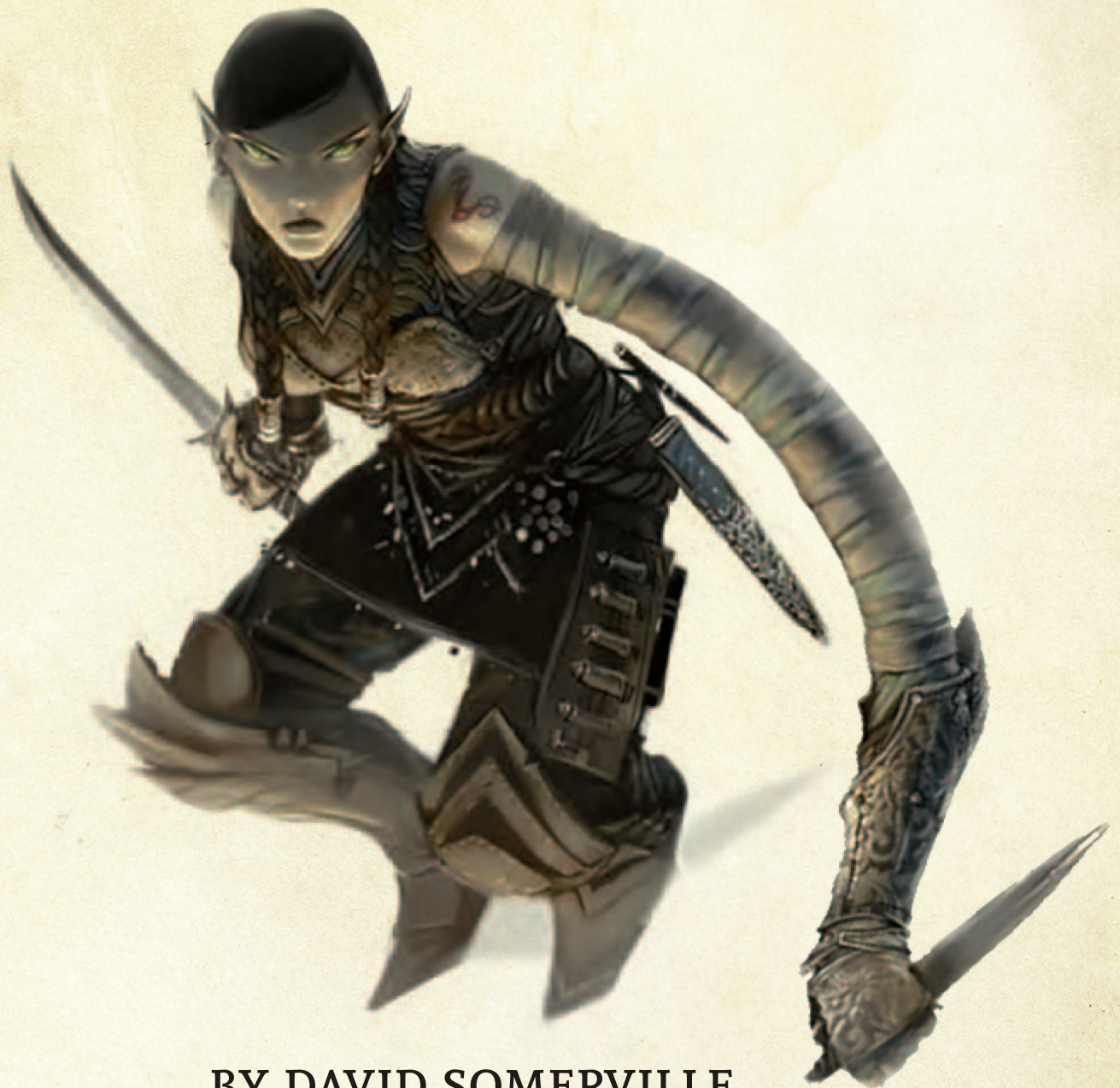


HALF-OOZE

**A STRETCHY, SQUISHY, &
VERY HUNGRY PLAYABLE RACE**



BY DAVID SOMERVILLE



HALF-OOZE

LOST MADE THE BARKEEP UNEASY. BUT THEN, *Lost made everyone uneasy. Still, he couldn't help but notice the way the old halfling avoided his eye.*

"Hey," Lost said, slapping the bar. "Want to see a trick?"

"I've seen 'em all," said the barkeep.

"Doubt it," said Lost. "Watch this." He lifted his thick arm and stretched—and stretched—and the arm lengthened unnaturally, twice its usual length. With a gap-toothed grin, Lost grabbed a sack of potatoes that stood behind the bar, and pulled it back to himself, his arm retracting to its normal length with a sickening 'schluck.'

"What are you?" asked the ashen-faced halfling.

"Hungry," said Lost, and ate the sack of potatoes raw.

—David Somerville, *Half-Ooze at Hellsgate*

Sometimes, in dark caverns or long-forgotten forests, a hapless wanderer meets an untimely end at the creeping pseudopods of an ooze sire. Usually catching travelers while asleep, the sire slies into a humanoid's ears, nose, and mouth—and once it's inside, it's too late. What awakes from that slumber is a new creature, a half-ooze, half-humanoid thing that is aware of only three things: its strangely malleable body, the dim memories of its past life, and an overwhelming hunger.

IS THAT YOU?

Half-oozes wear the outside form of the creature that died when the ooze sire took their life, although they are a little more pale, and clammier to the touch. Their skin tends to have an unusual tint, depending on the type of ooze that sired them. Half-oozes usually exist in the dregs of society, and are typically dressed poorly, in clothes that let them stretch their limbs when occasion calls for it.

SO HUNGRY

When a traveler meets its end at the touch of an ooze sire, that creature ceases to exist. Half-oozes can, with great effort, recall some dim shreds of the memory of the creature that died to bring them into being (called the ooze dam, regardless of gender). But although they wear the outer face and form of their dam, they are entirely a new creature in their thinking. Half-oozes usually come to consciousness in dark places, alone, without any knowledge of how they got there—only the need to eat.

More often than not, the dark and lonely origins of half-oozes, and their voracious appetites, leads them to a life of poverty and crime. They tend to fall in with desperate people, doing what they need to do to stay alive.

DISGUSTING, BUT USEFUL

Most civilized races reject half-oozes as monstrous, some even choosing to kill them on sight. But half-oozes who stay out of the way of the authorities can find employment with brigands, second-story men, or even those adventurers, pioneers, or working people who don't care what you smell like (or how much you eat) as long as you can get a job done.

BORN IN DARKNESS

Nobody knows how the first ooze sires came to be. Some say they're arcane, others a fiendish prank, still others that it's something that leaked through from a more distant and unsettling plane of existence. Still, regardless of their origin, ooze sires and their offspring are a fact of life grudgingly accepted by those at the edges of dark and eerie places.

APPETITE FOR ADVENTURE

Half-oozes all come into existence with ravenous hunger, and that appetite continues to drive them throughout their existence. Most half-oozes will give the same answer to anyone who asks them why they did something—they were hungry. The rare half-ooze who can find a regular meal might seek to better itself for its short life, in learning or building something, or in seeking to make the world a better place. There have even been half-oozes who sought out the families of their dams and tried to make restitution for whatever was broken in their last life... as long as it doesn't get in the way of the next meal.

A BAD BEGINNING

Your half-ooze adventurer has arisen from unpleasant circumstances. Use the tables below to find out a few details, or sort it out yourself.

Dam

d6 The creature who your sire infested was...

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | A lost commoner who stumbled into the wrong cave. |
| 2 | A heroic adventurer on a critically important quest. |
| 3 | An explorer trying to map unknown places. |
| 4 | A criminal hiding from justice. |
| 5 | A researcher trying to learn more about ooze sires. |
| 6 | I don't know. |

Awakening

d6 You woke up in...

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | A deep, dark cave, far below the sunlit surface. |
| 2 | A forest considered to be cursed by those who live at its edge. |
| 3 | The dungeon of a powerful noble. |
| 4 | A wrecked ship at the edge of a stormy coastline. |
| 5 | The tower of a wizard. |
| 6 | A battlefield strewn with bodies. |

Background

d6 You've managed to make your way so far because...

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | When I stumbled into the sunlight, a kind passerby had pity on me and took me in. |
| 2 | I got in trouble with the local law immediately, and they established me in my background as a path to rehabilitation. |
| 3 | I watched the locals from hiding for some time before sneaking in amongst them. |
| 4 | Adventurers found me in the darkness and brought me to nearby civilization, setting me on my current path. |
| 5 | I was mistaken for my dam and I've never corrected the error. |
| 6 | Nobody's ever given me anything—everything I have, I fought for, tooth and nail. |

HALF-OOZE NAMES

Half-oozes usually call themselves by the first word or phrase that pops into their mind. This is often one of the last thoughts of their dam as they drifted off to sleep. Since dams usually meet their end in dark and lonely places, this lends a macabre air to the names of most half-oozes.

Common Names: Lost, Hopeless, Dark, Cold, Miss-You, Desperate, Soon, What-Was-That, Damp, Alone, So-Tired, Not-Safe.

THE OOZE SIRE LIFE CYCLE

The dreadful creatures known as ooze sires wait in the dark for unsuspecting humanoid victims for one reason—reproduction. As an asexual species, they infest a humanoid host, posthumously called an ooze dam, permanently fusing with it and using it to consume as much nourishment as possible. The fused creature—called a half-ooze—tends to live until the end of the ooze dam's natural lifespan. When the half-ooze dies, the final stage of the ooze sire's life cycle begins, and 1d4 new ooze sires depart the corpse, to seek new dams, perpetuating the species' miserable existence.

HALF-OOZE TRAITS

Your half-ooze character has a number of qualities in common with other half-oozes.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution and Dexterity scores increase by 1.

Age. Half-oozes don't last long, since their bodies begin on borrowed time. They usually live out about half their dam's original lifespan, if the dam was young when the half-ooze was sired. A half-ooze with an elvish dam might live for a hundreds of years, where one with an orcish dam might die of old age after only a couple of decades.

Alignment. Half-oozes are, more than anything, hungry. This constant need to consume renders them either neutral, or somewhat evil—although if they can get the food they need through good and lawful means, they may do so.

Size. Half-oozes range in height from under 4 feet to over 6 feet tall, depending on their Dam. Ooze sires don't usually prey on smaller races such as halflings or gnomes, as they're not suitable for their life cycle. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, and can understand one other language of your choice, but you can't read, write, or speak it.

Hunger of the Ooze. You must eat every day, or suffer 1 level of exhaustion. When eating, you require twice as much food as other Medium humanoids.

Pseudopodic Limbs. As an action, you may extend either your arms or legs to twice their normal length. When doing so, your AC decreases by 1. If you extend your legs, add 10 feet to your speed on foot. If you extend your arms, any melee weapon you're wielding is considered to have the Reach property. If a weapon already has the Reach property, it does not gain additional range, as it's too awkward to handle at that length. You may end the effect as a bonus action. Your arms and legs cannot both be extended at the same time.

Rubbery. Your ooze origin makes you able to fit through small spaces. Your body can fit through openings normally suitable only for Small or Tiny creatures. Depending on the size of the opening, your armor and equipment may not fit through.

Echoes of the Dam. You have the faintest memories from the life of your dam. Choose one: Gain one skill proficiency, gain one weapon proficiency, or gain two tool proficiencies.

Subrace. Half-oozes are sired by one of three types of ooze. Choose one.

ACIDIC

The ooze that sired you was of a peculiarly acidic variety. The skin of acidic half-oozes tends to have a pale greenish hue, a faintly sharp smell hangs around them.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Corrosive Strike. Once per day, when hit by a melee attack, you may as a reaction deal acid damage equal to your Constitution modifier. You may not use this trait again until after a short or long rest.

Omnivore. You do not require your food to be cooked, and are immune to being poisoned by food or drink you ingest.

STICKY

The ooze that sired you was of a creeping, sticking nature. The skin of sticky half-oozes tends to have a yellowish hue, and they smell faintly of rot.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Ooze Climb. Your sticky fingers help you cling to the walls. Climbing no longer costs you extra movement.

Sticky Fingers. You gain proficiency in the Sleight of Hand skill.

MAGICAL

The ooze that sired you was of arcane origin, perhaps concocted by some strange wizard for unknown experiments. The skin of magical-half-oozes tends to have a purplish hue, and they have a vaguely sweet smell.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Cantrip. You know one cantrip of your choice from the wizard spell list. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for it.

Magic Knows Magic. You gain proficiency in the Arcana skill.

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