

HUMBLEWOOD™

Humblewood Playtest

PEXIAN'S & THE PEARL CAVES

JANUARY 2025



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Happy New Year! The Humblewood playtest continues with material that we're testing to appear in future books. This month, we're trying a new format. Along with a new ancestry, the pexians, we're also sharing a new location, the Pearl Caves. We've also included monsters, adventure hooks, and encounters so you can start playing in this new location right away.

Let us know what you think about this content and the new format here: <https://forms.gle/v8jmwe3rH4LoohHM6>

New Race: Pexian

NEW RACES > DEATH

TWO WORLDS

Pexians are amphibious folk who originate in underground lakes on the Gasparian Isles. Today, they are found across land and sea, where they can use their ability to navigate both land and water to their advantage. Pexians are excellent swimmers thanks to their webbed hands and feet and strong tails. Artistry and philosophy are highly valued in pexian culture, and personal decoration is used to express beliefs as well as personal style. Pexians often adorn the colorful frills on their heads and tails with jewelry.

CHANGEMAKERS

Thanks to their unique ability to switch between their soft cave and tough swamp forms, pexians embrace change with enthusiasm. When pexians undergo the transformation from cave to swamp or vice versa, they can also alter other aspects of themselves, including their sex. Pexians have a flexible and broad view of gender, with individual pexians freely embracing one, multiple, or no genders at all.

Pexians also embrace change in other areas of their lives. Switching occupations or habits, even after a long time, is considered not only normal but healthy. Pexians' relaxed approach to major changes can earn them a reputation for being inconsistent and unreliable among other folk who value stability over a go-with-the-flow attitude.

DREAMERS OF THE DEEPS

Inspired by the teachings of their patron Amaranthine, Temik the Dreamer, Pexians place great importance on the power and significance of dreams. They see the veil between dreams and waking life reflected in the sea's relationship with the land. In each case, both worlds are real, but one can only be accessed when submerged or asleep. For pexians, the physical world and the divine world of dreams are inseparable and interconnected. Temik is also seen as a liminal figure, capable of moving between the divine and the physical world as easily as pexians shift between the underwater and surface worlds. Pexians find great meaning in omens and coincidences, chance meetings, and sudden departures. Such events may be ripples of the divine that have crossed over into the waking world through the Great Rhythm.

PEXIAN NAMES

Pexians make no distinction between genders in their names, and they don't use family names. Some pexian communities mark the transition between cave and swamp forms with slight name alterations. For example, someone called Lilo, as a cave pexian, might go by Lilon while they are a swamp pexian.

EXAMPLE TILLIA NAMES

Pexian names: Atlo, Chixan, Choxas, Kixin, Patlas, Michi, Niya, Notlu, Sivil, Temi, Tlau, Yai, Zun



PEXIAN TRAITS

Ability Score Increases. Increase one ability score by 2 and another ability score by 1. To play a typical cave pexian, choose Charisma and Dexterity. To play a typical swamp pexian, choose Strength and Wisdom.

Alignment. Pexian's changeable nature leads them toward chaotic alignments as they easily adopt varying points of view.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet. You have a swim speed equal to your walking speed.

Age. Pexians are slow to reach maturity, reaching adulthood at 25. They can live up to 100 years. All pexians begin life as cave pexians.

Size. Cave pexians stand around 3 to 4 feet tall on their hind legs or 4 to 5 feet tall on their tails. Swamp pexians are typically taller and broader, reaching heights of around 5 and ½ to 6 feet. Your size is Medium.

Amphibious. You are able to breathe both air and water.

Regeneration. You are able to regenerate your body to heal wounds and restore lost limbs, though the process is taxing. As an action, you can enter a regenerative state, which lasts for one hour. During this time, you restore a number of hit points equal to your proficiency bonus every 10 minutes. While in your regenerative state, you can regrow lost limbs, but take a level of exhaustion for each body part regrown in this way. You are incapacitated while in your regenerative state but can end it at any time as a bonus action. Once used, this feature can't be used again until you complete a long rest.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Pexian and one other language. You can understand Aquan, but you can't speak it.

Origin. Choose either the swamp pexian or cave pexian origin option.

CAVE PEXIANS

Cave pexians are inspired by the juvenile forms of axolotls and olms. They have smooth skin and brightly colored frills. Cave pexians have a wide range of vibrant skin tones, including pink, gold, and luminescent green.

Soft Body. Your pliable body can fit into places most others can't. You can fit through an opening as narrow as 1 foot wide without squeezing.

Swamp Pexian Transformation. You can choose to become a swamp pexian by carrying out a ritual that takes 24 hours to complete. At the end of this ritual, you lose your cave pexian traits and gain the swamp pexian traits. When you make this shift, you can change one or both of your choice of Ability Score increases that you made at 1st level.

Tail and Feet. Your long, thick tail can support your body weight, as well as the weight of any carried equipment, as long as you are unencumbered. You can spend 10 feet of movement to stand on your tail or dismount from it. While standing on your tail, your speed becomes 0, but you can use your feet with a bonus action to interact with objects, quaff a potion, make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or retrieve an item from your bag. When you engage in two weapon fighting and make a melee weapon attack using your feet, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

SWAMP PEXIANS

Swamp pexians are inspired by the adult form of axolotls as well as other salamanders and newts. They tend towards builds that are bulky and powerfully muscled. Swamp pexians are less brightly colored than their cave pexian kin and have rough skin in shades of green, brown, and grey, though their head and tail frills are often vibrant shades of orange, red, or blue.



Big Jaws. You can use your jaws to make an unarmed strike that deals 1d6 + Strength piercing damage. When you hit with your Big Jaws, you can use your bonus action to grapple the target if it is Medium or smaller. The escape DC for this grapple is equal to 8 + your Strength modifier + your proficiency bonus.

Cave Pexian Transformation. You can choose to become a cave pexian by carrying out a ritual that takes 24 hours to complete. At the end of this ritual, you lose your swamp pexian traits and gain the cave pexian traits. When you make this shift, you can change one or both of your choice of Ability Score increases that you made at 1st level.

Swamp Camouflage. Your mottled skin gives you advantage on Stealth checks made to hide or move through water or marshy areas.

Tail Slap. Your powerful tail can aid you in jumping and swimming. By slapping your tail when jumping, you can add a number of additional feet to your high jump equal to your Strength modifier. Additionally, your powerful tail increases your swim speed by 5 feet.

The Pearl Caves

THE PEARL CAVES

Thick waterweed obscures the view down the winding tunnel-street. The once pristine mosaics lining the walls are covered with algae. Some tiles have been lost, but the designs of pexians dancing can still be made out. The water all around you is cooler than it should be. Up ahead, something dark darts out of sight, sending out waves. Or was it just a trick of the shadows?

The Pearl Caves are the original home of the pexians located under the Gasparian Isles. Once home to a thriving community, the caves were recently abandoned by their inhabitants. A terrible monster called the **nightsnare*** pushed through from the fey realm of dreams and settled in the heart of the caves, forcing the residents out. The nightsnare's presence has polluted the psychic environment, turning the Pearl Caves into a nightmarish labyrinth where deep shadows hide fearful horrors drawn from the worst dreams.

Wet and Dry. The caves have a mixture of underwater and air-filled chambers and tunnel streets, excavated by both ancient pexians and the flow of water. While pexians and other folks who are comfortable in the water, like webpaw mustels, could move through the wet areas with ease, other visitors and residents relied on the dry passages and caves to move around. Even then, a quick dip to move from one dry area to another was often required. Many walls in public areas are carved and inlaid with mosaics made from shells.

Dark Times. Now, the vibrant caves lie in darkness, the once brilliant glow lamps gone dark with no one to tend to the jellyfish inside them. Thick patches of dangerous **drownweed*** have grown, making navigation difficult, and wild beasts like **weeping carp***, **quippers**, and **giant poisonous snakes** have moved into what were folks' homes. The nightsnare lurks in the center of the Pearl Caves and has made a nest of bones on the altar of Temik in the Amaranthine's most sacred shrine.

Reclaiming the Caves. Many wish to reclaim the Pearl Caves from the nightsnare, particularly the sacred shrine of the Amaranthine Temik the Dreamer. However, all attempts thus far have failed as the monster captures and devours the would-be heroes. Requests for help from the Wind King far above have been ignored.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

You can use these hooks to begin an adventure in the Pearl Caves or create your own.

Healthy Harvest (Low Level). An entrepreneurial webpaw mustel named Oskpaw [he/him] has a job posted on the local adventurer's guild notice board: Wanted—reliable adventurers to harvest drownweed from the edges of the Pearl Caves. Competitively compensated plus free rations! Oskpaw has secured a buyer who wants a large quantity of drownweed crackers.

Little Larvae Lost (Mid Level). A group of three pexian children have ventured into the Pearl Caves, trying to prove their bravery to each other. They have become lost and trapped in the unfamiliar tunnels. Mixti [they/them], a young pexian who refused to enter the caves, asks the party to find her friends. They are very worried about their friends' safety but also doesn't want to tell their parents for fear of being called a snitch as well as a coward. The lost children are holed up in an old theatre, hiding from a shoal of hungry weeping carp.

Slay the Nightsnare (High Level). A new expedition to evict the nightsnare and reclaim the caves is being planned. The party is approached by Chiltik [they/them], a priest of Temik the Dreamer, because of their reputation as heroes. Chiltik requests that the party venture into the heart of the caves and face down the nightsnare. They firmly believe that the party will be successful because they have seen them in their dreams. If the party is successful, the folk who once lived in the caves will reward them handsomely.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE PEARL CAVES

d6 Encounter

- 1 A hungry **weeping carp*** is attracted to the party's movement.
- 2 Two **giant poisonous snakes*** lurk in the shadow of a pexian statue.
- 3 The party swims into a patch of stick **drownweed***.
- 4 A crew of treasure hunters (**bandits**) are searching for loot abandoned by the residents of the caves. They are led by a webpaw mustel called Henpen the Lightpaw [she/her] (**bandit captain**).
- 5 A 20 foot section of waterlogged tunnel has partially collapsed. As the party moves through, they must make a DC 14 group Dexterity check. On a failure, the roof collapses, dealing each creature 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and restraining them (escape DC 14).
- 6 The **nightsnare*** has left its lair in the Shrine of Temik to go hunting.

WHAT LURKS IN THE PEARL CAVES

WEeping CARP

Weeping carp are named for the pattern of teardrop scales around their eyes. However, these fish are anything but sympathetic. Aggressive hunters, they take down prey much larger than them by dashing in to bite at vulnerable areas. Weeping carp also hunt each other, and many bear scars of battles on their thick, armor-like scales.

WEeping CARP

SMALL BEAST, UNALIGNED

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d6 + 24)
Speed 5 ft., swim 40 ft.

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

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 2 (00,000 XP)

Slippery. The weeping carp has advantage on saving throws to avoid or escape being grappled or restrained.

Small Fish, Big Bite. The weeping carp has advantage on attack rolls against creatures that are Medium or larger.

Water Breathing. The weeping carp can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The weeping carp makes two Bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

DROWNWEED

This tough and sticky seaweed grasps onto passing swimmers and turns them into fertilizer. It is difficult to distinguish from other waterplants. Drownweed grows wide dark green blades from long fronds. Though it is poisonous while wet, if drownweed is harvested and dried it becomes a nutritious snack. However, few dare gather it for fear of being drowned.

DROWNWEED

LARGE PLANT, UNALIGNED

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)
Speed 5 ft., swim 5ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning

Condition Immunities charmed, blinded, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone, unconscious

Senses blindsight 20 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

False Appearance. While the drownweed remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal water weed.

Sticky Tangle. When a creature hits the drownweed with a melee attack, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be disarmed as the weapon it used in the attack becomes stuck to the drownweed. A stuck weapon can be retrieved by a creature using an action to make a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check.

Water Plant. If the drownweed isn't immersed in water for over 8 hours, it is reduced to 0 hit points and dies.

ACTIONS

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target takes 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and it takes 18 (4d8) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The drownweed can constrict only one target at a time.

Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target takes 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage.

NIGHTSNARE

The nightsnare is a cruel fey creature that slipped into Everden through the weak veil between dreams and reality in the Pearl Caves. It lurks in the cavern that was once the shrine of Temik the Dreamer. Its narrow head rests at the end of a long, flexible neck, allowing it to hunt for living creatures in tight spaces. As a creature of dreams, its appearance shifts to inspire terror in beholders, but it always has far too many teeth. This powerful fey warps the reality around it, bringing dream logic into the waking world and making the rules governing spaces and distances flimsy and bendable. The nightsnare likes to eat the minds of the creatures it traps before devouring their bodies. It is a patient creature. The nightsnare knows that by occupying a sacred site, heroes will come to it and be easy hunting.

LAIR ACTIONS

In its lair, the nightsnare is able to reach through the weakness in the veil between dreams and the waking world to draw forth terrible things. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the nightsnare takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the nightsnare can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- The nightsnare targets a creature it can see within 60 feet of it and summons forth one of its nightmares. The nightmare uses the statistics of a **sea hag**, but its appearance reflects the fears of the target. The nightsnare can't summon more than 3 nightmares at one time, and all the nightmares vanish when the nightsnare is defeated.
- Until initiative count 20 on the next round, any humanoids that can see the nightsnare must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or have their speed reduced to 0 until the end of its next turn.
- The geography of the lair shifts. Each creature the nightsnare can see must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, a target is teleported to an unoccupied space the nightsnare can see.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The nightsnare's presence transforms its lair into a waking nightmare causing any of the following effects:

- Within 10 miles of the lair, creatures sleep poorly, plagued by nightmares.
- Creatures within 1 mile of the lair have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks as they see things that are not there moving in shadows.
- Divination spells targeting the lair do not show reality, but the spell caster's worst fears of what might be in the area.

NIGHTSNARE

LARGE FEY, CHAOTIC EVIL

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 195 (26d10 + 52)
Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

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

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +8, Int +9, Cha +11

Skills Deception +11, Insight +10, Intimidation +11, Perception +10

Damage Immunities psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 15 (500,000 XP)

Amphibious. The nightsnare can breathe air and water.

Creature of Darkness. The nightsnare can't use its legendary actions or lair actions while it is in sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the nightsnare fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nightsnare uses its Morbid Snare and makes two Bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target takes 20 (3d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) psychic damage.

Morbid Snare. The nightsnare targets up to six creatures within 120 feet of it that can see it. Each target must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or become charmed by the nightsnare. While charmed in this way, a creature must use its movement to move toward the nightsnare and can't willingly move away from the nightsnare. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the nightsnare's Morbid Snare for the next 24 hours.

Nightmare Wave (Recharge 5–6). The nightsnare releases a pulse of dark energy in a 40-foot radius centered on itself. Each creature in the area must make a DC 19 Charisma saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) force damage plus 24 (7d6) psychic damage and being pushed 15 feet away from the nightsnare on a failed save, or take half as much damage and not being pushed on a successful one.