



SHADOW OF THE BROODMOTHER

MONSTER HUNT
ONESHOT FOR
LEVEL 5,
11, & 17

HELIANA'S GUIDE TO MONSTER HUNTING

5TH-EDITION ADVENTURE



CREDITS

This adventure is made for roleplaying games, specifically for the 5th Edition of the world's oldest role-playing game. All art, except for the swamp map, is original and is copyright of Loot Ink Press.

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KICKSTARTER

This project is going to be kickstarted into a big, real thing! It'll have hardback book, cards, enamel pins and all sorts. If you drop us your email address at loottavern.com and we'll let you know when it's ready. We'll probably only send you two emails, so make sure you give us your good email address, not the junk one! Kickstarter



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PLAYTESTING

This adventure hasn't been playtested yet! We're playtesting every adventure throughout our kickstarting journey. If you have any feedback, jump on the [Humperdink's Wares discord](#) and have your say!



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FOREWORD

Welcome, you adventurous vagabond! What you've got here is a taster of *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting*. We hope that after you read this freebie, drink in the gorgeous art, laugh at the mediocre puns, and run this **totally free adventure** for your favourite group of players, you come and check out our Kickstarter. If you give us your email on loottavern.com we'll let you know when it's ready!

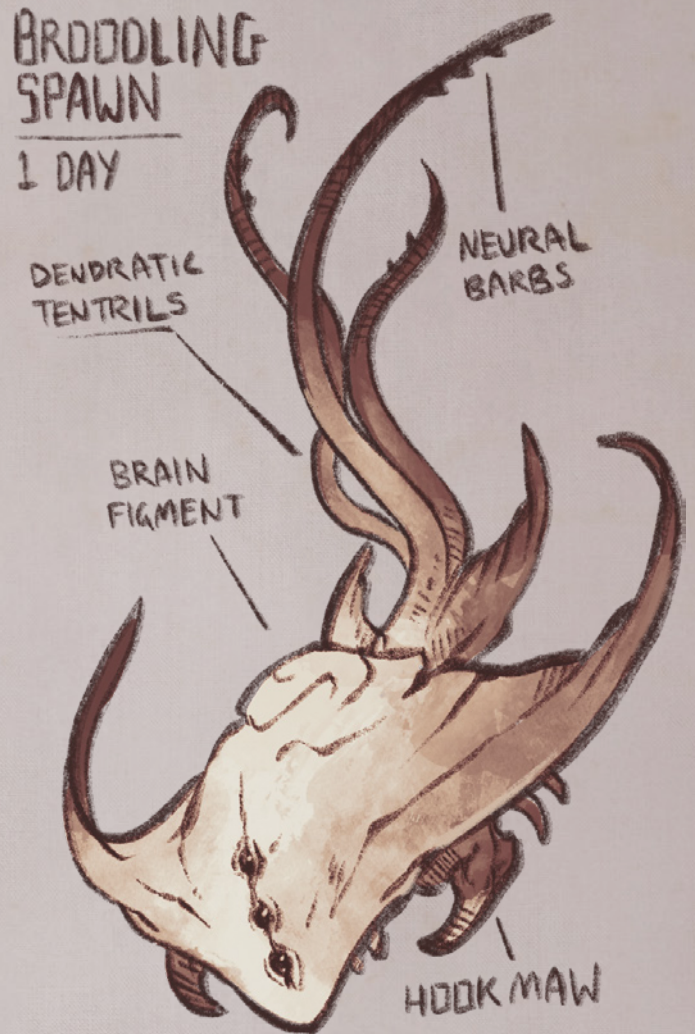
We're making a **proper, real-life book**. It'll have **ten** of these monster hunts; a wondrous extra-dimensional tavern; a host of characterful staff and patrons; a modular harvesting and crafting system that suits GM who like details, as well as those who like a streamlined game; **over one hundred** fully-illustrated items, and a horde of cute familiars and blood-curdling monsters. If you like this, then level up your campaign with these setting-agnostic adventures in *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting*.

This document is a totally self-sufficient adventure. However, you might see references to characters like Heliana, and you might want MOAR details on harvesting and crafting. That's all coming down the line. Plus, all this content is subject to change as we head down the editing road. Stay tuned!

– Max, Lead Writer

INTRODUCTION

This adventure, *Shadow of the Broodmother*, is intended for 3 to 7 characters with an average party level (APL) of 5, 11, or 17. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to progress one quarter of the way to 6th level or one third of the way to 12th or 18th level. The adventurers must find and defeat the remnants of a rare swamp aboleth that has purportedly already been killed by a group of celebrated adventurers. After hunting for clues about this aberration, the adventure culminates in a three-wave boss battle. This battle is **deadly** and uses the party's entire daily XP budget. A party well-equipped for an extended fight, as well as means of alleviating disease and mind control, will prove a great boon on this monster hunt.



RULE ZERO

As with all roleplaying games, rule 0 is the most important: **have fun!** If you're all doing that, you're doing it right.

As a GM, I find that this has a second secret part to it: **you can change anything.** Rename anyone or anything to suit your world. Adapt the gold rewards, quest hooks, and magic items to suit your players. This is your game and, though we've shed blood, sweat, and tears polishing it into what it is, we totally encourage you to change anything you see fit!

BACKGROUND

Slkvol the aboleth broodmother has, for the past few million years, shaped the ecology of Milakul swamp to best serve its own interests: the native swallybogs worship Slkvol as a deity, the fauna all bear signs of Slkvol's modifications, and adventurers are enthralled to spread word of how uninteresting and unworthy of exploration the swamp is. However, Dr. Doolots is not so easily deterred.

Dr. Doolots, a female dragonborn zoologist, is intent on unveiling the swamp's secrets. After several of her field assistants went missing, she gave credence to the swallybog tales of the 'swamp curse' and contracted Heliana, the Hunt Master, to send a group of monster hunters. The Fearsome Five tracked Slkvol to its flooded cave where they dispatched him in a mighty battle, taking one of Slkvol's spawn from its egg sacs back as proof.

However, Slkvol was prepared for such an eventuality. The egg sacs—and there are dozens—contain aboleth broodlings whose sole purpose is to venture into the swamp, mind control creatures, and return this biomass to the cave where it can be converted into a new body for Slkvol. Upon returning to the swamp, Dr. Doolots' assistants continued to disappear, leaving her believing the Five duped him.

By the time the party arrives, Slkvol has almost been reformed. The three waves of the battle represent the final flood of broodling-controlled biomass, the chrysalis converting this biomass into a new broodmother, and the reborn Slkvol.

SUMMARY

Here's the main info to digest:

- ♦ **Which Monster?** Slkvol the aboleth broodmother and its many broodlings.
- ♦ **Where's the Monster?** The monsters' realm is a swamp accessible through a bayou. Its lair is enclosed by thick vines that prevent passage to those not under Slkvol's control.
- ♦ **Monsters' Motivation.** The broodlings want to gather enough biomass to reform Slkvol. Slkvol then wants to enthrall the party.
- ♦ **Monsters' Previous Actions.** Slkvol has lorded over the swamp for the last few million years, bending it to its will. After being killed, Slkvol's broodlings have mind controlled many creatures—including Dr. Doolots' field assistants—gathering them all in Slkvol's lair.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Enticing your party to slog through a swamp ain't no easy thing! Luckily if curiosity, morality, or the chance to tell a good story doesn't tickle their fancy, there's always gold. Feel free to use as many of the following hooks as necessary to get the party to bite!

- ♦ **Curiosity: *The Unending Curse.*** The party overhears an argument; Dr. Doolots accuses the Fearsome Five (jokingly called the Fearful Five for their tendency to give up when hunting especially ferocious beasts) of lying. The Five claimed to have killed the beast responsible for the 'swamp curse'—they have one of the beast's offspring to prove it. However, Doolots, their patron for this mission, claims that the local swallybogs are still behaving oddly. If anything, the curse is now worse!



DR. DOOLOTS



- ♦ **Morality: *The Missing Assistant.*** Dr. Doolots, a zoologist studying swamp ecology, approaches or otherwise contacts the party. She previously hired adventurers to clear the swamp of a dangerous curse affecting local fauna but, despite the adventurers' protestations of success, the curse seems to be persisting. Her field assistant, a swallybog named Gilforth, has been captured and he needs someone to save the swamp's inhabitants. Gilforth is identifiable by the white lab coat he wears.
- ♦ **Compensation: *Swamp Gold.*** The party comes across an advert on a noticeboard in an adventurer's guildhall, town square, or on Heliana's job board in the Loot Tavern itself. In addition to monetary rewards (see the table below), L'Ar-sène Upin (an infamous gadgeteer), also near the noticeboard, mentions that the properties of monstrous amphibians' skin and toxins allow incredibly useful items to be fashioned from them. If the party can harvest whatever swamp monster is probably responsible for this curse, he could make something useful for the party.

In all cases, Dr. Doolots acts as the quest giver and can give the party directions to a place where they can dock their boat and proceed on foot. She doesn't know much about what's going on—she hasn't had a chance to start her research as her assistants keep disappearing. Dr. Doolots offers a reward relative to the party's level; adjust this to best fit your world's economy.

ADVENTURE REWARDS

Adventure Level	Total Reward (gp)	XP per Player*
5	3000	1900
11	14000	4800
17	35000	13000

*Includes all keyed monsters

KNOW THY ENEMY

Doolots suggests the party's first port of call be the Fearsome Five, followed by Heliana who currently holds the monster-hunting contract. Each of the following clues lists ways in which you can hint at the broodmother's traits. The clues are that:

- The aboleth broodmother and its offspring, broodlings, use mind control.
- The touch of the broodmother is infectious.
- The broodmother and broodlings travel mostly through water.

CLUE 1: MIND CONTROL

The aboleth broodmother and its broodlings can all attempt to charm creatures within close range of them that they can see. When charmed, a creature is under the charmer's control. On their own, a broodling's charm is easy to overcome but, en masse, broodlings become more powerful. A broodling can attempt to charm a creature once per day. Damaging a charmed creature can help break this charm.

Fearsome Five. The Five have a broodling captured in a small cage, covered by a cloth. When the cloth is removed, the broodling attempts to charm one of the party members. The DC is low (**DC 6**) but, success or fail, the party member realises they were a moment away from trying to free the critter. If asked, Ser Lonsalittle (LG male gnome **knight**) motions to a goliath compatriot and says something like the following:

“Hah! Looks like little Slimo almost got you there!” he slaps his thigh “Climbo here almost got taken in by the fellow, too! Had to give him a rap around the noggin’ to snap him out of it, eh, Climbo? Yes this little blighter” he points at the broodling “tries to get at least one of us each day. Lucky for us there’s only one of them; get a few of em near each other and you don’t stand a chance. The cloth seems to put paid to his hi-jinx, mind you”

En Route. As the party progresses into the swamp, a broodling splashes out of the undergrowth, staring at one of the party members and trying to charm it. Success or fail, the character realises they were close to picking up the critter and protecting it.

CLUE 2: INFECTIOUS DISEASE

The aboleth broodmother and its offspring can spread disease through their touch. The diseased creature becomes a vessel for more broodlings and is prone to drying out if it spends too long out of the water. The broodlings can only hatch underwater, so this alteration is a way of keeping its host in a favourable environment.

Fearsome Five. One of the five, a N female halfling **assassin** named Garr Oate, has a large tub of grease she is constantly applying to her skin, which looks painfully dry. A **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check notices a conspicuous, fleshy yellow lump (a broodling sac) under her sleeve. She mentions:

“Bloody swamp has dried my skin out. Only time I get any relief is when I take a bath - I’ve never bathed so much!”

If pressed about the yellow sacs she says:

“Just some bot fly larvae. Our cleric says to wait till it hatches so we don’t leave an open wound.”

A **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature or Medicine)** check reveals that this is not a bot fly larva. The broodling sac is too unique for anyone to know what it is by making a check.

En Route. As the party near Slkvol’s swamp while boating through the bayou, they spot a half-submerged alligator sunning itself near a fallen tree. A **DC 8 Wisdom (Perception)** check spots the large yellow lumps (broodling sacs) on its back. A result of **13 or higher** notices that, where the alligator is out of the water, both its skin and the sacs look dry and damaged. Under the water, the skin and sacs look healthy and small creatures can be seen moving within the sacs.

CLUE 3: WATERY WORLD

The swamp’s inhabitants are more mobile—and more deadly—in the water. Water can act as a medium through which the broodmother’s and broodling’s psychic energy can propagate. For this reason, the lair around Slkvol’s cave can produce surges of water to knock people into the water. Items and spells that grant a swim speed will prove great boons on this hunt.

Fearsome Five. The party’s bard, a NG male dwarf named Cacaphonics, is composing a song about the fight. In its current, unfinished version it reads:



SCAN CODE
OR
CLICK
TO
LISTEN

“Attend the tale of the Fearsome Five.
Through curséd swamps did they bravely strive.
The water crashed and did pull them in,
So phantasmical horrors could wear them thin.
Their magic let them swim and thrive,
The Fearsome Five,
Delivered that monster’s death wish.”

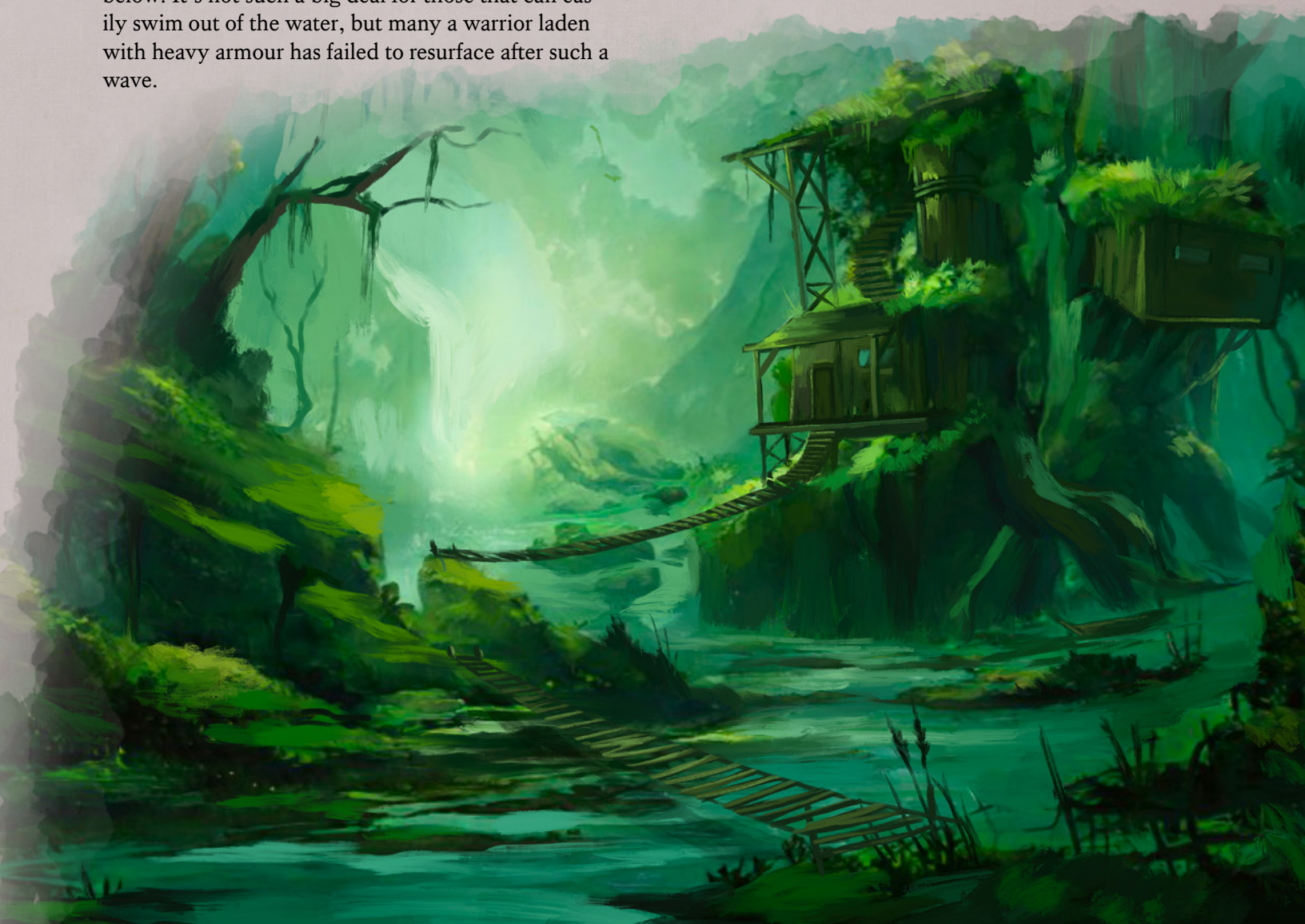
Stories. If the party enquires with any locals, or perhaps asks Dr. Dootlots herself, it’s revealed that the swamp curse is capable of plucking men from their boats so that they see untold horrors in the water below. It’s not such a big deal for those that can easily swim out of the water, but many a warrior laden with heavy armour has failed to resurface after such a wave.

L’ARSÈNE’S CATALOGUE

L’Arsène Upin, infamous gadgeteer, will pay good gold for rare magical components in quality condition. Even better, he can craft those harvested components into new magic items, for a fee. For more information see harvesting (page 15) and crafting (page 16). Before the party sets of on their journey L’Arsène informs them that he has designs to craft the following:

- A coat that can grab foes with its tentacles as well as helping its user breathe underwater. He requires a suitable hide and tentacles for this.
- A symbiotic arm prosthesis that can spit poisonous mucous and bite foes. For this he needs a suitable egg sac and mucous.
- A book that stores helps a users memory and even channels the memory of its donor. For this he needs three eyes and a pouch of teeth.

Providing your party with this information helps them make informed decisions when it comes to choosing what parts to harvest.





MILAKUL SWAMP

For the most part, Milakul swamp is a navigable bayou replete with a dizzying array of unique flora and fauna. It is a humid, mosquito-filled labyrinth from which many adventurers have failed to emerge. Luckily for the party, the map Dr. Doolots has provided makes finding Slkvöl's swamp much easier. You can use the following list to describe some of the many wonders observed en-route:

- ♦ A bird shoots a lightning bolt from its long, reptilian tail, stunning a fish near the water's surface before swooping down to pluck it with its long talons.
- ♦ An eight-eyed fish spins a web around an unlucky frog under the water's surface.
- ♦ A large-fronded fern bends down to dip its net-like leaves into the water, scooping up a pile of silt which it begins filtering.
- ♦ Small, six-limbed mammals groom one another in the tree-tops, fixing the party with hard stares as they ferry insects to their mouths.
- ♦ An unkempt native clad in ragged scraps of armour (an adventurer who got lost many decades ago) runs away when spotted by the party.

The party can park its boat at the head of a sunken trail leading through nigh-on impassable underbrush to Slkvöl's lair. This short journey is a good time to reveal clue 1 to the party (page 4) if you have not done so already.

BROODMOTHER'S LAIR

Upon arriving at the entrance to Slkvöl's swampy lair, you can read the following to narrate the party's journey:

A small, muddy bay leads up to a thicket of impassable vegetation. Within the wall of closely knitted swamp bramble is a half-submerged passageway of uneven, muddy ground, scarcely 5 feet wide.

The air is cool and clammy within the passage. The ground undulates beneath the water; roots and clods of earth occasionally break its surface, while at other times it falls away with a lurch, leaving you thigh-deep. Despite the lack of any perceivable current—whirlpools of silt spiral straight upwards with each footfall—the water elicits a sensation like a strong tide pulling you onwards wherever it touches your bodies. The air is void of the thrum of living things that have accompanied you on the journey thus far. There is no buzz of mosquitoes and the distant call of bird song is muffled, swallowed by the thick vegetation that hems you in.



INFECTED
CROCODILE



BROODLING

This is an appropriate time to narrate the ‘en route’ encounter for Clue 1 if you choose to do so. Otherwise, you can continue reading:

Turning yet another corner, the space opens up. You would be forgiven for thinking you were in a cave, so thick is the twisted swamp bramble that rises up from the surrounding foliage, forming a dome overhead. Visible within the humid, dimly-lit dome is a lake some hundred feet across. Small islands of mud clump around protrude from the water below and the ruins of a primitive village are picked out by narrow shafts of sunlight.

On a small island at the far side of the lake is the unmistakable dead form of a tentacled creature. Between the lake’s entrance and the corpse is assembled all manner of creatures, many bearing the fleshy yellow sacs you’ve seen elsewhere. More appear through the thick vegetation or bubbling up from the lake. Each carries tiny manta-like creatures, not dissimilar to the one you encountered.

KEY FEATURES

The lair has the following features:

- **Ceiling.** The ceiling is a dome made of 5-foot-thick swamp bramble. It starts 10 feet above the water around the lair’s edge and rises to 40 feet high in the centre. Each 5-foot-cubed volume of the thicket has an **AC of 15**, **50 hit points**, **vulnerability** to cold damage, **resistance** to bludgeoning damage, **immunity** to piercing, poison, and psychic damage.
- **Walls.** The walls are made of the same thicket as the ceiling but are 15 feet thick. The walls can open to allow broodlings, the broodmother, and the creatures they control, to pass.
- **Floor.** The floor is mostly murky water 15 feet deep. A creature more than 5 feet below the water’s surface is heavily obscured to observers above the surface. Small islands—tangles of roots, mud, and rushes—protrude from the water and are difficult terrain. The swallybog ruins are made of damp wooden planks.
- **Light.** The interior is dimly lit.
- **Hazard: Infections.** The water of this swamp is a petri dish of loose genetic material and virulent creations of the broodmother. Any creature that is reduced to half its maximum hit points or fewer by piercing or slashing damage must make a **Constitution saving throw** (see Lair Actions, page 10, for the DC) or become infected with a disease. If the disease is not cured within **24 hours**, the creature becomes afflicted by one disease from the contagion spell until the disease is removed.

A submarine cave (containing various treasures, see page 15) can be found in the water to the east on a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check.

THE BATTLE AHEAD

The upcoming battle consists of 3 waves, the first against the broodlings and swallybogs, the second against the aboleth's chrysalis, and the third against the reborn aboleth broodmother. The battle should be conveyed as a race against time to try and prevent the broodmother from reforming. In reality, there is no way to stop this, but the players can affect how strong the subsequent waves are depending on how much damage they deal to the broodlings, the mind-controlled creatures, and the chrysalis.

Variable Strength. Throughout the encounter, actions the players take can reduce how strong the chrysalis and broodmother are in the subsequent waves. This change in strength is measured in a passive penalty or bonus to the damage of its attacks and abilities. This can be affected in the following ways:

- **Wave 1:** Each **10 damage** dealt to the huddled creatures results in a **-1 penalty** to the damage rolls of the chrysalis and broodmother.

- **Wave 2:** Each creature (broodling or charmed creature) that melds into the chrysalis gives a **+1 bonus** to damage rolls of the chrysalis and broodmother.
- **Wave 2:** Each **20 damage** dealt to the chrysalis results in a **-1 penalty** to the damage rolls of the chrysalis and broodmother.

GM TIP – KEEPING TRACK

Save yourself panic by having a pencil and eraser ready! A tally chart can be used to keep track of the current bonus/penalty the chrysalis and broodmother have applied to their damage rolls. The tally chart is then simply another modifier you apply to the result of each damage roll.

Timings. Waves 2 and 3 start on round 4 and 7 of combat respectively. The third wave (and the encounter) ends when the broodmother is defeated.



LAIR ACTIONS

So long as the aboleth broodmother or one of its offspring is alive and within the lake, it can evoke the ambient magic to take lair actions. The DCs and damage of the lair actions and environmental hazards depend on the level at which you run the adventure.

LAIR ACTION DCs

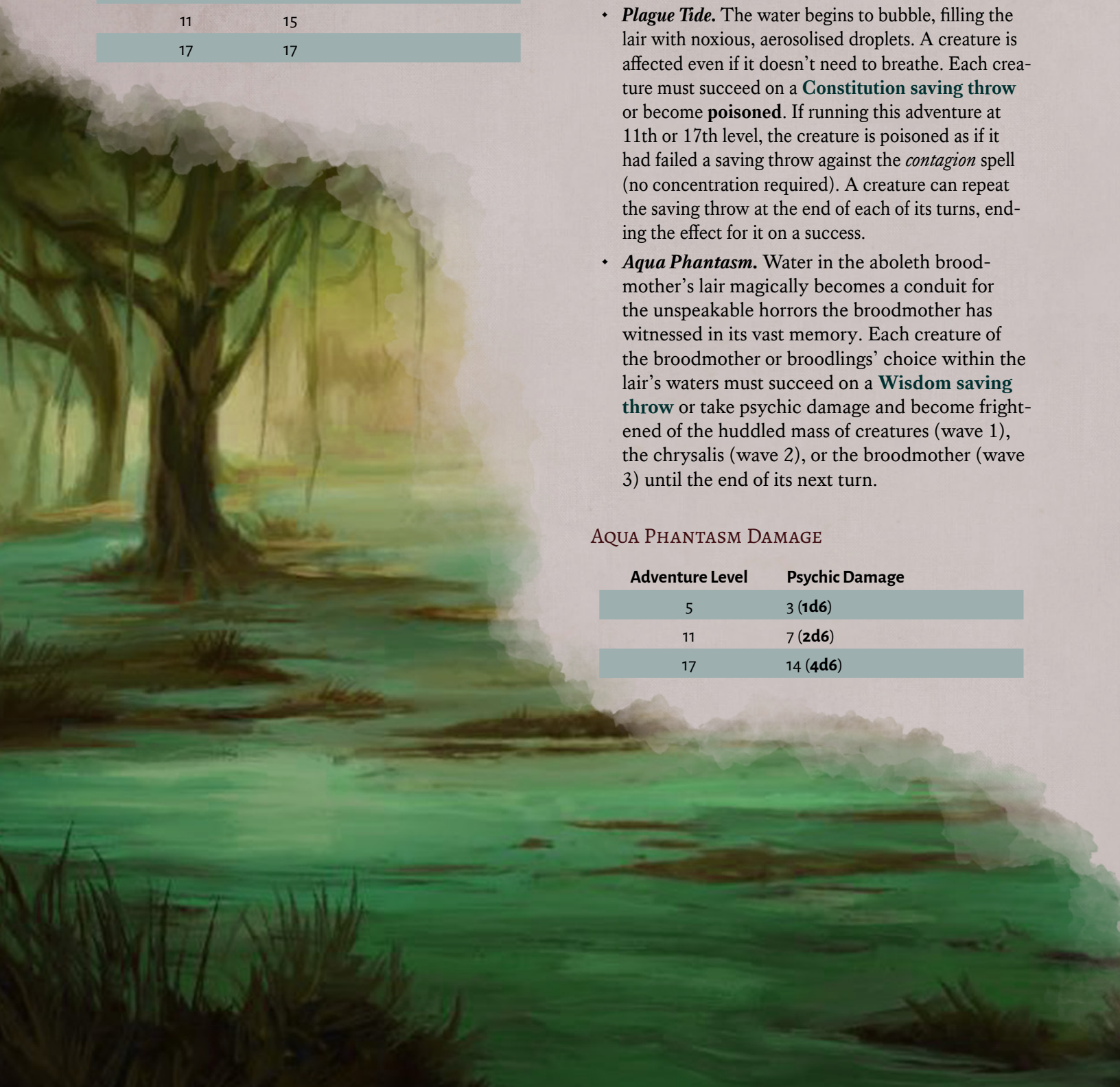
Adventure Level	Saving Throw DC
5	13
11	15
17	17

Lair Actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the creature takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the same effect can't be used two rounds in a row:

- ♦ **Tempestuous Turbulence.** The water within the lair writhes and swirls, causing 6-foot-tall waves to crash over all the low-lying islands. Each creature in the water, or on the ground less than **5 feet** above the water's surface, must make a **Strength saving throw** or be pulled up to **20 feet** into the water and be knocked **prone**.
- ♦ **Plague Tide.** The water begins to bubble, filling the lair with noxious, aerosolised droplets. A creature is affected even if it doesn't need to breathe. Each creature must succeed on a **Constitution saving throw** or become **poisoned**. If running this adventure at 11th or 17th level, the creature is poisoned as if it had failed a saving throw against the *contagion* spell (no concentration required). A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect for it on a success.
- ♦ **Aqua Phantasm.** Water in the aboleth broodmother's lair magically becomes a conduit for the unspeakable horrors the broodmother has witnessed in its vast memory. Each creature of the broodmother or broodlings' choice within the lair's waters must succeed on a **Wisdom saving throw** or take psychic damage and become frightened of the huddled mass of creatures (wave 1), the chrysalis (wave 2), or the broodmother (wave 3) until the end of its next turn.

AQUA PHANTASM DAMAGE

Adventure Level	Psychic Damage
5	3 (1d6)
11	7 (2d6)
17	14 (4d6)



WAVE 1: BROODLINGS

Upon noticing the party, several of the charmed creatures change tack to intercept the party, though the majority stay in a huddled mass near the lake's centre. **Broodlings** (see Appendix C, page 21) that haven't yet found a host jet through the water towards the characters. Hiding from the party, charmed **swallybogs** (see Appendix C) sneak through the undergrowth. The rest of the creatures huddle together in front of the cave's entrance.

Sneaking swallybogs. Roll a single **Dexterity (Stealth)** check for the swallybogs with **advantage** before combat and on each of their turns until they attack. If the result is lower than one of the players' passive Perceptions, let that player know at the start of its turn that it notices something moving through the swamp bramble.

SWALLYBOG GROUP STEALTH CHECK MODIFIERS

Adventure Level	Swallybog Stealth Modifier
5	+3
11	+4
17	+5

The Missing Assistant. If using "The Missing Assistant" adventure hook, Gilforth (NG **swallybog**), conspicuous in his now-muddied white lab coat, is visible near the north edge of the huddled mass. Gilforth resists any attempt to grapple him (+1 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** modifier). If Gilforth is not within the huddle when wave 1 ends (at initiative 0 of the third round of combat), the charm on him is broken. If he is still in the huddle, he gets absorbed into the chrysalis.

ENEMIES

Charmed snakes and crocodiles swim alongside broodlings, while swallybogs lurk behind the swamp bramble, ready to unleash an ambush. Depending on the level at which you're running this hunt, the make-up of the enemy combatants differs. Monsters with an ^s can be found in the SRD (basic 5e rules) while all other monsters can be found in Appendix C.

Level 5. At 5th-level, the wave 1 combatants are:

- 8 broodlings (CR 1/2)
- 3 swallybogs (CR 1/2)
- 3 constrictor snakes^s (CR 1/4)

GM TIP – DARKVISION & PERCEPTION

Creatures without darkvision have **disadvantage** on Perception checks that involve sight in dim light. You can impose a **-5 penalty** on **passive Perception** to account for this disadvantage.

Level 11. At 11th level, the wave 1 combatants are:

- 8 broodlings (CR 1/2)
- 3 swallybog sharpfins (CR 3)
- 3 giant constrictor snakes^s (CR 2)

Level 17. At 17th-level, the wave 1 combatants are:

- 8 broodlings (CR 1/2)
- 2 swallybog sharpfins (CR 3)
- 1 swallybog gillwrangler (CR 6)
- 3 giant crocodiles^s (CR 5)

Huddled Creatures. At all levels, the mass of charmed creatures huddling together in front of the cave can be targeted. Consult the table below to find its AC and saving throws. Treat the huddle of creatures as two separate individuals for the purposes of determining damage from area of effect abilities and spells.

HUDDLED CREATURE STATS

Adventure Level	Huddled Creatures' AC	Huddled Creatures' Saving Throw Modifier
5	+3	+0
11	+4	+2
17	+5	+4



BROODLING

TACTICS

Broodlings and Beasts. Broodlings in close proximity to one another have higher Intelligence (see the Appendix). Hence, while the **snakes/crocodiles** surge toward the nearest target, the **broodlings** identify which of the party has a low Wisdom saving throw and flank the adventurers to attack that creature *en masse*.

Swallybogs. These individuals sneak through the thicket (which opens to allow them passage as they're charmed by **broodlings**) on the lake's west side. They wait for an opportune moment to ambush any creature that tries to stay far from the cave.

AFFECTING THE NEXT WAVES

Damaging the huddle of creatures in front of the cave weakens the **chrysalis** (see Appendix C, page 21) in wave 2. For each **10 points** of damage the creatures take, the chrysalis' and broodmother's damage rolls gain a **-1 penalty** until it finishes a short or long rest.

GM TIP – VISCERAL FEEDBACK

Your players don't know if they're having an effect if you don't narrate it! If a player damages the huddle of creatures, be sure to let them know the creatures they're fighting dislike that. They could even change targets to attack the creature that damaged the huddle. You could say "As many of the mindless beasts fall under your attack, your foes let out hisses and snorts of anger, turning their attention on you".

WAVE 2: THE CHRYSALIS

With a wet sucking sound, the huddle of creatures melds into a mass of writhing limbs, eyes, bones, and viscera. As the form of each creature dissolves into a single bubbling mound of flesh, the broodlings all turn tail, rushing to merge with the creature. Over the next few rounds, more creatures rush from the surrounding water to meld with the mass.

Survivors. Each non-swallybog creature that survived wave 1 spends all its movement and actions to move towards the **chrysalis**. These creatures Dash; they don't have the wherewithal to take the Disengage action. Each creature that reaches the chrysalis' space immediately melds with it, granting it and the **broodmother** a **+1 bonus** to damage rolls until it finishes a short or long rest.

Newcomers. At initiative 20 of each round (winning initiative ties), **constrictor snakes** appear at the edge of the map (GM's choice; consult the table below for the number of snakes). They act on initiative 0 of each round, using their movement and action to move directly towards the chrysalis. Each creature that reaches the **chrysalis**' space immediately melds with it, granting the chrysalis and the **broodmother** a **+1 bonus** to damage rolls until it finishes a short or long rest.

SNAKES SPAWNED PER ROUND

Adventure Level	Number of Constrictor Snakes Spawned
5	2 (1d4)
11	6 (2d4 + 1)
17	9 (3d4 + 2)

Lair Actions. Ignore the lair actions for this wave.

ENEMIES

This wave involves a single chrysalis, a couple more aggravating swallybogs, and multiple low-health beasts that spawn each turn. Depending on the level at which you're running this hunt, the makeup of the enemy combatants differs. Monsters with an ^S can be found in the SRD (basic 5e rules) while all other monsters can be found in Appendix C (page 21).

Level 5. At 5th-level, the wave 2 combatants are:

- ♦ 1 lesser brood chrysalis (CR 5)
- ♦ 2 swallybogs (CR ½)

Level 11. At 11th-level, the wave 2 combatants are:

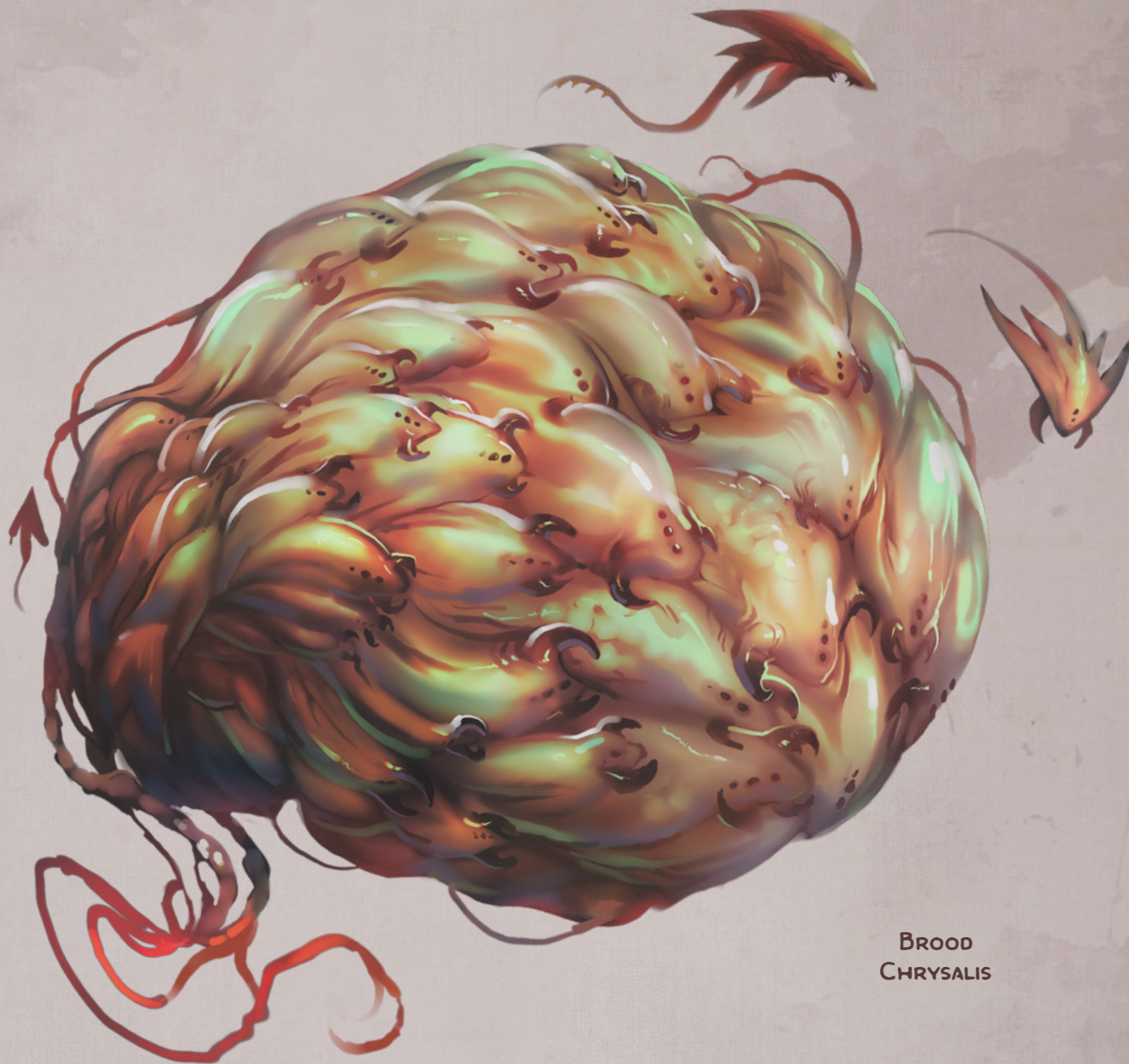
- ♦ 1 brood chrysalis (CR 8)
- ♦ 2 swallybog sharpfins (CR 3)

Level 17. At 17th-level, the wave 2 combatants are:

- ♦ 1 greater brood chrysalis (CR 12)
- ♦ 1 swallybog gillwrangler (CR 6)
- ♦ 1 swallybog sharpfin (CR 3)

TACTICS

All creatures except the swallybogs and chrysalis spend their movement and actions trying to reach the chrysalis in order to be assimilated. The chrysalis tries to maintain a central position while slowing creatures with its Sticky Ectoplasm so they can be assimilated after its adult form emerges.



BROOD
CHRYSALIS

Swallybogs. The swallybogs, being charmed creatures, are allowed to move freely through the thick undergrowth around the lair's periphery. They enter the map wherever is least convenient for the players (GM's discretion). Their purpose is to isolate and eliminate any creature that is attacking at range and keeping its distance from the chrysalis.

AFFECTING THE NEXT WAVES

Damaging the **chrysalis** weakens the **aboleth broodmother** in wave 3. For each **20 points** of damage the chrysalis takes, the chrysalis' and broodmother's damage rolls have a **-1 penalty** until it finishes a short or long rest.

GM TIP – VISCERAL FEEDBACK

Giving players feedback on how their actions affect this mechanic is an important part of them solving the puzzle in wave 2. You can say things like “As the snake melds into the chrysalis, the mass of flesh writhes in triumph, its movements more vigorous and its ectoplasm more virulent” or “As your blows crack the chrysalis' exterior, its strength appears to wane, its attacks becoming less potent”.

WAVE 3: BROODMOTHER REBORN

The hard carapace of the chrysalis ruptures open with a damp crack, releasing the tentacled form of a rubbery-skinned aboleth. Small yellow sacs on its back already swim with unborn broodlings.

ENEMIES (H4)

The aboleth broodmother, along with any surviving swallybogs and beasts, attack the players. Depending on the level at which you're running this hunt, the makeup of the enemy combatants differs. Monsters with an ^S can be found in the SRD (basic 5e rules) while all other monsters can be found in Appendix C (page 21).

Level 5. At 5th-level, the wave 3 combatants are:

- ♦ 1 lesser aboleth broodmother (CR 6)

Level 11. At 11th-level, the wave 3 combatants are:

- ♦ 1 aboleth broodmother (CR 11, no mythic form)

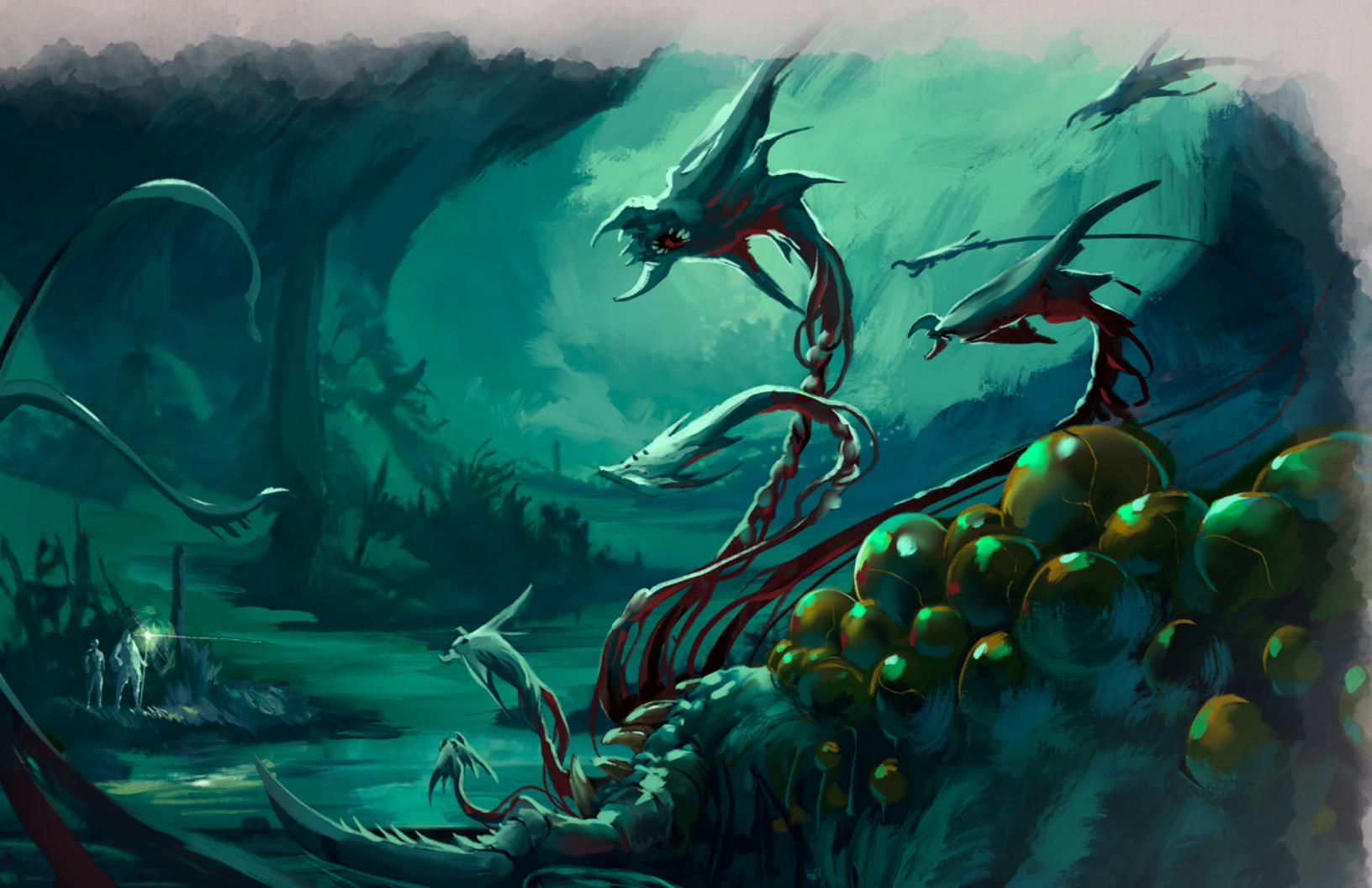
Level 17. At 17th-level, the wave 3 combatants are:

- ♦ 1 aboleth broodmother (CR 11 followed by CR 16 mythic form)

TACTICS

Initially, the aboleth broodmother's main motivation is to entrance and capture as many of the party as possible. It is an extremely intelligent fighter, able to identify those with low Wisdom saves. To begin with, it tries to use the murky water to prevent itself being seen, birthing broodlings and popping its head up only when it tries to entrance low-Wisdom player characters on its turn. Under no circumstances does it willingly move onto land; its long tentacles can reach up to the swallybog ruins.

Once it has used up its daily uses of its Entrance action, the broodmother's tactics become more aggressive; it is now fighting to survive. While it uses its superior movement to pick out isolated party members, attacking them with Tentacle and Suction Drain, it commands its broodlings to swarm whoever it thinks is the greatest threat. If it gets surrounded, it uses Jet in an attempt to disappear in a cloud of ink. The mythic trait (only used in the 17th-level adventure) represents the ultimate escalation of this fight for survival.



HARVESTING

Slkvol's first corpse has already begun to rot—there are no salvageable parts. If the party manages to slay Slkvol's reborn form, however, the fresh corpse has plenty to offer to a harvester with a steady hand.

Hazard: Biohazard. Harvesting a aboleth broodmother carries all sorts of risks. Any creature that attempts to harvest or assist in the harvest of the broodmother must make a **DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check. On a failure, the creature comes into contact with mucous and must make a save against the broodmother's Infectious Mucous trait (see the stat block on page 24).

Harvest: Broodmother. What follows is an abridged version of the harvesting rules in [Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting](#). When a character attempts to harvest the broodmother, use the following steps to decide which components are extracted:

- Describe the components that can be harvested. Each component is harvested separately, but the party can harvest more than one of each component, depending on availability. If multiples of a component are available, this is indicated by "(up to X)" after the component name.

SLKVOL THE BROODMOTHER'S HARVEST TABLE

Component DC	Components
5	Eye (up to 4)
10	Tentacle (up to 5); Pouch of teeth
15	Broodling sac; Phial of mucous (∞)
20	Hide

- The party then says what it wants to try and harvest, and in which order. For example: 3 eyes, a pouch of teeth, and the hide.
- The GM writes this down and sequentially adds the **Component DCs** together to make the harvest check DC like so:

Component	Component DC	Harvest Check DC
Eye (1)	5	5 (5)
Eye (2)	5	10 (5 + 5)
Eye (3)	5	15 (5 + 5 + 5)
Pouch of Teeth	10	25 (5 + 5 + 5 + 10)
Hide	20	45 (5 + 5 + 5 + 10 + 20)

- The party elects up to two harvesters: an assessor and a carver; the same person can fulfil both roles.

GM TIP – NON-STANDARD SKILL CHECKS

You can mix and match skills and abilities. For example, Intimidation is usually a Charisma check. However if a character breaks an iron bar to instil fear, you might ask for a **Strength (Intimidation)** check. All this requires the player to do is roll and Strength check and, if they have proficiency in Intimidation, add their proficiency bonus to the result.

- Because the aboleth broodmother is an aberration, the skill used for the two checks is Arcana. The assessor makes an **Intelligence (Arcana)** check, and the carver makes a **Dexterity (Arcana)** check. The combined total of these two checks is known as the harvest check result.
- The GM compares the harvest check result to the harvest check DC. The party receives each item for which they meet or exceed the harvest check DC.
- The party can attempt to harvest the corpse once. After these checks are made, any magic remaining in the body has dissipated, leaving only mundane flesh and bone.

Example. The party elects to harvest the broodmother in the order: eye, eye, eye, pouch of teeth, hide. The assessor gets a 12, and the carver gets a 15. The result of the harvest check is a 27. The party receives the three eyes and the teeth, but no hide.

Benevolent DM. If the party doesn't get any components from its harvest check, award them one *broodmother eye*—it practically falls out.

TREASURE

Slkvol's underwater cave can be spotted with a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** check. Inside are the spoils of ill-prepared adventurers, explorers, and traders. The rewards depend on the level at which you run this adventure.

TREASURE IN SLKVOL'S CAVE

Adventure Level	Coinage	Gemstones
5	1d6 x 1,000 sp 3d6 x 100 gp	1d4 x 25 gp diamonds 1d4 x 25 gp gems
11	5d6 x 200 gp 1d6 x 20 pp	1d6 x 50 gp diamonds 3d6 x 50 gp gems
17	7d6 x 300 gp 1d6 x 30 pp	2d6 x 50 gp diamonds 6d6 x 50 gp gems

CRAFTING

While the full crafting system will be unveiled in *Heliana's Guide to Monster Hunting*, what follows is a simplified snippet. Using harvested components, players can have unique items crafted for them by a relevant craftsperson. In the Loot Tavern, L'Arsène Upin, infamous gadgeteer, specialises in creating bespoke magical trinkets from the components of rare monsters.

Rarity and Upgrades. Each hunt's target has three unique items that can be crafted from its components. Each of these items can be crafted at one of three rarities, and upgraded to a higher rarity later on. Items that are rare, very rare, or legendary require specific *essence* to craft or upgrade.

Components and Cash. For the sake of simplicity, L'Arsène (or a craftsperson you choose) has a stock of *aberration essence* that the party can purchase to craft the higher level versions of the broodmother items. Thus, L'Arsène charges both for his crafting time and for the rare ingredients. These two costs are combined in the table below.

Heliana's Guide will unveil the rules for harvesting and crafting, as well as providing individual prices of all components and magic items. The items from the 5e SRD rules will also have suggested rarity adjustments to bring them in line with the unique, mathematically-balanced items presented in the book. Let's face it; *flame tongue* is ridiculously overpowered for a rare item.

L'ARSÈNE'S PRICE LIST

Item	Rarity	Components	Total Gold Cost
Broodmother's Embrace	Rare	Broodmother Hide	6000
	Very Rare*	& Broodmother	13000
	Legendary*	Tentacle	31000
Broodslinger	Uncommon		1200
	Rare*	Broodling Sac & Phial of Mucous	4000
	Very Rare*		9000
Tome of Living Memories	Uncommon	3 Broodling Eyes &	800
	Rare	Pouch of Brood-	3200
	Very Rare	mother Teeth	7400

*Not included in this freebie – back the kickstarter to get it all!

SOCKETING

One of the familiar gaming concepts *Heliana's Guide* introduces to 5e is socketing. Charms, runes, and other socketable wondrous items enhance weapons, armour, and items that you wear. A creature with proficiency in any of the following tools can take 1 hour to attach a socketable item to a weapon or worn item in such a way as to confer its benefits to the bearer of that item:

- Carpenter's tools;
- Smith's tools;
- Cobbler's tools;
- Tinker's tools;
- Glassblower's tools;
- Weaver's tools;
- Leatherworker's tools;
- Woodcarver's tools.

Sockets. Items have a number of slots based on their rarity. Common, uncommon, and artifact level items have no slots:

- **Rare:** 1 slot;
- **Very rare:** 2 slots;
- **Legendary:** 3 slots.

Attunement. Socketable items specify whether the items they're slotted on must be attunable or not. If a socketable item that requires attunement is slotted onto a magic item that doesn't require attunement, the item gains the 'Optional Attunement' property (see New Attunement, below). The benefits of the slotted item are gained only while attuned to that item.

Removal. A creature can make a DC 10 Dexterity or Intelligence check using proficiency in any of the above tools to try and safely remove a socketable item. On a success, the item is removed and can be reused. On a failure, the item is broken during removal and can no longer be used.

NEW ATTUNEMENT

Some items in *Heliana's Guide* have two new types of attunement: optional and enhanced.

Optional. Properties described as being 'Optional Attunement' grant their benefits only when a character attunes to the item. Any other properties the item has are granted to the item's user even if they aren't attuned.

Enhanced. Enhanced items require the completion of a task, a semi-permanent investment, or have a downside. Upon completing the prerequisites, an attuned creature gains access to the enhanced properties of the item. Working the pre-requisite into your campaign can add depth to your world and offset the significant power increase enhancement affords.

APPENDIX A - MAGIC ITEMS

BROODMOTHER'S EMBRACE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This thick, rubbery overcoat sports several writhing tentacles that can biomantically fuse with their wearer, acting as gills, propulsion, and a formidable, concealed weapon. When in danger, the coat can encapsulate you in a protective chrysalis, nourishing you with stored regenerative mucous.

While wearing the coat underwater, tentacles wrap around your throat, fusing with your vascular system and allowing you to breathe underwater. The tentacles also propel you, giving you a swimming speed of **40 feet**.

Tentacle Lash. As an action, you can make a melee spell attack (+7 to hit) against a creature within **10 feet** of you. On a hit, the creature takes **3d8** bludgeoning damage and, if it is Medium or smaller, must make a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** or be knocked prone.

Chrysalis. You can use an action to cause the coat to expand and harden, encasing you in a regenerative, chitinous casing which grants you **20** temporary hit points. While encased, your speed is reduced to **0**, you are incapacitated, and you regain **2d6** hit points at the start of each of your turns. You can regain no more than **30** hit points in this way while encased. These effects end when the temporary hit points are lost, after **1 minute**, or when you decide to emerge from the chrysalis as an action, whichever comes first. After you activate this property, you can't do so again until after the following dawn.

BROODMOTHER'S EYE

Wondrous item (socketable), common

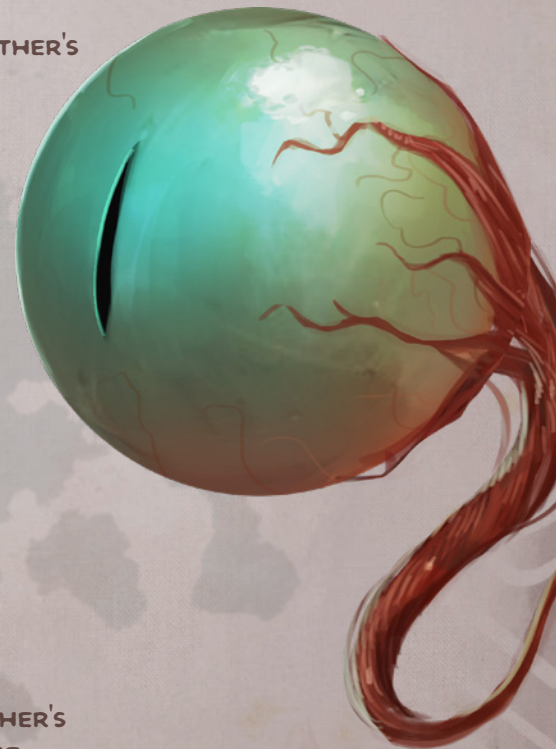
While socketed* in an attuneable magic item, the item gains the 'Intense Stare' property.

Intense Stare. The socketed aboleth's eye fixes on a humanoid of that you can see within **60 feet** of you that isn't hostile towards you, making you seem both alluring and imposing. For the next minute, you have **advantage** on all **Charisma (Persuasion and Intimidation)** checks made to interact with the creature. After this minute elapses, the creature realizes that you used magic to influence its mood. How it reacts is at the GM's discretion.

Once you use this property, you can't do so again until the following dawn.



BROODMOTHER'S
EYE



BROODMOTHER'S
EMBRACE

*(see socketing on page 16)



BROODSLINGER

BROODSLINGER

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Known fondly by L'Arsène as Ling's Bane, this forearm-mounted symbiote represents conquering of the incredibly infectious broodmother strain of aboleths. This blind broodling has been altered to feed off of its host's nutrients, generating powerfully acidic mucous. A small note attached to one tentacle reads:

"Upin Enterprises accepts no responsibility for enslavement caused by accidental generation of new aboleths caused by this item."

This magic item can hold a maximum of **10 charges**. Whenever you finish a short or long rest, you can expend any number of Hit Dice to charge the broodslinger. For each Hit Die spent in this way, roll each die and add your Constitution modifier. The *broodslinger* regains a number of charges equal to the total.

Spikes. Your unarmed strikes deal **1** additional piercing damage on a hit.

Mucous Spit. As an action, you can cause the *broodslinger* to spit a globule of acidic mucous at a target within **60 feet** of you. Make a ranged spell attack (+5 to hit). On a hit, the target takes **2d6** acid damage. You can expend charges immediately before making the attack roll to enhance the mucous in the following way (no action required):

- ♦ **Splashing Mucous (1 Charge):** Hit or miss, acid splashes onto adjacent creatures. The target and each creature within **5 feet** of the target must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity saving throw** or take **1d4** acid damage.



TOME OF LIVING MEMORIES

Wondrous item, uncommon (optional attunement by a wizard)

The pages of this book are littered with the shifting memories of all the aboleth broodmother's eyes have seen. This deluge of information includes historical occurrences, the gods, and all things arcane, in addition to several spells. Unfortunately, the script is a shifting mire of letters that only the most astute can decipher.

Knowledge from Beyond. Over the course of a minute, you can attempt to discern information from the broodmother's memories. Make a **DC 10 Intelligence** check. On a success, you gain proficiency in **Arcana, History, Nature, and Religion** for the next **10 minutes**. On a failure, you take psychic damage equal to your level.

Shrouded Spells. In a similar manner, you can spend **10 minutes** attempting to cast one of the following spells, requiring no material components and without expending a spell slot. At the end of the 10 minutes, make an Intelligence check. The DC equals 8 plus the spell's level. On a success, you cast the spell. On a failure, you don't cast the spell and you take psychic damage equal to twice the spell's level.

- ♦ *identify* (1st-level)
- ♦ *augury* (2nd-level)
- ♦ *clairvoyance* (3rd-level)

Optional Attunement: Wizard. If you are attuned to this item, you can use it as a spellbook and an arcane focus. While you use this tome as your spellbook, you can prepare the *comprehend languages* and *detect thoughts* spells from it.

Rare variant:

- ♦ Add the spells *divination* (4th-level) and *legend lore* (5th-level) to the Shrouded Spells list. When you cast them using the book, it is the disembodied voice of Slkvol the broodmother that answers.
- ♦ While you use this tome as your spellbook, you can prepare 1 additional spell at the end of a long rest and you know the *guidance* cantrip, which is a wizard spell for you.

Very rare variant:

- ♦ Add the spells *divination* (4th-level), *legend lore* (5th-level), *contact other plane* (5th-level) and *find the path* (6th-level) to the Shrouded Spells list. When you cast them using the book, it is Slkvol the broodmother who answers.
- ♦ While you use this tome as your spellbook, you can prepare 2 additional spells and you know the *guidance* cantrip, which is added to the wizard spell list for you.



TOME OF
LIVING
MEMORIES

APPENDIX B - SPELLS

RIPTIDE

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 300 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Mechanism: Debuff; **Str save**

Classes: Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Choose one creature you can see within range that is in at least 2 feet of water, and choose a direction. Turbulent currents wrap around the creature. For the duration, the target must make a **Strength saving throw** at the start of each of its turns. On a failure, it is dragged **30 feet** in the direction you chose and its swimming speed is reduced to **0** until the start of its next turn and. On a success, the creature can move normally until the start of its next turn.

As a bonus action on your turn, you can change the direction of the underwater currents. The spell ends early if the creature is ever out of the spell's range, or is no longer 2-feet-deep in water.

SWARM

Biomancy cantrip (*can be replaced with conjuration)*

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a spider sac)

Duration: 1 round

Mechanism: Damage, Debuff; **Dex save**

Classes: Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Choose a target within range; a cloud of poisonous spiders floats on gossamer strands towards it. The target must succeed on a **Dexterity saving throw** or take **1d6** poison damage and have **disadvantage** on the next attack roll or ability check it makes before the end of its next turn.

The spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (**2d6**), 11th level (**3d6**), and 17th level (**4d6**).

WATER WHIP

Transmutation cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Mechanism: Damage, Utility; Melee spell attack

Classes: Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard

Choose a source of water that you can see within range that has a volume of at least 1 litre. Make a melee spell attack against a creature within **30 feet** of the source of water. On a hit, the target takes **1d6** slashing damage and you can force the creature to make **Strength saving throw**, pulling it up to **10 feet** towards the body of water on a failure.

The spell's damage and distance it can pull a target increase when you reach 5th level (**2d6** and **15 feet**), 11th level (**3d6** and **20 feet**), 17th level (**4d6** and **25 feet**).

APPENDIX C - CREATURES

SWALLYBOGS

Swamp natives, swallybogs are an easily deceived race of amphibious humanoids prone to apotheosis. Amazed by even the most rudimentary of modern technologies, such as metal, swallybogs will quickly deify creatures that bring even a modicum of comfort or order to their lives. Their culture follows a loose hierarchy based on morphological adaptations encountered along their tumultuous lifecycle.

Early Life. Within holy *swabologs*—birthpools, in common—swallybogs begin their life as limbless tadpoles, void of sex or gender. When food is scarce, these tadpoles can become cannibalistic, ensuring only the strongest (or most devious) survive. Some more barbaric tribes purposefully limit food input to bring about this struggle—known as a *florbracka*—ensuring the strength of the next generation.

Emergence & Growth. After a year, these tadpoles absorb their tails and sprout limbs, clambering through the vines and mud to breathe air for the first time, an event known as the *Guppening*. If a swallybog reaches adulthood, an uncommon occurrence in the alligator-filled waterways of swamps, it undergoes a moulting. From its old skin, the swallybog emerges as a sharpfin.

These muscular swallybogs have fins to increase their underwater movement, and adopt the smaller, forward-facing eyes of a predator. These individuals are the guards and hunters of the swallybog people, and are the most likely to encounter wandering adventurers. Importantly, all sharpfins are male.

Matriarchy. The eldest members of any swallybog tribe are the females, known as gillwranglers. Once a year, gillwranglers oversee a phlegm-spitting contest amongst the sharpfins, choosing the strongest to sire the thousand or so eggs each releases into the *swalabog*.

Enrapture. Given swallybogs' gullibility, it is unsurprising that they treat a creature as old, powerful, and seemingly omniscient as the aboleth broodmother as a god. As for any troublemakers, Slkvol can quickly entrance them, or use them for 'additional biomass', a ritual which the swallybogs believe provides great honour.

SWALLYBOG

Medium humanoid (swallybog), neutral

LIP

Armour Class 13 (hide)

Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +3

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Swallybog

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amphibious. The swallybog can breathe air and water.

Gullible. The swallybog has **disadvantage** on **Wisdom (Insight)** checks.

Standing Leap. The swallybog's long jump is up to **20 feet** and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Swamp Camouflage. The swallybog has **advantage** on **Dexterity (Stealth)** checks made to hide in swampy terrain.

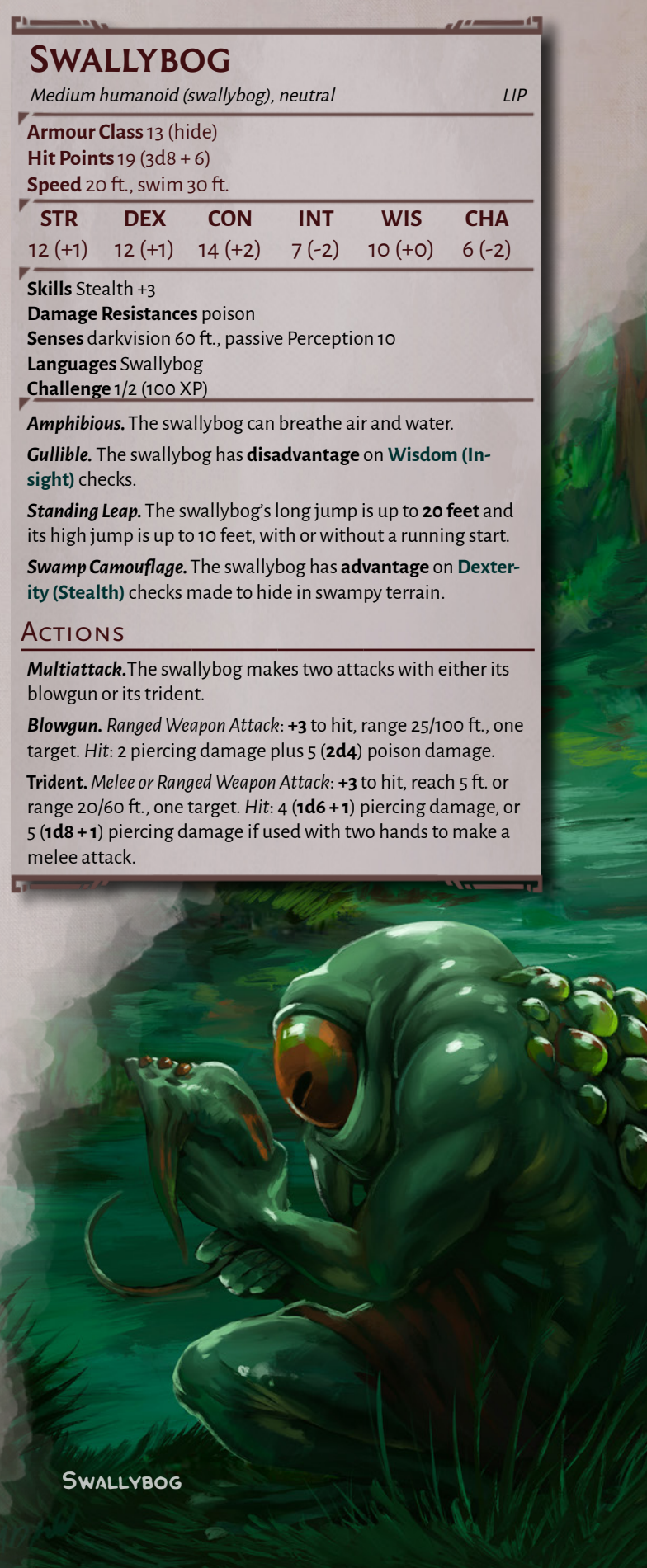
ACTIONS

Multiattack. The swallybog makes two attacks with either its blowgun or its trident.

Blowgun. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* **+3** to hit, range 25/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 piercing damage plus 5 (**2d4**) poison damage.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* **+3** to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (**1d6 + 1**) piercing damage, or 5 (**1d8 + 1**) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

SWALLYBOG



GILLWRANGLER

Martriarchs of the tribe, gillwranglers are the wisest, fiercest, and most intelligent (although that isn't saying much) of all swallybogs. With this final moulting comes a change in brain chemistry granting more rational decision-making and a stronger grasp of magic. Their druidic magics are often the focus of any ritual or celebration.

Combat. Before a hunt, a gillwrangler blesses sharpfins with enhanced jumping, allowing them to silently leap onto their prey. If endangered themselves, a gillwrangler can summon swarms of insects and whirlpools, whipping foes with lashes of water. Gillwranglers are also the tribe's healers, uses swamp plants and magic to prevent wounds festering.

SWALLYBOG GILLWRANGLER

Medium humanoid (swallybog), neutral

L.I.P.

Armour Class 16 (natural armour)

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saves Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +7

Skills Nature +2, Perception +7, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Druidic, Swallybog

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amphibious. The swallybog can breathe air and water.

Gullible. The swallybog has **disadvantage** on **Wisdom (Insight)** checks.

Spellcasting. The swallybog is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *shillelagh*, *swarm*^{*}, *water whip*^{*}

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *jump*^{*}, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *moonbeam*^{*}, *riptide*^{*}

3rd level (3 slots): *blight*, *dispel magic*, *plant growth*

4th level (3 slots): *dominate beast*, *control water*^c, *polymorph*^c

5th level (2 slots): *contagion*, *insect plague*^c, *mass cure wounds*

^{*}see Appendix B; **bold** indicates combat spell; ^c indicates concentration; ^{*}cast on self and three other swallybogs before combat (60 ft. jump) using 4 first level spell slots.

Standing Leap. The swallybog's long jump is up to **20 feet** and her high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Swamp Camouflage. The swallybog has advantage on **Dexterity (Stealth)** checks made to hide in swampy terrain.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (**1d6 + 1**) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (**1d8 + 1**) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

SHARPFIN

Sharpfins are distinguished by the fin-like plum that rises from the top of their heads. Masters of net-based combat, sharpfins will leap out of the shadows, entangling its quarry in a net before finishing the job with its trident.

SWALLYBOG SHARPFIN

Medium humanoid (swallybog), neutral

LIP

Armour Class 16 (hide armour, shield)

Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Athletics +5, Stealth +4, Survival +3

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Swallybog

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Amphibious. The swallybog can breathe air and water.

Gullible. Swallybogs are prone to believing anyone capable of magic is a deity and have **disadvantage** on **Insight** checks.

Net Master. Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on the swallybog's ranged attack rolls. Making an attack with a net doesn't limit the number of non-net attacks the swallybog can make (included in actions).

Standing Leap. The swallybog's long jump is up to **20 feet** and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Swamp Camouflage. The swallybog has advantage on **Dexterity (Stealth)** checks made to hide in swampy terrain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The swallybog makes three attacks: one with its net and two with its trident.

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (**1d6 + 3**) piercing damage, or 7 (**1d8 + 3**) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 5 (**2d4**) poison damage.

Net. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/10 ft., one target. Hit: the target is restrained if it is Large or smaller. A creature can use its action to make a **DC 10 Strength** check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing **5 slashing** damage to the net (**AC 10**) also frees the creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the net.

SWALLYBOG SHARPFIN



THE BROOD

Slkvol has shaped the swamp for as long as it has existed. In fact, before the swamp was even a watering hole, Slkvol travelled through its subterranean rivers entralling and entrancing as it went. As the aeons passed, Slkvol ingested many fauna, assimilating the adaptations that naturally grew out of the changing selective pressures. One of those adaptations was a failsafe, a means of storing its memories, gathering biomass and reforming itself.

BROODLING

Slkvol's workers are its broodlings. These ray-like amphibians scour the swamp looking for targets with high biomass or interesting features. Once such a creature is found, a broodling releases a pheromone, gathering its brethren and enhancing their hive-mind intellect. With a sting, the broodlings inject a toxin that makes a creature more suggestible and less willful. Then, the gathered mass of broodlings use their augmented intelligence to submit the creature to their will. Once entranced, the creature willingly follows the broodlings to Slkvol's lair, where the broodmother decides how best to extract its assets.



BROODLING

BROODLING

Tiny aberration, lawful evil

LIP

Armour Class 12

Hit Points 13 (3d4 + 6)

Speed 10 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages telepathy 120 ft., understands Deep Speech but can't speak

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amphibious. The broodling can breathe air and water.

Hive Mind. Broodlings' minds connect to other broodlings within 5 feet of them, forming a chain of thought. The broodling gains a +2 bonus to Intelligence checks and saving throws, and to its Entrance save DC for each other broodling in such a chain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The broodling makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its sting.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 3 piercing damage and the creature must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution saving throw** or have **disadvantage** on **Wisdom saving throws** until the end of the broodling's next turn.

Entrance (1/Day). The broodling targets one creature it can see within **10 feet** of it. The target must succeed on a **DC 6 Wisdom saving throw** or be magically charmed by the broodling until the broodling dies or until it is on a different plane of existence from the target. The charmed target is under the broodling's control and can't take reactions.

Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. No more than once every 24 hours, the target can also repeat the saving throw when it is at least **30 feet** away from the broodling.

ABOLETH BROODMOTHER

Due to the plethora of adaptations a broodmother has assimilated, it only vaguely resembles its form when it first arrived on the Material Plane. The one thing it does retain is its indelible memory and its desire to entrance living things. For lair actions, see page 10.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing a aboleth broodmother's lair is warped by millenia of tinkering with the flora and fauna, creating one or more of the following effects:

- Never-before-seen fauna, often sporting sacs of unborn broodlings, proliferate within 6 miles of the lair.
- Creatures in contact with water within 6 miles of the lair feel a compulsion to move towards its centre.
- Within 1 mile of the lair, thickets of dense vegetation allows passage only to the broodmother, broodlings, or creatures controlled either. Each 5-foot-cube of the thicket has an **AC of 15, 50 hit points, vulnerability** to cold damage, **resistance** to bludgeoning damage, and **immunity** to piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

ABOLETH BROODMOTHER

Large aberration, lawful evil

LIP

Armour Class 17 (natural armour)

Hit Points 153 (18d10 + 54)

Speed 15 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +7, Int +8, Wis +6

Skills Athletics +9, History +12, Perception +10

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Amphibious. The aboleth can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistances (3/Day). If the aboleth fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Infectious Mucous. The aboleth is surrounded by infectious mucus. A creature that touches the aboleth or that hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it must make a **DC 15 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, the creature is diseased. For the first hour of the disease, the creature takes 4 (**1d8**) necrotic damage each time it ends its turn out of water (it must be at least neck-deep to avoid this damage). After the first hour and until the disease is cured, a creature is unable to gain the benefits of a short or long rest if it does not spend the rest at least neck-deep in water.

A creature that fails the saving throw by 5 or more (**DC 10**) becomes a host for **1d4** broodling eggs that hatch within **3d6** days.

Mother of the Swarm (Mythic Trait; Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the aboleth is reduced to 0 hit points, it doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, it regains 153 hit points. In addition, it births **2** broodlings, gains a **+5 bonus** to its damage rolls until it finishes a short or long rests, and a flurry of swamp fauna swarms over it to protect it, granting it **80** temporary hit points.

Probing Telepathy. If a creature communicates telepathically with the aboleth, the aboleth learns the creature's greatest desires if the aboleth can see the creature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The aboleth makes three tentacle attacks and uses Birth, if available.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: **+9** to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. **Hit:** 14 (**2d8 + 5**) bludgeoning damage and the target must save against the aboleth's Infectious Mucous trait.

Birth (Recharge 4-6). The aboleth produces a broodling in an adjacent, unoccupied space.

Entrance (3/Day). The aboleth targets one creature it can see within **30 feet** of it. The target must succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom saving throw** or be magically **charmed** by the aboleth until the aboleth dies or until it is on a different plane of existence from the target. The charmed target is under the aboleth's control and can't take reactions, and the aboleth and the target can communicate telepathically with each other over any distance.

Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. No more than once every 24 hours, the target can also repeat the saving throw when it is at least 1 mile away from the aboleth.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The aboleth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. The aboleth regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Jet. The aboleth spurts out a pall of ink, heavily obscuring a 20-foot-radius sphere of water centred of the aboleth until the start of its next turn. It then moves up to its swimming speed.

Tentacle. The aboleth makes one tentacle attack.

Suction Drain (Costs 2 Actions). The aboleth attempts to grapple one creature within **10 feet** of it with a special tentacle. A creature charmed by the aboleth automatically fails this contested check. If the aboleth succeeds, the creature takes 21 (**6d6**) necrotic and the aboleth regains hit points equal to half the damage dealt. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

If the aboleth's mythic trait is active, it can use the options below as legendary actions for 1 hour after using Mother of the Swarm.

Gestate. The aboleth recharges and uses Birth. It must use a different legendary action before it can use this one again.

Rapid Suction Drain. The aboleth uses its Suction Drain legendary action option costing only 1 legendary action instead of 2. It must use a different legendary action before it uses this one again.

LESSER ABOLETH BROODMOTHER

Large aberration, lawful evil

LIP

Armour Class 15 (natural armour)

Hit Points 67 (9d10 + 18)

Speed 15 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Athletics +6, History +9, Perception +7

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amphibious. The aboleth can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistances (3/Day). If the aboleth fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Infectious Mucous. The aboleth is surrounded by infectious mucus. A creature that touches the aboleth or that hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it must make a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw**. On a failure, the creature is diseased. For the first hour of the disease, the creature takes 2 (1d4) necrotic damage if it ends its turn out of water (it must be at least neck-deep to avoid this damage). After the first hour and until the disease is cured, a creature is unable to gain the benefits of a short or long rest if it does not spend the rest at least neck-deep in water.

A creature that fails the saving throw by 5 or more (**DC 8**) becomes a host of a broodling egg that hatches in **3d6** days.

Probing Telepathy. If a creature communicates telepathically with the aboleth, the aboleth learns the creature's greatest desires if the aboleth can see the creature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The aboleth makes two tentacle attacks and uses Birth, if available.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and the target must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution saving throw** or be affected as per the aboleth's Infectious Mucous trait.

Birth (Recharge 4-6). The aboleth produces a broodling in the nearest adjacent, unoccupied space to it.

Enslave (3/Day). The aboleth targets one creature it can see within **30 feet** of it. The target must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom saving throw** or be magically **charmed** by the aboleth until the aboleth dies or until it is on a different plane of existence from the target. The charmed target is under the aboleth's control and can't take reactions, and the aboleth and the target can communicate telepathically with each other over any distance.

Whenever the charmed target takes damage, the target can repeat the saving throw. On a success, the effect ends. No more than once every 24 hours, the target can also repeat the saving throw when it is at least 1 mile away from the aboleth.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The aboleth can take 3 Legendary Actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. The aboleth regains spent legendary actions at the start of each of its turn.

Jet. The aboleth spurts out a pall of ink, heavily obscuring a **20-foot-radius** sphere of water until initiative 0 of the current round. It then moves up to its swim speed.

Tentacle. The aboleth makes one attack with its tentacle.

Suction Drain (Costs 2 Actions). The aboleth attempts to grapple one creature within **10 feet** of it with a special tentacle. A creature charmed by the aboleth automatically fails this check. If the aboleth succeeds on the check, the creature takes 14 (4d6) necrotic and the aboleth regains a number of hit points equal to half the damage dealt. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.



BROODMOTHER CHRYSALIS

The broodmother's chrysalis is its failsafe. After gathering a sufficient volume of biomass within the huddle of charmed creatures, the broodlings encapsulate the huddle, creating a hard, sticky casing that protects the internal workings. In this temporary transitional state, the aboleth is almost unkillable. It metabolises the constituent creatures at an astonishing rate almost immediately repairing any wounds it may sustain.

BROOD CHRYSALIS

Huge aberration, lawful evil

LIP

Armour Class 20 (natural armour)

Hit Points 207 (18d12 + 90)

Speed 5 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	5 (-3)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +9, Int +6, Wis +5

Skills Perception +8

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 90 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 20

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP) Surviving until the chrysalis transitions is sufficient to gain XP

Amphibious. The chrysalis can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistances (3/Day). If the chrysalis fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Regenerative State. The chrysalis regains all its hit points at the start of its turn.

Sticky Mucous. When a creature hits the chrysalis with a melee attack, it must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength saving throw** or become disarmed as its weapon stays stuck to the creature. A creature can use an action to make a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check, freeing a stuck weapon within its reach on a success. If the attack requires that the attacker touch the aboleth (GM's discretion), then the attacker becomes **grappled** (escape **DC 15**) on a failed save. While it is grappled, it can't use that limb. If the natural weapon is a bite, then the creature can't speak while it is grappled in this way.

Transitional State. The chrysalis turns into an aboleth broodmother at the start of its fourth turn after becoming a chrysalis, ending any grapples it is a part of.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chrysalis makes three sticky ectoplasm attacks. Each attack must be against a different target.

Sticky Ectoplasm. *Ranged Weapon Attack: +8* to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (**3d6 + 5**) acid damage and the target's speed is reduced by **15 feet** until the target uses an action to remove the ectoplasm. A creature whose speed is reduced to 0 feet by this effect is **restrained** (escape **DC 15**).

GREATER BROOD CHRYSALIS

Huge aberration, lawful evil

LIP

Armour Class 22 (natural armour)

Hit Points 312 (25d12 + 150)

Speed 5 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	5 (-3)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +8, Wis +6

Skills Perception +10

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 20

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP) Surviving until the chrysalis transitions is sufficient to gain XP

Amphibious. The chrysalis can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistances (3/Day). If the chrysalis fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Regenerative State. The chrysalis regains all its hit points at the start of its turn.

Sticky Mucous. When a creature hits the chrysalis with a melee attack, it must succeed on a **DC 17 Strength saving throw** or become disarmed as its weapon stays stuck to the creature. A creature can use an action to make a **DC 17 Strength (Athletics)** check, freeing a stuck weapon within its reach on a success. If the attack requires that the attacker touch the aboleth (GM's discretion), then the attacker becomes **grappled** (escape **DC 17**) on a failed save. While it is grappled, it can't use that limb. If the natural weapon is a bite, then the creature can't speak while it is grappled in this way.

Transitional State. The chrysalis turns into an aboleth broodmother at the start of its fourth turn after becoming a chrysalis, ending any grapples it is a part of.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chrysalis makes four sticky ectoplasm attacks. Each attack must be against a different target.

Sticky Ectoplasm. *Ranged Weapon Attack: +10* to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (**3d6 + 6**) acid damage and the target's speed is reduced by **15 feet** until the target uses an action to remove the ectoplasm. A creature whose speed is reduced to 0 feet by this effect is **restrained** (escape **DC 17**).

Brood Chrysalis CR Calculation. As the brood chrysalides' Regenerative State effectively prevents it from being killed, the CR presented here represents only the offensive CR. You can remove the Transitional State and Regenerative State traits to use this creature as a normal, killable monster. If you do so, use the following CRs:

- Lesser Brood Chrysalis: CR 7 (2,900 XP)
- Brood Chrysalis: CR 13 (10,000 XP)
- Greater Brood Chrysalis: CR 18 (20,000 XP)

LESSER BROOD CHRYSALIS

Large aberration, lawful evil

LIP

Armour Class 17 (natural armour)

Hit Points 171 (18d10 + 72)

Speed 5 ft., swim 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	5 (-3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +5

Skills Perception +8

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses blindsight 90 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 18

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) Surviving until the chrysalis transitions is sufficient to gain XP

Amphibious. The chrysalis can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistances (1/Day). If the chrysalis fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Regenerative State. The chrysalis regains all its hit points at the start of its turn.

Sticky Mucous. When a creature hits the chrysalis with a melee attack, it must succeed on a **DC 14 Strength saving throw** or become disarmed as its weapon stays stuck to the creature. A creature can use an action to make a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics)** check, freeing a stuck weapon within its reach on a success. If the attack requires that the attacker touch the aboleth (GM's discretion), then the attacker becomes **grappled** (escape **DC 14**) on a failed save. While it is grappled, it can't use that limb. If the natural weapon is a bite, then the creature can't speak while it is grappled in this way.

Transitional State. The chrysalis turns into a lesser aboleth broodmother at the start of its fourth turn after becoming a chrysalis, ending any grapples it is a part of.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chrysalis makes three sticky ectoplasm attacks. Each attack must be against a different target.

Sticky Ectoplasm. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* **+7** to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (**2d6 + 4**) acid damage and the target's speed is reduced by **15 feet** until the target uses an action to remove the ectoplasm. A creature whose speed is reduced to 0 feet by this effect is **restrained** (escape **DC 14**).



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