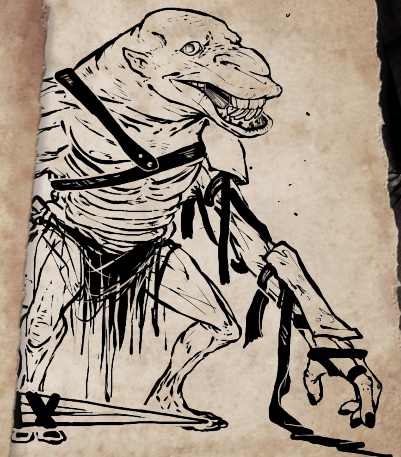


NARRATIVE DECLARATION 

ROTGRIND

A WORLD
IN DECAY



BESTIARY

DELVKIN

PATHFINDER
COMPATIBLE

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DELVKIN

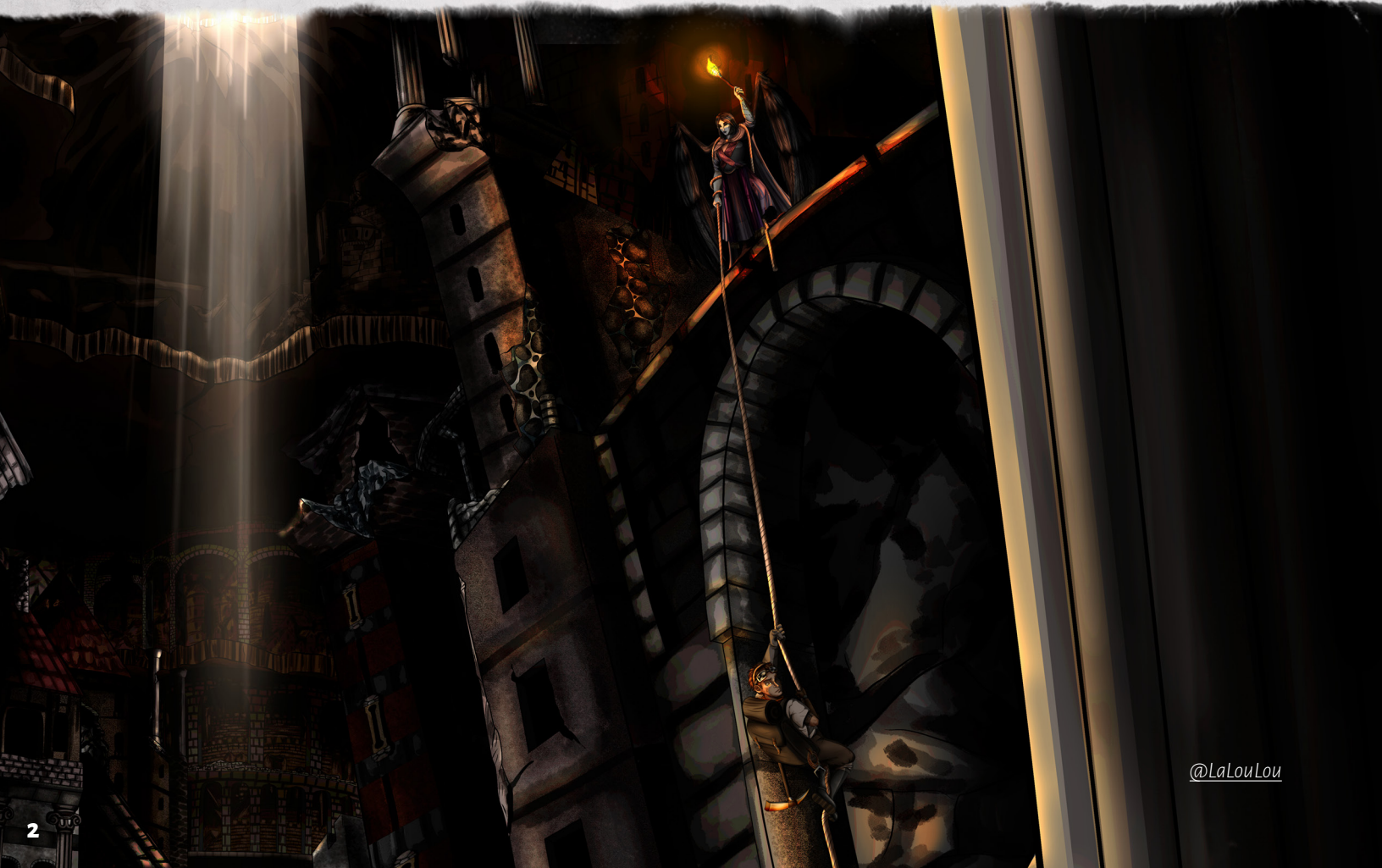
The mysterious species known as the delvkin haunt the Buried City that spans the depths under the great city of Outset. Their origins remain shrouded in mystery, though their presence is a constant threat to those exploring the forgotten depths of Tyne's oldest city. What follows is the first in a series of bestiary entries that details the hidden delvkin and their many subspecies.

HISTORY OF THE DELVKIN

Members of the Delvers' Guild in the city of Outset speak in hushed whispers of things in the Buried City; there are creatures that multiply in the depths and their only known name is the delvkin.

The origins—and to some, even the existence—of these albino humanoids is a matter of some debate. For as long as written history has existed, there has always been some mention of an entire society living within Outset's Buried City. The first such records date back to the disappearance of the last of the First People within Outset, and some believe that the events that led to that society's sudden departure correspond to the appearance of the delvkin.

Most delvers and Outset scholars posit that the delvkin are less the result of one prior civilization, but an amalgam of creatures who have become lost within the urban layers beneath the world's oldest city. Where it started is up for debate, but it's clear that entire districts have been left, over the millenia, to fend for themselves while sinking ever further into the depths. For many of these areas, once fully cut off from the surface, it means a slow extinction, while for some it might mean joining the ranks of the creatures in the subterranean depths.



[@LaLouLou](#)

DELVKIN PHYSIOLOGY

The appearance of delvkin widely varies between subspecies, though the greater species all seem to share a generally humanoid appearance with albino skin tones. Their faces generally appear stretched, with skin that is folded over onto itself like a strange texturing that assists with their ability to climb and maneuver in narrow spaces.

These creatures always possess a natural aversion to sources of bright light, and have adapted a form of nightvision that lets them thrive in the Buried City's lightless depths. Whether some ingrained past memory or a developed trait, delvkin always maintain a fascination with light, and though bright emanations cause them physical discomfort, they seek out light sources with an almost childlike interest.

Procreation remains a complete mystery, though the species must propagate itself somehow within the depths. The existence of the so-called sitters proves that the delvkin aren't immortal horrors, but do spawn and have young that likely grow to maturity. The study of the few corpses shows that the delvkin to have a similar structure in terms of reproductive organs, meaning that they could reproduce asexually or that some unknown species exists to further the delvkin's breeding potential.

DELVKIN SOCIETY

Regardless of their origins, the delvkin have been a sporadic threat for as long as folk have dared to brave the Buried City. While not every delve is guaranteed to come across these normally furtive humanoids, some delvers walk into a proverbial hornets nest by wandering into territory claimed by the delvkin with light that burns their sensitive eyes. To date, few pieces of evidence have returned to the surface to verify claims of the delvkin. Only a handful of corpses donated for scientific study to the University of Outset have had proper analysis, and to date all such examples have been dubbed as horrific mutations rather than a coherent species.

Delvers have dubbed groups of delvkin as throngs. Different throngs are identified by some societal differences, such as the use of different materials in fashioning clothing and weapons, or in the expressions and communication styles used by different delvkin. There's even further debate if these differences might represent the equivalent of heritages among delvkin, with some being ancestors of long-passed civilizations that once ruled Outset and have since developed into new forms of delvkin.

One element that delvkin seem uniquely associated with is the Rot. Throngs of delvkin seem to cluster around areas tainted with the Rot or regions that seal away the Rot. Delvkin of all subspecies have a natural resistance to the Rot and can withstand rotten effects inflicted upon them with a far greater resilience to most. Where this comes from is a mystery and scholars have yet to study the effects of Rot on delvkin for the potential danger of handling the Rot in a scientific setting within Outset.

Exactly what, if any, religious beliefs the delvkin is unknown. Some stranger variants of delvkin appear to possess occult powers, and at least one team of delvers has uncovered the abandoned site of a delvkin throng littered with strange totems and carved symbols. Research into some of these objects uncovered an association with the Entity known as Imhalthath, the so-called "End of Beginnings" and one of the inscrutable divine beings that exists outside the cycle of creation.

DELVESPEAK

The language of the delvkin is a pidgin dialect of clicks, groans and grunts that takes advantage of longer mouths to incorporate pitch into meaning. This language is unique to delvkin and requires a specific physiology to imitate, meaning that only magical spells like tongues can be used to successfully reproduce the language outside of the delvkin.

Small

Delvkin

Humanoid

This three-foot tall albino humanoid stares out with wide-eyes. Tattered robes and scattered pieces of dented and rusted metal provide it some clothing. Its face is stretched, giving it an almost equine feature as it sniffs and chatters its teeth in search of outsiders.

Perception +4; darkvision

Languages Delvespeak

Skills Athletics +4, Stealth +5, Survival +4

Str +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2

Items shortsword

AC 15; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

HP 15; **Resistances** rot 3

Light Blindness When first exposed to bright light, the delvkin is blinded until the end of its next turn. After this exposure, light doesn't blind the delvkin again until after it spends 1 hour in darkness. However, as long as the delvkin is in an area of bright light, it's dazzled.

Speed 25 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ shortsword +7 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

Sneak Attack The delvkin scavenger deals 1d6 extra precision damage to off-guard creatures.

LORE

The most common form of delvkin encountered by explorers are the aptly titled scavengers. This subspecies most accurately represents what passes as a typical delvkin within the Buried City and they can be found in multitudes. Anywhere from a handful to hundreds of scavengers might appear from the depths at the approach of an outsider, granting every delve an added layer of potential danger to their mission.

Delvkin scavengers typically employ rudimentary weapons (the example here uses a shortsword) that they claim from the forgotten chambers and halls of the Buried City. They tend to employ light weapons that don't burden them and that can be used in the tight spaces they often travel. Such scavengers learn quickly to employ their weapons in vicious displays of beatings or stabbings that target vital areas and work in tandem with other scavenger attacks to overtake more well-prepared foes.

A group of delvkin scavengers communicate in delvespeak, using their bespoke language to exchange simple bits of information that outsiders only hear as frightening clicks and groans. They have enough cunning to employ basic tactics and use of overwhelming force and positioning to take down intruders in their spaces. Sometimes, a handful of delvkin break out of their throng's territory in a mission to acquire more weapons or resources for themselves, which often leads to conflicts with delvers or other forces in the Buried City.



Small

Delvkin

Humanoid

Tattered cloth and corroded metal covers much of this child-sized humanoid, which clutches a bow and blackened arrows. An elongated mouth emerges from the hoob of cloth around its head, as its eyes look out assessingly.

Perception +7; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +7, Intimidation +4, Stealth +6, Survival +4

Str +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -1

Items dagger, composite shortbow (20 arrows)

AC 17; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

HP 34; **Resistances** rot 5

Light Blindness When first exposed to bright light, the delvkin is blinded until the end of its next turn. After this exposure, light doesn't blind the delvkin again until after it spends 1 hour in darkness. However, as long as the delvkin is in an area of bright light, it's dazzled.

Speed 25 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +10 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 ft., versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+3 piercing

Ranged ♦ dagger +10 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 ft., versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+3 piercing

Ranged ♦ composite shortbow +10 (deadly d10, propulsive), **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing

Mark Target ♦ (concentrate) The delvkin wretch designates a single creature they can see as their mark. The delvkin gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek the mark and a +1 circumstance bonus on Strikes against the mark. The first time the delvkin hits their mark in a round, they deal an additional 1d8 precision damage. These effects last until the delvkin uses Mark Target again.

Surprise Attack On the first round of combat, creatures that haven't acted yet are off-guard to the delvkin.

LORE

Where scavengers are the mainline citizens of delvkin society, the wretches are those most predisposed to depart the protection of the throng to strike out on their own or in small groups. These delvkin maintain the same physiology of their scavenger kin, but have adapted to act as hunters in the lightless depths of the Buried City, traveling out with a bow and arrow to bring down prey to sustain themselves and to bring back to the throng to trade for equipment to sustain their missions.

Delvers often encounter wretches as solitary hunters who track them for some time before departing when they realize they cannot tackle a group of ready adventurers. A single wretch allowed to escape might alert members of a nearby throng, returning with a group of scavengers or even other wretches to try to takedown the intruders and split up the loo they find among the corpses. In this way, wretches often act as a peripheral detection system for throngs, with their missions away from core delvkin society being an early detection system of intrusion.

One mission some wretches often take is the observance of Rotten sites within the Buried City. When not taking on missions to expand their arsenal or gathering goods to trade with the throng, it seems that wretches instinctively patrol around sites with dormant elements of the Rot or areas where the Rot remains contained. Though the Rot is a recent development on Tyne, its rampant appearance within areas of the Buried City have led some to speculate that the wretches that watch over it, also report their findings back to the throngs which have some strange association or interest in the Rot and its expansion in the Buried City.



Large

Delvkin

Humanoid

This hulking fifteen-foot-tall behemoth of muscled albino flesh strikes forward bedecked in a host of trophies. It clutches a chunk of stone simply torn from the earth and now acting as a club, while its hunched back is home to a host of miniscule forms that hoot and holler while brandishing tiny improvised ranged weapons.

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Delvespeak

Skills Athletics +14, Intimidation +10, Survival +12

Str +5, **Dex** -1, **Con** +4, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -1

AC 21; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

HP 90, all-around vision; **Resistances** rot 8

Light Blindness When first exposed to bright light, the delvkin is blinded until the end of its next turn. After this exposure, light doesn't blind the delvkin again until after it spends 1 hour in darkness. However, as long as the delvkin is in an area of bright light, it's dazzled.

Offspring Contribution **Trigger** A creature within 20 feet of the delvkin uses a manipulate action or a move action, makes a ranged attack, or leaves a square during a move action it's using; **Effect** The delvkin makes an offspring debris ranged Strike against the triggering creature. If the attack is a critical hit and the trigger was a manipulate action, the delvkin disrupts that action. This Strike doesn't count towards the delvkin's multiple attack penalty, and its multiple attack penalty doesn't apply to this strike.

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee **◆** rock club +14 (backswing, shove), **Damage** 1d10+9 bludgeoning

Ranged **◆** rock +14 (brutal, range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 2d6+9 bludgeoning

Ranged **◆** offspring debris +14 (range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Create Boulder **◆** (earth) The delvkin tears a hunk of earth or stone and throws it as a rock Strike. A creature hit must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save or be knocked prone.

Swipe **◆◆** **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The delvkin makes a melee Strike and compares the attack roll result to the AC of up to two foes, each of whom must be within their melee reach and adjacent to each other. Roll damage only once and apply it to each creature hit. A Swipe counts as two attacks for the delvkin's multiple attack penalty.



LORE

The delvkin sitter proves that some sort of life cycle exists within delvkin society. These hulking behemoths stand almost five times the size of their scavenger kin, akin to the brutish ogres of other cultures. While their size alone makes them a potent threat for delvers, its teamed with the fact that their back acts as a roost for a small host of delvkin infants which brandish wicked weapons.

What few delvers have survived encounters with the sitters have reported their findings to the guild, and scholars theorize that the sitters act as both protection for delvkin throng's youngest members, as well as a means of getting those younglings associated with the concept of murder. Like a child might learn how to ride a bicycle with training wheels, a delvkin infant learns the act of murdering foes from the protected back for a hulking behemoth who prevents others from getting close (or lasting long if they do get close!).

The sitter itself is a mutation of delvkin society, some occasional freak change in a delvkin's development that causes it to increase to immense size. Such beings often find themselves ostracized

in other cultures, but the delvkin see their sitters with a sort of calm reverence, allowing the sitters to act as they see fit within the throng's strange structure. It is rare to find a sitter away from the throng, unless it accompanies a wretch or group of scavengers against an unprepared delving group. The reason for this is that the sitter can easily defeat such groups and the children on its back can learn from the experience, honing their skills with ranged weapons and learning more about battling in the Buried City.

One other time a group may encounter a delvkin sitter is during the rare times that delvkin throng relocates or is defeated by another threat. Sitters act as shepherds for younger delvkin, and if encountered in such situations will avoid combat as best they can, but if dragged into a battle will fight with a berserker rage in defense of the children under their care.

WON'T SOMEBODY THINK OF THE CHILDREN!?

One of the core concepts of the delvkin sitter is that it is effectively a mount for a group of delvkin infants. Since the earliest days of tabletop gaming, groups have wondered how to handle the room full of goblin infants. We don't get into that with the sitter, and if your group (understandably) doesn't want to handle the presence of children, it's easy enough to re flavor the sitter to have tiny disruptive quills on its back. Alternatively, it's OK to simply indicate the children scamper off and escape into inaccessible tiny crevasses and holes if the sitter is slain, taking the disturbing choice of what to do with the delvkin spawn away from the players if your group doesn't want to have such discussion in their games.



NARRATIVE DECLARATION

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