



NEPHILIM

THE TERRIFIED SCREAMS OF THE CHILDREN around Nulara's legs turned to gasps of awe, the village burning down around them forgotten for just a moment as the plainly-clothed gardener they passed on the way to school every morning caught the falling steeple and tossed it away as if it weighed no more than a piece of firewood. She winked at them with a glowing eye, then took off towards the towns square where the monsters had first emerged, moving so fast that sparks lit beneath her feet on the charred cobblestones. Every instinct told the children to run for the safety of the hills, but they followed anyway, eager to see what she might do next. As they drew closer, the haughty roars of the brimstone-stinking creatures had turned to bellows of pain, and above the clash of metal on claw, they heard a single voice, sharp as a dagger and clear as the peal of a bell, laughing loudest of all.

Solitude and savagery make up the lives of the nephilim, an ancient race forgotten by all save those who took part in their (almost) complete extermination. The descendants of the First Children inevitably find themselves drawn to conflict and hardship, even when all they desire is a simple life. Feared and respected by Heaven and Hell alike, they fight without a family, a nation, or a banner, driven instead by a doom that is in their very blood.

GRIM TITANS

A nephilim moves with purpose in even the most mundane motions. Nephilim average between 7 and 8 feet in height, weighing anywhere from 200 to 500 pounds, most of it sheer muscle. They resemble tall humans in terms of features, but often have unusually-colored skin that sets them even further apart from their mortal cousins. Their hair grows fast and long, and their glowing, solid-colored eyes are simultaneously ethereal and unsettling. They lack facial and body hair, often giving off the impression of living gods, so many nephilim will hunch over or dress unassumingly to deflect some of the attention they inevitably attract. Those who enjoy that attention (or simply don't care) often find themselves subconsciously drawn to the style of their ancestor.

DISTANCE BORN OF CAUTION

Nephilim do not age, their years coming to a halt around their mid-30s. Should they survive long enough, this unparalleled longevity blesses them with a long-sighted perspective on the cyclical nature of the world that not even the elves can match, but in spite of those who yearn for life eternal, this gift is not without its drawbacks.



A RACE WITHOUT HISTORY

Because of their lack of any centralized culture or homeland, most nephilim have no idea of their racial origins or even what they are beyond 'different' from others of their mortal parent's race. Most mortals won't know either, taking them for unusually tall aasimar, unless they're familiar with ancient mythology. Holy and unholy creatures recognize nephilim for what they are, and will treat them with a combination of caution and respect - at least until they realize the nephilim is clueless as to their true place in the pantheon of divinity. The few nephilim who are aware of the legacy in their blood have mixed reactions to angels, devils, and the devout of each; some may harbor a grudge against those factions for the virtual extinction of their race, while others may seek to ally themselves in an attempt to atone for the sins of long-dead generations. Others may simply avoid them altogether.

So as not to get attached, many of them keep a professional distance from other mortals, though some embrace the fleeting nature of life and intentionally seek out companionship where they may. Even relatively young nephilim will have seen their friends, loved ones, and at least one parent grow old and die while they remain frozen in the prime of life; for many, the dull ache of loneliness is an easier burden to bear than the sharp pain of loss. As a result, nephilim individuals have a reputation as aloof and even cold-hearted, but this could not be further from the truth.

Unlike many other long-lived races that take a more even-handed stance, nephilim are intensely emotional, though many have learned to hide it behind a mask of reservation. Their emotions, particularly anger, are easily stirred, held in check only by hardened hearts. Should a mortal crack through a nephilim's defenses, they will make a friend who would, quite literally in some cases, take on all Seven Heavens and Nine Hells for them.

WANDERERS AND WARRIORS

Nephilim are creatures of action, whether that action is hunting down a great evil or secretly watching over a village or city for centuries on end. Most nephilim find work as adventurers, tracking down monsters or clearing out ruins, anything to appease the instinct to go out into the world and throw down with the worst it has to offer. Even those who attempt to live simple lives away from civilization will always seem to find themselves thrust into action; a necromancer may choose to build their lair nearby, or perhaps a marauding band of orcs will just so happen to come raiding right through the nephilim's territory. Whether those nephilim somehow magically attract such situations is a question for metaphysical scholars, for when those moments come, and they always do, the nephilim will be unable to stay neutral for long. Luckily, a nephilim is also always ready to fight.

While other races have natural gifts of stonecrafting, diplomacy, or sorcery, the nephilim's gift is combat. Even younger nephilim fight with an ease that speaks of experience beyond their years, and a nephilim who has not drawn their sword in decades still moves in battle as if they've practiced every day of their lives. None of this is to say that nephilim are invincible, far from it; a nephilim's innate desire to challenge themselves - and thus the ends they inevitably meet - is the primary reason why this already sparse race of immortals hasn't overrun the mortal races.

Most of all, nephilim have an unwavering sense of justice, a desire to set wrongs right, passed down through millennia from their forebears. It is the true legacy of the nephilim: a desire to see the kind live in peace and the wicked have their faces smashed in. Far from a child's black and white understanding of good and evil, nephilim act decisively even in morally ambiguous situations, even if it means no one goes punished - or unpunished. Most will follow the laws of mortals, but if those laws be unjust, then the nephilim has no need of them.

There are a select few nephilim who still share their ancestors' decisiveness, but in place of the inborn desire for balance is an innate bitterness, a corrupting hatred of all things kind and good. It is unknown where this sourness of the soul comes from, and it is still possible for such cursed nephilim to do good and, more importantly, to be good, but battle against a nature of that sort is a constant struggle, and such individuals often barrel down darker paths, eventually becoming monsters capable of such blindly evil depravity that even the likes of drow and illithids are ill-disposed to ally with them.



NEPHILIM NAMES

Nephilim can only be born to the pairing of a nephilim and a mortal, so their names almost always end up in line with other names of the region or parent race.

NEPHILIM TRAITS

Your nephilim character has a number of traits in common with other nephilim

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Age. Nephilim reach adulthood in their late teens and stop visibly aging between 20-30 years, with the oldest appearing to be in their mid-30s. They do not die of old age.

Alignment. Nephilim carry the legacy of their progenitors in their blood, and as such tend towards lawful alignments, although some (particularly Scions of Strife and Absalom) carry a more individualistic or even chaotic streak. Regardless, they are almost all categorically good, though this good may take many forms; one living in secret among mortals may dedicate themselves to small acts of kindness that leave the day brighter than it began, while their more boisterous brethren may make a living as demon hunters or even freedom fighters in lands ruled by tyranny.

Size. Nephilim are quite tall, ranging from 7-8 feet in height - sometimes taller. Even the 'weakest' of them are quite muscular, weighing in between 200 and 400 pounds. Your size is medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Otherworldly Instincts. You know the *Detect Evil* and *Good* cantrip. This does not count against your cantrip total.

Child Of Three Worlds. Your creature type is humanoid, celestial, and fiend. You have advantage on saving throws against effects that affect celestial and fiend creature types.

Natural Weaponmaster. You have proficiency with four weapons of your choice.

Unwavering Will. You cannot be frightened, and have advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Horsemen's Rage. As a free action at the beginning of your turn, you tap into your nephilim heritage, temporarily taking on the characteristics of your ancestor for one brief, terrible moment. Your weapon gains the reach property and does an additional 1d4 damage (type determined by your Scion on the table) until your next turn; if your weapon already had the reach property, it gains an additional reach of 5 feet this turn. If you are using a ranged weapon, it has an additional 5 feet of range instead. The damage increases to 2d4 at 6th level, 3d4 at 11th level, and 4d4 at 16th level. Additionally, if you do not move or take any other action this turn, you may make an attack on every creature in front of you within range, with a separate attack roll for each.

You may not use this ability again until after a long rest.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common. You can also understand Celestial and Infernal, and can speak, read, and write your choice of those two.

Subrace. All Nephilim trace their heritage back to either one of the Four Horsemen or to the hidden child of Absalom, resulting in five subraces: scion of War, scion of Death, scion of Fury, Scion of Strife, and scion of Absalom. Choose one of these subraces.

SCION DAMAGE TYPE

Scion	Damage Type
WAR	Fire
DEATH	Necrotic
FURY	Psychic
STRIFE	Force
ABSALOM	Poison

SCION OF WAR

As a descendant of the Horseman War, battle is in your very blood, the clash of steel on shield your meat and drink. Scions of War have tanned, bronze, or otherwise sun-touched skin, with piercing white eyes and matching white hair, and are built with broad shoulders capable of sporting the heaviest arms and armor.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2.

Weapons Enthusiast. Whenever you make a skill check to identify weapon marks or wounds, you are considered proficient in the related skill and add double your Proficiency Bonus to the check, instead of your normal Proficiency Bonus.

SCION OF DEATH

As a, however unlikely, descendant of the Horseman Death, you are nimble and quick as a ghost, sure as death itself. Scions of Death have highly desaturated skin that often has a purple, blue, or green tint to it, with inquisitive orange eyes, and shining black hair. They are the tallest of the scions, and their thin builds, far from looking emaciated, serve only to highlight their bone-taut muscles.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

Macabre Affinity. Undead, though conscious of your presence, will not attack you unless you attack them first. Sentient undead can understand you no matter what language you are speaking, and you can understand them as well.





SCION OF FURY

As a descendant of the Horseman Fury, you come alive in combat and contest, a living storm of movement and pain in the heat of battle. Scions of Fury tend to look the most 'human' of all the Four's descendants except for their fierce white eyes and wild shocks of purple, magenta, or even flame-orange hair that billow in an unseen wind. Fury's children are built like dancers, their elegant forms both alluring and intimidating.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength or Dexterity score increases by 2.

Acrobatics Pragmatist. When making a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or a Dexterity saving throw, if you are currently wielding a weapon with the reach property, add your weapon proficiency bonus in addition to any other modifiers.

SCION OF STRIFE

As a descendant of the Horseman Strife, you are fast on your feet and faster on the draw, always ready to cash in action whatever check your mouth writes. Scions of Strife possess jet-black, drow-like skin, expressive yellow eyes, and hair that collects in sleek, spike-like shapes. Strife's descendants are lithe and long-legged, perfectly built for walking the earth - or running from trouble.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

Fast On The Trigger. When you use a Charisma skill on a sentient creature, if you succeed, then you have advantage on your next Charisma skill check on the same person. If you fail, you have advantage on the first attack roll you make against that same creature.

SCION OF ABSALOM

As a descendant of the nephilim's greatest hero, you are forever marked by the bitterness of the Horsemen's betrayal, the rage of your forefather's last moments roiling within even as it gives you strength. The spawn of Absalom's cursed bloodline have blueish-green skin, menacing yellow eyes, and bone-grey hair; in addition, blackish shapes seem to swirl just beneath their skin like a roiling ocean, adding to their already unsettling appearance. Like Absalom once was, his descendants are hulking and muscular, as tall as his are broad.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2.

Corrupted Heart. Instead of damaging you, poison damage heals you for half of the damage it would have done. You may also absorb poison from a poisoned creature by touching them, neutralizing the poison and regaining hit points equal to 1d4 + your spellcasting ability modifier.



AUTHOR'S NOTE: NEPHILIM HYBRIDS

While most nephilim are born to human parents, and thus have a humanoid appearance, nephilim are fully compatible with many more mortal races. A nephilim with a dragonborn parent will still have scales, horns, and the maw of their draconic side, but their scale color and eyes will match that of their nephilim parent. A nephilim with a dwarven parent will have a head and beard of fine, silken hair, and will probably be a great deal taller than other dwarves, but not as tall as a human-born nephilim. Have fun with creating your character, and don't feel constrained to a human design!



ART CREDITS

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Background Image

Darksiders 3 DLC Concept - Darly Mandryk
<https://www.artstation.com/mandryk>

Inset

Death (in-game render), Darksiders 2
(2012, Vigil Games)

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Chaosseater Cosplay Replica photo, taken from
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Absalom (in-game render), Darksiders 2
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SPECIAL THANKS

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