

THE GUTTER GUILD



TAKE A STEP OUT INTO THE CITY AND breathe the fresh air. Is it not sweet despite the many thousands of citizens relieving themselves without a care into the gutters, emptying their filth into the streets? And the river — people fish from it, even drink of the water. Have you not wondered how it is that a place so populated can seem so clean?"

—Clarissa Brite, Custodian of Gutter Guild.

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Any adventurer who has made their way through a sewer is familiar with a variety of oozes, slimes, and molds that inhabit grimy undercities. These maligned creatures are seen as demonic extensions of The Faceless Lord and feared because of their shapeless unrelenting hunger, yet they serve a vital role in preventing disease from effluent waste and where oozes are absent there are cities succumbing to vermin, plague, and pollution. There are few sane people interested in the qualities of oozes and fewer still that dedicate themselves to public health, but for those unique individuals there is no better organization than the Gutter Guild, a small group of alchemists, academics, and street healers that capture, breed, and seed oozes in sewers across the known world.



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HISTORY

Young dwarven engineer and now hunted traitor Clarissa Brite was the scientific genesis of the Gutter Guild. She developed her theories of ooze ecology while observing the recovery of her home city after it was briefly overcome by a cult of the Faceless Lord—and the oozing horrors summoned in their honor. Heroes drove out the demonic influence but the oozes were harder to completely eradicate, and the heroes (uninterested in roaming sewers any longer than absolutely necessary) left the job unfinished.

Working in city water and waste management, Clarissa observed that previous scourges (such as noxious vapors and outbreaks of filth fever) did not hamper the population as their home recovered. The local temple was quick to claim divine credit for this ‘miracle’, while city leadership obscured the fact that monstrous oozes were still loose beneath the city streets (fearful of panic or a resurgence of the demonic cult). Clarissa thought otherwise—the oozes consumed waste and a cleaner city resulted in better health. She shared her theories and though largely dismissed by the establishment, a few people took interest in her work. The Gutter Guild was created to collect evidence from surrounding settlements, some affected by the cult and others not, and they concluded that where oozes are present overall health had improved.

With their support Clarissa collected samples, cultivated the creatures, and introduced oozes to a nearby city where the cult had never taken hold—and again observed that as oozes colonized the sewers the presence of disease and vermin decreased. Once discovered by the authorities her activities led to her being branded a treasonous cultist and so her work, and the Gutter Guild, were driven underground. That hasn’t stopped them and they are still at large, continuing their work in secret to improve public health by creating functional sewer ooze-ecologies.

MOTIVATION

The Gutter Guild's members are a mixed bunch of misfits ranging from influential city officials (willing to bend the rules for a greater good) to street urchins (whose familiarity with the underground spaces in a city are a boon for research purposes). The organization is altruistic—there isn't much money and getting involved with them is a quick way to become a fugitive wanted for the crimes of breeding and releasing monsters. There is a very real public risk as oozes are of course quite dangerous, and care is required to introduce the correct type to an area lest they overpopulate and spill into the streets. Thus Gutter Guild gatekeepers are careful to recruit the right people for the right reasons and there is an internal paranoia (perhaps justified) that demonic cultists will infiltrate and undermine the organization, proving the authorities right. However even with careful oversight there have been cases of ooze theft and trade to mad wizards, monster collectors, and priests of the Faceless One.

ACTIVITIES

Custodians of the Gutter Guild focus on the acquisition and cultivation of oozes, making certain that they are present in sufficient (but not excessive quantities) within the sewers of towns and cities within the Guild's influence. There is tension with other organizations that tend to utilize the sewers (mostly thieves' guilds and occasionally overzealous adventurers whose activities can devastate an ooze-ecology) leading to outbreaks of plague and pestilence, and as such custodians act as diplomats to try and smooth relations between disparate groups (often while trying to disguise their own actions) or to guide adventurers away from their hidden laboratories. All members actively oppose demonic cults, specifically those of the Faceless Lord—which seek to take the oozes and lore they've acquired and developed.

Gutter Guild Items

Working with corrosive monsters able to slip through tiny gaps in their enclosures has proven quite difficult, and custodians of Gutter Guild have developed a number of magic items to aid their activities.

Dehydrated Jelly

Wondrous item, rare

This spongy, sour smelling, gelatinous bead becomes an ooze when you spend an action to submerge it in at least 1 gallon of water. The ooze is paralyzed as it grows to full size over 2 (1d4) rounds. The type of ooze is based on the bead's color. The ooze is hostile to everyone, including you, and acts on its own initiative.

Table: Ooze Type

D4	COLOR	Ooze
1	Black	Black pudding
2	Clear	Gelatinous cube
3	Gray	Gray ooze
4	Yellow	Ochre jelly

Dust of Ooze Paralysis

Wondrous item, uncommon

Found in a small packet, this powder resembles very fine sand. There is enough of it for one use. When you use an action and throw the dust on an ooze within 5 feet of you, it must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for 11 (2d10) hours. While paralyzed this way, the ooze loses any corrosive qualities.

Ooze Handler's Gloves

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing these gloves, you have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks made to grapple oozes, and you have immunity to acid damage from an ooze you are grappling. In addition, you gain resistance against acid damage.

MODUS OPERANDI

Gutter Guild custodians travel with merchant wagons disguised as alchemists or apothecaries, spending time investigating sewers before they introduce new oozes to the area. If a sewer is overrun by improper vermin (such as Faceless Lord **cultists**, **giant rats**, **wererats**, **otyughs**, or even inappropriate **oozes**) they might hire adventurers (or encourage a city official to do so) to clear out the infestations before oozes are introduced. There are only a few more permanent set ups, hidden laboratories in sewers where loyal Gutter Guild custodians (**mag**es, **guards**, **veterans**, and **ooze handlers**) experiment in ooze cultivation, trying to create new oozes with unique variations to better suit their idealistic goals.

Ooze Handler

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 66 (12d8+12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +4

Skills Arcana +4, Medicine +4, Nature +4, Perception +2

Damage Immunities acid

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ooze handler attacks twice.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage.

Ooze Fling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) acid damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage at the end of each of the target's turns until a creature uses its action to remove oozes from the target. In addition, nonmagical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

REACTIONS

Sticky Slime (Recharge 5-6). When a creature moves to a space within 15 feet of the ooze handler, they may throw a jar of slime targeting the creature. A 10-foot square area centered on the target becomes difficult terrain and each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or become grappled (escape DC 12). The slime persists for 1 minute and a creature that enters the area or ends its turn there must make a DC 12 Strength saving throw or become grappled (escape DC 12).

Ooze handlers are specialized members of the Gutter Guild who capture and cultivate oozes. They travel under the guise of alchemists or apothecaries, carrying a great many jars and vials containing tiny oozes. When journeying into the sewers they are accompanied by **guards** or **veterans** loyal to the Gutter Guild.

OOZE VARIANTS

Through their research the Gutter Guild has classified a number of variant oozes:

VARIANT: BLAZING BLACK PUDDING (CR +0)

Identifiable by its gaseous odor, the oily sludge of a blazing black pudding constantly bubbles and emits a flammable vapor that catches ablaze at the slightest touch of flame.

A blazing black pudding has resistance to fire damage and gains the following trait.

Blazing Form. After taking fire damage, until the end of its next turn the pudding becomes immune to fire, and its form becomes covered in flames that shed bright light 30 feet and dim light a further 30 feet. While the pudding is ablaze its speed is doubled, it can make a pseudopod attack as a bonus action, and when a creature touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack using a weapon that does not have reach, the creature takes 2 (1d4) fire damage.

VARIANT: EUPHORIA CUBE (CR +0)

A particularly deadly variant, the euphoria cube is visually indistinguishable from its gelatinous cousin but is laced with psychotropic toxins that cause its victims to feel ecstatic joy even as they are consumed.

A euphoria cube gains the following trait.

Euphoric Touch. When a creature is engulfed by or touches the cube, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way and in contact with the cube, a creature is charmed by it, feeling an intoxicating euphoria as long as it remains in contact.

VARIANT: FLASH JELLY (CR +1)

The flash jelly's oozing form constantly ripples with flickers of dim light in a mesmerizing display, and when hit with weapon attacks it emits sudden bright flashes to blind its attackers.

A flash jelly gains the following action and reaction:

ACTIONS

Hypnotic Display (Recharge 5–6). All creatures within 10 feet of the jelly that can see it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for 1 minute. While charmed in this way, a creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0. At the end of each of the creature's turns it may repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a successful save. The effect also ends if another creature spends its action to shake the creature out of its trance, or if the creature takes any damage.

REACTIONS

Sudden Flash. When the jelly is hit with a melee weapon attack, it emits a sudden flash of light. Any creature within 10 feet that can see the jelly must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn. 🗨️

