

# The Fist Of Grollob

The Dankwater Morass: a steaming cesspool of rot and evil. For over five hundred years this area has been sinking, decomposing into a mire of fetid vegetation. Centuries ago, this land was part of the Spinehusk Mountains. Dwarven citadels peppered the fringes of the foothills, and small villages dotted the landscape, their residents farming the dales and raising livestock. The Age of Domination put an end to those peaceful times.

With the Scionic races reeling under the heel of the Human Mage-Kings, the Dwarves mustered in the Spinehusk region, attracting much of the Mage-Kings' attention in the area. Two hundred and twenty-nine years before the Plague put an end to the Age of Domination, the ten Dwarven clans deliberately imploded the entire region, destroying not only the host of Humans and their allies, but also many of their own kin.

For years after The Burial, the silence of the swamps was broken only by the croaking of frogs, the calls of marsh birds and the rustle of reeds in the wind. Now, though, anvils ring again, sinister lights shine forth from demolished hamlets, and unearthly howls echo throughout the sinkholes of collapsed citadels. The Dankwater Morass is inhabited by a group of beings perhaps more ominous than any other upon Argyle: The Fist of Grollob.

Throughout Argyle, goblins are considered little more than nuisances, their cowardly ways no match for even a single well-armed warrior. The goblins in the Dankwater Morass, however, reign supreme. Over hundreds of years, natural selection has bred an uncanny intelligence into these small creatures, and the Dankwater goblins have used their wiles to great advantage. Through superior intellect and sinister methods they control many beasts more formidable than themselves, and those they cannot control they exterminate. With the entire Morass under their sway, the Fist of Grollob is on the verge of expanding its influence to more habitable lands – lands closer to Soberdan and Lorellindon.

**Location:** The Fist of Grollob calls all of the Dankwater Morass its own, but there are essentially only five Fist settlements within the region. The three main Fist steadings are ruined villages formerly inhabited by Dwarves and Gnomes, while the other two are collapsed Dwarven citadels. In all, less than two thousand Dankwater goblins gather under the banner of the Fist – a black pennant with a bestial red fist imprinted upon it – but this number is more than enough when coupled with the goblins' intelligence and allies.

The three Fist steadings are similar in layout. Each one is contained entirely within the ruins of a Dwarven village which was demolished in The Burial. Inhabitants number between three and five hundred in each stading, along with a myriad of slaves, thralls, bodyguards and other creatures. Minimal restorative work has been performed on the original village ruins. Aside from a crude perimeter wall and rebuilt roofs, the steadings appear as they have since the Burial.

Being well-ordered and fairly smart, the goblins have an organized presence in their steadings. Warriors and their allies live along the stading's edges, within crude huts beside the short walls. Further inside are found compounds which house

giant lizard mounts for cavalry, and several small dwellings for hobgoblin thralls and the slaves used for labour. Between these buildings and the center of the stading is where the bulk of the goblins dwell; the elderly, the females, young and other goblins who are not active defenders of the Fist. In the middle of the habitation can be found the heart of the stading's operations. Here there is a large mustering area, along with a well-guarded smithy operated by Mûrkan and Dwarven slaves, the dwellings of the stading's leaders and the shrine of Grollob.

More so than the steadings, the citadels of the Fist are heavily guarded, for they have a very sinister function: here is where the dreaded goblin Pargs, or Creators, perform their despicable experiments, striving to mold select goblin infants into the image of Grollob. The goblins make no effort to hide these citadel laboratories from view; they know that the Dwarves have the location of each ruin on record, and they are also confident in their ability to defend these locales against any intruder.



While the citadels are less populous than the steadings, with goblin warriors numbering roughly fifty, there are far more dreaded reasons why these locales are considered safe by the Fist. Each citadel is home to three Pargs, each of whom is a formidable shaman who boasts sorcerous abilities as well as a unique tie to Grollob herself. Each Parg has three adepts under their tutorship, each of whom can hold its own in combat. Numerous Mûrkan, Dwarf and Human slaves work within the citadels, providing the goblins with arms and armour of the highest quality.

While these may be cause enough for outsiders to shy away from Fist citadels, they are not the main reason. The cunning of the Fist Pargs has resulted in each citadel having been adopted by a gray render. These hulking beasts are diligent in their protection of the citadels, and viciously attack any creature straying too close to the areas. For this reason, the Fist of Grollob is secure in its belief that the citadels are impenetrable.

Both Fist citadels are similar in general composition, although specifics are of course as varied as the original citadels were. The portion of each citadel which remains above ground houses Fist warriors, both goblin and hobgoblin. Lookout points are scattered around the citadels, and higher up the mountain slopes, where guards can survey much of the surrounding lands, even keeping an eye on the citadel's gray render at times.

Once past the guardhouses, the citadels descend into the side of the mountains, leading downwards to more guard posts and

living quarters for the Scionic slaves who man smithies and excavate the ruins. Deeper yet is the realm of the Pargs, their adepts and their experiments. A series of laboratories, operating rooms and shrines to Grollob are interconnected by old tunnel systems, giving each area more than one means of entry and egress.

**Culture:** The Dankwater goblins who comprise the Fist of Grollob have quite well structured communities, especially when compared to other goblin tribes of Argyle. Each Fist Steading is ruled by a priest of Grollob, who enjoys dictatorial control over the Steading on behalf of his goddess. These priest leaders, called Uchurs, rule the Steading until another stronger priest usurps them. Since the Uchur instructs all lesser priests on the tenets of Grollob, the chances of being overthrown are slim. When a younger priest does take over rulership, though, it makes the Steading stronger, for the younger priest is almost always a more powerful figure than his predecessor. The only other way an Uchur relinquishes power is if he is lucky enough to become a Parg, a rare promotion given the fact that Pargs have adepts of their own who are groomed for succession.

While the Uchur may be all-powerful in the Steading, the goblin's power pales in comparison with that of the Pargs. The most intelligent and driven of all the Dankwater goblins, the Pargs (Creators in the goblin tongue) are also clerics of Grollob. However, they have far more formidable clerical powers than the Uchur, and are bound more intimately to Grollob than any others. This combination allows them to constantly push the boundaries of their work. Their primary focus is the transmogrification of goblin infants into gruthaks, the fearsome killing machines which look somewhat like miniature versions of Grollob (in fact, gruthak is goblinoid for Grollob-spawn). While they have succeeded to a certain degree in their goals, the cost in infant lives is quite high, and the Pargs strive for greater success in this manner.

Next in Steading seniority are the Kelms; the goblin alchemists who, among other things, distill the addictive drug used on Scionic thralls. Numbering anywhere from one to three per Steading, these individuals have a sorcerous bent to them, as well as a keen aptitude for all things herbal and chemical in nature. They spend much of their time refining a hrukka-cane

concentrate, trying to increase its potency so it will not only be more addictive to their slaves, but also generate greater revenue when sold in Soberdan. When they are not engaged in this manner, they are creating a myriad of potions and phials for use by the Fist's warriors.

Females and young comprise one half of a Steading's population. These goblins are noncombatants. The females and those young close to maturity can wield weapons if need be, but are not trained in the art of war nor expected to bear arms. The Fist males, along with their slaves, thralls and gruthaks, have to date provided more than enough protection for each Steading. Females instead are responsible for daily chores: cooking, cleaning, mending and weaving cloth, performing minor construction repairs and raising the young.

Goblins breed profusely, with females giving birth to one offspring nearly every year. The infant mortality rate is around 50%, meaning each Steading welcomes between thirty and sixty new goblins each year. Of the infants that survive, not all remain with the Steading. Each year, all three Steadings hold a Gathering of the Fist, in which the Pargs of the two citadels venture down into the townsites to perform elaborate ceremonies. Through a series of divinations, the Pargs select a group of infants who are deemed to be blessed by Grollob, and take them back to the citadels, there to undergo the grotesque and painful treatments intended to transform them into gruthaks.

All Dankwater goblins are fervent worshippers of Grollob. Ceremonies dedicated to the Beast are very intense, climactic events. The zeal of the goblins' devotion is what enables the Pargs to cull the strongest infants during the Gathering of the Fist each year. It is also what provides the Uchurs with most of their tribal respect.

One of the most disturbing facets of the Fist of Grollob's existence is its penchant for retaining slaves. Fist Steadings have many slaves of all races, Human and Scionic. Most slaves seem to be Gnomes, whom goblins hate with a passion, lending further credence to the myth that Mirimil created goblins as her fourth, abandoned, race. Control of the slaves is accomplished with the use of a concoction created from a particularly potent strain of the hrukka-cane, thus keeping the slaves in a euphoric stupor. Slaves are used for a multitude of jobs, from gathering food to fighting for sport. Those slaves who are knowledgeable in the fields of mining and smithing are of particular value. All Fist Steadings have Scionic smiths forging weapons and repairing armour, while the two Fist citadels have extensive mining operations led by Dwarf slaves. While one might think that the equipment created by these Scionic slaves would be subpar, quite the opposite is true. The slaves' dependence on the hrukka-cane drug is strong enough to bring their best efforts to the fore, in order to receive larger doses of the drug.

Slaves are not the only non-goblin residents within Fist Steadings and citadels. Many hobgoblins are used as bodyguards and heavy infantry by the Fist of Grollob. Those who do not willingly toil for the Fist are either slain or forced to imbibe the addictive hrukka-cane mixture. Many giant lizards are corralled in the Steadings, and used as mounts by Fist Clenches and Spikes. Last but certainly not least, each Fist citadel enjoys the protection of a gray render.

**Combat:** The tactics and machinations of the Fist of Grollob warriors are relatively sophisticated. Armed and protected with fine pieces of weaponry and armour created by their Scionic smiths, the Dankwater goblins enjoy the same level of equipage as most Human or Scionic foes would. These warriors know the Dankwater Morass intimately, and can set ambushes and traps throughout the bogs with uncanny ease. Dankwater goblins prefer to attack from the flanks, trying to use the element of surprise to their advantage rather than running headlong at a



*A Fist of Grollob hobgoblin thrall*

group of invaders.

Scouting groups of the Fist of Grollob are known as Clenches. A Clench consists of four Dankwater goblin warriors, often with a giant lizard used by one warrior as a mount or, on long excursions, as a pack animal. A Clench has the ability to move quickly and quietly through the Morass, as all four goblins are extremely familiar with the terrain.

Larger contingents of warriors, often called into play by a Clench if a major threat such as lizardfolk, bugbears or Humans is spotted, are called Spikes. A Fist Spike is often made up of seven to ten Dankwater goblin warriors, three or four of whom will each be astride giant lizards. Accompanying these warriors will be one or two hobgoblins, one or two of the fearsome gruthaks, and one Dankwater goblin leader. A Spike will often rely on power and force when engaging a threat, but it can also lay elaborate ambushes and traps if need be. The Spike leaders are well versed in all aspects of battle, and their calculating nature is sure to create problems for any who encounter them.

When not on patrol or responding to a possible threat, the members of Clenches and Fists devote their time to guarding their respective steadings and honing their combat skills. Rumour has it that the Fist occasionally lets Scionic slaves loose for hunting and tracking exercises. Where these rumours originate is a mystery, since no slave has been known to escape the Morass. Most likely a Fist trade contingent bragging to their Soberdan contacts was the basis for the talk.

**Hearsay:** Those living in Soberdan are well aware of the Fist

of Grollob. Trade emissaries from the Fist regularly travel to the city, a small group of goblins who speak the common tongue quite well and barter their goods, predominantly the addictive drug distilled from the hrukka-cane, in Soberdan's underground markets in exchange for slaves. Mercenary groups have been hired for forays into the Dankwater Morass on more than one occasion, but sponsors of these expeditions now know that the Fist is too powerful to be disbanded that easily. They are looking for different means of destroying the clan, and feel that a small group of adventurers relying on stealth rather than power may be able to deal devastating blows to the Fist of Grollob's infrastructures.

A scattering of Dwarven clans still dwell along the Burnt Ranges, eking out a living in the harsh region. They have made sure that Argon's King Abellus is aware of the goblin occupations in the Dankwater Morass, and word is that the King is mustering a large Dwarven company in hopes of exterminating the vile creatures and cleansing the Dwarven ruins.

The Fist of Grollob occasionally sends Clenches out towards Niire, probing into Lorellindon in an attempt to gauge the strength of the Elves. These Clenches are becoming more frequent and better armed, and are now inflicting casualties when the Edgewatch Warden comes across them. The Nelde Mahalma has been lobbied by the Edgewatch to increase patrols south of Niire, in hopes of permanently dissuading the Fist of Grollob from attempting to move towards the Elven lands.

## DM Information

Organization	Fist Steading Kelm (4 <sup>th</sup> level adept)
<p><b>Clench:</b> Fist Warriors (4) Giant Lizard (1)</p> <p><b>Spike:</b> Fist Warriors (7-10) Giant Lizards (3) Fist Captain (1) Hobgoblins (1-3) Gruthaks (1-2)</p> <p><b>Steading:</b> Fist Warriors (80) Female Dankwater goblins (120) Young Dankwater goblins(120) Fist Captains (6) Giant Lizards (5-8) Hobgoblins (8-13) Gruthaks (5-8) Uchur (1) Uchur Adepts (1-3) Kelms (1-3) Scionic slaves (6-13)</p> <p><b>Citadel:</b> Fist Warriors (30) Pargs (3) Parg Adepts (3-8) Scionic slaves (11-20) Immature gruthaks (3-10)</p>	<p><b>Hit Dice:</b> 4d6+4 (18 hp)</p> <p><b>Initiative:</b> +1</p> <p><b>Speed:</b> 30 ft. (6 squares)</p> <p><b>Armour Class:</b> 12 (+1 size, +1 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 11</p> <p><b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> +2/-2</p> <p><b>Attack:</b> Sickle +2 (1d4) melee</p> <p><b>Full Attack:</b> Sickle +2 (1d4) melee</p> <p><b>Space/Reach:</b> 5ft./5ft.</p> <p><b>Special Attacks:</b> Spells (see below), potions (see below)</p> <p><b>Special Qualities:</b> Darkvision 60 ft.</p> <p><b>Saves:</b> Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +6</p> <p><b>Abilities:</b> Str 9, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 6</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Craft (Alchemy) +12, Concentration +3, Decipher Script +5, Knowledge (Dankwater Morass) +9, Spellcraft +9</p> <p><b>Feats:</b> Brew Potion, Skill Focus (Alchemy)</p> <p><b>Environment:</b> Marshlands</p> <p><b>Challenge Rating:</b> 1</p> <p><b>Treasure:</b> Standard</p> <p><b>Alignment:</b> Usually Lawful Evil</p> <p><b>Advancement:</b> By character class</p> <p><b>Level Adjustment:</b> +0</p> <p><b>Description:</b> The Fist Steading Kelms are viewed warily by other Dankwater goblins in the Steading. Their powers are focused on creating toxic brews to be used against assailants, potions to aid Fist warriors, and strong, addictive strains of the hrukka-cane drug. With a combination of their abilities and divine aid from Grollob through Uchurs and Pargs, Kelms can create a vast array of fluids, many of which would be beyond the skills of their Human counterparts. They</p>

are quirky, odd individuals, constantly researching new alchemical methods, studying recovered Dwarven artifacts and attempting to improve on existing formulae. They rarely engage in battle, but when they do they will first use their potions as weapons. Each Kelm will carry 1d6 potions on his person, selected from this list: *Barkskin, Blur, Darkness, Gaseous Form, Haste, Jump, Invisibility, Reduce Person*. Kelms also brew many unique potions for the Fist, and will have 1d6 of the following vials on their person as well: *Cane Juice, Fenwalk, Grollob's Touch, Liveskin, Snakemind, Swamp Tongue*. See the end of the write-up for potion descriptions.

**Typical spells prepared:** 0 – *create water, detect magic, read magic*; 1 – *bless, cause fear, comprehend languages*; 2 – *resist energy*.

## DM Information cont.

### Fist Warrior (1<sup>st</sup> level warrior)

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+1 (5 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armour Class:** 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather armour, +1 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 15

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/-3

**Attack:** Short sword +2 melee (1d4) or light crossbow +3 ranged (1d6)

**Full Attack:** Short sword +2 melee (1d4) or light crossbow +3 ranged (1d6)

**Space/Reach:** 5ft./5ft.

**Special Attacks:** –

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1

**Abilities:** Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +7, Jump +4, Knowledge (Dankwater Morass geography & nature) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Ride +4, Spot +3

**Feats:** Stealthy

**Environment:** Marshlands

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +0

**Description:** Fist warriors comprise the bulk of the Fist of Grollob's fighting forces. They are patient and calculating during combat, preferring to harry foes who are greater in size or number, ambushing them or attempting to steer them into less easily traversed regions of the Morass. Each Fist warrior will carry one or two Kelm potions during patrols.

### Fist Captain (3<sup>rd</sup> level warrior)

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+3 (16 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armour Class:** 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather armour, +1 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 15

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/-1

**Attack:** Masterwork short sword +6 melee (1d4+1) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d6)

**Full Attack:** Masterwork short sword +6 melee (1d4+1) or light crossbow +5 ranged (1d6)

**Space/Reach:** 5ft./5ft.

**Special Attacks:** –

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +2, Will 0

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (Dankwater Morass geography & nature) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Ride +6, Spot +3

**Feats:** Stealthy

**Environment:** Marshlands

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +0

**Description:** Fist captains are similar in stature to the warriors they command. They have more battle experience and are typically the larger and stronger of the Dankwater goblins. They lead by example in battle and are good strategists. As a point of tribal honour, they are given the best swords and armour that the Steading's Scionic slaves can create, thus increasing their combat abilities. They also possess one to three Kelm potions, and use them effectively.

## DM Information cont.

Fist Steading Uchur (6 <sup>th</sup> level adept)	Uchur Acolyte (3 <sup>rd</sup> level adept)
<p><b>Hit Dice:</b> 6d6+6 (27 hp)</p> <p><b>Initiative:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Speed:</b> 30 ft. (6 squares)</p> <p><b>Armour Class:</b> 11 (+1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 11</p> <p><b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> +3/-1</p> <p><b>Attack:</b> <i>Staff of Grollob</i> +5 melee (1d4+1/1d4+1)</p> <p><b>Full Attack:</b> <i>Staff of Grollob</i> +5 melee (1d4+1/1d4+1)</p> <p><b>Space/Reach:</b> 5ft./5ft.</p> <p><b>Special Attacks:</b> <i>Staff of Grollob</i> (see below), spells (see below)</p> <p><b>Special Qualities:</b> Darkvision 60 ft.</p> <p><b>Saves:</b> Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6</p> <p><b>Abilities:</b> Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Concentration +8, Heal +8, Knowledge (Grollob) +10, Survival +7</p> <p><b>Feats:</b> Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Wondrous Item</p> <p><b>Environment:</b> Marshlands</p> <p><b>Challenge Rating:</b> 3</p> <p><b>Treasure:</b> Standard</p> <p><b>Alignment:</b> Usually Lawful Evil</p> <p><b>Advancement:</b> By character class</p> <p><b>Level Adjustment:</b> +0</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A Fist Steading Uchur is the leader of a Dankwater goblin community. He is also the Steading's high priest of Grollob, and as such presides over all religious ceremonies that do not involve the Citadel Pargs. The Steading Uchur and his acolytes are also responsible for tending to wounded Fist warriors. While the Uchur rarely engages in combat, he can be a formidable opponent with his arsenal of spells and the Staff of Grollob. There are three Uchurs in total, one at each Steading. Uchurs do not possess familiars.</p> <p><i>Staff of Grollob:</i> These four foot tall blackened staves are roughly hewn from dead pieces of a darkwood tree. They are rather plain, with no ornamentation nor any runic carvings upon them. There are three <i>Staves of Grollob</i> in existence, each possessed by a Steading Uchur. As weapons, these staves function as +1 magic items. Through devout prayers and sacrifices dedicated to Grollob, these staves have been imbued with the following powers, each representing one aspect of Grollob's influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>cure serious wounds</i> (1 charge)</li> <li>- <i>shatter</i> (1 charge)</li> <li>- <i>magic circle against good</i> (2 charges)</li> <li>- <i>earthquake</i> (40' radius) (5 charges)</li> </ul> <p><b>Typical spells prepared:</b> 0 – <i>ghost sound, guidance, touch of fatigue</i>; 1 – <i>command, obscuring mist, sleep</i>; 2 – <i>web</i>.</p>	<p><b>Hit Dice:</b> 3d6+3 (13 hp)</p> <p><b>Initiative:</b> 0</p> <p><b>Speed:</b> 30 ft. (6 squares)</p> <p><b>Armour Class:</b> 11 (+1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 11</p> <p><b>Base Attack/Grapple:</b> +1/-3</p> <p><b>Attack:</b> Quarterstaff +2 melee (1d4/1d4)</p> <p><b>Full Attack:</b> Quarterstaff +2 melee (1d4/1d4)</p> <p><b>Space/Reach:</b> 5ft./5ft.</p> <p><b>Special Attacks:</b> Spells (see below)</p> <p><b>Special Qualities:</b> Darkvision 60 ft.</p> <p><b>Saves:</b> Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4</p> <p><b>Abilities:</b> Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Concentration +6, Heal +5, Knowledge (Grollob) +7, Survival +4</p> <p><b>Feats:</b> Combat Casting</p> <p><b>Environment:</b> Marshlands</p> <p><b>Challenge Rating:</b> 1</p> <p><b>Treasure:</b> Standard</p> <p><b>Alignment:</b> Usually Lawful Evil</p> <p><b>Advancement:</b> By character class</p> <p><b>Level Adjustment:</b> +0</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A Fist Steading Uchur acolyte is a devotee of Grollob, under the tutelage of the Steading Uchur. Each Steading Uchur has from one to three Uchur acolytes under his command. The ultimate goal for any acolyte is to succeed the Uchur and become leader of the Steading. To this end, they spend their time acting on the Uchur's behalf: aiding the Clenches and Spikes in any manner needed, learning what they can from the Uchur in regards to the worship of Grollob, and organizing and caring for any loot or other items acquired during raids or explorations of the Morass. Much like their mentors, Uchur adepts rarely engage in direct combat, instead augmenting the Fist's forces with their arcane and divine skills. Uchur adepts do not possess familiars.</p> <p><b>Typical spells prepared:</b> 0 – <i>cure minor wounds, mending, purify food and drink</i>; 1 – <i>burning hands, cause fear, cure light wounds</i>.</p>

## DM Information cont.

### Fist Citadel Parg (12<sup>th</sup> level adept)

**Hit Dice:** 12d6+12 (54 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armour Class:** 17 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +5 *Amulet of The Beast*), touch 12, flat-footed 16

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+2

**Attack:** Masterwork morning star +8 melee (1d6)

**Full Attack:** Masterwork morning star +8 melee (1d6)

**Space/Reach:** 5ft./5ft.

**Special Attacks:** *Amulet of The Beast* (see below), spells (see below)

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +10

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10

**Skills:** Concentration +8, Handle Animal +10, Heal +9, Knowledge (Grollob) +16, Survival +8

**Feats:** Combat Casting, Craft Staff, Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Wondrous Item

**Environment:** Marshlands

**Challenge Rating:** 6

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +0

**Description:** The most powerful goblins in all of Argyle, Pargs are more than a match for most adventurers. They are the supreme rulers of the Fist of Grollob, and all Dankwater goblins fear and respect them, for they wield the power of Grollob with her blessing. Their focus is on the creation of the gruthaks; hulking monstrosities that were once goblins but have been molded into the likeness of the Fist's goddess. Pargs do not normally engage in combat, and will come to the aid of their citadel or nearby steadings only if their minions are in desperate need of help. They will try to use their arsenal of spells rather than melee combat in defense of their demesne. Fist Pargs, due to their relationship with Grollob, have access to the special features of the Destruction and Evil domains, as per a 6<sup>th</sup> level cleric, including the granted powers and additional spells.

*Amulet of The Beast:* This rough-hewn pendant is crafted from the bone of a dead gruthak, and imbued with several powers during a ceremony in which Grollob partakes. The amulet grants a +5 enhancement bonus to the owner's armour class. Thrice per day, when grasped and the proper phrase muttered, the following effects can be activated, all at 12<sup>th</sup> level: *chaos hammer*, *contagion*, *unholy blight*.

**Typical spells prepared:** 0 – *create water*, *detect magic*, *read magic*; 1 – *cause fear*, *command*, *obscuring mist*, *sleep*, *protection from good* (domain); 2 – *animal trance*, *bull's strength*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *desecrate* (domain); 3 – *animate dead*, *lightning bolt*, *contagion* (domain).

### Parg Acolyte (6<sup>th</sup> level adept)

**Hit Dice:** 6d6+6 (27 hp)

**Initiative:** 0

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armour Class:** 11 (+1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 11

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/-1

**Attack:** *Staff of the Citadel* +5 melee (1d4+1/1d4+1)

**Full Attack:** *Staff of the Citadel* +5 melee (1d4+1/1d4+1)

**Space/Reach:** 5ft./5ft.

**Special Attacks:** Spells (see below), *Staff of the Citadel* (see below)

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10

**Skills:** Concentration +7, Heal +7, Knowledge (Grollob) +10, Survival +7

**Feats:** Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Wondrous Item

**Environment:** Marshlands

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually Lawful Evil

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +0

**Description:** Understudies of the Pargs, these acolytes are sometimes steading Uchurs who have demonstrated the talents needed to follow the path of a Parg. They work diligently to uncover secrets of the citadels, hoping to find artifacts which will aid them in their conquest of lesser races. They are tireless in their worship of Grollob, spending hours daily in meditations to better understand her credo. They aid the Pargs in the gruthak creation process and other religious ceremonies. They will defend the Pargs and their research areas with both spells and their staves. Because of their devotion to Grollob, Parg adepts have access to the special features of the Destruction domain, as per a 1<sup>st</sup> level cleric, including the granted power and an additional 1<sup>st</sup> level domain spell.

*Staff of the Citadel:* This gnarled staff is crafted of swamp ash and has a +1 enhancement bonus. Three times per day the following powers may be activated: *contagion* (on successful touch attack), *deeper darkness*.

**Typical spells prepared:** 0 – *guidance*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*; 1 – *burning hands*, *comprehend languages*, *obscuring mist*, *inflict light wounds* (domain); 2 – *web*.

# Dankwater Goblin

Located within the Dankwater Morass, these goblins are all part of an extended clan. Most of them have rust-coloured skin and pale yellow eyes. Warriors wear well-cared for studded leather armour, wield more sophisticated weapons such as scimitars and light crossbows, and adorn themselves with body parts of their enemies.

This goblin variation differs slightly from goblins found throughout the rest of Argyle, as per below:

- +2 Intelligence. Natural selection bred into these goblins a greater awareness of the world around them, and that awareness has increased over the years. More cunning than their weaker relatives to the north, the Dankwater goblins can rival Humans with their ingenuity and battle tactics.
- Usually lawful evil. With greater intelligence comes a greater realization of potential. Such dominating success as the Dankwater goblins have found would not be possible without adhering to some basic rules and customs within the tribes.
- Dankwater goblins have a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently and Spot checks, but only when they are in the Dankwater Morass. If travelling outside the Morass these bonuses are negated by the goblins' lack of familiarity with the surroundings.
- Additionally, Dankwater goblins do *not* have a +4 racial bonus to Ride checks.
- Warrior goblins typically have the Stealthy feat in place of the Alertness feat. In the Dankwater Morass, these goblins are very confident in their safety, and instead focus on slinking quietly through the bogs, the better to ambush their victims.
- Dankwater goblin mounts are giant lizards (same stats as monitor lizards, but of the 4HD variety and with a +2 AC bonus due to armour provided by the goblins) rather than worgs. Occasionally, a 5HD lizard will be found with a Spike. This lizard is capable of carrying two goblins, one that steers the beast and one that uses its crossbow with both hands.
- +1 attack bonus when fighting any Gnome race, or bugbears. In fact, all goblins in Argyle receive a +1 attack bonus when fighting Gnomes, lending further credence to the myth that Mirimil created them. Dankwater goblins also receive a +1 attack bonus when fighting bugbears due to their hatred of these large cousins. Bugbears are considered too dangerous to be of use to Dankwater goblins, and are killed on sight if found within the Morass.
- Dankwater goblins have a Challenge Rating of 1/2 instead of 1/3 due mainly to their increased intelligence and improved equipment. The use of Scionic slaves has provided the goblins with excellent armaments, while their high level of cunning has enabled them to execute more elaborate combat tactics, while also giving them somewhat greater courage.

# Gruthak

## Medium Aberration

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+8 (27 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armour Class:** 16 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armour, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 15

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+7

**Attack:** Club +7 melee, bite +7 melee

**Full Attack:** Club +7 melee (1d6+4), bite +7 melee (1d6+4)

**Space/Reach:** 5ft./5ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rage

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., ferocity

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 8

**Skills:** Hide +3, Jump +6, Move Silently +4

**Feats:** Cleave, Power Attack

**Environment:** Marshlands

**Organization:** 1-6, always with Dankwater goblins

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral Evil

**Advancement:** None

**Level Adjustment:** –

*This freakish creature stands nearly as tall as a Human. Its crimson skin is covered with tufts of black hair, and its yellow eyes glare with a burning hatred. Saliva drips from its fanged maw. It walks on two legs, but often uses its long, muscular arms to run more quickly.*

Gruthaks are the result of manipulations and experiments performed by Pargs (Creators, in the goblin tongue). Every year, during the Gathering of the Fist, the goblin Pargs choose a number of infants during a solemn ceremony. These goblin young, having been deemed sacred to Grollob by the Pargs, are removed from their families and taken back to the Pargs' citadels, where they undergo numerous treatments over a span of a dozen or more years in an attempt to imbue upon them the likeness of Grollob. These treatments are incredibly painful and rarely successful: for every thirty infants taken, only one survives to become a gruthak.

Once a gruthak reaches maturity and is physiologically stable, the Pargs release it into the care of its homestead. Fist commanders take in the gruthak, where it becomes a formidable piece of the homestead's warband. It has been trained to do two things: obey the commands of goblins, and destroy that which it is told to.

Gruthaks are sexless, and cannot reproduce. Their lifespan is relatively short: any who die of old age do so after serving their homestead for only two or three dozen years. Death is often preceded by a year or more of dire physical complications.

These creatures are dressed for war by their commanders, usually wearing piecemeal leather armour painted in such a manner as to invoke fear in their adversaries. Their bright red leathery hides have patches of coarse black hair into which are often tied the bones of the Fist's victims. This appearance, combined with an apelike gait, slavering jaws and burning eyes, can be rather alarming.

Gruthaks understand the goblin tongue well enough to be able to follow basic commands, but cannot speak it.



## Combat

Gruthaks are bred to be living symbols of Grollob; hence, their sole purpose is destruction. Armed only with a club, gruthaks will not hesitate to engage a foe in battle. They do not know fear or cowardice, and simply follow the orders of their commanders. With a brutish bellow they will rush forward, swinging their club madly and attempting to bludgeon any moving creature within range. They are known to continue to pound on corpses once a battle is over, and only stop when called off repeatedly by their leader. If a gruthak comes into close quarters with its opponent and cannot use its club, it will attempt to grapple its foe and bite it. The powerful jaws of a gruthak can cause considerable damage, even biting through leather or hide armour.

**Ferocity (Ex):** Bred for combat, gruthaks fight without penalty even if disabled or dying.

**Rage (Ex):** Gruthaks that are injured in battle become enraged, attacking even more maniacally than usual. They gain a +4 to Strength and Constitution, and a -2 to AC, until the battle is over. Gruthak commanders can attempt to bring a gruthak out of this state prematurely by performing an Intimidate check, DC 16, each round until the beast succumbs to the commands or the combat ends. Note that on a roll of 1 the gruthak will turn on its master.

## Potion Descriptions

**Cane Juice:** The distilled, concentrated and highly addictive drug created from the hukka-cane. When imbibed, it induces a feeling of euphoria unlike any the imbiber has ever experienced. The person drinking the potion will be unable to move at all for 30-100 minutes, instead laying immobile upon the ground, smiling wistfully and staring blankly.

Worse than this, though, is the high likelihood of addiction that comes from imbibing cane juice. Characters must make a Will save against DC 20 or they will become addicted, falling under the influence of anyone who can promise them more of the drug. If the save is successful, the DC on subsequent saves increases by 4. Generally, a *Heal* spell is required to break the addiction.

This potent formula is used by the Fist of Grollob to maintain control over their throng of slaves, to whom small doses of cane juice are administered in reward for good behaviour.

**Fenwalk:** Quaffing this potion allows the person freedom of movement through the Dankwater Morass. Mud, quicksand, peat and even water are as solid ground for 30 minutes. Many Fist Clenches will carry vials of Fenwalk.

**Grollob's Touch:** Grollob's touch heals 3d8+6 points of damage, but with the healing comes pain: the imbiber must make a Fortitude save versus DC 15 or lose one point of Constitution until healed by natural means such as sleep or a healer's kit.

**Liveskin:** Drinking this potion will give the user chameleon-like powers for 30 minutes. The person will have the ability to blend into his surroundings, gaining a +10 bonus on Hide checks.

**Snakemind:** Drinking this potion causes the imbiber to enter a mild trancelike state. They become immune to all fear and mind control effects, and gain 1d8 hit points. The effects last for 1d6+4 rounds.

**Swamp Tongue:** This vile-smelling oil can be applied to bolt tips, sword blades and other piercing or slashing weapons. A failed Fortitude save against DC 15 will introduce a rapidly spreading fungal rot to the wound, reducing the victim's strength and constitution by 1 point each per day, as well as causing an additional 1d6 points of damage per day. Curable as per typical poisons.