



AUROROS

Young Pythia Stepped into the ancient temple chamber, Alone. The guards stood to either side, just outside the door, fearful even to look in upon her ministrations. She was glad.

It was not often that an Oracle could find peace within the world of men. Every merchant wished to know the outcome of his fortune, every warrior the tide of their next battle, and every king the fate of their heir and kingdom. She was accosted everywhere she went. Everywhere but this place.

She sat astride the chasm from which the glowing vapours swirled, seated firmly, but comfortably upon the cushions as she began to inhale. Almost immediately the strange voices and symbols began to fill her mind.

War, chaos, the fall of great kings and the rise of strange empires flooded her vision. The dead walked among the living and strange golden men served humbly before creatures who's wealth could only belong to gods. She was used to this, it was her part to play as the great oracle of Delphi. But amongst the visions there was something else today. Something beyond the answers to the never ending questions laid out before her. Today the visions seemed almost to be asking something of her.

She was tired, and the noxious fumes, for all their power, did little to ease her state. As she swayed forth over the iridescent vapours, she could almost here a voice, like a mother, or sister, calling out to her by name, offering it's care and concern. The visions softened, and the swirls of cloudlike color receded almost as if pulling away from her. There would be no more prophecy today, no matter what the men asked. And she was glad of it.

As the young Teran slept quietly upon the altar plinth, an invisible wind brushed through her untamed locks. The girl was overworking herself again: trying so hard to provide for those men outside. At least here, Asara admitted, the youngling could rest undisturbed, she only wished the primitive minds of her unwitting hosts were more open to understanding her psychic warnings. Even stranded here without her Xexel, it pained her to see these Teran creatures at such constant odds with their own kind.

DISTANT OBSERVERS

To the outside observer, an Auroros in it's natural state may not seem alive at all. Indeed, among those of other worlds, these glowing clouds of swirling gas are often mistaken for nothing more than mirage-like illusions or atmospheric phenomenon; a disguise that the Auroros as a whole are happy to take advantage of.

Auroros make use of their unique biology to act as passive observers and watchers of other races. Few would suspect the air itself to be listening in on a private conversation, and the gentle curiosity of their race lead more than a few individuals along the path to discover secrets most would prefer hidden.

This secret and intimate knowledge, however, is rarely used to any effect beyond satiating curiosity. Most Auroros prefer to stay out of the affairs of other races, and beyond observing, few individuals have much interest in directly interacting with more terrestrial races. As such, Auroros adventurers are rare. But rare seldom means unheard of.



LIVING VAPOUR

While shapes and forms may vary, most sentient life in the universe shares at least one thing in common: a physical body made up of solid matter. Auroros, however prove an exception to this rule. At home on Gaseous worlds devoid of solid matter, Auroros are a strange people made up entirely of shifting gasses and vapours, coalesced by psionic force. Their vaporous bodies faintly glow with a myriad of colors, giving them an ephemeral appearance not dissimilar to the polar lights sometimes known to dance through the nighttime skies.

To the untrained eye, Auroros can often appear to be nothing more than strangely glowing clouds, and their natural bodies are incapable of exerting enough pressure to interact with solid objects or creatures, which puts them at a heavy physical disadvantage to other races. But what Auroros lack in solid substance, they make up for with powerful minds.

These Living clouds are known as highly intelligent creatures, and their centuries old wisdom is valued in any number of important circles. Far beyond that, evolution has also gifted the Auroros with potent psionic abilities, such as telepathy and telekinesis, allowing members of the race to communicate with others and manipulate the world around them through thought alone.

That said, these ephemeral dancing lights are not without more traditional ways of interacting with the world, and their advanced technology is, for most races, indistinguishable from magic.

XEXEL CONTAINMENT

Long ago stripped of their own world, Auroros are an advanced people who have been travelling amongst the stars for millions of years. In this time they have adapted to the solid worlds of others through the use of specialized pressure-vessels that mimic the humanoid forms of other races. Over the countless centuries, these suits, known as Xexels, have become as intrinsic a part of the Auroros as their own gaseous bodies.

While inhabiting a Xexel, an Auroros is said to be “contained”, and can interact with the physical world in a similar way to any other humanoid. Xexels, however, are sophisticated devices which do far more than simply contain an individual’s gaseous body. Each Xexel bears a powerful psionic link to its owner, allowing them to experience the physical sensations like touch, which other creatures take for granted.

Xexels are an intrinsic part of Auroros culture, and an individual’s suit is as much a part of their identity as their memories and personality. Xexels are often decorated with intricate designs and patterns which tell the story of an individual’s centuries-long life. While it is possible to exit a Xexel and float free in gaseous form, an Auroros would sooner die than leave their Xexel behind to be stolen or (gods forbid) worn by another creature. Stealing another’s Xexel, or inhabiting a Xexel other than one’s own, is seen as the greatest taboo of Auroros culture.

PSIONIC FISSION

Auroros are long-lived and highly cerebral creatures, and an individual’s sense of identity might change hundreds of times over the course of its eons-long life-span, but these changes do not alter the fundamental makeup of an Auroros. By contrast, the process of Psionic fission represents the birth of an entirely new creature.

During Psionic Fission, a single Auroros makes the conscious decision to become two: separating the distinct elements of their personality and self, along with the physical compounds that make up their body into two unique clouds. These clouds are both chemically and psionically distinct from their parent, and while they each retain aspects of their predecessor, they are separate individuals who often take close to a century to form a complete identity of their own.

Psionic fission represents the end of an Auroros’ singular life, and because of this it is an act seldom undergone without deep and meaningful consideration. Additionally, it can take an Auroros tens of decades to gather the necessary matter and psionic energy to successfully split into two unique beings, making the process as a whole quite rare.

AUROROS NAMES

Auroros are always in a unique state of flux, and may choose to take many names and titles over their vast life-spans. Generally though, an Auroros will hold a single name for as long as it continues to interact with the same creatures. Auroros have no concept of gender or sexuality.

Athphae, Atmos, Faera, Delphai, Ephervell, Ghora, Heiro, Nahlra, Pheos, Sephonea, Zeirhas.

AUROROS TRAITS

An ever shifting cloud of gas and vapour, contained in a pressurized suit called a Xexel, you gain the following traits

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 3, and your strength score decreases by 2

Age. Auroros have a different concept of age than most species, as their ever shifting vapours are never entirely the same from moment to moment. That said, an individual cloud can exist for as long as it's psionic bonds hold, and unless these bonds are destroyed, an Auroros may be said to "live" indefinitely, or until it's diffusion with another cloud gives it new identity.

Alignment. Most Auroros are chaotic at heart, a reflection of their ever swirling forms, but good and evil have little meaning to the Auroros as a whole. All things tend toward entropy.

Size. Auroros Xexels are designed to compress an individual's gaseous state into the form of a medium humanoid.

Speed. While contained in a Xexel, your speed matches that of other creatures your size at 30 ft.



Weak Cohesion. Your gaseous body struggles to maintain cohesion without the aid of a pressurized suit. Your hit point maximum is reduced by half.

Protective Vessel. To protect your vaporous body and allow you to physically interact with the world, you are contained within a pressurized suit called a Xexel, which offers you a protective layer of Xexel hit points equal to your hit point maximum. These hit points function temporary hit points but do not prevent you from gaining additional temporary hit points from other sources.

Xexel Repair. Your Xexel is a complex piece of alien technology, and must be repaired as it takes damage. Your Xexel can only be repaired by yourself or another member of the Auroros race, and recovers hit points equal to 1 hit dice + your intelligence modifier for each hour spent undergoing repair.

Arcane Dissidence Your separation from the world of the arcane makes it difficult to comprehend arcane magics. You are incapable of attuning to magic items, and require twice as long to copy new spells into a spell book or ritual book.

Natural Telekinesis. Auroros have evolved a level of innate psionic ability, which allows them to interact with more solid objects even in their gaseous state. You can use and interact with objects and creatures within 10 ft of yourself as if you were touching them. You can carry and manipulate objects in this way up to a total combined weight (in pounds) equal to your intelligence modifier times 15. Interactions such as attack rolls and grapple checks made using this ability use your intelligence score in place of your strength score.

Maintaining this telekinetic force requires concentration. If an action or effect would cause you to lose concentration on this ability, all force exerted by this ability ends, and objects or creatures held in the air by this ability drop to the ground.

Telepathic Communication. You can speak telepathically to any creature you can see within 60 feet of you. You don't need to share a language with the creature for it to understand your telepathic messages, but the creature must be able to understand at least one language or be telepathic itself.

Languages. Common, and your choice of two others.

MAGICAL REPAIR

Magical methods of repair such as the *Mending* cantrip can be used to help restore a Xexel to proper working order, but due to the complex, alien nature of a the suit's design, only Auroros themselves, or creatures similarly familiar with Auroros technology are capable of using magic to repair a Xexel.

For each foot of material repaired through spellwork, a Xexel recovers hit points as if it had spent an hour undergoing repairs. A Xexel can be repaired this way a number of times equal to the caster's proficiency bonus before requiring manual repairs. Multiple casters do not increase this limit.

BREACHING CONTAINMENT

The safety of your pressurised suit protects your gaseous body from direct harm, but there are a number of conditions which can expose your vaporous form to the outside air.

EXTENSIVE DAMAGE

If your Xexel takes extensive damage, it can lose its ability to properly contain your gaseous body, forcing you out of its protection. When damage would reduce your Xexel hit points to 0 or fewer, your suit ruptures, and you enter an uncontained state.

CONTROLLED EXPOSURE

As an action on your turn, you may release the pressure latches on your Xexel to enter your uncontained state.

When you enter your uncontained state weather through Extensive damage or Controlled Exposure, your Xexel falls empty in your space, along with any worn or carried items or equipment, and you gain the following traits:

Lighter than Air. While in your gaseous, uncontained state, you gain a fly speed of 60 ft, and can hover in mid-air.

Highly Flammable. The vapours and gasses that make up your body are incredibly flammable. You are vulnerable to fire damage, and if dealt fire damage, you must succeed on a DC 15 constitution saving throw or continue to take 1d6 fire damage each round. You may repeat this saving throw at the beginning of each of your turns to end the effect.

Insubstantial. The shifting gasses that make up your body flow out of the way of most physical attacks, and can exert little to no force on their own. You have immunity to non-magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, but are incapable of physically interacting with objects and creatures, and cannot wear armor or carry equipment through normal means.

Vaporous Form. Effects such as strong winds which would disperse gas or vapour are hazardous to you in this state. You cannot willingly enter zones or areas created by such effects, and forced movement caused by such effects is doubled for you. When you are subject to such an effect, you must succeed on a DC 15 constitution saving throw take 1d6 force damage.

Poisonous Cloud. Your cloudlike body forms a roughly spherical cloud 5ft in diameter, and is made up of luminous gasses and vapours that are poisonous to most creatures. You may occupy the same space as other creatures, and the space within your cloud is considered lightly obscured. Creatures who enter or start their turn within your space must succeed on a DC 17 constitution save or take poison damage equal to your level.

Returning to an unruptured Xexel requires an action to complete. However, once ruptured, a Xexel enters emergency repair mode, and cannot be re-entered until after completing a long rest. This emergency repair only restores the Xexel to 1 hit point, and the suit must be repaired normally beyond that point.



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A SPECIAL THANKS

Jack_McAwesome, who helped me fill out the list of sample names

To My wife, who has put up with my obsessive work.

To My friends and players, who have helped me playtest and fine-tune my content.

And of course, to all my patrons and supporters, and to those fans who continue to enjoy my work. I love what I get to do for you guys, and hope to continue doing it far into the future

GASEOUS ALIEN LIFE

So I was all set to write up a whole thing about the distinction between fantasy and Sci-fi, and why, even in DND, I consider myself a Science-fiction author. But it's been two weeks, and I'm still sick, so lets save that for another time.

I'm always on the lookout for interesting ideas, and with my campaign setting slowly expanding beyond the prime world of the material plane (Terra), I've started trying to imagine what sort of life might exist beyond the stars. I'm not sure how many people understand how hard it is to imagine aliens in a fantasy setting where players routinely battle sentient eyeball monsters and giant fire-breathing lizards with wings, but let me tell you: it isn't easy. Pretty much any strange alien creature you might expect to find in a sci-fi show has a similar equivalent that already exists in dnd - even if it hasn't been ported to 5e yet.

But the thing that has always struck me about alien life is that if it exists (and by sheer probability alone, it must), it is bound to be so different from what we find on our own planet that we may not even recognize it as life at all. I wanted to try and exemplify that as my campaign setting expanded into space, by making alien life as exotic as possible. But this creates it's own problems.

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When a race become so strange and inhuman, it becomes difficult to model it in 5e without breaking the game. Extra limbs, the ability to move through solid objects, unique senses that are not found in other more Terrestrial races - All of these things have the potential to greatly imbalance an aline race, which makes building a playable character a true balancing act of imagining not just what special powers these aliens might have, but also what abilities they might not.

One way I have opted to do this is to imagine that in my Campaign setting, magic is a force mostly unique to Terrestrial life. While aline races may have the ability to change their shape, fly amongst the clouds, or manifest powerful psionic forces, they are at a complete loss when encountering magic. To most of these races, magic is a completely alien technology - something they have difficulty even beginning to understand, and by extension, something they often fear.

But enough of my rambling. It's late, I'm sick, and I really need to sleep. I'll See you all in the stars. Or something. I'm too sick to be clever right now.