

MERMAIDS

A 5E PLAYER RACE BY DM TUZ



MERMAIDS

*"I want to be, where the people are.
I want to see them dancing!"*

Mermaids, also known as merfolk, are aquatic humanoids who merge human and ichtyan features. In their home beneath the sea, mermaids have existed parallel to the other races of the world for centuries, free to establish their own civilization without outside influences.

For generations, mermaids have lived in harmony with the oceanic world and among one another. While not entirely spared from hardships in their long history, compared to the wartorn histories of the surface, the mermaid's existence has been notably peaceful and prosperous. Though tensions and rivalries exist, they are commonly resolved through diplomacy and wit, instead with brawn and blade. This history reflects on the mermaids as a whole, who have developed to become harmonious and peaceful people, but perhaps in the eyes of the surface dwellers, naive and sheltered might be a more appropriate label.

Until the world of the mermaids and those of the surface dwellers met, mermaids have featured in plenty of tales told by sailors who had brief and half-remembered encounters with their kind. Therefore, the idea of mermaids permeated the surface culture long before their arrival, leading many mermaids to face preconceived notions about them and their kind birthed from the fantastical stories told about them. Perhaps confusing to mermaids exposed to them, but certainly not to their displeasure, as mermaids are genuine lovers of tall tales.

Mermaids are romantics through and through, typically believing in grand ideals and principles that may manifest in their often embellished view of reality. This romantic streak can manifest in many ways, but is a trait all mermaids share, may it be the fulfillment of a lifelong goal, the adventure of a lifetime, or becoming a person of great importance that leaves a mark in history. But they are not self-focused in their pursuits, as they are susceptible to others' passions, just as they seek to inspire others as well.

PART OF THEIR WORLD

One of the greatest tales told among the mermaids is the history of how their people were gifted the ability to walk the lands.

It is a story about a mermaid yearning for love but unable to find it, searching across the sea far and wide. But then a song lured her to the surface - a melody yearning for love - a melody that deeply resonated with the lone mermaid. When she breached the surface, she saw a lone human at the shore singing the tune. The lonely human captured her heart, and she experienced love she never thought she could. Despite not sharing a language, she responded with a tune of her own. Their song transcended words, and the human fell in love with the mermaid. They would continue to meet and

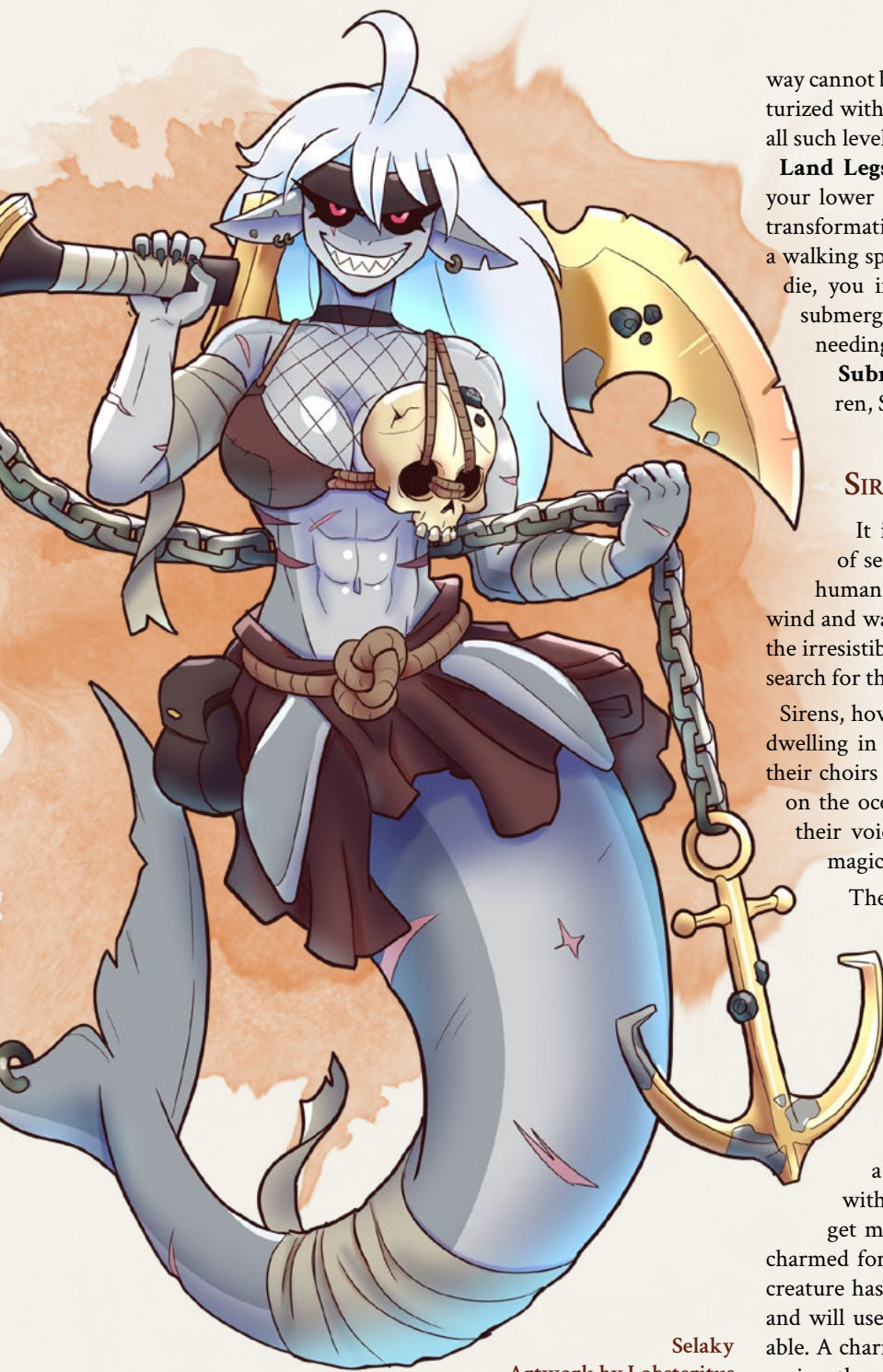


Siren
Artwork by Lobsteritus

sing once more, again, and again, and again.

The mermaid, though, grew discontent. The human was a creature of the land, and she was a creature of the sea. They lived in different worlds, yet she ached for the human's embrace. Upon their next meeting, she rode the grandest wave to carry her and was flushed to the shore, right into the arms of her beloved human. In that embrace, the mermaid refused to return to the sea; even as she grew weaker, she would not part with her love. In the end, she withered away and turned to seafoam, right in her lover's arms.

When the sea reclaimed her remains, her tears of love and joy mixed with the ocean's salty waters, blessing all of her kin to walk the land so that they too could find their hearts desire, whether it be on the land or in the sea.



Selaky
Artwork by Lobsteritus

MERMAID TRAITS

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score by 2 and increase a different one by 1, or increase three different ability scores by 1.

Creature Type. You are a humanoid (shapechanger).

Size. Your size is Medium.

Speed. You have a swimming speed of 30 feet and a walking speed equal to half your swimming speed.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, and another language of your choice.

Aquatic. You can breathe both air and water, and your default movement is swimming. Any effect, trait, or spell that increases your movement speed increases your swim speed instead. Additionally, you must submerge yourself in water or be similarly moisturized at least once every 24 hours, or you gain one level of exhaustion. Exhaustion gained this

way cannot be removed by a long rest unless you were moisturized within the last 24 hours — if you were, you recover all such levels at the end of that rest.

Land Legs. As an action, you can magically transform your lower body into humanoid legs. You can revert this transformation as an action. While in this form, you gain a walking speed equal to your swimming speed. When you die, you immediately revert to your true form. While submerged in water, you may revert to your true form needing no reaction.

Subraces. Choose one of the following subraces: Siren, Selaky, Kraken, and Aboleth.

SIREN

It is said that Sirens were born from the union of sea and song, their voices once believed by early humans to be ghostly echoes carried to the shore by wind and wave. Many have lost their lives at sea, drawn by the irresistible allure of these enchanting melodies in a vain search for their source.

Sirens, however, are actually a common type of mermaid, dwelling in magnificent underwater societies from which their choirs send songs soaring to the surface. They thrive on the ocean's harmony and rhythm, which resonate in their voices, lending each note a mesmerizing, almost magical power.

Their underwater cities are alive with music—from grand ceremonial performances marking important occasions to the casual melodies that fill their daily routines. For a Siren, who is constantly surrounded by the harmonious voices of their choirs, silence is deeply unsettling and always in need of being filled.

Siren Voice. As an action, you can perform a Siren's Song, targeting any number of creatures within 60 feet of you that can hear you. Each target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for the duration of the performance. A charmed creature has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and will use its movement to stay within 60 feet of you if able. A charmed creature that takes damage may repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. A charmed creature that ends its turn unable to hear you is no longer charmed. The DC is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier. You must use your action on each subsequent turn to maintain the performance; if you don't, it ends immediately. The performance cannot last longer than 10 minutes. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Alternatively, you can use a bonus action to expend a use of your Siren Voice to lace your voice in charming magic for 10 minutes. If you do so, any Charisma ability check using your voice has advantage for that duration.

Aquan Tongue. Beasts and monstrosities that dwell in water that can hear you understand your speech as though you share a language.

Natural Performer. You are proficient in the Performance skill and an Instrument of your choice.

SELAKY

The fierce Selaky are known for migrating across the world's seas in pursuit of adventure and riches. To brave the uncharted waters, the Selaky developed remarkable courage and ferocity—traits that have served them well. Today, they are most commonly found on the ocean's frontiers, where they fully embrace the freedom these wild expanses offer.

Their abrasive demeanor sets them apart as social outsiders among the more peaceful mermaids. As a result, the Selaky generally keep to themselves or seek the company of those who, like them, care little for decorum or polite society.

Bite. Your sharp teeth make your bite a natural weapon for unarmed strikes. On a hit, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier. At 9th level, this damage increases to 1d8.

Blood Frenzy. As a bonus action, you can move up to half your speed toward a creature you can see and make a bite attack against it. If the target is missing any hit points, you have advantage on the attack roll. You can use this bonus action a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Darting Speed. Your swimming speed increases by 5 feet.

Selaky Scent. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks to detect or locate creatures that are missing hit points.

KRAKEN

In the abyssal depths dwell the Krakenkin—commonly known as Kraken. These beings are the descendants of legendary beasts and their mermaid subjects, brought into existence through the use of eldritch magic. Their task was to protect ancient knowledge and enigmatic artifacts left behind by their creators, wielding the primordial magic of their forebears to drive away all who would attempt to steal them.

However, over the generations, faith in this solemn duty has waned for many Krakenkin. Some have abandoned their posts, venturing out to explore the oceans and beyond in search of greater meaning. As a result, Kraken are a rare and curious sight among the mermaids.

Kraken Magic. You learn the *Shocking Grasp* cantrip and the *Witch Bolt* spell and can cast them both without material components. You can cast the *Witch Bolt* spell without expending a spell slot at a level equal to your proficiency bonus. When you do so you must finish a long rest before you can do so again. When you choose this subrace, you choose Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Tentacles. You possess 8 tentacles that you can use to make unarmed strikes or deliver touch-range spells. Your tentacles have the reach property. On a hit, you deal bludgeoning damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier. You can also use your tentacles

to grapple creatures; while doing so, your tentacles can be targeted by attacks, using your AC and applying your resistances and immunities. Your tentacles can hold objects, but cannot perform complex tasks such as using tools, wielding weapons, or performing somatic spell components.

Darkvision. 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.

Kraken
Artwork by Lobsteritus



ABOLETH

An enigmatic offspring of the mermaids found in hidden grottos at the darkest ocean depths, the Aboleth are as strange as they are rare. When compared with their mermaid relatives, they appear grotesque, if not monstrous. In place of fins, they develop tentacled appendages, and slimy skin covers their whole body. With both, they may easily traverse the labyrinthine underwater tunnels that branch from their cavern homes.

Matching their outer appearance, their minds are equally strange, working in otherworldly patterns and seeming to transcend worldly logic. However, it is precisely this alien mind that grants them telepathic powers, which can warp others' perceptions of the physical world. Their tentacles appear to be conduits of this psionic mastery. With a touch of their tendrils, they can link minds with others and establish a telepathic bridge. Through that connection, an Aboleth can clearly communicate their otherwise alien thoughts to a recipient.

Their origin is an mystery, even to their own kind, though it is theorized that they have spawned from mermaids intermingling with the eldritch forces of the far realm. Further investigation of their true nature and culture has proven difficult, as Aboleth's abyssal habitats are not only hazardous to explore, but they will make steady use of their psionic powers to avoid outsiders. Nonetheless, through bizarre twists of fate, a few Aboleths escaped their cavernous domains, finding themselves in a world equally as strange to them as they are to the world.

Psionics. You know the *Phantasmal Force* spell and can cast it without any components. You can cast this spell without expending a spell slot once and can do it again when you finish a Long Rest. When you choose this subrace, you choose Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as your spellcasting ability for this spell.

Aberrant. You can read, speak, and write Deep Speech. Additionally, you have advantage on saving throws against effects and spells that specifically target humanoids.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 120 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.

Telepathy. You can communicate telepathically with any creature within 30 feet of you, provided you share a language. If you are in direct physical contact with a creature capable of speech, you can communicate with it telepathically as though you share a language for as long as the contact is maintained.



Aboleth
Artwork by Lobsteritus

MERMAID UNIQUE FEATS

MERROW MARK

Prerequisite: Mermaid (Any)

Through the boon of a higher power, or primal entity, you have earned the Merrow's Mark. This mark allows you to connect with a primordial form of your ancestry, granting you the following boons:

Ability Score Improvement. Increase one of your Ability scores by 1.

Swift Change. You can now use your **Land Legs** trait as either an action or a bonus action.

Merrow's Medicine. Your flesh gains healing properties. If you are willing, you can allow another creature within 5 ft. of you to take an action and feast on you. When they do, you spend one hit dice (if you don't have any hit dice left, take an amount of damage equal to your hit dice plus your constitution modifier) and the creature regains an amount of hit points equal to the highest number on the hit dice spent plus your constitution modifier. In addition, if the creature regains hit points this way, it is no longer diseased or poisoned.

SIREN SERENADE

Prerequisite: Siren Mermaid, Level 4+, Charisma 13+

Your voice has evolved and now carries the true alluring rhythm of the sea, imbuing it with magical properties. You gain the following bonus:

Ability Score Improvement. Increase your Charisma score by 1 (to a maximum of 20).

Song of Suggestion. You learn the *Suggestion* spell and when you use your **Siren Song** trait, you can cast *Suggestion* as part of the same action, targeting one creature targeted by your Siren Song without having to expend a spell slot by artistically weaving your suggestion into the lyrics of your performance. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your spell.

Enraptured Audience. Whenever you use an action to extend your **Siren Song** you can beckon one creature you charmed. On the charmed creatures' next turn, it must use its movement to approach you, taking the most direct, yet safest path towards you while staying within 60 ft. of you.

FEEDING FRENZY

Prerequisite: Selaky Mermaid, Level 4+

You have truly become a feared ocean predator. You gain the following bonus:

Ability Score Improvement. Increase your Strength score by 1 (to a maximum of 20).

Hungry for More. Whenever you score a critical hit or reduce a creature to 0 hit points with your **Blood Frenzy** trait, you regain the expended use of your **Blood Frenzy**.

Lingering Taste. When you hit a non-construct and non-undead creature with a bite attack, you have advantage on any Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Survival) check to find it for 1 hour.

PRIMAL KRAKEN MAGIC

Prerequisite: Kraken Mermaid, Level 4+

The kraken blood in your veins has awakened. You gain the following bonus:

Ability Score Improvement. Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1 (to a maximum of 20).

Stormborn. You gain resistance to lightning damage

Jumping Jolt. Whenever you cast the *Shocking Grasp* cantrip, its range becomes 30 ft. and in addition to its other effects, on a hit you can choose another creature within 5 ft. of your target. That creature takes half as much lightning damage as the original target and also can't use reactions until the end of your next turn.

EVOLVED TENTACLES

Prerequisite: Aboleth Mermaid, Level 4+

Your tendrils are no more sensory organs, but weapons of your own. You gain the following bonus:

Ability Score Improvement. Increase your Intelligence score by 1 (to a maximum of 20).

Aboleth Tendrils. Your tentacles become weapons that you can use to make unarmed strikes with. Your tentacles have the reach property and when you attack with them you can choose your Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma instead of your Strength. When you hit with your tentacles, you deal bludgeoning damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier.

Once per turn when you hit a creature with your tentacles, you can unleash a psychic assault on the creature, dealing 2d6 psychic damage and you regain hit points equal to half of the psychic damage dealt. You can do so a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before you have to finish a long rest to do so again.



Artwork by
DM Tuz

Designers Note: Siren Song

I figure that the average player might see the Siren Song and be alerted over its strength. So here is a quick reminder of how it works in actual play:

- The Charmed condition does not prevent creatures from fighting all-together, nor will they stop attacking your allies. They will only stop attacking you and your ability checks interacting socially with them have advantage.
- If you choose to interact with them socially with a Charisma (Persuasion) check for example, you will spend an action to do so, probably leaving you no action left to continue your performance.
- Disadvantage on Perception checks also means that a creature suffers a -5 penalty to passive perception.
- Yes, this trait works similar to *Enthrall*, but also forcing you to use your actions to extend its duration while also keeping the targets within range.



Created by Dungeon Master Tuz
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