



# THE BOOK OF THE EAST PART I

SKORNE OPTIONS



*"I swear upon the legacy of my ancestors that I will forge our people into one nation, one army. Thus united, our imperishable dominion will claim the world."*

—Supreme Archdomina Makeda

**T**HE SKORNE. A RACE THAT ARRIVED FROM THE EAST through the Bloodstone Desert, across the Abyss. Led by Vinter Raelthorne, the deposed Cygnaran king, they began a brutal war of conquest against their leader's home nation, a war that soon spread to include both the Protectorate of Menoth and Ios as well as the scattered farrow, trollkin, and other peoples within the Marches. Even after Vinter was driven out, the skorne continued to pursue their war, seeking to take control of all of western Immoren.

Roughly the size of a human, skorne are noted for their slim, often emaciated bodies that hide a wiry strength. They are nearly hairless, with sharp facial features and a bony crest across the head alongside pointed ears. While skorne are not especially robust compared to races such as the trollkin, their ability to endure extreme pain and injury can be disconcerting at best and terrifying at worst. Pain is a way of life among the skorne.

## AN ORDERED SOCIETY

Skorne society operates on an extremely strict caste system, one that colors every aspect of their lives. At the top is the warrior caste, who train relentlessly for battle. Warriors are the most respected of the skorne and follow a strict honor code known as *hoksune*, a belief system that governs their every decision and action. Next is the worker caste, the largest and most diverse caste, that includes skilled laborers as well as paingivers, extollers, and other specialist occupations. Below them is the slave caste, which consists of other skorne taken in house wars in addition to captives of any other race. Slaves are treated almost as a currency in skorne society, used both for unskilled labor as well as experimentation

when needed. At the very bottom of the caste system are the outcasts, most often criminals who have fled punishment. Outcasts are regarded much like vermin and are slain out of hand if discovered. For their own part, many act as bandits, preying on wider skorne society.

## THE FATE OF THE VOID

Perhaps the most difficult aspect for outsiders to understand about the skorne is their fate after death. The skorne worship no gods and have no afterlife. Instead, when a skorne, dies their souls are thrown into what they call the Void: a dark realm where they are tortured for eternity. Why this happens is unknown, but it is a fact of life accepted by the skorne. Only a very select few can avoid this fate through exaltation—that is, having their souls preserved upon death in sacred stones and revered by skorne society as honored ancestors. The only skorne who can hope for this honor are their warriors, and then only if they die gloriously in battle. For every other skorne, only the Void awaits, and this has given them a brutal pragmatism in life.

## SKORNE RELIGION AND HOKSUNE

Many other races mistake the skorne as lacking religion. While it is true that skorne have no gods, they instead practice a series of philosophies based around worship of their ancestors. One of these ancestors, Vuxoris, created *hoksune*, a warrior creed that is older than the skorne's written word. Practiced heavily by the warrior caste, *hoksune* at its core defines a true warrior as only alive while risking their life in battle, and outside of war, they are mere shadows



of themselves. Warriors must embrace the approach of death and fight to the last, as it is only here when they achieve can perfection. Furthermore, *hoksune* preaches that true honor is only found in melee combat, close enough to look into your enemies' eyes. Ranged combat, while not dishonorable, does not earn the same level of honor. *Hoksune* leads skorne warriors to constantly strive to improve themselves in combat and to throw themselves fearlessly into battle despite the risk of death.

## SKORNE AND MAGIC

Skorne, unlike the other races, do not possess the Gift, and have no divinities to provide them with celestial favor. Instead, they have discovered mortitheurgy, a form of magic produced from pain and death. This magic can be evoked either from pain inflicted upon one's own body or through pain harnessed from others, but in either case, it is an extremely versatile form of magic. Furthermore, every skorne is capable of using this magic, though it requires years of practice and study to unlock it. It is also a grueling power, and those that undertake it quickly transform their bodies through scarification and self-inflicted injury.

## THE SKORNE IN THE WEST

The Claiming saw the entire world thrown into chaos, and the skorne armies, much like everyone else, found themselves beset on all sides by the infernals. They formed a fragile alliance with the losans, pushing back the infernals, but they were betrayed by the elves at the very moment of their victory. The armies of the Western Reaches were driven across the entire Bloodstone Desert, thrown back across the Abyss, and remained there in the five years post-Claiming, held back by the losans who now control the Abyssal Fortress.

However, while their armies were driven out, thousands of skorne were left behind. Some were scattered by the running conflicts, small groups that were cut off and left behind during the skorne's fighting retreat. Others held small forts and supply bases that were overlooked in the fighting. Many of these scattered groups perished in the merciless desert, but others managed to find each other and form into groups, seeking survival on their own. Over time, they have connected with one another and have begun to carve out small areas of control among the Bloodstone Marches. Their discipline and ability to endure even the worst of conditions have allowed them to survive within the chaotic Marches, though such fiefs only stand to survive as long as the skorne themselves do.

## SKORNE NAMES

**Male:** Helzar, J'Deth, Jolxl, Korinvaas, Lorketh, Morghoul, Narkuuru, Rhadeim, Vorkesh, Zaadash

**Female:** Cidaar, Eshkereet, Leskaar, Makeda, Telzesh

## SKORNE TRAITS

Your skorne character has an assortment of inborn traits and cultural leanings, common among all skorne.

**Age.** Skorne reach adulthood in their late teens.

Skorne can live almost three hundred years, though few survive that long.

**Alignment.** Skorne are raised in a brutal and stratified society that rewards pragmatic cruelty and ruthless violence. They tend toward evil alignments.

**Size.** Skorne have almost as much variance as humans, ranging from 5 feet to almost 7 feet tall. Your size is Medium.

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Stoic Endurance.** Life as a skorne has taught you to endure pain and injury that would bring others to their knees. When you take damage, you may use your reaction to roll a d12. Add your Constitution modifier to the number rolled and reduce the damage by that total. 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.

**Languages.** Skorne all speak the majority language of their homeland, Havaati, and speak one other language they've picked up in their travels (often Cygnaran).

**Upbringing.** Skorne children lead highly regimented lives, and their path and early childhood are strictly controlled based on their caste and house. Nearly all children of the warrior caste are expected to have learned the use of a weapon, but youths selected as paingivers also undergo martial training from a young age. Training in mortitheurgy is restricted, but many are schooled in it to serve the myriad roles magical ability requires. Choose one of the following upbringings.

### WARRIOR

You were taught from a young age how to fight. Perhaps a member of the warrior caste, the child of former warrior slaves, you have learned to fight and face your own death with honor in preparation for one of the militant orders.

**Weapon Training.** Choose one martial melee weapon. You gain proficiency with that weapon.

**Warrior's Devotion.** You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Brutal Strike.** When you score a critical hit with a weapon attack, you deal one additional die of weapon damage.

### MORTITHEURGE

Your early years were devoted to the study of mortitheurgy, the magical arts of the skorne. Some warriors study this art for the sake of making themselves powerful fighters while others study it in preparation to enter one of the many occupations that demand the skills of a mage.

**Magical Study.** You have proficiency in the Arcana skill.

**Mortitheurge Training.** You know the *resistance* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *false life* spell once with this trait. You regain the ability to cast these spells when you finish a long rest. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells. You can also cast these spells using spell slots you have of the appropriate level.

**Powered by Pain.** Once per long rest, when you attempt to cast a spell you have prepared and are holding a bloodletting tool or blade in hand, you may choose to suffer 1d8 necrotic damage per spell level to cast the spell without expending a spell slot.

# NEW FIGHTER ARCHETYPE

The Follow Praetorian archetype is available to fighters in addition to those from other sources.

## PRAETORIAN

The Praetorians are the primary military arm of the skorne empire. This group possesses several distinct subgroups, including the traditional Swordsmen, the defensive Karax, the mounted Ferox, and the elusive Keltarii. Almost all these warriors select (or are selected) to learn one of these forms of combat; however, some train to fight in multiple or even all of them. Those who can master these various styles become unpredictable combatants, able to smoothly move between savage offense, measured defense, and shifting mobility in seconds.

### PRAETORIAN FIGHTING STYLES

At 3rd level, you begin to master the various fighting styles of the Praetorians. You gain the following features:

**Swordsmen.** You can use two-weapon fighting with two of the same melee weapon, so long as the weapons aren't heavy or two handed.

**Karax.** You can use your reaction to gain resistance to AOE damage and damage from spells with an area of effect so long as you're holding a shield.

**Keltarii.** When wielding a two-handed melee weapon, you can use your reaction to deflect a missile when you are hit by a ranged weapon attack. When you do so, the damage you take from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + your Dexterity modifier + your fighter level.

### ADAPT AND OVERCOME

At 7th level, you have mastered swapping weapons in the blink of an eye. When you use your reaction for an ability that requires you to be wielding a weapon or shield, you may use two object interactions to draw or stow weapons to meet the requirements as part of the reaction. You may use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, which recharges on a short rest.

### FIGHTING STYLE

At 10th level, you can choose a second option from the Fighting Style class feature.

### PRAETORIAN MASTERY

At 15th level, your prowess with weapons has begun to reach its peak. You gain the following features:

**Swordsmaster.** While engaged in two-weapon fighting, when you hit with a melee weapon attack, you can use your bonus action to cause that attack to become a critical hit. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus. This recharges on a long rest.

**Karax.** When you use your reaction to gain resistance to AOE damage, you can choose a number of friendly creatures equal to your proficiency bonus and within 5 feet of you to also gain this effect.

**Keltarii.** When wielding a two-handed melee weapon, you may use a bonus action to take the Disengage action.

## INSTANT ADAPTATION

At 18th level, your ability to adapt to changing battlefield conditions has been honed to perfection. Once per short rest, you may take a reaction during a round, even if you've already used your reaction.

## BACKGROUNDS

The following section provides new backgrounds for skorne characters.

### ABILITY SCORE INCREASE

The ability score increases in this section are intended to be used with the essence rules introduced in *Iron Kingdoms: Requiem*. Do not use the increases associated with these backgrounds if your campaign uses the standard rules for determining ability score increases.

### A NOTE ON CASTE

Caste means almost everything in traditional skorne society. It is difficult and extremely rare for someone to move up in caste, though every skorne is always at risk of becoming a slave from raids and interhouse warfare. Similarly, dishonor and criminal activity can instantly see a skorne become an outcast, and the truth of the actual event often matters little to the decision. Because of this, a skorne's current caste might not reflect their upbringing and background, and your character can have moved across the castes through tragedy or success.

## OUTCAST

Outcasts are the lowest of skorne society, regarded as little better than vermin, lower than even slaves. They are killed out of hand if discovered, so those Outcasts who last a long time are learned survivors. Be it an escaped slave, a criminal fugitive, or any number of other ways one can earn outcast status, outcasts are wily and often desperate, no longer bound by their culture's strict codes. Many outcasts ended up in the west by joining the Bonded Porters, workers who are responsible for ferrying supplies across the Bloodstone Desert, while others have come as mercenaries, fighting for any house that will overlook their status in light of their skills.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity or Charisma increases by 1.

**Skill Proficiencies.** Deception, Insight, Survival

**Tool Proficiencies.** Choose one.

**Equipment.** A club, an explorer's pack, a set of traveler's clothes, a tattered cloth with your old house symbol, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

### FEATURE: ONE EYE OPEN

Outcasts are constantly at threat of being killed if their status is discovered, and this breeds into them a justified paranoia. You have advantage on initiative checks and can make Perception checks even while asleep.





**d8 Personality Trait**

- 1 I was born an outcast, and it is the only life I know. I am highly suspicious of anyone because of this.
- 2 I was wrongly accused of a crime and fled to avoid execution. I burn to correct this injustice, even though I know it will still mean my death.
- 3 I hate other skorne for forcing this life upon me, and I take any chance I can to get revenge.
- 4 I have become an ascetic and live a life of fasting and self-flagellation.
- 5 I speak little, unused to conversation after years of solitude.
- 6 In truth, becoming an outcast was the best thing that ever happened to me. I enjoy the freedom, even if the life is tough.
- 7 Now that I am stuck in the west, I can make a new life for myself.
- 8 I am incredibly curious about the cultures and people of the west.

**d6 Ideal**

- 1 Freedom. I am free of the expectations that other skorne must adhere to, and I intend to keep it that way (Chaotic).
- 2 While I have become an outcast, I still adhere to *hoksune*, and I fight honorably (Lawful).
- 3 I delight in sending other skorne to the Void, especially if by surprise (Evil).
- 4 I can't help but guide new outcasts to places of relative safety (Good).
- 5 I must often steal from other skorne to survive, but I take no pleasure in it (Lawful).
- 6 Now that I am an outcast, I am free to indulge in my desires, no matter how dark (Evil).

**d6 Bond**

- 1 Some of my family keep in contact with me despite my status.
- 2 I can't help but explore the region I'm in.
- 3 My house actively hunts me.
- 4 I joined the Bonded Porters, which is how I came west.
- 5 I stole my weapons when I fled, and I maintain them out of spite.
- 6 I once outed another outcast in public to save my own life.

**d6 Flaw**

- 1 I become paranoid when in enclosed spaces, fearing paingivers around every corner.
- 2 I am easily tempted by offers of good food.
- 3 I often flee if I feel out of control, desperate to maintain my life.
- 4 I can't help but steal supplies I consider vital, even if I have no need for them.
- 5 I regret not simply accepting my execution, and I often fight as if I have a death wish.
- 6 I am quick to anger and will accept any reason to fight.

## SLAVE CASTE

You are a member of the slave caste. You might have been born the children of slaves, taken in a house raid, or suffered some other defeat that saw your demotion. Slaves in the skorne empire are valued for their work, but they are considered expendable and might even be used for experimentation of a new mortitheurgy process or chemical formula. You have learned to adapt to grueling conditions and work and can often pass by unnoticed so long as you don't stand out. You have also mingled among the various non-skorne slaves and have learned much of western Immoren.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength or Constitution increases by 1.

**Skill Proficiencies.** Athletics, Stealth

**Tool Proficiencies.** Your choice of carpenter's tools, cook's utensils, potter's tools, or mason's tools.

**Languages.** Choose two.

**Equipment.** One of carpenter's tools, cook's utensils, potter's tools, or mason's tools, a set of common clothes, manacles, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

### FEATURE: ENDLESS WORK

Skorne do not shy away from working their slaves to the brink and even beyond and are skilled in the use of magic to augment their strength and durability to make them work long past mortal limits. Your body has adjusted to this constant strain, and you can work far longer than most others. When you would suffer a level of exhaustion, make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On successful save, you ignore that level of exhaustion. The DC for this check increases by two for every successful save you make and resets on a failure.

#### d8 *Personality Trait*

- 1 I was once a warrior, but I never got to finish my training.
- 2 Life as a slave was hard, so little else could bother me.
- 3 I take pride in being stronger than anyone else.
- 4 Humans are an interesting group, and I miss no chance to converse with them.
- 5 Something about me puts others off, and even the willbreakers were leery of me.
- 6 I was born a slave and know no other way of life.
- 7 I have made multiple attempts to escape and bear the scars to prove it.
- 8 I worked as a snitch for the paingivers, keeping tabs on other slaves.

#### d6 *Ideal*

- 1 Now that I am free, no one will ever chain me again. I would die first (Chaotic).
- 2 My house was destroyed in conflict, and it is only natural I became a slave (Lawful).
- 3 I have taken punishment for other slaves to prevent their deaths (Good).
- 4 I used to think slavery was normal, but my experiences in the west have taught me otherwise (Good).
- 5 I once killed a fellow slave to ensure he couldn't escape (Evil).
- 6 Now that I am free, I want to find my place in the world (Any).

#### d6 *Bond*

- 1 I remember some of my fellow slaves and ask about them when I get the chance.
- 2 Scars from my time as a slave are proof of my strength, and I bear them with pride.
- 3 A human I escaped with promised to show me the west.
- 4 A trollkin slave told me his last message before he died, and I feel duty bound to deliver it.
- 5 I hold on to the chains that once bound me as a reminder of my old life.
- 6 I have nightmares of the time I was experimented on by a willbreaker.

#### d6 *Flaw*

- 1 I can't help but be nervous around paingivers.
- 2 Servitude comes easy, and a strong enough personality can cow me.
- 3 Any attempt to restrain me causes me great panic, and I can't help but struggle.
- 4 I struggle to understand money and can be easily swindled.
- 5 I chafe at being told what to do, no matter how valid the order.
- 6 My scars still ache, especially in the cold.





## WARRIOR CASTE

You are one of the warrior caste, the pinnacle of skorne society. Your entire life has been devoted to fighting and seeking death in battle for the chance at exaltation. Be it as a Praetorian, Cataphract, or Venerator, you have memorized and internalized *hoksune* and seek to honor your house with your martial prowess.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength or Dexterity score increases by 1.

**Weapon Proficiencies.** Choose one: Short sword, long sword, karax pike, or double-bladed glaive

**Armor Proficiencies.** Infantry Armor

**Skill Proficiencies.** Athletics, Intimidation

**Equipment.** One of: Short sword, karax pike, or double-bladed glaive, a set of leather armor, a sliver of a low-quality sacral stone, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

### FEATURE:

### HONORABLE COMBAT

The tenants of *hoksune* speak highly of honorable singular combat and facing down formidable enemies. You can use your bonus action to nominate a single creature you can see and issue a challenge. Make an Intimidation (Charisma) check. Until the start of your next turn, you may substitute that check for one attack roll made against the marked creature, or substitute that check for your AC when you are attacked by the marked creature. If you have not used the roll at the start of your turn, it is lost. During each of your turns, you may use your bonus action to make another Intimidation (Charisma) check to use with this feature.

### d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am often silent, letting my actions speak for me.
- 2 I take great pride in my station, and I ensure others know it.
- 3 *Hoksune* is not simply a way of life; it is the only meaning in life.
- 4 I can't help but respect those who are powerful, no matter their station.
- 5 I delight in combat, often laughing at my brushes with death.
- 6 The western fighting arts fascinate me
- 7 While I still observe caste rules, I'm well known for being friendly with lower castes.
- 8 I am dour, and my presence tends to put others on guard.

### d6 Ideal

- 1 I do not expect to receive the honor of exaltation and instead fight to protect my fellows (Good).
- 2 I delight in taking life and am glad my station allows me to do so (Evil).
- 3 I will never flee from a fight, no matter how unmatched I am (Lawful).
- 4 I am eager to fight and prove my worth (Any).
- 5 I fight for my own survival rather than to die in battle (Chaotic).
- 6 Even though the skorne empire has been repelled, I still follow *hoksune* (Lawful).

### d6 Bond

- 1 I take great pride in my weapons and armor and have learned to maintain them myself.
- 2 I was being groomed as a Tyrant to command others.
- 3 I hold strong kinship with other skorne now that we are so few in number.
- 4 My parents were slaves, and my elevation to the warrior caste was a great surprise.
- 5 My word is my bond, even in these trying times.
- 6 I can't help but wonder at the state of my house back east.

### d6 Flaw

- 1 I am secretly terrified of the Void.
- 2 I bear several wounds that sometimes cause me pain.
- 3 I can't help but underestimate non-skorne warriors.
- 4 Violence is often my first resort.
- 5 I have become disillusioned with *hoksune* but fear speaking about it.
- 6 I regard myself as superior to all but other warriors, and I treat everyone else with disdain.



## WORKER CASTE

You are a member of the worker caste, the most diverse caste of the empire. Masons, smiths, and other skilled workers form a major part of the caste, but paingivers and extollers are also members. Workers cannot fight in the name of their house, but they are just as dedicated to its success and take pride in how their work enables the house's warriors to do battle.

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

**Skill Proficiencies.** Choose two from Animal Handling, History, Medicine, or Nature.

**Tool Proficiencies.** Choose one and then your choice of: Vehicle (water) or vehicle (land).

**Equipment.** A set of traveler's clothes, an abacus, one set of tools in which you are proficient, and a pouch containing 20 gp.

### FEATURE: WORKER'S HONOR

Members of the worker caste are well used to toiling on exacting and difficult projects, with some of their work taking years to perform. Whenever you make a skill check using tools you are proficient in and spend at least ten minutes working on the task, you can double your proficiency bonus for the purpose of the check.

#### **d8 Personality Trait**

- 1 I find the works of the west fascinating.
- 2 I often forgo sleep to continue working.
- 3 It frustrates me to see others take my work for granted.
- 4 The only reason my mouth hasn't seen me executed is because of my skills.
- 5 I despise my old skills and will only use them in the greatest need.
- 6 My skill set has allowed me to integrate with non-skorne far easier than most.
- 7 Nothing less than perfection will do.
- 8 I must have my work bench just right or else I am constantly irritable.

#### **d6 Ideal**

- 1 Now, more than ever, my skills are needed (Lawful).
- 2 As a healer, I delighted in allowing injured warriors to die on purpose (Evil).
- 3 The westerners respect my talents far more than the skorne ever did (Any).
- 4 I see my work as proof of the superiority of my house (Lawful).
- 5 Westerners are far more thankful for my efforts, and I can't help but be cheered by it (Good).
- 6 I wish to perfect my art (Any).

#### **d6 Bond**

- 1 My tools have been in the house for generations, and I respect them greatly.
- 2 I was part of a secret society of workers, who avoided the gaze of the warrior caste.
- 3 Though my fate may be the Void, my works will give me immortality.
- 4 I struggle to talk to others about things not related to my skillset.
- 5 I must always be doing something with my hands.
- 6 I can't help but try and teach others how to do things easier or better.

#### **d6 Flaw**

- 1 My work is more important than my life.
- 2 I become distracted by fine craftsmanship easily.
- 3 Life in the skorne empire was reliable and comfortable, and I struggle to adapt now.
- 4 I am easily flattered by compliments.
- 5 I once made a grave mistake and suffered greatly for it. I still have nightmares of the torture.
- 6 I can't help but insult others when they make even minor mistakes.





## FACTIONS IN THE BLOODSTONE MARCHES

In the years after the Claiming, the skorne left behind coalesced into three major groups: The Wastelanders, the Lost Tor, and the Survivors of the Western Army. Each of these groups is identified primarily by their reaction to the skorne being driven out: the Wastelanders have resolved to simply adjust to their new reality, certain the skorne empire will never return. The Lost Tor accept that they may never see the skorne empire again but refuse to completely abandon their way of life. The Survivors of the Western Reaches wish and plan for the return of the skorne empire and prepare to welcome the wider empire when it returns.

### WASTELANDERS

The Wastelanders are skorne who have, for one reason or another, forsaken their culture. These men and women are the most baffling yet the most relatable of the skorne survivors. Without the shackles of their society, they are happy to adopt western weapons, armor, and habits. They often converse freely, and many are friendly and jovial, a stark contrast to the normally dour countenance of their fellows. Many live in and around Ternon Crag and can commonly be seen around the city, becoming a normal enough sight to practically be integrated, though major resentment still bubbles to the surface over the invasion at large. It would be a foolish mistake to believe that they are somehow reformed, however. They can be just as cruel as any skorne, and often the only difference between a traditional skorne and one of the Wastelanders is how much they're willing to express joy at the suffering of their victims. Still, other members of this group have shown a shocking amount of compassion, no longer chained by the expectations of skorne society. A surprising number of paingivers have embraced this new reality and have begun to sell their services to farrow most notably, helping them to train their warbeasts far more effectively than the crude and brutal

methods they prefer. Former Venators are another group who are common among these skorne and have taken to the firearms of the west with undisguised zeal.

### THE LOST TOR

The Lost Tor have struck a fragile compromise between concession and tradition. They still adhere to the tenants of *hoksune* but are willing to work with outside groups for money and supplies. They have proven themselves to be surprisingly reliable and have built a reputation for discipline that many mercenary groups often lack. They have embraced a sort of nihilism regarding their fate, unwilling to adopt western values but not so bound to the past that they hold out hope for the return of the empire. They exist in the middle ground of the emerging skorne cultural spheres and have tense but peaceful relations with both other groups. While the Survivors regard them as traitors and outcasts, they also still hold respect for their adherence to *hoksune*, and some small but steady trade has emerged. No formal relation exists with the Wastelanders; however, they can interact with them without resorting to violence.

### SURVIVORS OF THE WESTERN REACHES

The Survivors of the Western Reaches maintain the belief that the skorne empire will return and treat the war as having never ended. The most hostile group, they also benefit from controlling the remaining sacral stones and many of the extollers, along with what remains of the Ancestral Guardians and Immortals who remain in the west. They live within the deeper desert, and while they have managed to retake and hold several smaller forts, they remain dependent on trade for food and water when their few remaining Venators can't provide through hunting.

# MONSTERS OF THE SKORNE EMPIRE

When the skorne march to war, they do not do so alone. They march with all manner of beasts, large and small, many of which were entirely unknown to the people of the west.

## FEROX

Ferox are a species of cat-like reptiles that roam the various rocky wilds within the skorne empire. Large ambush predators, ferox are fearsome on the hunt, working in mated pairs to bring down prey far larger than them. Never truly domesticated, the skorne must instead break ferox much as they do any other slave. Their ability to leap long distances makes them useful steeds, and their natural ferocity makes them dangerous in a melee. Riders must take care, however, as feroxes that sense weakness are more than happy to murder their masters. Skorne paingivers still hold the secrets of breaking ferox, and they continue to do so both for their own members and for outsiders willing to pay the price.

## FEROX

Large beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 30 (4d10 + 8)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Athletics + 7, Stealth + 6

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Pounce.** If the ferox moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 2d6 slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the ferox can make another Bite attack against it as a bonus action.

**Standing Leap.** The ferox's long jump is 20 feet and its high jump is up to 8 feet, with or without a running start.

**Sure Footed.** The ferox has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The ferox makes two claw attacks and one bite attack

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage



# BASILISK

Basilisks are a unique bipedal species of reptiles native to eastern Immoren. Despite their small size, roughly as big as a trollkin, they have no natural predators thanks to their weapon: a gaze that projects withering energy strong enough to reduce stone, metal, and flesh into little more than dust. Only skorne hunt basilisks, as they make fearsome warbeasts. Basilisks in the Bloodstone are rare, but signs of them forming nests are troubling news. Several Cygnaran scholars worry the species might overwhelm the region due to their extremely territorial nature.

## BASILISK

*Medium monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 57 (6d10 +24)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	3 (-3)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage

**Withering Gaze (Recharge 5–6).** The basilisk focuses its gaze on a line 30 feet long and 5 feet wide from its location. Every creature and object in the line must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. A target takes 28 (8d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save.



# BASILISK KREA

Kreas are the name for female basilisks; however, the term has come to apply most commonly to the skorne-modified creatures. They are not naturally occurring; paingivers perform both physical and magical modifications to kreas, blinding them and redirecting their eyesight's ability to control force energy to instead produce a protective bubble. Not only do the kreas manifest the ability to sense their surroundings despite the loss of their eyesight, their magical energy can slow projectiles that pass through, causing arrows, bolts, and even bullets to lose velocity and blunt their damage. Some very few kreas can be found in the wild, always escaped beasts, as kreas born in the wild lack these modifications.

## BASILISK KREA

*Medium monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 57 (6d10 +24)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	3 (-3)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this distance), passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage

**Force Aura (Recharge 6).** Until the start of the krea's next turn, ranged weapon attacks against creatures within 10 feet of the krea have disadvantage. Creatures within 10 feet of the krea have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage caused by ranged weapons.



# EQUIPMENT AND UPGRADES

**Karax Pike.** This spear has been specially balanced to function with one hand, though it is intended to also be braced against a shield.

**Double-Bladed Glaive.** This glaive features a long, curved blade at each end. Despite its length and weight, users who practice with it learn to make deft, flowing strikes as they spin it.



## SKORNE EQUIPMENT

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Karax Pike	20 gp	1d8 Piercing	5 lbs	Heavy, Reach
Double-Bladed Glaive	30 gp	1d6 slashing	7 lbs	Heavy, Reach, Finesse, Two Handed

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