

HIERONYMUS BLACK

Hieronymus Black is a dwarf bounty hunter who operates almost exclusively underground as a member of the Fathomless—a guild of expert subterranean hunters known for tracking down those who think they can disappear into the dark places of the world. In the manner of an old gunslinger of the Wild West, Hieronymus is a dwarf of few words who easily sees through fast-talking scalawags and weaselly cutthroats. He has a strong dedication to a job well done, and won't compromise his integrity for anything—not even gold.

Hieronymus rides through the catacombs and grand caverns of the Underdark on his faithful mount, Maybelle—a deep rothé adapted to the pitch darkness of subterranean life. Maybelle is trained for hunting fugitives, and she works like an extension of Hieronymus to chase down quarry and bring the wanted back to the Fathomless—dead or alive.

Hieronymus has friends and connections throughout the subterranean world, especially among the drow. Far from the influence of Lolth's infamous sects of zealots, countless peaceful drow enclaves and villages can be found throughout the Underdark, and Hieronymus has little patience with those who view his friends as potential enemies—or who traffic in old prejudices.

THE FATHOMLESS

The Fathomless are a guild of bounty hunters trained to survive in even the most challenging subterranean environments. When criminals flee to places where the law of the surface realm cannot go, the Fathomless take up the chase.

Members of the Fathomless are always on the lookout for candidates to join their guild, and they actively recruit adventurers who they think would be a good fit. The members of the guild share no specific ethos or morals. In the end, it's money that talks, and many ask few questions about the jobs they're assigned. Adventurers who have proven their ability to face the worst threats in cramped passageways a mile underground might attract the attention of a member of the Fathomless guild—followed by an invitation to join.

In Faerûn, the Fathomless actively work throughout the Underdark and in the dungeons of Undermountain, and the guild holds maps to many of the labyrinthine catacombs beneath major cities such as Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, and Waterdeep. As guides, compatriots, or information brokers, members of the guild might be a resource for characters preparing to undertake a major dungeon delve. Alternatively, the Fathomless might be antagonists to a party—racing through the Underdark to get to the same prize the characters are seeking.

Further members of the Fathomless will appear in upcoming issues of *Dragon+*!

HIERONYMUS'S GEAR

Hieronymus makes use of all kinds of special gear when stalking and taking down his quarry.

KLEAVER

This custom-built oversized knife unleashes deadly slashing damage, backed up with a pulse of magical destruction.

OL' BESSIE

This magic crossbow gives Hieronymus a forceful edge in combat as it knocks foes off their feet.

SPIDERFANG BLADES

Hieronymus carries a number of these balanced throwing knives, whose poison paralyzes targets to take them out of the fight.

HEADBAND OF THE BAT

While wearing this headband, Hieronymus has blindsight out to a range of 120 feet and a +3 bonus to Wisdom (Perception) checks. He loses both these features if he becomes deafened.



PAULDRON OF THE SPIDER

Forged by a drow armorsmith, this shoulder plate was given to Hieronymus as payment for taking down an assassin of Lolth targeting the leader of a drow village. While wearing the pauldron, Hieronymus has a climbing speed equal to his walking speed, and he can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings while leaving his hands free.

MAYBELLE

Maybelle is Hieronymus's deep rothé companion, and the one creature he truly counts on. Keeping Hieronymus safe is a full-time job for her, and she has saved the dwarf's life more than once. Like most deep rothés, Maybelle is stubborn and grumpy as a rule, but those who get to know her understand that there's a heart of gold underneath that shaggy coat.

USING HIERONYMUS IN YOUR GAME

In an adventure or a full campaign involving the Underdark, Hieronymus Black might end up crossing paths with the characters in any number of ways.

REQUESTING AID

The characters are on a mission to slay a dangerous subterranean monster. Any search for special equipment or resources leads them to the Fathomless, and to Hieronymus. The dwarf might become a source of information and lore, a broker for needed magic and equipment, or a guide prepared to lead and fight alongside the characters in their quest.

MAYBELLE

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages rothés communicate with each other using their *dancing lights* innate spell
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Charge. If Maybelle moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

Innate Spellcasting. Maybelle's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom. She can innately cast the following spell, requiring no components:

At Will: *dancing lights*

ACTIONS

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

CHANCE MEETING

While journeying through the Underdark, the characters need to choose between a long, safer route and a potentially dangerous shortcut, but time is of the essence in their journey. From out of the shadows, Hieronymus Black appears and offers to guide them along the dangerous route—for a fee.

HIERONYMUS BLACK

Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Armor Class 16 (half plate)
Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)
Speed 25 ft., climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +4, Wis +6
Skills Insight +6, Perception +9, Stealth +7, Survival +6

Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Undercommon
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Dwarven Resilience. Hieronymus has advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, Hieronymus can regain 20 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hieronymus can attack three times with Kleaver or throw two spiderfang blades.

Kleaver. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) force damage.

Spiderfang Blades. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the target is paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Spiderthread Net. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained. A creature can use its action to make a DC 17 Strength check to free itself or another creature in the net, ending the effect on a success. Dealing 20 slashing damage to the net (AC 15) frees the target without harming it and destroys the net.

Ol' Bessie (Heavy Crossbow). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage plus 6 (1d12) force damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

YAHIRA SILVERBLADE

Yahira Silverblade is a monster hunter for hire. This well-equipped elf travels from city to town to village, following stories and rumors of monstrous trouble so that she might ply her trade and earn another sackful of loot.

Yahira is not much for words. But when she does open her mouth, she's a straight talker who's all about business. A student of her craft, she has extensive knowledge regarding aberrations, monstrosities, and the undead, with a special focus on fighting fiends of all kinds. But she is always on the lookout to learn more, and if someone wants to get her attention, the best way is to talk about fighting monsters—especially a monster she hasn't previously heard about.

MAGIC ITEMS

Over long years of hunting monsters, Yahira has picked up a few unique magical tools of the trade.

FIEND-FORGED PAULDRONS

The shoulder plates of Yahira's scale mail were forged in the Abyss and the Nine Hells, and instantly translate any speech in Abyssal and Infernal by whispering it to her in Elvish.



YAHIRA

Medium humanoid (elf)

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +4

Skills Athletics +5, Nature +4, Perception +6, Survival +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Fey Ancestry. Yahira has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Yahira makes two melee or ranged attacks.

Fuerza (Greatsword). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) force damage.

Radiant Dagger. *Ranged or Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Yahira adds 3 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, she must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

PLANE SHIFT RING

Yahira wears a magic ring that allows her to cast the *plane shift* spell to chase down monsters across the multiverse. Once the ring is used in this way, it cannot be used again until the next dawn.

LIONESS BROOCH

The magic of this brooch, which is carved as the head of a lioness, allows Yahira to cast the *true seeing* spell. Once the brooch is used in this way, it cannot be used again until the next dawn.

RADIANT DAGGERS

The matching pair of *radiant daggers* Yahira wields were given to her by a holy order of clerics, as payment for hunting down a fiend that plagued their abbey.

FUERZA

Yahira's magic greatsword is named Fuerza—an ancient heirloom that is now her only reminder of her family.

USING YAHIRA IN YOUR GAME

Yahira can be used in a number of ways in your campaign, most easily as a helper or a competitor to the characters.

HELPER

In the role of a helper, Yahira might be a specialist NPC brought into the party to help defeat a particularly tough monster—or she could be a stranger who comes to the aid of the characters when all seems lost. She might be an acquaintance or friend of one of the party members,

who owes that character a favor. She can also be a resource for information to a group of adventurers about to embark into the Abyss, the Nine Hells, or some other deadly realm, sharing the secrets she has learned about fighting fiends, undead, and more. Yahira could also accompany the party as a guide to dangerous extraplanar sites, cheerfully telling horrific stories about monsters to put the characters (and the players) on edge before a big battle.

COMPETITOR

As a competitor, Yahira could be hired to seize a bounty that the characters are also after. Her employer might be the wealthy rival of the party's patron, in a scenario where both employers are vying for the rare treasure or magic item the monster possesses. For a humorous start to the interaction, you can have Yahira better outfitted all around than the characters, so that if they have an ornery donkey and a cart, she has a noble Clydesdale and a wagon. If the characters' gear is showing wear and their patron has gifted them with only common magic items to help in their quest, have Yahira show off her gleaming scale mail and a healthy supply of alchemist's fire, potions, scrolls, and more. The monster hunter might lord it over the characters at first, but then become an ally and a resource when she and the characters establish a common cause.

GRABITHA GRINDLECLAW

The green hag Grabitha Grindleclaw lurks in the middle of a dank and dangerous swamp with her toad familiar, Wart. She's a collector of rare mushrooms, monster parts, extraplanar flowers, and magical spices, which she stores in the drawers of a wooden medicine chest she carries on her back. With the right ingredients, Grabitha can brew any potion imaginable in the magic cauldron she rides. If an adventurer brings her something special such as a roper's tongue or a moth's breath flower, Grabitha might take a liking to them and brew something to order. But be forewarned! Grabitha keeps a close eye on her business partners, and characters who aren't careful might find themselves turned into the ingredients for one of her more fiendish concoctions.

GRABITHA'S GEAR

In the course of the countless bargains she's made with mortals in her lifetime, Grabitha has come to possess an assortment of magic items and strange curios.

THE GALLOPING CAULDRON

The *galloping cauldron* is a magic iron pot, forged by a night hag coven from the iron bones of a fallen titan. Grabitha won the cauldron in a fiendish game of rattle-skulls—and narrowly escaped a grisly death at the hands of the night hags, who still seethe over the loss to this day. She uses the *galloping cauldron* to brew her elixirs and potions, with its magic infusing her brews with increased potency. The *galloping cauldron* also acts as her main mode of transportation, and she rarely leaves her perch on its lip. When she needs to move fast, Grabitha hops inside the pot, shakes the ropes, and clicks her tongue. The cauldron then takes off like a shot, its squat legs galloping tirelessly day and night.

Only Grabitha knows the Sylvan command words to activate the cauldron, which has the following features:

- It has Armor Class 16 and 150 hit points.
- It has a speed of 30 feet.
- It is immune to poison and psychic damage.
- It understands Abyssal and Sylvan but can't speak.

CHATTERTOOTH THE SHRUNKEN HEAD

This magical shrunken head is named Chattertooth, and it normally lives up to its name with its constant bantering. Grabitha limits Chattertooth to blinking and making muffled sounds by binding the head's mouth with gauze wrappings. Despite this, the hag often talks to Chattertooth, and responds as if she can understand what the shrunken head is saying.

GRABITHA'S LAMPREY LADLE

Grabitha's *lamprey ladle* operates as both a serving ladle and a deadly weapon. In response to its user's mental commands, the ladle manifests a ring of fangs along its spoon-shaped head that can clamp on to hapless victims. The handle of the ladle is a magical gullet of sorts, which greedily sucks the blood from the body of its victim and gives life force back to its wielder.

MEDICINE CHEST

The drawers and cubbyholes of Grabitha's magical medicine chest are filled with all kinds of strange ingredients, and just about every spell component a wizard could imagine. And if Grabitha doesn't have it, she knows just where to get it.

WART

Wart has been Grabitha's toad familiar for as long as she can remember. Wart uses the **frog** stat block, and understands Common and Sylvan but cannot speak. (Grabitha can understand Wart's croaks and chirps fairly



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well nonetheless). The toad helps Grabitha fetch items from her medicine chest, as his sticky feet are perfect for grasping slippery bottles, popping open cork stoppers, and rifling through cluttered drawers.

USING GRABITHA IN YOUR GAME

Grabitha can be used as the centerpiece of a fun encounter for a lower-level party of adventurers. As a green hag, she's powerful enough to command respect but not so powerful that she sees the characters as insignificant. And for higher-level adventurers, Grabitha can be an NPC resource that they must seek out for her formidable brewing skills.

Like most hags, Grabitha is an exceptional source of information. She knows where many monsters have their lairs, and where many rare and unique magical reagents and alchemical ingredients can be found. You can play Grabitha as a kindly grandmother, or as a straight-up hag who wants nothing more than to inspire tears and mayhem. Even as a foil to the characters, though, Grabitha doesn't need to be evil, so feel free to make her fit your campaign's story however you'd like.

SHOPPING LIST

Grabitha loves to take advantage of most adventurers' desire for interesting challenges—or their need to make some coin to fund their next expedition. She's always in search of the best ingredients for her brews, and is quite willing to tell a group of fresh-faced adventurers where and how to get them. Once they bring her the items from her shopping list, Grabitha is willing to pay them for their help with a few lesser potions or one powerful potion that can aid the characters on their future quests.

Use the Grabitha's Shopping List table on the next page to select the ingredients she needs the characters to find, or as inspiration for ingredients of your own.

A PARTY'S BEST FRIEND (FOR A PRICE)

If the characters have a need for a magic potion or strange alchemical substance to unlock a secret, provoke a vision, or solve a problem, you can have rumors send them to the dark swamps to look for Grabitha. There, the characters must bargain with the hag for the things they seek.

You can set up that Grabitha is the only one who knows how to make the particular potion, elixir, poultice, or philter that cures a specific disease, opens a magic door, or removes a curse. Grabitha is always up for an alchemical challenge, so all the characters need to do is tell her what they require. She can then figure out what ingredients she needs to craft a brew that packs a real punch—and what favors she'll ask for in return.

GRABITHA'S POTION MASTERY

Grabitha's signature ability allows her to make any potion in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. However, with the help of her galloping cauldron, she is also able to make unique

GRABITHA GRINDLECLAW

Medium fey

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Amphibious. Grabitha can breathe air and water.

Mimicry. Grabitha can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Innate Spellcasting. Grabitha's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Grabitha's Lamprey Ladle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage, and the ladle attaches to the target. While the ladle is attached, at the start of each of Grabitha's turns, the target loses 5 (2d4) hit points due to blood loss. If the target loses hit points this way, Grabitha gains 5 hit points (up to her hit point maximum). Removing the ladle requires a successful DC 15 Strength saving throw made as an action. If Grabitha commands the ladle to detach (no action required), it instantly returns to her hand.

Illusory Appearance. Grabitha covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if Grabitha takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies.

The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, Grabitha could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that Grabitha is disguised.

Invisible Passage. Grabitha magically turns invisible until she attacks or casts a spell, or until her concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, she leaves no physical evidence of her passage, and can be tracked only by magic. Any equipment she wears or carries is invisible along with her.

Potion Mastery. Once per day, if she is in possession of the right ingredients, Grabitha can create any potion in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

potions, limited only by your imagination. All you need to determine is how difficult it is to obtain the ingredients Grabitha tasks the characters with collecting for her—and the more powerful the brew, the more dangerous getting those ingredients should be!

GRABITHA'S SHOPPING LIST

d12 Ingredient

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | A vial of basilisk blood |
| 2 | A tuft of troll hair |
| 3 | Shed snakeskin from a medusa's hair |
| 4 | A feather from a cockatrice |
| 5 | Donkey cap mushrooms from the Feywild |
| 6 | A toenail from a lich |
| 7 | Scales from a merrow king |
| 8 | A feather from a pegasus |
| 9 | Wine from the court of the Pixie Queen |
| 10 | A finger from a wight |
| 11 | A chunk of purple amethyst from the Underdark |
| 12 | A captive will-o'-wisp |