

UNDERWORLD

PREVIEW





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UNDERWORLD PREVIEW

The *Underworld* preview is a glimpse of the subterranean wonders that await you in the Underworld setting book from Kobold Press. Here you'll find an overview of the book, as well as excerpts you can play with today in your **Tales of the Valiant** game. As development and playtesting continue, some aspects of this preview might change before the final book appears.

This is only a sample of what's to come! Look over the table of contents to get a fuller picture of this campaign overlay setting for the sunless worlds deep within the earth.

EXPLORE THE MYSTERIOUS LANDS BELOW

The Underworld encompasses locations, regions, or lands—even entire worlds—that exist wholly below ground. Most Underworld realms are connected to others

via tunnels, cavern systems, and underground waterways. However, regions can also be isolated pockets independent from the rest.

Underworld presents creatures, locations, factions, campaign villains, and adventure ideas to explore a unique collection of interconnected realms. Or create your own Underworld! Use these as add-ins to your game or begin a new campaign in an Underworld setting, featuring its people as the primary characters.

BEINGS OF ANCIENT POWER

Life in the Underworld is challenging. To ease daily burdens, those who dwell below often worship powerful entities who provide spiritual guidance, magic, and protection. Three major deities (collectively known as the Trium) are widely worshiped by the peoples of the Underworld, though other faiths of varying size and

influence exist. The mushroomfolk are followers of their fey lady, the Spore Queen, while dark-hearted souls from diverse lineages join vile cults dedicated to the demon lords of the Abyss.

FEY LADY, PHYLIOTINA THE SPORE QUEEN

While most Fey lords and ladies born of the Summerlands are tied to forces ruled by the seasons of the surface, some hail from courts deep within the earth. These Fey offer protection to (and draw power from) the countless varieties of flora and fauna that thrive in sunless environments.

The most prolific of these fey is Phyliotina the Spore Queen, the Farsighted, Her Omnipresent Majesty, Mother of Mycolids, and Warden of the Fairy Rings. Phyliotina (FIE-lee-o-TEE-na) is a fey lady of immense power. Her realm encompasses large swathes of the Underworld, but has no fixed location.

Phyliotina can manifest anywhere in her realm, growing a new body as needed. She is always accompanied by her entourage of mycolid spore lords, dryads, and shambling mounds. Though she claims all natural fungi as her creatures, her chosen people are the mushroomfolk, and they worship her as a goddess. She is also worshipped by others in the Underworld, including some derro and druids from a variety of lineages.

Queen Phyliotina desires to spread her people throughout the Underworld, until every cavern and tunnel is filled with fungi and becomes part of her realm. She regards the demons and aboleths of the Depths as her biggest foes. She hates vrock in particular for spreading vile, abyssal fungus through their spores.

Phyliotina is friendly to visitors who show proper respect. She sometimes grants petitioners use of the hundreds of fairy rings dotted throughout the Underworld for fast, reliable travel.

The Spore Queen takes many forms but she most often appears as a tall, beautiful, violet-skinned elf with glowing green eyes. Her neck, shoulders, arms, and legs are covered in brightly colored lichen and tiny mushrooms. Alternatively, she presents as a gigantic toadstool with a purple cap, eyes, and a mouth, surrounded by drifting mycelia.

Phyliotina the Spore Queen

CR 15

Medium Fey (Outsider)

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 201

Speed 40 ft.

Perception 24

Stealth 20

Resistant bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks | exhausted, paralyzed, petrified, unconscious | Fey Resilience

Immune poison | poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft.

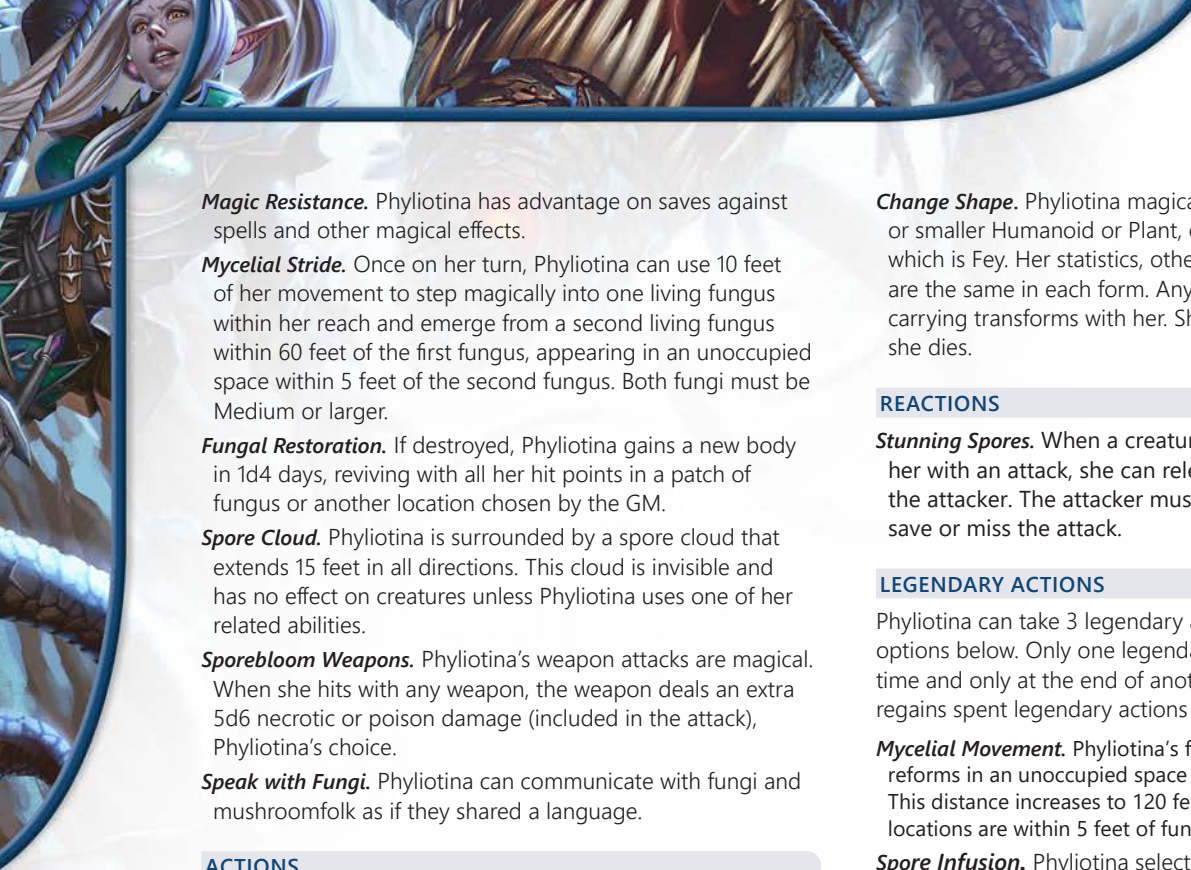
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan, telepathy 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4	+5	+9	+5	+9	+10

Fey Resilience. Phyliotina is resistant to the charmed and unconscious conditions.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Phyliotina fails a save, she can choose to succeed instead.





Magic Resistance. Phylotina has advantage on saves against spells and other magical effects.

Mycelial Stride. Once on her turn, Phylotina can use 10 feet of her movement to step magically into one living fungus within her reach and emerge from a second living fungus within 60 feet of the first fungus, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the second fungus. Both fungi must be Medium or larger.

Fungal Restoration. If destroyed, Phylotina gains a new body in 1d4 days, reviving with all her hit points in a patch of fungus or another location chosen by the GM.

Spore Cloud. Phylotina is surrounded by a spore cloud that extends 15 feet in all directions. This cloud is invisible and has no effect on creatures unless Phylotina uses one of her related abilities.

Sporebloom Weapons. Phylotina's weapon attacks are magical. When she hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 5d6 necrotic or poison damage (included in the attack), Phylotina's choice.

Speak with Fungi. Phylotina can communicate with fungi and mushroomfolk as if they shared a language.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. Phylotina makes three Claw or Spore Blast attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 17 (5d6) necrotic or poison damage (Phylotina's choice).

Spore Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) poison damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

Sporebound Servitors (1/Day). Phylotina magically calls 1d4 Plants of CR 1 or lower or 1 Plant of CR 3 or lower. Phylotina prioritizes fungi and dryads over other creatures. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Phylotina and obeying her spoken commands. The creatures remain for 1 hour, until Phylotina dies, or until Phylotina dismisses them as a bonus action.

Spellcasting. Phylotina casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using CHA as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18).

At will: *druidcraft, fog cloud, mage hand, minor illusion*

3/day each: *darkness, plant growth (fungi only), restoration, sleep, stinking cloud*

1/day each: *blight, cloudkill, confusion, contagion, teleport*

BONUS ACTIONS

Activate Spores. Phylotina activates the spores in her Spore Cloud feature, causing one of the following effects until the start of Phylotina's next turn:

- **Decay.** A creature inside the cloud's radius must succeed on a DC 18 CON save or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage.
- **Obscure.** The spore cloud thickens and darkens becoming heavily obscured for the duration.
- **Sicken.** A creature within the radius of the spore cloud must succeed on a DC 18 CON save or be poisoned until the start of Phylotina's next turn.

Change Shape. Phylotina magically transforms into a Large or smaller Humanoid or Plant, or back into her true form, which is Fey. Her statistics, other than her size and speed, are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying transforms with her. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

REACTIONS

Stunning Spores. When a creature Phylotina can see targets her with an attack, she can release a burst of spores toward the attacker. The attacker must succeed on a DC 18 WIS save or miss the attack.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Phylotina can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Phylotina regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Mycelial Movement. Phylotina's fungal form dissolves and reforms in an unoccupied space she can see within 60 feet. This distance increases to 120 feet if the origin and destination locations are within 5 feet of fungi.

Spore Infusion. Phylotina selects up to three creatures she can see within 30 feet of her. Each creature gains 11 (2d6 + 4) temporary hit points.

Searing Spores (Costs 2 Actions). Phylotina causes her spore cloud to intensify. Each creature in its area must make a DC 18 CON save. On a failure, a target takes 7 (2d6) poison damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and is poisoned until the end of its next turn. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned.

DEMON LORD, ASHRODU, LORD OF CLOAKERS

The deepest parts of the Underworld are riddled with connections to the hideous realms of the demons. In the Depths, the citadel of Blackreach stands watch over a seemingly bottomless chasm that stretches down into the Abyss. Elsewhere, ominous tunnels spiral down until they reach the domains of the demon lords and their fiendish underlings. As demonic corruption spreads through the caverns and passageways of the Underworld, it gives rise to vile cults that seek to appease their demonic patrons with bloody sacrifices and to advance their schemes of destruction and mayhem. One such demon lord is Ashrodu, the demon lord of cloakings.

The demon lord Ashrodu, Lord of Cloakers, the Winged Shadow, and the Slaughterveil, is widely acknowledged as the creator of cloakings and their ilk. Whether factually correct, cloakings worship Ashrodu and regard it as their only deity. Cloaking sovereigns serve as Ashrodu's priests and large gatherings of cloakings make offerings to the demon lord.

Ashrodu goes about shrouded in shadow, appearing as a patch of darkness. Only when it reveals itself do people

see its true form, an unholy meld of Humanoid and cloaker. It almost never attacks in plain sight, preferring to ambushing from darkness instead. It demands that its followers do the same.

Ashrodu has long rivalries with Alquam, Demon Lord of Night and Camazotz, Demon Lord of Bats and Fire. Ashrodu jealously wants darkness as its aspect alone. It claims night (Alquam's dominion) as a mere manifestation of darkness, and calls fire (belonging to Camazotz) antithetical to darkness. Ashrodu's animosity is acted on by its cloaker followers who attack servants of Alquam and Camazotz on sight.

Ashrodu Lord of Cloakers

CR 20

Large Fiend (Demon)

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 292

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

Perception 16

Stealth 22

Resistant bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks | Demonic Resilience

Immune Demonic Resilience

Senses truesight 120 ft.

Languages Abyssal, Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+6	+12	+4	+5	+6	+10

Demonic Resilience. Ashrodu is resistant to cold, fire, and lightning damage. In addition, he is immune to poison damage and to the poisoned condition.

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the demon lord's darkvision.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Ashrodu fails a save, it can choose to succeed instead.

Lord of Cloakers. Ashrodu can communicate with cloakers as if they shared a language.

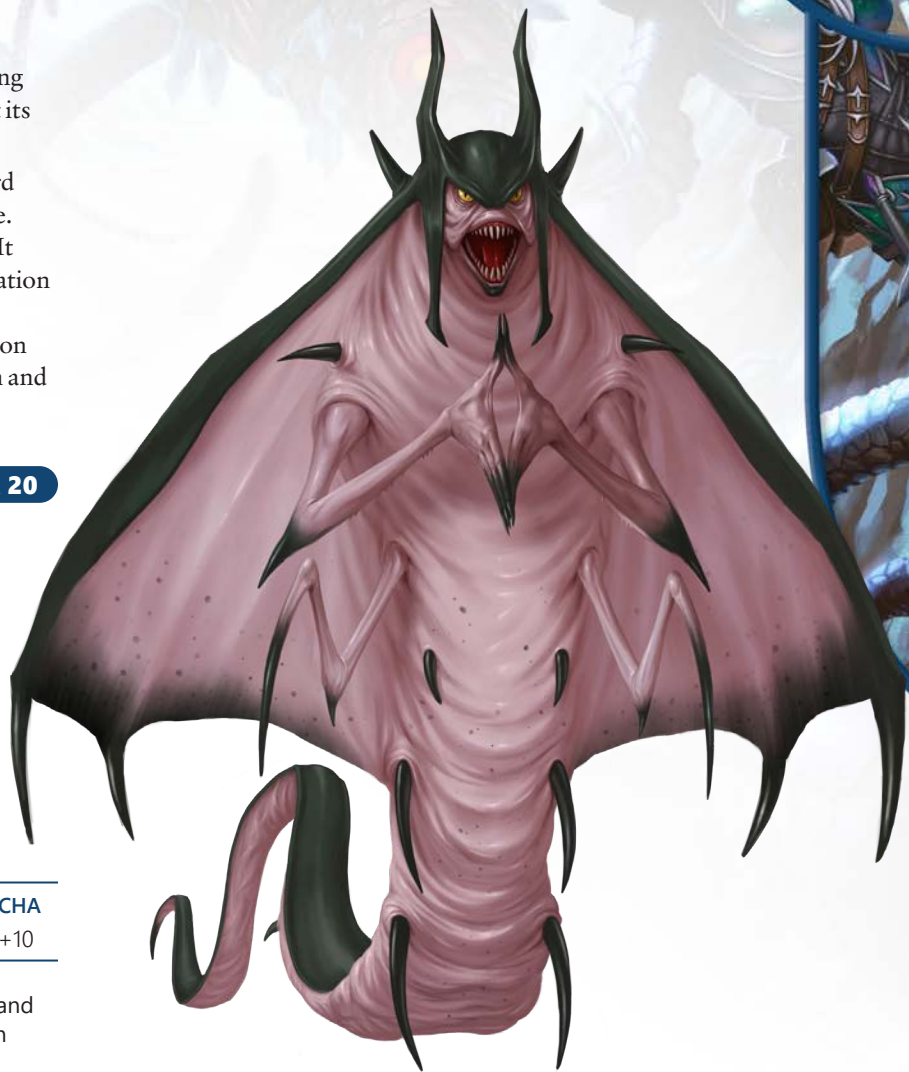
Magic Resistance. Ashrodu has advantage on saves against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ashrodu makes one Bite attack, two Tentacle attacks, and one Tail attack, or it makes four Poisoned Spine attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of **Spellcasting**.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 34 (8d6 + 6) piercing damage.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 42 (8d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 20). Ashrodu has four tentacles, each of which can grapple only one target.



Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (6d8 + 6) slashing damage.

Poisoned Spine. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (5d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Call Cloakers (1/day). Ashrodu magically calls 1d2 cloakers. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Ashrodu and obeying its telepathic commands. The cloakers remain for 1 hour, until Ashrodu dies, or until it dismisses them as a bonus action.

Spellcasting. Ashrodu casts one of the following spells, using CHA as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18).

At will: darkness, detect evil and good
3/day each: black tentacles, invisibility
1/day each: greater invisibility, teleport

BONUS ACTIONS

Invisibility. Ashrodu magically turns invisible until it attacks, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment Ashrodu wears or carries is invisible with it.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Ashrodu can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ashrodu regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. When Ashrodu moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Tail Attack. Ashrodu makes a Tail attack.

Soul-Rending Screech (Costs 3 Actions). Each creature within 30 feet of Ashrodu that can hear it and that isn't an Aberration or a Fiend must make a DC 18 WIS save. On a failure, a creature takes 55 (10d10) psychic damage and is frightened until the end of its next turn. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't frightened.

RUINED REALMS AND BURIED SECRETS

All surface civilizations are doomed to fall to ruin. Their monuments, treasures, and secrets will be swallowed by the shifting earth. Surface dwellers may forget history, but all that is buried is revealed again in the Underworld.

The people of the deep live surrounded by relics of the past. Settlements across the Underworld are built atop the ruins of sunken cities, their ancient architecture serving as foundations for new expansion. Many make their living harvesting or refining materials from local ruins. Salvage rights for newly discovered ruins spawn skirmishes between various Underworld realms.

This section contains a preview of some fallen civilizations and ruined sites that you can adapt and drop into your setting. Each site provides a framework to turn the location into a series of memorable encounters.

The end of this section contains tables and resources you can use to quickly concept and design new ruin sites for their campaign.

RUINED REALMS

d10	REALM
1	Cleithrum, Cursed City of the Sahuagin
2	Dauranosk, Ruined City of the Brain Eaters
3	Gloamfast, Fallen Duergar Hold
4	Isokairi, Abandoned City of the Isokairos
5	Myosepta, Drained Ruins
6	Terastar, Forsaken Haven
7	Thoosulplool, Lost Shrine of Melanoceta
8	Trilandia, Elven City of Unity
9	Voristjhan, City of Demon Webs
10	Zirkovis, City of Peace

SAMPLE REALMS OF RUIN

Dangerous monsters, lost magic, and strange riches await adventurers bold enough to explore the ancient ruins, abandoned dwarf holds, and forgotten cities in the deep.

This section previews two examples of infamous ruined realms filled with danger, treasures, and secrets. To introduce a ruined realm to your game, roll on (or choose from) the **Ruined Realms** table and add it to your map.

CLEITHRUM, CURSED CITY OF THE SAHUAGIN

While sahuagin swim in some branches of the Black River, they've been unable to build and maintain a settlement of significant size in the Untamed Lands. The longest-standing sahuagin settlement was Cleithrum, built by sahuagin progenitors in the depths of one of the Gray Dawn Lakes (known to the sahuagin as Lake Cleithrum).

This once-stunning fortress city is partially carved into the walls of the lake's cavern, and built out with massive stones of a type that can't be found anywhere near the Gray Dawn Lakes. How the early sahuagin brought them here remains a mystery.

At its height, Cleithrum was a bustling settlement with hatcheries, training arenas, and businesses. All of the buildings were decorated with inlays of gold, pearl, or other other valuables that glimmered even in the depths of the lake. At its heart was the palace, a building even more ornately decorated. From here, King Salvuinjun organized the expansion of the kingdom.

Now, the ornate decorations of gold and pearl on the shattered ruins are surprising, almost jarring, to those who catch a glimpse. Adventurers who salvage treasures from the outskirts of Cleithrum speak of shadows moving in the darkness. Their dreams are haunted by the shadows for days or weeks after.

Cleithrum, once the mainhold of the sahuagin progenitors in the Untamed Lands, now lies in ruin. Sahuagin legends claim King Salvuinjun made a bargain with a powerful outsider. Upon hearing of the deal, the king's son slew him, and refused to honor the bargain himself. Enraged, the outsider cursed the kingdom, which promptly fell. Attempts to resettle or inhabit the ruins have been in vain.

For centuries, sahuagin have tried to retake the city, unsuccessfully. A small number of aquatic creatures (hunter sharks, swarms of quippers, and giant crabs) dwell near and around the ruins. Their appearances are slightly altered from their surface-dwelling counterparts. The remains of the settlement are currently home to an **aboleth** who feeds on those who venture into Lake Cleithrum seeking treasure or to reclaim the city.

DAURANOSK, RUINED CITY OF THE BRAIN EATERS

In the distant past, a large swath of the Depths was ruled by the zallsyss, a species of telepathic aberrations that resembled Medium-sized, translucent, levitating octopuses. Fleeing their collapsing empire, these alien creatures arrived in the Underworld from beyond the stars and established a foothold in the subterranean realms. The zallsyss relied on the brains of intelligent creatures for physical and intellectual nourishment. They absorbed nutrients, memories, and knowledge from the brains of others. To ensure a steady supply of food and useful thralls, they raided surrounding communities of grimlocks, deep gnomes, ikthrys, and others, using their psionic powers to subjugate the inhabitants and bring them back to their settlements.

Dauranosk was the largest zallsyss enclave until its destruction by the armies of the duergar. The hubristic zallsyss underestimated the belligerence and determination of the gray dwarves. The duergar sacked Dauranosk, slaughtered every zallsyss, smashed every brain jar they found, and freed the thralls.

A relentless military campaign followed for several years as the duergar attacked other zallsyss enclaves. Eventually Grand Marshal Krommond Bonesnapper declared that they had wiped out the zallsyss completely. Rare sightings of floating tentacled creatures have been reported from time to time since, but most inhabitants of the Depths believe the zallsyss eradicated.

The ruins of Dauranosk were partly buried after duergar engineers collapsed several major tunnels and chambers within the city. However, access is still possible through the twisting caverns below where the zallsyss kept their thralls. Today, these caverns serve as the hunting grounds of a gap of gricks, led by a fearsome grick alpha.

Above these thrall caves, Dauranosk is built on three levels, connected via a series of tall, vertical shafts. A few are equipped with ladders for humanoid thralls to use. Chambers are typically ovoid and have exits in the curved walls, floors, and ceilings. Passages and rooms in the ruin are littered with the armored skeletons of dead duergar, broken weapons, and debris. Because the zallsyss were boneless, only their sharp beaks have survived the passing of time.

At least one cloaker lairs in the ruins, but its most dangerous inhabitant is an observer (see *Monster Vault 2*). A creation of the mysterious Onyx Lords, the observer lurks in the upper level of the city, but its eyes wander throughout the complex, spying on intruders. The aberration has hung pieces of polished duergar plate armor on the walls of its lair to reflect torchlight and disorient visitors. It can sometimes be negotiated with, and may offer to sell valuable information about the peoples of the Depths if the price is right.

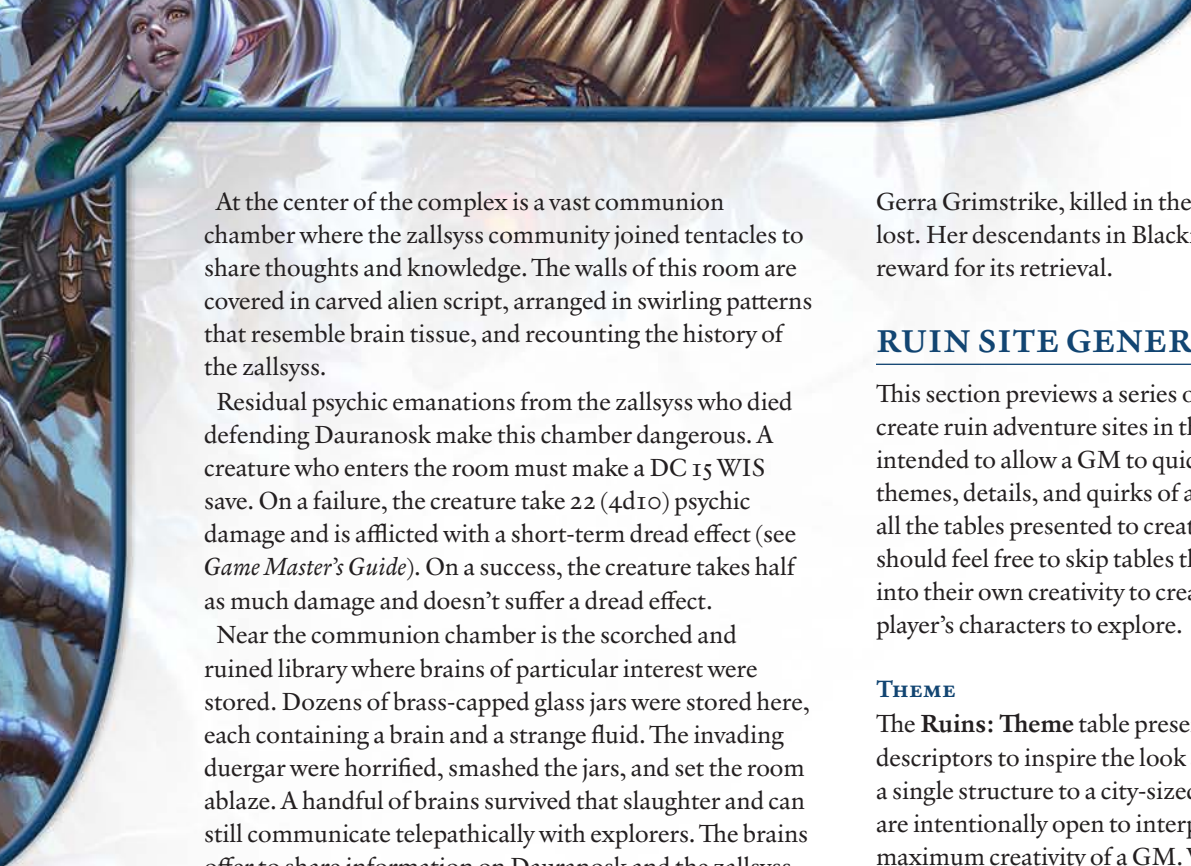
IT'S ONLY DOWN FROM HERE

Underworld is a comprehensive player and GM resource for adventuring in the lightless depths. Buried within are new character options, encounter tools, and worldbuilding resources for a whole Underworld campaign!

Underworld: Descent into Darkness is a complete adventure path for levels 1-12. Characters journey down to face rival civilizations . . . and a rising dragon empire.



**BRAVE THE DEPTHS!
BACK UNDERWORLD ON KICKSTARTER!**



At the center of the complex is a vast communion chamber where the zallsyss community joined tentacles to share thoughts and knowledge. The walls of this room are covered in carved alien script, arranged in swirling patterns that resemble brain tissue, and recounting the history of the zallsyss.

Residual psychic emanations from the zallsyss who died defending Dauranosk make this chamber dangerous. A creature who enters the room must make a DC 15 WIS save. On a failure, the creature take 22 (4d10) psychic damage and is afflicted with a short-term dread effect (see *Game Master's Guide*). On a success, the creature takes half as much damage and doesn't suffer a dread effect.

Near the communion chamber is the scorched and ruined library where brains of particular interest were stored. Dozens of brass-capped glass jars were stored here, each containing a brain and a strange fluid. The invading duergar were horrified, smashed the jars, and set the room ablaze. A handful of brains survived that slaughter and can still communicate telepathically with explorers. The brains offer to share information on Dauranosk and the zallsyss in exchange for being put out of their misery.

One adventuring band that braved the ruins of Dauranosk and lived claims to have recovered a *javelin of lightning*, *potions of psychic resistance*, and a suit of *dwarven plate*. The *dwarven thrower* that once belonged to the infamous Major

Gerra Grimstrike, killed in the sack of Dauranosk, remains lost. Her descendants in Blackreach have offered a fine reward for its retrieval.

RUIN SITE GENERATOR

This section previews a series of tables a GM can use to create ruin adventure sites in the Underworld. They are intended to allow a GM to quickly produce some of the themes, details, and quirks of a ruin site. A GM can use all the tables presented to create their ruin, though they should feel free to skip tables that don't suit them and lean into their own creativity to create unique areas for their player's characters to explore.

THEME

The **Ruins: Theme** table presents twenty quick descriptors to inspire the look and feel of any ruin, from a single structure to a city-sized complex. The themes are intentionally open to interpretation to allow for the maximum creativity of a GM. While one theme is often enough, feel free to roll two or three times on the table, rerolling duplicate results, to generate more complex ruins. More than three themes might dilute the impact of your ruin, or make it more complex than necessary to describe or populate. Fewer rolls with wide interpretation of the results is encouraged.

RUINS: THEME

d20	THEME	DEFINITION
1	Advanced	Crafted from materials or containing technology beyond the current era.
2	Beautiful	Appealing to the senses.
3	Burning	Superheated or aflame due to natural or magical phenomena.
4	Caustic	Acidic or possessing an effect that dissolves organic matter
5	Deep	Located in the depths of its layer of the Underworld.
6	Demonic	Built by or for demons.
7	Diabolical	Made by or for devils.
8	Dilapidated	Crumbling due to age or neglect.
9	Dripping	Subjected to liquid falling from ceiling to floor.
10	Flooded	Fully or partially submerged in liquid.
11	Forgotten	Lost to common knowledge due to the passage of time or unnatural phenomena.
12	Frigid	Icy or subject to extreme cold.
13	Fungal	Made of fungus or providing an ideal environment for mushroom growth.
14	Harsh	Difficult for Humanoids to survive, even if adapted to the environment.
15	Impossible	Qualities that defy conventional physics.
16	Infested	Haven for insects, arachnids, and other pests.
17	Labyrinthine	Mazelike networks of irregular and twisting tunnels and chambers.
18	Nullifying	Limiting or preventing the use of magic.
19	Reeking	Subject to harmful or nauseating odors.
20	Suffocating	Possessing thin or no oxygen. Spiritually or physically oppressive.

SIZE

With the **Ruins: Size** table, you can produce a ruin as small as a single one- or two-room structure or as large as a vast city-sized complex of divided chambers connected by variable sized corridors.

Population and area suggestions are approximate. Use them as a guide rather than a rule. The populations given indicate how many creatures potentially lived in or around the ruin before it fell. A Metropolis-sized ruin could be a single immense complex, or an entire community could have fit into a Settlement-sized site prior to its ruin. The sizes are as follows:

Settlement. No bigger than a handful of structures capable of holding a maximum of one hundred people. If it's a single structure, make it no bigger than a longhouse or a village temple.

Hamlet. A space holding up to five hundred residents maximum.

Village. A village with a capacity of up to two thousand inhabitants.

Town. An area encompassing five to ten square miles holding up to five thousand souls.

City. A large area spread across ten to fifty square miles, capable of housing up to twenty-five thousand people.

Metropolis. The size of a small country or greater and boasting one hundred thousand or more residents.

STYLE

The **Ruins: Style** table refers to the prevailing architectural style of the ruin. More than mere aesthetics, the style of building supplies insight into the creatures who founded the site and open a window into their world. While the styles provided refer to real-world architectural movements, adapt them to your version of the Underworld.

PURPOSE

Use the **Ruins: Purpose** table to determine why a ruin exists. You can roll on this table multiple times, first to generate the site's founding purpose, and again to see what it is currently being used for. If a number of sites have stood at the same location over a span of time, you can roll for each generation to create a multilayered ruin.

RUINS: SIZE

d6	SIZE	EXAMPLE
1	Settlement	1d4 hut-sized structures or chambers. A complex with up to five distinct chambers.
2	Hamlet	3d4 structures or chambers. One structure might be the size of a temple or keep.
3	Village	4d4 + 15 structures or chambers. One structure might be as large as a castle while one to three might be the size of a temple or keep.
4	Town	4d6 + 30 structures or chambers. One structure might be as large as a palace or cathedral while three to six might be the size of a temple or keep.
5	City	5d10 + 50 structures or chambers. One to four might be the size of a palace or cathedral while six to twelve might be the size of a temple or keep.
6	Metropolis	More than 100 structures or chambers.

RUINS: STYLE

d8	STYLE	EXAMPLE
1	Baroque	Dramatic. Ornate. Contrasting light and dark. Curving walls. Ovoid shapes. Gilded statuary. Frescoes. Real World: Palace of Versailles, France
2	Brutalist	Blocky. Bold. Geometric. Utilitarian. Real World: Habitat 67, Canada
3	Byzantine	Grand. Domed. Elaborate. Mosaics. Light-filled. Real World: Hagia Sophia, Turkey
4	Classical	Symmetrical. Proportional. Fluted columns. Bas-relief adornment. Durable materials. Real World: the Parthenon, Greece
5	Expressionist	Distorted. Otherworldly. Sculptural. Symbolic. Biomorphic. Real World: Einstein Tower, Germany
6	Functionalist	Practical. Purposeful. Undisguised. Unornamented. Real World: Brno Crematorium, Czech Republic
7	Gothic	Grand. Tall. Light-filled. Pointed arches. Ribbed vaults. Flying buttresses. Gargoyles. Real World: Notre Dame, France
8	Renaissance	Orderly. Symmetrical. Ornate. Columns. Domes. Pediments. Round arches. Vaulted ceilings. Real World: Villa Rotonda, Italy

RUINS: PURPOSE

d6	PURPOSE	DEFINITION
1	Agriculture	Primarily used for raising, cultivation, harvesting, and processing of livestock and crops.
2	Military	Primarily used for training, housing, and support of an armed force.
3	Natural Resources	Primarily used for procurement and processing of non-agricultural resources such as gases, minerals, and building materials.
4	Settlement	Primarily used for housing and care of non-military populations.
5	Trade	Primarily used to sort, package, and sell goods. Often found in conjunction with agricultural and natural resource focused communities.
6	Worship or Learning	Roll a d6. On a roll of 1–3, the site is primarily used for the training, housing, and general support of clergy. On a roll of 4–6, it's primarily used for the housing and education of scholars or magic users. In some cases, this might be a mixed use.

THAT'S JUST A TASTE

Additional tables for ruins include inhabitants, their attitude toward outsiders, challenges they face, unusual features, hazards, and more aspects designed for societies operating within underground ruins. Use them to set up entire adventures sites (with hooks!) ready to go, within minutes.

CAMPAIGN VILLAINS

Underworld contains sections detailing four powerful villains that can form the foundation of a campaign set below ground. A portion of one of these villains, the Cult of the Worm, is previewed here.

CULT OF THE WORM

Cultists of Hriggala pose a grave danger to the Underworld, but their gluttony makes it hard to hide their activity. Once their presence is discovered, their downfall is all but assured as communities band together to root them out. However, under the leadership of Orivis Brightbane, the Squirming Deacon, their plan is subtle and indirect so that it might evade notice until it's too late to stop.

Orivis Brightbane has given its life and body in service to the devouring worm, subsuming its own flesh to become a being formed from Hriggala's substance. In all ways, the Squirming Deacon seeks to fulfill its patron's desires. Even in peaceful-seeming conversation, it looks for weaknesses or an angle from which to strike. However, unlike most cultists of the devourer worm, Orivis won't throw its life away if nothing is gained by the sacrifice.

After years of seeking a swift, efficient way to deliver the lives of the Underworld into the maw of Hriggala, the Squirming Deacon has had a breakthrough. From its meticulous study of the mycolids of the Mushroom Fields, Orivis has determined that the route to its goal is lined with fungus.

CULT GOALS

Worm cultists seek perpetual consumption. Each act of devouring pays homage to the demon lord, so they shovel every edible thing they find into their maw. Once Hriggala, through them as its agents, has consumed all other life, they will turn their hunger upon themselves. No world can reach a state of perfection so long as a single organism lives. Seeing themselves as extension of Hriggala's body, cultists goals and methods are straightforward—they devour.

The cult rarely devises clever plots, but Orivis Brightbane is more creative than most of its leaders. The Squirming Deacon feels that weaponizing the fungus of the Underworld is key to Hriggala's dominion. Orivis's plan is to procure a pure source of sporeborn spores and transmute them to create an aggressively self-replicating, self-cannibalizing spore plague.

Once he has this weapon, he will deposit a large portion of it in the Black River to spread, while keeping the remainder for use against those who come against them. If the spread is slower than Orivis would like, it attempts to use its methods against Phylotina, the Spore Queen. Infecting her will surely enhance the effect and speed its transmission.

CULT AGENDA

Stage 1: Introduction. The Squirming Deacon sends its agents to the fungal forests throughout the known reaches of the Underworld. It has divined that a pure, original source of sporeborn spores could be most easily found in these areas. Its agents have been instructed to deny their hunger while on mission, to prevent discovery. Once a source is discovered, the Squirming Deacon will travel there to recover it.

During this phase, the PCs might encounter cult members in search of the sporeborn source. Despite instructions, some members have difficulty restraining themselves from satisfying their hunger, drawing PC interest. None of the seekers are aware of Orivis's plan,

however, so they should seem like little more than a singular threat. As more groups are encountered, the PCs might wonder about the fuller story. If they directly interact with Orivis, it quickly flees to keep its prize secure.

Stage 2: Developing the Plot. While Orivis transmutes and corrupts the sporeborn source, it commands its agents to spread far and wide. Chaos spreads across the Underworld as the cult of Hriggala unleashes its hunger. None of the cultists operate within 10 miles of the Writhing Grotto, keeping eyes away from the unholy work there. Orivis keeps only a skeleton crew of trusted minions at the grotto.

After 2d4 months, Orivis's work is complete—it alters the sporeborn spores into Hriggala's Hunger, a fungal infection that incubates and replicates quickly. Victims transform into skullblooms that hasten their evolution into bloatblossoms by consuming organic matter.

If other sources of sustenance are unavailable, Hriggala's Hunger causes the infected to consume themselves. Orivis travels with Hriggala's Hunger to the Gray Dawn Lakes where it pours the bulk of its converted spores into the river. From there, outlets carry the waters throughout the Underworld.

This stage keeps the PCs busy traveling throughout the Underworld to stem the resultant chaos. If they encounter Orivis directly, it has contingencies to move itself and its project to another location.

Stage 3: Endgame. Frustrated that the spread of Hriggala's Hunger is slower than desired, Orivis and a quartet of nalfeshnee demons take an army of cultists, sporeborn, and lesser demons to infect the Spore Queen, Phyliotina.

At this point, the PCs should be aware of the gravity of the threat. Skullbloom outbreaks are more frequent and evolve into bloatblossoms. If the PCs have dealt with sporeborn prior to this outbreak, these are more vicious and their hunger is evident as they stop to devour a fresh kill. If encountered in Phyliotina's lair, Orivis flees to the Writhing Grotto. Once it is encountered there, the Squirming Deacon fights to the last.



ORIVIS BRIGHTBANE, THE SQUIRMING DEACON

A gloom-shrouded humanoid wearing a tattered purple cloak over armor that constantly shifts disconcertingly. The figure's hood casts deep shadows over its face. Only at close range does the armor, and in fact the creature's entire body, resolve into a writhing mass of purple-gray worms adopting the general shape of a man.

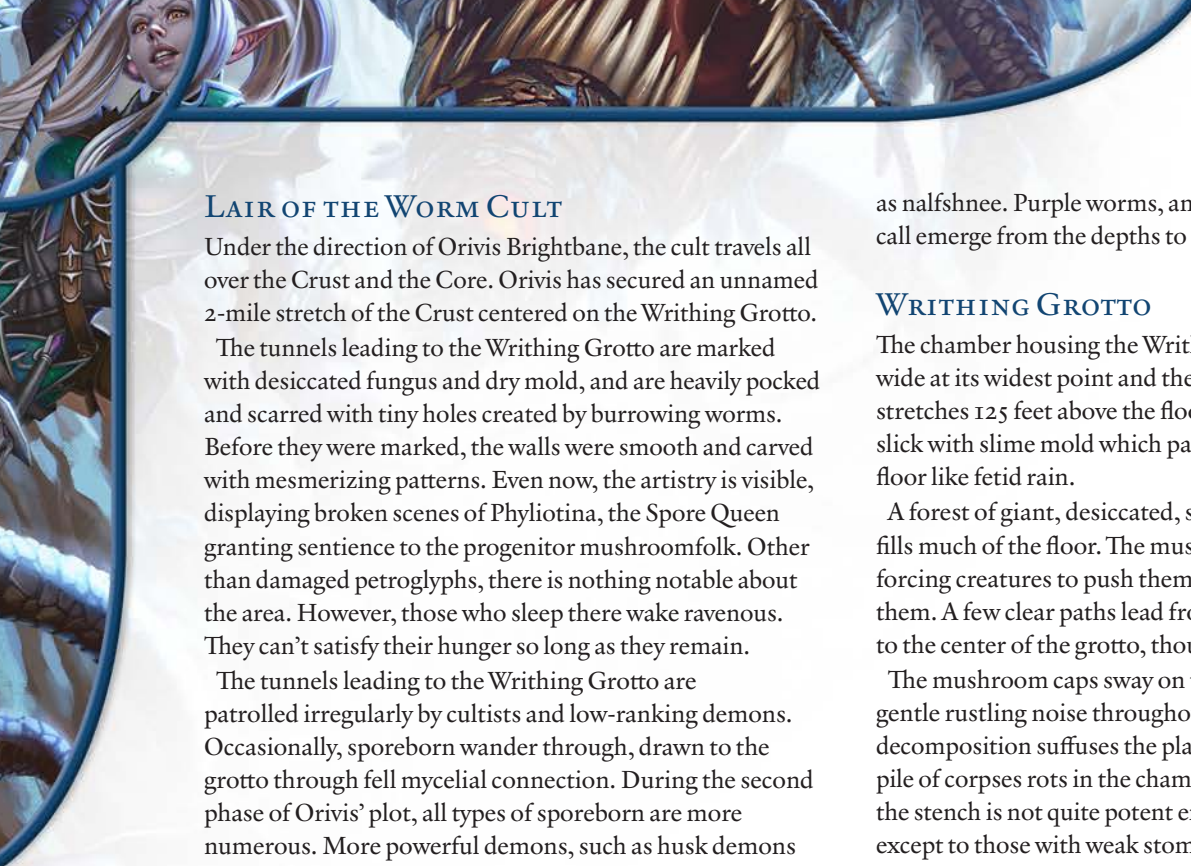
Personality Traits. Honey voiced. Obsessed with consumption.

Always speaks as though an audience is watching.

Bonds. Its hunger. The Squirring Deacon doesn't need to eat to sustain itself, but it constantly feeds edible material to the worms that comprise its body.

Quirks. Prone to monologuing. Overconfident and slow to realize danger.

Wants. To make the Writhing Grotto into a permanent home for Hriggala. To usher in an age of hunger. To wake the spawn of Hriggala at the center of the Writhing Grotto.



LAIR OF THE WORM CULT

Under the direction of Orivis Brightbane, the cult travels all over the Crust and the Core. Orivis has secured an unnamed 2-mile stretch of the Crust centered on the Writhing Grotto.

The tunnels leading to the Writhing Grotto are marked with desiccated fungus and dry mold, and are heavily pocked and scarred with tiny holes created by burrowing worms. Before they were marked, the walls were smooth and carved with mesmerizing patterns. Even now, the artistry is visible, displaying broken scenes of Phylotina, the Spore Queen granting sentence to the progenitor mushroomfolk. Other than damaged petroglyphs, there is nothing notable about the area. However, those who sleep there wake ravenous. They can't satisfy their hunger so long as they remain.

The tunnels leading to the Writhing Grotto are patrolled irregularly by cultists and low-ranking demons. Occasionally, sporeborn wander through, drawn to the grotto through fell mycelial connection. During the second phase of Orivis' plot, all types of sporeborn are more numerous. More powerful demons, such as husk demons and golmanas, venture from here to serve their ravenous master. In the final phase, the remains of the cult fall back to the grotto and environs, including fearsome demons such

as nalfshnee. Purple worms, answering an ineffable abyssal call emerge from the depths to oppose the cult's enemies.

WRITHING GROTTO

The chamber housing the Writhing Grotto is half a mile wide at its widest point and the roughly domed ceiling stretches 125 feet above the floor. The walls and ceiling are slick with slime mold which patters down upon the mossy floor like fetid rain.

A forest of giant, desiccated, spindle-stalked mushrooms fills much of the floor. The mushrooms are crowded, forcing creatures to push them aside while moving through them. A few clear paths lead from the surrounding tunnels to the center of the grotto, though.

The mushroom caps sway on their stalks, creating a gentle rustling noise throughout the grotto. An odor of decomposition suffuses the place, as though a never-ending pile of corpses rots in the chamber's confines. Though vile, the stench is not quite potent enough to serve as a deterrent except to those with weak stomachs.

At the center of the chamber, a statue of a wide-mawed worm erupts from the floor while a pair of mycolid spore lords attempts to hold it in place. The worm rises to a



height of 10 feet with a slightly wider girth. It is made of an unidentifiable dark gray mineral that feels strange to the touch, as though it might spring to life at any moment. In truth, the statue is the calcified remains of a spawn of Hriggala (see *Tome of Beasts 2*) and the two spore lords who called to Phylotina for aid while trying to prevent the demon from running amok in the area.

Ghouls and ghosts (see *Monster Vault*) can often be found prowling around the bamboolike stalks of the mushrooms. Cultists and fanatic cultists (see *Monster Vault*) also visit the grotto, prostrating themselves before the statue and leaving decaying offerings to feed its bottomless hunger. Adherents come from every lineage in the Underworld, but darakhul, drow, and mycolids that lost their belief in the Spore Queen make up the bulk of the faithful.

The Writhing Grotto is tended to by Orivis Brightbane, who calls himself the Squirming Deacon. Orivis can almost always be found in the grotto, kneeling in prayer before the statue or gathering slime mold into earthenware containers. The Deacon decocts the collected mold into a necrotizing toxin which he packs into a cool vault to age a decade and reach its full life-stealing potential.

Despite being only 10 miles from the Mushroom Fields, the Writhing Grotto is rarely found by those that would seek to end the threat it represents. Conversely, it seems to have an almost magnetic effect on those who find their desires unrequited. The true pernicious power of the demon lord of hunger is not in its desire to devour, but in its ability to appeal to mortals whose hunger for esoteric things such as companionship, love, power, or respect go unfulfilled.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing the deacon's lair is warped by its magic, which creates one or more of the following effects:

- **Bottomless Hunger.** Creatures within 2 miles of the Writhing Grotto must consume twice as much food per day as usual and can't sustain themselves on half rations.

A creature that hasn't eaten a sufficient amount suffers one level of exhaustion at the end of the day. Levels of exhaustion gained due to this effect can't be removed until the creature eats a sufficient amount of food.

- **Crawling Carpet.** Insects within 1 mile of the Writhing Grotto increase in size and ferocity, infused with the fell energies of Hriggala. Vermin such as giant centipedes, giant fire beetles, giant scorpions, giant wasps, scorpions, and swarms of insects (see *Monster Vault*) in the area have advantage on attack rolls.
- **Rotting Miasma.** Decay spreads quickly within 1 mile of the Writhing Grotto. Nonmagical foodstuffs become inedible after 1 hour in the area. Similarly, corpses in the area decay at five times the usual speed.

If the Squirming Deacon dies, these effects fade in 1d10 days.

CULT ALLIES AND MINIONS

The Cult of the Worm is comprised of a frightening number of cultists and fanatics who often work alongside the devourer worm's demonic minions. All stat blocks in this table are found in the *Monster Vault*.

CULT OF HRIGGALA MINIONS

LOW TIER	MID-TIER	HIGH-TIER
Cultist	Bloatblossom	Archdruid
Cultist, fanatic	Demon, husk	Demon, nalfeshnee
Skullbloom	Demon, vrock	Purple worm

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Once they become apparent, the cult's activities can't help but draw decent folk into conflict with them.

Roll a d4 on the **Cult of Hriggala Adventure Hooks** table to find ways to draw your decent PCs into the action.

CULT OF HRIGGALA ADVENTURE HOOKS

d4	DESCRIPTION
1	A group of mushroomfolk pilgrims was found butchered in the Untamed Lands. Investigation reveals the killing was done by a cell of Hriggala cultists. In addition to exterminating the threat of the cult, the characters might discover information leading to the sporeborn source.
2	Word spreads that the Pioneer, an important site in the Mushroom Fields, is under attack from a cult of demon worshippers. After eliminating the cultists and their demon allies, the characters learn that a mysterious hooded figure took something from the area before quickly retreating.
3	Seemingly all at once, cultists of Hriggala appear all over the Crust and Core. The cultist cells attack without warning and end their assault just as swiftly before re-emerging nearby to attack a different target. This behavior is ongoing, but is actually a distraction drawing eyes away from the cult's leader, the Squirming Deacon.
4	Learning that a cultist called the Squirming Deacon is leading an army to the lair of Phylotina, the Spore Queen, the characters must race to stop the cult before it corrupts the Fey noble and buries the Underworld beneath a tide of insatiable fungus.

SUBCLASSES

This section provides a preview of two of the new subclasses in *Underworld*.

DRUID SUBCLASS: MYCETIC

Mycetic druids care for, preserve, and protect the fungi that inhabit the dark and damp confines of the Underworld. They learn the applications of mushrooms, lichens, and molds, which range from hazardous to helpful. By learning about these fungi, they can reproduce these effects and manifest them.

SUBCLASS PROGRESSION

DRUID LEVEL	FEATURES
3rd	Mycelial Medicine, Mycetic Ring Spells, Wild Shape: Fungal Bloom
7th	Psychoactive Sleep
11th	Intensified Bloom
15th	Fungal Backlash



MYCELIAL MEDICINE

3rd-Level Mycetic Feature

You can harness both the helpful and harmful effects of fungi. You learn the *poison spray* cantrip if you don't already know it.

In addition, you can use an action to touch a creature and heal a number of hit points equal to twice your PB. Alternately, you can remove one of the following conditions instead of healing: blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned. You can do this a number of times equal to your WIS modifier and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

MYCETIC RING SPELLS

3rd-Level Mycetic Feature

You gain ring spells at the druid levels listed in the **Mycetic Ring Spells** table. See the Druid Subclass class feature in the *Player's Guide* for how these spells work.

MYCETIC RING SPELLS

DRUID LEVEL	SPELLS
3rd	<i>charm</i> , <i>enlarge/reduce</i> , <i>ray of enfeeblement</i> , <i>sleep</i>
5th	<i>fear</i> , <i>hypnotic pattern</i>
7th	<i>blight</i> , <i>confusion</i>
9th	<i>cloudkill</i> , <i>tree stride</i> *

*this spell can be used on fungi in addition to trees

WILD SHAPE

3rd-Level Mycetic Feature

You gain the following Wild Shape option.

Wild Shape: Fungal Bloom

As a bonus action, you can expend a use of your Wild Shape feature (see *Player's Guide*) to channel fungal effects and project them to others. Choose a number of creatures within 5 feet of you that you can see up to your WIS modifier. Each target creature must succeed on a CON save or suffer one of the following effects which you choose when you use this feature:

- **Euphoric.** Target creature is charmed.
- **Horrific.** Target creature is frightened.
- **Toxic.** Target creature is poisoned.

The effect lasts for 1 minute, and a creature can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

PSYCHOACTIVE SLEEP

7th-Level Mycetic Feature

When you and your allies take a long rest, you can affect everyone's dreams, allowing mental and physical restoration. At the end of the long rest, you and your allies gain temporary hit points equal to your WIS modifier + your PB.

INTENSIFIED BLOOM

11th-Level Mycetic Feature

When you use the Fungal Bloom effect of your Wild Shape feature, it can affect creatures within 10 feet of you that you can see. In addition, you can choose one of the following additional effects:

- **Stupefying.** Target is stunned.
- **Typhlotic.** Target is blinded.

FUNGAL BACKLASH

15th-Level Mycetic Feature

When a creature you can see within 10 feet of you hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to deal poison or necrotic damage (your choice) to that attacker equal to half your druid level (rounded down).

In addition, the Fungal Bloom effect of your Wild Shape feature now affects a number of creatures equal to twice your WIS modifier.

MECHANIST SUBCLASS: MAGNETIST

Some mechanists learn how to use lodestones to detect and alter magnetic fields. These include the magnetic field and lines that pass through the earth as well as the much smaller ones generated by living creatures. They can use these magnetic fields not only to move and manipulate creatures and objects, but to move themselves, and to track the movements of creatures.

MAGNETIST PROGRESSION

MECHANIST LEVEL	FEATURES
3rd	Augment: Polarizing, Lodestone
7th	Magnetic Manipulation
11th	Field Rider
15th	Magnetism Master



AUGMENT

3rd-Level Magnetist Feature

You gain the following unique effect for your Augment feature. This effect can't be replaced and doesn't count against the number of effects that you know, as shown in the Augment Effects Known column of the **Mechanist Progression** table (see *Player's Guide*).

Augment: Polarizing

Item Requirement: Weapon

You imbue a weapon with the ability to realign a target's magnetic field. When the weapon hits, if the target is Large or smaller, you can choose to make the field either attractive or repulsive. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a STR save or be moved: 5 feet toward you for an attractive field, or 5 feet away from you for a repulsive field. If the target is an object, it automatically fails the save. The target can't be moved into an occupied space or pass through solid objects. If the target is a creature and its movement is blocked by a creature, object, or surface it instead falls prone. This property can be used only once on the wielder's turn.

For the purposes of your other Magnetist features, the polarization field lasts until the start of your next turn.

At Higher Levels. Once you reach 9th level in the mechanist class, you can move a target 10 feet and if the target would strike a solid surface or object, it takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

LODESTONE

3rd-Level Magnetist Feature

You possess a magnetic lodestone that is a Tiny object that fits in your hand. While holding the lodestone, you unerringly know which direction is north. When you make a WIS (Survival) check to find or track a creature or object, you can use your INT modifier instead of WIS and add your PB to the roll. You can also use a bonus action to detect all sources of metal within 10 feet of you.

In addition, while holding the lodestone, you can manipulate magnetic fields to protect you from harm. When you are targeted by an attack from a creature you can see within 60 feet of you, you can use your reaction to alter the magnetic fields around your body, giving you a bonus to your AC equal to your INT modifier (minimum of 1) until the end of your next turn. You can use your lodestone in this way a number of times equal to your PB and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

If you lose your lodestone or it is destroyed, you can spend 1 minute replacing it. You can also use your Shard of Creation as a lodestone.

MAGNETIC MANIPULATION

7th-Level Magnetist Feature

While holding your lodestone, you can use a bonus action to target a Medium or smaller metal creature, object, or the target of the Polarizing effect of your Augment feature. You must be able to see the target, and it must be within 60 feet of you. If the target is an object that is not being held or worn, you move it a number of feet up to twice your INT modifier (minimum of 2).

If the target is being held or worn by a creature, or you target a metal creature, the creature can make a STR save to resist. On a success, the target isn't moved. On a failure, one of the following occurs:

- If the target is a held object, it is pulled away from the creature holding it and moved as intended.
- If the target is armor or an equivalent object worn by a creature, and that creature is Large or smaller, the creature is moved along with the object.
- If the target is a creature, and the creature is Large or smaller, it is moved.

CREDITS

DESIGNERS: Celeste Conowitch, Sarah Madsen, Kelly Pawlik

EDITOR: Jeff Quick

COVER ARTIST: Sara Forlenza

INTERIOR ARTISTS: Sara Forlenza, Basith Ibrahim, Ian Perks, Roberto Pitturru, Kiki Moch Rizki, Alannah Rose

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Marc Radle

LAYOUT: Marc Radle, Kennedy Williams

KOBOLD Press

KOBOLD WARRENS

CEO: Wolfgang Baur

COO: T. Alexander Stangroom

Director Of Digital Growth: Blaine McNutt

Art Director: Marc Radle

Art Department: Amber Seger, Kennedy Williams

Editorial Director: Thomas M. Reid

Design & Editorial Department: Celeste Conowitch, Jeff Quick, Brian Suskind

Marketing Director: Chelsea "Dot" Steverson

Marketing Department: Anya Combs, Trevor Kidd, Kendrick Smith

Copywriter: Chris Wright

Project Manager: Amber Seger

Logistics Manager: Kym Weiler

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If an object or creature is moved 10 feet or more and collides with another object, creature or surface, both take 1d6 bludgeoning damage. If a creature or object falls, it follows the rules for falling damage, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it falls.

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

FIELD RIDER

11th-Level Magnetist Feature

You can use a bonus action to manipulate magnetic fields to lift and move yourself. You gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed for 1 hour. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your PB and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

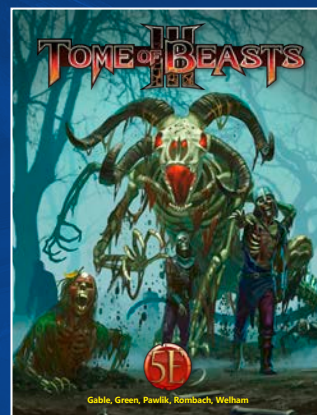
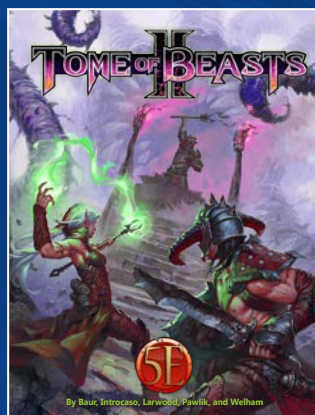
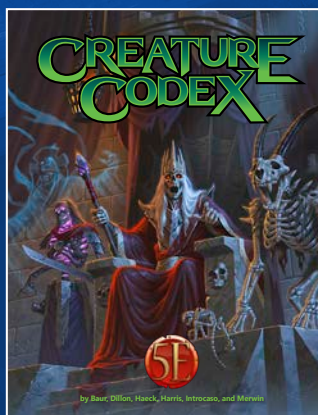
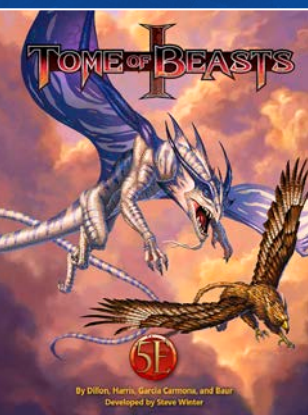
MAGNETISM MASTER

15th-Level Magnetist Feature

Your power over magnetic fields has increased, granting you the following benefits while holding your lodestone.

- A creature suffering the Polarizing effect of your Augment feature has disadvantage on attacks made against you.
- You have advantage on attacks made against a creature suffering the Polarizing effect of your Augment feature.
- When you use your Magnetic Manipulation feature, you can move a target a number of feet up to four times your INT modifier. If the target moves 20 feet or more and collides with another creature, object, or surface, both take 2d6 bludgeoning damage.





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