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FEY REVISITED

Forces of the First World



Dryad

Forest-dwelling fey who keep near their bonded trees and seek to protect their beloved groves.

Source: Greek folklore



Nymph

Graceful fey creatures whose supernatural beauty is enough to drive one mad.

Source: Greek folklore



Gremlin

Pesky fey saboteurs who delight in pranking others and wrecking everything in sight.

Source: English folklore



Redcap

Sadistic fey brutes who harbor slaughter and blasphemy at the core of their terrible hearts.

Source: English folklore



Leprechaun

Mischievous fey creatures who adore playing tricks on travelers as much as they love their gold.

Source: Irish folklore



Rusalka

Cruel fey creatures that haunt waterways looking for victims they can ensorcel and murder.

Source: Slavic folklore



Norn

Ancient watchers who guide the threads of fate, only intervening when those threads are twisted.

Source: Norse folklore



Satyr

Hedonistic fey as interested in music, wine, and carnal delights as they are in their forests.

Source: Greek folklore



Nuckelavee

A horror of corruption and pestilence that ironically preys on those who taint its waters.

Source: Orcadian folklore



Sprite

Tiny tree-dwelling defenders of nature and masters of mischievous thievery.

Source: European folklore

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Reference

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at paizo.com/prd.

| | | | |
|-------------------|----|----------------------------------|------|
| <i>Bestiary</i> | B1 | <i>The Inner Sea World Guide</i> | ISWG |
| <i>Bestiary 2</i> | B2 | <i>Ultimate Combat</i> | UC |
| <i>Bestiary 3</i> | B3 | | |

On the Cover



Menacing fey come in all shapes and sizes, as Steve Prescott shows us in this scene of Daniel's desperate flight from the forest's defenders.



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I DO BELIEVE IN FAIRIES!

For as long as humans have told stories to explain the world around them, to frighten, and to inspire, fairies and fey have been among the most common themes (along with the spirits of the dead). In nearly every part of the world, ancient tales tell of nature spirits: sometimes benevolent, sometimes benign, and other times wholly evil, but almost always mysterious, mischievous, and otherworldly. Fantasy gaming thus has a long history of including fey themes as well, and so fey were destined to play a large role in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and Pathfinder campaign setting.

Fey on Golarion pay homage to the legends of the real world and gaming history, while also taking on a flavor unique to the setting itself. So while you'll find some of the old favorites from myth—dryads, leprechauns, nuckelavees, nymphs, pixies, and satyrs—and new versions of classic fey from past decades of roleplaying games—such as forlarrens, quicklings, and twigjacks—each has been reimagined to better fit into the setting and feel new and exciting when used in your games.

Traditionally, fey are often said to belong to one of the two faerie courts, the benevolent Seelie Court and the evil Unseelie Court. These organizations (originally from Scottish folklore) have been replaced on Golarion with the court of powerful fey lords, known as the Eldest, who rule the alien plane known as the First World and all fey—whether good, neutral, or evil—who dwell therein.

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Fey Revisited presents 10 fey species originating from real-world legends and reimagined for the Pathfinder campaign setting, detailing which aspects of nature the creatures represent; how they interact with one another, other fey, and civilization; their uses in campaigns of all levels; and what they offer as tokens of their admiration or affection. While this is not an exhaustive overview of all fey in the setting, these 10 are the most common and most easily recognized, and have the most real-world folklore on which to build their flavor and role in our world and your campaigns.

Dryad: These feminine tree spirits exist throughout the world, and serve as protectors of some of the most beautiful and remote groves of trees on Golarion. Amanda Hamon investigates their ecology and culture, and presents a sample dryad who lives in the demon-haunted portion of Shudderwood, near the Worldwound.

Gremlin: This set of troublesome fey represents the inherent chaos and destructive power of nature; these annoying pests plague civilized races across Golarion. Tim Hitchcock presents details on all six existing versions

of gremlins, as well as a brand-new variation: the urban-dwelling grimple.

Leprechaun: Traditionally associated with four-leaf clovers and pots of gold, the wily trickster fey known as leprechauns are revealed in this exploration of their culture by Tim Hitchcock, which includes a shadow-conjuring leprechaun sorcerer from the land of Brevoy.

Norn: Guardians of fate and prophecy, norns are among the most mysterious of the fey, and the highest-level fey creatures presented to date in the Pathfinder RPG aside from members of the Tane. Amanda Hamon weaves the norns' tale here, presenting a look behind their mysterious veneer as well as a lower-CR version of a norn separated from her sisters and reborn on the First World.

Nuckelavee: The most alien and frightening of the fey presented in this book, the aquatic equine creatures known as nuckelavees are likely to leave your skin crawling (especially since they have none themselves). This section also presents a unique variant nuckelavee that terrorizes the River Kingdoms, written by Ray Vallese.

Nymph: The pinnacle of beauty, nymphs are often the objects of desire and use this power to manipulate those who would defile the unspoiled lands they protect. Gazing upon a nymph can leave a person blind, but can also provide endless inspiration, whether she protects a secluded waterfall or a somberly beautiful elephant graveyard, as is the case with the sample nymph presented by Levi Miles.

Redcap: Amanda Hamon presents the redcaps, one of the most evil of fey species, who revel in murder, death, and violence, and who are known for the blood-soaked caps that give them their power. An especially large redcap native to Rivenrake Island in Varisia rounds out the chapter.

Rusalka: Living nearer to civilization than most other fey are the aquatic rusalkas, though their proximity to settlements doesn't mean they're more widely recognized. In contrast, their propensity to masquerade as spirits of the dead means they are often mistaken for ghosts—a deception most rusalkas are happy to maintain. Savannah Broadway explores their ecology and society, and provides a sample rusalka living on the edge of the Eye of Abendego.

Satyr: The typical satyr has a distinctive form: a humanoid male upper body and the legs of a goat from the waist down. Purveyors in debauchery and indulgence of all sorts, satyrs are known for inciting scandals when they encounter non-fey. Jerome Virnich provides information on their hedonistic ways, their offspring, and the blackwood satyrs of Taldor's Verduran Forest.



Sprite: Among the smallest of fey, lone sprites present little threat, but sprites can be a true force of nature when found in large numbers—such as the swarm detailed in this chapter. Equal parts protectors and pranksters, the sprites presented here by Amanda Hamon are a great way to liven up any campaign.

The First World

Fey in the Pathfinder campaign setting hail from the plane known as the First World, a rough draft of the Material Plane created—and subsequently abandoned—by the gods before they forged the current universe. The environment in this lush natural world is ever-changing and often quite dangerous, for it is the very epitome of untamed wilderness, and the creatures native to the First World are often enigmatic combinations of beauty and danger, madness and simple logic.

Fey have no souls, but are also immortal when in the First World; this means that they often lack any understanding of mortality and time, and that fey encountered in their home plane are particularly dangerous. On the Material Plane, however, they are creatures that may be killed like any other, though being on the Material Plane rarely colors their outlook on life or makes them any less alien.

The First World has no rulers, but the most powerful fey are the mighty beings known as the Eldest. These unique fey each pursue their own mysterious goals, and have little interest in the doings of lesser creatures, either on the First World or the Material Plane, but their agents may not have the same disregard for other life forms. All the Eldest command great respect or fear from the other inhabitants of that strange realm, and many fey find themselves working toward the mysterious goals of the Eldest whether they intend to or not, often never realizing they have done so.

Further Inspirations

Because fey are so ubiquitous across human cultures and throughout history, there are countless sources from which you can draw inspiration for using fey in your campaigns. The following books, stories, shows, and films are just a few suggestions. Stop by the Pathfinder

messageboards at paizo.com to discuss your favorite fey-themed stories.

Blackwood, Algernon: “The Willows,” etc.

Carroll, Lewis: *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking-Glass*

Clarke, Susannah: *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*

De Lint, Charles: The Newford series, etc.

Del Toro, Guillermo: *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*, *Pan’s Labyrinth*

DiTerlizzi, Tony: The Spiderwick Chronicles series

Dunsany, Lord: *The King of Elfland’s Daughter*, etc.

Froud, Brian: The Fairielands series, etc.

Gaiman, Neil: The Sandman series, *Stardust*, etc.

Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm: *Children’s and Household Tales*

Henson, Jim: *The Dark Crystal*, *Labyrinth*

Lovretta, Michelle: *Lost Girl*

Machen, Arthur: “The White People,” etc.

Mignola, Mike: The Hellboy series

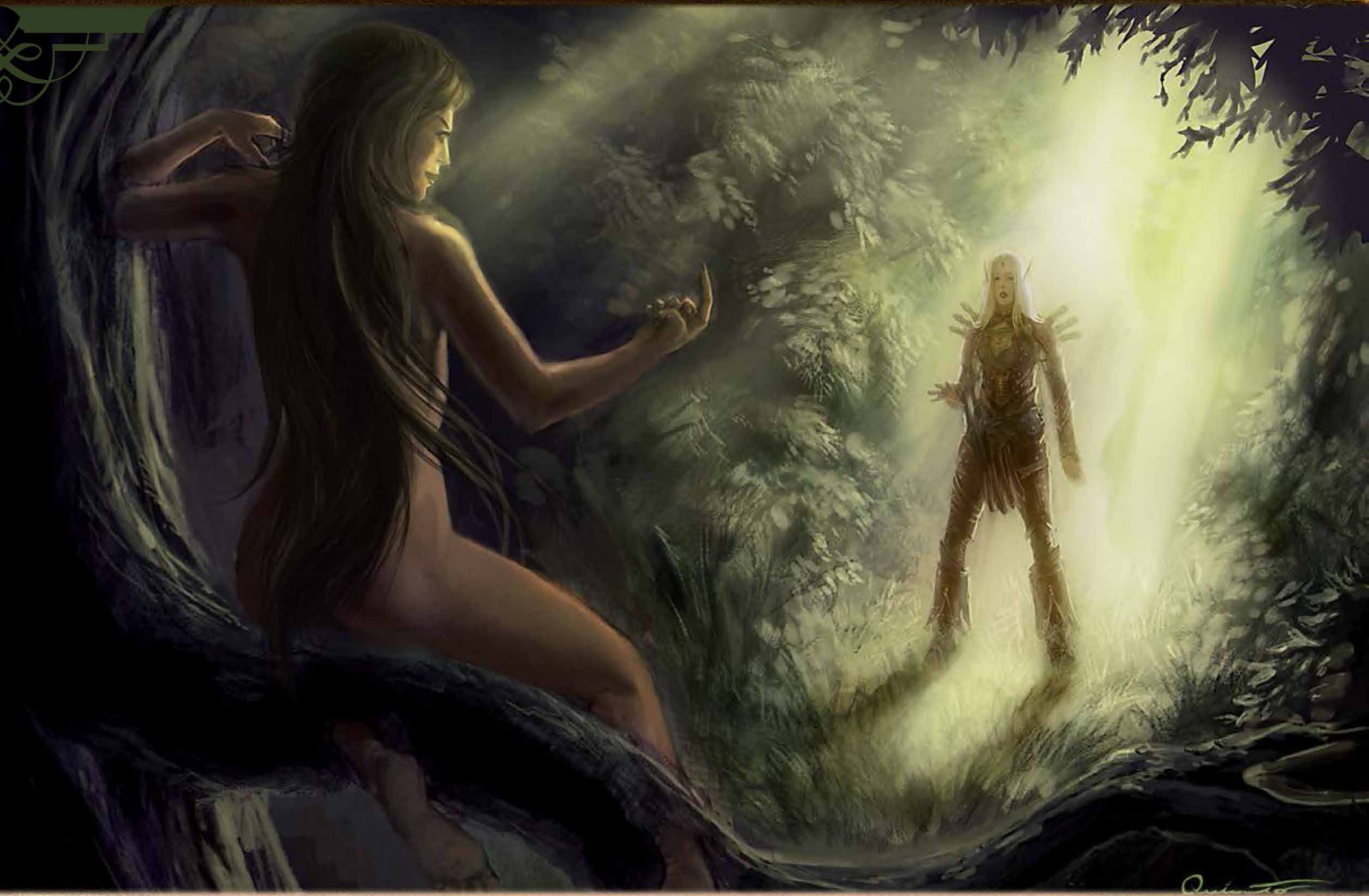
Miyazaki, Hayao: *Princess Mononoke*, *Spirited Away*, etc.

Nixey, Troy: *Don’t Be Afraid of the Dark*

Shakespeare, William: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

Stevenson, Robert: *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*, *The Gnome-Mobile*





DRYAD

When we first heard the foreigners' axes chopping our beloved trees, Chief Kwandele strapped his spear to his back and set out from the village to investigate. The deeper he traveled into the misty forest, the larger the trees became—until the chief came upon the tallest, most gnarled specimen he'd seen in his life. In its branches, wincing at the nearby logging sounds, sat a beautiful woman with skin the color of bark and hair like flowing leaves. She gave our chief a look filled with fear and pain. "Drive these savages from my forest, warrior," the woman beseeched, "and you may name your reward."

—Traditional Mwangi tale



As beautiful and mysterious as the forests themselves, dryads are some of the most reclusive fey. Found in the thickest and most magic-tinged forests, dryads bond with individual trees, which they must not abandon lest they sicken and perish. Far from resentful of this limitation, these fey embrace their arboreal connections and use them to their advantage. Dryads craft breathtaking works of art and function from wood, transform their bodies into the aspects of trees, and even meld their flesh with wood at will. They manifest the majesty of nature in their effervescent personalities, which allow them to befriend (or manipulate) like-minded creatures with ease.

Dryads all appear to be female; they stand about 6 feet tall and have daintily pointed ears, angular faces, and brilliant white teeth. They possess richly colored skin that shines like polished wood, unmarred by hair or pores. Their heads sprout thick, colorful manes, often decorated with leaves, blossoms, buds, and twigs. A dryad's natural hair color sometimes reflects the hue of her tree's leaves; the hair of elder dryads whose arboreal connections are particularly strong may even change with the seasons. Dryads dislike bulky clothing, but when they do attire themselves, they wear garments fashioned from the bounty of their bonded trees. Hats made of berries, gowns fashioned from leaves, and boots carved from branches are typical dryad vestments.

Because of their dependence on healthy forests, dryads fear and misunderstand society, typically taking pains to avoid contact with sentient beings. This reclusiveness has led some to question dryads' very existence, though scholars and forest dwellers know better. Some woodland tribes view dryads as minor nature deities whose presence foretells prosperity. Other societies take a more sinister view, equating dryads with mysteries that must be destroyed. Their widely varying reputations make dryads even more reluctant to reveal themselves. Though sometimes the creatures become so desperate for help—whether it's to defeat loggers threatening their forests or other threads to the forest—that they'll approach and enlist the services of even the surliest adventurers.

Aspect of Nature

Dryads are the embodiment of trees and great plants, the anchors that sustain all life. They and their trees exist in symbiosis; the moment a dryad is conceived, her tree begins to grow. If that tree dies, although its dryad may painstakingly form a bond with a new tree, she will grieve inconsolably. Dryads typically live in large, ancient forests because they feel at home nowhere else.

Because they are so connected with forests, dryads consider it a sacred duty to protect trees—and even entire forests—with their lives. Lack of combat training

is no impediment; dryads are adept at charming good passersby, either by appealing to their love of nature or by adding seductive nuances to requests. Dryads sometimes even convince groups of their allies to live nearby to protect them from intruders. These allies are typically tasked with escorting misguided foes to the edge of the forest, where they're told never to return. When faced with hostile enemies, though, dryads do not hesitate to have allies kill the offenders.

Ecology

Since they are irrevocably tied to their bonded trees, dryads live alone and typically have little interest in creating or participating in communities. However, that does not mean they eschew company altogether. When their trees are near other dryads' trees, the creatures are often quite social; they are capable of developing deep, trusting relationships with each other and even with other fey, though they are less interested in the latter. One exception is satyrs, who often playfully pursue dryads in courtship games. While dryads enjoy this, their hearts belong to their bonded trees. They don't readily divide that affection; not even their most ardent admirers can truly win a dryad's love.

Dryads are their trees' caretakers. In autumn, dryads massage the leaves in efforts to ensure the colors turn properly. In winter, they sing to their trees, believing that their songs keep the plants alive, and in the spring they kiss the trees' nascent buds, coaxing them to produce verdant leaves and bright blossoms. Dryads believe that in return, their trees provide them with their own strange, arboreal powers. A dryad's affinity for its tree is so great that she often refers to the tree as "mother" and speak to it as if it were sentient. In extreme cases, a dryad will speak of the tree as an extension of herself, even using the first person when referring to it.

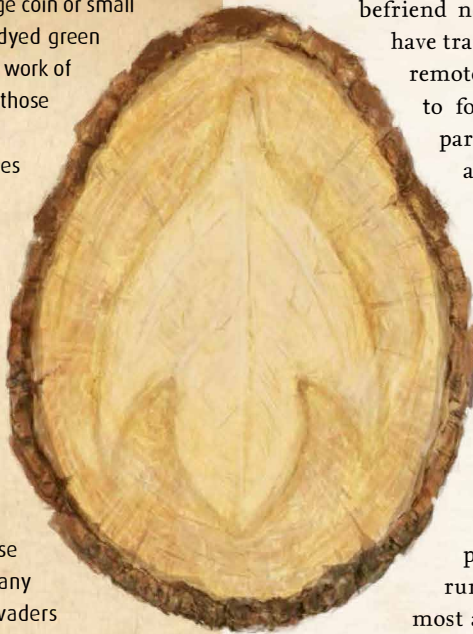
These trees provide for all of a dryad's immediate needs, including food, drink, and shelter. Dryad diets consist of leaf salads and mixed greens dressed with their trees' fruits or berries. Sometimes, dryads eat insects that pose hazards to their trees. To slake their thirst, they drink dew or moisture from the same groundwater or streams that feed their trees' roots. Some sleep in tree-trunk hollows or high in their trees' branches, while others have been known to pass the evenings melded with their trees' wood. Dryads share the respiratory quality of plants, thriving in low-oxygen environments as long as sufficient carbon dioxide remains for them to breathe.

As there are no male dryads, like trees they reproduce asexually. Every 5 to 10 years, in the spring, a dryad produces a fully fertilized seed in her womb. As the dryad seed grows within its mother, a corresponding sapling grows somewhere in the surrounding forest. During the

TOKEN OF THE DRYAD

On the rare occasions that dryads become indebted to non-fey, they may spend an hour crafting a token to give as payment or as a gift. This token is an exact replica of a leaf plucked from the dryad's tree, imprinted in a piece of the tree's most finely grained wood. The token is generally the size and shape of a large coin or small medallion. Polished to a shine and dyed green with natural materials, the token is a work of art that imparts curious benefits to those who possess it.

Upon gifting its token, a dryad gives the recipient two options: The token can either impart the strength of the dryad's tree, adding a +1 luck bonus on all Fortitude saving throws, or it can manifest in its replicated veins a map of the dryad's forest. Once the benefit is chosen, it cannot be reversed. A dryad tokens' benefits last for 24 hours or until the recipient leaves the surrounding forest, whichever comes first. Dryads must give these tokens willingly, and they disavow any knowledge of crafting them if invaders attempt to force them to create these boons on command.



dryad's 6-month pregnancy, the tree grows at an accelerated rate, until it is nearly full size upon the infant dryad's birth. Mother dryads give birth to children in their own trees, and newborn dryads grow to maturity within a year. During that first year, a dryad child shares her mother's bond with her tree, but as the youth reaches adolescence, this bond weakens. To transition into full adulthood, the dryad child departs her mother's tree in search for the tree that grew as she did. This pilgrimage is the only time a dryad may part from its tree without significantly weakening.

Dryads can live up to 200 years, but their lives can be cut short by the trauma of losing a bonded tree, the stress of loggers' activities, or other threats to their delicate ecosystems. Some claim that even in death a dryad maintains some connection to her tree. It's unknown whether such examples arose because of the catastrophic tragedy or the dryad's unyielding devotion to her bonded tree, but there are stories of dryad-made woodcarvings containing fragments of their creators' spirits, and of malevolent dryad ghosts haunting ships or buildings crafted from their trees' timbers.

Society

While the uninformed consider dryads simply shy, in reality the creatures possess a rather morbid view of civilization, and consider it a threat to the natural world. Dryads particularly avoid revealing themselves to those who appear cultured or cosmopolitan, and are most suspicious of urban natives. If it becomes necessary to befriend non-fey, dryads seek adventurers who have trained as druids or those who hail from remote lands. They're often reluctant to form friendships even with other fey, particularly if doing so would require any amount of effort or travel.

In contrast to their indifference toward other fey, dryads living near each other often become as close as tight-knit siblings; such pairs or small groups collaborate to play clever pranks on satyrs, or combine their persuasive powers against nearby humans and elves. Dryads are aware that they are physically attractive; they take pleasure in turning their charms toward gaining power over weak-willed non-fey. It's rumored that deep within Avistan's most ancient forests, groves of dryads keep dozens of charmed admirers nearby—both to protect their trees and to indulge at their whim. While dryads may augment their persuasive abilities with hints of seduction, scholars agree that rumors of half-dryad children roaming the wildest forests are untrue—most likely biologically impossible.

Dryads are also at home socializing with animals native to their home forests, such as deer, squirrels, and rabbits. These fey are particularly attuned to animal emotions, as well as to the limited consciousness of plants and plant creatures, with which they can communicate. In contrast, dryads loathe creatures they consider affronts to nature—aberrations, constructs, undead, and magical beasts that are not the direct result of environmental mutations. Dryads refuse to ally with creatures they despise; if a dryad chooses to allow a creature to see her, it's typically a sign that the dryad has judged the stranger worthy.

Dryads are incredible artisans. They can produce breathtakingly beautiful wooden sculptures, totems, dishware, weapons, and even armor with little more than their bare hands. To a dryad, creating a worthy masterwork is a life goal that is nearly as important as keeping her tree and its forest safe. To augment their artistic pursuits, dryads may even shed their discomfort with society to barter with passing merchants or adventurers—typically trading their lesser handiwork for jewels, paint, or magical



boons to use for their masterwork artisan projects. Some dryads spend a decade or more on these works, which are kept hidden deep in the hollows of their trees. Rarely, a dryad may gift her masterwork to a fellow dryad or even to an adventurer who has saved her life or her tree.

Campaign Role

Because dryads are physical manifestations of the forests they so dearly love, encounters with them can add a mysterious and flavorful touch to any foray into the woods. Dryads in desperate need of aid, goods, or even revenge can make a mundane forest come to life, while hinting at the hidden presence of dryads may intrigue PCs who possess affinities for nature. GMs could have PCs to catch a glimpse of a dryad melding with her tree, morphing into the aspect of a tree, or peacefully toiling away at a masterwork—only to disappear when she notices the party's presence.

Dryads' vulnerabilities present opportunities for GMs to pose situational ethical questions to their players. For example, when a being's entire world revolves around a single tree, should the PCs cut down that tree to satisfy a remote townspeople's request? Or, in another scenario, should the PCs support the interests of a wealthy merchant if doing so means the destruction of the creatures, including dryads, that inhabit a forest? In those scenarios, GMs may wish to present a dryad as a proverbial canary in a coal mine: the creature is often the first to detect trouble in a forest and the first to perish should that trouble erupt into violence.

In a low-level adventure, the appearance of a dryad may serve as an end scenario for PCs tasked with determining what's sabotaging logging or similar forest-based activities. Higher-level adventures might involve a group of dryads—perhaps they have charmed a village, need help against a powerful enemy, or seek to aid the PCs in a mutually beneficial cause. No matter how they're used, it should always be clear that dryads' first priorities are protecting their trees, their forests, and themselves—in that order. Any attempts to circumvent those tasks will be met with every form of opposition at their disposals.

Since they are so invested in their trees, dryads lovingly augment their homes with elaborate carvings, natural decorations, and personalized artwork. The tenor of these improvements depends on personal sensibilities. A dryad who loves music might train the growth of her bonded tree to create living masterwork instruments. A dryad who favors painting might decorate her tree with elaborate murals, while a dryad with an affinity for jewel-crafting might adorn it with the finest filigreed, gem-encrusted arabesques she can produce. When other forest denizens make their homes in a dryad's tree, the dryad typically welcomes the new inhabitants—as long as the creatures are natural

beings—and sometimes treat the creatures as beloved children. The most clever and resourceful dryads protect their trees by placing discreet traps among the branches and exposed roots. The creatures also sometimes seek out scrolls of spells such as *hide campsite* (*Advanced Player's Guide*) or *obscuring mist* to safeguard against imminent danger.

Treasure

Dryads' homes usually contain valuables stashed in obscure places such as inside tree hollows, buried in underground keepsake boxes, or behind slabs of bark. Most commonly, their homes house art and weapons they've made, particularly masterwork longbows with accompanying arrows. Dryads residing in forests that are near towns or outposts also may possess civilized valuables, such as scrolls and potions, acquired through trade. They might also possess items of questionable worth, typically minor gifts from ardent admirers.

A few industrious dryads have learned to harvest the sap their trees produce. These fey work that sap into multifaceted forms, which harden into an amber-colored, gemstone-like material. Sapstones, as some have come to call these creations, are comparable in value to semiprecious gems such as onyx, peridot, and moonstone. Dryads who favor sapstones tend to wear them lavishly in personal adornments such as rings, pendants, circlets, and earrings. Some human nobles, particularly those of Taldan descent, covet these jewels. A few even believe that sapstones can impart a portion of their creators' breathtaking beauty upon those who wear them, though this has never been proven.

Dryads on Golarion

Centuries ago, long before the death of Aroden and the emergence of the Worldwound, dryads found a haven in the forests of Sarkoris—a wild northern land inhabited only by tribes of primitive warriors and weird witches. In a testament to their understanding of dryads' natures, these peoples revered them as semidivine and took pains to protect them and their trees from outsiders. However, this unlikely alliance shattered when the god of humanity met his untimely demise; demons swiftly poured from the newly formed Worldwound and wiped Sarkoris's natives from the face of Golarion. The demons slaughtered dryads as well, until most of those vulnerable fey had been erased from that land. However, the story of Sarkoris's dryads never died. To this day, many of the remaining dryads in the surrounding lands tell the stories of their murdered predecessors with heavy hearts. Each spring, some bury offerings of food, clothes, or artwork next to their trees in memory of the Sarkoris tragedy.

Currently, dryads inhabit most of Avistan's densest forests, including the Verduran Forest (stretching

DRYADS IN MYTHOLOGY

Dryads have a rich and important place in Greek mythology, which describes them as beautiful maidens who live in and embody the spirits of trees. Similar to nymphs, mythological dryads are divine spirits that are considered particularly shy, except in the presence of the huntress goddess Artemis, who is a friend to dryads and nymphs alike. Mythology holds that when the world was young, the primordial deity Gaia gave birth to several dryad sisters, who later tended the infant Zeus.

Several variations of dryads are described throughout Greek mythology. Ash-tree dryads—such as those who tended the god-king—are called *meliai*. Apple-tree dryads are *epimeliads*, while walnut-tree dryads are *caryatids*. A fourth variation, called *hamadryads*, was considered so connected with their trees that if the plants died or were felled, the hamadryads perished, too. The Greek gods were said to punish anyone who harmed trees without first accommodating the dryads who lived inside them.

across parts of Taldor and Andoran) and the woods of Darkmoon Vale in Andoran's northern reaches. Dryads are also present in Mendev's Estrovian Forest and, rarely, in even colder locales such as Grungir Forest, located in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Hoarwood Forest in Irrisen, and Shudderwood (located southwest of the Worldwound). In Shudderwood, the tales of Sarkoris's murdered dryads ring most tragic, particularly because some Shudderwood dryads claim to be Sarkorian refugees or their descendants. Given their aloof natures and the sheer danger of Shudderwood's proximity to the Worldwound, scholars have remained unable to confirm whether their claims are true.

Although dryads can be found scattered throughout Avistan, they are perhaps most numerous in the Mwangi Expanse, where the rampant wilderness cradles these reclusive creatures like children. Mwangi dryads often bond with enormous kapok trees, which can grow to the pinnacle of the forest canopy and have trunks as wide as small homes. Even more so than their Avistani cousins, dryads bonded to kapok trees are known for their remarkable craftsmanship skills. For example, they process fine oils from kapok seeds, and from the seeds' fibers they weave elaborate textiles. Although such dryads typically use these products for mundane purposes—such as creating tapestries and making lamp oil—many tribes believe the items have magical properties and seek them at any cost. Found throughout the expanse, dryads bonded to kapok trees are most concentrated in the wilderness surrounding Usaro, Kibwe, and Jaha.

Sample Dryad

This lithe, otherworldly woman has with deep brown eyes and dark green hair that cascades past her waist. She's adorned in trinkets made from a great white pine's needles and cones.

AMALYA

CR 6

XP 2,400

Dryad druid 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 116)

CG Medium fey

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+1 deflection, +5 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 73 (9 HD; 6d6+3d8+39)

Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12

DR 5/cold iron

Weaknesses tree dependent

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +5 (1d6), dagger +10 (1d4)

Ranged mwk longbow +11 (1d8/×3)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +11)

Constant—*speak with plants*

At will—*entangle* (DC 16), *tree shape*, *wood shape* (1 lb. only)

3/day—*charm person* (DC 16), *deep slumber* (DC 18), *tree stride*

1/day—*suggestion* (DC 18)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

2nd—*barkskin*^D, *lesser restoration*, *summon swarm*

1st—*cure light wounds*, *enlarge person*^D, *obscuring mist*, *shillelagh*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *guidance*, *mending*, *stabilize*

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 21, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 21

Feats Great Fortitude, Self-Sufficient, Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +9, Craft (wood) +19, Escape Artist +19, Handle

Animal +14, Heal +6, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +13,

Stealth +19, Survival +17; **Racial Modifiers** +6 Craft (wood)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Druidic, Elven, Sylvan; *speak with plants*

SQ enlarge^{APG} (7/day), nature bond (Plant domain [Growth subdomain^{APG}]), nature sense, trackless step, tree meld, wild empathy +14, woodcraft, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of remove curse*, *scrolls of resist energy* (2), *wand of calm animals* (24 charges); **Other Gear** club, dagger, mwk longbow with 20 arrows, *ring of protection* +1, pinecone amulet (divine focus), wooden art objects worth 600 gp, 35 gp

A still untainted fey in the northern stretch of the Shudderwood, Amalya is a bastion of nature among a perverse land, where denizens are beginning to succumb



to the Worldwound's demonic hordes. To survive, she has formed a particularly close bond with her natural surroundings. She's studied the earth's struggle to survive against the Worldwound's onslaught; this scholarly curiosity has granted her powerful spells that she uses to protect herself, her tree, and the forest's remaining natural creatures. Given the danger she faces daily, Amalya is better at hiding than most dryads—however, the prevalence of half-fiends and other unspeakably abhorrent creatures also makes her a pragmatist of the highest order. She allies with like-minded adventurers who can stave off these threats more readily than others do of her kind.

Shudderwood

A major forest perilously close to the growing Worldwound, the northern stretch of the Shudderwood exhibits clear signs of the region's struggle against its demonic invaders. At first glance, it's an ancient, majestic forest towering over a lushly verdant floor; to the unaware observer, it may seem even peaceful. A closer look reveals an encroaching darkness—vines that writhe with malevolent life, animals that suffer grotesque mutations, and monsters that roar with otherworldly power. Even some of its fey, attracted here centuries ago by the ease with which they could move from the First World to the Material Plane, seem fiendishly aberrant. As the remaining good creatures fall one by one to the Abyssal forces, the Worldwound's sphere of influence steadily grows.

It is within this dire atmosphere that Amalya has learned to survive. Born just as the demons began to pour from the Worldwound, she watched her mother and most of her fey companions succumb to murder or worse as the demonic hordes infiltrated her forest. This trauma pushed her deep into her studies of nature, and it has made her even more adept at hiding, fighting off enemies, and generally surviving by any means necessary. As resourceful as fey come, Amalya is bonded with an enormous white pine tree located deep in Shudderwood's heart. She is adept at hiding her home—through both misdirection and magic—from any who would wish her and her fellow good creatures harm, and she considers it her solemn duty to protect defenseless plants and animals from the threatening blight.

Surrounding Amalya's home are creatures of all stripes, from innocent squirrels and deer to cruel dire wolverines and even half-fiend satyrs, redcaps, and treants, which bloodthirstily roam the forest in blasphemous mockery of their untainted cousins. Although Amalya and others of her ilk seek to destroy the forest's abominations, tainted creatures and demons have thrived in recent years; for

example, some dretch and quasit demons call the forest home. Rumors also whisper that glabrezus, nabasus, and more powerful demons increasingly feed and plot here. Should any of these abominations find Amalya's home, she would quickly and objectively move even deeper into the forest and bond with a new tree, as heartrending as that would be for her. To Amalya, and to all goodly Shudderwood denizens, survival is always the primary concern.





GREMLIN

Kee a watch for gremlins when traveling through the Arthfell. If the nasty little pests catch sight of you, they'll plague you for miles, doing everything from slitting your waterskins to poisoning your goats. Just try not to kill them. At least, don't let their kin see you kill them. Gremlins get hysterical when they see one of their own get splattered. If they witness a killing, they'll think you're the funniest thing they've seen this side of the Menadors and soon they'll be plaguing you all the way to Almas."

—Meris Trellauf of the Freedawn Trading Company

Gremlin serves as a catchall name for a wide variety of tiny, deplorable fey whose sole interests lie in plaguing other creatures and causing general mayhem. Lacking souls, these loathsome First World menaces have no concept of morality and thrive upon deviance and destruction. For reasons unknown, they target humans and good-aligned humanoids with a vengeful hatred. A gremlin's two principle weapons are sabotage and traps. They can dismantle nearly any device, leaving just enough of its structure intact for it to look whole but crumble at the slightest touch. Likewise, they can turn the most ordinary objects, even refuse, into sadistic mechanisms capable of maiming the most cautious of rogues. While larger species sometimes bully gremlins into servitude, most gremlins lack the ability to reason, and bargaining with them often proves impossible. One should never expect a gremlin to keep its word on a promise, provided one can even get the creature to make a promise in the first place.

Other fey despise gremlins as execrable pests and have made numerous efforts to erase them from existence. In the First World, ancient forces have almost driven gremlins out entirely, though they sometimes spontaneously manifest. Unfortunately these tenacious creatures have learned to survive, if not thrive, on the Material Plane. Like roaches, they cravenly cluster together in colonies in the dark and filthy recesses on the edges of mortal settlements. Worse, once these creatures take up residence, they begin multiplying.

Gremlins reproduce asexually by budding. While the process varies slightly from species to species, overall it retains the following similarities. Once a gremlin reaches its reproductive stage, a hideous tumor forms somewhere on its body and begins to grow. When it reaches the size of its host, it falls off, forming a new gremlin. Some gremlins eat their tumors. Most often, these tumor-clones die, though sometimes they produce a mutation. The numerous gremlin subtypes may in fact have arisen from such mutated clones.

Aspect of Nature

While many argue that gremlins have no purpose or place in the natural world, they are fey nonetheless. While their ties to the natural world are less apparent, they represent one of nature's greatest strengths—the ability to dismantle, decompose, erode, and reclaim. A gremlin's urge to sabotage things mirrors nature's reordering of itself, a breaking down of its own components into their base parts so that it might again reassemble them into something new. The cycle of destruction serves as a precursor for rebirth and change, and as such is as an inevitable component of the natural cycle of life. A gremlin's complete disregard for life, even the lives of its own kin, stems from its instinctual

belief that unadulterated destruction is both necessary and inevitable.

Lacking any concept of time, most gremlins can barely differentiate between passing years and the passing of a few minutes. Even though they are mortal and can be killed, they retain a concept of death in keeping with their First World ancestors. They believe that when they are killed, they simply reform in the First World or as tumors upon the flesh of their kin. They have no understanding of human mortality or tragic death. From their perspective, dying seems like an absurd concept and killing things seems hysterically funny.

Ecology

Gremlins come in many types with distinct physiology and habitats.

Fuath

Infestations of these aquatic, lobster-clawed gremlins form colonies within sea caves and coral reefs in waters that border active shipping lanes or large ports. Fuath despise land-dwellers, especially those who dare to violate the gremlins' waters with ships, and take sadistic delight in dismantling sailing vessels and drowning their crews. Because of their aversion to sunlight, they attack in the dead of night, and their insatiable taste for human flesh drives them to devour all evidence of their grisly work. After slaying a ship's crew, fuaths loot the vessel for gold, gems, and other glittering prizes, which they stash in their undersea lairs. Once they gut a ship, fuaths tow the vessel close to shore and then set adrift, creating a "ghost ship." They use the seemingly abandoned craft as bait to lure other ships into their clutches, hiding until a new vessel comes to investigate, then creeping aboard by night to ravage and murder. If not dealt with quickly, fuath infestations can become a cascading problem, as wreckage from one victim of their antics creates more hazards for later ships, resulting in an ever-increasing number of wrecks upon which the creatures can prey.

Though fuaths' lobster-like pincers and carapaces lack internal skeletal structure, their legs, torsos, heads do have endoskeletons, making them creatures of a most unique synthesis. Fuaths have been known to use their chelae to hollow out the corpses of their dead and booby-trap them. They then set the corpses afloat in shipping lanes and harbors. On rare occasions, they build new colonies beneath the ghost ship, stringing the bones of their victims into cage-shaped living areas that eventually become cemented together by crusts of barnacles and other shellfish.

Jinkin

Jinkins are gaunt, with toadlike skin, stubby bat faces, and rows of spiky fangs. They are natural contortionists—their limbs have a rubbery quality, allowing them to squish into





impossibly small spaces. Like most gremlins, jinkins have long lived upon the Material Plane and have acquired the need to sleep and eat. Still, they sleep only restlessly, taking light naps from which they easily wake, and never settle in for longer than an hour. Food, too, seems more of an indulgence than a necessity. Strict carnivores, they eat both ferociously and sloppily, typically gorging on the meat of the small rodents that inhabit their territories. Numerous accounts also tell that jinkins eat larger humanoid creatures such as goblins and svirfneblin, and even engage in acts of cannibalism. Jinkins lurk in lightless subterranean depths, contorting and scampering through cramped passages as they plot attacks on nearly any creatures they encounter. They live in hordes, taking over territories riddled with small nooks and crevasses into which they like to wedge themselves for both stealth and shelter. They favor karst formations, glacial tears, sewers, and similar structures for their abundance of small and winding tunnels. Once they settle in, they litter the surrounding territory with complex snares and traps, sometimes baited with meat or treasure.

Mite

Stunted misanthropic gremlins with bluish, bruised-looking skin and bulbous eyes, mites are loathsome creatures that inhabit the Darklands. Deplorable even to goblins, these craven creatures hide in the darkest subterranean recesses, dwelling among the only creatures able to tolerate their existence—mindless vermin. While the mites' origin lies in the First World, they have not

lived there for hundreds of generations. Although they still retain some fey properties, their ties to First World have petered out over the millennia and more than a handful of educated scholars even classify them as humanoids. More so than other gremlins, mites possess a natural predilection for insanity. A few years after adulthood, most begin losing their memory, suffering from auditory and visual hallucinations, delusions of grandeur, and extreme paranoia. Still, most lead short, pitiful lives and die before the madness sets in.

Nearly helpless as individuals, mites live in colonies and depend on the group for security. For the most part, they keep to themselves, afraid to attack or even defend against aggressors. They make pitiful slaves and their tiny bodies and rubbery flesh make them unappealing as prey, but because they're easy targets, mites often fall victim to the abuse and bullying of more powerful Darklands creatures. Only rarely do the creatures become fed up enough to seek revenge. When this occurs, the maddened mites call forth their vermin allies and go on murderous crusades.

Mites are noted for their ability to communicate with centipedes, spiders, ticks, and other mindless vermin. The creatures' lumpy flesh secretes a chemical that attracts most monstrous insects. Over the centuries, mites have learned to direct various types of summoned vermin with sounds and gestures. Mite tribes exchange these gestures, allowing them to seemingly command all manner of crawly critters, and sometimes save their own dead for use as breeding farms for vermin colonies.

Nuglub

Hunched and hideous, these three-eyed brutes are the largest and most aggressive of the land-dwelling gremlins. While they are subterranean creatures like mites, nuglubs tend to lurk in areas where they can ambush larger prey. They love to eat the flesh of humanoids and other intelligent creatures, especially other nuglubs. For this reason, they have great difficulty getting along with each other and are seldom encountered in groups. Instead, a nuglub forms its own gang by bullying lesser gremlins into servitude. The boss of a nuglub gang rarely eats its servitors, unless one dies as a result of some outside cause. A nuglub gang usually consists of a single nuglub and six to eight lesser gremlins. Gangs actively hunt, seeking out and preying upon small and isolated humanoid settlements. A typical raid leaves no survivors. A gang raid starts by laying traps in the surrounding area. Next, the creatures wait until the moon is high, then creep into town. After binding everyone to their beds, nuglubs waken



their victims, so they die screaming as they are tortured and eaten alive. When everyone is dead, the nuglubs loot the settlement, taking whatever items strike their fancy. Nuglubs love treasure and greedily store it away in secured, trap-laden chests. They favor gems, gold, jewelry, and magic items. Their treasure traps tend to be deadly and sadistic, designed to cause severe pain and disfigurement rather than outright death.

Pugwampi

Pugwampis live in warm climates, particularly in deserts and other wastelands. They are most noted for their unlucky auras and sycophantic infatuation for gnolls. They avoid sunlight, typically settling in the abandoned structures of larger mortals. Ruined fortresses, sewer tunnels, and ghost towns all are alluring places for pugwampis to establish a colony. Infighting between colony members is constant, with larger creatures bullying their smaller kin. Still, they generally group together in tribes under the command of an alpha. The alpha then brands or scars its tribe members in order to identify them to other tribes. This act makes smaller tribes readily identifiable as such, and they are often enslaved or butchered by more powerful tribes.

Like hyenas, pugwampis are chiefly scavengers, though they readily eat any creatures that happen to fall into their malicious traps. They have iron stomachs and rarely get sick from eating meat that has been poisoned or begun to rot. They gain a +10 circumstance bonus on saves to resist any disease or poison they come into contact with as result of eating rotting meat or a creature that has died of poisoning.

Pugwampis love treasure, particularly shiny objects, which they bury in random locations in their lairs, marking each stash by urinating on it. The tactic works remarkably well, as pugwampi urine has a particularly foul smell that never really goes away. It marks not only the burial spot, but the items as well—all items pulled from a pugwampi stash must be thoroughly cleaned to remove the stench. Until the loot is cleaned, a pugwampi gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Survival checks to track down its soiled treasures.

Vexgit

The scampering vexgit's insatiable need to dismantle the most complex of humanity's innovations and resculpt them as harrowing deathtraps unnerves even the most steady-minded of inventors and architects. Vexgits are driven to transform technological advances into sources of fear and pain, and they delight in their work.

A vexgit has no bones; instead, its body is covered with an insectile exoskeleton of semi-pliable chitin, which it must molt when it grows or reproduces. When a vexgit emerges from its exoskeleton, the flesh beneath is pale and the unformed, and its new shell is soft. The vexgit loses its natural armor bonus until its shell hardens 1 week

later. In addition to providing protection and camouflage, the vexgit's exoskeleton allows it to retain water for long periods of time. A colony of vexgits can hide for months, perhaps even years, in a sort of stasis before surfacing to wreak havoc. When seeking food, these gremlins scavenge or steal from larger creatures and often live off scraps and rotting carrion. Luckily, their strong stomachs can devour almost anything. Resembling alien cockroaches, vexgits are rarely encountered outside of cities. They inhabit spaces between walls, dank cellars, and shadowy rafters of abandoned buildings, slowly dismantling these areas and transforming them into death traps. They cram their lairs with collected widgets, cogs, and other junk from devices they have disassembled. Though they are natural hoarders, any treasure they have is incidental, and lies scattered within their piles of junk.

Campaign Role

Gremlins are the most likely of all the fey creatures to be encountered in urban environments. This quality, combined with their sheer aggression, makes them perfect opponents for low-level PCs. Their instinctual hatred for humans makes them great antagonists, and unlike most monsters, gremlins will actively seek out the PCs in their own environment. Gremlins themselves, not PCs, initiate the majority of gremlin encounters. For this reason, a GM can place a gremlin attack anywhere without needing a lot of preparation or explanation.

By their very nature, gremlins are bothersome and annoying. While such traits sculpt their reputation, a GM should never fail to overlook their conniving intelligence. With few physical advantages over larger creatures, gremlins survive by their ability to scheme. Not simply impulsive opportunists, they watch for situations that allow them to successfully pull off their destructive hijinks. Gremlins favor elaborate, almost puzzle-like pranks, with ever-escalating levels that may start almost playfully, but quickly turn dark, violently deviant, and ultimately deadly.

Gremlin humor is dark and characterized by a total disregard for life, including the lives of other gremlins. They favor sabotage above all other types of pranks, for it sparks their dark mirth and grisly sense of humor. A gremlin saboteur's work can be surprisingly complex, leading the victim through an entire series of increasingly deadly events that ultimately lead to in some sort of terrible accident resulting in disfigurement or death, both of which gremlins find hysterical.

For example, a mob of gremlins might choose to sabotage an individual by targeting his mount. They might begin by tampering with the mount's shoes, then place a scorpion in one of the saddlebags, and conclude by loosening the girth on the rider's saddle. Such efforts create a comedy of errors with a potentially deadly finale.

GREMLINS IN MYTHOLOGY

The real-world origins of the gremlin are perhaps the most contemporary of all fey. While these pesky saboteurs likely have some sort of roots in old English folktales, they are most commonly associated with twentieth-century aircraft. Whenever aircraft experienced some sort of unexplained failure, mechanics and pilots would blame the problem on tiny impish goblins that they called gremlins. Since then, gremlins have surfaced as an excuse for all kinds of mechanical and even electronic failures.

An even more recent depiction of gremlins comes from director Joe Dante's classic 1984 black comedy film *Gremlins*. In the film, a tiny and adorably fuzzy creature called a mogwai accidentally clones itself. The clones then transform into hideous and scaly gremlins that go on a rampage of mischievous sabotage. A sequel film in 1990 envisioned these same evil gremlins decimating a genetics lab and undergoing even more transformations before running amok. Both films depict gremlins as wholly evil creatures that scurry about in the shadows, delighting in violence and mayhem. It is the aggression, attitude, and sense of humor expressed in Dante's gremlins that most inspire gremlins in Pathfinder.

Because they're small and individually weak creatures, gremlins tend to work in groups, seeking strength in numbers. Though they collaborate on pranks and sabotage, they often make bets about who can cause the most destruction. They take these challenges extremely seriously and may even murder each other to seize a victory.

While the various species of gremlins settle in distinct environments, all gremlin lairs share certain similarities. First, because gremlins stalk victims for their murderous plots and pranks, they tend to be transient, moving quickly from lair to lair as the need arises. Therefore, they almost never build lairs (they are, after all, creatures of destruction), but instead settle in preexisting sites such as caves, ruined buildings, hollow trees, or any other convenient refuge with plenty of shade and shadow. They require little space, and in fact prefer cramped places such as wells, sewer pipes, and similar crawl spaces where maneuvering is difficult for larger creatures. Gremlins make no effort to maintain their lairs, which quickly turn into filthy, dung-filled pits, strewn with carrion and often infested with vermin. Still, individuals should take care when traveling through gremlin lairs, for the feisty creatures litter them with cruel traps and painful snares.

Gremlins on Golarion

Gremlins have long plagued Golarion. Common belief marks their arrival sometime during the Age of Anguish,

and many speculate that greater beings exiled them from First World, leaving the miserable creatures stranded on the Material Plane—a story not unlike that of Golarion's gnomes, though none know whether the two are connected. Since then, they have run rampant. Multiplying quickly, gremlin populations then spread throughout Golarion, evolving into many distinct subspecies, each more vile than the next.

Subterranean-dwelling gremlins like jinkins and nuglubs fill the upper levels of the Darklands' narrow, twisting catacombs, city sewers, and crypts. Ultimately, they do not stray too far from the surface, but use less common entrances to avoid the violence of more deadly subterranean hunters. Pathfinders and other experienced adventurers sometimes seek them out in order to find hidden back doors into the Darklands.

Most major cities have their share of problems with vexgits. They have become particularly problematic in Golarion's more technologically advanced cities, such as Alkenstar, drawn to the wealth of machinery that they can cause to go haywire. Another rumor suggests that Kragreth-Kol, Numerian barbarian lord and cousin to the Black Sovereign, has begun breeding vexgits to sabotage the Technic League and end his mad cousin's reign.

Preferring cooler waters, fuath hunt the shipping lanes along the coast of Avistan. Recently, sailors passing near the Ironbound Archipelago have reported sightings of a ghost ship colony consisting of several drifting hulks lashed together. While none have ventured too close, the colony crawls with fuath who have rallied beneath the rule of a corrupted nereid known as Noyade. The fuath worship her and make midnight raids on small seaside towns, dragging off victims for sacrificial drownings they perform in her honor.

The lands of eastern Garund are plagued with perhaps the most annoying of the gremlin species: the sickly looking, dog-faced pugwampis. Pugwampis have a strange fascination with gnolls, often venerating the hyenafolk as near-gods; most gnolls enjoy the praise but not the bad luck that follows the gremlins around, and generally only permit the pugwampis to remain near to torment and torture the pathetic creatures.

Finally, it is said that one cannot travel across Varisia without tripping over a mite, though the same holds true of almost everywhere on Golarion. Of all the gremlin types, mites are the most pervasive and widespread. While for the most part these wretched creatures keep to themselves, recent reports show a sharp increase in accounts of mites succumbing to madness and entire tribes going on violent rampages. Sandpoint's resident intellectual, Brodert Quink, suggests some sort of First World contagion as the source of these occurrences. Worse, he fears the mites might soon spread the madness to humans.

Grimple

This putrid looking creature has the appearance of a half-starved, mange-ridden opossum. Leathery skin flaps stretch between its forearms and stubby hind legs, and a pair of boarlike tusks dominates its face.

GRIMPLE

CR 1/3



XP 135

CN Tiny fey

Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 size)

hp 4 (1d6+1)

Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2

DR 2/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +3 (1d3-4)

Ranged rock +3 (1d2-4)

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

Special Attacks putrid vomit

STATISTICS

Str 3, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6

Base Atk +0; CMB -1; CMD 5

Feats Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Finesse[®]

Skills Climb +13, Fly +1, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +16, Swim +5

Languages Undercommon

SQ gremlin lice

ECOLOGY

Environment any urban

Organization solitary, pair, mob (3-8), or infestation (9-16 with 1-3 rogues of 1st-3rd level, 1 fighter leader of 2nd-4th level, 2-6 trained dire rats and 1-4 spider swarms)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Gremlin Lice (Ex) Filthy creatures, nearly all grimples are infested with gremlin lice. Whenever a warm-blooded creature comes in direct physical contact with a grimple, there is a 25% chance it contracts gremlin lice. 1d4 rounds after the individual contracts lice, it begins to itch. The itch proves so distracting that for the duration of the infestation, the individual takes a -1 penalty on all concentration and initiative checks. Fortunately, these annoying parasites cannot live long on non-gremlins, and only survive for 24 hours. Submersion in water or exposure to freezing temperatures also kills a goblin lice infestation.

Putrid Vomit (Ex) Every 1d4 rounds, a grimple can spit up a 30-foot stream of vomit as a standard action. Treat the vomit as a ranged touch attack with no range increment. Anyone struck by the vomit must succeed at a DC 11 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds. The save is Constitution-based.

Grimples are filthy urban scavengers that lurk beneath the eaves of abandoned buildings, clock towers, belfries, and steeples. Sickly-looking and hideously ugly, they shed constantly as a result of the small parasites they host. Quick climbers, grimples also have loose flaps of skin that stretch between their arms and legs that they use to glide short distances.

Like most gremlins, they despise humans and show their vengeance by attacking drunks, unlocking stables, torturing guard dogs, urinating in water barrels, and loosening hanging storefront signs so they fall on people. Still, the grimple's ability to vomit at will remains its most unappealing quality.

Voracious omnivores, grimples feast off garbage. They frequently target inns, restaurants, and other places where they can scavenge a steady supply of food.





LEPRECHAUN

One'd be wise to keep from the golden lures of the soulless fey, for the wee folk—the leprechauns—prey upon mortal greed. When I was young, me grandfather'd always ask us children what we thought the wee folk wanted gold for, as there's little use for it in the First World. It ain't for what gold can buy that the leprechauns crave it. Nay, it's for the bewitching power it has upon mortals. And lo! No good é'er comes to those who become the playthings of the wee folk, for their mirth has neither mercy nor ethics.

—Ewiss Drane, *Grandfather's Wisdom*, Vol. III

Few mortals give much thought to the wily leprechauns. Folklore portrays them as deviant gnomes who race drunkenly through the wild vales stashing away gold coins. Leprechauns masquerade as wandering, aged hermits from an earlier time—tiny, wrinkled men dressed in threadbare coats and a battered caps. Despite their humanoid facade, their glittering green eyes and capricious personalities quickly reveal them to be mischievous children of the First World.

Gold is almost synonymous with the leprechaun's name. For centuries, people have told strange tales of wee folk performing ceremonies deep in the wood, melting down gold coins in great black cauldrons and burying them in the ground. Other tales depict greedy leprechauns robbing travelers of their gold or offering mortals wishes in exchange for gold, favors, or even their freedom. These fables have enticed many to seek out leprechauns, hoping for quick riches, while the despicable use the fables to fabricate a source for their ill-gotten gains. Drunks often tell tales of drinking with the wee folk to explain their empty pockets and stinging hangovers to their angry families. Ultimately, it is doubtful that anyone enjoys these tales more than leprechauns themselves, for they thrive on guile and deception. The less mortals understand them, the more effectively they achieve their goals.

Leprechauns desire gold not for what it affords them, but for its effect upon the mortal creatures they seek to manipulate. For this reason, they hoard it. The effect gold has on the will of a mortal remains strongest when the gold serves as an object of desire, not when it is given as a reward, for once it's been given, its effect wanes. Thus, leprechauns use gold to sow chaos, letting the tales of their riches amplify the mortal emotions of greed, jealousy, frustration, and anger. For leprechauns embody nature's push toward entropy, and such emotions break down the organizing spirit of civilization and open people to the influence of chaos. Everything else—the clever games of tag, the old-fashioned garb, the constant drinking, and the offers of gold—are all merely lures for their mortal prey.

Aspect of Nature

Leprechauns represent unbiased and ever-increasing entropy, not in a malevolent sense, but in a way that evokes nature's pure and primordial spirit. As nature reclaims all mortal creations, so do leprechauns use temptation to lure mortals into creating the very chaos that is their undoing in the end.

Mortals typically encounter leprechauns within deep and ancient woods, in places unknown to civilization—for there the Material Plane wears thin and the realm of First World seeps through. Leprechauns prefer forest groves and other areas where light steals into the woods.

As masters of shadow magic, they find these places ideal for weaving light with darkness. Some act as wardens for other fey or as protectors of sacred areas, particularly those places known as "blooms" that serve as connections to First World.

Leprechauns' world lies shrouded in shadow. While gnomes (their closest kin) left the First World for the Material Plane, leprechauns became entangled with the Material Plane's other coterminous twin, the Plane of Shadow. It is from this strange plane that they gain their ability to create their illusions and twist light. Still, their strongest ties remain to the First World, and tapping its raw essence allows them to create and shape matter to their will. In these talents the wee folk revel, much to the chagrin of the mortals they enjoy tormenting.

Ecology

Small humanoid-shaped fey, leprechauns strongly resemble a mix between their gnome cousins and halflings. Few grow taller than 3 feet high, though rare accounts tell of larger, more bestial leprechauns that reach the height of a dwarf. Though such leprechauns lack the tact and cunning of their smaller brethren, they more than make up for it in tenacity and muscle.

Leprechauns have ruddy skin tones, most with a fair amount of freckles. Their hair ranges in color from reddish orange to auburn to deep black. Most sport shaggy facial hair, typically large wolfish sideburns. Some have silvery gray highlights that give them the appearance of being wizened by age, though the coloration likely has nothing to do with a leprechaun's actual age, which can span several centuries. Perhaps leprechauns' most unnerving trait is their fiery, pale-green eyes, which seem to burn with an almost otherworldly glow. As with elves, their eyes lack whites and appear alien.

Leprechauns seem to have acquired a taste for alcohol, particularly strong drinks such as distilled liquors. They can drink quite a bit without showing any discernible effects, perhaps because they rarely go long without drinking. For this reason, it is difficult to say whether leprechauns' alignment spurs them toward excessive drinking or whether excessive drinking instead influences their alignment.

With neither a mortal's soul nor its conscience, leprechauns are instead driven entirely by a contradictory mix of whim and purpose. They do not age, but instead exist until some force destroys them. The race's origin is older than written history, older than the formation of the Material Plane. Some even speculate leprechauns are the fey progenitors of gnomes, halflings, dwarves, and perhaps even goblins. More likely, they are evolutionary cousins of gnomes, but grew further apart from them because of the influence of the Shadow Plane. Rarer, but



no less fascinating, are the tales that purport leprechauns are the bastard children of demons stranded in the First World after the formation of the Shadow Plane.

Lastly, all leprechauns are male in form. While a few rare accounts of female leprechauns exist, most dismiss them as arising from pranks, for it is not unheard of for the creatures to dress in women's clothing to enhance their tomfoolery. How leprechauns reproduce remains somewhat of a mystery, though most sages speculate they form spontaneously on the First World, as physical manifestations of the plane's state of constant change.

Society

Leprechaun culture seems a patchwork of mortal customs woven together with fey frivolity. They emulate the practices of mortals, emphasizing those elements they find most absurd or amusing. They feast almost as insatiably as they drink, and dance as wildly as satyrs beneath the stars. They have a particular affinity for mortal clothing, and often pilfer old, discarded clothes, which they tailor to fit their small frames. For this reason, their clothing often appears worn and antiquated. While their culture, clothing, and customs seem to mirror those of neighboring mortal settlements, any similarities evolve out of sport or even mockery, not out of tradition.

Many speculate as to whether leprechauns have settled upon the Material Plane, or if they are visitors instead. Some tales speak of entire leprechaun villages built in lost vales deep in the woods. Yet almost always, their settlements, like leprechauns themselves, possess the ability to magically disappear. Reports of settlements exist only from the least reliable sources—vagrants and other drunks who claim they staggered into a leprechaun village and partook in wild celebrations, only to wake the next morning in an empty field of clover.

Among their own kind, leprechauns enjoy socializing. They love drinking, dancing, and music. In these pastimes, they seem to share a sort of kinship with more peaceful mortals, one that has perhaps tempered the cruelty of their capers. At other times, they can be solitary creatures, in part because of their argumentative nature—their incessant squabbling frequently devolves into bitter feuds. Fortunately, these never last long, for the fickle creatures live in the moment, quickly forgetting past arguments when something new and exciting catches their attention.

Of all the victims they target, leprechauns seem to enjoy tormenting humans and dwarves the most, perhaps because both races make easy targets and tend to react explosively to pranks. While the wee folk like to tease and agitate, for the most part they do not employ pranks that directly harm their victims. Instead, they take pleasure in creating mayhem and inspiring outrage and frustration

in their victims, for leprechauns find great humor in fiery public displays of emotion.

Leprechauns do not always extend this playfulness to evil humanoids and other destructive and mirthless creatures, such as orcs, ogres, and goblins. Toward such creatures, leprechauns' tricks sometimes take a dark, even gruesome turn. Employing murderous and bloody jokes, they drive these creatures screaming from their territories by pretending to be ghosts, devils, or other malign supernatural intruders.

Campaign Role

Folktales describe the leprechaun as a puckish foil that sidetracks humans or lures them into the wild with tales of gold. While GMs may devise numerous ways to implement leprechauns in their games, leprechauns' traditional role remains the creatures' greatest strength. The easiest way is to have the PCs attract the attention of a leprechaun, or even a troop of leprechauns, while venturing near a wood. Once a leprechaun catches sight of the PCs, have it secretly trail them, playing pranks upon them until it has the opportunity to steal some of their gold. Using its spell-like abilities, the leprechaun can plague the PCs for days; it may try to turn them against each other, create paranoia about what may lurk in the woods, or simply taunt the PCs into a leprechaun hunt with the promise of gold or wishes. In the latter scenario, the leprechaun might lead the PCs on a wild goose chase, running them through all sorts of potentially dangerous situations. Misdirecting PCs into an owlbear cave, through a field of toxic sporing mushrooms, or across a patch of quicksand are all terribly funny pranks to a leprechaun.

Even though leprechauns aren't necessarily evil, their lack of mortal conscience and morality makes them great adversaries. A band of leprechauns with a goal that opposes or even endangers a human settlement creates a solid adventure plot, particularly if the PCs must attempt to reason or trick the creatures out of completing their objectives instead of butchering them. A leprechaun band's objectives might include stealing all the gold from a small town and leaving it destitute, secretly exacerbating a tribe of violent and evil humanoids and inspiring them to take their revenge on nearby human settlements, or orchestrating a kidnapping to make demands against civilization's encroachment of their wild lands.

Leprechauns make challenging villains, especially if commanded by more powerful, evil fey like grimstalkers, redcaps, or even a leprechaun with class levels. As an interesting option for a low-level villain, try making a "mad" leprechaun who uses his gold to lure weak-willed and greedy mortals into his murderous clutches. Leprechauns make great stealth attackers, and their propensity toward illusions allows them to fabricate

strange and disorienting terrain capable of confusing and entrapping their opponents. The creatures have a powerful array of illusions at their disposal, from the ability to make strange sounds and glittering lights, to creating entire illusory creatures and landscapes. A leprechaun with levels in an arcane class makes an excellent opponent for higher-level characters. Its size, speed, and predilection for illusions and transmutation make it a difficult target, while its wit, intellect, and charm give it a natural advantage as a bard, sorcerer, or specialist wizard such as an illusionist. While its chaotic nature causes it to shy away from following the commands of others, a powerful leprechaun makes a great leader.

One of the leprechaun's strong points is its ability to go unseen to create mayhem. While leprechauns won't necessarily cause the PCs to tremble, the presence of an unseen and unknown assailant can quickly unnerve the most confident adventuring party.

Leprechauns know that mortals fear the unknown, and use that knowledge ruthlessly. When using them as antagonists, keep them hidden for as long as possible. Don't reveal to the PCs that they face leprechauns, but instead make use of the fey's spell-like abilities to keep the PCs speculating about the nature of the creatures stalking them.

Treasure

For all their chicanery, there is no trickery in a leprechaun's love for gold. They often boil it down into small nuggets using small iron cauldrons. True to legend, they avariciously hoard their gold in secret places deep within the forests in which they dwell. What makes the creatures so covetous of gold is unknown, though some speculate that the creatures are attracted to the mineral's ability to change the will and emotions of mortal beings, particularly humans. As such, the wee folk believe gold gives them power over mortals. A single leprechaun may create dozens of gold hoards scattered throughout the lands it travels. A single stash typically ranges in value from 100 to 500 gp. Strangely, leprechauns rarely trap their stashes and sometime place them in seemingly obvious locations (though they always conceal them quite well). Some interpret this lack of protection as the leprechauns' attempt to lure mortals, while others attribute it to a breach in their understanding of human logic—leprechauns simply do not believe mortals capable of finding their stashes. That stated, should a mortal stumble across a leprechaun's gold, the creature becomes extremely wrathful, even murderous, if the individual attempts to claim it for herself.

TOKEN OF THE LEPRECHAUN

Leprechauns are known for their furious appetites, especially their thirst for alcohol. While they enjoy wine, they prefer the effects of a poitin, a clear liquor they distill from potatoes in their tiny cauldrons. Normally, leprechauns secret away their liquor, though on occasion they might offer a deserving mortal a cup as a token reward for a favor or service, or even for their own sport. Mortals who consume poitin gain feysight. Beneath the veneer of the Material Plane, they see the first draft of the universe and its ever-shifting mysteries.

The effect lasts for 1 hour, during which time the imbiber can see and identify any fey (visible or invisible, disguised or in its true form) and any other flora, fauna, or objects native to the First World as per the effects of a *true seeing* spell. Similarly, those affected by the drink immediately attract the attention of any fey creatures encountered, often inciting their ire.

Poitin has another, predictably negative effect: its potency as an alcoholic beverage. Those who drink the stuff risk becoming staggeringly drunk, and most have little if any recollection of the strange and terrible world into which it allows them to peer. A single cup of poitin is equal to 4 cups of a standard alcoholic beverage.



Leprechauns on Golarion

One can encounter leprechauns anywhere in Avistan, though they are most commonly encountered in the eastern kingdoms, roaming the unsettled countryside of Brevoy, Galt, the River Kingdoms, and Taldor, as well as the neighboring region of Iobaria.

In Galt, the land of bloody revolution, no prank goes unpunished, and the leprechauns there have learned to give the "bigginse" (a leprechaun term for larger creatures such as humans) their sway. Still, they torment the villagers or small communities eking out their existences on the fringes of the revolution. To these folk, leprechauns represent the playfulness of lost ideals, and despite the annoyance of their pranks, people celebrate their sightings and often leave gifts of bacon, sweet cakes, and liquor for the free-spirited fey.

In the River Kingdoms, leprechauns have far more interactions with humans. Though still prankish, they greatly enjoy participating in the struggle between the region's numerous rival lords. Leprechauns see these human struggles as games, and may align themselves with a local lord for a time, working against that lord's

LEPRECHAUNS IN MYTHOLOGY

Most think of leprechauns as tiny Irish fairies with bushy red sideburns dressed in green waistcoats and bowlers who hide gold-filled pots at the end of rainbows. However, such images are contemporary, constructed by early 20th-century cartoonists to poke fun at poor Irish immigrants who arrived in cities wearing the outdated clothing of their homeland.

Much dispute surrounds traditional folktales that claim to explain leprechauns' true origins. According to most tales, they are descended from the Tuatha Dé Danann, and arose from that more regal folk after they were forced underground. Traditionally, depictions of leprechauns resembled those of other fairies. They had long beards, wore worn red coats and pointy caps, and spent their time making and mending shoes and playing pranks. They were said to love music, dancing, and strong liquor. Some fables depict leprechauns as granting wishes to human captors.

A more fearsome portrayal of the leprechaun comes from a franchise of horror-comedy movies initiated by the 1993 film *Leprechaun*. These films depict the leprechaun as a monstrous fairy who extracts gory revenge on mortals who steal his magical gold. In the various films the leprechaun is susceptible to four-leaf clovers (used to immobilize him), iron spikes, clover water, and the destruction of his magical gold.

rivals. They make perilous allies, however, because they are likely to switch sides with no notice, either out of boredom or simply to see what happens.

Perhaps the largest concentration of wee folk hides within the vast and ancient Verduran Forest. The majority of it falls within Taldor's borders, and since the Taldan monarchy still honors the ancient druid pact known as the Treaty of Wildwood, much of the forest remains untouched by mortals. In many sections, only a sliver of reality lies between the First World and the primordial wood, creating the ideal conditions for leprechauns to weave their magic.

The Verduran Forest also hides one of the leprechauns' largest Material Plane settlements, a semipermanent village known as Stillhouse. The settlement jaunts about the forest, popping up in remote areas. It remains visible for periods of between 2 weeks and a month, before fading back into the First World, where its creators reshape and reform it. Each time it returns to the Material Plane, it manifests in a new location. Thus far, it has never appeared in the same location twice, and there is no discernible pattern in its manifestations. Stillhouse always appears as a slightly different settlement, one that's new, yet vaguely familiar. Even its residents seem to change with

each appearance; sometimes they are older, sometimes younger, and sometimes they are even physically warped by the mysterious forces of their home plane. While some point to the village's name as an example of fey irony, the inhabitants actually named Stillhouse after its most important feature: the village centers upon a large dilapidated shack cobbled from scrap wood and junk, and inside this shack is a device beloved to all leprechauns—a massive still that pumps out barrels of a potent liquor the wee folk call poitin.

Sample Leprechaun

Dressed entirely in gray worn robes, a tiny, otherworldly man stands cloaked in mysterious shadows, his head crowned by a mane of wild, fiery-orange hair and his green eyes gleaming with madness and delight.

FYNDYLSNITCH THE SHADOWKING

CR 7

XP 3,200

Male leprechaun sorcerer 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 177)

CN Small fey

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 54 (9d6+23)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

DR 5/cold iron; **SR** 13

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 club +6 (1d8+1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +9)

Constant—*shillelagh*

At will—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *invisibility* (self only), *mage hand*, *major image* (visual and auditory elements only, DC 18), *prestidigitation*, *ventriloquism* (DC 16)

3/day—*color spray* (DC 16), *fabricate* (1 cubic foot of material only)

1/day—*major creation*

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +10)

8/day—*shadowstrike* (1d4+2 nonlethal and dazed 1 minute)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +10)

2nd (5/day)—*darkvision*, *dust of twilight*^{APG} (DC 17), *haunting mists*^{LM} (DC 17)

1st (8/day)—*bungle*^{UM} (DC 16), *lock gaze*^{UC} (DC 16), *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shadow weapon*^{UM} (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *haunted fey aspect*^{UC}, *message*, *read magic*

Bloodline shadow^{APG}

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 17

Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +16, Escape Artist +11, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +20, Perform (comedy) +11, Perform (dance) +13, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +14, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +20;
Racial Modifiers +8 Perception, +4 Sleight of Hand
Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Halfling, Shadowtongue, Sylvan
SQ bloodline arcana, leprechaun magic, nighteye
Combat Gear *wand of memory lapse*^{APG} (30 charges), thunderstones (5); **Other Gear** club, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *gray bag of tricks*

A master of shadow magic, Fyndylsnitch delights in using his craft to warp reality. While it is suspected he holds great power, the Lord of Drearwood has never moved from his realm. For this reason, sages speculate he performs some sort of duty for a greater lord in First World.

Drearwood

Along the eastern border of Brevoy that edges into the Icerime Peaks lies a hidden vale. Tucked away into the vale and isolated by cruel, frozen spires stands a small stranded forest known as Drearwood. Its trees are gray and knotted, with smooth, fleshy bark and thin foliage of blushing plum and crimson ovate shaped, waxy leaves. They bend and sway slowly as if weeping, and seem to shift their positions so that once-familiar surroundings change even when one remains standing still. Deeper within the wood, the trees weave erratically, forming labyrinthine passages. Almost as if the trees devoured sunlight, the forest is unnaturally dark, and inky shadows dart about like frightened crows. Yet the wood doesn't feel empty or dead. Quite to the contrary, the shadows themselves seem to bear life and travelers feel the weight of a hundred unseen, but ever-watching eyes.

Drearwood is the shadow-warped domain of Fyndylsnitch the Shadowking, a grim prankster who delights in creating terror in any death-fearing mortals who trespass on his domain. His court consists of a few dozen leprechauns who seek to emulate their master's magical prowess along with a handful of renegade fey such as forlarrens and spriggans who have sworn him fealty. Fyndylsnitch lives in the center of the wood within a living fortress of warped gray trees known as the Gnarled Citadel. Ever growing, the Gnarled Citadel constantly changes its shape as the leprechauns bend and prune it to the King's will. Here, all of the forest's winding pathways converge. The Shadowking's

spies lurk everywhere; shadowspiders, murders of eerie gray-winged magpies, and charcoal-furred stoats take note of all trespassers before scampering back to the Gnarled Citadel with their reports.

The Gnarled Fortress rests upon a thin spot between the Material Plane, First World, and the Plane of Shadow. Constructed by an ancient Fey Lord eons before Fyndylsnitch became its appointed warden, it serves as a sort of dam between the Shadow Plane and First World that siphons the runoff into the Material Plane. It is believed that Drearwood evolved as a result of the mixture of the energies of the former two planes. Many seek to tap the potent mix of energies, particularly Shadow Plane denizens who worship the wood's power to make shadow substantial. For this reason, the Shadowking is locked into an eternal war against the Shadow Plane's fetchling and shae denizens, who have long sought to conquer Drearwood for themselves.





NORN

In the beginning, there were only the gods, their plans to create our world, and the mighty norns, who knew the fate of existence before it began. As millennia passed and the gods' designs began to unfold, the Enlightened Ones guarded our destinies from any who would see us erased. From storms, famine, and war the norns sheltered us, their chosen people, by bringing us warnings and signs. Now, ask yourself, in whom would you place your trust: absent gods whose designs favor none and who abandoned their first creation, or our all-knowing norns, whose mighty shears guard us from fate itself?

—Evangelical text of the Varki norn cult

Never will an adventurer feel smaller and more insignificant than when facing a triumvirate of towering, august norns. Detached from mundane concerns, norns are impossibly tall fey women who deliver prophecies, test heroes, and help preserve the destiny of all life in the multiverse. Some say norns live at the sides of the gods themselves; scholars, however, know that they hail from a place even more mysterious than any other in the Great Beyond—the First World, which seems to be the source of norns' incredible power and prescience.

Standing more than 14 feet tall and weighing 800 pounds, norns are among the most physically imposing of fey. The austere, feminine creatures wear their hair in complex arrays of braids that reach nearly to their feet. Their skin comes in all shades, but their skin and eyes lighten as they age; both start dark, but their hair lightens gradually to blonde and their eyes to azure, violet, or amber and take on an otherworldly glow, especially when the creatures are searching for magical auras. While spending time on Golarion—where they're most often sighted in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings—norns typically array themselves in luxurious, flowing furs that cover most of their bodies. When they speak, norns' rich, authoritative voices boom in unison, causing all who hear to take notice of their words.

Norns' powers of foresight often prompt them to appear on Golarion during times of great turmoil or just prior to major events—a practice that has earned the creatures much reverence among the few who know they exist. Some peoples, most notably the semi-nomadic Varki, worship norns as all-powerful protectors. To others, norns are portents of death, and some brash adventurers—particularly those who have never come across norns themselves—believe they are simply overhyped giants. In all cases, norns do nothing to sway others' opinions, nor do they often deign to answer misguided prayers. Instead, norns concern themselves with matters important to their self-styled purpose: keeping the multiverse from slipping into chaotic oblivion.

Aspect of Nature

Possessed of nearly unimaginable wisdom and power, norns understand that every occurrence in the multiverse—from the fluttering of a butterfly's wings to the spinning of the heavens themselves—was predetermined in a time before time. Though the mysterious creatures don't understand the logic of the universe's great blueprint any better than most, they do know the importance of preserving these complex, multilayered plans. Norns believe that if too many events occur out of sync with predestination, entropy will consume the multiverse and existence itself will eventually collapse. Preventing cosmic calamity, therefore, is the norns' charge. In this way, and in myriad other ways

the creatures themselves don't always understand, norns embody the integrity of existence itself.

With its wild variety of powerful creatures and beings, Golarion presents innumerable dangers to the multiverse's predetermined fabric. This leads norns to spend inordinate amounts of time here preparing for journeys, delivering messages, developing tests for potential heroes, and generally attempting to keep fate intact. As they can most easily travel from the First World to the Lands of the Linnorm Kings—and because norns believe this region plays an unknown but important role in the cosmos's destiny—norns appear most frequently in this frozen expanse. Some scholars believe that the norns, for reasons beyond most beings' understanding, make long-term homes in these northern locales so they can complete vital, centuries-long work there.

Ecology

Although norns are considered formidable creatures by any standard, spending time on the Material Plane eventually confuses and weakens them. A norn who traverses Golarion alone might find her powers of foresight adversely affected, find it more difficult to strike down an ill-fated foe, or become easily lost or confused. To combat this strange sickness, norns always travel the Material Plane in threes. For reasons scholars find elusive, this grouping allows norns to effectively retain the powers they possess in their native realm.

Contrary to rumors, a norn triumvirate does not represent one soul split into three creatures. In fact, each norn is an individual, though triumvirates are as physically, mentally, and emotionally attuned as any natural-born triplets. This is because unlike most fey, norns are not born biologically, nor do they attempt to procreate sexually. Rather, a finite number of norns were born in threes during a time before history via a method of reproduction the creatures no longer possess.

When norns die on the Material Plane (mortally wounded fey in the First World simply reform after some time has passed), they're reborn as infants on their native plane. They must then grow to maturity before seeking out their previous companions, to whom they are bound across all their lives. Norns who have either lost or expelled a group member typically seek their reborn companion on the First World. When doing so is impossible, norns wait on Golarion for their new, matured group member to rejoin their ranks. Reborn norns retain some memories from their previous lives and recognize their companions on sight. However, they are often unclear on the circumstances leading to their deaths or on the details of previous missions they undertook.

Although they appear celestial in nature, like all fey norns require food, drink, and sleep. Owing to their

enormous size, norns have ravenous appetites. They prefer to eat raw meat and are adept at hunting with their wicked shears. Their powers of foresight ensure they always strike their game in the right place at the right time. To account for their considerable consumption on Golarion, norns frequently shepherd groups of animals from the First World to the Lands of the Linnorm Kings—this practice has led to sightings of impossibly strange creatures roaming the region, particularly in Grungir Forest.

Although on the First World norns are effectively immortal, on Golarion they age as other creatures do, albeit at a considerably decelerated rate. Many scholars agree that after spending more than 3 centuries on the Material Plane, even norns who are members of triumvirates begin to experience confusion, a loss of physical strength, and a serious impairment of their strange abilities. Scholars believe it's possible for norns to die of old age, but because they are so elusive, their lifespans there are unknown.

Society

The northern peoples of Golarion repeat innumerable myths about norns' creation and role in the multiverse. From these tales, scholars have extracted some commonalities they now consider fact. Most agree that norns came into existence long before the gods abandoned the First World. In those early days, the norns considered themselves caretakers of all creation. However, when the gods abandoned the First World in favor of the newly created Material Plane—a traumatic, unforeseen event norns refer to as the Severing—they came to believe they had failed in their mission. Then emerged the Eldest: First-World denizens so powerful that they command respect from all that realm's residents and even from the land itself.

Since the Severing and the rise of the Eldest, which happened before the Age of Creation on Golarion, norns have sought to atone for their previous failure. Even during the tumultuous Age of Lost Omens, norns' prophecies have remained eerily accurate, leading some to believe the creatures' ultimate role in the cosmos is even larger than scholars imagine. Though most norn triumvirates continue to work to ensure the gears of fate keep turning as intended, some act as handmaidens to individual Eldest, who often have their own unique views of predestination. Such servile triumvirates occasionally clash with their more traditional kin, leading to even more confusion about how exactly norns' missions fit into the larger lines of fate.

Aside from their triumvirates, norns don't interact with others of their kind unless their missions require such alliances. Neither do norns particularly favor other fey, preferring instead to view all creatures—whether on the First World, the Material Plane, or elsewhere—as equally

key to fate's designs. An exception to this philosophy lies in humans. Norns believe that, given humans' wildly varying dispositions and proclivity for quickly rising to power, these mortals are capable of great, foreordained deeds. For this reason, norns pay close attention to humans—particularly adventurers—who show potential to affect widespread change for good, evil, harmony, or chaos. When necessary, norns interfere with such individuals in whichever ways their views of predestination require. Although triumvirates prefer to accomplish their work independently, they're willing to ally with other powerful, goodly creatures when it becomes necessary to accomplish a particularly important goal.

Campaign Role

Given their mysterious abilities to anticipate the future and to alter minor events in the immediate past, norns can introduce into an adventure the weighty concepts of destiny, fate, and fatalism. In a low-level game, norns are great foreshadowers: They can deliver messages of adventurers' future power or point out a party's potential to prevent calamity. Similarly, low-level parties might encounter norns in environments where the First World mixes with the Material Plane. These norns might then present cryptic tests of wit or skill to determine the party's worth. In higher-level games, since those who meddle with the threads of fate particularly enrage norns, a triumvirate might request adventurers' help in vanquishing a powerful sorcerer or in ensuring a mighty dragon meets its end. A norn triumvirate might even target a party of particularly heinous adventurers. However norns are used, it should remain clear that their presence is the harbinger of a milestone event, the rise of an individual fated for greatness, or something far worse.

The fact that some cultures consider norns gods can be used to heavily influence campaigns featuring the creatures. Since the most prominent norn worship occurs among the Varki, a semi-nomadic people populating the Icemark territory in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, characters with ties to this culture may respond particularly strongly to norn encounters. Far from being the dominant Varki religion, though, the norn cult exists on the fringe of this society, which is split into tribes that largely worship Erastil, their ancestors, nature, or a combination thereof. At best, most Varki consider norn cult adherents misguided, but at worst the faithful are considered heretical. In either case, norns do not possess the ability to grant divine spells, and those who worship them and possess the spark of magic attain it from some other mysterious source. PCs and NPCs with Varki heritage can embody two extremes: They consider norns either blasphemous or divine. Each worldview presents multiple storytelling options for GMs to exploit.

Because norn triumvirates live on Golarion only while working toward long-term goals or waiting for returning companions, their abodes on the Material Plane tend to be minimal and unadorned. In addition, norns are private creatures who wish to remain undisturbed while at rest. For this reason, norns take pains to hide their lairs using powerful magic, sometimes even placing their homes in dimensions inaccessible through most conventional means. Norns also keep their lairs safe using lethal traps equipped with lightning bolts, wickedly sharp spears, or other deadly deterrents. Adventurers able to locate and access norn lairs are in for a lucrative surprise: To produce the golden thread the creatures use to cut fates short, they must use gold bars and intricate, magic-tinged clockwork devices, which they store in their lairs. With such vital treasure at risk, norns who discover looters in their homes are quick to visit considerable wrath upon the thieves' heads.

Treasure

Given their obsession with high-minded goals, norns have little earthly concern for material wealth, but they have a strong grasp of the Material Plane's economies, and they realize the power treasure has to influence the world and its inhabitants. Norns thus keep gold coins and loose jewels, which they use as incentives or payment to creatures who aren't receptive to reason—and who the norns don't wish to engage in open combat. In addition, norns often keep spare sets of fur clothes pieced together from the pelts of their exotic prey in their lairs; these can be worth hundreds of gold coins apiece.

Of all the items kept in norn lairs, though, the most famous are their supplies of gold bars. The creatures obtain these through trading, tribute, or payment so they can fuel some of their most powerful abilities. A norn triumvirate's lair typically includes gold bars whose value equals that of several thousand coins or more. These valuable supplies might be further protected by sinister, hidden traps.

To make thread from their golden bars, norns use a complex process that involves clockwork devices imported from the First World. Rumors say these devices contain gears that, when removed from their surrounding machinery, impart a curious effect. For anyone who can decipher and speak aloud the strange script found on one such gear, the strange cog functions like a *scroll of foresight*, and as with a scroll, the words disappear after being read. Rumors claim that incorrectly pronouncing the words on a gear can lead to unintended, disastrous effects ranging from severe injury to instant death.

TOKEN OF THE NORN

In addition to gaining the attention of some of the First World's most powerful beings, pleasing a norn triumvirate—whether by passing their cryptic tests or offering them aid with a vital mission—may garner a tangible benefit. A norn can spend 1 hour crafting a token that consists of a few inches of her flaxen hair tied at each end with golden thread. A PC in possession of a token can use it to slightly realign fate in her own favor. The token allows its bearer to reroll one saving throw within 24 hours of receiving the gift, taking the higher of the two results. Use of this ability must

be declared before the results of the initial saving throw are revealed.

Unlike many other fey, norns distribute their tokens liberally. Most norns are open to bestowing a boon if they believe their reasons for appearing have been taken seriously or if they have been aided, even if the aid is minor. When a party completes a harrowing puzzle or test, norns might even give each member her own token. The only adventurers norns never consider giving tokens to are those who serve evil purposes or publicly shun the concepts of predestination and fate.



Norns on Golarion

Although they watch with interest over all life on the Material Plane—and on the First World and Shadow Plane, for that matter—norns rarely appear to Golarion's adventurers in any place other than the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. The reason behind the creatures' fascination with this icy realm has been debated for centuries, but most agree that norns foresee and seek to preserve the seeds of a great, cataclysmic event that will take place here. Another reason could lie in logistics: Because of their slow physical rejection of the Material Plane, norns come to the plane most often in places where the barrier between it and the First World are the thinnest. Few places meet that description as well as some of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings' untamed locales.

Of the Lands' mystical places, perhaps none is quite as alluring to norns as Grungir Forest. Here, the landscape roils and stretches with eldritch energy, and rolling mists obscure some of the Material Plane's strangest plants and creatures. Norns are said to build their lairs in these mystical woods because few strangers venture into their depths. The creatures particularly favor living near Forestheart, where a breach norns often use to travel

NORNS IN MYTHOLOGY

Not unlike the Three Fates of Greek, Roman, or Slavic origins, the norns of Norse mythology are female beings who rule the destinies of mortals and immortals alike. Although myths describe many norns who exist for varying purposes, the most powerful and prominent of them are named Urthr, Verthandi, and Skuld. Described as giantesses whose arrival at the Well of Fate ended the gods' golden age, these three norns pour water and sand over Yggdrasil—the tree of the world—so that its branches do not rot, thereby preserving the fate of all who exist.

The dispositions of mythological norns cover a wide range, from watchful and benevolent to wrathful and evil. The former are considered protective goddesses, while the latter are said to cause all tragic events in the world. In addition, it's said that upon birth each child receives a visit from norns, who lay out the course of his future as it's meant to be. Some versions of mythology even claim each individual is assigned a norn to watch over his fate. Others claim norns are responsible for some of humanity's most heinous deeds, because the powerful beings must fix evil into one's fate before it ever happens.

between realms lies. Some norns who prefer to avoid the strange creatures of Forestheart instead make their homes near Moonwing's Bough, which is abandoned by everyone except some of the strongest and most powerful of the goddess Desna's mortal followers. Regardless of where they live, triumvirates who pass their time in Grungir Forest are fairly mobile, moving their lairs from ancient trees to inconspicuous hillocks as their missions require—or as their secret sanctums are discovered.

The most secretive norns—or the ones most protective of their considerable treasure—often choose to make homes in the mysterious Faerie City of Nithveil. Although Nithveil spends most of its time rooted in the First World, the city's marvelous spires and arching skyways appear in a new spot in Grungir Forest on the first night of each new moon. This leaves its resident norns' homes briefly exposed—and, for those up to the task, ripe for exploring.

When not resting or regrouping in their lairs, norns spend their time appearing to adventurers and other influential individuals throughout the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and in surrounding areas. Norns' missions most often take them to Hagreach, where they goad adventurers into harassing nearby winter witches; to Icemark, where they aid heroes regardless of whether these stalwarts spurn or worship them; and to the Ironbound Islands, where ruler White Estrid has forged an oddly

close relationship with several triumvirates. Outside of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, norn sightings have been reported in Irrisen, where the creatures delight in subverting Baba Yaga and her ilk, who they believe work counter to fate, and even in some stretches of Varisia, though the creatures are little known in that region.

Sample Norn

This breathtaking, giant-sized woman's raven hair falls to her ankles. Her skin is as pale as the glowing moon, and her ebony eyes deeply pensive.

YRLDAK

CR 10

XP 9,600

Variant norn (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 202)

LN Large fey

Init +10; **Senses** low-light vision, *true seeing*; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +5 insight, +3 natural, -1 size)

hp 138 (12d6+96); regeneration 5 (cold iron)

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities *death ward*, fated; **DR** 10/cold iron;

Immune cold; **Resist** acid 15, electricity 15, fire 15; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. with armor)

Melee shears +17/+12 (1d8+12/15-20 plus energy drain), touch +7 (energy drain)

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

Special Attacks energy drain (1 level, DC 21), shift fate

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +15)

Constant—*death ward*, *tongues*, *true seeing*

At will—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *divination*, *greater dispel magic*, *wind walk* (self only)

1/day—*maze*, *moment of prescience*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 19)

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 26, **Int** 17, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 30

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Diehard^B, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +12, Craft (cloth) +10, Heal +6, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (all) +11, Perception +19, Perform (oratory) +12, Sense Motive +19, Use Magic Device +16

Languages Common, Giant, Sylvan; *tongues*

SQ change shape (humanoid; *alter self* or *giant form II*), sister seeking

Gear +2 *hide armor*, shears

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Shears (Su) Yrldak's shears function as a +5 *keen scimitar* when she wields them, instead of as a +5 *mithral keen speed scimitar* like the shears wielded by fully grown norns.

Sister Seeking (Su) An immature norn separated from her sisters has an innate ability to locate them across any distance

on the same plane. The norn can sense when she is facing in the direction of one or both of her sisters, as well as in which direction they are moving. This sense does not grant a norn the ability to assess distance to her sisters. Once the norn rejoins one or both of her sisters, she loses this ability.

The norn known as Yrldak and her sisters Surlda and Hilde have served as handmaidens for Magdh, prophetess and seer of the mysterious Eldest who have ruled the First World since the gods were young. Serving as their mistress's agents, these norns protect her long-term interests wherever possible, but especially on the Material Plane, where Magdh lacks direct influence. As one of the multiverse's most prescient beings, Magdh is capable of seeing farther down the long lines of probability and fate than the norns themselves, and the triumvirate often takes on dangerous and enigmatic missions on Magdh's behalf.

It was on one such venture that Yrldak met her demise upon the Material Plane, when facing a particularly greedy white dragon who thought the norn trio's treasure would make a good addition to its hoard. As happens to all norns who die outside the First World, Yrldak was reborn on her native plane, and is quickly growing while traversing Golarion looking for her sisters. Exhibiting the dark features of a reborn norn, whose hair and eyes lighten as they age, Yrldak is distinctive among her kind, and though her ebon hair reveals her still undeveloped power, Yrldak is a force to be reckoned with if any stand in her way or tempt fate in her presence. Eager to rejoin her sisters, Yrldak might seek the aid of adventurers, to whom she may promise wealth, prophecy, and other boons if they assist her in her quest.

Nithveil

To the few residents of the Material Plane who have the chance to view its majesty, Nithveil is a city of unbelievable wonder and curiosity. Formed from the malleable matter of the First World, the city is composed of floating skyways, twisted spires, sprawling alleyways,

rolling meadows, imposing graveyards, and foreboding castles. Instead of concrete laws of nature, in Nithveil willpower reigns supreme. The city's most powerful inhabitants can shape their surroundings on command. The rest of its denizens either seek out the city's stable singularities or revel in its illogical mutability, whichever best suits their needs.

Though scholars don't fully understand why Nithveil appears monthly in a random spot in Grungir Forest, most posit that the city's fabric has integrated enough of the Material Plane's essence to render it vulnerable to the tidal pull of Golarion's moon. Regardless of how it happens, Nithveil's travels have given it a population with unrivaled diversity. The city is populated by scores of the First World's talking animals, shape-changing trolls, bizarre gnome clans, and an astonishing variety of lycanthropes. Some Golarion natives also inhabit Nithveil. Many are curious wizards, sorcerers, or oracles who, upon arriving, found themselves irreversibly lost amid the city's baffling architecture. Others are slaves snatched from their homes by the city's undesirables, and still others seek only to pass through the city in hopes of achieving their own mysterious goals.

Of all Nithveil's denizens, some of the most elusive and enigmatic are the raven-haired norns who "ride" the city back to the Material Plane to seek and rejoin their sisters upon Golarion. Here such reborn norns as Yrldak seek aid from both the city's denizens and travelers from the Material Plane they encounter on the lone night each month when the planes align. Some expert adventurers even seek out these reborn norns to offer assistance in finding their sisters—the rewards a fully restored norn triumvirate can offer in return are rivaled by few upon the Material Plane.





NUCKELAVEE

As I stared at the lake in the moonlight, I saw a crab emerge from the dark water and scuttle onto shore. Then another. Then two more. Then many more, until they swarmed all about me, scuttling in a frantic herd. Behind them, out of the lake rode a man on a horse, both of them cloaked in clinging seaweed. The animal trotted onto the rocks, dripping water and snorting with hot breath. A sudden stench of rot and blood brought vomit to my throat. Then I saw that it wasn't a man. It wasn't a horse. And what dripped from its body was not water."

—Calalon Tamry, on why he moved from Lake Encarthan to the Five Kings Mountains

When sheltered citizens of Golarion hear the word “fey,” they often think of lithe nymphs lounging in groves or pixies flitting through meadows. Wiser heads know that the First World has spawned its share of grotesqueries, perhaps none more gruesome than the dreaded nuckelavee. Nicknamed the “devil of the sea,” the repulsive monster looks like the offspring of a union between two incompatible creatures. It resembles a powerful horse with a humanoid torso growing out of its back and legs that have fins or webbed hooves, but that’s where any likeness to a natural creature ends. The abomination has no skin, as if it had been turned inside out. Its gory, glistening body is a lattice of yellow veins pulsating with black blood; thick, white muscles and sinew; and strange, quivering organs. If that weren’t disturbing enough, the torsos of some nuckelavees are grossly deformed, with disproportionately large heads that their necks can barely support and long, spindly arms with oversized hands that hang almost to the ground.

Thankfully, most of the time the nuckelavee dwells unseen in brackish waters around Golarion. The creature does not protect the seas, rivers, lakes, streams, and swamps so much as it punishes those who contaminate them, emerging to hunt and kill the perpetrators. When it gallops onto land, dripping with water and gore, breathing putrid clouds of plague from its rotting mouth, the pungent smell of its viscera blends with a briny tang to turn the stomach of the hardest warrior. However a nuckelavee identifies the guilty—and when the cause is natural, its wrath can be indiscriminate—its judgment is absolute, and it does not rest until it has dispensed violent justice, cutting a bloody swath of destruction across the countryside.

Farmers, ranchers, and other villagers blame the terrifying monster for all manner of ills—drought, famine, plague, blighted crops, dead livestock, and more. They claim that its appearance heralds doom, that it spreads ill fortune, and that horrors grow wherever its black blood soaks into the ground.

Aspect of Nature

Nuckelavees exist for one purpose—to punish those who despoil the natural waterways of Golarion. The grotesque creatures dwell below the surface in murky bogs, still lakes, churning rivers, and coastal currents until they ride forth to bring brutal retribution to offenders on land. Their underwater lairs are usually found near breaches to the First World, suggesting that they seek to stop corruption on the Material Plane before it can flow into the pristine realm of the fey. Just as the physical form of a nuckelavee is an unsettling hybrid of horse and humanoid, the creature embodies the strange duality of purity and contamination. Like a raging spirit

of vengeance, it tenaciously pursues those who pollute the lakes, rivers, and seas of the world, but it does so by spreading a virulent disease that sickens living creatures and withers plants. It may be that such punishment is only fitting for purveyors of filth, or perhaps the inherent conflict between opposing corruption and reveling in it explains why nuckelavees are so ferocious and hideous, driven as they are by anger, bloodlust, and ugliness. The greater the desecration that compels the fey horror to vengeance, the more disturbing a visage it presents.

Ecology

As unnatural creatures, nuckelavees do not mate and reproduce biologically. They simply appear near breaches to the First World and claim the surrounding regions as their territory. Scholars of the fey theorize that the Eldest send the nuckelavees to the Material Plane to prevent unwanted contamination from flowing through the breaches and tainting their fertile home. This theory also explains the nuckelavee’s freakish appearance—many creatures of the First World are prototypes of the familiar versions on the Material Plane. Perhaps the devil of the sea is an early model of a centaur or an aquatic horse with ghastly variations. Its twisted form may also be a reflection of the impurity in which it wallows, such that one nuckelavee’s torso might have a normal humanoid appearance while another’s is hideously deformed.

Most of the time, a nuckelavee slumbers in a sea cave or flooded hollow in its home body of water, motionless in a bed of kelp or a maze of coral. It needs little nourishment; a few bites of aquatic plants from time to time are enough to sustain it. Some nuckelavees are more active than others and patrol their waters, hunting catoblepas and other beasts that poison the environment. Regardless, a nuckelavee responds quickly when it senses invasive contamination, whether the source is natural (such as an algal bloom that chokes sea life) or artificial (such as toxic discharge from a wizard’s laboratory, sewage from a city’s storm drain, trash dumped by a fishing vessel, or even tainted runoff from a farmer’s field). Even activities such as overfishing, building dams, or harvesting seaweed to be dried and burned for its ash might incur a nuckelavee’s wrath. The nuckelavee emerges on the shore and gallops with thundering hooves to destroy the source of the contamination. It does not rest or return to its home waters until it kills its quarry or perishes in the attempt. During these rampages, the fey creature’s fetid breath spreads a highly infectious disease called mortasheen that wilts plants and causes living beings to sicken and die.

A nuckelavee is a hulking beast, 6 feet tall at the horse head and 9 feet tall at the humanoid head, and it weighs about 2,000 pounds. If not slain, it lives on, ageless.

When the monster is finally killed, perhaps by a target it underestimated, sooner or later a replacement appears near the same breach to the First World. It's not known whether the nuckelavee regrows itself or the Eldest send another guardian as a replacement.

Society

Nuckelavees on the Material Plane rarely interact with one another. Each remains within the region near its particular breach to the First World (though the boundaries of those regions are fluid and unknowable to mortals). When a guardian leaves the water to vent its fury on a despoiler, it pursues its prey to the ends of the world, even if that means entering the domain of its kin. In cases of extreme abuse of nature's waterways, multiple nuckelavees might ride together in a terrifying pack, their howls swelling and crashing like the roar of the sea.

Once a nuckelavee's wrath is stoked, its rage grows hotter and sharper as the monster thunders inexorably toward its target, bringing plague and death to all living creatures in its path. The fey avenger is practically crazed with bloodlust by the time it reaches its quarry, shouting profane curses in Aklo and sharing its horrific punishments with anyone within reach, whether it is the transgressor sought after or not. Sometimes, it seizes the culprit in its long arms, holding the creature tightly to its gory back, and takes its prey to suffer excruciating torments in its lair (which is frequently underwater and is usually decorated with trophies cut from the bodies of past victims).

Many skeptics believe the nuckelavee is just a story cooked up to frighten people into conserving nature's bounty and keeping Golarion's waters clean. However, anyone who has seen the devil of the sea or witnessed its trail of atrocities knows better. These believers swear by various methods of warding off the fey horror—wearing garlands of seaweed or kelp, filling one's pockets with horsehair soaked in brine, muttering prayers to the Eldest or other entities—but these legends are just that. A few people who have been chased by a nuckelavee claim to have escaped by leaping over a stream or creek, which the monster supposedly will not cross. (This tactic was born of the mistaken belief that such an unnatural abomination would be repelled by fresh running water.) Druids and priests of nature gods are said to know how to hide from a nuckelavee or coax it back to its lair, but this tactic only works after the creature's vengeance has been carried out.

Most other fey creatures avoid nuckelavees, perhaps fearing that the misshapen monsters do the bidding of the Eldest. It's also suggested that other fey creatures don't appreciate the company of such vile and putrid

monsters, or that they simply have little in common with the single-minded beasts other than a shared interest in conservation. Although intelligent aquatic creatures shun nuckelavees as grotesque perversions of nature, they also show nuckelavees great deference because the fey protect their homes from pollution and contamination. Especially vile sea and swamp denizens, such as annis hags and sea hags, see the fey plague-bearers as kindred spirits, and sometimes pair up with the creatures in mutual bouts of terror and antagonism.

Campaign Role

An encounter with a nuckelavee should be frightening for any group of player characters, regardless of their level, simply because of the skinless creature's disturbing appearance—it is revolting in every way, especially if its torso is distorted. Thanks to the rumors that spread throughout lands where nuckelavees have been spotted, they have a reputation as relentless butchers that do not rest until their targets have been torn to shreds. Many villagers share the opinion that if you're marked by a nuckelavee, you'd do better to take your own life rather than risk facing its torments. They speak of its mighty hooves pounding like cracks of thunder, its fang-filled mouth spewing clouds of pestilence, its blood and gore stinking like briny death.

Scholars agree that a nuckelavee comes after those who harm the natural waters of its territory. However, no one knows why it hunts a particular transgressor but might ignore another person who shared in the corruption, how long it takes the creature to rouse from slumber and seek vengeance, or even what constitutes an offense in its eyes. That mystery adds to the general fear of the devil of the sea.

In low-level games, the player characters shouldn't face a nuckelavee in battle on their own. Instead, they might overhear town gossip about the fey monster, come across the wreckage and slaughter that marks its passing, or see it gallop by as it chases a fleeing victim. Perhaps they could be part of a larger crew hired to protect a local lord or merchant who fears retribution for his sins against the water. Villagers might ask an adventurer who is a druid or a priest of Gozreh to use her "mystical nature powers" to keep them safe from the creature's rampages. Regardless, you should build up an eerie atmosphere around the nuckelavee so the PCs come to regard it as a dire, murderous force of nature. Their dread and anticipation will make their eventual direct encounter with the beast more dramatic and memorable.

Obviously, introducing a nuckelavee into your game allows you to have the characters confront environmental aspects of the campaign world. For example, perhaps the PCs must stop a nuckelavee's attacks on a town by facing

down an alchemist who is heedlessly contaminating a bog with waste from his laboratory. But the devil of the sea can be the center of many other plot hooks. Maybe the heroes have been tasked with draining a swamp or pond to recover a buried relic, and their actions wake a nuckelavee that nobody knew about. Perhaps the cowed residents of a village try to appease a nuckelavee with offerings of goods, animals, or people. Maybe the characters use the nuckelavee for their own goals by baiting an enemy into spoiling waters near a nuckelavee's lair, ensuring that the grisly avenger goes after their foe.

In your campaign, you can also explore the weird, fleshless nature of the monster. A shaman's claim that nuckelavees are full of rage because their skins were stolen by the gods could be the seed to send the party on a quest to find one of the creature's lost skins—if such a thing even exists. Alternatively, perhaps each nuckelavee safeguards its own skin, which is hidden somewhere near its lair, and anyone who finds it can gain power over the foul creature.

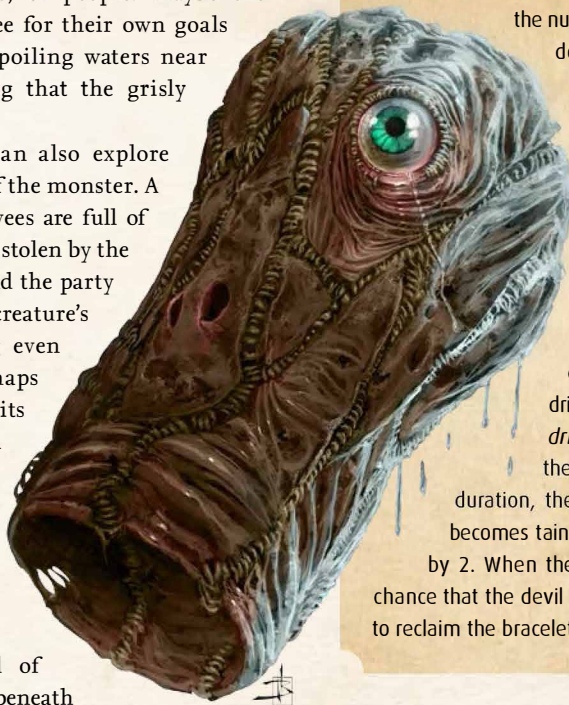
Treasure

A nuckelavee has no need of wealth or treasure in its lair beneath the waves. Typically its only worldly possession is the finely crafted masterwork weapon it wields against those who incur its wrath (though some nuckelavees eschew manufactured weapons and instead rely solely on their bite and their hooves). The possessions of the creature's victims often end up half buried in the silt of its submerged cave and in the seabed, lake bottom, or river bottom of the surrounding area. Such items are stripped from offenders that the devil of the sea drags back to its lair, where they are drowned, eviscerated, and scattered as food for the local aquatic life. Almost any mundane item has a chance of being present, although most objects have spent enough time in the water to rust, warp, or sustain other damage. Especially shiny trinkets might have been swallowed by large fish that swam nearby or pilfered by underwater creatures drawn to such treasures.

When a nuckelavee kills a victim on land, it sometimes cuts off one of the body parts—typically a head or a hand—to display in its lair. These spoils don't last long underwater, and the fey guardian replaces them often. A trespasser in the cave might find a row of these recent flesh trophies impaled on spikes wrought from coral or

TOKEN OF THE NUCKELAVEE

Nuckelavees are rarely pleased by anything other than bloody vengeance, but occasionally they take a liking to a mortal—usually one with some connection to nature—who has a reputation for being a friend of the waters, perhaps by virtue of clearing a river of debris or driving a coven of polluting hags from a shore. In such instances, the nuckelavee bestows its token upon the do-gooder. The recipient awakens one day to find a bracelet made of cold, gray skin that smells of brine and constantly drips water. (Some say the nuckelavees craft these bracelets from strips of their own skin, which is why they have none left to wear.) Upon donning the bracelet, for the next 24 hours the recipient gains the ability to make contaminated water clean enough to drink (as per the spell *purify food and drink*, but only for water). However, the fey token has a cost. For the same duration, the water inside the recipient's body becomes tainted, lowering his or her Constitution by 2. When the token's power expires, there is a chance that the devil of the sea comes after the recipient to reclaim the bracelet.



seashells, some still festooned with whatever helmets, necklaces, or rings they wore in life.

If the rumors are true, each nuckelavee has a separate skin that it keeps hidden and well protected near its lair. No one has ever seen such a skin, so their existence is just a theory, but they would fetch high prices from those interested in learning more about the fey.

Nuckelavees on Golarion

Nuckelavees have been reported all across the Inner Sea region, though since many of the witnesses were in a state of utter terror, inebriated, or otherwise unreliable, it's possible that some of them merely spotted a rider on a horse and mistook it for the deformed fey. The best way to find a nuckelavee is to locate a breach to the First World and search the waters nearby—or just despoil them in some way, in which case the creature will probably find you.

The Lands of the Linnorm Kings harbor many rifts to the First World, and nuckelavees frequent the coast, where the frigid rivers of that land meet the waters of the Steaming Sea. Farther inland, the fey of the wandering city of Nithveil are said to know the secrets of escaping

NUCKELAVEES IN MYTHOLOGY

In the real world, the nuckelavee is a malicious fairy from Scottish folklore that lives in the sea and terrorizes the northern archipelago known as the Orkney Islands. Physical descriptions of the monster vary; some say it's a man riding a horse, and others say it's a centaurlike hybrid of both creatures, often with fins or flippers. Most tales agree that the creature is grotesque—skinless and gory, with mismatched features. Worse, the legendary beast is not driven by the desire to punish those who despoil the waters and instead exists merely to bring death and plague to the islands. Supposedly, the creature becomes enraged by the bitter odor created when seaweed is burned to produce soda ash, and it rampages through the land, cursing horses with mortasheen (which eventually spreads to the humans). The devil of the sea is blamed not only for sick livestock but also for various natural troubles, including drought and poor crops. Fortunately, the evil fairy will not cross running water, so its prey can find safety by leaping over a stream. The benevolent entity known as the Mither o' the Sea can also defeat the nuckelavee's curse and drive it back into the dark, stagnant waters from which it came.

from the gruesome avengers, and perhaps that's why the faerie settlement moves around the land. At the opposite extremes of temperature, nuckelavees are known to live along the Junira River between the deserts of Thuvia and Osirion, not far from a First World breach outside the city of Lamasara. The local festivals usually include performers dressed as the devils of the sea, working in pairs to accommodate the costume, though the costumes are scorned by merchants who fear that the dramatizations invite bad luck.

The largest number of nuckelavee sightings occur in the eastern part of Avistan, along the regions touched by the long Sellen River and its tributaries. The creatures have attacked numerous communities from the River Kingdoms, which are rich with waterways, down to where the Sellen feeds into the Inner Sea. The River Kingdoms support a large population of alchemists and poisoners, ensuring that runoff and pollution are present in the region—a perfect draw for nuckelavees. Nuckelavees ride frequently through the corrupted, poisoned wastelands in southern Kyonin; the elven kingdom's portals open to many locations across Golarion, and perhaps to the First World as well, which would allow nuckelavees easy access to that land. The executioners of Galt often foul the rivers of that land by dumping bloody corpses into them, but even fleeing into the dense Southern Hymbrian Forest does not save them from punishment. Between Andoran and Taldor, the Sellen River empties into Star Bay, home

to one or more nuckelavees. The cities and villages that border the bay enforce harsh environmental laws to keep the waters clean and stave off the bringers of disease, death, and despair.

No matter where they ride, nuckelavees exist only to destroy those who harm the natural waters of Golarion. Some scholars count the devils of the sea among the Tane, the dreadful creatures of destruction commanded by the Eldest of the First World, sent to the Material Plane to stop its poisons from flowing into the home of the fey. Ultimately, it can be argued that nuckelavees do good works by slaying the defilers of nature, but their heinous methods and sickening visages make it hard to see them as anything other than pure evil.

Kallas Devil

Growing from the back of a horselike beast is the torso of a sea hag with grossly elongated arms and large, clawed hands. Its tangled web of stringy hair does not hide the disturbing fact that the hideous creature has no skin, and is built of gore and viscera.

KALLAS DEVIL

CR 9

XP 6,400

Variant nuckelavee (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 203)

NE Large fey (aquatic)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

Aura frightful presence (30 ft., DC 20),

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+5 Dex, +2 dodge, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 102 (12d6+60)

Fort +9, **Ref** +15, **Will** +10

DR 10/cold iron; **Immune** poison, disease

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee mwk trident +11/+6 (2d6+5), bite +10 (1d8+5 plus disease), 2 hooves +5 (1d6+2 plus disease)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-ft. cone, 10d6, Reflex DC 21 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), evil eye, trample (1d6+7, DC 21)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +13)

3/day—*black tentacles, call lightning, stinking cloud* (DC 17)

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 20, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 29 (33 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Stance, Mobility, Spring Attack, Wind Stance

Skills Acrobatics +20 (+28 when jumping), Escape Artist +20, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (nature) +16, Perception +17, Stealth +16, Swim +28

Languages Aklo, Common, Sylvan

SQ amphibious, undersized weapons

Gear masterwork trident

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Evil Eye (Su) Three times per day, the Kallas Devil can cast its dire gaze upon any single creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or be staggered as a strange nebulous distress and a gnawing sense of impending doom plague the victim. If the Kallas Devil uses its evil eye on someone already afflicted by this curse, the victim must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or be overwhelmed with fright and collapse into a comatose state for 3 days. Each day that passes, the comatose victim must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or perish. The evil eye is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Evil Eye Curse: Gaze—failed save; save Will DC 20; frequency 1/day; effect staggered (or fall comatose if already under the effects of the evil eye).

This nuckelavee is even more hideous than usual because its torso is that of a sea hag, whose skinless head somehow retains a mess of hairlike knotted seaweed that flails behind it as the creature gallops furiously across the land. The creature dwells in Kallas Lake at the southern tip of the River Kingdoms and terrorizes the nearby town of Riverton, where humans and half-elves survive by fishing and guiding travelers along the branches of the Sellen. Its mighty hooves also pound along the riverbank as far west as Tymon and as far east as the Creeperwood, bringing plague and death to those who despoil the waters.

The influence of its hag torso drives the beast to want to clothe itself in skin. Other nuckelavees keep trophies of their kills, but the Kallas Devil flays its quarry to create a patchwork cloak of flesh that it drapes over its upper body. The husk of skin tears easily, so the devil requires a steady supply of victims to maintain its appearance. Some villages that suffer under its vengeance try to appease it by staking out criminals and other undesirables for its pleasure. The fey terror takes these sacrifices but shows no favor to its supplicants.

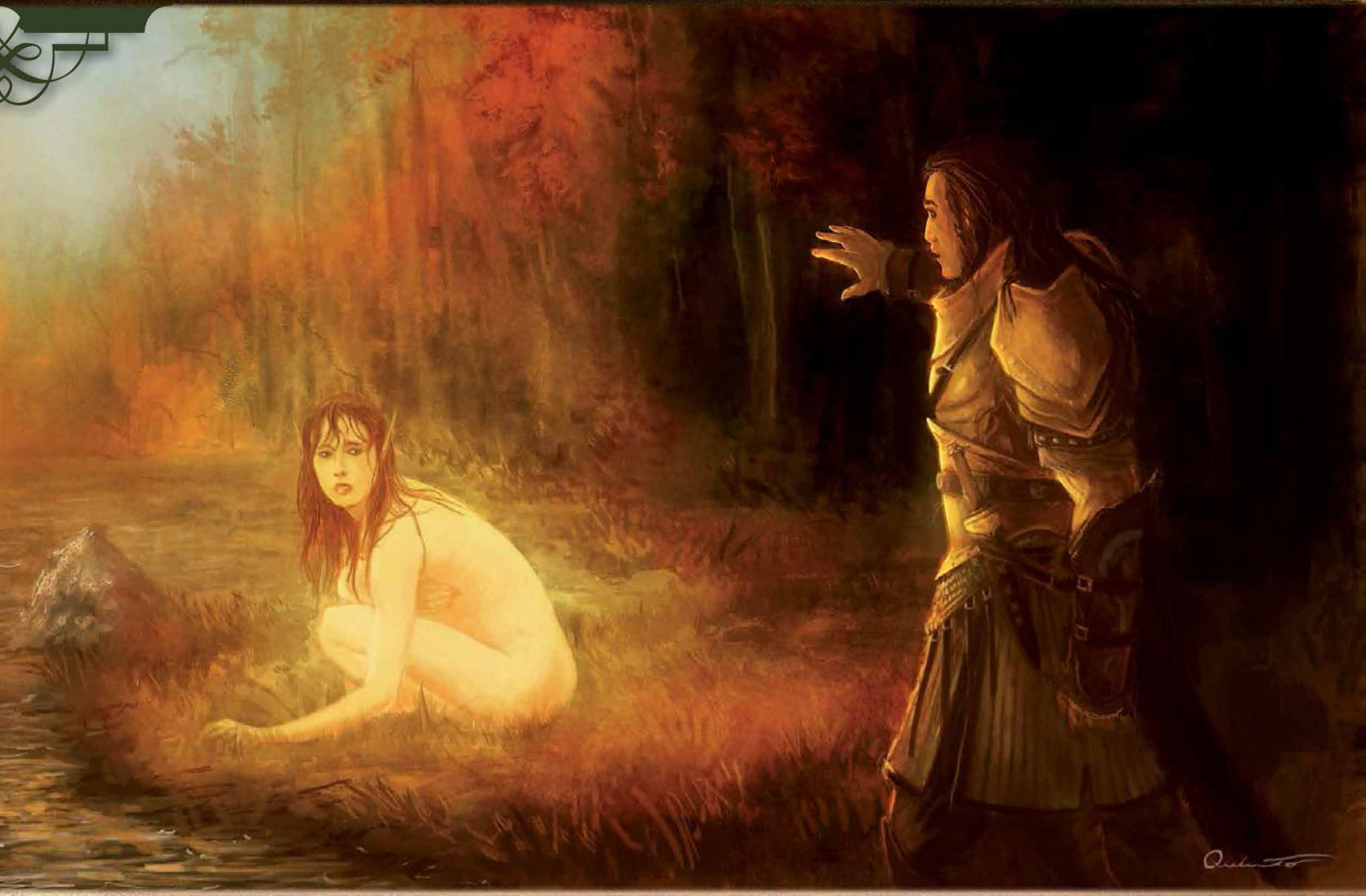
Kallas Lake

The Kallas Devil lives in a partially flooded cave below the lake bed, accessible through a sinkhole that lies several hundred yards out from the northern shore. The hole, hidden in an area thick with silt and seaweed, gives way to a shaft that plunges below the lake at a slight angle, then turns sharply, becoming a horizontal tunnel that opens into the cavern. The lair is cold and dark; luminescent algae on the walls gives off a green

glow that faintly illuminates part of the hollow. Because the cave is open to Kallas Lake, where the branches of the Sellen River converge, fish, snakes, eels, and other natural aquatic creatures sometimes make their way into the half-flooded lair.

The Kallas Devil sleeps in the submerged portion of the cave and stores its skin cloak (plus any raw materials, such as half-flayed victims and whatever possessions they might have had) on a rocky plateau that protrudes above the waterline. Many captives drown during the descent to the lair, but some survive the trip and are conscious when flayed. Large gray oozes that cling to the cave walls and roof digest the remains of its prey after it harvests their skin with its claws.





NYMPH

I spent my life looking for her, and in my sixtieth year, I found her. Was it worth it? I would say so. A blind man can still sing, no? And now I have everything I could ask for—gold, fame, and love. Sure, I can't see, and I will never behold such painful perfection again, but that moment was complete bliss, both for her otherworldly—no, divine—beauty and for the sheer wonder of her home, which was more extravagant than the greatest works of art or architecture civilization has ever wrought. I can still see her in my mind, and her inspiration is all I need. I don't regret anything, and certainly not looking upon her as my final sight."

—Avad the Blind, *Visions of Sight's Unseen*

Residing in the most isolated and beautiful places in the world, the nubile fey known as nymphs are at once dangerous and beautiful. Charged with the protection of places of extreme natural beauty left undefiled by civilization, nymphs rank among the least capricious of fey, yet are as unpredictable as the wilds that they live in. Nymphs always appear as strikingly beautiful young women, with large almond eyes that range from the deepest cerulean to the palest emerald. Their skin matches the tone of the local human populations, from a pale ivory toward the poles to a rich mahogany near the equator, while their silky hair runs anywhere from soft gold to inky black, favoring the shades of the local human populace's hair. All nymphs have long, tapered ears, much like those of elves. Nymphs rarely wear clothes, instead preferring to display their bodies for the power it gives them over others.

Nearly all humanoid races consider nymphs to be the embodiment of physical beauty, but these fey are particularly fascinating to humans, who view them as idealized versions of themselves. Their beauty is so perfect, in fact, that few sentient creatures can look upon a nymph and remain unchanged. Merely taking in the nymph's perfect form can cause blindness, while a sideways glance from the fey can stun a creature into submission. A nymph's embrace is rumored to cause madness—if her lover lives through the ordeal.

Because of nymphs' blinding beauty, other races often fear and respect these fey (if they believe in them at all), and rarely go out of their way to disturb the solitary creatures. Still, there are some who are too tempted by the promise of beholding the vision of perfection. These brave souls often find themselves stumbling blindly through the woods, the image of the nymph forever burned into their ruined eyes. And yet, for those who show them the proper respect, nymphs are kind and gentle creatures, oftentimes showering kind souls who wander into their groves with magical gifts and kind words, and in particularly special cases, inspiring them to achieve great things.

Aspect of Nature

Guardians of nature and protectors of the last undefiled lands of the world, nymphs are the stewards of the fey, and are the literal manifestation of nature's splendor. Natural beauty can be found in any number of forms, from snowy pine forests to sandy beaches, so nymphs can be found virtually anywhere. As stewards of these places, nymphs never consider their wards their homes, and instead view their places of residences as temporary, treating them as respectful visitors would the offerings of a host. Regardless of where they are found, nymphs always blend into their surroundings, constructing

simple yet elegant abodes that enhance their wards' natural splendor.

Nymphs' wards are always hidden in isolated places, well out of the reach of prying mortal eyes, but with many ways for the nymphs to access the land around them. Occasionally, a nymph's home is near civilization, but such wards are very rare and only occur in newly settled regions or deep in isolated forests where the nymph can live in harmony with the indigenous population. The ward is always a place of incredible beauty, and is often enhanced by the nymph through magic and carefully planned additions to the flora and fauna.

Ecology

Nymphs can be found anywhere the natural splendor of the world lies untarnished by the hands of civilization. From snowy mountain peaks to tropical rainforests, nymphs' homes run the gamut of environments. Nymphs live in these areas to protect them, and guard their wards fiercely against any who attack them, as those who seek to cause harm soon discover. Despite this, nymphs are often hospitable to kind souls who seek out their wards for peaceful reasons, and offer help to visitors who are respectful of their homes. Nymphs' wards often have natural defenses, from poisonous fruit to deadly quicksand; a kindly nymph may warn well-intentioned visitors about them, while a distrustful or angry nymph is likely to trick enemies into her defenses' grasp.

Nymphs' diets consist of whatever food is easily attainable in their wards, but the fey make an effort to avoid consuming the flesh of other living creatures or parts of plants without which the flora cannot survive. A nymph who lives in a temperate forest may consume toadstools and berries, while one who resides in the desert may subsist solely on the flowers of cacti and water drawn from deep wells.

Because of their fickle and wild spirits, the concept of marriage is completely foreign to nymphs, and they only take lovers to satisfy their lusts and to produce offspring. Being exclusively female, nymphs must seek out males of other humanoid races to reproduce, but they consort with members of both sexes for pleasure and companionship. When the time comes to mate, nymphs create elaborate schemes to bring lovers into their wards, but only the most worthy of men survive these schemes unscathed. More often than not, would-be suitors stumble blindly away from the nymph's home, cursed by the magnificence of her appearance. Nymphs favor humans and elves above all others when selecting companions, but have been known to take other fey, such as fauns, as lovers. The relationships that follow are always passionate, but like candles, burn out shortly thereafter. Oftentimes, the nymph's partner departs the ordeal not only blind, but

TOKEN OF THE NYMPH

Of the fey most commonly found on Golarion, nymphs are among the most generous with their tokens, granting them to kindly visitors and to creatures they hope to seduce or to manipulate into helping protect their wards. Their tokens are almost always crafted from the natural resources of their wards, and thus can take on a virtually limitless array of forms. Nymphs who cultivate lust lilies, however, often provide preserved specimens of the rare flower as tokens of their favor.

A nymph can spend 1 hour crafting a token from a part of her ward (including tree bark, smoothed stones, or dried flowers). This token grants the wielder a +2 bonus on Charisma-based checks when dealing with the fauna of the nymph's ward and in a 5-mile radius around the ward. Additionally, the wielder of a nymph's token increases the saving throw DCs of any class abilities, spells, or spell-like abilities determined by Charisma, such as a sorcerer's spell save DCs or a cleric's channel energy save DCs, as if the wielder's Charisma score were 2 higher than normal. The token does not grant additional uses of abilities per day or bonus spells. These bonuses last for 1 day or until the token's wielder takes the token more than 5 miles from the nymph's ward, after which the token serves only as a reminder of the creature's encounter with the nymph benefactor.

Note that this boon may be combined with a nymph's inspiration ability, adding the listed bonuses to those granted by the token of her affection. This does not increase the duration of the bonuses granted by her token.

also in a markedly different state of mind, and rumors persist that to lie with a nymph is to court madness.

The offspring of nymphs are usually nymphs themselves. At birth, young nymphs resemble female elven infants, already exuding a radiant, otherworldly beauty. They reach maturity after approximately 50 years, standing only slightly shorter than the average human and weighing about 100 pounds. Nymph children are taught the ways of the wild as soon as they can walk, and learn to harness their natural charms soon after. When they reach maturity, they are given wards of their own and leave their mothers, though daughters often take wards near their mothers and thus see them as often as they like.

Nymphs typically live between 300 and 500 years on the Material Plane, but their lifespans can increase to several millennia on the First World.

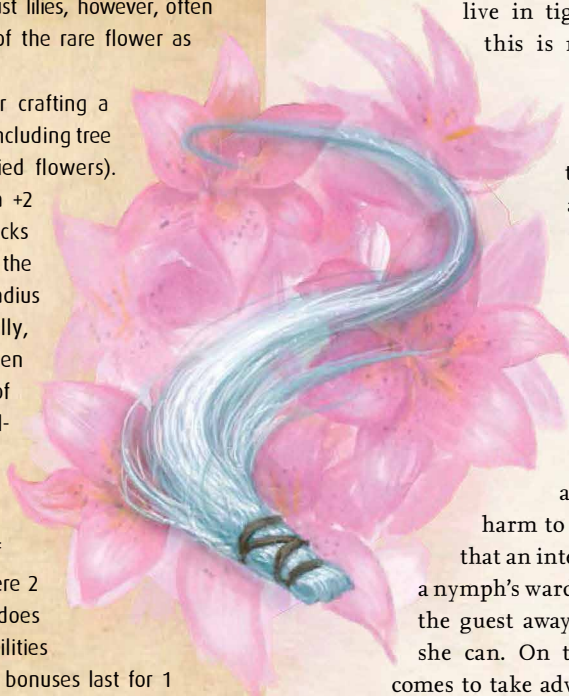
Society

By their very nature, nymphs are solitary creatures, as isolated from the world as the secluded places they stand vigil over. In this way, they are very different from fey who

live in tight-knit communities. However, this is not to say that nymphs do not maintain connections with their families. It is very common for nymphs to stay in contact with their mothers, daughters, sisters, and even cousins who dwell within relatively close proximity to their ward.

When dealing with non-fey, nymphs present themselves in one of two ways: as mysterious beauties with a kind and helpful disposition, or as terrifying fighting spirits with a vendetta against anyone who would bring harm to their homes. On the rare chance that an interloper innocently stumbles upon a nymph's ward, she is typically kind and ushers the guest away quickly, offering any assistance she can. On the occasion that a greedy soul comes to take advantage of a nymph or her home, the malicious trespasser finds himself faced with a fierce guardian. More than a few trespassers have stumbled out of the woods, blinded forever as punishment for their greed—if they were lucky enough not to be killed outright.

Nymphs' relations with other fey are a more complicated matter, and vary from species to species. For obvious reasons, nymphs ally themselves with good fey and can be found in their company on both the Material Plane and the First World. They appreciate the lighthearted nature of fauns and enjoy their company. Nymphs may share their wards with dryad; such powerful pairings can be found protecting some of the most beautiful forests in the world. Sprites frequently live in the vicinity of nymphs' wards, taking it upon themselves to protect the wards as well, regardless of the nymphs' approval. A nymph often allows such arrangements unless the sprites are rude to any of her guests or annoy the nymph herself. And while nymphs willing ally themselves with good fey to protect nature's purest places, they deal with evil fey quickly and effectively, and do not permit such villains to exist in or around their wards. Nymphs hold nuckelavees in particular disdain, as they destroy the beauty of the natural world they should be protecting. If



possible, nymphs who know of a nuckelavee in the area around their ward work with adventurers or other goodly fey to destroy it and restore the water to its natural state.

Campaign Role

Adventurers are likely to encounter nymphs in situations where the balance of nature is in danger. Nymphs in such threatened areas may seek out adventurers to stop the plots of evil druids, to defeat powerful warlords seeking to pillage the wilds, or to put an end to the machinations of greedy corporations (like Andoran's Lumber Consortium or the globe-spanning Aspis Consortium).

Nymphs' homes are secluded and exceedingly difficult to locate, and the fey take pride in enhancing their wards' natural beauty with plants and fauna that can protect their territory. Thus it is common to find gorgeous yet dangerous plants and animals in the vicinity of a nymph's home. Adventurers lost in the wilderness may find luck leads them into such a ward, where they may convince its protector of their good intentions and with luck, gain her aid in finding their way out—assuming they survive the nymph's often-deadly defenses and don't take hostile actions against the ward's guardian in retribution.

Nymphs rarely serve as villains in low-level games, but can work as a rival or opposing force to neophyte adventurers who have a reason to use the natural resources of the wild. In a high-level campaigns, a nymph can be an excellent adversary, serving as an obstacle to collecting a rare type of wood needed to make a special weapon, or perhaps as a guardian of a cave the adventurers need to explore. It is more likely, however, that the PCs will find an ally (though admittedly not the most loyal ally) in the nymph. Bards in particular have reason to seek out the attention of nymphs, as the nymphs' beauty can inspire them to achieve even greater success in their musical studies by serving as a muse.

Flexible by nature, nymphs can be presented in a number of ways to make a memorable encounter. When using nymphs in an adventure, it is important to make the environment as fascinating and exotic as the nymph herself. Nymphs' wards run the gamut of environments, and their beauty doesn't need to be immediately visible. An elephant boneyard hidden deep in the jungle is just as appropriate a setting for a nymph as a desert oasis that is perpetually shrouded in a blinding sandstorm. Adding class levels to nymphs is yet another way to bring a level of mystery to these reclusive fey. Nymphs are naturally powerful spellcasters, and enhancing their abilities makes them even more intimidating. Levels in bard, oracle, and sorcerer are excellent choices for nymphs who take advantage of their natural charisma. Nymph oracles add another layer of mystery to encounters, and their curses and revelations can have many strange effects on

their wards. Many nymphs take the path of the druid as a natural expression of their close relationship with nature, and those who do are often assume leadership roles over other the nymphs in that area during crises.

Treasure

Vain creatures, nymphs prefer treasure of two particular types: jewelry and reflective items. They gleefully collect all manner of personal adornments, from mother-of-pearl hair combs to diamond-studded necklaces. Nymphs hold the work of elven jewelers in the highest regard, and covet these treasures above all others. They favor reflective metals for their reflective properties—these narcissistic fey have been known to stare for hours at their own reflections, doting over their already flawless appearances. When bartering with outsiders, nymphs often request gifts of glimmering crystals and silvered mirrors in exchange for their favor.

Nymphs are also known to cultivate rare flowers, decorative trees, and other plants found almost exclusively in nymph wards; the most legendary of these cultivated rarities is the lust lily. A night-blooming flower, a lust lily can grow in any environment and uniformly appears as a trumpet-shaped bloom with champagne-pink petals. Old wives' tales commonly depict the nectar of such flowers as a sort of love potion, although such stories are not true. It's possible accounts of nymph wards and their indigenous flora conflate the effects of the unique blossoms with those of close encounters with nymphs themselves. In any case, lust lily plants and preserved lust lilies have been known to fetch exorbitant prices among gardeners, botanists, and collectors of fey artifacts.

Nymphs on Golarion

On Golarion, nymphs serve as the guardians of nature's most pure places. They are most commonly found in the forests of Andoran, Kyonin, the Mwangi Expanse, the River Kingdoms, and Varisia, but the increasing number of reports of encounters with nymphs in the island nation of Jalmeray; in the desert oases of Katapesh, Osirion, Qadira, and Thuvia; and on the steppes and tundra of northern Avistan and the Crown of the World suggest they may have larger populations in such areas than previously thought. In the temperate forests of Avistan, pale-skinned nymphs dance alongside fauns, and are often found deep in the most heavily wooded areas, well out of the way of mortal souls. The exception to this is Kyonin, where nymphs and elves are often found in comparatively close proximity, and trade wares regularly. Many nymphs in Avistan have wards that resemble a dryad's glade, because of their temperate environments.

The nymphs of Garund are found in a number of varied regions, from the continent's expansive northern deserts

Nymphs in Mythology

Historically, the term “nymph” has been used to describe a wide range of minor female nature deities with ties to particular locations. In Greek mythology, nymphs are depicted as beautiful young women who love to dance and sing and have some power of the elements of nature. Nymphs are believed to dwell in the natural features that they represent, whether forested groves, high mountain peaks, rocky grottoes, or bodies of water.

While not technically gods, nymphs served as retainers for a number of Greek deities, including Artemis, Dionysus, Hermes, and even the faunlike Pan. Like gods, nymphs never grew old or died of old age, but could be laid low by other methods.

Because of the wide variety of natural habitats in the Greek countryside, stories of nymphs abound in Greek mythology, and a number of creatures once considered nymphs from a mythological perspective are now regarded as distinct species in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. In Ancient Greece, nymphs who lived in trees were known as dryads, while those who lived in fresh water were named nereids, and those who protected stony grottoes and mountains were called oreads. Still other monsters, such as the dreaded Scylla, were once considered nymphs as well.

to the sweltering tropical rainforests of the central Mwangi Expanse. These nymphs have tanned or dark skin and dark hair, and are sometimes considered to be powerful spirits by the indigenous Mwangi inhabitants. In the jungles, these fey live peacefully with the animals of the area, providing protection from poachers and hunters. In the sweltering deserts, some nymphs take it upon themselves to use their powers to protect worthy travelers lost in the deadly wastelands. Some simply interview travelers who wish to take shelter from the elements or refill their waterskins, turning away those who have vile souls, while less trusting nymphs employ magical divinations to test individuals before granting access to their life-giving wards.

Nymphs can be found around any area of natural beauty, and lone nymphs are found throughout the Inner Sea region. The Lady of the Lotus makes her home on the coast of Jalmeray, and the twisted nymph now only known as the Wasted Maiden resides as a shadow of herself in the Mana Wastes, in what used to be her ward millennia ago—the warped magic of the region has extended her life and transformed her into a gruesome mockery of her former glory. Upon the Winterwall Glacier in northern Avistan, the nymph Intindiatra lives in a hollow chasm that glitters like diamonds when the sun shines through its thin roof from above.

The nymphs of Golarion all originally came from the First World, the verdant “rough-draft” of the Material Plane, and many still guard wards there. On the Material Plane, nymphs’ wards are often places where the boundaries between the two worlds are thin, and shifting between the two planes is frequently possible through natural portals or gateways. Nymphs who protect such valuable wards are typically much more suspicious of visitors, knowing that the presence of portals makes invasions of their wards more likely. In the First World, nymphs often hold positions of power, and act as emissaries between the capricious and unpredictable leaders of the First World, the Eldest. Nymphs only serve the neutrally aligned Eldest in this capacity, and refuse to serve the evil Eldest. The Lantern King has the largest number of nymph diplomats, followed by Ng and the Lost Prince. Nymphs who serve Eldest often take on their qualities, and usually have class levels in the oracle or sorcerer classes.

Sample Nymph

This slender, seductive woman has bone-white skin and an otherworldly beauty.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| KHALIRAI, THE IVORY QUEEN | CR 15 |
| XP 51,200 | |
| Nymph oracle 8 (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 217, <i>Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide</i> 42) | |
| CG Medium fey | |
| Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24 | |
| Aura blinding beauty (30 ft., DC 24), | |
| DEFENSE | |
| AC 29, touch 28, flat-footed 21 (+10 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural) | |
| hp 152 (16 HD; 8d6+8d8+88) | |
| Fort +18, Ref +25, Will +27; +2 vs. death effects, disease, mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, and stunning | |
| DR 10/cold iron | |
| OFFENSE | |
| Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft. | |
| Melee +2 <i>disruption light mace</i> +19/+14 (1d6+1) | |
| Special Attacks command undead (13/day, DC 26), stunning glance (DC 24) | |
| Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +13) 1/day— <i>dimension door</i> | |
| Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +12) 4th— <i>dispel magic</i> , <i>summon nature's ally IV</i> 3rd— <i>call lightning</i> , <i>daylight</i> , <i>neutralize poison</i> 2nd— <i>barkskin</i> , <i>flame blade</i> , <i>resist energy</i> , <i>tree shape</i> 1st— <i>charm animal</i> (DC 16), <i>endure elements</i> , <i>entangle</i> (DC 16), <i>obscuring mist</i> , <i>pass without trace</i> , <i>produce flame</i> 0— <i>flare</i> , <i>guidance</i> , <i>know direction</i> , <i>light</i> | |
| Oracle Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +18) | |

- 4th (5/day)—*cure critical wounds* (DC 24), *fear* (DC 24), *restoration*
- 3rd (7/day)—*animate dead*, *cure serious wounds* (DC 23),
remove disease, *searing light*
- 2nd (9/day)—*align weapon*, *cure moderate wounds* (DC 22),
false life, *gentle repose*, *remove blindness/deafness*
- 1st (9/day)—*bless*, *cause fear* (DC 21), *command* (DC 21),
cure light wounds (DC 21), *detect undead*, *hide from*
undead, *sanctuary* (DC 21)
- 0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*,
mending, *purify food or drink*, *resistance*, *stabilize*, *virtue*

Mystery bones

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 24, **Con** 18, **Int** 18, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 30

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 37

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Casting, Command Undead, Dodge, Extra Revelation^{APG}, Improved Channel, Skill Focus (Heal), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +7, Diplomacy +29, Escape Artist +26, Handle Animal +26, Heal +30, Knowledge (nature) +23, Perception +24, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +26, Swim +18

Languages Aklo, Celestial, Common, Elven, Polyglot, Sylvan

SQ inspiration, oracle's curse (clouded vision), revelations (armor of bones, near death, undead servitude, voice of the grave), unearthly grace, wild empathy +24

Gear +2 *disruption light mace*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, 495 gp

Khalirai, the Ivory Queen, is one of the most powerful nymphs in the Mwangi Expanse. Protecting her exotic ward, known in local myths as the Ivory Boneyard, Khalirai is mysterious even by nymphs' standards. In mimicry of her surroundings, she has bone-white skin—a rarity among nymphs of the region—and she possesses long, lustrous black hair and deep green almond-shaped eyes. She has taken to wearing ivory jewelry that she crafts from the tusks of the fallen elephants that travel here at the ends of their lives to rejoin their ancestors in her ward. The Ivory Boneyard has had a great impact on her, and she is a dark, brooding soul, but with a soft spot for the sick and ill, and often heals those who are brave enough to come into her ward. While she protects the elephant graveyard from external threats, she holds it as her solemn duty to keep undead at bay, especially those arising from the ward itself.

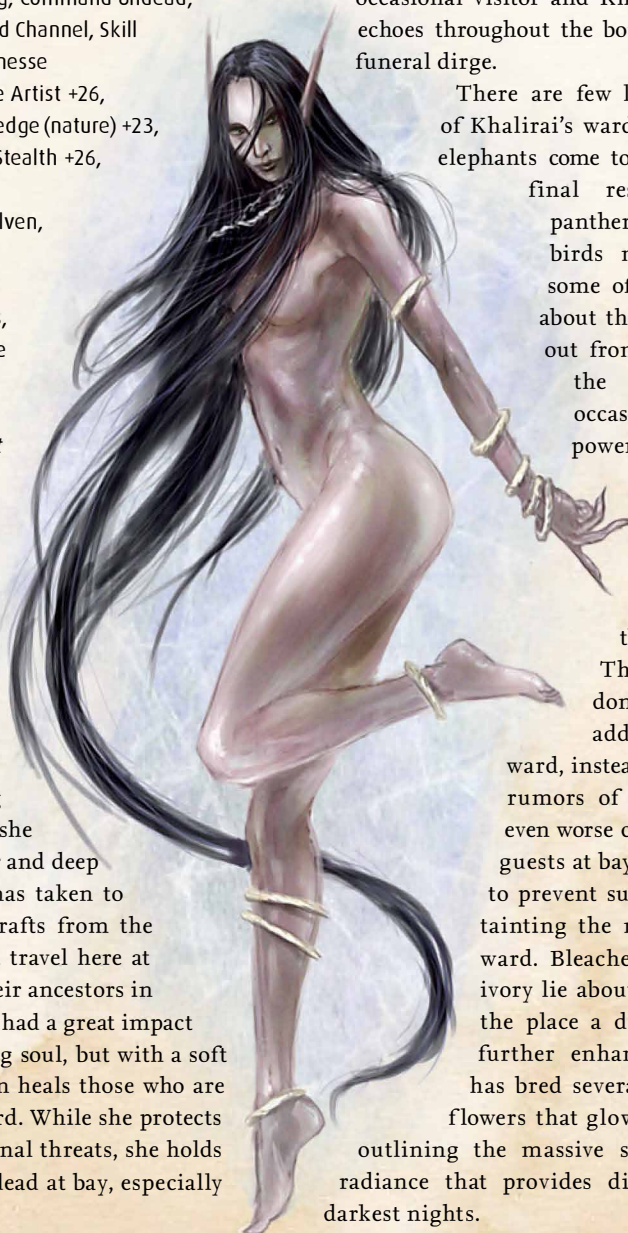
Many years ago, Khalirai fell in lust with a young Mwangi man, and has served as his muse ever since. It has been many years since then, and her love is old and frail; soon she will need to find a new bard to inspire.

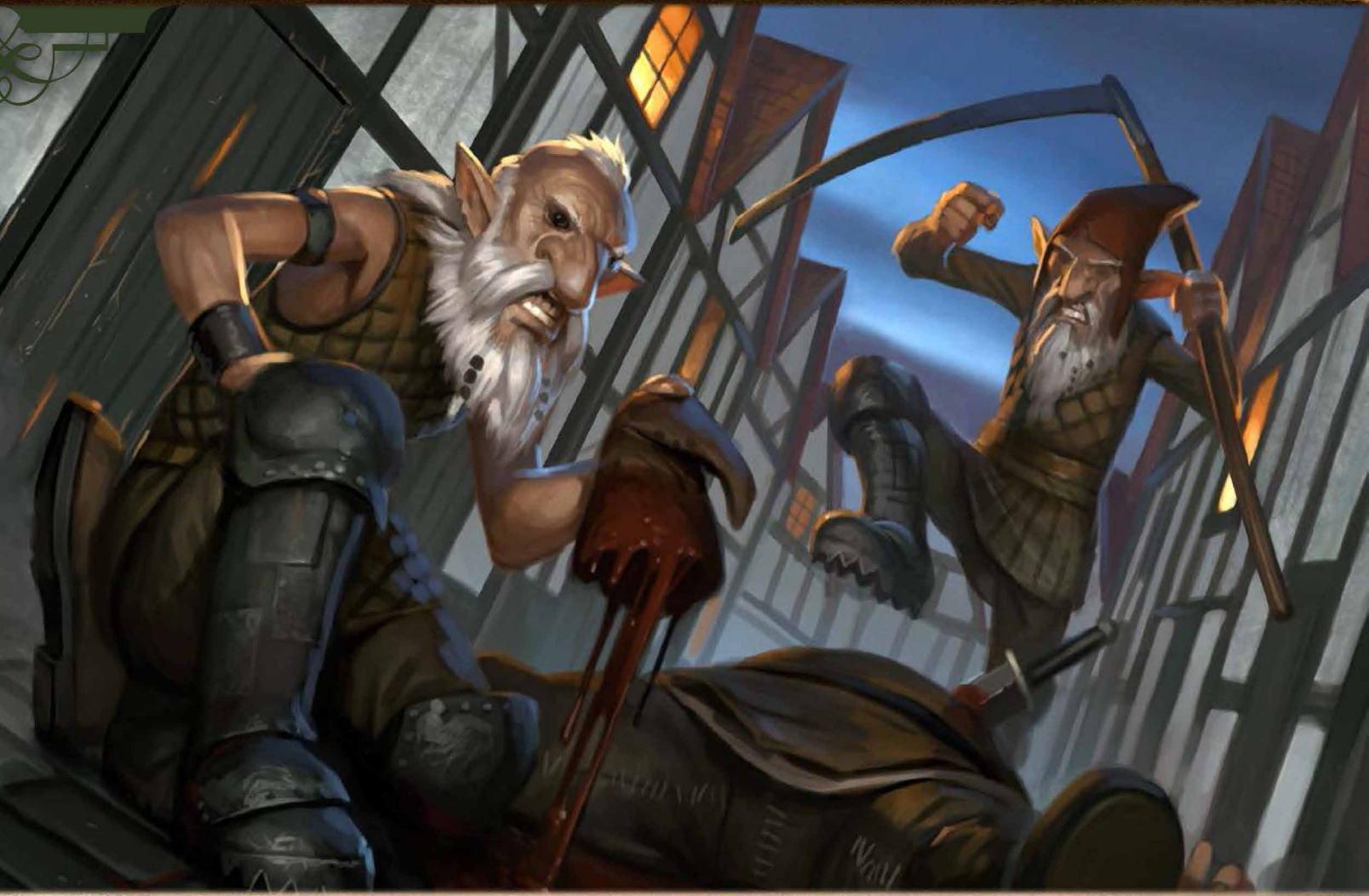
The Ivory Boneyard

Khalirai's ward, known as the Ivory Boneyard, lies on the vast savanna south of the Mwangi Expanse's iconic jungles. As with all nymph wards, it is a place of striking beauty, but with an unnerving twist—Khalirai's ward is an elephant graveyard. Mist clings to the pale bones of long-dead behemoths, and the sweet stench of recently deceased animals hovers over the whole ward. An eerie silence covers the entire area, only broken by the occasional visitor and Khalirai's singing, which echoes throughout the boneyard like a haunting funeral dirge.

There are few living creatures inside of Khalirai's ward, but each week a few elephants come to the area to seek their final resting place. Shadow panthers and dark-plumed birds make their homes in some of the skeletons littered about the ward, and only come out from these shelters under the cover of night. On occasion, necromancers or powerful undead venture to the Ivory Boneyard to collect specimens for undead armies, though Khalirai fends off these intruders with the utmost vigilance.

The Ivory Queen has done relatively little to add to the defenses of her ward, instead letting the terrifying rumors of undead elephants and even worse creatures keep unwanted guests at bay, all the while working to prevent such abominations from tainting the macabre beauty of her ward. Bleached bones and yellowed ivory lie about the graveyard, giving the place a drained appearance. To further enhance this effect, Khali has bred several species of luminous flowers that glow a light blue at night, outlining the massive skeletons in a ghostly radiance that provides dim light on even the darkest nights.





REDCAP

Dread crept through our veins like icy sludge as we combed the ancient battlefield, calling for our missing companion—until we rounded the rocky bend, and we hushed. There, between the fetid ground and a spiked deadfall trap, lay the tattered form of our beloved Brayan. Blood bubbled from his crushed corpse into a shallow pool, where a spindly, bearded creature gleefully dunked its woolen hat. The brute pulled the dripping vestment onto its head, hefted an enormous scythe in brawny hands, and through its deranged grin uttered two words: ‘You’re next.’”

—Journal of Ulen Craddic, Isgeri Pathfinder

Redcaps' innate sense of cruelty, unadulterated love of murder and proficiency in torture make them among the most feared fey in existence. The vicious creatures' practice of wearing hats soaked in their victims' blood—the infamous detail that lends redcaps their name—has haunted many children's nightmares, while the telltale clanging of their iron boots has set soldiers' nerves on edge for ages. Although some claim redcaps are phantoms conjured by the weak-minded or superstitious, those who have survived an encounter with the fiends know that their relentless thirst for blood is all too real.

To the ignorant, redcaps may appear to be simply dirty, skinny dwarves. Redcaps stand about 3-1/2 feet tall and possess lanky, knobby bodies; batlike ears; and mud-colored skin. Their arms end in powerful, corded hands, which they use to menacingly wave scythes that are longer than their bodies. Redcaps' blood-soaked hats often drip gore down their evil-looking faces; their yellowed beards hang past their belts and are often filled with weeks' worth of the creatures' putrid foodstuffs—victims' bone meal, congealed marrow, shriveled muscles, or snapped tendons. Beyond their macabre appearances, redcaps are also identifiable by their notoriously ghoulish, high-pitched cackling, which some adventurers claim can echo through the mind for a lifetime.

Redcaps prefer violence and murder over any other activity. They eschew speaking to non-fey whenever possible. The few words they do utter to outsiders tend to be taunts or threats before combat—particularly if one member of an adventuring group has already fallen prey to the monsters' gruesome traps. Redcaps delight as much in mental torture as they do in physical anguish; for example, redcaps often toy with victims just before they strike. One of their favorite practices is to follow targets for miles, clanging their boots and chortling softly while staying maddeningly just out of sight. Once a group of adventurers is targeted, it's said the only way they can turn back these cruel creatures is to present the holy symbol of a good-aligned god—or to fight them and simply hope for the best.

Aspect of Nature

In contrast with some of Golarion's more revered fey, redcaps embody nature's cruel, sadistic underbelly. Like a wolf's unconscious desire to dismember its prey slowly, savoring each crack of bone and slurp of blood, redcaps' violent natures are simple, natural, and inexplicable. To these creatures, death is glorious. Messy, visceral death brought about in close quarters is even better. No trap, weapon, or tactic is too over the top for redcaps (stomping victims' heads into mush with their spiked boots is a favorite).

On the Material Plane, redcaps gravitate toward places that reek of bloody, atrocious death. In fact, redcaps are

uncommonly attuned to a place's history and can detect the lingering scent of horror and suffering almost as if they had a sixth sense. As a result, historic battlefields, particularly those with an abundance of sheltering brush or hillocks, are common redcap habitats. The areas around mass graves, especially those harboring victims of genocide, similarly attract redcaps, as do the abandoned keeps of murdered or conquered nobility. Redcaps are also said to enjoy lairing in cave complexes and old mines, especially those thick with souls lost during a cave-in or a miners' rebellion.

Ecology

Redcap lairs tend to be small and well hidden, even if the gang living there numbers a dozen or more. Victims' body parts, including ropes of dried sinew and canvases made of raw skin, are often incorporated into redcaps' haphazard dwellings. Decorations might include tassels and jewelry crafted from severed fingers and garland made from looped intestines and desiccated eyeballs. It's said a well-trained nose can detect these disgusting lairs from nearly a mile away.

Despite the fact that redcaps bathe their hats—and often their bodies—in their victims' blood, they aren't known for drinking that blood for sustenance. Rather, redcaps eat any part of the body that isn't a good source of blood, such as bones and organs. Redcaps view blood more ritualistically than pragmatically and see any use of the life-giving fluid other than keeping themselves and their grisly headwear thoroughly soaked as a waste of the hard-earned resource. Luckily, redcaps revel in violence and bloodletting of all sorts, and so constantly seek opportunities to increase the supply of blood available to them.

Although most mistake all redcaps for males, the species is evenly split between genders. To the discerning eye, female redcaps are distinguishable by their shorter, patchier beards, hairless hands, and slimmer body frames. Male and female redcaps display almost no differences in behavior or attitude. Reproduction occurs sexually but not arbitrarily; scholars believe that redcaps only mate in the ecstatic and ritualistic acts during the aftermath of successful murders.

Pregnant females carry their young for 6 to 8 months, after which they give birth to groups of two or three infant redcaps. Typically, only one juvenile redcap from each birthing survives to adulthood; siblings viciously fight in instinctual bids to please their parents and to jockey for a place of respect among the larger gang. Redcap parents often encourage this savagery. In fact, should an offspring show signs of weakness, parents typically remedy such embarrassments with well-placed swipes of their scythes.

Young redcaps quickly grow their distinctive beards, which they use to knit their hats, using the wool-like

undercoat from beneath their chin. Redcaps' ready access to their own neck wool allows them to quickly create new caps should the need arise, but most redcaps feel naked and vulnerable without their hats and keep their original cap as a gruesome reminder of every murder they've committed since birth.

On the Material Plane, redcaps can live up to 60 years. It's unlikely for redcaps to reach the end of their existences naturally, though, as they prefer lives and deaths filled with bloody, dangerous strife to ones of peace and quiet.

Society

For all their violent tendencies, adult redcaps treat each other with grudging respect. They love fighting among themselves for sport, but they also have a high tolerance for pain and typically do not aim to kill their own kind. Exceptions include unsatisfactory offspring, weak adults, and even worse, traitors. To redcaps, the quickest way to earn the latter brand is to interact with non-fey in any way other than deadly combat without the assent of the gang. Redcap gangs quickly overwhelm their traitorous peers; traitors' blood, like that of any other victim, is used for ritualistic cap bathing.

Among other fey creatures, redcaps tend to be surly and rude, and often taunt less violent fey. Given their shared heritage, however, redcaps don't seek outright acrimony with other fey. They serve as mercenaries if the price is right; this is often how they obtain goods they need in a pinch. The raw materials redcaps use to craft their deadly steel boots and oversized scythes are often attained through mercenary work for fey who interact with more civilized cultures.

Occasionally, redcaps ally with other monsters found near their lairs, though these alliances can sometimes be volatile. A gang that agrees not to encroach upon a bugbear clan's territory, for example, will be just as happy to attack those bugbears should the beasts insult them in any way. In the end, redcaps' ability to tolerate non-fey—even ones who share enemies with them—boils down to whether the redcaps think they would survive a battle with the group in question.

To keep their caps warm with life-giving blood, redcaps aim to kill something every day. Any warm-blooded prey will do, though redcaps prefer sentient victims; they see adventurers who happen upon their lairs as victims hand-delivered for their killing pleasure. Redcaps attack all races with equal impunity—even those larger than themselves, such as humans, whom they love to cut down to size with their scythes.

Redcaps also take joy in setting elaborate lures and traps. In trap-setting, redcaps try to outdo each other in terms of creativity, goriness, and pain inflicted

on victims—spikes, chains, and blades are often implemented in ways most would find unimaginable. Such tactics also bring out redcaps' demented senses of humor: nothing is funnier to redcaps than the sight of an impaled victim writhing and screaming while her lifeblood slowly drains away.

Campaign Role

Given redcaps' love of psychological torment, encounters with these fey are a fantastic way to ratchet up an adventure's creepiness. For a party combing through the ruins of an abandoned keep or traversing the bone-littered moors of an ancient battlefield, a redcap's well-timed cackle or the clanking of its iron boots can set nerves on edge. Redcaps' guerrilla-style hit-and-run tactics also can wear down the resolve of any party, while seeing a group of the horrid creatures could serve as a worthy reveal after a build-up of spooky foreshadowing.

Because redcaps are such hated creatures, it's fitting for that build-up to include wild, whispered tales among villagers living near the monsters' lairs. Trauma has a long memory; even if it's been decades since a sighting, villagers might speak about these "devil fairies" as if they were encountered yesterday. Settlers near known redcap strongholds also may have developed superstitions meant to help stave off the beasts. Hand-carved tokens, specific prayers, or even periodic human sacrifices to sate redcaps' bloodlust might be common practices in these backwaters. In some cultures, speaking the monsters' names is an invitation for them to rush out of hiding to attack; this could be particularly frustrating for adventurers hoping to discover what might be the cause of a village's woes. While redcaps should rarely be presented as overwhelming or unbeatable monsters, it should be clear that these creatures are rightly feared for their cruelty and merciless love of murder.

For low-level parties, a single redcap might prove a worthy capstone to a short adventure in which, for example, a series of gruesome murders plagues an urban environment, causing a panic among the city's residents. In another scenario, a lone redcap might terrorize a low-level party for hours with swift boot stomp attacks—only to skitter into the underbrush once a PC realizes he's been hit. For higher-level parties, a single redcap won't present much danger; a group of the vile creatures, however, could be a different story. Redcaps become much braver when their numbers are larger. In these cases, they take pleasure in swarming enemies and slicing them to ribbons with their wicked scythes.

Redcaps strategically build their lairs to be as undetectable as possible. These monsters seek to live in naturally sheltering areas, such as the dark corners of caves or small clearings encircled by tall brush. They often

spend years building elaborate, if repulsive, dwellings, and intrusions are taken personally and answered violently. When they leave for raids, redcaps typically assign a group of their highest-ranking elders to guard their beloved homes. These guards are often willing to solicit other nearby monsters for help should their defensive efforts start tipping in their enemies' favor.

A higher-level encounter might see a party stumble onto a redcap lair only to face the lair's enraged guards as well as a nearby clan of storm giants, who might hold a tentative truce with their redcap neighbors. If the redcaps successfully capture any of the intruders, it's a sure bet that they won't simply kill the offenders out of rage. Rather, prisoners would become test subjects for the redcaps' newest and most gruesome traps and bloodletting techniques—perhaps creating a situation in which the rest of the party must rescue the victims or die trying.

Treasure

Since they kill only for pleasure and to keep their hats dripping with fresh blood, redcaps don't have much personal use for treasure. However, they shrewdly recognize the value of material wealth, particularly as it can lure unsuspecting victims into traps and ambushes. Following each successful battle, redcaps tear the trinkets off victims' bodies and harvest any valuable gems they find. Items that are most alluring as whole pieces are set aside, while discarded metal settings are smelted into ingots to be used in building traps, making boots, and forging blades. Although redcap boots and scythes are made from more mundane metals, savvy adventurers know that sometimes a small fortune can be found in the pins and bearings of redcaps' elaborate traps.

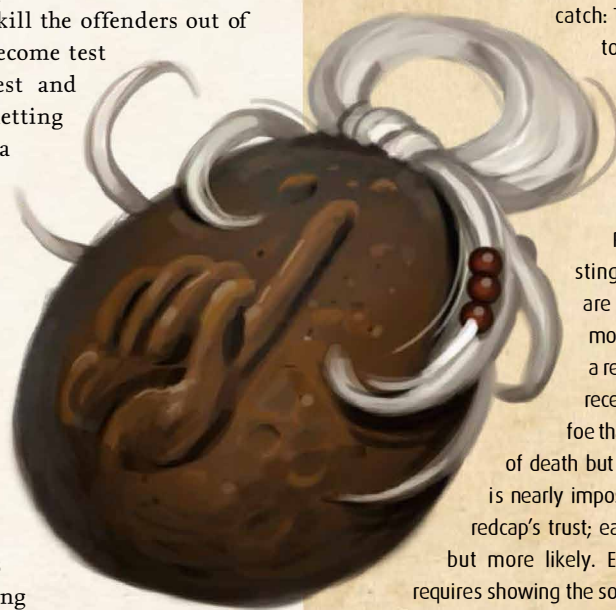
Redcap gangs often possess considerable wealth, but they typically don't stash it in their lairs. Rather, redcaps prefer to tote gems in their boots or caps, so as to easily bait traps or to create spontaneous lures. Redcaps know civilized creatures' greed and sometimes mine crystals or gemstones to gather as bait. In some parts of central Avistan, for example, redcaps are known to harvest reinrite—a rare, semiprecious gray gem native to the area's caves. The gem is particularly popular among the common folk in the area, who cannot afford more brilliant jewelry, and a simple bauble crafted of the stone is often enough to lure an unwary farmer into a redcap's carefully planned trap.

TOKEN OF THE REDCAP

A redcap may spend an hour crafting a token to give to a creature that has pleased it. Redcaps create their tokens by boiling a small amount of their victims' blood and mixing it with finely ground bones. As this paste hardens, the redcap shapes it into a foul-smelling, shale-like stone, weaving strands or braids of its beard into the trinket. Bearers of redcap tokens are granted immunity from bleed damage and from further attacks by the bequeathing redcap and its band for 24 hours. What redcaps don't typically tell recipients,

however, is that the token comes with a catch: The redcaps only honor the token's implied truce if its bearer presents an equally appealing alternative target, such as another party member, for the redcaps to slaughter.

Redcaps are particularly stingy about what creatures are worthy of their tokens. A monster that comes to the aid of a redcap lair under attack might receive such a gift, as might a foe that beats a redcap to the brink of death but allows it to escape alive. It is nearly impossible for non-fey to earn a redcap's trust; earning its respect is difficult but more likely. Earning a redcap's respect requires showing the sort of ferocity, bloodlust, and prowess in battle that those of its kind innately strive for.



Redcaps on Golarion

To redcaps, the Material Plane presents a wonderful opportunity to easily slaughter non-fey. Golarion, which possesses plenty of breaches between the Material Plane and the First World, is a particularly popular destination. Redcaps are most numerous in Avistan in places where civilization is sparse. In fact, among some of Golarion's primitive cultures, the wild, alien-like growth found around a First World breach is often a dreadful signal that a roving redcap gang is lurking nearby, ready to attack.

Redcaps can commonly be found in the wilds of Varisia, where they find an alluringly wild atmosphere that ensures an ample supply of native victims. Hollow Mountain provides a labyrinth of dreadful caverns, which rumors say are choked with the angry ghosts of Thassilonian worker-slaves, whose suffering and death attracts redcaps. The Lost Coast, on the other hand, contains goblin-filled forests that some say are home to

REDCAPS IN MYTHOLOGY

In English folklore, redcaps—also known as “powries” or “dunters”—are murderous goblins that live in the ruined castles found along the borders between England and Scotland. They are depicted as sturdy old men with red eyes, large teeth, and talons for hands. Redcaps murder travelers who stray into their homes, then use the victims’ blood to dye their hats. According to legend, if such a hat ever dries, the redcap wearing it will perish.

In spite of the heavy iron pikes they wield and their ironshod boots, redcaps are said to be so fast that outrunning one is impossible. Legend claims that the only way to escape a redcap is to quote a passage from the Bible. Doing so causes redcaps intense pain and prompts them to flee, leaving behind a single tooth. GMs who wish to extrapolate upon this myth in their games may wish to imbue lost redcap teeth with a minor bonus, such as a +1 resistance bonus on saving throws.

The most infamous redcap in folklore is Robin Redcap. The familiar of the murderous Lord William de Soulis, Robin lived with his master in Hermitage Castle, where it was said men were murdered, women were abused, and dark arts were practiced. In fact, so much evil and blasphemy were committed at Hermitage Castle that the great stone keep was thought to be sinking under the weight of Robin’s and Soulis’s sins.

pockets not only of redcaps but also other strange, beastly fey. Several other areas of Varisia are also said to harbor redcap enclaves, including the Iron Peaks, the Stony Mountains, and Sanos Forest.

Years of bloodshed combined with miles of wild hills and forests make Nidal and Isger similarly attractive habitats for redcaps. In Nidal, redcaps are said to roam the Uskwood freely, slaughtering unsuspecting victims while living in lairs that are nearly impossible to find. The massive cairn necropolis of Barrowmoor in northern Nidal is also said to harbor redcap gangs, which lurk near the monuments to the tyrants and warlords buried there and murder bands of travelers foolish enough to wander nearby, trusting the deaths will be blamed on the haunted barrows. In Isger, Chitterwood’s countless warrens and caverns are redcap havens; some even claim the evil fey have allied with a goblinoid population that is quickly recovering from its defeat in the Goblinblood Wars. Redcaps are also said to inhabit Finder’s Gulch, though whether the cruel beasts could coexist alongside Ilcayna Alonnor’s undead hordes is a matter still up for debate.

Despite the Lastwall army’s proficiency in routing evil from its lands, the country’s growing orc menace and its sprawling wilderness make it another fine habitat for

redcaps. The northern Fangwood, in particular, is said to be home to rogue redcap gangs, which find that the members of the forest’s isolated orc tribes make easy prey. In the redcaps’ eyes, even better targets are the would-be dragonslayers who periodically brave the wood in search of Zedoran, a notoriously dangerous green dragon whose lair remains maddeningly elusive.

Although the presence of redcaps is well documented in the above areas, their habitats are not limited to these places alone. Redcaps are also said to run wild in the southern Fangwood in Nirmathas where they are believed to suffer the same blight as many of the fey in the forest, though no firsthand accounts of tainted redcaps have ever been reported. Redcaps are also known to inhabit Kyonin, where they live in relative peace alongside large populations of other fey. The River Kingdoms, as well, are particularly attractive to redcaps, who seem to delight in terrorizing the brigands and outcasts who call the chaotic country’s rivers and forests home.

Sample Redcap

Shards of broken manacles, links of chain, and iron flails are imbedded in this hideous, human-sized man’s ruddy flesh. Rivulets of congealing blood run from its soaked cap down its mangled face and neck, soaking its tangled white beard; in its arms looms a rusty but clearly sharp scythe.

GRENDLER RED-CHAINS

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male advanced redcap (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 233)

NE Medium fey

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+2 armor, +4 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 147 (14d6+98); fast healing 5

Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

DR 10/cold iron

Weaknesses irreligious

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.

Melee mwk scythe +15/+10 (2d4+13/x4), kick +8 (1d6+7)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 22, **Int** 16, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 27

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Step Up, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (scythe)

Skills Acrobatics +21 (+33 when jumping), Bluff +18, Climb +23, Escape Artist +21, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (nature) +20, Perception +17, Sense Motive +17, Stealth +21; **Racial**

Modifiers +12 Acrobatics when jumping

Languages Aklo, Common, Giant, Sylvan

SQ boot stomp, heavy weapons, red cap

Gear mwk leather armor, mwk scythe

It's said the latent suffering in Varisia's Hollow Mountain—where Thassilonian slaves long ago carved out a labyrinth of intricate corridors—not only attracted Grendler Red-Chains but helped him grow to a size considered monstrous for a redcap. The height of a short man, Grendler Red-Chains stalks the mountain's tunnels with aplomb, terrorizing adventurers and the complex's denizens alike with his wicked scythe and spiked boots. Perhaps because of his larger size, he heals faster than most redcaps; he enjoys self-mutilation almost as much as he enjoys dipping his cap in his victims' blood. Over the years, Grendler Red-Chains has culled bits of chains and shackles from the corpses of long-dead slaves and embedded them into his own flesh, both to terrify his enemies and to fortify his defenses.

Hollow Mountain

Millennia ago, when Thassilon was thriving in what is now modern-day Varisia, one of the empire's power-hungry runelords set upon Hollow Mountain with the intention of building a sanctuary to experiment with rune magic away from rivals' prying eyes. Envisioning a vast labyrinth of underground training quarters, test chambers, and factories, this runelord rounded up an army of giant slaves and instructed them to build these facilities. For decades, taskmasters beat and tortured slaves into submission inside Hollow Mountain; at night, for pleasure, the slave masters would force enslaved brothers, sisters, and cousins to fight to the death, as much for their own entertainment as to increase the glory of wrath, the runelord's chosen sin.

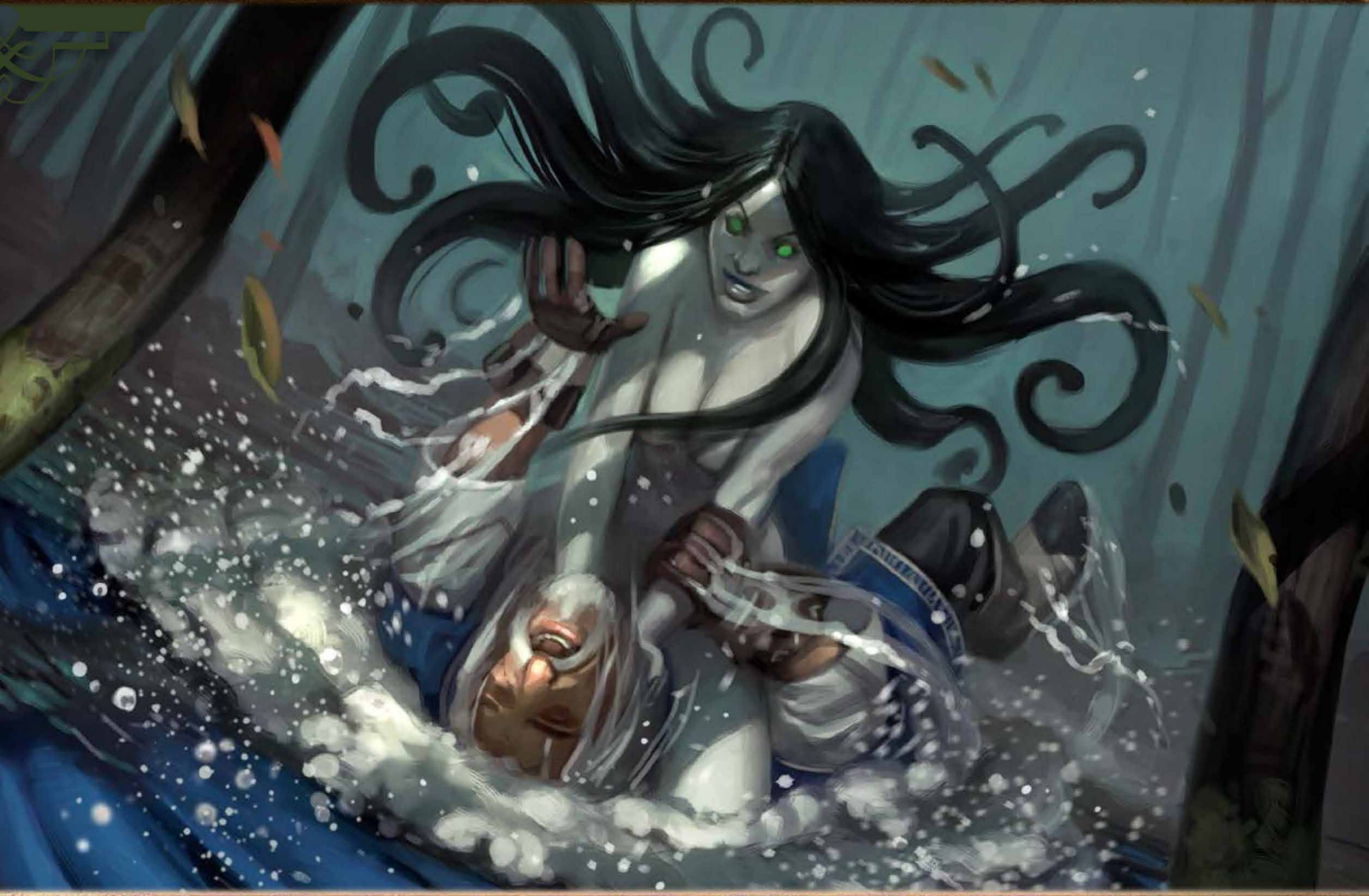
Even long after Thassilon fell, it's said the screams of suffering slaves lingered in the mountains' abandoned, ruined corridors. The place's dark history didn't stop there; following Thassilon's demise, the ruin attracted shady denizens, including bands of ogrekin and cave giants, which continue the area's history of slavery unapologetically. The mountain is also home to denizens such as giant black widow spiders, cave fishers, and even the occasional gibbering moulder, not to mention demons still attracted to the Abyssal worship propagated there millennia ago.

In recent decades, the mountain's dark past has attracted an even more heinous resident: Grendler Red-Chains, a hideously oversized and abundantly cruel redcap who found his way to the Material Plane via a nearby breach. It's said that when adventurer victims are unavailable, Grendler Red-Chains hunts his cave giant

neighbors; he has made a pact with the ogrekin, who help lure surface victims into his favorite tunnels. Grendler Red-Chains has built his lair deep within the mountain, inside a room that once housed a Thassilonian slave master's torture devices.

Grendler Red-Chains takes pains to ensure that unwelcome creatures regret trespassing near his lair. Traps that incorporate spiked torture racks, iron saws, and caltrops litter the halls near the lair, while similar implements are located nearby to aid him in his battles. Containing bloody puddles and a dilapidated dwelling made of rusty torture devices, the lair itself is decorated with the bones of ancient slaves and the flesh of Grendler's most prized adventurer victims. It's said Grendler Red-Chains would only allow an escape from his lair over his cold, dead body.





RUSALKA

We'd heard the stories—that a beautiful ghost walked the edge of the lake of drowned lovers. The stories were wrong. A creature of flesh and blood turned Gilvan against us, and the preternatural hair that held Keena under the misty waters until she stopped thrashing was real enough. We bargained, pleaded with it, until finally the monster just stared at us with empty eyes, whispered, "Tell them the ghost sent you," and waved us away. We ran, but the mist is everywhere, and now we can't find the way back to the village. Maybe we never will.

—Final entry in an anonymous journal

Spiteful, sadistic, and seductive, rusalkas are evil water fey who rely on misinformation and fear to command the respect and admiration of lesser beings. Often rusalkas operate for decades without their true nature being known to those nearby, and this deception makes them one of the least understood of Golarion's more prevalent species of fey.

Rusalkas look the part of drowned maidens, with pale, waterlogged skin and mangled tresses that seem to float even when the creatures aren't in the water. Most rusalkas don't bother with clothes, though some dress themselves in flowing white gowns—generally taken from one of their early drowned victims—to better appear as the ghosts of those same victims. Generally, this ploy is meant to lure victims close enough to charm, bringing the unsuspecting “pet” under the malevolent rusalka's influence. For the most part, rusalkas keep captivated creatures for their own amusement and discard the thralls when they tire of them, but the fey are canny enough to use charmed non-fey to spread misinformation if word of their true nature gets out—after all, hunters brandishing holy water are much preferred to those equipped with cold iron.

Rusalkas are greedy creatures, and they love receiving gifts more than simply stealing from their victims. All things being equal, a rusalka values a prize gained through deception over one granted with eyes wide open. Thus, under the guise of ghosts, rusalkas often foster in their victims the false notion that their restless spirits can be placated with gifts. In areas where people know a rusalka's true nature, villagers often come to an uneasy relationship with the creature, giving it offerings of linens, wreaths, and shiny objects annually in exchange for allowing the villagers to live in peace. Rusalkas generally accept these offerings, though if one or more of a settlement's youths go missing, few villagers can afford to speak up against the reneging fey. To offset the chance of losing any of their own to the charms of a rusalka, some villages direct adventurers to the streams or pools in which the creatures live in hopes of either providing the fey with more interesting pets or being rid of the rusalka for good.

Aspect of Nature

Rusalkas are connected to water—a connection they share with mermaids, nixies, and kelpies, among others—but also specifically to the underlying danger water presents, especially in tragic circumstances. They scorn the idea of the raw and undisputed power of the sea, instead preferring serene streams in which small children or weak swimmers can drown, underestimating their danger; frozen ponds through whose deceptively thin ice the unwary can plummet into frigid waters; and pools in which those unlucky in love drown themselves to

end their sorrows. For this reason, rusalkas are normally found closer to human habitation than other water fey, as abandoned lagoons, lakes, and oases rarely play host to such doleful deaths.

While they do not make it their sole goal in life, rusalkas also serve as protectors of their habitats. They may allow local villagers to wash laundry in their watery homes, or even fish in them (if they've paid the proper tribute, of course) but most rusalkas don't tolerate anyone seeking to despoil the waters or disrupt the balance of nature in the area.

A rusalka may also take on traits of her home, with a pond rusalka sporting trailing bits of moss in her hair, and a stream rusalka moving with more flowing, dance-like grace than most.

Ecology

Physically, rusalkas are very similar to elves and half elves, with the wide, jewel-toned irises of the former and the slightly pointed ears of the latter. While they look just as frail as elves, rusalkas' lithe bodies hide surprising strength. Rusalkas are all female-bodied, though they have no true gender. A rusalka identifies as female primarily as a way to confuse and undermine her enemies and those over whom she rules.

While rusalkas do not require as much food as humanoids, they do need to eat, and prefer fish and edible water flora. Extremely rare is the rusalka who is fond of prepared meals—perhaps even accepting well-cooked food in place of treasure—but such creatures are not unheard of.

While rusalkas are typically cruel and disdainful, the water fey respect the art of song with an almost religious reverence—and with good reason. Rusalkas are not born by traditional means, but from water, and earth, and song itself. Rusalka births happen very rarely, as the creatures are generally solitary and jealous by nature, but when they do occur, they take place over the course of an entire week. The mother rusalka spends half of this time above the water, shaping a portion of mud from the edge of her pond or stream into the shape of a swaddled child. As she forms the mud, she sings, drawing from all of the songs she has heard throughout her life. These songs are said to influence the tastes and personality of the offspring. The length and variety of the songs can also affect how many daughters will be born—it may be as few as one or, rarely, as many as six. When this ritual is complete, the mother dives under water, nestling the mud shape in the bottom of the stream or pond bed. Already infused with magic, the mud does not dissolve while submerged, but instead takes on more definition as the mother spends the remainder of the week imbuing her offspring with a connection to both water and fey magic. At the end of this

week, the mother rusalka draws her sculpture from the ground and wipes away the mud, revealing one or more living, breathing daughters underneath.

A newborn rusalka grows rapidly, and after 1 month of meals of fish, water flora, and her mother's milk, she reaches the size of an 8-year-old humanoid girl, after which her growth slows immensely and she is sent away from her mother's territory. Over the next 40 years, she grows into an adult rusalka. These young rusalkas have all of the abilities an adult would have, but also have the young simple template until the age of 40. Rusalkas can live up to 500 years, but many die before adulthood, either while looking for a pond or stream of their own, or at the hands of adventurers hired by a village or rival.

Society

A rusalka is neutral toward other fey as long as they are passing through the rusalka's territory and don't come between her and her village. That said, rusalkas are rarely so lukewarm toward one another. On occasion, several of the fey (often sisters) live together in the same pond or stream in a group known as an eddy. Eddies are fiercely loyal to one another and are rarely seen apart. Attempts to appease these fey must please all members of the group, and their tastes often differ. Eddies are more given to living in streams than ponds because the former offer more space, and particularly large eddies have been reported in wide rivers such as the Sellen, Sphinx, Vanji, and Yondabakari. Eddies are often skilled at fighting as a single unit, with at least one or two members charming foes while their sisters obscure themselves in fog and use their long hair to grab and constrict uncharmed opponents.

Most rusalkas, however, abhor the very concepts of cooperation and harmony, instead seeing others of their kind as rivals for the tribute and awe of the local populace. A rusalka who has recently arrived on the Material Plane or who seeks to relocate normally finds little sympathy from those whose territory she intrudes upon. Expecting this animosity, wandering rusalkas generally keep their pets alive and under their control specifically to help them drive out anticipated rivals, though they take the opportunity to "trade up" if they encounter more appealing potential thralls along the way.

Taste in what kind of creatures they wish to ensnare varies from rusalka to rusalka, with a few common themes. While the occasional rusalka may surround herself primarily with animals such as bears, wolves, or more powerful magical beasts, most prefer humanoids. A rusalka new to the area will normally focus on acquiring strong creatures who are capable of combat, and depending on the area she inhabits, this can range from sturdy villagers to town guards and wandering mercenaries. Once she feels secure in her home, however,

she focuses on her own whims. Music is a weakness of all rusalkas, who are born of melody as much as nature, and most rusalkas prefer pets who are proficient with instruments and can provide accompaniment to the fey's songs and dances. As such, many rusalkas attempt to bespell bards first, but aren't above simply killing them if they prove too troublesome, especially if they counter the rusalkas' beckoning calls and haunting songs with their own magical music.

Rusalkas are proud of their performance talents, primarily their singing. If a rusalka perceives no threat and feels indulgent, she may either accept a challenge from a skilled performer or issue one herself. This can be a dangerous game, however, as winning such a contest will result in gaining either the rusalka's respect or her ire, neither of which many people want—or survive.

Campaign Role

Rusalkas generally lack the large-scale ambition to become the main villain of a campaign of more than a regional scope, being focused on taking advantage of parochial settlements rather than entire nations or even large cities. Low-level parties may encounter a rusalka's charmed pets long before they ever encounter the rusalka herself, and the tales of a haunted lake or river can build their anticipation until they reach a level at which facing the fey is appropriate. Since a rusalka's controlled creatures can vary greatly in challenge rating and can wander beyond the rusalka's immediate territory, such creatures can challenge parties at a number of stages, continually building the legend and apparent influence of their enigmatic leader for an entire campaign.

In mid-level campaigns, PCs may first hear of a rusalka in the context of a local ghost story, leading to a potentially challenging encounter when the party arrives on scene with holy water and *ghost touch* weapons instead of cold iron. Such encounters are sure to be both challenging and memorable for characters and players alike who fall for the rusalka's deceptions. Higher-level campaigns may feature a unique rusalka with class levels as a willing or unwilling servant of some greater evil, as the focus of a cult, or as an exceptional fey with larger aspirations.

Given their charismatic natures, rusalkas generally take levels in bard or in sorcerer with the aquatic, fey, or maestro bloodlines. Rusalkas are not generally given to religion, and rusalkas with divine magic are almost always oracles. Though they are strong, rusalkas prefer subterfuge to direct fighting, and value cunning over study, meaning that combat classes like fighter or barbarian do not generally suit them and they are rarely wizards or clerics.

Rusalkas are not given to living deep in isolated dungeon complexes, as this would limit their interaction with those

subservient to them, but many claim pools or streams near abandoned temples, crumbled cities, or vast cavern networks, requiring the party to either defeat or bargain with one to gain entry into the true goal of their quest.

Because of both her control of other creatures and her own wanderings, a rusalka can be a wealth of information, though gaining such knowledge comes at a price. In order to obtain this information, a party might be required to bring the rusalka a certain type of treasure or pet that she likes best. Morally ambiguous parties who prove themselves competent may even be invited to a rusalka's lair, where she may offer them either a favor or a specific piece of her treasure hoard in exchange for killing a rival or removing something that threatens nature in the area.

Rusalkas are at their most devious and effective when their true nature is obscured. They enjoy perpetuating the rumors of ghostly maidens and usually style their lairs accordingly, allowing grasses and moss to grow freely and making liberal use of their *fog cloud* spell-like ability. A rusalka may enjoy using invisibility to spook adventurers, or use her gift for song to build her legend as a ghost—standing in the open and singing a song of lost love to lure gullible characters into coming within range of her beckoning call.

Treasure

Rusalkas are fond of shiny treasure, which of course includes precious metals and gems, but also less valuable glass baubles. They willingly accept such things as tribute and are just as willing to take them from the corpses of unlucky travelers, though items given freely, especially as a result of the rusalka's false pretenses, are always preferred. Their underwater caves and nest lairs are generally decorated with this treasure, but if the circumstances are dire, they are willing to use it to pay others to do what they cannot.

Rusalkas on Golarion

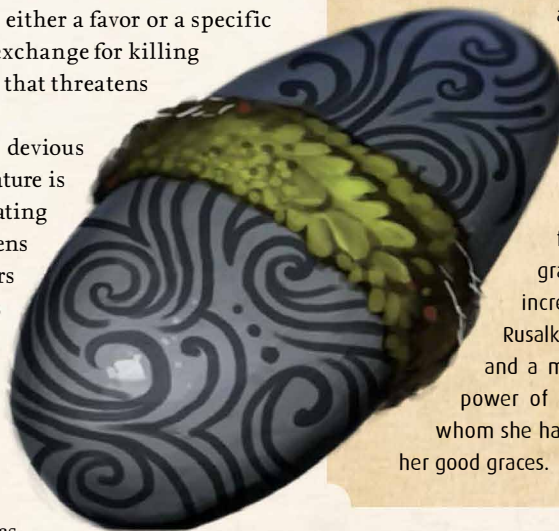
Though spiteful and vindictive in the way they go about it, rusalkas do help to maintain the stability of nature and keep other races from despoiling the lands around them. Since they live closer to humanity than many other species of fey, rusalkas are proud of their role as "nature's first defense." From a rusalka's perspective, good fey are too easy on Golarion's inhabitants, and the evil rusalkas generally believe civilized races can only be taught

TOKEN OF THE RUSALKA

Rusalkas are stingy with their favor, and generally offer it only grudgingly. If a creature offers a rusalka a particularly pleasing tribute, impresses a rusalka with enjoyable music, bests her in a singing contest, or proves itself particularly difficult to charm or otherwise manipulate, a rusalka may offer it a token of her favor. This token takes the form of a smoothed piece of wood or stone wrapped in moss, lily pads, or seaweed, all drawn from the rusalka's watery home. Particularly artistic rusalkas add scrollwork or other designs to the token, though this grants no additional benefit.

A rusalka's token grants its wielder the ability to walk on the bequeathing rusalka's pond or stream as the spell *water walk* for 24 hours. Sometimes a rusalka grants such a token to her pets to increase their effectiveness in battle.

Rusalkas are mercurial creatures, however, and a malicious rusalka can suppress the power of her tokens at will, ensuring any whom she has aided with such a gift remains in her good graces.



through force and guile. A rusalka is concerned with herself first and foremost, but if she feels that nature has been disrespected—especially the waterway in which she lives—she takes it as a personal affront and shows the violator no mercy.

Rusalkas can technically live in any body of water, but they prefer colder temperate climates, such as that of northern Avistan, especially in eternally ice-shrouded Irrisen. There rusalkas generally oppose the ruling White Witches, whom they see as corrupting the balance of nature with Irrisen's eternal winter, despite their shared evil natures. Generally, Irriseni rusalkas do not take any direct action against the witches, as the fey recognize their own limitations—namely that they are unwilling or unable to work well together, and do best outside of a straight fight. Rusalkas can also be found throughout other northern nations from Brevoy to the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, and as far north as the southern reaches of the Crown of the World.

Rusalkas are not given to kindness, but an occasional rusalka may find herself serving as the guardian of a particular village against an outside threat. She does so not out of true concern for the welfare of her "subjects" but because she realizes that the dead are very poor givers of tribute.

RUSALKAS IN MYTHOLOGY

Rusalkas originally come from Slavic mythology, in which they go by several names. The term “rusalka” itself seems to be connected to the words for “water” and “riverbed.” These rusalkas lived in either the sea or streams and lakes, often in glimmering palaces of gold and silver. Some types of rusalkas were said to have different personalities, depending on where they were from, and would seek either to enchant mortals or to kill them.

Rusalkas were believed to have a strong connection to linen and would accept it as tribute, and anyone who stepped on the linen the fey had laid out to dry was cursed. In fact, rusalkas were most often known for taking vengeance on those who slighted them, either by working on days important to the fey or by not offering presents on the rusalkas’ graves along with the proper song. Rusalkas were also so connected to the water that if their hair dried, they would die. However, a rusalka who had a comb could conjure a wave with it to keep her hair ever wet.

Mythological rusalkas could come about in any number of ways, most commonly from drowned maidens and unbaptized babies, but also from female suicides and children who were cursed by their mothers. These young rusalkas were often tiny enough to sail around in eggshells and had much the same legendary role as faeries.

Sample Rusalka

Standing amid a roiling fog, this nude, humanoid woman’s pale, wet skin glistens. Her long, dark hair moves about her head as though she were submerged underwater, and rapier in her hand crackles with arcane energy.

MALSANDRA

CR 16

XP 76,800

Rusalka rogue 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 232)

NE Medium fey (aquatic)

Init +13; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +33

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 23, flat-footed 21 (+3 deflection, +9 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 212 (24 HD; 20d6+4d8+124)

Fort +14, **Ref** +25, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge;

DR 15/cold iron; **Immune** fire; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee +2 *vicious frost rapier* +24/+19/+14 (1d6+9/18–20 plus 1d6 frost plus 2d6), staggering touch +17 (stagger), 4 tresses +17 (2d6+3 plus grab)

Ranged +1 *hand crossbow* +23 (1d4+1/19–20)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with tresses)

Special Attacks beckoning call (DC 28), constrict (2d6+10), sneak attack +2d6, staggering touch (DC 28), tresses

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +28)

Constant—*blur*, *water walk*

At will—*entangle* (DC 19), *fog cloud*, *invisibility*

3/day—*quicken charm monster* (DC 22), *control water*

1/day—*summon nature’s ally VI* (water elementals only)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 28, **Con** 21, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +22 (+26 when using tresses); **CMD** 43

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great

Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot,

Precise Shot, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (charm monster),

Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus

(Stealth), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +35, Diplomacy +19, Escape Artist +24,

Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +17,

Perception +33, Perform (dance) +21, Perform (sing) +31,

Sense Motive +17, Stealth +42, Swim +28

Languages Aquan, Common, Sylvan

SQ amphibious, rogue talents (combat trick, finesse rogue), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin*, *potions of cure serious*

wounds (3); **Other Gear** +1 *hand crossbow* with 20 bolts,

+2 *vicious frost rapier*, *ring of protection* +3, gems and art objects worth 3,000 gp, 230 gp

Malsandra traveled farther from her mother’s stream in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings than any of her sisters when looking for a body of water to call her own, just under a century ago. She followed the stream to the Rimeflow River and from there to the Steaming Sea, where the open water felt new and exciting to her. Once in the ocean, Malsandra swam south along the coastline for many months, never settling and continuing ever toward warmer waters. Nearly a year after setting out on her own, she finally found a marshy estuary where the godless land of Rahadom meets the Sodden Lands, well within the immediate influence of the newly formed permanent hurricane known as the Eye of Abendego.

There she inhabited a long-abandoned temple to a forgotten god—all holy symbols and iconography shorn from its walls after the Oath Wars drew to a close—submerged in the center of an ever-growing swamp. The Rahadomi villagers of the nearby fishing settlement of Mekhum, still coping with drastic shifts in climate as a result of the Eye of Abendego’s advent, believed her to be a drowned victim of the increasingly dangerous wetlands. Lacking clerics to exorcise the ghost from the abandoned temple, the people of Mekhum had little choice but to acquiesce to Malsandra’s demands, and to this day, they pay her tribute each year on the anniversary of her arrival (a date they believe to have been when she died).

Malsandra prefers to keep as pets a combination of wayward sailors who find their way into her marshy seaside realm and powerful swamp monsters, which have grown ever more prevalent since the Eye of Abendego has taken hold in the region. From time to time, locals even report seeing the temple ghost with a small black dragon, though these may be simple rumors.

The Mekhum Temple

On the northwestern edge of the Sodden Lands, just south of the Napsune Mountains and the expansive desert of Rahadom to the north, lies a stretch of arid land known as the Abendego Piercing, where the hurricane-drenched swamps of the Sodden Lands have yet to spread. The formerly Rahadoumi fishing villages that pepper the coastline here have struggled to survive since the Eye of Abendego appeared just over a century ago, and many have abandoned their homes to head north to Rahadom proper, where the weather doesn't hamper their every effort to make a living.

Among the few remaining settlements in this area is the village of Mekhum, which lies near the edge of the ever-encroaching mire of the Sodden Lands. Here, Malsandra makes her home in an abandoned temple to a god whose worship was long ago outlawed by the Rahadoumi who lived there. Surrounded on all sides by a deep marsh that grows wider and swamplier each year, the temple rises from the murk like a bastion of a bygone era. The temple consists of a wide circle of 88 marble columns, each rising 40 feet into the air, supporting a domed ceiling with a narrow oculus at its apex. Beneath the dome, which once housed a recessed, 360-degree amphitheater and passages into the underground chambers inhabited by the temple's priests, there now stands a murky basin of fetid water; the constant rains and encroaching marshland long ago flooded the temple's lower levels.

Here the people of Mekhum bring their tribute to the "drowned ghost" who has spared them her wrath for the last 90 years, leaving a tithe of what meager living they can muster from the violent seas or scavenge from the wrecks littering the coast from ships driven against the shore by the hurricane's uncaring winds. Malsandra takes the most valuable or beautiful of these trinkets into her lair in a submerged alcove beneath the dome, safe under the water where none can steal her treasures from her. She leaves the rest of the tribute in large piles between the temple's columns, where they attract vermin and swamp creatures looking for shelter on dry land.

Even Malsandra doesn't venture too far into the temple's water-filled lower levels,

however, for the spirits of the priests buried in the crypts below are vengeful and angry at the outlawing of their faith and the current state of the temple. While Malsandra is confident the spirits pose no real threat to her, she would rather be the only ghost to trouble the townsfolk of Mekhum. Nevertheless, the potential wealth buried beneath her home is a constant temptation, and eventually the rusalka will give in to its beckoning call, perhaps awakening an even greater power in the process.





SATYR

I don't know what came over me. It... it might have been the music. It was the sweetest, most extraordinary music I have ever heard. I followed it without thinking. And when I arrived, the... creature was waiting for me. I wish I could say I resisted his wooing, but the music, the spread of fine food and drink laid before me, and the way he jumped and frolicked so gracefully made it feel so right. And something about his smell, his musk, was so alluring. Even his hard, curling horns excited me. You mustn't tell anyone but... I'd do it again. I really would."

—Lady Eurillus of Oppara, to her handmaiden

Satyrs are one of the most famous—some would say notorious—of the fey races. Their bodies are a memorable combination of masculine human torsos perched upon powerful, cloven-hoofed goat legs. Large, curving ram horns adorn the sides of their rugged faces, and unkempt tangles of fur enhance their sinewy muscles. They emit the dank, earthy smells of sweat, soil, and exertion. More brutishly alluring than handsome, these wild creatures nevertheless have widespread reputations as voracious seducers.

Known for their insatiable carnal appetites, satyrs are the epitome of virility and sensuality. They are commonly associated with wild bouts of drinking, feasting, and sexual congress, and their powers of seduction are legendary. People from a wide variety of races and social stations have been lured into the satyrs' hedonistic debauches. From holy men to highborn women, few can resist a satyr's pure concupiscent powers.

Far from being one-dimensional, satyrs are also known for their innate magical and musical talents. They are able to use the otherworldly music from their distinctive panpipes as a conduit for their magical powers, changing the melodies in order to influence creatures in a variety of ways. While most satyrs know a handful of traditional illusion and conjuration spells, they are best known for their potent compulsions. Some older satyrs can produce a wide range of magical effects; however, the vast majority of these fey limit their repertoire to melodies that can either avert combat or ingratiate them with strangers.

Satyrs scorn the use of magic to aid in their amatory pursuits, however, trusting implicitly in the potency of their natural charms. And for many, their supreme confidence and attentive wooing are indeed irresistible. Still others are attracted to satyrs' carefree lifestyles and libertine ways, and need little persuasion to partake in their raucous revels. Unfortunately for besotted lovers, tender moments rarely translate into lasting relationships. Satyrs are in love with the new and uninterested in entanglements, and once they have attained their goal, they are quickly lured away by the thrill of the next conquest. But regardless of their attitudes toward these amorous, flighty, and selfish creatures, most agree that satyrs are among the most renowned and distinctive of the many fey races.

Aspect of Nature

As befits their profound connection with the procreative powers of nature, satyrs prefer locations in the forest where the flora and fauna are most vibrant. Their attraction to all things sensual often leads them to settle in orchards, fields of wildflowers, or patches of fragrant herbs. It's not uncommon to discover a satyr wallowing

in an orchard, drunk on fermented fruit and surrounded by disheveled and enthralled admirers. Any place with an abundance of flavor, color, or aroma is an attractive home for a satyr.

Unlike many other fey, satyrs are not in the least bit territorial. On the contrary, they prefer locations that attract a variety of other fey, animals, and consorts. Also, while many fey are bound to their habitats, satyrs are prone to wandering. Once a satyr has sated himself on the local offerings, he abandons even perfectly suitable sites in search of greater stimulation. Many compare them to traveling minstrels, not only for their musical talent, but also for their tendency to meander from place to place, leaving a string of awkward conversations in their wakes. For the most part, satyrs' merry company and musical skill make local inhabitants willing to share their patch of forest.

Ecology

Satyr biology makes for raunchy jokes and bawdy songs throughout Golarion. However, despite the exaggerations, satyrs are not so different from most humanoids. Standing slightly taller than the average human, at around 6 feet, satyrs tend to be lean and well-muscled. They require as much food and sleep as a full-grown human, though their love of excess often leads them to gorge themselves beyond reason on both. In order to supply their insatiable appetites, satyrs spend much of their time foraging, either for the fruits of fey forests, or for a host with a well-stocked larder.

Satyrs are largely vegetarian, preferring to eat whatever is on hand rather than hunting for food. Low-hanging fruit is by far the favored diet of satyrs, who see too much effort spent on sustenance as a distraction from the riotous experience of life. This does not necessarily mean that satyrs do not enjoy the taste of flesh. After all, nothing provokes the senses quite like fresh blood. This proclivity leads the occasional satyr to become carnivorous; some even have been known to lure prey using their magical compulsions. Their favorite foods, however, are free meals from their current hosts—a diet that requires the least effort possible.

All satyrs are male, and thus they require females of other species to procreate. Though satyrs are able to reproduce with a wide variety of humanoid species and forms of fey, the child born of a union between a satyr and a female of another species is either a satyr or, if the satyr's lover is particularly virtuous, a faun. Because the parentage of satyr children is absolutely indisputable, these newborns often suffer the rage of cuckolded spouses or the embarrassment of inconveniently pregnant women. If the father doesn't collect the child himself, some satyr babies are left at the edge of the wilderness, to be spirited

away by either their fathers or predators, whichever arrives first. Abandoned satyr infants who are lucky enough to be discovered by fey are usually raised by a single satyr, who uses the child to garner sympathy and good will among those it wishes to influence until the child is old enough to start piping on its own.

Society

There is very little in the way of a centralized satyr culture. Most of satyrs' magical and piping abilities are passed down on an individual basis from father to son. Once of age, most satyrs strike out on their own, preferring to live among their fey brethren, enjoying the debauched lifestyle other satyrs offer. When a satyr happens upon an especially lush orchard or watering hole, he may stay there for a while, soaking up all the company and comfort he can, before either becoming bored or wearing out his welcome. Come winter, satyrs often attempt to ingratiate themselves with less transient fey in the hope of exchanging entertainment for a winter's shelter. If they're unable to install themselves as hangers-on, satyrs accumulate as many followers as possible, and weather the colder months in a cozy cave, using their admirers for warmth.

Satyrs' unapologetic imposition on the hospitality of others gives them a mixed reputation in fey circles. While most see them as sponges, many fey find the ribald entertainment and intrigue satyrs bring to be worth the price of food and shelter. Unfortunately for satyrs, however, they are not known for their manners or hygiene, and their hosts tend to tire quickly of their companionship. Occasionally a satyr establishes himself as a long-term consort to an influential nymph, or as a guardian to a specific forest or dryad's glade, but for the most part satyrs move in accordance with their whims. This lifestyle provokes a fair amount of envy and resentment from fey whose natures do not allow them such freedom.

Because of their great love of excitement and all things sensual, satyrs are more likely than most fey to be discovered at the edges of humanoid settlements. Towns give rise to all manner of amenities that satyrs find fascinating, especially brothels, spices, and alcohol. While seldom welcome in towns, satyrs sometimes bed down near a settlement in the hope of procuring a cask of ale or luring the odd townsfolk into their lascivious traps. Because many humanoids encounter satyrs only when they're engaged in petty thieving and wanton behavior, these fey have a dubious reputation among many communities, who see them as compulsive criminals or degenerate beasts. If not exposed to the creative, witty, and lively side of the fey creatures, some view them as malevolent and evil.

Campaign Role

Satyrs' ribald senses of humor, lascivious aspirations, and dubious moral codes make them a lively addition to any forest campaign. While satyrs excel as NPCs, they are also well suited for combat roles. They can serve ably as main villains in low-level games, or as combat support aiding more powerful fey in high-level games.

Like most fey, satyrs rarely appear in towns or cities, making them ideal for wilderness adventures. PCs might encounter a satyr while en route from one village to the next, or at the outskirts of a smaller settlement. Satyrs are not the wariest of creatures, having little material wealth and a great love of drunkenness, so they are seldom on guard and are easily ambushed. If caught unaware, satyrs are usually found playing their pipes on beds of moss, with wineskins, fruit pits, and adoring lovers littering the ground around them.

On the whole, satyrs are not violent creatures, and don't seek out combat. This makes them ideal for social encounters, as their raunchy senses of humor and love of bacchanalia often put them more in the role of troublesome friends than that of enemies. Having a satyr guide or advisor, for instance, is a mixed blessing for an adventuring party. As itinerants, satyrs know their home forests like the backs of their hands, making them excellent navigators and foragers. Their highly social natures also make them experts on the forest's inhabitants, and which of those creatures may be trouble. Finally, their magical and musical skills make them useful in many situations where charm or diplomacy might be preferable to violence.

The capable aid of a satyr guide does not come without costs, however. The first drawback is that a satyr will likely attempt to seduce at least a few members of the adventuring party, captivated by the excitement and intrigue adventurers inspire. The second drawback of working with satyrs is their unabashed self-interest. Satyrs may sometimes fulfill the role of forest guardian or selfless counselor, but more often they follow their immediate desires. As long as a party can keep its guide engaged with excitement, wine, and intimate company, all is well. As soon as they run short of those things, though, the adventurers' fickle assistant is likely to wander off in search of greener pastures. A party that relies too heavily on a satyr may wake up one day to find itself lost and its mercurial guide nowhere to be found.

As combatants, satyrs are support casters who rely almost entirely on their famed pipes and arsenal of spells to see them through. Their abilities to charm at will and enchant multiple targets simultaneously make them dangerous foes. A party without the willpower to resist a satyr's enchantments may find its members fighting among themselves, fleeing before him, or lying

down to take a nap in the middle of a fight. Despite their ample musculature, satyrs prefer to avoid hand-to-hand combat, and more often than not leave melee combat to burlier creatures. As main opponents, satyrs summon creatures like wolves, wolverines, or boars to do their dirty work. If allied with other fey, they concentrate solely on disrupting their enemies, leaving damage dealing to their compatriots.

Treasure

Though satyrs do not pursue material wealth, preferring instead the pleasures of experience, they often have a few possessions of value, generally gifts from charmed admirers. As satyrs have little use for coins or gems and lack permanent homes in which to store treasure hoards, much of a satyr's wealth consists of a few useful items that can be worn or easily carried, such as magical jewelry, or takes the form of information or consorts.

Satyrs' most prized possessions are usually their masterwork panpipes, with which they can enchant whole groups of creatures with a simple song. Despite being integrally linked to the satyrs' compulsion effects, these pipes are seldom magical themselves. This fact has dismayed countless thieves, who had hoped to capture the satyrs' enchanting effects for themselves, only to discover they've stolen a mundane instrument at the cost of the satyr's ire.

With little ability to craft items and no money to buy them, satyrs occasionally covet relatively minor magical items that can produce food, shelter, or bonuses to their Charisma-based abilities. Items a satyr might deign to own include *campfire beads*, *circlets of persuasion*, *decanters of endless water*, and *sustaining spoons*. Advanced satyrs might augment their musical repertoire by learning to play *pipes of haunting*, *horns of fog*, or *pipes of sounding*.

Often more valuable than satyrs' meager possessions are their admirers and the information these consorts let slip during intimate moments. Fittingly, powerful fey may employ satyrs as intelligence-gathering agents, putting their coercive skills toward complex political purposes. While usually not so conniving or far-sighted themselves, satyrs are not above using sensitive information for the purposes of extortion or blackmail, or selling the information to adventurers wishing to do the same.

Satyrs on Golarion

Fey creatures are famously secretive, preferring to stay cloistered away in the depths of Golarion's wilderness. Most of these creatures—like quicklings, dryads, and



TOKEN OF THE SATYR

Satyrs are not above sentimentality, and despite the common perception that they are heartless and cavalier, satyrs harbor no ill will toward those they seduce. On the contrary, most satyrs honestly wish to share the joy of life with their consorts, and this show of affection sometimes takes the form of a small gift.

A satyr's token is a miniature panpipe, roughly carved from bone or wood. Such a token retains its magical properties for 24 hours, during which time the wielder can, as a standard action, play the pipes to activate their blessing, which lasts for 1 minute thereafter. When played, a satyr's token grants a +1 morale bonus on Will saves and increases the DC of any enchantments cast by the user by 1. The bonuses granted by a satyr's token do not function against the satyr who crafted it.

pechs—avoid contact with humanoid settlers. However, some fey—like brownies, fauns, and twigjacks—are more open to interaction with humanoid races, for better or worse. Satyrs, with their insatiable desires, fall into the latter category. This sociability, coupled with their much-publicized philandering, make them widely recognized throughout Golarion.

The satyr population is broadly dispersed, because of both their itinerancy and their tendency to conveniently leave the scene after accomplishing their seductions. While there is no centralized satyr culture to speak of on Golarion, they are well known and accepted in fey enclaves throughout the Inner Sea region. The majority of satyrs are located in central Avistan, but they have been sighted as far east as western Casmaron and as far south as central Garund, beyond the Mwangi Expanse, where their skin and fur often take on darker hues.

Many human populations have conflicting opinions regarding satyrs. On one hand, the fey embody what many humans wish they could be: carefree, joyful, and liberated. On the other hand, they also epitomize what many people see as barbarism: rampant promiscuity, squalor, and sloth. While some hold only one or the other opinion, the vast majority regard the satyrs with some combination of fascination and loathing.

The Taldan nobility, for example, have traditionally held a fetishistic attraction to satyrs. Rumors of a Taldan noblewoman having been lured into the Verduran Forest

SATYRS IN MYTHOLOGY

Products of Greek mythology, satyrs were originally followers of Silenus, a minor fertility deity. They were first portrayed as having the upper parts of men and the lower halves of goats, and it wasn't until the Roman reiteration of the creature that their distinctive horns appeared. Also associated with the better-known Greek god Dionysus (patron of wine, ritual madness, and ecstasy), satyrs have always been harbingers of music, merriment, and hedonism.

The original Greek versions of the satyr were not the attractive wantons we know today. On the contrary, the first satyrs were old and repulsive. In later times, Attic artists reimagined the satyrs as graceful and attractive nature spirits. In addition to being patrons of sensuality, satyrs were also used by playwrights in a specific type of tragicomedy called "satyr plays." These works, which emphasized bawdy humor and facetious retellings of well-known narratives, provided a change of pace during long evenings of theatrical entertainment.

The Romans expounded upon the concept of the satyr in several ways. Aside from adding the creatures' distinctive horns, they also emphasized the subversive nature of the satyrs on the stage. The resulting Roman satirae were not used for comedic relief, but rather for creating biting social commentaries; hence the contemporary meaning of the word "satire." The Romans also conflated satyrs with the Roman god Faunus and his Greek counterpart Pan, giving rise to the term "panpipes."

by a satyr often creates a scandal that can vault the lady into the social spotlight. She instantly becomes an object of both envy and sympathy, which makes for a wealth gossip. For ladies seeking social advancement, this notoriety is often welcome, even if a satyr child is not.

Not all nations' inhabitants, however, are as titillated by satyrs as are Taldor's. The Chelish, for example, have hunted satyrs to the verge of extinction within their borders to obtain the satyrs' horns, which the hunters sell to wealthy diabolists. These buyers mistakenly believe that either ingesting or making items from a satyr's horns will bestow a measure of the fey's legendary virility upon them.

While most cultures view satyrs as disreputable, ethnic Varisians have a definite cultural affinity for the sylvan creatures. These nomads see something of themselves in satyrs, who share their love of wine, music, and wandering. Both are also victims of misconceptions and dubious reputations—like satyrs, ethnic Varisians are often stereotyped as smooth-talkers, con artists, and seducers. Though the two groups seldom seek each other out, there is a tacit respect between them. This makes

Varisia, and the Sanos Forest specifically, a traditional safe haven for the fey.

Variant Satyr

BLACKWOOD SATYR CR 7

XP 3,200

CN Medium fey

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +22

Aura incorrigible charm (30 ft., DC 19)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 83 (9d6+52)

Fort +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

DR 10/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee dagger +6 (1d4+2/19–20), horns +1 (1d6+1)

Ranged +1 *longbow* +11 (1d8+1/×3)

Special Attacks pipes (DC 19)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +13)

At will—*dancing lights* (DC 15), *deep slumber* (DC 18), *ghost sound* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 18)

3/day—*major image* (DC 18), *reckless infatuation*^{UM} (DC 18)

1/day—*charm monster* (DC 19), *summon nature's ally IV*

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 20, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (*longbow*)

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +17, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nature) +13, Perception +22, Perform (wind) +21, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +8, Stealth +17;

Racial Modifiers +4 Perception, +4 Perform, +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Sylvan

Combat Gear *sleep arrows* (3), +1 *seeking arrows* (5); **Other Gear** +1 *longbow* with 20 arrows, dagger, *efficient quiver*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Incorrigible Charm (Su) A blackwood satyr emits an aura of incorrigible charm out to a radius of 30 feet. Any creature that begins its turn in this area of effect must succeed at a DC 19 Will save, or be affected as per the spell *charm person*. The blackwood satyr can suppress or resume this ability at will. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Pipes (Su) A blackwood satyr can focus and empower his magical abilities by playing haunting melodies on his panpipes. When he plays, all creatures within a 60-foot radius must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or be affected by *charm monster*, *deep slumber*, *reckless infatuation*, or *suggestion*, depending on what tune the satyr chooses. A creature that successfully saves against any of the pipes' effects cannot be affected by the same set of pipes for 24

hours, but can still be affected by the blackwood satyr's other spell-like abilities as normal. The satyr's use of his pipes does not count toward his uses per day of his spell-like abilities, and if separated from them, he may continue to use his standard abilities. The pipes themselves are masterwork, and a satyr can craft a replacement with 1 week of labor. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Blackwood satyrs are an especially infamous breed of fey indigenous to the Verduran Forest, which straddles the borders of Andoran, Taldor, and Galt. They are well known throughout southeastern Avistan for exuding the pleasantly sweet aroma of blackwood tar, from which they gain their name. Though the human population surrounding the Verduran Forest seldom ventures deep into the fey wood for anything other than logging, the blackwood satyrs seem to take perverse pleasure in waylaying noble lords and ladies during their passage down the heavily traveled Sellen River, playing songs from the river's bank to lure vessels closer and enthrall all aboard.

The Verduran Forest

The blackwood satyrs make their homes in the famed Verduran Forest, one of the largest woodlands in Avistan. Despite being largely untamed, the forest sees heavy human traffic through select areas. At its fringes, Andoran lumberjacks remain locked in constant tension with the native fey over logging and the hopes of supplying their nation with shipbuilding materials. The heavily trafficked Sellen River and Verduran Fork move goods and travelers to and from major shipping centers in Andoran, Taldor, Galt, Kyonin, the River Kingdoms, and the shores of Lake Encarthan. However, beyond the well-worn waterways and logging camps, the Verduran Forest is still very much a fey stronghold, even attracting a large population of gnomes in nearby Wispil.

The dense wilderness of the Verduran Forest befits the blackwood satyrs' decadent lifestyles, as it provides no shortage of room in which to roam, food to forage, and potential fey hosts to impose upon. Their extensive knowledge of the Verduran Forest helps them steer well clear of its many dangers, which include ettercaps, dragons, flesh-eating plants, and swarms of vermin, as well as malicious fey like redcaps and gremlins. This makes them able guides for adventurers hell-bent on trekking through the forest, a role the blackwood satyrs relish, sometimes for dubious reasons.

The best part about living in the Verduran Forest for the satyrs, however, is the constant stream of travelers that float upon the forest's central waterway. The longships and keelboats that

transport goods and passengers up and down the Sellen River are an endless source of entertainment for the blackwood satyrs. Their favored pastime is to use their pipes to lure unsuspecting travelers from their vessels during the night, while their ships are at anchor. The satyrs then treat themselves and their new friends to a night of raucous, bacchanalian ecstasy, returning them at first light to their unsuspecting crewmates. These disheveled and exhausted travelers usually keep their experiences to themselves, though enough stories of these nocturnal excursions have leaked out to earn the blackwood satyrs an ever-growing reputation—one that keeps the flow of the curious and adventurous steady.





SPRITE

The night air was heavy and I was tired, so at first I mistook the buzzing at my ear for a bee. Then I felt a slight tug; instantly, my hands flew to my neck. My magic amulet was gone! I spotted it across the camp, flying drunkenly through the air in the hands of a diminutive, giggling man with wings the color of an amaryllis and ears the length of his arms. As he disappeared into the trees, he offered a wink and a sarcastic salute—almost as if daring me to give chase. I did, of course, for that amulet was all I had to remember my mother by, but I never found it, and I never saw the little thief again, either.”

—Elindril Thassir, Nirmathan Pathfinder

Perhaps the least understood of Golarion's fey, sprites are living paradoxes—they are beautiful yet primitive, isolated yet ruthlessly competitive, martial yet drawn to magic, and protective of nature yet always looking for man-made baubles to decorate their treetop homes. Because of their complicated personalities, sprites are regarded as everything from wondrous champions of nature to pests in need of extermination. Regardless of how they're viewed, sprites are well-documented banes to any adventurers who happen upon their wooded homes.

Among the smallest fey, sprites typically stand about 9 inches tall. They rarely weigh more than 1 or 2 pounds. Each sprite's feathery wings are a unique color, ranging from brilliant orange to deep emerald to rich violet. Sprites often have flaming red or orange hair topping lithe, athletic bodies, while long, elflike ears protrude from their heads. Sprites' bodies are naturally luminous, and they can vary the color and intensity of this glow with a thought.

Far from ashamed of their odd appearances, sprites take pride in their flamboyancy. They even use natural dyes to decorate themselves with intricate tattoos that typically have great meaning to themselves or to their tribes. In fact, sprites often hold competitions not to determine who of the tribe is strongest or fastest, but to see who boasts the most beautiful body art.

Sprites are unendingly curious beings, but they are distrustful of all outsiders—even other fey—and perceive most intruders as threats. This attitude likely stems from their diminutive size, which marks them as easy prey. For protection sprites wield short swords and shortbows; they prefer to flee when they are clearly overmatched, but they often take risks to obtain particularly attractive treasures, to explore alluring magical sites, or even to seek rollicking adventures for the thrills they provide. Sprites are at their fiercest when their forest homes are threatened; many an adventurer has stumbled upon a tiny treetop village of peculiar little homes only to be met by a winged horde determined to protect their sanctuary at all costs.

Aspect of Nature

Like robins fluttering at play or squirrels bantering jovially, sprites embody nature's capricious, carefree side. Sprites conduct much of their lives based on whims; races among friends break out spontaneously, as do forays outside their villages for treasure and adventure. Sprites are intrinsically drawn to forests because of their wildly varying ecosystems and their cyclical nature, both of which the erratic creatures find comforting. Sprite tribes consider themselves responsible for protecting and maintaining specific elements of the forest—even if some elements, such as an ancient herd of elk or pack of wolves, don't particularly need protecting. While sprites may not pack a major punch in combat, they are always willing to come

up with clever—and often mischievous—ways to thwart those who mean to do their charges harm. Sprites only eschew their tricky ways when their homes are directly threatened; such an event turns them from whimsical revelers into enraged defenders.

Ecology

Almost never found alone, sprites live in tribes consisting of anywhere from 40 to several thousand individuals. They typically make their homes high in forest canopies, away from the prying eyes of predators and most sentient creatures. Sprite dwellings are expertly carved into tree trunks and thick branches; an elaborate system of vine bridges and lifts allows villages to maintain a tight-knit sense of community. Sprite tribes often hold raucous seasonal festivals tied to their charge: for example, a celebration of mating season for tribes that protect animal herds or a feast of spring for those that venerate the thaw.

Although they are not particularly skilled in its use, sprites are captivated by the concept of magic. They find ruined temples or crumbling spires—where the air often crackles with latent magic—particularly intriguing. Sprites living near such features might adopt and protect them as if they were part of nature itself. Particularly ancient sprite tribes might even live in these structures, revering the auras around them as natural emanations of the earth's bounty. This interest in magic also makes sprites unusually receptive to taking on roles as familiars; a 5th-level chaotic neutral spellcaster with the Improved Familiar feat may gain a sprite as a familiar.

As their primary, self-styled purpose on Golarion is to protect nature in some way, sprites view the earth as the answer to all their needs. Their diets consist of fungi and insects, particularly those they consider invasive or harmful. Sprites' ingenuity is boundless; they can fashion helmets from nuts, shields from sheaths of bark, and clothes from leaves and bird feathers. To sprites, the more colorful their attire is, the better—particularly if that color complements their natural glow.

As tradition prescribes, sprites participate in elaborate mating rituals each year. Throughout the winter, would-be suitors sprites spend an inordinate amount of time determining how to impress their potential mates. When spring arrives, dusky forests often light up with these sprites' wooing efforts: pulsing displays of color, aerial maneuvers, and fierce competitions to prove who is fastest and brightest. When a courted sprite finds these efforts satisfactory, she signals her desire by placing a flowery wreath on the head of her chosen suitor. A mated pair of sprites might produce one or two offspring in the short time their union lasts. Most sprite couplings endure for only a few seasons before the pair part ways, and individual sprites often experience many romantic liaisons throughout their lives.

Although they are maddeningly elusive and skilled at survival, sprites are not particularly long-lived creatures. On the Material Plane, sprites live 40 years or less—they reach adolescence by their fifth year and adulthood by their tenth. Unlike many shorter-lived races, sprites are acutely aware of their mortality—perhaps explaining why the creatures constantly feel the need to seize the day no matter the ramifications.

Society

Unfailingly insular, sprites typically spend their entire lives among their birth tribe. The diminutive creatures consider themselves superior to other fey—and to all other races, for that matter—and refer to themselves simply as “the people.” All outsiders are viewed as potential threats. Most distrusted are dwarves, whom sprites view as rigid and obtuse, especially when it comes to nature. On the other hand, sprites view elves and gnomes as the least likely to wish them harm. This is probably because elves often live in harmony with nature, while sprites share common ancestry in the First World with gnomes, and also because sprites are intrigued by both races’ natural magical tendencies.

Although sprites usually stand united against outsiders, they are fiercely competitive among themselves. Nearly every disagreement is solved with a contest; races on the backs of large birds are common, as are duels with wooden swords and contests of aerial agility. Competition is the only true law sprites follow: Winners are winners and deserve praise, while losers are urged to improve themselves to win the next contest. To a sprite, nothing is more valuable than bragging rights recognized by the whole tribe.

The competitive nature of sprites often manifests in the creatures’ love of all things shiny. Rather than seeking material wealth, sprites take joy in searching for treasures they can show off to their kin—particularly treasures that can be embedded into their wings or clothing and paraded for all to see. Sprites are opportunists when it comes to treasure; if a party adventuring near their homes displays jewelry or magic items, sprites often employ every clever tactic at their disposal to pilfer as much as they can. A favorite sprite trick involves sneaking into camps at night, stealing loot, and then finding ways to convince the victim that he is delusional, forgetful, or drunk.

Sprites are experts at stealth and dislike open combat, but as evidenced by their pilfering ways, they often take risks for trivialities, such as the joy of causing mischief. While they enjoy playing tricks on nearly anyone, including their own kin, sprites turn into particularly cruel pranksters when the targets are creatures that are unwelcome in their forests. In an effort to turn away intruders, sprites pull no punches—anything, from luring strangers into a bear’s cave to convincing a dire wolf that adventurers would make good prey, is considered permissible.

Campaign Role

Because of sprites’ mischievous, unpredictable behavior, encounters with these fey can add mysticism and whimsy to an adventure. The presence of a sprite tribe might serve as an indication that the surrounding forest hums with latent magic, which perhaps attracted the creatures there in the first place. Sprites also offer great opportunities for bridging between encounters or parts of a larger adventure; perhaps a PC wakes just in time to watch her prized circlet fly away in a sprite’s hands, only to be lured along with her group into a dangerous, high-stakes situation. Similarly, should a party wander unknowingly into a sprite tribe’s forest, the creatures might play dastardly tricks on the PCs in an attempt to keep them from stumbling upon their village. Such a situation could provide a great opportunity to ratchet up an area’s mystique while keeping players on their toes.

Sprites’ villages are typically built in woodland canopies for safety; particularly dense and secluded forests, however, might harbor sprites homes carved closer to the ground. Sprites use naturally occurring materials creatively when building their homes, and often augment that architecture with art and other ornaments. Individual sprites are known to carve elaborate murals around their front doorframes; like family crests, these murals tell the story of the sprite family living inside. Additionally, sprites love incorporating stolen baubles into their structures. In fact, astute adventurers usually can detect the presence of a nearby sprite village by the unnatural glinting coming from the treetops.

Sprites view their homes as living entities to be protected—just like the forest around them—and do so at all costs. The creatures are incredibly vigilant against threats; guards are always posted at key spots around villages. These guards are trained to use a system of meticulous, birdlike calls, each of which signals the exact details of a situation—including whether intruders appear to be hostile, accidental, overwhelming in number, or solitary. No matter the scale, attacks on large villages are invariably met with a swarm of angry, armed sprites ready to do battle with whoever or whatever dares threaten their home. In a low-level game, such a swarm might serve as an unexpected capstone to a series of events that could include missing items, strangely colored lights in the woods, or unexplained mishaps such as tripping over unseen obstacles or falling into a river. In higher-level games, encounters with thieving sprites might spice up an otherwise uneventful journey through a forest—or provide a way to lure PCs into encounters with forest denizens they might not typically disturb when traveling on well-marked roads and trails.

Perhaps because of their proficiency in stealth, sprites tend to be viewed as either noble guardians of nature or signs of terrible luck by those who live nearest to them.

Many uncultured human settlements believe sprites are imps from Hell; these communities often place bounties on sprites, payable upon presentation of their long, severed ears. Other cultures believe sprites represent nature's bounty; in some villages, appearances of sprites are considered signs of the gods' favor, so locals often attempt to gain the creatures' trust. Whether sprites are aware of these beliefs is unknown, but it's always clear that the more information a sprite has about a target of its mischief or ire, the more it will use that knowledge to its advantage.

Treasure

Sprites' obsession with baubles and small magic items—and basically anything shiny enough to catch their eyes—borders on kleptomania. Aside from the small array of loot they tend to wear on their persons, sprites store their valuables in their personal dwellings. Because of their small size, sprites rarely steal items that are bigger or heavier than they can comfortably lift—common items found in sprite villages include magical and nonmagical jewelry (including rings, necklaces, brooches, and headbands), loose gems, bags of gold, magic glasses and goggles, magic bracers, and occasionally arms and armor sized for Small or smaller creatures. Sprites are superstitious when it comes to protecting their valuables and often use strange hiding places or minor cantrips to try to keep their purloined goods safe.

In some sprite communities, love of treasure approaches the sprites' reverence of nature in terms of cultural significance. These sprites plan and carry out elaborate heists targeting nearby villages, with each sprite playing a prescribed role in the crimes. To further prepare themselves before such a thieving endeavor, some sprites are fond of chewing on a rare moss called keffis, which affects sprites but has no physiological effect on other creatures. When boiled, keffis sharpens the senses and provides a high many times more potent than an adrenaline rush; sprites use it to secure clean getaways and to increase the thrill of stealing, but are left lethargic and sometimes even nauseated after the moss's effects wear off—a result that has led to a growing epidemic of keffis addiction in sprite communities.

Sprites on Golarion

Golarion's sprites are split between tribes that recently emigrated from the First World and tribes descended from those who did so generations ago. Regardless of how long they've dwelled on Golarion, sprites possess roughly

TOKEN OF THE SPRITE

During the rare occasions sprites interact with outside creatures, they may spend an hour crafting a token to give as a sign of affection or gratitude, or as payment. These tokens are walnut-sized and carved from wood culled from a sprite's home. The tokens are dyed brilliant colors and imprinted with the sprite's family seal, which usually incorporates tiny carvings of animals and other natural elements.

Sprite tokens allow the bearer to retrieve one stolen item from the bequeathing sprite's tribe within 24 hours of receiving the token. If that is not applicable, the token instead protects the bearer from sprites' thievery for the following 24 hours. In the latter case, the tokens are meant to protect bearers from all sprites, not just the giver; most sprites typically honor this custom.

It is exceedingly difficult to attain a sprite token honestly, as the creatures are quite discerning givers. The most common ways to earn a token are to risk one's life protecting a sprite's forest, to drive enemies away from a sprite village, or to save sprites from hunters or slavers. Rarely, sprites have been known to give tokens to creatures that have somehow infiltrated their competitions and won. Rumors say only elves and gnomes have been known to accomplish this feat, but that encourages members of other races to try more often than it discourages them.



the same ethereal sets of abilities and usually exhibit the same broad-based personality traits. Although many sprite habitats are well documented, scholars believe many places where the creatures exist have yet to be discovered by civilized humanoids.

With its plethora of undisturbed forests, its ancient magic, and its high, thick canopy, the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse are a natural habitat for sprites. Here sprites often exhibit darker natural skin tones, a willing evolution to help them better interact with the Mwangi and Garundi humans they most often encounter near their settlements. In the heart of jungle—where the foliage is thickest and most sheltering—hundreds of tribes consisting of thousands of individual sprites live in such close proximity that their settlements have grown into a thriving sprite metropolis among the treetops. This fey city, called Allavelium by its inhabitants, spans a region as large as a large humanoid city, and may be the

SPRITES IN MYTHOLOGY

The existence of diminutive, spiritual creatures is persistent in folktales found across the world. Typically, the term “sprite”—which derives from the Latin word “spiritus,” or spirit—is a broad one generally referencing elflike creatures, fairies, pixies, gnomes, or even ghosts.

In European folklore, sprites are humanlike creatures that are about the size of large insects. Their bodies exhibit dazzling colors, and their wings are glistening and membranous. Considered the most common type of fairy, they live deep in forests that boast high populations of other fey. They are playful, mischievous, and have short attention spans. Sprites’ reverence of nature shows in all they do, even in their diets, which include bugs that harm the plants they love.

At night, sprites glow faintly, causing some to mistake them for fireflies. They sleep wherever is most comfortable, such as on lily pads or wrapped in foliage. In some forests, it’s said one can easily find evidence of sprites’ existence: hollowed-out acorns they’ve used as bowls, dandelion-tuft mattresses, and hats made from folded leaves are just a few examples of items sprites are said to leave behind.

single largest concentration of fey on the Material Plane, if only because so many diminutive sprites can fit in that space. The Mwangi natives who live on the ground nearby steer clear of Allavelium, where the sheer number of sprites could overwhelm even their largest and most well-equipped armies. Many a local children’s tale warns to avoid the part of the forest wherein the trees above glow and laugh in the dead of night.

Elsewhere in Garund, sprites are equally feared, but not for their numbers—rather, inhabitants of Geb avoid the malevolent sprites inhabiting the nation’s haunted woodlands. Gebbite sprites are said to have an unhealthy interest in necromancy and a love of cruelty eclipsed only by their bloodlust, and they replace their kin’s bright colors with ghostly glows of pale light, body paintings of macabre images in blood, and decorations constructed of the bones of small woodland creatures. Instead of engaging in celebrations of mirth and joy, these evil fey instead sing somber dirges and dance as though under the mental control of a lurching, half-alive puppeteer. Whether these twisted sprites are products of Geb’s endless war against Nex is unclear, but the fact remains that even the nation’s undead inhabitants avoid these frightening creatures when possible.

In Avistan, sprites have been documented in the woodlands of the nations around Lake Encarthan, especially Razmiran’s Exalted Wood (where the fey are ruthlessly hunted by priests of Razmir), Kyonin’s Fierani Forest (where

the elves’ isolationism keeps away those who would wish the sprites harm), and Nirmathas’s Fangwood (where the mysterious blight affecting the region’s fey has not spared the sprite tribes within). To the south, many travelers through the Verduran Forest in Taldor report encounters with sprites, though the gnomes of Wispil deny their presence, and few have found the creatures’ hidden homes.

Sprite Swarm

Thousands of tiny, colorful winged humanoids crawl from every corner of the forest to form this buzzing, writhing swarm.

| | | |
|--|------|---|
| SPRITE SWARM | CR 5 |  |
| XP 1,600 | | |
| CN Diminutive fey (swarm) | | |
| Init +7; Senses low-light vision, <i>detect evil</i> , <i>detect good</i> ; Perception +14 | | |
| DEFENSE | | |
| AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 size) | | |
| hp 45 (10d6+10) | | |
| Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +7 | | |
| Defensive Abilities swarm traits | | |
| DR 2/cold iron; Immune weapon damage | | |
| OFFENSE | | |
| Speed 15 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect) | | |
| Melee swarm (2d6 plus distraction) | | |
| Space 10 ft.; Reach 0 ft. | | |
| Special Attacks angry glow, concentrated rush, distraction (DC 16) | | |
| Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +5) Constant— <i>detect evil</i> , <i>detect good</i> 1/day— <i>mass daze</i> ^{UM} (DC 14) | | |
| STATISTICS | | |
| Str 3, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 10 | | |
| Base Atk +5; CMB —; CMD — | | |
| Feats Alertness, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception) | | |
| Skills Fly +30, Intimidate +10, Perception +14, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +28 | | |
| Languages Common, Sylvan | | |
| SQ mob mentality | | |
| ECOLOGY | | |
| Environment temperate forests | | |
| Organization solitary | | |
| Treasure incidental | | |
| SPECIAL ABILITIES | | |
| Angry Glow (Su) Once per minute, as a full-round action, the sprites that make up a sprite swarm may coordinate their luminous abilities to create a singular, searing glow. Creatures within 10 feet of a sprite swarm with line of sight must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. A creature that succeeds at its save is dazzled for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based. | | |

Concentrated Rush (Ex) Once every 1d4 rounds, if more than one creature occupies a sprite swarm's space, the swarm may use its attack action to concentrate on one of these creatures to deal 4d6 points of damage in place of its normal swarm damage. Other creatures within the horde's space do not take swarm damage that round.

Mob Mentality (Ex) As long as a sprite swarm has at least 10 hit points, it retains its Intelligence score and can act accordingly. Even so, it cannot be targeted by mind-affecting spells or effects that target a single creature. If its hit points fall below 10, the swarm is considered mindless as the individual creatures within begin to panic.

When intruders threaten their beloved homes, sprite guards in large villages are taught to call for their fellow tribe members to form a vicious, enveloping swarm to drive back their enemies. Typically consisting of at least 5,000 sprites, these swarms are known for inflicting pain upon any creatures in their paths. Sprite swarms typically form only when the sprites' village is threatened by a large number of intruders or a single powerful foe; however, the malevolent sprites of Geb are quick to form swarms when faced with intrusion of any kind.

In some parts of Golarion where sprites are known to exist, those accused of crimes or other unacceptable behavior are sentenced to face a sprite swarm so that nature itself can judge them. If a sprite swarm forms to drive one of the accused away, he is guilty; if not, he is innocent. Most of those sent forth never return, having run afoul of the sprites' protective instincts, but occasionally the sprites allow someone they deem not a threat to live—quite independently of their actual guilt or innocence.

Druellian

In pastoral Kyonin, the heart of Fierani Forest hums with flourishing wildlife and ancient magic. In summer, veils of mist shroud long-abandoned elven monuments that seem to rise from the forest itself; in winter, snowfalls blanket elf gates and other mysteries that have stood undisturbed for years. Among this natural paradise frolics a robust array of denizens, including fey creatures that seem as mystical as the forest itself. Among those fey, none are quite as numerous as the sprites that inhabit Druellian, an enormous village situated high above the ground. Only Allavelium in the Mwangi Expanse is said to be larger.

Technically a grouping of several smaller sprite villages, Druellian—also known as the “mystic city”—consists of thousands of dwellings and other structures carved from the trunks of ancient trees. The size of several city blocks, Druellian is home to nearly 20,000 sprites split into individual tribes of a few thousand. An

intricate, vine-based infrastructure system connects the community's buildings and dwellings, while guards are posted in hundreds of fortified outposts throughout the city. The dedicated artisans of Druellian create increasingly more elaborate and gem-encrusted architecture for wealthy village patrons, and its merchants offer items as fantastic as they are expensive.

Because it's so populous and well guarded, Druellian can muster remarkably strong responses to threats—its inhabitants can easily send forth three or four sprite swarms. Rumors suggest that should a foe come close to besting even those defenses, Druellian's sprites could even marshal reinforcements from neighboring tribes for help. No matter how many sprites live in and near Druellian, one thing is clear: These creatures would sacrifice themselves and their entire families to save the place they call home.



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