

PREVIEW



WHERE EVIL LIVES

THE MCDM BOOK OF BOSS BATTLES

MCDM

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WHERE EVIL LIVES

THE MCDM BOOK OF BOSS BATTLES

Twenty-two named leader or solo creatures have lairs and treasure hoards you can drop into your campaign. Each creature's lair and hoard are located in the same entry as that creature's stat block.

Each lair has been optimized to present a fun challenge for five player characters of a specific level, as indicated in the lair's description. The Lairs by Level table on page 6 shows each lair's optimized level and the creature entry where it can be found.

MAPS

Each lair has a map that indicates all hidden information, like traps and secret doors. Digital versions of these maps (along with player versions that don't include the secrets) are included with your purchase of this book.

CARDINAL DIRECTIONS

Most lair maps include a compass rose, even if the location is on a plane other than the Mundane World. Most planes of the timescape (see "The Timescape") are circular planets as well as planes, so they have a north, south, east, and west. But for the rare planes without cardinal directions, the compass rose is still included to make interpreting the map easier.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Each lair area begins with bullet points that overview the room's most important features, giving you all the information you need to run that area upfront. Some of these are meant to be shared with players, while others are for the GM's eyes only, as follows:

- "If you see a description in quotation marks like this, read or paraphrase it to the players when their characters first enter the area—provided they can sense their surroundings properly. This text describes what the characters immediately notice."
- (*If the characters did X in area Y...*) "If a quotation starts with a parenthetical condition like this, only read or paraphrase it to players if those conditions apply."
- **(Secret)** If a bullet starts with this parenthetical subheading, don't read it aloud! This description contains information for the GM, and it shouldn't be revealed to players until their characters investigate the area further. Hidden creatures, traps, and more could be presented this way.

LAIRS BY LEVEL

Optimized Level	Lair Name	Lair Boss	Boss Ancestry
2nd	Jagged Edge Hideaway	Queen Bargnot	Goblin
3rd	Hanging Tree	Dohma Raskovar	Orc
4th	Shtriga Nonna's Hut	Shtriga Nonna	Hag
5th	Burnock Mill	Baron Uthrak	Human
6th	Camp Firefield	Bloodlord Varrox	Hobgoblin
7th	Shifting Library	Kiona the Dread Lord	Incorporeal Undead
8th	Cloud Fang Keep	Lady Emer	Medusa
9th	Molten Enclave	Zenith Aastrika	Fire Giant
10th	Ruins of Wrathrock	Ithu'rath	Olothec
10th	White Tower	Xorannox	Overmind
11th	Canyon of the Tower Crown	Aurumvas of Meaningless Greed	Demon
11th	Tomb of the Keeper	Ashyra	Mummy
12th	Terminal Excrescence	Lord Syuul	Voiceless Talker
13th	Eighth City Advocacy Services	Chancellor Lazivos	Devil
13th	Shadowkeep	Count Rhodar von Glauer	Vampire
14th	Durixaviinox's Rest	Durixaviinox	Dragon
15th	Coronal Hollow	Qazyldrath	Dragon
16th	Eyes of the Mountain	Yserthrax	Dragon
17th	Glass Cavern	Xaantikorijek	Dragon
18th	Mount Brazen	Forzaantirilys	Dragon
19th	Ash Queen's Reliquary	Ataeshia	Elemental
20th	Boughs of Eternity	High Mage Vairae	Lich

TREASURE HOARDS

The bulk of a lair's treasure is in a hoard listed at the end of the lair. Each treasure hoard includes a unique magic or psionic item and another unique reward, such as a recipe for a new poison.

Treasures not included in the hoard are sprinkled throughout the lair. These appear in the "Treasure" subheading of the area where they are found.

STAT BLOCKS

Unless otherwise noted, when a creature appears in a lair's area description, their stat block is found at the end of the lair's entry. For instance, the stat block of Queen Bargnot, the ruler of Jagged Edge Hideaway, appears at the end of the Jagged Edge Hideaway entry along with the stat blocks of all the other creatures in the lair. The stat blocks appear in alphabetical order.

THE TIMESCAPE

The places, people, and other proper names in the lore of this book come from the timescape, the MCDM multiverse. Most of the creatures detailed in this book are found in Orden, a world of high fantasy and just one of the timescape's many planes (also called manifolds). Orden is also called the Mundane World. If you like what you're reading, you can find more lore about the timescape on the MCDM Patreon at mcdm.gg/patreon.

You can ignore any creature's lore if you wish to use their stat block in another way in your campaign.

JAGGED EDGE HIDEAWAY

Optimized for Five 2nd-Level Characters

CONTENT WARNING: SPIDERS

Marrownaw is a really big spider! If you or any players in your group don't enjoy descriptions of skittering spiders, you don't need to go into detail while narrating scenes with the creature. You could also turn the war spider into another creature, like a war lizard with sticky saliva. A bucket of spiders also serves as a trap in area G9. You can similarly re flavor this trap.

QUEEN BARGNOT, SCOURGE OF THE HIGH ROAD, LEADS THE Jagged Edge Bandits in pillaging caravans. Before her rise, the goblins struggled, attacking only the weakest travelers in unorganized strikes. When she killed her boss and became the band's self-proclaimed queen, everything changed.

The Jagged Edges dug a sprawling network of tunnels in the soft earth beneath the High Road. Secret entrances allow the goblins to make coordinated strikes and disappear before their victims can organize against them. Jagged Edge Hideaway contains the bandits' living quarters, pets, prisoners, and ill-gotten gains.

GOBLINS

Like all humanoid ancestries, there are many different goblins and goblin cultures, each with their own ideals. Known to themselves as rogabrin, meaning "more of us" in their language, goblins are one of the most numerous humanoids in the world. They can be found in every environment humans occupy and places many others avoid, like deep cave systems.

Their proportionally long arms and prehensile toes make them equally well adapted to arboreal environments. Goblins live comfortably in treetop cities and subterranean environments with stalactites, ledges, and chasms. Others prefer to dwell in tight-knit neighborhoods of diverse cities.

Those goblins who cross swords with adventuring heroes are the worst of the bunch, thieves and murderers shunned by their own people and driven to live on society's outskirts.

HIDEAWAY STORY HOOKS

You can use one of the following story hooks to integrate this lair into an adventure:

Bandit Attack. While the characters traverse the High Road, a group of Jagged Edge Bandits, consisting of ten **goblin lackeys**, a **goblin sniper**, and a **goblin warrior**, attacks. If the characters defeat the bandits, the party can track the goblins back to the hideaway without an ability check.

Friends of Toblobb. One of the characters is friends with Toblobb (see area G7). Toblobb's mother, Morba, reaches out to the character. Morba knows Toblobb went to confront the Jagged Edge Bandits and the young goblin never returned. The mother begs the characters to find her child, offering them a *potion of gaseous form* as a reward for bringing Toblobb back to her.

Merchants' Request. Fenrir Whipp, a human cooper and the leader of the High Road Guild of Merchants, puts out a bounty on Queen Bargnot. The merchant offers 500 gp to any band of adventurers who can capture or kill the bandit queen.

HIDEAWAY FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, each area of Jagged Edge Hideaway has the following features:

Ceilings. The dirt ceilings are 15 feet high, and creatures with a climbing speed can climb upside down on them without needing to make an ability check.

Dirt Walls. A creature without a climbing speed or climbing equipment can climb the packed-dirt walls of the hideaway with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. If a creature fails this check by 5 or more, they fall while attempting to climb, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage per 10 feet fallen. A creature can use a shovel or other digging equipment to dig out a 5-foot-cube section of a wall with 5 minutes of work. Multiple creatures working together decrease the time proportionally.

Doors. Heavy oak doors stand in doorways 8 feet high. The doors have no locks.

Illumination. Lanterns hang from the ceilings of all areas. The bandits keep the lanterns burning low, shedding only dim light.

Noise. The hideaway's solid doors and dirt walls muffle sound. Creatures in an enclosed area can't hear creatures outside that area.

Secret Doors. Each bandit knows the location of the secret doors in the hideaway. Any creature who has a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 14 or higher spots the outline of these doors, as does a creature who searches the area and succeeds on a DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

JAGGED EDGE HIDEAWAY MAP



1 SQUARE = 5 FT.



BANDITS

Bandits in the Jagged Edge hideout attack intruders as soon as the bandits notice them. The goblins make use of their Crafty trait to engage in hit-and-run tactics and escape melee confrontations with dangerous foes. Goblins who are clearly losing flee for their lives and escape the lair by the most direct route.

Captured Bandits. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check convinces a captured or cornered bandit to give up one of the following pieces of information:

- The location of one of the secret passages connecting area G4 to G7 or area G7 to G9.
- The location of a trap in area G2.
- The existence of the war spider in area G4.
- The location of the treasure in area G7.
- The location of Queen Bargnot in area G9.

Defeated Characters. If the bandits defeat the characters, the Jagged Edges don't kill them. Instead, the bandits lock them in cages and store their equipment in area G7.

RESTING IN THE HIDEAWAY

Provided the characters first deal with any enemies in that area, they can safely take short rests in areas G1, G3, G4, G6, and G7, and long rests in areas G1, G3, and G4. Otherwise, if the characters attempt to rest, there is a 50 percent chance four **goblin warriors** interrupt them halfway through their rest.

ENTERING THE HIDEAWAY

If the characters search the High Road for entrances to the lair, a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals one of the seven hidden, moss-covered trapdoors leading to area G2 or G3. Alternatively, a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check finds goblin footprints that lead to and reveal one of these trapdoors.

False Entrance. The goblins have placed a decoy trapdoor leading to a dead-end trap in area G1. This trapdoor is purposefully easy to find. A character who searches the High Road and succeeds on a DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices this poorly hidden trapdoor. If the party also noticed the other trapdoors, they observe that this one isn't hidden nearly as well as the others, and it has very few goblin tracks around it.

Scouting Party. If the party fails to find a real entrance to the lair and they don't learn about one from any goblins who investigate the collapsed tunnel in area G1, the character with the highest passive Perception spots three **goblin warriors** and one **goblin sniper** leaving the hideaway via a trapdoor from area G2. These goblins are heading out to scout for merchants to rob.

JAGGED EDGE HIDEAWAY AREAS

The following areas are keyed to the Jagged Edge Hideaway Map on page 8.

G1. DEAD-END TUNNEL

The dead-end tunnel has the following features:

- “The entrance opens into a tunnel that slopes gently down. Its earthen walls are supported with vertical wooden beams. At the end of the tunnel stands a dirt-stained wooden door.”
- **(Secret)** Opening the false door at the end of the tunnel activates a trap that collapses the tunnel.

Collapsing Tunnel. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that an unusual series of planks connect the doorframe to each of the tunnel's support beams. If a character investigates the door and succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they determine a solid dirt wall lies beyond it.

If a creature pulls on the door to open it, the door tumbles out of its frame and all the wood beams attached to it fall, causing the tunnel's ceiling to collapse. Each Medium or smaller creature in the tunnel when it collapses must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and becomes restrained in 3 feet of dirt. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't restrained. A creature can use their action to make a DC 10 Strength check, and on a success, they free themselves or another creature in reach who is restrained in this way.

When the tunnel collapses, the entire ceiling falls in and exposes the tunnel to the surface. Two rounds later, three **goblin warriors** and one **goblin sniper** arrive from an entrance tunnel (area G2) to investigate. If captured, they freely reveal one of the entrances to area G2 or G3, in addition to any other information the party coaxes out of them.

G2. ENTRANCE TUNNELS

The hideaway's six main entrance tunnels sit on either side of the High Road. Each tunnel has the following features:

- “This circular shaft sinks 30 feet into the earth, leading down to a tunnel with hazy light. Its dirt wall is marred with little holes.”
- **(Secret)** A dirt-covered canvas conceals a pit at the end of the tunnel, opposite the entrance shaft.

Entrance Shaft. The entrance shaft has no ladder or other means of climbing. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check recognizes that the holes in the shaft are created by goblin fingers and toes.

Pit Trap. The goblins avoid the pit trap by climbing the tunnel ceiling and walls. A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check notices there are no footprints in the dirt over the trap. If this check result is 14 or higher, the character also notices the canvas covering the pit's entrance.

The pit has a 5-foot-square opening and is 10 feet deep. The bottom of the pit is lined with rusty iron pots.

When a Small or larger creature steps on the canvas, it collapses and the creature falls into the pit below it with a clatter, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and landing

prone. If any creatures are in the adjacent area (G4 or G5), they hear this noise and arrive to investigate.

G3. WAR SPIDER ENTRANCE

This wide entrance tunnel sits on one side of the High Road. It has no light sources and the following features:

- “This wide entrance shaft sinks 30 feet into the earth. At the bottom, its floor is illuminated only by what light seeps in from outdoors.”
- “Webs as thick as rope line the shaft, and a foul scent of decay wafts up from the tunnel.”

Entrance Shaft. Characters can use the webs to climb down the shaft without needing to make a check (see “Climbing Webs”). If they attempt to avoid touching the webs while climbing down the shaft, they must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to do so. On a failed check, the creature must choose between grabbing onto a web or falling to the bottom of the shaft. A creature who chooses to fall takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and lands prone.

Climbing Webs. These webs are far less sticky than the prey-snaring webs they connect to in area G4, and creatures can safely climb them without impediment. Marrowgnaw, the **war spider** in that area, uses the webs in this shaft to climb to the surface when she’s needed in battle. They allow her to move at full speed as she squeezes through this area.

If a creature touches or damages these webs, it alerts Marrowgnaw. She climbs up to the ceiling of area G4 and hides in the darkness to ambush them when they enter that area.

G4. MARROWGNAW’S CAVERN

This cave has a 25-foot ceiling and no light sources. The characters only notice the following features if they have a light or another way to see in the dark:

- “Sticky, thick webs crisscross over the ground.”
- “Stinking humanoid bones and bloodstained rags litter the floor.”
- *(If the characters didn’t touch the webs in area G3)* “An elephant-sized, gray-haired spider chitters her mandibles, then she skitters up the wall on legs strapped with bloodstained blades.”
- **(Secret)** If the characters touched the webs in area G3, the spider is already hidden and the characters don’t see her skittering up the wall.
- **(Secret)** A secret door opens to reveal a passage to area G7 (see “Hideaway Features”).

War Spider. This cave is the den of Marrowgnaw, a **war spider** who the bandits keep well-fed with prisoners. If she didn’t detect the characters before they entered the area, they can make a DC 10 group Dexterity (Stealth) check, sneaking through the cavern unnoticed on a success (as long as they avoid touching the webs as described in “Sticky Webs”).

If a creature touches or damages the webs in area G3 or G4, this alerts Marrowgnaw to their presence, and if they haven’t already seen her, she hides on the cave’s ceiling in the shadows. A character who has a way to see in the dark and a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 12 or higher notices Marrowgnaw in hiding. Otherwise, the characters are surprised when she attacks.

She begins combat by using Web Spray, then wades into the fray making Bite attacks. When Marrowgnaw only has 20 hit points remaining, she uses Trample to try to escape through area G3.

Sticky Webs. The webs are difficult terrain. A creature who enters a webbed area for the first time on a turn or starts their turn there must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failed check, their speed is reduced to 0 until the end of their next turn and Marrowgnaw is alerted to their location. On a successful check, they avoid touching the webs in that area.

Dealing fire or slashing damage to a web destroys a 5-foot-square section.

Treasure. A character who takes 10 minutes to search the rags on the chamber’s floor finds a *potion of healing*, three gold teeth (worth 2 gp each), and a belt pouch containing 210 cp, 55 sp, and 16 gp.

G5. LIVING QUARTERS

This room has the following features:

- *(If a character fell into a pit trap in area G2 that is connected to this area, these goblins may have already engaged the party in combat.)* “A small, robed figure and a muscle-bound goblin carrying an axe twice her size lead ten bandits in sparring exercises.”
- “Bedrolls and backpacks lie neatly on the floor around the cave’s perimeter.”

Goblins. Forcan (a **goblin cursespitter**) and Ulгна (a **goblin spinecleaver**) train a group of ten **goblin lackeys**. When they notice the party, Ulгна attempts to shove any character who is next to a pit into that trap (see area G2), then she switches to Greataxe attacks. Forcan hurls hexes while moving toward the skitterling den (area G8) to stir up those creatures; if he can, he then moves to the throne room (area G9) to warn Queen Bargnot of intruders. If Forcan reaches the queen, she prepares an ambush in area G9 with Forcan and her guards.

Treasure. The backpacks around the room hold a total of thirty-six rations, five silvered arrows, 90 cp, 23 sp, and 8 gp.

G6. GUARD POST

This room has the following features:

- “Raucous laughter and the smell of strong liquor fills this small chamber. Three bantering goblins sit on the dirt floor, rolling bright green dice and gambling copper pieces.”
- “A barrel at the north end of the room is labeled, ‘Brimshire’s Best.’”

Goblin Party. Morky (a **goblin assassin**) is beating Norrica (a **goblin underboss**) and Skelver (a **goblin warrior**) in a dice game. All three are drunk and considered poisoned. They're supposed to watch the door to the prison (area G7), but are absorbed in their game, jokes, and liquor. A character can sneak by them with a successful DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check.

Explosive Alcohol. A character who is proficient with brewer's supplies or who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check knows Brimshire's Best is a whiskey with explosive potential. If the barrel or its contents take fire damage, the barrel explodes and each creature within 10 feet of it must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Treasure. There are 27 cp on the ground, along with a dice set carved from bright green teeth that glow in the dark (worth 3 gp).

G7. PRISON AND STORAGE

This room has the following features:

- “Three 6-foot-tall iron cages stand at the north end of the room. Two are empty, but the centermost contains a thin goblin wearing filthy clothing.”
- “On the east and west walls of the room, crates stand piled up to the ceiling, emblazoned with the marks of various merchants.”
- **(Secret)** Two secret doors open to reveal passages to areas G4 and G9 (see “Hideaway Features”).

Cages. The cages are locked, and Queen Bargnot (in area G9) holds their key. A character can force a cage open with a successful DC 18 Strength check, or they can pick a cage's lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A cage door has AC 19, 18 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Prisoner Toblobb. The prisoner is Toblobb, a goblin adventurer. They dislike the Jagged Edges for giving goblins a bad name. Toblobb scouted the High Road for the bandits' hideaway, but the Jagged Edges found Toblobb first. The bandits plan to feed Toblobb to Marrowgnaw.

Toblobb begs for freedom when they notice the characters, offering to aid in the fight against Queen Bargnot. If freed, Toblobb is a **goblin sneak** who stays with the group for the duration of their time in the lair. At the GM's discretion, Toblobb can choose to join the party for a longer period.

Toblobb knows about both of the room's secret passages, but they don't know where the passages lead.

Treasure. Toblobb's equipment is in the crate nearest them. The other crates contain Queen Bargnot's treasure hoard. See “Queen Bargnot's Hoard” for more information.

G8. SKITTERLING DEN

This room has the following features:

- *(If the skitterlings have already been stirred up to attack the characters, they aren't in this room.)* “Scores of winged

rodents with six legs cling to the dirt ceiling, chittering to each other.”

- “Foul-smelling guano covers the floor.”

Skitterlings. A **swarm of skitterlings** clings to the ceiling here, eager for violence. A Jagged Edge bandit who enters this room can use their action to stir up the skitterlings, who then fly through the complex in search of intruders.

Each character who enters the area while the skitterlings are at rest must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check to avoid disturbing them. Alternatively, a character can befriend the swarm by succeeding on a DC 11 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, made with advantage if the character offers food. A befriended swarm does not attack any of the characters.

Guano. When a creature who isn't a Jagged Edge bandit or skitterling starts their turn in this area, they must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of their next turn.

G9. THRONE ROOM

This room has the following features:

- “On the east side of the room, a 5-foot-tall wooden platform stands on wooden legs. Atop it, a goblin with long white hair and a jeweled crown sits on her throne. On each side of her stands a goblin warrior.”
- “At the west end of the room, a table holds a map of the High Road, scribbled with notes in Goblin.”
- **(Secret)** A goblin sniper hides in the shadows under the platform.
- **(Secret)** If Forcan from area G5 warned Queen Bargnot of intruders, a rusty iron bucket of spiders sits on the doorway into this area (see “Spider Bucket”), Forcan hides under the platform with the sniper, and all goblins have actions readied to attack intruders on sight.
- **(Secret)** A secret door opens to reveal a passage to area G7 (see “Hideaway Features”).

Goblins. Queen Bargnot is flanked by two **goblin warriors** and protected by a hidden **goblin sniper** under the platform (possibly accompanied by Forcan the **goblin cursespitter** from area G5). Any character who has a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher notices all hidden goblins.

Queen Bargnot allows her warriors to wade into the fray while she makes Shortbow attacks. If cornered, she makes Shortsword attacks. When she uses her Get in Here bonus action, goblin lackeys can appear from area G7 or G8 or from hiding spaces, shadows on the ceiling, or beneath the platform or table.

If her defeat is imminent, Queen Bargnot asks for parley and offers the characters all the goods in area G7 in exchange for her freedom (see “Queen Bargnot's Hoard”). If the characters refuse, she resumes the attack, fighting bitterly to the death.

Platform. Medium creatures must squeeze to move under the platform. Small and Tiny creatures can move

under it freely. The platform has AC 15, 27 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If the platform is destroyed, each creature on and under it takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Spider Bucket. If Forcan reached the queen with a warning, a bucket containing spiders has been rigged to sit above the door leading from area G8. The first creature to enter this room through that door knocks down the bucket and must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the spiders swarm the target, and the target takes 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage plus 2 (1d4) piercing damage before the spiders scurry away.

Map. The map on the table contains notes about previous and upcoming robberies. The characters can use this map to return the goods from area G7 to their owners. At the GM's discretion, the map might be marked with other creature lairs.

Treasure. Queen Bargnot wears a silver crown set with small moonstones (worth 125 gp) and carries a goblet made from a halfling skull (worth 70 gp).

QUEEN BARGNOT'S HOARD

Queen Bargnot's treasure hoard is contained in crates in area G7 of her lair. Her hoard was stolen from merchants she robbed, and she isn't fully aware of its contents.

The hoard contains the following items:

- *Bag of holding* that contains a *potion of climbing*, a *spell scroll of cure wounds*, a *spell scroll of lesser restoration*, and a glowing poison recipe (see below)
- *Monocle of secrets* (see below)
- 5 silvered arrows
- 250 pounds of flour (worth 5 gp)
- 10 pounds of ginger (worth 10 gp)
- 200 pounds of salt (worth 10 gp)
- 5 pounds of cloves (worth 15 gp)
- 200 pounds of iron bars (worth 20 gp)
- 3 pounds of saffron (worth 45 gp)
- 10 square yards of linen (worth 50 gp)
- 193 cp, 110 sp, and 83 gp

GLOWING POISON RECIPE

Injury Poison

This one-page recipe is written in fine calligraphy on a sheet of clean white parchment. If you are proficient with alchemist's supplies or a poisoner's kit, you can make a dose of this poison with raw materials worth 250 gp and 1 hour of uninterrupted work.

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 8 hours. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency bonus. While poisoned in this way, a creature sheds bright green light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. Any attack roll against the poisoned creature has advantage if the attacker

RETURNING THE HOARD

If the characters wish to return the items the Jagged Edge Bandits stole to their rightful owners, the merchants who own the flour, salt, ginger, cloves, iron, saffron, and linen give the characters a reward equal to half the value of the items, or the full value of the items if the characters defeated Queen Bargnot. The owners of the magic items, poison recipe, silvered arrows, and coins were killed by the Jagged Edges, so the characters can keep those items for themselves.

can see them, and the affected creature can't benefit from being invisible or hide from creatures who can see.

Additionally, the creature leaves a glowing green trail whenever they move. The trail lasts until the creature is no longer poisoned.

MONOCLE OF SECRETS

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

While you wear this gold-rimmed monocle, you have advantage on ability checks made to find secret doors and traps.

Additionally, you can use an action while holding a mundane object to learn that object's exact value, the materials used to create it, and whether it is genuine or counterfeit.



Monocle
of Secrets

JAGGED EDGE HIDEAWAY STAT BLOCKS

The following stat blocks appear in the lair.

GOBLIN TACTICS

Goblins benefit from fighting in environments with features to climb on and hide behind, like trees and pillars. The Crafty trait means melee-focused goblins can run into combat, attack, then regroup with their allies. It also allows goblin minions to run past enemy warriors and surround their spellcasting foes to make use of their Tiny Stabs trait. Goblins who fight at range climb for better sightlines and defense.

If clearly losing a battle, goblins typically don't stick around and fight to the last warrior. Instead, they flee to untamed wilderness and tight tunnels, utilizing their natural agility to run and hide from threats. Goblins who escape with their lives take time to lick their wounds then gather more allies and rush back face the threat with fresh, overwhelming numbers.

Goblin
Assassin



GOBLIN ASSASSIN

CR 1/2 Ambusher

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Any Alignment

100 XP

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 16 (3d6 + 6)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus +2

Backstab. When the assassin has advantage on their attack roll against a creature who isn't a Construct or an Undead, their attacks deal an extra 3 (1d6) damage and inflict a bleeding wound on the target that lasts until the bleeding creature regains at least 1 hit point. A bleeding creature loses 2 hit points for each bleeding wound they have at the start of their turn. Any creature who can reach the target can use an action to staunch all the target's wounds, ending the effect.

Crafty. The assassin doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when they move out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Summon Shadows (1/Day). A 10-foot-radius sphere of magical darkness emanates from a point the assassin can see for 1 minute. The darkness spreads around corners. Except for the assassin, a creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and mundane light can't illuminate it. At the start of their turn, the assassin can move the darkness up to 30 feet to a point they can see (no action required). If the assassin takes damage, the effect ends.

BONUS ACTIONS

Sneak. The assassin takes the Hide action.

Strike first, strike hard, grab what you can, and then disappear into the shadows. If you can't find a shadow, don't worry. Morky will make one for you.

QUEEN BARGNOT

GOBLIN CURSESPITTER

CR 1 Controller

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Any Alignment

200 XP

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 27 (5d6 + 10)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +2

Skills Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus +2

Crafty. The cursespitter doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when they move out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Toxic Touch (Cantrip). *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute (save ends at end of turn).

Brittle Bone Hex (Cantrip). The cursespitter chooses one creature they can see within 60 feet of them. The target's bones are wracked with pain until the end of their next turn. The first time the target willingly moves or uses an action, a bonus action, or a reaction before then, they must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 9 (2d8) necrotic damage.

To Me! The cursespitter chooses up to two willing creatures they can see within 30 feet of them. Each creature is teleported to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the cursespitter.

Dizzying Hex (2/Day; 1st-Level Spell). The cursespitter chooses one creature they can see within 60 feet of them. The target must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target falls prone and can't stand back up for 1 minute (save ends at end of turn).

REACTIONS

Cowardly Commander. When a creature the cursespitter can see hits them with an attack, the cursespitter chooses a willing ally within 5 feet of them. The attack hits the ally instead.

GOBLIN LACKEY

CR 1/4 Minion

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Any Alignment

10 XP

Armor Class 14 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 6

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus +2

Crafty. The lackey doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when they move out of an enemy's reach.

Minion. If the lackey takes damage from an attack or as the result of a failed saving throw, their hit points are reduced to 0. If the lackey takes damage from another effect, they die if the damage equals or exceeds their hit point maximum; otherwise they take no damage.

Tiny Stabs. If an enemy starts their turn within 5 feet of three or more lackeys who can see them, the enemy must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 1 piercing damage for each lackey within 5 feet. The DC for this saving throw equals 10 + the number of lackeys within 5 feet of the enemy.

ACTIONS

Dagger (Group Attack). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.



Goblin Cursespitter

GOBLIN SNEAK

Retainer

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Any Alignment

Armor Class 15 (medium armor)

Hit Points Seven times their level (number of d8 Hit Dice equal to their level)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10(+0)	16(+3)	10(+0)	12(+1)	10(+0)	10(+0)

Saving Throws +PB to all

Skills Acrobatics +3 plus PB, Stealth +3 plus PB

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus (PB) equals the mentor's bonus

Signature Attack (Daggers). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 plus PB to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2d4 plus PB piercing damage. Beginning at 7th level, the sneak can make this attack twice, instead of once, when they take the Attack action on their turn.

FEATURES

3rd Level: Weaving Knives (3/Day). As an action, the sneak moves up to their speed without provoking opportunity attacks. Before, during, or after the move, they can make two signature attacks.

5th Level: Sneak and Stab (3/Day). As a bonus action, the sneak takes the Hide action. If the sneak hits a creature they are hidden from with an attack on the same turn, the creature takes an extra PBd10 piercing damage, and the sneak can immediately take the Hide action (no action required).

7th Level: Poisoned Blade (1/Day). As a bonus action, the sneak covers a dagger in a special poison, which lasts for 1 hour or until the sneak hits a creature with a signature attack. A creature hit with the poisoned dagger must make a DC 10 plus PB Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes PBd12 poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute (save ends at the end of turn). On a successful save, the target takes only half as much damage and isn't poisoned.

GOBLIN SNIPER

CR 1/2 Artillery

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Any Alignment

100 XP

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d6 + 3)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8(-1)	16(+3)	12(+1)	10(+0)	12(+1)	8(-1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus +2

Crafty. The sniper doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when they move out of an enemy's reach.

Sniper. If the sniper misses with a ranged weapon attack while they are hidden, they remain hidden. Additionally, if the sniper hits a target with a ranged weapon attack while they have advantage on the attack roll, the attack deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Sneak. The sniper takes the Hide action.

Goblin Sniper



GOBLIN SPINECLEAVER

CR 1 Brute

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Any Alignment

200 XP

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d6 + 12)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +4

Skills Athletics +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus +2

Crafty. The spinecleaver doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when they move out of an enemy's reach.

Strong Grip. Wielding a heavy weapon doesn't impose disadvantage on the spinecleaver's attack rolls.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Tricksy Warrior. When a creature within 5 feet of the spinecleaver misses them with an attack, the spinecleaver can make a melee attack against the creature with disadvantage.

GOBLIN UNDERBOSS

CR 2 Support

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Any Alignment

450 XP

Armor Class 17 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +3

Skills Insight +3, Intimidation +2, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus +2

Crafty. The boss doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when they move out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The boss makes two Shortsword attacks or two Shortbow attacks. They can replace one attack with a use of Command.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Command. The boss chooses one ally they can see within 30 feet of them. If the target can hear the boss, the target can use their reaction to move up to their speed or make one weapon attack.

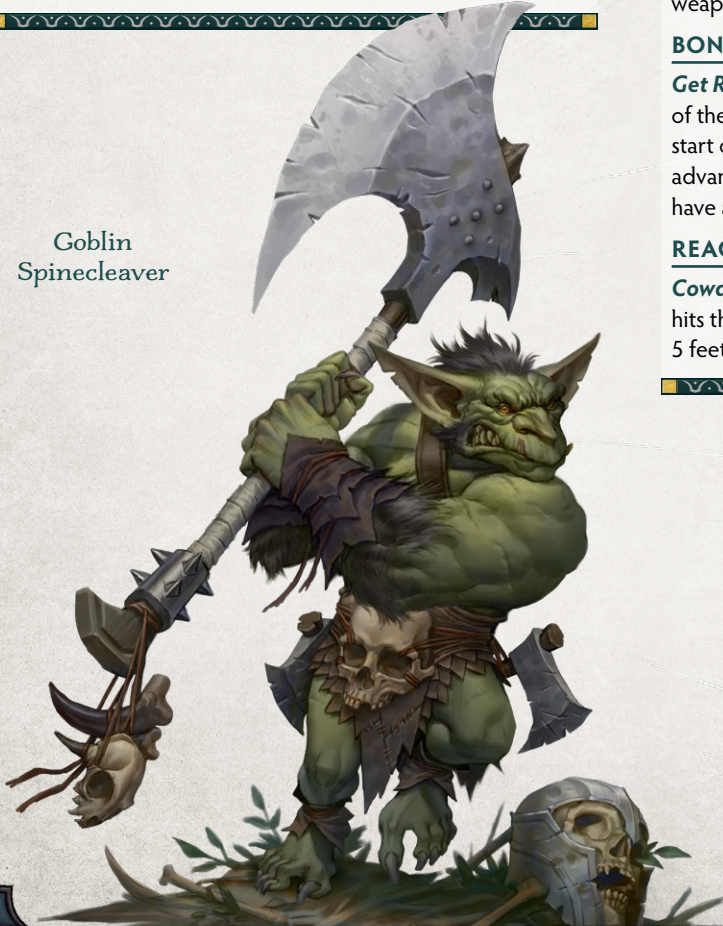
BONUS ACTIONS

Get Reckless (Recharge 6). Each willing ally within 30 feet of the boss who can hear them becomes reckless until the start of the boss's next turn. While reckless, a creature has advantage on attack rolls, and attack rolls against the creature have advantage.

REACTIONS

Cowardly Commander. When a creature the boss can see hits them with an attack, the boss chooses a willing ally within 5 feet of them. The attack hits the ally instead.

Goblin
Spinecleaver



GOBLIN WARRIOR

CR 1/4 Skirmisher

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Any Alignment

50 XP

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus +2

Crafty. The warrior doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when they move out of an enemy's reach.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Fleet Foot. When a creature within 5 feet of the warrior misses them with a melee attack, the warrior can move up to half their speed.

SWARM OF SKITTERLINGS

CR 2 Soldier

Medium Swarm of Tiny Beasts, Unaligned

450 XP

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, dazed, frightened,

grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages —

Proficiency Bonus +2

In Your Face. While the swarm occupies an enemy's space, that creature has disadvantage on attack rolls made against any target other than the swarm and takes 3 (1d6) slashing damage if they attack a creature other than the swarm.

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 skitterling. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) slashing damage, or 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the swarm has half of their hit points or fewer. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the start of their next turn. Creatures who are immune to poison damage or the poisoned condition succeed on this saving throw automatically.

Skitterling



SKITTERLING

A six-legged, winged rodent the size of a housecat, a skitterling moves their clawed feet as they fly, appearing to scurry through the air. Goblins train these pets to claw at the faces of enemies, as their feet secrete a toxin that causes temporary blindness.

Skitterlings make excellent little guardians, but they leave quite the mess. Make sure they're fed. If not, you'll become the next mess they make.

QUEEN BARGNOT

QUEEN BARGNOT

Small Humanoid (Goblin), Neutral Evil

CR 3 Leader

700 XP

Armor Class 17 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 54 (12d6 + 12)

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +3

Skills Insight +3, Intimidation +3, Perception +3, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Goblin

Proficiency Bonus +2

Crafty. Queen Bargnot doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when she moves out of an enemy's reach.

Take My Pain (3/Day). When Queen Bargnot fails a saving throw against a spell or other supernatural effect, she can choose a willing creature within 30 feet of her. Queen Bargnot succeeds on the saving throw, the creature is targeted with the same spell or effect as if they were in her space, and they fail their saving throw automatically.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Queen Bargnot makes three Shortsword attacks or two Shortbow attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Get In Here. Queen Bargnot shouts for aid and 1d4 **goblin lackeys** appear in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of her.

REACTIONS

No Dying! When an ally Queen Bargnot can see within 30 feet of her is reduced to 0 hit points, they are reduced to 1 hit point instead.

VILLAIN ACTIONS

Queen Bargnot has three villain actions. She can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy's turn. She can take these actions in any order but can use only one per round.

Action 1: What Are You Waiting For?! Each ally within 60 feet of Queen Bargnot who can hear her can move up to their speed or make a melee weapon attack (no action required).

Action 2: Focus Fire. Queen Bargnot chooses an enemy she can see with 60 feet of her. Queen Bargnot and each ally within 60 feet of her who can hear her can move up to their speed toward the target.

Action 3: Kill! Each ally within 60 feet of Queen Bargnot who can hear her can make a weapon attack with advantage (no action required). If the attack hits, it deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage.



SWARM OF SPIDERS

CR 1/2 Controller

Medium Swarm of Tiny Beasts, Unaligned

100 XP

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, dazed, flanked, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Proficiency Bonus +2

Spider Climb. The swarm can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

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 spider. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Web Walker. The swarm ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage, or 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage if the swarm has half their hit points or fewer.

Too Many Legs. The swarm mobs a creature in their space and attaches to them. When the swarm takes damage other than psychic damage, the attached creature also takes half as much damage. The attached creature has disadvantage on attacks against creatures other than the swarm, and attacks against the attached creature have advantage.

While attached, the swarm can't attack another target. The attached creature or another creature who can reach them can shake off the swarm and detach them as an action. The swarm can detach by spending 5 feet of their movement.

WAR SPIDER

CR 3 Brute

Huge Beast, Unaligned

700 XP

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 73 (7d12 + 28)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Proficiency Bonus +2

Baby Burst. When the spider dies, a **swarm of spiders** bursts forth from their remains and acts on the same initiative count as the spider did.

Rider Launcher. An allied rider who jumps off the spider has a long jump of 30 feet and a high jump of 15 feet, with or without a running start. If an allied rider jumps off the spider, the first melee weapon attack the ally makes on the same turn has advantage.

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Wide Back. Two Small or Tiny creatures can share a space while riding the spider, allowing up to eighteen Small or seventy-two Tiny creatures to ride the spider at once.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Bladed Leg. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Web Spray. The spider sprays webbing from their abdomen in a 15-foot cube. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained by the webbing. A creature can use their action to make a DC 14 Strength or Dexterity check, freeing themselves or another creature they can reach on a success.

Trample (Recharge 6). The spider can move up to their speed and move through the spaces of other creatures as if they were difficult terrain. The spider can make one Bladed Leg attack against each creature whose space they move into during the move. A creature hit by this attack can't take reactions until the start of their next turn.

TERMINAL EXCRESCENCE

Optimized for Five 12th-Level Characters

CONTENT WARNING: BODY HORROR AND EUGENICS

The Terminal Excrement contains many visceral scenes of body horror. Be sure to check in with your players and establish the use of safety tools before running this lair.

Voiceless talkers are evil sapient beings who engage in reprehensible and irredeemable acts of eugenics. While you can create exceptional synlirii who fight against such philosophies and practices, the voiceless talkers who participate in genetic experiments are unquestionably evil.

Chief Design Architect of his nation's body banks, the synlirii Lord Syuul (see-YOU-ull) seeks more material for his experiments. His spies, informants, and allies are always on the lookout for subjects with unique hereditary traits the Interlace might extract.

Lord Syuul, who belongs to an ancient and respected noble house, never leaves his estate without a retinue of guards and minions. They obey his orders fanatically—as Syuul has ensured they're biologically incapable of refusing to do so.

Syuul's recent experiments have focused on isolating the trait that expresses sorcerous ability in humanoid. Thus far, these attempts have been unsuccessful. Not to be deterred, Lord Syuul has placed his assistant in charge of the day-to-day operations of the body banks, while Syuul himself ventures forth to observe the surface world and plunder its diversity.

In his vile laboratory known as the Terminal Excrement, Lord Syuul performs terrible procedures on all manner of creatures. This lab-fortress was originally made from the vessel Syuul used to travel to the Mundane World, but over the years, leftover flesh from discarded experiments has grown over the lab and much of the massive cavern it inhabits. The Terminal Excrement is suspended 100 feet below the cavern's ceiling and 200 feet above the floor via web-like cords of neoplastic flesh. From the outside, the lab looks like a distended orb of pulsing meat hanging over a bilious lake of its own drippings.

TERMINAL EXCREMENT STORY HOOKS

You can use one of the following story hooks to integrate this lair into an adventure:

Missing Orcs. Berak Mahul, an elderly orc wizard, contacts the characters to find and rescue two of his vassals who recently went missing: Gosha and Gorar (see areas S2 and S3). The pair were last seen venturing to the depths of the World Below. The characters can trace the orcs back to the Terminal Excrement. If they

bring back Gosha and Gorar, Berak gives the characters a *carpet of flying*.

New Flesh. A humanoid cult believes that Lord Syuul's grotesque experiments will lead to the perfect form. Its members travel to the World Below and willingly undergo his fatal procedures. Following the trail of these misguided fanatics leads the characters to the Terminal Excrement.

Twin Vessel. An otherworldly vessel of the same make as the one that creates Syuul's laboratory crashed in a valley near the characters. The vessel has autonomously started to replicate some of Lord Syuul's experiments, producing mutated aberrations that threaten to overrun the region. Investigating the vessel reveals a map that can be followed to the location of the Terminal Excrement. The local leaders offer the characters 30,000 gp to find this second ship and destroy it.

VOICELESS TALKERS

Among the most powerful psions in the timescape, synlirii (singular: synlirii) are known as the "voiceless talkers" to the denizens of the World Below—and to surface dwellers unfortunate enough to encounter them. Descended from boneless aquatic cephalopods, they are alien in thought and motivation to the humanoid species they loathe. Synlirii consider the "barking ones" (their label for creatures who squeeze air through meat flaps to communicate) to be an abomination that must be corrected.

Synlirii breed mollusks that secrete plastic-like substances, using them to fashion weapons and similar technology powered by psionic crystals. The voiceless talkers' handheld psi-pistols and portable psi-rifles can be used only by their alien minds.

Synlirii are obsessed with manipulating the natural development of other organisms. They create hulking brains, mindkillers, and other servants using a psionic technique they call the Interlace. Many synlirii experiments don't live long and aren't intended to. But the World Below is littered with unnatural creatures who escaped the voiceless talkers' body banks—most of them singular life forms that can't reproduce and may never die.

TERMINAL EXCREMENT FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, each area of the Terminal Excrement has the following features:

Ceilings. The ceilings in the fortress are 15 feet high.

Extension of Will. Countless eyes—humanoid and not—line this structure's fleshy walls. Syuul is psionically connected to the eyes via the cerebral processor in the experimentation chamber (area S3). While connected,

he can see through these eyes and his own at the same time.

Flesh Fortress. The fortress's walls, floors, ceilings, and other surfaces are covered with a mass of muscle, skin, teeth, and bones. This pulsing organic matter flinches if touched.

Illumination. Inside the fortress (in areas S2 and S3), chitinous growths on the walls and ceilings contain bioluminescent globules suspended in a clear liquid. These fill the interior of the fortress with dim light.

WORTH MORE ALIVE

Powerful heroes are much more useful to Syuul alive than dead. His forces prioritize submission over destruction. Defeated adventurers are placed within the stasis pods in cold storage (area S2) to await their inevitable vivisection.

Syuul's servants are unerringly loyal and fight to the death. Interrogating them yields no information.

RESTING IN THE TERMINAL EXCRESCENCE

Provided the characters first deal with any enemies in an area, they can take a short or long rest in any area without incident. At the GM's discretion, Lord Syuul can confront characters who rest in the cold storage (area S2) before they find him in the experimentation chamber (area S3).

ENTERING THE TERMINAL EXCRESCENCE

A vast, winding tunnel network in the World Below leads to dozens of outcroppings in the upper levels of a massive cavern with a 150-foot diameter and a 300-foot-high ceiling.

Flight of the Navigators. Two flying patrols, each consisting of a **voiceless talker artilleryist** and ten **mindkiller whelps**, make circles through the cavern. The characters must succeed on a DC 17 group Dexterity (Stealth) check to get to the fortress without one of the patrols noticing. On a failed check, one patrol spots the characters and attacks; if the party doesn't defeat that patrol within two rounds, the second patrol arrives at the start of the third round and joins the fray.

Neoplastic Webbing. A precarious webbing of sinewy bridges and fleshy knotted cords extends from the cavern's tunnels to the Terminal Excrescence's exterior (area S1). The 10-foot-wide bridges have very little cover, and creatures on them have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. If a creature instead tries to reach the lab by climbing the web of narrow cords, they have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks but must also succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to cross. A creature who fails this Strength (Athletics) check by 5 or more falls into the lake of rot, taking damage from the fall as normal. A creature who fails by less than 5 is unable to cross but safely slides back to the cavern's tunnels.

Lake of Rot. A 15-foot-deep lake of blood, bile, and worse drips from the Terminal Excrescence, covering

the floor of the cavern 200 feet below the fortress. Non-Aberration creatures who start their turn touching the lake must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. While poisoned in this way, a creature's speed is halved as their limbs become rubbery and difficult to move.

A living **amalgam** of flesh (a giant gibbering moulder) floats in the lake and attacks non-Aberration creatures who enter.

TERMINAL EXCRESCENCE AREAS

The following areas correspond to the Body Ball Map, the Cold Storage Map, and the Experimentation Chamber Map on pages 22, 24, and 26.

S1. BODY BALL

The exterior of the suspended laboratory is a gruesome flat-topped orb. This area has the following features:

- "Flesh bridges and cords meld seamlessly into the massive structure they're suspending—an orb of wet muscle and bulbous flesh. Across its surface, incomplete faces scream soundlessly and impossibly twisted limbs extend outward, offering grim handholds as a way up the pulsating mass."
- "Atop the orb, several figures stand guard, backlit by a dim purple light. A hulking mass of muscle patrols in a circle around the source of the light. Around them, two tentacled horrors and two bone-clawed brains watch the cavern for intruders."

Flesh Bridges and Cords. For information about the bridges and cords, see "Neoplastic Webbing" in the "Entering the Terminal Excrescence" section. The bridges and cords intersect the body ball halfway up its side, just below the Horrid Climb.

Horrid Climb. A 25-foot-wide ring of steep difficult terrain circles the body ball. Creatures who access the ball via the bridges or cords must climb this incline to reach the lab entrance.

Lab Entrance. The top of the body ball is flattened and easy to traverse. At the center of its 35-foot radius lies the psionic egress—the sole entrance to the lab.

Guards. The psionic egress is guarded by two **voiceless talkers**, two **mindkillers**, and a **hulking brain**. If one of the voiceless talkers is killed, the other retreats to the cold storage (area S2) to continue the fight.

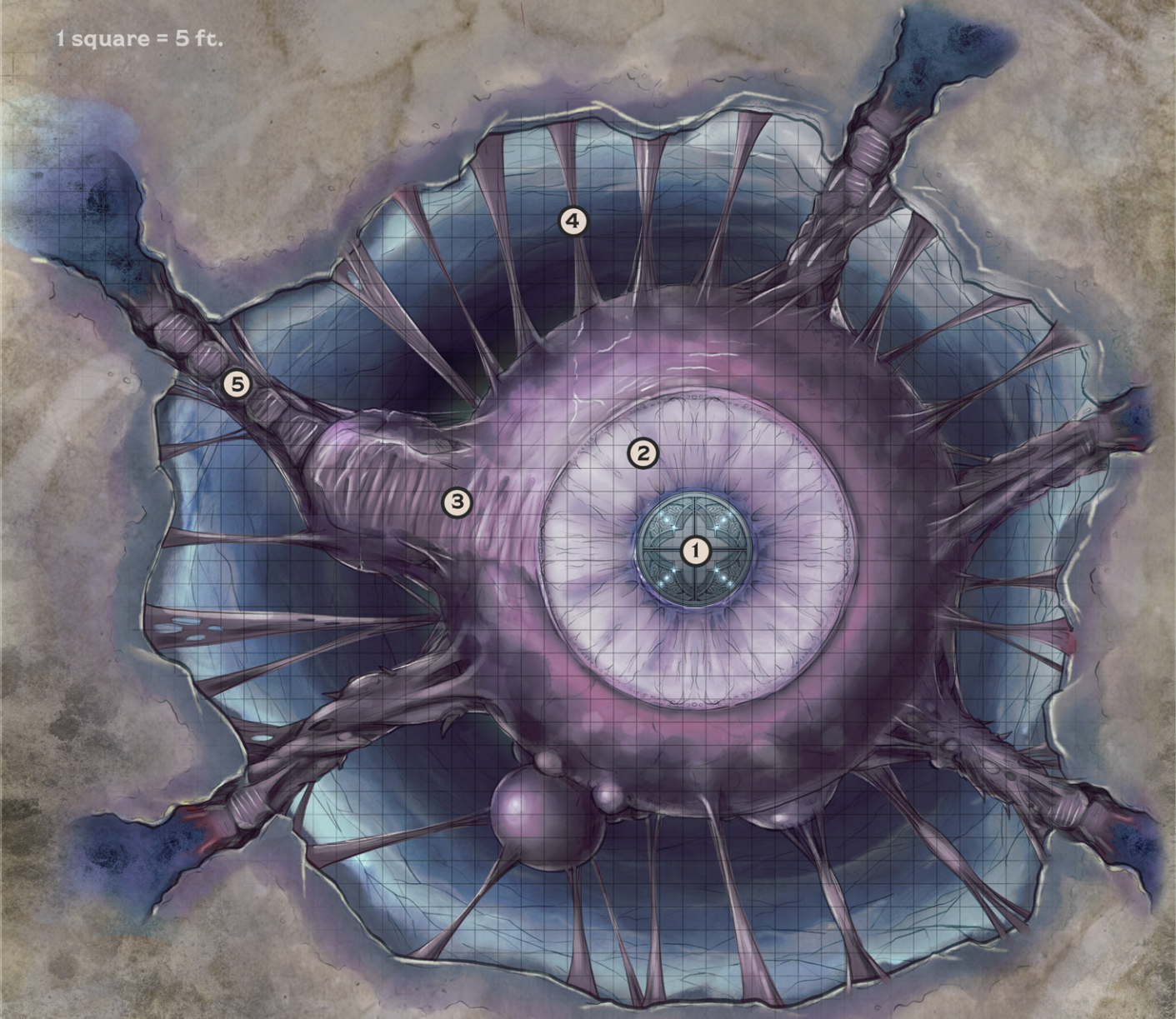
Psionic Egress. The cold storage (area S2) can be entered via the psionic egress atop the body ball. This 20-foot diameter, 25-foot-deep cylinder contains a semi-solid membrane of transparent psionic gel, which sheds bright purple light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet.

Creatures who can manifest a psionic power can move through the egress, including up or down, at normal speed. The egress is difficult terrain for other creatures. A creature who looks down through the egress can see Humanoid shapes dangling from the ceiling of a large chamber below.



S1. BODY BALL MAP

1 square = 5 ft.



1. Psionic egress
2. Lab entrance
3. Horrid climb
4. Neoplasmic webbing cord
5. Neoplasmic webbing bridge

S2. COLD STORAGE

What once was a hibernation chamber for long-distance travel now resembles a butcher's meat locker. Lord Syuul stores his future experiments here while they await their grisly fate in the experimentation chamber (area S3). This area has the following features:

- “In this frigid chamber, breath curls up in white wisps and a sheen of frost clings to everything.”
- “Gnarled hooks made of extruded bones and teeth dangle from the ceiling. Each hook suspends a mutilated humanoid or monstrous corpse.”
- “Along the north wall, half of a troll hangs over a footlocker made of flesh.”
- “Meaty growths have overtaken every surface, partially burying ten coffin-like metal pods that circle this chamber.”
- “At the south end of the chamber, a huge metal plate protrudes from the fleshy floor. In the middle of this square platform, an embedded 10-foot purple crystal hums with energy.”
- **(Secret)** Mindkillers hide behind the stasis pods and among the hanging bodies.
- **(Secret)** An unconscious orc is trapped in a stasis pod.

Cold Storage. Each creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour they spend in this area or gain a level of exhaustion. Aberrations, creatures who are resistant or immune to cold damage, and creatures wearing cold weather gear automatically succeed on this saving throw.

Mindkillers. Three **mindkillers** and ten **mindkiller whelps** hide until all the characters emerge from the psionic egress before attacking. A character notices the hidden mindkillers with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. If noticed, the mindkillers immediately attack.

Half a Troll. The **troll** hanging above the footlocker has 0 hit points remaining but is still alive, thanks both to their Relentless Hunger trait and Syuul's experimentation. The troll is immune to cold damage and loyal to the voiceless talkers. They remain motionless until a character gets within 5 feet of the footlocker, then the troll attacks. If the troll regains any hit points, they regrow the bottom half of the body, break free of their bonds, and fight to the death.

Footlocker. Beneath the troll's body, this membranous, fleshy chest contains two dungeoneering packs and equipment belonging to Gosha (see “Stasis Pods”) and Gorar (see area S3).

Stasis Pods. Ten stasis pods encircle the chamber: nine pods are empty with clear windows, and one humming pod has a foggy window but is clearly occupied. On the occupied pod, a small console displays in Undercommon, “Use this console to open without killing subject.” A creature can open the pod by using an action to make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a successful check, the pod opens without killing the creature inside. On a failed check, the pod opens but the creature inside is dead. A creature who can read Undercommon automatically succeeds on this check by following the console's prompts.

If the occupied pod is opened, it hisses and white mist shoots out of its sides, revealing an unconscious, mucus-covered **orc blacksmith** named Gosha. A character can use an action to wake her. Gosha was captured with her brother, Gorar, when they were in the World Below looking for rare ores for smithing. If her brother is not with the party, she tells them with panic that Lord Syuul is probably experimenting on him in area S3 (see “Gorar”), and she eagerly joins the characters if offered a chance to fight Syuul.

Transporter Pad. A character who is proficient in Arcana or who spends 1 minute studying the metal plate knows what the transporter pad is and how it works. At the start of each round, any object or willing creature on the pad is teleported to the transporter pad in the experimentation chamber (area S3), and vice versa.

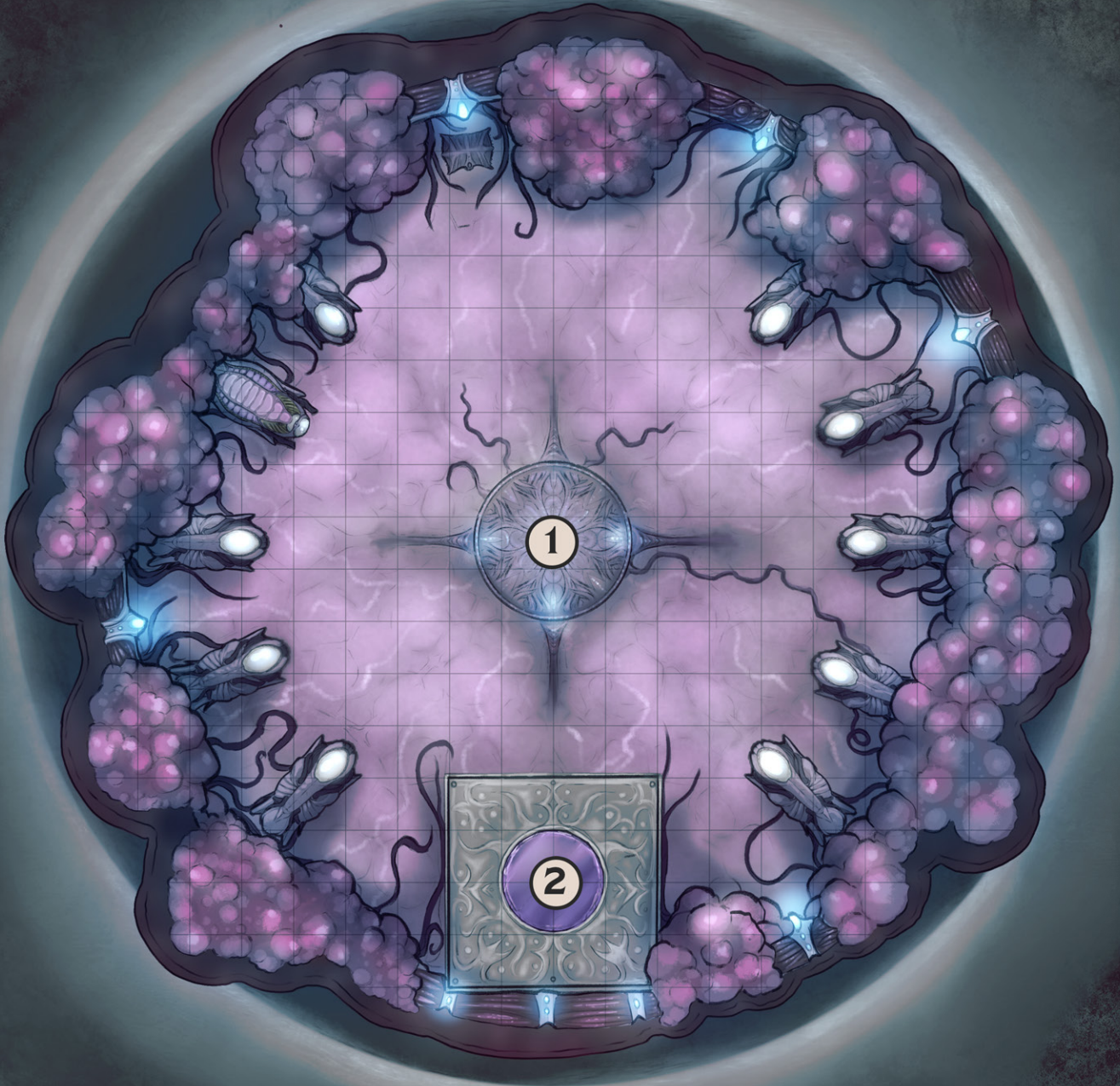
Mindkiller





S2. COLD STORAGE MAP

1 square = 5 ft.



- 1. Psionic egress
- 2. Transporter pad

CONTENT WARNING: EXTREME BODY HORROR

The enucleator in the experimentation chamber (area S3), restructures a creature's body while the subject is still alive. If you or anyone in your group doesn't like such descriptions, the enucleator can instead magically scan and enchant creatures to give them magical features rather than rearranging or adding to their body parts. You should double check with a player before their character enters the enucleator to get a body modification. Make sure the character is undergoing a change their player enthusiastically embraces.

S3. EXPERIMENTATION CHAMBER

In this inner laboratory, Syuul vivisects living bodies to create new and horrifying amalgamations. This area has the following features:

- “Dim blue, pink, and purple light illuminates this vast chamber that smells of blood. Two enormous square mouths filled with mismatched teeth protrude from the east and west walls.”
- “Statues of fused humanoid bodies form two rows in the middle of the room.”
- “On the north side of the room, an enormous device made of flesh contains a translucent vat of viscous liquid.”
- “A voiceless talker gazes into the vat in front of him. He wears a massive crown, and gold jewelry adorns his face. He touches two metallic orbs that protrude from the floor on rods, manipulating the contents of the vat.”
- “Inside the vat, the body parts of a dissected—but still living—orc float within a clear liquid. The orc's nervous system, musculature, and skeleton are all visible as his isolated eyes dart in terror.”
- “Lodged in the center of the chamber's ceiling, a 15-foot-diameter mass of brain matter pulsates slowly.”
- “Three chests made of flesh stand on the east wall.”

Lord Syuul. Using a psionic device called the enucleator, **Lord Syuul** works to isolate the biological origins of sorcery within an orc subject (see “Gorar”). He likely saw the characters approach through the eyes on the walls and ceilings of the fortress (see “Terminal Excrescence Features”), and it's nearly impossible to surprise him.

Syuul isn't particularly angry with the characters for overcoming his guards. In fact, he thinks any spellcasters or psionic talents among them would be excellent subjects for his experiments. Assuming they decline his offer to volunteer as subjects, Syuul attacks. He begins by using his Wall of Flesh lair action (see the “Lair Actions” sidebar) to divide the party, and he uses his Grappling Jaunt bonus action to place his foes within 5 feet of the excremus. If defeat is imminent, Syuul attempts to flee.

Enucleator. This horrifying device can reconfigure a living creature's entire bodily structure, pulling their organs apart so they can be picked through or recombined with

LAIR ACTIONS

When fighting inside the Terminal Excrescence, Lord Syuul can command the living fortress around him. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the cerebral processor whirs and Syuul takes one of the following lair actions; he can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row:

Excremus March. Both excremus mouths can each move up to 30 feet along the wall in directions of Syuul's choice.

Screaming Protection. Psionic projections of fleshy mouths cover Lord Syuul and scream at his aggressors. When a creature within 5 feet of Lord Syuul hits him with a melee attack, the attacker must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 13 (3d8) thunder damage. The mouths disappear at the end of initiative count 20 on the next round.

Wall of Flesh. Syuul creates a wall of flesh that extends in a straight line between two points he can see on the chamber walls. The wall stretches from floor to ceiling and is 5 feet thick. Each 5-foot cube of wall has AC 10 and 20 hit points.

something else. The lid of the enucleator's 10-foot-deep tank is open, revealing an orc's disassembled body floating inside a psionic liquid (see “Gorar”). A creature who can manifest a psionic power or who is proficient in Arcana can touch the metal orbs of the enucleator and spend 1 minute splicing or putting back together a creature inside the enucleator tank. A creature spliced by the enucleator is stunned, but the psionic liquid in the tank keeps them alive. If a spliced creature is removed from the tank before being reassembled, they die.

On both sides of the enucleator, a mass of clear psionic gel rises in a column from floor to ceiling. The gel suspends and preserves organs, limbs, monstrous appendages, and unrecognizable viscera.

The enucleator can also be used to make body modifications (see “Lord Syuul's Hoard”).

Excremus. Two 15-foot-wide square mouths with rows of mismatched teeth protrude from the walls on the east and west sides of the room. Their starting locations are shown on the map, but Lord Syuul can use his Excremus March lair action to move both mouths.

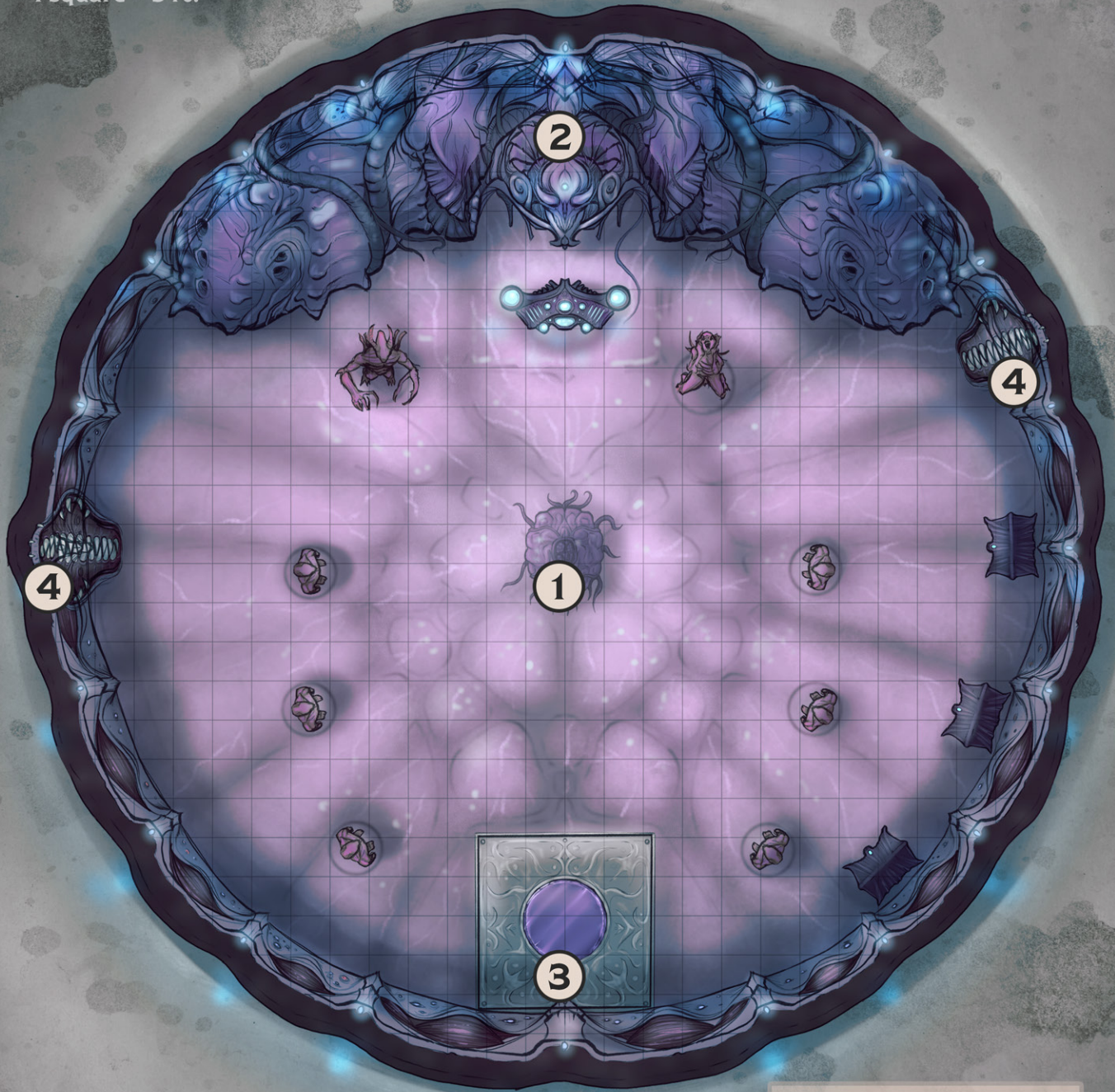
When a creature starts their turn within 5 feet of a mouth, the creature must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (2d12) piercing damage and be swallowed by the excremus. While swallowed, a creature disappears into the excremus stomach cavity where they are blinded and restrained, have total cover against attacks and effects outside the cavity, and take 22 (4d10) acid damage at the start of each of their turns.

Each mouth has AC 10 and 50 hit points. If destroyed, that mouth can no longer swallow creatures, though any creatures already swallowed remain in the stomach.



S3. EXPERIMENTATION CHAMBER MAP

1 square = 5 ft.



- 1. Cerebral processor
- 2. Eucleator
- 3. Transporter pad
- 4. Excremus mouth starting locations

A creature inside the stomach can attack it. The stomach has AC 10, and if it takes 20 or more damage on a turn, it relaxes until the end of that turn. A swallowed creature can exit the relaxed stomach on their turn (no action required), landing prone in an unoccupied space of their choice within 5 feet of either excrement mouth. If Syuul dies or leaves the fortress, the excrement stops functioning and the stomach relaxes.

Cerebral Processor. The cerebral processor is a mass of brain matter on the ceiling that connects Syuul's mind to the fortress. The processor has 15 AC and 60 hit points. If it is destroyed, Lord Syuul can no longer see through the fortress's eyes (see "Terminal Excrescence Features") or use lair actions.

Chests. These chests contain Syuul's hoard. See "Lord Syuul's Hoard" for more information.

Transporter Pad. A character who is proficient in the Arcana skill or who spends 1 minute studying the metal plate knows what the transporter pad is and how it works. At the start of each round, any object or willing creature on the pad is teleported to the transporter pad in the cold storage (area S2), and vice versa.

Gorar. The orc in the enucleator is Gorar, an **orc conduit**. If he's reassembled and rescued, he thanks the characters. If his sister Gosha is not with the party, he expresses hope they can save her from area S2 (see "Stasis Pods"). If Gosha and Gorar are both saved, Gosha offers to join the party as a retainer while Gorar goes back home.

LORD SYUUL'S HOARD

Lord Syuul's hoard is stored in three fleshy, chitinous pods—one holding currency, one for collectibles, and one for magic items. All the items float in the quivering gel inside the pods.

The hoard contains the following items:

- *Kinesthetic projection* (see below)
- *Robe of eyes* made of an unidentified creature's flesh
- *Rope of climbing* with fleshy fibers
- *Potion of flying*
- *Potion of superior healing*
- *Power crystal of fold space*
- *Power crystal of gravitational collapse*
- *Power crystal of psychic projection*
- Vial of *oil of etherealness*
- 10 pieces of gold jewelry, each fashioned to wear on a voiceless talker's tentacles (worth 60 gp each)
- 90 ingots of metal from an alien plane of existence (worth 100 gp each)
- 10 fleshwork statuettes (worth 300 gp each)
- Ornate fleshwork box with a collection of copper coins from across the planes (worth 500 gp)
- 1 diamond (worth 1,000 gp)
- Pouch of ruby dust (worth 3,500 gp)
- 9,000 sp, 6,000 gp, and 450 pp

ENUCLEATOR MODIFICATIONS

Lord Syuul's psionic enucleator can be used to modify the body of any creature inside its tank. The device must be operated by another creature who can manifest a psionic power or who has proficiency in Arcana. To complete a body modification, the subject must remain inside the tank while the operator touches the metal orbs outside the enucleator for 1 hour. If this work is interrupted, the creature in the tank takes 55 (10d10) necrotic damage; they remain unmodified unless the process is started over.

In Lord Syuul's absence, the enucleator has enough energy stored to make three modifications. Each creature can only have their body modified by the enucleator once. The creature operating the enucleator chooses one of the following permanent modifications to apply to the creature in the tank:

Bone Spikes. Bony protrusions sprout from the creature's skin. The creature gains a +1 bonus to the attack and damage rolls of unarmed strikes and natural weapon attacks.

Chromatophores. The creature's skin gains the camouflaging qualities of a squid. As an action, the creature can make themselves invisible for 10 minutes or until they attack, cast a spell, or manifest a power. Once they become invisible in this way, they can't do so again until they finish a long rest.

Redundant Organs. The creature gains an extra heart, liver, spleen, or other essential organ, granting them advantage on death saving throws.

Relentless Toughness. The creature is infused with troll essence. If they are reduced to 0 hit points by damage other than acid or fire damage, they are reduced to 1 hit point instead. Once this effect is triggered, the creature can't benefit from this modification again until they finish a long rest.

Tentacle Arms. One or more of the creature's arms are replaced with tentacles. The creature's reach is extended by 5 feet.

KINESTHETIC PROJECTION

Weapon (Shortsword), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

Many warriors claim the sword they wield is an extension of themselves—an allegory at best. But this shortsword, forged from viscera, bone, and shattered psyches, makes the statement literal. The sword's bony blade narrows into a handle, wrapped in fleshy tendrils.

Curse. When you attune to this shortsword, it fuses to your hand, stitching your bones to the handle and binding your flesh to the sinewy wraps. You can't let go of the sword or use your fused hand to hold another object. This effect ends and the sword detaches if you are targeted by a *cure ailment* power or *remove curse* spell.

While attached to your hand, whether you remain attuned to the sword or not, you have violent nightmares

whenever you close your eyes, and you take 1d6 psychic damage whenever you finish a short or long rest.

Kinesthetic Projection. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this shortsword, and it deals an extra 1d6 psychic damage on a hit.

Visceral Reach. As a bonus action, you can spend 2 Hit Dice to extend this weapon's reach by 10 feet for 1 minute. Additionally, for the duration, you can use an action to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 30 feet of you. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 25 feet directly toward you.

POWER CRYSTALS?

The power crystals are psionic items found in *The Talent and Psionics*. If you're not using the rules in that MCDM supplement, replace the power crystals with *spell scrolls* containing the following spells: *globe of invulnerability*, *phantasmal killer*, and *wall of force*.

Kinesthetic
Projection



TERMINAL EXCRESCENCE STAT BLOCKS

The following stat blocks appear in the lair.

AMALGAM

CR 5 Controller

Gargantuan Aberration, Typically Chaotic Neutral 1,800 XP

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 189 (14d20 + 42)

Speed 10 ft., fly 10 ft. (hover), swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Con +6

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages speaks all languages but doesn't understand any

Proficiency Bonus +3

Immutable Form. The amalgam is immune to any power, spell, or effect that would alter their form.

Lake Rebirth. If destroyed, the amalgam reforms in the Lake of Rot 24 hours later with all their hit points.

Primordial Influence. A dazed enemy who starts their turn within 20 feet of the amalgam must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, that creature's body is altered in an otherworldly way of the GM's choice—they might flicker in and out of reality, sprout miniature fingers from their fingers, or have their physical form altered in a similarly alien way. This alteration doesn't affect the creature's game statistics. A *cure ailment* power of 4th order or higher, a *greater restoration* spell, or a similar supernatural effect reverses this alteration.

While altered in this way, a creature must repeat the saving throw whenever they finish a long rest. On a failed save, their previous alteration worsens or they experience another chaotic alteration of the GM's choice. If a creature fails this saving throw three times after their initial alteration, they transform into an amalgam controlled by the GM, and only a *wish* spell can restore the creature to their original form.

Viscous Vicinity. The amalgam envelops their surroundings in their shifting reality. The area within 20 feet of them is difficult terrain for other creatures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The amalgam makes two Reality Rend attacks. They can replace one attack with a use of Pull.

Reality Rend. *Melee Power Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be dazed until the start of the amalgam's next turn.

Pull. The amalgam warps reality around up to three creatures they can see within 60 feet of them. Each target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 30 feet directly toward the amalgam.

HULKING BRAIN

Large Aberration, Typically Lawful Evil

CR 7 Brute

2,900 XP

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +3

Psionic Immunity. The hulking brain is unaffected by psionic powers manifested by voiceless talkers unless the brain wishes to be.

Psychic Scream. When the brain drops to 0 hit points, each creature within 30 feet of them must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brain makes three Bash attacks.

Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on saving throws against psionic powers. The brain can grapple up to four creatures at once.

Squeeze. Each creature grappled by the brain must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

BONUS ACTIONS

Psionic Invigoration (1/Day). Each willing voiceless talker within 60 feet of the brain regains the use of one psionic power of the voiceless talker's choice, and the voiceless talker has advantage on attack rolls until the end of the brain's next turn.



HULKING BRAIN

The voiceless talkers have engineered pearlescent-skinned, humanoid-shaped aberrations with four massive arms and—in place of a head—a large pulsing brain. Called *thylinça* by voiceless talkers and hulking brains by everyone else, these creatures serve as bodyguards and psionic batteries for their *synlirii* creators.



LORD SYUUL

Medium Aberration, Lawful Evil

CR 15 Solo

13,000 XP

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 221 (26d8 + 104)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15(+2)	16(+3)	18(+4)	22(+6)	20(+5)	21(+5)

Saving Throws Con +9, Int +11, Wis +10

Skills Arcana +16, Deception +10, Insight +10, Perception +10, Persuasion +10, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances bludgeoning

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +5

Draw In. If Lord Syuul fails a saving throw while grappling at least one enemy, he can choose to release all grappled creatures and succeed on the saving throw instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lord Syuul makes two Tentacle or two Psionic Repeater attacks then manifests a power or uses Memory Transfer.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) psychic damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, they are grappled (escape DC 19).

Psionic Repeater. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) force damage.

Brain Overload (1/Day; 6th-Order Power). Lord Syuul creates a sudden surge of energy in the mind of a creature he can see within 120 feet of him. The target must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 77 (14d10) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the target has a brain and is reduced to 0 hit points, their brain explodes, and if they can't survive without their brain, they die.

Flay (6th-Order Power). Lord Syuul shoots a 15-foot cone of psionic energy from his eyes. Each creature in that area must make a DC 19 Intelligence saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Memory Transfer. Lord Syuul psionically plunders the mind of each creature he is grappling. Each target must succeed on a DC 19 Intelligence saving throw or take 44 (8d10) psychic damage. If a target fails their saving throw and doesn't escape the grapple by the end of their next turn, they must choose one of these effects:

- The target's proficiency bonus drops to 0, they can't form new thoughts or speak, and they have disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. Only the *cure ailment* power, a *lesser restoration* spell, or a similar supernatural effect can end this effect. Additionally, until Lord

Syuul finishes a long rest, he gains a cumulative +5 bonus to damage rolls.

- The target is charmed by Lord Syuul for 1 hour. While the target is charmed, Lord Syuul can issue the target telepathic commands (no action required), which the target does their best to obey. Each time the target takes damage, they can make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Guise (3rd-Order Power). Lord Syuul projects a psionic image over his body, transforming his appearance for 1 hour into that of a Medium creature he has seen. When he manifests this power, he can also change the appearance of any equipment he carries.

The changes wrought by this power fail to hold up to physical inspection. A creature can use an action to inspect Lord Syuul's appearance and make a DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) check, noticing the image is a projection on a success.

BONUS ACTIONS

Grappling Jaunt. Lord Syuul and each creature grappled by him teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

REACTIONS

Brain Drain. When a creature grappled by Lord Syuul makes a saving throw against Memory Transfer, Lord Syuul momentarily weakens the creature and the creature has disadvantage on the saving throw.

VILLAIN ACTIONS

Lord Syuul has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy's turn. He can take these actions in any order but can use only one per round.

Action 1: Mindblind. Each enemy Lord Syuul can see within 60 feet of him must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature can't see creatures other than Lord Syuul for 1 minute (save ends at end of turn).

Action 2: Was I Ever Here? Lord Syuul becomes invisible, teleports 60 feet to an unoccupied space he can see, and can take the Hide action. At the same time, an illusory psionic image of Lord Syuul appears in the space he left, gesturing, speaking, and behaving as he chooses (no action required). A creature who touches the image for the first time on a turn or makes a melee attack against it must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 21 (6d6) psychic damage because things can pass through it. Lord Syuul's invisibility ends and his image disappears at the end of his next turn.

Action 3: Mindshatter. Each enemy Lord Syuul can see within 60 feet of him must make a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 55 (10d10) psychic damage and is dazed for 1 minute (save ends at end of turn). On a successful save, a target takes half as much damage and isn't dazed.

MINDKILLER

CR 2 Ambusher

Small Aberration, Typically Lawful Evil

450 XP

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 45 (10d6 + 10)

Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14(+2)	15(+2)	12(+1)	16(+3)	15(+2)	14(+2)

Skills Deception +4, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +2

Amorphous. The mindkiller can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Psionic Immunity. The mindkiller is unaffected by psionic powers manifested by voiceless talkers unless the mindkiller wishes to be.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) psychic damage, and if the target is a Medium or smaller creature, they are grappled (escape DC 12).

Concealing Strike. *Ranged Power Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (3d6 + 3) psychic damage, and the mindkiller is invisible to the target until the end of the mindkiller's next turn.

Mindwipe. A Humanoid grappled by the mindkiller must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or the mindkiller enters the Humanoid's body. While inside a Humanoid, the mindkiller has total cover against attacks and other effects originating outside the Humanoid, and the only action the mindkiller can take is to leave the body, exiting in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body.

When a Humanoid ends their turn with the mindkiller inside of them, they must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 10 necrotic damage. If the Humanoid is reduced to 0 hit points, they die and the mindkiller takes over the body, which regains hit points equal to the Humanoid's hit point maximum. The mindkiller retains their Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, their understanding of Deep Speech and Undercommon, and their telepathy. They otherwise adopt the target's statistics and can take the actions the creature could take. They know everything the creature knew, including spells, class features, traits, and languages. If the body is reduced to 0 hit points after the mindkiller takes control, the mindkiller must leave it.

A creature wielding a sharp tool or weapon within reach of a Humanoid host or body with a mindkiller inside can use an action to attempt to remove the mindkiller, making an attack roll against the Humanoid's AC if the host is unwilling. On a hit, the creature deals 11 (2d10) slashing damage to the host and must make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a successful check, the creature cuts the mindkiller out of the host. On a failed check, if this slashing damage reduced the host to 0 hit points, the mindkiller kills the host; otherwise, there is no effect.

MINDKILLER WHELP

CR 2 Minion

Small Aberration, Typically Lawful Evil

90 XP

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 9

Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10(+0)	14(+2)	11(+0)	14(+2)	12(+1)	12(+1)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +2

Amorphous. The whelp can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Minion. If the whelp takes damage from an attack or as the result of a failed saving throw, their hit points are reduced to 0. If the whelp takes damage from another effect, they die if the damage equals or exceeds their hit point maximum; otherwise they take no damage.

Psionic Immunity. The whelp is unaffected by psionic powers manifested by voiceless talkers unless the whelp wishes to be.

Resistance Drain. When an enemy within 5 feet of three or more whelps makes a saving throw against a power or psionic effect, the enemy takes a penalty to the save equal to the number of whelps within 5 feet of them.

ACTIONS

Claws (Group Attack). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 slashing damage.

ORC BLACKSMITH

Retainer

Medium Humanoid (Orc), Any Alignment

Armor Class 15 (medium armor)

Hit Points Eight times their level (number of d10 Hit Dice equal to their level)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16(+3)	10(+0)	12(+1)	10(+0)	12(+1)	12(+1)

Saving Throws +PB to all

Skills Athletics +3 plus PB, Perception +1 plus PB

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11 plus PB

Languages Common, Orc

Proficiency Bonus (PB) equals the mentor's bonus

Signature Attack (Warhammer). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 plus PB to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d10 plus PB

bludgeoning damage. Beginning at 7th level, the blacksmith can make this attack twice, instead of once, when they take the Attack action on their turn.

FEATURES

3rd Level: Relentless Rush (3/Day). When the blacksmith isn't incapacitated and they take damage but aren't killed outright, they can make an attack against an enemy (no action required) before the hit point reduction is resolved. If the attack hits, the blacksmith regains twice their PB hit points.

5th Level: Reinforce Armor (3/Day). As a bonus action, the blacksmith touches a piece of armor and fortifies it. For the next 10 minutes, a creature wearing the armor gains a bonus to their AC equal to half the blacksmith's PB.

7th Level: Fortify Weapon (3/Day). As a bonus action, the blacksmith touches a weapon and polishes it. For 1 minute, the weapon is magical and deals an extra PB damage.

ORC CONDUIT

CR 1 Artillery

Medium Humanoid (Orc), Any Alignment

200 XP

Armor Class 13 (studded leather)

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14(+2)	12(+1)	16(+3)	10(+0)	12(+1)	16(+3)

Skills Perception +3

Damage Resistances determined by the conduit's Affinity trait

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Orc

Proficiency Bonus +2

Affinity. The conduit has a lifelong affinity for one of the following damage types: cold, fire, or lightning. The chosen type determines the conduit's damage resistance and the damage of their Elemental Discharge and Power Burst actions.

Relentless (1/Turn). When the conduit isn't incapacitated and they are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright,

they can make an attack against an enemy (no action required) before the hit point reduction is resolved. If the attack hits and its damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the conduit drops to 1 hit point instead of 0 hit points.

ACTIONS

Elemental Discharge (Cantrip). *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) damage of the type determined by the conduit's Affinity trait.

Power Burst (2/Day; 1st-Level Spell). The conduit unleashes explosive energy in a 15-foot cone. The ground in that area becomes difficult terrain, and each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 10 (3d6) damage of the type determined by the conduit's Affinity trait, and they are pushed 10 feet away from the conduit. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.

BONUS ACTIONS

Rush. The conduit takes the Dash action.

But where does your magic come from? The humors—your very lifeblood? Perhaps it is deep within your marrow. Bones are such curious things. We must dissect again and again—every piece smaller than the last—until we arrive at the truth. Your contributions to this experiment could change everything.

LORD SYUUL

TROLL

CR 5 Brute

Large Giant, Typically Chaotic Evil

1,800 XP

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 94 (9d10 + 45)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18(+4)	13(+1)	20(+5)	7(-2)	9(-1)	7(-2)

Saving Throws Con +8

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Giant

Proficiency Bonus +3

Relentless Hunger. When the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by any damage other than acid or fire damage, they don't die or fall unconscious, and can continue moving and taking actions as usual. The troll only dies if they end their turn with 0 hit points, if acid or fire damage reduces them to 0 hit points, or if they take acid or fire damage while they have 0 hit points.

Sluggish. For 1 hour after sleep or another period of unconsciousness, the troll's speed is halved and they can't use Multiattack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The troll makes one Bite attack and two Claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is not a Construct, an Elemental, or a Plant, the troll regains hit points equal to the damage dealt. If this attack reduces the target to 0 hit points, the troll regains twice as many hit points as they otherwise would with this attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Crash Through. The troll moves up to their speed in a straight line, smashing through mundane obstacles in their path. The troll can enter the spaces of Large or smaller creatures during this movement, forcing those creatures to make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage and falls prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and doesn't fall prone.

During this move, mundane objects that aren't worn or carried by a creature take 14 (4d6) damage when the troll enters their space. If the troll moves into the space of a Large or larger object and this damage doesn't destroy it, the troll's movement stops and they are stunned until the end of their next turn.

REACTIONS

Spiteful Retort. When the troll is reduced to 0 hit points and doesn't die, they can make a Bite attack against a creature within 5 feet of them.

MUTATED TROLLS

At the GM's discretion, a troll can mutate after consuming the flesh of an alien, powerful, or supernaturally created creature, gaining some of their prey's damage immunities and resistances, traits, or actions. For instance, a troll who devours a blue dragon might gain the creature's immunity to lightning damage and Lightning Breath action. Be aware this can significantly increase the difficulty trolls present in combat—especially if their mutations deal more damage than normal or grant immunity to acid or fire damage.

You could have the troll in cold storage (area S2) take on the features of another creature as a result of the troll's diet or Lord Syuul's experiments. To give the troll some psionic flavor, add the hulking brain's Psychic Scream trait or the Flay action of a voiceless talker.



VOICELESS TALKER

CR 7 Controller

Medium Aberration, Typically Lawful Evil

2,900 XP

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10(+0)	16(+3)	14(+2)	19(+4)	15(+2)	14(+2)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +5, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +5, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +3

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The voiceless talker manifests a power and makes one Tentacle or Psionic Pistol attack.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, they are grappled (escape DC 15).

Psionic Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) force damage.

***Memory Thief (4th-Order Power).** The voiceless talker psionically plunders the mind of a creature they can see within 30 feet of them. The target must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 22 (4d10) psychic damage, and until they finish a long rest or die, their proficiency bonus is cumulatively lowered by 1 and the voiceless talker gains a cumulative +2 bonus to damage rolls. On a successful save, a target takes half as much damage and doesn't have their proficiency bonus reduced.

A creature whose proficiency bonus drops to 0 can't form new thoughts or speak, and they have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws.

Flay (3/Day; 5th-Order Power). The voiceless talker shoots forth a 15-foot cone of pure psionic energy. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Guise (3rd-Order Power). The voiceless talker projects a psionic image over their body, transforming their appearance for 1 hour into that of a Medium creature they have seen. When they manifest this power, they can also change the appearance of any equipment they carry for the duration.

The changes wrought by this power fail to hold up to physical inspection. A creature can use an action to inspect the voiceless talker's appearance and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, noticing the image is a projection on a success.

REACTIONS

Brain Drain. When a creature grappled by the voiceless talker makes a saving throw against one of the voiceless talker's powers, the voiceless talker momentarily weakens the creature and the creature has disadvantage on the saving throw.



PSI-TECH

While most psi-tech weapons can be used only by voiceless talkers, a character using the talent class (from the MCDM supplement *The Talent and Psionics*) can use these weapons by gaining 1 strain each time they make an attack with one. A creature using a psi-tech ranged weapon uses Intelligence instead of Dexterity for attack and damage rolls.

VOICELESS TALKER ARTILLERIST

CR 10 Artillery
5,900 XP

Medium Aberration, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12(+1)	16(+3)	16(+3)	21(+5)	17(+3)	16(+3)

Saving Throws Con +7, Int +9, Wis +7

Skills Arcana +9, Deception +7, Insight +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +7, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

Proficiency Bonus +4

Phasing Rifle (1/Turn). When the artillerist hits a target with their Psionic Rifle attack, the artillerist can attempt to teleport the target (no action required). The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be teleported to an unoccupied space the artillerist can see within 60 feet of the artillerist.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The artillerist makes two Psionic Rifle attacks, or they manifest a power and make one Phasing Tentacles attack.

Psionic Rifle. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) force damage.

Phasing Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) psychic damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, the artillerist can choose one of the following effects: the target is grappled (escape DC 17) or

teleported up to 15 feet to an unoccupied space the artillerist can see.

***Memory Thief (5th-Order Power).** The artillerist psionically plunders the mind of a creature they can see within 30 feet of them. The target must make a DC 17 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 33 (6d10) psychic damage, and until they finish a long rest or die, their proficiency bonus is lowered by 1 and the artillerist gains a cumulative +2 bonus to damage rolls. On a successful save, a target takes half as much damage and doesn't have their proficiency bonus reduced.

A creature whose proficiency bonus drops to 0 can't form new thoughts or speak, and they have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws.

Guise (3rd-Order Power). The artillerist projects a psionic image over their body, transforming their appearance for 1 hour into that of a Medium creature they have seen. When they manifest this power, they can also change the appearance of any equipment they carry for the duration.

The changes wrought by this power fail to hold up to physical inspection. A creature can use an action to inspect the artillerist's appearance and make a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check, noticing the image is a projection on a success.

BONUS ACTIONS

***Vanish for One (3/Day; 3rd-Order Power; Concentration).**

The artillerist cloaks themselves from the sight of a creature the artillerist can see within 60 feet of them. The creature must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or the artillerist becomes invisible to the creature for 1 minute (save ends at end of turn). This effect ends early if the artillerist attacks the creature, deals damage to them, or creates an effect that forces them to make a saving throw.

NEW RULES AND STYLES

THE CREATURES IN THIS BOOK GENERALLY FOLLOW THE CORE rules, but we've made a few tweaks. These new rules and presentation styles are designed to make combat encounters easier to run, more fun, and more memorable.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

The effects in this book sometimes target just allies or enemies. A creature is your **ally** if they're inclined to help you or fight alongside you—or if you believe they're inclined to do so. However, you are not your own ally, so if you target your allies with an effect, it doesn't affect you. A creature is your **enemy** if they're inclined to oppose you or fight against you—or if you either believe they're inclined to do so, or you plan to pick a fight with them regardless. If in doubt, it's up to the GM to decide whether a creature counts as an ally, an enemy, or neither.

CHALLENGE RATING

Each creature's stat block lists their challenge rating in the top right corner. The more obvious placement of the challenge rating makes it easier to find stat blocks and build encounters to challenge your players.

CONDITIONS

Some of the creatures in this book inflict—or are immune to—the following new conditions.

DAZED

A **dazed** creature can only do one of the following things on their turn: move, use an action, or use a bonus action. If a creature becomes dazed during their turn, their turn ends. The *cure ailment* power, *lesser restoration* spell, and *greater restoration* spell remove the dazed condition. At the GM's discretion, other powers, spells, or effects might also remove the dazed condition.

When a dazed creature is affected by a spell or effect that gives them an extra action on their turn (like the *haste* spell or the fighter's Action Surge feature), they can still take this extra action, in addition to the movement, action, or bonus action allowed by the dazed condition.

Some creatures in this book have immunity to the dazed condition. At the GM's discretion, a creature published in the core rules or another supplement who has immunity to the paralyzed or stunned condition also has immunity to the dazed condition.

FLANKED

If your game uses the optional flanking rules in the core rules, a creature who is immune to the **flanked** condition can't be flanked regardless of the position of their enemies.

CREATURE ROLES

Each creature has a role listed next to their challenge rating. Roles are descriptive and most don't follow special rules—they simply help you build encounters and use the creature effectively in combat.

AMBUSER

Ambusers are creatures who hide well—not just before an encounter, but during it. They utilize surprise and stealth to gain the upper hand.

ARTILLERY

Artillery creatures fight best from afar. Whether they wield arrows or magical rays, these creatures always try to keep a distance from their foes.

BRUTE

Brutes are hardy creatures who have lots of hit points and deal lots of damage. They might not be the most disciplined warriors, but they make up for it with sheer toughness and aggression.

COMPANION

Companion creatures are meant to accompany player characters on adventures. For more information, see the “Companion Creatures” section.

CONTROLLER

Controllers debuff, move, and obstruct their enemies. They often have crowd-control actions that apply a debilitating effect or target multiple creatures at once.

LEADER

A leader is an action-oriented creature who fights alongside underlings. For more information, see the “Action-Oriented Creatures” section.

MINION

Minions are weak creatures who find strength in numbers. For more information, see the “Minions” section.

RETAINER

Retainers are sapient beings meant to accompany player characters on adventures. For more information, see the “Retainers” section.

SKIRMISHER

Skirmishers are mobile warriors who use hit-and-run tactics in combat. Their traits allow them to make the most of their position.

SOLDIER

Soldiers are well-armored creatures who draw the attacks of their foes, freeing allies to move around the battlefield. These trained warriors typically have higher attack bonuses and AC.

SOLO

A solo creature is an action-oriented creature who can take on the player characters on their own. For more information, see the “Action-Oriented Creatures” section.

SUPPORT

Support creatures aid their allies, providing buffs, healing, movement, or action options.

MUNDANE AND SUPERNATURAL

This book uses the term **mundane** to refer to attacks, items, and other effects that aren’t magical or psionic.

On the other hand, the term **supernatural** describes an effect or item that is either magical or psionic. For instance, a creature’s stat block might say they’re resistant to “bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from mundane attacks.” This means that when you deal them bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage using a spell, power, magic weapon, or psionic weapon, the damage is supernatural and thus the creature isn’t resistant to it.

PRONOUNS

The core rules often use the singular pronoun “it” to refer to a single creature. This book instead uses the singular “they” to clearly delineate between creatures and objects. Objects still use “it” as a singular pronoun.

PSIONIC POWERS

Some creatures have psionic **powers**, creating effects with sheer force of will instead of with magic. When a creature manifests a power, they create an effect that has similar rules to casting spells, with the following exceptions.

NOT MAGIC

Powers don’t create magical effects, so they’re unaffected by features and spells like *antimagic field*, *counterspell*, and *dispel magic*. The damage from a power attack isn’t magical.

If a rule affects only spells or magical effects, it doesn’t affect powers. However, psionic powers are supernatural, so if a rule affects supernatural effects, it does affect powers (see “Mundane and Supernatural”).

POWER ORDERS

Every power has an **order** that is an expression of its level of strength. Powers of the 1st order are the weakest (equivalent to cantrips in strength), and 6th-order powers are the strongest.

If a stat block feature should be considered a power, its order is noted in parentheses.

NO COMPONENTS

Powers don’t have material, somatic, or verbal components.

CONCENTRATION

Like spells, many powers require you to concentrate to maintain their effects. However, unlike spells, a creature can simultaneously concentrate on more than one power, up to a number equal to their proficiency bonus. If a creature fails a Constitution saving throw to maintain concentration, all the powers they are concentrating on end.

A creature can’t have multiple manifestations of the same power active at once. Additionally, a creature can’t concentrate on a power if they’re concentrating on a spell or other effect.

If a stat block power requires concentration, this is noted in parentheses.

MANIFESTING MULTIPLE POWERS

Unlike player characters, if a creature’s stat block allows them to manifest a power as a bonus action, they can still manifest another power of 2nd order or higher as an action on that turn. For example, a creature who manifests the *jaunt* power as a bonus action can also make a 2nd-order power attack as an action. Similarly, many Multiattack actions let a creature make multiple power attacks on a turn, even though each attack is a power of its own.

POWER ATTACKS AS OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

When an enemy’s movement provokes an opportunity attack from a creature whose stat block includes a melee power attack, the creature can use their reaction to make a melee power attack against the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack.

NEW POWERS

A character playing a talent—the class found in the MCDM supplement *The Talent and Psionics*—can use the rules in that book to learn new powers from the creatures in *Where Evil Lives*. Powers that aren’t in *The Talent and Psionics* are indicated in a creature’s stat block with an asterisk (*) and provided in the “New Psionic Powers” chapter of this book.

SAVE ENDS EFFECTS

Some creatures have a trait or action that, on a failed saving throw, imposes a debilitating effect for an extended duration. But sometimes a lucky foe can retry their saving throw and potentially end the effect early. In such situations, the stat block specifies “save ends at start of turn” or “save ends at end of turn.”

When you see this phrase, it means any creature affected by a **save ends effect** like this can repeat the saving throw on each of their turns, ending the effect on themselves early on a success. They can only make that saving throw either at the start or end of their turn, as specified in the stat block.

Here is an example of an attack with a save ends effect from the **goblin cursespitter** stat block:

Toxic Touch (Cantrip). *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute (save ends at end of turn).

BEHIND THE DESIGN: SAVE ENDS EFFECTS

Save ends effects are one way of saving space in stat blocks and making them less complex for GMs to run at the table. Much like how stat blocks just reference the poisoned condition instead of spelling its rules out each time, we didn't want to fill up the pages by repeating long sentences similar to this one: “A target poisoned in this way can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on themselves on a success.”



SPELLS

Some creatures have magical actions, bonus actions, and reactions. When these features should be considered spells (for the purpose of *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, and similar effects), the spell level is noted in parentheses. If the spell requires concentration, this is also noted in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, these spells have somatic and verbal components.

CASTING MULTIPLE SPELLS

Unlike player characters, if a creature's stat block allows them to cast a spell as a bonus action, they can still cast another spell of 1st level or higher as an action on that turn. For example, a creature who casts the *misty step* spell as a bonus action can also make a 2nd-level spell attack as an action. Similarly, many Multiattack actions let a creature make multiple spell attacks on a turn, even though each attack is a spell of its own.

SPELL ATTACKS AS OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

When an enemy's movement provokes an opportunity attack from a creature whose stat block includes a melee spell attack, the creature can use their reaction to make a melee spell attack against the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack.

UTILITY SPELLS

In addition to combat-focused spells, some creatures can cast spells that are primarily used outside of combat. To streamline the stat blocks, these spells aren't written out in the creature's combat-oriented “Actions” section. Instead, their names are listed in a separate “Utility Spells” section at the end of the stat block. After each spell name, the casting time is indicated in superscript, as shown in the Casting Times table.

CASTING TIMES

Superscript	Casting Time
A	1 action
B	1 bonus action
R	1 reaction
+	Longer than 1 action (see spell description)

For example, a spellcaster's utility spells might appear as follows:

1/day each: *expeditious retreat*^B, *mage armor*^A, *phantom steed*⁺

ACTION-ORIENTED CREATURES

The solo and leader creatures presented in this book are designed to be bosses: enemies who can take on an entire party by themselves or with a handful of underlings. Rather than simply increasing the challenge rating (an approach that often leads to underwhelming encounters), this book introduces **action-oriented creatures**.

A powerful villain needs plenty of opportunities to act and move when it's not their turn. Thus, each action-oriented creature has at least one special bonus action and reaction, as well as a special section with villain actions that let them dominate the battlefield.

These actions make the boss creatures dynamic and formidable. Whether fought as an exciting solo challenge or alongside a few easy-to-run underlings, action-oriented creatures challenge the characters with dramatic and powerful actions in combat.

VILLAIN ACTIONS

Every action-oriented creature has three **villain actions** they can use after an enemy's turn. Villain actions are similar to legendary actions with the following exceptions:

- A creature can use only one villain action per round (as such, villain actions tend to be more powerful than legendary actions).
- Each villain action can only be used once during a combat encounter.

Like legendary actions, a creature can't use villain actions if incapacitated or otherwise unable to take actions.

CHOOSING VILLAIN ACTIONS

Each trio of villain actions has a recommended round order. These abilities give the battle a logical flow and a cinematic arc:

- The first villain action is an opener, which shows the characters they're not battling a typical creature. Openers generally deal some damage, summon a lackey or three, buff the boss, debuff the characters, or move the creature into an advantageous position. They're just a taste of what's to come.
- The second villain action provides crowd control. It typically fires after the heroes have had a chance to respond once or twice, get into position, and surround the villain. This second action helps the villain regain the upper hand. Like an opener, this action comes in many flavors, but it's even more powerful than an opener.
- The third and final villain action is an ultimate move or "ult"—a showstopper the villain can use to deal a devastating blow to the characters before the end of the battle.

While every creature has a recommended order of actions, you can take villain actions in any order if it makes your fight more dramatic. You could push back a villain action if a creature is stunned or might stay alive for more than three rounds, or you could perform the recommended third action in round two after several surprise critical hits!

UNIQUE CREATURES

All of the action-oriented creatures in this book are unique. They have a specific name and backstory, though you can ignore these if you wish to use the creature's stat block in another way in your campaign. For instance, Queen Bargnot's stat block could be used for any action-oriented goblin in your game.



RETAINERS

Retainers are sapient beings who adventure alongside the player characters. Each retainer is a less experienced adventurer who a player character can take under their wing. Retainers are never meant to achieve the same power level as the player characters.

Rules for retainers first appeared in *Strongholds & Followers*. This book contains updated rules for these followers.

MENTOR

Every retainer has a player character **mentor**. A retainer's mentor gives them orders, and the mentor's player also controls the retainer. A retainer acts on the same initiative count as their mentor in combat, acting immediately before or after the mentor (player's choice). As a mentor gains experience and levels up, so does their retainer (see "Statistics" below).

STATISTICS

Retainers are designed to be easy to run so their player (who is already managing a complex character) doesn't get overwhelmed with even more details. Each retainer has a simple stat block—though these are similar to other creature stat blocks, retainers follow a few different rules.

LEVEL

A retainer's level equals their mentor's level. As a retainer levels up, their hit points increase (see "Hit Points and Hit Dice") and they gain combat features (see "Features"). Additionally, a few of their statistics increase when their mentor's proficiency bonus does, including attack bonuses, skills, and save DC (see "Proficiency Bonus"). Their other statistics typically remain the same regardless of their level.

ARMOR CLASS

Unlike player characters, a retainer's armor class isn't determined by a particular set of armor they don (like studded leather). Instead, each retainer's armor class is simplified to one of three armor types:

- Retainers with light armor have AC 13.
- Retainers with medium armor have AC 15.
- Retainers with heavy armor have AC 18.

HIT POINTS AND HIT DICE

Retainers gain one Hit Die per level. Their hit point maximum is based on the size of their Hit Die, as shown on the Retainer Hit Points table.

Retainers have exceptionally high hit points—sometimes even higher than their mentor. This allows the party to enjoy the presence of a beloved retainer without worrying about losing them to an unlucky roll of the dice or decision by a single player. The GM often awards characters with retainers in lieu of other treasure. Such rewards shouldn't be lost easily.

RETAINER HIT POINTS

Hit Die Size	Hit Point Maximum
d6	6 times their level
d8	7 times their level
d10	8 times their level
d12	9 times their level

PROFICIENCY BONUS

Because a retainer's effectiveness and survivability depend on the training and expertise of their mentor, a retainer's proficiency bonus is equal to their mentor's proficiency bonus.

Some of a retainer's statistics refer to their proficiency bonus, abbreviated as **PB**. Other statistics use a number of dice equal to a retainer's proficiency bonus; these are expressed with **PB** in place of the number of dice. For example, if a retainer has a +3 proficiency bonus, **PBd10** means 3d10.

A retainer adds their proficiency bonus to any saving throw they make.

FEATURES

Each retainer has a **signature attack** they can make using the Attack action each round. Retainers can use their signature attack to make opportunity attacks, even if their signature attack isn't a melee weapon attack.

A retainer gains new features at 3rd, 5th, and 7th level. Some features can only be used a certain number of times per day (as noted in the retainer's stat block).

Additionally, if a retainer's signature attack is a weapon attack, they typically gain an extra attack at 7th level (as noted in their stat block), allowing them to make two signature attacks per round instead of one.

GEAR

When a retainer joins the party, they typically carry clothes appropriate to their position, a suit of armor, a weapon, and an explorer's pack. If the retainer casts spells, they also carry a spellcasting implement. Any additional equipment must be provided to them by their mentor.

Magic Items. Retainers can use magic items like anyone else. For example, a *+1 weapon* increases their attack and damage rolls by 1, and *+1 armor* of the appropriate type (light, medium, or heavy) increases their AC by 1.

One happy side effect of having retainers is that as a player character levels up and acquires better equipment, they can pass their obsolete items on to the retainer.

DYING RETAINERS

When a retainer is reduced to 0 hit points, they follow the same rules as player characters. If not killed instantly by massive damage, they fall unconscious, make death saving throws, and can be stabilized or healed.

OPTIONAL RULE: SHARED ATTACKS

If a player wants to speed up their retainer's turn, they can make **shared attacks** at the GM's discretion.

When the mentor hits a creature with an attack, if their retainer can see or hear them, the retainer is inspired by their mentor's success. On the inspired retainer's next turn, for each successful attack their mentor just made, the retainer can automatically hit a creature of their choice within range with their signature attack, up to the number of attacks the retainer can make.

If the mentor hit with fewer attacks than the number of attacks the retainer can make, the retainer can make additional attack rolls for those attacks to see if they hit.

RETAINER ENCOUNTER BALANCE

When building encounters, the GM should consider a retainer as akin to a powerful combat-focused magic item. A retainer gives a party a significant power boost; they not only dish out more damage and provide more hit points for enemies to target, but they also create complications to challenge the party's foes. GMs can increase encounter difficulty by one step (from easy to medium, hard to deadly, and so forth) to properly challenge a group of characters with a retainer.

MINIONS

A **minion** is a weak foe, designed to allow GMs to create dramatic combat encounters with hordes of enemies without overwhelming the characters. In fact, an encounter with minions makes characters feel heroic, since they can take on a myriad of foes and live to tell the tale.

However, minions still make threatening foes. Killing a minion still requires penetrating their defenses, and characters can't just shrug off damage from minion attacks.

So how do minions make running a horde of enemies quick and easy for the GM?

- Minions are simple to run. Their stat blocks are small and uncomplicated.
- Minions act quickly. They don't multiattack, roll for damage, or take unique bonus actions or reactions, so their turns aren't long.
- Minions die fast. A character can kill several minions with a single weapon attack!
- Minions have strength in numbers. Their attacks can be grouped together to make them deadlier and faster to use at the table.

NO HIT DICE

Minions have hit points but no Hit Dice, simplifying their design. Minions can't spend Hit Dice to heal during a short rest because they have none.

NO DAMAGE ROLLS

Minions don't roll for damage because their attacks deal a static amount of damage. They also can't score critical hits.

SHARED TURNS

Typically, all minions of the same stat block act on the same turn. Since they share a turn, the minions can each move into position then each use an action if they wish, instead of each moving and taking an action individually.

MINION TRAIT

Every minion has the Minion trait, which affects the creature in the following ways:

- If the minion takes any damage from an attack or as the result of a failed saving throw, their hit points are reduced to 0.
- If the minion takes damage from another effect, they die if the damage equals or exceeds their hit point maximum; otherwise they take no damage.

OVERKILL ATTACKS

Powerful weapon attacks can kill more than one minion in a single maneuver called an **overkill attack**.

As already discussed, a weapon attack requires only 1 point of damage to reduce a minion to 0 hit points, regardless of their hit point maximum. However, when a weapon attack's damage does exceed the target minion's hit point maximum, the attack becomes an overkill attack and the damage dealt beyond the minion's hit point maximum becomes **overkill damage**.

Overkill damage can be applied to a second minion who has the same stat block as the target and is in overkill range (see below). Damage against the second minion is counted as if you made a weapon attack against them; since it only takes 1 point of weapon damage to reduce a minion to 0 hit points, *any* amount of overkill damage immediately knocks them out. But wait, it gets better—if the initial attack's overkill damage exceeds the second minion's hit point maximum, the leftover overkill damage can roll over to a third minion, and so on! In other words, for each time the overkill damage exceeds the new target's hit point maximum, the attacker can choose an additional minion to reduce to 0 hit points.

For example, when a weapon attack deals 18 damage to a minion with a hit point maximum of 5, the overkill damage is 13. If there are three additional minions of the same stat block in overkill range, they can all three be immediately reduced to 0 hit points, since the overkill damage exceeded the target's hit point maximum more than twice over.

Overkill attacks can't be made as part of an opportunity attack.

OVERKILL RANGE

Minions must be within a certain range to qualify for an overkill attack, determined by whether the attack is a melee or ranged attack. In addition to the examples below, the "Overkill Damage Illustrated" sidebar demonstrates how to calculate overkill damage

Melee Overkill Attacks. When a creature hits a minion with a melee weapon attack, other minions within reach of the attack are in **overkill range** and can be chosen as additional targets for an overkill attack. The overkill attack can't target minions outside the weapon attack's reach.

Lady Ulnock the paladin battles a horde of goblin minions (each with 6 hit points). She hits a goblin minion with her longsword and uses Divine Smite, dealing 8 slashing damage and 11 radiant damage to the target for a total of 19 damage. Since Lady Ulnock dealt 13 points of overkill damage—more than the hit point maximum of two additional minions—she can choose up to three additional goblin minions within 5 feet of her (the reach of her longsword attack) and reduce them to 0 hit points. If there are no other goblin minions within 5 feet of Lady Ulnock, she can't damage additional minions with this attack.

Ranged Overkill Attacks. When a creature hits a minion with a ranged weapon attack, other minions in a line originating from the creature in the direction of the target, to a distance equal to the weapon's short range, are in **overkill range** and can be chosen as additional targets for an overkill attack. The overkill attack can't target minions outside the line or beyond the weapon's short range.

Perigold Quickfingers the rogue is hidden and takes aim at a group of zombie minions (each with 6 hit points) with his light crossbow (which has a short range of 80 feet). He hits a zombie minion with his crossbow, dealing extra damage thanks to his Sneak Attack, for a total of 14 damage. Since Perigold dealt 8 points of overkill damage—more than the hit point maximum of one additional minion—he can choose up to two additional zombie minions in an 80-foot-long line extending from Perigold in the direction of the target, reducing them to 0 hit points. If there are no other zombie minions in the line, then Perigold can't damage other minions with this attack.

Outnumbered? Switch to area-of-effect powers. Otherwise you're gonna have a bad day, which will probably last the rest of your life.

THE SUN,
SENIOR PYROKINETIC,
THE SOCIETY



BEHIND THE DESIGN: MINION TRAIT

You might ask, why not just give minions 1 hit point and take no damage when they save for half, like in fourth edition? First, spells that use a creature's hit points to determine effectiveness—like *color spray* and *sleep*—would devastate all minions, even those meant to challenge high-level characters. These spells are still effective against minions, just not devastating!

Second, spells and effects that deal damage without any attack roll or save—like *magic missile* and *spike growth*—would lay waste to minions with 1 hit point. This fits the fiction for minions with low challenge ratings, like goblins and zombies. But the balance of combat and fiction breaks down to near-silliness at higher levels when the same spells easily take down powerful devil minions.

Finally, high-level spells with a save for half damage—like *fireball* or *meteor swarm*—would feel wasted against minions with 1 hit point. Why use a higher-level spell when a lower-level one will do? Similarly, the fourth edition design could lead to a kobold minion illogically surviving a *fireball* spell while a "stronger" standard kobold next to them dies, despite both creatures succeeding on their saving throw. By contrast, under this book's minion rules, spellcasters still have a good reason to use high-level spells against minions.

GROUP ATTACKS

Each minion has at least one **group attack** action that speeds up play. In a group attack, two to five minions of the same stat block who share a turn can all use their action to join the attack, provided the target is within the original attack's reach or range for each minion.

- Make a single attack roll for the group attack. It counts as one attack.
- A group attack roll gains a +1 bonus to the attack roll for each minion who joins the attack. (For example, if four goblin minions make a group attack together, the attack roll has a +4 bonus.)
- If the group attack hits, multiply the damage by the number of minions who joined that group attack. (For example, if four goblin minions hit with a group attack that deals 1 damage, their group attack deals 4 damage.)

The GM decides how many minions join a group attack. For instance, if five minions surround a target, the GM may decide to have all five attack at once to speed up combat, or may break up the attacks among smaller groups to increase the odds that some minions hit while others miss. A single minion can even use their group attack action on their own—they make the attack as a normal creature would, and simply don't benefit from the group bonuses described above.

ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

A group attack is only made with advantage or disadvantage if all the minions joining the group attack have advantage or disadvantage on the attack roll. Otherwise, the attack is made without advantage or disadvantage.

COVER AND CONCEALMENT

If a target has cover or concealment from some but not all minions, the GM should divide the minions into multiple groups based on the type of cover or concealment they have, then make a separate attack for each group.

TARGET RESPONSE EFFECTS

If a group attack triggers a reaction or similar effect that would normally affect a single attacker, such as the *fire shield* or *hellish rebuke* spell, the target of the group attack picks one minion who joined the attack to be affected by the effect.

GROUP OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

If a creature provokes an opportunity attack from more than one minion of the same stat block at a time and those minions have a melee group attack action, the minions can each use their reaction to join a group attack as an opportunity attack.

OPTIONAL RULE: GROUP SAVING THROWS

Though minions often make saving throws individually, there are times when rolling individual saving throws for each minion could slow down the fight, like when a cleric surrounded by eighteen shade minions uses *Turn Undead*.

When many minions with the same stat block need to make a saving throw against the same effect at the same time, you can make one saving throw for a group of up to five minions at a time. All minions in a group use the result of the saving throw.

For instance, if thirty-four goblin minions need to make a saving throw against a *hypnotic pattern* spell, the minions would make a total of seven saving throws against the spell: six for thirty minions divided into six groups of five, and one more save for the remaining group of four minions.

OPTIONAL RULE: TOUGH MINIONS

Minions of a higher challenge rating, such as fire giants, make for powerful foes. Consequently, it could break the game's verisimilitude for an NPC commoner to kill such a minion with a single attack. To keep minions believable, you can use the following rule.

OVERKILL DAMAGE ILLUSTRATED

Imagine a fighter is making a melee attack with a shortsword against a lackey, and two more lackeys are within overkill range of that attack. Each lackey is a minion with 6 hit points. In example A, the attack hits and deals 4 piercing damage. This kills only the targeted lackey. A successful attack against a minion always kills the target.



Example A

In example B, the attack is a critical hit and deals 13 piercing damage. This kills the targeted lackey with 7 overkill damage remaining, which spreads to the other minions within the fighter's overkill range. So a second lackey within 5 feet of the fighter takes 6 piercing damage and dies, leaving 1 overkill damage remaining. The third lackey takes that last point of overkill damage and dies.



Example B

When a minion's challenge rating is at least 6 higher than an NPC's challenge rating, that NPC's actions and traits affect a minion as if they didn't have the Minion trait, reducing the minion's hit points like a normal creature instead of automatically dropping them to 0.

This rule shouldn't be applied to player characters—they're heroes who can always kill a minion in one hit.

SPECIAL TRAITS

Many minions have traits that give them strength in numbers but become less powerful as their allies are defeated. For example, an enemy who starts their turn within 5 feet of three or more goblin lackeys must succeed on a saving throw or take damage from the lackeys' Tiny Stabs trait.

CHALLENGE RATINGS

Minions have a challenge rating just like any other creature. However, their experience point value depends on their challenge rating, as shown on the Minion Encounter Building table. Aside from their damage output, the Minion trait, and their experience point value, a minion's statistics are on par with a standard creature of the same challenge rating.

When the rules reference a challenge rating, such as the *polymorph* spell or the cleric's Destroy Undead feature,

use the minion's listed challenge rating as normal. For instance, a 5th-level cleric can affect Undead creatures with a challenge rating of 1/2 or lower with their Destroy Undead feature—so this feature can affect rotting zombie minions (CR 1/4) but not shade minions (CR 1).

MINION BANDS

A combat encounter with more than five minions per character can become deadly if all minions act on the same turn—the characters cut down minion hordes on their turns but then suffer massive damage as a sea of minions pour down on them. While many groups like this challenge, you have the option to divide the minions into different bands that act on different initiative counts. If you do this, minions can only join group attacks with minions in the same band. At the start of a new round, two or more bands of minions can reorganize into one band, acting on the lowest initiative count of the bands that combined.

If you divide minions into bands, be sure to distinguish which minions belong together. For gridded combat, you could use a colored marker for each miniature. In a theater of the mind encounter, try group descriptors like "zombie dwarves" and "zombie elves."

Shambling Mound



NEW PSIONIC POWERS

A CHARACTER PLAYING A TALENT—THE CLASS FOUND IN THE MCDM supplement *The Talent and Psionics*—can use the rules in that book to learn the following new powers from the creatures in this book. Powers that aren't found in *The Talent and Psionics* are listed in this section and indicated in a creature's stat block with an asterisk (*).

Note that some stat block powers work differently than the version for player characters presented below, usually because a creature's innate psionic ability enhances their power.

MEMORY THIEF

4th-Order Metamorphosis Power

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Creatures: Voiceless talker, voiceless talker artillerist

You plunder the mind of a creature you can see within 30 feet of you. The target must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 4d10 psychic damage, their proficiency bonus is lowered by 1, and you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and your power save DC for the duration.

Increased Order. When you manifest this power, you can increase its order by 1 or more. For each increase of 1, the damage increases by 2d10.

VANISH FOR ONE

2nd-Order Resopathy Power

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Creatures: Voiceless talker artillerist

You obscure yourself in the sight of a creature you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or you become invisible to them for the duration (save ends at end of turn). This effect ends early if you attack the creature, deal damage to them, or create an effect that forces them to make a saving throw.

Increased Order. When you manifest this power, you can increase its order by 1 to make its manifestation time 1 bonus action.

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