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[One of the greatest encounters I ever ran involved a splinterwaif. I was running a game freshman year of college for players with very little to no experience. So when they heard the story in game about the “Crazy Thorn Man”, they wrote it off as flavor. Until they found one stowed away on the ship they were traveling on. The encounter that followed was a nail biter all the way through, as both the players and their characters were genuinely freaked out.]

### **Splinterwaif**

*This spindly humanoid seems to be sculpted from wood—its hair and claws are a tangle of thorns, and its skin has a bark-like texture. A long tongue protrudes from its maw.*

Splinterwaifs are urban fey, creatures to whom a vacant lot or overgrown garden are as beautiful and important as an untamed forest. They are creatures of fear as many urban fey are, seeming to represent the uncertainty of intrusions of nature into supposedly human controlled environments. Splinterwaifs are herbivores of a weird type—their favorite food is wood formed from the flesh of children. They stalk and murder humanoid children, transform them into bushes and then browse from their branches as they will.

Most splinterwaifs live in abandoned alleys, poorly kept cemeteries, and other places where their crop of formerly human bushes would not go remarked upon. They prefer to strike from ambush whenever possible, firing splinters of wood from their long tongues to impale enemies, then dragging them away to transform and consume. Children are their favorite prey—they tend to find adults turned into bushes to be sour and unpalatable. Some splinterwaifs still transform adult victims into vegetation, using them more for decoration or concealment than for food. Splinterwaifs are usually solitary creatures, but in large slums with ample prey sources, they may form gangs led by the cleverest and cruelest member. Splinterwaifs advance by class level, and rogue is the most common

class among them. A splinterwaif stands about five feet tall and is very skinny, weighing no more than eighty pounds.

### **Splinterwaif Boons and Banes** (2<sup>nd</sup> level, CL 3<sup>rd</sup>, DC 14)

As their relationship with humanoids is purely predatory, splinterwaifs are unlikely to bestow either a boon or a bane to them. Some splinterwaif gangs may bestow their boons on wicked humanoids, using them as couriers and spies to find good sources of children to abduct and consume. They then use their bane as punishment for any failures these minions may commit.

**Boon**—You may use the splinterspit ability of a splinterwaif three times per day. This boon lasts for 1 week.

**Bane**—Your flesh becomes partially lignified, giving you the inflexibility of wood. You suffer a -6 penalty to Dexterity. This cannot reduce your Dexterity to 0. This bane is permanent until removed.

### **Splinterwaif CR 2**

#### **XP 600**

NE Medium fey

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision, Perception +8

Defense

**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +2 natural)

**hp** 13 (3d6+3)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

**DR** 5/cold iron; **SR** 8

Offense

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +5 (1d4+1)

**Ranged** splinterspit +5 (1d6+1)

**Special Attacks** call branch

Statistics

**Str** 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +10 (+14 when jumping), Bluff +8, Climb +13, Escape Artist +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +16, Survival +8;

**Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

**Languages** Aklo, Common, Sylvan

**SQ** camouflage, lignify, superior woodland stride

Ecology

**Environment** urban

**Organization** solitary or band (2-6)

**Treasure** standard

Special Abilities

**Call Branch (Su)** As a standard action three times per day, a splinterwaif can cause a branch to grow from any wooden object within 60 feet and attack. The branch makes a claw attack every round, using the splinterwaif's attack and damage bonuses. The branch cannot move from the space it is created in, has 5 hit points, AC 10 and DR 5/slashing. The branch exists for three round or until slain.

**Camouflage (Ex)** A splinterwaif can make Stealth checks in natural terrain without cover or concealment.

**Lignify (Su)** A splinterwaif can transform a dead humanoid or fey into a thorn bush of the creature's size. This takes 1 full minute of concentration. The transformed corpse does not radiate magic. A creature that has been lignified cannot be returned from the dead except through a *miracle*, *wish* or *true resurrection* spell.

**Splinterspit (Su)** As a standard action, a splinterwaif can fire a shard of wood from its mouth. Treat this as a ranged attack with a range increment of 30 feet. It has a range increment and deals damage as if it were a thrown weapon.

**Superior Woodland Stride (Su)** A splinterwaif ignores all difficult terrain from natural and magically enhanced plant life.