



# Denizens of the Dragon Isles

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Between the freeholds of mortal men and Old Ones dwell creatures of every description, both fair and foul. Beware the wilderness, uncivilized and untamed, for there roam beasts of monstrous intent and creatures who despise or hunt mankind--giant insects, man-eating beasts, enormous worms, and hideous serpents. These are not always creatures of magic or intelligence, good nor evil, but they are powerful and vicious, and any traveler of the Dragon Isles should be wary of their presence.

## Introduction

This is a bestiary of the Dragon Isles, describing dark and dangerous denizens who lurk, prowl, and hunt. This book is written as a guide for the GM to challenge the PCs. However, all of these monsters exist in myths and legends which might be known to anyone living in the Dragon Isles, so the contents may also be useful to players.

## Ætherics (Elementals)

**Elementals (Ætherics)** are spirits composed of permutations of magical elements. They originate from outside Ambar, either from the myriad Kalla or the whirling void of magic known as the Astral Sea. In order to walk the Dragon Isles they are forced to become "incarnate" and take a physical body, which is relatively limited compared with their true spirit form.

# Ætheric Creatures

Creatures who have no physical bodies are said to be Aetheric. Such creatures do not exist in the physical world, and can walk through walls or other objects. However, they cannot walk through people or objects with Aether, such as magic items. Thus, a person's fist, a magic sword, or magic spell can hurt an Aetheric but a mundane sword cannot. (Yes, you can punch a ghost!) An Aetheric who is "killed" is not destroyed (because Aether cannot be created or destroyed) but is weakened and banished elsewhere.

The Astral consists entirely of Aether, and all creatures who dwell in or pass through the Astral are Aetheric.

Some wizards with normal mortal bodies are able to become Aetheric, which might allow them to walk through walls or teleport.

## ÆTheric Crystals / Soul Gems / Mthu Rygas

When sufficient raw Aether or Aetherics flow through a physical space it can *incarnate* into an "Aetheric Crystal", commonly known as a "Soul Gem" or *Mthu Rygas*. Aetheric Crystals contain Aetherics...whether they are proto-souls or fully-formed named souls.

Wizards and Incarnates can use Aetheric Crystals as magical batteries. This is especially useful when traveling across Darklands, where the ambient Aether is diminished, or when their own reserves are running low. A wizard could draw upon an Aetheric Crystal to augment a spell or extend a magical effect. Such has been done for millennia, and wielders of magic trade Aetheric Crystals as one of the only forms of currency that has any value to them (Nodes and Arcanymys being notable exceptions).

In some cases fully developed, named souls are imprisoned in Aetheric Crystals, which is the logical source of their alternative

name "Soul Gem". These can be consumed as any Aether, or alternatively conversed with or set free. While this process is extremely unpleasant for the trapped soul, it does not destroy the soul, only transfers it somewhere else...slowly and painfully, like being pulled one inch at a time through a wringer.

*"Soul gems are filled with tiny mimes." -- wizard gag*

## Dracontias / Uru Rygas

A Dracontia is an Aetheric Crystals containing the soul of an *Uru* (commonly known as a dragon or wyrm). These crystals typically resemble floating, burning eyes of fire, seething with power.

Dracontias are most commonly formed after a dragon is slain, and then the Aetheric dragon spirit has begun the process of reforming into a new Incarnate, but is not yet strong enough to form a physical dragon body. Avaggdu (Ever-Hungry, Bloody Tongues, Trolls)

Few predators are feared more than the ever-hungry Avaggdu, a breed of trolls. They are truly hideous in appearance, comparable only to images of daemons. Their gnawing hunger must be constantly appeased, and these carnivorous monsters can devour all living creatures for miles in their wake.

### Regions

Avaggdu have been sighted in nearly every corner of the Dragon Isles. They are most common in regions with a plentiful food supply, such as swamps, woodlands, and the Rochir Plains. In Nan-Avathar, Avaggdu are taken from the infamous canyons of Cabed'Avaggdu, fed incessantly, and trained as elite shock troops.

### Half-deads

It was a challenge to make the trolls even more fearsome, but the Avathars Necroalchemists are very creative. The Avathars use Blood Alchemy to enhance the Avaggdu who serve in their armies. An infusion of undead ghoulish blood creates soldiers who can feed on

both the living and the dead. Naturally, some Avaggdu escaped and now the species these enhancements have been passed along through generations of these horrid creatures.

## Personality

The primary motivator of the Avaggdu is hunger. They are always voraciously hungry and can eat any sort of meat, but fresh meat is best. Due to their insatiable appetites, Avaggdu are always edgy, impatient, and ill-tempered. However, this makes them fairly predictable, easy to manipulate, and allows for little in the way of thought beyond locating and securing the next supply of meat. Avaggdu have no concept of fear and will not hesitate to attack even if very badly outnumbered--a trait which makes them greatly feared. Animals seem to have an instinctual fear of Avaggdu, and even well-trained warhorses will seldom remain calm with troll-scent in the air. Avaggdu who have a steady supply of food are quite capable of lucid thought, and can even make cunning leaders in battle, so long as they command troops who are motivated by terror. While their hunger-clouded minds are dull, Avaggdu are not completely mindless and those with hands frequently employ tools in their hunt. Enormous meat-cleavers or throwing stones are their favorite tools, but Avaggdu are clever and fully capable of using more sophisticated weapons when available. Avatar-trained Avaggdu are issued heavy swords, axes, or hammers.

## Avaggdu Poetry

Avaggdu are far more clever and creative than their appearance suggests. They often compose poems, scrawled in the blood of their victims.

*Foetid jungles*

*hold Bloody tongues and bloated young*

*Where the weak are crushed*

## Physical Appearance

Avaggdu are an eclectic and varied species, but tend to resemble daemonic giants. Some Avaggdu are double the height of a man, but most are about half again man-height. However, Avaggdu are

typically stoop-backed and walk on the backs of their knuckles, so their true height can be deceiving. The second most distinguishing trait is exceptionally strong jaws with some sort of well-developed teeth, mandibles, tusks, or beak. Avaggdu are voracious carnivores, and are always hungry.

Avaggdu are exceedingly tough and nearly impossible to slay. They usually have thick, scaly hides and are resistant to most forms of attack. While they can wear armor, most do not feel the need to do so. Intense heat or sun-like magic can slay them, but most other wounds are not life-threatening. Furthermore, the Alchemical magic used to create their foul kind quickly regenerates any damage done to their bodies, so long as they can feed. Old legends speak of heroes who slew a particularly nasty Avaggdu by tricking it into eating itself.

However, most Avaggdu share a crucial weakness--they turn sand, clay, or stone when touched by direct sunlight! Whether or not this slays the Avaggdu is unknown, but they have not been known to recover from this state. This weakness is one of the factors that prevents Avaggdu from conquering much of the Dragon Isles or rebelling against their Avathar masters, for they can only move under cover of night or shadowy clouds.

Beyond those commonalities, Avaggdu often bear little resemblance to one another unless they are from the same family or lineage. Their origins are murky, but there are countless subspecies of Avaggdu, with new species being frequently discovered.

## Relations

Most creatures hold nothing but fear and loathing for the daemonic Avaggdu. However, the Avathars are said to have created the Avaggdu, and train them as elite shock troops.

## Lands

Avaggdu only dwell in lands that are teeming with wildlife or human prey, moving on when game becomes scarce, which is frequent.

Most Avaggdu maintain a vast territory, forcing others out of their domain and continuously roaming within. Thus, Avaggdu tracks or spoor rarely indicate danger, except in areas which have an unusually abundant supply of food, or in which the ever-hungry have been somehow trapped.

## Religion

Avaggdu have no gods of their own, but could probably be convinced to worship a god of meat.

## History

The first Avaggdu were not born, but were created by an aspiring Avathar Necroalchemist named Vil'Tys as a race of perfect soldiers to serve the glorious "Necroalchemical Empire of Arh'Tolth". Given their prodigious size, it is generally believed that the first Avaggdu were created from the bloodline of Jotuns. In their endeavors to create a perfect warrior race, the Avathars also infused the Avaggdu with the bloodlines of many other predators, and races such as Goblins, Kreen, Gobbah, and perhaps even Dragons. The results were mixed, creating countless failed experiments, aberrations, horrors, and prototypes before the first viable soldiers were produced. Even then, the Avaggdu went through several generations of prototyping and field testing. Thus, the Avaggdu are an exceptionally eclectic and varied species, often appearing nothing at all like one another, or sometimes seeming like identical clones.

The Avathars used their Avaggdu in many wars, using training, food, and fear of the sun as motivators. Unleashing the ever-hungry upon the field was often the breaking point in a battle, routing the enemy army in terror. None who fled the battle would survive, however, for the Avaggdu are swift hunters.

## Language

Avaggdu have no language of their own, typically communicating with one another in hoots, growls, and pantomime. However, they can learn to speak if taught by a patient tutor employing large quantities of troll-treats.

## Adventurers

Many Avaggdu are unique creations, resulting from failed experiments. While many of the resulting creatures were destroyed in the laboratory, it was just as common for their creators to release a seemingly-useless Tereg into the wilds to observe its behavior. Some of these Avaggdu survived and prospered beyond expectations, earning names of legend for themselves. One unique, ancient Avaggdu named Krarigar is rumored to dwell in the Rotwood swamp near Si'Anwon.

## Quotes

*Be careful not to get too close to the cage...you're made of meat.*

## Uru (Dragons, Dragonhawks)

The Uru are the noble dragons of the Dragon Isles. They were created by the Urumaiar dragon gods to guard the holy places, and are sometimes called "guardian dragons".

These majestic, terrifying creatures have fire-hardened black scales and green eyes that glow with hellish light. They breathe a cone of flaming, oily acid called Baal Fire. Naturally, these dragons are immune to fire and acid. Even their spittle and blood are highly acidic and the few heroes who slay a dragon do not live to tell the tale, burned and trampled in the bloody death throes of the dragon. Dragons should not be confused with the vile, legless Wyrms that are hunted by the Baal and Kith.

Dragons are immortal, living forever unless slain, but their bloodline has diminished over time. The earliest dragons were created as perfect watchers and guardians, with great black wings and multiple heads. The Pendragon, "mother of dragons" is said to have five heads, and some of her princely consorts such as SIRRUSH had as many as three. Dragons born in these late years usually only have a single head.

Dragons were common guardians of Baal temples. The custom was to take a new egg to the place that it would eventually guard. The



dragon would build ties with the place during the years inside the egg before hatching, which wizards describe as a form of "arcane connection" with the place. While at one time most temples had dragon guardians, now only a few has such protection. There are many speculations as to the cause of this decline: some say that they are merely sleeping, or gone to an unknown birthing ground beyond unexplored mountains, but many fear that most were slain by Wyrms or even Wurm hunters who mistook them for evil. Whatever the cause, many of the Baal temples are now vulnerable or in ruin, as is the majority of the once great "Draconian Empire".

## Types of Dragons

### Alu Dragons

Alu Uru resemble draconic birds, and are known as "dragonhawks" or phoenixes. Some Alu dragon names are: Souref

### Baal Dragons

Baal dragons are the most common variety, with black scales and green eyes. They breath a cone of flaming, oily acid called Baal Fire. Some Baal dragon names are: Aashok, Alion, Anwon, Gaur, Ronatha, Shymtaar, Shynn, Ututhra

### Dwur Dragons

Dwur dragons are seemingly carved from stone, and can spend long periods of time in the guise of statuary. Some Dwur dragon names are: Kazakzigil, Kadumzigil, Zirakzigil

# Gobbah (Fomorians, Sea Devils, Deep Ones)

The Gobbah (also Fomorians or Deep Ones) are the mythological aquatic daemons that dwell in the inscrutable dark waters beneath the mountains, ocean deeps, and Astral Seas. For eons, they have warred against each other for control of the oceans of the Dragon Isles, as well as emerging from the waters in conquest of the Eldar and other surface dwellers. The Eldar slew a great any of the repulsive sea devils, but their numbers are seemingly without end. They are thought to be the race responsible for corrupting Dwur to create the Zuhls of the "Zirakzigil Dwurdelf".

Ancient and terrible, the Deep Ones are beings are loathed and feared as no other except perhaps the Kha'din, for they are the source of wizardry, masters of the Goblyns, and terror that stalks from inscrutable ocean deeps. Human history is rife with stories of Deep Ones creeping out of the waters and stealing away people quietly in the night. The rabid hordes of Goblyns who worship the Gobbah are believed to be bred from human captives long ago.

A Gobbah is said to look like a commingling of Goblyn and sea monster, presenting a cold and horrid appearance. A typical specimen looks much as if a paunchy body had been covered with scales and topped with a fish's head. The huge fish eyes of the head tend to swivel in different directions when observing an area or creature. At the sides of their thick necks are palpitating gills, and their long paws are webbed. They are mostly shiny and slippery, but the ridges of their backs are scaly, concealing the stamina and strength inherent in their piscine ancestry. Coloration varies between grayish-black, gray, and red, though they have white bellies. Their croaking, baying voices, clearly used for articulate speech, hold all the dark shades of expression which their staring faces lack. Gobbah

tend to hop irregularly, sometimes on two legs and sometimes on four.

## Origins

Nodes exist everywhere in Ambar, not just on land; there are Nodes in the skies and in the ocean deeps. The Gobbah were originally Ifr'it who came through the Deep Gates in the oceans abysses eons ago, but have dwelled in the depths for so long that their forms evolved into something half-daemon, half-fish, that is uniquely "Deep One" or "sea devil" and no longer considered Ifr'it or "Astral daemon". Like the Eldar, the Gobbah are effectively natives of the Dragon Isles.

## Regions

Deep Ones dwell in the deeps, though they sometimes walk the shores in search of human prey. There are a vast number of subraces, yet, very little is known of most of them. Broad stone steps lead from the deeps up to shoreline shrines and subterranean temples where the Goblyns worship their masters. The Deep Ones have vast undersea palaces and labyrinths throughout Ambar, many of which were once below the seas but were thrown ashore by the movements of continents or the Breaking.

The Great Goblyn Empire to the south is ruled by hordes of Goblyns. While the Goblyns worship the Gobbah, they leave governance to the "Great Goblyns", or Hobgoblyns, who are the Goblyns champions.

## Personality

Fearsome creatures and the darkest of Warlocks, Deep Ones are as ancient as they are evil. Various noble houses of Deep Ones have bred their dark armies of Goblyns for thousands of years to war on humans or elves, but usually fight among themselves for control of the empire. The Deep Ones style themselves as nobles but they are often as base and cruel as the Goblyns they created.

It is thought that the Deep Ones feed on raw magical energies found in the Astral Sea, powerful magic, and young life. Some restrict their feeding to non-sentient life and have even been friendly to humans, but most see no reason to discriminate on what they consider to be lesser beings.

## Physical Appearance

Similar to the faeries of *Earth* legend, countless varieties and seemingly-conflicting descriptions are found in the legends of the Dragon Isles. The only consistencies are descriptions of horrid watery daemon creatures, evil and cruel, and far too alien to fully comprehend. Although bipedal and vaguely humanoid, there is little other constancy--they might have scales, rubbery skin, tentacles, horns, webbed claws, or even multiple limbs. There are also many tales of the Deep Ones (and Great Deep Ones) appearing in disguise, though humans are usually said to have retained an instinctual fear of them. The consequences of ignoring such intuition is a frequent cautionary tale in seaside cultures.

There are apparently an unlimited number of varieties, subraces, and unique individuals that all appear strangely different. Variations are common even with those of the same ancestry. Nevertheless, there are some consistencies within particular bloodlines and subspecies. Thousands of often-interchanged names have emerged from this confusion, such as: Deep Ones, Deep Ones, Sea Devils, Deep Old Ones, Fomorians, Kessrith, and others which cannot be spoken aloud for fear of summoning the even more horrid litigators. Little is known about these beings, and the human names do little justice to their true horror. Whether they are factions in a greater race of Deep Ones or separate subspecies is unknown. There is even speculation that the Deep Ones, Great Deep Ones, and Kha'din are somehow interrelated.

Equally numerous are the slaves of the Deep Ones. There appears to be a very complex hierarchy of Deep Ones enslaving each other and members of various species, creating or enlightening new races

when necessary. Some are merely thralls, but in most cases the Deep Ones leave their slaves with a vestige of free will, but somehow limit their ability to escape or turn upon their masters. The best known example is the Gobbah and their Goblyn minions. The Goblins can do as they please so long as they worship and obey; their fear of water is a safeguard against rebellion.

At the top of this vast master-slave hierarchy are the Great Deep Ones, beings of tremendous godlike power who are worshiped and obeyed by the Deep Ones. Just as the Deep Ones elevate slaves that please them, so do the Great Deep Ones.

## Relations

Deep Ones are little known, for they are almost never seen on the surface of the earth. They prefer to act in secrecy. The Gobbah direct their Goblyn hordes strike against the cities of men in order to capture slaves to build their great expanses, caverns and tunnels ever larger. However, the Deep Ones know of each other, and continuously struggle for dominance. Some Kessrith work in secrecy to undermine the machinations of the Deep Ones, leading to odd alliances with Æethiiri, who share a common foe.

In spite of being mainly marine creatures, they can survive for some time on land and will sometimes come up to the surface to make deals with humans. In exchange for human sacrifices and various gifts the humans receive gold jewelry and abundant fish in their waters, herded nearby by the Deep Ones.

## Lands

Deep Ones are thought to build their kingdoms far below the ocean's surface in eerie palaces hewn from living coral. Deep Ones ruins are often found on the shores--eerie temples and shrines on the surface with steps leading down into the sea. These ruins abound are unsettling to humans, for the stones are "strange in design":[sid?DeepOneArchitecture](#) and contain great power. The temples are typically hewed from green stone and carved with

ancient "glyphs":sid?DeepOneGlyphs that instruct the lesser races on wizardry or rites worship of the "Great Deep Ones".

## Religion

Just as they have thousands of subraces, so do the Deep Ones worship thousands of aquatic gods, whom they call the Great Deep Ones. Little is known of these gods, but it is suspected that they are actually Deep Ones who are more powerful and ancient (i.e. "Ancient Ones") than the others.

## History

The Deep Ones are aquatic daemons born of old magic in the darkness of the Astral Sea, where they took many forms and warred against one another for eons before the coming of the Eldar.

## Language

The Deep Ones tongue is known as the "Black Speech" by humans and Eldar. Probably better spoken underwater, this ugly language has been taught to a host of dark races by the Deep Ones, primarily the Goblins.

## Equipment

In their watery domains they wear no clothing, only a harness for their weapons and a small amount of personal gear--any other garments would hinder their swimming. With few belongings, Goblins prefer to show their wealth openly to awe and impress others, and often decorate themselves in elaborate tattoos.

Their weapons are often crafted from substances dredged from the bottom of the sea. Strange corals, obsidian, bone and other natural but hitherto unknown materials. They often carry elaborate shields constructed of gigantic seashells, and various polearms with trident tines or barbed hooks upon which to mount a poisonous urchin or fish spine. Deep Ones warriors cannot wear armor, but usually carry elaborate shields constructed of gigantic seashells. They prefer scimitars, javelins, and bladestaffs.

Dueling and gladiatorial combat with the quarterstaff and more dangerous "bladestaff" is popular and honorable in Deep Ones society. A bladestaff is similar to a quarterstaff, but with a deadly blade mounted on each end. Some bladestaffs have tines resembling tridents, or barbed hooks upon which to mount a poisonous urchin or fish spine. Some say that staff weapons are likely popular simply because they like to keep slaves at a distance.

## Adventurers

Deep Ones rarely venture from their empire, and outcasts are usually slain, making adventurers rare. Since Goblins are typically killed on sight in human or elven lands, Deep Ones adventurers must rely on illusory magics to stay alive.

# Akuma (Taint-Bearers, Kha'din Sorcerers)

Akuma are doomed sorcerers who seek to master the magic of the Kha'din.

*The song of the Kha'din is the song of the universe, the understanding of which brings one endless life and spiritual power.*

Thus say the Akuma, the abstruse spirit-sorcerers who walk a very narrow line between this world and the next, studying the astral songs of the Kha'din. While others eschew the eerie whispers and dreams of the Kha'din as "corruption" or "taint" that can destroy the soul, an Akuma sees the call of the Kha'din as a singular opportunity to transcend mortality.

Moreover, to resist the call of the Kha'din as fearful-minded men do is invite certain disaster, for only an open mind has any chance of surviving the apotheosis of the soul that begins the moment one

first hears the astral melodies. A mind that comprehends the song too slowly--or worse, shuts out the song--will go mad and abandon the body, leaving only a hollow husk. It is this result that the world fears, but do not understand that this fear is largely self-fulfilling. True, a man who resists the call can avoid this fate if he has an uncommonly strong soul, but the same man could instead choose to attain godhood. The best means of surviving the Kha'din "taint" is to embrace it.

Motivated by a compound desire for survival and power, the Akuma embrace the Kha'din "taint" and seek to accelerate their understanding of the Kha'din song. Like any journey of the spirit, the path taken is different for every man. Some find their way quickly in an epiphany, while others struggle or falter along the way. Aside from introspection and meditation, many Akuma employ additional methods to speed the process. Those with an understanding of the magic arts usually find a way to leverage their craft, using Alchemy, Necromancy, Wizardry, or Mthus.

Nearly all Akuma seek out others who bear the Kha'din "taint". People naturally feel a need to find others of a similar nature, and so Akuma begin to watch others for signs of "taint". Even simple observation of other "tainted" individuals can be very illustrative, and Akuma quickly realize that they are unlikely to accomplish their goals alone. At some point most Akuma attempt to make contact and ally with others of their kind--a perilous act to be sure, for Akuma are hunted.

## Taint-Bearers

Akuma are hunted as taint-bearers, spreaders of corruption, and power-mad witches in most societies. The fearful mortals are not without just cause, for the presence of Akuma can spread taint in the surrounding populace like an unseen plague. As the corruption spreads, more Akuma join the secret cult. There are frightening tales of entire towns coming under the sway of Akuma. If the stories are to



be believed, strangers within an Akuma neighborhood or town often disappear, or resurface years later with new names or personalities. There are some civilizations thought to be overrun with Akuma, such as the dark Eldar of Morbrethil, the Zuhls of the "Wintercrown Mountains", the Guldur Alu, and their Manticora Alu retainers. Whether this is true or mere rumor is unknown, but the nations of the Dragon Isles have a very deep-rooted fear of Akuma that provokes decisive action against the "Taint-Bearers".

## Doomed Path

Like many wizards, Akuma are motivated by arcane power and place little value on mundane things and events of the mortal world. No longer truly mortal or sane by human standards, the Akuma become increasingly detached from mortal life. The witch-hunt only exacerbates this isolation, making the mortals into foes.

Akuma all-too-often become sociopaths, dark magi, or priests of the Kha'din, carrying out arcane rituals that garner spiritual power and curry favor with the eldritch horrors. Some even lose their qualms over taking mortal life, slaying mortals who interfere with their apotheosis, or even performing experiments on newly tainted mortals.

As mortals see it, the Kha'din taint corrupts the body and spirit. The Akuma are cursed beings neither wholly human nor spirit, but human-seeming and possessed of vast forbidden power.

## Nightmares

The presence of an Akuma in the surrounds can often be noted by mortals by an increase in restless dreams and nightmares. Bad omens such as the death of a misshapen calf are also attributed to the presence of Akuma, and can lead to a full-scale witch-hunt. This is no more obvious to onlookers than smaller traces of Kha'din Taint, and the Kha'din spells which an Akuma gains through his transformation often make his condition undetectable even with magical sight. Shrouded in magick, Akuma can live out convincingly normal lives within human societies to spread the Taint undetected.

In most cases the Akuma does not understand the nature of his own affliction.

If a slain Akuma is split open the internal corruption is obvious to those with supernatural sight. The body is a hollow husk filled with the indescribable writhing mass of tentacles, eyes, and mouths of pure chaos--a fledgling Kha'din.

Upon death, some Akuma have reportedly undergone a horrific transformation. There are stories of men being slain who suddenly explode into a mass of tentacles as the Kha'din within sheds its clothing of man flesh.

*My time has run out. The tapping of power I have used to extend my natural life has not gone unnoticed. Even now, I have begun to see signs that the Nameless Ones have begun their search for me. I cannot evade them forever...*

## Akuma Thrall

Occasionally Kha'din will choose to enthrall men with strong backs and weak minds. Dock workers, miners, and other unskilled laborers all too often match this description, as do guards and soldiers in under disciplined commands. This description matches that of a stone quarry worker, but could be easily adapted.

Some of the strong-backed, tireless miners from the local quarry have been enthralled by a Kha'din spirit and drawn close enough to become fully tainted Akuma. They usually spend their time clustered around the Kha'din pool, chipping away at the stone to enlarge the pool and its surrounding cavern. They are essentially mindless automata, however, a fearsome guard.

# Harvesters (Harvesters of Souls, Oni, Masters, Pactlords)

The Harvesters are a race of Ifr'it who come to Ambar to harvest bodies and souls. There are likely entire cities of Harvesters in the Astral, for several culturally distinct groups have come to our world in the past.

Hmmm, harvesting what exactly?

Some Harvesters wander Ambar seemingly aimlessly, while others only come to our world with a specific goal in mind. Regardless, the Harvesters *of Souls* are almost always after souls, for harvesting souls is what they do. They collect souls for trade, currency, to power enchantments, and sometimes for food. Keep in mind that all creatures and magical objects have souls, so some Harvesters merely collect magic items or the physical bodies of magical creatures. On the other hand, some Harvesters are perfectly willing and capable of ripping the souls out of living beings and then putting them into Soul Crystals for later use. Others harvest the The Harvesters are as varied as mortals.

Like all Ifr'it, Harvesters do not choose their own physical form when they visit Ambar, except after thousands of years of attempts and considerable effort. Harvesters who have spent considerable time in Ambar eventually find a physical form that they find appealing. Some Oni prize a fearsome form such as an "ogre-magi", who are highly adept at physical and magical combat, but preferences vary widely.

The following are some sightings or encounters with Harvesters.

## The Masters (encountered in Kalabaiss)

These Harvesters referred to themselves as the "Masters". When encountered, the Masters were visiting Kalabaiss as it was "strong stone" and used some sort of ESP to detect surface thoughts and learn languages with supernatural speed.

The Masters were most interested in trading for Soul Crystals, which are often used as currency. They have a special scale which can be used to weigh Soul Crystals. They also sell Black Lotus blossoms. The Masters were shown the way out of Kalabaiss in return for cataloging the souls within the lbyn into smaller soul crystals. An arrangement was made for the Masters to come back from time to time to clean out the lbyn.

## Oni

The Oni are arcane Warriors who have transferred their souls to clockwork automatons that look like fantastical samurai *o-yoroi* armor. Their souls are literally in their armor.

They spend much of their time on the Aether and consume rarified magic essence for sustenance. They lose energy quickly while active so they tend to hunt aggressively. While they rely on nodes, black lotus, or soul crystals, they relish feeding on fresh souls, preferably hard-won. They especially prize souls that are rare, especially those gained with honor during a ritual duel. There is some speculation that the ritual duel itself can manifest a soul, so the honor really does represent spiritual energy. They can also hibernate to recharge from ambient energy, or to repair damage.

## Pactlords (encountered in Ashenrise)

These Harvesters called themselves the "Pactlords" and were seeking an unholy artifact that could summon Ifr'it. The Pactlords harvested arcane bodies of monsters, such as giants, Fomorians, and magical beasts, then transferred their own souls into those bodies to "ride" them around.

Some of the Pactlords were subservient to others. Apparently, there is a higher order who contract out work to mid-tier Pactlords, and assign a lower tier of "bond servants" to assist. The bond servants similarly "rode" inside magical beasts, but were compelled to obey by magical collars.

Interestingly, the Pactlords were seemingly incapable of lying or telling a half-truth.

# Goblyns

Goblyns are feral half-men that fill the wildernesses of the Dragon Isles, raiding outlying human lands. While individually weak, Goblyns in large numbers form an ever present threat on Ambar. They emerge from caves at night and in Nocturne, razing villages and dragging livestock and human prisoners back to their lairs. They also form the bulk of the mighty armies of the Great Goblyn Empire, which present an organized, potent threat to even the greatest empires of man.

The Goblyns are horrid in appearance, seemingly part-man and part fish, frog, or beast. Most have scaled or warty skin, and wide staring eyes that tend to swivel in different directions. Their voices seem only half-suited to speaking, and make horrid gurgling and croaking noises. They often have webbed paws, and walk with a shuffling hop. However, there are thousands of variations, and some even have seal-like fur. Some subspecies are known by names such as orcs, ogres, trolls.

The Goblyns were born and bred to worship the Gobbah sea-devils and extend their influence beyond the seashores.

Forged by the hammer and anvil of battle for centuries, the Goblyns have few talents besides war. They are more warlike than the Kith, more cruel than even the Avathar, and often as skilled craftsmen as the Dwur. However, they are unwilling to share the land with these

other races, seeing them only as sources of slaves or food. Their chief weakness is that they are semi-aquatic and can only prosper in cold subterranean rivers and watery caves, so they do not willingly venture too far from their lairs. The armies of the Great Goblin empire are driven by whip and goad from their caves to march upon far away lands and never return, finding it preferable to perish in glorious battle than from desiccation and dust.

Goblins who rise to become leaders and champions amongst their kind are known as "Great Goblins", or Hobgoblins. This is often due to a stronger Gobbah influence in their bloodlines.

*In some of the darkest, dampest caves and forests lurk lots of great, big ugly-looking Goblins wielding axes, scimitars and slave-driving whips. Goblins are cruel, wicked and bad-hearted. They make no beautiful things, but they make many clever ones. They can tunnel and mine as well as any but the most skilled Dwarves, when they take the trouble, though they are usually untidy and dirty. Hammers, axes, daggers, pickaxes, tongs, and also instruments of torture, they make very well, or get other people to make to their design, prisoners and slaves that have to work till they die for want of air and light. - J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit*

## Regions

Goblins are everywhere, but require dark places such as caves, and are thusly most frequently found in hills and mountains. They boil in vast numbers from the "Great Goblin Empire" far to the south, and fill many caves within the "Cloudspine Mountains".

## Personality

Goblin society is simple--survival of the fittest--when they aren't at war with the other races of the Dragon Isles they are at war with themselves. This makes for a brutal society, but one where fighting skills and cunning are not simply prized, but necessities. Those who rise up the ranks and become leaders are often rewarded by their dark priests with blessings from their darker gods, and are called Hobgoblins. Conversely, those Goblins who anger their dark priests are punished in truly horrible ways.

Perhaps it is their small size, but Goblins are typically very cowardly, and usually only attack in large numbers. When sufficiently motivated, however, Goblins are dangerous foes. Intruders within Goblin territory are often surprised by the ferocity and cunning of the small, cowardly Goblins.

Smaller Goblins survive by gathering in large numbers, or by taming and riding wild beasts such as wolves, giant rats, or giant bats. Some Goblins have even taken on traits of these beasts.

## Physical Description

Goblins appear much like ugly, paunchy Dwur, and are sometimes mistaken for Dwur by those not familiar with both races. However, Goblins have a malicious glint in their eyes, even longer noses than Dwur, and have warty skin mottled in shades of gray, green, brown, or black. Underlings tend to be skinny, malnourished, and only half-clothed, while their masters are prosperously fat and laden with wealth. They bristle with a snagged assortment of cracked and yellowing teeth, tusks, and horns that lengthen and become more weatherbeaten with age. Finishing off their horrid appearance are their oversized, evil eyes that glow with a hellish red or ochre light. Like Dwur, Goblins prefer to dwell below ground, but their homes are filthy pits and caves totally unlike the glorious Dwur halls.

Whether it is their foul living conditions or the workings of their priests, Goblins are frequently born with aberrations and mutations. Extra fingers, toes, horns, and eyes are quite common, and many range on the bizarre. Goblin mothers see this freakish diversity as a blessing, making every Goblin unique and special. Goblins who are born larger than the norm are also common, frequently attaining human size or more rarely larger. These monstrosities, often called Ogres, form the core shock troops of any Goblin army.

## Relations

Goblins are an ever present threat on Ambar. They hate all other creatures and see them only as fit for slaves and cattle. Goblins have no allies, but sometimes serve Gobbah or Avathar masters. The Alu call Goblins *Bakemono*, and Hobgoblins *Oni*.

## Lands

Goblyns dwell in troglodytic cities below ground, populating every dark cave and hole that can be found on Ambar. Most Goblyns dwell in hills or mountains. Often these lairs are near human lands, keeping their favored source of food and slaves close at hand.

## Religion

Goblyns hold service to Kraken in watery temples and arenas, sacrificing slaves or forcing them to fight one another with deadly weapons. Most Goblyns are taught to see the Kraken not as a single god, but rather as a pantheon of gods (i.e. "Krakens"), each of whom embodies a specific trait. Ssendam is the Lady of Insanity, Ygorl is "Lord of Entropy", Chourst is the "Lord of Randomness", Renbuu is the "Lord of Colors", and Tsathogga is the "Lord of Corruption". In some circles, the Duirgurth gods are also seen as facets of Kraken.

## History

The Goblyns were once Dwur who were enslaved by the Gobbah and corrupted by the darkest of wizardry. Like Dwur, they are most at home in mountains and dislike the sea. The arid mountains and lands of the south are much to their liking. It is thought that the Gobbah wanted servants who would fill the lands, yet not disturb the watery homes of the Gobbah.

## Language

Goblyns speak the ugly, guttural tongue known as the "Black Speech" to other races.

## Equipment

Most Goblyns live primitive lives, but some retained talents in metalworking and stone carving from their Dwur ancestry.

## Adventurers

Since Goblyns are typically killed on sight in human or elven lands, Goblyns adventurers must rely on guile to stay alive.



## Hobgoblyns (Goblyn Champions)

The Goblyn leaders and champions are called Hobgoblyns. They are usually larger and stronger than the lesser Goblyn rabble, growing prosperous and fat over many years. Thankfully, the Hobgoblyns are few in number, for they are one of the few forces that can rally the lesser Goblyns into action or force them to serve in armies. Many Hobgoblyns are Warlocks, who can call forth dark magicks of the Gobbah.

Some scholars believe that Hobgoblyns are Goblyns who have been augmented by combinations of dark magic, dark priests, or dark gods. Many have unique gifts that are normally only present in Gobbah, leading to speculation that Hobgoblyns are Goblyns with an infusion of Gobbah blood or other power. In recent times the Gobbah Necromancer Tavik gave his Hobgoblyn lieutenants the ability to survive in daylight by infusions of the blood of baby dragons.

## Jotuns (Giants)

The Jotuns are a race of giants, ogres, trolls, demons or mere myth, depending on whom you ask. They purportedly dwell in the coldest mountain regions, able to survive the coldest winters and stride through the deepest snowdrifts. The Dwur myths say that the Jotuns were born of a block of frost and ruled an empire of ice called Jotunheim in the northernmost, arctic mountains. There were thought to be two general types of giant: the frost-giants, who symbolized the severe winters of the area, and the hill-giants, who symbolized the mountains.

Jotuns of the southern lands are said to be blue-skinned ogres of immense physical strength dwelling in remote mountainous and jungle regions. They are violent and ferocious cannibals who hunt men for sport and food. However, they are also subtle, cunning, and highly skilled in the ancient forms of Eldar spirit sorcery called Mthu Rygas.

Some believe that the frost-giants are the forefathers of the Kith, and the Avathars used hill-giants to breed the first Avaggdu.

*Male Names:* Bendigeidfran, Blunderbore, Jimmercrack, Ymir

*Female Names:* Angrboda

## Kreen

Insect men from the volcanic southern jungles, cruel hunters of all who enter their domain. They are also known as the Master Insects for their ability to command the obedience of lesser insects. Kreen are aggressive, always seeking to expand their territories and enslaving any creatures they meet. The Avathars, Baal, Alu, Tengu, and Vôzen have all suffered bitterly from the depredations of the Kreen.

Kreen dwell in large hives, each ruled by a queen. Most tribes have different physical characteristics, such as variations in limbs, mandibles, or even wings. The hive complexes also vary in size and construction. Some hives are vast labyrinths of underground tunnels, while others are shallow caves in a cliff face or bowl of an extinct volcano.

There are large numbers of active volcanoes in their homelands which constantly exude clouds of toxic smoke and ash. While Kreen are accustomed to this toxic environment, humans who are exposed usually sicken and die. This has historically made it difficult for neighboring threatened lands to counterattack to the heart of the Kreen homelands.

## Nagpa (Vrock, vulture daemon)

Nagpa (Eldarin "Vrock") are a species of Ifr'it who resemble hideous humanoid vultures, although they typically conceal their true appearance. They are denizens of the Astral but are encountered on Ambar more than typical Ifr'it species, although typically in small numbers.

All Nagpa are winged, although most fly poorly or not at all. Similar to humans, most who dwell in civilization grow soft and lack the tremendous strength needed to leap and fly, instead hobbling awkwardly on their legs. With the proper physical regimen Nagpa can become astonishingly strong and agile, and fit individuals can leap great heights, soar on strong wings, and lift burdens many times their own weight. In cities this has become increasingly rare, and typically only adolescents or the military remain physically fit, while "Feral" Nagpa who dwell in the badlands must stay strong and keep moving in order to survive. Militant Nagpa favor pole arms, as they can be used without endangering their fragile wings or while swooping.

The Nagpa home plane resembles arid badlands with floating motes of sandstone. There is little food and water, and the Nagpa long ago were forced to become scavengers and cannibalistic. Mirrored towers and cities stand atop tall sandstone bluffs and mesas, reflecting the Astral stars and warding away feral Nagpa and other beasts of the badlands.

Religion is relatively uncommon, but their Saints are most likely to follow Pazuzu, a manifestation of Reshuk.

Nagpa are highly intelligent and magical, even for Ifr'it, and are often adepts of Mthu. Unique to the Nagpa is an offshoot of Mthu that utilizes *Melong* ("magic mirrors"), either of glass or by Mthu Rygas force. *Melong* can be used as scrying pools, portals, or for any sort of magic relying on images, light, or reflection. Nagpa have been known to quickly form a *Melong* of force as a shield to reflect a weapon or spell back at a hostile caster, or to imprison the attacker within the *Melong*.

Nagpa Mthu-bo are particularly adept at opening Astral Gateways, which has allowed them to travel to Ambar for millennia. The Eldar (who call them "Vrock") generally considered them to be at best nuisances and at worst instigators of evil, for Nagpa are often found performing magical experimentation of questionable intent. More often than not, they are encountered lurking at the periphery of large-scale troubling events, as if they are studying dark times, although in more than a few instances they were accentuating or magnifying the situation. For example, the wizened Nagpa named Agathu was found experimenting with a Mirror of Contagion.

names: Agathu, Mulatu, Ngothu

## Marrashi, harbingers of disease

Marrashi are wretched creatures who have been forced into servitude to Reshuk, often by transformative Nagpa magic.

# Kha'din (Nameless Old Ones)

*In the end times, the silent enemy will arise again, and in its wake it shall bring oblivion.*

The Kha'din are ancient spirits of unspeakable evil and eldritch power. These alien beings are said to exist outside time and space, slipping silently and unseen through the spaces parallel to our world.

The Kha'din are astral spirits that largely defy description and have no place within our reality. They have no mind or physical form as we understand such things. When a mortal perceives this *nothingness* his mind lends the Kha'din a shape of his own imagination, lest he go mad. In our attempt to place meaning upon the formlessness, we draw from primal and subconscious fears. Thus, some stories describe the nearly-formless shapes as gigantic squids, vine-

wrapped trees, or insects of hideous size, although they are warped and distorted in nightmarish ways. Even if two men saw the same creature, each would likely describe it in his own horrifying way. Not only are Kha'din alien to our world, but their presence is harmful, spreading spiritual corruption through what mortals perceive as faint droning whispers and dream-songs that resonate with the subconscious spirit. Those who fall victim to their corruption are said to be "Tainted" or "Kha'din-touched" and are doomed to wither away in mind and spirit, until they eventually vacate their corporeal form entirely, leaving an empty shell. What happens to the mortal soul at this point is subject to a great deal of speculation, but it is undisputed that the soul goes through some type of apotheosis rather than being consumed or sent to oblivion. The few witnesses to such events describe eerie singing.

While inimical to the soul, Kha'din Taint brings great power, and some power-mad individuals willingly seek out the Kha'din song. Known as Akuma, these men are essentially dark magi or priests of the Kha'din, carrying out arcane rituals that garner spiritual power and curry favor with the eldritch horrors. Like many wizards, Akuma are motivated by arcane power and place little value on mundane things and events of the mortal world.

However, the Kha'din are elusive and the Akuma are devious. Most people have never heard of the Kha'din, and the few scholars who do know of the ancient horrors believe they were wholly defeated by the Æethiiri during the fabled Battle of the Thousandfold Curses. The Akuma actively look for individuals who know of the Kha'din, seeking to increase their own knowledge and stamp out any resistance to the practice of their magic.

*Tentacles unfold  
Now my fate is surely sealed  
My watery grave*

## Secrets: Kha'din Forms

The following information contains secrets unknown to most characters.

Native to the so-called "Astral Space", the presence of a Kha'din on our world causes reality to ooze and run like melted wax. Insubstantial poltergeists, they are undetectable save for a black shimmering in the air, a warbling drone and a feeling on the skin like ground glass or nails scraped across the chalkboard. Usually Kha'din spirits are subtle and do not give away their presence, but occasionally they will create a truly vile body of illusion and shadow stuff--one which will send mortal men screaming in terror, even causing stalwart heroes to quake in terror. These physical manifestations of Kha'din appear to have been pulled from some insane nightmare--formless masses of writhing tentacles, eyes, and mouths run together like melted wax. In order to prevent damaging itself, the mortal mind places its own meaning upon the formlessness, drawing from primal and subconscious fears. Thus, some stories describe the nearly-formless shapes as gigantic squids, vine-wrapped trees, or insects of hideous size, although they are warped and corrupted in gruesome ways. Even if two men saw the same creature, each would likely describe it in his own way. While the touch of a Kha'din's form can corrupt reality itself, the Kha'din rarely make blatant displays of power, preferring to keep their insidious nature hidden, whispering in the night and creating illusions to deceive the mind. Kha'din speak in whispering voices of crooning insanity--the sounds of nightmares and mad voices whispering just beside your ear or inside your head, or shaping your dreams. This voice can drive mortals mad or become consumed with a hateful, killing rage. They manipulate mortals by promising gifts of great knowledge, power and fulfillment of hidden desires. Those who willingly accept these offers are doomed, for the Kha'din possess their bodies and devour their dreams and thoughts until all they experience are insane nightmares. Their bodies are devoured by Taint, slowly transform into insane, hideous masses of writhing tentacles known as Akuma. When the being dies it becomes one

with the Kha'din, who are said to have a single mind or shared consciousness which their entire race experiences together.

## Taint (Kha'din Corruption)

The touch of a Kha'din's form can corrupt reality itself, which the scholars of the Dragon Isles call Taint. Aside from the Kha'din, certain regions of the world and the "Astral Space" contain large amounts of Taint, as do certain forms of magic. Taint is a magical corruption that affects body and soul, initially causing unusual nightmares and a dark mottling of the flesh as if one had been splashed with ink. If left unchecked, Taint can progress through the body, marring the flesh, maddening the brain, and eventually transforming the afflicted person into a shattered husk in nominal control of the Kha'din.

Taint is externally visible as a dark mottling of the flesh, as if Taint were dark swirls and splashes of ink. If left unchecked, especially if the power of the Kha'din is accepted, the stains of Taint will spread and become more severe, perhaps causing odd mutations or magical swirling glyphs to appear, eventually transforming the afflicted person into an Akuma--a shattered husk in nominal control of the Kha'din.

It is only after a few hours have passed that the first signs of taint begin to show. Taint is primarily an affliction of the soul, but also has physical signs. At early stages this manifests in some sign of chaos or corruption, such as shadowy ink stains scattered on the body or strange growths. The victim quickly realizes that the taint has spread to cover his limbs or sensory organs, and twitch or writhe unless controlled through an act of will. In mid-stages the victim may see dramatic signs of corruption, such as eyes and tentacles bubbling forth from his skin, just as often the effects are subdued, such as eyes turning black as shadow. Near the final transformation into an Akuma, the victim's shape seems to melt, flow, writhe, and boils as in some insane nightmare, the tainted parts of the body under control of the Kha'din.

While the physical signs of Taint are sometimes visible, they are more often hidden by the deceptive magic of the Kha'din. Once the character becomes an Akuma the deceptive magic of the Kha'din nearly always hides it from anyone except Kha'din or anyone else who has Taint. To a common man, the stains seem to disappear over time, just as would be expected of a normal ink stain. However, the victim sees his body undergoing the terrible transformation, and surely thinks that he is going mad from the nightmarish whispers and the fact that no one else can see the affliction! Many people who have the Taint are simply declared insane and locked away, all the more terrified because they cannot flee the voices in their heads. The horrific dreams are worst on nights with little or no moonlight. Some individuals have been known to embrace the Taint, accepting the gifts of the Kha'din. It is power that most often seduces, for embracing the Taint is an easy path to tremendous magical power. Young wizards frustrated at the slow pace of their studies, old scholars fearful of death, and those with goals far beyond their grasp, are all answered by the Kha'din with promises to fulfill their grandest goals and deepest desires. At the mere cost of one's soul... These individuals can be anywhere, for in using the magic of the Kha'din they can remain extremely well-hidden and gain positions of tremendous power. Many believe that the innermost secrets of the "Black Wizards" involve dabbling with Kha'din magic, and other dark warlocks such as Fomorians and Zorlims also draw on power from the "Nameless Ones". In extreme cases Taint can cause one to become Akuma, the body turning into a hollow husk containing a Kha'din and granting even greater power. Ithilnaur weapons and armor are potent devices against Taint and those filled with its dark power, but even the Eldar who created found fighting the Kha'din daunting.

## Ungolath (Great Spiders)

Deep in the heart of the darkest forests dwell small groups of the deadliest foes--giant spiders as large as horses, running silently through the forest or along their rope-thick webs into the treetops.



Speaking in hissing, creaking voices, their clever traps catch those travelers who dare step off the few safe roads or elf paths in the "Endless Forest". Spiders are competitors with Goblins and Æethiiri, and sometimes make pacts with Goblins to conquer and divide Elven forests.

## The Astral Spider

Adventurers recently told a tale wherein they encountered a fell beast they called the Astral Spider, a gigantic arachnid that could ensnare victims in webs and pull them through a rip in time into its lair, a horrifying pocket plane. Leaping onto a comrade being taken by the spider, one of the heroes found himself brought within the Astral Spider's lair, a dark place where time seemed to stand still. All was dark, so the hero fought blindly to save self and friend. The treacherous floor felt wet and uneven, threatening to spill the hero into the eggs heard crunching (or hatching?) under foot. The spider was a terrible foe defending its brood, and it took all the resources of the lone hero to slay the fell beast. Surely they saved the world from a dark fate should those eggs have hatched.

## Wyrms (Fallen Dragons, Linnorms, Lindwyrms, Wyvern)

Once glorious dragons, these vile creatures were tricked by the god Tark into betraying their sacred trust, releasing the Kha'din from their dark prison. They were cursed by the god Hruul to crawl in the dust on their bellies. Their legs shriveled up to the point where they had to slither and crawl like worms. It is very common for cultures that hate dragons to smash the legs of stone dragon statues to make them appear to be wyrms.

The fallen dragons have been hunted extensively by the Baal, and most have fled to the far or dark places of the Dragon Isles such as

the cold north, desert, mountains, or tunnels beneath the surface. Many wyrms wriggled off to dark places and deep caves, often chasing Dwur out of their golden halls. In the north, these ignoble beasts terrorize the land for many miles until they are hunted down by the fierce Kith.

Many wyrms have been further corrupted by the Kha'din or the Lord of Lies, and openly worship Tark.

## Zuhls (Dark Dwur)

Zuhls are what remains of the Dwur who were trapped in the Underhalls of the "Dwurdelf of Zirakzigil" during the "Battle of the Thousandfold Curses". While most Dwur fled the collapse of the Dwurdelf gates, some were trapped in the mountain city deeps with hordes of undead. These clans fled into the deepest mines of the mountain Underhalls, hoping that they would lose their pursuers in the passageways and be safe underneath miles of rock. Many escaped in this way, but the deeps changed them forever.

Necromantic energies spilled from above and strange gases from the earth's core drifted upward. They also discovered that Wyrms had already tunneled into the core, driven to the deep, dark places either by Baal Wyrms-hunters or the whispering call of the Kha'din.

Hundreds of years dwelling in the light-less and often water-filled bowels of the Zirakzigil have twisted the forsaken Dwur into a dark, cruel race bent on destruction and revenge. The Zuhls bear scant resemblance to what they once were, retaining their Dwur-like stature but sprouting loathsome vestiges of their undeath. Their faces have become twisted into hideous mockeries of the sacred guardian Gargoyles of the Dwur. Some have adapted to their semi-aquatic life by gaining aquatic appendages such as tentacles or fish-like fins.

Naturally, Zuhls have an intense loathing for the Dwur who abandoned them to their dark fate. Unlike Dwur, who dwell in mountain peaks, Zuhl now prefer to dwell deep underground in

abyssal halls. For years, the Zuhls have been training the Goblins to fight with skill and organization, and to worship the Serpentmother. The Zuhls currently control the Underhalls of the "Dwurdelf of Zirakzigil" miles beneath the city of Aegis, struggling daily against the Dwur living above.

## Zorlims (Zuhl Priests)

The priests of the Zuhl people are called Zorlims. They have forsaken the worship of Xohm, the Earthmother, to worship the dark gods of the deeps, such as the Serpentmother, Kraken and Kha'din. Zorlims are greatly feared for their ability to control the minds of their foes, creating thralls who obey their every command. They have also been known to summon Kha'din to bless their allies and devour their foes. Such magic is not without its price, and the Zorlims are taking their race even deeper into darkness.

The Dwur have traditionally worshiped Xoden, the Allfather, and his bride Xohm, the Earthmother. Deep in the bowels of the earth, a new cult sprung up and flourished, falsely worshiping the Earthmother as the Serpentmother, Hypsiglena. Over many years the priests, who called themselves Zorlims, converted all those living in the deeps to worship of the Serpentmother. The forsaken Dwur now called themselves Zuhls, chosen of Hypsiglena.

While their priests are persuasive, they find that slaves are easier converts, and the Zorlims have developed great skill in capturing and ensorceling their prey. Many slaves have been taken from the surface throughout Ambar and taken to the Underhalls for conversion. The Goblins were once bitter foes, and even they now serve the Serpentmother. Even some clans of Drow pay homage to this dark faith.

The Zorlims now wish to spread their faith to the surface world. Finding willing roots in some lands, their faith has already begun to prosper in Aquila and Nan-Avathar. However, many lands resist their priests, such as Alglondor, calling their faith an evil cult that must be subjugated by force of arms.