

# Random Encounters

## Part of the Pack - New Magic Spells and Items

By Robert Wies



### New Magic Spells and Items

Clevadoran has a new spell or two that he uses to protect the secrecy of his den. These spells were developed with the help of more powerful casters, and in the case of *greater trackless domain*, the other caster developed this extension of the original spell. These spells all deal with covering one's presence or signs of one's presence. He also has an item that allows him to benefit from one of the new spells.

**Cloak of the Servant:** This somewhat worn cloak is drab brown in appearance. It confers the effects of a *servant's guise* spell on the wearer.

*Caster Level:* 1st; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *servant's guise*; *Market Price:* 2,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

#### Servant's Guise

Illusion (Glamour)

**Level:** Rgr 1, Sor/Wiz 0

**Components:** S

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** 10 minutes/level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates (see text)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes



*Servant's guise* allows you to subtly alter your clothing, weapons, and equipment, but not your form, features, or body type, in a manner that makes you unworthy of notice. You must choose the style of clothing and decide what your weapons and equipment look like or whether they appear at all. This spell does not alter the perceived tactile (touch) or audible (sound) properties of you or your equipment. A battleaxe made to look like a dagger or a sash still functions as a battleaxe. If you use this spell to create a disguise, you get a +5 bonus on the Disguise check.

Note: Creatures get Will saves to recognize the glamor as an illusion if they interact with it (such as by touching you and having that not match what they see, in the case of this spell.)

#### Greater Trackless Domain

Transmutation

**Level:** Drd 4, Rgr 3

**Components:** V, S, DF

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Area:** 200-ft.-radius spread

**Duration:** 24 hours

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell, an improved version of *trackless domain*, affects a larger area and allows the caster to select which beings leave tracks in the domain, and which do not. The caster can select one creature, or one subtype of creature (for example, bears as a subtype of animals), per caster level. The selected creatures do not leave any trace in the trackless domain, and all other creatures leave normal signs of their passage. Thus, the caster can set up a trackless domain that allows him to track certain creatures, and not others. For example, if a caster was investigating an area where a lot of one type of animal, say wolves, lived, but wanted to find the elf bounty hunter hiding among them, the caster could set the area so that the elf's tracks remain, and other normal tracks for the area are excluded. It is also useful for hiding the passage of selected people, say a group of adventurers, while not eradicating all tracks in the area.

#### Obliterate Tracks

Transmutation

**Level:** Drd 2, Rgr 1  
**Components:** V, S  
**Casting Time:** 1 action  
**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)  
**Area:** 100-ft.-radius spread  
**Duration:** Instantaneous  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell obliterates all tracks and signs of passage in the area of effect. Scents vanish, broken twigs are repaired, and the area looks as if no one has passed through it in at least a month. The effect is instantaneous, and subsequent signs of passage remain. The spell cannot eliminate the tracks of Huge or larger creatures. Further, it cannot repair anything more than tiny branches on plants; it is not a plant healing spell and does not cure wounds (hit points) suffered by plants.

### **Trackless Domain**

Transmutation  
**Level:** Drd 3, Rgr 2  
**Components:** V, S, DF  
**Casting Time:** 1 action  
**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)  
**Area:** 100-ft.-radius spread  
**Duration:** 24 hours  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell creates an area in which no creatures can be tracked. In effect, all creatures passing through the area are affected by a *pass without trace* spell. The trackless effect affects beings only within the area of effect of the spell; once subjects leave the area they can be tracked normally. For example, if a bear passed into the trackless domain, it would suddenly cease to leave tracks, scent, or any sign of passage. If the bear later left the area at a different point, tracks and scent would resume.

### **Bringing the Parts Together**

Dungeon Masters may want to tie these spells into the campaign through Clevadoran, though it could be clever to allow a foe of Clevadoran's to utilize his own spells against him! Perhaps the PCs become involved in a territory dispute between Clevadoran and another druid. What side would the PCs take?

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## **Random Encounters**

# **Monks of the Burning Tiger - Rod of the Burning Tiger**

*By Eric Cagle*



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***Rod of the Burning Tiger***

Magoun held the rod before him in a single hand, his muscles bulging with wiry strength. He did not seem to notice the black flames that roiled from the rod and licked up his arms. His steely gaze swept across the ranks of black-clad monks before him, who stood rock steady in their fighting stance. "If any of you can take the rod of the burning tiger, symbol of our dedication and might, from my grasp, you shall be named leader of this school," he bellowed. No one moved.

With an annoyed growl, Magoun pressed a button on the rod. It sprang to life, transforming first into a quarterstaff, then an exotic bladed polearm, and finally into twin kamas, held firmly in his grasp. A subtle almost inaudible roar of a tiger seemed to come from the weapons he held. As if on cue, the monks charged as one. The weapons in Magoun's hand morphed as he twirled among them, cutting them down like grass. In mere seconds, he was the only one standing.

"The lesson is complete," he said with a sigh. The rod in his hand began to purr like a contented tiger.

The *rod of the burning tiger* is the most coveted item of the monastery of the same name. The Burning Tiger monks are an evil group that practices their craft in order to rule their land with an iron fist. Their leader, the evil monk Magoun, commonly wields it in combat. The monks will fight to the death to make sure that it does not fall into the hands of anyone but one of their order. When not in use, the rod resides on an altar of jade within the monastery of the monks, which is located in the heart of a burning plain of lava.

At 3 feet long, the *rod of the burning tiger* is larger than most magic rods. It is a thick, black shaft of iron, with numerous fierce tigers carved upon it. These tigers seem to move on their own accord when the rod is still. The ends of the rod are capped with black iron. A nimbus of black, heatless flame constantly flickers about the rod. When used in combat, the rod releases bursts of black (and intensely hot) flame and a stench of brimstone.

In its regular form, the rod acts like a +2 *flaming burst light mace*. The following spell-like functions can each be used once per day, all as if cast by a 12th-level sorcerer:

- *Haste* on the wielder.
- *Cat's grace* on the wielder.
- *Magic circle against chaos* centered on the rod.

There are four small hidden buttons along the side that turn the rod into a variety of monk weapons. Pressing the first button (and requiring a standard action) separates the rod in two and curved blades spring out from either end, turning them into two +1 *flaming burst kamas*. By placing the rods together and pressing the button (a standard action), the rod resumes its original form.

The second button elongates the rod, and two crescent shape blades spring out at either end, turning the rod into a +1 *flaming burst lajatang* (both ends). It requires a standard action to activate or deactivate this ability.

The third button transforms the rod into a +2 *flaming burst three-section staff*. It is a standard action to activate or deactivate this ability.

The last button elongates the rod into a +2 *flaming burst quarterstaff* (both ends). It is a standard action to activate or deactivate this ability.

The *rod of the burning tiger* is a lawful item and any chaotic character attempting to wield it gains two negative levels. These negative levels remain as long as the rod is in hand and they disappear when the rod is no longer wielded. These negative levels never result in actual level loss, but they cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the rod is wielded.

**Caster Level:** 12th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Rod, *cat's grace*, *haste*, *magic circle against chaos*, *magic weapon*, *order's wrath*, *produce flame*; **Market Price:** 192,016 gp.

### Bringing the Parts Together

If the PCs haven't yet stumbled across the Burning Tiger monks, perhaps they are sent out on a mission to find out as much as possible about an item called the *rod of the burning tiger*.

### Coming in Part 5 of the Monks of the Burning Tiger

The Trial of the Burning Tiger may bring about the death of more than one participant.



# Random Encounters

## Pets of Any Stripe

By Robert Wiese



### New Transmutation Spells

Since the work done at Skye's requires unique spells, Maephus has researched or has contributed work to each of the following spells. The new spells deal with transforming creatures into other creatures, and they complement the *polymorph* spells.

#### Mind of a Beast

Transmutation [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 4

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

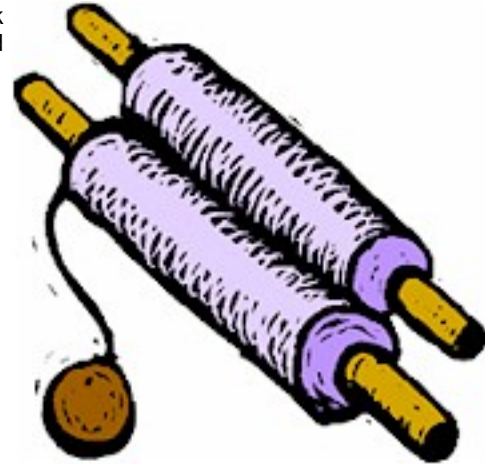
**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** 1 minute/level

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes



*Mind of a beast* transforms the mentality of the subject into that of an animal or beast. The spell suppresses the target's own personality, mental awareness, and memories, and it puts in their place the average mental abilities and knowledge of a creature of type animal or beast whose Intelligence is 2 or lower. The caster selects the animal or beast type (bird, bear, owlbear, and so on) when the spell is cast. The target then acts as a normal creature of that type for the duration of the spell. For example, a target succumbing to "*mind of a wolf*" might fight to defend young wolves, but might run if a threat presented itself.

Unless another spell is already affecting the subject that changes these traits, it retains its type (for example, "humanoid"), physical traits (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), body shape, natural attacks and damage, base saves, and speed, and gains the average Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma of the creature type. It gains the skills of an average creature of its type (modified by the target's physical abilities rather than the animal's), and it cannot use the skills of the original mentality. The spell does not grant any supernatural, spell-like, or extraordinary abilities of the creature type, and though the target retains its extraordinary abilities, it does not know how to use them if the animal or beast type does not also possess them. The target can use any feats of the original mentality that the creature mentality also possesses. The supernatural and spell-like abilities of the target's original mentality are not available to the animal consciousness, nor are any of the target's memories.

The animal mentality is not surprised or disoriented by its sudden existence, and it does not question that its body does not match the usual for its type. The animal mentality assumes that it belongs in the body it occupies and does the best it can. Thus, a target suffering from *mind of a deer* would run on two legs instead of trying to run on all fours, and a target suffering from *mind of a snake* would not try to slither. The animal mentality also does not question how it got into the situation it is in when the spell effect begins. It does have all the racial knowledge of an adult of its type, so it knows how to attack, run, what constitute threats, what it should be eating, and so forth. During the spell duration, others can speak to the mentality using the *speak with animals* spell if the new mentality is an animal type.

This spell can be made permanent by use of the *permanency* spell, but the caster must be at least 13th level and spend 2,000 XP in the endeavor. The spell cannot be used on targets that have no Intelligence.

**Material Component:** A small bit of brain matter from an animal or beast that has been dead no more than one hour. The brain matter may be carefully preserved for later use. The brain matter need not be from the creature type chosen in casting the spell, but it must be from a creature of the animal or beast type.

#### Mind of Another

Transmutation [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 7

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Target:** One creature

**Duration:** 1 hour/level  
**Saving Throw:** Will negates  
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

An improved version of the *mind of a beast* spell, *mind of another* transforms the subject's mentality into that of an aberration, animal, beast, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, or vermin, and there is no maximum Intelligence limit. The caster chooses a creature (for example, "stone giant" or "nymph") upon casting the spell. Making this spell permanent requires a 16th-level caster and the expenditure of 3,500 XP. Otherwise the spell works exactly the same as the *mind of a beast* spell.

**Material Component:** A small bit of brain matter is required, but it can be from any creature of the types listed for this spell.

### Bringing the Parts Together

Perhaps the characters come across someone who wishes to have access to Maephus's spellbook. Will they assist in this endeavor? What story will this person come up with to convince the PCs to assist him or her? Will the PCs do it?

### Coming in Part 5 of the Pets of Any Stripe

See some more developed adventure hooks that you can use with the pet store!

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## Random Encounters

# Spider, Spider, Burning Bright ...

By Ramon Arjona



### The Sword of Selvetarm

Son of the Spider Queen, Champion of Lolth, the Spider That Waits -- these are the titles of the drow god that is known as Selvetarm. A vassal of Lolth, he serves her without question despite the deep hatred he harbors for her and for every other living being. As the patron of drow warriors, he inspires the dark elf military to hone their fighting skills and to seek out bloodshed.

Selvetarm's favored weapon is a heavy mace named *Venomance*. However, his warriors specialize in many forms of combat, including the two-handed fighting styles favored by the drow. To empower these warriors and further the cause of Lolth against her many enemies, Selvetarm gave his sword to a powerful dark elf warrior. For decades, the foul blade has been lost in the Underdark. It is only a matter of time, however, before the blade is discovered. If Lolth's enemies uncover it, they will perhaps have opportunity to destroy it. If, however, the followers of Selvetarm find the sword first, they will have a powerful weapon to use in their endless battles against the foes of the Queen of the Demonweb pits.

In the hands of a nondrow evil character, the *Sword of Selvetarm* functions as a +2 *longsword*. If a nonevil character attempts to wield the Sword, it bestows 2 negative levels on her. Although these negative levels never result in actual level loss, they remain as long as the sword is in the wielder's possession and cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells). The negative levels disappear when the sword leaves the wearer's possession.



In the hands of an evil drow, however, the true power of the sword emerges.

- It functions as a +5 *elf bane unholy vorpal longsword*.
- The wielder gains a +5 enhancement bonus to Dexterity.
- The wielder gains an additional +10 enhancement bonus on Hide checks.

- The wielder can rage as though a 16th-level barbarian.
- The wielder can cast at will as if a 16th-level caster: *spider climb*, *web*.
- Once a day, the wielder can cast as if a 16th-level caster: *fire spider*, *phantom steed*.
- Once a month, the wielder can summon a yochlol, which will allow the user to commune with Lolth or Selvetarm on their home plane, the Demonweb.

The sword is intelligent (Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 19, Ego 25) and lawful evil. It does not like to be kept from battle, and it will try to propel its owner into any fight. The sword cannot speak, except to call out the name of Selvetarm in the heat of combat, but it can communicate telepathically with its owner. It will attempt to dominate any nondrow who wields it, forcing them to support the cause of Selvetarm and Lolth.

To destroy the sword, it must be forced to deal damage to either Lolth or Selvetarm while located in the Demonweb.

### Introducing the *Sword of Selvetarm* to Your Campaign

- While trekking through an unexplored part of the Underdark, the PCs stumble on the skeleton of a drow warrior, clutching a stainless sword in his hand. The sword attempts to dominate the first PC that picks it up and forces the PC to return it to the soldiers of Selvetarm located in Menzoberranzan. Alternatively, the sword might attempt to persuade the PC to take up the cause of Selvetarm and slay a powerful enemy of the drow that lurks nearby.
- The PCs are charged with finding the sword and destroying it. However, Naradna the drider also wants the sword so that she can forward her campaign of genocide against the drow. Rather than confront the players, she offers a compromise: if the PCs work with her to find the sword, she will first use it to eradicate the drow before helping the PCs uncover the means of destroying the evil blade. Naradna knows the secret to the sword's destruction and is willing to share it with the PCs when she feels the time is right -- indeed, she hopes the PCs will take the blade to the Demonweb and turn it on Lolth herself, hopefully destroying the Spider Queen in the process and erasing what will by then be, she hopes, the last trace of the drow.
- The drow have recovered the sword and with it plan to launch a bloody campaign against the surface elves. The PCs may not want to confront the dark elf host directly, but perhaps they can infiltrate the dark elf ranks and steal the sword from them, thus depriving the drow of their primary advantage.

### Bringing the Parts Together

As mentioned in the section on Naradna, she wishes to find the sword. Perhaps Derrin, on Naradna's behalf, presents the group of PCs with a mission: Find the whereabouts of the sword, and the PCs will be well rewarded. If you wish to be sneaky about it, you may want to set up another item that was also lost with the sword that the PCs are to seek out. Since Naradna would presumably know that if you find one, you find the other, this more innocuous item could cause the PCs to bite the bait.

**Coming in Part 4 of Spider, Spider, Burning Bright . . .**

Find the Courtyard of Spiders and see what dangers lurk there.

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## Random Encounters **Ways of the Sword**

*By Robert Wiese*




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### Arcane Duelist Prestige Class



The duelist is a well-known figure in many taverns, streets, and roadways. Exchanging bulk for speed, the duelist's sword flashes as its wielder mocks her heavier, slower opponents. However, not all possess the skill of the duelist. Some, like the arcane duelist, attempt to achieve through spells and trickery what the duelist achieves through skill.

The arcane duelist is a tricky, evasive opponent who relies on her foe's perceptions of her abilities as much as her actual abilities. Through magic, the arcane duelist can appear to be as dangerous as a duelist, but in general she does not do as much damage to her opponents. She prefers to win by cowing her opponent into defeating himself. Thus, Dexterity and Charisma are the arcane duelist's most valuable ability scores.

Rogues, bards, and sorcerers make excellent arcane duelists, since each class hides its own surprises in addition to this class's abilities. Some fighters become arcane duelists if they prefer not to kill opponents unless absolutely necessary. Paladin arcane duelists are unheard-of because of the trickery involved, and barbarians don't usually have the subtlety for the class. Humans and elves become arcane duelists more often than dwarves or half-orcs, but halfling and gnome arcane duelists are not uncommon.

**Hit Dice:** d8.

**Requirements**

To qualify to become an arcane duelist, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6.

**Skills:** Perform 5 ranks, Tumble 5 ranks.

**Feats:** Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Proficiency (rapier, short sword, dagger, or any variation of these weapons as given in *Sword and Fist*).

**Spellcasting:** Able to cast 1st-level arcane spells.

**Class Skills**

The arcane duelist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex). See Chapter 4: Skills in the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

**Class Features**

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Arcane duelists gain no weapon or armor proficiencies. Arcane duelists are not proficient with armor.

**Chosen Weapon:** Since much of the arcane duelist's apparent ability is tied to magic, the arcane duelist can imbue a specific melee weapon with powers to make herself appear more skilled. The arcane duelist must choose a specific melee weapon to be her chosen weapon. If that melee weapon is lost, she can choose another, but it takes seven days for a chosen weapon to bond to the arcane duelist so that she can use it with other powers of this class.

**Enchant Chosen Weapon (Ex):** The arcane duelist's chosen melee weapon acts as if it has an enhancement bonus, even if it does not. If it does have an enhancement bonus, the arcane duelist adds this bonus to the weapon as an effective bonus. This can bring a weapon's effective enhancement bonus above +5. However, no weapon can have more than a +10 total effective bonus, so this class-granted effective bonus cannot be added to a weapon if the addition would increase the weapon's total effective bonus above +10. This class-granted bonus works only for the arcane duelist when wielding her chosen melee weapon. The enhancement bonus is +1 at 1st level, and rises to +2 at 4th level, +3 at 6th level, and +4 at 8th level.

**Apparent Defense (Ex):** Due to trickery and force of personality, the arcane duelist adds her Charisma bonus to her Armor Class, in addition to her Dexterity bonus. Conditions that cause the arcane duelist to lose her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class also cause the arcane duelist to lose this bonus.

**Dexterous Attack (Ex):** Because the arcane duelist values successful hits over actual damage dealt, she can subtract damage from her chosen melee weapon's potential damage and add the same amount to her attack bonus. However, the weapon must do a minimum 1 point of damage. For example, the arcane duelist who wields a rapier as her chosen weapon can subtract up to 5 points from the damage, since the rapier has a damage potential of 6 points, and add that to her attack bonus. If she were wielding a +3 rapier, she could subtract up to 8 points from damage, since the weapon has a damage potential of 9 points, and add that to her attack bonus. The arcane duelist declares this power before rolling her attack, and the amount subtracted cannot exceed her base attack bonus.



**Blur (Sp):** The arcane duelist can activate a *blur* effect, as the spell cast by a caster of her arcane duelist level. She can use this power once per day per arcane duelist level.

**False Keenness (Ex):** To create the idea that she is more effective than she really is, the arcane duelist can make her chosen melee weapon *keen* once per day per arcane duelist level. To activate the *keen* effect, she must subtract the weapon's normal threat range for critical hits from her attack bonus. For example, if the arcane duelist wields a rapier, she must subtract 3 from her attack bonus, since the rapier has a threat range of 18-20, to make it *keen*. The *keen* effect lasts for 1 round per arcane duelist level, and it does not stack with the *keen edge* spell or other magical effects that make a weapon *keen*. The ability does stack with the increased threat range granted by the Improved Critical feat and by a *keen* magic weapon. If the arcane duelist uses this power in conjunction with the dexterous attack power, the damage dealt by a critical hit is reduced by the weapon's critical multiplier. Thus, the arcane duelist wielding a rapier and using dexterous attack to reduce the damage by 4 on her rapier has it reduced by 12 if she scores a critical hit using this power. The weapon must still do a minimum 1 point of damage.

**Mirror Image (Sp):** The arcane duelist can activate *mirror image* effect as the spell cast by a caster of her arcane duelist level.

**Flurry of Swords (Ex):** The pinnacle of the arcane duelist's power is to create a flurry of sword attacks against a single target. When this power is activated, the arcane duelist makes one additional attack each round at her highest base attack bonus, but each attack that round suffers a -2 penalty. All attacks must be made on the same opponent. Further, the arcane duelist creates 1d4 quasi-real images plus 1 additional image per three levels of arcane duelist. Each image attacks the same opponent as the arcane duelist herself using the same bonuses as the arcane duelist, and any hits do subdual damage to the target. This power is usable once per day per arcane duelist level, but only once per day against any opponent. It requires the full-attack action to use this power. Aside from these differences, the images act as the *mirror image* spell.

| The Arcane Duelist |                   |           |             |           |                                         |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------|
| Class Level        | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Reflex Save | Will Save | Special                                 |
| 1                  | +0                | +0        | +2          | +2        | Chosen weapon, Enchant chosen weapon +1 |
| 2                  | +1                | +0        | +3          | +3        | Apparent defense                        |
| 3                  | +1                | +1        | +3          | +3        | Dexterous attack                        |
| 4                  | +2                | +1        | +4          | +4        | Enchant chosen weapon +2                |
| 5                  | +2                | +1        | +4          | +4        | <i>Blur</i>                             |
| 6                  | +3                | +2        | +5          | +5        | Enchant chosen weapon +3                |
| 7                  | +3                | +2        | +5          | +5        | False keenness                          |
| 8                  | +4                | +2        | +6          | +6        | Enchant chosen weapon +4                |
| 9                  | +4                | +3        | +6          | +6        | <i>Mirror image</i>                     |
| 10                 | +5                | +3        | +7          | +7        | Flurry of swords                        |

Bringing the Parts Together

You may wish to introduce an NPC that uses this prestige class to your campaign via a conflict with a duelist from the academy in the first random encounter in this series. You could also allow one of the PCs to take this prestige class, thus automatically setting the character up with an instant opposition: the Way of the Flashing Blade Academy.

Coming in Part 3 of Ways of the Sword  
The Cat's Claw Dueling Pride is detailed in the next week's installment!

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## Random Encounters

# The Crawling Jungle

By James Jacobs



### The Cult of the Ravenous Maw

The foul Cult of the Ravenous Maw is based in the stinking depths of the Crawling Jungle. New cultists are often indoctrinated into the ranks when the jungle awakens and manifests after its hundred-year dormancy; those creatures that don't flee in terror or aren't quickly slain by the jungle's dangers often become enthralled by the jungle's evil beauty. These cultists can be of any race, but they are most often elves since the Crawling Jungle seems to have a strange predisposition to manifest near or in elven lands. As part of their indoctrination to the cult, these new cultists are brought before the Ravenous Maw, where the fell energies of the N'gharl Seed infuse them with fiendish power (as detailed in Part 4 of The Crawling Jungle).

The cult typically takes only a few months to reach stability once the Crawling Jungle manifests. The cult itself is nomadic, since the jungle itself moves as the Ravenous Maw wanders the landscape, but the cult leaders tend to stay near the center of the jungle. All cult members have at least one druid level; none of them are clerics. All druids of the Ravenous Maw take the Tainted Druid feat as soon as they can since they have little access to normal animals in the Crawling Jungle to befriend with the *animal friendship* spell. Indeed, most normal animals wouldn't last long in the Crawling Jungle.

The cult typically organizes into one of four types of groups. Hunting parties provide food for the rest of the cultists, and patrols scour the jungle for any sign of intrusion from beyond its borders. Slave caravans are the only groups found outside of the jungle, since they stage raids on nearby towns and roads so they can kidnap more slaves (who generally have only short periods of servitude before they are sacrificed to the Ravenous Maw). A fourth type of group is the warband (an extra large patrol led by a cult high priest). These large groups are typically mobilized only if the cult determines a powerful enemy force has invaded the Crawling Jungle.



#### Typical Ravenous Maw Cultist Groups

**Hunting Party:** 4 acolytes, 1 marauder.

**Patrol:** 4 marauders.

**Slave Caravan:** 3 marauders, 1 priest, 3d6 slaves (usually 1st-level commoner humans).

**Warband:** 6 marauders, 2 priests, 1 high priest.

**Acolyte:** Druids of the Ravenous Maw are considered acolytes until they master the cult's traditional fighting style: dual-wielding a pair of sickles in combat in homage to their Ravenous lord. Mastering this style requires two of the following feats: Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting Style, or Weapon Focus (sickle). Since most of these druids have Tainted Druid as their 1st-level feat, they usually remain acolytes until 6th level. Those who have a few fighter levels (for bonus feats) or a ranger level find that, unless they have druid, fighter, or ranger as a favored class, their progress in the cult hierarchy quickly becomes stunted.

**Marauder:** Some druids have little interest in achieving the rank of cult priest and would rather wallow in the savagery of combat and the hunt. These cultists are known as marauders and are multiclass barbarian/druids. Once they gain the ability to *wild shape*, they prefer to spend as much time as possible in various *wild shape* forms, combining their barbarian rage ability with the powerful natural attacks of their new form with devastating effect. Marauders serve as the guardians and warriors for the cult.

**Priest:** Once an acolyte of the cult masters the cult's fighting style, she becomes a priest of the cult. Priests generally remain near the core of the Crawling Jungle so that they can better serve the high priests and the Ravenous Lord. They do accompany slave caravans and warbands as needed, but otherwise are only rarely found in the outer reaches of the jungle. Priests of the Crawling Jungle are expected to take at least

two item creation feats as they gain levels; those who do not gain the ability to craft various magic items are quickly shunned, excommunicated, and eaten.

**High Priest:** Traditionally, only five high priests are active at any one time in the Crawling Jungle. The cult has no official ruling that keeps this number to five, but infighting and sabotage tend to keep the number to a healthy minimum. To achieve the rank of high priest, a priest must first gain at least two item creation feats in addition to all three of the cult's favored combat feats (Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting, and Weapon Focus [sickle]). To prove her might, a high priest-to-be must personally cast the *awaken* spell on no less than three creatures native to the Crawling Jungle and must also be able to assume *wild shape* forms of at least Huge size.

### **Tainted Druid [General]**

Your druidic powers are tainted by fiendish influences.

**Prerequisite:** You must forsake all that is good and peaceful in the natural world. Typically, this means you must be an outsider with the Evil subtype, possess the Fiendish template, or be undead. Other unique qualifiers could apply, based on the DM's discretion.

**Benefit:** All of your spells and abilities that normally apply to animals now apply only to animals, vermin, or beasts that have the fiendish template. You can gain a fiendish animal/beast companion with the *animal friendship* spell (but not fiendish vermin, since they are immune to mind-affecting magic), can summon fiendish animals/beasts/vermin with *summon nature's ally* spells, can *awaken* fiendish animals/beasts/vermin, and can increase the size of fiendish animals/beasts/vermin with the *animal growth* spell. You can also assume the form of a fiendish animal/beast/vermin with *wild shape*, although this feat does not allow you to gain any of the new form's supernatural abilities.

### **Introducing the Cult of the Ravenous Maw to Your Campaign**

- The N'gharl Seed manifests somewhere in the world, and the surviving Cultists of the Ravenous Maw sense its return and awaken. The PCs might encounter one of these groups of cultists while on the road, or perhaps a group of them passes through a village the PCs are staying in and they start causing trouble.
- The party is called upon to protect a frontier town that has been attacked several times by a particularly violent and disturbing tribe of barbarians. These barbarians are led by several marauder cultists of the Ravenous Maw who survived the latest banishing of the Crawling Jungle, and they have turned their attention to building up a horde of minions while they await the return of their lord.
- The Tainted Druid feat could be used by any strange or sinister sect of druids in your world. Perhaps a wood that is rumored to be haunted is in fact the lair of a night hag druid who has the Tainted Druid feat and is attended by fiendish dire animals. The night hag may be searching for a way to transform all of the animal life in her wood into fiendish animals, just to make a home away from home.

### **Bringing the Parts Together**

Cultists of the Ravenous Maw are certainly the most common foe adventurers encounter as they explore the Crawling Jungle. Perhaps the PCs run into some cultists after they've already been weakened by disease.

**Coming in Part 4 of the Crawling Jungle**  
**In the final part of The Crawling Jungle random encounters,**  
**you'll find full statistics for Azuvidexus, the Ravenous Maw!**

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# Random Encounters

## Fharlanghn's Garden

By Stan!



### The Milestone and the Rod of Leagues

What is it that every hero needs to complete a quest? Some would answer that philosophically by saying bravery or determination. Others would be pragmatic and say a sword or other weapon. Worshipers of Fharlanghn, though, will without hesitation tell you that the answer is a road.

Whether it is literal or figurative, every quest follows a path, and the only way to successfully complete the task at hand is to follow that path to its ultimate end. Of course, the more significant the quest is, the more winding the road will be, and the more side roads will lead away from the true goal. Correctly navigating these avenues and byways is the key to success.

As the god of roads, Fharlanghn might also be considered the god of quests. Over the years, his devotees have invented a pair of magic items designed to make it easier to find one's way along the road of life.

**Milestone:** This small pendant, worn around the neck, is shaped like a marker one might find at a crossroads. Made of granite, each of its four sides is engraved with one of the cardinal compass points. By concentrating for 1 round, the wearer can identify any compass direction she can name (examples include north, southwest, and east-northeast).

At will, someone wearing a *milestone* can find the shortest, most direct physical route to any location, as if she was the target of a *find the path* spell. To begin this effect, the wearer must spend 1 minute concentrating on the intended location. Once the stone is focused, it displays the current distance between the wearer and the intended locale. The distance appears as a number apparently carved on the appropriate face of the *milestone*. If the locale lies two miles to the north, a number 2 would appear on the side of the stone marked "North." Distance is measured in quarter mile units, and the distance may appear on two separate faces. (For example, distance might appear on both the north and west faces if the locale lies to the northwest).

**Caster Level:** 6th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *find the path*; **Market Price:** 64,800 gp; **Weight:** --.

**Rod of Leagues:** This sturdy, 5-foot tall wooden rod looks like a walking stick (and can be used as one) and has the names of various cities, villages, and historical sites carved across its length. Once per day the rod may be activated to grant the wielder the benefits of an *expeditious retreat* spell; these effects last for up to 8 hours. If the wielder performs any action other than a move or free action, the effect ends immediately. When the effect ends, the wielder is fatigued.

Additionally, if a character casts a *teleport* spell while holding a *rod of leagues*, he may consider any locale that appears on the rod as someplace with which he is "very familiar." A *rod of leagues* can hold the names of up to 10 locales. When the rod is created, the creator may inscribe any 10 locales with which she is already very familiar; thereafter, the wielder may replace any of the existing locales with a locale of his choice. To do so, the wielder must currently be in the locale that he is adding and must spend 10 minutes using a dagger or other blade to carve the name of that place onto the rod on top of the locale that is being eliminated. Instead of wearing the rod away, the old locale name is magically erased and replaced with the new name. Once completed, the locale name appears in the normal handwriting of the carver, as though written with a fine pen rather than carved with a blade.

**Caster Level:** 10th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Rod, *expeditious retreat*; **Market Price:** 21,000 gp; **Weight:** 5 lb.

#### Using the Milestone and Rod of Leagues Together

The *milestone* and *rod of leagues* are remarkably useful items, and they were created to celebrate the glory of Fharlanghn's providence. However, they have an additional function known only by the most faithful servants of the Dweller on the Horizon. The following information will be common knowledge to any cleric of Fharlanghn who has reached 8th level or higher. Other characters may discover it by succeeding at a bardic knowledge or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 30) or through use of the *legend lore* spell.



If one person holds both a *milestone* and a *rod of leagues*, a new place name appears on the rod. A wielder who is not specifically looking for this additional name must make a Spot check (DC 15) to notice it. The place name is "Journey's End." Unless the character succeeds at one of the Knowledge checks described above, this name has no meaning to him, and it cannot be found on any maps. Those who know say that Journey's End is a garden favored by Fharlanghn -- a blessed place where a traveler can find comfort, rest, and safety.

The *milestone* reveals the distance and direction to Journey's End only to someone who wields a *rod of leagues*. And although the rod cannot be used as a focus to *teleport* there (it is the one locale that is exempt to the rod's power), a wielder who also has a *milestone* can double the rod's movement abilities when traveling to Journey's End.

## Bringing the Parts Together

Although random encounters usually happen by chance, some DMs may wish to tie these five parts together into something that could lead to further adventures. Obviously, introducing both items into your campaign allows PCs to venture forth on a journey to Journey's End!

## Coming in Part 2 of Fharlanghn's Garden

In the second part, learn about the eternal pilgrimage.

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# Random Encounters The Shadow Glade

By Jesse Decker



## The Touch of Shadow and the Shadow-Bound

With the mastery of shadow that they learned in perfecting the ritual that formed the Shadow Glade, the shadar-kai wizards also learned to bind the stuff of shadow to living creatures. These creatures, although not as powerful as shadow creatures from the Plane of Shadow, make excellent scouts and provide the shadar-kai with expendable troops.

Although the shadar-kai wizards have used this ritual to corrupt many of the forest's creatures, their most powerful success came in the form of a group of human druids. The druids, not expecting to encounter spellcasters as powerful and stealthy as the shadar-kai, fell one-by-one to the spells of the shadow fey and then became bound to shadow itself. As the DM, you may determine the exact number of druids bound by the shadow fey. A druid who escaped the machinations of the shadar-kai would also make a great hook to bring the characters into conflict with the denizens of the Shadow Glade.



## Shadow-Bound Druid

**Shadow-Bound Druid:** Male human Druid 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d8+14; hp 45; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/x3, +1 *shortspear*) or +7 ranged (1d8+1/x3, +1 *shortspear*); Full Atk +7 melee

(1d8+2/x3, +1 *shortspear*) or +7 ranged (1d8+1/x3, +1 *shortspear*); SQ animal companion (brown bear), low-light vision, nature sense, resist nature's lure, shadow blend, shadow curse, *shadow walk*, trackless step, wild shape (Small or Medium animal 3/day), woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +12, Handle Animal +9, Heal +14, Hide +5, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +9, Move Silently +5, Ride +3, Survival +6; Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Penetration.

**Animal Companion (Ex):** This druid has a brown bear as an animal companion. This creature is a loyal companion that accompanies the shadow-bound druid on adventures as appropriate for its kind. See the Monster Manual page 269 for the brown bear's statistics. The druid gains the following benefits.

**Link with Companion (Ex):** This shadow-bound druid can handle his animal companion as a free action, or push it as a move action, with a +4 bonus on wild empathy and Handle Animal checks made while dealing with that animal.

**Share Spells (Ex):** This shadow-bound druid may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his animal companion if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. The shadow-bound druid may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on his animal companion.

**Nature Sense (Ex):** This shadow-bound druid gains a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks (these bonuses are included in the statistics given above).

**Resist Nature's Lure (Ex):** This shadow-bound druid gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against the spell-like abilities of fey.

**Shadow Blend (Su):** In conditions other than full daylight, a shadow-bound druid can wrap himself in shadows, giving him concealment. Attacks against a creature with concealment suffer a 20% miss chance (see Chapter 8: Combat in the *Player's Handbook* for more information on concealment). Artificial illumination, even a *light* or *continual flame* spell, does not negate this ability. A *daylight* spell, however, will.

**Shadow Curse (Su):** The shadow-bound druid does not suffer the effects of the shadow curse while within the Glade of Shadows.

**Shadow Walk (Sp):** The shadow-bound druid can use *shadow walk*, as the spell of the same name, except that the ability works only on the shadow-bound druid. Caster level 7th.

**Trackless Step (Ex):** This shadow-bound druid leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

**Wild Shape (Su):** This shadow-bound druid can change into a Small or Medium animal and back again three times per day, as per the polymorph spell (except as noted in the *Player's Handbook* in the druid entry in Chapter 3).

**Woodland Stride (Ex):** This shadow-bound druid may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at its normal speed and without damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are magically manipulated to impede motion still affect the druid.

**Druid Spells Prepared** (6/5/4/3/2; save DC 14 + spell level, or 15 + spell level for conjuration spells): 0 -- *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *virtue*; 1st -- *cure light wounds*, *entangle*, *faerie fire*, *longstrider*, *produce flame*; 2nd -- *barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *flaming sphere*, *resist energy*; 3rd -- *call lightning*, *cure moderate wounds*, *greater magic fang*; 4th -- *cure serious wounds*, *flame strike*.

**Possessions:** +1 *leather armor*, +1 *shortspear*, *potion of bear's endurance*, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *cloak of resistance* +1, *periapt of Wisdom* +2, 38 gp.

## Creating a Shadow-Bound Creature

"Shadow-bound" is an acquired template that can be added to any aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, or vermin.

A shadow-bound creature has all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Size and Type:** Animals and vermin with the shadow-bound template become magical beasts (with the augmented animal or augmented vermin subtype respectively). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. All other types remain unchanged. The creature's size remains unchanged.

**Special Qualities:** A shadow-bound creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A shadow-bound creature can see twice as far as a human in dim lighting.

*Shadow Blend (Su):* In conditions other than full daylight, a shadow-bound creature can wrap itself in shadows, giving it concealment. Attacks against a creature with concealment suffer a 20% miss chance (see the Chapter 8: Combat in the *Player's Handbook* for more information on concealment). Artificial illumination, even a *light* or *continual flame* spell, does not negate this ability. A *daylight* spell, however, will.

*Shadow Curse (Su):* The Plane of Shadow exerts a tremendous pull on shadow-bound creature's soul, which is only tenuously connected to its mortal body. Any time a shadow-bound creature is stunned, dazed, staggered, or unconscious (other than from natural sleep), the creature must make a Will save (DC 15) or lose a portion of her soul to the Plane of Shadow. The shadow-bound creature must also attempt a save any time she removes a gal-ralan, if she has one (see Shadar-Kai Items, from the *Fiend Folio*). A shadow-bound creature with a damaged soul gains one negative level that cannot be removed until it restores its soul completely. If exposed to another event that requires a save against the shadow curse, a shadow-bound creature may gain additional negative levels. A shadow-bound creature on the Plane of Shadow can transfix her soul to her body again with a *greater restoration* spell. A shadow-bound creature on the Material Plane (or elsewhere) must use a *wish* or *miracle* spell to restore her soul. A shadow-bound creature afflicted with the shadow curse cannot be raised from the dead or resurrected, and it cannot gain experience. The touch of the shadow curse galls a shadow-bound creature, filling its heart with an icy emptiness that eventually drives all but the most determined creatures to capitulate and leave the Material Plane altogether. A shadow-bound creature who goes to the Plane of Shadow and remains there ameliorates the effects of the shadow curse and suffers no ill effects. However, if it leaves the Plane of Shadow without restoring its soul, it suffers the effects of the shadow curse until it returns to the Plane of Shadow or restores its soul.

*Shadow Walk (Sp):* The shadow-bound creature can *shadow walk*, as the spell of the same name, except that the ability works only on the shadow-bound creature. Caster level equals the creature's HD.

**Skills:** A shadow-bound creature gains +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as base creature.

**Alignment:** Same as base creature (often changes to evil)

**Level Adjustment:** +1

In addition to the statistics noted above, shadow-bound creatures in the Shadow Glade have been turned to evil and follow the instructions of the shadar-kai wizards at the glade's heart.

**Note:** DMs making regular use of the shadow-bound template in their game should be prepared to quantify the ritual needed to bind a creature to shadow and apply the template. Characters can learn the ritual by making a Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 35). The day-long ritual requires the casting of the *shadow walk* spell by an arcane spellcaster of at least 9th level. The ritual requires the caster to expend 100 XP and must be performed in a place with a close natural connection to the Plane of Shadow, such as the Shadow Glade.

**Bringing the Parts Together**

As the taint of shadow spreads, the characters might seek to penetrate the depths of the Shadow Glade, encountering scouts, denizens, and the touch of the Plane of Shadow itself over the course of several adventures.

**Coming in Part 4 of the Shadow Glade**

In the final part of The Shadow Glade, you can confront the shadar-kai wizards lurking at the heart of the glade.

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## Random Encounters

### Gold!

By Robert Wiese



## Golden Spells

In the pursuit of gold, a great many have lost their lives. Wizards who have been especially annoyed by this have, over the centuries, developed some spells particular to finding, or making, gold. Bards have created their own versions of some of the spells.

### Fool's Gold

Illusion (Glamer)

**Level:** Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 2

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target:** One nonmagical object of up to 1 lb. per caster level

**Duration:** 1 hour per caster level

**Saving Throw:** Will disbelief

**Spell Resistance:** No



*Fool's gold* causes an object appear to be made of gold. The object does not actually change, but it takes on the appearance of gold. Anyone appraising the object must first make a saving throw (or make an Appraise skill check, whichever is higher). Those who fail the saving throw or skill check set a value to the item as if the item were gold. Using an effect similar to a *true seeing* spell can reveal the object for what it really is.

### Gold Finder

Divination

**Level:** Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Area:** Cone-shaped emanation

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 min./level

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

You can sense the presence of gold within the range of the spell. The amount of information revealed depends on how long you study a particular area.

*1st Round:* Presence or absence of gold.

*2nd Round:* Number of different accumulations of gold, and relative size of each. An accumulation is a single pile of gold or golden objects, no matter how large. A pile of gold is a collection of gold objects that all touch each other.

*3rd Round:* Approximate value and location of each pile of gold. The approximate value is for the whole pile, not for individual objects within it. Getting the approximate value requires a successful Appraise check (DC 15).

Each round, you can turn to detect sources of gold in a new area. The spell can penetrate barriers more easily than other detection spells, since it is designed to find treasure hidden in vaults. The spell is blocked by 3 feet of stone, earth, wood, or dirt, or 1 foot of any metal. If blocked, the caster knows that the spell was blocked, but not by what.

### Gold Finger

Transmutation

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 7

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action  
**Range:** Touch  
**Target:** One nonmagic object of up to 1 lb per 2 caster levels, maximum 20 pounds  
**Duration:** 24 hours  
**Saving Throw:** None  
**Spell Resistance:** No

With *gold finger*, you can transform normal nonmagical objects into gold. The object retains its shape, but its material changes to solid gold. As noted in the target entry, this spell affects only nonmagic objects, it does not affect creatures (including animated objects and other constructs), magic items, or any objects with active spells on them, though it can affect objects made from creatures, such as wooden objects or a fur coat. This spell can be made permanent using a *permanency* spell cast by a minimum 15th-level caster with an expenditure of 3,500 XP.

*Arcane Material Component:* 1 gold coin

**Spendthrift**  
Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind Affecting]  
**Level:** Brd 1  
**Components:** V, S  
**Casting Time:** 1 standard action  
**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)  
**Target:** One creature  
**Duration:** 10 min./level (D)  
**Saving Throw:** Will negates  
**Spell Resistance:** Yes

The subject won't hurry to divest himself of all wealth, but he will be inclined to spend more than he otherwise would. A creature under the effect of this spell pays double for any item or service without thinking about it, provided the normal market price for the item or service is 100 gp or less, and he still thinks he is getting a good deal. In any bargaining, the subject suffers a -5 penalty on any skill checks related to the bargaining. Likewise, the subject suffers a -5 penalty to any Sense Motive check he makes to detect or avoid confidence games, swindles, requests for loans, or other attempts to separate him from his money. When the spell wears off, the subject retains the impression that he spent the right amount of money during the time of the spell effect.

### Bringing the Parts Together

One or more of these spells could be found in a tomb that Rassin has stolen and foisted onto one of the characters. Merenea's first-level bard spell *animate rope* could be replaced with *spendthrift*, a spell that fits her very well.

### Coming in Part 4 of Gold!

Some need to guard their gold, and some use their gold to guard their gold. See a strange construct that guards treasure hoards.

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## Random Encounters

# Gold!

By Robert Wiese



## Golden Guardian

The adventurers moved past the smoldering body of the wyvern and into the treasure cavern. They had survived a great many monsters and traps to get this far, and the pile of gold before them was their reward. As the rogue began to pick up coins and examine them, the pile flowed together into a vaguely humanoid shape that took on more definition as the adventurers watched. When its form became completely humanoid, it extended a tentacle of golden coins and slapped the rogue hard. The adventurers scrambled to regroup before this new, and previously unseen, threat.

### Gold Golem

#### Large Construct

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

**Initiative:** -1

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Armor Class:** 24 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +16 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 24

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+19

**Attack:** Slam +14 melee (2d10+8) or tentacle +4 melee (1d10+8)

**Full Attack:** 2 slams +14 melee (2d10+9), or slam +14 melee (2d10+8) and tentacle +9 melee (1d10+4), or 2 tentacles+14 melee (1d10+8)

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

**Special Attacks:** Energy reflection, tentacle

**Special Qualities:** Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., half damage from slashing weapons, immunity to magic, low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 27, Dex 8, Con --, Int --, Wis 11, Cha 1

**Skills:** --

**Feats:** --

**Environment:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Special

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 11-30 HD (Large), 31-50 HD (Huge))

**Level Adjustment:** --



This automaton appears to be made from thousands of gold coins, bars, and other golden objects. It is nearly twice the height of a normal human and glistens as the light reflects from its golden surface.

A gold golem has a humanoid body that is comprised of a very large number of gold coins, gold bars, gold jewelry pieces, or other golden objects of value. It appears as a humanoid with a featureless face. It wears no garments or armor.

A gold golem is constructed from the gold of a treasure pile. In its natural state it appears as a pile of treasure, and indeed its creator can remove golden coins or objects from the pile and spend them, thus robbing the golem of part of its body mass. When the treasure pile is disturbed by anyone other than the creator, it swirls and forms the golem's humanoid form, and attacks.

Gold golems understand the language of their creator, but do not speak. They do not eat, breathe, or sleep. They weigh at least 2,000 lbs, which is the weight of gold required to create them. Each additional 10,000 gp added to the golem increases its weight by 200 lbs.

### Combat

The tentacle ability and their magical protections and energy reflection make gold golems a truly terrifying foe. Additionally, damaging a gold golem damages the treasure that makes up its body. Every 10 points of damage reduces the total worth of the treasure by 10,000 gp. If the golem is reduced to 0 hit points, it dissolves into its constituent treasure components, with the decrease in value from damage.

**Tentacle (Ex):** A gold golem can use part of its body to extend into a whiplike appendage and strike with a reach of 30 feet. The appendage is reabsorbed into the golem at the end of the attack. Using this attack provokes an attack of opportunity from foes that threaten the golem. The golem uses its Dexterity modifier to resolve tentacle attacks.

**Energy Reflection (Ex):** The gold in the golem's body is inert energetically. Thus, any energy attack directed at the golem is absorbed. From this energy, the golem first is healed 1 point for every 5 points of damage that the attack would have done. Once the golem is at full hit points, the remainder of the attack is reflected on the source as a free action in the same round. The golem must expel the extra energy every round; if somehow it is prevented from doing so then it takes half damage from the attack in the following round as the attack energy is forcefully dissipated.

**Half Damage from Slashing Weapons (Ex):** Because the golem's body is made of thousands of parts, slashing weapons pass through the body without causing as much damage as normal. The coins or objects part somewhat to let the slashing weapon through.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex):** A gold golem is immune to any spell or spell-like effect that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells or spell-like effects function differently against the golem, as described below.

*Telekinesis* can cause the golem to temporarily lose part of its form. Used in violent thrust option, the spell pushes 10,000 gp to 18,000 gp worth of the golem out of the golem's body for the duration of the spell (depending on caster level). This results in the golem suffering -1 to attacks and damage, and the temporary loss of 6 hit points. It also prevents the golem from using its ranged slam attack for the duration of the spell.

*Transmute metal to wood* does not change the golem's nature, but it does negate its magic immunity and damage reduction for 1 round.

*Dismissal* deactivates the golem for 1 round, returning it to a pile of golden objects.

**Construct Traits:** A gold golem is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. It cannot heal itself but can be healed through repair. It cannot be raised or resurrected.

## Construction

To create a gold golem, one must have a minimum of 100,000 gold coins or gold in other forms that makes up the same mass. The gold becomes the body of the golem; there is no construction of a body. The creator can remove parts of this "body" at any time when the golem is not in humanoid form. The golem can be improved only through using more gold for the body. For each additional 10,000 gp added to the base requirement, the golem gains +1 HD (and 5.5 hit points). Additional Hit Dice increase the golem's abilities as noted under the rules for advancing monsters on page 294 of the *Monster Manual*. The only limit to the power of a gold golem is the amount of gold that can be amassed to make one. Gold golems cannot have additional treasure added to their bodies once construction is complete, so all the gold to be used must be present when the golem is made.

Spending the gold that makes up the golem reduces its size and power, at the same rate as additional gold adds to its statistics. If half or more of the gold is permanently removed by the creator, the golem is destroyed. Any gold removed cannot be returned to the golem.

A gold golem is always created with the default instruction to defend itself from anything other than its creator. Control of the golem can be passed to another only if the treasure hoard that makes up its body is given to another; whoever controls the gold controls the golem.

CL 16th; Craft Construct (see page 303 in the *Monster Manual*), *animate objects*, *limited wish*, *polymorph any object*, *Bigby's clenched fist*, caster must be at least 16th level; Price equals value of gold used to create it; cost equals the value of gold plus an additional 25% of the gold's value (for components) plus 4,000 XP. Additional gold used in the construction adds 400 XP per 10,000 gp added.

## Bringing the Parts Together

Rassin, on a mission to steal something, could need the characters' help against the gold golem. Or, the characters could be in a dungeon and use a *gold finder* spell to locate a treasure hoard that just happens to rise up and attack. . . .

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## Random Encounters

# The Kaorti Ubercyst

(Bonus Epic Encounters)  
By Darrin Drader



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## The Ubercyst

Though it is not the original kaorti cyst, the ubercyst is one of the oldest, largest, and most powerful in existence. Built in a subterranean lair within a dense forest, the cyst remains undiscovered by natives of the world. (DMs can place the ubercyst in any campaign world.) Over the millennia, the kaorti have had an opportunity to strike at unfortunate travelers passing through their forest. They capture these travelers and transform them into kaorti or into their thralls. Their lair is located 200 feet below ground, and the entrance to the winding tunnel that leads there is hidden behind a waterfall. The ubercyst has spawned numerous smaller cysts over time, and since they share the same ultimate goal, they coordinate their impending attack with the offshoot groups.

The denizens of the ubercyst have never maintained a visible presence outside their lair, and they keep their attacks spread out both in location and time to avoid arousing the suspicions of those who would try to destroy them. This well-established cyst's inhabitants include 300 kaorti, 35 monstrous thralls, 30 skybleeders, 20 rukanyr, and 10 thruocks (see part 4 of this series). Like most creatures from the Far Realm, the kaorti are insane, though aside from their distorted perceptions, the most easily identifiable illness they suffer is extreme paranoia. The only group they distrust more than the natives of this plane are each other.



The ubercyst is led by a 30th-level kaorti sorcerer named K'tral'sk. Cold, calculating, and utterly untrustworthy, K'tral'sk directs the kaorti by demanding absolute loyalty and his own warped version of order. He promotes his subordinates based largely on merit, though each one has several beneath them that would betray it without a thought to gain higher standing. Once promoted, K'tral'sk not only evaluates their value to him, but he also intentionally creates power struggles to see who can rise to the top. Those few who have remained close to him through the years have done so through guile, betrayal, and a talent for survival.

K'tral'sk is largely responsible for the recent success of this cyst. While many others are discovered by nearby inhabitants who eventually succeed in destroying them, the ubercyst has thrived by operating without drawing attention to itself. K'tral'sk insists that they mainly capture people who are knowledgeable and well-traveled so that they can force the beings to feed the cyst information. They also capture societal derelicts for immediate transformation into new kaorti. They almost never target those who they estimate will be missed unless they feel that the targets carry information that is extremely valuable. In addition, the forest the kaorti inhabit is peaceful, even tranquil, since the kaorti hunt any dangerous creatures that move into the forest and transform them into thrall to be used later. Despite the low profile that they maintain, the kaorti are not sitting motionless, and they are slowly organizing a massive attack against the nearby regions that, if successful, may transform the area into something resembling the Far Realm, but natives of this world will find the area uninhabitable.

**K'tral'sk:** Male kaorti Sorcerer 30; CR 31; Medium outsider (extraplanar, evil); HD 2d8+4 plus 30d4+60; hp 148; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +17; Grp +18; Atk +18 melee (1d6+1, bite) or +19 melee (1d4+1/x4, dagger) or +19 ranged (1d4+1, dart); Full Atk +18 melee (1d6+1, bite) or +19/+14/+9 melee (1d4+1/x4, dagger) or +19/+14/+9 ranged (1d4+1, dart); SA spell-like abilities, vile transformation; SQ darkvision 60 ft., poison immunity, material vulnerability, outsider traits; AL NE; SV Fort +17, Ref +17, Will +19; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 8, Cha 25.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +5, Bluff +29, Concentration +24, Craft (metalworking) +8, Craft (woodworking) +8, Diplomacy +9, Heal +23, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Listen +0, Spellcraft +35, Spot +9, Survival +4, Use Magic Device +12; Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (ribbon dagger), Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Initiative, Spell Knowledge (x2), Weapon Finesse.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 1/day -- *alter self*, *color spray* (DC 18), *feather fall* (DC 18), *ray of enfeeblement*, *reduce person* (DC 18), *spider climb*. Caster level 2nd.

**Vile Transformation (Su):** K'tral'sk can infuse any living creature with otherworldly essence from the Far Realm, permanently transforming the target into a mockery of its previous form. This process takes 8 hours, during which time K'tral'sk's jaws must be locked onto the victim, who must be either willing or helpless for the duration. After 8 hours, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 13). Failure indicates that the victim transforms into a kaorti (if the victim was humanoid), or into a kaorti thrall. If the victim succeeds at the save, K'tral'sk can attempt the transformation again; each additional attempt to transform a victim increases the save DC by +1. (See the *Fiend Folio* for more on transformed creatures.)

**Material Vulnerability (Ex):** K'tral'sk must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and become fatigued. The fatigued condition persists until the kaorti recovers all the nonlethal damage it took from its exposure to the Material Plane. If rendered unconscious through the accumulation of nonlethal damage (from this ability or from any other source), the Material Plane environs begin to deal normal damage at the same rate (Fort save negates; save DC continues to increase per check as stated above). If K'tral'sk wears his resin suit or inside his cyst, he is protected from the effects of the Material Plane.



**Outsider Traits:** K'tral'sk has darkvision 60 ft. and he cannot be raised or resurrected (though *awish* or *miracle* spell can restore life).

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (6/8/8/8/7/7/7/6/6; save DC 17 + spell level; 25% chance of arcane spell failure): 0 -- *acid splash, detect magic, disrupt undead, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st -- *alarm, comprehend languages, identify, magic missile, shocking grasp*; 2nd -- *arcane lock, blur, invisibility, knock, scorching ray*; 3rd -- *dispel magic, fireball, hold person, lightning bolt*; 4th -- *ice storm, stoneskin, wall of fire, wall of ice*; 5th -- *break enchantment, cloudkill, dominate person, feeblemind*; 6th -- *disintegrate, greater dispelling, true seeing*; 7th -- *finger of death, greater teleport, plane shift*; 8th -- *antipathy, incendiary cloud, symbol of insanity, trap the soul*; 9th -- *gate, imprisonment, meteor swarm, power word, kill, soul bind, wish*.

## Bringing the Parts Together

You can introduce K'tral'sk to the PCs while they're wandering the forest. Perhaps K'tral'sk is on his way to meet with his guardians (see part 2) at a site of recent trouble, and the PCs get their first chance to interact while he's very near (but not with) his guardians. He may attempt to send them away from the area so that he can deal with whatever has caused trouble without their interference, or he may send his guardians in to take care of the situation.

## Coming in Part 2 of the Ubercyst

Take a look at some of those who protect the Ubercyst.

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# Random Encounters

## The Kaorti Ubercyst

(Bonus Epic Encounters)  
By Darrin Drader



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## The Guardians of Gloom and Despair

The Guardians of Gloom and Despair are the elite warriors of the kaorti ubercest. When the cyst engages in a battle, they lead the charge. Normally a member of this order patrols the nearby area on a sky bleeder at any given time, and these warriors quell any internal disturbances within the cyst. They also recruit new warriors from the ranks of the common kaorti and then train them to be effective combatants. Currently, a total of seven Guardians of Gloom and Despair exist, and the one detailed below is representative of them as a group.

Before K'tral'sk's rise to power, the seven fighters that now serve as guardians were hand-picked by their current leader. The former leaders took a more aggressive approach against the outside world, which led to higher risks, more exposure, and numerous preventable kaorti deaths. The Guardians of Gloom and Despair were feared warriors under the old power structure, and they ultimately betrayed their former masters. At the behest of K'tral'sk, they waited until the ruling faction was meeting in private, then silently entered the room and quickly put them to the sword. When K'tral'sk assumed power, they became his most staunch supporters. K'tral'sk's ability to remain in power is partially due to the unwavering support of the Guardians of Gloom and Despair, as well as accurate information about those who are plotting against him, and his cautious and methodical approach to accomplishing their ultimate goals. The Guardians of Gloom and Despair are occasionally called on to dispose of kaorti who have the audacity to plot against K'tral'sk, or those who have displeased him in some way.

When the cyst discovers a monster threatening the peace of the forest, it is normally the Guardians of Gloom and Despair that are sent to subdue it and bring it back. Assuming that subdual is possible, the creature is brought to the cyst where it is transformed into a thrall. Although they are capable combatants, they are also knowledgeable about many of the creatures that inhabit the world, and if their target possesses spells or spell-like abilities, they are not above calling on one of the ranking sorcerers to aid them in their duty. Although few kaorti sorcerers wish to aid in these hunting expeditions, almost none of them are brave enough to refuse for fear that K'tral'sk's favor will turn against them.

When they engage in battle, the Guardians of Gloom and Despair normally set up ambushes along the roadways. When their target is in range, they begin by firing their crossbows in rapid succession at the creature that looks capable of magic or otherwise looks powerful. They do this



for no longer than 2 rounds, and then engage their targets in melee combat, using their magic ribbon *longswords of wounding* to great effect. They normally pick battles that are not challenging; however, if the battle begins turning against them, they beat a hasty retreat. They are not interested in fighting a losing battle and they never fight to the death unless they are protecting K'tral'sk or the cyst from destruction.

**Guardians of Gloom and Despair:** Male and female kaorti Fighter 23; CR 24; Medium outsider (extraplanar, evil); HD 2d8+4 plus 23d10+46; hp 185; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +22; Grp +25; Atk +26 melee (1d6+4, bite) or +33 melee (1d8+11/17-20/x4, +7 *ribbon longsword*) or +29 ranged (1d10+3/19-20, +3 *heavy crossbow*); Full Atk +26 melee (1d6+4, bite) or +33/+28/+23/+18 melee (1d8+11/17-20/x4, +7 *ribbon longsword*) or +29 ranged (1d10+3/19-20, +3 *heavy crossbow*); SA spell-like abilities, vile transformation; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunities (poison), material vulnerability, outsider traits; AL NE; SV Fort +20, Ref +16, Will +14; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +4, Climb +12, Concentration +7, Craft (any) +7, Craft (any) +7, Handle Animal +17, Heal +21, Intimidate +17, Jump +2, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Ride +18, Spellcraft +9, Spot +6, Survival +7, Use Magic Device +8; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (ribbon dagger), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (ribbon longsword), Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Shot On the Run, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 1/day -- *alter self*, *color spray* (DC 13), *feather fall* (DC 13), *ray of enfeeblement*, *reduce person* (DC 13), *spider climb*. Caster level 2nd.

**Vile Transformation (Su):** A guardian can infuse any living creature with otherworldly essence from the Far Realm, permanently transforming the target into a mockery of its previous form. This process takes 8 hours, during which time the guardian's jaws must be locked onto the victim, who must be either willing or helpless for the duration. After 8 hours, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 13). Failure indicates that the victim transforms into a kaorti (if the victim was humanoid), or into a kaorti thrall. If the victim succeeds at the save, the guardian can attempt the transformation again; each additional attempt to transform a victim increases the save DC by +1. (See the *Fiend Folio* for more on transformed creatures.)

**Material Vulnerability (Ex):** A guardian must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and become fatigued. The fatigued condition persists until the kaorti recovers all the nonlethal damage it took from its exposure to the Material Plane. If rendered unconscious through the accumulation of nonlethal damage (from this ability or from any other source), the Material Plane environs begin to deal normal damage at the same rate (Fort save negates; save DC continues to increase per check as stated above). If the guardian wears his resin suit or is inside his cyst, he is protected from the effects of the Material Plane.

**Outsider Traits:** A guardian has darkvision 60 ft. and cannot be raised or resurrected (though *awish* or *miracle* spell can restore life).

**Possessions:** +7 *ribbon longsword of wounding*, +3 *heavy crossbow* with 20 bolts, resin full plate suit, *boots of striding and springing*, 5 *potions of cure serious wounds*.

## Bringing the Parts Together

As mentioned in part 1, the PCs could travel very close to a spot that the guardians are at. The guardians already sent one of their number to retrieve their leader. They could simply be awaiting a decision on what to do with a captive away from the cyst, for instance.

## Coming in Part 3 of the Ubercyst

Find out more about the mind flayer thrall.

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# Random Encounters

## The Kaorti Ubercyst

(Bonus Epic Encounters)  
By Darrin Drader



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## Thruocks

The kaorti create numerous bizarre and deadly creatures to serve them in various capacities. These creatures differ from the thralls because they are created for various specific purposes. Thruocks serve as an integral part of the kaorti's plan to conquer and transform the surrounding regions. While deadly by themselves, as a thruock swarm they will ravage the countryside and everyone in it, killing most, but forcing other unfortunate souls to carry their eggs within their bodies.

### Thruock

#### Large Aberration

**Hit Dice:** 35d8 +315 (455 hp)

**Initiative:** +11

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 70 ft. (good)

**Armor Class:** 41 (-1 size +3 Dex, +29 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 38

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +26/+44

**Attack:** Tentacle +39 melee (2d12+14 plus 2d6 acid)

**Full Attack:** 2 tentacles +39 (2d12+14 plus 2d6 acid), 2 slams +37 (2d8+7), bite +37 (1d10+7 plus 2d6 acid)

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

**Special Attacks:** Acid, impregnate, spell-like abilities

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 20/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunities (acid, cold, fire)

**Saves:** Fort +20, Ref +14, Will +21

**Abilities:** Str 39, Dex 16, Con 28, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 17

**Skills:** Climb +54, Hide +1, Intimidate +41, Knowledge (local) +42, Move Silently +43, Survival +40, Swim +54

**Feats:** Athletic, Awesome Blow, Cleave, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*disintegrate*), Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Improved Bullrush, Multiattack, Power Attack, Superior Initiative, Stealthy, Track

**Environment:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary or pestilence wave (10-15)

**Challenge Rating:** 24

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually neutral evil

**Advancement:** By size

**Level Adjustment:** --

*The creature resembles an enormous locust or preying mantis, bigger than a draft horse. It has a body clad in thick orange scales. Two glistening tentacles sprout from the thorax, and the monster has two forelimbs equipped with vicious barbs. It has wings covered in sickly pink feathers, but shading to red near the body.*

Created by the kaorti, a thruock is a bizarre and horrific and creature. The kaorti of the ubercyst have created ten of these horrific beasts, but they can reproduce by using their victims' bodies to incubate their eggs.

### Combat

Thruocks are deadly opponents who make quick work out of most opponents. They attack most victims with the intent to kill, although once a month they look for a suitable carrier for their eggs, which are usually especially strong specimens of any humanoid species. In such cases, they use their slam attacks to grapple their opponents and then inject microscopic eggs into their victim's body. They fight furiously, making use of their forelimbs and acid-covered tentacles. They enjoy using their formidable melee attacks, and they freely use Power Attack to tear apart creatures that are much weaker than they are. Against tougher foes, they'll use empowered *disintegrate* and Flyby attacks bolstered with *true strike*. Against stronger foes, if the battle begins to go against them, they often attempt to grapple their foes and fly into the sky to drop them from great heights.

**Acid:** The thruock's tentacles and the inside of its mouth are coated in acid. All successful bite and tentacle attacks deal an additional 2d6 points of acid damage.

**Impregnate:** A thruock that hits with both slam attacks can inject an egg pellet into the opponent's body. The affected creature must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save to avoid being impregnated. The save DC is Constitution-based. Within 1d4 hours, 1d6 of the eggs come to rest and begin to gestate in one of the target creature's body cavities (usually the stomach or the lungs). They grow for 30 days, during which time there is no pain and the only indication the victim has that anything is amiss is a Constitution decrease that occurs at a rate of 1 point of damage per 6 days. If this decrease would bring the creature below 1 point of Constitution, the creature stops losing Constitution. At the end of the gestational period, a tiny thruock bursts from the host's body, causing 3d12 + 50 points of damage; forcing the victim to make a save vs. massive damage. Because this creature was created using magic native to the Far Realm, eggs cannot be removed via most conventional

magical methods. Nothing short of a *wish* spell may remove an egg; and even then it removes only 1 egg per casting.

**Spell-like Abilities:** At will -- *detect magic*, *magic missile*, *sleep* (DC 14), *true strike*; 1/day -*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *disintegrate* (DC 19), *fireball* (DC 16), *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*. Caster level 15th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

## Bringing the Parts Together

Thruocks are effective guardians of the cyst, and if the PCs wander too close to the cyst, they'll have to deal with the consequences.

## Coming in Part 5 of the Ubercyst

Discover new ways to use that resin!

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# Random Encounters

## The Kaorti Ubercyst

(Bonus Epic Encounters)  
By Darrin Drader



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## Magic and Resin Items

Kaorti items are all constructed from the resin their palms secrete. In most campaigns involving the kaorti, the creation of resin weapons doesn't become an issue because the kaorti normally serve as enemies of the player characters. However, a few kaorti turn rogue and seek to find a home within the world, and others would like to wield the powerful ribbon weapons that they find.

Weapons made from kaorti resin require the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat to wield, and each must be specific to each ribbon weapon. For example, if the character acquires one of the *ribbon longswords of wounding* wielded by the Guardians of Gloom and Despair, she must take the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (longsword) feat. If she has acquired a *ribbon dagger* also, she must take the dagger version of the feat as well.

Making magical versions of kaorti items is possible. The item maker must use resin it has excreted itself, and also must have the appropriate craft skill and item creations feats. Kaorti resin is particularly suitable for bladed weapons such as daggers and swords. Any resin item must be made as a masterwork item. A resin piercing or slashing weapon has a critical multiple of x4. A suit of resin armor works like masterwork armor, but also protects a kaorti wearer from the effects of the Material Plane. Normally characters creating magic weapons must spend large amounts of gold as well as experience points to create the masterwork weapon. Because the kaorti exist outside of ordinary society and they normally craft their own weapons, an adjustment to the magic item creation system described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* is necessary. This method applies only to the creation of kaorti ribbon weapons, and it is not a replacement method for normal magic item creation. A kaorti armorer or weaponsmith must excrete considerable amounts of resin, or gather resin from other kaorti and mix it with his own. In either case, the process is very draining for the kaorti.

The actual process for creating magic items is almost identical to that of an ordinary magic user who is enhancing an item. A lab must be created and the item is treated with alchemical substances over the usual period of time to enhance it. With the exception that the base items consist of resin, all other material aspects of the item's creation are exactly as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Spell components, chemicals, and other materials are still required. Magic weapons, armor, rings, staff, rods, and all other magic items can be crafted from kaorti resin.

A kaorti must begin to process of making a magic item by first collecting enough resin for the job and forming it into a suitable shape. Kaorti resin typically lasts only about 500 days, so a kaorti item maker must strengthen it with extra material excreted from its own body to fashion a truly permanent item; this process costs the kaorti experience points equal to 50% of the market price for a masterwork item of the appropriate type. After that, a kaorti can reduce the cost to make a magic item by 5 gp for every XP spent, to a minimum of 35% of the normal cost (and it must spend at least 1/5th the base item's cost in XP). A kaorti character cannot spend so much experience so as to cost itself a level to create

an item. Multiple kaorti can work together to create a single item, but none can contribute less than 33% of the total amount of experience points necessary to create the item. All kaorti must fulfill the requirements necessary to create the item.

References: Page 110 of the *Fiend Folio* gives general information regarding kaorti items.

Bringing the Parts Together

Now that you have been introduced to the full cast of characters, you may want to integrate a full-blown plot focusing upon a mind flayer captive, the leader of the cyst, his guardians and mind flayer follower, plus the secret of creating the resin items. The mind flayer captive could have just discovered the secret to making these items (how it did so is up to you!), and the PCs may wish to save him from becoming the latest thrall so that they can learn this knowledge. Do they do so? Can they face the forces that oppose them? What will they discover about the kaorti while they're in the area? Is there a larger threat, and can they destroy it?

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Random Encounters

Wild Life

By Jesse Decker



Animal Companions for Any Character

The animal companions of druids and rangers, along with the paladin's magical mount and the familiars of arcane spellcasters, all provide interesting ways to bring animals into an adventuring party, but as interesting as these options are, they do not allow for characters of other classes to form a bond with a single animal. Many DMs allow the Leadership feat to be used to call strange and exotic creatures, many of which serve ably as mounts or guardians, but again, the idea of a lone wanderer and his trusty mount or animal companion is only partially served by the rules -- in this case the animal comes, but it comes accompanied by as many as a hundred humanoid followers. The Wild Cohort feat described below addresses many of these problems, but like the Leadership feat, it is meant as an option that DMs and players discuss together. Like the Leadership feat, the Wild Cohort feat gives the player access to another creature that can become powerful in its own right and therefore should be included in a campaign only when the DM judges it appropriate.

It would be entirely appropriate, for example, for a DM to require some story-based prerequisite to be fulfilled before allowing a character to take the Wild Cohort feat. Such a prerequisite might range for the clichéd pulling a thorn from the animal's foot to a more dramatic rescue scene where the character must win the animal's trust through a combination of the Handle Animal skill and careful roleplaying.

Wild Cohort [General]

You have a special bond with a wild animal, and it is willing to travel and adventure with you.

**Benefit:** You gain an animal cohort. The animal cohort is generally friendly to you and is willing to follow you and adventure with you. If given proper training, the animal cohort will willingly serve as your mount, guardian, and companion. (See the description of the Handle Animal skill on page 74 of the *Player's Handbook* for more details on training animals.)

You can use the Handle Animal skill on your animal cohort as a move action rather than as a standard action, and you gain a +2 bonus on all Handle Animal checks made to direct or influence your animal cohort.



Provided the DM gives her approval, at 1st level you can choose from a badger, camel, dire rat, dog, riding dog, eagle, hawk, horse (light or heavy), owl, pony, snake (Small or Medium viper), or wolf. Like a druid, you can choose more powerful animals as you increase in level. These alternative animal cohorts work like the alternative animal companions available to a druid, but they are available as cohorts later than they are available as animal companions. When selecting an alternative animal cohort, use the list of alternative animal companions on page 36 of the *Player's Handbook*, but treat yourself as a druid three levels lower than your character level. For example, once you reach 7th level, you can choose an animal cohort off the list of animal companions available to a 4th-level druid.

**Special:** Druids and rangers who take the wild cohort feat gain an animal cohort in addition to their animal companion. Although the two abilities are similar, they follow different sets of rules and must be tracked separately.

You can only ever have one wild cohort at any given time.

Like a druid's animal companion, your wild cohort improves as you gain experience. Although the animal cohort improves significantly compared to others of its kind, its abilities do not rival those of a druid's animal companion.

| Character Level | Bonus HD | Natural Armor Adj. | Str/Dex Bonus | Bonus Tricks | Special          |
|-----------------|----------|--------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1st-2nd         | +0       | +0                 | +0            | 0            |                  |
| 3rd-5th         | +1       | +1                 | +0            | 1            | Evasion          |
| 6th-8th         | +3       | +3                 | +1            | 2            |                  |
| 9th-11th        | +5       | +5                 | +2            | 3            |                  |
| 12th-14th       | +7       | +7                 | +3            | 4            | Devotion         |
| 15th-17th       | +9       | +9                 | +4            | 5            |                  |
| 18th-20th       | +11      | +11                | +5            | 6            | Improved evasion |

**Animal Companion Basics:** Use the base statistics for a creature of the companion's kind, as given in the *Monster Manual*, but make the following changes.

*Class Level:* The character's class levels and racial Hit Dice.

*Bonus HD:* Extra eight-sided (d8) Hit Dice, each of which gains a Constitution modifier, as normal. Remember that extra Hit Dice improve the animal cohort's base attack and base save bonuses. An animal cohort's base attack bonus is the same as that of a cleric or rogue of a level equal to the animal's HD. An animal cohort has good Fortitude and Reflex saves (treat it as a character whose level equals the animal's HD). An animal cohort gains additional skill points and feats for bonus HD as normal for advancing a monster's Hit Dice (see the *Monster Manual*). The number listed is the current total of extra HD over and above the base creature's total. For example, a creature that normally has 1 HD but that is a wild cohort for a 6th-level character gains an additional 3 HD for a total of 4 HD.

*Natural Armor:* The number noted here is an improvement to the animal cohort's existing natural armor bonus. For example, a creature that normally has a natural armor bonus of +2 but that is a wild cohort for a 6th-level character gains an additional +3 bonus for a total natural armor bonus of +5.

*Str/Dex Bonus:* Add this value to the base creature's Strength and Dexterity scores. For example, a creature that normally has a Strength score of 10 but that is a wild cohort for a 15th-level character gains an additional +4 for a total Strength score of 14.

*Bonus Tricks:* The value given in this column is the total number of "bonus" tricks that the animal knows in addition to any that the character might choose to teach it (see the Handle Animal skill, *Player's Handbook* page 74). These bonus tricks don't require any training time or Handle Animal checks, and they don't count against the normal limit of tricks known by the animal. The character selects these bonus tricks, and once selected, they can't be changed. For example, a wild cohort that belongs to an 11th-level character has a total of 3 bonus tricks.

*Evasion (Ex):* If an animal cohort is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw.

*Devotion (Ex):* An animal cohort's devotion to its master is so complete that it gains a +4 morale bonus on Will saves against enchantment spells and effects.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, an animal cohort takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and only half damage if the saving throw fails.

**Coming in Part 2 of Wild Life**



Next week, train your mount, pet, or animal cohort with new tricks, and gain some special feats. Plus, make sure you've got the right gear for your mount.

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**Random Encounters**  
**Wild Life**  
*By Jesse Decker*



**Tricks and Training for D&D Animals**

Animals, especially those used as guards or mounts, are capable of learning a wide variety of tricks and combat techniques. This section of Wild Life explores feats and tricks that riders, handlers, and animals themselves can use to make them more effective both in and out of combat. Many of the feats allow riders with special abilities, like barbarians or spellcasters, to take better advantage of those abilities while mounted on a properly trained mount.

**New Feats**

The following feats allow characters to work better with their mount, pet, animal companion, or animal cohort.

**Coordinated Strike [General]**

You and your wild cohort are adept at coordinating your attacks to distract foes and catch them off guard.

**Prerequisites:** Wild Cohort, Handle Animal 5 ranks or Ride 5 ranks.

**Benefit:** During any round in which you and your wild cohort both make a melee attack against the same target, you each gain a +1 bonus on your attack rolls against that target.

**Mounted Spellcasting [General]**

You are adept at casting spells while mounted.

**Prerequisites:** Mounted Combat, Concentration 5 ranks, ability to cast 1st-level arcane or divine spells.

**Benefit:** When casting spells while mounted, you do not have to make Concentration checks because of your mount's movement.

**Normal:** Without this feat, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + the level of the spell you're casting) or lose the spell.

**Mounted Fury [General]**





Your fearsome rage spurs your mount to greater heights.

**Prerequisites:** Mounted Combat, Ride 5 ranks, rage class ability.

**Benefit:** As long as you are riding a war-trained mount, your mount gains the same benefits and penalties that you do while you rage. This includes improved rage abilities like greater rage, tireless rage, and mighty rage. The mount's rage ends any time you are no longer mounted or when your rage ends. You must be mounted when you initiate your rage ability for the mount to be affected.

### **Steady Rider [General]**

You never lose your concentration while riding, and you ride confidently even in combat situations.

**Prerequisites:** Mounted Combat, Ride 8 ranks

**Benefit:** You can always take 10 on Ride checks, including Ride checks made to negate a hit against your mount with the Mounted Combat feat.

### **New Tricks**

Handle Animal allows characters to teach animals specific skills and habits that help in combat or adventuring situations. Adventurers and animal trainers have developed a number of specialized tricks and training techniques.

*Teach an Animal a Trick:* You can teach an animal a specific trick with one week of work and a successful Handle Animal check against the indicated DC. The following tricks expand the list of tricks found on pages 74 and 75 of the *Player's Handbook*.

**Ambush (DC 15):** The animal hides using the Hide skill to the best of its ability. It then stays in one place and attacks the first creature to come near it, unless it has been previously trained to recognize the creature as a friend.

**Bull Rush (DC 15):** The animal attempts to bull rush a designated creature.

**Flush Out (DC 20):** The animal moves into an area and, if it encounters any creatures, it makes noise and feints attacks toward the creature in an attempt to drive it to you. If the animal makes the creature move, there is a 50% chance that the quarry moves directly toward you. Otherwise, the quarry veers to your left or right (equal chance for each).

**Overrun (DC 15):** The animal attempts to overrun a designated creature. If the animal has the trample special ability, it uses that ability against the creature if the creature is small enough to be affected.

**Pin (DC 15):** The animal attempts to grapple and pin a designated creature.

**Stalk (DC 20):** The animal follows a designated creature using the Hide and Move Silently skills to the best of its ability. It stays with the target until you call it off (normally accomplished with a whistle). If attacked by the designated creature, the animal attacks. If attacked by a different creature or severely wounded, the animal attempts to return to you.

*Train an Animal for a Purpose:* Rather than teaching an animal individual tricks, you can simply train it for a general purpose. Essentially, a purpose is a preselected package of tricks. If the package includes more than three tricks, the animal must have a 2 Intelligence to learn them all. The general purpose described below expands the list of general purposes found on page 75 of the *Player's Handbook*.

**Adventuring Pack Animal (DC 20):** An animal trained as an adventuring pack animal doesn't panic in combat, but it stays away from fighting to the best of its ability. It stays within sight of its handler unless caused to flee by extraordinary means (such as a magical fright effect). Once the battle is over, the animal attempts to regroup with its handler. An animal trained as an adventuring pack animal knows the come, heel, stay, and work tricks. Training an animal as an adventuring pack animal takes four weeks.

### **Animal Item Slots**

Although it's easy to imagine an animal benefiting from magic equipment beyond a simple saddle and a suit of barding, fitting a mount's physiology to the list of item slots available to characters is not an easy task. Try the following variant list of item slots for quadruped animals (and other monsters when appropriate).

- One skull cap or helm
- One pair of lenses or goggles

- One collar
- One saddle blanket or vest
- One saddle or jacket
- One belt or strap worn in front of or over the haunches
- One pectoral or harness worn over the chest or shoulders
- One pair foreleg bracers
- One pair of foreleg shoes or mitts -- hoofed creatures wear shoes and creatures with paws wear mitts
- Two rings -- creatures with toes wear rings on the toes and creatures with hooves wear "rings" just above fore hooves
- One pair of hind leg shoes or mitts -- hoofed creatures wear shoes and creatures with paws wear mitts

### Coming in Part 3 of Wild Life

Next week learn the secrets of a powerful new prestige class for mounted warriors.

[Return to Main Page](#)

## Random Encounters

### Wild Life

*By Jesse Decker*



### Silverwood Outrider

Home to far more than the usual assortment of woodland creatures, the vast and ancient expanse of woodland known as the Silverwood shelters a diverse group of mounted warriors and animal trainers. This group, known as the Silverwood outriders, has long studied with druidic masters to perfect techniques of mounted warfare unmatched by any. Even druids and paladins, with their vaunted ability to work with animals and call special mounts, acknowledge that the blend of martial skill and animal friendship exhibited by the Silverwood outriders at least matches, if not surpasses, their own mounted combat abilities.

The Silverwood itself is large and well protected by the outriders and their druidic teachers, along with animals and strange fey creatures, and it has become a haven for many who share a bond with a single animal. Those warriors drawn to the Silverwood seek a place where they can grow their skills and learn more of the special bond between them and their mounts.

Most Silverwood outriders begin their careers as rangers or barbarians, but a fair number of fighters and rogues join their ranks as well.

**Hit Die:** d8.

#### Requirements

To qualify to become a Silverwood outrider, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5.



**Skills:** Ride 5 ranks, Handle Animal 3 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 3 ranks.

**Feats:** Mounted Combat, Wild Cohort\*.

**Special:** Your wild cohort must be an animal large enough for you to ride and must be trained to serve as a mount. (This training includes either being trained for riding or trained for combat riding with the Handle Animal skill. See pages 74 and 75 of the *Player's Handbook* for more information on training animals.)

A character can substitute the special mount ability from the paladin class or the animal companion ability from the ranger or druid class in place of the Wild Cohort feat.

**Class Skills**

The Silverwood outrider's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

**The Silverwood Outrider**

| Class Level | Base Attack | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special                      |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------------------------|
| 1           | +1          | +0        | +2       | +0        | Fast handling, skilled rider |
| 2           | +2          | +0        | +3       | +0        | Cohort trick                 |
| 3           | +3          | +1        | +3       | +1        | Brute mount                  |
| 4           | +4          | +1        | +4       | +1        | Cohort trick                 |
| 5           | +5          | +1        | +4       | +1        | Bonded mount                 |

**Class Features**

The following are all class features of the Silverwood outrider prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Silverwood outriders gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

**Fast Handling (Ex):** At 1st level, a Silverwood outrider can handle his wild cohort as a free action rather than a move action. The Silverwood outrider can push it as a move action. This benefit applies only toward the Silverwood outrider's animal cohort; the normal action times are required to handle and push other animals. See the description of the Handle Animal skill in the *Player's Handbook* for more information on handling and pushing animals.

**Skilled Rider (Ex):** You gain a bonus on Ride checks equal to the number of ranks you have in Ride that you purchased as cross-class ranks. In addition, when you take levels in classes or prestige classes other than the Silverwood arcanist, the Ride skill is treated as an additional class skill.

**Cohort Trick:** At 2nd level and again at 4th level, your wild cohort can learn a "bonus" trick in addition to the ones it can learn because of its Intelligence, training, and the Wild Cohort feat. These bonus tricks don't require any training time or Handle Animal checks, and they don't count against the normal limit of tricks known by the wild cohort. The Silverwood arcanist selects these tricks, and once selected, they can't be changed.

**Brute Mount:** Your wild cohort's Strength increases by 2. This is an ability increase like those gained for advancing in level, not a bonus.

**Bonded Mount (Su):** At 5th level, the Silverwood outrider's continued training and empathy for his wild cohort develops into a deeper, near-magical relationship with the animal. While mounted on his wild cohort, the Silverwood outrider can handle and push his mount as a free action (this supercedes the 1st-level fast handling ability).

**Coming in Part 4 of Wild Life**

The Silverwood outriders aren't the only mounted adventurers that protect the ancient forest. Next week, learn the secrets of their powerful allies, the Silverwood arcanists.

## Random Encounters

### Wild Life

By Jesse Decker



#### Silverwood Outrider

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Most Silverwood outriders begin their careers as rangers or barbarians, but a fair number of fighters and rogues join their ranks as well.

**Hit Die:** d8.

#### Requirements

To qualify to become a Silverwood outrider, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5.

**Skills:** Ride 5 ranks, Handle Animal 3 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 3 ranks.

**Feats:** Mounted Combat, Wild Cohort\*.

**Special:** Your wild cohort must be an animal large enough for you to ride and must be trained to serve as a mount. (This training includes either being trained for riding or trained for combat riding with the Handle Animal skill. See pages 74 and 75 of the *Player's Handbook* for more information on training animals.)

A character can substitute the special mount ability from the paladin class or the animal companion ability from the ranger or druid class in place of the Wild Cohort feat.

#### Class Skills

The Silverwood outrider's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

#### The Silverwood Outrider

| Class | Base   | Fort | Ref  | Will    |
|-------|--------|------|------|---------|
| Level | Attack | Save | Save | Save    |
|       |        |      |      | Special |



|   |    |    |    |    |                              |
|---|----|----|----|----|------------------------------|
| 1 | +1 | +0 | +2 | +0 | Fast handling, skilled rider |
| 2 | +2 | +0 | +3 | +0 | Cohort trick                 |
| 3 | +3 | +1 | +3 | +1 | Brute mount                  |
| 4 | +4 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Cohort trick                 |
| 5 | +5 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Bonded mount                 |

Class Features

The following are all class features of the Silverwood outrider prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Silverwood outriders gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

**Fast Handling (Ex):** At 1st level, a Silverwood outrider can handle his wild cohort as a free action rather than a move action. The Silverwood outrider can push it as a move action. This benefit applies only toward the Silverwood outrider's animal cohort; the normal action times are required to handle and push other animals. See the description of the Handle Animal skill in the *Player's Handbook* for more information on handling and pushing animals.

**Skilled Rider (Ex):** You gain a bonus on Ride checks equal to the number of ranks you have in Ride that you purchased as cross-class ranks. In addition, when you take levels in classes or prestige classes other than the Silverwood arcanist, the Ride skill is treated as an additional class skill.

**Cohort Trick:** At 2nd level and again at 4th level, your wild cohort can learn a "bonus" trick in addition to the ones it can learn because of its Intelligence, training, and the Wild Cohort feat. These bonus tricks don't require any training time or Handle Animal checks, and they don't count against the normal limit of tricks known by the wild cohort. The Silverwood arcanist selects these tricks, and once selected, they can't be changed.

**Brute Mount:** Your wild cohort's Strength increases by 2. This is an ability increase like those gained for advancing in level, not a bonus.

**Bonded Mount (Su):** At 5th level, the Silverwood outrider's continued training and empathy for his wild cohort develops into a deeper, near-magical relationship with the animal. While mounted on his wild cohort, the Silverwood outrider can handle and push his mount as a free action (this supercedes the 1st-level fast handling ability).

Coming in Part 4 of Wild Life

The Silverwood outriders aren't the only mounted adventurers that protect the ancient forest. Next week, learn the secrets of their powerful allies, the Silverwood arcanists.

Random Encounters  
**Wild Life**  
*By Jesse Decker*



## Silverwood Arcanist

The vast expanse of woodlands known as the Silverwood has many guardians, but few are as unusual as a group of arcane spellcasters who specialize in casting spells while mounted. These spellcasters, known as Silverwood arcanists, work closely with the druidic circles within the Silverwood and the Silverwood outriders. Like the outriders, arcanists build a near-mystical bond with their animal mounts, learning their techniques from both skilled animal trainers and druidic traditions. Because of their unique blend of skills, Silverwood arcanists are some of the most versatile and mobile individuals on a battlefield, and they have long been one of the secrets of the Silverwood's continued prosperity and security.

Most Silverwood arcanists begin their adventuring career as sorcerers, but a good number of wizards and bards join as well.

**Hit Die:** d4.

### Requirements

To qualify to become a Silverwood arcanist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Handle Animal 3 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, Ride 3 ranks.

**Feats:** Mounted Combat, Wild Cohort.

**Special:** You must be able to cast 3rd-level arcane spells.

**Special:** Your wild cohort must be an animal large enough for you to ride and must be trained to serve as a mount. (This training includes either being trained for riding or trained for combat riding with the Handle Animal skill. See pages 74 and 75 of the *Player's Handbook* for more information on training animals.)

### Class Skills

The Silverwood arcanist's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Handle Animal (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Survival (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

### The Silverwood Arcanist

| Class Level | Base Attack | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special                      | Spells per Day                                 |
|-------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1           | +0          | +0        | +0       | +2        | Fast handling, skilled rider | +1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class |
| 2           | +1          | +0        | +0       | +3        | Cohort trick                 | +1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class |
| 3           | +1          | +1        | +1       | +3        | Mounted casting              | +1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class |
| 4           | +2          | +1        | +1       | +4        | Cohort trick                 | +1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class |
| 5           | +2          | +1        | +1       | +4        | Share spells                 | +1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class |

### Class Features

The following are all class features of the Silverwood arcanist prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Silverwood arcanists gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

**Spells per Day:** A Silverwood arcanist continues training in magic as well as her field of research. Thus, when a new Silverwood arcanist level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (bonus feats, improved familiar abilities, and so on). This essentially means that she adds the level of Silverwood arcanist to the level of some other





spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells known, spells per day, and caster level accordingly.

**Fast Handling (Ex):** At 1st level, a Silverwood arcanist can handle her wild cohort as a free action rather than a move action. The Silverwood arcanist can push it as a move action. This benefit applies only toward the Silverwood arcanist's animal cohort; the normal action times are required to handle and push other animals. See the description of the Handle Animal skill in the *Player's Handbook* for more information on handling and pushing animals.

**Skilled Rider (Ex):** You gain a bonus on Ride checks equal to the number of ranks you have in Ride that you purchased as cross-class ranks. In addition, when you take levels in classes or prestige classes other than the Silverwood arcanist, the Ride skill is treated as an additional class skill.

**Cohort Trick:** At 2nd level and again at 4th level, your wild cohort can learn a "bonus" trick in addition to the ones it can learn because of its Intelligence, training, and the wild cohort feat. These bonus tricks don't require any training time or Handle Animal checks, and they don't count against the normal limit of tricks known by the wild cohort. The Silverwood arcanist selects these tricks, and once selected, they can't be changed.

**Mounted Casting:** At 3rd level, the Silverwood arcanist gains the Mounted Casting feat as a bonus feat. She does not have to meet the normal prerequisites for this feat.

**Share Spells:** At the Silverwood arcanist's option, she can have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts on herself also affect her wild cohort. The wild cohort must be within 5 feet at the time of casting (usually serving as the Silverwood arcanist's mount) to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the wild cohort if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the wild cohort again even if it returns to the Silverwood arcanist before the duration expires. Additionally, the Silverwood arcanist can cast a spell with a target of "you" on her wild cohort (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. A Silverwood arcanist and her wild cohort can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the mount's type (animal).

## Random Encounters

# Dead Guys on Parade

By Dale Donovan



## The Mastermind Revealed?

This week's installment presents the final undead stalker sent by a mysterious master villain to kill the player characters of your campaign. As noted in previous parts of this series, the identity and powers of the mastermind are left to DMs to determine, but this week's article includes advice on how to adapt the undead creature detailed herein to become that evil mastermind for DMs who need one.

The undead being that is now sent after the PCs is a swordwraith. The swordwraith is actually an undead template that can be applied to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid that had fighter levels while it lived. The template is detailed below; DMs are encouraged to apply this template to one (or perhaps more) past fighter foes of the heroes who now (or so the PCs think) lie in musty graves -- victims of the heroes' righteous might. The mastermind villain could have learned enough about the PCs to have found these dead foes and created swordwraiths from them, thus allowing the forgotten foes a chance at revenge. Alternatively, DMs can take the sample NPC fighter write-ups from Chapter 4 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and apply the template to an NPC of an appropriate level.

This portion of Part 4 assumes that the swordwraith is merely the latest minion sent by the evil master villain to torment the PCs. (For those DMs seeking the mastermind itself, see the "Mastermind Option" below.) Swordwraiths are mentioned in the *Fiend Folio* as being mercenaries so devoted to their craft that they carry on waging war even after death. Broadening that interpretation allows us to use dead past foes of the PCs themselves to serve as the fodder from which the swordwraiths are made. Perhaps the heroes encountered an evil mercenary troop at some point, they fought against the warriors of an evil cult or secret society, or they may have eliminated a band of evil soldiers or a den of evil creatures. After all, what self-respecting party of PCs hasn't wiped an orc, gnoll, or bugbear warband in its history?



Once you know where the swordwraith came from, it's time to send it at the PCs. Be certain to apply the template to a creature with sufficient levels to challenge the party on its own. Also, don't forget to equip it as you would any other NPC foe of the heroes -- the gear and magic items were those the

swordwraith had while it lived. (If any of the PCs ever took a magic item from a dead foe and that foe is now a swordwraith, that undead will likely make the PC looter its first target.) Or, the master villain could have learned from past encounters that sending just one (or two) seekers of the heroes lives simply leaves the undead too outnumbered to prevail, and so she prepares a larger number of swordwraiths to attack the PCs -- perhaps she sends as many as there are heroes.

When and where this attempt on the heroes' lives takes place remains up to the DMs. Since this may well be the climactic battle of this series of events (at least until the characters find the master villain), this battle should be grand in scale and deadly in the extreme. Don't forget to have the foe utter the following words, if you wish: "I am sent to destroy you, and so you shall die."

**Mastermind Option:** The aforementioned option to make this swordwraith the actual mastermind behind this series of attacks requires a bit more work on the part of DMs, but the payoff can be worth it for those DMs who want to subject their players to this series of events but lack a suitable villain to play the role of the mastermind behind it all. The swordwraith template can be applied to humanoid and monstrous humanoid creatures that possess levels in the fighter class while they lived. Nowhere in the template does it say that the humanoids must have had class levels in only the fighter class. A swordwraith with multiple levels in wizard, cleric, or sorcerer (and the right assortment of magic items, including a *crystal ball with clairaudience*) could provide the means by which the mastermind observes the PCs and sends the parade of undead killers after them. Such a creature would be a truly formidable opponent with its wide range of abilities and powers. Thus, after the failure of several of its undead minions, the powerful mastermind decides to personally destroy the characters. Further, since it's already been established that this being prefers to use lesser undead, it's likely that the swordwraith would enter this battle aided (if not surrounded) by lesser undead beings, perhaps led by a quth-maren or an abyssal ghoul.

### Swordwraith Template

This template can be added to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid creature with levels in fighter (hereafter referred to as the "base creature"). The creature's type changes to undead. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Hit Dice:** Increase to d12.

**Special Attacks:** A swordwraith retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following attack.

**Strength Damage (Su):** A creature struck by a swordwraith's melee weapon takes 1 point of temporary Strength damage in addition to normal damage from the weapon.

**Special Qualities:** A swordwraith retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following special qualities.

**Damage Reduction (Su):** A swordwraith's insubstantial-seeming body is tough, giving it DR 10/magic and slashing. Despite their appearance, swordwraiths are corporeal.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** A swordwraith is treated as an undead with 2 more Hit Dice than it actually has for the purposes of turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempts.

**Abilities:** Same as the base creature except that, as undead, it has no Constitution score.

**Skills:** Swordwraiths gain a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

**Feats:** Swordwraiths gain the Alertness and Iron Will feats.

**Environment:** Any land or underground.

**Organization:** Solitary, company (2-8), or squadron (11-20 plus 1 leader of 1-4 levels higher).

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

**Treasure:** Standard.

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil.

**Advancement:** By character class.

**Level Adjustment:** +3

*Description:* Swordwraiths appear much as they did in life, though their equipment is battered and dirty and their flesh seems insubstantial. In dim lighting or darkness, their eyes can be seen to glow a hot yellow like the sun. As most were mercenaries during their lives, many swordwraiths still wear insignia from the mercenary company or order they belonged to in life.

## Bringing the Parts Together

If the heroes prevail, two things should come about. Their victory should be one that the players still talk about months or years from now as they discuss great battles they played in the past, and the players should be highly motivated to seek out the mastermind that has sent so many undead with death on their minds and these words on their lips, "I am sent to destroy you, and so you shall die." The insignia worn by the defeated swordwraiths can be the first clue in a train of evidence that eventually leads to the very doorstep of the master villain who tried for so long to prevent this very event from coming to pass: the PCs' payback for all the trouble they've been put through by this mastermind.

## Random Encounters Nasty Surprises

By Jeff Quick



## Double Agent Weaponry

Even the most hack-happy group of players tries to make plans. Some groups enjoy the planning of an encounter more than the execution. Regardless of how deeply the plans run, they usually fall apart in the first round of actual enemy contact. But players never completely give up making them because some plan is better than no plan at all.

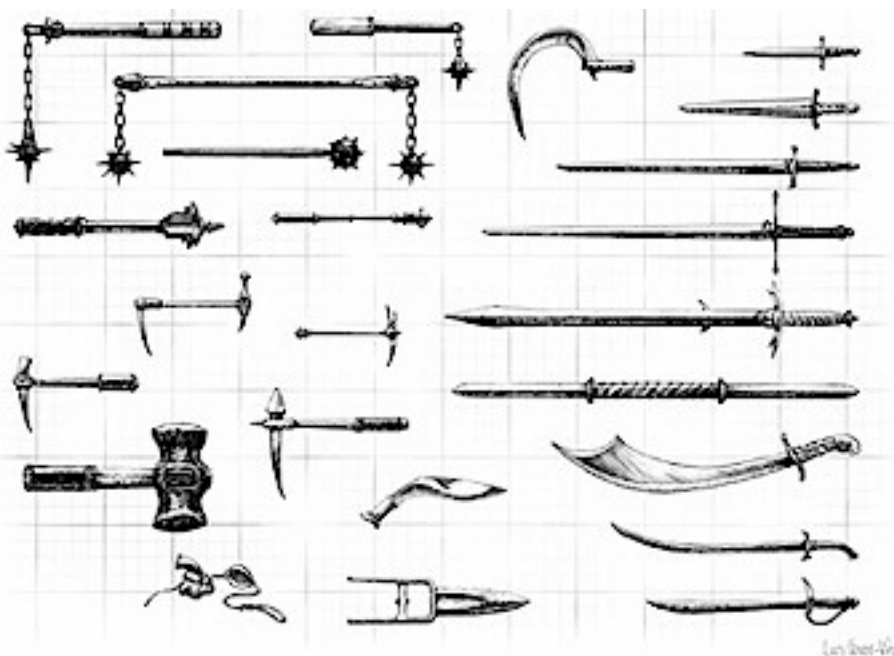
Anybody with divination spells tries to use them to aid planning. But players rarely spend the time or resources to erect appropriate defenses against divination themselves. Your villains can gleefully exploit this weakness, giving players a scary jolt when the opposition seems a little too prepared. When it becomes clear that the enemy knows their plans, it means they weren't safe when they thought they were. It means they still might not be safe. Paranoia sets in as the players wonder if an untrustworthy NPC gave away their schemes, or if someone in the group is under the enemy's influence.

The best way to plant divination on the party is to make them want to carry it around with them. What's the thing that every adventuring party carries in spades? Weapons. Most spellcasters don't bother to make cursed weapons. It's too much money and effort to create a sword that makes opposing fighters slightly less efficient. But a good weapon with backlash is a whole different story.

Weapons are the spy item of choice, since these magic items don't have charges and won't be quickly discarded. When a weapon receives an additional power that resembles a *clairaudience/clairvoyance* effect in addition to whatever other abilities it has, it can prove a real pain to player characters. Further, PC spellcasters take more time and effort on discovering secrets about items meant for them to carry. Staves get close examination while a broadsword is likely to get a cursory *identify* spell and then be promptly ignored by the curious wizard thereafter.

Since the item is the object of a spell instead of its source, *identify* does not alert the owner to a weapon's divinatorial function.

When a villain wants to put this in the PCs' hands, he hands it to an expendable lieutenant as a gift. The villain can then listen or watch as the lieutenant approaches and battles the PCs, and continue the show once they defeat the villain's underlings and claim the spoils.



Spy Item

Below, we've calculated the cost to add the *clairaudience/clairvoyance* effect to any item as a weapon special ability. Then, we follow up with a sample item ready to use on unsuspecting PCs.

**Eavesdropping:** A weapon with this property has a corresponding fetish tuned to the weapon. When the fetish is held, the holder can listen to the vicinity of the weapon's wielder as a free action as if the holder had cast the *clairaudience/clairvoyance* spell.

No aura; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*; Price +27,000 gp; Cost +13,500 gp and 1,080 XP.

Shadowededge

This +3 *longsword* has a heavy tip, and light is reflected blackly from its blade instead of shining the light's normal color. The sword allows its wielder to *detect good* as the spell 3 times per day, and it can dim all nonmagical lights in a 30-foot radius, centered on the wielder, also 3 times per day.

The sword was also made with a corresponding dagger. Anyone who holds the dagger can, at will, listen to the sword's vicinity as if the holder had cast a *clairaudience/clairvoyance* spell on the sword's location.

Moderate evocation; CL 10; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *detect good*; Price 137,417 gp; Cost 69,017 gp + 5,472 XP.

Random Encounters  
**Demons**  
By Robert Wiese



The Bogannarr

Tramping through the jungle, Merdath paused briefly to survey the strange foliage around him. According to the people in the last village, something had corrupted the area. Now the locals avoid the tainted region like the plague. Merdath would avoid it, too, except that the most direct route to the Great Lake ran through this stretch of woods.

As he started forward again, he chanced to see a reddish face looking down at him from a tree. At first he thought it was a monkey of some kind, for the face was definitely simian. However, the little wings were not, and the creature had six arms. It moved like a spider more than like a monkey. Then it chittered and swung lower using its tail. It bared fangs and leered at Merdath, who began to move more quickly.

He was not quick enough. The other three creatures lunged from the trees and fastened themselves onto him. He fell to the ground as their tail stingers began to pierce his skin over and over. Eventually he stopped twitching, and the creatures returned to the trees.



**Bogannarr**  
**Small Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Tanar'ri)**  
**Hit Dice:** 2d8+2 (11 hp)  
**Initiative:** +3  
**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 20 ft.  
**Armor Class:** 17 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+3  
**Attack:** Claw +6 melee (1d4)  
**Full Attack:** 2 claws +6 melee (1d4) and bite +1 melee (1d4) and tail stinger +1 melee (1d3 plus poison)

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

**Special Attacks:** *Enlarge*, improved grab, *summon tanar'ri*

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, outsider traits, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, telepathy 100 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Balance +9, Climb +13, Hide +12, Jump +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6, Tumble +10

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse

**Environment:** Infinite Layers of the Abyss

**Organization:** Solitary, gang (3-5), or crowd (6-15)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** 3-4 HD (Small); 5-6 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment:** --

*This creature looks like a six-legged monkey with a prehensile tail. Its glowing red eyes, undersized wings, and red-black fur lend it an air of malevolence. Its tail ends in a stinger that drips with ichor.*

A bogannarr is a savage fighter, similar in ferocity to a wolverine. Once it begins attacking, a bogannarr does not quit. In groups they are even more dangerous. With limited intelligence, they are well suited to follow the orders of more powerful demons.

A bogannarr resembles a red and black monkey with six legs. It has small wings on its back that are nonfunctional. Some think that this denotes a relationship between these creatures and the more powerful nalfeshnee, but no one knows for sure. The bogannarr also has a prehensile tail that it can use both to grasp things and utilize as a weapon. The tail sports a stinger that drips venomous ichor.

Bogannarrs are about 4 feet long, and they weigh about 50 lbs. They understand Common and Abyssal, but do not speak. They communicate telepathically with each other to coordinate attacks.

## Combat

Bogannarr are fierce combatants. One of their usual tactics is to swarm a single opponent and drain it of life before moving on. The creature latches onto an opponent with all six legs and uses its tail to devastating effect.

***Enlarge (Sp):*** Once per day, a bogannarr can increase its size by one category. This works as an *enlarge person* spell cast at a caster level equal to its Hit Dice, but only on itself. Use of this ability is a standard action.

***Improved Grab (Ex):*** To use this ability, a bogannarr must hit a foe up to one size category larger than itself with its two claw attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

***Poison (Ex):*** Injury, Fortitude DC 12, initial damage 1d2 points of temporary Constitution damage, secondary damage 1d2 points of temporary Constitution damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

***Summon Tanar'ri (Sp):*** Once per day a bogannarr can attempt to summon 1d4 additional bogannarrs with a 40% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

**Skills:** Bogannarrs have a +4 racial bonus on Balance checks and a +8 bonus on Climb checks.

## Coming in Part 2 of Demons

One can make too many bargains with demons, as Ormad found to his growing despair.

## Random Encounters

### Demons

By Robert Wiese





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## Ormad Sulpar, Master of Demons

From his youth, Ormad dreamed of the day when he could make demons do his bidding. No one knows why he focused on demons so early, and his parents certainly were concerned, but he never gave up his goal of controlling demons. He learned the spells to contact demons, bring them to this plane, and bind them to service when they arrived.

The problem with Ormad is that his dreams outstrip his abilities. After learning to summon demons, he found that he could not control them as easily as he thought he would be able to. He found himself bargaining with them for services he had intended to compel from them. This culminated in his current crisis; he has bartered his soul to no fewer than six demons, each of which would like to collect. None of them knew about the others until after the deals were made, and they are all furious -- furious with each other, furious with themselves for being tricked, and furious with Ormad for tricking them. They intend to exact a terrible revenge, as soon as they can stop fighting among themselves.

Ormad, meanwhile, lives in constant fear. He knows that as long as he has his quasit familiar he can never hide from the demons, and he does not think he could hide anyway. He has put on a little weight, but his facial features have shrunk in and he looks pale and exhausted most of the time.

Ormad needs a lot of help. He would actually like to keep his soul; he has discovered that he likes it. So, he'd like to find a way to kill the six demons permanently so that they cannot collect. He knows that he cannot do this on his own, so he spends his money seeking out adventurers who can tackle powerful demons. So far, he has not had much luck, and his funds are starting to run low. The lower they run, the more desperate he becomes.

**Ormad Suplar:** Male human wizard 7/lore master 4; CR 11; Medium humanoid; HD 7d4+7 plus 4d4+4; hp 38; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); SQ familiar benefits, lore +7, secrets; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +14; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 8. Age 89, height 5 ft. 9 in., weight 198 lbs.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +15, Decipher Script +8, Diplomacy +1, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Listen +4, Spellcraft +19, Spot +4; Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Heighten Spell, Improved Familiar, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [the planes]), Spell Focus (conjuration).

**Familiar Benefits:** Ormad had a hawk familiar, but he traded it to a demon in return for an extension on his soul. Now word seems to have gotten around, and he cannot attract anything but demons. Thus, he has a quasit familiar. When his familiar is within 5 feet of him, he gains the benefit of the Alertness feat. He also gains the following benefits.

**Empathic Link (Su):** Ormad can communicate telepathically with Nigglesfirth at a distance of up to 1 mile. He has the same connection to an item or a place that Nigglesfirth does.

**Share Spells:** Ormad may have any spell he casts on himself also affect Nigglesfirth if the latter is within 5 feet at the time of casting. Ormad may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on Nigglesfirth.

**Speak with Nigglesfirth:** Ormad and Nigglesfirth can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language.

**Touch:** Nigglesfirth can deliver touch spells for Ormad.

**Lore:** Ormad knows legends and information about various topics. This ability works like bardic knowledge. Ormad rolls 1d20+7 to determine whether he knows a particular piece of information.

**Secrets:** Ormad, because of his loremaster training, has come across two secrets.

**Instant Mastery:** Ormad has four bonus ranks in a skill he did not have before. He chose to take Knowledge (local).

**Secret Knowledge of Avoidance:** Ormad gains a +2 bonus on his Reflex saves.

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (4/5/5/5/3/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *acid splash\**, *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*; 1st -- *comprehend languages*, *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor\**, *magic missile*, *protection from evil*; 2nd -- *detect thoughts*, *fog cloud\**, *glitterdust\**, *Melf's acid arrow\**, *see invisibility*; 3rd -- *dispel magic*, *nondetection*, *phantom steed\**, *stinking cloud\**, *summon monster III\**; 4th -- *detect scrying*, *dimensional anchor*, *scrying*; 5th -- *cloudkill\**, *lesser planar binding\**; 6th -- *planar binding\**.



**Spellbook:** 0 -- *acid splash\**, *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost\**, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st -- *comprehend languages*, *expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *identify*, *mage armor\**, *magic missile*, *protection from evil*, *shocking grasp*, *summon monster I\**, *unseen servant\**; 2nd -- *darkvision*, *detect thoughts*, *fog cloud\**, *fox's cunning*, *glitterdust\**, *Melf's acid arrow\**, *rope trick*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*; 3rd -- *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *nondetection*, *phantom steed\**, *protection from energy*, *slow*, *stinking cloud\**, *summon monster III\**, *tongues*; 4th -- *detect scrying*, *dimensional anchor*, *ice storm*, *Leomund's secure shelter\**, *polymorph*, *scrying*, *solid fog\**, *summon monster IV\**; 5th -- *baleful polymorph*, *cloudkill\**, *contact other plane*, *hold monster*, *lesser planar binding\**, *overland flight*, *summon monster V\**, *wall of force*; 6th -- *acid fog\**, *analyze dweomer*, *planar binding\**, *summon monster VI\**.

\* Conjuraton school spells.

**Languages:** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven.

**Possessions:** Quarterstaff, *ring of protection +1*, *cloak of resistance +3*, *necklace of adaptation*, spell component pouch, 830 gp.

**Nigglesfirth:** Male quasit familiar; CR --; Tiny outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar); HD 3d8 (effective 11d8); hp 18; Init +7; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +5; Grp -4; Atk +10 melee (1d3 plus poison-1, claw); Full Atk +10 melee (1d3-1 plus poison, 2 claws) and +5 melee (1d4-1, bite); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA poison, spell-like abilities; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, fire resistance 10, immunities to poison, improved evasion, outsider traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +6, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +4, Hide +17, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spellcraft +20, Spot +7; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d4 Dex, secondary damage 2d4 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will -- *detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only); 1/day -- *cause fear* (as the spell, except that its area is a 30-foot radius from Nigglesfirth, save DC 11). Caster level 6th.

**Alternate Form (Su):** Nigglesfirth can assume other forms at will as a standard action. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on himself (caster level 12th), except that Nigglesfirth does not regain hit points for changing form, and he can assume only the forms of a bat and a toad. When in alternate form, he loses his poison special attack.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** The creature regains hit points at the rate of 2 per round. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow a creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

**Improved Evasion (Ex):** If Nigglesfirth is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage on a successful save and half damage on a failed save.

## Coming in Part 3 of Demons

In this mysterious place, souls disappear and evil festers.

## Random Encounters

### Demons

By Robert Wiese



## Plant Demons

One of the things for which Ormad Sulpar sold his soul was to acquire demonic participation in a twisted experiment. He had been working on growing smarter tendriculoses, and he eventually succeeded. Then, he bred one of them to a demon, and the result became a half-fiend tanttur. Pleased with the results, he bred more of the creatures, and found that they could interbreed. However, controlling them proved difficult; he fled the base where he had been working with the creatures, taking only one with him. He thought one could not breed, but he found out differently -- the creatures breed by fission as well as mating. Worries of what he has unleashed on the world add to the burden he already carries.

### Half-Fiend Tanttur

#### Huge Outsider (Native)

**Hit Dice:** 12d8+84 (138 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 20 ft. (average)

**Armor Class:** 19 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 18

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +9/+28

**Attack:** 2 claws +18 melee (2d6+11)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +18 melee (2d6+11) and bite +16 melee (2d8+5) and 2 tendrils +16 melee (1d6+5)

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

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, paralysis, smite good, spell-like abilities, swallow whole

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to poison, low-light vision, plant traits, regeneration 10, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, and fire 10, spell resistance 22

**Saves:** Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 32, Dex 13, Con 24, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 5

**Skills:** Balance +3, Hide +10, Listen +15, Move Silently +18, Search +6, Spot +16, Survival +6, Swim +18

**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Stealthy

**Environment:** Temperate forests

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 9

**Treasure:** 1/10th coins; 50% goods; 50% items

**Alignment:** Always evil (any)

**Advancement:** 10-16 HD (Huge); 17-27 HD (Gargantuan)

**Level Adjustment:** +4

*Appearing as a huge mass of black and brown plant matter striped with red, this creature sports large batlike wings and red-brown vines and branches. It has a huge maw in its center that opens to reveal sharp teethlike thorny branches covered in blood and pus. Glowing red spots above its mouth give the impression of eyes.*

The half-fiend tanttur is a horrid fusion of advanced tendriculos and fiend. Born of evil magic and filled with blood-lust, a half-fiend tanttur can rear up to a height of 15 feet, and it weighs about 3,700 lbs. Enormous batlike wings spread forth on the side opposing the maw, and, though it rarely flies, it inspires dread and horror when it does.

The creature retains the tendriculos's ability to regenerate and regrow parts of itself; whole leaves and vines can appear and snake across the creature in mere minutes. To do this, it consumes vast quantities of meat. Thus, anyone with the power to intimidate it and who then provides it with a steady diet of meat can make it a servant of sorts.

Animals and plant creatures fear and hate these creatures, and they avoid any area where it is or has been in the last 24 hours.

### Combat

Combining its fiendish resistance to harm with hard-hitting power, the half-fiend tanttur is a dangerous foe. It attacks savagely, trying to consume as much flesh as possible. It rarely relies on its spell-like abilities, since it knows they have limited effectiveness. It fights with cunning, and thus it makes a good guardian creature.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a half-fiend tanttur must hit a creature at least one size smaller than itself with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the opponent in the following round. A half-fiend tanttur can also use its improved grab ability on a tendril attack. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold, picks up the opponent, and transfers it to the mouth as a free action, automatically dealing bite damage.

**Smite Good (Su):** Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal an extra 12 points of damage against a good foe.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day -- *darkness*, *poison* (DC 11); 1/day -- *blasphemy* (DC 14), *contagion* (DC 10), *desecrate*, *unholy blight* (DC 11).

Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Swallow Whole/Paralysis (Ex):** A half-fiend tanttur can try to swallow a grabbed opponent by making a successful grapple check. Once inside the plant's mass, the opponent must succeed on a DC 23 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds by the half-fiend tanttur's digestive juices, taking 2d6 points of acid damage per round. A new save is required each round inside the plant. The save DC is Constitution-based. A swallowed creature that avoids paralysis can climb out of the mass with a successful grapple check. This returns it to the plant's maw, where another successful grapple check is needed to get free. A swallowed creature can also cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the half-fiend tanttur's interior (AC 14). Once the creature exits, the plant's regenerative capacity closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A Huge half-fiend tanttur's interior can hold 2 Large, 8 Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny, or 512 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Bludgeoning weapons and acid deal normal damage to a half-fiend tanttur . A half-fiend tanttur that loses part of its body mass can regrow it in 1d6 minutes. Holding the severed portion against the mass enables it to reattach instantly.

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Random Encounters  
**The Cult of Tharizdun**  
*By Darrin Drader*



**Cultists**

The cultists of Tharizdun find themselves drawn to the banished god for a number of reasons. Some of them are criminals, while others have been beaten by the uncaring forces within their civilization. They often have enough negative experiences with humanity in general that they decide that the world is fundamentally flawed. They furthermore decide that if they cannot obtain the finer things in life, no one deserves to have them. The cult of Tharizdun has committed itself to the destruction of all things, but they welcome potential cultists with open arms, pretending to care about the injustices that they have been victimized by, and promising that when Tharizdun reduces the world to smoking ruins, his followers will be rewarded with all the things they cannot possess in the world as it currently exists. They are also treated to excesses of food, flesh, and wealth previously denied to them.

The blighter prestige class, with its ability to ruin natural locations, holds great appeal to Tharizdun's mortal worshippers. Many Tharizdun cultists briefly follow the druidic path just long enough to learn how to despoil nature. The cultists claim that Tharizdun, and not nature itself, empowers their druidic spells and abilities.

**Blighter Cultist of Tharizdun:** Male or female human ex-druid 5/cleric 3/blighter 3; CR 11; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8+10 plus 3d8+6 plus 3d8+6; hp 71; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +12 melee (2d6+6/19-20, +3 *greatsword*) or +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+6/19-20, +3 *greatsword*) or +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA blightfire, *deforestation*, rebuke undead 2/day; SQ sustenance, *undead wildshape* 1/day; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +13; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +13, Heal +12, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (religion) +2.5, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Listen +9, Spellcraft +11, Spot +9, Survival +9; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatsword), Power Attack, Scribe Scroll.

**Blightfire (Su):** As a standard action, a blighter cultist can unleash a scorching blast of fire. This effect deals 5d6 points of damage to every creature within 10 feet (DC 16 Fortitude save) and ignites flammable objects it touches.

**Deforestation (Sp):** The cultist of Tharizdun can kill all nonsentient plant life within a radius of 60 feet as a full-round action once per day. If a potentially affected plant is under the control of another (such as a druid's liveoak or dryad's home tree), the controller can make a DC 16 Fortitude save to keep it alive. Affected plants immediately cease photosynthesis, root tapping, and all other methods of sustenance. Like picked flowers, they appear vibrant for several hours, but within a day, they turn brown and wither. Except for plants saved by a controller, nothing can grow in a deforested area until it has a *hallow* spell cast upon it and it is reseeded. Deforestation enables the cultist of Tharizdun to cast his daily allotment of spells. This ability works in any terrain, but deforesting a sandy desert, ice floe, or other environment with only sparse vegetation does not empower the character.

to cast spells.

**Sustenance (Ex):** The cultist of Tharizdun no longer needs food or water to survive.

**Undead Wildshape (Sp):** Once a day, the cultist of Tharizdun gains a version of the wild shape ability, except that he uses the skeleton template to the animal form it transforms into.

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (4/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic, detect poison, guidance, inflict minor wounds*; 1st -- *bane, cure light wounds, entropic shield, obscuring mist, protection from good\**; 2nd -- *bull's strength, detect thoughts\*, shatter*.

\*Domain spell. Deity: None. Domains: Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Knowledge (cast divinations at +1 caster level).

**Blighter Spells Prepared** (5/4/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic, flare, ghost sound, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st -- *burning hands, decomposition, inflict light wounds, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd -- *chill touch, warp wood*; 3rd -- *contagion*.

**Languages:** Common, Infernal.

**Possessions:** +1 half-plate armor, +3 greatsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, 3 potions of cure moderate wounds.

**Bringing the Parts Together**

Regardless whether the PCs face the cult of Tharizdun while they are attacking a local populace or while they are investigating the disappearance of local people who will serve as sacrifices, they are likely to encounter numerous cultists before they reach the more powerful priests, who many know as the Witnesses of Tharizdun.

**Coming in Part 2 of the Cult of Tharizdun**

The destruction of all things requires unique and deadly magic secretly forged in the darkness, away from the sensibilities of civilization and law.

**Random Encounters**

**The Cult of Tharizdun**

*By Darrin Drader*



**Net of Despair**

Magic items are a central focus of the cult of Tharizdun. Because Tharizdun is locked away in a plane from which he cannot escape, his connection to his followers is not as strong as that of most other gods. His clerics can cast divine spells, but only if they are in contact with an object or site imbued with some of Tharizdun's power. Portions of destroyed artifacts that were crafted in his name before his imprisonment are frequently worked into magic items to fulfill this requirement. The cult goes to great lengths to recover any remaining portions of these items by devoting months, if not years, scouring moldering texts to learn the history of their god's lost items of power. Remnants of once-mighty magic still possess an ember of their former power, and many consider them the most important direct link between followers and deity.

The magic items belonging to the cult include newly forged items as well as some items so old that they date back to the time when Tharizdun walked freely among the planes. The older the items are, the more powerful they tend to be, provided that they remain intact. Numerous wondrous items, magic weapons, armor, and rods have been passed down within the cult for generations, and all of them are identifiable by the symbol of the vortex etched into them.

The church commonly crafts the following item for its followers.

**Net of Despair:** This net is crafted from the silk of a drider. The silk is harvested, woven, and then blackened by infusing charred bone powder in with the fibers. The net absorbs light and has a visible aura of darkness. It continuously radiates darkness in a 20-foot radius as

the *darkness* spell.

Creatures that the user catch within the net begin to experience rapid decomposition and decay as though they are aging at a massively accelerated rate (see page 117 of the *Player's Handbook* for net statistics). A creature entangled in the net must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) each round or suffer 2 points of ability damage. The specific ability affected depends on the result of a d6 roll:

- 1 -- Strength
- 2 -- Dexterity
- 3 -- Constitution
- 4 -- Intelligence
- 5 -- Wisdom
- 6 -- Charisma

A creature caught within the net for 3 uninterrupted rounds suffers accelerated deterioration. Starting on the third round of entanglement, the entangled creature gains one negative level in addition to ability damage. The creature continues to take ability damage and negative levels each round the creature remains entangled. A creature that escapes the net is fatigued for a number of rounds equal to the number of ability points drained. A creature that survives entanglement in the net can heal ability damage and recover negative levels from the net in the normal manner. The save DC to remove a negative level is 15. In the hands of a nonevil PC, this functions as a normal masterwork net.

Moderate necromancy; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *darkness*, *enervation*, *ray of exhaustion*; cleric must worship Tharizdun; Price 150,000 gp.

### Bringing the Parts Together

The *net of despair* is a powerful item to use against mid- to high-level PCs. A war party that carries one or more of these items into battle is a force to be reckoned with, even by the most seasoned group of adventurers.

### Coming in Part 3 of the Cult of Tharizdun

Lurking in the secret depths of the temples are legions of their secret weapons: deadly undead soldiers, called elhoriads.

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## Random Encounters The Cult of Tharizdun

*By Darrin Drader*



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### Elhoriads

Encountered within the strongholds of Tharizdun's followers are elhoriads, which serve as an undead force for the cultists. Though many adventurers often dismiss elhoriads as trivial when they first encounter the creatures, they quickly discover that these undead foes are not as easily dispatched as most first surmise. As a result, elhoriads serve as one of the cult's secret weapons against those who seek to destroy them. To preserve the element of surprise, the cult keeps a tight rein on these creatures.

Elhoriads are not allowed to wander, and they are not sent to mindlessly terrorize the surrounding countryside. The cult uses them for protection and for attack whenever they move against a selected target. The cultists remain near them in battle, and they ensure that all elhoriads either return with them to their temple or are utterly destroyed. They fear that one of these creatures will fall into the hands of their enemies, allowing their foes to better prepare the next time they encounter the undead creatures.

**Elhoriad**  
**Medium Undead**  
**Hit Dice:** 5d12 (32 hp)  
**Initiative:** +7

**Speed:** 30 ft.  
**Armor Class:** 18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural), touch 13, flat footed 15  
**Base Attack/ Grapple:** +2/+5  
**Attack:** Longsword +5 melee (1d8+4/19-20) or claw +5 melee (1d4+3 plus entropic touch)  
**Full Attack:** Longsword +5 melee (1d8+4/19-20) or 2 claws +5 melee (1d4+3 plus entropic touch)  
**Special Attacks:** Entropic touch  
**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits  
**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4  
**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 17, Con --, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12  
**Skills:** Hide +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Spot +8  
**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Power Attack  
**Environment:** Any land and underground  
**Organization:** Solitary or gang (3-10)  
**Challenge Rating:** 3  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Neutral evil  
**Advancement:** 6-15 HD (Medium)  
**Level Adjustment:** --

*The creature looks like the blackened skeletal remains of a human. Its eyes are such a deep shade of inky black that they stand out against their ebony remains.*

The cult of Tharizdun created the elhoriads to act as guardians. The cult researched the various methods of undead creation for several years and even went so far as to recruit accomplished necromancers into their ranks to unlock the secrets that would allow them to manipulate the various forms of undead. Cultists produced elhoriads by taking the base skeleton and infusing them with the very power of entropy channeled from unearthed remnants of Tharizdun's once-mighty artifacts. This grants these creatures their above average intelligence and their deadly entropic touch ability.

Elhoriads are intelligent creatures, but they derive their power from Tharizdun, so they remain fiercely loyal to him and his followers. Elhoriads are the foot soldiers whenever the cult takes action against the outside world. Within their hidden temples, they serve as guards who protect the clergy in the event that their sanctuary is attacked.

The appearance of the elhoriads is not entirely unlike that of typical animated skeletons. Many who encounter them simply dismiss them as blackened skeletons, so they often make the mistake of employing the same tactics that they would against these all-too common undead. The inky blackness within the elhoriads' eye sockets and the constant shadow that surrounds their claws are the only outward characteristics that they display that cause them to appear as anything but common skeletons. These differences are subtle and have cost numerous adventurers their lives.

## Combat

Elhoriads are used primarily for melee combat. Their job is to weaken opponents before their foes can reach the cultists whom they protect. Elhoriads typically use longswords to cut through less powerful enemies, but if they are pitted against higher level foes, they instead use their claw attacks to deliver their entropic touch, which quickly weakens their opponents.

**Entropic Touch (Su):** An elhoriad's touch disrupts most living tissue. Whenever an elhoriad successfully strikes an aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, outsider, plant, or vermin with a claw attack, the creature struck must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or take 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain and 1d4 points of permanent Strength drain. The save DC is Charisma based.

**Undead Traits:** An elhoriad is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to its physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. It cannot be *raised*, and *resurrection* works only if it is willing.

## Bringing the Parts Together

If the party is sent to deal with a cult plaguing an area or with some specific cultists who are looking for an artifact, elhoriads are present to guard the temple or the cultist group if the group is extremely close to acquiring their item (and need to bolster their numbers). Likewise, if the cult attacks an area where the PCs are staying, the PCs may encounter the elhoriads as they try to defend the region.

## Coming in Part 4 of the Cult of Tharizdun

Meet the leader of the temple -- the one who gives the order to sow seeds of destruction amid the surrounding area.



## Random Encounters

# The Cult of Tharizdun

By Darrin Drader



## The Witnesses of Tharizdun

The high priests of the god of entropy are known in many temples as the Witnesses of Tharizdun. They oversee the operations of the temples, ensure that their actions remain secret, and lead the faithful in the dark ceremonies, which they believe brings their god closer to freedom. They are dark souls who, unlike those at lower levels of the organization, understand that if Tharizdun breaks free of his prison he will destroy everything in existence, not just the society that may have oppressed them earlier in life.

Witnesses of Tharizdun rise to the top of their clergy due to certain common personality traits that ultimately allow them to recruit and lead others within the cult. Though they don't all fit the following description, most have many, if not all of these traits. They possess a superficial charm that attracts people toward them rather than the message that they promote. They come across as soothing and reassuring, despite their utter contempt for their subordinates. Their own emotions run shallow, and they cannot experience love, shame, or guilt. They are highly egotistical with a grandiose sense of self, believing that they are entitled to the finest things life has to offer. Before joining the cult, these individuals commonly have been bandits or societal leeches, living off their own misdeeds or the charity of others. They often wander from place to place, reinventing themselves as the situation demands until they find a welcoming harbor in the cult of Tharizdun, which relies upon all of these traits to promote itself.

Many of the witnesses of Tharizdun are truly insane. Their motives are not clearly understood by their peers or sometimes even by themselves. Some fail to fully comprehend what it is that their god wishes to do. They are hateful, malicious individuals, but they have also found inner fulfillment with their deity and his baleful designs. To them, life is neither sacred, nor valuable unless it serves to promote their own agenda. Followers beneath them are to be lied to and deluded until their lives have become so intertwined with the religion that they can no longer extricate themselves from the organization.

Damargath is a witness of Tharizdun who leads a temple of fifty-five members in the sewers beneath the city of Verbabonc. Most regions of the Flanaess are not friendly toward the cult of Tharizdun. Damargath's temple goes to great measures to avoid the First Army of the Church, which patrols the streets of this city because they know that these zealous warriors would take it upon themselves to hunt them if they knew that they were operating in this area.

Damargath had once been one of the high priests of Tharizdun in the city of Greyhawk, but he left along with ten of his most trusted henchmen to create a new division in this city. He has found numerous malcontents here who are not satisfied with their lives because of the usually sunless weather, or those who are dissatisfied with the leadership of "His Noble Lordship, the Viscount Langard of Verbabonc, Defender of the Faith." Damargath, posing as a noble from Greyhawk, has befriended his lordship and has become a member of the court. He continually worms his way closer to becoming an advisor, and he plans to one day make a play for leadership of the city, which would serve to subjugate all the people of the city under the will of Tharizdun.

**Damargath, Witness of Tharizdun:** Male human cleric 10/fighter 5; CR 15; Medium humanoid; HD 10d8+30 plus 5d10+15; hp 117; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +12; Grp +15; Atk +16 melee (1d12+5/x3, +1 *unholy greataxe*) or +16 ranged (1d8+2/x3, +2 *longbow*); Full Atk +16/+11/+6 melee (1d12+5/x3, +1 *unholy greataxe*) or +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+2/x3, +2 *longbow*); SA rebuke undead 6/day; AL NE; SV Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +11, Concentration +16, Craft (weaponsmithing) +6, Heal +11, Intimidate +10, Jump -3, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Spellcraft +6; Blind-Fight, Brew Potion, Cleave, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll.

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st -- *bane*, *cause fear*, *curse water*, *entropic shield*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*\*; 2nd -- *align weapon*, *darkness*, *desecrate*\*, *make whole*, *sound burst*, *undetected alignment*; 3rd -- *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against good*\*, *obscure object*, *searing light*; 4th -- *discern lies*, *dismissal*, *restoration*, *unholy blight*\*; 5th -- *dispel good*\*, *slay living*, *true seeing*.

\*Domain spell. Deity: Tharizdun. Domains: Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Knowledge (cast divinations at +1 caster level).

*Languages:* Common, Infernal.

*Possessions:* +5 mithral breastplate, +1 unholy greataxe, +2 longbow, quiver with 20 arrows, amulet of natural armor +2.

## Bringing the Parts Together

Damargath and the other witnesses of Tharizdun represent a dire threat to the surrounding region. If the PCs must take action against the cult, they will ultimately face Damargath, or another like him.

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# Random Encounters

## The Cult of Tharizdun

*By Darrin Drader*



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## Temple Sites

*"Light must be snuffed, perfection decayed, order dissolved, and minds fragmented."* The mantra of the cult of Tharizdun, these words are often found etched into the altars, the stone pillars, and the doors within the Tharizdun's temples. These dark places are crushingly void of hope, and its followers revel in the darkness and despair that all things almost certainly face at some time in their existence. Though their lord is currently locked away in a planar prison, the congregations praise the fact that even the most optimistic sages agree that in time everything that exists will one day pass into dust and nothingness. Tharizdun will win the battle, despite the opposition of all the gods.

Each temple is led by one of the witnesses of Tharizdun, who are vile cultists who have risen to their positions through ambition, charm, and manipulation (see Part 4). The worshipers often reside at the temple site in opulent chambers, surrounded by riches donated to them by their body of worshipers. Despite their message of eminent decay, they partake of the finest things life has to offer. Rich food, rare tapestries, gold, and often harems are kept by the witness in charge of a temple. While the head of a temple indulges in these lavish surroundings, the cult uses these very things as a means of recruiting new followers to the temple. Those who are disenfranchised by society find not only acceptance, but luxury in these surroundings.

Temple sites must be hidden from the local populace. Nearly all people of the Flanaess have a hatred toward the cult of Tharizdun. This hatred, sponsored by the gods themselves, force the cult into hiding. They exist in the shadows, often transforming abandoned buildings into temples. They have also been known to take control of ill-used and forgotten chambers in sewer systems beneath cities. Occasionally their temples exist in basements or cellars beneath houses belonging to respectable people who have converted.

In the wilderness regions, the cult can afford to operate somewhat more openly. Structures exist in wooded depths and rocky plains where the followers of a region can meet and perform their dark rituals. The locals may believe that there is a darkness hanging over the region, but as long as no harm comes to them, the cult's activities are rarely investigated.

While the outside of a temple to Tharizdun normally doesn't betray the nature of its malign denizens, the interior must serve as a place of worship as well as a defensive location where the inhabitants can defend themselves from those who would try to destroy them. Doorways are usually trapped in such a way that only someone within can disarm them to allow others entrance. Hallways are often lined with murder holes, rooms are constructed with a dais so that warriors can gain the advantage of higher ground. Guard rooms are placed throughout the temple and manned by either the worshipers of Tharizdun or elhoriads. Ceremony chambers, the private rooms belonging to the high priests are located deep within the temple. Many temples also have a permanent portal to another plane established so that they can quickly flee to another realm where good creatures are much less likely to follow.



### A Sample Temple

By using one of the maps from the [Map-A-Week feature](#), you can either start playing right away or get an idea of how to lay out your own temple. The map chosen as a sample here represents a hidden temple that lurks along a seacoast. You may want to add a few other sea-going beasts to it to provide a nice local flavor to the perils your PCs will face! This sample represents a temple that is in the process of building itself into something more stable and permanent (inasmuch as Tharizdun's followers want stability). As a result, some of the rooms are not quite furnished to the taste of the witness in charge of the temple. Also, only blighters, a witness (Samiela), and elhoriads reside in these caves at present. Samiela's goal is to destroy the local fishing industry, so there should be at least one town whose industry is based on fish within a day or so of the caves. While she's doing this, she hopes to start recruiting new worshipers from nearby. Lack of fish can lead to despair among those whose livelihoods depend on the fish harvest, after all. (If the DM wishes, she may also have a deeper motive of seeking out a *net of despair* lost to the worshipers of Tharizdun in a shipwreck somewhere nearby.)

### Outside Environs

The cliffs near the sea cave have a cleverly hidden path leading upward. The beach itself is barely a strip of sand at high tide, though low tide exposes a fair amount of bracken-strewn sand. Both the land above and the beach serve as areas for the blighters inside the temple to go out and find plenty of nature to destroy with their innate abilities. At any moment, 1d4 blighters may be outside the temple. (Use the statistics presented in Part 1 of this series.) Another nearby cave (not shown on map) has a few hidden canoes and a small ship owned by Samiela and crewed by the blighters she brought with her (replace the blighters' Listen skills with Profession [sailor]).

**1. Entrance:** At least two elhoriads (see Part 2) lurk just within the entrance to the temple.

**Elhoriads (2):** hp 32; see Part 2.

**2. Trap:** The area has a spiked pit trap. The DM can choose to add a few elhoriads at the bottom of this pit.

**Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Reflex save (DC 14) avoids; 10 ft. deep (1d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 3d6 damage); Search (DC 15); Disable Device (DC 30). *Market Price:* 5,700 gp.

**3. Outer Temple:** The ceremonies for this hidden temple take place within this room. Four elhoriads stand guard within, and a ghost of a former seagoing fighter (a former pirate) wanders the area. There is usually one blighter here, as well (90% chance of her being present).

**Elhoriads (4):** hp 32; see Part 2.

**Ghost:** hp 32; see *Monster Manual*, page 117.

**4. Sea Cat Lair Trapdoor:** A trapdoor here opens into a water-filled pit that has a sea cat living in it part of the time (50% chance of it being present). The pit has an exit to the sea, and the tide brings in more water at various parts of the day. (The normal water depth is about 10 feet deep, but it can fluctuate between 15 feet deep and 5 feet deep.) One part of the wall forms a lip that is available only when the water depth is 10 feet or less. Samiela has plans to make these creatures into undead of some sort in the future.

**Camouflaged Watery Pit Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 25 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 317). *Market Price:* 8,500 gp.

**Sea Cat:** hp 51; see *Monster Manual*, page 220.

**5. Witness Chamber:** The temple's witness of Tharizdun resides in a room beyond a black velvet curtain. A rich bear-fur rug is spread out over a sleigh bed. Two chests made of dark-stained oak rest at the far end of the room. A dark wardrobe stands opposite the bed, and a full-length silver mirror hangs on the wall to the left of the doorway. Despite the overriding scent of salty water, a pleasing aroma drifts from a censer hanging next to the bed. While the PCs can find several sets of rich priestly vestments and some very nice outfits, not much else of importance is in this room -- unless the DM wishes it to be.

**Samiela, Witness of Tharizdun:** hp 110; see Part 4.

**6. Eating Chamber:** A couple of round wooden tables are grouped in this room, and a cooking area, complete with brick oven and vent, is on the far end of the room. (The vent branches into several other smaller crevices, which helps disperse the cooking smoke in a less visible manner.) Two blighters are usually in this room taking a break.

**Blighters (2):** 76 hp; see Part 1.

**7. Privies:** The priests have added wooden seating to what used to be little more than holes in the ground. A censer filled with fragrant incense hangs outside each entrance.

**8. Meeting Room:** The temple's witness has set up this room as a meeting room. Though the room has a few wooden chairs, these seats serve only to make the room look emptier. Four elhoriads are stationed here.

**Elhoriads (4):** hp 32; see Part 2.

**9. Temporary Storage and Sleeping Areas:** These rooms contain crates of food and other necessities, as well as several simple beds. There are usually 2d4 blighters in the area.

**Blighters (2d4):** 76 hp; see Part 1.

### Bringing the Parts Together

The ultimate challenge a party faces with regards to the forces of Tharizdun should be its location of strength: the temple itself. Uncovering and destroying a temple site can be the focus of an entire campaign. Once here, they face a number of deadly obstacles, ranging from fanatic followers who view their own deaths as progress toward their ultimate goal to traps, undead creatures unknown to the outside world, and powerful priests intent on preserving not only their decadent lifestyle as well as their following. If the party succeeds in destroying the temple but fails to eliminate the high priest, chances are that the temple will arise at a later point in time, even stronger than it is now.

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# Random Encounters

## What's Bugging You?

By Robert Wiese



### The Werewasp

Rumors persisted of a newly discovered type of were-creature: one that could change into vermin forms. Miala and Scout walked through the woods looking for proof that such a creature existed. They planned to start with the nest of giant wasps that the townsfolk had located about two miles inside the forest's border. The wasps had been too organized, some woodsmen had said. No one who had gone looking for the giant wasps had returned, and the townsfolk did not expect the two women back either.

After an hour, Scout pointed upward toward a huge cave opening in the side of a hill. Quietly, they approached and listened. The faint buzzing of wasps rewarded their efforts, and Scout started to climb toward the nest. Miala changed herself into a snake and followed.

The wasp nest was very large, and so were the wasps. The women had been expecting giant wasps, though, and took pains to conceal themselves. Then they saw the woman, and knew that the rumors were true. She was sitting among the wasps as if she belonged there, buzzing to them now and again and polishing a rapier in the dim light from outside. Her head was bulbous, like a wasp's, but her torso was definitely humanoid. Her large eyes swept the nest from time to time, and then alighted where Miala, in snake form, rested on a rock. Its gaze produced a tense moment for the women, but the werewasp turned away. Then it transformed into a giant wasp.



Scout and Miala did not know what to do next, but they knew that telling someone about this find should rank highly on the list. Slowly, and carefully, they snuck out of the nest.

#### Werewasp

|                             | Werewasp, Humanoid Form                                                     | Werewasp, Hybrid Form                                                                                 | Werewasp, Giant Wasp Form                                  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
|                             | Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)                                       | Medium Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)                                                                 | Large Humanoid (Human, Shapechanger)                       |
| <b>Hit Dice:</b>            | 1d6+3 plus 5d8+15 (44 hp)                                                   | 1d6+3 plus 5d8+15 (44 hp)                                                                             | 1d6+3 plus 5d8+15 (44 hp)                                  |
| <b>Initiative:</b>          | +3                                                                          | +4                                                                                                    | +4                                                         |
| <b>Speed:</b>               | 30 ft.                                                                      | 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (good)                                                                             | 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)                                  |
| <b>Armor Class:</b>         | 18 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +3 studded leather armor), touch 13, flat-footed 15 | 20 (+4 Dex, +6 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 16                                                     | 19 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 15 |
| <b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> | +3/+3                                                                       | +3/+7                                                                                                 | +3/+11                                                     |
| <b>Attack:</b>              | Rapier +3 melee (1d6/18-20) or shortbow +6 ranged (1d6/x3)                  | Rapier +7 melee (1d6+6/18-20), or sting +7 melee (1d3+6 plus poison), or shortbow +7 ranged (1d6/x3)  | Sting +6 melee (1d3+6 plus poison)                         |
| <b>Full Attack:</b>         | Rapier +3 melee (1d6/18-20) or shortbow +6 ranged (1d6/x3)                  | Rapier +7 melee (1d6+6/18-20), and sting +2 melee (1d3+2 plus poison), or shortbow +7 ranged (1d6/x3) | Sting +6 melee (1d3+6 plus poison)                         |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>         | 5 ft./5 ft.                                                                 | 5 ft./5 ft.                                                                                           | 10 ft./5 ft.                                               |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>     | Sneak attack +1d6                                                           | Curse of entomanothropy, poison, sneak attack +1d6                                                    | Curse of entomanothropy, poison, sneak attack +1d6         |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Special Qualities:</b> | Alternate form, darkvision 60 ft., entomanothropic command, entomanothropic immunities, trapfinding                                                                | Alternate form, damage reduction 5/silver, darkvision 60 ft., entomanothropic command, entomanothropic immunities, trapfinding                                     | Alternate form, damage reduction 5/silver, darkvision 60 ft., entomanothropic command, entomanothropic immunities, trapfinding                                    |
| <b>Saves:</b>             | Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +3                                                                                                                                           | Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3                                                                                                                                           | Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Abilities:</b>         | Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 8                                                                                                                      | Str 18, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 8                                                                                                                      | Str 18, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 8                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Skills:</b>            | Bluff +3, Climb +3, Escape Artist +5, Hide +6, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +6, Perform (sing) +3, Search +5, Spot +21, Survival +11*, Tumble +6 | Bluff +3, Climb +8, Escape Artist +7, Hide +8, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Perform (sing) +3, Search +5, Spot +21, Survival +11*, Tumble +8 | Bluff +3, Climb +8, Escape Artist +7, Hide+4, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Perform (sing) +3, Search +5, Spot +21, Survival +11*, Tumble +8 |
| <b>Feats:</b>             | Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility                                                                                                                        | Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility                                                                                                                        | Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Environment:</b>       | Any                                                                                                                                                                | Any                                                                                                                                                                | Any                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Organization:</b>      | Solitary or swarm (2-5)                                                                                                                                            | Solitary or swarm (2-5)                                                                                                                                            | Solitary or swarm (2-5)                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Challenge Rating:</b>  | 4                                                                                                                                                                  | 4                                                                                                                                                                  | 4                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Treasure:</b>          | Standard                                                                                                                                                           | Standard                                                                                                                                                           | Standard                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Alignment:</b>         | Chaotic neutral                                                                                                                                                    | Chaotic neutral                                                                                                                                                    | Chaotic neutral                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Advancement:</b>       | By character class                                                                                                                                                 | By character class                                                                                                                                                 | By character class                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Level Adjustment:</b>  | +2                                                                                                                                                                 | +2                                                                                                                                                                 | +2                                                                                                                                                                |

*This woman has large, dark eyes, and her dark hair has light-colored bands running through it.*

A werewasp is a clever and tough opponent, and it can fly at a foe and deliver a virulent poison. The creature lives either in a small community (though it does not act as a swarm creature) among humanoids or with the base creature's type. The wasplike aspects of its humanoid appearance actually increase its physical beauty. While it does prefer humanoid or wasp form, those whom it lives among determines which form it usually stays in. It does not fight mindlessly, and it retreats when injured unless something threatens its community.

The werewasp presented here is a 1st-level human rogue using the following base stats: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 8. She is a natural entomanothrope.

## Combat

Werewasps prefer hit-and-run tactics when possible, though they also swarm on a creature when with normal giant wasps. They prefer to disable their victims and then deal with them once they neutralize the threat.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fort DC 16, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con.

**Curse of Entomanothropy (Su):** Any humanoid or giant of size Small to Huge that is hit by the werewasp's sting attack in vermin or hybrid form must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract entomanothropy. Afflicted entomanothropes cannot pass on the curse of entomanothropy.

**Alternate Form (Su):** An entomanothrope can shift into vermin form as though using the *polymorph* spell on itself, though its gear is not affected, it does not regain hit points for changing form, and only the specific vermin form indicated for the entomanothrope can be assumed. It does not assume the ability scores of the vermin, but instead adds the vermin's physical ability score modifiers to its own ability scores. An entomanothrope also can assume a bipedal hybrid form with two humanoid (or giant) arms and legs, and a face like the base vermin. The hybrid body is basically humanoid, but with fur or hair or skin/plates like that of the base vermin. If the base vermin has a tail attack, such as the monstrous scorpion, giant wasp, or giant bee, then the hybrid form has it, too. If the base vermin has wings, then the hybrid form has wings also. Changing forms is a standard action. An entomanothrope can maintain its new form indefinitely.

**Entomanothropic Command (Su):** In any form, entomanothropes can command vermin of its type (any size) as if using a *command undead* spell or mindless undead. This ability affects 2 Hit Dice of the vermin type per Hit Die of the entomanothrope, and it lasts for 1 hour.

**Entomanothropic Immunities (Ex):** Entomanothropes have immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) in any form.



**Skills:** The werewasp has a +8 bonus on Spot checks. \*It also has a +4 bonus on Survival checks on orient itself.

## Coming in Part 2 of What's Bugging You?

Learn how to create your own entomanothropes with the entomanothrope template.

# Random Encounters What's Bugging You?

*By Robert Wiese*



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## Entomanothropy Runs Wild

Entomanothropes are humans or giants that can transform themselves into monstrous vermin. While similar to lycanthropes, they differ in the forms they can assume and some of their abilities. As a lycanthrope struggles against its animal nature, an entomanothrope remains at peace with its vermin nature because it has no alignment conflicts. Entomanothropes in humanoid (or giant) form resemble the humanoid or giant they are, but they have some verminlike characteristics that depend on the vermin type. Generally the vermin looks are reflected in the face, but reddish tough skin on the back and arms is not uncommon among werescorpions.

### Creating an Entomanothrope

"Entomanothrope" is a template that can be added to any humanoid or giant (referred to as the base creature). Entomanothropy as an affliction works exactly as the lycanthropy affliction does, except that the entomanothrope never runs the danger of assuming the alignment of the vermin type (as vermin really have no moral or ethical sense). Entomathropy can be cured in the same way as lycanthropy.

**Size and Type:** The base creature's type does not change, but the creature gains the shapechanger subtype. The entomanothrope takes on characteristics of some monstrous vermin (not swarms) no more than one size category larger than the base creature (referred to as the base vermin). Entomanothropes can also adopt a hybrid form that combines features of the base creature and the vermin. The hybrid form is the same size as the base creature's size. Entomanothropes can assume vermin forms one size smaller than the base creature size, regardless of the normal size of the vermin type. For example, an entomanothrope that is humanoid and Large monstrous scorpion could become a Small monstrous scorpion, though its hybrid form would be Medium and its normal vermin form would be Large.

**Hit Dice and Hit Points:** Same as the base creature plus the base vermin. To calculate total hit points, apply the best Constitution modifier that the creature has in any form. Hit points do not change when the entomanothrope changes form.

**Speed:** Same as the base creature or base vermin, depending on form. Hybrids use the base creature's base land speed. If the hybrid form has wings (see under Alternate Form below), then the hybrid has a fly speed equal to the lesser of the base creature's base speed or the base vermin's normal fly speed. For example, the giant wasp has a fly speed of 60 feet. If a human commoner entomanothrope (speed 30 feet) changed into a hybrid giant wasp form, it would fly at speed 30 feet. If an 11th-level human monk entomanothrope (base speed 70 feet) changed into a hybrid giant wasp, the hybrid would fly at 60 feet.

**Armor Class:** The base creature's natural armor bonus increases by +2 in all forms. In hybrid and vermin forms, the natural armor bonus is equal to the base vermin's or base creature's, whichever is greater.

**Base Attack/Grapple:** Add the base attack bonus for the base vermin to the base attack bonus for the base creature. The lycanthrope's grapple bonus uses its attack bonus and modifiers for Strength and size depending on the lycanthrope's form.

**Attacks:** Same as the base creature or base vermin, depending on which form the entomanothrope is using. An entomanothrope in hybrid form uses the base creature's attacks and the base vermin's bite attack (or other primary natural weapon if the vermin form lacks a bite attack). Monstrous scorpion entomanothropes gain claw attacks in hybrid form.

**Damage:** Same as the base creature or base vermin, depending on which form the lycanthrope is in. Hybrid monstrous scorpions have claw attacks that do 1d4 base damage for Medium hybrids, 1d6 base damage for Large hybrids, or 1d8 base damage for Huge hybrids.

**Special Attacks:** An entomanothrope retains the special attacks of the base creature in humanoid form, and of the base vermin in vermin or hybrid form. It also gains the special attacks described below. Class abilities (such as sneak attack) are retained in all forms.

An entomanothrope spellcaster cannot cast spells while in vermin form and cannot cast spells with verbal components in hybrid form. Monstrous scorpion entomanothropes cannot cast spells with somatic components in hybrid form.

*Curse of Entomanthropcy (Su):* Any humanoid or giant of size Small to Huge that is hit by an entomanothrope's bite or sting attack in vermin or hybrid form must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract entomanthropcy. The curse can be passed through claw attacks if the hybrid or vermin form does not have a bite or sting attack. Afflicted entomanothropes cannot pass on the curse of entomanthropcy.

*Poison (Ex):* If the base vermin has a poison bite or sting, or an acid sting, then the entomanothrope gains these special attacks in its hybrid form. The type of poison (or acid) and the Fortitude save Difficulty Classes remain the same in hybrid or vermin form.

**Special Qualities:** An entomanothrope retains the special qualities of the base creature and base vermin (except vermin traits), and it also gains those described below.

*Alternate Form (Su):* An entomanothrope can assume the form of a single type of vermin as if using *apolymporph* spell on itself, though its gear is not affected, it can maintain the new form indefinitely, and it does not gain hit points for changing form. It adds the physical ability score modifiers to the scores of the base creature rather than gaining the base vermin's physical ability scores (see how to calculate these under "Abilities" below).

An entomanothrope can also assume a bipedal hybrid form with two humanoid (or giant) arms and legs, and a face like the base vermin. The hybrid body is basically humanoid, but with fur or hair or skin/plates like that of the base vermin. Werescorpions have clawed hands. If the base vermin has a tail sting attack, then the hybrid form has it too. If the base vermin has wings, then the hybrid form has wings also. The fly speed is calculated as per the Speed section above. Changing forms is a standard action. (See Lycanthropy as an Affliction in the *Monster Manual* for information about afflicted entomanothropes controlling their change.)

*Damage Reduction (Ex):* An entomanothrope in vermin or hybrid form has damage reduction 5/silver.

*Darkvision (Ex):* Entomanothropes have darkvision to a range of 60 feet in any form.

*Entomanothropic Command (Su):* In any form, entomanothropes can command vermin of its type (any size) as if using a *command undead* spell on mindless undead. This ability affects 2 Hit Dice of the vermin type per Hit Die of the entomanothrope, and it lasts for 1 hour.

*Entomanothropic Immunities (Ex):* Entomanothropes have immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) in any form.

**Base Save Bonuses:** Add the base save bonuses of the base vermin to the base save bonuses of the base creature.

**Abilities:** All entomanothropes gain +2 Wisdom and -2 Intelligence. In addition, when in vermin or hybrid form, the entomanothrope's physical ability scores equal the animal's normal ability scores -10 or -11 (subtract 10 from even scores and subtract 11 from odd scores). For example, a werespider based on a large monstrous spider (Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12) adds +4 Str, +6 Dex, and +2 Con. An entomanothrope may also gain an ability score increase due to increased Hit Dice (from adding the template), but this increase cannot be put into Intelligence.

**Skills:** An entomanothrope gains skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1) per Hit Die of its vermin form, as if it had multiclassed into the vermin type. (Vermin is never its first Hit Die, though, and it does not gain quadruple skill points for any vermin Hit Die.) Any skill given in the vermin's description is a class skill for the entomanothrope's vermin levels. In any form, an entomanothrope also has any racial skill bonuses of the base creature and of the base vermin, although conditional skill bonuses apply only in the associated form.

**Feats:** Add the base vermin's feats (if any) to the base creature's. If this results in an entomanothrope having the same feat twice, the entomanothrope gains no additional benefit unless the feat normally can be taken more once, in which case the duplicated feat works as noted in the feat description.

This process may give the entomanothrope more feats than a character of its total Hit Dice would normally be entitled to; if this occurs, any "extra" feats are denoted as bonus feats.

This process also may give the entomanothrope fewer feats than a character of its total Hit Dice would normally be entitled to; if this occurs, choose additional feats for the entomanothrope so that it has the correct number of feats.

An entomanothrope may not meet the prerequisites for all its feats when in humanoid or giant form. If this occurs, the entomanothrope still has the feat but cannot use them when in humanoid or giant form.

**Environment:** Same as either the base creature or base vermin.

**Organization:** Solitary or colony (colony size dependent on base vermin).

**Challenge Rating:** By class level or base creature, modified according to the Hit Die of the base vermin: 1 HD or 2 HD, +2; 3 HD to 5 HD, +3; 6 HD to 10 HD, +5; 11 HD to 20 HD, +6; 21 or more HD, +7.

**Treasure:** Standard.

**Alignment:** Same as base creature.

**Advancement:** By character class.

**Level Adjustment:** Same as the base creature +2. In addition, an entomanothrope's character level is increased by the number of racial Hit Dice the base vermin has.

Random Encounters

What's Bugging You?

By Robert Wiese



The Fearsome Werescorpion

Miala stopped on the path, listening to the sounds of the wind and of the rocks falling far below. "The mountains are treacherous, full of giants and dragons," went the warning from the nearby village. Miala took the warning to heart and proceeded with caution. She sought a type of mountain fey that a dying wizard had described to her, but she had found no trace of it so far. As she resumed her walk, the ground shook and a burly hill giant stepped around from behind a rock. Almost as surprised at seeing her as she was at seeing it, the giant stopped for a moment. Then it bellowed and started to change. As its body grew large scorpionlike claws and its head and body took on more of a scorpion's visage, Miala decided that a change of her own form, followed by a speedy retreat, was the best course of action. She morphed into an eagle and dodged the rock thrown by the enraged half-scorpion entomanothrope. It howled in rage, but could not follow.

Hill Giant Werescorpion

|                      | Werescorpion, Hill Giant Form                                                       | Werescorpion, Hybrid Form                                                           | Werescorpion, HugeMonstrous Scorpion Form                          |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | Large Giant (Shapechanger)                                                          | Large Giant (Shapechanger)                                                          | Huge Giant(Shapechanger)                                           |
| Hit Dice:            | 12d8+84 plus 10d8 +70 (253 hp)                                                      | 12d8+84 plus 10d8 +70 (253 hp)                                                      | 12d8+84 plus 10d8 +70 (253 hp)                                     |
| Initiative:          | -1                                                                                  | -1                                                                                  | -1                                                                 |
| Speed:               | 30 ft.                                                                              | 40 ft.                                                                              | 50 ft.                                                             |
| Armor Class:         | 22 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +11 natural, +3 hide), touch 8, flat- footed 22                | 22 (-1 size, -1 Dex, + 14 natural), touch 8, flat- footed 22                        | 21 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +14 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 21         |
| Base Attack/Grapple: | +16/+28                                                                             | +16/+34                                                                             | +16/+38                                                            |
| Attack:              | Greatclub +24 melee (2d8+12), or slam +23 melee (1d4+8), or rock +15 ranged (2d6+8) | Greatclub +30 melee (2d8+21) or claw +29 melee (1d8+14) or rock +14 ranged (2d6+14) | Claw +28 melee (1d8+14)                                            |
| Full Attack:         | Greatclub +24/+19/+14/+9 melee (2d8+10), or 2 slams +23 melee                       | Greatclub +30/+25/+20/+15 melee (2d8+21) or 2 claws +29 melee                       | 2 claws +28 melee (1d8+14) and sting +23 melee (2d4+7 plus poison) |

|                           |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                           | (1d4+8), or rock +15 ranged (2d6+8)                                                                                                         | (1d8+14) and sting +24 melee (2d4+7 plus poison) or rock +14 ranged (2d6+14)                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Space/Reach:</b>       | 10 ft./10 ft.                                                                                                                               | 15 ft./10 ft.                                                                                                                                                          | 15 ft./10 ft.                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Special Attacks:</b>   | Rock throwing                                                                                                                               | Poison                                                                                                                                                                 | Constrict 1d8+14, improved grab, poison                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Special Qualities:</b> | Alternate form, darkvision 60 ft., entomanothropic command, entomanothropic immunities, low-light vision, rock catching, tremorsense 60 ft. | Alternate form, damage reduction 5/silver, darkvision 60 ft., entomanothropic command, entomanothropic immunities, low-light vision, rock catching, tremorsense 60 ft. | Alternate form, damage reduction 5/silver, darkvision 60 ft., entomanothropic command, entomanothropic immunities, low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft. |
| <b>Saves:</b>             | Fort +19, Ref +6, Will +10                                                                                                                  | Fort +22, Ref +6, Will +10                                                                                                                                             | Fort +22, Ref +6, Will +10                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Abilities:</b>         | Str 27, Dex 8, Con 19 Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 7                                                                                                  | Str 39, Dex 8, Con 25 Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 7                                                                                                                             | Str 39, Dex 8, Con 25 Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 7                                                                                                              |
| <b>Skills:</b>            | Climb +12, Hide -5, Jump +8, Listen +6, Spot +12                                                                                            | Climb +21, Hide -2, Jump +21, Listen +6, Spot +12                                                                                                                      | Climb +21, Hide -6, Jump +25, Listen +6, Spot +12                                                                                                       |
| <b>Feats:</b>             | Alertness, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)                 | Alertness, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)                                            | Alertness, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)                             |
| <b>Environment:</b>       | Temperate hills                                                                                                                             | Temperate hills                                                                                                                                                        | Temperate hills                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Organization:</b>      | Solitary or band (6-9 normal hill giants)                                                                                                   | Solitary or band (6-9 normal hill giants)                                                                                                                              | Solitary or band (6-9 normal hill giants)                                                                                                               |
| <b>Challenge Rating:</b>  | 12                                                                                                                                          | 12                                                                                                                                                                     | 12                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Treasure:</b>          | Standard                                                                                                                                    | Standard                                                                                                                                                               | Standard                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Alignment:</b>         | Often chaotic evil                                                                                                                          | Often chaotic evil                                                                                                                                                     | Often chaotic evil                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Advancement:</b>       | By character class                                                                                                                          | By character class                                                                                                                                                     | By character class                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Level Adjustment:</b>  | +6                                                                                                                                          | +6                                                                                                                                                                     | +6                                                                                                                                                      |

*This almost feral giant has the head of a large scorpion. Natural plates cover its body, and it has wicked-looking pincerlike claws that somehow hold a greatclub with confidence and power.*

The hill giant werescorpion is a brutish creature, and it usually serves as the thrall of some smarter hill giant or even of an ogre mage or clever orc. It revels in combat, and it must be restrained from charging at opponents upon sight. It prefers its hybrid form, which is its most frightening.

This creature is a standard hill giant with entomanothropy as an affliction.

### Combat

With intelligence bordering on that of animals, this werescorpion rushes into melee without any real strategy, wielding its club and claws to do the most damage possible. On an initial rush into battle the creature attempts to overrun or bull rush smaller targets. Its claws have fingers, but it also has razorlike ridges on the insides like those of a scorpion's pincers.

**Constrict (Ex):** A werescorpion in vermin form deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the werescorpion in vermin form must hit with a claw attack.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fort DC 28, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con.

**Rock Throwing (Ex):** The range increment is 120 feet for a werescorpion's thrown rocks.

**Alternate Form (Su):** An entomanothrope can shift into vermin form as though using the *polymorph* spell on itself, though its gear is not affected, it does not regain hit points for changing form, and only the specific vermin form indicated for the entomanothrope can be assumed. It does not assume the ability scores of the animal, but instead adds the animal's physical ability score modifiers to its own ability scores. An entomanothrope also can assume a bipedal hybrid form with two humanoid (or giant) arms and legs, and a face like the base vermin. The hybrid body is basically humanoid, but with fur or hair or skin/plates like that of the base vermin. Werescorpions have clawed hands. Changing forms is a standard action (see Lycanthropy as an Affliction in the *Monster Manual* for information about afflicted entomanothropes controlling their change). An entomanothrope can maintain its new form indefinitely.

**Entomanothropic Command (Su):** In any form, entomanothropes can command vermin of its type (any size) as if using a *command undead* spell on mindless undead. This ability affects 2 Hit Dice of the vermin type per Hit Die of the entomanothrope, and it lasts for 1 hour.

**Entomanothropic Immunities (Ex):** Entomanothropes have immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) in any form.

**Coming in Part 4 of What's Bugging You?**

We turn our attention to druids and an option for giving them vermin companions.

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Random Encounters  
**What's Bugging You?**  
*By Robert Wiese*



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**Vermin Druids and Their Companions**

Some druids favor animals, and others favor plants. A very few favor insects, or vermin, or would if they could. Using these rules, they can.

Druids who favor insects have a more difficult time than druids favoring animals, because vermin are very different from animals. An animal has some intelligence, though slight, and can understand what the druid wants. It can, to some extent, strategize and solve problems. Insects understand need, and that is about it: need for food, need for safety, need for shelter from the elements, need to escape predators, need to protect offspring (in some cases). Animals understand these too, but animals can move beyond basic needs in their intellectual capability. Vermin cannot be handled, or trained, or even spoken to. Because of this, the relationship between a druid and her vermin companion is different than it would be with an animal.

A druid can select a vermin companion from the following table. She must be of the indicated level, and the amount in parentheses is subtracted from the druid's level to determine the companion's special abilities.

**1st Level or Higher (Level -0)**

- Giant Ant, Worker
- Giant Bee
- Giant Fire Beetle
- Monstrous Centipede, Large
- Monstrous Scorpion, Medium

- Monstrous Spider, Medium

**4th Level or Higher (Level -3)**

- Giant Ant, Soldier
- Giant Bombardier Beetle
- Monstrous Centipede, Huge
- Monstrous Spider, Large

**7th Level or Higher (Level -6)**

- Centipede Swarm \*
- Giant Praying Mantis
- Giant Stag Beetle
- Giant Wasp
- Locust Swarm \*
- Monstrous Scorpion, Large

**10th Level or Higher (Level -9)**

- Monstrous Centipede, Gargantuan
- Monstrous Spider, Huge

**13th Level or Higher (Level -12)**

- Monstrous Scorpion, Huge
- Monstrous Spider, Gargantuan

**16th Level or Higher (Level -15)**

- Monstrous Centipede, Colossal
- Monstrous Scorpion, Gargantuan

\*Swarms might be very unusual when thought of as a companion, but the image of a druid pointing and a mass of small creatures moving to attack is too good not to include. A swarm acts as a single creature for purposes of special abilities described below.

Druid vermin companions are treated as magical beasts (enhanced vermin) for purposes of effects that depend on its type (though it retains its vermin type and traits, vermin Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saves, skill points, and feats). However, most useful spells that affect animals still do not affect vermin companions. Vermin companions are superior to normal vermin, and they have special abilities that depend on druid level, just as animal companions do.

| Class Level | Bonus HD | Natural Armor Adj. | Str/Dex Adj. | Bonus Tricks | Special                     |
|-------------|----------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 1st-2nd     | +0       | +0                 | +0           | 0            | Empathic link, share spells |
| 3rd-5th     | +2       | +2                 | +1           | 0            | Evasion                     |
| 6th-8th     | +4       | +4                 | +2           | 2            | Skills, feats               |
| 9th-11th    | +6       | +6                 | +3           | 3            | Multiattack                 |
| 12th-14th   | +8       | +8                 | +4           | 4            |                             |
| 15th-17th   | +10      | +10                | +5           | 5            | Improved evasion            |
| 18th-20th   | +12      | +12                | +6           | 6            |                             |

The Bonus Hit Dice, Natural Armor Adjustment, and Str/Dex Adjustment work exactly as for animal companions.

*Empathic Link (Su):* Because vermin cannot normally learn tricks, a druid must establish an empathic link with a vermin companion. The range



of this empathic link is line of sight. The link allows the druid and vermin to communicate needs back and forth, and it can be activated and suppressed at will by the druid. For game purposes, communication of needs is equivalent to directing the vermin to perform any of the following tricks: come, down, heel, or attack. Using *empathic link* to communicate with a vermin companion is a move action.

Without any guidance, a vermin companion follows the druid around and reacts normally to stimuli. For example, if it is hungry, it tries to eat anything it normally considers food, except the druid and her companions. The vermin generally considers people and other creatures closely associated with the druid as part of its colony. It runs from predators, and it takes shelter from inclement weather. It sleeps when the druid does. The druid can use her empathic link to overcome these normal reactions as described above. The vermin always attacks any creatures that have attacked the druid or her companions, without need for commanding -- even when the foe includes aberrations and outsiders. However, it flees from undead and oozes (even if given the order to attack), though it stays within sight of the druid if possible. Once the undead or ooze leaves the scene (or is destroyed), the vermin companion can be recalled via the empathic link (by issuing the command to come). It will not attack constructs because it cannot register a construct as a possible food source (even if given the order to attack). It also does not attack incorporeal creatures, undead or not. It must be called off via empathic link once it has begun fighting.

*Share Spells (Ex)*: The druid can share spells with a vermin companion in the same way that she can share spells with an animal companion.

*Evasion (Ex)*: If a vermin companion is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex save for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful Reflex saving throw.

*Skills (Ex)*: Continued exposure to the druid enlarges the vermin companion's capabilities. When the druid reaches 6th level, the vermin companion gains skill points as if it had an Intelligence of 1, and it gains quadruple that for its first Hit Die. These points must be spent on Balance, Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Survival, or Swim. Swarm companions do not gain skills.

*Feats (Ex)*: Vermin companions that gain skill points also gain feats. Select one feat plus one feat per three Hit Dice for the companion. These may be selected from the *Player's Handbook* and the *Monster Manual*. The vermin must meet all prerequisites for the feats selected. The feats cannot require intelligence to use or give skill check bonuses for skills not listed under "Skills" above. The vermin cannot take the Track feat. Swarm companions do not gain feats.

*Bonus Tricks (Ex)*: When the druid reaches 6th level, the vermin companion can learn two tricks, as per the normal rules under Handle Animal for teaching an animal tricks. This includes teaching it to attack unnatural creatures, including corporeal undead and oozes. It takes a separate trick slot to teach a vermin companion to attack constructs. It cannot be trained to attack incorporeal creatures. It gains additional tricks as the druid increases in level. It cannot gain the Track trick. A druid may have her vermin companion perform tricks it knows as a free action. A vermin companion can be pushed as a full-round action to perform a forced march or hustle, but that is all.

*Multiattack (Ex)*: The vermin companion gains Multiattack as a bonus feat if it has three or more natural attacks. If it does not have three or more natural attacks, it instead gains a secondary attack with its primary natural weapon at a -5 penalty.

*Improved Evasion (Ex)*: If a vermin companion is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex save for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful Reflex saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

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## Random Encounters

# City Scenes, Part 3

By Skip Williams



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## Death from Below

Scavengers and hunters of all kinds flock to cities. There they find plenty of refuse and all manner of unwary prey. It helps if an urban predator or scavenger can keep a low profile, because crowds of urban folk can pose a danger to almost anything.

One creature that fits the roles of both scavenger and hunter is the rare and lethal assassin jelly. This particular specimen is typical of the species. It lurks in the city sewers, usually near an intersection, using its tremorsense ability to pick out lone city dwellers walking around after dusk. When it

believes it has found a lone victim, the jelly tracks its prey to its home and waits until the victim is asleep, then it moves in to suck the victim dry.

**Assassin Jelly:** CR 6; Medium ooze; HD 5d10+25; hp 52; Init +6; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, tentacle); SA Constitution damage 1d6, improved grab, paralysis; SQ blindsight 60 ft., camouflage, hide in plain sight, immunities (electricity, sonic, and mind-affecting effects), ooze traits, scent, tremorsense 120 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +10, Hide +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +6, Spot +13, Survival +5 (+13\* when tracking by scent); Improved Initiative, Track.

**Constitution Damage (Ex):** After an assassin jelly establishes a grappling hold on a living foe and it begins its turn with the foe in its grasp, its many mouths suck blood and other fluids from the victim. The jelly deals an extra 1d6 points of Constitution damage in addition to its tentacle damage with a successful grapple check. When it can grapple a paralyzed foe, an assassin jelly typically draws every last ounce of fluid from the body, leaving behind nothing but a dry husk.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, an assassin jelly must hit a foe the same size category as itself or smaller with its tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can deal Constitution damage.

**Paralysis (Ex):** An assassin jelly's mouths produce an anesthetic slime. A target hit by an assassin jelly's tentacle attack must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. The Save DC is Constitution-based. The jelly can grab a paralyzed opponent automatically.

**Camouflage (Ex):** Even when it isn't hiding, it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice an assassin jelly.

**Ooze Traits:** An assassin jelly is blind (blindsight 60 feet) and immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight. It is immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, and *polymorphing*. It is not subject to critical hits or flanking.

**Assassin Jelly**  
Medium Ooze  
**Hit Dice:** 5d10+25 (52 hp)  
**Initiative:** +6  
**Speed:** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.  
**Armor Class:** 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+5  
**Attack:** Tentacle +5 melee (1d6+3)  
**Full Attack:** Tentacle +5 melee (1d6+3)  
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Constitution damage, improved grab, paralysis  
**Special Qualities:** Blindsight 60 ft., camouflage, damage reduction 5/--, hide in plain sight, immunities (electricity, sonic, and mind effects), ooze traits, scent, tremorsense 120 feet  
**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3  
**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 1  
**Skills:** Climb +10, Hide +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +6, Spot +13, Survival +5 (+13 when tracking by scent)  
**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Track  
**Environment:** Any warm or temperate land  
**Organization:** Solitary  
**Challenge Rating:** 6  
**Treasure:** 1/10th coins, 50% goods, 50% items  
**Alignment:** Always neutral  
**Advancement:** 6-10 HD (Medium); 11-15 HD (Large)

*What seemed to be just a wet spot on the wall is in fact a nearly transparent creature that slithers about like some great, repulsive amoeba.*

A relative of the gray ooze and ochre jelly, the assassin jelly is a cunning hunter, though it can survive on carrion or most other kinds of organic refuse. It craves the body fluids of warm-blooded prey.

Unlike most other oozes, an assassin jelly has an outer shell of clear, hard plates that protect its body, with a gelatinous core. The creature normally forms a shallow puddle about 5 feet across and about 3 inches thick in the center. It can flatten itself to a thickness of about half an inch and roll itself into a long rope, so that it can squeeze under doors or through openings about a half-inch across.

Although intelligent enough to speak, an assassin jelly has no vocal apparatus, and it attempts to contact others telepathically when needed. It reveals no thoughts, though it behaves like a thinking creature.

## Combat

An assassin jelly's underside contains hundreds and hundreds of tiny rasping mouths. The creature attacks by forming a snaking tentacle that it uses to slap foes. A hit deals bludgeoning damage and slashing damage from the mouths.

An assassin jelly prefers to stalk lone prey and ambush its victims while they sleep. From time to time one will follow an entire party to its lodging or campsite. The jelly tends to stay just within range of its blindsight ability and uses its camouflage and hide in plain sight abilities to then slither in to attack its chosen victim. Often the victim's companions don't notice the assault until they find their comrade's desiccated husk in the morning.

**Constitution Damage (Ex):** After an assassin jelly establishes a grappling hold on a living foe and it begins its turn with the foe in its grasp, its many mouths suck blood and other fluids from the victim. The jelly deals an extra 1d6 points of Constitution damage in addition to its tentacle damage with a successful grapple check. When it can grapple a paralyzed foe, an assassin jelly typically draws every last ounce of fluid from the body, leaving behind nothing but a dry husk.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, an assassin jelly must hit a foe the same size category as itself or smaller with its tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can deal Constitution damage.

**Paralysis (Ex):** An assassin's jelly's mouths produce an anesthetic slime. A target hit by an assassin jelly's tentacle attack must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based. The jelly can automatically grab a paralyzed opponent.

**Camouflage (Ex):** Even when it isn't hiding, it takes a Spot check (DC 15) to notice an assassin jelly.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Ex):** An assassin jelly can attempt to hide even when being observed. If the jelly's Hide check result is less than 15, it still takes at least a DC 15 Spot check to notice it, thanks to its camouflage ability.

**Skills:** An assassin jelly has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. An assassin jelly has a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks. It also has a +8 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

## Bringing the Parts Together

The assassin jelly often lurks, out of sight, near the location of any large-scale activity. Afterward, it picks a victim to follow home. The PCs might encounter the assassin jelly when they retire for the night after they have one of the other encounters in this article series.

## Coming in Part 4 of City Scenes

Dare you trust the potions and charms sold by Madame Phadra?

