

# VOLO'S GUIDE TO Monsters

AN OFFICIAL REFERENCE FOR...



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## Introduction

All of the races presented in this document are open for D&D Adventurers League play. That's right, aasimar, orcs, kenku, yuan-ti... ALL of it. That said, we have some idea about how these new character races fit into our world, and so herein resides a racial story that **MUST** be incorporated into the background of your various characters. If this document references a location for your race, that is where you're from. If it references a specific tribe, that is where you're from. If it references an outlook, then that is part of your outlook. I think you get the idea.

Additionally, all characters made from these races **MUST** be part of a faction. The factions that accept members of each race are listed at the bottom of that race's entry. Each of these entries have been carefully considered and crafted by our loremaster, Matt Sernett, and so it is with his blessing that we embark upon a new journey with the grand possibility of new friends and allies.

That said, the common folk of the Forgotten Realms aren't nearly as open minded, so if you come from one of these races, you can expect that some might not treat you as cordially as you might expect if you were a human, dwarf, elf, or halfling. But isn't that part of the fun?

Enjoy and Good Gaming!

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## Aasimar

Prayers being answered— isn't that what everyone hopes for? The thing that people forget is that when you ask someone for a favor, often they ask for one in return. It doesn't happen every day—thank goodness for that. But someone up there has a plan, and parts of it come in dreams. Oh, to sleep without those intruding thoughts. To rest in darkness and silence. To be truly alone. The visions can be overwhelming, terrifying, dreadful. Other people don't understand. When you tell them, some are awed, but others are jealous, and some get angry, even violent. It's hard to blame them, though. People are desperate. They call out to deaf ears, look blindly for salvation, and listen to empty winds for hope. Well, if the gods won't answer their prayers, someone has to.

*FACTIONS- The Harpers; Order of the Gauntlet;  
Lord's Alliance*

## Firbolg

The High Forest is vast, a world of its own, and it holds wonders found nowhere else. Cottage-sized crystals speckle the sides of the Star Mounts, glowing like earthly constellations when struck by moonlight. Pure white trees ring the darkly magical Dire Wood, standing guard like warning ghosts. Pools high in the Lost Peaks reflect not the skies above but events of the past, providing windows into history. The forest's boughs have sheltered multiple elven kingdoms, and the boney ruins of those realms lie tangled in its roots. One could spend a lifetime in the High Forest and experience just a thimbleful of the beauty overflowing from its cup. To the firbolgs who live there, the High Forest is a home they never want to leave. And yet there lies beyond its bounds a wider world with ever more wonders. Those firbolgs that step out of the High Forest's shadow carry cherished memories of home with them. You can take a firbolg out of the forest, but you can't take the forest out of the firbolg—especially the High Forest.

*FACTIONS- The Harpers; Emerald Enclave*

## Goliath

Welcoming smiles falter. Eyes flick up and down, left and right, trying to take you in, trying to take your measure. The question isn't if you're a threat. It's how much of a threat you are. Goliaths aren't common in your distant homeland in Thesk, but the reaction you get from anyone not of your tribe sure is. That's fine. You are dangerous. Tough as stone. Strong as iron. Tall as a mountain. And you measure them back and often find them wanting. Still, the path you've walked has been long and lonely. Without a tribe, life has been hard. It's time to choose a new tribe. They won't be like you, but they don't need to be. They just need to measure up.

*FACTIONS- ANY*

## Kenku

"Well met." (sound of children laughing) "I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones." (sound of wine glasses clinking) "I have found out that there ain't no surer way to find out whether you like people or hate them than to travel with them." (sound of an old man chuckling) "Giddyup!" (sound of a bullwhip cracking and wagon wheels rolling) "Life is a journey, not a destination." (sound of a happy baby gurgle) "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." (sound of a stair creaking

underfoot) "Not all those who wander are lost." "We'll be friends forever won't we?" (sound of buzzing)

*FACTIONS- The Harpers; Zhentarim*

## Lizardfolk

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The walled town of Daggerford takes its name from a legendary incident: a human boy fought off attacking lizardfolk at the ford with just a dagger. But the swampy forest from which the lizardfolk came had been known as Lizard Marsh for centuries before that. Its tangled trees and brackish waters have sheltered lizardfolk for so long no one among them has a story for how they might have come from anywhere else. It is the nest from which all the tribes were hatched. It is the home where all of them expect they'll die. Lately though, there's been too much death. Vethka, a Lizard Queen empowered by dark magic, made war among the tribes and drew in outsiders who killed still more. When it's a choice between leaving the only life they've known or death, there is no choice. Lizardfolk left in droves. Some set out to find a new home where they might bring more of the tribe. Others wanted the power or the allies they needed to return home and take Vethka's place. But thrust into a strange new world with the fleshy beings and their alien ways, most just struggle to adjust and survive.

*FACTIONS- Order of the Gauntlet; Emerald Enclave*

## Tabaxi

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The world changed, literally opening new horizons. Somewhere, across the sea there was somewhere...new. How could any tabaxi touched by the Cat Lord's curiosity resist? Sure it meant a long journey over trackless sea, but there's a first time for everything. And isn't the first time always the best? New places, new faces, new foods, new...everything. What a wonderful surprise. What a great gift! The people a tabaxi explorer meets are naturally curious about what a tabaxi is and the land from which the tabaxi came. Isn't curiosity wonderful? Stay curious you wonderful new people! After all, no cat anywhere ever gave anyone a straight answer.

*FACTIONS- The Harpers; Zhentarim*

## Triton

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Fish out of water. Boy, does that one get old. It doesn't stop it from being true though. Sometimes being in the surface world can leave a triton gasping for breath. Not at their bad jokes, but because air-breathers are so strange. They see a body of water, and they look across

it, not in it. To them the surface of the sea is like a floor, but it is no more a floor than the sky is a ceiling. Their world has edges and borders, but in thinking this way they somehow miss the fact that most of the planet exists under waves. They squabble over patches of dirt while a war for the world is waged underwater. It is up to the tritons to set them straight.

*FACTIONS- Order of the Gauntlet; Lord's Alliance*

## Goblins

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Life among the Cragmaw goblins was pretty good. There were caves to hide out in, wolves to ride, travelers to rob, and they even had a castle. Sure, the roof leaked, and the walls had holes you could walk through, but it was a castle! Then someone calling himself the Black Spider started bossing everyone around. Even King Grol bent knee. Things really started going south after that. Well, if there's one thing any smart goblin knows, it is when to run. Of course, heading out on your own isn't a great way for a goblin to stay alive. In fact, it's a pretty good way to end up as an owlbear's lunch. How's a lone goblin supposed to make friends in the wider world? Not smiling. Humans just see the pointy teeth. Groveling? Making jokes? It's time to try out some ideas. If all else fails, running away has worked so far.

*FACTIONS- Zhentarim*

## Bugbears

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The war horns of The Chill can be heard echoing across through the pines in the snowy Lurkwood. That means the hobgoblins want to go to war...again. What a nuisance. It's pretty easy work: Show up, take a bribe, take a nap, assassinate somebody, take a reward, take another nap. On the other hand, it is a job, and you have to listen to the boss. Maybe it's time for some "me time." No boss. Nobody to boss around. Just relax and react to whatever the next day or the next moment has to offer. Who cares if friends are lining up for another hobgoblin handout? You can make new friends—people who really appreciate you for being you. That sounds good. Need to get on that—right after this nap.

*FACTIONS- Zhentarim*

## Hobgoblins

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The northern edge of the High Moor ends in a pink granite escarpment that drops down to the Delimbiyr River. There, at Red Cliffs, the people of Secomber quarry stone under the watchful eyes of the Urshani. These hobgoblins have long taken tribute from

Secomber and surrounding villages in order to maintain peace. It is an agreement that doesn't sit well with every member of the tribe. What glory is there in taxation? How will any warrior join Maglubiuyet's army of immortals without first being tested in battle? Maintain discipline. Follow orders. These are the maxims the Urshani leaders use to keep every hobgoblin in line. But what if a hobgoblin broke ranks to become a mighty hero? Could not such a hobgoblin return to the Urshani and become the one who gives the orders? What glory might all the Urshani gain then?

*FACTIONS- Lord's Alliance; Zhentarim*

## Orcs

Obould Many-Arrows was perhaps the greatest orc leader the North has ever known, certainly the greatest ever to bear the name Obould. His kingdom of Many-Arrows was vaster than any a single tribe had ever controlled. And it was one of relative peace where orcs and humans lived side by side. But war broke the peace and the kingdom crumbled, with orc tribes shredding to the four winds. Some say Obould's peace was always an illusion—a trick he played to get the Silver Marches to lower their defenses. Others say it was the dwarves who broke the peace, or that the whole conflict was engineered by scheming devils or drow. How can an orc on the fringes know the truth of such things, when tale-tellers argue about whether or not Obould survived? Perhaps Obould's peace with other races was an illusion, but aren't some illusions worth believing? Must every dream of an orc be a nightmare? Can an orc not just dream?

*FACTIONS- Order of the Gauntlet; Emerald Enclave; Zhentarim*

## Kobolds

Too many kobolds and too few fish! The Ice Lakes region has long hosted the Selgryn kobolds, a vast network of interrelated tribes. Battles with patrols from Luskan, miners from Mirabar, prospectors, adventuring bands seeking riches from old ruins, and other threats have kept the Selgryn kobolds's numbers in check, but last year was the Year of Fish-Fat Bellies, and this year, with winter cold, and the ice thick, is turning into the Year of Hungry Babies. That's no good. Where's a few dozen adventurers when you need them? Well, maybe it's time to go find out. What do adventurers do when they aren't killing kobolds? More importantly, what do they have to eat?

*FACTIONS- Emerald Enclave*

## Yuan-ti

People outside the broad region known as Njara know little of what lies within, and most prefer not to think about it. Rumors abound of a secret empire of scaly beings—lizardfolk, yuan-ti, nagas, and dragons—though what form that empire takes differs by the tale. Do dragons rule? Is there one yuan-ti kingdom or many? Those that venture into the seemingly empty ruins that abound in the region rarely return. Whole armies have disappeared in its vast wilderness. Njara keeps its secrets. However, the yuan-ti of Njara have at times sent emissaries or merchants to the lands beyond. Spies folk call them, and that is likely true, but what ruler would dare miss the opportunity to learn a little something of so potent and mysterious an enemy as the yuan-ti of Njara.

*FACTIONS- Lord's Alliance*