

# Piety

a

# Morningstar

Adventure  
By R. Scott Kennan



“Piety” is a short d20 scenario set in the Morningstar campaign setting. Morningstar is a world in its golden age, where a dark Prophecy has begun to unfurl. Horrid aberrations crawl from the earth, while mysterious messengers deliver dark verses. The Canticle of the Morning Star, as the dark Prophecy is known, manifests in mysterious ways, and sometimes seems related to the appearance of aberrations. This adventure combines these themes.

This introductory adventure is suitable for characters of levels 1-3. “Piety” can be used in another world by placing the village of Tover’s Brink along a natural river rather than the Canali, and by adjusting the history and sources of divine power for Sarool Jesterin.

All events take place in the year 1608 on the 25th and 26th days of Gret, the first month of autumn, and a day when Thraxis’s planetary moon Arril rises at dusk.

## Adventure Synopsis

The characters come to the village of Tover’s Brink, which is built upon the banks of a man-made river and supported by high pillars. After they arrive they meet Sarool Jesterin, an Ijamvian cleric, and his human and inhuman flock. His unusual raft has attracted the attention of the villagers, who cajole the characters into investigating. In doing so they discover the aberrant creatures who treat Sarool as a god, possibly rescuing him from his own folly and protecting the humble village from the creatures’ ravages.

## Adventure Background

Sarool Jesterin originally hails from Ijamvhul, an empire that elevates the will of men above any god. He has secretly and willingly allowed psychic parasites called pit leeches to feed on him, in the hope that they will help to make him a god. Believing that by keeping them close he can gain greater worship energies, he has carried them with him among his cargo.

Sarool hired a halfling fip ship to ferry him to Brend, the capital of the Brendirian Empire. Along the way the pit leeches bred and laid their eggs. He

is now trying to find a discreet way to get rid of the soon-to-be-hatched young, since he knows he would die if they were all to attach to him. His pit leech worshippers will turn on him if he kills the young, but he will die if he doesn’t get rid of them.

The ship’s crew discovered his secret and cast him and his four followers off their ship on a mahogany raft with a *hold of holding* used to contain his pit leech followers. They floated downstream until they were pulled ashore in Tover’s Brink. Sarool is trying to think of a way to rid himself of his parasites’ young, and waiting for a ship to sail by in order to secure passage to Brend.

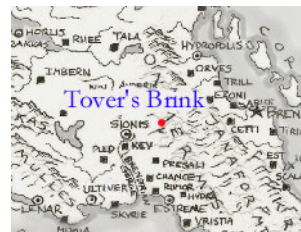
## Adventure Hooks

This adventure presupposes that the characters are in the eastern part of central Homm. The characters might be seeking transport along the Canali, monster hunting, or just exploring. Alternately, they may receive an invitation from an acquaintance to visit his home in Tover’s Brink. Tover’s Brink is located 100 miles due east of Sionis, where the Prestarren branch of the Canali crosses Homm to pass through the Onimer mountains.

The rest of the adventure assumes that the party arrives at the village just after nightfall. If they wait until morning, the adventure can be played normally with slight adjustments to the descriptions and with all further events occurring after moonrise the following night.

## Tover’s Brink

*Read the following to the Players when they first catch sight of tover’s Brink.*



You crest a high hill, exiting the forest just as the sun is setting. Arril has just risen over the majestic Onimer Mountains. There is a hurricane brewing in the northern hemisphere. A magnificent panorama stretches out before you. Green foothills roll smoothly to the north, dotted by sparse copses of hardwood trees that have begun to display autumn’s spectrum of gold and red leaves.

The Hommish branch of the Canali rests on marble pillars, sloping gently from the western horizon to pass into a mountain to the east, about a mile from where you stand. Roughly a quarter of a mile from this mountain cavern there is a small

village, half floating, half built upon the banks of the great raised river. At the base of the monument, a lush forest spreads out for about three miles to the north.

A haphazard wooden staircase ascends from the forest floor at odd angles to the top of the structure, creaking audibly in the breeze even at this distance. The sparkling water reflects the rich hues of twilight, and you could just make it there by nightfall. The warm breath of the day has begun to cool rapidly, hinting at a cold night ahead.

The staircase is poorly designed but well constructed. Its planks are not fitted, but nailed on top of each other, squeaking and shuddering with every step. It rises in zig-zagging spurts to a height of 120 feet, the elevation of this portion of the Canali. If the characters refuse to use it, five very large thull return from hunting and cavalierly stomp up the steps with their quarry, a large deer strung between them on a pole.

Upon reaching the top of the staircase, the characters find themselves in the midst of a quaint if disorderly village of shacks, some as many as three precarious stories high, built upon the southern bank of the aqueduct and upon rafts that bob in the water up to halfway across the 300 yard wide river. The marble underfoot is dew-covered and slick with algae. Running or moving faster than a walk may result in a fall (Dexterity check, DC 14). Near the sairs this isn't too dangerous, since there are railings, but falling anywhere else may be deadly. There is a 120 foot drop to the forest floor.

This village makes no concession to the standard Brendirian city model, and is haphazardly arrayed as a result of necessity and poor planning. The south bank only allows construction one building deep, with a narrow sidewalk between the buildings and the water. Broad docks extend the habitable area in places, but most of the commotion is centered on the water itself. A hastily scrawled sign reads "Welcome to Tover's Brink."

Warm lights flicker in the windows of most homes, and people are cheerfully gathering and socializing out in the open. Most are congregating in and around the village's makeshift tavern: a dhow-like vessel that is in permanent dock (the villagers have extended a bit of a wharf around the ship). It has a large door cut into its side and a sign reading "Diver's Tavern."

Five yards to the left of the tavern, on the dock, is a large wooden box (the *hold of holding*) used as a raised platform to support a crude tent. In front of

this tent sits an elderly, one-legged man. At his side rests a crude crutch. It's obvious that the natives are giving him a wide berth. This is Fend, who is guarding the *hold of holding* at Sarool's command. If the PCs approach him, he will rudely shoo them off, only revealing that he is here with his lord, the divine Sarool Jesterin, and what little he knows of how they got here. As far as he's concerned, the halflings cheated Sarool out of his passage fee and set them adrift to die. He's bitter about that and makes disparaging comments about any nearby halflings. See below for more information on Fend.

Closer inspection reveals the box to be made of mahogany, with a hinged door that is locked with a huge padlock (Open Locks, DC 15; break DC 30). Runes and illegible inscriptions adorn it on all surfaces. Lifting the door once the lock is opened requires a Strength check (DC 13). If the characters open the box, skip to "Jacks in the Box," below.

## Diver's Tavern

As you enter the smoky, odd smelling room, the ship rocks slightly. The small room is well kept but sparse. Barrels serve as chairs and crates as tables. Lanterns with colored glass swing slowly from the ceiling, casting shifting light upon the bare walls of what was once a cargo hold. The diverse patronage are in fine cheer, but are disheveled and in need of bathing. A rotund halfling serves wine and ale to a dozen halfling, human and thull patrons while others walk in to place orders.

One robust man stands out, if only for his cleanliness. He wears a strangely cut midnight blue robe, with crisply angled shoulders and a red trim. He has black hair and peircing blue eyes that stand out even in these dim quarters. He is carousing with three women: a thull, a human, and a halfling. Behind him on the floor in the corner sit three humans: a young man, a hefty woman, and a middle aged man. All are half asleep.

The well-dressed man is Sarool, and the three seated on the floor behind him are three of his four human cultists: Elb, Hostra, and Junis. See below for more information on these characters. All are friendly, and will tell the same story that Fend will tell, albeit with their own angles. Sarool is maintaining the same story, but will quickly try to change the subject to himself. If the PCs seem gullible enough, he may even try to extoll the virtues of faith in him, to a hearty round of laughter from the rest of the room.

**Sarool Jesterin**, male human Clr5: CR 6 (+1 due to pit leech influence); Size M (5 ft., 8 in. tall); HD 5d8+5; hp 35 (currently 25); Init -1 [+0\*]; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9 [10\*] (-1 Dex); Attack +3 melee, or +2 ranged; SV Fort +5 [3\*], Ref +1 [+0\*], Will +8; AL CN; Str 10, Dex 9 [10\*], Con 12 [8\*], Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 16 [18\*]

*Languages Spoken:* Ijamvian, Brendirian.

*Skill points:* Clr 28

*Skills and feats:* Concentration +7, Craft +4, Hide -1, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +4, Move Silently -1, Profession +11 (political agitator), Spellcraft +7, Spot +4, Swim +3; Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Extra Turning.

*Possessions:* +1 *small steel shield*; +1 *hide armor*; masterwork dagger; 14 bolts; masterwork Triskatar crossbow; +1 *Ijamvian viper clamp*; *bag of holding*; *potion of lesser restoration*; *potion of wisdom*; *potion of false life*; *potion of cure light wounds* (x2); *scroll of divine flame* (divine magic, lvl 5); key to the *bold of holding*; 26 gp

*Cleric Domains:* Strength, Travel.

*Cleric Spells Per Day:* 5/4+1/3+1/2+1 [5/4+2/3+2/2+2\*]

\* Stats and spells in brackets indicate alteration by the pit leeches' Astral Tether ability. Use the bracketed numbers until the pit leeches are killed. 20 pit leeches are currently tethered to Sarool.

Like most Ijamvian clerics, Sarool is a priest who worships himself (see page 137 of *Morningstar*). He left Ijamvuhul in order to find others passive enough to do the same, and makes a living as a highly paid political agitator for rich Brendirian politicians. He is slightly overweight but handsome and well kept, with neat black hair, a goatee, and sharp black and midnight blue outfits in many styles, most trimmed or highlighted with red. He is not particularly suited to the adventuring life, but he has had a few escapades and is always on the look out for a high-profile quest that will help impress would-be followers.

Thus far, he has convinced only a handful of admirers to believe in him. He hopes to acquire a shard of the Prism to change that (see page 89 of *Morningstar* for details of the Prism). He sees himself as an embryonic god of subterfuge and hidden strength, and uses his magics to promote this self-image, which was challenged many times in his portly Ijamvian childhood. Such challenges only served to strengthen his resolve to emerge triumphant as the first man to successfully will himself down the road to full godhood. He has a soft spot for the underdog in life, and despite his limitless self-love, he tries to inspire those who are kept from reaching their highest potential. Unlike many Ijamvians, he doesn't believe himself to be better than everyone else; quite the opposite, he thinks that no man or "god" is better than another. It is simply a matter of power and the illusion of such.

Sarool is grossly intolerant of true believers of established religions, but tries to shelter others from such thoughts. He has recently uncovered some secrets regarding the reasons for the appearance of the Strangers that he believes will help him get noticed by the Canticle. When he does so, he believes, he will be that much closer to his goal. Currently he travels with four cultists, and feels bad for misleading them, but truly hopes to make it up to them when he becomes a deity. He has 20 pit leeches astrally tethered to him.

### Sarool's Human Cultists

Sarool is traveling with 4 cultists, who hang on his every word and follow his commands. In exchange, he protects them and makes decisions for them. All are all first level commoners, impressed by the well-spoken and exotic cleric. None has an Intelligence higher than 8.

The cultists are: Junis, a male who was near death after a kobold run-in when Sarool dispatched the threat and healed him; his corpulent but pretty wife Hostra, who was cured of warts; Fend, an elderly, irritable one-legged man with a crutch; and Elb, an idealistic youth swayed by promises of a glorious afterlife with his deceased parents. Junis is the most level-headed, Hostra is the most enthusiastic, Fend violently opposes any suggestion that his lord is less than what he says he is, and Elb gets tearful when speaking of his lord's deeds. They do not know about the pit leeches.

All the cultists are 1st level commoners (4 hp, Str 14). They carry Sarool's "favored weapon," a specially engraved dagger (considered masterwork).

**Cultist of Sarool**, human Com1: CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +2 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 11.

*Languages Spoken:* Brendirian (Common).

*Skill points:* Com 8

*Skills and feats:* Climb +8, Hide +0, Listen -1, Move silently +0, Spot +3; Armor proficiency (light), Skill focus (climb).

*Possessions:* Masterwork Dagger; 2 gp

The other patrons find Sarool likeable enough, but worry about his followers. They also speak of the strange raft, which is revealed to have been recognised by one NPC as a *Hold of Holding* on a successful Gather Information check vs. DC 10. They will express great curiosity as to its contents, and may try to put the characters up to opening it.

They also talk about the comings and goings of ships (one will arrive tomorrow) their individual trades, and reasons for coming to Tover's Brink. Most are misfits or semireformed criminals, but none is violent unless provoked. They make their money from travellers, and by offering any skills or trades they may have to passing ships. Many trade in furs or beast parts.

This is a very tight-knit community, but there are no children to be found. Anyone with children left long ago, to avoid the nightmare of losing a little one over the edge.

One halfling patron is particularly friendly – the duly elected “mayor” of Tover's Brink, Jondle “Diver” Polve (male halfling Exp4; 20 hp, speaks Brendirian, Ynnidonian, Halfling, and Thullish). A carpenter by trade, he oversaw most of the construction of the village, but was too busy to do everything. His next project is an inn, since many who come here lament the village's lack of one.

He offers to help the PCs in any way he can, and will even pay for a round of drinks. This isn't a burden, since he owns the tavern, which he bought when it sunk while at dock. He patched it up, but it wasn't seaworthy, so he found another use for it. That project earned him his nickname.

Jondle is especially curious about the raft. He claims he can't open it himself because of “sensitivity to his official status in village.” But, like the other patrons, he's glad to see it opened by someone else.

**Jondle “Diver” Polve**, male halfling (Embral [lightfoot]) Exp4; CR 3; Size S (3 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 4d6+4; hp 20; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (+4 Dex, +1 Size); Attack +2 melee, or +8 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +6; AL CG; Str 6, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Languages Spoken:* Brendirian (Common), Ynnidonian (Elven), Thullish (Orc), Halfling.

*Skill points:* Exp 56

*Skills and feats:* Animal empathy +5, Appraise +4, Climb +0, Craft +9, Forgery +8, Handle animal +2, Hide +8, Diplomacy +3, Jump +7, Knowledge +8, Listen +5, Move silently +9, Profession +3(Carpenter), Scry +9, Spot +3; Alertness, Improved initiative.

*Possessions:* 3,300 gp in gear.

## The Canticle Speaks

As soon as the relationship between Sarool and his followers is clear, a loud, clear voice can be heard from the river. It seems someone is speaking from a passing boat.

*He who dares to summon me,  
Shall search and he shall seek.  
For fate knows none are truly free;  
The God is ever weak.*

*Lo almighty deity,  
You search and deep you dig.  
Your noble swains have piety:  
Two boys, some bugs, a pig.*

Upon hearing this, Sarool blanches; though he hoped to be recognized by the Canticle, it is obvious that he has not gained admiration. He will not go outside, without goading.

If the players rush outside, they arrive just in time to see a heavily cloaked riverman passing in a reed boat. He is slowly poling along silently, now that his message has been imparted. If any PCs catch up to him, he vanishes leaving the cloak, 15 foot pole, and reed boat behind. The boat is sodden and will sink in 1d4 hours. The pole is unspectacular; the cloak is moth-eaten and is nonmagical. There is no other sign of a living being having passed here. Such is the voice of the Canticle.

After this, the villagers are even more curious than ever about the *hold of holding*, and they're just as scared of Sarool, leading them to try all the harder to persuade the characters to open it.

## Tracks in the Blox

Read this text once the characters open the *hold of holding*.

As the door swings upward, a large room is revealed. Immediately, over a dozen hopping creatures that barely reach a man's shin spill out and leap toward you. They are nasty, five-limbed lamprey-mouthed beasts that are obviously aberrations. A foul, sweaty stench rolls out of the room after them. The space is filled with offal a foot deep, and contains a mass of shiny amber hives strewn with sickly, translucent amber orbs.

By now the sun has set and the moon has risen. The pit leeches are disorganized by Arril's bright light for one round (see creature description) and may be attacked with ranged weapons or by foolishly leaping into the water. Standard penalties for fighting underwater apply to any who attempt so- but not to the pit leeches, an amphibious race. The water is 12 feet deep.

The pit leeches will initially attack, but Sarool will telepathically beg them to stop, and after one round of combat they willingly obey, retreating by swimming or running along the far bank towards the cavern where the canal passes into the mountain. There are 20 pit leeches in the swarm.

The box is a small *hold of holding*, the next logical step up from a *bag of holding*. Its outer dimensions are 10x10x1, and it is composed of wood. A large 9x9 door swings open vertically to an internal volume of 10x10x30. Unlike a *bag of holding*, a *hold of holding* does not risk damage from sharp objects, and only by forcibly loading cargo with enough force to splinter wood or by setting fire to it does one risk destruction of the *hold*.

Extradimensional spaces placed inside have the same effects as they do upon a *bag of holding*, once the door is closed. However, unlike most settings, in Morningstar a breached extradimensional space opens to the Wheel (a magical black hole) if Arril is in the sky, which destroys all contents irrevocably and creates a catastrophic implosion (page 62, Morningstar or treat as a *Disjunction* spell) with a radius of 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a mile on the prime material plane (660 ft radius).

Further investigation of the interior reveals the skeletal remains of four cows, utterly clean, and a cluster of over 100 fist-sized, pulpy spheres that glisten with mucous. If these are held before a light, a tiny star-shaped "tadpole" can be seen squirming within its casing. These are pit leech eggs. Each has 1 hp, and may be destroyed by any form of violence. If they are attacked, 2d6 hatch immediately, and emerge from under the mass of their siblings with one hp but otherwise identical to adults, just smaller. These will attempt to attach themselves to any living creatures nearby-creating astral tethers as described in their creature description below.

When the pit leeches escape, Sarool will act surprised. If questioned, he will hastily blurt that he knew nothing of the creatures. Sense Motive reveals he is lying. Explaining the bovine carcasses, he will say that he had cattle in the hold to sell in Brend.

If the PCs chase the pit leeches, skip to *Into the Breach*, below, but instead of finding the pit leeches in their makeshift lair, they find them attacking a Dire Beaver (based on a dire badger). When the PCs are noticed, the pit leeches will stop attacking to kill, and instead attach their astral tethers to the beast who will then fall under their sway and fight on their behalf. The already full grown pit leeches will then attempt to escape. If desired, you may use the following stat block:

**Dire Beaver with 10 pit leeches tethered (-2 Con, +2 Str and Dex)** Medium Animal (); CR 3; HD 3d8+13 (15 hp remaining); Init +4; Spd 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk

+2; Grp +4; Atk Claw +4 melee (1d4+2); Full Atk 2 claws +6 melee (1d4+4) and bite +1 melee (1d6+3) or tail slap +6 melee (1d6+3); SA Rage; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL Always neutral; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 19, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10 Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6 Feats: Alertness, Toughness, Track

### If the PCs Set Fire to or Otherwise Breach the Hold

*Use the below only if you are prepared to deal with the consequences of a PC created catastrophe.*

If the PCs decide to set fire to the contents of the Hold of Holding, the box will begin to burn, taking damage based on the source of fire used by the PCs, which bypasses hardness. When it has taken 80 pts of damage, or if it takes 70, and is subsequently pushed into the Canali to douse the flames (rushing water shatters the already weakened wood) it will be breached- causing a catastrophic implosion. The space that the Hold previously occupied will become an open portal to the Wheel-oriented at the same angle as the hold was previously oriented, and pulling creatures and objects into itself, and almost immediately, a Rage storm (page 143) will begin, taking 6 rounds to form. If the Village or its people are within 660 feet of the hold when this event occurs, they will almost certainly be destroyed. The Area of the canali where this occurs will invariably be broken as well, creating a great waterfall or whirlpool (if in the center of the canali) that floods the forest below. This will continue for 4d6 hours, the time it takes for Brendir to muster a team of Stonecutter Dwarves and Spellcasting legionnaires from the surrounding region to repair the damage. The spellcasters will cast various wall spells or magical items to stop the flooding, and the stonecutters will begin to make repairs. If the PCs are still in the area, they will have to answer a lot of questions- and may face charges, and if they are not, the Empire will organize a group of inquisitors (page 53, Morningstar) to seek them out. In 24 hours, the Canal will be entirely repaired, as if the disaster never occurred, except for the possible absence of Tover's Brink and its inhabitants. At any rate, if he survives, Sarool will almost certainly attempt to escape, maybe to haunt the PCs at a later date.

## Midnight Raid

If the PCs let the Pit leeches escape, things calm down for a while. The villagers are nervous, abut

after a while fall back into their routine, though the conversations revolve around the day's events.

About an hour before midnight, the village's activity dies down, and most people return to their dwellings. Jondle fetches the PCs a tattered sail and helps them build a tent, if they don't already have one.

If any pit leeches escaped their initial release from the hold of holding, they send a war party of 5 pit leeches to explore the village. Being the only groups out in the open, only Sarool's party and the PCs are aware of them. Sarool himself is quite drunk and is fast asleep. The commoners will likely run for the stairs (risking a lethal fall) or leap into the Canal if cornered. They cannot swim, so this will cause problems. Even if they catch a piece of debris to hold onto, they will drift towards the cavern, where the rest of the pit leeches are holed up. If any characters pass within five feet of the edge of the Canal while fighting, he may fall. Whenever any combatant takes damage in a square that is at the edge of the canal, he must make a Dex check vs. DC 14, or fall. He may make a reflex save (DC 14) to avoid going over the edge. If three of the pit leeches are destroyed, the rest will attempt to flee. At this point, if the party is not already pursuing the pit leeches, Jondle will try to make sure they do.

## Into the Breach

If the party is intrepid enough to chase the escaped pit leeches, they find them only a short distance into the cavern. About 800 feet into the cave, the lip of the canal abruptly ends and marble gives way to stone. There is a cave opening on the other side of the river, and the scattered remains of a dire beaver lodge (Knowledge Nature DC 13 reveals). In their flight the pit leeches killed and ate this beast. The cleaned skeleton of this unfortunate creature is a short distance away. Among the wreckage is a wand of magic missiles (2d4 charges) which was once incorporated into the structure.

If the characters swim across, they discover an ancient worker's camp, which has become the pit leeches' makeshift lair. The cavern has a surprise in store for the PCs: four stirges (CR 2) lurk inside, ready to attack any decent-sized meal.

If any character passes within five feet of the edge of the canal while fighting, he may fall. Whenever any combatant takes damage in a square that is at the edge of the canal, he must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or go over the edge.

## Pit Leech Lair

When the PCs arrive, the remaining pit leeches are in a trance, rocking in unison and humming a discordant melody.

Energy leeches from their bodies and coalesces into an orb. In the center of the orb can be seen an idealized but somehow aberrant image of Sarool. Their vision of him is one of power and grotesque might.

If the PCs explore the cave, they find old tools worth 25 gp. and ancient uncut gems mined during the cave excavation worth 120 gp. If they take more than 1d10 rounds to explore, the pit leeches come out of their trance and attack immediately. Be sure to take into account darkness or light penalties for the PCs and pit leeches, respectively.

## Conclusion

Upon defeating the pit leeches, the characters will have gained allies in Jondle and any surviving citizens of Tover's Brink. If Sarool and his followers have not been accosted, he will be grateful, somewhat grudgingly, and will ally with the characters if they will have him. Sarool will seem clumsier now, and not quite as magnetic as he first did. (His ability scores have dropped back to their normal levels now that the leeches are dead.)

The village rewards the characters with goods and supplies totaling 75 gp, and the promise of a permanent room at the inn, when it's completed. Sarool makes a show of giving them his two potions of *cure light wounds*, or his Triskatar crossbow if the potions have been used already. He may or may not travel with the PCs for a short while, at the GMs and party's discretion. In apparent contrition, he may "emancipate" his followers, giving them enough gold or other treasure to settle somewhere nearby, depending on the PCs reaction to their arrangement.

At dawn a ship arrives with goods for the village, and passage as far as Brend may be bought.

## Appendix 1: Pit Leech

<b>Pit Leech</b>
<b>Tiny Aberration</b>
<b>Hit Dice:</b> 1/2 d8 (2 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b> +7 (Dex)
<b>Speed:</b> 50 ft, Swim 30 ft
<b>AC:</b> 25 (+4 size, +7 Dex, +4 Natural)
<b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> +1/+6
<b>Attack:</b> 5 claws +7 melee (1d2-1)
<b>Full Attack:</b> 2 claws +11 melee (1d2), 3 claws +6 melee (1d2), bite +1 melee (1d4)
<b>Space/Reach:</b> 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.
<b>Special Qualities:</b> Astral Tether, Dark Vision
<b>Saves:</b> Fort +0, Ref +7, Will +3
<b>Abilities:</b> Str 12, Dex 25, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 11
<b>Skills:</b> Balance +9, Climb +3, Handle Animal +3,

Hide +9, Intimidate +2, Jump +11, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +3, Survival +3, Tumble +11, Use Magic Device +2
<b>Feats:</b> Acrobatic, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse
<b>Environment:</b> Any underground
<b>Organization:</b> Swarm (8-16)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b> 1/2
<b>Treasure:</b> Double standard
<b>Alignment:</b> Usually lawful evil (entire swarm shares alignment)
<b>Advancement:</b> Small (1-2 HD)

A pit leech walks and jumps on three long, splayed legs and has two clawed, finger-like strikers arching off its back that it uses to grip a target. Its mouth is circular, like a lamprey, with row upon row of incisors. Its body is bulbous like a spider's and its flesh is pale and mottled, in human tones. A pit leech is eyeless, but is aware of its surroundings by virtue of a combination of relatively weak scent, vibration, and simple light sense organs all over its skin. A pit leech can rasp in any languages it speaks, typically up to four.

Pit leeches are a particularly devout race, for as intelligent as they are, they worship those they feed upon for any length of time. A particularly large or resilient beast could conceivably become a godling given enough time with the suckling pit leeches. Incidentally, flayed dwarves say they are delicious when roasted in a fire built from ganga cactus husks.

## COMBAT

**Astral Tether (Su):** Once a pit leech has successfully fed upon a victim, it attaches its astral cord to the prey. Thereafter, it will always know the location of this victim, and receives a +2 circumstance bonus to all attacks (but not damage) and skill uses against his prey. If the pit leech acquires some method of teleportation (such as a device), it may use this method to teleport directly to the victim with no chance of destruction, regardless of Arril's position in the sky. This tie works both ways, to an extent. The victim receives no bonus to skill checks or attacks, but gains a +2 circumstance bonus to spells cast against the pit leech, and may send telepathic messages to it.

For every 5 pit leeches that attach themselves, the victim takes one point of temporary Con damage that will not heal without removal of the pit leeches, and receives a +1 enhancement bonus to any two attributes except Con. For every 10 attached, the host receives one divine bonus spell (if a divine spellcaster) per level

per day. The victim becomes their deity, and they worship him daily.

A pit leech can only be tethered to one target at a time, but many can be tethered to a single target. *Dispel magic* or *remove curse* destroys one tether with each casting. In order to willingly do damage to a pit leech that is tethered to him, a creature must make a will save vs. DC 11 (the pit leech's Cha score) + the number of pit leeches tethered to him.

**Blindsense (Ex):** A pit leech does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to pinpoint the location of a creature within range of its blindsense ability, provided that it has line of effect to that creature. Any opponent the creature cannot see still has total concealment against the pit leech, and the creature still has the normal miss chance when attacking foes that have concealment. Visibility still affects the movement of a creature with blindsense. A pit leech is still denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against attacks from creatures it cannot see.

**Vulnerability to Light:** Pit leeches suffer a -8 circumstance penalty to attacks and AC in full daylight, a -4 penalty at dusk (or when Arril is full and in view), and -2 in the presence of a *light* spell or torch.

**Trance:** While worshipping, Pit Leeches are entirely oblivious to their surroundings until one of their number is attacked. They will worship for a half hour each day if uninterrupted. If attacked they will be stunned for the first round, but thereafter attack normally.

## Appendix 2: Ijamvian Faith- The Path of Zanoee

The converse of the faith that most cultures of Thraxis display is the pragmatic, and some say cynical, creed of the Ijamvians. This culture will not bow to any god, but refuses to be deprived of divine power. Thus, the tradition of Zanoee, or 'each man a god' exists. Zanoeeen clerics sacrifice one character level, in order to create a divine focus in their own image, on the astral plane. By worshipping this icon, and by getting others to follow them, they gain access to clerical magics and can gain levels as a cleric of any two domains, and powers over undead in accord with their alignments. These priests even gain an afterlife through the discipline. At the end of their lives, they may choose to transubstantiate to any heaven or hell that will have them.

For each follower that the priest gains, he receives a one-time award of experience points equaling the combined Cha, Int, and Wis scores of the follower. He may only maintain a number of

followers equaling his level times his charisma bonus. As a consequence of their worship, he may cast any single spell upon himself that he has prepared, once per day, without losing the spell. The maximum level of this spell is the nearest square root of the number of followers he has.

If he ever achieves 21<sup>st</sup> level, he will become immortal, and may begin the walk towards godhood.

# Followers	Free Spell level
1-3	1
4-8	2
9-15	3
16-24	4
25-35	5
36-48	6
49-63	7
64-80	8
81+	9

### Appendix 3: Other NPCs in Tover's Brink

The denizens of Tover's Brink are people who have either dropped out of Brendirian society, or never had a place there to begin with. The Empire allows them to live atop the Canali, as they are fairly innocuous, and so far have caused little trouble. They live a communal lifestyle, and do as little work as is necessary to survive. Each citizen does the work he is best suited for, and is inclined to perform, such as hunting, or gathering fruits, nuts, or mushrooms from the rich forests below.

Whenever possible, crafts, skins or other finds are traded to passing ships, for the small amount of currency that can be earned from them. The philosophy is one of leisure, and near apathy, but the people are essentially good, and troublemakers don't last long. Most citizens spend a good part of the day inebriated or in some other altered state. PCs will note that there are no children here- this is because the responsibilities of caring for the young are too much for the citizens of the village, and those who have children leave, knowing that it would only be a matter of time before the child wandered too close to the edge. Tover's Brink is but one of hundreds of such settlements along the Canali.

The population consists of Humans, Halflings and thull. A few example NPCs to help you along might be:

**Gronex, Laesh, Molnol, Bairn, and Kreneg-** male 1<sup>st</sup> level Thull Rangers (10 hp). These brothers are taking their time in finding a city for their clan to settle in. They are the primary warriors and hunters of Tover's Brink.

**Shar and Kleeska-** female 1<sup>st</sup> level Thull commoners (4 hp), have no intentions of leaving, gather mushrooms to trade for their supper and abhor violence.

**Ralla-** female 1<sup>st</sup> level Human Adept- mostly an apothecary, she ministers to the daily health concerns of the citizens of the village. She is very friendly to charismatic male PCs.

**Yonus, Matrel, and Jak-** 1<sup>st</sup> level Speaker halfling rogues. Enjoy gambling, and arguing over everything in various languages. Steal from each other for sport.

*The rest of the NPCs will be 1<sup>st</sup> level commoners, evenly split between humans and standard halflings. The village's population is about 20.*







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