



# BORDERLANDS SURVIVAL GUIDE

*The GM's resource for psychology, maladies, peril, relics, and monsters found in the wilds of the Iron Kingdoms: Requiem campaign setting.*



# BORDERLANDS SURVIVAL GUIDE



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# INTRODUCTION

In your hands you hold the most important tool or weapon any person could ever own: knowledge. In the five years since the infernals came, I've seen people from every walk of life try to navigate this new world we live in. I've seen a lot of them dead on the side of the road, too, victims of highway robbers, hungry critters, and their own damned foolishness.

Those people thought they knew better. Let that be your first lesson, and if only one thing I say gets through that skull of yours, make it this: you don't know better, and thinking so is a quick way to an early grave. Rather than rely on what you think you know, take it from the experts. People like me and my associates are ready to give you the benefit of our hard-won experience. If you heed it, maybe there will be one fewer unmarked grave cluttering up the countryside.

—Alten Ashley

**F**EW PLACES IN WESTERN IMMOREN COULD BE described as safe, but the regions that form the borderlands of the Iron Kingdoms—mountainous Rhul, mist-shrouded Ios, the tangled Glimmerwood, and parched Bloodstone Marches—present their own unique threats and challenges. To address some of these issues, and maybe make a few gold crowns in the process, the enterprising monster hunter Alten Ashley has put together a manuscript he calls *The Borderlands Survival Guide*. Drawing on his many years of experience in the untamed lands of western Immoren, Ashley also calls on other experts such as his friend and noted scholar, Viktor Pendrake, to offer the most comprehensive work on, in his own words, “Not getting dead while you’re out and about.”

*The Borderlands Survival Guide* presents new rules options for both GMs and players. These optional rules are in

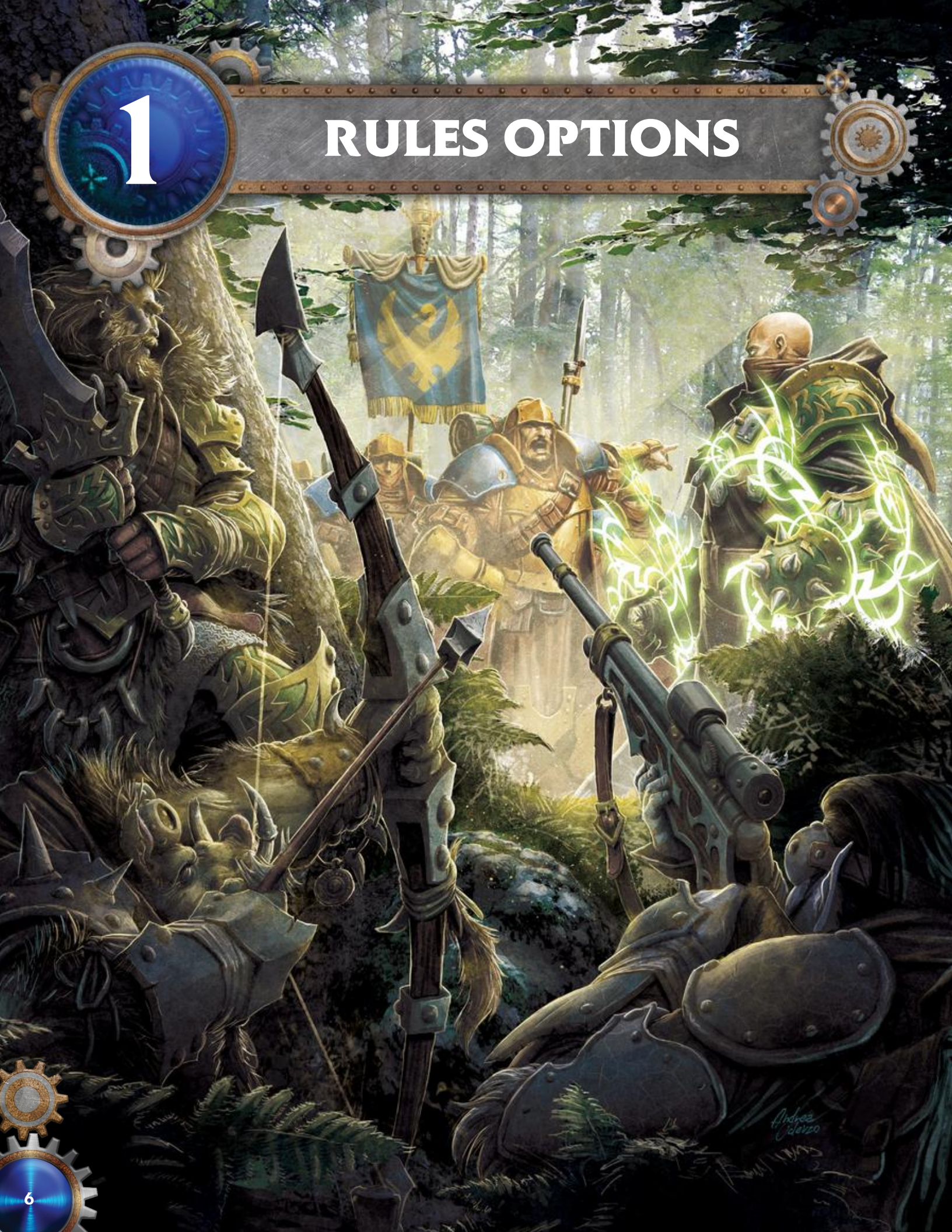
addition to those found in the core rules of the game and *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem* and are not mandatory. Rather, they are tools to aid players and GMs to craft adventures and stories in the Iron Kingdoms that suit different styles of play. A campaign can use some, all, or none of the rules presented here. These options are by no means a requirement for inclusion in your games but can add a bit of variety and intrigue to them. In addition, this book presents a bestiary of new monsters found in the borderlands.

Throughout the book, infamous monster hunter Alten Ashley and other experts chime in with their own observations and insights. Take heed. These are the words of those who have faced the challenges within and lived long enough to pass on word about these exploits.

With that, enjoy your journey into the borderlands of the Iron Kingdoms and beyond!

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# RULES OPTIONS



Survival is a mindset. Those who have it are going to live, and those who don't are not. I don't care how fancy your tent is, how many tins of beans you have stuffed in your rucksack, or how many bullets are weighing down your pockets. Without the right state of mind, you might as well smear your naked body in pork fat and go dance with the dire trolls around lunchtime.

Here's an example. I was on a hunt once with two very different hunting partners. There was Danny Kilborne, a retired grave digger who'd held the line against Khador in the Thornwood more times'n he could count, and then there was Slim—we called him Slim, anyway—a gobber out of Cloutsdawn. When things went south, one of those two lost his head and didn't make it back home with us. And it wasn't Slim.

See, Kilborne didn't have the right mindset. He thought that with a gun in his hand he could take on any danger and come out the victor. Slim, he thought different. That little gobber'd spent his life facing things that could kill him every single day. Slim was careful not to bite off more than he could chew, knew when hidin' was a better play than actin' tough. Kilborne was worried about winning. Slim just wanted to stay alive.

Be like Slim. Know when somethin' is tougher than you, and when to hide or run instead of fight.

*Allen Ashley*

**T**HE RULES OPTIONS PRESENTED IN THIS CHAPTER provide new tools to run interesting and dramatic games of *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem*. These are in addition to the rules found in the core *Requiem* book, and in some cases modify or replace existing rules.

The material in this chapter is meant to increase your options as a GM. If something doesn't fit the story you and the players want to tell, or if you would prefer not to use it, feel free to ignore it. Similarly, feel free to tweak and tailor these rules to better fit your preferred play style. They are by no means mandatory for a fun and compelling game set in the Iron Kingdoms.

### NOTE TO GMS

The ability to build and rebuild custom items will make your players slightly more powerful; however, the added cost in gold is fairly steep to balance that. If you allow players to make custom equipment, it is recommended that the characters not be able to easily attain large sums of gold and do not begin the game with custom equipment unless they have an extremely good reason.

# CUSTOM EQUIPMENT

I never head into the wilderness without my best friend and companion, Bucking Jenny. Now, don't think that Jenny started out as the fine, precision instrument of monster-killing that she is today. You can't just buy something like her. No, Jenny and I learned a lot about each other over the years. I've had her tinkered with, modified, and rebored more times than I can count. If you really want to survive—and thrive—don't just grab whatever piece of hardware you see for sale. Take the time and put the work in to make sure that your gear does exactly what you want it to do, exactly how you want it to. In time, you'll have a companion just as reliable as mine. Just don't name it Jenny. That name's spoken for.

*Allen Ashley*

This section presents rules on how to build your own new equipment and customize existing pieces.

The folk of western Immoren—especially those in its borderlands—are notorious for adding knives to everything, alchemically treating gear, and creating hybrid weapons. While some cultures have their own traditions of mechanika—or arcanika, as it is known in Ios—many people in the wilder stretches of the borderlands are content to improve their weapons and equipment in more mundane, but still effective, ways.

## BUILDING YOUR OWN EQUIPMENT

It's not cheap to have custom items crafted, but if you are willing to put up the gold, you can get yourself the instrument of death you've always wanted.

## BUILD POINTS AND BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

Each item has a set number of build points based on how much you are willing to pay to have the item custom-built. An item can't have more than 15 or fewer than 7 build points. The more complex the item is, the longer it takes to prototype and engineer. Those who are skilled in crafting might find it easier—or cheaper—to build their own custom equipment. Building a custom item yourself requires half the cost listed in the Cost and Building Time table.

If you are skilled in the specialized tools for the type of equipment you are attempting to make and have the needed items and ingredients, you'll be able to build your own. In order to make hybrid items (such as an alchemically treated blunderbuss mounted in a shield), you or an ally you are working with will need proficiency in all the prerequisites (in this case, field alchemy kit, gunsmith's kit, and smith's tools). The specific proficiencies required are presented in the Tool and Skill Proficiencies table.

## COST AND BUILDING TIME

Build Points	Cost	Time to Prototype	Time to Finished Item
7	300 gp	5 days	12 days
8	500 gp	10 days	18 days
9	800 gp	15 days	24 days
10	1,500 gp	20 days	30 days
11	2,000 gp	25 days	36 days
12	2,500 gp	30 days	42 days
13	3,000 gp	35 days	48 days
14	4,000 gp	45 days	59 days
15	5,000 gp	50 days	65 days

## TOOL AND SKILL PROFICIENCIES

Item Type	Tool or Skill Proficiency Required
Weapons and armor made primarily out of metal	Smith's tools
Weapons and armor made primarily out of cloth	Weaver's tools
Weapons and armor with alchemically treated components	Field alchemy kit or alchemist's supplies
Firearms	Gunsmith's kit
Weapons and armor made primarily out of wood	Woodcarver's tools
Weapons and armor made primarily out of animal products	Leatherworker's tools
Weapons and equipment designed for steamjacks or warbeasts	Mechanik's tools
Mechanika housing	Mechanik's tools and rune-etching kit
Magic items	Rune-etching kit or Arcana

## PROTOTYPES

Creating a custom item requires building a **prototype**. The prototype is useful in and of itself but will not last nearly as long as the finished product. While using a prototype weapon, an attack roll of 1 to hit causes the weapon to break. If the prototype is an armor or shield and an attack against the wearer scores a critical hit, the armor is punctured and ruined. It adds no AC to the wearer, and all its qualities except the maximum Dexterity bonus to AC and disadvantage to stealth rolls cease to function until it is repaired. Repairing a prototype requires 5 gp per build point and 1 day of work.

You can turn a prototype into a finished product by spending half the cost to build the prototype and 1 day of work per build point of the item.

You can cannibalize the prototype in the process of making a custom item; doing so reduces the final cost by 5 gp per build point. Cannibalizing the prototype also reduces the time to finish the final product by 1 day. A cannibalized prototype is destroyed in the process.

## BASE ITEM

When creating a custom item, first select a base item or items from the Base Items table, then spend build points to modify that item. Upgrades can include extra AC, extra damage, special qualities, removing negative modifiers, and so on.

You can select multiple base items only if you are building a weapon or shield, and doing so means you are creating a hybrid item (see below). When building a weapon, the base item is considered a simple weapon.



## BASE ITEMS

Base item	Base Characteristics
Melee weapon	1d4 piercing (wood or metal), bludgeoning (wood or metal), or slashing (metal) damage
Ranged weapon	1d4 piercing (metal or wood) or bludgeoning (cloth or leather) damage, ammunition, range 20/60, loading
Firearm	1d6 piercing damage, firearm, range 20/60, light, magazine (1), misfire (4); must be a pistol
Light armor	AC 10 + Dex modifier, made of leather, cloth, or wood
Medium armor	AC 11 + Dex modifier (max 2), requires Str 13, Disadvantage on Stealth, made of leather, metal, or wood
Heavy armor	AC 13, requires Str 15, disadvantage on Stealth, made of metal
Shield (includes steamjack and warbeast shields)	+1 AC, requires Str 13, made of leather, wood, or metal
Melee weapon for steamjack or warbeast	1d10 piercing (wood or metal), bludgeoning (wood or metal), or slashing (metal) damage
Firearm for steamjack or warbeast	2d6 piercing damage, firearm, range 20/60, magazine (1), misfire (4); cannot be a pistol or rifle

## SPENDING BUILD POINTS

Once you have selected the base item(s), decide how you wish to spend your build points. Use the corresponding tables below for a melee weapon, ranged weapon, firearm, armor, or shield. Unless stated otherwise, you can apply a given upgrade only once.

### MYRMIDON CUSTOM ITEMS

Myrmidons' weapons do not use conventional methods to damage a foe. It is suggested to rebuild myrmidon weapons rather than make them entirely custom. However, if a player wishes to create a weapon that deals an atypical type of damage such as fire, radiant, necrotic, and so on for their myrmidon, they must first purchase the Magical Reinforcement upgrade.

## MELEE WEAPON UPGRADES

Upgrade	Build Point Cost	Additional Rules or Requirements
Extra Damage	2	
Extra Damage	3	Can be applied twice; must be martial
Thrown (range 20/60)	1	Cannot be heavy
Increased Range	2	Must be thrown, cannot be heavy
Martial and Extra Damage	1	Special
Two-Handed and Extra Damage	0	Costs 3 more for simple weapons, cannot be light
Versatile	1	Cannot be two-handed
Heavy and Extra Damage	1	Cannot be light or finesse; costs 4 more for simple weapons, cannot be light
Light Reach	1	Cannot be heavy
Light Reach	4	Must be martial; costs 1 less if two-handed
Finesse	*	Special, cannot be heavy
Hidden	2	Cannot be heavy; costs 1 more if two-handed
Mechanika Housing	1	Special
Magical Reinforcement	2	Special

## SHIELD UPGRADES

Upgrades	Build Point Cost	Additional Rules or Requirements
+1 AC	3	
Extra +1 AC	7	
Remove Strength Requirement	1	
Combine with Weapon	4	Must be martial
Assault	3	Special
Alchemically Treated	1	Special, can be applied four times
Mechanika Housing	1	Special
Magical Reinforcement	2	Special

## ARMOR UPGRADES

<b>Upgrades</b>	<b>Build Point Cost</b>	<b>Additional Rules or Requirements</b>
+1 AC to Light Armor	3	Can be applied twice
+1 AC to Medium Armor	2	Can be applied four times
+1 AC to Heavy Armor	1	Can be applied four times
+1 AC to Heavy Armor	2	Also increases the cost of the item by 1,500 gp
+1 AC	5	Also increases the cost of the item by 2,500 gp
Remove Stealth Disadvantage	2	Costs 1 more for heavy armor
Remove Strength Requirement	1	Costs 1 more for heavy armor
Reduce Speed Penalty by 5 feet	3	Can be applied twice
Alchemically Treated	1	Special, can be applied four times
Storm	4	Special
Mechanika Housing	1	Special
Magical Reinforcement	2	Special

## RANGED WEAPON UPGRADES

<b>Upgrades</b>	<b>Build Point Cost</b>	<b>Additional Rules or Requirements</b>
Extra Damage	2	
Extra Damage	3	Can be applied twice; must be martial
Increased Range	1	Can be applied twice
Increased Range	2	Can be applied three times; must be martial
Martial and Extra Damage	1	Special
Two-Handed and Extra Damage	0	Costs 3 more for simple weapons
Versatile	1	Cannot be two-handed
Heavy and Extra Damage	1	Cannot be light or finesse; costs 4 more for simple weapons
Remove Loading	1	
Light	1	Cannot be heavy
Finesse	*	Special
Hidden	2	Cannot be heavy; costs 1 more if two-handed
Mechanika Housing	1	Special
Magical Reinforcement	2	Special

## FIREARM UPGRADES

<b>Upgrades</b>	<b>Build Point Cost</b>	<b>Additional Rules or Requirements</b>
Extra Damage	1	Can be applied twice
Extra Damage	3	Can be applied twice; must be martial and two-handed
Increased Range	1	Can be applied twice
Increased Range	2	Can be applied three times; becomes a rifle
Reduce Misfire by 2	1	Can be applied twice
Increase Magazine by 2	1	Can be applied twice
Martial and Extra Damage	1	Special
Two-Handed and Extra Damage	0	Costs 3 more for simple weapons; becomes a rifle
Heavy and Extra Damage	1	Costs 4 more for simple weapons
Hidden	2	Cannot be heavy; costs 1 more if two-handed
AOE (5)	3	Cannot be volley, must be martial
Increase AOE by 5	7	Must be AOE (5)
Volley	3	Cannot be AOE, must be martial and have a magazine of 10 or more.
Dual	1	Special, must be martial
Magelock	1	Must be martial
Mechanika Housing	1	Special
Magical Reinforcement	2	Special

## EXTRA DAMAGE

Each time the weapon gets an Extra Damage upgrade, that weapon's damage die increases. The weapon die progression is as follows: 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, 1d12 (or 2d4), 2d6, 2d8, 2d10, 2d12 (or 3d6), 3d8, 3d10, 3d12.

## HYBRID ITEMS

When you build a hybrid item incorporating two or more weapons, the item automatically gains each of the weapon profiles provided in the base items. Each upgrade except Martial and Extra Damage on the item applies to only one weapon profile at a time. The cost for Martial and Extra Damage is paid only once, and the upgrade is applied to all weapon profiles on a hybrid item. Items that are combined with a shield grant the shield's qualities and AC bonus while equipped.

## INCREASED RANGE

Each time an Increased Range upgrade is applied, increase the range of the weapon by 10/50.

## VERSATILE

A weapon with the versatile quality may be wielded with one or two hands; when using two hands, the weapon damage die increases by one step along the Extra Damage progression, above.

## SPECIAL UPGRADES

Following is a description of all upgrades that are marked as Special.

### ALCHEMICALLY TREATED

Shields and armor that have been alchemically treated offer additional resistance to one or more of four damage types. Each time you apply the Alchemically Treated upgrade to a piece of equipment, choose one damage type: cold, fire, acid, or lightning. The first time you take damage of the chosen type, you have resistance to that damage. Once you have benefited from each resistance, you must renew the alchemical treatment to benefit from it again. Doing so costs 10 gp in alchemical supplies (or one use of a field alchemy kit), and 2 minutes of work. You do not need to be trained in any tools to renew the treatment on an alchemically treated item.

If you are wearing an alchemically treated shield and alchemically treated armor, the resistance benefit is used up on both pieces at the same time. In other words, a treatment affecting the same element on two different items doesn't stack.

### ASSAULT

When you successfully shove a target while you are equipped with a shield with the Assault quality, the target takes 1d4 piercing damage.

### DUAL

Dual firearms increase the magazine capacity of the weapon by 1 and offer one of two benefits, depending on whether it is a mundane weapon or a magelock weapon.

- **Mundane.** You can choose to fire one or both barrels. If you fire both barrels, you make the attack with disadvantage, but if the attack hits, you score a critical hit.
- **Magelock.** If you fire both barrels, you make the attack with disadvantage, but you can apply two of your Rune Shot options to that attack.

### FINESSE

When applying the Finesse upgrade to a custom weapon, the upgrade costs build points equal to the combined cost of all upgrades that grant extra damage. If the custom weapon is also two-handed or versatile, this upgrade costs an additional 3 build points.

### MAGICAL REINFORCEMENT

This item is inscribed with holy or arcane runes that imbue it with a low level of magical energy. The weapon is considered magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances.

### MARTIAL

Weapons designed for steamjacks and warbeasts cannot be upgraded to martial weapons. For the purposes of qualifying for other upgrades, a steamjack or warbeast custom item is considered to be a martial weapon.

## MECHANIKA HOUSING

This item can be used as the housing for a mechanika item.

### STORM

This armor is designed to disperse lightning attacks. A character wearing this armor is immune to lightning damage.

## REBUILDING EXISTING ITEMS

It is possible to rebuild existing items, but doing so is an expensive and laborious process. The rules for rebuilding items differ depending on whether a custom or non-custom item is being rebuilt.

### REBUILDING A CUSTOM ITEM

You cannot rebuild a custom item made with the above rules. However, you can add build points to a maximum total of 15. To do so, select a new build point total that is higher than the current total of the custom item from the Cost and Building Time table above, paying the listed cost minus 300 gp. Subtract the item's current build points from the number of build points you selected from the table to get the number of build points the item gains. During the process a prototype is not created, and it takes 10 days less than what is listed under the "Time to Finished Item" column.

### REBUILDING A NON-CUSTOM ITEM

You can use one or more items that are not custom equipment as the base for a new item, which becomes rebuilt. When rebuilding such an item, use the following table instead of the Cost and Building Time table. The process of rebuilding an item does not produce a prototype. An item cannot be rebuilt to have the Mechanika Housing upgrade.

If you wish to rebuild an item that has already been rebuilt, you will need to start from scratch. All the build points (and corresponding upgrades) on the rebuilt item are lost, and you then buy a new number of build points.

When rebuilding an item, you cannot give it a quality it already has. For example, if you are rebuilding a martial weapon, it cannot be made martial again, and you cannot choose the Martial and Extra Damage upgrade.

### REBUILDING COST AND TIME

Build Points	Cost	Time to Finished Item
1	100 gp	5 days
2	300 gp	10 days
3	500 gp	15 days
4	800 gp	20 days
5	1,200 gp	25 days
6	2,000 gp	35 days
7	3,000 gp	50 days

## REBUILT MECHANIKA

Mechanika housing can also be rebuilt. However, the first build point must be used for the Mechanika Housing upgrade.

## REBUILT MAGIC ITEMS

Rebuilding a magic item can damage the underlying enchantment that powers the item. The first 2 build points must be used for the Magical Reinforcement upgrade.

# COAL DICE

*Feedin' your iron beast can be a logistical nightmare when you're trompin' around in the wilderness. But mindin' a cart full of coal is a lot less troublesome than teachin' a gorax to fight for you.*

*Allen Ashley*

Steamjacks are hungry for coal, burning through the finances of an adventuring company a 20-pound sack at a time. Keeping track of how much coal the company's steamjack goes through can be a complicated task. Some groups might enjoy the bookkeeping, while others might be inclined to handwave the fuel requirements of a steamjack companion.

This alternative rule seeks to strike a balance between those two extremes of keeping track of how much fuel the steamjack has left. After all, running out of fuel can be a powerful tool for drama and creating stories in your games in the Iron Kingdoms!

## USING COAL DICE

With this rule, a steamjack has a **coal die** to indicate how much fuel it has left and provides a rough guideline for the 'jack's overall fuel efficiency.

Steamjack Type	Coal Die	Fuel Load Cost
Light laborjack/warjack	1d8	10 gp of coal
Heavy laborjack/warjack	1d6	20 gp of coal

Under normal operations, the amount of coal a steamjack burns is negligible. It conserves fuel when the party performs a short or long rest and uses only a minimal amount of coal for basic locomotion. The majority of coal usage is during strenuous activities such as combat.

After a combat encounter, roll the coal die. On a roll of 1 or 2, the 'jack burned through a portion of its coal supply. The die decreases one step in size (from d8 to d6, or from d6 to d4). If the coal die is a d4 and would decrease a step, the steamjack has burned through all its coal and becomes inert.

## OTHER COAL DIE USES

At the GM's discretion, the coal die can factor into other parts of gameplay.

**Extra Effort.** Any time a steamjack performs a particularly strenuous action or one that would cause it to burn through its fuel supply at an increased rate, the GM might call for a roll of the coal die, reducing the die size as above on a roll of 1 or 2. Examples of things that might involve a roll of the die include:

- The steamjack takes the Dash action
- The steamjack benefits from a 'jack marshal's drive
- Other vigorous physical effort

**Chewing Sparks.** This use of the coal die represents a steamjack putting forth extra effort in an attack or a test of its physical abilities. At the GM's discretion, the steamjack can burn extra fuel as part of an action to roll the coal die and add the result to a single Strength or Dexterity check, attack roll, or damage roll. Regardless of the roll's result, after "chewing sparks," the steamjack's coal die decreases by one step.

## REFRESHING THE COAL DIE AND FUEL LOAD COST

The coal die is refreshed whenever the steamjack receives a fresh load of coal and water, as determined by its fuel load cost from the table above.

The fuel load cost has only a minor component associated with the water required to keep the 'jack's boiler functioning. This cost has less to do with the water itself—other than in the Bloodstone Marches, water is plentiful in the Iron Kingdoms—and more to do with the physical labor of hauling it and refilling the steamjack's boiler.

If the steamjack cannot be provided with a full refueling, or if the only available fuel is of lower quality, the GM may choose to increase the size of the coal die by one or more steps instead of refreshing it.

## COAL DICE AND OTHER FUEL TYPES

The optional rules above are for standard, good-quality coal as is available in the majority of the Iron Kingdoms. If the only source of fuel is of a different type, the GM may choose to modify the standard rules for coal dice in one of the following ways.

**Low-Quality Fuel.** In a pinch, a steamjack can run on anything that burns. Broken bits of furniture wood gleaned from the ground can work but is dirty, unreliable, and can keep a 'jack going for only a little while longer.

If a steamjack is burning low-quality fuel, the coal die decreases by one step on a roll of 1–3 instead of the normal roll, and it cannot be used to "chew sparks."

**Necrotite.** An unusual fuel common to Cryxian bonejacks, helljacks, iron lichens, and undead constructs, necrotite is coal infused with negative energy. It is efficient, but the fumes produced by it can be lethal to living creatures.

A steamjack or other steam engine burning necrotite increases its starting coal die by one step (for example, a light laborjack begins with 1d10) but doubles its fuel load cost—necrotite is rarer than coal. Additionally, while the steamjack or engine is active and burning fuel, creatures that start a turn within 10 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take poison damage equal to a roll of the steamjack's or engine's current coal die.

## COAL DICE AND POWERED ARMOR

Coal dice can also represent the fuel costs of steam-powered and warcaster armor. Such armor using coal dice follows the rules above, with a coal die of 1d10 and a fuel load cost of 5 gp.



# DISEASES OF IMMOREN

Sometimes the biggest threat to your survival isn't the monster you can see, but the one that you can't. I'm no expert—that's why I've asked a guest to speak on the subject of illness, but I know what it's like to watch someone's flesh fall off because they stepped in the wrong pool of muck or left a devil rat bite untreated for too long. If you think you might have caught some kind of little nasty, then you probably already have.

—Allen Ashley

My name is Doctor Henri Gateau, and I have spent my life in the study and treatment of a number of infectious diseases. My first word of advice is to take precautions. It is far better to avoid any infection vector than it is to pursue a remedy. Careful use of antiseptics, protective wear like impermeable gloves, goggles, and masks—especially when one suspects a pathogen is airborne—should be your primary concern. The evaluation and treatment of an illness can only occur when the practitioner of medical arts is clearheaded and not succumbing to the ravages of the illness they seek to treat.

—Dr. Henri Gateau, Shrouded One

Terrors abound in western Immoren, both seen and unseen. An indiscriminate killer, disease has shaped the face of Caen as much as war, with entire villages and cities decimated. Even the Orgoth, the brutal conquerors who ruled western Immoren for centuries, owe their defeat in part to the pestilent rip lung that raged across the continent, leaving thousands dead in the streets. Though the cities and towns of Immoren have made great strides to limit the spread of disease with highly organized sanitation practices, these silent killers can appear out of nowhere to ravage those who come into contact with them.

The contraction of diseases is silent and insidious, so a character is unlikely to notice they have caught a disease until symptoms appear. A character who is exposed to a potential disease transmission gains a d6 in their **infection pool**; prolonged exposure can add more dice. Once the **check interval** is reached, these dice are rolled and compared to an **infection threshold** based on the character's relevant ability score. Meeting or exceeding that number results in the character contracting the disease and experiencing the relevant effects. Thereafter, the character makes saving throws (typically Constitution) to determine the advance of the disease, and the infection pool resets to zero.

Additionally, some diseases can infect creatures without them knowing—these infected are known as asymptomatic carriers. Each disease has a length of time designated for these carriers, after which they no longer carry the disease. Anyone in contact with an asymptomatic carrier is considered exposed to the disease.

## ADVICE ON USING DISEASES

Be careful not to trivialize the spread of infectious disease at your game. At the time of writing, the world has still not fully curtailed the spread of our own very real pandemic. It is wise to approach the subject of plague and illness with a measure of caution, and not to make light of the effects that such sickness has had on the real people sitting at your gaming table.

Disease can be a powerful plot device, but only if it can't be quickly removed by anyone wielding a bit of magic. At the end of this section are some alternative rules for curing and preventing illness that offer more immersion in the world—and offer a higher risk. Some of the rules are optional, and others deal with how spells and features that cure diseases function with the infection pool system.

Dealing with diseases provides as much challenge, threat, and resource consumption as confronting a monster. In most cases, consider a disease as having a CR equal to the player characters' average party level.

**Type:** This is the cause of the disease, such as bacteria, dragon blight (dragon name), parasite (name), plant/mold/fungus (name), virus, toxin, and so on.

**Transmission:** Transmission determines how a creature can become infected by a disease, such as waterborne, ingested, airborne, contact, bite, or injury.

**Infection Pool Max:** The maximum number of d6 in the infection pool.

**Infection Threshold:** When checking for infection, this is the number above which a disease is contracted, typically an ability score. So long as multiple dice are rolled, a maximum roll on the dice always results in an infection, even if the total is below the infection threshold.

**Check Interval:** How often a check for infection occurs. Slow-acting infections might be measured in weeks; more aggressive diseases might take only days or hours.

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** If the disease can infect someone without them experiencing the effects, this happens when more than one infection die is rolled and the minimum roll comes up on all the dice.

## THE MIDLUNDS PLAGUE

In recent months, a new and unknown plague has been observed in the Western Midlunds and Thuria duchies of Cygnar. Efforts to stem the progression of this disease have met with mixed results, and the Brotherhood of the Bloody Shroud, a group dedicated to the study and eradication of illnesses, has not yet been able to find an effective treatment for it.

The spread of this plague is one of the major issues facing the southern kingdom at this time, and no one at present is certain the effects it will have on Cygnar in the long term.

## BLACK TONGUE

Black tongue is a parasitic disease first observed among the inhabitants of the Scharde Islands. The disease is widespread among blighted trollkin kriels of the region, but some cases have been reported in coastal villages of the mainland as well.

**Type:** Parasite (tongueworm)

**Transmission:** Waterborne. 1d6 per day in which contaminated water is ingested

**Infection Pool Max:** 4d6

**Infection Threshold:** Dexterity

**Check Interval:** 24 hours

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** N/A

After black tongue is contracted, the infected creature's tongue becomes numb and begins to show black spots. At the end of each check interval, an infected creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. After the first failed save, the black spots increase in size, and numbness causes the creature to make all Charisma ability checks with disadvantage. On a second failed save, the tongue turns completely black and the numbness increases. In addition to previous effects, the creature cannot cast spells with verbal components or use abilities dependent upon use of the voice (such as bardic inspiration, fell calling, or the feat Inspiring Leader). A third failed save makes eating impossible due to swelling of the tongue. Further, the infected creature cannot roll Hit Dice during a short rest and cannot regain Hit Dice during a long rest. Unless the condition ends or the creature is fed through other means—requiring a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check, with failed attempts dealing 7 (2d6) poison damage—the creature gains one level of exhaustion per day that cannot be removed while the condition persists. Three successful saves end the condition, though the discoloration of the tongue persists for about a month.

**Special Treatment.** Serpent rye is a potent liquor distilled with the blood of the bog constrictors found in Widower's Wood. It can help treat black tongue, granting advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) rolls to treat the disease or Constitution saving throws to resist the disease.

*Don't kiss a girl from Blackwater, boy!  
Hey hey, heave ho!  
'Cause 'er tongue's as black a blightshark, boy!  
Heave away, heave ho!  
Find yourself a bog-snake, boy!  
Tow the line, heave ho!  
Bleed that snake and make a rye, boy!  
Heave away, heave ho!*

*from the sea shanty  
"Blackwater Bay"*



## BLOODY SWEAT

Bloody sweat is a highly contagious airborne fever, though the likelihood of transmission increases dramatically with direct fluid contact in the form of blood or saliva. The disease has a rapid incubation period, followed by a prolonged prodromal stage of many weeks during which the symptoms manifest.

After a few weeks, the disease becomes full-blown. Its major symptoms include dramatically increased fever, open sores, and frequent, heavy nosebleeds. Within days of progressing to this state, the infected frequently die—bloody sweat has a mortality rate of nearly 70 percent. The illness' final, lethal symptoms are a drastic spike in temperature followed by the flow of blood from the victim's pores in a gruesome sweat that gives the malady its name.

**Type:** Virus

**Transmission:** Airborne/contact. 1d6 per hour spent in same room as an infected humanoid; 1d6 per contact with infected humanoid's blood, sweat, or saliva

**Infection Pool Max:** 4d6

**Infection Threshold:** Constitution

**Check Interval:** 24 hours

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** 1 week

On contracting bloody sweat, a creature begins to suffer bouts of nausea and sweating. Thereafter, DC 12 Constitution saving throws must be made at the end of each check interval. Each failed save results in 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and the creature's hit point maximum is reduced by the amount of necrotic damage taken, as capillaries near the surface of the skin burst and the creature begins to "sweat" blood. A creature dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0. It is cured if it succeeds on five saving throws.

**Special Treatment.** An alchemical remedy, first created by the Llaelese physician Doctor Henri Gateau, can be given to a creature infected with bloody sweat, granting advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) skill rolls to treat the disease, or Constitution saving throws to stop its progression.

*Whether a merchant living in Bainsmarket or a warlord in the Wyrmswall Mountains, whether commoner or noble, it is blood that carries the very vital essence of our lives. Best to keep it inside our bodies and not mopping from our brows.*

*—Dr. Henri Gateau*

## BOGRIN BLIGHT

Falsely attributed to the oft-reviled cousins of gobbers, bogrin blight is a virulent infection spread most commonly among the wasteland tribes of the Bloodstone Marches.

**Type:** Bacteria

**Transmission:** Injury/contact. 1d6 per injury with an infected tool or weapon; 1d6 per contact with bodily fluids of someone infected

**Infection Pool Max:** 4d6

**Infection Threshold:** Constitution

**Check Interval:** 24 hours

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** 1 week

On contracting bogrin blight, an infected creature develops a fever, and the original wound reopens and produces pus. Additionally, stiffness in the creature's joints causes it to have disadvantage on Dexterity ability checks.

Thereafter, at the end of each check interval, the infected creature must make DC 13 Constitution saving throws to determine the advance of the infection. The first failed save reduces the creature's movement by half due to painful lesions all over the body. A second failed saving throw causes the lesions to spread, which deals 2 (1d4) slashing damage each round the creature both moves and takes an action, as well as when donning or doffing armor. On a third failed save, the creature develops pockmarks (treat as **Battered** on the Severe Injuries table) and acquires one level of exhaustion that cannot be removed while the infection persists. Each subsequent failed saving throw adds one level of exhaustion that likewise cannot be removed while the infection persists. Three successful saving throws end the affliction.

**Special Treatment.** The grim folk of the Bloodstone township Pierson's Pit are known to fashion a poultice made from crushed malachite that can help against bogrin blight, granting advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) rolls to treat the disease, or Constitution saving throws to slow its onset.

*Clean your instruments well, Evlin—passing the blade through fire or wiping it with uiske works, in haste—for it is important that we do not introduce something worse than we excise.*

*—from the notes of  
Shrouded One Gillian Reane to an apprentice*

## BLACK LUNG

Immoren depends on coal for heat and industry, and a large number of Immorese folk are employed in coal extraction. In coal mining communities, a condition called black lung is a grim reality. The inhalation of coal dust scars the lungs, making breathing difficult.

**Type:** Toxin

**Transmission:** Airborne. 1d6 per day spent in space where coal dust is present

**Infection Pool Max:** 7d6

**Infection Threshold:** Constitution +20

**Check Interval:** 3 months

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** N/A

A creature afflicted with black lung develops a cough. The cough is infrequent but imposes disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks where the creature can be detected by sound. Thereafter, the infected creature must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw at the end of each check interval. The first failed save results in 1 permanent point of Constitution loss. The second failed save results in disadvantage on all Constitution ability checks. The third imposes one permanent level of exhaustion. Each

subsequent failed saving throw adds another permanent level of exhaustion. Three successful saves stop the advance of black lung, but all previous effects are permanent. The *greater restoration* spell can remove the Constitution loss or levels of exhaustion, with a separate casting required for each.

**Special Treatment.** Use of a gas mask or respirator while mining prevents an infection die from accumulating that day.

*As much as we try to dig it up—it tries to bury us.*

*from the journal of Dermot Hugh,  
coal miner*

## DEVIL RAT FEVER

This debilitating infection is carried by the bite of devil rats. It is not known if the illness is the product of a bloodborne parasite common among all members of the species, an innate quality of their physiology, or if they are merely asymptomatic carriers of this vile disease. What is known is that the bite of a devil rat can lead to a rapid onset of infection and, if not treated, a painful death.

**Type:** Bacteria

**Transmission:** Injury/contact. 1d6 per bite from a devil rat; 1d6 per contact with bodily fluids of someone infected; 1d6 per corpse handled of a creature slain by the disease

**Infection Pool Max:** 4d6

**Infection Threshold:** Constitution

**Check Interval:** 24 hours

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** 1 week

A humanoid afflicted with devil rat fever develops bleeding lesions that slowly appear across the skin, eventually covering the entire body. The lesions manifest at the end of the first long rest following contraction of the disease, causing the victim's Constitution and Strength scores to decrease by 1 each. Each day that the creature is diseased, more of the lesions appear: at the end of each check interval, an infected creature makes a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a success, it regains 1 point of Constitution and 1 point of Strength lost to the disease. If the infected creature regains all the points lost to the disease, it is cured. Other effects that raise ability scores do not cure the disease. On a failed saving throw, the infected creature's Constitution and Strength scores each decrease by 1 again. A creature dies if its Constitution score or Strength score is reduced to 0 as a result of this disease. Three successful saves end the condition.

*Many a merc's career started in this basement, clearing out the devil rats. Sometimes the fever makes them reconsider their career prospects.*

*from an interview between Dr. Henri Gateau  
and Quinn Donovan, proprietor of  
Quinn's Taproom in Corvis' Undercity*

## MAWG RABIES

The murderous frenzy of Molgur warriors was feared throughout western Immoren. For some Molgur this blood-maddened fury was more than just battle lust and adrenaline-induced ferocity; it was the result of mawg rabies, a parasitic disease that attacks the brain and the central nervous system, inducing mania and bloodlust.

**Type:** Parasite (mawg rabies)

**Transmission:** Injury/Ingested. 1d6 per bite or scratch from a burrow-mawg or another infected creature; 1d6 per raw burrow-mawg adrenal gland consumed; 1d6 from consuming the raw flesh of an infected creature

**Infection Pool Max:** 3d6

**Infection Threshold:** Wisdom

**Check Interval:** 6 hours

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** 1 week

On contracting mawg rabies, an infected creature develops a headache, which imposes disadvantage on Intelligence ability checks. Thereafter, it must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of each check interval. The first failed save results in 7 (2d6) necrotic damage that cannot be healed by any means while the creature is still infected. The second failed save results in another 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and imposes disadvantage on all Wisdom ability checks, as the creature develops paranoia. On the third failed save, the infected creature takes another 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and becomes compelled to attack anyone that comes near: when another creature moves within 10 feet of it, the creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or use its reaction to try to bite as an unarmed attack. A fourth failed saving throw results in another 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and the creature gains the paralyzed condition as it completely loses control of its body to seizures. A fifth failed saving throw results in the creature's death. Three successful saves stop the advance of mawg rabies.

**Special Treatment.** An alchemical restorative brewed with a distillate of a burrow-mawg's adrenal gland grants advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) skill rolls to treat the disease, or Constitution saving throws to stop its progression.

*Using burrow-mawgs for target practice is fun—right up until your best chum gets bit and tries to eat your face.*

*from the journal of Private Nilo Bancroft,  
43rd Long Gunners "Rainmakers"*

## PANNER'S POX

For generations, the people of Ternon Crag in the Bloodstone Marches have known of a regional ailment they call "panner's pox," so named for the number of prospectors who strike out into the northern hills and return with the condition.

What is known to only a few is the origin of the disease. Northeast of Ternon Crag, not far from the source of the Comb's Beacon River, lies the Castle of the Keys. This ancient fortification was for centuries the hiding place of the dragon Pyromalfic, whose blight spread into the headwaters of the

river and tainted it for miles downstream.

The “disease” is in truth a low-level blighting, the potency of the dragon blight diluted by the river’s water. Though the dragon has been dead and gone for years, Pyromalfic’s corruption still lingers and afflicts those who come into repeated contact with it.

**Type:** Dragon blight (Pyromalfic)

**Transmission:** Waterborne. 1d6 per day in which blighted water is ingested or in which 1 hour or more is spent in contact with blighted water

**Infection Pool Max:** 7d6

**Infection Threshold:** Dexterity + 20

**Check Interval:** 14 days

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** N/A

A beast or humanoid that contracts panner’s pox develops patches of skin that begin to itch distractingly, reducing movement by 5 feet while the infection persists. At the end of each check interval, the infected creature must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage that cannot be healed by any means while the creature is still infected, and the creature’s skin starts to take on a deathly pallor and dark patches of scaly flakes. Failing a second saving throw has the additional effect of causing all Charisma ability checks except for Intimidation checks to be made with disadvantage while the affliction persists. Failing a third saving throw makes the speed reduction permanent. Failing a fourth saving throw makes the Charisma penalty permanent, but when the creature isn’t wearing armor, its AC equals 13 + Dexterity modifier as the scales thicken and bone ridges grow. Failing a fifth save completes the metamorphosis: the creature grows claws that give it a natural unarmed attack dealing 1d4 slashing damage, its speed is reduced another 5 feet, and it makes all Wisdom ability checks except for Survival checks with disadvantage as it becomes obsessive and develops hoarding tendencies. Thereafter, the necrotic damage from all previous failed saving throws can be healed normally. After making three consecutive saving throws, the progress of the disease is halted and damage can be healed normally, but the paleness and patches of scaly skin are permanent, as are the aforementioned effects.

*I’m gonna warn you like the last kid. You might pan a fortune from Comb’s Beacon—I ain’t seen it yet, though maybe—but that panner’s pox chews them up and spits them out ugly.*

*—from an interview between  
Dr. Henri Gateau and  
Nazariah “Naz” Jcorsi,  
waitress at Sanity’s Bastion saloon*

## RIP LUNG

Rip lung is the respiratory plague that ravaged western Immoren, and particularly the Orgoth, during the Orgoth occupation. Thought to be a mystic bioweapon of the druids of the Circle Orboros, rip lung was an indiscriminate killer that spread like wildfire. It is believed that the Orgoth brought this disease back to their homeland when they fled Immoren following the Rebellion’s victory.

Though the illness was largely curtailed by the efforts of Ascendant Corben, who developed a remedy for the disease, a weaker strain still appears in some rural communities.

**Type:** Virus

**Transmission:** Airborne/contact. 1d6 per hour spent in same room as an infected humanoid; 1d6 per physical contact with infected humanoid

**Infection Pool Max:** 3d6

**Infection Threshold:** Constitution

**Check Interval:** 12 hours

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** 1 month

A creature that contracts rip lung develops red blotches over its skin and suffers extreme thirst. While infected, the creature must drink twice the normal amount of water per day or suffer the effects of dehydration. At the end of each check interval, it must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On the first failed saving throw, the creature begins spitting up blood and has disadvantage on all Strength and Constitution ability checks. After the second failed saving throw, the creature’s lungs begin filling with blood (treat as **Spitting Blood** on the Severe Injuries table). After a third failed save, the creature begins drowning from the blood in its lungs, gaining one level of exhaustion per hour. Two consecutive successful saving throws end the affliction.

**Special Treatment.** Ascendant Corben developed an inexpensive cure for rip lung made from common herbs. Alchemists belonging to the Brotherhood of the Bloody Shroud (see page 20), as well as anyone proficient in both Medicine and a field alchemy kit can craft this, requiring 1 gp worth of herbs and a DC 10 Intelligence check using a field alchemy kit to produce five doses in 8 hours. Use of this cure grants advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) rolls to treat the disease or Constitution saving throws to slow its onset. It also eliminates all dice in the character’s infection pool for this disease.

*Upon taking the vows of the Brotherhood of the Bloody Shroud, you will become a Shrouded One. Following in the footsteps of Ascendant Corben, you will ensure the survival of his cure that ended the rip lung plague—and be vigilant, should it return. And you will seek outbreaks of other diseases, provide succor to the afflicted, organize a public response, and seek to contain and cure.*

*—Abess Anslieigh Byrne  
of the Cathedral of  
Asc. Corben, High Shrouded One*

## STONE SICKNESS

A rare contagion suffered by mine workers, stone sickness affects the nervous system of the infected. It is contracted by breathing in toxic spores released by cidyne mushrooms that grow in some deep subterranean chambers.

**Type:** Fungus (cidyne mushrooms)

**Transmission:** Airborne. 1d6 per minute within 10 feet of a patch of cidyne mushrooms

**Infection Pool Max:** 5d6

**Infection Threshold:** Intelligence +10

**Check Interval:** 12 hours

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** N/A

On contracting stone sickness, a creature begins having mild visual and auditory hallucinations, suffering disadvantage to all Intelligence and Wisdom ability checks. At the end of each check interval, it must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On the first failed saving throw, the infected creature gains the poisoned condition from mild seizures that impair motor functions. On the second failed saving throw, the creature becomes incapacitated as the seizures get more severe. On the third failed saving throw, the creature becomes paralyzed, completely losing control of its motor functions. Three successful saves end the condition.

*Even after seven of us ended up in the infirmary with stone sickness, the old foreman kept sending us down. So, we sent him down and collapsed the tunnel. I'm sure Empress Ayn will be just as happy with coal from a different hole.*

*—Foreman Negomir Beladon  
of Roovish Hill's Labor Camp No. 11, shortly  
before his death at the hands of a shaft-wright*

## UMBRAL HEMOPHAGES

Umbral hemophages are deadly organisms from the Outer Abyss that were inadvertently brought into Caen by infernal horrors. When these stowaway organisms contact a surface, they form a mosslike lattice with small, mucus-covered buds that open and expel a small bit of ooze on anything in contact. When it contacts a sentient humanoid, a malign and alien intelligence directs these parasites to begin consuming its flesh from within. They rapidly form a bestial larva that, if left to feed, will eventually become a lamenter.

**Type:** Parasite (umbral hemophages)

**Transmission:** Contact. 1d6 per contact with ooze or tainted blood

**Infection Pool Max:** 4d6

**Infection Threshold:** Charisma

**Check Interval:** 3 hours

**Asymptomatic Carriers:** N/A

## TAKING PRECAUTIONS

Characters who use creativity to take precautions should be rewarded. Clever uses of spells and equipment can slow or prevent accumulation of dice in an infection pool, for example. However, unless using a spell that specifically removes all dice from an infection pool, it's recommended that you not let a character bring an infection pool below 1 die. Diseases are dangerous and insidious, and any amount of exposure should be considered a threat.

A creature that contracts umbral hemophages suffers from intense hunger—it feels compelled to eat a full day's rations every hour, gaining one level of exhaustion at the end of each hour it cannot eat. It also sweats profusely as its body temperature increases. At the end of each check interval, the infected creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution save or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage; these hit points cannot be healed while the creature is still infected. If the infected creature fails three consecutive saves, an **umbral larva** erupts from its abdomen, dealing 21 (6d6) slashing damage and ending the infection but leaving the character with the **Spitting Blood** status from the Severe Injuries table, should it survive. The umbral larva also emerges from a creature that is reduced to 0 hit points or that dies from exhaustion. Three successful saves ends the condition, and the creature spends 1 minute vomiting out an immature larva that immediately dies.

**Special Treatment.** Taking radiant damage or being the recipient of a beneficial Channel Divinity power immediately causes the infected creature to succeed on a saving throw against the infection's progress.

For more on umbral larvae, see chapter 4, "Bestiary of the Borderlands."

*So there we were—not a one of those Khadorans spoke a lick of Cygnaran, nor we Khadoran, but they let us into their outpost to wait out that frozen hell of the blizzard. Things were better after Henge Hold, you know? At dinner, they served us the same beet-slop they were eating, shared their vyatka with us, and it seemed to be going well. But this one red keeps giving us the stink-eye—right up until he started convulsing and his guts exploded. What came out—this worm-thing—scurried off. By morning, that had played out several more times, and the things got bigger. The rest of my unit, and all dozen Khadorans were either ripped apart or killed for suspicion of having a monster in them. So I found the powder magazine and blew that whole place straight to Urcaen.*

*—Sgt. Lorna Hurst, 7<sup>th</sup> 2nd Crencher,  
Commander "Howling Mawgs"*

# BACKGROUND: BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLOODY SHROUD

If you travel with a Shroud, keep 'em safe. Better to have 'em happy and healthy when you catch a spot of the sniffles or get scratched by a 'mawg than to try to cure yourself with bad hooch and your mamma's soup.

—Atten Ashley

The following background is well-suited to a campaign with a focus on the treatment of illness and is offered in addition to those in *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem* and *Borderlands and Beyond*.

You are a member of the Brotherhood of the Bloody Shroud, a monastic sect of Morrowan alchemists devoted to studying the biological sciences and the eradication of disease. You might have lost a loved one to disease or are a survivor yourself. Whatever your calling, you follow in the footsteps of Ascendant Corben, who developed a cure to the rip lung epidemic. Shrouded Ones, as members are called, work tirelessly against the spread of disease in the Iron Kingdoms.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Intelligence or Wisdom score increases by 1

**Skill Proficiencies:** Investigation, Medicine

**Tool Proficiencies:** Alchemist's supplies or a field alchemy kit, and choice of forensics kit or healer's kit

**Languages:** One of your choice

**Equipment:** A gas mask and two filters, alchemist's supplies, a talisman of Ascendant Corben, a small journal, a bar of soap, a set of common clothes, a priest's pack, and a pouch containing 10 gp

## FEATURE: IMPECCABLE HYGEINE

Having seen the ravages of disease, you are always wary and careful. As a result, the infection threshold to contract a disease you or your party encounters increases by your proficiency bonus. Additionally, your experience with diseases makes it so that you receive a bonus to saving throws against disease equal to your proficiency bonus, whether or not you are proficient in saving throws for that ability.

## SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Shrouded Ones are practical individuals who trust in science, which they use to cure the sick and alleviate suffering. They tend to be reserved or even morose. Because they battle the unseen with science and alchemy, and often are not seen until a plague has befallen a community, they can easily be misunderstood.

### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I have a take-charge attitude, but I'm actually afraid that I'm unqualified to do what I do.
- 2 I have a purpose, and I find comfort in that.
- 3 I am fascinated by people and love to study their mannerisms and interactions.
- 4 I am direct and to the point. Life is too short for sugar-coated half-truths.
- 5 I have a solemn, quiet nature.
- 6 Science will save us—if we can throw off the chains of superstition and folk wisdom.
- 7 I strive to show compassion to others—even those who might not deserve it.
- 8 Sometime I'm a little too nice—I don't like to deliver bad news.

### d6 Ideal

- 1 Science. The responsible use of science will better the world. (Lawful)
- 2 Responsibility. I have a responsibility to alleviate suffering in the world. (Good)
- 3 Truth. Our society must be preserved, even if it means the sick must be separated. (Lawful)
- 4 People. I believe people are worth preserving, not ideals or unfeeling laws. (Neutral)
- 5 Reason. Logic, not emotion, should guide my choices and actions. (Any)
- 6 Ruthlessness. Morality should not stand in the way of the pursuit of scientific knowledge. (Evil)

### d6 Bond

- 1 I will discover a cure to the disease that killed the one I loved.
- 2 I owe everything to a mentor who saved me from death.
- 3 If the authorities found out about the "accident" then I might get put behind bars.
- 4 I cannot stand by when others are made to suffer.
- 5 I saved the life of someone who went on to do terrible things.
- 6 I constantly experiment with new herbs and substances.

## d6 Flaw

- 1 My career creeps people out. I'm sure it's my career.
- 2 I am constantly washing my hands.
- 3 I am quick to anger when someone contradicts me on a scientific point.
- 4 The next Claiming will be a disease, and I must stockpile supplies before it's too late.
- 5 I see the bodies of people as machines, and I find it irritating when they don't defer to the judgment of a master mechanik like me.
- 6 Half the bottles in my alchemy kit are filled with liquor; I might have a problem.

## CURING DISEASE MODIFICATIONS

Certain spells and features function differently when using the infection pool mechanics presented above. Since creatures with accumulated infection dice have not yet contracted a disease, even recipients of a lesser restoration spell might still become infected when making a threshold check. Consistent with other types of injuries or afflictions, the magic of western Immoren is not a universal fix-all, but more of a tool to be used with precision. Game Masters are encouraged to reward creative uses of resources, including magic (see the "Taking Precautions" callout on page 19).

If you would like your characters to face an even more challenging experience, use the alternative curing rules provided below.

## SPELLS AND EFFECTS

**Contagion Spell.** No change—this spell affects only one creature and does not spread.

**Greater restoration Spell.** Add to the list of possible effects "potential diseases," which removes all dice from all infection pools.

**Any Other Effect.** Characters can use spells and features to take precautions if they know they have been put at high risk of contracting a disease. Any spell or feature that cures a disease reduces the current infection pool of each disease the target is currently infected with by 1 die, but cannot remove the last die of the infection pool.



## PHARMACEUTICALS

Although few diseases have true cures, various pharmaceuticals are made by pioneering scientists, mad alchemists, or good-natured doctors. Unfortunately, a large snake-oil industry has also built up around those who are actually making useful items to help prevent and alleviate illness. Truly helpful treatments made by experts fall into one of two categories: tinctures and draughts. **Tinctures** help a creature overcome an illness, and **draughts** help delay the onset of the worst symptoms.

Creating pharmaceuticals requires alchemist's supplies, a field alchemy kit, or a herbalism kit, and the character must

*Draughts, tinctures, pharmaceuticals. Call 'em whatever you want. Just make sure you've got enough in your pack to last the whole trip.*

*Allen Ashley*

be proficient in Medicine. The crafter makes an Intelligence or Wisdom (player's choice) check with one of the tool sets, with a DC equal to 3 + the save DC of the disease. It requires 1 hour to make one dose of either a tincture or draught, and costs 15 gp plus an additional 15 gp for every point the save DC of the disease is above 10. Failure means the time and half the cost of the supplies are wasted.

**Tinctures.** Consuming a tincture grants advantage on the next saving roll made at the next check interval of a disease. A single tincture is good for only one save and affects only the disease it was made for.

**Draughts.** Consuming a draught allows the infected creature to skip the next saving roll at the next check interval for the disease. Skipping the save means the disease does not progress, but it also does not count as a success. A draught is good for delaying a disease only once each use and affects only the disease it was made for. Continually using draughts can delay a disease's progression indefinitely.

Additionally, draughts can be used as a preventive measure. For 1 week after using a draught, before being exposed to a disease, a creature does not gain an infection die from the disease the draught is designed for the next time it would. After a draught has prevented gaining an infection die, there is a 50% chance that the protective effect is exhausted.

### NOTE ON CLASS ABILITIES

Some classes—druid, monk, paladin—have features that make a character immune to disease. Though dragon blight mechanically works like a disease (see panner's pox), it is not a true infection. Characters with disease immunity from these classes are just as susceptible as any other. However, characters immune to disease who have been exposed might still bring other characters into contact with diseases (for example, a paladin could have been spattered with the blood of someone infected with devil rat fever).

## ALTERNATIVE CURING RULES

These optional rules make curing diseases far more difficult. Unless a character uses an extremely powerful spell, each time a disease is cured through a spell or feature, the infected creature only rolls a new save to recover from a disease. When a creature makes a new save as a result of a disease being cured by a spell or feature, the disease does not progress on a failed save. Success on the save counts as one of the successes required to end the disease's effects. A creature can roll only one additional save from the effects of spells or features between each check interval of a disease.

**Lesser Restoration Spell.** A creature affected by this spell rolls a new save against one disease, making the roll with advantage.

**Greater Restoration Spell.** This spell has the additional effect of completely curing one disease affecting the creature it is cast on. Permanent effects caused by diseases are not reversed, however.

**Wish Spell.** Each casting of this spell, such as granted by an Infernal, can reverse the permanent effects of disease on one willing creature.

**All Other Effects.** If any other spell or feature would cure a disease, the affected creature makes a new save instead.





# ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

*A smart traveler knows that, out in places like the Bloodstone, Glimmerwood, or anywhere you can't see the smoke from somebody's chimney, it ain't just the critters that can kill you.*

*Foul weather, hidden natural hazards, and not knowin' the lay of the land have killed just as many poor saps as a mean-spirited argus or a hungry troll. Before you head out, read up on what to expect. A good place to start is in the obituaries of explorers who tried before you. Find out what it was that killed them, so the same doesn't happen to you.*

*Allen Ashley*

Civilization is often said to end at the borderlands. They are dangerous and often hostile territories. From the mysterious Glimmerwood to the tempestuous Stormlands, the region is rife with peril. Pits of noxious flaming tar, forests devastated by dragon blight and industry, and areas tainted by infernal darkness mark this land. Magic and technology aside, the region is filled with natural phenomena and natural terrors. Much of this expanse is considered wasteland to the common folk of Immoren, but the few brave souls who explore these lands can also find wonder, beauty, and riches.

The hazards detailed below are not all unique to the borderlands. Many of these features can be found throughout Caen unless otherwise stated.

A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) check allows a traveler to recognize an environmental hazard and provide the knowledge of how to mitigate the harm if possible. An additional successful DC 16 Intelligence (Nature) check grants a traveler advantage on saving throws to avoid taking damage from an environmental hazard.

All the features listed below represent average examples of the effect these hazards have on characters. GMs may choose to make them more deadly or less by adjusting the damage dice, area of effect, and saving throw DCs.

## BLACKMIRE

Bitumen is a volatile and viscous black liquid lying beneath the fractured landscape of the Bloodstone Desert. It can be refined to produce Menoth's Fury—a valuable fuel and dangerous weapon. Large deposits of bitumen form pits of viscid pitch, which the Idrian tribes of the desert call blackmires.

Blackmires are often hidden by dust and sand. When a creature enters the area, it sinks 1 foot into the mire and becomes restrained. At the start of each of the creature's

turns, it sinks another foot. As long as the creature isn't completely submerged in the mire, it can escape by using its action and succeeding on a Strength check. The DC is 12 plus the number of feet the creature has sunk into the mire. A creature that is completely submerged in a blackmire cannot breathe. A creature can pull another creature within its reach out of a blackmire by using its action and succeeding on a Strength check. The DC is 7 plus the number of feet the target creature has sunk into the mire.

The bitumen of a blackmire is flammable, and fields of it are occasionally ignited by lightning or other sources of great heat. Any creature caught in the burning field takes 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. Even after escaping the field the creature takes 1d6 damage per round from flaming bits of tar sticking to its body. This damage ends only when the creature or another spends an action putting out the flames.

Bitumen also produces noxious fumes. Any creature breathing the air within 5 feet of a blackmire for 1 minute must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1d4 minutes.

## BLOODSTONE DESERT

*It's hell to get off your boots, but a bit of the black stuff is a great way to start a fire, even in the rain. Keep a little of it in a flask for when you really need it.*

*—Allen Ashley*

This inhospitable waste stretches from the edge of civilization to the rim of the Abyss. The great expanse and desolation of the desert makes all other lands seem like paradise in comparison. Some Idrian tribes of the Bloodstone Marches venture into the desert but know and respect it enough not to linger. Still, beings do call this blighted terrain home. Most notable are the efaarit, whose mastery of this deadly landscape is second to none. More recently the hardy skorne have become residents in some pockets, though the vast majority of these warriors have returned to their home beyond the Stormlands.

Every place within the desert is exposed to severe heat by day, but at night the temperature drops to levels of severe cold. The daytime temperature of the desert is never below 100 degrees Fahrenheit (F), and at midday increases by 10–20 degrees. At night the temperature falls just below freezing. For the effects of severe heat and severe cold, see their specific entries in this chapter.

Features unique to the Bloodstone Desert include the following.

**Bitter Sea.** The Bitter Sea is a huge inland lake nestled in the Chalice Peaks, with a surface area of about 12 square miles. Its water is highly acidic and not potable. A creature making contact with water of the Bitter Sea takes 1d4 acid damage. If a creature ingests the water it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature

takes 7 (2d6) acid damage and is poisoned for 1d10 minutes. On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and is not poisoned.

**Magnetic Sand.** Sediments of sand infused with iron in the form of magnetite are not uncommon. Rarely, however, a deposit of iron sand can become magnetized like a lodestone. The process is much debated, but the prevailing theory is that the sand is influenced by the strong magnetic fields surrounding lightning bolts. All objects made of ferrous metal that pass over this tract of black metallic sand are acted upon by an extremely powerful magnet. Unattended metal objects such as weapons and cookware instantaneously fall to the ground. A creature holding a metal object while standing on magnetic sand at the start of its turn must make a successful DC 17 Strength saving throw or drop the object on the ground. Steamjacks and creatures in heavy armor that end their turn on a patch of magnetic sand must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or become prone and restrained. A restrained creature can use its action to try to escape, doing so with a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) roll.

**Mortis Weed.** A dry reddish grass that springs up among the dunes, mortis weed makes a distinctive crunch when walked upon and smells faintly of the grave. If ingested by a creature, it has unpredictable effects; roll 2d4 and consult the following table.

### MORTIS WEED EFFECTS

#### 2d4 Result

- 2–3 The creature gains the ability to cast speak with dead once within the next 8 hours.
- 4–6 The creature can sense undead within 60 feet of it. Within the same radius, the creature can also detect the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated. These effects last for 10 minutes after ingesting the weed.
- 7–8 The creature takes 5 (2d4) poison damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it is also poisoned for 10 minutes.

If the mortis weed is instead burned, all creatures within 5 feet of the smoke are affected as if they had ingested the weed. A creature that is affected by mortis weed cannot be affected by it again for seven days.

**Glass Patch.** Whether through volcanic activity, lightning, or sorcery, patches of sand sometimes turn to glass. The glass patch is 2d20 feet in diameter and 1d6 inches thick. The glass patch is difficult terrain. When a creature moves onto the glass patch for the first time on a turn, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.

**Shattered Glass Patch.** Sometimes a glass patch is damaged by natural forces or by interference from intelligent beings. A shattered glass patch is rough and jagged, forming difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn on or enters a patch of shattered glass takes 3 (1d6) piercing damage from the broken glass.

## CAUSTIC DOWNPOUR

A sudden shower of acid rain sometimes falls in areas tainted by blight, foul magic, heavy industry, and other unnatural influences. This acid rain is infused with magic and is therefore much more corrosive than the mundane variety.

A creature exposed to such a storm takes 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns within the area. Only substantial cover or shelter offers protection against the caustic liquid. Objects that are not worn or carried take 3 (1d6) acid damage for every round they are exposed to the caustic downpour.

A typical shower lasts 1d4 minutes, but some horrible storms have lasted for days and laid waste to villages, cities, and woodlands. Open sources of water exposed to a caustic downpour remain undrinkable for 1d4 days after its passing.

## CUTTING GALE

Winds from the Stormlands to the east pick up across the Bloodstone Desert, carrying sharp rocks in a lacerating *haboob*, or dust storm. A creature exposed to it takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage at the end of each minute of exposure. Cutting gales last for 2d4 hours, and only substantial cover or shelter can protect a creature from the damage they cause. Everything within a cutting gale is heavily obscured, and creatures in the area have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. Creatures within a cutting gale not wearing protective face coverings cannot breathe easily because of the dust and sand, and run the risk of suffocation.

## FLASH FLOOD

*A good pair of goggles is worth the cost. Just ask Roln "No-Eyed" Kenson. You can find him beggin' outside the Last Gambit Saloon in Ternon Crag.*

*Allen Ashley*

Sometimes occurring during heavy rain or the result of swiftly melting ice or snow, a flash flood is a rapid inundation of low-lying areas. Creatures in a flash flood suddenly find themselves trapped in a deluge as the water rises suddenly. The water is 2d6 × 1d4 feet deep and covers a radius of 3d8 × 10 feet.

All creatures in the area must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a success, it takes half as much damage and is not knocked prone.

A creature runs the risk of drowning while it is prone in the floodwater. To stop being prone, a creature must make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, rising to the surface of the water on a success.

Flash floods can last anywhere between twelve hours to a week, depending on the size of the flood and how quickly it can pass into a drainage area.

## EARTHQUAKE

The ground trembles violently, tossing creatures and objects about. In extreme cases buildings crumble and fissures open up in the landscape. Most earthquakes affect a radius of 1 to 2 miles and last less than a minute, but they vary greatly in area of effect, duration, and severity.

The following rules describe an average earthquake. Game Masters should adjust the DCs and damage levels according to the desired severity.

The ground in the area affected by an earthquake is difficult terrain. Each creature on the ground that is concentrating must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's Concentration is broken.

Each creature that ends its turn on the ground in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is knocked prone.

Fissures frequently occur in the area affected by an earthquake. An average quake generates a total of 2d4 fissures in locations chosen by the Game Master. Each is 2d6 feet long, 2d6 feet deep, and 2d6 feet wide.

Any structure in contact with the ground in the area where an earthquake occurs takes 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage at the end of each round that the quake persists. If a structure drops to 0 hit points, it collapses and potentially damages nearby creatures. The radius threatened by the falling structure is equal to half the structure's height. A creature within this area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 9 (4d8) bludgeoning damage, is knocked prone, and is buried in the rubble. A creature buried in this way is blinded and restrained, and it has total cover. The creature gains 1 level of exhaustion for every 5 minutes it spends buried. It can try to dig itself free as an action, breaking free and ending the blinded and restrained conditions on itself with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and doesn't fall prone or become buried.

## HAZARDS OF INDUSTRY

Immorese society, whether within the Iron Kingdoms or in the nations of the Rhulfolk and Iosans, is built on industry—and that industry is driven by factories, mines, and mills. The modern age has brought wonders to those who accept it and power to those who choose to wield it. These innovations come at a price, though. Damage to the environment is common near industrial sites. Many risky situations can occur in the forges, sweatshops, and foundries of the continent. Most factories are dirty, dark, and hot places filled with thunderous noise and dangerous devices.

## FACTORY FLOOR

Not all industrial areas are inherently dangerous, but few have any stringent safety protocols in place to prevent harm to workers and other individuals. Factories and mines present numerous risks. Machinery accidents can lead to burns, arm and leg injuries, amputation of fingers and limbs, and death. Other threats of a factory environment include chemical spills, dust, and severe heat.



It happened one evening, when her dress was caught by the shaft. In an instant the poor woman was drawn by an overpowering strength and crushed on the floor. She uttered the most wretched cries! We ran toward her as we saw her pulled round and round with the shaft—we heard the cracks as her bones suddenly broke to pieces, pulverized as the machinery twisted her round, and drew her body tighter and tighter within the works...

*—an account of an accident at  
the Caspian Verlini Gunworks by  
Master Gunsmith Rogan Verlini*

Below is a list of potential hazards. Normally no more than two would be present in any one industrial setting, but truly dangerous sites could have more.

**Chemical Spills.** Chemicals can be corrosive, explosive, flammable, or toxic. A creature that comes into contact with a hazardous chemical must make a saving throw, taking damage on a failed save according to the threat level of the chemical. On a success the creature takes half damage. The type of saving throw is shown on the Hazardous Chemicals table. The DC of the saving throw and amount of damage incurred are determined by the threat level of the chemical.

**Dangerous Machinery.** A creature that stumbles, is pushed, or otherwise comes into contact with dangerous machinery can be harmed a number of ways. The following are examples of dangerous machines. The saving throws and damage can be adjusted to meet the level of threat required for an encounter.

#### HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

Chemical Saving Type	Damage Throw	Type	—Damage by Threat Level—		
			Moderate (DC 12)	Dangerous (DC 15)	Deadly (DC 20)
Corrosive	Dexterity	Acid	1d6	2d8	3d10
Explosive	Dexterity	Thunder	2d6	3d8	4d10
Flammable	Dexterity	Fire	1d6	2d8	4d8
Toxic	Constitution	Poison	1d8	2d10	3d12

<b>Machine</b>	<b>Effect</b>
Crushing/ Slamming Device	Many machines can purposely or inadvertently crush or slam creatures and objects. A swinging arm on a crane can threaten an unwary individual or a heavy weight can fall on the unfortunate. A creature coming into contact must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage.
Needle Points	This device could be intended to create clothing or to puncture a tough material. A creature coming into contact must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (2d4) piercing damage.
Shredder	Shredding devices are particularly nasty machines. Some are designed to destroy delicate material such as paper, but others can rend stout trees to wood pulp and tear through metal objects. A creature that comes into contact with a shredding device must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled. The DC to escape the grapple is 16. Every time a creature ends its turn grappled by the machine it takes 4 (1d8) slashing damage and 13 (2d12) bludgeoning damage.
Slicing Blades	This machine has cutting edges that can harm those touched by them. A creature coming into contact must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) slashing damage.

**Dust.** Ventilation is rare in factories and sweatshops. Countless contaminant particles can affect individuals there. Everything within an area of heavy dust particles is lightly obscured, and creatures in the area have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. Any creature that spends more than 10 minutes in an area with heavy dust and without proper protection must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1d4 hours.

**Intense Temperature.** Forges, weapon mills, refineries, and other industrial sites frequently produce severe heat. Severe cold is also a potential threat in areas with refrigeration technology. For the effects of severe heat and severe cold, see their specific entries in this chapter.

## GLIMMERWOOD

The Glimmerwood is a damned forest in the eyes of the beings in surrounding regions. Its name stems from the blue glowing algae and lichen that grow on the trunks of its trees. This ghostly radiance has fueled the Glimmerwood's reputation as a cursed and ominous place. The foxfire light of the forest is constant but noticeable mostly at night; even on a starless evening everything within the Glimmerwood gleams dimly. The luminescent growths that give the forest its name are actually a collection of several species with differing properties. Some of those are detailed below.

All these growths shed dim light in a 10-foot radius. Attempts to transplant them outside the Glimmerwood have been unsuccessful; it seems none of these species can survive beyond their native forest.

**Death Slime.** This algae grows on the ground and branches in very moist areas. Death slime is difficult terrain. When a creature moves onto it for the first time on a turn, it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone. Any creature that touches death slime without protection must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1d4+1 rounds.

**Devil's Ear.** A large, clamshell-shaped fungus that grows out of the sides of trees, this is edible in spite of the shimmering light it produces. Many say it tastes like chicken. A single sheet of devil's ear yields 1d4 pounds of food.

**Eye of the Night.** This small blue toadstool is covered with black-and-white spots that resemble eyes. Eating it causes a creature's pupils to dilate, giving it darkvision for 1 hour. While the creature is in bright light during that hour it has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Grumblemoss.** This plant grows low to the ground and reproduces through spores. When a creature walks on grumblemoss it releases its spores while making a repetitive low rumbling noise as if muttering some complaint. Any creature making a Dexterity (Stealth) check in the area does so with disadvantage.

**Lustercappe.** A broad mushroom that grows low to the ground, lustercappe glows somewhat less than the other surrounding fungus but when struck sharply explodes in a burst of light.

*In other lands there can be found the occasional glowing fungus, which it has been discovered is caused by enzymes that are released as the organism breaks down the rotting wood of dead trees. The glow of the Glimmerwood is... something else.*

*—an excerpt from "The Hidden World of Treatise on the Undergrowth of the Glimmerwood" by ogryn naturalist Rishka Skullsplitter*

Every creature within a 10-foot radius of an exploding lustercappe must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) radiant damage and be blinded until the end of the next round. On a successful save the creature takes half as much damage and is not blinded.

## INFERNAL LOCUS

After the Claiming, many hope that the threat of infernals is gone. However, their mark upon Caen can still be felt in some areas. An infernal locus can be any place or size. A detect evil and good spell cast within range of one reveals its nature.

Infernals within an infernal locus have advantage on all saving throws. In addition, the infernal taint in an area can cause lingering effects. Roll on the following table or pick one or more or create your own using the following as inspiration.

### INFERNAL LOCUS EFFECTS

#### d10 Characteristic

- Unnatural darkness.** The area is one degree darker than it should be. If the surrounding area is bright light the infernal locus is dim light. If the surrounding area is dim light the locus is shrouded in darkness. The radius of light produced by torches, lamps, and other nonmagical sources is cut in half.
- Eerie wind.** A chilling breeze whips through the air (even if the infernal locus is indoors or underground). The temperature immediately drops below freezing for 1d6 minutes.
- Chattering whispers.** Strange voices utter indecipherable incantations. All concentration rolls are made with disadvantage.
- Shifting landscape.** The ground is swaying, buckling, or trembling. The area is difficult terrain. Any creature attempting the Dash action must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw before moving or be knocked prone.
- Rage.** Upon entering this area creatures feel an overwhelming anger. A creature starting its turn in this infernal locus must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or use its action before moving to make a melee attack against another creature within reach. If more than one creature is within range of the attack, the Game Master may choose a target or pick randomly. The affected creature can act normally on its turn if no target is within its reach. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, it is immune to the effect of this particular locus for 24 hours.
- Remorse.** This area is permeated with a sense of deep regret and sadness. A creature starting its turn in this infernal locus must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated until the start of its next turn. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, it is immune to the effect of this particular locus for 24 hours.
- Terror.** This locus is imbued with a feeling of anxiety, as if something terrible has just happened or is about to. A creature starting its turn in this infernal locus must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the start of its next turn. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, it is immune to the effect of this particular locus for 24 hours.
- Confusion.** Things just aren't right here. Colors are strange, shapes are at unusual angles, and paths do not lead where they should. A creature that ends its turn in this infernal locus must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as if by the *confusion* spell until it leaves the area. Once a creature succeeds on the saving throw, it is immune to the effect of this particular locus for 24 hours.
- This area is covered in **umbral hemophages** (see "Diseases" in this chapter).
- Phantom Limbs.** 1d12 hideous spectral arms pop out of flat surfaces in a 30-foot radius and menace creatures that tread here. If a creature enters a space within 5 feet of one, the limb attempts to grapple it. Though immaterial, the limbs each have a Strength of 18. A creature that ends its turn grappled by a phantom limb takes 2 (1d4) psychic damage. If a creature resists or breaks the grapple of a limb, that limb ceases to exist immediately. Direct sunlight causes the limbs to dissipate immediately.

## LAVA

Lava is molten rock (magma) that has been expelled from beneath the ground. An area within 100 feet of lava above ground is under the effects of severe heat at 100 degrees F. For the effects of severe heat and severe cold, see their specific entries in this chapter. Within 50 feet the heat is over 110 degrees, and within 20 feet it is above 120 degrees. Within 30 feet of a lava flow above ground the air is poisonous.

Gases produced by lava can be dangerous. A living creature that ends its turn in this area must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save it takes 5 (2d4) poison damage and is poisoned until it takes a short or long rest outside of the area. On a successful save the creature takes half damage and is not poisoned. The ranges for severe heat and poisonous air around subterranean lava flows are double those of aboveground lava.



A creature that falls onto lava immediately takes 52 (15d6) fire damage and continues to do so every time it starts its turn in contact with the lava. Any nonmagical equipment that is not made of metal is instantly destroyed. Nonmagical metal objects take the same damage as the creature holding them. Lava is an incredibly dense liquid, and creatures and objects do not immediately sink into it. A heavy creature or object (200 pounds or more) in lava sinks at a rate of 1 foot per minute if it is not utterly destroyed before that time. As long as the creature isn't completely submerged in the lava, it can escape by using its action and succeeding on a Strength check. The DC is 15 plus the number of feet the creature has sunk into the lava. Any creature that has been burned by lava will continue to burn for 1d6 rounds or until the fire is put out. While burning, the creature takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

## MACABRE MISTRAL

Many things can cause a macabre mistral. The tremendous death and destruction wrought on battlefields leads some areas to become haunted with the spirits of fallen soldiers. Once in a great while the weight of so much wanton carnage condenses into a wind of undead misery. Veins of necrotic ignited by flame have also been known to create this deadly wind. It is possible that the haunted mists of Ios after the Claiming could whip into such a frenzy of sorrow that a macabre mistral could be created.

Travelers caught in the mistral feel as if their very life is draining from them as myriad mournful voices whisper and cry around them. For every minute spent here a creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 3

(1d6) necrotic damage on a failed save. The creature's hit point maximum is decreased by the amount of damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest.

For every hour spent exposed to the macabre mistral, a creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion due to the wind's essence-sapping nature.

*A wind tore through the unsettling fog. Stephan heard them first, the wails, the cries. Nevertheless, we stayed the night in that dark hollow, having nowhere else to make camp. The whispering zephyr spoke unpleasant dreams into my mind all through the night. When I awoke, feeling depleted instead of refreshed, I attempted to rouse my fellows. Each one had passed in the night with a look of terror frozen on their faces.*

*The account of Rolegg Wasmairth of Hoorsk*

## MISTS OF IOS

Interlopers in the ancestral homeland of the elves are never made to feel welcome. The very landscape rejects them. Paths twist and turn to shift would-be trespassers to the border. The trees themselves project a sense of foreboding to all who do not belong. The most potent aspect of the land's inherent defense system is the fabled mists of Ios. Travelers through the mists hear voices whispering phrases that are just beyond their understanding.

**Soul Haze.** Within the mists of Ios are patches of fog that contain the demented souls of those lost to the wilderness. Every minute a creature lingers in a patch of soul haze, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be affected as if by the *confusion* spell.

A creature that spends more than 10 minutes in the soul haze takes 3 (1d6) psychic damage at the end of each of its turns until it leaves the haze.

## MUSKEG

A quagmire that forms in arctic regions when peat accumulates close to a water table, muskeg combines the effects of quicksand with those of severe cold. For the effects of severe cold, see the specific entry in this chapter. When a creature enters a muskeg, it sinks 1d4 + 1 feet into it and becomes restrained. At the start of each of the creature's turns, it sinks another 1d4 feet. As long as the creature isn't completely submerged in muskeg, it can escape by using its action and succeeding on a Strength check. The DC is 10 plus the number of feet the creature has sunk so far. A creature that is completely submerged in the muskeg cannot breathe.

Each minute spent in the muskeg requires the creature to succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures that are naturally adapted to living in ice-cold environments.

*When I traded among the Rhulfolk I discovered their love of peat. It makes a decent enough fuel when dried into bricks, but those darned buggers figured out that burning it to dry malted barley gives their uiske a distinctive smoky flavor!*

*from the travel log of Mattolame Webbe*

## RAILWAYS

Western Immoren is crisscrossed with railways. The wonder of fast travel has sparked cultural exchange and advancement in all areas of society throughout the continent. However, the advent of rail travel has created new perils.

The tracks themselves are difficult terrain to any creature crossing them or foolish enough to walk along them. Not every rail and tie is perfectly maintained and secured, so accidents do occur. Rail yards are particularly perilous due to the sheer quantity of tracks. The constant movement of locomotives in this area makes the danger of a collision an ever-present threat to the unwary.

The most dramatic hazard is the possibility of a collision. Any creature in the path of a train moving at top speed must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save.

The interior of a train is not without its dangers as well. While moving, the interior is considered difficult terrain. Creatures in the boiler room are subject to the effects of the severe heat and dust entries in this chapter. A boiler that

is poorly maintained or pushed to its limits might burst. If the Game Master determines that a boiler is in danger of bursting, roll a d20. On a roll of 1, the boiler explodes. Each creature in a 15-foot cube originating from the boiler must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 13 (3d8) thunder damage and 9 (2d8) fire damage, and is pushed 10 feet away from the blast's point of origin. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much thunder and fire damage and isn't pushed. In addition, unsecured objects that are completely within the area of effect are automatically pushed 10 feet away from the center of the blast's point of origin.

Derailments and collisions between trains are extremely rare but do occur. In the case of such an event survival is unlikely. Each creature on board must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The exterior of a moving train is not intended for passengers. Every surface on the outside is difficult terrain. All attack rolls and ability checks are made with disadvantage. Each creature starting its turn on the exterior of a moving train must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be thrown from the train.

## ROCKSLIDE

A typical rockslide is 250 feet wide, 200 feet long, and 30 feet high. When a rockslide occurs, all nearby creatures must roll initiative. At the start of each round the rockslide travels 400 feet until it can travel no more. When a rockslide moves, any creature in its space moves along with it and falls prone, and the creature must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw, taking 13 (2d12) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. When a rockslide stops, the debris settles and buries creatures. A creature buried in this way is blinded and restrained, and it has total cover. The creature gains 1 level of exhaustion for every 5 minutes it spends buried. It can try to dig itself free as an action, breaking the surface and ending the blinded and restrained conditions on itself with a successful DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. A creature that fails this check three times can't attempt to dig itself out again. A creature that is not restrained or incapacitated can spend 1 minute freeing a buried creature. Once free, that creature is no longer blinded or restrained by the rockslide.

## SEVERE COLD

Whenever the temperature is at or below freezing, a creature exposed to the cold must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures wearing proper clothing to protect from the cold and creatures naturally adapted to cold climates.

When the temperature reaches 10 degrees F below freezing, an unprotected creature takes 2 (1d4) cold damage after each 10-minute period it spends in the cold. When the temperature is 20 degrees or more below freezing,

an unprotected creature takes 7 (2d6) damage after each 10-minute period spent in the cold.

If a creature is immersed in freezing water, the DC for the Constitution saving throw to avoid exhaustion is 17 and all damage dice for severe cold temperatures are doubled.

## SEVERE HEAT

Deserts, industrial areas, lava flows, and many other places in the world generate incredibly high temperatures, which can harm creatures inhabiting those places. A creature exposed to temperatures above 100 degrees F must succeed on a Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. The DC is 5 for the first hour and increases by 1 for each additional hour. A creature exposed to temperatures above 110 degrees must make their saving throws every 10 minutes and the difficulty increases by 1 for each additional 10 minutes. A creature exposed to temperatures above 120 degrees suffers the same effect as at 110 degrees but also takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the end of each 10-minute period that it spends in the area.

Creatures wearing medium or heavy armor or who are clad in heavy clothing, have disadvantage on all saving throws related to severe heat. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage, as well as those naturally adapted to hot climates, automatically succeed on saving throws related to severe heat.

## SINKHOLE

The ground ruptures and collapses above a cavity, dropping objects and creatures into it. A typical sinkhole is 3d12 × 10 feet in diameter and almost uniformly circular in shape. The depth of a sinkhole is 1d6 × 5d10 feet with an average sinkhole being around 100 feet deep. All creatures or objects more than 10 feet within the area where a sinkhole occurs immediately fall to the bottom of the cavity. A creature within 10 feet of the edge of the sinkhole must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into the hole. Creatures on the inside of the area make the saving throw with disadvantage.

Any structure with more than a quarter of its area intersecting with the sinkhole takes 27 (5d10) force damage. Any structure with more than half of its area intersecting with the sinkhole takes 55 (10d10) force damage. If the damage equals more than half of the structure's hit points, it collapses into the hole.

Roughly half of all sinkholes contain water that typically fills half the cavity's height.

## STORMLANDS

A more hostile region than the Stormlands can hardly be imagined. Unending gales and constant electrical bursts fulminate against the landscape. Only the hardiest of creatures can last here for long. Strong wind, heavy precipitation, severe cold, and lightning bolts perpetually pummel travelers in this region. Any creature not native to the Stormlands must make a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw every hour that it spends in the region or be deafened for 1d4 days. This effect is prevented by wearing heavy covering over the ears. Throughout the region anything more than 30 feet from the

viewer is heavily obscured. Everything less than 30 feet from the viewer is lightly obscured, and creatures in the Stormlands have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Every minute that a creature spends in the Stormlands without significant cover, roll 1d20. On a 1, lightning strikes the spot where that creature is standing. Each creature within 5 feet of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 16 (3d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Steamjacks and creatures in heavy armor make the saving throw with disadvantage.

Navigating through the Stormlands is virtually impossible. Merely determining which direction is north or south requires a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check. The check must be made at least once per hour while traveling through this tempest-racked region.

*A thick pair of rubber-soled boots, stayin' clear of any tall structures, and keepin' metal well clear of your body. All good tips to keep in mind during a lightning storm. Not that any of it will do you a lick of good in the Stormlands.*

*Allen Ashley*

## THE ABYSS

Beyond the Stormlands lies the Abyss, a remnant of the Cataclysm that split the valley of the River Hyless down to the heart of Caen. The steep cliffs of the Abyss are home to storm raptors, deep drakes, and other terrifying creatures habituated to this extreme environment.

The greatest danger in and around the Abyss is falling. The exact depths of the chasm have never been determined, but it is most certainly measurable in thousands of feet if not hundreds of thousands. Creatures climbing the cliff-face within the rift can find many handholds and ledges, but the cost of failure is extreme. No explorer has ever made it to the bottom and returned.

It is postulated that most or all of the lowest levels of the Abyss are filled with magma. Once in a great while lava bursts jet up from the yawning depths. During periods of intense volcanic activity there are 1d6 + 1 lava bursts in a 60-foot radius. A typical lava burst is 20 feet in diameter and shoots 120 feet above the lip of the canyon. A creature in the path of the lava burst must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) fire damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one. If climbing or within 5 feet of a ledge, the creature must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall.

Other common threats to travel within or near the Abyss include earthquakes, lava, rockslides, and sinkholes.

**Calling Spirits.** The souls of many who died in the Cataclysm still haunt this unnatural split in the world. Incorporeal undead abound here, but the most prevalent are the calling spirits. Any creature that understands language in an area plagued by calling spirits hears soft cries and

whimpers emanating from somewhere deep within the Abyss. If the creature does not have ear covering, it must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the voices, which immediately start pleading for it to come and keep them company. At the start of each of its turns the creature must move 10 feet closer to the source of the cries. If the creature reaches a ledge, it must succeed on a DC 5 Wisdom saving throw or be compelled to leap into the Abyss.

## WITHERING WOOD

A rare but increasingly common phenomenon throughout western Immoren, a withering wood is a denuded forest of decaying and blackened trees, teeming with mutated animals that ooze black goo from their orifices. The air itself is imbued with noxious chemicals that contaminate the eyes and skin of unprepared travelers. Many things can cause a forest to become so putrescent. Pollution from industry, residual effects of infernal influence, and dragon blight are the most likely explanations.

Withering woods have been discovered throughout the continent, but the highest concentrations are in Llael, where industry is everpresent. However, reports of these woodlands popping up in and around the Scharde Islands support the dragon blight theory. It is possible that these decaying forests are all having similar reactions to various causes.

For every minute spent here a creature takes 2 (1d4) poison damage simply from breathing the air. Special goggles and breathing equipment can reduce this frequency to once per hour.

Even with protection, creatures that remain here for more than 14 consecutive days tend to mutate. The following chart provides examples for the types of changes that can happen. The Game Master can roll, choose, or use the table as inspiration. Extended periods in the region can cause multiple mutations at the Game Master's discretion.

## WITHERED CREATURE TABLE

d20 roll

Mutation

- 1 Shadow Sight. The creature's eyes become solid black. It gains darkvision up to 60 feet. If the creature already has darkvision, its vision extends an additional 60 feet.
- 2 Sickly. The creature's Constitution is reduced by 1.
- 3 Fur. The creature's body is covered in soft fur that grants it resistance to cold damage.
- 4 Tough Skin. The creature's body is covered in pachydermal plates, snakelike scales, or some other material that grants it a +1 natural AC bonus.
- 5 Reduced Mental Capacity. The creature's Intelligence is reduced by 1.
- 6 Natural Weapon. The creature gains claws, teeth, talons, pincers, or some other natural adaptation that can be used as a natural weapon, dealing 1d6 + the creature's Strength bonus bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage. The creature is

proficient in the weapon. The type of weapon and the damage it causes is at the Game Master's discretion or can be chosen randomly.

- 7 Vestigial Wings. The creature sprouts a pair of small wings on its back. They can be feathered, batlike, or insectoid. They do not grant the ability to fly but double the creature's Strength modifier to determine jumping distance. Additionally, the creature halves the bludgeoning damage inflicted by falling.
- 8 Aquatic. The creature grows gills and webbed fingers/toes. It gains the ability to breathe underwater and a swim speed equal to its walking speed.
- 9 Distorted Features. The creature's visage is altered in a disturbing manner, such as a twisted nose, eyes in the wrong positions, an abnormally large or tiny mouth, and the like. The creature's Charisma is reduced by 1.
- 10 Heat Warding. The creature gains resistance to fire damage.
- 11 Enhanced Musculature. The creature's physique is transformed. Its Strength is increased by 1.
- 12 Reduced Strength. The creature is weakened. Its Strength is reduced by 1.
- 13 True Wings. The creature sprouts a pair of large wings on its back. They can be feathered, batlike, or insectoid. The creature gains a fly speed equal to its walking speed.
- 14 Sticky Feet. The creature gains the ability to climb sheer surfaces as per the *spider climb* spell.
- 15 Stretchy Bones. The creature gains the ability to extend its limbs. Its reach increases 5 feet when attacking.
- 16 Heightened Brain Power. The creature's Intelligence is increased by 1.
- 17 Enhanced Features. The creature's physical appearance is improved according to the standards of society, becoming slightly taller or shorter, thicker or thinner, or having more or less hair or adjusted facial features. Its Charisma is increased by 1.
- 18 Ectothermic. The creature becomes vulnerable to cold damage and has disadvantage on saving throws against severe cold conditions.
- 19 Hardy. The creature's Constitution is increased by 1.
- 20 Heliophobia. While in direct sunlight the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.



# EFFORT POINTS

*When you find yourself in a real, honest-to-Morrow survival situation, you're gonna have to dig deep. Some people are surprised to find that deep down inside, they've got iron in their guts. I've seen people do the damn-near impossible when it came down to life 'n' death.*

*And if you aren't one of those people, my advice is to find out who is and stick close to them. If you can't make it on your own, maybe they'll pull your fat out of the fire when it matters.*

*Allen Ashley*

The heroes of the Iron Kingdoms often face dizzying challenges that require them to draw on their innate heroism and grit to prevail in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

Effort points represent luck and raw heroic potential. They can enable a character to reroll failed skill checks, shake a condition, or use any one of a number of special benefits.

Effort points are a variant of the standard inspiration rules. When you use effort points, every player character gains this benefit. Additionally, certain NPCs or monsters also benefit from effort points. A creature with Legendary Resistance gains effort points equal to its total number of uses of Legendary Resistance per day.

Characters start with 1 effort point at the start of each session, which refreshes whenever a character completes a long rest. A character can have a maximum of 3 effort points at any time, but the total resets to 1 after completing a long rest.

Effort points can be spent for one of the following benefits.

**Inspiration.** Spend 1 effort point when making an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check to gain advantage on that roll.

**Cling to Life.** Spend 1 effort point when making a death saving throw. The character does not have to make a death saving throw on their next turn.

**Extra Attack.** Spend 1 effort point to make one additional attack when taking the Attack action.

**Heroic Dodge.** Spend 1 effort point to halve the damage dealt by an attack, spell, or effect.

**Bonus Action.** Spend 1 effort point at the start of the character's turn to take an additional bonus action during that turn.

**Run and Gun.** Spend 1 effort point to take the Dash action as a bonus action.

**Shake a Condition.** A character affected by a condition that can be ended with a successful saving throw can spend 1 effort point to immediately end the effect.

**Stroke of Luck.** Spend 1 effort point to reroll an attack roll, skill check, saving throw, or damage roll.

**Unsurprised.** A character who is surprised at the start of combat can spend 1 effort point to not be surprised.

**Walk It Off.** Spend 1 effort point to immediately regain hit points equal to the roll of 1 Hit Die. A character making a death saving throw must roll the saving throw before spending this effort point.

## GAINING EFFORT POINTS

When using this optional rule, every character refreshes to 1 effort point after completing a long rest, but effort points can also be gained during a session.

At the GM's discretion, a character gains an effort point when one of the following conditions occurs.

**Suffer a Setback.** The character suffers a major setback, such as the loss of a weapon, a severe injury, or other similar situation.

**Self-Sacrifice.** The character puts their own safety in danger in order to protect someone else.

**Defeat a Significant Foe.** The character triumphs over a significant enemy creature in combat or in some other contest.

**Critical Hit.** The character scores a critical hit on a significant foe in combat.

**GM Award.** The GM can give an effort point to a character as a reward for clever roleplaying, such as exemplifying an ideal, bond, or flaw; proposing a brilliant plan; pulling off an exemplary feat of heroism; or whenever the GM is so inclined.

## TEAMWORK AND EFFORT POINTS

The player characters are typically members of the same team, be it a tribe or an adventuring company, or are united through a common purpose. They look out for each other, working together toward a common goal.

At the GM's discretion, a character may spend 1 or more effort points to affect another friendly and willing creature rather than benefiting from it themselves.

## ALTERNATIVE HEALING RULES

For those who aren't familiar with previous editions of the game, healing magic in the Iron Kingdoms has always come at a cost. In *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem*, those rules were streamlined so that cost was primarily a roleplaying element. However, for those who want healing magic that works more like that of previous versions, the following rules present a more complex and costly version of healing.

These rules change a large part of how the game is played. It is strongly recommended that the GM and players decide as a group whether or not to use them.



People get hurt. It's a fact of life. Sometimes they get hurt bad enough that no amount of alchemical goop or bandagin' will do the trick.

When you're hurt bad enough, try to find the nearest priest. Morrow, Menoth, Dhunia, or otherwise... when you're pushin' your guts back into your belly, you might be surprised at how open-minded you feel when it comes to religion.

Just keep in mind, healin' you is gonna cost the priest more than a couple of crowns and some pretty words. If they do it, it's gonna hurt. Hurt you, hurt them, maybe even hurt any damned fool standing too close when it happens. Tip a few coins into the alms box, and if the priest asks you to do a favor then you do it.

*—Allen Ashley*

## THE PRICE OF HEALING

Clerics drawing their magical powers from faith in their gods are at the mercy of those same gods when casting spells. The gods of the Iron Kingdoms do not look favorably upon their faithful using their granted powers to disrupt the balance of life and death or to do anything that could possibly affect that balance, especially healing through the use of magic.

The casting of any healing spells in the Iron Kingdoms is a risky proposition that is not to be taken lightly. Both the healer and the subject of the spell are at risk each time divine power is drawn upon to heal, and the risk involved can, at times, be seriously debilitating. Even the successful casting of a healing spell takes a toll on the caster. To reflect the grittiness of the Iron Kingdoms, GMs can apply these optional rules to their campaigns.

The risks and triggers for each depend on a number of variables outlined below. All modifiers are cumulative. If a roll on the table below is required, the caster's healing spell still works (unless a table result indicates otherwise). Once the number of points healed is determined, make the roll. Some caster results also affect the subject of the healing spell and vice versa; in an extremely bad situation, both characters involved can be knocked out or even killed.

### SAFE HEALING LIMIT

A spellcaster can—as long as none of the other complicating conditions apply—safely heal a cumulative number of hit points per day equal to  $(10 + \text{Wisdom modifier} + \text{proficiency bonus}) \times \text{caster level}$ . If this number is exceeded, both the healer and the subject must roll on the Pain of Healing and Being Healed table. For example, a 6th-level cleric with a Wisdom of 16 can safely heal 78 cumulative hit points in one day, but any damage healed that same day in excess of that forces the cleric to roll 1d6 and check for side effects. Additionally, the person being healed when the cleric surpassed this limit (and any additional people the cleric heals) must roll 1d6 and check for side effects from the healing.

$$\text{Safe Healing Limit} = (10 + \text{Wisdom modifier} + \text{proficiency bonus}) \times \text{caster Level}$$

Clerics who have access to the Life domain can safely heal twice this amount.



## COMPLICATIONS TO HEALING

**Cleric Domains.** Two cleric domains directly affect the risk of using healing magic.

- **Death Domain:** Clerics who have chosen the Death domain have no safe healing limit. The healer and the subject of the healing spell are automatically required to roll on the table with a +1 modifier.
- **Benefaction and Healing Domains:** Clerics who have selected the Benefaction or Life domain, if forced to roll on the table, apply a -1 modifier to rolls by both the healer and the subject.

**Worship.** Because of the strife caused by the War of Souls, there is added risk to healing individuals who follow certain gods. Generally, these apply only to worshippers of gods who are in direct conflict; thus, followers of Morrow and the dwarven Great Fathers do not have any special restrictions on healing.

- **Menoth:** Clerics of Menoth are forbidden to heal followers of any other faith. Should a cleric of Menoth forget or choose to ignore this mandate, rolls on the table have a +3 modifier.
- **Cyriss, the Devourer Wurm, Dhunia, and Thamar:** If a cleric of one of these deities attempts to heal a follower of Menoth, rolls on the table have a +3 modifier.

## REFUSING HEALING

If someone attempts to heal an unwilling creature, it can make a Wisdom saving throw against the healer's spell save DC. On a successful save, the creature is not healed and does not roll on the Pain of Healing and Being Healed table. However, if the healer exceeds their safe healing limit, they must still make a roll to determine the outcome, and any spell slots used for the spell remain spent.

## THE PAIN OF HEALING AND BEING HEALED

d10	Healer	Subject
1	—	—
2	Exhausted	—
3	Poisoned	—
4	Stunned	Exhausted
5	Minor Drain	Poisoned
6	Open Wounds	Stunned
7	Infestation	Vicious Pain
8	Drained	Horrible Burning
9	Terrible Retribution	God Strike
10	Divine Suffering	Painful Curse

**Divine Suffering.** The healer is immediately stunned for 1 minute. Additionally, the healer must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the healer's Wisdom score is reduced by 1d4. The healer dies if this reduces their Wisdom to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the healer finishes a long rest.

**Drained.** The healing of the subject completely drains the healer's divine powers for the day. The healer immediately loses all spell slots and the Channel Divinity feature for a period of 24 hours. In addition to this loss, the healer must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

**Exhausted.** The character gains one level of exhaustion.

**God Strike.** The spell has no effect, and the subject and anyone within 10 feet of the subject, including the healer, is pushed 2d4 × 10 feet and knocked prone. All creatures pushed this way take 10 (3d6) force damage and are stunned for 1 round.

**Horrible Burning.** The healing spell has no effect. Instead, a burst of divine fire courses through the subject's veins. The subject takes 7 (2d6) fire damage.

**Infestation.** The healer is overwhelmed by a divine plague as a punishment for angering the god. This plague takes the form of a barrage of small insects that instantly appear within the healer's body, eating and tearing at inner organs.

The healer must succeed on a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 10 + the level of the spell slot used to cast the spell or their hit point maximum is reduced by 1. The healer repeats this save at the end of every 24 hours for a number of days equal to the level of the spell slot used. The healer dies if this effect reduces their hit point maximum to 0.

Casting *remove curse*, *greater restoration*, or a similar spell on a creature suffering from Infestation ends the plague and restores its hit point maximum.

**Minor Drain.** The casting of the spell functions normally, but the healer also expends one additional spell slot of the same level. If they have no other spell slots of the same level available, the healer instead expends two spell slots of one level lower than that of the spell cast. If the healer has no available spell slots to expend, they take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

**Open Wounds.** The healer's skin splits open immediately upon casting, dealing 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. The wounds remain open and bleeding profusely for a number of rounds equal to the level of the healing spell cast. The healer must succeed at a Constitution saving throw (DC equal to 10 + the level of the spell slot used) or take 1 additional damage for each round the wounds remain open. When these wounds heal, whether normally or magically, they leave permanent scarring.

**Painful Curse.** The spell has no effect, and the subject of the spell must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the subject's Constitution score is reduced by 1. The subject dies if this reduces its Constitution to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the subject finishes a long rest.

**Poisoned.** The character is poisoned for 1 minute.

**Stunned.** The character is stunned until the end of their next turn.

**Terrible Retribution.** The healer's god is greatly angered and reverses the healing power of the spell. Instead of healing the number of hit points rolled, the healer must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or take necrotic damage equal to half the amount that would be healed.

**Vicious Pain.** The healing has no effect and the subject takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.

## RAISING THE DEAD

Death is more final in western Immoren than in other fantasy settings. After death, there is but the slimmest chance of return from Urcaen, the land of the dead, to the land of the living. Most who pass on will be denied this return unless they are particularly worthy and important individuals.

*Death is the end of the line—at least most of the time. Every so often, you hear about someone comin' back from the other side. That's all well and good, and I'm happy for those who get the chance. Me, on the other hand, well, I'll just do my best not to die in the first place. Sometimes the person who comes back ain't exactly the one who went, if you catch my meaning.*

*Allen Ashley*

Whether or not a cleric chooses to cast raise dead on a slain character depends greatly upon that particular cleric's god. The following information can assist the GM in determining whether or not a cleric will bring a character back from the dead and the price of the service.

Bringing someone back from Urcaen is not without risk. Once a cleric has agreed to perform the necessary rituals, the chance of risk—and what side effects occur—must be determined. See “Adverse Effects of Returning from Urcaen” below for complete information on the side effects of being raised from the dead.

## MORROW

Priests of Morrow are plentiful and powerful, the religion having great power in four of the five Iron Kingdoms. Unfortunately for adventurers and warriors, priests of Morrow are very unlikely to raise the dead, preferring to leave souls in Urcaen where they can serve the god and his cause.

Morrow's clergy automatically deny reanimation to characters below 10th level. Those of 10th level or higher have a slight chance of being deemed worthy enough to return, and the priests must be convinced of the individual's worth to be raised from the dead. If they agree, the priests demand 2,500 gp + 100 gp per character level above 10th for raising the deceased character. The priests bring the individual back from the dead with the understanding that they will be a servant of the Church for 1d6 months. Characters who attempt to leave without fulfilling their time in service with the Church will be hunted down by priests of Morrow and those they command.

If the slain character worships Morrow, the priests are more likely to perform the ritual. Characters below 10th level, however, will still be refused, and no priest of Morrow will raise a character who is deemed unworthy.

## THAMAR

Priests of this evil goddess are most likely to attempt to bring souls back from Urcaen. The priests demand a minimum offering of 1,250 gp + 300 gp per character level above 10th before considering raising the individual.

If the character being raised is a worshipper of Thamar, the priests drop their demanded price by 500 gp (to a minimum



of 1,000 gp), but the raised character must undertake an unholy quest upon revival. Alternatively, if the character is not a Thamarite, but their companions agree to fulfill a quest for the Church, the priests likewise reduce the cost by 500 gp. However, the others must willingly submit to a *geas* spell before the character is raised, and often a *geas* is also cast upon the raised person with the hopes of bringing them closer to Thamar in their second chance at life—usually unbeknownst to those who request the raising.

## MENOTH

Worshippers of the Lawgiver, while not as strict as those of Morrow, are unlikely to call a soul back from the land of the dead.

Raising the dead costs a minimum of 2,500 gp (or 1,250 gp for the faithful) + 100 gp per level of the dead character above 5th and the performance of one action beneficial to the Temple selected by the priest who brings the slain character back to life. As well, the Menite priests demand that the risen character tithe 10 percent of all future income to the Temple or their life is forfeit, and they have many scrutators, knights exemplar, and monks to ensure compliance. Priests of Menoth are more able to resist the effects of raising the dead. The DC to resist adverse effects (see “Adverse Effects of Returning from Urcaen”) is reduced by 5.

## DHUNIA

Clerics and druids of Dhunia prefer to bring souls back from Urcaen using the spell *reincarnate*. Followers of Dhunia prefer that souls return through the natural order, however, they will cast *reincarnate* if it is for the good of Dhunia and nature. The use of *reincarnate* does not have the same adverse effects on the caster as *raise dead* does. Some Dhunians might consider casting *raise dead* if it can be proven that the death has been very recent; for example, within the last 24 to 48 hours.

The cost of this service is not usually measured in coins, but rather in trade goods or services to the spellcaster worth up to 2,250 gp. Usually, the spellcaster also demands that the deceased character’s companions undertake a service beneficial to nature or to the spellcaster’s tribe or community.

Obviously, the standard table provided for the *reincarnate* spell doesn’t work well in the Iron Kingdoms setting. The following table is more appropriate to the Iron Kingdoms, except for ogrun. Oddly, ogrun are almost always reincarnated as ogrun.

## REINCARNATION RESULT

d100	Race
01–04	Ogrun
05–21	Dwarf, Rhulic
22–34	Elf, Iosan
35–42	Elf, Nyss
43–46	Trollkin, albino
47–52	Trollkin, Northkin
53–60	Trollkin, woodland
61–76	Gobber
77–00	Human

## OTHER GODS

The chances of being raised by priests of gods other than those detailed above fall between the extremes of the priests of Morrow and Thamar. The GM should use good judgment when dealing with priests of the remaining gods. The important thing to remember is that raising the dead is rare and dangerous. No priest willingly casts *raise dead* for fewer than 1,000 gp plus whatever feels adequate for the risks taken.

## ADVERSE EFFECTS OF RETURNING FROM URCAEN

Those who were dead, and are brought back to the living, test the patience of the gods and nature and are likely to suffer unpleasant and sometimes terrible effects upon their return to Caen. Clerics or others who facilitate the retrieval of a soul from Urcaen are also likely to be victims of such side effects; the gods do not look favorably upon souls who shirk their responsibilities in the lands of the dead.

The spells *resurrection* and *true resurrection* are not available to clerics in the Iron Kingdoms setting. Any cleric, other than the primarch and exarchs of Morrow, attempting *raise dead* must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10 + level of the character being raised) at the time the spell is cast. If the save is successful, the cleric has managed to avoid any unfortunate side effects. On a failed save, however, something has gone awry in the process of returning the soul from Urcaen. Roll 1d8 on the following table to determine what effect casting the spell has on the raised character.

## RESURRECTION EFFECTS

d8	Effect
1	Struck Mute
2	Marked
3	Struck Blind
4	Dispassionate
5	One Foot in the Grave
6	Aura of Death
7	Plagued by Nightmares
8	Didn’t Come Back Right

**Aura of Death.** The raised character suffers disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) checks as those nearby shy away from this unseen but palpable aura. This effect can be removed by the *greater restoration* spell.

**Didn’t Come Back Right.** The character returning from Urcaen is not the same person as before. They might have undergone a kind of fundamental transformation while in the spirit world or, more disturbing, the spirit that now inhabits the raised body was not the one that previously did. This effect can be removed by the *greater restoration* spell.

At the GM’s discretion, the character’s alignment changes to reflect this shift. Additionally, the character’s bond, ideal, or flaw is randomly determined.

**Dispassionate.** The raised character returns to life with dulled—or even no—emotions. The raised character suffers

disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) checks but gains immunity to being charmed or frightened. This effect can be removed by the *greater restoration* spell.

**Marked.** The stress of raising has left its mark on the raised character. The character's hair prematurely turns gray, dark circles appear around their eyes, or their features wrinkle with age. In any case, these changes are permanent.

**One Foot in the Grave.** Having already journeyed to Urcaen once, the raised character's soul feels the pull to the afterlife more strongly. When the raised character makes a death saving throw, a result of 1 or 2 counts as two failures. This effect can be removed by the *greater restoration* spell.

**Plagued by Nightmares.** Visions of the hellish wilds of Urcaen plague the raised character's dreams, making sleep difficult if not impossible. The raised character must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw on completing a long rest. On a failed save, the raised character gains one level of exhaustion from fitful and restless sleep. This effect can be removed by the *greater restoration* spell.

**Struck Blind.** Perhaps overcome by the majesty of the City of Man in Urcaen, the raised character is blinded for 1d6 hours.

**Struck Mute.** The raised character is rendered temporarily mute and cannot speak for the next 2d6 hours.

# ILLICIT ALCHEMY: DRUGS AND POISONS

*I'm not one to turn my nose up at options, but poison has never been my favorite thing. You can't exactly dose up a bullet with it, and it spoils the meat to boot. Sure, I've put some on my blasting powder to keep the skiggs off, and it's useful in a pinch if you got no other way to bring down a beasty, but I'll leave poisons to the spies and assassins.*

*All that aside, it's good to know about 'em. If you end up takin' a sip of bluetongue or blackbrandy, it's better to know what's in store.*

*Allen Ashley*

Many useful alchemical reagents are toxic, but some are manufactured with no other purpose than to slay or torment the living. Creating these substances is often seen as immoral, and indeed most civilized nations and the majority of religions outlaw the creation and possession of purely toxic alchemical substances. However, what constitutes a "poison" is not always clear, and certain poisonous substances have other uses, providing a gray area in the law for alchemists to exploit. Some alchemical creations, though very close to poison, are not illegal and can be part of the modern adventurer's arsenal.

Despite this prohibition, the nations of Khador, Llael, Ord, and especially Cryx depend on such tools for their own spies and agents. Covert agents of the Ordric crown call on contacts to supply them with poisons to assassinate dangerous enemies, Cryxian agents poison officers and potentially pesky bureaucrats the night before a major raid, and Empress Vanar's spies eagerly trade gold for serums to further their cause. Poisons are certainly dangerous, but in the right hands they can be weapons in valid and moral causes. Many alchemists are patriots, laboring for their country's agents. Doing so rarely pays all the bills, however, so if they can offload items to an adventurer or mercenary, so much the better.

Those seeking illegal and potent poisons can find them for sale among the black markets of human cities, Rhulic freeholds, and the workshops of any morally flexible alchemists—in short, any town with an apothecary. Despite this fact, few adventurers or mercenaries make regular use of poisons. Use or even possession of illicit alchemical poisons is punishable by jail time in Cygnar, public execution in Khador, and the rack in the Protectorate, so carrying them is risky. Prices on these substances can vary widely and might include an extra surcharge to represent the risk to the seller.

## HAUNTED

An extremely rare—and disturbing—side effect of being raised is a phenomenon known as haunting. A haunted character has been followed back to the land of the living by a soul that has now taken up residence in their body alongside their own soul.

A haunted character constantly puts others ill at ease. Things around them move without warning. Dogs howl and shrink away, while babies cry uncontrollably. Being near holy locations causes the character pain (1 radiant damage per 10 minutes they are within 100 feet of a holy location such as a temple or shrine). Undead appear to be drawn to the character. Divination spells that detect living beings or souls reveal two living auras around the character's body. In short, strange and often bad things happen to the character.

There is a 1% chance that a character brought back from Urcaen will be haunted. This can occur even if the character exhibits no other side effects, or it can be in addition to other side effects.

A character, once haunted, cannot be rid of the second soul by any means of power lesser than *banishment*. Haunting is a difficult side effect of raising the dead to implement in a game and GMs should consider carefully before using this option.

## HISTORY OF DRUGS AND POISONS IN WESTERN IMMOREN

The dark side of alchemy has been a staple of political machinations and covert operations dating back thousands of years. Over the course of history, poisons and drugs have gone from being valued methods of extracting military information, available only to the privileged and government-sanctioned few, to more easily manufactured and distributed than ever before. What once was the singular purview of esoteric specialists under the patronage of warlords has become a science in which any university-trained student might dabble.

Assassin's poisons were prominent throughout the Thousand Cities era. In fact, this time was the heyday of such poisons, and they would never again see such widespread use and importance as they achieved then. This was a time of conflict, of brutal battles and mighty warlords. Indeed, these warlords were so mighty that killing them through conventional means, such as a horselord's axe to the head on a battlefield, held far less certainty. Instead, rival nations, tribes, and groups turned to assassination for the timely deaths of their enemies, and assassins made heavy use of poisons.

For poisoners in the Thousand Cities era, a key problem was that intended victims were often wealthy and vigorous warlords. These people had excellent constitutions, a staff of poison-tasters, and enough healthy suspicion to make them difficult targets. Assassins devised many ways to overcome this problem. The most effective was bedcorpse dust, still in use today by some nefarious organizations. Made from the crushed and dried spores of several native southern plants, a dose of the poison is placed in a paper tube. When blown through

the tube, the dust exits in a cloud. An assassin would slip into a warlord's stronghold at night and breathe the dust into the victim's face. Since the victim spent all night breathing the poison, even a hale nature wasn't enough to prevent death.

Like all other sciences, poison and drug concoction stagnated during the Orgoth invasion. Scattered texts recovered from Orgoth ruins—mostly journals kept by budding Immorese alchemists—hint that the Orgoth brought their own poisons with them across the seas. Modern alchemists know nothing about these poisons, but the ancient accounts speak of them causing agony and vile disfigurement. Alchemy saw its main advances at the end of this era, when the Rebellion reached its peak. At this point, almost all alchemists were members of the Golden Crucible, and they developed blasting powders, early mechanika, and useful acids. These alchemists, guided by Morrowan doctrine, didn't seek to create new poisons except to provide antidotes to those employed by their enemy. Mechanical and alchemical invention also led to a number of useful industrial substances that happen to be toxic to living tissues, a fact exploited by certain poisoners.

By the signing of the Corvis Treaties, the newly formed Iron Kingdoms outlined special and often severe punishments for murder by poison as a means to prevent its use in political ascendancy, but the alchemical training that can produce such poisons is widespread. As a result, the knowledge of how to create illicit substances is secret but pervasive. Adventurers who know the right places can attain poisons more easily than ever before, and with proper training can use them proficiently.

Poisons come in the following four types.

**Contact.** Contact poison can be smeared on an object and remains potent until it is touched or washed off. A creature that touches contact poison with exposed skin suffers its effects.

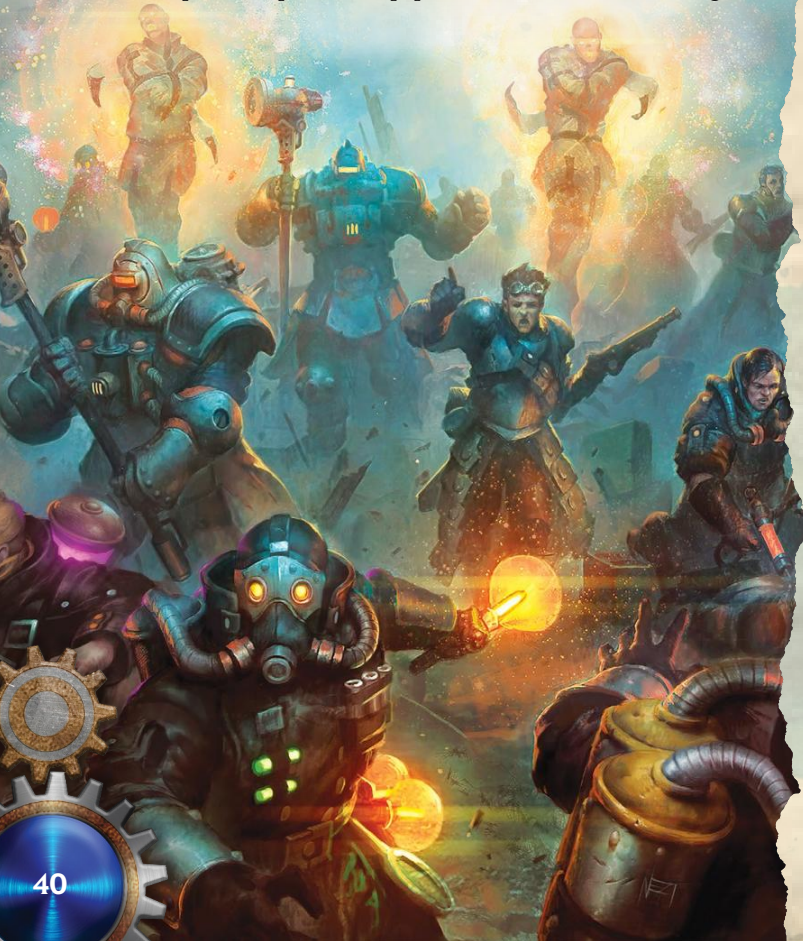
**Ingested.** A creature must swallow an entire dose of ingested poison to suffer its effects. The dose can be delivered in food or a liquid. You may decide that a partial dose has a reduced effect, such as allowing advantage on the saving throw or dealing only half damage on a failed save.

**Inhaled.** These poisons are powders or gases that take effect when inhaled. Blowing the powder or releasing the gas subjects creatures in a 5-foot cube to its effect. The resulting cloud dissipates immediately afterward. Holding one's breath is ineffective against inhaled poisons, as they affect nasal membranes, tear ducts, and other parts of the body.

**Injury.** Injury poison can be applied to weapons, ammunition, trap components, and other objects that deal piercing or slashing damage and remains potent until delivered through a wound or washed off. A creature that takes piercing or slashing damage from an object coated with the poison is exposed to its effects.

## CRAFTING POISONS

A character with access to the proper ingredients can craft poisons during downtime between adventures. The crafting cost on the Sample Poisons table indicates the standard cost for such ingredients, if they can be found at all. Crafting poisons requires proficiency with a poisoner's kit, alchemist's



## SAMPLE POISONS

Item	Type	Price per Dose	Crafting Cost
Assassin fly venom	Injury	750 gp	75 gp
Bedcorpse	Inhaled	2,200 gp	220 gp
Blacksap	Ingested	50 gp	5 gp
Bluetongue	Ingested	150 gp	15 gp
Khorva's Kiss	Injury	1,500 gp	150 gp
Remel's Embrace	Ingested/Injury	500 gp	50 gp
Sambertine	Ingested	25 gp	2 gp
Tears of Lyliss	Contact	1,750 gp	175 gp
Vektiss venom	Injury	500 gp	50 gp
Venom of Kossk	Ingested	1,750 gp	175 gp
Whispers of Lukas	Ingested/Injury	1,000 gp	100 gp
Witchbane	Injury	1,500 gp	150 gp

supplies, or a field alchemy kit. The time required to craft a poison is determined as per the normal crafting rules.

After spending the allotted time crafting the poison, the crafter must make an Intelligence check using a poisoner's kit or field alchemy kit. The DC of this check is equal to the saving throw DC of the poison. On a successful check, one dose of the poison is produced. On a failed check, the crafter can spend 1 hour refining their work and roll again. If the check fails by 5 or more, the crafter is subjected to the effects of the poison as they accidentally come into contact with it during the course of the work.

## SAMPLE POISONS

**Assassin Fly Venom (Injury).** The assassin fly's toxic sting is highly prized on the black markets of western Immoren. This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated male assassin fly. An adult male contains enough venom for a single dose.

Upon exposure to the venom, a creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Bedcorpse (Inhaled).** A rare powdered poison made from toxic plants growing on islands south of Immoren, bedcorpse is an insidious weapon in the hands of a poisoner. Upon inhaling, the powder coats the interior of the lungs with a thick layer impermeable to oxygen, preventing respiration.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature falls unconscious and begins suffocating. On a successful save, a creature takes 22 (5d8) poison damage, is not unconscious, and does not begin suffocating.

**Blacksap (Ingested).** Blacksap is a thick distillation of various plant syrups that is sometimes used as crude anesthetic by mercenary surgeons. It is also used by press gangers and kidnapers, who dilute the substance in beer or brandy (called blackbeer and blackbrandy, respectively). After consuming a dose, the drinker is incapacitated, allowing the poisoner to drag them aboard ship for interrogation, ransoming, or to be pressed into service as crew.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 2d4 hours.

The poisoned creature is unconscious but wakes up if it takes damage.

**Bluetongue (Ingested).** The pungent mash called bluetongue by the trollkin of the southern reaches of the Thornwood is a powerful narcotic concoction that addles the mind and induces haunting visions and hallucinations for hours. The poison leaves a telltale blue stain in the mouth of the creature that has ingested it.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1d4 hours. While poisoned in this way, the creature sees vivid hallucinations and acts erratically, as if under the effect of the *confusion* spell. If the saving throw succeeds, the creature is not poisoned and instead immediately casts the *divination* spell without requiring a spell slot or material components.

**Khorva's Kiss (Injury).** Khorva's Kiss is a fast-acting alchemical poison designed to kill its victim in a matter of moments. An odorless clear oil, the poison must be administered directly into the victim's bloodstream.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 21 (6d6) poison damage and have its hit point maximum reduced by the amount of poison damage taken. The creature must repeat this save at the start of each of its turns. On each successive failed save, the creature takes 21 (6d6) poison damage and has its hit point maximum further reduced. The creature dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0. After five successful saves, the poison runs its course.

## BLACKSAP ADDICTION

Blacksap is potentially addictive. If a creature that consumes blacksap, even if it is diluted in a drink, fails the Constitution saving throw by 5 or more, it becomes addicted to the substance. An addicted creature must repeat the saving throw every 24 hours. On a failed save, the creature must consume a dose of blacksap or gain one level of exhaustion. A creature that succeeds on three saves is no longer addicted to blacksap. A creature that cannot consume blacksap for 72 hours or more suffers the exhaustion but then is no longer addicted.

**Remel's Embrace (Ingested/Injury).** Remel's Embrace is an alchemical sleeping poison that renders a victim insensate for a period of time. The viscous dark liquid can either be injected into the bloodstream or added to a victim's food. Due to the strong smell of the poison, it is best administered to pungent foods.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 3d6 hours. The poisoned creature is incapacitated. If it takes damage, the incapacitated condition ends. On a successful save, a creature takes 18 (4d8) poison damage and isn't poisoned.

**Sambertine (Ingested).** While not a true poison, this stimulant can have deleterious effects. A creature subjected to this substance immediately removes one level of exhaustion and must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature suffers disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Wisdom (Perception) checks for 1 hour.

**Tears of Lyliss (Contact).** A tool used by the assassins of Ios, Tears of Lyliss is a clear, odorless fluid. On contact with the skin, it is rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream.

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 31 (9d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 1d4 hours. The poisoned creature is blinded and deafened. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage, is not blinded, and is not deafened.

**Vektiss Venom (Injury).** This poison must be harvested from a dead or incapacitated vektiss. A creature subjected to the poison must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. A poisoned creature is paralyzed.

**Venom of Kossk (Ingested).** Distilled from the toxin secreted by certain swamp frogs, this compound leaves an imbibor in a coma for extended periods. It is brewed by gatorman bokors for the creation of blind walkers, a type of senseless warbeast, but others use it to induce a deathlike state in victims, who are often then buried alive.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw or fall unconscious and have its Intelligence reduced by 1d4. The creature is not able to take a short or long rest while unconscious in this way. The creature repeats this saving throw every 24 hours, reducing its Intelligence by 1 on a failed save. If a creature's Intelligence drops to 1, the creature can't cast spells, activate magic items, understand language, or communicate in any intelligible way. It becomes a mindless thrall and is charmed by the first creature that interacts with it. After three successful saves, the creature is no longer unconscious and the poison runs its course.

If the creature's Intelligence is not reduced to 1, the Intelligence reduction lasts until it completes a long rest. Otherwise, only a spell such as *greater restoration* can restore the creature's Intelligence.

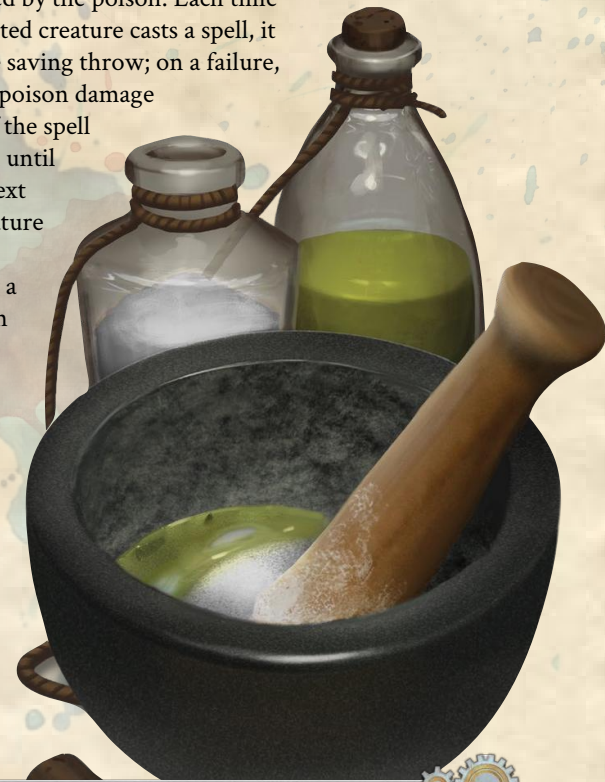
**Whispers of Lukas (Ingested/Injury).** Whispers of Lukas is a slow-acting alchemical poison designed to destroy its victim's mind. An odorless brown oil, this substance can either be injected into the bloodstream or added to a victim's food.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 36 (8d8) poison damage, and the creature's Intelligence score is reduced by 1d4. The creature must repeat this save at the start of each of its turns. On a failed save, its Intelligence is further reduced by 1. The target dies if this reduces its Intelligence to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

After five successful saves, the poison runs its course.

**Witchbane (Injury).** Infamously used in late 608 AR on the Cygnaran warcaster Major Haley, this supernatural poison originates in the dark alchemy workshops of Cryx. Behaving more like an infection than a traditional poison, the concoction requires magical energy to sustain itself. It was developed as an experiment in permanently destroying the magical abilities of the afflicted.

A creature exposed to this poison must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. If the creature does not possess the ability to cast spells, it automatically succeeds on the saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is magically tainted by the poison. Each time a magically tainted creature casts a spell, it must repeat the saving throw; on a failure, it takes 3 (1d6) poison damage per slot level of the spell and is poisoned until the end of its next turn. If the creature goes 24 hours without casting a spell, the poison dissipates and runs its course.



### NEW ITEM: BLADE RESIN

Blade resin is an alchemical substance that retains the efficacy of poison on a blade. The resin is created by mixing five doses of the desired poison with a binding agent, which hardens 1 minute after application.

The resin breaks down on blood contact, allowing a single dose of the poison to enter a target's injuries. The blade resin is used up after all five doses of poison have been consumed and must subsequently be reapplied.

The binding agent of blade resin is a common alchemical formula and can be purchased for 30 gp.

# STRESS

*Survivin' takes its toll, even on the hardest minds in the Iron Kingdoms. If you're stressed out, scared, and don't keep your wits, your mind can play tricks on you. Worse, it can make you forget what you know about how to survive and can make you do foolish things. Actin' the fool is a quick way to end up dead. Best to know when your mind starts to fray around the edges. Take some time, center yourself, and get back to bein' smart and makin' the right choices. Maybe drink some tea. Whatever helps you.*

*—Allen Ashley*

Western Immoren bears deep scars—the ravages of centuries of war, an incursion of unspeakable horror, nightmares made flesh. The physical toll has been harsh enough, but the psychological scars endured by its citizens are just as deep. While many have healed these unseen wounds, many have not yet—and never will. And worse, these are burdens that most face alone. Where horrors tread, broken minds are left in their wake. Even the strongest of soldiers can be pushed past the breaking point.

Most major cities have sanitariums, hospitals specifically for those suffering from these afflictions. At best, they are staffed by well-meaning and competent professionals who wish to cure their charges; at worst, they are prisons where cruel overseers strip patients of identity and hide them from the world—or treat them as a menagerie for the amusement of those willing to pay a few pennies for admission. Such institutions are notorious for attracting grymkin, whose ranks swell with those whose minds have shattered—and those wicked enough to prey upon them.

## STRESS POINTS

Stress points are a measure of a character's mental fatigue. They accumulate when a character is subject to things that are troubling: death, pain, fear, and creatures that embody those things. Time and rest will eventually reduce a character's stress, but some wounds last longer. And some experiences are so scarring they cause a person's mind to break on the spot. Either the player or the GM can keep track of a character's stress points. A GM should assign a stress point to a character for each of the following occurrences.

- Encountering a dragon, dragonblighted, undead, grymkin, or infernal with a CR equal to or greater than their level
- Gaining the frightened condition
- Witnessing the death of someone close
- Failing a saving throw for a fear-based spell
- Being reduced to 0 hit points
- Participating in a battle resulting in mass casualties
- Each day spent under duress (such as forced labor), with constant threats (in trenches during constant

## PLEASE NOTE

These rules are intended to showcase how minds are affected by the trauma of war and encounters with incomprehensible horrors—they are not intended to encompass real-world mental illness or neurodivergence. Should you decide to include them in your Iron Kingdoms experience, recognize that these conditions are often suffered in silence and by more than many realize. We encourage you to include these in your game only if approached with compassion, never as a punchline. A quick search online should uncover resources for writers wishing to portray these conditions without romanticizing, stereotyping, or stigmatizing.

bombardment), in a harsh environment (being snowbound in a Khadoran winter, or on a ship constantly storm-tossed), or in complete solitude

- If compelled to act against their morals, such as through an enchantment spell
- Restoring a number of hit points greater than their safe healing limit in one day (see “Alternative Curing Rules” above)

A character who gains a number of stress points exceeding their proficiency bonus in a single encounter must succeed on a Wisdom or Charisma saving throw (whichever is higher) with DC 10 + the number of stress points acquired in the encounter or develop a minor affliction lasting for 1d6 minutes. The effect is determined and applied immediately.



### d8 **Minor Afflictions (1d6 minutes)**

- 1 The character becomes panicked and must use their move action to move away from the area where the affliction occurred but can make a DC 15 Wisdom or Charisma saving throw at the end of their turn to end the effect.
  - 2 The character has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks as they avoid unseen enemies.
  - 3 The character is gripped with despair and becomes stunned but can make a DC 15 Wisdom or Charisma saving throw at the end of their turn to end the effect.
  - 4 The character is afflicted with muteness and cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.
  - 5 The character has flashbacks. They cannot distinguish friend from foe and must use their action to attack the nearest creature but can make a DC 15 Wisdom or Charisma saving throw at the end of their turn to end the effect.
  - 6 The character's skin is suddenly uncomfortable from imaginary burning or itching, and they have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks but can make a DC 15 Wisdom or Charisma saving throw at the end of their turn to end the effect.
  - 7 The character is convinced they have succumbed to a mortal wound. They go unconscious and fall prone but can make a DC 15 Wisdom or Charisma saving throw at the end of their turn to end the effect.
  - 8 The character hears an overwhelming cacophony—perhaps voices, or extremely loud noise—and is deafened.
- 4 The character becomes obsessed with a creature or thing nearby as if under the effects of a *sympathy* spell toward it.
  - 5 The character has an irrational compulsion to do something, and their life depends on accomplishing that specific task. Treat as a *geas* spell with the instructions assigned by the Game Master.
  - 6 The character is compelled to perform a brief act—making a religious sign, uttering a string of numbers, tapping a specific rhythm—each time they want to do something. In combat, the character must forfeit either an action, a bonus action, or a move action to satisfy this need.
  - 7 The character refuses to bathe, resulting in disadvantage on all non-Intimidation Charisma checks and saving throws against disease.
  - 8 The character develops an irrational fear of sunlight and will not venture out during the day without covering every inch of their body. The character has disadvantage on Dexterity and Charisma ability checks.

If a character gains a number of stress points in excess of twice their proficiency bonus in a single encounter, they must succeed on a Wisdom or Charisma saving throw (whichever is highest) with DC 10 + the number of stress points acquired in the encounter or develop a major affliction lasting 2d6 days. The effect is determined and applied immediately; if the character acquired a minor affliction earlier in the encounter, the minor one is replaced.

### d8 **Major Afflictions (2d6 days)**

- 1 The character becomes lethargic and is treated as if affected by the *slow* spell.
- 2 The character becomes extremely averse to a thing or person nearby, as if under the effects of an *antipathy* spell toward it.
- 3 The character develops crippling suspicion of everyone and has disadvantage on all Wisdom ability checks.

## STRESS THRESHOLD

Each character has a **stress threshold** equal to the higher of their Wisdom or Charisma score plus their character level. Exceeding the stress threshold has severe repercussions. However, as a character accumulates experiences and develops greater awareness of the world, they build some mental resilience. Each week, a character reduces their stress points total by their proficiency bonus plus their Wisdom bonus (minimum 1).

If a character accumulates a number of stress points exceeding their stress threshold, they develop a long-term affliction (no saving throw). The effect is determined and applied immediately and persists until their stress points are equal to or lower than their stress threshold. A long-term affliction replaces an ideal, a bond, or a flaw. This alters their personality on a core level, and mechanical effects related to ideals, bonds, or flaws (such as gaining inspiration) are now tied to the new trait. If the character's stress points drop below their stress threshold, they may choose to restore the original trait or choose another appropriate one (with the GM's approval).

A character who accumulates a number of stress points in excess of twice their stress threshold gains another long-term affliction, and all stress points become locked in as trauma (see below). Return from this state is rare but not unheard of.

### A NOTE ON CHARACTER ABILITIES

Some classes and subclasses have features that shield them from fear. However, they are not immune to stress. Afflictions described with panic and fear still affect them as described, since stress afflictions are based on the character's perception of the world, not on external forces trying to affect them.

## D20 Long-Term Afflictions

- 1 (Bond) My very life depends on following the instructions delivered daily by a crow inhabited by an Orgoth spirit.
- 2 (Ideal) Civilization is a scourge. I cannot be in a city, and I must embrace my primal spirit.
- 3 (Flaw) An infernal visits me every night and implants me with an evil seed that I must dig out of my flesh each morning.
- 4 (Bond) Blight is growing within me. An agent of Blighterghast is targeting me, and I suspect someone close to me.
- 5 (Ideal) Everyone and everything in Caen wants what I have. I must protect it—preemptively, if necessary.
- 6 (Flaw) I have started to secretly commemorate my battles with a grisly trophy from each enemy, such as an ear or a finger.
- 7 (Bond) My shadow criticizes me harshly. Every time I accomplish something I feel I must justify my actions to it.
- 8 (Ideal) Infernals are looking for me specifically. Perhaps I can escape their notice by wearing someone else's face or hair.
- 9 (Flaw) My pursuit of perfection can make me practice something for hours upon hours, until dawn, my fingers are bloody, or I collapse from exhaustion.
- 10 (Bond) I have angered a water spirit—she is waiting for me to bathe to murder me. I will not allow her the opportunity.
- 11 (Ideal) Everything is a joke—a vile, bitter joke played on me by a malevolent force.
- 12 (Flaw) I have come to loathe the symbols of authority: flags, holy symbols, military insignia. When people are not looking, I spit on them—or worse.
- 13 (Bond) The specters of everyone I lost in the Claiming will continue following me around until I do a task for each.
- 14 (Ideal) Everything is futile; nothing matters. All goodness is but a dying gasp as the void claims us all.
- 15 (Flaw) I cannot help but steal something, however small, from each place I go.
- 16 (Bond) I have a friend and confidant who appears only to me. They offer...interesting advice.
- 17 (Ideal) There is a great conspiracy afoot—and I can prove it with these broadsheet clippings, spent shell casings, and rubbings of markings from walls. I must find the puppet master and kill them.
- 18 (Flaw) I am an archon in disguise and keep meticulous notes about the religious activities of those around me.
- 19 (Bond) There is a sniper following me, looking for a perfect shot. I must be extremely cautious.
- 20 (Ideal) If I start punishing the wicked, the grymkin will accept me as one of their own. Soon, I will rule over them all.

Every time a character suffers a minor or major affliction, one of the stress points becomes locked as trauma. Trauma cannot be removed through normal means; it lingers and reduces a character's capacity to handle more stress.

Stress points locked as trauma can be reduced in the ways listed below.

- A *greater restoration* spell unlocks a number of locked stress points equal to the caster's proficiency bonus.
- An *atonement* spell unlocks a number of locked stress points equal to the caster's proficiency bonus.
- A *calm emotions* spell suppresses the effects of trauma for the duration.
- Each uninterrupted week a character is cared for in a nonthreatening environment, the caretaker makes a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) ability check to reduce the character's trauma by 1.
- Each uninterrupted week a character spends in quiet reflection in a nonthreatening environment, they make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw to reduce their trauma by 1.
- Players, with GM approval, can voluntarily set a goal related to overcoming trauma and receive a reduction in trauma upon completion.
- Game Masters may reward players with a reduction in trauma as part of an adventure resolution, at their discretion.

# 2

## ADVENTURES IN THE BORDERLANDS



**T**HIS SECTION IS A RESOURCE TO INSPIRE YOUR OWN games set in the borderlands of western Immoren, and builds on similar concepts developed in Iron Kingdoms: Requiem.

*Adventure. What does that word mean, anyway? Most of the things I've done that people call an "adventure," I'd call getting shot at while I was low on supplies, wet, tired, and about a hundred miles away from my next meal or warm bed.*

*But ah, there will always be folks who have a head full of adventure. Mind that, if you're one of 'em, you know what you're getting yourself into. It's not all as glamorous as it looks in the broadsheets or when the bards tell it. Pack warm socks and have a pair of boots you don't mind wearin' for days on end. A warm blanket is a luxury when you're on the road or sleeping rough in the woods. Carry a knife. Hell, carry two or three. You never know when you'll need an extra blade in a pinch. And if you're committed to living as an adventurer, pay a good mortician in advance. The last thing you'd want is to be laid to rest lookin' like a sick gorax.*

*Allen Ashley*

## THEMES

Themes help you create memorable story arcs for your campaigns. A theme unifies all the story's individual adventures and concepts into a cohesive whole.

The theme you choose can have a dramatic impact on the story. A theme of dynamic struggles for power is very different from the same story based on a theme of dark magic and the occult.

By approaching your story with an overall theme in mind, you help set the players' expectations at the outset about what kind of adventure they're about to undertake. You can weave aspects of your theme into everything the characters see, hear, and experience as they journey through your world.

For instance, if your story had a theme of "survival," you could do some of the following.

- The NPCs the characters meet wear worn, threadbare clothing that hangs from their emaciated frames. The deep lines of their faces bely how long it's been since they've eaten a decent meal.
- When the characters travel between destinations, describe the grueling march through inhospitable terrain. If they're moving through the mountains, the glacial wind tears at their clothing looking for tiny gaps to freeze the flesh beneath. If they're crossing the Bloodstone Desert, the pounding sun beats on their heads during the day and bakes the parched earth.
- The beasts they encounter act out of desperation, not rage. If one brings a target down, it begins to gulp down mouthfuls of meat, snapping at any other creatures that get too close to its much-needed meal.

With just a few touches like these, you can reinforce your theme even when it isn't front-and-center in your adventure.

## DARK MAGIC

Much of western Immoren's borderlands are infused with dark magic of various origins. Its manifestations include the lingering mark of skorne mortitheurgy throughout the Bloodstone Marches, the blight of the dead dragon Pyromalfic and his cult, and the cataclysmic occult force that has lately spread across the elven kingdom of Ios. In their exploration of the mortitheurgical lore that the skorne left behind, the undead elves are uncovering progressively more terrible powers that draw them deeper into the study of pain and death. How the eldritch choose to employ these powers and the ways they manifest can serve as the inspiration for a whole campaign.

The various peoples of the borderlands also provide opportunities for you to employ dark magic as a central theme in your campaigns. Some of the bone grinders of the woods might begin to investigate extracting power from the flesh of sentient beings they murder to make strong talismans. The Brand of Odom has numerous cabals around the world, including Rhul, who are ready to explore the darkest aspects of magic in their pursuit of power. Did they experiment with dread abilities, and if so, how would this affect the world of your campaign?

## EXPLORATION

Discovery is one of the cornerstones of any adventure. The lands beyond the eastern borders of the human world, outside the familiar lands of the Iron Kingdoms, are teeming with strange territories—as well as opportunities for exploration and adventure.

Humanity has long been unfamiliar with and insular toward the two most populous regions on the planet, Ios and Rhul. Rhul, a prosperous nation of high mountains and deep mines, is an ideal setting for exploration adventures spiced with a dash of danger. Refugees and explorers can take their first steps into the homeland of the dwarves and their ogrun companions as a result of Rhul's welcoming attitude toward new citizens.

Ios, on the other hand, is a strange and foreboding place. It has been cut off from the rest of the world for a long time, and recent events have only exacerbated that isolation. People seek answers to the mystery of what happened in Ios, and the more difficult a location is to enter, the more likely they will become interested in it. Exploring the Mistbough or Archenbough forest is like entering another world entirely, one full of strange and wondrous sights as well as potential hazards. Adventurers traveling into Ios should feel like they have left the world they know behind, with few opportunities to experience anything comforting or familiar.

What parts of the world could your players explore? Will you send them into the Stormlands to uncover the lost secrets of the ancient Lyossan Empire, or to the distant peaks of the Ryolese Mountains? What might they discover out in the vast wilderness—and who might want to claim such discoveries as their own?



## POWER STRUGGLES

Fighting for power is a regular occurrence in the Iron Kingdoms, and this is especially true in the borderlands. This region has witnessed some of the most severe power struggles in the history of western Immoren. Rival clan feuds are widespread in Rhul, with a back-and-forth of deception, cunning, and violence that can last for hundreds of years or even millennia. Ios was formerly engulfed in a war between the hallytyr, which pitted them against one another in enormous battles, and the elven country is still embroiled in an ongoing fight for domination among the various eldritch that live in the forest. Tribal forces compete for supremacy over resources, influence, and positions of importance in the Bloodstone Marches and the Glimmerwood, as well as other places.

Such competition is a compelling theme for any adventure. With a suitably complex set of belligerents on either side, the characters could ally with one faction over the other, be caught in the middle, or battle for dominance themselves. Power struggles are seldom clean affairs, and you can introduce intricate plots of alliances and betrayals, windfalls and setbacks, as the power play unfolds.

## SURVIVAL

The sunbaked flats of the Bloodstone Marches, the harsh frost of the Rhulic Mountains, and the death-infused forests of Ios are just a few of the obstacles that characters must overcome while traveling through the frontiers of the world. The borderlands region contains some of the harshest terrain in western Immoren, and the struggle to survive is every bit as dangerous as any encounter with farrow brigands or ravenous monsters.

You can use the environmental threats described in chapter 1 of this book to build a harsh and brutal story about the characters' battle to survive.

## REGIONAL CAMPAIGNS

The lands that make up this region are diverse, each having its own unique characteristics, inhabitants, and opportunities for adventure.

Of course, you don't have to be restricted to just a single region. You can begin the story in one place, such as the Glimmerwood, and have it spill over into the Bloodstone Marches, for instance. Each region of the borderlands touches at least one of the others, and during the course of a longer campaign you can have events unfold that will take your players all across its breadth.

## IOS

The vast nation of Ios is a place of the undead and the soulless. Crumbling cities dot the land, concealed under a canopy of dense forests and the perpetual veil of shifting mists.

Ios is an ideal backdrop for stories of mystery. After all, not only has the kingdom been cut off from the outside world for many years, but even its former citizens are now kept beyond its borders and uncertain of what is transpiring among the trees.

Ios is also well suited to stories of dark magic. The eldritch are awakening to the full scope of their new unliving status and the dreadful capabilities that it offers. Compounding this, practitioners of magic in Ios have begun to study the remnants of mortitheurgy left behind by the fleeing skorne.

## IOSAN ADVENTURES

Ios offers unique opportunities for adventure unlike anything in the Iron Kingdoms. The closest parallel to present-day Ios is Cryx, but beyond a population of the living dead the similarities are few. The table below presents some possibilities.

### d4 Goal

- 1 Obtain information about the fate of the Iosan and Nyss people. The Iosans and Nyss outside the nation are desperate for news about friends and family who remain within the misty forests.
- 2 Defend an Iosan settlement near the forest from attack by soulless warriors. Some eldritch are willing to feed on the living elves who remain in the world and command their soulless thralls to bring them fresh meals.
- 3 Negotiate for a group of Iosan refugees to settle within the boundaries of a human nation. The relationship between elves and humans is a tenuous one, thanks in no small part to the actions of the Retribution of Scyrah. Finding a safe home for the refugees is sure to come with challenging tasks and favors paid to local human authorities.
- 4 Discover the location of a cache of Iosan gear hidden in the Iron Kingdoms. Stashed by the Retribution of Scyrah, this cache contains supplies and weapons that could help protect fledgling refugee communities in the human kingdoms—or be used by extremist remnants of the Retribution to exact revenge on those they feel are responsible for the death of the gods.

## IOSAN VILLAINS

Creating an Iosan villain for your campaign comes with a few extra choices. First, is your villain one of the eldritch, or have they escaped that fate? Regardless of which you choose, your Iosan villain will have access to some of the most advanced technology in western Immoren, thanks to the skills of the arcanists who built the nation. They might have a somewhat fatalistic outlook—hard to avoid when the last of the elven gods died in recent memory and the majority of the population was transformed into unliving creatures. However, an Iosan villain does have one significant weakness: a lack of numbers on which to draw. The elves were never particularly numerous, and their population is at an alarmingly low point, even when you count the eldritch among them.

Examples of Iosan villains appear in the following table.

### d6 Eldritch Villain

### Living Villain

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | The villain was one of the original eldritch, a member of the priesthood of Nyrro.  | A former soldier of the Retribution of Scyrah has turned to the life of a mercenary, using the scattered hideouts and safe houses of the Retribution as hiding places.   |
| 2 | A recently-transformed eldritch who loathes their current state takes out that loathing on others.  | The villain is a former mage hunter of the Retribution of Scyrah. Even though the goddess is dead, that will not stop them from exacting bloody vengeance on human spellcasters.   |
| 3 | A new eldritch, who revels in the power that unlife has given them, takes great pleasure in hunting down fresh victims to transform into sythyss servants.          | The villain is the sole living survivor of his or her household, who was forced to watch as the rest of the family became eldritch.  |
| 4 | An ambitious eldritch wishes to seize power among the hallytyr and is amassing a force of soulless soldiers.  | A talented arcanist mechanik has turned to a criminal life, using cunning arcanikal devices and myrmidons to commit crimes.  |
| 5 | The villain has devoted their existence to unlocking the full potential of skorne mortitheurgy, no matter how many people must suffer and die to achieve that goal. | The villain is a prominent figure in one of the enclaves of living elves in one of the human or Rhulic cities. Wielding political influence like a weapon, they operate from the shadows through a countless series of intermediaries. |
| 6 | The villain's living family was beyond Ios at the moment of the Sundering. They wish to be reunited with those family members in unlife, forever.                   | One of the warcasters who fought with the Retribution of Scyrah has now become a warlord who preys upon all who are unfortunate enough to be within their reach.   |

## NYSS AND SOULLESS

The options above can also work for Nyss villains with minor adjustments. Some eldritch in Ios were once Nyss refugees who returned to their ancestral home in recent years to be closer to Nyssor.

You can also use the table as inspiration for a soulless villain, but such individuals are often better suited to serve as lieutenants. Soulless aren't without desires or motivation, but they are less likely to have the grandiose schemes that a campaign villain might need.

## IOSAN CHARACTER GOALS

Any of the tasks listed on the following table might be the driving force behind an Iosan character or villain, or serve as a mission that a character can undertake on their own or on behalf of an ally during a larger adventure.

### IOSAN TASKS

#### d6 Task

- 1 Recover a family relic that was left behind in Ios. The relic's seeker knows the item's exact location but has been turned away at the border by a cohort of soulless soldiers.
- 2 A living Iosan nears the end of their life and wishes to see the great city of Shyrr once more before passing out of the world.
- 3 An eldritch has been persecuting the surviving Iosans in nearby Llael, sending out agents to abduct them and bring them back as food. The remaining elves seek someone who can destroy this creature.
- 4 An apothecary in one of the elven enclaves is dealing with a rare disease. The only known remedy must be distilled from a particular herb that grows only in the great gardens of Shyrr.
- 5 An arcanist mechanic has nearly completed a large project but needs a component from one of the great foundries in Ios.
- 6 During the Ios-Skorne War, a dreadful spirit was unleashed into the woods by skorne extollers. The hungry spirit still rages through the land and is drawing close to a community of living elves just beyond the forest border.

## OTHER ADVENTURE HOOKS

The table below presents ideas for additional adventures themed around the nation of Ios.

### IOSAN ADVENTURE HOOKS

#### d6 Hook

- 1 An eldritch of House Vyre has uncovered many of the dark arcanical experiments hidden in vaults beneath the city and is using them to attack those living near the forest.
- 2 A caravan of refugee Iosans and Nyss seek aid in reaching the colony of living elves in Frostbracken.
- 3 Several families of living elves are worried about their neighbors in a human city, who are being provoked to violence by a man whose wife was killed by mage hunters for being a sorcerer.
- 4 A group of Nyss plan to return to the Shard Spires to reclaim the artifacts of their people from fanes hidden among the mountains.
- 5 One of the living sibyls, the seeresses of Ios, claims to have had visions of a great army of the undead mustering in Ios that will ravage the continent if not stopped.
- 6 Sythyss that have broken free from the control of their eldritch maker are trying to join the living elves, but their necrotic presence will cause the deaths of many innocents.



## IOSAN LOCATIONS

An interesting location acts as a backdrop for the action of your encounters. The following table presents options for locations the characters might discover while journeying in Ios.

### IOSAN LOCATIONS

#### d8 Location

- 1 The empty ruins of an abandoned Iosan city. The forest has grown to reclaim the streets, with huge trees growing up in the center of wide avenues. Animals of all description lair in the empty homes and shops.
- 2 A vast elven greenhouse has been left to grow wild. Under the cracked glass ceiling, wild and rare plants flourish, some dating back to the Lyossan Empire.
- 3 A high waterfall cuts through the forest. Around its basin are white stone statues of hooded and robed elven figures, perhaps effigies of the Divine Court, overgrown with moss.
- 4 An encampment once inhabited by refugees from the Shard Spires. The Nyss elves have all vanished, leaving behind their tents, tools, and weapons. The ulk herds they once tended roam in the vicinity, having gone feral once more.
- 5 A graceful alabaster bridge spanning a deep ravine in the forest. Despite clear signs of neglect and decay, soft blue arcanikal torches provide constant illumination over the bridge.
- 6 A crumbling tower stands beside the Knot, the complex road that winds through the forests of Ios. Once a garrison of Houseguard soldiers, it is now home to something new and dangerous.
- 7 A staircase of crumbling stone rises out of a valley. Thick brambles on either side of the stairs—once well-tended topiaries left to grow wild—stretch across the stairway to catch clumsy feet and send the unwary tumbling.
- 8 The convergence of two streams forms a rushing river that has carved a deep gorge in the forest. A pale stone tower stands at the point where the waters meet and radiates powerful geomantic energy.

## RHUL

The home of the dwarves is one of the most exciting places to go on an adventure. Vast cities of incredible scale nestle among the Rhul mountains and small freeholds are scattered across the foothills, along with vast expanses of wilderness to explore.

Rhul is also a good choice for stories that center on the struggle for power. Inter-clan (and intra-clan) feuds are common, and the characters can easily become entangled in such schemes before they even realize what's happening. It makes no difference which side of a conflict the characters choose to support; they will quickly discover new rivals who have long memories and longer grudges.

### RHULIC ADVENTURES

The characters encounter unknown perils no matter where they travel in Rhul, due to the intricate web of clan alliances and debts, as well as the chains of fealty among the Rhulic ogrun. The following table provides some possibilities for adventures in Rhul.

### RHULIC ADVENTURE GOALS

#### d4 Goal

- 1 Discover the identity of a Glomring spy embedded in one of the Rhulic clans. The Glomring has agents everywhere and keeps eyes on every potential source of information and sabotage. A Glomring agent will stop at nothing—not even murder of a high-profile individual—to maintain their cover.
- 2 Uncover arcane secrets on the behalf of the Brand of Odom. The dwarven wizards are always seeking new magic lore to add to their archives. Those who unearth magical wisdom are well rewarded for sharing it with the Brand.
- 3 Locate a clan lord's offspring who went missing during the Claiming. Rhul was not as badly affected as the Iron Kingdoms, but it too suffered at the hands of the infernals. Many mercenaries went to Henge Hold to help defend the refugees fleeing Caen. One such mercenary is the child of an influential clan lord, rumored to still be alive and hiding out in one of the dwarven enclaves of the Iron Kingdoms.
- 4 Broker an agreement between Rhulic mercenaries and a powerful client. Rhul's mercenary armies are in high demand, particularly in cities that were greatly harmed during the Claiming. One such city approaches the lords of Rhul for soldiers to patrol its streets until a local force can be mustered, but the Rhulfolk are playing hardball during negotiations.

## RHULIC VILLAINS

Rhulic villains are typically ambitious individuals who strive to increase their personal wealth and influence. They are well versed in the laws of Rhul, and they either use those laws to their own advantage or have devised loopholes to carry out their heinous deeds without being prosecuted for their crimes. If your characters come up against a Rhulic villain, they will almost certainly be forced to justify their actions within the confines of the Codex. Unless they tread carefully, they might find themselves labeled as wrongdoers, depending on how closely they adhere to the Codex's edicts.

Examples of Rhulic villains appear in the following table.

### RHULIC VILLAINS

#### **d6 Villain**

- 1 A stern Moot Judge uses their authority to punish wrongdoers—which the judge interprets as “anyone who refuses to do what I say.”
- 2 An ambitious clan lord who commands the fealty of dozens of lesser clans.
- 3 A powerful ogrun whose korune fell in battle.
- 4 A scheming member of the Glomring whose acumen with stealth and assassination make them a dangerous foe.
- 5 A cunning wizard of the Brand of Odom wields arcane power to control those they consider lesser beings—anyone who is not of dwarven blood.
- 6 A platoon of corrupt soldiers from one of the Rhulic freeholds is extorting the refugees who have come to Rhul for a new life.

## RHULIC CHARACTER GOALS

Any of the tasks listed on the following table can be the driving force behind a Rhulic character or villain, or missions that a character undertakes on their own or on behalf of an ally during a larger adventure.

### RHULIC TASKS

#### **d6 Taks**

- 1 Escort the payroll shipment of a mercenary company from Ghord to the fortress where the mercenaries dwell.
- 2 Argue before the Moot to exonerate an accused criminal.
- 3 Recover an heirloom mechanikal hammer that was swallowed by a hungry slag hound.
- 4 Clear a profitable mining operation of an infestation of shaft wights.
- 5 Slay a rock drake that has been plaguing an outlying village for months.
- 6 Settle a feud between two rival clan lords that threatens the stability of a region.

## OTHER ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following table presents ideas for additional adventures themed around the nation of Rhul.

### RHULIC ADVENTURE HOOKS

#### **d6 Hook**

- 1 An earthquake has weakened the foundations of a Rhulic town. With each passing day, more of the town threatens to tumble from the mountainside into the valley below. The clan lord of the region has put out a call for help evacuating the inhabitants before the imminent collapse.
- 2 A notable clan figure swore to put an end to a shaft wight infestation that has plagued the clan's mines for generations. Unfortunately, this noble warrior was turned into one of the undead creatures—and now the whole mine's worth of them are marching on the warrior's home, with the undead dwarf leading the column.
- 3 Someone has been setting fires in the newest freehold to be constructed near a major Rhulic city. The clan lord suspects the arsonist harbors prejudice against non-Rhulic people, and wants to make an example of the criminal before the incendiary urge picks up momentum among others.
- 4 An ogrun seeks a korune who is worthy of her oath of loyalty, but she is quite particular about who she considers up to her standards. She has put out a call to all comers prove themselves in a challenge, but her trials are seemingly impossible. If the characters can find a way to accomplish her tasks, they will have a powerful and loyal companion.
- 5 The Brand of Odom is home to many occultists, and not all of them are willing to hamper their study of magic. One such member, having seen the terrifying power of the infernals during the Claiming, is seeking out infernal lore to better understand how to command and control these outsiders. The Brand of Odom wants the occultist stopped—without others learning of his connection to their order.
- 6 The children of two feuding lords have fallen in love and wish to marry, but their parents would rather see all of Rhul ground down to dust first. The pair ask for aid in putting the feud to rest, which requires discovering what started the argument in the first place. Rhulfolk keep good records, but the only information about this particular feud has been lost for generations. The only clue is in a letter between two of the lords' ancestors: “If you don't bring me back Glittergelt, our lines will be at war for a hundred generations!”

## RHULIC LOCATIONS

An interesting location acts as a backdrop for the action of your encounters. The following table presents options for locations the characters might discover while journeying in Rhul.

### RHULIC LOCATIONS

#### d8 Location

- 1 A claustrophobic mine with low ceilings and a complex network of side passages and seemingly bottomless shafts. Disused mining equipment and mechanika litter its many chambers.
- 2 A remote temple to the Great Fathers carved into the rock face of the mountain. Statues of the dwarven gods flank the precipitous steps leading to the temple's doors.
- 3 A narrow mountain pass blasted by cold winds. Blown grit fills the pass with a haze that stings the eyes and reduces visibility to a few feet.
- 4 A narrow stone bridge spans a dizzying drop. The bridge has no railing or guides on either side, and winds buffet anyone who steps out on it.
- 5 A steep path of stairs, earthen ramps, and switchbacks along the face of a mountain.
- 6 A series of roaring waterfalls cascade down the mountains into the valley below.
- 7 A glacial peak of clear ice. The glacier's surface slopes sharply down, making any movement on it perilous.
- 8 A sheer cliffside, with narrow shelves along its surface connected by a series of creaking wooden ladders. Some of the shelves still have the remnants of campsites on them.



## GLIMMERWOOD

It is true that the Glimmerwood is not as ominous as the forests of Ios, but it is still a dangerous place. Fiercely protective tribes, as well as a diverse range of beasts and monsters, live beneath the canopy of the Glimmerwood's trees. It is one of the truly wild places of western Immoren, unencumbered by civilization and controlled by no single ruler. The people here continue to live in close proximity to nature and with a certain amount of wild abandon, just as likely to settle their differences through violence as they are through negotiation.

### GLIMMERWOOD ADVENTURES

With so much variety in the Glimmerwood, it is possible to run almost any type of campaign, from the intrigue of tribal chieftains vying for dominance of the region to the rediscovery of ancient trollkin kriels that were lost when the skorne invaded from the east, to the eerie ritual practices of wild shamans. The table below presents some possibilities.

### GLIMMERWOOD ADVENTURE GOALS

#### d4 Goal

- 1 Negotiate an alliance between two rival clans. The tribes of the Glimmerwood are not strangers to conflict, but a rising power in the forest threatens all who dwell within it. Unless the chieftains can agree to set aside their differences, this new threat will destroy them both.
- 2 Rescue a bone grinder who is being forced to create talismans for the warriors of an up-and-coming warlord. The warlord's soldiers rely on this magic to help them in battle, and unless the bone grinder can be saved—or failing that, eliminated—hundreds of innocent tribes may be doomed.
- 3 Stop the rampage of a terrifying beast. The characters must discover the reason behind its behavior, or slay it if there is no other solution.
- 4 Sanctify a desecrated site. The skorne invaders took it upon themselves to desecrate many of the sites that were holy to the Dhunia- and Devourer-worshipping tribes of the Glimmerwood.



## GLIMMERWOOD VILLAINS

The majority of the Glimmerwood's population are Dhunian, be they trollkin, pyg, bogrin, gobber, or farrow. While Dhunia is a nurturing goddess, she can also manifest great wrath. Her children are equally capable of unleashing terrible fury on those who oppose them. Such a villain will not hesitate to destroy an entire village of rivals standing in their way, letting the mother goddess reclaim and reincarnate those they slaughter.

Examples of Glimmerwood villains appear in the following table.

### GLIMMERWOOD VILLAINS

#### d6 Villain

- 1 A clan chieftain enacts an escalating series of raids to lay claim to the heart of the forest.
- 2 A shaman, guided by visions of Dhunia's wrath, plans to sacrifice every member of a nearby tribe to ensure a season of fertility.
- 3 A warlock trains up warbeasts by having them attack defenseless tribes in the region.
- 4 An exile from one of the Glimmerwood tribes plots revenge on the community they were driven from.
- 5 A tribal warrior whose clan was destroyed during the Claiming has begun abducting newborns, believing them to be reincarnations of dead clanmates.
- 6 A brutal warlord is capturing whole villages to act as cannon fodder in their growing warband.

## GLIMMERWOOD CHARACTER GOALS

Any of the tasks listed on the following table can be the driving force behind a Glimmerwood character or villain, or they can serve as missions that a character can undertake on their own or on behalf of an ally during a larger adventure.

### GLIMMERWOOD TASKS

#### d6 Task

- 1 Deal with a band of trollkin bandits causing trouble for the nearby tribes.
- 2 Lead a hungry troll away from the farmlands of a bogrin village before it can eat them literally out of house and home.
- 3 Fight as the champion of a kriel in a duel in to settle a dispute between two chieftains.
- 4 Drive out a logging company from Llael that seeks to plunder the forest.
- 5 Discover the krielstone of a displaced group of trollkin who lost their ancestral lands to the skorne.
- 6 Halt the spread of a blight that is poisoning a region of the forest and driving the creatures to madness.



## OTHER ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following table presents ideas for additional adventures themed around the Glimmerwood Forest.

### GLIMMERWOOD ADVENTURE HOOKS

#### **d6 Hook**

- 1 A dignitary from the United Kriels has come to the Glimmerwood requesting aid in clearing out a den of pernicious beasts that threatens the construction of a new kriel.
- 2 A boastful fell caller is visiting the Glimmerwood looking for anyone who can best him in a test of fell calling, and offers a drinking horn said to have belonged to Bragg himself as a reward.
- 3 Two tribes, one of bogrin and the other of gobbers, are locked in a feud over which can rightfully claim a site both say belonged to their ancestors. Unless a third party intervenes, the quarrel will turn into outright warfare between the tribes and could spill over into the surrounding lands.
- 4 Something has been slaughtering the livestock of a Glimmerwood tribe. Whatever is responsible isn't eating the beasts but has surgically dissected them. A few of the dead animals have had their organs replaced with strange mechanical devices that pump unknown alchemy.
- 5 A gang of river raiders from Corvis have settled in the southwestern Glimmerwood to establish a hideout beyond the reach of human law enforcement. Made up mostly of swampies, krielless trollkin, and swamp gobbers, these bandits are causing havoc in all the nearby communities, whether through stealing supplies from their neighbors or due to collateral damage from constant gun battles with bounty hunters. Someone needs to deal with the raiders and show them what Glimmerwood justice looks like.
- 6 The trollkin of the northwestern Glimmerwood have long been wary of the elves in nearby Ios, but recent events have caused them great concern. A mysterious figure has emerged from the Mistbough Forest to prey on the trollkin. A local chieftain wants to deal with this new peril. However, she does not want to risk the wrath of the elves and so is asking for someone who is familiar with Iosan culture and language to speak as her diplomat and put an end to the killings.

## GLIMMERWOOD LOCATIONS

An interesting location acts as a backdrop for the action of your encounters. The following table presents options for locations the characters might discover while journeying in the Glimmerwood.

### GLIMMERWOOD LOCATIONS

#### **d8 Location**

- 1 A living bridge made of a tree that has been bent down to grow across a narrow ravine cut by a swift-moving brook.
- 2 The overgrown remnant of a trollkin kuor, a massive fighting platform made of stone.
- 3 A circle of rune-inscribed stones, each towering twenty feet from the forest floor. The air within the stones hums with latent magical power.
- 4 A forgotten battlefield in the forest. The skeletons of warriors on both sides of the conflict lie scattered on the ground, and trees have grown up through some of the ancient bones.
- 5 An ancient burial mound marked with a great boulder on which are carved the moss-filled runes of the Molgur people.
- 6 A maze-like tangle of trees with roots and branches that twist into each other to create impassible barriers around every other turn.
- 7 A boggy mire with glowing fungus that grows on the bark of the nearby trees fills the space with a strange luminescence.
- 8 A stone shrine is tangled in the roots of a huge tree. As the tree has grown, it has steadily raised the shrine off the forest floor, so it now teeters a dozen feet in the air.

## BLOODSTONE

The Bloodstone Marches and desert beyond are built for stories of survival. From the parched scrubland on its western flank to the vast expanse of sand dunes to the east, here resources such as food and water are in short supply and extremely valuable. The people who control access to these critical locations are the true rulers of the Bloodstone, and they are fiercely protective of their position.

Additionally, the Bloodstone is the home to some of the most dangerous creatures to be found in western Immoren, including the enormous and terrifying gorgandur, which can swallow an entire village in a single bite. Creatures of every description imaginable claw out their existence in this region, and though they are less of a threat than the thunderous wurms that swim beneath the soil, they are still deadly to encounter.

## BLOODSTONE ADVENTURES

It's important to communicate to the players that their characters will be dealing with long treks through punishing sandstorms, as well as encounters with exotic creatures and a lot of dirt in their shorts in the days ahead, when you set a story within the Bloodstone.

### BLOODSTONE ADVENTURE GOALS

#### d4 Goal

- 1 Track down a raiding party of skorne soldiers. There are still small cohorts of skorne across the Bloodstone Marches, many of who rely on raids and murder to survive. These callous invaders don't differentiate between warriors and innocents, and will continue to kill unless they can be found and stopped.
- 2 A group of trollkin have returned to the Bloodstone to reclaim their hereditary lands. However, in the interim the Idrians have settled in the region. Is there a way forward for both peoples to live in peace, or is bloodshed inevitable?
- 3 Prevent an arcane calamity. Many dark magics lie hidden beneath the sands of the Bloodstone. Among them are cracked sacral stones housing the spirits of skorne ancestors, as well as hungry sepulchral lurkers and other entities that would devastate the region. And now, something is drawing them all to a single point, where unsuspecting civilians face the full fury of their power.
- 4 Warlords from two or more bandit tribes have formed a dangerous alliance. While one or the other of them could be driven off, together they represent a nigh unstoppable threat. In order to save the day, the characters must discover a way to drive a wedge between the groups.

### BLOODSTONE VILLAINS

Villains who make their homes in the Bloodstone are, first and foremost, survivors. This is true for everyone who lives in the Bloodstone Marches and the desert, but villains survive only at the expense of others. They raid other tribes in search of supplies and don't leave anything behind. Their victims face the prospect of death by deprivation while the villains move on to the next target, leaving in their wake a trail of demolished villages and bloodied corpses for miles in every direction.

Examples of Bloodstone villains appear in the following table.

### BLOODSTONE VILLAINS

#### d6 Villain

- 1 A tribal warlord who preys on the scattered villages of what was once the Protectorate of Menoth has acquired a vast cache of Menoth's Fury.
- 2 A prospector out of Ternon Crag has gone mad from dragon blight and believes they are an avatar of the dead dragon Pyromalfic. The prospector believes they must cannibalize hundreds to achieve their full splendor.
- 3 A warband of skorne left behind when the Army of the Western Reaches retreated has begun to plague innocent tribes in the region.
- 4 An extremist from the Protectorate of Menoth is putting whole villages to the flame, an act of retribution for the harm suffered by the pious nation of Menites.
- 5 An Idrian warrior has discovered an ancestral weapon of the skorne that corrupts its wielder. Now the warrior is setting out to slaughter thousands in order to feed the weapon a steady supply of souls.
- 6 A shaman of the desert has discovered how to lure the deadly gorgandur and now plans to use the great beast as a weapon against the last bastions of civilization in the desert.

### BLOODSTONE CHARACTER GOALS

Any of the tasks listed on the following table can be the driving force behind a Bloodstone character or villain, or they can serve as missions that a character can undertake on their own or on behalf of an ally during a larger adventure.

### BLOODSTONE TASKS

#### d6 Task

- 1 Clear a thicket of bloodstone manticora that is blocking access to a watering hole.
- 2 Stop the spread of an assassin fly infestation that is drawing too close to a settlement or village.
- 3 Clear a bogrin tribe out of a valuable deposit of diamonds.
- 4 Stop a farrow warlord who is gathering an ever-increasing warband.
- 5 Recover a religious artifact that was lost in the Bloodstone Marches during an attack by the skorne.
- 6 Help a prospector from Ternon Crag establish a new mining camp in the Erud Hills.

## OTHER ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following table presents ideas for additional adventures themed around the Bloodstone region.

### BLOODSTONE ADVENTURE HOOKS

#### **d6 Hook**

- 1 A band of farrow brigands cruise the wastelands of the Bloodstone Marches on improbable war machines cobbled together from spare warjack parts, chariots, and farming equipment they have raided. This war party leaves a trail of smoldering wreckage behind it everywhere it goes, and a call has gone out to put the tusked raiders to an end.
- 2 Tormented spirits thought to have once been Idrian Marchfolk taken into Tower Judgment by Menite scrutators have begun haunting one of the only crossroads between the cities of the Protectorate of Menoth and the rest of western Immoren. This trio of sand dervishes deny passage to any who will not face them—and defeat them—in a duel of martial prowess.
- 3 An elder oasis ooze has taken up residence in the only watering hole for miles in any direction. The tribesfolk of the region rely on the water supply the ooze lurks within, and they will perish if something isn't done.
- 4 A herd of warbeasts, left behind by the skorne, has settled in around Scarleforth Lake in the northern Bloodstone Marches. Without paingivers to keep them under control, the beasts have begun to revert to their normal behavior. This invasive species lacks true predators, and unless the herd is culled, threatens to expand across the region.
- 5 A tribe of Idrians has broken free of the rule of the Protectorate of Menoth and wishes to return to their ancestral territory on the fringe of the Bloodstone Desert. The only problem is, desert bogrin have plundered the lands and traded away all the tribe's relics for food, weapons, and strong drink. The Marchfolk seek anyone who can aid in the recovery of their ancestral treasures.
- 6 A faction of the blighted elves who once worshipped the dragon Pyromalfic are pursuing a dark ritual they believe can restore their dragon-god to them. Though their blight-addled plan is not likely to bear fruit, the numerous human sacrifices it requires have become a problem for people living near the Castle of the Keys. Now, local authorities are rounding up a posse of able-bodied individuals to deal with the crazy elves.

## BLOODSTONE LOCATIONS

An interesting location acts as a backdrop for the action of your encounters. The following table presents options for locations the characters might discover while journeying in the Bloodstone.

### BLOODSTONE LOCATIONS

#### **d8 Location**

- 1 A field of blackmire with slender pathways among the pools. The skeletal remains of beasts that were trapped in the pools jut from the tarry black surface.
- 2 An encampment of tribal scavengers built into a deep ravine to keep clear of the biting winds and sandstorms that blow across the desert.
- 3 A vast oasis surrounded by lush vegetation is home to a wide range of wild animals. A small shrine to Dhunia stands near the edge of the water.
- 4 An old diamond mine encampment with numerous tunnels riddling the surrounding hills. The wooden structures of the camp are pockmarked with bullet holes.
- 5 A series of buttes and natural stone arches create a claustrophobic network of tight passages and elevated positions—the perfect place for an attacker to lie in ambush.
- 6 A vast salt plain in what was once the bed of a lake or inland sea. Beneath the crust of salt, a thick and corrosive soil waits to catch boots and burn the flesh of those who break through the surface.
- 7 A field of cacti with sharp, hooked spines. Narrow footpaths wind through the patch, and local wildlife make their homes amid the protection of the plants.
- 8 A sheltered valley that has been used for generations by teams of bandits and scavengers. Within the valley is a motley assortment of shelters constructed by Idrian, farrow, skorne, and other hands, but it now lies forgotten and abandoned under a fine layer of blown sand.

3

# TREASURES OF THE BORDERLANDS



There's a reason people like mechanika. It's predictable. Not like the magic you find out in the wilds, or the strange old things that folks like the elves and dwarves keep on their mantelpieces.

Mechanika is a bit like math, I've heard. You can make the numbers dance around if you know how to add 'em, subtract 'em, divide 'em. You carve the right runes onto the plate, and you have a pistol that shoots out bolts of fire while it whistles you a perky tune.

But these things? These things are magic. They don't gotta make a lick of damned sense, and I wager they're more dangerous than skigg-whacking. If you try to lay your hands on them, there's like to be a bad outcome for you. Unless you know exactly what you're doing.

*Allen Ashley*

**U**NLIKE THE WONDERS FROM THE FOUNDRIES AND arcane workshops of the Iron Kingdoms, and even different from those mechanical marvels produced in Rhul and the Iosan arcanika equivalents, the cultures of the wilderness have, for thousands of years, relied on the more primal power of “true” magic items.

Throughout time, the wild peoples of western Immoren have harnessed the power of magic and bound it to objects. Once properly inscribed and invested with a bit of the maker's own power and vitality, these potent tools are permanently infused with magic. They often outlast their creators, becoming prized relics passed down through generations. The mightiest earn legends that overshadow any who wield them, becoming mythic objects in their own right.

Creating magic items is not easy—it requires patience, diligence, and careful craftsmanship. Binding magical essence is dangerous and potentially deadly. Those who do not approach this work with a great deal of caution can be unmade by their carelessness, as the arcane power they seek to harness lashes back against them.

This chapter contains a selection of new magic items and relics found in the wild lands of western Immoren.

## MAGIC ITEMS OF THE BORDERLANDS

Magic items are powerful assets in the hands of player characters and dire threats when wielded by enemies. While mechanical weapons and tools are easier to fabricate and therefore more commonly discovered, vessels of true magical power represent something else altogether. They are a perfect way to highlight the strange divide between the “civilized” world and that beyond, a means to define the cultures and traditions of disparate peoples, as well as a reward for players who dare to seek them out.

### MAGIC ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

These magic items are presented in alphabetical order.

#### AMULET OF STONE STRENGTH

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

Your Strength score is 19 while you wear this amulet. It has no effect on you if your Strength is already 19 or higher.

#### ANCESTRAL WEAPON

*Weapon (any sword), rare (requires attunement)*

When the skorne were driven out of western Immoren, many prestigious warriors fell in battle. Lost with them were ancestral weapons, blades containing the sacral stones of skorne ancestors. The spirits housed within empower the weapons with mortitheurgical might.

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

When you attack with this weapon and roll a 20 on the attack roll, the target takes an extra 2d8 necrotic damage. This necrotic damage can be healed only by a long rest.

#### BLADE OF BITTER FROST

*Weapon (Nyss claymore), very rare*

Once carried by the priesthood of Nyssor and certain sorceresses of the Shard Spires, these weapons carry the supernatural cold of the deceased Scyir of Winter.

When you hit with this weapon, the target takes an extra 1d8 cold damage. On a critical hit with it, the target is restrained until the start of your next turn as ice covers its body and roots it in place.

#### CODEX OF THE CLAYWIVES

*Wondrous item, very rare*

This book contains the holy writ of the Codex, as first transcribed by the Claywives of the Great Fathers, and its words are charged with a divine font of magic. If you spend 48 hours over a period of 6 days or fewer studying the book's contents and practicing its guidelines, your Intelligence score increases by 2, as does your maximum for that score. The manual then loses its magic, but regains it in a century.

#### DEATHSHADOW BLADE

*Weapon (any sword), very rare (requires attunement)*

Deathshadow blades are rare relics of the Black Kingdom of Morrdh. Capturing the dying energy of their victims, these weapons allow their wielders to slip invisibly into shadow.

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

While you are attuned to it, if you drop a non-construct, non-undead creature to 0 hit points with this weapon, you can use your reaction to become invisible. You remain invisible for 1 minute or until you attack or cast a spell.

#### DECK OF THE DEFIERS

*Wondrous item, very rare*

In rural communities, there are those who view the Defiers of the Wicked Harvest and their grymkin subjects in a somewhat more favorable light. Though the Defiers are still thought to be dangerous demigods, a few folk attempt to appease them in return for favors. Imbued with the reality-warping power of the Defiers and their most loyal subjects, these decks are potent relics.

This box contains a set of parchment cards. A full deck has 13 cards. A deck found as treasure is usually missing 1d4–1 cards.

The magic of the deck functions only if cards are drawn at random (you can use an altered deck of playing cards to simulate the deck). You can use an action to draw a card at random from the deck. As soon as you draw and reveal the card, its magic takes effect. Once a card is drawn, the deck's power fades until the following midnight.

Playing Card	Card
King of diamonds	The King of Nothing
Queen of diamonds	The Dreamer
Jack of diamonds	The Baron
King of hearts	Dolly
Queen of hearts	The Child
Jack of hearts	The Lady
King of clubs	The Wanderer
Queen of clubs	The Twilight Sisters (Heidrun)
Jack of clubs	The Dread Harvester
Eight of spades	Lord Longfellow
King of spades	The Heretic
Queen of spades	The Twilight Sisters (Agrona)
Joker	The Gate Keeper

**The Baron.** This card depicts a stout toad wearing the clothing of a human noble. For the next 10 minutes, you can cast the cantrip poison spray at will. Additionally, for the next 10 minutes, you can jump three times the normal distance, though you can't jump farther than your remaining movement would allow.

**The Child.** This card depicts a small girl ripping apart a porcelain doll with her bare hands. Until the start of your next turn, your Strength becomes 20 unless it was already higher, and you roll an additional weapon damage die with melee attacks for the same duration.

**Dolly.** This card depicts a hulking hairy brute with oversized talons and a face hidden beneath a porcelain doll's mask. For 1 minute, your body increases in size as if you were enlarged by the *enlarge/reduce* spell. Your hands twist into overgrown talons. For that duration, your unarmed strikes deal slashing damage equal to 1d10 + your Strength modifier.

**The Dread Harvester.** This card depicts a slender figure in tattered clothes wielding a long reaping scythe. Its head is a leering jack-o'-lantern lit from within. For 1 minute, your eyes and mouth glow with a hellish internal light, granting you darkvision with a range of 60 feet. Additionally, for that duration, when you make a melee weapon attack, compare the attack roll to the AC of all creatures within reach of your weapon. You deal the weapon's damage to every creature you would hit with the roll, both friend and foe.

**The Dreamer.** This card depicts a beautiful young woman suspended on a field of stars and moons, surrounded by colorful, dreamlike images. You immediately cast *sleep* as a 4th level spell, followed by *hallucinatory terrain*.

**The Gate Keeper.** This card depicts a crooked old woman with iron talons studying a great armillary sphere. You immediately cast *teleport*. Teleporting in this way never risks drawing the attention of infernals.

**The Heretic.** This card depicts a wrathful priest-king with a halo of burning sunlight. You immediately cast *flame strike*. Additionally, until the end of your next turn, when a hostile creature targets you with a ranged spell attack that deals damage, you reflect the spell back at the attacker. The spellcaster must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw against its own spell save DC or take half damage from the spell.

**The King of Nothing.** This card depicts a small male figure in a withered tree with a tarnished crown on his head, eating from what looks to be a bowl full of ashes. Until the end of your next turn, all creatures within 60 feet of you have a -2 penalty to AC and cannot regain hit points.

**The Lady.** This card depicts a young woman sharing a meal with several pink gremlins. For the next 10 minutes, all grymkin that can see or hear you are automatically charmed by you. Once the 10 minutes are up, grymkin are no longer charmed and act normally.

**Lord Longfellow.** This card depicts a black spider wearing a porcelain mask with a human face. You gain a climbing speed equal to your current speed for 10 minutes. Additionally, for 10 minutes any weapons you carry with the magazine property cannot run out of ammunition.

**The Twilight Sisters (Agrona).** This card depicts a frail old woman in a witch's hat stirring a cauldron of unpleasant-looking ingredients. For 1 minute, you can use an action to cast *cure wounds* up to a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus.

**The Twilight Sisters (Heidrun).** This card depicts a beautiful young woman holding a cup that contains a suspiciously bloodlike substance. For 1 minute, when you hit a target creature with a melee weapon attack, the attack deals an extra 1d8 necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken this way, and you regain hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**The Wanderer.** This card depicts a slender traveler with a lantern pole over one of his shoulders. Until the end of your next turn, if you are the target of an attack, you can use your reaction to instantly swap places with another target creature you can see. You teleport to the target's space, and it teleports to your previous space. The attack is then rolled against the creature you swapped places with.



## FANG OF CALDER

Weapon (any dagger), very rare (requires attunement)

These obsidian ritual blades are ancient weapons used by worshippers of the Devourer Wurm and their druid allies. They have ritually ended the lives of uncounted thousands over centuries of dark sacrificial rites to appease the

Devourer Wurm with the blood of enemies of the wild. The weapons draw from the life force of victims and are tied to the unchanging cycle of the moon Calder.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

**Light of the Moon.** While you are attuned to this weapon, it gains additional properties depending on the phase of the moon.

- **Full.** The weapon deals an extra 2d6 necrotic damage, and you regain hit points equal to half the necrotic damage dealt this way.
- **Waxing.** The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +3. While wielding the weapon, you can cast the *light* cantrip.
- **Waning.** The weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls decreases to +1. While wielding the weapon, you can cast the *vicious mockery* cantrip.
- **New.** Unless the weapon is used to sacrificially kill a humanoid creature at a site sacred to the Devourer Wurm, it loses all magical properties and remains dormant until the sacrifice is performed.

## GLYRNYS' MUSIC BOX

*Wondrous item, rare*

These rare and unusual devices were fabricated by the renowned Iosan craftsman Teslar Glyrnys centuries ago. Most of the boxes have disappeared over the centuries, but a rare few remain in the world and are prized for both their rarity and their extraordinary characteristics.

You can use an action to speak the music box's command word and wind the box, which begins to play a song woven with mystical energy produced by runes inscribed into its mechanism. While the song plays, each creature within 60 feet of the box that can hear it is affected by its song. The music box plays for 1 minute. At the end of that time, any effects end.

Each use of the music box has a 10 percent chance of causing the box to break. If it does, the music box is destroyed and any of its ongoing magical effects end.

There are multiple versions of this item, each with its own effect.

**Lullaby.** This music box produces a restful song. On first hearing it, each affected creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for the duration of the song.

**Song of Hours.** A creature that spends the full minute of the song's duration in the affected area gains the benefit of a short rest.

**Song of Soothing.** A creature that spends the full minute of the song's duration in the affected area regains 2d8 + 4 hit points when the song ends.

**Song of Spring.** For the song's duration, magical plants grow rapidly to fill the affected area, which becomes difficult terrain and is lightly obscured.

**Song of Twilight.** Darkness fills the affected area for the song's duration. Creatures with darkvision can't see through this darkness and nonmagical light can't illuminate it.

**Song of Winter.** Ice forms on all surfaces in the affected area for the song's duration. Nonmagical fire is extinguished in the area, and the ground becomes difficult terrain.

## HARROWING BLADE

*Weapon (any sword), very rare (requires attunement)*

Harrowing blades are relics of the Molgur times, ancient weapons once carried by battle-witches as they fell upon the defenders of the first cities. They are worked with runes of power and sacrifice to the Devourer Wurm.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

While attuned to the blade, when you deal damage with it to a target non-construct, non-undead creature, you can mark the target for harrowing. While it is marked in this way, when you would take damage from a melee attack, you can cause the marked target to take the damage instead, and then the target is no longer marked. Damage taken in this way ignores any resistances or immunities of the marked target.

After a marked target takes damage in this way, you can't mark another target with this blade until the next dawn.



## HORN OF BRAGG

*Wondrous item, rare*

This drinking horn shines with a deep luster and smells of wafting alcoholic fumes. Stains on the inside of the horn are said to be the residue of legendary fell caller Bragg's "personal reserve."

When you drink a pint of beer, wine, or other strong hooch from the horn of Bragg, you gain temporary hit points equal to 5 times your Constitution modifier (minimum 5) and advantage on saving throws against being frightened. These effects last for 1 hour. Once you have gained these benefits from the horn, it cannot provide them again until the next dawn.

## KRIELSTONE

*Wondrous item, rare*

Krielstones are sacred monuments of the trollkin, and the great carved rocks are covered with carefully inscribed Molgur runes immortalizing heroism over the ages. The largest krielstones are placed at sites of importance to Dhunia or noted ancient battlegrounds and are often near or part of shrines to the Ravaged Mother. Through the prayers of generations, they became replete with spiritual power, and miracles have long been associated with them. Most are too heavy to move, but a tradition has arisen over the centuries

## HUNT FOR THE STONES

The krielstones of many tribes were lost when skorne forces marched on western Immoren. Forced to abandon their traditional lands, the stones remained out of the trollkin's reach for years. Now that the skorne have been driven back to the east, the trollkin kriels who inhabited the Bloodstone, Scarleforth Lake, and nearby regions have begun to hunt for the missing relics of their past.

whereby kith carve smaller krielstones specifically for use in battle. These are reservoirs for the furious strength warlocks draw from their beasts and can radiate powerful protection to the brave warriors fighting nearby.

An average krielstone weighs between 300 and 350 pounds.

**Fury Vault.** A trollkin warlock can store fury points in a krielstone within 60 feet. A krielstone can contain up to 3 fury points at a time. The warlock cannot store fury points in a krielstone being carried by a hostile creature.

**Protective Aura.** While carrying a krielstone, you can use an action to spend 1 fury point stored in it to produce a protective aura. The aura is a 20-foot-diameter sphere centered on the krielstone and increases in diameter by 5 feet for each fury point currently stored in the stone. Creatures in the area have a +2 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.

## NONOKRIAN PACT BLADE

*Weapon (any weapon that deals slashing damage), rare (requires attunement)*

Those who were willing to throw in with the infernals received many gifts for their betrayal. One of the most common was a simple blade consecrated in occult rituals that gave the wielder strength, but also marked the soul for swift claiming upon death.

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. While you are attuned to it, infernal horrors treat you as a friendly creature, but you gain the Marked Soul trait.

**Marked Soul.** You have a marked soul. An infernalist or infernal master can use the marked soul to summon horrors into the physical world.

## RUNE BELT OF MARGOR

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

The trollkin of the Scarsfell Forest in Khador crafted this belt centuries ago to serve a great hunter among the Margor kriel. Constructed of thick leather and covered with iron plates, the belt has several large runes carved into each plate of metal. The belt grants advantage to Dexterity (Stealth) and Wisdom (Survival) checks while also increasing your base speed by 10 feet.



## RUNE BLADE

*Weapon (any axe), uncommon*

Most often seen in the hands of trollkin sorcerers and shamans, rune blade weapons are inscribed with Dhunian runes that grant them unique capabilities.

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. It also has one of the following special properties, determined by the runes inscribed on its surface. When you use any of these properties, it can't be used until the next dawn.

**Dhunian's Rage.** When you hit with this weapon, you can choose to have it deal an extra 1d12 slashing damage.

**Fate Blessed.** When you miss with an attack roll with this weapon, you can reroll the attack.

**Weight of Stone.** When you hit with this weapon, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## SCROLL OF GRINDAR AND GELFAS

*Wondrous item, very rare*

Among stone scribes of the trollkin, some few rise to prominence. They have carved indelible runes on dozens of krielstones and copied hundreds of scrolls to immortalize the deeds of the greatest trollkin warriors.

Stories have power, particularly the great epics whose themes of sacrifice, heroism, and redemption resound in the minds of listeners. One tale favored among the kriels, and enjoyed despite endless repetition, involves Grindar and Gelfas, two famous trollkin heroes of the Orgoth Rebellion.

The tale begins with the "Valley of Mist," when a small group of trollkin including the great Chief Grindar advanced through a fog to ambush a band of the oppressors. Just as things looked grim for Grindar, the "Charge of the Trolls" recounts how Grindar's son Gelfas arrived with full-blood trolls and battled in to save his father. A few days after came "The Hero's Tragedy," when this brave eldest son gave his life to buy time for reinforcements to arrive. By this sacrifice, and despite his heavy heart, Grindar went on to lead one of the greatest victories that helped drive the Orgoth from the land.

As an action you can read a chapter of this epic tale. The tale affects all friendly creatures within 30 feet of you who can hear it. A creature can be affected by a chapter only once per round. You must read the chapters in order, and you can begin again after reading the final one. The effects of each chapter last until the start of your next turn.

**Chapter 1: The Valley of Mist.** The area is heavily obscured by magical mist. Additionally, an affected creature cannot be targeted by ranged attacks while prone.



**Chapter 2: The Charge of the Trolls.** When making a melee attack targeting an enemy creature within 5 feet of a friendly creature, an affected creature gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

**Chapter 3: The Hero's Tragedy.** An affected creature can, as a reaction, make one melee attack against any creature that hits it with a melee attack. The affected creature still takes any damage dealt by the triggering attack.

## SHACKLES OF SPELLBURNING

*Wondrous item, rare*

After the Gift of Magic caused Immorese spellcasters to emerge, the Orgoth occupiers needed the means to suppress the magical abilities of their captives. The Orgoth produced these magical restraints, which have continued to see use in the Iron Kingdoms into the modern day.

You can use an action to place these shackles on an incapacitated creature. In addition to serving as mundane manacles, the shackles punish a wearer who attempts to use magic.

While in the shackles, a creature that attempts to cast a spell must first make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the creature takes 22 (4d10) fire damage and the spell is not cast, though the spell slot remains spent. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and can cast the spell normally.

Additionally, while in the shackles, a creature does not regain expended spell slots after completing a rest, does not regain focus points, and cannot leech fury points. This effect ends as soon as the shackles are removed.

## SPEAR OF SCYRAH

*Weapon (any spear), very rare*

These rare weapons belonged to the famed Spears of Scyrah, a cabal of devoted killers who fought for the cause of the Retribution of Scyrah. Three of these weapons are known to exist, most recently carried by the warriors Dysis, Lyona, and Nya, who vanished after the death of the gods.

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Attacks with this weapon ignore bonuses to AC provided by spells such as *barkskin*, *mage armor*, or *shield*.

When you attack with this weapon and roll a 20 on the attack roll, if the target creature has the ability to cast spells, it takes an extra 2d8 radiant damage. A creature can avoid this extra damage if it sacrifices its highest spell slot level or all its current focus or fury points.

## SPLINTERBOW

*Weapon (Nyss bow), very rare*

These seldom-seen weapons are a legacy of the Voassyr tribe of Nyss, renowned hunters and the family of the notorious blighted warlock Lylyth. When you nock an arrow on the bow, crackling blue light rushes down the shaft and head of the arrow.

This magic weapon has 3 charges. When you make a ranged attack with the splinterbow, as a bonus action you can expend 1 charge to cause the arrow to split into numerous deadly shards that rain on an area. Each other creature

within 10 feet of your target must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes damage as if you had hit it with the attack. In addition, your target and creatures in the affected area gain no benefit from cover other than total cover.

The bow regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

## STONESHARD

*Weapon (any axe or sword), very rare*

Stoneshard weapons are rare, prized implements found in the hands of the greatest champions of the trollkin people. Each of them is crafted from the fragments of a krielstone and shaped into a deadly weapon. The legacy of a kriel's accomplishments has sunk into the stone itself, and scraps of runic passages along the blade glow with the innate power of stories told through generations.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

**Krielstone Echo.** After hitting a hostile creature with a melee attack using this weapon, you can grant a +2 bonus to AC to friendly creatures within 20 feet of you until the start of your next turn. After using this feature, you can't use it again until the next dawn.

## TALISMAN OF SUBDUAL

*Wondrous item, very rare*

This stone talisman acts as a defense against the rampages of wild beasts, cowing their spirits. When a creature you can see within 30 feet of you moves, as a reaction you can force the creature to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature cannot target you with an attack until the end of your next turn.

## TORCH OF THE FELL CALLER

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement by a fell caller)*

Wilderness trollkin kriels have a long-standing tradition of carrying great torches into major battles to light the way for the warriors to follow and inspire them to heroics. Only worthy fell callers who have fought in the defense of their kriels may bear these symbols.

Ancestral runes and Dhunian blessings cover the surfaces of this torch. If you are a trollkin bearing a fell caller's torch, it grants allied trollkin within 40 feet who can see you advantage on saving throws to avoid becoming frightened. Additionally, when you use Bardic Inspiration, the torch increases the ability's range to 120 feet. The torch grants these bonuses only while lit.

Each massive and cumbersome stone torch contains a brazier to fire flammable materials and long-burning oils. It weighs 60 to 100 pounds, holds 3 pints of oil, and burns for up to 10 hours.



## WITHERING BLADE

*Weapon (any sword or axe), very rare (requires attunement)*

The fabrication of a withering blade is known to some people of the Molgur tribes. Those who feel the touch of these weapons shrivel like a weed baking in the sun.

When you hit a creature with this blade, the target must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 10 + the damage taken from the attack. On a failed save, the creature's speed is halved and it has disadvantage on Strength checks and saving throws until the start of your next turn.

## WRAITH BANE

*Weapon (any sword or axe), very rare*

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus increases to +3 when you use the weapon to attack a creature with the Incorporeal Movement feature.

When you attack with this weapon and roll a 20 on an attack roll, the target takes an extra 2d6 bludgeoning damage. This bludgeoning damage increases to 4d6 if the target is a creature with Incorporeal Movement; if such a creature has 25 hit points or fewer after taking this damage, it is destroyed.

*Relics. If magic items were warjacks, then these things would be the colossals. Too damned scary to consider touching, if you ask me.*

*—Allen Ashley*

## RELICS

Many ancient and powerful relics yet remain in Ios, Rhul, and the nearby wildlands.

Some of these items predate human civilization. They are objects of power, some the personal possessions of the gods themselves. The instruments of the Divine Court are revered still by sects who pay respect to the Vanished, and the tools of the Great Fathers are given a special place in the halls of the dwarves.

Some such objects are re-creations, perhaps even fabricated by mortal hands, but even these are so ancient and potent as to stand apart from common mechanika and even rare traditional magic items.

## RELIC DESCRIPTIONS

This section presents an assortment of relics in alphabetical order.

### CRACKED LENS OF VELSHES

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

Lacyr's servant Velshes, known also as the Spinning Lens, had many eyes through which it was able to view the threads of time and fate. Iosan legends tell of one of Velshes' many eyes suffering a minute flaw on first looking upon the infernal horrors that sought to invade the Veld. Lacyr was believed to have carried this lens into Caen as a memento of this loyal servant.

## THE SERVANTS OF THE DIVINE COURT

In the Veld, the gods of the elves created attendant servants: Velshes, Nyolise, Savcyr. These names are spoken with the same deference as those of the Ascendants of Morrow and Scions of Thamar among human worshippers.

Many objects said to be associated with these divine servants—and a few claimed to be those servants—traveled across the Bridge of Worlds with the Divine Court. When the gods departed Ios, they left behind the tools and instruments they brought with them, with a few notable exceptions—the Mantle of Lacyr and Nyssor's sword Voass being the most well-known, but there were others as well.

The lens is an opaque crystal disk 4 inches in diameter. While attuned to this item, you can peer through the lens. The crystal becomes perfectly transparent, apart from a fracture running diagonally across its face, and you gain truesight with a range of 120 feet.

While holding the lens, you can cast the *scrying* spell at will (save DC 18).

## EVERSPRING STAFF

*Weapon (quarterstaff), legendary (requires attunement)*

Made of living wood, these relics are carried by the archons of Dhunia when they manifest on Caen. For reasons none have been able to ascertain, once in a while when an archon returns to the soil she leaves behind her weapon, perhaps as a gift for pious Dhunians. The ever spring staff continues to bloom with new growth constantly.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

The staff has 1d4 + 2 branches growing from it that can produce various effects. The staff regrows 1d4 branches each day at dawn.

- When you hit with a melee attack using the staff, as a free action you can cause one branch to drop away to deal an extra 1d8 poison damage with that attack.
- As an action, you can slam the staff into the ground to cast the *entangle* spell (save DC 15). You cannot use this ability again until you finish a short or long rest. The spell lasts for 1 minute.
- As an action, you can snap off one of the branches to cast the *goodberry* spell. The berries grow on the broken branch.
- As an action, you can snap off three branches and crush them to cast the *plant growth* spell.

## GEK'S GUTSLICER

*Weapon (shortsword), legendary (requires attunement)*

While it is not well known to other cultures, among the wilderness tribes of bogrin dwelling on the fringe of the Bloodstone Marches Gek's Gutslicer is an object of myth and legend. Once belonging to the infamous Gekakulmannon, this wickedly curved shortsword is said to have ended the life of a fiery priest of Menoth who tried to eradicate the Bloodstone bogrin. Gek went on to bury the weapon in the guts of countless crusaders, pilgrims, and knights who came to take vengeance on him.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. If you hit a creature with it that has current hit points below its maximum hit points, the attack deals an extra 1d8 necrotic damage.

While you have the weapon drawn, you can use a bonus action to activate one of the following properties:

- Have the blade become pitch black. While the blade is black, nonmagical sources of light within 20 feet of you are extinguished.
- Give the weapon the thrown property, with a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet.



## GHORBLOD

*Weapon (greataxe), artifact (requires attunement)*

As the First Father of Battle and Master of Axes, Dhurg carried this double-bitted axe into battle. The axe's blade has a deep red coloration, said to be from the cinnabar chips of the heart of Ghor the Mountain-God used to smelt it. For generations the axe has been one of the relics of Clan Dhurg, carried ceremonially by the Stone Lord of Clan Dhurg during important moots.

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. It scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20. If you hit a construct or elemental with it, the target takes an extra 2d10 slashing damage.

**Spells.** This axe has 5 charges and regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. While you are carrying Ghorblod, you can expend 1 charge and use an action to cast one of the following spells (save DC 18) from it: *move earth*, *stoneskin*, or *wall of earth*.

## HAMMER OF NYOLISE

*Weapon (maul), legendary (requires attunement)*

Nyolise was the servant of Nyssor who helped construct the divine palace of the gods in Urcaen and forge their greatest weapons. Upon Nyssor's departure from the Veld, Nyolise is said to have given the finest hammer in her possession to the great crafter of the Divine Court, so he could continue to fabricate wonders on the other side of the veil.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. If you hit a construct with it, the target takes an extra 2d10 cold damage.

This hammer functions as smith's tools, and you have advantage on checks made with it if you are proficient with smith's tools.

**Spells.** While you are carrying the Hammer of Nyolise, you can cast the following spells: *knock* and *shatter*. After casting a spell this way, you can't cast it again until the next dawn.

## HRORDSKER

*Weapon (shortsword), artifact (requires attunement)*

As the Second Father of Battle and Master of Blades, Hrord carried this unassuming bronze blade out of Kharg Drogun, the land beneath. The blade radiates intense heat, causing the air around it to shimmer and ripple. Legends of the Great Fathers say that Hrord dipped the blade in the last font of Ghor's blood, a river of molten bronze that still flows along its surface to this day.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

You are immune to fire damage while holding Hrordsker. Whenever it deals damage to a creature, the blade radiates a burst of intense heat in a 30-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in that area takes 10 (3d6) fire damage.

## MASK OF JHORD

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)*

This black iron mask is one of the sacred relics of the Great Father Jhord, the Father of Spying and Information. Once the most valuable treasure in the vaults of Clan Jhord, it was stolen generations ago. The clan suspects their rivals in the Glomring are responsible for the deed and have spent years trying to locate the missing relic. This has only added to the friction between the noble spies of Clan Jhord and the Brotherhood of Lurkers—exacerbated by the Glomring's agents making a habit of wearing faux masks to taunt their noble rivals.

You can activate the mask's properties by touching the symbol of Jhord inscribed on its forehead. When you do, you speak the name of any humanoid creature to immediately take on the physical appearance of the creature named. You do not need to know the appearance of the creature.

For every 24 hours you maintain the appearance of another creature, you run a risk of permanent alteration. At the end of that interval, you must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw, with a +1 modifier for every additional 24 hours you have maintained the appearance. If the save succeeds, you can revert to your normal appearance at will. On a failed save, the mask falls away and no longer functions for you, and your appearance is permanently altered to match the appearance of the chosen humanoid.

## ODOMWEYD

*Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement by a wizard)*

The Great Father Odom's "Book of Secrets," Odomweyd is an unassuming tome bound in dark leather with the symbol of Odom embossed on its cover. It is said that the Father of Magic and Secrets recorded his vast knowledge of spellcraft and the lore of the entire world in this book. When opened, its vellum pages appear blank, but they gradually fill with text to match the needs and secret thoughts of the individual who carries it.

If you can attune to this item, you can use it as a spellbook and an arcane focus. Once per day, when a wizard spell of 1st level or higher is cast within 100 feet of you and you have a spell slot of the appropriate level, you can choose to have the spell appear in Odomweyd, transcribed in your own notation.

The spell remains in Odomweyd until you use this feature to replicate a different spell.

## SHIELD OF AESOSS

*Armor (shield), legendary (requires attunement)*

Aeossw was one of the two guardians who stood at the gates of the Veld in Urcaen, ensuring that none of the feral spirits could intrude on the realm of the Divine Court.

While holding this shield, you have a +2 bonus to AC and creatures within 30 feet of you cannot benefit from the Etherealness or Incorporeal Movement features. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC.

While attuned to the Shield of Aeossw, you can use an action to cast *magic circle*. Once you do so, you can't use this property again until the next dawn. Additionally, you have resistance to your choice of acid, cold, fire, or lightning damage. You choose the type of damage each day at dawn, and can choose a different damage type each time.

## SHIELD OF VOLARR

*Armor (shield), legendary (requires attunement)*

The Shield of Volarr is a relic of the Thornwood trollkin. The legendary chieftain Madrak Ironhide took it up during his travels east to the Alchiere subcontinent, where he established a new home for his displaced people far from the petty warmongering of the human kingdoms. It is a sturdy round shield of banded metal hung with rune-marked stone talismans. These talismans afford greater protection to all who fight beside the warrior who carries it.

While holding this shield, you have a +2 bonus to AC. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC.

The shield has 5 charges. It regains 1d4 charges each day at dawn. A warlock attuned to the shield can use an action and spend 1 fury point to replenish an expended charge.

A charge can be spent for one of the following.

**Protective Aura.** You can use an action and expend 1 charge to summon a protective aura. Friendly creatures within 40 feet of you gain a +2 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.

**Wards of Volarr.** When a friendly creature within 40 feet of you is hit by an attack, before the damage is rolled you can use your reaction and expend up to 5 charges from the shield. For each charge expended, reduce the damage the creature takes by 1d10.

## SPEAR OF AELWYS

*Weapon (spear), legendary (requires attunement)*

Aelwys was the second of two guardians of the Veld, whose spear pierced a seemingly endless tide of wild spirits seeking entry into the home of the Divine Court.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you hit a fiend or an undead with it, that creature takes an extra 2d10 radiant damage.

While you hold the spear, its blade sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet. While within the radius of bright light, you and all friendly creatures gain resistance to necrotic damage.

## TELMIRR, "WINTER'S END"

*Weapon (longsword), artifact (requires attunement)*

A graceful, curved longsword that once belonged to the Iosan goddess Scyrah, Telmirr has a fine knotwork of elven runes inscribed along the length of its blade. The wooden handle is constantly warm to the touch, and when swung it produces a gentle susurrus, like wind blowing through the leaves.

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon, which has the finesse property. When you hit with it, the target takes an extra 1d6 poison damage. It has the following additional properties.

**Eruption of Life.** As an action, you can drive Telmirr into the ground to cause magical vegetation to fill a 60-foot-diameter, 60-foot-tall cylinder centered on you. These plants turn the area into difficult terrain for all creatures except those you designate, and the area is lightly obscured.

When you remove Telmirr from the ground, the plants wither and die.

**Rejuvenation.** While holding Telmirr, you can use an action to give yourself 1d8 + 4 temporary hit points. This property can't be used again until the next dawn.

## UDOLENRAZ

*Weapon (hammer), artifact (requires attunement)*

As the Third Father of Battle and Master of Hammers, Udo was known for wielding this massive warhammer. Circling the hammer's head are the full edicts of the Codex as first laid out by the Great Fathers. The binding law of the Rhulfolk can be imbued into the strikes of this weapon.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you hit with an attack using this weapon, the target takes an extra 1d6 radiant damage.

If you hit with an attack using this weapon, you can choose to trigger one of two effects instead of dealing damage. You can use each effect once and cannot use them again until you finish a short rest.

- You cast a *silence* spell centered on the target.
- You cast a *zone of truth* spell centered on the target.

## VOASS, "SUMMERBANE"

*Weapon (Nyss greatsword), artifact (requires attunement)*

The legendary sword of Nyssor, Scyir of Winter, Voass is a gigantic blade imbued with the cold of deepest winter. For centuries the weapon waited with Nyssor in the god's frozen vault in the Shard Spires before Nyssor was awoken by Lord Ghyrrshyld of House Vyre, who claimed the relic as his own. For many years Ghyrrshyld carried the stolen blade. When he passed, it was Voass that cut down the last of the elven gods.

After Ghyrrshyld's death, Voass has continued to be a significant relic in the hands of those who follow his beliefs. The Nyss Ryllys Dyvvar, a scion of the Voassyrd shard who remains devoted to the dead Winter Father, makes no secret that he desires this fabled weapon, believing that for any other to wield it is to desecrate the memory of his god.

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon, which has the finesse property. When you hit with it, the target takes an extra 1d8 cold damage.

Voass has the following additional properties.

**Carved from Ice.** When you attack a creature without immunity to cold damage with this weapon and roll a 20 on the attack roll, the creature must also make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is restrained by a thick layer of ice. The creature must make another Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If it successfully saves against this effect three times, the effect ends. If it fails the save three times, it is frozen solid and becomes petrified for 1 hour.

**Godslayer.** You make attack rolls with this weapon with advantage against celestial creatures. If both dice in the attack roll would hit the target, the attack is considered a critical hit.

**Eruption of Winter.** As an action, you can drive Voass into the ground to cause a magical blizzard to fill a 60-foot-diameter, 60-foot-tall cylinder centered on you. The area becomes heavily obscured. A creature that starts or ends its turn in the area takes 1d8 cold damage.

When you remove Voass from the ground, the blizzard dissipates.

## WELL OF TRUTH

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a pious Menite)*

The Well of Truth is an ancient Menite relic thought to have protected pilgrims in ages long past. It is a brass bowl engraved with scripture from the Canon of the True Law. When water is poured into the basin, it is said to hide the faithful from an enemy's detection. The well was lost during the Orgoth Occupation after the Prophet Cassian used it to conceal the exodus of refugees from the destruction of Laedry at the hands of the invaders; it remained undiscovered until 605 AR, when it was found in a forgotten temple south of Leryn.

While attuned to it, as an action you can pour water into the Well of Truth. For the next hour, you and any friendly creatures within a 100-foot-radius sphere centered on the well are unable to be detected by scrying or similar magic. Additionally, the well produces a magical fog in this same radius that renders friendly creatures in it invisible until they attack or cast a spell. The Well of Truth can't be used again in this fashion until the next dawn.

## POTENT CONSUMABLES

Throughout the borderlands are various powerful limited-use items that take the form of fetishes, elixirs, tinctures, magical orbs, and the like. Such items confer powerful positive effects but also have downsides. Potent consumables have a listed number of uses; once the item has been used that number of times it is exhausted and is no longer magical, leaving behind only a mundane shell of its former power.

When a creature attempts to identify the properties of an item in this category, it makes one check with the skill or tool associated with the item. If the item has more than one skill or tool listed, a creature may attempt each check once to determine its properties.

Each item has two check DCs, one each for its positive effect and negative effect. The positive effect is easier to identify than the negative one. Compare the result of the

check to both, then read the corresponding description in italics to the player for each check they pass. If the check result is equal to or greater than the positive effect DC, they learn that the item also has a negative effect but not what it is. A result of 10 on either check indicates only that the item is magical; a result above 10 but below the lower check DC for the item reveals that it has both a positive and negative effect, but not necessarily what those effects are.

The *identify* spell reveals only the positive properties of the item.

## BAG OF WORMS

*Potent consumable, uncommon*

**Skill Check:** Intelligence (Nature)

**Positive Effect DC:** 13

**Negative Effect DC:** 18

**Uses:** 3

As an action, you can reach into this bag to pull out a handful of various types of bugs and worms and throw them at a chosen square within 10 feet of you. Make a DC 10 Dexterity check. On a success, the vermin land in the square and multiply into hundreds of thousands more. The square becomes difficult terrain for 1 minute, and each creature that starts its turn in or that enters the square must make separate Constitution and Wisdom saving throws with a DC of 13 or 10 + your proficiency bonus, whichever is higher. On a failed Constitution save, the creature is poisoned for 1 minute. Failing the Wisdom saving throw causes the creature to become frightened by the chosen square until the end of its next turn. After a minute the bugs and worms disappear as the magic fades away.

If you fail the Dexterity check, or pull bugs out of the bag but don't throw them, one of the squares you are occupying, chosen by the DM, is affected instead.

This item does not affect undead or constructs.

**Positive Description:**

*This constantly writhing bag contains a nightmarish variety of poisonous vermin. You believe that you can pull out some of them out of the bag to throw at a nearby area. For a short time after being drawn from the bag the bugs and worms are docile, but once released from your hand they will multiply. Their sudden presence is terrifying to anyone nearby and their thousands of poisonous bites debilitate the object of their scorn. After about a minute the insects fade away. You believe this bag has three uses still available. (If the bag has fewer or more uses, instead tell the player that number.)*

**Negative Description:**

*Failing to correctly handle the bugs and worms in this bag will turn their wrath on you.*

## LESSER TINCTURE OF HEALTH

*Potent consumable, common*

**Skill Check:** Intelligence (Arcana)

**Tool Check:** Intelligence (field alchemy kit)

**Positive Effect DC:** 12

**Negative Effect DC:** 17

**Uses:** 1

You can drink or administer this tincture as if it were a potion. You take 7 (2d4 + 2) necrotic damage on drinking the tincture, but after taking the damage you gain twice that amount in temporary hit points for 24 hours. Additionally you have advantage on Constitution saving throws for 1 minute. Necrotic damage taken from this tincture reduces your hit point maximum by an equal amount until you complete a long rest; your hit point maximum cannot be reduced below 1 by this damage. If this damage reduces you to 0 hit points, you still gain the temporary hit points.

Administering this tincture to a creature at 0 hit points does not deal damage, confer temporary hit points, or grant advantage on Constitution saving throws, but the creature has disadvantage on any death saving throw it makes during its next turn.

This item does not affect undead or constructs.

**Positive Description:**

*This strange, murky red tincture will grant the one who consumes it additional vitality and boost their ability to resist harmful ailments.*

**Negative Description:**

*In order to gain the additional vitality, the imbiber must sacrifice some of their life force. Administering this tincture to a dying creature will only hasten its demise.*

**More Powerful Versions.** Tinctures of health and greater tinctures of health also exist, although they are seen less often; both of the more powerful tinctures are uncommon items. The necrotic damage from a tincture of health is 14 (4d4 + 4), and the DCs to identify its positive and negative effects increase by 2. The necrotic damage from a greater tincture of health is 21 (6d4 + 6), and the DCs to identify its positive and negative effects increase by 3.

## FETISH OF PRIMAL RAGE

*Potent consumable, uncommon*

**Skill Check:** Intelligence (Arcana)

**Positive Effect DC:** 13

**Negative Effect DC:** 18

**Uses:** 4

This farrow fetish made from the bones of predatory animals has been enchanted with their bestial fury. As an action, you can grant yourself or a willing ally of your choice within 30 feet of you a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls when making a melee weapon attack using Strength. If a creature affected by the fetish begins its turn within 5 feet of another creature (friend or foe), the affected creature must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, it makes as many melee attacks as it normally can with a single action against one of the creatures (of their choice) within 5 feet of it, using Strength to resolve these attacks if

it can. After making these attacks the affected creature's turn immediately ends. Each use of this effect lasts for 1 minute.

**Positive Description:**

*This farrow fetish made from the bones of predatory animals can enhance the accuracy and damage of melee attacks that utilize strength. It can affect either the user of the fetish or another of their allies nearby. You believe this fetish has 4 uses still available. (If the fetish has fewer or more uses, instead tell the player that number.)*

**Negative Description:**

*If the affected one is within striking distance or a friend or foe, they could fly into a rage and attack anyone nearby.*

## FLASK OF ENDLESS REMEDIES

*Potent consumable, rare*

**Skill Check:** Intelligence (Arcana)

**Tool Check:** Intelligence (field alchemy kit)

**Positive Effect DC:** 15

**Negative Effect DC:** 20

**Uses:** 3

You can drink or administer a dose of the contents of this flask as if it were a potion to cure various maladies. With each use, you can attempt to end one of the following negative effects and conditions with a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw.

- Reduce exhaustion level by one.
- End one of the following conditions: blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious.
- End any reduction to one ability score.
- End one effect reducing hit point maximum.
- Cure one disease as if by the lesser restoration spell.
- Neutralize one poison.

After each successful Constitution save, you take 3 (1d6) poison damage and are poisoned for 1 round (plus 1 additional round per save made this way).

This item does not affect undead or constructs.

**Positive Description:**

*This strange rainbow-colored liquid is created by trollkin Dhunia worshippers as a panacea for the various maladies the Glimmering Woods can induce. Its healing properties can release people from negative magical effects, cure poisons or diseases, or reduce exhaustion. You believe this flask has 3 doses still available. (If the flask has fewer or more doses, instead tell the player that number.)*

**Negative Description:**

*The healing effects come at a cost. The liquid poisons you, causing terrible pain and debilitating effects that are worse and last longer the more the panacea cures.*

## IOSAN MIRROR OF THE MOON

*Potent consumable, very rare*

**Skill Check:** Intelligence (Arcana)

**Positive Effect DC:** 17

**Negative Effect DC:** 22

**Uses:** 5

As part of casting a spell that targets a single hostile creature, you can invoke the power of the mirror. Doing so means the spell does not consume a spell slot or resources such as focus or fury. However, in the process the spell is duplicated, and that duplicate spell targets you. If the spell requires concentration, you must maintain concentration on both spells if you can; ending concentration on one spell ends it automatically on the other. If a spell cast with the mirror, duplicate or original, ends early for any reason the other ends as well. If the spell requires any saving throws, only the original target makes them; successes and failures automatically apply to you as well. If the spell needs an attack roll to hit the original target, a hit or miss automatically applies to you.

A creature can use the mirror only once every 24 hours.

**Positive Description:**

*Created by tinkering Iosan arcanists, this mirror was designed to be an alternative to a spell engine. Its use has waned recently, but many such items were left behind in the wake of the Sundering. Using the mirror while casting a spell that affects only a single hostile creature will deplete none of your energies to conjure the magic, but it can be used only once a day. You believe this mirror has 5 uses still available. (If the mirror has fewer or more uses, instead tell the player that number.)*

**Negative Description:**

*Using the mirror not only makes your spell consume no energies but also duplicates it! The duplicated spell will always affect the caster. The original and duplicate spells are linked together so that if one ends the other also ends.*

## LESSER TINCTURE OF RESISTANCE

*Potent consumable, common*

**Skill Check:** Intelligence (Arcana)

**Tool Check:** Intelligence (field alchemy kit)

**Positive Effect DC:** 12

**Negative Effect DC:** 17

**Uses:** 1

You can drink or administer this tincture as if it were a potion. Select one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, or thunder. You gain resistance to the chosen damage type for 1 hour. During that hour, you also gain vulnerability to two other damage types from the same list (chosen by the GM without your knowledge).

**Positive Description:**

*This concoction created by both farrow and trollkin Dhunia worshippers will grant the imbibers resistance to a single type of damage not dealt by physical weapons. The effects persist for about an hour.*

**Negative Description:**

*Gaining resistance from this tincture comes at the cost of vulnerability to unknown elements for the duration of the effect!*

**More Powerful Versions.** Tinctures of resistance and greater tinctures of resistance also exist, although they are seen less often; both of the more powerful tinctures are uncommon items. A tincture of resistance grants resistance to one additional damage type from the list, but you gain two additional vulnerabilities and the DCs to identify the positive and negative effects increase by 2. A greater tincture of resistance grants resistance to three damage types, but you gain vulnerability to all other listed damage types and the DCs to identify the positive and negative effects increase by 3.

## TINCTURE OF MAGIC INVULNERABILITY

*Potent consumable, common*

**Skill Check:** Intelligence (Arcana)

**Tool Check:** Intelligence (field alchemy kit)

**Positive Effect DC:** 12

**Negative Effect DC:** 17

**Uses:** 1

You can drink or administer this tincture as if it were a potion. You gain advantage on all saving throws required by spells, and spell attacks targeting you have disadvantage. However, melee and ranged attacks targeting you have advantage and you have vulnerability to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. The effects of this tincture last for 1 minute.

**Positive Description:**

*The silvery purple liquid seems heavier than any other you have seen. This tincture will both bolster your fortitude to magic and make magic less likely to hit you. The effects persist for about one minute.*

**Negative Description:**

*The additional protection from magic comes at a cost: physical attacks against you have unnatural accuracy and cause much more damage than normal.*

## TINCTURE OF PHYSICAL INVULNERABILITY

*Potent consumable, common*

**Skill Check:** Intelligence (Arcana)

**Tool Check:** Intelligence (field alchemy kit)

**Positive Effect DC:** 12

**Negative Effect DC:** 17

**Uses:** 1

You can drink or administer this tincture as if it were a potion. You gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. However, spell attacks targeting you have advantage and you have disadvantage on all saving throws required by spells. The effects of this tincture last for 1 minute.

**Positive Description:**

*Designed to mimic the potent physical resistance of dire trolls, this tincture will grant you protection from all physical damage. The effects persist for about one minute.*

**Negative Description:**

*Unfortunately the resistance of a dire troll comes at a cost: magic targeting you becomes more accurate, and you are less able to resist the effects of magic in general.*

# 4

# OCCULT ODDITIES



# LIFE BEYOND DEATH: ELDRITCH CHARACTERS

*If it bleeds, I can kill it. I've proven that on hundreds of different hunting expeditions, from devil rats on up to a mammoth the skorne brought over from the east.*

*But what if it doesn't bleed? Or worse, what if bleedin' only makes the damned thing stronger?*

*What I mean is, there are more things in the borderlands than you, I, or anyone else could possibly explain. Things that defy logic and reason, and the rules of the world itself. Some I've only heard stories about, and some I've seen with my own eyes. I include it just so you know what kind of weird, nasty stuff might be out there. Keep your eyes open and your heart steady.*

*—Allen Ashley*

**W**ESTERN IMMOREN IS NO STRANGER TO THE undead. These creatures rise up in every corner of the continent, clawing out of swamps and graveyards to plague the living.

The vast majority of undead are mindless beings, either following the echoes of instincts they once had in life or acting as the thralls of necromancers who command them. Sentient undead exist, but they are by far the minority. The best known are the iron lichs of the Nightmare Empire, who scheme against the Iron Kingdoms from their island homes in service to their master Toruk. But there is another strain of thinking undead, one that until recently was all but unknown beyond the forests of Ios: the eldritch.

The eldritch are, by their very nature, predatory creatures. They require the life essence of other beings to sustain themselves and maintain their strength. Without feeding, an eldritch becomes increasingly weak until it falls into a feeble state, making it easy prey for other, more enthusiastic killers.

Eldritch were once few in number, the

last vestiges of a corrupted priesthood who cast aside their mortality rather than face the consequences of their actions. Even in Ios they were more myth than fact, monsters who haunted the ruins of an ancient city, only emerging to feed on the living.

Recent events have revealed the truth of the eldritch in catastrophic fashion, as the population has exploded far beyond their once limited numbers. Other than the soulless, every Iosan and Nyss yet dwelling within the nation is now counted among them.

## THE CULT OF NYRRO

The origins of the eldritch began long ago. The first of them arose from the Cult of Nyrrro in Eversael.

Nyrrro was one of the Divine Court, the gods of the elves: Arsyf of Day, Seneschal, and Lorekeeper of the gods. His priests were seen as exemplars of lorekeepers and shining keepers of the fanes. Eversael, the gleaming city devoted to the god, was the first completed within Ios. The mighty Dawnguard were sworn to protect Nyrrro, and by association, his priesthood.

Thus it was a devastating blow when those same priests betrayed their role as the spiritual leaders, not only of Eversael but of all living Iosans.

Three hundred years after the exodus of the gods, the Fane of Nyrrro in Eversael made an announcement that elated people across Ios. Nyrrro had returned, they claimed, and brought with him glad tidings! Eversael became the center of joyous pilgrimages and offerings as citizens from every corner of Ios traveled there, hoping to catch a glimpse of the god and hear his word. Tremendous celebrations were held in the streets as the city experienced a rebirth.

The priesthood encouraged these festivals with fresh revelations, much to the



unease of the other fanes.

For years this new cult to Nyrro multiplied, but not all fell under its spell. Those wise enough to be skeptical contended it was peculiar that the priests continued to prevaricate in revealing the god's full message, and stories of his sightings grew increasingly fantastic. Dark rumors began to circulate outside of Eversael: the priesthood was said to be involved in unseemly rites within hidden chambers beneath their fane. Some who traveled to Eversael were never heard from again.

Then a survivor who had escaped the dungeons of the city fled to the Aeryth Dawnguard and affirmed that the clergy had murdered any who sought to reveal their secrets. His story was corroborated when he led Dawnlord Chrylos Nyarr to a mass gravesite.

It is still not entirely understood what led to the corruption of these once holy people. Perhaps it was an attempt to regain influence lost after Eversael was abandoned. It is possible the instigators initially believed they were acting in the interests of the people by restoring hope. Clearly, though, these priests fell to the darker whispers of their souls.

The Dawnguard were infuriated at this betrayal. Nyrro had long been their patron god, and their affiliation with the priesthood had been close for millennia. In their eyes, these acts disgraced their order and therefore justice fell to them. The entire Dawnguard assembled to march from their fortress and descend on Eversael. Bound, dragged from their fane, and shamed into confession in view of their shocked followers, the priests admitted to a long litany of blasphemies. Dawnlord Chrylos Nyarr executed the leaders with his own blade while his soldiers dealt with the rest. The cult evaporated and its survivors fled, leaving Eversael abandoned once more.

Eversael has since been avoided. Rumors persist that the unhallowed fane is haunted and cursed; there is even evidence to suggest that some members of the priesthood avoided execution and transformed themselves into unholy creatures that feed on life to evade death. After this incident the Dawnguard divorced itself from any connection to Nyrro. A strong undercurrent of respect for the god lingers among pious members of the order, but they prefer to keep these sentiments private.

## GORESHADE

The most notorious eldritch in existence, Lord Ghyrrshyll—also known as Goreshade—gained infamy that extended beyond the borders of Ios. He was once the Narcissar of House Vyre, but Goreshade's actions led to civil unrest and the War of Houses in Ios. Following his defeat by a coalition of other Great Houses, Goreshade fled to Eversael seeking out Nyrro's former priesthood.

Though they were initially reluctant, the Cult of Nyrro agreed to share their secret of undeath with the Lord of Vyre. He emerged from the catacombs beneath the city transformed and set out on a decades-spanning plot that would see him ally with the undead armies of Cryx, challenge the last of the living elven gods, and eventually bring about the undeath of the vast majority of elves in the world.

## THE SUNDERING

The Sundering is the name given to the moment when the gods Nyssor and Scyrah perished and to the arcane aftermath of their passing. When Goreshade's ally Elara used his sword to slay the gods, it caused a spiritual shockwave that passed to the very borders of Ios. In a moment, all the Iosans and Nyss within the nation faced one of two fates.

The first and larger of the two groups perished. When the escaping essence of the gods washed over them, the spirits of these elves flew along with that tide. Young and old, sick and hale died in an instant as their souls left their bodies, mingling with the energy of the gods before dispersing from Caen. What happened to that great collective of spiritual essence is not known, but there are still threads of it in Ios, drifting in the dead mists and clinging to certain sites like strands of old webs.

The second, smaller group died as well, but their death was not the end. They transformed into eldritch. Once, this transformation was known only to the Nyrro cultists who pioneered it in an effort to escape true death, and required a prolonged ritual marked by a series of brutal sacrifices to achieve. Even the mighty lord of House Vyre had to bow to the Auricant of the cult for the privilege of becoming one of these creatures. That was no longer the case. What once required weeks occurred in the span of a single breath.

No one is certain what distinguished the first group from the second nor why the influence of the gods' death was contained to Ios. The original eldritch cultists have plumbed their lore for any answers to such questions but remain as unknowing as the rest of their reborn kin.

## BECOMING AN ELDRITCH

The following rules provide player characters the option to become eldritch themselves, either due to the effects of the Sundering or through transformation brought on by another eldritch. In order to become an eldritch, a character must have once been either an Iosan or Nyss elf, as this condition is unique to those particular lineages.

## NATURE OF THE TRANSFORMATION

Before playing an eldritch, the first question the player must answer is how the character underwent this change. Were they one of the masses who transformed during the Sundering, or does their eldritch origin have some other source? The Cult of Nyrro has bestowed the "gift" on others in the past, such as Lord Ghyrrshyll, and the character might have been one of these special individuals. Or it is possible they were transformed by one of the new generation of eldritch following the Sundering: a family member, friend, or even rival could be responsible.

Second, was the transformation willingly undertaken?

## PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Use caution when considering whether to allow a player to play an eldritch character. By their nature these entities must devour the essence of other creatures, and such an existence can cause friction between different player character concepts—or the players themselves. These rules can allow groups to explore the difficult questions facing the inhabitants of Ios and how they would react under those circumstances. They are not carte blanche for a player to harm the enjoyment of the game for anyone else. Before including the option to play eldritch, consider having a conversation with the players first.

Though they might not think so, those who became eldritch in the Sundering agreed, at least at some level, to continue on in undeath. But that is not always the case. Those who became so before or after the event might not have been given the choice. For them, the eldritch state might be a curse, unwanted and irreversible. This kind of involuntary transformation should always be a choice made by a player and not something forced on them by the GM.

Choosing the nature of how a character became an eldritch goes a long way to determining how they will interact with the world and their state of undeath.

## TRANSFORMATION FEATURES

The following are true of eldritch characters. These characteristics replace the racial features of the character. Do not adjust the character's ability scores, class levels, or class features.

**Prerequisite(s):** To become an eldritch, you must meet the following requirements:

- **Elf.** You must be of Iosan or Nyss lineage.
- **Constitution 13.** The transformation is not easy. Those who do not possess physical rigor are not able to exist in this undead state.
- **Unique Genesis.** You must either have been one of the elves in Ios during the Sundering who suffered the full effects of that apocalyptic moment, find an eldritch willing to transform you through ritual art, or have been the victim of such a creature. If you voluntarily pursued this transformation, your creator will likely require you to undertake some service or series of tasks to prove your worthiness to join the ranks of these unique undead.

## SUGGESTED LEVEL

Characters from every walk of life and level of experience can become eldritch, but a player character should have attained a certain degree of experience before taking on this condition. Those who seek out transformation or have it forced on them are likely individuals of some skill and capability to attract the attention of a progenitor. For eldritch who transformed in Ios, the nation is undergoing a tumultuous time of changing loyalties, power struggles, and great peril. Player eldritch who rose during the Sundering are most likely those who were

able to survive this unpredictable and often violent world.

For these reasons, it is suggested that a character be at least 6th level before becoming an eldritch.

## REBORN

When replacing the Iosan or Nyss race with the eldritch transformation, you can keep any skill proficiencies from the base race, as well as size and speed.

If you don't keep any of those elements or you choose this lineage at character creation, you gain proficiency in the Arcana skill and one skill of your choice. Your size is Medium and your base speed is 30 feet.

## UNDEAD

As an eldritch, your type becomes undead. You count as undead for all spells and features that reference the undead type. You no longer need to eat or drink—traditional food, at least—and no longer require sleep. You gain the benefit of completing a long rest after 8 hours of light activity. You are immune to effects that would cause you to fall asleep.

## DREAD TOUCH

Your very touch can be deadly. Make an unarmed melee attack. If you hit with it, you deal necrotic damage equal to 1d4 + your Constitution modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike. A target that isn't a construct or undead must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. The target takes an extra 2d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. You regain hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt by this attack.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

## SUPERIOR DARKVISION

You can see in dim light within 120 feet of you as if it were bright light and in darkness as if it were dim light. You discern colors in that darkness as shades of gray.

## ELDRITCH WEAKNESS

Eldritch have vulnerability to radiant damage and damage from weapons made of entirely organic materials (such as bone or wood).

Each year an eldritch must commit a series of thirteen ritualistic murders. If you fail to complete this ritual, your Strength is reduced by 1 per week until the murders are completed. Your Strength score cannot fall below 1 in this way. You regain 1 point of Strength every 24 hours after the ritual is completed.

## ELDRITCH GIFTS

As eldritch gain experience in their new existence, many discover latent talents and abilities that they did not know they possessed. As with a young child learning to walk and to speak, these abilities lie dormant for a time until experience causes them to rise to prominence. Every eldritch has such potential, but individual discoveries vary from one to the

next. Only the oldest and most powerful eldritch are truly aware of the vastness of their capabilities.

The following are a number of eldritch gifts: feats available only to eldritch characters. Whenever you have the option to choose a feat, you can select one of the following instead of those offered by your essence or other sources.

## ARCANE CONSUMPTION

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch

Your undead status has given you the power to siphon off a portion of enemy magic and use its energy to revitalize your unliving flesh.

When a hostile creature casts a spell while within 60 feet of you, you can use your reaction to regain hit points equal to your proficiency bonus + the level of the spell slot used.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

## AURA OF DESECRATION

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch

Your body exudes an aura of necromantic energy that desecrates the world wherever you travel. Nonmagical plants wither and die at your touch, and nonmagical materials begin to decay and tarnish. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of you must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC = 10 + your Wisdom modifier + your proficiency bonus) or have vulnerability to necrotic damage until the start of its next turn.

## COMMAND THE DEAD

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch, Charisma 13

As an action, you target one undead creature you can see within 60 feet. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your Charisma modifier + your proficiency bonus. On a failed save, the target must obey your commands for the next 24 hours. An undead whose challenge rating is equal to or greater than your level is immune to this effect.

After you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

## CREATE SYTHYSS

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch

You have learned to master the art of transforming those killed by your touch into unliving servants bound to your will, the sythyss. When an Iosan or Nyss elf dies from your Dread Touch attack, you can choose to raise it as a sythyss servant.

Raising a sythyss requires you to use an action and touch an Iosan or Nyss killed by your Dread Touch attack within the last hour. The target gains the sythyss template (see the Eldritch entry in *Monsternomicon*) and follows your commands to the best of its ability, with no regard to its own safety.

You can have a number of sythyss bound to you equal to your proficiency bonus. If you attempt to raise another sythyss beyond this number, the attempt fails.

After using this feature, you can't use it again for 10 days.

## DARK RESTORATION

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch, the ability to create sythyss

Your bond with your sythyss runs deep. Within each of them is a mote of the dark energy that gives you unlife. In times of need, you can revoke it from them to keep yourself alive.

When you are dropped to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can destroy one of your bonded sythyss within 60 feet that is bound to you. You drop to 1 hit point instead. Doing so uses your reaction if it is available.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

## DEATHLY ALLURE

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch, Charisma 13

Despite your physical transformation, your strength of personality and hypnotic presence is enough to make others overlook your visible state. You weave a bit of magic into your words or otherwise suppress your appearance—for a time.

When you use this ability, you conceal your true appearance for a number of minutes equal to your Charisma modifier + your proficiency bonus (minimum 1 minute). During that time, you look like a normal, living member of your race. Only abilities such as truesight can see through this illusion.

After you use this ability, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

## DEATH SURGE

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch, the ability to cast spells

Your undead state allows you to weave the life-stealing essence of the eldritch into the runes of every spell you cast. When you cast a spell of 1st level or higher, in addition to the spell's normal effects, you can choose one target creature that isn't a construct or undead within 60 feet of you that you can see. The target must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. On a failed save, the creature takes necrotic damage equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain an equal number of hit points.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a short or long rest.

## INTRINSIC MAGIC

**Prerequisite:** Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma 13 or higher; Occult Empowerment

You further refine the arcane potential of your new undead state. When you choose this feat, you acquire two 1st-level spells of your choice. Choose one of the following classes: bard, cleric, sorcerer, or wizard. You must choose your spells from that class' spell list. The class you choose also determines your spellcasting ability for these spells: Charisma for bard or sorcerer, Wisdom for cleric, or Intelligence for wizard.

You cast the chosen spells innately, without requiring a spell slot or material components. After you cast a spell innately, you can't do so again until you complete a long rest.

When you have the chance to choose another eldritch gift, you may select this gift again to choose two new spells. The spells you choose must be from the same class you chose when first gaining this gift.

## OCCULT EMPOWERMENT

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch

You learn how to innately wield magic, even if you possessed no such ability before. You learn one sorcerer cantrip of your choice. You also learn the *charm person* and *magic missile* spells, each of which you can cast once without requiring a spell slot. You regain the ability to cast these two spells in this way when you finish a long rest. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for all three spells.

## RESILIENCE OF DEATH

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch

Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

You become inured to the touch of the common weapons of mortals. You gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't made of natural materials. You still have vulnerability to certain damage types, as described in the Eldritch Weakness trait.

## SPELL VORTEX

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch, the ability to cast spells

When enemy spells wash over the field of battle, you can draw on their lingering potency and reshape them to serve your own needs.

When a hostile creature within 60 feet of you casts a spell, until the end of your next turn you can cast a spell with a level equal to the spell slot of the enemy's spell. This casting does not require you to expend a spell slot.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you complete a long rest.

## WITHERING TOUCH

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch

The draining power of your eldritch touch becomes even more potent, granting you the power to more swiftly end the lives of those you fight.

A creature that fails the Constitution save required by your Dread Touch takes an extra 1d6 necrotic damage.

## WORD OF DESPAIR

**Prerequisite:** Eldritch

Your words can chill the hearts of living creatures who hear them as you weave occult power and ominous portents into your speech. You can use your action to force any creatures that can see you within a 60-foot radius to make a Wisdom saving throw, with a DC equal to 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency bonus, becoming frightened of you for 1 minute if it fails.

If an affected creature ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to you, it can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the effect ends for that creature.

To use this ability again you must finish a long rest.

## REVERSING THE TRANSFORMATION

Once transformation to an eldritch is complete, the process is believed to be utterly irreversible. In all the centuries of their existence, only a single person has ever returned from this condition. When Goreshade confronted the gods in the heart of Ios, the goddess Scyrah saw fit to return him to life as Lord Ghyrshyld, the Forgiven.

Barring a literal act of god like this, a character who starts down the path of an eldritch is not likely to return from it. Most of the remaining Iosans and Nyss are seeking a way to undo the transformation of their fellow elves, and reversing the effect on even a single person would be a monumental achievement that could alter the fate of thousands.

It is assumed that a character cannot reverse the eldritch transformation. However, as GM if you see fit you can introduce something of this magnitude in your own game. Proceed with caution. Once the door back to life is unlocked, it will be difficult to bar it once more.

In short, being an eldritch is not something that can be undone by mere spells such as *greater restoration*. Only powers on the level of the divine have the chance to unmake this transformation, and a character who pursues it might spend the greater part of their adventuring life chasing down this nigh impossible goal.

## NEW BACKGROUND: REBORN AS ELDRITCH

The following background is available for eldritch characters. It offers suggestions for how your eldritch character interacts with the world and can be chosen at character creation. If a character becomes an eldritch later in life, you can replace the character's existing ideals, bonds, and flaws with options from this background, but they will not gain other benefits from it.

How did you become one of these unliving creatures? Were you cursed by the death of your gods, did you pursue this fate instead of the uncertainty of what would happen upon your death, or are you the victim of another of eldritch who thrust this existence on you? How long have you been one of these creatures of death and predation? And how do you view yourself? Are you a monster who must prey on others, or do you see yourself as fundamentally the same person you always were?

Answering these questions will help you determine what kind of character your eldritch is.

**Skill Proficiencies:** Stealth, Survival

## FEATURE: GRAVE SENSE

As one of the undead, you are acutely attuned to their presence. So long as you are conscious, when one or more undead creatures are within 100 feet of you, you are able to sense their presence. You do not know the specific kind of undead or their exact location, but you do have a sense of the general direction and distance from you and how many are present.

Your ability to supernaturally sense others also extends to living Iosans and Nyss. These beings are the richest sources of the spiritual essence on which you feed, and thus you are accustomed to the unique shape of their souls. If you have not used your Dread Touch within the last 24 hours, you can sense living Iosans and Nyss as described above.

## SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Eldritch are shaped by their extraordinary transformation and the consequences of their undead state. No longer having to eat, drink, or even sleep gives the eldritch ample time to contemplate what it means to live as the undead—and equal opportunity to dwell on the negative aspects of this life. Their personalities might be shaped by the need to hunt and feed, but also by the relationships they have with fellow eldritch and their bonds to elves who yet remain alive outside of Ios. Their flaws might be some internalized loathing or fear of what they have become, or an intense rejection of the person they were in life.

### **d8 Personality Trait**

- 1 I attempt to replicate a behavior from my past life, such as eating a particular meal, to remember what it was like to be alive.
- 2 Death has finally given me the time to pursue my many passions.
- 3 I still talk to the gods. It doesn't matter if they can no longer hear me.
- 4 Nothing can weaken my resolve: I will live again one day.
- 5 I like to treat the soulless as if they are my own family.
- 6 I feel a kinship with other eldritch now and always listen to what they have to say.
- 7 I long dreamed of leaving Ios to see the wider world. I'm not about to let something as petty as death get in my way.
- 8 Interacting with soulless and sythyss have made me a bit too eager to interact with anyone who can hold a decent conversation.

### **d6 Ideal**

- 1 Tradition. Despite our transformation, we must preserve the ways of our people. (Lawful)
- 2 Protection. I always try to protect those who can't protect themselves, no matter what harm I might suffer for the attempt. (Good)
- 3 Change. None of us know what the future holds anymore. We might as well embrace uncertainty and forge our own way forward. (Chaotic)
- 4 Power. I can use my newfound abilities to amass even greater power. (Evil)

- 5 I can still feel the hands of the Divine Court guiding my life. Perhaps a bit of their divinity yet remains within me. (Lawful)
- 6 Aspiration. I seek to prove myself worthy of my new power by demonstrating my control over it. (Any)

### **d6 Bond**

- 1 I will die to protect and preserve the history of my people.
- 2 I will get revenge on the ones responsible for leaving me in this cursed state.
- 3 My family beyond Ios are still alive, and I will do anything to protect them.
- 4 My responsibility is to prevent what happened to me from ever happening to anyone again.
- 5 Never again will a foreign army blemish the sanctity of Ios.
- 6 I seek to preserve the beauty of my homeland.

### **d6 Flaw**

- 1 Every time I feed on another living person, I can feel my ability to resist the urge grow weaker. If I can't stop myself soon, then I will become the monster I fear I am.
- 2 I don't know how to navigate my new existence. Because of this, I'm too quick to trust others who have more experience as undead than I do, even if I know they don't have my best interest at heart.
- 3 I'm beginning to forget what it felt like to be alive.
- 4 I enjoy feeding on others. Perhaps too much.
- 5 I wish to build a family of sythyss to replace the family I lost.
- 6 It sometimes slips my mind that I'm not alive anymore.

## ELDRITCH OF OTHER RACES

In the Iron Kingdoms setting, only Iosans and more recently Nyss can become eldritch. This state is unique to the elven descendants of the Empire of Lyoss, and creatures of other types simply are not compatible on a spiritual level with such a condition.

However, as the Game Master it is up to you whether this is true in your game. If you decide that people of other ancestries can suffer the fate of becoming an eldritch, consider the following questions.

How did the character come to be an eldritch? Was the character the victim of an existing one, or was it brought on by a cursed artifact or other source of power? Can the character feed on beings of any races, or only their own?



# MORTITHEURGY

First discovered and pioneered by the skorne of eastern Immoren, mortitheurgy is a unique magical tradition that draws upon the power that can be wrung out of suffering and death.

When the Iosans turned on their temporary skorne allies, they swiftly drove them from the land, back across the Abyss to their eastern homes. In the aftermath vast quantities of skorne holdings were left ripe for the taking. The Iosans—particularly those who remained in Ios and were transformed by the Sundering—sought out these troves of skorne artifacts to decipher the powers once wielded against them by mortitheurges and warlocks. Thus the kingdom of Ios became the inheritors of this unique art.

Even in Ios, though, mortitheurgy is not a common practice, not even among the eldritch who dwell there. It is not forbidden, but some view it as a distasteful practice, while others refuse it due to the necessity to inflict harm on others—not out of any sense of altruism, but because there are a limited number of living beings in Ios with which to feed mortitheurgical powers. The cost of weakening the soulless is seen as too high for the rewards of such spellcasting.

## ORIGINS OF MORTITHEURGY

Ages ago, the nomadic skorne gained insight into the complex workings of anatomy and physiology as they used pain to subdue the wild beasts of their world, first while hunting them for food and later while employing them as beasts of burden and warfare. As their knowledge increased, these ancient skorne discovered the secrets of the inherent energy of the spirit in life and in death. This was the beginning of the skorne metaphysical traditions that eventually became mortitheurgy.

Mortitheurgy was first codified into a system by Voskune the Ascetic. After decades of mortifying his own flesh and enduring experimentation and study to achieve understanding of the vital link between the body and its animating essence, Voskune learned to sense this energy not just in himself but in living creatures around him, both skorne and beast.

## NATURE OF MORTITHEURGY

Mortitheurgy draws on a unique blend of philosophy, anatomical knowledge, and deep insight into the fundamental processes of life and death. Mortitheurges understand that blood and living tissue contain great power that can be controlled and manipulated. They learn how to enhance their magic by mutilating their own bodies as well as drawing on the life force of enemies. They then reallocate this power to their allies, enabling warriors to push past the natural limits of the flesh.

Those who practice this dark art invariably become clinically detached and regard other living things as expendable resources. Thus mortitheurges are considered evil by human and Rhulic standards. Most mortitheurges practice self-discipline, but others are more temperamental.

Mortitheurgy is a spiritual tradition, but one based on study and direct experimentation. Some are particularly skilled in this art and its application, but with enough training and dedication it is possible for anyone to wield such magic.

## THE MORTITHEURGE

The mortitheurge is not a traditional class. It is available only to those who are skilled enough to master the complex hybrid of occult study and philosophy required to practice it. Mortitheurgy is an inscrutable school of magic that for most of history was known only to those skorne willing to devote time and effort to its study. A character never begins their career as a mortitheurge; walking that path is possible only through discovery of its secrets, but with a GM's permission a player character can also delve into this pain-fueled arcane art. Inhabitants of western Immoren have extremely limited opportunities to study this dark art, which is known there almost exclusively among the former Iosans.

### BECOMING A MORTITHEURGE

The mortitheurge class has unique requirements that must be met before a character can begin to plumb its depths. It cannot be chosen by a character of 1st level.

**Prerequisite:** To gain levels as a mortitheurge, you must meet the following requirements (in addition to the multiclassing prerequisites for any classes you have):

- **Intelligence 15 or Wisdom 15.** Whatever your background, you must have a strong aptitude for magic and the strength of self to delve into this dark art.
- **Constitution 13.** A mortitheurge must be hardy enough to withstand powerful necromantic forces.
- **Proficiency in the Arcana skill.** You must have some understanding of arcane lore to comprehend the art of mortitheurgy.
- **Study Mortitheurgical Lore.** To begin your journey, you must either discover a source of written lore about the philosophy and origins of mortitheurgy, requiring many months in study poring over tomes of skorne philosophy and occult practice, or find a practitioner willing to teach you. Most mortitheurges are skorne, reluctant to share their secrets with anyone else, and the undead Iosans are protective of their newly discovered knowledge. To earn the trust of someone who can teach you this occult art, you will first need to undertake some service or tasks to prove your worth.

## CLASS FEATURES

As a mortitheurge, you gain the following class features.

### HIT POINTS

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 per mortitheurge level

**Hit Points per Level:** 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per mortitheurge level

### SPELLCASTING

As a student of mortitheurgy, you have a book of blood containing the spells you know. The runic formulas of these spells are literally written onto your body as a part of your practice in the art of pain and death. Your body itself can be an arcane focus and counts as your spellbook.

**Cantrips.** At 1st level, you know one cantrip of your choice from the mortitheurge spell list. You learn additional mortitheurge cantrips of your choice at higher levels, as shown in the Cantrips Known column of the Mortitheurge table.

**Book of Blood.** At 1st level, your scars contain the secrets of two 1st-level mortitheurge spells of your choice. Your book of blood is the repository of the spells you know, except your cantrips, which are fixed in your mind. As you learn new spells, you must spend time in meditation working them into your flesh, fixing the unique tapestry of pain and power the spell evokes.

**Spell Slots.** The Mortitheurge table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest. For example, if you know the 1st-level spell *inflict wounds* and have a 1st-level and a 2nd-level spell slot available, you can cast *inflict wounds* using either slot.

**Spells Known of 1st Level and Higher.** The Spells Known column of the Mortitheurge table shows when you learn more mortitheurge spells of your choice. Each of these spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. For instance, when you reach 3rd level in this class, you can learn one new spell of 1st or 2nd level. Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the spells you know and replace it with another mortitheurge spell, which also must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

### MORTITHEURGE SPELLCASTING

Mortitheurge Level	Features	Cantrips Known	Spells Known	Spell Slots per Spell		
				1st	2nd	3rd
1st	Mortitheurgy, Spellcasting	1	2	2	—	—
2nd	Dark Dominion	1	3	3	—	—
3rd	Pain Is My Friend	2	4	4	2	—
4th	Armor of Scar and Bone	2	5	4	3	—
5th	Greater Mortitheurgy	3	6	4	3	2

**Spellcasting Ability.** Choose Intelligence or Wisdom. That attribute is always your spellcasting ability for your mortitheurge spells. You use that attribute whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. You also use it when setting the saving throw DC for a mortitheurge spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

**Spell save DC** = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your chosen spellcasting ability modifier

**Spell attack modifier** = your proficiency bonus + your chosen spellcasting ability modifier

**Ritual Casting.** You can cast a spell as a ritual if that spell has the ritual tag and you have the spell in your book of blood. You don't need to have the spell prepared.

**Spellcasting Focus.** You do not need a dedicated item to use as a spellcasting focus for your mortitheurge spells. The pain written on your skin acts as a focus for your spells.

**Multiclassing.** You add all your levels in the mortitheurge class when determining your total spell slots.

## MORTITHEURGY

At 1st level, you can draw power from injury and bloodshed, temporarily sacrificing vital essence to spontaneously cast spells. If you have a bloodletting tool or blade in hand, you can use a bonus action to inflict injury on yourself to cast a spell you know with the mortitheurgy tag or from the necromancy school. You do not need to have the spell prepared. You take 1d8 necrotic damage per slot level of the spell cast, and your hit point maximum is reduced by an equal amount. You take this damage before casting the spell, and if it causes you to fall unconscious the spell fails. Any effect that would prevent you from taking this damage prevents this ability from functioning. The reduction to your hit point maximum lasts until you complete a short or long rest.

## DARK DOMINION

Starting at 2nd level, your ability to manipulate the energies of pain and death gives you brief control over those who fall in battle around you. When a creature within 60 feet of you drops to 0 hit points but isn't killed outright, you can use your reaction to take control of the creature's broken body. You cause the creature to move up to its speed and can have it make a single melee attack. The creature does not fall unconscious until after it makes the attack. If you use this ability on a friendly creature, it makes its first death saving throw with disadvantage.

## PAIN IS MY FRIEND

At 3rd level you learn how to wield your own vital essence as a weapon in battle, drawing on your inner strength to enhance your considerable power.

When you attack with a weapon or spell that deals necrotic damage, after rolling the damage dice you can expend and roll up to half your Hit Dice, replacing any dice in the damage roll with your Hit Dice results.

You can't use this feature again until you complete a long rest.

## ARMOR OF SCAR AND BONE

At 4th level, your power over mortitheurgy gives you resistance to many mundane forms of pain and harm. Your body becomes more emaciated and your appearance begins to become unsettling (even more than it might otherwise be if you are an eldritch or skorne). You gain resistance to slashing, bludgeoning, and piercing damage made by nonmagical attacks. In addition, when you gain a level of exhaustion, you can expend a Hit Die to ignore that level of exhaustion.

## GREATER MORTITHEURGY

At 5th level you can utilize the life essence of others to fuel your spells rather than suffering damage personally. When you use Mortitheurgy, you can choose to deal the necrotic damage to a helpless or willing target creature instead of yourself. The target still suffers a reduction to its hit point maximum that lasts until it completes a short or long rest.

## MORTITHEURGE SPELLS

The following spells can be cast using Mortitheurgy and are considered to have the mortitheurgy tag.

### CANTRIPS (0 LEVEL)

*Guidance*  
*Resistance*  
*Shillelagh*  
*Spare the Dying*

### 1ST LEVEL

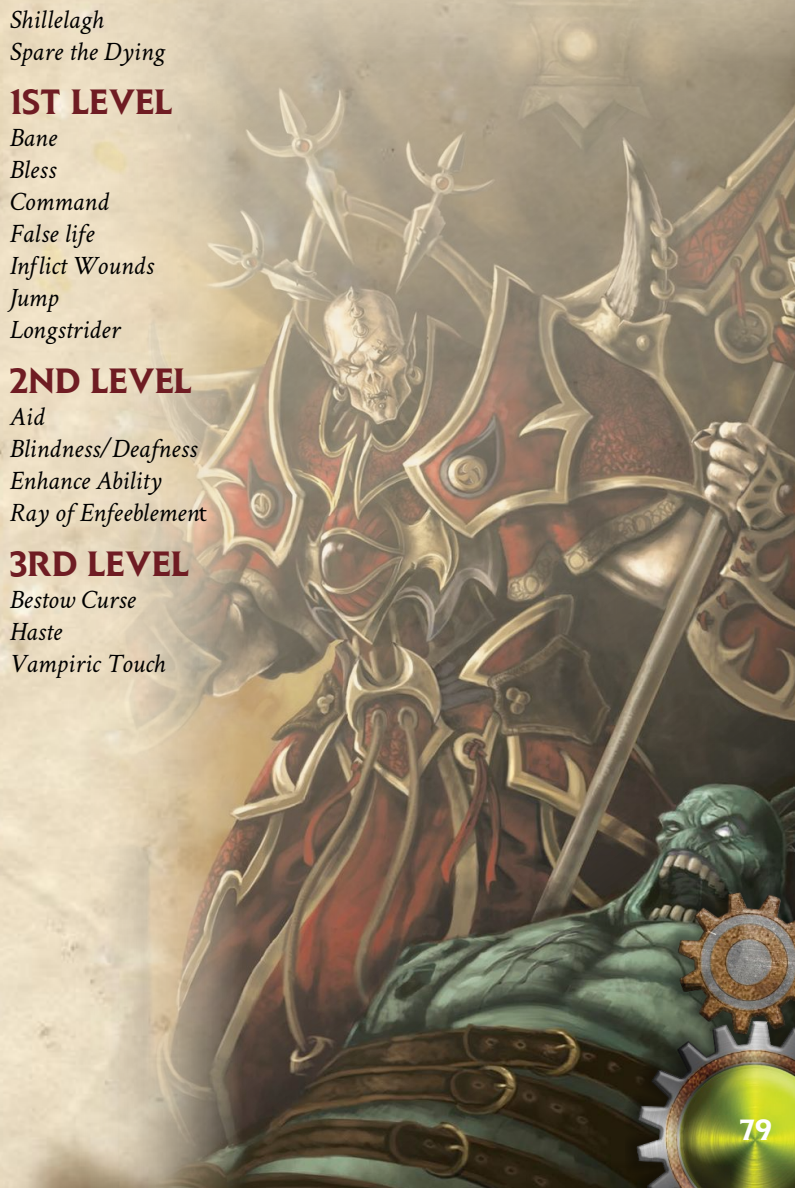
*Bane*  
*Bless*  
*Command*  
*False life*  
*Inflict Wounds*  
*Jump*  
*Longstrider*

### 2ND LEVEL

*Aid*  
*Blindness/Deafness*  
*Enhance Ability*  
*Ray of Enfeeblement*

### 3RD LEVEL

*Bestow Curse*  
*Haste*  
*Vampiric Touch*



5

# BESTIARY



**I**N THE FOLLOWING PAGES YOU'LL FIND INFORMATION about many of the unusual beasts that adventurers can encounter in a campaign set in the borderlands of western Immoren, including monsters that hunt the untamed wilderness, remnants of once-powerful armies and cults, and beasts that can threaten whole regions. Remember that most of these creatures are driven by their natural instincts and are neither good nor evil; like everything in these strange and changed lands, they're just trying to survive.

This chapter details various creatures found in the wilderness of the Bloodstone Marches, Glimmerwood, Ios, and Rhul, arranged by region.

# CREATURES OF THE BLOODSTONE

The Bloodstone Marches and the desert beyond are an unforgiving, parched expanse of rock and sand. The creatures that dwell here are among the hardest in western Immoren, possessing remarkable abilities to survive the punishing environment.

It is not just the arid land that makes such creatures so well adapted to survival. In the heart of the Bloodstone Desert are the Stormlands, the physical scar on Caen left by the Cataclysm that destroyed the old empire of the elves. The Cataclysm was an apocalyptic event that racked the world with arcane energies, contorting the land and the creatures within it. Some of the strangest beings in Immoren are products of that magical stain.

*I've walked damn near every patch of soil west of the Abyss, and faced more critters and beasties than I can even remember. But my job is to hunt monsters, not to learn about 'em. For that, I defer to the experts... well, the expert of experts, Professor Pendrake. If you want to know about a monster, he's the man to ask.*

*Working with him and his team, we've put together a list of the nasty things you're likely to encounter in the wilderness, both big and small. Pay close attention to what he has to say. It might save your skin.*

*Allen Ashley*

*Not many people travel east of the Crag, and anyone who does is a sun-baked lunatic lookin' for a quick trip to Urcaen. If the desert doesn't kill you—and it will try, believe me—then there are plenty of things just achin' for their chance to do the job.*

*Allen Ashley*



# ARCHIDON

These enormous reptiles, perfectly at home amid the lightning and the rolling thunder of the Stormlands, attack from the cover of the raging storms. Archidons swoop down on their victims with a speed matched only by their savagery. They descend screaming to tear into flesh with razor-sharp teeth and leave their victims staggering and bleeding. Before the doomed prey can begin to recover from the shock of the first assault, the beasts return to deliver the fatal strike.

Archidons roost in the mountain ranges scattered across the Bloodstone Desert, posing a constant threat to those few but hardy creatures inhabiting the barren expanse. Flight makes these peerless ambush predators superbly adapted to hunt the Stormlands. Though they prefer to prey upon smaller creatures, archidons are capable of working together to hunt surprisingly large animals. Sieges of archidons coordinate their hunts through piercing screams and move in unison to attack prey as large as titans. The siege descends upon quarry with shocking speed, ripping into it with their bony maws before quickly moving out of reach of retaliation.

**It's Not the Fall That Kills You.** Archidons are not discriminating predators and even hunt small groups of skorne or other nomads that venture across the wastes. After snatching up its quarry, the archidon hurls the victim high into the air with a single toss of its powerful neck, leaving the unfortunate creature to smash down onto the jagged stones.

*They came west with the skorne. The skorne might have turned back, but the archidons stayed behind. They're bad enough on most days; if you've got a shot lined up on one and see the sun glinting off metal, be careful. The ones that have hooks embedded in their skin were conditioned by the skorne, and that makes them much more dangerous.*

*Allen Ashley*

## VARIANT: PAIN CONDITIONED

Some archidons in the Bloodstone are relics of the skorne occupation of the region. Conditioned by skorne paingivers, these archidons do not respond normally to injuries.

A pain-conditioned archidon has the following trait.

**Pain Conditioned.** While it has half or fewer hit points remaining, the archidon's bite deals an extra 1d12 piercing damage.

## ARCHIDON

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 75 (10d10 + 20)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Damage Immunities** lightning

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Wind Rider.** An archidon's movement speed while flying is not affected by strong winds.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The archidon uses Pitch if it has a creature grappled at the start of its turn. It then makes two bite attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the archidon can't use its bite on another target.

**Pitch.** If the archidon has a target creature grappled, it can throw the target 20 feet. The grappled creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone, in addition to any falling damage caused by the throw.



# ASSASSIN FLY

Assassin flies have a crimson carapace and fine black wings that blend into the rocky terrain of the Bloodstone Marches. They also sport wicked stingers used both to poison and to implant eggs in their victims. The male's poison is a mixture of potent blood and nerve toxins meant to prepare the body to host the female's eggs.

**Dry Fly.** Assassin flies react poorly to rainfall and humidity. More moisture than they are accustomed to in the Bloodstone Marches makes it difficult for the creatures to fly. They do not venture west of the Marches.

*I always keep an extra canteen with me when I'm hunting in the Bloodstone. More water always helps, but I keep this one around to douse any assassin fly nests that I encounter. I'll not be playing nursery to the offspring of some damned bugs.*

*—Allen Ashley*

## ASSASSIN FLY

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 7 (3d4)

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	16 (+3)	10 (0)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Sexual Dimorphism.** Only male assassin flies possess a sting attack, and only females has an implant attack.

**Water Vulnerability.** The assassin fly loses its flying speed in excessively wet or humid conditions.

### ACTIONS

**Sting.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 27 (5d10) poison damage. If this poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Implant (1/10 Days).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be implanted with a clutch of assassin fly eggs.

A humanoid host can carry only one clutch of eggs to term at a time. Over 1d4 + 3 days, the eggs gestate and form assassin fly larvae. In the 24-hour period before giving birth, the host starts to feel unwell: its speed is halved, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. At birth, the young assassin flies chew their way out of the host's flesh in 1 round, dealing 27 (5d10) piercing damage.

Any effect that cures disease kills all assassin fly larvae infesting the host.

## SWARM OF ASSASSIN FLIES

*Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (10d8)

**Speed** 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	16 (+3)	10 (0)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Sexual Dimorphism.** Only male assassin flies possess a sting attack, and only females has an implant attack. While acting as a swarm, the composition of both is roughly 50-50 (alternate attack types).

**Swarm.** The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny fly. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

**Water Vulnerability.** The swarm loses its flying speed in excessively wet or humid conditions.

### ACTIONS

**Stings.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 27 (5d10) poison damage. If this poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Implant (Recharge 5–6).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be implanted with a clutch of assassin fly eggs.

A humanoid host can carry only one clutch of eggs to term at a time. Over 1d4 + 3 days, the eggs gestate and form assassin fly larvae. In the 24-hour period before giving birth, the host starts to feel unwell: its speed is halved, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. At birth, the young assassin flies chew their way out of the host's flesh in 1 round, dealing 27 (5d10) piercing damage.

Any effect that cures disease kills all assassin fly larvae infesting the target.



# BLOODSTONE CONSTRICTOR

This enormous snake lives in the sun-beaten lands of the Bloodstone Marches. Its ochre-colored scales blend into the distinctive soil of the region, helping it to slither up on its prey unnoticed.

**Crushing Grip.** Though it is technically a viper and can inject a potent paralyzing venom into its prey, this venom is secondary to the serpent's main method of killing: powerful constriction. Looping around a creature with coils of iron-hard muscle, the constrictor slowly squeezes during each of the creature's exhalations so it is unable to draw in air. Unconsciousness soon sets in, followed swiftly by death and consumption.

*I used to keep a hunting dog with me on trips into the Bloodstone. Coleman was smart, loyal, and never questioned commands. Wish he had, though, when I sent him down into what turned out to be a constrictor nest. I couldn't save the dog, but I did get a nice pair of new boots out of the ordeal.*

*—Atten Ashley*

## BLOODSTONE CONSTRICTOR

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 18

**Hit Points** 17 (2d10 + 6)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Condition Immunities** prone

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Desert Camouflage.** The bloodstone constrictor has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in desert terrain.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Constrict.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the constrictor can't constrict another target.



# BLOODSTONE MANTICORA

The Bloodstone manticora is a desert plant standing 5 to 8 feet tall and similar in appearance to a common hairy cactus found in the western marches and the Protectorate. Vegetable predators, manticora can sense and attack any creature with water in its body that comes nearby. These dangerous plants lash out with their lengthy black spines to kill or paralyze their prey and soak their sprawling roots in moist flesh.

**Self-Watering Plants.** Most manticora grow solitary on paths leading to an oasis or along the migratory routes of desert beasts. However, small patches and even rare forests of them do exist. These areas are almost always surrounded by the desiccated corpses of animals and humanoids who sought out a source of water, but were instead turned into one for the thirsty plants.

**Water Detectors.** These plants sense prey by detecting the presence of nearby moisture, though rain and other great amounts of water blind them. Manticora growing on the banks of an oasis or river are often water-blind and docile, and rarely attack unless provoked. Despite the danger of harvesting it, a manticora holds enough water reserves within its husk to keep a humanoid alive for days in the desert.

## BLOODSTONE MANTICORA

Large plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 45 (7d10 + 7)

**Speed** 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened, frightened, prone

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the manticora remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal desert plant.

**Water Sense.** The manticora's blindsight only allows it to detect the presence of moisture, such as that found in a living creature. Constructs and undead are effectively invisible to it.

### ACTIONS

**Spine.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 10/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute unless it is immune to poison damage. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the target's saving throw is successful, or if the effect ends on it, the target is immune to this manticora's paralysis for 1 hour.

**Root Drain.** The manticora grapples one paralyzed creature within 30 feet of it with its entangling roots. The creature is restrained, and at the start of each of its turns, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 27 (5d10) necrotic damage. The manticora regains hit points equal to half the necrotic damage taken by the creature. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest, and the target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0.

*I found time to sketch a full-grown specimen during my initial scouting of skorne movements in the deep Bloodstone Desert. I noted its strangely long thorns and the unusual number of remains, including a dune prowler, about its trunk. These dry corpses offered some warning, and I guessed that these cacti might prove poisonous or emit some noxious spores like plants I have previously encountered. I had not expected the plant to physically whip its segments and fling a hail of its stiletto-sharp thorns at me.*

*Professor Victor Pendrake*



# CRAG LION

The crag lion is a breed of cave lion that dwells in the rocky mountains of the Bloodstone Marches. The lion's spotted reddish-brown pelt allows it to blend in with its surroundings. Prides of crag lions are found near Ternon Crag, on the lower slopes of the Rotterhorn, and the southern Iosan Peaks.

**Pack Hunters.** Crag lions are active pack hunters. Creeping up on a potential meal, the pride relies on natural camouflage to avoid notice before springing forward with powerful leaps to bring a target to the ground. The lions then descend as one, grabbing and tearing at the prey with teeth and claws.

**The Lion's Den.** After incapacitating prey, the lions drag a meal back to the rocky caverns they call home away from the eyes of other predators and scavengers. These crag lion dens are veritable graveyards of chewed carcasses and picked-apart skeletons.

*They aren't the most dangerous critters in the Bloodstone, but only a fool would turn his back on one. I was that fool once. A hungry mama lion got the drop on me and tried to pull me back to the den to feed her babies.*

*Allen Ashley*

## CRAG LION

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (4d10 + 4)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The crag lion has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

**Crag Camouflage.** The crag lion has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide while in sandy or rocky terrain.

**Pack Tactics.** The crag lion has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the lion's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Pounce.** If the crag lion moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the crag lion can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage.

# DUST HOG

The dust hog is native to the Bloodstone Marches. Its preferred territory is dry lakebeds, where it can burrow into the soft soil to avoid the glaring daytime sun. Dust hogs root out tunnels like oversized, tusked mole rats, creating networks of underground warrens.

**Stupid and Mean.** Dust hogs are not clever. They mass in great swarms of thirty to fifty animals, charging blindly at anything that dares to step into their territory. Battering an intruder under the collective weight of their hooves, the hogs proceed to rip it apart with a flurry of slashing tusks.

*There are bigger and meaner hogs out there. The mossback boar of Widower's Wood is meaner by far, and I've seen some goliaths that make a horse look tiny. But there isn't a sneakier pig in all of creation than these burrowing bastards.*

*—Allen Ashley*

## DUST HOG

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Charge.** If the hog moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Dust Camouflage.** The hog has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in dusty or sandy terrain.

**Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** If the hog takes 7 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

### ACTIONS

**Tusk.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d6 + 1) slashing damage.



# FARROW BIBOAR

Biboars are rare conjoined twins born among the farrow. Like many of the other sub-breeds of farrow, these creatures grow to mammoth proportions. Possessing limited intellect but immense physical strength, biboars are prized by tribal farrow as some of their greatest warbeasts.

**Personality Conflicts.** Unlike the two-headed argus, or the rare conjoined twins born among the croaks of western Immoren, the two heads of a biboar are in constant conflict. Roaring and squealing, each head does what it can to rip away a meal from the other. Each struggles for control of their shared body, and whichever wins out is just as likely to batter the other head as it is to act for their mutual benefit.

*If you spend much time around the farrow, you quickly learn that some of them aren't born quite right. In most cases, it means a farrow is bigger and dumber than the rest of the tribe, and they get trained as battle boars. But every so often, a farrow is born... more not right than the rest.*

*—Allen Ashley*

## FARROW BIBOAR

Huge humanoid, neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 115 (10d12 + 50)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Saving Throws** Strength +9, Constitution +9

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** understands Grun but does not speak

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Keen Smell.** The farrow has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Regeneration.** The biboar regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the biboar takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the biboar's next turn. The biboar dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

**Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** If the biboar takes 17 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

**Stench.** Any creature other than a farrow that starts its turn within 5 feet of the biboar must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the biboar's Stench for 24 hours.

**Two Heads.** The biboar has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The biboar makes four melee attacks: two with its tusks and two with its claws.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

**Tusk.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.



# GOLIATH HOG

Huge beast, neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 103 (9d12 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	6 (-2)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Saving Throws** Strength +9, Constitution +8

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Charge.** If the hog moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 17 (5d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Keen Smell.** The hog has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Prone Vulnerability.** A goliath hog that is prone begins to suffer the effects of suffocation, due to the weight of its body crushing its lungs. Additionally, a prone goliath hog must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw to stand up from prone.

**Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** If the hog takes 15 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

**Stench.** Any creature other than a farrow or a goliath hog that starts its turn within 5 feet of the hog must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the hog's Stench for 24 hours.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The goliath hog makes two tusk attacks.

**Tusk.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (5d6 + 6) slashing damage.

# GOLIATH HOG

Goliath hogs are giant, monstrous boars that emerge from populations of the smaller and more common razor boars. They are born as larger-than-average razor boars, but some quirk of their makeup causes them to never stop growing. Within the first few years of life, a goliath looms over the other boars in its herd, and within a decade it is massive enough to topple heavy steamjacks with a toss of its head.

*It Ain't Easy Bein' Big.* Despite their immense stature and physical strength, goliath hogs have numerous health complications that shorten their lives. As they grow larger, clusters of tumors begin growing in their flesh that cause them constant pain. The sheer bulk of their bodies puts strain on their skeletons and organs. Goliath hogs also endure an endless hunger that drives them to consume anything in their path, with little regard for their own well-being. The skeletons of goliaths that tried to make a meal of a thicket of Bloodstone mantichora are a testament to their blind gluttony.

*I suppose you could eat 'em. And hell, one of these big porkers would be enough to feed a whole tribe for a month. But once you get a whiff of what they smell like, I promise you that eating will be the furthest thing from your mind.*

*Atten Ashley*



# GORGANDUR

A tunneling creature of unfathomable size, the gorgandur is a rare beast that chews through the solid rocks of mountains and beneath the Bloodstone Marches. Even young gorgandur are gigantic, and they keep growing throughout their phenomenally long lives.

**Forces of Nature.** Gorgandur are unintelligent hunters that devour anything in their path as they tunnel through the world. When one becomes hungry, it surfaces and scoops up a mile-long swath of dirt, trees, animals, and anything else that is unable to escape its waiting maw.

Gorgondur feed like some whales, filtering meals from the vast quantities of material they consume. Anything the gorgandur cannot digest passes through its system. Ancient specimens grow to truly enormous sizes and can swallow whole villages, leaving behind nothing more than a featureless trench carved into the earth.

Fortunately, gorgandur are seldom active. They slumber for periods of time as long as decades, basking in the warmth of volcanic pockets deep beneath the surface. When they awaken, their movements are often mistaken for small earthquakes.

**Ancient Danger.** Records of these creatures stretch back to the earliest days of Menite civilization, shortly after the Time of the Burning Sky. Due to their long lifespans, it is possible that some of the gorgandur still alive in the modern day were first encountered in those ancient times. Early Menites wrote of them in the *Olnkurizon*, calling them the gormalaine; they were said to be a punishment left on Caen by Menoth.

**Spawn of the Devourer Wurm.** There are some who believe gorgandur to be the offspring of the Beast of All Shapes itself, having long lain dormant within the body of Caen from eons past when first it was spawned. While this belief is likely untrue, these creatures do act with all the blind hunger and wanton savagery of the Devourer Wurm, so the comparison is not without merit.

Every panner in the Crag has a story about a gorgandur, but ten times out of ten it turns out they had a run in with a sand drake, a tatzylwurm, or some other critter that they remember bein' bigger than it actually was. It's enough to make you think that the damn things don't even exist—but believe you me, they're real, and nastier than you could even imagine.

—Allen Ashley

## ADULT GORGANDUR

Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 240 (13d20 + 104)

**Speed** 10 ft., burrow 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	4 (-3)	26 (+8)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

**Saving Throws** Strength +13, Constitution +13

**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 6

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 14 (11,500 XP)

**Siege Monster.** The gorgandur deals double damage to objects and structures.

**Tunneler.** The gorgandur can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The gorgandur can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes two bite attacks. It can replace one of its bite attacks with Corrosive Sludge.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by the gorgandur. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the gorgandur, and it takes 28 (8d6) acid damage at the start of each of the gorgandur's turns. If the gorgandur takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the gorgandur must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the gorgandur. If the gorgandur dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

**Corrosive Sludge (Recharge 5–6).** The gorgandur exhales a 30-foot cone of caustic sludge. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of the gorgandur's choice that is within 120 feet of the gorgandur and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the gorgandur's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

## YOUNG GORGANDUR

*Huge monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 126 (11d12 + 55)

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	4 (-3)	20 (+5)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

**Saving Throws** Strength +8, Constitution +8

**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 6

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Siege Monster.** The gorgandur deals double damage to objects and structures.

**Tunneler.** The gorgandur can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The gorgandur makes two bite attacks. It can replace one of its bite attacks with Corrosive Sludge.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by the gorgandur. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the gorgandur, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the gorgandur's turns. If the gorgandur takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the gorgandur must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the gorgandur. If the gorgandur dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

**Corrosive Sludge (Recharge 5–6).** The gorgandur exhales a 30-foot cone of caustic sludge. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## ELDER GORGANDUR

*Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 553 (27d20 + 270)

**Speed** 10 ft., burrow 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	4 (-3)	30 (+10)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

**Saving Throws** Strength +18, Constitution +18

**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 6

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 25 (75,000 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The gorgandur's innate spellcasting ability is Constitution (spell save DC 26, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells:

At will: *earthquake*

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the gorgandur fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Siege Monster.** The gorgandur deals double damage to objects and structures.

**Tunneler.** The gorgandur can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The gorgandur can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes two bite attacks. It can replace one of its bite attacks with Corrosive Sludge.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) piercing damage. If the target is a Huge or

smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by the gorgandur. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the gorgandur, and it takes 35 (10d6) acid damage at the start of each of the gorgandur's turns. If the gorgandur takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the gorgandur must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the gorgandur. If the gorgandur dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

**Corrosive Sludge (Recharge 5–6).** The gorgandur exhales a 30-foot cone of caustic sludge. Each creature in that area must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of the gorgandur's choice that is within 120 feet of the gorgandur and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the gorgandur's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The gorgandur can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The gorgandur regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Detect.** The gorgandur makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

**Bite.** The gorgandur makes a bite attack.

**Bellow (Costs 2 Actions).** The gorgandur releases a titanic bellow in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be deafened for 1 hour and knocked prone.

# GRAY TATZYLWURM

The gray tatzylwurm is a seldom encountered breed of the serpentlike creatures. They are nowhere near as widespread as some other breeds and are almost exclusively found in the vicinity of Scarleforth Lake, where they prey on desert creatures that travel to the lake to drink.

**Bladed Hide.** Gray tatzylwurms have a unique physical appearance. Their dull grayish scales form a protective layer almost like iron filings. Indeed, there is a substantial amount of the metal in their scales and bodies, due in large part to the metallic contamination of their lake. A spiky layer of iron sulfides coats the keratin of the tatzylwurm's scales, growing in size through progressive moltings until each is the size of a small dagger.

Along with their metal-coated scales, gray tatzylwurms can produce stout iron barbs. By constricting the same muscles

*My general advice on tatzylwurms is 'best if avoided.' But if you find yourself in the unlikely position where you can take a grey one down, and are lacking for a dagger or cooking knife, one of the larger scales can work as one in a pinch.*

*Allen Ashley, monster hunter*

that allow them to envenom their prey, the tatzylwurms can project these barbs a significant distance, simultaneously piercing and poisoning creatures at range.

**No Fear of Rusting.** Gray tatzylwurms most often make their nests in the hot springs and geyser fields near Scarleforth Lake. Soaking up the heat, they are able to remain active for a much longer portion of the day than some other breeds and prefer to hunt at night.

## GRAY TATZYLWURM

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 210 (20d10 + 100)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +7, Constitution +9

**Skills** Athletics +8, Stealth +7, Survival +6

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

**Slashing Charge.** If the tatzylwurm moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 11 (2d10) slashing damage.

**Iron Scales.** A creature that touches the tatzylwurm or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) slashing damage.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The tatzylwurm makes two bite attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) poison damage.

**Iron Barb.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 3) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) poison damage, and the barb embeds itself in the target. A creature with an iron barb embedded in it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns or take 5 (1d10) piercing damage and have its speed reduced by 10 feet. A creature takes half damage and its speed is not reduced on a successful save.



# OASIS OOZE

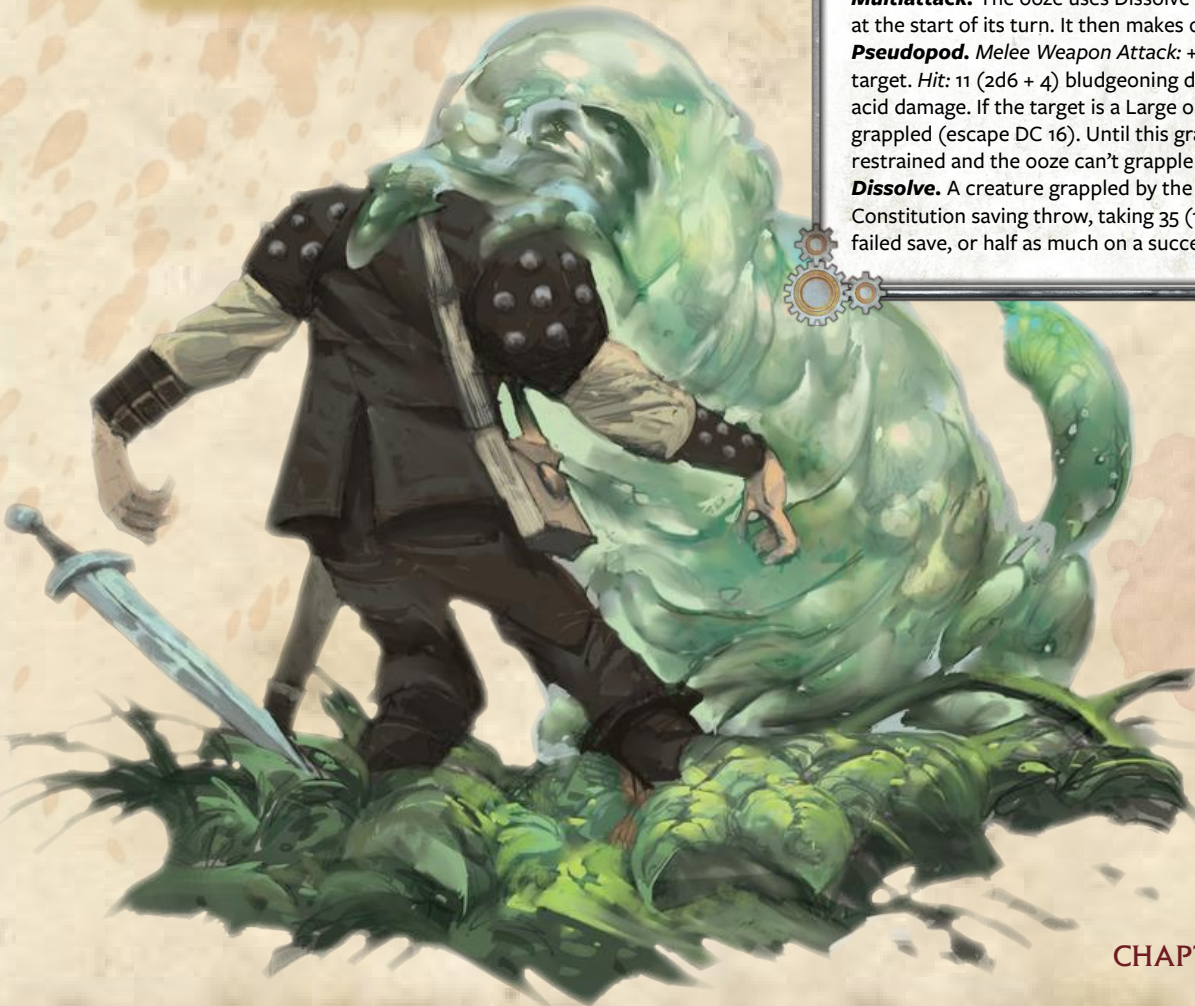
Oasis oozes make their home in the scattered oases of the Bloodstone Marches. Even a trained eye can hardly see these creatures lurking just below the water's surface.

From wandering travelers to sand beasts, the oasis ooze fearlessly attacks any who dare to drink from the waters of its home. It usually waits until its victim has taken a sip before surging from the water to envelop its prey and drag it into the oasis, where it is simultaneously strangled and digested. Although not always successful on the attack, the oasis ooze is more than able to defend itself and its territory.

**Dehydrated Oasis.** Oases come and go in the Bloodstone Marches, and the oasis ooze has adapted to these conditions. It is not uncommon to find one in suspended animation, withdrawn into a rocky depression waiting for the next rainfall. Even in this state, it is still unwise to handle the ooze. The mere touch of water or organic material is enough to revive it from hibernation.

*I know, the Bloodstone is hot as hell. Just because you're sweating like a Tharn in church, though, doesn't mean you should jump in any swimmin' hole you encounter. It might be a refreshing oasis, or it might be one of these tricky bastards, hoping to make a meal out of you. I say, poke it with a stick first just to be sure.*

*Allen Ashley*



## OASIS OOZE

Huge ooze, unaligned

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 152 (16d12 + 48)

**Speed** 15 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	6 (-2)	2 (-4)

**Skills** Stealth +1

**Damage Resistances** acid

**Damage Immunities** lightning, slashing

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Amorphous.** The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Amphibious.** The ooze can breathe air and water.

**Hibernation.** If the ooze is not exposed to water for a period of 24 hours or greater, it enters a state of hibernation and becomes unconscious. The ooze remains in this state until it comes into contact with water or is touched by a living creature, at which point it reanimates.

**Caustic Body.** A creature that touches the ooze or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 11 (2d10) acid damage.

**Watery Stealth.** While underwater, the oasis ooze has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide, and it can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The ooze uses Dissolve if it has a creature grappled at the start of its turn. It then makes one pseudopod attack.

**Pseudopod.** **Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 21 (6d6) acid damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained and the ooze can't grapple another creature.

**Dissolve.** A creature grappled by the ooze must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

# RAZOR BOAR

For as long as the tribes of the farrow have gone to war, they have been accompanied by the vicious razor boars. As large as wolves, razor boars are deadly, untamed creatures that require little incentive or training to join the farrow in battle. When loosed upon an enemy, razor boars charge in heedless of their own well-being, intent only on goring their prey and bringing them low to feast upon their soft flesh. Survivors of farrow raids grow pale when they recall the speed with which a few razor boars reduced a well-armed soldier to a heap of rags and bloody bones.

**Bred for Butchery.** The farrow have spent generations breeding razor boars with the sole intent of making them larger and more dangerous. Only the biggest boars possessed of the most savage dispositions are chosen to be mated, a primitive breeding program that has resulted in beasts of war barely controlled by their masters. Their “training” includes feeding them fresh kills of diverse races so they develop a strong taste for the flesh of humans, trollkin, skorne, and farrow. The victims’ screams of pain and fear ring out from the butchering complex before each feeding, and the beasts learn to associate them with an impending meal. Thus the sounds of suffering serve only to awaken the beasts’ hunger, making the cacophony of battle sound like a dinner bell to them.

*I like bacon as much as the next man, but I won't touch the meat of a razor boar. There's something wrong about eatin' a creature that has, itself, probably eaten someone you knew.*

*—Allen Ashley*

## RAZOR BOAR

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 19 (3d8 + 6)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the boar can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

**Charge.** If the boar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** If the boar takes 7 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

### ACTIONS

**Tusk.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (4d6 + 2) slashing damage.



# ROTTERHORN GRIFFON

The Rotterhorn griffon dwells atop the towering Rotterhorn, one of Immoren's tallest mountains, though its hunting grounds range across the Bloodstone Marches and into the Bloodstone Desert itself. A keen-eyed hunter, this griffon stays aloft on thermal currents rising from the desert floor for most of the day, barely visible in the sky as it scans the terrain below.

**Death From Above.** When it spots prey, the Rotterhorn griffon dives down at incredible speed, lashing out with its talons and beak. Smaller prey is consumed on the spot, but larger animals are butchered on the sand and brought to the griffon's nest. A slash from a griffon's talons disembowels creatures as large as a horse, and a snap from its beak can sever a human limb. In addition, the Rotterhorn has an unusual method of disabling prey: the power of its cry.

**Death Shriek.** This griffon's shriek is extremely potent, and those who hear it are racked with agony. Shrill enough to carry for miles across the desert, it can cause trauma such as burst eardrums and internal hemorrhages to those close by. Creatures this cry does not kill outright are left reeling and have difficulty warding off subsequent attacks.

*Traveling back across the Bloodstone about fifty miles east of the Rotterhorn, I saw a black speck circling overhead in a field of blue sky. I thought little of it until I heard its cry, a noise of such great intensity that it cracked the glass in my left spectacle lens despite the miles between us.*

*Niktor Pendrake*

## ROTTERHORN GRIFFON

Large monstrosity, neutral

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 52 (7d10 + 14)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Dive Attack.** If the griffon is flying, dives at least 30 feet straight toward a target, and then hits it with a melee weapon attack on the same turn, the attack deals an extra 9 (2d8) damage to the target.

**Flyby.** The griffon doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Keen Sight.** The griffon has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The griffon makes three attacks: one with its beak and two with its talons.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Talon.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Shriek (Recharge 5–6).** The griffon unleashes a devastating shriek. Creatures within 10 feet of the griffon must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) thunder damage and be deafened until the start of the griffon's next turn on a failure. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't deafened.

# SAND DERVISH

Small, swirling sandstorms at sunset or sunrise commonly occur in the Bloodstone Marches and the desert beyond. Occasionally more than one rises at a time, and tales speak of canyons and passes where many of them whirl. Such a gathering is always taken as a sign of ill omen, for it marks the territory of the sand dervish.

Sand dervishes are the remains of mighty warriors who perished before fulfilling a sworn oath or task. Their lingering spirits desire death through honorable battle and seek out opponents who can give them such an end.

**Bodies of Sand.** The spirit of a sand dervish can take on a corporeal form made from the sands of the Bloodstone in which it perished. This body is resistant to many forms of damage, and the dervish can relinquish its physical form to become a sentient whirlwind that scours the flesh of all it passes over.



Dust devils aren't always just dust. If you see one moving against the wind, get out of there fast. Unless you want to fight an angry ghost made out of sand that carries around some damned sharp swords.

—Allen Ashley

## SAND DERVISH

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 60 (8d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Constitution +6, Wisdom +6

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +6

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** fire, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poison

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** any languages it knew in life

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Ambusher.** The dervish has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

**Bound to the Desert.** The only way to get rid of a sand dervish is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting. Most find their final rest when challenged and defeated in single and honorable combat, while a few might have more obscure requirements. Otherwise, if it dies, the sand dervish regains its form and all its hit points after 1d10 days, reappearing in the location where it died or in the nearest unoccupied space.

**Sand Step.** As a bonus action, the sand dervish can collapse into a pile of sand and re-form at another spot within 30 feet that it can see. The target location must be composed of sandy terrain.

**Wind Walking.** When it moves, the sand dervish can choose to move as a whirlwind of sand. When it does so, it becomes immune to nonmagical damage and appears to be a mundane whirlwind. While it is a whirlwind of sand, the dervish can move through a space occupied by a creature, which must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) slashing damage. A sand dervish cannot use Wind Walking during a turn in which it has made an attack.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The sand dervish makes two enervating sword attacks. It can replace one of these attacks with Cutting Gale.

**Enervating Sword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. When the target finishes a short or long rest, it loses every level of exhaustion gained from this attack.

**Cutting Gale.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (5d6) slashing damage and if the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be blinded until the start of the dervish's next turn.

# SAND DRAKE

A sand drake is a lithe, desert-dwelling breed of drake that lives deep in the Bloodstone Desert. Due to its remote habitat, the sand drake is seldom encountered by any but nomadic groups of Idrians or isolated skorne left west of the Abyss.

These creatures are solitary, territorial, and utterly fearless. Burrowing under a soft dune, a sand drake is almost indistinguishable from the terrain until it leaps to attack. A whirl of blowing sand further aids this concealment, which radiates off the drake's body in a constant, gritty haze.

*In case you thought I was kidding before, keep your eyes for dust clouds in the Bloodstone that seem out of place. If you're unlucky, it's a sand dervish looking for a fight. If you're damn unlucky, it's a sand drake looking for a meal.*

*—Allen Ashley*

## SAND DRAKE

Large dragon, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 126 (12d10 + 60)

**Speed** 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +8

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +8

**Senses** tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Desert Camouflage.** The sand drake has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made in a desert environment.

**Sand Cloud.** The sand drake is constantly surrounded by a 60-foot-diameter cloud of sand. The area of the cloud is lightly obscured.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The sand drake makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) poison damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.

**Sandblast (Recharge 5–6).** The sand drake spews a cone of stinging sand mixed with blinding venom in a 60-foot cone. Creatures in the cone must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) slashing damage and be blinded until the start of the drake's next turn on a failed save. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't blinded.

# SKORNE

Once upon a time, the skorne all but owned the Bloodstone. Seemed like every year between 603 until now a fresh batch of them marched out of the east. The Iosans might have kicked most of 'em back across the divide, but there are still a few out there. Waitin' for you to let your guard down so they can bushwhack you in your sleep.

—Allen Ashley

For a span of several years, the skorne invaders from eastern Immoren all but dominated the Bloodstone Marches. These militant slavers came to the west seeking conquest, warring against the kingdoms of Cygnar and the Protectorate of Menoth, secluded Ios, and the eastern trollkin kriels. Every culture and people within the reach of the Army of the Western Reaches felt the sting of their tyrant's lash, and countless were taken as captives.

**Fallen from Might.** The skorne might have remained a significant presence in the Bloodstone Marches were it not for their betrayal at the hands of the Iosans. The two cultures joined during the Claiming to combat the infernals, but on the heels of their mutual victory, the Iosans waged all-out war on their erstwhile allies.

In short order, the skorne army was driven back across the Abyss that divides the continent. Only a handful yet remain in the west, cut off from any semblance of their military structure or supply lines. These scattered bands now live as fierce vagabonds, fighting to survive.

## VAGABONDS

The once-vast Army of the Western Reaches was built around a solid core of skilled melee warriors, the praetorians and cataphracts. Still fighters of considerable skill, these warriors must now live as desert vagabonds, raiding when the opportunity arises and fighting for survival without the support of their mighty warlocks or warbeasts.

## HUNTERS

Members of the venator caste of warriors, skorne who rely on ranged weaponry, hold a lower status in skorne society, which emphasizes martial prowess in close combat. These former venators now fill a vital role in the vagabond bands as hunters, taking down game from afar with their fearsome reivers. Without their contribution, the skorne still in western Immoren would not need to fear death at the hands of the enemy: starvation would kill them far before anything else had the chance.

## BLOODRUNNERS

Bloodrunners are members of the paingiver caste of skorne, who learn the art of excruciation and how to wring mystical power from such pain with the art of mortitheurgy. Stealthy warriors and skilled assassins, the final release of death inflicted by their hands empowers them to flicker through shadows like phantoms.

## DAKARS

With the majority of the tyrants and dominars of the skorne forced back across the Abyss, the leadership of the vagabond bands falls to the dakars. These warriors once led small groups of ten warriors in battle and have had the leadership of larger bands thrust upon them.

### SKORNE BLOODRUNNER

Medium humanoid (skorne), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 60 (8d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +6

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6, Survival +4

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Cygnaran, Skorne

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Blood Step.** The bloodrunner casts *misty step*. It can't cast it again until it completes a short or long rest, or until it drops a humanoid creature to 0 hit points.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** The bloodrunner deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the bloodrunner that isn't incapacitated and the bloodrunner doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Warrior Devotion.** The skorne has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The bloodrunner makes two melee attacks.

**Assassin Blade.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

## SKORNE DAKAR

Medium humanoid (skorne), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 17 (skorne plate)

**Hit Points** 85 (10d8 + 40)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Constitution +7

**Skills** Intimidate +3, Perception +5, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** Cygnaran, Skorne

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Hoksune.** As a bonus action, the skorne can mark a humanoid creature it can see. The skorne has advantage on melee attacks targeting the marked creature if no creatures friendly to the skorne are within 5 feet of the creature.

**Indomitable (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** The dakar rerolls a failed saving throw.

**Martial Precision.** The dakar's weapon attacks deal an extra 2d8 damage on a hit (included in the attacks).

**Warrior Devotion.** The skorne has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The dakar makes two longsword attacks.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Combat Coordination.** The dakar selects up to two allies within 90 feet of it that can hear its commands. Each ally can immediately use its reaction to move up to its speed or make one melee attack.

## SKORNE HUNTER

Medium humanoid (skorne), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (7d8 + 21)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +5, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** Cygnaran, Skorne

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Warrior Devotion.** The skorne has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The hunter makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Reiver.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

## SKORNE VAGABOND

Medium humanoid (skorne), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 17 (skorne plate)

**Hit Points** 52 (7d8 + 21)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Intimidate +2, Perception +3, Survival +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Cygnaran, Skorne

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Hoksune.** As a bonus action, the skorne can mark a humanoid creature it can see. The skorne has advantage on melee attacks targeting the marked creature if no creatures friendly to the skorne are within 5 feet of the creature.

**Warrior Devotion.** The skorne has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The vagabond makes two longsword attacks.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.



# STORM RAPTOR

This terrible bird of prey soars through the skies of Immoren's Stormlands flaring with electrical energy, its silhouette blotting out the sun while its keen eyes scan for prey wandering the desert below. Lightning flickers through its feathers, to be unleashed in blinding arcs of voltaic energy as the raptor dives upon its prey, talons extended for the kill.

Native to the desolate northern Stormlands, this great beast makes its home on the steep cliff faces of the Abyss. It is a superb hunter and spends much of its time circling amid the harsh storms common to the region, using their frequent electrical discharges to cloak its approach to prey. Solitary storm raptors often clash with archidons in territorial feuds high above the desert, rending the air with their cries. The storm raptor is invariably the victor in these tempestuous battles, though archidons working together sometimes succeed in driving one away.

Biggest damn bird I ever saw.

Allen Ashley

## STORM RAPTOR

Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 18

**Hit Points** 216 (12d20 + 84)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	26 (+8)	25 (+7)	2 (-4)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Wisdom +10, Charisma +9

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** lightning, thunder

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Electro Leap.** When the storm raptor hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it can choose another creature within 10 feet of its target. That creature takes 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

**Flyby.** The storm raptor doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Plasma Nimbus.** A creature that touches the storm raptor or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the storm raptor fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Siege Monster.** The storm raptor deals double damage to objects and structures.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The storm raptor makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d6 + 8) slashing damage.

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d8 + 8) slashing damage.

**Lightning Storm (Recharge 6).** All other creatures within 120 feet of the storm raptor must each make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature has disadvantage on the saving throw if it is wearing armor made of metal.

#### Legendary Actions

The storm raptor can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The storm raptor regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Peck.** The storm raptor makes one beak attack.

**Move.** The storm raptor moves up to its speed.

**Lightning Strike (Costs 2 Actions).** The storm raptor launches a bolt of lightning to strike a point on the ground anywhere within 120 feet that it can see. Each creature within 5 feet of that point must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Swoop (Costs 2 Actions).** The storm raptor moves up to its speed and attacks with its talons.

# STORM TROLL

Storm trolls are thought to have originated in the punishing Stormlands of the Bloodstone Desert, a freakish region unlike any other in Immoren. There, these creatures eke out their existence in a blasted wasteland of biting winds, earthquakes, and constant electrical storms. The only beasts capable of enduring this environment are those specifically adapted to it, the storm troll among them.

**Alternative Energy.** Due to the scarcity of food in their scarred homeland, storm trolls have adapted to gain limited sustenance from an unusual source. Where other trolls have quills or rocky protrusions growing from their thick skin, a storm troll has a series of natural conductors made of multiple layers of metal and mineral deposits. Lightning strikes are drawn to these protuberances and arc directly into a storm troll, even if other potential conductors are closer. Lightning cannot replace a storm troll's need for meat but allows it to subsist on a smaller quantity of food than other troll breeds do, at least during periods when it is regularly exposed to storms.

*If the Storm Division ever started recruitin' trolls, I'm sure these ones would shoot right to the top of the list.*

*Allen Ashley*

**Living Electrical Conductors.** Tendrils of blue lightning arc constantly between the protrusions on storm trolls' backs and crawl along their skin. Contact with a storm troll causes some of this energy to discharge, and this transfer is sufficient to numb an opponent's limb or frazzle a steamjack's cortex. Worse yet, an agitated storm troll can produce a powerful bolt of lightning capable of electrocuting a target.

## STORM TROLL

Large giant, neutral

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 157 (15d10 + 75)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Strength +9, Constitution +8

**Skills** Perception +3, Survival +3

**Damage Immunities** lightning

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Molgur-Trul

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Repulsor Field.** A creature that touches the troll or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) lightning damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be pushed 5 feet away from the troll.

**Regeneration.** The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes necrotic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The troll makes two melee attacks.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) lightning damage.

**Spit Lightning (Recharge 4-6).** The troll spits a 30-foot-long, 5-foot-wide line of lightning. Each creature along the line must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



# THE CULT OF PYROMALFIC

The elves have long proven to be remarkably malleable people when exposed to dragon blight. It was this susceptibility that the dragon Everblight used to his advantage, first from beneath the city of Issyrah, and then again with the Nyss people of the Shard Spires. But Everblight was not the only dragon to be attended by a group of blighted elves.

## CULT PRIEST

Medium humanoid (blighted losan), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15  
**Hit Points** 45 (6d8 + 18)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-2)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned  
**Skills** Religion +6, Stealth +5  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13  
**Languages** losan, Tkra  
**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The priest's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

**At will:** fear, poison spray, vampiric touch

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The priest has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

**Regeneration.** The priest regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the priest takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the priest's next turn. The priest dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The priest makes two claw attacks.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

### REACTIONS

**Blighted Rebuke (2/Day).** When the priest is damaged by a creature within 30 feet of it that it can see, the creature that damaged it is engulfed in blighted vapors and must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

You hear all sorts of things about the Bloodstone. I was in Ternon Crag when a panner told me about some elves he spotted headed east, into the desert. This was after the losans took that fortress on the Abyss, so I told him I knew about it. The panner shot back his hooch and told me, "It weren't them elves."

*Allen Ashley*

For centuries from his hiding place within the ruined Castle of the Keys, Pyromalfic lured citizens of Ios to him. Those who answered his call were blighted, transformed, and made into a cult that worshipped him with a fervency that overpowered their previous devotion to the Divine Court.

**Without a God.** When the Legion of Everblight fought and ultimately destroyed Pyromalfic, his cult was left without a purpose. But though the dragon was gone, his blight lingered, nowhere more strongly than in the flesh and bones of his worshippers.

Those who survived the Legion's attack were driven underground—literally. They sheltered in forgotten tunnels and caverns beneath the Castle of the Keys. There they lived like parasites, emerging from the darkness only infrequently to strike at the skorne warriors who took possession of the ruined castle. With the skorne driven out of the region, the last remnants of Pyromalfic's cult have ventured out into the Bloodstone Marches.

**Without a Purpose.** Years have passed since the dragon was slain, which the cultists spent hiding in darkness and isolation. They knew nothing of the infernals or the Claiming, nor the events of the Dragon War that raged over Cygnar to the west. They have returned to a world that is far different from the one they once knew and fight to find a new purpose within it.

**The Promise of the East.** The blighted cultists ache for a return to the blighted blessing of the dragons. They dare not venture to one of Pyromalfic's many siblings, though. Blighterghast, Scaefang, Halfaug, or any other living dragon

## CULT DEVOUT

Medium humanoid (blighted losan), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 12  
**Hit Points** 45 (6d8 + 18)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	8 (2)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned  
**Senses** passive Perception 12  
**Languages** losan  
**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The devout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

**Regeneration.** The devout regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the devout takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the devout's next turn. The devout dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The devout makes one attack with its claws and one with its kris.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage

**Kris.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

would sense the blight of Pyromalfic upon them and would not hesitate to destroy them. But they are not without hope.

To the east roams the mad dragon, known as Chimera. Chimera the Shapeless. Chimera the Forgotten. This dragon bore the full brunt of the apocalyptic Cataclysm, which warped its athanc in a storm of arcane power. The cultists hope to find Chimera and enter into its service: they believe the dragon's mind is too fractured to detect Pyromalfic's stain on them.

**Across the Sands.** The cultists now venture toward the Stormlands, where Chimera roams. Having no allies, no safe haven in the desert, their journey is perilous and slow. The cultists move at night, raiding for what little supplies they can find. They have become something of a myth among the Idrian and farrow tribes of the desert, who are most often the target of their wrathful nighttime assaults.

## CULT PRIEST

These blighted elves were once the high priests of the cult of Pyromalfic. Only a handful of them survived the death of the dragon, with many unable to endure in a world without

the blessings of his blighted presence. Those few who remain seek out a new life for themselves and the lower orders of the cult.

## CULT DEVOUT

The most numerous members of the cult are the devout, those worshippers who toiled in service to Pyromalfic under the guidance of the cult's priesthood. While not as corrupt as their fellows, they are nonetheless dangerous and unshakably devoted.

## CULT DRAGONBLESSED

Some of the cult's members were blessed with a deeper and more pervasive blighting than their fellows. These members are hardly recognizable as elves anymore. Their flesh is twisted with growths of bone protrusions and thick armored plating. Their mouths are distended and weep a steady flow of toxic saliva, and their hands have contorted into rigid talons like those of the dragonspawn.

### CULT DRAGONBLESSED

Large humanoid (blighted losan), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 95 (10d10 + 40)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	6 (2)	10 (+0)	4 (3)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 10

**Languages** losan

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Keen Hearing.** The dragonblessed has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

**Rampage.** When the dragonblessed reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the dragonblessed can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

**Regeneration.** The dragonblessed regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the dragonblessed takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the dragonblessed's next turn. The dragonblessed dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

**Cloud of Blight.** At the start of a turn when it regenerates, each nonblighted creature within 5 feet of the dragonblessed takes 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The dragonblessed makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.



# UMBRAL LARVA

Akin to a benign fungus in the Outer Abyss, feeding on motes of essence, the parasites known as umbral hemophages can be deadly on soul-rich Caen. There they form a mosslike lattice that lies in wait to infect those who touch or tread upon it. Once it takes hold, this malignant infestation works with a deadly alien intelligence to consume its host from the inside,

creating a horrific larval creature intent on propagating itself. Resembling a gray, segmented worm the size of a trollkin's arm, with its tail terminating in wicked stinger, an umbral larva is quick and cunning.

For more on umbral hemophages, see "Diseases of Immoren" in chapter 1.

## UMBRAL LARVA

*Small fiend (infernal horror), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 39 (6d6 + 18)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +5

**Skills** Acrobatics +3, Perception +3, Stealth +5

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, exhaustion, frightened

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Evasion.** If the umbral larva is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

**Growing Horror.** If the umbral larva is adjacent to another umbral larva, the two merge, combining hit point totals and

growing one size category. When the umbral larva becomes Large, it transforms into a lamenter at the end of its next short rest.

**Soulless.** The umbral larva does not have a soul.

**Spider Climb.** The umbral larva can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Spring Away.** The umbral larva can take the Dodge action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

**Standing Leap.** The umbral larva's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

### ACTIONS

**Stinger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Parasitic Vomit (Recharge 5–6).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one paralyzed humanoid adjacent to the umbral larva. *Hit:* The target takes no damage but must immediately make a disease threshold check at maximum infection pool dice for umbral hemophages (see "Diseases of Immoren" in chapter 1).



# CREATURES OF THE GLIMMERWOOD

The Glimmerwood is home to many different creatures. The majority of these can also be found in other regions, such as the Thornwood Forest, Widower's Wood, and others, but a few are unique to the ecology of the Glimmerwood.

*Trollkin out in the Glimmerwood know the forest better than most anyone else alive. Get in good with a local guide if you can. They'll tell you where the glowin' spiders make their nests, and which trees aren't really trees but drakes hidin' in the forest. And if you can't find a trollkin to walk you through the woods, bring some extra ammo and take a pot shot at any oak that looks at you sideways.*

*If you want some real advice, though, there's a trollkin woman who let me side 'round the fire when she was talkin' to the young ones. Here's what she had to say.*

*Allen Ashley*

## GLOWWEB SPIDER

This enormous predatory spider hunts in the gloomy shadows of the deep forest.

**A Light in the Darkness.** The glowweb spider produces a faint phosphorescence along its body, and even its many eyes glow with a dim light. This adaptation allows the spider to blend in with the foxfire glow common in the deep Glimmerwood, and attracts the attention of animals accustomed to grazing on the glowing fungus and lichen of the region.

**Slow Eaters.** The spider's bite injects its prey with a paralyzing venom, which allows it to drag the immobile meal back to its lair. A glowweb spider's nest is filled with numerous captured creatures bound in web, on which the spider feeds over the course of several days. Not prone to gluttony, the spider drains only a bit of fluid out of each meal each day. While prolonging the death of a victim, this habit can be sometimes helpful in rescuing someone the glowweb has taken captive.

**All in the Name.** As its name suggests, the most unusual characteristic of the spider is the strange webbing it produces. Sticky and strong enough to restrain a fully-grown trollkin, the webbing contains a natural chemical similar to that which gives the spider its bioluminescence. On contact with exposed skin, the glowing strands burn into the flesh with a caustic radiance, which simultaneously allows the webbing to bite deeper into a creature's body and weakens it before the spider approaches.

### GLOWWEB SPIDER

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d10)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Glowing Body.** The spider's body emits dim light in a 30-foot radius.

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

#### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Glowweb (Recharge 5–6).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing and takes 1 radiant damage at the start of each of its turns. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 13 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).





The roots of the gnarlwood trees go deep, so that they can bear the weight of the drakes above. The deeper your own roots go, the roots of your kith and kriel, children, the easier you will bear similarly heavy burdens.

*Galandra Truthsayer*

# TIMBER DRAKE

An elusive breed of drake found only in deep forest regions, the timber drake is among the rarest of its kind. While other drakes are long-lived and grow relatively slowly, the timber drake grows to its full size in only a few months—and even after reaching its adult size, its body undergoes a rapid cycle of shedding and growth. Every few weeks, the drake sheds its outer scales, with the layer beneath being thicker and more pronounced.

**Overgrowth.** A timber drake's peculiar physiology causes it to rapidly heal injuries. Unlike the healing of trolls, this regeneration does not fully re-form injured tissues, but rather causes them to grow over with thicker, denser muscle and scale. These tumorous growths take on an appearance similar to the burls of old trees, adding to the creature's natural camouflage.

**Bad Breath.** A timber drake can expel a noxious cloud of poisonous gas. The poison is a natural byproduct of its digestion and brews constantly within one of the drake's many stomachs from a combination of natural poisons, decaying flesh, and rampant bacteria.

**Cautious Predator.** Timber drakes use their natural camouflage and climbing ability to set unexpected ambushes. Clinging to the trunk of a massive tree, a drake's body blends in with the texture of the bark. Timber drakes are patient, waiting for the opportune moment to spring down from the canopy to surprise their prey.

Despite their natural regeneration, timber drakes are not prone to reckless attacks. They are more likely to let a potential meal pass them by than attack a large group of creatures or one that would present the risk of injury. They are smart enough to recognize threats like dire trolls or large groups of trollkin warriors, and attempt to attack such perilous targets only when they are truly desperate for a meal.

## TIMBER DRAKE

Large dragon, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 142 (15d10 + 60)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	4 (3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Strength +9, Constitution +8

**Skills** Stealth +4, Perception +6

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Plant Camouflage.** The drake has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks it makes in any terrain with ample obscuring plant life.

**Regeneration.** The drake regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If it takes cold, fire, or necrotic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the drake's next turn. The drake dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The drake uses Poison Breath if it can. It then makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Poison Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The drake exhales a cloud of poisonous breath that fills a 15-foot cube emanating from the drake. Each creature in the cube must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 33 (6d10) poison damage and be poisoned until the start of the drake's next turn.

# YOUNG TROLLS

Among the trollkin kriels of the Glimmerwood, full-blooded trolls are treated like members of the family. Their well-being is the responsibility of the entire kriel, and even from a young age these trolls contribute to the livelihood of the trollkin among whom they dwell.

In kriels that contain a warlock, the training and upbringing of these young trolls is of paramount importance. Not only are they taught how to use their strength to help haul heavy loads and assist in building or expanding the kriel's village, they are also instructed in the ways of battle. Long before they reach maturity, these trolls have spent years honing their skills in combat and learning how to function under the telepathic bond of a warlock.

**Immature and Young Trolls as Warbeasts.** Immature and young trolls take after their environment but have yet to

*There are all sorts of trolls in the world, and you'll see most of them somewhere in the Glimmerwood. One thing that always catches my eye are the little ones, though. If you're not paying attention, you might confuse a young troll for an adult trollkin. You'll be halfway through telling a story before you realize that the person you're talking to is just a juvenile troll, and not some sort of trollkin nudist.*

*Viktor Pendrake*

develop to the extent slag, winter, pyre, or swamp trolls have. Depending on the environment they are found in, they take some of the traits and animi from their "parent" troll according to the Troll Traits table below. For more information, see "Trollblood Warbeasts" in *Borderlands and Beyond*, chapter 6.

## YOUNG TROLL

Large giant, neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 68 (8d10 + 24)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Strength +6, Constitution +5  
**Skills** Perception +2, Survival +2  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12  
**Languages** Molgur-Trul  
**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Regeneration.** The troll regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes necrotic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The troll makes two slam attacks.  
**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

## IMMATURE TROLL

Medium giant, neutral

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 26 (4d8 + 8)  
**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Constitution +4  
**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10  
**Languages** understands Molgur-Trul but does not speak  
**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Regeneration.** The troll regains 2 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes necrotic damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Parent Troll	Environment	Trait	Immature Troll Animi	Young Troll Animi
Common troll	Woodlands	None	earth's blessing	earth's blessing, rush
Pyre troll	Deserts or badlands	Fire Resistance	flaming fists	boiling blood, flaming fists
Slag troll	Areas with volcanic activity	Acid Resistance	acidic touch	acidic touch, boiling blood
Swamp troll	Wetlands	Amphibious	elasticity	elasticity, swarm
Winter troll	Places with near-constant snow coverage	Cold Resistance	icy breath	icy breath, winter coat

# CREATURES OF IOS

Most of the creatures native to the Iosan forests are unknown to anyone living in the Iron Kingdoms. For that matter, even the inhabitants of the forest nation knew little about what creatures dwelled among the mist-shrouded trees. Most of these creatures were cautious and avoided what few pockets of civilization existed, only moving into the ruins of cities long years after the Iosans had fully abandoned them.

With the recent upheaval in Ios and the dramatic reduction in population, some of these creatures have been emboldened. They now roam the countryside unafraid, for there are too few Iosans left to worry them. As their territories expand, some have begun to press the borders of the forest in search of new opportunities and new lands to call their own.

Beyond these, new creatures have arisen, fundamentally altered by the spiritual apocalypse that erupted in Ios. When the gods died, they changed the world in more ways than one.

*I can't say I know much at all about what's going on in Ios nowadays... or at any other point in time, for that matter. But I've heard stories now and then, from the people who escaped the forest a few years back. Seems like there were always nasty things hidin' among the trees, and in recent years they've gotten real bold. As anyone in eastern Llael, the Marches near Scarleforth Lake, or up in Rhul can tell you, something's changed in Ios, and I can't say it's for the better. I had to talk to one of Pendrake's assistants, the Iosan woman, to give me some clues about what's going on.*

*—Allen Ashley*

# BEASTS OF LEGEND

*It is a surprise to most, myself included, that the mythic creatures of our legends have one foot—or talon, as the case may be—in fact. While most young Iosans know the names of Shyeel and Vyre's powerful machines, who among us would have imagined that the creatures from which they take their names inhabited the forests we call home?*

*—Edrea Hlorynn, Assistant to Professor Pendrake*

Iosan myrmidons are named for beasts both great and terrible, often drawn from the stories of elven heroes of old. Some of these creatures, such as the griffon or the hydra, remain relatively commonplace in other parts of Immoren, even while they are nowhere to be found among the tall, silent trees of Ios. Scholars hypothesize that these creatures were more often encountered in the days of antiquity, when the elves still dwelt in the now-fallen empire of Lyoss. Others, however, were thought to be nothing more than myth—until recently.

The devastation wrought by the Claiming has opened up avenues for the natural world to intrude once more on the cities and roadways of western Immoren. Buildings are consumed by vines, while paved roads succumb to weeds and rank grasses. Nowhere is this more true than in haunted Ios, where few still remain who count themselves among the living. Into the eerie silence that has descended upon these forests, creatures long relegated to legend have begun to reemerge, and soulless scouts and rangers report clashes with beasts thought to have been extinct for centuries, if they ever existed at all.

What the reemergence of these legendary beasts will mean for the peoples of Ios remains to be seen, but they provide unusual threats to those who encounter them—and intriguing puzzles for naturalists and eldritch scholars alike.

# ASPIS

The most unsettling thing about an aspis attack is how silent it all is. Watching a trained soldier tossed around like a rag doll by a force you can neither see nor hear is eerie indeed.

—Edrea Horyrn

Some scholars believe that the legendary aspis is a distant relative of the more common tatzylwurm, which is found in a variety of breeds throughout Immoren. Certainly these coral-colored serpents bear a passing resemblance to the great snakes of that family, though those who have more closely studied an aspis assert that it is more caecilian than snake: a legless amphibian with a soft, rubbery body rather than the tatzylwurm's scales.



**An Eye for Danger.** Nor do the differences end there. Where tatzylwurms are noted for their many eyes, the aspis appears to have only one, and there is some debate as to whether the smooth black organ that dominates the center of an aspis's head is an eye at all. As large as a human face and as hard as stone, this strange feature seems to serve the aspis as both a sensory organ and defense mechanism. When the aspis is threatened, it rears up on its muscular body like a viper preparing to strike, and this carbuncle emits a wave of force that can drive back even larger predators.

In fact, this unusual defense is also the aspis's primary means of subduing prey, since it has neither teeth nor fangs. Two short, muscular, tentacle-like pedipalps located on either side of the aspis's expandable jaw allow it to consume much larger prey than it might otherwise appear, scooping them into its mouth once they have been pulverized by the waves of force.

## ASPIS

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 71 (11d8 + 22)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

**Condition Immunities** blinded, prone

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Force Gaze.** Each creature in a 15-foot cube originating from the aspis must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 13 (2d10 + 2) force damage and, if it is Large or smaller, is pushed 10 feet away from the aspis, taking an additional 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if it contacts a structure or other creature of equal size or larger. Any creature struck in this manner also takes 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.

Unsecured objects completely within the cube are also pushed 10 feet from the aspis.

# BANSHEE

*I have not yet studied a banshee in person, but I must confess that how such an odd creature is able to carry itself aloft is a fascinating puzzle for a naturalist... albeit one I wouldn't like to explore without some earplugs.*

*Edea Horyn*

When the elves first settled the forests of Ios, some of their earliest writings detailed encounters with the creatures known as banshees. Seemingly endemic to the region, banshees appear as stocky birds of prey large enough to carry off an armored warrior. It isn't until one has drawn altogether too close for comfort to one of these large avifauna that the physical differences between banshees and actual birds become apparent.

**Terrible Song.** Instead of beaks, banshees sport a mouth full of sharp teeth, above which are perched two large, saucerlike black eyes. What at first appear to be feathers are actually sheets of thin keratin, like that which forms fingernails or hair. These vibrate incredibly quickly when the banshee is active, and this vibration produces its most distinctive feature: a dissonant keening that builds as the creature approaches, until it swoops down upon its prey with a deafening shriek. This "song" is capable of incapacitating those who hear it and seems to be particularly dangerous to

elves and other sapient beings.

However, the very earliest accounts of the banshee suggest that the breed is more scavenger than predator. The elves hunted the banshees to what they believed at the time was extinction shortly after arriving in Ios, not in an attempt to quell their dangerous call, but from coveting the banshee's unusual "plumage," which was sometimes incorporated into finery and even ceremonial dress in the early days of the empire.

## BANSHEE

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 55 (10d10)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	7 (2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Discordant Song.** Each creature within hearing range of a banshee when it is not incapacitated must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is deafened and must repeat the save again at the beginning of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends and the creature is immune to the banshee's song for 1 hour. In the event of a second failure, the creature is unconscious.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The banshee makes two attacks with its talons.

**Talons.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

**Hit:** 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.



# GORGON

Blissfully, gorgons appear to be largely solitary and are rarely encountered in pairs or groups. Sometimes, however, other forest scavengers will trail a gorgon's path, attempting to pick off creatures affected by this bizarre monster's attacks before the gorgon can finish the job, or feeding on what is left behind afterward.

—Edea Horyn

Until recently, most Iosans considered the legends of the gorgon to be little more than myth or allegory. It was only when the soulless—not known for exaggeration—reported sightings of these unusual beasts in the darkest parts of the wood that their eldritch masters were forced to accept the reality of even those unbelievable tales.

**Slow Death.** Gorgons resemble enormous snails, each the size of a heavy myrmidon. Slow and ponderous, they would

## GORGON

Large monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 149 (13d10 + 78)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	5 (-3)	22 (+6)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The gorgon makes three attacks with its stinging tendrils.

**Stinging Tendrils.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage and, if the target is a living creature, it must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it becomes poisoned and restrained. A creature poisoned this way must repeat the saving throw again at the end of its next turn. If it succeeds, it remains poisoned and restrained and must repeat the saving throw again at the end of its next turn, at which time a second success ends the effect and renders the creature immune to the gorgon's poison for 1 hour. If a creature poisoned this way fails either of these subsequent saving throws, however, it becomes paralyzed and takes 9 (2d8) damage at the start of each of its turns until it dies, as its blood and tissue begin to calcify.

**Shell Defense.** The gorgon withdraws into its shell, gaining a +4 bonus to AC until it emerges. It can emerge from its shell as a bonus action on its turn. While in its shell, the gorgon cannot attack.

seem to pose little danger were it not for their exceptional method of attack. Aside from its great size, where the gorgon's physiology differs most from that of a common snail is in its head, which is shaped something like a tightly-closed seedpod when the gorgon is at rest. If it is threatened or attacking, however, the outside of that pod peels back in strips, each of which is revealed to be a serrated tendril surrounding a rasping mouth.

Each of these tendrils ends in a small, sharp barb that injects a victim with a paralytic toxin that displays an immediate and terrifying effect. The muscle and blood of the victim's body begin to calcify within seconds, forming painful extrusions like the rocky outcroppings that decorate the bodies of the largest trolls. The gorgon feeds on these calcified projections, taking advantage of its victim's paralysis to begin grinding them from the body with its radula, even before the victim has finished dying an agonizing death.

**Armored Shell.** Like most snails, the gorgon carries its home on its back in the form of a shell, in this case formed from similar calcified extrusions that it appears to excrete as part of its digestive process. These take the shape of hollow spines reminiscent of volcanic rock formations and gradually bleach to a driftwood gray. The gorgon retreats into its shell if threatened by something its formidable attacks cannot fend off.

# MANTICORE

More recent investigations into the manticore have revealed that its unlikely physiology is more than skin deep. Manticores appear to also sport an unusual crystalline organ that sits directly behind their sternum. Current hypotheses suggest that this may be formed from waste material as part of the growth of their glassy spines.

—Edrea Horyn

In outline, a manticore resembles a large lion or other hunting cat. Seen up close, however, the similarities end. Rather than fur, the manticore is covered in jagged spines of glassy chitin that sweep backward from its beak and end in a tail like a morningstar.

From beak to tail, a manticore is onyx black, making it difficult to spot in the rocky crevices where it makes its lair. The only other color anywhere on the manticore's body is from two red eyes, which sparkle like rubies above the creature's sharp beak.

**Indiscriminate Killer.** Recent brushes with many of the beasts of elven myth suggest that, in the wild, they attack only to hunt or defend themselves, but stories of the manticore focus on its ferocity and are borne out by recent encounters. Manticores appear to kill for its own sake, often leaving prey savaged yet uneaten. In fact, the manticore is not even primarily a flesh eater; its typical diet seems to consist of dirt and small rocks. Those few who have studied the manticore suggest that the minerals thus ingested facilitate the growth of its unusual defensive spines.

**Jagged Spines.** These glassy, gem-like protrusions grow from mineral deposits in the manticore's flesh. Baby manticores hatch from eggs with no spines to speak of, their

brick-red flesh flecked with dark bumps that eventually grow into the glassy shards of the adults. Because they are comparatively defenseless, young manticores rarely leave the safety of the den, where they are cared for by one or another of the adults, mating being the only time that manticores tolerate the company of even one another. The rest of the time, manticores lie in wait in dark crevices and pounce upon anything that comes too close, savaging it with their glass-sharp beaks and spiny tails.

## MANTICORE

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 156 (13d12 + 52)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Pounce.** If the manticore moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a sharp beak attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the manticore can make one sharp beak attack against it as a bonus action.

**Spiny Armor.** A creature that touches the manticore or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 10 (3d6) piercing damage.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The manticore makes two attacks, one with its sharp beak and one with its spiked tail.

**Sharp Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1 target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Spiked Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1 target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. On a critical hit, the target is knocked prone.



# SPHINX

The skorne believed they could isolate the limited telepathy of the sphinxes to a specific, unusual gland located at the base of the skull. Lately, I have heard that this gland is in high demand among those few bone grinders who know of its existence.

—Edea Horyn

The earliest references to sphinxes in Iosan legend can be traced back to the exodus from the ancient empire of Lyoss. Along the route from their former homeland to what would become their new nation, the elves were behest by many hardships. Among those enumerated in these ancient tales are encounters with large hunting cats they called sphinxes.

Peerless pack hunters, the sphinxes are said to have harried the elves all the way from Lyoss to the Iosan Peaks. Compared to some of the other beasts of elven myth and legend, sphinxes do not appear particularly fearsome, growing no larger than a small pony. Early stories describe them as having pale coats, though those more recently encountered bear fur that is white with a greenish cast, as though they are adapting to their new forest environment.

**Uncanny Awareness.** Their most distinctive visible features are their long, tufted ears, but otherwise, sphinxes don't look much different from other big cats found in the wild places of Immoren. However, the ancient stories describe them in terms normally reserved for spirits and fiends, suggesting that they could anticipate where an arrow was going to strike before it landed, and that they moved with such uncanny, silent unity that as soon as one flushed its quarry from hiding, another was already there, waiting to attack.

This behavior interested the skorne mortitheurges and beast handlers who had briefly allied themselves with the Iosans when the first sphinxes began to make their reappearance. After successfully slaying a few of the wily beasts—albeit at great cost—and studying their anatomy, the skorne concluded that sphinxes exhibited a limited form of telepathy. This ability allows them to communicate silently across short distances, and possibly even read the surface thoughts of their prey, to know when to dodge and where to move in for a killing blow. The skorne speculated that sphinxes might be able to exert subtle mental pressure on nearby creatures, making themselves harder to hit or even to see.

## SPHINX

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 75 (10d10 + 20)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

**Senses** passive perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** The sphinx's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect thoughts*, *minor illusion*

3/day: *silent image*

1/day each: *blur*, see *invisibility*

**Pack Tactics.** The sphinx has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one other sphinx is within 5 feet of the creature and isn't incapacitated.

**Saw It Coming.** The sphinx has a +2 bonus to AC against any creature that is lower than it in the initiative order, as well as advantage on attack rolls against creatures that have not acted yet this turn. Anytime a sphinx is forced to make a saving throw, it does so with advantage. If the sphinx would take half damage on a successful save, it takes no damage on a successful save, and only takes half damage on a failed save.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1 target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.



# FALLEN KNIGHT

While their gods yet lived, the Fane Knights of Ios held the most sacred duty among their people, having sworn unbreakable oaths to guard with their lives the dwelling places of the gods themselves. Unlike the churches of Morrow or Menoth scattered across the Iron Kingdoms, the fanes of the elves were more than just temples; they were home to their gods on Caen, so to guard one was to stand on the doorstep of the divine.

**Oaths Too Strong for the Grave.** The living Fane Knights were chosen from among the strongest, most skillful, and most devout of all Iosan warriors. Their mettle, while rarely tested, was unflinching. For some among their number, even the death knell of the gods they guarded could not put an end to their vigil.

Like the other Iosans who were present in the nation when Scyrah and Nyssor were assassinated, the Fane Knights were either transformed or destroyed. Some, realizing that their duty was at its end, became eldritch, leaving the fanes behind to seek a new fate elsewhere. Others simply perished, released from their holy obligation. For a small handful, however, their ultimate failure was too great to accept. Now called Fallen Knights, the oaths of these individuals continued to hold, even after their bodies had vanished.

**Sentinels Who Will Never Tire.** As they did in life, the Fallen Knights continue to silently guard the fanes of the gods. Yet within their suits of ornate, ritual armor, nothing remains but dust and the force of the oaths they once swore—oaths broken by failure and now rendered unbreakable in death.

Fallen Knights never speak, and they never rest. No reason will deter them from their course, and not even the former priests of the gods they once served are given preferential treatment. Whatever remains within the Fallen Knights recognizes neither friend nor foe, and they will strike down, without hesitation, any who trespass on the sacred temples they once guarded—or anyone else who stands in the way of their now-inscrutable goals.

**Bound to the Past.** Not all the Fane Knights were at their posts at the moment of the Sundering. Fallen Knights are most commonly encountered within the former Fane of Scyrah in Iryss and the Great Fane of Lacyr in Shyrr, where the gods were slain, but have also been spotted wandering abandoned cities or on seldom-used roads through the dense forests of the land, silently pursuing some inexplicable errand understood only by them.

When encountered in one of the fanes, Fallen Knights unwaveringly continue the duty they pursued in life, though now they guard nothing but empty halls and abandoned rooms. They no longer seem to recognize their own people—or perhaps they recognize all too well that their people have changed irrevocably into something new and strange—and they strike at anyone who tries to intrude on the former sanctuary of the gods, be they outsider or Iosan, soulless or eldritch.

The behavior of those encountered elsewhere can be harder to predict or comprehend. Some walk unerringly in a straight line toward some distant and unknowable goal. Others pace back and forth in one place, slaying anyone who draws too near. Still others take up a position on a road, in the middle of an abandoned town, or in a forest clearing, and cut down anyone who tries to pass.

What little I have heard about such beings demonstrates that the convictions of duty and faith can sometimes persist beyond death.

—Edea Hloyn

## FALLEN KNIGHT

Medium undead, lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 16

**Hit Points** 178 (21d8 + 84)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison, radiant

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Fallen Knights still understand the languages they knew in life, but they never speak

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The Fallen Knight's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +8 to hit with magic attacks). It can cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *compelled duel*, *wrathful smite*

1/day each: *branding smite*, *magic weapon*

**Legendary Resistance (1/day).** If the Fallen Knight fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** The Fallen Knight has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Sacred Guardian.** Any living or undead creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the Fallen Knight must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this effect for the next 24 hours. On a failed save, the creature has disadvantage on saving throws and its speed is halved until the start of its next turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Fallen Knight makes two attacks with its Iosan greatsword.

**Iosan Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) radiant damage if the Fallen Knight has more than half its hit points remaining.

# IOSAN FOREST HAWK

*When I was a child, my mother had a pet hawk named Kalys. He was a constant companion on our walks through the gardens of my childhood home, and never failed to bring us back a hare or two for dinner. I sometimes wonder if he's still alive, swooping through the trees. I hope he is.*

*—Edea Horyn*

Long prized by falconers among the noble houses of Ios, the forest hawks who call these eerily quiet woods home are capable of impressively tight maneuvers as they fly effortlessly between the tall trees. This aerial agility is possible thanks to the hawks' shorter wings and tailfeathers compared to others of their kind. While difficult to train, Iosan forest hawks are considered some of the finest hunting birds available, and falconers who keep one or more of these stately raptors are justly proud of the complex commands their birds are capable of following.

Unfortunately, the art of falconry was already in decline in Ios even before the Sundering, and the eldritch have found the process to be hardly worth the trouble, as the hawks seem to have an instinctive distrust of the undead elves and are even more skittish and uncooperative than normal when in their presence. However, a few keep to the old ways, just as Dawnlord Vyros of House Nyarr kept his loyal hawk Jyren throughout the many battles that led up to the Claiming.

**Striking Difference.** Uncommon among raptors, Iosan forest hawks display marked sexual dimorphism of the kind more frequently found in songbirds. The females, which are most often kept for hunting, are smaller than males and more closely resemble other hawks throughout western Immoren, albeit with shorter wings and tails. Male forest hawks, on the other hand, grow significantly larger than females, reaching sizes comparable to the torso of an adult elf, and have feathers in striking blues and greens, while females tend toward earth tones and rust-colored plumage. Males also have long, decorative tailfeathers that make them less capable of the tight maneuvers for which forest hawks are famed, as well as beaks that sweep backward into bony crests surrounding and protecting the eyes during the sometimes deadly mock battles of their mating display.

**Deadly Compactness.** Though not especially large, a female forest hawk is the bane of any small animals living in the ground cover of the Iosan forests. The males rear the young since the more compact females are the better hunters. This makes female forest hawks particularly esteemed among elven falconers, although the lovely plumage of males makes them common pets in the homes of Iosan nobility, and their feathers have been used for centuries in decorations, art, and fashion.

## IOSAN FOREST HAWK

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13  
**Hit Points** 3 (1d6)  
**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

**Senses** passive Perception 14  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)

**Keen Sight.** The forest hawk has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Tight Quarters.** Accustomed to maneuvering between the trees of Iosan forests, the forest hawk has advantage on Dexterity saving throws and can move without provoking attacks of opportunity.

### ACTIONS

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 3 (2d4 - 2) slashing damage.



# KARKINOS

*In case you thought I was kidding before, keep your eyes for dust clouds in the Bloodstone that seem out of place. If you're unlucky, it's a sand dervish looking for a fight. If you're damn unlucky, it's a sand drake looking for a meal.*

*—Edrea Hloryn*

Sometimes called “tree fishers,” karkinoi are an unusual breed of giant blue forest crab native to the vast, silent woods of Ios. They make their lairs in freshwater springs and forest pools, feeding on moss and small animals that they “fish” from the trees with the unusual barbed lances they sport in place of the pincers of crabs hauled from the Meridius.

**Far Travelers.** Legend has it that the karkinoi were among the creatures that originally followed the elves on their exodus from Lyoss, either trailing behind as scavengers or intentionally brought along as pack animals or livestock. If this is true, then these strange beasts probably once hailed from the Sky Mirror lakes to the east and more closely resembled their smaller, more aquatic kin.

In ages past, karkinoi were hunted to the verge of extinction for their spiny, mottled yellow carapaces, which were once valued as items of decor and even components of armor by the Iosans and their trading partners. Since the Claiming, however, these vast forest crustaceans have been enjoying a resurgence, and today a traveler in the quiet woods is more likely than ever before to see a karkinos venturing forth from the water to hunt.

**Tree Fishers.** To accommodate their changed climate, the pincers normally sported by other crabs have adapted over time in the karkinoi, replaced with a single long, piercing lance on each front limb. Karkinoi use these barbed lances to pierce fish as well as small tree-dwelling animals, and haul them in to eat. They aren't shy about using them in defense if attacked or simply startled.

Viciously territorial, karkinoi lie partially submerged in forest pools when they are not active, attacking anything that approaches too close, which often includes larger animals that have come to the water to drink. Wandering hunters, their territory is remarkably large, and a single karkinos migrates

gradually from one clear spring or pool to another over the course of several weeks or months, so as not to overhunt a given area. Despite their great size, karkinoi have a remarkably small impact on their environment. Most of their diet consists of the moss that grows near the pools where they make their lairs, and they consume a surprisingly modest number of small animals and fish.

This fact provides little consolation to any creature unfortunate enough to surprise a karkinos in the water, however, who will find the otherwise docile giants to be fierce combatants when provoked.

## KARKINOS

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 120 (16d8 + 48)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Damage Resistances** piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Amphibious.** The karkinos can breathe air and water.

**Spiny Shell.** A creature that touches the karkinos or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The karkinos makes two attacks with its piercing claw.

**Piercing Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage. A Medium or smaller target that is more than 5 feet away from the karkinos when it is hit by a piercing claw attack is immediately pulled to within 5 feet, where it takes an additional 4 (1d8) piercing damage from the crab's spiny shell.



Iosan linguists continue to debate whether the myrmidons that serve the elves in battle are named after these enormous, insectlike burrowing creatures that make their homes in the foothills of the Iosan Peaks, or whether it is the other way around. Which is the case may remain a mystery, but there can be little doubt of the striking resemblance between the two.

—Edea Horyrn



From what I have been able to gather, the skorne learned this lesson the hard way, and I'm not apt to question the wisdom of it: If you find yourself in possession of a myrmid egg, put it back.

—Edea Horyrn

# MYRMID

Standing easily as tall as a myrmidon on six thick legs, a myrmid has a relatively small body and head in comparison to its overall mass, much of which is made up of dense, marble-white armored plates covering its back and limbs, especially the two front legs. When a myrmid is dug into its burrow, it brings together these two legs to effectively seal the door, creating a shield as impenetrable as any warjack's hull. Early in the history of Ios, myrmids were often hunted for these chitinous plates, which were sometimes used in the manufacture of armor and weapons. The difficulty associated with capturing and killing a myrmid rendered such operations inefficient, however.

**Burrowing Hunters.** Though able to scuttle quickly in the open, myrmids' preferred method of catching prey involves burrowing into rock, weakening it with an acidic vapor expelled from their mouths. Once the surface of the rock has been partially dissolved, those powerful front legs go to work. Myrmids prefer to hunt alone, usually digging a hole large enough to hide in and then settling behind the cover of their front limbs to wait for something to pass by. Able to detect the vibrations of even small creatures moving across the ground, a myrmid strikes when something large enough passes too close.

**Gregarious Giants.** With their dangerously huge legs and arachnid countenances, myrmids are intimidating, and anyone who has ever tried to hunt one will attest that a cornered myrmid is one of the deadliest things one will ever

## MYRMID (JUVENILE)

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (6d10 + 12)

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Hive Sense.** No matter how far a juvenile myrmid is carried from its original burrow, any adult myrmids from that same burrow can always track it unerringly.

### ACTIONS

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Acidic Vapor (Recharge 6).** The juvenile myrmid breathes out a 15-foot cone of acidic vapor. Each creature in the cone must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

encounter. However, they are social and gentle when not hunting or being threatened. Myrmids form large, communal burrows with others of their kind, digging elaborate, interlinking tunnels into the rock of their mountain homes. Within these enormous burrows, myrmids take on a variety of roles, with some hunting to bring food back to the rest of the burrow, while others guard nests or work to expand chambers.

**Stubborn Beasts.** Myrmids hatch from large, leathery eggs around the size of a goblin. During their expansion across the Iosan Peaks, the skorne had their first encounters with these enormous creatures, and some enterprising beast handlers even managed to make off with a few eggs in hopes of rearing the young as new warbeasts. Unfortunately for them, myrmids' nervous system is uniquely unsuited to their usual methods of conditioning, and even the infants proved surprisingly intractable and even deadly when harmed or threatened. Not to mention their discovery that the adult myrmids would pursue any eggs taken from the nests across a remarkable distance...

# RELIQUARY

*I would prefer not to talk about the rumors of these... abominable things. The crimes of House Vyre should remain buried with the monster who perpetrated them.*

*—Edrea Horyrn*

In an uncannily clean elven ruin, an eerie clanking echoes down a darkened hallway, preceding the appearance of a hideous simulacrum of crystal, metal, bone, and spirit. On a deserted street, something neither machine nor ghost comes lurching out of a rent in the cobblestones, its movements like those of some grim marionette. Those few unlucky souls who have seen one of the reliquaries and lived to tell the tale thus describe their encounters with these unholy fusions of vengeful ghost and broken arcanika.

**A Dark History.** The underground laboratories of House Vyre saw terrible things, even before the current affliction settled over the inhabitants of Ios. In these secret chambers, grisly experiments were conducted, seeking the cause of and cure for those elves born without souls. The tactics employed were unthinkable, unconscionable, but at the same time, those driven to such extremes felt they had no other choice. What they sought was not merely a matter of individual life and death but literally the fate of their entire people.

These experiments eventually helped to drive the War of Houses, but even when Ghyrrshyld had been defeated and the war drew to a close, they continued far from the eyes of the public. For those who conducted them, the stakes were simply too high to give up—and the people of Ios had their tacit approval, as those infants born without a soul were still often put to death.

**An Ignoble End.** The precise nature of the experiments conducted by House Vyre and, later, select others who shared their concerns, remain unknown. Those who participated did not speak of the atrocities they had committed, and few of them survived the Sundering, many having died—often by their own hand, unable to live any longer with what they had done and seen—long before that calamity gripped the elves.

These dark experiments came to an end as Ios was called once more to war with forces from outside their borders. The growing influence of the Retribution of Scyrah saw more and more military resources committed to skirmishes with the armies of the Iron Kingdoms, while skorne invaders from the Bloodstone Marches threatened the borders of Ios, until the elves and the skorne joined forces—albeit only temporarily—against the infernals.

The underground laboratories were abandoned and their secret nature made them all but impossible to properly clear out. Instead, they were simply sealed off, with the grisly remnants of past horrors left inside. When the Sundering slew so many of the nation's populace, many of those laboratories were lost forever.

## MYRMID (ADULT)

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 104 (11d10 + 44)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Shield of Legs.** An adult myrmid has an armor class of 18 against attacks originating within 5 feet of it.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The myrmid uses Acidic Vapor, if possible. It then makes two giant claw attacks.

**Giant Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Acidic Vapor (Recharge 5–6).** The myrmid breathes out a 30-foot cone of acidic vapor. Each creature in the cone must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Steamroll.** The myrmid moves up to 30 feet in a straight line and can move through the space of any creature smaller than Large. The first time it enters a creature's space during this move, the creature must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be pushed ahead of the myrmid for the remainder of the move. If a creature fails this save by 5 or more, it is also knocked prone and takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or just 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage if it was already prone.

**A Waking Nightmare.** The death knell of the gods had many long-lasting effects on Ios. While the most obvious was the transformation of all living, ensouled elves who survived into eldritch, this was far from the only repercussion. In the lost and forgotten laboratories of House Vyre, another change took place.

Long-abandoned experiments were awakened anew by the deaths of Scyrah and Nyssor. The infants who had been vivisected in the depths had lacked souls, but something awoke from the remains of their bodies—something that spread outward to infest the arcanikal vessels that entombed them. Thus were born the abominations called reliquaries.

Horrific amalgamations of glass, metal, and the bones of those who were taken apart in the labs of House Vyre, no two reliquaries are alike. Each one walks on numerous metal legs, reaching out with claws of glass and steel. A spectral luminescence spills out from the remnants of bell jars and glass tubes holding skulls and fragments of bone. All reliquaries share a seething hatred of any creature displaying even a semblance of life—including and perhaps especially the eldritch—a hatred they vent with shocking violence on anything that crosses their path.



## RELIQUARY

*Medium undead construct, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 142 (15d10 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

**Damage Resistances** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** cold, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature within 30 feet of the reliquary and aware of it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. On a successful save, the creature is immune to the reliquary's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success.

**Fueled by Hate.** So long as a living or eldritch creature is within 30 feet of the reliquary, it regains 10 hit points at the start of each of its turns.

**Magic Resistance.** The reliquary has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The reliquary's weapon attacks are magical.

**Semi-Intangible.** The reliquary can move through other creatures (but not objects) as if they were difficult terrain, its physical body reshaping itself to flow around them. If the reliquary ends its move in a space occupied by one or more other creatures, any creature in its space takes 11 (2d10) force damage and is pushed into the nearest adjacent space. The reliquary can move without provoking attacks of opportunity.

**Turn Resistance.** The reliquary has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

**Undying Hatred.** The reliquary has advantage on attack rolls that target eldritch or other elves.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The reliquary makes three attacks with its makeshift claw.

**Makeshift Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) psychic damage.

**Force of Hate (Recharge 5–6).** The reliquary magically emits psychic energy in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) psychic damage and be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

# TORMENTED

Near the ancient aeryth known as the Twilight Gate, battles between the Iosans and the skorne scarred the land in ways that might never heal. Here, elven magic and arcanika clashed with skorne mortitheurgy, and countless skorne warbeasts perished under the lash or were cut down by Iosan weapons and myrmidons. So much death soaked into the earth that it transformed the very plant life and created the horrifying creatures known as tormented.

*Our people have suffered greatly, both at our own hands and at those who would seek to do us harm. These entities are an unliving reminder that, no matter what happens to our people, our pain will remain in the world.*

*Edea Horyn*

**All Too Tangible.** It would be tempting to call the tormented “ghosts,” for they are certainly spirits of a sort, sharing more in common with the dead than the living. Yet they are also physical creatures in a way that most spirits in Caen are not, their shifting forms rising from the forest floor as clouds of tarry black putrescence, wrapped here and there around a few bones from some fallen warbeast.

Whatever their precise nature, what they fundamentally are is a scream of pain and anger, an echo of the suffering of countless skorne warbeasts, torn by a lash they can never escape. Though driven to a state of nearly mindless frenzy by their constant agony, the tormented hold a special hatred for sentient beings, especially anyone who reminds them of their elven foes or their former skorne masters.

**Composite Nightmares.** More than merely the ghosts of skorne warbeasts, the tormented are composite creatures, made up of the suffering of innumerable beasts and the eddy remnants of skorne mortitheurgy, activated by the arcane backlash that flowed outward from the murder of the elven gods—the same backlash that transformed elves into the undead eldritch they now are.

The tormented are ever shifting, with the features of fallen warbeasts forming and receding at random as they vent their rage and pain upon any living creatures they can find. At any given moment, a tormented might manifest the tusked head of a titan, the club tail of a rhinodon, or the piercing claw of an aradus—or all of the above. Those few survivors who have told of the tormented describe them as having two sizes, roughly corresponding to the lighter and heavier warbeasts employed by the skorne, but those manifestations do not seem to match warbeasts of the same size. Even the smallest tormented might look like a titan one moment, a lowly scarab the next, or some combination of the two.

**Driven by Agony.** Whatever they once were, all that remains of the tormented is what gives them their name. The pain visited on them in life by their handlers is now amplified in death until it is all they know, and their only outlet is to inflict that pain on others. Mercifully—for both the tormented themselves and the rest of Ios—they seem to manifest only when living creatures draw near. The rest of the time, the racked spirits of the tormented lie torpid in the earth until spectral nerves are pricked raw by the presence of the first sapient being to pass by.



## TORMENTED (LIGHT WARBEAST)

Large undead, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16

**Hit Points** 115 (11d10 + 55)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained  
**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive perception 7

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Driven by Pain.** The tormented has advantage on attack rolls on any turn in which it has been damaged.

**Immutable Form.** The tormented is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The reliquary has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Shifting Shape.** The constantly shifting form of the tormented means that it is never the same creature from moment to moment. At the start of each of the tormented's turns, roll a d4 and apply the rolled effect until the start of its next turn:

1. *Remembered Armor:* The tormented's AC increases by 2.
2. *Borne Aloft:* The tormented manifests wings, which grant it a flying speed of 60 feet.
3. *Regeneration:* The tormented immediately regains 10 hit points.
4. *Withering Gaze:* As a bonus action, the tormented can choose one target creature that it can see. That target must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be stunned.

**Turn Resistance.** The tormented has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The tormented makes two attacks: one bite and one claw.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* + 9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) psychic damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* + 9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) psychic damage.

## TORMENTED (HEAVY WARBEAST)

Large undead, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 18

**Hit Points** 162 (13d10 + 91)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	24 (+7)	4 (-3)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained  
**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive perception 7

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Driven by Pain.** The tormented has advantage on attack rolls on any turn in which it has been damaged.

**Immutable Form.** The tormented is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The reliquary has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Shifting Shape.** The constantly shifting form of the tormented means that it is never the same creature from moment to moment. At the start of each of the tormented's turns, roll a d6 and apply the rolled effect until the start of its next turn:

1. *Remembered Armor:* The tormented's AC increases by 2.
  2. *Lengthening Grasp:* The reach of the tormented's melee attacks increases to 10 feet.
  3. *Regeneration:* The tormented immediately regains 10 hit points.
  4. *Withering Gaze:* As a bonus action, the tormented can choose one target creature that it can see. That target must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be stunned.
  5. *Grand Slam:* A creature hit by one of the tormented's melee attacks is pushed 15 feet away from the tormented, and must succeed on a DC 17 saving throw or be knocked prone.
  6. *Breath Weapon:* The tormented can replace one of its melee attacks with a breath weapon. It exudes a 40-foot cone of necrotic mist that eats away living flesh and pits metal. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- Turn Resistance.** The tormented has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The tormented makes three attacks: one bite and two claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* + 11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) psychic damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* + 11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) psychic damage.

# TWILIGHT FLORA

*While I am conversant with extraordinary zoology, the field of extraordinary botany is unfamiliar to me. My best advice is this: if you don't know what it is, don't try to eat it.*

*—Edrea Hloynn*

By the time the elves turned on their erstwhile skorne allies, the region around the Twilight Gate into Ios had already borne witness to more strife than most of the nation had seen in centuries. It was here that the skorne invaders had first pressed into Ios from the Bloodstone Marches beyond, and it was here that the elves ultimately drove them out, in an act the skorne saw as base treachery, the Iosans as simple self-preservation.

What, precisely, twisted the plants and trees here and left them forever changed depends on who you ask. Some say the staggering quantities of blood from skorne, Iosans, warbeasts, and slaves fertilized the vegetation here; others suggest that the lingering effects of skorne mortitheurgy warped the flora. Ask the skorne, and they might tell you the taint of the elves' treachery poisoned the very land.

Whatever the cause, the few plants that still grow from

the blasted lands surrounding the Twilight Gate are nothing like those in other parts of Ios. Even the most innocuous among their number are twisted and gnarled. Trees sprout jagged thorns and weep viscous sap, and their branches seem to reach for anyone passing by. Thorny vines sprawl everywhere, flowers and leaves have taken on unnatural hues, and unusual fungi bloom in shadowy glades. Nearly any fruit that can be found in this region is deadly poison.

All the plants in the eerie woods around the Twilight Gate have undergone dramatic changes, though some have changed more than others and are capable of things beyond the ken of normal vegetation, much to the misfortune of those who encounter them.



# ECHOLICHEN

Most who pass by this unusual gray-green lichen, which grows in thick mats in the eerie woods around the Twilight Gate, never spare it more than a second glance, as it is generally surrounded by much more ominous-seeming vegetation. For these lucky travelers, the echolichen is nothing more than it appears and offers little to fear.

**Violent Reaction.** For those who bring violence into the forest, however, the echolichen has an uncanny tendency to react in kind. It picks up on moods and emotions in its environment, and can detect violence or wrath over vast distances. When it does, the dense carpet of vegetable matter suddenly lurches into motion, reshaping itself to echo the forms of the creature or creatures it detects, if only in the vaguest of outlines.

Once in motion, the echolichen attacks the source of any anger or violence in its environs with violence of its own, whether a field mouse being swooped up by a forest hawk or a soulless Iosan patrol tangling with the remnants of skorne warbands. What makes the echolichen particularly dangerous to those who inadvertently stir it into activity is that it continues to psychically feed off the violence of its own actions, making the suddenly ambulatory mass of vegetable matter surprisingly difficult to put down.

*I only encountered the echolichen on one occasion, during a skirmish with some skorne holdouts on the edges of the wood. During that encounter, my Idrian guide showed me the best course of action, should you ever have the misfortune to draw the attention of one of these odd plants: run away.*

*—Edea Horyr*

## ECHOLICHEN

Large plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (16d10 + 48)

**Speed** 20 ft. (when active)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)

**Damage Resistances** all damage except cold, fire, and necrotic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, stunned, unconscious

**Senses** blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius, but see Psychoreactive below), passive perception 7

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the echolichen is inactive, it is indistinguishable from normal lichen.

**Fueled by Violence.** So long as the echolichen remains within 1 mile of a source of violence or anger, it regains 12 hit points at the start of its turn. Calm emotion or similar spells can negate this regeneration for their duration, while a *mind blank* or similar spell cast upon the source of the violence or emotion can render the echolichen inactive, if no other source of violence or strong anger is within range.

**Psychoreactive.** The echolichen can detect strong emotion or acts of violence for up to 1 mile. If any such emotion or violent action occurs within that radius, the echolichen animates and pursues the source until it either reaches its target or the target moves more than 1 mile away. The echolichen can always detect the source of any violence or other strong emotion within range, no matter where it is. If multiple sources are within range, the echolichen pursues the nearest one; once it has latched onto a specific target, it will not break off pursuit unless that target leaves its radius of detection. In the event of two sources that are equidistant, the echolichen attacks both indiscriminately, if they are within range.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The echolichen makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

**Hit:** 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

# HOLLOWTHORN

At a glance, hollowthorn resembles wild roses, complete with blossoms that are pale as snow when the plant hasn't been feeding. Indeed, among the sinister-looking flora of the environs surrounding the Twilight Gate, hollowthorn appears more normal and beautiful than most. Looks, in this case, are most definitely deceiving, as any creature unlucky enough to draw too close soon discovers.

**Deadly Sleep.** The woody vines that make up most of the plant are covered with tiny thorns, from which it gets its name. While all these thorns look alike, there are actually two varieties, lying one beside the other. One type of thorn secretes a soporific toxin that combines with the scent of the hollowthorn's blossoms to induce a sensation of well-being followed by growing drowsiness and, eventually, blissful sleep.

**Thirsty Thorns.** By this time, the hollowthorn's victim is likely already several yards away, but this doesn't pose a problem for the aggressive plant. Once a creature has the toxin in its blood, the plant can track it unerringly; even as it wanders away in a beatific haze, the woody vines are trailing along behind, waiting. Once the creature succumbs, the vines wrap around it, and the name of the plant becomes horrifyingly literal. Alongside the thorns that inject the toxin are other, hollow thorns through which the plant proceeds to drain its slumbering victim's blood.

As the hollowthorn feeds, the other thorns continue to secrete toxin into the victim, ensuring it remains docile long after being ensnared. The bones of animals caught in its brambles are one of the few warnings as to the nature of this deadly plant.

*As counterintuitive as it might seem, finding a hollowthorn with bright carmine red blossoms is actually a blessing, not a warning sign. The blossoms flush from white to pink to red as the plant drains its victims, so a hollowthorn with red blooms has fed recently, making it less aggressive.*

*Edrea Horyn*

## HOLLOWTHORN

Large plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (16d10 + 48)

**Speed** 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	3 (-4)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, stunned, unconscious

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the hollowthorn is inactive, it is indistinguishable from a normal plant.

**Profuse Thorns.** A creature that touches the hollowthorn or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage, and must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned (as per Thorny Vines, below).

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The hollowthorn makes two attacks with its thorny vines. If both attacks hit the same target, the target is grappled (escape DC 14), and if its size is Medium or smaller it is pulled to within 5 feet of the hollowthorn. The hollowthorn then uses its Constrict attack on it as a bonus action.

**Thorny Vines.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (4d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage. A target damaged by the hollowthorn must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. The creature can make a saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending this effect on itself with a success. A target that is poisoned this way is also charmed by the hollowthorn and gains a level of exhaustion on each of its turns. On gaining six levels of exhaustion, it becomes unconscious instead of dying.

**Constrict.** The hollowthorn constricts around a grappled target, dealing 22 (8d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage.



## WALKING FUNGUS

Among the strangest of the transformed flora native to the Twilight Gate region are the walking fungi. At a glance, these appear to be relatively normal fungal growths whose fruiting bodies reach anywhere from 1 to 6 feet in height, and they display a remarkable range of shape and texture, from honeycomb-like patterns to shelves to pilei.

Like other more common fungi, walking fungus often grows up through dead tree stumps and other bits of plant matter, uprooting them and carrying them along when they lurch into motion. These, combined with the fibrous nature of fungal tissue, serves the walking fungus as a sort of natural armor.

This ambulation appears to be largely involuntary, but the walking fungus is far from harmless. It feeds on arcane energy, attacking individuals who cast spells or who are bearing mechanika or other magical items. While these attacks are relatively mild on their own, they can quickly become a serious nuisance or even deadly when combined with the magic-deadening qualities of the walking fungi themselves, especially if the fungi strike in the midst of some other skirmish.

**Magical Appetite.** At night, walking fungus gives off an eerie and subdued violet bioluminescence, but only when sources of arcane energy are brought into close proximity does the reason for its name becomes apparent. When they detect magical

*If you ever encounter these unusual walking toadstools at an inopportune moment, there's an easy solution. Just throw them an arcane capacitor or a piece of mechanika that you're not too fond of and make your getaway while they feast.*

*—Edea Horyn*

power sources nearby—arcane accumulators and other forms of mechanical and arcanikal power are particularly tempting targets—the fruiting bodies of the walking fungus uproot themselves and trundle in the direction of the magical energy.

If a walking fungus is able to get hold of a magic or mechanika item, it attempts to feed on the arcane energy within, sending miniscule hyphae into arcane accumulators or even the cortexes of jacks that are no longer fighting back. In spite of this, walking fungus is not entirely despised by practitioners of the arcane arts, for another of their unusual qualities actually makes them quite valuable: when not in motion, walking fungi tend to root to spots where ley lines cross and natural geomantic energy waxes strong.

### WALKING FUNGUS (SMALL)

*Small plant, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 10 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 18 (4d6 + 4)  
**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, stunned, unconscious  
**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius, but see Magic Sense below), passive Perception 10  
**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Arcane Consumption.** For every turn a magic item or arcane power source that uses charges remains within 15 feet of the walking fungus, that item loses 1 charge. Each time a magic item or arcane power source loses a charge this way, any walking fungus within range regains 5 (2d4) hit points.

**Arcane Dampening.** Magic items, including mechanika, lose all magical properties while within 15 feet of the walking fungus.

**Magic Resistance.** The walking fungus has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Sense.** The walking fungus can pinpoint the location of magic items and spellcasting within 300 feet of it.

#### ACTIONS

**Fibrous Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 1) bludgeoning damage.

**Arcane Gluttony.** If the walking fungus is within 5 feet of an unattended magic item or arcane power source that uses charges, it uses its action to feed off the item unless it is actively being attacked. This works like Arcane Consumption, except that the walking fungus drains 1d3 charges per turn. If the walking fungus spends 3 turns feeding off a magic item in this way, the object is ruined by fungal filaments and cannot be repaired.

### WALKING FUNGUS (LARGE)

*Large plant, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)  
**Hit Points** 72 (12d10 + 6)  
**Speed** 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, stunned, unconscious

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius, but see Magic Sense below), passive Perception 10

**Languages** —  
**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Arcane Consumption.** For every turn a magic item or arcane power source that uses charges remains within 30 feet of the walking fungus, that item loses 1 charge. Each time a magic item or arcane power source loses a charge this way, any walking fungus within range regains 5 (2d4) hit points.

**Arcane Dampening.** Magic items, including mechanika, lose all magical properties while within 30 feet of the walking fungus.

**Hungry Pack.** The walking fungus has advantage on attack rolls against a target creature if at least one other walking fungus (of any size) is within 5 feet of the creature and isn't incapacitated.

**Magic Resistance.** The walking fungus has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Sense.** The walking fungus can pinpoint the location of magic items and spellcasting within 300 feet of it.

#### ACTIONS

**Fibrous Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage.

**Arcane Gluttony.** If the walking fungus is within 5 ft of an unattended magic item or arcane power source that uses charges, it uses its action to feed off the item, unless it is actively being attacked. This works like Arcane Consumption, except that the walking fungus drains 1d3 charges per turn. If the walking fungus spends 3 turns feeding off a magic item in this way, the object is ruined by fungal filaments and cannot be repaired.

# CREATURES OF RHUL

The mountainous landscape of Rhul does not have as many, or as diverse, creatures as some of the lower-lying areas of western Immoren. The physical barrier of the Rhulic mountains prevents most beasts from traversing into the heartland of the dwarves. Several specialized breeds, though, can be found within the vast and rugged landscape of the kingdom, or hidden in the network of tunnels and mines carved beneath the surface.

*Rhul is the place to visit, if you ask me. Friendly folk both short and tall, some of the finest booze you can drink, and plenty of other explorers and hunters to chew the fat with around the fireplace. My last trip into the mountains ended with a long talk with Murgan Ayer, one of the best field guides in the business. You can find him in Farhollow putting a hurt on their hollowbite reserves. He had a few things to say about the local beasts that I've recorded here.*

*Allen Ashley*

## RAZORBAT KING

*Big as an argus and mean as a shot of undiluted hollowbite, razorbat kings are best avoided. Their tails cut deeper'n a dagger, and they aren't shy about usin' 'em either. Get yourself a concussion grenade or two when you head out in their territory. Big bastards can't stand the noise of 'em.*

*Murgan Ayer, Rhulic guide*

A cousin to the smaller, more common razorbats found across the Iron Kingdoms, the razorbat king is an enormous flying predator. Solitary hunters, razorbat kings grow to terrifying sizes, and their territories are much larger than those of razorbat colonies. Covered by a thick coat of fur that both insulates them and regulates their temperature, razorbat kings have been spotted both in the caverns of the frozen north and deep within the southern jungles.

The saliva of all razorbats is a mild anticoagulant, and razorbat kings coat their long, barbed tails habitually. Wounds inflicted by the barbed tail of a razorbat king bleed profusely. A razorbat king slashes at larger prey with its tail, returning to feed after the quarry collapses from blood loss and exhaustion.

### RAZORBAT KING

Large monstrosity, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 39 (6d10+6)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Echolocation.** The razorbat can't use its blindsight while deafened.

**Keen Hearing.** The razorbat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The razorbat king makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail barb.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Tail Barb.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or begin bleeding. A bleeding creature takes 2 (1d4) necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. The bleeding can be stopped with a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check.



# ROCK DRAKE

*I was trekkin' up beyond Mount Gursfell in the Glass Peaks when I saw my first rock drake. Well. Maybe saw is too strong a word. Big lizard was napping and looked like nothin' but a pile o' rocks. The thing didn't wake up until I'd set camp and started cookin' bacon over the fire for my dinner! I left the bacon behind. Better the drake eat it than me.*

*—Muzgen Ayer*

The rock drake is a squat, sturdy variety of drake found in the upper reaches of mountain ranges throughout western Immoren, with the largest concentration in the Glass Peaks and Skybridge mountains of eastern Rhul. These solitary predators rarely come down from their mountain homes except in extreme circumstances, preferring to hunt the peaks and mountain passes.

**Like a Rock.** The scales of a rock drake are thick, rocklike accumulations similar to those that grow on the largest and oldest dire trolls. These rocky scales provide the drake with

extraordinary protection against mundane attacks. As the drake ages, its scales take on a more pronounced profile, growing into a rigid crest behind its head.

**Walloping Tail.** Unlike the lean, whiplike tails of other drakes, the rock drake's tail is stout and ends in a large, double-ended bony protrusion. The drake uses its tail to defend itself and in dominance displays during the creatures' mating season. The size of an adult human's torso, this clubbed tail hits with a punishing force.

**Gizzard Stones.** The rock drake chokes down its food in a few huge bites. To assist in digestion, the drake has a gizzard and swallows stones to grind and pulverize a meal. When agitated, the rock drake can spew out these stones with near hurricane force. This powerful breath blasts out the stone contents of its gizzard as though from a scattergun.

## ROCK DRAKE

*Huge beast, neutral*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 184 (16d12 + 80)

**Speed** 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 40 feet

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Strength +11, Constitution +9

**Skills** Athletics +11, Stealth +3

Damage Resistance bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Stone Camouflage.** The drake has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The drake uses Shale Breath if it can. It then makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its clubbed tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.

*Hit:* 21 (4d6 + 7) piercing damage.

**Clubbed Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage. A Large or smaller creature hit by this attack must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Shale Breath (Recharge 5-6).** The drake spews a blast of stones in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



# SHAFT WIGHT

Shaft wights are dangerous undead creatures that inhabit tunnels and mines throughout western Immoren. Most were once miners, buried by cave-ins and collapsing tunnels and left to suffocate in the darkness beneath the earth. Some were consumed by such terror at the thought of their inevitable deaths and clung to life so strongly that they fueled a terrible transformation. The desperate imperative to free themselves endured past death—hours after they died, each clawed free of their earthen tombs with hands stripped of flesh and twisted into bloody talons.

**Endless Labor.** A shaft wight wields the tools of its previous life, clumsily and mindlessly pounding at the walls of its mine with picks and hammers or beating against stone with its bare hands until they are torn to useless stubs. Any hunks of stone it extracts are senselessly hauled from chamber to

chamber within the mine. These efforts occasionally cause cave-ins or breach a tunnel wall into a new area.

In Rhul, the presence of shaft wights is a particular concern. The extensive mining operations of the Rhulfolk present an elevated risk of tunnel collapse and the creation of shaft wights. If any workers cannot be rescued when a mine tunnel caves in, a team of heavily armed warriors—supported by steamjacks outfitted for battle—move through the mine and clear every tunnel and chamber, one after the next. Any wights the dwarves encounter are put down at a distance to minimize the risk that others will rise as new undead.

If a clan is unlucky, some of its ogrun workers rise as shaft wights. These risen ogrun are particularly dangerous, so the dwarves sometimes prepare explosive charges capable of bringing down an entire mining complex. These explosives bury the wights under hundreds of tons of rock, preventing them from spreading through a clan's holdings.

## SHAFT WIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 34 (4d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	4 (-3)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** Understands all languages it spoke in life but does not speak

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the shaft wight to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the shaft wight drops to 1 hit point instead.

**Spawn Shaft Wight.** A humanoid killed by the shaft wight's Constitution Drain or Gravel Vomit rises as a shaft wight 24 hours later unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The shaft wight makes two pickaxe attacks. It can use its Constitution Drain in place of one pickaxe attack.

**Pickaxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Constitution Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its Constitution score is reduced by 2. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its Constitution to 0.

**Gravel Vomit (Recharge 5–6).** The shaft wight spews a wretched mix of gravel, sand, and brackish liquid from its mouth onto one target within 5 feet. The target must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

*Ask any Redhammer, if you can understand the accent. Shaft wights are no joke. Don't realize that they're dead and just keep hammerin' on the walls of old mine shafts, like they were tryin' ta meet a foreman's quota. If you see one, put it down with a shot in the skull, and then put a few more in beside, jus' ta make sure.*

*—Muzgen Ayer*



# SLAG HOUND

The slag hound—or dolomite, as some zoologists of the Iron Kingdoms prefer to call them after a mineral composition of similar appearance—is found in uninhabited rocky plains and low mountain foothills. These huge, jagged jumbles of rock and dirt are usually mistaken for piles of rubble, though in reality, they are slow-moving, dim-witted creatures. Their lifespan is measured in thousands of years, and some who have studied the creatures believe they cannot die of old age or infirmity.

**A Nose for Magic.** Usually slag hounds are mostly harmless, and brainless to boot. They eat dirt for the most part,

tearing up great clods of earth and stuffing them into their gigantic maws. Unfortunately, these massive and virtually indestructible monsters have also developed an insatiable hunger for magically imbued metal of all kinds.

In the presence of such materials, a slag hound goes out of its way to devour the imbued metal. Deaths attributed to slag hounds often come as the creature crunches through enchanted armor with the wearer still inside, or rends off a limb in an attempt to consume a magic item carried within it. They are particularly prone to attacking steamjacks, due to the abundance of magical alloys within the cortex and arcane turbine of the constructs.

Slag hounds attack only if provoked or if they are near metallic magic items but will not pursue a fleeing foe unless it carries an item of particular magical significance that the slag hound desires.

## SLAG HOUND

Huge aberration, neutral

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 126 (12d10 + 60)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** thunder

**Damage Resistance** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Consume Item.** When it hits a target creature it has grappled, the slag hound can use a bonus action to select one magic item in the target's possession. The target must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the slag hound devours the item. The chosen item is unharmed but remains within the slag hound until the slag hound is incapacitated or dies.

After consuming a magic item, the slag hound no longer targets that creature with attacks unless the creature targets it with an attack.

**False Appearance.** While the slag hound remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal pile of rocks.

**Magic Hound.** The slag hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to detect creatures carrying magic items or mechanika.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The slag hound makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16) unless the slag hound is already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained.

**Rend.** A creature grappled by the slag hound must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage. After the slag hound uses Rend, the creature is no longer grappled.

*I ain't ever seen a slag hound, an' I don't want to. You show me a gorax, a drake, a bloody dire troll, an' I can tell you where ta shoot ta put the thing in the grave. But, by the Great Fathers... where do you shoot a rock to kill it?*

*Murgen Ayer*



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I reached out to every expert in the Iron Kingdoms while preparing this volume. Included are some of the more interesting responses I received.

*Allen Ashley*

Mr. Ashley,

It's not too regular for anyone to ask for the unpleasant info you've been wanting to know, but seeing as how you're trying to put together a book to keep other people alive, I think we can work something out.

You already know that Melias Shivyss killed at least seventeen people that we know about during that infernal thing, and we in law enforcement suspect there are many others. We'll figure that out in a few months at the Shivyss investigation summit when two dozen of us from all across the region get together to finalize our records. In the meantime, Shivyss sits in my jail and talks—yes, sir, he talks and talks and talks. How he picked them, what he made them do before he started in with the knives, which parts he ate and which parts he kept and how he got rid of the rest. I know details, things they said while he was killing them, that give me waking nightmares.

So, what you want to know—all that knowledge he has of the wooded hills where he buried, burned, and hid the remains—he'll tell you. He knew those woods like he knew how to keep them alive with most of their bodies cut away. He told me a story about getting lost, but how the trees and the beasts and even the blasted winter wind came together to guide him out. Proof, he said, that even the elements hated what he was doing, enough to help him go away.

I want to remind you in case you have expectations: he's NOT an elf. The name he calls himself, his accent, the affectations—it's all posturing, Mr. Ashley. It's all fake. He was raised as Wallace Bodeck in northern Cygnar, and it wasn't until after he disappeared for six days in the forests around Ios that he started in with the elf story. We think that's when the killings started too, but it's hard to be sure since it went on for so many years. No one caught on until he started using the infernal invasion to cover his tracks, but he did it so badly, especially the last three that he made kill each other, that it was almost like he wanted to get caught.

He knows how to survive, that's true, sir. He knows how to stay alive in the forest and in the mountains and even in the ruins out there. He says there are bodies in poses in those abandoned cities that'll tell a story unto themselves. He says he'll guide us—but none of us want to run the risk of him escaping and hiding out in those woods. We'd never find him. But one day, you and yours might when you're out there just researching your book and minding your own business.

So, you come on and see me. You can interview him. But if you end up having nightmares about an evil thing carrying bodies into the forest at night, remember that I warned you.

Sheriff Zeff Starke  
Timberline Village

Ashley,

I caught wind you were writing a book.

Stop.

The last thing we need are a bunch of would-be explorers with a little bit of knowledge in their heads who think they have what it takes to do our jobs. Things are hard enough out there. Why are you trying to make them any harder?

What with the grymkin and damned infernals still out there, on top of everything else, you know exactly how this is going to go down. Little Aidan Big-Britches, copy of your damn book in his pack, is going to stomp off into the wilderness seeking fortune and glory. If he doesn't get lost in the first few hours, he'll stumble on a hungry troll or a nest of dreggs. No more little Aiden.

What do you think happens next? I'll tell you. Mr. and Mrs. Big-Britches come crying to me, "Oh Mister Kasimir, please won't you and your lads help us find our dear son?" They'll put a few measly coins on the table, even though you know they're sitting on a mountain back home, and then I get to lead a posse out to find whatever's left of their dear, sweet boy.

But it doesn't end there, Ashley. IT NEVER DOES. The Big-Britches, a well-liked and influential family in whatever-the-hell town, start to rile up the locals. They form their own posse, full of mud-for-brains farmers who ALSO each have a copy of your damn book, and they go out to get revenge on whatever put an end to little Aiden. Then we have ten, twenty more bodies to bury. And they come back to me, hats in hands, and ask if I can't deal with the monster what's been chewing on the bones of their dearly departed.

Do you see where this goes next?

You're making more work and more trouble for the rest of us, Ashley. Why not leave well enough alone?

If you're ever back in Ord, drop by the HQ. I've got a bottle of 11-year Khardic and a pair of glasses. After a few sips of it, I'm sure I can make you see reason.

-Arturo "Trollslayer" Kasimir, Grey Blades Headquarters, Ohk

Dear Mr. Alten Ashley,

More often than not, those who find their way to me are in need of dossiers they might use to find vulnerabilities in their enemies or, nearly as often, in their allies. It's a rare occasion when someone such as yourself make contact with me to ask more esoteric questions about regions or peoples of said regions.

That said, it's not a subject I am accustomed to researching, though I've documented some sites of notoriety in the past. Your queries regarding survival in Ios, however, are ones I'm not comfortable seeking answers for. It is not that I doubt your intent or its value; rather, I doubt my survivability and value my own life more than scholarly pursuits, even those for the common good.

And while I hope you'll forgive my reluctance to participate, I also would ask that you accept the following advice. It's often the case that I learn about a dossier I opted to pass on ending up in the hands of a researcher with greater ambition but less caution than I have. In many instance, those researchers have ended up suffering the consequences. I would ask that you abandon this particular matter, at least where it involves researchers venturing into the realms in and around Ios. Consider the following:

ITEM: Three years ago, two students from Corvis University vanished along a twisted elven roadway that they were attempting to map for a cartography class they were pursuing.

ITEM: The equivalent of an entire platoon of skorne peasants were found mercilessly slaughtered after crossing the Iosan border. Of note here is that they were **fleeing** Ios, not entering it.

ITEM: A balloon propelled by hot air and manned by one Prescott Tyrn, passing over Iosan territory en route to Rhul, drifted to an unintentional landing and was found without Tyrn aboard. There were no signs of violence, though a single Iosan arrow was discovered piercing the balloon's envelope. It was this tear that led to its slow descent; otherwise, it might have drifted on well beyond the reach of any nation.

All that said, if you insist on recruiting a researcher for your project, might I recommend Carissa Ang of Merywyn? She is both professional and obnoxious, so the success of her research will ultimately please either you or me.

Yours,  
GK

Alten, my boy!

Your book sounds like an interesting project. I can't say I'd ever thought about writing something like it. Tell me, do you know a good printwerks that can do a run? I have some things I'd like people to know about. **Important** things.

I am sad to say that I won't be able to help you on this particular book, though. I'm sending this letter from the Bayford Company Trading Post before I head up into the Dragonspine. There are some rumors about a new farrow warlord, goes by "Harg, The Most Majesty Lord of Hooves and Tusks." They say he's trying to get a warband together with the mountain pigs. He's probably just another one of those would-be Carvers we get every few years, but I'm not about to risk it, either. I've got a box of Ghordson Brassbarrels with his name on 'em.

I'm waiting for the provisioner to get my order together, so I have a few moments to spare. See if you can fit these into that book of yours:

- \* Always have a backup plan. One is none and two is one.
- \* Get tinned meals if you can afford them. They are heavy and take up space, but you'll be desperate for a good pot of soup eventually. In a pinch, you can even use them to bash somethin's skull in.
- \* Get your water in order. Maybe you'll be lucky enough to find a sweetwater spring, but why rely on nature? Nature is a cruel bastard.
- \* A pair of good boots are worth every penny you spend on them. Find a good shoemaker and become a return customer. You won't regret it.
- \* When you're tracking farrow, let your nose be your guide.

I hope those help. I'm sure you've got plenty of other tidbits going into your work. When I get back from the mountains, I'll swing by Corvis to see if it's on shelves.

It's been too long, Alten. Next time we're both in town, the first round is on you. I expect you'll be flush with crowns from your book deal, and farrow bounties don't pay like they used to.

Say hi to the professor for me.  
—Seth Alkott, monster hunter

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