



A NEUROPHAGED DWARF AND HALF-ORC

NEUROPHAGED

KATRALL COULD STILL REMEMBER THE FEELING OF WARM broth on a cold day, even if they couldn't taste it anymore—not really, not in the same way. Even so, Katrall made it just the way their mother taught them; in the absence of taste, trust the recipe. The recipe always remains the same. The kitchen smelled right. Their hands stirred with practiced ease.

There are other memories: how to braid hair, how to sing, how to fold linens into neatly tucked shapes. All these things preserved, but distant, like insects caught in amber.

Katrall remembered these things. And loneliness. Being thrust penniless onto the street by that same mother. This, mercifully, feels distant now, too. There's a reassuring buzzing behind Katrall's eyes. The alien's presence, the shared mind.

Katrall's not alone. Not anymore. They have joined a new family.

You are no longer what you were.

Those who undergo full subsumption into the hivemind—willingly or not—emerge changed. The neu-

rophaged retain the memories of their past lives, as well as a semblance of their personality, but have been reborn in body and mind, their biology remolded by the alien intelligence. Your skin becomes smooth and hairless, and your eyes lose their pupils to take on a strange, watery shimmer. You are impervious to most nonmagical diseases, and tire less easily.

If a neurophaged is under the thrall of a hivemind (the beginnings of most), it is bound to the hivemind's will. But once the source of that will is destroyed, any connected neurophaged will gain their independence—and retain some of its gifts.

Freed from the hivemind's overwriting directives, neurophaged are faced with the grand task of finding purpose, identity, and trust in a world that sees you as something...other.

ORIGIN CULTURES

Depending on the nature of the hivemind's disappearance, your personality and memories from your previous life are more or less left intact. As a result, your background, culture, and racial details are unchanged from your origins as a neurophaged, although you may or may not choose to return to them.

SEARCHING FOR COMMUNITY

The hivemind source was unknowable, but it was never cruel. It gave you something: belonging without judgment, clarity without question. Your freedom came at the cost of that clarity.

Freed neurophaged often seek to reconstruct that lost wholeness in the world around them. The lucky return home and enjoy a second claim on life. Many are drawn to communes or close-knit adventuring parties, while others lose themselves in grand causes, societal hierarchies, or other forms of belief systems. The intensity with which a neurophaged may connect to such relationships or causes may seem strange to people, even disconcerting, but to the neurophaged, it fulfills an instinctual need—a way to quiet the emptiness left behind.

Rest assured: you are still yourself. But your self was once part of something greater, and sometimes, in silence, you miss it.

NEUROPHAGED NAMES

A neurophaged that's left without memories or who decides to reinvent themselves may choose a new name. This name could be what they knew as part of the hivemind, or something reflective of what they want to do with their newfound lease on life. Sometimes, a neurophaged will use the name of the hivemind as a surname or locative byname.

Neurophaged Names: Art, Blaze, Brave, Glimmer, Dream, Hope, Love, Luminous, Meaning, North, Prosper, Quest, Self, Silence, Scrape, Star, Tear, Wander, Weaver, Wind, Zilch

NEUROPHAGED TRAITS

Neurophaged have a mixture of traits as a result of their subsumed—and reclaimed—origins. They retain a portion of their original racial traits and replace the rest with new ones adopted from the hivemind.

Ability Score Increase. Your ability score increases remain unchanged from the ones granted by your original race.

Age. You age at a slightly slower rate than your original race.

Size. Your size remains unchanged from your original race.

Speed. Your base walking speed remains unchanged from your original race.

Darkvision. Thanks to your psionic abilities, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray. This trait replaces any Darkvision trait (or similar trait) gained from your original race.

Disease Inoculation. You are immune to disease.

Limited Psionics. You know the *message* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you can cast the *detect thoughts* spell once with this trait and regain the ability to do so when you finish a short or long rest. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells, and when you cast them with this trait they don't require any components.

Proficiencies. You retain the same proficiencies gained from your original race.

Psionic Resilience. You have resistance to psychic damage, and you have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or possessed.

Languages. You retain the same languages gained from your original race.

VARIANT: ORIGIN TRAIT

With your GM's permission, you can retain one trait from your original race and/or subrace in place of the Psionic Resilience trait. This trait cannot grant you a feat. This is especially useful for characters whose original race includes a trait that's inextricably linked to them.