

Pharolin Orvresslar

Male drider; 104 years old.

Magistrate of House Chathradin; trained soldier and bounty hunter. Uncomfortable on the surface. Respectful towards women of importance.

Like all drow, you have dark skin, white hair, and pointed ears; and your spider body has a dark carapace. You wear your hair in a long ponytail. You are wearing well-made heavy armour and you're carrying quite a lot of weapons. Under the armour you are wearing a fine silk shirt in the colours of House Chathradin—green and white.

You can go anywhere a humanoid can go. Your spider body is proportional in size to your torso, and like a spider you can tuck in your legs quite a lot to fit through narrow doorways—although you are not always comfortable in Snakesford's narrowest streets.

Traits

- High **strength** (d8)
- High **agility** (d8)
- Above-average **health** (d10)
- Below-average **knowledge of the world** (d20)
- Average **perception** (d12)

Skills

- Experienced **sniper** (d8)
- Skilled **melee fighter** (d8)
- Finely honed **sense of social propriety** (d10)
- Always **runs down** his quarry (d10)
- Knows how to **intimidate suspects** (d12)
- Familiar with **drow politics** (d12)
- Trained in the basics of **magic theory** (d20)

Important equipment

- Heavy combat **armour** (d10)
- Chathradin house guard **rifle**
- Hunting **crossbow**
- Several **knives**

You remember little of your early childhood—something which you don't particularly regret. You never saw the face of your mother. Whoever she was, you must have been a bitter disappointment to her. Very seldom do the cursed spider genes—a relic of ill-conceived yuan-ti meddling in your people's bloodline—express themselves as they do in you. Although there are laws against it, many drider children are killed at birth—you are grateful that you were merely abandoned.

You were raised in a temple of the Lady in Vilamel, a city governed by House Chathradin. The priestesses were kind, but distant—although they felt obligated to look after a creature which had been made in the image of the Lady's favoured animal, the presence of a small, eight-legged child was disruptive to their daily rituals. When you were old enough to look

after yourself, they handed you over to the local militia, to be trained in the traditional profession of your kind.

Here you found some sense of belonging at last. You came to excel in all forms of combat—which was not surprising, given that combat was exactly what driders were designed for. You rapidly outpaced your drow squadmates, and soon came to the attention of the weapons master of the ilharess. As the most promising soldier of your generation, you were promoted to the household guard. As an orphan, you were made a ward of the household—this entitled you to carry the Orvresslar name, which was granted to all adopted warriors.

After decades of loyal service, you earned the favour of Ilharess Trisstree Chathradin herself, and she gave you a new task: maintaining the house's law even in the farthest reaches of its territories. That is what you have been doing ever since—tracking down dangerous criminals who threaten the peace and stability of House Chathradin's lands, and usually executing them.

You were in Vilamel reporting to your superiors when the bad news from the surface arrived: one of the human engineers involved in the project to construct the new station in Snakesford had been murdered, and another engineer was missing. Of course, since Vilamel was the closest drow city to Snakesford, the ilharess was one of the major backers of the project in the underground—and she stood to lose a great deal if anything were to go wrong.

The ilharess found it particularly suspicious that two prominent engineers familiar with the workings of the project had met with some misfortune this close to the grand unveiling—one at which Empress Miressa herself is due to be a guest of honour. Had they stumbled across some kind of assassination plot which necessitated their elimination? If Miressa were to be killed in an incident linked to House Chathradin, her daughters would think nothing of reducing Vilamel to rubble.

The ilharess sent you to Snakesford with a letter to the local constabulary insisting that you be included in the murder investigation. She wanted to make sure that all avenues were followed, and certainly did not trust the humans to do it themselves. She believed that sending a drider would put the yuan-ti in the city at their ease, and make them more inclined to cooperate with your inquiry.

That is how you found yourself here in Snakesford. You can't say that you much care for it. The intense glare of the sun hurts your eyes, you can barely fit into some of these narrow streets—and the less said about the local smell, the better. The magistrates here wear no armour over their clothing, and carry pathetically small firearms—it amazes you that they can command any respect from the local populace while so woefully under-equipped.

As you made your way to the offices of the constabulary, you attracted stares from almost everyone on the street—you may be the only drider in all of Snakesford. While waiting to be admitted by some senior officer, you have made the acquaintance of the representatives selected by the yuan-ti and the city officials and reviewed what little you know about the matter at hand.

Could the yuan-ti be planning some sort of invasion? Their king will be in the city for the opening, and they have always been the type to lead from the front. The local humans may well be aiding them in such a conspiracy—the loyalties of these short-lived creatures are as fluid as water.

Of course, if there is a plot to assassinate the empress, the most obvious suspects are other drow. Most of the drow in Snakesford are vassals of House Varchessen—a minor house

which has made its fortune facilitating trade between surface and underground. Their ilharess is reputed to be quite mad, but has the support of a capable younger sister. Could they be plotting some kind of power play? The other drow in the city are either independents or proxies for other houses. They are unlikely to be working together, but you suppose that anything is possible.

Although you are uncomfortable in this alien environment, you will not fail in your duty to your house: if you uncover any threat to your ilharess in this hive of treachery, you intend to deal with it swiftly and permanently.

Your fellow investigators

Detective Alma Ostler: a human woman of middle age; clearly of superior rank to the goblin and older than the yuan-ti. You have treated her with great politeness—if her presence here is not some kind of human ploy, and she is prepared to work with you in good faith, she may be a useful local guide.

Special Constable Ugruk Grathnarsson: a young goblin. You would call him a foot soldier if you thought he knew which end of a knife to hold. He seems to be some kind of engineering expert. He is clearly Alma Ostler's inferior in rank, and defers to her.

Zzuxsartha Ssestl: a yuan-ti woman. She is very young, and you don't quite know what to make of her. She must be a favoured daughter of some influential yuan-ti house to have been selected for such an important duty, but she does not appear to have very much experience or military training. You are concerned for her safety, but also hopeful that her youth and inexperience may lead her to let slip something about her people's motivations.

Yuan-ti name pronunciation guide

Zzuxsartha Ssestl *zoosh-sar-tha ses-t'l*

Zzizzizth *zizz-izth*