

# Monstrous Races 2

*Character Options for Playing Every Monster in  
Volo's Guide to Monsters*



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## *Character Options for Playing Every Monster in the Monster Manual*

The follow-up to *Monstrous Races*, this document contains additional race options based on the new monsters presented in *Volo's Guide to Monsters*.

by Tyler Kamstra



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# Introduction

This document is a supplemental text seeking to expand upon the character options available to players. Each race presented in this document attempts to stay roughly balanced with the races included in the Player's Handbook.

This document makes no assumptions of setting, purpose, or usage. It is merely an attempt to open new and interesting options, and to allow you to do with them whatever you like.

Monstrous Races is not required to use and enjoy most of the races in this document, but the original Monstrous Races document contains the base traits for some races which receive new options in the supplement, plus additional content such as feats, backgrounds, and a more detailed explanation of the process and mechanics which I used to design and balance the races in this document. This document contains variants, templates, and racial feats intended for use with races presented in the original Monstrous Races document. These items may not be usable as-written without access to the original Monstrous Races.

## How to Use This Document

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Allowing "monstrous" or otherwise abnormal races in your game is a decision which the DM should make, likely after discussing the subject with other members of the group. Allowing monstrous races can have strange implications for your game that your group should be willing to accept. For those groups brave enough to adventure as monsters, this document seeks to provide an easily-accessible source of new options.

If you choose to allow content from this document, you don't necessarily need to allow everything contained herein. If your group wishes to allow a set of the contained races, but disallow others, that's fine too. For example: your group might allow a handful of specifically chosen races that fit a theme, or you might consider allowing all humanoid races.

Once you have selected what content your group will allow, treat those races just like you would any race in the Player's Handbook while creating new characters. The races in this document work just like existing playable races, and use all the same rules.

Each race includes sections on the race's flavor and concept, the race's traits, suggestions for playing that

race, and design notes about the creation of the race which are presented to help you adjust races if you decide to do so.

## Design Notes

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Races in this document all built using my own Race Builder system, which is presented in the original Monstrous Races. Races built with this system are intended to fall roughly within a range of 8-10 Build Points (BP) in order to keep them roughly balanced against published races and other races in this document. The Design Notes in this document describe the process of adapting each creature's monster entry into a playable race using this system.

While this document does not contain the full race builder rules with which to create or customize races, each race entry includes suggestions on making minor adjustments to strengthen or weaken the race without need for the full Race Builder rules.

All races are also assumed to be "intelligent", and are assumed to be in the normal range of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores normally afforded to Player Characters. Any in-game reasons behind this sudden leap in mental capacity are left entirely to you to determine, and options like the *awaken* spell make a fine explanation.

Many of the creatures presented in Volo's Guide to Monsters are variations upon the creatures presented in the Monster Manual. Some of these are functionally similar to the base creature with improved stats, like the Groll Hunter. In these cases, the monster entries are ignored by this document, as they can be easily replicated by using the race presented in Monstrous Races and adding class levels.

However, some of these creatures present new features unique to the race and not available as class features, such as the Storm Giant Quintessent. In many of these cases, the monster entry is presented as a racial feat for use by the race presented in the original Monstrous Races document.

## Included Art

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The art included in this document is all free art taken from the creator resources provided by Wizards of the Coast on DM's Guild. If you wish to reuse these images, I encourage you to download the official creator resources for the original images.

# New Rules & Rules Clarifications

While this document attempts to live within the confines of existing rules, adapting some parts of the monster manual requires some new concepts and mechanics.

## Healing Constructs and Undead

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The most common magical healing options (*cure wounds*, *healing word*, and *heal*) do not affect constructs or undead. This creates a unique challenge for players hoping to play those creature types.

Jeremy Crawford suggested [on twitter](#) that constructs and undead could heal themselves by resting, just as living creatures can, and also noted that the Regenerate spell still applies to constructs and undead.

In addition to these options, I recommend introducing matching spells which only affect constructs and undead. *Repair damage* matches *cure wounds*, *word of repair* matches *healing word*, and *repair* matches *heal*. You might also introduce more spells for newer options like *healing spirit*, published in Xanathar's Guide to Everything. Any class which has the normal version of the spell on their spell list should have the "repair" version on their spell list.

Alternatively, you could allow undead to be healed by necrotic damage. However, since necrotic damage is available as a cantrip, I don't advise this.

## Monks and Natural Weapons

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Monks gain a superhuman ability to deal damage with their unarmed strikes. While this causes no issues for humans and similar races, creatures which have powerful natural weapons already deal more unarmed strike damage than 1<sup>st</sup>-level monks.

For the purposes of Martial Arts and Flurry of Blows, the bonus unarmed strikes made as a Bonus Action must be conventional unarmed strikes: punches, kicks, etc. instead of relying upon claws, teeth, etc. These attacks deal bludgeoning damage, and follow the standard Monk Unarmed Strike damage progression.

## Templates

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The Monster Manual introduces the concept of Templates, which can be applied to existing creatures

to customize them. These templates include iconic creatures like liches, lycanthropes, and skeletons. While the existing rules work well for monsters, they don't function well for player characters, and granting players a template like lycanthropy presents a huge power increase, often at little cost.

The alternate rules presented here are intended as a replacement for the existing rules, allowing players to use templates without gaining an unfair benefit over other player characters, and presenting easily used means to play iconic creatures like vampires and werewolves while still fitting into the normal bounds of the game.

## Natural vs. Acquired templates

Natural templates are templates which must be applied to a creature at creation. These templates are specific to some circumstance of the creature's birth or creation, such as the half-dragon template or the skeleton template.

Acquired templates can be applied to a creature at any point as specified by the specific template, and represent a dramatic change to the creature at some point in their existence, such as a creature and returning as a ghost, or a creature being afflicted with lycanthropy.

Some templates can be either natural or acquired, such as the lycanthrope template. In these cases, the template's description elaborates on the mechanics of acquiring the template.

## Acquiring Templates

Natural templates can be applied to valid creatures when the creature is created, and acquired templates can be applied to valid creatures at any time, as specified by the template's description. All templates apply a set of traits immediately upon gaining the template.

## Template Levels

In addition to the traits applied when a template is initially applied, some templates also have "template levels." These levels function similarly to gaining levels in a class, but when you can or must take them is dictated by the template itself. More powerful templates will require more levels.

Template levels grant hit dice, as specified in the template's description. Template levels may only be taken by characters with at least one class level. A character's proficiency bonus advances with their total

level, including any template levels, just as if they had taken levels in a class.

## Removing Templates

If a character ever loses a template, such as by being cured of a curse, they immediately lose any traits gained from the template. If they have levels in the template, they lose those levels and may replace them with the same number of levels in a class upon completing a long rest.

## Somatic Components

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The rules for somatic components states that “the caster must have free use of at least one hand”. As written, this requires an actual hand. However, the core rules are clearly intended to cover humanoid races, and this document ranges far beyond humanoids, venturing into creatures like beholders and rocs, which clearly don’t have hands. However, lack of perfectly human-like hands should not prevent a race from performing somatic components.

Any creature can perform somatic components appropriate to their forms, whatever that form may be. However, any circumstance which would prevent a human from performing somatic components, such as being tightly restrained, similarly prevents monstrous races from performing somatic components.

## Tiny Creatures

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Due to their small stature, tiny creatures require additional mechanics not covered in the core rules. Being the size of a house cat carries certain complications not faced by common humanoid races like halflings and elves.

Tiny creatures have difficulty using weapons which small and medium creatures can wield comfortably. Tiny creatures may not use weapons made for larger creatures unless they have the Light property. Using those weapons requires two hands and negates the Finesse property, and tiny creatures suffer disadvantage on attack rolls with those weapons. Tiny creatures may not use weapons for larger creatures to engage in two-weapon fighting, even though they have the Light property, just as a medium creature cannot use two two-handed weapons for two-weapon fighting.

Due to their inability to use weapons made for larger creatures, tiny creatures usually wield weapons better suited to their size. Such weapons add the Tiny weapon property, in addition to any other properties, and

remove the Reach property if the weapon possesses it normally.

Weapons with the tiny property deal reduced damage, as per the table below, and weigh one quarter the normal weight for that type of weapon, and have half the range of the normal weapon (if any). Ranged weapons, thrown weapons, and thrown improvised weapons with the tiny property have ranges equal to half of their normal range, rounded down to the nearest 5 feet and to a minimum range of 5 feet. In addition, weapons with the Tiny property ignore the restrictions described in the preceding paragraph since they are size appropriately for tiny creatures.

Original Damage	Tiny Damage
1d4	1
1d6	1
1d8	1d2
1d10	1d3
1d12/2d6	1d4

Tiny creatures use armor which weighs less than armor for small or medium creatures. Armor made for tiny creatures weighs one quarter of the armor’s listed weight.

Finally, tiny creatures can lift and carry one quarter the amount which a medium or small creature would be able to carry with the same Strength score.

## Unconsciousness and Immunity

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The Monster Manual presents a long list of creatures with immunity to the Unconscious condition. However, it’s never explicitly explained what happens to these creatures when they drop to 0 hit points. The text in question, taken from the “Dropping to 0 Hit Points” section, is as follows:

“When you drop to 0 hit points, you either die outright or fall unconscious”

While this isn’t explicitly stated anywhere, it seems reasonable that if you’re presented with two options and one options is disallowed, you must take the other option. Therefore, creatures that are immune to unconsciousness are outright slain when they fall to 0 hit points.

Several of the races presented in this document are immune to the Unconscious condition. This presents a tradeoff for those races. They are immune to effects which would render them prematurely unconscious, such as the *sleep* spell. However, they also lose the relative safety of falling unconscious during a difficult fight. Expect these players to play more defensively than usual, and possibly to flee when the possibility of 0 hit points seems likely.

# Monstrous Races



## Banderhobb

Horrifying shadow creatures which resemble bipedal toads with massive, toothy maws.

### Banderhobb Traits

Banderhobbs share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Summoned for nefarious purposes and giving no concern to whatever pain or damage they might cause, most Banderhobbs are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

When you take the Attack action and make an unarmed strike, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple with the target of your successful unarmed strike.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Resonant Connection.** If you have even a tiny piece of a creature or an object in its possession, such as a lock of hair or a splinter of wood, you know the most direct route to that creature or object if it is within 1 mile of you.

**Shadow Stealth.** While in dim light or darkness, you can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

**Tongue.** As an action, you may use your extendable tongue to draw foes toward you. Make a melee weapon attack as though you were making an unarmed strike against a creature within 15 feet. On a hit, you deal as much damage as you would normally deal with an unarmed strike, but the damage dealt is necrotic damage rather than its normal damage type. In addition, you pull the target into an adjacent unoccupied space. If you pull the foe adjacent to you, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple as though you had attacked with your bite.

**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Banderhobb

Banderhobbs are strong and make excellent grapplers. Their Tongue ability allows them to keep foes nearby, and their ability to grapple easily makes them great at isolating and overpowering single foes. Consider classes like barbarian and fighter which can capitalize on the Banderhobb's capabilities in melee.

Banderhobbs are summoned via a secret ritual for some specific, nefarious purpose by an evil creature. Banderhobbs pursue that goal as instructed with little care for anything else. In a party with a specific goal in mind, a benefactor might introduce a banderhobb to the party, or one of the party members might discover

the ritual to conjure a banderhobb to serve them. Consider who your master is, as you are wholly bound to follow their instructions, your brief existence ending when your task is complete.

## Design Notes

Banderhobbs are mostly simple, but they have a few interesting abilities which we haven't seen before. We'll tackle the easy stuff first, then dive into the unique abilities once we have an idea of how much BP we have to work with. Banderhobbs also have a Swallow ability just like the Giant Frog, so we'll borrow design decisions from the Giant Frog.

Banderhobbs are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Banderhobb's have excellent Strength and Constitution. Increasing both by 2 would make sense, but we'll need to conserve BP, so we'll grant +1 to Strength for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), we'll drop natural armor to save BP, 30 ft. walking speed, condition immunities to Charmed and Frightened for 1 BP total, 60 ft. Darkvision (down from 120 ft.) for 2 BP, the ability to understand Common but no ability to speak for -1.5 BP, and Shadow Stealth for 1 BP. We'll set the Banderhobb's natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP and add Grab for 2 BP to approximate the trapple mechanic.

That brings us to 7.5 BP before we address the Banderhobb's remaining abilities. We still need to address Resonant Connection, Tongue, Swallow, and Shadow step. We've got almost no room to work, so we'll need to make cuts.

Like the Giant Frog, we'll abandon Swallow because it's too powerful to grant to players. We'll also abandon Shadow Step, which isn't normally available to players except as subclass-specific class features like the Way of Shadow Monk's Shadow Step at 6<sup>th</sup> level.

That leaves Resonant Connection and Tongue. Resonant Connection is hard. It's an extremely central piece of the creature's theme, so we absolutely don't want to cut it. Revenants get a functionally identical ability called Vengeful Tracker for 2 BP, so the same cost seems appropriate.

Tongue looks startlingly similar to the *thorn whip* cantrip, which is a great start for approximating its BP cost. Banderhobb's get to make an extra bit attack after the pull effect, but we'll drop that piece to save BP. We'll allow the Banderhobb to use their normal unarmed strike damage, limit the reach to 15 feet, and we'll call it 0.5 BP.

At 10 BP, the Banderhobb is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Banderhobb, grant it a +1 Constitution bonus or add natural armor. If you want to weaken the Banderhobb, reduce its natural weapon damage.

## Barghest

Canine fiends the size of horses, barghests were created to prey upon and consume the souls of goblins.

### Barghest Traits

share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fiend.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Dexterity

**Alignment.** Fiends created to prey upon sentient creatures, most barghests are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 60 ft.

**Bite and Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing or slashing damage on a hit.

When you take the Attack action and make an unarmed strike, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple with the target of your successful unarmed strike.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Fire Banishment.** When you start your turn engulfed in flames that are at least as large as your space (5 ft. square for a small or medium creature), you must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be instantly banished to Gehenna.

Instantaneous bursts of flame (such as breath weapons or a *fireball*) don't have this effect on you, but magically conjured fire which has a non-instantaneous duration (such as *create bonfire*) do. In the case of magically created fire, if you succeed on a Dexterity saving throw to reduce the damage taken, you do not need to make the Charisma saving throw to avoid banishment.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Shapechanger.** As an action, you can magically take the form of a Small goblin or return to your true form. Any equipment you are holding or wearing is not transformed. You retain all of your own statistics, except as noted below.

To discern that you are disguised, a creature can use its action to inspect your appearance and must succeed on an Intelligence (Investigation) check. The DC of this



check is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

While in goblin form, your walking speed is 30 ft. and you may not use your bite attack, so your natural weapons deal 1d8 slashing damage and may not deal piercing damage.

**Soul Feeding.** You can feed on the corpse of a humanoid that you kill, and that has been dead for less than 10 minutes, devouring both the creature's flesh and its soul. This feeding takes at least 1 minute (but may take longer for exceptionally large humanoids like goliaths), and it destroys the victim's body. The victim's soul is trapped in your stomach for 24 hours, after which time it is digested. If you die before the soul is digested, the soul is released.

While a humanoid's soul is trapped in your stomach, any form of revival that could work has only a 50 percent chance of doing so, freeing the soul from your stomach if it is successful. Once a creature's soul is digested, however, no magic short of divine intervention can restore it.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Abyssal, Common, Goblin, and Infernal.

### Playing a Barghest

Barghests spend most of their time pretending to be a goblin, so consider classes which goblins normally pursue. Monk, ranger, and rogue are all great choices, but fighter is also an option. Because Fire Banishment

presents a way to quickly remove you from your party, be extremely cautious around open flames and spellcasters, and consider improving your Charisma saving throws to protect yourself.

Barghests are normally found in two places: among goblins, and among yugoloths. Barghests found among goblins are actively preying upon them, but might still cooperate with a party of goblins long enough to entrap them individually, or might wait until the goblins grow strong and prestigious to elevate the barghest's own status upon completing its quota of 17 goblin souls.

### Design Notes

Despite its low CR, Barghests have a long list of special abilities. We'll need to make significant cuts to balance them as a playable race without cutting into the defining parts of the creature. They share a lot of design elements with Yugoloths, so we'll borrow design notes from the shared Yugoloth racial traits where we can. Barghests are a weird combination of goblin, yugoloth, and wolf, which makes them very interesting but also very difficult to design.

Barghests are fiends, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Barghests have excellent ability scores, but Strength and Dexterity are their best, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.



From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +2 natural armor (down from +5) for 1 BP, 40 ft. walking speed (down from 60 ft.) for 1 BP, Darkvision for 2 BP, and racial languages plus Common and two additional fixed languages for 0.5 BP. We'll set the Barghest's natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP. Barghests don't have hands but can change shape into a humanoid form which has hands, so we won't apply the No Hands BP adjustment.

We'll drop all of the Barghest's damage resistances and immunities. We'll also drop blindsight, telepathy, Keen Smell, and Innate Spellcasting. Even with those reductions, we're already at 9 BP and still need to tackle Shapechanger and Fire Banishment.

Shapechanger is different on every creature that has it. The Yochlol's version is easily the closest, but the Barghest gets much less from their shapechange ability. We didn't apply the No Hands BP adjustment, so there's no BP change. We'll call the ability 0.5 BP.

Fire Banishment is clearly a handicap, but it's also not likely to come up unless the DM makes it a plot point. A 10-foot square fire is exceptionally large, so either someone would need deliberately create such a fire, or a structure would need to catch fire. We'll call Fire Banishment -0.5 BP and leave its mechanics unchanged.

The Soul Feeding sidebar presents rules for barghests eating the bodies on souls of humanoids. This is a major component of the Barghest's theme, but only has a notable mechanical effect if someone wants to raise the consumed creature from the dead. This doesn't come up often for enemies, so we'll add this capability for 0 BP.

At 9 BP, the Barghest is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Barghest, increase its natural armor or grant it telepathy. If you want to weaken the barghest, remove its natural armor.

## Beholders

A variety of magical creatures identified by their shares features: A floating, orb-like creature with a single central eye, and some variety of tentacles or stalked growing outward from their body.

Originally presented in the original Monstrous Races, this section adds additional Beholder subraces. The shared beholder racial traits presented in Monstrous Races have been altered below to reflect new subraces. If you use Beholder subraces from the original Monstrous Races, use the version of the racial traits presented there.

## Beholder Traits

Beholders share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Aberration.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 0 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Subrace.** Choose one of these subraces. You gain the traits listed under your chosen subrace in addition to those listed above.

### Death Kiss Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength.

**Alignment.** Violent and predatory, most death kiss beholders are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Blood Drain.** Using the Attack action, you can make a special melee attack to drain blood from a creature which you are currently grappling. No attack roll is required for this attack. Instead, the target makes a Constitution saving throw. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. On a failed saving throw, the creature takes lightning damage equal to the damage dealt by your unarmed strikes, and you can spend a hit die to heal yourself.

**Flight.** You have a flying speed of 30 feet, and can hover. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor. You are immune to the prone condition.

**Damage Resistance.** You have resistance against lightning damage.

**Tentacle.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

When you take the Attack action and make an unarmed strike, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple with the target of your successful unarmed strike.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Deep Speech and Undercommon

### Gauth Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Intelligence.

**Alignment.** Deceptive, manipulative, and willing to enslave creatures to help it find magic items to eat, most gauths are lawful evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 piercing damage on a hit.

**Death Throes.** When you fall to 0 hit points, the magic within you explodes. Each creature within 10 feet of you must make a Dexterity saving throw, taking 1d6 force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The DC of this check is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. The damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5<sup>th</sup> level (2d6), 11<sup>th</sup> level (3d6), and 17<sup>th</sup> level (4d6).

**Eye Rays.** You know the *devour magic* (see the Spells chapter) and *fire bolt* cantrips. You may cast spells as though you were using a magic focus, even if you are not doing so. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

**Flight.** You have a flying speed of 30 feet, and can hover. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor. You are immune to the prone condition.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Stunning Gaze.** As an action, you can incapacitate a creature that you see within 30 feet of you with a look from your central eye. The creature must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save the creature becomes incapacitated until the beginning of your next turn. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your Proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Deep Speech and Undercommon

#### Gazer Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Petulant, impolite, hostile, and generally unpleasant and aggressive, most gazers are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is tiny.

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, you can move up to your speed toward a hostile creature that you can see.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 piercing damage on a hit.

You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of your unarmed strikes. Your unarmed strikes count as a weapon with the Finesse property for all effects which require it, such as Sneak Attack.

**Eye Rays.** You know the *daze* (see the Spells chapter), *mage hand*, *spook* (see the Spells chapter), and *ray of frost* cantrips. You may cast spells as though you were using a magic focus, even if you are not doing so. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

**Flight.** You have a flying speed of 30 feet, and can hover. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor. You are immune to the prone condition.

**Mimicry.** You can mimic any sounds you have heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful Insight check against a DC equal to 8 + your Charisma (Deception) bonus.

**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in Undercommon, but are unable to speak except through your Mimicry ability.

#### Playing an Beholder

Beholders are all evil, aggressive, territorial, and borderline insane. They rarely play well with others, and when they deign to cooperate with other creatures, it's typically because it has enslaved, dominated, or otherwise compelled the other creatures to work toward the beholder's goals.

The beholders presented here differ from the beholders presented in original *Monstrous Races*. Death Kiss Beholders are powerful melee combatants. Gazers lack the intelligence to make natural wizards, but make for fine rogues, especially arcane tricksters. Gauths make excellent wizards, and present a slightly different set of traits more in line with Eye Tyrants and Spectators.

#### Death Kiss

Death Kiss Beholders are all about grappling. Select a class that gets you proficiency with Athletics like Barbarian and Fighter, and get into melee as quickly as possible to start grappling things. Blood Drain lets you use hit dice to heal quickly in combat so consider the Durable feat to make your hit dice a more reliable source of healing.

Motivated almost exclusively by the need to feed, it's unclear what might compel a Death Kiss Beholder to join a party. They might be bullied into service by an Eye Tyrant, or they might be persuaded to work alongside cannibalistic monsters that don't mind their prey being drained of blood immediately prior to consumption.

### Gauth

Gauths are much like eye tyrants in many ways: intelligent, evil, and magically powerful. While they don't have as many eye ray options as an eye tyrant, their Stunning Gaze is a reliable and potent way to temporarily incapacitate foes. Like the Eye Tyrant, Gauths make natural wizards.

Gauths are less xenophobic than eye tyrants, and are more willing to team up with, hire, or enslave other creatures that might assist the Gauth in its goal of locating and consuming magic items.

### Gazer

Gazers are small and nimble, and combined with their ability to fly and hover, they make excellent rogues. While they lack the raw magical power of other beholders, Gauths can still succeed as Arcane Tricksters.

Gazers like to serve creatures with magical power, so a party with numerous spellcasters in it might find a gazer willing to join them. However, Gazers are bullies who will pick on anything small enough or obviously weak, so they need frequent shepherding to prevent them from getting distracted by the urge to harass other creatures.

### Design Notes

Beholders are the first monster type in Volo's Guide to Monsters that presents new subrace options, which is exciting from a design perspective. Taking a quick look at the monster entries, I can see that the shared racial traits we designed in Monstrous Races won't work for the new beholders in Volo's. That's unfortunate, and I think that's going to be the norm.

Looking at all three of the new types of beholders, we can identify a few shared traits. All three types of beholders are Abberations for 0.5 BP, and they have a move speed of 0 ft. for -3 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision (down from 120 ft.) for 2 BP, and no hands for -2 BP.

That brings our total to -2.5 BP before we tackle individual subraces, leaving us a huge amount of room to work.

### Death Kiss

Death kiss beholders are all about lightning damage and grappling. They have impressive 20 ft. reach, and their Blood Drain ability is very powerful. We'll need to make a lot of cuts to make them work as a playable race.

Death kiss beholders are melee fighters, unlike other beholders, and their ability scores reflect it. But we're going to have a love of trouble adapting the Death Kiss

Beholder's traits, so we'll need to save BP. We'll grant +1 Strength 1 BP total.

From the stat block, we get mediumsize (down from large), we'll drop naturalarmor to conserve BP, 30 ft. fly speed for 4 BP, the ability to hover for 2 BP, resistance to lightning (down from immunity) for 2 BP, condition immunity to Prone for 0.5 BP, and racial languages plus Common (Undercommon in this case) for 0 BP. We'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP, and add Grab for 2 BP.

That brings us to 11 BP. We're already over our BP limit, and we still need to tackle Lightning Blood and Blood Drain. We could approximate Lightning Blood by reskinning Hellish Rebuke, but I think we'll just drop it to save BP.

Blood drain needs to have a low BP cost and it needs to have a usage limitation to prevent players from getting constant free healing. We've made other racial healing mechanics consume hit dice, so I think it makes sense to do that here, too. We'll allow Blood Drain to replace an attack, and we'll let the player spend a hit die when they use it. To maintain parity with the originalability, we'll also make it call for a saving throw from the target rather than another attack roll from the beholder. We'll call it 1 BP.

At 12 BP, the Death Kiss Beholder exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to weaken the Death Kiss Beholder, limit Blood Drain to once per encounter or once per short rest, or reduce its fly speed.

### Gauth

Gauths are more similar to Eye Tyrants than any of the other new beholders in Volo's Guide to Monsters. They're basically just a smaller, weaker Eye Tyrant. Even their ability scores reflect the Eye Tyrant's very closely. However, there are some major differences which differentiate the two: the Eye Tyrant's antimagic eye is replaced by Stunning Gaze and Death Throes, and the Gauth's eye rays have different effects.

With all of that in mind, we'll start from the Eye Tyrant racial traits from the original Monstrous Races, which we valued at 9.75 BP. We rated the Eye Tyrant's central eye at 2 BP, and we granted 4 eye ray cantrips for 2 BP total, so we'll remove that and we're left with 5.75 BP before we look at the Gauth's traits.

Death Throes works a lot like the Magmin's Death Burst trait, so we'll duplicate it and change the damage type for 1 BP. Since Force damage is almost never resisted, we'll drop the damage die to d6's.

Stunning Gaze is hard to approximate. I frequently look at spells as a good basis, but spells that inflict the Stunned condition are all high level. If we drop the

condition to Incapacitated, it's still really strong but not as bad. Hypnotic Pattern renders groups of creatures charmed and then incapacitated, and it's only 3<sup>rd</sup>-level. If we limit Stunning Gaze to a single creature and only allow it to be used once per day, I think we can call it 2 BP.

We've got roughly 1 BP left, which means we can select two cantrips to approximate the Gauth's eye rays. Enervation Ray and Fire Ray can be approximated by *chill touch* and *fire bolt*, respectively, but I really want to keep the Devour Magic Ray because it fits the theme of a magic item-eating beholder so well. The effect doesn't seem any more powerful than a cantrip, especially consider how infrequently it would be important, so we'll borrow a note from the Triton racial traits entry in *Volo's Guide to Monsters* and write a new spell specifically so that we can grant it as a racial trait. We'll keep *fire bolt* because everyone enjoys fire damage, and the two cantrips will cost 1 BP total.

At 9.75 BP the Gauth is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the gauth, add *chill touch* to the list of cantrips it knows, or allow it to use Stunning Gaze once per short rest. If you want to weaken the Gauth, remove its natural armor.

### Gazer

Gazers, being the weakest published beholder, are also the easiest to design. Nearly all of their traits are covered in races which we've designed in the original *Monstrous Races*, with the exception of a couple of their eye rays. Since Gazers are normally unintelligent, we'll need to treat them as awakened and allow them to at least understand Common.

Unlike other beholders, Gazers have impressively high Dexterity. We'll grant +2 Dexterity for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get tiny size for -1.5 BP, 30 ft. fly speed for 4 BP, the ability to hover for 2 BP, condition immunity to prone for 0.5 BP, Aggressive for 1 BP, and Mimicry for 1 BP. We'll add the ability to understand Common, but not to speak it. We'll raise the gazer's natural weapons to 1d4 for 0.5 BP and add Natural Weapon Finesse.

The version of mimicry in the Gazer's monster entry is worse than the Kenku's, and Gazers can only mimic the "simple sounds of speech", but I think it's safe to attribute that to the Gazer's 3 Intelligence and 7 Charisma. A gazer with human-like Intelligence could almost certainly match the capabilities of a Kenku.

That brings us to 7 BP before we consider the Gazer's eye rays, which gives us lots of room. Gazers only have four eye rays, so giving them four cantrips makes sense. Frost Ray can be approximated by *ray of*



*frost*, though *ray of frost* adds a speed debuff. Telekinetic Ray can be approximated by *mage hand*, though we'll lose the ability to push creatures away.

Dazing Ray and Fear Ray are harder because there aren't cantrips which approximate those effects. So, as we did with the Gauth, we'll add two more new spells. Both of the reffects, as written, are safe enough that the designers at Wizards were comfortable with them being on a CR ½ creature, so I think it's safe to copy their effects as written.

With four cantrips in total, that's 2 BP.

At 9 BP, the Gazer is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Gazer, add natural armor or increase its natural weapon damage. If you want to weaken the Gazer, reduce its natural weapon damage to 1 or remove some of its cantrips.

### Bodak

Evil undead created when a follower of Orcus willingly performs a ritual upon themselves.

## Bodak Traits

Bodaks share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Undead. You don't require air, food, drink, or sleep. Instead, you enter a restful state, remaining semiconscious, for 4 hours a day. While resting, you can dream after a fashion; such dreams are reflexive mental exercises inherent to your consciousness. After resting in this way, you gain the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Dexterity, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Murderous undead utterly loyal to Orcus, most Bodaks are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Death Gaze.** As an action, you can turn your deadly gaze upon a creature to harm it. A creature within 120 ft. than you can see and that can see you must succeed on a Constitution saving throw, or take 1d10 necrotic damage. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw as a reaction. If the creature does so, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls against you and you have Advantage on attack rolls against it until the end of your next turn. If the creature looks at you in the meantime, it must immediately make the saving throw, taking the damage on a failed save as normal.

This damage increases to 2d10 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d10 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d10 at 17<sup>th</sup> level. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this attack.

**Fist.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Undead Nature.** You have resistance to lightning damage. You have immunity to poison damage, and to the poisoned condition.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Abyssal.

## Playing a Bodak

Bodaks are physically strong and resilient, so they can succeed in a variety of classes. Their Death Gaze offers a potent ranged option, allowing them to deal necrotic damage, or force a creature to look away from the Bodak, affording the Bodak a significant advantage.

Bodaks are devout worshippers of Orcus. As such, they are at home in a party of demons, undead, or Orcus adherents.

## Design Notes

Bodaks are reasonably simple, complicated only by Aura of Annihilation and Death Gaze.

Bodaks are undead, costing 1 BP.

Bodaks have good physical ability scores, but they rely on their gaze attacks over anything else. I think we'll grant +1 Strength, +1 Dexterity, and +1 Constitution for 3 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +2 natural armor for 1 BP, 30 ft. walking speed, we'll drop the Bodak's resistances, resistance to lightning (down from immunity) for 2 BP, Poison Immunity for 2 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision (down from 120 ft.) for 2 BP, and 1d4 natural weapons for 1 BP.

That brings us to 10 BP, and we still need to consider Aura of Annihilation, Death Gaze, Sunlight Hypersensitivity, and Withering Gaze.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity first appeared on vampires, which we covered in the original Monstrous Races. Vampires take four times as much damage, so we'll reduce the size of the BP adjustment. -3 BP seems reasonable, since it's half-way between -2 for Sunlight Weakness and -4 for the Vampire's version of Sunlight Hypersensitivity.

I can't think of a safe way to make Aura of Annihilation work, so we'll drop it.

Death Gaze has a save-or-die mechanic which we absolutely can't retain. Once we remove that, Death Gaze and Withering Gaze are almost identical, so we'll roll them into one ability. The damage and save look very similar to the *chill touch* cantrip, so we'll start with *chill touch* and reskin it and tweak it a bit. I like the averting eyes mechanic, so we'll add that in and bump the damage dice up from d8's to d10's. We'll call that 0.5 BP.

At 7.5 BP, the Bodak is below our target range of 8-10 BP. Despite the low BP, it's an extremely appealing race that can succeed in a variety of classes. If you want to strengthen the Bodak, increase the damage of Death Gaze or its natural weapons.

## Boggle

Small fey born out of a feeling of loneliness, boggles resemble mishshapen humanoids covered in thick, black oil.



## Boggle Traits

Boggles share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fey.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Unreliable, flighty, and often annoying though rarely malicious, most boggles are chaotic neutral

**Size.** Your size is small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft. You have a climb speed of 30 ft.

**Boggle Oil.** You naturally excrete a nonflammable oil from your pores. You can choose whether the oil is slippery or sticky, and can change the oil on your skin from one consistency to another as a Bonus Action.

*Slippery Oil:* While coated in slippery oil you gain Advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks made to escape bonds, squeeze through narrow spaces, and end grapples.

*Sticky Oil:* While coated in sticky oil, you gain Advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks made to grapple and any ability check made to maintain a hold on another creature, a surface, or an object. You can also climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Dimension Rift.** As a Bonus Action you create an invisible rift in space and step through it. You create this rift in an immobile, enclosed frame that you can see within 5 feet, such as an open doorway or window, the space between bars of a cell, or an open container.

You instantly emerge from another suitable frame within 30 ft. of the first frame.

**Oil Puddle.** As an action you create a puddle of oil that is either slippery or sticky (depending on the current state of your Boggle Oil trait). The puddle is 1 inch deep and, and fills a 10 ft. square area. The puddle is difficult terrain for all creatures except boggles and lasts for 1 hour.

If the oil is slippery, any creature that enters the puddle's area or starts its turn there must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

If the oil is sticky, any creature that enters the puddle's area or starts its turn there must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be restrained. On its turn, a creature can use an action to try to extricate itself from the sticky puddle, ending the effect and moving into the nearest safe unoccupied space with a successful Strength check.

The DC of these saving throws and ability checks are 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution bonus.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

**Pummel.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Sylvan.

## Playing a Boggle

Nimble, slippery, and surprising, boggles make excellent monks, rangers, and rogues. Oil Puddle is a useful option for trapping foes in place, or otherwise making it difficult for your enemies to move.

Brought into being by profound feelings of loneliness, boggles might suddenly appear to join a solitary adventurer, or one who surrounds themselves with allies with whom they have trouble connecting emotionally, like a long-lived elf wizard in a party of short-lived goblins. In any case, boggles are unrepentant tricksters, and love all manner of practical jokes, surprises, and even the occasional jump scare.

## Design Notes

Boggles have several complicated and unique abilities, but are otherwise very similar to humanoids.

Boggles are fey, costing 0.5 BP, but offering no specific abilities.

Boggles have excellent Dexterity, so we'll grant +1 Dexterity for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size for -1 BP, 30 ft. walking speed for 0.5 BP, 30 ft. climb speed for 2 BP, Darkvision for 2 BP, and only racial languages for -1 BP. We'll reduce the Boggle's natural weapons to 1d4 for 1

BP. We'll drop resistance to fire and Keen Smell to save BP.

That brings us to 5 BP before we tackle Boggle Oil, Dimensional Rift, and Oil Puddle.

Boggle Oil combines three important points: Advantage on checks to escape grapples, Advantage on checks to hold onto stuff, and Spider Climb. Spider Climb is 1 BP. Unfortunately, we don't have a good precedent for the rest. Chameleon Skin provides Advantage on checks with a skill for 2 BP, but Boggle Oil covers two very specific uses of two different skills. We'll call it 1 BP, making Boggle Oil 2 BP total.

Dimensional Rift is really interesting, but also extremely abusable. As written, a boggle might be able to shove its hand into something like the opening of a backpack and attack anything within 30 feet. The primary purpose of the ability is to allow limited teleportation, so we'll look at *misty step* as a basis. If we require that the boggle use a fixed frame of some kind in an adjacent space, and limit usage to once per day, I think we can call it 1 BP.

The slippery version of Oil Puddle looks an awful lot like *grease*. In fact, aside from the area of effect and duration the wording is functionally identical. The sticky version matches *entangle* almost as closely. I think if we set the area of effect to a 10-foot square and allow it in either version once per day, we can call it 1.5 BP.

At 9.5 BP, the Boggle is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Boggle, increase its Dexterity increase, or allow it to use Oil Puddle once per short rest. If you want to weaken the Boggle, limit the area of effect of Oil Puddle to a 5-foot square.

## Catoblepas

Loathsome, foul-smelling quadrupedal swamp creatures, the presence of a catoblepas is seen as a bad omen, and brings corruption and disease to wherever it resides.

### Catoblepas Traits

Catoblepas share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beast-like creatures, most catoblepas are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it

were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Death Ray.** As an action, you may target one creature you can see within 30 ft. of you. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 1d8 necrotic damage. The DC for this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier. The damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5<sup>th</sup> level (2d8), 11<sup>th</sup> level (3d8), and 17<sup>th</sup> level (4d8).

**Keen Smell.** You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Stench.** As a bonus action you can exude a horrifying stench for up to one minute. Any creature which starts its turn within 5 ft. of you must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. The DC for this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

You must maintain concentration during that time, as if you were casting a spell. If you lose concentration, affected creatures are no longer poisoned by this ability.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Tail.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.



### Playing a Catoblepas

Strong and tough with good natural armor and Stench, the Catoblepas is a strong melee threat. Consider



classes like barbarian and fighter which play to the catoblepas's strengths.

Catoblepas are normally solitary creatures, but occasionally hags keep them as pets, and legends tell of evil knights two have tamed a catoblepas to use as a mount.

### Design Notes

Despite its flavor, the Catoblepas is basically just a beast. It's only unique abilities are the stun on its tail and Death Ray, but those shouldn't be difficult to deal with. Like other creatures, we'll treat the Catoblepas as awakened.

Catoblepas are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Like beasts and other similar creatures, the Catoblepas has excellent Strength and Constitution. We'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +3 natural armor for 1.5 BP, 30 ft. walking speed for 0 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, Keen Smell for 0.5 BP, Stench for 2 BP. We'll add the ability to speak Common for 0 BP since we're treating the Catoblepas as awakened. Catoblepas have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings us to 8.5 before we tackle the stun effect on the Catoblepas's tail and Death Ray.

We'll need to drop the stun effect because it's simply too powerful. Even if we require a successful hit and a failed saving throw and apply a usage limitation, the closest thing we can compare it to is Power Word Stun, which is far too powerful to grant as a racial trait.

Death Ray is easily replicated by reskinning *chill touch*. We'll limit the range to 30 feet, but otherwise leave it unchanged for 0.5 BP.

At 9 BP, the Catoblepas is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the catoblepas, increase its ability score increases or increase the range of Death Ray. If you want to weaken the Catoblepas, reduce its natural armor.

### Cave Fisher

Pale monstrosities resembling a spider with crab arms, cave fishers are dangerous ambush predators whose whole bodies are prized for their numerous valuable components.

### Cave Fisher Traits

Cave fisher share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beast-like creatures, most cave fishers are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 20 ft.

**Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing or slashing damage on a hit.

**Filament.** As an action, you can fire a sticky filament up to 60 feet in a straight line. This line is blocked by total cover. The filament adheres to everything that it touches. You automatically attempt to grapple every creature adhered to the filament, making a Strength (Athletics) check opposed by their Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check as normal. If a creature adhered to the filament has half or three-quarters cover, they receive Advantage on this check because less of the filament strikes them. Creatures that fail this opposed check are grappled by you.

Creatures adhered by the filament may attempt to escape the grapple as normal, but no longer gain Advantage if they had cover when you fired the filament. In addition, the filament may be attacked. It has an AC of 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. It has hit points equal to your number of total hit dice + your Constitution modifier. The filament is immune to poison and psychic damage. It uses your Strength and Constitution saving throws, if applicable, but automatically fails any other saving throws.

You may release the filament as a reaction. If you move after firing the filament, become incapacitated, or die, you automatically release the filament. When you release the filament, creatures remain adhered, but have Advantage on their ability checks to escape and on attack rolls to damage the filament.

If you begin your turn while still holding the filament, as an action you can reel in a creature or unattended object which your filament has adhered to. If you do so, all other targets of your filament are immediately released. The target must weigh no more than your carrying capacity (your Strength score multiplied by 15). If the target is a creature, you must make a Strength (Athletics) check opposed by their Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a successful check, you pull the target into an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you. The target remains grappled by you, and you may make an unarmed strike against the target as a bonus action.

**Flammable Blood.** While your current hit points are equal to or less than half of your hit point maximum, you have vulnerability to fire damage.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 14 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Spider Climb.** You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Undercommon.

## Playing a Cave Fisher

Cave fishers thrive in melee. They have excellent natural armor, and their Filament allows them to reel in foes who are too far away or too quick for the Cave Fisher to catch. Consider classes like barbarian, especially because it improves your movement speed.

Chitines and hobgoblins both tame cave fishers to serve as guards or beasts of war, so a cave fisher might fit into a party with a chitine or hobgoblin to command them. Because cave fishers have an instinctive fear of fire, characters who use fire spells, breath fire, or weird magical flaming weapons might have trouble befriendng a cave fisher.

## Design Notes

Cave Fishers are mostly simple, but their Adhesive Filament and Filament abilities will need some extra work. We can hopefully borrow ideas from giant spiders and ettercaps (covered in the original Monstrous Races). Like other creatures, we'll treat the Cave Fisher as awakened.

Cave fishers are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Cave fishers are melee fighters with no ranged options except Filament, and Strength is their highest ability score, so we'll grant +2 Strength for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +4 natural armor (down from +5) for 2 BP, 20 ft. speed for -1 BP, 20 ft. climb speed for 1.5 BP, Spider Climb for 1 BP, and the ability to speak Common (we'll say undercommon since cave fishers are subterranean). We'll drop blindsight to save BP. Cave fishers have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings use to 6 BP before we tackle Adhesive Filament, Flammable Blood, and Filament.

Resistance to fire is normally -1 BP, but Flammable Blood only applies when the cave fisher is severely wounded. We'll call it -0.5 BP.

Adhesive Filament and Filament are built to work together. They form a sort of combination attack: on the first turn, the Cave Fisher uses Adhesive Filament to grapple creatures in a 60-foot line. The creatures get their turn to attempt to escape, but if they fail the

Cave Fisher can use Filament on its next turn to reel in one of the grappled creatures and attack it. That's a really cool combination, but we don't have anything that we can easily use as a comparison. *Thorn whip* is the closest thing I can think of, but even that doesn't quite match. We'll need to get creative.

I don't think either ability is too much of a problem on its own. It's the only unique active ability on the Cave Fisher, so I really want it to be a big part of how the Cave Fisher functions. At the same time, I don't want it to be the only thing that the Cave Fisher does because they're going to have fun class features. I think limiting usage to once per short rest is a good start.

We'll also need to make some tweaks to the math of the abilities. We'll replace the saving throws with ability checks, which are the norm for players initiating a grapple, and we'll remove the automatic Disadvantage on ability checks to escape because that would be far too powerful in the hands of a player. We'll also tweak the 200 pound weight limit. I think limiting it to the Cave Fisher's carrying capacity seems reasonable. Beyond that, I think the ability is fine as-written. I'll adjust the text to make it a bit clearer how it works, and we'll call the whole thing 4 BP.

At 9.5 BP, the Cave Fisher is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Cave Fisher, allow it to use Adhesive Filament once every time it rolls initiative (and any time that it is not stressed or distracted out of combat), or increase its natural armor by 1. If you want to weaken the Cave Fisher, reduce its natural armor or reduce the range on Adhesive Filament to 30 ft.

## Chitine

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Creatures with features of both arachnids and humanoids, chitine are fiercely loyal servants of Lolth, and exist to carry out her revenge upon disloyal Drow.

### Chitine Traits

Chitines share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity

**Alignment.** Fanatically devoted to Lolth, and created to exact cruel revenge upon her disloyal worshippers, most chitines are chaotic evil.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft. You have a climb speed of 30 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Fey Ancestry.** You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

**Spider Climb.** You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Walker.** You ignore movement restrictions caused by webbing.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Undercommon.

**Subrace.** Choose one of these subraces. You gain the traits listed under your chosen subrace in addition to those listed above.

#### Chitine Traits

**Size.** Your size is small.

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Dexterity

**Arachnid Skills.** You are proficient in Athletics and Stealth.

**Four Arms.** You have four arms, and may hold and use items in each of your hands.

If you have Extra Attacks, when you take the Attack action you may make each of your attacks using any weapon you are holding.

When you take the Attack action and attack with a weapon which qualifies for use with two-weapon fighting, you can use a bonus action to attack with a different qualifying weapon. You don't add your ability modifier to the damage of the bonus attack unless the modifier is negative or you have an ability which allows you to add your ability modifier to the bonus attack granted by two-weapon fighting. If you choose to make this additional attack, you may not benefit from using a shield until the beginning of your next turn.

If you use a weapon with the Heavy property or use a Versatile weapon two-handed you may not benefit from using a shield until the beginning of your next turn, but you may switch between multiple Heavy or Versatile weapons with each attack.

#### Choldrith Traits

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity, +1 Wisdom

**Innate Spellcasting.** You know one Cantrip of your choice from the cleric spell list. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, you may cast *spiritual weapon* (dagger) once per day. Wisdom is your spellcasting these spells.

**Web.** You may shoot sticky webs from your body as a ranged weapon attack. This attack has 30/60 range. On a hit, the creature is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained creature can make a Strength check against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus

+ your Constitution bonus, escaping from the webbing on a success. The effect ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has AC 10, 5 hit points, resistance to bludgeoning damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

#### Playing a Chitine

Chitines have uncomfortable relationships with drow. They worship the same deity, and perform many of the same activities like rearing giant spiders, but drow view chitines like wayward slaves, and chitines view drow like less-devout adherents of the same religion.

#### Chitine

For a monstrosity, chitines are remarkably similar to humanoids. Their high dexterity and multiple arms make them excellent at using finesse and ranged weapons, able to quickly switch from melee to ranged weaponry, without needing to sheath or drop a weapon. Consider classes like fighter, ranger, and rogue which can capitalize on these strengths, but don't overlook monk as a potential option.

Chitines are divided into strict worker and warrior castes, and serve the good of their colony in whatever capacity they are assigned. They might naturally follow a Choldrith party leader on an adventure. Chitines are also occasionally re-enslaved by the drow, in which case a chitine might be found in party with one or more drow characters.

#### Choldrith

With high Dexterity and Wisdom, choldrith make good clerics, druids, rangers, and rogues. They're not quite as capable with weapons as chitines, but their innate spellcasting offers some useful options, and the Web trait allows them to easily inhibit their foes without relying on magic.

Choldriths are the leaders of Chitine society, and despite their hatred for the Drow they they share many similar tendencies. Choldriths constantly vie for position, but differ from drow in that choldriths always place the good of their colony above their own ambitions.

#### Design Notes

Chitine come in two varieties which share a number of traits. They're created from drow and spiders, and share traits with both. We should be able to borrow a lot of elements from drow, giant spiders, and ettercaps (covered in the original *Monstrous Races*), which should make adapting chitines simple.

Chitines are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Both varieties of chitine share 30 ft. climb speed for 2 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, Fey Ancestry for 0.5 BP, Sunlight Sensitivity for -2 BP, and Web Walker for 0.5 BP. We'll drop Web Sense, as we've done previously with ettercaps and giant spiders. Both varieties also speak Undercommon for 0 BP.

That brings us to 3.5 BP before we consider individual subraces.

### Chitine

For a monstrosity, chitines are remarkably similar to humanoids.

Chitine's best ability score by far is Dexterity, and their other ability scores are unremarkable. We'll grant +2 Dexterity for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size for -1 BP, 30 ft. speed for 0.5 BP (remember that 25 ft. is normal for small size). Chitines have four arms for 1 BP.

That brings us to 6 BP, and we're mostly out of material. As we've done in similar situations in the original Monstrous Races, we'll take a look at the Chitine's skill proficiencies. Chitines list Athletics and Stealth, so we'll grant proficiency in both for 1 BP total. That's still only 7 BP, but without deviating from the original creature I don't know what else we can add.

At 7 BP, chitines are below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Chitine, give it natural weapons that deal poison damage on a bite. If you want to weaken the Chitine, reduce its walking speed.

### Choldrith

Choldrith are clearly more powerful than chitines. Their stat block includes an impressive innate spellcasting arsenal which borrows heavily from the cleric spell list. Still, aside from trimming their innate spellcasting it won't be difficult to adapt the Choldrith.

Choldriths have excellent Dexterity and good Wisdom. I don't want the Choldrith to just be a larger, better Chitine, so we'll grant +1 Dexterity and +1 Wisdom for 2 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size and 30 ft. walking speed. We'll duplicate the Ettercap's Web trait for 1 BP since the text is basically identical.

That brings us to 6.5 BP before we consider the Choldrith's innate spellcasting. They have mostly generic cleric spells, which doesn't make it easy to choose what to keep. We want to stay somewhere in the range of 3 BP worth of spells, so we can't keep a lot. I think we'll allow the choice of a cleric cantrip for 1

BP, and we'll grant Spiritual Weapon (Dagger) 2 levels early for 2.25 BP.

At 9.75 BP, the Choldrith is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Choldrith, allow it to cast Bane once per day starting at 3<sup>rd</sup> level. If you want to weaken the Choldrith, delay Spiritual Weapon to 5<sup>th</sup> level or replace it with Bane.

## Cranium Rats

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Normal rats subjected to considerable psychic energy by mind flayers in order to create a breed of creatures capable of forming a hive mind.

### Cranium Rat Traits

Cranium rats share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Beast

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, most rats are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is tiny.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1 piercing damage on a hit.

You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of your unarmed strikes. Your unarmed strikes count as a weapon with the Finesse property for all effects which require it, such as Sneak Attack.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 30 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Keen Smell.** You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Telepathic Shroud.** You are immune to any effect that would sense your emotions or read your thoughts, as well as all divination spells.

**Telepathy.** You can communicate telepathically with any creature that knows a language within 30 ft.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Cranium Rat

Cranium rats are just as sneaky and nimble as regular rats, but are considerably faster and smarter. Their Dexterity and their ability to communicate telepathically allow them to operate silently while still

cooperating with their allies. However, be wary of the fact that your brain is visible atop your head, clearly distinguishing you from normal rats. Consider classes like monk and rogue which can capitalize on your capabilities.

Cranium rats are created by mind flayers, and serve them as spies. A cranium rat might fit into a party with a mind flayer, or with other mind flayer servants like intellect devourers.

### Design Notes

Cranium rats are basically normal rats with some extra abilities tacked on, so we'll start from the original Rat (covered in the original Monstrous Races), and add from there. Like the original Rat, we'll treat the Cranium Rat as awakened. Basic rats sit at just 0.5 BP, so we've got lots of room for new abilities.

Cranium rats have 30 ft. speed (up from 20 ft. for basic rats) for 1 BP, Telepathy for 2 BP, and Telepathic Shroud for 3 BP. That brings us up to 6.5 BP, which still isn't great but it's much better than a normal rat.

At 6.5 BP, the Cranium Rat is below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Cranium Rat, add a +1 Intelligence increase. If you want to weaken the Cranium Rat, reduce its Dexterity increase.

### Darkling

Fey cursed by the queen of the Summer Court, darklings are cursed to suffer rapid aging when they are exposed to light, and so they live out their lives in complete darkness, covering themselves head to toe to ward off any trace of light which might fall upon them.

For Darkling Elders, see Racial Feats, later in this document.

### Darkling Traits

Darklings share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fey.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Natural thieves and assassins, most darklings are chaotic neutral.

**Size.** Your size is small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Blindsight.** You have blindsight 30 ft.

**Death Flash.** When you fall to 0 hit points, nonmagical light flashes out from you in a 10-foot radius. Each creature within 10 feet of you which can see the bright light must make a Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn. The DC of this check is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

While you are at 0 hit points and dying, you cast bright light within a 10-foot radius, and shadowy light for an additional 10 feet. If you are stabilized or regain hit points, this effect immediately ends.

When you die, your body gives off one final flash of light as your body and your possessions burn to ash. Any equipment that you were carrying or wearing is immediately destroyed, excluding any metal or magical items.

**Light Sensitivity.** While in bright light, you have disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Superior Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 120 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Elvish and Sylvan.

### Playing a Darkling

Darklings are nearly humanoid, making them an excellent choice for a player who wants to play a fey without a lot of complicated traits. Their Dexterity, speed, and small size make them excellent rangers and rogues, and their blindsight and Darkvision make them adept at working in complete darkness. However, their light blindness means that they may have trouble fighting creatures that need light to see, especially in melee combat.

Darklings sell their services, so a mercenary darkling could fit into many parties. However, their light sensitivity may make it difficult for them to work alongside races which lack Darkvision.

When you have gained a few levels and built prestige in the Darkling community, consider taking the Darkling Elder feat.

### Design Notes

Darklings come in two varieties: the standard Darkling, and the Darkling Elder. Darkling elders are an advanced form of the basic Darkling, so instead of presenting them as a subrace, we'll make them a racial feat so that players can start as a standard darkling and advance by taking a feat if they choose to do so. I'll include the design notes for the Darkling Elder below.

### Darkling

Darklings are basically humanoid, which makes them easy to design. Death Flash and Light Sensitivity are both new, but can be easily adapted from traits which we have designed previously.

Darklings are fey, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Darklings are described as thieves and assassins, and their ability scores reflect this. Their ability scores are all good (except their Intelligence), but their Dexterity is clearly their best. We'll grant +1 Dexterity for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size for -1 BP, 30 ft. walking speed for 0.5 BP, 30 ft. blindsight for 6 BP, 120 ft. Darkvision for 3 BP, only racial languages plus one fixed language for -0.75 BP.

That brings us 10.25 BP before we cover Death Flash and Light Sensitivity. Light Sensitivity is similar to Sunlight Sensitivity, but where Sunlight Sensitivity requires direct sunlight, Light Sensitivity only requires bright light like that cast by a torch. It's also important to note that attacking a creature which is in bright light doesn't affect the Darkling; the Darkling itself must be in bright light. This seems like it could be an even trade, especially consider that darklings have 120 ft. Darkvision, so we'll call this -2 BP.

Death Flash works the same way that the Magmin's Death Burst does, so we'll borrow from the design work we did in the original Monstrous Races. However, unlike Death Burst, Death Flash doesn't deal damage, and instead blinds creatures for a round. The weakest spell which inflicts blindness is blindness/deafness, which is just 2<sup>nd</sup>-level and has a one-minute duration, so I think a single round of blindness is safe to call 1 BP.

Death Flash also notably destroys any of the Darkling's non-metal and non-magical possessions. While that's fine on a monster, it could be a problem for a party of players if the Darkling is carrying important things like letters, maps, food, etc. that the rest of the party needs. It's still really cool, and I want to keep it, so we'll make it a secondary effect on Death Flash that occurs when the Darkling actually dies.

At 9.25 BP, the Darkling is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to weaken the Darkling, reduce its blindsight range. If you want to strengthen the Darkling, increase its Dexterity increase.

### Darkling Elder

This is going to be my first time designing a racial feat, which is very exciting. I'll discuss general racial feat design notes in the Racial Feats chapter later in this document.

To start with, we should figure out what darkling elders get that regular darklings don't, and use those elements as the basis for our feat. Darkling elders grow to medium size, upgrade Death Flash to Death Burn, which adds some radiant damage to the effect. They

also lose Light Sensitivity, which is a considerable gain for a darkling. Finally, they get the ability to cast *darkness* once per short rest.

Next, we should figure out how much BP everything is worth. Upgrading from small size to medium size is 1 BP. Adding damage to Death Flash is probably around 0.5 BP if we make it all or nothing instead of save for half. Removing Light Sensitivity is 2 BP. Casting *darkness* once per short rest is 5 BP.

That's a total of 8.5 BP, which is obviously out of the question for a feat since our target range is 2-4 BP. *Darkness* is by far the biggest source of BP cost, and I think it's also the least interesting part of the Darkling Elder, so we'll drop it. That brings us to 3.5 BP, which is within our target range.

## Deep Scion [Template: Acquired]

Shapechangers coerced into undergoing a horrifying ritual, deep scions serve their aquatic masters as spies and assassins, venturing onto dry land where their masters cannot.

### Becoming a Deep Scion

Any living humanoid of 5<sup>th</sup> level or greater can become a deep scion. Lower-level humanoids are typically not powerful enough to attract the notice of the powerful creatures with the knowledge and power to create deep scions.

Becoming a deep scion is a bargain made with the humanoid's new master. While it is technically possible to enter this bargain willingly, most deep scions are not so fortunate. The bargain is traditionally offered to a humanoid facing the certainty of drowning, and transformation and subjugation are offered as an alternative to death.

Once the ritual is complete, the subject is released safely, typically on dry land. The effects of the ritual may not be immediately obvious.

The next time the character gains enough experience to gain a level, instead of selecting a class in which to take a new level the character immediately gains the single level of the Deep Scion template.

### Deep Scion Traits

All deep scions have the following traits, adding these traits to their existing racial traits upon gaining the template.

#### Hit Points

**Hit Dice.** 1d8 per revenant level

**Hit Points at Higher Levels.** 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per deep scion level

### Traits

Deep scions gain the following traits at each level, as indicated on the table below.

Level	Features
1	Creature Type, Alignment, Speed, Languages, Bite and Claw, Psychic Screech, Shapechanger

**Creature Type.** You gain the Shapechanger subtype.

**Alignment.** Your alignment changes to neutral evil.

**Speed.** You gain a swim speed of 40 feet.

**Languages.** You learn the Aquan language.

**Amphibious.** You can breathe air and water.

**Bite and Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 piercing or slashing damage on a hit.

**Psychic Screech.** As an action you can emit a horrifying screech that can be heard clearly within 300 feet. Creatures within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for until the end of your next turn. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

In water, psychic screech also telepathically transmits your memories of the last 24 hours to your master (the creature which make you a deep scion), regardless of distance, so long as you and your master are in the same body of water.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

**Shapechanger.** You can cast Disguise Self once per day. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

### Design Notes

Deep Scions are not a unique race: they're a humanoid which has undergone a ritual performed by a powerful aquatic creatures like a kraken. So we'll present the Deep Scion as a template. They have no racial drawbacks aside from being ugly and smelling like fish, so we'll need to make the Deep Scion a leveled template.

Before we decide how many levels we'll need, we need to figure out the total BP of the traits added by the Deep Scion. Leveled templates shoot for 8-10 BP for their first level, and 4-5 BP for additional levels. Once we know how many BP we need to split up, we can decide how many levels to use for the template. We also need to remember that hit dice have a per-level BP cost.

Deep scions use d8 hit dice. They're intended to be sneaky and deceitful like rogues, so I think that makes sense. That costs 0.5 BP per level of the template.

Deep scions add the shapechanger subtype for 0.5 BP.

To identify the traits that are unique to the Deep Scion, we need to get an idea of what the base creature was intended to be. I think we can assume that it was a human since humans are always a good baseline for creatures like this. We'll also need to tackle Shapechanger, which is a unique ability every time, and Psychic Screech.

Deep scions speak Aquan, Common, and Thieve's Cant. I think we can assume that the base human may have been a rogue to explain Thieve's Cant, so we'll add Aquan for 0.25 BP.

While in piscine form, deep scions have a 40 ft. swim speed for 1.5 BP, 120 ft. Darkvision for 3 BP, amphibious for 0.5 BP, and 1d6 natural weapons for 1 BP. To simplify things, we'll drop the reduction to land speed. That will mean that deep scions won't feel the need to disguise themselves in combat just to move around better.

Shapechanger is basically a disguise for the deep scion. They give up most of their new traits in exchange for the ability to pass as a normal humanoid. Like we did for the Doppelganger, we'll approximate this with *disguise self* once per day for 1 BP.

That just leaves Psychic Screech. It's fine for a solo monster like the Deep Scion, but for a player it's far too powerful. Stunning creatures is significant, and spells that stun creatures are generally high level. We'll need to find a less powerful crowd control effect. Frightened seems reasonable, since it achieves the desired effect of keeping enemies away from the Deep Scion. The *fear* spell is a good basis. If we reduce the duration from one minute to one round, reduce the effect to just the Frightened condition, allow it to be used once per long rest, and change the effect from a cone to a radius centered on the Deep Scion, I think we can call it 2 BP.

That brings our total to 9.75 BP before we consider per-level hit dice and start breaking things up into levels. Our target range for single-level templates is 8-10 BP, which we'll very slightly exceed if we award everything at one level, but I think that's better than trying to break things up and having two weak levels.

If you want to strengthen the Deep Scion, increase the duration of *disguise self* to 24 hours. If you want to weaken the Deep Scion, reduce its natural weapon damage.

## Demons

The vile denizens of the Abyss.

This section expands on the demon options presented in the original Monstrous Races. The core racial traits are identical in both documents.

### Demon Traits

Demons share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fiend (demon)

**Alignment.** Embodiments of chaos and evil, most demons are chaotic evil.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Subrace.** Choose one of these subraces. You gain the traits listed under your chosen subrace in addition to those listed above.

### Babau Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution, and +1 Wisdom.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 35 ft.

**Claws.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 slashing damage on a hit.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.



**Weakening Gaze.** Starting at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, as an action, you can weaken one creature within 20 feet that you can see. The target must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target deals only half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Wisdom modifier.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in.

### Maw Demon Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Rampage.** When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on your turn, you can take a bonus action to move up to half your speed and make a bite attack.

**Three Arms.** You have three arms, and may hold and use items in each of your hands.

If you have Extra Attacks, when you take the Attack action you may make each of your attacks using any weapon you are holding.

When you take the Attack action and attack with a weapon which qualifies for use with two-weapon fighting, you can use a bonus action to attack with a different qualifying weapon. You don't add your ability modifier to the damage of the bonus attack unless the modifier is negative or you have an ability which allows you to add your ability modifier to the bonus attack granted by two-weapon fighting. If you choose to make this additional attack, you may not benefit from using a shield until the beginning of your next turn.

If you use a weapon with the Heavy property or use a Versatile weapon two-handed you may not benefit from using a shield until the beginning of your next turn, but you may switch between multiple Heavy or Versatile weapons with each attack.

**Unwavering Hunger.** You are immuned to the Charmed and Frightened conditions.



**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in Abyssal.

#### Shoosuva Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Bite and Sting.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit. Attacks made with your sting are made with an additional 5 feet of reach.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Rampage.** When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on your turn, you can take a bonus action to move up to half your speed and make a bite attack.

**Unwavering Hunger.** You are immuned to the Charmed and Frightened conditions.



**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Abyssal and Gnoll.

#### Playing a Demon

##### Babau

Babaus are mechanically simple, and their flexible ability scores make them very versatile. They make good clerics, fighters, and rangers, and can rely on their natural armor in place of manufactured light armor. Weakening Gaze provides a means to physically weaken enemies before overpowering them in melee combat.

Babau are described as more clever than typical demons, but they still have normal demonic tendencies. A babau could fit into a party of evil characters, especially if their activities tend to be chaotic and violent.

##### Maw Demon

Maw demons exist almost exclusively to eat stuff. Consider classes like barbarian which get you into melee quickly so you can get right to eating stuff. Maw demons have three arms, which allows you to easily switch between weapons and shields, but remember that your primary goal is still to eat stuff.

Created by Yeenoghu to fight alongside gnoll war packs, maw demons are at home in a party of gnolls. However, they tend to be a silent party member. With no capacity for speech, and little interest in doing anything except eating stuff, a maw demon is a welcome addition to a party with an established command structure and a lot of eating stuff to do.

##### Shoosuva

The Shoosuva is a strong melee combatant, and has extended reach with its sting. Consider classes like barbarian and fighter, and capitalize on the Shoosuva's high speed to stay out of reach of slower foes with shorter reach than you.

Shoosuva appear as a boon from Yeenoghu granted to gnoll leaders after a major success. A shoosuva in the party might be a divine boon for one of the party members in a gnoll party, or they might be sent by a gnoll leader who has sent the party forth on some task.

#### Design Notes

Volo's Guide to Monsters expands the demon options presented in the Monster Manual, adding three new varieties. Like the demons which we covered in the original Monstrous Races, the three new varieties share little beyond their creature type. That also means

that we can use the same shared racial traits that we did for demons in the original Monstrous Races.

That brings us to 2.5 BP before we explore individual demon subraces.

### Babau

Babau are roughly-humanoid demons with a mildly interesting origin story. The vast majority of their abilities are tied up in innate spellcasting, but there is nothing about the Babau which makes it difficult to adapt.

The Babau's best ability scores are its physical ability scores. They're described as being "as clever as devils", but this is not reflected in their ability scores. Still, I want them to be a clever, crafty demon, so we'll grant a semi-flexible (physical ability scores only) +1 and a +1 to Wisdom for 2.5 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +2 natural armor (down from +3) for 1 BP, 35 ft. walking speed (down from 40 ft.) for 0.5 BP, only racial languages for -1 BP, and 1d8 natural weapons for 2 BP.

That brings us to 7 BP before we tackle the Babau's innate spellcasting and Weakening Gaze. Weakening Gaze is basically identical to *ray of enfeeblement*. The only difference is the range, which isn't enough to make a noteworthy BP difference, so we can call it 2 BP. We'll allow it 2 levels early for an additional 0.25 BP.

With so little room left to add more traits, I think we'll abandon the Babau's innate spellcasting. They'll make excellent clerics, so they can get spellcasting from their class.

At 9.75 BP, the Babau is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Babau, allow it to use Weakening Gaze at 1<sup>st</sup> level. If you want to weaken the babau, reduce its natural armor.

### Maw Demon

Resembling a gigantic mouth with legs and stumpy armor, the maw demon exists to eat stuff, which is then magically transported to Yeenoghu's gullet. Ignoring the inconvenience of having food magically appear in your throat at random, that's a pretty great deal for Yeenoghu. Maw demons don't have a lot going on. Their only special ability is Rampage, which we designed for Gnolls in the original Monstrous Races.

Maw demons' ability scores aren't great, but Strength and Constitution are their best, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +3 natural armor (down from +4) for 1.5 BP, 30 ft. move speed, and condition immunities to Charmed and Frightened

for 1 BP total. Maw demons know only racial languages for -1 BP, and they can't speak for -1.5 BP. We'll add Rampage for 2 BP, and set the Maw Demon's natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

It's not entirely clear if Maw Demons have functional hands. The official art portrays them as having 3 arms ending in clawed appendages, but they don't have claws listed as an attack options so it's unclear if the claws are noteworthy. They don't appear to have opposable thumbs, either, but two sets of opposable digits on one appendage is probably as good as a human hand for everything except playing a piano. We'll grant three arms for 0.75 BP.

At 9.25 BP, the Maw Demon is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Maw demon, increase its ability score. If you want to weaken the Maw Demon, reduce its natural armor or apply a Charisma reduction.

### Shoosuva

Similar in function to maw demons, but less "giant mouth" and more "demon hyena", the Shoosuva is a weird creature. Its abilities aren't especially unique, and its design is very similar to that of the Maw Demon.

The Shoosuva's best ability scores by a wide margin are Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from Large), +3 natural armor for 1.5 BP, 40 ft. walking speed for 1 BP, condition immunities to Charmed and Frightened for 1 BP total, only racial languages plus one fixed language for -0.75 BP total, and Rampage for 2 BP. We'll drop telepathy to save BP. Shoosuva have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP. We'll drop the poison/paralysis on the tail because it's too powerful to grant to a player, and we'll add Natural Weapon Reach for 0.5 BP.

At 9.75 BP, the Shoosuva is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the shoosuva, increase its natural weapon damage. If you want to weaken the shoosuva, reduce its natural armor.

## Devourer

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Fiends devoted to Orcus may be deemed worthy and transformed into a Devourer, a horrifying fiend that eats the souls of living humanoids.

### Devourer Traits

share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fiend

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Fiends that worship Orcus and seek to bring everlasting death to all reality, most devourers are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 slashing damage on a hit.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Imprison Soul.** As an action, you may absorb a living, intelligent creature within 30 feet with 0 hit points. That creature is teleported into your ribcage and imprisoned there. If the creature was stabilized before being imprisoned, it again begins dying. While imprisoned, the creature has disadvantage on death saving throws. You may only have one creature imprisoned at a time.

While imprisoned this way, the creature is reduced in size in order to fit inside your ribcage, if necessary, and is clearly visible to creatures which can see your torso. The creature has three-quarters cover. Any attempt to touch the creature must overcome your own AC plus the bonus for three-quarters cover. You may choose to resist any spell which targets the creature (including beneficial ones) by making a saving throw against the caster's spell DC. If the spell does not list a saving throw, you may make a Charisma saving throw against the caster's spell DC, negating the effect on a successful saving throw.

If you are reduced to 0 hit points or if the creature regains hit points, the imprisoned creature is released into an adjacent unoccupied space, chosen at random. You may intentionally release the creature as a bonus action, releasing it into an adjacent unoccupied space.

If the creature dies while imprisoned this way, you may absorb and use a portion of its soul as the soul departs the body. At the beginning of your turn, you must release the body as a Bonus Action. In addition, you may choose to spend one hit die to recover hit points, or you may release a wave of soul-rending necrotic energy. If you choose the soul-rending wave, each living, intelligent creature within 30 feet of you must make a Constitution saving throw. The creature takes 1d6 necrotic damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a successful one. This damage increases to 2d6 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d6 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d6

at 17<sup>th</sup> level. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Abyssal.

### Playing a Devourer

Devourers are primarily a melee threat, and they're most effective when facing numerous relatively weak intelligent creatures, like a pack of goblins or a squad of city guards. Reduce a target to 0 hit points, then imprison them. When they die, you can either recover some lost hit points or release a soul rending wave to damage enemies in an area around you. In an ideal situation, you may be able to imprison creatures in successive rounds, repeatedly releasing soul rending waves and imprisoning the dying victims. Consider classes which will boost your damage output and provide offensive options when Imprison Soul isn't useful. Barbarian and Fighter both work, but you may find options like Monk or Ranger viable, too.

Devourers are devout worshippers of Orcus, so they're at home in a party of undead, necromancers, or possibly other fiends who might revere Orcus.

### Design Notes

Devourers are mostly simple, but Imprison Soul and Soul Rend are both very unique. We'll need to approach them both cautiously. We'll also borrow design decisions from demons, since devourers are closely related.

Devourers are fiends, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Devourers are melee monsters with high Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +3 natural armor (down from +5) for 1.5 BP, 30 ft. walking speed, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and only racial languages for -1 BP. Like we did with demons, we'll drop the devourers damage resistances, and we'll drop Telepathy to save BP. We'll set the devourer's natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings us to 7 BP before we tackle Imprison Soul and Soul Rend. Both abilities are very powerful, but notably only affect humanoids. While that's fine for a monster that will typically be fighting a party of humanoid players, that's basically worthless for a player who could be facing anything in the monster manual. I think if we change the limitation to living intelligent creatures, I think that will make the ability useful without changing the flavor too much.

We also need to discuss the specific effects of the abilities. Imprison Soul allows the devourer to absorb a dying target, which is central to the Devourer's flavor. If the creature dies, the Devourer gets a ton of cool stuff. We can't grant a player a bunch of healing, a free action, and an undead ally.

Soul Rend is a big area damage effect. It does additional damage for each dying humanoid in the area, which makes it important for players facing a devourer to keep their allies conscious. But for a player playing a devourer, it provides an incentive to knock out but not kill as many enemies as possible before they use Soul Rend. That also means that encounters with large numbers of enemies become exponentially easier for the Devourer. We'll need to reduce the base damage and the scaling significantly.

I think we can get away with mashing Imprison Soul and Soul Rend into one ability. We'll keep the mechanic about absorbing dying enemies unchanged, but we'll change basically everything else. After the creature dies, we'll allow the Devourer their choice of two effects on the following turn. We'll allow them to either spend one hit die to recover hit points, or release a pulse of necrotic energy to damage living creatures. We'll make both options require a bonus action which expels the entrapped creature, and we'll set the necrotic energy option to match the damage scaling on Chill Touch. We'll call the whole thing 3 BP, but it's a very unique ability so it's difficult to assess a realistic BP value.

At 10 BP, the Devourer is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Devourer, increase its natural armor or allow it to use Imprison Soul to imprison a dying creature as a bonus action. If you want to weaken the devourer, reduce its natural weapon damage or limit Imprison Soul to once per short rest. Keep in mind that Imprison Soul is a complicated and somewhat experimental ability, so you may need to adjust it if it proves problematic in your game.

## Dinosaurs

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Dinosaurs vary wildly in size and appearance, but the most iconic dinosaurs are typically giant reptilian creatures. In many Dungeons and Dragons settings, dinosaurs still exist in a handful of locations throughout the world.

This section expands on the dinosaur options presented in the original Monstrous Races. The core racial traits are identical in both documents.

## Dinosaur Traits

Dinosaurs share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Beast

**Alignment.** Simple animals motivated by little beyond basic survival instincts, most dinosaurs are neutral.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

**Subrace.** Choose one of these subraces. You gain the traits listed under your chosen subrace in addition to those listed above.

### Brontosaurus Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 15 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Stomp and Tail.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d10 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

**Trip.** If you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you may attempt to shove the target prone as a bonus action (see "Shoving a Creature", page 195 of the Player's Handbook).

### Deinonychus Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Dexterity, +1 Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Bite and Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing or slashing damage on a hit.

**Keen Senses.** You have proficiency in the Perception skill.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 11 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Pounce.** If you move at least 15 feet straight toward a creature then hit it with an unarmed strike on the same turn, you may attempt to shove the target prone as a bonus action (see "Shoving a Creature", page 195 of the Player's Handbook).

### Dimetrodon Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength, +2 Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft. You have a swim speed of 20 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d10 piercing damage on a hit.

**Keen Senses.** You have proficiency in the Perception skill.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

#### Hadrosaurus Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength, +2 Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Keen Senses.** You have proficiency in the Perception skill.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Tail.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d10 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

#### Quetzalcoatlus Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

**Dive Attack.** Once per turn, if you dive at least 30 feet toward a creature and hit it with a melee weapon attack, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage from the attack. This damage increases to 2d6 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d6 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d6 at 17<sup>th</sup> level.

**Flight.** You have a flying speed of 40 feet. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor.

**Flyby.** You may perform the Disengage action as a bonus action.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

#### Stegosaurus Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength, +2 Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Tail.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d10 piercing damage on a hit.

#### Velociraptor Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity, +1 Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is tiny.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 piercing damage on a hit.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 11 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Pack Tactics.** As a bonus action you may take advantage of the presence of your allies. You gain Advantage on the next attack roll you make this turn against a creature if at least one of your allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

#### Playing a Dinosaur

Dinosaurs are simple creatures with few special abilities, but they're also built to survive on their own without the aid equipment of magic.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a Monster Manual great deal of influence on your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

#### Brontosaurus

The brontosaurus is well defended, even without armor. Its tail does incredible damage with its tail, and has the ability to knock foes prone. However, it has trouble dealing with challenges which can't be solved by knocking them down.

#### Deinonychus

Fast and with excellent physical ability scores, the Deinonychus makes an excellent melee character. Barbarian and fighter are both great class options, and be sure to capitalize on Pounce. However, because their natural armor is poor you'll want to consider manufactured armor.

#### Dimetrodon

Dimetrodons are slow swimmers, but their ability score increases and their natural weapon damage are both excellent.

### Hadrosaurus

Hadrosaurs are very simple. With no active abilities but with decent numerical traits, they're a great simple basis for a character if you want to play a dinosaur.

### Quetzalcoatlus

Powerful flyers, Quetzalcoatlus thrive when they have room to use Dive Attack and to escape using Flyby.

### Stegosaurus

Fast for such a bulky creature, and with excellent natural armor and natural weapon damage, stegosauruses make great melee characters.

### Velociraptor

Velociraptors are tiny, but otherwise resemble the deinonychus or the tyrannosaurus. Pack Tactics and increased Dexterity make the velociraptor an excellent rogue, but don't overlook Monk or Ranger as options.

## Design Notes

Dinosaurs are among my least favorite monsters to adapt. They're mostly only interesting because of their size, and they almost never have interesting special abilities. They're fine monsters to throw into an encounter which isn't intended to be a major plot point, but aside from their size they're just not interesting. That's not to say that they aren't playable, just that they're not very interesting.

We covered dinosaurs in the original Monstrous Races, and the shared racial traits we decided upon still work for the new dinosaur options. Of course, that only covers creature type and languages, so it's not a great deal of time saved. The core racial traits bring us to -0.5 BP before we consider individual subraces.

### Brontosaurus

The Brontosaurus is a fantastic example of the point I made above regarding dinosaurs being boring. After adjusting for size, its traits are identical to the Ankylosaurus, which we covered in the original Monstrous Races. Rather than duplicate that effort, I encourage you to see the design notes for the Ankylosaurus, presented in the original Monstrous Races.

### Deinonychus

After adjusting for size, the deinonychus is basically a faster and more agile version of the Allosaurus, which we covered in the original monstrous races.

The Deinonychus's physical ability scores are all good, so we'll grant +1 to each for 3 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +1 natural armor for 0.5 BP, 40 ft. speed for 1 BP, and Pounce for

1.5 BP. We'll set the deinonychus's natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

At 7.5 BP, the deinonychus is slightly below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Deinonychus, increase its natural armor. If you want to weaken the Deinonychus, reduce its speed.

### Dimetrodon

Dimetrodons are a bit like less-interesting crocodiles.

Like other dinosaurs, dimetrodons have good Strength and Constitution. They don't have any special abilities, so we'll grant +2 to each for 4 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +2 natural armor for 1 BP, 30 ft. walking speed, 20 ft. swim speed for 0.5 BP, and proficiency in Perception for 0.5 BP. Dimetrodons have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d10 for 3 BP.

At 6.5 BP, the dimetrodon is below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the dimetrodon, increase its swim speed or natural armor. If you want to weaken the dimetrodon, reduce its natural weapon damage.

### Hadrosaurus

Even for dinosaurs, the Hadrosaurus is boring. Its stats are bad, and it doesn't even have an extra movement type. At CR ¼, that's hardly a surprise.

Hadrosaurs have good Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +2 to each for 4 BP because I don't know what else to do here.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large, +1 natural armor for 0.5 BP, 40 ft. walking speed for 1 BP, and proficiency in Perception for 0.5 BP. Hadrosaurs have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d10 for 3 BP.

At 6.5 BP, the Hadrosaurus is below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Hadrosaurus, increase its natural armor. If you want to weaken the Hadrosaurus, reduce its natural weapon damage.

### Quetzalcoatlus

The Quetzalcoatlus is a really cool dinosaur if you're not familiar. It's like a gigantic pterodactyle, but with a ridiculously disproportionate head. Go look at pictures, they're super cool. Mechanically, they're fun to compare to pterodactyls, which we covered in the original Monstrous Races. While the Pterodactyl is nimble and focuses on Flyby, the Quetzalcoatlus is strong and relies on Dive Attack. This gives us two cosmetically similar, but functionally different races.

The Quetzalcoatlus's ability scores aren't fantastic, but Strength is its best, so we'll grant +1 Strength for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from huge), +2 natural armor for 1 BP, 10 ft. walking speed for -2 BP, 40 ft. fly speed (down from 80 ft.) for 5 BP, Dive Attack for 2 BP, and Flyby for 2 BP. Quetzalcoatlus have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

At 8.5 BP, the Quetzalcoatlus is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Quetzalcoatlus, increase its Strength increase. If you want to weaken the Quetzalcoatlus, reduce its natural armor or speed.

### Stegosaurus

The Stegosaurus is another dinosaur with no special abilities.

The Stegosaurus's best ability scores are Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +2 to each for 4 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from huge), +4 natural armor for 2 BP, and 40 ft. walking speed for 1 BP. Stegosauruses have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d10 for 3 BP.

At 7.5 BP, the Stegosaurus is just below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the stegosaurus, increase its natural armor. If you want to weaken the stegosaurus, reduce its natural weapon damage.

### Velociraptor

Tiny pack hunters, most of the Velociraptor's BP will be eaten up by Pack Tactics, but otherwise it will resemble a tiny deinonychus.

The velociraptor's best abilities are Dexterity and Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get tiny size of -1.5 BP, +1 natural armor for 0.5 BP, 30 ft. speed for 0 BP, and Pack Tactics for 5 BP. We'll set the velociraptor's natural weapons to 1d6 for 1.5 BP.

At 7 BP, the velociraptor is below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Velociraptor, increase its natural armor or natural weapon damage. If you want to weaken the velociraptor, reduce its natural weapon damage.

## Draegloth

Enormous drow-demon hybrids used as muscle and as a status symbol for drow households that are favored by Lolth.

### Draegloth Traits

Draegloths share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fiend (demon).

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Fiends barely cowed by the commands of their drow masters, most draegloths are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Claws.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 slashing damage on a hit.

**Fey Ancestry.** You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

**Four Arms.** You have four arms, and may hold and use items in each of your hands.

If you have Extra Attacks, when you take the Attack action you may make each of your attacks using any weapon you are holding.

When you take the Attack action and attack with a weapon which qualifies for use with two-weapon fighting, you can use a bonus action to attack with a different qualifying weapon. You don't add your ability modifier to the damage of the bonus attack unless the modifier is negative or you have an ability which allows you to add your ability modifier to the bonus attack granted by two-weapon fighting. If you choose to make this additional attack, you may not benefit from using a shield until the beginning of your next turn.

If you use a weapon with the Heavy property or use a Versatile weapon two-handed you may not benefit from using a shield until the beginning of your next turn, but you may switch between multiple Heavy or Versatile weapons with each attack.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Superior Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 120 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Abyssal, Elvish, and Undercommon.

### Playing a Draegloth

Draegloths are very versatile. Their natural armor and natural weapons allow them to fight effectively without manufactured equipment, but their four arms make them able to wield manufactured weapons, spellcasting foci, and other items with ease.

Draegloths are created by drow in a ritual, and serve the house of their creator. This makes them a good addition to a party which includes drow or other drow associates and servants. Occasionally a draegloth sets out on their own, so they may also fit into a party of former drow servants such as svirfneblin or chitines.

## Design Notes

Draegloth are a mix of Glabrezu demons and Drow. That's wonderful because we can easily build a race by mixing and matching traits from the two races. Drow are covered in the Player's Handbook, and we covered Glabrezu in the original Monstrous Races. However, it's also a problem because Glabrezu and Drow are 10.5 BP and 11.5 BP, respectively, so it's likely that the Draegloth will come out on the high end of the BP spectrum. We'll need to make many of the same cuts that we did for demons in the original Monstrous Races.

Draegloths are fiends, which costs 0.5 BP but offers no specific abilities.

Draegloths have excellent physical ability scores. Strength and Constitution seem like obvious options, but we should also consider the Draegloth's parentage. We granted the Glabrezu increases to Strength and intelligence, while the Drow grants increases to Dexterity and Charisma. We can't do all four of those, so I think we'll go for +1 Strength and +1 Dexterity for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +2 natural armor (down from +3) for 1 BP, 30 ft. walking speed, 120 ft. Darkvision for 3 BP to reflect their Drow heritage, racial languages plus Common (Undercommon in this case) plus one fixed for 0.25 BP, Fey Ancestry for 0.5 BP, and 1d8 natural weapons for 2 BP.

Draegloths notably have 4 arms for 1 BP. Glabrezu only have claws on their additional set of arms, but every piece of art I can find depicting draegloths depicts them with full hands on all four arms. That brings us to 10.25 BP, so unfortunately we'll need to forego innate spellcasting.

At 10.25, the Draegloth is slightly above our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Draegloth, give it some innate spellcasting based on the Drow's Drow Magic trait. If you want to want to weaken the Draegloth, replace its ability score increase with a flexible +1 increase to one ability score, or reduce its Darkvision range.

## Firenewts

A race of amphibious humanoids that worship elemental fire, and resemble human-sized orange newts.

### Firenewt Traits

Firenewts share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Humanoid (Firenewt).

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Dexterity, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Aggressive, wathful, and cruel, most firenewts are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Amphibious.** You can breathe air and water.

**Damage Immunity.** You are immune to fire damage.

**Spite Fire.** You can use your action to spit fire at a creature within 10 feet of you that you can see. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. A creature takes 2d8 damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. The damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5<sup>th</sup> level (3d8), 11<sup>th</sup> level (4d8), and 17<sup>th</sup> level (5d8).

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Draconic and Ignan.

### Playing a Firenewt

Nimble and tough, firenewts make excellent fighters, monks, rangers, and rogues. Their society worships the evil prince of elemental fire, and many firenewts become warlocks. If you choose to explore pact magic, consider the Imix's Blessing feat.

Firenewts worship elemental fire, so they'll likely cooperate with any creature that is similarly fire-themed. Azers, fire elementals, and fire giants all seem like great allies for an adventuring Firenewt.

## Design Notes

Amazingly, the Firenewt is the first humanoid to appear in the Volo's Guide to Monsters. Humanoids are fun to design because they typically have a low CR and easily-adapted abilities. The Firenewt is no exception.

Firenewts are humanoids, costing 0 BP and offering no specific abilities.

Firenewts have only two ability scores with positive modifiers, so we'll grant +2 Dexterity and +1 Constitution for 3 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, 30 ft. walking speed, fire immunity for 5 BP, Amphibious for 0.5 BP, and only racial languages plus one fixed for a total of -0.75 BP.

That brings us to 7.75 BP before we address Spit Fire. Conveniently, it's already written to recharge on a short or long rest. It's astoundingly similar to breath weapons, but instead of a cone it affects a single target and does slightly more damage. We'll keep it as-



written with the addition of level-based damage scaling for 2 BP.

At 9.75 BP, the Firenewt is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Firenewt, increase its constitution modifier. If you want to weaken the Firenewt, reduce its fire immunity to fire resistance.



## Firenewt Giant Strider

Typically referred to simply as “giant striders”, these bipedal reptilian beasts serve fire newts as mounts.

### Giant Strider Traits

Firenewt Giant Striders share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, many giant striders are neutral, but many are also neutral evil due to their close association with firenewts.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

**Damage Immunity.** You are immune to fire damage.

**Fire Absorption.** Whenever you are subjected to fire damage, you take no damage and instead heal yourself. As a reaction, you may spend one hit die and regain the number of hit points rolled.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Ignan.

### Playing a Giant Strider

Fast and durable, giant striders make excellent front-line melee characters. Consider classes like barbarian and fighter. Due to your Fire Absorption ability, having someone in the party who deals fire damage can be a useful source of healing. A wizard who likes to cast fire spells with area effects can be especially effective as they incinerate your foes and heal you in a single turn.

Giant Striders are generally only used as mounts by Firenewts. However, other fire-elemental creatures might find themselves fighting alongside a giant strider, especially if they share devotion to evil elemental fire.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence on your character’s personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character’s personality.

### Design Notes

Giant Striders are the mount of choice for Firenewts. When you live in volcanoes and other places with intense heat and abundant magma, immunity to fire is a crucial trait for a mount. Unfortunately, the Giant Strider has several complicated abilities that may cost a lot of BP to adapt. We’ll treat the Giant Strider as awakened, as we’ve done with similar creature.

Giant striders are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Giant striders have good Strength and Constitution like most creatures commonly used as mounts, so we’ll grant +1 to each for 2 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +2 natural armor (down from +3) for 1 BP, 40 ft. walking speed (down from 50 ft.) for 1 BP, and fire immunity for 5 BP. Giant striders have no hands for -2 BP, and we’ll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

Normally when we treat a creature as awakened we grant it the ability to speak Common, but in this case I think we’ll give giant striders Ignan since they’re most likely to be awakened by a firenewt. Not speaking Common means that the Giant Strider speaks “racial languages” only for -1 BP.

That brings us to 8.5 BP before we consider Fire Absorption and Fire Burst. That's not a lot of room to work, so whatever we decide upon will probably need to be small. Fire Burst is basically a better version of the Firenewt's Spit Fire, which is boring, so we'll drop it and focus on Fire Absorption.

Fire Absorption is similar to regeneration, but it requires fire damage to trigger it. The Giant Strider monster could sit in a lit fire and rapidly heal to full health. That's obviously not acceptable for a player, so we'll need to add some limitations.

Like we did with Regeneration in the original Monstrous Races, we'll limit the ability to work based on hit dice. That provides a nice built-in daily usage limitation. We'll also make it require an action of some kind. It triggers when the Giant Strider takes fire damage, so we'll make it a reaction. I think we can call that 2 BP, but if it becomes a problem you should definitely impose an additional usage limitation so that it can only be used once per short or long rest.

At 10.5 BP, the Giant Strider slightly exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Giant Strider, increase its speed. If you want to weaken the Giant Strider, limit Fire Absorption to once per short or long rest.

## Flail Snail

Enormous snail-like creatures with magic-repelling shells and flail-like appendages used to repel predators.

### Flail Snail Traits

Flail snails share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Elemental.

**Ability Score Increase.**

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent creatures, most flail snails are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 20 ft.

**Antimagic Shell.** Any time that you are targeted by a line spell, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, you have a chance to reflect the spell off of your shell. If the spell requires a saving throw, you may do so by rolling a natural 20 on the saving throw. If the spell requires a ranged attack roll, you may do so when the caster rolls a natural 1 on the attack roll. In either case, roll a d6 and consult the table below.

d6 Features

1-2 You are unaffected, and the effect is reflected back at the caster, using the spell slot level, spell save DC, attack bonus, and spellcasting ability of the caster.

3-4 No additional effect.

5-6 Your shell converts some of the spell's energy into a burst of destructive force. Each creature within 30 feet of you must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 1d6 force damage per level of the spell on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Flail Tentacles.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 17. You gain no benefit from wearing armor.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Scintillating Shell.** You shed bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. You may suppress or re-activate this ability as a bonus action.

**Shell Defense.** As an action, you can withdraw into your shell, gaining a +4 bonus to AC until you emerge. While withdrawn in this way, you can't take the Attack action, and you can't target objects or other creatures with spells or abilities which require line of sight, and you gain the blinded and restrained conditions.

You can emerge from your shell as a bonus action on your turn.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Flail Snail

Slow, but extremely durable, flail snails are crawling tanks. Their natural armor is nearly as good as full plate, and their ability to reflect spells make them dangerous to engage with magic. The Flail Snail's poor speed can be a problem, especially in large areas, so look for ways to increase your speed or consider the Charger feat so that you can use Dash to compensate without losing the ability to attack every turn.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence on your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

## Design Notes

Flail Snails are a weird creature. Both in concept, and mechanically. The stat block for the monster is the full height of the page, and most of it is totally unique. Even their basic stats are difficult to reverse-engineer. That means that the flail snail is a fun and difficult design challenge. Because flail snails are normally unintelligent, we'll treat them as awakened.

Flail snails are elementals, costing 0.5 BP because they still require food, drink, and sleep like most living creatures.

Flail snails are all about being hard to kill, and their high Constitution reflects it. We'll grant +1 Strength and +2 Constitution for 3 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), 20 ft. walking speed (up from 10 ft.) for -1 BP, fire resistance (down from immunity) for 2 BP, Poison Resilience (down from immunity) for 1 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and the ability to speak Common for 0 BP. Flail snails have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 damage for 2 BP. We'll drop Tremorsense to save BP.

That brings us to 7.5 BP before we address the rest of the Flail Snails traits. We need to discuss natural armor, antimagic shell, the tentacle death mechanics of Flail Tentacles, Scintillating Shell, and Shell Defense.

The flail snail's natural armor is hard to pin down. They have a -3 Dexterity modifier, and it's not clear if this affects the flail snail's AC. If it does, they get +9 natural armor and still apply Dexterity, which is too much for a player. If Dexterity doesn't apply, they have a fixed 16 AC and dexterity doesn't apply, which is hard for a player when they need to compete with full plate. I think we'll give them a fixed 17 AC, which matches Tortles (see the Turtle Package) and Umber Hulks (covered in the original Monstrous Races).

The Flail Snail's tentacles have an interesting mechanic which causes the tentacles to die when the snail takes a certain amount of damage, then the snail curls up in a ball and wails until it withers away and dies if the snail somehow falls in the 2-hit point gap where all of its tentacles may have been destroyed, but the snail isn't unconscious. This is great for a monster because the players can wear down the flail snails damage output, but it's a nightmare for players to track throughout the day. We'll just drop the mechanic, and leave it up to the players to explain cosmetically.

I want to look at Shell Defense next because it's relatively simple. Most creatures can take the Dodge action, which has a similar effect mathematically. The biggest difference is that the effect stays in place for

the flail snail until it takes a bonus action to exit its shell. For a normal flailsnail this isn't a big deal, but for a player this is time to cast spells, wait for help, etc. We'll add some limitations explicitly preventing the Flail Snail from attacking or targeting other creatures, and we'll call it 0.5 BP.

Scintillating Shell is the next easiest ability to design. If we just keep the light effect, it's basically Illumination, which costs just 0.5 BP. I think we'll do that to leave room for Antimagic Shell.

That brings us, at last, to Antimagic Shell. It's immediately problematic, because the Flail Snail gets Advantage on saving throws against all spells, which is 5 BP on its own. We'll need to totally rework the ability to keep the flavor, but abandon the mechanics. We did something similar with the Tarrasque in the original Monstrous Races, which provides useful design inspiration. However, the Tarrasque's Reflective Carapace can only reflect spells, while the Flail Snail's Antimagic Shell can also produce an explosion effect.

I think we can start with the adapted version of Reflective Carapace, and make some small tweaks. We'll remove the bit about magic missiles, and instead of always reflecting the spell, we'll keep the 1d6 roll to determine the result, we'll keep the effects. This means that the spell may be reflected (usually good for the flail snail), but it may also cause an explosion, potentially damaging the snail's allies, or potentially a crowd of the snail's enemies. This isn't significantly better or worse than the Tarrasque's version, so we'll retain the 1 BP cost.

At 9.5 BP, the flail snail is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Flail Snail, increase its Strength increase. If you want to weaken the Flail Snail, remove its Strength increase or reduce its natural armor.

## Froghemoth

Enormous, frog-like creatures with three eyes and reaching tentacles.

### Froghemoth Traits

Froghemoths share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, most froghemoths are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft. You have a swim speed of 30 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

When you take the Attack action and make an unarmed strike, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple with the target of your successful unarmed strike.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Shock Susceptibility.** When you take lightning damage, you suffer several effects until the end of your next turn. Your speed is halved, attacks against you gain Advantage, you take disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, you can't take reactions, and on your turn you may take an action or a bonus action, but not both.

**Tongue.** As an action, you may use your extendable tongue to draw foes toward you. Make a melee weapon attack as though you were making an unarmed strike against a creature within 15 feet. On a hit, you deal as much damage as you would normally deal with an unarmed strike, but the damage dealt is necrotic damage rather than its normal damage type. In addition, you pull the target into an adjacent unoccupied space. If you pull the foe adjacent to you, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple as though you had attacked with your bite.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

## Playing a Frogheemoth

Strong and able to quickly grapple foes, frogheemoths are dangerous melee predators. Their ability to breath underwater and swim allows them to function in a variety of environments. Consider classes like barbarian and fighter which capitalize on the frogheemoth's melee capabilities, but also consider ranger for its ability to get you into melee unnoticed.

Frog giants are revered by bullywugs, which make the two natural allies. A party of bullywug characters might form to follow, serve, and worship a frogheemoth character. However, frogheemoths are usually inintelligent, which introduces complications.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence on your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

## Design Notes

Frogheemoths, despite the extra tentacles, strongly resemble giant frogs, which we covered in the original Monstrous Races. Frogheemoths are normally unintelligent, so we'll treat them as awakened as we've done with other creatures.

Frogheemoths are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP, but offering no specific abilities.

Frogheemoths have massive Strength and Constitution, but they also have a ton of other abilities, so we'll grant +2 Strength and +1 Constitution 3 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from huge), +3 natural armor for 1.5 BP, 30 ft. walking speed, 30 ft. swim speed for 1 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, Amphibious for 0.5 BP, and we'll add the ability to speak common for 0 BP. Frogheemoths have no hands (their tongue doesn't count) for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP, and we'll add Grab for 2 BP.

That brings us to 10.5 BP before we address the Frogheemoth's resistances, Shock Susceptibility, and Tongue. We'll duplicate the Tongue trait we designed for the Banderhobb for 0.5 BP. We'll drop the resistances entirely.

Shock Susceptibility is an interesting handicap. Shock Susceptibility applies -2 penalties to some things, which feels very 3<sup>rd</sup>-editon. We'll replace those penalties with disadvantage, but otherwise we'll only adjust the text to fit player characters. I think that's probably only worth -1 BP.

At 10 BP, the frogheemoth is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the frogheemoth, increase its Constitution score. If you want to weaken the frogheemoth, reduce its Strength increase or its natural armor.

## Giants

The options below are additional options for the giant races presented in the original Monstrous Races.

The Frost Giant Everlasting One template is presented below. For other giants, see the Racial Feats section later in this document.

## Frost Giant Everlasting One [Template: Acquired]

Power-hungry frost giants sometimes turn to the giant deity Grolantor for an unconventional blessing. By consuming a faithful troll, the frost giant can gain the trolls powers of regeneration.

### Becoming an Everlasting One

The choice to become an everlasting one is presented to a frost giant who is desperate for power. First, Grolantor presents them with visions of power, followed by horrifying nightmares of the giant committing cannibalistic acts. If the giant does not reject these nightmares, Grolantor offers them his blessing.

When the frost giant attains enough experience to gain a level, a willing troll selected by Grolantor from among his faithful presents itself to the giant. The giant must then eat the troll in its entirety (including the bones). Upon doing so, the frost giant immediately gains the single level of the Frost Giant Everlasting One template.

### Everlasting One Traits

All Everlasting Ones have the following traits, adding these traits to their existing racial traits upon gaining the Everlasting One template.

### Hit Points

**Hit Dice.** 1d10 per everlasting one level

**Hit Points at Higher Levels.** 1d10 (or 6) + your Constitution modifier per everlasting one level

### Traits

Everlasting Ones gain the following traits at each level, as indicated on the table below.

Level	Features
1	Regeneration, Extra Heads

**Regeneration.** You are able to recover from wounds with horrifying speed, and can even regrow severed body parts. As a bonus action, you may spend a Hit Die to recover hit points.

If a part of your body is removed or destroyed (including your head) but you are not killed, you may re-attach the body part as an action.

You are vulnerable to acid and fire. If you take acid or fire damage, you may not use your regeneration trait to recover hit points or re-attach limbs until the end of your next turn.

When you take a short or long rest, you regain spent Hit Dice, up to a number of dice equal to half of your total number of them, rounded up. If you have lost any

body parts, the missing body parts regrow and the original body parts wither and die.

**Extra Heads.** Your regeneration occasionally causes you to grow disformities, most notably additional heads. At any given point you have between 1 and 4 additional heads, each of which might die and fall off as you are injured or regrow as you recover.

While at least two of your heads are awake, you have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

## Design Notes

The giants included in Volo's Guide to Monsters are all advanced versions of the base giants presented in the Monster Manual. Representing advancement with a new race doesn't make sense, so we'll design the new giants as racial feats.

### Cloud Giant Smiling One

Smiling ones are distinguished from their normal cloud giants by two abilities: spellcasting, and Shapechange. Their spellcasting seems to be Bard spellcasting, which fits the flavor of the creature, but it's not helpful for a feat.

That only leaves Shapechange. Every creature with Shapechange has a different version with different effects, and the Cloud Giant's version seems to be one of the least complex. It allows the giant to polymorph into a humanoid. Normally for creatures with similar abilities, including notable shapechangers like doppelgangers, we've approximated this with *disguise self* because allowing a polymorph effect for a low-level character is problematic. We can do the same thing, but it's not enough on its own.

Looking at the Smiling One's listed skills, it seems to have Expertise in Deception and Sleight of Hand. While this can also be attributed to Bard levels, I think we can still use it. If we grant Expertise in one skill, Disguise Self, and a +1 Charisma increase, I think we have a usable feat.

### Fire Giant Dreadnought

Dreadnoughts are really cool. They wear full plate armor, and *two* shields. This makes them equal parts armor-clad tank and two-weapon charger. They also have cool spiked, flaming shields, which means that there's also a cool item in play here. It's a fun monster, but it introduces complications for players. We need to answer several questions: what happens with the

giant's AC? How do we handle using shields as weapons? What do we do about Shield Charge?

The first question is the easiest to handle, as we can look at the Fire Giant Dreadnought's AC and reverse-engineer it. Full plate starts us at 18, and disregards the giant's low Dexterity. A shield grants another +2, bringing us to 20. That means that the second shield must cover the last +1 AC to get us to 21. That lines up with the Dual Wielder feat, so we'll keep it. We gave the Marilith +1 AC for 2 BP, but didn't require wielding two shields. I think we can call this 1 BP.

Turning shields into weapons isn't especially difficult, but I want to make sure that the stats and properties make sense. We'll make shields a martial weapon with the light property and 1d6 damage. We'll have them deal bludgeoning damage normally, or piercing damage if the shield is spiked.

Finally, we need to tackle the charge/push effect. Normally players must rely on the "shoving a creature" rules to do stuff like this, but players are limited to pushing creatures 5 feet at a time. Fire Giant Dreadnoughts are also limited to pushing creatures smaller than they are, which is a frustrating limitation for a medium creature. We'll need to take some liberties, but we'll try to maintain the feel of the ability.

I think we can take a lot of the design from Pounce, which is 1.5 BP. We'll require moving half of the giant's speed as a build-up, then we'll require a successful attack and a bonus action to shove the creature. For simplicity, we'll make the decision to push the target or knock them prone an either/or decision.

It's really difficult to assess a BP cost for this feat because it's so unique. I would call it a minimum of 3 BP, but I can't say for certain what the value would be. If this feat proves to be problematic, reduce the shield weapon damage to 1d4.

### Frost Giant Everlasting One

Everlasting ones eat a troll, and gain regeneration. That leaves room for players to ask some very unpleasant questions about eating trolls, but we'll just gloss over those. They also have a chance of having additional heads.

Regeneration (with vulnerability to acid and fire to match trolls) normally costs 5 BP, which is too good for a feat. Two Heads is normally 3.5 BP. That's 8.5 BP total, which conveniently fits right into the BP range for the first level of a leveled template. That's surprisingly little design work, but sometimes things just work out that way. We'll add 1d10 hit dice for 1 BP, bringing the total to 9.5 BP, and we're done!

### Mouth of Grolantor

I'm at a loss here. The Mouth of Grolantor is basically a randomized set of actions applied to a creature. While it makes for an amusing monster, it's a terrible option for a player. They lose all control over their own actions, and they don't appear to get much in return. Their bite heals them, but other than that it's all just running around and smashing things.

I see two ways we could tackle this. The first is to lean into the random actions, and let players willingly enter a rage-style state where they attack the nearest thing but essentially can't make decisions. The second is to let players play insanity however they like, and give them the tools they need to smash and bite stuff. I like the second option better.

We can set the Mouth of Grolantor's natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP. The healing mechanic is conveniently similar to the Lizardfolk's Hungry Jaws trait, so we'll steal it. We called it 1 BP in the original *Monstrous Races*' assessment of published races, which puts us right at the 3 BP target for a feat.

If you want to strengthen the feat, allow the bite mechanic to grant temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt rather than the giant's Constitution score.

### Stone Giant Dreamwalker

Dreamwalkers get two new abilities: Dreamwalker's Charm and Petrifying Touch. Dreamwalker's Charm is similar to *charm person* on anything within 30 feet of the giant, and petrifying touch works like any other petrification ability, with the exception of the ability to adhere things to the giant's body.

Dreamwalker's Charm isn't okay to grant to players. Walking into every encounter with the enemies charmed doesn't make for an exciting game. I think we can grant the *friends* cantrip for 0.5 BP and leave it at that.

We tackled petrification effects with Basilisks in the original *Monstrous Races*. They're a bit complicated because we needed to make them fair for a 1<sup>st</sup>-level character to use without potentially ending every encounter with a single action. While we probably don't need to worry about 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters here, I think we still need to be cautious. Flesh to Stone, the go-to petrification option for players, is a 6<sup>th</sup>-level spell for good reason. Petrifying Gaze is normally 4 BP, and normally losing range would justify a reduction in BP, but I think the inability to avert your gaze is a fair trade.

That brings our total to 4.5 BP, which is high for a feat. If it proves to be a problem in your games, limit Petrifying Touch to once per long rest.

### Storm Giant Quintessent

Quintessents get a whole bunch of cool abilities. They have lair abilities, they have legendary actions, and they can summon lightning weapons out of thin air. That gives us a lot of ideas, but many of them won't work as a feat, or should otherwise be left to be handled by the player's choice of class.

After looking through all of the various abilities, I see five important options: creating wind, creating clouds of blinding effects like fog, wind javelins, lightning swords, thunderbolts, and turning into a storm. Thunderbolts are too powerful to add as a feat, so we'll drop those. Turning into a storm could be most closely approximated by Gaseous Form, which is a 3<sup>rd</sup>-level spell so it's too powerful for us to add as a feat and still have an interesting feat.

Creating gusts of wind is easy. We can grant the *gust* cantrip for 0.5 BP.

Blinding fog effects are also easy. *Fog cloud* is a 1<sup>st</sup>-level spell, and we can allow quintessents to cast it once per day for 1 BP.

Finally, we have wind javelins and lightning swords. I think we can roll it into one ability. I think we can steal mechanics from the Warlock's Pact of the Blade, but we'll make the weapons deal lightning damage. I want storm giants to be able to summon and throw a javelin in the same turn, so we'll make that a special case and allow wind javelins to be summoned as a bonus action. I think we can call this 2 BP.

That brings us to 3.5 BP, which is within our target range of 2-4 BP.



### Girallon

Enormous four-armed primates that inhabit the ruins of human settlements.

#### Girallon Traits

share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, most Girallons are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft. You have a climb speed of 30 ft.

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, you can move up to your speed toward a hostile creature that you can see.

**Bite and Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 piercing or slashing damage on a hit.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Four Arms.** You have four arms, and may hold and use items in each of your hands.

If you have Extra Attacks, when you take the Attack action you may make each of your attacks using any weapon you are holding.

When you take the Attack action and attack with a weapon which qualifies for use with two-weapon fighting, you can use a bonus action to attack with a different qualifying weapon. You don't add your ability modifier to the damage of the bonus attack unless the modifier is negative or you have an ability which allows you to add your ability modifier to the bonus attack granted by two-weapon fighting. If you choose to make this additional attack, you may not benefit from using a shield until the beginning of your next turn.

If you use a weapon with the Heavy property or use a Versatile weapon two-handed you may not benefit from using a shield until the beginning of your next turn, but you may switch between multiple Heavy or Versatile weapons with each attack.

**Keen Smell.** You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Girallon

Girallons are capable melee threats. Four arms and good Strength allow them to quickly change tactics in melee to suit their needs, and their climb speed allows them to quickly navigate obstacles which would prove problematic for other adventurers.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence of your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

### Design Notes

Girallons are essentially better apes. They have an extra pair of arms, some extra traits, and better numbers. They're still not complicated to design, but it's interesting to compare the two creatures. Like other unintelligent creatures, we'll treat the girallon as awakened.

Girallons are monstroties, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Girallons' best ability is Strength, but it only barely exceeds Dexterity and Constitution. We'll grant +1 Strength and +1 Constitution for 2 BP, and save the rest of our BP for other traits.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), 30 ft. speed (down from 40 ft.), 30 ft. climb speed (down from 40 ft.) for 2 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, Aggressive for 1 BP, Keen Smell for 0.5 BP, the ability to speak Common for 0 BP, and 1d6 natural weapons for 1.5 BP. Girallons also have 4 arms for 1 BP.

At 10.5 BP, the Girallon slightly exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Girallon, increase its ability increases or add a +1 Dexterity increase. If you want to weaken the Girallon, reduce its natural weapon damage.

## Gnolls

The options below are additional options for the gnoll race presented in the original *Monstrous Races*.

The Gnoll Witherling template is presented below. The Gnoll Flind is represented by the Flind's Flail, presented in the Magic Items section later in this document. Gnoll Flesh Gnawers and Gnoll Hunters can be represented by Gnoll Rogues and Gnoll Fighters, respectively.

### Gnoll Witherling [Template: Natural]

When gnolls go too long without sating their violent and predatory urges, they occasionally turn upon and eat on another. In these cases, the consumed gnolls arise and witherlings; animated skeletons with all of the ferocity and strength of a gnoll, but without the need to eat whatever scant prey the war band has available.

#### Becoming a Witherling

Any formerly living gnoll can become a witherling by being killed and eaten by its own kind.

The skeleton template must be applied to a character during character creation. Witherlings retain essentially nothing of their former mind, so a witherling created from the body an experienced character loses any class levels, proficiencies, or other acquired capabilities that it may have had while it was alive. The witherling is functionally a new character, sharing only the body of the formerly living character.

#### Witherling Traits

All witherlings have the following traits, adding these traits to their existing racial traits upon gaining the skeleton template.

**Creature Type.** You replace your current creature type with Undead, and lose the Gnoll subtype.



You don't require air, food, drink, or sleep. Instead, you enter a restful state, remaining semiconscious, for 4 hours a day. While resting, you can dream after a fashion; such dreams are reflexive mental exercises inherent to your consciousness. After resting in this way, you gain the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Ability Adjustments.** -2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Undead Nature.** You have immunity to the exhausted and poisoned conditions, and to poison damage.



### Design Notes

Gnolls, like giants, see some variant stat blocks in Volo's Guide to Monsters which present advanced versions of the existing creature. Glesh hnawers and

hunters are just advanced versions of the base gnoll, which can be addressed by class levels for players. The interesting options are flinds and witherlings.

### Gnoll Flind

Gnoll flinds are essentially normal gnolls with a cool weapon and advanced stats. The cool weapon is the important part, which means that we're taking an unprecedented dive into designing custom magic items. 5<sup>th</sup> edition's magic items are far more art than science, which makes them an uncomfortable and unfamiliar exercise for me. I'm much more familiar with 3<sup>rd</sup> edition's magic items, which could be designed using a set of tables and formulas.

The Flind Flail has three major functions delivered on attacks. They're all fairly powerful, so we'll limit the use of each of them to once per day, and we'll add a save for half damage to the Pain effect. We'll also rework Aura of Blood Thirst a bit to make it less powerful, and we'll require that a Gnoll attune itself to the flail to get the effect. I think we can call that Very Rare.

### Gnoll Witherling

Witherlings are basically fancy skeletons. You could easily use the skeleton template (presented in the original Monstrous Races), but it wouldn't quite match the stats of the Witherling. We'll use the Skeleton as an example, but we'll give the Witherling its own template. They're still mindless reanimated bodies, we'll make it a natural template like skeletons.

Witherlings change the Gnoll's creature type from humanoid to undead for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get +2 natural armor (down from +3) for 1 BP, immunity to the exhausted condition for 0.5 BP, and Poison Immunity for 2 BP. Flinds can't speak for -1.5 BP.

We'll drop Vengeful Strike to save BP, but that still brings us to 3 BP, which is a big problem since we have a target of 0 BP for natural templates. Like skeletons, we'll impose -2 penalties to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma for a total of -3 BP.

That brings our total to 0 BP, which is right where we want natural templates to be.

### Grungs

Poisonous, amphibious tree-frog humanoids.

Grung are also presented in a semi-official capacity in Christopher Lindsay's [One Grung Above](#). One Grung Above presents its own version of the Grung racial traits, which differ slightly from those presented here. One Grung Above also notably donates its proceeds to the charity Extra Life. Despite being presented as part

of an official Wizards of the Coast event, Lindsay's version of Grung is not considered "official" and is not permissible in Adventurer's League organized play.

Similarities between the version of Grung presented below and the version in One Grung Above are essentially coincidental, but are to be expected because both versions are based on the same creature.

## Grung Traits

Grungs share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Humanoid (Grung).

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Dexterity, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Evil, xenophobic creatures which live in a rigid caste-based society, most grung are lawful evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 25 ft. You have a climb speed of 25 ft.

**Amphibious.** You can breathe air and water.

**Poison Immunity.** You are immune to poison damage, and immune to the poisoned condition.

**Poisonous Skin.** Any creature that grapples you or otherwise comes into direct contact with your skin must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature no longer in direct contact with you can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

You may also use your poisonous skin to poison your weapons. As an action, may rub a weapon or a single piece of ammunition on your skin. The next time you hit an enemy with that weapon or piece of ammunition, your attack deals an additional 2d4 poison damage. This damage increases by 1d4 when you reach 6<sup>th</sup> level (3d4), 11<sup>th</sup> level (4d4), and 17<sup>th</sup> level (5d4). This poison dries and becomes ineffective after 1 minute.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Standing Leap.** Your long jump is up to 25 feet and your high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

**Water Dependency.** If you fail to immerse yourself in water for at least 1 hour during a day, you suffer one level of exhaustion at the end of that day. You can only recover from this exhaustion through magic or by immersing yourself in water for at least 1 hour.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Grung.

## Playing a Grung

With high Dexterity and good mobility, Grung makes excellent monks, rangers, and rogues. Poisonous Skin offers a useful defensive option in addition to the ability to add poison damage to an attack, so grappling enemies may be an effective way to handicap them. Water dependency creates a minor headache, so avoid deserts and if you need to travel through dry territory be sure to bring an adequately large source of water to soak yourself in.

Grung society is a strictly-defined caste system. Consider where your grung character falls in the caste, and what color you are. Grung like to take slaves from other races, which offers a convenient way for a grung character to meet what might become an adventuring party.

## Design Notes

Grung are fairly simple humanoids, but their flavor is really fun. Volo's Guide to Monsters presents three versions of grung with varying traits, which makes it easy to identify shared racial traits.

Grung are humanoids for 0 BP.

All three version of Grung have the same Dexterity and Constitution scores, so we'll grant +2 Dexterity and +1 Constitution for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size for -1 BP, 25 ft. walking speed, 25 ft. climb speed for 1.75 BP, Poison Immunity for 2 BP, Amphibious for 0.5 BP, Standing Leap for 0.5 BP, and only racial languages for -1 BP.

That brings us to 5.75 BP before we look at Poisonous Skin and Water Dependency. Water dependency is easy to satisfy in almost any campaign by dragging a barrel of water around in a wagon, so we'll call it -0.5 BP.

Poisonous skin is a great deterrent to keep many melee monsters from attacking the Grung. However, it's also far too powerful to allow as written. A clever player might build a grung grappler in order to poison their foes and thereby heavily handicap them. The Poisoned condition is extremely effective.

We'll limit the usage of the Grung's poison to once short rest. That makes it an effective deterrent, but it's not going to be abusable enough to win every fight.

Grung also notably deal poison damage with all of their attacks. That's fine for a monster, but we can't let players add 2d4 poison damage to every one of their attacks. Instead, we'll allow the Grung to prematurely expend their poison to poison a weapon and deal 2d4 poison damage. We'll scale the damage like breath weapons, and we'll call the whole ability 4 BP.

At 8.75 BP, the Grung is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Grung, increase the die size for the Poisonous Skin's option to poison weapons. If you want to weaken the Grung, reduce its Dexterity increase.

## Guard Drake

Reptilian quadrupeds created in a ritual to serve as guard animals and servants for those who serve chromatic dragons and the dragon deity Tiamat.

### Guard Drake Traits

share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Dragon

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally created to serve evil masters, most guard drakes are evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Bite and Tail.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 bludgeoning or piercing damage on a hit.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 14 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Draconic.

**Subrace.** Choose one of these subraces. You gain the traits listed under your chosen subrace in addition to those listed above.

#### Black Guard Drake Traits

**Speed.** You have a swim speed of 30 ft.

**Amphibious.** You can breathe air and water.

**Damage Resistance.** You are resistant to acid damage.

#### Blue Guard Drake Traits

**Speed.** You have a burrow speed of 10 ft.

**Damage Resistance.** You are resistant to lightning damage.

#### Green Guard Drake Traits

**Speed.** You have a swim speed of 30 ft.

**Amphibious.** You can breathe air and water.

**Poison Resilience.** You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance against poison damage.

#### Red Guard Drake Traits

**Speed.** You have a climb speed of 30 ft.

**Damage Resistance.** You are resistant to fire damage.

#### White Guard Drake Traits

**Speed.** You have a burrow speed of 10 ft.

**Damage Resistance.** You are resistant to cold damage.

### Playing a Guard Drake

Guard drakes are strong, versatile melee fighters. Their natural armor is excellent, and your choice of subrace provides a useful movement type.

Guard drakes are granted as boons to those who serve and worship dragons, so they fit well into parties made up of those characters. Clerics of Tiamat, kobolds, and dragonblood sorcerers all make great companions for a guard drake.

### Design Notes

Guard drakes are essentially just beasts. The variant versions are where things get interesting. I could adapt just the base stat block, but at that point you might as well play a mastiff (see the original Monstrous Races). Like other unintelligent creatures, we'll treat the Guard Drake as awakened.

Guard drakes are dragons, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Guard drakes have good Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +4 natural armor for 2 BP, 30 ft. walking speed, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and the ability to speak Common plus racial languages for 0 BP. Guard drakes have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings us to 6.5 BP before we consider individual subraces. There are small variations in the BP value of individual guard drake types, but I don't think they're large enough to worry about. If you're worried, reduce natural armor values, on the high-BP subraces and add Perception proficiency to the low-BP subraces.

#### Black

Black guard drakes add Amphibious for 0.5 BP, 30 ft. swim speed for 1 BP, and resistance to acid for 2 BP.

At 10 BP, the Black Guard Drake is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP.

#### Blue

Blue guard drakes add a 10 ft. burrowing speed (down from 20 ft.) for 2 BP, and resistance to lightning for 2 BP.

At 10.5 BP, the Blue Guard Drake slightly exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP.

### Green

Green guard drakes add amphibious for 0.5 BP, a 30 ft. swimming speed for 1 BP, and poison resilience for 1 BP. Volo's Guide to Monsters doesn't provide advantage on saving throws against poison, but I think that's an oversight since the colored guard drakes are technically a variant.

At 9 BP, the Green Guard Drake is within our target range of 8-10 BP.

### Red

Red guard drakes add a 30 ft. climb speed for 2 BP and fire resistance for 2 BP.

At 10.5 BP, the Red Guard Drake slightly exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP.

### White

White guard drakes add a 10 ft. burrowing speed (down from 20 ft.) for 2 BP, and resistance to cold for 2 BP.

At 10.5 BP, the White Guard Drake slightly exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP.

## Hags

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Hags are evil creatures with magical powers. They also famously form covens, typically consisting of three witches joining together for greater power.

Originally presented in the original *Monstrous Races*, this section adds additional Hag subraces. The shared hag racial traits presented in *Monstrous Races* have been altered below to reflect new subraces. If you use Hag subraces from the original *Monstrous Races*, use the version of the racial traits presented there.

### Hag Traits

Hags share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fey.

**Ability Score Increase.**

**Alignment.** Taking delight in malevolence, misery, and destruction, most hags are chaotic evil

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Damage Resistance.** You are resistant to cold damage.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Subrace.** Choose one of these subraces. You gain the traits listed under your chosen subrace in addition to those listed above.

### Annis Hag Traits

**Bite and Claws** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing or slashing damage on a hit.

**Innate Spellcasting.** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, you may cast *disguise self* once per day. Charisma is your spellcasting these spells.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common, Giant, and Sylvan.

### Bheur Hag Traits

**Slam.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common, Auran, and Giant.

## Playing a Hag

### Annis Hag

### Bheur Hag

## Design Notes

Like beholders, Volo's Guide to Monsters presents new varieties of hag that deviate significantly from those presented in the *Monster Manual*. The new hags are considerably more unique than those presented in the *Monster Manual*, which means that they're more interesting but also require more design work.

Both varieties of hag are fey, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The two new varieties both have medium size (down from large for the Annis Hag), +2 natural armor (down from +6 for the Annis Hag and +4 for the Bheur Hag) for 1 BP, 30 ft. walking speed (down from 40 ft. for the Annis Hag), Darkvision for 2 BP, and resistance to cold damage for 2 BP. That brings us to 5.5 BP before we consider individual subraces.

### Annis Hag

Annis hags are a cool monster. They really emphasize the creepy grandmother flavor of hags, and their Iron Token ability is really interesting. They're a weird combination of melee monster and spellcaster, which is unusual compared to other hags.

Annis Hags are incredibly strong, especially for a creature like a hag. We'll grant +1 Strength and +1 Charisma for a total of 2 BP.

Annis hags speak racial languages plus Common and an additional fixed language for 0.25 BP. We'll set the Annis Hag's natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings us to 9.75 BP before we address the Annis Hag's innate spellcasting and Crushing Hug. Crushing Hug can easily be approximated by players making an unarmed strike attack while grappling, so we'll drop it. We don't have a ton of room and we have very little room for cuts, but we'll add *disguise self* once per day for 1 BP.

At 10.75 BP, the Annis Hag exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to weaken the Annis Hag, remove its natural armor or reduce its natural weapon damage.

### Bheur Hag

Bheur hags are closer to the hags in the Monster Manual than the Annis Hag, returning to an emphasis on magic.

The Bheur Hag's best ability scores are Dexterity and Charisma, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

Annis hags speak racial languages plus Common and an additional fixed language for 0.25 BP. We'll set the Annis Hag's natural weapons to 1d4 for 1 BP.

That brings us to 9.25 BP before we consider innate spellcasting, greystaff magic, ice walk, and maddening feast. Greystaff Magic seems like we can put it in an item, which means less BP on the race itself (discussed below). Ice Walk is close enough to Earth Walk that I think we can call it 0.5 BP.

Unfortunately, I think we'll need to remove Maddening Feast. I don't want it to totally vanish, so we'll make it a feat. I think if we reduce the duration to one round, reduce fear range to 30 ft., and limit to once per short rest, it works fine as a feat for bheur hags and other cannibalistic monsters like ghouls and ghouls.

At 9.75 BP, the Bheur Hag is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Behur Hag, increase its natural armor. If you want to weaken the Bheur Hag, remove its natural armor or natural weapons.

The Bheur Hag's Greystaff is a cool item. It works as a broom of flying, and grants additional spellcasting. Brooms of flying are uncommon and not especially complicated, so we'll allow the staff to behave like a broom of flying. We'll also add the ability to use the staff as a spellcasting focus, because I would feel silly having a wizard walk around with two staves. The biggest challenge is the extra spells, which are 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>-level. 6<sup>th</sup>-level spell scrolls are very rare, which means that our staff needs to be at least very

rare. Casting a 6<sup>th</sup>-level spell even once per day would make it too good to be very rare, so we'll allow casting each of the found spells once per day each and call it legendary.

## Hobgoblins

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Volo's Guide to Monsters presents two new hobgoblin stat blocks. For either monster, use the Hobgoblin racial traits presented in the original Monstrous Races.

To approximate a Hobgoblin Devastator, use the Wizard class with the Evoker arcane tradition. To approximate the Hobgoblin Iron Shadow, use the Monk class with the Way of Shadow monastic tradition.

## Ki-rin

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Resplendant creatures resembling unicorns with scales.

### Ki-rin Traits

Ki-rin share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Celestial

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 to any one ability score.

**Alignment.** The physical embodiment of goodness, Ki-rin are nearly always lawful good.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Flight.** You have a flying speed of 30 feet, and can hover. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor.

**Horn and Hooves.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 bludgeoning or piercing damage on a hit.

**Innate Spellcasting.** You know one cantrip of your choice from the cleric spell list. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. You may cast spells as though you were using a magic focus, even if you are not doing so.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in common and celestial.

### Playing a Ki-rin

Ki-Rin are flexible and capable of succeeding a variety of roles. Their flight and ability to hover allow them to easily navigate many obstacles, and with natural weapons and access to cleric cantrips they're capable

of fighting without relying on equipment. However, with no natural armor they're reliant on manufactured armor or magic for protection.

Ki-Rin are embodiments of good, so they fit into a party of fiercely good-aligned creatures. Good paladins, celestials, and clerics of good deities all make excellent companions for a Ki-Rin, but characters with an urge to misbehave may find themselves at odds with a Ki-Rin.

### Design Notes

Ki-rin are really interesting creatures, and consider their CR is only 12 they have a ton of high-level abilities. Legendary actions and legendary resistance are rare at such low CR, and they have access to 9<sup>th</sup>-level spells. We'll need to make drastic cuts to make Ki-rin fit as a playable race, and we'll look at pegasi and unicorns as examples since they're anatomically similar.

Ki-rin are celestials, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Ki-rin have fantastic ability scores. Their lowest is 16, and they have four scores around 20. It's difficult to decide what to enhance, so we'll grant a flexible +1 for 1.5 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from huge), 30 ft. walking speed (down from 60 ft.), 30 ft. fly speed (down from 120 ft.) for 4 BP, the ability to hover for 2 BP, poison resilience (down from immunity) for 1 BP, and 60 ft. Darkvision (down from 120 ft.) for 2 BP. We'll drop natural armor, blindsight, and telepathy, and we'll replace the ability to speak all languages with racial languages plus Common for 0 BP. Kirin have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings us to 9 BP before we consider any of the Ki-Rin's active abilities. We'll drop all of the legendary stuff and the magic attacks. The spellcasting looks awfully similar to cleric spellcasting, so we'll attribute that to cleric levels. That leaves us with the Ki-Rin's innate spellcasting, which would be great except that all of the Ki-Rin's innate spells are too high level for us to use.

We'll need to take some liberties. If we grant the choice of one cleric cantrip for 1 BP we'll get the right feel without a big BP cost. We'll also add Innate Focus for 0.25 BP because Ki-Rin are clearly intended to be spellcasters despite lacking hands to hold material components. The Ki-Rin's spellcasting ability for its innate spellcasting is charisma, so we'll use charisma over wisdom so that the Ki-Rin doesn't over-emphasize playing a cleric.

At 10.25 BP, the Ki-Rin very slightly exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Ki-Rin, grant it a second cleric cantrip. If you want to weaken the Ki-Rin, remove its ability to hover.

## Kobolds

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Volo's Guide to Monsters presents three new kobold stat blocks. For any of these monsters, use the Kobold racial traits presented in the original Monstrous Races.

For the Kobold Dragonshield, see the Racial Feats section later in this document. Approximating the Kobold Inventory can be done with some clever use of existing items, and a little bit of improvisation. To approximate the Kobold Scale Sorcerer, use the Sorcerer class with the Draconic sorcerous origin.

### Design Notes

Kobold inventors are basically just a bunch of weird items attached to a kobold, so there isn't much to do there. Kobold Scale Sorcerers are just the base kobold with some sorcerer levels, so we'll skip them. But Kobold Dragonshields present a fun new racial option for which we can turn into a racial feat.

Damage resistance for one of the listed types is 2 BP, which is easy. Rerolling on saves against fear/paralysis is a bit like resistance, and condition resistance is 0.25 BP per condition, so we'll call that 0.5 BP total. Sharing the effect is the only complicated part. It only works on other kobolds, which is a helpful limitation. We'll call it another 0.5 BP, but that's a very rough estimate. Advantage after succeeding on one of the extra saves is fun, but it will only matter occasionally and it only applies to one attack, so we'll call it another 0.5 BP.

That brings us to 3.5 BP, which is slightly above our target of 3 BP, but not above our hard cap of 4 BP.

## Korred

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Small cloven-hoofed fey attuned with earth and stone.

### Korred Traits

Korreds share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fey.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength.

**Alignment.** Fiercely independent, most korred are chaotic neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 25 ft.

**Control Hair.** Korreds are famed for their magical hair, and many korreds cut their own hair with iron shears and weave it into sturdy iron rope. After completing a long rest, you may spend an hour to cut

your hair and weave a 50-foot length of rope. You may only have one such rope at a time. Creating a new rope causes the old rope to wither away, leaving only a small amount of rusty iron shavings.

As an action, you may magically animate this rope to move 20 feet. If this movement ends with the rope in the space of another creature which you can see, the rope may entangle the creature. Otherwise, if the rope ends this movement in the air it immediately falls. The creature must make a Dexterity saving throw or become grappled by the rope. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. Escaping this grapple uses the grapple rules for monsters detailed in the sidebar on page 11 of the monster manual. The DC to escape this grapple is the same DC as the saving throw to avoid being grappled.

You may release a creature grappled by your hair rope as a bonus action. Creatures are automatically released if you die or are incapacitated. Spending an action to move the rope again also releases a grappled creature.

Your hair rope has AC 20 and 20 hit points. It regains 1 hit point at the beginning of your turn while it still has at least 1 hit point, and you are alive. If the rope drops to 0 hit points, it is destroyed, any entangled creatures are released, and the rope withers away, leaving only a small amount of rusty iron shavings.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Rock.** You may throw a rock or similar object as a ranged weapon attack. This attack has 30/60 range, and deals 1d4 bludgeoning damage on a hit. This is made as though the object had the Thrown weapon property.

**Stone Camouflage.** You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

**Stone's Strength.** While on the ground, you may use a bonus action to draw on your connection to stone and earth to empower your blows. After doing so, your first weapon attack that turn deals additional damage equal to half your proficiency bonus on a successful hit.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Terran and Undercommon.

## Playing a Korred

Despite their small size, Korred are potent melee threats. Their increased Strength and Constitution make them excellent barbarians and fighters, and Control Hair provides a useful way to hinder enemies

who might try to stay out of melee. Stone's Strength can provide a useful damage boost, but because it consumes your bonus action it won't work with two-weapon fighting.

Korreds are deeply attuned to the earth, and spend a lot of time around earth elemental creatures like galeb duhr and earth elementals. They find the sound of mining annoying and revere the earth, so they may have trouble adventuring alongside dwarves.

## Design Notes

Korred are impressive. They've got good senses, good ability scores, 5 languages, and several fun unique abilities. While that makes them a really interesting creature and a fun basis for a race, it also makes them really difficult to adapt because there is so much stuff to cut.

Korreds are fey, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Despite their small size, korreds have spectacular Strength and Constitution. We have a lot to cover, so we need to be careful with our BP. We'll grant +1 to Strength for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size for -1 BP, 25 ft. walking speed (down from 30 ft.) for 0 BP, 10 ft. burrow speed (down from 30 ft.) for 2 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision (down from 120 ft.) for 2 BP, and Stone Camouflage for 0.5 BP.

We'll drop the Korred's natural armor, damage resistances, tremorsense, and innate spellcasting. We'll reduce their languages to racial languages plus Common (Undercommon in this case) for 0 BP, and we'll call Terran their racial language.

After all of those cuts, we're at 5 BP. That leaves us with 3 things to address: Command Hair, Stone's Strength, and Rock. Rock is easy, but natural weapons are big BP sink so we'll reduce the damage to 1d4 and allow it to be used at range for a total of 1.5 BP.

Command Hair is really fun, but it's easily abusable if we give it to players as-written. A smart player would make a bunch of ropes, and spend every one of their bonus actions to hinder their enemies. We'll need to make significant tweaks.

First, we'll limit players to one piece of rope. That makes protecting and recovering it important. Second, we'll require a long rest to make a new rope. Growing enough hair to make rope out of it takes a long time, so this will require some suspension of disbelief, but if you really need an excuse just point out that korreds are fey and maybe their hair grows back abnormally fast.

Finally, we'll require an action to animate the hair instead of a bonus action. I think we can call that 2 BP.

Stone's Strength is harder. It's a consistent and easily accessible damage increase. Obviously, we can't grant two bonus dice or we'll see an army of greataxe-wielding korreds rolling 3d12 damage on every attack. I think a modest damage boost will be sufficient. If we require spending a bonus action and grant damage equal to half of the Korred's proficiency bonus to their first attack for the turn. That will make it an appealing damage boost for characters that don't rely heavily on their bonus action, but shouldn't be such a major damage boost that it will cause problems. I think we can call this 1 BP.

At 9.5 BP, the Korred with within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to weaken the Korred, remove Rock. If you want to strengthen the Korred, allow it to create a new hair rope during a short rest, or increase its Strength increase.

## Leucrotta

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Horrifying creatures spawned by Yeenoghu that like to mislead, torture, and kill.

### Leucrotta Traits

Leucrotta share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength.

**Alignment.** Horrible, violent creatures that enjoy torturing and murder, leucrotta are nearly always chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Bite and Hooves.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 bludgeoning or piercing damage on a hit.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Keen Smell.** You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Kicking Retreat.** If you make an unarmed strike on your turn using your hooves, you make take the Disengage action as a bonus action.

**Mimicry.** You can mimic any sounds you have heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful Insight check against a DC equal to 8 + your Charisma (Deception) bonus.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Rampage.** When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on your turn, you can take a bonus action to move up to half your speed and make a bite attack.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in.

### Playing a Leucrotta

Leucrotta are strong melee fighters with built-in hit-and-run tactics. Kicking Retreat allows you to easily move into combat, attack, and use your high speed to get away.

Like other creatures loyal to Yeenoghu, leucrotta fit alongside gnolls and may demons, and make good additions to an evil party which does a lot of killing.

### Design Notes

Leucrotta are fairly simple creatures. At first glance their version of Mimicry looks unique, but it's just a reworded version of the Mimicry that we saw in the Monster Manual.

Leucrottas are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Leucrotta have good physical ability scores, but Strength is the only one that's especially high. We'll grant +1 Strength for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +2 natural armor for 1 BP, 40 ft. walking speed (down from 50 ft.) for 1 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, only racial languages plus one fixed language for -0.75 BP, Keen Smell for 0.5 BP, Mimicry for 1 BP, Rampage for 2 BP. Leucrotta have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings us to 8.25 BP before we address Kicking Retreat. Kicking Retreat is like a much weaker version of Cunning Action. Goblins get 2/3 of Cunning Action, which we called 2 BP, so we'll call it 1 BP, but that might be a bit high since it still requires an attack before you can use it.

At 9.25 BP the Leucrotta is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Leucrotta, increase its Strength increase. If you want to weaken the Leucrotta, remove its natural armor.

## Meenlock

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Horrifying insectoid fey, these creatures spontaneously form in response to feelings of immense fear.





## Meenlock Traits

Meenlocks share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fey.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Horrible creatures that prey on the fear of their victims, most meenlocks are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Claws.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 slashing damage on a hit.

You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of your unarmed strikes. Your unarmed strikes count as a weapon with the Finesse property for all effects which require it, such as Sneak Attack.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 120 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Fearless.** You are immune to fear.

**Light Sensitivity.** While in bright light, you have disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Paralyzing Claws.** On a successful melee attack with your claws, you may attempt to paralyze the target. The target must make a Constitution save against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. On a failure, the target is paralyzed for 1 minute. Elves and undead are immune to this effect. At the end of the creature's turn, they may attempt this save again, ending the effect on a successful saving throw.

You may not use this ability again until you have completed a long rest.

**Shadow Teleport.** When you are in dim light or darkness, as a bonus action you can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space you can see that is also in dim light or darkness.

**Telepathy.** You can communicate telepathically with any creature that knows a language within 30 ft.

**Languages.** You know no languages. If you learn a language, you are only able to use it read and write. You are incapable of communicating vocally in any fashion.

## Playing a Meenlock

Meenlocks are fantastic monks, rangers, and rogues. They're well-suited to stealth and ambush tactics, and their ability to communicate telepathically makes it easy to communicate with allies without giving away your position.

Because of their evil nature, meenlocks might fit into a part of other evil creatures, especially if those creatures rely on terrifying their foes.

## Design Notes

Meenlock have really great flavor. Their fear aura and shadow teleport abilities will need some thought, but otherwise their stats are simple.

Meenlocks are fey, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Meenlock have decent Dexterity, but their other ability scores are unremarkable. We'll grant +1 Dexterity for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size for -1 BP, +3 natural armor for 1.5 BP, 30 ft. walking speed for 0.5 BP, condition immunity to frightened for 0.5 BP, 120 ft. Darkvision for 3 BP, 30 ft. Telepathy (down from 120 ft.) for 2 BP, Light Sensitivity for -2 BP, and no languages for -3 BP. Based on the art, meenlocks have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP, and we'll add natural weapon finesse for 0 BP.

That brings us to 5 BP before we address Fear Aura, Shadow Teleport, and the paralysis effect on the Meenlock's claws. Fear aura is clearly too powerful to allow, and I'm not sure how we would adapt it. We could make it an active fear effect, but I don't think that would quite hit the flavor we want. Instead, I think we'll drop it to conserve BP.

We can copy the paralyzing claws from ghouls (see the original Monstrous Races) for 1 BP.

Shadow Teleport duplicates the Way of Shadow Monk's Shadow Step ability. The closest approximation we've done on a similar creature is the blink dog, which we allowed to teleport once per short rest for a whopping 6 BP. Requiring shadows imposes an extra limitation, so I think we can call it 4 BP.

At 10 BP, the Meenlock is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Meenlock, allow it to use Shadow Teleport once every time it rolls initiative. If you want to weaken the Meenlock, limit Shadow Teleport to once per long rest.

## Mind Flayers

Volo's Guide to Monsters presents three new mind flayer stat blocks. The Alhoon template and the elder brain racial traits are presented below. The Ulitharid is presented in the Racial Feats section, later in this document. If you want to play an Alhoon or a Ulitharid, use the Mind Flayer racial traits presented in the original Monstrous Races.

### Alhoon [Template: Acquired]

Powerful outcast mind flayers seek immortality to replace the eternal life presented by absorption into an elder brain. Those outcast arcanists which cannot reach true lichdom find a shortcut by becoming an Alhoon.

#### Becoming an Alhoon

The ritual to become an Alhoon is a closely-guarded secret, known only to those rare deviant mind flayers that pursue forbidden arcane knowledge. Still, the possibility of everlasting life is a temptation that few illithid arcanists can resist.

Becoming an Alhoon requires at least three mind flayers to cooperate in the creation of a *periapt of mind trapping*. All participants must be wizards of 12<sup>th</sup> level or higher. The ritual takes three days to perform, during which the participants may not perform other strenuous activity (such as combat) for more than one hour, or the ritual fails and must begin again.

This ritual also requires the sacrifice of a living, intelligent creature with a soul such as a human for each participating mind flayer.

Upon the completion of the ritual at the end of the third day, the sacrificial victims immediately die, and their souls are trapped in the *periapt of mind trapping*. The participating mind flayers then become alhoons, and immediately become free-willed undead.

After completing the ritual, the character immediately gains their first level in the alhoon template. They must take both levels of the template before they can take levels in another class or template.

#### Alhoon Traits

All alhoons have the following traits, adding these traits to their existing racial traits upon gaining the template.

#### Hit Points

- **Hit Dice.** 1d6 per alhoon level
- **Hit Points at Higher Levels.** 1d6 (or 4) + your Constitution modifier per alhoon level

#### Traits

Liches gain the following traits at each level, as indicated on the table below.

Level	Features
1	Transformation, Undead Nature, Periapt of Mind Trapping, Spellcasting
2	Alhoon Resistances, Chill Touch

**Transformation.** You replace your current creature type with Undead, but retain any subtypes.

You don't require air, food, drink, or sleep. Instead, you enter a restful state, remaining semiconscious, for 4 hours a day. While resting, you can dream after a fashion; such dreams are reflexive mental exercises inherent to your consciousness. After resting in this way, you gain the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Undead Nature.** You have resistance to necrotic damage. You have immunity to the poisoned condition, and to poison damage.

**Periapt of Mind Trapping.** Your soul is bound to a *periapt of mind trapping*. In the event of your destruction, your soul is entrapped in the periapt along with any previous sacrifices and any other alhoons which were previously destroyed. If your periapt is destroyed, you and any other surviving alhoons which are bound to the same periapt immediately die and your souls are destroyed, as are any souls contained in the periapt. Nothing short of divine intervention can

restore you or the other creatures whose souls are destroyed in this manner.

In order to maintain your undead state, you must periodically sacrifice additional souls to the periapt. Your undeath is extended by the length of the sacrifice's life, starting from the moment the sacrifice is completed. For this reason, elderly victims and long-lived races are favored victims. A new sacrifice effectively resets the clock, so an alhoon sacrificing a 500-year old elf will persist for 500 years from that moment, regardless of their previous sacrifices. At the end of this period, the alhoon immediately dies, and their soul is trapped in the periapt as normal, and any surviving alhoons bound to the same periapt are unaffected.

Souls trapped inside the periapt are in permanent communion, blind to the world outside the periapt but able to communicate with each other freely. The souls of these victims are imprisoned in the periapt, and cannot be raised from the dead except by a *wish* or *miracle* spell, or similarly powerful magic.

Carrying the periapt grants you incredible power over the alhoons bound to it. The carrier gains advantage on attacks, saves, and checks against the alhoons which created it, and those alhoons suffer disadvantage on attacks, and checks against the holder, and on saving throws against effects created by the holder. In addition, the holder of the periapt can telepathically communicate with any sacrificed soul trapped within, and alhoons within the periapt can speak telepathically with the holder. A creature carrying the periapt can't prevent communication from alhoons but can silence trapped souls of sacrificed creatures.

**Spellcasting.** Upon gaining each level in the Alhoon template, you are treated as one Wizard level higher for the purposes of Spellcasting, including spell slots and the level of spells which you can prepare with that class.

**Alhoon Resistances.** You have resistance to cold damage and lightning damage, and you have advantage on saving throws against any effect which turns undead.

**Chill Touch.** As an action, you may make a melee spell attack against a creature within reach. On a hit, the target takes 3d6 cold damage.

## Elder Brain

The center of most elder brain colonies, an Elder Brain is an immense brain with a mass of writhing tentacles and immense psychic power.



### Elder Brain Traits

Elder brains share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Abberation.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Intelligence, +1 Wisdom, +1 Charisma.

**Alignment.** Tyrants which lord over a tyrannical people, most elder brains are lawful evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 5 ft. You have a swim speed of 10 ft.

**Blindsight.** You have blindsight 30 ft.

**Brain Body.** You are unable to wear armor or use shields.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Cunning.** You have advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** Once you reach 3<sup>rd</sup> level, you can cast *levitate* once per day. Once you reach 5<sup>th</sup> level, you can cast *detect thoughts* once per day. You may cast spells as though you were using a magic focus, even if you are not doing so. Your spellcasting ability for these spells is Intelligence.

**Mind Blast.** As an action, you can magically emit psychic energy in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that

line must make an Intelligence saving throw. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency bonus. A creature takes 2d6 psychic damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. The damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5<sup>th</sup> level (3d6), 11<sup>th</sup> level (4d6), and 17<sup>th</sup> level (5d6).

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Tentacles.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 psychic damage on a hit.

**Telepathic Hub.** You can communicate telepathically with any creature that knows a language within 30 ft, and you may allow other creatures within range to communicate telepathically with each other.

**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in Common, Deep Speech, and Undercommon.

### Playing an Elder Brain

Elder brains are powerful, but also very limited. With poor movement speed and few options to get around, elder brains are largely blind beyond their blindsight range. They have fantastic mental ability scores, but without the ability to perform verbal components they are severely limited as spellcasters. While official psionics rules have not been published as of this writing, consider using the Mystic presented in the *Unearthed Arcana* article series.

Elder brains make a natural leader in a mind flayer-centric party. Good allies include intellect devourers, mind flayers, mindwitnesses, and other underdark races which might be slaves to one of the other party members.

### Design Notes

The new mind flayer entries present opportunities for a new template, a new race, and a new feat. This means that it's a lot of fun to design, and it adds some really fun options for mind flayer characters.

We'll address each new item below. Since they're largely unique, we'll build their BP values independently, but we'll keep the base Mind Flayer racial traits in mind (see the original *Monstrous Races*).

### Alhoon

The Alhoon is, in many ways, a weaker version of the lich intended for mind flayers that can't quite make it to becoming a true lich. That makes things easy, as we can look at the existing Lich template (presented in the original *Monstrous Races*) for inspiration, and ideally reduce the size of the template.

To start, we'll compare the alhoon and lich stat blocks to identify which traits are different between the two. Legendary Resistances is removed. Paralyzing Grasp is reduced to Chilling Grasp. The Alhoon gets no legendary actions. The grasp change and losing Frightening Gaze conveniently lines up with the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of the Lich template presented in the original *Monstrous Races*. I think we'll be able to drop the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of the Lich and squeeze the Alhoon into just two template levels.

Like the Lich, we'll go for 1d6 hit dice for 0 BP per template level.

We'll largely copy the Lich's first level. The Undead Creature type costs 1 BP. Resistant to necrotic damage and Poison Immunity cost another 4 BP. Spellcasting costs another 3 BP.

We'll also add the *periapert of mind trapping*, but we can't assign definitive BP cost. While immortality is great in an abstract sense, campaigns rarely last long enough for immortality to matter, and the *periapert* comes with some heavy drawbacks. Alhoons have no way to relocate their own *periapert* if it is lost. Recovering it from a hostile creature is difficult. And if the Alhoon is destroyed, they don't get to regenerate like a lich, and they can't be raised from the dead unless someone goes to great lengths to do so. So we'll omit a BP cost, and be happy with 8 BP for our first level.

8 BP is at the bottom of our target range of 8-10 BP for the first level of leveled templates.

At second level we'll add resistance to cold and lightning for 4 BP. Chill Touch as written in the Alhoon stat block is roughly equivalent to a cantrip at this level, so we'll call it 0.5 BP.

At 4.5 BP our second and final level is within our target range of 4-5 BP for additional levels of leveled templates.

### Elder Brain

Elder brains face several design issues. They're not intended to be mobile, instead residing in a brine pool for the whole of their existence. That's not a great way to play and adventurer, in my opinion, but I gave up on trying to keep things sensible a long time ago. If you want to play a borderline-immobile brain, go for it.

Elder Brains are aberrations, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Elder brains have spectacular ability scores, which makes sense considering their role at the heart of mind flayer society. However, it also makes it very difficult for us to pick ability score increases. I think we'll grant

+1 Intelligence, +1 Wisdom, and +1 Charisma for 3 BP. That's really weird, but this is going to be a weird race.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), 5 ft. walking speed for -2.5 BP, 10 ft. swim speed for 0 BP, 30 ft. blindsight (down from 120 ft.) for 6 BP, racial languages plus Common and one fixed for 0.25 BP, and no ability to speak for -1.5 BP. Elder brains have no hands -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d4 for 1 BP.

With the basics out of the way, we're at 4.75 BP, but we've still got a lot to cover. Creature Sense, Magic Resistance, Telepathic Hub, Mind Blast, Psychic Link, Sense Thoughts, and Innate Spellcasting. We'll drop Legendary Resistance and the Elder Brain's Legendary Actions.

Creature Sense is difficult. Giving away the location of every creature within any distance beyond blindsight range is a huge advantage, and largely negates anything that might be surprising. The closest comparison is the Ranger's Primeval Awareness, which only works on a subset of creature types, only works for a few minutes, and doesn't reveal their numbers or location. I think we'll need to drop Creature Sense.

Magic Resistance costs too much to keep, but I think we can drop it to Cunning for 2 BP. Normally I just drop Magic Resistance, but I think a giant brain having good mental resistances to magic makes a lot of sense.

Telepathic communication is massively useful for an adventuring party, which is why Rary's Telepathic Bond is a 5<sup>th</sup>-level spell. We'll need to significantly alter Telepathic Hub's effect it safe to give to a player.

Telepathy is normally 2 BP for 30-foot range. Allowing players to communicate telepathically over unlimited distances as Telepathic Hub allows offers lots of room for abuse, so that's clearly off the table. If we allow the brain to act as a hub for creatures within range, I think we can call it 2.5 BP. That's not a big increase, but there's nothing in the rules preventing telepathic creatures from perfectly repeating telepathically communicated messages between creatures, effectively making them a hub already.

We'll copy Mind Blast from the Mind Flayer (see the original Monstrous Races) for 2 BP.

We'll drop Psychic Link because it's difficult to adapt, and we'll drop Sense Thoughts because it doesn't function without Psychic Link.

That just leaves the Elder Brain's innate spellcasting. I think *detect thoughts* and *levitate* are more important than the other spells, so we'll drop the rest. *Detect thoughts* and *levitate* once per day each is 3 BP. We'll also add an innate focus for 0.25 BP.

Unfortunately, that brings us to 14.5 BP, which is well outside of acceptable ranges. We've already made significant cuts, but we'll need to do more. I think we'll disallow armor. Wearing a giant helmet seems a bit silly, and I feel like it's beneath the dignity of a giant brain floating in a brine pool. Since elder brains don't have hands, they also can't use shields, which nets a total -4 BP.

At 10.5 BP, the elder brain is above our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the elder brain, give it some natural armor. If you want to weaken the elder brain, remove Cunning.

### Ulitharid

Ulitharid are mostly an improved version of the Mind Flayer. They add some new abilities (creature sense, magic resistance, and Psionic Hub), and improve the Mind Flayer's existing psionics, tentacles, and mind blast. Magic resistance is one of those "boss monster" abilities that players should never get (yes, I'm aware of Yuan-Ti Purebloods presented in Volo's Guide to Monsters and I discuss them in the original Monstrous Races), so we'll drop it.

The extra mind blast damage is mechanically minor but feels rewarding for players, so we'll increase the die size of mind blast for 0.5 BP. The extra tentacle damage is similarly minor, so we'll increase the damage to 1d8 for another 1 BP. Psionic hub doesn't actually benefit the Ulitharid, so we can grant it mostly as-written.

Creature sense is difficult to adapt. There aren't spells that replicate the effect, and the closest I can find is *commune with nature*, which is far too high level. Instead, we'll add Detect Thoughts to the Mind Flayer's existing psionics for 2 BP.

That brings our total to 3.5 BP, which is above our target of 3 BP but below our hard cap of 4 BP. It's a little bit stronger than we want, but considering Detect Thoughts is available as a spell many Mind Flayers will be able to cast it by the time they could take a feat, so this feat needs to be strong enough to be meaningfully appealing.

## Mindwitness

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Beholders captured and altered to serve as telepathic hubs for mind flayers and their servants.

### Mindwitness Traits

Mindwitnesses share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Aberration.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Intelligence.

**Alignment.** Subservient to tyrannical masters, most mindwitnesses are lawful evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 0 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Eye Rays.** You know the *mage hand*, *mind spike* (see the Spells chapter), and *spook* cantrips. You may cast spells as though you were using a magic focus, even if you are not doing so. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

**Flight.** You have a flying speed of 20 feet, and can hover. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor. You are immune to the prone condition.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Tentacles.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 bludgeoning and 1d4 psychic damage on a hit.

**Telepathic Hub.** You can communicate telepathically with any creature that knows a language within 30 ft, and you may allow other creatures within range to communicate telepathically with each other.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Deep Speech and Undercommon.

## Playing a Mindwitness

Intelligent and gifted with flight and free cantrips, mindwitnesses make excellent spellcasters, especially wizards. Your slow speed may be a problem, so be sure to plan your position carefully.

Mindwitnesses are a natural fit in a party build around mind flayers, but they'll happily take commands from other telepathic creatures.

## Design Notes

The Mindwitness is a weird combination of beholder abilities and the Elder Brain's Telepathic Hub ability. They don't have any new or unique abilities, so we shouldn't have any issues, and we can borrow existing design choices from beholders and the Elder Brain.

Mindwitnesses are aberrations, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Mindwitness's two best ability scores are Intelligence and Wisdom. We've got a lot to cover, so

we'll grant +1 Intelligence for 1 BP to align with mind flayers and other related creatures.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +2 natural armor (down from +3) for 1 BP to match the beholders in the original Monstrous Races, 0 ft. walking speed for -3 BP, 20 ft. fly speed for 3 BP and the ability to hover for 2 BP, condition immunity to prone for 0.25 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision (down from 120 ft.) for 2 BP to match other beholders, and racial languages plus Undercommon for 0 BP. have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

We'll duplicate Telepathic Hub from the Elder Brain for 2.5 BP.

That brings us to 9.25 BP before we look at the Mindwitness's eye rays. Like other beholders, we'll approximate the eye rays with cantrips. Fear ray can be approximated by *spook* (see the Spells section of this document), and telekinetic ray can be approximated by *mage hand*. I really want a psychic damage option, but the only published option is Cutting Words, which doesn't make much sense as an eye ray. So, as we've done with the other beholders in this document, we'll create a new spell to make into an eye ray. We'll reskin Sacred Flame, make it an enchantment that deals psychic damage, and drop the damage to 1d6 because psychic damage is really rare and almost nothing resists it. We'll call it *mind spike*. That's 0.75 BP for three cantrips.

At 10 BP, the Mindwitness is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Mindwitness, increase its natural armor. If you want to weaken the Mindwitness, remove its natural armor or remove some of its eye rays.

## Morkoth

Greedy, extraplanar creatures resembling a gigantic, alien octopus that obsessively collect and hoard objects from across the multiverse.

### Morkoth Traits

Morkoths share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Aberration.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Intelligence.

**Alignment.** Selfish, destructive, and greedy, most morkoths are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 20 ft. You have a swim speed of 25 ft.

**Amphibious.** You can breathe air and water.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it

were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Hypnosis.** As an action you may project a 30-foot cone and attempt to magically charm each creature in the cone. Creatures must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by you for 1 minute. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.

You must maintain concentration during that time, as if you were casting a spell. If you lose concentration, affected creatures are no longer charmed by this ability.

While charmed in this way, the target tries to get as close to you as possible, using its actions on its turn to Dash until it is within 5 feet of you, and taking no other actions (including bonus actions) unless those actions move the creature closer to you. Once the target is within 5 feet of you, or as close to you as it can safely get, it may take no further actions (including bonus actions) so long as they are charmed in this way. If your position changes after this point, the target must continue to move as close to you as it can.

A charmed target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns and whenever it takes damage, ending the effect on itself on a success.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Telepathy.** You can communicate telepathically with any creature that knows a language within 30 ft.

**Tentacles.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

**Languages.** You know no languages.

## Playing a Morkoth

Morkoths are complicated creatures. They are built for melee combat with natural armor, natural weapons, and a hypnosis ability which draws foes in close. However, they generally prefer spellcasting. Consider playing a wizard, but an eldritch knight fighter may be just as appealing. Also remember that, while morkoths lack hands, they can still hold material components in their tentacles (they just can't use spellcasting foci like wands), and can perform both somatic and verbal spellcasting components.

Morkoths are naturally solitary, but they also tend to horde creatures that they find interesting. A morkoth's party might be creatures willingly contributing to the morkoth's horde, or they might be part of the morkoth's horde that's on a strange outing to fulfill one of the morkoth's other goals.

## Design Notes

Despite their high CR, their lair actions, and their unique flavor, morkoths are mechanically simple. Most of their abilities are things we've adapted previously, or they're close enough to existing ideas that we can adapt them without much new work.

Morkoths are aberrations, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Morkoth's best ability is Intelligence, and they're Intelligence-based spellcasters, so we'll grant +1 Intelligence for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +3 natural armor (down from +5) for 1.5 BP, 25 ft. walking speed for -0.5 BP, 50 ft. swim speed for 2 BP, we'll drop the Morkoth's damage resistances and blindsight, 60 ft. Darkvision (down from 120 ft.) for 2 BP, Telepathy for 2 BP, and no languages for -3 BP. Morkoth have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 2 BP.

We'll add Amphibious for 0.5 BP, but we'll drop Grab to save BP. We can approximate Spell Reflection by duplicating Reflective Carapace from the Tarrasque (see the original Monstrous Races) for 1 BP. We'll disregard the Morkoth's innate spellcasting because it's not innate, and can be approximate by wizard levels.

That brings us to 7 BP before we look at Hypnosis. It's a lot like the spell *fear*, but creatures run toward you rather than away from you. It also notably allows creatures to make additional saves each round. I think if we add a concentration requirement, and limit to once per long rest, we can keep the ability largely unchanged for 2 BP.

At 7 BP, the Morkoth is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Morkoth, increase its natural armor. If you want to weaken the Morkoth, decrease its natural armor.



## Neogi

Powerful, creatures resembling a bizarre union of eel and spider that travel the planes on magic ships capturing and trading slaves, especially umber hulks.

### Neogi Traits

Neogi share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Abberation.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Inhuman slavers with unfathomable minds, most neogi are lawful evil, but they lack the emotional and philosophical mentality to acknowledge such concepts as good and evil.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Mental Fortitude.** You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened, and magic can't put you to sleep.

**Spider Climb.** You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in.

### Neogi Hatchling

**Size.** Your size is tiny.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 20 ft. You have a climb speed of 20 ft.

**Languages.** You know no languages.

### Neogi Adult

**Size.** Your size is small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft. You have a climb speed of 30 ft.

**Enslave.** As an action, you can attempt to magically charm a humanoid you can see within 30 feet. It must make a Wisdom saving throw, and does so with advantage if you or your companions are fighting it. If it fails the saving throw, it is charmed by you for one hour per level, or until you or your companions do anything harmful to it. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.

You must maintain concentration during that time, as if you were casting a spell. If you lose concentration, affected creatures are no longer charmed by this ability.

The charmed creature regards you as a friendly acquaintance. When this effect ends, the creature knows it was charmed by you.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common, Deep Speech, and Undercommon.

### Playing a Neogi

Neogi are nimble and able to get around easily thanks to spider climb, but they lack natural armor and their natural weapons are weaker than most manufactured weapons. Consider classes like ranger and rogue, but also consider warlock to take advantage of neogi's close association with the evil stars that are frequently the source of power for warlocks service a Great Old One patron. As you gain levels, consider taking the Neogi Master feat to improve your characters stats, and to claim your rightful rank as a master among your people.

Neogi are slavers by nature, conquering and enslaving whatever creatures they can. Neogi are especially fond of umber hulk slaves, and have tamed and traded umber hulks for an unknowably long time. A party with an umber hulk serving a neogi master is a good start, and other party members can fill in gaps around that pairing.

### Design Notes

Neogi come in three version: hatchling, adult, and master. The hatchling is the weakest, but aside from numerical changes it lackson the Enslave ability. The master is the largest, aside from numerical changes it only gains the spellcasting abilities of a 7<sup>th</sup>-level Warlock. The limited differences in their stat blocks makes it difficult to draw meaningful distinctions between the three. So instead of three subraces, we'll present just two: the hatchling, and the adult neogi. Then we'll add Neogi Master as a racial feat. We'll look



at the common items between the neogi hatchling and the adult neogi before we discuss their differences.

Neogi are aberrations, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

From the stat blocks, we get 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and Spider Climb for 1. The art portrays neogi with three-fingered hands with an opposable thumb, so we'll say that they have hands. Since they have hands, we'll drop their natural weapons to 1d4 for 1 BP

Mental Fortitude is Fey Ancestry with resistance to frightened added on. Fey Ancestry is 0.5 BP, and resistance to one condition is another 0.25 BP.

That brings us to 5.25 BP before we consider individual subraces.

### Neogi Hatchling

Much like we did with the Fire Snake (the juvenile form of the Salamander; see the original Monstrous Races), the neogi hatchling is going to be weaker than the adult neogi. I don't want players to feel like aging into adulthood is a handicap, and generally adventuring as a child shouldn't be mechanically beneficial.

Neogi hatchlings have terrible ability scores, but their Dexterity is still good, so we'll give them +1 Dexterity for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get tiny size for -1.5 BP, 20 ft. walking speed for 0 BP, 20 ft. climb speed for 1.5 BP, and no languages for -3 BP.

At 3.25 BP, the Neogi hatchling is below our target range of 8-10 BP.

### Neogi Adult

The adult neogi's best ability scores are Dexterity and Charisma, but we don't have a lot of BP to spend so we'll just grant +1 Dexterity for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size for -1 BP, we'll drop natural armor to conserve BP, 30 ft. walking speed for 0.5 BP, 30 ft. climb speed for 2 BP, and racial languages plus Common and one additional fixed language for 0.25 BP.

Enslave presents a serious problem. As-written, it's *dominate monster* with no Concentration component and a 24-hour duration on a short rest recharge. No part of that is okay for a player race. We'll need to make considerable cuts to make it fair.

Downgrading the effect from domination to charm is a good step, but 5e doesn't have a *charm monster* spell to compare to. The closest we can get is *charm person*, so we'll start there for lack of a better option. *Charm person* once per day would be 1 BP. That's a good start, but it doesn't really hit the "enslave all creatures" feel of the Neogi. If we broaden the effect to all creatures,

it's hard to guess what the BP value would be, but 3 BP sounds about right. That's more than we can reasonably afford at this point, so we'll add a concentration requirement, call it 2 BP, and hope for the best.

At 10 BP, the neogi adult is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Neogi, add a Charisma increase. If you want to weaken the Neogi, remove spider climb or remove its natural weapons.

### Neogi Master

Similar to how we adapted the Darkling Elder as a feat, we'll adapt the Neogi Master as a feat. Players can take it to signify their advancement within Neogi society, but might go their whole careers occupying councils but not being granted the rank of master.

Bumping the neogi up to medium size costs 1 BP. Increasing the neogi's natural weapons to 1d8 costs another 1 BP. Finally, we'll add a +1 Charisma increase.

That brings our total to 3 BP, which is our target BP for feats.

## Neothelid

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Mind flayer tadpoles that outgrew their tank, neothelids are enormous worm-like creatures with vicious tentacles and acidic breath.

### Neothelid Traits

Neothelids share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Abberation.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent but still hideously evil, most Neothelids are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Acid Breath.** As an action, you can breathe lightning in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. A creature takes 2d6 acid damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. The damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5<sup>th</sup> level (3d6), 11<sup>th</sup> level (4d6), and 17<sup>th</sup> level (5d6).

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Flail Tentacles.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 bludgeoning and 1d4 psychic damage on a hit.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** You can cast *mage hand* once per day. Once you reach 3<sup>rd</sup> level, you can cast *levitate* once per day. Your spellcasting ability for these spells is Wisdom.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in undercommon.

### Playing a Neothelid

Strong and durable, Neothelids make natural barbarians and fighters. Their acid breath gives them a helpful way to handle crowds of foes, and their psionics allow them to overcome challenges which they lack of hands and inability to fly.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence on your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

### Design Notes

The neothelid doesn't have any abilities that we haven't seen before, so we won't have any issues adapting it. Like other unintelligent creatures, we'll treat the Neothelid as awakened.

Neothelids are aberrations, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Neothelid has high Strength and Constitution like most big dumb monsters, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from gargantuan), +3 natural armor (down from +8) for 1.5 BP, 30 ft. walking speed, we'll drop blindsight to conserve BP, but we'll add 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP. Since we're treating the Neothelid as awakened, we'll grant the ability to speak Undercommon for 0 BP. Neothelids have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

Like we've done with other creatures like the Elder Brain, we'll drop Creature Sense. We'll also drop Magic Resistance and the Neothelid's ability to swallow creatures whole.

The Neothelid has impressive innate spellcasting for a giant unintelligent worm. We can't replicate it

perfectly, but we can give the Neothelid some basic innate spellcasting. We'll grant *levitate* once per day for 1 BP and *mage hand* once per day for 0.25 BP. We won't grant an innate focus because Neothelids generally aren't spellcasters.

Finally, we'll add a breath weapon for 2 BP.

At 9.25 BP, the Neothelid is within our target BP range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Neothelid, add Grab or increase its natural armor. If you want to weaken the Neothelid, reduce its natural armor.

## Nilbog

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The Nilbog is represented by the Nilbog Spirit, presented in the Magic Items section later in this document.

### Design Notes

The Nilbog, despite its low CR and fairly short list of special abilities, is a perplexing design challenge. It's presented with its own stat block, but it's not really a creature on its own: it's a divine spirit that attaches to a goblin. How do we present that as an option for players? It doesn't make sense as a race because it's a goblin plus some stuff.

That leaves feats, templates, and items. Using a feat or a template would be my normal method, but I don't think either of those quite work here. Feats and templates generally can't be removed without something significant happening, and the Nilbog is technically free to depart and go inhabit some other goblin whenever it pleases.

So I guess we're writing an item. This feels super weird because the nilbog is a spirit, but the spirit itself doesn't have stats and it can't be interacted with except by affecting the goblin it inhabits.

We'll start by looking at the stuff which the Nilbog spirit applies to the goblin host. The "Nilbogism" sidebar conveniently spells out the effects for us. The spirit forcibly possesses the host, then the host becomes chaotic evil and gains a bunch of stuff. For the most part it's straightforward, but this is clearly a creature built to be beaten on by a party of adventurers. We'll need to make some tweaks and expand the text a little bit to remove potential confusion and complications at the table.

The possession mechanic deserves some discussion. It's normally something that happens behind the scenes, and some nameless goblin gets promoted to nilbog status largely by accident. But in a group of PCs, there might only be one goblin, so they naturally

become the target of the nilbog spirit. In an evil party changing alignment might not be an issue, but if the party is all lawful good heroes it could be a serious problem. In a way, the possession is a curse, so we'll present it as such.

Nilbogism and Reveal of Fortune are powerful abilities. A player with Reveal of Fortune might be able to solo high-level spellcasters because the spellcaster might not have spells that deal damage more than once in a given round. Alternatively, the Nilbog could allow an ally to beat them until they returned to full hit points at no cost. I was hoping to avoid making structural changes to the Nilbog because what we're doing is already so weird, but I think we'll change Reversal of Fortune to allow the Nilbog to spend a hit die. That adds a built-in cap, and also allows the Nilbog to benefit from higher Constitution or larger hit dice rather than healing a d6 once per round at high levels.

## Orcs

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Volo's Guide to Monsters presents six new orcs. Racial traits for the Tanarukk are presented below

### Tanarukk

The result of demonic corruption within an orc tribe, the Tanarukk are considered violent abominations even among orcs. On the battlefield Tanarukk are powerful warriors, but outside of battle they are a danger to their allies.

#### Tanarukk Traits

Tanarukks share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fiend (demon, orc)

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Created by demonic influence and raised among violent savages, most tanarukks are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, you can move up to your speed toward a hostile creature that you can see.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 piercing damage on a hit.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Damage Resistance.** You have resistance to fire damage.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 11 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Unbridled Fury.** After being hit by a critical hit from a melee attack, you can make one melee weapon against the attacker as a reaction.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Abyssal, Common, and Orc.

#### Playing a Tanarukk

Tanarukks thrive in melee combat. Their natural armor and their natural weapons provide good fallback options, but you're probably better off using manufactured equipment. Try to draw enough attacks to trigger Unbridled Fury, but be careful not to let yourself take too much damage all at once. Consider feats like Durable to increase your hit point maximum, and be sure to improve your Constitution score when you can. Consider durable classes like barbarian, fighter, and paladin.

Tanarukk obviously fit well into a party of orcs and half-orcs, but they may also find a place in a party of demons or demon worshippers. Warlocks, evil clerics, and other unpleasant characters might find you to be a powerful and like-minded ally.

#### Design Notes

After the craziness that was the Nilbog Spirit, it's nice to get back to something straightforward like orcs. Oh, is that an orc plague monster? Well, nevermind then.

Volo's Guide to Monsters presents an impressive 6 new orc stat blocks, each with unique flavor and most with totally new abilities. Under the hood, the first 5 orcs are all still your garden-variety orc, which means we're going to be writing a bunch of feats. In a normal D&D setting like Forgotten Realms, there's a practical in-world limitation that would make taking more than one of these feats impossible, but because I can't assume what setting you're using, I won't bother writing such a restriction. If you want your orcs to collect religious devotion feats like trading cards, go for it.

The Tanarukk is unique enough that it will be its own race. They'll end up being similar to orcs, but they're still different enough to not be a subrace.

We'll look at each new orc individually.

#### Orc Blade of Ilneval

The Blade of Ilneval adds two abilities: Foe Smiter of Ilneval, and Ilneval's Command.

For Smiter of Ilneval, as written, isn't going to work for our purposes because it's simply too powerful. Every orc fighter in the world would take it, grab a greataxe, and murder their way through the game largely unimpeded. We could add the effect onto

critical hits, but I want half-orcs to be able to take these feats too, and a half-orc dealing 3d12 on a critical hit with a greataxe is a bit too appealing.

I think we'll borrow some inspiration from the Paladin's Divine Smite. We'll allow the damage to apply on a successful melee weapon attack. Of course, we can't assume that the orc has spell slots to feed into the ability, so we'll limit it to once per short rest. We'll also make the damage scale to keep it relevant at higher levels.

We also need to consider how much damage the ability should add. One damage die makes greataxes much more appealing for orcs, which isn't necessarily bad, but it makes me wonder why the published Blade of Ilneval doesn't use a greataxe.

I think we'll set the bonus damage to a fixed 1d8, and scale it at the same rate that cantrips scale. Cantrips are normally 0.5 BP, but this won't require an additional action so we'll call this 1 BP.

That brings us to Ilneval's Command. We've got roughly 2 BP to work with, and the effect is very powerful. There aren't many examples to compare this to, which makes adapting the ability challenging. The closest I can think of are the Gnoll's Rampage ability and the *haste* spell, but the only similarities are that you can get an extra attack.

This is weird, but I'm going to dip back into previous editions for inspiration here. 4<sup>th</sup> edition had a lot of abilities which let you give allies extra attacks (check out the Warlord class), but 4<sup>th</sup> edition is difficult for me to adapt to 5<sup>th</sup> edition because I'm less familiar with it than 3<sup>rd</sup> edition or 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

Instead, we'll look at the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition spell *snake's swiftness*. *Snake's swiftness* was a 1<sup>st</sup>-level druid spell (or 2<sup>nd</sup>-level sorcerer/wizard, but that's not important) which allowed one ally to make a single attack. *Mass snake's swiftness* was 2<sup>nd</sup>-level and affected all allies in a small area. Most spells didn't change spell level when they were converted to 5<sup>th</sup> edition, so we can squint a little bit and pretend that *mass snake's swiftness* got the same treatment. That hits our 2 BP target with a fairly similar spell to compare Ilneval's Command to, provided that we limit Ilneval's Command to once per day.

We can replace *mass snake's swiftness's* area of effect with "3 allied orcs in range" without adjusting the BP, and the range on *mass snake's swiftness* would probably be set to somewhere around 120 feet when converting to 5<sup>th</sup> edition (3<sup>rd</sup> edition spells had variable ranges based on your level), so no change there.

That basically gives us our ability unchanged from the stat block (except the recharge part) for 2 BP. We'll expand it to allow half-orcs, and we'll call it good.

That brings the Blade of Ilneval feat to 3 BP, which is our target for feats. If you want to strengthen the feat, allow Ilneval's Command to be used once per short rest or change the bonus damage of Foe Smiter of Ilneval to one weapon damage die. If you want to weaken the feat, reduce the die size of Foe Smiter of Ilneval to 1d6.

#### Orc Claw of Luthic

The Claw of Luthic is a cleric. Their spells all come from the cleric spell list. Their only new ability that isn't a spell is their claws, and while natural weapons are great, that's a pretty disappointing feat on its own.

We'll add 1d8 natural weapons for 2 BP, and we'll add a +1 Wisdom increase for another 1 BP. That will make it reasonably appealing for orc clerics, but not so powerful that orc clerics will regret not taking it.

That brings the Claw of Luthic feat to 3 BP, which is our target for feats. If you want to strengthen the feat, add a free cleric cantrip. If you want to weaken the feat, reduce the natural weapon damage.

#### Orc Hand of Yurtrus

The Hand of Yurtrus is another orc cleric. They have a different spell list from the Claw of Luthic, but they're still a cleric.

Instead of claws, they get Touch of the White Hand. It's an interesting trade-off. Claws are a natural weapon, so they benefit from things like Extra Attack and high Strength. Touch of the White hand is a melee weapon attack, but it deals damage a fixed damage amount like a spell. Reworking *chill touch* into a melee attack would be pretty simple, but I'm not settled on that idea just yet, if only because it's only 0.5 BP.

Similar to the Claw of Luthic feat, adding an ability increase is a good idea. The Hand of Yurtrus has mostly terrible ability scores, and even its Wisdom is poor for a cleric, but its Constitution is excellent, so we'll add a +1 Constitution increase.

Hands of Yurtrus also remove their tongue. Inability to speak is normally -1.5 BP, but it looks like the Orc Hand of Yurtrus can still perform verbal components, so we'll call that -1 BP instead. But now we need something to offset that BP cost. The Orc Hand of Yurtrus has more skills than most orcs, so'll add a skill proficiency for 0.5 BP. We'll also add a free cleric cantrip for 1 BP.

At just 2 BP, the Hand of Yurtrus feat is below our target of 3 BP for feats, but it's already complicated and bulky, so adding more will probably make things

worse. If you want to strengthen the feat, add another cleric cantrip. If you want to rework the feat, make the touch effect a normal natural weapon and remove the damage scaling.

#### Orc Nurtured One of Yurtrus

The Nurtured One of Yurtrus is mostly straightforward. Resistance to disease and poison is 0.5 BP (they aren't resistant to poison damage, just the status effect), and Corrupted Carrier is close to the Magmin's Death Burst ability.

Death Burst is 1 BP. Changing the damage type from fire to poison and changing the saving throw type won't change the BP value. The big change is adding the Poisoned condition. There aren't a lot of abilities available to players which apply the Poisoned condition, which makes assessing the BP value difficult. Perhaps the best comparison is Stench, which can also poison foes for up to a minute, but doesn't do damage and doesn't require to drop to 0 hit points.

If we grant Corrupted Carrier as-written, I think we can call it something like 2 BP. We'll add Corrupted Vengeance as a freebie because I don't see a lot of players nearly killing themselves to intentionally trigger this unless it's an exceptionally good idea at the time. We'll also drop the Death Burst damage die to d6s to match the original Corrupted Carrier effect.

That brings the Nurtured one of Yurtrus feat to 3 BP, which is our target for feats. If you want to strengthen the feat, increase the damage die.

#### Orc Red Fang if Shargaas

This is the closest orcs get to a rogue. A race with a Strength increase and nothing that touches Dexterity doesn't get used for Dexterity-centric classes. But the Orc Red Fang of Shargaas indicates that there is a place for rogues in orcish society.

Red fangs add three abilities to the orc stat block: Cunning Action, Hand of Shargaas, Shargaas's Sight, Slayer, and Veil of Shargaas. Cunning Action is the same as the 1<sup>st</sup>-level Rogue class feature, and Slayer matches the Assassin subclass's Assassinate class feature, so we can conveniently make 3 level of rogue a prerequisite for the feat.

Hand of Shargaas works just like Foe Slayer of Ilneval (see the Orc Blade of Ilneval design notes, above), but I think we're going to approach it differently. Red fangs are thieves and assassins, and the Orc Red Fang of Shargaas conveniently uses a weapon with d6 damage dice. We'll attribute that bonus damage to Sneak Attack (ignoring Multiattack and the lack of actual

Sneak Attack mechanics) and otherwise ignore the ability.

The leaves us with Shargaas's Sight and Veil of Shargaas. Shargaas's Sight is Devil's Sight, which is 1 BP. Veil of Shargaas is just the Darkness spell once per short rest. That's 5 BP, which is too much for a feat, so we'll drop it to once per long rest for 2 BP. The combination of the two is a fantastic tactical option, granting the red hand a significant tactical advantage against anything that doesn't also have Devil's Sight.

That brings the Red Hand of Shargaas feat to 3 BP, which is our target for feats. If you want to strengthen the feat, allow Darkness to be cast after a short rest. If you want to weaken the feat, limit Darkness to be cast on the player's current position rather than at 60-foot range.

#### Tanarukk

In many ways, the Tanarukk is to orcs what the Tiefling is to humans: offspring tainted by fiendish influence. But where tieflings look demonic but aren't necessarily evil, tanarukks are chaotic evil and generally exist to murder things and cause trouble. Mechanically, they're no more complicated than a typical humanoid. Their only new ability is Unbridled Fury.

Tanarukks are fiends, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Tanarukk's ability scores are your standard Strength and Constitution setup. It's interesting to note that they have less Wisdom and Charisma than the generic orc, but we're trying to avoid ability score penalties so we can't do much with that information. We'll grant +1 Strength and +1 Constitution for 2 BP, but we'll need to save BP to cover the Tanarukk's other abilities.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +1 natural armor (down from +3) for 0.5 BP, 30 ft. speed, fire resistance for 2 BP, we'll drop poison resistance to save BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, racial languages plus common and one additional fixed language for 0.25 BP, Aggressive for 1 BP, and we'll drop their natural weapons to 1d4 for 1 BP.

That brings us to 9.25 BP before we consider Magic Resistance and Unbridled Fury. We'll drop Magic Resistance like we usually do, but Unbridled Fury is the Tanarukk's signature ability so I want to keep it. As-written it's far too powerful for a player, so we'll need to rework it.

The core of the ability is that the Tanarukk gets hit, then makes a counterattack as a reaction. We can't allow that to happen every round, or players will be incentivized to run into combat with no AC, and class

features like the Barbarian's Reckless Attack will be too appealing. I also don't want to limit the ability to recharging on a rest, or players will rush to trigger it early in a fight then forget about it. Instead, we'll let the ability trigger when the Tanarukk suffers a critical hit from a melee attack. That sounds nice and angry, which fits the theme of the ability, and it will still function tanarukks who invest in their AC because critical hits don't care about your AC. We'll drop automatic Advantage on the attack, and we'll call it 1 BP.

At 10.5 BP, the Tanarukk is slightly above our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Tanarukk, increase its natural armor or add resistance to poison damage. If you want to weaken the Tanarukk, remove its natural armor or natural weapons.

## Quicklings

Tiny humanoid-like fey creatures famed for their astounding speed.



### Quickling Traits

Quicklings share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fey.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** While not directly violent, quicklings are cruel pranksters who never miss an opportunity to cause mischief. Most quicklings are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is tiny.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 60 ft.

**Blurred Movement.** You may take the Dash action as a bonus action.

By moving exceptionally fast, you can move so quickly that you become an indistinguishable blur. If, on your turn, you take the Dash action and expend your full movement (including the additional movement provided by the Dash action) without re-entering a space which you just exited, you become difficult to attack. All attacks made against you until the beginning of your next turn suffer Disadvantage. If you take damage of any kind, this effect immediately ends.

**Evasion.** When you are subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common and Sylvan.

### Playing a Quickling

#### Design Notes

Quicklings present an interesting design challenge for two reasons: first, their speed is wildly outside of the values we've seen previously; second, Blurred Movement and Evasion are two extremely powerful defensive options which normally require magic items, high-level spells, or high-level class features.

Quicklings are fey, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

Quicklings are all about Dexterity, so we'll give them +1 Dexterity for 1 BP. I want to give them more, but we'll need to save BP room for their more interesting traits.

From the stat block, we get tiny size for -1.5 BP, 60 ft. walking speed (down from 120 ft.) for 3 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and racial languages plus Common for 0 BP.

That brings us to 5 BP before we touch Blurred Movement or Evasion.

Blurred Movement largely mimics the effects of the Blur spell, but it's constant. This is roughly the effect of the Cloak of Displacement, which is an extremely powerful rare magic item. This is an extremely powerful effect, so we'll need to add some limitations. My first thought is to require that players take the Dash action, but rogues with Cunning Action can abuse that easily, and other classes basically wouldn't use it unless they're running away. I still want there to be a

movement requirement because the version in the monster entry means that a quickling standing perfectly still (not that they do that often) is still blurred.

To limit the ability, we'll require that the quickling take the Dash action, but we'll also add the ability to Dash as a bonus action for 2 BP (we've previously ruled that individual parts of Cunning action are worth roughly 2 BP, including the goblin design notes in the original *Monstrous Races*), and we'll require that the Quickling move its full movement (including the Dash distance) on their turn without re-entering a space which they just left. Finally, we'll borrow from the Cloak of Displacement and end the effect for the turn if the Quickling takes any damage. This is still a fantastic ability, so we'll call it 4 BP total.

Evasion is a 7<sup>th</sup>-level rogue class feature, so giving it out as a racial trait is hard. We haven't previously touched on proficiency in saving throws, or anything of the sort. The closest we've gone is Poison Resilience and resistance to specific conditions. We'll need to try something creative.

We've previously decided that a feat is worth roughly 3 BP (the choice of any feat is worth 4 because options to choose from are always more valuable than the individual options). Mathematically, Advantage on a check is worth roughly +5, which is within the range of values for proficiency bonus. So, with a little bit of squinting we can say that Proficiency and Advantage can be roughly the same value. Now we can consider the Resilient feat as a basis for Evasion. If we start from 3 BP and strip away the +1 ability increase, proficiency in a saving throw is worth something like 2 BP. So we'll call Evasion 2 BP.

At 11 BP, the Quickling is above our target range of 8-10 BP. It's a strange race, and sinking so much BP into movement is unusual enough that it's difficult to accurately assess how balanced the race is. If you want to strengthen the Quickling, allow Blurred Movement to trigger any time the Quickling takes the Dash action. If you want to weaken the Quickling, reduce its speed or alter Evasion to make it function once per short rest.

## Redcap

Short, bloodthirsty fey famous for their bloody red hats.

### Redcap Traits

Redcaps share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fey.

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength, +2 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Evil and murderous, most redcaps are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 25 ft.

**Bloody Red Cap.** You are born into the world with a red cap soaked in blood, and this cap is central to your existence. You must soak the cap in fresh blood from time to time to stay alive. If your cap goes three days without being soaked in fresh blood, you die and your body instantly vanishes from existence, leaving behind any items you were carrying except your red cap and your iron boots.

You may never willingly remove your red cap except to soak it in fresh blood. If your cap is removed by force, you can recall it as a bonus action, causing it to magically reappear on your head.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Iron Boots.** You always wear heavy iron boots, which you cannot remove. While moving, you have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

**Ironbound Pursuit.** If you move at least 15 feet straight toward a creature then hit it with an unarmed strike on the same turn, you may attempt to shove the target prone as a bonus action (see "Shoving a Creature", page 195 of the *Player's Handbook*).

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Outsize Strength.** While grappling, you are considered to be Medium size. Also, wielding a heavy weapon doesn't impose disadvantage on your attack rolls.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common and Sylvan.



## Playing a Redcap

Redcaps are aggressive and dangerous in melee. Iron Boots is a great way to start combat, and their ability to use heavy weapons allows redcaps to use more dangerous weapons than small creatures can normally use without disadvantage. Be sure to keep track of how recently you've soaked your cap, though. Dying unexpedily because you forgot to keep your cap fresh is a terrible way to go.

Evil and aggressive, a redcap is welcome in all sorts of evil parties. Demons, other evil fey, or violent humanoids might all find a means to conjure redcaps, or they might enlist one by promising it a reliable supply of victims.

## Design Notes

Redcaps have a few interesting design challenges. Outsize Strength cuts away many of small size's biggest limitations, and Iron Boots presents a rare built-in racial handicap. Other than that, redcaps are fairly simple.

Redcaps are fey, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Redcap's best ability scores are Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +2 to each for 4 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size (we'll discuss the BP later), +2 natural armor for 1 BP, 25 ft. speed for 0 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and racial languages plus common for 0 BP.

That brings us to 5.5 BP before we look at the Redcap's weird sizing, Iron Boots, and Ironbound Pursuit.

Small size is typically -1 BP, and comes with some limitations: you can't use heavy weapons effectively, your carrying capacity is reduced, your grappling options are limited, and smaller creatures can swallow you whole. There are also less mechanical limitations like having trouble climbing things or reaching high shelves, but since those aren't enforced mechanically they aren't addressed by the BP value. Outsize Strength allows the Redcap to use heavy weapons and treats it as medium while grappling, which is significant enough that I think we can call it 0.5 BP, which will partially offset the -1 BP for small size.

Iron Boots imposes disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, and we don't have a precedent for built-in disadvantage on ability checks. I think -0.5 BP is a fair estimate because it's entirely possible for a character to survive as an adventurer without sneaking.

That leaves Ironbound Pursuit. If you squint a little bit it's functionally the same as Pounce for 1.5 BP.

While it's not called out in the stat block, the Redcap's hat is a central theme in the creature description. If the hat isn't periodically soaked in fresh blood, the redcap ceases to exist. Adventurers tend to spend a lot of time killing things, so this shouldn't be a significant handicap, but it's worth listing it in the racial traits to keep the flavor of the race.

At 8 BP, the redcap is at the bottom of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Redcap, increase its natural armor. If you want to weaken the Redcap, reduce its natural armor.

## Sea Spawn

Humanoids transformed into amphibious, fish-like humanoids to serve their aquatic masters.

### Sea Spawn Traits

Sea Spawn share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Humanoid.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Slaves to evil masters that grow to love their subjugation, most sea spawn are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 20 ft. You have a swim speed of 30 ft.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Piscine Anatomy.** Your anatomy is warped by your transformation, taking on vicious aquatic features. Select two of the three options below:

- **Bite.** Your jaw expands and you grow rows of jagged teeth. Your natural weapons deal 1d8 piercing damage when attacking with your bite.
- **Poison Quills.** You grow poisonous quills, which you can use to poison foes. You may make a melee weapon attack which deals 1d4 poison damage on a hit, and forces the struck creature to make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is poisoned for 1 minute.

The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. The target may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.



After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

- **Tentacle.** You grow a long, prehensile tentacle. You may make melee weapon attacks with the tentacle which deal 1d4 bludgeoning damage. On a hit, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple with the target. You may grapple even if you have no free hands, so long as your tentacle is not already being used to grapple.

**Slam.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

**Superior Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 120 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in Aquan and Common.

### Playing a Sea Spawn

Strong with natural armor and natural weapons, Sea Spawn work best in melee combat. Unfortunately, their slow land speed can limit their ability to fight on land. Do your best to surprise foes while you're up close, or look for ways to improve your movement speed. Barbarian is an especially tempting option because of Fast Movement, and because you won't need heavy armor which will slow you down more.

Because Sea Spawn were once other humanoids, you may wish to consider what race you were in a previous life. What did you do before you became a sea spawn? Who do you serve in your new life, and why?

Sea spawn work well in any party with powerful, aquatic magic creatures. Krakens, sea hags, deep scions, and even merfolk might bring along some sea spawn as bodyguards or servants.

### Design Notes

The Sea Spawn shares a lot of its concept with the Deep Scion, but there are some important distinctions. Deep Scions are created when a creature trades their service to save themselves from drowning, while Sea Spawn are transformed either because the subject has failed in some bargain, or because they were forced to submit to the transformation by some powerful master. Deep Scions serve as spies, going where their masters can't without giving away their true nature. Sea Spawn look like weird fish people, so they can't go among civilized folk without notice.

All that said, the Sea Spawn is still a transformed humanoid, rather than its own species. But, unlike the Deep Scion, the Sea Spawn doesn't attempt to cling to

its former species to pass among their former kind. So instead of a template, we'll make the Sea Spawn a normal race.

The Sea Spawn is simple. Its only real complication is Piscine Anatomy, but even that isn't difficult to handle.

Sea Spawn are humanoids, costing 0 BP and offering no specific abilities.

The Sea Spawn's abilities are terrible, but its Strength and Constitution are good, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +2 natural armor for 1 BP, 20 ft. walking speed for -1 BP, 30 ft. swim speed for 1 BP, 120 ft. Darkvision for 3 BP, racial languages plus Common for 0 BP, no ability to speak for -1.5 BP, Amphibious for 1 BP (Limited Amphibious doesn't justify a BP change in most campaigns), and 1d4 natural weapons for 1 BP.

That brings us to 6.5 BP before we touch Piscine Anatomy. It's a fun ability which adds some variety to the Sea Spawn as a race. With our current BP, I want the abilities to be somewhere around 2 BP, and they should be roughly equivalent so that no one option is more appealing than the others.

Bite, as written, would be worth just 0.5 BP. Even if we bump the damage up to 1d8, it's still only 1 BP.

Poison Quills adds the option of poison damage, and the poisoned condition. Poisoned is very strong, so we'll need to add some limitations. Stench is a good basis for comparison, but since Poison Quills only affects one creature it should be worth less than 2 BP. If we limit the damage to the Sea Spawn's default 1d4 natural weapon damage, and limit usage to once per short rest, I think we can call it 1 BP (the cost of the natural weapon damage is already covered).

Tentacle is easy: Grab is 2 BP. That's more than the other two abilities, so we won't increase the Sea Spawn's natural weapon damage to 1d6 to match the stat block, and we'll limit the natural weapon damage to the Sea Spawn's default 1d4.

Unfortunately, that means that Bite and Poison Quills fall behind Tentacle, and only one of our options brings the Sea Spawn into our target BP range. So as an easy fix, we'll allow the Sea Spawn to pick any two of the Piscine Anatomy options. That will bring us to 8.5 or 9.5 BP, which is perfect. Grab is technically the best option, but a lot of people don't like grappling, so Bite and Poison Quills still look appealing.

At 8.5 or 9.5 BP, the Sea Spawn is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Sea Spawn, grant all three Piscine Anatomy options. If you

want to weaken the Sea Spawn, limit players to only one Piscine Anatomy option.

## Shadow Mastiff

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Vicious, predatory pack hunters from the shadowfell.

### Shadow Mastiff Traits

share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength, +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Intelligent, ravenous hunters, most shadow mastiffs are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Ethereal Awareness.** You can see ethereal creatures and objects.

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Shadow Blend.** As a bonus action while in dim light or darkness, you can magically turn invisible until the start of your next turn or until you attack, make a damage roll, force someone to make a saving throw, or are no longer in dim light or darkness.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Sunlight Weakness.** While in sunlight, you have disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Shadow Mastiff

Fast and occasionally sneaky, shadow mastiffs make great front-line melee characters in a sneaky party. Their Dexterity increase and Shadow Blend offer some stealthy options not available to many similar creatures. Consider classes like barbarian and fighter, but also consider ranger and rogue to capitalize on your ability to ambush your foes.

Shadow mastiffs don't naturally associate with other creatures, but they can be summoned and bound to service using magic. Creatures which worship deities of darkness or night might summon a shadow mastiff to serve as a bodyguard, sentry, or pet.

### Design Notes

Shadow mastiffs are mechanically complicated despite their CR of 2. Their interactions with light make them difficult to adapt as a playable race, and they have several wholly unique special abilities. We'll need to borrow design work from several other creatures and do a lot of new stuff, too. Shadow mastiffs have 5 intelligence (the cap for the awaken spell), so we'll also treat the Shadow Mastiff as awakened like we usually do with unintelligent creatures.

Shadow mastiffs are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Shadow mastiff's best ability scores are Strength and Dexterity, but since we need to save BP for its long list of special abilities we'll only grant +2 Strength and +1 Dexterity for 3 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size, 40 ft. walking speed for 1 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, we'll add the ability to speak Common for 0 BP because we're treating the Shadow Mastiff as awakened, and Keen Hearing and Smell for 1 BP total, and Sunlight Weakness for -3 BP. Shadow Mastiffs have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings us to 5 BP before we look at the complicated stuff. We need to look at the Shadow Mastiff's damage resistance, Ethereal Awareness, and Shadow Blend.

Ethereal Awareness is very similar to Otherworldly Perception (see the Kuo-Toa design notes in the original Monstrous Races), but they're not quite the same. Otherworldly Perception allows you to detect invisible creatures, and you can't actually see creatures; you can only "pinpoint" them. Ethereal Awareness allows you to actually see ethereal creatures, but doesn't affect invisible creatures at all, so the ability trades invisibility detection for improved detection of ethereal creatures. I think we can allow the ability as-written for 2 BP.

Once you consider player-appropriate usage limitations, Shadow Blend has a lot in common with Hidden Step. If we add the dim light or darkness requirement to Hidden Step, I think we can call it 1 BP.

That just leaves the Shadow Mastiff's damage resistances. I don't want to grant them as-written

because that would be too powerful, but I want the Shadow Mastiff to get some defensive benefit while in dim light. Allowing the Shadow Mastiff to dodge as a bonus action might work, but that's still really strong.

I think the best we can do is an AC boost. Inhuman Reflexes grants +1 AC for 2 BP. If we add the lighting requirement, I think we can call it 1 BP.

At 9 BP, the Shadow Mastiff is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Shadow Mastiff, grant it natural armor. If you want to weaken the Shadow Mastiff, reduce its Strength increase.

## Slithering Tracker

Oozes created to seek out revenge upon those who harmed them in their previous life.

### Slithering Tracker Traits

Slithering Trackers share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Ooze.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Created from a creature that willingly sacrifices its own life to exact bloody revenge, most Slithering Trackers are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft. You have a climb speed of 30 ft. and a swim speed of 30 ft.

**Ambusher.** You have advantage on attack rolls against any creature you have surprised.

**Amoeboid.** Your body is a gelatinous, amoeboid form. You can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

You are unable to wear armor. You have no arms or hands, and are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

You are immune to the blinded, deafened, exhaustion, and prone conditions.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Damage Transfer.** While you are grappling a creature, you take only half the damage dealt to you, and the creature which you are grappling takes the other half.

**Damage Vulnerability.** You have vulnerability to cold and fire.

**False Appearance.** While motionless, you appear indistinguishable from a mundane puddle. You must spend one minute motionless before this ability takes

effect. You must maintain concentration during that time, as if you were casting a spell.

**Keen Tracker.** You add double your proficiency bonus on Wisdom checks to track prey.

**Life Leech.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 necrotic damage on a hit.

When you take the Attack action and make an unarmed strike, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple with the target of your successful unarmed strike.

**Spider Climb.** You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Watery Stealth.** You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made while underwater.

**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Slithering Tracker

The Slithering Tracker is a complicated race. They have no natural armor, can't wear manufactured armor, and are vulnerable to two common damage types, which means that they're vulnerable to damage and can't take a lot of hits even if you invest heavily in your Constitution. Look for other ways to boost your AC like Unarmored Defense or spells, and try to avoid drawing too much attention until you can get into melee.

But the Slither Tracker also has numerous advantages that make it dangerous in combat. Its movement speeds, Amoeboid, and Spider Climb allow it to easily traverse nearly any terrain, bypassing obstacles that normally require magic. False Appearance and Watery Stealth offer excellent options for a stealthy approach. Once you're in melee range, Life Leech allows you to quickly grapple foes, bringing Damage Transfer into play to deter other foes from attacking you while you continue to attack.

Slithering trackers are lonesome creatures, driven by a quest for vengeance, and once their quest is complete driven by the urge to lash out at anyone who might be related to their original target. Slithering trackers might fit into a party with similar themed creatures like Revenants, or they might ally themselves with creatures who performed the ritual to create the slithering tracker like clerics of gods of vengeance.

### Design Notes

Like most oozes, the Slithering Tracker has a long list of abilities, but it also has a lot of limitations. Fortunately nothing on the Slithering Tracker is new except Life Leech, so we shouldn't have too much trouble.

Slithering trackers are oozes, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Slithering Tracker's best ability scores are Strength and Dexterity, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, 30 ft. walking speed, 30 ft. climb speed for 2 BP, 30 ft. swim speed for 1 BP, vulnerability to cold and fire for -2 BP total, 9 condition immunities which we'll cut down to 4 for 1 BP total, and we'll drop blindsight to conserve BP. We'll give the tracker Common and one other language for 0.5 BP, but they can't speak for -1.5 BP. Slithering Trackers have no hands for -2 BP, and can't use armor or shields for -4 BP, but we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP, and we'll add Grab for 2 BP.

That brings us to just 1.5 BP before we consider the Slithering Tracker's special abilities, which is good because there's a lot to cover. Ambusher is 1 BP. We can copy Damage Transfer from the Rug of Smothering (see the original Monstrous Races) for 4 BP. False Appearance is 0.5 BP. We can replace Keen Tracker with single-purpose Expertise for 1 BP. Liquid Form is basically the same as Amorphous for 0.5 BP. Spider Climb is 1 BP. Watery Stealth is Camouflage for 0.5 BP. That's 10 total, which is perfect.

At 10 BP, the Slithering Tracker is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Slithering Tracker, add Grab. If you want to weaken the Slithering Tracker, reduce its natural armor.

## Spawn of Kyuss

Undead animated by magical worms originally created by Kyuss, a high priest of Orcus.

### Spawn of Kyuss Traits

Spawn of Kyuss share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Undead. You don't require air, food, drink, or sleep. Instead, you enter a restful state, remaining semiconscious, for 4 hours a day. While resting, you can dream after a fashion; such dreams are reflexive mental exercises inherent to your consciousness. After resting in this way, you gain the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Undead created to spread like a plague, most spawn of kyuss are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Burrowing Worm.** As an action you can launch an undead worm at a humanoid within 10 feet. The target must make a Constitution saving throw or immediately

take 1 piercing damage. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. Creatures which are resistant to this piercing damage make this saving throw with advantage, while creatures immune to this piercing damage are immune to this effect.

At the end of the target's turn, it takes 2d6 necrotic damage if the worm is still alive and attached to the target. After dealing this damage once, the worm detaches from the target and is destroyed. The worm remains attached to the target and does damage for one additional round at 5<sup>th</sup> level (2 rounds), at 11<sup>th</sup> level (3 rounds), and at 17<sup>th</sup> level (4 rounds).

The worm is a Tiny undead with AC 6, 1 hit point, a 2 (-4) in every ability score, and a speed of 1 foot. While on the target's skin, the worm can be killed by normal means, or any creature that can reach the worm can scrape it off as an action, removing any other worms on the target with the same action. If a worm-infested creature is targeted by an effect that cures disease or removes a curse, all the worms infesting it are destroyed. Destroyed worms fall off of the target and wither away to dust.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 slashing damage on a hit.

**Regeneration.** You are able to recover from wounds with horrifying speed. As a bonus action, you may spend a Hit Die to recover hit points.

You are vulnerable to acid, fire, and radiant. If you take acid, fire, or radiant damage, you may not use your regeneration trait to recover hit points or re-attach limbs until the end of your next turn.

When you take a short or long rest, you regain spent Hit Dice, up to a number of dice equal to half of your total number of them, rounded up.

**Undead Nature.** You are immune to poison damage, and immune to the poisoned condition.

**Worms.** If you are targeted by an effect that cures disease or removes a curse, all the worms infesting you wither away, and you loses your Burrowing Worm ability until you complete a long rest.

**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in Common and one other language of your choice which is spoken by humanoids.



## Playing a Spawn of Kyuss

The Spawn of Kyuss is hard to kill thanks to regeneration, but three damage vulnerabilities mean that many foes may be able to halt your regeneration. Look for classes with large hit dice and invest in your Constitution. Burrowing Worm provides a useful way to harm foes who might run away or whose AC proves difficult to overcome.

The Spawn of Kyuss is created by followers of the god of undeath. They fit well into parties with death clerics, necromancer wizards, and all manner of undead.

## Design Notes

In the original *Monstrous Races*, I wrote zombies as a template. I wanted every living creature to have the option of becoming a zombie, just as Orcus intended. The Spawn of Kyuss is, simply put, a fancy zombie. If you enjoy zombie media, you might know of plague zombies, radiation zombies, fast zombies, magic zombies, juju zombies, and all sorts of other weird zombie varieties. If we collectively refer to these variations on the classic shambling corpse as “fancy zombies”, I think it’s fair to place the Spawn of Kyuss in that group.

Of course, this is also the first fancy zombie that we’ve covered, which means that it’s time to answer some interesting questions about how to implement fancy zombies mechanically.

We implemented zombies as a non-leveled template so that you could be a 1<sup>st</sup>-level human zombie fighter without the messy “level adjustment” mechanics of third edition. While that was a great idea for the generic zombie, it might not work as a decision for the Spawn of Kyuss because it has too many expensive traits to hit the 0 BP target for a non-leveled template. The Spawn of Kyuss retains nothing from its former life except languages known, so making it a leveled template doesn’t make sense either.

Since neither form of template makes sense, we’ll write the Spawn of Kyuss as a standalone creature. Fortunately, the Spawn of Kyuss can only be a humanoid, and humanoid NPC stat blocks tend to gloss over most of the racial traits granted to players.

For other forms of fancy zombies (if they ever pop up in official rules supplements) we may make other decisions like making a “Fast Zombie” feat, but the Spawn of Kyuss will be its own standalone race.

Spawn of Kyuss are undead, costing 1 BP.

The Spawn of Kyuss has mostly terrible ability scores, especially on the mental side, but its Strength and Constitution are good, so we’ll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, 30 ft. walking speed, poison immunity for 2 BP, and we’ll drop immunity to exhaustion to save BP. We’ll give the spawn of Kyuss racial Common plus one flexible language for 0.5 BP, but it can’t speak for -1.5 BP. We’ll drop the spawn’s natural weapons to 1d4 for 1 BP and expect them to rely upon manufactured weapons primarily.

That brings us to 5 BP before we look at Regeneration, Worms, and Burrowing Worm. That’s a problem because Regeneration on its own is 5 BP with two damage vulnerabilities. We also have a lot of overlap with trolls, so I want to make sure that the Spawn of Kyuss is mechanically unique enough to not be an undead version of the Troll racial traits.

Further comparison to trolls gives me some ideas. The Spawn of Kyuss doesn’t have any damage vulnerabilities like trolls do, but adding some might be a good idea. Bonuses to Strength and Constitution combined with regeneration and no need to eat or sleep make it a bit too ideal as a barbarian or a fighter. We’ll add vulnerability to acid, fire, and radiant for -1 BP total (remember that Regeneration’s 5 BP includes two vulnerabilities). That brings us back down to 9 BP and leaves us with little room to look at Worms and Burrowing Worm.

Worms is an extremely rare weakness. I don’t think players will see a lot of enemies attempting to cure

them of diseases or curses, so we'll retain the ability as-written for 0 BP.

That just leaves Burrowing Worm. Like we've done with other undead that create spawn, we'll drop the spawn mechanic. We don't need players generating a bunch of CR 5 creatures to let loose on the world. But I still want to keep the ability to shoot worms at people because it's central to the creature's theme.

With so little BP to spend, we'll need to make Burrowing Worm the equivalent of a cantrip. I really want it to be more interesting than that, but we just don't have room to spend more BP.

I like the damage-over-time aspect of Burrowing Worm, but we also need to be cautious about making it too powerful. Fortunately, *poison spray* is an easy comparison. It has the same 10-foot range, and deals 1d12 damage at first level, roughly equivalent to Burrowing Worm's 2d6. If we stretch the damage out over several rounds, Burrowing Worm has the potential to deal less damage than Poison Spray at the cost of the target spending an action (or at least an attack) to detach the worm. Amazingly, that keeps the ability as-written in the Spawn of Kyuss stat mostly unchanged. As usual for cantrips, this will cost 0.5 BP.

At 9.5 BP, the Spawn of Kyuss is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Spawn of Kyuss, increase its natural weapon damage. If you want to weaken the Spawn of Kyuss, add a Concentration requirement to Burrowing Worm.

## Tlincalli

Vicious scorpion-like hunters with humanoid upper bodies.

### Tlincalli Traits

Tlincalli share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Uncivilized predatory hunters that feed live prey to their young, most Tlincalli are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 14 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Sting.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

The first time you successfully attack a creature with your sting, you inject the target with poison. Your attack deals 1d4 piercing and 1d4 poison damage instead of your normal unarmed strike damage, and forces the struck creature to make a Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is poisoned for 1 minute.

The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. The target may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

After you attempt to poison a creature, you can't do so again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Tlincalli.

### Playing a Tlincalli

The Tlincalli is a simple creature with few complications. Its natural armor is good enough to compete with medium armor, and if you can increase your Dexterity enough you can be able to exceed the AC normally provided by full plate, all while being as fast as a horse. In addition, the Tlincalli's Sting allows you to temporarily handicap problematic foes by poisoning them.

Tlincalli have little in the way of culture, and no known allies. However, they might choose to become obedient to a creature which proves itself to be a superior hunter.

### Design Notes

Basically centaurs, but scorpions instead of horses. Mechanically the Tlincalli is simple, so we won't need to do anything crazy. Their biggest g

Tlincalli are monstrosities, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Tlincalli's base ability scores are Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +4 natural armor for 2 BP, 40 ft. walking speed for 1 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and only racial languages for -1 BP.

The Tlincalli's sting does poison damage and has a paralysis rider. We can't grant paralysis because it's too strong, unfortunately, but I still want to give the Tlincalli something because without their spiked chain they're really boring. I think we'll borrow the poison rider from the Sea Spawn's Spiked Quills for 1 BP, and we'll set the Tlincalli's natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

At 8.5 BP, the Tlincalli is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Tlincalli, improve

its ability score increases. If you want to weaken the Tlincalli, reduce its natural armor.

## Trapper

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Flat creatures that ambush, envelop, and digest their prey.

### Trapper Traits

Trappers share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Monstrosity.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, most trappers are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 10 ft. You have a climb speed of 10 ft.

**Blindsight.** You have blindsight 30 ft.

**False Appearance.** While motionless, you appear indistinguishable from a mundane section of ceiling, floor, or wall. A creature that can see it and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (Nature) check can discern your presence.

You must spend one minute motionless before this ability takes effect. You must maintain concentration during that time, as if you were casting a spell.

**Flat Body.** You have no hands. You are unable to wield weapons, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc. You are unable to wear armor or use shields.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Smother.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 bludgeoning damage on a hit, or 1d8 acid damage if you are grappling the target. When you take the Attack action and make an unarmed strike, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple with the target of your successful unarmed strike. You may grapple even though you have no hands.

**Spider Climb.** You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Trapper

Trappers are fantastic ambush predators, but their severely limited movement speed presents a serious handicap. Look for ways to improve your movement speed to overcome your racial handicaps, but expect to spend a lot of time hiding and waiting for enemies to wander near you before you can attack them.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence of your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

### Design Notes

The Trapper is basically a natural Rug of Smothering (see the original Monstrous Races), which means that we can easily copy much of the Rug of Smothering's design. They're unintelligent, so we'll treat them as awakened like we've done with other creatures.

Trappers are monstrosities, costing 0.5 but offering no specific abilities.

Trappers have good Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +3 natural armor for 1.5 BP, 10 ft. speed for -2 BP, 10 ft. climb speed for 1 BP, 30 ft. blindsight for 3 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and since we're treating the Trapper as awakened we'll add the ability to speak Common for 0 BP. Trappers have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP. Since they're big flat sheets of flesh they can't wear armor or use shields for -4 BP.

False Appearance costs 0.5 BP, Spider Climb costs 1 BP, and like the Rug of Smothering we'll add Grab for 2 BP to approximate Smother.

At 9.5 BP, the Trapper is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Trapper, increase its movement speed. If you want to weaken the Trapper, reduce its blindsight to blindsense.

## Vargouille

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The severed heads of cursed humanoids that detach, grow wings, and turn into predatory, flying fiends.

### Vargouille Traits

Vargouilles share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fiend.

**Ability Score Increase.**

**Alignment.** Predatory fiends that prefer live prey, most vargouilles are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is tiny.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 5 ft.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 piercing damage and 1d4 poison damage on a hit.

You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of your unarmed strikes. Your unarmed strikes count as a weapon with the Finesse

property for all effects which require it, such as Sneak Attack.

**Can't Speak.** You are unable to speak, but are still able to read, write, and understand any languages which you know. You are unable to perform verbal spell components.

**Flight.** You have a flying speed of 40 feet. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor.

**Kiss.** As an action you may kiss a creature which you can see within 5 feet of you and inflict it with the vargouille's curse for 1 day. The target must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or become cursed. The cursed target suffers disadvantage on Charisma ability checks and saving throws.

The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Constitution modifier. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. *Restoration* or any effect that removes a curse ends this effect immediately.

If the creature dies while still cursed, its head grows wings in place of its ears, detaches from the body, and becomes a new vargouille which teleports to a random location in the Abyss one round later.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Poison Immunity.** You are immune to poison damage, and immune to the poisoned condition.

**Shriek.** As an action you can emit a horrifying screech that can be heard clearly within 300 feet. Creatures within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for until the end of your next turn. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete long rest.

**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in Abyssal and Infernal.

## Playing a Vargouille

Vargouilles make natural rogues. Being tiny and able to fly allows them to easily traverse many obstacles, and their Darkvision allows them to work in the dark. However, they lack hands and can't speak, which present their own hurdles. Try to use Shriek on groups of surprised foes so that your allies can gain the upper

hand early in an encounter and use Kiss to handicap foes who use Charisma-based skills.

Vargouilles have a nasty habit of reproducing by kissing adventurers (there's a joke in there somewhere, but I'm not clever enough to tell it). Conveniently, that puts a vargouille in the middle of an adventuring party right as one of its members needs to be replaced. A clever party might convince the Vargouille to stick around in exchange for easy access to a supply of food.

## Design Notes

Vargouilles are a fun monster. They've got weird abilities, a fun flavor, and they look really goofy. Mechanically they're simple, but Kiss will need some thought. Vargouilles are barely Intelligent, and they're technically within the Intelligence limits of Awaken, but they already understand languages, so we won't bother treating them as awakened.

Vargouilles are fiends, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Vargouille's only good ability scores are Dexterity and Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get tiny size for -1.5 BP, 5 ft. walking speed for -1.5 BP, 40 ft. fly speed for 5 BP, we'll drop the damage resistances to conserve BP, Poison Immunity for 2 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, Only racial languages plus one fixed for -0.75 BP, and no ability to speak for -1.5 BP. Vargouille's have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP, and we'll add natural weapon finesse for 0 BP.

I'm not sure if Vargouilles should be allowed to wear armor. They can wear helmets, which would cover the vast majority of their body. Is that enough? I'm going to say yes, but the usual armor restriction on flight still applies so at best most vargouilles will be wearing the equivalent of those old leather football helmets.

That brings us to 6.25 BP before we look at Kiss and Stunning Shriek. Stunning Shriek is easier, so we'll do that first. Conveniently, we built a fear-inducing scream effect for the Deep Scion which we can duplicate for 2 BP.

That just leaves Kiss. Normally we drop any ability which creates spawn, which is still an option here. I really want to include something for Kiss because it's such a central ability for the creature, but it's clearly designed as an ability which monsters inflict upon players who will suffer the effects long after an encounter ends. When the vargouille is the player, waiting hours or even days for the curse to take effect isn't really an option. We also need to consider that



Kiss only works on incapacitated creatures, which the vargouille typically handles with its Stunning Shriek. Since we reduced Stunning Shriek to inflict frightened rather than stunned, finding valid targets for Kiss is much harder. We'll need to build a new ability from the ground up.

The core components we need to maintain are that the Vargouille kisses a humanoid target, then the target is cursed so that their Charisma is handicapped. I think we'll make this work on a saving throw rather than an attack roll to stay closer to the original ability. We'll make the curse effect impose disadvantage on Charisma saving throws and ability checks, we'll suppress the effect in sunlight, and we'll allow additional saves every hour, and if the target dies while cursed their head pops off, turns into a vargouille, and teleports to the Abyss. We'll allow the ability to be used once per short rest. Limiting the effect to humanoids means that it will only be effective in a few situations against a handful of Charisma-dependent creatures, so I think we can call this 1 BP.

At 9.25 BP, the Vargouille is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Vargouille, increase its Dexterity increase. If you want to weaken the Vargouille, limit Shriek to once per long rest.

## Vegepygmies

Plant creatures born from russet mold growing on a dead body.

The standard vegepygmy and the thorny are presented below. For the vegepygmy elder, see the racial feats section later in this document.

### Vegepygmy Traits

Vegepygmies share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Plant.

**Alignment.** Primitive creatures with little in the way of culture or philosophy, most vegepygmies are neutral.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Plant Camouflage.** You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in terrain with ample obscuring plant life.

**Regeneration.** You are able to recover from wounds with horrifying speed. As a bonus action, you may spend a Hit Die to recover hit points.

You are vulnerable to cold, fire, or necrotic damage. If you cold, fire, or necrotic damage, you may not use your regeneration trait to recover hit points or re-attach limbs until the end of your next turn.

When you take a short or long rest, you regain spent Hit Dice, up to a number of dice equal to half of your total number of them, rounded up.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Vegepygmy.

### Standard

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity.

**Size.** Your size is small.

**Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 slashing damage on a hit.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

### Thorny

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 to your choice of Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

**Thorny Body.** At the start of your turn, the thorny deal 1d4 piercing damage to any creature grappling you.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 13 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

### Playing a Vegepygmy

Vegepygmies have little in the way of culture. They're motivated almost solely by their survival instincts, and their drive to reproduce. Unfortunately that offers little fodder for a character's background, and provides little insight into how a vegepygmy might fit into a party. However, they get along with other fungoid plant creatures like myconids, so they might find their way into an adventuring party if another such creature is already a member.

### Standard

Standard vegepygmies make excellent rogues and rangers thanks to their camouflage and dexterity, but their regeneration also makes them durable enough to succeed as fighters or other front-line melee classes.

### Thorny

Thornies are versatile and durable. Their natural weapons and natural armor allow them to fight without relying on manufactured equipment, and their Regeneration allows them to easily handle the durability lost by fighting without heavier armor.

### Design Notes

Vegepygmies are presented in three stat blocks detailing the standard vegepygmy, the chief, and the thorny. The chief is an advanced version of the standard, so we'll make it a feat available to the standard vegepygmy.

We'll look at the standard vegepygmy and the thorny and treat them as subraces despite the anatomical differences. The two share the vast majority of their noteworthy traits, so the individual subraces will require little additional work. We'll treat the thorny as awakened, which makes them able to speak at least as well as the standard vegepygmy.

Vegepygmies are plants, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

From the stat blocks, 30 ft. walking speed, we'll drop the vegepygmies' damage resistances to save BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and only racial languages for -1 BP.

We'll add camouflage for 0.5 BP, Regeneration for 5 BP, and because the vegepygmy's regeneration is stopped by 3 damage types we'll add a third vulnerability for -1 BP.

That brings us to 6 BP. That's a lot before we look at subraces, but the bulk of the Vegepygmies' racial traits are shared, so we don't have much left to cover.

### Standard

Standard vegepygmies are basically humanoid, and they don't have any special abilities which we haven't already looked at.

The standard Vegepygmy's ability scores are terrible. Only two of their abilities have a modifier above +0. We'll grant +1 Dexterity for 1 BP.

From the stat block, we get small size for -1 BP, +2 natural armor for 1 BP and 1d6 natural weapons for 1.5 BP to match their stat block.

At 8.5 BP, the Standard Vegepygmy is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Vegepygmy, add a Constitution increase. If you want to weaken the Vegepygmy, reduce its natural armor or natural weapon damage.

### Thorny

The thorny has surprisingly little to show for its CR compared to the standard vegepygmy. It adds medium

size, Thorny Body and a much better natural weapon, but gives up the utility of hands.

The thorny's ability scores aren't much better than the standard vegepygmy's. We'll grant +1 to any physical ability score for 1.5 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, and +3 natural armor for 1.5 BP. Thornies have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

Thorny body seems extremely situational, and it specifically requires other creatures to grapple the thorny rather than allowing the thorny to go grapple something and force the damage upon them. We'll call it 0.5 BP.

At 9.5 BP, the thorny is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Thorny, increase its natural weapon damage or grant a second +1 ability score increase. If you want to weaken the Thorny, reduce its natural armor.

### Chief

The vegepygmy chief adds surprisingly little. Its ability scores are much better than the standard vegepygmy, but the only new ability is Spores.

Spores is usable once per day and inflicts poison damage and the poisoned condition. A similar spell would be ideal, but I don't know of a comparable spell, so we're on our own here. We can take a little bit of inspiration from Stench, but there isn't a lot of overlap there, either.

I think we can largely retain the mechanics of the official version of Spores, but if we add some scaling mechanics we can make it useful at all levels without being problematic at low levels. It also can't be too strong because a single ability usable once per day probably isn't enough to make a feat interesting.

We'll follow cantrip levels for scaling, starting the radius at ft. and increasing the radius by 5 ft. at each increment. We'll start the damage at 1d8 and increase it once at the second cantrip increment to 1d8. Finally, we'll add a Concentration requirement. I think we can call that 2 BP.

To fill in the feat, we'll add a +1 ability score increase to one of the vegepygmy's physical ability scores for 1.5 BP.

That brings our total to 3.5 BP, just above our target of 3 BP for feats but below our hard cap of 4 BP. If you want to strengthen the feat, allow the ability increase to be used on any ability. If you want to weaken the feat, make the ability score increase a +1 Strength increase.



## Wood Woad

Humanoid-like creatures made of wood created to protect natural places of great importance.

### Wood Woad Traits

share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Plant.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Unfeeling creatures who live to perform their sworn duty, most wood woads are lawful neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft. You have a climb speed of 30 ft.

**Damage Vulnerability.** You are vulnerable to fire damage.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Tree Stride.** Once per turn as a bonus action, you may enter a tree at least one size larger than you and emerge from another tree nearby. To do this, spend 10

or more feet of your movement (in 5 foot increments). You then emerge from another tree within a distance equal to twice the movement you spent. You emerge 5 feet from the tree in an unoccupied space of your choice.

**Unwavering Guardian.** You are immune to the charmed and frightened conditions.

**Weapons of the Forest.** As a bonus action you may grow wooden armaments from your body, creating a single club and/or a shield. If the club or shield leaves your hands for more than 1 round, or if you form a new one, the existing one withers away to nothing.

Beginning at third level, you may choose to imbue the club with magic, treating it as a magic weapon for one minute. After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in sylvan.

### Playing a Wood Woad

Wood Woads are a good choice for a front-line melee character. Their natural armor and their ability to create their own weapons and shields means that they can fight without relying on manufactured weapons, though you may find that they are more effective. Consider learning the *shillelagh* cantrip to enhance your club if manufactured weapons don't sound appealing.

Because they are immortal, wood woads occasionally outlive their original purpose, their masters, and the orders which their masters may have left behind. In these cases, the Wood Woad might seek new purpose elsewhere. They are drawn to places of natural beauty, and to those who protect those places, like druids, treants, or fey.

### Design Notes

Wood Woads are basically humanoids made of wood with built-in weaponry. They share the Dryad's Tree Stride ability and they have Regeneration, but otherwise they're not terribly complicated.

Wood woads are plants, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Wood Woad's best ability scores are Strength and Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +2 natural armor (down from +5) for 1 BP, 30 ft. speed, 30 ft. climb speed for 2 BP, vulnerability to fire for -1 BP, we'll drop their damage resistances, two condition immunities for 1 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and only racial languages for -1 BP.

That brings us to 6.5 BP before we look at the Wood Woad's special abilities. We're going to drop regeneration. It's not especially important to the theme of the creature, and the Wood Woad only has one damage vulnerability (we normally require two as part of Regeneration's 5 BP cost). That will also leave us room to keep the Wood Woad's other abilities.

Camouflage is 0.5 BP, and Tree Stride (see the Dryad design notes in the original Monstrous Races) is another 1 BP, leaving us at 8 BP before we look at Magic Club.

Magic Club gives the Wood Woad a constantly available magic weapon. The *magic weapon* spell is 2<sup>nd</sup>-level, only lasts an hour, and requires concentration. That suggests that this ability is worth a bare minimum of 2 BP (even after we remove or reduce the bonus damage), so we'll need to make some adjustments.

I think 2 BP is a good target. We'll allow the Wood Woad to grow a wooden club and a shield as a bonus action, and starting at 3<sup>rd</sup> level we'll allow the Wood Woad to make it magical for one minute per short rest. Clubs are terrible weapons, so I suspect that players will prefer to rely on manufactured weapons unless they need to get past damage resistances.

At 10 BP, the Wood Woad is at the top of our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Wood Woad, increase the damage of its magic club to 2d4. If you want to weaken the Wood Woad, remove its natural armor.

## Xvart

Small, cowardly humanoids created in the image of their greedy, cowardly demigod.

The racial traits for xvarts are presented below. For the Xvart Warlock of Raxivort, play the Warlocks class and take the Eldritch Invocations Armor of Shadows and Eldritch Sight. It's not clear which type of patron Raxivort would be.

### Xvart Traits

share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Humanoid (Xvart).

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Dexterity.

**Alignment.** Cowardly, greedy, and selfish, most xvarts are chaotic evil.

**Size.** Your size is small.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Low Cunning.** You can take the Disengage action as a bonus action.

**Overbearing Pack.** As a bonus action you may take advantage of the presence of your allies. You gain Advantage on the next Strength check you make this turn to shove a creature if at least one of your allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Raxivort's Tongue.** You can communicate with ordinary bats and rats, as well as giant bats and giant rats.

**Stealthy.** You have proficiency in the Stealth skill.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Abyssal.



### Playing a Xvart

Xvarts are nimble, stealthy, and cowardly. They make natural rogues, though Cunning Action will make the Xvart's Low Cunning ability redundant. You may also consider other classes which can capitalize on the Xvart's talents. A fighter who enjoys hit-and-run tactics can make excellent use of Low Cunning.

Xvarts don't have a lot of friends. They mostly concern themselves with hiding, surviving, and finding treasure. However, Xvarts will often befriend bats and rats, and will occasionally serve wererats.

## Design Notes

The Xvart is mostly a simple humanoid, but they have some abilities which resemble those of gnomes, goblins, and kobolds. *Volo's Guide to Monsters* presents two stat blocks: one for the standard xvart and one for warlocks of Raxivort.

Looking at the stat blocks for the two, the Warlock of Raxivort has no abilities that a standard warlock doesn't get, so we'll recommend that players pursue class levels as normal.

Xvarts are humanoids, costing 0 BP and offering no specific abilities.

The Xvart's only good ability score is Dexterity, so we'll grant +2 Dexterity for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get 30 ft. walking speed for 0.5 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, and only racial languages for -1 BP.

That brings us to 3.5 BP before we look at Low Cunning, Overbearing Pack, and Raxivort's Tongue.

Low Cunning is one of three components of Cunning Action. Goblins have something similar in Nimble Escape, which we rated as 2 BP, so we'll call Low Cunning 1 BP.

Overbearing Pack is a much weaker version of Pack Tactics. Pack Tactics is normally 5 BP, but Overbearing Pack only grants advantage on the shoving a creature. That's still a significant advantage, but nowhere near as good as advantage on attacks. We'll require a bonus action to trigger the effect and call it 2 BP.

Raxivort's Tongue looks a lot like the Forest Gnome's Speak With Small Beasts, which we rated as 0.5 BP (see the Published Races section of the original *Monstrous Races*), and I think that's still a good cost.

That brings us to just 7 BP, which isn't great. The Xvart stat block lists Stealth proficiency, so we'll add proficiency in Stealth for 0.5 BP.

At 7.5 BP, the Xvart is slightly below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Xvart, grant it a Constitution increase. If you want to weaken the Xvart, reduce its Dexterity increase.

## Yeth Hound

Hideous dog-like fey creatures sent to serve masters.

### Yeth Hound Traits

Yeth hounds share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Fey.

**Ability Score Increase.** None.

**Alignment.** Creatures created to serve evil masters which enjoy terrifying, harassing, and brutally killing their prey, most yeth hounds are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 40 ft.

**Baleful Baying.** As an action you can emit a horrifying screech that can be heard clearly within 300 feet. Creatures within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for until the end of your next turn. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete long rest.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

**Dark Master.** When you are first summoned, a specific non-good creature is designated as your master. You suffer disadvantage on opposed checks against your master and on saving throws to resist spells and effects created by your master. To oppose a direct command from your master, you must succeed on an opposed Charisma check, which you make with Disadvantage. However, you may willingly refuse any command which would cause you to enter sunlight without making an opposed check.

If your master is slain, you must seek out a new master immediately, or risk vanishing into nothingness.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Flight.** You have a flying speed of 40 feet, and can hover. To use this speed, you can't be wearing medium or heavy armor. You are immune to the prone condition.

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Sunlight Banishment.** If you start your turn in natural sunlight, you are immediately transported to the Ethereal Plane. While sunlight shines on the spot from which it vanished, you must remain in the Deep Ethereal. Blocking light to the spot in some fashion does not end this period; the sun must set beyond the horizon.

After sunset, you return to the Border Ethereal at the same spot, whereupon you must set out to find your dark master. You are visible on the Material Plane while in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, but you can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Once you are in the Border Ethereal and adjacent to your dark master who is on the Material Plane, you can return to the Material Plane as an action.

**Telepathic Bond.** While you are on the same plane of existence as your dark master, you can magically share your senses with your master as an action, and the two of you can communicate telepathically with each other.

**Languages.** You can understand, read, and write in common, elvish, and sylvan.

### Playing a Yeth Hound

Yeth hounds are versatile and powerful. Their flight and excellent senses make them good scouts, and Baleful Baying allows them to briefly handicap foes while allies move to attack. Consider classes like barbarian and fighter which allow you to thrive in melee combat while isolated from your allies.

Yeth hounds are granted by powerful as boons, which makes them easy to introduce to a party. An existing party that aids a powerful fey in some fashion might welcome a new Yeth Hound party member as a reward.

### Design Notes

Yeth hounds don't have a lot of new stuff going on. Sunlight Banishment is new, but everything else can be handled with design work we've done for other races.

Yeth hounds are fey, costing 0.5 BP but offering no specific abilities.

The Yeth Hound's physical ability scores are all good, which makes it difficult to decide what to increase. Yeth hounds have a long list of abilities, so we'll skip an ability increase to leave room for everything else.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), we'll drop natural armor to save BP, 40 ft. walking speed for 1 BP, 40 ft. fly speed for 5 BP, the ability to hover for 2 BP, we'll drop the Yeth Hound's damage and condition immunities, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, racial languages plus common and one fixed for 0.25 BP, no ability to speak for -1.5 BP, and two keen senses for 1 BP total. Yeth hounds have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

That brings us to 10.25 BP before we look at Sunlight Banishment, Telepathic Bond, and Baleful Baying.

Telepathic Bond is similar to Telepathy, but only works with one specific creature. If the Yeth Hound's master is in the party, it's still a big advantage, so we'll call it 1 BP.

Baleful Baying is another "create loud noise, cause fear" ability, so we'll duplicate the work we did on the Deep Scion's Psychic Screech for 2 BP.

Sunlight Banishment is totally unique and it's hard to assess. Replacing it with Sunlight Weakness seems

easy, but I don't want to do that because it's one of the most iconic parts of the creature. I think our best bet is to grant the ability as-written, but it's hard to set a BP value. In some campaigns it might never come up, but that's true of both Sunlight Sensitivity and Sunlight Weakness. I think being banished to another plane for at least the rest of a day is more problematic than the disadvantage imposed by Sunlight Weakness, so we'll call Sunlight Banishment -4 BP.

## Yuan-Ti

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Volo's Guide to Monsters presents five new Yuan-Ti stat blocks. The Yuan-Ti Anathema and the Yuan-Ti Broodguard are presented below. The Yuan-Ti Mind whisperer, Yuan-Ti Nightmare Speaker, and Yuan-Ti Pit master are presented in the racial feats section later in this document. For racial traits for Yuan-Ti purebloods, malisons, and abominations, see the original Monstrous Races.

### Yuan-Ti Anathema [Template: Acquired]

Yuan-ti Abominations sometimes seek to ascend to near-godhood by undergoing a horrifying, transformative ritual.

#### Becoming a Yuan-Ti Anathema

Any Yuan-ti Anathema of 5<sup>th</sup> level or greater can become a Yuan-ti Abomination. Lower-level Yuan-ti are typically not powerful or influential enough to perform the ritual.

Once the character gains enough experience to gain a level, the character may choose to perform the ritual to become an anathema. This ritual requires sacrificing hundreds of snakes. After sacrificing the snakes, the character must kill an enemy and bath themselves in their enemy's blood. This enemy must be specifically known to the character; it may not be an unknown member of some group with which the character is enemies. The whole ritual requires 8 hours to complete, and if interrupted must be restarted from the beginning.

Upon completing the ritual, the character immediately gains the single level of the Yuan-Ti Anathema template.

#### Yuan-Ti Anathema Traits

All yuan-ti anathemas have the following traits, adding these traits to their existing racial traits upon gaining the template.

#### Hit Points

**Hit Dice.** 1d10 per yuan-ti anathema level

**Hit Points at Higher Levels.** 1d10 (or 6) + your Constitution modifier per yuan-ti anathema level

### Traits

Yuan-ti anathemas gain the following traits at each level, as indicated on the table below.

Level	Features
1	Flurry of Bites, Natural Armor, Phidiophobia, Six Heads

**Flurry of Bites.** After taking the Attack action, you may use a bonus action to make an unarmed strike using your natural weapons. You don't add your ability modifier to the damage of the bonus attack, unless that modifier is negative.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Ophidophobia.** As an action you can cause creatures to gain a profound fear of snakes. Creatures other than snakes or yuan-ti within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of snakes and yuan-ti for until the end of your next turn. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

**Six Heads.** You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

### Yuan-Ti Broodguard

Stripped of your former humanity, reptilian broodguards live to serve their yuan-ti masters.

#### Yuan-Ti Broodguard Traits

Yuan-ti broodguards share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Humanoid (Yuan-ti)

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

**Alignment.** Driven to serve their evil masters, most yuan-ti broodguards are neutral evil.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Bite and Claw.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 piercing or slashing damage on a hit.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Mental Resistance.** The broodguard has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't paralyze it.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 12 + your Dexterity modifier.

**Poison Immunity.** You are immune to poison damage, and immune to the poisoned condition.

**Reckless.** At the start of its turn, the broodguard can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in abyssal, common, and draconic.

#### Playing a Yuan-Ti Broodguard

Yuan-ti broodguards are intended to be subservient to other yuan-ti, and are enraged by the mere sight of creatures which yuan-ti consider enemies. Consider classes like barbarian to play to this theme, but a well-trained broodguard might also be a fighter, a ranger, or even a paladin of some sort.

Broodguards follow the orders of other yuan-ti, making them an excellent addition to a party with one or more other yuan-ti in it. However, they hate non-reptilian creatures, so any other creature in the party that isn't reptilian or a slave to the yuan-ti may be a point of conflict.

It's notable that broodguards were humans before being transformed, but the transformation process obliterates the creature's former personality. As such, consider using the Born of Magic background presented later in this document.

### Design Notes

The Yuan-Ti entry in Volo's Guide to Monsters is dense. The Anathema is an advancement option for yuan-ti abominations, the broodguard is a standalone race, and the three other varieties present specific options for yuan-ti warlocks. They're all fun and exciting, and the Mind Whisperer/Nightmare Speaker/Pit Master will be fun to design because they're similar enough that we can balance them against each other while trying to find unique mechanics to distinguish them.

#### Yuan-Ti Anathema

The Anathema is a really cool creature. You like snakes? How about snake people? Oh, you like snake people? Well how about snake people that are *even more snakes?*

Mechanically, the Yuan-ti Anathema is an improvement to the Yuan-ti Abomination. That means that we're building either a template or a feat. The transformation into an Anathema is described as instantaneous in the Anathema's monster entry, so if we go for a template it will beed to be at most one

level. We'll take a look at the Anathema's abilities and total their BP value before we decide which way to go.

Because the Anathema is an improvement to the Yuan-ti Abomination, it's easy to compare the two stat blocks and determine what's new. The Anathema improves the Abominations natural armor from +2 to +5 (we dropped natural armor from the Yuan-ti Abomination racial traits in the original Monstrous Races), and adds climb and swim speeds, a bunch of damage resistances, blindsight, more innate spellcasting, some extra acid damage to Constrict, Ophidiophobia Aura, Six Heads, and Flurry of Bites.

We'll drop the climb and swim speeds, the damage resistances, and blindsight because they're worth a ton of BP and I don't think they're especially important for the creature. We'll drop the innate spellcasting because it's all spells that are higher level than I want to squeeze into the template.

Improvements to the Abominations natural combat abilities through natural armor and natural weapon improvements are appealing and would cover both the natural armor increase and Flurry of Bites. We'll grant +2 natural armor for 1 BP. Most anathema players will likely still resort to manufactured armor or magic.

Natural Weapon Master (see the Feats section of the original Monstrous Races) includes the ability to make an additional unarmed strike after taking the Attack action. I think we'll steal that. Feats in the original Monstrous Races didn't receive BP assessments, which means we'll need to reverse-engineer some BP values. Two-weapon fighting is something that creatures can already do, and Natural Weapon Master's additional attack expands that capability to unarmed strikes. I don't think that's overwhelmingly powerful, so we'll call it 1 BP.

Six Heads is easy. Two Heads is 3.5 BP, and allows additional heads at no cost but provides no additional benefit.

That brings us to 5.5 BP before we look at Ophidiophobia Aura. We're already far above our BP cap for feats, so we're definitely looking at a leveled template. Ophidiophobia Aura is a bit of a problem because it's not an active ability; it just happens every round. That's not okay for players, so we'll reskin the Deep Scion's Psychic Screech ability for 2 BP. That gives us a nice fear effect that we've already put some work into.

Since we're doing a level template, we'll need to pick a hit die. I think d10 makes sense because I think we'll see a lot of Yuan-ti Abominations taking martial classes like fighter. That's 1 BP per template level.

That brings our total BP to 8.5, which is within our target range of 8-10 BP for the first level of a leveled template. If you want to strengthen the Yuan-ti Anathema, improve the natural armor granted by the template. If you want to weaken the Yuan-ti Anathema, remove the natural armor granted by the template.

### Yuan-Ti Broodguard

Broodguards are the simplest new yuan-ti. They're a standalone race, and with the exception of Reckless they have no traits which will make their design complicated.

Yuan-ti broodguard are humanoids, costing 0 BP.

The Yuan-Ti Broodguard's physical ability scores are all good, and its intelligence and charisma are awful. Because its physical ability scores are so even, it's hard to decide which to increase. We'll grant a semi-flexible +1 to any physical ability score for 1.5 BP and let players pick for themselves.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +2 natural armor for 1 BP, 30 ft. walking speed, Poison Immunity for 2 BP, 60 ft. Darkvision for 2 BP, racial languages plus Common and one fixed language for 0.25 BP. We'll drop the broodguard's natural weapons to 1d4 for 1 BP.

That brings us to 7.75 BP before we look at Mental Resistance and Reckless. Mental Resistance is almost identical to Fey Ancestry, but Mental Resistance replaces sleep with paralysis. I think we can still call it 0.5 BP.

Reckless is hard. The only similar ability I can think of is the barbarian class feature Reckless Attack. I'm always hesitant to grant class features as racial abilities because it makes specific classes less appealing, but Reckless is the Yuan-ti Broodguard's only notable ability so I think we can make an exception. I think we'll call it 2 BP as-written, but it might be worth more.

At 9.75 BP, the Yuan-ti Broodguard is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Yuan-ti Broodguard, add a second +1 ability score increase. If you want to weaken the Yuan-ti Broodguard, require the broodguard to use a bonus action to activate Reckless.

### Yuan-Ti Mind Whisperer

The Mind Whisperer is the first of three yuan-ti warlocks. All three are similar CR, and since they're all yuan-ti warlocks most of their abilities are similar. That makes it easy to identify which abilities are new and unique. At a glance, these abilities look simple enough



that they will fit into feats, so we'll make three new feats.

All three add two abilities: an on-hit damage boost, and a once per day magic effect.

The damage boost abilities are powerful, as-written. 3d10 damage is a lot, even if it's only twice per day. Twice per day is also weird for a player ability. We'll try to keep the concept, but we're largely going to dump the mechanics.

We'll trigger the effect as a reaction, deal damage matching a cantrip with d8 damage dice, and limit usage to once per short rest. That's fairly unique, but I think it's somewhere in the range of 1 BP. For the Mind Whisperer we'll use psychic damage, but the other two get different damage types.

The unique magic abilities are more difficult, so they'll require more individual design work.

The Mind Whisperer's unique ability is Sseth's blessing. It's identical to the Dark One's Blessing invocation. I think we'll just grant the invocation as part of the feat and call it 2 BP.

That brings us to 3 BP, which is our target BP for feats. If you want to strengthen the feat, make Mind Fangs activate without using an action. If you want to weaken the feat, reduce the damage die of Mind Fangs.

#### Yuan-Ti Nightmare Speaker

The Nightmare Speaker uses necrotic damage for its on-hit damage boost.

Invoke Nightmare sounds a lot like *phantasmal killer*, but I'm reluctant to grant a 4<sup>th</sup>-level spell on a feat so we'll look for something similar that's lower level. *dissonant whispers* seems like a good candidate, so we'll start from there.

A 1<sup>st</sup>-level spell once per day is 1 BP, but at high levels a feat which grants *dissonant whispers* is going to feel lackluster. So to keep it relevant, we'll make the spell automatically scale with the player's warlock levels. Normally increasing the spell slot level by 1 costs 0.5 BP, which would make this as much as 4 BP on top of the 1 BP for the spell itself, but I think we'll fudge the rules a bit here to make the feat interesting. We'll set the spells level to the player's warlock level divided by 2 (maximum of 9, of course). Unfortunately, it's hard to assess a BP cost here.

The BP value of this feat is unclear. If you want to strengthen the feat, delay the spell level of *dissonant whispers* by 2 so that players won't get the 9<sup>th</sup>-level slot until 20<sup>th</sup> level. Also consider adjustments suggested in the Yuan-ti Mind Whisperer design notes.

#### Yuan-Ti Pit Master

The Pit Master uses poison damage for its on-hit damage boost.

Mersshaulk's Slumber looks a lot like *sleep*. To keep things balanced, we'll duplicate the design of the Nightmare Speaker's magical ability, allowing the player to cast *sleep* once per day with an automatically advanced spell slot.

The BP value of this feat is unclear. If you want to strengthen the feat, delay the spell level of *sleep* by 2 so that players won't get the 9<sup>th</sup>-level slot until 20<sup>th</sup> level. Also consider adjustments suggested in the Yuan-ti Mind Whisperer design notes.

# Assorted Beasts

## Aurochs

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Immense herbivorous herd animals, aurochs resemble larger and more bestial cattle.

### Aurochs Traits

share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Beast.

**Ability Score Increase.** +2 Strength, +2 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, most aurochs are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 50 ft.

**Charge.** Once per turn, if you move at least 25 feet toward a creature and hit it with a Strength-based melee weapon attack, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage from the attack. This damage increases to 2d6 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d6 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d6 at 17<sup>th</sup> level.

**Gore.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 piercing damage on a hit.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 11 + your Dexterity modifier.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

### Playing an Aurochs

Strong and fast, but lacking hands, aurochs make natural barbarians. Their Charge ability provides a significant damage boost, but requires them to rush in and out of combat, potentially endangering them.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence of your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

### Design Notes

Fairly straightforward beast. Like other beasts, we'll treat the Aurochs as awakened.

Aurochs are beasts, costing -0.5 BP but offering no specific traits.

The Auroch's best ability is Strength, followed closely by Constitution, so we'll grant +2 to each for 4 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), +1 natural armor for 0.5 BP, 50 ft. walking speed

for 2 BP, the ability to speak Common for 0 BP, and Charge for 2 BP. Aurochs have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d8 for 2 BP.

At 8.5 BP, the Aurochs is within our target range of 8-10 BP. It's a very straightforward charger. If you want to Strengthen the Aurochs, increase its natural weapon damage or natural armor. If you want to weaken the Aurochs, reduce one of its ability increases.

## Cattle

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Herd animals commonly kept for meat, milk, and leather, their size and immense horns can make them dangerous if angered or startled. "Cattle" includes a variety of species including oxen and cows.

### Cattle Traits

Cattle share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Beast.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Strength, +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, most cattle are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 ft.

**Charge.** Once per turn, if you move at least 25 feet toward a creature and hit it with a Strength-based melee weapon attack, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage from the attack. This damage increases to 2d6 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d6 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d6 at 17<sup>th</sup> level.

**Gore.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 piercing damage on a hit.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

**Subrace.** Choose one of these subraces. You gain the traits listed under your chosen subrace in addition to those listed above.

### Cow Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** Additional +1 Strength and +1 Constitution.

**Natural Armor.** While unarmored, your AC is equal to 11 + your Dexterity modifier.

### Deep Rothe Traits

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Innate Spellcasting.** You know the *dancing lights* cantrip. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

#### Ox Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** Additional +1 Strength and +1 Constitution.

**Beast of Burden.** You count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity and the weight you can push, drag, or lift.

#### Rothe Traits

**Ability Score Increase.** Additional +1 Constitution.

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 30 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

#### Stench Kow Traits

**Darkvision.** You can see in dim light within 30 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Extraplanar Resistance.** You are resistant to cold, fire, and poison damage, and you have advantage on saving throws against poison.

### Playing Cattle

Strong and tough, cattle make good barbarians and fighters. However, their lack of hands and limited racial traits may make it difficult to succeed in other classes.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence of your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

### Design Notes

Cattle are mostly just a weaker version of the Aurochs. However, they also include a collection of varieties of cattle which make for excellent subraces. Before we delve into individual subraces, we'll work from the base Cattle monster entry to create the core racial traits. Like other beasts, we'll treat cattle as awakened.

Cattle are beasts, costing -0.5 BP but offering no specific traits.

Cattle's best ability is Strength, and its only other good ability is Constitution, so we'll grant +1 to each for 2 BP total.

From the stat block, we get medium size (down from large), 30 ft. walking speed for 0 BP, the ability to speak Common for 0 BP, and Charge for 2 BP. Aurochs have

no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d6 for 1.5 BP.

That brings us to 3 BP before we look at individual subraces.

#### Cow

Cows are the base line. They're not listed as a subrace because the cattle subraces are additional capabilities on top of the cow. Unfortunately, that doesn't work for playable races, so we'll need to take some liberties.

We'll add an additional +1 Strength and +1 Constitution, and +1 natural armor for a total of 2.5 BP.

At 5.5 BP, the Deep Rothe is well below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Cow, increase its speed, increase its natural armor, or allow it to select a feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

#### Ox

Oxen are cows that are better at carrying stuff. We'll renamed Powerful Build to Beast of Burden for 0.25 BP, and use it to replace the Cow's natural armor.

At 5.25 BP, the Ox is well below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Deep Rothe, increase its speed, grant it natural armor, or allow it to select a feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

#### Rothe

Rothe get 30 ft. Darkvision for 1.5 BP. We'll also grant an additional +1 Constitution to keep them in line with other cattle subspecies.

At 5.5 BP, the Rothe is well below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Deep Rothe, increase its speed, grant it natural armor, or allow it to select a feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

#### Rothe, Deep

Deep Rothe are smaller than regular Rotheres, but otherwise better in every way. Since we're reducing the Rothe to medium size, we don't have a lot to work with. We'll give the Deep Rothe Darkvision for 2 BP, the *dancing lights* cantrip for 0.5 BP, and nothing else.

At 5.5 BP, the Deep Rothe is well below our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Deep Rothe, increase its speed, grant it natural armor, or allow it to select a feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

#### Stench Kow

Stench Kows are super weird. They're the only creature I can think of that has resistance to poison damage but not the poisoned condition, which I think may be an error. We'll grant resistance to cold and fire for 4 BP, poison resilience for 2 BP, and Darkvision for 2 BP.

At 11 BP, the Stench Kow exceeds our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Stench Kow,

grant it a +1 Constitution increase. If you want to weaken the Stench Kow, remove one of its damage resistances.

## Dolphin

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Aquatic mammals famed for their intelligence and social nature.

### Dolphin Traits

Dolphins share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Beast.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Dexterity, +1 Intelligence.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, most dolphins are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 0 ft. You have a swim speed of 60 ft.

**Blindsight.** You have blindsight 50 ft.

**Charge.** Once per turn, if you move at least 25 feet toward a creature and hit it with a Strength-based melee weapon attack, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage from the attack. This damage increases to 2d6 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d6 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d6 at 17<sup>th</sup> level.

**Echolocation.** You can't use your blindsight while deafened.

**Slam.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 bludgeoning damage on a hit.

You can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of your unarmed strikes. Your unarmed strikes count as a weapon with the Finesse property for all effects which require it, such as Sneak Attack.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Dolphin

Able to function in perfect darkness, dolphins make excellent Rogues.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence of your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

### Design Notes

Dolphins are simple beasts, but they have numerous special abilities which add a significant BP cost. They're

also one of very few beasts that are too intelligent to be affected by the *awaken* spell. We'll ignore that limitation and treat them as awakened so that they can speak Common.

Dolphins are beasts, costing -0.5 BP but offering no specific traits.

Dolphins' best ability is Strength, but I feel like that doesn't really match with the nature of the animal. They're more known for acrobatics and intellect than for bludgeoning stuff, which clearly isn't reflected in the monster entry. We'll grant +1 Dexterity and +1 Intelligence for 2 BP.

From the stat block, we get medium size, +1 natural armor for 0.5 BP, 0 ft. walking speed for -3 BP, 60 ft. swim speed for 2.5 BP, 50 ft. blindsight (down from 60 ft.) for 8 BP with Echolocation for -1.5 BP, the ability to speak Common for 0 BP, Charge for 2 BP, and Hold Breath for 20 minutes for 0.25 BP (slightly more, but I don't want to split hairs over 5 minutes of breath holding). Dolphins have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d6 damage for 1.5 BP. We'll add natural weapon Finesse, too, since we're giving dolphins a Dexterity increase.

At 9.25 BP, the Dolphin is within our target range of 8-10 BP. If you want to strengthen the Dolphin, increase its blindsight range to 60 ft. If you want to weaken the Dolphin, reduce its blindsight range or its swim speed.

## Rot Grub

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Oversized maggots that instinctively burrow into the heats of living creatures to kill and consume them.

### Rot Grub Traits

Rot grubs share the following racial traits.

**Creature Type.** Beast.

**Ability Score Increase.** +1 Constitution.

**Alignment.** Normally unintelligent beasts, most rot grubs are neutral.

**Size.** Your size is tiny.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 10 ft. You have a climb speed of 10 feet.

**Bite.** Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 piercing damage on a hit.

**Grappler.** You have advantage on attack rolls against a creature you are grappling.

**Infest.** When you take the Attack action and make an unarmed strike, you can use a bonus action to initiate a grapple with the target of your successful unarmed strike.

When you grapple, your bite and burrow you're your target's flesh. Applying fire to the bite wound deals 1 fire damage to the target and ends the grapple. Any effect that cures disease also ends the grapple.

If a target that you are grappling ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as you burrow into its heart and kill it.

**No Hands.** You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc.

**Grub Body.** You have no arms or hands. You are unable to wield weapons or wear shields, and cannot use items which require manipulation, including spellcasting foci, wands, tools, etc. You are unable to wear armor. You have vulnerability to Bludgeoning damage.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common.

### Playing a Rot Grub

Rot grubs can grapple, and that's about it. Consider playing a barbarian, a fighter, or a monk.

Like many other creatures, being awakened has a great deal of influence of your character's personality. Consider what effect granted your character superior intelligence, and how that effect shaped your character's personality.

### Design Notes

Rot grubs are difficult to handle because they're only presented as a swarm. Fortunately, we tackled swarms in the original Monstrous Races, so we can easily identify the traits which come from the Rot Grub itself. Like other beasts, we'll treat the Rot Grub as awakened.

Rot grubs are beasts, costing -0.5 BP but offering no specific traits.

Rot grubs have terrible ability scores. The only score that even meets 10 is Constitution. We'll grant +1 Constitution for 1 BP. I feel like rot grubs don't really deserve it, but they don't have a lot of abilities, so we don't have a lot of things to spend BP on.

From the stat block, we get tiny size for -1.5 BP, 10 ft. walking speed (up from 5 ft.) for -2 BP, 10 ft. (up from 5 ft.) climbing speed for 1 BP, 10 ft. blindsight for 4 BP, and the ability to speak Common for 0 BP. Notably, rot grub swarms don't have resistance to Bludgeoning damage like other swarms, which means rot grubs have vulnerability to bludgeoning damage for -1 BP. Rot grubs have no hands for -2 BP, and we'll set their natural weapons to 1d6 for 1.5 BP. We'll also say

that rot grubs can't use armor or shields for -4 BP because armor would prevent them from crawling.

That brings us to just -3.5 BP, and the only part of the Rot Grub that we haven't covered is the burrowing mechanic attached to their bite attacks. It's essentially a fancy grapple attack, so we'll add Grab for 2 BP, and Grappler for 2 BP. Despite being tiny, rot grubs need to be excellent grapplers to function.

We'll ignore the part about Rot Grubs being largely untouchable after the first round of burrowing because that would make them basically unstoppable as a player. We'll mostly keep the part about fire damage to the rot grub's victims, but instead of outright killing the rot grub (which would be horrible for a player) we'll simply expel the player to the nearest empty space. We'll make the same change for effects which remove disease.

At 0.5 BP, the Rot Grub is essentially unplayable. If you want it to function alongside other races, you'll need to make considerably concessions. Consider granting a feat or allowing the player to use the Swam template out of the original Monstrous Races.

# Feats

This section presents new feats catered to specific races presented in this document and in the original Monstrous Races.

Design notes discussing the general design of racial feats are included at the end of this chapter.

## General Feats

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### Improved Petrification

Your capacity to petrify your victims is legendary.

*Prerequisite: Racial trait which petrifies creatures, such as Petrifying Gaze.*

- Increase the saving throw DC to resist your petrification effect by 1.
- When a creature fails a saving throw to resist your petrification by 5 or more, it is treated as gaining two levels of exhaustion instead of one.

## Racial Feats

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### Blade of Ilneval

A devotee of Grumsh's battle captain Ilneval, you lead your orc brethren in battle.

*Prerequisite: Orc or Half-orc race.*

- When you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, you may choose to smite it to deal 1d8 additional damage. This damage increases to 2d8 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d8 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d8 at 17<sup>th</sup> level.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

- As an action, you can command your allies to attack. Up to three allied orcs or half-orcs within 120 feet of you that can hear you can use their reactions to each make one weapon attack.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

### Claw of Luthic

A devotee of Grumsh's wife, you care for your tribe's home, defend it against outsiders, and ensure the long-term survival of the tribe.

*Prerequisite: Orc or Half-orc race, ability to cast 2<sup>nd</sup>-level cleric spells.*

- Increase your Wisdom by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You grow out your finger nails, filing and lacquering them into wicked claws to emulate Luthic. Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 slashing damage on a hit.

### Darkling Elder

Wise and respected by your elders, you undergo a ritual which elevates you in the eyes of your peers and physically empowers you.

*Prerequisite: Darkling race, 12 Wisdom, level 5.*

- Your size changes to medium.
- When creatures fail the saving throw against your Death Burst, they take 2d6. This damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 11<sup>th</sup> level (3d6), and 17<sup>th</sup> level (4d6).
- You remove the Light Sensitivity racial trait.

### Cloud Giant Smiling One

Devoted to the deceptive aspects of the giant god Memnor, Smiling Ones strain the tolerance of their own kind with their tricky, deceptive mannerisms.

*Prerequisite: Cloud giant race, proficient in Deception and Sleight of Hands*

- Increase your Charisma by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Choose Deception or Sleight of Hand. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses that proficiency.
- You may cast *disguise self* once per day without expending a spell slot.

### Fire Giant Dreadnought

A living engine of war, you have learned to fight from behind the bulk of two shields.

*Prerequisite: Fire giant race, proficient in martial weapons and shields*

- You gain a +1 bonus to AC while you are wielding a shield in each hand.
- You may use shields as weapons. Shields deal 1d6 bludgeoning damage, and have the light weapon property. If the shield is spiked, it deals piercing damage instead.
- You may perform a shield charge, striking a foe and shoving them. To do so, you must move 15 feet in a straight line immediately before making the Attack action, and attacking the target. If you succeed on the attack roll, you may shove the creature as a bonus action.

### Kobold Dragonshield

A beacon of courage and strength among your cowardly kind, your presence inspires your brethren to fit on in the face of terrifying foes.

*Prerequisite: Kobold race.*

- You gain damage resistance your choice of resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison damage. This choice is permanent once made.
- If you are frightened or paralyzed by an effect that allows a saving throw, you can repeat the saving throw as a bonus action at the start of your turn to end the effect on yourself and all kobolds within 30 feet that can see and hear you. Any kobold that benefits from this trait (including you) has advantage on its next attack roll made before the beginning of your next turn.

### Fear Aura

Your presence is terrifying, and your attacks terrify your foes.

*Prerequisite:* Dragon or Meenlock race.

On your turn, when you score a critical hit with a melee weapon attack or reduce a creature to 0 hit points with one, you can attempt to terrify your foes as a bonus action. Enemies within 10 feet must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened of you for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

### Hag Coven

You and two other hags have joined your magics to form a powerful coven.

*Prerequisite:* Hag race, spellcasting or pact magic class feature, level 8

Upon gaining this feat, you may join a coven of hags. This coven must include exactly three hags of any type. Other hag player character must also possess this feat to join the coven. The benefits of this feat take effect after all three hags complete a long rest while within 30 feet of each other.

The power of your coven is based on your “coven level”. Your coven level is half the average spellcasting level (the number you use to determine the number of spells you have) of the coven’s members.

While within 30 feet of the other members of your coven, you share a pool of spell slots. The number of spell slots available is based on your coven level using the Multiclass Spellcaster table on page 165 of the Player’s Handbook. The spells you may cast are listed in the Hag Covens sidebar on page 176 of the Monster Manual.

For casting these spells, each hag is a spellcaster of a level matching your coven level. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells. Your spell save DC is 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence modifier, and the spell attack bonus is your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence modifier.

Finally, you and the other members of your coven may create a Hag’s Eye, as described in the Hag Covens sidebar on page 176 of the Monster Manual.

### Hand of Yurtrus

A devotee of the orcish god of death, you see to the tribes ill, and performs rites for the dead. As badges of your office, you wear pale gloves made of humanoid skin, and you have removed your own tongue.

*Prerequisite:* Orc or Half-orc race, ability to cast 2<sup>nd</sup>-level cleric spells.

- Your Constitution increases by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You craft a pair of pale gloves from humanoid skin, which function as a holy symbol. As an action, you can touch a creature and channel your deities’ diseased blessings into the target. Make a melee weapon attack. On a hit, the target suffers 1d8 necrotic damage. You do not add any ability modifier to this damage. This damage increases to 2d8 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d8 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d8 at 17<sup>th</sup> level.
- You learn one cantrip of your choice from the cleric spell list, and you gain proficiency in your choice of Arcana, Medicine, or Religion.
- You cut out your own tongue. You lose the ability to speak, but you may still perform verbal components for spells.

### Mind Flayer Ulitharid

You are more powerful than other Illithids. You bear six tentacles rather than the customary four, and you are the favored child of your colony’s elder brain.

*Prerequisite:* Mind flayer race

- Your tentacles deal 1d8 psychic damage on a hit.
- Increase the die size of your psychic blast to 1d8.
- You may cast *detect thoughts* once per day without expending a spell slot using your innate spellcasting trait.
- If an elder brain establishes a psychic link you, the elder brain can form a psychic link with any other creature which you can detect when casting *detect thoughts*. Such link ends if the creature falls outside the telepathy ranges of both you and the elder brain.

You can maintain a psychic link with the elder brain regardless of distance, so long as you and the elder brain are both on the same plane of existence. If you are more than 5 miles away from the elder brain, you can end the psychic link at any time (no action required).

### Maddening Feast

You have no problem eating the flesh of your fallen foes, and have learned to do so in such a horrifying fashion that it frightens other creatures, rendering them wholly speechless.

*Prerequisite: Bheur Hag, Ghast, or Ghoul race*

As an action, you may feast on the corpse of one enemy within 5 feet of you that died within the past minute. Each creature of your choice within 30 feet of you and able to see you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of your next turn. While frightened in this way, a creature is incapacitated, can't understand what others say, can't read, and speaks only in gibberish. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the hag's Maddening Feast for the next 24 hours.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

### Mouth of Grolantor

Starved to madness and near death, you were "blessed" with insatiable hunger by Grolantor. While your allies loath to set you loose for fear of your appetites, your drive to kill and eat your foes is impressive.

*Prerequisite: Hill giant race*

- Driven by madness and hunger you may bite and pummel your foes with unnatural ferocity. Your unarmed strikes deal 1d8 bludgeoning damage or piercing damage on a hit.
- As a bonus action, you can make a special attack with your bite. If the attack hits, it deals its normal damage, and you gain temporary hit points (minimum of 1) equal to your Constitution modifier. After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

### Neogi master

Old, experienced, and powerful among your kind, you have become a master of your people.

*Prerequisite: Neogi race*

- Your Charisma increases by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Your size increases to medium.
- Your unarmed strikes deal 1d4 piercing and 1d4 poison damage.

### Nurtured One of Yutruss

Infected with horrible diseases and nurtured into a horrifying disease-infested monstrosity, you serve your orcish brethren as equal parts shock troop and biological weapon.

*Prerequisite: Orc or Half-orc race, not immune to disease, 14 Constitution.*

- You are resistant to disease, and to the poisoned condition.
- As an action, you may intentionally reduce yourself to 0 hit points.
- When you fall to 0 hit points, you explode in a burst of bile and putrid flesh. Each creature within 10 feet of you must make a Constitution saving throw, taking 1d6 poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The DC of this check is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

The damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5<sup>th</sup> level (2d6), 11<sup>th</sup> level (3d6), and 17<sup>th</sup> level (4d6).

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

### Red Fang of Shargaas

A pariah among orcs, you worship Shargaas, the orcish deity of deep darkness and sneakiness. You serve your people as thief and an assassin, working on your tribe's behalf despite their disdain for you and your ways.

*Prerequisite: Orc or Half-orc race, Sneak Attack +2d6, 14 Dexterity.*

- Magical darkness doesn't impede your Darkvision.
- You may cast *darkness* once per day. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

### Stone Giant Dreamwalker

Acclimated to the dreamscape that is the surface world, you have taken on strange magical abilities to affect the creatures that inhabit the strange realm.

*Prerequisite: Stone giant race*

You learn the *friends* cantrip. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell.



As an action, you can attempt to petrify a creature with your touch. The target must be a creature within your reach. Creatures whose bodies are not made of flesh, such as constructs, are immune to this effect, as are creatures immune to paralysis. The target creature must make a Constitution saving throw. The DC for this saving throw is 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus.

On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone. They are treated as having 1 level of exhaustion. The creature must repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a failed saving throw, the creature is treated as gaining an additional level of exhaustion. If the creature fails 6 saving throws, it is petrified until freed by *greater restoration* or similar magic. On a successful saving throw, the creature resists the effect, and is treated as having one less level of exhaustion. The creature is treated as having one less level of exhaustion each round until they are treated as having 0 levels of exhaustion. Creatures immune to exhaustion are not immune to this effect, and any actual levels of exhaustion do not stack with this effect.

This effect lasts up to one minute. You must maintain concentration during that time, as if you were casting a spell. If you lose concentration, the creature is treated as having no levels of exhaustion from this effect and immediately returns to normal. If the creature becomes petrified by this effect, the effects are permanent and you no longer need to concentrate.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

### Storm Giant Quintessent

Seeking to stave off inevitable death of old age, you have embraced the power of the storm.

*Prerequisite: Storm giant race.*

- You learn the *gust* cantrip. You can cast *fog cloud* once per day without expending a spell slot. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for these spells.
- You can use your action to create a lightning weapon in your empty hand. This weapon can be a sword, dagger, or other similar weapon. You are proficient with it while you wield it. This weapon counts as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. You may dismiss the weapon as a free action during your turn, and it disappears if it leaves your hand for one round or more. It also disappears if you use this feature again, fall unconscious, or die.

- As a bonus action, you can coalesce wind into a javelin-like form. You may then throw this weapon as if it were a normal javelin. This weapon counts as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. The javelin disappears at the end of your turn.

### Vegepygmy Chief

You have lived long enough that spore clusters have formed on your body, identifying you as an elite among your kind and allowing you to spread the fungus which produce new vegepygmies.

*Prerequisite: Vegepygmy (standard) race.*

- Your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution increases by 1 to a maximum of 20.
- As an action, you can release a cloud of spores in a 5-foot radius around you. The spores spread around corners. Each creature in the area that isn't a plant must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. While poisoned this way, a target takes 1d8 poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Constitution modifier. A target can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

At 5<sup>th</sup> level, the radius expands to 10 ft. At 11<sup>th</sup> level, the radius expands to 15 ft. and the damage increases to 2d8. At 17<sup>th</sup> level, the radius increases to 20 ft.

You must maintain concentration during that time, as if you were casting a spell. If you lose concentration, affected creatures are no longer poisoned by this ability.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

### Yuan-Ti Mind Whisperer

Your pact with the Yuan-ti god Sseth, the Sibillant Death, grants you great power in return for your devotion.

*Prerequisite: Yuan-ti race, level 3 warlock.*

- After making a successful melee attack, as a reaction you can cause the target of the melee attack to take an additional 1d8 psychic damage. This damage increases to 2d8 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d8 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d8 at 17<sup>th</sup> level. After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.
- You gain the Dark One's Blessing warlock invocation.

## Yuan-Ti Nightmare Speaker

Your devotion to your patron, Dendar the Night Serpent, grants you additional powers beyond those of most warlocks.

*Prerequisite:* Yuan-ti race, level 3 warlock.

- After making a successful melee attack, as a reaction you can cause the target of the melee attack to take an additional 1d8 psychic damage. This damage increases to 2d8 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d8 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d8 at 17<sup>th</sup> level.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

- You may cast *dissonant whispers* once per day. Unlike normal spells, this spell is cast at a spell level equal to your level divided by 2 (minimum 1, maximum 9). Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

## Yuan-Ti Pit Lord

You devote yourself wholly to your pact with the Yuna-ti god Merrshaulk, drawing magical power from his eternal slumber.

*Prerequisite:* Yuan-ti race, level 3 warlock.

- After making a successful melee attack, as a reaction you can cause the target of the melee attack to take an additional 1d8 psychic damage. This damage increases to 2d8 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 3d8 at 11<sup>th</sup> level, and 4d8 at 17<sup>th</sup> level.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

- You may cast *sleep* once per day. Unlike normal spells, this spell is cast at a spell level equal to your level divided by 2 (minimum 1, maximum 9). Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell.

## Design Notes

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We need to consider how powerful feats can be. Feats are much more art than science, but we'll still do our best to play scientists here. We've valued the choice of a feat at 4 BP, so any feat should never exceed 4 BP, and generally should be worth less because an opportunity to select any feat is always more valuable than a feat itself. Feats are, in theory at least, of equal value to two flexible ability increases, which we've valued at 3 BP, which is another good barometer.

We'll shoot for a 2-4 BP range, and try very hard to stay close to 3 BP.

We also need to consider prerequisites. Stronger feats should require more things in order to mitigate how powerful they are. Unfortunately, it's difficult to find a mathematical way to balance prerequisites because by nature they'll be trivial for some characters and impossible for others.

# Backgrounds

The following backgrounds are designed for use primarily by monstrous characters, but frequently work just as well for more conventional characters.

## Born of Magic

You were brought into being entirely by magic. You have no true parents or family, but the circumstances of your creation set your life on a path which is anything but mundane.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Two of your choice of Arcana, Nature, or Religion.

**Tool Proficiencies:** One of Artisan's Tools, Alchemist's Tools, Smiths Tools, or Tinker's Tools.

**Languages:** One language from the Exotic Languages table (Player's Handbook, page 123).

**Equipment:** An object of magical significance such as a spellcasting focus, a spell component pouch, a dagger, or an ornamental piece from a destroyed magic item. A set of tattered common clothes, and magic components (usually powdered silver, diamond dust, or small onyx gemstones) worth 15 gp.

## Magical Origin

Creatures are conjured or created in an unknowable number of magical rituals.

D8 Ritual Nature

- 1 I was created in a ritual devoted to specific powerful entity.
- 2 I was created in a ritual to perform a specific task.
- 3 I was created as the result of an arcane experiment.
- 4 I was created as a side-effect of alchemy.
- 5 I was created as a boon to a favored servant.
- 6 I was the accidental result of magic gone awry.
- 7 I was the masterwork of a craftsman skilled in constructing others of my kind.
- 8 I was an unintelligent creature or object granted intelligence to better serve my master.

## Feature: Magical Scrounger

You have an innate sense of what materials may have magical applications. Whenever you encounter materials which might be used as a spell component, or which might have some other useful function

related to magic, you instantly know that the material is useful. However, this ability does not grant you insight into why something is useful; merely that it has some use related to magic.

This effect stretches all the way from minor items like bat guano up to incredibly valuable items like diamonds. However, it is not limited to spell components. If, for example, you encounter a trinket which opens a magical lock, you know that the trinket has some magical purpose. Unfortunately, this ability grants no insight into the purpose of objects which you identify as useful.

## Suggested Characteristics

Where most creatures were born and grew to maturity, you were brought into existence fully formed and ready to face the world. While this removes the messy emotional baggage of a previous life, it also leaves you lacking in life experience, and your personality reflects this abnormal personal history.

d4 Personality Trait

- 1 I inherited my creator's quirks, and I find myself doing small, odd things without explanation.
- 2 I recreate small elements of my creation wherever I rest.
- 3 I hoard objects of any magical significance.
- 4 I befriend spellcasters and other magical creatures whenever I can.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Obedience.** You are utterly devoted to your creator. (Lawful)
- 2 **Vengeance.** You resent your creator and others like them, and seek to do them harm by any means possible. (Evil)
- 3 **Rebellion.** The purpose for which I was created is abhorrent, and I must never fulfill it. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Detachment.** I am not supposed to exist, and I must make my presence felt as little as possible. (Neutral)
- 5 **Charity.** My existence is a gift, and I must turn it toward the good of others. (Good)
- 6 **Passivity.** I will serve the purpose for which I was created, but I do not let those actions define me. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I yearn to fulfill the purpose for which I was created.
- 2 Lacking a true family, I value personal relationships, and desire a sense of belonging.
- 3 The process of my creation fascinates me, and I want to know everything I can about it.
- 4 I think of my creator as family and treat them as such regardless of their feelings or actions.
- 5 I want to become powerful enough to one day replicate the magic which created me.
- 6 I want to destroy all knowledge of the magic which created me.

d6 Flaw

- 1 My first instinct is always to obey verbal instructions, regardless of their origin.
- 2 My first instinct is always to refuse verbal instructions, regardless of their origin.
- 3 I avert my gaze or kneel when I encounter a ritual being performed.
- 4 I cannot stand children. I find their existence deeply unsettling.
- 5 My personality and behavior are deeply ingrained, and I am slow to exhibit personal growth.
- 6 I seek magical solutions to all of my problems.

## Dungeon Denizen

Until your escape, you were confined to a dungeon.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Two of your choice of Animal Handling, Insight, Perception, and Stealth.

**Tool Proficiencies:** One type of artisan's tools.

**Languages:** Your choice from the Exotic Languages table (Player's Handbook, page 123).

**Equipment:** One martial weapon or one spellcasting focus, one shield or 20 arrows or bolts, and 10 gold pieces in a small decorative container such as a chest, jewelry box, or decorative urn.

## Dungeon Role

Creatures which inhabit dungeons do so for a reason, and you are no exception. Whether you are there by choice, by accident, or by the will of some other creature, you had a purpose in the dungeon.

d8 Why were you in the dungeon?

- 1 To guard an item or location.
- 2 To retrieve a specific item.
- 3 To clean up messes.
- 4 To assist other inhabitants.
- 5 To prey on other inhabitants.
- 6 To find shelter.
- 7 I was a captive or slave.
- 8 I was the master of the dungeon.

## Dungeon Type

Not every dungeon is worked stone buried underground. Many dungeons take other forms.

d6 What type of dungeon?

- 1 Worked stone, underground.
- 2 Ruined city or structure.
- 3 Natural cave network.
- 4 Natural above-ground dungeon, such as a forest or canyon.
- 5 Abnormal: A pocket dimension, the inside of a giant creature, etc.
- 6 Roll again twice.

## Feature: Unconventional Diet

Your life in a dungeon has taught you to find sustenance wherever you can. Dead bodies, pests, patches of lichen, and other scraps provide enough food for you to live on. You can scavenge for enough food to feed yourself anywhere that living creatures dwell, even in the most inhospitable environment.

Unfortunately, your allies may lack your digestive fortitude and cannot benefit from your ability to scavenge unconventional food sources unless they possess similar digestive capabilities.

## Suggested Characteristics

Life in a dungeon is often very different from living anywhere else. The constant presence of traps, predators, and other hazards makes many dungeon denizens wary, cautious, or even paranoid.

d6 Personality Trait

- 1 I always walk along the right edge of rooms and hallways.
- 2 I never look at the faces of humanoids in artwork.
- 3 I take unnecessarily high steps when crossing thresholds.
- 4 I whisper a secret word whenever I open a door.
- 5 I never use furniture that I don't own unless I have studied it at length.
- 6 I prefer to eat and rest while sitting on the floor.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Enforced Order.** My home exists in a carefully established balance, and the world at large will be better if it is similarly balanced. (Lawful)
- 2 **Dominion.** What is mine is mine, and I will hurt anyone who wants to take it from me. (Evil)
- 3 **Wanderlust.** Freedom to leave a place is purest expression of my personal freedom. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Exploration.** I want to see and experience the world. (Neutral)
- 5 **Mercy.** Not all of my enemies oppose me by choice, so I spare their lives when I can. (Good)
- 6 **Survival.** I'm just trying to survive in a harsh world in any way I can. (Any)

d4 Bond

- 1 I'm afraid to be alone in a locked room.
- 2 I have a secret location where I inter my valuables for safe keeping.
- 3 Finding secret doors, traps, or other hidden mechanisms makes me nostalgic for my former home.
- 4 I left someone or something behind in the dungeon and I hope to retrieve it some day.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I hoard resources like food, even when they are abundant.
- 2 I always consider members of a specific group (spellcasters, clergy of one religion, etc.) my superiors
- 3 I refuse to speak unfamiliar words until I have heard several other creatures speak them aloud.
- 4 I'm visibly uncomfortable in rooms with reflective surfaces.
- 5 I examine new objects in one strangely specific way.
- 6 Talking to strangers is always either transactional or a potential violent conflict.

## Locale Spirit

You are a spirit which occupies and personifies a specific place or inanimate object, such as the spirit of a tree or a lake.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Two of your choice of Animal Handling, Nature, or Religion.

**Tool Proficiencies:** Herbalism Kit.

**Languages:** Your choice of dwarven, elven, giant, or one language from the Exotic Languages table (Player's Handbook, page 123).

**Equipment:** A club, greatclub, or quarterstaff made from materials available in your home locale, an herbalism kit, and either an antitoxin or a potion of healing.

## Native Locale

Many locations are home to nature spirits. Choose the location from which you originated, or roll on the table below.

d8	Locale	d8	Locale
1	Cave	5	Mountain
2	Desert/Tundra	6	Ocean
3	Forest	7	Plain/Prairie
4	Lake	8	River

## Feature: Kindred Spirits

You can always locate the homes of other locale spirits in the local area. Spirits of the same or similar type to you willingly allow you to pass through and rest in their territory, and may offer aid if they are good-natured or if your goals align with theirs.

## Suggested Characteristics

Locale spirits are closely bonded to their homes, and often suffer harm or even death if their home is damaged or destroyed. They may live for as long as their home remains undisturbed, and many locale spirits never depart their homes. This reclusive nature might make locale spirits feel aloof or alien to other creatures.

d4 Personality Trait

- 1 I collect small trinkets which I find strange or unfamiliar.
- 2 I mimic animal calls and bird song from my home when I'm bored.
- 3 My life is exceptionally long, and I take a very long-term view of world events.
- 4 I frequently focus my attention on the place I'm in rather than the creatures I encounter there.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Natural Order.** Nature eventually settles into a healthy natural balance which must not be disturbed by outside influence. (Lawful)
- 2 **Predation.** I am the apex predator; all others are my prey. (Evil)
- 3 **Self-Determination.** All creatures must choose their own path and live with the consequences. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Detachment.** It is not my place to meddle in the world's affairs unless they directly affect my home. (Neutral)
- 5 **Hospitality.** My home offers succor to all those who require it. (Good)
- 6 **Mis En Place.** Everything has a natural place in the world, and once there it should remain undisturbed. (Any)

d4 Bond

- 1 Creatures and objects from my home are things to be treasured.
- 2 I avoid changing the natural world outside of my home, for fear of consequences.
- 3 I love my home as it is now, and I want to keep it as such however I can.
- 4 My home is vulnerable to outside intrusion, so I must keep its location a closely guarded secret.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I expect everything to function the same way it does at home, and become confused or upset when it doesn't.
- 2 I am scared of creatures which don't exist in or near my home.
- 3 I want to expand the reach of my home, and often disregard the consequences for doing so.
- 4 I dislike my home, and want to distance myself from it as much as I can.
- 5 I am constantly irritable whenever I am away from my home.
- 6 Whenever I'm not sure what to do, I find myself making my way home without thinking about it.

# Magic Items

## Automagical Hand

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*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

This object resembles a harness with a humanoid arm and hand extending from its center. The arm may be skeletal, mechanical, or even fleshy, and the hand may have varying numbers of fingers, but the arm is always roughly as functional as human hand and arm, possessing a thumb and at least two fingers. The harness is worn by strapping it to the wearer's torso, and the folds against the torso while not in use.

Wearing the hand allows the wearer to take the Use an Item action to use items as though they have a free hand. Creatures with two full hands can open doors and retrieve items from a backpack, and creatures with no hands can finely manipulate objects. The hand cannot be used for more complicated actions, including attacking, reloading a weapon, holding a shield, performing somatic components, or other similar actions.

## Collar of Mighty Claws

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*Wondrous item, uncommon*

This collar is made of sturdy leather, and is decorated with claws, teeth, and small bones from predators, especially those of magical nature or origin such as displacer beasts and owlbears. While wearing this collar, your unarmed strikes are treated as magic for the purposes of overcoming resistance or immunity to damage.

## Flind's Flail

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*Weapon (Flail), very rare (requires attunement by a groll)*

This terrifying weapon resembles the iconic weapon of the demon lord Yeenoghu. The handle is wrought of bones lashed together with black fur from the tail fur of a powerful groll. The heads of the flail, connected to the handle by rope made of the same black fur, are humanoid skulls pierced with metal spikes. The eyes of the skulls glow with malevolent orange light.

The flail can produce three effects, which you may choose to activate as a free action after making a successful melee attack with the flail. Each effect may be activated once per day, resetting at dawn. Each effect calls for a saving throw. The DC of these saving throws is 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier.

- **Madness:** The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target must make a melee attack against a random target within its reach on its next turn. If it has no targets within its reach even after moving, it loses its action on that turn.
- **Pain:** The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. The target suffers 4d10 psychic damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a successful one.
- **Paralysis:** the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

In addition, while attuned to this flail, your Rampage ability is enhanced. Whenever Rampage activates, all creatures within 10 feet of you with the Rampage trait may also activate their Rampage trait.

## Graystaff

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*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a Bheur Hag)*

This staff is composed of a long piece of gnarled, gray wood from a tree found on a snowy mountaintop.

This staff functions as a staff spellcasting focus, and as a broom of flying (Dungeon Master's Guide, page 156).

In addition, while attuned this staff allows a Bheur Hag to cast additional spells. You may cast *cone of cold*, *hold person*, *ice storm*, and *wall of ice* each once per day without expending a spell slot. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells if you do not already have a spellcasting ability.

## Nilbog Spirit

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*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a goblin)*

This mysterious object is the remnant of a long-dead goblin deity. Sent to wreak havoc on the followers of Maglubiet, this mischievous spirit imbues its host with several perplexing abilities, but also drives its host acts of random violence and spite.

The spirit itself is invisible, intelligent, has a flying speed of 30 feet, can't speak, and can't be attacked. The spirit may attempt to possess a living goblin as an action. The goblin must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or become possessed by the Nilbog Spirit. The goblin may choose to fail this saving throw willingly. If the save succeeds, the spirit can't possess that goblin for 24 hours.

Once the goblin is possessed, it becomes attuned to the Nilbog Spirit, just as a creature attunes to other

magic items. The goblin may not remove attunement to the Nilbog spirit without first ending the possession (see Nilbog Possession, below). A goblin ending the possession immediately loses the traits granted by the Nilbog Spirit.

While possessed by the spirit, your Charisma becomes 15 (unless it was already higher), and you gain the following traits:

- **Innate Spellcasting.** You learn the *mage hand* and *vicious mockery* cantrips. If you are 3<sup>rd</sup> level or higher, you may cast *tasha's hideous laughter* once per day. If you are 7<sup>th</sup> level or higher, you may cast *confusion* once per day. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells.
- **Nilbog Possession.** While possessed by the spirit, the goblin's alignment becomes chaotic evil. If the Nilbog Spirit's host is killed or the possession is ended by a spell such as hallow, magic circle, or protection from evil and good, the possession ends, and the Nilbog Spirit may not attempt to possess the same goblin again for 24 hours. If other goblin hosts are available, the Nilbog Spirit will typically go looking for another host in this period. The spirit can leave its host at any time, but it won't do so willingly unless it knows there's another potential host nearby.
- **Nilbogism.** Any creature that attempts to damage you must first succeed on a Charisma saving throw or be charmed until the end of the creature's next turn. A creature charmed in this way must use its action praising you if it speaks a language, or making suitable sounds and gestures to indicate your greatness if it does not. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Charisma modifier.

Once a creature is affected by this ability, it may not be affected by your Nilbogism again until you have completed a long rest.

You can't regain hit points, including through magical healing, except through Reversal of Fortune.

- **Reversal of Fortune.** As a Reaction in response to another creature dealing damage to you, you reduce the damage to 0 and may spend a hit die to regain hit points.



# Spells

## Spell Lists

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### Bard

#### Cantrips (0 Level)

- Daze
- Devour Magic
- Spook

### Cleric

#### Cantrips (0 Level)

- Devour Magic

### Druid

#### Cantrips (0 Level)

- Devour Magic

### Sorcerer

#### Cantrips (0 Level)

- Daze
- Devour Magic
- Spook

### Warlock

#### Cantrips (0 Level)

- Daze
- Mind Spike
- Spook

### Wizard

#### Cantrips (0 Level)

- Daze
- Devour Magic
- Mind Spike
- Spook

## Spell Descriptions

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### Daze

*Enchantment Cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 60 ft.

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** 1 round

The targeted creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the start of the gazer's next turn. While the target is charmed in this way, its speed is halved, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls.

### Devour Magic

*Abjuration Cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 120 ft.

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** 1 round

The targeted creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or have one of its magic items lose all magical properties until the start of your next turn.

Determine the affected item randomly, ignoring single-use items such as potions and scrolls. If the object is a charged item, it also loses 1d4 charges.

### Mind Spike

*Enchantment Cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 60 ft.

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You fire a shimmering purple ray at the target which wracks its mind with painful sensations. The target creature must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or take 1d6 psychic damage. The target gains no benefit from cover for this saving throw.

The spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

### Spook

*Necromancy Cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** 60 ft.

**Components:** V, S

**Duration:** 1 round

The target creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the start of your next turn.

# Appendix:

## Campaign Ideas

This section includes a set of briefly explained campaign ideas designed to cater easily to characters built using Monstrous Races.

### Aspiring Necromancer

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Players play minions of an aspiring necromancer. This can be a great opportunity to present necromancy in a light-hearted, comical fashion, but you could also keep things extremely serious. Players might be familiars, undead servants, or just evil creatures whose goals align with that of the necromancer.

### Bargain

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You are sent to serve a warlock. Tone based on patron. The warlock might be any level of power the DM, but you are bound into their service. A campaign built around a Fiend patron warlock might include fiends of all sorts, while a campaign around an Archfey patron warlock will likely include numerous fey.

### Cult of Personality

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Everyone plays a race which worships a central monstrous creature. Froghemoths and Grung are a great example.

### DAE Tentacles?

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The ancient war between Aboleths and Mind Flayers has been mentioned numerous times throughout the history of Dungeons and Dragons but has never been explored in any significant detail. This provides fertile ground for exploration in your own games. What is the world like before humanoid took over? How does the war play out? What is the world like before gods gain power in the multiverse?

### Familiarquest

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Everyone plays a familiar or similarly powerful creature. You might simply restrict players to these options and go no further, but you might also make the players familiars for powerful spellcasters.

### Game of Thrones, but with Drow

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Drow house politics are very similar to the political dramas which play out in Game of Thrones (or A Song of Fire and Ice for those of you who prefer the books), but with considerably more magic and violence. But don't limit yourself to players playing Drow, as there are numerous suitable drow-related races.

### Game of Thrones, but with Orcs

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Orc politics, which is mostly violence. Orc society, depending on your setting, is typically tribal, primitive, and extremely violent. The players are out to make a name for themselves and to gain prestige among their people.

### Gnoll Warband Simulator

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Everyone is a gnoll or gnoll-adjacent. Volo's Guide to Monsters includes numerous creatures that fight alongside gnoll warbands, giving you a handful of interesting options. The campaign will be a mix of attacking civilized cities, forts, etc. and some resource management to keep your warband healthy and strong.

### Just Goblinoid Things

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Everyone is a goblinoid living in goblin society. Everyone could be goblins, but hobgoblins and bugbears are also options.

### Pet Heroes

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Everyone is a house pet. Cats, birds, mastiffs, and any number of other options can work. There's some overlap with this option and both Animal Farm Party and Familiar Quest.

### Tyranny

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Villains have conquered the world, and the players are part of villainous society. Where once caves were full of goblins, now they're full of halflings. Hordes of orcs are now armies of human remnants trying to cling to their long-dead society. Players are likely orcs, goblins, or other races of evil humanoids.

### (Un)Seelie Court intrigue

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Everyone is a Fey, and the campaign takes place in the Feywild. Take a lot of inspiration from Alice in Wonderland. The world is weird, crazy, and dramatic, and the Fey even more so.

# Appendix:

## Character Ideas

This section includes a brief list of character concepts for monstrous characters. These are intended as inspiration to help you create your own characters, but if you see something in this section which you want to bring to the table you should absolutely do so.

### Item Spirit

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This concept could apply to any animated object: armor, swords, etc. The basic idea is that the character is actually the magic force that inhabits the item, rather than the union of the item and the magic force. If the character encounters a superior body of the correct type (a flying sword finds a new sword, etc.), the character can transfer their being into the new item.

This conveniently addresses the issue that animated items have trouble benefiting from magic items of their same type. A flying sword character could inhabit a +1 sword that they find while adventuring, and an animated armor character could move into a suit of adamantine full plate.

This can present some balance complications in your game, so be sure to discuss it at length with your dungeon master. The inability to use certain items is part of the mechanics that balance animated items as race options and removing or altering that restrictions could make those races more powerful than intended. Still, this concept could make animated objects more fun to play and can help keep them useful at high levels in games where magic items are abundant.

### Reverse Beastmaster

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Start with an animal that can serve as a beastmaster ranger's companion (A wolf, a pony, etc.), and take the ranger class with the beastmaster subclass. Rather than select another beast as your companion, talk to your DM and see if they will allow you to select a humanoid NPC. You could be a wolf with a bandit companion, a cat or owl with an apprentice wizard companion.

Like with animal companions, your humanoid companion should be medium size or lower and challenge rating  $\frac{1}{4}$  or lower. The stat blocks presented in the Monster Manual and in Volo's Guide to Monsters generally assume that NPCs are human, but page 282 of the Dungeon Master's Guide includes a

table which alters the traits of NPCs to easily change their race.

This character concept requires some allowances from the dungeon master. Even if you stay within the bounds of CR  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NPCs are still more versatile and often more powerful than beasts of comparable CR. The simple addition of opposable thumbs is a huge improvement in their utility. This character concept assumes that you don't have hands (unless you're an ape or something), so a companion with hands is a huge boon.

To balance these issues, consider restricting yourself to NPCs of CR  $\frac{1}{8}$  or CR 0, use a race with a BP below the usual range of 8-10 BP like a bat, a cat, or a rat, and consider making your NPC companion a complete idiot to that their capabilities are somewhere in line with a beast. Also remember that your NPC companion is an NPC, rather than another character you directly control. You can issue commands, but the NPC's actions are ultimately up to the DM.

### Un-Familiar

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Similar to the reverse beastmaster, the un-familiar flips the roles of the familiar and its spellcaster. Start with an animal that serves as a familiar: anything from the *find familiar* options (possibly including those added by Pact of the Chain) will work, but other CR 0 beast options may work too. Second, take a spellcasting class with access to *find familiar*, or take the Ritual Caster feat and learn *find familiar* as a ritual. Finally, select a humanoid as your familiar. A CR 0 humanoid like a commoner is recommended. Anything more powerful threatens to eclipse your own abilities, especially at low levels.

The stat blocks for generic humanoid NPCs generally don't specify what race the NPC is, so if you want a humanoid familiar of a specific race, refer to the NPC Features table on page 282 of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

# Appendix: Party Ideas

This section includes a brief list of ideas for parties of monstrous characters which fit together thematically. While thematic cohesion is in no way necessary in many games, sometimes it can be fun to play a group of characters whose backgrounds intersect frequently.

## Animated Armory

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Everyone in the party is an animated object. As of this writing, the only animated objects which I've adapted as playable races are animated armor, flying swords, rugs of smothering, and animated tomes, all of which are presented in the original Monstrous Races (see the race builder appendix for animated tomes).

Conveniently, this makes for an amusing visual: a suit of armor riding atop a flying carpet with a sword in one hand and a spellbook in the other, only to take foes by surprise when each of the four separates to attack on their own.

## Dragon Adherent

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Evil dragons frequently gather followers in various forms and quantities. In some cases, groups of uncivilized humanoid take up worshipping living dragons as gods. A dragon (see the original Monstrous Races) makes a natural focal point for a party centered around dragons their activities.

Dragonborn, kobolds, and potentially other scaled creatures like lizardfolk make great additions to the party. Kobolds have the added benefits of being expendable, edible, and easily replaced.

## Elder Brain Trust

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Volo's Guide to Monsters introduces a number of new creatures which frequently serve mind flayers, as well as mind flayer-related options like the Alhoon and the Ulitharid. This offers a diverse set of racial options for a party centered around a mind flayer or an elder brain.

Cranium Rats, Intellect Devourers (see the original Monstrous Races), and Mindwitnesses are all good additions to the party. Also consider other races which might frequently become thralls to mind flayers: drow, duergar, svirfneblin, and anything elde with a brain that frequents the underdark.

## Familiar Quest

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The spell *find familiar* offers a number of creature options, most of which fall into a similar BP range. While these creatures are extremely weak by the standards of other races, they're roughly balanced against each other, which is usually enough to make a party's characters feel fair.

Bats, cats, crabs, frogs, hawks, lizards, octopi, owls, poisonous snakes, quippers, rats, ravens, sea horses, spiders, and weasels are all good options, but don't limit yourself to that list. Also consider imps, pseudodragons, and sprites which are added as familiar options for Pact of the Chain warlocks, but remember that their BP value is much higher than other familiar options.

## Frogemoth Cult

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Grung tame, care for, and to some degree worship frogemoths. That makes a frogemoth a natural focal point for a party composed of grung. Frogemoths typically don't have the mental capacity to understand this relationship and see grung as a food source rather than an ally. An intelligent frogemoth could make an interesting party leader and could handle dead grung allies by eating them and replacing them with other grung from the same tribe.

## Gnoll Warband

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Volo's Guide to Monsters add numerous creatures and options for creatures which fit into a gnoll warband. This party is naturally violent and evil, but could be fun in a combat-centric campaign where moral issues are outright ignored.

Gnolls are obvious and having several gnolls in the party fits the theme. Gnolls should vie for supremacy, with the ultimate goal of becoming a flind to claim the leadership role. The party might also include hyenas, leucrota, maw demons, shoosuva demons, and witherlings.

## Goblinoids

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Perhaps an obvious option, a party of goblinoids is a classic counter-point to the iconic humanoid party consisting of a dwarf, an elf, a halfling, and a human.

A bugbear, a goblin, and a hobgoblin are a good start to a party. Finding an obvious fourth race may be difficult, but consider a barghest, and ogre, or a worg.