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DARKLANDS REVISITED

THURSTON HILLMAN

Denizens of the Dark



Drow

Infamous for their sadism, depravity, and near-constant political infighting, the demon-worshipping dark elves are the most powerful force in Sekamina. Their noble houses continuously vie for control of their fractious empire.



Munavri

Good-aligned albino psychics locked in constant conflict with the Darklands' evil denizens (especially the urdefhans), munavri are one of the few potential allies adventurers can hope to find in the dangerous Vaults of Orv.



Duergar

Gray dwarf slavers dedicated to Droskar, the dwarven god of toil and betrayal, duergar are among the most common Darklands denizens to venture near Golarion's surface, as they maintain their steady supply of new slaves.



Neothelid

Gargantuan, alien, wormlike monstrosities utterly intent on bringing their Outer God patron to Golarion, neothelids slumber in teeming nests, sending forth their seugathi spawn to advance fell plots throughout the Darklands.



Gug

Horrific, four-armed giants, gugs were originally native to the underworld of the Dreamlands but found a way to burrow into the Darklands of the Material Plane and settle there. Now they guard the deepest Darklands passages.



Troglodyte

Primitive reptilian humanoids descended from an ancient and subterranean empire of psychic xulgaths, troglodytes live barbaric lives of violence and hatred, often working as mercenaries for more civilized Darklands cultures.



Intellect Devourer

Mobile alien brains capable of replacing victims' brains and controlling their bodies from within, intellect devourers are master puppeteers, ever alert for opportunities to seize new bodies and torment their owners' loved ones.



Urdefhan

Depraved creations of powerful daemons, the urdefhans have a single purpose—spreading death and pain throughout the Darklands and beyond. Their life-stealing abilities have earned them the nickname “Orvian vampires.”



Morlock

Degenerate former humans descended from the people of ancient empires, morlocks often protect the ruins of their forebears, guarding them from intruders while at the same time venerating the humans they ward off.



Vegepygmy

Miniature fungal humanoids, vegepygmies are birthed from the spores of infectious russet mold. They often worship large patches of the fungus, creating macabre shrines of rampant mold and their victims' remains.

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Reference

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

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Occult Bestiary</i>	OB
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Occult Adventures</i>	OA	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM

On the Cover



Alahazra prepares to unleash positive energy as Valeros battles an urdefhan deep in the Vaults of Orv in this cover by Igor Grechanyi.



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Worlds Beneath Your Feet

The Ancient Greeks told stories of Orpheus, who journeyed into the depths of the Underworld to rescue his late love, Eurydice, from Hades's clutches. German professor Otto Lidenbrock ventured into Icelandic lava tubes, seeking the heart of the world in Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Edgar Rice Burroughs crafted legendary Pellucidar in *At the Earth's Core* and subsequent adventures. Stories of danger and mystery in the dark regions beneath our feet have been part of human culture since we first painted on the walls of those same caves, and it's no surprise that many of the tales of adventure that inspired the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and Pathfinder campaign setting also incorporate such elements.

While there are caves and caverns accessible from the surface of Golarion, most are isolated geological phenomena, unconnected ingresses that go little more than a mile underground. These are certainly homes to dangerous denizens, but they offer only a hint of the

excitement provided by the "hollow earths" that exist deeper still. The Darklands—the expansive but largely inaccessible region beneath these surface caverns—is home to much more primal and potent enemies.

Drawing inspiration from works of horror and science fiction dating back to the nineteenth century, the creatures that populate Golarion's Darklands present a challenge for parties of all levels, though the deeper one travels into the subterranean realm, the tougher the inhabitants get. *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Darklands Revisited* presents 10 of the most iconic species to make their homes beneath the surface of the Inner Sea region, and fleshes out their complex ecologies, societies, campaign roles, and more. Each chapter also includes statistics for a sample creature of or related to the species covered in the section. While these creatures represent only a small fraction of Golarion's diverse underground ecosystem, the species detailed here are responsible for a large portion of the Darklands' total civilization.

The monsters included in this book are as follows.

Drow: Evil, corrupted versions of their terrestrial kin, these so-called "dark elves" take their name in equal parts from the dark blue and purple hues of their skin and from the nature of their chaotic, demon-worshiping souls. Drow draw inspiration from many sources, including the matriarchal Martians of Edgar Rice Burroughs's *The Gods of Mars* and villains in Robert E. Howard's *Almuric*. They feature prominently in the Second Darkness Adventure Path.

Duergar: When the dwarves left their subterranean homes in the great exodus known as the "Quest for Sky," not all of their people made the journey. Those that remained made fell pacts with the dwarven god of toil and were warped into duergar. Known on the surface for their voracious slave trade and dedication to tireless work, duergar are one of the most common Darklands species to be encountered near or on the planet's surface.

Gugs: Lifted from the pages of H.P. Lovecraft's *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, gugs are black-furred, four-armed giants with gaping mouths set vertically in their heads. Exiles of the Dreamlands, gugs make formidable foes, known for both their physical might and the sinister powers they worship and serve.

Intellect Devourers: Appearing as little more than enlarged brains on canine legs, intellect devourers are



Darklands Revisited



more dangerous than their alien visages would suggest, for they are the master puppeteers of the Darklands. Capable of destroying and replacing their victims' brains, intellect devourers can travel unnoticed throughout the world—including on the surface—to sate their desire to experience new and exotic sensations through their hosts.

Morlocks: Inspired by the creatures of the same name from H.G. Wells's classic *The Time Machine*, morlocks are the degenerate descendants of ancient humans who fled a cataclysmic disaster by traveling deep underground. Masters of stealth and swarming tactics, these pale, beady-eyed people now barely resemble their forebears, yet still hold the pure humans from which they devolved in near-fanatical reverence.

Munavris: One of the few good civilizations to have taken root in the otherwise depraved Darklands, the munavris are psychic humanoids who deftly sail the waters of the Sightless Sea, combating the aboleths, drow, urdefhans, and other ill-intentioned enemies from their ivory boats. Munavris are descended from the humans of ancient Azlant, and are perhaps the most advanced humanoid species in the Darklands.

Neothelids: The largest of the creatures detailed in this book, neothelids are also perhaps the oldest. The spawn of the Outer God Shub-Niggurath, neothelids are gigantic wormlike creatures capable of reading and controlling the minds of weaker creatures. For millennia, they have been locked in a war with the intellect devourers, sending their madness-spreading seugathi spawn to the distant corners of the Darklands to promote their sinister plots and overthrow their ancient enemies.

Troglodytes: The primitive reptilian troglodytes are actually the descendants of ancient creatures from the depths of the Darklands known as xulgaths. Troglodytes often show up on or near the surface or throughout the Darklands as slaves or soldiers for other forces, such as drow and duergar. Troglodytes are deadly combatants who combine their natural weapons, overpowering stench, and ambush tactics to overwhelm their targets.

Urdefhans: Often called "Orvian vampires," urdefhans are the creation of the daemons of Abaddon, and live only to bring death and war to the entire world. While urdefhans are largely humanoid in shape and size, they have transparent skin that gives them a horrific, skeletal appearance, and ride giant undead bats as ghoulish mounts. Urdefhans' primary enemies are munavris, whom they have battled on the waters of the Sightless Sea for countless generations.

Vegepygmies: Vegepygmies may appear primitive or weak, but such assumptions can prove fatally wrong. The result of drow experiments upon human-like plant creatures from the primordial First World, vegepygmies procreate by exposing prey to the spores of russet mold, which incubate inside their hosts to form new

vegepygmies, meaning that tribes can pop up anywhere the fungus grows and present a threat in the most unexpected places.

Golarion's Darklands

The Darklands beneath the Inner Sea region are more than just barren caves, and contain as many complex and varied ecosystems as the surface world does. The Darklands are divided into three distinct layers—Nar-Voth, Sekamina, and Orv—each presenting unique threats to intruders and serving as home to different civilized and monstrous inhabitants.

Nar-Voth: The topmost of the Darklands' layers, Nar-Voth has the most entry points from the surface, and thus its denizens are the most likely to be encountered and known by the people of the Inner Sea region. Many of the region's inhabitants actively prey upon surface dwellers, often kidnapping them for experimentation or enslavement. Notable inhabitants of Nar-Voth include the dark folk, derros (detailed fully in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Classic Horrors Revisited*), duergar, mongrelfolk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 191), troglodytes, and vegepygmies. Many of the largest settlements in this layer are located under or near surface cities, such as the derro city of Corgunbier beneath Cassomir, the duergar stronghold of Fellstrok under Urgir, or the troglodyte enclave of Kuvhoshik near Riddleport.

Sekamina: Beneath Nar-Voth is Sekamina, home to the teeming metropolises of the drow and ghouls, the sleeping cities of the serpentfolk, and remote caverns guarded by tribes of gugs. Among the other creatures encountered here are skum, svirfneblin, morlocks, and seugathi. Notable for its high number of established settlements compared to the other two layers, Sekamina is a twisting maze of wide tunnels and narrow passages surrounding the massive Lake Northran, which is larger in area than the Inner Sea itself.

Orv: The deepest of the Darklands' layers, Orv comprises 10 immense caverns, each large enough to hold several surface nations. Carved out of the solid core of the planet by the mysterious Vault Builders in eons past, these massive vaults each contain a world unto itself. From the Black Desert beneath northern Garund to jungle-filled Deep Tolguth under the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, the Midnight Mountains beneath central Avistan to the expansive Sightless Sea beneath the Arcadian Ocean, Orv's vaults are as diverse as the many bioregions of the surface world. Intellect devourers, neothelids, munavris, and urdefhans each lay claim to nearly an entire vault, while dinosaurs, shoggoths, and other primordial horrors lurk in others. This is the realm of some of the most powerful creatures on Golarion, and only the bravest and most skilled of explorers can venture into Orv and return to tell the tale.

Introduction

Drow

Duergar

Gug

Intellect Devourer

Morlock

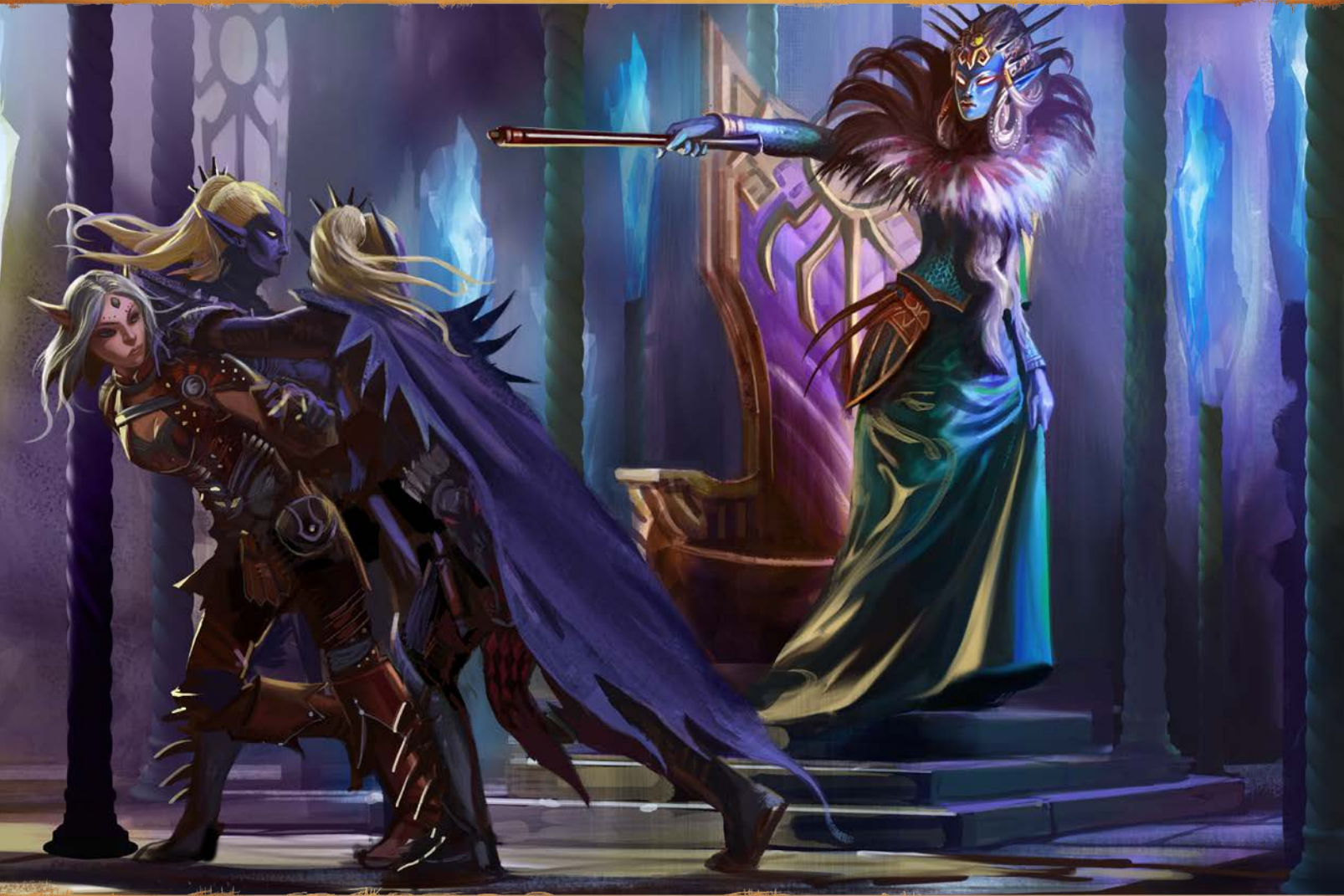
Munavri

Neothelid

Troglodyte

Urdefhan

Vegepygmy



Drow

The drow are a race unlike any other, their vindictive nature the basis for an entire self-eroding civilization. Having lived in disguise in their capital for several months, I can say with certainty that these fallen elves possess no redeeming qualities. Their vast subterranean empire is built on debased sacrifices and slavery, like meat into a constantly churning grinder. Only their continued infighting and petty political backstabbing keeps them from turning their attention to the surface world. Were they ever to be united in common purpose, their armies might only be rivaled by those that pour forth from the Worldwound in wickedness.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44



Deep beneath the skin of the world, children of an age long past plot against those that dwell above.

Millennia ago, elven prophets and arcanists foresaw the coming of Earthfall, forcing the elves to make a difficult choice. Most abandoned Golarion to take refuge in the mysterious realm of Sovyrian. Yet a few refused to leave, choosing instead to seek safety deep within the Darklands. There they were corrupted by the influence of the caged god Rovagug, seeded with a festering malice that germinated in their hearts and turned them to the worship of demons to survive the depredations they found in the deep places of the world. Over time, they became an entirely new race: drow.

Today, the drow reside within their many stronghold settlements in the Darklands realm of Sekamina. Having traveled far during their initial sojourn to escape Earthfall, the first drow engaged in a brutal pogrom against those inhabiting that layer of the Darklands. The first wars defined the drow's savagery, with the fallen elves utterly eradicating what remained of the dwarves untouched by Droskar's curse, forcing the explorative gugs back to Orv, and pushing the native ulat-kini back to their watery homes. Only the ancient and hidden communities of the serpentfolk and a few ghoulish settlements have maintained any autonomy in the face of the cruel drow.

There is no room for compassion within the delicate web of drow society. Only by ruthlessly executing a well-prepared scheme does one succeed in achieving power. Even then, males can only advance so far, as females dominate the upper echelons of the households that make up the governing body of the drow's Darklands empire. Matrons remain firmly entrenched at the pinnacle of drow society, their power coming from both a lifetime of hardship and their firm devotion to demonic powers. The drow spare only those non-drow who might make useful slaves. The fallen elves see gentle or kind members of their own race as disgraces, and kill them for the good of society, as the harsh realities of a drow's life permit no weakness.

Ecology

Since their initial foray into the Darklands, the drow race has adapted physically as well as culturally to their new surroundings. Their skin coloration ranges from shades of midnight blue to rich purples, allowing them to blend in with their underground environs. This adaptation would have normally occurred over the course of countless generations, but the latent influence of the imprisoned deity Rovagug and subtle manipulations from demonic forces expedited this change to improve the defensive capabilities of the drow. Most drow view their current form as a blessing, touting it as superior and far more appealing than that of their surface-dwelling elven cousins.

Five Facts about Drow

Both Game Masters and players may wish to keep the following facts about drow in mind.

- Drow are capricious and cruel beings. If a drow shows sympathy, it is part of some larger scheme of eventual betrayal. Even within their own society, drow act only to advance their respective agendas.
- Drow poison subdues opponents, lulling them into unconsciousness for easy capture. Many confuse this with a sleep effect, which is not the case. Drow poison affects elves just as it affects other races.
- Females hold positions of power in drow society. When negotiating with drow—a delicate matter—adventurers should be sure to have a female do the talking. If a group is entirely male, they should act as subservient as possible toward all female drow, lest they invite punishment for their perceived impudence.
- A drow's ability to shrug off spells is as much a curse as it is a boon. Severely injured drow must spend time suppressing their innate spell resistance if they want to receive magical healing. For some drow, this means retreating at the first sign of trouble. Others fight to the death rather than show weakness.
- Drow venerate the demon lords of the Abyss, with each family having to a specific demonic patron. Determining a particular household's patron can give some idea on the practices of its members, and adventurers may want to check slain drow for symbols to help determine their allegiance.

Drow are often dexterous and charming, yet lack the same heights of intellect found in their surface kin. The reason for this is derived from millennia of exploration into the arts of fleshwarping, the vile art of altering flesh through strange alchemies and surgeries. Modern drow generally have dozens of ancestors who partook in some restorative form of this process. Use of these techniques combats the visual effects of aging in humanoids, but over prolonged periods and numerous generations, it has failed to overcome natural elven frailties. The greatly enhanced abilities of drow of noble lineage are usually the result of extensive cosmetic and enhancing fleshwarping performed on their forbearers—and likely even themselves throughout their youth.

During the early years of their devotion to demonic powers, the drow were tempted with many gifts to ensure their servitude, most of these coming at the expense of their already rapidly dwindling sense of morality. Easily defeating the haggard forces of surviving dwarven enclaves and the few orcs squatting in their ancestral Darklands homes, the drow eventually found a worthy foe in the skum and their aboleth overlords. Unwilling

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to cede territory they held after losing so much during Earthfall, the aboleths fought a vicious series of battles against the drow, using their incredible mental powers in tandem with the martial ferocity of their skum servants. To ensure the survival of their new worshipers, the demons gifted the drow with an innate resistance to magical effects, tipping the scales of the conflict and confounding the aboleths' latent abilities. While the two forces were still roughly matched, the aboleths had little patience for continuing their conflict against the elves. This led the aboleths to retreat into the depths of the lowest regions of the Darklands, but also further indebted the drow to the demon lords with whom they bargained.

The innate spell-like abilities of drow come from the first elves who made their way into the Darklands. Equipped for a prolonged quest into the underground tunnels of the world, these elves prepared many different spells to create light in an area or on specific allies or enemies. Almost every member of the expedition, from child to elder, was familiar with the casting of these important spells in some way. Over the intervening years, the common practice became second nature, eventually ingraining itself into the psyche of all elves in the Darklands. This was later subverted by the drow's demon allies, who granted them the ability to shroud areas in darkness, useful in rare circumstances against inhabitants of the Darklands, but of much more use when raiding the surface world. The ancestors of the nobles of drow society were often at the forefront of Darklands exploration, forging ahead in the underground, and relying on many other magical spells to survive; in particular, these explorers specialized in magic useful for surviving the treacherous terrain of the region. Eventually, the bloodlines that would one day come to be the nobility of the drow adopted more unique magical gifts, imparted by their demonic patrons.

Society

Drow are evil creatures, with those taking exception to their wicked practices slaughtered without remorse by their "normal" kin. Great houses ensure the continued prosperity of the drow, with the greatest houses based in the capital city of Zirkakaynin, far below the surface nation of Nirmathas. Each of these houses finds succor in a particular patron—one of the many demon lords. On rare occasions, a house finds assistance from multiple demon lords, with such houses often transitioning between their devotions. Some small households venerate the entire demonic pantheon, hoping that a particular patron will come to them with offers of power. These houses often end up destroyed by other drow, who take exception to

competition, but in some instances, a demon lord takes notice of an unprotected drow house under siege and offers its support. Though rare, some renegade houses worship other evil forces, such as House Shraen, exiled long ago into the depths of Orv for their dalliances with the goddess Urgathoa. The drow consider such heretics' fate a scandalous topic.



Fleshwarping—a science involving the submersion of creatures in vats of alchemical compounds to make them susceptible to magic alteration—is a staple of drow culture. The drow value it as both a form of art and a form of torture, and they make extensive use of the technique. The most common application of fleshwarping provides the subject with subtle cosmetic alterations, which the drow perform primarily on themselves. While an extensive bout of fleshwarping leads drow to transform into driders, subtler techniques can reduce the onset of aging, repair severe physical damage, and even bolster natural resistances to disease and poison. The drow use the conversion of their kind into driders as a means of punishment or torture, and some households pay incredible bribes to coerce mercenary

fleshwarpers to perform this transformation on their rivals in lieu of standard cosmetic procedures the subjects believe themselves to be receiving. As such, hosts of house guards closely monitor fleshwarpers when the alchemists perform their art on more affluent nobles. Drow nobles are the paragons of beneficial fleshwarping, with many of their natural physical and mental aptitudes resulting from millennia of fleshwarped tampering among their bloodlines.

While fleshwarping is important to drow, no institution is as pervasive as slavery, which remains the cornerstone of the modern drow empire; the fallen elves' indolence requires extensive use of slaves to support their grandiose desires. Drow see their slaves as little more than expendable resources to be squandered in whatever pursuit they demand. This is a stark contrast to the duergar, who employ numerous laws and strictures on the owning and use of slaves, and the derros, who primarily use slaves as test subjects. The drow's contempt for their slaves is expressed in the low-ranking status of drow nobles with direct oversight of slaves. Those tasked with maintaining the slave stock of a household or mercantile empire are often embittered, seeking to further humiliate and torture their charges as a means of exerting power over those less fortunate. The utter disregard for even the most basic of upkeep and maintenance of slaves ensures every house constantly explores avenues to replenish their lost stock. Drow take slaves from a variety of other species, including dark folk, duergar, kobolds, morlocks, mongrelmen, svirfneblin, troglodytes, all manner of



surface humanoids, and even the hulking gugs of Orv. The drow have little to no interest in enslaving creatures with innate abilities that could disrupt other slaves, such as seugathi or ghouls.

There are few within the Darklands who risk entering trade arrangements with the drow, though a handful of nations and empires have done so by necessity. The demon lord Kabriri protects the Darklands' many ghouls from being utterly destroyed by the drow. The fallen elves traffic infrequently with the undead, as the two groups are often separated by vast distances. The duergar maintain brisk trade with most drow households, offering a constant stream of captured slaves to satiate the ravenous appetites of cruel drow overseers. The duergar maintain that by keeping the drow stocked with slaves, they also keep their elven neighbors from taking more direct actions against their holdings in the upper Darklands of Nar-Voth. The drow are keen not to antagonize the deep-dwelling neothelids, and often show uncharacteristic acts of deference when dealing with emissaries of the great wormlike aberrations.

By the grace of their internal rivalries and feuding, drow are a self-containing threat. Having expanded into a massive Darklands empire, the drow typically concern themselves with the acquisition of further power and climbing the barbed ladder that makes up their societal hierarchy. Drow of ignoble lineage have only a handful of ways to gain notoriety, though such means do exist to foster appetites for power even at the lowest rungs of drow society. For those at the pinnacle of drow influence, their interests turn toward personal ambitions and the maintenance of their power base. Particularly powerful drow—namely the matrons of the most powerful houses—become direct champions of the demon lords whom they serve. Such privilege comes with great danger, as these paragons among the drow are often called to different worlds or entirely alien planes of existence to personally champion their demon lord; all the while, their family and servants scheme for their downfall.

Campaign Role

Drow's light sensitivity precludes their involvement in most surface-based adventures, but there are many drow war bands that emerge from the Darklands to take slaves and wreak havoc on their enemies—typically elves or humanoids inhabiting ancient elven settlements. Such encounters bring the presence of the subterranean drow empire into the light (in a metaphorical sense), as knowledge of drow on the surface world is only beginning to circulate among very specific organizations. In these initial encounters with drow, GMs can emphasize their use of slaves, their spell-like abilities, and their expert use of poison (not to mention their own specially crafted poisons) to give PCs an idea of their strengths.

Entering the Darklands and fighting the drow in their home territory can be its own reward for good-aligned

Half-Drow

Most drow consider the existence of darkborn—offspring of drow and human parents—a taboo topic. These unique half-elves are most commonly the result of trysts between drow noblewomen and powerful humans. These would-be matrons—or in some cases, actual matrons—believe that by conceiving an illegitimate non-drow offspring, they can foster a loyal retainer whose lineage would prevent them from inheriting or advancing in drow society, not to mention dissuade them from acts of betrayal.

Those half-drow who manage to escape the clutches of drow society find themselves ostracized from all but the most accepting of communities—likely few within the Darklands. These half-breeds find similar social acceptance to half-orcs on the surface world, with outright hostility from elves, who hold no kinship with them and often attack on sight.

Darkborn birthed by ignoble drow parents rarely survive past their teens, unable to navigate adulthood in drow society without some noble benefactor. Those half-drow raised by their drow parents receive an upbringing in line with the social status of their parent. Noble half-drow fit awkwardly into the politics of their family, existing outside any official power structure. The training of these noble darkborn varies based on gender, with males being the lowest members of a family, while females exist under their trueborn siblings but still above male noble heirs. Specific training for these heirs often breaks down to magical and martial training, with their mothers employing them as envoys or assassins as required.

Alternate Racial Trait

Half-elves descended from drow may select the following alternate racial trait.

Drow-Trained: Darkborn are proficient with the hand crossbow, rapier, and shortsword. This racial trait replaces the adaptability racial trait.

parties, as drow's direct association with demon lords makes an irredeemable target for PC wrath. Mid-level PCs with strong oppositions to one of the many demon lords may find themselves thwarting the efforts of a drow household tied with that demonic patron. A fight against the servants of a given demon lord on the surface could easily point the PCs in the direction of a hidden demonic threat manifested by the actions of the drow. Whether in a surface-level dungeon or somewhere in the Darklands, these battles allow a GM to showcase the drow's association with demons and their domineering matriarchal leaders. In mechanical terms, these types of encounters work well

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to showcase drow spell resistance, especially when the drow possess multiple class levels.

At all levels of play, the politics of drow households, with their petty squabbling and unseen wars, can be a fantastic catalyst for strong roleplaying-based scenarios. Finding oneself embroiled in the machinations of one or more drow houses can make PCs feel like movers and shakers in the Darklands, while those houses that the PCs may think hold them in high esteem actually use them as pawns. Despite being creatures of unadulterated sinfulness, drow aren't stupid, and are willing to deal honestly with other species and creatures of other alignments in order to further their own ends. Exposing PCs to the intricate intrigue of drow society can lead to encounters that are as social as they are filled with vicious combat.

Treasure

Drow collect an eclectic hoard of items during their long lives. Only the lowest of house guards are bereft of magical items, and even then their equipment is typically no less than masterwork in quality. High-ranking soldiers often wield enchanted weapons, giving their melee weapons preferential treatment over ranged weapons like hand crossbows, which are viewed primarily as poison delivery systems. Poisons are a common treasure pilfered from defeated drow, particularly the poison that bears their racial name.

Drow nobles maintain vast treasuries, dedicating entire rooms in their familial holdings to personal armories and museums of magical items. Drow of such standing often publicly balance ostentation with effectiveness, eschewing a plain longsword with powerful enchantments for a diamond-encrusted rapier with a demon-headed platinum hilt that has weaker magic. Defeating such a noble offers a wealth of treasure, with the promise of even more reward if the noble's home can be similarly ransacked. Of course, claiming the treasures of a drow noble is a dangerous task unto itself, as servants, siblings, or rival houses swiftly move to take ownership of any possessions in the aftermath of the confrontation.

At the apex of drow society are its matriarchal leaders. Where lesser nobles have great museums within their households, matrons have entire fortresses dedicated to containing their excess riches. These matrons often find themselves in possession of multiple artifacts and the accumulated wealth of nations in both coins and precious gems. The drow jealously guard such riches, using defensive measures of which even the keenest of dragons would be envious. The greatest of these treasure strongholds don't even exist in the Darklands; instead, canny drow matrons acquire permanent residences in extraplanar retreats such as the Abyss or personally created demiplanes. Immortal constructs, outsiders, and undead maintain these distant strongholds. Many

of these extraplanar retreats belong to drow households that have been destroyed by rivals, or whose matrons were assassinated without divulging their locations, and thus stand ready for plundering by adventurers from both the surface and other drow houses.

Drow on Golarion

While they control the most powerful empire in Sekamina, the drow have done little to expand outside this middle layer of the Darklands. A number of drow settlements dot the northern reaches of Sekamina, colonized by drow in millennia past and each containing their own subset of families removed from the politics of the capital. Some enterprising, lesser-known houses conspire in far-off colonies or expedition points in pursuit of morbid agendas. These houses perform their dark work far from the eyes of Zirnakaynin, fearing reprisal from the great houses should their efforts be discovered.

The town of Blackstrand is the closest satellite colony to Zirnakaynin, with House Vexidyre maintaining strict control following the discovery of a functional elf gate. Worshipers of the demon lord Shax, the members of House Vexidyre use the gate to bolster their vast, unscrupulous trade empire; where the portal leads remains a mystery to all but the most trusted of Vexidyre agents.

Dozens of minor houses jointly rule the trade city of Delvingulf on the Dying Sea. Through this town, the drow maintain cordial relations with the ghouls of Nemret Noktoria and the skum of Cold Momugado, providing slaves in exchange for discreet favors and magical goods. The nobility of Zirnakaynin are concerned that one or more of the colony's matrons has fallen under aboleth control as a result of growing interaction with the skum, though such accusations could be part of a larger power play, the architect of which has yet to reveal her hand.

The colony of Giratayn is another strong trade hub, with leadership of the colony changing every 50 years to the first daughter of one of Zirnakaynin's great families. It is considered an important test for these selected daughters to prove they can maintain a strong trade position with the unflinching duergar of Hagegraf, with whom the majority of Giratayn's trade occurs.

Comparatively small numbers of drow depart the safety of their homes in Sekamina to explore the depths of Orv or venture to the world above. A group of young drow renegades ply the waters of Orv's Sightless Sea, offering their services as guides and providing transport to those who seek to brave the treacherous waters. Aboveground, raiding parties sponsored by the houses below capture surface dwellers for interrogation and eventual sacrifice or slavery. House Azrinae maintains a large presence in Varisia's Mierani Forest, using the cover of trees to mitigate much of their light sensitivity, while fighting a growing war against the elven protectors of the Shin'Rakorath.



The Surface Caller

This blue-skinned elf has milk-white eyes, a glowing punching dagger, and a shield embossed with a demonic face.

THE SURFACE CALLER

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female drow sorcerer 4/swashbuckler 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 114, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 56)

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 58 (8 HD; 4d6+4d10+20)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6; +2 vs. charm, cold, enchantments, fear, fire, and sleep

Defensive Abilities charmed life 3/day, nimble +1; **Immune** sleep; **SR** 14

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 punching dagger +11/+6 (1d4+3/×3) or dagger +9/+4 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged dagger +9/+4 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks deeds (derring-do, dodging panache, kip-up, menacing swordplay, opportune parry and riposte, precise strike, swashbuckler initiative), panache (5)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +7, spell failure chance 25%)

2nd (4/day)—*alter self*

1st (7/day)—*grease*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *true strike*, *vanish*^{APG} (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 13), *message*, *open/close* (DC 13), *read magic*

Bloodline Accursed^{UM}

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20

Feats Eschew Materials, Extra Panache^{ACG}, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (punching dagger), Weapon Specialization (punching dagger)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +6, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +7, Intimidate +7, Perception +7, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +3, Stealth +4, Survival +2; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Elven, Undercommon

SQ dare (out for blood^{ACG}), horrific visage, poison use, swashbuckler finesse, wretched endurance

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *scroll of fly*, *wand of animate rope* (50 charges), drow poison (5 doses); **Other Gear** +1 mithral chain shirt, mwk buckler, +1 punching dagger, daggers (6), *cloak of resistance* +1, 13 pp

Born Ilyxaria, daughter of a merchant in the drow trading outpost of Delvingulf, this daring drow grew to doubt her small family's worship of the demon lord Mestama, the mother of hags and witches. When the young drow began suffering vivid nightmares—thought by her mother to be demonic boons—rather than embrace them, she retreated across Lake Nirthran in fear. Eventually, her flight brought her to the surface world, in the barren deserts of Thuvia. Dying of thirst and sun exposure in the unfamiliar lands, Ilyxaria was saved by a coven of hags, who declared her salvation the will of Mestama.

Almost a century later, a mysterious drow trader bringing slaves from the deserts of the surface world first appeared in Delvingulf. Selling her wares to both drow and ghouls alike, this drow proclaimed herself the Surface Caller, a servant of Mestama. Her trademark is to give away every third slave from her stock, taking no payment from the buyer, but removing one of the slave's eyes. What use the Surface Caller has for these eyes is anyone's guess, but she claims it serves Mestama.



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Duergar

One of my earliest discoveries in the Darklands was a copy of a duergar treatise called *Restrictions on the Enslavement of Lesser Races*. I happened upon the vast book in the back of an abandoned troglodyte lair, being used as a chair. This impressive tome proved invaluable in negotiating with the gray dwarf masters of Nar-Voth, who all too often attempted to put my colleagues and me in chains. Only meticulous study of the plundered book, and a few close combats, kept us safe from a life of toil under the duergar. It wasn't until we happened across a disenfranchised duergar trader keen on talking that I learned the book I'd found was a companion to a twenty-volume series—*Successful Methods for the Enslavement of Lesser Races*.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44



Undisputed rulers of the upper heights of the Darklands, the duergar—“gray faced” in the dwarven language—are the ancestors of modern dwarves who refused their god’s directive to emigrate to the surface. Remaining in their subterranean cities, these dwarves were beset on all sides by both creatures of the lower Darklands roused by the quakes of Earthfall and those of the surface world fleeing the global disaster. In their darkest moment, abandoned by the god whose advice they shunned, these dwarves turned to another deity—the fallen dwarven god Droskar, the Dark Smith. Seeing the plight of the few remaining Darklands dwarves, Droskar spoke through prophets who promised these surviving dwarves a hard but prosperous future. In the end, with no other choice but destruction at the hands of their numerous enemies, the dwarves accepted and became the duergar.

In addition to blessing the duergar with dull gray skin, Droskar bestowed upon them myriad gifts, shoring up the deep dwarves’ defensive and offensive abilities. Empowered by their god, the duergar surged from their few remaining settlements, riding out atop the massive beetles the Dark Smith had given them. Turning their backs completely on the teachings of their former patron, the god Torag, the duergar built an empire on the backs of slaves. By codifying and enacting a generational plan for the breeding and maintenance of vast slave holdings, the relatively low numbers of duergar quickly became the preeminent force of Nar-Voth, their expansion kept in check only by the drow dwelling in the lands below and the blistering sunlight of the surface world above. Yet none of this matters to the duergar, who are content with the status quo of their great empire, living lives of grim toil in the subterranean depths of the world.

Ecology

Duergar are a long-lived race, forced into an existence of endless drudgery under the surface of the world. Living the same lifespan as dwarves, the eldest of their kind can survive upward of 500 years before succumbing to death by natural causes. Far more often, a duergar falls victim to the scheming of rivals, or even the supposedly “kind” axehead of a clan member. The mercy killing of elder duergar is in fact one of the few situations in which duergar turn against other members of their own clan, believing that the failing faculties of an infirm leader puts the family’s welfare at risk. Perhaps because of this, many duergar actively seek out paths to immortality, regardless of the consequences.

In addition to branding them with gray skin, Droskar reinforced his new servants against other Darklands aggressors. Foremost among Droskar’s gifts is the blessing of improved darkvision, allowing duergar to see as far or farther than their subterranean rivals. The duergar also have the ability to increase their mass,

Five Facts about Duergar

Both Game Masters and players may wish to keep the following in mind about duergar.

- Duergar, also known as gray dwarves, are descended from the ancient dwarves who did not participate in the pilgrimage to the surface called the Quest for Sky. They harbor a deep-seated hatred of the dwarves who moved to the surface, and often kill surface dwarves on sight.
- If PCs are traveling through duergar territory, they might want to try and convince a duergar to act as their guide. With a duergar shepherd accompanying them, PCs may be able to avoid being immediately targeted by duergar slavers.
- In the event that PCs are captured by duergar, they will undoubtedly be subjected to rigorous testing in a duergar settlement. While the PCs’ initial response may be to balk at such tests, doing their best might be preferable. Failure means they could be sold off to far less tolerant slavers, such as the drow.
- Duergar society is starkly divided between their military and priesthood. The military defends settlements, and often produces members of their ruling clan monarchies. Meanwhile, the priesthood ensures the faith of Droskar—the fallen dwarven smith god of endless toil—is maintained by all duergar.
- Gray dwarves have an intense interest in all avenues to immortality, as each aspires to become immortal in a similar fashion to their divine leaders, the Taskmasters. Duergar arcane and psychic students often search to find methods of everlasting life, and many duergar (especially duergar tyrants) of sufficient power sacrifice their mortal life to become psychic lichens (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary* 32).

a skill useful in both defense and toil. With this power, the duergar gained the temporary strength to drive back those intruding on their domain. This, in turn, allowed the duergar to expand beyond the confines of their city holdings and make war on their neighbors. Invisibility was the next of Droskar’s boons, allowing duergar to ambush and deceive those who would soon be turned into slaves for their growing empire. Accenting these abilities, duergar are impervious to the effects of paralysis, phantasms, and poisons, protecting them from drow and other enemies fond of such tactics.

Unlike the dwarves of the surface, duergar have an aversion to the sun, an impediment directly related to their lack of exploration beyond the Darklands (though some believe it to be less an evolutionary trait than a leash imposed by Droskar, to ensure they never attempt

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to follow their former kin). This flaw has little impact on duergar, who rarely traverse the surface; instead, they prefer to send mercenaries or slaves on missions that require leaving the relative comfort of the Darklands.

Among the duergar's few allies are the hives of vermin that Droskar first summoned to their side. Most prominent among these are the immense beetles of the Darklands, considered to be the favored animal of their patron deity. Since their earliest days, duergar have used such beetles as mounts and beasts of burden, particularly in the transport of goods and slaves. Of note, chapel beetles (Huge stag beetles with added HD) act as holy mounts for the priesthood of Droskar, bearing the most senior priests aloft on their great backs. These great beetles are emblazoned with the symbol of Droskar, burned into their chitin with unholy acids. Divine spellcasters who worship Droskar can channel their power through these immense beetles, effectively using their chapel beetle mounts as impromptu holy symbols.

Since their recrafting by Droskar, the duergar have experienced little in the way of racial change, their species remaining a living reminder of subverted and rigid dwarven history. One of the few deviances from this model is the duergar tyrants (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary* 23), those deep dwarves blessed with psychic powers from birth. Dubbed tyrants by those growing up alongside them, these psychically gifted duergar use their powers to cow those around them, creating childhood gangs that only grow as the tyrant matures.

Society

Duergar maintain a vast subterranean empire in Nar-Voth, their entire race unified under the glorious banner of Droskar. While religion is key to the ceaseless toil of duergar, they maintain a distinct separation of church and state, with the two primary governing positions split between the military or priesthood. The military oversees

the protection of the duergar people, expansion of their empire, and the acquisition of slaves. Meanwhile, the priesthood is responsible for overseeing the spiritual health of the people, with Droskar's teachings meaning that priests are responsible for ensuring all duergar put in enough grinding work toward the betterment of the empire and, in turn, Droskar. Punishments for failing in the eyes of either governing body carry harsh censure, though it is common for duergar to attempt subterfuge in the face of such laws, for Droskar himself teaches the values of deceit and trickery.

Duergar are steadfastly loyal to their fellow clan members. Extended familial units, each duergar clan is made up of dozens of different families, descended from the scattered few who refused the dwarven Quest for Sky ages ago. Ancestral family rivalries were laid to rest among those who remained in the Darklands, and today these clans have effectively replaced the former familial lines that once existed. To a duergar, there is no greater sin than betraying or failing one's clan, save perhaps for consorting with a dwarf. Duergar clans operate independently from one another, with some being dedicated to mercantile endeavors, while others focus on military training, or perform required agricultural labor to provide for duergar settlements and their sheltered slaves.

Slavery is the cornerstone of duergar culture and the literal embodiment of Droskar's teachings, which espouses having someone else do your work for you rather than doing it yourself. Unlike the negligent treatment of slaves among other species (particularly the drow), slavery is a finely documented trade among duergar. First, a slave must be captured; the use of poisons and nonlethal weapons is an important factor in the capture of viable slave stock. Once captured, a slave must be transported back to a duergar settlement for immediate "codification." Inside the cities of the gray dwarves, a prisoner is taken to an expert in such evaluation, specifically a duergar slaver knowledgeable in the numerous articles written about slavery. What follows is an intense regime of interviews and testing, wherein the duergar interrogator compares the results against millennia-old documentation and strictures to determine the best use for the slave in question. Those who fail to meet appropriate expectations are returned to the caravan that brought them, the drivers continuing on to sell the failed stock to the uncaring whips of the drow below. Those who pass the tests are assigned lives as slaves within the duergar's vast hierarchy.

Quality of life as a duergar slave depends entirely on how one places on the countless initial tests. Those slaves found to have intellectual ability are often sent to vast scriptoriums, where they endlessly review handwritten holy texts of Droskar, as penned by innumerable other slaves. Failure to catch mistakes results in punishment





for these editors, while every mistake reported to their overlords results in punishment for the initial transcriber. More physically fit prisoners are sentenced to excruciating trials of labor, working on building vast stone edifices, or digging out new tunnels to connect sections of the duergar-held Darklands for easier navigation. Regardless of the vocation forced upon a duergar captive, they can be sure to expect a lifetime of endless toil.

Duergar dwell in huge cavernous settlements, and prefer the convenience of easy access to primary tunnels to the security of isolated cities on secondary routes. Duergar cities stand along well travelled routes, fortified to a level unseen in the battlements of other Darklands-dwelling creatures. Where the drow maintain intimidating vistas of curving and spiked architecture, duergar fortress-cities are built to rugged purpose. During sieges on their cities, duergar can endure for decades within their walls, though only the most privileged of slaves are allowed to partake in the stored food and water set aside for a settlement's residents. Besieging armies thinking themselves safe from duergar reprisal discover their mistake soon after the siege begins, as the duergar's connection with verminous mounts allows the gray dwarves to launch assaults from above and below by burrowing through the stone.

The duergar possess little social grace, and their dogged persistence in the Darklands gives every one of them a sense of entitlement. Their language is constantly punctuated with curses, usually directed at others, as duergar rarely accept any responsibility for their own failings, choosing instead to blame others for all misfortune. Many duergar understand their submission to the Dark Smith Droskar was a pitiable choice, but claim that the dark folk, drow, orcs, troglodytes—and, in particular, their surface-dwelling former kin—all forced the duergar into making that decision. Because of this “forced choice,” the duergar believe it societally acceptable to abuse and force their will on others.

Eleven gifted gray dwarves, to whom Droskar bestowed immortality, rule the rest of their kind. Known as the Taskmasters, they number 7 males and 4 females, known respectively as patriarchs and matriarchs. The Taskmasters oversee the spiritual health of the duergar people, and operate independently throughout their empire, though many of them congregate in a single holding for meetings and ease of contact by their emissaries. Only slightly below the Taskmasters in duergar hierarchy are the militant monarchies of the gray dwarves' numerous settlements. Kings and queens alike rule the largest of the fortress cities, often staking claim to entire regions. Rulers of settlements under the domain of a monarch are usually military leaders themselves, such as commanders or war-marshals. The highest ranking of these military rulers are the margraves, acting as proxy rulers for major population centers far removed from the direct control of a reigning monarch.

Occult Heritage

Like many species native to the Darklands, the duergar have a heavy connection to occult elements, particularly kinetic and psychic mastery. The exact reason for this mastery is unknown; many gray dwarves believe it to be a natural adaptation to combat occult threats in the Darklands, while others think it is yet another blessing from Droskar.

Kineticist: Duergar following the path of elemental manipulation tend to focus on mastery of the earth that surrounds them. The hardiness of dwarves lends itself well to being a kineticist, and the military and slaving rings alike often recruit those successful in these arts. Geokineticists are particularly valuable to slaver bands if they possess the entangling or grappling infusions.

Psychic: The most common psychic disciplines learned by duergar are those of faith and lore. Because the priesthood of the Fallen Smith interprets psychic abilities as a gift from Droskar, they often recruit psychics into special units meant to root out heresy or punish those whose labor is deemed insufficient.

Racial Favored Class Options

Duergar kineticists and psychics may use the following racial favored class options.

Kineticist: Add 1/5 of an Extra Wild Talent feat that must be spent on an earth element wild talent.

Psychic: The psychic treats her Wisdom bonus as 1/3 point higher for the purpose of determining the number of uses or rounds per day of her discipline powers.

Campaign Role

Duergar represent the greatest unified nation in the uppermost layer of the Darklands and, as such, are often encountered by adventuring parties seeking to brave the depths of the world. In their stronghold cities, duergar fill roles as merciless slavers, as well as the only true bastions of civilization in Nar-Voth. By navigating the seemingly endless array of laws and strictures around the capture and subjugation of lesser species, explorers from the surface can actually trade safely and dependably with duergar.

As adversaries, duergar run the gamut, from low-level slavers all the way up to the high priests of Droskar and their militaristic monarchs. At the lowest levels, PCs should be dealing with small duergar raiding parties, possibly employing troglodyte mercenaries in addition to allied vermin—particularly their massive beetles, which are the favored animals of Droskar. Members of the duergar military, each indentured to a reigning monarch or serving a margrave who in turn represents the interests of the Taskmasters, rank above slavers. The

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duergar military are capable fighters, wielding powerful magical arms and armor to overwhelm and defeat foes. Unlike slavers, these duergar have no qualms about killing their enemies.

Treasure

Bands of surface adventurers are most likely to encounter wandering duergar slave caravans, and thus the sinister slavers and their prisoners serve as the primary source of gray dwarf treasures to non-duergar. The duergar who guard and manage these caravans often possess all sorts of equipment, from the primitive weaponry of captured mongrelmen (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 191), morlocks, and troglodytes to the valuable magical equipment held by other roaming Darklands explorers. Duergar are ever efficient and often melt down nonmagical metal weapons and armor taken from their slaves, reforging them as thick chains; prisoners go from wearing armor to wearing the same metal as shackles.

Mountains of wealth lie behind the walls of duergar fortress cities, ripe to be claimed by any who can sack the settlements. Duergar viciously guard their treasures within deep vaults seated in the center of their clan holdings. These vaults often fall last during the taking of a duergar clanhold, the gray dwarf warriors stubbornly and greedily defending their treasures even when they have clearly lost the battle.

The greatest treasure offered by duergar may in fact be the fruits of their god-mandated labor. Turning the dark industries of the duergar toward a unified purpose could lead to the most cost-effective and well-equipped force on Golarion. Fueled by a ceaseless machine of slave-driven workers, under the eyes of thankless and merciless duergar masters, such a coerced labor force could easily be worth more than the treasures of all duergar communities put together.

Duergar on Golarion

Spread throughout Nar-Voth, duergar maintain an immense empire under the northern stretch of the Inner Sea region. Paramount to their success is the tunnel known as the Long Walk, a wide passage winding from beneath the Hold of Belkzen all the way to the stone below the Five Kings Mountains. Originally carved by duergar slaves as the race emerged from their settlements in the first days of Droskar's blessing, this great tunnel is considered to be the only proper highway of the Darklands. To this day, duergar patrol the length of the Long Walk, taxing those other species who use it to navigate Nar-Voth, and enslaving those who would seek to cheat them of their due.

Under what was once the Sky Citadel of Urgir, the city of Fellstrok is a growing settlement commanded by War-Marshal **Brithuan** (LE male duergar fighter 6/rogue 6). Located at the northernmost edge of the Long

Walk, Fellstrok has opened negotiations with the orcs of the Hold of Belkzen above, securing both slaves and Brithuan's position as the undisputed leader of this distant settlement.

The city of Hagegraf is the most renowned of the gray dwarf cities, occupying the eastern end of the Long Walk. King **Kurindey Orgukagen** (LE male duergar fighter 4/cleric of Droskar 14) controls both the priesthood and military of the city and nearby region. Kurindey is considered a power to rival even the Taskmasters, and many predict he will one day usurp their position as the favored of Droskar. To cement his hold on the duergar nation, Kurindey has opened the inner courts of Hagegraf to non-duergar, imposing a strict tax on such visitations, but allowing travelers to enter his city to trade or partake in what amenities duergar have to offer, as well as to view the infamous clock known as the Akrizoth Horologe—a powerful relic and one of the wonders of the Darklands. A growing army of duergar and well-equipped slave mercenaries occupies a series of massive caverns near Hagegraf. The army's purpose is a closely guarded secret, but rumor holds that Kurindey summoned powerful and mysterious outsiders to train the soldiers in preparation for some apocalyptic conflict the king believes is fast approaching. Whether this battle will pit the army against the surface dwarves, duergar forces loyal to the Taskmasters, or some unknown threat from below Nar-Voth is anyone's guess.

Between Fellstrok and Hagegraf, under the Molthuni capital of Canorate, rests the duergar city of Mabbryn. One of a handful of secure and plentiful water supplies in the Darklands, the city is a series of fortified districts spreading out from a small lake. The city resupplies duergar making the trek between the major settlements at the ends of the Long Walk. Margrave **Daguda Urgadan** (LE female duergar tyrant fighter 5/kineticist^{OA} 10; *Occult Bestiary* 23) is the appointed leader of Mabbryn, a position fraught with continued conflict with the local church of Droskar. Finding support with the commander of Mabbryn's outermost fortress wall, the bastion of Cael-Durak, Daguda hopes to declare herself as queen of the settlement, and engineer a peaceful secession from the holdings of distracted King Kurindey of Hagegraf.

The hidden fortress cathedral of Diepkamer is the official seat of the Taskmasters, spiritual leaders of the duergar race, though few know of its existence. Diepkamer is officially the command of Margrave **Giteana Redbraid** (NE female duergar spiritualist^{OA} 9), a representative of a nonexistent monarch. In truth, she serves the Taskmasters that often dwell within the halls of the hallowed interior cathedral. Giteana's phantom is that of the Diepkamer's previous margrave; the Taskmasters twisted the spirit of the deceased to aide their new agent rather than spend any time



formally training her. The devoted priesthood of the fortress has been sequestered for the past 6 years, as within that time six Taskmasters have died under mysterious circumstances. Currently, two matriarchs and a patriarch of the Taskmasters reside in Diepkamer, while both a patriarch and a matriarch have ventured outside the fortress in search of an answer to the death of their kin.

The Would-Be Queen

This gray-skinned dwarf wears iron plates over a set of purple and magenta robes and carries a warhammer.

ALMARA KAZAAR **CR 10**
XP 9,600

Female duergar warpriest of Droskar 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 117, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 60)

LE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+10 armor, +1 natural)

hp 108 (11d8+55)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +13; +2 bonus vs. spells and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities sacred armor (+2, 11 minutes/day); **Immune** paralysis, phantasms, poison; **Resist** duergar immunities

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 warhammer +14/+9 (1d10+7/19-20/x3)

Special Attacks blessings 8/day, channel negative energy 4/day (DC 16, 4d6), fervor 8/day (4d6), sacred weapon (+2 1d10, 11 rounds/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +9)
1/day—*enlarge person* (self only) (DC 9), *invisibility* (self only)

Warpriest Spells Prepared (CL 11th; concentration +14)
4th—*divine power*, *freedom of movement*
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 16), *blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *wind wall*
2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 15), *shatter* (DC 15), *sound burst* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*

1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 14), *protection from good*, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *resistance*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23 (27 vs. bull rush, 27 vs. trip)

Feats Channel Smite, Cleave, Combat Casting, Furious Focus^{APG}, Improved Critical (warhammer), Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (warhammer)

Skills Bluff +2, Knowledge (religion) +7, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +3, Stealth -1; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

SQ blessings 8/day (Charm: charming presence, dominance aura; Evil: battle companion, unholy strike)

Combat Gear feather token (*whip*), scroll of air walk, scroll of dispel magic (2), scroll of heal, wand of death knell (50 charges); **Other Gear** +2 half-plate, +1 warhammer, amulet of natural armor +1, belt of giant strength +2, cloak of resistance +1, iron unholy symbol of Droskar^{UE}, 11 pp, 23 gp



The duergar clergy of Droskar generally avoid direct combat, preferring instead to command hordes of mercenary forces in battle on their behalf. Almara Kazaar is one of the few priests of the Dark Smith who prefers to wade into the thick of battle herself, meting out the dark fury of her god with the head of her warhammer. In combat, she is cold and calculating, and prefers to first use her numerous spells to improve her physical abilities and then unleash other debilitating effects at range. She wields her warhammer in close quarters, not hesitating to use her racial spell-like ability to increase her size and strike at as many foes as she can.

The leader of Droskar's faithful in Mabbryn, Almara spends much of her time in the Forge Quencher—the massive fortress that protects Mabbryn's water supply. Much of Almara's daily life is fraught with political squabbles with Mabbryn's military leader, Margrave Daguda Urgadan. Nicknamed the "Would-Be Queen" by members of Droskar's faithful, Almara maintains a tense relationship with Daguda, but hopes to replace the other political leader of the city one day.

Introduction

Drow

Duergar

Gug

Intellect Devourer

Morlock

Munavri

Neothelid

Troglodyte

Urdefhan

Vegepygmy



Gug

I had read the texts of explorers who had traveled to Sekamina before me, yet I'd never understood their inability to reach the deeper lands of Orv. All became clear when I encountered the gugs.

For a reason I have yet to uncover, these brutish creatures congregate around the few routes connecting the two lowest layers of the Darklands. Gugs do not take well to intruders, and my few companions who had made it through the trek from Nar-Voth did not survive our first encounter with the great furred beasts. I'll never live down my failure in leaving those people behind, but against such raw physical might, what can mere mortals hope to accomplish?

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44



Guarding the entrances to the lowest levels of the Darklands, the bestial creatures known as gugs dwell within a world both far removed from and very near to the strange realm of their ancient origins—the enigmatic Dreamlands. Banished underground by the gods of the Dreamlands, gugs have since spread throughout the cosmos, enticed or summoned by numerous malign benefactors to inhabit the depths of countless worlds. The presence of these alien aberrations, clad in filth-encrusted furs and possessing a form both similar and utterly alien to most humanoids, validates the fears of many about the horrors lurking in the depths of the Darklands. These creatures would be terrifying enough if they simply remained in the darker places of the world. Sometimes, however, gugs hear the sibilant whispers of alien powers. While thankfully rare, gugs who listen to these incoherent nightmares imparted by the elder gods they serve inevitably brave the journey to the surface to complete whatever foul missions they have been assigned.

A race of aberrant giants, gugs possess a roughly human level of intelligence, with most of their knowledge focused on their Darklands home. Because gugs are so physically powerful, most observers overlook the creatures' savvy, especially when comparing gugs to the towering minds of the aboleths, intellect devourers, and neothelids with whom they share the Darklands, and the fact that gugs care nothing for other species beyond their role as potential meals reinforces this misconception. The entire existence of a gug is governed by constant hunger teamed with devotion to the debased deities whose worship damned gugs to the depths of the underground.

Ecology

A gug is a giant-sized humanoid covered in matted black or gray fur that is often encrusted with dirt, excrement, and other filth. A typical gug stands between 15 to 20 feet in height and weighs around 2,000 pounds. Gugs' uniquely shaped mouths are the most recognizable trait of the monstrous beasts; positioned vertically, a gug's mouth bifurcates its head into unsettling hemispheres, each with a large orange or red eye located near the base of its maw. A gug's arm forks at the elbow into two forearms, each graced with three sharpened talons. With a total of four clawed hands on two distinct arms, a gug can easily rend and grapple its prey or quickly shovel a meal into its wide mouth.

Ages ago, the first gugs existed in the Enchanted Wood of the Dreamlands, a strangely immutable region of the ever-changing Dimension of Dreams. Little is known of their physiology or society during this time, as gugs lived there for only a brief portion of their long history, subsisting on the mortal dreamers that frequented the forest. At a time and for reasons unknown, the gugs, experiencing vivid nightmares and finding their hunger insatiable, turned their attention and devotion to the

Five Facts about Gugs

Both Game Masters and players may wish to keep the following facts about gugs in mind.

- Gugs can speak, and they typically only understand Undercommon, but the act of talking is incredibly painful for them. They prefer to use subtle facial movements to convey information to others of their kind. A gug speaks aloud only in the direst of circumstances, and intelligent gugs might be able to understand other languages, including Common.
- Despite their superior size and strength, gugs have an irrational fear of ghouls. Gugs actively avoid ghouls, though no such protection extends to ghosts, whom gugs eagerly attack. Even starvation won't compel a gug to attack a ghoul.
- Rocks provide gugs some form of sustenance, and gugs snack on them if no other food sources are available. If an adventurer sees the chewed remains of rocks while exploring the Darklands, it's likely that a camp of gugs is nearby, and hungry for flesh.
- Certain spiritual gugs can become particularly attuned to their dark deities, gaining increased Charisma and spell-like abilities as a result. Known as savants, these gugs often take the role of leaders within small gug communities. If gugs are found outside of their natural Darklands environment, it's likely that they are either mentally controlled or led by a savant.
- Unless under direct supervision by one of their savants, gugs are cowardly creatures. Even if combat is going well for a gug, they are just as prone to retreat with one or two captured creatures to eat as to continue fighting. If another gug is slain, surviving gugs often abandon the combat to take the corpse of their kin; these corpses fuel their unique means of reproduction.

slumbering deific beings known as the Outer Gods. They erected primitive monoliths in adoration and worship of these deities from the Dark Tapestry, and made terrible sacrifices to their new patrons. The other gods responded to the gugs' actions by banishing them beneath the ground, locked below a sealed trapdoor, and warned them of even greater curses to be visited upon their kind should the door ever be opened.

The gugs found they were not alone in the lightless depths. Ghouls and ghosts awaited them, and despite their smaller size, the undead posed a serious threat to the displaced, forest-dwelling gugs. To this day, gugs are frightened of ghouls and avoid them at all costs; oddly, they have no such fear of the more powerful ghosts that often accompany ghouls. Some Darklands explorers take

advantage of this primordial fear of ghouls and procure one or more of the undead to ward off gug ambushes. (Such efforts most often end with the ghouls' escape and the necromancers' deaths.) Ghosts prefer to hunt gugs while the giants sleep, and so gugs often leave a sentry to ensure the safety of the community

Gugs possess a simple understanding of speech, and are able to hoarsely blurt out words with their vertically aligned mouths, though such sounds are painful for them. The creatures normally use their voices only to let out howls of challenge, and employ a visual language of facial expressions to communicate complex ideas and emotions to one another. Gugs' faces move in such alien ways that non-gugs cannot replicate the language without assuming the appearance of a gug through illusion or transmutation effects. Some scholars theorize that gugs' uniquely shaped mouths are a punishment inflicted by the other gods of the Dreamlands, exacted upon gugs to prevent them from easily communicating with members of other races.

Ever slaves to their ravenous appetites, gugs even incorporate feasting into their reproductive behavior. Gugs are asexual beings, devoid of gender or sexual dimorphism. They procreate by ingesting a substantial amount of flesh from a recently deceased gug. After this act of cannibalism, the eater finds itself overwhelmed with the urge to sleep. Solitary gugs seek out isolated and hard-to-reach places for this hibernation, while those in clutches rely upon the watchful eyes of their kin to keep threats away. Once content with its surroundings, a reproducing gug enters a state of unconsciousness for roughly 6 weeks, during which it experiences countless nightmares of alien vistas and carnage. During this time, the slumbering gug spasms violently and retches out human-sized spawn from its mouth at irregular intervals. The stronger the reproducing gug, the more spawn it creates, with the average litter consisting of three to four offspring; the most powerful gugs have been known to produce litters of eight to 10.

The parent and associated tribe of a clutch of newborn gugs protect the offspring for the following 4 to 6 decades, during which the young mature. Immature gugs are smaller and weaker than their adult kin (best represented by the young simple template), but partake in the same lifestyle as others of their kind. The tribe's adults typically allot young gugs a larger share of food to ensure they reach full maturity.

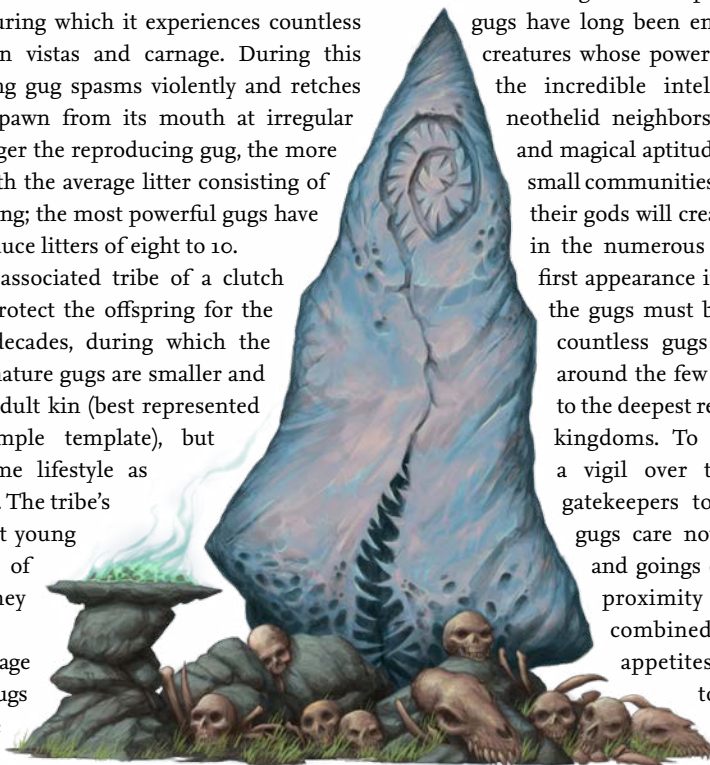
As inherently savage creatures, most gugs die from violence instead of old age.

Gug savants—the rare specimens whose connection to their dark gods grants them spellcasting abilities—are usually spared this violent end, and live to an age of approximately 350 years. Despite their bestial natures, gugs have deep respect for their dead (even those gugs consumed as part of reproduction) and maintain vast graveyards filled with cyclopean monoliths to honor their ancestors. These graveyards present incredibly tempting targets for the ghouls and ghosts of both the Dreamlands and the Darklands, so gugs protect them with the same vigilance with which they defend their places of rest.

Society

While gugs were long confined to the underworld beneath the Dreamlands, many have since migrated through tunnels bored into the dark places of the Material Plane, including the Darklands of Golarion. Whether summoned from the Dreamlands by the Outer Gods they worship or driven to the Material Plane by their own mysterious instincts, gugs inhabit the Darklands in numbers that rival their population in the Dreamlands. Because the Dreamlands exist in a place both distant and strangely near the Material Plane, travel to and from the Dreamlands can be difficult, but gugs, like the Dreamlands' ghouls, can easily travel between the planes using tunnels they have bored into the dreamstuff that makes up the walls of their underworld. Other travelers can also reach the Dreamlands via these extraplanar ingresses—should they manage to avoid gugs' ravenous attention while doing so.

Now living in the deepest levels of the Darklands, gugs have long been embroiled in conflicts with creatures whose power rivals their own. Lacking the incredible intellect possessed by their neothelid neighbors and the sheer numbers and magical aptitude of urdefhans, gugs form small communities in the deeps. Gugs believe their gods will create a moment of weakness in the numerous races that opposed their first appearance in the Darklands, a chance the gugs must be ready to seize. As such, countless gugs base their communities around the few entrances allowing access to the deepest regions of the underground kingdoms. To this day, gugs maintain a vigil over these caverns, acting as gatekeepers to Orv. The irony is that gugs care nothing about the comings and goings of other species, but their proximity to these entrances—combined with their insatiable appetites—almost inevitably leads to conflict with those making such journeys. Luckily, creatures who





survive travel through gug encampments into the depths of Orv should quickly discover that the woolly giants refuse to follow too far into the Darklands' lowest layer.

Only the Darklands' ghouls find themselves spared the attention of the gugs, as the gugs maintain their racial fear of ghouls from their first days of exile. Ghosts, however, are exempt from this racial fear, and gugs eagerly attack ghosts on sight. In extremely rare circumstances, gugs can be coerced into attacking ghouls, but only under direct mental compulsion or at the command of their dark gods. Not even starvation is enough to prompt a gug to attack a ghoul; they would rather subsist on rocks than fight even one of these flesh-eating undead.

Gugs cluster in groups typically numbering no more than a dozen. Because of the creatures' sheer size and appetites, groups larger than this tend to exhaust the already scant resources of a Darklands area in short order. The largest and most physically powerful gug takes a leadership role in the camp, using its size to intimidate other gugs into submission. The leader takes first spoils from defeated enemies or slain prey, making exceptions only for gug young, who are given extra resources as they grow as a means of making the group stronger. These camps—as gug communities are often termed—have a habit of staying in a single region, never venturing too far beyond the immediate cave systems they have claimed. Only after fully exhausting the local supply chain and scaring off new travelers by giving the region a reputation for their presence do gugs move to another area.

The racial identity of gugs is closely tied to their veneration of dark and alien powers. Camps of gugs form close communities based around the worship of the deities of the Dark Tapestry, particularly the Outer God Nyarlathotep. Lacking a full understanding of the profiles and purpose of these great beings, gugs offer their allegiance out of fear and respect more than anything else. They erect great stone menhirs to display fealty to these powers, and discovery of such grim idols often indicates proximity to a gug community. A sizable number of gugs—though far fewer than those who worship the powers of the Dark Tapestry—also venerate demon lords such as Shivaska, Yhidothrus, and Zevgavizeb.

Prolonged and dedicated worship of their fell gods imparts magical gifts to some gugs. Known as savants, these gugs form direct ties with their deities, enabling them to channel powerful magic to transform the terrain around them, conceal themselves, or even directly unleash the vengeance of their patron deities. These god-touched gugs are rare within the Darklands, but common among roaming groups of gugs found outside the Orvian depths, as savants often lead such groups away from their deeper homes. The dreams of savants are fraught with incoherent missives from their gods, and it falls to these divinely inspired gugs to interpret those nightmares

Variant Gugs

First appearing in H. P. Lovecraft's novella, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, gugs have their roots in the popular Cthulhu mythos. The background for gugs presented in this article matches the gug backstory presented in the writings of Lovecraft, but their added history on Golarion has led to some unique variants, in addition to the already described savants.

Elder Gug (+1 CR): The oldest gugs, often native to the Dreamlands themselves and living well beyond the normal life span of their kin, develop into wickedly large creatures known as gug elders. Gug elders are larger in stature than their lesser kin, and possess wickedly sharp talons. To represent an elder gug, apply the giant simple template and increase the critical threat range of the gug's claws to 19–20.

Psychic Gug (+1 CR): Gugs exposed to psychic entities over prolonged periods often exhibit similar powers. The most common method by which a gug develops psychic powers is through an extended period of mental domination, during which the gug's mind gains rudimentary psychic powers. Psychic gugs gain the following abilities: **Psychic Magic** (CL 14th; concentration +17) 15 PE—*babble*^{OA} (3 PE, DC 16), *burst of adrenaline*^{OA} (3 PE), *inflict pain*^{OA} (2 PE, DC 15), *primal regression*^{OA} (6 PE, DC 19).

and lead their camps to complete their assigned esoteric missions. As such, when gugs are discovered close to or on the surface, the presence of a savant is extremely likely. The neothelids and their seugathi spawn often act as master manipulators of gugs, using their powers to invade the dreaming minds of gug savants to twist gug camps into promoting the neothelids' inscrutable goals.

Campaign Role

Gugs fill the role of physically strong subterranean giants, albeit with an aberrant twist. The creatures' penchant for worshipping dark powers makes them appropriate additions when introducing elements of the Dark Tapestry or the involvement of Outer Gods to a campaign, but their brutality allows for little exposition. Gugs work best when they're used as unnamed terrors of the Darklands, creatures feared by even the depraved drow for their physical aptitudes and ceaseless need to feast on the flesh of the living (and dead).

Some gugs—most often the gifted gug savants—rise to positions of prominence among their kind, offering GMs the chance to introduce a strong NPC villain into a gug community. In other cases, a particularly powerful gug uses its physical superiority to become a chieftain of a small camp. These leaders find themselves elevated by the

evil deities whom they serve, given visions of important tasks to perform in the name of these dark powers. Such imparted visions give gugs reasons to move beyond the Darklands and into surface locations which are more accessible to most PCs. Without this divine direction, gugs are content to lead a sedentary lifestyle, squatting in a particular region and preying upon lesser creatures foolish enough to intrude in their territory—including unwary PCs.

Because of their power, gugs are best introduced as single enemies during the middle levels of play, where one or two gugs can be a deadly threat. At higher levels, entire camps of gugs can be pitted against the PCs, who should find the movement abilities of the creatures and their physical power difficult to handle in tight Darklands environs. To compound the existing movement and terrain advantages possessed by gugs, the magical abilities of one or more gug savants can literally change the makeup of a Darklands battlefield. If a savant has a handful of caster levels, its ability to use even low- to mid-level spells makes the creature even more of a threat.

Treasure

As gugs are prone to long periods of hunting in a specific region, their lairs often have a variety of incidental treasure. Unlike mindless creatures, gugs categorize their collected treasure troves, sorting items around their lairs based on an alien concept of value and worth. To non-gugs, the lairs of these creatures are haphazard displays of magical items and less explicable “treasures,” with glowing swords sitting next to the bones of small animals, or a powerful lost artifact being used to prop up a tattered banner. The inclusion of a savant in a gug community brings some order to the sorting, with savants who have taken levels in cleric or oracle claiming the most useful magical equipment for themselves.

Among the items collected by gugs, one grotesque sort of trophy stands apart from the rest: the faces of slain enemies. Using their sharpened talons as impromptu knives, gugs often claim the wretched faces of defeated enemies, leaving their slain foes’ heads a cartilaginous mess to be consumed at a later time. The trophy faces are kept in piles in gug lairs, and are used in particularly debased ceremonies. During these rituals—which are overseen by fervent savants—the gugs wear the trophy faces, hastily affixing them to sections of their own massive heads. By speaking their language of facial twitches and gestures, the gugs cause the faces to move in a bizarre mockery of speech, adding to the foul imagery of their cavorting rites.

Gugs on Golarion

After reaching Golarion by burrowing portals from the Dreamlands, the first large congregation of gugs emerged in the Midnight Mountains of Orv. To this day,

Golarion’s gugs are most numerous in the shadows of this great Darklands range, where they make offerings to the numerous umbral dragons that roost among the mountains’ upper crags. Of these dragons, none receives more worship than the great wyrm Ugothogo, who the gugs have (incorrectly) come to see as a divine servant of their deities. Only the colossal floating mu spores of the region receive an equal amount of veneration, for the gugs have interpreted each of the region’s six “moons” to be mortal manifestations of the Outer Gods they worship.

While many gug tribes have abandoned the safety in numbers offered by the Midnight Mountains to move upward to Sekamina, some have made inroads in other regions of Orv. At least a half-dozen gug camps have willingly allied with the neothelid overlords of Denebrum, to whom the gugs offer their physical might in the neothelids’ ongoing conflict with Ilvarandin. The leading savants of these gug camps believe their service to the neothelid overlords fulfills numerous prophecies imparted to them by the neothelids’ progenitor—the great Shub-Niggurath. The gugs’ aid has yet to turn the tide in the conflict, as the neothelids’ intellect devourer foes can easily capture gugs and use them as powerful host bodies.

In a remote section of Orv, cut off from all but a handful of tunnels connecting to Denebrum, a tribe of gugs gathers in complete isolation from the rest of their Darklands kin. Far below the Lands of the Linnorm Kings—under the locally renowned Ice Spire—these gugs toil to complete some unknown agenda. Guided by powerful savants, the truth of these gugs is far more startling than would first seem, as they appear to have arrived, not directly from the Dreamlands, but by way of the distant world Aucturn.

The gugs who inhabit Sekamina lack any large communities, and are instead divided into countless camps across the region. Here, the gugs tend to congregate around the routes leading down into Orv, where they enjoy ambushing the few creatures willing to risk entering their territory in order to reach the vaults below. Beyond these small, stationary camps, the far-reaching empire of the drow hunts gugs, valuing the creatures for their resilience and strength as laborers and as subjects of twisted fleshwarping experiments. Many gug camps that have managed to escape the grasp of the drow have instead come into contact with the few remaining hibernation cities of the serpentfolk. Able to capitalize on the weak will of the gugs, the slumbering serpentfolk’s automated defenses have had little problem pacifying these incursions. These encounters with other species in Sekamina encouraged the gugs to carve out small holdings of their own, rather than come into conflict with the established powers of the Darklands’ middle layer.

Darklands Revisited

Beyond Golarion, gugs exist on a multitude of worlds, the closest being the celestial body of Aucturn. The gugs residing in the underground domains of this world are a mystery, potentially bearing physical or mental differences from their Golarion-based kin.

Uchurah

Though mostly covered in grime-encrusted black fur, the muscles of this creature are still plainly visible along the four forearms that emerge from its split elbows. It wears a crude bone necklace that dangles under its vertically oriented mouth.

UCHURAH

CR 12

XP 19,200

Gug barbarian 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 151)

CE Large aberration

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +31

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+3 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 150 (17 HD; 15d8+2d12+70)

Fort +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge; **Immune** disease, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +20 (1d8+8), 4 claws +20 (1d6+8)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks rage (10 rounds/day), rage power (no escape), rend (2 claws, 1d6+12)

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 13,

Wis 20, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +22

(+26 bull rush); **CMD** 35

(37 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow,

Blind-Fight, Combat

Reflexes, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull

Rush, Lunge, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Intimidate),

Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +3 (+11 when jumping), Climb +21,

Escape Artist +18, Intimidate +10, Knowledge

(dungeoneering) +14, Knowledge (religion) +9,

Perception +31, Stealth +17, Survival +25; **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Escape Artist

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

SQ compression, fast movement

For much of its life, Uchurah led a typical gug existence as a member of a sizable camp that made its home deep in the Midnight Mountains of Orv. Unlike many of their kind, the gugs of this camp revered not the Outer Gods, but one of the many umbral dragons that nests among the towering subterranean peaks. Uchurah

was poised to apprentice with the camp's spiritual leader, hoping one day to take on that role, when it began waking unrested each night, remembering horrible dreams.

These dreams depicted increasingly gruesome scenes of slaughters and feasts, including the gug gorging on the corpse of its umbral dragon "god". The gug's nightmares intensified night after night, until Uchurah could no longer stand them. Mustering all its strength and rage, Uchurah slew the dragon and claimed the camp for itself.

While many of Uchurah's fellow gugs saw its actions as a sign of strength, some believed it the ultimate heresy and retaliated against Uchurah. The usurping gug was overwhelmed by its opponents' numbers, and fled, its own followers in tow, up into the realm of Sekamina.

Guarding one of a few select entrances to the Midnight Mountains, the rage-filled gug now leads its camp on vicious raids against nearby enclaves of drow and skum. Each victory the camp secures supports Uchurah's claims of divinity, and its followers grow more and more devoted with each passing year. Though Uchurah can't cast any spells or heal its devotees, it nevertheless leads a thriving cult that could grow to be a powerful force in the Darklands.



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Intellect Devourer

I found myself in a city with architecture I'd seen only in sketches of Old Azlant. By the next city block, the human construction ended and I found myself in a district of the sturdy craftsmanship of the pre-Earthfall dwarves. As I walked those streets, I witnessed debaucheries of both flesh and spirit, where dwarves and orcs stood side by side, laughing as they took turns cutting themselves. Elves were flagellated by the hands of preened humans straight out of the pages of Azlanti writings, and monstrous beasts walked the streets without question. When I discovered the skinless abominations that cavorted in the skulls of those myriad bodies, I knew I had to flee before becoming their next plaything.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44



In the deepest reaches of the Darklands, intellect devourers lurk amid the godlike creatures that surround their small territory. For other species, this would undoubtedly lead to quick extinction or subjugation, but intellect devourers resourcefully wear the bodies of their physically superior neighbors as a human wears a coat. While inhabiting creatures in this manner, intellect devourers enjoy a full suite of emotions unavailable to them in their natural state. Most Darklands monsters, from gugs to ropers—and even dragons—must sleep, and this period of inactivity allows intellect devourers to strike. Reducing their size, the devourers move swiftly into the mouth of helpless creatures, consuming the brains and seizing control of the bodies. Worse yet, despite the complete consumption of their brains, the hosts maintain a modicum of awareness—a spiritual tether binding them to live out the actions of the intellect devourers controlling their bodies.

Intellect devourers pose an even greater threat to the world because of their penchant for traveling beyond the Darklands. While their largest settlement resides in the deepest layers of the subterranean world, intellect devourers easily grow bored by their contained lifestyle and leave the safety of their homes for higher levels of the Darklands and even the surface world. Once they reach the surface, these creatures find a whole new set of hosts to inhabit. Intellect devourers desire nothing more than increasing the array of host bodies available to them. Such an assortment provides both ever-increasing power and a greater variety of emotions as they experience life through the eyes of feeling creatures.

Ecology

The first intellect devourers came from a small, dark world in the depths of space. They emerged from vast swamp-like pits, gifted with an imperative to hunt the few other life-forms on the surface of their world. In their lightless homeland, they mentally probed their immediate surroundings, and quickly came to dominate the other species on their planet's surface. The method of hunting employed by these first devourers is the same as that of their modern-day cousins: a devourer disables an enemy with mental abilities, and then enters its helpless adversary to consume its brain. It then inhabits the victim's cranium, controlling the victim as though the devourer were the creature's original brain, and able to take advantage of all the host's physical qualities while employing its own magical abilities.

It did not take long for the first intellect devourers to consume all threats on the surface of their home world, leaving them with no option but to burrow within the flesh-like crust of their world to find new diversions. Driven by their imperative instinct to feast, these first devourers soon came across a vast brain at the center of their world. As they consumed it, they realized their world

Five Facts about Intellect Devourers

Players and Game Masters may wish to keep the following in mind when dealing with intellect devourers in their games.

- An intellect devourer steals the body of a living or dead creature by reducing its size, crawling into the victim's skull, and devouring the victim's brain. Once in control of a host body, an intellect devourer gains all the benefits of the creature's physical powers, and is still able to unleash its wide array of spell-like abilities. A controlled host is still subject to decay, and many intellect devourers employ specialized magic to allay such effects.
- By casting *protection from evil*, adventurers can protect themselves and others from infestation by intellect devourers. This is especially important when resting, as stealthy intellect devourers enjoy entering desirable host bodies while they sleep. Adventurers should always be on their guard.
- Some intellect devourers have identifying tics that manifest when controlling a host body. These vary from facial twitches to different manners of speech. One intellect devourer might have a constantly winking left eye, while another might tap its feet incessantly. These tics persist across an intellect devourer's hosts, so it is possible to identify an intellect devourer based on these idiosyncrasies.
- Beyond their wide assortment of spell-like abilities, intellect devourers still have incredible defenses outside of a host body. Acid bypasses an intellect devourer's resistances and should be employed if it is available.
- Outside of their host bodies, intellect devourers have little in the way of physical power. Their claw-like legs are unsuitable for grasping objects, but they can manipulate simple objects with their proboscises. In such a way, an intellect devourer can activate wands, drink potions, and, in rare cases, wield rudimentary weapons.

was a single living organism, and they had been created to fend off harmful foreign invaders—the creatures who once roamed the surface of their planet. Even the devourers' brain-like appearance was based on the brains of the invaders they were created to defeat. After the intellect devourers consumed the being that birthed them, they proceeded to control its vast form in the same manner they'd used with the trespassers.

Having gorged on the mind of their home world, a congregation of several thousand devourers worked together to control the ever-regenerating brain of the planet, while countless more aimlessly roamed the

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planet's surface. It did not take long for more of the foreign raiders to return, though this second wave came with a fleet of impressive space vessels. Establishing contact with the devourers, the members of this alien group identified themselves as part of a space-faring alliance known as the Dominion of the Black, and offered the "intellect devourers"—a title first coined by these returning aliens—an ongoing alliance with their growing organization.

Untold generations of the surface intellect devourers journeyed into space alongside the Dominion, developing new abilities and knowledge during their travels. As these devourers grew older and wiser, they returned to partake in controlling their home world. Eventually, intellect devourers unlocked the secret to producing new generations of their species, and thousands more were spawned with each passing century. Each evolution saw intellect devourers improve, becoming hardened against the elements, magic, and even mundane weaponry. Physical changes rarely occurred in new broods; the focus was instead on mental and defensive abilities, with the species' ability to steal the bodies of other creatures remaining their coping mechanism for physical deficiencies. Eons of methodical breeding have ensured the modern spawn of intellect devourers are well prepared for any threats.

Alien even to other aberrations, intellect devourers are so far removed from the natural evolution of the universe that they are affected by defensive warding typically reserved for evil-aligned outsiders. The exact cause of this is unknown, but some theorize it is related to the unique methods by which intellect devourers control their own development.

There are few variants among intellect devourers, with only a handful of generations possessing increased strength and stamina (use the advanced creature simple template). One particular deviation is the egophage (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary* 26), a powerful psychic version of an intellect devourer with innate flight and numerous claws. Certain alchemical substances are known to initiate such a transformation. The most ancient egophages have become advanced versions over the millennia, effectively becoming paragons of their species.

Society

Intellect devourers found their way into the Darklands by means of space exploration. Onboard a Dominion vessel under orders to prevent a different ship from reaching the world of Golarion, the intellect devourers' ship was

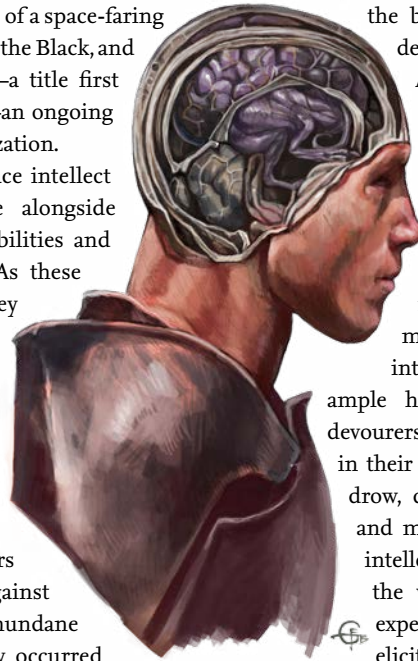
critically damaged in the ensuing battle and found itself burning up in the atmosphere. The devourers fled in an escape craft meant for other, far larger members of the crew and crashed deep into the Darklands. In the broken vaults of the earth, the intellect devourers quickly searched their new home. Aboleths, gugs, neothelids, and all manner of other powerful creatures soon forced the devourers to regroup.

These crash-landed intellect devourers found themselves in a vast abandoned city, which they made their new abode.

Expanding throughout the Darklands, intellect devourers captured members of many species or coerced representatives into visiting their city, ensuring they had ample hosts from which to choose. Intellect devourers maintain a strong stable of varied races in their immediate vicinity to this day, including drow, duergar, elves, humans, orcs, svirfneblin, and more. As they acquired more host bodies, intellect devourers soon came to appreciate the wide array of emotions these creatures experienced. Humanoid species, they found, elicited the widest variety of emotions, and proved particularly susceptible to fear.

Intellect devourers possess no emotions, their palette a blank slate evoking nothing beyond compulsion. This does not mean that emotional effects cannot affect intellect devourers, but only compulsion effects provoke noticeable responses. By "wearing" a host body, an intellect devourer can experience emotions in its interactions with others of the host's kind, from witnessing a loved one's rage and despair as the host acts abhorrently toward her, to the fear in a victim's eyes prior to a killing blow. Though an intellect devourer takes no pain or pleasure from the acts it performs with an inhabited body, it experiences the physiological effects—rushes of adrenaline, the pang of loss, and the euphoria of arousal—gaining an alien understanding of the emotions behind them. Ever trying to fully comprehend emotions, many intellect devourers note the actions that elicit the strongest reactions and repeat them in a variety of hosts over countless decades.

Modern Darklands intellect devourers consider themselves natives of Golarion and distinct from their spacebound kin. Still, they keep their affairs as hidden as possible from interplanetary powers, realizing unwanted attention could attract their ancestral kin, or—perhaps most dangerous of all—the Dominion of the Black. In either event, the intellect devourers of the Darklands would likely be (forcibly) collected by their interstellar brethren and returned home for analysis. They consider such a fate unacceptable, as they have developed an attachment to the experiences of their Golarion-based





hosts. Because of their inclination to avoid attracting attention, most intellect devourers prefer to restrict their activities to the Darklands. Darklands devourers consider their surface-dwelling brethren to be dangers to the ongoing prosperity of their society, and only a handful of non-exiled intellect devourers are trusted to oversee operations on the surface.

Intellect devourers are not without enemies, having come into direct conflict with the great neothelids of the lowest Darklands. A slow-moving war is fought between both sides, with intellect devourers unable to gain the upper hand. One of their greatest tribulations is their inability to steal the bodies of neothelids, a task made impossible by the worm-beasts' abnormal anatomy, which lacks a centralized brain. Similarly, neothelids' seugathi spawn cannot be actively controlled, necessitating the intellect devourers' acquisition of numerous slaves and host bodies for use in the ongoing conflict. One avenue of moderate success is their possession of purple worms—and the extraplanetary creatures take delight in subverting the wills of neothelids' purple work laborers.

Campaign Role

As enemies, intellect devourers are an interesting option for recurring villains. Killing a host body is not enough to kill the devourer, which can burst out of the body to escape or continue the fight as necessary. The devourer eventually returns, possessing a new host body with which to vex the PCs. Intellect devourers' powers scale with their host bodies, so having one inhabit a lower-level humanoid vessel ensures a reduced challenge for PCs, while a larger, more physically powerful host easily increases the effective challenge of a fight. Intellect devourers also learn new skills, especially through the consumption of powerful host bodies. As intellect devourers return, they should gain class levels; psychic (see *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures*), sorcerer, and wizard are all strong choices for an intellect devourer villain.

Single intellect devourers or small groups of the creatures make for vexing opponents in surface-based campaigns, particularly in an urban setting. The motivations for intellect devourers' actions on the surface vary, though the vast majority were exiled by their kin. Likely, these intellect devourers set up residence in a populated region, where they plan to feast on new hosts and sensations. Intellect devourers who are part of the greater Darklands community work with their underground brethren to secure more host bodies for their subterranean empire and its ongoing wars. Perhaps the greatest dangers are the lone intellect devourers who travel to enact grand experiments on the surface world. Whole campaigns can be based around artifacts that allow an intellect devourer to remotely consume the mind of a target or enable an intellect devourer to control multiple host bodies at once.

Puppeteers of Depravity

Intellect devourers lack any semblance of emotions, being creatures of thought rather than feeling. Because of this, they relish inhabiting host bodies and feeling the world through the hosts' senses. Because the strongest emotions are often tied to anger, fear, and revulsion, intellect devourers pursue actions that elicit these responses in their host's physiology or from those with whom the host interacts.

Presented are some examples of actions performed by controlling intellect devourers in order to dine on their hosts' emotions.

Destroying Relationships: While they do not understand the concepts of love and companionship, intellect devourers nevertheless know their hosts have strong relationships with others of their kind. Using hosts to kill their lovers, exile favored children, or betray those who depended upon and trusted the host are common ways intellect devourers can examine the emotions tied to close connections between creatures.

Self-Mutilation: Feeling the agony of the host as it saws off one of its own limbs is a tried and true vintage for intellect devourers. Additional acts like self-blinding or deafening elicit instinctual fight-or-flight responses and provide the devourer with further emotions on which to feed.

At the highest levels of play, combating intellect devourers in their Darklands home can be an impressive challenge, the likes of which could be the culmination of a whole campaign. Here, intellect devourers keep their greatest of host bodies, ranging from gugs with class levels to the most powerful of dragons. As a further means of defense, the intellect devourers of the deepest Darklands often have numerous class levels, preferring psychic spellcasting classes followed by arcane spellcasting classes. Revealing such an intellect devourer can be a climactic moment for any campaign. After defeating an intellect devourer's host in a battle that drains most of the PCs' resources, the unfortunate heroes will then have to contend with the high-level spellcaster that inhabited their former foe.

Treasure

Intellect devourers hoard a wide assortment of treasure and magical equipment, much of which once belonged to the various hosts they have worn. Since many intellect devourers dabble in magic, they often have wands which they operate via class levels or Use Magic Device—*wands of gentle repose* are by far the most common treasure found in an established intellect devourer lair, as these are exceptionally useful for preserving inhabited hosts.

Intellect devourers also employ several wondrous items that enhance a host body's physical attributes, which add to the overall protection the body offers the devourer inside, and can easily be reissued to new host bodies. Gold and gems are of secondary interest to intellect devourers, though they do maintain small treasure hoards should their surface endeavors require backing with suitable wealth.

One of an intellect devourer's more prized personal treasures is its cache of alchemical drugs and poisons. As an intellect devourer forces its host body to consume these substances, it undergoes new and exciting experiences. Younger intellect devourers often find non-harmful physiological and psychoactive effects of various drugs to be fascinating, and may use their host bodies to experiment with ways to alter the consciousness and perceptions of their hosts; as they age, however, milder experiences cease to interest them, and they begin to seek out increasingly intense sensations. In the end, only the extremes of pain can satisfy their jaded palettes, and the sensations they seek out are almost invariably those that eventually destroy their host bodies, especially if such destruction also allows them to witness the pain of friends or family of their hosts. Even common alchemical substances like simple solvents or alchemical bleach intrigue the body-hopping creatures, who relish the agony emitted by their host bodies as they consume these devastating compounds. As the host dies, the intellect devourer catalogs the sensations, taking note of which alchemical agents cause the greatest pain, and then ensuring it has a ready supply of such compounds in its lair.

Intellect Devourers on Golarion

Singular among intellect devourer settlements is the Orvian Vault of Ilvarandin. In the streets of High Ilvarandin, intellect devourers shift between a myriad of host bodies, enjoying what they perceive—through the eyes of their hosts—as a utopian society. They can indulge in endless feasts of emotions, all offered by a continual supply of host bodies, and many intellect devourers thus consider the place a paradise. Over the past 5 centuries, though, the idyllic promise of Ilvarandin has been torn asunder, as the neothelids of nearby Denebrum wage a methodical war against intellect devourers. High Ilvarandin is populated by ever fewer slaves, their numbers thinned as they are sent out to combat the neothelids and their seugathi minions in the tunnels between vaults.

Lens-Keeper Tiluatchek (CE intellect devourer sorcerer 12) controls a powerful artifact in Ilvarandin known as the *dream lens*, which, when focused on a surface location, allows intellect devourers from Ilvarandin to remotely inhabit the bodies of dreaming hosts. The lens is currently focused on the Varisian city

of Magnimar, where Tiluatchek's agents traffic in the drug known as *midnight milk* (see page 12 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Cities of Golarion*), which leaves the minds of addicts prone to control via the *dream lens*. The enslaved bodies harvested from Magnimar serve intellect devourers in their ongoing war against the neothelids of Denebrum, but the weak frames of the city's humanoids make them little more than fodder for the powerful worm-beasts. Other intellect devourers in Ilvarandin believe Tiluatchek's application of the *dream lens* is too slow for their species' salvation. They instead use the artifact to review remote communities on the surface world for potential use as a refuge should the war against Denebrum finally prove untenable. Already, doses of *midnight milk* are being shipped to these potential settlements in hopes of securing intellect devourers' future.

On occasion, the Dominion of the Black has seeded intellect devourer agents on Golarion's surface. These operatives work to complete inscrutable projects orchestrated by neh-thalggu overlords or even more elder members of the Dominion's alien hierarchy. They are abused by their seniors, and are able to achieve a modicum of respect only by possessing truly impressive physical hosts. Much of the Dominion of the Black's intellect devourer populace is content with their position, finding some camaraderie with allied kytons—outsiders summoned by the Dominion for their more perverse experiments. Intellect devourers see the kytons as kindred spirits, for both creatures have an inherent interest in and understanding of pain while being simultaneously numbed to it. Adventurers might thus stumble upon a kyton performing its twisted craft on a seemingly helpless humanoid, only to find the subject is a willing recipient—the host body of a deprived intellect devourer.

In the cosmos beyond Golarion, intellect devourers roam the stars. Many of their species still reside on the living world of their origin, floating through the void and spawning new generations to be ferried across the cosmos by the Dominion of the Black. Because of this, it is possible to encounter intellect devourers anywhere in the greater universe, including the planets of Golarion's own solar system. A coterie of intellect devourers maintains a small research outpost in the spatial debris of the Diaspora; here they perform experiments on akatas (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 23) entombed within some of the smaller asteroids. Thus far, akatas have proven resistant to the experimentation employed by intellect devourers, as their bodies reject any form of magical maintenance once their brains are consumed. Intellect devourer scientists hope to develop akatas into a more refined weapon, able to hibernate and be launched at planets as advance agents for future Dominion activities.

Quetzutrul

This brainlike creature has two clawed legs emerging from its fore and rear and a serpentine proboscis clutching a dagger.

QUETZUTRHUL **CR 11**

XP 12,800

Rogue mutant intellect devourer (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 248, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 180, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

CE Small aberration

Init +17; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., *detect magic*; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 23, flat-footed 16 (+11 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +1 size)

hp 107 (9d8+63); fast healing 5

Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/adamantine, 10/magic; **Immune** fire, mind-affecting effects; **Resist** cold 20, electricity 20, sonic 20; **SR** 23

Weaknesses vulnerable to protection from evil

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *returning dagger* +19/+14 (1d3+1/19–20), 4 claws +16 (1d4)

Ranged +1 *returning dagger* +19 (1d3+1/19–20)

Special Attacks body thief, sneak attack +7d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +9)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*confusion* (single target only) (DC 15), *daze monster* (no HD limit) (DC 12), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 14), *invisibility*, *reduce size* (as per *reduce person* but self only)

3/day—*cure moderate wounds*, *globe of invulnerability*

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 32, **Con** 22, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 27 (31 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack⁸, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +22 (+26 when jumping), Bluff +17, Climb +11, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +22, Knowledge (local) +16, Perception +19, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +34, Use Magic Device +10;

Racial Modifiers +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Orc, Terran, Undercommon, Varisian (can't speak); telepathy 100 ft.

SQ deformities (poor ability [Charisma]), mutations (celerity, extra arm, fast healing), prehensile proboscis

Gear +1 dagger

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Prehensile Proboscis (Ex) Quetzutrul's extra arm mutation manifests as a prehensile proboscis. It receives Multiattack as a bonus feat instead of Multiweapon Attack.

develop increased speed, rapid healing, and prehensile use of its proboscis, but at the cost of its ability to relate to others of its kind. Its ego swollen as a result of its advanced form, Quetzutrul led a half dozen other intellect devourers away from Ilvarandin in hopes of using its new abilities on Golarion's surface. They emerged from the Darklands along the Varisian Coast and onto a transport ship headed for the Ironbound Archipelago. Posing as simple passengers, the intellect devourers quickly learned the basics of navigation from the crew before switching hosts to replace them.

Along the way, a pirate vessel off their bow provided an unanticipated opportunity. Not suspecting the intellect devourers' presence, the pirates boarded the ship to find the crew seemingly dead. With the raiders' guard down, Quetzutrul and its allies overtook the pirates and claimed their ship, the *Jade Adder*, as their own.

Now, Quetzutrul plies the waters of the Arcadian Ocean, spreading its own version of piracy. The *Jade Adder's* captain and crew are never the same for longer than a few months at a time, and their unorthodox and rapidly evolving nautical tactics have made and putting an end to its piracy difficult.



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Vegepygmy

To accelerate its evolution, Quetzutrul exposed itself to radiation and other mutating forces. This caused it to



Morlock

Not long into my exploration of the few human ruins that exist in Nar-Voth, I came across the so-called inheritors of Azlant. Pitiful creatures of pallid white flesh and bulging red eyes, these degenerates desperately clung to the few small settlements the Azlanti managed to cobble together in the aftermath of Earthfall. Such encounters were thankfully brief, and most ended peacefully, with these creatures simply curious to speak with those who resembled their vaunted ancestors—I like to think my elven heritage contributed to their admiration, especially my pointed features.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44



In the aftermath of great cataclysms—particularly extinction-level events that bring about the end of a civilization—some humans manage to survive, perhaps by finding shelter under the surface of the world. Those who don't make a swift return to the surface live and breed in the lightless depths, moving toward a doomed future. After generations of inbreeding (which these survivors incorrectly believe promotes racial purity), and the attention of dark powers interested in further humiliating the fallen humans, these survivors devolve, transforming so slowly they don't even realize what is happening. Eventually these pitiful humans endure enough changes that they abandon their humanity entirely and take on the hideous form of morlocks.

By all accounts, morlocks are the true inheritors of numerous lost human civilizations, yet they have regressed to a point where their preserved history is merely a jumble of orally transmitted stories. Some shreds of truth are to be found amidst the greater tales known by elders and spiritual advisors, but most of morlock history is a hodgepodge of misconceptions and falsehoods adopted as gospel. The vast number of morlock tribes in the Darklands revere their distant ancestors, the humans of now-defunct empires, by venerating the few statues and frescos that depict the likenesses of their long-dead progenitors. Gone is honest worship of the pantheon once venerated by morlocks' predecessors, replaced by mad devotion to lifeless statues and the names of old leaders, distorted over generations of retelling. Woe befalls any who tread upon these hallowed ruins, as morlocks viciously defend such sacrosanct sites against all intruders.

Ecology

Morlocks are slightly smaller than their human ancestors, rarely exceeding 5 feet in height and weighing no more than 150 pounds. A morlock's appendages are covered inropy muscles, which provide reasonable strength and remarkable agility. Its torso, however, seems to possess no muscle at all, and the skin of its abdomen, chest, and back clings to its bones and gives it a skeletal look. Morlock skin is the color of chalk and looks as though it were sagging in some places and too tight in others. Morlocks are extremely sensitive to most sources of light; their bulging eyes consist almost entirely of pupils and can see in pitch darkness. Some morlocks possess eyes with a reflective membrane that makes them appear stark white while others—particularly those that have abandoned ancestor-worship for darker gods—have evolved eyes that seem to give off a vicious red glow when reflecting the dim illumination of the Darklands. Morlocks' hands are often misconstrued as claws, but they're too fleshy to be of any use as natural weapons and allow only for better climbing. Far more dangerous are morlocks' razor-sharp teeth, which they use to shred the flesh of even the hardest creatures.

Five Facts about Morlocks

Players and GMs may wish to keep the following information about morlocks in mind.

- Morlocks avoid sunlight because of their incredible sensitivity to it. While morlocks stay clear of the surface world as a result, they generally reside in tunnels directly under the ruins of human civilizations. When exploring such places, be prepared for morlocks to surface during the night.
- A fecund race, morlocks can double their numbers within a single settlement in 5 years. When seeking to remove a morlock presence, PCs should be sure to kill every morlock, as even a handful of the creatures can produce enough descendents to again pose a threat within a short time span.
- Morlocks frequent the forgotten ruins of humanity's old empires. While they hold such places in spiritual reverence, they also perform routine tasks to maintain any magical or technological devices still functioning. Driving off morlocks from these ruins could invite greater disaster as without maintenance, these devices can go haywire.
- Morlocks fight in large groups whenever possible. If PCs encounter a small number of morlocks, they're likely just a scouting party for a nearby tribe. Luckily, their hordes are dependent on powerful leaders, both communal and spiritual, to guide them. When faced with a horde of morlocks, PCs should always target the biggest ones or those capable of casting spells. Defeating these high-priority targets may distract the rest long enough for PCs to escape.
- If PCs can communicate with morlocks, they can present themselves as the morlocks' ancestors. Morlocks revere their ancestors as though their forebears were gods, and establishing a connection with these progenitors can turn the morlocks from ravenous beasts into rather civil hosts. However, even if PCs do manage to convince the morlocks of such a connection, they'll likely find some trivial reason to turn on the PCs in the future.

The earliest morlocks were indistinguishable from humans, but the dangers of the Darklands rapidly thinned their numbers, and only those able to adapt quickly survived. The extreme nature of the morlocks' new home compressed their natural evolution, as drastic threats conducted violent natural selection. The first adaptations came in the form of the morlocks' increased perceptive abilities. As light sources dwindled, those able to see in the dark could more easily avoid hazards and predators. Even their sense of smell improved as the surviving humans used scent to avoid threats in the deeper regions

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of the Darklands, becoming particularly aware of the distinct stench of gugs and troglodytes. The Darklands contain countless diseases and toxins, and many refugee humans perished to virulent plagues and potent poisons; those who survived developed a sturdy immunity to such toxins. Finally, without the threat of the harsh rays of the sun, morlocks' skin faded to its present milky white. The combination of their skin tone and colorless darkvision let morlocks see one another vividly against the darkness, allowing them to hunt in packs.

Because morlocks had little peaceful interaction with other species in the hazardous environs, their social skills dwindled. Becoming experts at moving along jagged tunnel walls, these creatures surrendered to savage impulses as they descended on prey. The first morlocks who prowled the tunnels of the Darklands brought down far bigger creatures by traveling in large groups, attacking from the ground and air by means of great, leaping strikes. Morlocks perfected this tactic to achieve victories through strength of numbers rather than martial skill, and soon their training with weaponry and tactics was another relic of civilization lost over time in the subterranean depths.

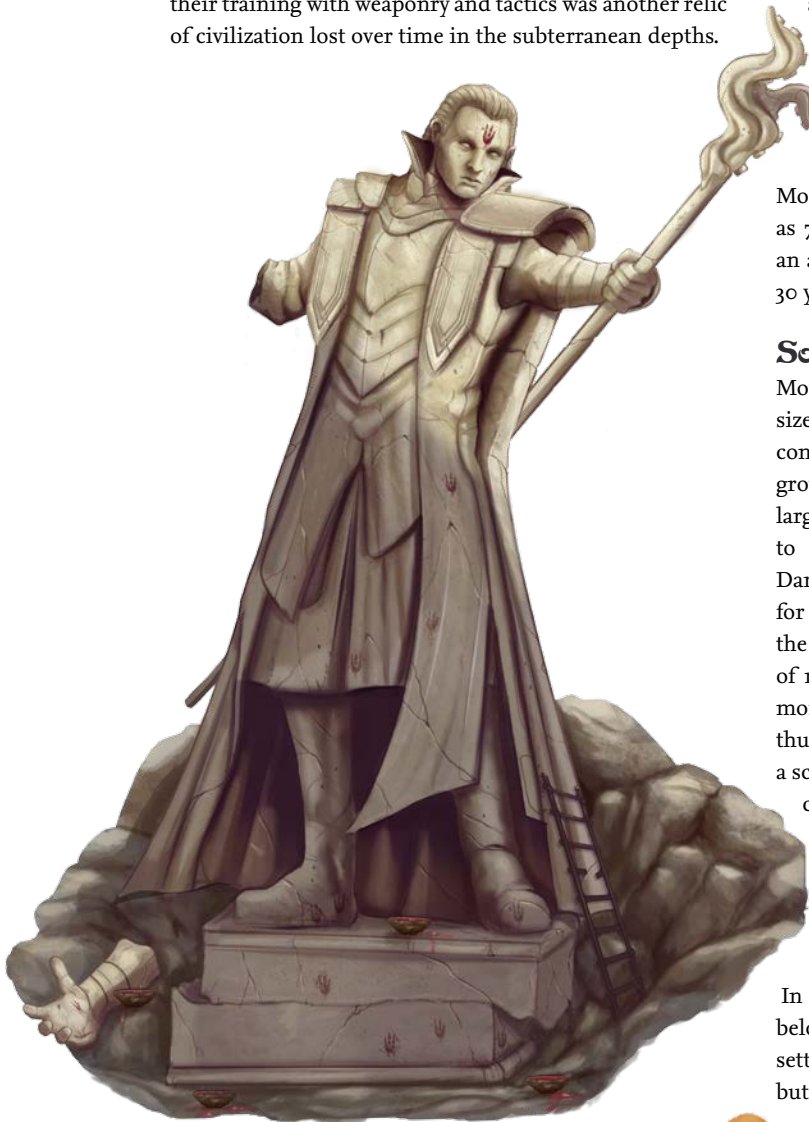
A morlock's diet consists of meats and cultivated fungi—several Darklands researchers posit that morlocks' consumption of odd fungus and other Darklands flora accelerated their degeneration. Some biological imperative, likely from their human heritage, pushes most morlocks to hunt mindless beasts rather than sentient creatures. Larger animals are slain by roving hunting packs and brought back to the tribe for consumption by the masses. This imperative breaks down, however, when such prey is scarce. Pressured morlock communities have no qualms with dining on the flesh of intelligent creatures, and some of the most depraved tribes in the lowest regions of the Darklands actually prefer the taste of such meats. Luckily for their neighbors, morlocks don't possess a strong appetite, subsisting on small quantities of food for extended periods of time, their metabolisms having adapted to the scant resources with which their ancestors were forced to cope.

The raising of morlock children is left to the birthing mother, who must sate her children's initial ravenous appetites. Once the younglings are weaned (after only a few months), their metabolisms slow to fall in line with those of adult morlocks, who teach them their tribe's pack-hunting techniques. Hunting parties of morlock young who return with larger prey are awarded positions of prominence within the tribe. Morlocks reach maturity at 5 years, and can live as many as 7 decades, though it is uncommon for a morlock in an active portion of the Darklands to survive more than 30 years.

Society

Morlocks live in communities of wildly differing sizes, from small bands of a half-dozen to sprawling communities numbering in the thousands. Smaller groups of morlocks are often explorers or survivors from larger communities who lack the numbers necessary to survive on their own among the dangers of the Darklands. Roving bands of morlocks can act as scouts for larger groups; most Darklands denizens understand the importance of destroying such forces, lest a horde of morlocks descend upon them. As a result, groups of morlocks who survive the destruction of their tribe (and thus have no reinforcements should they be mistaken for a scouting force) typically retreat into the most concealed caverns. They breed and build up their strength, returning within a decade or less, even more numerous than when first defeated.

The largest morlock settlements are found under the surface ruins of ancient civilizations, specifically those belonging to past human empires. In circumstances where these ruins remain intact belowground, morlocks treat the sites with reverence, setting up their dwellings on the outskirts of the ruins but often refusing to enter. Creatures intruding on these





lost cities can explore unmolested for only a short time before the stampeding noise of hundreds of enraged morlocks breaks the quiet. In surface city ruins, explorers may spend an entire day cataloguing the wonders of their find only to have their camp assaulted in the middle of the night by a flood of pallid-skinned monsters emerging from the depths. Those found trespassing are overrun and consumed by morlocks, who swiftly ensure that any trace of the meddlers' presence is removed. Following these bloody assaults and subsequent cleanups, morlocks retreat to their hidden lairs.

Where duergar and drow are the inheritors of the dwarves and elves who fled into the Darklands, morlocks represent human evolution in the lightless subterranean realms. No longer seeing themselves as human, they often go so far as to attack humans not specifically matching the depictions of their forebears. However, morlocks may treat with humans under certain circumstances. Those who dwell beneath ruins often believe themselves the inheritors of those civilizations and may spare any humans who resemble the surviving images of their progenitors. Others deal peacefully with worshipers of the same deity. The requirements differ from community to community, with some rare and remote morlock tribes believing humans of any appearance to be ancestors from the surface. Such acceptance often comes from morlock communities where humans are rarely seen, while those located near human settlements or places commonly explored by human adventurers maintain a hostility to all but those with the "correct" pedigree.

Morlock leaders come in two varieties: communal leaders and spiritual advisors. Communal leaders are often the most physically fit and capable morlocks in a region, taking levels in barbarian, fighter, or similar martial classes to fill the role of tribal chief. Spiritual advisors are typically witches, oracles, or shamans who venerate the morlocks' ancestors. Some morlocks find patronage from deities, notably Lamashtu, whose hand is said to have helped shape exiled humans into the first morlocks. Lamashtu sought to corrupt humanity just as the demon lords of the Abyss tempted the elves into becoming the modern drow. What Lamashtu did not anticipate was humanity's prideful devotion to itself. While her gifts twisted the humans into morlocks, Lamashtu never truly ruled this new race. Other tribes venerate more obscure or less-powerful deities, including a wide range of demon lords who have gained a foothold in morlock communities, turning what would otherwise be idle tribes into bloodthirsty underground empires.

Morlocks are shunned by other Darklands races, finding temporary allies among only derros and dark folk. When dealing with the deranged derros, morlocks end up protecting a specific territory, leery of working side-by-side with their would-be allies. Each species uses the other as additional defense for larger, shared

Morlock Religion

Morlocks most often worship their ancient human ancestors, idealized versions of the legendary pure beings their race once resembled. As they don't venerate deities, these morlocks do not have access to cleric domains and most often take levels in oracle and shaman, with witches filling in as arcane servants of their tribes' ancestors in rare cases. Because morlocks have severe racial penalties to Charisma, many of their spiritual leaders are actually ancestor-touched morlocks, possessing a preternatural presence that makes them effective divine spellcasters.

Ancestor-Touched Morlock (CR +0): Occasionally, morlocks are born as conduits for the divine powers they serve. Believing themselves to be mouthpieces for their ancestors, such morlocks are actually the reincarnated souls of the very ancestors they worship. These ancestor-touched morlocks gain a +6 bonus to their Charisma scores and can cast *cure light wounds* or *inflict light wounds* (select one) three times per day as a spell-like ability (caster level equals the morlock's HD). Because of the awe and fear other morlocks have for these divine conduits, they lose their swarming racial ability.

territory, particularly against the militarized duergar, who often cleanse smaller derro and morlock holdings when taking slaves. When derros capture lone morlocks or those in small groups, they relegate the captives to a life of slavery, as the taste of morlock flesh is unappealing to the blue-skinned creatures. While slavery in derro society is difficult, it is a far better fate than falling under the scalpels of their deranged scientists; naturally resistant to derro toxins, morlocks make good test subjects.

Dark folk treat morlocks as wayward kin, as they share a similar background as refugees from fallen human civilizations. Dark folk made pacts with umbral powers to survive the depths of the world, and they often wonder if they'd have suffered the same fate as morlocks if their shadowy patrons had not protected them. This often leads to dark folk aiding morlocks in small ways while remaining mindful that morlocks made their own choices and their current pitiful existence is the result.

Campaign Role

Morlocks are at their best in large numbers, where they can take advantage of their swarming ability while simultaneously providing a powerful visual to the players—a vast horde of morlocks should be an intimidating sight to all but the bravest adventurers. Keep in mind that some of the most mood-intensifying ways to use morlocks are as an unseen threat, with the PCs hearing

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about the presence of countless such creatures near a location they're going to explore. Once the PCs reach their destination, they likely find the lack of morlocks unsettling. Play up the abandoned nature of the region and wait until a key moment, when the ground begins to shake at the approach of untold numbers of foes. Even high-level characters should be concerned when confronted with so many morlocks, who not only can surround a PC by swarming, but can make leaping attacks against enemies, allowing them to make attacks every round as long as they're within even a reasonable threat range.

Negotiating with a tribe of morlocks may be the only way for the PCs to accomplish their mission, especially if their goal is tied to a ruin the morlocks protect. While morlocks are more eager to chew off an invader's face than they are to talk with her, the leaders among morlock communities make great dignitaries. These typically intelligent or "refined" morlocks are willing to negotiate with outsiders if they believe they can turn the situation into an advantage for the tribe. Commonly, morlocks allow outsiders to intrude on their hallowed ruins in exchange for undertaking missions against other nearby Darklands creatures that oppose the morlocks. There's always the possibility for betrayal, as morlocks are inherently chaotic creatures, but sometimes a tribe stands by its word.

Treasure

Morlock lairs are cramped affairs, with twisting tunnels and warrens that prove mazelike to intruders in search of treasure. Treasure is rarely found on the creatures, who prefer to remain unburdened while climbing cavern walls and store their trophies and claimed items in central areas of their tunnel homes. Retrieving such treasure is a feat unto itself, as the majority of morlocks sleep in close proximity for warmth and protection. Those seeking the treasure might discover the creatures' hidden homes and enter while the tribe is away, potentially creating a distraction in the holy ruins the morlocks guard to facilitate the heist. Such troves can be filled with incredible rewards, whose variety is as great as the number of slain foreign invaders.

The greatest treasures morlocks possess come from the ruins of the ancient civilizations. Devoted morlocks maintain and restore the ruins' ancient magical and technological wonders. Only the most devoted of morlocks, ordained by their spiritual leaders, dare to openly brandish the weapons of their ancestors. Wielding such equipment comes with a great stigma and is done only in the face of overwhelming threats or as the result of abandoning ancestor worship for other powers. The effectiveness of these morlocks is magnified by the finest equipment once crafted by empires now lost to time, making them greater threats than their ravaging brethren. Because of this, the leaders of such tribes should possess a variety of potent equipment, either on their persons or stored in their nearby lairs.

Morlocks on Golarion

Morlocks rarely venture to the surface of Golarion, dwelling instead in their subterranean lairs. Forsaking the conflict-ridden lands of Nar-Voth, the first Azlanti refugees to flee into the Darklands to survive Earthfall moved into Sekamina. Here, avoiding the growing wars of the elves who would become drow, the humans suffered a terrifying reverse-evolution, changing into morlocks over the ensuing millennia.

Morlock lairs lie deep under the settlements of the fallen empires of Azlant and Thassilon, burrowing through Nar-Voth and into Sekamina. These ancient ruins offer unique entrances to the middle layer of the Darklands, bypassing the domains of the duergar and other Nar-Voth threats. Some settlements, particularly the abandoned Azlanti underground refuges hastily assembled in the aftermath of Earthfall, lie in Nar-Voth and are inhabited by coterie of devoted morlocks. Located between Nar-Voth and Sekamina, the connecting region known as the Pallid Pits is home to a massive tribe of morlocks. Serving an obcisaedemon (*Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Book of the Damned*, Vol. 3 50) trapped in the pit by a powerful curse requiring the death of exactly 72,353 living beings in its name, these morlocks breed and grow along the niches of the great connecting tunnel. Once they have sufficiently grown their number, the morlocks plan to surge upward into Nar-Voth to raise the tally of sacrifices and bring their overlord closer to release from its prison.

Some non-Azlanti morlocks devolved under similar circumstances to their Azlanti kin. Aside from some physical dissimilarity—often in skin tone and facial structure—these morlocks are the same creatures. Under what is now southwestern Chelixa, survivors of the defunct Jistka Imperium live in huddled masses. Located near what was once the Jistkan city of Hekastor, a tribe of morlocks strives to power a series of 17 magical pylons covered in indecipherable glyphs. Since the days of their subterranean flight, these mutated survivors of the lost Imperium believe a great threat will be unleashed if the pylons are not appeased. Thus far, the only method morlocks have found successful in keeping the light of the pylons alive is the sacrifice of arcane spellcasters under the magical pillars' ominous glow.

Amid the interstellar wreckage of northern Numeria, the bowels of larger wrecks house disparate groups of morlocks. Forcibly changed by the mutating effects of radiation, these humans once crewed great vessels that soared through the void of space. Trapped for centuries in the tombs of their embedded vessels, they have devolved into morlocks, and differ from their Darklands peers by the unique neon green glow that pulses from their skin. While they provide continual upkeep to the wrecks they call home, excavations by the Technic League and other powers risk unleashing these creatures—and worse,



disrupting their delicate maintenance of the volatile ship sections over which they watch.

Eudranis

Garbed in tattered robes, this emaciated humanoid creature stares out with unblinking white eyes. In one hand, he clutches a great blade, while his other hand holds an idol of some fell power.

EUDRANIS **CR 5**

XP 1,600

Male morlock cleric of Lamashtu 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 209)

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 59 (7 HD; 4d8+3d10+25)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

Immune disease, poison

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor), climb 30 ft.

Melee mwk falchion +9/+4 (2d4+3/18-20) or bite +3 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 3/day (DC 12, 2d6), sneak attack +1d6

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +8)

7/day—touch of chaos, vision of madness (+/-2)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +8)

2nd—*align weapon*^D (chaos only), *hold person* (DC 16), *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *murderous*

command^{DM} (DC 15), *protection from law*^D, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *create water*, *detect magic*, *purify food and drink* (DC 14)

D Domain spell; **Domains** Chaos, Madness

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 7, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Casting, Extra Channel, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +18, Knowledge (planes) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Stealth -1 (+3 in caverns); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Acrobatics, +8 Climb

Languages Undercommon

SQ +4 stealth in caverns, expert climber, leap attack, swarming

Combat Gear *potion of bestow curse*, *scroll of daze monster*, *wand of cure light wounds* (30 charges); **Other Gear** +1 chainmail, mwk falchion, *cloak of resistance* +1, silver holy symbol of Lamashtu

A devotee of the goddess Lamashtu, Eudranis found himself as a speaker for the Mother of Monsters following his tribe's encounter with a group of Pathfinder Society agents. These agents presented themselves as

the morlocks' ancestors, effectively turning Eudranis's tribe into indentured slave labor for the Pathfinders' archaeological endeavors. Though he was initially honored to serve his revered ancestors, Eudranis became suspicious when they appeared to have only their own interests in mind, ignoring the well-being of their "descendants." Following a vivid nightmare in which the Pathfinders abandoned the morlocks and absconded with the treasures of their ancestors, Eudranis spied on the resting agents. Overhearing the Pathfinders' mockery of the simple morlocks shattered Eudranis's faith in his ancestor worship. He began preaching against the Pathfinders in secret and gathered his tribe for a retributive strike.

Following a night of bloodshed, the morlocks tortured and slew the Pathfinders, whose screams echoed through the ruins of the ancient Azlanti city they had come to plunder. The morlocks soon hailed Eudranis as a prophet of the tribe's new true goddess, Lamashtu. Guiding his tribe fully into Lamashtu's worship, Eudranis has vowed never to be tricked by humanity again. The morlocks of his tribe have embraced their monstrous physiques and abandoned the reverence their race traditionally holds for their human ancestors.



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Munavri

Amid the blackness of the Sightless Sea, as daemonic horrors overran my ship, I met them. Albino humanoids, with hair and skin as white as polished bone, leapt onto the deck of the ship and repelled my attackers, whisking me away to one of their ivory sailing ships.

I later learned that these alabaster-skinned humanoids were a race called the munavris. They brought me to one of their great isolated cities—an entire island of jade floating on the water. They treated me as an honored guest and comrade. We traded stories and laughed and cried over drinks. They were good people, and thanks to them I was able to return to the surface to submit this report.

If I were to make any accusation against the munavris it would be that their civilization was so grand I didn't want to leave.

—Koriah Azmeren
Apocrypha to the Pathfinder Chronicles



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Munavris are a shining example of how the forces of good can thrive, even in the darkest regions of the world. The descendants of humans devastated by Earthfall, munavris dwell amid jade cities in the deepest oceans of the Darklands. The great calamity forced the munavris' ancestors underground, where they struggled against horrors such as the mind-bending aboleths and the terror-inspiring urdefhans. It was during the trying times of these first skirmishes that munavris developed the ability to wordlessly communicate among themselves. Soon they uncovered other mental advancements, such as the power to instantly understand the use of almost any device. Standing by the munavris since their arrival in the Darklands, the empyreal lords back them in their ongoing conflicts, defiantly reinforcing their bulwark against those underground realms' more depraved denizens.

The munavris' ancestors were once the seafarers of a great surface empire, and munavris maintain their connection to navigating the open ocean to this day. They operate in the Darklands on violet-sailed ships, carved entirely out of ivory, plying the waters of the Sightless Sea as explorers and defenders of their island cities. Munavris' pervasive wanderlust brings them into continued conflict with other species, particularly urdefhans—whose genocidal lust to destroy the Darklands' entire human population makes them the bitterest of rivals.

Ecology

Munavris are the offspring of the ancient humans who plied the waters around the now-destroyed continent of Azlant. Many of Azlant's myriad naval and civilian ships were caught on the open sea as the sky rained fire. Of the thousands of ships on the water during Earthfall, only a few hundred survived the bombardment from the heavens, the tidal waves, and the violent thunderstorms that followed. The aboleths, ever eager to push the limits of what humanity could accomplish, even in the wake of their orchestrated destruction, used powerful magic to transfer the Azlanti ships through the magical waterspout that connects the floor of the Arcadian Ocean to the underground ocean known as the Sightless Sea.

Finding themselves in the strange, lightless world of the Darklands, the refugees banded together in a vast armada of ships of all shapes and sizes, knowing it was their only hope of survival against the countless terrors that confronted them. Over time, they found uninhabited islands, which they settled in an effort to reestablish their great civilization, leaving behind the ruins of their distinct architecture, which stills stands to this day. The refugees' plan was successful, and through tenacity and dedication, they managed to avoid devolving into degenerate species as the morlocks and mongrelfolk did, and eschewed the dark bargains for safety held out by the dark folk, drow, and duergar.

Five Facts about Munavris

Players and Game Masters may wish to keep the following facts in mind when encountering or playing munavri characters.

- Munavris are the most numerous good-aligned force in the Darklands region of Orv. They sail the Sightless Sea in violet-sailed ships of ivory, seeking out enemies and protecting their floating jade island-cities. Aboleths and urdefhans rank as munavris' greatest enemies, and both malevolent species engage in ceaseless attempts to torment or wipe out the alabaster-skinned humanoids.
- Munavris possess psychic abilities, and all members of the race can telepathically communicate with others of their species. This easy method of communication renders munavris somewhat ignorant of how other species communicate. Though munavris are socially graceful during initial interactions with creatures whom they have determined to be friendly, their ceaseless questions can quickly come to grate on their guests.
- Simply by touching and examining an item, a munavri can unlock the secrets of its true potential. Both scrolls and wands are particularly useful to munavris, who can use either item regardless of their training. In fact, many martial munavris possess scrolls and wands that specifically complement their spellcasting deficiencies. Munavris are prone to thievery in the midst of combat, using their quick reading powers to actively take an enemy's equipment and use it against him.
- The empyreal lords are the primary deities among munavris, and have been so since the earliest days of the munavris' history. Most munavris venerate azatas, while less free-spirited munavris foster stronger connections to archon and agathion lords, though such followers are a minority among munavri priests.
- Beset on all sides by the depredations of the aboleths, urdefhans, and other terrors of the Darklands, munavris find solace on their island homes. The origins and history of these strange islands are mysterious even to the munavris, but these colorful isles are actually weapons once used in an ancient conflict between the baleful aboleths and some forgotten force.

At first, the refugees flourished, believing themselves the most fortunate of their devastated culture. The aboleths, once again angered at the humans' resilience, took note of their ancient enemy's survival and unleashed

their full might against the remaining Azlanti cities. As the aboleths' ulat-kini legions overran their last stronghold, the Azlanti of the Sightless Sea fled into the murky corners of the Darklands.

Eventually, the humans found shelter on islands of jade, some mysterious quality of which repelled the tireless pursuit of the aboleths. Here they discarded their Azlanti titles, surviving in tight-knit communities. The munavris found themselves bereft of most of the gods of their old pantheon, who had either died during Earthfall or retreated beyond the reach of mortal prayers. In response, many among them reached out to Empyrean Lords for help. The celestial demigods answered by protecting the munavris' burgeoning settlements, showing them means of building ships and structures in the absence of trees.

Munavris have changed over the centuries, their hair and skin having paled to a bone white. Their natural humanoid grace, however, has only been improved by their time sailing the waters of the Darklands, and many walk with a subtle dancelike sway as a result. Their continued exposure to the Darklands' strange radiations, the assaults of aboleths, and the psychically resonant nature of their jade island homes, imparted munavris with their own psychic aptitude—first, as strong empathy, and later, telepathic communication with their own kind. Munavris rarely have reason to speak aloud, only doing so when treating with members of other races. A munavri's telepathic voice is the best reflection of her personality, with subtle inflections and a wide range of tones, while her physical voice is a monotonous contralto sound.

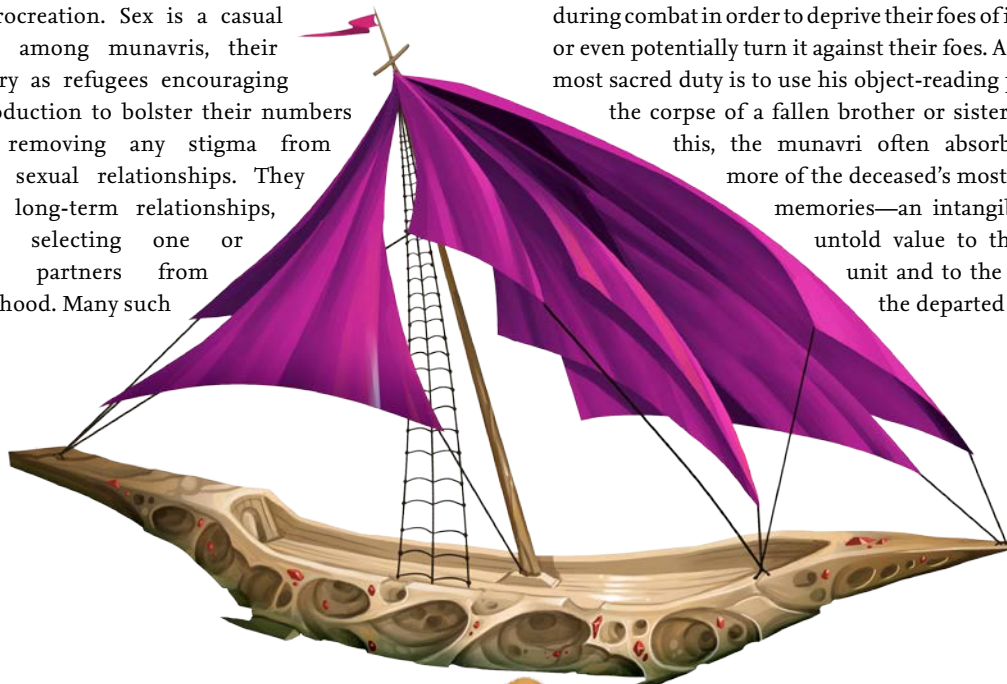
Munavris share most of the same needs as their human ancestors, from similar dietary requirements to means of procreation. Sex is a casual affair among munavris, their history as refugees encouraging reproduction to bolster their numbers and removing any stigma from open sexual relationships. They form long-term relationships, often selecting one or more partners from childhood. Many such

relationships are not exclusive, and a single munavri may share multiple life partners, both female and male. Children birthed in such groups have multiple fathers and mothers, and blood relations are seen as less important than bonds of affection. The munavris' mental communion encourages these unique familial units, as individuals often find it difficult to sequester themselves from other members of the community, effectively making all munavris of a given group as close as the family members of other species. This intimacy makes munavris prone to fits of passion when their extended families are threatened. Jealousy is the greatest threat to the ongoing prosperity of a family unit, particularly when one munavri shares multiple families and the members of these respective families find themselves at odds over an issue.

Munavris' time underground makes them susceptible to bright lights, and most munavris prefer a soft, ambient glow if they need any light at all. An overall increase in nimbleness, longevity, and mental faculties compensates for their relatively delicate frames. Munavris live longer than their human predecessors, and their life cycles are similar to those of half-elves. Death is viewed as a release of one's spirit, and funerals consist of rejoicing the deceased's accomplishments in life.

The most unique ability possessed by munavris is their instinctual power to "read," or intuitively understand, any objects they hold or wear. Thought to be another form of latent psychic power, this object-reading power allows munavris to use magical arms and armor without the need for standard magical identification. With this ability, munavris can also quickly discern the use of scrolls and wands possessed by their more magically inclined enemies; they often pilfer such equipment during combat in order to deprive their foes of its benefits or even potentially turn it against their foes. A munavri's most sacred duty is to use his object-reading powers on

the corpse of a fallen brother or sister. In doing this, the munavri often absorbs one or more of the deceased's most cherished memories—an intangible gift of untold value to the familial unit and to the friends of the departed munavri.





Society

Munavri developed a strong sense of communal attachment after the fall of the last Azlanti city, when they came to rely upon one another for survival. Living on their islands of pure jade among the lightless waters of the Sightless Sea, the munavris have formed diverse communities with their own societal characteristics. Each island possesses a unique coloration of jade, assisting in the munavris' societal distinction. The largest munavri settlements lie on Beryl Isle—one of the few jade islands to house multiple settlements. The vast number of munavri sailors patrolling the Sightless Sea bear Beryl Island's trademark green jade armor.

The different population groups of munavri settlements refer to themselves as kinships. Numerous family units make up the fabric of these kinships. The protector marshal, charged with ensuring the settlement's safety, holds the highest rank in a kinship, and her role places her above even the most important familial connections. Three spiritual leaders guide the munavris of a settlement: the agathum, archum, and azatum. These holy leaders represent the empyreal lords worshiped by munavris. While the azatum often holds the majority of influence in the community, the agathum and archum are tasked with creating balanced views and providing counsel for the protector marshal. Admirals lead munavri families, with captains commanding individual sailing vessels or squads.

The munavris' crenelated settlements, known as conurbations, range in size from small to large cities, and provide shelter to thousands. Violence rarely occurs in the conurbations; arguments are handled by escalating concerns up the hierarchy for resolution. In cases where discourse cannot settle a matter, nonlethal duels of honor are enacted. Munavris treat the few outsiders allowed to visit conurbations akin to royalty. They relish the opportunity to talk with those outside of their kinships and the telepathic communion shared by every member of their species. Munavris have little social tact or sense of personal boundaries when describing their lives to outsiders, and they tend to overwhelm victims with their most treasured personal thoughts.

Beyond the walls of their cities, munavris sail the Darklands seas in violet-sailed ships of ivory. The bones and teeth of large sea creatures compose the majority of munavri sailing ships hulls'. From a young age, each munavri is expected to craft a skiff, which is then used to learn the art of sailing. Not all munavris employ their naval skills beyond childhood, and some (particularly craftsfolk or priests) remain within the confines of the conurbation for most of their lives. Skilled artisans craft the immense sailing vessels used to patrol the munavris' territorial waters, working with the priests of empyreal lords and resident psychics to imbue these ships with powerful magic.

Munavri Characters

A munavri is defined by her class levels—she doesn't have racial Hit Dice. Despite having no racial Hit Dice, a munavri is a powerful creature and her CR is 1 higher than that of a human of the same level. A munavri has the following racial traits.

-2 Strength, +4 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma: Descended from ancient humans who were forever changed by the harsh lands in the depths of the earth, munavris have exceptional abilities.

Medium: Munavris are Medium creatures and have no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Normal Speed: Munavris have a base speed of 30 feet.

Senses: Munavris have darkvision 120 feet.

Telepathy (Su): A munavri is able to mentally communicate with other munavri within 60 feet.

Advanced Object Reading: A munavri can instantly understand and learn how to use almost any device, even if she's never seen it before. She can cast *object reading*^{DA} at will, divining secrets of an object's history and its use. Once per day, she can select one weapon, suit of armor, or spell-trigger item on which she has cast *object reading*. For a number of minutes equal to her level, she is considered proficient with that item, or can make use of the spell-trigger device as if she were a spellcaster of the appropriate class.

Spell Resistance: A munavri possesses spell resistance equal to 8 + her total number of class levels.

Light Blindness: As deep underground dwellers, munavris suffer from light blindness. Abrupt exposure to any bright light blinds munavris for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, they are dazzled as long as they remain in the affected area.

Languages: Munavris begin play speaking Munavri. Munavris with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Aklo, Aboleth, Aquan, Dark Folk, Draconic, Terran, and Undercommon.

Campaign Role

Munavris fill a unique role in the Darklands as one of the few good-aligned forces with any major presence there. Since they're located in the deepest regions of Orv, it's unlikely the PCs will come across them early in their adventuring careers. Munavris aren't widely known beyond the depths of Orv, meaning the PCs' first encounter with them will likely be as shocking to them as it is to the munavris. The encounter may very likely end up turning into a combat; munavris are naturally distrustful of outsiders after centuries of illusory attempts at subversion by their aboleth rivals. But munavris can

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become strong and lifelong allies if a peaceful accord can be arranged. Such an alliance is invaluable in the Darklands, where supplies and allies are scarce.

Munavri settlements are bastions of freedom in the Darklands. They are literal islands of safety amid the threats of surrounding territories, but for guests seeking extended rests, these settlements may not be ideal. Their hosts' understanding of personal space is limited, and even simple transactions can turn into prolonged conversations. Munavris explain odd personal problems and share deeply private information to their guests without understanding normal social cues to end such conversations. Visitors to munavri settlements can expect normal activities to take two to three times the normal amount of time, simply because of the additional hurdles of social encounters.

Treasure

Munavris' most iconic treasures are items crafted from the jade of their island homes. The islands regenerate in places where pieces have been broken off, allowing their settlers to harvest components for use as equipment. Expert stoneshapers craft the various jade arms and armor utilized by the munavri kinships. All but the most inexperienced munavri sailors possess masterwork quality equipment, while squad leaders, captains, and higher-ranked munavris bear magical arms and armor.

Munavris' craft extends well beyond the art of stoneshaping, and calligraphy is a favored vocation. Because they can instinctively understand the use of all magical scrolls, the production of such magical devices is abundant in munavri society. They also seek out wands, particularly those with healing properties, and churches of the empyreal lords located among the conurbations often craft them in bulk, distributing them to munavri forces to use in protecting the settlement.

Munavris on Golarion

Munavris are almost exclusively found on the islands of the Sightless Sea in Orv, or sailing nearby waters. Here, they fight an ongoing battle against both aboleths and urdefhans. Of the munavris' two greatest enemies, urdefhans pose the most direct threat, as their daemonic forces are intent upon conquering island after island in the Sightless Sea. Meanwhile, the aboleths remain an inscrutable danger, keenly opposed to the munavris but unwilling to engage them in any meaningful conflict.

While munavris know their island homes keep the aboleths at bay, they don't know how or why. It's believed the islands were once great weapons left behind by the mysterious Vault Builders during forgotten battles with the aboleths. The Vault Builders are said to have crafted these bodies of jade to be psychically attuned to repel the aboleths and keep them contained beneath the Sightless Sea. Whatever their original purpose, the islands now

serve as homes to the munavris, and ultimately, the catalyst for their psychic evolution.

Beryl Island is the largest and most opulent of the munavri holdings. Covered in spires of green jade, the island houses almost a quarter of the total munavri population in three distinct conurbations. The cities of Alcacentum and Lileda cover the western and eastern edges of the isle, respectively. Alcacentum is the munavris' military training ground, and sailors from other conurbations are sent there in order to train with its renowned "sword dancers." Lileda is a spiritual bastion, filled with temples and gardens for priests of the empyreal lords to debate religious matters among themselves. Within the central city of Valcergos, the munavris are oddly absent, save for a score of powerful psychic warriors under the leadership of **Protector Martial Tejana** (LG female munavri^{OB} fighter 6/psychic^{OA} 10/guardian 3; *Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 26) who are supplemented by a score of jade constructs embedded with numerous *ioun stones*. Whether Tejana and her soldiers protect something within the city or act as a final defense against outside aggression is unknown.

A short-lived home to the munavris' ancestors—the Azlanti flung down the Darklands waterspout known as the Braid—the city of Soltrua is nothing more than a rubble-strewn island. The aboleths' skum legions laid siege to the city ages ago and some remain within the ruins to this day, led by a handful of aboleth masters. Decades ago, a powerful water current captured the floating island settlement known as Auburn Haven, bringing the munavri city in close proximity to Soltrua. Orange-armored munavris from Auburn Haven, led by **Captain Cesio** (CG male munavri^{OB} sorcerer 4/swashbuckler 6), launch regular expeditions into the ruins of Soltrua. The munavri captain's soldiers battle against the resident cabals of skum in search of lost Azlanti treasure.

Azatum Neta (NG female munavri^{OB} cleric of Ylmancha 4/mesmerist^{OA} 4) guides a growing kinship along the western edge of the Sightless Sea, specifically on the shores of Arcadia's Darklands. The survivor of a conurbation overrun by the urdefhans, Neta has overseen the construction of a half-dozen villages along the shoreline, each built using stone crafting rather than the jade often seen in munavri construction. The members of this colony eschew the traditional leadership of a protector martial, instead trusting their future to religious guidance. Dark folk continually plague the prosperity of Neta's growing confederation, launching ceaseless raids on the munavri settlers. So far, Azatum Neta has found few allies against the depredations of the dark folk, since most believe she should simply submit to the authority of the protector martial. Her most promising prospective allies are the munavris of the Xanthous Redoubt, a settlement still recovering from a 3-year-long urdefhan siege.



Captain Ignisco

This alabaster-skinned man holds a rapier made of intricately carved crystal and wears armor made of the same material.

CAPTAIN IGNISCO

CR 6

XP 2,400

Male munavri psychic 2/swashbuckler 4 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary* 34, *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 60, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 56)

CG Medium humanoid (munavri)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +2 dodge)

hp 55 (6 HD; 2d6+4d10+22)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities charmed life 3/day, emotional push (+3, 1/day), nimble +1; **SR** 14

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +10 (1d6+2/18–20) or silver dagger +8 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged silver dagger +8 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks deeds (derring-do, dodging panache, kip-up, menacing swordplay, opportune parry and riposte, precise strike +4, swashbuckler initiative), panache (3), phrenic amplification (defensive prognostication^{DA}), phrenic pool (4 points)

Psychic Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd; concentration +3) 1/day—*detect thoughts* (DC 14)

Psychic Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +3)
1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 12), *mind thrust* ^{DA} (DC 12), *true strike*
0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 11), *know direction*, *mage hand*, *mending*

Psychic Discipline rapport

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Perception +7, Profession (sailor) +7, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Spellcraft +7, Swim +7

Languages Munavri, Undercommon; telepathy 60 ft.

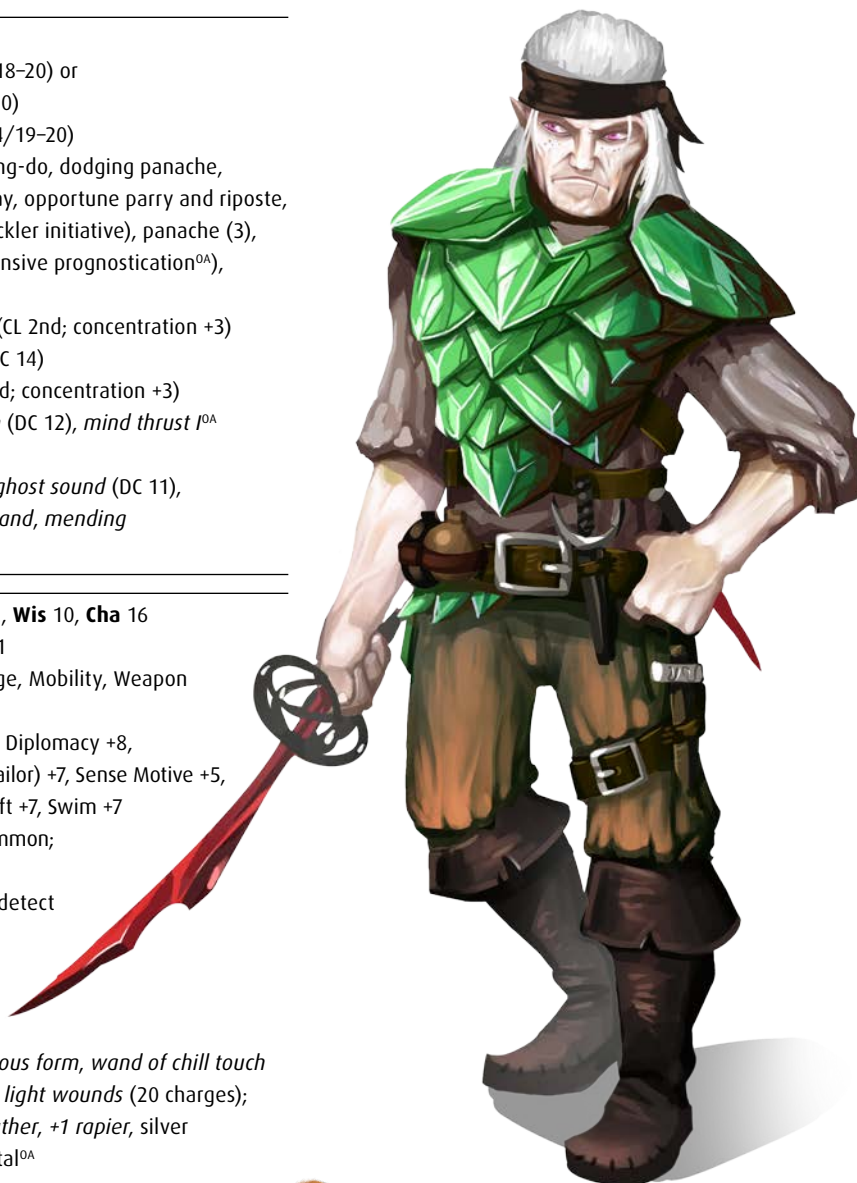
SQ advanced object reading, detect thoughts, emotional bond, swashbuckler finesse

Combat Gear feather token (swan boat), scroll of blur, scroll of gaseous form, wand of chill touch (10 charges), wand of cure light wounds (20 charges);

Other Gear +1 studded leather, +1 rapier, silver daggers (4), prismatic crystal^{DA}

When the infamous Serrated Fleet of the urdefhan city of Niovengia moved against Beryl Isle, Captain Ignisco led the munavri defense. He and his crew boarded the urdefhan flagship *Apocraphalix*, and while he did not take the vessel, Ignisco sent the urdefhan fleet into disarray.

Ignisco now sails the Sightless Sea, keeping a keen eye over the Braid—the colossal waterspout leading up to the aboleth-held territory known as the Inverted Sea. When he came across the Pathfinder Koriah Azmeren during his travels, he saved her from a band of urdefhan raiders. Ignisco brought her back to Beryl Isle, where she learned much from his stories of sailing darkened seas. In return for saving Azmeren and ensuring her Darklands discoveries reached the Grand Lodge, the Decemvirate expunged all records of the munavris from the annals of her published chronicle; only Azmeren, the Decemvirate, and the most trusted of Pathfinders know of the unpublished apocrypha that details the munavris' society.



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Neothelid

Deep under the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and Varisia, below the empires of fallen dwarves and elves, reside the alien masterminds of the Darklands, wriggling worms of untold size and power whose emissaries claim they are Golarion's first true inhabitants. We describe them with ineffectual titles like "neothelid," a name given to us by these creatures' envoy children, who speak of their parents' unimaginable power. Of all the horrors to be found in the depths of Orv, I never chanced upon the great serpentine lords of Denebrum. That in itself may explain how this chronicle came to be submitted.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44



Brooding in their territorial holdings in the deepest levels of the Darklands, neothelids are akin to demigods when compared to some of even their most powerful neighbors. Great worms that rest in nests the size of entire surface settlements, neothelids manipulate the world through dominated agents and their numerous seugathi offspring. The eons have not been kind to neothelids, with each century seeing more of their kind destroyed than can be replenished by their slow reproductive cycles. Out of anger or fear at this gradual decline, neothelids are taking a more active approach in recent years, pursuing seemingly incomprehensible agendas with far-reaching scopes and destructive results.

Only a handful of beings beyond the Vaults of Orv recognize the threat that neothelids present, many of whom learned of the great subterranean worms through disastrous encounters with the creatures' seugathi spawn. Neothelids breed seugathi at a rate far faster than they themselves can reproduce, and use seugathi as ambassadors to and soldiers against the world beyond their own highly guarded nests. Most of neothelids' great plans boil down to one goal: the utter elimination of all races they view as beneath them—meaning all life, save their own.

Ecology

Just as neothelids spawn large clutches of their seugathi offspring, so too did the monstrosly fecund Outer God Shub-Niggurath spawn the first neothelids. These early neothelids numbered in the millions, burrowing into the surface of the world after being released by the birthing expulsion of their mother god. For tens of thousands of years, during which they were left to their own devices in the deepest layers of the Darklands, the first neothelids fought among themselves, devouring one another in vile acts of cannibalism demanded by their alien morality and consumed one another for sport. This infighting led neothelids to relish the taste of their own kind—the consumption of another neothelid brings euphoria to the great worms' alien minds.

Missing the appendages traditionally required to burrow, neothelids carved out their first homes using acidic spittle, creating the first great caves of the Darklands. Masters of mental manipulation, they prove naturally resistant to the magical intrusions of their kin as well those of as other creatures who attempted to employ the arcane against them. During their first hunts through the relatively uninhabited Darklands of the world, these massive worms mastered the art of teleportation as a survival mechanism, and developed keen instincts in tracing teleportation effects to better hunt one another.

As other species evolved and learned the arts of war and magic, the great worms were finally forced to

Five Facts about Neothelids

Game Masters and player characters should keep the following in mind when dealing with neothelids and their seugathi servitors.

- Unless adventurers are exploring neothelid territory in the deepest reaches of the Darklands, they are far more likely to encounter neothelids' servant children, seugathi, than an actual neothelid.
- Despite physical similarities to purple worms, neothelids don't have any innate burrowing speed, so adventurers can escape into narrow passages to avoid neothelids giving chase. Be aware, however, that the huge aberrations can still easily burn through tunnels with repeated use of their acidic breath weapon.
- Neothelids can cast *teleport* at will and can trace teleporation effects used by others. Adventurers who need to flee from a neothelid should get to a safe distance (about 100 feet or so) from it before teleporting away. This will confound the neothelid's ability to trace their teleportation, though it may have other means of tracking the PCs down.
- The mental abilities of a neothelid can deal large amounts of damage or even outright kill a creature. This mental damage is untyped and cannot be resisted or negated except through force of will. Anything adventurers can do to improve their mental fortitude is important when planning a confrontation with a neothelid.
- A neothelid can't see, and perceives the world around it through microscopic scilia that cover its skin. This means that most applications of stealth or subterfuge—including the spells *invisibility* and *silence*—are ineffectual against the creatures, which are generally always on watch for approaching enemies, even when asleep.

cease their infighting. The emergence of aboleths from the seas of the Darklands and the advent of the Vault Builders brought about the earliest conflicts between these species and neothelids. During this time, the still-numerous neothelids cultivated new means of dealing with their physically smaller enemies. The four tongues of neothelids made consuming their lesser adversaries simple, while their mental abilities—first refined centuries earlier during their eons of infighting—proved particularly potent against more powerful threats. Neothelids found new applications for their caustic breath beyond efficient tunnel crafting, as acid is an effective weapon against the defenses of intellect devourers—yet another species neothelids quickly came into conflict with after their first contact.

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In the aftermath of these conflicts, neothelids retreated to their cavernous nests, no longer hunting their own kin for fear of total extinction. When neothelids attempted procreation, they discovered that by some cruel twist of fate, they lacked the fecundity of their mother, Shub-Niggurath. Neothelid reproduction takes place over the course of 2 to 3 centuries. The majority of that time consists of a fragile egg stage, during which the growing neothelid is extremely vulnerable. Once the egg hatches, the larval neothelid is still incredibly weak, and it takes further centuries of development for these young to reach the same heights of power as adults of their kind.

In contrast to their stunted fertility when creating more of their own kind, neothelids are excessively prolific when it comes to birthing the lesser race of seugathi (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 243), which they release by the hundreds. The evolution of these servitor worms mirrors the history of the primordial neothelids, with the seugathi larvae feasting on one another until only the strongest survive. A neothelid can breed a batch of seugathi roughly once per month, allowing the creatures to beget entire armies within only a few decades—a short span of time in the immortal life of a neothelid.

At the apex of the neothelid food chain are neothelid overlords (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary 36*)—those aberrations who consumed the greatest number of their own species during their time of internecine strife. These paragons possess incredible magic and psychic powers; their mere presence is enough to induce acute madness in lesser creatures. Overlords' dual heads are the result of one advanced neothelid hunter devouring another. The conflict between the two minds merges the beings into a single entity of shared consciousness. Rarely in modern times do new neothelid overlords appear, as the worms are loath to fight one another. Consuming another neothelid does not guarantee ascension to the ranks of the overlords however, so most neothelids have forgone cannibalism for millennia in hopes of preventing the gradual annihilation of their species.

Society

There is little communal culture among neothelids; the scant survivors of their long-lived species defend their isolated territories within the Darklands. Even on the rare occasion where neothelids meet, it is difficult for the creatures to forget their ancient days of hunting one another and the ecstasy of consuming the minds of others of their kind. Still, some neothelids do form

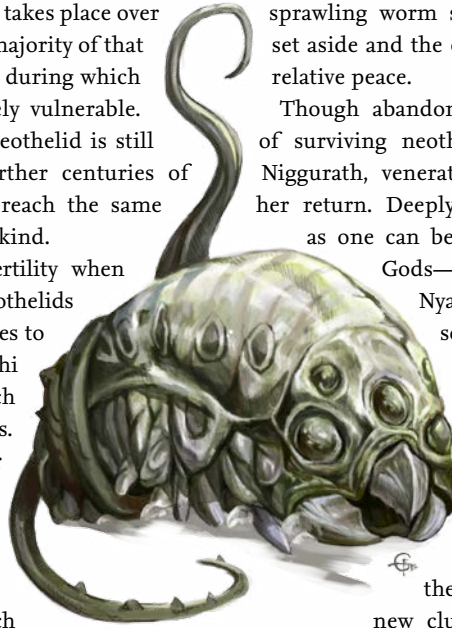
small cults, which number fewer than half a dozen at most, and exist only for the purpose of mutual defense or as part of their great schemes. The only exception to this exists under the enforcement of neothelid overlords, who carve out city-sized sections of the Darklands as sprawling worm settlements, where all rivalries are set aside and the overlords can guide their species in relative peace.

Though abandoned by their mother, the majority of surviving neothelids still pay homage to Shub-Niggurath, venerating the goddess and praying for her return. Deeply religious as a species—as much as one can be among the servants of the Outer Gods—other neothelids revere Azathoth, Nyarlathotep, and Yog-Sothoth as secondary powers to their mother. Slumbering in their expansive nesting caverns, neothelids craft plans almost universally geared toward the furthering of their deities' agendas. Their central motivation is to usher forth Shub-Niggurath's return, for they believe their ancient mother will release a new clutch of neothelids into the world

and usher in a new age of cannibalistic hunting—a glorious outcome, because although lesser prey species are plentiful and easily dominated, their minds lack the alluring taste of those of other neothelids.

The relationship between neothelids and their seugathi offspring is a strictly master-and-servant affair. Those seugathi larvae showing clear signs of dominance in their nascent struggles receive the telepathic accolades of their neothelid parents, who view the larval battle for supremacy as an amusing distraction as they brood in their lairs. Each seugathi is imprinted with a defined set of goals, each one part of the neothelid's greater agenda. The physically strongest seugathi are often kept to guard the neothelid parent's lair, while the remaining spawn are sent on missions throughout the Darklands and the surface world. These explorative missions may take a seugathi days, years, decades, or even centuries to complete. The creature perishes shortly after completing its tasks, dissolving into a pile of primordial sludge. Neothelids become mystical figures in the eyes of their seugathi children, who rarely see their parents during the course of their existence, but are expected to speak on the neothelids' behalf.

Should the task be made impossible by sources outside the seugathi's control or by a failure on its part, the seugathi enters a state of manic insanity as it attempts to find a solution. After spending years or decades in solitude struggling to solve its impossible mission, the seugathi ravages the minds of mystics and prophets to find other solutions. In so doing, the





seugathi undergoes a psychic awakening—its mind expands to find a way of completing the goal it was literally birthed to fulfill. In the end, if the mission is truly unsolvable, the seugathi develops into a seugathi savant (*Occult Bestiary* 52), who goes to its neothelid master to find its purpose. Many times, the neothelid already understood the task requested of its child was unattainable, revealing its intent to foster this development in the seugathi from birth.

Neothelids rarely interact directly with species other than their seugathi spawn. Seugathi handle all external affairs on behalf of their bloated worm parents, who rest safely in their deep abodes. In exceptional circumstances, important creatures demanding an audience with neothelid masters and spurning contact with seugathi underlings have their requests to meet approved. While they are usually able to resist the mental abilities of seugathi, these bold visitors often find their defenses inadequate in the presence of neothelids themselves. A neothelid's patience is finite when dealing with lesser species, and it is only a matter of time before the alien creature uses its overwhelming mental powers to destroy or dominate those who think themselves worthy of speaking with it. The only outsiders whom neothelids entertain are the occasional purple worms, for neothelids view these creatures as distant relations, and treasure them as underground laborers. In particular, purple worms' burrowing makes them perfect for expanding or renovating neothelid lairs, while their dim-wittedness makes them easy targets for neothelids' suggestions.

Campaign Role

The appearance of a neothelid is a momentous event, something best used as the capstone for a high-level adventure. A neothelid's intervention in the course of events shouldn't be obvious to PCs until they have securely placed themselves in the center of its machinations or earned its ire. Neothelids work best as behind-the-curtain manipulators, their influence felt through the actions of their minions or fallout from deeds completed long ago. By orchestrating the events of an adventure so that in the end, the PCs trace their inception back to a great worm deep beneath the surface of the earth, a GM can craft an entire campaign around combating the machinations of a single neothelid.

At earlier levels, adventurers come into conflict with the neothelids' seugathi children rather than the neothelids themselves. A seugathi can be an incredibly frustrating opponent, and players will learn to despise the strong combination of its aura of madness, spell resistance, damage reduction, fast healing, and spell-like abilities. Luckily for the PCs, it is rare for seugathi to be sent on missions of violence. They eagerly attack any who interfere with their assigned tasks, relishing the confusion and fear of foes who succumb to their abilities, but rarely

Missions of the Worm Gods

Neothelids engage in long-term plots to manipulate world events from the safety of their nests in Orv. Their seugathi spawn, while far more likely to encounter adventurers in the wild, are often discovered completing seemingly inexplicable missions for their masters. Presented here are some examples of seugathi missions and how they can be used to introduce PCs to the greater neothelid threat.

Blood from Above: A seugathi has been tasked with gathering the blood of a chimera, a medusa, a stegosaurus, and a yeti, requiring it to trek across vast distances. The seugathi could easily come into contact with adventurers who stand, willingly or not, in the creature's way. Rather than simply finding another specimen to meet its master's needs, the seugathi may hunt down the PCs to eliminate them as an obstacle. Alternatively, if the PCs defeat the seugathi, its neothelid master may send another to exact revenge.

Death to the Chosen: For unknown reasons, a powerful neothelid has targeted a prominent mortal on Golarion's surface for death. Rather than send seugathi to kill the target, however, the neothelid orchestrates the kidnapping of the target's daughter. Deep in the lands of Orv, the neothelid implants the child with powerful mental compulsions and orders her to return to the surface. The child then murders her parent at the neothelid's behest. As the PCs investigate the murder, they learn of the child's tortured dreams, in which a bloated worm haunts her and compels her to do terrible things.

Slaves of the Worms: A cult of hooded assassins has taken root in the Varisian city of Magnimar. Operating in the dead of night, the killers target ethnic Varisians who, rightly or wrongly, they associate with the city's many Szarni gangs. The PCs investigate these murders, and learn that the assassins are actually worms that walk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 286) who worship a powerful neothelid. Guided by a seugathi they believe to be their god's emissary, the cultists seek the source of the drug known as *midnight milk* and kill anyone who stands in their way. The PCs soon find themselves caught in the crossfire of the neothelids' war against the intellect devourers of Ilvarandin, who are supplying the strange narcotic.

seek out combat. Defeating the seugathi should reveal or hint at the involvement of a neothelid. Depending on the seriousness of a seugathi's mission, the PCs could find themselves in conflict with the neothelid and its greater plans, necessitating a journey to the deepest levels of the Darklands to fight the worm directly.

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Only when the PCs have reached the highest levels are they ready to encounter a neothelid. Patient beyond measure, neothelids stock their lairs with natural hazards and veritable armies of powerful, mind-controlled guardians. If threatened, a neothelid eagerly unleashes its most powerful attack—its psychic crush—to outright slay its most formidable opponents. Should conflict with a neothelid turn against the PCs, retreat becomes a dangerous proposition, for the great worm’s hubris demands intruders be slain. Teleporting PCs soon find themselves once again confronting the neothelid, which employs its teleportation-tracing senses to track the escaping PCs.

Treasure

The anatomy of neothelids makes the use of most magical implements impractical. Despite this, their lairs are filled with small mountains of coins and heaps of offered magical trinkets, laid before the neothelids as tribute from their servants and seugathi children. While the treasures are of little use to the titanic, slumbering worms, neothelids nevertheless viciously guard their accumulated wealth, often putting it on display as an enticement or simply to impress those rare individuals they invite into their lairs. Much of a neothelid’s treasure takes the form of magical weapons, wands, and other implements that their seugathi servants can use to further the neothelid’s goals.

While they possess far less personal treasure, those seugathi sent away from their parent’s lair equip themselves with wands and weapons, wielding them in the twin appendages that make up their tails. Other seugathi come into possession of wands as part of their dealings with other Darklands species. Drow in particular, weary of neothelids’ meddling, constantly supply wands containing spells like *magic missile* or *cure moderate wounds* as bribes to seugathi emissaries. Seugathi also seek out suitable weapons on longer missions, favoring magic blades that complement their abilities. Seugathi often prefer the misery-fueled craftsmanship that goes into a drow blade, the toil-driven creations of duergar forges, or the eldritch power of weapons left behind in the slumbering cities of Golarion’s serpentfolk.

Neothelids on Golarion

The vast majority of neothelids on Golarion reside in the lowest layer of the Darklands in the Vaults of Orv. Greatest of the worms’ claimed territories is the Vault of Denebrum (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Realms* 24), known by some as the “worm-empire.” Five centuries ago, the neothelids of Denebrum sought to expand their realm to include the whole of Orv. The first battle of this conquest is still being fought, with the neothelids embroiled in what other, less long-lived races would view as a cold war with the intellect devourers of

neighboring Ilvarandin. To the credit of the neothelids’ patience, the intellect devourers are steadily losing ground to the Denebrum worms and it seems like only a matter of time—maybe only a few more centuries—before the neothelids expand their domain into other adjoining caverns.

A single neothelid known as the Midnight Emperor makes its home in the Land of Black Blood. This immense creature rules a fungal jungle in the vault’s western reaches, roosting in an area known as the Fetid Palace. Empowered by the corrupting black blood of the land, this reclusive neothelid lives in solitude and consumes any creatures foolish enough to intrude upon its domain. The neothelids of Denebrum have sent seugathi emissaries to persuade their wayward sibling to return home—mainly in hopes of taking the black blood for themselves—but all such attempts have met with failure and seugathi deaths.

While neothelids keep to their Orvian nests, their seugathi spawn pioneer new paths through the Darklands. Over the course of the past millennia, seugathi have retraced the path of the elven followers of Jininsiel, finding their way into the Darklands of Tian Xia. These seugathi undertake similar missions to their kin beneath the Inner Sea, often creating communities of enslaved minions to aid in completing their tasks. These Tian seugathi, distant as they are from their neothelid parents, are reluctant to interact too aggressively with the denizens of Tian Xia’s Darklands, as they lack the reinforcements and reputation of their Inner Sea brethren.

Gruunshuuga (CE half-fiend neothelid psychic^{OA} 8), a particularly enterprising neothelid, has escaped the confines of Golarion, making its way onto the Abyss. Finding itself in the realm of Jeharlru, Gruunshuuga has found shelter with the resident demon lord, Cyth-V’sug. Now known as the Birthing Worm, this enhanced neothelid spews out clutches of fiendish seugathi, which it sends on missions throughout the multiverse. Cyth-V’sug encourages this fecundity, as Gruunshuuga’s offspring also serve the demon lord.

Neothelid overlords present the greatest threat to Golarion of any creatures of their species. Scheming in the heart of Denebrum and unconcerned with the petty conflicts their lesser spawn have with intellect devourers and other Orvian denizens, these advanced, twin-headed worms work directly toward the goal of inviting Shub-Niggurath back to the world of Golarion, seeding agents across the entire planet. The greatest opposition to the overlords’ apocalyptic vision comes from Golarion’s few surviving elder things (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 85). Having fought neothelids in eons past, elder things oppose overlords’ attempts to call Shub-Niggurath back to Golarion, knowing the catastrophic results. Should the overlords succeed, their Outer God mother would

release a new brood of neothelids upon Golarion, creating a global apocalypse not seen since Earthfall. Luckily, the conflict has long stood in stalemate, with elder things manipulating key mortals into opposing the neothelid overlords' complex plots.

Thath-Malal, the Eyeless Prince

This immense, eyeless worm is covered in a midnight blue hide. Four barbed tongues wriggle out from its open, lily-shaped maw.

THATH-MALAL

CR 13

XP 25,600

Variant young neothelid (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 214)

CE Huge aberration

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight 100 ft., trace teleport 60 ft.;

Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (+20 natural, -2 size)

hp 178 (17d8+102)

Fort +13, **Ref** +5, **Will** +14

DR 10/cold iron; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee 4 tongues +13 (2d6+8/19-20 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. cone, 10d10 acid, Reflex DC 24 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), mind thrust (12d10, DC 23), psychic crush (DC 23), swallow whole (1d8+8 plus 1d8 acid damage, AC 20, 17 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th; concentration +22)

At will—*charm monster* (DC 19), *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *poison* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 18), *teleport*

3/day—*clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *telekinesis* (DC 20)

1/day—*quicken suggestion* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 11, **Con** 22, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +22 (+24 bull rush); **CMD** 32 (34 vs. bull rush, can't be tripped)

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (tongue), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*suggestion*)

Skills Bluff +22, Climb +28, Diplomacy +22, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Perception +22, Spellcraft +23

Languages Aklo, Orvian, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

One of the scant handful of young neothelids on Golarion, Thath-Malal has seen only a millennia of life since emerging from its egg, and its power pales in comparison to that of older neothelids. Abstaining from the greater neothelid community's

struggle against the intellect devourers of nearby Ilvarandin, Thath-Malal sought out new regions in which to establish itself as a force to be worshiped. It shared none of its progenitors' desires to see Shub-Niggurath's return to Golarion, and eventually left Denebrum entirely. Thath-Malal now resides in the lowest levels of Tian Xia's Darklands, having found its way there by the guidance of determined seugathi explorers and has had several centuries to formulate its strategy for convincing the other species in the area to pay it appropriate tribute.

Nesting below Dtang Ma, Thath-Malal sends its clutches of seugathi children to entice the residents of the jungles above into worshipping it. Thus far, the young neothelid has enjoyed success among the rural jungle villages, its seugathi convincing the local populace that their master represents one of the nation's abandoned spirits—Yola-At, the Saint of the Pathways Below. Amused, Thath-Malal hopes to expand its influence into Nagajor and Po Li.



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Troglodyte

If there was one constant during my time in the Darklands, it was the troglodytes. Among the numerous entrances to the Darklands I studied, troglodytes were often present. In the high layer of Nar-Voth, I encountered their scattered tribes at the outskirts of the duergar empire. In Sekamina, troglodytes serve indentured soldiers enslaved by the drow, and carve out small settlements wherever they can. But in Orv, in this deepest of regions, there is more to these reptilian humanoids than meets the eye. In these utter depths, I saw what was once the pinnacle of this species—we should feel blessed that these fell beings' descendants possess but a fraction of their malign demeanor.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44



A proud empire once spread throughout the Darklands, ruled by the creatures now called troglodytes. The proper name of the troglodyte people is *xulgath*, a term now reserved for their enlightened, ancestral kin. It was not a single apocalypse that reduced the xulgath to their current state, but rather a series of events that broke down the mighty empire they maintained in the Vaults of Orv. With the arrival of powerful species in epochal succession, the xulgath survived the first coming of neothelids, the Vaults Builders, elder things, aboleths, and more. In the midst of these continual threats, many xulgath traveled to the surface, where they devolved into small, bickering tribes. These became the troglodytes known to the modern world. To this day, however, some pure xulgath survive in the deepest regions of the Darklands, a testament to the tenacity of their species.

Troglodytes settled in the upper layer of Nar-Voth and the tunnels that connect it to the surface world. These tribes are equally as inclined to fight among themselves as they are to attack other nearby creatures. The drow and duergar have learned to harness troglodytes' propensity toward violence, using them as auxiliary troops. Troglodytes are the most common mercenary forces of the Darklands, pitting themselves against other species in a continual battle for supremacy.

Ecology

Troglodytes are reptilian humanoids, scaled in colors ranging from dull gray to blue, green, and red depending on the background of their cavernous homes. A troglodyte's skin provides camouflage in rocky terrain, its coloration adapting to the region in which it lives. Troglodytes typically stand about 5 feet tall and weigh 150 pounds, with much of their bulk in their elongated tails. Despite its size, a troglodyte's tail is not useful for any practical combat purpose. Instead, troglodytes use their vicious teeth and sharpened claws for unarmed combat.

Perhaps most iconically, troglodytes produce a stifling stench that wafts out to a radius of roughly 30 feet around them. The stench is the byproduct of troglodyte heritage and their connection to the pure xulgath of the lower Darklands. The psychically attuned xulgath produce an odorless compound that affects the minds of those who inhale it. As the regressing troglodytes slowly lost their psychic ability, their bodies adapted to release a pungent odor to compensate for the diminished defenses. Secreted by tiny pores nestled in their scaled hide, the exact smell often varies between tribes or their offshoots. Most versions are initially sweet, followed by the stench of spoiled meats coupled with a feeling of humidity slipping into the nostrils.

To fuel their exodus from Orv, troglodytes overcame their previously sluggish rate of procreation. Over millennia, troglodytes became one of the most fecund

Five Facts about Troglodytes

Game Masters and players should keep the following facts about troglodytes in mind.

- Troglodytes smell. The particular odor varies from tribe to tribe and region to region, but as a species the creatures can easily be identified by their pungent odors. Other Darklands creatures sometimes seed the entrances to their tunnels with troglodyte corpses to repel intruders, though troglodytes do not use this tactic.
- Troglodytes have endured continual warfare in their long existence, and have come to embrace it. It is rare to find a troglodyte tribe that is not currently engaged in hostile activities against another tribe or other nearby forces. Luckily, PCs can usually bargain with troglodytes. Troglodytes often accept weapons or magical items in exchange for safe passage, as they are uninterested in fighting intruders who are mere distractions from their current primary foe.
- A troglodyte lair often contains a rookery of newly spawned eggs. Attempting to use troglodyte eggs or newborns as hostages is not advised. Troglodytes have no concern for their unborn eggs or newborns, as these young aren't yet actively contributing the tribe. In fact, troglodytes reproduce so quickly that a destroyed clutch of eggs means next to nothing to them.
- There are few mercenaries in the Darklands more reliable than troglodytes. Exceptionally common among the region of Nar-Voth, troglodyte warriors fight on behalf of many other species as either mercenaries or enslaved troops, with duergar retaining a particularly high number. Getting the attention of troglodyte soldiers for hire is a simple affair, though mercenary tribes accept only weapons and magical equipment as payment.
- While the common language of troglodytes is Draconic, troglodytes have no direct connection with dragons. Troglodytes interpret any inferences that they're subservient to dragons—such as comparing them to kobolds—as unforgivable insults.

species in the Darklands. Each female is capable of producing a healthy clutch of eggs that number anywhere from three to five per spawning cycle (roughly once every 6 months). Eggs hatch in 2 to 3 months, with each egg containing one to three offspring. Infant troglodytes mature rapidly; they're able to assist the tribe in as little as 3 months and reach full maturity within a year. This incredible reproductive rate makes troglodytes one of the most populous species inhabiting Nar-Voth, and potentially the entire Darklands.

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In order to sustain their rapidly aging bodies, troglodytes subsist on an entirely carnivorous diet. Local fauna can support a tribe of troglodytes for only so long. The reptilian creatures soon assault nearby settlements to consume the inhabitants, and cannibalism is an accepted racial norm. This fact has ensured the survival of other races, as troglodytes often fall on other tribes of their own kind rather than attacking other species. Injured or infirm troglodytes find themselves offered up to younger generations for nourishment, while even the strongest tribal members might be consumed during infighting.

Troglodytes construct only primitive weapons, as their constant infighting prevents their species from achieving any sort of technological or manufacturing advancements. The most common weapons include clubs and spears, with sharpened javelins or slings used at range. Many troglodytes craft weapons using bone or obsidian (see page 52 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment*), based on available resources. Some tribes are supplied with equipment by drow or duergar, who use troglodytes as auxiliary troops in their ongoing conflicts.

Two particular variants of troglodytes exist as evolutions from their current incarnation and not their xulgath forebears. Slaugraks (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 220) are hulking mutants descended from demon-worshipping troglodytes. Twisted by the influence of the Abyss, slaugraks manifest when a demon enters a position of leadership in a troglodyte tribe and breeds with them. The hatchlings that mature into slaugraks are often considered to be half-fiends. By the time their resurgent Abyssal association is noted, the spawn turn on their demonic parent, murdering this progenitor in a vicious display of claws and teeth.

The other troglodyte variant is the monstrously fleshwarped ghonhatines (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 102). Forged by the fleshwarping effects of the drow, ghonhatines are hulking brutes used as shock troops by the most

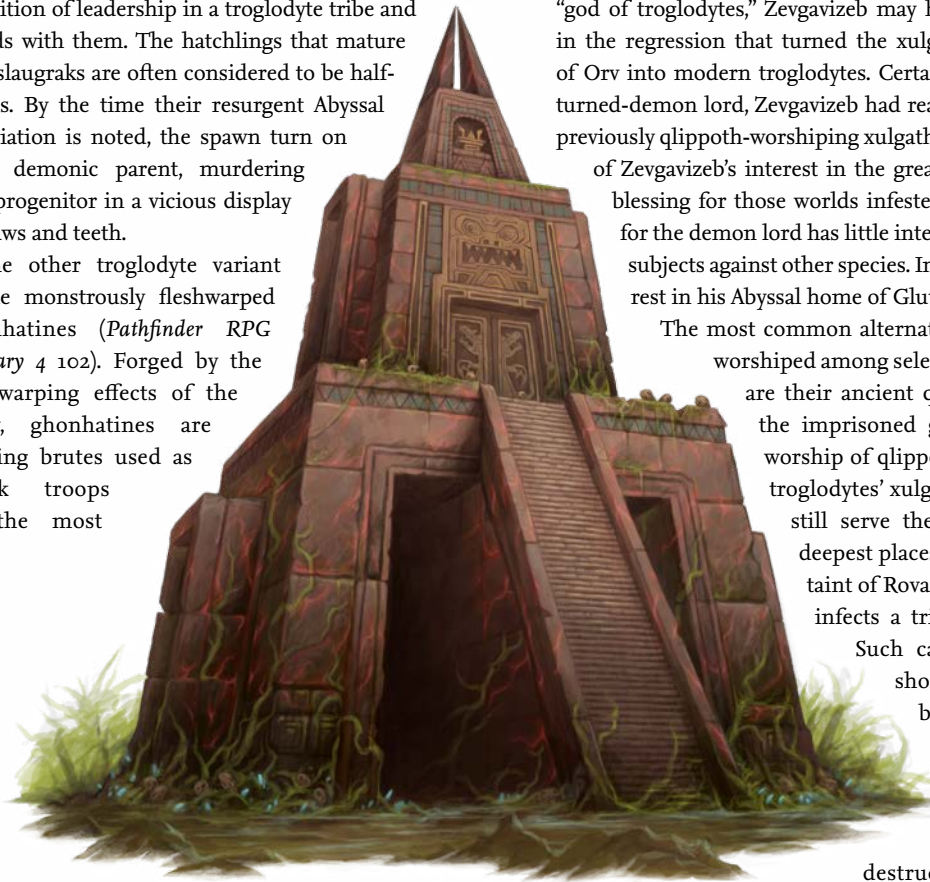
affluent drow houses. These brutish creatures have a lifespan of only 2 years before their metabolism eats them from the inside out—so they find use only in houses with immediate military needs.

Society

Troglodyte tribes vary wildly based on their particular locations. Surface-dwelling troglodytes remain close to expansive tunnel networks so they can retreat if ever attacked by a superior foe. These tunnels also serve as a protected spawning area for eggs and newborns. Aside from most civilized humanoid species, surface-dwelling troglodytes have a particular enmity for boggards and lizardfolk, as those two species often claim territory that's particularly desirable to troglodytes. In the Darklands, troglodyte tribes spread out over vast areas, overrunning large tunnel complexes. The expansionist nature of a troglodyte tribe is often short-lived, as the tribe's rampant growth rapidly causes concern among neighboring species or other tribes, with which it inevitably ends up in conflict. In these conflicts, troglodytes typically lose many members to attrition, leaving the tribes without enough resources or food sources to continue a prolonged campaign.

Religion plays a central role in troglodyte society, with the demon lord Zevgavizeb as a major focus of worship among the majority of practicing tribes. As the self-appointed “god of troglodytes,” Zevgavizeb may have been involved in the regression that turned the xulgath venturing out of Orv into modern troglodytes. Certainly, as a qliploth-turned-demon lord, Zevgavizeb had reason to corrupt the previously qliploth-worshipping xulgath. The relative laxity of Zevgavizeb's interest in the greater multiverse is a blessing for those worlds infested with troglodytes, for the demon lord has little interest in unifying his subjects against other species. Instead, he prefers to rest in his Abyssal home of Gluttondark.

The most common alternatives to Zevgavizeb worshiped among select troglodyte tribes are their ancient qliploth lords and the imprisoned god Rovagug. The worship of qliploth is a callback to troglodytes' xulgath ancestors, who still serve these powers in the deepest places of the world. The taint of Rovagug now and again infects a tribe of troglodytes. Such cases are rare and short-lived, however, because Rovagug's influence renders already-barbaric troglodyte tribes even more self-destructive than usual.





Introduction

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Perhaps the oddest deity taken up by troglodytes is the god-assassin Achaekkek. Venerated among troglodytes in a form greatly differing from that worshiped by other species, the Mantis God is attractive to troglodytes because of his ancient portfolio of blood, monsters, and natural disasters in the time of Old Azlant, which meshes well with troglodytes' lust for conflict.

When not at war with other species or among themselves, troglodytes busy themselves with hunting society, including of intelligent species. However, they also sometimes make peaceful contact with outlanders, be they lone travelers or emissaries from a settlement or foreign empire. Troglodytes making nonviolent contact with strangers often seek to trade safe passage for equipment and trinkets. Representatives from other communities may negotiate for safe passage through troglodyte lands for their people, or even convince troglodytes to act on their behalf in greater conflicts. The loose peace between drow and duergar is often subverted by both sides hiring out troglodyte tribes to attack the other. Entire proxy wars are fought between troglodyte tribes, which grind themselves into bloody pulp to further the interests of other Darklands species.

Campaign Role

In a Darklands campaign, troglodytes can easily become a staple creature, as their kind exist throughout the whole realm. For adventures where the PCs progress through the three layers of the realm, troglodytes can first be introduced during the PCs' adventures in Nar-Voth, a location where the reptilian humanoids are plentiful. In this uppermost region, troglodytes make for suitable adversaries or groups with which the PCs can negotiate. The PCs can come into direct conflict with small tribes, even entering a tribe's lair—a potential dungeon in itself—to put an end to the reptilian threat. The mercenary nature of troglodyte tribes makes it appropriate for PCs to switch between fighting and working beside them, regardless of the malicious and unruly troglodytes' alignment.

In Sekamina, troglodytes are almost universally slaves to the drow, though some tribes try to claim their servitude is mercenary work for the fallen elves. If an adventuring group is opposed to the drow, they will likely face combat with enslaved troglodyte guards. Turning these troglodytes against their elven masters could prove difficult, but it is possible if the PCs pledge to extricate the troglodytes from their slavery.

In the lowest caverns of Orv, scattered troglodytes prowl the edges of the territories that once made up their primordial empire. Here, the xulgath of old still hold court, purging those troglodytes who venture too far into their territory. PCs exploring the ancient threat of the surviving true xulgath can learn snippets of lore from the troglodytes who skulk around the xulgaths' holdings.

Xulgaths

Xulgath is the proper term for the troglodyte race—their modern name is a derisive term coined by other species. The xulgath inhabitants of the lowest Darklands (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary* 61) continue the legacy of their species, and are far more powerful and proud than their lesser kin. Xulgaths are gifted with potent psychic gifts, which work in tandem with the psychogenic secretions they emit. Unlike their degenerate troglodyte descendants, true xulgaths can master a variety of classes, with an emphasis on martial classes and a small number of psychics.

Xulgaths show no mercy toward troglodytes who invade their domain. Slaying their devolved kin on sight, xulgaths view them as weak castoffs, bereft of the blessing of their dark gods. Despite this, dozens of the strongest troglodyte tribes reside in close proximity to their former kin, hoping against hope for some form of recognition or acceptance by their ancestors. Although scorned, these troglodyte tribes effectively safeguard the borders of xulgaths' territory from outsiders. Such tribes also provide a veil of false savagery and ignorance over xulgaths' temple cities, where they strive to restore their dominance via obedience to their alien deities.

Latent Troglodytes (Troglodyte Variant, CR +1): By some genetic miracle of evolutionary remembrance, some troglodytes regain the psychic abilities of their xulgath forbearers. These troglodytes gain a xulgath's psychogenic secretions supernatural ability. These touched troglodytes also gain the following: **Psychic Magic (CL 3rd; concentration +3)**, 4 PE—*mind thrust*^{DA} (1 PE, DC 11), *mindlink*^{DA} (1 PE, DC 11), *suggestion* (2 PE, DC 12).

As descendants of these creatures, the troglodytes can relate a muddled oral history of the xulgaths' association with obscure Abyssal gods.

Treasure

Troglodyte tribes rarely have any treasure beyond crude weapons such as clubs and javelins. Their armor (when worn) is often crafted using readily available materials such as bone, obsidian, or stone. Those employed as troops by another Darklands species, however, often carry equipment provided by their patrons. Such arms offer a good indication (though not definitive proof) of the troglodytes' allegiance. In cases where the tribe has one or more divine casters (particularly clerics, oracles, or shamans), some equipment is most likely magical, with emphasis on wands for the spiritual leaders and weapons for important soldiers or chieftains. Even in tribes where there are no spellcasters, troglodytes may have a few

items looted from defeated enemies—favoring the most impressive-looking equipment.

One unique troglodyte commodity is their wide array of reptile mounts. Troglodytes have a connection with various reptiles of the deep, and domesticate these creatures for use as beasts of burden or mounts. Their tribes often have dozens of such creatures in their service. Those uneducated in traveling the Darklands often kill these giant lizards out of hand, but species with knowledge of the subterranean depths—particularly drow—plunder the troglodytes' stables after defeating a tribe. With the lack of common mounts like horses in the Darklands, one of the greatest treasures attackers can obtain is a herd of combat-trained lizard mounts. The most common mounts procured by troglodyte tribes are giant monitor lizards (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 295, 194), giant chameleons (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 186), and giant geckos (*Bestiary* 3 186), which are able to cling to walls or move with speed in the cavernous environment.

Troglodytes on Golarion

The vast majority of Golarion's troglodytes reside in the tunnels of Nar-Voth surrounding the duergar settlements located along the north of the Inner Sea region. These troglodytes see little reason to set up vast settlements, instead maintaining small tribal strongholds. Considered to be the only proper troglodyte settlement, the region of Kuvhoshik is a melting pot of over a hundred troglodyte tribes. Located under Varisia's Mierani Forest, Kuvhoshik is home to ongoing tribal battles and skirmishes, the incessant grinding war pausing only at the appearance of threats from the surface world or from the neothelids of the Orvian Vault of Denebrum below.

On the surface, troglodytes maintain several cavernous homes, preferring marshes or swamps to cater to their reptilian heritage. Several tribes have recently taken up home in the Sodden Lands, emerging from previously uncharted Darklands tunnels to vex the few remaining inhabitants there. They most frequently come into conflict with the lizardfolk tribes in the southern region once known as Yamasa. Other tribes reside in the Mushfens of southern Varisia, the mountainsides of Andoran's Aspodell Mountains, and even along the rivers at the base of Rahadoum's Napsune Mountains. Those troglodytes living among the crags of the mountains tend to ally themselves with giant tribes whenever possible, though such alliances often fall apart when the giants tire of the troglodytes' presence; only cave giants maintain any long-lasting allegiances with troglodytes.

Some determined troglodytes have ensconced themselves within some of Golarion's more well-known dungeons. A large group of mutated troglodytes inhabits the Deep Pools region of the infamous Thassilonian ruin of Hollow Mountain. These troglodytes are universally fiendish, with several half-fiends among their number.

Guided by a dedicated clergy in service to the qliploth lord Yamasoth, the troglodytes have recently begun to doubt their master, a bloated hezrou demon named **Balravnus** (CE male hezrou rogue 3), who declared himself the manifestation of Yamasoth. The hezrou's indolence and inability to answer the mounting questions of the troglodytes' priesthood is setting the stage for what will undoubtedly be a bloody internal conflict between the followers of the priests and those in service to Balravnus.

The Candlestone Caverns in Andoran play host to a winding burrow of troglodytes, all belonging to a single clan. Unified by the constant raids from nearby duergar and kobolds, the troglodytes have allied under a strong chieftain named **Xhuchuk** (NE male troglodyte barbarian 4). Wearing a belt of kobold skulls and wielding the forge hammer of a slain duergar war captain, Xhuchuk has solidified the position of his tribe by negotiating with the few outlanders who brave the depths of the caverns. Xhuchuk offers a place of rest within his territory, selling this safety in exchange for the heads of his enemies: every duergar head or three kobold heads buys a single night's rest for one occupant in the troglodyte burrows.

On the surface of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords lies the Darklands entrance known as the Earthnavel—a relatively direct route from the surface to the Orvian Vault of Deep Tolguth. By following this path, one can enter the heart of what remains of the ancient xulgath empire. The tunnels of this immense dungeon are home to disparate tribes of advanced troglodytes, each battling for survival against the primeval beasts dwelling in the larger tunnels.

In Deep Tolguth, Golarion's few surviving xulgath dwell. Living under the shadows of ancient ziggurats, these paragons of troglodyte society pray to a power forgotten by most—the qliploth lords of the Abyss. Guarding the edges of Deep Tolguth are scattered troglodyte tribes and clusters of other uncivilized humanoids that long ago emigrated there from the surface. A particularly large number of orc dwells here, continually battling the qliploth-worshipping xulgath. Only the presence of fervently overprotective troglodytes and guardian plants known as tenebrous blights (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary* 55) keep the orcs from overrunning the xulgath and their city. Those xulgath dwelling under the great central ziggurat of Deep Tolguth—an edifice directly under the false sun of the vast vault's ceiling—worship the qliploth lord Shiggarreb. Portrayed as a driderlike atrocity, Shiggarreb heralds the invasion of worlds by qliploth, and bestows forbidden magic to those who follow in her mad path. The xulgath believe their psychic powers are the blessing of their qliploth mistress, and that the false sun above their heads will one day open, like some fell Abyssal flower, to reveal a stable portal to her realm.



Ghristah

Wielding a net of woven moss and a stone javelin, this humanoid reptile wears armor of swamp reeds and bone and the skull of a larger reptile as a menacing mask.

GHRISTAH **CR 8**

XP 4,800

Female troglodyte hunter (feral hunter) 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 267, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 26, 95)
NE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft.; Perception +12

Aura stench (30 ft., DC 15, 10 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 83 (9d8+43)

Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. in armor

Melee mwk net +9/+4 or

bite +3 (1d4+1), 2 claws +3 (1d4+1)

Ranged mwk javelin +9 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks wild shape 2/day

Hunter Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +8)

3rd (1/day)—*poison* (DC 14), *stone shape*, *summon nature's ally III*

2nd (3/day)—*chill metal* (DC 13), *protection from energy*, *spider climb*, *summon nature's ally II*, *summon swarm*

1st (5/day)—*entangle* (DC 12), *magic fang*, *obscuring mist*, *speak with animals*, *summon nature's ally I*, *thorn javelin*^{ACG}

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *purify food and drink* (DC 11), *resistance*, *spark*^{APG} (DC 11)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 6, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Great Fortitude, Net Adept^{UC}, Net Maneuvering^{UC}, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Stealth Synergy^{UC}

Skills Knowledge (dungeoneering) +4, Knowledge (geography, nature) +5, Perception +12, Stealth +14 (+18 in rocky areas), Survival +7;

Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth, +4 Stealth in rocky areas

Languages Draconic

SQ animal focus (7 minutes/day), feral focus, nature training, summon pack, track +3, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *scroll of neutralize poison*; **Other Gear** +1 *bone*^{UE} *scale mail*, mwk javelins (5), mwk net, *aspect mask* (snake)^{ACG}

Unlike most of her kind, Ghristah lives on Golarion's surface. She travels the Inner Sea region, never resting in one spot too long before moving on. A consummate hunter, she's forsaken the companionship of a pet to master her own bestial urges, and is able to take the form of beasts in dire circumstances. Ghristah believes this atavistic connection to be the blessing of the great power of Zevgavizeb, patron of all troglodytes. She prefers a covert hunt, wearing down her enemies with her nature-inclined spells and swift strikes from javelins as well as the use of natural attacks. She always keeps a barbed net on her person, which she primarily uses to disable enemies prior to the deathblow or in the rare case that she needs to retreat from a superior foe.

Ghristah enjoys teaching other troglodytes the basics of hunting and stalking prey. Because of her wandering nature, she rarely spends much time with a given tribe, but she has perfected working with other troglodytes, making optimal use of their unrefined tactics. When confronted by hostile intruders, Ghristah is not above recruiting local troglodytes and reptiles to work with her in overcoming these foes. She may stalk her prey for months at a time, striking at inopportune moments or using her magic at range to confound foes already caught up with other threats.



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Urdefhan

If duergars are the law of Nar-Voth and drow carelessly rule Sekamina, the depths of Orv are swiftly falling to urdefhans. In those lowest regions of the Darklands, these translucent-skinned monsters slaughter all those they call neighbors. My only encounter with the so-called “Orvian vampires” was on the waters of the Sightless Sea, where I’d managed to gain passage on a ship of drow sailors by virtue of illusory magic. Urdefhans waylaid us on the open sea and the battle seemed all but lost, so the drow captain urged us to take our own lives, and then killed herself. I think she knew better than any of her crew the cruel fate that awaited any captured by urdefhans.

—Koriah Azmeren
Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 44



Urdefhans, in their sprawling metropolises of depravity, murder, and toil, work toward a single purpose: the perfection of the art of dealing out death. They strive to craft plagues, spells, and weapons to better inflict their bleak will on others, especially in times of war. Urdefhans' entire existence—and their motivation to keep existing—is to seek out other species and end their lives in as painful and symbolic a manner as possible. Urdefhans derive their sustenance by sucking the vitality out of other living beings—a trait that has given them the moniker “Orvian vampires.”

Urdefhans are a meticulous species, never leaving a task unfinished when it presents them with the opportunity to end a being's existence. They were crafted by the powers of Abaddon and share the same motivation that drives the daemons of that realm: killing. To every urdefhan, murder is a holy prerogative and means of spiritual rejuvenation. The entire urdefhan species is purposed toward the wholesale extermination of other species across the world, for there can be no greater accomplishment than the final extinction of an entire people. Most urdefhans currently remain locked in the depths of the Darklands fulfilling one great endeavor: expunging the last descendants of lost Azlant. Perhaps, when they feel certain they have eradicated the underground remnants of that ancient human empire, they will turn their attention to the human descendants on Golarion's surface.

Ecology

The first urdefhans of ages past were painstakingly crafted by a great daemonic entity of the realm of Abaddon. Known only as the Oinodaemon, this former Horseman of that bleak realm created urdefhans as part of an experiment to seed the Material Plane with worshipers more suitable to the schemes of daemons. Taking the souls of mortals destined for the cruel fields of Abaddon, the Oinodaemon infused their quintessence with pure malice and spite to forge a new type of being. Knowing its creations would be hunted from the moment of their appearance, the Oinodaemon placed these first urdefhans in the depths of Orv, away from the prying eyes of other species. By the grace of their daemonic patron, urdefhans initially remained apart from the ongoing conflicts that plagued the ancient powers of the Darklands. Around them, the wars of aboleths, intellect devourers, neothelids, and Vault Builders raged, while urdefhans eagerly awaited the arrival of more of their kind from distant Abaddon.

Urdefhans are roughly the size of humans. These gaunt figures have translucent skin that displays their musculature and the pulsing, vibrant blue blood coursing through their veins. They garb themselves in tight leather wrappings for protection, and as a way to further disturb their enemies. Urdefhans believe that the strands of leather they coil around their bodies enhance their grotesque appearance; the tighter they make their bands,

Five Facts about Urdefhans

Players and Game Masters alike may wish to keep the following in mind when dealing with urdefhans.

- Urdefhans are a race of creatures bred from the depravity of daemonic minds. Their connection with Abaddon is so strong that they can willingly end their lives on the Material Plane in an explosive blast of negative energy that hurtles their damned souls to their daemonic masters.
- Possessing incredibly sharp rending teeth, urdefhans suck the blood out of targets they bite. The area around the wound becomes translucent like the skin of an urdefhan. Such bites sap the target of strength. Because of this, urdefhans have received the moniker “Orvian vampires.”
- In spite of their skeletal appearance and translucent skin, urdefhans are not undead. Their reactions are similar to those of the unliving when positive or negative energy is used against them, so PCs may mistakenly believe that they are undead.
- Developers of countless diseases, spells, and weapons, urdefhans are best known for their iconic blades—the deadly rhoka swords. With twin serrated blades emerging from a thick guard, a rhoka sword is a hefty but powerful weapon designed to inflict maximum damage on a target.
- Urdefhans wear light straps of leather to accent their gaunt and skeletal appearance. Urdefhans with covered eyes are not as blind as one might think—every urdefhan has a single eye at the back of its mouth.

the more their blue blood glows in a luminescent display that shows off their fearful appearance even in the dark. Every urdefhan has a third eye, located inconspicuously at the back of its mouth. They believe they have better sight through their “mouth eyes,” and sometimes cover their primary eyes with leather, leaving their mouths agape as a means of seeing.

An urdefhan's blue blood represents a link to its soul. As an urdefhan reacts to pain or emotional stimuli, the intensity of its blood's hue rises; it takes on a vibrant color and emits a faint light. Particularly excited urdefhans may accidentally betray their presence in an ambush, simply because the hue of their blood grows in intensity. Urdefhans can, in desperation, or as a final means of spiting their enemies, channel a self-destructing power through their daemonic bond, tearing their bodies apart in a blast of negative energy. Such an act is the physical embodiment of an urdefhan accepting the end of its existence, forever damning its soul to the heartless plains of Abaddon. The blackening of an urdefhan's blood is a signal that it is about

to make this sacrifice, and those familiar with urdefhans take such a visual cue as an indication to seek cover. Urdefhans use this self-destruction to ensure that they can never be taken captive, though this tactic can be prevented by potent magical compulsions.

The Oinodaemon's disappearance is one of the multiverse's greatest mysteries, but the event impacted urdefhans more heavily than it did other creatures. They had prospered until their patron disappeared and suddenly found themselves suddenly bereft of a proper means of procreation in the aftermath. Urdefhan males are almost universally sterile (virile urdefhan males often serve as cult leaders or take other positions of power); urdefhan women have few suitable mates with which to continue the species. In an act of questionable charity, the Horseman of War at that time approached the urdefhans with a means of sustaining their race: reproduction with daemons. The resulting offspring of such unions are almost always urdefhans, with a small minority resulting in half-fiend urdefhans.

Erodaemons and lacridaemons (detailed on pages 46 and 48, respectively, of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Book of the Damned*, Vol. 3) are the most numerous fiends called to reproduce with urdefhan. The easily summoned ceustodaemons are brought forward only when the intelligence of offspring is not a priority. Particularly canny urdefhan conjurers often summon hydrodaemons, piscodaemons, and thanadaemons in order to create more aquatically attuned urdefhan offspring, as such affinities are needed on Orv's Sightless Sea. Those mad urdefhans seeking to create progeny destined for great importance often strive to summon the genocidal olethrodaemons, offering entire settlements as sacrifices to calm the beasts long enough to produce even a single child.

Urdefhans eventually sought other daemonic powers with which to treat and found succor from the Horseman of Famine. The Horseman offered further daemons to act as mentors, overlords, and mating partners, but in exchange it marked the urdefhan race with a gnawing hunger that can be quenched only by the blood of living creatures. When urdefhans feed upon members of other species, those bitten take on a translucent quality similar to urdefhans' grotesque coloration. Creatures slain by the bite of an urdefhan have a small chance of resurrecting hours after death as new urdefhans, though such reincarnations are rare, occurring only when the soul of the creature slain was already destined for the fields of Abaddon. Most resurrected urdefhans have only vague memories of their former lives; those who remember their previous existence clearly are uncommon and those who retain their class levels are rarer still. Because of this

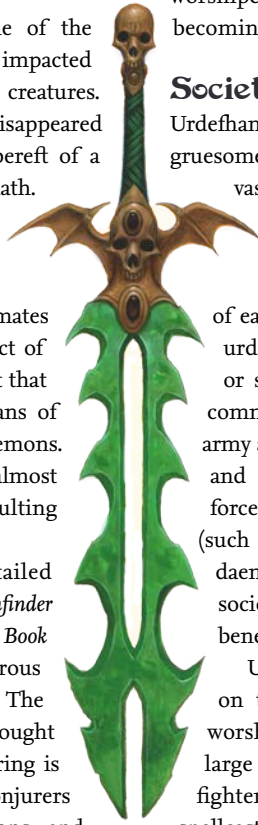
possibility, surface cultists dedicated to daemonic powers often seek out urdefhans to feed on members of their flock. Much like acolytes of conventional vampires, the cultists hope to rise as new urdefhans. These deranged worshipers rarely see their desired result, instead simply becoming effortless meals for the uncaring urdefhans.

Society

Urdefhans are driven by war and the need to witness its gruesome consequences. Their species is broken down into vast militarized units called armies, each supported by smaller groups known as cults. Their society promotes aggression, preparation, and the faultless execution of warfare. At the pinnacle of each army is a malefactor, most often a half-fiend urdefhan, to whom numerous cults are indebted or subservient. The malefactor maintains constant communication with daemonic forces and leads her army against other Darklands inhabitants. The success and death-dealing capabilities of a malefactor's forces directly impact the level of daemonic support (such as consorts) her army receives. In this manner, daemons are the true power brokers within urdefhan society, with the subservience of malefactors in turn benefitting their daemonic patrons.

Urdefhan cults are common both in Orv and on the surface, where they shelter with daemon worshipers. These groups of urdefhans include a large number of martially inclined members (often fighters, rangers, and rogues), a handful of arcane spellcasters (specializing in conjuration or necromancy), and one leader (most often a divine spellcaster). Additionally, cults include the likes of conjured daemons, aerial skaveling mounts (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 242), and even the occasional deranged humanoid servant. Orv-based groups work toward the unified goal of the army to which they belong, their leader receiving instructions from the army's leading malefactor. Those cults not part of an army are most often found pursuing missions in Sekamina or on the surface, where they are forced to use stealthier methods.

The goal of complete genocide against other species drives urdefhans further than any other motivation. Orvian vampires have broken several lost and now nameless empires by means of blade, disease, and spell. They even savagely hunt mostly extinct species—such as the remaining pech. The crusade of a single malefactor has now become one of the overarching goals of the numerous armies of the urdefhans: the complete annihilation of what survives of the Azlanti people. While the true Azlanti are long dead, their numerous descendants live on in the realms of the Darklands, and urdefhans seek to complete what Earthfall could not. Their armies continually battle against dark folk, gillmen, mongrelmen, and morlocks alike. The most vexing of





urdefhans' foes are munavris, the only race to emerge from the fall of Azlant still able to act as a beacon of good within the uncaring pits of the Darklands. Munavris' dogged determination and free spirits keeps urdefhans keenly focused on their extermination, a fact that allows the rest of the Darklands—and by extension, the surface world—to remain free from a unified urdefhan threat. Munavris regard their ongoing feud as a small sacrifice to make to safeguard more vulnerable peoples from Orvian vampires.

Urdefhan cities are impressive fortresses in the monolithic caverns of Orv, each built with magically shaped stone and lined with lead. These settlements are places of both madness and meticulous craft, kept safe behind sturdy walls and watched over by summoned guardians. The Orvian vampires are quick to turn on each other if bereft of an immediate enemy, fighting throughout the streets of their cities in quick and bloody cult wars. Ruling malefactors engineer conflicts with other nearby species—or even other urdefhan armies—to ensure their population does not destroy itself with internal strife.

Urdefhans eagerly craft new means of meting out death to their enemies, spending their time performing such research when not engaged in brutally murdering one another on the streets of their cities. In vast forge complexes, urdefhans force what few slaves they keep to craft deadly arms from toxic metals. The rhoka sword—a two pronged blade with serrated edges—is an iconic urdefhan creation, and the forges of Orvian vampires' fortress cities churn out such weapons at an alarming rate. Urdefhan alchemists similarly perfect untold numbers of diseases in remote labs. Strains similar to devil chills and demon fever are commonly employed against urdefhans' enemies, while records dating back to the earliest post-Earthfall nations suggest the Orvian vampires were responsible for the creation of the disease known as mindfire.

Skavelings, the favored mount of the urdefhan race, are used to establish aerial dominance in the vast vaults of the Darklands. Young mobats are taken at birth and fed a specified regimen of fungi and undead flesh, gradually preparing the bats for a future life as undead mounts. Urdefhan priests of Trelmarixian, the Horseman of Famine, complete the transformation by ritually slaying the matured mobats. Most denizens of the Darklands refer to these aerial abominations as “ghoul bats.” Regardless of their title, skavelings act as devoted mounts to urdefhan riders. Their riders find little opposition in the “skies” of Orv, though they sometimes get attacked by hidden ropers or the odd Darklands avian. Most often, skaveling riders come across the scattered flying ships of the munavris, which they engage only when numbers are overwhelming on their side, as they are all too familiar with the prowess of munavri aerial sword dancers.

Daemonic Parents

Urdefhans frequently summon daemons from Abaddon to sire new generations of urdefhans. Such pairings occasionally result in the creation of half-fiends, who are destined to become leaders in urdefhan society. Erodaemons (*Horsemen of the Apocalypse* 48) are the most common type of daemons summoned to breed with urdefhans. A variant half-fiend template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 171) specific to daemon couplings with erodaemons is presented here. If an element of the half-fiend template is not mentioned, that element is not adjusted.

Half-Erodaemon

A half-erodaemon resembles a blue-skinned humanoid with a set of protruding, stub-like horns. Half-erodaemon urdefhans have a full set of black ram horns and white blood instead of the traditional blue blood.

Speed: A half-erodaemon does not gain a fly speed.

Change Shape (Su): A half-erodaemon can use this ability to assume the form of the loved one of any humanoid creature affected by its *detect thoughts* spell-like ability. The half-erodaemon gains a +10 bonus on its Bluff and Disguise checks to impersonate a loved one of its target.

Wilting Bite (Su): A half-erodaemon is treated as if it were one size category larger than its actual size for the purpose of its bite attack's damage, and gains the grab special attack with its bite. A non-urdefhan half-erodaemon gains the Strength damage special ability of a normal urdefhan (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 276). Half-erodaemon urdefhans gain a +1 racial bonus to the Strength damage of their bite and a +2 racial bonus to the DC of the associated saving throw.

Alternate Spell-Like Abilities: Replace *desecrate* with *detect thoughts*. Replace *unholy blight* with *unnatural lust*^{UM}. Replace *poison* 3/day with *modify memory* 3/day. Replace *contagion* with *crushing despair*. Replace *unhallow* with *utter contempt*^{UM}.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Dex +4, Con +2, Int +2, Wis +4, Cha +6.

Campaign Role

Urdefhans make an excellent threat for PCs who have several levels under their belt. Urdefhans should be introduced in a way that allows for one or more key members of their species to be presented with class levels and distinct personalities. Unlike brigands and other bullying creatures, urdefhans do not feel fear, and even the most zealously noble PC can't intimidate the vampires of Orv. They are driven by their obsession with death and are irredeemable foes, fully accepting (and

welcoming) that their souls will sent to Abaddon upon death to be mutilated by their daemonic creators.

It is uncommon for urdefhans to be seen outside of their Darklands homes, particularly because of their ongoing mission of extermination in the greater region of Orv. There are two major types of non-Darklands based urdefhans, the first being those working directly as servitors for a daemonic power—typically a Horseman or daemonic harbinger. The other type consists of urdefhan exiles or explorers seeking to escape their ongoing Darklands existence and find enjoyment through bringing death to those unfamiliar with their blighted species. Surface urdefhans thrive by capitalizing on the terror their depraved yet recognizably humanoid forms inspire.

Urdefhans prefer martial roles, favoring close and personal fights in which they can make liberal use of their life-stealing bite attacks. Urdefhans' ability to cast *death knell* as a spell-like ability is particularly deadly, as their enjoyment from feeling the life drain out of a target often overrides their desire to select new targets.

Treasure

The urdefhan race is the creation of daemonic powers, and as such, urdefhans prefer the feel of magic equipment that represents the traits of such vile powers. They prize both *vicious* and *unholy* weapons and armor that improves elemental resistances. The vast majority of urdefhans' arsenals consist of rhoka swords. Spellcasting urdefhans typically specialize in conjuration or necromantic magic, and have equipment that supports these preferred schools. Conjurers work to bring forth fiendish servitors and at higher levels summon daemons and consorts for the armies they serve. Necromancers often have one or more means of casting *animate dead*—a spell urdefhans hold in high regard, as it enables them to gain mindless servitors while simultaneously perverting the corpses of the deceased.

Urdefhans on Golarion

The Orvian vault of Doga-Delloth is home to the greatest concentration of urdefhans on Golarion and serves as the seat of their seething empire, concentrated on the shores of the adjacent Sightless Sea in a group of eight cities. These cities, known at the Eternal Barbs, each house a different urdefhan army with a single malefactor overlord. Niovengia is the largest of these settlements and is the northernmost of the Eternal Barbs. Built of black basalt towers and spires, Niovengia is equal parts docks and rookery. Malefactor **Tryfilion** (NE male urdefhan^{Bz} cleric of Trelmarixian 7/exalted 5/fighter 5; *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods* 200) rules the city by virtue of his devotion to Trelmarixian, the Horseman of Famine. The gift of a powerful artifact known as the *Misery Gage*—a jet-black spiked gauntlet once used by the favored servitor

of Trelmarixian's predecessor, the Parasite Queen—seals Tryfilion's position as leader of the urdefhans of Niovengia, and some believe that he will eventually be poised to lead their entire species.

The metropolis of Tiz-Ivox rests at the southern edge of the urdefhans' line of cities. Cut off from its neighbors, the city is constantly embroiled in battle against aggressors from the Sightless Sea, specifically the skum minions of the aboleths. The coastline was once home to some of urdefhans' most impressive docks and shipyards, but has since been retrofitted into a bulwark against the waters beyond. Tiz-Ivox's de facto leader, former ship captain Lady **Ixala** (NE female urdefhan^{Bz} swashbuckler^{ACG} 12), took up the mantle of leadership when she uncovered a veiled master impersonating the city's former malefactor. Ixala leads the city against the constant attacks of the ulat-kini while trying to contact the other urdefhan cities to warn them of the growing aboleth threat. To date, she has had little success with her attempts, and few of her kin have shown interest in relieving the siege of Tiz-Ivox.

The Oinodaemon initially seeded urdefhans in the vault of Minos-Pashat, but it is currently home to only a small fraction of their numbers. These first urdefhans left their ancestral home following the disappearance of their creator, out of both anger at the event and respect for the Oinodaemon. Today, only the most powerful urdefhans—high priests or elders—make their way to the vault, often to commune with the remaining powers within. Countless cults of half-fiend urdefhans and their daemonic consorts dwell in the sheltered regions of Minos-Pashat. These deeply religious cults pray for the return of the Oinodaemon, forcefully converting to their faith any urdefhan entering their territory. A sealed stone door, banded by adamantine and reinforced with powerful magical runes, rests at the center of the vault. While most histories state that this was the door from which the Oinodaemon released the first urdefhans into the Darklands, the half-fiend cults that dwell in the region claim the door is actually a back door into the prison that holds the Oinodaemon. Theories on the means of opening the door vary; some believe it will open only when a great urdefhan unites their people and brings them all back to Minos-Pashat, while others contend that it will open when urdefhans successfully purge the last descendants of the Azlanti from Golarion.

Triaza

This humanoid figure is garbed only in leather straps wrapped around her translucent skin, as well as scattered pieces of armor. She wields a wicked two-pronged blade.

TRIAZA

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female urdefhan magus 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 276, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 9)

Darklands Revisited

NE Medium outsider (native)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 104 (10 HD; 7d8+3d10+57)

Fort +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

DR 5/good or silver; **Immune** death effects, disease, fear, level drain; **Resist** acid 10; **SR** 14

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *vicious rhoka sword* +16/+11 (1d8+7/15–20 plus 2d6), bite +9 (1d4+3 plus 2 Str) or

bite +14 (1d4+6 plus 2 Str)

Ranged dagger +11 (1d4+6/19–20)

Special Attacks arcane pool (+2, 7 points), blood drain (1 Con), magus arcana (empowered magic^{UM}, lingering pain^{UC}), spell combat, spell recall, spellstrike, strength damage

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

At will—*feather fall*

3/day—*align weapon*, *death knell* (DC 12), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 12)

Magus Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +11)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *haste*

2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *scorching ray*, *shatter* (DC 16), *spider climb*

1st—*shield*, *shocking grasp* (2) *true strike*, *vanish*^{APG} (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 16, **Con** 21, **Int** 18, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 28

Feats Dodge, Improved Critical (rhoka sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (rhoka sword)

Skills Intimidate +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering, planes, religion) +17, Perception +14, Ride +5, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +17, Survival +7, Use Magic Device +14

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Azlanti, Infernal, Undercommon

SQ daemonic pact, knowledge pool, medium armor

Combat Gear *scroll of animate dead*, *scroll of inflict critical wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 *chainmail*, +1 *vicious rhoka sword*^{UE}, daggers (5), *belt of mighty constitution* +2

Triaza is the leader of a cult of urdefhans in Varisia's Kodar Mountains that emerged from the Darklands following a failed mission for her malefactor. She led her fellow cultists upward rather than face the repercussions of her failure. Now firmly entrenched in a network of surface caverns, Triaza and her cult prey on those passing to and from the nearest major settlement—the human city of Riddleport.

Triaza indulges the dark appetites of her underlings, even allowing her few skaveling bat riders to make short flights to pick off stragglers on the nearby roads. She has

few concerns about the adventurers and mercenaries of Riddleport who investigate the attacks, but worries significantly more about retaining power. Triaza keeps the members of her cult pacified by allowing them various means of venting their depraved and violent desires, yet still worries about her tenure as ruler, given that her cult is now cut off from the rest of urdefhan society. A time may come when her underlings decide she is not fit to lead, and instead plot to push her to pair with a daemon to continue the propagation of the cult. She has no solid arguments against the importance of increasing their numbers, but is loath to accede to a plan that would take her away from the bountiful death-dealing opportunities offered by the surface world, which are the only activities in which she finds any pleasure or fulfillment.



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Vegepygmy

After the plant creatures drove us off, we decided to go back for Branmor. The last we saw of our sullen duergar ally was the moldfolk staunching his wounds as he lay unconscious. We returned to their fungal lair hoping to find our companion imprisoned, but instead we found what could only be his corpse. The plant people returned, and the reasons for their actions became clear; when I saw Branmor's crude facial features on one of the moldfolk, I knew the awful fate that had befallen our poor friend.

—Koriah Azmeren
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Vegepygmy

Child-sized plants that have humanoid forms, vegepygmies are curious creatures that inhabit the uppermost tunnels of the Darklands. Dwelling in dank and concealed tunnels, these plant people attack their Darklands neighbors and the surface dwellers to capture living prey. However, unlike the depraved drow or toil-driven duergar, vegepygmies have no use for slaves; instead, they bring their captives before their community's revered russet mold. Those unfortunate souls already weakened from battle are offered to the mold and quickly succumb to the fungus's toxic spores, their bodies collapsing in a final spasm. Yet death is not the end for these poor prisoners. Within only a day of infection, those slain by the russet mold burst open, their organs decayed from the inside. A new generation of vegepygmies then emerges from within the broken shell of the deceased victim. These newly formed plantfolk go on to haunt the deeps, bringing other creatures back to their lairs to repeat this gruesome cycle.

Vegepygmies share more traits with plants than with the humanoids whose form they imitate. Unable to speak beyond a series of squeaks, vegepygmies communicate among one another with taps and rasping hisses. Tribes of these creatures infest the upper reaches of the Darklands, requiring constant purges by other species to keep their numbers contained. Like tenacious weeds, vegepygmies endure the constant war waged against them; every time an enclave is destroyed, another appears nearby, sustained by a patch of russet mold.

Ecology

Far removed from the current vegepygmies of Golarion, a separate fey breed of these vegetal people can still be found in the First World. These creatures live among the primal plane's verdant fields, and benefit from the reincarnating powers of the plane. The death of each fey vegepygmy is reversed by the restorative powers of the First World, which protects creatures from all but the most horrific of fates. In their natural home, these plant people know nothing of russet mold or the need to use other species as incubators. Only after coming to Golarion and interacting with the drow did vegepygmies undergo the tragedy that transformed them into the hideously spawned creatures they are now.

Russet mold, the substance that enables reproduction for Darklands vegepygmies, has the reddish brown hue its name suggests. Thriving in dank and lightless environments, these fungal blooms detect the approach of living creatures within a short radius via the temperature changes brought on by nearby body heat. As a means of self-defense, russet molds release spores that quickly overwhelm the immune systems of lesser creatures. Russet mold spores are neither disease nor poison, but microscopic invaders, and immunity

Five Facts about Vegepygmies

Game Masters and players should consider the following facts when dealing with vegepygmies.

- The fungal matter that makes up a vegepygmy is susceptible to both blunt impact and chopping. Piercing weapons do little to stop the advance of an angered vegepygmy, as the creatures have no discernible internal anatomy. This doesn't mean vegepygmies are immune to precision damage; in fact, their heads are particularly sensitive locations to attack.
- PCs should never trust the endearing appearance of a vegepygmy, even if it seems to be nonhostile. In the moldfolk's society, the greatest blessing is to give a creature "freedom from flesh" by offering it a future life as a vegepygmy. If PCs follow a vegepygmy, there is a good chance it is leading them back to the lair of its russet mold to be infected.
- Vegepygmies revere the decaying matter of their birth corpses, going so far as to craft weapons and tools from the bones of their former hosts. Vegepygmies have a strong connection with these items and can be made to back down if such objects are stolen or wrestled from them. If PCs are already trapped within a lair of the moldfolk, damaging the preserved remnants of a birth corpse can offer them a suitable distraction with which to make their escape.
- Originally creatures hailing from the First World, current vegepygmies have little connection with their species' previous incarnation. Some fey find themselves spared the depredations of vegepygmies, and it is not uncommon for the moldfolk to ignore trespassers if they have one or more fey creatures in their company. Similarly, vegepygmies never target plants and undead except in defense, as neither creature type can be affected by russet mold.
- A vegepygmy has no inherent susceptibility to light and can pursue enemies into areas of bright illumination, including sunlight. Many vegepygmies raid sunlit surface communities for new birth corpses. The moldfolk's association with dark areas is more of the result of their association to russet mold, which quickly shrivels and dies when exposed to sunlight. Vegepygmy communities are universally located in damp and lightless locales.

to either affliction proves ineffective against their Constitution-sapping effects. A creature fully overcome by these spores falls into a deep coma, during which the spores incubate inside its body. Within a day, the

spores mature, adapting biomatter from the host body and expelling a clutch of vegepygmies, which literally burst forth from the most suitable section of the body (typically the torso, in the case of most humanoids).

The number of vegepygmies birthed depends on the size of the body. A Small creature produces one full-grown vegepygmy, while larger creatures produce one additional vegepygmy per size category larger than Small. If the host body was a humanoid with a discernible face, the offspring sometimes (roughly 20% of the time) bear faces similar to that of the birth body. Beyond the inception of new vegepygmies, the husk of a birthing body is of little use to the tribe, but the vegepygmies it spawned maintain a strong attachment to the remains, often venerating the corpse in a form of primitive ancestral worship.

Vegepygmy communication consists of a combination of thumps, raps, and pheromone secretions specific to the moldfolk. Vegepygmies can't speak in a manner consistent with other oral languages, though they can force out odd squeaking sounds from their tiny mouths; what little voice a vegepygmy is capable of emitting is insufficient for understandable discourse, but still appropriate for spellcasting requiring verbal components. Because of the specialized nature of the vegepygmies' language, it is impossible for outsiders to reproduce except through magical effects like *tongues*.

Vegepygmies have few interactions with other species beyond attempting to co-opt them as russet mold incubators. Other plant-based life forms, undead, and other creatures that can't be infected by russet mold spores are exempt from such attentions, however. Vegepygmies completely ignore these creatures, pitying such beings for being unable to transcend their curse of flesh.

Society

Long ago, adventurous fey crossed through planar breaches from the First World and entered the Darklands. Arriving at first in small groups, these folk were timid creatures, all too aware of their mortality on the Material Plane as they strove to survive in a new and unique environment. As they formed small communes in the shadows of warring dwarves and orcs, they soon came into contact with the refugees of elven

civilization who would eventually become the drow. These elves were at first courteous and interested in the timid moldfolk, but because of a misunderstanding, coined the derogatory term "vegepygmy" to describe them. The two peoples soon reached an accord and traded knowledge; the vegepygmies graciously offered information on techniques for farming fungal blooms as food to their new elven friends. Beyond these peaceful exchanges, the vegepygmies were a quaint staple of the Darklands' uppermost layer, content to interact with the people of that realm.

This peace was not destined to last, as other species crammed into the tunnels of the Darklands to survive the devastation of Earthfall. Caught between rapidly devolving humans and militarized gray dwarves, the vegepygmies found their numbers dwindling as their small settlements were attacked by foes seeking slaves or territory. The tunnels had changed shape in the apocalypse, and the few still-remembered portals to the First World were lost. The surviving moldfolk had no place to turn and no means of replenishing their numbers, fated for a slow death in the increasingly inhospitable depths of Golarion. Without warning, salvation appeared—the elves with whom the vegepygmies once traded offered the survivors amnesty in their growing empire in Sekamina.

Sheltered by the fungal sporecrafting masters of House Udrinor, the vegepygmies were given space in the family's vast gardens. Here, sporecrafters performed numerous experiments on several of the vegepygmies in order to help them find a means of reproducing. The drow's research twisted the moldfolk, brutally murdering

the plant creatures and leaving only fungus behind. Sending slaves to clean up the mess, the drow were amazed when the spores of the deceased vegepygmies managed to

overtake their servants, who died in bouts of spastic coughing. Examining the corpses of their slaves, the sporecrafters of House Udrinor watched in shocked adulation as stunted, misshapen creatures burst forth a day after their deaths.

Oblivious to the fate of their kin, the remaining moldfolk soon found themselves greeted by new members of their species—humanoid plants who had taken on facial features far closer to the drow around them than to their normal fey countenances. Continuing to experiment on the vegepygmies from the First





World, the drow perfected the art of crafting russet mold—the compound that promoted the creation of vegepygmies by incubating virulent spores in a humanoid host. By the time the remaining vegepygmies discovered the means the drow had employed to sustain their race, they were too few to act on their revulsion. Soon they, too, fell prey to drow fleshwarpers, who transformed them into the first halsoras (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 104).

Vegepygmy settlements vary in population size depending on the location of their russet mold and the number of nearby host creatures available for new spawnings. The smallest groups range from lone vegepygmies to gangs of about six. Tribes of several dozen are most common, and can be found scattered throughout the Darklands and well-shaded surface regions. Vegepygmy tribes typically select an arbitrary number as a population range, venturing out for additional hosts only if their population falls below the lower threshold of the range. In extremely rare cases, russet molds have spread over entire settlements of other creatures, effectively creating small cities and towns of moldfolk. These exceptionally large sites are particularly hostile to non-vegepygmies, as the deadly russet mold clings to the sides of buildings and along streets, making even exploration a life-threatening endeavor. Oddly enough, vegepygmy settlements of such size often house the least aggressive vegepygmies, as the moldfolk feel little need to sacrifice creatures to their russet mold when their numbers are so great.

Approximately one in every 20 vegepygmies is born a paragon of its species and is known as a “chieftain” (even if the vegepygmy does not actually serve as the leader of a tribe). In most vegepygmy societies, the eldest or most skilled chieftain serves as the tribe’s leader, but variants of this arrangement do exist. A chieftain has the advanced creature simple template and typically possesses at least 1 class level. These enhanced vegepygmies are identifiable by their particularly long dreadlocks, as well as a far bulkier physical appearance.

Vegepygmies typically worship the russet mold and corpses that birthed them, but some take to more traditional religions, most often a heavily modified version of Gozreh’s teachings. Specifically, they venerate Gozreh’s association with decay, growth, and nature over her association with weather and the sea. Tridents and holy symbols crafted in homage to this god of nature are such as made from the bones of birthing bodies—the first tribute the vegepygmy offers to its chosen deity.

Considered nothing more than a virulent infestation by other Darklands species, vegepygmies are routinely hunted by duergar and drow. Duergar hunting parties come armed with fire-spewing alchemical weapons while seated atop giant vermin. Drow send small units of their house guards to perpetrate acts of genocide against vegepygmies, often as retributive strikes when

Russet Mold

Vegepygmies would not exist if not for the russet mold that facilitates their horrific means of reproduction. A typical patch of this rust-colored fungus covers a roughly 5-foot-square area, releasing its spores against living creatures that come within 5 feet of it. As the spores are not a disease effect, protection like a paladin’s divine health is ineffective, but the growth of the spores can be halted with a *remove disease* spell or similar effect. The best tool to overcome the spores of a russet mold patch is exposure to sunlight, which kills both the spores and the mold itself.

In addition to the standard russet mold presented on page 273 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, several other varieties of russet mold exist, each with unique properties and passing on racial variations to the vegepygmies they spawn.

Argent Mold (CR 8): A far more insidious type of infection, argent mold is a reflective, gray-hued fungus. Creatures that come within 15 feet of argent mold must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw or be infected by the mold’s spores. Twenty-four hours after initial infection, the mold takes root and begins dealing 2 points of Constitution damage per round; success at a new Fortitude save halts the effect. All vegepygmies spawned from a character slain by this infection possess the advanced creature simple template.

Aurus Mold (CR 5): Aurus mold is a golden-tinged fungal matter that can sometimes be found on the surface. This variant mold is unaffected by sunlight, but its spores deal only 1 point of Constitution damage per round. There is a 50% chance that any vegepygmies created by this mold gain the degenerate creature simple template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5* 288).

Iron Mold (CR 6): This rare variant of russet mold is susceptible to cold damage instead of acid. Vegepygmies created by this variant mold gain immunity to acid and cold, but also gain light sensitivity.

the moldfolk venture into Sekamina. Harshest of the drow sanctions against the moldfolk is the drow’s use of halsoras—vegepygmies tainted by fleshwarping—against their former kin. The spores of halsoras are effective even against other plant life, and the release of these hulking mutant plant creatures into communities of vegepygmies often ends with the destruction of all nearby moldfolk. Seeing their kin converted into these drow-controlled monstrosities is also a sharp psychological blow against vegepygmies, who often experience a near-compulsive desire to destroy the creatures before they take on other opponents. Drow use this knowledge to outflank their vegepygmy enemies.

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Campaign Role

Weak on their own or in small numbers, vegepygmies make good opponents for low-level parties adventuring in the Darklands or other lightless environs. The spawning russet mold that ensures vegepygmies' continued existence is a far more dangerous foe than the creatures it creates. A patch of russet mold is a CR 6 encounter, but this is a subjective number depending on the mold's exact location and the tactics of its vegepygmy servants. Because the presence of russet mold dramatically changes the difficulty of an encounter with moldfolk, vegepygmies can continue to be a threat as a campaign advances, with PCs forced to battle several of the plant creatures while simultaneously fending off vitality-sapping spores.

As foes, vegepygmies have an odd duality to their appearance in a campaign. Their small stature and appearance can easily lull enemies into a false sense of security, while the truth behind their creation is abhorrent to those first discovering it. An emotionally impactful approach for groups first encountering vegepygmies is to play up the plant-people's "cuteness factor," having the vegepygmies usher the PCs back to their lair, with both sides unable to effectively communicate. Once in the lair of the vegepygmies, the moldfolk offer up trinkets and items taken from others who have come before, disarming the PCs further. All this changes when one of the group (particularly a cherished NPC ally) is brought before the russet mold. Suddenly, the vegepygmies turn, trying to subdue the adventurers and bring them closer to the mold in hopes of releasing spores and infecting as many PCs as possible. Even if successful in retreating, the PCs may soon find the faces of fallen allies adorning the next gang of vegepygmies they come across.

In higher levels of play, vegepygmies are difficult to introduce as ongoing villains. Their inherently low CR, combined with the fact that only leaders and important members of their small communities ever gain class levels, means it is difficult to make them imposing threats. The addition of thornies (see page 63) increases the overall threat of a vegepygmy community, as these creatures work with the moldfolk to better subdue targets for submission to a russet mold. Certain regions could host a particularly high number of moldfolk chieftains, particularly Darklands locations where lesser vegepygmies are constantly killed off by local predators and only the most advanced moldfolk survive. In these regions, bulkier versions of vegepygmies exist—huge fungal masses akin to plant-based siege weapons, which are known as tramguls. Only vegepygmy communities that have lasted for centuries in the deeps without being eradicated by their warlike neighbors know how to create these behemoths.

Treasure

The lairs of vegepygmies are littered with the possessions the birthing bodies had before falling prey to russet

mold spores. Appropriately sized weapons and some magical items find their ways into the hands of individual vegepygmies, but the majority of their accumulated wealth is left to sit in the damp dirt of their subterranean homes. It behooves adventurers to spend time searching a vegepygmy lair, as those hideaways that have survived many decades or longer often have treasures buried deep in the ground, and important magical items may have sunk into the rubble over the years, unnoticed by the oblivious vegepygmies.

Vegepygmy chieftains, particularly those with class levels, take the best equipment from defeated enemies. Newer spawns of young vegepygmies often fight over the remaining scraps of equipment, from daggers to belt buckles. Everything from a vegepygmy's birth corpse is considered sacred, with those originating from such bodies taking as much as they can in a strange form of ancestral veneration. Once the body is stripped of equipment, vegepygmies even craft weapons out of the bones and teeth of their broken host. What little that remains afterward is placed within a sacred altar near the center of vegepygmy lairs—a mass of gore-strewn offal and muscle matter that soon attracts swarms of insects, and sometimes lures predators into the embrace of the nearby russet mold.

Vegepygmies on Golarion

Vegepygmies exist all across Golarion, but inhabit the Darklands realm of Nar-Voth in the greatest numbers. Across the upper layer of the Darklands, vegepygmies operate in small tribes, eking out a living in hidden caverns and tunnels where they ambush small animals or wandering caravans. Inevitably, a Darklands vegepygmy tribe becomes too large to go unnoticed, and whatever culture holds sway nearest to them—typically derros, duergar, or drow—mounts a military effort to wipe out the infestation. Despite their neighbors' constant aggression, vegepygmies continue to thrive in Nar-Voth by virtue of the dogged persistence of russet mold.

The drow of House Udrinor maintained a small research outpost in Nar-Voth, numbering under 100 souls, prior to an outbreak of russet mold. The outpost—researching ways to once again establish dominance over the vegepygmies—was soon overrun by the creatures they sought to subjugate. Now, the vegepygmies have grown to nearly 1,200 strong. The closest duergar settlements refer to the overrun outpost as the Canker. Alarmingly, the sporecrafting labs in the center of the Canker are home to numerous variants of russet mold (see the Russet Mold sidebar on page 61). Some of these modified mold colonies have developed rudimentary sentience, and are worshiped by the vegepygmies and thornies of the community as minor deities.

Golarion's greatest concentration of vegepygmies is the Midnight Jungle of Nar-Voth. Here, hundreds of

Darklands Revisited



tribes battle amid the great canopies of fungal blooms and mountainous mushrooms that make up the jungle. Dozens of minor alliances form the basis of the vegepygmy society in this harsh region, with each alliance promoting a different interpretation of vegepygmy religion. Two particular factions in this struggle are the more peaceful vegepygmies who see Gozreh as their patron, and their bitter enemies, who venerate the demon lord Cyth-V'sug in homage to the House Udrinor sporecrafters who first made them. In a region of the Whisperwood of Cheliaz known as the Scar Thicket, a group of vegepygmies who shun religion and the conflicts of the Midnight Jungle below have found safety from their warring brethren. These moldfolk guard one of the larger points of entry into the Darklands, and the abundance of russet mold there makes this region perilous.

Beyond the confines of the Darklands, vegepygmies have spread across numerous surface sites on Golarion. Vegepygmies maintain vast fungal gardens in the most lightless regions of the Mwangi Expanse, where the jungle cover is so dense it blocks out the sun. These areas are home to hundreds of unique russet mold patches that the tending vegepygmies use to infect local fauna and Mwangi natives that venture too close to their territories. In the ruins of recently rediscovered Xin-Shalast, a tribe of advanced hulking vegepygmy warriors watches over the Root of the Tangle, a massive yellow musk creeper that they have come to see as a deity.

Thorny

This mass of plant matter has the general shape and build of an oversized dog. Lacking a head of any kind, its bulk is covered in jagged thorns protruding from its fungal surface.

THORNY	CR 3
XP 800	
N Medium plant	
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -1	
DEFENSE	
AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural)	
hp 26 (4d8+8)	
Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +0	
Defensive Abilities thorny hide; DR 5/slashing or bludgeoning; Immune electricity, plant traits	
OFFENSE	
Speed 40 ft.	
Melee bite +4 (1d6+1 plus poison and trip)	
Ranged thorn cluster +6 (1d3 per thorn/19-20 plus poison)	
STATISTICS	
Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 9	
Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 17 (21 vs. trip)	
Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot	
Skills Acrobatics +7	
Languages Vegepygmy (can't speak)	

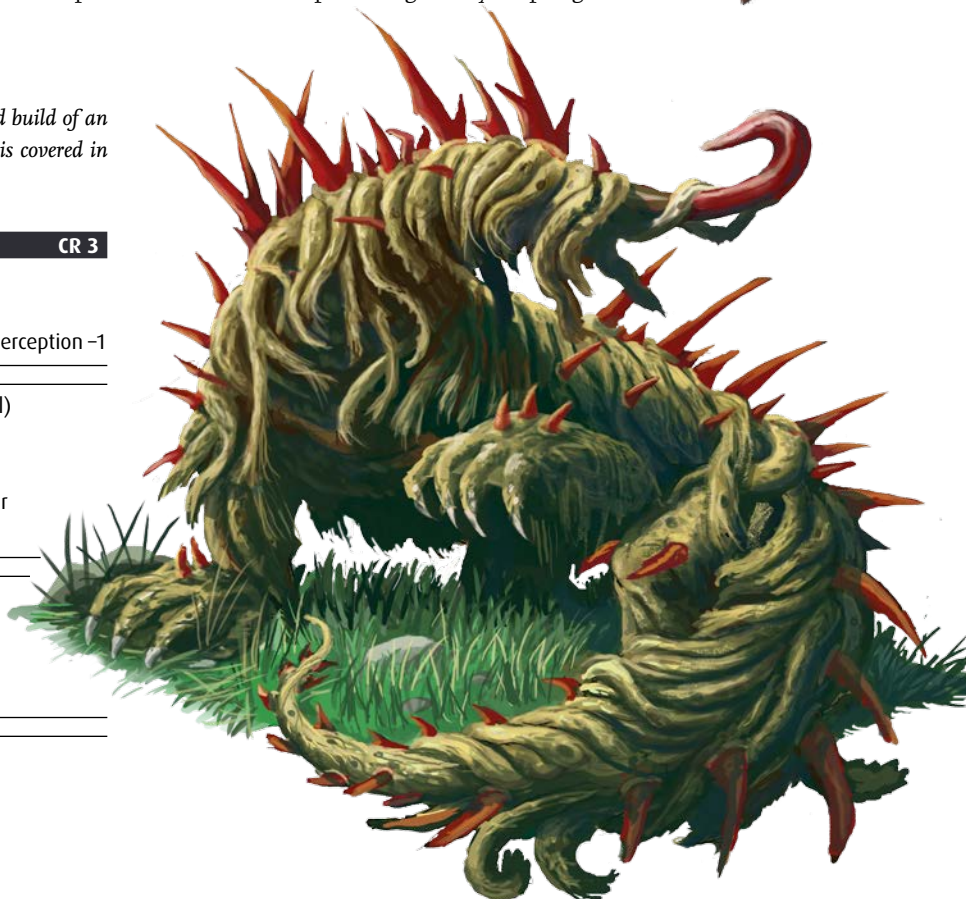
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite or thorns—*injury*; *save* Fort DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 3 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex; *cure* 1 *save*; *special* additional applications of this poison increase the save DC by only 1 instead of 2.

Thorn Cluster (Ex) A thorny can shoot a cluster of thorns from its back as a ranged attack against any target within 30 feet. If the attack hits, the target is struck by 1d3 poisoned thorns, each dealing 1d3 points of piercing damage. Each thorn applies a single dose of the thorny's poison. A successful critical hit on this attack instead means the target has been struck by four poisoned thorns. A thorny can use this ability every 1d3 rounds.

Thorny Hide (Ex) When a thorny is eligible to use its thorn cluster attack, its hide fills with numerous thorns. Creatures grappling or making natural attacks against the thorny immediately take 1d3 points of piercing damage and are each affected by 1 dose of the thorny's poison.

Known by many as “vegepygmy hounds,” these masses of fungal matter dwarf their diminutive vegepygmy kin, but still maintain a strong sense of loyalty to them. Named for the vicious thorns that adorn their backs, thornies infect their prey with a weak paralytic toxin, making the prey susceptible to capture. Creatures infected by russet mold while thorny poison lingers in their systems have a small chance of producing thorny offspring.



Introduction

Drow

Duergar

Gug

Intellect Devourer

Morlock

Munavri

Noethelid

Troglodyte

Urdefhan

Vegepygmy

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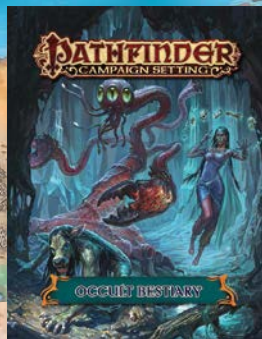
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TERRORS FROM BELOW

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- ▶ Gray-skinned duergar slavers, shunned by all other dwarves for their worship of an evil god.
- ▶ Gugs, the four-armed giants of the Dreamlands' tunnels.
- ▶ Intellect devourers, who remove victims' brains and wear their bodies.
- ▶ Munavris, albino psychics who fight against evil in the deepest depths of the Darklands.
- ▶ Degenerate morlocks, who hunt humans even as they worship them.
- ▶ Wormlike neothelids, plotting to bring their fell gods to Golarion.
- ▶ Troglodytes, the fallen scions of a vast reptilian empire.
- ▶ Vampiric, daemon-crafted urdefhans, eager to spread death and pain.
- ▶ Fungal vegepygmies and the carnivorous mold that births them.

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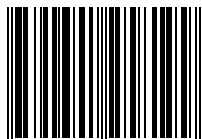
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