

PATHFINDER CHRONICLES™



INTO THE DARKLANDS

By James Jacobs and Greg A. Vaughan

DARKLANDS WANDERING MONSTERS

Nar-Voth	Sekamina	Orv	Creature	Avg. EL	Source
01-02	01-02	—	1d2 thoquas	2	MM 242
03-06	—	—	3d4 mites	2	<i>Tome of Horrors Rev.</i> 266
07-10	03-04	—	2d6 fire beetles	3	MM 285
11-14	—	—	2d8 dire rats	3	MM 64
15-16	05-06	01-02	1 gray ooze	4	MM 202
17-20	—	—	1d12 darkmantles	4	MM 38
21-22	—	—	1d4 cave fishers	4	<i>Tome of Horrors Rev.</i> 56
23-24	07-08	—	1d4 cave lizards	4	MM 275 (monitor lizard)
—	09-10	03-04	1 gibbering moulder	5	MM 126
—	11-14	05-06	1 ochre jelly	5	MM 202
25-28	—	—	1d6 vegepygmy guards	5	Page 24
29-32	15-16	—	1d8 dire bats	6	MM 62
33-34	—	—	2d4 Darkland sentinels	6	<i>Pathfinder</i> #13 80
35-38	—	—	2d6 grimlocks	6	MM 140
39-40	—	—	2d6 jinkins	6	Page 24
—	17-18	07-10	1 black pudding	7	MM 201
—	19-20	—	1 lurker above	7	<i>Tome of Horrors Rev.</i> 258
—	—	11-16	1d8 pechs	7	<i>Tome of Horrors Rev.</i> 291
41-42	21-24	17-18	1d6 cave raptors	7	Page 17
43-44	25-28	19-20	1d6 cave solifugids	7	Page 17
—	29-30	21-26	1d8 mobats	7	<i>Tome of Horrors Rev.</i> 31
—	31-32	27-30	1 giant slug	8	<i>Tome of Horrors Rev.</i> 323
—	33-34	31-32	1d4 seugathi	8	Page 58
—	35-36	—	1d8 ugothols	8	<i>Pathfinder</i> #2 88
45-46	—	—	2d4 fungal crawlers	8	<i>Pathfinder</i> #13 82
47-48	37-40	—	2d6 morlocks	8	Page 54
—	41-42	33-34	1d4 driders	9	MM 89
—	43-44	35-38	1d8 skavelings	9	Page 50
—	45-46	39-40	1d12 cloaklers	10	MM 36
—	47-48	41-42	2d4 average xorns	11	MM 261
—	49-50	43-46	1 purple worm	12	MM 211
—	51-52	—	2d6 redcaps	12	<i>Pathfinder</i> #4 80
49-50	53-54	—	1d6 scanderigs	13	<i>Pathfinder</i> #4 86
—	—	47-48	1 adult umbral dragon	14	<i>Pathfinder</i> #11 86
—	—	49-50	1 vemerak	14	Page 62
—	—	51-52	2d6 intellect devourers	14	Page 50
—	—	53-56	1 neothelid	15	Page 48
—	—	57-58	1 shoggoth	15	<i>J3: Crucible of Chaos</i> 29
—	55-56	59-62	1d10 gugs	15	<i>Pathfinder</i> #11 82
—	57-58	63-66	1d6 ropers	15	MM 215
51-52	59-62	67-70	1 scorpion	Var.	MM 287
53-54	63-64	71-74	1d6 centipedes	Var.	MM 286
55-58	65-66	75-78	1d6 spiders	Var.	MM 288
59-62	67-68	79-80	Adventurers	Var.	Variable
63-66	—	—	Dark Folk	Var.	<i>Tome of Horrors Rev.</i> 87-88
67-70	—	—	Derro	Var.	MM 49
71-72	69-76	—	Drow	Var.	MM 102
73-78	77-78	—	Duergar	Var.	MM 91
79-80	79-80	81-86	Elementals	Var.	MM 95-100
—	81-82	87-88	Fiends	Var.	Variable
81-84	83-86	89-90	Ghouls	Var.	MM 199
85-88	—	—	Mongrelmen	Var.	<i>Tome of Horrors Rev.</i> 267
—	87-88	91-92	Serpentfolk	Var.	Page 56
—	89-92	—	Skum	Var.	MM 228
89-90	93-98	—	Svirfneblin	Var.	MM 132
91-94	99-100	93-94	Swarm	Var.	MM 237-239
95-100	—	—	Troglodytes	Var.	MM 246
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A *Pathfinder Chronicles*™ Supplement

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Darklands

Everyone knows that monsters live below. You've all heard the stories of the deformed men who dwell in blue-litten tunnels, the shapeless crawling horrors with acid for skin, and the dark-skinned demon-worshipping elves. You may scoff at some of the stranger stories, of fish capable of controlling the minds of nations or of hidden lost worlds of primeval wonder and horror. I have been below, and I know better than to scoff. Count your blessings, uplander, since when night falls your sun is never more than a few hours away. Here, the night lasts forever, and the monsters never sleep.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 4

Brooding deep beneath Golarion lies another world, a dark mirror giving broken reflections of the surface above. These endless caverns are called the Darklands in children's tales or around campfires—or at the council tables of dwarven war chieftains and elven inquisitors. To the folk who live in the lands below they go by many names: Nar-Voth, Sekamina, Orv, the Vaults, Cold Hell, Evernight, the Hunting Grounds, or simply Home. While many races live there and even thrive in its harsh environs, those that are aware of a surface realm universally lust after its resources, soft living, and prey so abundantly available, while at the same time cursing its burning sunlight, mysterious weather patterns, and the agoraphobic openness that is anathema to most Darklands races. The inevitable result is a deadly animosity to any surface-world visitors daring to descend into the night below, into a world where even the air one breathes or the ground one walks upon can kill. Such are the dangers facing anyone daring to venture into the Darklands.

DARKLANDS BASICS

The Darklands themselves consist of three general realms that overlay one another as they descend deeper



toward the core of the world. The uppermost realm is called Nar-Voth and exists immediately below the surface (including up and into some of its mountain peaks) and extends down to a depth of about 2,000 feet. Most dwellers of Golarion's surface who ever have any truck with the Darklands do so at this level, and Nar-Voth is synonymous for Darklands for most of the surface populace. However, caverns that exist at the surface and do not extend down to deeper layers of the Darklands are not considered to be a part of Nar-Voth. To qualify as part of the Darklands, a cavern or dungeon must have access to a lower layer.

Whereas Nar-Voth exists in isolated cave networks that occur sporadically within Golarion's crust, Sekamina is a continent-spanning network of caverns and subterranean wonderlands that harbor all manner of strange environs and denizens. It is Sekamina that one thinks of when picturing endless, stalactite-filled tunnels and great lakes and rivers that have never seen the light of day. Sekamina exists below the depth of 2,000 feet until about 8,000 feet. This represents the largest subterranean realm of the three—one can walk from continent to continent traversing the deadly tunnels of Sekamina.

Finally, at the bottommost extent of the known layers of the Darklands lies mysterious, primordial Orv. Created in times immemorial by something other than the natural forces of tectonics and water, much of Orv consists of the enigmatic vast chambers known as Vaults. These strange and often fantastical cysts in Golarion's mantle lie below 8,000 feet in depth, and their creation is ascribed to a race of mythical elder beings known only as the Vault Keepers. Who or what these elder beings might have been is anyone's guess, as is what magic they must have wielded to create and still sustain the incredible Vaults of Orv.

The inhabitants of the Darklands are a disparate and far more insular lot than their surface-dwelling counterparts, and as such, tend to exist in more isolated communities. However, the lure of wealth and luxury is too strong even for these misanthropes such that some dare to brave the vast distances and endless dangers that lurk between the scattered communities to create a network of trade that, if not so broad as that enjoyed by Golarion's surface, is far more varied in its participants. All but the most barbaric of the Darklands races engage in some form of trade and peaceful relations with their neighbors, even mortal enemies. Though most of these denizens of the deeps prefer conquest and pillaging as a method of securing their neighbors' resources, war is not always a practical solution, so trade fills the gap nicely in the meantime. As such, travelers, while uncommon, are not wholly unknown in the Darklands—even surface dwellers can often find solace from the dangers of the

Darklands and ready markets for their goods and coin. Standard coinage is accepted virtually everywhere, though gems, raw ore, and rare substances are much more common as stock-in-trade than is normally found on the surface.

Darklands Languages

While some denizens of the Darklands have had contact with surface races and know common languages as a result, relatively few speak the Common tongue of Taldane that dominates the Inner Sea region. Rather, the inhabitants of the Darklands have created their own patois from their various languages known as Undercommon. In addition, several surface racial languages can be found among the speakers of the Darklands, including Abyssal, Aquan, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Ignan, Infernal, Orc, and Terran. Interestingly, some examples have been found of an archaic Azlanti dialect within the confines of the Darklands, though its origins as a Darklands language are shrouded in mystery to most scholars.

Following are the most common languages unique to the Darklands. These languages are not ordinarily known among the people of the surface. Anyone can learn them (using the Speak Language skill) from a teacher who knows the language.

Aklo: An otherworldly tongue from some realm beyond Golarion's reality that can still be found in isolated nooks and corners spoken by creatures both strange and fantastic. It is the language spoken by the serpentfolk.

Canto: This crude language involves a complex series of thumps and raps, delivered often by slapping the chest, clanging weapons together, or striking stone walls with rocks or clubs. Canto relies on echoes and acoustics to carry over long distances in Darklands tunnels—sometimes for miles.

Gug: The gurgling, grunting language of the deepest-dwelling, bestial gugs.

Orvian: The ancient language still spoken by many dwellers of the Orvian Vaults. Possibly the original tongue or derivative of that of the mythical Vault Keepers.

Necril: This is the gibbering, muttering tongue of the Darklands ghouls.

Sakvroth: A secret language of silent hand gestures useful at close range by creatures with prehensile digits. It is most commonly used by individuals with darkvision in order to communicate discreetly without the need for light or noise.

Undercommon: This is the most common trade tongue of the Darklands.

Vegepygmy: A wordless language of thumps, raps, and specialized pheromones utilized by the vegepygmies and other plant creatures.

Darkland Terminology

The inhabitants of the Darklands have developed many terms that find common usage and are typically carried over directly or translated into their various languages. Following is a list of some of the more common terms:

Cold Walk: A tunnel that ends in a river or water-filled cavern.

Darklander: An inhabitant native to the Darklands.

Dead Walk: A tunnel that ends at a collapse or other dead end that is of no further use (a played-out mine, etc.)

Deepmeat: An uplander that has fallen afoul of some hazard of the Darklands or has been tricked into danger by a darklander (also deepbaiting—the practice of luring surface dwellers into danger).

Digger: Any of a number of types of burrowing creatures that dig through solid rock as a part of their locomotion.

Down Orvway: Dead, killed, murdered; as in “he’s gone down Orvway.” (Not usually used by the inhabitants of Orv.)

Dry Walk: A tunnel that does not have ready access to potable water sources, requiring the traveler to carry or create his own water supply.

Nar-Voth: The upper realm of the Darklands.

Sekamina: The middle and most populous realm of the Darklands.

Slopper: Any of a number of shapeless ooze (such as gray ooze or ochre jelly) that stalk the deep tunnels.

Orv: The deepest realm of the Darklands.

Overburn, The: The surface of Golarion (named for the burning sun that occupies the surface world’s sky).

Scrubber: A scavenging creature that cleans carrion and detritus from tunnels and caverns; can be used for any such creature, such as rats or vermin, but is usually reserved for slime crawlers, gelatinous cubes, and the like.

Uplander: Inhabitant of Golarion’s surface.

KNOWN POINTS OF ENTRY

While many folk have heard of the Darklands, few know how to get there. As previously mentioned, just entering any old dungeon or cave system is inadequate. The would-be Darklands traveler must find a cave system or tunnel that connects to Nar-Voth in order to find themselves in the Darklands proper. While a large and extensive cave system may look very similar and share several features with Nar-Voth, unless the access point exists that connects it to the Darklands’ second level or lower, it is not considered a part of the Darklands. Cut off from the lower regions, such an isolated cave system won’t share many of the unique cultures and characteristics found specifically in the Darklands. As such, this work leaves out entrances to even the vastest of caverns and tunnel systems if they lack a Nar-Voth/Sekamina connection.

While numerous lesser-known access points exist, the following lists the major known entrances into the Darklands that exist in the Inner Sea region. The Darklands do indeed exist beneath the other continents of Golarion as well as its many seas, yet with one exception (the Pit of Gormuz) exploration of these distant entrances must wait for later works in the Pathfinder Chronicles line.

Candlestone Caverns

Exposed to the surface two centuries ago by an earthquake, this vast limestone labyrinth has several entrances in the northeastern Aspodell Mountains in Andoran. The caverns themselves are infested by dangerous vermin, kobolds, and in some areas a fair amount of undead and duergar, but the primary denizens are the numerous tribes of gremlins and other underground-dwelling fey. The caverns themselves provide the swiftest route to the Nar-Voth city known as the Court of Ether.

The Caves of the Craven

Deep in the legend-haunted Mierani Forest lies one of the former great cities of the elven race on Golarion—the ruins of Celwynvian. Just over 10,000 years ago, before the catastrophic event known now as Earthfall, many of the elves retreated to the distant realm of Sovyrian. Yet there remained many who felt that fleeing Golarion entirely was not the way, and a sizable portion of these elves gathered in Celwynvian to determine a course of action. Their solution, arrived at only weeks before Earthfall, was to traverse a deep network of caverns in the neighboring





Calphiak Mountains—the elves gathered their greatest works of art and magic and supplies for months, then filed into the caverns. Their fate is discussed further in Chapter Three of this book, but needless to say the elves found these caverns to be far more expansive and deeper than even they suspected.

Today, the caverns under the Calphiak Mountains are known collectively as the Caves of the Craven for the immense number of goblin tribes that infest their damp extents. The goblins don't descend too deeply into these caves, though, for they soon give way to the troglodyte nation of Kuvhoshik (see page 29), one of Nar-Voth's larger collections of these savage reptilian creatures.

Deepgate

Just as the elves fated to become the first drow fled underground so long ago, so did the dwarves flee topside shortly after the Age of Darkness began, driven by the Quest for Sky. As the dwarves pushed upward toward the surface, they drove the orcs before them. The first (and the largest) eruption of orcs from Nar-Voth occurred at Deepgate, in lands that would eventually become the Hold of Belkzen. Unlike the orcs who emerged into Avistan elsewhere, the orcs of Deepgate were particularly ingenious—as they emerged into the terrible dark world above, they built an enormous fortress of stone and iron over the tunnel mouth they had come from. Deepgate was the only site where the orcs were able to hold their own against the dwarves, and although they were still fated to lose the war against their bearded enemies, today Deepgate remains one of the most coveted orc fortresses in Avistan, with its control falling to different tribes with regularity.

Dread Dungeons

Deep in the Fog Peaks lie the Dread Dungeons of Galtcreed. During the rise of the Galtcreed Pact (one of many failed governments that temporarily claimed control of the nation of Galt during its bloody revolution) the Primarch Bremovir moved the center of the people's justice from the guillotines of the city square to a secret prison carved into the stone of the Fog Peaks. Political prisoners, dissidents, suspected provocateurs, and inconvenient personages alike disappeared in the night into the depths of this secret jail that became known as the Dread Dungeons. None who were imprisoned ever returned, and the stone floors ran as slick with the blood of innocents as the cobbled square of Isarn ever did. Few Galtan soldiers were ever reassigned to man this high security post, and rumors ran through seditious circles that Primarch Bremovir had discovered new allies within the depths of his prison—allies who excelled at the midnight kidnappings that snatched suspected citizens from their beds, sometimes without even waking others in the household.

Like all governments to have graced Galt in the last forty years, all too soon the Galtcreed Pact found itself on the wrong end of the popular uprising, and the primarch himself was led to the guillotine in Isarn's Liberty Square. Extensive torture was unable to wrest the exact location of the Dread Dungeons from the deposed ruler, and none who knew their location were captured in the coup. He finally went to the guillotine protesting his innocence and that a mistake was being made—protestations cut suddenly short by the cruelty of Galtan justice. Not until some weeks later did rumors surface that Bremovir had secretly groomed a double to take his place and that the primarch himself had actually been tipped off by informants and fled in the night to his mountain fastness along with a large portion of what was left of the nation's already-depleted treasury. Despite attempts by the next three provisional governments to locate the Dread Dungeons and its stolen treasures, no trace was found, and the quest was eventually given up—drowned in the continual bloodlust consuming the nation.

The Dread Dungeons actually exist high in the Fog Peaks, though Bremovir's prison occupied no more than the first few levels of the massive system of tunnels and chambers he had discovered there. To this day, the aged Bremovir sits atop his ill-gotten treasures surrounded by loyal Galtan guards and derro allies, while below, the labyrinthine dungeons extend on downward into Nar-Voth. Many political prisoners and innocent hostages alike still languish in deep cells, and one carries the secret to true Galtan independence and lasting peace. Bremovir dares not let this prisoner escape for some unfathomable reason, yet keeps him alive at all costs.

Drowning Stones

In the northern reaches of the Mwangi Expanse lie the mysterious ruins of Drowning Stones. Once a city of stone ziggurats and elegant towers, the sinking of the region into bitter, rank jungle swamplands seems to have been one reason for its abandonment by its original settlers—the sudden appearance of bands of skum in the waters being another. The city itself lies half drowned in brackish waters thick with algae and ooze, but the central fortress remains relatively dry on a low, upthrust section of bedrock. Drowning Stones is ruled by one of the only known surface settlements of skum—their presence alone seems to indicate that a major entrance to the Darklands is nearby, either in the unexplored dungeons below the ruins, or perhaps even via a flooded entrance under the swamp.

The Earthnavel

The frozen north hides many savage realms and peoples, but perhaps none as savage as the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, caught between witch-haunted Irrisen and demon wastes of the Worldwound. In the center of this land

ranges the Tusk Mountains, and nestled within these crags are deep valleys that open onto vast caverns. At the center of this network of caverns and vales lies a great, tiered pit—like an inverted, circular ziggurat. The walls of the 13 levels of this pit are decorated with the skulls of dire bears and other fierce beasts, as well as the massive bones of creatures that trod the lands of Golarion long ago in another age, mighty curving tusks and great long bones with the girth of a half-dozen men clasping hands. Legend holds that such beasts are beyond even the greatest of dragons and prehistoric animals that roam the world. The size and antiquity of the bones and skulls increases as one travels deeper. At the bottom of the pit is a small man-sized opening that the locals call the *sipapu*, or Earthnavel, an umbilicus to an older, more primordial world.

Anyone daring the reaches of the Earthnavel finds the way fraught with peril. For not only do all manner of feral beasts unknown in the world today haunt the surrounding caverns, but the ghosts of warriors from a bygone age clad in furs assault any who dare violate the site without the proper totems and acts of obeisance. Passing through the *sipapu*, one enters a stretch of freezing tunnels that extend down to Nar-Voth. Evidence of collapses indicates that larger tunnels once existed that extended deeper into the Darklands, as well as connecting to the Earthnavel caverns at the surface and perhaps providing an entry for the many prehistoric beasts that still roam the frozen plains.

The Mobhad Leigh

Named for the Shoanti phrase meaning “steps into hell,” this enigmatic circular pit lies at the base of the Kodar Mountains in far northern Varisia. Perfectly round, the pit is obviously of artificial construction, which is confirmed by the spiral stairs that hug the pit’s sheer walls as they circle down into darkness. The steps themselves end after a few hundred feet, terminating at a point of obvious collapse. Venturing further requires the use of ropes or flight. Surface explorers have yet to publicly report on the depth of the Mobhad Leigh as none have returned to do so, and attempts to scry its depths have universally met with failure—and sometimes death from violent magical backlashes.

The truth of the matter is that the Mobhad Leigh is one of only a handful of locations that pierce the Darklands without ever connecting with Nar-Voth. After a sheer descent of approximately 6,300 feet, the pit opens directly into Sekamina near one of the lost serpentfolk cities—a horrific place called Sverenagati (see page 42).

Pit of Gormuz

The most legendary of the entrances to the Darklands is the fabled Pit of Gormuz, lying far to the east on the continent of Casmaron. Far from the hearts of any civilized lands,

the Pit of Gormuz is a gaping chasm fully 20 miles wide. This wound in the earth is said to be the site of an ancient lost city known as Ninshabur, reputed also to be where, eons ago, Sarenrae cut open the world and imprisoned the Rough Beast Rovagug. Both of these legends are often considered little more than nomads’ tales, yet they have somehow persisted through the ages.

Regardless of the veracity of its claimed origins, the Pit of Gormuz remains unique among entrances to the Darklands, for it alone provides direct access to the lowest realm of Orv. A seemingly impenetrable shroud of darkness occludes its 2-mile depth and prevents even the faintest ray of sunlight from illuminating what lies hidden below, and none known have dared to explore its lowest points, despite the fact that some of the greatest threats to face Golarion have emerged from this pit, including the Tarrasque and other Spawn of Rovagug. Gazing into the Pit’s impenetrable blackness has been known to bring madness to the viewer.

The Pyramid of Kamaria

Looming on the banks of the River Asp, dominating the southern skyline from the city of An in Osirion, the Pyramid of Kamaria is the notorious tomb of the only pharaoh to openly venerate Rovagug, the Rough Beast. Believed for many centuries to have been long-since looted of anything of interest, the extensive dungeons and trap-filled tombs below this pyramid are still occupied by the cult of Rovagug, and even they don’t know the true extent of the ancient chambers and caverns below. The dungeons themselves are dominated by an immense central shaft, just over a hundred feet in diameter, that not only connects the various dungeon levels but drops all the way into Nar-Voth to an extensive set of caverns ruled by a particularly violent tribe of grimlocks who sometimes clamber up the shaft to engage in all manner of vile trade with the cultists who dwell above.

Scar Thicket

Deep in Chelixa’s Whisperwood lies a particularly densely overgrown region known as the Scar Thicket. This tangled mass of primal woodland has long been avoided by locals, who whisper stories of the strange shapes that trees take on the deeper one delves into the region. Monstrous insects, deformed animals, and enormous bats dominate the Scar Thicket, and the farther one journeys, the thicker the canopy above grows. The central region is dominated by immense mushrooms and pallid fungi, and is the domain of a large tribe of surface-dwelling vegepygmies. Russet mold grows in shocking quantities in the depths of Scar Thicket, and humanoids are not the only creatures to have succumbed to the dangerous fungus. Dozens of fungus-lined cave mouths pock the Scar Thicket, some of which are little more than



Major Darkland Entrances



narrow openings amid the roots of diseased trees. Yet despite their unassuming size, these entrances wind deep into the ground below Whisperwood to connect to the Nar-Voth realm of the Midnight Jungle (see page 29).

Shadow Caverns

Located in the benighted depths of the Uskwood lie the legendary Shadow Caverns, emanating from a simple cave opening above an ice-cold natural spring. Originally discovered and used by Chelish legionnaires as a campsite and supply depot 400 years ago during the Everwar, the true depths of the caverns were unknown for many years. When Nidal warlords discovered the camp and launched a surprise attack, the unprepared legionnaires were driven back into the confines of the caves. Dark magic flooded the opening above the spring and forced them deeper into the caverns than they had ever gone before. This ragged remnant marched for miles through the dark, never realizing they had broached an entrance in Nar-Voth until the last of their torches expired and the dark creepers, who had been watching them from below all along, attacked. In the echoing darkness, the Chelaxians were slain to the last man in a horrific slaughter of fear, blind screams, and blood. When Nidal finally fell to Cheliox some months later, reports came back to Westcrown of the lost legionnaires, and reinforcements were sent along with Nidalian scouts to determine if they could be rescued. Reopening the cave and subsequent exploration revealed only the gore-spattered site of the massacre but no remains of legionnaire or foe. Cheliox abandoned the caves into the keeping of the Umbral Court and counted the lost men as casualties of war.

The Umbral Court has been busy in the intervening years at this isolated location. After many spectacular failed attempts, peaceful contact was finally made with the dark folk who dwelt in the Shadow Caverns, and negotiators were able to open up trade between the Kuthonites and the Darklands. The caverns still look much as they did, with only a simple cave opening accessible by wading through an ice-cold spring, but within much has changed. The Shadow Caverns now serve as the primary hub of the slave trade between Nidal and the Darklands. Among the relics of the ancient Chelish legionnaires now stand rough iron cages holding slaves brought to Nidal by the pirates of the Shackles; the slaves are then sold to those below. Serving as arbiter of the trade is a powerful umbral dragon named Visceroth that makes the deeper caverns its home and guards the spring entrance with troglodyte minions. The presence of the dragon (a devotee of Zon-Kuthon) ensures that the Umbral Court and the dark folk are able to maintain their fleshtrading profitably to the greater glory of the Midnight Lord.

Sky Citadels

When the dwarves emerged upon the surface world at the climax of the Quest for Sky, they established ten glorious “Sky Citadels”—fortress cities that formed the initial foundation of dwarven life in the Inner Sea region. Only a few of these great dwarven citadels maintain their connections to the Darklands—they are perhaps the most secure accesses into Nar-Voth to be found, as the dwarves contain them with a system of portals and vault doors constructed of reinforced stone, steel, and adamantine and keep them under heavy guard with a gauntlet of traps, sally ports, and fields of fire, not to mention the doughty warriors of the dwarven race. In addition, the tunnels just beyond these entrances are regularly patrolled by heavily armed parties of dwarven warriors to warn off any Darklands threats that might choose to move into the area. Known dwarven citadels that have such entrances include Janderhoff in Varisia’s Mindspin Mountains, Highhelm of The Five Kings Mountains, and Kravenkus in the World’s Edge Mountains in Taldor. Most of the smaller surviving Sky Citadels, such as Dongun Hold in Alkenstar, have long since closed off their access points to the Darklands, since these smaller fortresses aren’t as well-equipped to stand against the threat of possible invasions of duergar from below. Urgir, once a Sky Citadel, is a special case and is detailed in its own section below. The fate of the connections beneath citadels that fell or were abandoned is unknown.

Urgir

Little-known to most outsiders is the fact that the orcish capital of Urgir was once the dwarven Sky Citadel, Koldukar, overrun by the orc hordes of the warrior-king Belkzen in the battle of Nine Stones. Like the other dwarven Sky Citadels, this one too holds a secret entrance to the Darklands that descends directly from the heavily guarded palace of Grask Uldeth of the Empty Hand. Deep below its foundations, a secret door opens through a subcellar floor. Not as heavily warded as those of the still-occupied dwarven citadels, the Urgir entrance has faced no threats from below in several generations. This is usually attributed to the periodic tremors that plague the city and the palace. Strangely, it is easier to gain access to this entrance than through a similar dwarven citadel simply by applying the proper combination of bribery and praise to Grask Uldeth. The orc chieftain longs to be known as a civilized and legitimate ruler and has been known to show favor to some guests who appropriately stroke his ego.

Anyone daring to enter this path into the Darklands can quickly discern the source of the tremors in Urgir above. The roots of the ancient dwarven Sky Citadel are planted upon massive iron pylons and support beams that serve as the city’s very foundation. An infestation of rust monsters



RANDOM DARKLAND HAZARDS

Nar-Voth	Sekamina	Orv	Result	EL	Source
01–02	01–10	01–04	Caphorite	1/4	Page 14
03–12	11–14	05–06	Piercer	1/4	<i>Tome of Horrors Revised</i> 420
13–17	15–19	07–08	Bad Air	1	Page 11
18–19	20–24	09–14	Hot air	1	DMG 303
—	25–32	15–16	Lazurite	1	Page 14
20–29	33–36	17–18	Brown Mold	2	DMG 76
30–39	37–38	—	Cytillish	2	Page 12
—	39–42	19–24	Severe heat	2	DMG 303
40–44	43–47	25–28	Tremor	2	Page 12
—	48–51	29–30	Carbouxine gas	4	Page 11
—	52–53	31–34	Extreme Heat	4	DMG 303
45–54	54–58	35–38	Flash Flood	4	Page 15
55–56	59–62	39–44	Rot Grubs	4	<i>Tome of Horrors Revised</i> 421
57–66	63–66	45–48	Green Slime	4	DMG 76
67–68	67–70	49–56	Olive Slime	4	<i>Tome of Horrors Revised</i> 419
—	71–74	57–64	Quickdeath gas	6	Page 11
69–78	75–78	—	Russet Mold	6	<i>Tome of Horrors Revised</i> 421
79–93	79–82	65–68	Yellow Mold	6	DMG 76
—	83–84	69–76	Blightburn Ore	7	Page 14
94–95	85–88	77–82	Twilight Mushrooms	7	<i>Tome of Horrors Revised</i> 423
96–100	89–92	83–88	Cave-in	8	DMG 66
—	93–96	89–93	Ghost Mold	8	Page 13
—	97–100	94–100	Lava Flow	8	Page 13

for the last decade has led to the serious deterioration of these support structures. As more of them are consumed by the ravenous aberrations, the remaining few take on a greater and greater load in supporting the city above. It is a testament to dwarven ingenuity and sturdiness of construction that the foundation supports continue to hold, though it is only a matter of time before the stress becomes too great for them and the once-mighty dwarven citadel-cum-orcish capital is swallowed in a massive sinkhole.

The Urgir entrance provides a path to the duergar city of Fellstrok, though the gray dwarves do not frequently venture up that way due to the omnipresent danger of the rust monster colony.

Well of Sorrows

The Isle of Terror, lying at the heart of Lake Encarthan has seen its share of events both tragic and portentous. Perhaps most famous of all was the duel where the Last Azlanti, Aroden, laid low the vile wizard-king Tar-Baphon. Less-known, however, is the insidious trap Tar-Baphon had laid for the Last Azlanti which failed to ensnare him. At the heart of the isle lies the Wizard-King's Pit, a sizable dungeon complex constructed by Tar-Baphon and stocked with his allies and bestial servitors. At the heart of it was the Well of Sorrows, an ornate shaft embossed with images of death and defeat. Here Tar-

Baphon created an elaborate trap intended to capture and imprison Aroden in the depths. When Aroden failed to fall into the trap and prevented Tar-Baphon from fleeing into the dungeon, the wizard-king was defeated, and the trap lay unused.

Today, the Wizard-King's Pit remains as a dungeon complex haunted by nightshades, dread wraiths, and all manner creatures from the Darklands. At its heart, the Well of Sorrows serves as a dangerous entrance to Sekamina for anyone capable of navigating the deadly tunnels and dungeons. The dweomers of ancient magic still linger around the well, the nascent trap of Tar-Baphon waiting to be sprung which, according to legend, opens access to even deeper and more dangerous portions of the Darklands, perhaps even deadly Orv, where even a living god like the Last Azlanti might find more than he could handle.

DARKLANDS HAZARDS

The world of Golarion can be a dangerous place, and the Darklands are certainly no exception. Here, the competition for limited resources sometimes becomes so fierce that even the environment itself can become an enemy. Guided in their formation by no sentient hand, the tunnels and caverns of the Darklands are rough and random, following the course of ancient fault lines, cave-ins, or water courses. Other passageways were carved by

PERILS OF UNDERLAND TRAVEL

Keep the following perils in mind during overland movement through the Darklands.

Climbing: The walls of the Darklands are generally uneven and slick, requiring a DC 30 Climb check to scale.

Getting Stuck: Tunnels and passages in the Darklands are rarely of uniform height or width. Rules for squeezing through narrow openings and making Escape Artist checks are found on pages 73 and 148 of the PH. In some cases, however, openings are too low rather than too narrow to comfortably traverse. When available head room is at least half of the creature's space, consider it to be squeezing. A DC 30 Escape Artist check is required for tight spaces; on a failed skill check, the creature has become stuck and must make a DC 32 Escape Artist check to become unwedged and be able to move normally again.

Getting Lost: The final major terrain hazard universal to the Darklands is the chance of getting lost in its many winding ways and dead ends. Survival checks to forage, avoid getting lost, avoid hazards, or follow tracks gain a +2 synergy bonus if a creature has at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering). Due to the lack of edible resources to be found in the Darklands, attempts to get along in the wild by using Survival suffer a -5 penalty to the check.

the passage of burrowing monsters or the work of powerful magic. The greatest danger created by the terrain is from falls into chasms or getting stuck in a space too tight to accommodate the explorer. In addition, getting lost in the winding labyrinth of the Darklands can lead to death much more slowly but just as surely.

Travel in the Darklands

Traveling through the Darklands is a time-consuming process, as one cannot simply walk in a straight line from one point to another—the caverns and tunnels themselves dictate the way, and they often wind and curve along paths frustratingly random at times. Dead ends and sheer pits often block passage completely. Although many above and below have tried to map it, no exhaustive guide to the tunnels of the Darklands exists.

Three categories of passageway exist in the Darklands. Each of these types features its own chances for peril and frustration in overland travel. The following three tunnel types are presented in statblock format.

Underland Movement gives the modifier to the number of miles per hour and day for underland movement (remember that creatures who cannot see travel at half their base speed).

Safety gives the Survival check required to secure a safe place to camp. With a successful check, the chance of an encounter while camping drops to 1% per 8-hour period.

Dead End gives the chance per 8-hour period of losing 1d6 hours of travel progress due to dead ends. Creatures capable of burrowing through rock ignore dead ends.

Complexity gives the Survival DC required to avoid becoming lost.

Verticality gives the chance per 8-hour period of encountering sudden significant vertical shifts in the form of pits or cliffs. These shifts can be either upward or downward (equal chance of each) and rarely rise or fall for more than 200 feet at a time (roll 1d20×10 to determine distance). Creatures capable of climbing, flying, or otherwise navigating shafts do not lose travel progress; otherwise, the traveler loses 1d6 hours of progress.

Encounter gives the chance per 8-hour period of having an encounter with a wandering monster or hazard. All encounters while a creature has remained stationary for the 8-hour period are with wandering monsters. Only 50% of encounters while traveling are with wandering monsters—the rest are with hazards (roll on the Random Darklands Hazards table to determine the encounter, rerolling results of hazards from sources you do not have access to).

PRIMARY TUNNELS

Underland Movement ×3/4

Safety Survival DC 20

Dead End 0%

PERILS

Complexity Survival DC 5 (automatic with map)

Verticality 0%

Encounter 12%

DESCRIPTION

These passageways average 40 feet in width, and comprise the most heavily traveled tunnels of the Darklands. The ground of these tunnels is relatively free of obstruction, rubble, slippery patches, or significant drops and sinkholes. These tunnels are relatively rare, but are incredibly long—their routes are shown on the regional maps of Sekamina and Orv. Nar-Voth possesses only one primary tunnel—the Long Walk.

SECONDARY TUNNELS

Underland Movement ×1/4

Safety Survival DC 20

Dead End 10%

PERILS

Complexity Survival DC 15 (DC 5 with map)

Verticality 20%

Encounter 10%

DESCRIPTION

These tunnels range from anywhere between 5 to 30 feet in width. Often doubling back on themselves, coming to dead ends, or rising or falling into shafts, secondary tunnels are the frontier of the Darklands, regions generally avoided by those who aren't skilled at hunting or combat. The tunnels

comprising Nar-Voth cavern complexes are all secondary tunnels, and a few longer tunnels (as indicated on the regional maps) are known to connect distant locations in Nar-Voth, Sekamina, and Orv.

TERTIARY TUNNELS

Underland Movement $\times 1/10$

Safety Survival DC 30

Dead End 25%

PERILS

Complexity Survival DC 30 (DC 15 with map)

Verticality 40%

Encounter 8%

DESCRIPTION

Tertiary tunnels are the true wilderness of the Darklands. These tunnels are rarely more than 15 feet wide, and often constrict down to widths of 2 feet or even less. Tertiary tunnels wind throughout all of the Darklands, but their routes are so fantastically complex that they are not shown on any of the regional maps. Of course, it is via the tertiary tunnels that the true discoveries wait, and intrepid or brave Darkland explorers seek these tunnels out in hopes of finding lost civilizations, ancient treasures, or other storied legends. A character who wishes to travel along a route not connected by primary or secondary tunnels can do so if he opts to take the tertiary tunnels, but travel through these caves is a long and tedious process.

Air

Unless otherwise noted, all areas of the Darklands are considered to have breathable, if somewhat stale air, but in some places—particularly those sealed by rockfalls, blocked by water, or thick with rivers of magma—the air can become depleted or poisoned by deadly gases or fumes. Sometimes odors or visible emanations make identifying such areas easy and thus easily avoided, but in other cases the gasses are colorless or odorless or the oxygen has just become too rare to support breathing creatures. In these areas, a DC 25 Survival check is necessary to detect the problem before the effects are felt. Many darklanders make use of small animals like bats to detect such areas early before their harmful effects kick in, but these methods are not always sure to provide enough warning in time.

Bad Air (CR 1): The least dangerous areas of bad air are simply regions where air is low in oxygen. In such areas, breathing creatures secretly make a Fortitude save (DC 15 +1 per previous check) each hour or become fatigued. After a creature becomes fatigued, slow suffocation sets in as described on page 304 of the DMG.

Carbauxine Gas (CR 4): This rare gas is typically found in isolated pockets deep within the Darklands—particularly Sekamina and lower. It was first recognized and harvested by the dwarves of ancient times for its ability to create



exceedingly hot, controlled flames capable of working notoriously difficult to smelt ores, such as mithral and the various skymetals. Carbauxine gas is flammable and filled with heavy contaminants. Exposure to open flame ignites it, creating a sudden explosion that just as quickly blows itself out, dealing 6d6 points of fire damage in a 30-foot radius (DC 15 Reflex save for half). Areas of carbauxine gas typically have massive carbon deposits on walls, floor, and ceiling, and a visibly sooty atmosphere. They are otherwise considered areas of bad air as described above.

Quickdeath (CR 6): This colorless, odorless natural gas pools in low points in passages and caverns—noticing an area contaminated by quickdeath gas requires a DC 25 Survival check. Entering such an area requires a Fortitude save (DC 20 +1 per previous check) each round or immediate suffocation begins. Worse, quickdeath is toxic—those who breathe it must make a DC 18 Fortitude save once per minute or suffer 1 point of Wisdom damage as their senses slowly grow hazy and unreliable.

Collapses and Tremors

To surface dwellers, the claustrophobic depths of the Darklands can invoke the fear of the crushing weight of the stone above them and of the dire consequences should its supports give way. Unfortunately this fear is all too real, as tremors often occur along fault lines, in areas of geothermal activity, or simply due to shifts in supporting columns, bracing walls, or the recent passage of burrowing creatures.

The effects of a full-blown earthquake are devastating in the Darklands, but thankfully such events are rare. More common are the minor tremors described here.

Tremor (CR 2): Often called “rumblers” by darklanders and often likened to the growling stomach of Rovagug, tremors typically last for 1d6 rounds and affect a 200-foot-radius area. Creatures within this area must make a DC 12 Balance check each round to remain standing. Movement is halved during a tremor, and each round there’s a 30% chance that one random creature in the area is attacked by falling rocks or stalactites. Rockfalls make a +16 melee attack and deal 1d6+4 points of damage on a successful hit.

Darkness

Nothing is as ubiquitous to the Darklands as the complete and utter lack of light. Cut off from access to the surface world where celestial bodies provide light in a regular cycle, the Darklands are a realm of constant, impermeable night. Some caverns are lit by swaths of phosphorescent fungi, and many of the Orvian Vaults and drow cities provide strange illumination of their own, but by and large the Darklands are just that—dark. To the majority of the denizens of the Darklands, this condition has largely been overcome through natural or magical evolution—most prominently seen by the prevalence of darkvision, tremorsense, scent, blindsight, and blindsense throughout most of the indigenous species.

However, to the Darklands traveler from the world above, the absence of light can be deadly—leading the would-be explorer into ambushes, deadly environs, or simply over the edge of an unseen cliff. Light sources are the order of the day, which proves problematic when they are of limited duration or require a supply of fuel—it is difficult to purchase wooden torches in the stone halls of the Darklands. Oil lamps and tallow candles made from the fat of slain beasts and sentient creatures alike are far more common for Darklands travel. Even the Darklands inhabitants use light sources with some frequency either for decoration, defense against the light sensitivity of their enemies, to provide illumination beyond the scope of their darkvision’s limited range, or even when the fine distinctions of color—undetectable in the black-and-white spectrum of darkvision—are required for their own esoteric purposes. The light sources of choice to most darklanders are phosphorescent forms of mold and fungus and the harvested glands of fire beetles.

Only foolish uplanders walk the Darklands with open flames or unshielded light sources. The glow of a standard light source may provide illumination to the bearer for 20 feet or so, but can be seen by those lurking in the surrounding dark from a much greater distance. Reflecting light from a lit torch can be seen automatically

from a distance of 200 feet, while a successful DC 20 Spot check extends this distance to 400 feet. Direct or brighter light can be seen for much longer distances, and while details won’t be apparent, such lights provide an obvious beacon for hungry denizens who might enjoy a snack of soft surface travelers. Chances for wandering monster encounters are doubled if a group carries light sources equal to or brighter than a torch.

Darklanders have tumbled to this fact and prefer the more subtle rays of red or blue light sources. The blue glow of brain mold (see below) can only be detected from 3 times its bright radius with a DC 10 Spot check and 3 times its shadowy radius with a DC 20 Spot check, and there are a few other types of growth, such as phosphorescent fungus and drow-bred wingless fireflies, that are equally hard to see from a distance. The light source of choice, however, is the luminous gland of a giant fire beetle, which provides a glow in a 10-foot area but can only be detected with a DC 10 Spot check from twice its radius and cannot be detected at all beyond that range. *Faerie fire* is another excellent source of such subdued lighting, only being visible out to 3 times its shadowy radius with a DC 20 Spot check, but it provides little in the way of immediate illumination as well.

Several Darklands races have perfected a technique for harvesting fire beetle glands from a still-living giant fire beetle without killing the creature; a successful DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check preserves the gland’s luminosity for 2d12 days rather than the standard 1d6 days.

Fungus

With the exception of some of the stranger and more exotic Orvian Vaults, plants find nowhere in the Darklands to thrive. Deprived of sunlight, only fungus grows in these lightless caverns. Countless species of harmless mold, mushroom, and similar life grow in these caves, ranging from the mundane to the monstrous. Fungus is the primary food source for many of the Darklands’ denizens, and in many of the larger caverns (particularly in Sekamina) mushrooms grow to fantastic heights, creating forests of fungi that can, in places, rival the mightiest woodlands on the surface.

Yet not all of the fungus of the Darklands is harmless. Some, such as the violet fungus or phantom fungus, are actual creatures; others, such as yellow mold or brown mold, are merely deadly hazards. Russet mold (described in the *Tome of Horrors Revised* on page 421) is a particularly horrific fungus, stuff that not only kills but transforms its victims into vegepygmies. Two other forms of fungal hazards exist in the Darklands, as described below.

Cytillish (CR 2): Cytillish, also known as brain mold, is a growth on some rocks in the Darklands that gives off an eerie bluish glow. It is found prominently in derro communities, where it grows on the walls and ceilings of their tunnels and homes. The spores given

off by cytillesh are harmful to most organisms in the long term, causing brain damage and birth defects, as well as an inordinately high number of stillbirths, but is also thought to cause mental enhancements and mutations. The existence of derro savants is credited to the constant bombardment of the cytillesh spores, and it is even thought to be able to unlock psionic potential in those overexposed. The derro revere brain mold for these perceived benefits and hold that it grants near immortality as well.

Cytillesh provides bright illumination in a 10-foot radius and shadowy illumination in a 20-foot radius. A creature within the illumination of cytillesh requires a DC 15 Will save (+1 for each previous save) every 24 hours to avoid suffering 1d4 points of Wisdom damage to a minimum Wisdom of 5. If Wisdom is reduced to 5 and three more consecutive saving throws are failed, then the Wisdom damage becomes permanent. If this occurs, then the creature is affected as if by an *insanity* spell (no save). Typically, gaining significant mental enhancements from cytillesh requires years of living within its aura (though some cases of instantaneous psionic ability have been rumored), but any time spent within its bluish-white rays reduces aging to one-half the normal rate while so exposed.

Ghost Mold (EL 8): This pale mold grows in areas where undeath and necromantic energies are strong, appearing as swaths of what appear to be faintly glowing black dust smeared upon walls, floors, and ceilings. It's generally quite difficult to notice a patch of ghost mold—those who know what to look for can detect a patch with a successful DC 25 Spot check.

Ghost mold reacts violently to the presence of life, glowing with a pale white luminescence if any living creature approaches within 5 feet. At this point, the mold sends up a cloud of spores to a height of 10 feet, radiating out from the edge of the mold to a further 5 feet. Any creatures caught within this area must make a DC 20 Will save as visions of horrific deaths assault the mind, and a DC 20 Fortitude save as the necromantically-infused spores begin draining away the creature's life. On a failed Will save, the creature cowers (this is a mind-affecting fear effect). On a failed Fortitude save, the creature gains 1 negative level (DC 20 Fortitude save to recover). A new Fortitude and Will saving throw must be made each round a creature remains in the area.

If a creature is slain by negative levels from ghost mold, its body immediately collapses into a new patch of ghost mold (size equal to the creature's space); if the creature's Charisma was 6 or higher, its spirit returns as a chaotic evil ghost. The ghost lingers in the area, but loses 1 point of Charisma per day as the mold feeds on it. Once reduced to 0 Charisma, a ghost created by ghost mold is destroyed.

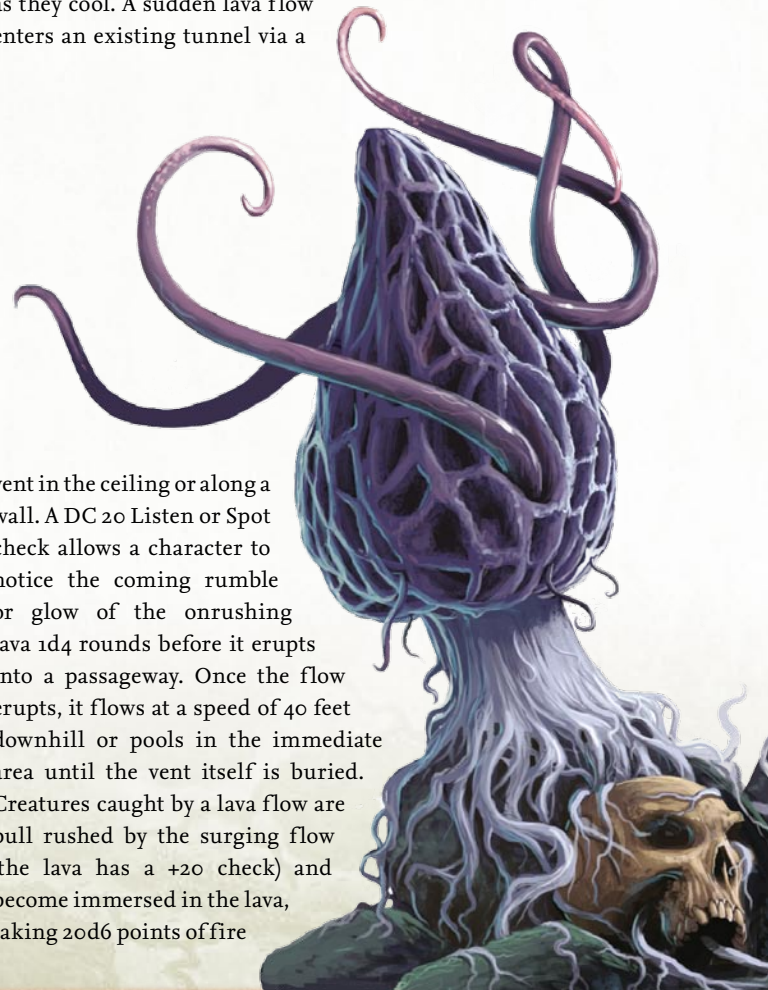
Heat

The deeper one travels underground, the greater grows the heat. This heat comes from the proximity of magma as one delves deeper underground, but in the Darklands much of this heat is counteracted by the ancient magic of the Vault Keepers. The Vaults of Orv are magically modulated ecosystems of their own, and their influence extends upward through the Darklands into Sekamina and Nar-Voth. As a result, throughout most of the Darklands, the temperature remains at a relatively constant level; warm, but not nearly warm enough to cause discomfort.

Yet the magic of the Vaults is old, and in some areas (particularly those in areas where Vaults have collapsed or where magma is particularly common), the overwhelming heat of the Darklands is not suppressed. These patches of heat may be hot, severely hot, or extremely hot (see DMG page 303).

Lava Flow (CR 8): Lava and magma are also dangers one faces in deeper sections of the Darklands, or in areas with volcanic activity. Rivers of lava sometimes flow through the tunnels—these deadly flows aren't enough to melt new tunnels through the stone, but they do flow with shocking speed along established tunnels, eventually sealing them as they cool. A sudden lava flow enters an existing tunnel via a

vent in the ceiling or along a wall. A DC 20 Listen or Spot check allows a character to notice the coming rumble or glow of the onrushing lava 1d4 rounds before it erupts into a passageway. Once the flow erupts, it flows at a speed of 40 feet downhill or pools in the immediate area until the vent itself is buried. Creatures caught by a lava flow are bull rushed by the surging flow (the lava has a +20 check) and become immersed in the lava, taking 20d6 points of fire



damage per round. Larger caverns contain constant flows of lava rivers, or even entire lakes of magma. Additional rules for lava appear on page 304 of the DMG.

Radiation

One of the strangest and least understood aspects of the Darklands are the unusual forms of radiation that permeate the deepest regions. Some of these are useful and some are extremely deadly; some are natural in source while others have mystical or magical sources. Following are the three most commonly known forms of radiation to be found in the Darklands.

Caphorite (CR 1/4): Also known as drowstone, caphorite is the most commonly known of the Darklands' exotic radiations. Caphorite has no known harmful effects on most creatures exposed to its rays, though it does have some interesting effects on certain forms of plant life exposed to its aura for long periods of time. The drow are closely associated with caphorite since they often settle in regions where caphorite deposits are common. Caphorite is typically found in lodes of ore ranging in size from 100 pounds to several tons, and glows with a strange, soft, orange-purple glow. As mentioned above, the caphorite radiation can affect some forms of plant life, particularly fungi, imparting an enhanced sentience in some cases and causing faster rates of growth and development. Drow typically plant their fungi farms near such ore to enhance productivity, and rumors hint that both fungal crawlers (see *Pathfinder* #13), phantom fungi, violet fungi, and even vegepygmies may have somehow had their beginnings in areas of enriched caphorite.

Caphorite is magical radiation that exudes a faint aura of transmutation. The crystals in the ore provide shadowy illumination that interacts strangely with brighter light, reducing any such brighter illumination down to shadowy levels. Anyone attempting to cast a spell with the light descriptor within 30 feet of caphorite must make a DC 15 caster level check or the effects of the spell are diluted enough to be inconsequential. Actual sunlight (including that created by magic, provided the spell's caster makes his level check) causes caphorite crystals to darken and crumble to sticky ash in only a few seconds.

Although caphorite is a crystal, it has a particularly unusual quality once powdered and then melted, allowing

it to be incorporated into smelting processes to enhance many metals.

Blightburn (CR 7): The deadliest of the radioactive Darklands substances is lethal blightburn, a crystal that grows in isolated locations. It gives off a deep green glow as it slowly decays from exposure to air. The rays given off by blightburn are extremely deadly and poisonous to living creatures, though certain species seem to possess resistance to it.

Blightburn is highly radioactive and emanates a nonmagical aura that provides a dim illumination equal to a candle. This emanation can be blocked by stone of at least 1-foot thickness or lead sheathing, as well as force effects. Contact with blightburn causes immediate pain, blistering of skin, and 2d6 points of fire damage per round. In addition, the radiation poisons anyone within 60 feet with blightburn, a deadly disease (Fort DC 22, Incubation instantaneous, 1d6 Con/1d6 Cha); victims of this sickness grow increasingly frail as sores erupt on their bodies, hair falls out, and bones grow shockingly brittle.

Teleportation spells function poorly in areas where blightburn is present—in order to successfully cast such a spell in a cavern that has blightburn crystals in its walls or teleport to such a location, a spellcaster must succeed on a DC 30 caster level check.

Lazurite (CR 1): Lazurite is the decayed form of some far older radioactive material that no longer exists in the Darklands.

The ore appears as a thin, crumbling, black crust where it is exposed in rock beds. Lazurite is said to be the remnant of a dead god, and its only known source is found in marrowstone veins

of Sekamina. Though not overtly harmful, lazurite is associated with the spontaneous creation of undead—particularly ghouls and ghosts.

Lazurite exudes a magical radiation that gives off a strong aura of necromancy. Any relatively intact corpse left within 30 feet of a deposit of lazurite for 24 hours has a 50% chance to spontaneously rise as a free-willed ghoul (often with class levels equal to what it had in life). Undead creatures within the area of effect of Lazurite radiation gain +4 turn resistance. Lazurite is notoriously difficult to mine, and has not yet been effectively recovered and transported to another location while retaining its potency.

Water

Numerous subterranean waterways course through the Darklands, along tunnels that mimic the three categories described on pages 10–11. The majority of these





underground rivers have little or no headroom and cannot be navigated with ease by air-breathing creatures. These rivers empty into large underground lakes or seas, typically in Sekamina or deep in Orv, which houses an immense underground ocean called the Sightless Sea. Whereas rivers and lakes generally pose little more threat than as a barrier for air-breathing creatures traveling through the Darklands, flash floods pose a very real danger.

Flash Flood (CR 4): Tremors that open fissures into sea beds, walls that crumble after ages of erosion, and cave-ins that divert the flow of subterranean rivers are all common causes of Darklands flash floods. A flash flood hurtles down passageways at a speed of 60 ft., sweeping away everything in its path. A creature can detect the onset of a flash flood with a DC 20 Listen check—success grants a creature 2d6 rounds to prepare. The first sign of a flash flood is a rumbling and a sudden flow of river along the ground; the wall of water that follows such an event arrives quickly, striking only 1d4 rounds later.

A creature struck by a flash flood is immediately subjected to a bull rush (+20 on the check), with a successful bull rush indicating that the creature is swept away. Creatures carried along by a flash flood take 2d6 points of damage per round from buffeting (Reflex DC 12 negates) and, if they are air-breathers, they must hold their breath or begin to drown. Swim checks are possible in a flash flood, but the water is treated as stormy, requiring a DC 20 Swim check to navigate. Most flash floods last for only 3d6 minutes before the rushing water causes a cave-in or similar collapse further upstream that finally stops the flow, but 10% of Darklands flash floods represent long-flowing events that can last for days.

DENIZENS OF THE DARKLANDS

The Darklands hold a myriad of horrors stalking, crawling, or slithering on feet, pseudopods, and less-identifiable appendages. And while a number of great and less-than-great civilizations call the layers of the Darklands home as explored later in this book, there are a large number of less-intelligent or less-organized creatures that prowl the endless tunnels and caverns serving alternately as predator and prey.

The most prolific creatures among the Darklands are those that serve as scavengers; even when resources are tight, they are able to subsist on the leavings of others—including when those leavings are the deceased corpses of others who have succumbed to privation. The lowest order of scavengers are those fungi and forms of plant life that can grow on nearly any trace of organic material—the tiniest patches of soil even—or remain dormant in spore or pollen form for extremely long periods of time until more hospitable climes become available. These life-forms include such growths as shriekers, violet

fungi, the various forms of mold, phycoids, phantom fungi, and the strange hybrid insect creatures known as fungal crawlers.

Just above the plant forms in the order of the scavengers are the organisms such as rot grubs, vermin including beetles (of all sizes), rats, cave crickets, the various forms of oozes, and a wide range of fungus-eating lizards, slugs, gricks, and stranger creatures that serve as the prey for larger predators. Many of the upper-tier Darklands scavengers are quite strange, such as deep-dwelling otyughs that inhabit the fringes of other societies and feed off their wastes, or the enigmatic gibbering mouthers that prefer to hunt prey but are able to feed on the barest traces of carrion and other leavings.

Above the Darklands' scavengers are the ambushers and trap-building creatures. Rather than relying on brute force or stalking to secure their prey, these creatures build cunning traps using tricks, terrain, or natural camouflage to ensnare their prey. Some of the more common examples of these creatures include the ubiquitous piercer and its cousins, the darkmantle and Darklands sentinel. Similar in method to these are the trapper and lurker above that disguise themselves as terrain features, and the insidious mimic that can disguise itself as anything. More advanced hunters include the tentacled decapus, an ambusher who utilizes illusions to draw in prey. Others lay traps, such as the insectoid cave fisher or the various forms of monstrous spiders that use webs or leap from trapdoors to capture their prey. Cave morays use a similar tactic, leaping from small crevices in the stone, while vilstraks actually pass through the solid stone to reach their prey, and tentamorts hide in the shadows of ceilings and among stalactites to strike unexpectedly.

At the top of the food chain of creatures are the hunters, the true predators of the Darklands. These creatures might stalk their prey for hours in order to kill and devour it at their leisure or perhaps simply leap out suddenly to attack after locating a potential meal. Purple worms are a prime example of this, as are giant slugs, the dreaded vemeraks, and the larger types of giant lizards, arachnids, and beasts. Yet above even the hunters lie the true masters of the Darklands—the intelligent races like the derro, the duergar, the skum, the neothelids, and the infamous drow. These races deserve special mention, and all are detailed throughout the next three chapters of this book.

A wandering monster table is printed on the inside front cover of this book, but the monsters listed there represent only the most common types of creatures one might encounter while exploring the Darklands. Note that many of the wandering monsters on this table are from sources other than this book or the MM; if you roll an encounter with a creature that's in a source you don't have access to, simply reroll the encounter.

Several of the encounters mentioned on the wandering monster table require more explanation.

Adventurers (EL any): A group of adventurers in the Darklands could be explorers, exiles from the surface, criminals, crusaders, questers, or rescuers. The best way to handle encounters with adventurers is to build a bank of NPCs you can use in a pinch; alternately, you can utilize the pregenerated characters that appear at the back of every Pathfinder Adventure Path or Pathfinder Module; just file off the names and give them new ones and you're ready to go. Adventurers encountered in Nar-Voth are generally low-level (1st through 5th level), those in Sekamina are generally mid-level (6th through 12th level), and those in Orv are usually quite high-level (13th level or above).

Centipedes (EL 2–12): In Nar-Voth, centipede encounters are with Medium centipedes. In Sekamina, these are encounters with Large or Huge centipedes (equal chance of either). In Orv, these are encounters with Gargantuan (80%) or Colossal (20%) centipedes.

Dark Folk (EL 6): Dark folk encounters typically consist of a gang of $1d3+1$ dark creepers led by a dark stalker.

Derro (EL 6 or 10): Most derro encounters are with a band of $1d6$ derro, with a 35% chance they're hauling an unconscious prisoner to or from the surface. There's a 20% chance that a derro encounter is with $2d6$ derro led by a derro savant (a 5th-level sorcerer).

Drow (EL 6 or 11): Drow encountered in Nar-Voth are usually patrols of $1d4+2$ 1st-level warriors led by a 3rd-level fighter. Down in Sekamina, groups of drow can be encountered in numerous combinations, but most consist

of patrols of $1d4+2$ 5th-level warriors led by a 6th-level male fighter and an 7th-level female cleric.

Duergar (EL 6 or 10): Duergar patrols in Nar-Voth are groups of $1d6+2$ 1st-level warriors led by a 2nd-level fighter. Those encountered in Sekamina are generally merchants traveling to drow cities; the merchant is usually a 7th-level wizard or cleric accompanied by $1d6+2$ 2nd-level fighters.

Elementals (EL 6–11): Elemental encounters in Nar-Voth are with $1d6$ Medium elementals. Encounters in Sekamina are with $1d3$ Large elementals. Encounters in Orv are with one elder elemental. Most elementals encountered in the Darklands are earth elementals. Air elementals are rarely encountered, and usually only in large chasms or canyons. Water elementals are only encountered in or near subterranean rivers, lakes, or seas, and fire elementals are only encountered in proximity to magma or lava.

Fiends (EL 5+): Countless demons and daemons wander the Darklands, freed from servitude to derro, drow, or even urdefhan (see page 60) masters. These extraplanar monsters can range from packs of dretches to solitary fiends of great power. In Nar-Voth, these should usually be EL 5 encounters. In Sekamina, they should be EL 8 to 12. In Orv, they should never be less than EL 15 encounters.

Ghouls (EL 4–14): The ghouls of Nemret Noktoria (see page 41) constantly seek exotic dead flesh to carry back to their kingdom for their grisly banquets. A typical group of ghouls in Nar-Voth consists of $1d4+2$ ghouls. In Sekamina, these are usually hunting parties of $1d6+4$ ghouls led by a 6th-level ghoul fighter or rogue. In Orv, these are almost always groups of $1d4+2$ 9th-level ghoul clerics on a pilgrimage.

Mongrelmen (EL 5–7): The majority of mongrelmen encounters are with groups of $2d4$, but 25% of these groups are led by a 4th-level mongrelman fighter or rogue.

Scorpion (EL 1–12): In Nar-Voth, scorpion encounters are with Medium scorpions. In Sekamina, these are encounters with Large or Huge scorpions (equal chance of either). In Orv, these are encounters with Gargantuan (80%) or Colossal (20%) scorpions.

Serpentfolk (EL 7 or 13): Serpentfolk encounters in Sekamina are usually with $1d6$ degenerate serpentfolk, while encounters in Orv are generally with a 10th-level serpentfolk cleric or wizard accompanied by $2d6$ degenerate serpentfolk.

Skum (EL 8): The majority of these encounters are with raiding parties of $2d6$ skum, but in areas far from water, these encounters are instead with a lone skum scout (a 9th-level rogue or monk).

Spiders (EL 3 to 14): In Nar-Voth, spider encounters are with Medium spiders. In Sekamina,





these are encounters with Large or Huge spiders (equal chance of either). In Orv, these are encounters with Gargantuan (80%) or even Colossal (20%) spiders.

Svirfneblin (EL 6 or 10): In Nar-Voth, svirfneblin encounters are with 2d4 1st-level warriors led by a 2nd-level fighter—these groups are either scouting parties or merchants. In Sekamina, svirfneblin encounters are with highly-trained patrols of four 5th-level rogues led by a 7th-level rogue.

Swarm (EL 3–7): Swarms encountered in the Darklands are with 1d6 swarms of bats, centipedes, rats, or spiders (equal chances of each).

Troglodytes (EL 5 or 9): Fully 80% of encounters with troglodytes are with a patrol of 2d4 standard troglodytes; the remaining encounters are with the ragged remnants of a nomadic tribe that has fallen on hard times. These tribes usually consist of 2d6 standard troglodytes, 1d4 3rd-level barbarians, and a 5th-level cleric leader.

Urdefhans (EL 10): Most encounters with urdefhans are with war parties of 1d4+2 of the monsters, each mounted on a skaveling.

Creating Darkland Monsters

In addition, to these creatures, several types of monsters normally found on the surface of Golarion can be found in the Darklands in monstrous, pigmentless variants—things whose distant ancestors crawled deep into some hole and never found their way out again. Over countless generations, their coloration edges toward white, and they may go blind or lose their eyes entirely. These include not only the blind cave fish found in subterranean pools, but predators like albino crocodiles, arachnids, and at least one rumored group of dire apes. Collectively called *sicuels* (from an Undercommon word meaning “pale”), these monsters can be represented by simply utilizing their ordinary stats and adding blindsight or tremorsense to their abilities. Alternately, you can apply the cave creature template from the *Advanced Bestiary* to represent them, such as the two monsters presented here.

CAVE SOLIFUGID CR 4

Advanced cave creature solifugid (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 192, *Advanced Bestiary* 36)

N Medium vermin

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +4

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14
(+1 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 45 (7d8+14)

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2

Immune mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d6+4) and bite +4 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks improved grab, constrict 1d6+4

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +9

Skills Climb +12, Hide +1 (+5 in stony areas), Spot +4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a cave solifugid must hit a creature of its size or smaller with a claw attack; if it establishes a hold, it can constrict.

Light Blindness (Ex) When exposed to sudden bright light, a cave solifugid is blinded for 1 round. When operating in an area of continual bright light, the cave solifugid takes a –1 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, all saving throws, and all ability and skill checks.

Skills Cave solifugids gain a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks. They gain a +4 bonus on Hide checks in areas of natural stone.

CAVE RAPTOR CR 4

Elite cave creature deinonychus (*MM* 60, *Advanced Bestiary* 36)

N Medium animal

Init +3; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +10, Spot +10

DEFENSE

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

hp 46 (4d8+28)

Fort +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 60 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee talons +9 (1d8+6) and 2 foreclaws +7 (1d6+3) and bite +7 (2d4+3)

Special Attacks pounce

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 17, **Con** 24, **Int** 1, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +9

Feats Multiattack, Track

Skills Climb +14, Hide +11 (+15 in stony areas), Jump +33, Listen +10, Spot +10, Survival +10

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Light Blindness (Ex) When exposed to sudden bright light, a cave raptor is blinded for 1 round. When operating in an area of continual bright light, the cave raptor takes a –1 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, all saving throws, and all ability and skill checks.

Skills Cave raptors gain a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and a +4 bonus on Hide checks in areas of natural stone.



Nar-Voth

Those who say that Nar-Voth is the safest realm of the Darklands merely because it is the most shallow have never visited the place. Depth has no bearing on danger in the Cold Hell, and all three realms have their own special ways to visit such fates on the unprepared. In Nar-Voth, the unwary traveler is more likely to become lost and die a death of starvation or thirst, for here there are no wide thoroughfares save for one, the duergar-held Long Walk. Here, the Darklands are truly wild.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44

The caverns of Nar-Voth comprise the uppermost reaches of the Darklands, and it is with these caverns that the majority of Golarion's adventurers and explorers are most familiar. Nar-Voth consists of countless isolated cave networks, sometimes connected to each other via long winding tunnels, and at other times existing only as a single independent network of caves—you cannot cross a continent underground by traveling solely through Nar-Voth. The thing that differentiates Nar-Voth from other near-surface cave networks is the fact that all Nar-Voth warrens include at least one lower passageway that winds down deeper into the earth, eventually connecting to vast Sekamina below. The caverns of Nar-Voth extend from the surface to an average depth of 2,000 feet.

The fall of the *Starstone* at the advent of the Age of Darkness changed the world of Golarion forever, and these changes were not limited to the surface world. The impact of the *Starstone* was felt throughout the Darklands—and the upper reaches of Nar-Voth in particular. Many caverns and passageways under what is now the Inner Sea were destroyed, along with a large portion of the underground orc empire. For unknown eons before this event, the orcs and the dwarves, two races that had vied for control of these caverns

for as long as either could remember, ruled the caverns of Nar-Voth. Where the dwarves were masters of tactics and defense, the orcs were fecund and warlike. No matter how many orcs the dwarves slew, more grew up to replace those lost. And no matter how often the orcs assaulted the great dwarven city-fortresses, the dwarves always rebuilt.

Yet the dwarves were not content to remain in the dark. Their god, Torag, had given his children a prophecy—that following a great earthquake, the Quest for Sky would lead the dwarves to a new world above. With the orc empire devastated by Earthfall, the dwarves undertook this great migration, pushing ever upward during the Age of Darkness in an unprecedented mobilization of their armies. They drove the orcs and other races before them, finally emerging onto the surface at 10 locations that would become known as the Sky Citadels. The dwarves found life on the surface much to their liking; the relatively shallow caves above Nar-Voth were much easier to rule, and they adapted to the return of the sun with much greater grace than the orcs. In many ways, dwarven society matured at the climax of the Quest for Sky, and they never thought of returning to their ancient homelands below—they had found a new home.

Yet not all of the dwarves agreed with Torag's prophecies. Some felt that the abandoning of their ancestral home in Nar-Voth was an affront to tradition. These dwarves remained behind when their brothers left, and they dwelt for generations in the vast, abandoned dwarven city-fortresses. They became known as the gray dwarves—the duergar—and their surface-bound kin became their greatest enemies for abandoning them. To a duergar, no greater filth exists than the dwarf.

With the exodus of the dwarves and orcs, the wild creatures of Nar-Voth took hold of the abandoned ways. From above, several races crept down into the caves (often to seek shelter from orc or dwarven aggression). Troglodytes, vegepygmies, dark fey, and other creatures began colonizing Nar-Voth's abandoned tunnels. Others, like the derro, had always been in Nar-Voth, and they used the sudden vacancies to seize new power. To this repopulation came yet another category of pilgrims—a displaced mass of humanity. Yet humanity found Nar-Voth to be a deadly place to live. Many remained for only a few years before returning to the surface to risk their fates in lands more familiar, even if they had been cloaked under a shroud of darkness. Those who remained in Nar-Voth changed over the millennia. Some looked to magic to sustain their race and found succor in the interplay between light and darkness—these Azlanti eventually transformed into the dark folk. Others quickly lost all connection with humanity, and their deformed children became the mongrelman race. But it was those who sought to perfect their race through selective breeding who saw the greatest success, even at the cost of their sanity and

humanity. Over the centuries, these Azlanti devolved into the near bestial morlocks and forsook Nar-Voth entirely for the deeper embrace of Sekamina.

NAR-VOTH DENIZENS

Composed of hundreds of cavern systems connected, if not by secondary tunnels, then by indirect paths via Sekamina below, Nar-Voth has a wide variety of creatures and cultures. In addition, it bears the distinction of supporting a fair amount of crossover species from above, primarily dwarves, orcs, goblins, trolls, and the like. Also known as transient cave dwellers, these are the animals and creatures that use portions of the Darklands at its uppermost reaches as lairs or for hibernation yet maintain their lives as surface creatures. It's rare but not unheard of to even encounter creatures like wolves, bears, manticores, wyverns, and other surface creatures seeking shelter in caves.

Derro

If not the most numerous of the sentient races in Nar-Voth (that honor is one constantly traded between the duergar and the troglodytes), the derro are still likely the most notorious and powerful of Nar-Voth's native races. Unlike most of the other races, who congregate in large enclaves, derro prefer to dwell in smaller numbers scattered throughout the many pockets of Nar-Voth, with only three notable exceptions. Yet no matter the size of a derro settlement, two constants abide—the sickly blue glowing fungus known as cytillesh, and a handy tunnel or secret passage that provides surreptitious access to a heavily-populated surface region. The overwhelming majority of Golarion's cities have derro colonies in Nar-Voth below, yet these connections go for the most part unknown by any but the derro, who are consummate kidnappers and masters of covering their tracks. As a result, none of the derro entrances to the Darklands are indicated on the Darklands Entrances map.

The origins of the derro are murky at best, but study of ancient orc carvings and dwarven texts reveals a disturbing truth—the derro existed long before either of those races rose to prominence in Nar-Voth tens of thousands of years ago. Most folk believe that the derro have always dwelt in Nar-Voth, but not even the derro themselves know the truth. Their own creation myths are so complex and tangled that no two derro share precisely the same tale of where they came from.

In fact, the first derro are the descendants of a much more benign stone-loving fey race known as the pech. After the fall of the Vault Keepers, one tribe of pech chose to flee upward through the Darklands, and when they reached the surface world they realized they had gone as far as they could go. They settled into the caverns of

Nar-Voth, and there discovered a strange blue fungus that grew in great quantities—cytillesh. Brain mold, as it is known to other races, was once a rarity even in the nooks and crannies of the Darklands, but the pechs who discovered it quickly grew addicted to its flavor and soothing radiation. They cultivated the stuff in their settlements, and in so doing doomed themselves to a vile transformation. They lost their close connection to the First World, grew larger and more elongated of limb, and progressively became more violent, sadistic, and insane. Within a few generations, they had forgotten their previous ways and become derro.

By living in constant proximity to brain mold and using it as a primary food source (cytillesh is extremely high in proteins and fats) the derro have developed an affinity with the substance such that, while insane, they retain their mental acuity, unlike what happens to other races exposed to its radiations over the long term. Generations of exposure have likewise somehow unlocked the magical and mental potential in many derro, resulting in a ruling class of powerful psychopaths known as savants. The derro also benefit greatly from cytillesh's benign properties, though most meet a violent end long before reaching

extreme old age. It does, however, allow derro women to remain fertile for a much longer period of their lives to offset the stillbirth rates likewise caused by overexposure to brain mold, and therefore keeps the derro a viable race.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the derro is their inability to survive in sunlight—direct exposure eventually kills them. Living as close as they do to the surface and its vast resources, the derro continually seek ways to overcome this racial limitation. To this end, they frequently kidnap surface creatures (with a preference toward intelligent creatures, since it's more rewarding to torture things that have emotions and can beg for mercy) and conduct all manner of bizarre experiments on them, both to plumb the secret of survival under the sun as well as to practice their techniques of measuring pain tolerance thresholds. Many of the derro's subjects go mad from the pain or exposure to cytillesh, but those that manage to survive are frequently released back to the surface—usually somewhere near where they were first abducted—after being forced to drink a concoction derived from cytillesh that partially erases their memories of their time in captivity. The derro's understanding of surface psychology and physiology remains imperfect, however, and these draughts frequently fail to completely erase the abduction from the victim's mind, leaving hazy

memories of blue-glowing tunnels, scalpels, torture, and pale-skinned humanoids with great, pupilless eyes. Fortunately the draught seems to work well enough combined with the madness that most such victims have begun to suffer that their tales are frequently dismissed. Organized reprisals against derro

enclaves have thus been few and far between. Derro take captives from among their fellow darklanders as well, though such races are much more wary of the dangers the derro represent and are hence

harder to take unawares. The derro continue their efforts, though, as they seek to understand and adopt useful survival traits from those races as well. Derro that do manage to kidnap darklanders never let their subjects leave after completing their experiments, knowing that such survivors would invariably reveal the locations of their enclaves, exposing them to attack. Such experimental subjects typically become a supplement to the derro's diet.

The derro generally have little time for or interest in worship, but those who do invariably worship demon lords. Lamashtu is a favorite deity for her domain over madness and deformity (qualities all derro find to be virtues), but derro also often worship Andirifkhu (demon lady of knives and traps), Cyth-V'sug (demon lord of fungus and parasites), Orcus (demon lord of undead and necromancy), and Shax (demon lord of lies and murder).



Derro

Duergar

Not all of Nar-Voth's dwarves chose to abandon their ancestral homes in pursuit of the Quest for Sky at the onset of the Age of Darkness. A not-inconsiderable number heard the prophecies and the rhetoric of Torag's faithful and found the very concept of the Quest for Sky to be foolish. These dwarves chose to remain in the Darklands, a choice that drove a permanent wedge between clans and shattered family bonds forever. Yet as they attempted to retain their hold on the mostly abandoned dwarven cities of Nar-Voth, they soon found that their numbers were too few to hold the defenses. These dwarves found themselves in a perpetual retreat, beset on all sides by troglodytes, derro, dark folk, and all manner of beasts, and as they retreated to small fortified portions of their cities they nursed a growing hatred for their kin, whom they felt had betrayed them and left them to die in the Darklands. In bitterness, this beleaguered remnant turned to one of Torag's greatest enemies in their hour of need—Droskar the Dark Smith. Droskar gave the embittered dwarves a new prophecy—a prophecy of darkness and rebirth, of innovation and the promise of power. These dwarves, on the verge of extinction, accepted this bargain and turned their reverence toward this fell deity. As an outward sign of their corruption, accursed by their former god and dwarven brothers, all of the hair fell from their scalps (although their beards and moustaches remained), and their skin turned an ashen gray. They became known as duergar—"gray-faced" in the Dwarven tongue.

In exchange for this mark of both shame and fealty, Droskar imbued within the duergar an innate mastery of magic to help them survive. Many duergar learned to train the giant spiders and beetles of the Darklands to serve as mounts and guardians. With these changes, the duergar slowly began to reclaim ground lost in their years of headlong flight. The smallest of the Darklands dwarfholds were quickly retaken and secured, creating bastions from which the duergar could mount missions of vengeance and reclamation.

Duergar society is brutal and filled with toil, as one might expect from a people dedicated to a deity like Droskar. Over the ages, they have modified and rebuilt the ancient dwarven cities, often trading in artistry for functionality. Their cities generally have little evidence of rebellious activity, vagabonds, extensive slums, or similar problems that often plague other cities, yet a duergar city is by no means a utopia. They are places of endless labor, where the only ones who work harder than the duergar to perfect their weapons and defenses are their hapless slaves—duergar are perhaps the Darklands race most dependant on slavery, although not out of necessity. To a duergar, the concept of forcing a lesser race to toil unto death is the greatest mark of personal success one can hope to achieve.

DERRO IN THE REAL WORLD

Although the derro have been a part of the game for decades, first appearing back in *S4: Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, this was not their first appearance in literature. In the late '40s, *Amazing Stories* featured a series of tales by Richard Sharpe Shaver collectively known as the "Shaver Mystery." In these stories, Shaver claimed to have had contact with a sinister, ancient society of creatures deep underground. The stories were presented in the guise of fiction, but Shaver claimed that they were based on his actual experiences in the underworld, after he supposedly uncovered an ancient language that was the source of all languages on Earth. The creators of this language had long since departed from the world, but they left behind their descendants—the rare and humanlike "teros" and the much more populous and deformed "deros." Shaver claimed he had been imprisoned by the deros, and that they had dealings with horrific aliens and could travel in spaceships. The deros kidnapped surface-dwelling people by the thousands for meat or torture and wielded strange powers and technology their masters had left behind long ago, and were responsible for many of the world's misfortunes and disasters. The stories were enormously popular, with many writing in to add their own experiences and encounters with the deros. A strange sort of mass hysteria seemed to develop out of the stories, and even after the stories faded from popularity, the myth of the deros persisted. In Golarion, the derro are as much inspired by these stories as they are from their role in the past three decades of gaming.

Troglodytes

Troglodytes are one of the most numerous of the sentient races of Nar-Voth and possibly all of the Darklands. However, despite their numerical superiority, they have never stood in a position of primacy in the Darklands, nor are they likely to ever do so for several reasons. Troglodytes are, by and large, bestial reptilian creatures—one of the oldest sentient races of Golarion, as a matter of fact, but one so primeval that they are more prone to civil wars than building empires. One might even consider them a peek at what might have occurred had evolutionary change favored reptilian creatures rather than the rise of the warm-blooded mammals. Certainly, troglodytes seem to be stuck in an evolutionary loop. Most independent tribes of troglodytes exist at a crude stone-age level of technology and social order. This limits their development culturally and prevents great strides from taking place within their societies. It's worth noting that troglodytes raised among other societies (particularly as servitors or slaves for the drow) are much more likely to develop beyond the level of primitive hunters.

Due to their great numbers and lack of social cohesion, troglodytes are among the most numerous of the mercenary races to be found in the Darklands. Almost every race in the Darklands (and several who dwell on the surface as well) has employed troglodyte mercenaries at some time or other. In fact, it is not at all uncommon for military conflicts between races such as the drow and duergar to manifest as all-troglodyte battles as one side's mercenary companies seek victory for their own masters even at the expense of their shared racial heritage. In cases where troglodyte society is advanced through exposure to another culture, those advances within troglodyte society are inevitably erased to a great extent when the "enlightened" troglodytes in question are crushed from battle after battle before any of their advancements can truly take root in their culture.

Troglodytes mostly live in small tribal groups scattered throughout the fringes of the Darklands or are employed and relocated to serve as mercenaries and guards for other races. These tribal groups are usually small but exist in numerous scattered lairs. When troglodyte mercenaries are sought, it is usually a simple matter for scouts to locate a half-dozen or so such groups simply by heading into tertiary passages and little-used tunnels. When greater numbers are sought, troglodyte mercenaries are sent in great sweeping invasions through areas known to be inhabited by these tribes to drive them in a panicked stampede into carefully stationed choke points where they can be rounded up as slaves or hired as soldiers.

The troglodytes of the Darklands venerate the demon lord Zevgavizeb, Lord of Troglodytes and Caverns, a lethargic, reptilian fiend prone to years of somnambulist slumbers. When he wakes from his hibernations, he is much more concerned with finding sufficient prey to feed his gnawing hunger than checking in on the mortal creatures that pay him homage. As such, his worship is intermittent and disorganized. Most troglodytes worship him on a very crude level consisting of little more than superstitious traditions, rock art drawings, and ancient fables told over meals of bony fish in dank cavern lairs. Rumors do exist of more organized cults of Zevgavizeb among the troglodytes, where high priests wear headdresses of strangely wrought gold and consort with creatures of the stygian deeps, but any centers of such worship have yet to be documented.

Vegepygmies

The vegepygmies are among the youngest of Darklands races. These unusual creatures began their existence in the sporecrafting gardens of drow House Udrinor as part of a series of experiments into developing a viable source of food that would be both plentiful and resilient in the more remote and barren parts of the Darklands. Of course, the drow do nothing if they can't mix a bit of cruelty into the process. By combining various spores

harvested from strange molds and exposing the spores to strong doses of caphorite rays, the fledgling progenitors of the vegepygmy race were spawned. Tough and bitter, these barely conscious plant creatures nevertheless stood the test of survival in the lightless realm of the drow. However, the sporecrafters were not content with a race of barely-conscious plants as a new food source. Following the belief that fear and horror add a delectable spice to harvested food, the sporecrafters worked at increasing the creature's limited intelligence and granted them the ability to tend to their own communities while awaiting harvesting by drow slaves. When the first vegepygmies began to die through misadventure or maltreatment, some of the bodies not harvested for food underwent an unusual change that surprised and delighted the sporecrafters. These bodies, as they decayed, collapsed into patches of unusual rust-colored mold that was capable of infesting flesh and transforming living creatures into new vegepygmies.

When the first patches of russet mold appeared in vegepygmy gardens, the drow underestimated its dangerous properties. One day, an entire group of the house sporecrafters went missing. The drow assumed that they had been murdered by feral vegepygmies and had hundreds of the creatures destroyed. As they carried out the executions, though, a curious fact emerged—there were more vegepygmies than the drow expected. Furthermore, they were much more intelligent than those who had come before—these were the transformed drow sporecrafters, and in their rebirth as children of the mold, they had retained much of their previous intellect. These were the first of the free-willed vegepygmies, and as the drow realized what had happened, the transformed sporecrafters made their move.

The great revolt became known as the Stalking Death among the drow of Zirnakaynin. The transformed sporecrafters used the entire vegepygmy population throughout the city's fungus gardens, inspiring in them the need for revolution. By the thousands they arose and attacked their masters. Overseer slaves were quickly overcome (and many were brought before patches of russet mold for their own transformation) and even a number of drow guards fell before the general alarm spread throughout the city. When the full might of the drow houses mobilized, however, it seemed that the revolution was doomed. Powerful magic and skilled warriors tore through the ranks of the vegepygmy mob with ease. Slave handlers brought forth immense fleshwarped troglodytes, turning them loose upon the moldfolk where the riots were fiercest. Yet these troglodytes drew too close to the growing fields of russet mold and were themselves transformed into mold monsters—creatures known today as "thornies." The speed with which the mold effected this transformation heightened the spreading

panic in the city. Effete drow nobles, safe behind the lines of fighting, suddenly found themselves accosted from all sides by their own gardens, and more than a few were savaged—with those who survived quickly transforming into moldfolk themselves. Zirnakaynin was under siege from within. Finally admitting the extent of the emergency, house matrons set about calling forth help from the Great Beyond, conjuring armies of demons from the Abyss to augment their defenses. The demonic host proved more than capable of the task and drove the vegepygmies from the city—of course, the next several weeks of banishing demons back to the Abyss and paying for services rendered caused turmoil of its own, but it was turmoil the drow were well-accustomed to. Dealing with unruly demons was much more pleasant than dealing with unruly food.

When all was said and done, it was estimated that fewer than a thousand vegepygmies survived the revolt and perhaps half that number of thornies. Yet it was enough. While the drow eradicated every single patch of russet mold and every last vegepygmy they could find, it became apparent over the next several months that enough of the moldfolk had survived to carry on their new race. Yet they had fled upward into Nar-Voth, wholly abandoning the caverns of Sekamina to the drow. The dark elves went on to cultivate the more docile and easily manipulated fungoids to serve their food needs, and for the most part left the vegepygmies of Nar-Voth to their own devices—hoping, perhaps, that they would hinder and harm the duergar and derro. Yet even today, the drow carry a hatred and disgust of the creatures, and it's not unusual for a drow patrol to head into Nar-Voth with the sole purpose of hunting down vegepygmy dens to destroy them.

Today the vegepygmies and their thorny cohorts can be found in many places throughout Nar-Voth, particularly in out-of-the-way caverns with a good supply of water. They shy away from other races, well remembering their captivity, but aren't afraid of attacking travelers that they outnumber. They always attempt to capture as many as possible in order to bring them back to their carefully cultivated russet mold patches for conversion and admittance into the tribe. They view this not as an act of aggression but of redemption, for there is no greater honor a tribe of vegepygmies can bestow than escape from the flesh.

Vegepygmies tend to leave all religious matters to their shamans, most of whom venerate a fungus-themed interpretation of Gozreh, but there are some more violent tribes who include shamans of Cyth-V'sug (demon lord of fungi and parasites) out of fear.

Other Races

As the closest to the surface Darklands realm, there's a fair amount of crossover between underground-dwelling surface races and true Nar-Voth natives. Yet there are also less-common races that exist entirely in Nar-Voth and compete for territory against both each other and the four primary Nar-Voth races.

Dark Folk: Descended from Azlanti survivors of Starfall, the dark folk have developed into a two-caste society. The shorter and much more numerous dark creepers are the rank-and-file soldiers, although they prefer to strike with surprise rather than face foes in a stand-up fight. They are led by the dark stalkers, human-sized variants who excel at the use of poison and can create magical clouds of dark mist. Both castes of these filthy humanoid function well in all manner of darkness, and have the ability to supplement their typical diet of rotten flesh and fermented fungus sap by absorbing faint light through the flesh of their palms. Large amounts of light sicken the dark folk, but they find the dim glow of exotic phosphorescence or the light exuded by burning flesh to be particularly energizing. When one of the dark folk is slain, his body bursts in an explosion



VEGEPYGMY GUARD

The vegepygmy first appeared in the classic module *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*, and were updated to the current edition of the rules on page 361 of the *Tome of Horrors*. They are presented there as six different sets of statistics, one for each caste, but the vast majority of vegepygmys encountered in the Darklands are of the guard caste. Their stats are reproduced here for ease of reference.

VEGEPYGMY GUARD

CR 2

Always N Small plant (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 361)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +6, Spot +6

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14

(+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities plant traits; **DR** 5/slashing or bludgeoning; **Immune** electricity

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +4 (1d4+1) or

spear +4 (1d6+1/×3)

Ranged spear +5 (1d6+1/×3)

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +2; **Grp** -1

Feats Alertness, Toughness

Skills Hide +13 (+25 in forests or swamps), Listen +6,

Move Silently +9, Spot +6

Languages Vegepygmy

Gear spear

of pent-up light. Dark creepers burst in a blinding flash, while a dark stalker's death can scour flesh from bone. The dark folk aren't overly religious, but it's not unusual to see worshipers of Norgorber or, more commonly, Sivhana (goddess of illusions); those living under Nidal may worship Zon-Kuthon.

Grimlock: These eyeless humanoids form large tribes, but seldom amount to anything more than pack hunters. They prefer to dwell in the ruins or abandoned settlements of other races, and tribes of grimlocks have been known to attack smaller duergar encampments simply to take over their lairs. While they are rather intelligent and can wield weapons, their social graces rarely rise above a brutal "might makes right" mentality. They are favored as slaves by many Darklands races, particularly the drow and duergar. Grimlocks are believed to be even more debased and degenerate offspring of the deeper-dwelling morlocks, who often clamber up

into Nar-Voth to hunt grimlocks—the morlocks find their tough, rubbery flesh to be particularly flavorful. Religious grimlocks are relatively rare, but those who exist generally practice a crude form of animism, venerating the rocks and scents of the Darklands rather than an actual deity. Grimlock druids are much more common than clerics.

Gremlins: Ranging in size from a relatively towering 3 feet in height down to barely over a foot tall, various types of gremlins dwell in the smallest of Nar-Voth's tunnels. Many of these tunnels pass close to thin spots in reality between Golarion and the mysterious First World—and the smaller a gremlin is, the stronger his ties to this realm of the fey. The largest of the gremlin races are mites (see *Tome of Horrors* page 266)—they are universally hideous, and dwarves are fond of saying they dwell in the darkest tunnels of Nar-Voth because the mites simply can't stomach the sight of each other's faces. Mites attack foes by swarming over them, stabbing and cutting with their tiny knives in a bloodthirsty frenzy. Many of the smallest gremlins, known to dwarves as jinkins, have eerie powers that grant them the ability to weave mayhem and even curses into complex magical or technological devices. Mites prefer the worship of archdevils, particularly Mammon or Dispater, while gremlins prefer to worship Andirifkhu, demon princess of knives and traps.

JINKIN

CR 1

Usually CE Tiny fey

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Listen +6,

Spot +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14

(+4 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 3 (1d6)

Fort +0, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

DR 5/cold iron; **SR** 15

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee short sword +6 (1d3-4/19-20) and

bite +1 (1d2-4)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6, tinkering

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):

At Will—*prestidigitation*

1/hour—*dimension door*

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 19, **Con** 11, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -12

Feats Dodge, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Bluff +6, Craft (trapmaking) +6, Disable Device +6, Escape

Artist +8, Hide +16, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6

Languages Terran

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sneak Attack (Ex) This functions identically to the rogue ability of the same name.

Tinkering (Su) A group of six jinkins, working together over the course of an hour, can create an effect identical to *bestow curse* on any living creature. This functions at CL 6th, and the target creature must either be willing or helpless (but still gets a saving throw to resist). The save DC is set by the jinkin with the highest Charisma score, and is equal to 14 + that Charisma modifier. Alternatively, these six jinkins can attempt to infuse a magic item with a curse. The nature of this curse is determined randomly; half the time the curse simply makes the magic item unreliable so that there's a 20% chance each time it's used that it does not function, but the remainder of the time the curse creates a randomly determined drawback (roll on the drawback table on page 273 of the DMG to determine its nature). A jinkin can take part in a tinkering only once per day, and may only tinker with a creature or object that isn't already cursed. Once a tinkering curse is in place, it is permanent until removed. All jinkin tinkering functions as a 6th-level curse.

Mongrelmen: Mongrelmen are a hodgepodge race of deformed oddities. Possessed of the ability to breed with nearly any humanoid creature, each new generation of mongrels adds new layers of deformity and mutation to their people, but as hideous as these deformities are, they more often than not grant the mongrel key abilities to aid in his survival in the dangerous wilds of Nar-Voth. These deformed humanoids also have the unusual distinction of being the most friendly of all Nar-Voth's natives to outsiders, and despite their often fearsome countenances are the easiest folk of this realm for explorers to find asylum with. Unfortunately, this ready acceptance of surface folk has done more for the other regional races' hatred of the mongrels than the most hideous deformity. Mongrelmen have a diverse pantheon of gods that, like their nature, are culled from a wide range of racial pantheons. The most common religions among mongrelmen settlements are Gozreh, Pharasma, and Sivhana.

NAR-VOTH LOCATIONS

Nar-Voth consists of large cavern complexes connected to each other via secondary tunnels or Sekamina below. While some of these cavern complexes can be quite large, with many exceeding the size of the largest surface-world cities by a factor of two or three times, there are no complexes in Nar-Voth that rival the size of surface nations.

Bloodcleft

At the base of a thousand-foot-deep shaft that descends from the lowest levels of the dungeons under the Pyramid

of Kamaria is a vast cavern, the floor of which is a razored maze of jagged stalagmites and upthrust ridges of deep red stone. Any who move through Bloodcleft find the place aptly named, for it is dangerously easy to slash oneself against the numerous sharp protuberances. Bloodcleft and the caves surrounding it are home to a large tribe of particularly violent grimlocks that decorate themselves with fantastic scarring patterns and bits of stone embedded under the flesh. They are gifted climbers, and can move through the dangerous fields of the cavern without fear—they delight in capturing live prey and then releasing them into the razor fields so they can chase them to death.

Corgunbier

Although derro usually dwell in small enclaves, three larger settlements do exist in the Darklands. The largest settlement of these is a maze-like series of tunnels beneath Cassomir known as Corgunbier. Nearly 2,000 derro dwell in Corgunbier, along with half that number of enslaved mongrelmen. Several secret connections exist from here that allow them to reach the sewers and countryside in and around the Taldan city above, providing plenty of stock for their experiments. Three powerful savants known as the Ecliptic Triad hold sway over these warrens and are rumored to possess vast mental powers far exceeding those typical for their kind.

CORGUNBIER

Size small town (magical—derro savants); **AL** CE

GP Limit 800 gp; **Assets** 79,360 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 2,984

Type mixed (65% derro, 34% mongrelmen slaves, 1% slaves of other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Dandek, CE female derro sorcerer 10 (Savant of the Ecliptic Triad), **Devenkes**, CE female derro sorcerer 8/rogue 2 (Savant of the Ecliptic Triad), **Ivlurt**, CE female derro sorcerer 10 (Savant of the Ecliptic Triad)

Court of Ether

Perhaps the most infamous of Nar-Voth's regions is also its least visited, even though it extends into the very bowels of Sekamina. This is a great natural rift nearly a mile across called the Endless Gulf. Several winding Nar-Voth passages open onto cliffs overlooking its depths, and dozens of ledges provide precarious means of navigating its sheer walls. The gulf itself is home to countless colonies of bats, doombats, and mobats that nest in the hundreds of caverns that extend off the rift's walls.

Few who visit stay long, though, due to the creatures who call its jagged ceiling home. Amid a vast growth of stalactites exists a fantastical inverted city of narrow



bridges, sharp-edged ledges, and many hollow chambers that follow the contours of the stony roof. Here, large and strange varieties of fungi grow upside down from the ceiling in concentric rings—some giving off just enough ghostly light for the stalactite-city to be vaguely glimpsed from the depths of the gulf below. This stalactite-city is known as the Court of Ether, home of the dark fey Queen Frilogarma and her followers. Exiled from the First World an age ago, these fey have long held a truce with the dark folk who dwell in the Shadow Caverns above, and rely on them to protect the surface approach from invaders. The sinister denizens of the Court of Ether are a large part of the reason that the svirfneblin took up residence in Golarion in order to monitor them and thwart their fell plans if possible. The hanging city is always under surveillance by hidden deep gnome watchers, allied xorn, or other elemental creatures, though they dare not approach too close due to the mystical powers commanded by the queen's court. Queen Frilogarma is attended in her fabulous city by all manner of fey bearing a violent or cruel streak, including large numbers of gremlins, mites, redcaps, and corrupted pixies. Within the court, stirges of prodigious size are bred to serve as aerial steeds, and at least one colony of the strange, six-legged bird-creatures known as gryphs serve as allies as well.

THE COURT OF ETHER

Size Large town (conventional); **AL** NE

GP Limit 3,000 gp; **Assets** 733,500 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 4,890

Type integrated (35% gremlins, 33% mites, 21% redcaps, 8% pixies, 3% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Queen Frilogarma, NE female nymph sorcerer 11 (Queen of the Court of Ether)

Diepkamer

Although the duergar city of Hagegraf is the heart of their people and the capitol of their nation, the duergar as a race are in fact ruled from a secret fortress located in the Darklands wilds far beyond Hagegraf. This heavily guarded redoubt is known as Diepkamer—a location as legendary as any in the Darklands, for few have ever visited its halls. All known entrances are heavily guarded by duergar spider-riders and steam traps, for within its hallowed halls reside the immortal elders of the duergar race—the Seven Patriarchs said to be the first seven dwarves to turn their backs on the dwarven kin and swear allegiance to Droskar. These seven remain sequestered in Diepkamer, where they hear pleas from the duergar kings, margraves, and war-marshals and pass decrees affecting

the entire race. The duergar believe the seven meditate to make contact with Droskar's forgemasters, and as a result their edicts are considered divine law.

The margrave of Diepkamer and his advisors harbor a terrible secret, though, one that they keep even from their own people. In the last three years, five of the Seven Patriarchs have died under mysterious circumstances. Neither of the surviving Patriarchs, both duergar many thousands of years old, have been able to learn through their communion with Droskar why their compatriots have suddenly died, but both are near the point of panic as they fear the finality of death creeping up on them as well. Who or what is killing the Patriarchs, and why Droskar has not intervened, remains an absolute mystery to the once-immortal priests—a mystery that could tear apart the entire structure of the duergar nation.

Fellstrok

Connected to the fallen Sky Citadel of Urgir above via a long tunnel, the dwarven ruins of Fellstrok lie deep beneath the badlands of Belkzen. The duergar have only recently reoccupied Fellstrok, and they work feverishly to reclaim the ruins from countless indigenous monsters and to fortify them against orcs or dwarves invading from above. These duergar serve under War-Marshal Brithuan in a continual conflict against the incursions of mongrelmen and grimlock tribes that roam the area.

FELLSTROK

Size Large town (conventional); **AL** LE

GP Limit 3,000 gp; **Assets** 578,250 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 3,855

Type mixed (70% duergar, 10% mongrelmen slaves, 8% svirfneblin slaves, 6% troglodyte slaves, 4% grimlock slaves, 2% slaves of other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Brithuan, LE male duergar fighter 6/rogue 6 (War Marshal of Fellstrok)

Gakenbode

Nestled deep under the Barrier Wall, far from the enslaving duergar nation or the murderous enclaves of derro, the crescent-shaped cavern of Gakenbode serves as a haven for a large population of mongrelmen. Among their deformed kind, Gakenbode is whispered as a sort of earthly paradise, a place free from the terrors so common in the Darklands and where mongrelmen can live and love in peace and harmony.

The truth isn't quite so utopian. While it is true that Gakenbode is all but unknown to the duergar and the derro, the large mongrelman city is hardly safe from harm. The city itself consists of hundreds of cabins

made from mushroom logs harvested from a nearby subterranean forest, with a few larger stone buildings along the outer arc of the cavern. The inner arc supports a large pool of water fed by several waterfalls that form a river (the Ochreflow) that winds south and down into Sekamina. Yet despite the convenient source of water and building supplies, Gakenbode is a study in isolation. With no trade to speak of, the mongrelmen who dwell here have little reason to leave their homes save to till fungus farms in outlying caverns. Of course, the fact that the surrounding caverns and tunnels (all tertiary tunnels) are truly wild means that predators often invade these outlying farms or make it all the way into the city before the Gakenbode militia can put them down or drive them off. Vermin predators like giant spiders and centipedes are common problems, but the most feared are the violent tribes of morlock raiders that often surge up from Sekamina below, using tunnels that the mongrelmen of Gakenbode have marked with warning carvings after their attempts to block or destroy them ended with violent reprisals. Today, the mongrelmen have achieved a grim sort of truce with the morlocks, and nearly all of the new arrivals in Gakenbode live only for a few months before they are led to one of these pits and sent down as sacrifices. This ironic fate for mongrelmen who make the pilgrimage to Gakenbode, seeking utopia but finding death, has left the older citizens of the area with a growing sense of shame and despair.

GAKENBODE

Size Small town (conventional); **AL** LN
GP Limit 800 gp; **Assets** 41,600 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 1,040
Type isolated (100% mongrelman)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Father Scatterface, LN male mongrelman rogue 9 (King of Gakenbode)

Hagegraf

The most well-known of the duergar cities lies at the eastern end of the Long Walk. Known as Hagegraf, this fortress city rings an immense cavern, giving the entire place the appearance of a huge arena enclosed by dozens of fortresses and floor-to-ceiling towers. Dozens of bridge-connected stalactites hang above the enormous central plaza—it is here that the city’s nobility dwell, along with their ruler, a powerful duergar named King Kurindey Orgukagen.

The city of Hagegraf is very much the capital of the duergar nation. Its patrols keep the Long Walk clear for much of its length, and taxes and fines extracted from travelers along this route are one of the most lucrative

sources of income for the city. Travelers and merchant caravans of all races (other than dwarves, who are never welcome here) are admitted daily into Hagegraf’s massive inner court to trade, although entrance requires paying a one-way tax of 10 gp per wagon (visitors would do well to remember the exit tax of 20 gp per person, though—any non-duergar who attempts to leave Hagegraf without proper payment ends up in the extensive dungeons below the city). Duergar slave caravans depart from the city’s mechanically-powered gates on a regular schedule for the markets of Delvingulf and Sverspume. Overlooking the broad inner bailey is a huge contraption showcasing the height of duergar craft—a massive clock called the Akrizoth Horologe. This monolith’s huge face bears numbers inscribed in seven Darklands languages and has six hands. For someone skilled in reading the clock (a DC 30 Knowledge [the planes] check) it provides an accurate count of time in synchronization with the passage of the sun over Highhelm and (it is said) the entire output of Droskar’s forges in the Great Beyond. The clock was crafted by a duergar slave who claims to have escaped from Droskar’s realm after memorizing the time sequence the forges followed—a sequence that generations of duergar priests have since adopted and used to track the output of their god’s endless toil. The Akrizoth Horologe is considered to be one of the wonders of the Darklands, and many travel to Hagegraf just to view its grandeur.

HAGEGRAF

Size Metropolis (conventional); **AL** LE
GP Limit 100,000 gp; **Assets** 164,000,000 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 32,800
Type mixed (77% duergar, 12% slaves of various races, 5% half-orc, 3% dark folk, 2% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Kurindey Orgukagen, LE male duergar fighter 4/cleric 14 (King of Hagegraf)

Krba

The best-known derro settlement exists not far from the drow city of Delvingulf. It is known as Krba, which translates roughly to “debris” in Undercommon. This derro enclave, home to 800 derro and nearly 600 allied morlocks, exists among the rubble of a collapsed cavern and dwarven fortress that were destroyed long ago in an earthquake. The derro never bothered to repair the older structures, merely finding nooks and crannies among the debris to support them and their growths of cytillesh. The derro of Krba maintain an embassy in Delvingulf and started a small trading colony in a nearby large cavern, maintaining trade with other Darklands

nations in a manner unusual for their insane kin. Krba's primary point of contact with the surface is the Chelish capital, Egorian, and the derro of Krba maintain subtle connections even here among a few of that city's more despicable noble families, using those contacts to ease the process of snatching victims from city streets as they need them. Krba is currently ruled by an unusually tall derro savant named Kivkord, a visionary murderer who hopes to someday transform Krba into the first derro metropolis.

KRBA

Size small town (magical—derro savants); **AL** CE

GP Limit 800 gp; **Assets** 59,200 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 1,480

Type mixed (57% derro, 39% morlocks, 3% human, 1% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Kivkord, CE male derro sorcerer 12 (High Savant of Krba)



Kuvhoshik

Although most troglodytes prefer to dwell in relatively small families or tribes in remote areas scattered throughout the Darklands, the troglodytes of the caverns of Kuvhoshik are a notable exception. Once used by the elves of Celwynvian as an escape passage into the deep, the tangled caves and passageways of this complex are now primarily under the control of no less than a hundred different tribes of troglodytes. Although they live in close proximity, the tribes themselves are not allied, and infighting between groups is commonplace. In many places, monsters

dwell in caves separating the tribes from direct contact with each other, but in just as many places tribes dwell in adjacent caverns connected by dozens of tunnels. Tribes commonly raid each other for slaves, steel, and eggs. Only when Kuvhoshik is beset upon by a powerful external force (such as a large incursion of goblins or ogres from the Caves of the

Craven above, or by invasions of wormfolk or gugs from Zenebrum below) do the troglodytes cast aside their bickering ways to join forces in the defense of the region. These alliances are extremely short-lived, and often break down even before the defeated invaders have the chance to fully retreat from the area.

Kmlin-Bru

The second largest derro settlement exists in the deep dungeons of Kmlin-Bru, ancient tunnels that predate Earthfall and the dwarven Quest for Sky. Approximately 1,250 derro dwell here today. The derro of this settlement hold sway over the vast complex in a militaristic organization in a manner quite atypical of their kind. Their fortress connects directly to the infamous Dread Dungeons of Galtcreed above, where they serve as both a holding and questioning service for Primarch Bremovir, secreting prisoners for long-term confinement in secure cell blocks—some infested with cytillesh. The ruler over these unusual derro is a savant called Mirgik who keeps her true appearance secret; she maintains her alliance with the humans above for ready access to subjects for experimentation as well as murkier reasons known only to herself.

KMLIN-BRU

Size small town (magical—derro savants); **AL** CE

GP Limit 800 gp; **Assets** 62,320 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 1,558

Type mixed (80% derro, 10% human, 6% mongrelmen slaves, 4% other slave races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Mirgik, LE female derro sorcerer 14 (High Savant of Kmlin-Bru)

The Long Walk

This seemingly endless passageway, the only primary tunnel existing in Nar-Voth, serves as a highway of sorts for trade throughout this region of the Darklands. Patrolled heavily by duergar from the city of Hagegraf, the Long Walk connects several key Nar-Voth locations throughout the region under Avistan.

The Midnight Jungle

The largest populations of vegepygmies in Nar-Voth are the tribes of the Midnight Jungle, an area of twisting tunnels ranging in size from a few feet to dozens of yards in diameter located deep under central Chelixa. The few explorers who have seen the Midnight Jungle and lived to return tell of massive fungal growths of strange and exotic mushrooms, molds, puffballs, and growths of all shapes and sizes that choke the tunnels into a veritable subterranean jungle. It's impossible to tell how many vegepygmy tribes inhabit this area, but they don't all get along—at any one time, at least a dozen ongoing wars and skirmishes between tribes keep the tangled pathways of the Midnight Jungle alive with mayhem.



Sekamina

If you have heard stories about the Darklands, chances are good those stories are of Sekamina. It is here that the drow hold court in their nighted cities, the skum swim in lightless lakes and sunken grottos, the svirfneblin toil in secret mines, and the ghouls gibber and cavort in the un-light of their undead empire. Other things dwell in Sekamina as well—boneless servitors of ancient gods, exiled giants from the realm of dreaming, serpentine survivors of a forgotten war, and worse. It is strange indeed to think that, of the three realms of the Darklands, this is the one most “civilized.”

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44

The most notorious realm of the Darklands, the region from which the majority of tavern tales and Pathfinder expeditions report, is the middle region known as Sekamina. The seemingly endless caverns of this realm span continents, and often consist of immense chambers, rivers, and even vast underground lakes. While the majority of the entrances to Sekamina from above pass through Nar-Voth, some notable exceptions exist. Some sages suspect that the Mobhad Leigh in northern Varisia provides a direct link from the surface world to Sekamina, for example. The caverns of Sekamina range from the foundation of Nar-Voth at 2,000 feet below the surface to depths of 8,000 feet.

When Earthfall struck, the denizens of Sekamina felt the tremors but, by and large, escaped much in the way of actual devastation. Indeed, by the time of Earthfall, Sekamina’s original rulers had already been defeated. These were the serpentfolk, ancient enemies of Azlant. Long did the wars between the serpents and man wear on, but in the end humanity won the day, with a forgotten hero beheading the serpent god Ydersius and breaking the back of the serpent empire. The genocide of the surface-dwelling serpentfolk at Azlant’s eager blades was complete—yet the warriors of

Azlanti were not able to finish their grisly task in Sekamina, to where the serpent followers of Ydersius had retreated in their defeat. These snakes had sought protection in hibernation in their deep and hidden Sekaminan cities, and before the Azlanti armies could seek them out, the human empire came to a ruinous end.

In the thousands of years to follow, the serpentfolk continued their longslumber. Other races came to Sekamina during this time. Hosts of ghouls seeking something more than merely scabbling in warrens under graveyards gathered in great numbers in some caves, drawn by the unhealthy glow of strange crystals of Lazurite. The gugs burrowed their way into Sekamina through eldritch portals from the land of the dreaming and found a new home ripe for plunder. Vast tribes of skum, abandoned by their aboleth masters, took up within immense sunken cities in subterranean lakes and waterways. The alien seugathi, worm-like minions of the deeper-dwelling neothelids, slowly began to extend their presence upward from Orv, claiming many of the deepest pits of Sekamina as their new warrens. The mysterious deep gnomes, the svirfneblin, carved their own tiny kingdoms out of the stone of Sekamina, eager to find a place of their own away from their hated derro enemies above and urdefhans below. A particularly large and fecund tribe of Azlanti pilgrims slowly adapted and changed over the generations, becoming the feral and ferocious race known as the morlocks.

Yet none of these races can be thought of as the “rulers” of Sekamina. If any race has a legitimate claim to that title, it is the drow. Long held to be little more than a myth, recent events have proven that the decadent demon-worshipping dark elves of legend are fact, despite claims to the contrary by most of Kyonin’s diplomats and leaders. While the drow seem content at this time to remain in their lightless realm, if even half the stories of their resources, vast cities, and endless capacity for violence are true, they could well present one of the Darklands’ greatest threats to the world above.

SEKAMINA DENIZENS

Of the three realms of the Darklands, Sekamina is the most civilized, the most explored by the darksider nations. Here are not the vast uncharted tertiary tunnels of Nar-Voth, nor the mysterious and ancient and unknowable vaults of Orv. Between the svirfneblin, the ghouls, and the drow alone, Sekamina is a vast region dense in places with cities, towns, and well-traveled trade routes. The wilderness still exists in Sekamina, but the greater danger comes from the numerous nations of the region—nations who rarely get along well for long.

Drow

Foremost among the races of Sekamina are undoubtedly the wicked and twisted drow. Since their flight from the

surface millennia ago, their skin and hearts have become as dark as the stygian depths in which they dwell. Yet despite the paranoia of many surface-dwelling scholars, the dark elves do not seek to return to the surface—they are content to weave their complex plans and live their decadent lives in the comfort of Sekhamina, the world they have already all but conquered. This is not to say that the surface has nothing to fear from the drow—far from it. The dark elves still seethe with an ancient hatred for the elves above for what they view as an abandonment, and against humanity for indirectly being the cause of Earthfall in the first place. To the drow, the uplander races are fit only for slavery, and the fact that they function so poorly in the dark makes them unsatisfactory slaves indeed. Yet recent events threaten to arouse this ancient wrath—the drow, once content to let those upon the surface exist, could well be willing to strike against the uplanders if they were to perceive anything approaching a threat to their empire from above.

The drow empire spans much of central Avistan, from Varisia east to Razmiran and from the Worldwound south to the northernmost reaches of Andoran. Theirs is easily the largest empire in all the Darklands, but not a single day passes without the need to defend this empire from their enemies. They maintain an uneasy truce with the duergar nation above, but in Sekamina the drow are at constant war with the ghouls, the skum, the svirfneblin, the seugathi, and the gugs—all races whose own lands border the drow empire, all races who look upon the drow position of power with envious eyes. And of course, their greatest enemies lie in Orv below; the neothelids, the urdefhans, the intellect devourers, and the few remaining aboleth puppet masters of the Sightless Sea.

The drow are a people founded on cruelty and sin. Their pantheon of gods are a collection of a dozen demon lords. They are a matriarchal society, where men are seen as second-class citizens at best or slaves at worst. Drow society is ruled by twelve Great Houses, each constantly seeking to ever expand their holdings and influence at each others’ expense, each believing themselves to be the ones best qualified to lead the nation as a whole, each ruled by a matron of incredible power. As a result, the greatest enemy the drow empire faces is itself, and for the past several thousand years, the drow have balanced precariously on the edge of a devastating civil war. Only the constant threat of the enemies that surround them keep the Great Houses from declaring open war upon each other. Instead, they wage a war of politics and secret betrayals, of false alliances and complex machinations. Each House has something important to provide to drow society, and each House has pledged to defend the nation from their enemies without, yet this never-ending shadow war serves well to keep any one House from seizing enough control to dominate the

others. It is a precarious but serviceable balance, and the drow have grown quite fond of it over the ages.

Drow engage in many different pastimes, not all of which are decadence or the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure (although these two do remain favorites). Sporecrafting (the art of growing and transforming fungus), lithicrafting (the art of shaping stone), coldwarping (a magical method of forging and smelting metal), and fleshwarping (the vile art of transforming the flesh through torture, surgery, and alchemy) are all popular pursuits. Yet the primary and greatest pursuit for most drow is the art of violence. In most drow cities, the houses send their best and finest warriors to martial training and mustering groups known simply as the Fighting Society. Drow of all houses come here as youths to train and prepare for the inevitable

day that they will be called upon to kill. Many drow, especially nobles, stay only for training before returning to their houses to carry on more specialized training with their own house weapon masters, priests, and arcanists. A portion, however, stay on with the Fighting Society, forever forswearing allegiance to house and patron demons to become a permanent member of the society. The society brooks no warfare between its members and gives devotion to the entire pantheon of the drow's demonic patrons. The Fighting Society's creed is purity of race and clarity of purpose; no enemy will survive their cleansing vengeance or prevent them from attaining their ultimate victory. The ranks of officers are usually pulled from the female drow, who hold authority over the male rank-and-file.

Beyond warfare and their artistic pursuits, life among the drow is very much a question of where one falls in social class. Although the drow themselves are capricious and prone to fits of pique and unpredictable mood swings, as a race their lengthy dominance over Sekamina has bred into their society an almost cloying level of decadence in tradition, resulting ironically in a relatively stable caste system. The Great Houses rule over all, of course, but the majority of drow belong to no noble clan. These are the soldiers, the prostitutes, the crafters, the servants, and the aimless. Among these drow, it is violence and might, seduction and guile that earn the right to survive. The denizens of one drow home can change a dozen times over the course of a year, as can the makeup of entire families as members are adopted, exiled, or murdered. Those who visit a drow city find the place often just shy of full-blown anarchy; a riot in the streets of a drow city is in a way analogous to a busy day at market in saner cities. Laws exist in drow society, yet they are transient things prone to transformation or neglect—the only true constant in drow society is the 12 Great Houses. All drow aspire to these 12 icons—for to be accepted into the graces of one of the houses is to escape the madness and violence of the city street itself.

The drow are presented in further detail in *Pathfinder* #15's article, "Drow of Golarion."

Ghouls

The ghouls of the Darklands are one of its most feared and least understood races. In most societies, ghouls are little more than a blight upon surface cemeteries and boneyards, but in ancient Osirion, where traditions of interring preserved dead in trap-filled tombs made it difficult for ghouls to find their favorite repasts of human



**Drow
Priest of
Zura**

flesh, a strange thing happened. Rather than confront the living, these ghouls simply dug deeper. Their warrens were not meant for permanence, and as their tunnels slowly collapsed behind them, the ghouls of ancient Osirion found themselves in a new realm deep below the sands—the twisting tunnels of Sekamina.

The ghouls eventually settled in an immense cavern deep below western Osirion, and over the centuries transformed the cavern into a city of their own. Yet while their architects drew upon half-remembered skills of their trade from life, the city itself is in many ways a farce, for the ghouls of the Darklands are only as civilized as they need to be to ensure the flow of carrion. To the outlander, these ghouls may seem wild and barely sentient but are actually organized into a rigid caste system. While it's certainly true that ghouls plague other races in their eternal hunger for the flesh of the dead, a ghoul that exists long enough often begins to question its lot in unlife. Some of these hear whispers of the necropolis of Nemret Noktoria, and many abandon the surface to crawl their way through the Darklands to seek out the truth for themselves. Even surface-spawned undead created through the contraction of ghoul fever are not exempt from this call.

A tithe of all carrion recovered by ghouls dwelling in the Darklands is set aside, and once every several months as the tithe ripens, a ghoul is expected to bring the tithe to Nemret Noktoria to be given to the priest caste for sacred consumption. Unlike the living races, ghouls repopulate their kind not with birth but death. To surface ghouls, the act of creating new ghouls is often little more than an accident, but to the ghouls of the Darklands, it is survival. All humanoid a ghoul encounters are judged on one of two merits—if they would make a good addition to ghoul society, or if they would make a good addition to ghoul diets. Muscular humanoids are valued for their strength as potential soldiers or builders, and beautiful or handsome humanoids (particularly those with pale skin, dark hair, and lithe figures) are valued almost as works of art to populate a ghoul society. Children and the elderly are generally fit only for the larder, with the notable exception of anyone who has a wealth of knowledge. Sages and scribes are particularly sought after for indoctrination into ghoul society, for when they aren't eating carrion, most ghouls possess an almost equally ravenous hunger for the printed word. Ghouls obsess over libraries, particularly those with collections focusing on history. Perhaps this is little more than a deep-rooted need to recall their past lives, or perhaps it is more primal. Perhaps ghouls lust for knowledge of the past because, to them, these words speak to them from their experience ages ago as living creatures.

In the wild Darklands in areas where ghouls are common, side tunnels often lead to the chattel pits, dark

DROWCRAFT WEAPONS AND ARMOR

One of the classic tropes of drow weapons and armor is that the light of the sun causes them to melt away. While this makes for memorable and interesting flavor, this quality can also be problematic from a treasure balancing standpoint. On one hand, items that your enemy can't use should be more expensive than standard weapons, and as a result, an NPC outfitted with such weaponry would have less gear overall than one who uses normal weapons. On the other, items that melt in the sun aren't as stable as standard items and should cost less to create, resulting in drow who possess more gear than creatures of their level should. In either case, PCs who fight drow quickly find themselves not accumulating the expected amount of treasure, since so much of their gear harvested from fallen drow enemies melts away once they return home to the surface world.

It's a complex problem, and as a result, the drow of Golarion do not maintain this trope; their weapons and armor function equally well in the Darklands or under the light of the sun. However, if you prefer the drow in your campaign to retain this quality, the easiest solution is to simply say that all caphorite alloy objects disintegrate 2d6 days after being exposed to natural sunlight. Such weapons and armor can be sold normally in the Darklands, but a surface merchant who recognizes the nature of the object (requiring a DC 25 Appraise check) often won't agree to purchase the object—at best, he'll offer one-third normal price for the object.

oubliettes of filth and squalor where the ghouls farm captured humanoids—mostly goblinoids or grimlocks, but sometimes dwarves, svirfneblin, or even humans. These naked, nearly blind, pale-skinned victims are little like their more civilized kin—raised in captivity and kept in near-mindless herds, the farmed humanoids are fed to the point of flabby corpulence on tough, ropy fungi and a coarse mixture of water, ground bone, and harvested fat. The flesh herds serve the ghouls as a source of fresher fair when carrion pickings are slim. The herds are culled in slaughtercaverns where offcast slurry is prepared and poured back into stone troughs to be recycled as food for the new herd. These creatures are likely beyond redemption if somehow rescued and are better served by the solace of a clean death.

Some tribal warlords of Thuvia have entered into pacts with the Ghoul Court, and dark-robed and masked priests are sometimes found among their camps or lurking on the outskirts of settlements, bags of strong-smelling herbs hanging about their necks doing little to dispel the omnipresent smell of death that surrounds them. Many undesirables that have “disappeared” in the Thuvian desert—presumed lost—have actually found their way

unwillingly through deep tunnels to the threshold of Nemret Noktoria. Likewise, the undead-friendly land of Geb has many emissaries and visitors from the Ghoul King's court that walk the cities unremarked, surrounded by many of their own kind. As a mark of friendship to Priest-King Kortash Khain of Nemret Noktoria, the Blood Lords of Geb provide an annual tribute of corpses and live slaves numbering in the hundreds that are transported to Nemret Noktoria in a grand festival called the Thanatopsis Parade from Geb's palace in Mechitar all the way to the ghoulish city itself.

In addition to their eternal quest for sustenance, the ghouls of Nemret Noktoria are also consumed in an eternal war with the horrific gugs that roam the endless halls of Sekamina and the Orvian Vaults. The source of this eons-old strife is unknown, as is the seeming mismatch between opponents of the rank-and-file, yet the gugs hold ancestral memory of some great and disastrous defeat visited upon them by the ghouls and are just as likely to flee an encounter with ghoulish kin as fight. For their part, ghouls prefer to gather in numbers to take on the much larger

gugs but have been known, on occasion, to engage such superior foes single-handedly—though such conflicts when a gug deigns to fight are usually short and decided in the gug's favor. Nevertheless the gugs continue to fear their smaller opponents, and the eternal enmity seems to be in no danger of lessening.

It's worth noting that in the Darklands, ghouls are viewed as aberrations and freaks—no true ghoul of Nemret Noktoria would ever consider a friendship to a ghoulish. They are considered unfit even for larders, and are generally slaughtered and burned when they are encountered.

Skum

Misbegotten spawn of humanoids and vile species of fish, the skum are a slave race created ages ago by the aboleths from human stock culled from long-dead Azlant. In the ages to come after Earthfall, with the subsequent recession of aboleth presence in the Darklands, legions of skum slaves were abandoned. Left behind, this savage ichthyic race was forced to fend for itself. Bereft of even a language or racial name to claim as their own, these slaves clung to the name given them by their masters' ancient enemies—"skum."

In the centuries after Earthfall, the skum did not wither as the aboleths had assumed they would—they had done too good a job engineering the race to be hardy, sufficient, and tenacious. Never numerous, the free skum of Sekamina clung to the shadow-haunted ruins of ancient aboleth cities or soupy marsh caves along the shores of subterranean rivers or Lake Nirthran, where they continue to this day to eke out an existence as little more than savages living in the faded glory of their former masters' abandoned works.

Larger numbers of skum still exist and serve the aboleths in the deepest reaches of the Sightless Sea in Orv, but these skum have no contact with the free skum of Sekamina, and each subgroup is largely unaware of the other's existence. The largest concentrations of skum in the Darklands, however, can be found in the abandoned Temple of Ulat-Kini and in the distant subterranean marsh beneath Garund known as Cold Momugado.

Despite their barbaric nature, the skum hold the ancient cities built by their aboleth masters with a reverence and awe bordering on the fanatical. Skum cities are far from ruins as a result; they are well-maintained and haunting in their looming emptiness, for the number of skum in Sekamina are far too few to sufficiently populate these huge ruins. Skum populations in these cities are generally quite fragmented, split into dozens of smaller tribes that each claim control over a different building or set of buildings. They work together only in maintaining these cities, but often squabble and fight over matters of territory.

Skum



Skum warparties often travel far into the Darklands, days or even weeks from their homes, traversing dry tunnels in search of new settlements to attack. This relentless need for war, bred into their blood and souls, prevents skum from settling into long periods of peace; as they defeat neighboring tribes of svirfneblin, ghouls, or even drow, they expand farther afield until they inevitably overextend their resources and are defeated by their most recent enemy. Yet back at home, new broods of skum warriors are always ready to replace fallen crusaders; just as the teeth of a shark fall out from overuse, there are always more just behind ready to slip into the vacancies. Skum society is a senseless repetition of expansion and defeat as a result, yet the skum themselves seem almost incapable of envisioning any other way of life.

Svirfneblin

Not all of Sekamina's denizens are sadists, warmongers, flesh-eaters, or demon worshipers. Some are isolationists or explorers, uninterested in war or cruelty. Unfortunately, in a world as savage and deadly as the Darklands, such races rarely survive for long. The svirfneblin (or deep gnomes) are a notable exception.

When the first gnomes stepped over from the First World in the Age of Anguish to settle in Golarion, so too did gnomes arrive in the Darklands below. Yet those who came to dwell in the deep were not like their kin above. The svirfneblin, short of stature but more stout of frame and with hairless, stone-gray skin, came not to find safety or to explore, but to pursue their own enemies into this world, elements of the fey court that had preceded the gnome exodus and were at least partially responsible for the mysterious calamity that caused the gnome exodus from the First World. The svirfneblin chose to watch these dark fey rather than confront them, for they knew their powers of earth and stone were no match for the fey might. When the dark fey settled in the Endless Gulf and built the Court of Ether, the svirfneblin claimed deeper caverns in Sekamina as their new homeland. Here, they hoped to observe their nemesis from hiding, stepping in only if it appeared that the Ether Court would attempt to perpetrate a similar devastation on this new Second World.

Whereas the gnomes are friendly and eager to explore and intermingle with the inhabitants of this new world, the svirfneblin are taciturn, more concerned with their roles as self-chosen guardians and sentinels than with diplomacy, and even more so in keeping their presence as much a secret as possible. As a result, while the gnome enclaves of the surface are things of secrecy and whispered rumors, the svirfneblin enclaves of the Darklands are virtually unknown outside a couple of notable exceptions, and the numbers of svirfneblin dwelling in the Darklands

SHADES OF LOVECRAFT

The concept of a world below our feet is not a new one—it certainly dates back to the dawn of civilization, for we've always had stories of what must surely lie in wait in the deepest part of the earth. With Golarion's underworld, our primary sources for inspiration have been turn of the century adventure tales and the pulp magazines of the early 20th century. Between the dero of *Amazing Stories*, tales of Pellucidar from Edgar Rice Burroughs, or inspiration from H. G. Wells and Jules Verne, the genesis of the Darklands is firmly rooted in this tradition.

But it's perhaps to H. P. Lovecraft that the Darklands owe their greatest debt of gratitude. Between his epic *Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath* (in which the hero descends into an underworld ruled by gugs and ghouls and immense worms), *At the Mountains of Madness* (with its underground city and sea below Antarctica), and his ghostwriting work on Zealia Bishop's short story, "The Mound" (which is set in a hidden underground world of three distinct realms—K'n-Yan, Yoth, and N'kai), much of the Darklands owe a debt of gratitude to Lovecraft. Some of "Into the Darklands" is heavily inspired by Lovecraft, while other elements (like gugs and shoggoths and the gods of the neothelids) are directly from his writings.

GMs seeking more Lovecraftian inspiration for Darklands adventures should seek out the stories mentioned above. Another excellent resource is the excellent *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game published by Chaosium—readers are encouraged to investigate chaosium.com for more details.

are vastly underestimated—which is exactly the way the deep gnomes want it.

The svirfneblin are the friendliest of Darklands races when it comes to interactions with uplanders and the few non-evil darksider races, but they always put the good of their community and racial mission above other concerns. If one of their enclaves is in danger of discovery by a non-evil intruder, they might even consider slaying the intruder outright rather than take a less severe reaction that could result in the chance of leading enemies to their doorsteps. Captured intruders are rarely if ever tortured—unusual in the Darklands—and often not executed either, though such a traveler might find himself locked in a windowless stone cell for several years while the svirfneblin decide what to do with him and how best to prevent the exposure of their enclave. Still, prisoners are well fed on coarse fungal bread and cave cricket meat, and their prisons are relatively comfortable. Svirfneblin are slightly friendlier toward gnomes, but the initial hurdle of mistrust remains a difficult one to clear. However, if a friendship can be formed with a community of deep gnomes, it is a bond honored by all other svirfneblin and cannot be broken

short of betrayal. This honor is shown through the exchange of bonding stones, small stone amulets carved with the personal sigils of individual svirfneblin that are always verifiable by other svirfneblin simply by tasting and sniffing the amulets.

Other Races

The drow, skum, svirfneblin, and ghouls are merely the most widespread of Sekamina's indigenous races. Others share these caverns and passageways as well, and although few have cities of their own in Sekamina (with the notable exception of the serpentfolk), they can often be found dwelling in or near settlements of ghouls or drow in particular.

Driders: The most prolific results of drow fleshwarping techniques are the hideous monsters known as driders—half drow, half spider centaurs that breed true and, in

some parts of Sekamina, have grown numerous enough to establish their own eerie villages of webs and tunnels. Driders are sexually dimorphic; the rarer female driders are sleek, with graceful spider bodies and attractive, slender torsos with beautiful faces and lithe arms. Male driders, though, are much bulkier and more hideous, with muscular torsos, squat spider bodies, and hideous visages that mar the graceful drow features with a noseless, many-eyed countenance dominated by jaws that open apart like immense pedipalps. In drow society, it is usually the male drider one sees serving as a guardian or mercenary—not only are female driders less common, they are much more difficult to control. In the wilds of Sekamina, though, it is invariably these female driders who organize their kin and lead entire tribes.

Gugs: The largest of Sekamina's races are the gugs, enormous giants covered with coarse gray or black fur, with arms that split at the elbow into two forelimbs each tipped with a taloned paw, and a hideous face overwhelmed by an immense, vertically-opening, fanged maw. The gugs are not natives of Golarion, but rather tunneled into Sekamina from another dimension tied to the dimension of dream. In that dimension, the gugs had been imprisoned by the gods of that realm in an underworld similar to the Darklands. Unable to escape into the world above, they instead dug deeper into their world, following the strange call of a mysterious voice. This lured them through an eldritch portal into Orv's Midnight Mountains, where the gugs fell under the influence of the Rough Beast Rovagug. The portal between Orv and the dimension of dream has long since collapsed, stranding many of the hairy giants here, but they have taken to the Darklands with a tenacious delight. The majority have settled in the lowest caverns of Sekamina, where they guard many of the routes into Orv and worship Rovagug in bloodstained caverns.

Morlocks: Of the Azlanti who fled into the Darklands for shelter at the onset of the Age of Darkness, those who chose to flee the deepest were fated to fall the furthest from humanity. Driven mad by an unfortunate combination of dangerous fungi and an attempt to restrict their bloodlines through incest to maintain purity, their descent into the savage, feral monsters known as morlocks occurred with shocking speed. Today, countless numbers of these monsters dwell in Sekamina, living in tribes that sometimes number in the thousands in the larger caverns. Most morlock tribes are much smaller, led by wizened elders who retain an oral tradition of their time in the past when their kind was softer and more helpless, unable to defend themselves against their enemies. Although savage, morlocks nevertheless possess a cruel egotism that drives them to view other similar races (primarily mongrelmen and grimlocks) as fit only for torture and food.

Drider



Ropers: Although most adventurers view them as simple monsters, the ropers are one of the Darklands' more intelligent denizens. Uninterested in the concept of society as most intelligent races know it, ropers live in relatively small clusters, content to philosophize on the nature of pain, cruelty, and the finer points of Rovagug's tenets, whom most ropers view as their unholy source. Few non-roppers know about these strange moots or gatherings, for while many ropers are eager to share such conversations with visitors, the conversations almost always come to an end as the roper feeds on its guest—for to a roper, the act of eating an intelligent and conversant visitor is bliss.

Serpentfolk: Once the undisputed masters of Sekamina, the serpentfolk were nearly wiped out entirely by the Azlanti; only the advent of Earthfall prevented the Azlanti war from eradicating the serpentfolk completely. Reduced to a shadow of their former power, the surviving leaders retreated to their most remote and fortified cities to hide. Many opted to enter magical hibernation, setting into motion numerous long-reaching plans to trigger their awakening in the distant future when humanity would have grown complacent enough to serve willingly as slaves. Others opted to continue life, and over the millennia these serpentfolk have lost their skill at magic, becoming degenerate monsters that now haunt the cities their ancestors once ruled.

Seugathi: Even more inscrutable than the ropers, more hideous than the gugs, and more sinister than the serpentfolk are the boneless minions of the neothelids—the seugathi. What goals these worm-like monsters pursue at the behest of their immortal lords is a vexing mystery, for at times they seek only trade in strange bits of information, while at others they engage in horrifically violent crusades against all forms of life. Their primary purpose in Sekamina is to serve as a sort of ambassador race for the neothelids—their masters being too few and too entrenched in their deep realms to leave Orv. The Seugathi work the will of the neothelids in Sekamina and above, and fear of reprisal from below affords them unprecedented access to all Darklands societies, for few are willing to risk the wrath of their immortal lords.

SEKAMINA LOCATIONS

Unlike Nar-Voth above, Sekamina is connected via a large network of primary tunnels that stretch from Garund to Avistan and beyond. This system of passages serves as the primary trade routes for the darksiders, connecting to various settlements, enclaves, and fortifications throughout Sekamina and Nar-Voth. There are even a few places where these passages descend into the nether reaches of Orv. Collectively maintained and somewhat patrolled by drow, svirfneblin, ghouls, duergar, and skum, these sentinels represent the closest thing there is

to cooperation between the darklander races. Traversing along these tunnels is the safest of all Darklands travel—provided the traveler can pay the periodic tithes and bribes to those who guard its ways.

The Carrion Falls

Deep under the Mwangi Expanse lies a slime-choked cavern known as the Carrion Falls, named for a single stream of foul effluvia that sporadically empties into the cavern through the ceiling. The cavern and its many side caves are rife with all manner of fungal life flourishing off the organic slurry, and it also serves as one of the Darklands' largest breeding grounds of slime crawlers, deadly fungi, and various types of oozes. Explorers should be forewarned that somewhere within its depths lie the pupae of a massive swarm of carrion moths that dwell at the top of the food chain, swooping in to take their meals and following creatures sometimes for miles in the course of a hunt. The cavern is also said to be sacred to the demon lord Jubilex, and the deepest, most foul reaches of the area are ruled by a host of hideous slime demons devoted to him.

Dwimovel

The greatest svirfneblin settlement in Sekamina is also one of the region's best-kept secrets. Hidden behind a series of secret doors built into the walls of a secondary passageway, actual access to the city of Dwimovel is only via a tangled network of tertiary tunnels. The svirfneblin rely upon this configuration as both a defense from their neighbors and because they feel more at home among the tangled caverns and twisting passageways.

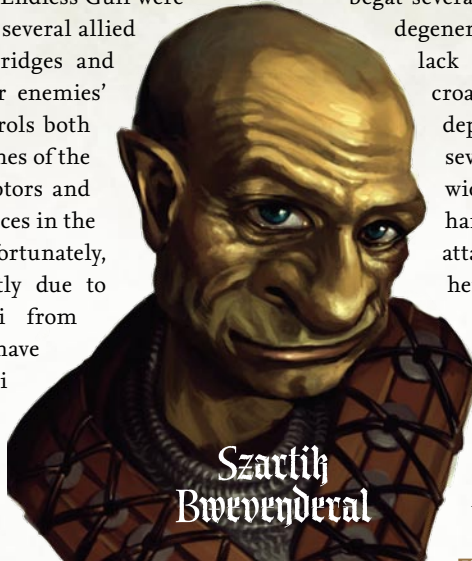
Dwimovel itself is a large collection of caverns that honeycomb the perimeter of a large cavern containing a beautiful and delicate forest of crystal. This central mineral growth serves the svirfneblin in as a place to meditate and relax—the actual urban sprawl of Dwimovel exists solely in the dozens of surrounding caverns, each of which is approximately a mile in diameter and contains a single enclave of several hundred gnomes. Each enclave is ruled over by an elected hetman, and a Hetmana Council composed of the three dozen hetmen meets to decide the course of not only their own clans and communities but the race as a whole. Decrees issued by the Hetmana Council are communicated to the hetmen of the hundreds of scattered enclaves throughout Sekamina through a series of allied earth elemental and xorn messengers.

While the innermost enclaves of Dwimovel are where the majority of the crafters, artists, and providers live, the outer caverns are populated by the city's militia. Here, watchcaverns outfitted with powerful beacons and flame-projecting siege weapons for dissuading intruders hold constant sentinel. To those who can find it and carry no



ill will in their hearts, Dwimovel is perhaps the safest location in all of the Darklands for a uplander traveler.

Peace in the city is maintained by General Szartik Bwevenderal. Elected by the Hetmana Council to see to the city's defense for a two decade term, Szartik has done much to increase the safety of not only Dwimovel, but of the nearby Darklands as well—it was at his command that the degenerate birdmen of the Endless Gulf were isolated after his stoneshapers and several allied earth elementals destroyed the bridges and ledges that allowed access to their enemies' caves. The ducal House Guard patrols both the city and the surrounding stretches of the Darklands astride trained cave raptors and there have been no major disturbances in the region for hundreds of years. Unfortunately, events have turned deadly recently due to sporadic incursions of seugathi from below the city. The svirfneblin have yet to identify where these seugathi are coming from, but reports of strange scratching noises from the ground below have been increasing, and recently a large patrol of xorn sent to investigate have vanished without a trace.



DWIMOVEL

Size Large city (conventional); **AL** N

GP Limit 40,000 gp; **Assets** 44,640,000 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 22,320

Type isolated (90% svirfneblin, 4% dark folk, 2% mongrelmen, 2% xorn, 2% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Szartik Bwevenderal, N male svirfneblin ranger 14 (Lord General of Dwimovel)

The Endless Gulf

Below the eerie Nar-Voth fey city of the Court of Ether yawns a tremendous chasm known as the Endless Gulf, a rift that plummets all the way into Orv itself, punching through the roof of the Midnight Mountains. Vast groups of doombats, mobats, ropers, and cave fishers haunt the walls of this chasm. The rocky walls of this vast expanse tantalize travelers with glimpses of furtive movement and strange hooting calls and clicking echoes. Like legends of siren-haunted shores of the surface world, the sheer walls of the Endless Gulf pose a hazard to all who choose to investigate. Careful scrutiny reveals where several ledges and natural bridges once leading from one cliff face to another have collapsed or been purposely undermined and destroyed. This was done by the svirfneblin long ago to

entrap the cliffs' insidious and tenacious inhabitants and prevent them from spreading too far beyond the isolated caverns along the Gulf's northern face. Within this warren of passages and hollows of the cliffs dwell several rookeries of dire corbies, hideous bird-like humanoids led by an ancient and powerful harpy crone named Nevaki. Exiled from the Zho Mountains of Qadira long ago, Nevaki begat several twisted daughters from the flock of degenerate birdmen. These deformed harpies lack wings but retain their deadly song, croaked from cleft mouth-beaks. In the depths of this guano-spattered lair lurk several hulking bird-like creatures with wickedly hooked claws. The harpy matron harbors these creatures for an eventual attack against the hated svirfneblin, yet her plans have had a hard time gaining foothold amid her natural slothful personality. Darklanders who are captured and not immediately eaten are put to work on constructing rickety rope bridges that can be put in place on a moment's notice to unleash her vile flock.

Flume Warrens

The Fume Warrens are a series of volcanic vents and geothermal rifts constantly filled with smoke and toxic gasses. Nestled deep beneath the Cinderlands of Varisia, they serve as home to warring tribes of azers and salamanders. Both seek to ally with the fire giants of the Mindspin Mountains who, in turn, continually play the two races off against each other for their own benefit. Thoqqua are plentiful in the Fume Warrens (having carved out many of them in their burrowing), and independent groups of magmin also reside here. Large natural deposits of gold and gems have been carried near the surface here by the volcanic activity, though few beings are brave enough to enter one of the Cinderlands' fumaroles to exploit them.

Garden of Nyl

Situated beneath the legendary island of Jalmeray, the Garden of Nyl is a vast cave magically illuminated by an ever-present illusion of a twilit sky. The land of Nyl is thought of as something of a promised land or earthly paradise among the citizens of Jalmeray, although few suspect that the entrance to this fabled land lies below their feet. No physical connection exists between the surface and the Garden—it can only be reached via Sekamina or Orv below.

The Garden of Nyl flows with crystalline streams and is swathed in forests of exotic fungi and lichens over a carpet of luxurious mosses where even predators can feast

without resorting to bloodshed. Deep within this strange paradise is hidden the vast, largely abandoned Palace of the Pit, built long ago by shaitan genies (see *Pathfinder* #18) out of gold and jewels. Today, the shaitans have abandoned the Garden of Nyl, and it is now inhabited only by nearly mindless fungoids, sentient flying snakes, and a legendary seductress known as **Silent Kessa** (CE female fungal creature janni bard 12) who uses a magical portal within the city to travel to dozens of different surface cities to lure men to an eternity of bliss or cruel death (depending on who's telling the story) in her arms. Deep inside of the Palace of the Pit, a 200-foot-wide shaft rimmed in strange and deadly fungus drops deep into Orv below, bypassing a primary tunnel in Sekamina before reaching the source of the fungoid taint that fills the city—a mushroom-infested secondary tunnel in Orv.

Harrowspire

This fortress is a legend among the drow as the most infamous and grueling of all drow Fighting Societies. The intense procedure drow undergo at Harrowspire kills more than it trains, but those who emerge from its halls are formidable soldiers indeed. Harrowspire is built into a massive stalagmite protruding from the depths of an immense cavern in the southernmost reaches of the drow nation.

A tangled network of rope bridges connects the upper reaches of Harrowspire with the various entrances and exits, all of which open into the cavern at heights of no less than 300 feet above the ground—no exits from the cavern exist at ground level, which is infested by an immense colony of green slime. Intruders (and trainee failures) are typically hurled over the edge into this deadly lake. As a result, most darksiders know of some sort of drow activity in the area but none realizes the true extent of the more than 10,000 drow warriors currently billeted in the isolated citadel or the huge stockpile of armaments and provisions they have stored there.

The current High Commandant of the Fighting Society is an unusually methodical and disciplined drow named **Valinqui Rasiurein** (LE male drow fighter 15), a master of all blades who bears several scars from close calls against overzealous students. Valinqui eschews the drow traditions of excess in his dress, preferring to wear simple tunics so that armor doesn't interfere with his art (although he never goes anywhere without his trusty *bracers of armor* +7). He patiently waits for the day when the portents shall be right and one of the Great Noble Houses of Zirnakaynin rises to clearly dominate the others so that he can place himself

and his troops at that House Matriarch's command. Of late, he has begun to have high hopes for the upstart Matriarch of House Azrinae and has even invited the new matron to Harrowspire for close consultation—although she has yet to reply.

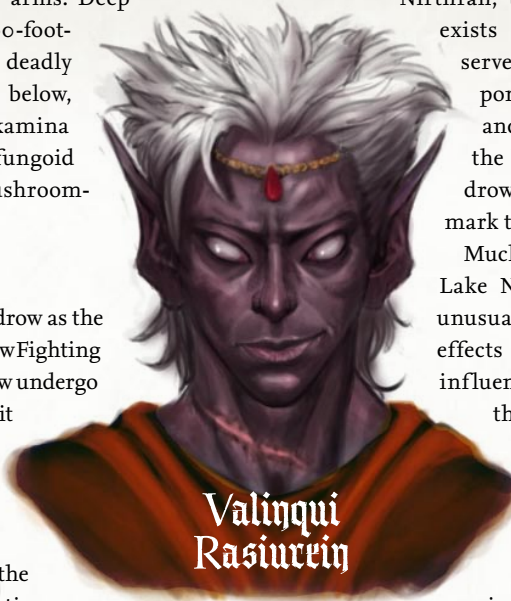
Lake Nirthran

Far to the south, under distant Garund, lies the second-largest body of water in the Darklands, and the largest in Sekamina—the strange body of water known as Lake Nirthran, the Dying Sea. Much of this lake exists deep under the Inner Sea and serves as a border of sorts between the portions of Sekamina under Avistan and Garund. The northern shores of the lake mark the southern edge of the drow empire, while the southern shores mark the lands of the ghouls.

Much smaller than the Sightless Sea, Lake Nirthran experiences an extremely unusual gravitational anomaly due to the effects of Golarion's orbit and the tidal influences of not only its moon but also the eccentric orbits of the planets Castrovel and Akiton. Within a few miles of its shores, Nirthran drops swiftly to a depth of several hundred feet deep and serves as home to many types of giant fish, including massive primeval sharks grown large and luminous in the dark.

The central lake is strangely much more shallow, its bed rising up in a dome-shaped, submerged mountain so that farther out than a dozen or so miles, the average depth is only 50 feet. Numerous islands dot the center of the lake, and it is here that the largest tribes of skum dwell, the strongest and most infamous of which are the skum of Cold Momugado, an ancient aboleth ruin located near the center of the lake and, it is said, the entrance to an isolated mini-Darkland contained entirely within the confines of the sunken mountain at the lake's center.

The eastern reaches of the Dying Sea form an immense crescent shape that circles the Isle of Kortos above. It is here that the waters of the immense lake are fed from the bed of the Inner Sea above, as a constant flow of water rains from the ceiling. The waters of the lake itself follow a lazy current westward, where at the opposite side it earns its moniker. Here, the lake constantly churns and froths against a sheer cliff wall nearly 500 feet in height. Driders and ropers nest in caverns overlooking this precipitous drop, along with huge tribes of morlocks. The waters below are often beset with powerful waves and deadly whirlpools, for it is here that the waters of the Dying Sea drain through countless narrow



fissures in the stone into the immense Sightless Sea in Orv below. These fissures are relatively shallow underwater, and while they are not navigable via boat, a skilled swimmer could traverse them into Orv. The lake itself is at its deepest just east of these fissures, dropping into an immense bowl of cold, dark water said to be the haunt of a mysterious tentacled horror. The skum of Cold Momugado worship this creature as a god named Shumbauth, and both the drow and the ghouls believe it to be an incredibly ancient aboleth left behind eons ago when its ilk abandoned Sekamina for the waters of the open sea.

Nemret Noktoria

Ghoulish depredations range far and wide across the Darklands and even into the realms above to scavenge among surface cemeteries and abandoned necropolises. However far their reach may extend, though, the center of ghoul culture has always been and will always be the necropolis of Nemret Noktoria, a hidden city of tombs and sephulchers buried far, far beneath the desert sands of Osirion. Here in lightless caverns supported by columns of whitish stone that resemble the ancient long bones and ribs of some truly titanic creature lurks the bulk of Sekamina's ghoul hordes. Rumored to be the petrified remains of some lost god, dead since the time before time, these columns of white "marrowstone" are thick with veins of shimmering lazurite, making the site a perfect capital for the ghouls.

The core of this city of hidden pyramids, spires, and ziggurats is an immense temple where strange, animal-headed ghoul priests dance and worship while their lesser kin raid the vaults of long-sealed royal tombs for the tantalizing victuals within. In sacred Nemret Noktoria, the ghouls pay fealty to their demonic master Kabriri, Him Who Gnaws, and bring tributes of fresh carrion to the ghoul-priests that attend Kabriri's temple. The ghoul-priests, ever awash in the stomach-turning carrion "perfume of Kabriri" and clad in robes of black and purple, make eternal homage to their own lords, the great ghouls and lords of Kabriri's Temple, a structure of black stone, embedded with marrowstone and lazurite tracery. These ghoul-lords in turn wait, sleepless, within the black vault of the temple where they attend High Priest Kortash Khain amid his eternal court and practice their foul necromancy.

Yet despite the fact that Nemret Noktoria is a city of the undead, it is not a closed city. Trade is welcomed, but only the bravest or most desperate of Osirian merchants dare make the journey down to the city. Merchants from Thuvia aren't so timid, and it's not uncommon to see Thuvian slavers in the streets of Nemret Noktoria, trading delicious-looking slaves for wagons of strange magic items and forgotten tomes. The worm-like seugathi have a strong presence in Nemret Noktoria, and in fact have nearly complete control

over the city's Worm District, a place the seugathi use as a base of operations for many Sekamina missions. Drow, duergar, derro, and even the odd svirfneblin visitors aren't unknown here, although all living creatures are well-advised to keep their stays in Nemret Noktoria as brief as possible. The ghouls can only control their hungers for so long, after all.

NEMRET NOKTORIA

Size large city (theocracy); **AL** CE

GP Limit 40,000 gp; **Assets** 35,300,000 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 17,650

Type isolated (88% ghoul, 7% seugathi, 2% human, 2% drow, 1% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

Kortash Khain, CE ghoul sorcerer 6/cleric of Kabriri6/mystic theurge 10 (High Priest of Him Who Gnaws)



The Pallid Pits

The sinister pits in the caverns surrounding the Nar-Voth mongrelman city of Gakenbode drop into a hellish tangle of mostly vertical tunnels interspersed here and there with large crisscrossing chasms. The beds of these deep rents in the earth are buried to an unknowable depth by millions of bones—a grisly legacy speaking to the ravenous hunger of the morlock tribes that infest this region. The morlocks of the Pallid Pits are particularly fecund, and have taken in recent decades to the worship of Szuriel, the Horseman of War. What fell influence opened the morlock's faith to this powerful archdaemon is unknown, but whispers among patrols from Nemret Noktoria claim that a powerful daemon has recently come to the Pallid Pits, perhaps to organize the morlocks into a private army for its own sinister goals.

Sverenagati

Although they once ruled Sekamina, the age of the serpentfolk empire is long past. All that remains are isolated ruined cities from this time; in many cases, these cities have been lost forever as the caverns they were once in collapsed. Yet at least one city remains in a close approximation of its original glory deep under the Kodar Mountains—dread Sverenagati. Utilizing techniques stolen from Thassilonian architects, much of the ancient City of Coils was constructed to last, magical augmentation lending support and protection from the passage of time in much the same way the monuments of Varisia endure above.

While Sverenagati is not a living city, it is far from uninhabited. Gugs dwell in the northern ruins, while ropers and a large tribe of driders have settled in the south, both of which obsess over the vast amounts of ancient lore still hidden in the ancient libraries. Wild beasts and monsters plague the city as well, infesting its alleys and making travel through the ruins dangerous at every turn. Yet at the heart of the eldritch ruins, the serpentfolk still hold sway, after a fashion—tribes of degenerates rule here in a brutish set of clans prone to infighting and cannibalism. Every few generations, a serpentfolk is born to these beasts that retains its race's advanced thinking and cunning, and often these serpentfolk organize their lesser kin into deadly warbands against the other denizens of Sverenagati in a hopeless attempt to retake their capital. At least once in the past few centuries, the serpentfolk even made the climb up through the nearby Mobhad-Leigh, once the main entrance to their empire, to prey upon Varisia's denizens. The fortress Viperwall was built at this time, and somewhere deep in that fortress a functioning portal between the surface and this deep ruin still exists.

Sverspume

South of the Fume Warrens, beneath the forest of Uskwood lies another well-known location in Nar-Voth. This series of

caverns is arranged in a ring of caverns and jagged chambers arrayed around a large central cavern known as Sverspume and serves as the largest open slave market in all of the Darklands. Shipments of uplander slaves are purchased through the nation of Nidal above, while duergar slave gangs bring in darksider slaves captured or kidnapped whenever possible. The caves themselves are maintained by a large tribe of dark folk who ensure that trade continues despite the common clashes between surface slavers and those from below. This vast market is under the leadership of a single powerful dark stalker known as the August Caller, who personally calls all of the most important auctions. Even non-sentient creatures are for sale as beasts of burden, breeding stock, or sources of food. Members of any race are welcome in Sverspume as long as they bring coin or trade goods and make no trouble. Troublemaking races are barred for a year or more as a penalty for misbehavior. Currently only svirfneblin, mongrelmen, and surface elves are barred from Sverspume—such intruders are be attacked on sight by the dark creeper guardians that patrol the outer caverns.

SVERSPUME

Size Small City (conventional); **AL** LE

GP Limit 15,000 gp; **Assets** 5,475,000 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 7,300

Type integrated (43% dark creeper, 18% duergar, 17% dark stalker, 10% troglodyte, 8% human, 2% drow, 2% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURE

August Caller, NE male dark stalker rogue 11 (Lord of Sverspume)

Ulat-Kini

Hidden at the end of a flooded spiraling secondary passage in the eastern reaches of the Dying Sea, the domed Temple of Ulat-Kini is built within a series of connected caverns covering more than five acres. The water in these caverns is strangely thick, seeming almost to slow those who travel into it as if they were moving through transparent mud. The series of interconnected domes themselves are composed of a golden stone, polished to a high sheen and often inset with decorative pieces of coral from when this area was the sea floor before millions of years of sediments raised it hundreds of feet above. Of aboleth construction, legend among the skum holds that the first of their kind were the Ulat-Kini, and this site bears the almost-forgotten name of their race as proof that it is where the aboleths first engineered the ichthyic humanoids.

The domed buildings themselves contain magically renewing air—the interiors are moist and wet, but not flooded. Many rooms feature pools of salt and fresh water holding exotic kinds of aquatic life often connected by water-filled tunnels. Several of these pools possess magical qualities said to be able to enhance the mind with strange psionic gifts,

while others are said to wreak horrific transformations in the flesh. Even in domes without such pools, the interior of the domes bear scintillating patterns of light as if reflecting off of a pool below. The skum warrior caste of Ulat-Kini patrol the domes and surrounding caverns astride giant albino crayfish to protect their venerable high priests sequestered in the largest, central dome covered with a sheath of beaten bronze. Within, the skum priests ingest strange substances and languish amid mysterious vapors as they converse with unknown entities across interstellar distances for guidance and wisdom.

Zirnakaynin

The crowning glory of the drow empire in Sekamina is also their greatest city—Zirnakaynin, Last Home of the Elves. Built in an enormous three-tiered cavern far under Nirmathas, the metropolis of Zirnakaynin is the largest city in all the Darklands. This cavern is where the drow first settled after coming to grips with their ancient transformation, and for over 8,000 years the city has grown.

The city of Zirnakaynin is split into three distinct regions, each inhabiting a different cavern stacked one atop the other, much in the same way the three realms of the Darklands are arranged. The largest cavern is the central one—this is the densely packed heart of the city, a cavern called Cocyrdavarin: home to the city's wealthiest and most powerful non-nobles, cruel artisans and performers, and purveyors of all manner of decadences. Above this central cave sits a much more sparsely populated region—this is the cavern Eirdrisseir, the home for Zirnakaynin's nobility and rulers. Finally, in the depths below lie the fiery halls of Rygirnan, a hellish pit of slavery and industry.

The upper and lower caverns are generally off limits to any but the drow and their slaves, but the central reaches of Cocyrdavarin are open to trade. While the city has few laws other than what the matrons of the 12 noble houses demand, the place isn't always in the throes of riots. Like a complex weather front, the city has its ebbs and flurries, and other races of Sekamina have long learned to predict the rough patches and try to time their visits to Zirnakaynin's extensive markets during periods of relative quiet. Non-drow are tolerated in the public parts of Cocyrdavarin (although elves are generally cause for an uproar or impromptu public executions), but are often treated with derision and impatience. To the drow, visitors are below slaves in terms of respect, a necessary evil they tolerate simply out of respect for the city's leaders, who believe that every traveler or merchant who comes to Zirnakaynin to trade affords the city additional power.

Zirnakaynin is a dark gem hidden in shadows. Yet, for all its imposing vistas and deadly crevasses, its twisted iron and bladed heights, the Last Home of the Elves merely reflects its residents' ruthlessness and malice, for

SIX OTHER DROW CITIES

While Zirnakaynin is the primary city of the drow and seat of the Great Noble Houses, it is by no means their only city. The following list presents the six other largest drow cities and populations, along with a brief description.

Blackstrand (pop. 4,790): The closest major city to Zirnakaynin, Blackstrand often serves as a secondary trading post to Sverspume. Just recently, an elf gate was discovered near this city, but it has yet to be reactivated and its destination is unknown.

Delvingulf (pop. 15,200): This port city lies on the northern shore of the Dying Sea, its great black quays providing docking for vessels and its markets doing brisk trade with the ghouls of Nemret Noktoria and even, at times, with the skum of Cold Momugado.

Far Parathra (pop. 7,040): The most remote of the drow cities, the denizens of Far Parathra are also shockingly decadent—tales of the violent orgies and weeks-long debauches are legend among Sekamina.

Giratayn (pop. 13,900): Giratayn lies close to the upper reaches of Sekamina and often does brisk trade with the city of Hagegraf.

Telderist (pop. 5,200): A smaller city on the fringe of drow-held lands, the corsairs of Telderist support numerous assassins, drug peddlers, and even pirates.

Umberweb (pop. 8,430): Of the six cities listed here, Umberweb has the largest population of driders—this unusual city is the only place where large numbers of female driders live in relatively close contact with full-blooded drow.

the city's greatest danger is the drow themselves. This city is described in more detail in *Pathfinder* #16's article, "Zirnakaynin—Last Home of the Elves."

ZIRNAKAYNIN

Size metropolis (conventional); **AL** CE

GP Limit 100,000 gp; **Assets** 276,700,000 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 55,340

Type mixed (77% drow, 6% duergar, 5% troglodyte, 3% dark folk, 3% ghouls, 2% tiefling, 2% derro, 2% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURES

Matrons Azrinae, Dolour, Rasivrein, Tracinoa, Vexidyre, and Vonnarc, CE female drow of various levels and classes (Rulers of the Six Great Houses of Zirnakaynin); **Alicavni Vonnarc**, NE female drow conjurer 18 (archmage of Zirnakaynin); **Patron Zov Caldrana**, CE male drow fighter 17 (leader of House Caldrana); **Breathless**, CE female flesh-warped drow bard 8/rogue 4 (artist of webs); **Varmirhias**, CE female marilith fighter 2 (daughter of Shax); **Xomos Fain**, NE male dark stalker rogue 9 (Boss of the Gray Market); **Letiandeil Dirvond**, CE female tiefling bard 14 (cognoscenti of Ovessia).



Orv

I am, of course, familiar with the legends of Orv. Rumors of underground jungles infested with monsters, of false utopias filled with hidden death, and of lightless caverns where the darkness itself feeds on flesh. Even in the Darklands themselves the stories continue. Stories abound of body-stealing monsters, of worm empires, and buried mountain ranges ruled by dragons. And let us not forget the myth of the Rough Beast himself, said to lie in prison in the lightless deep.

I have been to Orv, and I can say only this: these stories do not do it justice.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44

Many scholars categorize the realm of Nar-Voth as the unclaimed wilderness of the Darklands, with its vast amount of unexplored regions and preponderance of tribal societies like the troglodytes, vegepygmies, and mongrelmen. To these scholars, Sekamina is then the heart of Darklands civilization, although a civilization that values fear, rewards cruelty, and exists only to further its own needs at the expense of others. Although these scholars have heard of Orv, the third realm of the Darklands, most know little more than legends of this fabled land. The races of Sekamina and Nar-Voth know little about Orv as well, and what they do know strikes fear even into their darkened hearts. If Nar-Voth is the wild, and Sekamina is civilization, then Orv must surely be Hell.

Orv's genesis is not in the natural world, for the vast vaults of strange environments and closed ecosystems is not something a sane world could produce—left to nature, Orv would collapse into a realm of isolated dead-end tunnels filled with poisonous air or solid masses of stone grown pliant and soft from the searing heat. Yet this is manifestly not the case, for Orv is the most varied and immense Darklands realm of them all.

Orv consists of dozens of immense chambers called Vaults. The size and shape of each vault varies greatly, yet none are smaller than the smallest kingdoms of the surface world. Most are, in fact, much larger. Some, such as the Sightless Sea itself, contain entire oceans, but the majority of the Vaults of Orv are somewhere between the two extremes, immense caverns thousands of feet in height and covering regions large enough to contain entire nations. Each has its own rules, its own environment, and its own masters, its own dangers.

Scholars argue that such incredible worlds must have been built, and they are correct. In most of the Vaults, ancient clues paint pictures of a powerful race from the dawn of time who carved these chambers in the roots of the world and populated them with diverse creatures, some plucked mewling from the surface, others drawn from distant worlds or forgotten dimensions. The clues point to these Vaults as having served as terrariums of a sort, as chambers to house experiments of myriad natures. Of the builders of these Vaults little is known today, but those who dwell in Orv speak of them as angels and demons, gods and explorers, villains and heroes. These were the Vault Keepers, and their slaves were a race of diminutive humanoid earth spirits known as the pechs.

Today, the immense magic that maintains the Vaults and sustains the environments within seeps upward through the Darklands, incidentally making the upper tunnels more habitable by regulating the flow of air, preventing temperature extremes, and minimizing the effects of earthquakes. Yet the magic of Orv is slowly fading—the Vault Keepers have long gone from this world (driven away, some believe, after losing a prolonged war against the aboleths). They abandoned their pech slaves, and over time these creatures carved out tiny homes in the Vaults or fled upward into Nar-Voth where they became the first derros. Some Vaults have collapsed, and in these areas and those above, nature has reclaimed the Darklands, making regions uninhabitable to most forms of terrestrial life. Yet the majority of the Vaults remain strong, and in them a multitude of environments, people, and nations have flourished. Unlike in the upper Darklands, though, where the denizens wander and explore and trade and war with their neighbors, most denizens of Orv rarely move laterally beyond their homes. Only one race, the militaristic urdefhans, seem to have an interest in expanding their territory, and as their wars rise and ebb, they serve as the greatest force for cross-Vault interaction of all Orv's denizens.

ORV DENIZENS

Unlike Nar-Voth and Sekamina, Orv is not that diverse. The Vaults themselves have wildly different contents and support strange empires and alien societies, yet few (with

the exception of the urdefhans, who are detailed on page 60 of this book) have strong influences on Vaults beyond their chosen lair.

The Vaults of Orv, are connected to each other via primary and secondary tunnels, and within these tunnels all manner of Darklands denizens and hazards may be encountered. Unlike the Vaults, these tunnels often have a high degree of interaction between the various races of Orv, typically as such creatures are on their way up to Sekamina via hidden routes or leading a small patrol or expedition to another Vault.

Within the Vaults themselves, however, the types of creatures one encounters can vary greatly. Fully 75% of all encounters with wandering monsters in an Orvian Vault are with creatures mentioned specifically as dwelling in that Vault. The other 25% of such encounters can be determined using the wandering monster table on the inside front cover of this book.

ORV LOCATIONS

Orv is the most mysterious and isolated part of the Darklands. Not only does it lie far beneath the surface and have limited connection to the upper realms, but its strangeness is enough to keep most other darklanders away. Orv is a weird collection of isolated lost worlds, each different than the others, but united by their origin and incredible size.

Primary and secondary tunnels connect the vaults; there are no tertiary tunnels here. Orv's denizens do not regularly police these tunnels, but that is not to say that no intelligent life can be found in them, only that any thinking creature a traveler might meet is there for something other than keeping the tunnel safe, usually for a malicious purpose.

Black Desert, The

In the earliest days of the drow empire, countless families fought for dominance. It took several centuries for the squabbling drow nobility to settle into a semblance of order, but still the great houses of the drow are subject to upheaval, with older houses being ousted by upstarts only to reclaim their stolen positions of power decades or even centuries later. Those who fail to maintain their hold on power are either disbanded or exterminated—with one exception.

Known today as the Lost House, the drow of House Shraen were once among the race's most powerful. They alone had resisted the call to accept demons as their patrons, and instead turned to foul Urgathoa for guidance and support. As the centuries wore on, House Shraen took to increasingly vile and hideous practices into the art of undeath, and finally committed a long-forgotten atrocity that even the drow could not endure. They were forced to flee the reaches of Sekamina from a united force of much



of the drow empire. Many of House Shraen perished, but a few survived and fled south and down into Orv.

What followed was a devastating journey over thousands of miles that, in many ways, echoed the original elven descent into the Darklands. Eventually, all of House Shraen's living members succumbed to the ordeal, leaving only a slim core of undead nobles to eventually stumble upon an immense vault deep under northern Garund. This seemingly endless expanse contained mile upon mile of shifting black dunes—this was the legendary Black Desert, a lost cavern of immeasurable antiquity serving as a mass purple worm spawning ground in the dark glow of a ceiling encrusted with huge lodes of virulent blightburn ore. The poisonous sands and air of the cavern had no effect on the indigenous life, nor upon the undead flesh of the drow of House Shraen. Deep in the desert itself, they discovered a vast but abandoned city of pyramids and towers, the tallest spires of which rose up to and connected with the vault ceiling some 3,000 feet above. The drow colonized this city, naming it Shraen after their own family, and over the centuries to come they have increased in number only slightly. Yet their power is immense indeed—all of House Shraen are accomplished undead spellcasters, be they lich, vampire, or worse. Their needs are seen to by a growing army of undead slaves gathered from periodic raids against the ghoulish empire in Sekamina above, or culled from living bodies of prisoners caught elsewhere. The Shraen have even perfected methods of magically domesticating the great worms that roil through the desert sands. The drow mount odd carriages within the trained worms' gullets to allow transportation across the vast black desert on their enduring quest to discover the lost secrets of the Vault for their own use.

The cities and ruins hidden in this Vault were not created by the Vault Keepers, but are nonetheless ancient indeed. Those few uplander explorers who have viewed the ruins of the Black Desert (both the city claimed by the undead drow and the countless other ruins scattered across the sands) note the strange similarities in architectural styles between these ruins and modern structures in Osirion above, and wonder what hidden link exists between the nameless creators of these ruins and those who may have helped shaped Ancient Osirion's rise to glory.

The Crystal Womb

Nestled deep under the Mindspin Mountains, this immense vault is a legend among the dwarves. The Vault is a jungle of crystal, hundreds of square miles of delicate landscape composed of everything from quartz to diamond. The crystals arch from floor to ceiling in places, creating vast pillars hundreds or even thousands of feet in height, while in other reaches they grow like trees, lending

a riot of color to the landscape. Many of the crystals glow with strange internal energies, giving the region a colorful illumination that waxes and wanes according to complex rhythms in the stone. At the Vault's heart is said to be the Crystal Womb itself—a vast, churning vortex of crystals that grow, collapse, and are reborn in an endless geological orgy. This vortex is a portal across the dimensions, connecting the heart of the Womb with an even more unbelievable lode of crystal megaliths deep in the Elemental Plane of Earth itself.

The Crystal Womb is a wilderness, ruled by none but inhabited by all manner of creatures from the Elemental Plane of Earth. Most of these creatures are little more than elemental animals, predators, or relatively docile crystal-eating beasts, but a few more intelligent creatures like shaitan genies or powerful xorns have come to dwell here either in exile from the Plane of Earth or to protect this realm from adventurous dwarven prospectors who come seeking the rarest crystals the deep has to offer.

Deep Tolguth

Between the caverns of the Earthnavel and the strangely tropical expanse of Tolguth in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, there is certainly no shortage of primeval beasts and strange survivals from ancient times. The megafauna and dinosaur life of the region has long served the orcs of Belkzen with a constant supply of immense beasts to train for war, and the indigenous tribes of the lands east of the Tusk Mountains venerate the beasts as gods. Yet what dwells in these regions is but a hint at what dwells in the deep Vault where they originally hailed. Here, filled with vast trackless jungles, steaming swamps, and cities of ruined ziggurats lies the Vault of Deep Tolguth.

A lost world in every sense of the phrase, Deep Tolguth is a place of wonder indeed. The vast cavern is lit by a brightly glowing sphere of light that burns from the center of the cave's ceiling nearly two miles above, and the air itself is filled with clouds and strange mists. The false sun shines for 12 hours at a time before swiftly diminishing to nothing, plunging the Vault into 12 hours of near-darkness lit only by the countless points of glowing crystals that stud the cavern ceiling, much like a field of stars. Those who come to Deep Tolguth often mistake their emergence as a return to the surface world above, with only the static position of the "sun" above betraying the truth of the place.

Dinosaurs, immense monsters like froghemoths, Colossal vermin, vemeraks, and all manner of primeval beasts roam the jungles and swamps of Deep Tolguth. The perimeter of the Vault rises steeply like rugged mountain slopes, and in the countless caverns that pock these slopes dwell dozens of barbaric tribes of primitive humans and orcs. These tribes wage a constant war

TROGS OF DEEP TOLGUTH

Enlightened troglodytes have the same statistics as regular troglodytes, save that they gain the following racial ability score adjustments instead of the standard troglodyte ability scores: +2 Dexterity, +4 Constitution, +4 Intelligence. All enlightened troglodytes use the elite array when determining their statistics. Its base statistics as follows: Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12, Handle Animal +6, Hide +7 (+11 in rocky areas), Listen +6, Spot +6, CR 2.

against the denizens of the strange cities of onyx and porphyry that squat ominous on the shores of the central lakes of Deep Tolguth—cities built by unknown hands but populated now by a nation of unusually civilized (but no less decadent and cruel) troglodytes. These troglodytes use the local beasts as guardians, mounts, and drudges, and prey upon the primitives of the outlying caves for slaves and food in a constant war for dominance. The central city of this troglodyte empire sits atop a large artificial island in the central lake, a 900-foot-tall ziggurat temple located directly below the false sun above. It is said that a mysterious link exists between this temple and the “sun,” and that this link is what is responsible for the unusual intelligence of the troglodytes that rule here.

Denebrum

In deep Orv, immense worms writhe and war. These are the neothelids, spawn of ancient gods left behind in the deepest parts of the world, one time enemies of both the aboleths and the Vault Keepers themselves. Although the Vault Keepers have moved on and the aboleths have largely abandoned much of their interests in the Darklands, the neothelids remain. Ancient beyond reckoning, a neothelid’s life cycle is measured in eons; eggs remain unhatched while nations above rise and fall, growing slowly larger until they are ready to burst open, releasing an adult monster unto the world.

Yet time does not treat well races whose births happen only once every few centuries. Far fewer neothelids are born and survive their egg phase than are destroyed by their enemies over the years, and as such these vastly powerful creatures have been forced into a much more tentative and careful role than their ego and cruelty might demand. Today, isolated neothelids can be found trapped or hiding in areas throughout Orv, or even near the surface in some very rare cases, but the vast majority of those that survive dwell still in the worm-empire of Denebrum deep under Varisia.

Here, immense forests and swamps of sloppy, poisonous fungi and mold grow thick along sheets of mud and stagnant water. Neothelid hives rise from this fetid stinking swamp here and there, towering twisted spires

of stone and hardened resin that look as horrific as the monstrous worms themselves. Each neothelid hive houses only one neothelid, but they are tended by their own armies of seugathi minions who treat them at once as kings, fathers, and gods. Here, the neothelids endlessly plot and scheme for a reemergence into a role as masters of the Darklands, seeding the way by sending their seugathi spawn out on countless missions to study and ultimately undermine the other nations around them.

The neothelids themselves are the spawn of even more powerful entities, creatures from beyond Golarion that writhe blind but potent in the depths of outer space in the heart of the Dark Tapestry. The neothelids worship these ancient entities, passing down the mysteries of Yog-Sothoth, Azathoth, and others to their minions in order to prepare them for a future where they rule Golarion and all other life is but cattle for their hunger.

NEOTHELID CR 15

Always CE Gargantuan aberration

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight 100 ft.; Listen +30, Spot +30

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 4, flat-footed 28

(–2 Dex, +24 natural, –4 size)

hp 312 (25d8+200)

Fort +16, **Ref** +6, **Will** +16

DR 5/—; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 4 tentacle rakes +24 (3d6+10/19–20)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon, improved grab, swallow whole

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *charm monster* (DC 19), *clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *levitate*, *suggestion* (DC 18), *telekinesis* (DC 20), *teleport*, *trace teleport*, *poison* (DC 19)
3/day—*mind thrust* (DC 23), *psychic crush*, *quicken suggestion* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 7, **Con** 27, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +40

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Casting, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (tentacle rake), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle rake), Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*suggestion*)

Skills Climb +38, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Listen +30, Spellcraft +31, Spot +30

Languages Aklo, Orvian, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) 50-foot cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 14d10 acid, Reflex half DC 30.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a neothelid must hit a creature with two tentacles. It can then attempt to start

a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check it establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the foe.

Mind Thrust (Sp) The neothelid delivers a massive blast of mental energy at any one target within 60 ft., inflicting 15d10 points of damage. A successful DC 23 Will save negates the effect. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Psychic Crush (Sp) The neothelid attempts to crush the mind of a single creature within 60 ft. The target must make a DC 23 Will save with a +4 bonus or collapse, becoming unconscious and dying at –1 hit points. If the target succeeds on the save, it takes 6d6 points of damage.

Swallow Whole (Ex) A neothelid can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of a smaller size than itself by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+15 points of crushing damage plus 2d6 points of acid damage per round from stomach secretions. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the stomach (AC 22). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A neothelid's interior can hold 1 Huge, 2 Large, 8 Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny, or 512 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Trace Teleport (Sp) This ability affects a spread with a 60 ft. radius. The neothelid learns the mental coordinates of the teleport destination of all creatures that teleported in the area over the previous minute, gaining an awareness of the location equivalent to “seen casually.” This power does not grant any environmental information about the conditions of the destination.

Doga-Delloth

Perhaps the most well-known and certainly the most notorious Vault in all of Orv is Doga-Delloth, the legendary empire of the urdefhan race. Said to have been engineered eons ago by the daemon lords as a twisted sort of social experiment, the urdefhans alone have embraced their lot in Orv and have managed to claim the largest presence in this lightless realm. Urdefhan cities, settlements, and fortresses can be found in places as far-flung as islands in the Sightless Sea, Ilvarandin, and the Midnight Mountains, and their explorers and patrols can be encountered throughout the tunnels that connect the Vaults together. Yet their true heart and center of power lie here, in the vast Vault of Doga-Deloth.

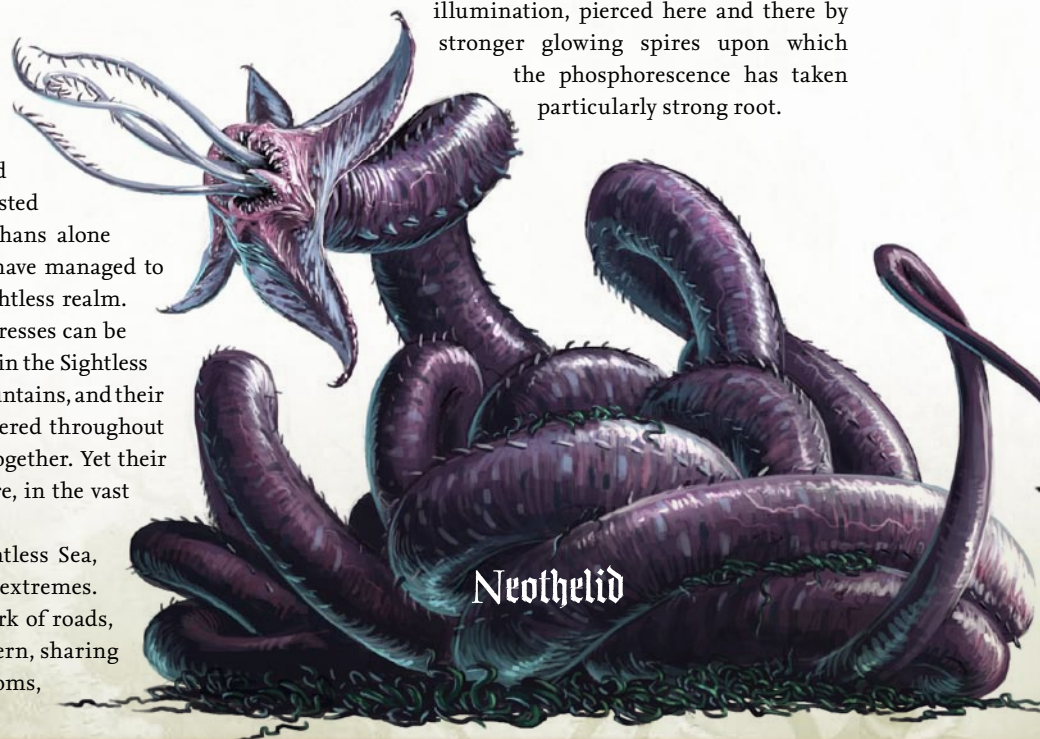
Situated on the shores of the Sightless Sea, Doga-Deloth is a land of myriad extremes. Just as with surface nations, a network of roads, cities, and fortresses decorate the cavern, sharing space with vast forests of mushrooms,

hills of razor-sharp crystals, rivers and lakes flowing from immense waterfalls fueled by the Dying Sea in Sekamina above, and swamps of poisonous mud and fungus. Yet while portions of the vault are uninhabited and “wild,” the nation itself is relatively civilized—if one could call a race of daemon-worshiping sadists who delight in the consumption of living sentient creatures “civilized.”

The majority of Doga-Delloth's walled cities lie upon the shores of the Sightless Sea or stand near the primary tunnel exits from the Vault. There are eight major cities in all, but the largest is breathtaking Niovengia, the northernmost city along the Sightless Sea's shoreline. Like many of Doga-Delloth's cities, Niovengia is a city of black basalt towers and spires, with countless horned crenellations, rookeries along the walls for skaveling mounts (see the sidebar on the next page), eerie glowing domes, towering statues of their beloved daemonic gods, and stone piers jutting out into the inky waters of the sea.

Ilvarandin

Lit by pale glowing clouds of countless phosphorescent spores that waft upon the higher air is the vast realm of Ilvarandin, a sight unlike any other in Orv. Here, the Vault Builders created a single vast city of towers, domes, arched bridges, and deep tangled alleyways amid immense plazas, winding streets, and countless stone structures. To those well-versed in architectural styles, the workings of this impossibly vast city are similar to those of ancient Azlant in some places, of elven cities in others, and in some places akin to nothing that remains on the surface today. The entire place is in a constant state of shadowy illumination, pierced here and there by stronger glowing spires upon which the phosphorescence has taken particularly strong root.



SKAVELINGS

The favored mount of the urdefhan race is the skaveling, a large undead bat. Young mobats are raised in stables, fed special diets of fungus and undead flesh, and trained to obey the commands of urdefhans from birth. When a mobat reaches the appropriate size, it is ritually slain with necromantic poisons that act upon the body to raise it from death as a loyal, ghoulish, undead skaveling mount.

SKAVELING

CR 5

Advanced mobat ghoul (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 31, *Advanced Bestiary* 76)

CE Large undead (augmented magical beast)

Init +8; **Senses**

blindsight 120

ft.; Listen

+12, Spot +12

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 17, flat-footed 14

(+8 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 52 (8d12)

Fort +6, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities undead traits

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee bite +13 (2d6+7 plus paralysis and ghoul fever)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks sonic screech

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 26, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +15

Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +13, Listen +12, Move Silently +11, Spot +12

Languages Urdefhan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ghoul Fever (Su) Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 13, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based. A humanoid that dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul soon thereafter, as detailed on page 118 of the MM.

Paralysis (Su) Those hit by a skaveling's bite must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sonic Screech (Su) A skaveling can emit a shriek that affects all creatures in a 20-foot-spread as a standard action. The screech stuns any creature in the area for 1d3 rounds if it fails a DC 14 Will save. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. Whether or not the save succeeds, the affected creature is immune to that mobat's sonic screech for one day. The save DC is Constitution-based.



Perhaps as eerie as the city itself is its silence. Known to many as the Mute Metropolis, the Vault-sized city is largely deserted, the only inhabitants of its abandoned buildings being hungry predators, ambulatory fungoid beasts, and isolated pockets of tribes displaced for various reasons from the reaches above—derro, duergar, drow, svirfneblin, and morlocks being the most common. These tribes dwell in Ilvarandin in quiet fear, for they tell tales of horrific thieves that steal into their camps unseen to abduct folk. Invariably, a few days after a disappearance, the abducted individual returns with tales of a fantastic utopia somewhere deep in Ilvarandin and an offer to lead those who seek a better life away from their current homes. The returnees are never quite “right,” though, and those who leave with them are never seen again.

At the core of the city is a more densely-inhabited heart.

To those few who stumble upon it by accident, the place may at first seem an impossible society where humans and orcs, drow and

elves, skum and morlock, dwarf and duergar live at peace, side by side, in a decadent realm of pleasure palaces and beauty. Those who react with suspicion to such a strange utopia are quite right to suspect, for the truth behind High Ilvarandin, as its inhabitants call it, is sinister indeed—for the inhabitants are intellect devourers. Capable of stealing living bodies and replacing a creature's brain, intellect devourers are hideous monsters incapable of experiencing emotion and pleasure on their own—this deadened perception helps greatly in affording them incredible protection from damage and harm, but also leaves the monsters starved for sensory input. By usurping bodies and inhabiting them, the intellect devourers can experience the full range of decadence and pleasure they hunger for, but unless they possess methods to extend the “freshness” of the bodies they steal, they swiftly fall apart from overuse (pain being as intoxicating a sensation to most intellect devourers as pleasure). In High Ilvarandin, eldritch magics suffice to prevent this decay, allowing the creatures to remain inhabiting their favorite bodies for centuries—or at least, until they grow bored and seek out new bodies for new sensations among the sentient races of the world.

INTELLECT DEVOURER

CR 8

Always CE Small aberration

Init +6; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Listen +19, Spot +0

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 17, flat-footed 16

(+6 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size)

hp 76 (8d8+40)

Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +6

DR 10/adamantine; Immune fire; Resist electricity 15; SR 23

Weaknesses vulnerability to *protection from evil*

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee 4 claws +13 melee (1d4+1)

Special Attacks body thief

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

At will—*detect magic*, *change size* (as *reduce person* but self only), *ego whip* (DC 17), *empty mind*, *id insinuation* (DC 17), *invisibility*

3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *intellect fortress*, *painful strike* (DC 17)

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 23, Con 20, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 16

Base Atk +6; Grp +3

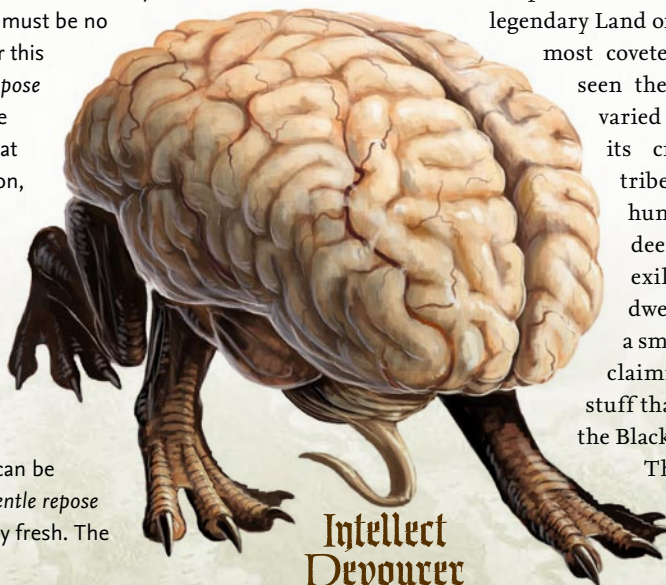
Feats Combat Casting, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +22, Concentration +16, Hide +21, Listen +19, Move Silently +25

Languages Undercommon (cannot speak); telepathy 100 ft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Body Thief (Su) As a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity, an intellect devourer can reduce its size and crawl into the mouth of a helpless or dead creature of Small size or larger and then burrow into the victim's skull to merge with the victim's brain. Treat this as a coup de grace attempt against the victim, save that the intellect devourer uses all four of its claws to make the attempt (and thus inflicts a total of 8d4+8 points of damage and forces the victim to make a Fortitude save to not die—see page 153 of the PH for more details). Once the victim is dead, the intellect devourer magically consumes the victim's brain and replaces it with its own body. Only creatures that have a distinct brain can be the victims of a body thief attempt. A dead body must be no more than one day dead for this ability to function (*gentle repose* can extend this period). The devourer can exit the body at any time as a standard action, bursting the victim's skull and resuming its normal form. After replacing its victim's brain, an intellect devourer can animate the body for up to seven days as if it were the victim's original brain. This period can be extended with the use of *gentle repose* spells used to keep the body fresh. The



Intellect Devourer

devourer retains its hit points, saving throws, and mental ability scores, as well as its spell-like abilities. It assumes the physical qualities and ability scores of the victim, as if it had used *polymorph* to assume the victim's form. As long as the intellect devourer occupies the body, it knows (and can speak) the languages spoken by the victim and very basic information about the victim's identity and personality, but none of the victim's specific memories or knowledge.

Ego Whip (Sp) One target within 170 feet takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage and is dazed for 1 round (Will DC 19 negates). *Ego whip* is a mind-affecting ability.

Empty Mind (Sp) The intellect devourer gains a +5 bonus on Will saves until its next action. Using this ability is an immediate action.

Id Insinuation (Sp) Up to three targets within 40 ft. (each within at least 15 ft. of one another) are confused for as long as the intellect devourer concentrates plus 1 round. A DC 19 Will save negates the confusion. This is a mind-affecting compulsion.

Intellect Fortress (Sp) A shimmering field covers a 20-foot radius centered on the intellect devourer, and all damage (including ability damage) the intellect devourer takes from spells and spell-like effects subject to spell resistance is halved for the intellect devourer and its allies in the area of effect. This lasts for 1 round. Activating this ability is an immediate action.

Painful Strike (Sp) The intellect devourer's claws deal an extra 1d6 points of nonlethal damage for the next 7 rounds.

Vulnerable to Protection From Evil (Ex) An intellect devourer is treated as a summoned creature for the purpose of determining how it is affected by a *protection from evil* spell.

Skills Intellect devourers have a +8 racial bonus on Bluff, Move Silently, and Listen checks.

Land of Black Blood

Hidden deep under the elven forests of Kyonin, the legendary Land of Black Blood is one of Orv's most coveted vaults, a place that has seen the ruling hand of countless varied masters over the ages since its creation. Numerous small tribes of strange amphibious humanoids, cloakers, driders, deep-dwelling derro, and even exiled fiends and shaitan genies dwell here, each in control over a small fiefdom of the land, each claiming a small portion of the stuff that gave the Vault its name—the Black Blood of Orv.

The black blood that flows thickly through this Vault is valued throughout the

Darklands for its potency in various necromantic workings. The ghouls of Nemret-Noktoria, urdefhan necromancers, and the lich drow of Shraen are particularly fond of the substance, but the Vault's relative isolation from these southern reaches and the strong presence of numerous powerful and deadly indigenous menaces make it difficult for any of these nations to maintain control over the stuff. Thicker than water yet thinner than tar, pure black blood is cold enough to freeze flesh at a touch. If eaten, a mouthful deals 1 point of Constitution damage and 3d6 points of cold damage, but for the next 10 minutes the creature gains +1 caster level on all necromancy spells. The material has other properties as well, each a secret closely guarded by the necromancers that discover them.

The Land of Black Blood's wide range of inhabitants and masters make it one of the most complex and contentious realms of Orv—it is detailed further in *Pathfinder* #18.

Midnight Mountains, The

Legends hold that the Endless Gulf of Sekamina is bottomless, that those unfortunate enough to fall into the yawning chasm fall forever. Of course, while these legends are based somewhat in reality, a fall into the chasm does present the victim with a singularly vertiginous experience. After plummeting for thousands of feet through the dark, the victim passes through an opening in the ceiling of one of Orv's largest Vaults, an immense realm lit by numerous moon-like orbs floating near the ceiling, illuminating a vast range of ragged mountain peaks far below. These are the Midnight Mountains.

The mountains themselves average 2 miles in height, with the ceiling just over an additional 2 miles away from the tallest mountain's peak. The Vault is large enough to support its own weather systems, including windstorms and dry thunderstorms. Rainfall is rare, but not unheard of. Moisture seeping down from the Dying Sea above sometimes suffuses the air enough to cause sudden downpours, the water running down the mountainsides through rubble-strewn slopes and tangled forests of fungus to gather in a nameless lake below that eventually drains into the Sightless Sea.

This Vault is the second largest in known Orv, behind only the Sightless Sea itself in size. The Midnight Mountains are in large part a wilderness unsettled by civilized races. The Vault's centralized location makes it a natural crossroads of traffic, particularly among southerner Orvian travelers moving north to the Land of Black Blood. Yet the Midnight Mountains are certainly not without their dangers. Countless tribes of gugs dwell in the mountains, where they gibber and caper and offer sacrifices to their unknowable gods. These hairy giants are the most numerous of the races dwelling in the Midnight Mountains, but troglodytes, mongrelmen, morlocks,

dridders, seugathis, pech, and ropers are present as well as numerous wild beasts like black puddings, vemeraks, and purple worms. Yet if anything can be called the lords of the Midnight Mountains, it would be the umbral dragons that dwell in several caves scattered throughout the peaks here. The greatest of all of these is a great wyrm umbral dragon named Ugothogo, a tremendously intelligent and sadistic creature that many gug tribes venerate as a god.

Yet even the umbral dragons themselves are not the most powerful denizens of the Midnight Mountains—for the six glowing “moons” that float in the skies above the mountains are in fact creatures themselves. Each is an immensely bloated advanced 56 Hit Die mu spore capable of flight. These sentient fungoid masses spend the majority of their time in a dream-filled torpor, but now and then they awaken hungry and descend to the mountains below to feed.

Minos-Pashat

Somewhere west of Doga-Delloth lies the Vault of Minos-Pashat, one of the most sacred of realms to the urdefhan race. Their legends speak of how they were born in this vault, a grand experiment at the hands of their daemonic lieges in an attempt to infuse mortal life with the power and glory of Abaddon itself. Out of respect for this history, the urdefhans do not dwell in Minos-Pashat—only their greatest priests and most respected elders make pilgrimages here to offer prayer and seek wisdom or direction from the Vault's true lords.

Minos-Pashat itself is unusual in that, unlike other Vaults, its ceiling never rises more than 40 feet. The Vault itself is crisscrossed by pillars, thick tangles of stalagmites and stalactites, fissures, and rock walls that turn the vault into a maze at places—in others, the wide-open terrain exists without obvious ceiling support, creating unsettling vistas at once agoraphobic and crushingly claustrophobic. Oozes, monstrous vermin, and hulking cave raptors are the most common denizens here, but in many regions the more tangled and more easily fortified sections of Minos-Pashat hide enclaves of half-fiends and their daemon masters.

At the center of Minos-Pashat is a circular region of stone about a thousand feet in diameter, almost like an immense pillar that rises from floor to ceiling. A single massive door of stone, large enough for two elephants to pass side by side, stands to the west. The door is banded by adamantine and marked with a dense tangle of strange runes. The door has not opened in recent memory, yet it is beyond the door that the urdefhans claim their race was born. Pilgrims and seers from Doga-Delloth come to the end of their journey at the door, spending hours or days at prayer before it. Sometimes pilgrims receive visions and strange prophecies. Other times they receive nothing. A few vanish mysteriously—those who come to the door next

sometimes claim to find the previous pilgrim's gear and belongings heaped to the side—almost as if they had been swept aside by the opening of the immense portal.

The Sightless Sea

Easily the largest of Orv's Vaults is the Sightless Sea, an immense cavern that sits deep under the Arcadian Ocean and rivals it for size. Although this vast underground sea forms the western border of the section of Orv detailed in this book, the far shores certainly open upon dozens of other strange and mysterious vaults as well. Sometimes, unusual vessels from these unknown distant shores pay visits to places like Doga-Delloth or Ilvarandin, bringing strange trade and stranger visitors. Certainly, ships captained by denizens of Leng, tieflings, albino telepathic humans clad in jade armor, and unusual urdefhans are far from uncommon encounters on the Sightless Sea, and are the greatest hints as to what sorts of lands might be found on distant shores. Dozens of tiny islands break the surface of the Sightless Sea as well—most of these have been settled by urdefhans, but some are the isolated empires of genie lords, neothelids, dragons, exiled fiends, or huge tribes of strangely advanced skum.

Yet the true dangers of the Sightless Sea dwell not on its dark surface but in its dark depths. The sea's deep drops to an average depth of a mile throughout most of its length, but in places is far deeper. All manner of fish, octopoid mollusks, marine reptiles and other primeval horrors swim through these waters. At one time, the Sightless Sea was ruled by the aboleths, and although they've largely abandoned these vast reaches for the surface oceans, rumors of lingering aboleth cities are too popular and pervasive to be ignored. Certainly, these mind-controlling monstrosities are common enough sights on some of the sea's islands or more distant shores. In other depths, truly hideous menaces dwell and cavort, but none more notorious than the alien shoggoths—shapeless horrors left over, perhaps, from an era that predates even the aboleth rule of the sea.

At the center of the Sightless Sea, under what was once the mighty empire of Azlant, rises the subterranean ocean's most impressive sight—the Braid. A sort of reverse waterspout, this miles-wide column of twisting water rises up from the sea, spiraling up to the cavern roof a mile above to pool in a much smaller mass of water that clings to the ceiling above. In defiance of gravity, this is the legendary Inverted Sea, the current stronghold of aboleth activity in the Darklands. And with good reason,

for a huge vent in the Inverted Sea's bed allows passage from Orv up through a vast network of deep tunnels that open into the lightless depths of the Arcadian Ocean above, providing the aboleths a way to move from one realm to another. Ancient aboleth magic keeps the oceans above and below in equilibrium. The results of this magic's failure would be catastrophic, as the Arcadian Ocean would partially drain into Orv. The flow upward from the Sightless Sea establishes an immense but largely unknown current of water that travels from the Arcadian Ocean into the Inner Sea, down to the Dying Sea and eventually back into the Sightless Sea on back up to the Inverted Sea—a current that grants the aboleths unprecedented access to almost every corner of Golarion itself.

Aboleth





MORLOCK

The creature crawls along the cavern wall like a spider, yet its shape and motions indicate its humanoid nature. Skin pale like a cave slug's belly, eyes huge and bulging, ears bat-like and scowling mouth filled with jagged teeth, the thing clammers down to the ground and rises to its feet as it snatches a large stone club in one hand.

MORLOCK

CR 2

Usually CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +8; Senses darkvision 120 ft., scent; Listen +8, Spot +2

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14
(+4 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 19 (3d8+6)

Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +5

Immune disease, poison

Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee club +5 (1d6+2) and
bite +0 (1d4+1)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks leap attack, sneak attack +1d6, swarming

TACTICS

During Combat The morlock is an ambush hunter, lurking in the shadows at the edges of well-traveled tunnels and waiting for prey to pass it by unawares. A morlock strikes quickly, often leaping from its ambush to make a mid-jump sneak attack against a foe before going back into hiding for a few rounds to repeat its attack again. Against larger or powerful foes, the morlock is more likely to wait for reinforcements to strike than make an attack on its own—a swarm of morlocks on the attack is almost hypnotic in its unearthly grace as the creatures clamber over and under each other with frightening ease to swiftly overwhelm prey.

Morale A lone morlock retreats if brought below 5 hit points, but in a group, morlocks fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6

Base Atk +3; Grp +5

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Climb +18, Hide +8 (+12 in caverns), Listen +8, Move Silently +8

Languages Undercommon

SQ expert climber

Gear club

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground (primarily Sekamina)

Organization solitary, band (2–4), or tribe (5–24)

Treasure standard

Advancement by character class; Favored Class barbarian

Level Adjustment +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Expert Climber (Ex) A morlock can cling to cave walls and even ceilings as long as the surface has hand- and footholds. In effect, a morlock is treated as constantly being under a nonmagical version of the spell *spider climb*, save that it cannot cling to smooth surfaces. This ability doubles the normal +8 racial bonus to Climb checks normally afforded creatures with a climb speed to a +16 racial bonus.

Light Blindness (Ex) When exposed to sudden bright light, a morlock is blinded for 1 round. When operating in an area of continual bright light, the morlock takes a –1 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, all saving throws, and all ability and skill checks.

Leap Attack (Ex) As a standard action, a morlock may make a single attack during a leap. It can make this attack at any point along the course of the leap, either at the start, the end, or while in mid-air. While jumping, a morlock does not provoke attacks of opportunity when it leaves a threatened square.

Sneak Attack (Ex) A morlock can make a sneak attack like a rogue, dealing an extra 1d6 points of damage whenever a foe is denied his or her Dexterity bonus, or when the morlock is flanking.

Swarming (Ex) Morlocks dwell and fight in cramped quarters every day of their lives, and as such are quite adept at swarming foes. Up to two morlocks can share the same space at the same time. If two morlocks in the same square attack the same foe, they are considered to be flanking that foe as if they were in two opposite squares.

Skills A morlock gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. In caverns, its racial bonus on Hide checks increases to +8. It also has a +16 racial bonus on Climb and Jump checks. A morlock can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks even if rushed or threatened.

Morlocks are savage, feral descendants of Azlanti refugees who fled into the Darklands on the eve of Earthfall. Over time, those Azlanti refugees who sought to preserve their species yet lacked the bravery to return to the surface were forced to make several difficult choices; the addition of various hallucinatory or toxic fungi to their diets (forced by their exile in caves barren of familiar foods) and exposure to eldritch and eerie radiation from both lazurite and blightstone worked well to erode the sanity of these survivors to the point where no malformation or hideous deformity manifest in their inbred children registered as such. Over time, this dire devolution saw a rapid regression in their bodies and minds, and by the time their numbers finally rose to a point where their kin were a stable society, nature and the effects of the Darklands had run their course. No longer were they human at all, but stooped and hideous monsters with only dim memories of their ancestry.

Ecology

The typical morlock moves about on two legs at times, but often drops down to a creepy four-limb shuffle when speed or stealth are necessary. They are roughly a foot shorter than humans, but their stooped posture gives the illusion that they're smaller than they actually are. Their wiry, often nearly emaciated frames mask the strength of their limbs and their swift reactions. A typical morlock weighs 150 pounds and can live to a ripe old age of 60—although the majority of their kind die far sooner than that.

Morlocks typically give birth to broods of three to four babies at a time, ravenous creatures born with a full set of teeth and a cannibalistic predisposition. The first few weeks of a brood's life must be carefully mothered to prevent attrition—it usually takes that long for the morlock young to overcome their natural inclination to feed on whatever is closest. Morlocks mature quickly, achieving adulthood after only five years of life.

FROM THE FUTURE

If the word “morlock” sounds familiar, chances are good that you're remembering H. G. Wells's classic novella, “The Time Machine.” In this tale, an unnamed narrator in Victorian London invents a time machine, then travels far into the future, to the year 802,700 AD, where he finds that humanity has evolved into two very different races—the peaceful, surface-dwelling Eloi, and the violent underground-dwelling Morlocks.

While it may seem a little strange to draw inspiration for new monsters from sources set in the distant future, rather than from fiction set in the past, morlocks fit so well into the Darklands that we just couldn't resist. And why not use the name, since it's already such an established word in the genre? After all, the game has used the word before—most recently in the grimlock (an obvious morlock homage) but originally back in the 1st Edition of the game as an alternate name for the aquatic monster called a morkoth.

GMs interested in making morlocks even closer to their literary inspiration can give the morlocks of the Darklands access to strange, ancient technology in the form of clockwork machinery or the like. This machinery could be a legacy of their Azlanti forbearers, or might even be from the mysterious Vault Keepers.

Habitat & Society

Morlocks have settled into the wildlands of Sekamina—although tribes can be found in Nar-Voth or even in some of Orv's vaults (particularly the Midnight Mountains), the vast majority dwell in tangled, remote warrens accessible via tertiary tunnels (yet rarely more than an hour's travel from well-traveled secondary or primary tunnel). Morlock tribes measure between a dozen and two dozen strong. Areas that seem to have larger gatherings are usually nothing more than individual tribes living in close proximity.

Morlocks have no real caste system—as long as an individual can hunt and fight, he or she is as valued as any other. Morlocks that can do neither are typically eaten if they can't escape into the wilds to live lonely lives. The leader of a tribe is generally the strongest or the most fertile member of the tribe, typically a morlock with barbarian levels. Morlocks are deeply suspicious of magic, and react poorly to any manifestation of such. At the same time, those exposed to the teachings or trappings of Lamashtu find them to be quite pleasing to their sensibilities—many morlock tribes have at the center of their community a crudely-carved stone altar dedicated to the Mother of Monsters, even though actual morlock clerics are a rarity.



SERPENTFOLK

Although the figure stands upright like a human being, it is manifestly not human. The creature's motions are smooth and sinuous, its body lithe in all the wrong places. Its hands sport sharp talons, and its flesh, where visible under the voluminous robes it wears, is sheathed in a glittering layer of fine scales. A long reptilian tail coils behind the figure while under the hood atop its shoulders a serpentine head peers out, golden eyes sparkling and long, forked tongue tasting the air.

SERPENTFOLK

Usually NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +2, Spot +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15
(+5 Dex, +3 natural)

CR 4

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

Immune mind-affecting magic, paralysis, poison; **SR** 15

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee dagger +10 (1d4–1/19–20) and bite +5 (1d6–1 plus poison)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

At will—*disguise self* (DC 14), *ventriloquism*

1/day—*blur*, *suggestion* (DC 16), *mirror image*

TACTICS

Before Combat A serpentfolk tries to never enter combat without first casting *blur* and *mirror image*.

During Combat A serpentfolk's first act in combat is to cast *blur* and *mirror image*, if it hasn't had a chance to do so in preparation. It prefers to leave the melee fighting to its minions while it stands back and provides support with ranged magic, typically from spells or wands. If forced into melee, a serpentfolk tries to poison strong-looking foes so as to minimize the enemy's advantage as swiftly as possible.

Morale A serpentfolk fights to the death only when cornered. If reduced to less than 10 hit points, a serpentfolk attempts to flee to safety. It generally does not surrender or beg for mercy from its foes.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 21, **Con** 17, **Int** 18, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +4

Feats Great Fortitude, Weapon Finesse

Skills Concentration +11, Disguise +11 (+21 with *disguise self*), Escape Artist +13, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Spellcraft +14, Spot +10, Use Magic Device +15

Languages Aklo, Azlanti, Draconic, Necril, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear dagger

ECOLOGY

Environment any (primarily Sekamina)

Organization solitary, pair, or cult (3–12)

Treasure standard plus double items

Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** wizard

Level Adjustment +4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 15, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills A serpentfolk instinctually understands the workings of magic items, and has a +4 racial bonus on Use Magic Device checks. Its lithe body affords it a +8 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks.

Serpentfolk are ancient beyond reckoning. Their empire was vast and established in the early days of Azlant, and stories of the wars the snake people waged against the humans of that ancient empire still circulate among today's legends.

Those legends hold that the Azlanti defeated the serpentfolk and wiped out the snake nations upon the surface of the world, driving the survivors deep underground to their true fortresses in Sekamina.

These reports are true, yet the majority of the serpentfolk who exist today are little more than bestial, degenerate descendants of the once mighty reptilian arcanists who confuse the worship of their headless god with vestigial racial memories of their former glory. Yet in some distant reaches of Sekamina, particularly in and near the ancient serpentfolk capital Sverenagati, true and proper members of this race live still and slowly but surely draw their plans for the resurrection of their empire.

Serpentfolk average 6 feet in height but weigh only 120 pounds. Degenerate serpentfolk walk with a hunched gait and are much more bulky, standing 5 feet in height and weighing 200 pounds. All serpentfolk are particularly long-lived—the typical serpentfolk can reach an age of 500.

Ecology

The physical resemblances between snakes and serpentfolk are but the beginning of the traits these people share with reptiles. They possess a keen sense of scent by tasting the air with their forked tongues, possess a poisonous bite that weakens their prey, and their bodies are capable of coiling and contorting in shocking ways when necessary. Like many snakes, serpentfolk give birth to live young in broods of nearly a dozen, yet they are not a particularly fecund race. Serpentfolk young are sheltered and protected until they reach maturity at the age of 50 as a result. Unlike snakes, though, serpentfolk are warm-blooded, although they prefer warm and humid environments.

Habitat & Society

To the serpentfolk, the pursuit of knowledge and magic is considered the highest goal one can chase. Their legends speak of how the first tribes of Azlant stole their mysteries, and of how the human empire rose to power only through the theft of serpent magic (despite the fact that Azlanti magic bears more in common with aboleth tradition than anything else). They view themselves as the undisputed masters of the art, be it arcane or divine.

At the height of their empire in the distant past, the serpentfolk ruled entire nations. Cities built via powerful magic and supported by the same formed the backbone of these nations, and while most of their cities on the surface have long since crumbled, a few impressive examples still exist in Sekamina. Here, lingering magic continues to support the graceful coiling towers and power ancient and deadly traps. Faced with the threat of extinction, many serpentfolk opted to enter a state of hibernation inside of magically-reinforced bunkers in these cities, and only today are they beginning to awaken.

Serpentfolk have several intrinsic magical abilities, but not least among these are their powers of suggestion and ability to cloak their appearances in magical disguises. Using these abilities, the serpentfolk often infiltrate enemy societies to prey upon them, study them, and to sabotage their works.

Religion

The primary god of the serpentfolk is a demigod named Ydersius. While the serpentfolk value guile and magic above all else, Ydersius was a powerful and brutal deity, a god of destruction and mayhem and unrestrained passion and wrath. The serpentfolk venerated Ydersius as all that was primal and potent in their psyches, viewing their god as a hero who took from them the base bestial natures and sheltered them from barbarism. The few serpentfolk who survive today point to the much more common and irreverent degenerates as proof, claiming that their loss of faith is what caused their regressions.

The serpentfolk empire was not all that was defeated by Azlant—in the final days of the war, a forgotten Azlanti hero beheaded Ydersius. Yet such was the power of the god that he remained alive in two pieces. Clerics of Ydersius have access to the domains of Animal, Chaos, Evil, Nobility, and Scalykind. Their favored weapon is the dagger.

Advanced Serpentfolk

Serpentfolk advance by character class; their favored class is wizard. As a serpentfolk gains class levels, several of his abilities increase as well, as detailed below.

- Spell Resistance equals total Hit Dice + 10.
- Poison save DC equals 10 + Con modifier + 1/2 total Hit Dice.
- Once a serpentfolk achieves 4th level in any class, he gains two new spell-like abilities usable once per day each: *major image* and *dominate person*.
- Once a serpentfolk achieves 9th level in any class, he gains two new spell-like abilities usable once per day each: *teleport* and *mass suggestion*.

Degenerate Serpentfolk

Degenerate serpentfolk possess the same statistics as normal serpentfolk, save for the following adjustments. CR score remains the same.

- They have no spell-like abilities, and do not gain any racial spell-like abilities by gaining class levels.
- They gain a +4 racial bonus on the save DC of their poison.
- They lose the +4 racial bonus on Use Magic Device checks, but gain a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.
- Their natural armor bonus increases from +3 to +7.
- They have the following ability score modifiers: Str +10, Dex +2, Con +8, Int –6 (minimum 3), Wis +2, Cha –4. A typical degenerate serpentfolk's ability scores are Str 20, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 6.



SEUGATHI

The monster rears up to a height of seven feet, an equal length of caterpillar-like body coiled below it to support its shining bulk. Dozens of tiny legs clutch and wriggle along the sides of its body, and at the far end its body splits into a pair of long tentacles, one gripping a sword and the other gripping a glowing crystal wand. The creature's head is a nest of glittering emerald eyes, and as its mouth folds back upon itself, three bony jaws extend outward to snap at the air menacingly.

SEUGATHI

Always CE Large aberration

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

Aura madness (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 14

(+4 armor, +5 Dex, +1 natural, -1 size)

CR 6

hp 67 (9d8+27); fast healing 5

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

DR 10/slashing or piercing; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, poison; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +11/+6 (1d8+3/19-20) and bite +5 (1d8+1 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks confusion command, poison

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 16), *levitate*, *mage armor* 3/day—*id insinuation* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 17), 1/day—*mind fog* (DC 19), *phantasmal killer* (DC 20), *shatter mind blank* (DC 19)

TACTICS

Before Combat A seugathi maintains *levitate*, *detect thoughts*, and *mage armor* active at all times. If the seugathi is preparing an ambush, it often places a *mind fog* not long before it expects its prey to enter an area.

During Combat A seugathi almost always casts *mind fog* during a surprise round or the first round of combat, following that up with *phantasmal killer* against the largest or most heavily-armored foe. It usually uses *suggestion* only against those it knows speak Undercommon, but otherwise slithers up into close range to foes while trying to keep as many of them within its aura of madness as it can while it slashes and bites at its enemies.

Morale Seugathi are fearless and fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +13

Feats Ability Focus (*phantasmal killer*), Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Concentration +15, Escape Artist +17, Hide +7, Knowledge (religion) +14, Move Silently +11

Languages Aklo, Orvian, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ item use

Gear masterwork short sword

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground (primarily Sekamina)

Organization solitary or cult (2-9)

Treasure standard

Advancement 10-15 HD (Large); 16-27 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment +8

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Madness (Su) A seugathi's mind is a powerful, but alien presence. Its horrific thoughts radiate from it to a distance of 30 feet, filling that area with madness. Any creature within this area must make a successful DC 18 Will save or become confused for 1 round; a new saving throw is required at the start of each round. A creature that fails 10 consecutive saving throws in a row becomes

permanently insane, as per the *insanity* spell. A seugathi can suppress or activate its aura of madness as a free action. This is a mind-affecting effect that cannot target creatures already suffering from permanent insanity (such as derros or victims of an *insanity* spell). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Confusion Command (Su): Once per round as an immediate action, a seugathi can issue a telepathic command to a single confused creature within 30 feet. This allows the seugathi to pick what result that creature acts upon, rather than rolling randomly to determine what confusion result the creature takes.

Id Insinuation (Sp) Up to three targets within 40 feet (each within at least 15 feet of one another) are confused as long as the seugathi concentrates plus 1 round. A DC 19 Will save negates the confusion. This is a mind-affecting compulsion. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Item Use (Ex) A seugathi can utilize wands, staves, and other devices with spell trigger activation as if it were a spellcaster of the appropriate class. It automatically identifies all properties possessed by items that are activated by spell trigger at a touch.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial damage 1d6 Wisdom and permanent blindness, secondary damage 2d6 Wisdom and permanent deafness. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Shatter Mind Blank (Sp) All creatures in a 30-foot-radius burst of the seugathi must make a DC 19 Will save. Against all who fail, the seugathi can attempt to remove any *mind blank* spells in effect on those targets by making a caster level check against a DC equal to 11 + the caster level of the creator of the *mind blank* effect.

The seugathi is a hideous combination of worm and caterpillar, with thick, rubbery skin and dozens of legs. The creature's twin tentacular tails are highly prehensile and capable of wielding weapons, wands, or other devices with equal (and often greater) skill compared to humanoid creatures with arms and hands. A seugathi is about 14 feet long, with its tentacles being another 6 feet in length. A seugathi weighs 650 pounds.

Ecology

The seugathi has a particularly hideous and disruptive diet—while it can subsist on flesh and fungi, its favorite meals are the ordered and sane thoughts of sentient creatures. The seugathi's aura of madness ability is little more than a side effect of it feeding on the minds of nearby foes—as it consumes order and logic from its victim's thoughts it leaves them bewildered and confused. Once a victim becomes permanently insane, the seugathi can derive no further nourishment from the foe and must seek new minds to feed upon. A seugathi denied sane minds to

feast upon becomes increasingly foul-tempered and quick to attack foes.

Young seugathi are spawned by the hundreds from a single neothelid into a pit-like depression in the stone of the creature's lair. Newly born seugathi are as long as a human's forearm, but they grow swiftly. A seugathi spawnpit contains up to several hundred squirming brood, but as the young grow over the course of a year, the ravenous creatures feed on each other until only one remains. This lone seugathi, fattened upon the flesh and minds of its brothers and sisters, is now fully grown. As part of the strange process of feeding on its kin, the seugathi assimilates an extensive list of missions from its parent—once a single seugathi completes these many missions, it perishes and swiftly rots away. The nature of these missions is often strange, including goals like, “kill six hundred female halflings,” or “carve a two-mile incantation to Yog-Sothoth along a cave wall overlooking the Dying Sea,” or “befriend a drow slaver and encourage him to bring fifty morlock slaves to Denebrum to be added to a large pool of green slime there.” No single seugathi knows the how or why behind these commands, but they trust that their neothelid masters have a reason for sending them on these diverse and usually cruel missions.

Habitat & Society

Seugathi are loners, focused entirely on completing their life missions. The only time they gather is when their missions require them to do so—these missions invariably revolve around strange services and quests involving the mysterious Great Old Ones of the Old Cults, often culminating in the summoning and release into the world of powerful and ancient alien entities from the Dark Tapestry. At other times, a single seugathi's missions require it to join with non-seugathi societies to serve as guardians, servitors, or even advisors—these rare seugathi must learn to control their hunger for sanity if they hope to achieve their misions.

Psionic Seugathi

Although the seugathi presented here use spell-like abilities, they're also designed with psionics in mind. To make the seugathi into a psionic monster, swap its Ability Focus (*phantasmal killer*) feat for Psionic Meditation, give it Wild Talent as a bonus feat, and replace its spell-like abilities with the following:

Psi-Like Abilities (Manifester Level 7th)

At will—*inertial armor*, *psionic levitate*, *read thoughts* (DC 16)
3/day—*id insinuation* (three targets, DC 18*), *psionic suggestion* (three targets, DC 18*)
1/day—*catapsi* (DC 19), *death urge* (DC 18), *shatter mind blank* (DC 19)

*Includes augmentation for the seugathi's manifestor level.



URDEFHAN

This humanoid creature wears strips of leather and dozens of metal buckles and badges, yet where its flesh is visible, the skin and musculature is translucent, leaving the underlying structure of the bones, blood vessels, and bodily organs plainly visible. The thing wields a double-bladed serrated sword, and its lidless eyes bulge with hatred, yet for all this menace its mouth may be the most disturbing, for its jaw opens far wider than any man's should, and its teeth are sharp and serrated like those of a shark.

URDEFHAN

Always NE outsider (native)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15

(+3 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 30 (4d8+12)

CR 3

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities negative energy affinity; **DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** death effects (but see below), disease, fear, level drain; **Resist** acid 10; **SR** 15

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee rhoka sword +9 (1d8+6/18–20) and bite +3 (1d4+2 plus weakness)

Ranged composite longbow +5 (1d8+4/×3)

Special Attacks blood drain

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th, ranged touch +5)

At will—*feather fall*

3/day—*align weapon*, *death knell* (DC 14), *ray of enfeeblement*

TACTICS

During Combat A lone urdefhan always seeks favored terrain to fight, preferring to open with ranged attacks. In melee, an urdefhan seeks to disarm foes or sunder their weapons, using their bite attacks and *ray of enfeeblement* to make such combat moves more likely to succeed against weakened opponents.

Morale Urdefhans are not cowards, but they understand the value of a strategic withdrawal. Capture is considered the greatest shame for the urdefhan people—given no other option, an urdefhan fights to the death to avoid capture, activating its daemonic pact if presented with a situation where capture seems unavoidable.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 12, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (rhoka sword)^B, Track, Weapon Focus (rhoka sword)

Skills Concentration +10, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Listen +8, Ride +8, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +8

Languages Aklo, Orvian, Undercommon

SQ daemonic pact

Gear masterwork studded leather, rhoka sword, composite longbow (+4 Str) with 20 arrows

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Ex) An urdefhan can suck blood from a living victim by making a successful grapple check. If it makes a successful bite attack against the victim, it inflicts standard bite damage (plus weakness) and drains blood as well, causing 2 points of Constitution damage.

Daemonic Pact (Su) An urdefhan's soul is infused with the raw daemonic energy of Abaddon, constantly tugging at their spirit in an attempt to snatch the life granted them by their daemonic pacts. As an immediate action (but no more than once per round), an urdefhan can attempt to allow this energy to consume its soul by making a DC 20 Concentration check. Failure indicates that nothing happens, but success causes the urdefhan to immediately

perish. This releases a pulse of negative energy that affects a 5-foot-radius spread around the dead urdefhan, inflicting 2d6 points of negative energy damage to any creature within the area. A DC 15 Fortitude save negates this damage. This energy heals undead (and other urdefhans) rather than harms them. An urdefhan can even activate this ability as a reaction to a failed saving throw, and often uses this ability to escape capture, particularly in reaction to a failed saving throw against a charm effect. This is a death effect—an urdefhan's normal immunity to death effects does not protect it from this effect. An urdefhan that is immune to death effects from other sources (such as being an undead urdefhan or being under the effects of a death ward spell) cannot will itself to die using its daemonic pact. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Negative Energy Affinity (Su) A urdefhan's body is infused with negative energy. It is harmed by *cure* spells and healed by *inflict* spells as if it were undead, and is immune to death effects, level drain, and other debilitating effects from exposure to negative energy.

Weakness (Su) An urdefhan's bite drains vitality from its opponent, turning the skin and muscle around the wound transparent and causing 2 points of Strength damage unless the victim succeeds on a DC 14 Fortitude save. The strange condition of transparency persists until the Strength damage is healed, but does not have any other game effects. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The urdefhans, sometimes referred to as Orvian vampires, are a hideous race spawned upon the world by the life-drinking daemons of Abaddon. An urdefhan is bald and smooth-skinned, and its teeth are sharp and serrated. An urdefhan generally stands at 7 feet in height and weighs 260 pounds.

Ecology

The primary denizens of Abaddon are the fiends known as the daemons. Bordered philosophically by devils on one side (fiends who seek to corrupt morality and faith) and demons on the other (fiends who seek to corrupt the flesh and ruin the physical world), the daemons exist to destroy nothing more than life itself and to feed on the souls of the freshly dead. It is something of an irony, then, that one of the most powerful daemons would seek to create life, but that is exactly what occurred with the urdefhan race.

The daemons are ruled by the Four Horsemen, heralds of war, death, famine, and pestilence. Yet these four are in turned ruled by a greater evil, a mysterious Fifth Horseman, referred to in certain blasphemous texts as the Oinodaemon. It was from this source that the urdefhans first came, molded from corruption and decay in the shape of humanity and given the semblance of life with daemonic

power. These first urdefhans were released unto the world in the Orvian vault of Minos-Pashat, and they quickly spread throughout the region until they became one of the most powerful empires in Orv.

Yet while they live and die as any mortal creature, the daemons made it difficult to propagate their race without intervention. Many male urdefhan are born sterile and live only for war. Females become fertile around ago 20 and can breed with their own kind or with daemons. The pregnancies resulting from a daemon-mating are never easy. Approximately one-fourth of urdefhan women do not survive childbirth. Urdefhan babies usually take after their mother's race in appearance, but a rare few (5%) are monstrous aberrations that are generally taken away by their daemonic father within hours of birth. What the daemons do with these deformed children is unknown. Fortunately, the young are hardy and have most of their race's innate resistances and immunities; most live to adulthood with little care from their parents and join their elders in the war effort.

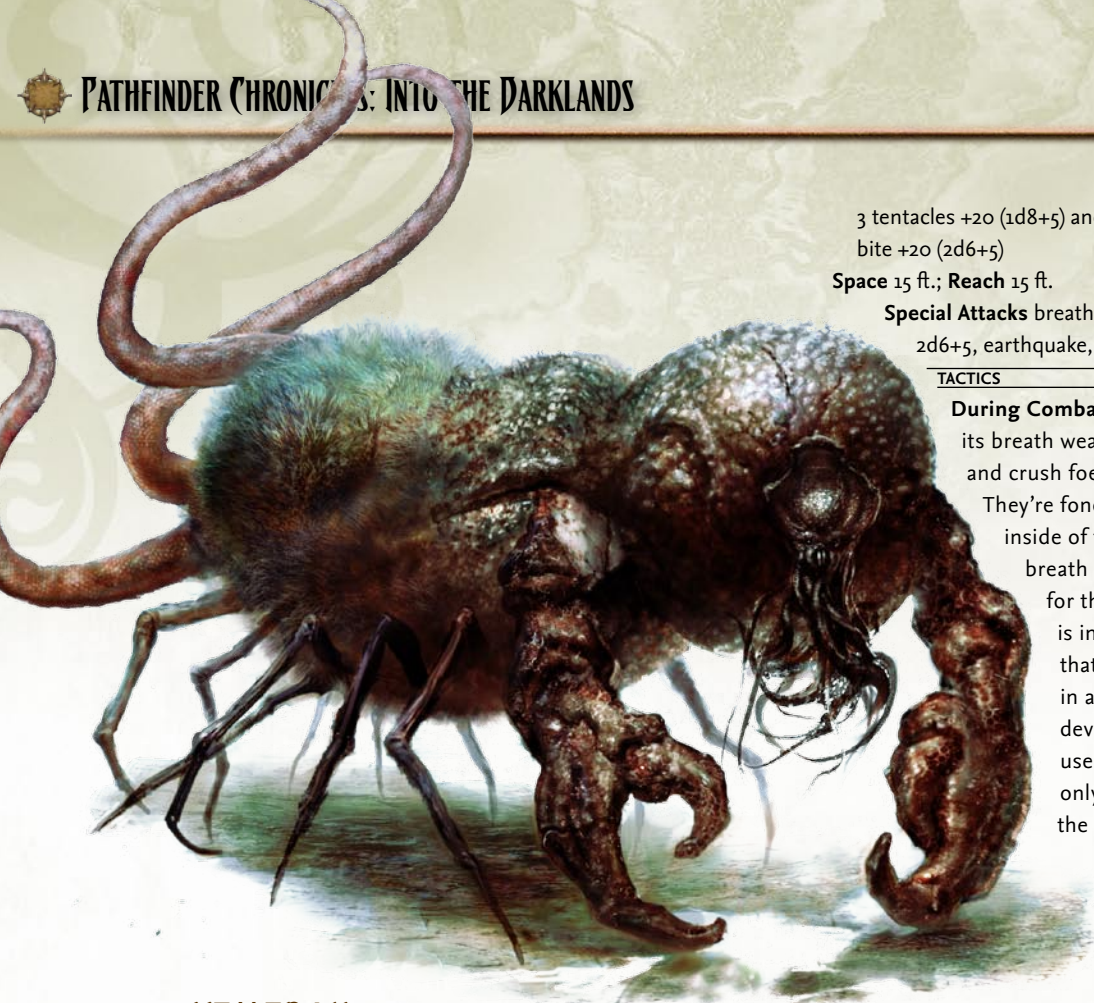
Habitat & Society

The urdefhans are true children of the daemonic powers, for they devote their lives to the pursuit of death. An urdefhan hopes to visit as much death upon the world as it can before perishing, and for most urdefhans this equates to a bloodthirsty addiction to war. Their giddy cruelty is tempered only by a sense of self-preservation that exists only to ensure they survive long enough to spread the blessings of their daemonic patrons. When not at war, urdefhans pass their time forging weapons, developing deadly new diseases and cruel magic, plotting disasters and other sabotages to visit upon their enemies, and offering up prayers to the Four Horsemen. They are a cruel, ambitious race hated by all who know them, and they would have it no other way.

Rhoka Swords

Urdefhans have experimented long with new weapon designs, yet few have met with as much success or delight among their kind as the rhoka sword. These wicked-looking swords are about the size of a longsword, but consist of two serrated blades placed side-by-side. The tips of each blade end in a cruel hook. When wielding a rhoka sword, you gain a +4 bonus on opposed attack rolls to sunder or to defend your weapon from being sundered. You can also use a rhoka sword to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the rhoka sword to avoid being tripped.

Rhoka Sword (*Exotic One-Handed Melee Weapon*): **Cost** 50 gp; **Damage (S)** 1d6; **Damage M** 1d8; **Critical** 18–20/x2; **Range Increment** —; **Weight** 6 lb.; **Damage Type** Slashing.



VEMERAK

The ground bulges and heaves as an immense beast shoulders itself free from a hidden burrow. At first, it appears as a chittering tangle of spidery legs and writhing tentacles, but as the stones fall away and the dust settles, the creature rises to its full height of twenty feet. Its body is vaguely ant-like, but possessed of too many legs for an ant. At one end writhe a set of three huge tentacles, glistening with clear slime, while at the other twitches an insectoid head set with tiny glittering eyes and a forest of writhing tendrils and twitching mouthparts. Two enormous arms protrude from either side, each ending in an immense scorpion-like pincer. Part of the beast's body is caked in thick layers of wriggling mold, and as the thing moves, the mold erupts into a cloud of noxious spores.

VEMERAK

CR 14

Always CE Huge aberration

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense; Listen +10, Spot +10

Aura spore cloud (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 11, flat-footed 28

(+3 Dex, +20 natural, -2 size)

hp 207 (18d8+126)

Fort +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

DR 5/—; **Immune** acid, electricity, mind-affecting effects, poison, disease; **Resist** sonic 20; **SR** 28

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +22 (2d6+11/19–20) and

3 tentacles +20 (1d8+5) and bite +20 (2d6+5)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon, constrict 1d8+5 or 2d6+5, earthquake, improved grab

TACTICS

During Combat A vemerak opens combat with its breath weapon, then moves in to grab and crush foes with its claws and tentacles.

They're fond of holding grappled foes inside of the toxic clouds created by their breath weapons to minimize chances

for their victims to escape. A vemerak is intelligent enough to know that using its earthquake ability in a tunnel or cavern can cause a devastating collapse, and as a result uses this ability in such regions only when desperate—note that the vaults of Orv are generally large enough that they are treated as open ground rather than caverns or tunnels.

Morale The vemerak has a compelling combination of low intellect and great power—it rarely

encounters foes that can match its ferocity and power, and thus never retreats from a fight.

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 17, **Con** 25, **Int** 5, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +32

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull

Rush, Improved Critical (claw), Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Climb +26, Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages Orvian

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground (Orv)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 19–24 HD (Huge); 25–44 HD (Gargantuan); 45–54 HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a vemerak can expel a 90-foot-long line of toxic acid, a ghostly blue corrosive fluid that burns away both flesh and mind in those it strikes. Anyone struck by this horrific fluid takes 12d6 points of acid damage, with a successful DC 26 Reflex save halving the acid damage. As the acid eats away flesh (it has no effect on inorganic or undead material), it creates a billowing cloud of foul-smelling vapor that fills the creature's space. The cloud of vapor persists for 1 full round. Any creature in the vapor (including the original

creature struck by the breath weapon) must make a DC 26 Fortitude save or become nauseated for 1d4 rounds. Creatures immune to poison are immune to this effect. The save DCs are both Constitution-based.

Constrict (Ex) A vemerak deals automatic claw or tentacle damage on a successful grapple check, depending on what attack it used to establish a hold.

Earthquake (Su) As a full round action, a vemerak can burrow its tentacles, legs, and mouth into the ground beneath it—this action does not provoke an attack of opportunity. At the start of the next round, it creates an effect identical to an *earthquake* spell (CL 18th). A vemerak can maintain this zone of trembling earth indefinitely, as long as it continues to take full-round actions to maintain the trembling.

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

Spore Cloud (Su) A unique form of mold grows upon the body of a vemerak—attempts to grow this mold elsewhere have, to date, resulted in failure. This mold has powerful anti-magic qualities, and is the source of the vemerak's spell resistance. Further, whenever the vemerak moves the mold exudes a cloud of spores in a 30-foot radius. These spores affect all ongoing spell effects with a *greater dispel magic* (CL 18th). They do not hamper spellcasting, but any spell effect with a duration other than instantaneous might be dispelled the instant after the spellcasting is complete. Make only one dispel check for each spell effect; a failed check means the effect is immune to further exposure to the cloud.

Skills A vemerak gains a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks, and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks even if rushed or threatened.

Although the Darklands are often cramped and cluttered, there exist a fair amount of enormous predators in the wilder regions. Creatures like purple worms, immense black puddings, and enormous spiders and scorpions are common tales told among those who have spent time in the Darklands, but few have encountered the elusive vemerak. Fewer still have survived such encounters.

A vemerak is an immense beast that combines the worst features of a mollusk and an larval insect. The typical vemerak stands 10 feet tall and is 20 feet long, with three tentacles extending that length by an additional 15 feet. The immense creatures weigh just over 6 tons.

Ecology

The vemerak is an immense predator that plagues the wilder portions of Sekamina and some regions of Orv. Yet unlike the nearly mindless purple worms or actually mindless oozes and vermin that are its competition,

the vemerak possesses a rudimentary intelligence—not enough to form anything approximating civilizations, but certainly enough to augment its instincts with plotting and emotion.

Yet the first vemeraks did not dwell in the Darklands—they were creatures closely associated with the monstrous Spawn of Rovagug. In ancient times, the Spawn of Rovagug (of which the Tarrasque is the most notorious and infamous) plagued the surface world, destroying cities, devouring nations, and functioning all in all as living, sentient natural disasters. The continent of Casmaron was particularly plagued by these beasts, but neither Garund nor Avistan escaped the predation of the Spawn. And where the Spawn went, the vemeraks followed.

Much as the remora attaches itself to the belly of a shark, the vemeraks existed in a symbiotic relationship with the Spawn of Rovagug. They did not physically attach themselves to the immense beasts, but they did follow in their destructive wakes, feeding upon the survivors and finishing the ruinous job of wrecking buildings and shattering dreams. Unlike the Spawn of Rovagug, which were beyond emotion and intellect, the vemeraks were intelligent enough to enjoy the misery and pain caused by the devastation. Where the Spawn of Rovagug were manifestations of his desire for destruction, the vemeraks were manifestations of his need to revel in the pain and loss such destruction bred.

Yet the Spawn of Rovagug have long been dead or sleeping, and Rovagug himself has languished in the deepest reaches of the world below Orv. The vemeraks had little to keep them on the surface, so instinct drew them deep into Orv's cradle, where they could be close to their master's dreaming mind.

Habitat & Society

Unfortunately for those fated to dwell near vemerak lairs, the immense creatures focus all of their limited intellects on matters cruel and sadistic. A vemerak's mind is linked in some small way to the urges and needs of Rovagug, in a more crude and primitive manner akin to the link that exists between a cleric and a deity. The link is far too primeval to allow the flow of divine magic, but it does let the monster feel the needs, urges, and desires of the Rough Beast. It is these urges that spur the vemerak on in its constant search for new victims or regions to devastate, but the further a vemerak travels from Orv, the fainter these urges grow, so the majority of these creatures do not range far from the deeper regions of the Darklands—the only fear they know is the strange sense of emptiness they feel in their souls if they travel too high toward the surface. Some Darklands races have tried to tame vemeraks for use as living war engines, but the creatures inevitably get bored and turn on their handlers.



MONSTROUS INDEX

Although a fair amount of the monsters detailed in *Into the Darklands* are familiar faces taken from the pages of the MM, many are not. In some cases, such as the wormlike seugathis or the titanic vemeraks, they are new monsters detailed in the pages of this book. In others, they are variants of monsters from the SRD, reworked slightly to function better in Golarion (such as the case with psionic monsters like the intellect devourer and the neothelid). In one case, we've taken an epic level monster (the mu spore) from the SRD (statistics for this creature, updated to the 3.5 version

of the rules, can be found online at any number of websites that host the SRD).

But there's an awful lot of other monsters mentioned in this book that hail from other d20 sources that readers of this book may or may not be familiar with—the *Advanced Bestiary* and the *Tome of Horrors Revised*. This index catalogues all of the non-standard monsters mentioned in this book, along with the source from which they come. For any creatures mentioned that you don't have access to, feel free to replace them more familiar monsters.

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AT THE WORLD'S CORE

Another world is hidden below—a world that slumbers under the foundations of mortal cities, dreams below the deepest roots of the oldest forests, and plots in hidden places as far below as the mountains are high. These endless caves have many names. Cold Hell. Evernight. The Hunting Grounds. Yet to those who dwell within they are known as the Darklands.

Into the Darklands explores this mysterious and deadly realm of caverns and secrets, from the numerous hazards that plague the deeps to the strange and sinister races that dwell therein. Within these pages you will find maps of the major entrances to the Darklands throughout Golarion's Inner Sea region, as well as dozens of locations hidden within three distinct realms of the deep. Tables to determine random dangers and wandering menaces, new languages and exotic hazards, and all manner of monsters, including the degenerate morlocks, the wormlike seugathis, the destructive vemeraks, the blood-drinking urdefhans, and the sinister serpentfolk await discovery within!

Just remember—in the Darklands, the night lasts forever, and the denizens of the depths never sleep.



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