

# GREHLOK



## Summary Information

The Grehlok are a relatively “new” race, created by the Drow using blood magic during the peacetime after the Second War. It was widely thought that the first Grehlok were a group of Humans that the Drow coerced; however, in the year 7AF, information was uncovered that revealed a deeper history of the Grehlok.

Through a ritual to see into the past, it was discovered that Grehlok are actually a form of homunculi entities, originally created from dead bodies. Ancient Drow coerced a group of Mana Elves (Sanctum Elves) to provide their dead for experimentation during the Second

War. From these dead, the Drow created life by binding their own essence to the corpses via blood magic: the most powerful, abominable thing possible. The ritual involves binding a soul's essence to a body with some known side effects: it is permanent, memory loss, and a specific deterioration period (lifespan) of 100 years begins.

While all are considered “transformed,” some Grehlok are not bound to their original body which affects their memory. Created or turned Grehlok have randomized essence, stemming from the soul essence that is available when the ritual seeks from beyond the veil: the original essence of the first Grehlok, Grehlok that have died, or Grehlok essence that is available. If the ritual is performed on a recently dead individual, it is highly probable that some fragments of the body's original essence will still be present. The combination of conflicting and distinct essences can create memory loss or the presence of unfamiliar memories.

Generations later, the Drow's blood magic ritual binds their soul and imbues the Grehlok essence into the body of the transformed individual.

There are three currently known ways that a Grehlok can be created:

- Born a Grehlok (any parent with Grehlok essence will have guaranteed Grehlok children)
- Transformed while alive to Grehlok (same body, same essence, no restoration)
- Directly Resurrected Grehlok (same body, restored)

All Grehlok are descendants of the originally cursed and have some element of homunculi present, primarily blood magic. This curse within their blood is directly imbued via the ritual or passed down through a parent.

Through blood magic, the Grehlok curse was burned into the mortal souls and linked all descendants to the original curse. This curse is directly imbued via the ritual, or passed down through a parent. This Drow curse is denoted by the magical mark on a Grehlok's neck (called a “Cursemark”), as well as their ragged, blackened ears. The word Grehlok means “thrall” in the Drow tongue. The Cursemarks are a form of runic magic, used in the original blood magic that created the Grehlok.

The blood that was magically imbued into a Grehlok's body during the ritual is what physically pressures them to perform directives. The blood that was magically imbued into a Grehlok's body during the ritual is what physically pressured them to perform directives...and what allowed some Grehlok stronger reserves of resistance against these directives.

Used by the Drow for battle in the Third War, many Grehlok were somewhat successfully integrated into society after the Allied victory. As they settled down and recovered, the curse was spread to their descendants. The Grehlok curse affected every race on the Homelands, with Norrahts being the only exception.

## Costume Requirements

Note: Any amount of Grehlok blood in one's bloodline will make them a Grehlok.

In order to play a Grehlok, a player at Lands of Exile must follow a few costuming requirements. Optional costuming is NOT required to play the race, but rather a suggestion based on how Grehlok look in this world.

## Required Costuming:

**Charred, ragged ears:** Must have black-tipped ragged ear prosthetics [[One option for ear prosthetics by Aradani](#)]

**Cursemark:** A scar-like Marking on the front right of the neck (denoted with makeup) - a simple, geometric or straight line combination. These permanent, runic markings were placed on a Grehlok soul by the Drow Binding Curse. See Legend and Cultural Practices for more information on the Cursemark. You may use one of these Cursemarks or create your own to be approved by our Backstory Team. Your Cursemark must be submitted with your backstory, whether created or used from the approved list.

### Optional Costuming:

Many Grehlok wear a scarf or high collar to conceal their Cursemark. Grehlok prefer clothing that is practical and functional, so a mismatched collection of pieces is common. They also will often reflect the style of the culture that they were born into, either naturally or prior to turning.

## Physical Description

**Lifespan:** 100 years after creation (birth or transformation)

All Grehlok carry a Cursemark upon their necks, forever marking the blood curse that they carry. Cursemarks are easily hidden with scarves, which has become one of the trademarks of many Allied Grehlok. Covering this Mark seems to lessen the ire they receive when interacting with others, and scarves can provide extra concealment when necessary.

Grehlok are always easily recognizable by their tattered and blackened ears. If a Grehlok has Hybrid lineage they will always exhibit the Grehlok ears and Cursemark, and never show other defining racial features.

Grehlok prefer clothing that is practical and functional which creates a 'collected over time' aesthetic, though it will reflect the style of the culture that they are born into or that they are emulating. Even if a Grehlok is quite well off—although rare—they will usually not showcase this in fancy possessions and dress due to the harassment it can draw from locals. Grehlok

often carry daggers but rarely keep them visible; because as a Grehlok, openly carrying a weapon could be interpreted as a threat.

## Temperament

The temperament of a Grehlok largely depends on their upbringing and cultures they were exposed to through life.

Grehlok are quiet and inconspicuous, traits developed and reinforced by the strict training they received from Drow Archons and Augurs. Some Grehlok find this inconspicuous behavior rather beneficial, as one seen being confident in Allied company is seen as suspicious. Grehlok can also be sadistic and malicious, as these traits were encouraged under Drow command. But it is important to note that many Grehlok have never been under Drow rule, especially those that come from the Homelands.

Grehlok are survivalists and tend to be most concerned with self-preservation. Even among other Grehlok, it is accepted that self preservation comes before the whole, although this is becoming less common in Allied Grehlok groups. Due to the types of traits honed and developed under the Drow reign, Grehlok rarely make amiable companions. However, many Grehlok put a concerted effort towards re-integrating, and find uneasy—yet available—places within the less tight-knit settlements in the Exiled Lands.

## Current and Pressing Concerns

Their connection to the Drow causes Allied communities to generally distrust Grehlok, reinforcing their secretive tendencies. During the confusion of the dragons' arrival, many Grehlok attempted to flee from the Homelands and found seats on the more sordid refugee ships. It is thought that during this exodus, many Grehlok died due to discrimination.

While Grehlok hoped for new freedoms in the Exiled Lands, many Allied races continue to be distrustful and believe the Grehlok are still actively being influenced by Drow via the power of their curse. Despite any trust that may have been built on the voyage to the Exiles Lands or in survival skills while helping others, the rumors and accompanying stereotypes about Grehlok from the Third War were quickly resurrected. This led to the formation of several Grehlok towns to protect themselves from both Drow and Elendari, taking an isolationist stance towards everyone. These towns do not tend to last long.

Escape to the Exiled Lands has given many Grehlok new social opportunities, allowing them to ingratiate themselves within the Elendari refugee camps via their impressive survival skills and self-preservation instinct.

Some Grehlok find life in the Exiled Lands more troublesome than their curse, and may even attempt to regain the trust of the Drow.

Although the Drow reputation for severe control of their underlings is universal, these Grehlok will adamantly defend their Archons and Augurs. Loyalty and devotion go hand in hand when considering a comfortable living as a Grehlok in Drow society; the Drow “reward” those who perform well.

Some newly-created Grehlok (those that have been made into Grehlok from another race) also face mortality as a new pressing concern, as Grehlok only live about 100 years from the moment they are transformed. One born as a Grehlok has this same lifespan, giving them the mortality equivalent to humans.

## Government Structure

Grehlok have no confirmed bodies of government or governmental structure. However, after the Third War, a massive group was rumored to have successfully broken free from the Drow and created their own civilization in a remote area on the mainland. No Grehlok currently alive seem to have ever visited this place, but rumors of its existence abound.

Grehlok have historically been the thralls of the Drow, and were never trusted enough to hold office in the Allied Empire. Although it is rumored that they have long been used by the Allied Empire as spy operatives and intelligencers (see **Legends and Cultural Practices**).

## Religious Beliefs

When Grehlok were created, separate belief systems never developed under control of the Drow. Therefore, most Grehlok will find themselves feeling more connected to Sho'thar than to other Eldest. Some Grehlok sometimes choose to throw off their old lives completely and either show interest in all Eldest or choose to explore one of particular intrigue.

On the road, many Grehlok find familiarity in Sho'thar shrines and rituals, whether or not they personally follow this Eldest. Worshipers of Sho'thar tend to be more sympathetic and accepting of Grehlok, due to a rather universal belief that Sho'thar gives direction to all who have been lost in shadow.

Some Grehlok claim to have met someone who is from the rumored Grehlok separatist city. No more details are ever shared beyond the conviction of its existence. It has many names: The City, Grehome, Sovereigntown, and others. To many Grehlok, the belief in this settlement is of special significance, as it gives them hope that one day, they can all find belonging in their everyday existence.

## Legends and Cultural Practices

Grehlok do not have a single unified culture, insofar as they do not live as a community. Because of the link to the Drow, Grehlok are still almost universally seen as traitors or unwilling pawns. This has caused Grehlok to live transient lives, surviving on what they can work for or steal. Grehlok often attempt to relearn the cultural practices of their parent race when they can; though they were almost never welcomed back into Allied communities before the Age of Fire.

Some of the best rogues and spies in history happen to be Grehlok, though often unnamed and uncredited. It was a little known fact among the upper echelon of society (nobility, military leaders, and government officials) that the Allied Empire would train Grehlok as spies intended to stop a potential Drow uprising before it started. These Grehlok were also used for keeping everyday tabs on the Allied Empire, squashing any rebellions before they began through political assassinations and "guidance." Many who knew about this espionage fear these Allied-trained Grehlok falling into Drow hands, especially as their survival training makes them well prepared to survive in the Age of Fire.

*The widely believed history before 7AF was that the original curse was created during a powerful blood ritual, where a large group of Humans willingly accepted the bond under the pretense of an alliance and being given access to unknown powers that the Drow had learned.*

*It was discovered that the above history was false - and that Ancient Drow coerced a group of Mana Elves (Sanctum Elves) to provide their dead for experimentation during the Second War (as explained in **Summary Information**).*

It is worth noting that a common practice for Grehlok in love is to draw new, matching marks on the backs of their hands or wrist to signify they no longer belong to the Drow but to each other.

## External Relations

Although Grehlok were not considered an Allied race until after the Third War, the Grehlok are the least trusted of all the races of the Allied nations—including Half-Orcs. Because of their blood magic connection with the Drow, Grehlok are always seen as potential spies.

Drow influences aside, the simple fact that Grehlok reputation is overwhelmingly negative will cause many to chase them off. The few Grehlok that are able to gain the trust of non-Grehlok company can become valued companions, as their roguish skills come in very handy.

Though their reputation is ill, many have chosen to break away from their tortured history and turn to more noble causes. Even in the Exiled Lands, many small groups of Grehlok attempt to create small, isolated communities with each other in order to create some type of new life away from others who seek to scrub them out.

## Additional information

Under Drow rule, there were four common paths of training for Grehlok: Fire Mages, Hunters, Alchemists, and Assassins. This is not to say that a Grehlok cannot have other styles of training—using ranged weapons, being a weapons or armorsmith, perhaps even a farmer—it is simply more likely to come across a Grehlok that specializes within one of the types listed due to the specificity of Drow instruction.

### Fire Mages

All Grehlok are inherently gifted with a knack for fire magic with some more than others. The most common path for Drow training, Grehlok fire mages are used in times of war. After the Third War, remaining fire mages were used as entertainment for Drow, creating fantastic spectacles of fire dancing. One of the more well known chefs within the realm (Ran'si Italrilde) is a Grehlok who uses fire magic to make gourmet dishes that have been served in the highest Elven courts.

Due to the showy and physical nature of their magic casting, fire mages often feel most comfortable in loose fitting, draped cloth or robes, typically black, with hints of fiery colors.

### Hunters

Performing tracking and scouting duties, these Grehlok were trained in the tactical spy style of the Drow. Silent, quick, and patient, they were frequently used to hunt down fleeing Grehlok. Different from an assassin, it is not unusual for a hunter to camp in one spot for days on end before their target arrives. Hunters trust their intuition unquestioningly.

Hunters tend to have shorter hair, or longer hair which is tied back tightly, keeping their field of vision clear. Clothing is loose, rugged, and amorphous, in dark neutral colors - or in the colors that fit their current environment.

### Assassins

Those who were meant to become assassins were hand picked from Grehlok hunters to be further trained by the best Drow assassins. This training was rigorous and often fatal, but Grehlok that survived the process were highly valued in Drow

society. Grehlok assassins were trained to swiftly take down their targets using stealth, hand to hand combat, or other solo tactics. They primarily utilized daggers and short swords due to ease of concealment. Their attire is varied, in order to allow them flexibility when performing a mission.

A sub-sect of Assassins has recently been rediscovered in the Exiled Lands, only spoken of in legends from the Third War. These Grehlok, called Vel'Thinir, are some of the most terrifying killers the world has seen. They can stalk their prey for days before striking at the opportune moment. Vel'Thinir are the only Grehlok that do not carry Cursemarks on their neck and they are always accompanied by an expressionless white mask. (**Note: Player Characters cannot be Vel'Thinir.**)

### **Alchemists**

During the war, the most loyal Grehlok were entrusted with potion-making and poison-craft. Poison crafters were specific to weapon applications and frequently used by assassins, while potion makers were essential for creating the stockpiles of health, energy, and other offensive potions. Loyal Grehlok potion makers tended to be the most well-treated, some even being allowed their own alchemy labs. Grehlok who create potions and poisons develop a keen eye for interesting plants and ingredients, and have a curious tendency to test new combinations on unsuspecting "friends."

Because the focus of their training was not martial, Grehlok Alchemists tended to hire bodyguards. Potion-making also tends to be a highly valuable skill in the Exiled Lands and making a decent living is common.

*Thank you to our writers and editors for this packet:*

*Writers: Emil Zickafoose, Chelsea Deaner, Justin Bullock, Jennifer Pan*

*Copy editors: Rowan E, Hannah Davis, Dannie Gray, Jordan Mullaney, Marcell Benevento*

*Based on lore created by Claire Wilshire and Thomas Betts*