

CampaignCogs

The Virtuous and the Vile

Morithal

Lord of Unceasing Hunger



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Lord of Unceasing Hunger

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Chapter One

Rise of the Maggot God

"When you speak of hunger, you speak of me. When famine strikes, I am there. I am the patron of gluttons and the starving alike. I am the Lord of Unceasing Hunger, The Maggot God, He Who Gnaws, The Feasting Worm, and The Ravenous One. I have always been here. And soon, it will be my time to rise."

-Declaration of the Eternal Hunger, Oaths to the Starving Coterie

The Lord of Unceasing Hunger has been around a long time, both in the assumed game world of Clockwork Gnome Publishing and in my imagination. He first appeared as the primary antagonist in a campaign that pitted two different adventuring groups against his forces from the Realms Below. In those days he was known only as the Worm That Gnaws and his goals were pretty straightforward: extinguish the sun and consume the gods who opposed him. While the heroes from that campaign made sure his plans came to naught, it was only a minor setback in a much larger scheme of total dominance.

Not much has changed since then. The Worm That Gnaws has gained the name Morithal. His past

is more clearly defined, and his influence, expanded to include multiple worlds of the Material Plane. But his ultimate goals remain much the same, and his manifestation as the Maggot God is something that existed from the very beginning.

Morithal's existence owes a huge debt to mythology, the works of Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, and the rich material produced by so many authors, film makers, artists, and other creative people. The inspirations are many and derive from more sources than can be reasonably enumerated. The Lord of Unceasing Hunger would never have emerged if not for those geniuses and dreamers, world builders and lore weavers who inspired his creation.



Protopenoi

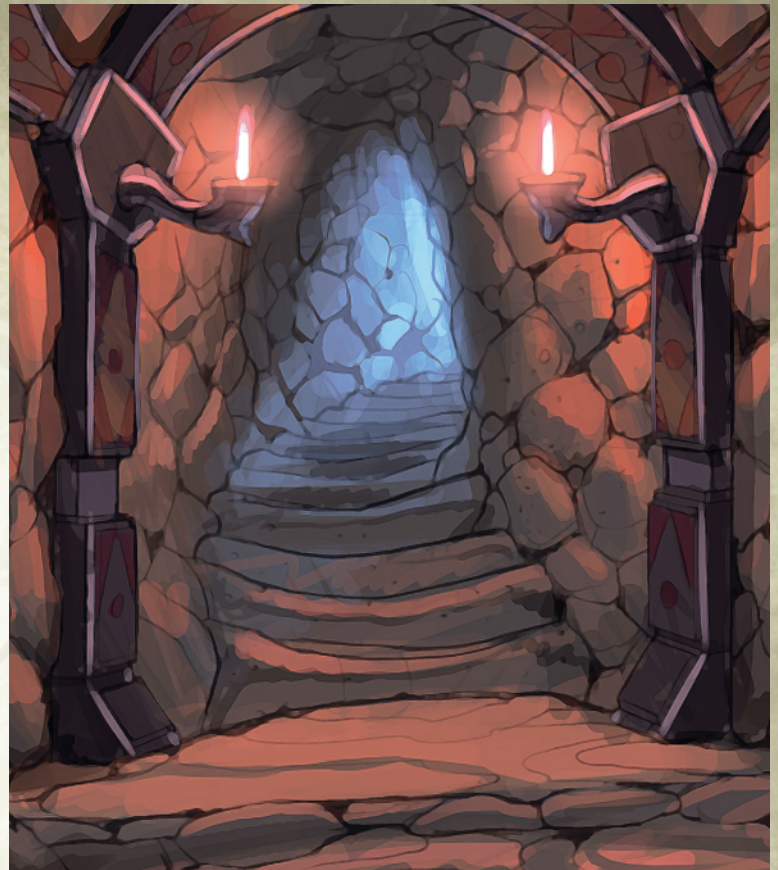
Morithal is one of the oldest individuals in the multiverse. He belongs to a very special class of entities known as the Protopenoi. In one form or another, the Protopenoi survived the destruction of the previous multiverse and have continuously influenced the current one. Each of these beings is unique. Their stories form a body of lore that provides a dim recollection of a previous existence. In most cases, Protopenoi are unrelated to each other, sharing only a single trait best described as a remarkable ability to endure. But, collectively, the Protopenoi represent a span of time that defies definition. Calling them ancient is inadequate. Many creatures are immortal, but the Protopenoi are eternal.

Protopenoi are entities that view the multiverse in a way that far exceeds the perceptions of nearly every other creature in existence. While some Protopenoi seem familiar, others are alien, either by virtue of their nature or, as in Morithal's case, because of events that warped their essence. While they vary greatly in potency, all of them are worthy of respect and, as a rule, are part of lore that does not originate in this reality. Their unpredictable, almost unknowable natures inspire fear in even the most powerful beings in the multiverse. Few would willingly stand against their might.

The Underworld

Throughout this book, references are made to the Underworld and its inhabitants. This term refers to the subterranean realm that exists beneath many fantasy worlds and which operates under some common assumptions.

- The Underworld is immense. It stretches beneath whole continents and delves deep into the world. There are subterranean seas that rival those found on the surface and caverns so massive whole cities can easily fit inside.
- Life in the Underworld is surprisingly abundant and it is home to a wide variety of races and creatures. While many were formed in the dark and haunted depths, some of these are former surface dwellers who have adapted to the harsh conditions.
- Some of the mightiest civilizations ever conceived are hidden in the Underworld. Dark elves and duergar are well-known for their great cities and imperial ambitions, but many other cultures claim territory in the twisting tunnels of the Underworld.
- The realms below are filled with alien splendor, but the environment is hostile to outsiders. Physical dangers are a serious concern, but few stop to



think how the dark and silent reaches of the Underworld can impact the mental health of those accustomed to the surface world.

This book adds the following details.

- The Underworld is much larger than any single world. Many planets on the Material Plane are connected to each other via the Underworld. These portals are not easy to detect and travelers can pass from planet to planet without realizing it. How much the various Underworld races know about these portals has been left vague, though worshipers of Morithal do seek them out.
- According to the followers of Morithal, the Underworld owes its existence to the Lord of Unceasing Hunger. While the veracity of this myth is up for debate, Morithal is likely responsible for some of the tunnels and caverns found in the Underworld.
- The diversity of the Underworld is made possible through the power of morthacite. This crystal grows from a particular form of rock thought to be the fossilized remains of Morithal's bodily waste. Morthacite can be found throughout the Underworld and is prized by its residents for its life sustaining radiation.

Chapter Two

Secrets of the Ravenous One

"I am the maker of the Underworld, the salvation against the gods of tyranny, and the keeper of promises. I will be with you always, beneath your feet, crawling in the dark. When the earth rumbles, that is a sign of my love for you. As the caves of the world spiral far below, so does my devotion run deep. So long as you call me Master the hunger you feel will be a gift, not a curse. Those who serve shall know no limit to the power I can provide. And when the time comes, your devotion will be rewarded tenfold. You shall see the utter destruction of those who spurn you and of their bright gods who scorch my flesh. Aid me and you shall be made kings under my great rule!"

-The Initial Promise, Oaths to the Starving Coterie

Morithal

God of the Underworld, Darkness, Hunger, Maggots, and Famine

Titles: Lord of Unceasing Hunger, The Maggot God, He Who Gnaws, The Feasting Worm, The Ravenous One

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Favored Weapon: heavy pick

Domains: Chaos, Darkness, Destruction, Earth, Evil, Famine, Travel

Subdomains: Catastrophe, Caves, Exploration, Loss, Rage

Origins

Records from the earliest days of civilization speak of Morithal as an ancient god. Cave paintings depict him as an immense maggot that feeds on the flesh of world. He has been the patron of many dark and ancient empires, now ground into dust by the press of centuries. By all accounts Morithal has always existed, plaguing mortals with his insatiable hunger since the beginning of the multiverse. There can be no question that the Lord of Unceasing Hunger is one of the oldest deities in existence. In comparison to the Maggot God, the anthropomorphic gods of the mortal races are mere children.

Morithal's story stretches back much further than many imagine, to a time well before the creation of this reality. It was in the last days of the previous multiverse that the Lord of Unceasing Hunger began his journey to infamy. Morithal was once a god of abundance, worshiped by farmers and druids on a world whose name is long forgotten. When that multiverse began to buckle and come to an end, as all things do, Morithal hid himself within a crack in the fabric of space and time. There he waited until the cataclysm came to an end. Cut off from his faithful, who no longer existed, the god grew hungry for the power of worship. As millions of years passed and the essence of creation began to reform into something that could develop into a new multiverse, the hunger only increased until it consumed Morithal's essence and transformed it. When the current reality rose out of the chaos, Morithal slithered from his hole and into legend.

Myths

There are many myths surrounding Morithal, far more than any one volume can detail. While scholars debate whether these stories carry a hint of truth or exist only as a pack of falsehoods, the followers of the Lord of Unceasing Hunger take them very seriously. These are but a few of the legends that they hold in the highest regard.

Creation of the Underworld

When Morithal left his hiding place he immediately came upon the initial act of creation, a single planet and star, newly formed in the young Material Plane. His hunger was all consuming and his only thought was to feast upon the flesh of this planet. The Maggot God devoured with impunity and in his wake he left endless tunnels and immense caverns. He feasted for centuries and honeycombed the world with a subterranean complex of incalculable size.

Sensing that new worlds had come into being on the Material Plane and unable to satisfy his ravenous desires with this place, Morithal folded the essence of space and arrived upon a new planet. Again he gorged himself upon the soil and rock for centuries, hollowing out a labyrinth of passages and caverns. Yet, his hunger still raged like an unquenchable fire. As before, Morithal moved on to a new world in the hope his desires might finally be sated. So has the Lord of Unceasing Hunger done since the beginning of the multiverse, seeking new worlds and hollowing them out as a worm ravages an apple.

It is said the tunnels beneath the surface of these worlds are connected by the magic Morithal used to pass between them. Travelers might pass from planet to planet, never aware that they are jumping across the Material Plane through the folds of space. Some creatures use these invisible portals to travel to and from various worlds, forming trade networks and establishing outposts on a hundred worlds. Many of his followers build massive temples at these locations, hoping that someday the Maggot God will return.

Morthacite and the Birth of the Duergar

Like any creature, Morithal expels waste from his body. In the Maggot God's case, these deposits form clumps of crystal that glow with a soft, green light. In the oldest languages these crystals are called the vilkta'tagorn, or lifeblood of the timeless worm. To the worshipers of He Who Gnaws it is known as morthacite. Found in varying sizes, morthacite deposits retain some of the god's ancient power of abundance, emanating a unique energy that encourages the development of life. When explorers find caverns or chambers full of subterranean wildlife and productive communities, they can be certain that somewhere nearby lies a cluster of these unusual crystals. If introduced to otherwise barren caverns, the crystals will encourage the spontaneous creation of life, usually in the form of oozes, slimes, molds, fungi, and worms of all varieties.

Very rarely, chosen of the Maggot God uncover deeper powers within morthacite. One case in particular, recorded by the ancient scholar Ireni the Greater, precipitated the physical and mental corruption of the duergar.

In those days the gray dwarves had yet to fall from grace and remained in close contact with their kin who dwelt closer to the sunlit lands above. Gorvis Wyrdmantle, a wizard of some reputation, learned to manipulate the energies of morthacite to bestow amazing powers on those who were otherwise unremarkable. His first experiments were a success, granting the subjects the ability to turn invisible or grow in size. Emboldened by his initial achievements, Gorvis offered his discoveries to the wider populace, arming nearly all of his people with these new abilities.

As might be expected, the gift of the crystals was not what it seemed. By manipulating the energy of the stones Gorvis had inadvertently altered how it reacted to dwarven physiology. In time those who had become infused with the power began to physically change, their skin turned ashen gray and the hair on their heads began falling out. Some of the other transformations seemed beneficial at first. The duergar gained the ability to see farther in the dark than their dwarven kin and they gained unique immunities. It seemed as though the race was entering a new, glorified stage of their evolution. Unfortunately, what the altered crystals did to their minds was much more subtle and hideous.

Over time the gray dwarves grew spiteful and greedy. A sense of paranoia took hold of their minds. They came to believe none of their former allies could be trusted, and they closed off relations with those who once valued their friendship. Meanwhile, the thoughts of the duergar turned more and more towards the worship of Morithal. In time, the duergar fully became the thralls of the Lord of

Unceasing Hunger and sought only to pursue his will.

Devouring of the Suns and the Coming of Eternal Darkness

After many centuries spent plumbing the depths, Morithal burrowed towards the surface to learn of what had transpired in the world above. When he broke through he was greeted by the sun, blazing hot and relentless upon the land. Having spent so long beneath the ground, Morithal had grown accustomed to the darkness of the Underworld. The sun scorched his flesh and blinded his senses. As he thrashed around in agony, Morithal grew to hate the sun and its life-giving rays. Morithal had become the power that consumes all, and the represented everything he stood against. He could find no longer find succor beneath its harsh gaze.

Slithering back into the gloom, the Maggot God waited for night so that he might yet explore the lands above. When the sun fell and the tapestry of night unfolded, Morithal moved out once more. The god was surprised to once again feel the touch of pain across his body, this time from the thousands of stars that twinkled above. Each one was like a lance of suffering that burrowed into his pallid flesh. Morithal had become a creature of total darkness and could not even stand the light of those distant suns. So he returned to his tunnels and continued his sojourn, swearing an oath of vengeance upon those brilliant orbs.

It is written in the holy book, *Oaths to the Starving Coterie*, that when the conditions are right and the Maggot God has devoured enough sacrificed souls, Morithal's power will reach its peak. The stars will no longer burn him, and he will no longer be consigned to eternal night. With his new found glory Morithal will bring about the Final Consumption, an apocalyptic swallowing of the stars that will ultimately sate the Maggot God's torturous hunger. This does not mean he will cease eating in this new Age of Eternal Darkness. Instead, the gods of the surface folk will become his prey of choice as he begins the Feast of Divinity. Meanwhile, the *Oaths to the Starving Coterie* claim, his faithful will be free to visit their own depredations upon the mortals of the surface world.

Worshipers

The majority of Morithal's worshipers come from the subterranean reaches. Most notably, dark elves, duergar, and some derro hold him in high regard. Various tribes of orcs, hobgoblins, trolls, and ogres have been known to worship the Maggot God, though his cult often competes with other evil faiths to win the devotion of these groups. Morithal also has a strong following among ghouls, vampires, wights,

and other undead cursed with unending hunger for the flesh or souls of the living. Indeed, there is a legend that a powerful city of ghouls devoted to the Lord of Unceasing Hunger can be found in the Underworld. This unholy capital, named Voraxia, is ruled by a caste of ghoul priests so bloated from feasting that they are incapable of moving about on their own.

Isolated cults of Morithal do exist within human society, though his religion is nearly nonexistent among elves, gnomes, and halflings. Dwarves in particular hate the followers of He Who Gnaws and will go out of their way to destroy his temples. Surface dwellers who call Morithal their patron consider themselves chosen servants. Most think of themselves as blessed spies, passing on details in prayer that Morithal is incapable of collecting himself. In return for this devotion, surface dwellers believe they will be spared during the Final Consumption.

Behind nearly every surface cult lurks a leader from the subterranean realms. Most often these individuals are the founders of the cult or otherwise assigned leadership by the original founder. How these priests choose to guide the group can differ. Some may enjoy direct control while others feel a more subtle approach best protects the members. However the hierarchy is arranged, nearly every agent from the Underworld is careful to remain hidden from the authorities and the zealous followers of other gods.

While Morithal's faith revels in violence and bloodshed, his most devoted priests understand that when a temple is destroyed by enemies, the ultimate goal of Final Consumption becomes more difficult to obtain.

Appearance

Morithal's most common form is that of a massive maggot with multiple green eyes, a dripping maw and pallid flesh. This form is by far the most common and recognizable. Those who focus upon his role as a god of darkness depict Morithal as a black void in a roughly humanoid shape. When invoking his power over famine, the Lord of Unceasing Hunger is seen as a gaunt, starved man of any race. Occasionally this form is depicted with empty eye sockets swarming with maggots.

Symbols and Associations

The most common symbol used by worshipers of Morithal is known as the Gaping Maw. Generally crafted in lead, silver, or stone, the Gaping Maw depicts a number of jagged fangs arranged in the form of a stylized mouth. Occasionally followers will streak blood across the teeth, an act that symbolizes the Feast of Divinity that will occur after the Final Consumption renders the Material Plane cold and dark.

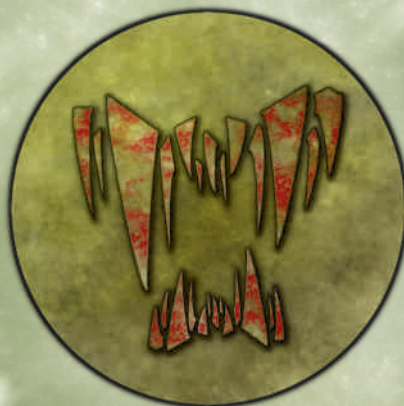
Because it is believed that Morithal created the Underworld, an extensive subterranean world and home to the dark elves, duergar, and foul creatures that defy explanation, any cave, cave mouth, or cavern system is considered sacred. In areas where cult members risk discovery, they often utilize a simple cave opening as their symbol. As many other deities also use some variation of this symbol, it may be difficult to prove that such a symbol is associated with the Maggot God.

Worms of all kinds are treasured creatures, though maggots receive the highest honors. These voracious worms are often magically altered to prevent their natural transformation into flies, allowing them to grow to unsettling sizes. From time to time, powerful cults have been known to capture and tame purple worms. It is believed that these creatures are the direct descendants of Morithal, tasked with continuing his excavations beneath the surface long after the Lord of Unceasing Hunger has moved on.

Other burrowing creatures are likewise associated with Morithal, though natural animals are generally disregarded. Bulettes, earth elementals, xorns, and ankhegs are the most highly prized for their power. Any of these creatures might be found in a temple devoted to the Feasting Worm, though xorns tend to ally themselves with the priesthood only if a substantial and constant quantity of gems and precious metals are provided as payment.

Oozes and slimes are sometimes regarded as sacred creatures as well. As most of these simple organisms only live to feed, the connection to the Lord of Unceasing Hunger is natural. Since morthacite can spontaneously create oozes and slimes, there are those who believe the Maggot God is responsible for their creation. While the demon

lord Jubilex holds a tighter control over oozes and



is generally considered their master, a powerful, gargantuan ooze does serve as one of Morithal's most favored servants.

Holy Writings

Across the many worlds of the Material Plane there is but one book that followers of Morithal look to for inspiration: *Oaths to the Starving Coterie*. Nearly every copy of this text contains a core treatise that details specific promises the Lord of Unceasing Hunger has made to his priesthood and the rites they must perform to make way for his rise to power. This main section is short, roughly ten to twelve pages long, and is most often written in either Undercommon or Common. While minor details might differ between copies, the heart of the *Oaths to the Starving Coterie* is fairly consistent.

Some copies include a variety of additions, though what exactly is included depends on the whim of the worshiper who crafted it. It is not uncommon to find a chapter devoted to the various myths of Morithal, including rare tales known only to a specific cult or group of cults. Copies held by dark elves often contain a section of illuminated plates crafted with an array of phosphorescent pigments made from fungus, crystals, and rare minerals. These images depict the life of Morithal, with special focus on his ultimate rise to power. Other augmentations include rituals developed for use at a particular temple, common prayers known to most followers, and even complex calendars designed to predict the time of Final Consumption.

Messengers and Servants

Morithal is served by a number of unique servants both divine and fiendish.

Hollow Longing

Hollow Longing is an ideal, a spirit that embodies the devastating effects of hunger and famine. Where it came from or how it was born is unknown, though some legends directly connect its rise to Morithal's emergence. Not even the oldest gods claim to know the origins of this primeval being or even understand its purpose in the multiverse. Whatever the case, Hollow Longing's fate has been intertwined with the Maggot God for as long as anyone can remember.

In its natural form, Hollow Longing is a mass of vapors from which emanates an unending wail of misery. When necessary, Hollow Longing may take

the form of a ravenous ghoul of any race and gender. In this body it appears as a bloated abomination with waxy, milk-colored skin. Its eyes burn like embers and its yellowed teeth appear too large for its mouth. When mortals gaze upon Hollow Longing in ghoul form they can always sense that something is not quite right, that the creature before them is not a normal ghoul or even a ghoul from the putrid nobility that rule the race.

No matter what form it takes, logic and reason mean nothing to Hollow Longing. It has no pity for those it harms and no empathy towards other creatures. It exhibits an unflagging loyalty to Morithal alone. While intelligent and capable of critical thought, Hollow Longing is often overcome by its need to devour. This makes it a poor choice for diplomatic or tactical missions, but

perfect when the Lord of Unceasing Hunger wishes to sow discord amongst his enemies.

Gothgor the Putrid

For those who believe that purple worms are the direct descendants of Morithal, the presence of Gothgor is the surest evidence. A massive purple worm, Gothgor nearly rivals his father in size. Said to be the first of his kind to bud from the side of the Maggot God, The Putrid One is also blessed with impressive intelligence, self-awareness, and demigod status. As the primary cleric and herald of Morithal, Gothgor is perceived by followers on many worlds as the ultimate authority when it comes to matters of their faith. He is the Lord of Unceasing Hunger's greatest servant and his actions are always in support of his father's cult.

Gothgor the Putrid looks like a purple worm of great size, though his chitin is pale and

mot tled with different shades of purple.

Nodes of green crystal grow from his body, erupting from his carapace. Where these clumps emerge the flesh is maggot ridden and covered in fungus of all kinds. His teeth are jagged and usually dripping a vile, green phlegm that dissolves both flesh and inanimate material with equal abandon. The Putrid One reeks of rot. It is said this odor floods an intended destination roughly one hour before Gothgor arrives, no matter how far away he is or what plane he is on.



Paranvoi the All-Consuming

Born from a cataclysm enacted by worshipers of Morithal on the world of Malheur, Paranvoi is a black pudding of epic proportions. It began life like one of many such oozes found in the temples of Morithal, created spontaneously in the presence of morthacite. However, Paranvoi was inadvertently empowered by an ancient and forbidden rite designed to shift the planet closer to the Plane of Shadow and shroud it in a black cloud known as the Ebon Caul.

While it is unclear what exactly went wrong, Paranvoi became stronger and more intelligent. It quickly consumed the priests who performed the ceremony, integrating their thoughts, emotions, and personalities into its own burgeoning identity. Understanding what had just happened and feeling an undeniable calling to the service of Morithal, Paranvoi began to devour.

In two years, it had wiped out nearly all life beneath the surface of Malheur. Its body swelled beyond normal proportions so that by the time it burst into the surface world, Paranvoi was the size of a small nation. What it found when it emerged was a world on the verge of collapse. For two years the nations on the surface had been without sunlight. Famine was rampant, war was everywhere, and extreme methods of survival had become a normal way of life. Paranvoi saw this as the perfect expression of Morithal's power, a precursor to the delicious horror that was to come when Final Consumption became a reality. Filled with religious fervor, it moved across the land, devouring all it could while singing unholy praises to the Maggot God.

Morithal took notice of this slaughter and turned his attentions to Paranvoi. What he saw pleased him. Paranvoi had grown to encompass the entirety of Malheur. The surface was completely covered by its undulating body. Paranvoi stretched into the tunnels of the Underworld, filling the dark places of the world with its massive bulk. Malheur became a dead world, nothing more than a lair for a devoted and powerful servant of Morithal.

The Feasting Worm visited Paranvoi in dreams and visions. Paranvoi was granted a place as one of Morithal's divine servants, second only in greatness to Gothgor the Putrid. Upon the ooze Morithal bestowed the gift of foresight, which blended with Paranvoi's composite mind to endow it with a perception of time not even the Lord of Unceasing Hunger can completely understand. With the ability to simultaneously view every possible future, the All-Consuming became an oracle of devastating accuracy.

Paranvoi continues to dwell on Malheur, which still lies in conjunction with the Plane of Shadow. It can split portions from its body and embed part of its

mind into the newly formed vessels. Due to its conglomerate psyche, Paranvoi's mind can easily exist in multiple locations at once without any serious detriment. As a result, powerful temples maintain oracle chambers to house a portion of Paranvoi within specially prepared pools. The oozes in these pools hold a portion of the High Oracle's mind, allowing priests to access the impressive foresight of Paranvoi whenever the need arises.

However, temples of Morithal have continued to see some of their plans fail since gaining this advantage, which has led some to believe the insight of Paranvoi is not as potent as many allege. Some of Morithal's faithful have come to the conclusion Paranvoi has its own goals and is only using the temples as a tool to usurp the Maggot God's position. Others have suggested the All-Consuming has foreseen that the Final Consumption will never come to pass and this has shaken its faith in the Lord of Unceasing Hunger. Whatever the case, while Paranvoi's amazing talent has not made the Cult of Morithal invincible, it has provided those who work the will of the Feasting Worm a powerful tool to aid them in many of their schemes.

Temples that wish to host a fragment of Paranvoi must petition the All-Consuming in person. Only the Mouth of Morithal, accompanied by the Voice of Paranvoi, may make such a request. All others are immediately devoured and their consciousness is added to Paranvoi's composite mind. While any method of travel will do, only those who are aware of the proper location on Malheur can make the trip safely. Known as the Mount of the Suppliant, this lonely rock is the only portion of Malheur not covered by Paranvoi.

Obtaining a fragment of Paranvoi requires a sacrifice of at least 10,000 gold pieces in rare materials, unguents, and gemstones. In addition, nine intelligent creatures must be fed to Paranvoi before it will consider the request. If approved, a fragment of Paranvoi will crawl out of the vast sea of ooze to accompany the priests on the return trip.

The Cult of Morithal

Collectively known as the Starving Coterie, Morithal's cult is not a unified force. However, most cells tend to follow similar principles and observe many of the same rites.

Temple Appearance

The Starving Coterie prefers to build temples to the Lord of Unceasing Hunger in cave complexes, especially those that provide a source of morthacite. Such chambers and passageways are usually expanded to better accommodate religious activities, but the natural features are highly prized and preserved as much as possible. If suitable caverns do



not exist, such as in a surface area, artificial sanctuaries are constructed and designed to appear as close to natural as possible.

All temples have two access points. Other natural entrances to the complex are sealed. The main entrance can be either obvious or hidden depending on the needs of the cult. When possible, this entry is monumental in size, constructed of iron, and covered in relief sculptures. The second entry, known as the Maw, is always hidden through magical means and only accessible to the leaders of the cult.

The Maw is most often located in the main sanctuary. It provides an emergency escape route, but also allows priests to embark on missions that require some level of discretion. Whether the temple is subterranean or on the surface, the Maw always leads downward before joining up with a web of hewn passages connecting to an even greater number of underground paths.

Although the halls and chambers of a temple devoted to the Lord of Unceasing Hunger look naturally formed, they are still heavily decorated. In all things, priests seek to bring a hint of majesty to the sacred caverns of their god. Richly woven tapestries depicting the life of Morithal and the coming Final Consumption are hung in archways instead of doors.

Sculptures of exquisite craftsmanship lurk in natural fissures, carved from valuable marble and inlaid with gems of such clarity that even those viewing the jewels with darkvision can appreciate them without needing to know their color. Cabinets filled with relics of the faith or items of importance to

the temple can be found throughout. Carpets of fur line the floors, while from the ceiling hang brass braziers, filled with crackling flames and pungent incense. These details combine to give the impression of a great palace, one fit for a god destined to rule over the deities of the surface world with unyielding resolve.

The temple's grandeur reaches its pinnacle in the sanctuary, as most religions openly display their wealth in this most unholy of locations. While the size of the space determines scale, nearly every sanctuary contains a massive statue of the Maggot God in all his glory. This impressive idol is always carved so that it appears to emerge from the ground before coiling its way around the chamber, encircling statuary, columns, and other temple features. Morithal's massive head and gaping maw looms over the altar, reminding those who enter that this is the Lord of Unceasing Hunger's domain. These statues are crafted from the finest materials and many are laden with spells that provide the illusion of dripping fangs and an undulating throat. In temples with access to morthacite, carefully carved crystals form the idol's many eyes.

Like any temple, the altar is the center of worship. Important rituals are conducted there and sacrifices meet their end on its cold stone surface. If possible, the altar is constructed from a prominent stalagmite, cut to provide a flat surface roughly three feet high but left bound to the cavern floor. In cases where no such feature is available, the altar is constructed from local stone and fused to the floor through magic. If available, the altar is often set

with morthacite interspersed with other valuable gems.

Due to the inherent qualities of morthacite, temples that use the crystal to decorate the altar and statue of the Maggot God are known for the abundant mold, slimes, fungi, and oozes that dwell in the sanctuary. As many of these are poisonous or otherwise detrimental to life, smart priests utilize such hazards as an extra layer of defense against thieves and crusaders. By allowing only the deadliest forms to live and prosper, priests can often develop rather dangerous environments. However, extra measures must be taken to ensure the faithful remain unmolested.

Church Structure

The faith of Morithal is spread amongst many worlds and its members are notoriously chaotic in their dispositions. Alliances between temples are not encouraged and a strong sense of competition means they rarely interact with each other. Temples that operate on the surface usually need to remain secret to avoid destruction at the hands of good, which further limits communication. As such, there is no overarching hierarchy and only Gothgor retains any kind of authority over the entire faith. Even his leadership is light-handed at the best of times.

There is a downside to this general lack of organization. Temples rarely work well together, and many actively seek to outdo their rivals. It is the unified goal of Final Consumption that prevents the faith from consuming itself in conflict and keeps most of the strife between congregations in check. Plots are limited to petty acts of sabotage and political maneuvering. That said, individual temples do see a great deal of internal struggle. Most of this involves subtle manipulation, but overt power plays are not unusual.

Despite this chaotic state of affairs, temples are still organized somewhat consistently. While small differences do exist, nearly every temple has a number of core positions.

High Warden

Every temple has a portion devoted to the breeding and housing of creatures sacred to the Lord of Unceasing Hunger. The most prominent of these are the maggot pits, where thousands upon thousands of squirming, flesh eating worms are kept

for use in rituals. Depending on the size of the temple, the Warden might also be tasked with hunting, capturing, and training a breeding pair of purple worms.

Mouth of Morithal

No matter its size, each temple is led by a single high priest. Since the faith of the Maggot God lacks an overarching hierarchy, the Mouth of Morithal wields total authority in all matters. In theory, only the Lord of Unceasing Hunger and his son, Gothgor, rank higher. In practice, however, leading a temple requires tact, skill, and regular displays of power. A Mouth of Morithal leads knowing that those who serve him constantly seek his position while high priests in other temples perceive him as a threat to their own greatness.

All of the major rites are led by the Mouth of Morithal. Only this high priest is capable of performing sacrifices. The Mouth is also responsible for the interpretation of scripture and serves as the final authority on what texts appear in a temple's sacred books. While the high priest assigns the other positions within the temple, care must be taken to ensure each appointee is both competent and an easily managed threat.

Servitor of the Worm

A temple of Morithal will usually have from five to twenty priests who handle day-to-day religious duties too minor to warrant the attention of the Mouth of Morithal. These are also the priests most non-believers will encounter outside of the temple. As a temple's influence grows, the Mouth sends out Servitors of the Worm to handle important missions or recruit new members to the cult. Servitors of the Worm are also assigned to assist certain temple officials, according to their talents and skills. This situation naturally breeds an environment of competition that gives birth to the power struggles common in the cult of Morithal.

Since progression within a temple hierarchy is rarely handled peaceably, it is not unusual for one of these priests to assassinate his predecessor, consolidate support, and quickly provide a show of power to maintain his claim.



Temple leaders must constantly be on the lookout for ambitious Servitors of the Worm. All it takes is a minor show of weakness for the wheels of conspiracy to begin spinning.

Starving Petitioner

When one of the faithful decide to make the transition from simple worshiper to priest, they begin their training as a Starving Petitioner. During this time, the potential priest is subjected to intense training to forge a connection with Morithal. These times of hunger grow longer as the acolyte's training in other fields grows more intense. A Starving Petitioner is expected to succeed or die. There is no middle ground and no other form of failure. Those who wish to wield the power of their god are expected to push themselves to the very edge of mortality before they are granted the title of Servitor of the Worm.

Morithal's Fang

Every temple maintains an expert in torture to pry information from prisoners and to keep a close watch on members of the cult. The Mouth of Morithal must trust his Fang and will often go out the way to protect him from others. As a result, this position sees the least amount of turnover due to internal squabbles. Though some of that might also have its origins in fear as Morithal's Fang is the only leader granted the right to detain members without informing the Mouth of Morithal beforehand. What happens after that feeds the nightmares of even the most hardened cultist.

Voice of Hunger

Operating as a seer and collector of information, the Voice of Hunger is part adviser and part spy master. For those temples capable of maintaining an Oracle Pool of Paranvoi, the Voice of Hunger also acts as its keeper. Normally, the Voice of Hunger is a master of divination magic and is often supported by a network of spies comprised of faithful adherents and paid informers. This ensures few secrets remain hidden for long, a fact that makes the Voice of Hunger a valuable ally and a dangerous foe to a temple's leadership.

Doctrine

According to the holy book, *Oaths to the Starving Coterie*, followers must always look forward to the Final Consumption and the Feast of Divinity. To help these events come to pass, all followers are expected to follow five commandments.

Know Your Hunger

Morithal's hunger can never be satisfied and it is expected his followers will occasionally fast to

understand the torment of their god. Members of a temple must participate in a fast at least once per year, though most worshipers average two or three in that time. Performed during the winter months, fasts can last anywhere from three days to a month, with survival depending entirely on magical assistance and the blessings of the Feasting Worm.

As Morithal Devours So Must You Consume With Abandon

When not participating in a prescribed fast, Morithal's followers are encouraged to indulge in all forms of gluttony. Most rituals involve abundant feasting where participants gorge and purge for hours on end. This motivation to consume also manifests in the daily lives of Morithal's followers who take the commandment to new heights of debauchery and excess. Cannibalism is not prohibited by the faith, though few worshipers participate in the act. Some followers take this commandment literally and attempt to train their bodies to process materials not normally considered food. They will regularly eat dirt, stones, and the like in honor of their god, who has chewed his way through the solid depths of many worlds.

Be As the Worm That Burrows Beneath the Land

Just as Morithal moves beneath the feet of surface dwellers without notice so should the followers of the Maggot God move through society. While this commandment is rarely taken seriously by those temples that operate in the Underworld, surface cults find such advice necessary for their existence. Even those temples that operate openly find it advantageous to keep their activities secret, lest their religious or political rivals thwart their plans.

Sacrifice Those Who Oppose the Faithful

Like other evil cults, the Morithal's faithful do sacrifice intelligent creatures to their god. However, these events are rare and usually mark the most important rituals and celebrations. It is believed that the sacrifice helps fuel the rise of the Lord of Unceasing Hunger but it is also understood that such acts attract the unwanted attention, either from the forces of good or from deities that oppose Morithal. As such, discretion is always used, even in societies where such sacrifice is legal and encouraged.

Temples prefer to sacrifice individuals who actively oppose the faith of the Feasting Worm. If it seems reasonable, followers also refrain from killing enemies they meet in combat. Those who find themselves in a losing battle against a worshiper of Morithal are advised to commit suicide rather than allow themselves to be taken captive. Such a death will be much cleaner than anything they might

experience in a temple of the Maggot God.

A Lifetime of Service Leads to the Ultimate Reward

Other religions claim worshipers will find a place in the home of their god when their soul finally passes beyond the final veil. The faithful of Morithal, on the other hand, do not labor under such expectations. Instead, their souls are destined to be consumed by their god. They will linger in his gullet for years as the Lord of Unceasing Hunger digests their essence, integrating those parts that are useful while discarding that which has no purpose. While this means a soul's ultimate fate is oblivion, the faithful willingly accept this destiny knowing their sacrifice will help bring about the Final Consumption.

This outcome is by no means certain. If the Consignment Rite is not performed within a week of death, it is believed the soul will depart for the natural cycle rather than find its way to Morithal. While the exact details differ depending on the world, this usually means the soul will be judged for its actions in life and assigned to a plane that best matches its alignment. Followers of Morithal will be consigned to the Abyss if measures are not taken to prevent this process.

Important Rituals

The followers of Morithal rarely recognize specific holy days. While spontaneous rituals are quite common, there are a few rites that define the religious life of the faithful.

Feast of the New Supplicant

While every ritual involves sacrifice and the consumption of flesh, this particular rite requires a sacrifice on a scale rarely seen. When Starving Petitioners become Servitors of the Worm a celebration representing the power of Morithal and the symbolic birth of the new priest is performed. For those temples with the resources to handle the task, a purple worm is slain, slashed open, and a cavity is hollowed out of the flesh. In groups that cannot take down such a powerful creature, a bowl large enough to hold those being honored is filled with maggots. The supplicants crawl into the cavity (or the bowl of wriggling maggots) and remain there for three hours, at which time the congregation begins chanting a paen of rebirth and ascension. At the height of the chant the priests burst forth and a period of unthinkable gluttony begins.

While there are a number of rites that involve the overindulgence in food and drink, the Feast of the New Supplicant takes the binge and purge practice to new heights. Most feasts last for at least six hours, with attendees occasionally emptying their stomachs in specially prepared ritual bowls. At the end of the

feast the new priests perform a final blessing on each of the participants before moving their belongings into newly assigned chambers.

Rite of Final Consumption

Celebrated once a year, the Rite of Final Consumption starts six hours before the beginning of the new year. However, a temple will begin seeking the important elements for the rite weeks beforehand. The most important part to this ritual, the sacrifice, is specially chosen and plans are put into action to capture this poor victim. Cultists must be careful in their selection and abduction. If they pick a person who is too prominent or they kidnap them too far in advance, they risk losing everything. The temple must choose someone of importance but one whose allies are not powerful enough to directly assault the cult and then take them at the right time so that any rescue attempt will come too late.

At the beginning of the Rite of Final Consumption all of the lights in the temple are covered or extinguished. In the sanctuary hundreds of candles are lit and placed around the room to represent the stars of the night sky. For the next four hours priests chant passages from *Oaths to the Starving Coterie* while praying that Morithal and his son, Gothgor, will attend the rite personally.

One hour before the new year, the sacrifice is brought to the altar and laid upon it. After rare unguents and sacred oils are spread upon the body, the Mouth of Morithal speaks the following quote from *Oaths to the Starving Coterie* in a booming voice:

The time of reckoning will come! When the final hour passes and my power reaches its zenith, the stars and sun shall no longer burn me. The eyes of the surface gods will no longer pierce me. These puny beings will look upon my might and know their end has come! I will rise up and swallow the stars in a single night of feasting. This Final Consumption shall be a sign that the faithful now rule the night! Together we shall overthrow the tyrannous and devour the faithless!

After a quick prayer asking that this sacrifice be the one that fuels the rise of Morithal, the victim is slain. All the candles in the sanctuary are snuffed immediately and simultaneously through magical means. Light is returned to the chamber through the use of morthacite and the faithful perform a feast in its emerald glow.

With a final blessing the ritual is finished and those present return to their homes or chambers where they are expected to wait for signs the Final Consumption has come to pass. At dawn the priesthood of the temple meets within the sanctuary where a formal mourning rite is performed to mark

the start of another year under the tyranny of the sun and stars.

It should be noted that nowhere in *Oaths to the Starving Coterie* is an exact date set for Final Consumption nor any indication it should occur at the closing of the year. How this ritual became associated with this time is a mystery. To complicate matters further, temples to Morithal exist amongst many cultures on thousands of worlds. While all of them consistently perform the Rite of Final Consumption at the end of the year, the actual date differs dramatically.

The Consignment Rite

When a follower of Morithal dies, the Consignment Rite must be performed to ensure the soul is devoured by the Maggot God and avoids the natural cycle reserved for the dead. Failure of Morithal's faithful to discharge the rite upon their death is one of the deepest fears held by the Starving Coterie, for it means they will not join their god and fuel his ascent to power. Cultists would rather face oblivion than risk eternal punishment in some hellish plane, especially since their sacrifice means the Lord of Unceasing Hunger will grow closer to his ultimate goal.

Priests will ensure the Consignment Rite is performed as quickly as possible after a follower's death—usually within a week. Although this is done primarily to avoid extreme putrefaction of the corpse, there is a sense that if the rite is not performed within that time the soul will have already departed for its final judgment.

For the most part, the Consignment Rite looks very similar to the funerary rituals of other faiths. The deceased is honored, his deeds are remembered, and his soul is released to its final fate. All of these elements have a darker tone, however, and much of the ritual focuses on the reward of being devoured by Morithal.

The Consignment Rite also represents one of the major tools a Mouth of Morithal can use to exercise control over a congregation. At any time the high priest can deny the performance of the Consignment Rite, a threat that inspires fear in the most rebellious cultist. However, care must be taken when wielding this power as a weapon. More than a few Mouths of

Morithal have met their end by abusing their ability to revoke the Consignment Rite. Overconfident high priests might find themselves facing divine judgment, instead of oblivion in the belly of their master.

Common Prayers

The followers of Morithal have a number of prayers they recite depending on the situation. While only one of these is repeated here, it provides a good example for the themes favored by worshipers of the Feasting Worm.

Lord of Unceasing Hunger, He Who Gnaws, Creator of the Underworld, heed my call!

I am your faithful servant. I am your devoted slave. I will walk in your service for the rest of my days.

Rightful Master, I ask now that you bring your ire against my enemies. Devour them and consign their souls to oblivion. Subject them to the full force of your cruelty and show them no mercy when they cry out for reprieve. Those that oppose you shall shudder at your name.

Unmatched Paragon, bring famine to the lands that do not honor your name. Cloak the people in eternal darkness and twist the falling rain to thwart their prosperity. Let starvation reign in the surface lands and bring ruin to the sunlit kingdoms. Those that oppose you shall shudder at your name.

Mighty King, give me mastery over the tyrannous. Provide me with power to conquer in your name. Bestow upon me the tools to bring more faithful under your banner. Those that serve you shall find comfort in your benevolence.

Incontestable Overlord, grant me prosperity and spare me from the wrath of famine. I shall fast in your name when you command so that the bounty will never be denied me. Those that serve you shall find comfort in your benevolence.

Supreme God, let the Final Consumption come. Rise up and swallow the stars that burn your flesh. Rise up and devour the gods who oppress your people. Let the new age of darkness be upon us. Those that serve you shall find comfort in your benevolence, and those that oppose you shall shudder at your name.



Chapter Three

Servants of the Worm

"As you grow to understand my power, so to will your gifts become more abundant. You will wield magic unseen since the fall of the last multiverse. The most potent among you will be feared by the servants of the tyrant gods."

- Excerpt of *The Second Promise, Oaths to the Starving Coterie*

Over generations of worship, Morithal's faithful have developed a myriad of tools in their battles against the followers of other gods. The Lord of Unceasing Hunger has provided amazing and horrifying gifts to those who swear allegiance to his cause. The powers, spells and creatures in this chapter provide just a sample of Morithal's influence and can serve as inspiration for further demonstrations of the Maggot God's strength.

While the character options and creatures featured in this chapter are focused on Morithal, they can be utilized by any deity associated with hunger. With a few tweaks, any of these elements would be appropriate for followers of the Horseman of Famine or, perhaps, another fiendish lord devoted to the suffering that starvation can inflict on mortals.

Spells and Domains

While some spellcasters prefer a scorching blast of fire or the crackle of lightning, the followers of Morithal look for spells of a more insidious nature.

Unsurprisingly, they lean towards magic effects that induce hunger, drain life force, or otherwise deprive their enemies of sustenance.

However, adherents of the Maggot God also favor spells that enslave the mind or inhibit logical thinking.

The new spells in this section focus primarily on hunger, the defilement of food sources, and the summoning of Morithal's faithful servants. While these spells are not exclusive to his cult, most spellcasting devotees of the Lord of Unceasing Hunger will have these spells in their repertoire.

Famine Domain

Granted Powers: You can inflict terrible suffering upon your foes by invoking the power of famine.

Touch of Overwhelming Hunger (Sp)- Targets you hit with a melee touch attack are struck with a gnawing

desire for food, inflicting a penalty to attack and damage rolls equal to 1/2 your cleric level (minimum 1) for 1 round. This yearning makes it difficult to focus, causing targets to incur a penalty on Concentration checks equal to 1/2 your cleric level (minimum 1). The target may make a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your

Wisdom modifier to avoid the Concentration penalty. Attack and damage penalties still apply. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

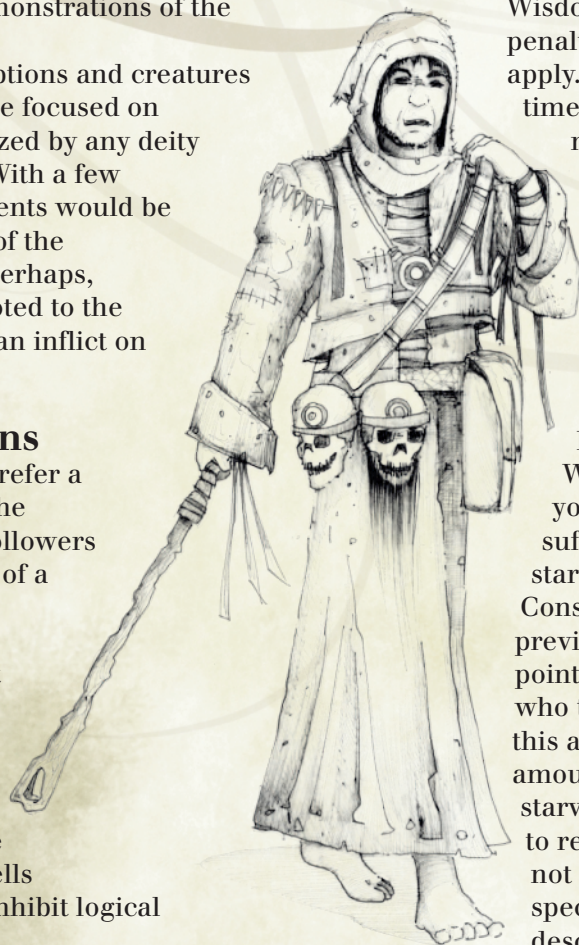
Famine Bringer (Su)- At 8th level, as a standard action you may emit a 20-foot aura that induces starvation for a number of rounds equal to your cleric level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive and ending the aura is a free action.

Enemies within this aura must make a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your cleric level + your Wisdom modifier) or begin suffering from an accelerated state of starvation. Those inflicted must make a Constitution check (DC 10, +1 per each previous check) each round or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Any creature who takes nonlethal damage as a result of this aura gains the fatigued condition. No amount of food will stop this unnatural starvation, but healing effects can be used to remove the nonlethal damage. They will not remove the fatigued condition unless specifically stated in the effect's description. Creatures who make their

saving throw are immune to this aura for 24 hours. See the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for more information on starvation and thirst.

Domain Spells: 1st- *contaminate food and drink**, 2nd- *feast of ashes*‡, 3rd- *diminish plants*, 4th- *blight*, 5th- *hungry pit*‡, 6th- *harm*, 7th- *waves of exhaustion*, 8th- *horrid wilting*, 9th- *energy drain*

* indicates a new spell, ‡ indicates a spell from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.



Contaminate Food and Drink

School Transmutation; **Level** cleric 1, druid 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, witch 1
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (a small portion of rotten meat)
Range 10 ft.
Target 1 cu. ft./level of food and water
Duration Instantaneous
Saving Throw Will negates (object); **Spell Resistance** yes (object)

This spell makes clean, disease-free food and drink rotten and bacteria-ridden. Anyone consuming the food is exposed to blinding sickness as detailed in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. The creature may make a Fortitude save to resist the disease as normal. Symptoms of blinding sickness begin with blurred vision, difficulty breathing and overall weakness. If left untreated, the victim's vision grows increasingly worse and strength fades dramatically before unconsciousness sets in.

While the putrid nature of the food and drink affected by this spell is obvious upon close inspection, it is possible to disguise this fact. Those skilled in food preparation, either through the Profession skill or Craft skill, may make a DC 15 check to cover up the rotten state through the use of spices, sauces, or other clever techniques. In such cases, the result of the skill check becomes the DC to detect the presence of contamination. Repeated uses of prestidigitation may be enough to cloak the foulness (GM's discretion). Illusion magic may also be employed to trick the senses into believing the food is clean and fresh.

Holy water and similar food and drink of significance are spoiled by this spell, but the spell has no effect on creatures of any type nor upon magic potions.

Infest Corpse

School conjuration (summoning) **Level** cleric 3, druid 3, sorcerer/wizard 4, witch 4
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (a rot grub and a dried piece of humanoid flesh)
Range touch
Target one small-sized or larger corpse
Duration instantaneous
Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no (object)

You touch a corpse and infest it with a colony of rot grubs. The corpse must be relatively fresh (no more than 3 days old) and be at least small-sized for this spell to function. Rot grubs are maggot-like creatures that feast on the flesh of the dead, though they present a real danger to the living. Anyone examining the corpse may make a DC 15 Perception

check to detect the grubs squirming beneath the flesh of the corpse. If they fail this check and proceed to touch the body, 1d6 rot grubs will burst forth and attempt to latch on to the victim. A successful DC 15 Reflex avoids the ravaging grubs. Any amount of damage reduction also prevents infestation. Each round after that, the victim must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or take 1d2 points of Constitution damage per grub as they burrow towards his heart, brain and other vital organs. Upon death the creature will become as dangerous as the original corpse and may infect others with the rot grubs that consume his flesh.

During the first round of infestation a creature may destroy the rot grubs by cutting them out of the flesh with a slashing weapon or through the direct application of fire to the entry wounds. Applying flame deals 1d6 points of fire damage to the victim, while cutting them out requires a DC 20 Heal check and deals 1d6 points of damage per round the victim has been infested. Each Heal check removes one grub. A *remove disease* spell kills any rot grubs in or on a host.

Morthacite

As Morithal burrows through the Underworld, he leaves behind excretions that resemble crumbling stone. From these piles of waste grow morthacite, a crystalline substance known for its soft, green glow. Morthacite can be found in clusters consisting of 8-12 six-sided prisms of about a foot in length. Each prism glows with light as bright as a torch.

Morthacite deposits retain some of the god's ancient power of abundance, emanating a unique energy that encourages the development of life. A single clump of morthacite can infuse an area with a radius of up to five miles with the energies necessary for the development of diverse life. This energy flows from the base of the crystal like a mass of roots, weaving its way through the surrounding stone. Morthacite serves a vital role in the ecology of the Underworld, allowing for a greater variety of life than would normally be found in such places. The rampant fungi and mold spontaneously created by the crystal provide food for subterranean herbivores and omnivores, which in turn serve as prey for the predators that call these places home.

Morthacite not only increases the amount of food available to subterranean creatures, but can actually reduce the amount of food they need to survive. Creatures living within the boundaries of morthacite's primary root system for a period of one year require half the normal amount of food to survive, lessening their impact on the ecology and allowing for other forms of life to thrive. Water in an area touched by morthacite remains pure and clean, as well, even if the source is otherwise contaminated.

From these cradles of fecundity, faint roots of energy emanate outward for another five miles. These secondary roots are much weaker than those within the main area, but their power can still be felt. Mold and fungi in these areas are healthier and more productive, though will never spontaneously appear and require food and water to survive. Creatures living in these regions for at least a year find they require only third of the normal amount of food. As with the immediate area around a cluster, water in this territory will always remain untouched by disease or filth.

Multiple clusters do not increase the potency in a particular area. If the secondary roots of one deposit overlap the primary roots of another, the energy of the primary roots dominates the area. Because each area is centered on an individual cluster, the overlapping effects of scattered deposits can create vast swaths of bountiful terrain.

Because the loss of morthacite would have a dramatic impact on the cycle of life in the Underworld, the major subterranean civilizations take great pains to protect clusters near their communities. Even non-intelligent creatures feel an instinctive urge to protect the mineral that enables them to thrive.

A prism of morthacite is fragile (hardness 1, hit points 3) and difficult to harvest, requiring a DC 20 knowledge (arcana) or knowledge (nature) check to successfully remove a prism without destroying it. Outsiders and surface folk who try to collect morthacite are seen as a real threat to the ecology of the Underworld, and natives often do whatever they can to stop such harvests before they begin. A few of the civilized communities, especially those with temples to Morithal, do occasionally collect prisms. Most of the time they are careful to take only what they need and never overtax a region without good reason. If a prism is removed without destroying a cluster, the missing prism will eventually grow back, though the process takes centuries to complete.

While there are many stories about the hidden powers of morthacite, few have the skills to unlock the deeper mysteries of the mineral. In the temples of Morithal, the crystals are often used for decoration, especially on statuary and altars. Others utilize morthacite for its ability to increase the potency of certain spells.

When using a single prism as a component in spells with the healing subschool the spell is maximized, per the metamagic feat without changing the spell slot of the altered spell. Using morthacite in this way drains a prism of its power, rendering it inert. Only a single prism may be used to maximize a healing spell, additional prisms have no effect but attempting to use them to increase the power of the spell will drain them as well.

After harvesting, a prism of morthacite retains its ability to create and support life, though on a smaller scale than that produced by the parent cluster. If left in a subterranean area for at least six months a single prism will begin to lay roots of energy through the surrounding stone and produce fungi and mold within a 2,500-foot area. These fungal growths do not require water or food, though access to both leads to more rampant vegetation, and will mature within a month. After maturity, plants will continue to grow, with many reaching mammoth proportions if the space allows. This spontaneous creation of mold and fungoid life will continue until a region reaches a point of saturation (GM's discretion). Fungi and molds that are eaten or otherwise removed are replaced at the same rate, though clear spaces can be easily maintained if desired.

Most of the fungi and mold species produced by morthacite are harmless. However, it is possible for a prism or cluster to produce some of the many dangerous varieties found throughout the Underworld. After morthacite has established its energy root system, there is a 30% chance each month that it will generate a form of deadly fungi. If ambulatory, these fungoid creatures will move to location within the area that best suits their needs. In addition, there is a 20% chance a form of dangerous mold will form, with brown and yellow being the most common. The life-giving properties of morthacite enable other species of fungi and mold to survive, despite the dangerous environments created by their more hazardous cousins. Intelligent fungi or mold creatures are rarely created.

Oozes and slimes can also spontaneously appear within an area affected by morthacite. This fact has led some scholars to suggest the crystal is responsible for the original creation of these unique life forms. Each month, a cluster or a prism of morthacite has a 30% chance of producing an ooze or slime. There are no limits on the kind of ooze that morthacite can create. When born, this ooze can appear anywhere within the energy root area and is not tied to the crystal in any way. It can wander off if it desires and has the ability to do so, though the abundance of food usually means the creature will remain in the area.

It should be noted that morthacite simply creates life and does not provide any control over the results of its power. At most a creature might feel an instinctual need to protect the crystal, but it is not required to remain near the area in which it was born and gains no additional benefits if it chooses to do so. In all ways, creatures formed by morthacite are normal for their kind.

Fragment of Paranvoi

A thick, black slime erupts from the shadows, forming a quivering mass that glistens in the light. Suddenly your mind is filled with the babbling of a thousand voices, each expressing their madness in unique and horrifying ways.

FRAGMENT OF PARANVOI CR 12 (19,200 XP)

CE Huge ooze

Init +9; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; **Perception** +25**DEFENSE****AC** 26 touch 16, flat-footed 24 (+2 Dex, +6 insight, + 10 natural, -2 size)**hp** 150 (15d8+75)**Fort** +10; **Ref** +7; **Will** +5**Defensive Abilities** ooze traits; **Immune** acid; **SR** 17**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.**Melee** slam +18 (1d8+12 plus 2d6 acid plus grab)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+12 plus 2d6 acid), corrosion, voices of the consumed**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th)Constant- *arcane sight*, *comprehend languages*, *deathwatch*, *detect thoughts*, *nondetection* (DC 20)3/day- *contact other plane*, *divination*, *false vision*, *locate creature*, *locate object*, *screy* (DC 25)1/day- *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *cloudkill* (DC 22), *fear* (DC 22), *greater screy* (DC 26), *invisibility purge*, *telepathic bond***STATISTICS****Str** 26, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 30, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 24**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +21(+25 grapple); **CMD** 39 (49 vs. bull rush, cannot be tripped)**Feats** Critical Focus, Greater Spell Focus (divination), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Sickening Critical, Spell Focus (divination), Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (slam)**Skills** Diplomacy +22, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +25, Knowledge (engineering) +25, Knowledge (geography) +25, Knowledge (history) +25, Knowledge (local) +25, Knowledge (nature) +25, Knowledge (nobility) +25, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +25, **Perception** +25; **Racial****Modifiers** Perception +10**Languages** telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** ooze traits, probability insight, suction**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Acid (Ex): A fragment of Paranvoi secretes a digestive acid that dissolves organic material and metal quickly, but does not affect stone. Each time a creature suffers damage from a fragment of Paranvoi's acid, its clothing and armor take the same amount of damage from the acid. A DC 22 Reflex save prevents damage to clothing and armor. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a fragment of Paranvoi takes 2d6 acid damage unless the weapon's wielder succeeds on a DC 22 Reflex save. If a fragment of Paranvoi remains in contact with a wooden or metal object for 1 full round, it inflicts 21 points of acid damage (no save) to the object. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Corrosion (Ex): An opponent that is being constricted by a fragment of Paranvoi suffers a -4 penalty on Reflex saves made to resist acid damage applying to clothing and armor.

Probability Insight (Su): A fragment of Paranvoi has constant insight into all possible futures. This provides a fragment of Paranvoi a +6 insight bonus to AC. Probability insight also provides a +10 racial bonus to Perception checks. At the GM's discretion, this ability might also provide other benefits, outside of combat (see Chapter Two

for more information on Paranvoi's foresight).

Suction (Ex): The fragment of Paranvoi can create powerful suction against any surface as it climbs, allowing it to cling to inverted surfaces with ease. A fragment of Paranvoi can establish or release suction as a swift action, and as long as it is using suction, it moves at half speed. Because of the suction, a fragment of Paranvoi gets a +10 circumstance bonus to its CMD score to resist bull rush, awesome blows, and other attacks and effects that attempt to physically move it from its location.

Voices of the Consumed (Su): As a free action, a fragment of Paranvoi may telepathically transmit the riot of voices that constantly babble in the mind of Paranvoi. All creatures within 60 ft. must make a DC 24 Will save or become confused for 1d6 rounds. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. A creature that saves cannot be affected by the same fragment of Paranvoi for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

ECOLOGY**Environment** subterranean, special**Organization** solitary**Treasure** none**SOCIETY AND HABITAT**

As an extension of Paranvoi the All-Consuming, a fragment has very little in the way of culture or society. Fragments of Paranvoi act as ambassadors for the All-Consuming, giving him the power to speak directly to Morthal's followers. Some temples keep these creatures around for long periods of time, providing them with a lair, a constant supply of food, and other luxuries. In return, the temple's prophet takes advantage of the fragment's remarkable foresight. When combined with traditional divinations, a fragment of Paranvoi grants an important edge over other temples and enemies who wish to see the followers of Morthal destroyed.

ECOLOGY

Paranvoi's mind is a composite formed from the millions of individuals who once called the world of Malheur home. This allows Paranvoi to follow thousands of thoughts simultaneously, examine ideas from all angles, and gain insights a creature with a single consciousness could never obtain. It also allows the All-Consuming to form smaller oozes from its body and imbue them with a portion of its mind. These fragments become an extension of Paranvoi and provide the ability to exist in multiple places at the same time. Fortunately for the sane people of the world, fragments of Paranvoi are dramatically weaker than the All-Consuming itself.

Unlike their master, fragments of Paranvoi require food. They do, however, prefer to consume the flesh of intelligent creatures. Fragments are incapable of absorbing the minds of these victims, but the process is unpleasant all the same. A fragment of Paranvoi enjoys driving its meal insane by projecting the constant babbling of the All-Consuming's mind before dissolving flesh and bone with its powerful acid.

Despite their origin, fragments can be damaged and can even die. Paranvoi, itself, is generally unaffected by the death of a fragment, however. Once a fragment of Paranvoi is killed, the body shrivels and dries up, leaving behind only a fine black dust. The shard of Paranvoi's mind almost always survives the experience, returning instantaneously to Malheur.

Walking Hunger

What appears to be a massive maggot lies upon the ground, its flesh quivering as it enjoys a putrid feast of rotten meat. But as it turns its eyeless head towards you the truth is much more horrifying. The pallid worm rises upon two legs, pushing itself up from the ground using thin arms that end in wicked claws. As the vaguely humanoid creature shambles toward you, the stench of rotten meat assails your nostrils.

WALKING HUNGER CR 8 (4,800 XP)

CE Large aberration

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., Darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +7

Aura stench (30 ft.DC 22, 10 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 20 touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +10 natural armor, -1 size)

hp 132 (12d8+72)

Fort +10; **Ref** +5; **Will** +4

Immune disease

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee bite +14 (2d6+4), 2 claws +14 (1d6+2)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks rend (2 claws/bite, 2d6+6)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 12, **Con** 22, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 25 (27 vs. sunder)

Feats Improved Natural Weapon (bite), Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +12, Escape Artist +17,

Intimidate +9, Perception +7, Sense Motive -10; **Racial**

Modifiers Escape Artist +8, Sense Motive -10 (includes Driving Hunger)

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

SQ compression, driving hunger

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Compression (Ex): Walking hunger lack skeletons and can move through an area as small as one-quarter its space without squeezing or one-eighth its space when squeezing.

Driving Hunger (Ex): The need to consume food never fades for the walking hunger. This unending appetite often impedes judgment and makes it difficult for a walking hunger to make decisions and determine truth from falsehood. Walking hunger receive a -4 racial modifier to all Will saves and Wisdom-based checks.

Stench (Ex): Walking hunger are surrounded by the cloying smell of rotting meat. Any living creature that comes within 30 feet of a walking hunger must make a DC 22 Fort save or be sickened for 10 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same walking hunger's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature.

Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC for this ability is Constitution based.

ECOLOGY

Environment subterranean

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SOCIETY AND HABITAT

By their nature, walking hunger are solitary creatures. They form no bonds within their species, considering others of their kind to be competitors for resources, and generally treat other creatures as potential food. Unless controlled by a more powerful force, one walking hunger will always react negatively to the presence of another. Battles between these beasts are violent in the extreme with the victor cannibalizing the loser, sometimes while the creature is still alive.

The only thing a walking hunger truly respects is strength. When another creature demonstrates its superior power, a walking hunger will immediately show deference, even going so far as to offer service in exchange for its life. Temples of Morithal often take advantage of this instinct for self-preservation to compel walking hungers into their ranks as guards and soldiers. So long as food is provided, a walking hunger will serve a more powerful individual or group without question.

The drive to feed leads a walking hunger to focus only on the immediate future. What plans they do make focus on trapping food or avoiding harm from more powerful creatures. When faced with a choice, a walking hunger will always take the path that leads to an easy source of food. Naturally, this shortsightedness makes a walking hunger susceptible to trickery and manipulation.

If left alone, a walking hunger will quickly deplete food sources in an area. They prefer to eat carrion and will never consume anything but the flesh of other creatures. While their predilection for rotting meat helps slow a walking hunger's predation upon an area, a lack of reliable food eventually means these beasts find it necessary to move their lairs on a fairly regular basis.

When the time comes to relocate, a walking hunger will abandon its lair and simply wander until it finds a new region more to their liking. It will avoid powerful communities during its travels, but is not opposed to settling near small subterranean villages and using them as personal sources of meat.

ECOLOGY

Walking hunger look like giant maggots with two, spindly legs and humanoid arms that end in wicked claws. They stand 10 feet tall but weigh very little in comparison to creatures of similar height.

The walking hunger are genderless creatures, incapable of procreation on their own. Their birth is still somewhat of a mystery but it is clear that they only arise in locations with a high density of morthacite and an unusual amount of carrion. Walking hunger emerge from decaying flesh fully grown, both physically and mentally.

For their entire lives these beasts know only one sensation, a desire to feed that can never be satisfied. Despite being sapient and possessing the ability to communicate through language, walking hunger form no close bonds and only speak when absolutely necessary. They are incapable of feeling love, compassion, pity, or even anger and despair. All that matters to them is food, which makes their attacks disturbingly impersonal.

A walking hunger's impressive appetite is believed to come from two sources. The first of these is most obvious: their origins give them a sympathetic connection to Morithal. His unending hunger is encoded upon them at creation, leaving very little room for anything else. The second source has to do with the walking hunger's bodily functions. Their metabolism is surprisingly high, meaning they burn energy at a remarkable rate. Walking hunger find it difficult to stay sedentary for long and only enter a sleep state once every week. Sleep periods can last anywhere between two and six hours, though they rarely exceed four hours.



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The Virtuous and the Vile

Morithal

Lord of Unceasing Hunger

The Final Consumption Approaches!

Since the beginning of time, the Maggot God has burrowed his way through the earth, indulging a hunger that can never be satiated. Morithal is an artifact from another time, a being who survived the fall of one multiverse and the birth of another. Cursed with a unending desire to consume, He Who Gnaws has hollowed out vast caverns beneath the earth and these have become the subterranean realm of the dark elves, derro, and other depraved creatures. Despite his repulsive nature, Morithal's followers are powerful and many. His cults are everywhere and each of them is tasked with a single goal: to bring about the reign of their god so that he might consume the stars and cast all the worlds of the Material Plane into eternal night.

The Virtuous and the Vile: Morithal, the Lord of Unceasing Hunger includes:

- An in-depth overview of Morithal, his origins, myths, and other important traits.
- Information on the cults of the Maggot God, their goals, and the benefits of their faith.
- The Famine domain and new spells that embody the horrid hunger of the Maggot God.
- Two new monsters, the walking hunger and the fragment of Paranvoi, who embody Morithal's unceasing need to feed.