

# MONSTERNOVA CON

~ VOL. II: THE IRON KINGDOMS AND BEYOND ~

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# MONSTERNOTHCON

~ VOL. II: THE IRON KINGDOMS AND BEYOND ~

## A Creature Book of Monstrous Proportion

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## Foreword

The plan to give birth to the second volume of the critically-acclaimed *Monsternomicon* came years before I had the honor to join the excellent team of writers, editors, and creative minds at Privateer Press. Without their experience, patience, and guidance this book would never have survived its brutal adolescence to transform into the uncompromising beast it is today.

A glorious hybrid of monster book and campaign guide, this book owes much to its predecessor in style and format and of course to the indomitable character of Professor Viktor Pendrake. For those of you new to these books, you can read more about Professor Pendrake on p. 218 of the *Monsternomicon* Volume I.

Many of the characters introduced in the first volume make an appearance here, including associate professors Lynus Wesselbaum and Edrea Llorr. Not to be missed are the tales of Alten Ashley, western Immoren's foremost monster hunter, nor the experiences of Bloodstone Marches expert and guide Quimut.

This tome is dedicated to all those who were disappointed when their mothers told them there were no such thing as monsters.

## Using this Book

The entries in this book are slightly different in format from the previous volume. In particular the first line of the monster stats provides a one or two letter abbreviated alignment followed by the creature's size, type, and challenge rating in a condensed format.

Two new entries have been added as well. Senses provides information on a creature's sight and bonuses to Spot and Listen skills. Immunities/Resistances provides information on the immunities, racial traits, and damage and spell resistances of the creature.

A great deal about using the Legends & Lore entry can be found in pages 208-209 of the first volume of the *Monsternomicon*.

Lastly, in order to condense the monster stats and provide more room for descriptive text, when a stat is not applicable (such as having no Advancement) the line has been removed from the statistics.

## The Back story...

Unlike the previous *Monsternomicon*, a number of events have led to Professor Pendrake venturing into previously unexplored territories.

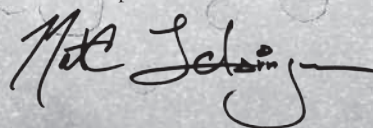
Before undertaking his career as an explorer or earning appointment as Chancellor of Extraordinary Zoology at Corvis University, Professor Viktor Pendrake served as a scout in the Cygnaran Army. After Corvis experienced a near catastrophic invasion by the skorne in 603 AR and a renewed invasion in 606 AR, Professor Pendrake felt it was his patriotic duty to become a scout once again. He ventured into the Bloodstone Marches to investigate the scope of this threat alongside his trusty Idrian guide Quimut, a man of proven familiarity with the wind-swept wasteland.

The good professor's efforts were cut short after violent clashes with the invaders. Quimut was nearly cut in twain by the tremendous blade of a cyclops warrior from the east. Pendrake left Quimut in the care of friendly trollkin and followed the skorne unaware that doing so would change his destiny. The skorne discovered their pursuer and captured him. Pendrake was thrown in a cage after being dealt grievous injury at the powerful hands of a titan.

Pendrake was dragged east to a massive fortress bridging the Abyss controlled by none other than Vinter Raelthorne IV, former king of Cygnar and now supreme tyrant of the Skorne Empire. Raelthorne offered Professor Pendrake a simple choice: venture into the east to chronicle Vinter's greatness or face immediate execution.

The threat of death notwithstanding, Pendrake knew he had been handed a singular opportunity. No scholarly man had gone into eastern Immoren—half of the continent remained unexplored. He knew he must seize the chance to see creatures undreamt of in the west. Pendrake was joined in his explorations by a skorne watcher named Kaleda who was tasked with both keeping him safe and on a short leash.

The full extent of Pendrake's adventures in the east must remain a tale for another time, but he witnessed many sights and spectacles chronicled on the pages herein. He may not have expected to live to return west and publish his work, but fate conspired to bring friends and allies to his rescue. After a harrowing boat trip through the Shattered Spine Islands and crashing on the Alchier Subcontinent, Pendrake at last returned to the hallowed halls of his university. With him he brought a wealth of previously untapped lore and has shed new light on eastern Immoren and its dangerous species. Many mysteries are yet to be explored and lie waiting beyond the next horizon for discovery by adventurers following in Professor Pendrake's esteemed footsteps.



# Map of Immoren



# IMMOREN

LEGEND	
☆	CAPITAL
○	TOWN
◻	FORTRESS
⊗	BATTLEGROUND

# Ancestral Guardian



Usually LE Large Construct (Ancestor) CR 8

Hit Dice: 9d10+30 (79 hp)

Immunities/Resist: Ancestor traits, construct traits,

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Listen 12, Spot 12,  
low-light vision,

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft.

Armor Class: 25, touch 9, flat-footed 25 (-1 size,  
+16 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+17

Attack: +1 glaive +13 melee (2d8+13) or slam  
+12 melee (1d6+7)

Full Attack: +1 glaive +13 melee (2d8+13) or 2  
slams +12 melee (1d6+7)

Special Attacks: Retaliatory strike

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. (15 with +1 glaive)

Special Qualities: Ancestor traits, construct traits, heavy step,  
gather spirits, spirit drive, spirit pool, other  
guardian abilities (see below)

Saves: Fort +3, Reflex +3, Will +5

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 11, Con —,  
Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge  
(history) +10, Listen +12, Move  
Silently +4, Sense Motive +10, Spot +12

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm,  
Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon  
Focus (glaive)<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Specialization  
(glaive)<sup>B</sup>

Environment: Any Skorne fortress, city, or crypt

Organization: Solitary

Advancement: 10–18 (Large), 19–27 (Huge)



Skorne cities possess relatively little in the way of ornamentation or iconography. Periodically, however, I observed these great, armed statues chiseled of black stone, most of them set with what looked like orbs of glass stained blood red. My keepers told me these contained the essence of skorne ancestors, a fact I took as symbolic until I saw one begin to move! This statue had stood near an archway and I watched as it suddenly came to life and advanced up the street with stoic deliberation. The skorne on the street cleared, bowing as they backed away, treating it as one might a lord or noble in the west. I could never pass another of these statues without feeling an itch of paranoia, wondering if some ancient restless spirit within looked upon me, deciding whether or not I should live.

According to Kaleda, when I could get her to say more than barking simple commands, these guardians serve a variety of roles among the skorne. They do not place every exalted ancestor preserved for posterity in a sacral stone into one of these guardians. They reserve this “honor” for certain warriors who died in battle and retain a keen awareness of the living world after they transform into their deathless state. They stand guard over the estates of major skorne houses, usually protecting a house’s store of crystallized sacral stones that contain other notable ancestors deemed worthy of preservation. Some guard other treasures or lore of a house, such as the occult libraries of their mortitheurges or significant ancient records preserved as house secrets. Their most respected use is to accompany the warriors of a house into battle, and by their presence pre-

serve those who die from the Void. The Void is, as far as I understand, the dreaded afterlife of oblivion awaiting most skorne, and their fear of it far exceeds any western unease regarding Urcaen.

A controlling sacral stone rests within the sculpted head of each ancestral guardian and contains the exalted spirit of the ancestor who animates it. Across its body lie other empty stones which have yet to receive the soul of a skorne. In battle the guardian can reach across the battlefield to “rescue” the spirits of skorne as their flesh fails. From another people I would doubt such tales or consider this purely a religious abstraction, but Kaleda assured me of its literal truth. Those saved by a guardian the skorne call “revered companions”. Though not held in the same regard as the full exalted, skorne consider these spirits saved from the Void companions to their more ancient and notable ancestors. Extollers supposedly can see these spirits with their mystic sight as the guardians gather them, a process invisible to the naked eye.

I must admit I find it awe-inspiring to watch these impossibly massive stone statues stride to battle next to skorne whose chests swell with pride at the thought that they walk alongside one of their revered ancestors. I have seen one of these constructs in battle. Faster than anything made of stone has a right to move, broad sweeping blows from the guardian’s massive stone halberd quickly felled an escaped cyclops driven mad by its conditioning. Kaleda said the energy of those spirits a guardian preserves fuels its blows, a fact which, like most of what I have heard of skorne occultism, made me uncomfortable. Do they sip on souls as a man drinks tea? I sensed this

## Ancestral Guardian

was an area where Kaleda would have no humor, so I resisted the urge to ask irreverent questions.

Though my exposure to the ancestral guardians was fascinating while I was in the east, I must admit I view them in an altogether different light now that I am back in the west. In my conversations with the monster hunter Alten Ashley, I have learned that these formidable animated statues are being seen wherever the skorne invaders march. Given the price of their construction, the fact that they have been included in the armies marching across the Bloodstone Desert is a reminder of the implacable resolve of the skorne to

subjugate our species. One rumor I am anxious to confirm is a report that some witnesses have seen entire ranks of animated statue soldiers marching together and fighting en masse. If that is the case, I think such "statue soldiers" must be of a distinctly different type of entity and may function differently. Certainly, I am assured the stalwart defenders of Cygnar's eastern border are likely to become all too familiar with the sight of well-armed guardians and other skorne horrors marching against them. Any lore we can discover regarding their vulnerabilities will save countless lives in the grim days ahead.

### Combat

An ancestral guardian boasts the experience and prowess of a long-dead skorne warrior. All ancestral guardians are formidable opponents, but those containing the souls of particularly ancient ancestors often have a broader array of powers and abilities than those of the more recently exalted.

All ancestral guardians have the following:

**Heavy Step:** An ancestral guardian can only run at triple its speed.

**Spirit Pool (Su):** Aside from the dominant spirit that animates the construct, guardians rely on the crystallized essences of other skorne spirits held within their forms.

Each of these spirits contributes to a spirit pool from which the guardian can power a variety of abilities. An ancestral guardian will have a number of points equal to  $1d3 \times \text{hit dice}$  in its spirit pool when encountered. An ancestral guardian may have a maximum of  $\text{hit dice} \times 4$  points in its spirit pool. Using this pool does not destroy the souls, but it does temporarily exhaust them. Points return at a rate of 1 per day.

Ancestral guardians of 9 hit die typically have 18 points in their spirit pool when encountered.

**Gather Spirit (Su):** Any allied skorne dying within 60 feet of a guardian has its soul drawn into the guardian and its essence added to the spirit pool. Each soul adds a number of points to the spirit pool equal to the hit dice of the fallen skorne. A soul must be gathered in its entirety. If adding these points exceeds the ancestral guardian's maximum spirit pool, that soul cannot be gathered.

**Spirit Driven (Su):** A skorne ancestral guardian's spirit pool fuels not just its special abilities, but also its ability to animate itself. Should an ancestral guardian deplete its spirit pool it weakens to a point that it can do nothing more than take a single move





# Ancestral Guardian

action per round. This state persists until the ancestor has gathered new spirit points to its pool.

In addition, an ancestral guardian will have one or more of the following abilities. The number of these abilities depends on the age of the ancestral spirit. Very recent ancestral guardians will only have one power, while extremely venerable ones might have all of them.

**Guard (Su):** As a swift action, an ancestral guardian can absorb the damage dealt to an adjacent allied creature or object. Guardians cannot block damage that does not involve hit points, such as level drain, ability damage, and death effects. The effectiveness of this ability depends upon how many points it spends from its spirit pool.

If the ancestral guardian spends 1 point from its spirit pool, it takes half of the damage dealt to the target in a single attack and the target takes the remainder as normal.

By expending 2 points from its spirit pool, a guardian can take all of the damage dealt to the target from a single attack.

**Retaliatory Strike (Su):** The ancestral guardian gains a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls against creatures that struck them in the previous round. By expending a point from its spirit pool, an ancestral guardian can increase these bonuses to +4.

Ancestral guardians with empty spirit pools may still make one attack per round against a creature that attacked them in the previous round.

**Ancestral Wrath:** The following lists the most common spell-like abilities a guardian might possess. Those of greater advancement may have access to other spells. An ancestral guardian must expend a number of points from its spirit pool as noted in parentheses every time it wishes to use a spell-like ability. At will—*darkness* (4), *doom* (2), *meld into stone* (6), *silence* (4).

**Spirit Sprint (Su):** The guardian can spend up to 2 points from its spirit pool as a free action to increase its movement by 10 feet per point spent. This speed increase lasts for 1 round per hit die (9 rounds for guardian listed).

**Spirit Vision (Sp):** The guardian can spending 1 point from its spirit pool and use a standard action to gain the benefit of *true seeing* for 24 hours.

## Ancestor Subtype

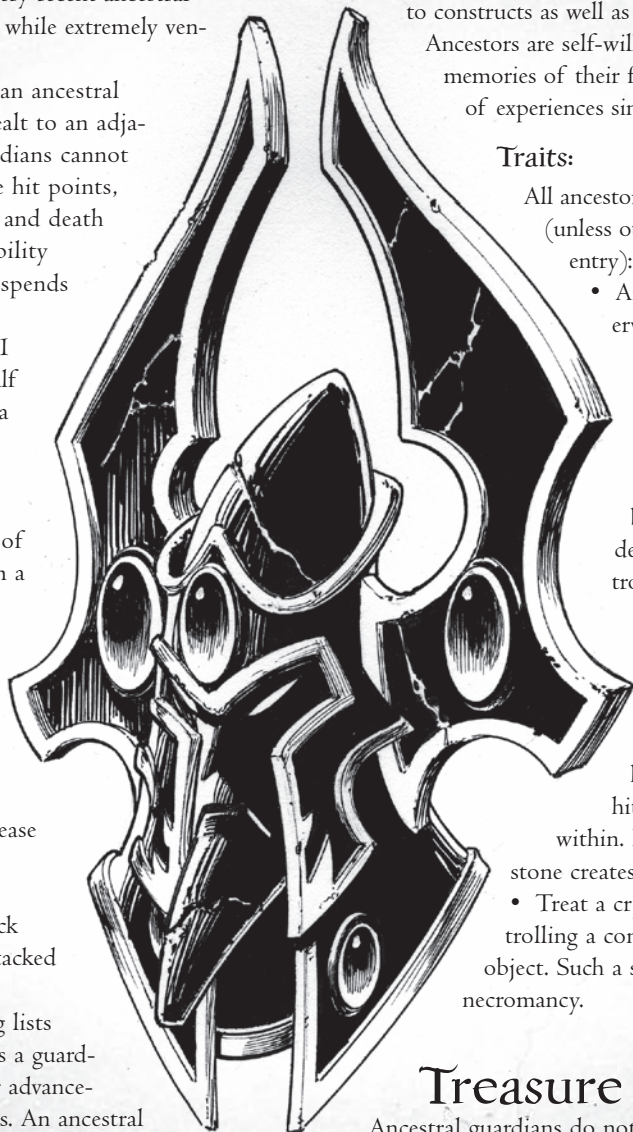
“Ancestor” is a subtype that applies to entities that were once living skorne but are preserved after death in sacral stones and prevented from leaving Caen. This subtype applies to constructs as well as certain types of undead.

Ancestors are self-willed sentient beings with all the memories of their former life as well as memories of experiences since becoming an ancestor.

### Traits:

All ancestors possess the following traits (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry):

- Ancestors cannot speak or otherwise communicate except by means of Exalted Dialogue (see Extoller, p. 232).
- While ancestors may inhabit or control a construct they do not have bodies and are not alive. The destruction of a construct controlled by an ancestor does not destroy the ancestor.
- Ancestors are typically contained within a “crystallized” obsidian sacral stone, which has hardness II and hit points equal to 5 x the hit dice of the soul contained within. Destroying an occupied sacral stone creates a *kovass* (p. 102).
- Treat a crystallized sacral stone not controlling a construct or undead body as an object. Such a stone radiates a strong aura of necromancy.



## Treasure

Ancestral guardians do not collect treasure, but set into each guardian are a number of sacral stones that are highly valued by the skorne and which have inherent value for their raw materials. An ancestral guardian will include 1 controlling crystallized sacral stone containing the spirit of a revered ancestor and one additional sacral stone for each HD (9 for the ancestral guardian depicted). Generally 1d4 of these additional stones will be crystallized and contain the spirits of recently killed skorne while the remainder are empty. The number of crystallized stones may be higher if the ancestral guardian were recently proximate to a large battle.

## Ancestral Guardian

Crystallized sacral stones glow dimly from within and radiate a strong aura of necromantic magic. The controlling stone is priceless to the skorne, and they will go to great lengths to recover it. The voluntary return of such a stone to an extoller might allow an outsider to gain favor with that extoller. The raw material value of a controlling sacral stone is 100 gp/HD of the ancestral guardian (900 gp for the ancestral guardian depicted here). Other sacral stones on an ancestral guardian are worth 400 gp each in raw materials. To an interested buyer, such stones may fetch higher prices, particularly due to their magical auras and obviously supernatural nature. A necromancer specialist or others interested in the manipulation of souls may be willing to pay up to three or four times a stone's actual value.

Empty sacral stones radiate a faint aura of necromancy and can attract the soul of a skorne of up to 4 hit dice who dies within 10 feet of the stone. If this happens, the stone becomes permanently crystallized. Generally crystallized stones are worth more than empty stones because they are considerably more durable, however certain necromancers may be willing to pay a premium for an empty stone in order to study its soul-attracting properties. For more specific details about sacral stones and their respective durability, see p. 236.

### Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** The spirits of skorne ancestors possesses ancestral guardians and to fight alongside one is high honor for a skorne.

**Rare:** The large sacral stone in the forehead of the guardian possesses the ancestor's spirit. Other stones possess lesser souls, considered revered companions of the ancestor.

*Scout General Rebald has asked me to estimate how many guardians to expect in a given skorne army. Giving a hard number is difficult, but my estimate is fewer than one per hundred soldiers. Higher caste warriors (such as cataphract Dethati, Arcuarii or veteran Praetorians) are more likely to be encountered with one or two ancestral guardians as escorts.*

*VP*

**Obscure:** Ancestral guardians absorb the souls of slain skorne in the vicinity. These souls infuse the guardian with additional supernatural abilities. Without these souls charging the guardian it cannot function as efficiently. Also, though removing the controlling sacral stone of an ancestral guardian might stop it from functioning, actually destroying the stone is extremely dangerous and will result in the manifestation of a kovass.

### HOOKS

The adventurers manage to acquire a valued item found amid the pawn shops of Corvis—a tarnished silver bracelet set with a curious dark-red stone that seems to glow very slightly from within. The half-blind shopkeeper undervalued this item and sold it for a pittance. Although it radiated both necromancy and conjuration strongly, the shopkeeper remained unaware that it had the properties of a bracer of armor (+2). In truth this item is far more valuable than even its apparent worth as a magic item suggests, for the source of its magic power is the controlling stone of a destroyed ancestral guardian.

Originally recovered by a Cygnaran soldier, the stone has passed through numerous hands. It was first sold to a member of the Fraternal Order who incorporated it into a magic item, then it was stolen by a thief and fenced. Unfortunately for the adventurers, several parties are on the trail of the bracelet including the Fraternal Order wizard and also a skorne extoller. The extoller is bringing with him a number of veteran skorne soldiers and a fully functional ancestral guardian. He considers it a matter of caste honor to reclaim the stone, and he will kill anyone who has profaned it with physical contact.

# Anura



## Croaker Warrior

Usually N Medium Monstrous Humanoid CR ½

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+1 (5 hp)  
**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +0, Spot +0  
**Initiative:** +2  
**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), Swim 40 ft., Climb 20 ft.  
**Armor Class:** 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +1 natural armor, +1 small shield)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+2

**Attack:** Spear +2 melee (1d6+1/x2 plus poison) or +2 ranged (1d6+1/x2 plus poison)

**Full Attack:** Spear +2 melee (1d6+1/x2 plus poison) or +2 ranged (1d6+1/x2 plus poison)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Croaking, hold breath, poison glands, wall climber

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2

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

**Skills:** Climb +9, Hide +6, Jump +8, Rope Use +2, Swim +9

**Feats:** Skill Focus (Jump)

**Environment:** Warm or tropical forest, marshes, or jungle

**Organization:** Wart (4-7), Pox (10-40 plus 1 or 2 sorcerers, 1 3rd level corporal per 10 adults, and 1 leader of 4th-6th level), Plague (40-400 plus 50% noncombatants plus 2 to 4 sorcerers, 1 3rd level corporal per 20 adults, 1 or 2 lieutenants of 4th or 5th level, and 1 leader of 6th-8th level)

**Advancement:** By character class

## Croaker Twin, 3rd level sorcerer

Usually N Medium Monstrous Humanoid CR 4

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+1 + 4d4 +4 (17 hp)  
**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +2, Spot +2  
**Initiative:** +6  
**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 40 ft., climb 20 ft.  
**Armor Class:** 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 natural armor)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+2

**Attack:** Spear +2 melee (1d6+2/x2 plus poison) or +2 ranged (1d6+2/x2 plus poison)

**Full Attack:** Spear +2 melee (1d6+2/x2 plus poison) or +2 ranged (1d6+2/x2 plus poison)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Extra limbs, hypnotic croaking, hold breath, poison glands, spells, wall climber

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6

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

**Skills:** Climb +8, Concentration +7, Hide +6, Jump +5, Search +2, Spellcraft +2, Swim +8

**Feats:** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus

**Environment:** Warm or tropical forest, marshes, or jungle

**Organization:** Wart (4-7), Pox (10-40 plus 1 or 2 sorcerers, 1 3rd level corporal per 10 adults, and 1 leader of 4th-6th level), Plague (40-400 plus 50% noncombatants plus 2 to 4 sorcerers, 1 3rd level corporal per 20 adults, 1 or 2 lieutenants of 4th or 5th level, and 1 leader of 6th-8th level)

**Advancement:** By character class



After the harrowing experience of escaping from the eastern port city of Kademe, I briefly fancied my adventures of discovery and danger in the east finished. Circumstances quickly disabused me of this notion. Our uncertain vessel made its way down swift-flowing channels into what I have come to call the Shattered Spine Islands. Very soon the climate underwent a radical change from dry clean heat to muggy sweltering humidity. The towering foliage of some foreboding and impenetrable jungle rose on either side of our waterway. Low on supplies because of our harried departure from the skorne city, we decided to brave the jungle in search of fresh water.

We navigated our boat into a narrow river canyon and proceeded to row inward. Our first sign of ambush came with the sudden heavy *thunk* of weapons hurled into the deck and hull of our vessel.

We ducked below the gunwales and hoped to press onward past the region, but some submerged obstruction pulled into the waterway in the dark of twilight blocked our ship. We slammed with a jolt into this and came to a standstill. I prompted my fellows to keep to cover and stand ready to free the ship while I took measures to draw away whatever creatures beset us. I swam to shore and spotted our assailants soon enough through the foliage. The strange bipedal creatures with



green and brown mottled skin and long, slender limbs reminded me of nothing so much as walking frogs.

A harrowing chase into the unknown jungle followed, with unfamiliar creatures dogging my heels. Eventually I eluded them, but I could not resist circling back to investigate their nature. I had not expected to find any organized intelligence among these knotted trees and vines. I discovered creatures I have named 'Anura', an old Caspian term related to frogs, but at the time observing them I preferred calling them by the more descriptive term 'croakers' after their interactions with one another, including a variety of complex croaks and warbles which must make up some hitherto unheard language. Several times I saw one of them hold their head high and make a particular loud and almost musical sustained, warbling call.

Their culture and society seemed primitive. Their dwellings consisted of peculiar hanging sacks of wattle and netting strung below the overhanging trees like improvised dens. The croakers moved quite nimbly among the tree branches and climbed surfaces human hands would find impassable. I

observed that their fingers had wide and soft pads that seemed to affix like suckers to the tree branches, yet remained dexterous in the manipulation of their spears, ropes, and other implements. Though clearly a tool using species capable of language, music, and interaction, I did not observe any crafts of great complexity, nor metalworking. Still, I have learned in my years not to discount the potential of any thinking species. I found most intriguing, however, the sight of certain half-buried ruins at the feet of some of these trees. Possessing an entirely different character, I presume these must mark some former civilization that once dominated this region. I suspect from carvings I observed on those pieces of stone that the anura did not erect them, as I saw figures quite manlike on those ruins. Likely the anura emigrated here as the climate changed and became more tropical. I hope to return to this fascinating region one day and explore more thoroughly.

A most peculiar and profound sight among the croakers interrupted these ruminations. A chant went up from the "villagers"—for so I had come to imagine them—as a figure of

## Anura

some importance arrived. Drifting up on a small flat-bottomed boat came another croaker of fatter frame and different coloration wearing an assortment of ornaments made from carved bone and bits of shining metal strung from straps. I stealthily came closer and discovered to my amazement that this new croaker had grotesque deformities, yet received tremendous respect from its peers. It appeared to have four arms, where most had a single pair, the extra arms attaching lower on its torso and somewhat stunted. More remarkable, upon its shoulders protruded what seemed to be a second head, slumped off to an angle, looking somewhat misshapen and uncomfortably situated on its neck. I believe it may have resulted from of some kind of "twin" birth, where the bodies fuse into one, as tragically sometimes happens even in our species. Yet it seemed this presented no social barriers to this particular anura.

I saw this twin creature raise its arms and there came a flash of light and a sudden outpouring of fog, followed by much bobbing and crooning among the others. This and a few other sights convinced me the deformed croaker in fact commanded sorcery, clearly the source of its power and esteem among its fellows. I did not discover whether such sorcery only manifests to those born in this conjoined condition or not.

Out of concern for my fellows I crept back to the shoreline and found our boat freed. My companions had begun to prepare an expedition to rescue me again, and I understood their unhappiness that I had made them worry for nothing. In the course of such investigations a scholar must take what opportunities he can. For now I know little of the anura's numbers or how far into the tropical Shattered Spine Islands their crude villages extend. Clearly they are territorial and handy at driving out others who would intrude. As much as they interest me, however, the ruins I glimpsed intrigue me even more.

## Combat

**Croaking (Ex):** An anura may make a single loud croaking sound that travels over a mile and serves as a signal call.

**Extra Limbs (Ex):** Anura conjoined twins have an extra pair of arms (and another head). Their extra pair of arms allows them to cast spells requiring somatic components even while climbing, swimming, bearing shields, or otherwise using their main pair of arms.

**Hold Breath (Ex):** An anura can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to six times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

**Poison Glands (Ex):** Glands in an anura's skin emit an oil poisonous to most humanoids if injected or entered into the blood stream. Anura warriors coat their spears and daggers with this oil. Creatures grappling with an anura do not suffer from the poison unless suffering piercing or slashing damage during the grapple. The initial effects include confusion, dimi-

nished vision, and phantom sounds followed one minute later by substantial loss of motor control. Anura are immune to this poison. Croaker musk – injury or ingestion, Fortitude save (DC 11), initial -2 Wis, secondary -1d3 Dex.

**Wall Climber (Ex):** An anura's sticky feet and hands allow it to climb in its natural environment with ease. Furthermore, it need not make Climb checks to traverse vertical or horizontal natural surfaces. It cannot, however, run while climbing.

**Skills:** Croakers have a +8 racial bonus to all Climb checks and may always choose to take 10 even if rushed or threatened while climbing. Croakers who choose an accelerated climb move at double their climb speed and make a single Climb check at a -5 penalty. While climbing a croaker cannot run, retains its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, and opponents get no special bonus on their attacks against it.

Croakers can move through water at their swim speed without making Swim checks. They have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check and can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. A Croaker can use the run action while swimming provided it swims in a straight line.

A conjoined twin anura's two heads give it a +2 racial bonus on Listen, Spot, and Search checks.

**Spells:** Anura conjoined twins always have levels in sorcerer. The anura sorcerer above knows the following spells: *0-level: acid splash, dancing lights, daze, mage hand, resistance, touch of fatigue; 1<sup>st</sup>-level: color spray, hypnotism, mage armor; 2<sup>nd</sup>-level: summon swarm.*

## Treasure

Anura keep an assortment of primitively fabricated weapons, scraps of armor, wooden shields, ropes, and other supplies. Such items have little value except to collectors. Anura trade among themselves using barter and do not have a concept of coinage. They do occasionally keep decorative bits of metal, including pieces of copper, silver, or even gold found among the ruins near their habitations.

## Legends & Lore (Skorne)

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** A prolific, primitive race of intelligent amphibians who make crude weapons inhabit the Shattered Spine Islands.

**Rare:** A mild poison coats anura skin and they use it on their weapons. A flower grows on their islands that serves as an antidote and drinking a tea made of its leaves might fortify one from the effects of the poison.

**Obscure:** Some anura are powerful sorcerers and are born as twisted mockeries of the others, boasting two heads and two pairs of arms. These conjoined twins are venerated by their peers but are not the chieftains of their crude mud and reed villages.



# Basilisk



<b>Basilisk Drake (male)</b>	
Usually NE Large Magical Beast CR 8	
Hit Dice:	6d10+24 (57 hp)
Senses:	Darkvision 60', Listen +7, Spot +8, low-light vision, scent
Initiative:	+5
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares), Burrow 10 ft.
Armor Class:	16, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+15
Attack:	Bite +10 melee (2d6+7)
Full Attack:	Bite +10 melee (2d6+7)
Special Attacks:	Withering energy, poison
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Saves:	Fort +9, Reflex +6, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills:	Listen +7, Spot +8
Feats:	Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative
Environment:	Any desert or warm land
Organization:	Solitary, mated pair, or barem (1 male + 2-3 females)
Advancement:	7-14 (Large), 15-20 (Huge)

<b>Skorne-Conditioned Basilisk Krea (female)</b>	
Usually N Large Magical Beast CR 9	
Hit Dice:	6d10+30 (63 hp)
Senses:	Blindsense 60 ft., Listen +7, Spot +8, low-light vision, magic sense, scent
Initiative:	+5
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares), Burrow 10 ft.
Armor Class:	16, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+15
Attack:	Bite +10 melee (2d6+7)
Full Attack:	Bite +10 melee (2d6+7)
Special Attacks:	Paralytic aura, spiritual paralysis
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Qualities:	Blind rage <sup>s</sup> , coquette, lean <sup>s</sup>
Saves:	Fort +11, Reflex +6, Will +5
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6
Skills:	Listen +7, Spot +8
Feats:	Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Blind-Fight, Die Hard, Endurance, Improved Initiative
Environment:	Any desert or warm land
Organization:	Solitary, mated pair, or barem (1 male + 2-3 females)
Advancement:	7-14 (Large), 15-20 (Huge)

<sup>s</sup>From the Skorne Conditioning quickplate



I first encountered the basilisk during the early days of my captivity, and it remains painful today to remember that time. In the bowels of the Abyssal Fortress I endured the abuse of my loathsome former mentor Saxon Orrik as he gloated about skorne supremacy and how the west should abandon all hope. I found a properly scientific and detached frame of mind difficult to adopt as he paraded before me what he considered a “triumph” of the twisted skorne conditioning techniques. At first blush the creature seemed just a strange, semi-bipedal reptile with an ornery disposition not remotely as impressive as the massive titans or even the brutish cyclops.

When goaded properly with painful hooks or barbs, this seemingly unimpressive reptile, by the force of its gaze alone, caused a block of granite to shimmer and explode. I am still at a loss to explain any plausible way such a power could arise in nature. This creature does much to explain the differences between western and eastern Immoren. It exemplifies the extraordinary and unusual beasts such as westerners would

never imagine that have populated the extreme environments and conditions in the east.

Much later in my travels alongside my “guide” Kaleda, I witnessed the lands where the skorne first discovered, caught, and tamed the basilisk, and I began to understand them better. I thought back on my conversations with the giant Chilon and his description of the unnatural disaster that consumed eastern Immoren thousands of years ago, and the manifestation of the basilisks’ power became more plausible. East of the skorne settled area lie the Trembling Waste, which seems a small pocket of the terrible chaos and upheaval that may once have devastated half the continent. Earthquakes, from small tremblers to massive lurching of the ground, occur commonly. The rain, heavy, sizzling, and burning the skin from some peculiar heat and corruption, comes at random intervals. This is where the basilisks and other creatures as peculiar live and hunt. By the power of its eyes this somewhat soft-skinned reptilian creature rules the Wastes, as those creatures which would compete with it or hunt it long ago learned to steer clear.

## Basilisk

The primary behavioral difference in the wild between male drakes and female kreas lies in temperament. Drakes must rouse to action whereas krea often lash out with their destructive vision at the slightest provocation. I count it a sign of skorne insanity or determination that they did not immediately give up on taming these creatures. Even after their beast-handlers learned to control the drakes it took some time before they attempted to tame the krea. The cost in lives and the creature's resistance to the methodical torture the skorne call training proved, at first, insurmountable.

I fear and respect this creature, though I have no fondness for it. Even for this beast, however, it turns my stomach to consider the barbaric experimentation that led to the

discovery allowing the skorne to use the krea in battle. The skorne discovered a new and even more potent manifestation of the krea's supernatural power when they blinded it and sewed its eyes shut. The females can turn whatever gives rise to the waves of disruptive energy inward and focus it into something else again. I witnessed a demonstration whereby a dagger dropped near a krea actually slowed in mid-air and drifted slowly to earth like a feather. I heard also that the krea suffers no particular difficulty sensing its surroundings, perhaps through some secondary benefit of this inexplicable aura of power.

By such means a krea can apparently slow even rifle or cannon fire. Given the reliance of my own kingdom on the





# Basilisk

accuracy and power of a stout rifle, this discovery chills me. I just hope the difficulty in training and breeding these creatures means the skorne have limited access to such power. I would be just as happy if the basilisk species became suddenly extinct. I cannot say this about many creatures, but basilisks in skorne hands mean nothing but trouble for Cygnar.

## Combat

### Drake

Basilisks have no natural enemies due to their terrible gaze; only the skorne actually confront and capture them. Basilisks dwell in burrows but emerge to sun themselves like other cold-blooded reptiles. Temperamental and aggressive, particularly in mated pairs, they are highly territorial and eagerly attack intruding creatures. Basilisks walk erect on two legs or use all four limbs for movement with equal alacrity. They reserve their forward claws for burrowing and attack with their poisonous bite if engaged.

Those captured, bred, and trained by the skorne will be Conditioned (see Quickplates, p. 221). Female basilisks undergo more severe and specialized conditioning.

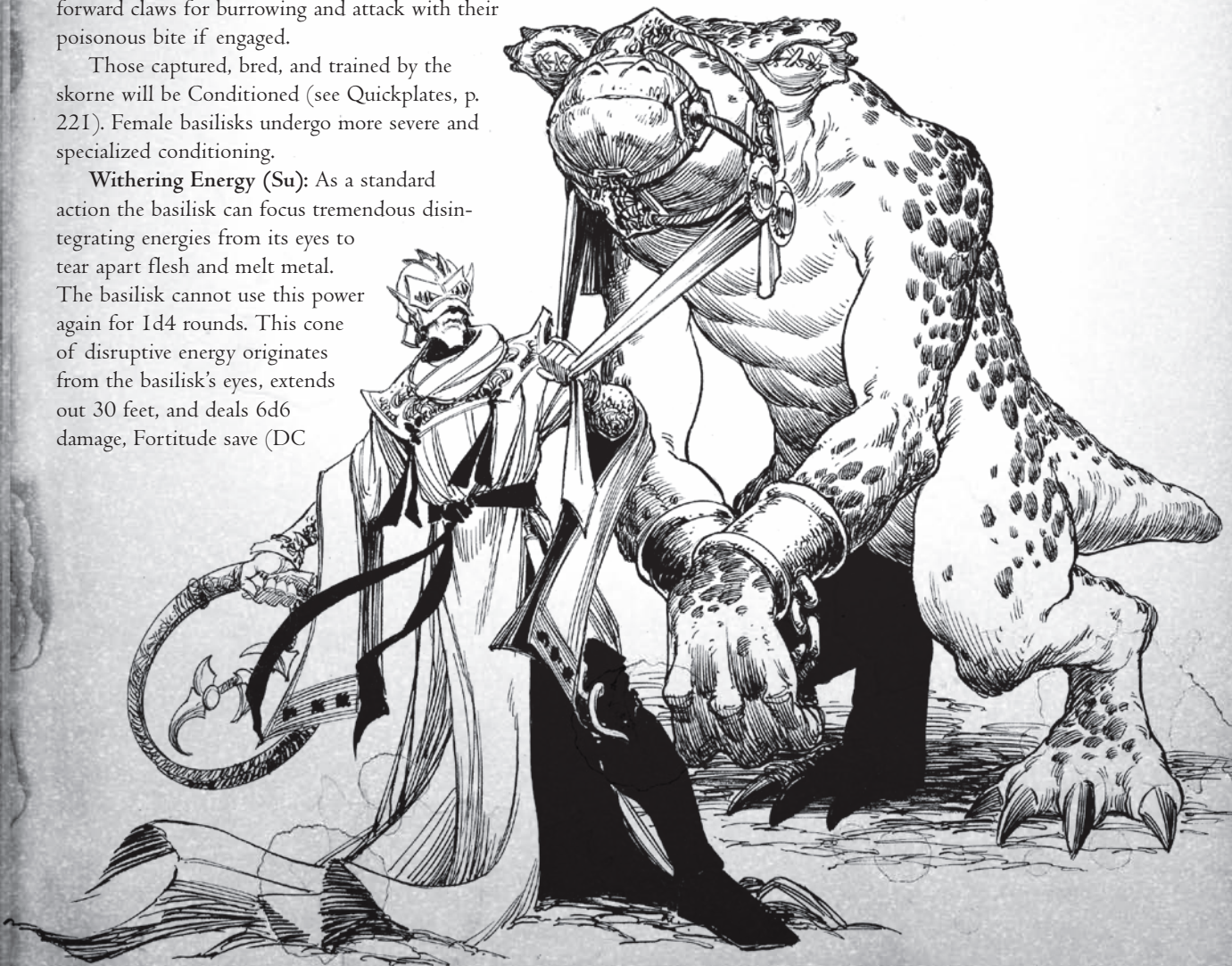
**Withering Energy (Su):** As a standard action the basilisk can focus tremendous disintegrating energies from its eyes to tear apart flesh and melt metal. The basilisk cannot use this power again for 1d4 rounds. This cone of disruptive energy originates from the basilisk's eyes, extends out 30 feet, and deals 6d6 damage, Fortitude save (DC

17) for half. Creatures reduced to 0 or fewer hit points disintegrate entirely, leaving behind only a trace of fine dust. This attack also damages objects. Creatures within this cone must also succeed at a Will save (DC 17) or suffer effects identical to the *repulsion* spell. Save DCs are Constitution-based. Basilisks ignore the effects of this energy.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude save (DC 17), initial damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 2d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

### Skorne-Conditioned Krea

Skorne-conditioned krea turn the terrible powers of a basilisk's gaze inward and grant these females strange control over debilitating energies. Krea prefer to fight alongside males. They use their paralytic auras to impede prey while drawing vigor from their closeness to potential mates. Skorne training also instills the desire to locate enemy magical sources and disrupt spellcasting.



**Paralytic Aura (Su):** As an immediate action a krea can surround itself with a field of dense energy that slows and potentially paralyzes enemies for one round. Treat all spaces within 10 feet of the krea as difficult terrain. Any opponent within 10 feet of a krea must make a Will save (DC 11) every round or become unable to move. While this aura is active, the krea and all creatures within 5 feet of the krea gain damage reduction 15/magic against ranged weapons. A krea has full control over this ability and can chose what creatures it affects. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Spiritual Paralysis (Su):** As a standard action, a krea can impede spellcasting within 160 feet. The target must make a Will save (DC 14) or he must make a Concentration check (DC 16 + spell level) every time he attempts to cast a spell for the next 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

**Coquette (Ex):** Kreas gain a +2 morale bonus on all attack and damage rolls while within 30 feet of a basilisk drake.

**Magic Sense (Su):** The krea may use detect magic at will as a spell-like ability.

## Legends & Lore (Skorne)

**Common:** Strange creatures that can kill with a look inhabit the Trembling Waste.

**Uncommon:** The ornery basilisks have no fear of predators because they can literally melt flesh, bone, and even stone with the massive disruptive energy they produce from their eyes. This power also makes them valuable to the skorne houses that can capture and tame them.

**Rare:** Although more dangerous than the male drake, the female basilisk krea has particular value to the skorne. When blinded by a special process, its power takes a new and dramatic form.

**Obscure:** Drakes possess a musk gland that, while odorless to man or skorne, has a dramatic effect on kreas. Although potentially provoking a krea to violence, this scent can also lure them in a particular direction.

## Treasure

Wild drake and krea basilisks do not collect treasure. Because capturing and taming the easily provoked wild basilisks is difficult, some skorne houses prefer to steal basilisk eggs and raise the creatures in captivity though it is rare for such hatchlings to survive. A krea may have a clutch of 2-6 eggs in her underground burrow. Intact eggs may fetch 25 to 50 gp each.

Other houses employ the drake's musk gland to lure krea into their traps. Both the eyes and musk gland of the male basilisk are prized by skorne generally, and now western alchemists seek them as well. Both eyes and musk glands will fetch hundreds of gold pieces (100 – 400 gp).

## HOOKS

Cygnaran military intelligence is reporting that the drake basilisk's presence seems to have a strong effect on krea. The party is tasked with discovering the truth of the matter and if there is a way to exploit this weakness. The party gets their chance when they cross the path of a lone paingiver escorting a conditioned krea back to a skorne encampment that is home to several male basilisks.

In one skorne city, young skorne males enjoy a dangerous holiday involving being chased by a wild krea through the streets after they are doused with ample musk from a drake. The skorne must run until either the bullish krea becomes too exhausted to pursue or risk meeting her disapproval as a potential mate.

*Both sexes of basilisk exhibit a fascinating and deadly power from their eyes. How is it, I wonder, that basilisks of the fairer sex, or "krea" as I prefer to call them, exhibit even more power when their eyes are stitched closed? I must acquire a live specimen.*

*VP*

# Bloodstone Manticora



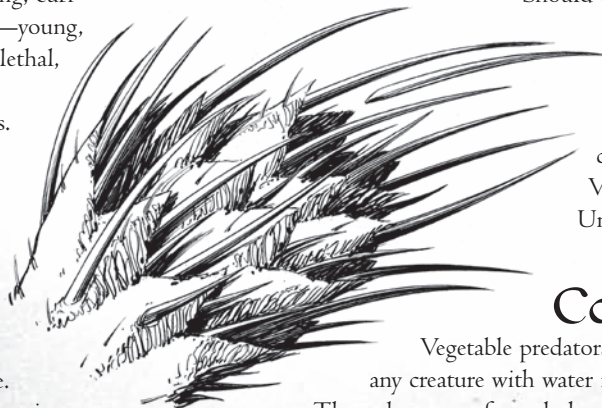
Always N Large Plant CR 3	
Hit Dice:	6d8+12 (41 hp)
Initiative:	+1
Immunities/Resist:	Plant traits
Senses:	Listen -2, Spot -2
Speed:	0 ft.
Armor Class:	18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+4/+6
Attack:	Needles +4 ranged (1d6 and paralysis) or slam +1 melee (1d6-2 piercing and paralysis)

Full Attack:	Needles +4 ranged (1d6 and paralysis) or slam +1 melee (1d6-2 piercing and paralysis)
Special Attacks:	Paralysis, drain
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Water sight, plant traits
Saves:	Fort +7, Reflex +3, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 7, Dex 13, Con 15, Int -, Wis 7, Cha 2
Environment:	Any desert or warm land
Organization:	Solitary, Patch (3-5), Forest (10 -20)
Advancement:	7-12 (Large), 13-16 (Huge)



One thing this treatise should make abundantly apparent: the fauna, flora, and even the very terrain of the Marches and the east are orders of magnitude more deadly than those we find in our homelands. Perhaps in the coming years this understanding will aid those in positions of power to defend against and, though unlikely, perhaps cement peaceful dealings with the peoples that call that bleak place home. For now, though, let my experiences serve as a warning to the daring, curious and—at the risk of redundancy—young, to limit their escapades to lands less lethal, closer to home, and equally rich in strange cultures and ancient mysteries.

Should this reckless audience require one further warning, though, let me tell you of the long thorn manticora. Not a beast but a desert plant standing 5 to 8 feet in height and similar in appearance to a hairy common cactus found in the western marches and the Protectorate. I found time to sketch a full-grown specimen during my initial scouting of skorne movements in the deep Bloodstone deserts. I noted its strangely long thorns and the unusual number of remains, including a dune-prowler, about its trunk. These dry corpses offered some warning, and I guessed that these cacti might prove poisonous or emit some noxious spore like plants I have previously encountered. I had not expected the plant to physically whip its segments and fling a hail of its stiletto-sharp thorns at me. Although I managed to dodge the deadly bombardment, the few needles that struck me—holing my favorite greatcoat—proved suggestion enough to conduct my examination from afar.



After my capture by the skorne and forced travels to the east, I found to my fascination that this plant also lives on the eastern side of the Abyss. I could see no way for the earth-bound cactus to cross so wide and deadly a natural barrier. I am left with the stunning thought that the Abyss opened after the initial spread of this species. Whatever the case, my studies clearly show that explorers should take nothing for granted when confronting the creatures of the Marches.

Should even this parable not deter you, I have three additional pieces of advice: take legible notes in your travels, work with only waterproof journals, and send copies of your findings to Prof. V. Pendrake care of the Corvis University.

## Combat

Vegetable predators, manticora can sense and attack any creature with water in its body that comes nearby.

These dangerous fauna lash out with their lengthy black spines to kill or paralyze their prey and soak their wide ranging roots in moist flesh. Their needles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet.

Most manticora grow solitary on paths leading to an oasis or along the migratory routes of desert beasts. However, small patches and even rarely forests do exist. Those growing on the banks of an oasis or river are often water-blind and docile and rarely attack unless provoked.

Manticora look much like another species of harmless cactus. It requires knowledge of the creature and a Spot check (DC 25) to determine the manticora's true nature from a distance over 50 feet.

## Bloodstone Manticora

**Paralysis (Ex):** In addition to extra damage, on a successful hit the target of a manticora's spine attack must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The DC is Constitution-based.

**Drain (Ex):** A manticora within 30 feet of a helpless creature can make a +6 grapple check (add an additional +4 since the target is prone). If this check succeeds, it deals 1d4 points of damage as the plant stabs several spiny roots into its target. Every following round, the manticora deals 1 point of Constitution damage as it leaches the water and nutrients from its target. A manticora gains 5 temporary hit points for each point of Constitution drained.

**Water Sight (Ex):** Manticoras are incredibly sensitive to moisture in the air, allowing them to automatically detect the presence of water—and in effect most living creatures—within 100 feet. Spells that create rain or drench a manticora (like *control weather* or *quench*) or emptying a gallon of water onto the plant effectively blinds it until the water evaporates. A manticora cannot be blinded in any other way.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Manticora are cactus-like desert plants capable of releasing sprays of needles at passing pray.

**Uncommon:** Manticora needles have a weak paralytic agent that can cripple prey wounded deeply enough.

**Rare:** These plants sense prey by detecting the presence of nearby water. Rain and other great amounts of water blind them. They subsist on the water from living creatures by slaying them and drinking their body fluids using spine-covered roots.

**Obscure:** Despite the danger of harvesting it, all manticora hold enough water in a reservoir within their husks to keep a man alive for days in the desert.

## Treasure

A Search check (DC 16) has a 30% chance of revealing half standard treasure from creatures slain by the manticora in the sands about the plant.

Idrian nomads value manticora needles and will trade 10 gp worth of goods for needles harvested from adult plants.

Besides material wealth, cutting into a manticora husk yields enough juicy pulp to serve as water and food for one person for one day per 2 HD of the plant. The above plant would, for example, provide food and water for one person for three days or three persons for one day.

## HOOKS

Traveling through the wastes, the PCs come across a strangely still, solitary figure standing alone in the desert. The manticora killed this skorne and his desiccated corpse fell against the plant. The remains now camouflage the plant's deadly nature.



# Cataphract Beetle



Always N Small Vermin CR 3	
Hit Dice:	5d8+10 (34 hp)
Senses:	Listen +0, Spot +0
Initiative:	-1
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 10 ft., fly 20 ft. (clumsy)
Armor Class:	17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 size, -1 Dex, +7 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/+0
Attack:	Bite +5 melee (1d4+1)
Full Attack:	Bite +5 melee (1d4+1)

Special Attacks:	Acid spray, sand trap
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Spiked shell
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10
Environment:	Any desert
Organization:	Solitary, clutch (2-8), or swarm (16-32)
Advancement:	6-10 HD (Small); 11-18 HD (Medium), 19-24 (Large)



While I can't say that my forced travels into the east were comfortable, I admit that I've participated in expeditions where worries about food, which paths to follow, and what beasts might harry my footsteps have been more personally pressing concerns. In retrospect, while I offer my corpse-faced captors few thanks for their efforts, my survival doubtlessly hinged upon their treading each step of our journey before me. In skorne lands even the most unassuming sands can quickly grow fangs.

My co-captive Aubrey Albrect Volker, a stoic former soldier who claimed to hail from Highgate but who spoke with an obvious Ordic accent, demonstrated the precariousness of life in even the quiet desert. With the wastes stretching out around us and nowhere to run, our captors left us relatively unguarded when our procession stopped just before the coming of the freezing dark. Aloof from the rest of the prisoners, Volker removed himself some fifty paces from camp, either simply for solitude or on some more private business. No one had yet missed the scowling Tordoran when a surprised and distressed yelp sounded over the barking skorne officers. Looking to the source, even in the dying red light all could see Volker sinking into the sand just as if he had stumbled into a quicksand bog.

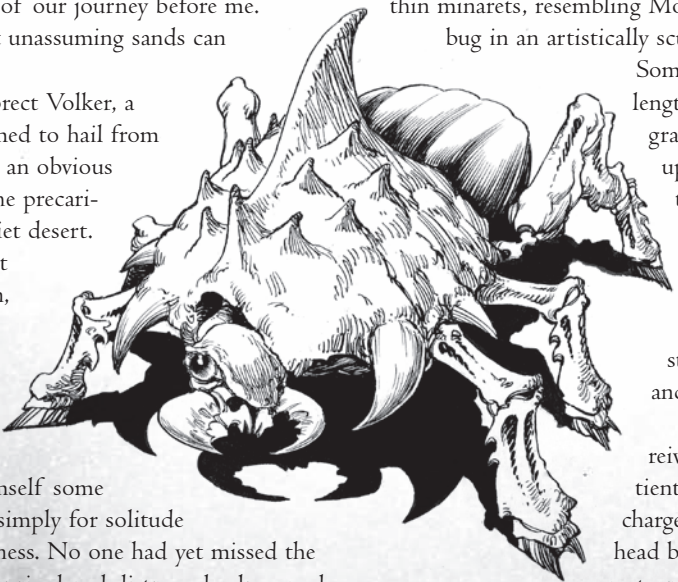
Being more sympathetic than our captors, I was among the first of the prisoners to head to Volker's rescue. We found that Volker had disturbed, and now scrambled along the collapsing side of, a shifting pit or kind of sandy nest like that

of an ant-lion. In his desperation to regain the surface, the man's struggling had the opposite effect from which he desired, and he slid ever deeper. As if to confirm my comparison, the glistening, onyx-black head of a gigantic beetle—easily the size of a powder keg—reared up from the depression's center with hungrily snapping mandibles the size of daggers. An armored carapace covered the insect's back. Jagged spires and needle-thin minarets, resembling Morrowan cathedrals, encased the bug in an artistically sculpted armor.

Some clever soul tossed Volker a length of rope, which he eagerly grasped and began hauling himself up with. The beetle, unwilling to let its prey escape so easily, hissed shrilly and sprayed forth an acrid, yellow bile. The sand turned black and bubbled where the insect's acid struck, as did Volker's breeches and the leg beneath.

Finally, the rapid popping of a reiver saved Volker's life. An impatient skorne venator expertly discharged his weapon into the insect's head before snarling commands for us to return to camp. Volker spent that night tormented by his acid

burns, which left him barely able to rise, much less keep to the skorne's unforgiving march. Although I personally tried to minister to him, none of my simple remedies seemed to ease the pain of the beetle's vicious attack. The next morning, the skorne forced us to leave the cursing Highgater behind as a cruel warning to all of us to watch our steps.



# Cataphract Beetle

## Combat

Digging sandy redoubts to protect themselves, these monstrous insects use their sand trap ability to draw prey closer, attacking from the center of steep-walled pits. Even if caught outside their traps, their razor-sharp, cathedral-like armor deters attackers while their powerful mandibles and acidic saliva reduces victims to edible pieces.

**Acid Spray (Ex):** The cataphract beetle spews a 10-foot cone of acid, once every 5 minutes up to three times per day. This inflicts 2d6 points of acid damage; a Reflex save (DC 14) halves the damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Sand Trap (Ex):** A cataphract beetle can create a dangerous trap by burrowing circles in loose earth, turning stable ground into a precarious, 10-foot-diameter pit. A sand trap serves a cataphract beetle in two ways. First, the beetle can burrow into the pit's center as a full-round action, gaining a +4 circumstance bonus on Hide checks and providing it with cover (+4 bonus to AC and a +2 bonus on Reflex saves). This cover lasts until the beetle breaks from the ground, thus losing its sandy covering, and makes an attack. Secondly, the sloping sides of the pit are precarious, requiring that creatures within make a Balance check (DC 14) to move half speed through the area and risk falling prone and sliding to the bottom of the pit (see the description of the Balance skill). A cataphract beetle can move into and out of its own pit without penalty. It takes a cataphract beetle 10 minutes of uninterrupted activity to create a sand trap.

**Spiked Shell (Ex):** Cataphract beetles are covered in a spiny carapace. Any creature that grapples with one takes 1d4 points of damage every round the grapple continues.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Cataphract beetles are carnivorous insects that lurk beneath desert sands.

**Uncommon:** These beetles create cunning, conical sand traps to draw prey into their jaws.

**Rare:** These beetles have a powerful acid that can even eat through dense metals.

**Obscure:** A cataphract beetle's own acid can be used to work its carapace into useful items. Efaarit craft crude items and shields from these creatures.

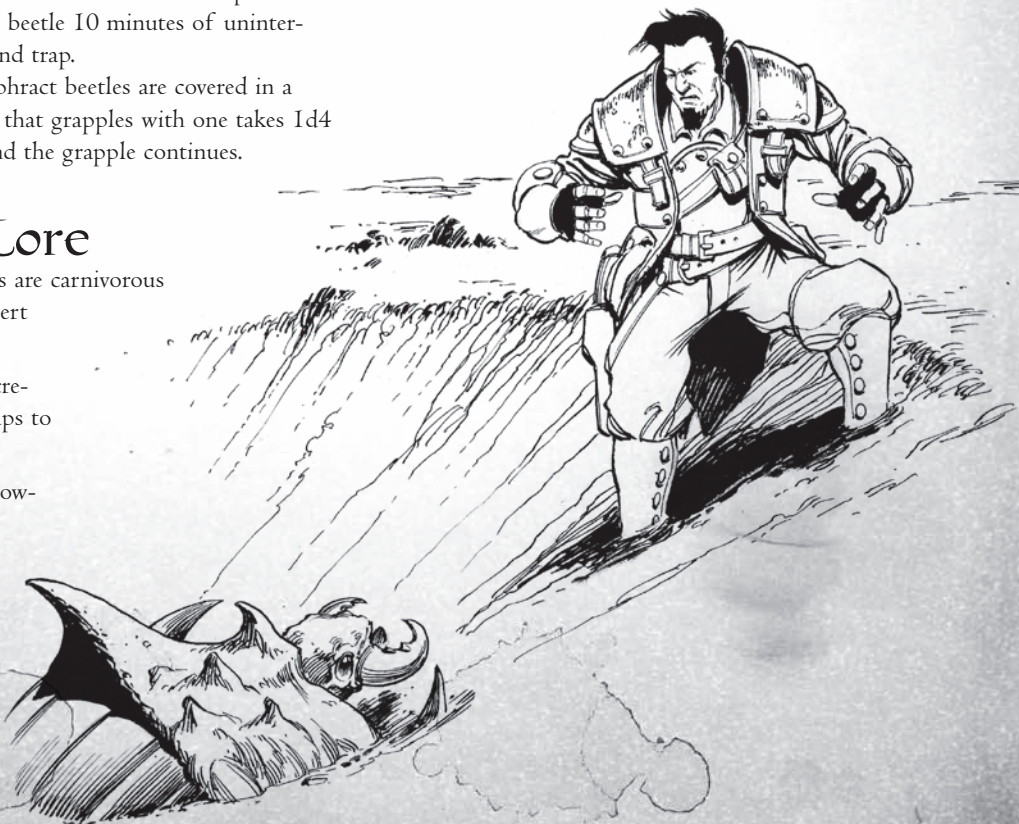
## Treasure

Given an intact cataphract beetle corpse, a bone grinder or armor smith can potentially create armor similar to a breastplate that weighs only 15 pounds. The smith must first succeed at a Knowledge (nature) (DC 15) check to determine whether he can use the materials. If he fails, he cannot create the armor. Otherwise, such armor requires the normal amount of time to create, costs 2,000 sp, requires Craft (armorsmithing) (DC 15) checks, but needs no additional expenditure of materials. In addition, cataphract beetles will not attack creatures wearing this armor unless attacked first.

## Hooks

Thousands of cataphract beetles swarm for hundreds of miles every four years, seeking mates. This year, they descend on the fortress compound of a noble skorne family who seek outside aid defending their ancestral home.

Idrean nomads report a hitherto unknown vermin lurking below the sands and attacking their horses. Cygnaran scouts along the border believe it is some new skorne deviltry and will pay handsomely for evidence of how to destroy it.



# Chimera



CE Colossal Dragon CR 22

**Hit Dice:** 32d12+512 (720 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Aberrant traits, damage resistance 20/sericsteel, immunity to acid, electricity, fear, fire, spell resistance 30

**Senses:** Darkvision 240 ft., Listen +43 Spot +43, low light vision

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 60 ft. (12 squares), Fly 300' (clumsy)

**Armor Class:** 46, touch 2, flat-footed 46 (–8 size, +44 natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +32/+67

**Attack:** Bite +43 melee (4d6+16); one option, see fractured form

**Full Attack:** Bite +43 melee (4d6+16), and 2 claws +42 (2d8+8), and 2 tentacles +41 (4d6+8), and tail slam +41 (4d6+8), one option, see fractured form

**Special Attacks:** Breath weapon, fractured form, frightful presence

**Space/Reach:** 30 ft./20 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Dragon traits, fast healing 10, malleable form, vulnerable to cold.

**Saves:** Fort +36, Ref +20, Will +24

**Abilities:** Str 48, Dex 11, Con 42, Int 20, Wis 22, Cha 21

**Skills:** Balance +39, Climb +54, Hide +19, Intimidate +40, Jump +40, Listen +43, Move Silently +35, Search +40, Spot +43, Survival +41, Tumble +39

**Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack

**Environment:** The Stormlands

**Organization:** Unique



The skorne inhabit some of the harshest lands I've ever encountered, enslave beasts capable of beating a warjack into scrap, and dare the elemental fury of the Stormlands, but even they know bone-shaking fear. In the shadow of their preposterously named "Conqueror's Bridge," skorne troops whisper of the chimera.

I first learned of this creature from my captors, although Kaleda spoke only reluctantly of what had unnerved her soldiers. At that point, I had yet to learn much of their language, but a dust-storm to the north and lights among the haze clearly elicited more fear in them than I had ever seen them display, then or since. They knew little enough of this abomination, other than it was an enormous horror whose shape was different every time it was seen, and that any who faced it died a terrible death. The skorne call it the Child of the Pit, a terrible beast spawned from the black void of the Abyss like an all-devouring emptiness given form.

I only learned more of this creature after my rescue in the accursed skorne homeland. My rescuers had apparently encountered this chimera while crossing the Abyss and barely escaped with their lives. From their description the creature seemed almost draconic, like some twisted and deformed relative of those great and terrifying creatures, yet removed of all their draconic grace and driven mad by its own condition. Like a dragon, this chimera's blood had given rise to lesser spawn. These malformed but dangerous entities manifested limbs, heads, claws, and other aspects of eastern beasts and creatures

from the Abyss itself. I hypothesize a most fascinating and singular defense mechanism for this peculiar shape shifter: it can transform, at least partially, into that which it has killed.

If this horrid, pitiable creature truly is some tortured form of dragon then woe to us all if it consumes another athanc and reclaims its full draconic form.

## Combat

The chimera, an ancient dragon, had its athanc permanently warped and flawed by the magical destruction wrought when the Bridge of Worlds collapsed. As its physical form regenerated the creature could no longer remember its past life, its true form, or its true nature.

Standing taller than a fortress of ten floors, the chimera possesses unnatural flexibility of form. Crawling, leaping, and flying, the chimera makes its way through the melted stone ruins that dot the plateau islands jutting from the Abyss's unfathomable depths, taking out its fury on all but the most insignificant beings it encounters.

Despite its keen native intellect and draconic cunning, the chimera has no long-term memory, and functions completely on instinct. It remembers no language, does not plot, or seek to collude with other creatures. The chimera knows only rage and incomparable loss. It forgoes tactics to lose itself in the black indulgence of unbridled rampages. Untouched by fear, the chimera never retreats and finds relief only in devastation and slaughter.

# Chimera

**Chimerabligh** (Su): Chimerabligh functions as a form of dragonblight and affects a number of miles equal to the chimera's hit dice (32 miles). Living and non-living things in this area suffer a -4 penalty to all saving throws from transmutation effects. All transformation spells cast in the area of chimerabligh gain the effects of the Greater Spell Penetration and Heighten Spell metamagic feats, giving +4 bonus on caster level checks made to overcome a creature's spell resistance and increasing its caster level by 2.

**Breath Weapon** (Ex): The chimera's breath weapon is normally a scalding cone of electrified acid. 70 ft. cone, damage 7d10 acid, 7d10 electricity, 7d10 fire, Reflex save (DC 42) half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

At will, the chimera may alter the draconic humors that create this attack, causing its breath weapon to deal 21d10 points of acid, electricity, or fire damage instead of a mixture.

**Fractured Form** (Ex): The chimera can manifest natural attacks as it desires. On any round it can use an attack action to make one of these natural attacks, or use a full-round action to make five of these natural attacks. The first attack is considered the chimera's primary attack and is made using the chimera's full base attack bonus plus its Strength modifier; the following attacks are secondary and are made at a -2 penalty. Depending on the natural attack manifested, the chimera may

gain bonuses or special attack options as noted below. The chimera can change what attack forms it uses from round to round, as it desires (although, using some special abilities, like the gore attack's awesome blow, would require it to manifest a horn for the gore attack on two consecutive rounds).

Attack	Number of Attacks	Damage	Special
Bite	1	4d8	—
Claws, Two:	2	4d6	—
Gore:	1	4d6	Awesome Blow
Tail Slam:	1	4d6	Tail slap, tail sweep
Tentacle:	1	4d6	Improved grab
Wings	2	2d8	+300 ft. fly (clumsy)

*Bite:* The chimera bites with a ferocious set of fanged jaws.

*Claws, Two:* The chimera grows a pair of savage claws and attacks with both. Attacking with both claws counts as using one natural attack for the purposes of determining how many attacks it can manifest in a round.

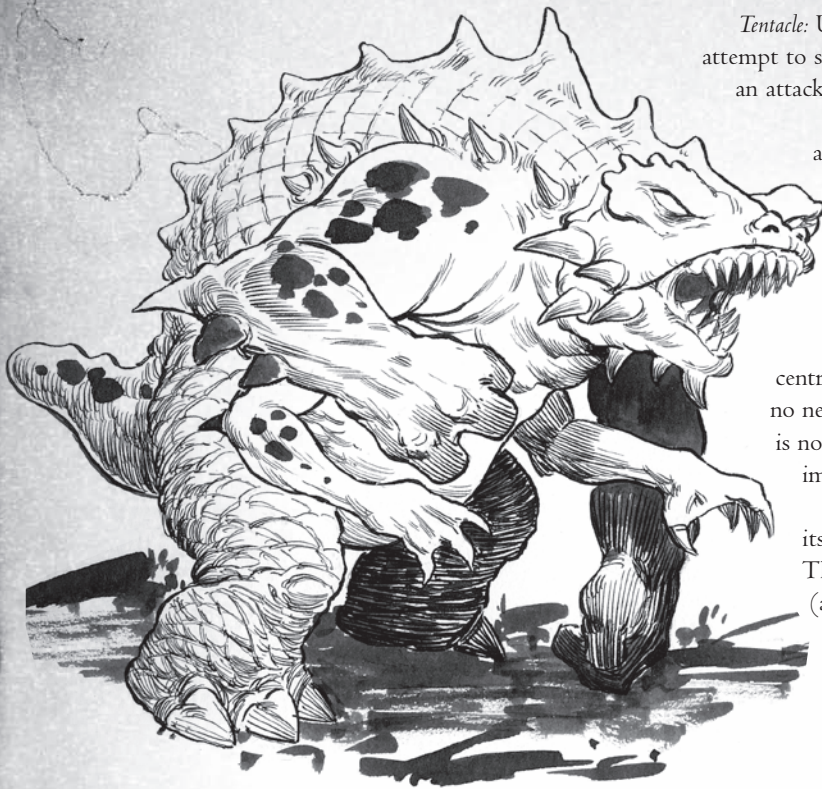
*Gore:* On the round after manifesting a gore attack, the chimera can use the gore again as if it had the feat Awesome Blow.

*Tail Slam:* On the round after manifesting a tail, the chimera can use it to make either a tail slap or tail sweep attack.





# Chimera



**Tentacle:** Upon hitting with a tentacle attack, a chimera can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Wings, Additional:** On the round after manifesting additional wings, the chimera's fly speed increases by 20 feet and its maneuverability improves to clumsy.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** 360-foot radius, HD 44 or less, Will save (DC 31) negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Aberrant Immunities (Ex):** The chimera has no centralized system of organs. As such, the creature has no need to breathe, cannot starve or become fatigued, is not affected by sneak attacks or critical hits, and is immune to all poisons and diseases.

**Malleable Form (Ex):** The chimera can change its form as its needs dictate, such as growing wings. Thus, it is never restrained by effects that entangle (as the *entangle* or *web* spells), impeded by rough terrain, or penalized by squeezing through spaces half its size.



## Chimera-Spawn Features

### Legs

1d6 Roll	Feature
1	Biped, no tail
2	Biped, with tail
3	Quadruped, no tail
4	Quadruped, with tail
5	Snakelike tail, no legs
6	Spider or centipede-like, many legs <sup>1</sup>

### Arms

1d6 Roll	Feature
1-2	Two arms
3	Two arms and two wings <sup>2</sup>
4	Two arms and four wings <sup>3</sup>
5	Two arms, two burrowing claws <sup>4</sup>
6	Two tentacles <sup>5</sup>

Size	Claw or Tentacle		Bite	Movement	Base Hit	
	Damage	Damage			Dice	AC
Fine	—	1	5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good)	1/8d10	+2 natural	
Diminutive	1	1d2	10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)	1/4d10	+3 natural	
Tiny	1	1d3	20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)	1/2d10	+4 natural	
Small	1d3	1d4	20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)	1d10	+5 natural	
Medium	1d4	1d6	30 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)	2d10	+7 natural	
Large	1d6	1d8	40 ft., fly 70 ft. (poor)	4d10	+10 natural	
Huge	1d8	2d6	40 ft., fly 80 ft. (poor)	8d10	+12 natural	
Gargantuan	2d6	2d8	30 ft., fly 70 ft. (clumsy)	16d10	+16 natural	

<sup>1</sup>Grants climb speed at the chimera-spawn's base land speed.

<sup>2</sup>Grants fly speed.

<sup>3</sup>Grants fly speed +20 feet and improved maneuverability one step.

<sup>4</sup>Grants burrow speed at the creature's base land speed.

<sup>5</sup>Grants +10 foot reach.

## Chimera-Spawn

The chimera still yearns for servants, and to fulfill its need, it can spill its blood to create chimera-spawn, abominable amalgamations of creatures it has seen. The chimera can create a number of hit dice worth of spawn equal to the chimera's hit dice, but no chimera-spawn may have more than half the chimera's hit dice (rounded down). Creating spawn costs the chimera nothing unless it has dropped below half its hit points, at which point the spawn's hit points are pulled directly from the chimera's. The chimera may opt to eat any of its spawn and regain lost hit points equal to the spawn's current hit points. Chimera-spawn, no matter their form, are considered magical beasts.

All chimera-spawn possess the following abilities:

**Blindsight (Ex):** Regardless of whether an individual has eyes, all chimera-spawn can sense objects within 80 feet as though they could see.

**Fractured Form (Ex):** Chimera-spawn of Large size or greater have additional natural abilities. For every size-category above Medium, the creature gains one additional random natural attack as appropriate to its size (roll 1d4, see below).

Size	Slam or Tentacle (1)	Bite (2)	Claw or Sting (3)	Gore or Tail (4)
Large	1d6	1d8	1d6	1d8
Huge	1d8	2d6	1d8	2d6
Gargantuan	2d6	2d8	2d6	2d8

**Immunities (Ex):** All chimera-spawn are immune to fear, sleep, and paralysis effects.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Acid inflicts normal damage on chimera-spawn. All other damage regenerates at the rate of 2 hp per round.

**Vulnerability to cold:** All chimera-spawn takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from cold, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed or if the save succeeds.

### Special Abilities

All chimera-spawn have a randomly determined special ability.

#### 1d8 Roll Ability

- 1-3 None.
- 4 **Breath Weapon:** Same breath weapon as the chimera, damage dice equal to one-fourth of the chimera's breath weapon, choose one damage type: acid, electricity, or fire.
- 5 **Fear Aura:** Creatures that come within 30 feet of the chimera-spawn suffer fear, DC 10 + half the chimera-spawn's HD + Charisma modifier.

- 6 **Spell Resistance:** Spell resistance equal to 8 + the chimera spawn's HD (minimum SR 9).
- 7 **Damage Reduction:** DR equal to 2 + half the spawn's HD (minimum DR 3/magic).
- 8 Chimera-spawn has multiple abilities, roll twice on chart. If 8 is rolled again, roll for another ability, and so forth.



This sample chimera-spawn is bipedal, wingless, and has four arms.

**Always CE Huge Magical Beast CR 8**

**Hit Dice:** 10d10+40 (95 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Aberrant immunities, immune to acid, electricity, and fire

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft., Listen +2, Spot +2

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 40 ft. (12 squares)

**Armor Class:** 23, touch 7, flat-footed 22 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +16 natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +10/+17

**Attack:** Bite +17 melee (2d6+7)

**Full Attack:** Bite +17 melee (2d6+7), and 4 claws +15(1d8+3)

**Special Attacks:** Breath weapon, fractured form, fear aura

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Dragon traits, malleable form, vulnerability to cold

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 3, Wis 7, Cha 8

**Skills:** Hide +3, Listen +2, Spot +2

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack

**Environment:** Any land and underground

**Organization:** Any



## Combat

**Breath Weapon (Su):** The chimera-spawn's breath weapon is a 70 ft. cone of reeking stomach contents that deals 5d10 acid damage. Reflex save (DC 19) half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

# CULLENROCK BARNACLE

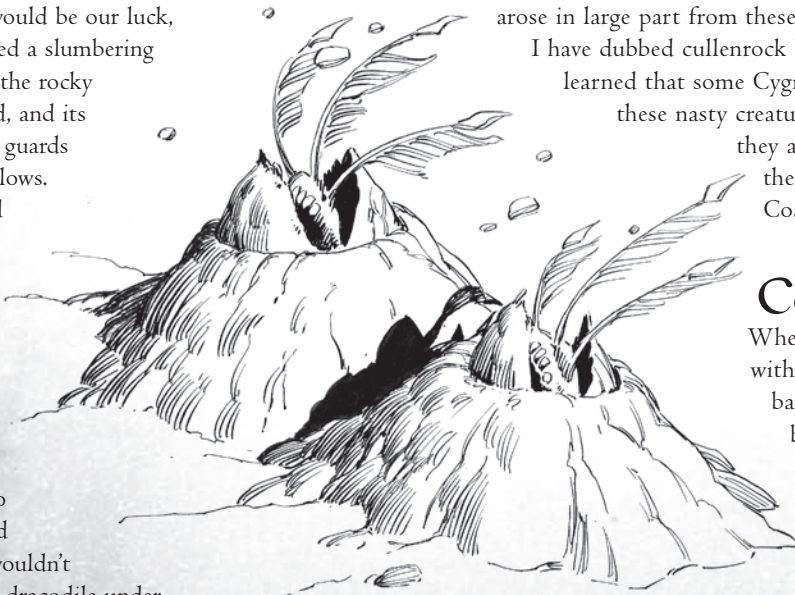


Always N Tiny Aquatic Vermin CR ½	Full Attack:	<i>Touch +3 melee (attach)</i>
Hit Dice: 1/2 d8 (2 hp)	Special Attacks:	<i>Attach, blood drain</i>
Immunities/Resist: Mind-affecting effects	Space/Reach:	<i>2 ft./0 ft.</i>
Senses: Listen +0, Spot +0; tremorsense 20 ft.	Special Qualities:	<i>Blood cloud, encrust</i>
Initiative: +1	Saves:	<i>Fort +2, Ref -5, Will +0</i>
Speed: Swim 5 ft.	Abilities:	<i>Str 2, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 1</i>
Armor Class: 16, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)	Environment:	<i>Temperate and warm aquatic</i>
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/-12 (+8 when attached)	Organization:	<i>Cluster (3-5) or colony (11-21)</i>
Attack: Touch +3 melee (attach)		



**D**uring my expedition to the southern islands east of Mercir, we weighed anchor near a tree-covered coastline of the largely unexplored island of Cullenrock. Together with my top aide Lynus and Gorden and Hadge, a pair of local Cygnaran bravos who offered to serve as bodyguards for a few coins, I boarded a rowboat and paddled from our hired steamship to the beach. As would be our luck, we accidentally disturbed a slumbering dracodile as we neared the rocky beach. The thing reared, and its sudden assault sent my guards overboard into the shallows.

Lynus, Gorden, and Hadge wanted to flee into the jungle, but something about the creature seemed out of the ordinary so I suggested we slay the beast so I might dissect it for further study. We splashed into the shallows swords and pistols at the ready. I wouldn't dare deal lightly with a dracodile under normal circumstances, but I noticed large barnacles covering the creature, which I thought meant it was old, weakened, and hopefully dying. I proved greatly mistaken. The dracodile fought ferociously and seemed immune to our attacks though its dark blood colored the water. I had a moment of panic when I felt something in the water latch onto my leg and, looking down, discovered one of the barnacle-like growths that covered the creature. The surprised shouts of my companions told me I wasn't the only victim.



We fled to avoid the sea vermin and face the dracodile out of its element. The creature refused to pursue but proceeded to destroy our rowboat and our hopes of returning to the ship.

Afterward, and with much effort, I sliced the barnacle off my skin, and though my blood flowed, I felt no pain. This procedure sparked a suspicion that I later confirmed: The dracodile's resistance to pain and its remarkable aggression arose in large part from these bony creatures, which I have dubbed cullenrock barnacles. I have since learned that some Cygnaran sailors know of these nasty creatures, though they claim they are a fairly new arrival in the waters of the Broken Coast and the Bay of Cygnar.

## Combat

When a living creature comes within range of a cullenrock barnacle's tremorsense, the barnacle waits until the prey is within 5 feet, then detaches, floats across the intervening space, and attaches to its new host. Small jets on the barnacle's underside

and tiny fins along its length allow it to move and maneuver in the water.

**Attach (Ex):** A cullenrock barnacle that succeeds on a touch attack attaches to its new host. An attached barnacle is effectively grappling its prey. The barnacle has a +20 racial bonus on grapple checks (already figured into the Base Attack/Grapple entry above). To remove a barnacle, the opponent must achieve a pin against the barnacle.

## CULLENROCK BARNACLE

Removing the barnacle this way causes 1d3 points of damage to the host.

**Blood Cloud (Ex):** A cullenrock barnacle may eject a cloud of inky blood that gives it concealment (20% miss chance) in the water.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** When a cullenrock barnacle attaches to a new host, it gorges on blood; the host takes 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage.

After the initial attack, the barnacle settles down and drinks more slowly. It causes no damage but the host must make a Fortitude save (DC 9 + 1 per barnacle attached) every day or become *sickened* for the rest of the day.

If not immersed in water at least one hour a day an attached barnacle will gorge doing 1 point of temporary Constitution damage to its host.

**Encrust (Ex):** When multiple cullenrock barnacles attach to a single creature, the barnacles provide natural armor, immunity to pain, and an uncanny lack of fear. The host gains the cullenrock-encrusted quickplate (see Appendix). The number of attached barnacles needed to attain the quickplate depends on the creature's size (See Quickplates, p 220).

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Cullenrock barnacles lurk in warmer waters and do not live in colder climes. Ships returning from long voyages to the south and east are rumored to bring entire colonies of barnacles with them.

**Uncommon:** Barnacles are repelled by vinegar and can be removed without damage to the host using vinegar and a sharp knife (and a successful DC 15 Heal check). Even so the tale-tell "sucker scar" may form where the barnacle attached.

**Rare:** Some hearty intelligent creatures that live in the sea go out of their way to find cullenrock barnacles and attach them to themselves for the protection provided by the barnacles' shells. These creatures

know no fear or pain and are best faced on land where the barnacles themselves pose less of a threat.

**Obscure:** Black and deformed cullenrock barnacles found in blighted waters are rumored to attach to undead and blighted creatures even though the hosts are not warm-blooded. This variation of the sea vermin may have supernatural or unknown properties.



# Cyclops



<b>CE Large Monstrous Humanoid CR 5</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	6d8+24 (51 hp)
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +3, Spot +3
<b>Initiative:</b>	+6
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft. (10 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	17, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural, +2 light hide armor, +2 insight bonus)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+6/+14
<b>Attack:</b>	Large improvised club +10 (2d6+4/x2)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Large improvised club +10/+5 (2d6+4/x2)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Hunter's sight, ocular reliance, prescient dodge, prescient strike
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +6
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 19, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +3, Jump +3, Listen +3, Spot +3, Survival +4
<b>Feats:</b>	Improved Initiative, Endurance, Blind-fight, Track <sup>B</sup>
<b>Environment:</b>	Any desert or warm land
<b>Organization:</b>	Gang (2-6)
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class

<b>Skorne Conditioned Cyclops, 2nd-level Barbarian</b>	
<b>CE Large Monstrous Humanoid CR 9</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	6d8+36 plus 2d12+12 +8 (92 hp)
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +5, Spot +5
<b>Initiative:</b>	+7
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. in skorne plate armor (6 squares), base speed 50 ft. (10 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	23, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural, +7 skorne plate armor, +2 insight bonus)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+8/+16
<b>Attack:</b>	Masterwork large falchion +16 (2d6+10/18-20/x2)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Masterwork large falchion +16/+10 (2d6+10/18-20/x2)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Blind rage 2x/day <sup>S</sup> , fast movement, hunter's sight, lean <sup>S</sup> , ocular reliance, prescient dodge, prescient strike, uncanny dodge
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +10
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 24, Dex 17, Con 24, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 4
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +4, Jump +4, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +6
<b>Feats:</b>	Armor Proficiency (Heavy) <sup>S</sup> , Blind-fight, Die Hard <sup>B</sup> , Improved Initiative, Endurance, Track <sup>B</sup> , Weapon Focus (large falchion)
<b>Environment:</b>	Any desert or warm land
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, pair (2) or squad (2-8)
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class

<sup>S</sup>From Skorne Conditioning quickplate.



My journeys through eastern Immoren often brought me afoul of the enormous, semi-prescient beasts I have named cyclopes. Possessing only a massive single eye, these creatures take in their surroundings with a malevolence I have not often seen outside my own species. Either in the wild or as conditioned slaves in the service of the skorne, I quickly learned to loath these brutes.

While many fascinating primitive races populate Immoren, I have never experienced one with the preternatural skills of the cyclopes. As I have learned, their great eye grants them the ability to see brief flashes of the immediate future. They put this talent to excellent use as cunning hunters in the wild or in battle as skorne beasts of war.

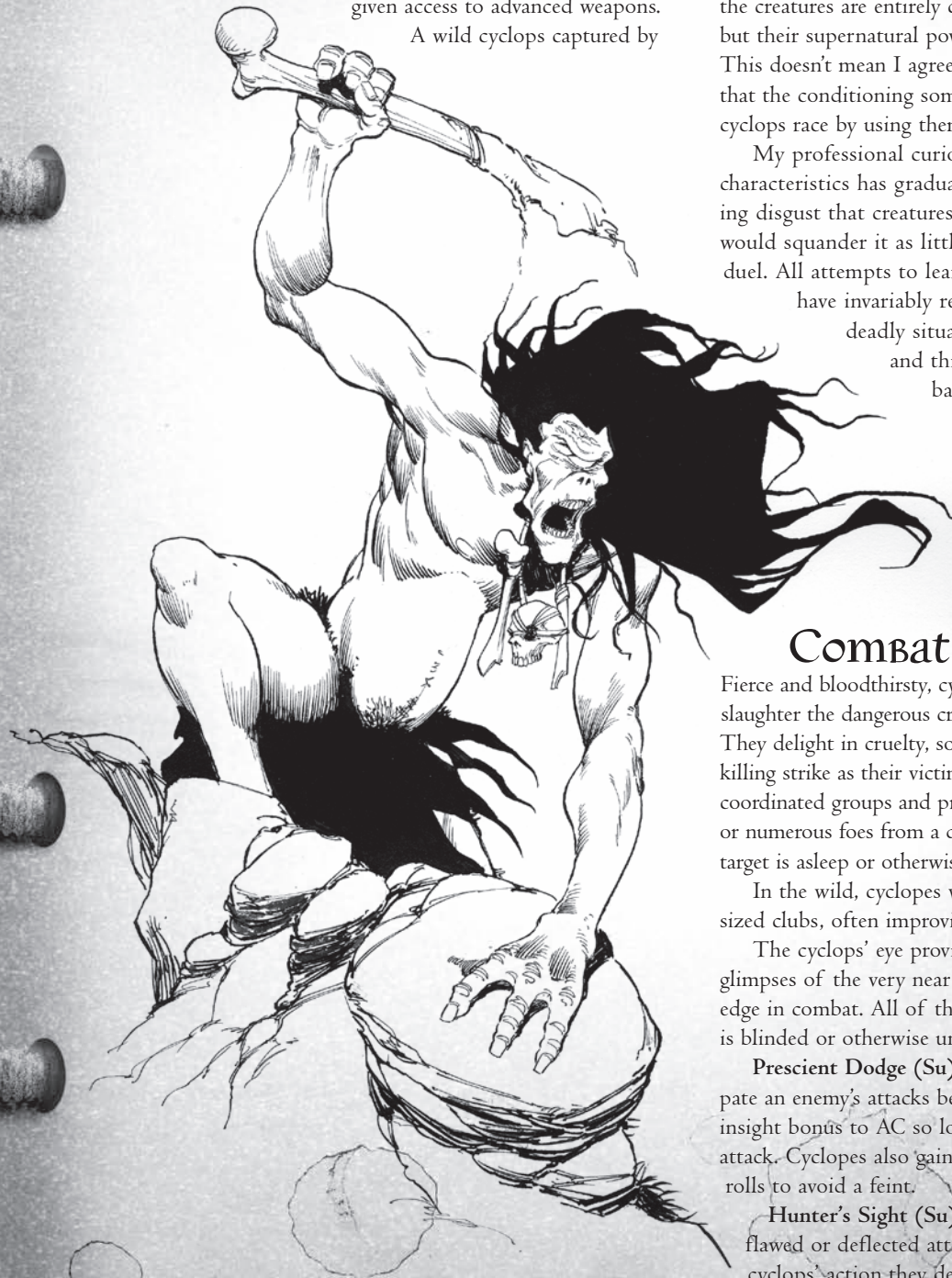
When encountered in the wild, the nearly nine foot tall cyclops appears almost feral and clothed in little more than a tattered loincloth, if anything. Wielding stout tree branches or rocks, they seem capable of creating only the rudest of tools. While many of their kind have served the skorne in captivity for generations, I was fascinated to learn that small nomadic bands of lean and bloodthirsty cyclopes still wander the harsh climes north of the Skorne Empire. These ruthless hunters no doubt employ the same techniques of ambush used by their ancestors centuries before to bring down titans and the massive desert hydra. While other primitive species seem to advance their tool use over time, wild cyclopes remain successful hunters in these desolate lands with only the crudest implements. I have a theory that their prescient eye keeps

# Cyclops

their race in this primitive state. Why, after all, should they invent better tools for the hunt if they can compensate for their simple weapons' deficiencies with the power of immediate foresight?

A tamed, or at least conditioned, cyclops under the command of skorne beast handlers provides a fascinating look into just how dangerous these cunning creatures can be when given access to advanced weapons.

A wild cyclops captured by



the skorne remains heavily drugged, lest it turn on its masters in a bloody rage, until they can break its spirit. Some born in captivity, however, must have their wildness conditioned so they remain cruel and powerful yet obedient enough to serve as guards. Indeed, when conditioned and employed as a beast of war, a cyclops wears fine armor and may carry a heavy falchion or polearm. This fact only serves to inform my opinion that the creatures are entirely capable of using complicated tools, but their supernatural powers keep them primitive in the wild. This doesn't mean I agree with my skorne captors' insistence that the conditioning somehow improves the destiny of the cyclops race by using them as weapons of war.

My professional curiosity regarding their behaviors or characteristics has gradually succumbed to a slow, seething disgust that creatures granted such a remarkable talent would squander it as little more than a cheater's edge in a duel. All attempts to learn about these creatures in the wild

have invariably resulted in a hasty retreat from a

deadly situation. They delight in causing pain and this cruelty serves the skorne well in

battle. Cyclopes even willingly inflict suffering on their own kind. This

malicious hatred culls the weak and leaves only the most brutal.

It is a joke only a divinity could manufacture, and one I don't find amusing.

## Combat

Fierce and bloodthirsty, cyclops skillfully track down and slaughter the dangerous creatures of the Bloodstone Marches. They delight in cruelty, sometimes deliberately withholding a killing strike as their victim suffers. They generally hunt in small, coordinated groups and prepare ambushes. They track dangerous or numerous foes from a distance and wait to attack until the target is asleep or otherwise distracted.

In the wild, cyclopes wear light hide armor and wield oversized clubs, often improvised from the bones of their prey.

The cyclopes' eye provides the supernatural ability to see glimpses of the very near future, giving them an enormous edge in combat. All of these abilities are negated if a cyclops is blinded or otherwise unable to see its foe.

**Prescient Dodge (Su):** This allows the cyclops to anticipate an enemy's attacks before they happen, granting a +2 insight bonus to AC so long as they are aware of an incoming attack. Cyclopes also gain a +4 insight bonus to Sense Motive rolls to avoid a feint.

**Hunter's Sight (Su):** The cyclopes can partially correct flawed or deflected attacks before they happen. During the cyclopes' action they designate an opponent and receive a +2

# Cyclops

insight bonus to attack rolls against that opponent. They may choose a new opponent each time they perform an action.

**Prescient Strike (Su):** A cyclops can see when its attack will hit and can maximize the impact. After a cyclops hits with an melee attack, they gain a +1 cumulative insight bonus to damage for every point by which their attack roll exceeded the opponent's AC (not including the +2 insight bonus from hunter's sight). Bonus damage may not exceed the cyclops' base attack.

**Ocular Reliance:** A cyclops that loses the use of his eye or is otherwise blinded does not gain the benefit of his supernatural special abilities.

## Treasure

Cyclopes in the wild have no treasure to speak of, but sometimes collect items from their victims. A cyclops conditioned by the skorne wears a suit of masterwork plate armor and wields a masterwork weapon, usually a falchion or halberd. Some also employ heavy shields. An intact cyclops eye could fetch 10 - 1,000 gp from the right buyer, such as a bone grinder or alchemist.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Found in eastern Immoren, the cyclops is a nine-foot tall ill-tempered, barbaric creature with one eye. They are more likely to communicate with weapons than with speech when dealing with non-cyclopes.

**Uncommon:** Though dim-witted, cyclopes fight remarkably well. They are natural hunters and can track their prey over long distances.

**Rare:** Cyclopes can see into the future briefly, giving them an edge in combat. They are at their most defenseless when surprised.

**Obscure:** Blinding a cyclops robs it of both its sight and its ability to see into the future.

## Hooks

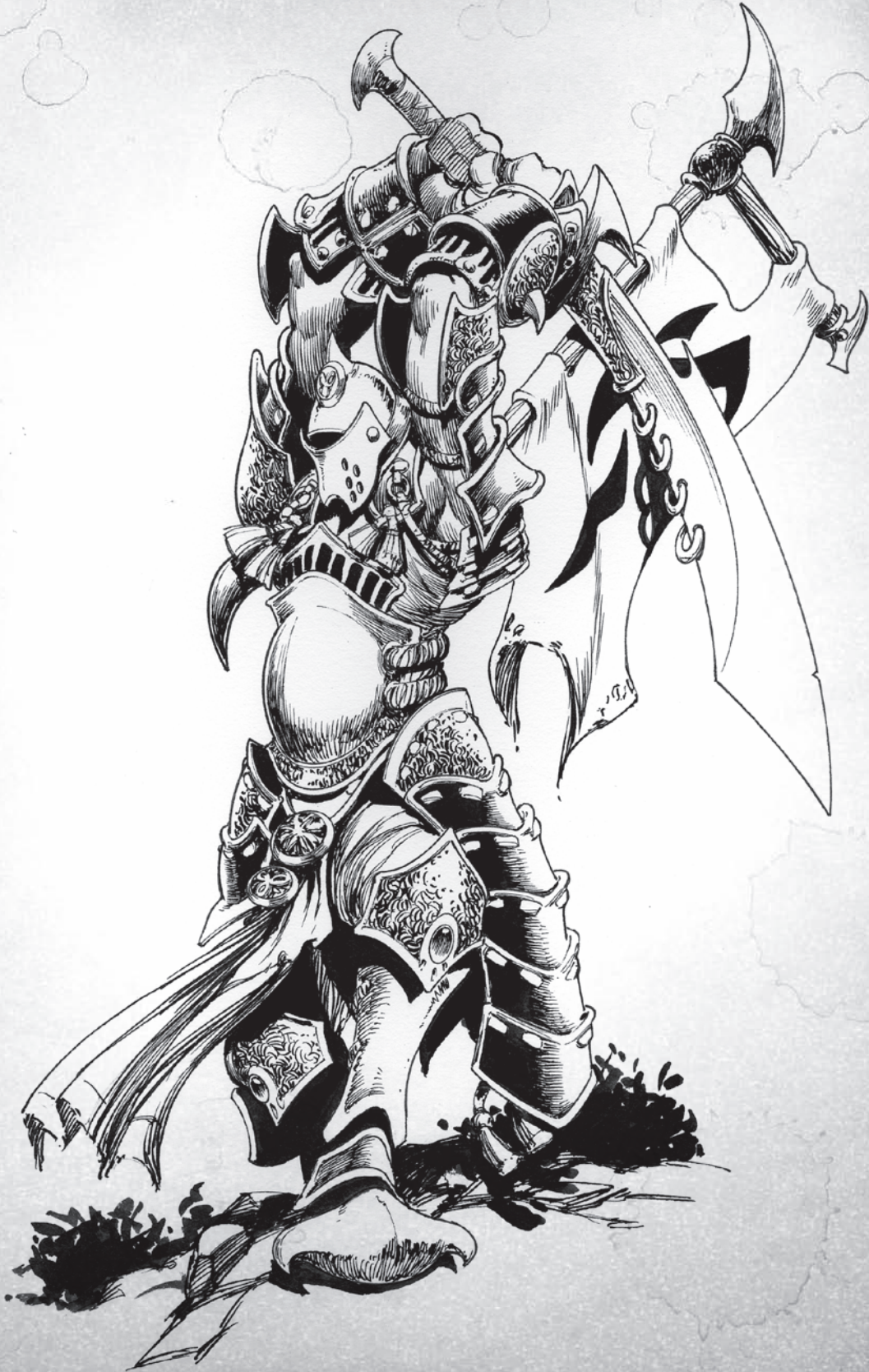
Either a sole survivor of a failed assault or an unlikely deserter, a lone skorne-conditioned cyclops has shed his arms and armor to revert to its natural barbaric state and live like a beast in the wilderness of western Immoren. Likely it could survive indefinitely hunting in the wilds if not for having developed a taste for human flesh. Its ravenous hunger drives it to a nearby village. Even if the PCs defeat or drive off the marauding creature, its skorne keepers will eventually arrive in hopes of recovering it.

Gerhard Fortros, a cigar-chomping wealthy and gregarious Rhulic fight-promoter in Corvis, is looking for a team of monster hunters willing to bring him a healthy captive cyclops to use in the fighting pits of the undercity for what he is billing as "the fight of the century" between the "Beast from the East" and the hulking Ogrun prize-fighter Barak "The Hammer".

*The skorne beast handlers often indulge the cyclops' natural penchant for cruelty. As an "honored guest" of my skorne captors I believe I escaped the worst abuses of my personal cyclops bodyguard, but for my part if I never look into the baleful eye of a living cyclops it will be too soon.*

*-VCP*

Cyclops





# Deathless



The following is an example of a level 8 fighter / level 8 sorcerer Orgoth deathless.

**CE Medium Undead (Augmented Humanoid) CR 19**

**Hit Dice:** 16d12 (96)

**Immunities/Resist:** Cold, damage reduction (10/body), electricity, fire, polymorph, turn immunity, spell resistance 26, undead traits

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft; Listen +1, Spot +1

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 40 ft (8 squares), climb 10 ft.

**Armor Class:** 30, touch 11, flat-footed 29 (+9 breast plate +4, +1 Dex, +10 natural armor)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +12/+17

**Attack:** +4 unboly vorpal great sword +23 melee (2d6+9 17-20, plus 2d6 vs. good)

**Full Attack:** +4 unboly vorpal great sword +23/+18/+13 melee (2d6 +9 17-20, plus 2d6 vs. good)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Energy drain, illusionary control, spell-like abilities

**Saves:** Fort 8, Reflex 8, Will 12

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 12, Con —, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 19

**Skills:** Climb +16, Concentration +8, Intimidate +15, Jump +16, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (Orgoth history) +10, Spellcraft +8

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (great sword), Weapon Specialization (great sword), Greater Weapon Focus (great sword), Power Attack, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (great sword), Spell Focus (Evocation), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Penetration, Greater Spell Penetration

**Spells:** This deathless knows the following spells:  
0: ghost sound, daze, acid splash, mage hand, arcane mark, message, open, light; 1<sup>st</sup>: charm person, magic missile, burning hands, shield, enlarge; 2<sup>nd</sup>: scorching ray, web, ghoul touch; 3<sup>rd</sup>: fireball, displacement; 4<sup>th</sup>: phantasmal kille

**Spells per day:** 8/5/3/2/1



The Orgoth reached our shores in 600 BR and within two hundred years they held nearly all of western Immoren in their grasp. Only the discovery of blasting powder, the creation of the colossals, and the 'gift' of sorcery allowed our ancestors to eventually drive the Orgoth from our lands. A few signs of their centuries of domination remain. Across the land lie places where crops refuse to grow, silent woods where animals fear to tread, and the dread ruins of the occupation. Many such tombs and crumbling fortresses hold dark things lingering oblivious to the march of time, such as the dread and the depraved excrutiator torturers, yet we have not seen the limit of Orgoth depravity nor the full extent of their determination to deny death. Some have lingered on by sheer force of will and dream of their empire of old.

I discovered this creature through the unfortunate death of the late professor Maphin Hlal, chief archeologist at Corvis University and an Orgoth expert. Away for some time on expedition, a student found his body tragically impaled and floating in the western Black River. I put aside my grief and, upon request, went to sort through the copious notes and journals sent back to the university, hoping to collect and publish his works for posterity.

I found among these the professor's personal journal. He described that in the bleak countryside of Ord's Olgenholt, not far from an ancient slave pit, clues and rumors had led him to a long forgotten tomb of a former Orgoth governor. He employed a group of local tomb raiders to bypass its traps. Utilizing such people presents its own dangers, as such men are sometimes little better than grave robbers or bandits. Hlal said he understood the risks.

Once inside, the pristine state of the place, apparently perfectly preserved despite the centuries, awed the professor. Frescos decorated the walls, the polished flagstones had no dust, and ever burning blue-green torches lit the way to the inner chamber. The impossible sight which here greeted him struck Professor Hlal speechless. What seemed a living, breathing Orgoth lord sat before him on a great stone throne flanked by his honor guard. He wondered if the torches contained some hallucinogen until the Orgoth lord spoke to him. In ancient Caspian the lord commanded him to kneel, which Hlal did without a thought. His companions fled, but the Orgoth guards cut them down. Their screams resounded through the halls.

## Deathless

Still mortally terrified and powerless before the creature's will, Professor Hlal, nevertheless, collected his wits enough to formulate a likely hypothesis for what he saw. Hlal deduced, despite his senses, that he faced a long dead Orgoth who's will to live had impressed itself upon his surroundings. The lord's words as he imperiously surveyed his chamber and ordered his soldiers made it clear that the creature mistook himself for living in the time of the Rebellion and had no knowledge of the modern world. Hlal recorded that, upon this discovery, he pierced the veil of deception, and the tombs' fixtures and dressings began to fade from sight. The governor's flesh also dissolved. Hlal saw the terrible visage of an armored skeleton upon the throne. Only an instant of doubt, however, served for the illusion to reasserted itself.

In awe Hlal unthinkingly spoke aloud. "You are dead!"

At this exclamation the lord scowled with rage and a light gleamed in his eyes. Advancing with blade in hand, he forced Hlal to apologize for his impertinence and to swear his allegiance and fealty. Hlal was powerless to resist. Thankfully the journals became less coherent at this point. I deduced Hlal did not wish to set to paper, and I did not wish to know, the horrible deeds the dead Orgoth commanded him to perform. I read enough, however, to realize with horror that this vague time coincided with a series of particularly dreadful murders in Carre Dova and later in Ceryl. I believe now Hlal must have been involved.

"Shamed by what I have done, what I have become," Hlal wrote in the last entry of the journal, "I must escape his grasp." This entry convinces me that Hlal took his own life rather than continue his unholy servitude; a tragic and horrible end to a great mind. Eventually I hope to arrange an expedi-



# Deathless

tion to destroy Hlal's tormentor, but for now I can only caution to not explore Orgoth ruins lightly. Their legacy lingers, undying, to this day.

## Creating a Deathless

History has lost the process for creating the deathless. What little information remains describes a gruesome process requiring the removal vital organs into preservative fluids held in metal vats. Only the skeleton remains of the body, though it gains the strength of steel.

The deathless is a template that can be added to any human Orgoth character (referred to hereafter as the base creature). Unlike most templates the deathless is not an acquired template added to an existing living creature but is applied to long deceased Orgoth governors, sorcerers, and warlords.

**Size and Type:** The creature's type changes to undead (augmented humanoid) do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size is unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Increase all future and current Hit Dice to d12s.

**Speed:** Same as the character.

**Armor Class:** The base creature's natural armor improves by +10.

**Attacks:** A deathless retains all the weapon proficiencies of the base creature and also gains two slam attacks if it didn't already have one.

**Damage:** A deathless' slam attacks does damage appropriate for its size.

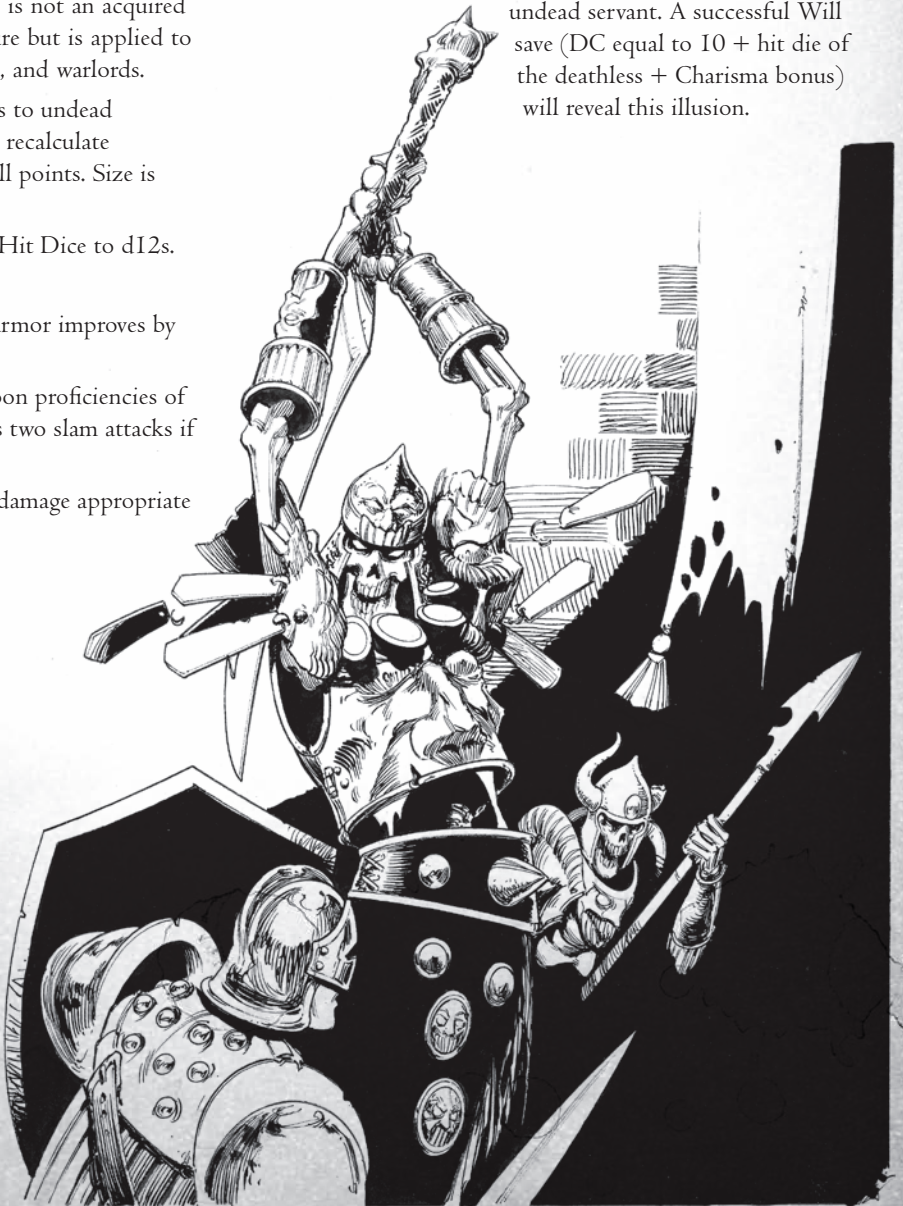
Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

**Special Attacks:** A deathless retains all the special attacks of the base creature.

**Spells:** A deathless can cast any arcane spells it could while alive.

### Special Qualities:

**Illusory Dominion (Su):** A deathless has no awareness of its state and creates a powerful illusion of their surroundings by force of will and stubborn belief. This will exactly replicate, down to the smallest detail, any fortress, palace, or estate the creature occupied before death. This works as a permanent *mirage arcana* and may include one or several *permanent image* illusions as well. While in its tomb, the deathless and its undead retinue look as they did in life, such as Orgoth warriors in armor, cloaked sorcerers, priests, etc. Treat these illusions as a permanent *disguise self* on the deathless and each undead servant. A successful Will save (DC equal to 10 + hit die of the deathless + Charisma bonus) will reveal this illusion.



**Immunities (Su):** A deathless is immune to cold, fire, electricity and polymorph.

**Damage Reduction (Su):** A deathless' skeletal body, infused with unholy energy. Gains damage reduction 10/holy.

**Energy Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a deathless' slam attack gain one negative level. A deathless may use its energy drain ability once per round.

**Spell Resistance (Su):** A deathless gains spell resistance 20 +1 per character level beyond 10th.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Su):** At will — *command, modify memory*; 3/day — *dominate person, greater command*; 1/day — *geas*

**Turn Immunity (Su):** A deathless cannot be turned.

**Undead Servants:** The deathless are entombed with a retinue of lesser undead servants, usually several dread and one or more excrutiators. It may have a number of such servants up to three times its hit dice, which serve the deathless faithfully until destroyed.

**Saves:** Same as base creature.

**Abilities:** Change from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Wis +2, Cha +4. As an undead creature, a deathless has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** Same as base creature. The deathless gain a +10 racial bonus to Knowledge (Orgoth history)

**Feats:** Same as base creature.

**Environment:** Any underground (Orgoth tomb)

**Organization:** Solitary or Retinue (see undead servants above)

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +3

**Alignment:** Always evil

**Level Adjustment:** Same as base creature +8

**Advancement:** The deathless continue to advance in level as per their original class.

## Combat

The deathless considers newcomers as visitors seeking an audience and will not immediately attack. The deathless believes it still lives, that the empire still exists, and that any Immorese they meet are either slaves or envoys from other Orgoth warlords. They can speak the 'slave tongue'—ancient Caspian—to communicate, as well as Orgoth and possibly other extinct languages. They demand obedience and deference from any visitors and grow angry, and eventually enraged, if visitors insist things are not as the deathless remembers.

If a visitor plays along with the deathless' delusions, the deathless will swear them to silence and use his powers to send them on a variety of missions on its behalf. Such missions

require the character to return to the deathless when finished, and the cycle continues.

If characters attack the deathless it will respond with its undead servants, usually dread, first. The deathless enters combat personally only if its servants are destroyed or if it perceives a 'worthy' foe among its attackers.

## Treasure

Deathless were always buried with treasures. These tarnished artifacts, even if otherwise worthless, can command impressive fees from collectors and scholars.

### Coins, Silver & Gold

Long, flat, and marked with Orgoth runes, fingers of silver formed the typical currency of the Empire. Tarnished and damaged Orgoth silver coins may fetch 1-5 gp from collectors, with rare mint condition coins going for up to twice that amount to an interested party.

Orgoth gold coins bear a face on one side, generally the emperor at the time or the governor of an enslaved province, which may, in fact, be the deathless. To serious collectors undamaged coins may command up to 20 gp while worn specimens go for 2-10 gp. Impure golden wheels fetch only 1 gp apiece.

Characters may sell golden idols bearing the howling visages common to Orgoth ornamentation, thought to hold religious significance, to collectors for 100-200 gp. Exotic larger gold items might fetch up to five times their value in gold.

### Marble Icons

Usually a leering face on a field of stars, thought to be the symbol of the Empire, carved into black marble, these icons vary in size from one square foot for distant outposts to massive wall sized affairs in a central stronghold. Smaller slabs fetch 100 gp if undamaged, but often prove difficult to remove. The extremely heavy large slabs can sell for up to 5,000 gp if undamaged.

### Masks

Strange masks often turn up among Orgoth ruins, particularly in burial vaults, and seem linked to Orgoth scholars or arcane practitioners. Excrutiators always wear such masks, fabricated from thick metal. In several instances those foolishly donning these masks have found themselves possessed by malignant forces.

### Writings

Very rare, each Orgoth text is unique, exotic, and priceless. These are usually preserved by excrutiators serving as minions to the deathless. Certain Orgoth tomes can be treated as Scholarly Works (MNI pg. 223) with a bonus ranging from +1 to +6 on a knowledge topic related to the period being covered. Estimate a value of 500 gp per +1 bonus that the work provides.

# Desert Hydra (5-Headed)



<b>N Huge Magical Beast CR 15</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	17d10 (195 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage reduction 10/bludgeoning or slashing, resistance to acid 10 and fire 10, spell resistance 14
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +5, Spot +10, scent
<b>Initiative:</b>	+2
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft. (8 squares), burrow 20 ft.
<b>Armor Class:</b>	29, touch 10, flat-footed 27 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +19 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+17/+33
<b>Attack:</b>	Bite +23 melee (2d6+8)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	5 bites +23 melee (2d6+8)

<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Improved grab, vomitous taint, swallow whole, wounding
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	15 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Regeneration 2
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +16, Ref +14, Will +5
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 26, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +10
<b>Feats:</b>	Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack
<b>Environment:</b>	Any desert
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Advancement:</b>	18–26 HD (Huge), 27–35 HD (Gargantuan)



I can honestly say that, in all my extensive travels, I've delighted in encountering few creatures more than the desert hydra. Gigantic, powerful, terrible to behold, and foul-tempered in the extreme, these beasts offer a very definition of monsters. Their appeal extends beyond their obviously fearsome appearances, however. Naturalists dream of studying creatures possessed of such a wholly unique physiology and reproductive and maturation processes that one might best describe as terrifyingly novel. Already I'm excitedly outlining an extensive thesis on these sand-bound horrors.

To highlight some of the beast's most intriguing traits, the desert hydra resembles a titanic desert snake (although what might be the vestigial hints of numerous feet are obvious). Resilient against the desert heat and many forms of attack, the creature quickly heals wounds and even regrows heads, as its brain and vital functions reside deep within its trunk. The torso also protects internal, hermaphroditic organs that keep the beast almost perpetually pregnant. Desert hydras lay sizable clutches of swift-hatching eggs on a near weekly basis.

Upon hatching, a desert hydra's whelps swiftly turn their nest into an arena. The strongest hatchlings not only savage their twins but core out many of their vital organs, most notably the brain. After devouring these parts, the victor bites a swiftly healing wound into its own flesh and winds around the

bloody trunk of its dead kin. In a feat I'm prepared to deem unique in all the world, the surviving hatchling's swift healing process mistakes the dead sibling's form for a separated appendage and assimilates it, reinvigorating the other's neck and head as its own wholly functional extension. The now two-headed desert hydra then hunts for more of its kind to claim their strengths as its own.

Look for my complete treatise on these delightful terrors, *Assimilation to Regeneration: The Physiology of the Desert Hydra*.



## Combat

Tenacious, resilient, and savage, the many-headed desert hydras live only to eat and reproduce. What they cannot rip apart with their wicked, four-jawed maws, they expel their toxic stomach contents upon and leave their prey to burn, seizure, and cramp into defenseless, partially digested meals.

A desert hydra can be killed *only* by slaying its body where its brain is lodged, and not by severing all its heads. However, the heads are the source of its natural attacks and if all are severed the creature will seek to flee. To sever a head, an opponent must make a successful sunder attempt with a slashing weapon. (The player should declare where the attack is aimed before making the attack roll.) Making a sunder attempt provokes an attack of opportunity unless the attacker has the Improved Sunder feat. An opponent can strike at a hydra's

## Desert Hydra

heads from any position in which he could strike at the desert hydra itself, because the hydra's heads writhe and whip about in combat. An opponent can ready an action to attempt to sunder a desert hydra's head when the creature bites at him. Each of a desert hydra's heads has hit points equal to the creature's full normal hit point total, divided by its original number of heads. For example each head of the desert hydra listed above has 39 hit points (195 hit points divided by 5 head = 39 hit points per head.) Losing a head deals damage to the body equal to half the head's full normal hit points. The desert hydra listed above suffers 19 hit points damage when it loses a head. A natural reflex seals the neck shut to prevent further blood loss. A desert hydra can no longer attack with a severed head but takes no other penalties. A desert hydra's heads regrow at a rate of one severed head per week.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the desert hydra must hit with a bite. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Vomitous Taint (Ex):** Once per day per head it possesses (but no more than once per round), a desert hydra can vomit forth a slurry of acidic stomach contents, half digested sand, and steaming blood in a 15-foot cone (4d6 acid damage). Characters may make a Reflex (DC 24) save for half damage.

Those who fail this Reflex save must make an

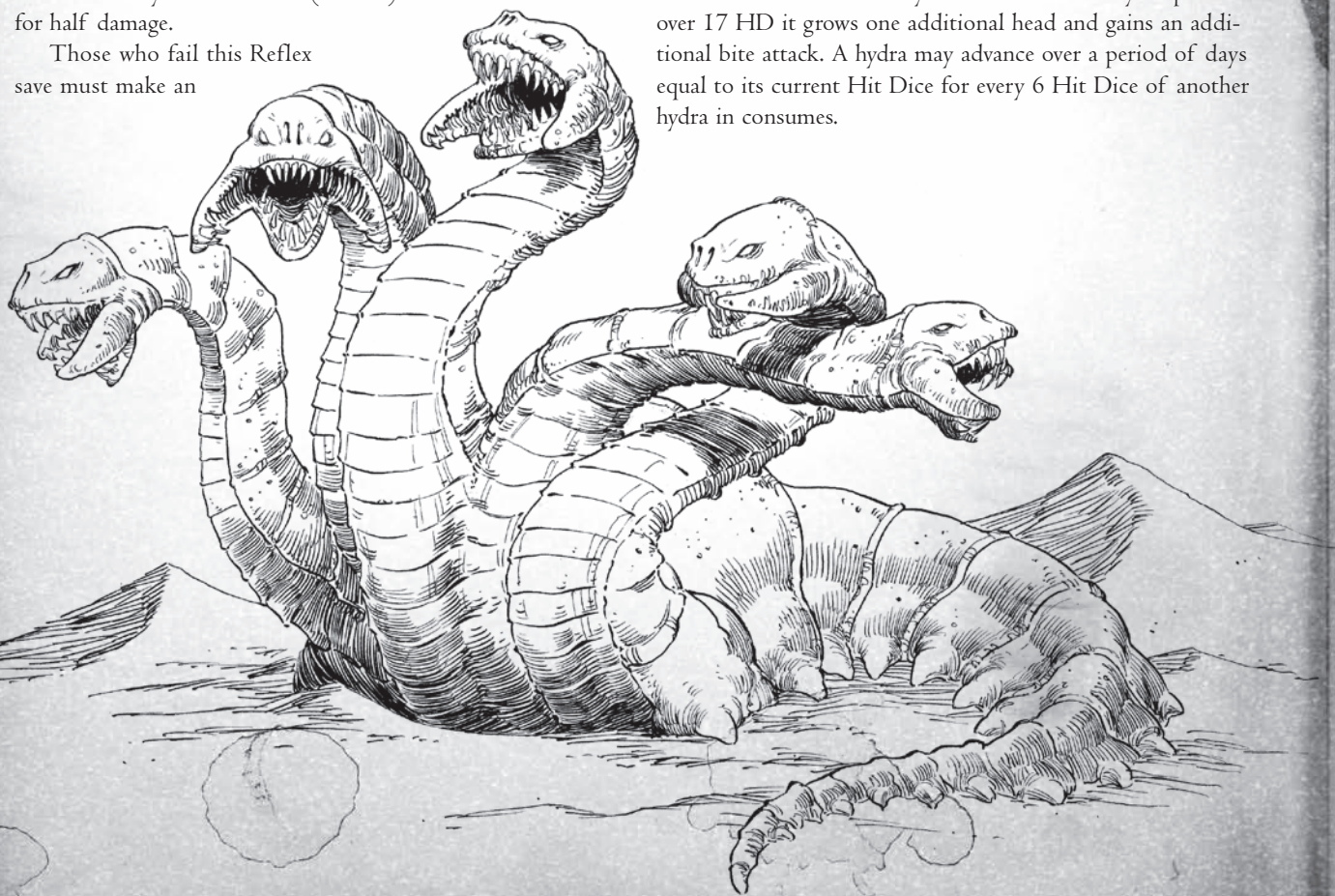
additional save or be poisoned by the disgusting, venomous bile that taints all it touches (Injury, Fortitude (DC 24), initial and secondary damage 1d4 Dex). Both save DCs are Constitution-based.

**Wounding (Ex):** Any living creature damaged by a desert hydra's bite continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding loss. Succeeding at a Heal check (DC 10) stops the bleeding, as does a cure spell or some other healing magic.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Cold deals normal damage to a desert hydra. If a desert hydra loses a head, the lost appendage regrows in 1d4 hours. The creature can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.

**Swallow Whole (Ex):** Hydra's of Huge size and larger may swallow whole creatures of Medium size or smaller. If the hydra begins its turn with an opponent held in one of its mouths, it can attempt a new grapple check (as though attempting to pin the opponent). If it succeeds, it swallows its prey, and the opponent takes bite damage. In the round immediately following and every round afterward, the swallowed prey suffers the damage of Vomitous Taint. The hydra's interior AC is 20 and does not have Damage Resistance.

**Advancement:** For every 6 hit dice a desert hydra possesses over 17 HD it grows one additional head and gains an additional bite attack. A hydra may advance over a period of days equal to its current Hit Dice for every 6 Hit Dice of another hydra it consumes.



# Devil Rat



<b>Devil Rat</b>	
Usually NE Small Magical Beast CR ½	
Hit Dice:	1/2d10+1 (3 bp)
Senses:	Listen +0, Spot +0; darkvision 60 ft., scent
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares), Swim 20 ft.
Armor Class:	13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+1 size, +2 Dex)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+1/-3
Attack:	Bite +4 melee (1d4)
Full Attack:	Bite +4 melee (1d4)
Special Attacks:	Disease (DC 11), distracting attack
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 4
Skills:	Hide +8, Move Silently +4, Swim +8*
Feats:	Weapon Finesse
Environment:	Temperate forests and underground
Organization:	Pack (5-20)
Advancement:	1-3 HD (Small)

<b>Devil Rat Swarm CR 3</b>	
Usually NE Tiny Magical Beast (Swarm)	
Hit Dice:	6d10+6 (39 bp)
Immunities/Resist:	Swarm traits
Initiative:	+3
Senses:	Listen +0, Spot +0; darkvision 60 ft., scent
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), Swim 15 ft.
Armor Class:	13 (+1 size, +2 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 11
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/-
Attack:	Swarm (2d6 plus disease)
Full Attack:	Swarm (2d6 plus disease)
Special Attacks:	Disease (DC 16), distraction (DC 14), enrage
Space/Reach:	10 ft./0 ft.
Special Qualities:	Half damage from slashing and piercing, swarm traits
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 6, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 4
Skills:	Hide +17, Move Silently +10, Swim +6*
Feats:	Ability Focus (disease), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse
Environment:	Temperate forests and underground
Organization:	Solitary, pack (2-4 swarms), or infestation (7-12 swarms)



I did not have to go far to study devil rats; the creatures infest Corvis. They demonstrate particular cunning for something akin to an animal. Their assaults on the Corvis University laboratory remind me that some creatures, no matter how fascinating in the wild, become nothing but nuisances when they invade your office and make off with several specimens. These irritating creatures display problem-solving abilities and can use simple tools like keys or switches. They also adeptly avoid detection and traps set for them. In fact, I dare say they are just as likely to set a trap for their hunter as they are to be trapped themselves.

They have an uncanny intelligence and, I believe, an inborn malevolence that qualifies them as far more than just the vermin they seem. Unlike more amiable creatures like the lab mouse, they seem incapable of domestication and so mean-spirited as to resist even being tamed. For example, in my extensive studies on gobberkind, I noted that many tribes of

wild gobbers hunt devil rats for food but none have sought them as pets, guardians, or companions.

I cannot say the same for their larger and more brutish bogrin cousins, however. The cruel nature and devious thinking of those creature seem a match for devil rats, and I have seen the two working together with success on at least one occasion. We were making for Highgate on a rather lonely bit of forest before ascending the Wyrmswall Pass when we were raided by a score of barbaric bogrin. Not unlike the crude swamp gobbers of Corvis, these raiders would normally attempt to steal the most accessible goods before retreating back into the wild. I understood full well the possibility of such a raid, and I had already seen to it that our most precious cargo was hidden away. This time however, the raiders had the help of furry, double-vexing spies. As much as I can piece together afterward, several devil rats must have stowed away on our supply caravan and uncovered the location of our most

## Devil Rat

valued foodstuffs and medicines. When the bogrin attacked they knew exactly where to go after seeing the rats boil out of those particular wagons. As we were to discover afterward, all the securing lines of our gear had been chewed through, making it easy for the bogrin to haul off with the goods before we could chase them off. What was already a long journey became longer still without ample food, but the sighting of a family of rare species of seahawks the next day did somewhat make up for our troubles.

That said, it is unclear if the bogrin had tamed the rats or, as is more to my thinking, they were working by some unspoken mutual agreement. I'm too old, and I might add wise, to think both attacks mere coincidence. In any case I recommend that no travelers endure the sight of any vermin, lest they secretly betray your interests.

Whatever can be said of these miserable, if fascinating, creatures, young devil rats are actually worse. Devil rats give birth in huge broods, and a colony of rats can spawn hundreds if not thousands of their kind. As a result, devil rats less than 6 months old invariably gather in vicious swarms that devour anything with flesh in their hunger to grow. I have heard tell that some parts of the Corvis undercity teem with them, a fact which makes conducting research of the oldest parts of the city impossible.

### Combat

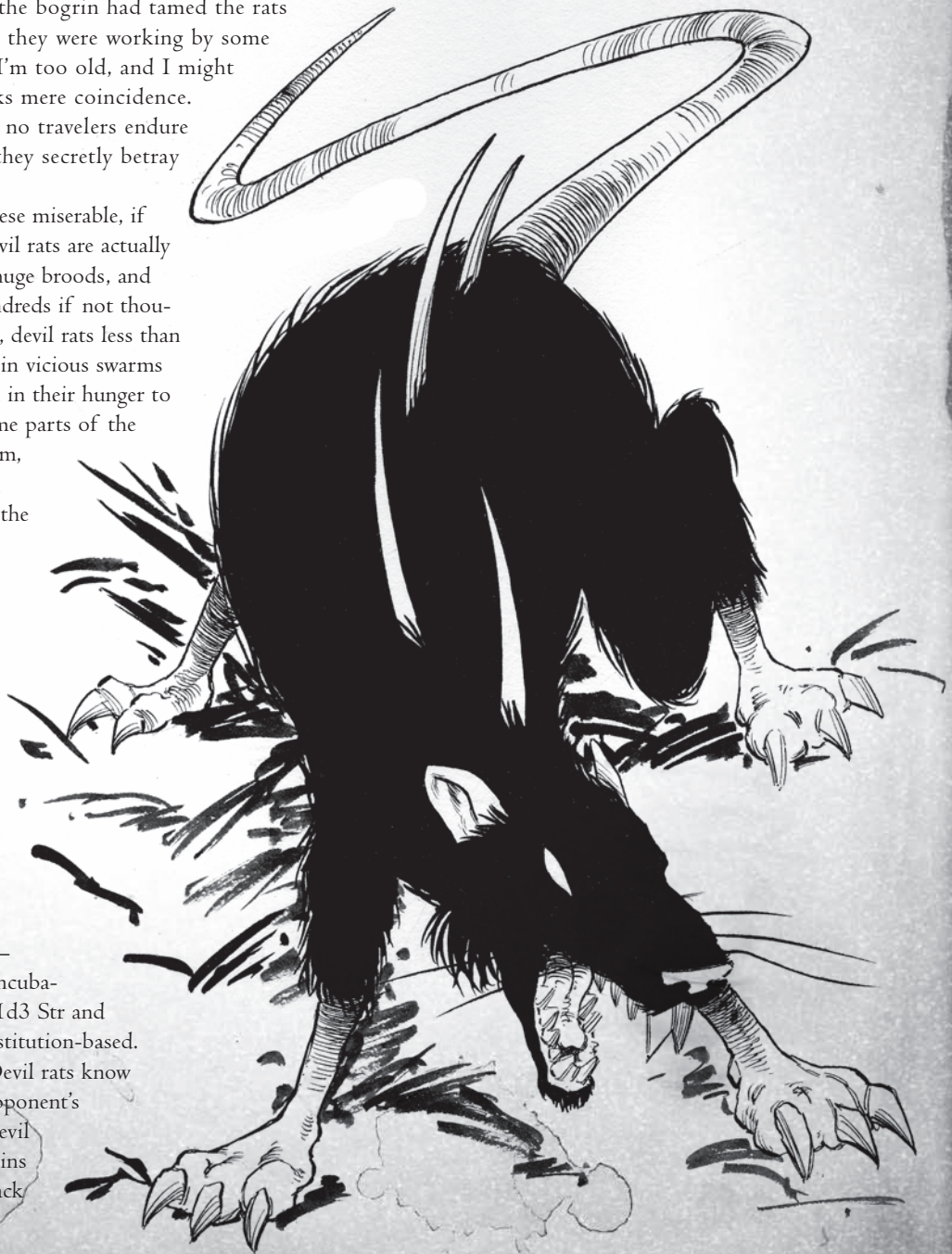
#### (Devil Rat)

Cunning creatures who work well in packs, devil rats prefer to ambush their opponents, surround them, and confuse them with distracting bites while other devil rats position themselves for more lethal attacks.

**Disease (Ex):** Devil fever — bite, Fortitude save (DC 11), incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Str and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Distracting Attack (Ex):** Devil rats know how to take advantage of an opponent's divided attention. When two devil rats flank an opponent, each gains an additional +2 bonus on attack rolls (for a total of +4).

**\*Skills:** A devil rat has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming provided it swims in a straight line.





# Devil Rat

## (Devil Rat Swarm)

Immature devil rats take comfort in their extreme numbers and know no fear. They become enraged if they see a great number of their brethren die, tearing and ripping at their opponents. This reaction is a survival instinct. Young devil rats choose fight rather than flight no matter the opponent (perhaps explaining why so few of them survive to maturity).

**Disease (Ex):** Devil fever — swarm attack, Fortitude save (DC 16), incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Str and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Distraction (Ex):** Any living creature that begins its turn with a devil rat swarm in its square must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Enrage (Ex):** When a devil rat swarm drops to half hit points or fewer, the remaining rats enter a rabid frenzy. The swarm gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls (making its damage 2d6+2) for a number of rounds equal to 5 plus its Constitution bonus if any.

**Skills:** \*A devil rat swarm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming provided it swims in a straight line.

## Treasure

Devil rats do not hoard treasure, but an enterprising explorer may find a few valuable bits that they use in their nests, necklaces or shreds of fine cloth, for example. Bainsmarket and other agricultural cities often pay a bounty for each adult devil rat killed. Some less civilized locations in the remote parts of western Immoren prize them as a source of food and trade.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Cunning, rat-like creatures dwell in profusion beneath the streets of Corvis and other cities. They carry disease and their young swarm.

**Uncommon:** These creatures are much smarter than any mere animals. They travel in packs and use group tactics to overcome much larger prey. When you encounter one, expect more to wait in ambush.

**Rare:** Young devil rats gather and hunt in massive swarms that devour everything in their path. These swarms become even more dangerous when provoked. A swarm may be distracted by offerings of fresh meat if they are not so enraged.

**Obscure:** Devil rats use a primitive system of squeaks and hisses to communicate with each other. A tea made from a licorice root found in the Widowers Wood, though itself mildly toxic, can help treat devil fever (+2 on Heal checks to treat the disease).

## HOOKS

The Balingworth family flees its estate house, citing strange happenings: vases topple from shelves, doors open and close, and food goes missing. The Balingworths believe their house haunted by the ghost of Roderick Volnov, a Khadoran soldier whom the Balingworths' grandfather slew in battle several decades ago. They hire a team of ghost hunters to cleanse their house. In reality, several adult devil rats infest the manor and wanted the place to themselves for the birth of their young. The ghost hunters arrive just in time to feed the swarm of hungry youngsters.

Several underground fight promoters have banded together to collect a handsome fee for the extermination of several broods of devil rats that are beginning to disturb the crowds gathering to watch the illegal fights. A regular attendee of the fights informs the PCs that he has a "flawless plan" to get rid of the rats easily, but he needs their help. All that is required is to slip past the rats and blast open a small hole in the river's retaining wall to wash away the creatures. Unfortunately, the water drives the creatures up into the city streets and brings the authority's eyes to the activities below.

In Five Fingers, a pair of "civilized" bogrin living in the hidden coves under the city have attempted to train devil rats to deliver messages through the underground tunnels snaking through the islands. This has met with no success, and instead the bogrin find themselves continually feeding the rats neighboring their home lest they and their families fall prey to the growing threat. Worse still, the meddling with the devil rats of Captain's Isle has angered agents of the Cult of the Wurm who have been using the creatures to spread disease in the city. Their anger is assuaged when it turns out both bogrin become carriers of devil fever. Now the agents urge the plagued bogrin to mingle with the city dwellers atop the island.



# Dragons



## ASHNEPHOS



<b>CE Colossal Dragon (Fire) CR 32</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	44d12+572 (858 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage reduction 20/serriesteel, dragon traits, fire, fear, spell resistance 32
<b>Senses:</b>	Blindsight 360 ft., keen senses, Listen +52, Spot +52
<b>Initiative:</b>	+6
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft. (8 squares), Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	48, touch 2, flat-footed 46 (-8 size, +2 Dex, +44 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+44/+77
<b>Attack:</b>	Bite +53 melee (6d8+17/19-20)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Bite +53 melee (6d8+17/19-20) and 2 claws +51 melee (6d6+8) and tail slap +52 melee (4d6+25)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Breath weapon, crush 4d8+25, frightful presence, tail sweep 2d8+25, ruinbringer
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	30 ft./25 ft. (30 ft. with bite)
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Dragonblight, regeneration 20, vulnerable to cold

<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +37, Ref +26, Will +29
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 44, Dex 14, Con 36, Int 28, Wis 20, Cha 26
<b>Skills:</b>	Appraise +44, Balance +38, Bluff +38, Climb +64, Diplomacy +34, Escape Artist +38, Intimidate +55, Jump +53, Knowledge (arcana) +44, Knowledge (geography) +44, Knowledge (history) +44, Knowledge (giants) +44, Listen +52, Search +44, Sense Motive +31, Spot +52, Survival +52, Swim +33
<b>Feats:</b>	Awesome Blow, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Critical (bite, claw), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw), Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover
<b>Environment:</b>	Suneater Mountains
<b>Organization:</b>	Unique



Tales relate that once a single great dragon named Erdross terrorized northeastern Immoren. Erdross sought shelter from its unrelenting sire Toruk the Dragonfather among the smoky peaks and jagged spires of the Suneater Mountains and there came to contest with the civilization of the giants. Even in ancient times when the giants had other cities, Erdross commanded their fear and respect and supposedly slew hundreds if not thousands. So the giant Chilon, the topic of other pages of this volume, told me.

Eventually the giants organized against this foe, concentrated their considerable powers, and endured great sacrifice to bring Erdross low. They divested its carcass of the pulsing athanc they sensed as the heart of its unholy power. Their efforts to destroy this strange crystal simply multiplied the terror. They succeeded only in dividing the stone, foolishly hurled these shards into a volcano, and gave birth to two dragons instead of one.

Neither Ashnephos nor Charsaug enjoy the same legendary stature as their sire. Legends claim Erdross had wings that would eclipse all the sky and fire enough to boil the oceans

dry. Even if lesser creatures than their sire, these dragons represent a threat beyond the capability of the giants to overcome. The giants and the dragons have pursued duels of wits and claw, blood and hammer, and axe and sword for millennia. While the dragons have not yet gained the upper hand, they do slowly win this war as the number of giants thins and the dragons remain undiminished.

Of these two great serpents the giants regard the one called Ashnephos as the most rapacious and cruel of the pair if also the less clever. Ashnephos menaces the northern giants with particular enthusiasm and seems to find no greater joy than burning flesh from their frames with its blighted breath.

None know what plans Ashnephos has beyond the obliteration of Bemoth, for it spends all of its time engaged in one campaign or another against these ancient enemies. The giants blame Ashnephos for accelerating the withering of their species, already suffering badly after the calamity that shattered eastern Immoren. Even after this disaster the three great strands of giant-kind once stretched across the river valleys and circled the lake of the Suneater Mountains in myriad and hardy tribes and villages that struggled for their



own survival against the elements. Despite triumphing over natural and unnatural forces, these lesser communities fell like wounded prey when Ashnephos descended upon them with fang and fire.

Giants describe Ashnephos as equally beautiful and terrible. Its scales seem to shimmer like oiled steel in the sun. Its fangs gleam bright like polished silver blades. Ashnephos' fire hypnotizes all who see it with such roiling beauty that they stand paralyzed with rapture even as their flesh boils away. The giant Chilon described many poems and songs written of the deadly beauty of Ashnephos, how those who witnessed its slaughters could never shake the memory and would find themselves longing for the beauty of death brought by this unrepentant wyrm.

## Combat

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Ashnephos has an incinerating breath weapon some giants have named the "roiling death" for the way it leaves extremely fine ash granules in its wake which boil in the air like a living thing. This is a 70-foot cone, damage 25d10 fire, Reflex save (DC 45) for half. The save DC is Constitution-

based. Any creature killed by this blast leaves behind a lingering cloud of burning ash for three rounds in the squares they occupied. This acts as a *hypnotic pattern* (Will save (DC 40) to resist, save is Charisma-based) affecting up to 24 hit dice worth of creatures. Those affected only see Ashnephos as a threat for purposes of gaining a new save or automatically breaking out of their fascination if the dragon directly attacks them.

**Ruinbringer (Su)** As a standard action Ashnephos can shed and stir up a great cloud of blighted ash around his body then ignite these particles with explosive blighted energy that tears apart stone, earth, and flesh. This 160 foot emanation inflicts 2d10 fire damage, Fortitude save (DC 45) for half, and also affects all creatures on the ground, structures, terrain, and vegetation within the area as the *earthquake* spell.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** 360-foot radius, HD 43 or less, Will save (DC 40) negates.

**Visions (Sp):** Once per day as a standard action Ashnephos can enter into a trance, losing awareness of its surroundings during the process but gaining the benefits of any one of the following divination spells: *discern location*, *divination*, *legend lore*, or *screying*. Treat Ashnephos as a 20th level caster for purposes of this ability.

# Dragons

## Legends & Lore (skorne)

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** None

**Rare:** This is the only creature the giants fear. Ashnephos is insane but this insanity grants periodic visions, which come to it as though instructions from its deceased sire.

## Charsaug



### NE Colossal Dragon (Fire) CR 30

**Hit Dice:** 40d12+480 (740 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Damage reduction 20/serriesteel, dragon traits, fire, fear, sleep, paralysis, spell resistance 30

**Senses:** Blindsight 360 ft., keen senses, Listen +54, Spot +54

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)

**Armor Class:** 46, touch 4, flat-footed 44 (-8 size, +2 Dex, +42 natural armor)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +41/+72

**Attack:** Bite +48 melee (6d8+15/19-20)

**Full Attack:** Bite +48 melee (6d8+15/19-20) and 2 claws +46 melee (6d6+7) and tail slap +46 melee (4d6+22)

**Special Attacks:** Breath weapon, burnination, crush 4d8+22, frightful presence, tail sweep 2d8+22,

**Space/Reach:** 30 ft./25 ft. (30 ft. with bite)

**Obscure:** Ashnephos and Charsaug have a unique relationship among dragons, as they seem willing to cooperate and live in relatively close proximity. Each will eventually seek to consume the other after they destroy the giants. Ashnephos plans to utilize its divinatory powers to eventually obliterate its "twin" but finds the arrangement useful for now.

**Special Qualities:** Dragonblight, regeneration 20, vulnerable to cold

**Saves:** Fort +34, Ref +24, Will +28

**Abilities:** Str 40, Dex 14, Con 34, Int 34, Wis 32, Cha 26

**Skills:** Appraise +55, Balance +45, Bluff +51, Climb +58, Diplomacy +51, Escape Artist +45, Intimidate +51, Jump +58, Knowledge (arcana) +55, Knowledge (geography) +55, Knowledge (history) +55, Knowledge (giants) +55, Listen +54, Search +54, Sense Motive +54, Spot +54, Survival +54, Swim +58

**Feats:** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Critical (bite, claw), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claw), Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover

**Environment:** Suneater Mountains

**Organization:** Unique



Charsaug, the more intelligent and reserved, but no less malevolent, of the dragon pair, seems obsessed with grander schemes and more wide reaching plans than simply destroying Bemoth and terminating the slayers of its sire. Perhaps this is paranoia, but the giants believe it. They apparently have had less direct contact with Charsaug, although this dragon has left its own bloody claw print on the peoples of Bemoth and relishes the opportunity to destroy any giant it finds vulnerable and exposed. They have observed Charsaug winging far from the Suneater Mountains, exploring many volcanoes of the north, and inspecting other ruins. It roamed as far away as the southern Abyss, and scattered skorne records refer to this creature. Several times it has loomed up over the Shroudwall, yet from what I have heard

it has thus far avoided direct battle with that smaller species. Like its "twin" the giants remain its main prey.

Described as a black shadow against the night that eclipses the stars, Charsaug possesses scales so dark that mortals can only see it in daylight or when highlighted by a wash of lava, into which the dragon frequently plunges. It seems to prefer to hunt nocturnally and moves less boldly than Ashnephos, who seems more inclined to tangle with the giants individually than to risk its own destruction against a large number of them. As with any child of Toruk, Charsaug likely has deadly fiery breath, but Chilon had little evidence of this and indicated the dragon preferred slaying by claw and fang. On several occasions, records describe Charsaug capturing a giant in its claws, stealing him away, and delighting in his struggle until the

dragon could plummet down into a volcano, grasping the giant until the creature melted away.

## Combat

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Charsaug does not often utilize his breath weapon, but can expel an acidic spray which ignites in the air. This is a 100-foot line, damage 20d10 fire, Reflex save (DC 42) for half. The save DC is Constitution-based. Anything this spray hits suffers an additional 10d10 points of acid damage the following round. A full round spent immersed in water prevents this secondary damage.

**Burnination (Su):** Charsaug often immerses himself in a volcano, allowing lava to seep into his scales and coat his wings, and the heat of his body keeps this lava molten. As a standard action he can shiver this lava outward in a 70-foot-radius aura, inflicting 3d10 fire damage against any creature which fails a Reflex save (DC 42).

**Lava Bath (Ex):** Any metal or wood weapon or item striking Charsaug's body must make a Fortitude save (DC 42) or dissolve. Items immune to fire are immune to this effect.

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** 360-foot radius, HD 43 or less, Will save (DC 40) negates.

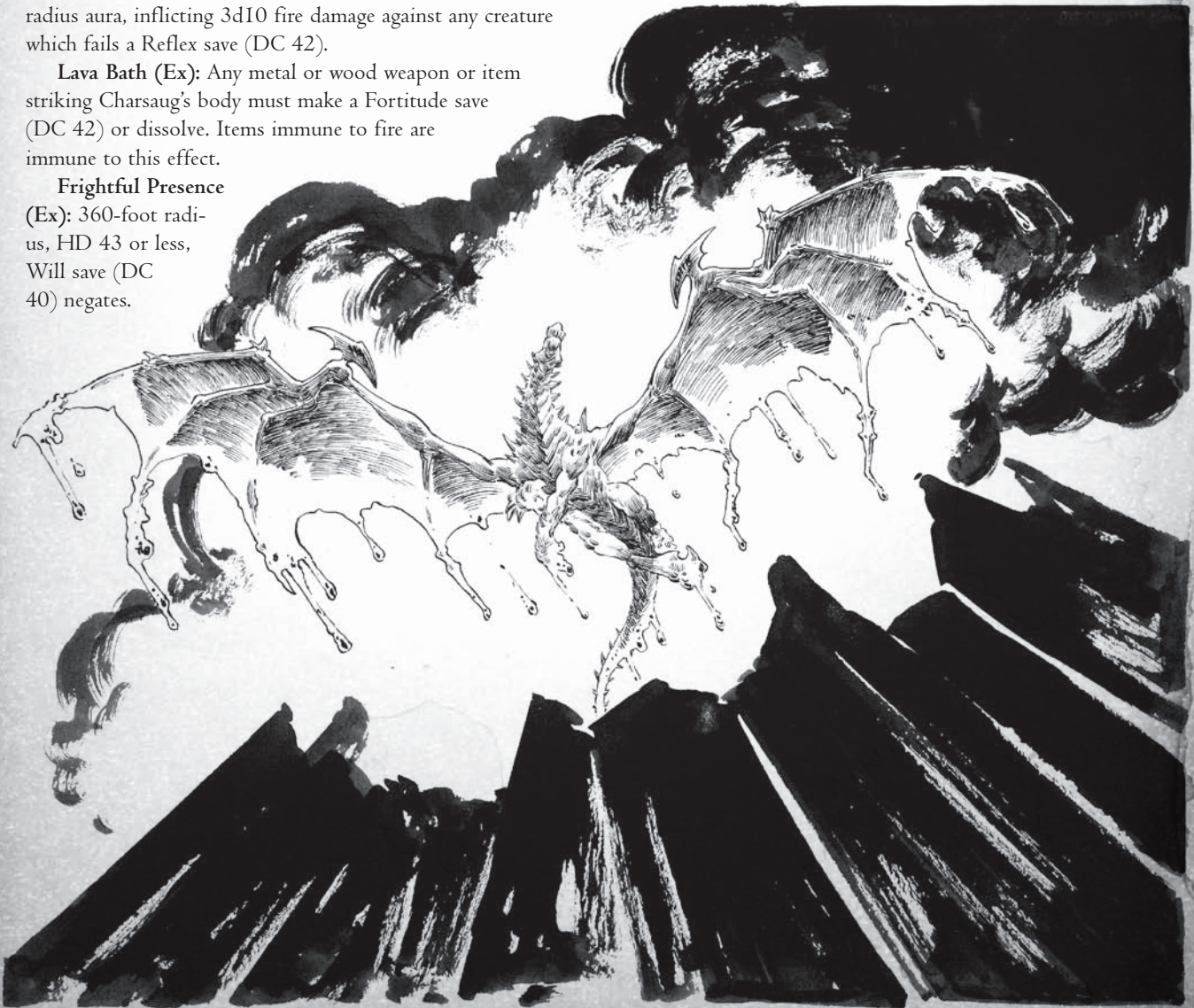
## Legends & Lore (Skorne)

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** None

**Rare:** A pair of dragons supposedly lairs deep in the Shroudwall Mountains. One of these occasionally prowls among the ruins that line the Abyss and elsewhere, searching for something.

**Obscure:** Charsaug may be searching for a tool it can use against Ashnephos when their alliance eventually crumbles, as each knows it inevitably will.



# Dragonspawn (incognitus)



## Carnivean

Always NE Huge Magical Beast CR 12  
**Hit Dice:** 13d10+104 (175 hp)  
**Immunities/Resist:** Damage reduction 8/magic, death attacks, disease, fear, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, resistance to cold 10, sleep effects, spell resistance 16  
**Senses:** Blindsight 80 ft., Listen +8, Spot +8, scent  
**Initiative:** +2  
**Speed:** 50 ft. (8 squares), Climb 20 ft.  
**Armor Class:** 21, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +11 natural)  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +13/+29  
**Attack:** Bite +19 melee (3d8+8/19-20)  
**Full Attack:** Bite +19 melee (3d8+8/19-20) and 2 claws +17 melee (2d8+4)  
**Special Attacks:** Breath weapon (6d10), improved grab (bite), swallow whole  
**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.  
**Special Qualities:** Fast healing 6, soulless, unnatural aura  
**Saves:** Fort +16, Ref +10, Will +6  
**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 14, Con 26, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 6  
**Skills:** Climb +16, Listen +8, Jump +12, Spot +8  
**Feats:** Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (bite), Power Attack, Multiattack  
**Environment:** Any  
**Organization:** Solitary  
**Advancement:** 13-22 (Huge); 23-33 HD (Gargantuan)

## Harrier

Always N Small Magical Beast CR 5  
**Hit Dice:** 8d10+24 (68 hp)  
**Immunities/Resist:** Death attacks, disease, fear, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, resistance to cold 10, sleep effects  
**Senses:** Blindsight 80 ft., Listen +15, Spot +14  
**Initiative:** +3  
**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), Fly 40 ft. (average)  
**Armor Class:** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural)  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +8/+7  
**Attack:** Talons +12 melee (1d8+3)  
**Full Attack:** Talons +12 melee (1d8+3) and bite +10 melee (2d6+1)  
**Special Attacks:** Savage flyby  
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Fast healing 4, soulless, unnatural aura  
**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +5  
**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 16, Cha 6  
**Skills:** Listen +15, Spot +14  
**Feats:** Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack  
**Environment:** Any  
**Organization:** Flock (2-5)  
**Advancement:** 9-14 HD (Small); 15-20 HD (Medium)

## Nephilim

Always NE Large Monstrous Humanoid CR 9  
**Hit Dice:** 12d8+48 (96hp)  
**Immunities/Resist:** Damage reduction 10/magic, death attacks, disease, fear, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, resistance to cold 10, sleep effects  
**Senses:** Blindsight 120 ft., Listen +31\*, Spot +30\*  
**Initiative:** +5  
**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), or glide 50 ft. (10 squares)  
**Armor Class:** 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural)  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +12/+23  
**Attack:** Masterwork large greatsword +21 melee (3d6+12/17-20) or bite +18 melee (2d8+10)  
**Full Attack:** Masterwork large greatsword +21/+16/+11 melee (3d6+12/17-20) or 2 claws +18 melee (2d6+7) and bite +13 melee (1d8+10)  
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.  
**Special Qualities:** Fast healing 6, glide, souled, telepathy, unnatural aura  
**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +14  
**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 22, Cha 12  
**Skills:** Jump +17, Listen +31, Spot +30  
**Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Greater Weapon Focus<sup>B</sup> (greatsword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus<sup>B</sup> (greatsword), Weapon Specialization<sup>B</sup> (greatsword)  
**Environment:** Any  
**Organization:** Solitary or gang (2-4)  
**Advancement:** By character class (fighter, barbarian, or ranger)





## Dragonspawn (incognitus)

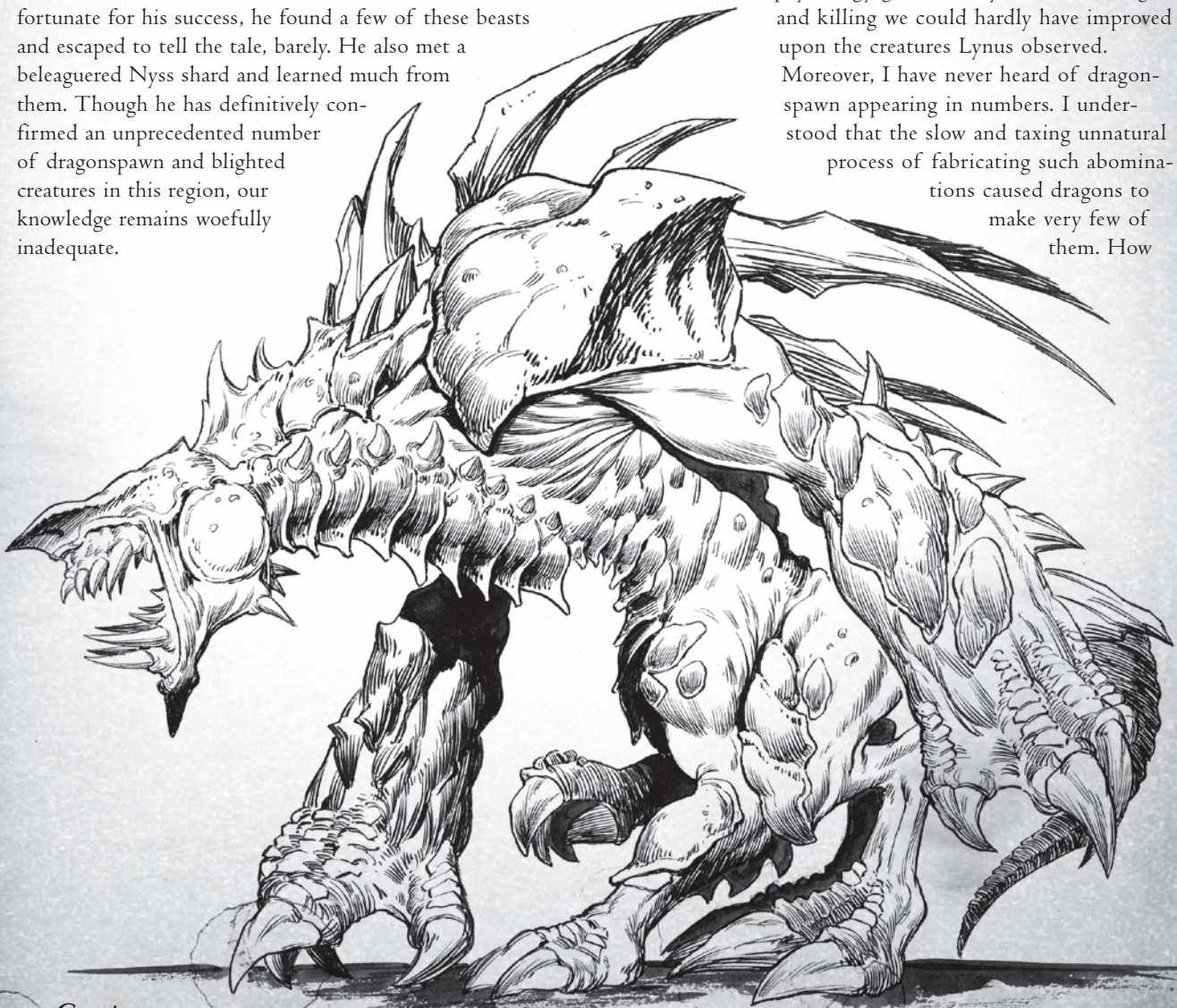
Only rarely does one in my profession witness the sudden emergence of an entirely new variant of a species. While exciting, I cannot view this event with purely scientific detachment as it involves dragons. Creatures that may represent a new and terrible danger move in the north of Khador and the frozen mountains beyond that rugged land. Though I cannot yet claim we have a perfect understanding, I have learned enough for concern. If not for my capture in the east I would have led an expedition to investigate this situation. As I could not do this, we might have missed the opportunity to learn much of this threat in its earlier stages.

Fortunately for us all, my former student and now associate professor Lynus Wesselbaum bravely ventured north to learn what he could. While he didn't consider himself fortunate for his success, he found a few of these beasts and escaped to tell the tale, barely. He also met a beleaguered Nyss shard and learned much from them. Though he has definitively confirmed an unprecedented number of dragonspawn and blighted creatures in this region, our knowledge remains woefully inadequate.

Lynus' description of the creatures he saw—eyeless, very draconic in appearance, with enormous fanged maws, black curved claws, and tails ending in barbed scythe-like tips—led me to classify them as dragonspawn. I have seen dragonspawn before, particularly their corpses, including those in the Wyrmwall Mountains I believe created by the blood of Blighterghast. The spawn I studied, however, were malformed and misshapen, like many things associated with dragonblight. No two had the same shape. Lynus saw something wholly different. These creatures displayed terrifying unity of form and symmetry. His account leads me to suspect—ominous as it sounds—that a singular mind shaped these things for some larger purpose. A naturalist like myself tasked with equipping the perfect predators with

physiology geared solely toward hunting and killing we could hardly have improved upon the creatures Lynus observed.

Moreover, I have never heard of dragonspawn appearing in numbers. I understood that the slow and taxing unnatural process of fabricating such abominations caused dragons to make very few of them. How



*Carnivean*



## Dragonspawn (incognitus)



*Harrier*

then to explain what Lynus saw or the tales he heard from the ragged Nyss survivors he encountered?

In an attempt at systematic science I have avoided fully facing the larger facts Lynus presented to me: that the Nyss as a people have suffered some tremendous upheaval. Given that his reports originated from a dubious source, possibly only a single shard beset by dragonspawn, I will refrain from extrapolating too far. I find even this fact ominous, as I rank the Nyss among the most skilled hunters and combatants I have encountered in my travels. I have heard from certain members of Cygnar's military that Khador may have repurposed border guards from the war to fight this menace. Clearly something unusual is happening which could affect entire ecologies in the frozen north. As I have concluded that these creatures indeed constitute distinct types of a related "species" of dragonspawn, I will approach them in this fashion.

I must admit I find this concept both loathsome and fascinating, and I feel compelled to unravel this mystery. A dangerous habit for a naturalist, yet with dragons I have often found clues in unlikely places, as these ancient, immortal creatures rarely pass the ages without leaving

footprints. I have consequently learned more about dragons in general even as I studied these fascinating illustrations Lynus brought back: spawn with wings clearly designed to fly, others which hunt in a pack like wolves, and—perhaps most ominously—a bipedal dragonspawn wielding a blade of unusual and unfamiliar design. Refugee Nyss in Lynus' reports describe this last species with particular horror while making a gesture invoking their god as if to ward off evil. Add to this the fact that many of the Nyss themselves display some blighted characteristics, including possible insanity, and the evidence of draconic catastrophe mounts significantly.

Likely culprits at first included Halfaug and Scaefang, both dragons reported as plaguing the north. Halfaug in particular menaced the Nyss in previous ages, and they named it Glyssingfor. Something in this theory struck me awry, however. Why would an old enemy not have unleashed these weapons before? The speed with which this threat arose, perhaps its most remarkable and puzzling attribute, leads me to suspect a new threat.

Edrea gave me the seed that has germinated into my current theory. Knowing my fascination with dragons, and entirely unrelated to Lynus' expedition and investigation, Edrea sent me a letter containing an abridged version of the Iosan tale of the dragon Ethrunbal's obliteration of the elven city called Issyrah centuries ago. I found it fascinating indeed, for I had found references to this dragon before in connection to the lost and dark empire of Morrdh.

The information sent by Edrea cast these hints and rumors in a new light, particularly the Iosan account of what happened to Ethrunbal's heartstone after they destroyed the dragon's body. Iosan heroes carried this imperishable stone far from their kingdom. From previous research of the Wyrmsaga Cycle I know only great cold has a chance of slowing the rebirth of a dragon. Could this latest plague of dragonspawn stem from the rebirth of an athanc thought dormant and destroyed? It seems the most likely explanation. I do not know what value such knowledge has, and I fear learning the source of these creatures brings cold comfort to the Nyss or others confronting this menace.

### Combat

While every dragonspawn differs, dragonspawn of Everblight, aka Ethrunbal, all possess the following special qualities unless noted otherwise.

**Blindsight (Ex):** Though eyeless, dragonspawn have blindsight out to 80 feet.

**Fast Healing (Su):** Dragonspawn possess fast healing equal to a quarter of their hit dice.

## Dragonspawn (incognitus)

**Immunities (Ex):** Everblight dragonspawn are immune to death effects, disease, fear, magic jar, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, sleep effects, soul bind, or trap the soul.

**Resistance to Cold 10 (Ex):** Everblight dragonspawn have resistance to cold 10.

**Soulless (Ex):** Dragonspawn cannot be returned to life by any means short of a *miracle* or *wish*.

**Unnatural Aura (Su):** Wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of an Everblight dragonspawn at a distance of 300 feet. They will not approach nearer than that and panic if forced closer; they remain panicked as long as they remain within that range.

### Carnivean

Ethrunbal created carniveans for sheer destructive ability and imbued the desire to charge forward and shred their enemies in their minds and bodies. If left to their own devices, they tear apart anything that gets in their way.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** 40-foot cone of fire, usable once every 1d4 rounds, 1d10 points of fire damage per 2 hit die of the carnivean (6d10, for the carnivean presented here), Reflex save (DC 24) for half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a carnivean must hit a creature at least one size smaller than itself with its bite attack. It can then

attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the opponent in the following round.

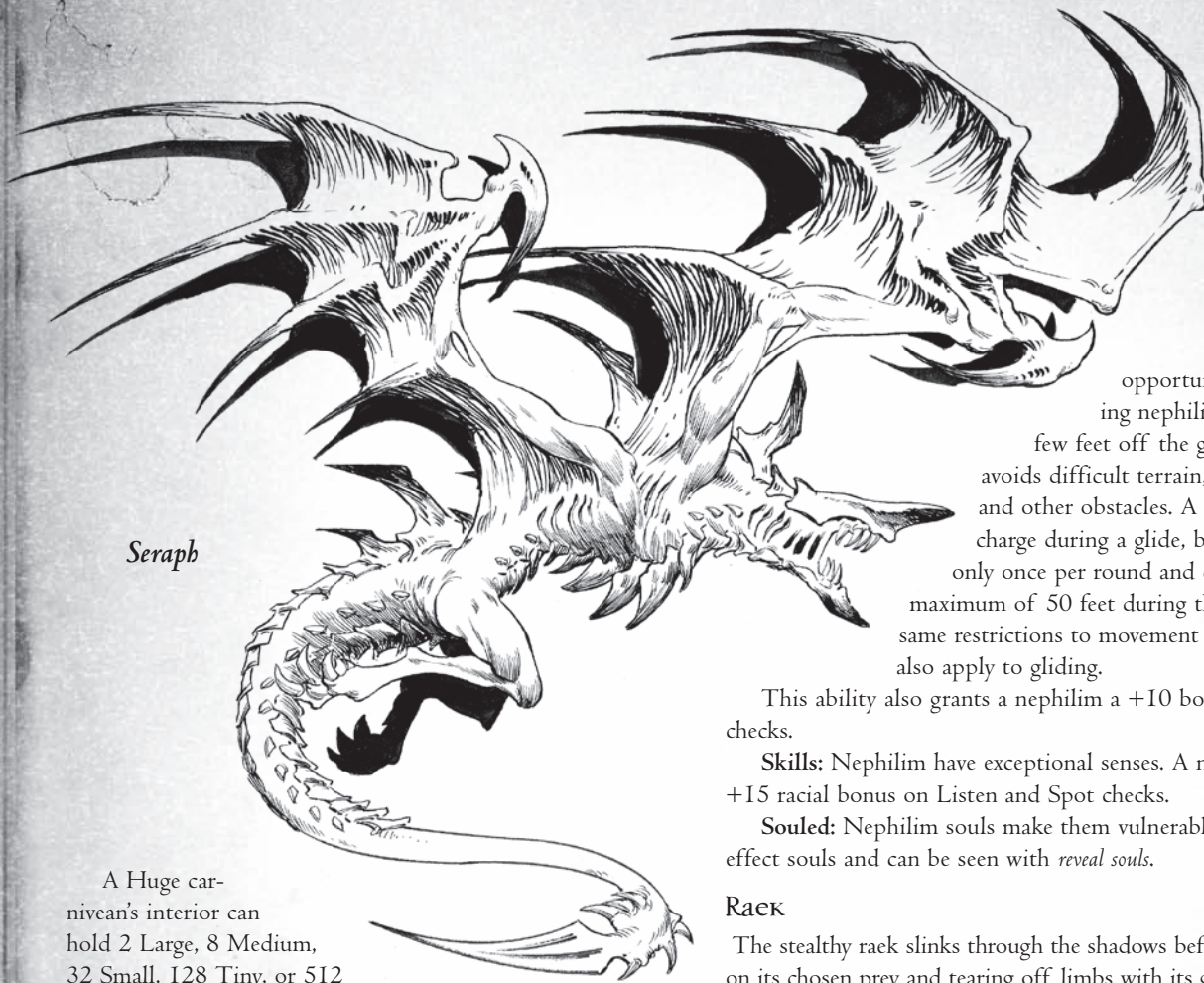
**Swallow Whole (Ex):** A carnivean can try to swallow a grabbed opponent by making a successful grapple check. Once inside the creature, the opponent takes 2d6 points of acid damage per round.

A swallowed creature can climb out of the creature's gullet with a successful grapple check. This returns it to the carnivean's maw, and must make another successful grapple check to escape. A swallowed creature can also cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the carnivean's interior (AC 15). Once the creature exits, the carnivean's regenerative capacity closes the hole. Another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.



*Nephilim*

# Dragonspawn (incognitus)



Seraph

A Huge carnivore's interior can hold 2 Large, 8 Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny, or 512 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

## Harrier

Harriers attack from the air with tearing claws and ripping teeth and prefer to hit and run. When directed at a specific target, or a powerful enemy, they concentrate and continue their attacks mercilessly.

**Savage Flyby (Ex):** When a harrier makes a flyby attack, or when it makes a flying charge, it can make a full attack in addition to its movement.

**Skills:** Harriers have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

## Nephilim

Unlike most dragonspawn, nephilim actually have souls, which gives them stronger minds, a better sense of self, and limited decision making capability.

**Glide (Su):** Though nephilim have tiny wings, they cannot fly and may only glide for short distances as a supernatural process. The nephilim may move up to 50 feet in a straight line as a move action that does not provoke attacks of

opportunity. A gliding nephilim travels a few feet off the ground and so avoids difficult terrain, certain traps, and other obstacles. A nephilim can charge during a glide, but it can glide only once per round and can move a maximum of 50 feet during the glide. The same restrictions to movement while charging also apply to gliding.

This ability also grants a nephilim a +10 bonus on Jump checks.

**Skills:** Nephilim have exceptional senses. A nephilim has a +15 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

**Souled:** Nephilim souls make them vulnerable to spells that effect souls and can be seen with *reveal souls*.

## Raek

The stealthy raek slinks through the shadows before pouncing on its chosen prey and tearing off limbs with its great jaws.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a raek charges, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

**Rake (Ex):** Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d8+3

**Stalk Prey (Su):** A raek focuses on its target to an uncanny extent and reacts with supernatural swiftness to the target's actions.

At any time during an encounter, a raek can designate a specific opponent as its prey. During its prey's turn, the raek may take a single move action or standard action at any time, as a free action, in addition to attacks of opportunity the opponent may provoke.

The raek may choose a different enemy to be its prey as a free action on its turn.

**Tail Strike (Ex):** Raeks use their jaws to hold opponents fast for an instant while its tail snakes forward to strike. If a raek makes a full attack and hits with its bite attack, its tail attack hits automatically, dealing 2d6+9 points of damage.

**Blood Scent (Su):** If a raek kills a creature, it immediately gains the scent of all creatures related directly to the victim by

## Dragonspawn (incognitus)



### Raek

Always NE Medium Magical Beast CR 9
Hit Dice: 9d10+27 (76 hp)
Immunities/Resist: Damage reduction 5/magic, death attacks, disease, fear, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, sleep effects, resistance to cold 10, spell resistance 20
Senses: Blindsight 80 ft., Listen +5, Spot +5, improved scent
Initiative: +5
Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class: 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +6 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+15
Attack: Bite +15 melee (2d8+6/19–20)
Full Attack: Bite +15 melee (2d8+6/19–20) and two claws +13 melee (1d8+3) and tail +13 melee (2d6+9)
Special Attacks: Pounce, rake 1d8+3, stalk prey, tail strike
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Blood scent, blurring speed, fast healing 4, improved scent, soulless, unnatural aura
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +8
Abilities: Str 23, Dex 21, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 20, Cha 10
Skills: Hide +17, Jump +16, Listen +5, Move Silently +17, Spot, +5, Survival +5*
Feats: Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack, Stealthy
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary or pair
Advancement: 10–15 HD (Medium); 16–21 HD (Large)

blood (parents, children, and siblings). If the raek detects this scent anywhere, it recognizes the scent as a relative of the slain creature and will stalk this new prey if possible.

**Blurring Speed (Su):** Raeks alternate between complete stillness and bursts of speed so fast their forms blur. If a raek moves at least 10 feet during its turn, it gains concealment (20% miss chance) for 1 round.

**Improved Scent (Ex):** Double the ranges at which a raek detects creatures with scent.

**Skills:** A raek has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks, a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

### Seraph

Always NE Large Magical Beast CR 9
Hit Dice: 11d10+44 (104)
Immunities/Resist: Damage reduction 5/magic, death attacks, disease, fear, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, resistance to cold 10, sleep effects, spell resistance 14
Senses: Blindsight 80 ft., Listen +8, Spot +8
Initiative: +6
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), Fly 60 ft. (good)
Armor Class: 21, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (–1 size, +6 Dex, +6 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple: +11/+19
Attack: Tail +14 melee (2d8+4 plus poison) or breath weapon +16 ranged touch (special)
Full Attack: Tail +14 melee (2d8+4 plus poison) and bite +12 melee (2d6+2) and 2 talons (1d6+2) or breath weapon +16 ranged touch (special)
Special Attacks: Breath weapon, poison
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with tail)
Special Qualities: Airborne grace, distortion, fast healing 5, soulless, unnatural aura
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +13, Will +4
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 22, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills: Listen +8, Spot +8
Feats: Flyby Attack, Multiattack, Hover, Wingover
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary or pair
Advancement: 12–17 HD (Large); 18–23 HD (Huge)

### Seraph

Seraphim are exceptionally graceful fliers and utilize their terrible breath weapon to kill their prey from a distance. Their poisoned tail stinger makes them formidable in close combat as well.

**Airborne Grace (Ex):** Seraphim are exceptionally nimble in the air. A seraph gains a +4 dodge bonus to AC against ranged attacks while flying.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** A seraph's breath weapon is a gout of superheated blight, flame, and incendiary ash. The seraph does not need to target a grid intersection and makes a normal ranged touch attack to hit its target; if it misses, determine deviation normally.

# Dragonspawn (incognitus)



## Teraph

Always NE Large Magical Beast CR 8

**Hit Dice:** 10d10+30 (85 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Damage reduction 5/magic, death attacks, disease, fear, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, resistance to cold 10, sleep effects

**Senses:** Blindsight 80 ft., Listen +12, Spot +11, tremorsense 60 ft.

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), Burrow 20 ft.

**Armor Class:** 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (–1 size, +10 natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +10/+19

**Attack:** Tail +14 melee (2d8+5 plus poison) or breath +9 ranged touch (special)

**Full Attack:** Tail +14 melee (2d8+5 plus poison) and bite +12 melee (2d6+2) or breath +9 ranged touch (special)

**Special Attacks:** Breath weapon, burst of speed, poison, sneak attack +2d6

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with tail)

**Special Qualities:** Dig in, fast healing 5, soulless, unnatural aura

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 11, Con 16,

Int 4, Wis 16, Cha 10

**Skills:** Listen +12, Spot +11

**Feats:** Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

**Environment:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary

**Advancement:** 11–16 HD (Large); 17–22 HD (huge)



The stream hits the targeted square (or individual) and all adjacent squares (including diagonals). It deals 1d8 points of fire damage for every 2 hit dice of the seraph (5d8 in the case of the seraph presented here), Reflex save (DC 19) for half. If the seraph hit its target, that creature cannot attempt to save.

The seraph can use its breath weapon once every 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Poison (Ex):** Tail, Fortitude save (DC 19), initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Distortion (Su):** A seraph's wings trail a blighted stream in flight, distorting the air around it in an unnatural ripple effect

and making the seraph difficult to see. While it flies, it has concealment against ranged attacks (20% miss chance).

## Teraph

Teraphim prefer to bury themselves 5 feet underground, and since they do not breathe, eat, or drink, they can remain buried indefinitely. Teraphim sense enemies with their tremorsense and burst forth with blazing speed to carve opponents into bloody chunks with their poisonous tails.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** A teraph's breath weapon is a gob of superheated blight and ash that explodes on impact. The teraph targets a grid intersection with the attack, just as with any other grenade-like weapon; determine deviation normally. The attack then explodes in a 20-foot-radius burst. All caught within it take 1d8 points of fire damage for every 2 hit dice of the teraph (5d8 in the case of the teraph presented here), Reflex save (DC 18) for half.

The teraph can use its breath weapon once every 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Burst of Speed (Ex):** Once per hour, a teraph can send its metabolism into overdrive as a free action. The teraph can do so even on other creatures' turns.

For the round in which the teraph uses this ability, its initiative count increases by +8, its base speed increases by +10 feet, and it can make a full attack action after taking a move action.

Beginning the round after using burst of speed, a teraph is fatigued for 1d4 rounds.

**Poison (Ex):** Tail, Fortitude save (DC 20), initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** Teraphim are instinctively skilled at taking advantage of surprised or distracted opponents. This ability functions like the rogue ability of the same name.

**Dig In (Ex):** A teraph can dig a hasty bulwark in the ground as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. While within this bulwark, it gains cover (+4 AC) against opponents on three sides.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** A number of eyeless, draconic beasts have lately appeared in the far north. Many types exist, all exceedingly dangerous.

**Rare:** These creatures resemble dragonspawn, but they differ from those seen elsewhere by appearing in greater numbers and apparently belonging to distinct "species" with separate strengths and tactics. Rumors say these creatures have devastated the Nyss.

## Dragonspawn (incognitus)

**Obscure:** The dragonspawn all originate from an as-yet-unknown dragon, which has also blighted and taken control of many Nyss tribes and ogrun of the northern mountains. Some senior minions of the dragon can control the dragonspawn in battle, and all these servants work towards some larger goal. These creatures have begun to move south.

### HOOKS

The scholar Nikolai Verikov takes stories of these dragonspawn seriously. Too weak to travel, he hires a group of adventurers to bring back reports and bits of flesh from at least four different types. Nikolai has more than just an academic stake in this research. The creatures threaten Khador, and he has concocted a dangerous plan to study the specimens to discover if he can harness the dark power that controls the dragonspawn.

A shard of Nyss and a kriel of trollkin have been at war over territory since the fleeing of the Nyss from their homeland. The appearance of the PCs can break the stalemate between the tribes, but only if the PCs can get the Nyss and trollkin to fight together will they survive the upcoming assault by voracious dragonspawn.

The lone and wild-eyed survivor of a destroyed Nyss shard claims he wants the PCs to help rescue his people. In actuality he is possessed of madness and instead seeks the last known lair of the dragon Glyssingfor. He hopes to rouse the creature to take revenge on the dragonspawn that ravaged his people.



*Teraph*

# Drake, Deep



Usually NE Huge Magical Beast CR 13

**Hit Dice:** 15d10+90 HD (178 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Electricity

**Senses:** Abyss vision 80 ft., low-light vision;  
Listen +11, Spot +11

**Initiative:** +12

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft.

**Armor Class:** 28, touch 16, flat-footed 20 (-2 Size,  
+8 Dex, +12 Natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +15/+28

**Attack:** Claw +18 melee (1d8+5)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +18 melee (1d8+5) and  
bite +13 melee (2d6+2)

**Special Attacks:** Bellow, improved grab, static breath

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Slow fall, spell-like abilities, squeeze

**Saves:** Fort +15, Reflex +19, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 29, Dex 15, Con 22,  
Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 15

**Skills:** Climb +13, Hide +0, Listen +11,  
Move Silently +14, Spot +11

**Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Blind-Fight, Improved  
Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack

**Environment:** Any underground

**Organization:** Solitary

**Advancement:** 16–32 (Huge)

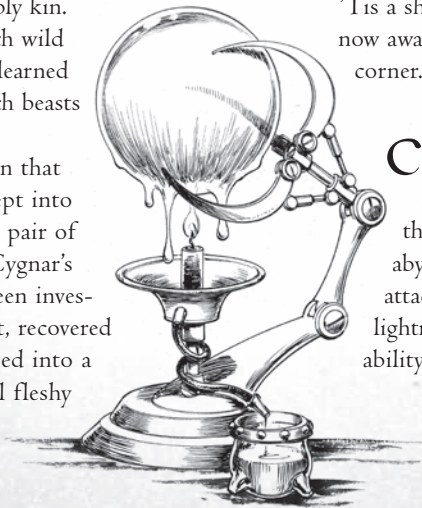
The fecundity and variety of life among the creatures of Immoren never fails to amaze me; it lends credence to my belief that whatever deity claims responsibility for populating the land with beasts once had a great deal of time on its hands. In point, drakes. While flies, beetles, and all manner of insects might bear slight differences to distinguishing them each as unique, nearly all remain recognizable as the same family. A borokuhn minefly and a deadsands dust lurker are unmistakably kin. From fog to frost, however, drakes bear such wild differences in form and ability that even a learned scholar might hold descriptions of two such beasts and never imagine them kindred.

The semi-complete deep drake skeleton that once hung in my study—and now lies swept into a corner after the unfortunate escape of a pair of razorbats—exemplifies this. A group of Cygnar's finest out of Fort Whiterock, who had been investigating the disappearance of a local scout, recovered the remains for me. Their rescue had turned into a monster hunt when they discovered several fleshy bits of their lost friend. Heading deeper into the mountains, as the story goes, the hunters found themselves harried by what they called a "big and bugger-fast cave lizard," that seemed most adept at attacking at night and from craggy hollows none would have expected. They finally cornered the beast in a narrow chasm and employed a sizable charge of explosives to finish it off. Consequently, the body I received had extensive damage.

Piecing together the mysterious skeleton consumed Lynus' every free moment for some weeks, but when a likely form

finally took shape I admit it resembled little in my experience. Lithe and with bones more flexible than most avians, it vexed me for some hours before, amid the preserved and cataloged entrails, I found an unusual gas bladder not unlike the mist-spewing organ possessed by a fog drake. The similarities proved numerous after that realization, and I set Lynus to cataloging and comparing the two seemingly dissimilar and territorially disparate creatures.

'Tis a shame, though. All my student's hard work now awaits an appropriately sized dust pan in my corner.



## Combat

Degenerate predators capable of scaling the sheerest walls and seeing in the darkest abysses, deep drakes constantly hunger and attack anything that moves. Capable of spewing lightning and caustic fog, these hunters use their ability to climb and squeeze into unexpected places to attack from above and catch victims off guard. If a battle goes poorly for a deep drake, it typically loses its hold on a cavern wall and plunges harmlessly down the nearest pit.

**Bellow (Su):** A deep drake can release a horrible roar. Anyone caught in the 40-foot cone must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or be knocked back 5 feet and take 1d6 points of damage. If used underground or indoors, creatures taking damage from the bellow must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or become deafened for 2d4 rounds. Both saves' DC is Constitution-based.

## Drake, Deep

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the deep drake must hit with a claw attack. It then pulls its prey into its powerful jaws for a bite attack.

**Static Breath (Su):** Three times per day a deep drake can expel one of two types of breath, a line of electricity or a 60-foot cone of irritating, salty vapor.

A deep drake can expel a 100-foot-long line of electricity that deals 8d8 electrical damage. Reflex save (DC 23) for half damage.

Alternately, a deep drake can expel a cone of irritating vapor which blocks sight as the spell *obscuring mist*. Those within or who enter the cone must make a Fortitude save (DC 23) or be blinded for 2d4 rounds. Those who succeed take no penalty and are immune to that cloud's effects. Additionally, this cloud of vapor is highly conductive. Any sort of electricity—whether natural, from a spell, or from a deep drake's other breath weapon—entering a square filled with this breath effects all creatures within the area of the irritating vapor. The dispersed electricity is weaker than a normal strike, dealing only half damage with a DC half normal. For example, a deep drake breathing electricity into its lingering cloud of vapor would cause all creatures within to take 4d8 electrical damage with a Fortitude save (DC 11) for half.

This vapor lingers for 5 minutes. A moderate wind (11+ mph), such as from a *gust of wind* spell, disperses the vapor in 4 rounds. A strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the vapor in 1 round.

**Abys Vision (Su):** A deep drake's eyes are complex receptors no longer dependant on light. Capable of sensing minute shifts in the surrounding environment, its eyes perceive air displacement, micro-changes in air density, and—to a lesser degree—heat. Thus, deep drakes have all the benefits of darkvision out to 60 feet, and cannot suffer magically blindness. This sight also allows deep drakes to see through magical trickery, making them immune to all illusion spells with the figment descriptor.



**Slow Fall (Ex):** A deep drake within 10 feet of a wall can use it to slow its descent. A falling deep drake takes damage as if it fell 90 feet less than it actually did.

**Squeeze (Ex):** Emaciated and nearly skeletal, deep drakes can fit into places other creatures of their size cannot. Deep drakes take no penalties to movement, attack rolls, or AC when in an area only 10 feet wide.



# Drake, Frost



Usually NE Huge Magical Beast (Cold) CR 11

Hit Dice: 16d10+64 (156 hp)

Immunities/Resist: Cold

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., beat vision, Listen +8,  
Spot +7, low-light vision

Initiative: +2

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), Burrow 20 ft.,  
Climb 20 ft., Swim 30 ft.

Armor Class: 25, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (-2 size,  
+2 Dex, +15 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +16/+31

Attack: Claw +21 melee (1d8+7)

Full Attack: 2 claws +21 melee (1d8+7) and  
bite +16 melee (2d6+3)

Special Attacks: Bellow, sleet breath, improved grab

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Amphibious, icewalking, vulnerability to fire

Saves: Fort +14, Reflex +14, Will +8

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 15, Con 18,

Int 4, Wis 16, Cha 11

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +5\*, Jump +13,  
Listen +8, Spot +7

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge,  
Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Stealthy

Environment: Cold mountains

Organization: Solitary or clutch (2-4)

Advancement: 17-24 (Huge), 25-32 (Gargantuan)



I place little value on the writings of armchair naturalists who, lacking proper field experience, often levy absurd theories from the comforts of marble-tiled libraries and fire-warmed studies. One ludicrous remark espoused by the supposedly esteemed Professor Remston Lochlan Ives of Ceryl University asserted that, in the case of the frost drake, “the severity of temperature and harshness of its glacial environs prove directly responsible for the creature’s aggressive demeanor.” While tempted to pen a public dismissal of Prof. Ives’ “the cold makes it mean” theory I find myself, to my distaste, partially agreeing.

Rathlok, an accomplished trollkin tracker of the Scarsfell Forest and my companion on many expeditions, regularly recounted his encounter with a frost drake while hunting elk with several young hunters of his kriel. The hunt, according to Rathlok, had been an epic success largely due to his efforts, but had taken the group far from home. While encamped beneath the cover of a rocky, ice-sheathed overhang, the trollkin celebrated their success—partaking of an embarrassing amount of rimegut—long into the night.

Although Rathlok’s tale blurs in its telling, the noise of the trollkin and smell of elk blood attracted a young frost drake. Its long, sharply pointed claws gave it purchase on the icy ceiling above the camp as it crept down on the hunters from above. It blasted the trollkin with its blizzard-like breath and sent them scattering and sliding across ground now slick with ice. Before the young hunters could collect their wits and weapons the beast had snatched half the hunt’s takings and made off into the icy dark. Although furious, the resulting antics of twelve nearly three hundred pound, wildly drunk trollkin on icy footing apparently proved distracting enough to quell all thought of pursuit.

## Combat

Deadly predators of icy peaks and mountain passes, frost drakes are masters of frozen ambushes. Hiding in banks of snow, amid jagged icicles in ice caves, or below frozen lakes, these drakes make cunning use of their mobility to strike from unexpected vantages. While their heat vision and icy breath typically give them significant advantages, frost drakes that find themselves outmatched often use their piercing bellow to bring down avalanches of ice and snow, trusting their strength and resilience to allow them to escape the arctic crush.

**Amphibious (Ex):** Frost drakes can breathe equally well in air or water.

**Bellow (Su):** A frost drake can release a horrible roar. Anyone caught in this 40-foot cone must make a Reflex save (DC 22) or be knocked back 5 feet (and prone if on icy ground) and take 1d6 points of damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Sleet Breath (Su):** Three times per day a frost drake can breathe a blast of frozen saliva and arctic cold. Any creature within this 60 cone takes 5d6 points of damage and is blinded for 1d4 rounds, Reflex save (DC 22) for half and to avoid blindness.

In addition, the breath coats the cone-shaped area with a thin layer of ice. A creature can walk within or through the area at half normal speed with a Balance check (DC 10). Failure means it can’t move in that round, while failure by 5 or more means it falls (see the Balance skill for details). This ice lasts for 1 minute in warm climes but may linger indefinitely in frigid areas.

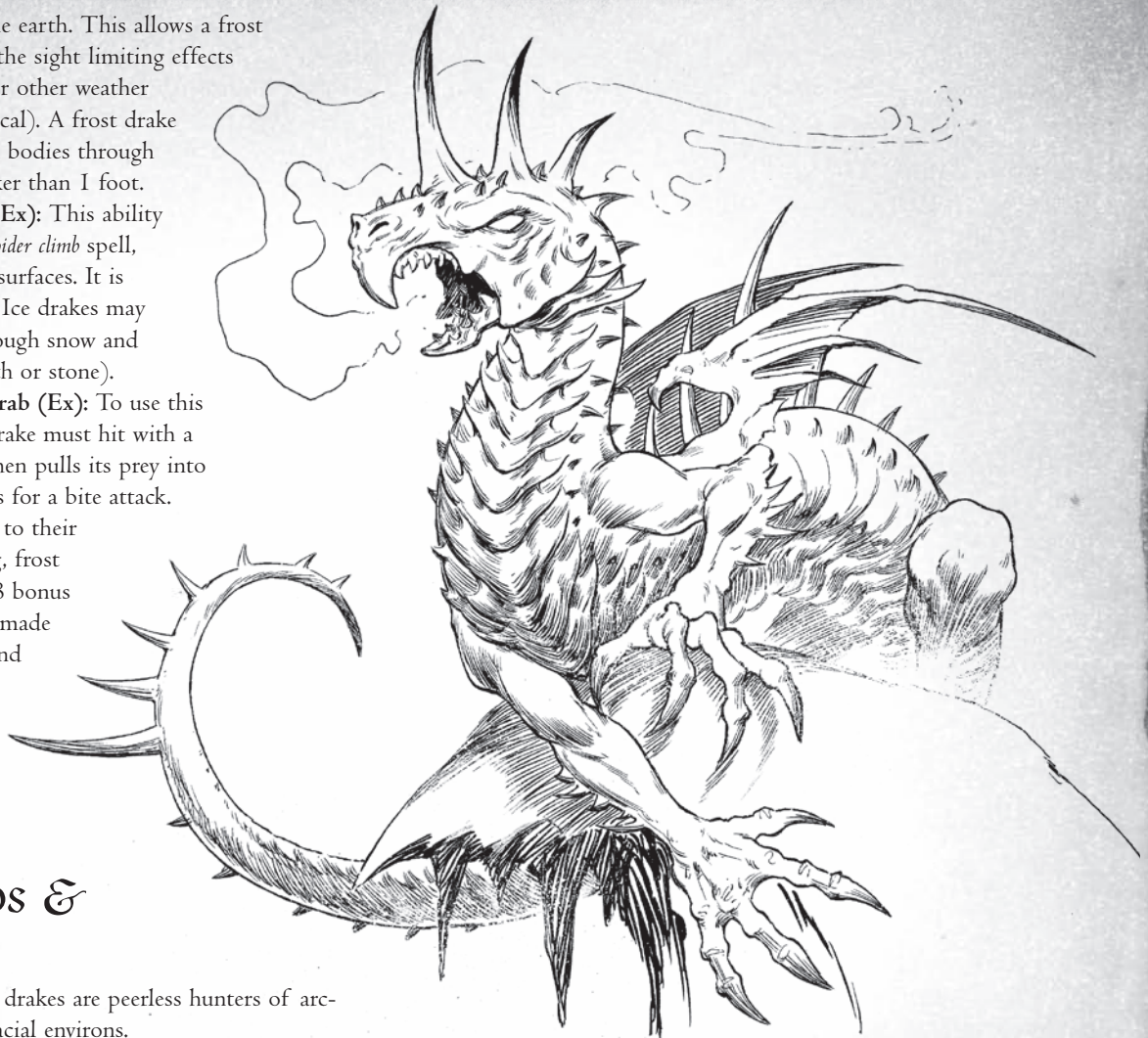
**Heat Vision (Su):** A frost drake’s incredibly heat sensitive eyes can pick out living bodies and even the residual warmth

of plants and the earth. This allows a frost drake to ignore the sight limiting effects of snow, mist, or other weather (natural or magical). A frost drake can detect warm bodies through barriers no thicker than 1 foot.

**Icewalking (Ex):** This ability works like the *spider climb* spell, but only on icy surfaces. It is always in effect. Ice drakes may also burrow through snow and ice (but not earth or stone).

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a frost drake must hit with a claw attack. It then pulls its prey into its powerful jaws for a bite attack.

**\*Skills:** Due to their wintery coloring, frost drakes gain a +8 bonus on Hide checks made in areas of ice and snow.



## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Frost drakes are peerless hunters of arctic peaks and glacial environs.

**Uncommon:** A frost drake bellow can break ice and cause avalanches as well as stun its prey.

**Rare:** Frost drakes move across ice or other slippery surfaces unimpeded. They can also unleash a blast of frigid cold that coats an area in ice.

**Obscure:** Frost drakes can see heat, allowing them to hunt hot-blooded creatures in even the densest blizzard.

## Treasure

Frost drakes have an obsessive fascination with reflective objects, and might spend hours gazing at their reflections. This attraction also extends to mirrored objects and shiny metals, and the drakes often keep several such items within their lairs. Searching a 16 to 24 HD frost drake's lair uncovers standard treasure, while the lair of a 25+ HD frost drake holds double standard treasure, mostly in armor, gems, and shiny objects d'art.

Bone grinders and anyone creating magic items related to cold, ice, or snow prize the gland at the base of the frost drake's neck that produces its frigid breath. When used to produce items such as *potions of energy resistance (cold)* or *boots of the winterlands*, a frost drake's breath gland replaces the cost of the materials normally required.

## HOOKS

Rhulfolk once worked a mine high in the Silverun Peaks said to produce diamonds of unparalleled size and purity. For reasons quietly forgotten, though, the stone lords collapsed this mine centuries ago. Hearing tales of the wealth senselessly abandoned by his ancestors, clan lord Dolhan Fortros has quietly assembled explorers from outside Rhul to find the mine and reopen it. He has sent four expeditions into the mountains thus far, though and the gigantic frost drakes that lair in the region have made sure that none have returned.

# Drake, Sea



Usually N Huge Magical Beast (Aquatic) CR 9
Hit Dice: 9d10+54 (109 hp)
Senses: Darkvision 80 ft., Listen +1, Spot +9, low-light vision
Initiative: +6
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 60 ft.
Armor Class: 24, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+26
Attack: Bite +16 melee (2d8+9/19-20)
Full Attack: Bite +16 melee (2d8+9/19-20) and 2 claws +11 melee (1d6+4)

Special Attacks: Bellow, hurricane breath, improved grab
Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.
Special Qualities: Spell-like abilities
Saves: Fort +12, Reflex +10, Will +4
Abilities: Str 29, Dex 15, Con 22, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 15
Skills: Listen +1, Spot +9, Swim +21
Feats: Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Snatch
Environment: Any aquatic
Organization: Solitary, pair, or clutch (3-6)
Advancement: 9-26 (Huge), 27-36 (Gargantuan)



I ntrigued by rumors of sea drakes hunting in Eyewall Bay and likely lairing in sea caves beneath Cullenrock, I went on a personal expedition several seasons ago to catch a glimpse of the elusive drakes in these secluded waters. Choosing a small islet near the center of the bay, I ventured out with a week's worth of supplies and a pack of empty journals.

I had rowed no more than five hundred feet from the rock-strewn coast when an eruption of foul-smelling bubbles boiled up about my only passably sea-worthy launch. While surmising that the coast hid some manner of sulfurous springs I knew nothing of—and hypothesizing that perhaps this attracted both sea drakes and cullenrock barnacles to the area—the water partially beneath my craft exploded with the glistening serpentine form of a seemingly surprised young sea drake. It made a few half-hearted snaps at me and gouged my armor with a long webbed claw. I deterred the serpentine beast with a few whacks of a sturdy oar. The creature had little fight in it, though, and soon submerged, leaving behind only a few blue-green scales and a cloud of ink.

Encouraged by my luck thus far, I reached my rocky destination and passed an eventful weeklong retreat observing the drakes, which politely only invaded my camp twice and left plentiful remains for dissection. The expedition afforded me ample time and resources to fill three journals, two on the sea drakes' fascinating hunting and social habits and a third on the surprisingly genial black cullenrock macaw.

## Combat

Sea drakes excel at knocking prey from the decks of ships and reducing hulls to worthless timbers. Their ability to unleash as blast of tornado-strength wind can easily blow an entire crew from their vessel or even scuttle smaller ships. A sea drake seek-

ing to escape can unleash a cloud of foul-smelling ink to conceal its retreat.

**Bellow (Su):** A sea drake can release a horrible roar. Anyone caught in this 40-foot cone must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or be knocked back 5 feet and take 1d6 points of damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Hurricane Breath (Su):** Three times per day a sea drake can unleash a breath of violent wind. Treat this as a gust of hurricane force wind that emanates from the sea drake's direction and lasts until its next turn. Creatures of Medium size or smaller must make Fortitude save (DC 20) or be blown away. This save DC is Constitution-based. A creature blown away is knocked prone and rolls 1d4 × 10 feet and suffers 1d4 points of non-lethal damage per 10 feet. A flying creature that is blown away is blown back 2d6 × 10 feet and takes 2d6 points of non-lethal damage due to battering and buffeting.

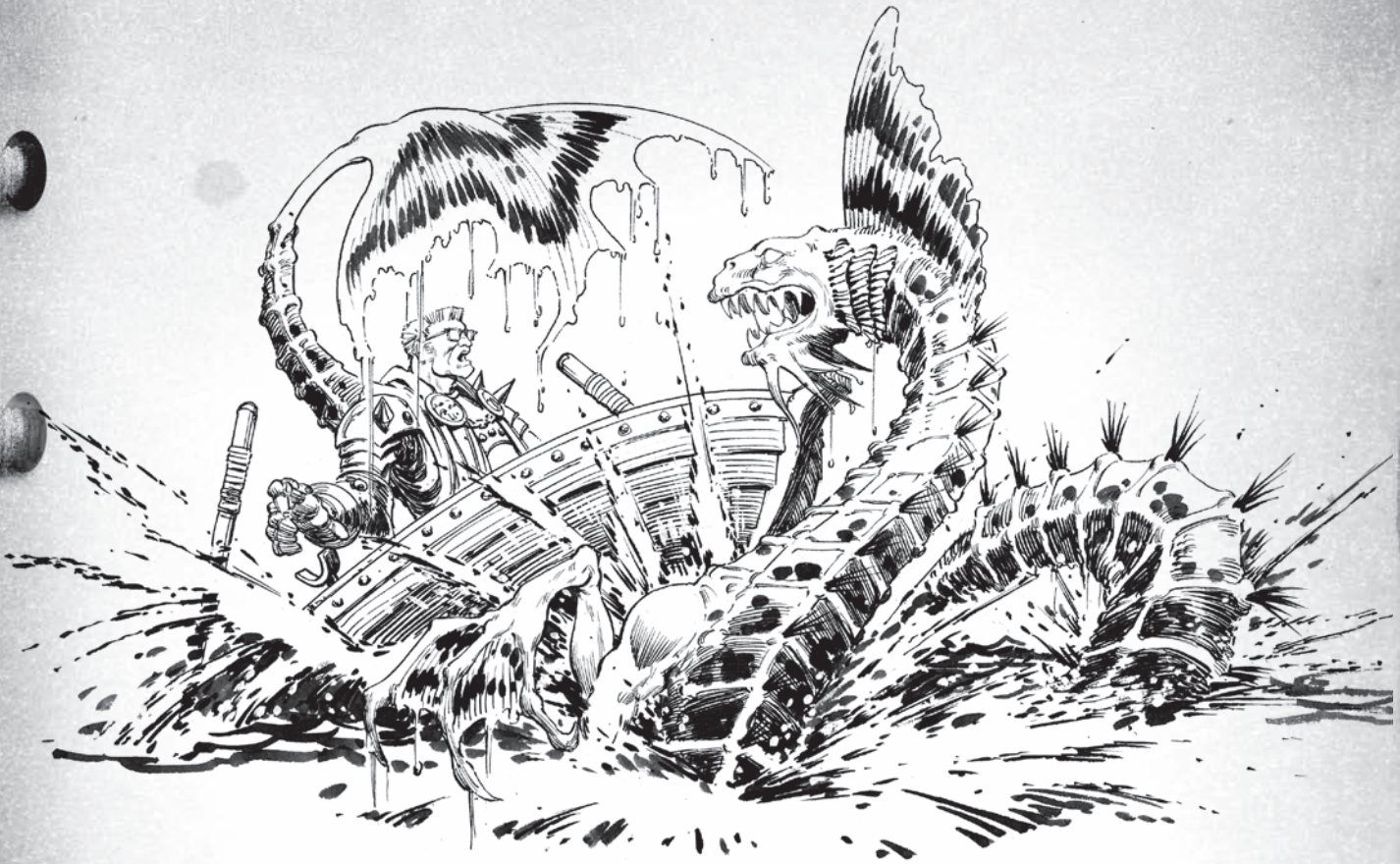
**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a sea drake needs to hit with a claw attack. It then pulls its prey into its powerful jaws for a bite attack.

**Ink Cloud (Ex):** A sea drake can emit a spherical cloud of jet-black ink with a radius of 100 feet three times per day. The effect is otherwise similar to *fog cloud*, and lasts for 10 minutes in relatively calm water and 1 minute in churning or stormy waters. This ability has no effect outside the water.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day—*control water*; *warp wood* (DC 16). Caster level 9th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Sea drakes dwell in the warm waters of the Broken Coast and the Gulf of Cygnar. Their serpentine appearance lends credence to sailors' tales of sea serpents and monsters lurking in the briny depths.



**Uncommon:** Sea drakes possess the terrible roar of all other drakes. They often roar deep below the water, just before surfacing, and a sudden torrent of huge bubbles typically precedes their attack.

**Rare:** Sea drakes seem to actively enjoy tipping sea-going vessels, finding flailing sailors easier prey than swift-swimming fish. Their powerful lungs can expel blasts of air capable of flinging a man into the air and far from his ship.

**Obscure:** When threatened, a sea drake can expel a cloud of ink to hide its escape. Despite being primarily ocean-bound predators, a sea drake can drag itself across the land and manipulate the water to menace the coast.

### Treasure

Sea drakes seem to like objects that float, which perhaps explains their regularly attacks on ships. These drakes often drag hunks of wood, barrels, and even corpses underwater with them to float at the tops of their sea cave lairs. Those able to reach a sea drake's lair might find double standard treasure in the home of a 9 to 26 HD sea drake and four-times the standard treasure in the lair of a 27+ HD sea drake.

Scholars, arcanists, and status-seekers the world over value sea drake ink for its tendency to dry in shades of deep red and purple. A Survival check (DC 22) allows one to harvest a number of pints from a sea drake equal to 1/8th the creature's HD. A pint of sea drake ink sells for at least 150 gp.

### HOOKS

Supposedly the Mateu Merchant House in Five Fingers keeps a mated pair of sea drakes in a flooded cave below one of their cliff-side warehouses to dispose of unwanted persons and guard loot sunk into their lair. Recently, and quite accidentally, the sea drakes broke through a wall of their lair and into the channels of Five Fingers and now prey upon the populace as they please. The Mateu wish to see the drakes deposed of quickly and quietly. The Fingers Buccaneers desperately want individuals capable of discovering the new underwater entrance and looting the Mateu's waterlogged vault.

# DUSKWOLF



## Male Duskwolf

Always N Large Magical Beast CR 5

Hit Dice:	8d10+24 (68 hp)
Senses:	Listen +8, Spot +8; low-light vision, scent
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class:	15, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+8/+19
Attack:	Bite +13 melee (3d6+9) Bite +15 melee (3d6+10)
Full Attack:	Bite +15 melee (3d6+10)
Special Attacks:	Trip, unnerving howl
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Saves:	Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 25, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills:	Listen +8, Hide +2, Move Silently +6, Spot +8, Survival +11
Feats:	Improved Natural Attack (bite), Run, Weapon Focus (bite)
Environment:	Temperate forests and plains
Organization:	Pack (4-8)
Advancement:	9-16 HD (Large); 17-24 HD (Huge)

## Female Duskwolf

Always N Large Magical Beast CR 5

Hit Dice:	8d10+16 (60 hp)
Senses:	Listen +8, Spot +8; low-light vision, scent
Initiative:	+4
Speed:	50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class:	17, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+8/+18
Attack:	Bite +13 melee (3d6+9)
Full Attack:	Bite +13 melee (3d6+9)
Special Attacks:	Trip
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Shadow merge
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 23, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills:	Listen +8, Hide +6*, Move Silently +10, Spot +8, Survival +11
Feats:	Improved Natural Attack (bite), Run, Stealthy
Environment:	Temperate forests and plains
Organization:	Pack (4-8)
Advancement:	9-16 HD (Large); 17-24 HD (Huge)



Any scholar of Extraordinary Zoology must remain mindful of myths and exaggeration. Not every creature discussed around a campfire actually exists, at least as described. For years I heard a number of fanciful tales of duskwolf attacks, but having never witnessed this elusive predator I thought it a campfire story. I discovered my mistake while climbing the peaks of the eastern Wyrmswall for evidence of a drake.

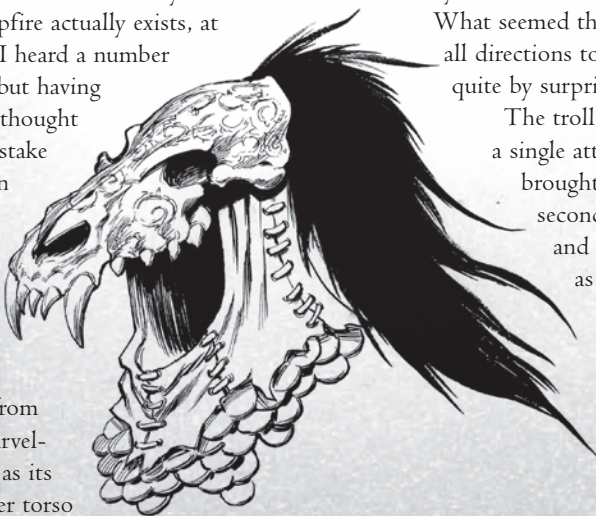
I had found the trail of a troll and tracked the beast lest it catch my scent and come upon me unaware. I came upon the massive thing as it advanced, spear in hand, upon an enormous wolf that howled from atop a short, tree-covered rise. The marvelous creature put me in mind of a lion as its thick mane and powerful muscled upper torso resembled no wolf I had seen before. As admirable an animal as it appeared, I feared for its life. Few beasts

can stand against a troll. Only as the troll moved to strike did I finally see the hints of movement surrounding it.

What seemed the shadows of wolves leapt from all directions to fall upon the troll, catching it quite by surprise.

The troll fought ably, but only injured a single attacker before they quickly brought it down. I identified these secondary wolves, slightly smaller and with less prominent manes, as likely females of the species. I had witnessed a fascinating hunting pattern. The male would attract hostile attention and distract the target while the females flanked.

The pack soon melted into the trees. One of them looked in my direction long and hard as if warning me against trying to follow.



## Combat

When a duskwolf pack encounters something it considers a threat (rather than prey), the males move to engage. They howl to draw the opponents' attention and to unnerve them. Meanwhile the females slink around to flank their targets.

If a duskwolf encounters an overwhelming threat when alone, it howls to alert its fellows and then retreats. Both males and females can howl in this way, though the males' howls often carry a supernatural effect.

**Trip (Ex):** A duskwolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent (+10 check modifier for females, +11 for males) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the dusk wolf does not risk being tripped itself.

**Unnerving Howl (Su):** Once every hour, a male duskwolf can imbue his howl with supernatural fear. Howling is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. All non-duskwolves within 60 feet that can hear the male must make a Will save (DC 14) or be shaken for 3d6 rounds. Note that other males' howls can worsen this condition to frightened or panicked. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Shadow Merge (Su):** A female duskwolf's pelt changes to take on the color and texture of any shadows she occupies. Some witnesses report that the creature appears slightly translucent as well. In areas of shadow, female duskwolves gain a +8 circumstance bonus on Hide checks.

**Scent:** Dusk wolves track by scent.

**\*Skills:** Dusk wolves have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Survival checks. Females have a +8 circumstance bonus on Hide checks in shadows, as described above.

## Treasure

The pelts of female duskwolves maintain some of the wolf's shadow-blending abilities when removed and properly cured. An intact female pelt can be used to create a hooded cloak that gives the wearer a +5 competence bonus on Hide checks.

Duskwolf cloak: faint illusion; CL 3rd Craft Wondrous Item; Price 2,500 gp; Weight 2 lb.

Certain tribal cultures prize the skulls of duskwolves as adornments, and when properly imbued these trophies bestow on their wearers the senses of a wolf. A character wearing this helm may use the scent ability. Helm of the Hunt: faint transmutation; CL 6th Craft Wondrous Item; Price 4,000 gp; Weight 3 lb.

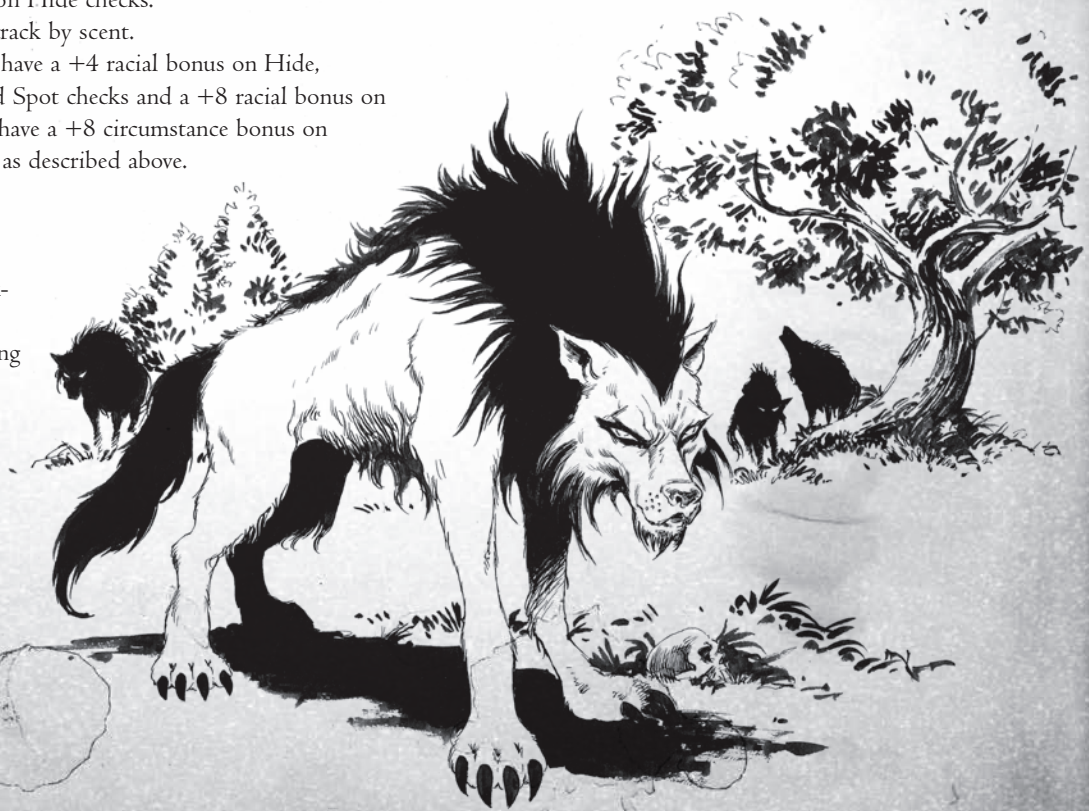
## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** Duskwolves are especially large wolves and have been known to hunt humans found alone in the wilderness. They are elusive and very difficult to track.

**Rare:** Duskwolves are far more intelligent than normal wolves. They can make themselves practically invisible and sound of their howls can chill a man's blood.

**Obscure:** Male duskwolves are stronger, while females are stealthier. Rumors hold that some Tharn tribes have partially tamed these creatures and use them as steeds.



# Efaarit



Usually N Small Humanoid (Efaarit) CR ½	
Hit Dice:	2d8+2 (11 hp)
Senses:	Listen +2, Spot +2, low-light vision
Initiative:	+1
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class:	15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 leather armor, +1 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+1/+1
Attack:	Glaive +3 melee (1d8) or sling +3 ranged (1d6)
Full Attack:	Glaive +3 melee (1d8) or sling +3 ranged (1d6)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Dogged, innate direction, sand walk, shallow breath
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skills:	Concentration +3, Handle Animal +3, Listen +2, Spot +2, Survival +2 (+8 to avoid getting lost)
Feats:	Endurance, Weapon Focus (Glaive)
Environment:	Any desert
Organization:	Solitary, trade caravan (4-12 with belcher mounts), raiding band (10-40 plus 1 3rd-level sergeants per 20 adults and 1 leader of 4th-6th level with belcher mounts) or tribe (20-120 plus 100% noncombatants plus 1 3rd-level sergeants per 20 adults, 1 or 2 lieutenants of 4th or 5th level, 1 leader of 6th-8th level)
Advancement:	By character class
Level Adjustment:	+1



I have learned little of the desert nomads the skorne call “efaarit” that I trust, yet what I have heard gives me hope that more than brutish monsters and cold-souled devils make up the creatures of the east. Kaleda, my jailer—no matter what she would call our relationship—spits whenever I refer to the nomads and insists that I turn my intellect toward more worthy interests. I spent much time fruitlessly investigating what those outside the skorne call the tribesfolk, as I’m relatively sure that “efaarit” is a demeaning skorne curse. Kaleda insisted that the nomads make very poor slaves, largely unresponsive to all but the most intensive and damaging conditioning, and characterized them only as thieves and murderers.

I’ve only had the opportunity to inspect the corpse of one efaarit briefly. Its short stature and flat features were slightly reminiscent of the skorne yet less severe, and I suspect the race’s genesis more closely coincides with the gobbers of the west. What facts I have gleaned place these nomads at home in the Blasted Desert, a region boiling with highly flammable pools of oil. Regularly set afire by the raging weather of the Stormlands, these oily lakes turn vast expanses into smoking infernos. The efaarit guide their strange, oil drinking mounts called “bletchers” through these unimaginable conditions seeking what rare water collects in the region and the starved excuses for animals that dare drink the polluted stuff. Their ability to survive in these conditions, subsisting upon what they can find and capture through raiding, marks their determination and resilience as a race despite the contempt my captors heap upon them.

## Combat

Perpetually threatened by deadly environs and savage beasts, efaarits rely on their tribal organization and knowledge of the dangers around them for survival. Untiring and observant, efaarits patiently study their opponents to exploit weaknesses and wear down the unprepared with quick attacks and ambushes, often from the cover of sand storms.

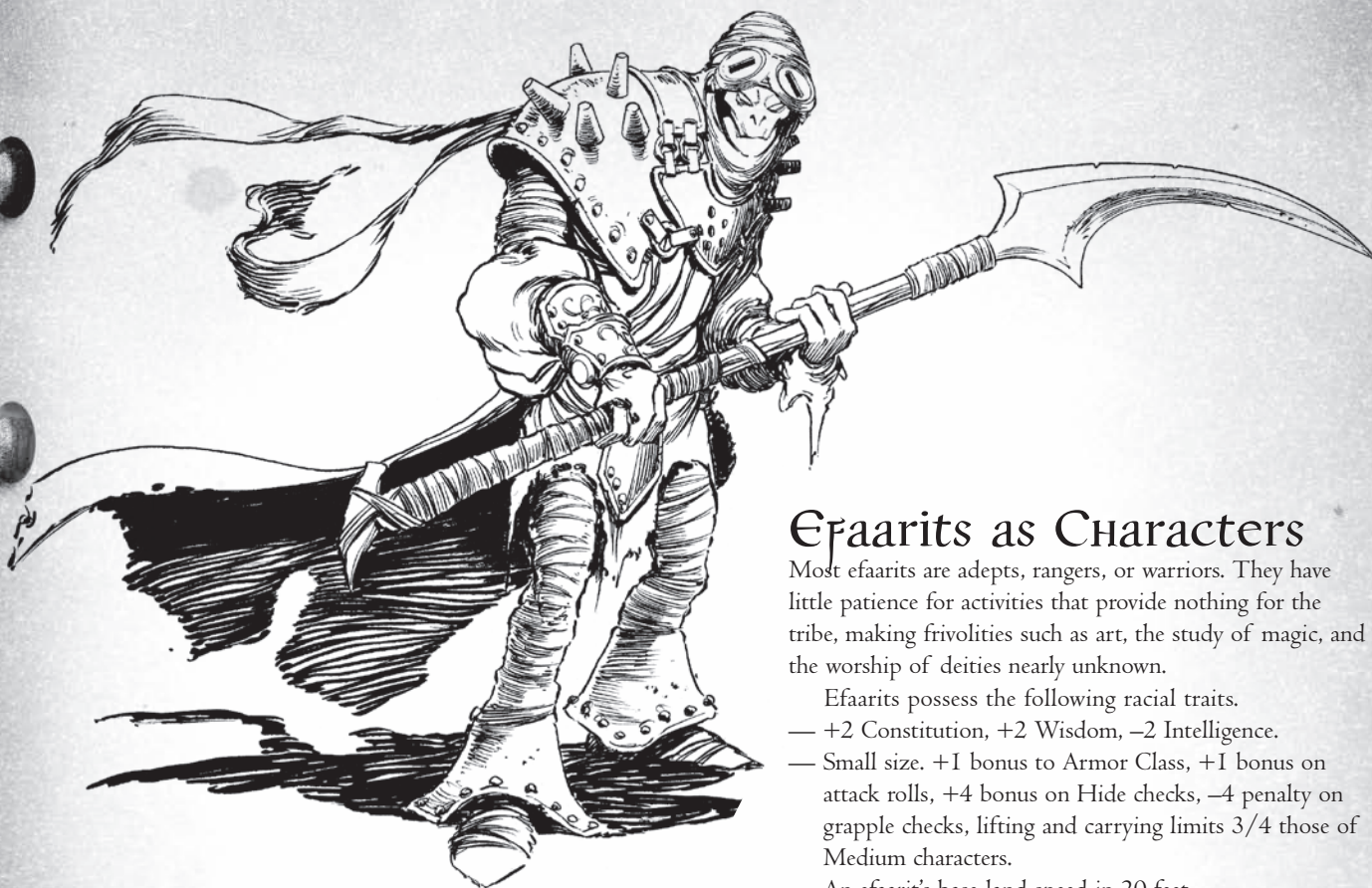
**Dogged (Ex):** As desert survivalists, an efaarit can go for a number of days equal to his Constitution modifier (minimum 1) without water before becoming dehydrated, or a number of days equal to his Constitution modifier + 3 (minimum 4) without food before he begins starving.

**Innate Direction (Ex):** Efaarits have an innate grasp on their surroundings and the creatures within them. This translates into a +6 racial bonus on Survival checks to avoid getting lost and a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against maze and illusion spells of the glamor subschool.

**Sand Walk (Ex):** Efaarits can move through sand, scree, or similar areas of fine, loose debris without suffering any movement penalties.

**Shallow Breath (Ex):** Efaarits do not risk suffocation from sand storms and gain a +2 racial bonus versus poisonous gases. They may hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to three times their Constitution score before they risk drowning or suffocation.

**Skills:** Efaarits have +2 racial bonus on Concentration and Handle Animal checks.



## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Efaarit are nomads that wander the Blasted Desert. Generally distrustful, even of their own kind, efaarit greatly fear the skorne, who prefer to slay rather than enslave them.

**Uncommon:** Some efaarit have a canny ability for calming the otherwise indomitable animals of the east. They might make good guides through the deadly deserts but notoriously betray and rob their allies.

**Rare:** Efaarit and their mounts largely ignore desert storms and often travel in such conditions to escape pursuing skorne slavers and warriors. Efaarit will also raid skorne encampments during storms, using the weather for concealment while they steal food, water, and weapons.

**Obscure:** Efaarit have a long if crude oral tradition that traces their history back to the time of Lyoss. Their language, a collection of harsh whispering sounds and occasional barking shouts, is very hard to learn, but those who master it would discover a great wealth of untold history of the eastern lands.

## Efaarits as Characters

Most efaarits are adepts, rangers, or warriors. They have little patience for activities that provide nothing for the tribe, making frivolities such as art, the study of magic, and the worship of deities nearly unknown.

Efaarits possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, −2 Intelligence.
- Small size. +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, −4 penalty on grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits 3/4 those of Medium characters.
- An efaarit's base land speed in 20 feet.
- Low-light vision.
- 1 point of natural armor.
- **Racial Hit Dice:** An efaarit begins with two levels of humanoid, which provide 2d8 hit dice, a base attack bonus of +1, and saving throw bonuses of Fort +0, Ref +3, and Will +0.
- **Racial Skills:** An efaarit's humanoid levels give it skill points equal to  $4 \times (2 + \text{Intelligence modifier, minimum } 1)$ . Its class skills are Concentration, Intimidate, and Survival. Efaarits have a +2 racial bonus on Concentration and Handle Animal checks.
- **Racial Feats:** An efaarit's humanoid levels give it one feat. Efaarit's gain Endurance as a bonus feat.
- **Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** An efaarit is proficient with and all simple weapons and a pole-arm of their choice.
- **Special Qualities:** Dogged, innate direction, sand walk, shallow breath.
- **Automatic Languages:** Efaarit. Bonus Languages: Cyclops, Skorne (Soresh or Havaati).
- **Favored Class:** Ranger.
- **Level Adjustment:** +1



# Ethon



Usually N Huge Magical Beast CR 10	Space/Reach:	15 ft./15 ft.
Hit Dice: 13d10+39 (110 hp)	Special Qualities:	Storm snare, wind rider
Immunities/Resist: Immunity to electricity	Saves:	Fort +11, Reflex +19, Will +7
Senses: Listen +3, Spot +17, low-light vision	Abilities:	Str 24, Dex 25, Con 17, Int 3, Wis 17, Cha 9
Initiative: +7	Skills:	Hide +3, Spot +17
Speed: 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 120 ft. (good)	Feats:	Flyby Attack, Hover, Lightning Reflexes, Snatch, Wingover
Armor Class: 24, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (-2 size, +7 Dex, +9 natural)	Environment:	The Stormlands
Base Attack/Grapple: +13/+28	Organization:	Solitary or mated pair
Attack: Bite +18 (2d6+10)	Advancement:	14-23 (Huge), 24-38 (Gargantuan)
Full Attack: Bite +18 (2d6+10)		
Special Attacks: Electrically charged, spell-like abilities		



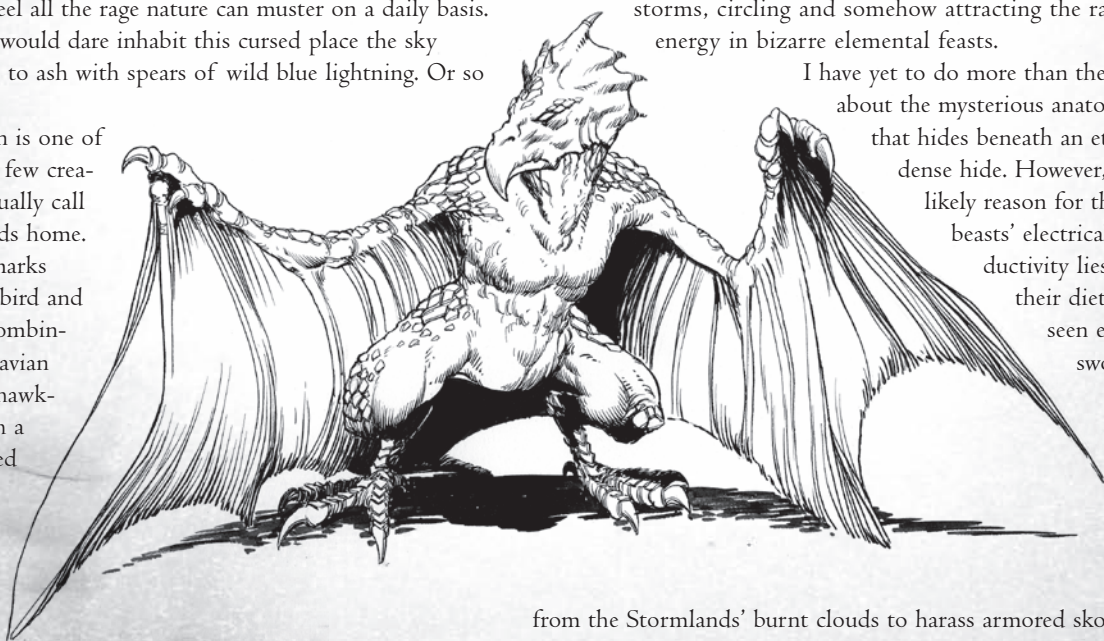
One never need look far while traveling the Stormlands to see it resembles no place in western Immoren (Morrow be praised). While our home surely has its deserts and bleak lands, the Stormlands feel all the rage nature can muster on a daily basis. Any life that would dare inhabit this cursed place the sky quickly blasts to ash with spears of wild blue lightning. Or so I thought.

The ethon is one of the tenacious few creatures that actually call the Stormlands home. Their form marks them as part bird and part lizard, combining powerful avian talons and a hawk-like beak with a reptilian frilled head ridge, thick brown-green scales, and leathery wings. Although clumsy in appearance, their powerful, nearly 40-foot wingspans allow these strange beasts to soar the violent winds above the wastes, impervious to the ever-lasting storms and magical energies raging above the Abyss.

However, on a typical, calm day scores of lightning blasts likely strike an ethon. How does the creature survive forces that would bake a cyclops in his armor? I dare not attribute this feat to nature alone, for the storms themselves

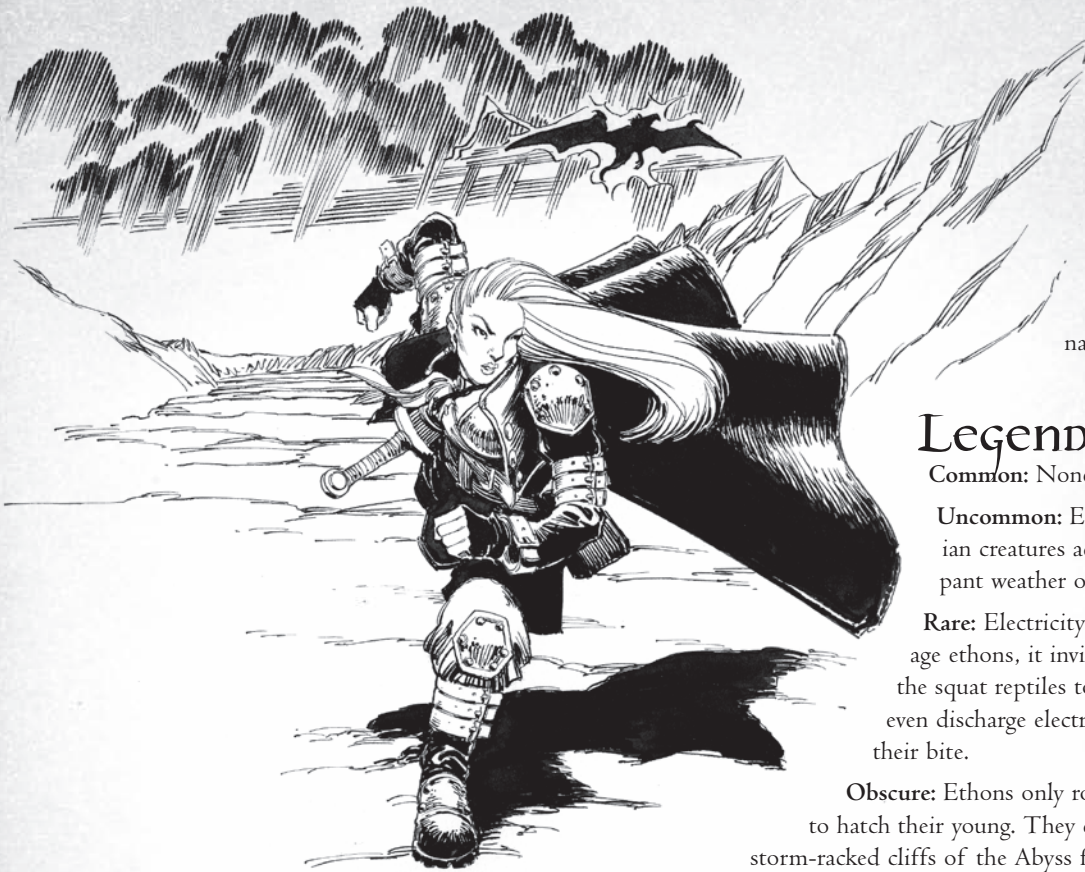
seem unnatural. Not only do ethons prove immune to the Stormlands' electrical outbursts, they apparently actually draw sustenance from them. The gigantic flyers actively seek out the most tumultuous eddies of their home's persistent storms, circling and somehow attracting the raging energy in bizarre elemental feasts.

I have yet to do more than theorize about the mysterious anatomy that hides beneath an ethon's dense hide. However, one likely reason for the beasts' electrical conductivity lies in their diet. I've seen ethons swoop



from the Stormlands' burnt clouds to harass armored skorne troops on their massive bridge spanning the Abyss, yet the beasts demonstrate little interest in skorne flesh. My skorne captors tell me that the ethons actually devour metal, likely storing the material in their bodies to attract lightning strikes. While this remains a theory, I'm eager for a chance to return to the Stormlands to test my hypothesis and discover the certainly countless other oddities at work in these pertinacious raptors of the angriest skies.

# Ethon



**Wind Rider (Ex):** Ethons masterfully ride the unpredictable gales of the Stormlands. When flying ethons ignore the movement penalties of wind (magical or natural).

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** Ethon are flying reptilian creatures acclimated to the rampant weather of the Stormlands.

**Rare:** Electricity not only fails to damage ethons, it invigorates them, causing the squat reptiles to act more swiftly and even discharge electrical blasts through their bite.

**Obscure:** Ethons only roost temporarily to hatch their young. They choose the remote, storm-racked cliffs of the Abyss for this purpose and ever hungry, lightning immune deep drakes often hunt them.

## Combat

Deadly predators of the Stormlands' skies, ethons seek prey ripe with both metal and meat. Scouring the blasted wastes, ethons employ their spell-like abilities and the raging heavens to bombard potential prey with lightning, favoring meals cooked by electricity and flavored by ozone. Upon weakening their targets, ethons use their incredible speed and control to swoop through the angry skies and snatch the most metal-rich meals.

**Electrically Charged (Su):** The ethon takes no damage from electricity. If an attack that deals electricity damage strikes an ethon, roll damage as normal but inflict no damage points. Treat the ethon as gaining the benefits of *baste* for a number of rounds equal to every 10 points of damage the electrical attack would have dealt. In addition, the ethon's bite attack deals an additional 1d6 points of electricity damage during this time.

**Spell-like Abilities:** At will—*call lightning storm, fog cloud, gust of wind*; 3/day—*control winds*; 1/day—*control weather, wind wall*.

**Storm Snare (Ex):** Any magical attack or natural event that deals electricity damage within 30 feet of an ethon is diverted from its target to strike the ethon instead and leaves the original target unaffected.

## Treasure

Content to perpetually sail the skies above the Stormlands, ethons keep no lairs and anything they can't devour they drop hundreds of feet to the ground below. Despite their lack of wealth, the bodies of ethons fetch handsome bounties in the west. Few scholars yet understand the creatures' relationship with electricity and pay upwards of 10,000 gp for a full-grown and intact body, while a live ethon might net a canny hunter more than 20,000 gp.

## Hooks

Skorne beast handlers captured several hatchling ethons from the Abyss and brought them to their camps in the Bloodstone Marches to try conditioning them for military use. The prospects looked improbable when the raptors collectively summoned a thunderstorm whose repeated lightning strikes melted several protective lightning rods and consumed the ethons' cage. Now the quickly maturing ethons have migrated west in search of storms.

# Ferox



Always N Large Animal CR 3	Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Hit Dice: 4d8+8 (28 hp)	Special Qualities:	Infect, perfect balance
Senses: Listen +4, Spot +3, low-light vision	Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +1
Initiative: +4	Abilities:	Str 21, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 12
Speed: 50 ft. (8 squares)	Skills:	Balance +12, Climb +15*, Hide +8, Jump +13*, Move Silently +10
Armor Class: 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural)	Feats:	Alertness, Run
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+12	Environment:	Any desert or warm land
Attack: Claw +7 melee (1d6+5)	Organization:	Solitary, pair, or pride (3-14)
Full Attack: 2 claws +7 melee (1d6+5) and bite +2 melee (1d8+2)	Advancement:	5-8 (Large), 9-12 (Huge)
Special Attacks: Bristle, pounce, rake 1d6+2		



**M**en learned the usefulness of the horse early in the rise of civilization as a tool to relieve their burdens, a method of speeding transport, and a companion to stave off loneliness. These loyal mounts have flourished in the centuries since, and even in these modern days one can scarcely tread a city back without crossing the path of someone's trusty steed. The crafty ferox fills a similar role in skorne society, though their experience—as in seemingly all cases—is markedly crueler.

Like many creatures common throughout the Skorne Empire, ferox display distinctly reptilian traits. In this case, fine, tooth-like scales and rough, yellow to red-brown leathery skin cover the beast. The long canines, a pair of razor-sharp curved fangs the size short swords, remain the creature's most distinctive feature. The beast seems as clever evolutionarily as it is predatorily.

Ferox in the wild behave much like the gray-spotted Thundercliff mountain stalkers or the haughty crag lion prides that posture about the hills of the Rotterhorn. Ambush predators, they prefer to hunt from above and patrol rocky hills and crags with the intent of leaping upon prey. Male and female ferox hunt together. Only their combined numbers can bring down the wild titan and korbesh cattle herds that serve as their most common sources of prey, but might just as likely turn into attackers and need fending off.

The skorne also break and train ferox. I say "break" here instead of "domesticate". Skorne do not ride loyal companions, as we think of our steeds. These riders and mounts have

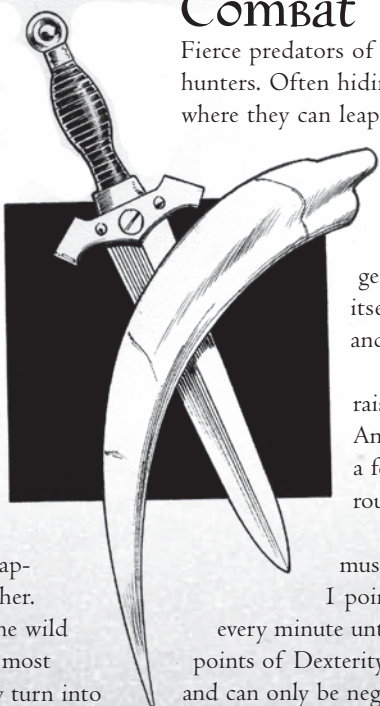
a relationship akin to masters and slaves. Skorne warriors have a keen appreciation for the cats' ferocity and treat them as dangerous hunters, but are always ready to show who is the dominate member in their relationship. Once trained, the cats seem happy to obey the commands of their riders, no doubt because they also desire to quickly decimate their enemy.

## Combat

Fierce predators of the wastes, ferox are patient, stealthy hunters. Often hiding in ambush in rocky outcroppings where they can leap upon prey and rend them with their reptilian claws and diseased bite. Even if a meal manages to escape a ferox, the infectious saliva often slows, even paralyzes, survivors and makes them easy targets for a second attack. A ferox which finds itself outmatched bristles its serrated spines and seeks a rocky place to hide.

**Bristle (Ex):** As a free action a ferox can raise the tooth-like scales covering its body. Any creature grappling or bareback riding a ferox that bristles takes 1d6 damage every round the grappling or riding continues.

**Infect (Ex):** Any creature bitten by a ferox must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or take 1 point of Dexterity damage. Repeat this save every minute until the creature successfully saves or takes 5 points of Dexterity damage. This is a fast-acting disease effect and can only be negated by *remove disease*. A specific ferox can only infect a creature once per day; the victim remains immune to a new infection from that ferox for 24 hours after the bite, whether it saves or not. The save DC is Constitution-based.



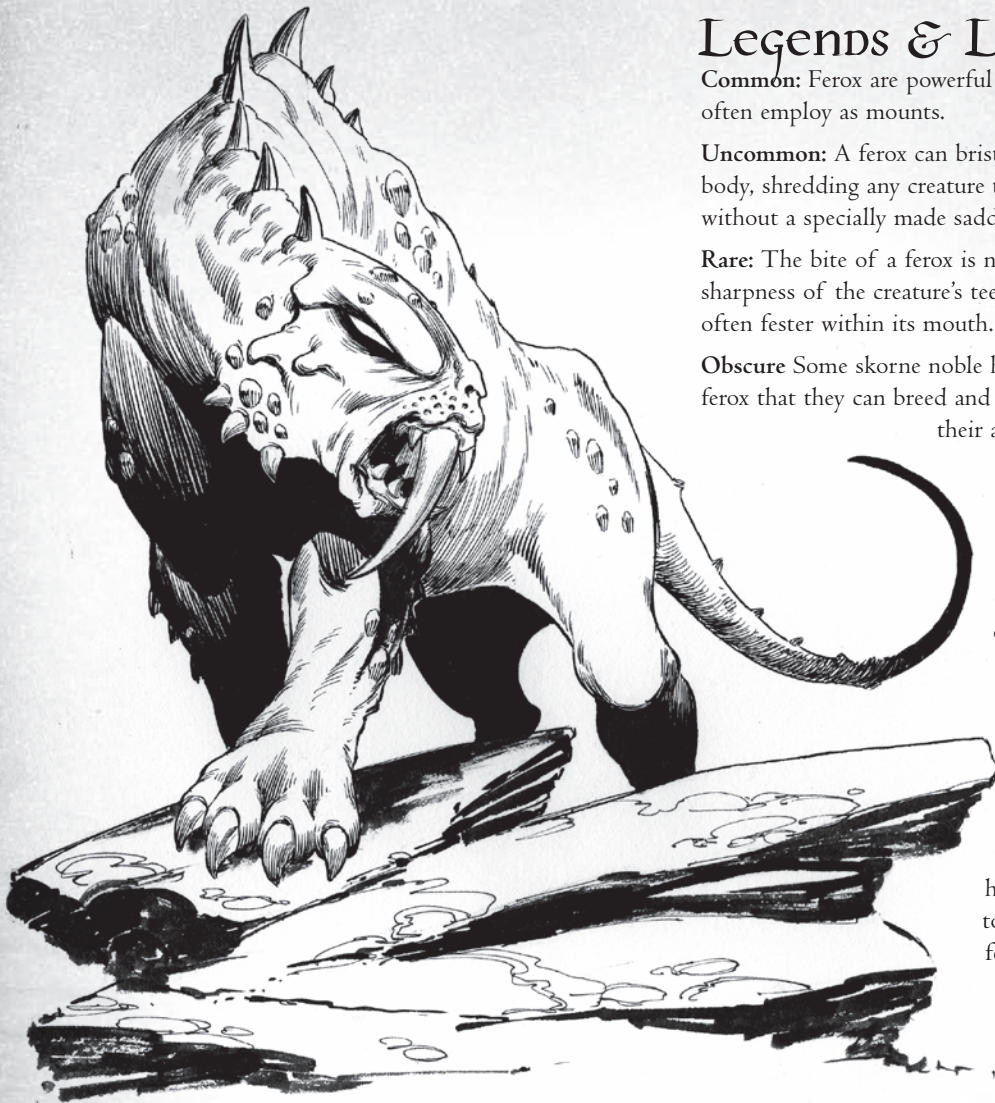
## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Ferox are powerful desert-dwelling felines the skorne often employ as mounts.

**Uncommon:** A ferox can bristle the sharp scales that cover its body, shredding any creature that attempts to grab it or ride it without a specially made saddle.

**Rare:** The bite of a ferox is not deadly merely for the size and sharpness of the creature's teeth, but for the infections that often fester within its mouth.

**Obscure** Some skorne noble houses value young aggressive ferox that they can breed and condition into deadly mounts for their armies.



## Treasure

Ferox hoard the bones of their prey, often in morbid piles within or just outside their rocky lairs. Not knowing the difference between bones and armor, whole suits of metal armor sometimes find their ways into a ferox's trophy pile.

Although not an item hoarded by ferox, the skorne have created a number of items to aid in riding the dangerous felines, most notably a heavy saddle made from leader and iron. The saddle prevents the rider from being harmed if the ferox bristles its scales.

The saddle also includes a cruel set of reins with a needled bit.

These spikes bite into the soft flesh of the cat's mouth when yanked, doing little to harm the beast's use as a mount and deterring it from attacking. A ferox saddle weighs 75 pounds and costs 30 gp.

**Pounce (Ex):** A ferox can make a full attack if it charges, including two rake attacks.

**Perfect Balance (Ex):** A ferox may always take 10 on Balance, Climb, and Jump checks even when threatened or distracted.

**Rake (Ex):** A ferox that pounces onto a creature can make two rake attacks with its hind legs. Attack bonus +7 melee, damage 1d6+2.

**\*Skills:** Ferox have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb and Jump checks. Cats have a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They may use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks.

**Carrying Capacity:** A light load for a ferox is up to 459 pounds, a medium load is 460–918 pounds, and a heavy load is 919–1,380 pounds.

## Hooks

As tribute to Archdomina Makeda, one of her inferior families wishes to gift her a fully trained adult ferox known for its ferocity and number of kills. No ferox seems better suited than Blackfang, the infamous dominate male of a pride that lairs near Slasrath's Rock. The mountain of gilded armor outside warns that many skorne have tried to capture Blackfang, but none have survived.

# Gentleman Stranger



<b>NE Medium Fey (Grymkin) CR 6</b>	
<b>Hit Die:</b>	8d6+24 HD (48 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage reduction 10/magic, spell resistance 16
<b>Senses:</b>	Listen +5, Spot +5, low-light vision
<b>Initiative:</b>	+4
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares), Climb 30 ft.
<b>Armor Class:</b>	18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+4 /+5
<b>Attack:</b>	Longsword +5 melee (1d8+1)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Longsword +5 melee (1d8+1)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Mocking laughter
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./ 5 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Charm, spell-like abilities
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +12

<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 13, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 25
<b>Skills:</b>	Bluff +16, Climb +14, Concentrate +10, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +19, Escape Artist +9, Forgery +12, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +9, Jump +14, Knowledge (Nobility) +14, Listen +5, Sense Motive +11, Spot +5, Tumble +7
<b>Feats:</b>	Ability focus (master of disguise) <sup>B</sup> , Deceitful <sup>B</sup> , Improved Feint <sup>B</sup> , Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill focus (bluff), Skill focus (diplomacy)
<b>Environment:</b>	Urban
<b>Organization:</b>	Unique
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character level (usually rogue)



The Gentleman Stranger, Marques of Wagers, Terror of Caspia, the Highgate Boogeyman, the Last Laugher, are just a few appellations given this mysterious but very real threat that stalks the wealthy and affluent of our cities.

I would think the multitude of stories of the Old Man of the Swamp and the grizzly tales of the wicked twins Gristle and Flay should provide incentive enough to keep oneself holed up in one's city, if not one's home. Recent events have reminded me that grymkin also haunt even our largest and most urbane cities.



Several years ago I traveled to Caspia to witness the knighthood ceremony for the Heroes of Corvis who had assisted in the Battle of Corvis in 603 AR. I have little taste for extravagant parties, yet politeness dictated I accept an invitation by a certain noble whose name I will withhold. My interest in the event waned rapidly. I had just decided to head to the piers and find a ship to Mercir when I overheard some intriguing scuttlebutt

from the kitchen servants. As the son of a junker I am not too proud to speak with any class of folk, but the tale they told would have earned them a beating from their employers.

According to these folk, a stranger described as devilish in both manner and appearance had come to stay in the mansion as a guest and won over the master's confidence. I had met this marques, a noble supposedly visiting from Ceryl, just the night before and found him typical of dandies from that city, hardly the sinister black-taloned creature the servants described.

After gaining their trust, the servants shared their suspicions of the marques' involvement in the tragic death of Baron Marus Brasher, a remote cousin of Lord Admiral Sparholm III. Apparently the Baron had bragged of having the fastest ship in all of Cygnar and this marques publicly challenged him to a race down the Black River. During this competition the baron failed to steer his ship from dangerous rocks and drowned within sight of Caspia's walls. The servants insisted this was no accident but a carefully orchestrated murder.

This piqued my curiosity. At some expense I paid for a local salvage team to dredge up the ship. The suspicions proved true when we determined that the workings of the baron's ship had been sabotaged.

Armed with this evidence but being no fool—one does not lightly accuse a “noble” of murder—I requested the assistance of Harlan Phineas Versh from the Order of Illumination. What happened next shocked me, if not my witch-hunting companion. We planned to confront the marques alone outside, away from his sycophantic hangers-on. He must have sensed our distrust because he dropped any attempt at civil-

# Gentleman Stranger

ity and demanded in a growling tone that we leave at once. Despite all I knew, of a sudden I felt the desire to do as he bid. Fortunately Versh would have none of it. The illuminated one raised his symbol of Morrow and demand the marques "show his true self". I gasped as the marques transformed under my very eyes. Rather than the refined gentleman dressed in finery, here stood a twisted mockery in ratty and stained clothes, fingers tipped with long black talons.

Spiting and cursing, the thing leapt like a tatzlwurm to a nearby wall. It scurried to the roof like a spider and disappeared while evading the noisome blast from my companion's quad-iron. So far as I know the creature never returned to Caspia, but whenever I move in polite society I expect to encounter him again. I have since heard many tales from as far away as Ord and northern Khador of others in high society killed in bizarre "accidents" playing on their vanity, and always accompanied by rumors of an instigator that draws black looks from the lower classes. It seems no city is safe from this predator. I just hope my own blood stays common enough to remain beneath his attentions.

## Combat

The gentleman stranger takes pains to obscure its identity while in polite society. It usually charms a well-to-do noble and becomes an honored guest, meanwhile plotting the downfall of nobles vulnerable to manipulation. It delights in bringing the arrogant and mighty to ruin, usually to their deaths, but only after suffering a proper amount of humiliation.

The gentleman stranger uses charmed retainers as a buffer. He is always encountered with 16 HD of charmed retainers willing to give up their lives defending him. If outmatched he uses *jump* and *spider climb* to escape. If cornered he will use his mocking laughter.

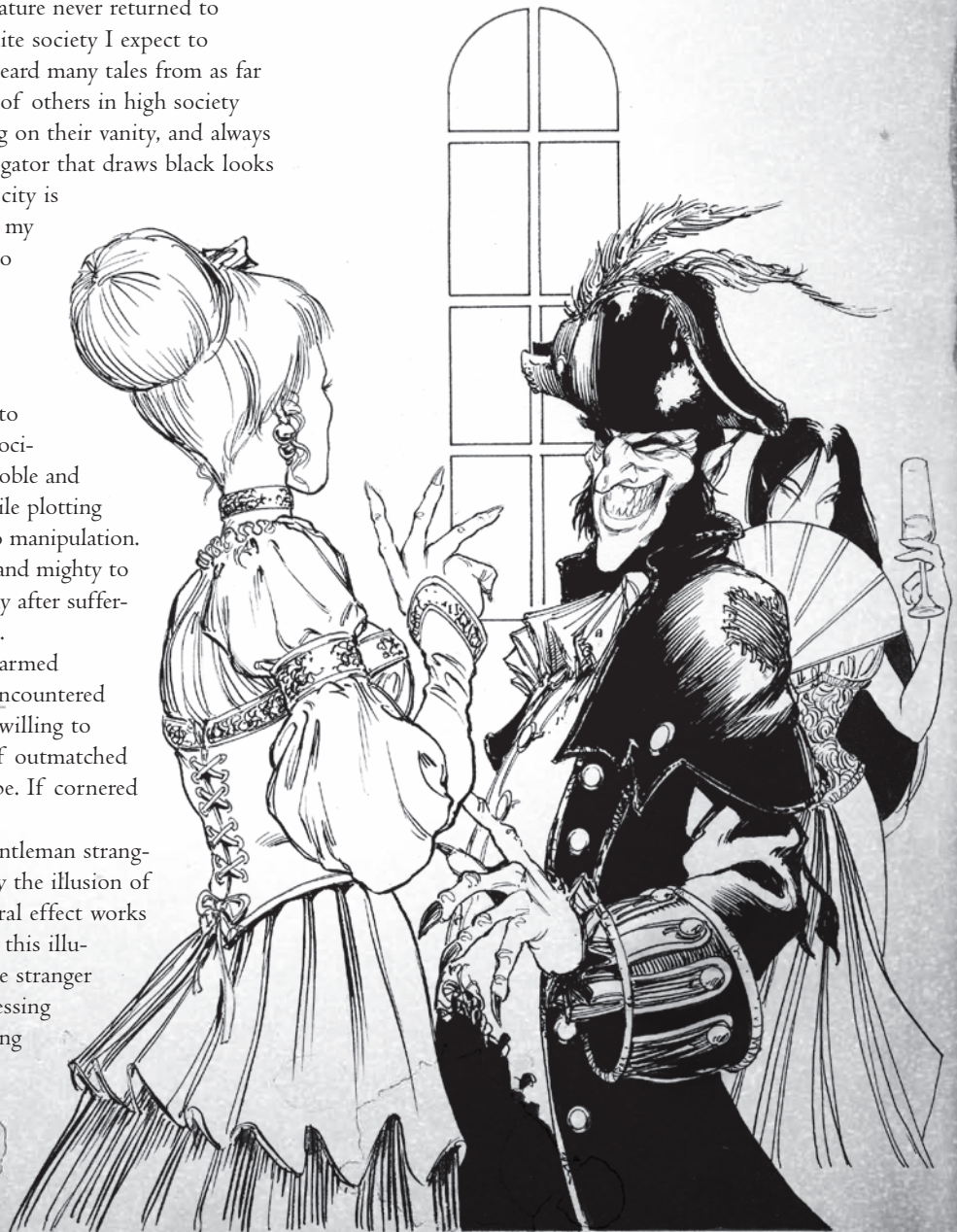
**Master of Disguise (Su):** A gentleman stranger's true form is always disguised by the illusion of a well-to-do noble. This supernatural effect works as a continual *disguise self*. Defeating this illusion requires direct contact with the stranger (such as shaking his hand) or witnessing his supernatural abilities, and making a Will save (DC 23). This DC is Charisma-based.

**Master of Illusions (Su):** A gentleman stranger gains a +20 to concentration checks to maintain any illusion he has created.

**Mocking Laughter (Su):** Three times per day the gentleman stranger may emit a cracking, mocking laughter that functions just like *crushing despair*, Will save (DC 21) to negate. This DC is Charisma-based.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day — *mass suggestion*, *misdirection*, *jump*, *spider climb*; 1/day — *mass charm monster*, *demand*, *mirage arcana*, *nightmare*. Caster Level 12th.

**Skills:** The gentleman stranger has a +8 racial bonus to Disguise, Climb, Jump, and Sense Motive skill checks.



# Genzoul



<b>Genzoul, 5th level skorne mortitheurge</b>	
<b>CE Medium undead (Augmented Humanoid) CR 7</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	6d12 (36)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage reduction 10/magic, undead immunities
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +2, Spot +2
<b>Initiative:</b>	+7
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft (8 squares), climb 10 ft.
<b>Armor Class:</b>	20, touch 13, flat-footed, 17 (+3 studded leather armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural armor)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+3/+7
<b>Attack:</b>	Bite +7 melee (1d6+4)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Bite +7 melee (1d6+4) and 2 claws +2 melee (1d4+4)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Fearsome gaze, gorge, ravening
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.

<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Armored caster, cannibal control, feasting, fast healing (3), mortification, mortitheurgy, necromantic affinity, spells
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +6, Reflex +6, Will +6
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 18, Dex 17, Con -, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 10
<b>Skills:</b>	Concentration +8, Decipher Script +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (medicine) +10, Spellcraft +10
<b>Feats:</b>	Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Mastery
<b>ECL:</b>	+9
<b>Spells:</b>	This genzoul has the following spells memorized: 0: daze, touch of fatigue, detect magic; 1 <sup>st</sup> : cause fear, sleep, chill touch; 2 <sup>nd</sup> : bull's strength, ghoul touch, fog cloud; 3 <sup>rd</sup> : vampiric touch



As with all peoples, the skorne suffer their own unique maladies and ailments. Like the blacktounge that torments the children of northern Khador and Llael, or the ruby wastes that seasonally plague the people of Bainsmarket, skorne throughout their vast empire spit to hear the word “ravening.”

Ravening, or *karovoul* in the skorne tongue, appears to be a kind of communicable psychological affliction. Similar to the way that some maladies lurk in the victim’s blood, ravening too spreads by the exchange of blood but in the most brutal way. Ravening, as the name suggests, is a degenerative form of cannibalism.

The skorne call those who contract ravening *genzoul*, a strange combination of curse and warning in their tongue and without parallel in our languages. Words like “lunatic” and “leper” elicit similar but lesser responses among westerners. These genzoul suffer from an obsessive addiction to the flesh of sentient beings, typically of their own race. Degenerating into a feral state as their minds erode, these infectious cannibals attack any who come close. Those they kill become meals. Those who escape them, having felt their bites, risk becoming genzoul themselves. Only the patient ministrations of an attentive nurse might stave off the gore-filled madness those infected with ravening face. In the Skorne Empire, the swiftest cure comes at the edge of a sword and, thus, few infected ever recover.

## Creating a Genzoul

“Genzoul” is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature). A genzoul uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** The creature’s type changes to undead (augmented humanoid or monstrous humanoid). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size remains unchanged.

**Hit Dice:** Increase all future and current hit dice to d12s.

**Speed:** A genzoul has a climb speed of 10 feet. If the base creature has a higher climb speed, use that instead. In addition, its base land speed increases by 10 feet.

**Armor Class:** The base creature’s natural armor improves by +4.

**Attack:** A genzoul retains all the attacks of the base creature and also gains a bite and two claw attacks if it didn’t already have them. If the base creature can use weapons, the genzoul retains this ability. A creature with natural weapons retains those natural weapons. A genzoul fighting without weapons uses its bite attack. A genzoul armed with a weapon uses its bite or a weapon, as it desires.

**Full Attack:** A genzoul fighting without weapons uses its bite and two claws to attack. If armed with a weapon, it chooses whether to use the weapon or use its natural attacks.

# Genzoul

**Damage:** Genzoul have bite and claw attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the appropriate damage value from the following table according to the genzoul's size. Creatures that have other kinds of natural weapons retain their old damage values or use the appropriate value from the following table, whichever is better.

Size	Bite Damage	Claw Damage
Fine	1	—
Diminutive	1d2	1
Tiny	1d3	1d2
Small	1d4	1d3
Medium	1d6	1d4
Large	1d8	1d6
Huge	2d6	1d8
Gargantuan	2d8	2d6
Colossal	4d6	2d8

**Special Attacks:** A genzoul retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains those following. Saves have a DC of  $10 + 1/2$  the genzoul's HD + the genzoul's Cha modifier unless otherwise noted.

**Fearsome Gaze (Su):** Creatures of 5 HD or less are frightened for 1 minute. 30-foot range, Will save negates.

**Gorge (Su):** Sustained by the sinew and flesh of sentient creatures, genzoul can forgo all other attacks in a round to make a particularly savage bite attack. If this attack succeeds, the genzoul gains temporary hit points equal to half the damage it dealt. A genzoul can gain no more than 4 temporary hit points per HD it possesses. These temporary hit points disappear after 1 hour.

**Ravening (Su):** Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude save, incubation period 1 day; damage 1d4 Con and 1d4 Cha. The DC is Charisma-based.

Creatures bitten by a genzoul risk being infected with ravening. As undead creatures, genzoul are immune to ravening and all other diseases.

**Special Qualities:** A genzoul retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains the following. Saves have a DC of  $10 + 1/2$  the genzoul's HD + the genzoul's Cha modifier unless otherwise noted. Because it is undead and cannot suffer nonlethal damage, genzouls lose the lesser moritheurgy and mortitheurgy abilities.

**Cannibal Control (Su):** Genzoul have a limited amount of control over those affected by ravening but who have not yet succumbed to the disease. At will, they can mentally spur any creature infected with ravening as per the spell *suggestion*.





# Genzoul

**Damage Reduction (Su):** Genzoul have damage reduction 10/magic. Treat a genzoul's natural weapons as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Feasting (Su):** Genzoul restore their bodies by eating living or dead flesh. As a full round action, a genzoul can eat a helpless, unconscious, or dead corporeal creature. The genzoul deals bite damage against its victim (if it still has any hit points left) and regains 2 hit points. A genzoul can eat from a body for a number of rounds equal to the victim's HD, after which the corpse is considered stripped of edible flesh. (This does not affect the corpse's ability to be returned to life.) A genzoul counts as flat-footed while feasting.

If given the option, genzoul will feast even when they do not have damage to heal. If allowed to feast uninterrupted for 5 consecutive rounds, a genzoul is invigorated. It gains a +4 bonus to Str and Dex for 10 minutes following its feast.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** A genzoul heals 3 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point.

**False Cadaver (Su):** If reduced to 0 hit points in combat a genzoul is not destroyed, but it collapses into inanimate, desiccated remains. Any additional damage dealt to a genzoul while in this form has no effect. If left undisturbed for 24 hours the genzoul awakens at full health.

**Abilities:** Change from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +4, Wis +4, Cha +2. As an undead creature, a genzoul has no Constitution score.

**Environment:** Any, usually same as the base creature.

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, pack (3-6).

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2.

**Alignment:** Base creature's alignment changes to chaotic evil.

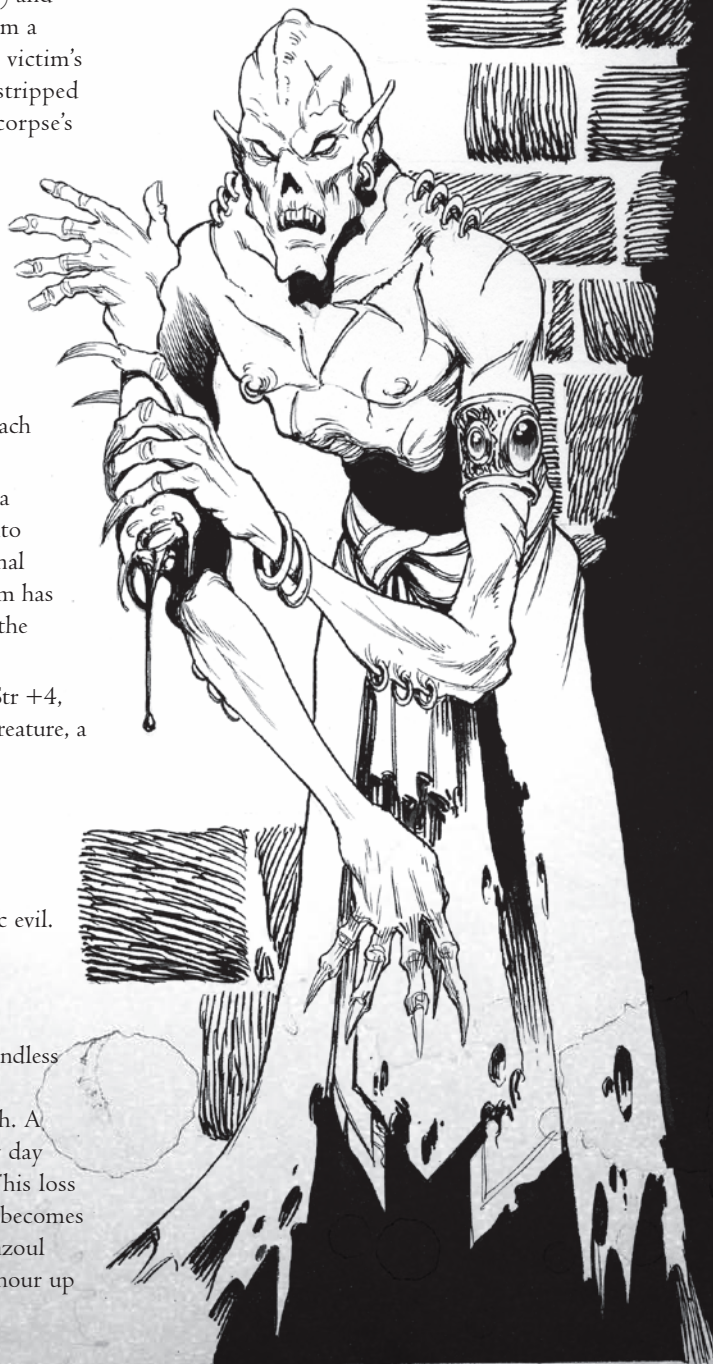
**Level Adjustment:** Same as the base creature +4

## Genzoul Weaknesses

Genzoul have a number of weaknesses related to their endless hunger for living flesh.

**Cannibal Cravings:** Genzoul endlessly hunger for flesh. A genzoul begins losing 1 point of Intelligence for every day past a week it goes without using its feasting ability. This loss continues until the genzoul reaches Intelligence 2 and becomes a feral beast consumed by hunger. After feasting, a genzoul slowly regains its Intelligence at a rate of 1 point per hour up to its original score.

**Sanctified Flesh:** Genzoul cannot eat from the bodies of those who have had final rites, their remains concentrated and souls sanctified for their journey into Urcaen. Treat a genzoul that eats the flesh of a sanctified corpse as though nauseated for 10 minutes. Any cleric or paladin can sanctify a corpse against a genzoul using the spell *bles*.



## Genzoul

*Repelling a Genzoul:* Folklore and campfire tales name all manner of herbal concoctions and baseless superstitions bane against genzouls. Of these, only four in particular seem to hold any merit.

Genzoul cannot abide the light of the full moon of Calder. Treat them as sickened while exposed to its direct light. While daylight does not harm genzoul, they find it uncomfortable and thus act primarily at night.

Blood spilt by natural processes disgust genzoul. Blood gathered after a birth or other natural loss burns a genzoul like acid. They also will not willingly come near a creature with hands smeared with such blood.

As sanctified flesh weakens them, a genzoul never willingly enters a graveyard, catacombs, or other place of righteous internment.

Filling the creature's mouth with metal will prevent a genzoul from reviving from its false cadaver state. Only the removal and burning of its fanged, black stomach, the seat of its ravenous nature, will permanently destroy a genzoul. If the stomach is not destroyed, the false cadaver disintegrates and a

new genzoul identical to the original reforms around the stomach within 24 hours.

### Suffering the Ravening

Unlike normal diseases, ravening, known as *karowoul* to the skorne, continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or is cured as described below.

Ravening is as much a psychological disorder as a disease, affecting the victim's brain and making him hunger for dead sentient flesh. A victim must consume at least 1 pound of meat harvested from a sentient creature per day or take double damage from the disease. The victim becomes increasingly more feral as it loses Charisma.

A victim can only make checks to recover from ravening on a day it consumes 1 pound of flesh from a living sentient creature. Upon consuming such a meal, the victim may make a Fortitude save to recover from the disease as normal.

A victim who dies of ravening immediately resurrects as a genzoul.



# Giants



I am thrilled to relate that I have spoken to a giant and confirmed the existence of an entire species of these tremendous beings. My mind still reels as I write this and try to remember every detail. By a single series of conversations I have learned enough to make everything I have suffered since my capture worthwhile.

The Department of Extraordinary Zoology at Corvis University already has the existence of giants on record, of course. In 603 AR, High Prelate Pandor Dumas donated to us the skeletal remains of the legendary giant Kohlasa. Necromantic energies had despoiled this body once interred and forgotten in a sunken Morrowan tomb. Dumas only stipulated that he must supervise the treatment of the remains to ensure proper honors, as Kohlasa had served as a Knight of the Prophet. The skeleton remains on display at the university, surrounded by holy sigils, and the sight of the twenty-foot tall form has amazed and brought wonder to all who have seen it. Few confirmed facts remain regarding Kohlasa, who died centuries ago. He “came from the east, across the sands” was all they knew, and he would say no more, yet he performed legendary feats of strength, courage, and righteousness in Morrow’s name.

There is also my own highly unusual encounter with the guardian giant Gorgolorbaramamiatt. Although these creatures do bear some physiological similarities—discounting the plethora of eyes on the guardian giant—in having two fingers and a thumb, similar skulls, height, and build, I am reluctant to extrapolate much about the species of giants found in the east based on this extremely unusual creature.

The last thing I expected to encounter as my captors led through the crowded press of the skorne capital Halaak was a giant! The sights of the city had already overwhelmed me, with four-armed titans stomping through the streets as beasts

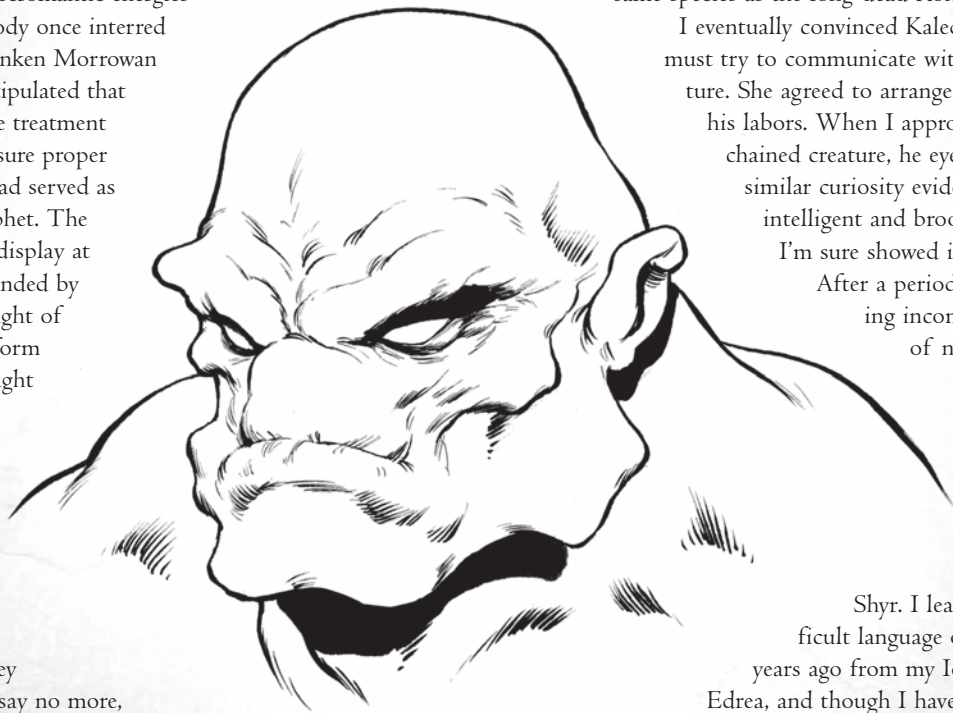
of burden, and other mammoth creatures pulling tremendous loads and winching oversized stones up for the construction of new buildings. Amidst a major construction project, I caught the heart-rending sight of a giant looming over every head yet bent by his burden. He carried a tremendous supply of granite bricks, as a man might carry buckets of water, from a brace across his shoulders. His weary face looked pained and his legs lined with lashes from the skorne handlers who whipped him cruelly. With a shock of excitement and sympathy I recognized immediately the creature I saw before me as the same species as the long-dead Kohlasa.

I eventually convinced Kaleda that I must try to communicate with this creature. She agreed to arrange a time after his labors. When I approached the chained creature, he eyed me with similar curiosity evident in his intelligent and brooding eyes as I’m sure showed in my own.

After a period of frustrating incomprehension of numerous tongues, I discovered that the creature spoke a passable if accented

Shyr. I learned the difficult language of the elves years ago from my Iosan associate Edrea, and though I have a weaker grasp of it than I would wish, by this language and some words of skorne we communicated a great deal. He told me his name was Chilon.

We talked for several days off and on, as his labors allowed, and only ceased when my handler forced me away. I intend eventually to write a longer work detailing this conversation in full. Even if only a portion of these anecdotes prove true, chasing them would take a younger scholar through an entire career. The skorne had only recently enslaved Chilon, and before this time his work had eerily resembled my own. I could not have asked for a better instructor on the lore of his people. However, I must warn that his enslaved condition may have prompted him to exaggeration. I have no means to verify the accuracy of any of



what he told me, and some of his stories stretched my credibility to its limit.

I learned his species, although severely declining and nearing extinction, lived to the north of the Skorne Empire. He did not give a precise number but I gathered only a few hundred at best survived in the last city of their kind, called Bemoth. The giants suffered in some great calamity of the ancient past, somehow related to the exodus of the elves, the details of which I am still trying to apprehend. This disaster obliterated both the old pre-Iosan empire and the civilization of giants and most of their cities.

They otherwise appear nearly immortal and do not suffer the ravages of time. They endure a perilously withered fertility and a general lack of females of their species; not one in ten children born among them are female, and few of those can bear offspring. There seems little hope of this condition reversing itself, but those who survive continue their proud traditions and fight to preserve what little remains of their culture. Adding to the peril of their situation, they prosecute an ongoing animosity and battles with the most terrible creatures that walk the face of Caen: the dragons. Now that the skorne have grown bold by capturing one, I wonder if more will follow. While I would welcome any distraction to slow the skorne advance on my own people, I do not wish the giants extinguished.

I will focus on several notable individuals of this species that my enslaved friend described. He used them as examples to provide a glimpse of the history and legacy of the giants. Giants are far from pacifists, and Chilon's tales dashed any fantasy I entertained of making an easy jaunt to set eyes on their cyclopean structures. The outer guardians and patrols from Bemoth take great pleasure in crushing any possible threat, large or small. The diminished state of their civilization has made the giants paranoid, with some justification. Wrestling with gigantic beasts like the chimera, or defending against the unassailable might of Charsaug and Ashnephos, I find it no

wonder that the giants consider themselves a people alone against the world. Chilon cautioned me never to enter their company without an escort. He imparted certain bits of advice on how to make such an approach safely, but out of my respect for him I will not relate them in print.

## Monstrous Giant Type

Monstrous Giants are humanoid shaped creatures of great strength and size, which often have supernatural or magical abilities.

### Features

A Monstrous Giant has the following features.

- 12-sided hit dice.
- Base attack bonus equal to total hit dice (same as fighter).
- Good Fortitude, Reflex, and Will saves.
- Skill points equal to (4 + Int modifier, minimum 1) per hit die, with quadruple skill points for the first hit die.

### Traits

A Monstrous Giant has the following traits, unless otherwise noted in its description.

- Low-light vision.
- Immunity to paralysis, sleep, and fear effects as well as spells with the [Earth] descriptor.
- Proficient with all simple and martial weapons and any weapons mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient in light armor, shields, and whatever type of armor (light, medium or heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as lighter types.

Monstrous giants eat, sleep, and breathe but can endure extended time without engaging in these activities, based on bonus points of Constitution. Monstrous giants can go without eating for 1 month per point, without sleeping for 1 day per point, and without breathing for 1 hour per point of Constitution bonus.

*I recall the childhood tales of the mighty giant Kohlasa who perished protecting Dorvis against a monstrous painted tatzlwurm hundreds of years ago. I wonder now if he came alone across the storm-wracked Abyss or if others of his kind still dwell in the far reaches of our lands.*

—VP

# Giants

## Ajaxus



**LN Huge Monstrous Giant CR 25**

**Hit Dice:** 30d12+420 (615 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Damage reduction 5/—, paralysis, sleep, fear effects, spells with the [Earth] descriptor, acid, lightning, spell resistance 30

**Senses:** Listen +20, Spot +20

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Armor Class:** 30, touch 12, flat-footed 28 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +12 natural armor, +8 armor)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +30/+53

**Attack:** Govan—+5 gargantuan axiomatic maul +50 melee (6d6+27/x2 +2d6 vs. chaotic) or Fist +43 (1d8+22/x2)

**Full Attack:** Govan—+5 gargantuan axiomatic maul +50/+45/+40/+35/+30/+25 melee (6d6+27/x2 +2d6 vs. chaotic) or Fist +43/+38/+33/+28/+23 melee (1d8+22/x2)

**Special Attacks:** Call to earth

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Cast spells as a 17th level cleric, regeneration 5

**Saves:** Fort +31, Ref +19, Will +27

**Abilities:** Str 40, Dex 14, Con 38, Int 19, Wis 30, Cha 22

**Skills:** Climb +25, Concentration +45, Craft (smithing) +29, Diplomacy +26, Heal +43, Intimidate +26, Jump +35, Knowledge (history) +24, Knowledge (religion) +29, Listen +20, Sense Motive +30, Spellcraft +24, Spot +20

**Feats:** Cleave, Combat Casting, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Improved Initiative, Earth's Skin<sup>1</sup>, Endurance, Improved Sunder, Weapon Focus (maul), Greater Weapon Focus (maul), Spell Penetration

**Environment:** Bemoth or surroundings

**Organization:** Unique (may be encountered with a retinue of 2-5 other giants)

<sup>1</sup>IKCG feat



Chilon described Ajaxus as peerless among giants, a mighty leader, and what passes for a high priest in Bemoth. No humble priest such as we might find overseeing services in a cathedral of one of our cities, this massive champion strides forth to shake the earth and bring his tremendous maul Govan against any intruders that threaten his peoples' seclusion and safety. The tales of Ajaxus reminded me of the stories of Kohlasa and his hammer Duteus.

Through the tales of Ajaxus the king and priest, I labored to understand the religion of the giants. Their creation myth convinces me they worship an entity nearly identical to the Creator of Man! Their size, three-fingered hands, and thickened skulls would suggest no relation, but I have learned stranger truths. The giants tell of how their creator, a masked giant named Monloeth who towers above the mountains, once chased a tremendous serpent at the dawn of the world. The sharp peaks of volcanoes sliced open his feet such that he trailed blood for fifty paces. The first giants sprang to life from the soil stained with their god's blood, nurtured by the

"Earth Mother". Giants call these first fifty progenitors the "Hekatonkheires" or "hundred handed". These divided into three distinct tribes, settled, and founded a civilization.

The translation may have confused me, but Chilon seemed to place Ajaxus among the Hekatonkheires. This may instead refer to a title denoting great respect. Ajaxus serves as a priest of Monloeth and leads his faith in Bemoth. He stands sworn to defend his people against the serpent enemy, which they believe spawned the dragons. Their religion also praises an Earth Mother Shebess, perhaps another name for Dhuniã.

Chilon has had few personal conversations with Ajaxus. The priest-lord apparently roams far from Bemoth on holy sojourns, north into the mountains to review the defensive works against the dragons or onto the southern plains to squash other enemies of the giants. Chilon described Ajaxus as the most wrathful of giants with tremendous influence over his people who fear and love him. They boast that Ajaxus has shattered entire mountains with his hammer, and stones spring from the earth to form walls at his command. Ajaxus has slaughtered a number of skorne who ventured too far north.

As Chilon related these stories I realized he focused upon these individual giants from some hopeful longing that one or several of them might come to rescue him eventually. I have no idea whether that is likely or a fever-dream.

## Combat

While most formidable as a melee combatant, Ajaxus remains a powerful divine caster who utilizes spells to bolster his power or hinder his adversaries. He has no fear of fighting alone, but against the northern dragons a loyal retinue accompanies him, including a shieldbearer, an archer-scout, and several armored subordinates of Bemoth's priesthood.

**Call to Earth (Su):** As a standard action, Ajaxus can target a single creature within 1500 feet which must succeed a Fortitude save (DC 40) or fall to the ground, suffering normal falling damage after losing any powers of flight, lasting for a duration of 10 minutes. Any creature affected by this ability, including one already on the ground, can only move at half speed, loses the benefit of a Dexterity modifier, and incurs

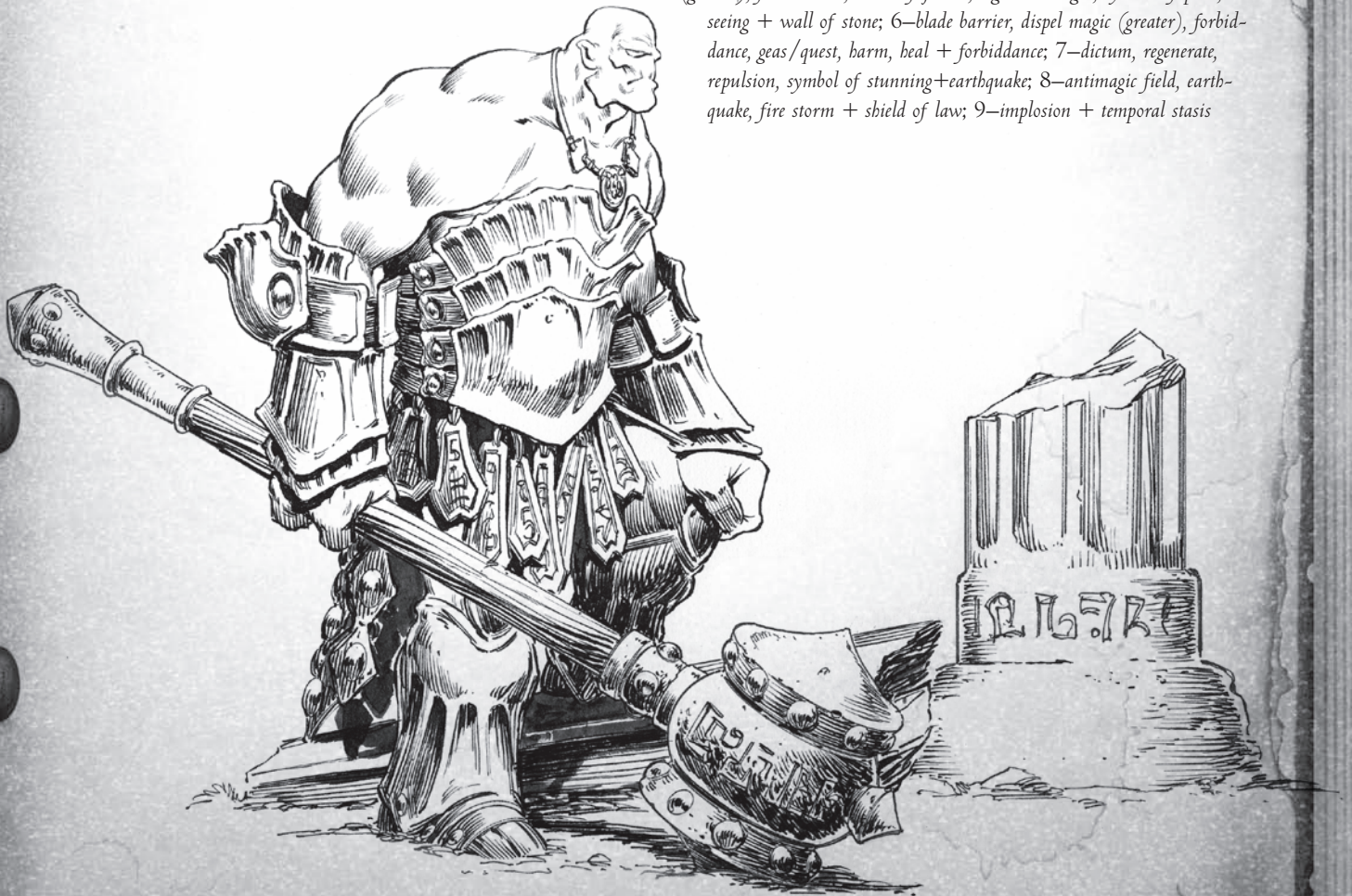
a -5 penalty to melee attack and damage rolls. There is no limit to how many times Ajaxus can utilize this ability, but it can only effect one target at a time. Individual creatures can only be affected by this power once per day. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Regeneration (Su):** Fire deals normal damage to Ajaxus. If Ajaxus loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes, or instantly if the severed member is held to the stump.

**Spells:** Ajaxus casts divine spells as a 17th level cleric, with access to the domains of Earth and Law. Save DCs are Wisdom-based.

*Typical Cleric Spells Prepared (6/8+1/8+1/7+1/7+1/6+1/6+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; DC 20 + spell level)*

1—command, divine favor, doom, protection from chaos + magic stone; 2—align weapon, bear's endurance, enthrall, hold person, make whole, shatter, silence, zone of truth + soften earth and stone; 3—blindness/deafness, continual flame, dispel magic, invisibility purge, meld into stone, searing light, stone shape + magic circle against chaos; 4—discern lies, divination, freedom of movement, restoration, sending, tongues + order's wrath; 5—command (greater), flame strike, mark of justice, righteous might, symbol of pain, true seeing + wall of stone; 6—blade barrier, dispel magic (greater), forbiddance, geas/quest, harm, heal + forbiddance; 7—dictum, regenerate, repulsion, symbol of stunning+earthquake; 8—antimagic field, earthquake, fire storm + shield of law; 9—implosion + temporal stasis



# Giants

## Oulixes



<b>N Huge Monstrous Giant CR 25</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	32d12+320 (528 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage reduction 4/-, paralysis, sleep, fear effects, spells with the [Earth] descriptor, lightning, spell resistance 30
<b>Senses:</b>	Listen +32, Spot +32
<b>Initiative:</b>	+8
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft. (10 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	33, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+6 studded leather +3, -2 size, +9 Dex, +10 natural armor)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+32/+51
<b>Attack:</b>	Hegad +3 huge distance composite longbow (+10 strength bonus) +42 ranged (3d6+13/x3) or Wurmfang +3 huge bane (dragons) longspear +44 melee (3d6+11/x3) or Argosis +3 huge keen shortsword +44 melee (2d6+11/17-20/x2)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Hegad +42/+37/+32/+27 ranged (3d6+13/x3) or Wurmfang +44/+39/+34/+29 melee (3d6+11/x3) or Argosis +44/+39/+34/+29 melee (2d6+11/17-20 x2)

<b>Space/Reach:</b>	15 ft./15 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Camouflage, favored enemy, favored terrain, regeneration 4, trackless step, vanish, woodland stride
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +28, Ref +27, Will +23
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 32, Dex 28, Con 30, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 16
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +31, Craft (trapmaking) +32, Heal +23, Hide +33, Jump +31, Knowledge (geography) +35, Listen +32, Move Silently +41, Search +20, Spot +32, Survival +40, Swim +31, Use Rope +29
<b>Feats:</b>	Alertness <sup>B</sup> , Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Die Hard <sup>B</sup> , Dodge, Endurance <sup>B</sup> , Far Shot, Improved Precise Shot, Manyshot, Mobility, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Point Blank Shot, Run <sup>B</sup> , Stealthy, Track <sup>B</sup>
<b>Environment:</b>	Suneater Mountains
<b>Organization:</b>	Unique



**O**f all Chilon's tales, I found the stories of Oulixes most difficult to believe. This giant, a famed hunter and trickster, descends from some lost tribe that once dwelt further up the rivers of the Suneater Mountains. I have difficulty imagining a creature as large as a giant capable of stealth, subtlety, and nimble evasion, yet I suppose a gobber might say the same of lumbering humans.

To hear Chilon speak, Oulixes makes a sport of tormenting the northern dragons. He leads them on diversionary chases which keep the remaining giants of Bemoth safe. Chilon described him in terms one might reserve for a god or some tremendous hero of legend. Excepting himself, Chilon described all the individual giants this way. Perhaps the regular citizen of Bemoth is different? I am unsure of the ages of any of these giants, as such questions puzzled Chilon. I think they may not measure age or even pay attention to the passage of time as we do.

A swift giant noted for his prowess with his bow, spear, and blade, Oulixes also constructs elaborate and extensive

traps. He apparently shaped each of his extraordinary weapons himself. His bow Hegad reputedly can launch an arrow to any distance Oulixes can see. His spear uses a point carved from a tooth of the dragon Erdross. His blade can cut through hide and flesh without resistance. I can't imagine any of these things hindering a dragon, yet Chilon insists that is the foremost avocation of this hunter, who knows the peaks and valleys of the Suneater Mountains better than any of their kin. Oulixes acts out of vengeance as the sole survivor of a village north of Bemoth wiped out by Ashnephos.

As with the other giants, enmity with the dragons does not translate to any friendliness toward other creatures. They believe it safer to slay what one does not understand rather than risk harm befalling them from an unfamiliar source. I suspect death by Oulixes would come swiftly and with no warning. Chilon described him as having phenomenal powers to elude sight and detection, drawing shadows to himself and disappearing into the landscape without a trace.



## Combat

Oulixes prefers to ambush from a distance and avoids engaging enemies directly whenever possible.

**Camouflage (Ex):** Oulixes can use the Hide ability in any sort of natural terrain, even terrain that does not grant cover or concealment.

**Favored Enemy (dragon+10, magical beast +8, aberration +6, animal +4, humanoid (skorne) +2) (Ex):** Oulixes gains the listed bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against a creature of the listed type. Likewise he gains the listed bonus on damage rolls against such creatures.

**Trackless Step (Ex):** Oulixes leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. He may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

**Woodland Stride (Ex):** Oulixes may move through any type of undergrowth at his normal speed and without taking

damage or suffering any other impairment. However, terrain magically manipulated to impede motion may still affect him.

**Favored terrain (mountains+6, hills+4, arctic+2) (Ex):** Oulixes has the listed competency bonus to Hide, Move Silently, Spot and Survival checks in each respective terrain type and also reduces movement penalties in the favored terrain to the next highest fraction.

**Vanish (Su):** As a free action, 1x/day Oulixes can completely vanish from sight and senses. This ability combines the effects of *invisibility* and *mind blank*, making Oulixes undetectable by scent as well and lasting for as long as Oulixes maintains concentration.

**Regeneration (Su):** Acid and fire deal normal damage to Oulixes. If Oulixes loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes, or instantly if the severed member is held to the stump.



# Giants

## Hekor



**LN Huge Monstrous Giant CR 25**

**Hit Dice:** 28d12+532 (708 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Damage reduction 10/-, paralysis, sleep, fear effects, spells with the [Earth] descriptor, acid, fire, spell resistance 30

**Senses:** Listen +27, Spot +27

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Armor Class:** 36, touch 11, flat-footed 33 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +9 armor, +6 shield, +10 natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +28/+48

**Attack:** Deklos—+5 huge wounding longsword +44 melee (3d6+21/17-20) or +3 pilum +33 ranged (3d6+17/19-20 x3) or +4 shield discus +33 ranged (3d8+16/19-20 x3)

**Full Attack:** Deklos—+5 huge wounding longsword +44/+39/+34/+29/+24 melee (3d6+21/17-20) or +3 pilum +33/+28/+23 ranged (3d6+17/19-20 x3) or +4 shield discus +33 ranged (3d8+16/19-20 x3)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Pilum impalement, shield discus, shield sundering

**Special Qualities:** Bulkwark shield, regeneration 10

**Saves:** Fort +35, Ref +21, Will +23

**Abilities:** Str 34, Dex 16, Con 48, Int 16, Wis 24, Cha 18

**Skills:** Climb +32, Craft (smithing) +28, Craft (stoneworking) +28, Diplomacy +19, Heal +17, Intimidate +35, Jump +37, Knowledge (history) +18, Listen +27, Spot +27, Swim 28

**Feats:** Blind-Fight<sup>B</sup>, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword)<sup>B</sup>, Improved Bull Rush<sup>B</sup>, Improved Critical (longsword)<sup>B</sup>, Improved Critical (pilum)<sup>B</sup>, Improved Critical (shield discus)<sup>B</sup>, Improved Disarm, Improved Sunder<sup>B</sup>, Improved Shield Bash, Improved Unarmed Strike<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack, Run, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (pilum), Weapon Specialization (longsword)<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Specialization (pilum)<sup>B</sup>

**Environment:** Bemoth

**Organization:** Unique



**M**any of Chilon's favored tales involved the warriors defending his city. He spoke of none with greater admiration than Hekor, Champion of Bemoth. Language and cultural barriers made it sometimes difficult to garner exact meaning, but I gathered that the giants credit Hekor for the survival of Bemoth in the time of the great upheavals. This implies he is upwards of five thousand years old. I barely restrained my skepticism on hearing this. Chilon described Hekor as "brother" of Ajaxus, but whether he meant a fraternal or figurative bond I could not tell. The paragon soldier in Bemoth, I gathered Hekor would act as general if his people could muster an army. To hear Chilon speak, Hekor alone is the equal of an army.

Hekor is a master-at-arms and responsible for ensuring that every giant, no matter his avocation, is prepared to fight when called upon. He stays close to Bemoth but ventures from

the city to review outposts and bulwarks and direct those who work to keep the dragons at bay. Chilon praised Hekor with every breath and named him almost alone as the reason their species had not vanished in several catastrophes. If Chilon's boasts are true, Hekor is unique among giants being unharmed by fire, a great asset against the dragons.

The only hint of reproach in the tales of Bemoth's Champion stems from Hekor's involvement in the destruction of Erdross, the first dragon of the north. Hekor loaned all his strength and guile to the task of shattering the defeated dragon's athanc. His great blow finally divided the heartstone and shattered his old sword to dust. Without knowing their folly, the giants cast the two pieces into a volcano, which gave rise to the two dragons Charsaug and Ashnephos. The destruction that followed torments the Champion of Bemoth as the dragons slew many of his kin before they erected defenses.

He holds himself personally responsible and has maintained unsleeping vigil ever since.

Hekor's fascinating accouterments reminded me of descriptions of ancient warriors from Calacia, the precursor to Caspia. He apparently wears splinted armor and carries a round shield, behind which he keeps javelins called pilum. The shafts bend upon striking to trip up a foe or force him to abandon his shield. This fighting style implies that giants once warred among themselves. Chilon affirmed this; even in these troubled modern times the giants do not always agree and occasionally clash to determine supremacy. None could

ever stand against Hekor or his brother, however. The two have united their people by blade, fiery oratory, and reminders of the dragon peril.

## Combat

**Pilum Impalement (Ex):** Hekor may use a pilum to hinder his opponent's movement. After a successful ranged attack with a pilum the opponent must make a successful Reflex save (DC 39) or suffer -10 feet movement until he removes the pilum. This penalty does not stack with further pilum impalements.

Removing a pilum requires a standard action and a Strength check (DC equal to the damage done). A thrown pilum cannot be reused. Hekor keeps 3 pila on his person. The pilum has a range increment of 50 feet and cannot be used in melee.

**Shield Sundering (Ex):** Hekor may use a pilum to sunder an opponent's shield with a ranged attack. This sundering attempt does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If the sundering damage does not destroy the shield, the character bearing the shield suffers the same penalties to movement as pilum impalement (these effects do not stack). The character may unequip his shield or remove the pilum to remove this penalty.

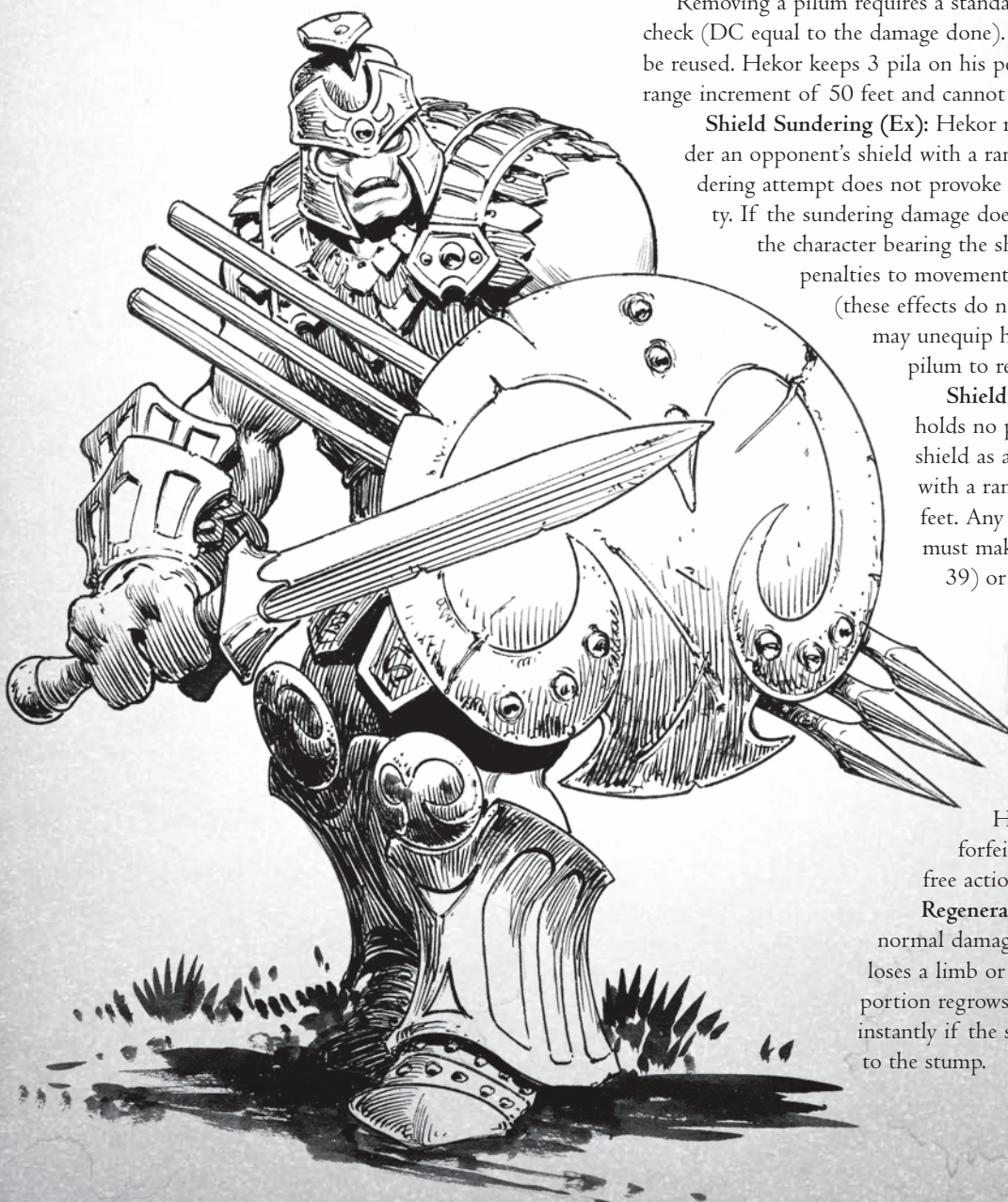
**Shield Discus (Ex):** So long it holds no pila, Hekor may hurl his shield as a special ranged attack with a range increment of 20 feet. Any target hit by the shield must make a Reflex save (DC 39) or be knocked prone.

**Bulwark Shield (Su):**

So long as he bears his shield, Hekor automatically reflects back on the caster all spells targeting him (as *spell turning*).

Hekor can voluntarily forfeit this protection as a free action.

**Regeneration (Su):** Cold deals normal damage to Hekor. If Hekor loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes, or instantly if the severed member is held to the stump.



# Giants

## Chilon



### N Huge Monstrous Giant CR 18

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	25d12+125 (288 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage reduction 2/slashing or piercing, paralysis, sleep, fear effects, spells with the Earth descriptor, spell resistance 15
<b>Senses:</b>	Listen +18, Spot +18
<b>Initiative:</b>	+4
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft. (10 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	22, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (-2 size, +4 Dex, +10 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+25/+43
<b>Attack:</b>	Fist +35 melee (1d6+10)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Fist +35 melee (1d6+10)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	15 ft./15 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Regeneration 2
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +19, Ref +18, Will +22
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 30, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 26, Wis 22, Cha 24

<b>Skills:</b>	Appraise +30, Bluff +17, Climb +27, Concentration +30, Craft (stoneworking) +18, Decipher Script +25, Diplomacy +17, Disable Device +18, Escape Artist +11, Jump +16, Knowledge (archaeology) +39, Knowledge (giant history) +36, Knowledge (religion) +28, Knowledge (ancient history) +33, Knowledge (Lyoss) +20, Knowledge (geography) +28, Listen +18, Search +33, Spot +18, Survival +21, Swim +17, Use Rope +14
<b>Feats:</b>	Alertness, Athletic, Diligent, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Grapple, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (knowledge (archaeology))
<b>Environment:</b>	Halaak or eastern Immoren
<b>Organization:</b>	Unique



In contrast to the tales of his peers, Chilon remained humble and self-effacing. I cannot claim a comprehensive understanding of giant culture, but Chilon counted himself a lesser caste than the heroes he named. Some true difference may exist in the unique powers boasted by various inhabitants of Bemoth, what they call the “blessings of Shebess”.

While claiming no great combat prowess, Chilon demonstrated fantastic strength of mind. He seemed a scholar among his people, an explorer of old ruins, and he spoke a dozen lost tongues unfamiliar to me. The language of the Iosans has not changed substantially in thousands of years, apparently, for we conversed in it passably. He had made it his work to examine the lost cities of the Empire of Lyoss.

Chilon blamed himself for his capture, having acted recklessly in his explorations. He shunned the company of his peers and preferred to work alone. While investigating a singularly expansive set of surviving Lyossan ruins surrounded by wind-swept desert and dunes just north of the Shroudfall Mountains, he had scared off curious desert dwellers—by which he meant the efarit—but in so doing attracted notice of skorne nomads. Having passed down tales of disastrous encounters with giants, these skorne war-bands proceeded to

cautiously, stealthily circle the ruins and draw the noose on Chilon. Though discounting his own capability in combat, Chilon admitted he snapped the necks of dozens of skorne and shattered the back of a titan brought to assist the capture. Eventually the skorne weakened him with drugged whips and darts, brought him down, wrapped him in chains, and dragged him south. He claims that starvation and thirst at skorne hands has robbed him of much of his former vitality and strength, but he still seemed formidable to my eyes.

He learned the skorne language far faster than I, and they quickly put him to use as manual labor, apparently as an expedient way to try to break his will. He has resisted their efforts to turn his strength to warfare. The house that “owns” him dearly wishes to use him as a weapon, but he swears to die before he will fight in their name. The plight of this proud and stubborn creature struck a chord with this fellow captive. I later encouraged certain events by which I hope to assist his eventual escape. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see Chilon free to return to his people. Perhaps he will remember a stimulating exchange of words with a diminutive human of the west. I think this the only hope that one day a meaningful exchange of information might occur between our species.

## Combat

Chilon does not consider himself a warrior, yet by size and strength alone he boasts formidable melee capabilities. He prefers to avoid battle if possible and engage potential adversaries in conversation. If cornered he fights without reservation, fear, or apparent fatigue.

**Mind Over Matter (Su):** Chilon is immune to all enchantment effects, death magic, symbols, and can resist any divination spells or efforts to force him to answer by coercion so long as he can maintain concentration. By this ability Chilon can also ignore the effects of being fatigued, sickened, exhausted, or nauseated.

**Perfect Memory (Ex):** Chilon always treats any Knowledge skill check as if he had rolled a 20.

**Regeneration (Su):** Fire and acid deal normal damage to Chilon. If Chilon loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes, or instantly if the severed member is held to the stump.

## Legends & Lore (Skorne)

**Common:** Giants dwell north of the Shroudwall Mountains.

**Uncommon:** Extremely intelligent and strong, giants kill any who intrude on their territory.

**Rare:** Giants inhabit a great city named Bemoth but slay any who approach this place.

**Obscure:** Tenacious and resilient, very few creatures can harm, let alone kill, a giant. They have a vulnerability to fire, however, that clever opponents can exploit.



# Glimmer Imp



Usually CE Small Fey (Grymkin) CR 4

Hit Dice: 5d6 (15 hp)

Senses: Blindsight, low light vision, Listen +10,  
Spot +7

Initiative: +4

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)

Armor Class: 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+1 size  
+4 Dex +2 padded armor)

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/-2

Attack: Sharpened spoon +6 melee (1d4-1)

Full Attack: Sharpened spoon +6 melee (1d4-1)

Special Attacks: Paralyzing gaze, scoop

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Greater invisibility, mirror viewed

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +8, Will +6

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 18, Con 10,

Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +5, Escape Artist +10,

Move Silently +10, Search +4,

Tumble +10, Open Lock +10

Feats: Weapon finesse

Environment: Urban

Organization: Solitary

Some months after finishing my first volume but before I began to explore the Bloodstone Marches in earnest, an inconvenience related to the war abroad forced me to stay several days in Fharin. Crowding in town necessitated sharing a room with Jerim Vanderly, a self-absorbed merchant dandy much bothered by the delays. He turned in early while I stayed up to hear a fascinating if morbid tale from the barkeep. Six months before a local woman of means had claimed to see some hideous man-like creature while attending to her appearance, lost both her eyes, and gone insane.

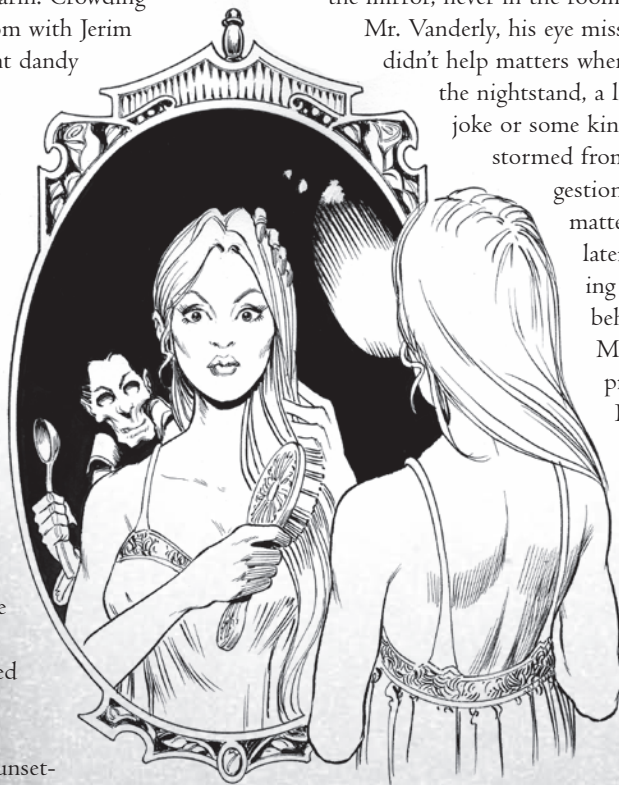
I put no more faith in this than the usual tavern gossip and ghost tales. Eventually I retired to my room and had just fallen to sleep when horrible screaming brought me awake. Mr. Vanderly stood upright staring into the mirror by the dresser, one hand clapped over his face, while babbling incoherently. Blood leaked from around his clenched fingers.

Leaping to my feet to render assistance, I saw something truly unsettling in the mirror. An eyeless impish creature grinned at me triumphantly from the glass. In one hand it held a sharpened metal spoon, while in the other dangled the orb of an eye violently excised from its owner. The imp happily inserted this grisly trophy into its own empty socket and

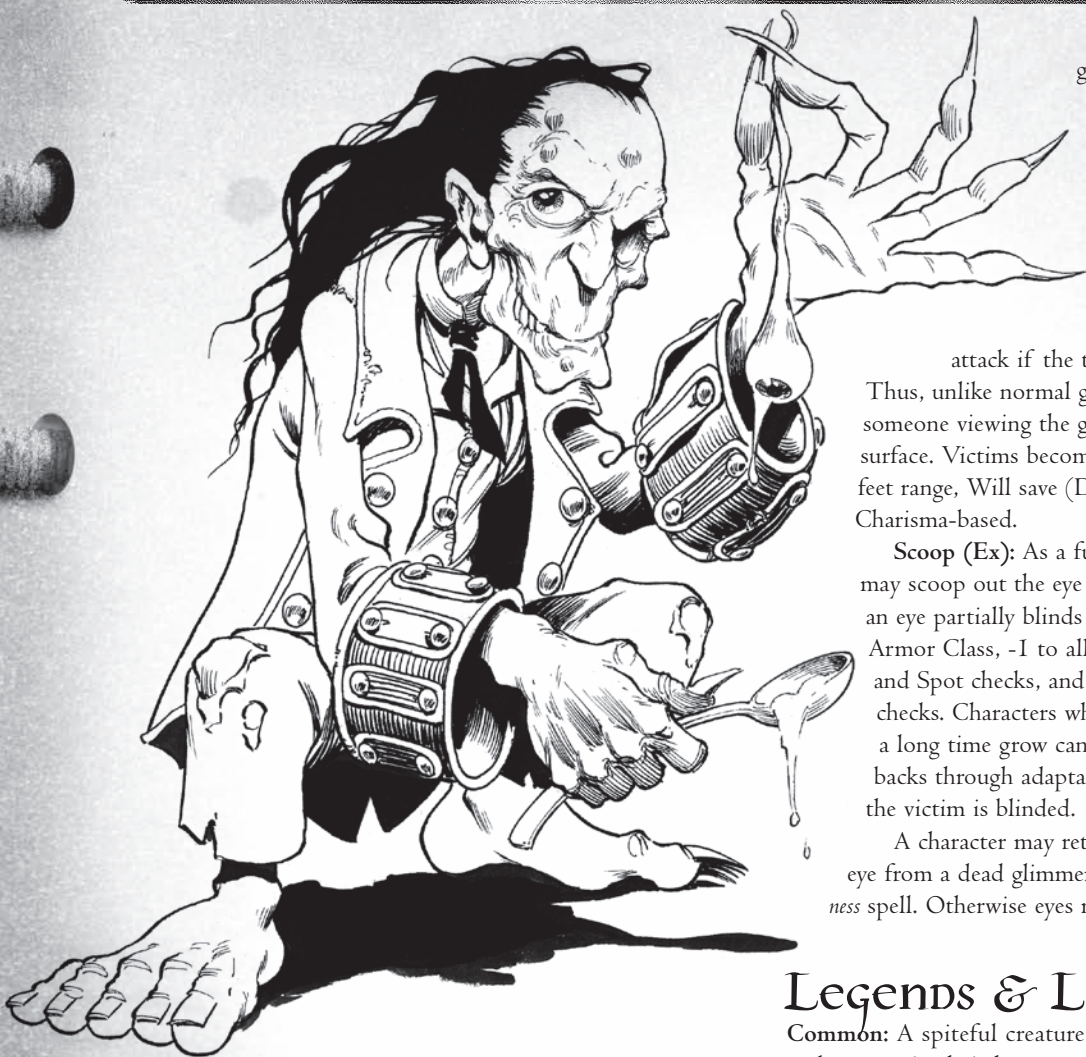
blinked at me through this stolen eye. Just as I reached for my sword, the creature scrambled away and out our open door I distinctly remember locking. The entire time I saw it only in the mirror, never in the room.

Mr. Vanderly, his eye missing, understandably panicked. It didn't help matters when we found, folded neatly upon the nightstand, a leather eye-patch left as either a joke or some kind of demented offering. Vanderly stormed from the room and ignored my suggestion that we try to investigate the matter and track down the culprit. I later heard it related that the following evening, while staying elsewhere behind a guarded and locked door, Mr. Vanderly lost his other eye, presumably to the same creature. I brooded on why the creature ignored me, and could only conclude that having one of my own eyes damaged made me unsuitable prey.

As to the imp, I have learned little beyond what I saw, but I have heard tales of this eye-thief repeated in other towns and villages, always associated with a mirror. I only know it has no eyes and seeks to steal a pair for its use. I did meet one man, whose tale I cannot confirm, who claimed he caught the imp after losing his first eye and negotiated for its return, thereby restoring his vision. Yet every other tale ends with a victim left forever in darkness.



## Glimmer Imp



### Combat

Glimmer imps seek out the eyes of humans, elves, and dwarves but rarely show interest in the eyes of any other creature. They prefer rare colors especially brilliant green. They ambush their prey whenever possible, silently stalking and using their paralytic gaze when their prey looks in a mirror or reflective surface such as a pool of water.

**Borrowed Eyes (Su):** Once per day a glimmer imp may install a scooped eye into its eye socket and gain +2 Charisma. A glimmer imp without any eyes has blindsight. If a character recovers their eye from a glimmer imp they become immune to the paralyzing gaze of glimmer imps and those that recover both stolen eyes may use *see invisibility* as a spell-like ability for a half hour once per day. A glimmer imp's borrowed eye lasts about 6 months before it shrivels to dust and forces the imp to hunt anew.

**Greater Invisibility (Su):** Always invisible, glimmer imps remains invisible even when attacking and only appear when seen in a reflective surface.

**Mirror View (Su):** The glimmer imp is never invisible when viewed in a mirror and may make gaze attacks. Furthermore, a glimmer imp can see an invisible creature's reflections in a mirror.

**Paralyzing gaze (Su):** A glimmer imp may only use this non-standard gaze attack if the target can see the glimmer imp. Thus, unlike normal gaze attacks, this attack affects someone viewing the glimmer imp through a reflective surface. Victims become paralyzed for 1d4 rounds, 60 feet range, Will save (DC 13) negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Scoop (Ex):** As a full round action the glimmer imp may scoop out the eye of a helpless target. Removing an eye partially blinds the victim, inflicting a -1 to Armor Class, -1 to all ranged attacks, a -2 on Search and Spot checks, and -2 to most Dexterity-based skill checks. Characters who remain partially blinded for a long time grow can overcome some of these drawbacks through adaptation. If both eyes are removed the victim is blinded.

A character may return his vision by recovering his eye from a dead glimmer imp and using the *remove blindness* spell. Otherwise eyes may regrow using *regeneration*.

### Legends & Lore

**Common:** A spiteful creature called an "eye thief" stalks men and women in their homes, waiting to steal away their eyes. Be suspicious of the sudden appearance or secret gift of a new mirror.

**Uncommon:** The glimmer imp has no eyes of its own and craves to see through the eyes of others. It prefers to gather a matched pair though it can only install one eye each day. Once it has stolen one eye, it always comes back for the other. A well-laid trap might be your only chance to return your eye.

**Rare:** A glimmer imp only appears in reflective surfaces like mirrors, but it may paralyze you if it catches you looking. The glimmer imp prefers exotic colored eyes over plain ones and rarely bothers those with simple brown eyes.

**Obscure:** Glimmer imps may sometimes leave one victim in peace if it will lead them to someone else with prettier or more unusual eyes. Recovered eyes may retain some mysterious powers of the imp itself.

# Hornbeak Trask



Always N Small Magical Beast CR ½	
Hit Dice:	1d10 (5 hp)
Senses:	Darkvision 60 feet, low light vision; Listen +5, Spot +5
Initiative:	+3
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), Climb 15 ft.
Armor Class:	16, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+1 small, +3 Dex, +2 natural armor)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+1/-5
Attack:	Bite +1 melee (1d4-2/x2)
Full Attack:	Bite +1 melee (1d4-2/x2)

Special Attacks:	Adrenaline surge
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Gluttonous metabolism, hibernation, scent
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 7, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills:	Hide +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Spot +5
Feats:	Weapon Focus (bite)
Environment:	Tropical forest, hills, or jungle
Organization:	Solitary or small pack (2-8)



Scholars of Extraordinary Zoology inevitably come across unusual creatures, but I try to leave them in the wilderness where they belong. My associate and junior professor Lynus Wesselbaum picked up one such creature and made the dubious decision of keeping it around. I don't suspect getting rid of it will be an easy task now. I have yet to encounter another one like it, and I am fairly certain it originated on the southern continent of Zu. Lacking any proper context, he has come to refer to it as a hornbeak trask, owing to its superficial similarity in appearance to the less exotic razorback trask. The name serves as well as any other.

For all I know these things are common as rats in Zu, but I hope not. Their prodigious appetites and apparently accelerated metabolism suggests that, if common, they would soon strip the continent bare. I can only hope in their natural environment they have some predator keeping them in check. Lynus gets quickly offended when I mention such ecological necessities, but then he has had an attachment to the creature ever since it followed him from a wharf-side tavern in southern Mercir. To the best of my understanding the creature bonded to him after he incautiously fed it from his plate. As soon as it discovered in him a reliable source of provender, it followed him. Now you can rarely find Lynus without the hungry beast lingering nearby. Even after the creature ate Lynus' unfortunate dog in a fit of gluttony, he forgave it and kept it around. Personally, I consider

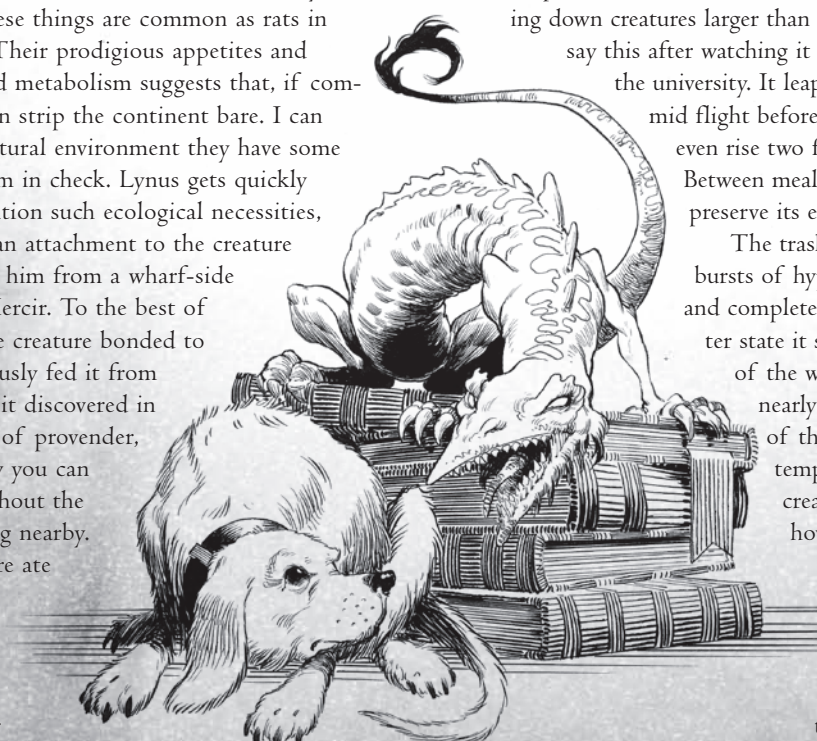
it a menace and likely to eat Lynus if he should forget to keep it satiated. I believe he left the beast with some associate at Corvis University during his recent travels to northern Khador, and I have no doubt it was responsible for any number of unpleasant accidents and missing pets during its stay.

Aside from being one of the few specimens of native wildlife from Zu, I find the creature fascinating because of its strange metabolism and the behavior this has engendered. Like certain tenacious and hyperactive rodents, the trask seems capable of surprising bursts of speed and energy. I believe it a fearsome predator in its natural environment capable of bringing down creatures larger than other hunters its size. I say this after watching it stalk a large hawk behind the university. It leapt and caught the bird in mid flight before the startled thing could even rise two feet from the ground.

Between meals it prefers slumbering to preserve its energy reserves.

The trask alternates between bursts of hyperactive, violent action and complete somnolence. In the latter state it seems to ignore the rest of the world and often proves nearly impossible to rouse. All of this presents an unusual template for the life of these creatures in the wild. Given how firmly it has bonded to

Lynus I must presume they have some kind of pack or strong family group behavior in their natural climate, and



# Hornbeak Trask

I'd expect a group of these creatures would make formidable hunters. It has demonstrated intelligence and capability for mischief. I hope Lynus' example doesn't prompt other students to seek them out, as the last thing we need is hundreds of ravenous half-tamed carnivores set upon our major cities.

## Combat

The hornbeak trask stalks its prey until it closes, then it unleashes a tremendous burst of hyperactive strength. Trasks prefer to hunt in small groups, each taking their turn to attack before falling back and defending one another if a prey should prove difficult.

**Adrenaline Surge (Ex):** Once a day the trask can prompt an adrenaline surge as a free action. During this surge the trask ignores any previous penalties from fatigue or exhaustion. The trask temporarily gains a +8 bonus to Strength and Constitution, +4 to Will saves, +10 speed and 2 secondary claw attacks.

Hit points gained from the bonus to Constitution go away when the surge fades. During the surge the trask cannot use Dexterity or Wisdom based skills. The surge lasts for a number of rounds equal to 2 plus its new Constitution bonus (4 rounds for the trask above). At the end of the surge the trask loses the modifiers and becomes exhausted. A trask which was already exhausted when entering the surge falls unconscious.

The above trask has the following stats during an adrenaline surge:

**Hit Points:** 9 hp  
**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), Climb 30 feet  
**Attack:** Bite +5 melee (1d4+2)  
**Full Attack:** Bite +5 melee (1d4+2) and 2 claws +0 (1d4+1)  
**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5

**Gluttonous Metabolism (Ex):** So long as the trask can glut itself, it only requires half the normal time to recover from exhaustion or fatigue. If the trask cannot consume half its weight in food every 24 hours it becomes fatigued.

**Hibernation (Ex):** A trask that has not eaten in 3 days will hibernate, falling unconscious for an extended period to conserve its energies. A hibernating trask does not require any food or water but will slowly lose weight. A trask can hibernate a maximum of three months, at which time it must emerge, though it can wake if exposed to an obvious source of food (strong odor) or if its surroundings change drastically. A newly awakened trask is sickened until it can eat.

**Skills:** The hornbeak trask has a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Move Silently, Listen, and Spot.

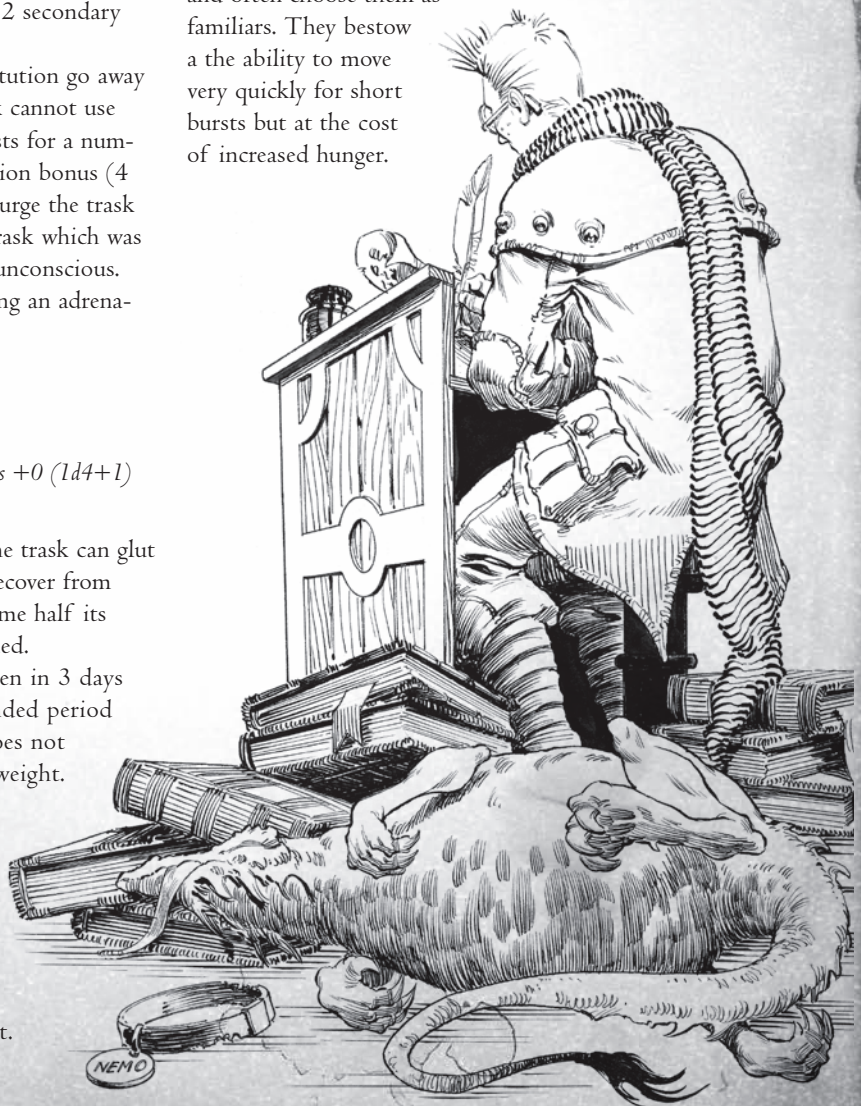
## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** Sailors returning from Zu tell of a strange reptile that sometimes stows away on board and sleeps for the entire trip. Though seemingly friendly to those that feed it, it has an incredible appetite.

**Rare:** The hornbeak trask demonstrates some of the qualities of both a mammal and a reptile. Though apparently warm-blooded, it supposedly hatches from a thick leathery egg. On occasion it can enter a dangerous, aggressive state but afterward becomes almost harmless and exhausted.

**Obscure:** The indigenous peoples of Zu call this creature "Karshar" and consider them possessed of the spirits of the dead sages who have decided to linger in the world. The sorcerers of certain tribes value the karshar's intelligence and loyalty and often choose them as familiars. They bestow a the ability to move very quickly for short bursts but at the cost of increased hunger.





# Infernal, Executor



Always LE Medium Outsider (Infernal, Nonokrion Order) CR 20

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	16d8+80 (152 hp)	<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 22, Dex 24, Con 21, Int 28, Wis 24, Cha 30
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Cold, damage reduction 15/epic, mind-affecting effects, petrification, poison, resistance 30 to acid, fire and electricity, spell resistance 30	<b>Skills:</b>	Appraise +33, Bluff +34, Concentration +24, Diplomacy +34, Forgery +33, Gather Information +34, Hide +26, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (infernal lore) +33, Knowledge (religion) +33, Knowledge (any other) +33, Listen +26, Move Silently +26, Search +26, Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +33, Spot +26
<b>Senses:</b>	Darksight, Listen +26, Spot +26	<b>Feats:</b>	All metamagic feats <sup>B</sup> , all item creation feats <sup>B</sup> , Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Penetration, Greater Spell Penetration
<b>Initiative:</b>	+11	<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft. (10 squares)	<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary (each is unique)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	34, touch 17, flat-footed 27 (+7 Dex, +17 natural)		
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+16/+22		
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.		
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Shape minion, spell-like abilities, spells		
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Metamagic mastery, outsider traits, superior infernal presence, superior soul mark, spell-like abilities, spells, telepathy 120 ft.		
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +15, Ref +19, Will +19		



I would have derived great pleasure from never writing of infernals again; the topic profoundly disturbs me. I obtained the lore noted here from a most unusual source. I discovered that a woman named Sybeth Roane, an open Thamarite, had taken an interest in my associate Edrea and arranged a meeting. I managed to intercept this charming but thoroughly subversive wizard, as I worried about Edrea's naïve curiosity and feared some kind of seductive recruitment effort. I forced Sybeth to endure my company, and I believe she took pleasure in unsettling me with tales of some of the most dire and insidious creatures imaginable who come to Caen to harvest souls and twist them to perverse purposes.

Sybeth called my previous efforts to summarize infernal cosmology "quaint" and attempted to learn the source of my information. I took this as a sign of the accuracy of my account. She provided one correction in terminology, explaining that infernals prefer the term "conscriptus" for their warrior caste, and I have adjusted my texts accordingly (the soul stalker and umbral reavers from my first volume likely occupy this caste). Her eagerness to impress me with her own daring led us to the topic of executors. Entities of tremendous power, executors exist above the already formidable curators who do the bulk of the day-to-day negotiations for the souls of mortals.

Executors come from an entirely higher echelon and standing. While curators boast tremendous arcane lore and occult

mastery, executors can bend the very fabric of reality. Magic flows through them and comprises their essence just as flesh, sinew, and blood compose the fundamentals of our bodies. This is the highest Nonokrion Order caste mortals can contact directly. Others rank above executors, but these architects and magnates are few in number and godlike in stature.

Sybeth insisted she did not practice infernalism, but she had the friendship of individuals on that treacherous path. She claimed to have stood within the infamous Infernal Archive of Ceryl, a treasure-trove of forbidden lore that the Order of Illumination would give nearly anything to destroy. The Archive takes particular note of negotiations with executors and records these singularly momentous arrangements. Such bargains can change the face of Caen, albeit in subtle and well disguised ways.

The executors appear when a deal grows too large for a curator to fulfill. These great supervisors of the dark trade do not deal in individual souls or a bit of life essence. Arrangements with an executor involve dozens or hundreds of souls, according to Sybeth. Additionally executors can make even more unusual and lasting arrangements to purchase souls as yet unborn through debts of blood lineage. She did not explain this processes fully, and when I questioned whether the gods would allow such an arrangement she offered only a mocking smile and said nothing.

Sybeth proved evasive when I asked for specific examples of executor arrangements. She did claim that the coal pit

## Infernal, Executor

explosion and inferno at Billingsdale, known now as Black Ghost Mountain, in fact comprised part of some price for an arrangement between an executor and an infernalist in Fharin. Sybeth insisted that executors specialized in this sort of subtle manipulation. Few suspect the number of souls thought safely in Urcaen that actually pass into infernal hands, a disturbing thought. I hope my own ancestors were not incautious in their promises to any dark powers. A man likes to consider his soul his own, but the executors put even that certainty into question.

### Ancillary Adjutants

Executors, like curators, sometimes bring peculiar creatures as servants. I understand they shape these entities from fragmentary pieces of soul matter similar to the “deciconscriptus” I describe in the following pages. I have attempted to illustrate one example, an otherworldly clerk to the executor, which Sybeth called an “archivist”. It seems strange that creatures so unattached to material reality should concern themselves with paperwork, but apparently executors and their subordinates find a sacred significance in formalizing negotiations in immutable text. This binding agreement ties to their arcane nature and reality itself conforms to preserve the contract.

Sybeth described such an archivist as the least of creatures an executor can shape with soul-matter. The archivist serves as a reservoir of soul-material as we might use a coin-purse. Executors can shape battle-ready conscriptus out of this reserve with a mere thought, although such creatures cannot long endure our reality without a binding contract. I cannot imagine a more perilous enterprise than summoning one of these creatures and giving it liberty to do as it wishes.

### Combat

Executors behave with extreme caution if challenged in battle, for death obliterates them permanently. Tremendously curious, executors prefer to watch a fight to completion. They will flee if they believe their destruction is imminent and return with a better plan of attack. Executors never engage in melee, utilizing their powers in all instances or creating conscriptus to fight in their stead.

### Executor

**Arcane Font (Su):** *Dispel magic*, *greater dispel magic*, and *antimagic field* do not effect executors. They cannot cast spells through an antimagic field, but such fields do not affect items carried by the executor, the executor's supernatural abilities, spell-like abilities, or spells it cast targeting itself.



*Executor*

# Infernal, Executor

**Darksight (Su):** Executors can see clearly in absolutely any kind of darkness, magical or otherwise.

**Immunities (Ex):** Executors are immune to all mind-affecting and charm effects as well as cold and poison. They can endure any environment on Caen, Urcaen, and their native realm without penalty.

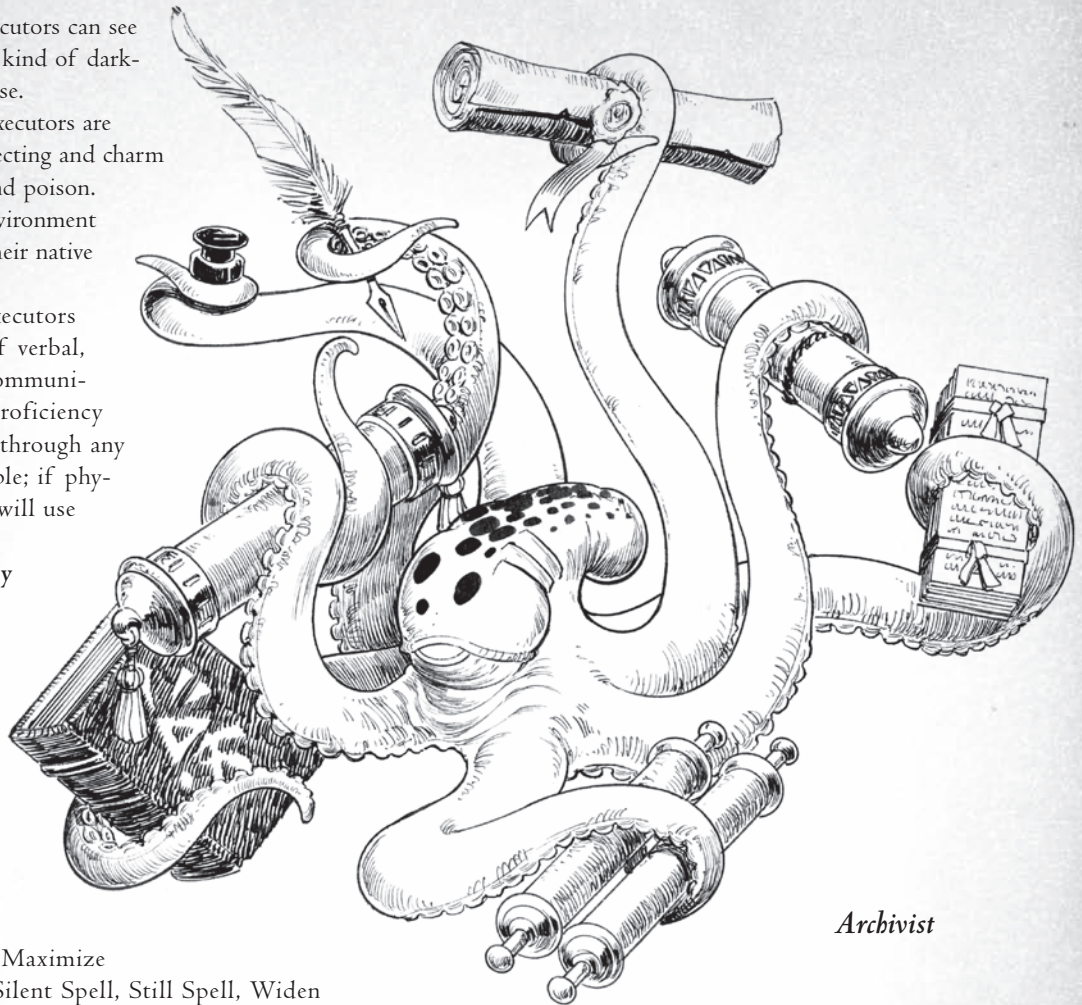
**Languages (Su):** Executors understand all forms of verbal, somatic, and written communication with complete proficiency and may communicate through any means physically possible; if physically impossible, they will use telepathy.

**Metamagic Mastery (Su):** Their close relationship with arcane magic allows executors to use two of the following feats on a single spell without paying any of the costs (no increased level costs, etc.): Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Heighten Spell, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Widen Spell. They may use additional metamagic feats (beyond two) to enhance a spell, but they must pay half the listed cost for using them. They may use metamagic feats not listed here, always only paying half of the listed cost for the enhancement.

**Resistances (Ex):** Executors have resistance 30 to acid, electricity, and fire.

**Spell Resistance (Ex):** Executors have spell resistance 30.

**Superior Infernal Presence (Su):** The environment warps when an executor answers a summons. This has a maximum range of 1000 feet but restricts itself to the immediate area (such as an enclosed room). Everything gets dark, strange lights drift in the air, distant cries and rattling chains echo around, a wind arises where none should blow, etc. The summoner cannot dampen these effects and becomes trapped in the area (doors lock and objects shift to make escape by mundane means impossible) unless the executor wishes otherwise. The immediate area comes under the effect of *mage's private sanctum* and the executor counts as having *mind blank*. All this grants the infernal a +8 circumstance bonus to Sense



*Archivist*

Motive checks. Any spell cast to mitigate any of these effects must overcome spell resistance 36.

**Spell-like Abilities:** At will—*arcane mark*, *break enchantment*, *detect magic*, *dismissal* (DC 25 + special), *dream*, *feeblemind* (DC 25), *invisibility*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *sending*, *clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *detect thoughts* (DC 22), *dispel good* (DC 25), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport*, *hold person* (DC 23), *insanity* (DC 27), *legend lore*, *geas/quest* (DC 26), *screaming*, *seeming* (DC 25), *spell turning*, *suggestion* (DC 23), *true seeing*. All save DCs are Charisma-based. Executors can use *geas/quest* only to fulfill negotiated contracts. Caster level 18th.

**Shape Minion (Su):** An executor in physical contact with its archivist or with another means of accessing souls (such as a soul cage) may expend souls to create conscriptus or deciconscriptus to fight in its stead or fulfill parts of a contract. Executors do not spend souls needlessly.

The executor must spend 2 hit dice worth of souls to create 1 hit die of conscriptus or deciconscriptus. The executor can utilize additional soul hit die to advance the conscriptus or deciconscriptus at the same 2:1 ratio.

## Infernal, Executor

Using this ability requires concentration and 1 standard action for every 16 HD of souls spent. For example, making a Quavash conscriptus (12 HD base) and advancing it +4 HD would require the executor to spend 32 hit dice of souls and use 2 standard actions.

**Spells:** All executors have the spellcasting abilities of 18th level sorcerers but with twice the typical spells known per level.

**Superior Soul Mark (Su):** Executors place an invisible mark on the soul of any mortal promised them in a contract or that they kill. This mark traps the soul on Caen and flags it for infernal collection. Paladins, clerics (of all kinds), and other religious servant PC classes are immune to this ability, though they may forego this immunity voluntarily. Depending on the nature of the contractual agreements, an individual who voluntarily accepts the mark may extend it also to his descendents to a limit agreed upon in the contract. An individual born with such a mark can only suppress it by joining a religious order with honest intent and maintaining their status with that organization until death. An executor can only mark the souls of individuals immediately present and helpless or killed under precisely delineated circumstances. In certain situations an executor may mark a large number of unwilling souls not necessarily present. This demands a special contract whereby the summoner or associated party slays those individuals in a very specific fashion. Unlike most lesser infernals, an executor can immediately collect the souls of those it kills and keep them on its person or store them in its archivist.

**Telepathy (Su):** Executors can communicate via telepathy with any creature capable of understanding it within 120 feet, though they usually choose to speak aloud.

**Uncanny Dodge/Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** Executors cannot be flanked except by 20th level rogues and are not denied their Dex bonus to AC even when flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

### Archivist

**Area Sense (Su):** The infernal archivist cannot be flanked or caught flat-footed.

**Soul Storage (Su):** The infernal archivist can hold up to 500 hit dice worth of souls that an executor can utilize for its shape minion ability. Archivists generally have 10d6 hit dice of souls when encountered. These souls can be perceived with *reveal souls* or similar spells, appearing as marked.

## Treasure

Any items on an executor, except those it picks up on Caen, vanish into greasy smoke upon its destruction. The only way to preserve any part of an infernal is to take it before the infernal dissipates. Black sticky fluids similar to blood sometimes remain after cutting or piercing an infernal. A few drops of this fluid



**Infernal Archivist, Always LE Medium Outsider**

**(Infernal Nonokrion Order, Deciconsriptus) CR 3**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	8d8 (30 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage reduction 5/—, spell resistance 20
<b>Senses:</b>	Listen +8, Spot +8
<b>Initiative:</b>	+1
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft. (8 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	25, touch 20, flat-footed 25 (+5 natural, +10 deflection)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+2/+9
<b>Attack:</b>	Tentacle +2 melee (3d4)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	1d4+1 tentacles +2 melee (3d4)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Area sense, deciconsriptus traits, outsider traits, soul storage
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +10
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +15, Jump +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Spot +8
<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Only found in the company of infernal executors
<b>Advancement:</b>	9-20



can garner up to 100 gp from interested parties, with larger quantities priced accordingly.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** Even infernals must answer to their own higher authorities, and curators must answer to creatures called executors. The dark annals of Scion Ekris record that his tremendous mortal longevity required a bargain with an executor. Ekris may also have negotiated for certain occult powers long before the Gift.

**Rare:** Each executor has a name infernalists must learn in order to negotiate with it. Discovering an executor's name requires negotiations with a curator.

**Obscure:** Only 81 executors exist in the Nonokrion Order. Executors only negotiate with mortals for upward of a hundred souls or more.

# Infernal, Quavash



Always LE Large Outsider (Infernal Conscriptus, Shapechanger) CR 10

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	12d8+72 (126 hp)	<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Acid, blindness, cold, damage reduction 20/magic, mind-affecting effects, poison, petrification, resistance to electricity 15 and fire 15, spell resistance 19	<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Conscriptus traits, mundane guise, outsider traits, soul mark
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +17, Spot +17	<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +10
<b>Initiative:</b>	+6	<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 22, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft. (8 squares)	<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +17, Climb +21, Hide +17, Jump +21, Listen +17, Move Silently +17, Search +17, Spellcraft +17, Spot +17, Swim +21
<b>Armor Class:</b>	27, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +16 natural)	<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Reflexes, Improved Grapple <sup>B</sup> , Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Improved Unarmed Attack <sup>B</sup> , Multiattack <sup>B</sup> , Power Attack
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+12/+22	<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Attack:</b>	Piercer +17 melee (3d8+6 x4) or handbite +17 melee (1d6+3 + 1d12 acid) or acid spit +13 ranged (1d12)	<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, Pair, or Squad (3-6)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 piercers +17 melee (3d8+6 x4) and 2 handbites +15 melee (1d6+3 + 1d12 acid) or 2 acid spit + 13 ranged (1d12)	<b>Advancement:</b>	13-24 HD (Large), 25-36 HD (Huge)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Acid saliva, mouth grab, piercing		



Like our human cultures, societies of infernals engage in clashes and battles. Rather than fighting one another directly, however, they use the subordinate warrior-caste of fabricated infernals called “conscriptus” as proxies. None of the conscriptus I described before rank among the “front line” of an infernal fighting force. The Quavash fill that role.

Primarily employed in the battles between infernal societies, human collaborators may sometimes “borrow” a Quavash as bodyguards and accomplices in their treacherous machinations. Summoners must negotiate with a curator for a Quavash’s service. This bargain requires the infernalist to sacrifice specific souls as payment. For example, a curator might demand: one soul of a woman who has given birth to three children, another of a former musician now deaf, and a man who has killed another man. The contract reshapes this last soul into the Quavash, which remains to discharge its obligation with no memory of its former existence. Three immortal souls paid for a hideous creature that serves for only a few years. Such is the way of infernal bargains.

A righteous person seeking to bring an infernalist to justice must beware entities like these that may wait to intercede

for their corrupted masters. Many an intrepid “soldier of light” has met their end, and lost their souls, facing horrors like these. I am given to understand that their masters shape Quavash as peerless killers and soldiers. They can insidiously disguise their grotesque shapes to appear as ordinary bodyguards or servants and only betray their nature in battle.



Quavash boast two powerful limbs tipped with sharp claw-like projections that can pierce even the thickest protection, as well as longer and more grotesque appendages that appear to end in toothy mouths. These can bite and tear loose flesh, but their gummy lips, strong tongue, and rounded teeth can also manipulate objects

with surprising dexterity. These mouths may secrete acidic saliva that dissolves flesh or even metal.

## Conscriptus Subtype

This subtype of outsiders serve among the infernals in a variety of combat and support roles. Executors shape conscriptus from the raw essence of souls marked and collected by infernals. Treat conscriptus as living and breathing creatures who do not need to eat or sleep. If something should destroy the

## Infernal, Quavash

physical form of a conscriptus its marked soul essence, visible to *reveal souls*, remains behind, and infernals can collect and use it again. Soul stalkers and umbral reavers from the MNI are conscriptus.

### Combat

A disguised Quavash takes pains to avoid betraying its nature until it decides that a threat requires the full scope of its powers.

**Acid Saliva (Ex):** Each of the mouthed appendages of the Quavash can spit acid as a ranged attack with a 20 foot range increment, dealing 1d12 damage. These appendages deal an additional 1d12 acid damage after a successful handbite attack. This acid dissolves organic material and metal but not stone. A struck opponent's armor and clothing dissolve and become useless immediately unless they succeed at a Reflex save (DC 22). These saves are Constitution-based. The Quavash's acid saliva deals 22 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects but the mouth must contact the object for 1 full round to deal this damage. A Quavash can choose not to inflict acid damage with handbite attacks.

**Mouth Grab (Ex):** The Quavash can make improved grapple and improved sunder attacks with its mouthed appendages. On a successful grapple the victim takes 1d12 acid damage, and on a successful sunder attempt the item takes 1d12 points of acid damage in addition to sunder damage. A Quavash can choose not to inflict acid damage with these attacks.

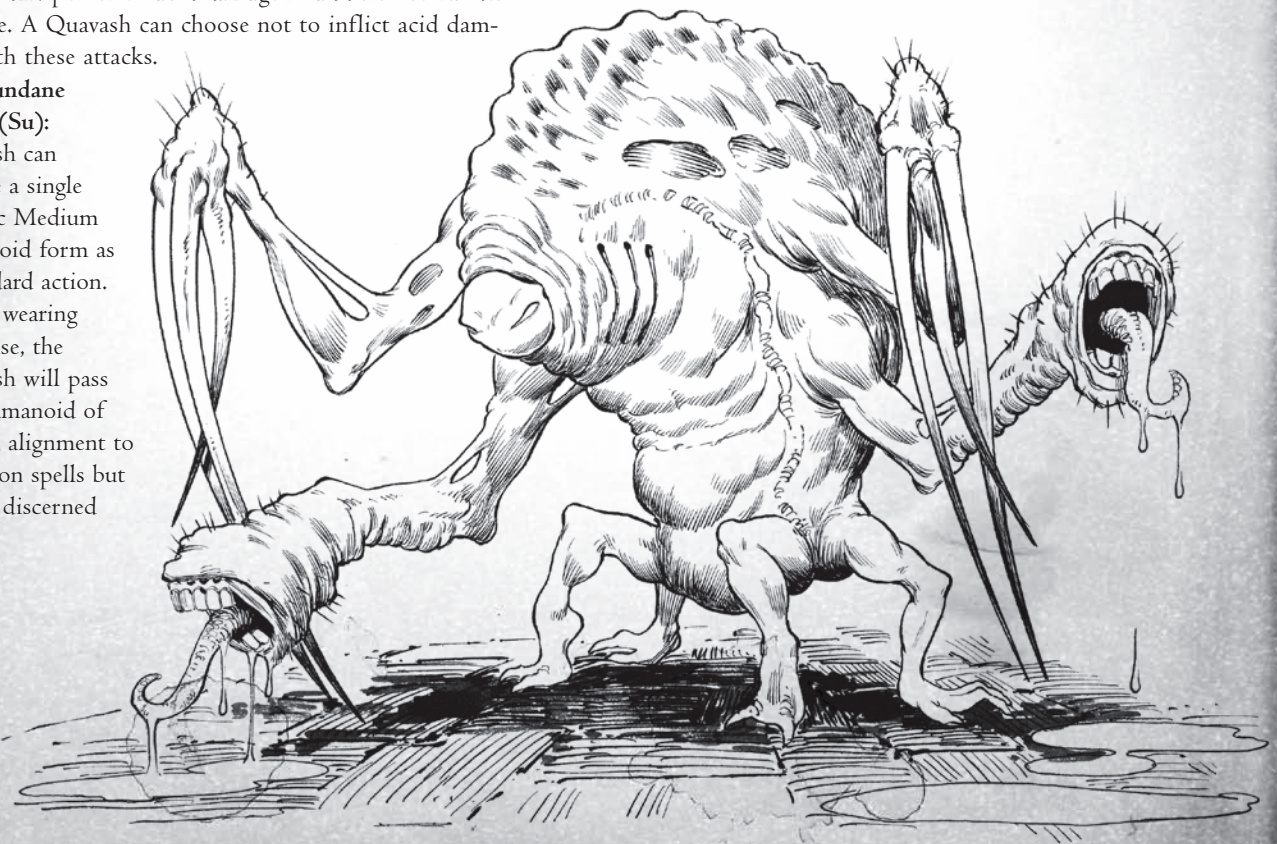
**Mundane Guise (Su):** Quavash can assume a single specific Medium humanoid form as a standard action. While wearing the guise, the Quavash will pass as a humanoid of neutral alignment to detection spells but can be discerned

with *true seeing*. It usually appears as a human wearing simple but ordinary clothing. In this form the Quavash has Str 12 and Dex 12 and can communicate by gesture or telepathy but cannot speak. If given armor (light, medium, or heavy) or a simple or martial weapon Quavash can fight at their normally base attack bonus. They can drop this guise as a free action.

**Blood Loss (Ex):** If the piercer attack hits, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer 1 point of temporary Constitution damage from blood loss. Creatures immune to critical hits also ignore this Constitution damage.

**Soul Mark (Su):** A Quavash marks the souls of intelligent creatures it kills for collection by other infernals. This mark traps the soul on Caen. The Quavash cannot personally collect this soul. Paladins, clerics (of all kinds), other religious servant PC classes, and anyone affected by *protection from evil* is immune to this effect unless they voluntarily forego this protection or forswear their god before death. Particularly pious characters gain a Will save (DC 25) to resist the mark. Actions such as bearing a holy symbol or standing on holy ground might provide a circumstance bonus to this save.

**Telepathy (Su):** Quavash can communicate via telepathy with any intelligent creature within 100 feet. Quavash prefer to avoid contact and do not use this ability often.



# Infernal, Quelvitar



<b>Always LE Large Outsider (Infernal Conscriptus) CR 9</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	10d8+30 (75 bp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Blindness, bull rush attacks, cold, damage reduction 10/magic, mind-affecting effects, poison, petrification, resistance to electricity 10 and fire 10, spell resistance 16, trip attacks
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +16, Spot +16
<b>Initiative:</b>	+9
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft. (10 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	25, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (-1 size, +6 Dex, +10 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+10/+18
<b>Attack:</b>	Piercer +14 melee (2d6+4 x4) or Stinger +14 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 Piercers +14 melee (2d6+4 x4) and Stinger +14 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Piercing, soul parasites
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.

<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Aura of the hunter, conscriptus traits, evasion, inspire denial, outsider traits, soul mark, telepathy, wallwalker
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +10
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 18, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 16
<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +19, Escape Artist +19, Hide +23*, Jump +25*, Listen +16, Move Silently +19, Search +16, Spellcraft +16, Spot +16, Swim +17, Tumble +19
<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Reflexes <sup>B</sup> , Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Multiattack <sup>B</sup> , Spring Attack, Track <sup>B</sup>
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Organization type (number)
<b>Advancement:</b>	11-20 HD (Large), 21-30 HD (Huge)



As she described these horrifying creatures, Sybeth went to great pains to caution me against ever feeling confident in my appraisal of an infernal. The curators and executors work souls like clay and can mold conscriptus into any form with any powers the creators can conceive. Thus conscriptus are weapons more so than any natural creature. By way of example she described the Quelvitar, or "soul gnawer".

A swift and elusive conscriptus, the Quelvitar falls more easily to concentrated effort than the Quavash, yet it can evade its enemies and engage on its own terms. It stalks conflicts as an assassin to bring death or ruin to its chosen prey. The Quelvitar's role on infernal battlefields holds less interest than the threat it poses on Caen at the behest of infernalists who arrange for it to track down and slaughter their own enemies.

The Quelvitar can cross walls or ceilings with equal alacrity and can leap tremendous distances. The air shimmers darkly about them, and flickering echoes appear ahead or behind them to disguise their exact location. Shadows quickly enfold them and unless one focuses fully they can vanish entirely, reappear from some unexpected quarter, and deliver a swift, painful death.

A strange swarm of flying spiritual parasites surrounds the Quelvitar like flies. These fragments of soul-stuff or life essence, perhaps more ghostly than the infernal itself, take the shape of hungry, disembodied mouths. Only the sound

of their gnashing teeth heralds the Quelvitar's movements. These parasites latch onto the infernal's prey as it attacks and chew on the very soul of a person to cause singular agony and nauseating disorientation. They apparently cannot cause actual harm to an immortal soul, which would not suit the Quelvitar's purposes, but they do prove a loathsome distraction and add to the horror of any attack by these otherworldly creatures.

## Combat

The Quelvitar obeys the orders of its master and attacks accordingly, but can use its powers to stalk and strike targets at their most vulnerable, if so directed. When the Quelvitar attacks it unleashes its soul parasites to weaken its adversary, or target a more dangerous obstacle standing in the way of its target.

**Aura of the Hunter (Sp):** The Quelvitar is considered under the effects of permanent *freedom of movement* and *displacement*.

**Evasion (Ex):** If the Quelvitar makes a successful Reflex save against an attack that normally does half damage on a successful save, it instead takes no damage. Helpless Quelvitar do not benefit from evasion.

**Inspire Denial (Su):** The sight of the Quelvitar so unnerves and traumatizes mortals that any who see these creatures must pass a Will save (DC 18) or fail to process the information and believe the Quelvitar something mundane,

# Infernal, Quelvitar

even if under the effects of spells like *true seeing*. Anyone failing this save explains Quelvitar attacks as something else, such as animal attacks or the acts of a deranged madman. Those personally attacked by the Quelvitar are unaffected by this power.

**Piercing (Ex):** Piercer attacks bypasses 10 points of damage reduction. Each piercer attack also deals 1 point of temporary Constitution damage from blood loss. Creatures immune to critical hits do not suffer this Constitution damage.

**Soul Mark (Su):** Quelvitar can use this ability only in regards to the creatures it kills. It cannot make deals with creatures for their souls. See Infernal Executor for details.

**Soul Parasites (Su):** Every round living non-infernal creatures within 10 feet of the Quelvitar must make a Will save (DC 18) or be nauseated for one round unless benefiting from *protection from evil*. Those who make their saves are sickened. This ability does not function on creatures that do not have souls. The Quelvitar can gather these parasites into its form at any time as a free action to disable this ability. This save is Charisma-based.

**Wallwalker (Su):** The Quelvitar can move on vertical surfaces and even upside down at its normal movement rate with no penalties. This ability functions even on severely slippery surfaces and makes the Quelvitar immune to trip and bull rush attacks.

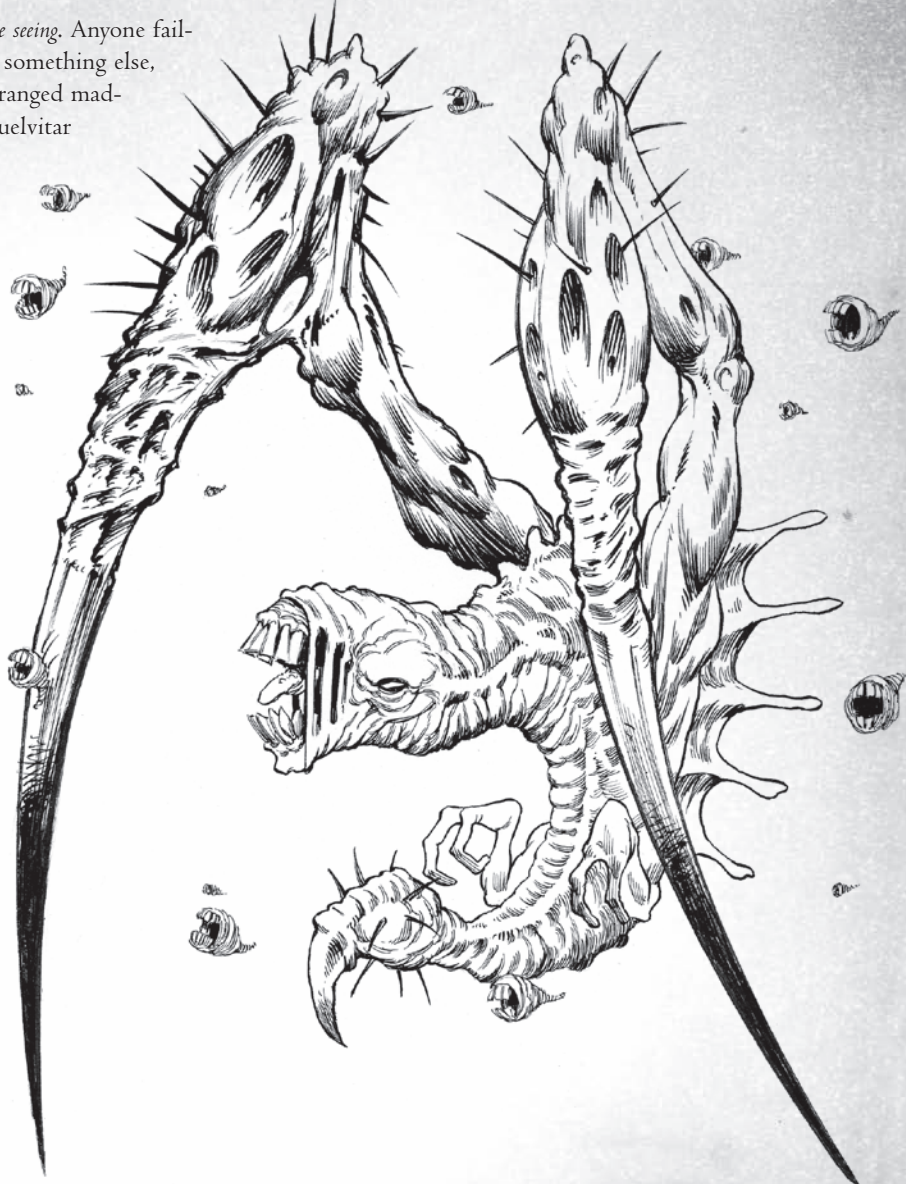
**Skills:** \*Quelvitar receive a +8 racial bonus to Jump and Hide checks.

**Telepathy (Su):** Quelvitar can communicate via telepathy with any intelligent creature within 100 feet. Quelvitar do not choose to utilize this ability often, preferring to avoid contact.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** This is one of countless variety of conscriptus used by the Nonokrion Order.



**Rare:** While deadly by itself, a Quelvitar brings with it a host of parasites that gnaw on the souls of those it fights, causing tremendous agony.

**Obscure:** Negotiating for the services of Quelvitar requires an infernalist of great subtlety, as curators demand the soul of a person duped into participating in an infernal summoning of their own free will. They need not know their fate, but cannot be bound, helpless, or otherwise forced to attend the negotiations. Curators also require payment of one additional soul.



# Infernals, Deciconsriptus, Bivashen



<b>Bivashen</b>	
Always LN Medium Outsider (Infernal Deciconsriptus, Shapechanger) CR 4	
Hit Dice:	4d8+16 (34 hp)
Immunities/Resist:	Blindness, cold, damage reduction 5/magic, petrification, poison, resistance to electricity 5 and fire 5, spell resistance 14
Senses:	Darkvision, 60 ft., Listen +8, Spot +8
Initiative:	+1
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +6 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+4/+7
Attack:	Piercer +8 melee (2d4+3 x4)
Full Attack:	2 Piercers +8 melee (2d4+3 x4)
Special Attacks:	Advanced flanking, lesser piercing

Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Deciconsriptus traits, mundane guise, outsider traits, soul mark, telepathy
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 16, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills:	Climb +10, Hide +8, Jump +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Search +7, Spot +8, Tumble +8
Feats:	Improved Initiative <sup>B</sup> , Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Piercer)
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary, Squad (2-6), Troop (7-20), Throng (21-50), or Mass (51-300)
Advancement:	5-10 (Medium) 11-15 (Large)



The unsettling information Sybeth Roane shared with me included the description of a type of lesser infernal I had never heard of called a deciconsriptus. The name suggests these rank at one tenth the strength, and require one tenth the investment, of a true conscriptus. Rather than being constructed from whole single souls, these things are made from fragments of souls, a literal tenth of a soul according to Sybeth. It frightens me that the twisted creatures called infernals can manipulate even the fragments of souls into monsters. I am no theologian and can make no claims as to how such a division of the soul is even possible. I could only take Sybeth's word on the matter. I take comfort only in the fact that transactions between mortals and infernals remain exceedingly rare, and that most of our souls stay out of their clutches from the protection of our gods.

In some cases deciconsriptus serve specific functions, more like tools or machines with organic form and little will of their own. I believe this category includes the "discerning beast" witnessed with some curators and the "archivist" described accompanying executors. I have come to understand also that infernals are capable of creating armies made of deciconsriptus warriors to wage war against their own kind. According to Sybeth, their masters throw masses of the deciconsriptus called Bivashen into battle, heedless of the cost, to surround and overwhelm their enemies. Their enemies, in turn, field their own hordes of weaker troops, so I wonder if such strategy achieves anything. I suspect the side with the most resources—in this

case souls—usually wins. Even war in our world, however, involves so many variables and complexities as to defy simplistic predictions.

This creature takes on an altogether different aspect when considering its use by the traitors of our own species who make pacts and sacrifice innocents. Even such lesser infernals can serve as significant rewards to an infernalist still new in his command over their arts. As deciconsriptus involve considerably less investment and do not require relinquishing an entire soul, curators offer them with greater liberty to mortals. While far less powerful than a full conscriptus, such creatures remain formidable protectors and guardians, especially in groups, and even these weakest of infernal soldiers have many advantages over mortal minions. As with most of these creatures, gaining their service generally requires negotiation with a curator and the offering of either soul or life essence, often stolen from an innocent victim kept bound and helpless or sacrificed on the spot.

## Deciconsriptus Subtype

Similar to conscriptus, deciconsriptus are outsiders created with fragmented soul essence. When a deciconsriptus is destroyed an invisible residue of soul essence remains and can be collected by infernals, but appears only as an indistinct haze to *reveal souls*.

# Infernals, Deciconsriptus, Bivashen

## Combat

Straight-forward combatants compared to most infernals, Bivashen obey orders from their master and engage when instructed. They prefer to fight together with others of their kind, take advantage of openings created by their peers, and operate smoothly without communication.

**Infernal Flanking (Ex):** If a Bivashen is in a position to receive a flanking bonus from another Bivashen, double the bonus (+4 to attack) and the attack deals +1d6 bonus sneak attack damage.

**Attuned Piercing (Su):** By taking a standard action, a Bivashen can attune its piercer attacks to bypass the damage reduction of creatures normally vulnerable to chaotic, lawful, neutral, bludgeoning, slashing, evil, or any non-magical material including serricsteel. A bivashen requires a standard action for each vulnerability to which it attunes. A Bivashen's natural attacks automatically bypass the damage reduction of creatures vulnerable to magic or piercing damage.

**Blood Loss (Ex):** If the piercer attack hits, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer 1 point of temporary Constitution damage from blood loss. Creatures immune to critical hits also ignore this Constitution damage.

**Mundane Guise (Su):** Bivashen can assume a single specific Medium humanoid form as a standard action. While wearing this guise, the Bivashen will pass as a humanoid of neutral alignment to detection spells but can be discerned with true seeing. It usually appears as a human wearing simple but ordinary clothing. In this form the Bivashen has Str 12 and Dex 12 and can communicate by gesture or telepathy but cannot speak. Bivashen are considered proficient in light, medium, and heavy armor. They have proficiency in all simple and martial melee weapons but not ranged weapons. They can drop this guise as a free action.

**Telepathy (Su):** Bivashen can communicate via telepathy with any intelligent creature within 100 feet. Bivashen prefer to avoid contact with non-bivashen, and they usually only utilize their telepathy to coordinate attacks with their fellow Bivashen.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** None

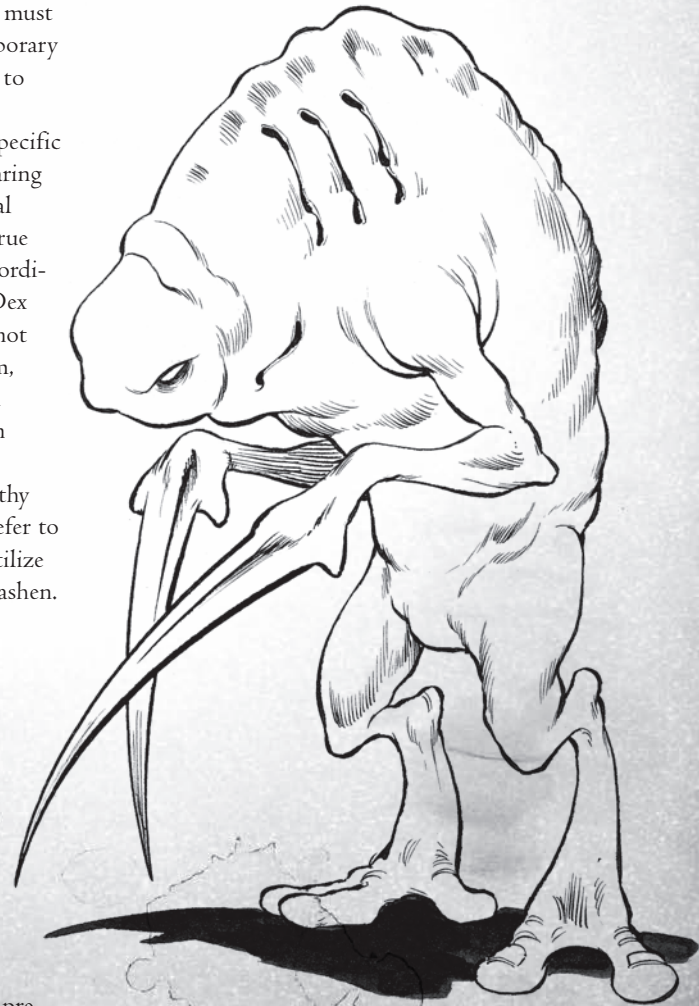
**Rare:** While most warrior conscriptus are very powerful, having been shaped of entire souls, curators can divide a soul into pieces and make lesser warriors thereby. These warriors may take the form of mortal men but are far more deadly in their "natural" form.

**Obscure:** If bargaining for Bivashen, the curators may accept life essence in the place of a sacrificed soul. They pre-

fer siphoning the strength of flesh or health vitality over other types of essence for this type of negotiation. Bivashen are not inherently evil, but they do bear an infernal mark that can be detected with the proper methods.

## HOOKS

Fearing reprisals on his family after crossing a High Captain in Five Fingers, an infernalist new to the art bargains for a pair of Bivashen to guard his daughter. A young witch-hunting priest of Morrow new to the city has his suspicions aroused when he witnesses the girl's guardians trash an entire gang in the streets. He employs the PCs to investigate. When the PCs confront the ever silent guards of the girl they may first find themselves fighting along side them against the High Captain's next attack and then against them when their true form is exposed.



# Infernal, Deciconscriptus, Bivether



## Bivether

Always N Small Outsider (Infernal Deciconscriptus) CR 2

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Immunities/Resist: Cold, damage resistance 3/magic, petrification, poison resistance to electricity 5 and fire 5, spell resistance 13

Senses: Listen +5, Spot +5

Initiative: +4

Speed: Fly 40 ft. (Perfect, 8 squares)

Armor Class: 16, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+4 Dex, +1 natural armor, +1 size)

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+3

Attack: Tentacle +4 melee (1d4+1)

Full Attack: 2 Tentacles +4 melee (1d4+1)

Special Attacks: Arcane backlash, sorcerous delivery

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Bound, deciconscriptus traits, evasion, outsider traits, sorcerous payload, spell-like abilities

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12,

Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 4

Skills: Hide +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +17\*, Search +3, Spot +5

Feats: Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Mobility

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Advancement: 3-5 HD (Medium)



The casual disregard with which these infernal creatures manipulate the very immortal essence of our being turns my stomach. Sybeth described the peculiar Bivether to me when illustrating the versatility of soul material. While some deciconscriptus act as warriors, others serve as tools for a single purpose. The 'tools' called Bivether hold arcane energy in reserve and serve as couriers for spells, carrying arcane effects great distances, to deliver them precisely as intended.

I have only experienced magic second-hand, but this struck me as a singularly ominous and useful practice. Such a creature would enable an arcanist to have any of a number of potent effects stored ahead of a conflict and ready at hand. Furthermore the Bivether can make themselves fade from sight and detection to deliver devastating spells far from their original source and with no peril to the caster. This clearly suits the cowardly nature of the curators and executors, who only reluctantly risk their own perishable forms.

Sybeth recalled a particularly cruel tale of a cunning infernalist so consumed with revenge that she willingly traded a portion of her own life force to send not one, but three of these sorcerous creations to her hated enemy that had exposed her to the public and scrutiny of the Order of Illumination. She was being hunted as a witch, and through the use of Bivether she had devised a means both to rid herself of her enemy and throw the witch hounds off her track.

This trio of infernal misfortune descended on the intended victim and unleashed their magic payload, transforming the victim into the very form that witch hunters sought. No sooner had the Bivether struck than did the agents of the Illuminated capture the victim thinking they had at last found

the witch they sought. It was weeks before the wizards of the Order realized that they had the wrong captive, and the infernalist had escaped their grasp.

## Combat

The Bivether exists only to maneuver invisibly to its intended target and deliver a spell payload. It employs its weak melee attack only if prevented from reaching its target. Once a Bivether has unleashed its spell it returns to its master by the most expedient means possible.

**Arcane Backlash (Su):** When a Bivether storing a spell reaches 0 hit points, it explodes in an arcane burst of energy against the attacker. The target suffers 1d6 electricity, fire, and force damage per spell level of the stored spell, Reflex save (DC 13 + level of spell stored) for half.

**Bound (Ex):** Bivethers are always bound to an arcane caster or to another infernal, will only obey that individual, and can only store and deliver spells cast by that individual. The caster can command the Bivether telepathically at a distance up to 50 miles per point of Intelligence modifier. A Bivether can only communicate a vague sense of its surroundings. The Bivether can only recognize a target not immediately present if its controller has seen that target and remembers it clearly. A caster may store spells in a number of Bivethers equal to his Intelligence modifier, although mortals very rarely boast more than one of these creatures.

**Evasion (Ex):** If the Bivether makes a successful Reflex save against an attack that normally does half damage on a successful save, it instead takes no damage. The Bivether does not gain the benefit of evasion if rendered helpless.

## Infernal, Deciconscriptus

**Sorcerous Payload (Su):** A Bivether can indefinitely store a single spell of a spell level equal to or less than twice its hit die. (A 4 HD Bivether can up to an 8th level spell.) A Bivether cannot store spells with a target of “You” or a range of “Personal”. The spell is cast normally but its target is withheld by the caster and the spell does not activate when cast. After a rest period the caster can prepare and cast spells normally, ignoring spells stored by a Bivether.

**Sorcerous Delivery (Su):** As a free action, the Bivether can deliver its spell to a target. The spell operates normally as if cast by its original caster but is targeted by and originates from the Bivether. The Bivether will attempt a touch attack if required. Damage caused by a spell centered on the Bivether itself, such as by *fireball*, causes damage normally to the Bivether.

**Skills:** The Bivether gains a +12 racial bonus to Move Silently.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At-will – *invisibility* (self only), *dimension door* (self only); caster level 8th.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** None

**Rare:** Some infernals and infernalists are accompanied by strange floating creatures that look like jellyfish, when they can be seen at all.

**Obscure:** While these creatures are very easy to kill, they can store arcane energy and can be used as vessels for extremely powerful magic.

## Hooks

A powerful and now desperate man betrayed by the PCs has enlisted the aid of an infernal or an infernalist who sends Bivether to plague the party. Should the party work to rectify their differences with the man, he will be willing to hear them out. Unfortunately the infernal or infernalist is not so forgiving and seeks to collect payment for his services – and likely the souls of the party as well.



# Junker Hulk



Always N Large Construct CR 6	
Hit Dice:	8d10+30 (74 hp)
Immunities/Resist:	Damage reduction 5/sericsteel, construct traits
Senses:	Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, Listen +9, Spot +10
Initiative:	-1
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class:	18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +10 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+14
Attack:	Slam +12 melee (1d8+6)
Full Attack:	2 slams +12 melee (1d8+6) or junk +4 ranged (1d6+6)

Special Attacks:	Junker bulk ability, rage
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Qualities:	Construct traits
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 23, Dex 8, Con -, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 7
Skills:	Hide -5*
Feats:	Alertness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)
Environment:	Urban
Organization:	Solitary or pair
Advancement:	9-14 HD (Large); 15-26 HD (Huge); 21-32 HD (Gargantuan)



While scouring a junkyard in Corvis, I was surprised when some of the scrap rose clanking from a surrounding pile and fought back. I staggered backward in surprise, reached for my sword, and found it suddenly gone. The creature resembled a steamjack composed of accumulated junk held together by mysterious means, including the sword that had leapt from my scabbard to join the hulking pile.

I cast about desperately for something I could use as a weapon as the creature approached, chains dangling from its great fists. Finally my eyes lit upon a sturdy but rusty steel bar. I snatched it up and smashed it into the creature's head. It paused for only an instant then renewed its attack un-phased.

I only dispatched the mechanical nightmare after a running battle through the labyrinth of scrap piles by commandeering the junkyard's steam-driven wrecking crane. When I sifted through the remains I discovered a cracked old cortex. I hauled it off for study, and though mechanika is not my specialty, I have a theory regarding the natural appearance of these mechanical creatures.

I believe these junker hulks, as I have named them, occasionally arise when a discarded cortex somehow achieves sentience though a mysterious magical interference not unlike that which gives birth to animatons. This may also explain the irrational hatred junker hulks supposedly display for warcasters. I believe the junker hulk's cortex takes a fierce pride in its independence, and these individuals—as well as any that attempt to command it—invoke its rage.

Junker hulks are also terribly territorial, as I discovered. I'll certainly never again search a junkyard alone.

## Combat

Junker hulks spend much of their time quiescent and practically indistinguishable from big piles of junk. When a creature enters their territory, though, they become aggressive. They usually watch intruders for a time, waiting for the opportune moment to burst forth in a sneak attack. They hurl chunks of detritus only if they can't get to grips with the enemy.

**Junk Throwing (Ex):** Junker hulks can hurl pieces of heavy and/or sharp junk lying around them. The range increment is 120 feet. The junk deals bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, as appropriate.



# Junker Hulk

**Junker Hulk Ability:** The junker hulk has one of the special abilities listed under "Junker Hulk Advancement and Repair".

**Junker Rage (Ex):** Junker hulks carry a residual and deep-seated hatred of creatures that attempt to control them. If such a creature attempts to influence the junker hulk through the Jack Handling skill or contact its insecure, flawed cortex though means native to warcasters, it enters a rage, gaining a +4 bonus to Strength and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves but taking a -2 penalty to AC.

A junker hulk's rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to half its hit dice (4, in the case of the junker hulk presented above).

**Skills:** \*Junker hulks have a +12 circumstance bonus on Hide checks in junkyards, steamjack factories, and similar areas full of metal scrap.

## Junker Hulk Advancement and Repair

A junker hulk with access to enough junk can replace ruined or broken parts of itself. A junker hulk usually has half its total hit points worth of junk (37 hp for the example above) available in its lair. A junker will repair itself at the rate of 5 hp per hour by adding and replacing junk to itself.

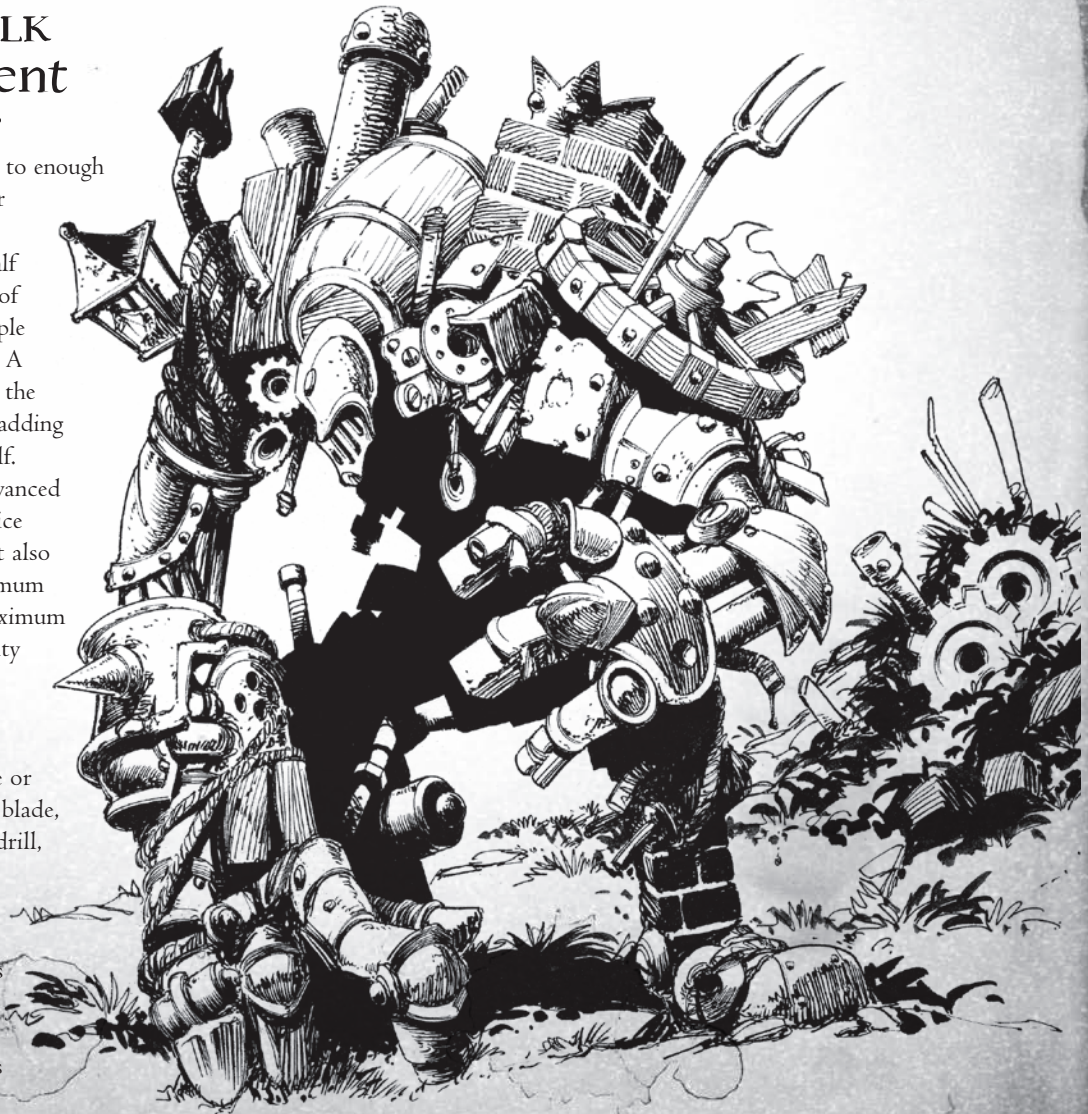
When creating an advanced version, for every 4 hit dice added to a junker hulk, it also gains +2 Strength (maximum 35), +1 Intelligence (maximum 11), and one special ability from the list below:

**Deadly Attack (Ex):** The junker hulk adds a dangerous weapon to one or both of its arms: a giant blade, a claw, a steam-powered drill, an electrical baton, or anything similar. The damage from one of the junker hulk's slam attacks increases from 1d8 to 2d6 and may deal piercing or slashing damage as well as bludgeoning.

**Extra Arm (Ex):** The junker hulk has an extra arm-like appendage grafted onto it somewhere. When it makes a full attack, it gains a third slam attack.

**Magnetic Draw (Su):** Once every 1d4 rounds, the junker hulk can magnetize its body. Every piece of ferrous metal weighing up to 2 pounds per hit die and within 5 feet per hit die of the junker hulk flies toward the junker hulk and attaches to it. Items attached and armor worn by creatures are immune to this ability though they would feel the pull. The magnetic field lasts for only one round, after which the items fall to the ground.

**Electrical Charge (Ex):** When a metal weapon strikes a junker hulk in a melee attack the attacker takes 1d6+1 points per hit die of electricity damage (1d6+8 for the junker hulk presented above). A junker hulk may use electrical charge once per hour.



# Kovaas



**CE Large Undead (Ancestor, Incorporeal) CR 10**

**Hit Dice:** 14d12 (91 hp)  
**Immunities/Resist:** Incorporeal traits, undead traits  
**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +21, Spot +16  
**Initiative:** +7  
**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (perfect)  
**Armor Class:** Incorporeal: 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +7 deflection); form of ruin: 24, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +12 natural armor)  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/-  
**Attack:** Stone shards +12 melee (2d6)  
**Full Attack:** 3 stone shards +12 melee (2d6)  
**Special Attacks:** Desiccation  
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Form of ruin, incorporeal traits, spirit shards, undead traits  
**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +11  
**Abilities:** Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 24  
**Skills:** Diplomacy +19, Hide +16, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (history) +20, Listen +21, Move Silently +15, Spot +16  
**Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes  
**Environment:** Any  
**Organization:** Solitary  
**Advancement:** 15–21 HD (Large), 22–29 HD (Huge)



I've already related the peculiar fashion whereby the skorne preserve their ancestors as animated statuary which walk the streets of Halaak and their other cities. Passing the centuries in this state—which I expect would drive any being mad—such spirits become assured of their immortality and are revered by their descendants. The problem arises when one of these sacral stones is destroyed, something I am given to understand fortunately happens rarely. The traumatic shattering of the vessel containing their soul drives the ancestral spirit insane and turns them into a murderous and vengeful entity called a *kovaas*. This ghost-like apparition clings to the fragmented shards of its destroyed sacral stone or ancestral guardian shell as if desperate for a tangible body and lashes out at the living. The skorne treat these creatures as a grave threat to their society. Their history includes several examples of such spirits causing tremendous destruction and slaughter.

These ancient ghosts seek revenge upon those who destroyed their revered forms, revenge upon the empire they wasted countless years serving, and revenge against the people who could not maintain the sanctity of their former sacral stone. A *kovaas* exacts its rage against all it encounters, casting its victims' souls to the oblivion it has escaped.

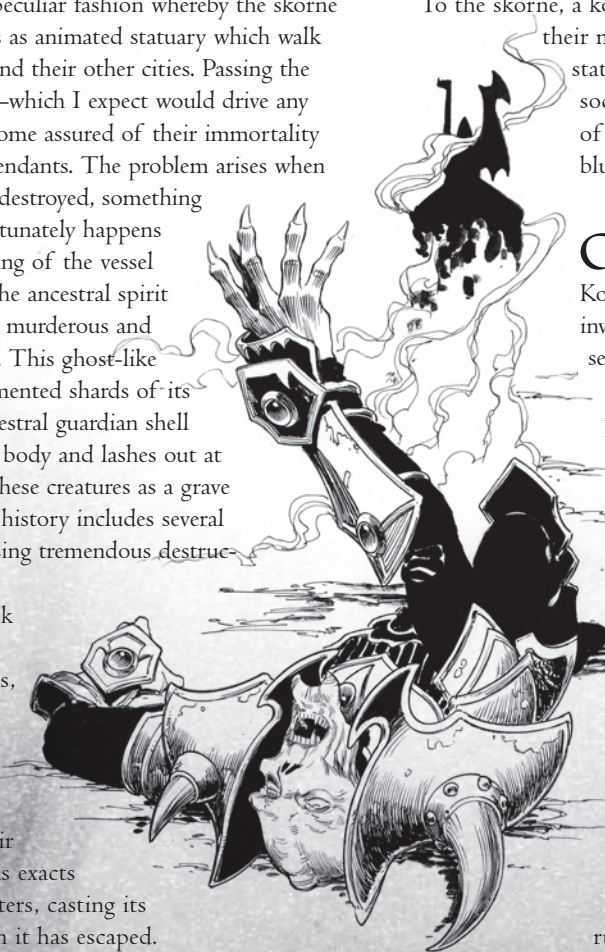
To the skorne, a *kovaas* embodies a corruption of one of their most honored achievements and hallowed states. In my opinion, *kovaas* arise from a society gone mad. They are a manifestation of skorne violence and arrogance and—bluntly—exactly what they deserve.

## Combat

*Kovaas* use their once revered, practically invulnerable forms as brutal weapons to send skorne spirits screaming into the Void.

**Form of Ruin (Su):** Naturally incorporeal, many of the *kovaas'* abilities remain tied to the shattered stones that once made up its physical form. As a move action and by spending 20 points from its spirit hoard, a *kovaas* can reassemble the swirling stone shards that whip about its incorporeal body to manifest physical attacks. In this state it can make use of abilities it otherwise could not, gains Str 20 and natural armor +12, but loses its deflection bonus to AC. A *kovaas* may retake its incorporeal form as a move action.

It costs a *kovaas* 1 point from its spirit hoard for every round it uses form of ruin, and when its spirit hoard is empty it



# Kovaas

becomes incorporeal automatically. The first time a kovaas takes the form of ruin in an encounter its hit points are restored to full.

**Stone Shards (Su):** While using form of ruin, a kovaas can attack with the jagged shards forming its body as a natural attack. It cannot make stone shard attacks while incorporeal.

## Soul

### Burning:

Once per round as a free action the kovaas can spend up to 5 points from its spirit hoard to gain an equivalent bonus to attack and/or damage rolls for stone shard attacks or to add damage to its desiccation attack. It can freely distribute the points between attack and damage (for example, +3 to attack, +2 to damage).

**Desiccation (Su):** While incorporeal, a kovaas can unleash a withering cloud of necromantic energy which sucks the moisture from living bodies and causing tremendous agony and injury. The kovaas can utilize this ability twice per day as a standard action, once every four rounds. To use this ability more than twice a day, the kovaas can spend 20 points from its spirit hoard per use. Within a 20-foot radius centered on the kovaas all living creatures suffer 10d6 damage, Fortitude save (DC 24) for half. Living creatures with 3 or fewer hit dice are automatically killed (no save). This cloud lingers for three rounds. After the initial damage, every round a living creature remains in the cloud it must make a Fortitude save (DC 24) or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Spirit Hoard (Su):** A kovaas can steal the spiritual energy of those it kills and utilize this energy to empower itself. A

kovaas formed from an ancestral guardian begins with 3d6 points in its spirit hoard. The kovaas gains 1 point to its spirit hoard for every hit die of any victim it kills with no limit.

**Reformation (Su):** A kovaas is nearly impossible to destroy. Upon being reduced to 0 hit points, its spirit temporarily disincorporates and its stones collapse into rubble. As long as even one grain of sand survives, a kovaas can reform.

After 1d4 weeks, a kovaas returns to its fragments and begins piecing bits of its sacral stone back together. This process takes a day unless the stones have been widely scattered, in which case the kovaas will be delayed for up to a week as it assembles new stone and as many of its sacral stone fragments as it can find. Only extollers can prevent this, utilizing rituals whereby they bind the kovaas within a specially prepared sacral stone, at which point it is buried and sealed.



## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** Kovaas are the maddened ghosts of ancient skorne who seek to end all life.

**Rare:** Kovaas occur when a sacral stone containing an exalted ancestor shatters. This also shatters the mind of the ancestor within, driving them to an insane gluttony of violence. Such ghosts feed on the deaths they cause.

**Obscure:** There is no way to destroy a kovaas, they can only be captured again by extollers and imprisoned. However, scattering the rocks and fragments of its fallen form will slow the process of its reemergence.



# Letheans



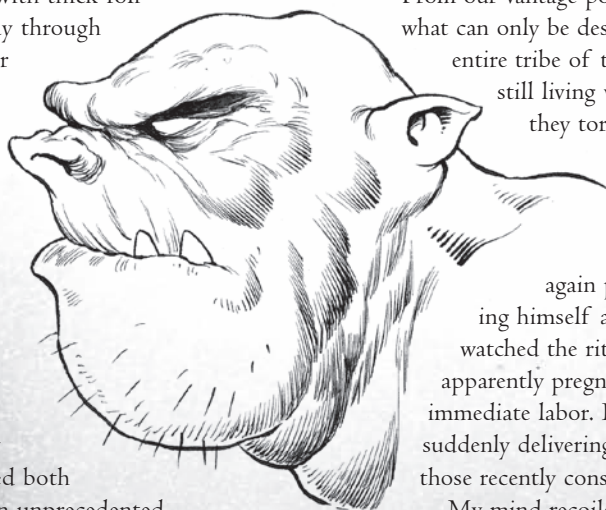
Usually NE Medium Monstrous Humanoid CR I	
Hit Dice:	2d8 +2 (11 hp)
Immunities/Resist:	Poison
Senses:	Darkvision, Listen +1, Spot +1
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), Climb 15 ft. (3 squares)
Armor Class:	15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural armor)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+2/+9
Attack:	Club +5 melee (1d6+1/x2)
Full Attack:	Club +5 melee (1d6+1/x2)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities:	Fear of fire, limited shared consciousness
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 8
Skills:	Climb +9, Hide +2, Jump +3, Tumble +6, Use Rope +2
Feats:	Acrobatic
Environment:	Warm or Tropical Forest or Jungle
Organization:	Gang (2-4), Pack (10-20), Tribe (20-50 plus 1 leader of 3rd-5th level per 10 adults).
Advancement:	By character class (usually fighter)



I found my return from the east fraught with far more peril than my 'escorted' journey there. Mounting a daring escape from the skorne homelands by boat with the help of my trusty guide Quimut and his fellows, I did not know what to expect on my path home other than the relief of freedom from my tyrannical captors. After a disastrous shipwreck in an attempt to make headway into the west we trekked overland in a strange land of vaulting, fog-filled mountains and volcanic soil rich with thick foliage. After days of hacking our way through the jungle and climbing ridge after ridge, even I started recalling my days among the skorne with relative fondness.

On our fifth day we crested a bare hill that afforded us a view of a wide jungle valley. I admit I despaired to think we still had days, maybe weeks of overland travel before breaking from this jungle. It was Quimut who first spied the vine-covered structure piercing the treetops of the valley below. I was immediately enthused both for what would undoubtedly be an unprecedented find but hopefully a refuge against the various reptiles and insects that assaulted our encampment every night. We eventually identified it as an ancient stone temple dedicated to the Creator of Man from the worn menofixes piercing the foliage cloaking the ziggurat. With the sun dying, we descended in hopes of taking shelter there and soon found the valley inhabited. As darkness fell a pack of man-like



beasts surprised us. Swinging from vines like apes, they had us quickly surrounded. Their numbers and strength quickly overwhelmed us though we gave good account for ourselves by wounding several of their number. We awoke in captivity tied to a crumbling high altar of Menoth in the very temple we had sought. The light of Calder added a blue pallor to the decaying stone darkened by what I could only suppose was centuries of blood stains.

From our vantage point on the raised alter I watched what can only be described as an unholy ritual. An entire tribe of the creatures cannibalized their still living wounded. Using crude weapons they tore into their own kind, and more sickeningly the victims offered no resistance to the blood orgy. Just as I feared they might consider us the main course, Quimut again proved his resourcefulness by freeing himself and stealthily cutting our bonds. I watched the ritual continue as some of the tribe's apparently pregnant females began the sounds of immediate labor. I realized with horror that the suddenly delivering females equaled the number of those recently consumed.

My mind recoiled at the very thought that these creatures could employ cannibalism to transfer their souls to new bodies. What dark purpose might our deaths mean for these degraded creatures?

Thankfully I do not know. Once Quimut freed us, we fled deeper into the temple. Uncertain of where our path would lead and seeking only escape, we raced through the guts of the ancient temple. As we fumbled in the dark laby-

## Lethians

rinth, our only hope was for the beasts' cannibalistic labors to distract them long enough for us to find our way out of the temple and escape this accursed valley. Deep in the ruin's inner recesses, the light of Calder lanced into the temple from a man-sized hole high in the wall ahead. While my companions set about climbing to attain it, my attention was captured by what the light revealed. Worn smooth with age, ancient glyphs carved into the inner wall seemed to tell a story—or perhaps only part of a story—but one with a dark ending upon which I had apparently stumbled. The glyphs very much resembled those on the ruins of Ancient Iethier, and though cruder and certainly as old, I recognized enough of them. I ran my finger along the symbols, traced their meaning in the story, and wished I could have made a rubbing for later research. As best I could understand, they told of a people who turned from their creator to worship the powers of the sky and earth. They sacrificed to the dark

beasts of the forest and in turn became like beasts themselves and forgot the ways of man. Not all of them fell to this primal decay; a few watched from the temple and paid tribute to their creator. In a mighty ritual they cursed the beast-men so that their souls would never know rest and prophesied that true men would return and bring fire and justice on the fallen people. What fate they met was not written, and I can only guess about the centuries that have passed since any hand etched the stones in this long hall of history. If true, this would shed much light on our captors. Did they once walk as men like us? What cursed them to live like beasts for time beyond memory in this hellish place?

My companions have not spoken a word since of what we saw, and even now I hesitate to speculate further on these creatures' true origins. To this day the sound of birth screams echoing off the temple walls reverberates in my mind.



# Letheans

## Combat

Letheans rarely venture out in daylight except in the darkest parts of the jungle. They use the cover of the forest while brachiating to surround their prey. Once surrounded, they will attempt to subdue intelligent prey by grapple. The lethean's grip is surprisingly strong and they seek to capture instead of kill intelligent creatures for sacrifice the lethean's idols.

**Brachiation:** By swinging on vines or leaping from tree to tree, letheans may move through wooded areas at their full movement with no terrain penalties.

**Immunity to Poisons:** Letheans are immune to all forms of contact, injury, and ingested poisons but suffer from poison gases.

**Fear of Fire:** Letheans fear the sight of fire and suffer a -4 penalty to all saves vs. fear when within 60 feet of a fire.

**Limited Shared Consciousness (Ex):** Letheans share a communal consciousness, enabling them to communicate as if telepathically with others of their kind over 100 feet. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in the group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No creature in the group is considered flanked unless all are. This ability is instinctual.

**Soul transference (Su):** When a lethean dies, its soul seeks out a pregnant female of its race so that she may give birth. Bestial lethean young take a year to mature. They retain no memory of their prior life but do share in the shared consciousness of the tribe. As a result, though never foolhardy, letheans fear almost nothing. Letheans gain +4 to all saves against fear effects except in the presence of fire.

**Skills:** A lethean's huge hands and powerful grip confers a +8 racial bonus to Climb and grapple checks.

## Treasure

Letheans share their crude possessions communally and offer their victim's valuables to their idols. Their crude potions might have value to an alchemist, fetching as much as 100 gp or more if one can discern the ingredients.

## Hooks

Baroness Islene Hurst of Mercir seeks to capitalize on the unexplored subcontinent of Alchiere, home to the brutal letheans. She hopes to find riches to pay for her presumed dead husband's exorbitant debts accrued for a journey to Zu some years ago. She needs experienced adventurers, though the creditors will insist on sending their own agent.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** These primitive creatures avoid large bodies of water, such as rivers, and fear fire so much they flee from it. Though beast-like, they seem to have an unnatural hatred for humans and will seek them for sacrifice despite all dangers.

**Uncommon:** Letheans drink a strong alcoholic mixture of poisonous fruit that could send unconscious all but the most robust trollkin. Instead this poison seems to have a narcotic effect on them. Those who survive its initial effects can use it to combat diseases (+4 to Fortitude checks against jungle diseases).

**Rare:** These creatures are cannibalistic but only consume the elderly or mortally wounded of their kind in a highly ritualized ceremony in which every member takes part. They never eat other intelligent races.

**Obscure:** These creatures have beast like minds and traits, yet they have a strange fascination with the crumbling temples of their jungle and ape religious-like service before them.

*Upon my return to Corv's, I  
paid a visit to Father Dumas  
for a little refresher on history,  
for he is as well versed in it  
as he is faithful to Morrow.  
Still, he could not verify  
what I had learned in the  
forgotten temple. Just as I  
had suspected, we encountered a  
place long forgotten by even  
the oldest traditions.*

*VP*



# Lord of the Feast



<b>CN Large Outsider (Native, Shapechanger) CR 17</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	18d8+144 (225 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage resistance 15/lawful, energy resistance 15 to acid, fire, cold, and sonic, immune to poison and mind-affecting effects, spell resistance 33.
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 240 ft.; Listen +26, Spot +26
<b>Initiative:</b>	+2
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft. (8 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	25, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 armor, +10 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+18/+30
<b>Attack:</b>	Wurmblade +30 melee (3d6+12/17-20)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Wurmblade +30/+25/+20/+15 melee (3d6+12/17-20)
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Crow's flight, feast of the worm, meat gathering, rejuvenation, spell-like abilities, swift tracking

<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +19, Ref +13, Will +17
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 26, Dex 14, Con 26, Int 15, Wis 22, Cha 14
<b>Skills:</b>	Balance +17, Climb +23, Escape Artist +12, Handle Animal +26, Hide +17, Intimidate +22, Jump +18, Knowledge (nature) +17, Listen +26, Move Silently +17, Spot +26, Survival +26, Swim +23
<b>Feats:</b>	Cleave, Combat Expertise, Improved Sunder, Improved Critical (wurmblade), Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (wurmblade)
<b>Environment:</b>	Any non-urban
<b>Organization:</b>	Unique



Edrea's tales of her encounters with the druids and their fantastic and varied elemental constructs did not prepare me for her other reports, particularly this one which relates to an ancient and primordial creature that seems more myth than reality. Were it not for her record of veracity and my faith in her intelligence I would suspect this to be a fever-dream or hallucination. I advise caution in any presumptions regarding this entity or its nature. What we know is tentative at best.

Edrea saw the Lord of the Feast, or at least something similar, during my time in the east. She observed a terrible battle near the fringes of Ios between druids and the new dragonspawn that have spread so rapidly. I have avoided attempts to fully duplicate her confusing and fragmentary description of that fight, although it bears on this creature as well as the elemental constructs she observed. She saw one of the druids direct his attention to a dragonspawn. Then what Edrea took for a great raven flew toward the beast, and this creature stepped from the shadow of the bird itself. She described it as taller than even the Kossites of the north, with an antler crown, a gaunt visage, and deliberate and graceful movements. It wielded a great blade whose edge shimmered as if soaked in blood or oil. The fight bore them from view, and in the interests of self-preservation she did not linger, yet everything she described matches other accounts I have found.

After Edrea related her tale, I conducted some discreet inquiries and research of my own to see if this walking myth existed. I discovered accounts from all over western Immoren, each dismissed on its own merits, which together painted a disturbing portrait of this monstrosity. Called variously the "Lord of the Feast", the "Feast Lord", or the "Walking Hunger", these and other names populate tales and legends stretching back, as far as I can tell, into prehistory, before the rise of Calacia and the priest-kings when the Molgur hunted unchecked.

This creature appears immortal, and naming it a grymkin seems misguided. I cannot escape the conclusion of the ancients that this being holds some inexplicable tie to the Devourer Wurm, the ancient enemy of the Creator of Man. The nature of the connection, or why the Beast of All Shapes should send this minion among us in a guise so like our own, remains a matter of conjecture.

This creature more than any other sign convinces me that the druids have finally stirred from their seclusion and secrecy. Every legend I can find describes the appearance of this creature as an omen of disaster. Several references imply that those with the correct power and knowledge can call the Feast Lord, but every such source describes it as a creature best "left slumbering". I can only presume the druids have this lore, and the will, and have awoken this strange immortal spirit wrapped in flesh to lend its strength to their struggles.

## Lord of the Feast

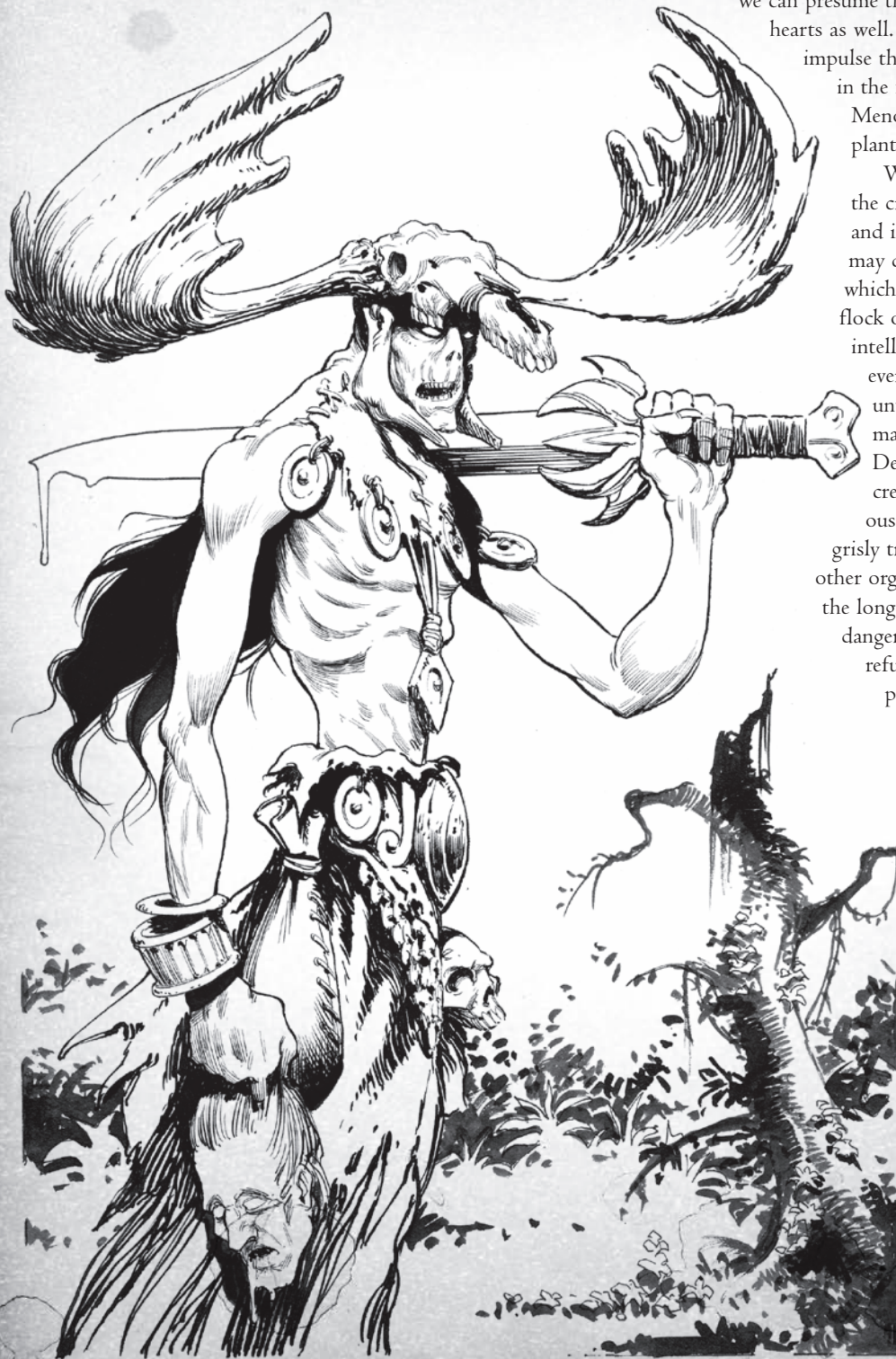
Certain passages relate that this spirit comes not from another realm, like the Infernals, or from Urcaen, such as the ascendants, archons, chosen, and scions that serve Morrow or Thamar. Rather the "Lord of the Feast" exists always among

us, slumbering as fragments in the mind of every predator. It shows particular fondness for the ravens and crows that feast on the flesh of corpses after battle. I would think this poetic license but for Edrea's description. From its very manlike shape we can presume the Feast Lord slumbers in our hearts as well. Perhaps it draws on some ancient impulse that drove us when we hunted in the forests for every meal, before Menoth taught us to build walls and plant crops.

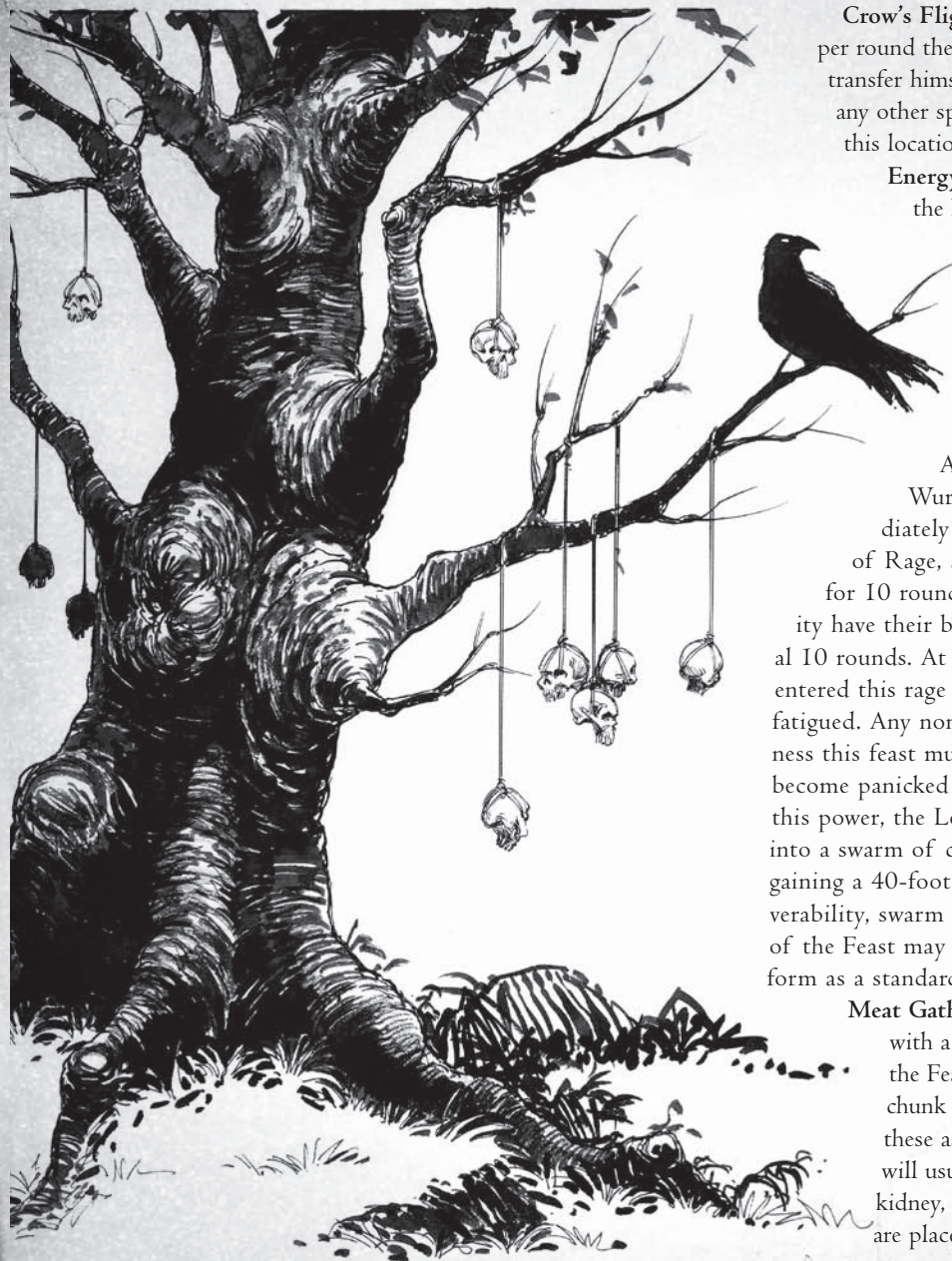
Whatever the case, tales describe the creature as impervious to harm and immune to destruction. Violence may disperse its physical form, at which point its flesh shatters into a flock of crows with no spark of greater intelligence. The spirit within, however, simply returns to its slumber until recalled to slaughter. As with many things associated with the Devourer, accounts describe the creature as ravenous and murderous, feasting on flesh, and gathering grisly trophies of hearts, livers, and other organs. Reportedly it grows hungrier the longer it remains in flesh, one of the dangers of awakening it, and sometimes refuses to sleep again until it has partaken of a tremendous feast only possible on a great field of slaughter.

### Combat

The Lord of the Feast prefers to stalk unseen at the edges of a battle and will choose to manifest wherever he can cause the most carnage. He prefers to slaughter the weak before the strong. He will often summon a large number of carrion birds such as crows and ravens to a battlefield, and may control them to serve as his eyes and ears. He can utilize these scouts to arrive wherever he wishes and where he can kill at greatest liberty.



## Lord of the Feast



In combat the Lord of the Feast is fairly straightforward, seeking to cut down any opposition with his Wurmblade. He will seek the physically weak first (those who seem to have the lowest Strength or Constitution scores.) He is not rash or unintelligent though and will not ignore any immediate threat confronting him.

With no need to sleep, eat, or even a moments rest, the Lord of the Feast is capable of stalking or hunting prey tirelessly and at speed.

**Crow's Flight (Su):** As a move action once per round the Lord of the Feast may instantly transfer himself from his current location to any other spot within 1200 feet so long as this location is within 10 ft of a carrion bird.

**Energy Resistances (Ex):** The Lord of the Feast has energy resistance 15 to acid, fire, cold, and sonic.

**Feast of the Wurm (Su):** When the Lord of the Feast gathers at least five trophies of slain victims with meat gathering, he may take a full-round action to devour them.

Any worshipers of the Devourer Wurm who witness this sight immediately gain the benefits and penalties of Rage, as the barbarian ability, lasting for 10 rounds. Those already using this ability have their benefits extended for an additional 10 rounds. At the end of this period all who entered this rage lose the benefits and become fatigued. Any non-Devourer worshipers who witness this feast must make a Will save (DC 20) or become panicked for 10 rounds. Upon utilizing this power, the Lord of the Feast may transform into a swarm of carrion birds as a standard action, gaining a 40-foot flight speed and good maneuverability, swarm traits, but no attacks. The Lord of the Feast may transform back to his normal form as a standard action.

**Meat Gathering (Ex):** If he kills an enemy with a Wurmblade attack, the Lord of the Feast carves off an organ or large chunk of tissue from that foe, collecting these as part of his combat action. This will usually be a skull, heart, lung, liver, kidney, or large piece of muscle. These are placed in bags and pouches about his person.

**Rejuvenation (Su):** Like a force of nature itself, the Lord of the Feast is impossible to destroy completely though combat. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. If slain, the physical form of the Lord of the Feast will decompose at an accelerated rate, and its stench will often attract a host of carrion creatures that devour it completely. The "destroyed" form of the Lord of the Feast will restore itself in 3d6 days (no later than the next new moon of Calder) with the rising of the Eye of the Wurm. It forms from a gathering of carrion birds or dramatically rips free from some beast that consumed its prior form. The Lord

## Lord of the Feast

of the Feast will return to tracking any being he was hunting prior to being destroyed. As a rule, the only way to get rid of the Lord of the Feast is to sate his desire for carrion prizes, after which he transforms into a swarm of carrion birds, leaves the area, or moves on to hunt elsewhere.

**Spell-like Abilities:** At-will – *fear* (DC 16), *freedom of movement*, *dominate animal* (no save); 3x day – *summon nature's ally V*; caster level 18.

**Swift Tracking (Ex):** The Lord of the Feast can move his normal speed (40 ft.) while following tracks without taking the normal –5 penalty. He takes only a –10 penalty (instead of the normal –20) when moving at up to twice normal speed while tracking.

**Wurmlblade:** The Lord of the Feast's weapon is unique, indestructible, and should be treated as a minor artifact. This +4 large mighty cleaving greatsword has the power to draw the life force from an opponent three times each day. On a critical hit the Lord of the Feast may call upon this death-dealing power, forcing a living victim to make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or die.

### Treasure

Characters may take the Wurmlblade if the Lord of the Feast is killed, but when he reforms the blade will vanish and reappear with him. He has been known to seek vengeance on any who steals the weapon. Every time anyone but the Lord of the Feast wields this blade the bearer must make a Will save (DC 19) or suffer *insanity*, as the spell. The Wurmlblade may have additional powers beyond those listed here at the GM's discretion.

Though the Lord of the Feast does not collect treasure, his victims may have possessed some. There may be treasure nearby if the Lord of the Feast is encountered on the battlefield, but it should only be a fraction of the standard treasure. Also the barbaric tribes that encounter this manifestation of the Wurm might also offer up valuable goods as well as fresh sacrifices though such misguided offers are ignored by the Lord of the Feast.

### Legends & Lore

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** The Lord of the Feast is some figure of prominence to the cults of the Devourer Wurm. He commands bird and beast to do the bidding of the Devourer Wurm.

**Rare:** The Lord of the Feast, also known as the Feast Lord and the Walking Hunger, is an embodiment of the Devourer Wurm that walks Caen in the guise of a man wearing a crown of antlers. Because he is an embodiment of such cha-

otic forces, only weapons enchanted with the power of law find easy purchase on his earthly guise.

**Obscure:** The only way to satiate the Feast Lord is to allow him to slaughter and feast on the organs of the slain. He is impossible to completely destroy and will always arise again.

### HOOKS

While traveling through the wilderness of western Immoren, the party encounters a half dozen rugged trollkin champions. Each is a mighty chief or hero of his kriel, and each has recently been maimed in battle. They are being pursued by some terrible manifestation of the Wurm that is stalking them through the shadows of the woods. Too exhausted to continue their flight, the warriors prepare to face the thing hunting them, with or without the party's help. The kithkar, eldest and leader of the champions, turns to the party for help with an ancient scroll these champions are tasked with delivering to a distant trollkin village. If the party stays and helps overcome the Lord of the Feast, the surviving champions will offer any survivors the kulgat bond. If the party promises to help deliver the scroll, or even if they defeat the Lord of the Feast, he will re-manifest, and soon they will find that the hunt continues. Only when they have delivered the scroll or have died will the Lord of the Feast cease his hunt.



# Machine Wraith



**NE Large Necrotech Construct (Incorporeal) CR 6**

**Hit Dice:** 6d12+20 (56 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Incorporeal traits, turn resistance, undead traits

**Initiative:** +6

**Senses:** Listen +6, Spot +6

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), Fly 40 ft. (perfect)

**Armor Class:** 13, touch 13, flat-footed, 11 (10 -1 size, +2 Dex, +2 deflection)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/+12

**Attack:** Claw +10 melee (1d8+4)

**Full Attack:** 2 Claws +10 melee (1d8+4)

**Special Attacks:** Machine meld, possession

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Incorporeal traits, undead traits

**Saves:** Fort -, Ref +4, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 14, Con -, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14

**Skills:** Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6

**Feats:** Ability Focus (machine meld), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (claw)

**Environment:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary or as part of a Cryx army



Occasionally, my modicum of celebrity and history as a scout allows me to travel with the military, not as an escort of course, but simply because our paths happen to run together and I may provide assistance in dealing our land's stranger creatures. During an expedition northeast of the Black River, Lynus and I were fortunate enough to enjoy the safety of traveling with the Trencher company known as the Northguard Gravediggers for a short time. The mercenary warcaster Damien Sperling and his black market Vanguard warjack accompanied these brave soldiers as a relief force for Deepwood tower.



Unfortunately, several of these hardened soldiers never arrived due to a horrific and unexpected assault by a creature of which I had to this point only heard rumor. Silently, a massive shadow that appeared part ghost, part mechanika swept out of the woods and buried itself inside the Vanguard's frame. Sperling shouted a warning as the warjack turned its shield gun on the men and cut down those too slow to dive to cover. The Vanguard swept its guisarme back and forth like a thing possessed, while return fire ricocheted feebly off its tower shield.

The shield gun swung toward me as I pondered how such a creature could control a warjack. Where once the orange glow of heart fire glowed in the warjack's eyes now only a corpse fire burned. In an uncommon feat of bravery, Lynus threw the two of us behind a nearby felled tree an instant before the gun fired. Risking a look, I saw Sperling standing in front of his warjack. He seemed to struggle mentally for control of the Vanguard as it turned and charged him. The possessed machine's gun unloaded on the warcaster as we all watched. Our shock turned to relief as both the shell and guisarme bounced off Sperling's power field. Unphased by the assault, Damien cursed aloud and renewed his efforts. With an ear-splitting screech like gears ripping from their housings, the wraith sprang from the 'jack. The nine-foot tall thing of baleful darkness and twisted metal seemed stunned by its struggle with the warcaster, and its ghostly form became solid. The soldiers cheered as their renewed fire tore away at the creature and soon reduced it to a heap of smoking scrap.

Though I count us fortunate to have a chance to observe such a creature, I must say I will never feel as secure as I once did in the presence of a warjack.

# Machine Wraith

## Combat:

**Machine Meld (Su):** A machine wraith may attempt to take control of a steamjack with a functioning cortex. To use this ability a machine wraith manifests and moves into the steamjack's space but does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 19). A successful save moves the wraith to an adjacent space and it loses its incorporeal traits for one round. If the save fails, the wraith vanishes into the target's body and it takes control of the 'jack with possession.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** A machine wraith has +4 turn resistance.

**Possession (Su):** Once a machine wraith occupies the 'jack's body, it keeps its Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, alignment, and mental abilities. The 'jack retains its Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, automatic and natural abilities, hit points, immunities, weapons, and natural attacks. A warcaster may not control or command the 'jack, nor does the 'jack respond to uses of the 'Jack Marshal skill. As a standard action a machine wraith may leave a possessed 'jack.

Dealing damage to a possessed 'jack forces the machine wraith to make a Will save (DC equal to the damage dealt) to remain in the construct. A warcaster controlling the 'jack may spend a focus point to give the 'jack another Will save (DC 19) to eject the wraith. Only these two methods can force a machine wraith from a 'jack.

If a machine wraith leaves the body of a 'jack for any reason it loses its incorporeal traits for one round.

## Treasure

Machine wraiths do not collect treasure. However, they often lair in ruined workshops, scrap yards, or old battlefields which may hold a great deal of mechanical wealth. A machine wraith forced out of a steamjack leaves behind a multi-ton bit of treasure if its owner does not claim it.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** Machine wraiths are ghost-like creations that can possess steamjacks. It is said only a warcaster may truly defeat

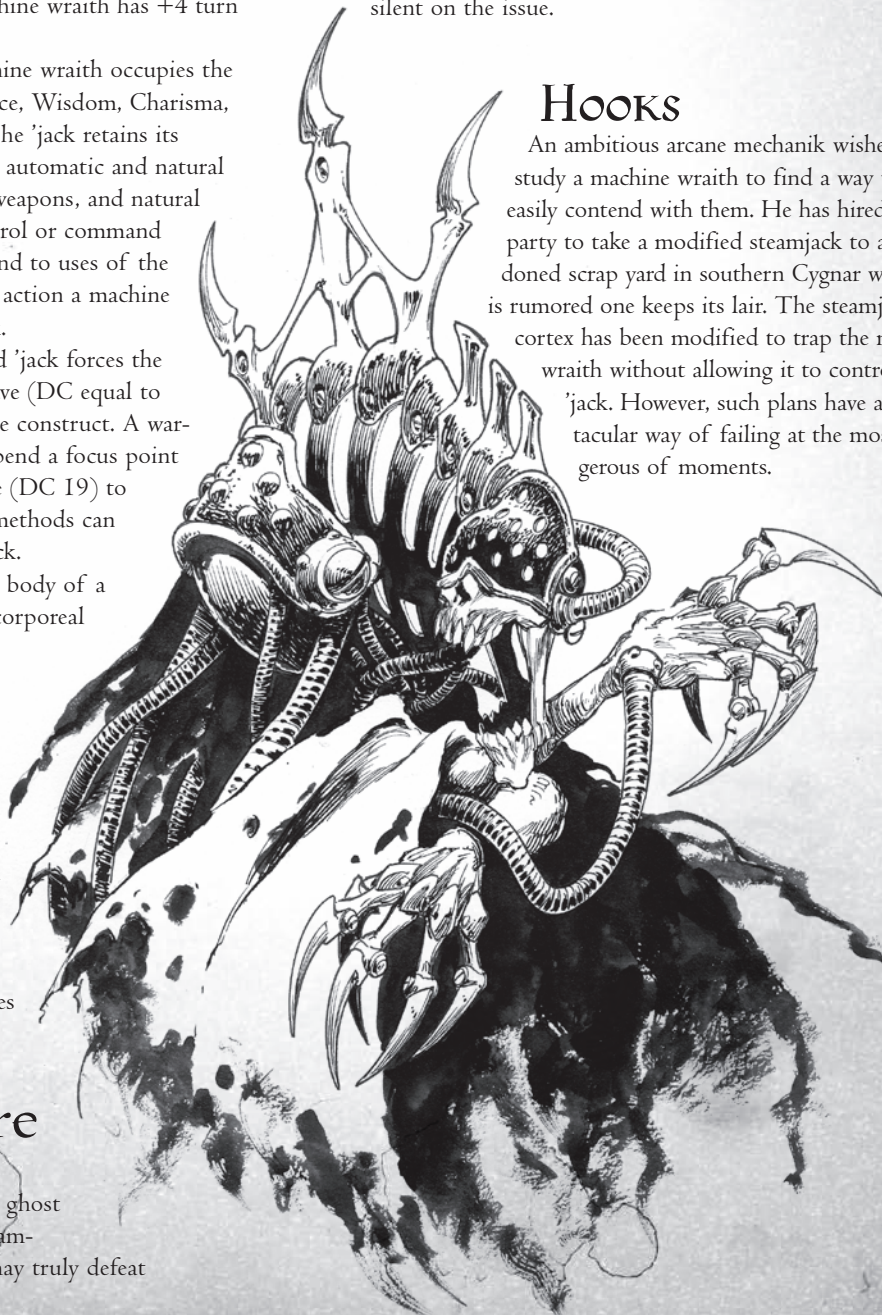
them. These terrors usually appear near conflicts and signal a Cryxian presence.

**Rare:** Damaging a possessed warjack might drive a machine wraith out. A warcaster can use his focus to exorcise a machine wraith. Once free of the 'jack, it becomes solid and vulnerable to normal weapons.

**Obscure:** Some say that Cryxian necromancers created these creatures. Some others speculate on fallen warcasters or priests of Cyrius as possible origins of these hateful creatures. The only certainty is that the necrotechs of Cryx remain deathly silent on the issue.

## HOOKS

An ambitious arcane mechanik wishes to study a machine wraith to find a way to more easily contend with them. He has hired the party to take a modified steamjack to an abandoned scrap yard in southern Cygnar where it is rumored one keeps its lair. The steamjack's cortex has been modified to trap the machine wraith without allowing it to control the 'jack. However, such plans have a spectacular way of failing at the most dangerous of moments.



# Mammoth



<b>Always N Colossal Animal CR 17</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	20d8+220 HD (310 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage resistance 10/piercing, energy resistance fire 5, cold 5
<b>Senses:</b>	Listen +6, Spot +6, low-light vision, scent
<b>Initiative:</b>	-2
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft. (10 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	38, touch 0, flat-footed 38 (-8 size, -2 Dex, +30 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+15/+47
<b>Attack:</b>	Gore +24 melee (4d6+18)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Gore +24 melee (4d6+18) and 2 slams +19 melee (2d8+8)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Collapse, stamp, trample 2d8+24, triple damage against objects
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	30 ft./15 ft.
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +25, Reflex +10, Will +5
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 42, Dex 6, Con 32, Int 2, Wis 9, Cha 6
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +19, Listen +6, Spot +6
<b>Feats:</b>	Die Hard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (gore), Weapon Specialization (gore)
<b>Environment:</b>	Any desert or warm land
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, pair, or herd (4-9)
<b>Advancement:</b>	21-40 (Colossal)



Soon after arriving in the heart of the Skorne Empire, my escort, or rather my armed minder, Kaleda and I spent several weeks as “guests” of Lord Tyrant Vaddra and her legions bivouacked on the outskirts of Halaak. Doubtlessly a propaganda ploy meant to educate me on the invincibility of the forces arrayed against the west, I actually learned something far more interesting and, I’m sure, completely outside my captors’ intentions.

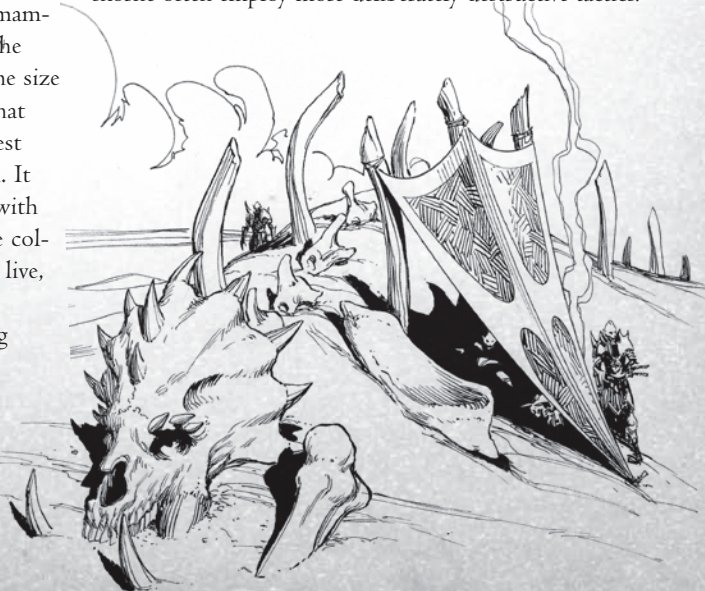
The lord tyrant’s pavilion towered above the simple tents and temporary structures of the skorne encampment. No mere thing of cloth and leather, however, would ever hold up to the wicked winds and dust storms that incessantly afflict even these “tamed” skorne lands. A forest of iron supports held aloft the rugged, scaled skin of a beast the skorne call a mammoth. The preserved head remained intact and crowned the great tent’s entrance. Two great tusks, each nearly twice the size of a full-grown man, jutted from the sides of a muzzle that seemed distinctly feline and obviously carnivorous. The rest of the massive hide, however, appeared markedly reptilian. It resembled a compact but impossibly large dracodile, but with a broad ridged head and blunt, three-toed feet like temple columns gifted with the ability to move. Had the beast been live, I dare guess it would have towered at a size of nearly ten men standing each on the shoulders of the others, making it perhaps the largest land bound animal I’ve ever had the pleasure of examining.

Although my captors had little patience for my questions about the great creature and kept directing my attention to endless drills and weapons demonstrations, I did glean that these titans roam in great herd-packs to the east of the skorne nation and that

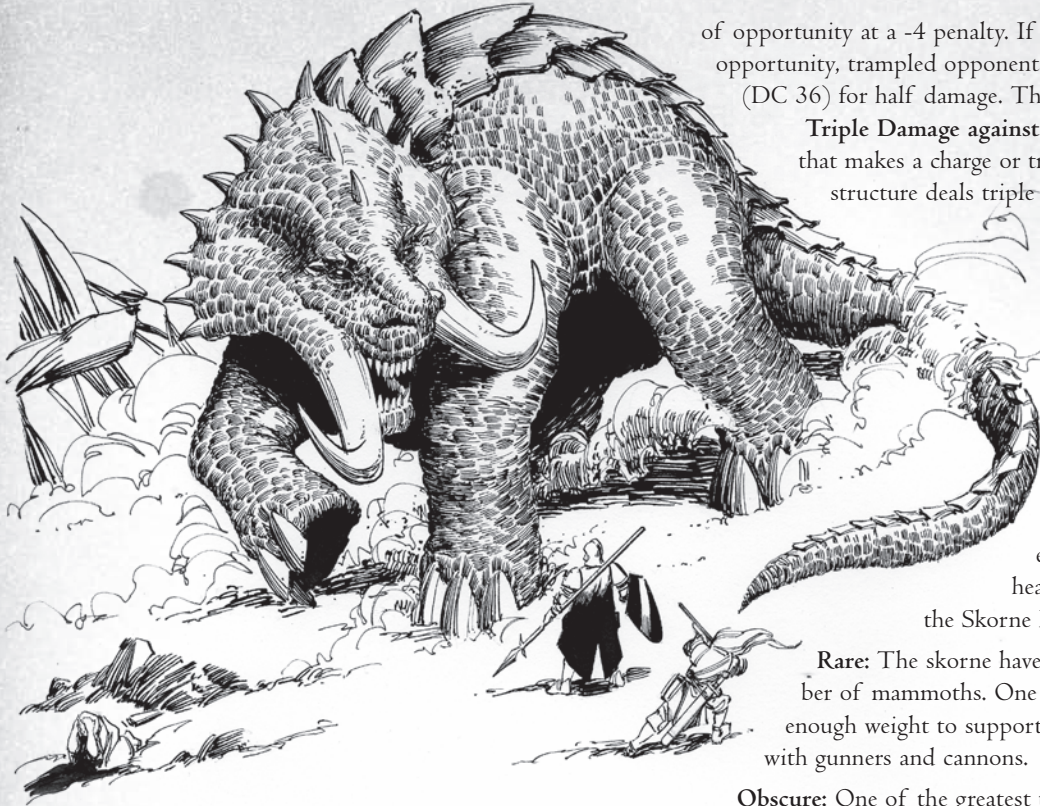
some surely exaggerated number serve the skorne as beasts of war. While I have no intention of returning to the savage lands of the east for some great long time, the call of wondrous creatures like this will ever beckon my imagination and my curiosity.

## Combat

Mammoths are as uncomplicated as they are devastating. Capable of destroying whole towns without noticing, a mammoth crushes any creature foolish enough to threaten it beneath its gigantic feet. Wild mammoths generally leave other creatures alone as long as they stay out of the mammoth’s way. Those trained by the skorne often employ more deliberately destructive tactics.



# Mammoth



**Collapse (Ex):** Upon reaching 0 or fewer hit points a mammoth collapses. Any creature within 10 feet of the falling mammoth is buried beneath tons of elephantine flesh and takes 8d6 crushing damage. Make a Reflex save (DC 25) for half damage.

A buried creature may attempt to escape every round by making an Escape Artist or Strength check (DC 25). If a creature remains under the collapsed mammoth, it begins to suffocate from the crushing weight. A buried creature's allies may help it escape by trying to pull them out or destroying the mammoth's body.

**Stamp (Ex):** As a full-round action, a mammoth can rear up on its back legs and bring both of its front feet slamming down upon any 10-foot-by-10-foot area within its reach. All creatures in that area must make a Reflex save (DC 36) or be knocked prone. The mammoth may then immediately make a grapple check as a free action against any huge or smaller creature knocked prone in the effected area. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Trample (Ex):** As a full-round action, a mammoth may move up to twice its speed and literally run over any opponents at least one size category smaller than itself. A mammoth merely has to move over the opponents in its path; any creature whose space is completely covered by the trampling mammoth's space is subject to the trample attack doing 2d8+24 bludgeoning damage. Trampled opponents can attempt attacks

of opportunity at a -4 penalty. If they do not make attacks of opportunity, trampled opponents can attempt a Reflex save (DC 36) for half damage. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Triple Damage against Objects (Ex):** A mammoth that makes a charge or trample against an object or structure deals triple damage.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** Mammoths are among the largest land-bound animals known, hunting any creature smaller than them in great packs heard in the eastern reaches of the Skorne Empire.

**Rare:** The skorne have managed to tame a number of mammoths. One of the creatures can carry enough weight to support an armored howdah loaded with gunners and cannons.

**Obscure:** One of the greatest threats posed by a mammoth comes from standing nearby when it falls. Its massive bulk can crush whole platoons beneath its nearly 30-ton weight.

## Treasure

Mammoths' sword-sized teeth and powerful jaws assure that little remains after their meals. What they cannot process, though, often becomes lodged in the creatures' stomachs, making their innards—especially those of mammoths trained for war and that frequently devour sentient creatures—veritable treasure troves. As such, anyone who spends an hour and makes a Survival check (DC 24) to gut a mammoth finds double standard treasure lodged within the beast's stomach and bowels. Some might say the repulsive effort exceeds the value of the treasure, though, and supposedly the smell of mammoth guts never washes off.

## Hooks

A lone mammoth is discovered wandering along the edge of the Stormlands, shrugging off occasional lightning strikes, but exhausted and obviously starved. The beast is foul tempered, attacking nearly any creature that approaches, but will surely die without aid. Any who can nurse the beast back to health, and keep it well fed, have a chance of gaining the most powerful ally they have ever met.

# Mazak Fruit



Always N Medium Plant CR 2	Space/Reach:	10 ft./15 ft.
Hit Dice: 2d8+6 (15 hp)	Special Qualities:	Limited mobility, plant traits, restraining roots, seedling scent, vulnerability to fire
Immunities/Resist: Plant traits	Saves:	Fort +6, Reflex +4, Will +0
Senses: Listen +0, Spot +0	Abilities:	Str 8, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 3
Initiative: +4	Skills:	Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Climb +4
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)	Feats:	Stealthy
Armor Class: 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+4 Dex, +1 natural)	Environment:	Any desert or warm land
Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+0	Organization:	Solitary or tangle (2–12 males and 8–24 females)
Attack: Slam +0 melee (1d4–1)	Advancement:	3–8 (Large), 9–14 (Huge)
Full Attack: Slam +0 melee (1d4–1)		
Special Attacks: Improved grab, pollen spray		



Where we dismiss the grasses, creepers, flowers and trees we encounter daily as little more than scenery, some weeds refuse to be ignored. Take the eastern mazak vine, a plant that requires the death of another living creature to survive, as an example.

One may most easily distinguish the mazak plant by its two distinctly formed and separate genders: the female fruited vine and the thorny male vine. The female mazak fruit grows as a far-spreading creeper, much like a melon. Its thick and thorny tendrils possess a wooden fiber strong enough to allow the plant to grow vertically as tall as seven feet. From these stands sprout plump, blood red citrus-like fruit, traced with lighter pinkish veins. Despite growing native in a parched environment, these fruits look, and taste, ripe and particularly juicy, though slightly sweet for my tastes. The skorne find the fruit so much to their liking that they cultivate this creeper in private gardens. Many even seek out wild strains to transplant or cross breed with their favorite cultivated plants. They serve the red fruit as food and make it into a refreshing sweet wine. The fruit is hardy and survives exposure, making it ideal for long overland journeys by skorne scouts.

Such an abundant source of food and fluid in a desert seems too good to be true, and of course it is. My short visit to the east taught me something that the skorne have known for centuries if not millennia: every benefit gained in eastern Immoren comes at a cost. In the case of the mazak fruit, what sustenance it provides is only a means to a very cruel end.

Within each mazak fruit lay thousands of fine seeds, each coated in the plant's juice-dripping meat. Upon consumption, mazak seeds lodge within the belly of the creature that devoured them while the juices quickly absorb into the blood

and sweat. Within moments of devouring even a single mazak fruit, the composition of a creature's sweat changes to emit a slight smell apparently very odiferous to receptors upon the male mazak vine.

The male mazak vine, you see, is an ambulatory predator. Studded with sharp, stout thorns and a strong, fibrous root system similar to the female, the male possesses tight flower buds capable of detecting and tracking the scent of creatures that have recently eaten a mazak fruit. Upon sensing such prey, all the vines of a patch—potentially miles worth of murderous roots in a larger field—pursue their victim, entangle the hapless beast, and spray it with an acidic pollen. Once the creature succumbs to likely overwhelming odds, the vines weave their way into the creatures' body until they find the stomach. There they use the same pollen that likely killed the host to fertilize the seeds. Thus provided with ample shelter, water, and compost, the seeds bud to form the next generation of mazaks.

All this I learned from my skorne captors after I had gorged myself on several of the fruits they had offered me. Their cruel laughter told me they were not lying about the danger of these more-than-creeping vines. Thankfully there were no male vines present at the time of my dinner, but I was prepared for the worst when I finally encountered them. The scent of the fruit lingers for hours, and had I wandered from camp without the warning of my skorne captors I might have fallen prey to the vine.

This introduction to the dangerous fruit was no accident. Not only do the skorne cultivate the vine for food and wine, but many warlords also use the vine as part of their prison gardens for their most honored "guests". It was just such a prison garden in which I was held before I was permitted to explore the Empire with Kaleda as my guide. These small houses are prisons, but they are not of the sort like the cruel

## Mazak Fruit

pits for holding criminals and their ilk. These fine guest houses are built in the center of a garden of rooted mazak vines. The fine building and the beauty of the garden gives the hostage the sense of being an honored guest. However, after a guest consumes a meal or drink laced with mazak juice, the hostage can never leave the house for fear of the thick maze of mazak vine that encircles it.

### Combat

Upon catching the scent of one who has eaten a mazak fruit, mazak vines swiftly converge on their victims. Fearless and unrelenting, mazak vines swarm their prey, aiding one another in immobilizing a target and soaking it in their poisonous, acidic pollen. A great distance may separate the fruit bearing female plants and violent acid-spewing males. With luck one might pass the seeds before becoming victim of the deadly pollination process.



## Mazak Fruit

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a mazak vine must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

**Limited Mobility (Ex):** The female vine has no mobility (speed 0 ft.) and the male vine only moves when it sense seedlings. It moves by uprooting (requiring a move action), lashing its vines about objects, and pulling itself forward. If it has nothing to cling to, a mazak vine cannot move.

**Pollen Spray (Ex):** Three times per day, a mazak vine can release a spray of acidic pollen at a single opponent within 10 feet. This attack deals 1d8 points of acid damage, which a Reflex save (DC 14) negates. This pollen infiltrates the bloodstream of those who take damage, forcing a Fortitude save (DC 13) to avoid poisoning on the following round. This poison deals initial and secondary damage of 1d4 Strength. Mazak vines can only use this ability once every 5 rounds. Mazak vines are immune to the acid and poison of this attack. A mazak vine can use this attack on an opponent it is grappling. The save DCs are Constitution based.

**Restraining Roots (Ex):** Rather than joining a grapple, mazak vines can use the aid another action to improve an adjacent mazak vine's grapple check. Upon successfully making an attack against AC 10, a mazak vine grants its ally a +3 bonus on its next grapple check. Multiple mazak vines can aid the same ally and the bonuses stack. Typically, one trying to escape the grapple of numerous mazak vines must only overcome one augmented grapple check and not the grapple checks of numerous participants.

**Seedling Scent (Ex):** Treat mazak vines as having scent for the purposes of detecting creatures who have eaten a mazak fruit within 24 hours. This form of scent functions at double the normal range (can detect creatures at a range of 60 feet, 120 upwind, 30 downwind).

Mazak vines have poor perception beyond this ability. Treat them as having tremorsense at a range of 5 feet but as effectively blind beyond that.

**Vulnerability to fire:** Mazak vines suffer half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Mazak are fruiting vines that grow in wide patches, often in the shadows of rocky outcroppings or other sheltered areas.

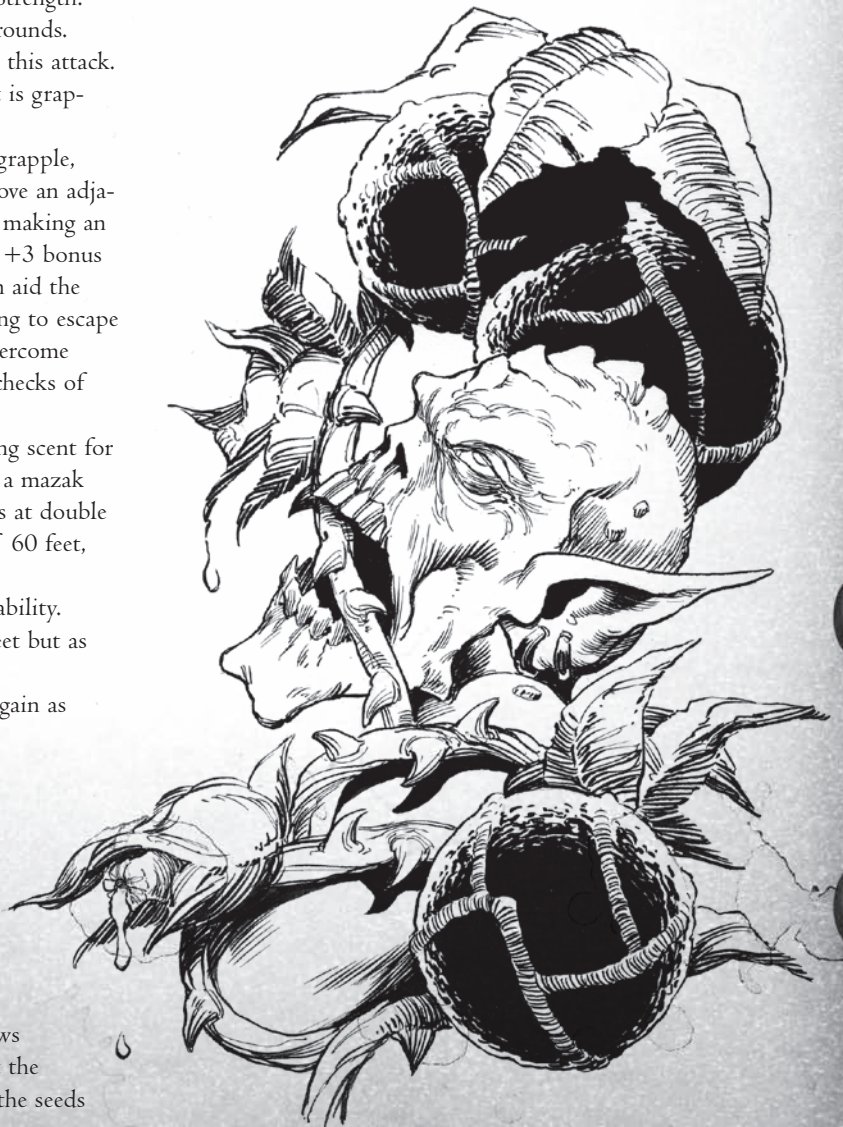
**Uncommon:** One of the few ready food sources in the desert, any creature that eats a mazak fruit exudes an almost undetectable sent. This scent allows the plant's thick, thorny, and mobile vines to detect the creature and strangle it in an attempt to germinate the seeds within its stomach.

**Rare:** Aside from its deadly constricting abilities, a mazak vine can spray deadly, acidic pollen. This pollen can taint a creature's blood, weakening it and preventing it from fighting the plant's clutching roots.

**Obscure:** The skorne consider mazak fruit a delicacy, and it produces a fine wine coveted throughout their empire. The skorne term "mazak run" means to purposefully send another into a dangerous situation.

## Treasure

The bodies of sentient creatures tangled in among mazak vines often retain their equipment and any treasure they might have carried before dying. A Search check (DC 18) of a mazak



## Mazak Fruit

patch's tangled undergrowth has a 40% chance of revealing such remains with standard treasure.

Despite the deadly nature of their vines, female mazak produce sweet and temptingly juicy fruit for a desert plant. A delicacy among the skorne, the difficulty in cultivating them leads some noble houses to pay as much as 5 gp for a ripe mazak fruit. The juice from a mazak fruit ferments into a refreshing wine, with bottles of even average vintages selling for at least 10 gp.

### HOOKS

As a test to determine their worthiness, a noble of house Sivtaashi sends the PCs on a literal "mazak run". The skorne instruct them to return with six bushels of fruit but let them discover and deal with the plants' deadly nature themselves.

Skorne soldiers camped near Ternon Crag started several growths of mazak vine in hopes of making their favorite wine. After a successful raid on these camps, trollkin warriors discovered the vines and found the fruit to their taste. They intend to bring cutting of the growths back to their village with little knowledge of what danger the plant holds.

### Mazak Wine

Mazak wine is typical of most fruit wines except it has unexpected effects on humans and gobbers, in particular once it has aged in a bottle.

A human that consumes 5 ounces or more of mazak wine aged 2 years or older gains the effect of low-light vision for a number of hours equal to the age of the wine.

Almost all gobbers are allergic to mazak wine, resulting in them losing their natural camouflage ability as their skin takes on a ruddy complexion. They also experience a sensitivity to motion and sound and gain a +1 to reflex saves. These effects last for a number of hours equal to the age of the wine in years after the gobber consumes at least 5 ounces.

Aged mazak wine is highly valued by skorne (5 to 25 gp per bottle) and bottles over 10 years are extremely rare (300 gp+)

*I have heard reports that this resilient vine not only survives in our native soil but that it thrives here. This is very worrying because the people of western Immoren have never experienced such a threat, and the vine may find permanent purchase in our lands before my warning can reach those who can stop it. The more I hear of such rumors the more clear it is to me that it is not just the skorne armies but all that they bring with them that truly threatens our way of life. Even if we drive the invaders out, our civilization may already be changed forever.*

*-VP*



# Necrotech Constructs



## Bile Thrall

NE Medium Undead (Necrotech Construct) CR 3

Hit Dice: 3d12+20 (38 hp)

Immunities/Resist: Necrotech construct traits, turn resistance

Senses: Listen +5, Spot +5

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft. (5 squares),

Armor Class: 14, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+3

Attack: Slam +3 melee (1d6+1)

Full Attack: Slam +3 melee (1d6+1)

Special Attacks: Bile cannon, purge

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +6

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con -,

Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Ability Focus (bile cannon)<sup>B</sup>

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or troop (6-10); often accompanies Cryx armies

Advancement: 4-9 HD (Medium)

## Bloat Thrall

NE Large Undead (Necrotech Construct) CR 6

Hit Dice: 8d12 +30 (82 hp)

Immunities/Resist: Necrotech construct traits, turn resistance

Senses: Listen +7, Spot +7

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft. (5 squares)

Armor Class: 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (-1 size, +7 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+12

Attack: Slam +8 melee (1d10)

Full Attack: Slam +8 melee (1d10)

Special Attacks: Despoiler cannon

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Rupture

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 10, Con -,

Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Power Attack, Ability Focus (despoiler cannon)<sup>B</sup>

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary; often accompanies Cryx armies

## Soul Hunter

NE Large Undead (Necrotech Construct) CR 6

Hit Dice: 10d12 +30 (90 hp)

Immunities/Resist: Necrotech construct traits, turn resistance

Senses: Darkvision 120 ft., Listen +10,

Spot +10

Initiative: +6

Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)

Armor Class: 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural)

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+13

Attack: +1 keen scythe +10/+6 melee (2d6+3 /19-20 X4) or +1 vicious sickle +10/+6 melee (1d8+4 plus 2d6 negative energy) or 2 hoof slam +9 melee (1d8+3)

Full Attack: +1 keen scythe +8/+4 (2d6+3 /19-20 X4) and +1 vicious sickle +8 (1d8+2 plus 2d6 negative energy)

Special Attacks: Soul fuel, trample

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Soul prison

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 14, Con -,

Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +10, Spot +10, Jump +13

Feats: Alertness, Improved initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Run

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or hunt (3-5); often accompanies Cryx armies



## Necrotech Constructs

Shortly after our close call with the machine wraith I had occasion to talk to the mercenary warcaster Damien Sperling at length regarding his recent battlefield experiences. Employed by the Cygnaran Army on the war front for months, he had begun to wonder if the coin still covered the steady escalation of horrors he endured. He related how the army had suffered far more encounters with Cryxian raiders than commonly known.

He lowered his voice to avoid drawing censure from the officers he claimed had strict orders to prevent the men from spreading rumors and panicking the common people. The popular depiction of the northern front as a brave battle between Khador and Cygnar related only half the story. The trench lines had endured the constant harassment of the unliving. The only encouraging news was that Khador was just as beset as our soldiers. Cryx employs all corpses equally for their macabre industry.

Aside from a fascination with the pervasiveness of Toruk's blight on the surrounding islands, Cryx has never ranked high on my list of priorities for study. As Sperling spoke, however, I glimpsed a certain fiendish inventiveness and genius to their grotesque fabrications.

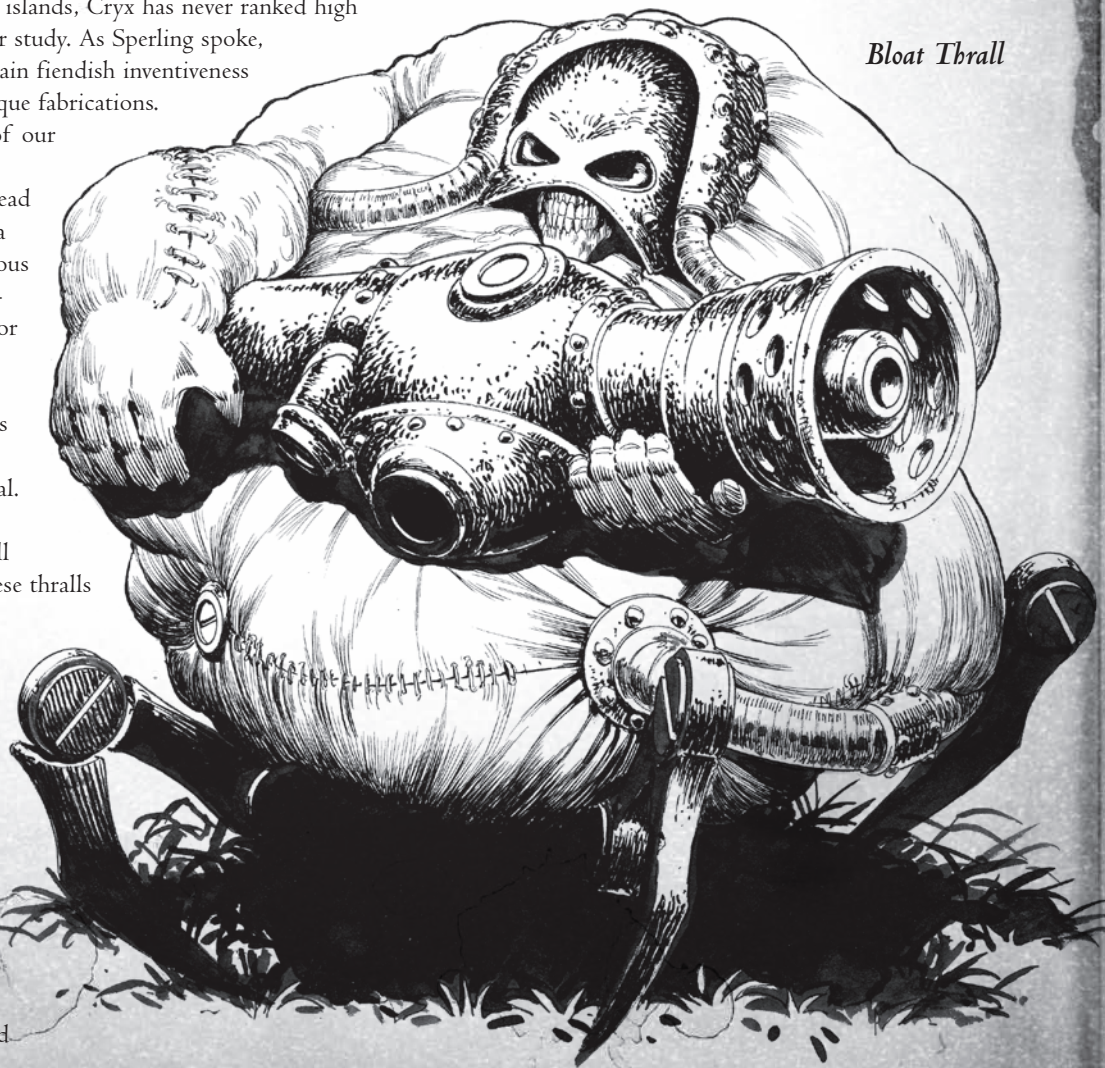
Like the twisted shadow of our own mechanics' creativity, Cryxian necrotechs fuse dead flesh and machinery into a stronger and more dangerous whole. I am convinced living soldiers remain superior to the dead, yet I find it difficult to argue with the devastation Cryxian troops obviously unleash with no regard to their own survival.

I have seen mechanithralls, of course. For all their deadly efficiency, these thralls do not inspire true fear in the hearts of Trenchers and Winter Guard. That dubious honor belongs to the bile thrall and its disgustingly similar counterpart the Bloat thrall. Descriptive, and entirely apt, terms, both of these creatures utilize ample quantities of some noxious and deadly substances invented by twisted

alchemy in the black halls of Skell or Blackwater that rapidly dissolves flesh. Necrotechs mix these "biles" and build these thralls solely for war; they have no other useful function.

The method of these substances' delivery causes as much terror as the concoctions themselves. These thralls serve as unliving reservoirs, with their entire bloated bodies manipulated to maximize their ability to contain as much bile as possible. Specially treated tubes sewn into their flesh connect their former intestines, stomachs, and bladders to a tremendous pressurized spraying device which unleashes this substance upon their unwitting victims. Even a few droplets of this bile causes agonizing burns and a sickness from which few survive. Those sprayed with any quantity nearly always die quite painfully. Even worse, should these creatures feel the need, they can pressurize all of their contained fluid to expel a single great surge, annihilating everything nearby. That they will not survive this means nothing to the dead.

*Bloat Thrall*

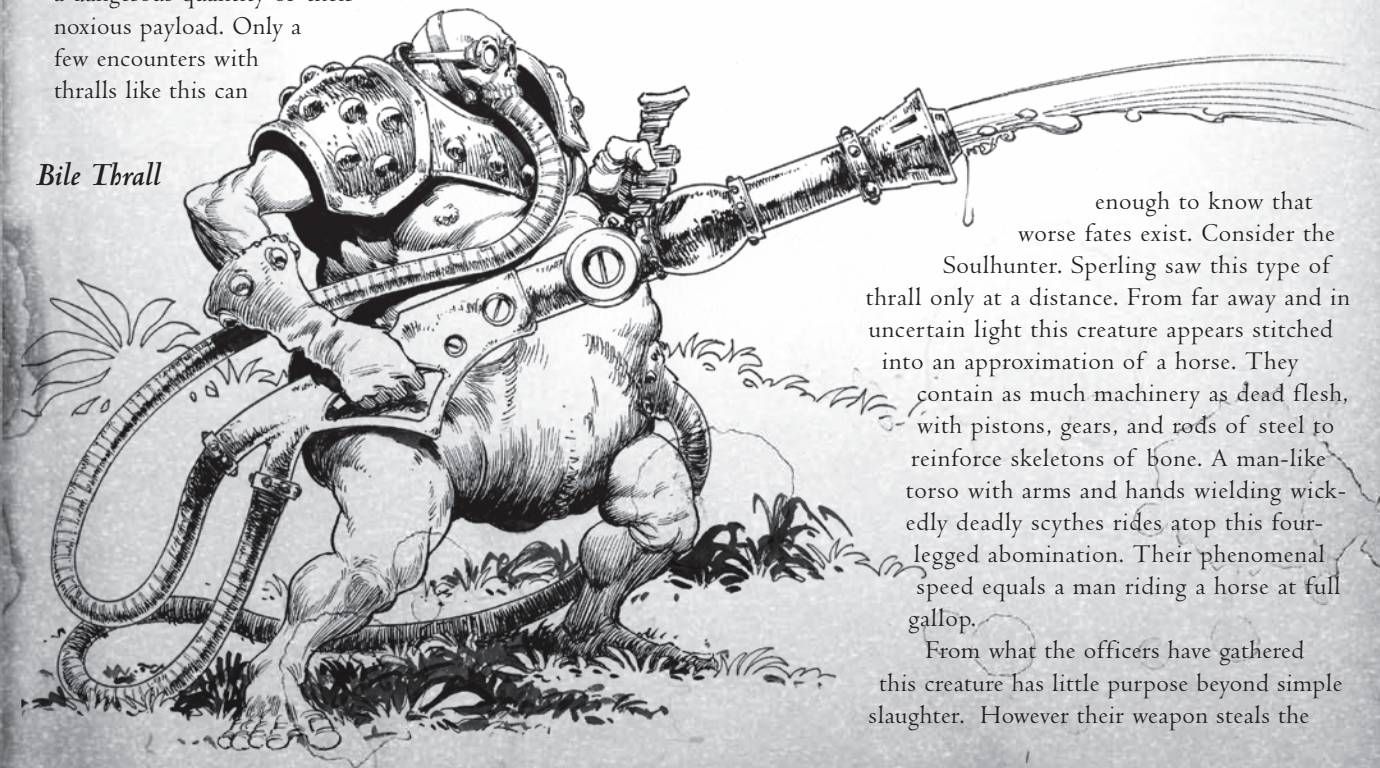


## Necrotech Constructs

Sperling told me he has seen entire squads of men annihilated in an instant by these shambling creatures. In one engagement he fought alongside long gunners who cut down bile thralls as quickly as they could while the undead advanced through the trees, but not fast enough. When the gunners paused to reload, one single thrall emerged from the torn foliage to washed the entire left flank with acidic ruin. Sperling escaped by a margin of inches, while to his left a man he had spent weeks fighting alongside screamed and melted into an indiscernible pile of meat and fluids.

The Bloat thrall is a larger variant, stitched together from the bodies of a half-dozen men with no regard for anatomy or decency, filled with an even greater quantity of this poison. This creature does not sacrifice itself, at least not right away. It wields an oversized brass cannon and launches explosive bile at a distance like unliving artillery. They only appear in support of larger Cryxian forces, and the Reconnaissance Service considers destroying these creatures a high priority. One cannot destroy a Bloat thrall without the creature exploding and releasing a dangerous quantity of their noxious payload. Only a few encounters with thralls like this can

### *Bile Thrall*



ruin the morale of soldiers in the field. Cryx is not called the Nightmare Empire without reason.

Dying is bad enough, and dying painfully something none of us hopes to experience. Yet I have witnessed

enough to know that worse fates exist. Consider the Soulhunter. Sperling saw this type of thrall only at a distance. From far away and in uncertain light this creature appears stitched into an approximation of a horse. They contain as much machinery as dead flesh, with pistons, gears, and rods of steel to reinforce skeletons of bone. A man-like torso with arms and hands wielding wickedly deadly scythes rides atop this four-legged abomination. Their phenomenal speed equals a man riding a horse at full gallop.

From what the officers have gathered this creature has little purpose beyond simple slaughter. However their weapon steals the

## Necrotech Constructs

souls of their victims, which seemingly empowers them. Death by a Soulhunter ensures the victim's agony endures, deprived of their rightful place in the afterlife, as a source of fuel for further depravity. Whether it is worse to die in the clutches of an infernal or at the blade of a Soulhunter is academic. Given such adversaries, I can certainly understand why some desperate soldiers take their own life rather than face eternal annihilation.

### Necrotech Construct

#### Subtype

A necrotech construct is an artificially fabricated undead or construct made from a mix of mechanika and the parts of once-living creatures animated and powered by spiritual, supernatural or otherwise necromantic forces. This type combines the best traits of the construct and undead types, making necromantic constructs a superior form of undeath in many ways, although they are susceptible to many of the weaknesses of both undead and constructs.

Creatures created or spontaneously arising from necromantic technology, or necrotech, use the necrotech construct type. Many of the thralls created by the undead mechaniks, or necrotechs, of the Cryxian isles such as bile, bloat, and mechanithralls are of this type, though purely undead creations like skarlocks and bane thralls are not. Some creatures, like machine wraiths, that rise spontaneously from mysterious processes rather than being constructed still use the necrotech construct type because they are largely composed of mechanika and necromantic energies.

#### Features

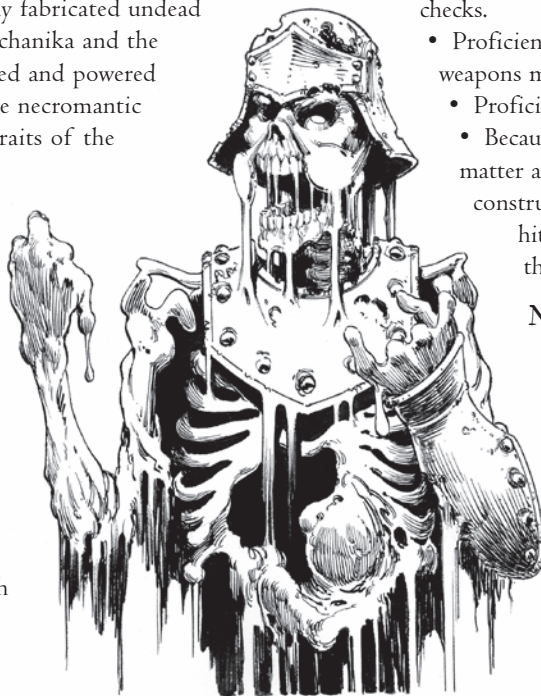
A Necrotech construct has the following features.

- 12-sided hit dice.
- Base attack bonus equal to 3/4 total hit dice (as cleric).
- Good Will saves.
- Skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1) per hit die, with quadruple skill points for the first hit die.

#### Traits

A necrotech construct possesses the following traits (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry).

- A necrotech construct is largely composed of mechanical parts and thus subject to a bodger's demolish and precise timing abilities and any ability or spell that effects creatures composed of mechanika.
- Undead necrotech constructs may be turned although they always have a turn resistance of at least +2.
- Cannot heal damage on its own, although it can be healed and repaired. Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal a necrotech construct. The Craft Construct feat can also be used to heal a necrotech construct. A necrotech construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
  - Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
  - Proficient with its natural weapons and any weapons mentioned in its entry.
  - Proficient with no armor.
  - Because its body is a mass of unliving matter and mechanical parts, a necrotech construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size, as shown on the table.



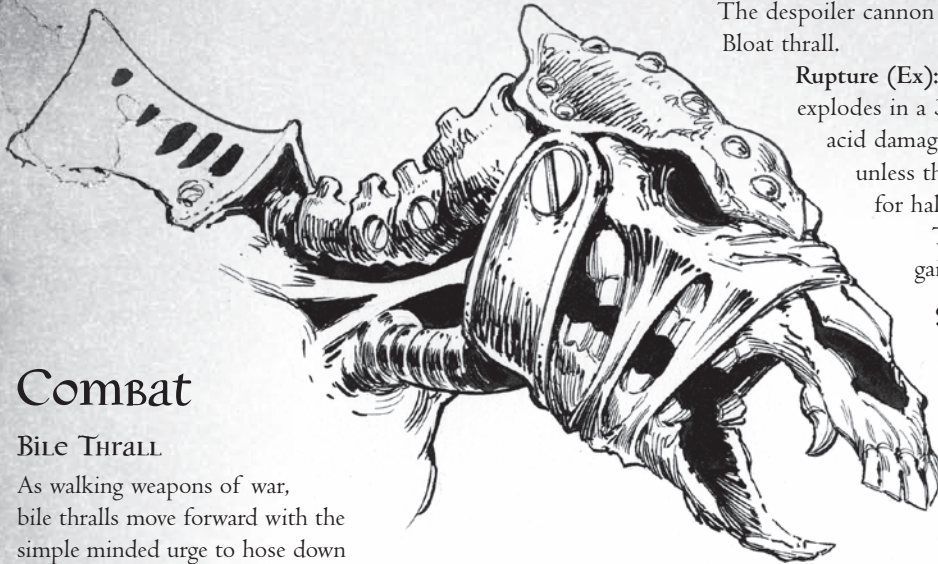
#### Necrotech Construct Bonus Hit Points

Size Bonus	Hit Points
Fine	—
Diminutive	—
Tiny	—
Small	10
Medium	20
Large	30
Huge	40
Gargantuan	50
Colossal	60

#### Meaner Mechanithralls

You may also apply the necrotech construct type to mechanithralls (MNI pp 126–127). This gives them better attacks than normal undead (their attack increases from +4 to +6) and 20 additional hit points for being a Medium creature (for a total of 46 hp on average). However, this also makes them susceptible to a bodger's Demolish attack and any effects or spells that affect creatures composed of mechanika.

# Necrotech Constructs



## Combat

### Bile Thrall

As walking weapons of war, bile thralls move forward with the simple minded urge to hose down and dissolved their enemies into piles of liquid flesh.

**Acid (Ex):** A bile thralls acid is a slow acting alchemical substance. Characters that take acid damage continue to suffer 1d6 points of acid damage for an additional 1d4 rounds.

**Bile Cannon (Ex):** As a standard action the bile thrall can make a ranged attack with the bile cannon. This is a 50 foot line that deals 3d6 points of acid damage plus 1d6 points of acid damage for every two additional hit die added to the bile thrall. Reflex save (DC 15) for half. This save is Constitution-based.

**Purge (Ex):** As a full-round action the bile thrall may make a purge attack. This is a 30 foot cone that deals 6d6 points of acid damage plus 2d6 points of acid damage for every two additional hit die added to the bile thrall. Fortitude save (DC 15) for half damage. After the attack concludes, the bile thrall falls to 0 hp.

**Turn Resistance (Su):** Bile thralls gain +2 turn resistance.

### Bloat Thrall

The unliving artillery called Bloat thralls constantly seep caustic acid from their sutured form while waiting to unleash globules of the hideous stuff on their target. Should its demise appear imminent, the thrall will scurry toward the largest grouping of enemies in hopes of catching them in its acidic rupture.

**Despoiler Cannon (Ex):** Once every two rounds a Bloat thrall may lob a blast of fast acting caustic acid from the cannon connected to its body as a +7 ranged touch attack with a range increment of 40 feet. The shell explodes on impact causing 10d6 points of acid damage on a direct hit and 5d6 point of acid splash damage within 15 feet. Those suffering splash damage may make a Reflex save (DC 16) for half. Anyone suffering acid damage must make a Will save (DC 16) or become frightened for 1d4 rounds. These saves are Constitution-based.

The despoiler cannon may only fire while connected to the Bloat thrall.

**Rupture (Ex):** When a Bloat thrall falls to 0 hp it explodes in a 30 ft area dealing 10D6 points of acid damage to every creature within the area unless they succeed in a Reflex save (DC 14) for half. This save is Constitution based.

**Turn Resistance (Su):** Bloat thralls gain +2 turn resistance.

### Soulhunter

Soulhunters are an unholy necromantic fusion of horse flesh and humanoid corpses powered by necrotic fueled necromantic technology. Borne of the festering imaginations of necrotechs, a Soulhunter is a relentless Cryxian weapon made to strike quickly into the enemy and use the souls of the dying to feed its attacks. Soulhunters rarely appear outside of the battlefield. However, should they be encountered (scouting for Cryxian armies, acting as messengers, or on hunter-killer missions) they have 1d4+1 trapped souls worth a total of 2d6 +2 levels between them.

**Soul Consumption (Su):** As a free action during a melee attack, a Soulhunter can consume a soul in its soul prison to gain +1 to either its attack or damage roll for every level of the soul (to a maximum of +5). A soul so consumed cannot be resurrected or otherwise brought back to life.

**Soul Prison (Su):** As a free action the Soulhunter can, after killing a living creature with a melee attack, draw the creature's soul into itself. A soul hunter can trap up to 30 levels or HD worth of souls much like a soul cage (MNI pg. 116).

**Trample (Ex):** As a full round action a Soulhunter can move up to twice its speed and literally run over any opponents at least one size category smaller than itself. Damage 1d8+3, Reflex save (DC 18). Opponents killed by a trample have their souls trapped by soul prison.

**Turn Resistance (Su):** Soulhunters gain +2 turn resistance.

**Weapons:** The Soulhunter's life eater sickle uses a version of the *vicious* property that deals negative energy damage, including 1d6 points of negative energy damage to the wielder (and thus heals a undead wielder 1d6 hit points). Both the sickle and scythe of Soulhunters radiate an aura of evil and bestow two negative levels on any good creature attempting to wield them.

## Treasure

Most thralls do not collect treasure but they may guard treasures of importance for their masters.

## Necrotech Constructs

The necromantic technology used in crafting these undead constructs might interest Cyriss priests or arcane mechaniks unafraid to probe such mysteries. The weapons of bile and Bloat thralls are unfamiliar but actually not surprisingly advanced in design other than their ability to withstand the caustic flow of acid the weapons use. They may bring 200 to 1200 gp each, depending on their quality.

### Legends and Lore

**Common:** Undead horrors apparently constructed out of mechanika walk the land near the coasts and war zones.

**Uncommon:** Composed of mechanika, such terrors are vulnerable to a bodger's knack for dismantling machinery. Guardians and servants in Cryx, these horrors are appearing with alarming frequency on the main land. Some, built like a wicked cross of man and steed, are known to travel far inland.

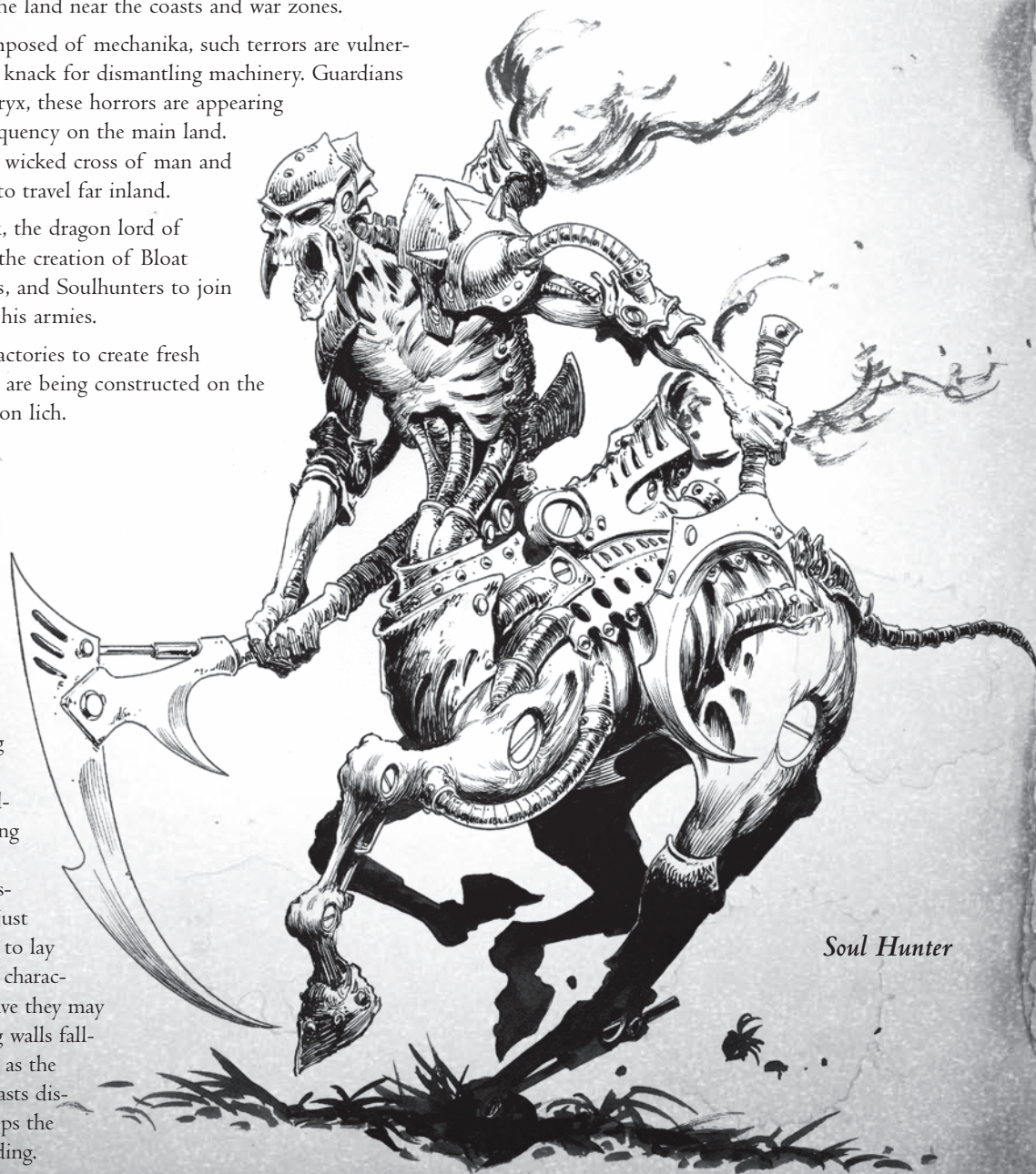
**Rare:** Lord Toruk, the dragon lord of Cryx, sanctioned the creation of Bloat thralls, bile thralls, and Soulhunters to join mechanithralls in his armies.

**Obscure:** Secret factories to create fresh necrotech horrors are being constructed on the mainland by an iron lich.

### Hooks

Characters approaching the ruins on Castle Moorcraig in hopes of uncovering the lost treasures of the ancient pirate king provoke several Bloat thralls guarding the site. Evading the watchful creatures might be possible but they are just intelligent enough to lay an ambush. If the characters attempt to leave they may find the remaining walls falling on their heads as the powerful acidic blasts dissolve whatever keeps the ancient walls standing.

Given free reign of a captured Golden Crucible fortress in Llael, a Khadoran Greylord provokes the suspicions of the local occupied populace. Rumor spreads he has turned to necromancy and is attempting to craft thrall of this own making using ancient necromantic texts, remains from Cryxian assaults, and the unwilling participation of the local population. Fearing the worst, the local members of the Llaeese resistance decide they must strike now before the Greylord becomes too powerful. What they will actually find in the fortress will surprise them.



*Soul Hunter*

# Razorbats



<b>Razorbat (Swarm)</b>	
Always N Tiny Animal (Swarm) CR 4	
Hit Dice:	10d8 (45 hp)
Immunities/Resist:	Swarm traits
Senses:	Blindsight 20 ft., Listen +7, Spot +2
Initiative:	+3
Speed:	Fly 30 ft. (6 squares) (good)
Armor Class:	15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+2 size, +3 Dex)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+7/-
Attack:	Swarm +7 melee (3d6)
Full Attack:	Swarm +7 melee (3d6)
Special Attacks:	Distraction, repeated attacks, sonic scream (2d8)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./0 ft.
Special Qualities:	Half damage from slashing and piercing, swarm traits
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills:	Hide +16, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Spot +2
Feats:	Ability Focus (distraction), Alertness, Multiattack, Stealthy
Environment:	Temperate forests
Organization:	Solitary or brood (2-5 swarms)

<b>Razorbat (King)</b>	
Always N Small Animal CR 1	
Hit Dice:	2d8 (9 hp)
Senses:	Blindsight 30 ft., Listen +4, Spot +2, low-light vision
Initiative:	+4
Speed:	10 ft. (2 squares), Fly 40 ft. (good)
Armor Class:	14, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+1 size, +3 Dex)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+2/-2
Attack:	Tail slash +5 melee (1d6 plus wounding)
Full Attack:	Bite +5 melee (1d4 plus disease), tail slash +0 melee (1d6 plus wounding)
Special Attacks:	Disease, wounding
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills:	Hide +9, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +2
Feats:	Flyby Attack <sup>B</sup> , Scent <sup>B</sup> , Weapon Finesse
Environment:	Any forest
Organization:	Solitary, mated pair, or pack (5-8)
Level Adjustment:	3-4 HD (small) 5 HD (medium)



Before my tenure at Corvis University, I had several encounters with a large species of razorbat known as the king razorbat. As a scout for the Cygnaran army, I had the opportunity to watch the creatures hunting in their natural habitat while I was stationed in the forests near the Khadoran border. At that time it was thought that only a few razorbats had the cunning and strength to live long enough to grow to such large stature. Though territorial, normal razorbats do not hunt great distances from their lairs, but even then I had my doubts that the larger king razorbats would have the same habit. After climbing a tree in hopes to observe them closely, I was quickly attacked by the large bats. My own theories proved correct when these king razorbats tracked me for miles back to base—a feat no normal razorbat could manage. However, this breakthrough in knowledge was not much consolation to my companions, who did not appreciate watching the bats make mincemeat out of one of our pack animals.

While the fascinating king razorbat was one of the first creatures to fall under my scrutiny as a student of the

wilds, some years past I had the great fortune to encounter the far more dangerous swarms of young razorbats in the wild. I encountered a razorbat swarm my first year at Corvis University with several able-bodied cohorts. While cataloging creatures and natural phenomenon as we found them, we made camp in the edge of the Thornwood. All seemed well, so I slept.

Professor Dravid, whose rather ill-received research into the behavior of the heavens made him both the butt of our jokes and the natural choice of night watchman, cried an alarm in the dead of night, disturbing my dream of being the first researcher to dissect an intact thornwood mauler. Hearing both his cry and innumerable approaching squeaks, I grabbed for my recently acquired Orgoth blade. Then I heard something else: a high-pitched whine that sounded more strange than threatening. Dravid screamed in pain and I made out the sound of his precious telescopes breaking.

When I lurched out of my tent, under-dressed but armed, I saw Dravid lying on the ground at the edge of camp with

## Razorbats

his eyes squeezed shut, his face pinched in pain, and his hands held to his ears. About him lay the ruined remains of his delicate research tools, each blasted apart like a hammer had struck the precious lenses. Then a ravenous swarm of fluttering, dark shapes descended upon him. When they entered the lamplight, I immediately recognized the tell-tale shape of the razorbat barb.

I leapt forward, slashing as the swirling mass flooded through our camp like a black wind. The swarm's collective screams shattered the glass of our lamps and plunged us into near darkness. I turned to jump for Dravid while my bleary-eyed companions raced from their tents, but came too late. The bats—hundreds of them—blurred out of the night and spun around the ill-fated man. He screamed again, though mercifully not for long. The bats darted in with fangs, their barbed tails lashed, and their bladed wings sliced. They clung to him with mouth and claws, shrieked into his ears, and ripped into his flesh. The night fairly glowed with gleaming eyes. Shining blood splattered on the pine needles.

When satisfied with their cruel extraction of flesh, the creatures disappeared into the night. The next day we buried Professor Dravid's remains with his shattered equipment and left a crudely carved stone marker as a testament to the man before plunging headlong into the darkness of the Thornwood.

## Combat

### Razorbat Swarm

Young razorbats are voracious predators that descend on their prey in huge swarms, hit it with a sonic scream to stun it, and then move in for the kill.

**Distraction (Ex):** Any living creature that begins its turn

with a razorbat swarm in its square must make a Fortitude save (DC 17) or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Sonic Scream (Su):** A swarm of razorbats acting in concert can focus the tiny shrieks they use for echolocation into a cone of deadly vibration.

A razorbat swarm can emit a sonic scream once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action. The scream extends in a 30-foot cone. Creatures within the cone take 2d8 points of sonic damage and must make Fortitude save (DC 15) or be stunned for 1 round and deafened. Crystalline creatures take double damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

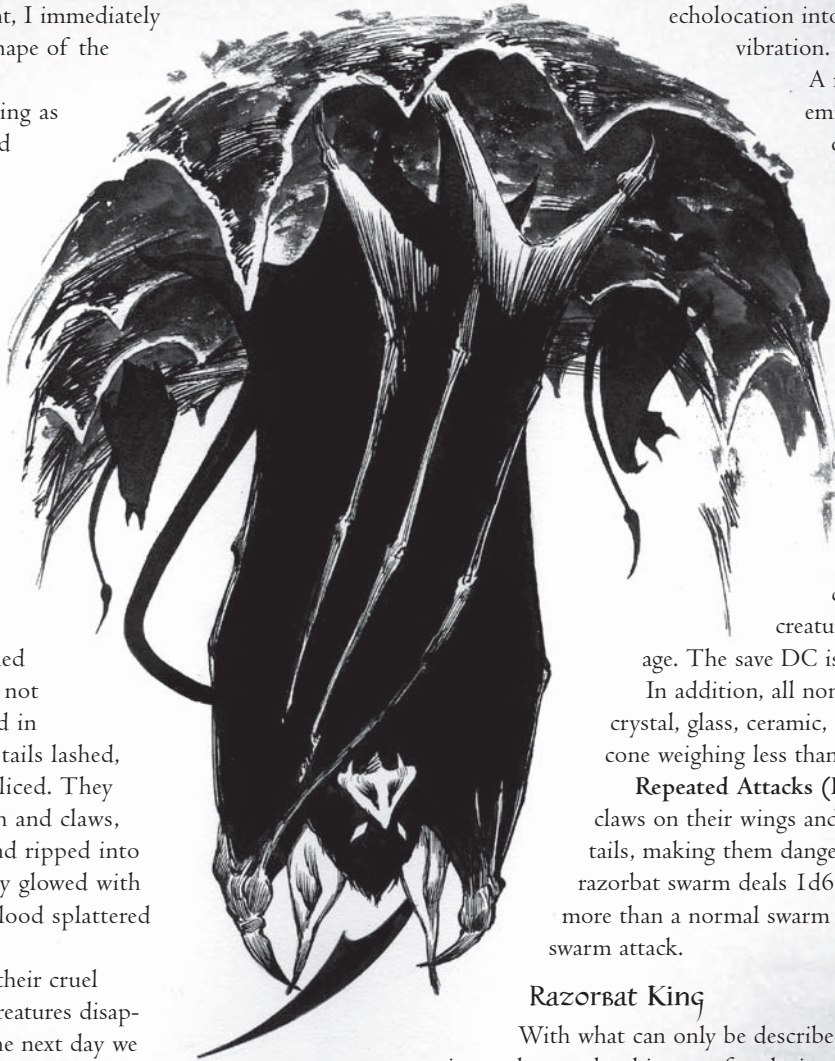
In addition, all non-magical objects of crystal, glass, ceramic, or porcelain in the cone weighing less than 1 pound shatter.

**Repeated Attacks (Ex):** Razorbats have claws on their wings and barbs on their tails, making them dangerous opponents. A razorbat swarm deals 1d6 points of damage more than a normal swarm of its hit dice on its swarm attack.

### Razorbat King

With what can only be described as a natural sadistic streak, razorbat kings prefer playing with their prey as a cat would a mouse instead of going for a direct kill. Whereas normal razorbats tend to swarm their prey and slash them to ribbons with their incredibly sharp barbed tails, these solitary hunters doggedly track their prey over long distances and bleed it slowly.

These razorbats have a good memory and will alter tactics when faced with unique circumstances. They prefer to ambush their prey from hiding through a series of fly-by attacks. The bite of a king razorbat carries a disease known as "razor fever" which appears as red streaks on the skin and muscle cramping. If it feels outmatched the canny bat will employ its bite then flee hoping that the disease cripples its prey in a few days time. King





## Razorbats

razorbats are patient hunters that commonly follow prey for days.

King razorbats are covered in a heavy fur that insulates and regulates their temperature and allows them to live in a greater range of territory. Observers have spotted them in both cold northern climes and southern jungles. They live most of their lives in solitude but do seek mates. In rare cases a group of adolescent males will come together for protection. When this happens the creatures devastate local wild life and livestock.

Just as ill tempered as their smaller kin, the nomadic king razorbats prefer the night but will hunt prey by daylight.

**Blindsense (Ex):** Using echolocation, a king razorbat notices and locates creatures within 30 feet provided it has line of effect to that creature.

**Disease (Ex):** The bite of a king razorbat carries a debilitating pathogen. Razor fever – Fortitude (DC 11), incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Str. The save is DC is Constitution-based.

**Wounding (Ex):** Any living creature damaged by a king razorbat's tail continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding loss. A Heal check (DC 10), a cure spell, or some other healing magic can stop the bleeding.

## Treasure

Razorbat's do not collect treasure. However, they may lair near or in sites with treasure, such as Orgoth vaults, forgotten Cyriss caches, or troll lairs (whose thick hide and regenerative powers make them all but immune to the bat's natural attacks). The tail barb of adult razorbats (p 280, WTCE) can be used as material to craft masterwork arrows. A king razorbat's tail barb can be worked into a masterwork dagger or a gobbler-sized shortsword. The tail barbs of young razorbats from razorbat swarms of 10 HD or more can be used as excellent needles or fishhooks worth 25 gp or more.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** The largest breed of razorbat dwells in forests but is nomadic and will even track its prey for days.

**Uncommon:** King razorbats can grow to astounding sizes, sometimes as large as a man. Larger bats are rumored to snatch smaller creatures or steal items to lure prey into an ambush.

**Rare:** The wicked barbed tail of the king razorbat is capable of heinous wounds that bleed profusely. The bat will bleed its prey and track it until it dies before feeding.

**Obscure:** Though monstrously large, these bats are animals. Some people claim to have trained king razorbats and use them as guardians or messengers.

## Hooks

The wealthy Marcus Jonathon is somewhat eccentric: He keeps a menagerie of exotic beasts on his extensive estate. He is especially proud of his large razorbat habitat, which contains more than two dozen adult specimens. However, Marcus's ignorance outweighs his enthusiasm, and he has flaunted his wealth by building his razorbat habitat from glass. Marcus doesn't know that razorbat swarms can shatter this easily. Nor does he know that most of his bats are females, and that they are very pregnant.

A local wizard has trained several king razorbats as guardians, and her jealous step-brother, a member of the Fraternal Order, is beginning to rile the local populace against her by calling her a witch. The confrontation comes to a head when her brother charms the otherwise restrained razorbats into attacking the populace in the city market. After defending against the bats, the PCs are approached by both siblings who wish to incriminate the other.

An enterprising gobbler in Five Fingers hopes to employ several king razorbats as messengers in the city. He seeks wilderness savvy adventurers to capture a male and several females in the nearby Gnarl so he may breed and train them. If the PCs are successful in their hunt, they will discover the bats' mates have the canny ability to track them. The local authorities do not appreciate the bats or the spread of razor fever that they believe the PCs are responsible for bringing into the city.

## Razorbats

The swampies in the Dorv's region know of a particular noxious poultice that will cure, or at least aid, in overcoming razor fever. Though none have supplied me with its recipe, I suspect they learned of making it from the local swamp gobbers. I recommend curious alchemists to go to the source when seeking to uncover the secret.

-VP



# Revenant



<b>CE Medium Undead Humanoid (Human) CR 7</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	5d12 (30 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Undead traits
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +3, Spot +3
<b>Initiative:</b>	+6
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +2 leather armor, +4 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+5/+8
<b>Attack:</b>	Cutlass +8 melee (1d8+3) or military pistol +7 ranged (2d6 plus 1d6 negative energy)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Cutlass +8 melee (1d8+3) or military pistol +7 ranged (2d6 plus 1d6 negative energy)

<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Soulform
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 17, Dex 15, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +9, Craft (Small Arms) +4, Intimidate +5, Listen +3, Spot +3
<b>Feats:</b>	Power Attack, Cleave, Exotic Weapon (small arms), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary or press gang (6–10)
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class



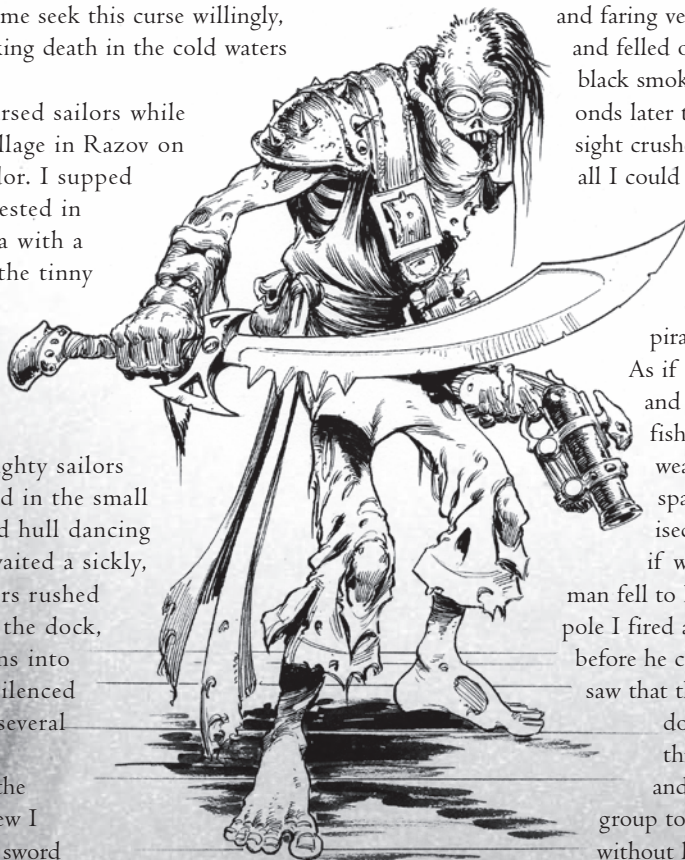
In my travels I have encountered tales of curses dark and cruel enough to curl a man's beard, but the curse that besets the poor souls known as revenant pirates tops them all. I hear some seek this curse willingly, even fervently, instead of risking death in the cold waters of the Meredius.

I encountered these accursed sailors while staying in a small fishing village in Razov on the Ordic border with Khador. I supped with several fishermen interested in sharing their tales of the sea with a scholar of my repute when the tinny chime of the town's alarm bell prematurely ended a wonderful repast. The sight awaiting us on the fog-laden wharf that cold night chilled even these doughty sailors to the bone. There, anchored in the small bay with its masts, sails, and hull dancing with spectral green flame, waited a sickly, sepulchral ship. As the sailors rushed in sudden terror away from the dock, the black vessel fired cannons into the village. The first salvo silenced the alarm bell and reduced several smaller buildings to rubble.

Remembering legends of the *Atramentous* and her sadistic crew I knew not what use pistol and sword

would have against these invaders, but I rushed to aid the villagers in defense of their home regardless. I found some fishermen already engaged in a pitched battle with several revenants, and faring very badly. I charged to their aid and felled one. It simply dissipated into a black smoke and rematerialized mere seconds later to return to the fighting. That sight crushed what hopes we had. It was all I could do to rally the men into a slow retreat.

One of the fishermen seemed to recognize the leader of this group of revenant pirates and called to it by name. As if in a dream the revenant turned and answered the unfortunate fisherman, telling him to drop his weapons and his life would be spared. It promised him – promised all of us – places in the crew if we surrendered. As the fisherman fell to his knees and lowered his gaff pole I fired and felled the lead revenant before he could complete his lie. I clearly saw that the creature intended to strike down the surrendering man. This threw the revenants into disarray and the remainder of our small group took the opportunity to flee without looking back.



When I encountered one of the fishermen years later I enquired after the man who had surrendered. Apparently his body vanished, and I wonder, when I am at sea, if I may someday look into his cursed eyes again.

## Revenants

Revenants are tenacious undead which arise from those murdered in horrible agony yet bound by oaths, passions, or powerful unfulfilled goals which allow them to ignore Urcaen's pull on their soul. Revenants are anchored to a specific person, place, or thing, termed a *Locus*, and their essence is tied into the integrity of the Locus. Revenants appear as rotting and desiccated animate corpses with apparel, armor, and weapons.

When a revenant's corporal body crumbles to dust, the revenant transforms into an invisible and incorporeal soulform. The soulform moves at its best possible speed to within 15 feet of the Locus, whereupon the revenant reforms its corporal shell as a full round action, completely regenerated with all normal equipment. They are fully self-willed, although compelled to return periodically to their Locus, and their behavior resembles their behavior in life, adapted to their new alignment (if any). Only destroying their Locus or incorporeal form will permanently slay a revenant.

One revenant may have another revenant with greater hit die as a Locus. For example, pirate revenants may be anchored to a quartermaster revenant, which is anchored to a captain revenant, which is anchored to a ship. A Locus cannot be an item bound to the revenant.

## Creating a Revenant

"Revenant" is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid. The creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature) must have a charisma and intelligence score of at least 6. Unchanged elements from the base creature are not listed.

**Type:** The creature's type changes to undead. It uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as listed here.

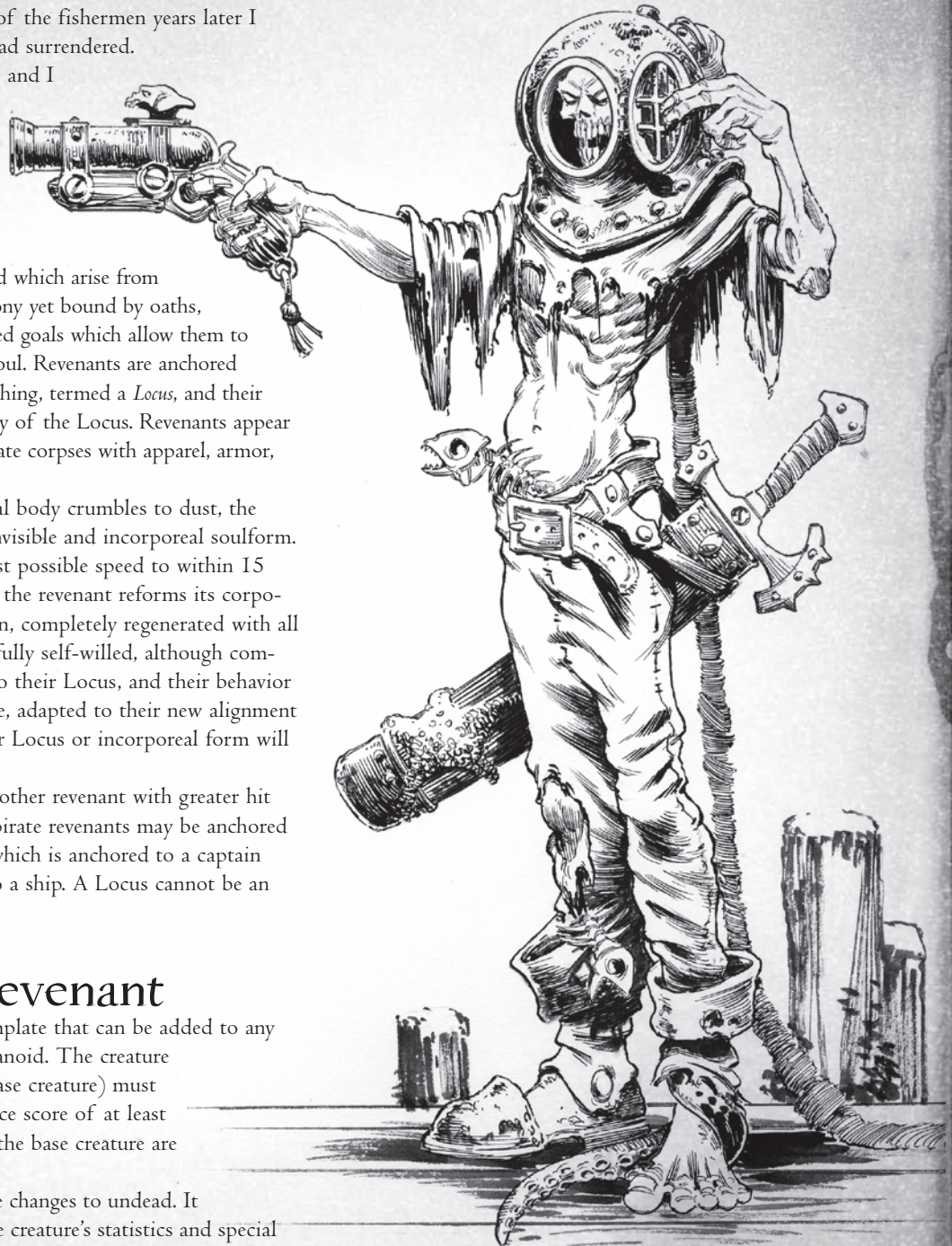
**Hit Dice:** All current and future hit dice become d12s.

**Speed:** Speed is unchanged.

**Armor Class:** Revenants have a natural armor bonus of +4.

**Attack/Full Attack/Damage:** A revenant retains all the attacks and damage of the base creature and weapons while in corporeal form.

**Special Attacks/Qualities:** The revenant retains any special attacks or qualities of the base creature except those relying on being alive, or other qualities that the revenant no longer possesses. Particularly potent revenants may have special abilities beyond those listed here.



# Revenant

**Soulform (Su):** When reduced to 0 hit points the revenant transforms into its soulform. A soulform is an invisible and incorporeal undead that has full hit points and a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability. Within 15 feet of its Locus, as a full round action, a soulform reform its corporeal body at full hit points and with all bound equipment. Bound equipment includes all items the base creature had when it acquired the revenant template. Soulforms cannot attack and always move unerringly toward their Locus by taking a double move. So long as their Locus exists soulforms will attempt to return to it regardless of how long this takes. If the Locus is destroyed or if the soulform is reduced to 0 hit points, the revenant is permanently killed. Spells such as *reveal souls* (IKCG) allow the caster to see a soulform.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** Revenants have +4 turn resistance.

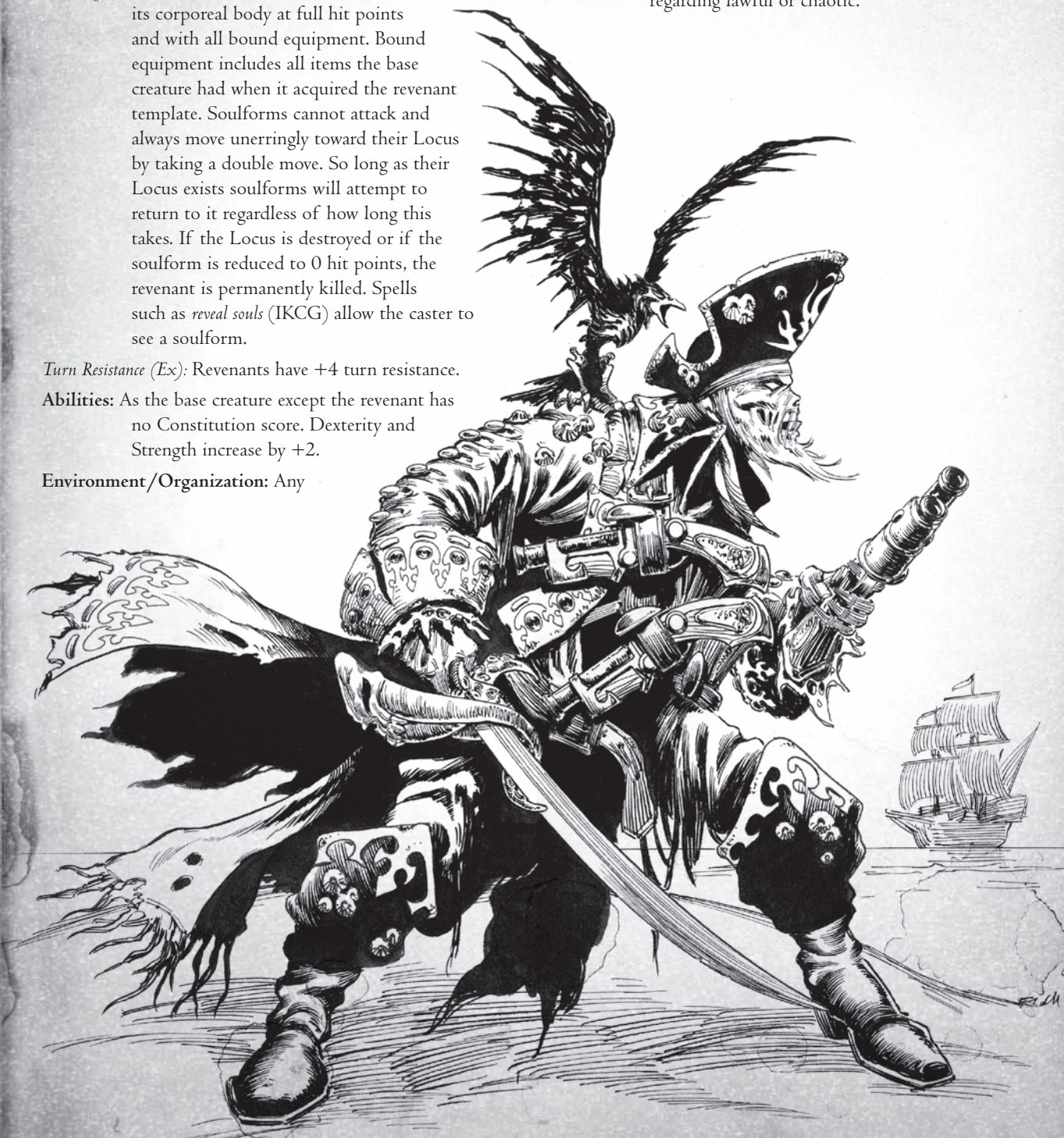
**Abilities:** As the base creature except the revenant has no Constitution score. Dexterity and Strength increase by +2.

**Environment/Organization:** Any

**Challenge Rating:** Base creature +2

**Treasure:** Any items the revenant has accumulated beyond its original bound items; bound items turn to dust when the revenant takes soulform.

**Alignment:** Changes to evil, but the same as base creature regarding lawful or chaotic.



## Treasure

Not all revenants collect treasure but certainly revenant pirates, used to a life of plunder, do. Such pirate revenants may have standard treasure plus the arms and armor bound to them.

Any items gathered by the revenant other than bound items can be gathered as treasure even if the revenant is not truly destroyed. This may include bits of jewelry or other trinkets the revenant has taken a liking to, or reminds it of its previous life.

Pistols used by the revenants of the *Atramentous* and similar ships in Toruk's service fire rounds made from hardened pieces of necrotite that cause living flesh to waste away. These bullets do an additional Id6 points of negative energy damage and are just as dangerous for living creatures to handle as raw necrotite.

## Legends and Lore

**Common:** Revenants are ghosts cursed to live in undeath forever.

**Uncommon:** The most infamous example of revenants are the pirates of the *Atramentous*. These pirates form press gangs that seek more sailors to add to their crew and are often armed with pistols that fire necrotite-laced bullets.

**Rare:** Revenants defeated in combat are not truly killed, but may reform their shape mere seconds later. To truly destroy a revenant once must discover the source of their necromantic resurrection and destroy it first.

**Obscure:** The tale of the *Atramentous* is a truly dark one, for it is said the now millennia old ship was the first of Toruk's pirate fleet and its captain and crew his first vassals on the seas. It is said the captain of that ship has the power to make new revenants by extracting a terrible promise from his prisoners.

## HOOKS

Having sworn to guard the city's mayoral mansion during the Khadoran invasion, a lone Llaese swordsman returned from death to continue his vigil. Khadoran soldiers that attempt to enter the mansion find themselves facing a nearly indestructible foe.

A Thamarite sect called the Shroud is seeking the recovery of the skull of the infamous Lord Governor Legison of Five Fingers from Traitor's Park in that city. Once they have the skull, the soulform of the governor will become a particularly powerful corporeal revenant under their control.

The sloop *Drunken Swan* brings news and trades fresh supplies with the party's ship while at sea, but it then falls prey to revenant pirates the next night. The ship is taken as a prize and her crew is captured alive. If they are not rescued, they face a grim fate in Cryx: swear an oath and become a revenant pirate or become fodder for Necrotech experiments.

A young Order of Illumination agent seeks the party's help in hunting a mysterious man with sorcerous powers responsible for multiple killings on the Market Line and who is said to be indestructible. Each time he is killed his corpse disappears in a plume of foul smelling smoke. Afterward the agent admits that his quarry is a life-like revenant and a prior member of the Order whose witch-hunting has turned to serial killing.

*Although the revenant pirates of Cryx may be the most infamous, they were not the only revenants haunting our lands. In times of war with passions running high, I can only imagine that this curse of unlife will become all too common.*

*—VP*

# Rhinodon



<b>N Large Magical Beast CR 12</b>	<b>Special Attacks:</b> <i>Critical slam, gore, powerful charge</i>
<b>Hit Dice:</b> <i>14d10+98 (175 hp)</i>	<b>Space/Reach:</b> <i>10 ft./10 ft.</i>
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b> <i>Resistance to fire and electricity 15</i>	<b>Special Qualities:</b> <i>Solid born, stable</i>
<b>Senses:</b> <i>Listen +5, Spot -1, low-light vision, scent</i>	<b>Saves:</b> <i>Fort +16, Reflex +8, Will +3</i>
<b>Initiative:</b> <i>-1</i>	<b>Abilities:</b> <i>Str 25, Dex 8, Con 24, Int 4, Wis 9, Cha 8</i>
<b>Speed:</b> <i>30 ft. (6 squares)</i>	<b>Skills:</b> <i>Climb +13, Listen +5, Spot -1, Survival +5</i>
<b>Armor Class:</b> <i>25, touch 7, flat-footed 25 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +18 natural)</i>	<b>Feats:</b> <i>Die Hard, Endurance, Power Attack, Improved Overrun, Improved Critical (tail)<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (tail)</i>
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> <i>+14/+29</i>	<b>Environment:</b> <i>Any desert or warm land</i>
<b>Attack:</b> <i>Tail +20 melee (2d6+7/19-20 plus critical slam)</i>	<b>Organization:</b> <i>Solitary, family (3-5), herd (6-19)</i>
<b>Full Attack:</b> <i>Tail +20 melee (2d6+7/19-20 plus critical slam), 2 slams +14 melee (1d6+3)</i>	<b>Advancement:</b> <i>15-19 HD (Large), 20-32 (Huge)</i>



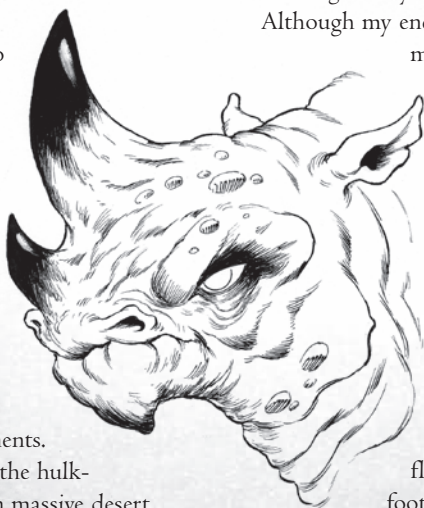
Every thirty-sixth fullness of Calder, all trollkin kriels in the Wyrmswall region participate in a shifting holiday of drink, thunderous song, and the rampages trollkin call dancing known as the Storm Moot. I once imagined that cacophony of noise and trembling earth the most bone-shaking experience one could endure. Recently, the trumpeting charge of an armored legion of titans forced me to reconsider. Now, to my horrified amazement, the ground-cracking stampede of the lumbering rhinodon has forced me to change my thinking again.

A beast apparently made less from flesh and more from stone pitted and made craggy by eons of erosion and harsh wind, the apply named rhinodon epitomizes the harsh tenacity and brutishness of the Bloodstone Marches. Twin rows of rough-hewn plates jut from their weathered and armored backs. The solid, double horns growing from the beasts' foreheads, and the stone-shattering boney clubs at the ends of their powerful tails make them deadly opponents.

For all their savage appearances, though, the hulking beasts look to split the difference between massive desert herbivores and primitive humanoids. Capable of walking upright, supporting themselves on two broad-toed rear legs, possessed of a highly social nature, and distinguished by a language of nasal blasts and blaring honks, my first encounter with the creatures led me to mistakenly approach with open arms, calling out a encyclopedia of greetings. I obviously startled them. A bull of the group dropped to all fours and, splaying

its armored ridges, launched into a bellowing charge without hesitation. A stunted, unsuspecting outcropping of dark quartz saved my life as I leapt for cover behind it. Undeterred, the rhinodon crashed into the crystalline barrier with all the sound and fury of an avalanche. When the earth stopped shaking and I dared to peek from my cover I expected to see the broken-necked corpse of the rampaging brute. Instead I watched, awed, as the thing merely shook its head and ambled away.

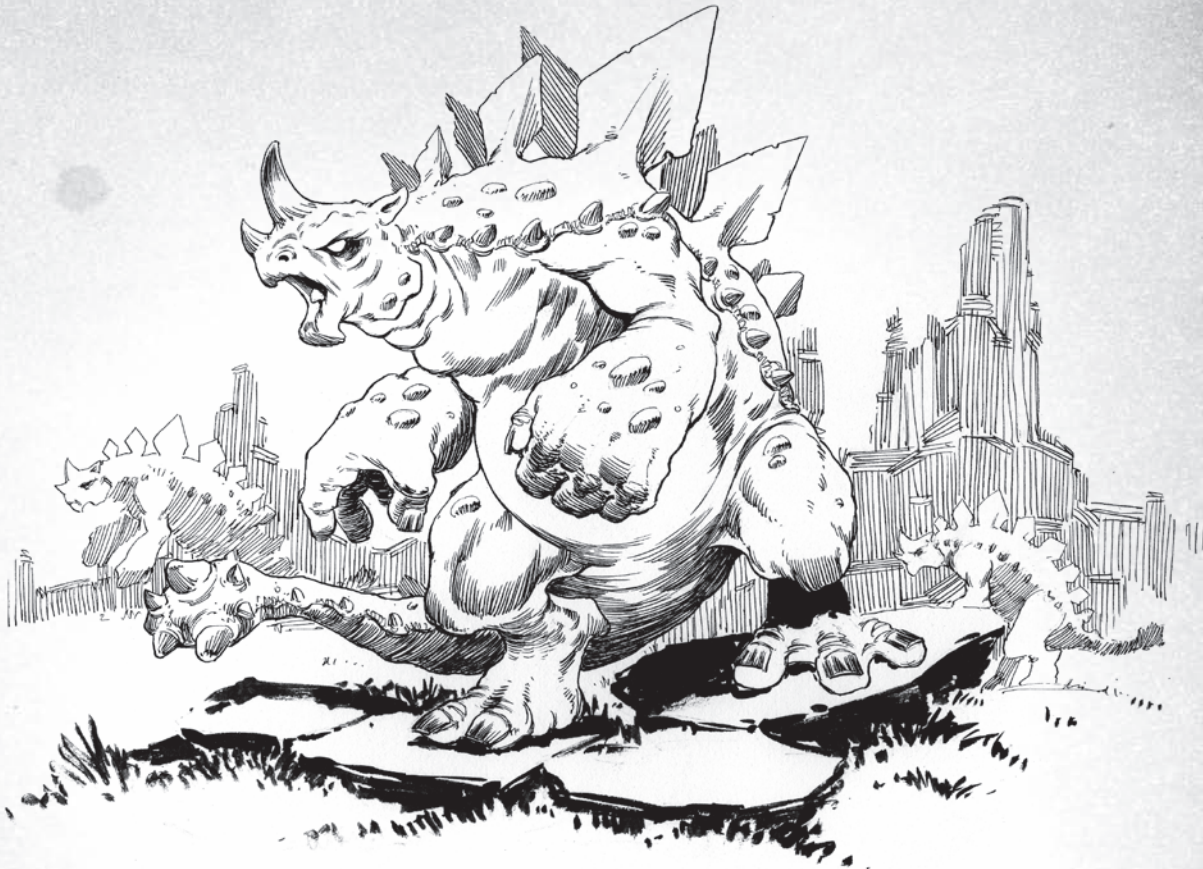
Although my encounter speaks poorly of the beasts' judgment and eyesight, I would guess that such things matter little when reinforced by nearly a ton of blunt muscle, boney armor, and man-skewering horn.



## Combat

While normally docile and easily avoided, rhinodons' notoriously poor eyesight and hearing make them easily surprised. A startled rhinodon quickly charges into an opponent with all the force of a steam-jack, sometimes sending smaller enemies flying. With their powerful hands, broad footing, and substantial bulk, few creatures can hope to overpower these beasts, and those that try risk impalement on a rhinodon's boney plates.

**Critical Slam (Ex):** If a rhinodon critically hits a Medium or smaller target with its tail, the creature must make a Reflex save (DC 24) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds, knocked flying 10 feet in a direction of the attacking creature's choice, and fall prone. If an obstacle prevents the completion of the



opponent's move, the opponent and the obstacle each take 1d6 points of damage, and the opponent stops in the space adjacent to the obstacle. If the critically hit target is of Large size or greater it is not knocked backward, but it still must save to resist being stunned. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Gore (Ex):** If a rhinodon hits with both its slam attacks, it throws its head forward to impale its opponent on its mighty horn. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+10 points of damage.

**Powerful Charge (Ex):** A rhinodon deals 4d6+21 points of damage when it makes a charge.

**Solid Horn (Ex):** A rhinodon's gore attack counts as sericsteel for overcoming damage resistance.

**Stable (Ex):** With their broad feet and strong hands, few terrains or impediments can slow a rhinodon. Rhinodons gain a +8 racial bonus on all Balance checks. In addition, they gain a +4 bonus on checks to resist being tripped and ignore rough terrain, such as that found on mountainous slopes or created by spells like *stone spikes*.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Bad-tempered barrens animals, rhinodons wander the Bloodstone Marches in ponderous herds.

**Uncommon:** A rhinodon will charge anything they see moving that isn't another rhinodon—and sometimes other rhinodons.

**Rare:** Rhinodons possess notoriously poor vision. They have little ability to distinguish between threats, always attacking the largest danger to face them.

**Obscure:** Rhinodons won't attack you if you aren't moving, mistaking you for some part of the environment.

## Treasure

While rhinodons carry nothing with them, gemstones of varying value are sometimes found in the creatures' gullets, swallowed along with small stones to aid in digestion.

## Hooks

A group of Idrian herdsmen from the west has captured a rhinodon calf, intent on domesticating it and judging its usefulness as a pack animal. The creature's infuriated parents, though, have followed their child's scent and are laying waste to everything in the kidnappers' wake.



# Riven



<b>CE Medium Undead (Incorporeal) CR 13</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	17d12 (110 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Incorporeal traits, undead traits
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +17, Spot + 18
<b>Initiative:</b>	+14
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	25, touch 25, flat-footed 15 (+10 Dex, +5 deflection)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+8/—
<b>Attack:</b>	Incorporeal touch +18 melee (1d8 plus 1d6 Wisdom drain)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Incorporeal touch +18 melee (1d8 plus 1d6 Wisdom drain)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Spirit bind, Wisdom drain
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Futile fatality, incorporeal traits, spell-like abilities, telepathy 100 ft., undead traits, unwelcomed

<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +5, Ref +15, Will +16
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str —, Dex 30, Con —, Int 17, Wis 22, Cha 21
<b>Skills:</b>	Bluff +24, Hide +22, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (religion) +22, Listen +17, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +14, Spot +18
<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (incorporeal touch), Spring Attack
<b>Environment:</b>	Any
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Advancement:</b>	17–28 (Medium)



**M**y assistant Edrea Lloryr encountered a riven while traveling near her homelands recently. She related the intriguing and harrowing tale to me as a warning.

With equal amounts of pity and abhorrence, she confessed to me that long ago some Iosan priests went mad from a tragedy that Edrea would not elaborate upon. Whatever the cause, their violent madness drove them to commit bloody atrocities among their people. At the time their people most needed them, they turned on their own with savage depravity.

As penance for their violent crimes, Edrea explained, these riven lost access to the afterlife, cursed to wander the earth with the necklace containing their symbol of office as a burning noose around their necks. Even the souls they wronged in life sleep lightly. Edrea painted a vivid image of the riven's apparition locked in an eternal scream, the grasping hands of its victims' spirits constantly pulling it earthward.

Most disturbing, however, is the manner in which these poor wretches seek to free themselves. Here Edrea made clear that these creatures truly threaten men, not Iosans. The guilt

ridden riven do not desire more Iosan victims. Instead they seek out mortal humans whose souls travel to Urcaen; possessing a soul pure of heart, they bring about its death in a futile attempt to follow it into the afterlife.

To my relief, she gave some hint of how to avoid these creatures. She suspects that these Iosan ghosts may not leave Ios except when asked, though the asker may not suspect himself the ghost's next victim. According to her lore, a border or threshold can contain these terrors.

To invite one across such a barrier is to invite death, however.

Let us hope few of these creatures

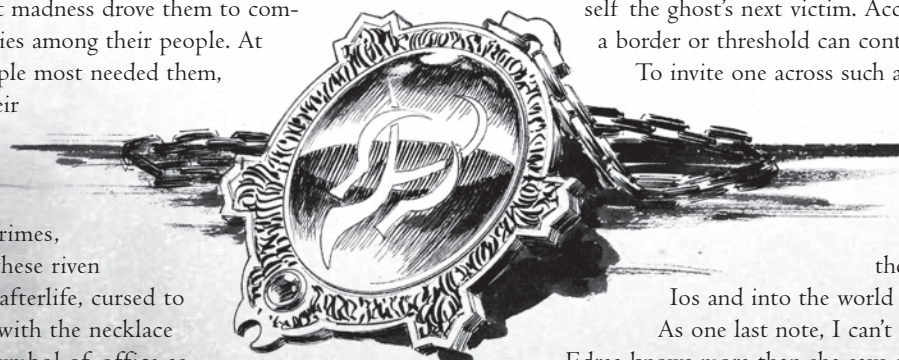
have escaped from the sleeping woods of

Ios and into the world at large.

As one last note, I can't help but think that Edrea knows more than she says about these ghosts, and that the tragedy of their origin runs deeper than she will express. If my suspicions are correct then they are but a symptom of some larger malady that plagues the elven-kind.

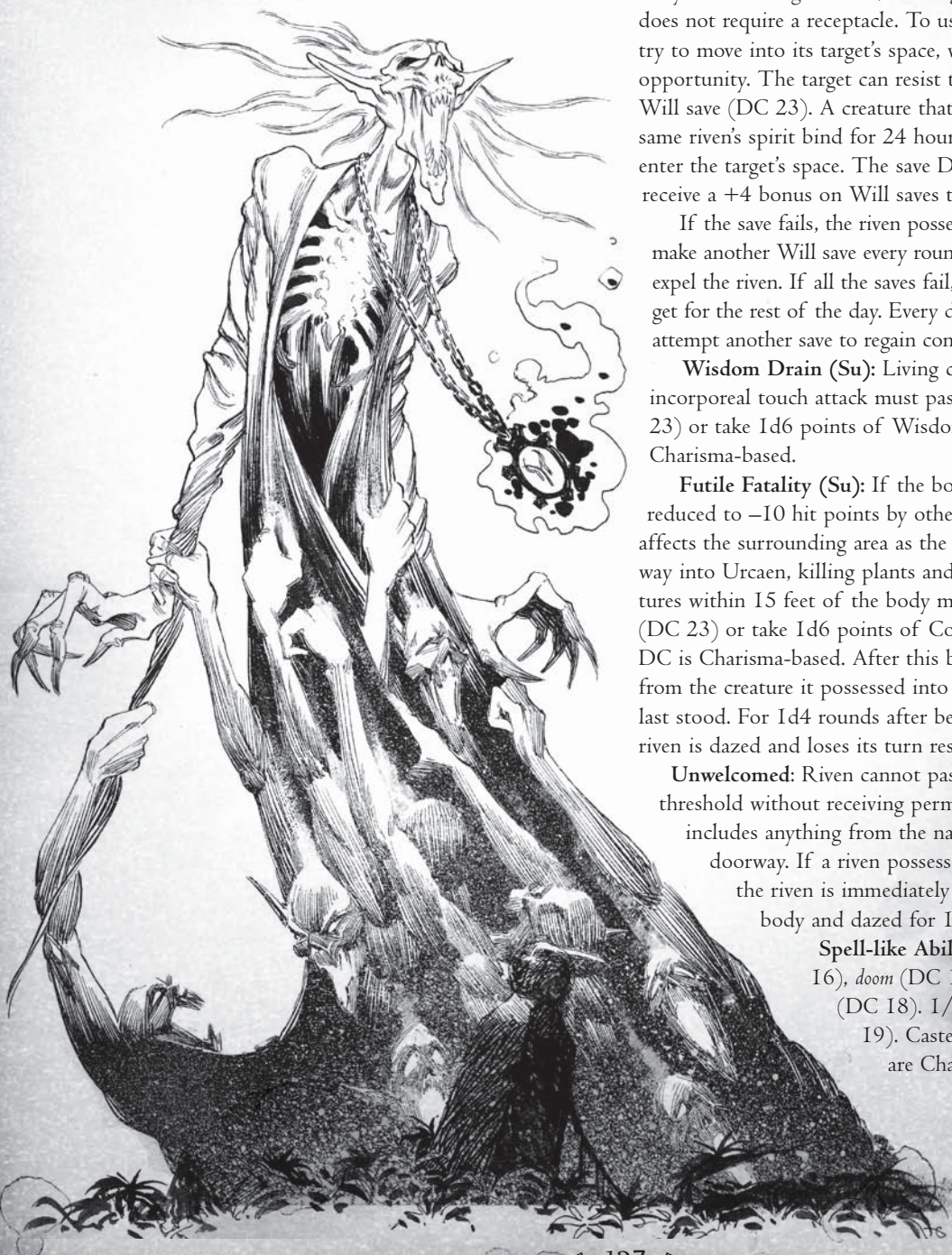
## Combat

The riven are the crazed, tortured spirits of elven priests who suffered and died during the Rivening. During this time, the



## Riven

connection between the deities of the Divine Court—with the exception of Scyrah and Nyssor—and their worshippers broke. Many of the most pious Iosans, wracked by fundamental loss (and, some say, tormented divine screams), lost their minds and committed atrocities against their terrified people. Their crimes bind these insane apparitions to Caen, each sin manifested as the spirit of one they wronged. They bear their former holy symbols as painful brands.



The riven believe that if they inhabit a body as it dies they might tether themselves to the passing soul and pass into Urcaen. They believe their chances are best if following the soul of a non-elf, given the uncertain fate of their own people, and to this end they seek out mortals of pure soul to possess and then kill. In this they delude themselves. The deaths they provoke can never bring them release.

**Spirit Bind (Ex):** Once per round, a riven can merge its body with a living creature, as a *magic jar* spell except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the riven must try to move into its target's space, which provokes attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 23). A creature that saves is immune to that same riven's spirit bind for 24 hours, and the riven cannot enter the target's space. The save DC is Charisma-based. Elves receive a +4 bonus on Will saves to resist spirit bind.

If the save fails, the riven possess the target. The target may make another Will save every round for the next 5 rounds to expel the riven. If all the saves fail, the riven possesses the target for the rest of the day. Every day thereafter, the target can attempt another save to regain control of its body.

**Wisdom Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a riven's incorporeal touch attack must pass a Fortitude save (DC 23) or take 1d6 points of Wisdom drain. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Futile Fatality (Su):** If the body a riven inhabits is reduced to –10 hit points by others, an energy draining wave affects the surrounding area as the spirit attempts to force its way into Urcaen, killing plants and draining away life. All creatures within 15 feet of the body must make a Fortitude save (DC 23) or take 1d6 points of Constitution damage. The save DC is Charisma-based. After this blast, the riven is shunted from the creature it possessed into the square where the body last stood. For 1d4 rounds after being forced from a creature a riven is dazed and loses its turn resistance.

**Unwelcomed:** Riven cannot pass through any border or threshold without receiving permission or an invitation. This includes anything from the national border of Ios to a doorway. If a riven possessing a body passed a border, the riven is immediately shunted from its possessed body and dazed for 1d4 rounds.

**Spell-like Abilities:** 3/day—*bane* (DC 16), *doom* (DC 16), *deeper darkness*, *suggestion* (DC 18). 1/day—*crushing despair* (DC 19). Caster level 16th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

# Sand Dervish



Usually LN Medium Undead (Incorporeal) CR 10

Hit Dice:	12d12 (78 hp)
Immunities/Resist:	Damage reduction 10/magic, incorporeal traits, spell resistance 21, undead traits
Senses:	Darkvision, 60 ft., Listen +0, Spot +0
Initiative:	+7
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares); wind walking
Armor Class:	15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex +2 deflection)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+12
Attack:	+2 longsword +12 melee (1d8+12/17-20)
Full Attack:	+2 longsword +12/+7 melee (1d8+12/17-20) and +2 longsword +12/+7 melee (1d8+12/17-20)
Special Attacks:	Blinding sand, fighter training, perfect two-weapon fighting, shredding sand
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Body of sand, fast healing 5, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, wind walking

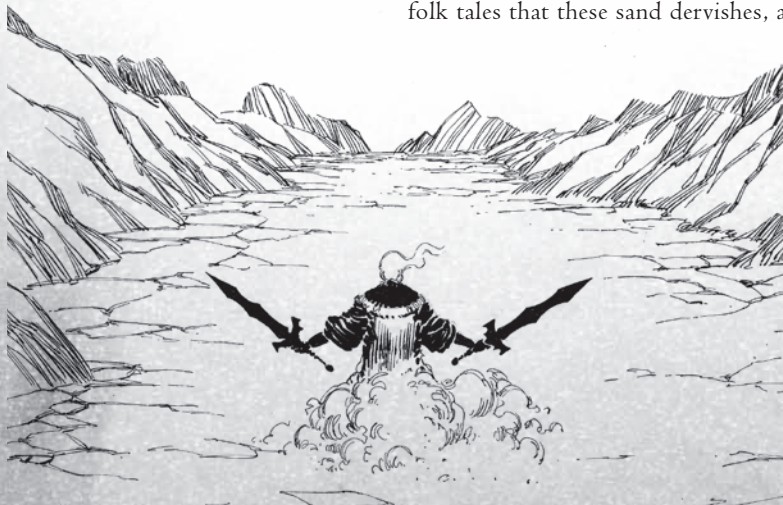
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +8
Abilities:	Str 22, Dex 17, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 14
Skills:	Bluff +17, Knowledge (any two) +15, Sense Motive +15
Feats:	Ability Focus (shredding sand), Dodge, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword) <sup>B</sup> , Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword) <sup>B</sup> , Improved Critical (longsword) <sup>B</sup> , Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting <sup>B</sup> , Mobility, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting <sup>B</sup> , Weapon Focus (longsword) <sup>B</sup> , Weapon Specialization (longsword) <sup>B</sup>
Environment:	Warm desert
Organization:	Solitary
Advancement:	13–28 HD (Medium, advancement as fighter for feats and prerequisites)



I have not yet had the good fortune of seeing a sand dervish, but Quimut, my guide in the Bloodstone Marches, encountered one once. He told me the story.

Small, swirling sandstorms at sunset or sunrise commonly occur there. Occasionally witnesses report seeing more than one of these, and tales speak of canyons and passes where many of them whirl. Such a gathering is always taken as a sign of ill omen. A younger and more foolish Quimut (his words not mine) sought one out.

He moved into a pass called Cleft Canyon, somewhere in the vicinity of the Rotterhorn, as the sun set and cast long shadows across the sand. Many small sandstorms moved about. The young Quimut made a sign against evil, and his courage deserted him. He turned and found a whirlwind blocking his path not twenty feet away. The whirling sand took on a shape, and



Quimut found himself staring at a man made of the red sands. The creature's feet trailed away into the desert ground, and it held two swords of trickling sand.

The apparition pointed one sword at Quimut and said something incomprehensible in some ancient form of Idrian, but clearly a challenge. Its swords dropped into a ready stance.

Quimut tells me with no shame that he fled into the mountains.

I have since learned through researching various Idrian folk tales that these sand dervishes, appear to be the spirits of mighty warriors who perish before fulfilling a promise or quest. One elderly barbarian chief of the Idrian nomads found east of the Rotterhorn told me these lingering spirits desire death through honorable combat, and will fight fairly if their opponent does the same.

## Sand Dervish

### Combat

When a sand dervish encounters a group, it hails them, singles out one creature, and challenges it to single combat. If the challenged creature duels it singly and honorably, the dervish returns the favor and does not use its offensive supernatural abilities. However, if other characters attack it or if its opponents fight unfairly, the angry dervish brings all its abilities into play.

**Sand Step (Su):** As often as it likes, a sand dervish may, as a move action, collapse and rise again from the sandy ground in a different location within 400 feet plus 40 feet per hit die.

**Shredding Sand (Su):** Once per day, as a standard action, the sand dervish may create a 60 ft. cone of sand flying hard enough to scour flesh from bones. This attack does 12d6 points of slashing damage, Reflex save (DC 20) for half damage.

**Blinding Sand (Su):** Up to three times each day, as a standard action, a sand dervish may envelop a target in a whirl of blowing sand. The target suffers blindness for a number of rounds equal to half the dervish's hit dice, Reflex save (DC 18) to negate.

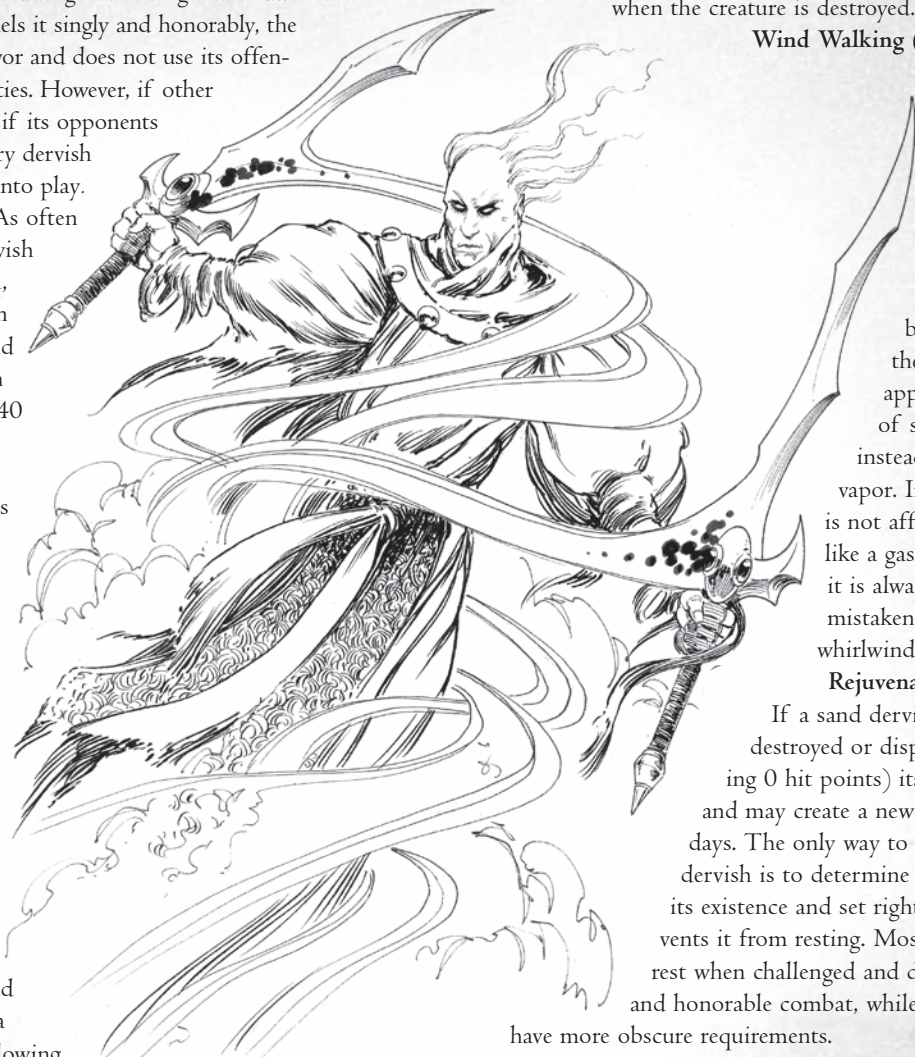
**Perfect Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex):** With this ability and its Two-Weapon Fighting and Improved Two-Weapon Fighting feats, a sand dervish can attack with both its longswords at its full base attack bonus with no penalty on the attack rolls and adds its full Strength bonus on damage rolls with both swords.

**Body of Sand (Su):** Sand dervishes create bodies out of sand. This provides both damage reduction and fast healing but makes the dervish susceptible to spells that effect sand, earth, or stone. *Stone to flesh* cast on it removes the sand dervish's damage resistance. *Transform rock to mud* prevents it from using

wind walking, shredding sand, and blinding sand. The dervish's weapons, also made of sand, function as +2 longswords that cannot be sundered, disarmed, or destroyed and disintegrate when the creature is destroyed.

**Wind Walking (Sp):** A sand dervish can take the form of a small sand whirlwind at will. Treat this ability like *wind walk* but it only affects the dervish who appears as a swirl of sand and dust instead of a cloudlike vapor. In this form it is not affected by wind like a gaseous form and it is always likely to be mistaken for a natural whirlwind.

**Rejuvenation (Su):** If a sand dervish's body is destroyed or dispersed (by reaching 0 hit points) its spirit survives and may create a new body in 1d4 days. The only way to get rid of a sand dervish is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting. Most find their final rest when challenged and defeated in single and honorable combat, while a few might have more obscure requirements.



### Legends & Lore (Idrian)

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** Sand storms in the Bloodstone Marches sometimes bring the additional danger of sand dervishes. Their bodies are made of sand, so therefore difficult to destroy.

**Rare:** Powerful spells that effect earth and stone can hamper these creatures, though only single combat will truly destroy them. Defeating a sand dervish quickly gains you renown among the nomadic Idrians.

**Obscure:** Sand dervishes are warriors who died in the desert before completing a task or oath. Completing the oath can give them final rest.

# Satyr



**N Large Monstrous Humanoid CR 9**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	16d8+80 (152 hp)
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +7, Spot +6, scent
<b>Initiative:</b>	+3
<b>Speed:</b>	50 ft. (10 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	22, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +20 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+16/+28
<b>Attack:</b>	Ram +23 melee (3d6+8)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Ram +23 melee (3d6+8) and 2 slams +21 melee (2d8+4)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Musk, powerful charge, powerful ram

<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Rock walking, shrug off blows
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +15, Ref +13, Will +7
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 26, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10
<b>Skills:</b>	Listen +7, Spot +6, Survival +12
<b>Feats:</b>	Improved Overrun, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (ram), Improved Natural Attack (ram), Improved Natural Attack (slam), Multiattack, Track
<b>Environment:</b>	Temperate mountains
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary or mated pair
<b>Advancement:</b>	10–22 HD (Large)

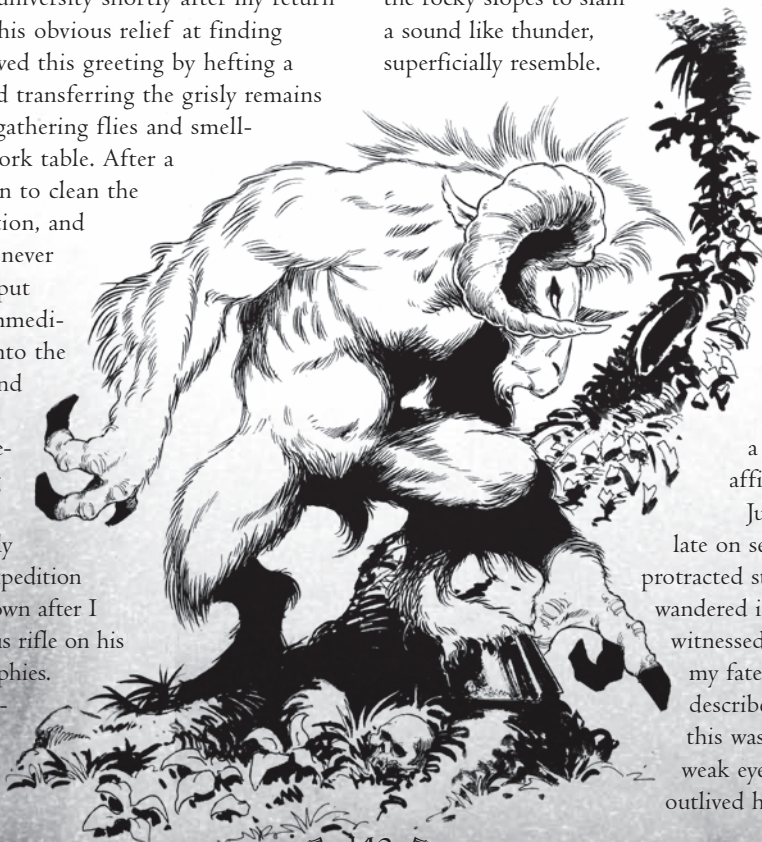


The nature of our respective professions has sometimes strained my long-standing friendship with Alten Ashley. His thrill at slaying rare creatures is sometimes frustrating. His zeal for the kill, however, lead me to the elusive mountain creatures I've named satyrs, in preference to Alten's appellation, "giant, reeking goat-man".

Alten visited me at the university shortly after my return from the east, and I found his obvious relief at finding me safe touching. He followed this greeting by hefting a blood-soaked oiled sack and transferring the grisly remains of a massive horned head, gathering flies and smelling of rot, from it to my work table. After a few choice invectives I began to clean the skull and make an examination, and quickly deduced that I had never seen this creature before. I put aside my obligations and immediately ventured with Alten into the Wyrmswall Mountains to find this creature.

After a few weeks of careful hiking, including fighting off a tribe of ornery bogrin, Alten and I reached the lonely heights. Alten tired of the expedition and decided to hunt on his own after I insisted he keep his ridiculous rifle on his back. I had not come for trophies. Left to myself I made a thorough study of these tremendously powerful, bipedal omnivores in their element.

I believe satyrs possess limited intelligence. I witnessed exchanges between them comprised of grunting snorts and insistent gestures, which convince me they have the rudiments of language. Not overly sociable, satyrs keep a distance from each other except when gathering for violent clashes as males compete for the attention of females. I saw them charge across the rocky slopes to slam into one another with a sound like thunder, much like the rams they superficially resemble.



They went unclothed, and I saw little inclination toward the use of tools. They seem content to rely on their natural gifts, though their hands suggest an untapped adroitness. I witnessed one older satyr, grizzled and sporting a braided beard, who leaned upon a stout length of wood affixed with a skull.

Just as I started to speculate on setting up a camp for protracted studies, a hapless troll wandered into the region and I witnessed what could have been my fate. I would not normally describe a troll with pity, but this was an older specimen with weak eyes who perhaps had outlived his regenerative capacity.

He blundered into the valley and came too close to the edge of a steep divide. From up the ridge I saw a satyr crouch and then charge down the steep slope, building up momentum like a train at full throttle. The troll had only a moment to turn before the satyr's head slammed into the center of the troll's ribs. The huge creature sailed off the side of the cliff with a startled howl that faded slowly. The satyr peered over the edge for a long while before returning to its post. I decided I had learned enough and it might be best to return to Corvis as quietly as possible.

## Combat

Though highly territorial, satyrs become more than marginally aggressive only during mating season. They charge at the earliest possible time.

**Musk (Ex):** When enraged or in combat satyrs release an eye-stinging musk. A living creature within 10 feet of a riled satyr must make a Fortitude save (DC 23) or take a -2 penalty on attack rolls, damage rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks. These penalties last for 1 minute. Other satyrs are immune. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Powerful Charge (Ex):** In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the beast to make a single ram attack with a +23 attack bonus that deals 5d10+12 points of damage.

**Powerful Ram (Ex):** The satyr can make a bull rush as part of a powerful charge, allowing it to both damage and push its opponent back. If the satyr moves at least 20 feet (4 squares) it gains a +4 bonus on its opposed strength check and if the bull rush is successful the defender is moved an additional 5 feet without requiring the satyr to move with the defender.

**Rock Walking (Ex):** Like mountain goats, satyrs nimbly clamber around in their native mountain

habitats. They treat difficult terrain created by rocks, uneven ground, and similar circumstances as normal terrain.

**Shrug Off Blows (Su):** Satyrs are supernaturally resistant to all but the strongest blows. They ignore nonlethal damage equal to their Constitution bonus (5 for the satyr above).

## Legends and Lore

**Common:** None

**Uncommon:** None

**Rare:** Isolated groups of goat-like bipedal creatures dwell high up in certain remote mountain ranges, particularly the Wyrmswall, the Nyschatha Mountains, and the Silvertip Peaks. These elusive beasts are extremely strong and while not overly aggressive they are extremely territorial.

**Obscure:** While satyrs compete among themselves for breeding and prefer an isolated existence, they have a sense of solidarity and sometimes defend others of their species from outsiders. The elusive druids of western Immoren seem to have an interest in these creatures and may have worked to hide them from mankind.



# SCYLLA FLOCK



Usually NE Tiny Undead (Swarm) CR 8	
Hit Dice:	12d12 (78 hp)
Immunities/Resist:	Undead and swarm traits
Senses:	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +22, Spot +22
Initiative:	+6
Speed:	10 ft. (2 squares), Fly 40 ft. (poor)
Armor Class:	22, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/-
Attack:	Swarm (3d6 plus disease)
Full Attack:	Swarm (3d6 plus disease)
Special Attacks:	Disease (DC 16), distraction (DC 18)

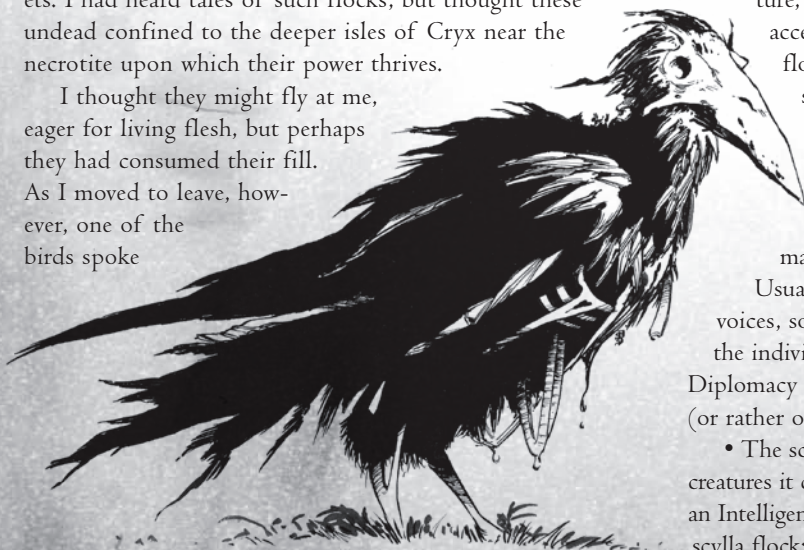
Space/Reach:	10 ft./0 ft.
Special Qualities:	Dead memory, necrotic healing, swarm traits, undead traits
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +11
Abilities:	Str 4, Dex 14, Con —, Int 4, Wis 16, Cha 10
Skills:	Hide +25, Knowledge (any two) +12, Listen +22, Move Silently +17, Spot +22
Feats:	Ability Focus (distraction), Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Improved Initiative
Environment:	Any land
Organization:	Solitary, flight (2–4), or colony (5–10)



Nothing in Cryx escapes the sick taint of Toruk's dragonblight, not even the land itself or any once ordinary and innocent creatures of nature. Sailors who have risked selling their pirated goods in Blackwater tell tales of skies dark with blighted carrion birds hungry for flesh, living or dead. While many a sailor tells a dark tale, I have seen the truth of this one.

During my exploration of Cullenrock Island I came across a wrecked ship, likely a pirate vessel from the lack of markings or discernable flag. There I disturbed a flock of birds feasting on the dead, and something in their behavior seemed awry. I crept slowly closer, not eager to smell again the familiar carrion stench of rotted flesh. I saw to my horror that the birds too rotted. Bones showed between dirty patches of feathers. One looked at me with empty eye sockets. I had heard tales of such flocks, but thought these undead confined to the deeper isles of Cryx near the necrotite upon which their power thrives.

I thought they might fly at me, eager for living flesh, but perhaps they had consumed their fill. As I moved to leave, however, one of the birds spoke



to me in the Scharde dialect with all the inflection and colorful vocabulary of a sailor. I scrambled back and prompting more of the birds to follow with grim and cruel laughter as they delighted in my confusion. I believe they had absorbed some portion of cunning and intelligence from those upon whom they feasted. I suffered nightmares for weeks thereafter at the thought that sharp probing beaks would steal my own lore and parrot it back from the treetops.

## Combat

**Dead Memory (Su):** A scylla flock's most notable ability is the fact that it gains a portion of the memories of creatures it consumes. This ability has the following effects:

- If a scylla flock consumes the body of an intelligent creature, it gains its memories for 1 week. Characters can access the spirit of the dead by conversing with the flock through a *Speak with Dead* spell. Of course, doing so requires that the flock have a positive disposition toward the character.
- The flock can speak with the voices of any intelligent creatures it has consumed in the past week. The flock adopts aspects of the creatures' mannerisms and personalities as well.

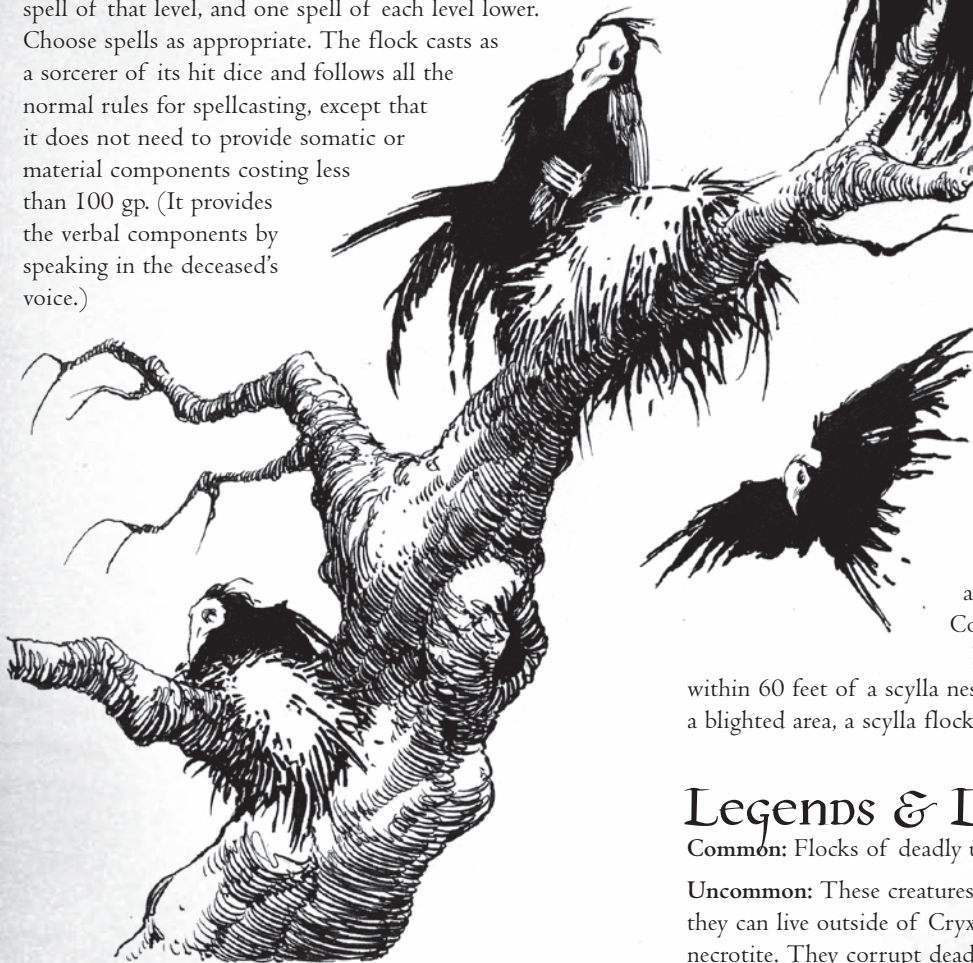
Usually, the flock chatters pointlessly in these creatures' voices, sometimes repeating words or phrases important to the individuals in life. Characters may use social skills like Diplomacy to negotiate with the flock in a language it knows (or rather of a creature it has consumed in the past week).

- The scylla flock gathers and retains skill knowledge from creatures it consumes. Thus, it gains skill points as if it had an Intelligence of 14. All skills are considered class skills for a scylla flock; those presented above are simply the most likely.

## Scylla Flock

• The scylla flock also retains some special mental abilities of creatures that it has consumed recently. A GM should choose one ability below for each flock based on its recent meal:

**Spellcasting:** The flock has consumed an arcane spellcaster and retains a limited amount of the creature's spellcasting ability. Roll 2d4–2 (minimum 1). The result is the highest level spell the flock can cast. Each day, it can cast one particular spell of that level, and one spell of each level lower. Choose spells as appropriate. The flock casts as a sorcerer of its hit dice and follows all the normal rules for spellcasting, except that it does not need to provide somatic or material components costing less than 100 gp. (It provides the verbal components by speaking in the deceased's voice.)



**Combat Knowledge:** The flock has consumed a fighter or other martial expert and retains a portion of his expertise. The flock deals 5d6 points of damage with its swarm attack, rather than 3d6.

**Skill Expertise:** The flock has an additional four skills, each with 12 ranks. Choose skills as appropriate.

**Feat Expertise:** The flock has an additional three feats. Choose feats as appropriate.

**Other Class Feature:** The flock retains a single non-spell like, non-supernatural class ability: evasion, favored enemy, rage, trap sense +4, uncanny dodge.

**Disease (Ex):** Filth fever — swarm attack, Fortitude DC 16, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Distraction (Ex):** Any living creature that begins its turn with a scylla flock in its square must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Necrotic Healing (Su):** While within 60 feet of a scylla nest with a source of necrotite or in a blighted area, a scylla flock has fast healing 6.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Flocks of deadly undead birds gather in Cryx.

**Uncommon:** These creatures are called scylla flocks, and they can live outside of Cryx if there is a source of blight or necrotite. They corrupt dead trees with necrotite and turn them into nests. They are weakest when driven from this nest.

**Rare:** They are intelligent undead and Cryxian necromancers use scylla flocks to secure information from the dead of battlefields. Flocks might also serve as scouts and spies for the armies of Cryx.

**Obscure:** Scylla flocks also retain some of the knowledge and abilities of people they consume. Some can even cast the spells of their victims.



# SLUDGE BRUTE



<b>Always N Medium Aberration CR 3</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	5d8+20 (42 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Critical hits, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, flanking, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, stunning, spell resistance 15
<b>Senses:</b>	Blindsense 60 ft., Listen +1, Spot +1
<b>Initiative:</b>	+1
<b>Speed:</b>	20 ft. (4 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+2/+5
<b>Attack:</b>	Slam +7 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d4 acid and alchemical touch)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 slams +7 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d4 acid and alchemical touch)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Alchemical touch

<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Acid, improved grab, oozelike, scent alchemy, shapeable, vulnerability to fire
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 16, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
<b>Skills:</b>	Escape Artist +21, Hide +10, Move Silently +7
<b>Feats:</b>	Stealthy, Weapon Focus (slam)
<b>Environment:</b>	Urban
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Advancement:</b>	6–8 HD (Medium); 9–12 HD (Large); 13–16 HD (Large); 17–20 HD (Huge)



Not all exotic creatures live solely in the wilds of Immoren. Some haunt our cities and lurk in the shadows of our towers and walls. A few such misshapen beasts, I must confess, arose not from nature but from human accident or hubris, tarnishing our claim as a beacon of civilization in a dark and cruel world. Let me share one such case.

My colleague the apothecary Beatrice Malandy first told me of a thing she named a sludge brute. An alchemist of no small means, Beatrice, like many prominent alchemists in Cygnar, had received a contract to produce for the war. After many days of brewing potions, oils, and elixirs, a great and diverse amount of alchemical waste material had accrued, leaving her gobber assistant Glug to decide where to dump it.

Rather than let it sink beneath the oily waves of the Black River or drain into the byways of the undercity, Glug took to experiments of his own. This went largely unnoticed, said Beatrice, until an explosion consumed Glug's secret lab and evidently Glug with it. All that remained to mark his failed experiment was a smoking pool of chemical sludge.

Such tragic incidents occur all too frequently, I am told. However an even more horrific consequence of the explosive experiment came to light a day later. Returning to her lab Beatrice discovered

it ransacked and almost every potion in her shipment to the army at Deepwood Tower unstopped and drained. At first she suspected a saboteur, perhaps an agent of Khador or even a jealous mage of the Fraternal Order. Not a wizard to be trifled with Beatrice used her arcane knowledge to track the culprit back to the site of Glug's secret lab. Here she confronted the unlikely saboteur, a roughly gobber sized mass of living sludge eager to consume her flesh in order to grow more powerful. Not bestowed with the patience and curiosity of a naturalist, the young wizard attempted to scour the creation from the face of Caen but only succeeded in driving it away.

I do not know exactly how these creatures originate, whether from a particular mixture of chemicals, because of an enchantment, or some other reason. What I know is that they are fearsome urban predators with a desire to devour living creatures. They do so in order to fuel their own growth. Horrifically, these creatures take on some of the traits and even the vague appearance of creatures they consume, and I hope never to encounter one I recognize as man-shaped.



## Combat

A typical sludge brute measures 2 feet thick and 5 feet tall and weighs 250 lbs. They may stretch or compress themselves to seem larger or smaller.

Sludge brutes go out of their way to devour alchemical substances and creatures carrying alchemical substances. Instinct tells

## SLUDGE BRUTE

them to sneak up and ambush prey, but they are not particularly intelligent. After their initial attacks, their combat tactics are straightforward.

**Acid (Ex):** A sludge brute secretes an acid that slowly dissolves organic, metal, and even stone but does not affect glass. Any melee hit or grapple causes acid damage and triggers alchemical touch.

**Alchemical Consumption (Ex):** A sludge brute can gain temporary hit points by consuming a potion or magical elixir. The more powerful the potion, the more the sludge brute benefits. For every caster level of the potion or liquid magical item, the sludge brute gains 1d8 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last 1 hour, afterward a sludge brute may advance one hit die for every 8 temporary hit points it gained in this manner.

**Alchemical Touch (Ex):** A sludge brute's touch has unpredictable effects. When a sludge brute hits a creature with its slam attack, in addition to dealing damage, the victim suffers one of the following effects. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

d4	Effect
1	Sleep
2	Confusion
3	Paralysis
4	Poison

**Sleep:** The victim must make a Will save (DC 16) or fall asleep for 1d4 minutes. Another creature can take a standard action to wake him.

**Confusion:** The victim must make a Will save (DC 16) or hallucinations cloud his mind, making him confused (as the spell *confusion*) for 1d4 rounds.

**Paralysis:** The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or lose all feeling in his body and become paralyzed. Paralysis lasts for 1 round.

**Poison:** The sludge brute's touch is a contact poison that weakens muscles and dulls the mind. Initial and secondary damage 1d3 Str and 1d3 Wis.

**Oozelike (Ex):** Though an aberration, a sludge brute has ooze traits. It is blind and has the immunities listed above.

**Scent Alchemy (Ex):** A sludge brute can scent any alchemical concoction within 120 feet. This functions just like the scent ability but it only detects alchemical substances like potions, elixirs, salves, and oils.

**Shapeable (Ex):** A sludge brute can slip through any opening or tunnel at least an inch in diameter.

**Vulnerability:** Sludge brutes always possess a vulnerability, usually to fire. Their random

makeup makes other vulnerabilities, such as cold or electricity, fairly common.

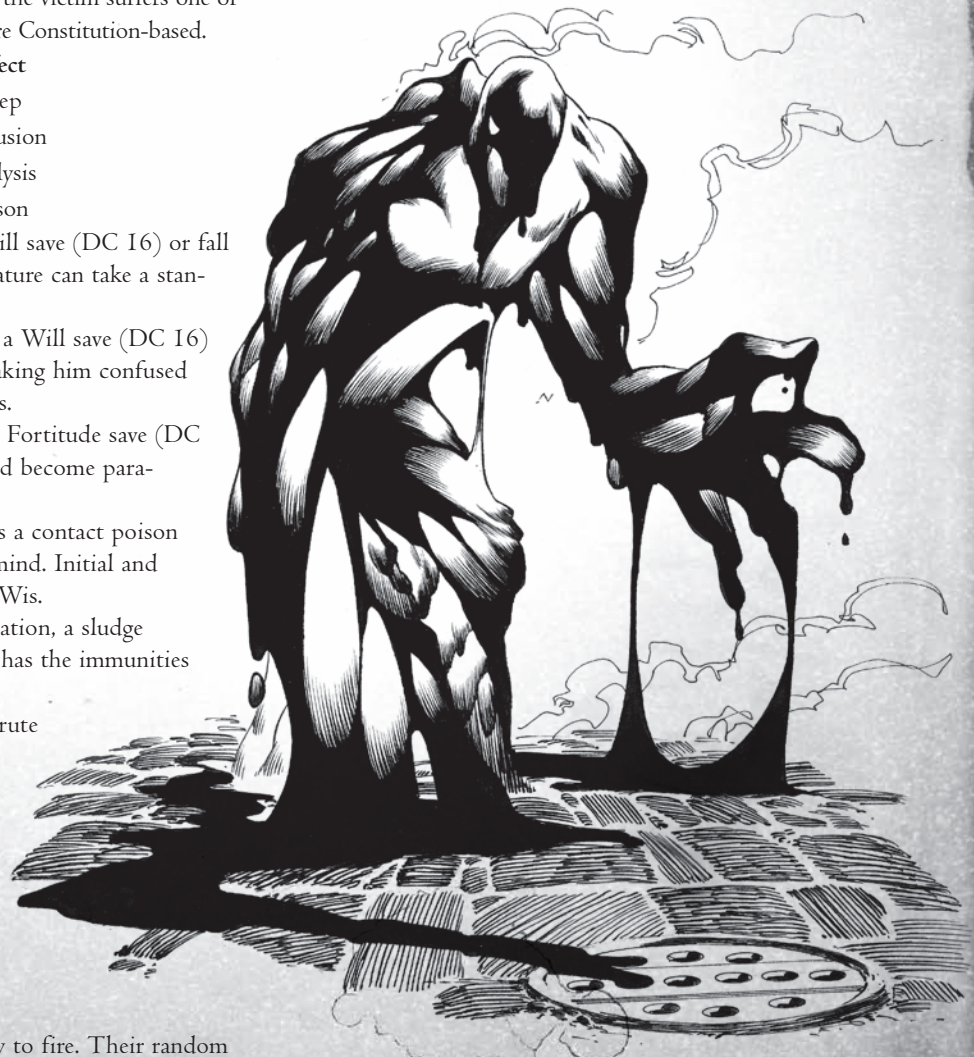
**Skills:** Sludge brutes have a +20 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks.

## Sludge Brute Advancement

As sludge brutes feed on alchemical solutions, they grow and become more powerful. If a sludge brute devours a creature, it becomes more like that creature in small ways:

Normally, an aberration's CR increases by +1 for every 4 hit dice added to it. A sludge brute's CR, however, increases by +1 for every 2 hit dice added to it. For every 2 hit dice a sludge brute advances, it gains the following benefits, most of which represent the benefits gained from its meals:

- Spell resistance increases by +1.
- +2 to Strength and Constitution to a maximum of +14
- Its acid damage increases by one step to a maximum of 1d12



# Storm Glutton



<b>CN Gargantuan Construct (Animaton) CR 15</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	16d10+60 (146 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Absolute magic resistance, construct traits, immune to electricity,
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., listen +0, Spot +9, low-light vision
<b>Initiative:</b>	-1
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	25, touch 5, flat-footed 25 (-4 size, -1 Dex, +20 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+12/+38
<b>Attack:</b>	Slam +22 (2d8+14)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 slams +22 (2d8+14)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Attract magic, energy discharge

<b>Space/Reach:</b>	20 ft./20 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Dispelling, energy form, magical disjunction, null field, spell consumption
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +5, Reflex +4, Will +5
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 38, Dex 8, Con —, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 14
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +14, Concentration +10, Spot +9
<b>Feats:</b>	Ability Focus (Attract Magic), Ability Focus (Energy Discharge), Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (Dispelling)
<b>Environment:</b>	The Stormlands
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary



Ruins of a people long fled lie deep within the Stormlands and upon the treacherous spires that rise from the primordial gulf of the Abyss. Once delicate towers lie as sun-beached rubble, whole districts of empty cities slide into depthless crags, and sand scours the statuary of nameless ancients into obscurity. These are places of strange magic, where eerie arcane eddies drift and swirl. Warm breezes, like breaths gasped long ago, give wind to half-heard ghostly whispers. The skorne avoid these places and speak nothing of who might have constructed such ruined wonders, though I have my suspicions. For all their dismissals, we never passed one of these devastated monuments or sepulchral cities that my captors did not offer side-long, frightful glances toward whenever they thought I would not notice.

Only once did we camp within view of one of these mysterious ruins. On that night, though the skies were relatively calm, I counted three strange lightning strikes amid the distant stone pillars, and a ghostly fire glow illuminated broken arches like jutting ribs before fading away. In that light, even removed a considerable length and though my eyes admittedly don't see as well as once they did, I swore then and do now that I saw something truly massive move amid the ruins.

## Combat

The storm glutton is a unique form of animaton arisen from the magical energies that also gave birth to the Stormlands. Unlike most animatons, its body has no consistent form. It creates itself from various items it

gathers. As a result it moves clumsily but inexorably toward any source of magic.

Seemingly empowered by the wild magical surges that flow through the Stormlands, the storm glutton seeks out magical energies that the storms created by the collapse of the Bridge of Worlds unleash. It hunts the blasted ruins of Lyoss for magic to feed upon.

**Absolute Magic Resistance (Su):** All spells cast upon or which would otherwise directly affect an animaton have no effect on it whatsoever.

**Dispelling (Sp):** The storm glutton may cast



# Storm Glutton

dispel magic at will as a standard action. It casts this as a 16th level wizard.

**Energy Discharge (Su):** Whenever the storm glutton is struck by a physical blow, the electrical and magical energies that infuse it burst forth as crackling blue electric-like force that affects all creatures in its threatened area for 2d6–1 points of force damage. All creatures, except those that made the attack, may make Reflex saves (DC 20) for half damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

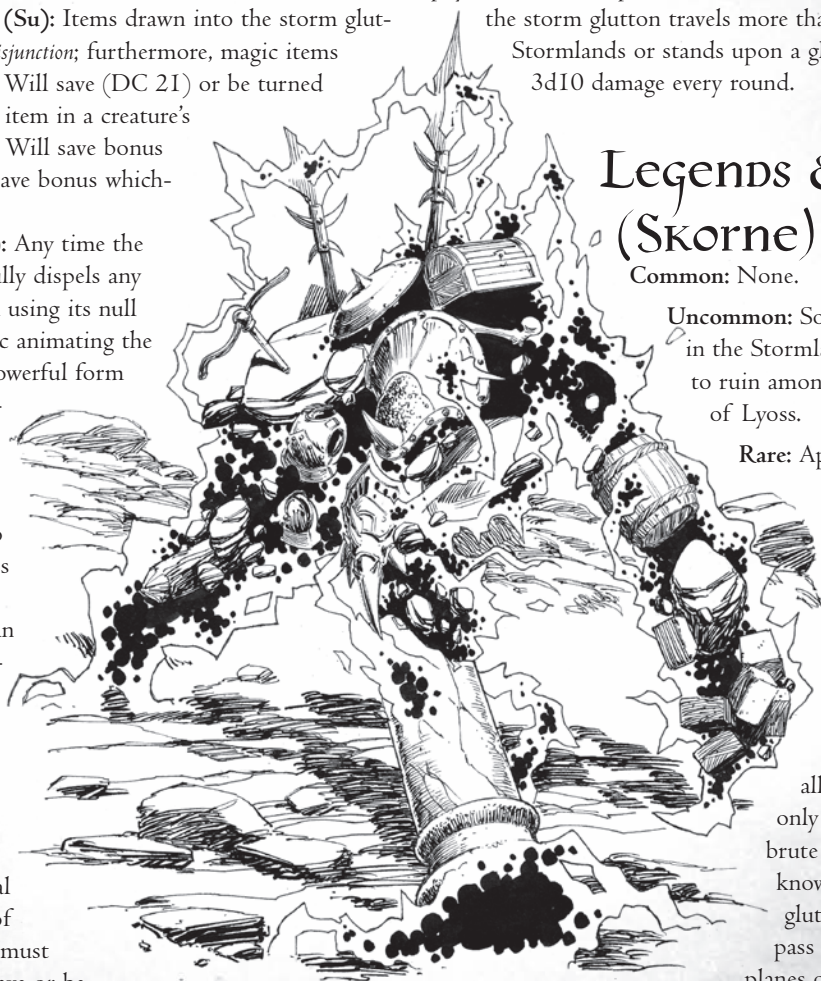
**Magic Disjunction (Su):** Items drawn into the storm glutton suffer from *mage's disjunction*; furthermore, magic items must make a successful Will save (DC 21) or be turned into a normal item. An item in a creature's possession uses its own Will save bonus or its possessor's Will save bonus whichever is higher.

**Attract Magic (Su):** Any time the storm glutton successfully dispels any magic effect of an item using its null field, the unstable magic animating the construct produces a powerful form of magnetic-like attraction. Magic items or items with spell effects on them are immediately drawn into the storm glutton unless they make a successful Reflex save (DC 20). An item in a creature's possession uses its own Reflex save bonus or its possessor's Reflex save bonus whichever is higher. All creatures with spell effects on them or wearing magical armor within the area of the creature's null field must make a similar Reflex save or be dragged 10 feet toward the storm glutton (provoking no attack of opportunity). Those who succeed at this check may act normally. A character may grab and retrieve a magic item in the storm glutton by attempting a disarm action with an unarmed attack but will suffer damage from an energy discharge.

**Null Field (Su):** The storm glutton is surrounded by a field that nullifies magic within a 10-foot-radius per hit die. This functions identically to an *antimagic field* spell with the exception that it does not suppress any of the storm glutton's own abilities.

**Spell Consumption (Su):** Any time the storm glutton successfully dispels any magical effect, either by its dispelling or its null field, it gains 1 hp per effective spell level per item or target affected. This includes suppressing spell effects and magic items.

**Energy Form (Su):** The storm glutton is actually a form of magical energy. It is not affected by the magical lightning of the Stormlands. If reduced to 0 hp, the storm glutton's physical form dissipates and will reform in 3d6 weeks. If the storm glutton travels more than one mile from the Stormlands or stands upon a glass surface it takes 3d10 damage every round.



## Legends & Lore (Skorne)

Common: None.

**Uncommon:** Something wicked dwells in the Stormlands, moving from ruin to ruin among the blasted remains of Lyoss.

**Rare:** Appearing as a pile of debris coated in magical energy, magical electrical energy charges the storm glutton. It can draw in magic to feed its hulking composite form.

**Obscure:** The storm glutton is immune to all forms of magic. It can only be dispelled by pure brute force. However, for no known reason the storm glutton will not willingly pass through or over large planes of glass.

## Treasure

The storm glutton collects magic items, though it tends to destroy all but the most powerful items. The storm glutton draws much of its substance from the Stormland's magical tempests. Consequently, though it has picked over the ruins of Lyoss for millennia, some magic sources may yet remain from the ancient empire. Characters might follow the storm glutton to ancient magic items and recover them before the storm glutton can consume them.

# Tatzylwurm, Black



Always N Medium Magical Beast CR II	Special Attacks:	Poison, spit, transfix
Hit Dice: 8d10+40 (84 hp)	Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Immunities/Resist: Damage reduction 10/magic and slashing, fear, paralysis, poison, spell resistance 22	Saves:	Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +6
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +2, Spot +2, low-light vision	Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 15
Initiative: +2	Skills:	Climb +11, Hide +14, Jump +23, Move Silently +9, Swim +11*
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), Climb 20 ft., Swim 20 ft.	Feats:	Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Stealthy
Armor Class: 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +10 natural)	Environment:	Warm forests
Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+11	Organization:	Solitary, pair, or pack (3–6)
Attack: Bite +12 melee (2d6+6 plus poison)	Advancement:	8–13 HD (Medium), 14–19 HD (Large)
Full Attack: Bite +12 melee (2d6+6 plus poison) or spit +6 ranged touch (blind plus poison)		



I have not till this point written much of the rare black tatzylwurm, but my colleague Professor Coriandr Jagus has a particularly arresting story that I think I should share here. He encountered black tatzylwurms first, and the experience ignited his interest in the creatures.

A man, looking gaunt and ill treated, staggered into the market square in New Larkholm. He explained to a gathering crowd that he was Ronald Grave, captain of the trade ship *Spirit* that had recently come to port. The ship had stopped at Clocker's Cover, Mercir, and Highgate and had apparently picked up some unwanted passengers: a group of snakelike creatures that Captain Grave said held men immobile with magical powers and slew with a single bite. These creatures had killed almost all the *Spirit's* crew, leaving Grave and two deckhands as the only survivors. The captain begged for someone in the crowd to come forward and rid his ship of the creatures. Professor Jagus agreed to help and thus had his first contact with tatzylwurms.

While in the ship's depths, Jagus confirmed some of what the captain had said. As Grave intimated, the creatures formed a single pack. They had no overt magical powers, but staring into their eyes was captivating and only the strong-willed could resist when the tatzylwurms turned their gazes on the boarding party. Jagus also discovered something Grave did not, for when Jagus' wizard companion Deila cast bolts of magic at one of the creatures, the magic simply slid off its black glistening hide.

## Combat

Like most tatzylwurms, blacks hunt in packs. These ambush predators prefer to sneak up on prey from behind, leap from trees, or lie in wait until suitable creatures come within range. While not as aggressive as pale or viper tatzylwurms, once they mark a creature as prey, the pack pursues it relentlessly.

A favored tactic involves one black tatzylwurm springing from the undergrowth to transfix the prey with its gaze while the rest of the pack approaches from behind.

**Poison (Ex):** Bite or spit, Fortitude save (DC 18), initial damage 1d6 Con, 1d6 Dex, and paralysis for 1d4 minutes; secondary damage 1d4 Con and 1d4 Dex. However, after a black tatzylwurm's first successful bite (or spit) attack, it may not use its poison again for another 24 hours. Subsequent poison attacks deal initial damage of 1d4 Con and 1d4 Dex (no paralysis). The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Spit (Ex):** When cornered (not when hunting), black tatzylwurms spit poison at their opponents' eyes. The attack roll takes a –4 penalty for the specific target (already factored into the above statistics). If it succeeds, the target suffers poison (as above) and is blinded for 1d4 rounds. Creatures without eyes are immune to the blinding effect; at the GM's discretion, under such circumstances, black tatzylwurms may not know where to aim their venom for an effective attack.

**Transfix (Su):** A black tatzylwurm's eyes glint in a strange, supernatural way. A black tatzylwurm can transfix a creature just by looking into its eyes. This ability is similar to a gaze attack, except that the tatzylwurm must use a standard action.

# Tatzylwurm, Black

This ability does not affect anyone merely looking at the creature. Anyone the tatzylwurm targets must make a Will save (DC 16) or suffer paralysis for 1 round. The tatzylwurm can maintain this ability on a specific target by taking standard actions; the target gets a new chance to save each round, on its turn, but the save DC increases by +1 each round. This ability has a range of 30 feet.

**Skills:** Black tatzylwurms have a +20 racial bonus on Jump checks and a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

Black tatzylwurms have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

\*A black tatzylwurm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming provided it swims in a straight line.

## Treasure

The eyes of a black tatzylwurm are worth 100 gp to wizards. When included as a material component in the casting of any spell of the charm subschool, they grant +1 to the save DC of the spell and are consumed in the casting.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** none.

**Uncommon:** Black tatzylwurms are reptilian predators known for ambushing their prey. Like all tatzylwurms they can jump great distances.

**Rare:** Black tatzylwurms can spit poison.

**Obscure:** Arcanists value the eyes of the black tatzylwurm. Rumors hold that these rare orbs may enhance the potency of certain charms and enchantments.



# Tatzylwurm, Painted



Always N Large Magical Beast (Aquatic) CR II

**Hit Dice:** 13d10+78 (149 hp)

**Immunities/Resist:** Damage reduction 10/piercing and slashing, fear, fire, paralysis, poison, spell resistance 23

**Senses:** Blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., Listen +11, Spot +11, low-light vision

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), Swim 40 ft.

**Armor Class:** 28, touch 9, flat-footed 28 (-1 size, +19 natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +13/+25

**Attack:** Bite +20 melee (2d8+12/19–20 plus poison)

**Full Attack:** Bite +21 melee (2d8+12/19–20 plus poison) or scalding stream +12 ranged touch (4d8 fire)

**Special Attacks:** Distract, fascinate, poison, scalding stream

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Amphibious, regeneration 10

**Saves:** Fort +14, Ref +8, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 11, Con 22, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Listen +11, Spot +11, Swim +16\*

**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will

**Environment:** Warm aquatic

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or pack (3–6)

**Advancement:** 14–19 HD (Large), 20–25 HD (Huge)



**M**y colleague Professor Coriandr Jagus, who studies tatzylwurms of all kinds, has a particular interest in painted tatzylwurms. These creatures dwell in tropical lakes and rivers as well as shallow coastal areas. Though not as aggressive as some other tatzylwurms, they remain some of the most dangerous (the pale tatzylwurm notably excepted).

Jagus saw plenty of these creatures as he traveled the Broken Coast searching for tatzylwurms of all kinds. He reports their ability to spit scalding water as one of their most peculiar qualities. The tatzylwurms use this to bring down weak flying prey, like large birds. Jagus describes the sight of a painted tatzylwurm pack shooting down a flight of geese as quite beautiful in a brutal sort of way.

Also, painted tatzylwurms seem to have some sort of deep incompatibility with pale tatzylwurms. Jagus' research verifies that pale tatzylwurm blood will harm, and even kill, painted tatzylwurms. He did not tell me how he came to know this, and turned a shade of white when I inquired. "Just luck," he muttered. "Lost poor Deila before we figured it out." He would say no more on the subject.

## Combat

Painted tatzylwurms are not particularly aggressive, but they are territorial, and once they enter a fight they do not leave it. Their straightforward tactics rely on their toughness and regeneration to keep them alive while they savage their oppo-

nents. They emit a scalding stream of water if they cannot get into melee.

**Distract (Ex):** The colorful patterns on a painted tatzylwurm's scales move in captivating ways as the creature's muscles play and shift. A creature within the painted tatzylwurm's reach must make a Will save (DC 16) at the beginning of its turn or take a -2 penalty on attack rolls for 1 round. Creatures without sight are unaffected. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Fascinate (Su):** When a painted tatzylwurm wills it, as a standard action, odd colors and patterns reminiscent of those on its scales play across its eyes. This effect combines with strange muscular motion that moves the patterns on its scales in hypnotizing ways to fascinate creatures.

All creatures within 30 feet that can see the painted tatzylwurm must make Will saves (DC 16). The creature on which the tatzylwurm chooses to focus its gaze suffers a -4 penalty on the save. Creatures who fail remain fascinated for as long as the tatzylwurm uses a standard action each round to continue this effect, plus 1 additional round. Each round, as a full-round action, affected creatures can attempt a new Will save (DC 16) to shake off the effect. The tatzylwurm may focus its gaze on a single creature each round, imposing a -4 penalty on its save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Poison (Ex):** Bite, Fortitude save (DC 22), initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Scalding Stream (Ex):** Painted tatzylwurms swallow a great quantity of water during their daily activities and store this water in a special organ near their mouths. When a tatzylwurm

# Tatzylwurm, Painted

gets nervous or angry, blood flows into the organ and heats the water until it boils. The beast's nostrils emit the steam.

A painted tatzylwurm can spit three streams of the scalding water before it must refill its store. Treat this as a normal ranged touch attack with a range increment of 20 feet and a maximum range of 10 range increments (200 feet).

**Amphibious:** Painted tatzylwurms can breathe both air and water indefinitely. They are equally comfortable on land and in water.

**Regenerate:** Acid and electricity deal lethal damage to a painted tatzylwurm. Also, a weapon freshly coated with pale tatzylwurm blood deals lethal damage to a painted tatzylwurm and bypasses the creature's damage reduction. Applying the blood to a weapon works like applying an oil, and the blood usually lasts for 1d4 attacks (whether successful or not).

**Skills:** \*A painted tatzylwurm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming provided it swims in a straight line.

## Treasure

Painted tatzylwurms do not hoard treasure. Weapon and armor smiths will pay up to 1,500 gp for all the bones of a single painted tatzylwurm. Alchemists prize their eyes; though no one has yet discovered an alchemical use for the eyes, they certainly have potential, and experimenting on them is considered an investment. Each eye sells for 50 gp. (A painted tatzylwurm has 10 eyes.)

Adventurers expecting to fight a painted tatzylwurm may pay up to 100 gp per dose for the blood of a pale tatzylwurm.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Painted tatzylwurms are reptilian predators that live in tropical waters.

**Uncommon:** A clutch of painted tatzylwurm eggs means the mother is nearby.

**Rare:** Painted tatzylwurms quickly regenerate damage, except for certain types of damage.

**Obscure:** Pale tatzylwurm blood is poison to painted tatzylwurms.





# Tatzylwurm, Viper



Always N Small Magical Beast CR 4	Special Attacks:	Poison, rattle
Hit Dice: 5d10+5 (32 hp)	Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Immunities/Resist: Damage reduction 5/magic, fear, paralysis, poison	Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +6, Spot +2, low-light vision, scent	Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 11
Initiative: +3	Skills:	Hide +7, Jump +21*, Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Spot +2, Survival +6*, Swim +9*
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), Swim 20 ft.	Feats:	Ability Focus (poison), Track <sup>B</sup> , Weapon Finesse
Armor Class: 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +6 natural)	Environment:	Temperate forests
Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+2	Organization:	Solitary, pair, or pack (3–6)
Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d6+1 plus poison)	Advancement:	6–11 HD (Small)
Full Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d6+1 plus poison)		



Viper tatzylwurms earned their deadly reputation for two reasons: They hunt in packs, and their venom is one of the most potent poisons in all of Immoren. Happily, I have only encountered these beasts in the taxonomy laboratory.

Professor Coriandr Jagus, who studies tatzylwurms of all sorts, relates a dark story about viper tatzylwurms. His study of these creatures lead him and several companions to the jungles of the Broken Coast, as dangerous and remote a place as one could choose for field work. While moving through the undergrowth, Bartleby Ruder the expedition's scout stopped and sniffed the air. "Blimey," he said, "does that smell like black brewed tea to you? We must not be the only ones here after all."

Jagus, a tatzylwurm expert, grew pale even at the memory. He told his companions to vacate the area, but they had no time. A rattle sounded ahead and the curious Bartleby moved to investigate despite Jagus' warning. The viper tatzylwurms attacked en masse with a swiftness only their species can muster.

Jagus escaped with only two companions, Deila Albright and Samuel Mackoly. Samuel had taken a bite, however, and though he managed to run on despite the poison, Jagus took no chances. "I turned," Jagus told me, "and pointed my pistol at Sam. He looked at me like I was crazy, and I was too winded to even tell him I was sorry. I shot him through the head. It was the only reason Deila and I escaped."

At first I thought he jested for Jagus could turn dark at times. Then he told me the keen senses of the viper could quickly track those poisoned by their bite. Though I cannot agree with his decision I do know that dire times do call upon us to make the most grotesque decisions.

## Combat

While cautious when alone or in pairs, viper tatzylwurms are ferocious pack hunters. Even if not hungry, groups of three or more will fearlessly attack anything nearby. A pack normally spreads out around its territory and uses a complex series of pheromones to communicate. When one tatzylwurm detects an intruding creature, it releases a pungent trail that smells a bit like black tea. Clever explorers recognize this smell and quickly vacate the territory when they scent it. The pack gathers in 10 to 20 minutes and charges.

**Poison (Ex):** Viper tatzylwurm poison is one of the most potent toxins in the Iron Kingdoms. Bite, Fortitude save (DC 15), initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. If the victim fails his save against the secondary damage, the poison deals an additional 1d6 points of Con damage each minute thereafter. Making a Fortitude save (DC 15) negates this damage and prevents any further damage.

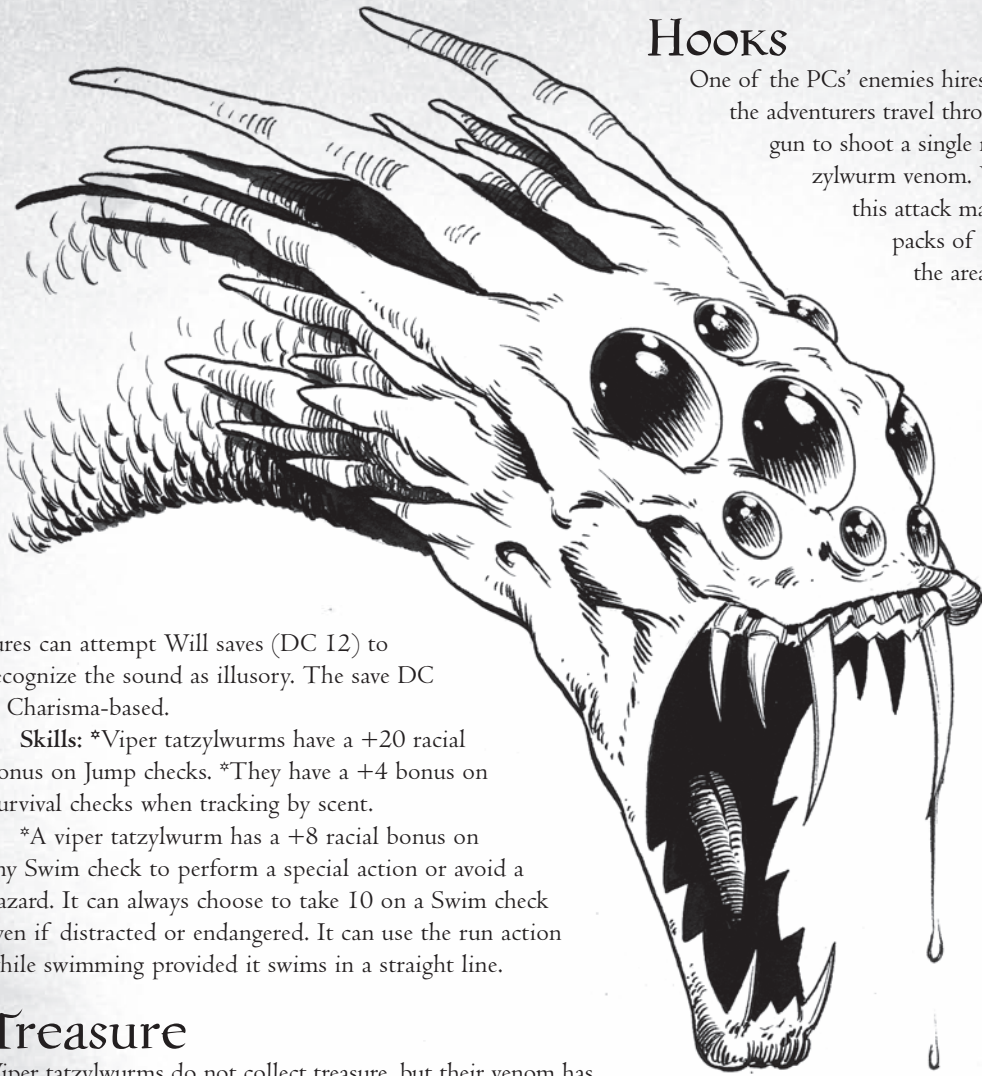
Also, if the victim fails either the initial or secondary saving throw, the poison remains in his system for 48 hours. While it (probably) stops dealing damage eventually, it mixes with his sweat and other bodily fluids. Viper tatzylwurms can scent this poison and gain a +8 circumstance bonus on Survival checks to track such a creature. Viper tatzylwurms instinctively desire to hunt creatures with this scent, as the poison should already have weakened them. Any spell that eliminates poison in a creature's system, such as *neutralize poison*, also eliminates this effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Rattle (Su):** Solitary viper tatzylwurms rattle to warn away predators, but stalking viper tatzylwurms use it to confuse their prey. They can make their rattle sound as if it comes from another location within 40 feet as a standard action; crea-

# Tatzylwurm, Viper

## HOOKS

One of the PCs' enemies hires an assassin who strikes while the adventurers travel through a jungle. He uses a blow-gun to shoot a single needle covered with viper tatzylwurm venom. While deadly in its own right, this attack makes the victim a target for the packs of viper tatzylwurms that lair in the area.



tures can attempt Will saves (DC 12) to recognize the sound as illusory. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Skills:** \*Viper tatzylwurms have a +20 racial bonus on Jump checks. \*They have a +4 bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

\*A viper tatzylwurm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming provided it swims in a straight line.

## Treasure

Viper tatzylwurms do not collect treasure, but their venom has value. It remains potent after removal as long as the collector makes a Craft (alchemy) check (DC 25) (Monster Lore grants a synergy bonus). While illegal in every kingdom, a single dose of poison sells for 3,000 gp on the black market. A dead viper tatzylwurm usually has 1d4–1 doses of poison available for extraction.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Viper tatzylwurms are reptilian predators with deadly poison.

**Uncommon:** Viper tatzylwurm poison is one of the most deadly toxins in the Iron Kingdoms. It is so potent that it remains in a victim's body for a long time.

**Rare:** Viper tatzylwurms rattle, like rattlesnakes.

**Obscure:** If you smell black tea in the jungle, it might mean viper tatzylwurms are nearby.

*The fascinating hardened scales of these devilish vipers seem resistant to the sharpest steel weapons. Not that it would stop Altan from making a pair of boots from their hides. I only hope he brings an intact species for me to study.*

*-V.P.*

# Tharn Bloodtrackers



Usually CE Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Tharn) CR 4	
Hit Dice:	6d8+12 (39 hp)
Senses:	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +11, Spot +11
Initiative:	+4
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class:	18, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 buckler)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+8
Attack:	Fighting claw +8 melee (1d4+2/19–20) or masterwork javelin +12 ranged (1d8+2/x3)
Full Attack:	Fighting claw +8/+3 melee (1d4+2/19–20) or masterwork javelin +12 ranged (1d8+2/x3)
Special Attacks:	Ambuscade, call the wurm 2/day, mark prey
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities:	Trackless step
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +5
Abilities:	Str 14, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 8
Skills:	Hide +14, Listen +11, Move Silently +14, Spot +11, Survival +16
Feats:	Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Track <sup>B</sup> , Weapon Focus (Tharn spear)
Environment:	Temperate forest
Organization:	Hunting pack (2–6), band (6–11 plus 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> level ranger or barbarian leader) or family (3–6 plus 1–4 Tharn males) or tribe (20–50 plus 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> -level ranger or barbarian per 20 adults and 10–40 males, 2–4 argus)
Advancement:	By character class
Level Adjustment:	+2



Recently I have heard reports that have led me to reappraise my opinion of the Tharn. I believe the Tharn may have recovered from the brink of extinction and their numbers now grow. Whatever curse may have afflicted their fertility clearly has unraveled, perhaps as recently as one generation ago. It seems the best explanation for the upsurge in sightings of both male and female Tharn working alongside the enigmatic druids who haunt our wildernesses. Furthermore, I have gathered that Tharn women also sometimes engage in battle, no less deadly for their smaller stature. I gathered the following narrative from Alten Ashley on the topic:

*I had started to have doubts about the druid who approached me a few weeks ago in the Crag. But my trigger finger had itched when he said dragonspawn and I'd thrown in. I found myself slinking toward Scarleforth Lake, which I didn't mind so much. I minded the things shadowing me, though. I figured them for other stooges of the Circle sent to make sure I did my job. I've come to expect that kind of paranoia from the druids.*

*Sounds drifted from up ahead, along with — I sniffed — water, and the stink of a battlefield. I soon saw the lakeshore and a bunch of dead trollkin. There'd been a mighty scrap, and the trollkin had taken it on the chin. The victors looked like the monsters I had come to kill. Some small ones, just mouths on legs, milled around.*

*In front of me, though, stood a big heap o' nasty; jagged barbs, thick claws, huge fangs, the works. Nearby*

*stood a dozen of what looked like elves of all things. I did a double-take when I recognized them as Nyss. Something strange about them, too, but I had bigger farrow to fry.*

*I set up Jenny and readied to fire. Then I caught movement to my left, and my head jerked around. A slender, savage woman emerged from the trees, all lean muscle and reflexes, not twenty feet away. I must have made a noise, because she gave me a look I couldn't interpret. Several similar companions slunk from the trees behind her.*

*I looked back at the monster, sighted, fired, and took it in a leg joint. The women attacked at the same time. Two more shots made Old Nasty another notch on my belt. With that thing down, I could pay attention to the women.*

*They moved like liquid shadows. I'd never seen such speed and reflexes on a human before; their grace reminded me of jungle cats. Their javelins flew even as the women rushed forward, pounded the Nyss off their feet, and flung them backward. The women fell on the few remaining elves with bladed bucklers. They fought like a pack, one distracting a Nyss from behind while the other jabbed him in the throat. Then the women turned on the small, toothy dragonspawn with eerily synchronized movements, and a horizontal rain of javelins lanced the air. It ended that fast.*

*I propped Jenny against a tree and lit a cigar. Assuming these girls weren't about to kill me, I enjoyed watching them. Their movements were almost an art. Every swing of a leg was effortless. After they lifted their dead and melted back into the trees, I listened, but I didn't hear a thing. They were almost as good as I was.*

*I puffed on my cigar and noticed*



## Tharn Bloodtrackers

the one I had seen first standing nearby. She eyed me and I let my hand hang loose near Jenny. She glanced at the monster I'd shot and nodded. I inclined my head and she disappeared silently into the forest. I watched her feet and saw her step directly on a dried twig. It snapped without a sound.

There's definitely something unnatural about them. Unsettling as they were, though, knowing they weren't properly human made me feel better about them being almost as good as I am.

### Combat

While male Tharn can transform into large bestial creatures, the females of the race enjoy completely different supernatural abilities. Masters of ambush, they prefer to slink around an enemy's flanks and back and hurl their javelins from hiding.

**Ambuscade Charge (Ex):** Ambuscade is a special full round action that allows a bloodtracker to move up to twice her speed and make a single ranged attack with a thrown weapon during her turn. The bloodtracker gains a +2 bonus on her damage from the ranged attack and takes a -2 penalty to her AC until the start

of her next turn.

This movement carries the same restrictions on movement as a charge.

#### Call the Wurm (Su):

Twice per day, a Tharn bloodtracker can call on her connection to the Devourer Wurm to bring her bestial nature to the fore. She becomes more elegant and swift, moving with cat like grace. While using this ability, the Tharn bloodtracker gains the evasion ability and +4 Dexterity. She also gains the Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Shot on the Run, and Weapon Finesse feats. She can maintain this ability for a number of rounds equal to 3 + her Constitution modifier (5 rounds, in the case of the Tharn bloodtracker presented above).

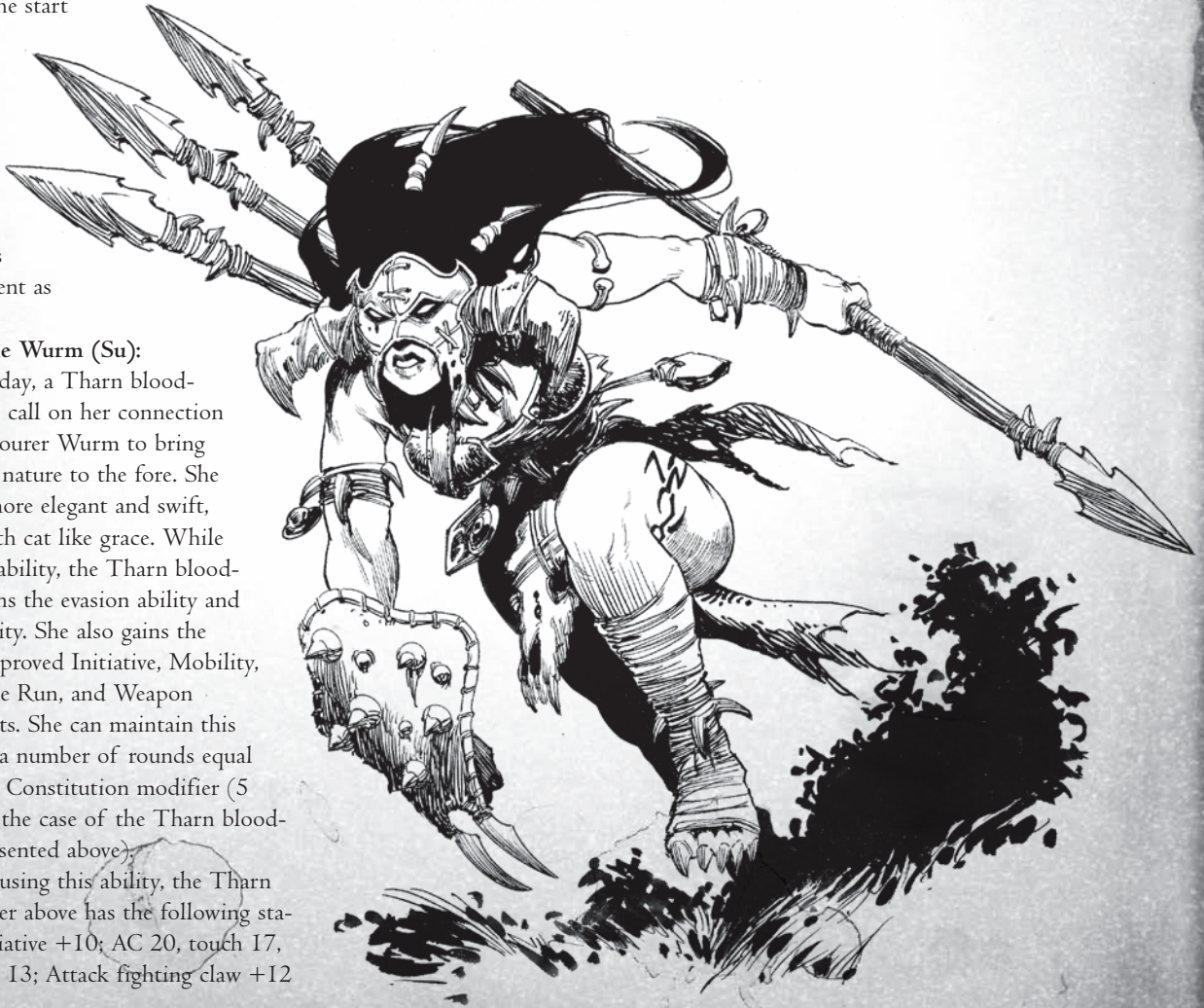
While using this ability, the Tharn bloodtracker above has the following statistics: initiative +10; AC 20, touch 17, flat-footed 13; Attack fighting claw +12

melee (1d4+2), or Tharn javelin +12 ranged (1d8+2/x3); Full Attack fighting claw +12/+7 melee (1d4+2), or Tharn javelin +12 ranged (1d8+2/x3); Ref +11; Dex 22.

**Mark Prey (Su):** The Devourer Wurm grants bloodtrackers the ability to mystically mark a hunted target as their prey. Once per day, after a successful Survival skill check to track a creature, a bloodtracker may select the tracked creature as her marked prey. The bloodtracker gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival, and Hide checks when using these skills against her marked prey. Likewise she gets a +2 bonus on damage against the marked prey. Several bloodtrackers can select the same creature as their marked prey.

**Trackless Step (Su):** A Tharn bloodtracker leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. She may choose to leave a trail.

**Skills:** Tharn bloodtrackers have a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, and Survival checks.



# Titans



**Wild Titan**  
Usually N Large Magical Beast CR 9

**Hit Dice:** 12d8+72 (126 hp)

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +9, Spot +9

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Armor Class:** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +12/+28

**Attack:** Gore +19 (2d8+12)

**Full Attack:** Gore +19 (2d8+12), 2 slams +17 (1d6+4)

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, powerful charge 4d8+12, 2x titan rake 1d4+4

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +14, Reflex +10, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 7

**Skills:** Listen +9, Spot +9

**Feats:** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Multiattack, Power Attack

**Environment:** Any desert or warm land

**Organization:** Solitary or gang (2-6)

**Advancement:** 13-20 HD (Large), 21-30 HD (Huge)

**Skorne Conditioned Titan (Gladiator)**  
N Large Magical Beast CR 12

**Hit Dice:** 15d8+105 (172 hp)

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +10, Spot +11

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armor Class:** 24, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural, +5 skorne armor)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +15/+31

**Attack:** War gauntlet +22 (1d10+8) or gore +22 (2d8+12)

**Full Attack:** War gauntlets +18/+16/+13/+8 (1d10+8) and gore +17 (2d8+12)

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, powerful charge 4d8+12, 2x titan rake 1d6+4

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Lean, Blind Rage 1x/day

**Saves:** Fort +17, Reflex +11, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 14, Con 24, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 3

**Skills:** Listen +10, Spot +11

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Cleave, Die Hard, Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Multiweapon Fighting, Power Attack

**Environment:** Any desert or warm land

**Bronzeback Titan**  
Usually N Huge Magical Beast CR 16

**Hit Dice:** 18d10+144 (243 hp)

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +11, Spot +12

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Armor Class:** 28, touch 9, flat-footed 27 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +19 natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +18/+35

**Attack:** Gore +25 (4d8+9)

**Full Attack:** Gore +25 (4d8+9), 2 slams +23 (1d8+4)

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, powerful charge, roar, 2x titan rake 1d6+4, topple

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Herd sense

**Saves:** Fort +19, Reflex +12, Will +7

**Abilities:** Str 28, Dex 12, Con 27, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Listen +11, Spot +12

**Feats:** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Multiattack, Power Attack

**Environment:** Any desert or warm land

**Organization:** Solitary

**Advancement:** 19-38 HD (Huge)



## Titans

Few creatures are as misunderstood as the titan. Its massive frame, four powerful arms, and long curving tusks give the uninitiated the impression of a creature built for combat and nothing more. The experience of the titan on the battlefield, armored and conditioned for war by the skorne, seems only to underline this theory. But after studying titans in the wild, I can unequivocally call this impression false.

Far from the brutal touch of skorne beast handlers, the wild titan is a naturally docile, quiet species, content to roam nomadically, graze, and look after its young on the golden savannahs of the east. These gentle giants fight with the ferocity one expects to see from such enormous creatures only when threatened. However, years of skorne deprivations have made this species wary and, though they do not seek violence, they do not tolerate even the hint of a threat. Simply approach a titan's young and see how fast the heard tramples you into paste.

Titan herds on the move are remarkable sights to see, with as many as a hundred striding across the red sands of the desert or through the high grasses with somber grace. Such a

sight makes one appreciate what this land once was before the dominating culture of skorne closed its iron grasp upon it. That grasp has changed the fate of this species.

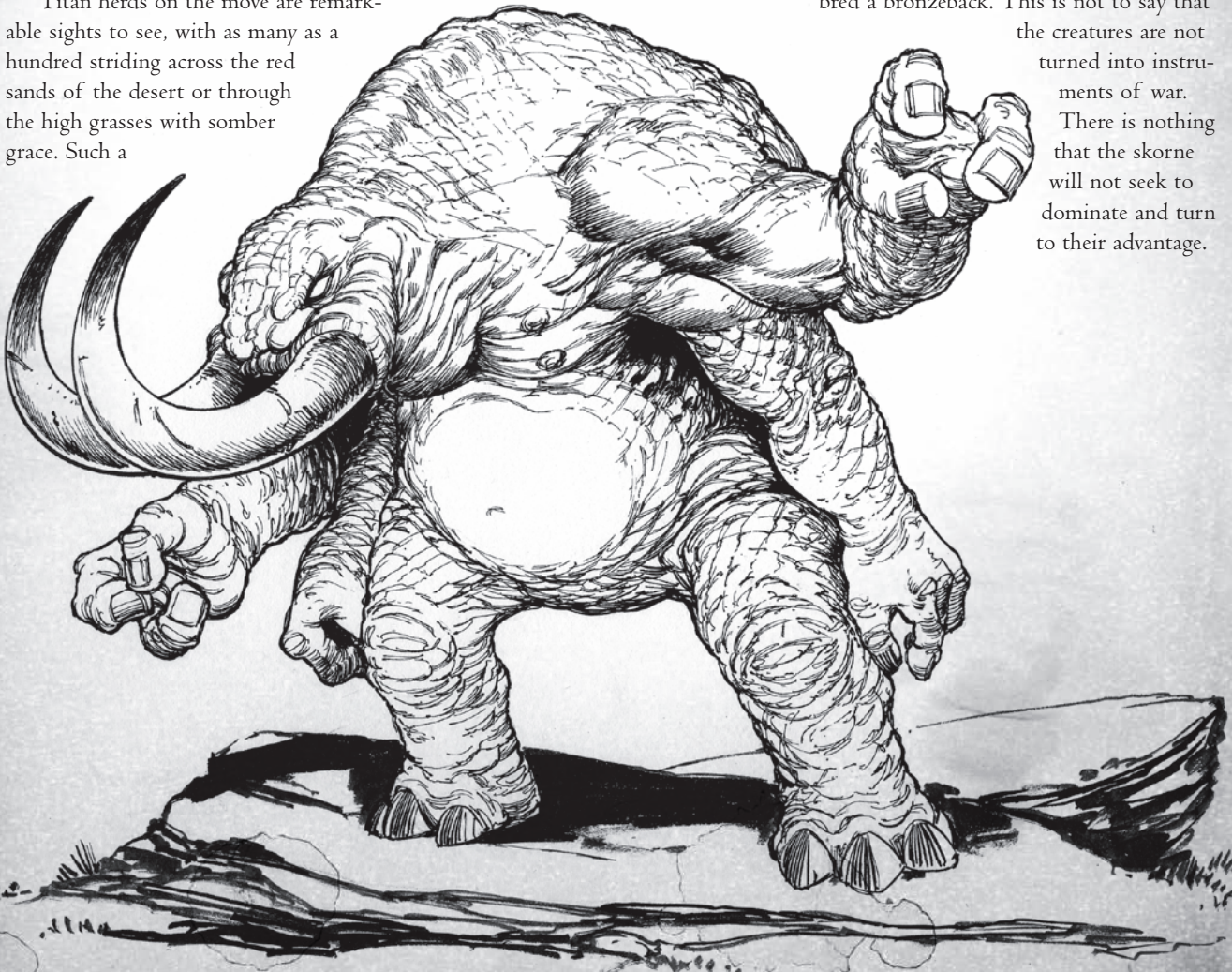
For centuries, it turns out, the skorne have conditioned these magnificent beasts with painful barbs to create one of their most powerful weapons of war. The mind of a titan one sees in the wild bears little resemblance to the miserable and broken monsters under skorne domination. Skorne methods for controlling titans work very well, but at what price for the titan species? I am surprised that any wild herds still remain as each house seeks to capture and breed their own superior strain of titan.

Of all titans, the mighty bronzeback stands as by far the most impressive to behold. Sporting double tusks and hairy backs of aged bronze hair, these huge titans rule their herds, quickly drive off competing males, and maintain a harem of titan cows. It interested me to learn that these mighty specimens only develop in the wild; no house has ever successfully

bred a bronzeback. This is not to say that

the creatures are not turned into instruments of war.

There is nothing that the skorne will not seek to dominate and turn to their advantage.



# Titans



## Titan Combat

While normally docile in the wild, titans fight fiercely to defend themselves, their territory, and their young. They prefer to gore opponents with their huge tusks, using size to advantage by charging to trample, slam, or overrun. They are a humanoid race slightly more intelligent than animals and capable of learning complex commands.

Those captured and trained by the skorne from birth are more formidable. They wear heavy plated armor that, combined with their naturally thick hides, makes them difficult to injure. Skorne conditioned titans wear bladed gauntlets enhancing their melee damage. Pain hooks in their flesh keep them in a simmering state of rage.

The titan's secondary pair of arms do not make regular attacks, but can hold or rake an adversary grappled with a fist slam or war gauntlet attack.

**Powerful Charge (Ex):** A titan typically begins battle by charging an opponent to impale them on its powerful tusks. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the beast to make a single gore attack with a +22 attack bonus that deals 4d8+12 damage.

**Titan Rake (Ex):** When a target is grappled, the titan's secondary arms can make attacks against grappled targets. Skorne conditioned titans are equipped with light war gauntlets on their secondary arms to enhance the damage of this attack.

## Bronzeback Combat

Unpredictable and quick to anger, a titan bronzeback attacks with the force of an avalanche. Protective of their herds and numerous mates, bronzebacks quickly challenge any interloper. Those who do not immediately flee from these behemoths'

thunderous roars often fall under their hulking forms. Larger and more savage than other titans, bronzebacks often drop to use their lower pair of arms like a second pair of legs. With this additional strength they can propel themselves at surprising speeds to easily overcome and trample unwary foes.

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

**Powerful Charge (Ex):** When a titan bronzeback charges, its gore attack deals 6d8+13 points of damage.

**Tusk Throw (Ex):** After a successful attack with powerful charge, a titan bronzeback may throw its target as a free action. After taking gore damage a Medium sized or smaller character hit by the gore attack is moved back 20 feet and knocked prone.

**Roar (Ex):** A titan bronzeback can bellow with incredible force once every 10 minutes. All creatures except other titans within 120 feet must succeed on a Will save (DC 19) or become shaken for 2d6 rounds. Those who make their save cannot be affected by the same bronzeback's roar for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

In addition, any titan within 1 mile of a bronzeback that uses its roar ability comes to investigate. As such, there is a 35% chance for 1d4 titans to appear 1d4 minutes after the bronzeback roars. The chance to call aid and the number of titans appearing can fluctuate greatly, increasing in areas of dense titan activity and decreasing in areas far from the titans' native lands.

**Titan Rake (Ex):** The titan bronzeback's secondary arms can attack a grappled target.

**Topple (Ex):** Upon being reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, a titan bronze back falls, crushing anything unable to escape its hulking form. The GM chooses a 10-foot square area adjacent to the bronzeback's current space for this ability to affect. Any creature in that area must make a Reflex save (DC 28) or take 4d6 points of damage. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Trample (Ex):** Reflex save (DC 28) for half. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Herd Sense (Ex):** A bronzeback is intimately familiar with every member of its herd and has an uncanny ability to perceive the wellbeing of nearby titans. Bronzebacks know the hit points of all other titans within 100 feet. If any titan within that range takes a significant amount of damage, a bronzeback will likely investigate.

## Treasure

Titans encountered in the wild possess no treasure, but their long curving tusks can fetch a good deal of gold from different buyers. Bone grinders and alchemists use the tusk, as well as curio dealers, scrimshaw carvers, and the like. The titan's hide, when properly cured, is tougher than the best western leather and is sought after for use as armor, tent canopies, and other applications.

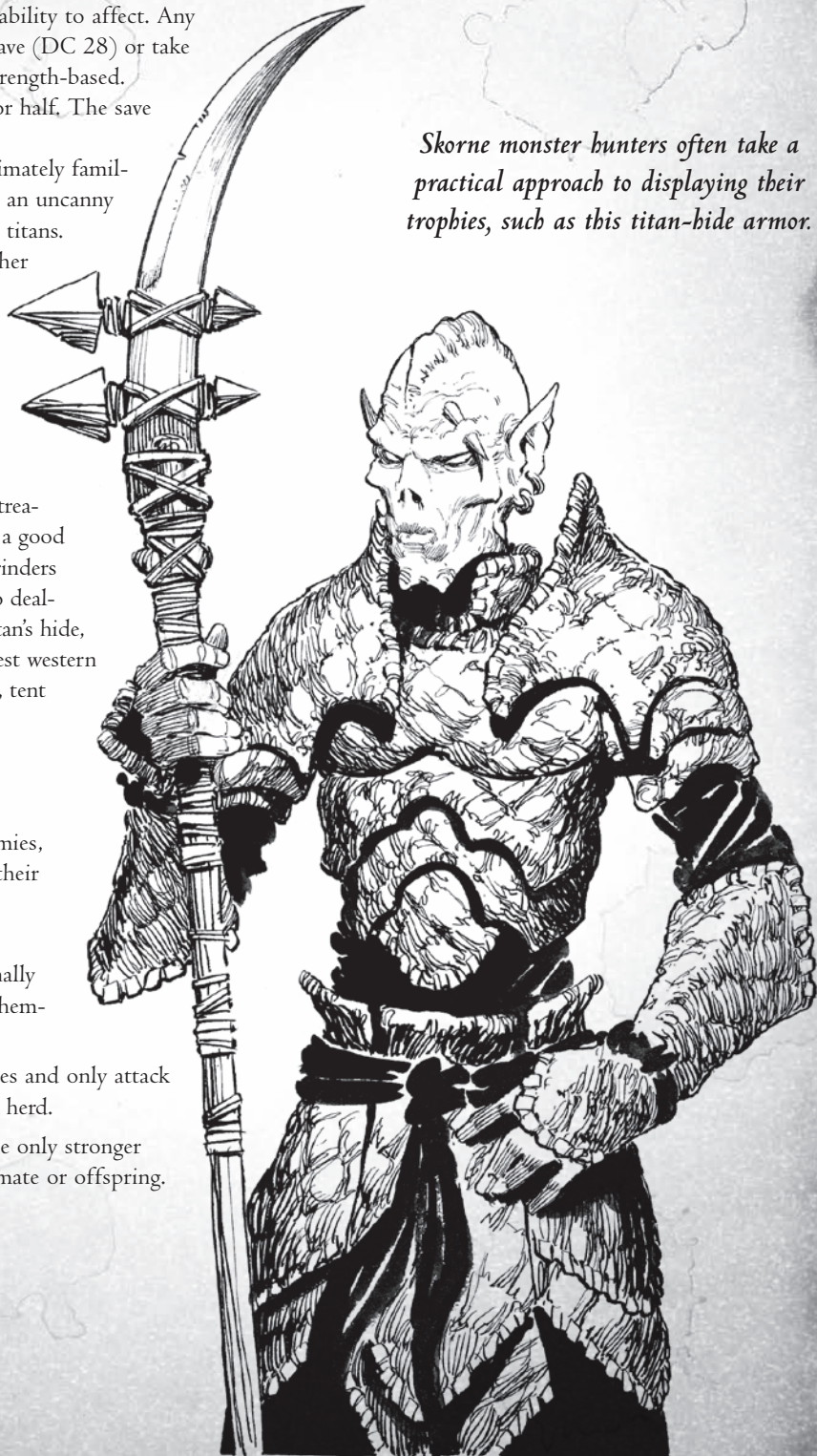
## Legends & Lore

**Common:** Titans favor charging their enemies, using their superior strength and mass as their primary weapon.

**Uncommon:** Rudimentary tool use is not unknown among the titans. They occasionally employ rocks and sticks when defending themselves or their herd.

**Rare:** Titans are relatively peaceful creatures and only attack when forced to defend themselves or their herd.

**Obscure:** Bulls and cows mate for life. The only stronger bond a titan has than to its herd is to its mate or offspring.



*Skorne monster hunters often take a practical approach to displaying their trophies, such as this titan-hide armor.*



# TROLLS



<b>Pyre Troll</b>	
Often CE Large Monstrous Humanoid (Fire) CR 8	
Hit Dice:	8d8+56 (92 hp)
Immunities/Resist:	Fire, poison, vulnerability to cold
Senses:	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +6, Spot +5, scent
Initiative:	+2
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class:	19, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+8/+18
Attack:	Claw +13 melee (1d6+6 plus 1d6 fire) or spew +9 ranged touch (4d8 fire plus special)
Full Attack:	2 claws +13 melee (1d6+6 plus 1d6 fire) or spew +9 ranged touch (4d8 fire plus special)
Special Attacks:	Hand fire, spew
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Qualities:	Regeneration 7, spawn whelps
Saves:	Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 22, Dex 14, Con 24, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 8
Skills:	Intimidate +6*, Listen +6, Spot +5
Feats:	Alertness, Endurance, Great Fortitude <sup>B</sup> , Power Attack
Environment:	Warm land or underground
Organization:	Solitary or gang (2–6)
Advancement:	By character class

<b>Slag Troll</b>	
Usually CE Huge Monstrous Humanoid (Fire) CR 11	
Hit Dice:	11d8+110 (159 hp)
Immunities/Resist:	Acid, fire, poison resistance 15, vulnerability to cold
Initiative:	+2
Senses:	Darkvision 90 ft., Listen +3, Spot +3, scent
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class:	25, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (–2 size, +2 Dex, +15 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+11/+27
Attack:	Claw +17 melee (3d6+8) or greatclub +17 melee (3d8+12)
Full Attack:	2 claws +17 melee (3d6+8) and bite +12 melee (3d6+4); or huge greatclub +17/+12/+7 melee (3d8+12); or rock +11 ranged (2d8+8)
Special Attacks:	Rage 3/day, rock throwing, vomit
Space/Reach:	15 ft./15 ft.
Special Qualities:	Metallic flesh, regeneration 10, spawn whelps
Saves:	Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 27, Dex 14, Con 30, Int 4, Wis 3, Cha 8
Skills:	Intimidate +12*, Listen +3, Spot +3
Feats:	Cleave, Diehard, Endurance <sup>B</sup> , Improved Natural Attack (claw), Power Attack
Environment:	Any mountain, including volcanic
Organization:	Solitary, plus 1–2 whelps
Advancement:	12–22 HD (Huge); 23–33 HD (Gargantuan)



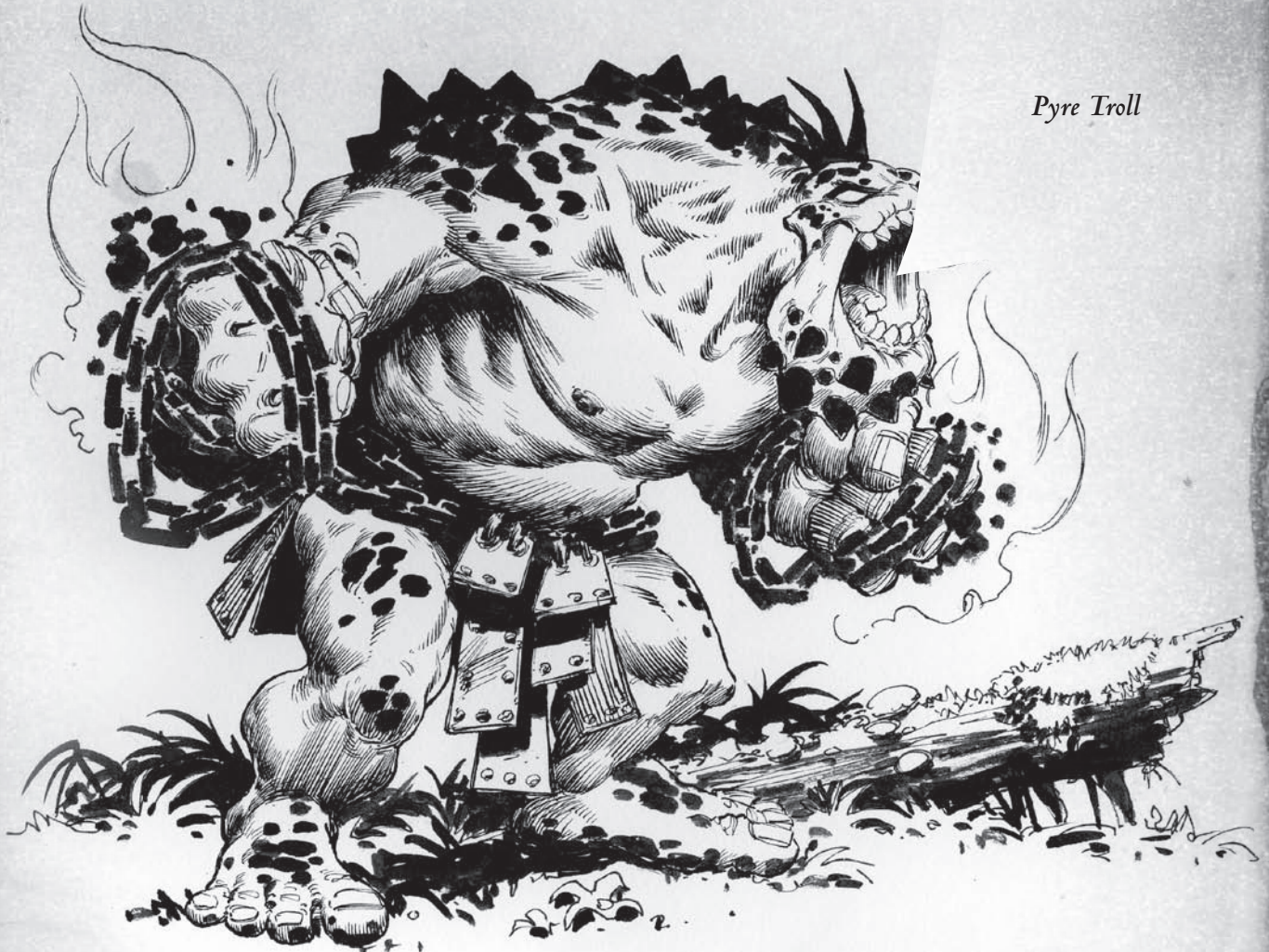
I have described many troll varieties in earlier works (cursorily in *Monsternomicon: Denizens of the Iron Kingdoms* and more exhaustively in *Genera and Species of Southern Trolls*). I feel that two of the more unusual troll subspecies, the pyre and slag troll, deserve some examination especially in light of current events.

Pyre trolls seem closely related to pitch trolls. I suspect the differences arise from dietary adjustments and the adaptation common to all troll species. These creatures—some of the first I encountered in the Bloodstone Marches—have some of the oddest eating patterns I've ever observed. They consume gallons of a noxious black liquid and supplement this with other foul, indigestible, or outright poisonous items their

instinct tells them to eat. I've no doubt this combination produces the gobs of burning these trolls spew at their enemies, or hock up upon their hands to lend themselves extra power in battle. Clearly, their bodies have altered to the point where they no longer feel fire.

I actually found the slag trolls more frightening, however. Based on appearance and anatomical similarities, I believe these evolved from dire trolls who decided at some point that they enjoyed the proximity of tremendous heat. These creatures prefer areas of volcanic activity, which partially accounts for their rarity. More fascinating yet, their hostile environment and hunger must have prompted them to try eating stone and metal. Such a diet would kill nearly any other creature, but

Pyre Troll



the troll developed a taste for metal in particular. Its massive regenerative properties altered its physiology to compensate.

In attempts to deal with indigestible materials, the slag troll has developed especially potent stomach acid. More frighteningly, the troll's body pushes bits of metal *through* its flesh and out its skin, covering its hide in metallic chunks reminiscent of the calcification on dire trolls. The pain and toxins associated with eating metal leaves slag trolls constantly angry and seems to also render them even less intelligent than dire trolls. Such creatures make me wonder what other wonders this species may produce if fed even more unlikely substances.

## Combat

### Pyre Troll

When a pyre troll expects to fight, it hocks its flaming spittle onto its hands, grins at the enemy's discomfiture, and charges into combat. It might spew flaming goo at them once or twice

before closing, especially if it thinks doing so will enrage them (rather than terrify them).

**Hand Fire (Ex):** As a standard action, a pyre troll can spit flaming gobs onto its hands (or, theoretically, anything else). The fire burns for 1 round per hit die of the troll (8 rounds, in the case of the troll presented above) and adds 1d6 points of fire damage to the troll's claw attacks. The above statistics take this modification into account.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Acid and cold deal normal damage to a pyre troll. If it loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 6d6 minutes. The pyre troll can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump within 1 minute of losing it. After that time the limb can no longer reattach and spawns a whelp.

**\*Skills:** Pyre trolls use their Strength modifiers instead of their Charisma modifiers on Intimidate checks.

**Spawn Whelps (Ex):** Pyre trolls have a 20% chance to be accompanied by 1d4 whelps, half of which are mature. These

## TROLLS

whelps grow in 1d4 days and mature in 1d4 weeks. They live for 4d6 months. Mature pyre troll whelps have the spew special attack but deal only 1d6 hit points of damage.

**Spew (Ex):** Once per day per 2 hit dice, a pyre troll can spew forth a giant glob of tarry ooze from its stomach. This ooze ignites on contact with the air. Hocking forth the glob is a standard action; it is a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 5 range increments (50 feet).

The glob deals 1d8 points of fire damage for every 2 hit dice of the troll. In addition, the substance sticks to the target, dealing 1d8 per 4 hit dice of the troll each round for the next 2d4 rounds.

A victim can scrape off the goo and extinguish the fire by spending a full-round action and making a Reflex save (DC 21). The save DC is Constitution-based.

### SLAG TROLL

Slag trolls are even less intelligent than dire trolls, and the pain of their digestive process leaves them in a constantly sour mood. Plus, they like eating things. Unsurprisingly, therefore, a slag

troll's standard approach to anything is to charge, pummel, and eat, whether or not they can actually kill, let alone consume, their target. The only creatures occasionally safe from their attacks are other trolls whom slag trolls occasionally let pass by, except whelps, whom slag trolls view as tasty snacks.

Slag trolls use their vomit ability when sorely pressed or when their opponent seems particularly difficult to digest (such as a steamjack), preferring to start the digestive process early in these cases.

**Metallic Flesh (Ex):** Deposits of iron and other metals toughen the already regenerative flesh of a slag troll. Anything that affects creatures composed of iron effects a slag troll. Consider a slag troll's attacks as serricsteel for the purposes of penetrating damage resistance.

**Rage (Ex):** Because of the pain their diet causes, slag trolls constantly teeter on the brink of frightening rages. A slag troll can rage once per day as a 1st-level barbarian. A slag troll's rage lasts for 12 rounds. When raging, a slag troll has the following statistics: 181 hp; AC 23, touch 8, flat-footed 21; Atk 2 claws +19 melee (3d6+10) and bite +14 melee (3d6+5); or Huge greatclub +19/+14/+9 melee



*Slag Troll*

(3d8+15); or rock +11 ranged (2d8+10); Fort +15, Will +5; Str 31, Con 34.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Cold deals normal damage to a slag troll. If it loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 6d6 minutes. The slag troll can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump within 1 minute of loosing it. After this time the limb can no longer reattach and spawns a whelp.

**Rock Throwing (Ex):** The range increment for a slag troll's thrown rocks is 120 feet.

\***Skills:** Slag trolls have a +4 racial bonus on Intimidate checks. They use their Strength modifiers instead of their Charisma modifiers on Intimidate checks.

**Spawn Whelps (Ex):** Slag trolls produce only mature whelps, but they usually eat them (or eat the limbs that would spawn them) before they have a chance to do much of anything. Slag trolls are rarely (30% of the time) accompanied by 1d2 whelps. These grow in 2d6 days, live for 1d4 years, and typically have greater than usual hit dice.

**Vomit (Ex):** Once per day, a slag troll can vomit its powerful digestive acids on any creature within arms reach. Doing so is a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

The slag troll must make a melee touch attack to hit with this attack. The vomit deals 1d6 points of acid damage per hit die of the troll (11d6 in the case of the slag troll presented here). Unless the target succeeds on a Reflex save (DC 25) all its weapons, armor, and clothing immediately dissolve and become useless. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## Treasure

### Pyre Troll

Pyre trolls keep treasure just like other intelligent trolls. Alchemists and bone grinders value pyre troll spit glands as rare ingredients in formulae involving fire and will pay around 1600 gp. The glands can be used as the material necessary for creating potions or wondrous items involving fire (such as an Elixir of Fire Breath, for example).

### Slag Troll

Slag trolls rarely have treasure, because they usually eat anything they end up holding in their hands. Like most trolls their blood has value and sells for 50-100 gp an ounce. The stomach of a slag troll will fetch up to 3000 gp from the right bone grinder or alchemist. It can be used as the material necessary for creating magic items involving acid (such as potions of acid resistance).

## Legends and Lore, Pyre Troll

**Common:** Trolls are among Caen's most adaptable species, and there is an amazing variety of breeds and types. Several breeds of troll have adapted to hot environments, such as the pyre troll commonly found on the fringes of the Bloodstone Marches.

**Uncommon:** It is believed the pyre troll ingests some substance similar to the oil used to produce Menoth's Fury in the Protectorate, and the material is the source of their fiery expectation.

**Rare:** Pyre trolls are invulnerable to fire, and cold is the best weapon against them.

**Obscure:** Pyre trolls aggressively attack pitch trolls if they are found in the same territory. Unlike pitch trolls, pyre trolls are rarely encountered with many whelps.

## Legends and Lore, Slag Troll

**Common:** Slag trolls dwell in volcanic areas and are known for eating metal and having a dangerous temper.

**Uncommon:** The slag troll's main attack is a virulent vomit that dissolves even serricsteel.

**Rare:** Slag trolls are immune to damage by fire but are vulnerable to cold.

**Obscure:** The slag troll has digested enough metal to become vulnerable to magic that would normally only affect creatures made of iron or other metals, including spells like chill metal. Transmute metal to wood reduces the natural armor of a slag troll by 5 points. Rusting grasp instantaneously deals 3d6 points of damage +1 per caster level (maximum +15) per successful attack against a slag troll.

*Each species of troll seems perfectly suited to its environment, no matter how harsh. Still, I saw no sign of troll life east of the Abyss where life is the harshest.*

*VP*

# Twilight Sisters



<b>Always LN Medium Fey (Grymkin) CR 12</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	18d6+18 (81 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Damage reduction 15/magic, spell resistance 25
<b>Senses:</b>	Listen +25, Spot +25; low-light vision, see invisibility
<b>Initiative:</b>	+7
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	26, touch 21, flat-footed 23 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +8 deflection)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+9/+11
<b>Attack:</b>	+1 dagger +12 melee (1d4+3/19–20)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	+1 dagger +12/+7 melee (1d4+3/19–20)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Magic riposte, spell-like abilities
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.

<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Alternate form, life manipulation, life sense, necromantic impunity, unearthly grace
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +17, Ref +24, Will +25
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 26
<b>Skills:</b>	Concentration +22, Diplomacy +31, Heal +25, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Listen +25, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +25, Spot +25
<b>Feats:</b>	Quicken Spell-Like Ability (enervation), Quicken Spell-Like Ability (cause moderate wounds), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Negotiator
<b>Environment:</b>	Temperate forest and marsh
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, pair, coven (3), or circle (4)
<b>Advancement:</b>	19–34 HD (Medium)



I fear that sometimes the tales of my exploits put others in needless peril, such as when some of my eager but inexperienced students attempt to replicate my successes. Such was the case with Ardam Martinbridge, a bright student at Corvis University, who overheard Alten Ashley's tale of Tharn huntresses. Without seeking my advice, Ardam set forth to study them personally, hoping to write a paper on the topic. Apparently he soon got lost in the Glimmerwood as the sky's last tinge of blue faded completely black, and a few stars glittered through the branches.

Ardam bore an unfortunate parting gift from said huntresses in the form of a vicious Tharn javelin protruding from his side. He claims he staggered blindly in the dark, his body jarring with agony every time the weapon struck anything, for what seemed far too long. Finally, he stopped against a massive tree, a quiet place he thought where he might die, and breathed deep. Gritting his teeth, and showing a determination that warms my heart to this day, he gripped the wood and pulled. He ripped the javelin out with a massive effort and a cry. Blood flowed, and the world spun away.

He awoke some unknown time later. His side throbbed, and he felt numerous new wounds across his body. Two women in long plain spun dresses that enhanced their shapely forms stood above him. Hoods covered their heads and hid their faces in shadow.

I laughed when he told me he thought he might have died and awoken in Urcaen with buxom women waiting upon him.

As if that were a scholar's reward! His wounds still hurt and that sufficed to keep the keen minded boy's wits about him. He remembered what transpired next as dreamlike yet he recalled every word of it clearly to me.

"Ah, he is awake," said one, kneeling to his right. The darkness of her hood concealed her face.

"Yes, yes he is. Welcome back, little one," said the other, kneeling on his left.

Ardam licked the dried blood on his lips. "Are you Tharn?"

"Don't be silly." He could not tell which one spoke.

"We are the twilight sisters, little one."

Ardam scrutinized them. Their hands and bare feet held no sign of the supposed bestiality of the Tharn race. "I feel strange."

They laughed, a sound somewhere between a giggle and a cackle. "Ah," said one, "That is because you are dying."

Fear rose in him. He felt the ground wet beneath him, perhaps with his own blood. "Dying?"

"Yes." One sister leaned close to his face and pressed a hand against his chest. He felt her breath on his mouth, though shadows still hid everything but her dark lips. "This heart does not have many beats left." She cocked her head. "My sister and I returned you to wakefulness so we could talk."

"Bargain," corrected the other, as the one leaning over his body pulled back. "We can cure you of this wound." She brushed her hand across his side, and he stifled a cry. "You'll live a nice and healthy life."

Ardam swallowed. "What bargain?"

## Twilight Sisters

The second sister cocked her head. "What indeed? A nice strong man like you...? You can likely get along fine with just one hand, couldn't you?"

"What? My...my hand?"

"Don't look so scared, little one. We'll let you choose which one to keep."

Ardam gulped and felt faint again. "Can't you just...just heal me out of a sense of mercy and charity?"

They laughed. "What are those? No, of course not, little one," said the first sister.

"It must be a bargain. Always a bargain," said the other.

"But it's better than being dead, wouldn't you say?"

Ardam forced down his panic. He related to me how close he felt to death and how desperately he wished for life. "Okay, I accept,"—with which they closed in on him and he held up his hand—"if you also promise to guide me back to my master Professor Pendrake afterward."

The sisters sat back. "Hmm," said one.

And the other, "This Pendrake will be hard to find since he is in no danger."

"No *immediate* danger," amended the other. "Still, we should be able to find him."

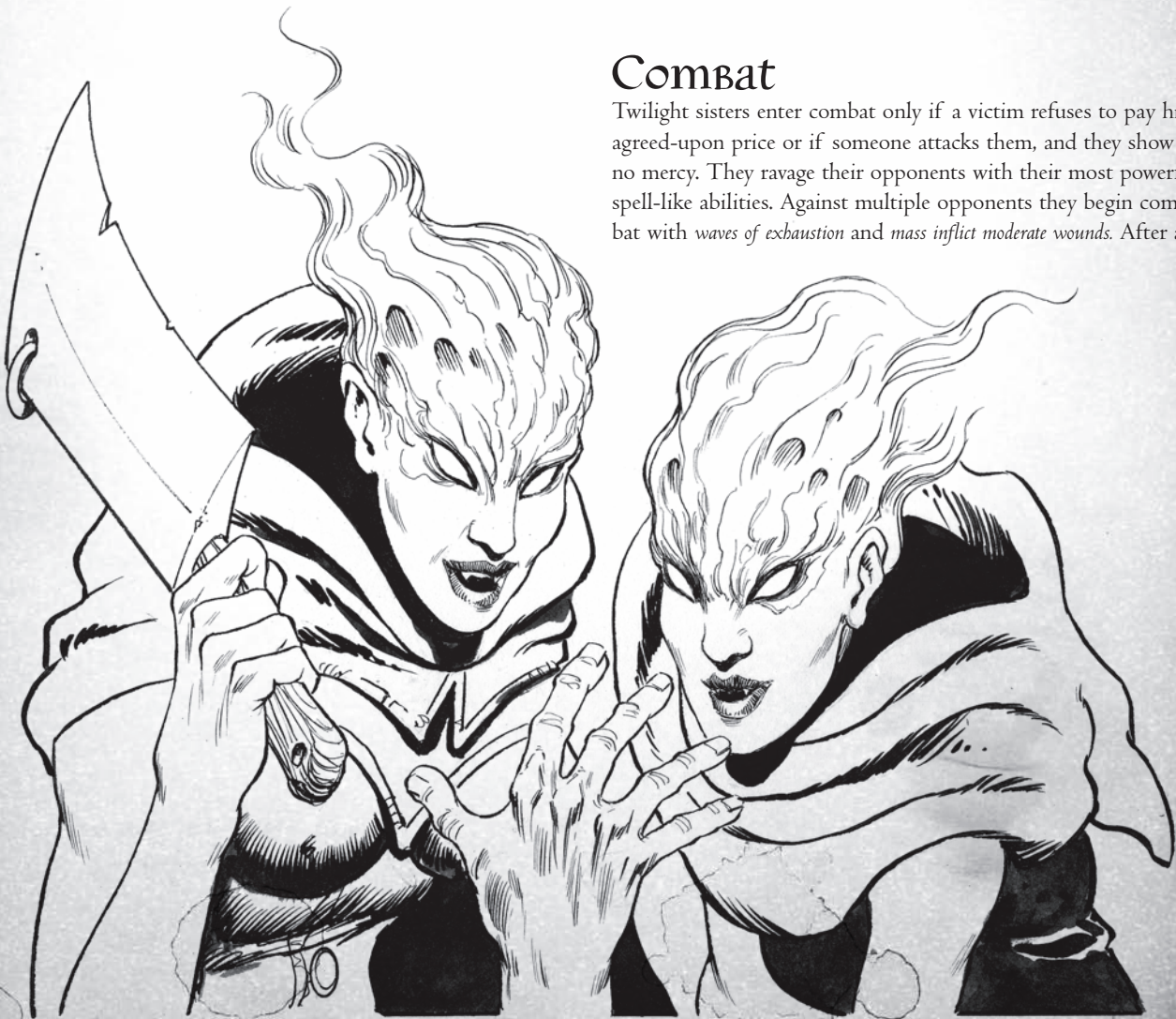
They shared a look and spoke as one. "We accept your terms, little one."

They closed on him again. As he saw the hungry pinpricks of light in their eyes, Ardam began to have second thoughts. One lifted a live, squirming rabbit. She snapped its neck with a swift jolt. Ardam's wound tingled. The other sister lifted a butcher's blade. Their hoods fell back, and Ardam screamed. He says he remembers no more.

Quimut and I found him lying near our camp the next morning sleeping fitfully and huddled around the bloody stump of his hand. Some days passed before he could tell us his tale.

## Combat

Twilight sisters enter combat only if a victim refuses to pay his agreed-upon price or if someone attacks them, and they show no mercy. They ravage their opponents with their most powerful spell-like abilities. Against multiple opponents they begin combat with *waves of exhaustion* and *mass inflict moderate wounds*. After a



Twilight Sisters



## Twilight Sisters

battle is over, they might offer their services to wounded survivors, though at a much higher price.

**Magic Riposte (Su):** If a spell fails to bypass a twilight sister's spell resistance, she may immediately use one of her spell-like abilities as a free action. This counts as a use of the spell-like ability for the purposes of the number of times per day she can use it. This also counts as a use of her Quicken Spell-like Ability feat.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*bestow curse* (DC 21), *cause moderate wounds*, *contagion* (DC 21), *fear* (DC 22); 3/day—*enervation* (DC 22), *waves of fatigue*; 1/day—*eyebite* (DC 24), *harm* (DC 24), *mass inflict moderate wounds* (DC 23), *mirage arcana* (DC 23), *waves of exhaustion*. Caster level 18th.

**Alternate Form (Su):** A twilight sister can assume the form of a locust swarm with a fly speed of 200 feet as a standard action.

**Life Manipulation (Su):** A twilight sister's signature power is her ability to manipulate life force. She can save a wounded character from death, but doing so always has a price.

A twilight sister can duplicate any spell of up to 6th level from the Conjunction (healing) subschool without any risk of Pain of Healing, but with certain stipulations. First, she must sacrifice (or have sacrificed in the past) something approximately equivalent. The exact specifics are up to the GM: to save a character from a life-threatening wound, a twilight sister might strangle a rabbit. If a character needs a new hand, the sister might replace it with a hand she once took from another character.

Secondly, the twilight sister always demands payment from the character she helps. This payment is usually painful and permanent, though if the character is a skillful negotiator, the twilight sister might not collect right away. Twilight sisters often demand flesh from the victim, such as a hand, a foot, an ear, or an eye (with repercussions for the GM to determine, such as deafness, blindness, loss of Dexterity, movement penalties, etc.). The twilight sister might also ask for something that causes permanent ability score loss. For example, she might accept payment in "youthful brawn" (Strength), "grace" (Dexterity), "breath" (Constitution), "wits" (Intelligence), or "beauty" (Charisma). They ask this more often in cases when the creature has regenerative powers such as trollkin, though not always. Characters who benefit from a twilight sister's ministrations always come away a little worse off than before, though many still view this as preferable to death.

Twilight sisters *always* bargain, temporarily performing whatever they must to undertake the discussion. They will return a victim to consciousness, for example. If the parties do not come to an agreement, the sister will return him to unconsciousness (perhaps forcefully).

Two sisters working in concert can duplicate any Conjunction (healing) spell of up to 7th level. Three or more

sisters can duplicate Conjunction (healing) spells of up to 8th level. Four sisters can duplicate Conjunction (healing) spells of 9th level but cannot cast any spell that brings the dead to life (such as *raise dead*, *resurrection*, or *true resurrection*).

**Life Sense (Su):** A twilight sister has knowledge of all living, intelligent creatures within 5 miles, as with the spell *status*. She knows the direction and distance to the creatures and any conditions affecting them: unharmed, wounded, staggered, unconscious, dying, diseased, or the like.

**Necromantic Impunity (Ex):** A twilight sister does not suffer the usual drawbacks for using necromancy spell-like abilities in the Iron Kingdoms.

**See Invisibility (Su):** A twilight sister can *see invisibility*, as the spell. This ability is always active.

**Unearthly Grace (Su):** A twilight sister adds her Charisma modifier on all her saving throws and as a deflection bonus to her armor class.

## Treasure

Twilight sisters make no great effort to collect treasure. However, when creatures refuse their aid, they often follow to observe the individual's fate and, should they expire, harvest whatever body parts and organs interest them. The sisters collect such a creature's valuables and store them in their lair. They might also bargain for such items in addition to the life force on which they feed. The sisters have little use for the treasure they collect, but it occasionally proves valuable in their negotiations.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

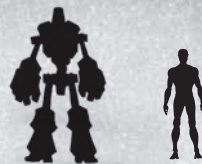
**Uncommon:** The twilight sisters find injured or dying travelers and occasionally return them to health.

**Rare:** The twilight sisters use powerful magic to restore their patients, but they may demand a literal pound of flesh in return.

**Obscure:** Twilight sisters are capable of truly great acts of healing magic. The greater the healing, though, the steeper the price.



# Woldwatcher



<b>Always N Large Construct (Elemental Construct) CR 9</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	8d10+30 (70 bp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Construct traits, damage reduction 10/magic, elemental construct traits
<b>Initiative:</b>	+0
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60', Listen +6, Spot +6, low-light vision, tremorsense (120')
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	24, touch 8, flat-footed 24 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +12 natural, +4 shield)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+6/+16
<b>Attack:</b>	Slam +11 melee (1d6+6)

<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 slams +11 melee (1d6+6)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Elemental strike
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	10 ft./10 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Call wardens, plant growth, fertilize, stone armor, stone form
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +2, Reflex +1, Will +4
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 22, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 15, Cha 1
<b>Skills:</b>	Hide +11, Listen +6, Spot +6
<b>Environment:</b>	Any land
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Advancement:</b>	9-12 (Large), 13-20 (Huge)



For years I mistakenly thought the woldwarden, a tremendously powerful construct of stone and wood which blackclads use to guard their territories, the only example of its type. In recent months I have found my preconceptions woefully misguided. The druids make use of a rather frightening assortment of these beings, some requiring far less time and mystical energy to craft and animate. The druids call one of these “lesser” constructs the woldwatcher, although from the story related to me by my Iosan associate Edrea, “lesser” remains a relative term.

Edrea had the misfortune to run afoul of the woldwatcher while out in the wilds on an ill advised “student expedition” to the Glimmerwood. I hold myself responsible as this occurred not long after my capture by the skorne. I would have warned her well away from that region, as recently it has become far more dangerous. I understand that violence between the wilderness trollkin and the blackclads reached its highest level to that point, with combat erupting at the slightest provocation, just as this group of ill-prepared students tragically blundered into a sacred grove of the druids.

These foolish students had no idea what awaited them as they disturbed the moss-covered obelisks they discovered deep in the Glimmerwood. Edrea described their shock as one of these stone columns unfolded under her hand and stood erect to reveal a woldwatcher. While considerably shorter and less massive than the woldwardens they strongly resemble, the woldwatcher demonstrated its own formidable powers. With no more evident emotion or malice than a steamjack displays, this stone and wood fabrication pointed at a student and the runes upon its granite surfaces glowed green. Without warning, lightning erupted

from beneath the lad’s feet, boiling him like a fish in oil as the power arced into the sky. His body ripped apart and, where his blood soaked the ground, flesh-hungry trees surged upward in an instant to replace a young man full of hope and ambition.

The horrors did not end there. Another stone column unfolded into a woldwatcher and the two of them quickly absconded into the trees with several living students. Fearing for her life and yet unwilling to abandon her wards, Edrea followed them and nearly witnessed a barbaric bloodletting ritual far too like the ancient rites of the Molgur. A blackclad druid—whom I had not known practiced ritual sacrifice—stood with a knife poised to spill one of the student’s blood upon knotted ropes lying near chiseled stone. They clearly intended to bring a new woldwatcher to life by spilling the life essence of an innocent student onto the construct’s raw materials. Hearing of this incident has caused me hold the druids in a new and unpleasant regard.

Before Edrea could use her own magic to attempt to save her student, fortune intervened. Enraged trollkin warriors beset the druids, allowing Edrea to rescue her wards and make good their escape. I have not yet interviewed Edrea personally regarding this encounter as she has left for some months on some task to her kinsfolk in Ios. I have only her detailed account and meticulous sketches, which I have copied and included here. In the pages that follow I will describe other similarly fascinating and even more wondrous fabrications apparently in use among the druids. I have reevaluated my opinion of this forest “cult” in light of this new information and now find it difficult to travel the woods without some apprehension that any nearby boulder might suddenly stand and try to end my life.

## Elemental Construct Traits

An elemental construct is an artificially constructed creature made of natural materials such as wood and stone, and relies on mystical powers imbued into its materials for its animation. Elemental constructs are a subtype of Construct and have the following traits in addition to Construct traits:

- No Intelligence score.
- Elemental constructs are always mindless and never gain skill points or feats.
- Cannot heal damage on its own, and can only be repaired by a class special ability or through the use of the Craft Elemental Construct feat.
- Cannot run or swim.
- Elemental constructs have a vulnerability to fire, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed or if the save is a success or failure.
- Elemental constructs are immune to all spells of the Animal and Plant domains. They are also immune to all spells that directly affect plants, trees, or wood, as well as all shapechanging spells. Some Elemental constructs gain other spell immunities.
- Elemental constructs can pass through non-enchanted vegetation completely unhindered and unharmed. They also leave no trail in such an environment and cannot be tracked by normal means.

## Combat

Woldwatchers defend sacred groves and entry points into Circle territories. Their natural construction and command of plants allows them to hide in the wilderness disguised as vine-entangled piles of stones. Some woldwatchers attack any who trespass while others simply watch intruders and call for the more powerful woldwardens to intercept. Woldwatchers usually appear in Stone Form and hiding before combat, giving them the element of surprise. They use the surprise round to call wardens, use *plant growth* to hinder opponents, and use elemental strikes from a safe distance.



## Woldwatcher

**Call Wardens (Su):** As a free action, a woldwatcher may send a telepathic message to all nearby woldwardens or to its creator. This message travels instantaneously up to 10 miles from the woldwatcher. The woldwatcher's creator establishes the content of the message and the conditions which trigger it. For example, the creator may instruct it to call nearby woldwardens its location if attacked. A woldwatcher may have one conditional call per hit die.

**Elemental Strike (Sp):** The woldwatcher may call a bolt of green lightning-like magical force that surges up from the ground and targets a single square up to 80 feet from the woldwatcher, and extends in a 40-foot vertical line of effect. Anyone in the square or in the 40-foot line suffers 8d6 points of force damage, Reflex save (DC 13) for half damage.

**Fertilize (Su):** The germinative power of the woldwatcher prompts plants to spring forth from the flesh of those it kills, utilizing their blood and tissues as fertilizer. When a woldwatcher kills a living corporeal creature with a slam attack or

an elemental strike, it may use its *plant growth* ability as a free action in the area where the creature died.

**Plant Growth (Sp):** A woldwatcher may create overgrowth effect of the *plant growth* spell as an 8th-level caster.

**Skills:** Woldwatchers have a Hide skill of +11 and a +4 competency bonus to Spot and Listen checks.

**Stone Armor (Ex):** Woldwatcher forearms carry large pieces of stone that provide additional protection like shields (hardness 8, hit points 90; each shield grants +2 AC shield bonus). These enchantments grant a +15 competence bonus to the woldwatcher's Hide checks (greater shadow ability). Creators of woldwatchers may imbue additional magical effects to a woldwatcher's arms during creation using the rules for magical shields.

**Stone Form (Ex):** By giving up all attacks and not moving, the woldwatcher may combine his stone shields to gain total cover. This does not provide cover against targeted spells; a spell caster can cast a spell by targeting the stone shields.



## Treasure

Should they survive combat intact and still enchanted (15% chance for one, 5% for both), the largest stone armor pieces utilized as woldwatcher forearms can be crafted into a shield. Unfortunately such items are extremely heavy and unwieldy, making for dubious equipment even for an ogrun. If crafted to remove extraneous stone and set with straps treat as +2 tower shields with a market value of 5,000 gp. There is no demand for these items as each stone shield weighs in excess of 100 lbs and impose a -12 armor check penalty.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** Woldwatchers are smaller versions of the druidic woldwarden construct. They are often set to guard sites sacred to the blackclads.

**Rare:** Druids create woldwatchers using a ritual that requires fresh blood from a sacrificed victim to animate them.

**Obscure:** Woldwatcher can become as firm and immovable as the earth. Moreover those slain at its hands feed the earth with their blood and create wildly growing vegetation where they fall.

## Hooks

An overly inquisitive naturalist seeks to investigate a unique formation of low standing stones inside a druidic circle he recently uncovered east of Merywyn. No fool, the naturalist desires a group of able-bodied adventurers to act as bodyguards while he researches the elaborate carvings. The stones are, of course, inactive woldwatchers guarding the circle from interlopers.

An Illuminated agent traveling far from the order's headquarters in Caspia requires a party of wilderness trackers and witch hunters to help him discover the dark secrets behind the druids' construction of woldwatchers and woldwardens.

*I have warned others in my prior writings not to tangle with the druids and to stay far from their territories marked with their distinctive stone markers. Now it is clear to me that confrontations between the druids and civilization are as inevitable as they are now common. Not only are our armies on the march in the wilds, but the glowing-rune standing stones of the druids seem to have multiplied and spread far and wide. No longer just guardians, these creations appear to be weapons of war, and rumor of new and powerful types of these constructs reach my ears all too often.*

*-V.P.*

# WOLDWRATH



<b>Always N Huge Construct (Elemental Construct) CR 16</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	24d10+40 (172 bp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Construct traits, damage reduction 10/—, magic, damage reduction 15/— vs. ranged weapons
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +4, Spot +4, low-light vision
<b>Initiative:</b>	–2
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	41, touch 6, flat-footed 41 (–2 size, –2 Dex, +35 natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+18/+39
<b>Attack:</b>	Slam +29 melee (4d8+13 plus knock back and knock prone)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 slams +29 melee (4d8+13 plus knock back and knock prone)

<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Druid's retribution, lightning strike, rock throwing, trample (4d8+19)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	15 ft./15 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Exceptional stability, fast healing 10
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +16
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 37, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis 18, Cha 1
<b>Skills:</b>	Listen +4, Spot +4,
<b>Environment:</b>	Any land
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary or guardianship (1 woldwrath plus 0–2 woldwardens, 1–4 woldwatchers and 1–6 woldwyrds)
<b>Advancement:</b>	25–28 HD (Huge)



Perhaps it is my competitive streak, but after reading Edrea's report on the woldwatcher and hearing Alten's description of the woldwyrd I felt compelled to discover evidence of these things myself. I had my opportunity as I accompanied several Fort Falk officers, at the request of the Scout General, on an expedition along Cygnar's eastern border. I was apprising them of skorne tactics and relating intelligence I had gathered about this enemy during my captivity. I had an ulterior motive for the site I selected to scout: Alten Ashley had sent a tip regarding a massive black-clad attack planned against the skorne.

The Cygnaran officers and I watched through spyglasses from a covered position, noting the skorne entrenched in a nearby ruin whose walls they had reinforced. They hid behind several feet of thick stone and moved about atop their battlements. We could observe them taking measures against a foe approaching from the other direction by readying a cannon-bearing titan. Knowing what I do of the skorne military, I wondered how the druids could hope to assault such a position.



We all became aware of the ground trembling with steadily increasing power at about the same time. It started subtly, but grew increasingly obvious—BOOM, BOOM, BOOM.

An enormous wold construct composed of whole tree trunks and tremendous slabs of stone emerged from a distant copse. It conveyed a sense of size and weight that boggled my scientific mind. A dozen steamship engines could not move such a mass, yet it advanced inexorably in defiance of all logic and sense.

Nothing could stand against it. It battered away the skorne screening forces. Then with a sound like massive trees splitting, the roots on the trunks in its legs extended into the soil, holding it firmly in place. The air darkened and I heard a static crackling. Flickering light played along the stone surfaces. Lightning struck down unerringly from the sky and smote the skorne battlements with explosive bursts. The largest blast baked the titan readying its cannon. With a rumble and spray of dust and debris the wall collapsed in several places and the skorne troops dissolved into chaos. In short order, the druids had won

## Woldwrath



the day, and this great creature disappeared back from whence it had come. I could see the Cygnaran officers were as awed and shaken as I. Afterwards, I stood in one of the woldwrath's footprints and simply marveled.

### Combat

A woldwrath is implacable and unstoppable, but its slow movement and bulk makes it an easy target. A woldwrath roots into the earth to call forth the powers of Orboros and to fuel its lightning attacks.

**Druid's Retribution (Su):** As a standard action, a woldwrath's runes glow bright green as it generates a powerful magical shield around itself. The woldwrath gains a +10 deflection bonus to AC. If a creature hits the woldwrath with a melee attack, druid's retribution blasts forth with a thunderous crack dealing 4d10+10 points of force damage to the attacking creature. This causes the woldwrath to lose its deflection bonus. It can recreate the effect in 1d4 rounds.

**Lightning Strike (Su):** The woldwrath can take a full round action to root itself into the ground and call forth tremendous lightning strikes. While rooted no known force can

move the woldwrath, and it can summon 2d4 strokes of lightning from the sky. It must be outside to use this ability, and it can direct the strikes as it likes within a 120-foot radius. Each bolt strikes a 5-foot square. Each lightning strike deals 12d6 points of electricity damage, Reflex save (DC 26) for half. The save DC is Wisdom-based. After using this power the woldwrath cannot use it again for 1d4+2 rounds.

**Exceptional Stability (Ex):** Even when not rooted a woldwrath gains a +8 racial bonus on checks to resist being moved (by a bull rush, for example).

**Fast Healing (Su):** A woldwrath regains 10 hit points per round.

**Greater Protection from Ranged Weapons (Ex):** The woldwrath has damage resistance 15/- against all ranged weapons.

**Magic Immunity (Ex):** A woldwrath is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, the following spells function differently against the creature:

*Transmute rock to mud* slows a woldwrath (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, though the woldwrath can make a Will save to resist this effect. *Transmute mud to rock* affects the woldwrath as a *cure critical wounds* spell.

*Stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the woldwrath's structure but reduces its damage reduction to 5/-. The spell also negates its magic immunity, though the woldwrath gains spell resistance 27 in its place. These effects last for 1 full round.

**Rock Throwing (Ex):** A woldwrath can hurl up to Medium size rocks with a 140 foot range increment.

### Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** None.

**Rare:** The enormous woldwrath is the largest and most powerful of all known druidic constructs. It is extremely resistant to magic and can call down tremendous bursts of lightning.

**Obscure:** Woldwraths may be slowed or weakened by certain earth-affecting spells, softening them up for combat.

# WOLDWYRD



<b>Always N Medium Construct (Elemental Construct) CR 7</b>	
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	10d10+20 (75 hp)
<b>Immunities/Resist:</b>	Construct traits, damage reduction 5/magic, elemental construct traits, spell resistance 12
<b>Senses:</b>	Darkvision, 60 ft., Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision
<b>Initiative:</b>	+4
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft. (8 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	20, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +4 deflection)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b>	+7/+4
<b>Attack:</b>	Energy strike +11 ranged touch (2d6 or 3d6*)

<b>Full Attack:</b>	3 energy strikes +11 ranged touch (2d6 or 3d6*)
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Caster blast, energy strike, spell suppression
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Hover, sense magic
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +8
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 5, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 16, Cha 1
<b>Skills:</b>	Listen +3, Spot +3
<b>Feats:</b>	Combat Reflexes <sup>B</sup>
<b>Environment:</b>	Any land
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, pair, or watch (3–6)
<b>Advancement:</b>	11–18 HD (Medium)



As Alten Ashley enjoys his tales, I listen to his boasts with a skeptical ear. Despite this he has convinced me that he has a mutually beneficial arrangement with the enigmatic blackclads. Though I have never seen the formidable weapon known as the woldwyrd myself, I trust Alten's professional eye and the description he gave me.

Alten first encountered these peculiar constructs while hired to accompany a blackclad named Stiana. The druids anticipated some necromantic unpleasantness in the northern Thornwood and brought Alten for added support. When they broke from trackless woods atop a rise, Alten saw a trio of floating wood and stone creatures with what looked like a single enormous green glowing eye awaiting them. He instinctively raised his rifle, but Stiana forestalled him and beckoned the creatures closer. Alten observed that, to him, their peculiar configuration would never have suggested a connection with the man-shaped woldwardens. They shared only faintly glowing runes along the stone in common.

Alten's neck hairs prickled as these things trailed silently and eerily behind with their orbs dimmed to no brighter than a glow-worm. They eventually arrived at their destination: a tableau of carnage in a clearing with the ground thickly

covered in a layer of rotting corpses. Hooded forms moved among the bodies and sawed off limbs. Alten readied his gun, but the three woldwyrd drifting ahead into the clearing distracted him. One of the huddled creatures spun and began chanting in a guttural tongue, moving his hands in mystical configurations. Before he could complete his spell the woldwyrd spun to face him. Beams of pure green light pierced the gloom to slice clean through the necromancer's torso with a sizzling sound. Undaunted by the death of one of their masters, a number of animated corpses shambled to the attack yet proved too slow for the nimble woldwyrd, Alten, and Stiana.



A quick but decisive battle ensued, after which Alten had occasion to question Stiana about the floating sentinels. She reluctantly explained them as weapons developed long ago to battle workers of magic. The druids have kept them far in the wilds because of their sensitivity to mystical energies. The prevalence of mechanika in settled regions can confuse them and may

prompt attacks which draw unwanted attention. My expanded knowledge of these druidic weapons, together with the others illustrated in this volume, has made me apprehensive. I wonder to what ends the blackclads arm themselves so thoroughly.

## Combat

Woldwyrds are swift hunter-killers especially deadly against spellcasters.

**Caster Blast (Su):** A woldwyrd contains imprinted orders to fire upon hostile spellcasters. If any creature begins to cast a non-druid spell or uses a non-druid spell-like ability within 100 feet of the woldwyrd, it may make an energy strike attack as an immediate action against the caster. This attack has a chance of disrupting spellcasting, as normal, and does not affect the woldwyrd's normal attacks.

**Energy Strike (Su):** A woldwyrd fires rays of elemental energy from its crystal orb. This ranged touch attack has a maximum range of 100 feet and no range increment. The energy strike deals 1d6 force and 1d6 fire damage (total 2d6). The woldwyrd can use energy strikes to make attacks of opportunity into the area it threatens, and can use them even in a grapple. A woldwyrd's energy strike does not provoke attacks of opportunity. An energy strike attack that hits a target currently under the effects of magic (such as a spell, spell-like effect, or potion) deals +1d6 force damage (total 3d6).

**Spell Suppression (Su):** When a creature within 30 feet of a woldwyrd casts a non-druid spell or uses a non-druid spell-like or supernatural ability, the creature must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + half HD + Wisdom bonus) or the spell or ability has no effect. Spells cancelled by spell suppression are lost.

**Hover (Su):** Woldwyrds hover between one and seven feet above the ground. They ignore difficult terrain and movement penalties caused by it. They can float over relatively calm liquid surfaces such as a stream. They do not actually fly, however, and still fall down pits and the like.

**Sense Magic (Su):** A woldwyrd can identify creatures in its sight capable of spellcasting or using spell-like abilities, and the relative power of each. They also gain the benefits of *detect magic* in a 60 foot cone emanating from their crystal orb.

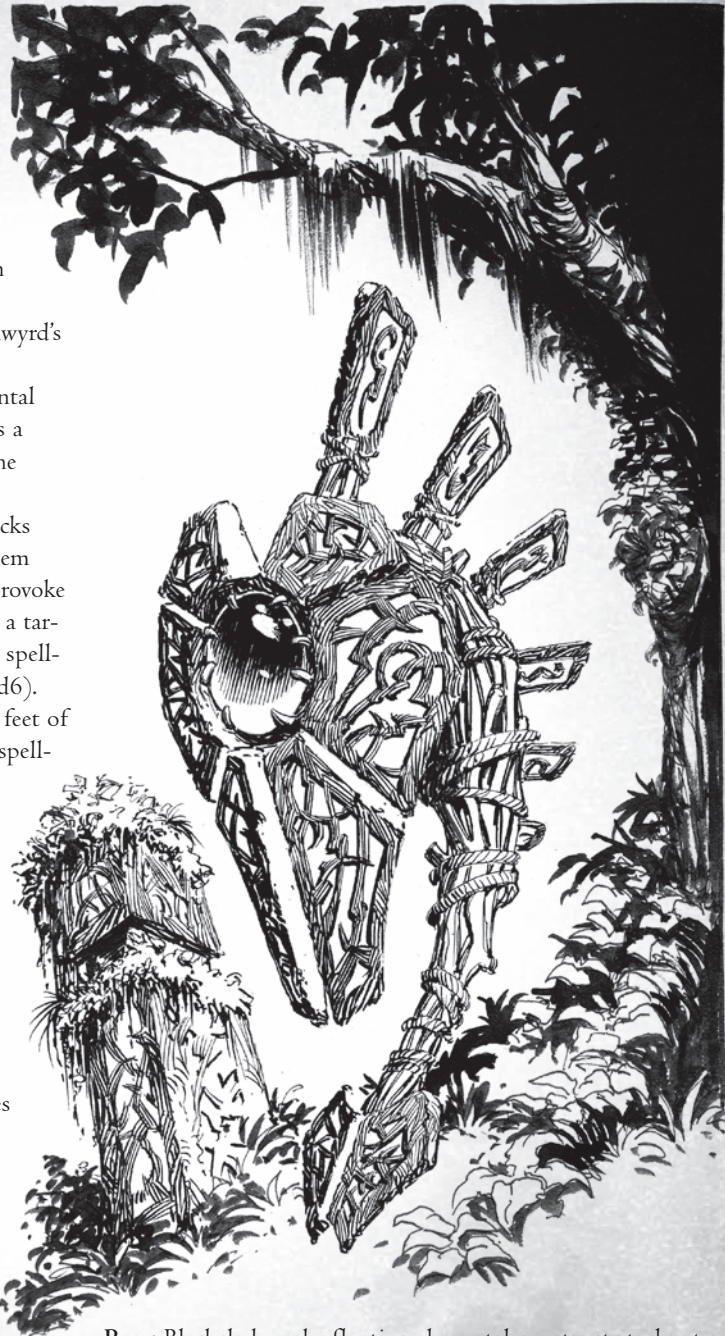
## Treasure

While it rarely survives intact, an undamaged crystal orb from a woldwyrd is a large sphere of pure beryl and has a market value of 2,000 gp or more. Such items may be useful in the enchantment of certain types of items, particularly those involving the focusing of light or energy.

## Legends & Lore

**Common:** None.

**Uncommon:** None.



**Rare:** Blackclads make floating elemental constructs to hunt spellcasters that penetrate protected areas. These constructs have never appeared near a large settled community. Casting a spell near these constructs invites attack.

**Obscure:** Called woldwyrds, these constructs can suppress magic around themselves and always target spell casters with preternatural accuracy. Any strong magical source, including magic items or large mechanical items, may distract a woldwyrd or divert it from its prey.



# Introduction to Eastern Immoren



*Greater distance than I had imagined separates east from west. I have stepped into another world, with the lands of man perhaps lost to me. My memories of Corvis are replaced by strange and savage sights from the streets of Halaak.*

*—Professor Viktor Pendrake, from his journals of the east*

**M**uch controversy has arisen over my disappearance into the east. I do not write this in response to such criticism, but to reveal to my colleagues and others the great vastness of our continent. It is remarkable how little we know of the bulk of the land we call home.

More than geographical distance separates east and west. The center of Immoren has clearly suffered from tremendous forces and supernatural disaster. We have always avoided the east and know it only a vast and perilous wasteland. This is true. Yet our continent does not end here. Past this terrible land of blasted ruin lies what might seem another world and lands beyond all imagining. Even I who have seen so much know now I know too little. As far as I have gone, many places remain that I barely touched and only heard rumor of. Though I am no youth, I feel the compulsion to explore renewed in me. This thirst has grown, not slackened, as I have left footsteps where no human has trod.

First, let us speak of the wasteland that is our barrier. The shifting red sands of the Bloodstone Marches mark just the western edge of a vast desert filling nearly a third of the continental land mass. Through hundreds of miles of trackless sand, beaten by a merciless sun and swept by biting winds, rests the great chasm of the Abyss which divides the continent and plunges into uncertain depths. This tremendous rift is like a wound upon the world where forces beyond mortal reckoning shattered Caen. By my colleague Edrea I have learned that only the elves of Ios, once inhabitants of the east, have lived on both sides of this rift. Then they were an empire called "Lyoss". They represented the peak of civilization and culture in a time when we humans had yet to learn to write and lived more savage lives.

The elves have been tight-lipped regarding what drove them into the west, and it is possible I will draw some ire from that quarter even by publishing what little I know. Yet it seems clear from what I have learned that, whether by accident or design, they called down some staggering catastrophe. Rhulic records confirm a great explosion in the east in those ancient times and a shockwave of destruction that shattered the continent. The elven empire died, consumed by fire, flood, tornado, and earthquake, and the survivors fled into the west. Some say that

their gods fled with them and sheltered the refugees. This may be a myth, I know not.

Hints of their legacy rest in the east for others to discover. I have seen the ruins of cities unmistakably elven in their architecture but had no time to explore them. What forces could be so vast as to change the shape of the world is beyond me, but I believe the Abyss and the Stormlands a lingering legacy of those unimaginable powers. So too this region has given rise to peculiar creatures, perhaps adapting to survive in conditions that never before existed. Incessant lightning storms which turn the sand to glass range through the Stormlands surrounding the chasm, yet life finds ways to thrive even here and in the dark and endless chasm of the Abyss.

To the north and south of the chasm the oceans seem to empty themselves into the rift as tremendous waterfalls pour into oblivion. This endless torrent of water continually rises again in a cycle of steam and spray around the Stormlands, creating clouds pregnant with water, rent by violent air currents, and projecting streaking lightning that blasts the sands below. Storm winds howl to the southwest. Angry clouds sweep across the air above the Accursed Sea. Hurricane winds and tremendous tidal currents churn through these waters and make a crossing by ship nearly impossible, particularly for those attempting to go from west to east. I made this crossing into the west and found it as harrowing a boat ride as ever I have heard of. We were pushed relentlessly by the hand of nature, and I am convinced no return by that route could easily be made. Yet perhaps our steamships could ignore the wind and fight against the currents. I reckon the cost in fuel would beggar most investors, and if not well planned, any such venture would leave the mariners stranded or swept back to the west.

Eastern Immoren encompasses far more than the Skorne Empire. There lie vast unexplored regions that could require many lifetimes to investigate. I want it well understood I do not claim to have seen or explored each of the regions I mention in the pages to come. In some cases I operate by the legacy of hint and rumor of other explorers. Any of this should be viewed with skepticism until other expeditions can return and chart maps.

## THE ABYSS

The Skorne Empire has claimed the Abyss, but no race has tamed this chasm which divides the continent of Immoren in half. The depth of this rift varies considerably, but in some areas it seems bottomless to normal investigation. This is a convincing illusion; dropping a stone into the deeper Abyss, one never hears the sound of its landing.

## Eastern Immoren

I arrived at the Abyss chained and seriously injured, and I recall little. After my recuperation I crossed the great bridge spanning this chasm into the east and I endeavored to pay close attention to everything I could in that time. While the Abyss and the surrounding Stormlands are wild, violent, and offer little sustenance, a struggling ecology seems to have arisen. Kaleda, my skorne handler, informed me later that peculiar creatures have carved out homes among numerous caves scattered along the descending walls. Nourishing fungus and mosses serve as the lowest end of a food chain that terminates in fearsome predatory creatures like deep drakes. More unusual creatures like storm gluttons and ethons have adapted to thrive on lightning itself.

The central Abyss is particularly wide; even if not for the constant storms it would be impossible to see to the opposite side of the chasm in this area. Kaleda showed me a map of its length and attempted to explain some of its features. I had only an imperfect understanding of the skorne language at that time, so I adopted more descriptive names based on the skorne titles for the three large plateaus which rise up from the depths. From north to south they are the **Plateau of Storm**, the **Defiant Plateau**, and the **Cursed Plateau**. The latter is the smallest of the three, so-named because it is rumored that several powerful *kovaas* spirits haunt its summit and tear apart anything that intrudes.

### Mapping the East

In my efforts to apply names and labels to many large geographical features in the east, I have sometimes chosen to translate descriptive skorne terms into their Cygnaran equivalent. In other cases I have preserved the actual skorne names for certain geographical features, particularly when I could find no easy or readily applicable translation. I will make available to other scholars some of the actual skorne terms I have unearthed in my voyage as a rudimentary glossary, as well as a detailed examination of their language, but that will have to wait for another scholarly project apart from this one.

After my return I checked with Edrea and she indicated that Iosan scholars believe a large river once ran through here, tracing the center of the current Abyss. The capital of Lyoss—which took the brunt of the devastation—stood near the northern end of the widest section of chasm on the shore of the massive river which fed an expanse of fertile farmland now arid desert. Evidence of elven ruins appear across the region including along the upper lip of the Abyss. This may take the form of a single shattered column of masonry or an entire series of crumbled and ruined buildings. Perched atop

the Plateau of Storm are the remains of **Gerlyoss**, once a great elven city nearly as vast as the capital itself, one of the most extensive unexplored ruins. Abominations called chimera spawn prowl these ruins and spill out into the desert to harass skorne supply lines to the south.

Waterfalls descend into the Abyss at the northern and southern ends. Sadly I have not seen these myself, but I have heard of them from several skorne. Those who have witnessed the thundering falls marvel that the chasm has not swallowed the oceans of Caen entirely. While the Abyss seems infinite, it must have a bottom. Perhaps it descends deep enough to reveal rivers of molten lava. I believe that rivers flow through the Abyss into underground channels and carve chasm networks before bubbling up below the surface as oasis in the nearby deserts. I am convinced that the underground rivers that feed the hot springs below the Bitter Sea hundreds of miles to the west originate here. Water pouring onto bubbling lava evaporates into steam and rises from the Abyss like an exhalation from the depths. This cycle adds to the unnatural and intense persistent weather of the Stormlands. Surrounding the majority of the Abyss for dozens of miles in both directions, a seething mass of storm clouds and churning air pregnant with lightning shrouds the Stormlands. Electrical strikes erupt randomly across the area, together with downpours of flooding rain interrupted by howling winds.

Vinter Raelthorne IV first made the impossible crossing of this region, not I. Since that time, thousands of slaves under the direction of his subordinates have constructed a tremendous bridge network upon the Defiant Plateau, the largest single land mass at the center of the Abyss. To the east is the **Conqueror's Bridge**. At the western end looking toward the Iron Kingdoms squats the **Abyssal Fortress**, the most recent home of Supreme Archdominar Vinter Raelthorne, as he has titled himself among his new vassals. A continual stream of skorne make their way to this fortress for training and equipping before marching west. Seeing the strength of them makes me fear for my beloved Cygnar, although I am positive many vanish into the wasteland they must cross.

### Alchiere Subcontinent

Two significant unexplored areas lie west of the Abyss and distinct from the Bloodstone Marches. Just southeast of the Protectorate waits a lush and tropical region clearly thriving in complete isolation from the rest of the continent which I have named Alchiere. The **Lion's Teeth Mountains** and the barren lands south of Ancient Ichthier separate this region from western Immoren. We discovered this land on my return voyage, and its scope and size surprised me.

I should note that adventurous sailors from Caspia have attempted to voyage east into this region before and have

## Eastern Immoren

at least seen some of this coastline. These uniformly rocky and unapproachable shores include long sections of wall-like cliffs which present few beaches for safe landing. Past the southern point extreme currents and winds make sailing east difficult. Larger steamships could overcome this obstacle today, but that would require a wealthy patron willing to fund such an expedition.

We landed on Alchiere after a harrowing storm and in need of resupply. We found the region perfect for that purpose, rich with fruits and good wood. We also found the letheans (see p. 104), a species of primitive but tool-using creatures I have never seen before. The entire region requires further exploration and will unquestionably reveal both wonders of extraordinary zoology and an opportunity for adventurous cartographers. Cut-off from the rest of the continent by impressive mountains to the southeast and the Bloodstone Marches to the north, Alchiere has developed its own unique assortment of plants and creatures, and is as dangerous as it is sumptuous and lush.

This hot region receives ample rainfall from the peculiar weather patterns emerging over the Abyss to sweep southwest,

which gives rise to a rich tropical environment including fertile rivers and lakes. I witnessed overgrown swamps as well as canopied forests with knotted trees and toughened roots. Too many unusual species of insects, predatory birds, and reptiles dwell in this area for me to have cataloged in my brief stay.

## The Blasted Desert

Past the Abyss one finds yet more arid sands: the Blasted Desert. This eastern counterpart to the Bloodstone Desert is a smaller expanse stretching from the Suneater Mountains south to the Shroudwall, and bordered on the west by the Abyss. Outlying skorne are well accustomed to this barren land, which they considered the limit of their empire until Vinter Raelthorne led them west. It remains a formidable barrier against northern skorne expansion; its frequent unpredictable dust storms can swallow entire cohorts and leave no trace of their passage.

The most notable feature of this desert is a series of tar-plains and natural oil spouts that occasionally spray thick oil up into the air before it collects into viscous pools. This region lies only a few miles east of the Stormlands, and occasionally



*Efaarit cross the Blasted Desert*

the vagaries of wind and storm will cause an overlap. Lightning strikes set vast tar fields ablaze, and burning oil sprays up into the air. Combined with monstrous creatures prowling the few oasis of this desert, the skorne have no motivation to push into this area. Some few skorne chymists have apparently collected and experimented with the oils and tars of this region, but have yet to collect it in quantity or refine it into anything similar to the Protectorate's *Menoth's Fury*. Morrow preserve us should they ever make this technological leap!

Chilon (p. 82) had interesting anecdotes about this region, claiming that in ancient times it formed the fertile heart of Lyossan farmlands. Now only occasional ruins, some entirely swallowed and buried by the sands, give any hint of that time. Chilon put names to some of these ruins that sounded convincing to my inexpert ear—places like **Mylvassin**, **Nyrlarys**, **Scyfylar**, and **Lacyrmyra**. Here also lies the path to **Kortonoth**, once among the greatest cities of the giants. Chilon explained that inhabitants of Kortonoth had an ancient accord with Lyoss and loaned their strength to help build a number of significant projects.

### The Bloodstone Desert

The Bloodstone Marches mark just the western fringe of the expansive Bloodstone Desert, named "Golbesh" among the skorne. The reddish sands which are its namesake appear most intense in the west, but are observed to greater or lesser degree throughout. Deeper in the desert red sands become striated veins crossing sandy dunes and valleys. Wind-carved plateaus and occasional rocky promontories break up the landscape. We know this region better than anything in the east, but few have gone so far as the Abyss and I expect most westerners underestimate the full scope of this desert.

In the west looms the **Rotterhorn** and other peaks surrounding its craggy height. Perhaps the tallest mountain on the continent, it can be seen for hundreds of miles on clear days. Idrians like my friend Quimut use it for desert navigation. I believe human settlements may once have extended into this region in an age lost to prehistory. The ecological disaster which cracked the continent likely expanded the desert wastes into the west, which surely posed as great a problem for humans of this region as for elves in the east. This disaster predates the written word, and no spoken tale or painted cave wall survives to immortalize the horrors of the sweeping sands and all-consuming winds that must have spread westward like some crazed embodiment of the Devourer Wurm. No wonder ancient supplicants sought shelter at Icthier and beseeched their Creator's aid, or saw divine providence in the construction of even a single lasting wall to keep out the sands.

The **Bitter Sea** and surrounding mountains represent the largest feature of the Bloodstone Desert. I gathered that the

skorne use several of the outer hills and mountains to construct supply fortresses. The more stable mountains on the periphery of the Bitter Sea contain many sheltered regions which allow the skorne to recuperate before making the next leg of their crossing. Most avoid the Bitter Sea itself, an elevated region of brackish water that may once have been a true inland sea but is now inimical to life. A shallow layer of water collects here from mountain runoff, rainfall, and thousands of connected geysers and hot springs venting scalding steam and bubbling superheated water up from below the surface. The nearly boiling waters of the Bitter Sea sometimes have a thin layer of sediment covering them and can seem deceptively solid. Those trying to walk across these regions will likely break through into the superheated liquid beneath and experience a brief moment of agony before the flesh cooks off their bones. In other areas the liquid collects in less dangerous heated pools. Some creatures—including titans and basilisks—find it pleasing to wallow in these, or so I have heard.

### Howling Wastes

A massive wasteland taking up the northernmost area of Immoren, possibly only the dragons Halfaug and Scaefang have any idea how far these great frozen plains extend. Few men have had the courage to even venture past the Burningfrost Plains and most think the world ends soon thereafter. What little I know of this region comes from several possibly boastful tales told by those who survived expeditions of Rhulkfolk sent from Griddenguard and Groddenguard to explore the periphery of the Broken Mirror Lake. The dwarves seek evidence of Scaefang, the dragon which has periodically harassed periphery communities. No one has discovered any sign of its lair, perhaps due to the tremendous expanse of trackless land to the north. The bitterly cold air and brutal snow and windstorms do not impede a dragon. Otherwise only ice drakes, winter trolls, and similarly adapted and dangerous creatures can endure the hostile environment. It would require the lure of tremendous resources as yet undiscovered to encourage any of the civilized nations to take an interest in the Wastes.

### Ryolyse

Most mysterious of all is another all-but-forgotten region of the continent, the **Lost Forest of Ryolyse**. Edrea claims that only some few Iosan scholars know this area and its surroundings. Though rightfully proud of having unearthed a few facts of note, she seemed reluctant to tell me everything. Apparently ancient tomes in the libraries of Shyrr and Iryss mention the region. A passage relates the tale of the exodus from the Lyoss Empire. One of the leaders of the refugees asked the gods who protected them during their flight if they should shelter in this

## Eastern Immoren

forest. Lurysar, the Issyr of Summer, responded, "No safe respite will you find among the trees of Ryolyse. A better land awaits to the west."

This place has lain entirely undiscovered by human explorers. The elves have not entered for thousands of years, apparently. I did learn of an excursion sent there by Rhul some three centuries ago to test the feasibility of harvesting the forest for timber. The Stone Lords rejected the plan as too costly. They concluded trade arrangements with neighboring kingdoms would suffice for their needs instead.

Ryolyse is described as a thickly forested region surrounded by imposing mountains to the north, west, and east. A chain of lakes and rivers make up the southern border, including the **North Mirror Lake**, the **West Mirror Lake** and the enormous **Sky Mirror Lake**, an inland sea larger than Lake Armsdeep in Rhul. While at the same latitude as Rhul, this area's considerably more temperate climate poses something of a mystery. The region has a vaguely ominous reputation among Rhulfolk and Iosans alike.

## Shattered Spine Islands

I saw the Shattered Spine Islands only briefly during the passage of my ship as I fled the Skorne Empire, but I found them worthy of a lifetime of study. This scattered sprawl of rugged and tropical islands lies directly to the southeast of Immoren. Perhaps a remnants of the trauma which created the Abyss, or perhaps a legacy of some more ancient catastrophe, the spread of these islands represents a tremendous unexplored region. The closer islands, mountainous and craggy, perhaps once made up part of a single great cohesive mountain chain stretching from the Wall of Anguish, through the Clawed Peaks, to the eastern Kajaras Mountains. Little is known of the interior of these islands, some of which appear tremendous in size.

The arboreal anura inhabit a number of islands near the skorne city of Kademe (see p. 205). These amphibious creatures, primitive compared to the skorne, have gathered into tight-knit communities armed and prepared to repel invaders. The densely overgrown and swampy nature of this unfamiliar terrain, and the croaker's facility for ambushes, has discouraged the skorne from penetrating the region. The have had little inclination to explore the treacherous channels and currents connecting the Shattered Spine Islands. Most of this region remains completely uncharted.

What most excited me about these islands was the tantalizing glimpse I had of ancient and overgrown ruins. I am reluctant to speculate too far about these from limited evidence, but when I first saw those ruins they put me in mind of stones I had seen unearthed from Ancient Ichthier. We know so little of those ancient days, and I wonder if humans once spread across much more of Immoren than we realize.

## Suneater Mountains

I named these mountains based on a description given me by Chilon. I must admit I have not seen with my own eyes these great peaks, but I have no reason to doubt my source. If half of what he described is true this could be the most imposing mountain chain in Immoren. The name derives from dozens of active volcanoes continually venting soot and ash into the sky. Weeks can pass with a dark shadow hovering over the northern region that the pale sun barely penetrates. Avoided even at the height of the Lyoss Empire, these mountains have become still more dangerous with fresh volcanoes awakened by earthquakes.

Here lies the land the giants call home. Chilon explained that his people once boasted a small but proud civilization. Most of their cities shook to rubble in the same disaster that consumed Lyoss. Only Bemoth remains, the last surviving city of an atrophied culture. Small clusters and villages of giants have settled elsewhere in the Suneater Mountains, particularly along the triple-pronged river valleys descending from Quench Lake. Skorne maps have loosely charted these rivers, and I have chosen to adopt their names. The Norkaat, Havkaat, and Vaskaat tributaries combine into the massive Harakith River which feeds into the Mizrah Sea.

## Valley of Konash

I could personally travel only this far north before the dangers here forced Kaleda to call a halt to my explorations and turned us south again. This grassy region south of Bemoth once belonged to the Blasted Desert, but it has recovered from ancient disaster and regained some of its former qualities. Four thousand years have sufficed to allow this eastern area to shake off preternatural storms and lingering destructive, arcane energies. Plant life has returned, sometimes changed and hardened, and the growth of flora has drawn a host of predator and prey animals into the area.

The skorne remain skeptical of the region, conditioned by their history to consider this area anathema, and have only slowly turned their gaze north. These plains have given rise to the hydra, herds of wild and untamed titans, rhinodons, and other large creatures able to defend themselves from even well trained groups of skorne. I will admit my closest brushes with death in the east happened here. The skorne also fear to test the northern giants even though reduced in number. Legends among the skorne praise the fighting prowess of those towering warriors, and while the skorne have proven bold enough to capture and enslave at least one, they have made no organized effort to subjugate the region. For now this remains an untamed expanse of high grasses and rushing rivers where dangerous oversized creatures tread.

# THE SKORNE EMPIRE



*Their culture is ancient and complex beyond all expectations. Nothing I have witnessed provides hope that they will relent, for as a people they see no virtue in peace. Bloodshed is their only assured path to immortality.*

—Professor Viktor Pendrake, from the journals of his captivity

Skorne have been the dominant inhabitants of eastern Immoren for thousands of years. They inherited this status after the destruction of Lyoss in 4,000 BR forced the surviving elves to flee into the west and settle in the kingdom of Ios. Skorne occupy a similar niche in eastern Immoren as humans in the west, and recent events have brought both sides of the continent together in a violent clash. Before the arrival of the former king of Cygnar Vinter Raelthorne IV the skorne lived as a fractured, feudal society consumed by inter-house warfare.

The skorne have come together only in the last decade to form the Skorne Empire. The rule of Supreme Archdominar Vinter Raelthorne IV—whom they have dubbed “the Conqueror”—appears absolute, but only strength of arms and fear of retribution unites them. All of skorne history stands against the concept of a single governing authority, and the ancient traditions of the skorne do not change easily. Though currently a powerful reality, whether the Skorne Empire will survive the coming years remains unknown.

Nothing unifies a people more than war against an external enemy, particularly a people who view battle as a sacred necessity. Many skorne see the value in putting aside internal difficulties to focus on conquest. Houses have staked their fortunes on expanding the empire to gain new and fertile lands on foreign soil. Warriors strive to earn the honor of *exaltation* and stand among the paragons whose souls the extollers preserve past death.

One decade cannot erase thousands of years of history. Much of skorne culture and society has not changed since the arrival of the Conqueror. Nor does the Skorne Empire encompass all of eastern Immoren. It comprises only the lands southeast of the Shroudwall Mountains. The skorne have avoided the northeast for a variety of reasons, although in time they may expand into these wild areas and enslave the inhabitants. Nor have the skorne made headway into the Shattered Spine Islands. The dense vegetation, humid climate, dangerous inhabitants, and tricky currents make them unappealing.

Westerners describe the skorne as cruel and violent, but their rich culture has survived a long era of disaster to prosper despite harsh conditions and constant peril. Cruelty

has allowed them to survive. As one sign of this cultural bias, skorne see the widespread imposition of slavery as a fact of life and consider it perfectly natural whether applied to their own species or outsiders. Though lower in standing than free workers, slaves constitute just another caste vital to the infrastructure of each great house. In house wars between skorne the victor commonly absorbs the losing house as sworn slaves who may earn freedom only through service and the passage of time. In many cases the conquered generation remains enslaved until death, but offspring have the chance for freedom if adopted by the victorious house.

## Skorne Empire Facts

**Ruler:** Supreme Archdominar Vinter Raelthorne IV (aka ‘The Conqueror’, ‘The Resorn’)

**Government Type:** Military Tyranny (formerly a Martial Aristocracy)

**Capital:** Halaak

**Total Population:** 5,275,000 (30% in urban areas)

**Ethnic Groups & Approx. Populations:** Kademesh (2,565,000), Sortaani (1,750,000), Malzash (470,000), Kasortaan (355,000), Kajar (135,000)

**Languages:** Havaati (primary), Kadesh, Soresh (dialect of Havaati)

**Climate:** Temperate and moderate in the southeast, but arid in the west and north. Mirketh Lake moderates the weather, sustaining a fertile river valley to the southeast. Winter brings a rainy season with sporadic and intense rainfall, but total annual rainfall remains low.

**Terrain:** Arid badlands to the east, desert to south, west, and the north, with an extensive chain of weathered mountains north of Mirketh Lake. Arid plains and savanna comprise much of the central and western region. Controlled territory includes parts of three deserts: the Blasted Desert in the north, the Mokkar to the south, and the Bloodstone Desert in the west.

**Natural Resources:** Copper, tin, salt, clay, iron ore, quartz, obsidian, basalt, granite, silver, gold, sulfur, marble, limestone, (angry) cattle, (war)beasts, hides

# The Skorne Empire

## Tors of the Skorne Empire

The Skorne Empire divides into six tors and the Northern Marches. Tors loosely correspond to provinces, duchies, gravs, or volozskya among the western nations. Only after the Second Unification did Vinter Raelthorne formally delineated the borders of these settled regions into controlled territories.

Vinter has appointed an archdominar or archdomina to rule each tor in his name. These leaders represent the highest authority in the empire, barring Vinter himself. Vinter has taken steps to enforce his will, but his agents cannot watch everywhere at once. Not all tors are equally compliant, and some archdominars feign loyalty. Even those with agendas remember the fate of the Betrayers after Vinter's Second Unification; none wish to test Vinter's vigilance.

### The Northern Marches

The Northern Marches include the sparsely settled lands beyond the Shroudwall Mountains, including Kunharaak Valley, Helkan's Reward, and the Swamp of Gaaketa. Only the remote town of Kotaan qualifies as a large settlement. No archdominar oversees this fringe territory as it is not a proper tor. The Conqueror has never visited this area; the isolated and aloof Kasortaan skorne have felt the least impact from the momentous events of the last two decades. This region contains a greater quantity of fertile land than the skorne can currently exploit. The region holds many threats including tribes of feral cyclops, gigantic hydras, and warlike bands of indefatigable giants who inhabit the untamed lands to the north. The skorne here live rustic and nomadic lives with little contact or news from the central empire.

Domina Leskaar of House Kursorik, a minor house which loaned its soldiers to the Second Unification serves as the Conqueror's vassal here. The house lords of the marches pay deference to the domina, but she has little direct influence over them or their vassals.

### Tor-Halaak

Named after the largest city and capital of the Skorne Empire, this tor and its territories comprise the heart of skorne civilization. Tor-Halaak encompasses the looming volcano named Karrak, the bulk of the southern shore of Mikreth Lake, Melhaas Lake, and the lands west of the Hezaat River, including the arid Mokkar. An expanse of meager but vital farmland occupies the region north of the arid plateau along the southern shore of Mirketh Lake. Plagued by thorny weeds and suffering periodic swarms of pernicious insects, farming this region remains difficult work.

Korinvaas, the Archdominar of Tor-Halaak, controls the capital for the Conqueror. Counted among the most ruthless of Vinter's vassals remaining in the east, skorne throughout

the region rightly fear the archdominar. He follows Vinter's iron-heeled example and punishes even the slightest whispers of disloyalty. He will torture and execute any judged guilty of conspiring against the Conqueror. The Archdominar has monopolized the services of paingivers in the capital toward this purpose and maintains numerous other agents abroad.

### Tor-Kademe

While named after the empire's only major port city and containing Scourge Lake, this southeastern region consists mostly of the sweeping Ocean of Grass. The most fertile area in the skorne settled region, this tor contains the largest farmlands and grassy plains supporting herds of titans, cattle, and the skorne who rely upon them for their livelihoods. The best farmlands lie adjacent the Hezaat River, which feeds most of the empire. While lush to the skorne, this farmland is paltry by western standards and each field only reluctantly yields its crop. Some of the river valley regions have more bogs than proper farmland, while the arid areas away from the river require irrigation and suffer periodic draughts. This tor has the highest total population in the empire with skorne living across scattered villages, towns, outlying settlements, and the region's most populous cities: Kademe and the river city Konesaan.

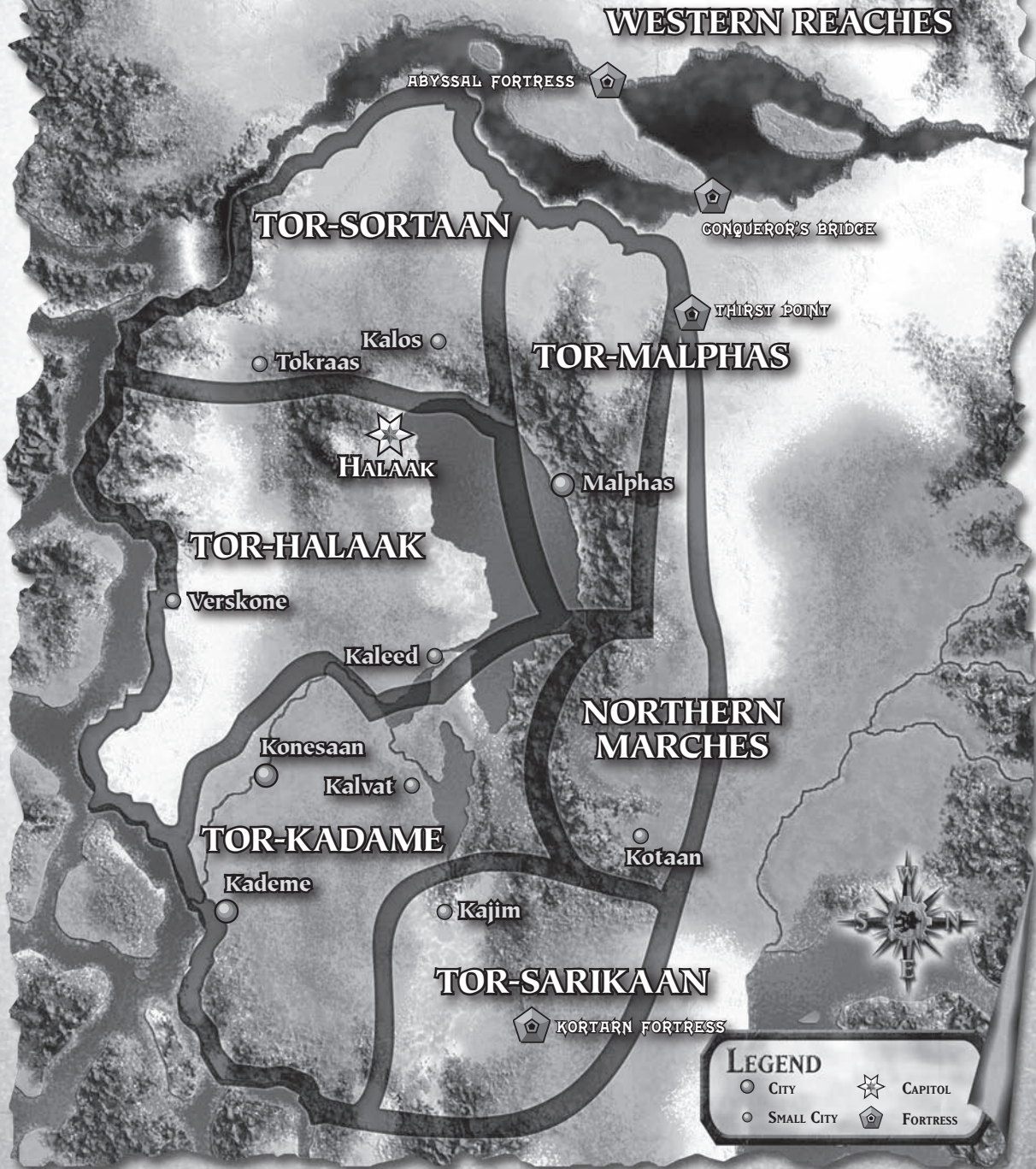
Archdominar Jolxal of House Murkaat, an opportunistic and bloody-minded skorne, rules this region. Jolxal hails from Kademe, his house one of several previously of small influence in the port city. A gambler noted for taking risks, some say Jolxal joined Vinter's side during the Second Unification on a whim to elevate his standing. If he did gamble, it has paid off as he now ranks among the most wealthy and influential skorne in the empire. He built a massive fortified complex just outside Konesaan where he holds court from an elevated throne and expects his vassals to treat him as the emperor of the river territory.

### Tor-Sarikaan

Poorest of the tors and sparsely inhabited, this northeastern area includes the Trembling Waste, the Shadow of Gelaash, and a small stretch of less arid land north of the waste. The skorne have proven reluctant to claim these lands due to the occasional bursts of violent weather, the last remnants of the millennia past unnatural disasters which have finally begun to fade, and settled much of this region only recently. Most of the skorne here live nomadic lives similar to those of the neighboring Northern Marches. While dotted with a number of villages and small encampments, only the town of Kajim, just south of the Trembling Waste, has any sizable population.

A smaller community has formed in the shadow of Kortarn Fortress, which once marked the northern border of the skorne settled region. The soldiers here muster

# TORS of the SKORNE EMPIRE





# The Skorne Empire

against all dangers, including untamed and peculiar beasts inhabiting the Trembling Waste. Age has taken its toll on Archdominar Hekrask of House Zhuron, the once noted warrior who controls this fortress, and he has grown paranoid of his subordinates. He holds the least sway among the archdominars, but most have long deemed this fortress impervious to outside attack.

## Tor-Malphas

This area extends across the western Shroudfall Mountains and most importantly includes the ancient city of Malphas. It also includes the desolate western area bordering on the Abyss, mostly uninhabited by skorne except for a few rugged villages that stand wary vigilance against attacks by efaarit. A large number of isolated mountain communities lie scattered throughout the Shroudfall and look to Malphas to represent their interests. Distrustful of outsiders, these communities conduct raids against their neighbors and rivals and largely ignore the precepts put in place during the Second Unification.

Archdominar Lorketh of House Jakaar controls this important tor in the Conqueror's name from the impressive fortified estate of his house in the ancient city. While leading an old and respected house notable for organizing the first Venators, Lorketh remains young and untested. He rose to his post after his predecessor's torture and execution in the Second Unification. Lorketh convinced Vinter that he could marshal the city's assets for him and thus prevented the full wrath of the Conqueror from falling on House Jakaar. Despite this, relations between the ruling houses of Malphas and Halaak remain tense and rife with the promise of bloodshed.

## Tor-Sortaan

Until recently, this expanse made up primarily by the Plains of Sortaan formed the western edge of the skorne inhabited region. While the eastern Ocean of Grass is famed for its wild titans, tremendous herds of *belek*, *korbesb*, and *kopaar*, cattle vital to skorne survival also inhabit the Plains of Sortaan. Numerous small villages and settlements dot these sparsely inhabited plains, dominated by the two largest communities of Kalos, just west of Halaak, and the trade hub of Tokraas to the south. Settlements thin considerably to the west as the Stormlands loom on the horizon, although a few rugged bands inhabit this area.

Vinter made his historic first crossing at this tor's furthest western extreme, encountered skorne communities, and first gathered warriors for the First Unification. Most of these fringe communities fully believe in Vinter as the Reborn and number among his most devoted supporters. Western villages have erected several small shrines in his honor, although the more orthodox urban skorne consider this custom distasteful at best. This region most enthusiastically answered the call to

war in the west, and certain opportunists have exploited the fact that many of these communities' warriors have left.

The unpopular Archdominar of the region Jalkiel of House Muzkaar holds court in Kalos. Jalkiel's peers consider him a money-grubbing merchant unworthy of his caste. House Muzkaar has never commanded much esteem for their shrewd business acumen among a people who do not place value on such a skill. The Conqueror considers Jalkiel useful and relies upon him to manage the vital supply lines flowing to the Abyssal Fortress and from there into the Western Reaches. Vinter has made clear that he will not abide any harm coming to his vassal in the region, a threat which has thus far preserved Jalkiel.

## Tor of the Western Reaches

The newest and largest tor, the Western Reaches encompasses a vague dominion arguably stretching from the Abyss to the borders of the Iron Kingdoms. Vinter intends this as just the first of several territories formed as his army conquers the Iron Kingdoms. This region supports no skorne communities, but Vinter has erected a series of fortress supply points across the Bloodstone Desert to facilitate the forces sent west. Vinter deemed the distance too great to attempt a simple seizure of power from the west, and he intends to wear them down over an extended campaign. The skorne control several routes west which pass both north and south of the Bitter Sea. The Conqueror designed the various fortresses to allow for fallback and mustering positions should forward forces need to retreat and regroup. However the brutal and unrelenting geography often takes its toll on even well prepared and conditioned soldiers with considerable experience in this territory. Those skorne entrusted with maintaining these fortresses quickly became experts on this desert and know its hazards and geography better than any explorers in the west.

Archdomina Makeda of House Balaash holds this region in a slightly different fashion than her peers. The archdomina serves first and foremost as the supreme general of the Army of the Western Reaches. Her powerful house remains near the capital of Halaak, although certain prestigious Balaash warriors have joined Makeda's army as significant officers and assist her in the difficult logistics of ongoing probing attacks and plans of conquest.

## Skorne Hierarchy

Titles described on the next page are distinct from but related to caste hierarchy, p. 193. Both ruling skorne overseeing the empire and military forces serving Vinter Raelthorne use the listed ranks. Vinter disrupted the strongest house armies and reshuffled their warriors into armies under his control to reduce the likelihood of future rebellions. Every house lord must contrib-

# The Skorne Empire

## Skorne Hierarchy

Conqueror/Supreme Archdominar	Singular title given to Vinter Raethorne IV, equivalent to emperor.
Archdomina(f)/Archdominar(m)	<p>Traditionally the highest possible title a skorne lord could attain, it indicated control over a substantial territory and the sworn fealty of three or more dominars.</p> <p>In the Skorne Empire, the archdominars form the highest ranking vassals of the Conqueror and control a tor region and possibly a large army.</p>
Domina(f)/Dominar(m)	<p>Traditionally dominars lead a powerful house and commanded the fealty one or two lesser houses. They generally answered to no higher authority, although some became vassals of an archdominar. The title still denotes the leader of a powerful and influential house. The distinction between dominar and lord tyrant is subtle and not always clear.</p> <p>In an army of the Skorne Empire, a dominar will supervise a small army or a single division of a large army.</p>
Lord Tyrant	<p>Traditionally a term of respect for a tyrant who had enjoyed particular success in the field of battle and proven his strength against rivals. If several tyrants served the same dominar or archdominar, lord tyrant would designate one of singular stature to his liege.</p> <p>Within an army of the Skorne Empire this title represents leadership of an entire cohort, generally at least four thousand soldiers. Many lord tyrants remain traditional house lords as well as military commanders.</p>
Supreme Aptimus	Special formal title usually reserved for the leading extoller accompanying a military force. In past centuries any house could boast a supreme aptimus, but now only the Army of the Western Reaches formally uses the title. Such an extoller receives treatment similar to a lord tyrant whether or not they actually command a cohort.
Tyrant	<p>The traditional title of every house leader and the default title for any ruler. In large cities like Halaak tyrants rule lesser houses, those lacking claims to political influence or a history of legendary accomplishments.</p> <p>Within an army of the Skorne Empire, tyrants lead a force of up to a thousand soldiers within a cohort. In some cases a tyrant might lead an entire smaller cohort of more specialized soldiers.</p>
Aptimus	A title similar to "Master" but reserved solely for extollers deemed to have proven mastery in this highly esteemed art. In some cases aptimus also implies that the extoller actively accompanies in battle heroes who may merit preservation as revered companions or full exalted.
Master	<p>The highest possible title of respect and status for most members of the worker caste, master denotes a highly valued and skilled specialist. This title most often applies to paingivers, mortitheurges, churgeons, chymists, prestigious slave handlers, beast handlers, or craftsmen.</p> <p>Top-ranking non-soldiers who serve in an army of the Skorne Empire receive this title and treatment similar to a tyrant but may exist outside the regular chain of command.</p>
Primus	<p>In a typical skorne house, primus denoted the single ranking leader of the house martial forces. Larger houses have several primus, each tasked with leading a significant element of house martial resources.</p> <p>Within an army of the Skorne Empire, primus indicates a veteran soldier entrusted to command several hundred subordinates. They form the backbone of the command structure which the tyrants rely upon heavily for day-to-day operations. This is the highest rank to which most skorne soldiers can realistically aspire.</p>
Dakar	<p>The role of the dakar as the trusted subordinates of a primus has not changed substantially.</p> <p>Each dakar is a proven veteran who has demonstrated leadership capabilities. Several grades of dakar exist, earning increasing esteem, but they begin by supervising a small group of soldiers. Junior dakars supervise fresh or relatively inexperienced soldiers and teach by experience. Those who earn respect and advance in grade lead larger numbers as well as veteran or specialized forces.</p>

# The Skorne Empire


ute soldiers into the service of the Conqueror to demonstrate loyalty. Smaller armies still serve individual houses despite this unpopular move. Most soldiers sent to the Abyssal Fortress join the Army of the Western Reaches, but some relocate elsewhere on a variety of missions to preserve Vinter's rule.

Many titles in use among the skorne have two meanings. The first meaning relates to the title's traditional use among the house-based martial aristocracy. When Vinter consolidated his rule and created a centralized army, he adopted many of these titles as formal ranks within a more rigid chain of command. The titles remain in common use in both contexts. Therefore, a tyrant in the city of Halaak most likely rules a small house, while a tyrant in the Army of the Western Reaches commands several hundred soldiers.

## History Timeline

For convenience this timeline uses the same dating system as western Immoren: "BR" representing "Before the Rebellion" against the Orgoth and "AR" representing "After the Rebellion." Skorne did not maintain written records until ~3000 BR and few systematic archives predate ~1000 BR. Dates are therefore approximate reconstructions by extollers from communion with exalted ancestors.

An ancient people, the skorne have thousands of years of history and countless legends. Each individual house maintains its own lengthy history and roster of memorable ancestors. The following by necessity constitutes a cursory overview.

- 
- |            |  |            |  |
|------------|--|------------|--|
| c. 5000 BR | Tribal nomadic skorne of southeastern Immoren encounter the outskirts of the Empire of Lyoss and begin to harass and raid outlying elven communities.  | c. 4240 BR | Philosopher-warrior Morkaash teaches enlightenment through the study of anatomy and suffering which inspires the rise of the paingiver and surgeon castes.   |
| c. 4650 BR | Master Voskune discovers the root principles of mortitheurgy and the fundamentals which give rise eventually to exaltation.  | c. 4000 BR | Empire of Lyoss obliterated by the fall of the Bridge of Worlds. The Abyss sunders Immoren; the continent endures earthquakes, storms, wildfires, and other disasters. Eastern Immoren enters a dark age as survivors struggle for basic survival. |
| c. 4450 BR | Dominar Vuxoris details the <i>boksune</i> warrior code describing the ideals of skorne combat. Teachers pass the code to students by word of mouth for fourteen centuries before committing it to writing.  | c. 3950 BR | Surviving skorne seek shelter in the Shroudwall Mountains and found their first permanent settlements. Skorne develop stonemasonry and engineering.  |
| c. 4440 BR | Dominar Vuxoris becomes First Exalted after Masters Ishoul and Kaleed, elaborating on work passed down by students of Voskune, perfect the first sacred stone. Their followers exalted neither Ishoul nor Kaleed on their deaths. Skorne philosophers record this with the loss of Voskune himself as a fundamental tragedy of the ancient period. | c. 3800 BR | Kelskor of House Kraltash names this first skorne city Malphas.  |
|            |  | c. 3600 BR | Murzoul the Tireless <sup>1</sup> gains dominance over the feuding houses of Malphas and declares himself  |

## What Year is it for the Skorne?

Skorne dating begins loosely with the cataclysm of the fall of the Bridge of Worlds and its aftermath circa 4000 BR. They never firmly placed this date, however, as skorne writing did not develop for another thousand years. A widely adopted calendar system did not appear until circa 1000 BR and changed over the following centuries. Supreme Archdominar Raelthorne enforces a western calendar on the skorne, but adaptation has proceeded slowly outside Halaak. A general tendency among the skorne for imprecise dating makes creating a definitive timeline challenging.

The skorne reckon the current year as either 4526, 4370, or 4475 depending on the source. Skorne prefer to utilize generations, a period equal to roughly 20 years, to measure time. For example, some might describe the fall of Lyoss as "226 generations past", which translates into approximately 4,520 years.

## The Skorne Empire

- archdominar. First recorded use of this title. Killed by his heir fifteen years later, his successor fails to preserve his holdings and five rival houses divide and enslave his house.
- c. 3500 BR Earthquake nearly levels Malphas, throwing ruling houses into chaos. After the upheaval a triumvirate begins the rebuilding process, dividing the city into distinct fortified wards.
- c. 3300 BR Crowding in Malphas and heavy bloodshed between houses prompts an exodus from the Shroudwall Mountains. Skorne settle along the southern shores of Mirketh Lake and its rivers.
- c. 3100 BR First mention by name of the cities of Kalvat, Kaleed, and Halaak in historical annals.
- c. 3000 BR Kexorus the Sage of Malphas becomes the first skorne scholar graced with exaltation. Kexorus remembered for inventing the skorne alphabet, preserving as runes in stone ancient histories, legends, and the *hoksune* warrior code of Vuxoris.
- c. 2500 BR Skorne communities along the Hezaat River decimated by the Lashing Plague. Lake cities seal themselves off from outsiders.
- c. 2300 BR Archdominar Horzaan of House Kelxul conquers the river valley region and establishes his estate where the city of Konesaan will eventually rise.
- c. 2000 BR Halaak exceeds Malphas in size and grandeur to become the heart of skorne civilization. Many great houses of Malphas abandon the ancient city to build estates within or close to Halaak.
- c. 1700 BR Greatest house war of the period lays waste to eastern Halaak. Devastation blamed on the dying curse of Lord Tyrant Norvaak, supreme aptimus for House Bashek, who shatters three ancestral stones of his house to inflict tremendously powerful *kovaas* spirits upon his enemies.
- c. 1500 BR The Undying Tempest—a region of unnatural storm and flooding north of the Shroudwall Mountains—finally fades, allowing skorne to explore what will become the Northern Marches.
- c. 1400 BR Beast trackers and paingivers led by Tormentor Jakheda mount an expedition into the Valley of Kornash to capture useful beasts of war. Jakheda returns as the sole survivor and carries the first reports of the horrors of the north, including hydras and giants. Leading extollers in Halaak and Malphas proclaim this



# The Skorne Empire

- area cursed and anathema to those seeking exaltation.
- c. 1200 BR Southern fishing and river trading community Kademe recognized by Halaak after envoys establish trade negotiations. This proves a deceptive overture to plant spies from the capital in the region. Tension between these cities rises.
- c. 1180 BR Lord Tyrant Hyvlaarik of House Kahzek in Kademe warns Halaak against violent intrusions into the area, boasting of the 'invincible armies' of the thriving southern city. The lord tyrant executes fifty visitors as spies after submitting them to extensive interrogation by paingivers in his employ.
- c. 1175 BR First War of the Hezaat River. An alliance of houses from Halaak launches attacks against the river valley, capturing many slaves. Lord Tyrant Nikuvox of Halaak clashes with the forces of several Kademe houses, including Lord Tyrant Hyvlaarik, at the Battle of the River Houses. The attackers fall back, but the defenders suffer too many losses to defend the region. Nikuvox slays Hyvlaarik and dismembers his corpse to feed the basilisks. Battles continue sporadically for nearly thirty years and bring many slaves to Halaak.
- c. 1100 BR The War of Hezaat Retaliation. Descendants of the Kademe warlords retaliate against Halaak nearly four generations after the last war, burning farmland and attacking outlying communities. The war lasts six years and includes both The Field of the Flayed and the Battle of Konmark. Kademe claims considerable spoils and victories but never attacks Halaak directly. Halaak records this war as a minor inconvenience, the casualties primarily among the outer hestatians and enslaved warriors, including descendants of Kademesh captured in the previous war.
- c. 1000 BR Second War of the Hezaat River. Fighting between houses in Halaak and Kademe continues for centuries. Historians refer to the largest conflict of this time as the Second War of the Hezaat. Halaak forces push the defenders all the way back to Kademe and burn down half the city. Several defending house lords flee by boat, thereafter vilified and exiled from their abandoned city. The war results in complete and utter victory for the attacking houses, who enslave the region and compel the elder houses of Kademe to sign humiliating promises for reparations and ongoing tribute. For two decades, an annual festival takes place whereby an heir of one of the Kademe houses is picked at random and dragged through the streets on a length of chain by a rampaging titan. Mortitheurges keep the victim alive until his body literally falls apart, at which time festivities praising Halaak carry on through the evening.
- 902 BR Campaign to initiate another war against the river settlements forestalled as civil war consumes Halaak. A council of twelve Dominars ends the fighting and sends regular slave gathering expeditions into the southeast.
- 878 BR The Great Mirketh Road between Malphas and Halaak completed at the cost of thousands of slaves. The causeway incorporates their bones.
- 849 BR Physiological experiments by paingivers and mortitheurges on captured cyclopes unravel the principles behind their unique vision. The immediate upsurge in cyclops hunting results in the enslavement and conditioning for battle of most of the free roaming cyclops tribes over the following century.
- 812 BR Settlement of Konesaan founded.
- 707 BR War of the Exalted. Dominar Helzar, leader of a house near what is now Kajim<sup>1</sup> notable for taming and subduing the bulk of the wild titans roaming the northern Ocean of Grass, proclaims all titans of this region his property and demands tribute from those seeking to use these beasts. Houses from Kalvat contest this claim, and the ensuing full war eventually draws in houses from every major settlement.
- 693 BR The war ends in a titanic six-way battle at a site now called the Graves of the Exalted, which few survived. More great warriors receive exaltation in this battle than in any previous. Dominar Helzar dishonored and his house crushed. Surviving houses vow to obliterate any single house monopolizing titans or other useful beasts. The tales of this battle and its participants have expanded and magnified over the centuries.
- 665 BR In an attempt to record the definitive account of the War of the Exalted, the former lord tyrant turned scholar Havaatan transcribes an epic rendition of these battles. This work codifies and corrects many aspects of the language and

# The Skorne Empire

grammar utilized by literate skorne. This language revision eventually spreads and within a hundred years "Havaati" becomes the most widely spoken language among western skorne.

- 504 BR Eruption of the volcano Karrak obliterates nearby communities and sends debris and ash raining down on Halaak. During the "Month of Darkness" thousands die from choking ash and thousands more in the extended draught which follows.
- 490 BR Settlement of Kalos founded.
- 350 BR A gathering of churgeons in Malphas implement a systematic methodology for compiling results of surgeries and experiments as well as recipes for poultices and salves. Referred to as the Corpusulem, this group eventually adds mortitheurges to their ranks. Branches of this organization filter to Halaak by 320 BR and Kademe by 260 BR. The Corpusulem provides the foundation for most subsequent skorne scientific advancement, but the organization has a troubled history. Tyrants and dominars, fearing conspiracies and spies passing information between houses, declare the organization a threat. Its members face ongoing persecution over the following centuries. Skorne studying the interaction of otherwise inert substances become known as 'chymists', considered a related specialty to chirurgery and of identical caste.
- 315 BR Settlement of Verskone founded.
- 112 BR Explosive mixture of sticky pastes called *hokar* discovered by members of the Corpusulem, initially dismissed as impractical for military use.
- 90 AR Settlement of Tokraas founded.
- 127 AR The Slave Revolt of Halaak. Downplayed in most annals as a minor slave rebellion, this actually consisted of a major uprising of conquered houses under the yoke of a lax dominar whose name historians have expunged.
- 190 AR Settlement of Kootaan founded.
- 204 AR Engineer-chymist Korsarat of House Tusokaar utilizes sappers bearing sealed casks of *hokar* to explode the walls of their rival during an extended siege.
- 210 AR Korsarat invents the first skorne cannon utilizing large wads of dried *hokar*. The leader of House

Tusokaar demonstrates the new weapon's effectiveness at the Battle of Konmark east of Halaak and declares himself archdominar of the entirely southern shore coast of Mirketh Lake. This prompts a scramble among major houses to secure chymists capable of creating *hokar*, which leads to infighting and division within the Corpusulem. Wealthy skorne houses begin to deploy heavy cannons with limited mobility, primarily for siege warfare.

- 356 AR After falling into disrepute, the Corpusulem reemerges among a smaller circle of scholarly minded churgeons and mortitheurges in Malphas and Halaak. They adopt rules of procedure to allow members to withhold research with military application to maintain house loyalty. Ruling tyrants and dominars still consider the group seditious.
- 415 AR House Balaash fields the first cannon-wielding titans and crush lesser rivals to carve out a sizable domain along the shore north of Halaak. Other great houses soon implement similar training programs.
- 462 AR A small group of chymists near Malphas innovate a method of extracting and storing a highly explosive gas called *venhokar*. Produced by filtering oil of vitriol through chunks of iron, the chymists capture the volatile gas in tightly sealed canisters. This gas had no immediate practical use due to the difficulty of containment, considered merely a chymical curiosity.
- 490 AR After years of failed attempts to create small arms using *hokar*, a retired Praetorian turned engineer named Honaek of House Lushon uses *venhokar* instead and invents the reiver firearm.
- 493 AR The Lushon Dominar attempts to produce a secret arsenal of reivers to gain an edge over his rivals, but spies from stronger houses discover the operation. To preserve his house, the Lushon Dominar allies with House Jakaar at unfavorable terms and surrenders the arsenal. House Jakaar deploys the first Venators in numerous battles over the next decade. Praetorians and cataphracts across the region voice their disapproval of the weapon as an affront to the code of *hoksune*.
- 503 AR Despite disapproval many major houses enlist paingivers and spies to unearth the secrets of reiver construction. A decade after its invention,

# The Skorne Empire

- Venators appear as lower caste warriors among most major house armies, particularly in Halaak.
- 570 AR The legendary Archdominar Vaactash of House Balaash finally dies and receives exaltation after spending his life expanding the holdings of his house north of Halaak. The house goes to his son, eliminated by his own son when he proves inadequate. This leader lasts only a short while before his sister Makeda kills and replaces him.
- 594 AR Vinter Raelthorne IV emerges from the Abyss and begins to gather his army at the town of Kelos to conquer the region in the First Unification.
- 595 AR After months of bitter fighting, the invading forces of the Conqueror manage to capture Halaak and subdue it over the course of the following year.
- 596 AR Vinter faces one of the toughest battles of the First Unification when he crosses blades with Archdomina Makeda of House Balaash north of Halaak. Eventually overwhelmed, she surrenders and offers her service to the Conqueror. Makeda is the first to speak of Vinter Raelthorne as the Reborn, proclaiming him to have the spirit of a skorne ancestor despite his human appearance.
- 597 AR The last major battle of the First Unification. Vinter clashes with Narkuuru, an archdominar of Kademe, on the plains northwest of that city. Narkuuru's Last Stand signals the end to the remaining skorne houses, who thereafter bend their knee to the Conqueror.
- 598 AR In a ceremony in Halaak, Vinter Raelthorne takes the title Supreme Archdominar and creates the Skorne Empire. Vinter spends the next few years consolidating his rule and rooting out subversive plots by houses seeking to regain independence.
- 600 AR Construction begins on the Conqueror's Bridge and the Abyssal Fortress. These structures remain incomplete until after the end of the Second Unification.
- 603 AR Vinter Raelthorne leads a vanguard army into the west and seizes Corvis to serve as a mustering point for the full invasion. In Halaak, the house lords take the opportunity of Vinter's absence to rebel and disobey standing orders to send additional forces. Driven from Corvis, Vinter returns to begin the Second Unification. Late in the year Vinter's army breaks the extended siege around the fortress compound of House Balaash. Archdomina Makeda joins Vinter against the rebellious house lords thereafter termed the "Betrayers".
- 604 AR Paingivers gather the Betrayers in Halaak to endure a month-long cycle of public torment and executions overseen by Master Tormentor Morghoul. By the end of the year the Second Unification is complete.
- 605 AR Vinter Raelthorne appoints archdominars to supervise the Empire, moves his seat to the Abyssal Fortress, and initiates reforms requiring all houses to contribute soldiers for the Army of the Western Reaches. Slaves and soldiers move rapidly west to construct a supply chain of fortresses and waypoints between the Abyss and the Iron Kingdoms.
- 606 AR Archdomina Makeda of Balaash goes west to begin the invasion. Skorne forces encounter surprisingly strong resistance from trollkin communities east of Cygnar's border which slows the advance. Probing assaults along the length of the borders search for likely areas of weaker defense.
- 607 AR Professor Viktor Pendrake rescued from the skorne and returns to the west to convey his experiences in eastern Immoren.

<sup>1</sup> Ancient skorne records, legends, and oral traditions rarely name houses destroyed completely. Records list significant leaders but deliberately omit obliterated house names.



## Skorne Society

*Something about them reminds me of Khador—everyone wants to join the army, and no one wants to plow the fields. Someone has to collect harvests, pave roads, and make weapons. This is when slavery starts to seem like an appealing option.*

—Professor Viktor Pendrake, from his journals during his captivity

Understanding skorne culture requires an understanding of the many castes which define the status and role of their people.

### Castes

Caste means everything to most skorne. Each knows his exact place among his peers. The existence of castes predates the transition from nomadic to urban culture after the construction of Malphas. Urban living greatly accelerated caste divisions. The word for 'warrior' has the same ancient root as 'hunter' and meant those who stalked the plains. Today a distinct difference exists between these groups within the larger warrior caste.

Failing to practice proper caste conventions can provoke bloodshed if a skorne feels insulted by the failure of his inferiors to show proper respect. Cases of extreme insult can throw entire houses into war. The imposition of centralized rule has not changed this fundamental aspect of skorne society. Killing another skorne over insults remains perfectly acceptable and proper behavior. Peers consider the death of one combatant as an affirmation of weakness and the end of the matter.

The caste system has little to do with governance except indirectly. The skorne have historically divided themselves and pursued bloody feuds as each house sought dominance over rivals. Caste represents a social force rather than chain of command. Two house lords, bitter rivals and enemies, may wage battle with all of the resources of their respective houses, yet they occupy the top of their castes and therefore remain peers. Even enemies of lower caste owe them respect. A lowly soldier of an enemy house cannot speak an insult to an enemy house lord, for such a person stands far above his station. Making eye contact with such a lord may merit brutal punishment by the soldier's superiors regardless of the enmity between their respective houses.

The skorne have three basic caste categories: warriors, workers, and slaves. Each of these categories contains many layers added over the millennia. Additionally two distinct special castes have arisen which slightly transcend these categories: the paingivers and the extollers. Both technically fall within the worker caste. Their unique roles in skorne society afforded them special respect and status above the rest of the worker caste. While sometimes inflexible, skorne society has evolved over time as the need arose. The sudden emergence of Supreme Archdominar Vinter Raelthorne as has forced adjust-

ments in thinking by adding a layer of hierarchy to which the skorne are still adapting.

Birth determines a skorne's initial caste. Only limited opportunities exist to reach a higher caste, usually a single chance at the onset of adulthood by a demonstration of combat prowess or other singular skills. Most skorne stay in their birth caste. Rising above the slave caste is difficult, sometimes impossible in a single lifespan. More often only the offspring of an enslaved generation have the opportunity to rise to the worker or warrior castes.

Because of the size of the warrior caste, many warriors inevitably also perform the duties of a lower caste in the day-to-day execution of their role. For example, many houses encourage or require their warriors to also learn the craft of armor or weaponsmithing, technically the role of a lower worker caste. How much of this work a warrior may do without loss of status is not always easy to determine and comprises one of the subtleties of skorne caste interaction. Generally a skorne warrior may only spend a significant portion of his efforts at labor when either a junior warrior or a very senior one beginning to show his age.

During a warrior's prime they need not lower themselves to any type of labor except that absolutely required in the course of a military expedition or battle. This has made certain practicalities among the Army of the Western Reaches a challenge. Senior warriors not yet past their prime often prove reluctant to undertake practical necessities such as helping to construct fortifications, overseeing supply inventory, digging emplacements, etc. Generally the skorne army attempts to maintain a support group of workers to handle these tasks or relegates them to slave labor. Soldiers will sometimes contribute when absolutely necessary, but this usually falls to those freshly trained as a means to humiliate them.

In other cases, a skorne with very specialized skills may perform two roles without loss of status. If both a warrior and a member of a lower caste they receive the respect due their warrior status. This situation commonly arises among occultists and other intellectuals who also fight on the battlefield, such as mortitheurges and extollers. For example, Lord Tyrant Hexeris acts as both a cohort leader and a master mortitheurge. His warrior standing takes precedence over his occult studies. A hestatian serving his liege as a weapon smith remains a hestatian, although his peers who fight more often will hold him in lower regard. When a skorne gives up his weapons, such as from age or crippling injury, he falls from his caste. Most skorne prefer to die in battle rather than suffer this indignity.

A house lord poses the one exception to this general attitude. A lord always ranks among the warrior caste regardless of his fighting skill or actual presence on the battlefield. Lords of actively fighting houses command greater prestige than their inactive peers. Older house lords



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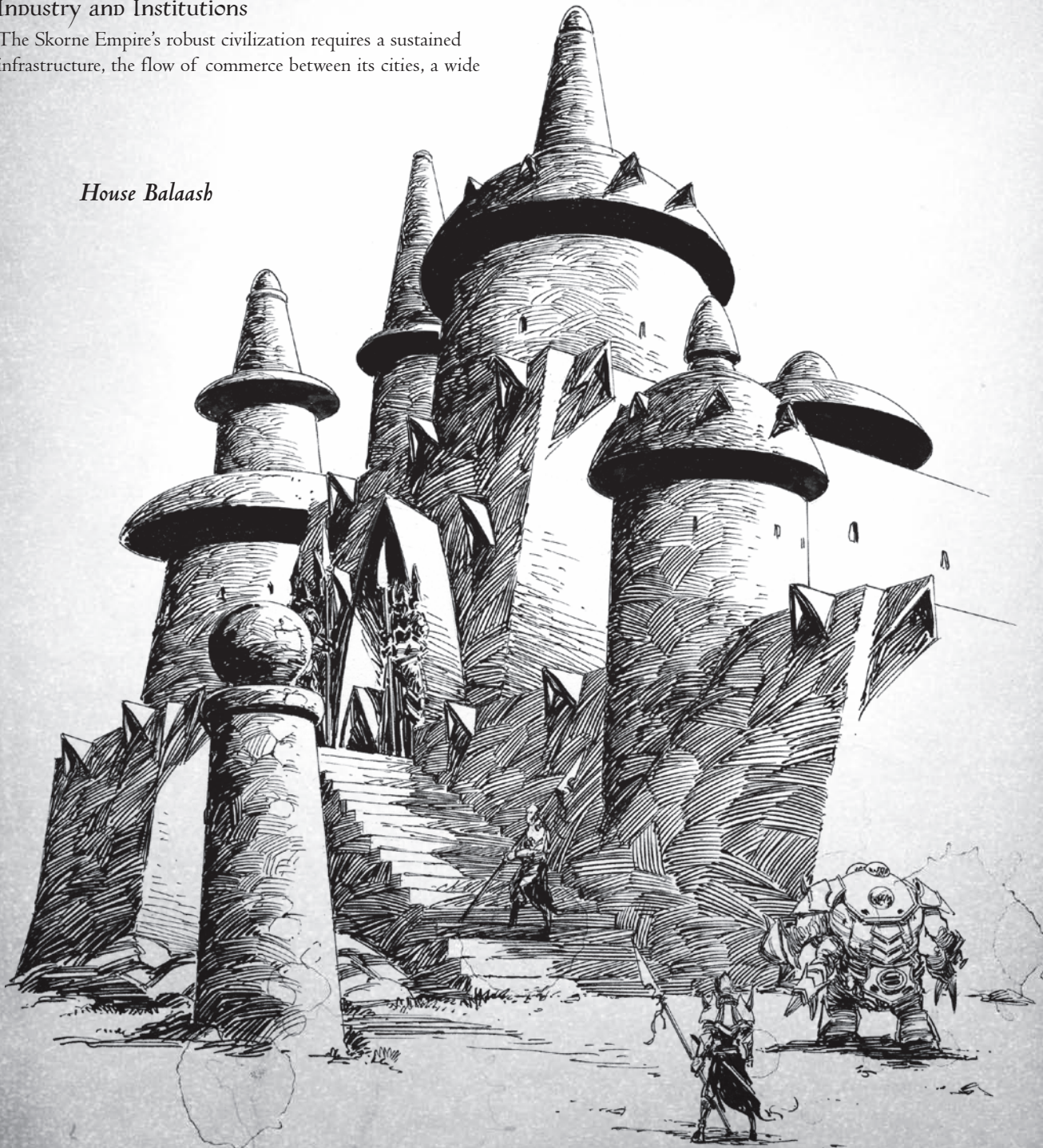
commonly dabble in other areas of power, such as expanding their lore of mortitheurgy, at the expense of their fighting prowess. However, younger heirs who desire to lead the house while still in their prime often violently supplant elder house lords. None consider this dishonorable behavior if handled with proper ceremony.

## Industry and Institutions

The Skorne Empire's robust civilization requires a sustained infrastructure, the flow of commerce between its cities, a wide

variety of labor, continuing industry, and incentives to innovate improvements. Life in skorne society requires many day-to-day tasks which fall below the purview or interest of house lords or even their warrior caste subordinates. The thankless work never venerated in legend which keeps skorne society running falls to the non-fighting castes.

### *House Balaash*



# The Skorne Empire

## Hierarchy of Skorne Castes (High to Low)

### Warrior Caste

House leaders and heirs  
Exaltation candidates  
Cohort leaders (non-warlord tyrants and lord tyrants)  
Direct descendants of a house leader (not an heir)  
Veteran<sup>1</sup> Cataphracts senior officers  
Cataphracts, Ferox cavalry, and other elite soldiery  
Praetorians, Karax, or other highly trained soldiery  
Veteran<sup>1</sup> hestatians  
Venators or other supportive or ancillary soldiery, veteran beast hunters  
Hestatians or rural guards/militia

### Extoller Caste<sup>2</sup>

### Paingiver Caste<sup>2</sup>

### Worker Caste

Mortitheurges  
Chirurgcons  
Scholars, tutors, engineers, etc.

### Chymists

### Administrators

### Weapon smiths, armorers

### Warbeast and war mount trackers/tamers/trainers (non-paingivers)

### Builders, sculptors (stone)

### Petty smiths, carpenters, leatherworkers, other crafts

### Slave masters

### Domesticated beast handlers

### Couriers/messengers, merchants

### Fishermen, boatmen

### Porters or other heavy laborers

### Free farmers

### Slave Caste

### War captives

### Born slaves

### Branded criminals

### Cleaners of filth

Other slave castes follow the same hierarchy as the castes above, but any slave equivalent is automatically of lower standing than an equivalent non-slave caste. An enslaved warrior fighting for his captors is of higher standing than an enslaved stonemason, for example, but both rank lower than any free farmer.

(1) 'Veteran' among the skorne requires considerably more experience than the term implies among humans in the west. A skorne veteran must survive many battles and demonstrate exceptional fighting skill to earn this respect. Such individuals often become dakar, primus, or other leading ranks and supervise sometimes large groups of junior warriors.

(2) Extollers and paingivers technically belong in the worker caste, yet receive greater respect and have evolved into distinct castes. Extollers maintain their house affiliation, while paingivers sever all ties with specific houses.

Houses handle many of these vital matters internally, but others require cooperation and communication between members of diverse houses and communities separated by great distances. Commerce, trade, long distance communication, ongoing construction, the handling of food stores and production, etc. all fall to prestigious members of the worker caste. Despite the essential nature of their work, ignorant hestatians sometimes treat such individuals with contempt. The nature of skorne society has made it difficult for groups to arise to effectively handle some of these tasks across house divides.

Individual industry and craft concerns have sometimes organized themselves locally into collectives loosely comparable to "trade guilds" in western Immoren. However, powerful skorne houses view such groups with suspicion and suspect

them of intrigues beyond their caste. House leaders sometimes gather up leaders of these collectives which overreach their bounds and submit them to paingivers for either torture or execution. This has slowed the development of certain advances in skorne civilization. More than once a house has developed a significant invention or engineering discovery in isolation and extinguished its techniques in silence before any others could learn or steal them. Such practices have not entirely died with the imposition of Vinter Raelthorne's central government. It may take some time before any of these collectives can more readily share information and resources.

A couple examples of these unusual institutions are described below.

# The Skorne Empire

## The Corpusulem

One of the more effective collectives, the Corpusulem has suffered its share of purges and bloodshed. This venerable archive and scholarly fellowship has endured nearly a thousand years. Many of the refinements to skorne chymistry, chirurgery, and engineering science have arisen from members of the Corpusulem. The organization has also had to periodically hide its membership and operate as a secret society to avoid destruction at the hands of paranoid house lords. The Corpusulem keeps its central archive and headquarters well protected and secured in Malphas, but it has significant branches in Halaak and Kademe as well as individual members in most major skorne communities.

Membership operates somewhat loosely by individual sponsorship, code-phrases, and written messages often disguised as something else. The Corpusulem expects all members to contribute any discoveries or learning back to the central archive. In theory these eventually disseminate to the entire membership, although in practice this process remains slow and far from thorough. Competing cabals, jealous researchers hoarding discoveries, and those who remain ultimately loyal to their house and willing to betray their fellows frequently limit the organization's effectiveness. Despite these setbacks, even grudging efforts toward sharing of advancements has greatly benefited both the skorne and individual members. Within the larger membership, the chirurgeons and chymists traditionally demonstrate the largest degree of solidarity.

## The Bonded Porters

Vinter Raelthorne instituted this group when he discovered the difficulties of organizing the smooth operations of supply lines for essential materials when constructing the Abyssal Fortress. To prevent supply delays or interception, he instituted a law requiring each house to contribute members of its lower worker castes for two years of mandatory service among these bonded laborers. This organization supervises caravans carrying goods from one major city to another across the empire. Their purview includes the major roads and shipping along the Hezaat River and Mirketh Lake.

The Bonded Porters operate similarly to a military organization, starting with a period of strict training in isolation from their respective houses. When sent to join, each skorne must wear neutral garments and put aside all other signs of house affiliation. When working they wear what amounts to a uniform: brown robes and a black cowed hood. While serving among the Bonded Porters no skorne may speak of their house origins or family, although in some cases this is common knowledge. The Porters tolerate no infighting or dueling and execute violators. They deliver food, weapons, armor, and building supplies to the Army of the Western Reaches as their first priority, although they also move many

large shipments of a variety of items across the empire. They frequently recruit young house warriors as escorts for long voyages. Some embrace this chance for danger and to prove their worth in distant places.

The Bonded Porters suffer some inevitable corruption, particularly regarding the shipping of non-military goods or when interacting with less influential houses. They serve as an effective means of connecting skorne cities nevertheless. They have allowed the empire to exploit the resources of its various regions without the houses going to war over these resources. After two years of service among the Porters, individuals may return to their house and continue their previous duties. Some decide to continue with the Porters and may eventually take on administrative tasks. Interfering with the Bonded Porters constitutes an attack on the servants of Vinter and his archdominans and always results in deadly reprisal.

## Skorne Law and Punishment

The skorne have a different approach to laws and the enforcement of order than the west. They find the idea of a single cohesive body of laws to govern all skorne entirely alien, and even Vinter has not introduced this concept. Skorne law has always revolved around the dictates of a house lord and his control over his people. Most of their other societal restrictions and restraints have more to do with caste divisions than formal written law. Skorne do not see obeying Vinter's decrees in the context of "laws", but rather as commands from their overall lord and master. His power over their lives gives him the right to order his subjects to do anything he may require. Skorne do not expect fair or equal treatment and have a radically different concept of justice.

Vinter's own inclinations as a tyrant have made his transition easy and he has not put great effort into instituting laws or trying to change this attitude. He focuses instead on ensuring absolute obedience to his commands and the punishment or execution of those who work against him. Skorne view this as the "proper" behavior of a house lord, a view which gave rise to the paingiver caste as the foremost means of delivering punishment and ensuring proper fear and obedience in one's subjects.

While they have little in the way of written or formal law, skorne obey many unwritten expectations of behavior and consider their violation criminal. Theft, murder without cause, lashing out at higher castes, disobedience or betrayal of one's rightful lord or other superiors all constitute offenses in skorne society. The warriors of various powerful houses in a city deal with most of these matters rather than a separate group specifically established to enforce the law. Even after Vinter's unification, enforcing order in a given town or city falls to powerful houses. The

# THE SKORNE EMPIRE

archdominans ultimately must ensure the smooth operations of the empire, but they can in turn delegate these tasks to lesser houses under their dominion. Clashes and fighting over topics of honor, insults, or perceived meddling or intrusion remain common and tolerated so long as they do not result in open war between houses or disrupt other important tasks.

The clashes between skorne houses may appear somewhat similar to the struggles between clans in Rhul, but in truth the situation in the Skorne Empire operates quite differently. In Rhul the Codex and its many laws regulate even clan feuding and include possible intervention by Moot Judges. The skorne have nothing similar to the Codex. Losing houses can only appeal to the next higher lord in their feudal structure who likely will not look kindly on such martial weakness.

Skorne society's tight regimentation comes from its castes, not the enforcement of laws. Individual house lords rightfully claim the title tyrants. They suffer no limit to their power over their household, consider no punishment too brutal for any offense, and brook no excuses for disobedience.

## Skorne Criminals

Among the lower castes and in the fringes of skorne society lurk those who do not live within the accepted order. Most often a house exiles such cast-offs or they flee into hiding to escape the wrath of their lord. Some belong to extinct houses who avoided enslavement and have turned to crime to survive. Thievery runs rampant in Halaak and other good sized skorne communities, although such thieves rarely rise above the level of petty survival. Street criminals occupy the same caste as the lowest slaves, since they produce nothing of use to skorne society.

The most subtle and successful criminals maintain a veneer of respectability. They remain members of a house and give the appearance of proper behavior while secretly indulging in corruption. This carries great dangers, as house lords can execute their subjects on a whim for even the slightest offense. However, some house lords indulge certain criminals in their midst so long as it profits the house. They can plead ignorance and if presented with evidence of the criminal activity can execute those responsible without any risk to their own status.

In cases of minor offenses some criminals receive branding rather than execution, a process generally handled by paingivers tasked to that purpose. This extremely brutal process applies brands liberally across the entire body including the face, neck, arms, and hands. Branded criminals commonly expire during the application of this "merciful" punishment. Criminals fear no group more than paingivers, since they almost invariably

have the task of rooting out the guilty and delivering proper punishment or execution.

## SKORNE PHILOSOPHY

*Nothing confirms their foreign nature more than their proud refusal to heed any gods. They look only to their ancestors for divinity, one sign of their arrogance.*

—Professor Viktor Pendrake, from his journals during his captivity

One may easily make the mistake to believe that the skorne have no religion. In ancient times the elves of Lyoss called the skorne "godless" and "faithless". While the first label is accurate, the second is not. Their religion comprises a sophisticated form of ancestor worship that does not venerate any god or pantheon of gods.

Skorne accept that gods exist, and experienced the religion of the elves of Lyoss before the development of skorne writing. However, the obliteration of Lyoss convinced them of the fickle nature of gods, and skorne see them as a crutch of weaker peoples. Skorne philosophers take pride in having freed themselves from the divine and refuse to acknowledge a creator. They do not refute the possibility that a god may have had a hand in their creation, but they consider this irrelevant. They pass down no creation myth and believe as a people they have risen to greatness on the strength of their will and the example of their ancestors.

Skorne ancestor worship places reverence on those great individuals whose deeds they immortalize in legend. These paragons exemplify values the skorne consider vital. Different schools of philosophy have arisen around the legends of specific skorne ancestors, and these comprise the varied "faiths" of the skorne. Myriad cults exist dedicated to specific ancestors. Some remain limited to a single family or bloodline, while the entire skorne population reveres certain singular ancient ancestors. A skorne may revere multiple ancestors, although most choose two for the majority of their devotion. Usually they select first one of the great ancients whose legend all skorne know and who embodies the virtues of their caste. The second, most often exalted within recent memory, possess a lineage deemed particularly admirable, and has a more direct relation to the individual skorne.

Skorne maintain veneration several ways, including a small dedicated shrine in one's home and keeping an item associated with the ancestor on one's person. Some skorne inscribe ancestral names and symbols on weapons or armor. Individual piety varies as in the west. Some rarely think of the ancestors while others spend a lifetime painstakingly attempting to emulate their icons. Many consider those who can attain the fragment of a sacral stone or the core sacral

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stone of such a revered ancestor particularly fortunate and favored, although this rarely occurs outside the extoller caste.

The work of a trio of great ancestors gave rise to the first sacral stone: Voskune, Kaleed, and Ishoul. Voskune existed long before the other two, but they built their work on his foundation. Their efforts allowed the skorne to master a method to preserve a spirit indefinitely after death as a sacred relic. The skorne call the process by which the spirit of a dead skorne crystallizes in a prepared sacral stone kept by his descendants exaltation. In this fashion, ancestors worshiped by the skorne remain among them. Such ancestors can interact with the living through the intercession of the extoller caste. This type of contact has many rituals and prohibitions associated with it and the exalted consider it disrespectful to disturb them without a compelling reason. Extollers (see Skorne Character Classes, Extoller, p. 232) spend their lives studying these rites and mastering the ability to communicate with the dead to serve as a conduit for the ancestors when they must manifest their will.

The skorne have a very different depiction of the afterlife than any religion of western Immoren. Skorne have no equivalent to Urcaen and believe that nothing positive awaits them after death. After death, a skorne's spirit falls into the infinite dark and hostile oblivion called the "Void". Only by preservation in a sacral stone can one avoid this fate. A skorne earns preservation either by arising to greatness to become exalted, or falling in battle near an ancestral guardian or an extoller who will preserve their essence as an honored companion of the exalted. The percentage of individuals thus preserved represents a small fraction of the majority lost to the Void. Most skorne have a pragmatic attitude toward this inevitability and consider it a simple fact of life.

## Practices and Benefits of Religious Schools

While most skorne revere multiple ancestors and could abide by the dictates of multiple schools, they can only gain one of the optional benefits listed below. The listed benefit applies only as long as the character qualifies for the benefit by adhering to the required behavior as determined by the GM.

A desire to prove oneself and gain glory and honor motivates most pious skorne, particularly those of the warrior caste. This caste has the most reasonable expectation of earning preservation, but members of the worker caste do achieve this state. Only very rarely do extollers judge a scholar, mortitheurge, or even a master builder worthy of preservation in a sacral stone. Even the majority of extollers will face the Void, although those who enter battle and die in combat usually earn preservation.

Extollers slowly and carefully craft the sacral stones, and the senior-most extollers decide who among their house merits exaltation. This gives extollers singularly high standing above the worker caste, and extollers capable of waging war can rise to the top of the warrior caste as well. Even house lords treat extollers with respect for their unique ability to contact the ancients.

While any remembered ancestor can gather a cult following, several timeless traditions have arisen based on the greatest ancestors. Most skorne subscribe to one or more philosophical schools associated with these individuals. Sizable houses may boast shrines to all of the great ancestors in addition to shrines for notable members of their direct bloodline. Skorne do not gather for sermons or prayer, but the pious spend time at these shrines in meditation or contemplation, particularly before embarking on difficult tasks.

## School of Ishoul and Kaleed

These seminal extollers receive veneration as a pair. While their work derived from the genius of Voskune, Ishoul and Kaleed created the first sacral stone and made Voskune's beliefs in exaltation a physical reality. Extollers have the most interest in the philosophies of Ishoul and Kaleed which relate to the transience of the flesh and the immutable nature of the spirit. Philosophers of this school have generated considerable material related to the connection between spirit and stone as demonstrated by the sacral crystallization process.

Those outside the ranks of extollers or advanced mortitheurges consider this school's writings esoteric and impenetrable. The school includes mystical speculation regarding the nature of the Void and the importance of preserving the greatest skorne spirits from its hunger. Some texts imply that ancients should risk madness as a *kovaas* before suffering the oblivion waiting in the Void. Fundamental texts of this school describe a hierarchy of states of spiritual being, similar to the caste hierarchy for the living, with the ancient exalted at the pinnacle and those consigned to the Void at the bottom.

Together with Voskune, Ishoul and Kaleed form a trio of highly revered ancestors not exalted on their deaths. Despite inventing the process, only warriors could exalt in the era of Ishoul and Kaleed. These brilliant extollers' status as workers exempted them from consideration.

**Practices and Benefits of the School of Ishoul and Kaleed:** Pious skorne who revere Ishoul and Kaleed pay particular reverence to their own blood ancestors, as per the teachings. They seek to acquire a fragment of the sacral stone (or eventually a complete sacral stone) of a direct blood ancestor

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to keep on their person. Lesser sacral stone fragments sometimes come available to those who have proven themselves loyal and worthy to their house.

Extollers who maintain such a sacral stone or fragment and spend at least some time each day in meditation considering the teachings of Ishoul and Kaleed gain benefits for doing so (see Extroller, p. 232). Craftsmen often set such stones into armor, weapons, or band them in ornamented metal, often including words in praise to Ishoul and Kaleed as well as the name of the ancestor whose fragment they carry.

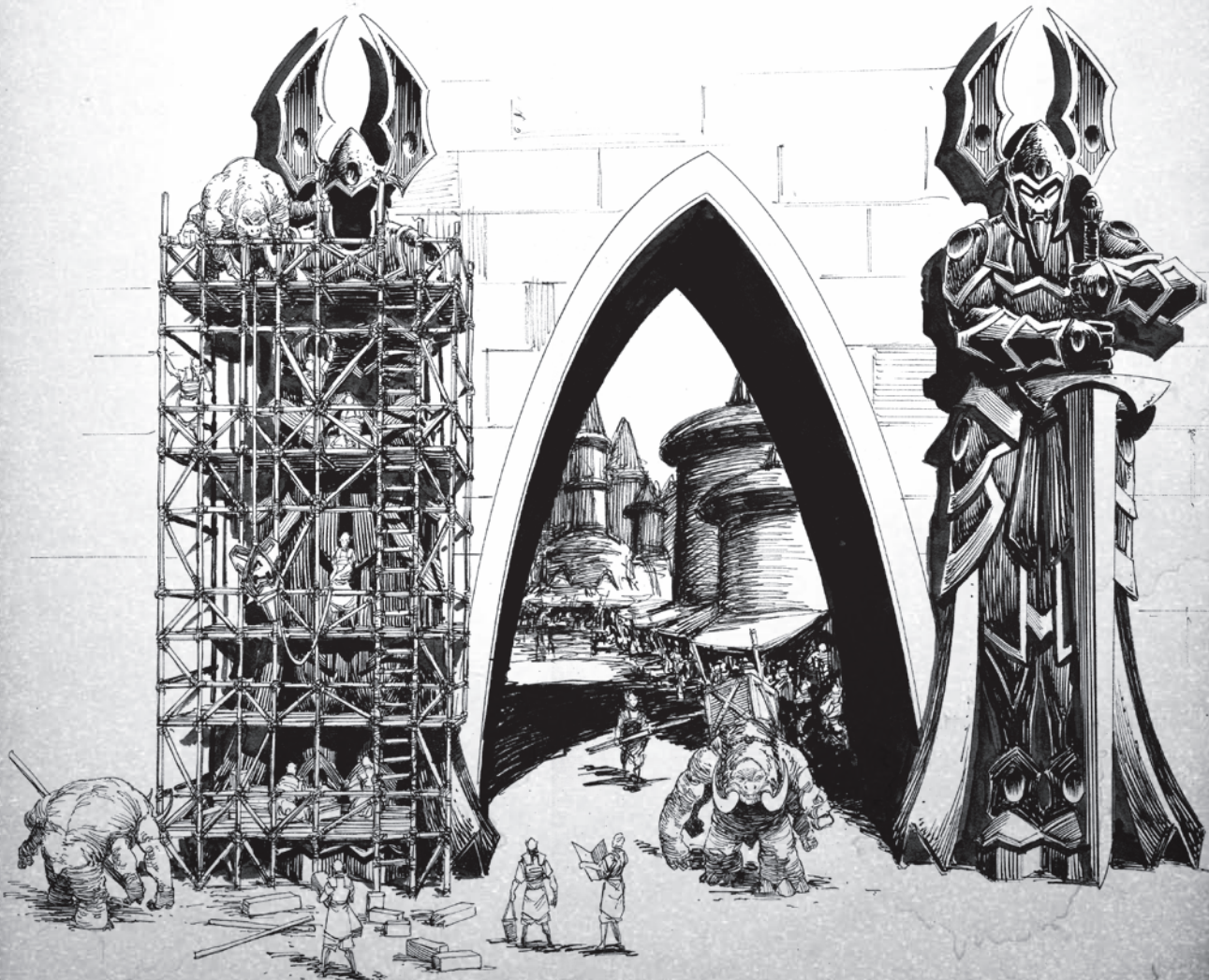
## School of Kexorus

Revered by the educated among the working caste and the greatest and most ancient non-warrior exalted, Kexorus invented writing among the skorne, making him particularly admired by scholars and house historians. Extollers entrusted with preserv-

ing house lore pay Kexorus respect in addition to Ishoul and Kaleed. His principles have given rise to an offshoot school of thought responsible for the majority of skorne advances in chymistry and engineering, as well as being the inspiration for the Corpusulem which served as the foundation for advances in chirurgery and mortitheurgy. Even warriors acknowledge the accomplishments of Kexorus for his work preserving the *boksune* code in writing for the first time.

### Practices and Benefits of the School of Kexorus:

Skorne who revere Kexorus seek to acquire and maintain written tomes and scrolls and preserve them against destruction. Such individuals must spend at least some of their time each day reading, whether from their own collection or in archives accessible to them from their house. So long as they remain properly pious—spending at least some time each day in meditation considering the teachings of



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the ancestors—and have access to a diverse collection of writing, such individuals gain a +2 competence bonus to any Knowledge or Forgery checks.

## School of Morkaash

The first paingiver Morkaash learned to master the intricacies of anatomy and tested his limits for suffering twelve generations before the destruction of Lyoss. Like Voskune before him, he knew power arose from the mastery of flesh, but Morkaash focused this discipline inward. He sought to push his body past its breaking point and become the perfect hunter. In his legends he spends weeks or even months foregoing food, water, and even breathing to await his prey. After each kill he dissected the body to understand its inner workings. The thin divide between life and death fascinated him. Morkaash believed pain and deprivation held the key to enlightenment. In the spark of pain he saw the crux of life and the urge to survive; an impulse that could overwhelm all rational thought and potentially break the conscious will.

Morkaash attracted followers even in life, but his philosophical teachings prospered in the centuries to follow and gave rise to the paingiver caste. Every paingiver holds Morkaash as a revered ancestor regardless of bloodline. Morkaash has a similarly devoted following among certain educated circles, such as churgeons and chymists, who admire the systematic method by which he experimented with the essence of life. He has a smaller but loyal following among hunters in fringe communities. The body of work produced by philosophers of this school includes extensive anatomical studies as well as esoteric meditations on achieving enlightenment by suffering.

### Practices and Benefits of the School of Morkaash:

Skorne revering Morkaash spend several hours every week in the study of anatomy. This includes examining texts on anatomy but must also extend to hands-on study of living systems and the dissection of living subjects and cadavers. Faithful of Morkaash always seek to expand their knowledge of skorne physiology and the anatomy of other beasts, including those conditioned for battle. This includes ancillary studies of poisons and chymical mixtures that have an affect on the body or mind. Obeying the dictates of Morkaash requires one to stay physically fit and to endure regular fasting as well as practicing the ability to endure pain.

Followers of Morkaash regularly pierce, cut, or burn their own flesh while seeking to retain their focus. Pious skorne—those who spend at least some time each day in meditation considering the teachings of the ancestors—who strictly adhere to this lifestyle gain a +2 competence bonus to Concentration, Intimidate, and Survival checks.

## School of Voskune

Voskune is the greatest remembered ancestor from the time before exaltation. His devotees consider his loss a fundamental tragedy underlying all life and study it to reduce the fear of facing the Void. The worker caste aphorism uttered as death approaches, “If Voskune can endure the Void, so can I”, exemplifies this. Voskune understood before anyone else that mortification of the flesh could bring arcane power. The first extoller, he learned to pluck out his eye and replace it with a polished crystal by which he could view spirit in its natural shape. He became a master of the energies later named mortitheurgy, manipulated spirit to sustain his flesh past mortal limits, and forced reality to conform to his will.

All skorne know the legends of Voskune, but his true devotees generally come from arcanists seeking to master mortitheurgy. Voskune began the work which Ishoul and Kaleed later completed and so holds singular importance for the extoller caste. No other philosophy among the skorne has inspired so many and varied texts over the millennia. Voskune has even inspired a specific brand of heresy in Malphas whose adherents believe the city hosts what they call the “Self Exalted Trinity”. They say the spirits of Voskune, Ishoul, and Kaleed resisted the pull of the Void by sheer force of will. Most shun followers of this belief, viewing its adherents as bringers of ill luck, as they often starve or bleed to death after sloppily blinding themselves and maiming their own bodies.

**Practices and Benefits of the School of Voskune:** Many individuals who admire Voskune lack the intelligence, unique stamina, and fortitude required to actually practice mortitheurgy. Regardless, they hope to come to a unique understanding of the connection between spirit and flesh found in bloodshed or the extinction of life. Warriors sometimes follow Voskune and seek the occasional glimpse of absolute truth while waging war and fighting to exhaustion. While the bulk of Voskune’s devotees arise from intellectuals and students of the occult, a significant secondary group comes from house lords and heirs who must learn the fundamentals of mortitheurgy. Nearly every skorne house maintains a shrine to Voskune, even if only a humble alcove eclipsed by the elaborate altars to great heroes of the house.

Pious skorne—those who spend at least some time each day in meditation considering the teachings of Voskune—and who regularly witness or take part in bloodshed and death gain a +2 competence bonus to Spellcraft checks.

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## School of Vuxoris the First Exalted (Code of Hoksune)

First and greatest of the warrior-philosophers, Vuxoris remains a paragon of the warrior caste emulated by all skorne who march to battle. Vuxoris practiced a heavily armored martial tradition considered a precursor to the cataphracts, who hold him in particular esteem. Vuxoris developed the *hoksune* warrior code which defined the principles still adhered to by skorne seeking honor and glory in battle. *Hoksune* passed by oral tradition from mentor to student as a series of chanted verses, akin to poetic stanzas, in the style used by lore keepers before the invention of the alphabet. Students memorized and recited these chants continually until they internalized their logic in battle. This regimented training preserved the code for sixteen centuries until Kexorus, the Sage of Malphas, inscribed it.

One of Vuxoris' core philosophies states that a true warrior only really lives while risking his life in combat. A warrior becomes a mere shadow outside of combat, his spirit asleep and dying, and only regains vitality with the first swing of battle. The risk of death is inseparable from true life. *Hoksune* teaches that each warrior must welcome the approach of death to fight with enlightened perfection. Vuxoris' teachings also emphasize the need to close with one's enemy, to look in their eyes, and witness the moment of their death. This has given rise to the belief that killing from a distance carries less honor. This has affected the respective standings between different warrior castes, such as the lower esteem given Venators compared to the more traditional Praetorians.

Vuxoris became the first ancestor exalted after death when Ishoul and Kaleed placed his spirit in the first sacral stone. Unfortunately his sacral stone has vanished and scholars believe it destroyed, perhaps fractured and divided too often by descendents seeking to borrow his strength. Some among his widespread cult believe the sacral stone or its fragments might still exist and they seek any evidence of this.

**Practices and Benefits of the School of Vuxoris:** Warriors who follow these beliefs work continually to improve their fighting prowess, which makes integrating Vuxoris' teaching into daily life quite simple. Activity spent in drills, training, sparring, and ensuring weapons and armor remain in good repair, all make up the lifestyle of those who follow the code of *hoksune*. Devotees know no amount of practice replaces the actual experience of bloodshed. The truly pious memorize the entire code, although most warriors can only speak a few passages from memory.

The truly devoted can recite the code aloud while sparring without hindering their fighting. This total concentration helps prevent a fighter from betraying his intent before he strikes, bestowing a +2 competence bonus to Bluff skill checks to feint in combat as well as a +2 competence bonus to Sense

Motive checks to sense when an opponent is trying to feint in combat. Only those willing to spar while reciting *hoksune* gain this bonus.

## Cult of the Reborn

The arrival of Vinter Raelthorne IV has sent many shockwaves through skorne society. That this entire society and culture should allow a human to rule them may seem strange to outsiders. Essential to this process has been the spreading of rumors that Vinter is "the Reborn". This term denotes the belief of many skorne that Vinter contains the spiritual essence of some great ancient ancestor. The most commonly stated explanation for this holds that a sacral stone became lost in the ancient past across the Abyss and eventually shattered. Rather than becoming *kovass*, this spirit had the strength to stay sane and endure but wandered lost for untold centuries until it came among the westerners. There it found a vessel worthy of housing it, and thus Vinter Raelthorne IV entered this world a skorne in spirit if not in flesh.

The deeds of Vinter have become legendary among the skorne, particularly the bloody exploits during the First and Second Unifications. Many see them as the deeds of a lord great enough to guarantee a place among the exalted. Many worship Vinter as if he had already exalted, including placing shrines in his name within their homes. Some of these cultists scarify their flesh with the crude representations of swords.

Not all skorne readily accept this title of Reborn, although few will speak such doubts aloud. They acknowledge Vinter as a great warrior and tyrant but do not believe him to have a skorne essence. Some have wondered at the opinion of the ancestors themselves. The extollers have said little on this topic, though many influential and great exalted have spoken their support of the supreme archdominar. They have sent ancestral guardians into the west as a sign of their support to preserve the great heroes among the Army of the Western Reaches. While many house ancestors have given their clear support to Vinter, none have sent specific confirmation of his claim as Reborn, nor any identification of which lost ancestor provided the reincarnated spirit. Those among the cult have made many wild speculations on this matter, including the outrageous suggestion that Vinter is Vuxoris the First Exalted. Most skorne would consider this akin to blasphemy.

## Heresy of Norvaak

Norvaak ruled House Bashek and caused the destruction of much of Halaak in 1700 BR by shattering the sacral stones of three tremendously powerful ancestors to set *kovaas* spirits on the city as a curse against his rivals. Norvaak died as he released these spirits, but they unleashed tremendous destruction. Aspiring extollers learn of Lord Tyrant and Supreme



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Aptimus Norvaak as a cautionary tale. The upper extollers of most houses consider both revering Norvaak a heresy and the destruction of a sacral stone to manipulate a *kovaas* an expressly forbidden taboo. Some revere Norvaak despite this and study his art as a natural extension of drawing on ancestral strength. Followers of Norvaak aspire to control *kovaas* spirits. Rumors persist that the Conqueror has sponsored those versed in these arts and sees them as just another weapon to employ against his enemies.

## Skorne Characters

Consider the adjustments provided for the ethnic groups below optional. The GM decides whether or not these adjustments apply to character generation. Ethnic group adjustments replace those considered standard for the skorne and do not stack with them.

Outside the Skorne Empire, all skorne suffer **Prejudice Penalties** as a result of their invasion. When interacting with people who lack extended exposure to their culture, skorne suffer a -6 circumstance penalty to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and similar social skill checks. The GM may waive or halve these penalties at his discretion.

If the GM does not wish to include variance by ethnic group, all skorne characters should receive the ability adjustments and traits of the Kademesh (below) except the automatic class skill. When generating skorne characters a player can opt to forego the +2 Str (or other ability adjustment) and +1d8 hit points at 1st level to eliminate the Level Adjustment +1.

## Skorne Ethnic Groups

Skorne ethnicities hold trivial importance compared to caste and house. Nonetheless regional groups have an awareness of a shared heritage. These groups display only mild and subtle physical differences compared to the diversity seen among humans or even trollkin in the west, and outsiders find it difficult to recognize individual skorne based on ethnic group. More obvious variance exists in dialect, accent, and manner of dress.

Each of these four large groups contains myriad inconsequential subcultures including subtle regional differences not listed here.

## Kademesh

The largest ethnic group of the Skorne Empire, the Kademesh hail originally from the fertile areas of the south-east, including natives of Kademe and dozens of large villages and settlements along the Hezaat River. The more plentiful food and water in this area encourage larger families. This does not necessarily translate to 'wealth' by skorne reckoning and many of these houses enjoy little esteem and station. A wealthy house built on farming never commands the respect, no matter how well fed, as even a small and impoverished house noted for its warriors. Productive farms send the bulk of their crops to their 'betters' elsewhere in the empire, including to the ravenous capital.

Houses seeking slave-stock have traditionally found excellent hunting in the southeast. Slave-gathering expeditions occur more rarely since Vinter's singular rule, but southeastern houses remain tainted by this history. Despite this lingering disdain, Kademesh remain the dominant population found everywhere in the empire. Some seek to better their station by providing services to higher houses or fighting in wars of the Empire. Those of humble background rarely rise above Hestatians but a few of proven skill aspire to become Praetorians and thereby earn higher honor for their descendants.

While little appreciated elsewhere, southern Kademesh number among the few skorne to spend time at sea. Kademe boast a sizable fishing fleet, although of awkward construction and dubious sea-worthiness by western standards. Even the boldest Kademesh respect the powerful currents and sudden windstorms of the Shattered Spine Islands and rarely venture far from their home port.

Southeastern Kademesh have lilting accents and a preference for the regional Kadesh language. Most speak Havaati fluently unless their profession has kept them isolated from the central empire. Kademesh of this region wear light armor, preferring heavier cloth robes and warmer garments, due to the more temperate climate. Even the wealthy prefer to demonstrate their station with displays of elaborately embroidered clothing rather than piercings or jewelry.

**Ability Adjustment:** +2 Str

**Bonus Hit Points:** +1d8 bonus hit points at 1st level

**Bonus Skill Points:** 4 bonus skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each level thereafter

**Bonus Feat:** Bonus feat at 1st level

**Automatic Class Skill:** Use Rope

**Base Height:** 5'9", Female 5'6" (+2d10")

**Base Weight:** Male 155 lbs., Female 125 lbs (+height mod x 2d4 lbs.).

**Automatic Language:** Havaati;

**Bonus Languages:** Kadesh, Soresh (dialect of Havaati)

# The Skorne Empire

**Level Adjustment:** +1 (applied only if adopting Ability Adjustment and Bonus Hit Points)

## The Kajar

Most subcultures of the major ethnicities arise from inconsequential distinctions, but not the Kajar. These ~120,000 skorne descend from southerners who survived the great cataclysm and its aftermath by virtue of living so far from the epicenter. The Kajar never joined the community of Malphas and shielded instead among caves in the Kajaras Mountains. Thus the Kajar do not share the same great ancestors as other skorne, making them outsiders. Kajar have distinct and privately venerated ancestral heroes. Kajar have taken leading

positions among the Kademe fishing fleet and shown a similar aptitude for piloting river boats up the Hezaat to Mirketh Lake. Their efforts keep the empire connected though afford them little acclaim. Kajar have found employment as couriers, traders, and messengers, which has made some of these individuals useful spies to Vinter Raelthorne. No one pays a Kajar much mind and one often finds them far from home and busy on peculiar errands.

Stockier, broader of shoulder, and standing a few inches shorter than Kademesh, Kajar usually have smooth skull ridges, rather than scalloped, and their skin has a slightly olive hue.

**Ability Adjustment:** +2 Str

**Bonus Hit Points:** +1d8 bonus hit points at 1st level



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**Bonus Skill Points:** 4 bonus skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each level thereafter

**Bonus Feat:** Bonus feat at 1st level

**Automatic Class Skill:** Spot

**Base Height:** 5'6", Female 5'2" (+2d10")

**Base Weight:** Male 150 lbs., Female 120 lbs (+height mod x 2d4 lbs.).

**Automatic Language:** Havaati;

**Bonus Languages:** Kadesh, Soresh (dialect of Havaati)

**Level Adjustment:** +1 (applied only if adopting Ability Adjustment and Bonus Hit Points)

## Kasortaan

A distinct ethnic group for only three centuries, the Kasortaan descend from the same roots as the Sortaani: the courageous—or desperate and disenfranchised—who left the central empire for its northern extreme and slowly expanded the holdings of their houses into the Valley of Konash and any other useful land bordering the Blasted Desert. Most skorne remain superstitious of these areas and consider it almost unthinkable to settle north of the Shroudwall Mountains. The Kasortaan have proven that hard work, vigilance, and solidarity of arms can wrest prosperity from this area. Others among the Kasortaan dwell near the inhospitable badlands of the Trembling Waste, learning to tame the dangerous beasts found there.

The Kasortaan have slowly put aside their nomadic roots as holding the northern regions requires skorne to claim lands and defend them. Some reluctantly turned to farming. Whenever possible strong houses will enter into arrangements with their lessers to delegate these tasks, or subjugate weaker rivals and force them to till the land. The greatest house lords boast tremendous tracts of territory and feign the old ways by continually patrolling their lands. Such skorne lords travel with impressive entourages of soldiers, slaves, and servants, maintaining sumptuous but temporary tents to hold court over their vassals. The Kasortaan remain wary of external threats from competing skorne or the dangerous beasts of these fringe regions. Many noted trackers, beast handlers, and paingivers have arisen from this rugged area.

The Kasortaan speak in a rapid and nearly clipped regional variation of the Soresh dialect, but remain easily understood by other Soresh speakers. Many do not know proper Havaati, and only the privileged upper castes commonly learn to read and write. Plated armor, albeit of lighter metals, proliferates. With iron scarce, the Kasortaan reserve it for steel weapons. The Kasortaan enjoy a diverse assortment of decorative embellishments for armor and clothing, fond of polished bronze and gold which demonstrates prosperity. One commonly sees body and facial piercings among them, as well as ritual scarification on brow, neck, and cheeks.

**Ability Adjustment:** +2 Con

**Bonus Hit Points:** +1d8 bonus hit points at 1st level

**Bonus Skill Points:** 4 bonus skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each level thereafter

**Bonus Feat:** Bonus feat at 1st level

**Automatic Class Skill:** Survival

**Base Height:** 5'7", Female 5'4" (+2d10")

**Base Weight:** Male 145 lbs., Female 115 lbs (+height mod x 2d4 lbs.).

**Automatic Language:** Soresh (dialect of Havaati);

**Bonus Languages:** Havaati, Kadesh

**Level Adjustment:** +1 (applied only if adopting Ability Adjustment and Bonus Hit Points)

## Malzash

The Malzash place more than typical importance on their cultural background. Malzash claim to descend directly from the original ruling houses of ancient Malphas. These skorne led the construction of Malphas after the great cataclysms rocked the eastern continent, and later led their people south to found Halaak. The Malzash control more of the great houses than any other ethnic group. Malzash appear throughout the central empire but concentrate in the two cities they deem triumphs of their ancestors. Some Malzash houses remain among the rugged peaks of the Shroudwall Mountains deliberately isolated from the rest of skorne society. These houses oversee much of skorne mining and quarrying, the actual labor conducted by slaves or members of lesser houses under their dominion.

While all skorne place importance on tracing lineage, Malzash take this to extremes and memorize lengthy lists of ancestry. Even lower caste Malzash believe themselves superior to peers of 'inferior' lineage and resent when house conflicts force their submission. Upper caste Kademesh particularly enjoy finding opportunities to humiliate Malzash and enlist them as servants whenever possible.

The boasts of the Malzash have some historical merit, as these bloodlines include many proven warriors and house leaders. They claim great attunement to mortitheurgy and the spiritual path of extolling. Malzash disdain the crude sound of Kadesh and the rural dialects of Soresh and speak only Havaati. Most consider education a point of honor and necessary to become leaders in their houses or upper officers in the military. Some have also taken pains to learn the western language of Cygnaran, although the use of this language remains rare and infrequent except among those who must deal with the Conqueror. Some skorne associate knowledge of this language—not entirely accurately—with an implied familiarity with Vinter or his inner circle. Urban Malzash, keenly aware of their caste and station, meticulously dress for their position. They prefer formal house armor; Malzash walk the streets fully

# The Skorne Empire

equipped for battle. They commonly pierce the head ridge, ears, lips, or brow.

**Ability Adjustments:** +2 Str

**Bonus Hit Points:** +1d8 bonus hit points at 1st level

**Bonus Skill Points:** 4 bonus skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each level thereafter

**Bonus Feat:** Bonus feat at 1st level

**Automatic Class Skill:** Diplomacy

**Base Height:** 5'10", Female 5'7" (+2d10")

**Base Weight:** Male 160 lbs., Female 125 lbs (+height mod x 2d4 lbs.).

**Automatic Language:** Havaati;

**Bonus Language:** Cygnaran

**Level Adjustment:** +1 (applied only if adopting Ability Adjustment and Bonus Hit Points)

## Sortaani

The widely scattered Sortaani, originating from the rural outlands, compose the second largest skorne ethnicity. Masters of savannas, deserts, and the rugged plains, Sortaani ancestors sought shelter among the Shroudwall Mountains and the city of Malphas, but returned to the plains once the worst of the storms passed. While some Sortaani live in every skorne city, the majority live in smaller villages scattered to the fringes of the Empire.

A number of outer Sortaani houses remain nomads. The most influential families, however, control lands, construct semi-permanent dwellings, maintain profitable herds of *belek*, *korbesb*, *kopaar* or other livestock, and enlist warriors to protect them. Sortaani living traditionally on the savannas have little regard for skorne who have given up those traditions to live in the cities. Sortaani consider 'river people' little better than dirt-grubbers or pampered slaves. Nor do they have kind words for the urban Malzash, whom they feel city living has made soft. Only the Kasortaan, who share the same ancestry, rouses any feelings of affinity. Some inevitable tension exists between 'true' Sortaani and those who increasingly answer the allure of opportunities in Halaak or other skorne cities. In some cases families disown, or at the least make unwelcome, those who make this transition. Those accepted as paingivers constitute an exception, as Sortaani deem this a great honor and do not view it as turning one's back on tradition.

The Sortaani pride themselves on their herds of livestock and their ability to hunt and tame dangerous beasts of the wild. Many of the best skorne cavalry come from among these people, and several influential Sortaani houses have earned their reputation capturing, breed-

ing, and training the Ferox (saber cats) utilized by other houses in battle. The need for these powerful beasts and their skilled riders has only increased with recent military excursions into the foreign west.

The Sortaani developed the Soresh dialect over the centuries, a rapidly spoken offshoot of Havaati that includes a simpler and less ornate alphabet. Though Sortaani can speak proper Havaati, speaking Soresh demonstrates pride in one's background. The Sortaani, particularly those dwelling on the fringes, wear more subdued colors than other skorne, choosing attire that blends into their surroundings. They have a fondness for body and facial piercings, some of which have special significance among their peers. They commonly wear veils, hoods, and armored masks as rural Sortaani refuse to show faces to strangers. Morkaash the First Paingiver arose from these people and his followers began their masked tradition from his teachings.

**Ability Adjustments:** +2 Str

**Bonus Hit Points:** +1d8 bonus hit points at 1st level

**Bonus Skill Points:** 4 bonus skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each level thereafter

**Bonus Feat:** Bonus feat at 1st level

**Automatic Class Skill:** Handle Animal

**Base Height:** 5'8", Female 5'5" (+2d10")

**Base Weight:** Male 150 lbs., Female 120 lbs (+height mod x 2d4 lbs.).

**Automatic Language:** Soresh (dialect of Havaati);

**Bonus Languages:** Havaati, Kadesh

**Level Adjustment:** +1 (applied only if adopting Ability Adjustment and Bonus Hit Points)

## Starting Age

Adulthood	Barbarian/ Rogue	Fighter/ Ranger	Mortitheurge
18	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6

## Effects of Age

Middle Age <sup>1</sup>	Old <sup>2</sup>	Venerable <sup>3</sup>	Maximum Age
70	100	115	+5d20

<sup>1</sup> -1 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

<sup>2</sup> -2 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

<sup>3</sup> -3 to Str, Con and Dex; +1 to Int, Wis, and Cha

# The Skorne Empire

## Random Starting Age

A hardy race with a long potential lifespan, skorne avoid the debilitating effects of aging considerably longer than humans. However, the crushing weight of accumulated years causes a rapid deterioration once they reach a certain age. Despite the chart above, few skorne live long enough to reach an age at which their body begins to fail. Warrior caste skorne have an average life expectancy of approximately 45 years, while even those of the worker and slave castes rarely live longer than 60 years due to the brutal conditions of daily life and the risk of violent death. While records exist of notable skorne living extraordinarily long lives, such as Archdominar Vaactash of House Balaash, rumored to have survived for over two hundred years, death from old age remains nearly unheard of regardless of caste.

## Great Cities

### Halaak

**In Power:** Archdominar Korinvaas

**Population:** 570,000 (skorne, mostly Malzash and Kademesh)

**Imports:** Grain, livestock, warbeasts, labor beasts, salt, raw materials, iron, stone

**Exports:** Fish, weapons, armor, tools, textiles

Greatest city of the skorne, Halaak now serves as the capital of the Skorne Empire. Though Vinter Raelthorne introduced the concept of a capital with unified rule, skorne culture has revolved around Halaak for thousands of years. The great houses of Halaak, counted the most powerful of the empire, outshine all peers of lesser cities. Decisions made here unleash ripples across the region, whether from great wars between leading houses, innovations in chymistry, mortitheurgy, and tactics, or shifts in culture and caste. The habits of Halaak's great and powerful quickly see emulation abroad.

An imposing wall surrounds this sprawling city of great stone buildings on the southern shore of Mirketh Lake. As fertile farmland as exists in the region lies to the east, and access to the great lake has allowed for a small amount of shipping including vessels journeying from Kademe up the Hezaat River. Tremendous statues guard Halaak's gates, several of them instilled with the exalted spirits of great ancestors who gave their lives in defense of the city. Though some whisper these statues serve only as decoration, their ancestors too removed from the world to act, those who witnessed the arrival of Vinter Raelthorne and his army in 595 AR say these great guardians did not move to intercept him and see this as confirmation of his Reborn status.

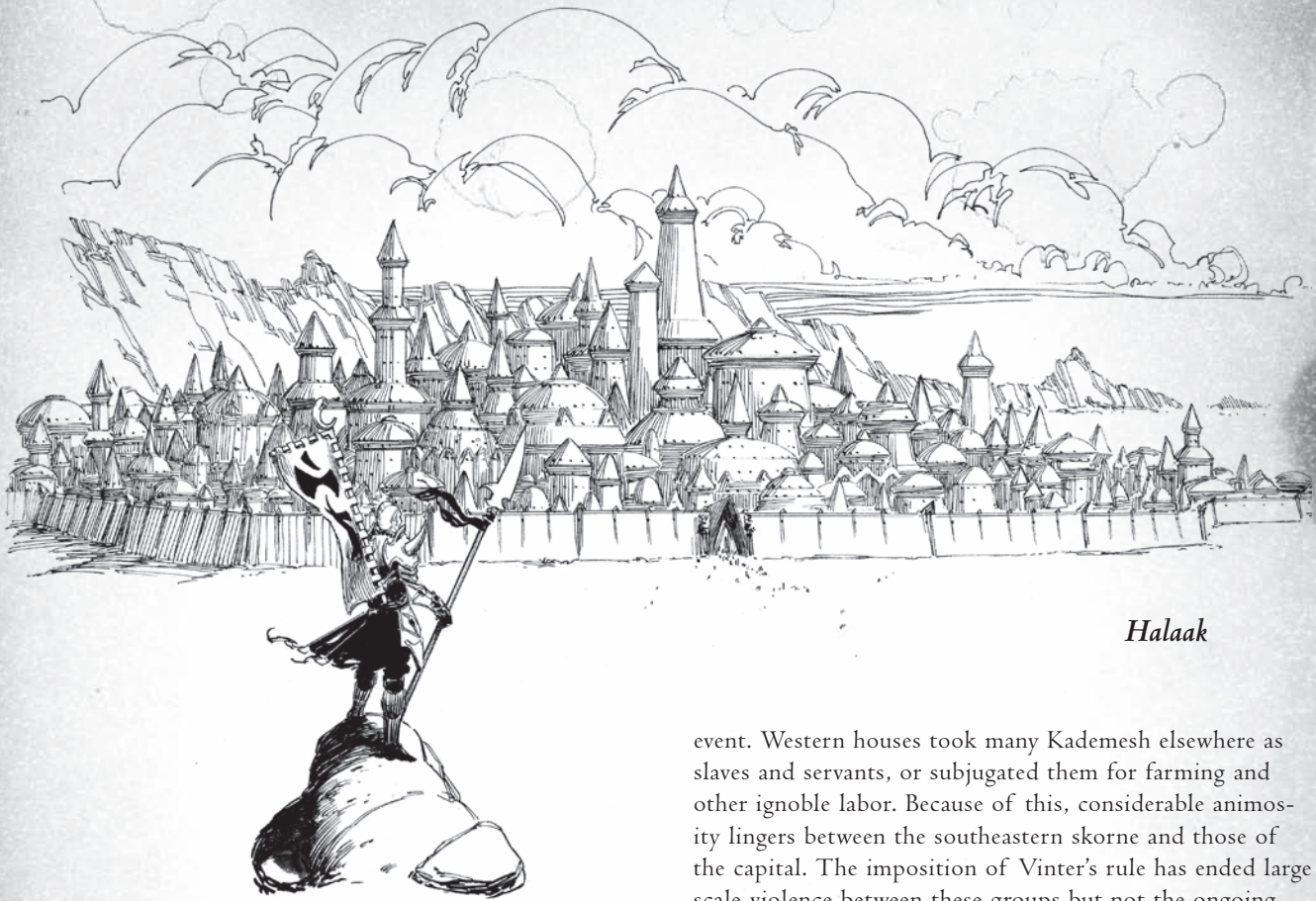
Extremely large thoroughfares divide Halaak into districts. These broad roads provide traffic for the tremendous enslaved beasts which labor in the capital, including titans, mammoths, and other captured beasts of the plains. Construction always continues in Halaak as houses dismantle certain old buildings and erect new towers. This work reflects the fates of powerful houses as compounds shrink or expand, and the city itself continues to accumulate new residents. Several small clusters of houses exist outside the eastern wall in a poorer district primarily occupied by slaves. In time, as merchants erect trade booths here, this area may become another district of the city, at which point the outer wall will expand to encircle and absorb it. Within the larger districts the streets become a tighter maze of narrow alleys and winding paths occupied by the cowed shapes of the lower castes. Smaller cramped buildings cluster near the grand estates of the ruling elite as if offering support. The exact inhabitants of these estates has changed considerably in the last two decades as the arrival of Vinter Raelthorne has prompted widespread changes in status across Halaak. The lowly but loyal rise to replace the once great Betrayers.

### Notable Locale

**Plaza of Excruciation:** This great open plaza at the center of Halaak serves as a bazaar for many merchants and traders as well as being a public gathering place for the uneasy meetings of rival houses to discuss terms or demands. A tremendous statue of Morkaash dominates the plaza near its center, and at his feet stands an elevated platform upon which master tormentors of the paingiver caste perform public torments and executions. For many centuries this stage has displayed the agony of those fallen in house wars as a warning from one great house to another. A victorious house would contract the paingivers to publicly humiliate and cow rivals, bringing favored heirs or relatives captured in war to face their doom before the watching crowds.

Paingivers consider this stage sacred. Many meet here even when no excruciations take place to share information and to seek employment, and no better place exists in the capital for those seeking to recruit paingivers and negotiate terms of contract. A house of respite called the Surcease, owned by the paingivers of the capital, sits off the plaza facing this square, and its dark windows witness any rites performed there. Master Tormentor Morghoul executed the Betrayers here, and the plaza has remained particularly active since the Second Unification. The Betrayers' steamed and polished skulls remain on display just below the lip of the platform, each bearing a plaque describing their misdeeds.

# The Skorne Empire



*Halaak*

## Kademe

**In Power:** Archdominar Jolxal of House Murkaat

**Population:** 190,000 (mostly Kademesh and Kajar)

**Imports:** Iron, copper, bronze, stone, textiles

**Exports:** Fish, rope, riverboats, fish oil

Largest city of the southeast, Kademe serves as the center of Kademesh culture, although in recent decades the large river city Konesaan to the north has increasingly become a central hub for politics and intrigue. The only significant port city of the skorne, Kademe hosts a large assortment of fishing vessels who ply the nearby coast and channels of the Shattered Spine Islands. Fishing remains the dominant industry and trade for Kademe, the catches shipped up the Hezaat River to the capital and other communities.

In ancient times a very significant divide between eastern and western skorne resulted in a number of brutal wars kept quite vividly alive through legends passed down over the generations. The most extreme of these, the Second War of the Hezaat River in 1,000 BR, sees frequent retelling at gatherings of all sizes as if a recent

event. Western houses took many Kademesh elsewhere as slaves and servants, or subjugated them for farming and other ignoble labor. Because of this, considerable animosity lingers between the southeastern skorne and those of the capital. The imposition of Vinter's rule has ended large scale violence between these groups but not the ongoing tension or prejudice with which each side views the other. Additionally, Vinter and his decrees impact less directly the skorne of this far removed region, and they feel at greater liberty to speak their minds. Such "traitors" must still watch their backs. Paingivers lurk in Kademe as elsewhere, but they have fewer numbers and a greater sense of liberty prevails here. Archdominar Jolxal, the great tyrant the residents of Kademe must answer to, fortunately spends more of his time in Konesaan.

The major fishing houses who control the fleet in Kademe may enjoy limited respect in the capital, but they rule life in Kademe. Their word is law to the many captains, sailors, and their families who make their living here. Westerners would consider the shipbuilding here antiquated and inadequate, and the skorne unquestionably do not build ships to sustain deep sea travel.

Along with fishing, the city relies on a number of small but poor mines in the Kajaras Mountains just northeast of the city. These cannot make Kademe self-sufficient and force trade with the capital and Malphas for certain materials. The tense relations between the houses who conduct these negotiations hum with the possibility of bloodshed.

# The Skorne Empire

## Notable Locales

**Hovelak Compound:** Arguably the strongest house in Kademe, Hovelak boasts the largest fishing fleet and the most able-bodied warriors. They maintain a large fortified compound directly on the piers of Kademe and well into the eastern section of the city. They control a significant portion of both the piers and fishing industry, and they ruthlessly extort their rivals. Their house lord, a bitter older skorne named Gelkash, resents his archdominar, and some believe Gelkash gathers forces to challenge him. If Gelkash can rally the greatest houses of Kademe, this might result in a major house war in the southeast which could draw the wrath of Vinter himself.

**Jalesh Shipwrights:** The small Jalesh house chose the wrong side in the Second Unification and has fallen upon hard times. It has a reputation for crafting some of the best vessels in Kademe, but their now limited labor pool cannot produce enough riverboats and ocean vessels to support themselves in the style which they once enjoyed. A number of competing shipbuilding houses have begun to prey upon them, sensing weakness, and several of their laborers have been murdered in the streets. Rumors hold that Lavesk, niece of the old house lord, has made ambitious plans to create a vessel capable of exploring the Shattered Spine

Islands and seeking profit among their uncharted regions. She believes the key to restoring the fortunes of her house might lie to the south.

## Malphas

**In Power:** Archdominar Lorketh of House Jakaar

**Population:** 230,000 (mostly Malzash)

**Imports:** Grain, meats, textiles, wood

**Exports:** Iron, granite, gold, weapons, quartz, gemstones, bronze, copper, silver

First city of the skorne, the name Malphas resonates with ancestral power even among those who have never visited its cramped streets and claustrophobic alleys. This tremendous sprawl of buildings clusters under the cliffs of Telkaris Mountain where a powerful stream cuts a divide into the peaks to create a sheltered and fertile valley. The protection afforded by this cliff face and the surrounding peaks staved off the brunt of the supernatural climate changes and storms that followed the destruction of Lyoss forty-six centuries ago. Despite its history, Halaak has overshadowed Malphas for centuries, as the older city remains a remote mountain community of crowded buildings and feuding, insular houses



# The Skorne Empire

which boast local influence but little say in the goings-on of the capital.

In ancient times the city divided into three fortified wards and remnants of this division remain. The city has expanded several times and little room remains for additional construction within the confines of the sheltered cliff facing. The layered and terraced city quickly confuses anyone except those who have lived their lives here. Several competing fanatic sects that worship the original ancestors have taken up the cause of protecting the oldest buildings in Malphas. They inhabit these nearly ruined structures and attack interlopers who fail to show respect. These militant sects indulge in self-mortification by slicing arms and faces, giving them a terrifying visage in battle. Many old caves and vaults extend into the mountain behind the homes of Malphas, forming a secret warren utilized by some members of the lower castes. Rumors claim that certain ancient sections of the city may have collapsed and perhaps conceal sacral stones or other tools of power under their rubble. A number of significant mines and quarries surround the city and provide much needed materials to the capital or other communities. Many of the Empire's best sources of iron lie in this area.

Malphas remains the largest of the Shroudwall mountain communities. Some here believe they could cast aside the yoke of Vinter Raelthorne should they put the strength of their houses to the task, but unity has rarely happened. While the Conqueror has a far from absolute grip, his agents listen for seditious talk and make examples on those who dare voice open defiance. This has kept the houses of Malphas reluctantly in line.

While the city lacks political influence in the capital, it remains a bastion of skorne scholars. It produces notable masters of mortitheurgy and chymistry, as well as periodic great engineers. These castes remain inferior to warriors but enjoy greater esteem and consideration in Malphas than in most skorne communities. A decided rivalry exists between the educated circles of Malphas and Halaak, and the most famed of these skorne thinkers find no welcome in the opposite city.

## Notable Locales

**The Hoksune Shrine:** The first written transcription of Vuxoris' *boksune* warrior code lies preserved in this small and dark shrine high up the terraced face of the city. This site receives a constant line of pilgrims among those pious members of the warrior caste who revere the First Exalted and mourn the disappearance of his sacral stone. The great ancestor Kexorus inscribed this text in stone circa 3,000 BR, and he remains in this chamber as a tremendously powerful ancestral guardian charged with watching over this relic. As many visitors come to lay eyes on the living statue containing Kexorus as to exam-

ine the *boksune* text. A small sect of honored extollers, sworn to avoid speaking directly to this ancient ancestor except at extremely infrequent intervals, attends to Kexorus and his honored companions.

**The Corpusulem Archive:** The center of this prestigious if controversial fellowship, this singularly impressive archive of skorne scientific and occult lore rests in Malphas. This tremendous maze of cramped shelves and cases holds countless tomes, scrolls, charts, diagrams, and other materials. Emaciated clerks occupy other rooms of the archive night and day copying or restoring documents or managing the voluminous ongoing correspondence of the organization's membership.

Unlike the Hoksune Shrine, the Corpusulem maintains the archive in careful secrecy and security, protected by a sizable group of rugged, fanatic warriors willing to kill any who enter without invitation. Access to the archive requires petitioning its governing administrators, all of them jealous of their positions and wary of outsiders. Despite this, they have done a passable job of maintaining the spirit of the archive by conducting continuous communication with scholars, chymists, chirurgeons, and mortitheurges abroad. A number of sages here, boasting phenomenal memories, catalogue the contents and can recover bits of information for copying and distribution to assist various projects on request. Most such requests or questions arrive in code by secret courier, and these scholars rarely divulge more than the minimum information necessary. Because of these difficulties some members of the Corpusulem have begun to rely more on their local branches, which have grown in size and influence. The branch in Halaak rivals the central archive in importance and has considerably more accessibility.

## Lesser Settlements

### Kajim

**Population:** 35,000

Kajim is the only settlement of note in Tor-Sarikaan and the last major supply and trade point south of the treacherous Trembling Waste. This well fortified and defended town once served as the easternmost limit of the skorne settled area, until settlers braved the Waste to settle the Northern Marches. Kajim remains an important point of resupply and contact between the remote northern communities living beyond the Shroudwall and the rest of the Skorne Empire. The most influential houses in Kajim have managed to tame some of the great beasts of the Wastes and trade them with military houses in the west. This includes the profitable trade in rhinodons captured in the Wastes, tamed, and then conditioned. These great beasts have



# The Skorne Empire

increasingly served in roles similar to titans both among the great houses and with the Army of the Western Reaches.

## Kaleed

**Population:** 70,000

The largest settlement along the northern section of the Hezaat River, just south of Mirketh Lake, Kaleed's name comes from the great ancient who assisted in the creation of the first sacral stone, and its inhabitants claim he arose from this community. A sizable veneration shrine exists here, even though Malphas claims the larger share of his following. Kaleed boasts a relatively impressive library among lesser settlements and a notable local following of philosophers, mortitheurges, and others among the educated worker caste. Many of the best riverboats and lake boats come from Kaleed, one of its more important local industries.

## Kalos

**Population:** 20,000

A small but important settlement west of Halaak, Kalos has profited in recent months from the ongoing traffic between the Abyssal Fortress and the capital. It has served as an important military mustering point for aspiring soldiers joining the western conquest. Before this it served as a location for western plains dwellers to gather to trade supplies, hides, and other goods with merchants who would serve as an intermediary with the larger markets in the capital. Its outlying retaining wall only partially protects this settlement of low buildings from the powerful wind and dust storms which frequently sweep through. During certain months of the year its residents must work vigilantly to prevent the shifting southernmost tendrils of the Blasted Desert from burying the northwestern side of town in sand.

## Kalvat

**Population:** 55,000

The largest community near Melhaas Lake, Kalvat's primary importance lies in its massive outdoor market for the sale of warbeasts. Much of the industry of the city revolves around the support of this market and the feeding of the warbeasts brought here for sale. The city sees an unusual number of fresh titans captured in the plains that still require subduing and tormenting into proper behavior, which occasionally results in incidental death and destruction. Despite this the great market has proven very profitable to the inhabitants and it has become a destination of choice for paingivers specializing in the training and taming of beasts. Near the market stands the Blood Sand Arena, where warbeasts fight for the enjoyment of spectators and the speculation of potential buyers. These events rarely last to the

death, overseen by skilled mortitheurges and chirurgions, as everyone considers the beasts participating prime assets. Buyers view these combats as good training and practice for the beasts as well as a good initial test of their mettle.

## Konesaan

**Population:** 125,000

While still a lesser settlement, Konesaan's importance has grown and it may one day eclipse Kademe as a major southeastern city. The largest city in the fertile region surrounding the Hezaat River, Konesaan benefits from considerable trade both by river as well as the major road to the capital, and serves as a hub for the bulk of the farming and ranching in the Skorne Empire. Historically, myriad competing houses handled this trade unregulated, but the Conqueror has taken some measures to bring this region more firmly under the control of the capital. The region's inhabitants consider themselves almost a nation apart, and even Archdominar Jolxal, Vinter's vassal here, conducts himself as if an emperor in his own right. Several arching bridges connect this sprawling and disorganized settlement which spreads on both sides of the river. A thick, high wall surrounds the city on the western shore, but the eastern half remains open and continues to expand.

## Kotaan

**Population:** 20,000

The only sizable settlement in the Northern Marches, the most remote and isolated of the skorne regions, the inhabitants of this rustic and unsophisticated town receive little respect or even notice in the capital. However, the skorne of this region remain proud of their strength and ability to wrest lands from territories once considered anathema and cursed. Kotaan's walls stand atop a gradually sloping hill fortified to serve as a stronghold against the dangerous creatures roaming the wild northern region. Along with its permanent inhabitants, the town sees considerable traffic from the nomadic houses of the Northern Reaches, and it serves as a central gathering point for the trade of goods and information. Domina Leskaar of House Cursorik, who serves as Vinter's local authority, controls the largest building in town as her estate.

## Tokraas

**Population:** 35,000

Since Kalos began supporting the military supply lines to the Abyssal Fortress, Tokraas has grown into the most important trade hub of the southwestern skorne settled region. It connects the nomadic and rustic skorne living in the Ocean of Grass with those living on the fringes of the Mokkar and

# The Skorne Empire

further east to the Hezaat River. This town also handles trade with the settlements south of the Mokkar along the coast. A settlement of narrow streets and tightly packed buildings perched atop a small plateau just southwest of the great volcano Karrak, Tokraas' strong fortifications have preserved it more than once from conquest by rival houses of the plains.

The volcano looming to the northeast dominates all views in the city, and ash and smoke continuously drift into the sky from its peak. The city endures near constant ashfall from the volcano, coating all surfaces eventually and leaving a lingering smell of sulfur. Slaves endlessly sweep and gathering this ash. Many of the inhabitants of Tokraas suffer from a number of mild throat and skin afflictions from breathing this ash.

## Verskone

**Population:** 20,000

Verskone sits south of the Mokkar, certainly the most disconnected and isolated skorne settlement south of the Shroudwall. Its inhabitants live relatively simple lives fishing or subsisting on meager farming on the few good areas of land in this region and have very little awareness of the goings-on in the empire. Its only contact to the rest of the Empire comes through the trickle of trade and visitors from Kademe. While not well known abroad, boats crafted in Verskone serve better for ocean travel than those built in Kademe for the Hezaat River. A number of local carpentry traditions make these vessels considerably more rugged, waterproof, and stable on rough waters.

## Skorne Wilds

**Helkan's Reward:** The most fertile and lush region of skorne settled territory just north of the Shroudwall Mountains, this area serves as the foundation for recent emigration of skorne into this region. Its name comes from the first skorne house to discover and exploit its possibilities, soon attracting competitors among what would become the Kasortaan people. Control over this region remains contested among the various powerful families of the Northern Reaches.

**Mirketh Lake:** While described as a lake, this vast body of water truly constitutes an inland sea and stabilizes the weather in the region, which allows the skorne to thrive. The depths of this lake have never been explored and most shipping on Mirketh remains close to the southern shore. Rumors persist of vast creatures dwelling in its waters closer to the Shroudwall, and ships occasionally go missing. Despite this, incidental fishing of Mirketh Lake provides a significant secondary source of food for many skorne communities. Just south of the Mirketh Lake lie its smaller companions Melhaas Lake and Scourge Lake. The latter's name comes from a period in the ancient past when it held toxic and deadly waters. Some claim something foul still lurks at its bottom and mistrust it, but little trace remains today of its former corruption.

**Mokkar, The:** Skorne note this small but extremely hostile desert in the Empire's southern section for biting winds, shifting dunes, and a trackless geography which makes it very easy to lose one's way. Certain skorne legends describe the Mokkar as a living enemy seeking to devour any hapless skorne who



## The Skorne Empire

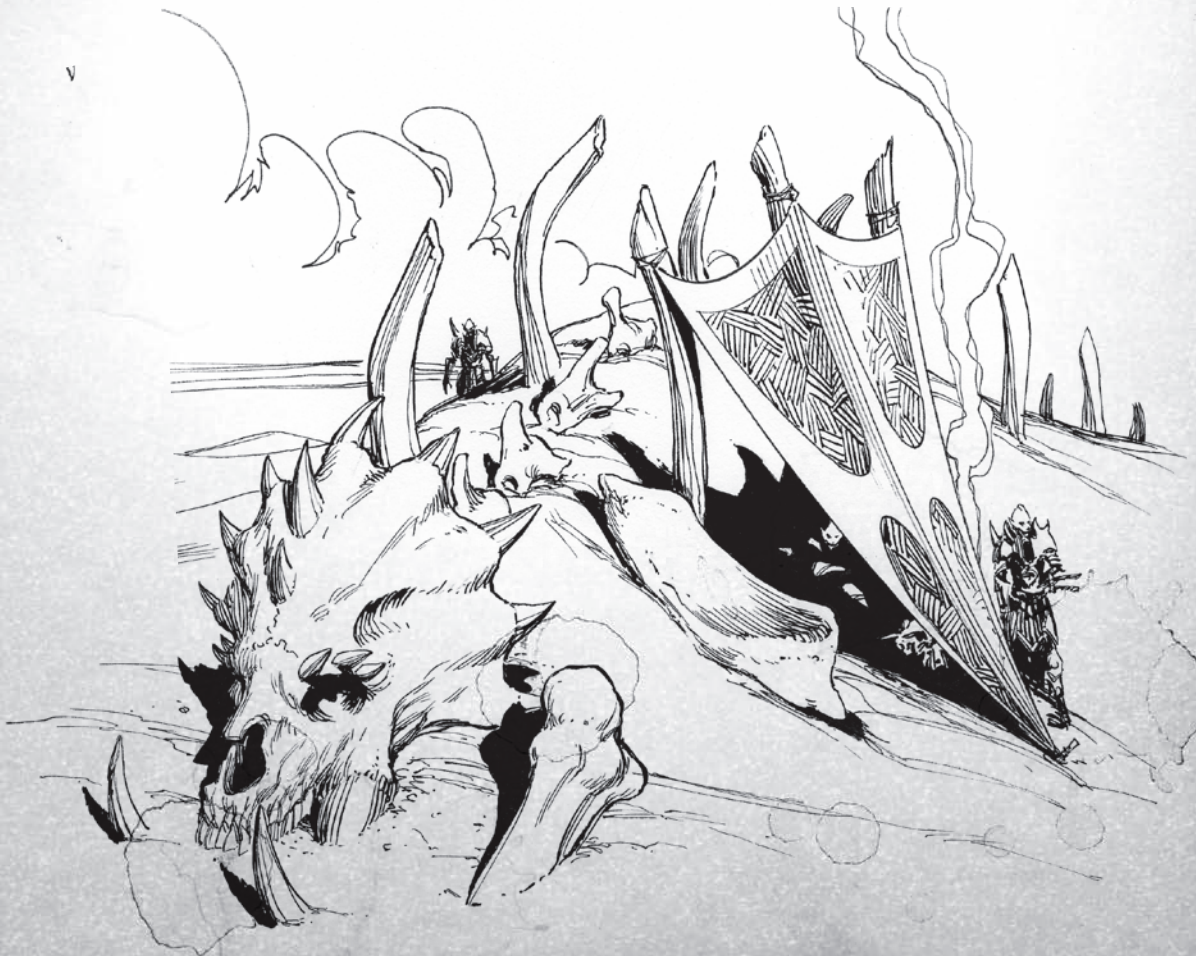
venture into its depths. Rumors also describe it as a place of wisdom where certain ancestors have challenged their fortitude and survived to find enlightenment, collapsing upon the southern shore in a haze of heat-blasted delirium. Certain tribes of efaarit have appeared in the western portion of the Mokkar, although they seem to prefer the Blasted Desert north of the Skorne Empire.

**Ocean of Grass:** North of Kademe lies a vast plain of tall arid vegetation known as the Ocean of Grass. The primary eastern habitat for wild titans still found in the skorne settled region, a number of nomadic skorne, and others hunting for fresh titans to tame, prowl this area. Several predators, such as the ferox, take advantage of the high grasses here to stalk prey. The first tribes to capture and tame these creatures for use as cavalry did so in this region before the practice spread across various houses.

**Shroudwall Mountains:** The skorne consider this large central mountain range their salvation from the ancient catastrophes which engulfed Lyoss. While Malphas remains its

largest settlement, many smaller mountain communities lie scattered throughout its peaks and valleys, although the rugged terrain offers little in the way of useful sustenance. A number of skorne houses explore these regions for likely places to establish mines as these mountains boast the largest sources of iron found in the region.

**Trembling Waste, The:** This craggy desolate region east of the Shroudwall takes its name from its frequent earthquakes. Tall plateaus and craggy spires, which occasionally crumble and crash to earth, cover the landscape. Basilisks originally came from this region, apparently at home within its strange shifting confines. The weather here acts as unpredictably as the earth, with long period of draught followed by flash floods of tremendous intensity. Little grows here other than tenacious vines and weeds, some of which have razor-sharp leaves and poisonous thorns. A number of other peculiar creatures, including oversized bloodthirsty insects and a wide variety of reptiles, have carved niches for themselves here.



# Weapons & Gear



*Knowledge alone is useless when caught in a sandstorm far from any hint of civilization.*

—Professor Pendrake

## Implements for Exploration and Survival

### Ogrun Winch Harness

Sized for use by ogrun, this harness and winch serves teams of Rhulic spelunkers and mining scouts when exploring the deep chasms, caves, and crevices of the Glass Peaks. The winch uses either rope or wire cable and its crank action allows its wearer to drag or lift twice their usual lifting weight. Using the crank action, the winch user may accelerate the movement of a climber using the winch's rope without the usual -5 penalty. Any Strength checks made by the user of the winch, such as pulling a stuck door apart, gain a +4 circumstance bonus. The winch includes a grappling hook which can be secured for climbing (see the Use Rope skill). Cost: 125 gp for winch with rope; 250 gp for winch with wire cable (hardness 5, 8 hp, Break DC 30).

### Brass Diving Helmet, Suit, and Steam Engine-Powered Pump

The exact origins of this diving apparatus have become obscured, but many suspect a bodger of Carre Dova in Ord who turned to deep sea salvage invented it. Originally the helmet attached to a simple leather diving suit that did not provide a properly sealed environment and limited the depth it could dive. Later improvements led to a complete diving suit, oiled and lined to remain watertight, with neck clasps allowing a snug seal for the helmet. A length of hose at the top of the helmet connects to a steam engine-driven air pump which forces fresh air down into the helmet and suit at considerable depths. Most often an operator stays on the surface attending to the steam engine and ensuring its smooth operation. Additionally the weight of the diving suit's boots and belt prevent users from easily ascending without assistance from above. Variations on this suit appear in several coastal towns of Cygnar, Ord, and even Khador where underwater salvage might tempt intrepid souls with more greed than common sense.

The suit and helmet allow the wearer to dive and breathe in relative comfort underwater but require the wearer to stay connected to the steam engine pump. The air hose (hardness 2, 2 hp, break DC 24) may extend up to 150 feet, and the rig

allows the diver to safely operate in depths to a maximum of 90 feet. Going deeper than this causes the seals to leak and the suit to fill with water in 2d4 rounds (once filled with water use the standard rules for holding one's breath). The suit and helmet offer some protection, but the stiff canvas suit, heavy gloves, and weighted boots restrict movement (+2 AC, 2 max Dex, -4 armor check penalty, 50% arcane spell failure chance, 20/15 speed). Spot, Listen, and Search checks while wearing the helmet suffer a -8 penalty. Cost: 350 gp.

### Czavyana Winter Coats

Originally crafted by skilled fur-trappers and traders from Uldenfrost, the Czavyana Trading Posts discovered these fine coats and have sold them in Khador's cold north country at a slow but steady pace as one of their luxury items. These winter coats have proven particularly popular among those in Skirov and Kossite communities who work outdoors to earn their living and can afford the expense. These coats have also filtered to other markets through ongoing trade, including certain Ordic sailors who journey north in winter, and have received a positive reception in Rhul.

The basic version of this coat provides protection from extreme cold to a degree some consider almost supernatural. Lined with fur and boasting a water-resistant sealskin outer layer, this hooded garment allows its wearer to exist comfortably and suffer no damage from conditions down to -50 degrees Fahrenheit. However, wearing this coat in temperatures above 50 degrees causes the wearer to become fatigued within a half hour. Spending an hour with the coat removed will allow full recovery from this fatigue so long as water is available to drink. Cost: 150 gp.

A special variant of this coat exists, made from thoroughly cleaned urthek fur and enhanced with additional tailoring and exotic materials. These rare and expensive urthek winter coats provide the same benefits described above but also provide energy resistance 5 against cold. Cost: 1,500 gp.

### Stormcaller

Among their specialized forces, the Cygnaran Army employs stormsmiths, a team of military engineers who have mastered the use of lightning as a weapon. Stormsmiths come from a variety of backgrounds, including simple engineers, arcane mechanics, or arcanists of other specialties. They use a mechanical staff called a stormcaller as their primary tool for the manipulation of electrical energy. Tipped with a complex mechanism including a whirling iron and copper-plated sphere set within a copper-lined hoop, each of these devices also includes a small hand-

## Weapons & Gear

held controlling and timing mechanism which looks similar to a pocket watch (and gives a +4 bonus to Survival checks to predict weather).

While military hardware and not readily available on the open market, these staves sometimes appear on black markets and fetch high prices from both arcanists and individuals who expect to face the hazards of lightning. They would serve as a particularly helpful tool for any individuals attempting to cross the imposing Stormlands which surround the Abyss.

The mechanical staff houses a heavy accumulator (holding 20 charges) which enables the bearer to gather electrical energy from the surrounding environment and focus it into deadly strikes. Rumors hold that fully trained stormsmiths can use additional powers from these tools besides those listed here.

The staff can be utilized in one of three ways:

First, the bearer can call down a 5-foot-wide, 30-foot-long, vertical bolt of lightning that deals 3d6 electricity damage (Reflex save for half) at any target point chosen by the bearer

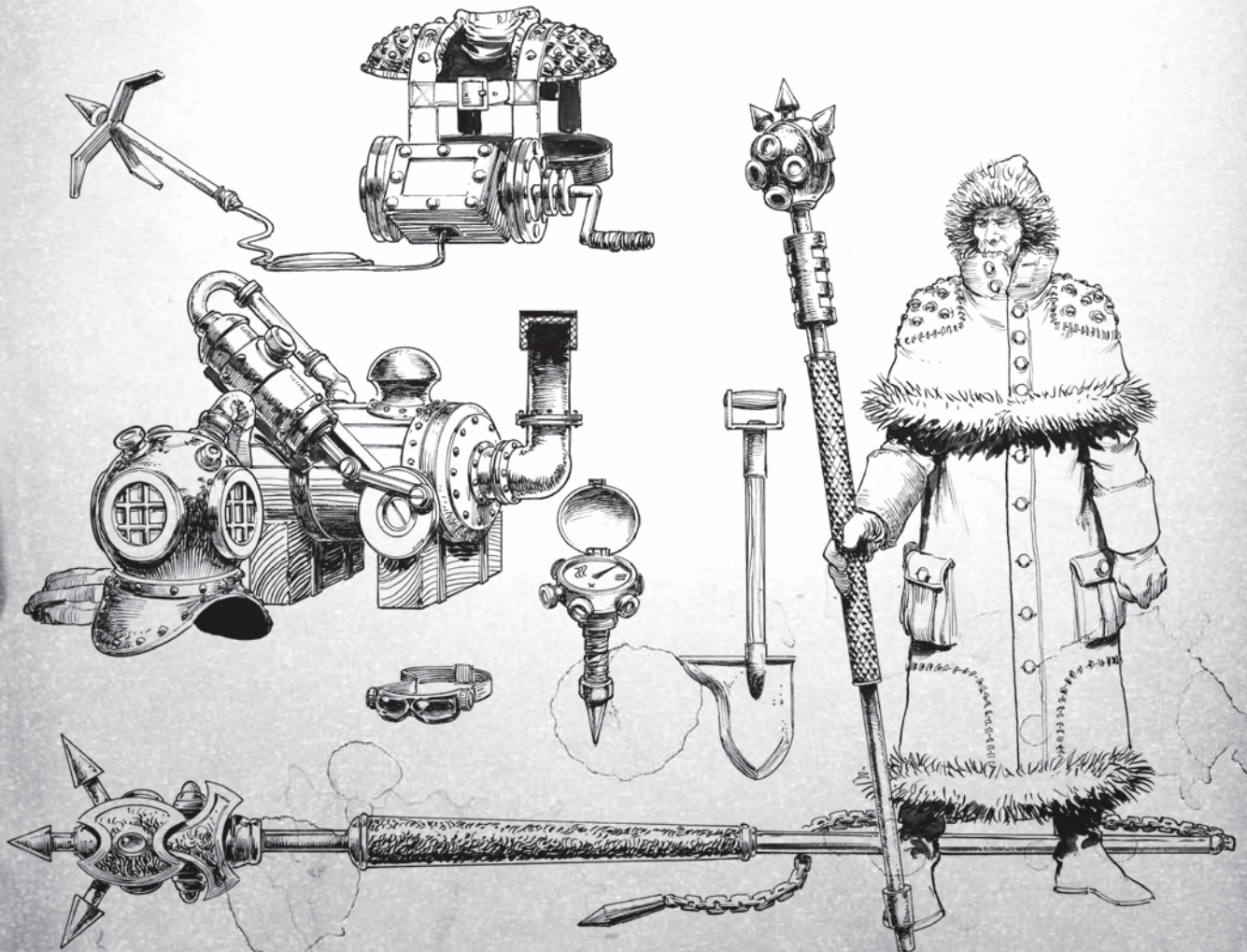
within 100 feet. If in a stormy area, such as a rain storm, each bolt deals 3d10 points of electricity damage instead of 3d6. The bolt effects any creature in the target square or in its path. The bearer must be outdoors for this function to operate, and it drains 4 charges.

Second, if the bearer is an arcane caster they can use charges to apply the Empower metamagic feat for free to a spell they have already prepared which has the lightning descriptor. This drains 8 charges.

Third, a stormcaller can prevent the bearer from suffering damage when struck by naturally occurring lightning. If naturally occurring lightning strikes the bearer of a stormcaller, it has a 75% chance of dispersing harmlessly. This ability fails if the stormcaller has expended all of the charges in its accumulator.

Moderate evocation; CL 8th.

Cost: 18,000 gp.



### Water Dowsing Compass

Originally created by an enterprising but now deceased arcane mechanic explorer named Zars Makentire, this arcano-hydro compass can dows for large water sources (greater than 20 gallons) up to a distance of 10 miles, making it invaluable for extensive expeditions into the Bloodstone Marches. Unfortunately, without other aid, this device can increase the chances of becoming lost as its bearer focuses solely on locating a water source and may lose track of his position relative to other landmarks. The original water dowsing compass was found near a complacent oasis ooze; it is suspected Zars Makentire was beset shortly after discovering this source of water.

The compass requires a light accumulator and consumes one charge per day. Using this item requires a Craft (mechanika) check (DC 10) to adjust for these parameters:

Minimum volume of water (20-1000+ gallons)

Maximum distance (1-10 miles)

Minimum distance (5-100 yards) – utilized to ignore water kept by the operator.

Once set anyone can use the compass who can see its face and follow its arrow (Int 5). The needle spins out of control when it detects no water. Otherwise it points to the most appropriate water source according to the parameters. Where potable water is available, using the device adds a +4 bonus to Survival checks for getting along in the wild.

Minor divination; CL 4.

Cost: 1,250 gp.

### Ice Breaker Shovel

Rhulfolk engineered this item to allow greater leverage and to serve as an impromptu pick-axe when dealing with frozen soil or tundra. It also works handily as a weapon in emergencies. In addition to serving normally as a shovel, it may be wielded as a light pick (1d4/x 4). A character with the shovel already in hand may attempt to use the sharp point to help stop a fall. Gain a +10 circumstance bonus to Climb checks when trying to catch yourself when falling. Cost: 16 gp.

### Shaded Goggles

Many individuals who spend substantial time in the blazing sun of the Bloodstone Marches or other arid environments often wear goggles treated with an alchemical substance which darkens the glass without reducing visibility. This allows the wearer to endure extended exposure to sunlight without any vision impairment in addition to the normal benefits of wearing goggles (IKCG, p. 199). The penalty to spot checks increases to -8 if wearing these goggles at night or in other low-light circumstances. Cost: 6 gp.

## Skorne Implements of Conquest and Dominion

Items in this category receive costs relative to their construction costs and value within skorne society. These items would likely fetch far more from those in western Immoren with an interest in exotic items. All of these items are extremely rare outside of skorne occupied regions, although some few have been recovered from battlefields along Cygnar's eastern border.

### Lightning Grounding Rod

Skorne chymists developed this large and heavy tool after considerable experimentation as a means to facilitate the crossing of the Stormlands by the invasion forces serving Vinter Raelthorne IV. Made from several layers of conductive metals, this very tall rod includes a trailing chain and weight intended to drag along the ground. Quite heavy at 80 lbs and not completely reliable, an enslaved cyclops, rather than a skorne, usually carries the rod using specially insulated armored gauntlets. During any crossing of the Stormlands, a skorne military column will include a number of these rods spread evenly through the force to provide overlapping protection. Both expensive to produce and only available in limited quantities, rods immediately return to the eastern side to accompany the next supply train or troop column.

If held perpendicular to the earth, elevated into the air, and its chain allowed to trail on the ground, this rod attracts all naturally occurring lightning strikes within 50 feet (10 squares) of the bearer. These strikes hit the square occupied by the bearer. If this lightning would normally arc to other targets, it fails to do so after striking the rod. The bearer makes a Fortitude save to avoid damage instead of a Reflex save and suffers no damage if he succeeds. The bearer receives a +10 circumstance bonus to this save if wearing insulated gauntlets.

Moderate abjuration; CL 11; Craft Wondrous Item, *protection from energy*, includes a tiny fragment of a sacral stone; Price 33,000 gp.

### Paingiver Mask

While many skorne choose to wear masks, paingivers are recognizable by the distinctive mask of office they always wear in public. This represents their caste and deemphasizes their individual facial features. This part of paingiver tradition demonstrating to their victims that a faceless representative of the philosophies of Morkaash interrogates them, rather than a specific individual or biased organization. Despite this ancient practice, many paingivers commonly add small embellishments or modifications to their mask. As long as the fundamental design of the mask remains unchanged this practice incurs no disfavor from

## Weapons & Gear

ranking paingivers. The individual wearing this mask gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidation checks against other skorne so long as the individual being intimidated believes the wearer is actually a paingiver. Cost: 10-100 gp.

### Paingiving Implements

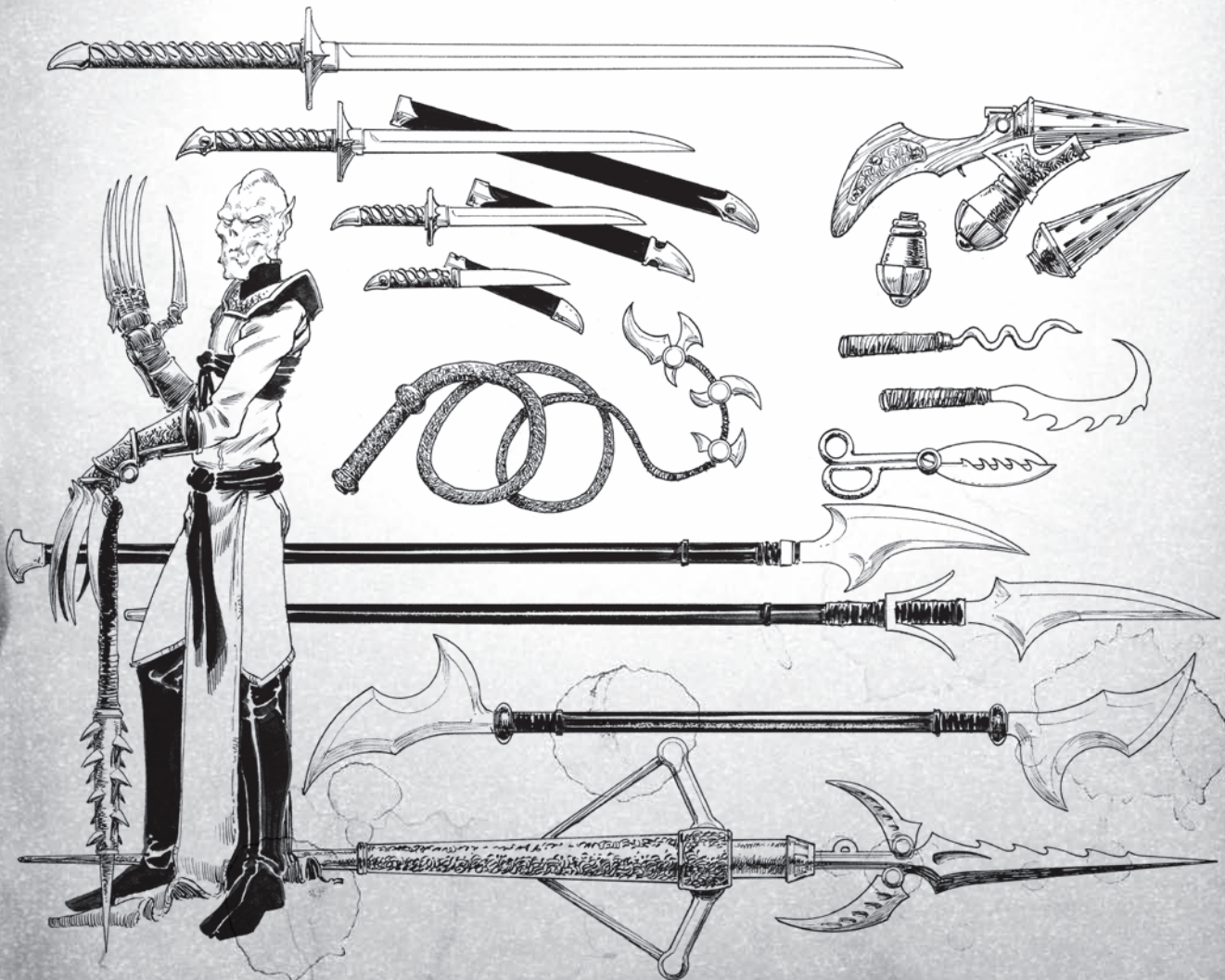
Paingivers utilize a wide variety of implements in the course of their duties. Some they employ against captives during interrogation while others they use when training and subduing beasts. The most common implements include piercing tools, a variety of precise blades, barbed hooks, flesh-gouging clamps, and toothed saws. Treat these as tools for the purposes of performing Profession (torturer) checks. Masterwork paingiving implements are the perfect tools for causing pain and provide a +2 circumstance bonus to these checks. Cost: Varies (200-300 gold for a diverse set).

### Skorne Weapons

Eastern Immoren possess less iron than the west, but smelted into proper steel, it sees extensive use in the fabrication of skorne weapons. In prior eras bronze weapons predominated, and still appear in certain ceremonial functions, but most true warriors wield steel weapons.

### Arcus

A unique weapon, the arcus has a long history of use among the skorne, and a specific branch of the cataphract tradition has adopted it as their weapon of choice. In ancient times it took the form of a finely balanced bladed polearm with an attached length of rope or chain which strong skorne could hurl a considerable distance as a harpoon. The wielder would impale a foe and drag them closer to finish them. More recently the arcus received improvement in the form of an extremely high torque crossbow firing mechanism which can launch the



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heavy harpoon considerably further and with greater accuracy than ever before. The arcus serves as both a deadly ranged weapon and a versatile polearm in the hands of a skilled wielder. Cost: 200 gold.

The arcus is an exotic two-handed melee weapon, with 10 foot reach. 2d6/x2, 15 lb, piercing.

The arcus is also an exotic ranged weapon, dealing 2d6/x3, 40 ft. This fires a large harpoon, see IKCG p. 172. The arcus head generally has a 30 or 60 foot length of chain which enables the wielder to recover and reattach it. Reloading the arcus requires at least 15 Strength and 2 standard actions, and the weapon cannot act as a melee weapon until the head is reattached.

### Gulgat

This unusual double-ended polearm does not have a specific martial tradition associated with it, but devotees in certain isolated houses up in the Shroudwall Mountains have used it for centuries. Those who have mastered it take pride in their elegant fighting style noted for its sweeping strikes and rapid changes in direction of attack.

The gulgat is an exotic double melee weapon, 150 gp, 1d10/1d10 x3 - 12 lb, slashing.

### Kolas Club

An ancient weapon whose design predates the founding of Malphas, this wickedly spiked club has small obsidian shards set in it. These cause tremendously painful wounds and grievous injury, especially when wielded by a master of the weapon. Most warriors consider the kolas crude and inferior to the sword, but paingivers appreciate it. While not considered a paingiver implement, the weapon has a dark reputation for delivering particularly unpleasant injuries. The obsidian shards in the club periodically break or get knocked loose and require regularly replacement to maintain the weapon in proper condition.

The kolas club is a martial two-handed melee weapon, 10 gp, 1d6/x4, 8 lb bludgeoning and piercing. Reduce the critical multiplier to x2 after delivering a critical hit with the kolas club. Repairing the weapon restores the x4 critical multiplier. Damage suffered from a critical hit by a kolas club at x4 modifier cannot be healed until the obsidian shards have been removed by a Heal check (DC 15).

### Paingiver Claw

Favored by paingivers, these masterwork quality fighting claws fit over the hand like gloves. Each finger has a length of sharpened, high grade steel attached. Inspired by the legends of similar weapons designed and used by Morkaash, the first paingiver, such claws indicate skill among the caste, and only seasoned and

experienced paingivers (those of 5th level or higher) wear them. It is a major transgression for anyone other than a paingiver to wield these weapons. The wearing of these claws by anyone not wearing a paingiver mask, or otherwise obviously of that caste, may prompt a blood challenge and will certainly lead to one once the ruse is uncovered.

The weapons serve as extensions of the fingers and allow tremendous control in combat. Skilled wielders may both injure their targets and deliver precise, painful strikes to key nerve clusters. Accordingly, this weapon counts as a masterwork paingiver implement. It is impossible to disarm a paingiver claw, and the wielder receives a +4 circumstance bonus to the opposed roll on attempts to sunder the weapon.

Light exotic weapon, masterwork, 1d4 (19-20/x3), 1 lb, Piercing or Slashing, 330 gp (for one claw).

### Paingiver Whip

Whips are a common sight in the skorne empire, used most often to discipline slaves or train beasts. Paingivers use a whip of much higher quality specifically designed as a weapon and engineered to maximize the agony caused by each strike. Its razor hooks can penetrate even the thick hides of the various species with which the paingivers regularly interact. It is considered a severe taboo to be carrying one if the bearer is not a paingiver and wearing the paingiver mask.

This weapon counts as a paingiver implement. Treat the paingiver whip as a melee weapon with 15-foot reach, though it does not threaten the area into which it can make an attack. In addition, it can be used against foes anywhere within its reach. Using the paingiver whip does not provoke an attack of opportunity. You can make trip attacks with a paingiver whip. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the whip to avoid being tripped. When using a whip, you get a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent (including the roll to keep from being disarmed if the attack fails). Paingiver whips inflict normal damage and can damage creatures with armor or natural armor.

Exotic one-handed weapon, 1d4/x2, 3 lb, 40 gp, slashing.

### Skorne Blades

The sword has great ceremonial importance and sees widespread use among the skorne in a variety of sizes similar to those in western Immoren. While skorne crafting techniques and ornamentation differ in some respects from their western counterparts, treat these weapons identically to the greatsword, long sword, and short sword. Skorne swords often weigh slightly less than their western counterparts, and usually have only a single sharpened edge. Some skorne fighting traditions, such as that practiced by the Praetorians, employ a two sword fighting style and use a matched pair of balanced



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masterwork blades. The user may treat the balanced sword in his off hand as a light weapon when using a pair of balanced longswords with the two-weapon fighting feat and weapon focus in longsword. In all cases skorne expect a member of their warrior caste to treat his weapons with respect and to maintain them carefully as the tools of his craft. Any damage or defacement of a weapon is rectified immediately.

Blades of identical length and properties as a dagger also appear commonly among all skorne but as a tool not a "proper" weapon. Skorne of the warrior caste consider it beneath them to fight with this weapon except as a last resort. Fighting a skorne with a dagger is considered an insult to the individual being attacked, and anyone killed by such a weapon will be derided and might bring shame on their house and immediate relatives.

### Skorne Warspear

The warspear, which may come in a variety of shapes and styles, is more a kind of pole-arm than spear and is not made for throwing. Warriors of the cataphract tradition as well as house guards use this weapon. If you use a ready action to set a warspear against a charge, you deal double damage on a successful hit against a charging character. You can use a warspear to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the warspear to avoid being tripped.

The skorne warspear is a martial two-handed melee weapon, 20 gp 1d10 x3 - 10 lb, Piercing.

### Reiver

The reiver is a unique skorne invention that loosely compares in role and function to the firearms which have proliferated in western Immoren. It has a similar stock and trigger but operates by quite different mechanisms. Explosive gas in a metal orb at the rear of the device provides the rapidly expanding force required to hurl its projectiles at the target. It stores the small but heavy iron needles it fires in a rotating cone-shaped mechanism which stands in place of the barrel on western firearms.

Each pull of the reiver trigger unleashes dozens of these iron needles in a single painful and tissue-rending attack. Reiver cones store enough needles to fire three shots. Gas canisters hold enough compressed explosive gas to fire six shots. While attaching a fresh reiver cone or gas canister to the reiver firearm is an easy and intuitive process, restoring a depleted reiver cone for firing is not. Only expert skorne craftsmen understand the painstaking and difficult process of preparing a depleted reiver cone for use, and no one can improvise this task in the field. Similarly, the gas canisters utilized to fire the reivers remain a technology unknown outside of the craftsmen who make and service these weapons.

No alchemists in western Immoren currently know how to manufacture this explosive gas.

Exotic ranged weapon, 1d8 (20/x2), 60 ft., 8 lb, Piercing, 300 gp. Reiver cone cost: 10 gp, gas canister cost: 20 gp. Reloading a gas canister or reiver cone requires a standard action. The needles of a reiver disperse relatively quickly, so the weapon can only reach a maximum of five range increments. This weapon is particularly effective against large targets which suffer a greater number of direct hits from the spray of needles. A target struck by the reiver suffers an additional cumulative +2 damage for each size category they are above Medium.

### Skorne Armor

Skorne armor has a very distinct style and appearance considerably different from all armor traditions of western Immoren. Skorne prefer layered armor, often ornately decorated even when worn by less esteemed members of the warrior caste. Skorne use a wide variety of armor both in terms of the extent of its protection and the types of materials utilized. With iron less abundant in eastern Immoren smiths often reserve it for use in weapons, which makes steel elements in armor less pervasive than in the west. Bronze often substitutes, as does a mix of iron and bronze along with hardened leather or more exotic materials like bone, horn, and chitin from creatures like the cataphract beetle.

Most armor of any material is lacquered for ornamentation and to provide additional durability and resiliency. Many pieces of skorne armor include spiked protrusions which allow the wearer to deal extra piercing damage on successful grapple attacks. Due to the degree of ornamentation and overlapping straps and layers, skorne armor is always specifically crafted for an individual. Most armor is not easily worn by someone other than the person for whom it was designed unless they have very similar physiology. Skorne armorsmiths can make the necessary adjustments to refit armor, which they often do when a suit of importance is passed down to the next generation in a house.

The skorne employ a variety of shields similar to those found in the west, although they make nearly all their shields from metal due to a scarcity of wood. Shields are often highly ornamented but always functional in battle.

Skorne of all types in the warrior caste have a strong preference for heavy armors over medium or lighter armors. The ability to arm oneself properly for battle forms a significant component of one's pride and standing compared to one's peers within this caste, and they disdain those who can only afford inferior armor.

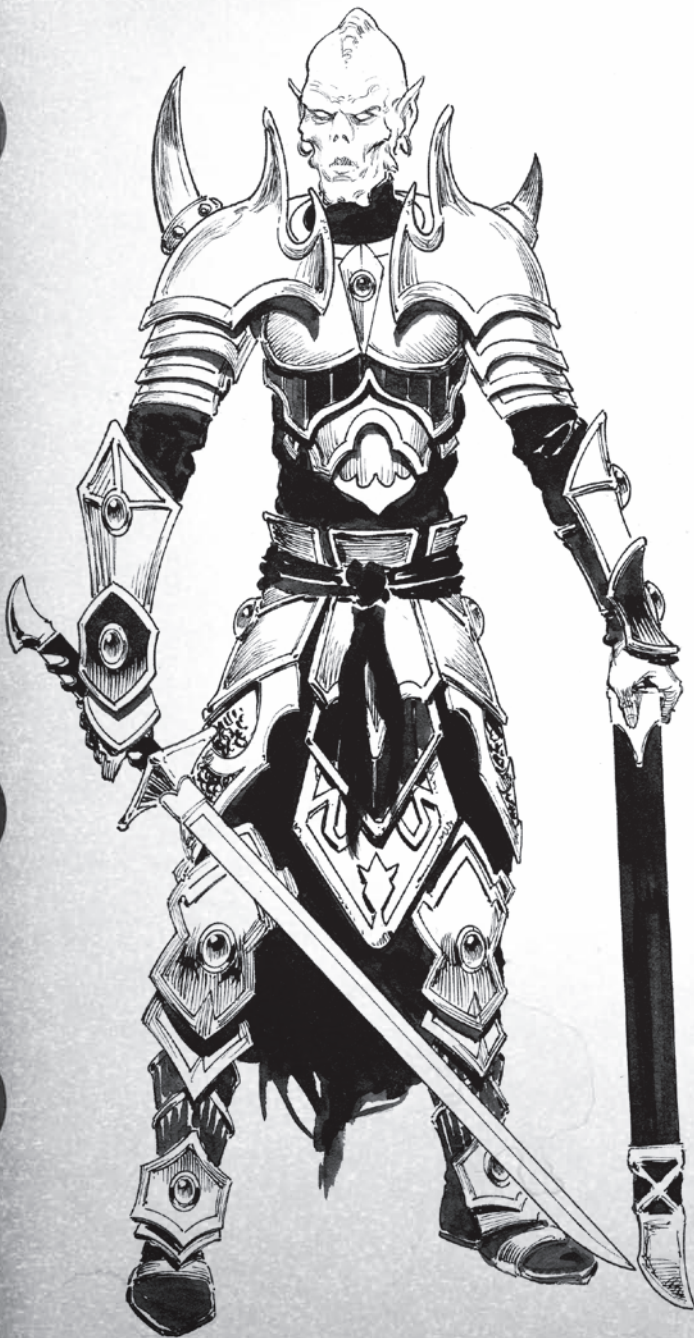
### Skorne Plate Armors

The skorne use a variety of plated and lamellar armors of similar attributes to full plate, half-plate, banded mail, or splint mail.

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Other than different decorations and the occasional exotic materials, the only notable difference from their western counterparts lies in the armor spikes included on many sets of this armor.

Certain martial disciplines have developed techniques to reduce the functional impairment of wearing these armors. These allow greater speed and reduce armor check penalties, but none of these techniques are inherent in the armor.



### Medium and Light Skorne Armor

While disdained by many in the warrior caste, lighter armors suit some functions better. Those of the Venator or Hestatian traditions generally wear less armor than Praetorians, for example. Nomadic hunters, who value mobility and comfort in extreme weather, commonly wear lighter armor. Even the least regarded warrior traditions try to wear at least medium armor equivalent to a breastplate, chainmail, or scale mail. Hunters will wear hide, including finely worked and exceptional hide armors made from the tough beasts on the periphery of skorne settlements. Individuals of other castes, such as mortitheurges, paingivers, extollers, and lesser beast handlers, may wear lighter lacquered leather armors and thick metal-studded robes equivalent to chain shirt, studded leather, leather, or padded armor.

### Cataphract Armor

The cataphract carry on a unique, ancient, and esteemed skorne warrior tradition trained and conditioned to bear the weight of the most impervious armor. Wearing this armor requires natural strength and endurance, and not all aspiring skorne have the size or attributes to join this tradition. Such armor requires a specific armor proficiency and is extremely expensive to craft. Such suits include armor spikes and locked gauntlets.

#### Exotic Armor Proficiency (Cataphract)

Prerequisites: Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Str 16, Con 16, Dex 12, training as a cataphract

Benefit/Normal: See Armor Proficiency (Light)

### Titan Hide Armor

Some of the nomadic skorne have perfected the curing and treatment of titan hide to create armor of exceptional quality. This tough but supple armor provides excellent freedom of movement for its thickness. Titan hide armor remains rare and valued among these societies as the more powerful Skorne houses capture and monopolize most titans, or send them to join the Army of the Western Reaches. In some cases this hide armor comes from the carcasses of older titans or those worn out and no longer useful for combat or labor. While the heavily armored warrior traditions view such armor with no great esteem, the outlying nomadic communities see it as a mark of distinction.

# Weapons & Gear

## Weapons

Simple Weapons	Cost	Dmg(S)	Dmg(M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight <sup>1</sup>	Type <sup>2</sup>
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>							
Skorne dagger	1 gp	1d3	1d4	19-20/x2	10 ft.	1 lb.	Piercing or slashing
<i>One-handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Ice breaker shovel	16 gp	1d4	1d6	x3	—	2 lb.	Bludgeoning or piercing
Kolas club	10 gp	1d4	1d6	x4	—	8lb.	Bludgeoning and piercing
Martial Weapons	Cost	Dmg(S)	Dmg(M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight <sup>1</sup>	Type <sup>2</sup>
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>							
Skorne shortsword	10 gp	1d4	1d6	19-20/x2	—	2 lb.	Slashing
<i>One-handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Skorne longsword	15 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	—	4 lb.	Slashing
Skorne longsword, balanced	315 gp	1d6	1d8	19-20/x2	—	4 lb.	Slashing
<i>Two-handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Skorne greatsword	50 gp	1d10	2d6	19-20/x2	—	8 lb.	Slashing
Skorne warspear <sup>3</sup>	20 gp	1d8	1d10	x3	—	10lb.	Piercing
Exotic Weapons	Cost	Dmg(S)	Dmg(M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight <sup>1</sup>	Type <sup>2</sup>
<i>Light Weapon</i>							
Paingiver claw	330 gp	1d3	1d4	19-20/x3	—	1 lb.	Piercing or slashing
<i>One-handed Melee Weapon</i>							
Paingiver whip	40 gp	1d3	1d4	x2	—	3 lb.	Slashing
<i>Two-handed Melee Weapon</i>							
Arcus	3 200 gp	—	2d6	x2	—	15 lb.	Piercing
Guulgat <sup>4</sup>	150 gp	—	1d10/1d10	x2	—	12 lb.	Slashing
<i>Ranged Weapon</i>							
Reiver	300 gp	—	1d8	x2	60 ft.	8 lb.	Piercing
Arcus harpoon	200 gp	—	2d6	x3	40 ft.	15 lb.	Piercing

<sup>1</sup>Weight figures are for Medium weapons. A Small weapon weighs half as much, and a Large weapon weighs twice as much.

<sup>2</sup>When two types are given, the weapon is both types if the entry specifies "and," or either type (player's choice at time of attack) if the entry specifies "or."

<sup>3</sup>Reach weapon.

<sup>4</sup>Double weapon.

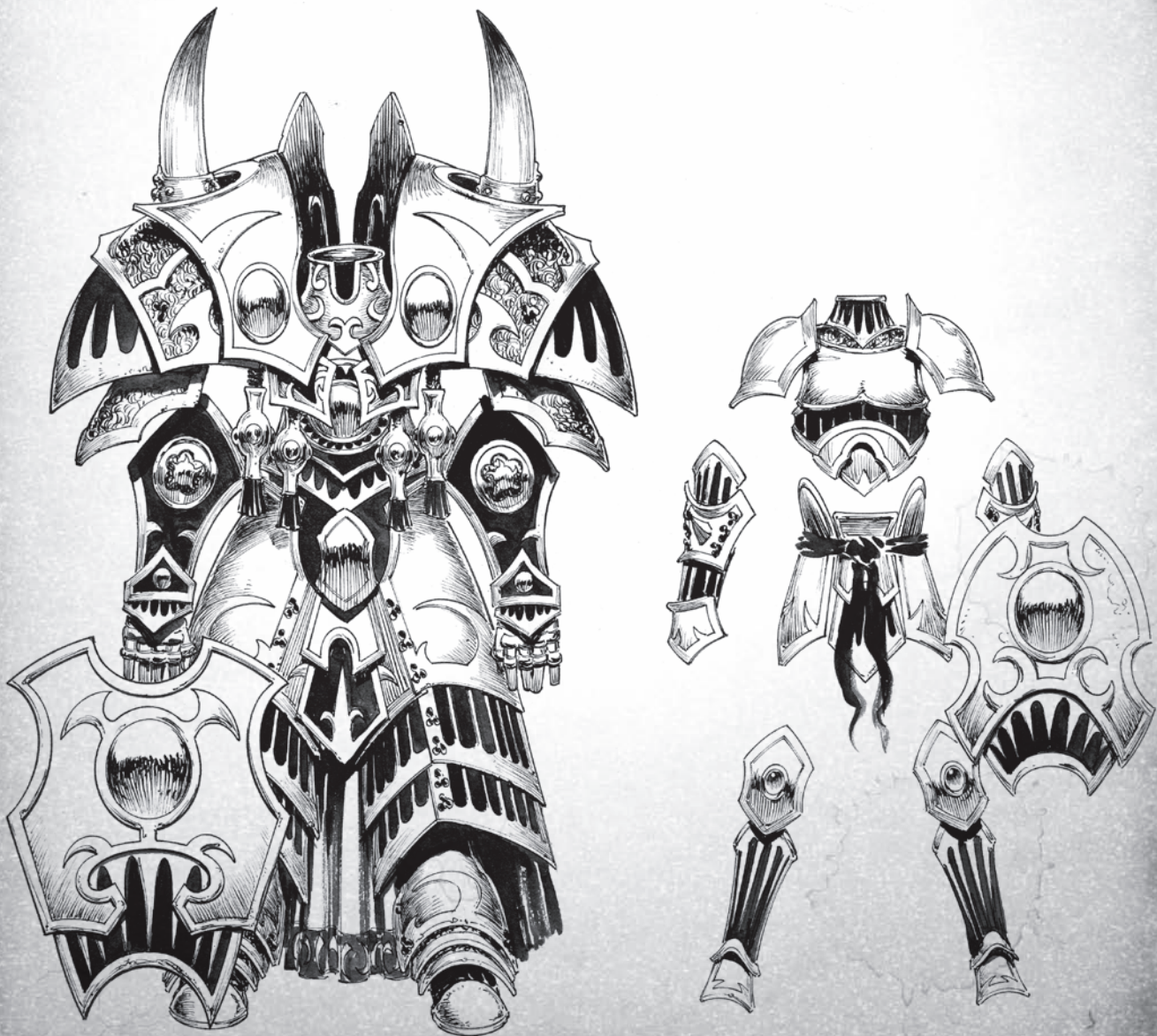
## Armor

Armor	Cost	Armor/Shield Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure Chance	Speed (30 ft.)(20 ft.)	Weight
<i>Medium armor</i>							
Titan hide armor	125 gp	+4	5	-2	20%	20 ft. 15 ft.	30 lb.
<i>Exotic armor</i>							
Cataphract	3,000 gp	+10	0	-8	45%	15 ft. 10 ft.	80 lb.

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*The dodgy wastes and manky jungles of Immoren play hell on even the simplest mechtstuff. Make sure you have a competent dodger in your outfit or be prepared for clapped out gear.*

*—VP*



# Quickplates



Quickplates are templates designed along the standard guidelines but streamlined with quick use in mind. They are great for fleshing out creatures meant for lesser encounters and making secondary opponents more dynamic and challenging.

**Attack, Damage, and Saving Throw Bonuses:** In some cases, creatures receive an increase to ability scores and to attack, damage, or saving throws. In these cases, the new ability score bonuses have already been factored into the total bonuses to attack, damage, or saves.

**Feats:** Quickplates may give creatures bonus feats. The creature does not need the prerequisite feats in order to gain the bonus feat provided by a quickplate.

## Haywire

This quickplate describes an intelligent construct that has suffered some form of damage to make its behavior unpredictable, unstable, and extremely violent. It may attack friend or foe, so haywire works best when applied to solitary constructs without friends to attack.

**Special Qualities:** Machine Frenzy, Scrambled

**Bonus feats:** Power Attack, Cleave, and Improved Overrun

**Challenge Rating:** Increase by 1

**Restrictions:** May only apply to constructs and mechanical constructs with Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores.

### Combat

Haywire constructs act unpredictably but aggressively in combat. They often overrun the front ranks before erupting into a whirling attack targeting friend and foe. However haywired creatures arrive at these tactics randomly, and in some cases they become confused and incapable of arriving at a plan of action.

**Scrambled (Ex):** During combat, when not in a machine frenzy, roll on the following table at the beginning of the haywired construct's turn to see what the construct does in the round.

d%	Behavior
01-10	Do nothing but emit loud noises (grinding gears, etc.)
11-20	Overrun nearest creature
21-50	Act normally
51-70	Attack nearest creature
71-100	Machine Frenzy

**Machine Frenzy (Ex):** A haywired construct may enter into a machine frenzy for a number of rounds equal to half its hit dice. While in a machine frenzy, the construct may make one extra attack in a round at its highest base attack bonus, but

the construct must attack the nearest creature friend or foe. During the frenzy the construct gains a +2 dodge bonus to Armor Class and Reflex saves and may not use skills or feats other than the bonus feats listed above.

## Awakened

An awakened construct gains the ability to think, learn, and remember. No longer mindless and restricted to its original programming, an awakened construct acts instead of reacts, quickly formulates its own plans, and displays a keen sense of self. It may anticipate an opponent's moves, seek to intimate them, or actively search for them if they hide.

**Abilities:** Gain an Intelligence of 3 and +2 Wisdom and Charisma.

**Skills:** Gain skill ranks equal to 4+I per hit die and gain Intimidate, Listen, Sense Motive, and Spot as skills (or 4 skills of the GM's choice if those are inappropriate for the construct).

**Bonus Feats:** Improved Initiative, Alertness

**Challenge Rating:** Increase by 1

**Restrictions:** May apply only to constructs without an Intelligence score but not animated objects made from *animate object* or creatures without Wisdom or Charisma score.

### Combat

An awakened construct can make short term plans and remember characters by sight. They have the intelligence of animals and groups of them will work in concert to gain advantage in combat, such as taking flanking positions or identifying the greatest threat. Some awakened constructs may hold grudges and stalk their chosen prey.

## Barnacle Encrusted

A creature covered with many cullenrock barnacles ignores pain, rarely knows fear, and due to the chitinous shells of the barnacles, gains natural armor.

**Armor Class:** Creature gains a +4 bonus to natural armor. This armor remains even if the barnacles are detached during combat, but after combat a number of barnacles indicated on the chart must be attached or the creature loses this quickplate.

**Special Qualities:** Endure Pain, Unshakable, Submerged Camouflage

**Bonus Feats:** Die Hard

# Quickplates

**Weakness:** The barnacles' attachment produces a drug-like stupor, giving a -2 penalty to Will saves against enchantments.

**Challenge Rating:** Increase by 2

## Combat

An encrusted creature often remains docile and hidden unless it feels threatened, at which point it will ceaselessly attack without fear.

**Endure Pain (Ex):** When the creature would take damage by failing a Reflex or Will save, the creature will take only half damage if it succeeds on a Fortitude save of the same DC. On a successful Fortitude save that would result in half damage, the creature takes no damage.

**Unshakable (Ex):** The creature gains a +4 moral bonus on saves of all fear effects and never suffers from the shaken effect.

**Submerged Camouflage (Ex):** The creature gains a +8 competency bonus to hide checks when motionless and completely submerged in water.

Size	Barnacles Required
Tiny or smaller	Not possible
Small	4
Medium	6
Large	10
Huge or larger	14

## Skorne Conditioning Quickplates

Skorne submit/enslaved creatures to a barrage of conditioning and training while raising them from an early age. This includes extensive exercises and drills to keep them in peak physical condition as well as exposing them to a variety of painful stimulus to reinforce or discourage certain behaviors. This may also include surgical procedure by skorne anatomists such as incisions into regions of the brain. This process numbs the creature to ordinary pain caused by injury, but the skorne know the means to inflict pain when required.

### Skorne Rage Conditioning

Some creatures are conditioned from birth to be mindless and savage fighters.

**Special qualities:** Lean, Blind Rage +1/day

**Saves:** Add +3 Fort and +2 Will saves

**Abilities:** Add +2 constitution, -4 charisma

**Bonus feats:** Armor proficiency (Heavy), Endurance, Die Hard

**Restrictions:** Can only apply to creatures raised under skorne captivity and control

**Challenge rating:** Increase by 2

### Skorne Pain Conditioning

Some creatures are allowed a greater sense of self but are made to ignore all manner of pain except that delivered by their masters.

**Special Qualities:** Endure Pain, Lean

**Saves:** Add +1 Fort

**Abilities:** Add +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma

**Bonus Feats:** Armor proficiency (Heavy), Endurance, Die Hard

**Restrictions:** Can only apply to creatures raised under skorne captivity and control

**Challenge Rating:** increase by 1

### Skorne Strength Conditioning

Some creatures are conditioned to perform acts of strength at cost to their well-being. Skorne use strength conditioned beasts to do the most labor intensive work but can also use them as devastating weapons.

**Special qualities:** Feat of Strength, Stable Footing

**Abilities:** Add +2 Strength, -4 Charisma

**Bonus Feats:** Power Attack, Improved Grapple or Improved Bull Rush

**Restrictions:** Can only apply to creatures raised under skorne captivity and control

**Challenge rating:** Increase by 1

## Combat

Skorne conditioned creatures attack normally according to their weapons and training but always take advantage of their conditioned abilities.

**Blind Rage (Ex):** This functions exactly like the barbarian Rage ability, and adds +1 use per day if the creature already has this ability. While using this ability the creature's line of sight reduces to 60'.

**Feat of Strength (Ex):** Once per day the creature may carry, lift, or drag 4x its normal limit for a number of minutes equal to its strength, afterward the creature suffers 1d6 points of temporary strength damage.

**Lean (Ex):** Creatures condition by the skorne require half as much sustenance as their base type.

**Endure Pain (Ex):** When the creature would take damage by failing a Reflex or Will save, the creature will take only half damage if it succeeds on a Fortitude save of the same DC. On a successful Fortitude save that would result in half damage, the pain conditioned creature takes no damage.

**Stable Footing (Ex):** The creature gains a +4 to ability checks to resist bull rushes and disarm or trip attempts.

# Skorne Character Classes



While a number of character classes from western Immoren do not have counterparts in the east, some exist with slight modifications, and others remain unchanged.

Individuals of the following classes do not ordinarily appear among the intelligent species of eastern Immoren: adepts, adventuring scholar, agent, arcane mechanik, bard, bodger, bonegrinder, druid, gun mage, malefactor, monk, paladin, sorcerer, or wizard. The other standard classes and NPC classes all exist in skorne society or among the other intelligent species inhabiting the eastern continent. The most common classes include fighters, warriors, and rangers. Clerics do not exist in skorne society, but one can find them in small numbers among some of the other intelligent species. They serve as shamans and generally worship a variant or combination of Dhunia (croakers, efaarit), Menoth (the giants), or the Devourer Wurm (efaarit, letheans). The expert NPC class can represent certain roles described in skorne culture, like the “chirurgion”.

## Paingiver (Pgv)

Skorne Character Class

*Outsiders see our masks and fear us. They should. They see our tools and shudder, for they know we can plunge our hooks into their eyes and make them betray themselves. Any strength of will to oppose us is illusory. Their feeble hope fades like morning mist when they test the full measure of our resolve. Our work facilitates the great efforts of the houses in their myriad wars. We goad their feuds or end them in crushing subjugation based upon facts we extract by blood and torment. We stand above the flux of petty warring houses and above even the drive of the Conqueror. Ours is a higher calling. We follow the path of Morkaash, who taught that in pain lies the crux of life. By creating this pure state of flesh and spirit, we allow the approach of eventual enlightenment. We pluck the nerves of our subjects with precise attention. Their screams and writhing become a language all its own and we its meticulous scholars.*

*We must master each creature that breathes. A wild and unthinking beast can be broken and changed from something useless into a precise weapon of our design. By this craft we can begin to perceive underlying similarities and affinities between all creatures. These we exploit by hook, by needle, by blade, by whip, and by drug.*

—Tormentor Kabaab of Halaak



### Description

Paingivers have mastered the gathering of information by the application of pain and terror and become unequalled handlers of beasts. They can tame any living thing by crushing its spirit and forcing obedience. As interrogators, spies, and beast trainers, these cruel individuals train to learn every detail of living anatomy, memorizing nerve clusters, key arteries, and the placement of vital organs. While a surgeon studies these to treat injury or prevent death by grievous wounds, a paingiver uses this lore in battle or, more often, in the process of questioning captured enemies. Their ability to shape behavior by the application of pain affords them tremendous influence over creatures of weaker wills or simpler minds, like the animals utilized across skorne society as weapons or beasts of burden.

Paingivers do not practice these 'arts' for pleasure, but from a deep spiritual calling. They find the application of pain a science as valid as engineering endeavor or arcane ritual. They are highly educated and supremely skilled specialists in an ancient practice. In addition to a thorough knowledge of anatomy, the paingiver must learn the application of poisons, elixirs, and alchemy for use on and off the battlefield. Paingivers believe truth lies in suffering. Their practices grow from an ancient ascetic philosophy that encourages the mortification of the flesh and pushing the body past its limits.

**Adventurers:** Paingivers, as obsessed with self-improvement and perfection as any zealous monk, always seek to further their craft and skill. The practice of their craft may take them far from the town or city of their birth to find new opportunities to explore their abilities. Many paingivers offer their services to those in higher authority, and their skills allow them to serve as exceptional agents abroad. Paingivers who focus on such skills can become excellent spies and learn how to move unseen and penetrate even well guarded locations in their pursuit of information or other goals. In this capacity they can serve a role similar to rogues in an adventuring party.

**Alignment:** Adhering to the paingiver philosophy and code requires a degree of discipline and focused dedication. It also requires the paingiver remain detached and operate without empathizing with their subjects, whether other skorne or beasts.

### Paingivers in Immoren

The paingiver caste is a manifestation of skorne philosophy. While interrogation by torture is hardly unique to the skorne, the paingiver as a recognized and respected caste is an inextricable element of skorne culture with no exact parallel in the west.

Paingivers occupy a unique caste niche between the warrior and worker castes, removed from house politics and loyalties. Paingivers often arise from the lower castes as their discipline

requires initiates to forego all house affiliations, and such a prospect holds little appeal to those born to privilege and status. In rural areas paingivers may arise from any of the fringe communities which track or tame beasts. In urban areas senior paingivers look for and recruit youths of exceptional latent talent, intelligence, and manual adroitness who often languish in poorer districts. Highly selective, senior paingivers seek a special combination of survivability, talent, and a sense of self-worth and honor. Paingivers never recruit those they do not believe can rise above the caste of their birth.

Recruits endure a grueling physical and academic training at the hands of their mentors designed to discipline and strengthen body and mind. They must prove capable of completely embracing the deeper philosophies of the great ancestor Morkaash before completing their initiation. This includes enduring an extended period of deprivation and performing difficult tasks after enduring starvation, tremendous thirst, and lack of sleep. Once brought into the ranks of the paingivers individuals dissolve former house loyalties and cannot restore them. The distinctive mask worn by paingivers in public serves as a symbol of their faceless resolve and aloof isolation.

Separated from normal house duties by their independent status, paingivers can give their services to a variety of houses which seek out their ability. This places them in a unique position in skorne society as unaffiliated and highly specialized professionals that perform tasks in great demand. Paingivers might be utilized as spies to gather information, as assassins to neutralize special targets, as beast-tamers to bring fresh military assets into a house, or as interrogators to pry secrets from captured enemies. Different paingivers specialize in each of these roles and rarely attempt to master all of them. Some paingivers establish a reputation for their singular interrogation techniques, while others gain renown for their skill at rearing and training beasts of war.

### Game Rule Information

**Abilities:** Dexterity and Intelligence are the most important abilities for the paingiver. A solid Constitution is helpful particularly for those wishing to fully exploit the arcane abilities they eventually develop. Strength may be desirable for paingivers expecting to spend more time on the battlefield, while Charisma better serves those focused on beast handling or interrogation.

**Alignment:** Any non-chaotic, non-good alignment.

**Race:** Any skorne

**Hit Die:** d8

**Starting Gold:** 4d4 x 10 (100 gp)

#### CLASS SKILLS

The paingiver's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Craft



# Skorne Classes

(alchemy), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (anatomy, arcana, local, philosophy, skorne houses, skorne ancestors) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (torturer), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex)

Skill Points at 1st Level: 5 + Int modifier x 4

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier

## Class Features

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** Paingivers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons and are also proficient with the paingiver whip and paingiver claws. Paingivers can choose to inflict lethal or nonlethal damage with any weapon at no penalty to their attack roll. Paingivers can use any paingiver implement as an improvised weapon with no penalty to the attack roll. Treat these as light weapons that inflict 1d3 damage (critical x2) when wielded by a paingiver. Certain specific paingiver implements may inflict higher damage when utilized as a weapon.

**Pain Strike (Ex):** When attacking for nonlethal damage with any paingiver implement or piercing melee weapon, the paingiver can opt to execute an excruciatingly painful strike. This incurs no penalty to his attack roll. If this strike hits and inflicts any nonlethal damage, living opponents thus damaged must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + attacking Paingiver class level + attacking Paingiver's Intelligence bonus) or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. Targets immune to pain or targets immune to critical hits are unaffected.

**Torture Training (Ex):** During their rigorous training, initiates learn anatomy and techniques of torturing and interrogating captives. This provides 4 skill points that must be spent on Profession (Torturer). For every level of paingiver attained, an additional point is received which must be spent on this skill. This training furthermore provides the paingiver with a +2 competency bonus to any Will or Fortitude saves made if he is subjected to Profession (torturer) checks made by others.

**Sneak Attack:** Gained at 2nd level, this is exactly like the rogue ability of the same name. The extra damage increases every third level (5th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 20th). If



## Paingiver Advancement Table

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells Per Day			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Pain Strike, Torture Training	—	—	—	—
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	Sneak Attack +1d6	—	—	—	—
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	Abuse Beast, Poison Use	—	—	—	—
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	Uncanny Dodge	—	—	—	—
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	Sneak Attack +2d6	—	—	—	—
6	+4	+2	+5	+5	Canny Defense	—	—	—	—
7	+5	+2	+5	+5	Armored Caster, Necromantic affinity	0	—	—	—
8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	Improved Uncanny Dodge, Sneak Attack +3d6	0	—	—	—
9	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	Lesser Mortitheurgy	1	—	—	—
10	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7	Special Ability	1	0	—	—
11	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	Sneak Attack +4d6	1	0	—	—
12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8		1	1	—	—
13	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Special Ability	1	1	0	—
14	+10/+5	+4	+9	+9	Sneak Attack +5d6	1	1	0	—
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+9		1	1	1	—
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	Special Ability	1	1	1	0
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	Sneak Attack +6d6	1	1	1	0
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11		1	1	1	1
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	Special Ability	1	1	1	1
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	Sneak Attack +7d6	1	1	1	1

## Skorne Classes

the paingiver gets a sneak attack bonus from another class the bonuses on damage stack.

**Abuse Beast (Ex):** At 3rd level the paingiver has learned to use paingiver implements and specialized conditioning techniques to break the will and train a wide variety of beasts. The paingiver can utilize Handle Animal on magical beasts and monstrous humanoids with an Intelligence of up to 6 and with no more than twice the paingiver's level in hit dice. The DC of these checks increases by 10 and the time frame increases to one month for every week normally required to teach an animal the same trick or train an animal with a purpose. Creatures with 3 intelligence can learn up to 9 tricks, and there is no limit to the number of tricks which can be taught to a creature with 4-6 intelligence. Training requires the creature to remain completely under the paingiver's control during the training period, either caged, bound, or otherwise kept in captivity and subjected to ongoing painful conditioning to reduce its will and enforce obedience. The paingiver must have access to paingiver implements during this period.

This ability also allows the paingiver to ignore the usual penalty when trying to push an animal, magical beast, or monstrous humanoid which is wounded or has taken nonlethal or ability score damage. Successful prior application of the pain touch ability provides a +5 circumstance bonus to the Handle Animal check for pushing a creature, although the penalties from being sickened remain.

Creatures can be reared from infancy by a skorne with this ability in order to fully condition them. Such creatures acquire the Skorne Conditioned template. This requires years of dedicated labor until the beast reaches maturity. Up to three animals of the same kind can be reared at once, but only one magical beast or monstrous humanoid of the same type can be reared by a single handler.

**Poison Use (Ex):** By 3rd level paingivers have trained sufficiently in the use of poison to never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** At 4th level the paingiver retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (He still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.) If the character already has uncanny dodge from another class he gains improved uncanny dodge instead.

**Canny Defense (Ex):** At 6th, level when not wearing armor or using a shield, a paingiver adds his Intelligence bonus (if any) to his Armor Class. If a paingiver is caught flat-footed, or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus, he also loses this bonus.

**Spells:** Beginning at 7th level a paingiver has become so attuned to the principles and philosophies regarding the mortification of flesh that they gain the ability to cast spells utilizing techniques similar to a mortitheurge. They can cast a small number of arcane spells drawn from the paingiver spell list.

### Profession (torturer) (Wis; Trained Only)

This skill encompasses a broad variety of techniques, both psychological and physical, to force a helpless target to speak and answer questions. This skill does not force a target to tell the truth, only to divulge information. Characters use other skills to determine veracity. Normal use of this skill requires a helpless target and access to specialized tools and equipment.

#### Check

A successful check (determined identically to Intimidation but using the Profession skill check result) indicates the target must talk or make a Will save (DC equal to the Profession (Torturer) skill check result) to stay silent. For every day of interrogation the target must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 5) or die. Failing the Profession check by 10 or more indicates dangerous injury to the target and knocks him unconscious; this increases the Fortitude save DC to avoid death by 2.

#### Action

A check represents a full day of interrogation.

#### Try Again

Each consecutive day incurs a cumulative -2 penalty to the target's Bluff checks and saving throws. These penalties remain until after two full days of rest without interrogation.

#### Special

Along with its use to interrogate specific prisoners, Profession (Torturer) can, given a ready supply of captives, substitute for Gather Information checks to gain general information about an area. Knowledge (Anatomy) 5 provides a +2 synergy bonus, Intimidation or Diplomacy 5 provide a single +2 synergy bonus, and Sense Motive 5 provides a +2 synergy bonus. These synergy bonuses are cumulative (except Diplomacy is not cumulative with Intimidation).

#### Untrained

Without this skill, interrogations are handled by Intimidation skill checks.

A paingiver must choose and prepare spells ahead of time. To learn, prepare, or cast a spell, the paingiver must have an Intelligence score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a paingiver's spell is 10 + the spell level + the paingiver's Intelligence modifier.

The paingiver can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment

## Skorne Classes

appears on the Paingiver Advancement Table. In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Intelligence score. A paingiver may know any number of spells. He must choose and prepare his spells ahead of time by getting a good night's sleep and spending 1 hour in focused meditation. Paingiver spell research and training requires access to a body of anatomical texts and occult scrolls which serve a similar purpose to spellbooks used by other arcane casters. Paingivers do not require access to this material as part of their spell preparation process, but must refer to this body of material for at least one uninterrupted rest period within a month of spell preparation.

**Armored Caster (Ex):** Paingivers reduce the arcane spell failure chance for wearing armor by 20% when casting spells off the Paingiver Spell List.

**Necromantic Affinity (Ex):** The normal dangers of casting necromantic spells (IKCG, p. 263, "Dangers of the Dark Arts") do not apply to paingivers.

**Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** By 8th level the paingiver can no longer be flanked, since he can react to opponents on opposite sides of him as easily as he can react to a single attacker. This defense denies rogues the ability to use flank attacks to sneak attack the paingiver. The exception to this defense is that an adversary at least four levels higher than the paingiver can flank him (and thus sneak attack him).

If the character gains uncanny dodge from a second class the levels from those classes stack to determine the minimum level required to flank the character.

**Lesser Mortitheurgy (Su):** Starting at 9th level the paingiver learns to draw power from injury and bloodshed, temporarily sacrificing vital essence to spontaneously cast arcane spells. A blade or appropriate bloodletting tool allows the paingiver to take a full round action to spontaneously cast a known spell without losing a prepared spell. This inflicts 1d8 damage to the paingiver per spell level of the spell cast. Damage is inflicted before casting the spell, and if the paingiver is knocked unconscious, the spell fails. Any effect which would prevent the paingiver from taking this damage prevents this ability from functioning. After any use of this ability the paingiver cannot benefit from any magical healing until he has rested for at least 8 hours.

If the application of this power reduces the paingiver below half of his total hit points he becomes fatigued. If the use of this ability reduces the paingiver to 0 hit points he must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + spell level of the spell cast) or contract the *karovoul* disease (see Genzoul, p. 70).

### Special Abilities

On attaining 10th level and at every three levels thereafter (13th, 16th, and 19th) a paingiver gains a special ability of his choice from the following options:

**Ascetic Mastery (Ex):** The paingiver has utterly mastered his own pain response and becomes immune to pain. This

makes the paingiver impossible to torture for information, immune to the pain-driven special strikes of other paingivers, and immune to *symbol of pain*. His mastery of his will provides the paingiver with a +4 competence bonus to saves to resist enchantment or fear effects.

**Beast Discipline (Ex):** The paingiver has learned to exercise unequalled control over the tamed and conditioned beasts in his charge. He can now handle these animals as a free action and push them as a move action. Additionally, any time a beast under the paingiver's control suffers a fear or mind-altering effect, he can make a Handle Animal check (DC 25) as a free action to completely negate the effect.

**Break Foe (Ex):** The paingiver learns how to attempt to shatter the fighting strength of his adversaries, taking advantage of their distraction to strike a key nerve cluster in combat and cause an explosion of agony. This requires a successful melee attack with a paingiver implement at a -4 penalty against a sickened target and the attack must inflict at least 1 damage. If successful, the target must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + class level + Intelligence bonus) or become nauseated for 2d4 rounds. This ability fails if attempted against a target immune to critical hits or pain.

**Nerve Strike (Su):** The paingiver's mastery of anatomy and pain infliction allows him to force muscle tissue to spasm and tear itself apart with the merest brush of a paingiver implement. The paingiver can make a touch attack with a paingiver implement and inflict lethal damage, adding the paingiver's intelligence modifier as bonus damage. This ability cannot affect a target immune to critical hits or immune to pain.

**Skill Mastery:** The paingiver gains such mastery in the use of certain skills that she can use them reliably even under adverse conditions. Upon gaining this ability, she selects a number of skills equal to 3 + her Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check with one of these skills, she may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent her from doing so. A paingiver may gain this special ability multiple times, selecting additional skills for it to apply to each time.

**Feat:** A paingiver may gain a bonus feat in place of a special ability.

**Code of Behavior:** Paingivers operate under a special mode of employment and service quite different from most skorne groups. They have no house affiliation and enforce their own internal code. Paingivers offer a service to house leaders considered vital and almost sacred, and receive the liberty to enter into negotiations with house leaders who seek to employ them to interrogate prisoners or prepare beasts for war. Paingivers do not perform these tasks from a mercenary desire for payment. They serve because they revere Morkaash and seek to emulate him by following his ancient philosophies and practices.

This does not grant them liberty to exercise their torments indiscriminately, but they must focus on the ongoing

mastery of their skills. A paingiver must exercise self restraint and dispassion and conduct interrogations and excruciations exactly to the degree requested by their current employer, no more or less. Discretion forms the most important element of the Paingiver Code, as any information learned during their interrogations must never go to anyone except the paingiver's employer at the time of that interrogation. In the course of a lifetime of practicing these arts a paingiver will serve a number of different houses and is expected to preserve all of their internal secrets.

Other than preserving secrets gained in the course of interrogation or other services for a house, a paingiver has no obligation to obey a house leader and may end service at any time so long as this does not violate previous sworn promises. While paingivers follow a loose hierarchy based on experience and seniority, each paingiver has liberty to pursue their arts without interference. So long as a paingiver brings no shame on his peers they experience very little oversight.

**Ex-Paingivers:** Paingivers who fail to live up to their code, by violating oaths of discretion, actively working against other paingivers, or violating agreed terms of service without cause, become anathema. They do not lose abilities gained but are henceforth unable to advance as a paingiver. Other paingivers will hunt down and capture ex-paingivers to administer punishment for violations. In cases of light infractions punishment may suffice to reinstate a paingiver. More serious cases leave offenders forever marked. Punishments include: torture, maiming (severing fingers, toes, hands, or feet), permanent branding, and possibly execution after extended torture. Paingiver Spell List

1st level — *cause fear, chill touch, daze monster, deathwatch, inflict light wounds, endure elements, expeditious retreat, longstrider, ray of enfeeblement*

2nd level — *blindness/deafness, contagion, darkness, daze monster, death knell, false life, flesh knitting(2), ghoul touch, inflict moderate wounds, resist energy, touch of idiocy*

3rd level — *deep slumber, fighting spirit (2), haste, hold person, inflict serious wounds, poison, rage, ray of exhaustion, reveal souls (1), slow, vampiric touch*

4th level — *blight, charm monster, confusion, crushing despair, enervation, fear, inflict critical wounds, neutralize poison*

# Mortitheurge (Mrt)

## Skorne Character Class

*There is no purer science or more fundamental study than the examination of the link between flesh and spirit. By our art we open the soft shell that encases the mechanisms of the flesh and lay bare its inner mysteries. Most simpletons cannot see past the crude shell which encases them. They believe their self rests in muscles, bones, ligaments, and the blood pumped through arteries. This crude and fragile assortment of fluids and gristle merely houses the spirit. Open the chest of a still-living slave, pry back the ribs, and reach down to touch the beating heart with your fingertips. Feel it spasm as you clench your fist and know that one small application of pressure can end a life. We require no blade to rend skin and no needle to mend it again.*

*With practice it is remarkable how easy it is to end a life or to extend it. Our power can force the spirit to linger in the body and make brave the life essence which would otherwise prove cowardly and flee at the first hint of disruption. Only we fully understand that the power of the will has no limits. Our will is paramount, and reality bends as we desire. This is mortitheurgy.*

—Master Mortitheurge Karzen Moritaan

## Description

Mortitheurges come to their arcane powers by a unique blend of philosophy, the study of anatomy, and deep insight into the fundamental nature of the power inherent in the processes of life and death. Mortitheurges understand that blood and living tissue have an innate power they can tap and harness. While a mortitheurge bears superficial similarities to a western necromancer, they arrive at their magic through different means and do not suffer some of the same limitations. They learn how to enhance their magic by mortifying their own bodies as well as drawing on the life forces of enemies to bolster their allies and empower them to fight past the limits of death.

**Adventurers:** Most commonly mortitheurges venture outside dusty libraries and laboratories in search of knowledge. True mastery of these arts requires testing one's limits on living flesh. Some mortitheurges aspire to lead a house and utilize their magic to ensure dominion over their peers, but these individuals must prove themselves in battle to command respect.

**Alignment:** Mortitheurgy is a dark study requiring the practitioner to siphon the forces of life and draw arcane power from those around him. Those who practice this art invariably become clinically detached and regard other living things as expendable resources. Mortitheurges of any power are evil by western standards. Most mortitheurges practice self-discipline while others are more temperamental.

## Skorne Classes

### Mortitheurges in Immoren

All Immorese mortitheurges are part of the Skorne Empire, but arise from a variety of backgrounds. This magical tradition has no relation to arcane practices in the west. Learning this skill requires complete immersion in skorne philosophies and teaching. Mortitheurgy has a sacred connotation inextricably linked to ancestor worship and the control of ruling houses. Even among skorne, only those of proven worth, station, or exceptional aptitude find welcome in these circles.

Two castes regularly learn mortitheurgy. One comprises dedicated arcane specialists chosen for intelligence who devote their lives to mastering and controlling the energies of flesh and spirit. Such individuals represent rare assets to their houses, eventually learning higher mortitheurgy for the battlefield to push soldiers past their mortal limits while sapping the strength of their enemies. The other initiates of these arts come from the leaders and heirs of skorne houses. They learn to utilize these powers to bolster their martial prowess and focus on controlling house warbeasts and soldiers. House leaders and heirs divide their time between these arts and a martial tradition.

While mortitheurges may practice any skorne religious philosophy, those seeking mastery follow Voskune's principles.

### Game Rule Information

**Abilities:** Intelligence determines how powerful a spell a mortitheurge can cast and how hard those spells are to resist. Mortitheurgy can be very strenuous to the body, so Constitution is helpful.

**Alignment:** Mortitheurges may start as any non-good alignment.

**Race:** Any skorne.

**Hit Die:** d6

**Starting Gold:** 5d4 x 10 (125 gp)

### Class Skills

The mortitheurge's class skills (and the key ability for each) are: Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (all), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int)

Mortitheurge Advancement Table

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells by Level									
						0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Armored Caster, Necromantic Affinity, Mortitheurgy	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	+1	+3	+0	+3		3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	+2	+3	+1	+3		3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat	3	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Mortification	3	2	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	+4	+5	+2	+5		3	3	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Moral Detachment	3	3	2	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
8	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6		3	3	3	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
9	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6		3	3	3	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
10	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Greater Mortitheurgy	3	3	3	3	2	2	—	—	—	—
11	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7		3	3	3	3	2	2	1	—	—	—
12	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Bonus feat	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	—	—	—
13	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8		3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	—	—
14	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9		3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	—	—
15	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9		3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	—
16	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	—
17	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1
18	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
19	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
20	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bonus feat	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2

## Skorne Classes

Skill Points at 1st Level:  $(2 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$ .

Skill Points at Each Additional Level:  $2 + \text{Int modifier}$ .

### Class Features

All of the following are features of the Mortitheurge class:

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Mortitheurges are proficient in all simple weapons and a martial weapon of their choice. Mortitheurges are proficient with light armor.

**Spells:** A mortitheurge casts arcane spells drawn from the mortitheurge spell list. A mortitheurge must choose and prepare spells ahead of time. To learn, prepare, or cast a spell, the mortitheurge must have an Intelligence score equal to at least  $10 + \text{the spell level}$  (Int 10 for 0-level spells, Int 11 for 1st level spells, and so forth). The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a mortitheurge's spell is  $10 + \text{the spell level} + \text{the mortitheurge's Intelligence modifier}$ .

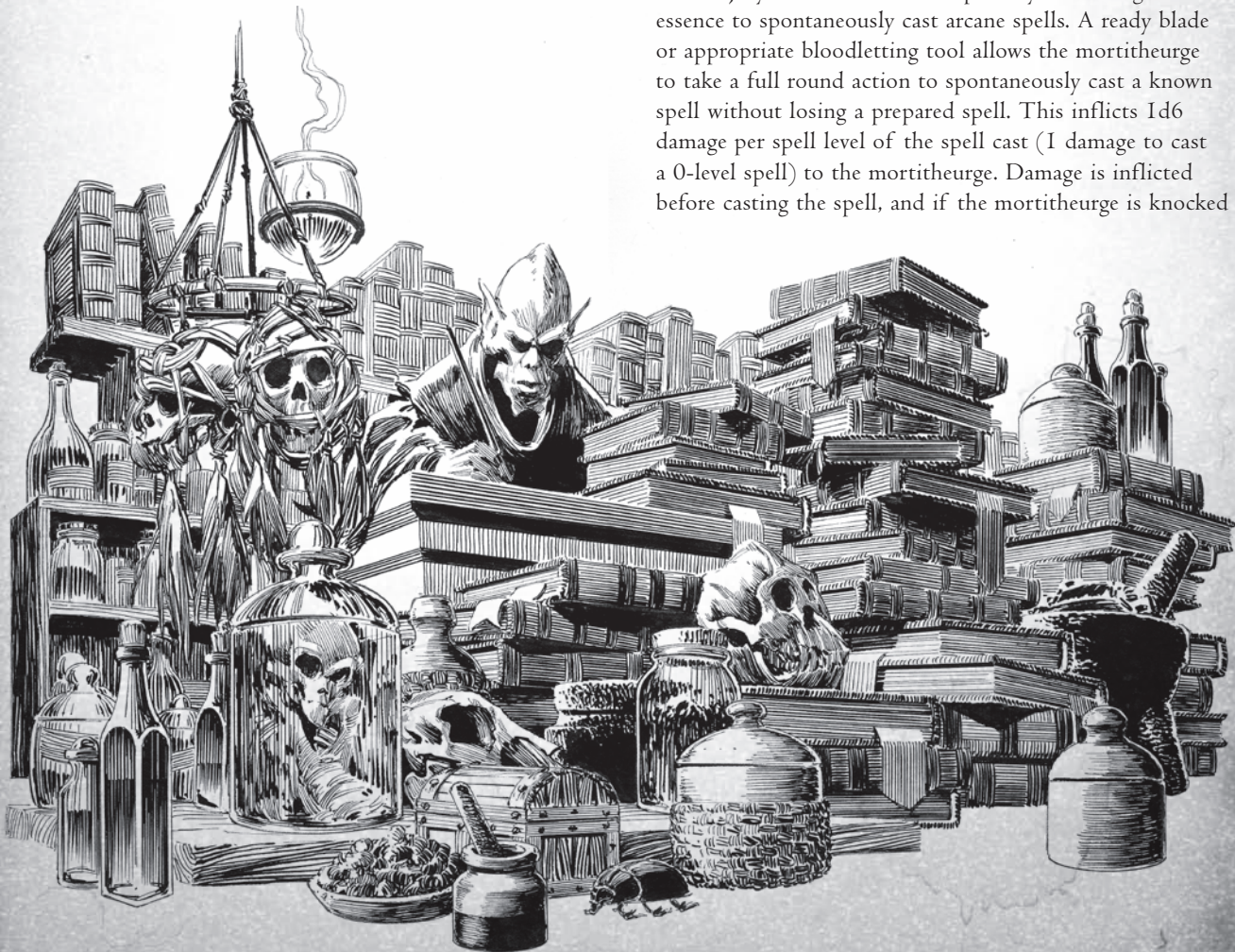
The mortitheurge can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment

appears on the Mortitheurge Advancement Table. In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Intelligence score. A mortitheurge may know any number of spells. He must choose and prepare his spells ahead of time by getting a good night's sleep and spending 1 hour in focused meditation. Mortitheurge spell research and training requires access to a body of occult tomes and scrolls which serve a similar purpose to spellbooks used by other arcane casters. Mortitheurges do not require access to this material as part of their spell preparation process but must refer to this body of material for at least one uninterrupted rest period within a month of spell preparation.

**Armored Caster (Ex):** Mortitheurges reduce the arcane spell failure chance for wearing armor by 20% when casting spells off the Mortitheurge Spell List.

**Necromantic Affinity (Ex):** The normal dangers of casting necromantic spells (IKCG, p. 263, "Dangers of the Dark Arts") do not apply to mortitheurges.

**Mortitheurgy (Su):** The mortitheurge can draw power from injury and bloodshed, temporarily sacrificing vital essence to spontaneously cast arcane spells. A ready blade or appropriate bloodletting tool allows the mortitheurge to take a full round action to spontaneously cast a known spell without losing a prepared spell. This inflicts 1d6 damage per spell level of the spell cast (1 damage to cast a 0-level spell) to the mortitheurge. Damage is inflicted before casting the spell, and if the mortitheurge is knocked



## Skorne Classes

unconscious the spell fails. Any effect which would prevent the mortitheurge from taking this damage prevents this ability from functioning. After any use of this ability the mortitheurge cannot benefit from any magical healing until they have rested for at least 8 hours.

If the application of this power reduces the mortitheurge below half of his total hit points he becomes fatigued. If the use of this ability reduces the mortitheurge to 0 hit points he must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + spell level of spell being cast) or contract the *karovoul* disease (See Genzoul, p. 70).

Whenever a mortitheurge dies there is a chance (2% per mortitheurge level) that he will rise again as a genzoul in 1d6+1 days unless the body is burned or otherwise completely destroyed.

**Bonus Feats:** At 4th, 12th, and 20th level, a mortitheurge gains a bonus feat. At each such opportunity, he can choose a metamagic feat, an item creation feat, or Spell Mastery. The mortitheurge must still meet all prerequisites for a bonus feat.

**Mortification (Su):** The 5th level mortitheurge gains the ability to draw on his life essence to amplify the power of his spells. As a free action, the mortitheurge can suffer nonlethal damage to spontaneously gain the benefits of a metamagic feat without having prepared a spell with a higher level spell slot. The mortitheurge must possess the respective metamagic feat and have access to the spell level which he would normally require to prepare the spell with the metamagic feat. For example, a 4th level mortitheurge casting a 1st level spell could spontaneously apply the Silent Spell metamagic feat, but not the Empower metamagic feat since he does not have access to 3rd level spells.

The caster immediately suffers 1d8 nonlethal damage for each spell level required by the metamagic feat. Damage is inflicted before casting the spell, and if the mortitheurge is knocked unconscious the spell fails. Any effect which would prevent the mortitheurge from sustaining this damage also prevents the ability from functioning. After any use of this ability the mortitheurge cannot benefit from any magical healing until he has rested for at least 8 hours.

This ability can only apply a single metamagic feat to any spell, although the ability can apply to a spell already prepared with a different metamagic feat. For example, a 15th level mortitheurge chooses to prepare *enervation* with Silent Spell, taking up a 5th level spell slot. When casting the spell, the mortitheurge chooses to apply the Maximize metamagic feat to the spell, which uses a spell slot 3 levels higher. The mortitheurge chooses to inflict nonlethal damage on himself to apply this metamagic feat and suffers 3d8 nonlethal damage after casting the spell.

This ability can apply to spells cast by mortitheurgy. For example, a *cloudkill* spell cast by mortitheurgy and Maximized with mortification inflicts 8d8 nonlethal damage on the caster.

Reduction in hit points by this power results in similar consequences as the use of mortitheurgy (fatigue, risk of contracting the *karovoul* disease).

**Moral Detachment:** By 7th level the mortitheurge has so steeped himself in the energies of death that he can no longer empathize with the living. If the mortitheurge is a neutral alignment, the mortitheurge's alignment moves one step toward evil. For example, a lawful neutral mortitheurges would become a lawful evil mortitheurge.

**Greater Mortitheurgy (Su):** At 10th level the mortitheurge gains the ability to utilize the life essence of others to fuel his spells rather than suffering damage personally. Having both a blade or appropriate bloodletting tool and a helpless or willing subject allows the mortitheurge to take a full round action to spontaneously cast a known spell without losing a prepared spell. This inflicts 1d8 damage per spell level of the spell cast (1 damage to cast a 0-level) to the subject. Damage is inflicted before casting the spell, and if the subject is knocked unconscious or killed the spell fails. Any effect which would prevent the subject from taking this damage prevents the ability from functioning. After any use of this ability the mortitheurge and his subject cannot benefit from any magical healing until they have rested for at least 8 hours.

## Mortitheurge Spell List

0 level — *arcane mark, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, inflict minor wounds, mending, read magic, touch of fatigue*

1st level — *cause fear, charm person, chill touch, daze monster, death-watch, detect animals or plants, detect undead, inflict light wounds, endure elements, expeditious retreat, hypnotism, grease, jump, longstrider, ray of enfeeblement, sleep*

2nd level — *bear's endurance, blindness/deafness, bull's strength, cat's grace, contagion, darkness, darkvision, daze monster, death knell, detect thoughts, false life, flesh knitting(2), fog cloud, globe touch, identify, inflict moderate wounds, resist energy, see invisibility, spectral hand, touch of idiocy, warp wood*

3rd level — *arcane sight, dispel magic, deep slumber, fighting spirit (2), gentle repose, halt undead, haste, heroism, hold person, inflict serious wounds, keen edge, poison, protection from energy, rage, ray of exhaustion, remove paralysis, reveal souls (1), slow, suggestion, vampiric touch*

4th level — *bestow curse, blight, charm monster, confusion, crushing despair, enervation, fear, inflict critical wounds, lesser restoration, locate creature, neutralize poison, remove curse, remove disease, repel vermin, speak with dead, stonewall, wraith (1)*

5th level — *break enchantment, cloudkill, death ward, dominate person, feeblemind, hold monster, inflict light wounds mass, magic jar, mind fog, permanency, remove blindness/deafness, slay living, stay the void (2), symbol of sleep, symbol of pain, waves of fatigue*

6th level — *analyze dweomer, antilife shell, bear's endurance mass, bull's strength mass, cat's grace mass, circle of death, dispel magic greater, eye-*

## Skorne Classes

bite, inflict moderate wounds mass, flesh to stone, geas/quest, harm, heroism greater, stone to flesh, symbol of fear, symbol of persuasion, transformation

7th level — arcane sight greater, disintegrate, finger of death, bold person mass, inflict serious wounds mass, insanity, power word blind, spell turning, symbol of stunning, symbol of weakness, vision, waves of exhaustion

8th level — charm monster mass, destruction, horrid wilting, inflict critical wounds mass, mind blank, power word stun, symbol of death, symbol of insanity, temporal stasis, trap the soul

9th level — dominate monster, energy drain, bold monster mass, power word kill, soul bind, wail of the banshee

(1) IKCG spell

(2) New spell (below)

## New Spells

### Flesh Knitting

Necromancy

Level: Mrt 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Special (see text), Fortitude negates (harmless)

Spell resistance: Yes

When laying your hand upon an injured living creature, you can manipulate its life essence to lessen the severity of wounds but risk having the injury transferred to yourself. This spell converts normal damage into nonlethal damage. You determine how many hit points are converted, up to 10 + your current hit points. You must immediately make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + 1 per hit point converted) or suffer nonlethal damage equal to the number of hit points converted. If you fail the save by more than 5, this damage is normal. For example, a 3rd level mortitheurge at 4 current hit points out of a total of 15 casts *flesh knitting* on himself, converting 11 damage to nonlethal. He fails a Fortitude save (DC 13) by 3 and suffers 11 nonlethal damage, exceeding his current hit points by 7 and knocking him unconscious. In 3 hours he heals 9 nonlethal damage and regains consciousness.

### Fighting Spirit

Necromancy

Level: Mrt 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Caster + one creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)

Subjects under the influence of this spell gain a +4 morale bonus to fear effects, and can make a fresh saving throw to resist if already under the influence of a fear effect when this spell is cast. Subjects automatically become stable if reduced to between -1 and -9 hit points and may act as if disabled rather than dying. When reduced to negative hit points subjects can take either a single move or standard action each turn, but not both, and cannot take a full round action. Subjects in this condition can take a move action without further injuring themselves. If performing any standard action (or any other action deemed as strenuous, such as casting a quickened spell), subjects take 1 point of damage after completing the act. Subjects reaching -10 hit points immediately die. When this spell expires subjects at -1 to -9 hit points fall unconscious but remain stabilized.

Unwilling targets can negate the spell's effects by making a Fortitude save or with spell resistance.

### Stay the Void

Necromancy

Level: Mrt 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Caster + One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

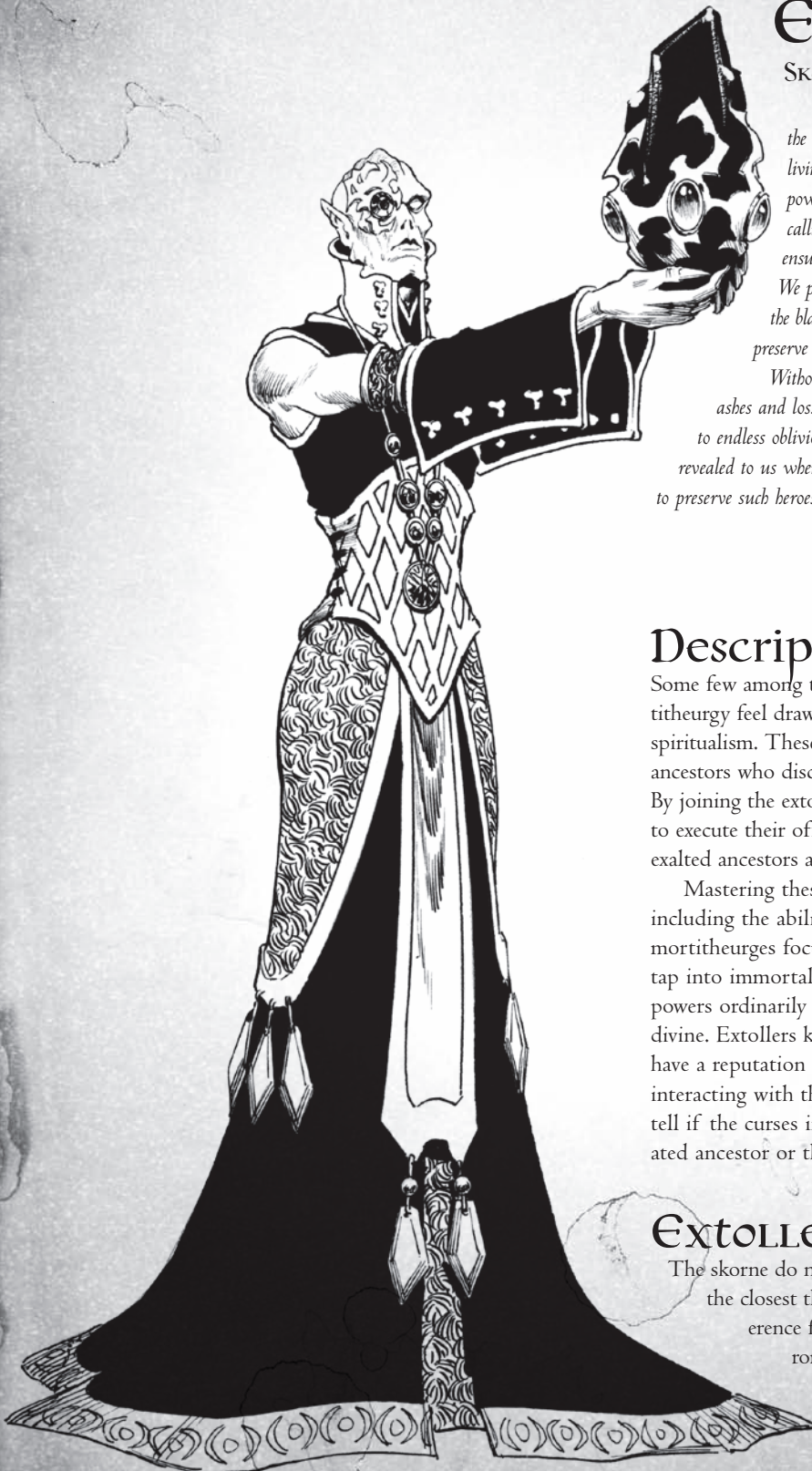
Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)

This spell renders subjects immune to fear effects; if already under the influence of a fear effect when this spell is cast, the effect is negated. This spell enables subjects to automatically become stable, remain conscious, and move and perform actions if reduced to between -1 and -29 hit points. When reduced to -1 to -9 hit points, the subject incurs no penalties and can act normally. When reduced to -10 to -29 hit points, the subject incurs a -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity and can neither run nor charge but can otherwise act normally. Subjects brought to -30 hit points immediately die. Subjects at lower than -9 hit points immediately die when the spell expires.



## Skorne Classes



## Extoller (Ext)

### Skorne Prestige Class

*We alone have the privilege and the burden of conveying the will of the ancestors. We act as their voice among the living and a bridge by which they bring their wisdom and power against the enemies of our house. Ours is a sacred calling; we hear the summons of our ancestors to serve. We ensure that none forget the great deeds of our progenitors. We preserve new heroes as they emerge in battle and fall on the blades of their enemies. We rescue them from the Void and preserve their legacy for future generations of our house.*

*Without our efforts, death would encompass nothing but ashes and loss with the essence of even our greatest figures consigned to endless oblivion. Some believe we choose the exalted. No. They are revealed to us when their spirits shine brightly to our oculus. Our task is to preserve such heroes when their nature is unveiled amid the gore of battle.*

—Aptimus Kalvesbex

## Description

Some few among those who learn the dark arts of mortitheurgy feel drawn to the art's underlying philosophy and spiritualism. These individuals answer a call to follow the great ancestors who discovered the very essence of immortal spirit. By joining the extoller ranks they enter into a sacred compact to execute their office as intermediaries and liaisons between exalted ancestors and their descendants.

Mastering these arts brings certain abilities and powers, including the ability to see manifestations of spirit. Where mortitheurges focus on the fundamentals of flesh, extollers tap into immortal essence. Their power, while arcane, accesses powers ordinarily only available to those who touch the divine. Extollers keep tight-lipped about their practices and have a reputation for secrecy. Some believe the very process of interacting with the exalted breeds insanity. One cannot easily tell if the curses inflicted by an extoller come from an infuriated ancestor or the extoller's own thirst for vengeance.

## Extollers in Immoren

The skorne do not worship gods, but the extollers represent the closest thing in their society to clergy and receive reverence from the pious. Though rooted in skorne necromancy, their magic taps into the divine power of ancestral spirits. The skorne entrust extollers with communicating with the great ancestors from past ages and passing down their wisdom and admonish-

## Skorne Classes

ments. Exalted ancestors, their minds changed forever by crystallization into sacral stones, rarely communicate clearly. Extollers require considerable training and study of history, ancient languages, and the proper protocols to interact with exalted spirits and understand them. This esoteric study commands great respect in skorne society, though outsiders do not understand it.

Extollers belong to a distinct class of privileged intellectuals above even the respected mortitheurges. Few among the skorne reach so high a status without belonging to the martial caste. Extollers remain members of their house and serve as a liaison to the house's ancestors. Their standing among their peers depends upon the strength of their house and their access to the exalted. An extoller serves his house by witnessing times of accomplishment or great battles in the hopes of preserving noted heroes after death as the exalted.

### Game Rule Information

**Hit Die:** d6

#### Requirements

To qualify to become an extoller, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Religion:** Must be a follower of Voskune, Ishoul, Kaleed, or closely related descendant schools.

**Skills:** Diplomacy 5, Knowledge (skorne ancestors) 10, Knowledge (arcana) 10

**Spells:** Able to cast 4th level mortitheurge spells.

**Feats:** Great Fortitude

**Special:** Must undertake the Ritual of the Oculus, supervised by an extoller with at least 4 levels in the prestige class.

#### Class Skills

The extoller's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int),

Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (all), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier

#### Class Features

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** Extollers do not gain any weapon or armor proficiencies. Like mortitheurges, they prefer light armor as heavier armor interferes with the somatic components of their spells.

**Spells:** When a character gains a new extoller level he gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in any one arcane spellcasting class that he belonged to previously. He does not gain any other benefits a character of that class would have gained. Extollers have access to spells from the Extoller Spell List in addition to the spells on the Mortitheurge Spell List. Spells from the Extoller Spell List gain the benefits of the mortitheurge armored caster ability.

**Ritual of the Oculus (Sp):** No character may join the extoller prestige class without undertaking this ritual which requires the hopeful to sacrificially excise one of his eyes. The aspiring extoller must remain conscious while the eye is removed and must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 12) or die. If the aspiring character lives, other extollers replace the eye with a specially prepared smooth crystal orb (costing ~1000 gp).

With the oculus in place, the extoller lives permanently under the influence of *reveal souls* and *deathwatch*. This ability functions as a cone-shaped emanation to a range of 120 feet.

**Prepare Sacral Stone (Ex):** Extollers learn the techniques to craft and prepare a sacral stone suitable to contain the soul of an exalted. The stone thus crafted is an empty receptacle capable of attracting and containing the soul of a slain skorne under special circumstances. Each stone can only contain a single soul and crystallizes when it acquires one, undergoing a permanent

### Extoller Advancement Table

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Ritual of the Oculus, Prepare Sacral Stone	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Audience with the Dead, Exalted Dialog	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Bonus Feat	+1 level of existing class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Ancestral Conduit	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Bonus Language	+1 level of existing class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Spirit Siege	+1 level of existing class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat	+1 level of existing class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Bonus Language	+1 level of existing class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6		+1 level of existing class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Direct Intercession	+1 level of existing class

## Skorne Classes

transformation (see “Sacral Stones”, p. 236). Crafting a sacral stone requires a quantity of pure obsidian, often embellished with metal bands, set with other decorative stones, and otherwise adorned. The cost incurred in preparing a sacral stone determines the strength of the soul it can contain. Every 300 gold pieces spent preparing the stone adds 1 hit die to its limit. For example, preserving a 20 hit die skorne in a sacral stone would require a stone costing at least 6,000 gp. Extollers sometimes prepare particularly large and ornate stones for house lords or significant individuals within a house. These stones can power exceptionally potent skorne enchanted items.

**Audience with the Dead (Su):** At 2nd level the extoller gains the ability to gather information from the corpses of the dead.

Once per day the extoller can question a corpse. After spending 10 minutes concentrating the extoller may ask up to one question per two caster levels. The corpse’s knowledge is limited to what the creature knew during life, including the languages it spoke. Answers are usually brief, cryptic, or repetitive, and the body must be mostly intact to respond. This does not let the extoller actually speak to the soul of the corpse. It instead draws on the imprinted knowledge stored in the corpse. The corpse cannot learn new information. This communication causes the crystal orb to glow dimly during the communication. No one but the extoller can hear answers given by the dead.

**Exalted Dialog (Su):** At 2nd level the extoller gains his most important signature ability. He may enter into communication with an ancestral spirit when in close proximity (20 feet) to its sacral stone. As a full round action the extoller can communicate with ancestral spirits preserved in sacral stones. When using Exalted Dialog, an extoller communicates directly with the ancestral spirit. The extoller must understand and speak a language known by the ancestor.

**Bonus Feats:** At 3rd and 7th level an extoller gains a bonus feat. He can choose a metamagic feat or an item creation feat. The extoller must still meet the feat’s prerequisites.

**Ancestral Conduit (Su):** By 4th level the extoller can serve as a temporary conduit for an ancestral spirit if he has its sacral stone on his person. They generally use this to allow the ancestral spirit to speak through the extoller to others. In this fashion extollers can communicate the will of the ancestors. Their oculus glows silver at this time to indicate a connection with the ancestor.

As a full round action ancestral conduit allows the extoller to *bestow curse* upon a single target within 30 feet. They can only use this ability safely once per day per ancestor. After serving as a conduit an extoller must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or become nauseated for 10 minutes. Attempting to use this power more often has a cumulative 10% chance of the curse affecting the extoller in addition to the target.

**Bonus Language (Ex):** At 5th and 8th level, the extoller gains the knowledge of a bonus extinct language from the study of ancient texts and tomes.

**Spirit Siege (Su):** At 6th level the extoller has learned to manipulate the very essence of his enemies. A beam of flickering light flashes from his oculus to strike his target and wrench at their spirit from a distance to cause pain and agony resulting in actual physical injury. This prompts a horrendous muscle spasm throughout the victim’s body. As a standard action the extoller may sacrifice a prepared spell of 1st level or higher to make a melee touch attack against any living target he can see within 60 feet. If the attack hits, the target takes 1d6 negative energy damage per spell level sacrificed + the target’s Strength modifier, if any. The ability of the extoller to see a target’s spirit does not require light, and *darkness* or similar effects do not block it. Intervening barriers or obstructions do block this ability.

**Direct Intercession (Su):** At 10th level the extoller can entreat an exalted spirit to lend direct intercession. Direct Intercession is rare, prompting a great ancestor to expend considerable effort and personal energy to influence events through the extoller as its liaison.

Calling a direct intercession requires the extoller to be within 100 feet of the sacral stone of the entreated ancestral spirit. Preparing for this ability requires the ancestral spirit to have a helpful attitude toward the extoller and requires a Diplomacy check (DC 50). This dialog can take place up to one day before the event requiring the intercession.

Only ancient or venerable exalted ancestors can intercede and will do so no more than once per decade. After an ancestor has interceded it will not answer any exalted dialog for at least one year. Before gaining the benefits of this ability the extoller must make a Will save (DC 15 + 1 per 100 years of the ancestral spirit’s age). Failure means the spirit takes control of the extoller’s body for up to 24 hours or until it deems its intercession finished. During intercession the extoller serves as a vessel for the ancestor, which bestows a +4 divine bonus to all attributes, 6d6+6 temporary hit points, all the benefits of *foresight*, and allows the extoller to receive an automatic 20 on every skill check or saving throw during the intercession. During the duration the extoller heals 10 points of nonlethal damage every round. Direct intercession lasts for no longer than one day but will immediately end if the event for which the extoller invoked it resolves.

During this time the extoller’s crystal orb glows with bright silver light. An extoller who serves as the vessel of a direct intercession cannot do so again for at least one year. The extoller falls unconscious and cannot be roused for 24 hours immediately after serving as a vessel for intercession.

## Exalted Dialogs

Gaining meaningful information from an ancestor requires an extended conversation, spiritual formalities, and ceremony. Ancestral spirits resent contact with the living and require persuasion to engage in a dialog. Particularly ancient and revered ancestors require the additional time and effort of developing a relationship over months or years. Once an extoller has established such a relationship, he can ask the ancestor questions or petition them for advice or intercession. Even great ancestors are not omniscient nor always cooperative, so their aid is not guaranteed.

Successful communication with an ancestral spirit requires the spirit to have a friendly or better attitude toward the extoller. This requires Diplomacy. A Diplomacy check may only increase an ancestor spirit's attitude once regardless of its result. Failing this check by 5 or more decreases the attitude one step lower. If already hostile, the DC increases cumulatively by 5 for every failure until a diplomacy check succeeds.

<u>Ancestor Type</u>	<u>Initial Attitude</u>
Revered Companion, Recent Exalted	Indifferent
Ancient Exalted (>500 years dead)	Unfriendly
Venerable Exalted (>1000 years dead)	Hostile

## Ancestor Attitude Modifiers

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Check DC/Modifier</u>
Ancestor died within the last decade	-2
Each 100 years the ancestor has been dead	+1
Increased time spent establishing a relationship (1)	-5/increment
Failure to wait long enough before contacting ancestor again	+5 to +20
Spending a week before contact researching this ancestor	-2 to -6
Using the preferred native language of the ancestor	-2
Extoller is a direct blood descendant of the ancestor	-5

(1) Time increment increases are: 1 minute to 10 minutes, 10 minutes to 1 hour, 1 hour to 1 day, 1 day to 1 week, 1 week to 1 month, 1 month to 1 year, 1 year to 10 years

## Supernatural Aid

Beyond questioning an ancestral spirit for basic information or lore from their life, extollers may request supernatural aid. Because of their peculiar state of existence, the Exalted sometimes have access to information beyond their direct experience. Requesting this type of information requires the spirit to have a helpful attitude toward the extoller. Ancestors will refuse to provide this type of assistance more frequently than listed below. Use the rules for *augury*, *divination*, *legend lore*, or *vision* to handle answers to these queries depending on the type of ancestral spirit questioned.

## Ancestor Capability Chart

<u>Ancestor Type</u>	<u>Answer Conveyed As</u>	<u>Minimum Communication Interval</u>
Revered Companion	<i>Augury</i>	1 day
Exalted	<i>Divination</i>	1 week
Ancient Exalted (>500 years dead)	<i>Legend Lore</i>	1 month
Venerable Exalted (>1000 years dead)	<i>Vision</i> or <i>Discern Location</i>	1 year

# Skorne Classes

## Sacral Stones

Specially prepared and carved pieces of polished obsidian, sacral stones preserve the souls of honored skorne from falling into the "Void", a state of oblivion every skorne dreads to face, after death. Empty sacral stones appear as regular carved obsidian that radiate a faint aura of necromantic magic. Souls within sacral stones cannot ordinarily communicate with mortals by any means other than exalted dialog. The spirits inside sacral stones change over time and can become cryptic and even belligerent. Every ancestor has a different temperament, but most resent repeated contact and do not have a normal perception of the passage of time.

Empty sacral stones naturally attract freshly slain skorne souls if in close proximity (within 10 feet) but require special rituals to attract a soul from further away. Extollers wrap empty stones in cloth treated with a mixture of rare oils and then encase this inside metal-lined enclosures to prevent empty sacral stones from attracting stray souls before their time.

When a soul enters a suitable sacral stone (sufficient to contain the HD of the formerly living skorne) it *crystallizes*, transforming permanently. The obsidian changes to a black or red hardened glass and glows dimly. Only destroying the sacral stone can release the soul within and this drives the ancestral spirit insane (see Kovaas, p. 102). An empty sacral stone is relatively fragile, with a Hardness of 2 and 1 hp per potential hit die. Once crystallized a sacral stone becomes supernaturally durable, with Hardness 11 and 5 hp per hit die of the soul within. Crystallized sacral stones emanate a strong aura of necromantic magic.

Sacral stones come in a variety of sizes primarily related to the status of the ancestor contained and the wealth and influence of the house commissioning the stone. Larger sacral stones imply great status and wealth. Some sacral stones take the form of enormous monuments comprised of priceless oversized pieces of obsidian. Many stones are decorated with metal bands, runes, and are carved into specific ceremonial shapes.

Houses commonly entrust an extoller with a fragment of a lesser sacral stone containing a recent ancestor, if available. This often contains the spirit of a revered companion, such as those gathered by an ancestral guardian, rarely a full exalted. Extollers will set this stone in an amulet, a breastplate, or occasionally a shield or weapon. Even the most humble stones confer power equivalent to +1 enchantment on such an item. On an amulet this represents a +1 deflection bonus to AC, while armor and weapons receive a +1 enhancement bonus. More significant sacral stones possess greater powers, some requiring time and communication with the ancestor activate.

Any sacral stone entrusted to an extoller can act as a divine focus for spells that require one. This only applies to sacral stones containing an extoller's blood ancestor.

The presentation of such a stone occurs at a formal ceremony undertaken at any point after the extoller has undergone the Ritual of the Oculus. It requires proven service, and more commonly takes place after achieving at least 2nd level or higher as an extoller.

## Ancestral Spirits

A spirit crystallized in a sacral stone it is referred to as an "ancestral spirit" or "ancestor" even if the spirit is freshly expired and therefore not technically an ancestor of those currently alive. Extollers classify ancestral spirits into four loose categories representing their power, age, and influence:

Revered Companion ~ These are the spirits of lesser individuals preserved in battle, generally by ancestral guardians, and are not considered full exalted.

Full Exalted ~ These revered spirits receive the honor of full exaltation for great deeds performed in life, particularly on the battlefield.

Ancient Exalted ~ A fully exalted spirit crystallized for at least five hundred years, these spirits are more difficult to interact with and their minds have begun to change.

Venerable Exalted ~ These extremely ancient exalted have been crystallized for a thousand years or more.

### Extoller Spell List

(combined with Mortitheurge Spell List)

- 0 level — guidance, resistance
- 1st level — bane, bless, command, doom, sanctuary
- 2nd level — calm emotions, shatter, status
- 3rd level — bestow curse, invisibility purge
- 4th level — discern lies, sending, stone shape
- 5th level — atonement, command greater, true seeing
- 6th level — animate objects
- 7th level — control weather
- 8th level — repel metal or stone
- 9th level — implosion

### Skorne Magic Items

Skorne do not create wands, but may take other magic item creation feats. All permanent skorne magic items require the use of a sacral stone or the fragment of a sacral stone. This is included in the cost of the magic item and is a normal part of the item fabrication process. Certain particularly powerful items may require particularly powerful or ancient sacral stones.

*I must say I was utterly shocked to find that the skorne claimed no gods, not even a single simple one like the less civilized races. How were they created, one wonders?*

*Instead they revere their own ancestors with a, dare I say it, religious fervor rarely seen in the West these days beside that of the Protectorate. Somehow, despite their race being hopelessly forsaken by all things divine, they have managed to thrive even in the harshest of climes. I shudder to think what foul misery the invading skorne might unleash if they ever gain a taste for western religion and power. Let us hope they do not twist our religions to their will like they do all else.*

*Monow preserve us if they do.*

*—VP*

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