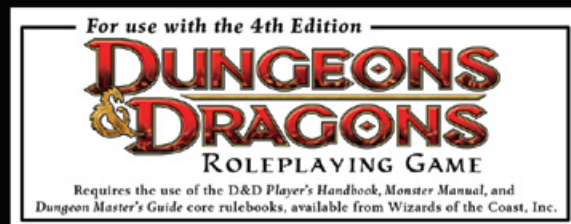


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Castoffs and Crossbreeds



EXPEDITIOUS RETREAT PRESS

Castoffs and Crossbreeds



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AUTHOR'S SPECIAL THANKS

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INTRODUCTION

I've always been drawn to the unusual. I remember making up my first character back in the days of AD&D. Why, I asked myself, would I play a normal elf when a Wood Elf was so much more distinctive? Thus was born Tanis Greenwood, and a love affair with new and exotic player character races. I lapped up each new half-breed or humanoid with relish. Eventually, it became obvious to me that the possibilities were endless; just as mythology was rich with monsters like chimera and sphinx that were the amalgam of several animals, so too could a campaign world boast any number of half-breeds based on standard races blended with other creatures. Why stop at half-orcs and half-elves, when you can have half-harpies and half-trolls?

Castoffs and Crossbreeds introduces 12 new half-races, and gives you the tools to introduce countless others of your own devising into your campaign. In a world with divine magic, arcane lore, strange laws of probability, curses, gods and fiends that dabble in the realms of man, and natural shapeshifters it seems perfectly natural that one might on occasion encounter

individuals of unusual heritage. Shunned by society, these bastards might take up the wandering life and seek homes among adventuring parties. Perhaps even yours.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Castoffs and Crossbreeds is arranged in four modular chapters.

Chapter One: Half-breeds in your Game

This chapter explores the opportunities that come with using half-breeds in your campaign, and discusses general issues that should be considered before introducing a half-breed.

Chapter Two: Half-breeds

The meat of *Castoffs and Crossbreeds* is this expansive chapter in which twelve new half-breeds are introduced, ready to play as a PC race. The widest possible variation is provided, to demonstrate the ways in which nearly any monster can be the genesis of a half-breed with a little forethought and imagination.

Chapter Three: The Demiurge

This short chapter ties the book together by introducing an alien race from beyond the stars with a mysterious agenda of abduction and crossbreeding. The Demiurge, as these malevolent beings are known, can be used the source for any number of half-breed races in your campaign. In addition, they serve as powerful and frighteningly sinister villains.

Chapter Four: New Monsters

In this chapter we find two new monsters upon which a two of the half-breeds are based. The gorilla and the giant cockroach are creatures that will find a fast home in most games. They're presented here.

CHAPTER ONE: HALF-BREEDS IN YOUR GAME

PROBLEMS WITH HALF-BREEDS

Just as a GM should carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of introducing a new character class, spell, or magic item into his game, he must also consider which half-breeds to allow in his game world. Any new crossbreed that's adopted will have repercussions on the game that, like opening Pandora's Box, may be difficult to undo once that step is taken. As a result, when a player approaches the GM with an idea for a unique crossbreed, the matter should be carefully weighed.

WORLD DESIGN

In some cases, the introduction of a half-breed may have an effect on world design. Depending upon how common the half-breed race is, there might by necessity need to be communities or even homelands for them. In a home-brew setting this might be accommodated fairly easily, but it does impose itself upon the GM and his creation. In a publishing game setting this can be a bit more problematic, perhaps even requiring substantive changes. Even then, the GM must determine how a half-breed community or homeland affects the dynamics of the region. Are they persecuted? What are their relations with neighbors? What is their collective relationship vis-à-vis the relevant parent races?

Even if a half-breed race doesn't exist in numbers requiring they have their own community or homeland, they may be common enough---even in a specific locality---to form a minority population in a town or province. How have they integrated themselves into society? What strata of society do they inhabit?

Are they slaves or relegated to eking out an existence in ghettos? Or maybe just the opposite, their uniqueness resulting in wonderment and awe that translates into privileged status.

In any event, it's clear that the introduction of a half-breed race that exists in any significant number results in more work for the GM as he tries to present a believable and exciting world for his gaming group. Of course, handled deftly, it could also result in opportunities for adventure and role-play, and a uniquely textured world.

SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

Half-breeds typically appear as exceptions to the norm, and yet even in a high fantasy setting with prevalent magic, dungeons underfoot, dragons and other monsters lurking around every corner, and epic quests that determine the fate of the world, players have a threshold for what they consider plausible and realistic. Some players have little trouble accepting anything in a fantasy setting. Others, however, like to be grounded by some sense of continuity and for them the suspension of disbelief may be strained by the appearance of half-breeds in any large number. If players find it difficult to accept the concept of half-trolls existing in urban ghettos and half-wight reavers doomed to continue their pillaging ways for all eternity, then you should probably limit the number and frequency in which crossbreeds appear in your campaign. Save them for important NPCs or dramatic moments.

It's important to establish a tone and flavor for your campaign vis-à-vis half-breeds, and maintain it consistently. This will help characters believe in the setting and enable you to predict what players will accept and what they will balk at. If you think introducing a particular half-breed will compromise the tone of the game, resist the temptation to use it; once a player's suspension of disbelief is undermined, it's extremely difficult to restore.

GAME BALANCE

In *Castoffs and Crossbreeds*, we've attempted to provide the broadest range of potential half breeds, and have in fact stretched the traditional definition in many ways. This was an intentional design decision. We wanted to demonstrate the infinite possibilities that arise with the application of a little creativity, and hope to inspire GMs to try their hand at creating their own unique half-breed races.

When introducing a half-breed, every effort must be made to ensure they balanced mechanically with the core D&D player character races. It's inevitable that some races will be better in certain aspects of the game than others, but you must carefully examine half-breeds to ensure they do not unbalance the game. Nothing could disrupt a party and sow dissension among the players faster than a PC who is more powerful than his companions simply because his player had the good-fortune of convincing the game master to allow him to play a half-demon lord or some other ludicrously powerful crossbreed.

BENEFITS OF HALF-BREEDS

Half-breeds offer great opportunities in a role-playing game. While the standard races are a long-standing staple of fantasy gaming and literature with good reason (they tend to be archetypal, and because elves and dwarves appear, in one form or another, in most cultures are readily identifiable), the introduction of new races can add a dramatic new spark that sets the campaign setting apart.

VARIETY

Half-breeds are invaluable for adding variety into your game, allowing players a wider range of options upon which to base their character concept. The benefit of a half-breed as opposed to simply introducing a new PC race is that it doesn't, by definition, alter the game setting in any fundamental way. If a player decides he wants to make up a half-troll character (in this book, named Thule), it doesn't by definition follow that the world must feature half-trolls in any significant number. Instead, the half-troll PC may be unique. In short, half-breeds allow greater variety while keeping the number of sentient races in a game world to a believable number.

Each half-breed is described in the following easy-to-use format.

NAME

Just as in the real world people of mixed black and white heritage (by way of example) are known as mulatto or creole, few beings in a fantasy world would identify themselves as "half-elven" or "half-orc". Instead, they would likely have a distinctive racial name. In some cases, these names are insults or slurs given to them by bigoted individuals. In others, they are embraced by the half-breed as a sign of their lineage.

ROLE-PLAYING POTENTIAL

Half-breeds tend to be filled with angst, and from that springs great drama and exciting role-playing opportunities. This is particularly true if the individual is unique or part of a very, very rare species. The Golem from Eastern European lore and Frankenstein's Monster are memorable characters were shaped by the notion that they were singular beings who wanted nothing more than to fit in with humans. There's a lot storylines can be based upon such emotions.

Answering the question, 'where did I come from', is more difficult for half-breed characters than those of a standard race, and potentially more rewarding. Was the character the product of rape, magical experimentation, or a powerful love spell that brought beings of two disparate races together? Perhaps some half-breeds are the result of a familial curse laid upon the bloodline by a bitter priest, or worse yet, a demon or evil deity. What if Thules are a naturally occurring though extremely rare and deeply embarrassing genetic mutation amongst dwarves that reminds them of a joint ancestry between them and trolls? Would these unwanted mutants be killed at birth or cast into slavery? Answering these questions opens up a rich and varied background for any new player character.

In addition to being saddled with origins laden with drama, half-breeds must exist in a world where they are a distinct minority. Even if Thules were relatively numerous and not instinctually hated, they would still be grossly outnumbered by elves and dwarves, to say nothing of humans, and therefore likely be the subject of prejudice or bias. Does the character struggle to fit in, or accept being marginalized by society and embrace the life of a vagabond or even an outlaw? Of course, keep in mind that not all bias are negative, but they still come with a burden. Moon Maidens are viewed as the offspring of celestial beings and are almost revered by elves. Living up to vaunted expectations and existing under the microscope that comes with hero worship can be just as difficult as being dismissed by society at large.

PLAYER AID

Each of the half-breeds presented herein comes complete with a suggested background and detailed notes regarding the race's personality, possible motivation for adventuring, and views towards other races and classes. This information can be an invaluable aid in fleshing out a player character (or, for GMs, non-player characters). Within minutes and with little thought, a fully realized and nuanced character can be created and ready for use at the gaming table. While most players would find this character-creation crutch of value when time is of the essence, and perhaps also find inspiration in the half-breeds themselves, novice gamers in particular will appreciate the assistance and reap the greatest rewards.

CHAPTER TWO: HALF-BREEDS

APPEARANCE

This section details the physical characteristics of the half-breed. Where applicable, the entry touches upon physiology as well. Finally, we might find here information on preferred style of dress or other ornamentation relevant to a character's appearance.

DEMEANOR

Here we discover prominent personality traits typical of members of the half-breed race in question, as well as delve briefly into collective psychology to learn what makes them tick.

Table 2.1 Half-Breed Lifespans

Half-Breed	Adulthood	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Ashwing	20	50	90	140	+4d10 years
Brimstone Beard	40	135	240	360	+3d100 years
Dragonlings	15	35	55	70	+2d20 years
Eldor	17	300	—	—	+5d100 years
Gutterling	10	18	36	50	+1d8 years
Half-Gnolls	14	20	30	40	+1d10 years
Lagoon Elf	27	100	150	200	+4d10 years
Moon Maiden	16	200	500	1000	+20d20 years
Ophidian	18	80	200	400	+8d20 years
Thule	35	115	150	200	+2d20 years
Wicht	18	—	—	—	+10d100 years
Yeren	12	22	45	68	+3d810 years

BACKGROUND

In this section we gain insight into the background of the races, focusing on the formative years that explain the circumstances under which the half-breeds are created. We also see how they interact with society, and the role this relationship plays on the development of a half-breed character.

ADVENTURERS

This section describes a half-breed's views on various races and classes, and what might motivate them to take up the uncertain and dangerous life of an adventurer. We also gain valuable insight into what kind of adventurer a typical member of this half-breed race might become.

RACIAL TRAITS

This section includes all the gaming rules required for the half-breed to be played in game as a PC race.

ASHWING

Ashwings are tragic individuals, the result of a forced union between a bloodfire harpy and either a halfling or an elf. They are most often found in rocky deserts or arid hill regions, where bloodfire harpies prey upon the hardy Halfling and elf tribes that huddle around watering holes eking an existence out of the harsh wilderness. These tribes, impoverished, small in numbers, and with only primitive weapons, are ill-suited to defend themselves against predation by harpy flocks. Some tribes are essentially held hostage; unless they willingly sacrifice healthy males to captivity, the harpies threaten to use their horrifying abilities against the tribe's helpless women and children.

Regardless how they enter captivity, prisoners normally end up as slaves and victims of horrid torment for the harpies' sick amusement. Sometimes unwanted children result from the abuse. Other times, harpies purposefully mate with their captives in order to increase their slave stock. In either event, the offspring is an ashwing.

Though ashwings are born of either sex with equal frequency, few female ashwings reach adulthood; harpies traditionally kill newborn ashwing girls. One reason for such cold-blooded murder is because females are seen as less useful slaves, being capable of less physical labor and not nearly as interesting playthings. There's another reason young ashwing females are put to death: to prevent any from coming to power within the harpy's matriarchal society.

As a result of their paucity of numbers, among escaped ashwings females of the species are cherished as rare treasures.

APPEARANCE

Ashwings are often mistaken at a distance for harpies. They have the small bodies and lithe frames of halflings or shorter elves, but appear much larger when their wide, feathered wings are fully expanded. These wings are fully 8-feet in span, are coal-black in coloration, and allow clumsy flight. When beating, these wings shed a cloud of fine dander that looks like ash. Wings are a double-edged sword; while they offer mobility and the ability to escape many enemies, they also require the ashwing to wear clothing and armor specifically tailored for them.

If ashwings are ungraceful in the air they are little better on land, the result of legs that are slightly crooked and of taloned feet more suited to gripping tree limbs and rocky outcroppings than to walking. These talons, resembling those of a raptor, allow ashwings to make claw attacks while in flight.

Instead of hair, these half-breeds have a thick mane of feathers, typically red-gold in coloration, but occasionally yellow or tan. Their skin is covered in an irritated-looking red rash, and facial features are sharp and predatory, though not unattractive. Indeed, many ashwing are statuesque and alluring, with melodic voices. They favor elaborate facial tattoos, a throwback to their time as slaves to harpies when they were branded to indicate ownership and status.

DEMEANOR

Ashwings offer a jarring contrast to conventional civilized culture. They value personal freedom above all else, and treat



all companions as equals, regardless of age, ability, social class, or any other means by which cultures typically stratify themselves. They also defer to a leader only when absolutely necessary. Crude, brash, and often painfully blunt, ashwings place little value on social pleasantries. Their long struggle for freedom and even survival, and the harsh conditions in which they typically dwell, have only perpetuated this attitude. They disdain caste systems and rigid laws, and as a result are often viewed as malcontents and rogues. Though a stereotype, often times this is not far from the truth: ashwings are not infrequently found amidst the ranks of poachers, smugglers, and thieves. They typically live on the fringes of society, where laws and social constraints are lax or non-existent. They value freedom, vengeance, pride in one's accomplishments (which can be considered arrogance), and self-sufficiency.

Though they can be contemptuous and cold to strangers, ashwings are fiercely loyal to one another and trusted companions, like traumatized siblings clinging to each other for support. Passions run deep between an ashwing and the members of its 'flock' (a term referring to kinship based as much on friendship as blood), and an ashwing will guard its companions with a savagery found more often among animals than humanoid.

Tenderness is a trait not often associated with ashwings. They love deeply, but it rarely expresses itself in traditional forms. Instead, it manifests in tattooing, piercing, and scarification that unite man and woman together. Despite the painful nature of the union, these relationships are just as intimate and bonding to ashwings as are the romances and marriages of other races. Even youngsters are raised coolly, so as to harden them from a young age to the harshness of the world and prepare them for the constant struggle that is survival.

BACKGROUND

There are relatively few free ashwings, and rarer still are ashwing communities. As a result, most are raised in servitude in harpy clans, suffering countless indignities and endless abuse early in life. Harpies consider them tools at best and at worst playthings upon which they can vent their bloodthirsty passions, and as a result the young ashwing is traumatized from an early age. It's little wonder then that an ashwing will snatch at any opportunity to escape their misery. It's also little wonder then that most ashwings find it very difficult to adapt to society and to foster healthy relationships.

That said, when an individual earns the trust of an ashwing, he gains a fervent friend for life. An ashwing will never betray or desert a member of its adopted flock, even upon pain of death, because they believe it is impossible to atone for such dishonor. Unsurprisingly, the rare ashwing communities that exist are extremely tight-knit and insular; an offense against one is an offense against the whole.

ADVENTURERS

A typical ashwing spends many years wandering, its emotional scars and unusual appearance making it difficult to interact with other races for extended periods. Though their smooth talking allows them to gain entrance to many villages and towns, they are too alien in temperament and too maladjusted for such an arrangement to be comfortable and as a result rarely remain in an urban environment for long. As a result, most ashwings are adventurers.

Many put their flight and natural hunting abilities to work as guides and scouts for trading or exploratory expeditions, but they rarely kept any job for long, working only when in need of money. Ashwings consider their own morals irrelevant when hiring out their skills, and may work for evil groups as readily as they do good-aligned ones.

Ashwings are wary of most races, and they take offense by the way elves tend to look down on them as abominations born of abuse and violence. Ashwings appreciate the talents of arcane spellcasters with their exceptional abilities, but have little time for the organized religion espoused by clerics. They tend to relate most to the lifestyle and mores of rogues, with their lack of respect for laws and the way they wink at societal restraints.

Average Height: 5'0" - 5'4"

Average Weight: 100-140 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Constitution, +2 Charisma

Size Medium

Speed 5 squares, fly 5 squares

Vision Normal

Languages: Common

Skill Bonuses: +2 Athletics, +2 Nature

Resist Fire 5

BRIMSTONE BEARD

Most dwarves pledge their souls to the earth, dwelling deep within its folds and harvesting its mineral bounty. Others develop a kinship to fire, nurtured during countless hours of hammering metal into form over a raging forge. Some rare dwarves are born feeling affinity to both elements, hearing the call of earth and fire with equal intensity.

These individuals are natives of the mortal world but have pure elemental energy flowing through their veins. Brimstone Beards, among the more common of these elemental blooded dwarves, are combative beings that descend from rockfire dreadnoughts.



APPEARANCE

Brimstone Beards are, at first glance, little different from standard dwarves. Their general shape and appearance remains consistent with most members of that stoic race, though they are slightly taller and noticeably denser. Closer inspection reveals significant differences, however. The skin of a brimstone beard is roughly textured, almost rocklike, and is a ruddy gray or brown. Their faces, which initially appear to be wrinkled with age, are in fact creased with fault-lines that run through the thick skin, becoming deeper with age. No hair grows atop their heads, though they have thick, bristly-black beards.

Brimstone beard's odd heritage is most often seen when they're enraged or threatened. At such a time their coal-black eyes burn with fiery intensity, and embers of red can be seen flickering within the folds of their skin. Most dramatically, their beards will begin to smoke with the acrid smell of brimstone, and when particularly riled may even alight in flames.

DEMEANOR

Brimstone beards tend to be laconic loners. They speak rarely and only when they have something of true value to say, and because they prefer their own company to those of others they are left socially isolated. It doesn't help matters that these hot-blooded dwarves have a fiery temperament, notoriously short fuses, and an appetite for destruction. Most beings recognize that to get too close to a brimstone beard is courting trouble; brawls and sword-fights seem to unerringly follow them around, and it's in the middle of the violence, grinning savagely and with eyes wild with rage, that the brimstone beard can usually be found.

Brimstone beards care little for finery and ostentation, clothing and equipment is functional rather than decorative, and

money is of little consequence. They are more likely to be lured into action by the promise of martial glory, a sense of obligation to the community, or even out of sheer boredom than by the promise of wealth or material gain.

They can be rigid beings though, even in comparison to the notoriously inflexible dwarven race. Formal hierarchies, ancient traditions, and old grudges are vitally important to them and they will willingly fight, if need be die, to preserve them.

BACKGROUND

Unlike many cross-breeds, brimstone beards are welcome among either parent race. To rockfire dreadnoughts, they are considered children of the Elemental Chaos, and there may even be a hint of pride in the race. Among dwarves, brimstone beards are heroes and often take on roles as clanhold guardians. As a result, they are not generally troubled individuals, and as such are less liable to become miscreants and outcasts than most half-breeds.

Most brimstone beards are of good alignment and seek to accomplish some difficult and legendary task that benefits dwarven civilization---perhaps recovering an artifact lost in the bowels of the Abyss, raising a hero from the dead, or restoring fortune to a city buried under an avalanche. While most reasonable people would believe completing these tasks to be beyond the realm of possibility, brimstone beards hold to them to unusual tenacity. Only lofty goals can hold their attention over the long centuries and sate their appetite for action.

ADVENTURERS

A brimstone beard is most apt to take up an adventure out of boredom. Though they are strongly loyal to the community in which they reside, they grow restless quickly and soon the call to unleash pent-up adrenaline becomes overwhelming. A brimstone beard that is unable to experience the thrill of combat begins to suffer mood swings during which he vents frustration on his environment---breaking furniture and defacing rooms---or even hapless individuals unfortunate enough to be present. In extreme cases, a brimstone beard may even take to self-abuse, particularly if imprisoned for long periods.

Adventuring brimstone beard's sometimes hire themselves out as mercenaries to those with plenty of coin, or as guides to expeditions venturing in to the lightless depths below ground or through inhospitable mountain ranges. Extremely proud, they remain only as long as they are well-treated, given the respect they believe they deserve, and have the opportunity for excitement. Should these conditions change, the brimstone beard considers the contract annulled and will not hesitate to abandon his erstwhile charges to their fates.

Brimstone beards naturally get along well with dwarves, though their fiery temper and laconic behavior can be disturbing to other races (especially Halflings, who are frankly frightened of them). Brimstone beards of any class appreciate the martial abilities of fighters and most especially barbarians. Arcane spellcasters, particularly those with a command over the elements, are greatly respected and a brimstone beard is liable to follow the lead of such an individual in most cases. They have little time for rogues, however, considering them cowardly and without worth.

Average Height 4'4"-5'0"

Average Weight 230-270 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity

Size Medium

Speed 6 squares

Vision low-light

Languages Primordial, Dwarf

Skill Bonuses +2 Dungeoneering, +2 Endurance

Resist 5 fire

Brimstone Touched: Once per encounter, you can use either the *first of flame* or *heat aura* power.

Fist of Flame

Brimstone Beard Racial Power

Dancing flames engulf your hand as you strike at your foe

Encounter

Free Action

Personal

Effect: The attack deals an extra 1d8 fire damage

Heat Aura

Brimstone Beard Racial Power

The air shimmers around you with unnatural heat, causing opponents to recoil.

Encounter

Minor Action

Effect: Aura 1, any creatures that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage.

DRAGONLING

Sometimes dragonborn births result in a dragonling. The special nature of these hatchlings is apparent almost at once, when their light-gray scales change color to match those of the nearest adult, and continue to change color as the hatching is passed from one proud parent to the next. Dragonborn consider these births a blessing, the children honored as special and fated for great deeds. In the last century, dragonlings births have been more common, perhaps 1 in 100.

APPEARANCE

Dragonlings resemble dragonborn in all ways but one: a dragonling's scales will change color and texture based on a variety factors, including lighting, proximity to other people and their own particular mood. The result is a great variety in outward appearance. Here are a few examples:

Mood: Mood is more often associated with brightness rather than color. A dragonling who is happy will have brightly colored scales, whereas a dragonling in a foul mood will have dark-hued scales.

Association: A dragonling who associates with eladrin will find her scales begin to twinkle with flecks of silver or gold, whereas one who befriends a tiefling will grow spikes and spines and more pronounced horns and claws. A dwarf-friend will find his scales take on the reflective qualities of polished metal.

Lighting and Environment: A dragonborn who explores a cavern may emerge from this adventure with scales the color and texture of rough stone. On his trek home through the forest, his scales might slowly change to a camouflage pattern of green and brown.

A dragonling who is alone in darkness or dim light, and remains calm will have very smooth, light gray scales. Only very disciplined dragonlings can consciously control the changes in their appearance.



DEMEANOR

Dragonlings are fickle and emotional. They are able to sense the emotions of those nearby, especially those they care for (e.g. clan-mates, adventuring companions) or those with very strong emotions (e.g. a hate-filled lich, an enraged minotaur or a greedy satyr). Unconsciously, a dragonling will empathize with these feelings, and this will be reflected in their appearance and in their behavior.

Dragonlings living among other races take on the attitudes and mannerisms of that society. This allows them to get integrate almost completely. A dragonling living among elves will enjoy the same food and music, and grow closer to nature. On the other hand, a dragonling mercenary working for hobgoblins will become aggressive, eager to participate in duels and other martial games, and begin to dislike elves and eladrin. None of this is done for guile, intrigue or false friendship. The dragonling truly changes his or her attitudes.

If two dragonlings meet one-another, a strange thing happens. The two resonate so strongly that over time they become like one twins or soul mates (depending on genre and disposition) - looking almost exactly alike, sharing very similar personalities, and so on. The final result is somewhere between where either dragonling started, as each individual compromises appearance and personality to become more like the other. Once this joining happens, the pair find a stability they have never had before, losing their chameleon-like abilities. If one of the pair dies, the other often dies soon after.

BACKGROUND

Some dragonborn believe that dragonling births herald a new era of prosperity. They base this theory on the fact that, before recently, last dragonling births happened during the height of the ancient dragon empire. Surely, they say, this can be no coincidence.

ADVENTURERS

Dragonlings are raised to consider themselves special and destined for great things. Their parents would be disappointed if they became a mere soldier or mercenary. At an appropriate age, they are encouraged to set out as adventurers, to find legendary success or die searching.

At first, it may seem like a dragonling is more likely to be a follower than a leader. They subconsciously adopt the ambitions and quests of their companions, and start out in a support role, one of enthusiasm and encouragement. But deep into an adventure, it is often the dragonling who takes the lead in following through in what has been started. Additionally, become dragonlings are so empathetic they often act as the glue that holds an adventuring group together. It is easy for them to find compromise between rivals, or break a deadlock in indecision and in so doing be seen as the leader.

Dragonlings get along with all races and classes. The only catch is that it sometimes takes a bit of time to adapt between extremes. A dragonling who has just spent several adventures in the company of paladins will not immediately take a shine to a group of cutthroats. More likely the dragonling will spend several days reverting to a more neutral demeanor before falling into bad company.

Dragonlings often become rogues, clerics or warlords, employing their natural skills to beguile opponents or lead allies.

Average Height 6'2" -6'8"

Average Weight 220-330 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma

Size Medium

Speed 6 squares

Vision Normal

Languages Common, Draconic

Skill Bonuses +2 Bluff, +2 Insight

Instinctive Co-operation: During co-operation skill checks, a roll of 10 or higher gives your ally +4 bonus to his or her check instead of the normal +2 bonus, and the maximum bonus is +10 rather than +8.

Chameleon Scales: After the third encounter within a specific environment, the dragonling adapts his appearance enough to gain a +2 bonus on stealth checks.

Adaptability: A dragonling is not limited to the same restrictions as other characters with regards to class-specific multiclass feats. A dragonling can dabble in as many classes as he likes, so long as she meets the prerequisites.

Dragon Breath: A dragonling has the same dragon breath ability as a dragonborn

ELDOR

The pursuit of magic comes naturally to eladrin. Those who excel do so beyond the capacity of other races, immersing themselves in arcane lore and channeling spells of great power. The repeated use of magic – especially powerful magic – comes at

a cost. It changes them at some fundamental level; they become infused with arcane energy. The offspring of two powerful eladrin magicians inherit this birthright. These eldor (as they are called) have bodies that are equal parts arcane energy and fey flesh-and-blood.

Note that in a few rare cases, eladrin (wizards or not) have united with beings of pure magic and the resulting offspring are also eldor. No matter who was the mother or father, eldor have always been raised in eladrin society.

APPEARANCE

Eldor are clearly of fey blood, resembling elves and eladrin in general form, but are distinctly different. Their skin is violet or blue, usually in the deeper shades - azure, indigo, sapphire blue, amethyst and purple. Their eyes are pure orbs of silver or gold. Eldor hair matches their eyes - silver or gold - although many of them lack hair altogether. Some eldor bear natural "birthmarks" that resemble mystical sigils. These sigils can be permanent, or they may fade and reappear, change from one sigil to another, or shift position over time.

DEMEANOR

Eldor appear awesome and other-worldly, even to eladrin, but are actually very down-to-earth. They seek out strong friendship and passionate love. It is almost as if these earthy emotions are a vital element they lack. They appreciate beautiful things and complex patterns, and admire displays of impressive power. An eldor may just readily lose themselves in the eye of a hurricane as in the facets of a tiny gemstone.

Eldor are drawn to magic of any sort, but particularly to scrolls, potions and wands. There is no doubt that eldor sense the magical energies within these items; they may even enjoy this sensation. Some observers have noticed that eldor behave strangely after using magic items (even intoxicated), while others have reported eldor displaying an unhealthy addiction.

Eldor wear as little clothing as they can get away with. When clothing is necessary, they prefer loincloths, togas, loose robes, skirts or tunics of linen, cotton or silk. Eldor will not wear clothing made of leather, wool or hide – not only do they consider it repulsive, they also have an allergic reaction. It goes without saying that eldor are strictly vegetarian (adding milk and honey to their diets for variety).

BACKGROUND

Despite their eldritch origins, eldors are raised within eladrin society without any prejudice or preferential treatment. They often pursue magical training, either at the behest of their spell-wielding parents or simply because it comes naturally to them. At the same time, concerned adults encourage social interaction to ensure that the eldor does not forget that a part of them is mortal.

Eldor seem to mature faster than eladrin, but they live much longer. Indeed, some seem to be functionally immortal, living well over a millennia. It's believed that some eldor can evolve through exploration of the arcane that they can make the final journey and become a being of pure magical energy. They make lifelong friends easily, but they feel little remorse when their companions die of old age even as they themselves remain ageless. Eldor consider death to be the way of things, and see grief a waste of valuable emotion.

Eldor are so preoccupied with magic and its infinite possibilities that they often fail to truly understand normal society and socialization. They go about the motions of normality and fitting in, but they often stumble when it comes to emoting and understanding normal feelings. They therefore tend to gravitate towards individuals who might tutor them in such matters.

ADVENTURERS

Eldor become adventurers so they can experience a sense of wonder and awe. They seek out mystic sites to bask in the magical energies that accumulate there, and will delve into ugly, unpleasant dungeons to recover potions and artifacts. They prefer gems and finely-wrought jewelry over simple coins. When a group divvies up loot, an eldor will accept a disproportionate share if it means being allowed to keep magical items, gems and jewelry.

Eldor are drawn to humans and halflings, who they consider full of life and emotions. For their part, humans and halflings tend to be filled with wonder and awe. As a result, a bond between the magical and the mundane tends to form quickly and be very difficult to break. The exact opposite reaction occurs between eldor and tieflings. They are polar opposites in so many ways that it takes a lot of work to overcome instinctive feelings of distaste, distrust and envy, as well as differing attitudes towards life and magic. Dwarves are generally distrustful of a creature so infused with magic. Dragonborn have a neutral attitude. It goes without saying that eldor get along fine with eladrin, elves and half-elves - after all, they are kindred in so many ways.

Eldor are most likely to follow the paths of wizard or warlock. The next most common pursuit is that of cleric or paladin, but in this case the eldor upholds a general philosophy or set principals related to magic rather than serving a specific deity. Eldor dislike the trickery of rogues and see little that is praiseworthy in the blunt tactics of fighters and warlords.

Average Height 5'7" -6'1"

Average Weight 140-180 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom

Size Medium

Speed 6 squares

Vision Low-light

Languages Common, Elven

Skill Bonuses +2 Arcana, +2 Heal

Resist 10 necrotic

Vulnerable 10 force

Fey Origin: Your bloodline has its origin in the Feywild, so you are considered a fey creature for purposes of effects relating to a creature's origin.

Force Shard: You can use *force shard* as an at-will power.

Arcane Buckler: You can use *arcane buckler* as an encounter power.

Force Shard

Eldor Racial Power

Drawing upon the arcane energies flowing through your veins, you fling forth a silvery shard of magical force.

At-will • Arcane, Force

Standard Action

Ranged 20

Target: One creature

Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d4 + Intelligence modifier force damage.

Increase to 2d4 + Intelligence modifier damage at 11th level, and to 3d4 + Intelligence modifier damage at 21st level.

Special: Each attack reduces your hit point total by 1. This cost increases to 2 hit points at 11th level and 3 hit points at 21st level, as you draw magical energy from your being. This racial power is considered as a ranged basic attack.



Arcane Buckler

Eldor Racial Power

Flinging your hand towards the attack, you attempt to deflect it with a shield of arcane energy.

Encounter • Arcane, Force

Immediate Interrupt

Personal

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to AC and Reflex defenses.

GUTTERLINGS

Also known as scuttlers, roachborn, or vermen, gutterlings are an unpleasant mix of giant cockroaches and Halflings. They combine the inquisitive and covetous nature of halflings with a propensity for uncleanliness and ill-manners inherited from their insect side, with a healthy dose of cynicism and spite mixed in.

Supposedly, gutterlings originated when a community of halflings was uprooted by war and, as refugees with only whatever meager belongings they could carry upon their persons, forced to relocate to a large city. There, without means and hope, they crowded into vermin-infested tenements and huddled in abandoned warehouses. Illness and despair began to sweep through their ranks, culling the Halflings at an alarming rate. They prayed to the gods for salvation, but none heard their desperate pleas. Only the intervention of the cockroach demon known as the Skittish One saved them from being consumed by the dark underbelly of the city. His gift was to transform the few remaining halflings into a new race cast in his image, allowing them survive and even thrive in the sewers and slums of even the most vile district.



Gutterlings are able to breed with both other gutterlings and halflings, though few Halflings would bring themselves to actually willingly entertain the notion. The number of gutterlings has swelled and populations have emerged in countless cities, thanks their adaptive nature and rapid breeding.

APPEARANCE

Gutterlings have the same build and size as halflings, but have distinctively insectoid features that include whip-like antennae protruding from their foreheads just below the hairline, a carapace that covers much of the back, and small spines on legs and arms. They have no visible nose, and some have small mandibles beside their mouths. Females are slightly smaller and thinner, and almost never have mandibles.

Hair is unusual among gutterlings, but when present it's always oily and dark, pressed flat against the skull. Gutterlings have darker skin than their Halfling kin, ranging from tan to yellow or dark brown or black. Regardless of the color, skin tends to have a shiny, oily appearance though it is in fact dry.

DEMEANOR

Gutterlings are skittish and easily frightened, but they're not cowards. Rather, they're practical. They know survival often depends on their ability to remain unseen and out of reach of those who would kill them. Most gutterlings would rather run and hide than fight.

Because they've been neglected, abused, even persecuted throughout their history, gutterlings are naturally suspicious and cynical, lending their trust only slowly. A deep-rooted paranoia infects them as a race, leading them to believe everyone wishes them ill until proven otherwise. But gutterlings are

highly communal and driven by a swarming instinct. Should a gutterling be made to feel truly welcome and respected, he will adopt that individual or group as part of his swarm. This bond is never broken, and the roachling will even sacrifice his own existence---which he has been conditioned by society to view as worthless, anyways---to ensure the survival of his friends.

But gutterlings have a darker side than most halflings. If a gutterling is abused, betrayed, or abandoned, it becomes extremely vengeful and will go to great lengths to even the score. Evil gutterlings will even kill the offending individual, slitting his throat with a rusty knife while he sleeps in the comfort of his bed. Neutral gutterlings take a more subtle approach by destroying reputations, undermining business opportunities, and stealing objects of immense sentimental or monetary value. Such a campaign of revenge can consume a gutterling's entire life.

BACKGROUND

Gutterlings experience suspicion and prejudice at best, but most frequently encounter abuse and outright hatred. Urban dwellers who suffer infestations from hungry giant cockroaches often see little distinction between insects and gutterlings, and attempt to exterminate both with equal fervor. Even Halflings consider their existence deeply embarrassing and will not generally accept gutterlings as members of their communities. As a result, most gutterlings live in tortured confusion, fascinated with civilization but unable to play an active part in it.

Gutterlings mature quickly, reaching physical and emotional maturity by the age of ten. Unfortunately, this accelerated aging continues throughout their lives and only a few live past the age of forty. Even reaching that milestone is considered a monumental achievement, since most gutterlings die much earlier by the twisted knife of a cut-throat, the slaving maw of some subterranean horror, or strung up by prejudiced humans.

ADVENTURERS

The constant struggle to survive in dank sewers and violent slums means every gutterling is an adventurer, even if most never venture more than a few miles from the hovel or cellar they call home. Always searching for food, avoiding predation, stealing necessities, and running from angry mobs or watch patrols, the life of a gutterling is never dull. It's little wonder then that many decide to turn their backs on their families and seek out greater opportunities as an adventurer; the risks are the same but the rewards invariably higher. Many gutterlings take up careers as thieves, scouts for expeditions entering subterranean realms, outlaws, and bounty hunters.

Gutterlings are shunned by most races to varying degrees. Humans and elves consider them little better than vermin, while halflings deny they even exist, preferring to ignore them rather than acknowledge their existence.

Gutterlings of any class appreciate the talents of rogues, and are alternately fascinated and frightened by displays of arcane spellcasting. They have little time for clerics since they believed the Gods shunned them and it was only the Skittish One that answered their prayers. Fighters, rangers, and most especially barbarians intimidate gutterlings but if the opportunity presents itself they will often ally themselves with someone of physical prowess so as to even the playing field against those that would bully them.

Average Height 3'4"-3'8"

Average Weight 50-75 lb

Ability Scores +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution

Size Small

Speed 5 squares, climb 2

Vision darkvision

Senses tremorsense 10

Languages Common

Skill Bonuses +2 Stealth, +2 Thievery

Skittish Reflexes You gain a +1 racial bonus to your Reflex defense

Immune disease **Resist** 5 poison

HALF-GNOLLS

In the dead of night down darkened alleys or deep within the overgrown forests lurk degenerate half-gnolls, aberrant hybrids bent on personal gain and menace. Half-gnolls have spread throughout the world infiltrating both urban and rural based criminal organizations, working their way into positions of power among bandit bands, pirates, street gangs, and slaver guilds.

APPEARANCE

Half-gnolls are large humanoids standing over 6 and a half feet tall on average but due to their bent statur they usually appear to be about 6 feet tall. They are lanky yet powerfully built with muscles rippling under their hairier than average skin. They usually weigh between 170 and 200 pounds and their skin has a more brownish or grayish hue than average humans. Most half-gnolls wear their unkempt hair or manes long and scraggly down their backs.

Their nose and mouths are muzzle-like in appearance and they have sharper teeth than a regular human allowing them to deliver a bite attack if they should desire. Their nails are usually stronger and sharper than normal. They have slightly elongated, almost pointed ears which allows them to hear much better than a human. They are also able to see in the dark with their yellow to brown hued eyes and suffer no ill effects from skulking around in the daylight.

Some half-gnolls suffer from a disease similar to mange. These sickly creatures are thinner and weaker than average, their skin and eyes take on a greenish hue, and their demeanor is more feral than usual.

Even though half-gnolls can function adequately during the day they prefer the dark of night to maneuver around. City based individuals almost always cover their features with hooded cloaks or even masks. Most half-gnolls have some form or disfigurement from the countless combats they have engaged in. These disfigurements include scars, lost eyes, teeth, ears, claws, or even lost limbs. When not hiding their appearance a half-gnoll will proudly display their old wounds as a sign of greatness and to invoke a sense of awe and fear in all those that see them.

DEMEANOR

Beaten, loathed, hated – A half-gnoll expects this form of abuse and prejudice from the other “civilized” races and learns to accept it in a strange, twisted way. They retain the gnoll belief system that the strongest shall rule. If a half-gnoll is part of an organization, be it criminal, black market, or outlaw in nature, sooner or later he will challenge his superiors in an attempt to gain power.

Throughout the world half-gnolls have taken up positions of leadership of mercenary companies, outlaw bands, slaving rings, black markets fencing operations and criminal underworlds. These influential leaders will almost never employ another half-gnolls as they expect the hireling to eventually attempt a run for the top themselves.



Half-gnolls are ruthless and cunning, using stealth, subterfuge, politics, backstabbing and you name it to achieve their goals. They trust almost no one, prefer being alone during downtimes and can be fanatically protective of themselves and their possessions to the point of bordering on paranoia. They believe in taking what they want by strength and cunning and if someone is too weak to retain a possession, then they do not deserve to keep it.

Half-gnolls encountered in the wilderness tend to be more feral than their city based brethren. They are usually part of roving outlaw bands, thieves and highwaymen. They have no qualms about slaying victims and leaving the corpses to rot. City based half-gnolls tend to be more civilized, preferring to use a combination of strength and stealth to achieve their goals and avoid drawing unwanted attention from the watch.

Half-gnolls see weaker races as beneath them, ripe for the picking, easy to enslave for manual labor and “willing” to be ruled. As a consequence, a member of these ‘weaker races’ who then bests a half-gnoll in battle is someone to be feared, not respected.

BACKGROUND

Gnoll raiding parties have existed since human civilization began. It is believed that the half-gnoll race is therefore almost as old as time, the result of brutal abuse of human women. However, due to their limited numbers and their individualistic nature, no one knows for sure exactly when they first appeared and where. Those born within a human community are generally put to death or sold into slavery. Those born among gnolls are destined for a lifetime of abuse at the hands of their large, more powerful brethren. In either case, a half-gnoll grows into adulthood in an atmosphere that generates resentment, paranoia, and brutality.

It's little wonder that half-gnolls are individualists, never working with others of their kind unless absolutely necessary. It is because of this their population is relatively small compared to other similar races. In large cities throughout the world their existence is rare with maybe a hand full of them being found per metropolis. Within wilderness communities they will raid frequented roads and highways but slink back to hidden lairs far from prying eyes.

A half-gnoll's lifespan is shorter than a human, but few live to die of old age. Most perish relatively young, from physical trauma, death in battle, or the deprivation of mange disease.

ADVENTURERS

A half-gnoll adventurer raised and living in the city is very different from one raised in the wilderness. A city based half-gnoll may have been raised among humans and tends to blend in as one better than one raised in a wilderness setting. They dress better, will wield proper blacksmithed weapons and armor, construct a secreted home, retain civilized possessions, and appreciate the "finer" things in life which they will covet and protect at all costs. A half-gnoll reared in the wild will tend to be more feral in nature and are more likely to have the mange disease. They dress in rugged cloths, sometimes tattered, and wield weapons and armor stolen from victims or crafted from the wilderness surrounding them.

A half-gnoll adventurer likely has recognized his vulnerability as a lone wolf, seeking the allegiance of like-minded individuals in order to ensure his survival. However, most such alliances tend to be precarious at best; they last only as long as the half-gnoll believes there is something to be gained by working alongside the party. That said, individuals who genuinely respect a half-gnoll and share similar goals and outlooks may, in time, be counted true friends.

Half-gnolls generally disdain elves and halflings, considering them weak and worthy only of contempt. Dwarves gain grudging respect for their bravery and sturdiness in combat. Half-gnolls fear clerics, druids, and rangers. And while they have little magical aptitude, they understand the inherent benefit of having spellcasters for companions. Rogues and fighters are the best understood and most likely to be wholeheartedly embraced by half-gnolls.

Average Height: 5'11" - 6'4"

Average Weight: 180-230 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Constitution, +2 Charisma

Size Medium

Speed 7 squares

Vision low-light

Languages: Abyssal, Common

Skill Bonuses: +2 Intimidate, +2 Stealth

Blood Fury: While you're bloodied, you gain +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls. This increases to a +4 bonus at 21st level.

LAGOON ELVES

Unlike their terrestrial cousins, lagoon elves are naturally drawn to the sea, a result of ancient aquatic elf blood that still courses through their veins. Dwelling on small tropical islands and alongside hidden coves, lagoon elves consider the sea their natural heritage and embrace it with all their passion. They are expert fishermen and pearl divers, and natural explorers.



Lagoon elf settlements are typically made up of a cluster of bamboo huts along a sandy beach or buildings raised on stilts that stand amidst the shallows. Though lagoon elves love the water, they rarely craft vessels of notable size, preferring outrigger canoes to larger sailed vessels. These canoes, like other examples of elven craftsmanship, have a strong aesthetic quality to them--often times, as much attention is paid to a canoe's appearance as to its sea-worthiness. All have graceful lines, are brightly painted, and feature figure-heads in the shape of porpoises, sea turtles or other maritime creatures.

APPEARANCE

Lagoon elves are lithe and statuesque. They are essentially elf in appearance, though their skin is brown and some have thin webbing connecting their fingers and toes. Roughly one in four lagoon elves also have haunting white-silver eyes that shine like mother-of-pearl. Their hair tends to curl into loose ringlets unless plied with whale oil to straighten it. All have dark laughing eyes and wide smiles.

Lagoon elves prefer light clothing and are far more immodest about their bodies than most elves, favoring garb that accents their figures and often times wearing little clothing at all. They almost never wear boots or shoes.

DEMEANOR

Lagoon elves are fond of music, dance, and festivals. They enjoy to the fullest every moment of every day, and do not believe in being depressed or moody. Only the defiling of the sea or of a serene shoreline can throw a lagoon elf into a dark melancholy, which they mark by playing mournful dirges on conch-shells and by prayers to their ancestor-spirits.

HOEROA

Crafted of curved bone, typically the jaw bone of a large shark or whale, the hoeroa is used as both a melee blade and a thrown weapon, though is relatively clumsy when used in the latter role. The weapon is typically five feet long and three inches wide.

Weapon	Prof	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Hoeroa	2	1d6	5/10	5gp	6 lbs	Heavy Blade	Heavy Thrown

Despite their natural joyfulness, lagoon elves are suspicious of outsiders and are slow to embrace strangers. They've learned through harsh experience that the intentions of outsiders are rarely benevolent, whether they are pirates intent on looting, or merchants aiming to exploit primitive natives. Buccaneers are brutally dealt with where ever they are found. Their ships are burned and their corpses strung up as grisly warning to others who would follow in this life.

Lagoon elves have a fondness for pearls and ivory, and such treasures are valued above all others. Exotic spices, found only within the jungle interior, are also highly prized.

BACKGROUND

In ages past, a peaceful and prosperous aquatic elf kingdom flourished in the kelp forests and coral peaks beneath Siren Call Sea. Then, one day the savage shark-god, Dakuwanga, emerged from the deepest chasm on the ocean's floor to destroy this idyll forever. The bloodthirsty, ravenous fiend cowed the barbaric and evil aquatic tribes in a terrifying assault aimed at the aquatic elf kingdom. War bands emerged suddenly and with terrifying force from the inky waters to lay waste to entire elf communities. The men were slain in hopeless battles, women and children sacrificed in orgies of murder that lasted days and turned the seas crimson for miles in every direction, and the great monuments of the aquatic elf civilization were destroyed.

Some few elves survived the onslaught and fled in small bands, hunted mercilessly by the followers of Dakuwanga. The Shark God intended to leave no one alive, to literally wipe out the elves of the Siren Call Sea. And he likely would have succeeded, had not the elves received a sign from their own god, in the form of a golden tern that led the refugees towards a distant archipelago and onto dry land where their pursuers were reluctant to follow. Thus was born the lagoon elves, which over the millennia since have spread to obscure islands and isolated shores along the breadth and width of the Siren Call Sea.

But lagoon elves have never forgotten their heritage, nor their hatred for the races and the fiendish god that drove them from their ancestral home.

ADVENTURERS

Lagoon elves are explorers by nature, and will often venture to nearby islands or along the coastline in their distinctive sea canoes, large dugout vessels with outriggers for stability and outfitted with a large sail. They make these journeys in search of resources, to scout for enemies, and out of a natural inquisitiveness. Some take this wanderlust to an extreme and travel much further away, perhaps for years at a time, but in the end the call of their homeland is too strong and they always return to their people.

Many lagoon elves follow the path of the druid, who tend sacred tide pools, guard against wanton hunting of depravation, and who work to ensure the waters are clean and the fish are plentiful. Mages are also relatively common among the people, and while lagoon elves prefer to go about their lives

peaceably, when threatened they are skilled fighters with their traditional weapon, the hoeroa. Organized religion doesn't play a prominent role in their society so few lagoon elves take on the role of clerics, and even rarer is the lagoon elf who is deceitful and covetous enough to live the shadowy existence of a rogue.

Lagoon elves get along well with other elves, and with gnomes and halflings who tend to share their cheerful demeanor. On the other hand, they do not work well with half-orcs and dwarves, who tend not to appreciate their joy of life. Humans are dealt with warily, if at all, for they tend to be the most rapacious of the major races and their civilization is at odds with the primitive lagoon elf way of life.

Average Height: 5'4" - 6'0"

Average Weight: 130-170 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma

Size Medium

Speed 6 squares, swim 6 squares

Vision low-light

Languages: Common, Elven

Skill Bonuses: +2 Nature, +2 Stealth

Cultural Weapons: Lagoon elves can reroll an attack roll with the hoeroa. They must use the second attack roll, even if it's lower.

Dive Away: When in water deep enough to become submerged in, you can use *dive away* as an encounter power

Dive Away

Lagoon Elf Racial Power

You dive under water in response to an enemy's attack

Encounter

Minor Action

Personal

Trigger: You take damage

Effect: You dive under water and are effectively invisible until you attack or until the end of your next turn, at which point you resurface.

MOON MAIDENS

Moon maidens are the result of a union between elves or eladrin and cherubim of the Moon Goddess (often known as the Shimmering One). They are most common in temperate woodlands or hills, where elves worship the majesty of the moon amidst standing-stone circles. The cherubim, called Angels of the Pale Light, are occasionally sent by the deity to live among these devoted worshippers, serving as guardians of the community and respected leaders. Its not unusual for an Angel of the Pale Light to develop feelings for an elven or eladrin man, especially priests of the Shimmering One with whom they share close spiritual ties. The results of such unions are moon maidens.



Moon maidens are overwhelming female. Only 20% of the crossbreeds born are male, and typically they resemble normal elves. Certainly, it's very rare for the male offspring of such a union to have any of the Shimmering One's divine energy flowing through their veins, and they are therefore almost indistinguishable from an elf. Moon maidens can breed with elves, with the offspring typically being elven; as a result, moon maidens are very rare and they are extremely conscious of the precariousness of their species.

APPEARANCE

Moon maidens are often mistaken for young, female elves. They have the lithe, shapely form of an elf, but their features are even more exotically beautiful. Moon Maidens have long, flowing hair that is typically blue or silver in coloration, and flawless, pearly-white skin. Their eyes are universally blue, and seem to shine like pale moonlight. When angered, this light seems to grow with renewed intensity, revealing something of the fiery temperament that moon maidens work so hard to suppress.

A moon maiden's odd heritage is most obvious when seen in motion. They move with a graceful, fluid motion that never seems hurried or forced. Even running at full speed seems effortless for a moon maiden, as her feet just barely brush against the ground. To some observers, it almost looks as though the moon maiden is gliding, so smooth is the movement, and in fact rarely do their steps leave any trace of their passage.

Moon maidens wear elegant robes of white or pale blue, and either light sandals or no footwear whatsoever.

DEMEANOR

Moon maidens are noble creatures who genuinely desire to spend their lives doing good deeds. They are extremely loyal to those they deem worthy, and would fight to the death in defense of friends and family. Moon maidens feel a great kinship with elves, and the two races mix easily and harmoniously for the most part. Nevertheless, tensions occasionally emerge because moon maidens do not find elves emotive or fervent enough, while elves are forced to tolerate behavior they consider to be erratic and impractical. Whenever evil raises its fell head, moon maidens are the first to urge the immediate dispatch of forces aimed at wiping out the blight. Their elven brethren calmly work to restrain such dangerous impulsiveness, demanding a more measured approach that many moon maidens might consider over-cautious. The rules imposed upon them by society occasionally cause moon maidens to chafe with restlessness.

In spite of their religious zeal, however, moon maidens have a taste for the finer things in life: good wine, silk clothing, silver jewelry, diamonds, and aesthetically pleasing magic items (regardless of their abilities).

BACKGROUND

Unlike many half-breeds, moon maidens are welcome in the community of either parent race. To elves, they are gifted heroes, paragons of faith, and representatives of their holy mistress, the Shimmering One. As a result, they often undertake roles as guardians and spiritual leaders. To Angels of the Pale Light they are fellow servants of the Shimmering One, and are accepted as equals. Because of this, moon maidens are almost always well-adjusted individuals, and lack the brooding angst common among other crossbreeds.

Moon maidens mature quickly compared to elves, but live astonishingly long life-spans. The average moon maiden reaches emotional and physical maturity at 16-years of age, but the aging process slows to a snail's pace thereafter. It's not unusual for them to see 1200 years, and some truly venerable individuals see as many as 1400.

ADVENTURERS

Moon maidens are crusaders at heart and so almost all are adventurers, even though they might never venture more than a few miles from their home. The need to confront evil, the undead, and lycanthropes whenever they might appear means many moon maidens lead far from sedentary lives. Often times, moon maidens will become involved in the adventuring life by becoming associated with others with a crusading mentality, enthusiastically teaming up with those who seek to be proactive against perceived threats. Unsurprisingly, many moon maidens become paladins, being nudged into an ascetic martial training from childhood.

Moon maidens get along best with elves, and actually find the stoic dwarves admirable. The jovial disposition of Halflings and gnomes grates on them, however. Moon maidens of any class appreciate the talents of arcane spell-casters, but have the greatest respect for clerics of the Shimmering One and will take advice from them even if it means ignoring authority figures. Thieves are viewed with absolute disdain, as are thuggish fighters who revel in bloodshed and brutality.

Average Height 5'4" - 6'0"

Average Weight 130-170 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma

Size Medium

Speed 6 squares

Vision low-light

Languages Common, Elven

Skill Bonuses +2 Insight, +2 Stealth

Moonshield: The innate magic of moonlight that courses through your veins grants +1 racial bonus to saving throws against charm and illusion effects. You also have resist necrotic at 1 + one-half your level.

Moon Magic: When you cast spells while standing in visible moonlight, creatures that attempt saving throws against your spell take a -2 penalty to the rolls. This benefit does not apply during the day, underground, or during a new moon.

Moon Step: When in visible moonlight, moon maidens become almost weightless, flowing above the ground and becoming capable of impossible leaps that border on flight. You gain a +10 racial bonus to Athletics checks made to jump. You also leave no footprints. Add 10 to the DC required to find or follow your tracks.

Moon Strike: You can use Moon Strike as a daily power (vs. lycanthropes only).

Moon Strike

Moon Maiden Racial Power

In the presence of your hated adversary, your weapon glows with the pale blue light of the full moon and hums with the divine power of your mistress.

Daily • Divine, Radiant, Weapon

Standard Action

Melee weapon

Target: One lycanthrope

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.



OPHIDIAN

Medusas strive for prestige, power and wealth. In this, they are not above beguiling or seducing the ruling class of a human society and thereby marrying into the nobility. Additionally, power-hungry humans have allied themselves with powerful medusa clans in an effort to advance or even just survive. The offspring of these medusa-human unions are known as ophidians. Less polite company calls them bedsnakes.

Note: While medusas might mate with humans (or half-elves or tieflings), they would find it repugnant to do so with dragonborn or dwarves. On the flip-side, virtually no elf, eladrin or halfling would succumb to a medusa's wiles.

APPEARANCE

Ophidians appear human at first glance, but there is always something not quite right. Perhaps it is the fact that ophidians don't blink (their eyelids are transparent, like a snake), lack any sort of body hair or tend to speak in a sibilant whisper (their tongues are forked). They have wide mouths and thin lips, small ears and slit-nostril nubs for noses. Add to this strange mannerisms, such as the ability to remain perfectly still without fidgeting or looking around, and it doesn't take long for a creepy feeling to set in.

Ophidians fall into the standard range of height and skin pigmentation for humans, based on parentage. However, they are almost always slender and wiry, lacking body fat, with lean muscles rippling beneath their smooth skin. When they age, their skin becomes transparent and papery, with very fine wrinkles. An ancient ophidian resembles a mummified corpse more than a beloved elder.

Ophidians give the impression that energy is at a premium and not to be wasted. They remain motionless for long periods of time, without twitching or turning their heads, staring straight ahead. When they move, it is mainly in fluid, languid motions, but they are also capable of uncanny bursts of speed.

DEMEANOR

Ophidians are aloof and callus. This should come as no surprise, raised as they are in an environment that is often loveless, where scheming and rivalry are ever present, and where offspring are pawns in a dynastic game of chess. Ophidians quickly learn to be ever-watchful and scheming. They evaluate their situation constantly, whether they are at an advantage or disadvantage, and plan accordingly. Like their medusa parents, ophidians seek power and control - not the sort that comes at the end of a mace, but rather one based on fear, deference, manipulation or simply a healthy survival instinct.

Ophidians rarely lose their temper. They don't get angry; they get revenge. An Ophidian's icy stare can silence even a brash dwarf; his whispered threats give pause to the most stalwart dragonborn. They are the bogeymen that keep halfling children awake at night.

If ophidians had a weakness, it would be pride. They hate to look foolish or weak. They will not cower or beg (very different from scheming). They will not demean themselves in any way. They may even be provoked into an uncharacteristic show of blunt, naked violence if subjected to public humiliation - especially if there is no way to save face or make a graceful exit (to get revenge later).

Ophidians tend towards unaligned or evil. Some do attempt to rise above this tendency. They would be considered lawful good, seeing “good” as an incidental consequence of “order and reason” rather than a goal in and of itself. But even these ophidians would come across as distant or even elitist. They would find shame in outward displays of emotion, and might even despise themselves as weak-willed.

BACKGROUND

Ophidians are welcome among medusas, as well as sister societies of other snake peoples. They represent the kind of manipulation and infiltration that these monsters hold in high regard. Humans have mixed feelings. Many humans feel instinctively distrustful or uncomfortable around ophidians, even if they don’t know the truth about their parentage. Superstitious, close-minded people may become rude or even hostile when they discover a bedsnake in their midst. On the other hand, there are two communities where ophidians may thrive: among the enlightened (e.g. scholars, secret societies, magic guilds) or among the indiscriminate (e.g. thieves guilds, spy rings).

ADVENTURERS

Ophidians seek out adventure to challenge themselves, or even reaffirm their entitlement to survival (“What doesn’t kill me makes me stronger”). They prefer contests of wits, opportunities to persuade or trick, or stealthy assassinations. Treasure is a means to an end – a tool to buy or bribe, which in turn gains an ophidian real reward in the form of status (e.g. a noble title), a position of authority (e.g. guildmaster, magistrate), or raw power (e.g. armies). Ophidians also like esoteric magic items, especially those that have unusual powers or a variety of uses.

Dragonborn and dwarves see ophidians as skulking and manipulative, and may even consider them “lickspittles” (which would not go over well if mentioned to the ophidian). Half-elves cut them a break, knowing too well how difficult it is to live between two worlds. Only in tieflings do ophidians find kindred spirits, although tieflings tend to be on the wild, emotional side of the same dark coin.

For their part, ophidians have the same neutral opinion of most races, clinically judging each individual on his or her merits or flaws. But ophidians reserve a special form of contempt for halflings, those little weaklings with their annoying voices and foolish antics.

Ophidians get along well with warlocks, wizards and rogues. They will follow warlords who demonstrate competence and cunning, will undermine a warlord who is undeserving of his leadership position, and in either case may vie for control of the group.

Average Height 5’6” -6’2”

Average Weight 130-160 lbs

Ability Scores +1 Intelligence, +1 Dexterity, +2 Charisma

Size Medium

Speed 7 squares

Vision normal

Languages Common

Skill Bonuses +2 Insight, +2 Intimidate

Immune petrification

Resist 10 poison

THULE

Throughout the world, crossbreeds are viewed with varying degrees of intrigue, suspicion, wonderment and often even hate. Whereas a few half bloods are readily accepted in civilized society and are even welcomed with open arms, others have arms taken up against them; none more so than the Thule, a race of dwarfs horribly tainted with the green-ichor of troll blood.

This species of isolationists has learned to live apart from the other “civilized” races for fear of being attacked on sight, and yet every so often a thule will seek to explore more of the world that openly rejects them, becoming tireless adventurers that are both resolute and resilient.

Though it’s clear that thule are the product of an unholy union of troll and dwarf, the ultimate origins of these mysterious and oft-misunderstood beings remain a matter of much debate. Dwarves tell of a time in the ancient past when a massive hoard of rampaging trolls raped and pillaged a path across the north, driving dwarves underground into defensive bastions. Finally, after years of terror and bloodshed, the trolls were smashed by an army of humans, elves and dwarves. The defeat was so resounding that the vile monsters have never recovered their losses, but unfortunately the damage was already done: troll half-breeds, the result of brutal attacks on hapless captives, had been born unto the world.

Others have a different story to tell. The barbarians who endure the biting cold of the northlands say that, in the timeless past, a plague stemming from a powerfully worded malediction ran through the dwarven nation. Flesh rotted, limbs atrophied, and thousands died in excruciating pain. It was only through breeding with trolls, willfully and knowingly, that the dwarves were able to build up a resistance to the disease and arrest the decline of their people. Of course, this tale is met with scoffs – or more violent rebukes – by dwarves.

APPEARANCE

Thule are stocky, powerfully built individuals. On average they stand about 6-feet tall and weigh as much as 250 pounds, not quite as stocky as a full-blood dwarf but still more solidly built than humans. There is little that is readily apparent to suggest their monstrous heritage, and what unusual features that emerge are typically well disguised. Their skin is thicker than normal and with an almost leathery feel to it, while complexion ranges from ruddy-brown to grey to a tinged green that lends a nauseous appearance. Teeth are sharper and longer than found in a dwarf, but not nearly as needle-like and intimidating as that of a troll, while the nose tends to be pointy and stretched. A thule’s face is generally angular and harsh, but is generally hidden behind a thick, wiry beard of black, red, or even green.

Thule have piercing yellow or red eyes, and are able to see in darkness. Unfortunately, strong sunlight bothers their eyes. Their blood is almost black in color and is much thicker than normal dwarven blood; many compare its smell and texture to oil. Thule are always muscular, far stronger in fact than even the most powerfully built barbarian, and have unnaturally long arms.

Even though the thule bloodline has been diluted over the years they still retain a hint of the regenerative properties of trolls. Some thule can even re-grow severed limbs, though at a ploddingly slow rate. Burns cannot be healed through regeneration and only very slowly normally through rest and recuperation; as a result, thule fear fire.

DEMEANOR

A tradition of being shunned by the other races (most particularly dwarves, who will often attack them on sight in an attempt to erase a perceived stain on their racial history), and generally being treated with a mixture of fear, animosity, and violence has left the thule bitter and short tempered. They are fearful of other races to the point that they have become isolationists, and are generally pessimists, thinking the worst of others and any given predicament.

Thule prefer to work alone or in very small parties consisting of other outsiders such as themselves. They do not easily make friends, and some go through life as hermits, with neither family nor confidants. That said, once a thule counts one as a friend, it is a bond that exists for life. Though organized thule settlements are rare and always small, it is considered the highest of honors for a non-thule to be welcomed and embraced into their fold.

Because of their inability to recover quickly from injuries sustained by burns, most thule are fearful of professions involving fire and thule smiths are a virtual unknown. Consequently, metal-work of any kind, but particularly weapons and armor, are greatly prized and a thule will pass up far more valuable treasure in order to secure such items. While they have little capacity for metallurgy, thule are expert wood-carvers and capable, if not artistic, stonemasons. Because of their hardiness and darkvision, many thule work small mines from which they extract ore with which to trade for metal-work items.

BACKGROUND

Almost all thule are either the product of ancient bloodlines dating back thousands of years, the offspring of two thule parents, or are the undesired result of a violation of a dwarven female by a troll. In the latter case, the mother, despite the violence of conception, cannot overcome her maternal bond and allow her child to be murdered as dwarven tradition would dictate. She flees with her infant, to raise it alone and in secret, far from civilization and the fear of persecution. It's very rare, but not unheard of for a twisted, if not outright evil dwarven wizard to mate with a troll intentionally in order to sire a powerful child that would serve loyally as a guard or laborer.

Hardy, resourceful, and suspicious of civilization, thule thrive in harsh regions little prized by other races. They can readily adapt to a variety of environments, but typically are found on the trackless expanse of the tundra, amongst frosted swamps and mountains, and within the dark confines of coniferous forests. They are also well-suited to a subterranean existence.

Thule are long-lived, but unlike most races suffer no side-effects from aging. They remain vigorous and strong well into old age, watching with pity and perhaps even a touch of disdain as friends and comrades-in-arms are slowed by the effects of time. In fact, a thule that dies of natural causes does so suddenly and without warning.

ADVENTURERS

Because thule lead a primitive existence, life itself is an adventure. Many are skilled hunters, trappers, or miners and face danger—whether from harsh climate, unforgiving terrain, or deadly creatures—on a near daily basis. They're unfazed by the notion of taking up the mantle of adventurer; facing uncertainty and dealing with life-and-death situations is simply an extension of how thule live.

Strong, fearless and intimidating, thule make excellent fighters and rangers. And yet, it's not unusual for thule to turn to the roguish pursuit of poaching, outlawry, trap thieving, and timber filching. Those rare few who spend any length of time



in or around cities usually take up the thieving profession, not surprising in light of the fact their dour disposition and slow wits make prospects for gainful employment unlikely. While clerics are almost unheard of among their kind, thule make capable if admittedly rare sorcerers.

Thule prefer adventuring alone, but if they are to be part of an adventuring party the smaller the group the better in their eyes. As a general rule, they get along with other half-races, especially if these other races are persecuted or part-troll, but are fearful of dwarves and elves, never knowing if they will be seen as an abomination of nature and killed where they stand. They are mindful of humans for similar reasons. Though it seems a contradiction, the stern and stoic thule are oftentimes fond of halflings, being amused by their lighter, easy-going attitude and their ability to remain cheerful in all circumstances. Thule often attach themselves to one as a bodyguard and friend, forming an odd-couple relationship that's beneficial to both individuals and remarkable effective.

Thule prefer adventuring away from civilization and may even remain outside of town while the rest of the party ventures in.

Average Height 6'0"-6'5"

Average Weight 220-250 lb

Ability Scores +2 Strength, +2 Con

Size Medium

Speed 6 squares

Vision low-light

Languages Dwarf, Giant

Skill Bonuses +2 Endurance

Regeneration: 5

WICHT (HALF-WIGHT)

Among all the monsters and beasts of creation, few inspire greater horror than the walking dead. Their very existence violates nature, and in their rotting bodies we see our ultimate fate—decomposing shells confined to a cold, cheerless grave. Imagine then being a product of both worlds, caught somewhere between the living and the undead. Imagine the waking nightmare such an existence would be. Imagine being a wicht.

Wicht, or half-wights, are an ancient and extremely long-lived race of beings cursed to feel a chill colder than death for a slight few even remember. Most think of these shadowy figures as no more than children's tales and characters from epic poems. In truth, wicht are rare but very real. Many are villains and thugs, but others are relentless heroes who strike fear into evildoers from the shadows in an effort to absolve themselves of past sins and free themselves from the curse that binds them.

The first wicht were a legion of notorious robbers and bandits who became undead together through the curse of a slain high priestess. The cleric witnessed the pillaging of her city, the raping of her church, and the defiling of her own body with stoic silence that made the raiders uneasy. Then, with her dying breath, she punished them and their descendents with a fate worse than death.

Wicht are able to breed with humans and some demihumans and humanoids, resulting in rare wicht being born rather than created.



APPEARANCE

In appearance, wicht are often very similar in appearance to wights. They have pale skin, which is often parchment dry and drawn tightly over their bones. Eyes are sunken, and clouded with regret and anger. In many cases, finger nails are long and sharp. They are cool to the touch, their bodies infused with necrotic energy. But despite the fact that wicht initially look superficially similar to a true wight, there are in fact noticeable differences. Close examination reveals a wicht to have a heartbeat, albeit a slow one, and some slight body heat. In addition, their nails, while long and sharp, are not nearly strong enough to serve as claws, and there is a spark of life in their eyes that is absent from that of a wight.

While wicht might wear any clothes or armor, they often favor anachronistic attire that hails back to a time before they were transformed into their present state. The one item of clothing universally worn is gloves; the coolness of their touch can be unsettling to mortals.

DEMEANOR

Unlike wights, wicht are not consumed by a burning hatred of the living. They do yearn to be among the living once more, to absolve themselves of the curse that has consumed them for millennia and which has been passed successive generations of their kind. Often times, this manifests itself as jealousy, which can cloud relations with others. The wicht may not mean to be resentful, but it surfaces nonetheless to create a barrier difficult to penetrate. At the same time, because wicht are touched by fell magic and balance uncomfortably between life and death, mortal beings are generally wary or even hostile towards them. As a result, wicht are by nature distrustful and cautious when dealing with other races.

Wicht tend to be reckless and aggressive, charging into dangerous situations even when caution is the most prudent approach. There are likely several reasons for this behavior. Among wights there is a constant need to display one's strength and prowess in combat, since their society—such as it exists—is hierarchical and based on the concept that the strongest rules. Wicht have inherited this attitude, and feel they must constantly prove themselves to retain respect and status. To demonstrate fear or even caution is a sign of weakness, and it threatens—in the wicht's mind, if no other—his standing among his companions.

In addition, wights are extremely long-lived and more resilient than most of the people they would have befriended or had relationships with. Watching companions die from injury, illness, or age is a matter of course for them. As a result, it's perhaps only natural that wicht feel death is a fate for others to face, leading to dangerous over-confidence and recklessness.

Finally, some wicht simply long for death, preferring to end the torment that is their existence rather than go on watching friends die around them and holding on to the faint hope that the curse may one day be lifted.

BACKGROUND

A wicht born into its condition is generally raised in great secrecy, and for good reason. In some communities, parents and child would be slain by torch-wielding mobs or witch-hunters, while in even in the most open-minded society the half-breed child would scorn growing up. Though born wights are more likely to be of good alignment than anciently transformed ones, their lonely childhoods often leave them maladjusted, suspicious, and cynical.

Wicht who were transformed centuries ago fall into two camps. There are those who remain twisted and cruel, possessing a burning hatred of all that is living. They long for a life long past, but have actually embraced their rotting shells as a reflection of their hideous inner-selves and revel in the fear it engenders amongst mortals. These wicht are irredeemably evil.

On the other hand, there are the penitent wicht. These individuals feel sorrow for the heinous crimes they committed in life that led to their current condition, and take great pains to right the wrongs of their existence. Many become devoutly religious and take part in formal penitent quests in the belief that they might cure their 'condition' by living a life of extreme asceticism and benevolence.

ADVENTURERS

Wicht respect strength of arms, and so willingly allow powerful warriors to lead the adventuring party, following willingly and obeying orders without hesitation. However, this deference lasts only so long as the individual remains vital and displays no diminishing of abilities, and he can expect the wicht to issue challenges—bloodless and without malice, but serious nonetheless—to contest his right to lead should he falter in any way. Naturally, should the wicht prove himself the mightiest warrior, he expects others in the party to accept his leadership. Arcane spellcasters command awe and respect among wicht, and their counsel is highly prized. Wicht appreciate the sturdiness of dwarves (even though dwarves are as liable to dislike or fear them as are any other race) and the strength of half-orcs.

Clerics, on the other hand, are dismissed out of hand; wicht are indifferent towards religion and indeed blame the gods for their cursed existence. Similarly, most wicht don't care for bards, gnomes, halflings, or elves, since their experiences tend to be at odds. They see little in life to be merry about, consider artistic endeavors of any kind to be a waste, and view these beings to be weak and subsequently of little worth. That said, should a bard or one of the "fairer races" prove their worth in battle, a wicht is not so rigid to as not be able to alter his view and accept them as an equal.

Average Height 5'5" – 6'1"

Average Weight 100-150 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity

Size Medium

Speed 7 squares

Vision low-light

Languages Common

Skill Bonuses +2 Stealth

Resist Immune disease and poison, 5 necrotic

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Life Rob: Once per encounter, you can use *life rob*

Life Rob

Wicht Racial Power

Your touch carries with it the chill of death, sapping the life force of your opponent

Encounter

Standard Action

Melee touch

Effect: 4 necrotic damage and the target loses 1 healing surge

YEREN

Yeren are rare crossbreeds created by the intermingling of gorillas and both humans or orcs. Also called ape-men, silverbacks, or wildmen, they are almost exclusively found in tropical, southern lands. Whereas human societies will usually kill yeren babies shortly after birth (most frequently along with the mother as well), gorillas will nurture any yeren born among them without bias. As a result, most yeren are found in the wilds, existing alongside gorilla troops.

True yeren only very rarely occur naturally. Most often, they require shapeshifting magic or other mystic means of combining their parents' bloodlines. They are often the children of powerful tribal shamans and witches who consciously choose to mix their blood with that of gorillas. The purpose of such breeding is often nefarious: to produce a child to serve as a powerful guard and loyal worker, to demonstrate piety before the raving ape-demon Braygustor and thereby gain his blessing, or perhaps to ensure their bloodline remains strong. Second-generation yeren can occur when yeren breed with each other, or with humans, half-orcs, or gorillas. Yeren can also mate with orcs, although their offspring are indistinguishable from normal orcs.

There are also reports and legends in numerous cultures of primitive men, stone-age holdovers a few steps back on the human evolutionary scale, existing in isolated mountain ranges and on fog-shrouded tropical islands. If true, they may represent an evolutionary branch of man that lies somewhere between gorilla and human: an entire lost race of yeren awaiting discovery.

APPEARANCE

Yeren are tall beings, with massive and muscular bodies, being almost as thick front to back as they are side to side. The average Yeren adult is around seven feet tall and weighs about 350 pounds. In males, the majority of the body, save for palms, face and chest is covered in fine hair that is generally black or brown in coloration. Mature males are distinctive by the silver hair that extends around the shoulders and across the upper back. Females exhibit far less body hair, though the simian features remain as pronounced. Yeren skin ranges in coloration, but is generally dark, ranging from black to reddish brown.

Their heads rise to a peak at the back, and faces are large with prominent brow ridges, deep-set eyes (generally yellow, black, or red in coloration), and wide cheeks. Ears are small, but pointed. Yeren arms are heavily muscled and long, reaching almost to the knees. Their hands are large and wide with stubby fingers and short thumbs, while their feet are wide, with long, prehensile toes that give them the ability to grip uneven or wet ground.

Though intelligent, they have little need of clothes or ornamentation. A simple loin cloth of fur or hide is the most a yeren will generally wear (they find anything more oppressively confining and unnatural), but when modesty isn't an issue most prefer to go about naked.

DEMEANOR

Yeren are shy and reclusive by nature. It's been their tragic experience that association with other races almost always leads to death and sorrow. Orcs capture adult gorillas to serve in their gladiatorial pits, and enslave the young to be reared as guard animals. Other races, most especially humans, destroy the jungle by clearing land for cultivation and hunt gorillas as a test of their mettle. Yeren have learned that humanoids are violent and destructive, and therefore tend to avoid them at all cost. Still, Yeren are highly inquisitive beings and will watch other people



from afar, stealthily following them through the jungle foliage and looking down upon them from the forest canopy above. However, the moment they are discovered they flee into the shadows.

Yeren have little interest in the trappings of civilization or the social conventions of most humanoid. They live a simple life, feeding on plant material, sleeping in nests made amongst the trees, rarely venturing far afield, naïve to the horrors of war and the violation of theft. They are gentle beings largely unconcerned with anything being the welfare of their family troop.

BACKGROUND

Yeren born into orc society are often treated harshly, generally raised as slaves and viewed with contempt even by their parent. Human communities view yeren as abominations that should be killed or left to die of exposure or predation in the wilds. The mother who brought this beast into the world is viewed little better, at best a violated victim, at worse a witch who covets with animals. In many cases, either to erase the shame of the family or to rid the community of an evil sorceress, the mother is killed alongside her newborn aberrant.

Yeren raised by gorillas are ensured of love and acceptance, but still grow up knowing they differ from the other members of the troop. For females, that knowledge may cause some angst, but it need not affect their lives in any real way; they may mate as other females in the troop would, their offspring are not subject to abuse or prejudice in any form, and they themselves enjoy the privileges and obligations of any other troop member. For males, the story is somewhat different. Any individual who displays physical abilities or mental acuity that may pose a threat to the position of

the dominant silverback will likely be chased away upon reaching maturity. Because yeren are notably more intelligent than even the brightest gorilla, many males find themselves in the unfortunate situation of being forcibly ostracized from family and friends.

Yeren find life amongst civilization confining and uncomfortable, and only reluctantly enter urban areas. Cities are dangerous, alien, noisy, and ugly places that, to a yeren's mind, are anathema to nature. As a result, they are extremely uncomfortable within towns and would prefer to avoid them or visit for a very short time (a few hours is usually pushing limit of a yeren's endurance). When forced to stay in a city or large town, they will become tense, irritable, and depressive.

ADVENTURERS

An adult yeren would not willingly abandon a mate or family to take up the life of adventure, so yeren adventurers are almost always usually unattached young males driven by wanderlust or a need to establish their own troop. Adventuring companions can be adopted as a surrogate troop; the bond a yeren enjoys with such individuals is broken, and he will willingly give his life in their defense.

Yeren feel most at home with elves, rangers, and others who welcome or live with nature. Druids are the exception to this, generally seeing the ape-men as aberrations that have no authentic role in the natural scheme of things. Yeren can associate with any group of beings provided they are predominantly neutral or good alignment. They will not tolerate evil beings for long, however, and will certainly never consider such individuals as members of his surrogate troop.

Yeren very rarely work for coins or material wealth, preferring adventures in which they have a personal investment.

Average Height 6'10" -7'2"

Average Weight 280-320 lbs

Ability Scores +2 Strength, +2 Constitution

Size Medium

Speed 6 squares, climb 4; see also *wild step*

Vision Normal

Languages Common

Skill Bonuses +2 Athletics, +2 Nature, +2 Perception

Vulnerability: Primitive and little-removed from gorillas, yeren are susceptible to spells that would otherwise only target animals.

Wild Step: A yeren ignore difficult terrain when it shifts.

Oversized: You can use weapons of your size or one size larger than you as if they were your size

Ferocious Charge: You can use ferocious charge as an encounter power

Ferocious Charge

Yeren Racial Power

After beating your chest in a threatening manner, you bare your teeth and charge you opponent, intending to overpower him with your strength and size

Encounter

Standard Action

Personal

Effect: You charge and deal an extra 2 damage on a successful attack. Increase the extra damage to 4 at 11th level and 6 at 21st level

CHAPTER THREE: THE DEMIURGE

What if a game master feels the need to explain the presence of an unusual crossbreed, to rationalize the existence of a humanoid that blends two creatures that would not or could not naturally reproduce? He might turn to magic or divine intervention, or perhaps the mysterious machinations of the demiurge, visitors from the blackness of space with a propensity for abduction and experimentation.

INTRODUCTION

The adventurer's life is full of challenges and threats, ranging from dangers as basic as a pit trap or a bear protecting its cubs, to something as sinister in nature as a legion of undead led by an evil priest attempting to take over a realm. Some threats are man-made, others are naturally occurring. A rare few are even completely alien in origin, extra-planar or extra-terrestrial in nature.

The demiurge fall into the last category of malice. They come to us from unknown parts of the galaxy in their citadel-like comets, and are responsible for strange lights in the sky, gruesome cattle mutilations, and mysterious disappearances. Most kidnapped victims never return. Some suddenly and inexplicably return, having only vague and horrifying memories of their missing time. They speak of bizarre experiments, painful tortures, and an ever-present blinding light. They are never the same, tortured by nightmares and debilitating illnesses for the remainder of their lives. Perhaps those that do not return are in fact the lucky ones.

HISTORY OF THE DEMIURGE

Little is known about the origins of the Demiurge as it relates to where they come from and how they developed as a race. What is known is that they are able to travel across the universe in completely sealed comet-shaped citadels. No one knows exactly why they come, but coincidentally with the arrival of the floating citadels (rarely seen, except as lights in the sky) comes an increase in missing persons and creatures, abductions if you will. Few have been inside these citadels and fewer still have ever come out again. Many of those abducted are altered, turned into various forms of half breed mutants, the likes of which have never been seen on the planet before the Demiurge's arrival. Is this genetic tampering the result of child-like curiosity, or a reflection of far more sinister motives? The truth has yet to be determined.

MYTHOLOGY OF THE DEMIURGE

Bedtime tales are told to young children of hideous creatures that swoop down from the skies in the dead of night, stealing away travelers caught out late and without the common sense to seek shelter for the evening. These tales are meant to scare children into not sneaking out at night or wandering too far from home. However, there is more truth to these tales than most people would like to believe. Travelers, livestock, monsters, even innocents sleeping snugly in their beds are snatched away by the demiurge.

Other stories are spun relating the Demiurge to evil gods that have come from their own plane of existence to punish those that have beliefs of an alternate nature.

The following table depicts the result of a Knowledge (arcana or nature) check as it relates to the Demiurge. Individuals living in or near areas where a floating citadel has appeared may be able to impart some or all of the information found within the table below. Note that the target numbers are higher than normal due to the obscure and limited knowledge of the Demiurge.

KNOWLEDGE (ARCANE OR NATURE)

DC 20 Strange lights seen in the night sky hail from floating citadels descended from the heavens and are not of this world. Abducted individuals and cattle mutilations often accompany these sightings.

DC 25 The denizens of the citadels are red skinned floating semi circles with multiple eyes and a set of upper teeth that are both jagged and sharp.

DC 30 These denizens are known as the demiurge and are never seen outside of their citadels. They are masters of levitation, flight and teleportation. Their floating comet fortresses are air tight with no visible entrances or viewing portals. The only known method of entry into the citadels is via teleportation

DC 35 Demiurge are experts at crossbreeding but the exact nature as to why they do these is unknown. It is speculated that they are attempting to "design" the perfect warriors so that they can create an army of these individuals and then begin a reign of conquest across the world

DC 40 The demiurge have a collective mind and are able to communicate with each other via telepathy. Their one known weakness is their inability to breathe an oxygen rich atmosphere

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE DEMIURGE

The demiurge themselves appear to be large semicircular floating orbs covered in red leather like skin that hangs down below their eye clusters. They are about 4 feet in diameter with one greenish central eye and two additional eyes on either side of the main ocular orb. The secondary eyes appear to be blind as the pupils of these are milky white and if they are able to "see" through these eyes, it is unknown. Located below the eye clusters appear to have been the remnants of a mouth. The demiurge has a top jaw and set of sharp teeth but no lower jaw is present. If they eat or digest any form of sustenance, it is not through a conventional mouth.

It would appear that at one point in their existence the demiurge may have actually had a full "head" including lower mandibles and maybe even a body of sorts but perhaps through evolution these anatomical features have disappeared. The demiurge's means of personal travel is through levitation, flight or teleportation. They never speak but they are able to communicate through thoughts and telepathy which they can project into another's mind. As well, they can read the thoughts of others to allow for two-way communication with other races is required. They have a collective consciousness and instantly know the thoughts and condition of any of their shipmates. Some demiurge are believed to have developed the power of psionics. Fewer still are believed to have the ability to wipe a creature's memories and experiences from their mind.

PSYCHOLOGY OF THE DEMIURGE

Demiurge are creatures of few words, both literally and figuratively. That doesn't prevent their sinister motives from being understood; their malicious actions speak louder than any words possibly could, clearly voicing their disdain for all life forms save their own. They seem to be driven by one main objective: to produce crossbreeds wherever they roam.

Whenever the shadow of a floating comet citadel should appear over an area, its presence betrayed only by eerie lights at night, two things are certain to occur. First, creatures of all kind, but in particular humanoids, will mysteriously disappear. In some cases, they are taken from along deserted roadways, their

tracks simply stopping mid-step as if the being simply ceased to exist. Other times, they will be abducted from their very beds. Many of these beings never reappear; those that do are generally mentally scarred, tormented by nightmares or memory loss, or demonstrate a startling loss of vigor, prone to nose bleeds, sudden onset of illnesses or disease, and headaches. Soon after the abductions take place, rumors of twisted crossbreeds begin appearing within the area.

These frightening phenomena result in so much wild speculation, rumor, and outright lies that it becomes difficult to separate truth from the chaff of fear-inspired falsehoods. Probably no one understands the methodology and more importantly the motives behind the demiurge's drive to abduct and experiment.

Abducted individuals are paralyzed, teleported aboard the citadel ships, heavily sedated, experimented on, mind wiped and ultimately returned to the surface in their altered state. The crossbred races that result are usually of combinations that have never been seen before, and which are the product of two races that would not be expected to interbreed naturally. Indeed, some of the crossbred combinations are of races hailing from entirely different climates or geographic locations, perhaps even different planets, which suggest that the demiurge collect samples from diverse areas before they begin their experimentation. There have even been crossbreeds of creatures that hail from other planes of existence. How the demiurge are able to abduct extraplanar creatures is a mystery, though it's possible they have access to dimensional gates.

The demiurge are malevolent creatures who see other living things as mere playthings. They alter, twist, and warp other creatures into new forms in an attempt to improve them. In fact, their entire society is predicated on the concept that only the demiurge are truly sentient. While its possible experimentation is performed for mere pleasure, out of some sick desire to compose new life much like an avante-garde artists seeks to expand the boundary of art. It's believed, however, that most experimentation is the product of an attempt to create the ultimate military forces in preparation for a complete and total invasion at some later, undefined date. Once released, an abductee is surreptitiously monitored from afar via miniscule implants in order to gather data on their behavior, durability, mental stability, cunningness, and a host of other criteria.

The demiurge are an emotionless driven race of creatures, mysterious in nature and feared whenever their ships appear. They are not egotistical but do genuinely believe that they are above all other races. Their arrival usually signifies a bad omen and a period of change. Although the new races are sometimes seen as a blessing, usually a change for the worst results from the abductions and crossbreeding.

CITADEL COMETS

Despite having visited countless planets over hundreds of years, the demiurge have rarely been seen and those few that have been witnessed have been within the alien confines of their citadel ships. These ships are constructed out of non-terrestrial rock of an unknown nature and which are immune to all known magical assault. The ships are teardrop in shape. When hovering over a planet, the 'tail' points towards the heavens. When traveling through the voids of space the bulge of the teardrop leads the way through the cosmos.

The exterior surface of a citadel comet is rough in texture and appears not to have been shaped or altered in any fashion by sentient hands. No entrance portals or windows can be seen

on the exterior of the ship and the only known method of entry appears to be via teleportation. These ships are quite large, with diameters of the largest part of the ship in excess of several hundred meters, while their length is usually two to three times that. Interior corridors are tubular in shape, completely smooth and polished to the points where they gleam as if made of polished granite or marble. All corridors and rooms and brightly lit by a white, source-less glow. Gravity, oxygen, and other elements of habitable atmosphere are absent from within the ship, even when the citadels are floating above a terrestrial planet. These vessels do, however, have the ability generate almost any environmental condition with the holding cells where captives languish (a fire elemental may be contained within furnace-like conditions within one cell, while in the cells adjacent one might find the humid conditions agreeable to a lizardman and the cool dark for a underground dweller). The fact that atmospheric conditions are confined to limited areas has led some abductees to believe that oxygen can harm or even kill a Demiurge given enough exposure to it.

Chambers within a citadel comet are hollowed out spheres polished to the same smoothness and gleam as the corridors. Corridors and chambers do not follow a standard horizontal planar approach to their design and instead corridors enter and exit chambers at any height and from any angle. Corridors also snake from one chamber to the next with direct straight passageways not to be found within the ships.

USING THE DEMIURGE

The demiurge make for ideal shadowy manipulators, masterminds at the center of a web of deceit and terror. Because they are utterly malevolent and place no value in life beyond their own race (and unapologetically so), they are enemy players can love to hate.

Demiurge should not be used casually, however; they have minions to do their bidding and rarely take a personal hand in any plot. They prefer to spend their time forging new creatures in their hideous workshops, rather than in engaging in more earthy pursuits. When a demiurge is encountered, he should be accompanied by thralls so as to allow it to blast its enemies safely from behind a wall of humanoid crossbreeds, gibbering mouters, otyughs, or other aberrants that might be cultivated in a demiurge laboratory.

While most demiurge never leave their citadel comets, occasionally they will establish secretive enclaves hidden in the dark corners of the world. Though on any given planet there would be at most a handful of these hidden lairs, each inhabited by no more than four or five individuals, they are the most likely place for PCs to encounter a demiurge and allow the GM the opportunity to introduce the star-faring race as masterminds behind some insidious plot.

A clever GM might incorporate elements of UFO/alien lore to enhance the atmosphere of adventures centered upon the demiurge. For example, people who speak out about witnessing mysterious lights in the night sky or publicly claim to have been abducted and experimented upon might find themselves harassed by mysterious 'men in black'. These operatives are always clad in black clothing, display little emotion, and are eerily similar in appearance to one another. They warn witnesses to keep quite about what they might have witnessed, and if their warnings aren't heeded will go to great lengths to suppress the story. Men in black rarely resort to outright violence, preferring to work in more subtle, but no less frightening ways.

Demiurge **Level 5 Controller (leader)**Medium Aberration XP 200**Initiative** +4 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision**HP** 63; **Bloodied** 31**AC** 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17**Resist** 10 poison**Speed** fly 6 (hover)⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

☞ **Crippling Gaze** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

☞ **Dominate** (standard; encounter) • **Charm**

Ranged 10; targets an immobilized humanoid; +20 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends). A dominated individual is no longer immobilized. A demiurge can dominate only one creature at a time.

☞ **Wave of Fear** (standard; recharge ☞☞) • **Fear**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +5 vs. Will; the target slides 1 square and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends)

Cloak of Deception (minor; at-will) • **Illusion**

A demiurge can disguise itself to appear as a normal human. A demiurge always has same appearance. A successful Insight check (opposed by the demiurge's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Supernal**Skills** Bluff +5, Intimidate +10, Stealth +9, Insight +9**Str** 15 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+5)**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 23 (+12)**Men in Black** **Level 3 Soldier**Medium humanoid XP 150**Initiative** +4 **Senses** Perception +6**HP** 38; **Bloodied** 19**AC** 15, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13**Speed** 6⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+10 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.

Vanish (standard; at-will) • **Illusion**

A man in black becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it attacks.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Supernal**Skills** Bluff +5, Intimidate +5, Stealth +5**Str** 14 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)**Men in Black Tactics**

Men in black are reluctant combatants, only reverting to brute force when intimidation, coercion, manipulation, persuasion, and even bribery have run their course. When fighting, they use vanish to disengage from opponents and mysteriously disappear, or to turn invisible and wait for an opponent to become distracted before renewing the attack. If the battle turns against them, men in black do not hesitate to flee.

CHAPTER FOUR: NEW MONSTERS

Several of the cross-breeds presented in this book are based on monsters that are not found in 4e as of yet. Here then are stats for the giant cockroach and gorilla.

GIANT COCKROACH

This large black cockroach has a shiny carapace and whip-like antennae that constantly taste the air. Its mandibles are large and slick with filth.

Giant cockroaches live in a wide range of environments but prefer warm conditions. In inhabited areas, they can be found in abandoned buildings, garbage dumps, sewers, and basements. Giant cockroaches come in a wide variety of sizes and colors, but all have long whip-like antennae, six spine covered legs, and filth covered mandibles. Most have wings, though they are absent in the females of some species.

Giant cockroaches have existed virtually unchanged for millions of years, feeding on the refuse of larger creatures, plant matter, carrion, and creatures smaller than themselves. Some species are herbivores, but even the most docile of species will attack creatures that invade their territory. They leave chemical trails in their feces and emit airborne pheromones that allow them to alert other cockroaches to threats or sources of food. Nocturnal creatures, giant cockroaches run away when exposed to light. They can survive for several months without food and almost an hour without air.

GIANT COCKROACH LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 12 Giant cockroaches are vermin that prefer to inhabit the dark environs of basements, sewers, and garbage dumps. Rarely are they found alone; where one finds a giant cockroach one is sure to find others.

DC 15 Most giant cockroaches are omnivorous, feeding on plant matter, carrion, and smaller creatures. They will sometimes coordinate efforts to bring down larger prey in a swarm. Many giant cockroaches have wings.

DC 18 Giant cockroaches fear bright light and will flee from it. They can survive long periods without air and months without food. They demonstrate a form of communication that allows them to alert one another to danger and coordinate hunting of prey.

GIANT COCKROACH TACTICS

A giant cockroach will attack anything smaller than it, assuming it to be potential food. It will only attack larger prey in swarm or if threatened. Because they are essentially mindless creatures, they use no sophisticated tactics. Victims are torn apart by powerful mandibles. Giant cockroaches will flee if exposed to bright light.

Giant Cockroach**Level 1 Lurker**

Small natural beast

XP 100

Initiative +6**Senses** Perception +2; darkvision, tremorsense 5**HP** 26; **Bloodied** 13**AC** 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13**Immune** disease**Speed** 6, climb 6, fly 4⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage, and the giant cockroach makes a secondary attack on the same target. Secondary Attack: +4 vs. Fortitude; the target contracts sewer shakes.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** –**Skills** Stealth +8**Str** 13 (+1)**Dex** 16 (+3)**Wis** 14 (+2)**Con** 14 (+2)**Int** 1 (-5)**Cha** 9 (-1)**Sewer Shakes****Level 1 Disease**

Carried among the vermin of the city's underbelly, sewer shakes weaken the body.

Attack: +4 vs. Fortitude.**Endurance:** improve DC 17, maintain DC 12

The target is cured.

**Initial Effect:** Target loses 1 healing surge.

The target takes a -1 penalty to AC, Fortitude defense, and Reflex defense

Final State: The target takes a -1 penalty to AC, Fortitude defense, and Reflex defense. The target loses all healing surges and cannot regain hit points.

GORILLA

A massive ape with silver-tinged fur covering its shoulder and back rears up before you. He bears his fangs and thunders upon his expansive chest with large hands, bellowing in defiance.

Gorillas are ground dwelling primates found in tropical and subtropical forests, and may be found from lowlands into hills and even remote mountains. They are highly territorial and silverback males are highly protective of their groups. Their great strength, surprising agility, and sharp teeth make them extremely dangerous when riled. However, before attacking they will usually attempt to frighten off opponents by screaming, beating their chest, breaking branches, baring teeth, and performing mock charges.

GORILLA LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 12 Gorillas are herbivores, but while not predatory they are highly territorial and will not hesitate to attack creatures that come too close for comfort. Gorillas are highly intelligent and sociable, and can be trained to perform a wide variety of tasks if reared from birth, to include sign language and simple tool use.

DC 15 Though gorillas are ground dwellers, they are expert climbers and spend nights in treetop nests. Their charges are often just bluffs designed to frighten away intruders.

DC 18 A silverback male is the leader of a gorilla troop. If he is slain, the troop will generally flee and permanently break-up.

Gorilla Tactics

A gorilla attempts to warn off intruders by thumping his chest aggressively and screaming. If that fails, it pummels opponents with blows from its powerful fists, concentrating on one foe at a time so as to be able to use its pointed canines. Since it is not a carnivore, a gorilla will leave the broken bodies of its victims where they lie.

Gorilla**Level 3 Brute**

Medium natural beast

XP 150

Initiative +3**Senses** Perception +6**HP** 56; **Bloodied** 28**AC** 16, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14**Speed** 7, climb 7⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Overpower** (standard; at-will)

A gorilla makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the gorilla can make a bite attack as a free action against the target.

⊕ **Bite** (free, when the gorilla hits a target with both slam attacks; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage.

Furious Charge

When a gorilla charges and hits, it deals an extra 5 damage, pushes the target two squares, and knocks the target prone.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** –**Skills** Athletics +10**Str** 19 (+5)**Dex** 15 (+3)**Wis** 12 (+1)**Con** 16 (+4)**Int** 2 (-3)**Cha** 10 (+1)