

## Monster ENCyclopedia: Grung

This is a series of articles about specific monsters from D&D's history. Each entry takes a look at the origin of one D&D creature, and tracks its appearances and evolution across different editions. This entry covers one of the creatures associated with the Trickster Gods of Omu in *Tomb of Annihilation*: the grung. It originally appeared along with a number of other creatures in a combined *Tomb of Annihilation* article.

---

### Contents

[1st Edition](#)

[2nd Edition](#)

[3rd Edition](#)

[5th Edition](#)

[Grung parts](#)

[Forgotten Realms](#)

[Greyhawk](#)

[Historical Reference](#)

[Grung miniatures](#)

[Grung names](#)

[Comparative statistics](#)

[References](#)

---

### Origins

Grungs are clearly inspired by poisonous frogs found in the real world, and specifically the poison dart frogs native to Central and South America. Although small (between 1.5cm and 6cm or roughly 0.5 and 2.5 inches) they rank in the planet's top 10 most poisonous creatures, with a single golden dart frog containing enough poison to kill 10-20 adult humans. Like grungs, these frogs are brightly colored, and their poison is secreted so that it coats their skin. They are called dart frogs because their poison is used by some indigenous cultures to coat darts for use in hunting, but the frogs themselves are not aggressive. They are considered among the most intelligent of all frogs. Their poison is a result of the alkaloids in their diet of ants, mites and termites, so when fed different insects in captivity these frogs are not poisonous. Sadly, many of these species are now threatened because of humans encroaching on their habitats.



Poison dart frogs, image from [Wikipedia](#)

There is less precedent for human-sized frogs in myths and legends, although the Loveland frog is worth mentioning. Reportedly first sighted in Loveland, Ohio in 1955 and several times since, this creature is a four-foot tall humanoid with a frog-like face and skin that walks on its hind legs. The Shawnee people who originally inhabited the region around the Little Miami River are also said to have sighted this creature, calling it “Shawnaooc” or “demon of the river”. The Loveland frog is sufficiently well-known to have inspired a 2014 musical, *Hot Damn! It's the Loveland Frog!*, so it is possible that the creator of the grung was aware of this urban legend. It's just as likely, however, that given that D&D already had birdmen (aarakocra), lizardmen, crabmen, and yak folk, the thinking was simply: why not frog people?

---

## 1st Edition

The toad-like, swamp-dwelling humanoids known as grungs first appeared in *Greyhawk Adventures*, last of the orange spine AD&D hardcovers, published on the cusp of 2nd Edition. As the author of *Greyhawk Adventures*, James M. Ward gets the credit for the grung, possibly shared with one of the seven other credited designers. Sadly, the grung did not get an illustration until its 2nd Edition appearance.

Three-foot tall amphibians, grungs resemble giant versions of the frogs or toads from which they may have evolved. They stand upright on strong lower legs, which are webbed, while their arms and heads are slightly more humanoid. Grungs hop rather than walk, but are incapable of substantial, bullywug-like leaps. Their upper limbs are muscular, and their opposable thumbs make them confident tool-users. Grungs breathe through their skin, which must remain moist; they must submerge themselves in water for at least one minute every three hours to avoid suffocation. In color, they vary from green to brown on their backs to yellow and white on their bellies. They have humanoid-looking heads and relatively small, red eyes with black pupils, protected by bony ridges.

Grungs lack the extendable tongues found in many frogs, and instead have a mouth full of sharp teeth, clearly signaling their carnivorous nature. They prefer ambush tactics and use short bows and spears, always poisoned. This poison is the grung's toxic skin secretions, so it simply wipes weapons on itself before battle. This toxin is a deadly poison to non-grungs (usually causing death in 1-4 minutes), but breaks down rapidly in air. Both poisoned weapons and the skin of a dead grung become inert after ten minutes. A grung's saliva also contains low concentrations of toxins, so it can have a fatal bite, but it will generally only bite if weapons are not available. The water around grung settlements is usually polluted by poisons, such that drinking the water causes nausea.

Grungs are intelligent, lawful evil, and carnivorous, a dangerous combination. They are uncommon creatures and dwell in swamps and marshes. Grungs are highly territorial and warlike, and most often encountered in wandering war bands during the day. They claim all territory within a mile of their settlement as their own and view any intruders, including those from neighboring grung tribes, as potential food. Grungs have their own language, and can communicate with other amphibians, even primitive ones, to a degree. They do not learn other languages, as they have little interest in talking to their food. From time to time they take live prisoners (especially enemy grungs) to be the main course at their next feast.

Typical communities number up to a hundred, living concealed inside large dead trees or other crude shelters. Grungs are egg-laying, and have a three month tadpole stage before losing their tails, at which point their limbs are developed enough for them to leave the water and join the tribe. They are considered adults after a further six months. Roughly a quarter of the population of any large grung settlement will be juveniles. Tribes accumulate some treasure from their victims, generally coins, gems and jewelry, but occasionally magic items.

Grung tribes are matriarchal. Female grungs are larger than males, and males have no say in tribal decisions, but both male and female grungs are aggressive and dangerous. War chiefs and shamans are exclusively female, and challenges to the incumbent chieftain are through duels to the death. Tribal leaders decorate themselves with ornaments made from the bones of enemies they have slain and eaten at feasts. When no

other food is available, grung hunt rats and other swamp mammals. Grungs themselves are too unpalatable to have many predators, but giant snakes have been known to eat them, as have other grung tribes.

Mechanically, grungs have low hit points (1+2 hit dice). Tadpole grungs have a single hit point, while juveniles have 1-1 hit dice. Except for their potent poison, grungs have feeble attacks (THAC0 18, and 1-6 point of weapon damage or 1-3 points with bite). They have okay defenses (AC 7), steady morale (13) and average intelligence (8-10). They have a walking speed of 9" and a swimming speed of 12". Grung shaman can reach third level.

---

## 2nd Edition

The 2nd Edition version of the grung appeared in *MC5: Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk Appendix*, but the description is a lightly edited version of the text from *Greyhawk Adventures*, with only minor changes and additions: Their THAC0 has worsened to 19 and it is noted that grungs are not immune to poisons other than their own. Grung shaman have access to the following spheres: all, animal, combat, healing (reversed only), and plant. This time the grung gets an illustration.



*MC5: Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk Appendix* (1990)

The adventure *Train of Events* in *Dungeon* #44 doesn't contain any grungs, but it does include a book on the language of the lesser spotted grungs of the Zapatai jungles. We do finally get a color picture of a grung on card #375 of the 1992 *Trading Cards*. The pictured grung appears to be wearing chainmail and wielding a shield, but the stats on the back of the card don't reflect this and are those of a normal grung.



1992 *Trading Card* #375 (1992)

---

### 3rd Edition

Despite its limited jumping abilities, the grung hopped right over both 3rd and 4th Editions of D&D. There is a 3rd Edition version in [ENWorld's Creature Catalog](#). In the jump from 2nd to 5th Edition, the plural—until now just “grung”—became “grungs”. For consistency, the 5th Edition convention has been used throughout this article.

---

### 5th Edition

5th Edition has given grungs a new lease on life, with the vast majority of all D&D grung references occurring since 2016's *Volo's Guide to Monsters*. They are still aggressive, territorial, poisonous frog people, but they are now also tree-dwelling slavers, and their matriarchal society has been replaced by one based on caste and color.



*Volo's Guide to Monsters* (2016)

Grungs are small, lawful evil humanoids with high dexterity and constitution. They now live in the trees of rainforests and tropical jungles rather than in swamps and marshes. Their swim speed has vanished, and has been replaced with a climb speed equal to their walking speed (25 ft.). 5th Edition grungs are better at jumping; they have a *standing leap* ability allowing them to jump up to 25 feet horizontally or 15 feet vertically from a standing start.

As amphibians, grungs can breathe in air or water. They prefer shade, to prevent their skin from drying out. Grungs now need to immerse themselves in water for longer—at least an hour per day—to avoid becoming temporarily exhausted. Their skin still secretes a toxic substance, and although the 5th Edition description doesn't explicitly state that they use this to poison their weapons, it is implied by their pervasive use of toxins. Any creature coming into direct contact with a grung's skin must save or become poisoned. If a grung dies, or the poison is removed from its skin, it loses its potency within a minute. Grungs are now completely immune to all poisons, not just their own.

Although they live in trees, grungs maintain a hatchery in ground-level pools, where they lay eggs. As in earlier editions, the grung tadpoles take three months to take adult shape, and then an additional six to nine months to progress from juvenile to adult. Grungs remain fiercely territorial, and view themselves as superior to most other creatures, whom they frequently capture as slaves. Slaves are treated poorly. Used to

perform menial tasks for the grungs, their food is treated with mild poisons to maintain lethargy and compliance. This has a permanent deleterious effect over a long period of time, and only magic can restore such a slave's mental health. Grung speak only their own language.

*Volo's Guide to Monsters* presents three different grung stat blocks. An ordinary grung has 2d6+4 hit dice (11 hit points), an armor class of 12 and a simple dagger weapon attack (+4 to hit, 1d4+2 damage plus 2d4 poison damage on a failed save). The grung wildling has 5d6+10 hit dice (27 hit points) and an armor class of 13 (usually improved to 16 using *barkskin*). In addition to a dagger, the wildling uses a shortbow (+5 to hit, 1d3+3 damage plus 2d4 potential poison damage) and knows the following ranger spells: *cure wounds*, *jump*, *barkskin*, *spike growth*, *plant growth*. The grung elite warrior has 9d6+18 hit dice (49 hit points) and an armor class of 13. It doesn't know any spells, but has both dagger and shortbow attacks. In addition, it has a recharging *mesmerizing chirr* ability which can briefly stun any creatures within 15 feet able to hear it.

Borrowing from the dart frogs on which they are based, 5th Edition grungs come in a wide variety of bright colors. Their society has a caste system based on these colors. Each caste of grung lays eggs in a separate hatching pool. Hatchlings all begin greenish gray and grow into their caste color as they age. The different colors/castes are:

- Green: warriors, hunters, laborers
- Blue: artisans and domestic activities
- Purple: administrators and commanders
- Red: scholars and magic users (these use the wildling stat block)
- Orange: elite warriors (these use the elite warrior stat block)
- Gold: leaders, including the tribe sovereign (these also use the elite warrior stat block)

It is possible, although rare, for an individual to be invited to join a higher caste, with a corresponding color change achieved through herbal tonics and ritual magic. Once changed, an elevated grung will produce offspring of the new color.

*Volo's* contains a sidebar of optional rules for variant poisons based on a grung's color. A poisoned creature affected by a grung of each skin color...

- Green: ...can only move by climbing or jumping vertically.
- Blue: ...must shout or make a loud noise before and after acting on its turn.
- Purple: ...is compelled to submerge itself in liquid or mud as soon as possible.
- Red: ...must eat if there is available food.
- Orange: ...becomes frightened of its allies.
- Gold: ...is *charmed* and can speak Grung.



*One Grung Above* (2017)



In the *One Grung Above* supplement, released in 2017 to support [Extra Life](#), Chris Lindsay, D&D designer and “Director of the Grung Preservation Society” explains that he was responsible for pushing for the grung to appear in *Volo’s*. He was also responsible for running an [all-grung game](#) during Wizards of the Coast’s 2017 Stream of Annihilation. The supplement contains brief biographies of three of the grungs from the game: d’Ahten’khan (a 5th-level monk courtier), b’Ang’r’ang and b’Leep (both 5th-level rogue outlanders).



*One Grung Above* (2017)

*One Grung Above* also includes a list of the traits gained by player character grungs, including *poisonous skin*, *standing leap* and *water dependency*. Notably, the height range of a grung is given as 2½ to 3½ feet, and the average weight as 30 pounds. Grungs are said to live up to 50 years.



*Muk's Guide to Everything He Learned From Tasha* (2020)

Another product released to support Extra Life is *Muk's Guide to Everything He Learned From Tasha*, which is described as an “adventure activity book”, and aimed at kids. One of the adventure seeds requires the collection of webs of the rare and elusive spiderfrog from grung king Robbit the Slimy. There are stat blocks for king Robbit and the grung who dwell in the Dankwood where the adventure is set. These grungs have an alignment of “lawful grumpy”. Elsewhere in the activity book, Muk has to navigate a maze to get past the grumpy grungs to get Winnieberry Tree fruit.



*Dungeons & Tombs: A Young Adventurer's Guide* (2019)

There is a two-page spread covering the grung in *Dungeons & Tombs: A Young Adventurer's Guide*, one of a series of D&D books aimed at younger readers. Most of the text paraphrases information from *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, but we are informed that their sticky toe pads give them excellent balance, which is a characteristic not previously mentioned. Accompanying the description is an illustration of relative size.



*Dungeons & Tombs: A Young Adventurer's Guide* (2019)

In 2022, Wizards of the Coast updated a number of 5th Edition monsters in *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*. Updated stat blocks for the grung, grung wildling and grung elite warrior were included. In the revised stats for all three, the “grung” subtype is gone and they can now be of any alignment. The poison used to taint grug weapons no longer has a save, it deals an automatic 2d4 extra damage on a hit. The wildling no longer has the redundant *jump* spell, or *barkskin*. Instead it gets a permanent natural armor class boost from 13 to 16. A wildling can now cast the *druidcraft* cantrip at will.

---

## Grung parts

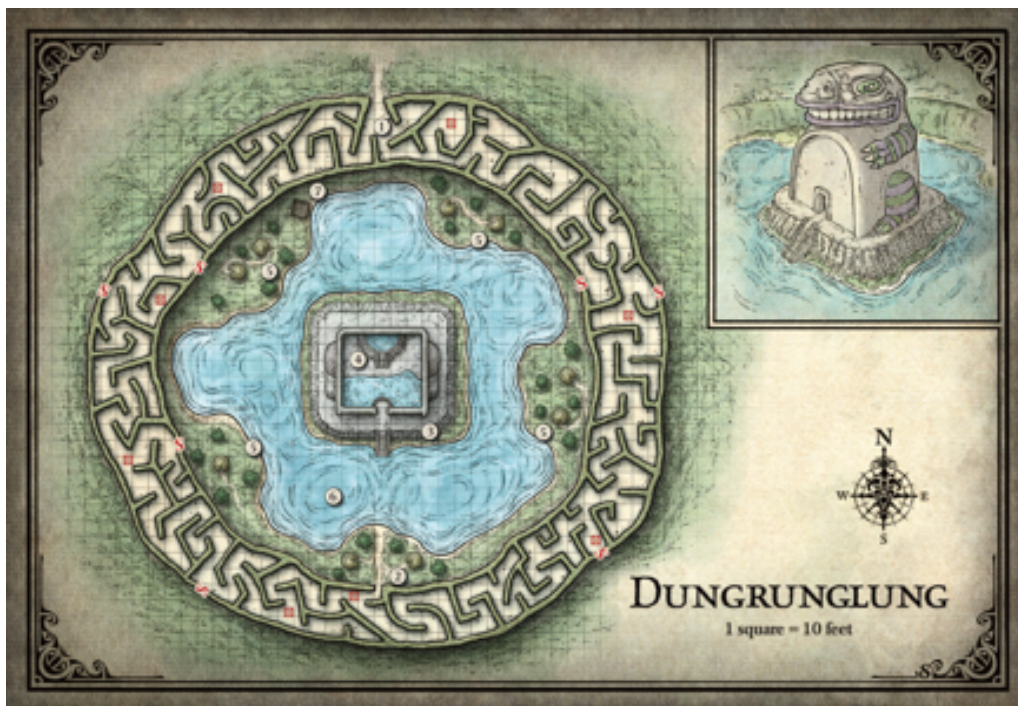
In *The Barber of Silvermoon*, released to promote some of the new creatures from *Volo's*, there is an evil barber who has three captive grungs (one green, one blue and one purple). He is using the secretions from the grungs' skin to create magical hair dyes. The green grung dye provides the benefits of *jump* and *spider climb* but deals poison damage. The blue dye makes the target's hair loud. It generates crackling sounds with the slightest movement and a vigorous shake of the head causes the effects of *thunderwave*. The purple dye makes the dyed hair perpetually wet, constantly dripping water and effectively a *decanter of endless water*.

According to the *Tomb of Annihilation*, candied grung eggs are a delicacy eaten by some yuan-ti.

---

## Forgotten Realms

Grungs were unknown in the Forgotten Realms until *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, but have made up for that since. There are plenty of grungs in the jungles of Chult in *Tomb of Annihilation*, which notes that although not all grungs are evil, even the non-evil ones mark the edges of their territories using hanging corpses of slain foes. They are enemies of the tabaxi, who hunt grungs in small groups. There is some demand for grung handiwork in the markets of Port Nyanzaru. Encounters with grungs outside of their settlements are likely to be with hunting parties.



Dungrunglung, *Tomb of Annihilation* (2017)

Featured in *Tomb of Annihilation* is Dungrunglung, a grung settlement protected by a 20-foot high maze of magic vines. Central to the village is a 60-foot tall mud brick shrine, where fanatic King Groak intends to summon the god Nangnang so that he can mate with her. Nangnang, who takes the form of a grung, is the most selfish and cruel of the nine trickster gods of Omu, and is bitter enemies with the kamadan Shagambi, whose spear she stole.





Nangnang's symbol, *Tomb of Annihilation* (2017)

Unusually for grungs, the residents of Dungrunglung are willing to interact with outsiders rather than immediately enslaving or eating them. This is because they have an undead problem, and since undead are immune to poison, they need assistance to solve it. There is a power struggle underway in Dungrunglung between Roark (an elite warrior focussed on protecting the village from the undead), Groak (the current king, who is obsessed with wooing the goddess Nangnang) and Krr'ook (a priest concerned with her king's insane obsession). Visiting adventurers may find themselves caught up in the summoning ritual, possibly trying to improvise a fake godly appearance by Nangnang to fool King Groak.

Another small colony of grungs dwells in the Forbidden City of Omu, in the rooftops around Nangnang's shrine. The leader of this colony is a hadrosaurus-riding, gold-skinned grung, Chief Yorb. Elsewhere in the city, a vegepymgy tribe has captured Yorb's beloved one hundred and eightieth son Imbok and is about to sacrifice him by tossing him into Omu's Great Rift. Rescuing Imbok may persuade Chief Yorb to provide assistance to visitors; he is otherwise hostile to strangers.



Chief Yorb, *Tomb of Annihilation* (2017)

The *Tomb of Annihilation* season of D&D Adventurers League features several encounters with grungs. The *Season 7 Narrative: Port Nyanzaru* mentions the Grudge-Gill tribe, who inhabit the jungles to the north of the Fane of the Whispered Fang. This tribe, led by Ker'kiri'ka, worship the yuan-ti of the Fane as gods. A member of this tribe, a green grung named Wadumu Who-Would-Be-Blue, offers himself as a guide in *DDAL07-04: A Walk in the Park*. During the trip, Wadumu reveals the existence of secret grung traveling nests (called tunulunga) in the jungle trees. These are constructed using oils and grung saliva.

CCC-SRCC01-02: *Down the River of Snakes*, is set in the town of Ylraphon on the southern edge of the Moonsea. The adventure includes a black dragon wyrmling who is worshiped by half a dozen purple-skinned grungs. CCC-THENT01-01: *Beneath the Surface* deals with a group of grung from Chult acting as envoys to slavers of the Moonsea region. They have occupied underground ruins to the east of Thentia, but have recently come into conflict with chitines over control of the area. In CCC-SEA-01-02: *Oh, Not the Bees!*, there is a grung named Gurka working on board the *Albatross* (a gambling and entertainment ship) as a face-painter. Since he uses his bare hands to do the painting there is a high risk of being poisoned and ending up with a face which is both painted and completely numb.

---

## Greyhawk

Until 5th Edition, grungs were exclusively associated with Oerth, but made few appearances in Greyhawk products. In the initial description in the *Greyhawk Adventures*, grung are described as the among the creatures residing in the Vast Swamp most likely to be deadly to travelers. The *Atlas of Flanaess* in the *From the Ashes* boxed specifies that grung can also be found in the Sunndi swamplands to the north of the Vast Swamp.

Hungry, gigantic crocodiles and infighting between tribes keep grung numbers in check in most of the Vast Swamp, but in the northern regions near Sunndi the grung have recently become more aggressive. This is because one of their tribal leaders has found a *ring of amphibian control*, and his increasing sway over enemy tribes means their aggression is now more outwardly than inwardly focussed.

---

## Historical Reference

*The Dark Continent* in *Dragon #189* suggests that grungs are appropriate monsters to use in an African-themed campaign.

---

## Grung miniatures

WizKids released two grung miniatures as part of the *Icons of the Realms: Dungeon of the Mad Mage* set. Figure #6 is an ordinary (green) grung while figure #16 is a (yellow) grung elite warrior.



*Icons of the Realms: Dungeon of the Mad Mage* (2019), images from [MinisGallery](#)

---

## Grung names

Aisin, b'Ang'r'Ang, b'Lahp, b'Leep, b'Lip, b'Loop, c'Ahbülos, d'Ahten'khan, Groak, Gurkha, Imbok, Ker'kiri'ka, Krr'ook, Roark, Robbit the Slimy, Yorb, Waduma.

## Comparative statistics

			
Edition	<b>AD&amp;D (1st Edition)</b>	<b>AD&amp;D 2nd Edition</b>	<b>D&amp;D 5th Edition</b>
Source	<i>Greyhawk Adventures</i>	<i>MC5: Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk Appendix</i>	<i>Volo's Guide to Monsters</i>
Size	Small (3 feet tall)	S (3' tall)	Small
Type			Humanoid (grung)
Alignment	Lawful evil	Lawful evil	Lawful evil
No. Appearing	4-48 (50-100)	4-48	
Armor Class	7	7	12
Hit Dice/Points	1+2	1+2	11 (2d6+4)
Speed	9"/12"	9, Sw 12	25 ft., climb 25 ft.
Abilities	Int Average (8-10)	Int Average (8-10) Morale Elite (13)	Str 7, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10
Senses			Passive Perception 12
Attacks	1 bite, 1 weapon	2	Dagger +4 melee or ranger
Damage	1-3 (bite), 1-6 (weapon)	1-3 (bite)/1-6 (weapon)	4 (1d4+2) piercing and 5 (2d4) poison
Special Attacks	Poison	Poison	Poisonous Skin Standing Leap
Special Defense	Nil	Nil	Immune poisoned
XP	35 + 2/hp	120	Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)
Treasure	20% 1-12 x 1000 copper 30% 1-6 x 1000 silver 10% 1-4 x 1000 electrum 25% 1-6 gems 20% 1-3 jewelry 10% any 2 magic items	20% 1-10 x 1000 copper 30% 1-6 x 1000 silver 10% 100-600 platinum or electrum 25% 1-6 gems 20% 1-3 art objects 10% any 2 magic items	

## References

- [Greyhawk Adventures](#), p27-28 (August 1988)
- [MC5: Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk Appendix](#) (April 1990)
- 1992 Trading Cards, #375/750 (September 1992)
- [From the Ashes](#), Atlas of Flanaess, p60, 74 (October 1992)
- Dragon* #189, p15, *The Dark Continent* (January 1993)
- Dungeon* #44, p70 Train of Events (November 1993)
- Volo's Guide to Monsters*, p156-157 (November 2016)
- [The Barber of Silvermoon](#), p7-8 (February 2017)
- [One Grung Above](#), Stream of Annihilation (June 2017)
- [Tomb of Annihilation](#), p14, 20, 49-51, 93, 101, 108, 195, 201 (September 2017)
- [D&D Adventurers League Season 7 Narrative: Port Nyanzaru](#), p9-10 (September 2017)
- [CCC-THENT01-01: Beneath the Surface](#), p6, 14, 16 (October 2017)
- [CCC-SRCC01-02: Down the River of Snakes](#), p21 (October 2017)

[One Grung Above](#), p1-4 (October 2017)

[DDAL07-04: A Walk in the Park](#), p3, 8 (November 2017)

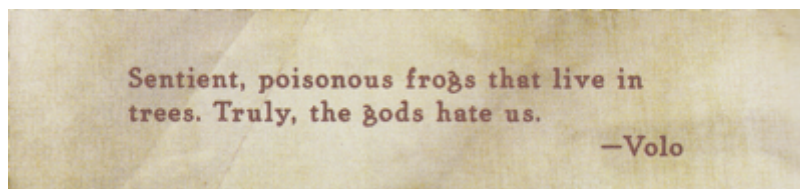
*Icons of the Realms: Dungeon of the Mad Mage*, figures #6/44 and #16/44 (March 2019)

*Dungeons & Tombs: A Young Adventurer's Guide*, p62-63 (November 2019)

[CCC-SEA-01-02: Oh, Not the Bees!](#), p7 (August 2020)

[Muk's Guide to Everything He Learned From Tasha](#), p11, 30-32 (December 2020)

[Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse](#), p149-150 (May 2022)



---

### Other ENCyclopedia entries

Visit the [Monster ENCyclopedia index](#) for links to other entries in this series.

---

### Comments? Suggestions?

Visit the [discussion thread](#) on ENWorld.

---