From the moment of the ancient betrayal, the drow have dwelled in the bowels of the earth, nestled in the bosom of the Spider Queen, where they suffer her insane whispers and attend to her capricious demands. For most, there is no life other than service to Lolth. They want nothing more than to be the vessels of her dark desire. To deny the wishes of the goddess is to invite unspeakable agony, scorn, ostracism, and, most likely, annihilation. Indeed, few drow even dare to think of breaking with the traditions that have informed their culture for hundreds—if not thousands—of years, for who can say whether the Spider Queen is listening when your thoughts turn to treason?

The drow exist in a complex society, where treachery is the currency of advancement, where poison laces every cup, and where each shadow holds the promise of a slow and agonizing death. Given these circumstances, one would wonder how anyone could find the resolve needed to escape the clutches of evil. In truth, only a few find the courage needed to stand against the matrons and demons ruling their worlds. Most are crushed under the heel of their betters and offered up to the goddess on blood-stained altars to serve as warnings to others with similar ideas. A few flee into the wilds of the Underdark, but become lost in the labyrinth of chambers and tunnels, eventually falling to starvation, thirst, or any one of the endless monstrous horrors stalking this lightless world. Only a rare few claw their way out of the quagmire of corruption and
embrace the clean air of the surface world, but even these lucky souls must ever after watch their backs because Lolth is loathe to let her secrets and her people escape.

**DROW IN THE REALMS**

The drow occupy a special place in the Forgotten Realms, and their influence on the setting over the years has been considerable, so much so that the existence of drow adventurers in the Realms is taken for granted. Whether inspired by a certain famous drow ranger or by a desire to play a dark and sinister character orbiting the shadowy edges of the adventuring group, players of drow characters fall into the trap of stereotype, recycling the same idea time and again until the drow adventurer becomes so commonplace, it’s easy to overlook the mystique of this wicked race. Of course, there’s nothing wrong with playing the archetypal drow or slightly modifying the stereotype to make it your own, but then again, you have a range of other options that can inject new life into these popular icons.

**DROW BY THE NUMBERS**

Although drow villains and heroes appear throughout the fiction, adventures, and game products, it’s important to note their place in the Dungeons & Dragons game, at least in regard to their numbers. Doing so reveals a great deal about the position the drow occupy in the minds of the common folk in the world. The Monster Manual presents drow adversaries from levels 11 to level 15, placing them squarely in the lower half of the paragon tier. As such, they represent threats and foes that transcend the common person’s experiences, and they exist far beyond the typical threats an ordinary member of a race might face. In fact, the Arcana DC of 20 to identify even a basic salient feature about this race indicates that few commoners know anything about them at all. Certainly, sages, leaders, and figures of note with a bit more worldly experience likely know more of these insidious villains, but for the typical person in the world, the drow are more myth than reality. Even those folks who know of the drow (say one in twenty), the extent of their knowledge is largely limited to an understanding that they are a subterranean people who emerge to raid the surface for slaves, and they have little knowledge of Lolth’s influence over them.

Obviously, there are exceptions. It’s safe to say elves and eladrin know a bit more about the drow, given their historical connections. Also, drow prey on elves and eladrin more than they do other surface races, making drow a looming threat to these people. Still, among the smaller and more remote communities, one could suppose that an individual elf, eladrin, or half-elf has probably never seen a drow, wouldn’t know what to do if they encountered one, and certainly would have little idea about their culture and way of life. Again, the wiser and more powerful members of these populations would know more, but generally speaking, drow are an elusive, rarely seen, and widely misunderstood people that exist as a distant and shadowy threat.

From this, a drow player character is likely to move easier through the world than many DMs might otherwise allow. When dealing with common folk, shopkeepers, bartenders, artisans, the average individual might think the character’s appearance strange, maybe even unsettling, but treat that character the same way they would any individual possessed of an unusual appearance. Does this mean drow characters are free of prejudice and persecution? Not at all: The danger is more severe, for the people who know best about the drow are the ones best suited to cause these characters grief. Rival adventuring parties, powerful individuals knowledgeable in the nature of dark elves, and other people with a long-standing grudge against the drow can all harass a drow adventurer. So even though a drow character might move among the ignorant with ease, she must be ever vigilant about not attracting undue attention lest someone of consequence come to purge of the community of a real or perceived threat.

**DROW CUSTOMS AND BEHAVIOR**

Lolth’s influence on the drow cannot be understated. Drow society is one built upon fear and ambition, where strength, cunning, and violence are rewarded, and where weakness, compassion, and mercy are stamped out wherever they are found. Status is everything to the drow, and nearly every dark elf seeks advancement by any means possible. From birth, the drow receive treachery and cruelty in place of warmth and love. Those children perceived as weak are denied food and other necessities. If they survive, they’ll be stronger for it. If not, they are spared an even nastier end later in life. Children showing compassion receive brutal punishments as their rewards, such as being beaten or tormented until he or she is cured of any future inclinations. As a result, drow children are vicious and bloodthirsty to escape punishment, and, more importantly, to survive.

The drow carry these early lessons with them throughout their lives, competing for scarce resources, honors, and advancement with the same tenacity they exhibited as children. Male drow distinguish themselves by murder, betrayal, and acts of sinister treachery to curry favor with their betters in the hopes of attaining a higher place, or to win a place of comfort as the courtesan of an important matron. Ambitious drow must be careful about their ascent lest they rise too quickly and gain the wrong kinds of attention—usually in the form of temporary alliances between those they stepped on to get ahead. These alliances frequently result in an equally rapid fall.
Outsiders see female drow as having an easier time than males, but their paths are just as perilous because the degree of competition exceeds that of their male counterparts. Female drow can enter Lolth’s clergy and carve or poison their way to positions of great power. Those that seek a path other than the church find themselves competing not with just their fellow females, but also resentful males who fear and resent the females.

Add to the nasty competition permeating every level of drow society the capricious whims of a dark and terrible goddess, drow cities and smaller communities exist ever on the brink of disaster, with noble houses rising and falling, individuals attaining great heights of fame and privilege only to be dragged down into a storm of poisoned blades. Through it all, those the drow subjugate languish under the cruel whips and plot uprisings to topple their masters and gain freedom, while aberrant horrors of the deep Underdark bubble up from the depths to wage war against these communities and enslave or devour them all. Against this complex and deadly backdrop, a drow player character is born.

Escaping the Past

Every drow character must grapple with its upbringing. If the drow was born in a drow enclave, the character must come to terms with the horrors of its past and the player must decide why and how the character transcended the indoctrination to become a hero. You can use the following options as written or to spark ideas for creating your own history.

Anomalous: You are a curious exception to the rule. Somehow, you escaped the worst punishments, survived the harsh competition of your childhood, and slipped away from your people before you could become corrupted. A sympathetic relative who shares your good heart might have sheltered you from the excesses of your people. Or, you might have been born to greatness and kidnapped by outsiders to be used against the drow later, or you were the sole survivor after your city was wiped out by mind flayers, duergar, or aboleths. In any event, you have none of the personality characteristics attributed to the drow.

Haunted: You experienced the full horrors of a childhood in a drow city and, to survive, committed a number of evil acts yourself. Each time you slid the knife in the rival, whipped a slave, or consorted with fiends, the guilt and self-loathing grew until you could take it no more. You broke free from the darkness, but your memories are filled with visions of your past, dogging your steps and haunting your dreams. You are resolved to make amends in the hopes that you’ll escape the nightmares of your past.

Unapologetic: You make no apologies for what you have done. It was necessary to survive. Murder, assault, thieving, and terrible betrayals are all part of the price of living. Now that you’re free from your old life, you no longer need to do those
things. However, you're not above resorting to underhanded tactics if the situation demands it, so you fall into the older patterns whenever you must. **Unhinged:** You escaped your past, but not without a price. The experience left you broken, as if your mind has become a shattered mirror, so when you reflect on your memories they are disjointed and confusing. The degree of your madness can be mild to severe. You might be an eccentric with unusual, but not bizarre behavior. Examples included being obsessed with cleanliness, feeling uncomfortable around all people or those of a specific race, going through a particular ritual before you enter your trance, having facial tics or erratic speech patterns, or swinging from one emotional extreme to another. Or, you might be deranged—reckless and dangerous not only to yourself, but also your allies.

Drow Archetypes

Defining how you reconcile your upbringing with your current life as an adventurer is an important part of defining your adventurer in the larger world, but it is only one piece of the puzzle that helps construct your character’s identity. The *Forgotten Realms Player’s Guide* presents 27 character backgrounds to help ground your character into the game in interesting ways. Selecting an appropriate background grounds your character in a particular place and also can establish your outlooks and objectives. The following archetypes are meant to be used with the character backgrounds to help you describe your relationship with your adopted land.

**The Immigrant Drow: Dragon Coast**

Of all the places a drow might wind up, there are few better havens than the Dragon Coast. West Gate’s cosmopolitan climate makes for a good retreat for drow escaping the Underdark, and the scum of Ilipur might embrace a drow adventurer if the character survives long enough to prove his or her worth. Even outside the major communities, the Dragon Coast is an excellent place for a drow to start a new life, because the people of this land value gold above just about everything else, and they can overcome ingrained prejudices if the object of their scorn has coin to spend.

Life on the Dragon Coast is perilous indeed, and for all its acceptance of a varied and diverse population, the streets of West Gate, Ilipur, and elsewhere are not especially safe and promise robbery, assault, or even bloody murder for the unwary. For drow characters, such an environment isn’t all that unfamiliar and most find it easy to adapt.

**Unhinged** and **unapologetic** characters are most likely to select the Immigrant archetype as their character background. Unhinged characters join the ranks of other mad folk struggling to survive here, while unapologetic characters have no trouble using the talents they acquired in the Underdark to rise above the common thieves and thugs.

Living among other races is not grounds for ostracism by your kin provided you keep to the traditions of your homeland and advance the ends of the drow people. Should you betray the principles of Lolth, expect no mercy from your former kin for if you are discovered, they hunt you down and kill you.

**The Refugee Drow: East Rift**

The catastrophe of the recent past brought changes to the world, caused widespread upheaval and destruction, and left much of the world reeling in the shock of the Spellplague. Although most point to the ruins on the surface, the devastation spread to the tunnels of the Underdark as well, collapsing ancient cities, wiping out entire civilizations, and erasing vast swathes of regions. Like all other people, the drow were affected by this event and many drow cities vanished into the darkness, their people scattered and defeated, and their ways and allegiances sundered like the lands above.

You are a descendant of these refugees, and the ways of the drow people from which your ancestors came have been lost or confused, leaving you and your kin with an incomplete picture of your heritage. Lacking a place to call home, your people flee to other ruins, or seek shelter among your ancestral enemies such as the gold dwarves of East Rift. Others might seek conquest and come boiling out of the darkness to lay claim on other civilizations and enslave them.

Regardless of the intent of your people’s tattered civilization, you have broken with the others and are now ensconced in a new culture, somehow proving that you are different and can be trusted. East Rift is not likely to accept drow since they make regular forays into the depths to oust the drow squatters lurking in the remains of Lost Underhome, but you made yourself invaluable to the dwarves.

Your past is likely filled with awful events, desperate fights against your rivals, betrayals by those you loved, and witnessing such horror that your dreams are filled with evil phantoms.

**Anomalous** and **haunted** drow make the best refugees because they have escaped the culture of corruption defining drow existence. These characters can show their good intent and might become valued allies to the people who offer them shelter. Such characters might assist by infiltrating the ranks of their former kin, while others can act as scouts and spies, or even as instructors, teaching techniques for fighting and defeating drow enemies. Your alliance with these newfound friends does you no favors when
dealing with other drow. You are beneath contempt—a liability that must be purged.

**The Classic Drow: Menzoberranzan**

The classic drow reached adulthood in a drow community. These settlements range in size from tiny outposts in the far-flung regions of the Underdark to huge sprawling city-states that spread throughout a cavern and spill out into the adjoining tunnels. Of all the drow settlements, none are as famous (or infamous) as Menzoberranzan, the birthplace of countless treacherous acts and villainous deeds, and also the homeland of Drizzt.

Whether you come from Menzoberranzan or another drow community, the results are typically the same. Your upbringing is steeped in Lolth and thus you were exposed to the full range of horrors that define life in the Underdark. Your past is likely filled with awful events, desperate fights against your rivals, betrayals by those you loved, and witnessing such horror that your dreams are filled with evil phantoms. As a result, any of the drow templates work well for classic drow. You might be anomalous, somehow cleaving to your principles even as evil swirls around you, or you might be unhinged, a broken vessel, struggling to find your place in the world after the terrors of your youth.

If you select the classic drow background, you need to decide under what terms you have escaped your community. Did you leave voluntarily, fleeing your people, or were you cast out and shunned for deviant behavior or beliefs? You might retain your loyalties, but take a more reasoned approach when dealing with your ancestral enemies, or you might try to lead the drow into a new era of prosperity, working to forge inroads into surface communities to facilitate trade (see the Horizon Syndicate below for one example).

Although some drow genuinely seek to escape the curse weighing upon their souls, many more surface-dwelling drow seek a sinister end. Still loyal to the goddess, these drow work to infiltrate their enemies to act as spies or saboteurs. Using magic or mundane methods, they mask their appearance and intentions to slip into their enemies’ communities where they gather information about strengths and weaknesses, feeding the intelligence to the matrons.
The longer the drow spend among their enemies, the greater the risk of the drow defecting and compromising the mission. In your case, you might sympathize with your enemies and even see them as undeserving of the hatred and impending violence about to fall on their heads. Then again, you might seek a greater end and give your better's false information to orchestrate their defeat and thus damage or undermine your rival house's standing to give your house the chance to ascend.

Whatever you decide, this archetype is the hardest to integrate into a party of adventurers. Characters that maintain their connections to their homeland are bound to be evil or chaotic evil, and if not, have sinister tendencies that can wreak havoc in a group, which can undermine their ability to work together. This said, the classic drow does provide interesting roleplaying opportunities. You can roleplay through the realization of your people’s darkness, while experiencing a better and nobler life among the traditional enemies of the drow. You might seek redemption, struggling to do your duty, while grappling with the conflicting emotions inside. Whatever you decide, be sure to work with the DM and your fellow players to find the right balance between playing your character in a way that's true to the background, but also keeps the disruption to gameplay at a minimum.

The Horizon Syndicate is an excellent place for drow who disagree with the shifting politics and treachery of their homelands to seek to escape and integrate into surface communities.

The Horizon Syndicate is an excellent place for drow who disagree with the shifting politics and treachery of their homelands to seek to escape and integrate into surface communities. Some join the Syndicate for a time in the hopes of breaking away once they establish a network of allies to give them haven during their transition out of their societies. Others join the Syndicate to put distance between themselves and the experiences of their childhood, hoping to mask their memories with new ones forged in a world far from the terrors of the Underdark. Overall, the Syndicate enjoys a diverse membership and has even expanded to allow nondrow to join their ranks in the hopes of spreading their presence into markets ordinarily closed to the drow.

**Joining the Organization:** The Horizon Syndicate is traditionally a drow institution and thus membership has, up until recently, been exclusive to drow candidates. As the organization has grown, other races that have no compunctions against working alongside the drow are welcome, though the Syndicate finds useful. Only those who prove their worth and loyalty are welcomed as full members, a factor is ever watchful for spies. To join the Horizon Syndicate, the character pays a small fee (10 gp) and becomes a junior member with few privileges. These low-ranking members are assigned to departments based on their talents, such keeping the books, packing cargo, or scouting out new trade routes to distant clients. The Syndicate uses this training period to assess the character’s loyalties, objectives, and talents, and so junior members are monitored almost at all times to judge the new member’s worth. Those who look as if they might compromise the organization vanish, but some might be kept on as junior members for the entirety of their careers if they have talents the Syndicate finds useful. Only those who prove their worth and loyalty are welcomed as full members, a position in which the character has some authority and freedom. Such agents can determine which missions they would undertake and are free to take jobs for their enemies have long memories, and the drow have proved time and again unworthy of trust, but a smattering of ambitious merchants have seized upon these new opportunities in spite of the risks, seeing these ventures as an excellent way to expand their presence into new markets. In the years since their founding, the Horizon Syndicate has sent its tendrils across the continent, expanding their enterprise throughout the Realms.

On the surface, the Horizon Syndicate appears to be nothing more than a merchant conglomerate that facilitates trade between the surface communities and those in the Underdark. A good number of its members strive to do just this, and these representatives deal fairly in their negotiations. Given the drow’s penchant for treachery, however, it should come to no surprise that not all its members are as committed to this new enterprise as the organization claims.
outside the organization provided they continue to devote some time to the Syndicate.

The highest-ranking members, called Factors, form up the Syndicate’s core. They oversee the expansion of the organization into new communities, broker larger agreements, and vet junior members to determine their suitability to become full members. There are eight Factors, and their motivations range from the peaceful to the downright sinister, with some truly abiding by the principles on which this organization was founded, while others seek to exploit the Syndicate’s connections to work their villainy.

**Character Benefits:** The benefits a character attains by membership depend on the character’s standing. Junior members receive free room and board in spartan accommodations if needed, and receive free passage to other Syndicate holdings provided the travel relates to the Syndicate. Full members receive a small stipend to pay for a permanent residence in any community friendly to the Syndicate they desire and also receive compensation for clothing, food, and basic necessities. They also receive a 10% discount on all mundane goods. They never need pay passage on any Syndicate ship and once a year they can requisition a vessel for a mission unrelated to the Syndicate’s operations.

**Roleplaying Suggestions:** Drow Syndicate members have a more cosmopolitan approach in their dealings with other races. Although they might harbor some bigotry toward what they perceive as lesser folk, they hide it well. Most are shrewd negotiators, and they are adept at coming out on top in their dealings. Since members travel a great deal, these drow are accustomed to dealing with other cultures and might embrace a variety of customs and beliefs that make them decidedly unusual representatives of their race.

**Typical Members:** The Horizon Syndicate welcomes members of all occupations and most races. By far, drow are the most numerous members, but the Syndicate has a number of humans and a few half-elves as well. Other races are represented in smaller numbers.

Just about any character can join the Syndicate, though rogues and wizards are preferred, followed closely by warlocks, rangers, and fighters. Paladins and clerics are not usually welcomed, but there have been exceptions, and rumors hold that at least half of the Factors are in fact priests.

### Lore of the Organization

A character knows the following information about the Horizon Syndicate with a successful History check.

**DC 15:** The Horizon Syndicate is a drow merchant conglomerate created to facilitate trade between surface communities and those of the Underdark. Since their formation, they have slowly spread throughout Faerûn, wherever the locals can tolerate their presence.

**DC 20:** The Horizon Syndicate maintains a peaceful front and has divorced itself from the more violent drow. Committed to their commercial ventures, the Syndicate is careful to maintain their neutrality when conflict erupts between drow and other races.

**DC 25:** Rumors indicate that the Syndicate has interests beyond commerce and some suggest that this organization is nothing more than a front for a complex and extensive drow spy network. The Syndicate members deny these allegations, dismissing them as the spurious claims of their competitors.

### A Horizon Syndicate Campaign

For players wishing to play drow characters, the Horizon Syndicate offers an excellent opportunity for introducing their characters to an adventuring party. Since the Syndicate is careful to maintain peaceful relations with their clients, their drow membership has a bit more freedom and acceptance than has their nonaffiliated kin. Syndicate members see the organization as being truly devoted to its founding principals, thus allowing the character to seamlessly work within another adventuring party. In fact, nondrow characters could also join the Syndicate, which gives the DM a good way to spark new adventures by sending the PCs on missions for the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drow Fighting Style</td>
<td>Drow, Dex 15</td>
<td>While armed with a light blade and hand crossbow, you don’t provoke opportunity attacks with the hand crossbow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drow Heretic</td>
<td>Drow</td>
<td>+2 damage against spiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instinctive Darkness</td>
<td>Drow, cloud of darkness racial power</td>
<td>Use cloud of darkness as an immediate reaction when target of melee or close attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loth’s Meat</td>
<td>Drow</td>
<td>Drop enemy to 0 hit points, gain +1 bonus to attack rolls until end of next turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowslip</td>
<td>Drow, cloud of darkness racial power</td>
<td>Shift 2 after using cloud of darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flickering Shroud</td>
<td>11th level, drow, cloud of darkness</td>
<td>Use darkfire to grant an ally +2 AC and Reflex defense racial power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highborn Drow</td>
<td>11th level, drow</td>
<td>+2 to Arcana checks, and gain webs of darkness racial power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowborn</td>
<td>11th level, drow</td>
<td>Gain +2 initiative in darkness or dim illumination and +1 damage to targets granting combat advantage</td>
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If the DM desires, the Syndicate might, in fact, be just what people suspect—a spy network. If so, the organization that might have fostered the drow PC might eventually evolve into a sinister and villainous group, with the transformation of its role occurring when the adventurer learns more about the Factors and their personal ambitions. The campaign could see the drow PC and any allies working to purge the rogue elements, restoring it to its original purpose, or oppose it, fighting its agents in a protracted campaign.

**DROW OPTIONS**

The *Forgotten Realms Player’s Guide* presents a wide range of options for players to expand their drow characters in interesting and dynamic ways. The following options build upon this solid foundation by helping to expand a drow player’s options as the character develops.

**Heroic Tier Feats**

Any feat in the following section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites. Heroic tier feats are the only feats you can take if you are 10th level or lower.

**Drow Fighting Style**

- **Prerequisites:** Drow, Dex 15
- **Benefit:** When holding a light blade in one hand and a hand crossbow in the other, you do not provoke opportunity attacks when making attacks using your hand crossbow.

**Drow Heretic**

- **Prerequisite:** Drow
- **Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls against creatures with the spider keyword.

**Instinctive Darkness**

- **Prerequisites:** Drow, *cloud of darkness* racial power
- **Benefit:** You can use your *cloud of darkness* racial power as an immediate reaction when you are the target of a melee or close attack.

**Lolth’s Meat**

- **Prerequisite:** Drow
- **Benefit:** Whenever you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer, you gain a +1 feat bonus to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

**Shadowslip**

- **Prerequisites:** Drow, *cloud of darkness* racial power
- **Benefit:** When you use your *cloud of darkness* racial power, you can shift 2 squares as a free action.

**Paragon Tier Feats**

Any feat in the following section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

**Flickering Shroud**

- **Prerequisites:** 11th level, drow, *darkfire* racial power
- **Benefit:** When you use your *darkfire* racial power, you can alter its effects to grant the target a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex saving throws until the end of your next turn.

**Highborn Drow [Drow]**

- **Prerequisite:** 11th level, drow
- **Benefit:** You gain a +2 feat bonus to Arcana checks. In addition, whenever you use your Lolth-touched racial feature, you can use the *cloud of darkness*, *darkfire*, or *webs of darkness* power.

**Wabs of Darkness [Drow Racial Power]**

Inky tendrils of solidified darkness leap from your fingertip and bind your enemies.

**Encounter**

**Standard Action** Close blast 3

**Target:** Each creature in burst

**Attack:** Intelligence + 4 vs. Reflex, Wisdom + 4 vs. Reflex, or Charisma + 4 vs. Reflex

Increase to +6 bonus at 21st level

**Effect:** Until the end of your next turn, the target is slowed and all creatures have concealment against the target.

**Shadowborn [Drow]**

- **Prerequisite:** 11th level, drow
- **Benefit:** Whenever you start an encounter in an area of darkness or dim illumination, you gain a +2 bonus to your initiative check and, until the second round of combat, a +1 feat bonus to damage rolls against any creature you have combat advantage against.

**Drow Equipment**

In the depths of the Underdark, drow must be innovative in the design and function of their tools to survive.

**Poisons**

Although famous for their knockout poison, the drow employ a wide range of toxins, some created through alchemical means, while others are the product of magical experimentation.
### Skull Rot Level 5 Poison
Distilled from toxic subterranean fungus, skull rot causes alchemically enhanced spores to root in the brain and trigger madness.

**Poison** 250 gp  
**Attack:** +8 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends), and the poison makes a secondary attack.  
**Secondary Attack:** +8 vs. Will; the target makes a basic or charge attack against the nearest creature it can see on its turn (save ends).  
**Special:** This poison works only when it is inhaled.

### Eyeburn Paste Level 10 Poison
A noxious paste made from powered stone and a mild acid, this poison steals the sight from its victims.

**Poison** 1,250 gp  
**Attack:** +13 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).  
**First Failed Save:** The target is blinded (save ends).  
**Mindscorch** Level 15 Poison  
Brewed from brain matter harvested from mind flayers, this potent toxin shreds the mind.

**Poison** 6,250 gp  
**Attack:** +18 vs. Will; ongoing 10 poison damage and -2 penalty to close or area attack rolls (save ends).  
**First Failed Save:** The target is dazed (save ends).

### The Calling Level 20 Poison
A foul mixture of spider eggs and slime collected from an aboleth, this vicious toxin devours the victim from the inside out.

**Poison** 31,250 gp  
**Attack:** +23 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 15 poison damage and a -2 penalty to the target’s Fortitude defense (save ends both).  
**Special:** The calling can be delivered only by food or drink, and it attacks 2d6 minutes after being ingested. A target slain by this poison causes a bloodweb spider swarm to appear in the target’s space. It attacks the closest creature each round until destroyed.

### Magic Items
The following magic items are representative of the sorts of gear employed by drow characters. Most drow-wrought magic items feature spider web etchings, spider imagery, and demonic creatures.

#### Spiderkissed Weapon Level 7+
The weapon’s surface is covered in faint lines evocative of a spider’s web.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>2,600 gp</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>13,000 gp</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>65,000 gp</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>325,000 gp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>1,625,000 gp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weapon:** Any melee  
**Enhancement:** Attack rolls and damage rolls  
**Critical:** +1d6 poison damage per plus  
**Power (At-Will) **Poison:** Free Action. All damage dealt by this weapon is poison damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal.  
**Power (Daily):** Free Action. Use this power when you hit with the weapon. The target is slowed (save ends).  
**First Failed Save:** The target is immobilized (save ends).

#### Virulent Weapon Level 3+
A pestilential fluid weeps from pits marring the weapon’s surface.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>680 gp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>3,400 gp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>17,000 gp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>85,000 gp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>425,000 gp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>2,125,000 gp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weapon:** Light Blade  
**Enhancement:** Attack rolls and damage rolls  
**Critical:** +1d6 poison damage per plus  
**Property:** Poison applied to this weapon gains a +2 item bonus to its attack rolls.

#### Rod of Flaying Level 24+
A tangle of steel wires and barbed hooks extend from one end of this crimson rod.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>525,000 gp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>2,625,000 gp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implement (Rod)**  
**Enhancement:** Attack rolls and damage rolls  
**Critical:** The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.  
**Power (Daily):** Free Action. Use this power whenever you hit a target affected by your Warlock’s Curse. The target takes ongoing 10 damage and is dazed (save ends both).  
**Level 29:** Ongoing 15 damage and the target is dazed (save ends both).
**Children of Darkness**

**Gloves of Venom**  
**Level 8+**

Constructed of lightweight spidersilk, these gloves fit like a second skin.

- **Lv 8**: +1 3,400 gp  
- **Lv 18**: +2 85,000 gp

**Item Slot**: Hands

**Power (Daily ✦ Poison)**: Minor Action. Change the damage type dealt by the next arcane power you use to poison. Add 1d6 to the damage dealt by that power (if any).

- **Level 16**: Add 2d6 to the damage dealt.  
- **Level 26**: Add 3d6 to the damage dealt.

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**Piwafwi**  
**Level 17+**

A long cloak of woven spidersilk sparkles in the moonlight.

- **Lv 17**: +4 65,000 gp  
- **Lv 22**: +5 325,000 gp

**Item Slot**: Neck

**Enhancement**: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

**Property**: Gain an item bonus to Stealth checks equal to the cloak’s enhancement bonus. Gain resist 5 fire.  
- **Level 22** or **27**: Resist 10 fire

**Power (Daily ✦ Illusion)**: Minor Action. You have concealment until you make an attack or are hit by an attack.

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**CURSEBORN**

“We all inherit the sins of our ancestors; how we choose to deal with them in our time determines if we pass them along to our children.”

**Prerequisite**: Drow race

Each drow character is born into darkness and then burdened with the Corellon’s curse and Lolth’s blessing. The curse manifests in their enslavement to the Spider Queen, while the blessing represents the goddess’s filthy touch, a gift ensuring the drow remain in her service. Drow can use only a portion of Lolth’s power, manifesting it into clouds of darkness or limning their enemies with purple flame, but a few drow are powerful enough to expand their talents in other areas. These drow learn to unlock the hidden reserves of their curse and exploit them to achieve greater results.

As a curseborn, you have awakened hidden powers within you. Whether you believe these powers are further gifts granted to you by the Spider Queen or are a permutation of your existing abilities granted by Lolth’s touch, or even a revelation based on your efforts to find redemption, the results are the same. Your Lolthtouched powers are intensified, your darkness is alive with umbral strands of shadow, and your ability to create darkfire is magnified to encompass a number of enemies. In addition, you also learn methods of using Lolth’s gifts in superior ways, from burning your foes with the flames of darkness to sliding into the Shadowfell to cloak your body with tendrils of darkness.

Your evolution into a curseborn results in a subtle transformation that is unnoticeable except when you tap into these abilities. Each time you use your curseborn or Lolthtouched powers, your bright eyes flare, casting your face into ghastly shadows, while tiny black spiders composed of living shadow scurry off to vanish into puffs of acrid smoke. None of these features interferes with your other abilities, but drow recognize you as being kissed by the Spider Queen.

**Curseborn Path Features**

**Clinging Shadows (11th level)**: In addition to its normal effects, the area of your cloud of darkness power is also difficult terrain for all creatures except you.

**Curseborn Action (11th level)**: When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you regain the use of one of your Lolthtouched powers you have already expended this encounter.

**Darkfire Conflagration (16th level)**: Whenever you use your darkfire power, you can target three creatures instead of one.

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**Curseborn Racial Powers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Accursed Flames</strong></th>
<th><strong>Curseborn Attack 11</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple flames limb your target, burning the target’s mind and body.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Encounter ✦ Charm, Fire**

**Minor Action Ranged 10**

**Target**: One creature

**Attack**: Intelligence +4 vs. Reflex, Wisdom +4 vs. Reflex, or Charisma +4 vs. Reflex

Increase to +6 bonus at 21st level.

**Hit**: 2d8 + Charisma modifier fire damage, and until the end of your next turn the target is dazed, grants all creatures combat advantage, and cannot benefit from concealment or invisibility.

**Special**: This power uses the same ability score as the one you selected for your darkfire power.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Shadow Stride</strong></th>
<th><strong>Curseborn Utility 12</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shadows cloak your body as you step partly into the Shadowfell so that you can move with astonishing speed.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Encounter**

**Move Action Personal**

**Effect**: You can shift up to your speed. You gain concealment until the end of your next turn.
The first works as a freelance designer for Wizards.

Prerequisite: You have ever struggled to rise above the darkness clouding your heart, but now you have the chance to prove to the world that you are different from all the rest. No matter the deeds done, no matter the life lived, none of your mortal actions change the fact that you are drow—a dark elf and a living symbol of mortal corruption and vice—and throughout the rest of your days, you must bear the burden of the understanding that nothing you do can ever lift the stain that darkens your heart. The only escape from the curse is to truly transcend the mortal coil and become something more—to leave behind the shell of flesh and bone so your true light can shine and reveal to all the purity of your purpose. To this end, you commit yourself to become more than drow and deny the Spider Queen her hold over you for all time.

Becoming a redeemed drow represents a drow’s ultimate repudiation of the Spider Queen. With this complete and total denial, you escape the webs of her influence and attain a higher state of existence. You name Lolth as your enemy and commit your life to fighting her machinations and plots, in the hopes of showing the world and the gods that you have succeeded in breaking your ties where others have failed.

Your successes earn you the attention of Corellon (and possibly others), who aids you in your crusade against your former kin by imbuing you with a greater sense of purpose to impel you to daring acts and astonishing deeds. As your mission nears completion, Lolth throws the full weight of her legions against you, and through the storm of demons, spiders, driders, and drow, you must stand fast before the blooming doubts and misgivings that threaten to cloud your vision. In the end, Corellon blesses you with the greatest gift you could ask for: a second chance at life without the filthy caress of the horrific Spider Queen. For a moment, you see yourself as you were originally formed, before the betrayal—before the fall—and all falls dark. In a blink of an eye, you awaken once more, your soul contained in a new infant body. As you take in your surroundings, your memories of the past fade as you take in the long, rich life that lies before you.

REDEEMED DROW FEATURES

Sacred Duty (21st level): Whenever you make an attack that reduces a creature with the demon or spider keyword to 0 or fewer hit points, you can spend a healing surge as a free action.

Lift Her Touch (24th level): You can expend your Lolthtouched racial power to recharge a previously expended encounter power.

Burden of Redemption (30th level): The first time you are reduced to 0 or fewer hit points each day, you regain a number of hit points equal to your surge value and gain resist 10 all damage until the end of the encounter.

REDEEMED DROW POWER

Light of Heaven

The pain of your injuries unleashes the ire of your patron. You will see this battle to its end.

Daily Healing

Free Action Personal

Trigger: You are bloodied by an attack.

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you gain regeneration 15, shed bright light in a 10 square radius, and grant all allies within the light resist 10 necrotic.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb works as a freelance designer for Wizards of the Coast and has contributed design to such books as the Forgotten Realms® Player’s Guide, Draconomicon™: Chromatic Dragons, Manual of the Planes®, and Demon Queen’s Enclave, as well as numerous articles for D&D Insider™. Robert lives in Tennessee with his wonderful wife Stacee and his pride of web-spinning spidercats.