Infested: Parasites For Your Game

“There are thousands of ways to die, millions if you’re creative. I would take any of them over that.”

—Kinsey Stafford, Apprentice Field Medic

Adventurers go to great lengths to put themselves where they don’t belong. Traversing far-off mountains, exploring dense jungles, or crossing shifting deserts means risking many dangers - both seen and unseen. And although facing the ravenous beasts and evil hordes that call these wild places home is a terrifying prospect, sometimes the gravest threats these areas contain come in the smallest packages.

Parasites

Parasites introduce a new play element into your games to challenge (and disgust) your players. Whereas diseases in a fantasy medieval game can be blanketed in the comfort of ignorance, since the knowledge of viruses and bacteria is typically nonexistent in these settings, there’s no getting around the mental ramifications that come along with a body being infested with parasites. Beyond the painful and grotesque physical symptoms, these tiny scourges can also bring feelings of invasion and violation that players must overcome.

Parasites bring a new condition along with them - infested. Unless otherwise stated in the Parasite effect description, any spell or effect that ends a condition will end being infested as well.

Infested

• An infested creature has disadvantage on Constitution saving throws and Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Treatment

Any character who has proficiency with an Herbalism Kit can create a single dose of a basic antiparasitic during a long rest if the materials are available. Some parasites are more exotic, virulent, or magical than others, and require one or more special materials in order to make an effective antiparasitic to prevent or treat their infestation. If special materials are necessary, they will be listed in the description of the parasite.

Antiparasitic

Adventuring Gear
50 gp

This potent tincture provides a creature with advantage on saving throws against infestation for 1 hour or ends the infested condition in a currently affected creature.

Harvesting

Particularly adventurous characters can attempt to harvest parasites for later use. Parasites can be harvested using the same standard rules as harvesting poison.
**Types of Parasites**

The following are a few different parasites that you can introduce into your games and can also be used as templates for creating your own parasites for later use.

**Dream Eaters (Internal)**

Dream Eaters are small leech-like creatures that inhabit deserts and sandy beaches. They spend most of their lives in hibernation among the dunes, only waking when they sense the presence of a warm-blooded creature in their vicinity. Those unfortunate enough to make camp among the Dream Eaters stir these parasites from their slumber, causing the worms to slowly climb from the sands and make their way up and into their victim's ear canal. By the next morning, the throbbing pain in the affected creature's ears combined with the constant scritching of the Dream Eater's movements makes sleep and concentration almost impossible.

**Effect:**

Dream Eaters cause incessant pain and irritation in the ears of those they afflict. A creature subjected to this parasite must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it is infested for 2d4 days, has disadvantage on any ability checks that require hearing and cannot complete a long rest. On a successful save, the creature is infested for 2d12 hours.

**Storm Mites (External)**

Storm Mites are aquatic arthropods roughly the size and shape of a copper piece. In most circumstances, these creatures remain in the shallow tidal pools where they're born without ever coming into contact with people. However, during periods of monsoons and flooding Storm Mite larvae are swept inland, where they burrow under the skin of anyone that they touch. They create large, excruciating boils wherever they gather on their victim, making it almost impossible to wear anything heavier than a loose tunic. After they've finished incubating within their host, the immature mites burst out of the creature's flesh, causing even more trauma and turmoil.

**Effect:**

Storm Mites burrow into the skin, causing painful and grotesque boils. A creature that comes into contact with this parasite must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is infested for 1d6 days while the mites incubate. During this period, the pustules caused by the incubating mites make wearing light, medium, or heavy armor impossible. At the end of their incubation period, the mites burst from their host's skin, causing 3d4 damage.

**Hermit Hounds (Internal)**

Hermit hounds are thin, translucent worms that are found infesting the waters and wildlife of forested areas. Incredibly difficult to see, they're most commonly encountered by novice adventurers and careless rangers who improperly prepare game or water tainted with the parasite. After infestation, Hermit Hounds cause a noticeable change in the personality of their host, making them prone to irritation and paranoia, and driving them to become more and more isolated. Once driven into seclusion in the wilderness, the host most typically falls victim to another wild animal or monster that the Hermit Hounds then pass on to.

**Effect:**

Hermit Hounds cloud the mind and dull their host's personality. A creature that drinks water or eats food contaminated with this parasite must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is infested for 1d10 days and has disadvantage on all Charisma saving throws and ability checks.

**Wraith Kin (External)**

Wraith Kin are tiny, transparent jellies that dwell in caves and dank dungeons throughout the realms. They wait on floors, walls, and ceilings in a dormant state until a living creature passes near them, rousing them from their slumber, at which point they attach themselves to their host's flesh. The impact of the Wraith Kin can be noticed immediately on their host, who find themselves suddenly depleted of their vitality and life force. Given their near-invisible bodies and the draining effects that they have on those they infest, they are rumored to actually be a type of undead, though this is yet to be proven.

**Effect:**

Wraith's Kin attach to their host's flesh, leeching their energy and spirit. A creature whose flesh comes into contact with Wraith Kin must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be infested for 2d6 days. While infested, the creature's hit point maximum is reduced by 4d4.
License

This material is being released under the Open Gaming License.

OPEN GAME LICENSE

Version 1.0a The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved. No other terms or conditions may be added to or subtracted from this License except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity; (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, art work, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content that you distribute, modifying or translating, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. System Reference Document 5.0 Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Copyright 2019, Underground Oracle Publishing; authors Jess Pendley and Keith Pendley

END OF LICENSE