



GROETUS

GROETUS (GRO-TUS) IS AN APOCALYPTIC GOD OF UNKNOWN ORIGINS, PERHAPS PREDATING THE CURRENT INCARNATION OF THE PLANES. HE IS DISTANT, ENIGMATIC, AND MALEVOLENT, BUT INCREDIBLY PATIENT IN THE FACE OF AN INDEFINITE WAIT TO FULFILL HIS MYSTERIOUS PURPOSE. BECAUSE HE DOES NOT ACTIVELY CULTIVATE WORSHIPERS, MUCH OF WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT HIM AND HIS SCATTERED FAITH IS LIMITED AND OFTEN CONTRADICTORY, BUILT FROM SECONDHAND INFORMATION AND PIECES OF LORE REPEATED BY HIS INSANE FOLLOWERS. MOST FOLK PAY HIM NO HEED OR ONLY GIVE HIM THE SCANTEST CONSIDERATION, FOR TANGIBLE AND IMMEDIATE THREATS SUCH AS POVERTY OR BEING DEVOURED BY MONSTERS ARE FAR MORE PRESSING THAN A GOD OF THE END OF ALL THINGS.

GROETUS

Groetus has no obvious connections to other Golarion deities that would explain how he came to be. There are records that he was worshipped in Azlanti and Thassilonian times, though he has no known kinship to other gods of those cultures. No deity claims to have elevated him to godhood, nor is there any evidence of him having once been a mortal or nature spirit who bargained for or stole enough power to become a deity. The proteans and qliphoth have no tales of his appearance or of a time before he existed. He simply exists, unacknowledged and unnoticed.

It is unclear whether Groetus's power is constant, building, or waxing and waning with events in the mortal world, nor is it known whether his strength relates to how closely his moon approaches Pharasma's Boneyard. The appearance of the moon varies slightly from viewer to viewer, and as there is no accurate way to judge celestial distances in the planar realms (where the thoughts of gods or the weight of a million souls may bend space), it is impossible to determine any correlation between the moon and mortal disasters. At its smallest known size, it looks no larger than a thumbnail held at arm's length; at its largest, it appears to be 20 times that size.

Groetus presides over the End Times—the end of the world, or perhaps the destruction of the multiverse itself. Having silently witnessed billions of souls from countless worlds filter through the Boneyard, he is unconcerned by the fates of individual heroes, villages, or even civilizations, any more than an old fisherman is concerned with the number of drops of water in the lake as he waits for his final catch of the day. Despite his chaotic alignment, he is an agent of inevitable fate: All things shall pass. Even gods have free will, and he chose this role for himself, the dispassionate observer in balance against the dispassionate judge.

Where he came from, what he is, and what others think of him are irrelevant; his role is to close the book on this reality when the final page of its story is told. He knows only how the story ends, and with that knowledge he can piece together bits of what is yet to come—a conflict occurs, this entity survives until the end of the story, this other entity does not, and so on—and what to do next once the book is finished. It is for him alone to know these things, and he has the unique capacity to understand them; anyone else subject to this knowledge is driven mad by thoughts and concepts far beyond what the brain can handle, just as if Thassilonian magic were explained to a common ant. Groetus does not intend to create followers or prophets. Their existence is but a side effect of mistaken attempts

to know the forbidden or unknowable (including failed attempts to use *contact other plane* spells). Some sages believe he may not even know he has worshipers.

This indifference means the mad fools who worship Groetus may do terrible things in his name, but the God of the End Times doesn't care. They may instead do generous, noble, or merciful things in his name, and still

he doesn't care. His attention is on the end goal and the grand cosmic things that may enable or delay that goal—the subtle movement of

planes against each other, the brooding thoughts of rising gods, the births and deaths of stars in the remote expanse of space. Whatever trappings mortals create in their pursuit of him are fabricated traditions built from visions of echoes of the great truth of the last moments of the world, and are no more reality than a child playing swords with twigs is a world-changing historical battle—they're merely

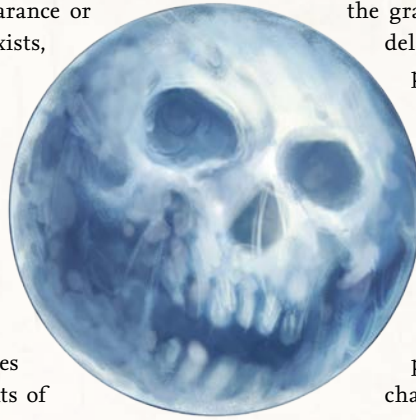
copies of copies of copies. Some mortals are touched by his power, and some of those gather followers and use that power in the mortal world; so be it. Much like the priests

of Zon-Kuthon, Groetus's clerics are given divine power with almost no responsibility (though with the caveat that they pay for this power with incurable madness).

Groetus rarely appears in human form, but a few records from ancient Azlant describe him as a tall, slender man wearing a long gray-cowled robe that hangs heavily to the floor. He is slightly bent at the neck, as if bearing a great weight on his head, with ashen skin, hollow eyes, and long, smooth hands. His voice is the dry whisper of old paper, his laughter low and breathy, and his inflection archaic or foreign. His feet are bare and covered in soot and ash, like he has walked through an old fire for his entire existence.

Groetus almost never intervenes directly in the mortal world, as if doing so were against some personal, self-defined code. His few positive interventions have been on behalf of his prophets, granting them a few moments of clarity at a critical time when their madness would interfere with his intentions. When he is displeased, madness intensifies or magnifies, phobias are born or triggered, and eyes become cloudy or weep itchy gray fluid.

Formal raiment for the church is usually a light gray robe with pale blue trim. The exact shade varies from region to region and prophet to prophet, but is always some form of gray with blue accents. Most priests put little stock in their appearance (after all, they are anticipating the end of all things), and their clothing tends to become shabby and stained as the years go by. Many priests allow



"All things fall into ruin, and once the world itself has passed..."

—Fragment from a madman's journal

MADNESS

Most of Groetus's priests bear some kind of insanity. They are still able to function in society, but their broken minds hear whispers of the god's will, and they hold beliefs that no sane being would embrace. The *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* has rules for insanities such as amnesia, mania, and paranoia. Note that Groetus's priests are insane even though none of their mental ability scores have been reduced to 0. Note also that followers of the god do not see this insanity as an affliction; rather they see this connection to Groetus as a gift worth celebrating. A priest's insanity can be cured, but unless she immediately rejects Groetus as a patron deity, she relapses in a matter of hours or days.



their hair to grow long and unkempt, but some shave their heads and color around their eyes with dark blue paint or makeup to represent the dreaded skull-moon image of their strange god.

Groetus is chaotic neutral, and his portfolio is empty places, ruins, and oblivion. His favored weapon is the heavy flail—a deadly weapon evolved from a tool to thresh grain from chaff. Some worshipers suggest this represents the god's role of breaking the world at the end of all things to free the pure essence within ruined matter. His symbol is a full moon with the faint image of a skull seen in the pattern of craters that decorate its surface. His domains are Chaos, Darkness, Destruction, Madness, and Void. Most of his priests are clerics, though a few wizards, summoners, and oracles claim to be prophets of his word, and the true clerics of Groetus do not dispute these claims. He is called the God of the End Times, the God of the End of the World, and the Harbinger of Last Days.

The skull-moon of Groetus looms above Pharsma's Boneyard. Because the ravings of his priests contradict each other, mortals are unsure whether this moon is actually the god, his realm, a shell containing him, or something he protects. The truth is that it is all these things. It is Groetus in physical form, like an impossibly huge avatar, though why he would take on such a strange form is a matter of speculation. It is his realm, much as an ancient tree is both a living thing and a home to smaller creatures (in this case, his servants and petitioners). It is a shell, defining in physical form the metaphysical abstraction between the divine and the not-divine, or between the end times and the moments before it, or between the power to destroy the world and the will to use that power.

These overlapping truths are too much for lesser minds to experience and survive intact. Some that dare set foot upon the moon vanish instantly; others walk for a time and return on their own, twisted in the mind and speaking

fragments of prophecy about the end times. Those who have attempted to scry its surface see strange writing that twists and folds upon itself, leading the viewers' eyes and thoughts deep along intricate paths, eventually driving the sryers mad, turning them into prophets of Groetus, or both. This outcome occurs whether the traveler or diviner is mortal, undead, an outsider, or a servant of another deity. Because of this problem, the other gods and goddesses are very cautious about how they approach Groetus in the infrequent times they need to communicate with him.

Groetus's followers may be insane, desperate, depressed, or the lazy kind of sadists who enjoy the suffering of others but don't seek gratification by inflicting pain. The mad ones are broken people who have seen a glimpse of a powerful, incomprehensible truth and now spend the rest of their lives trying to understand, remember, or forget that truth. The desperate and depressed ones believe the current world is a place of misery and pain, and embrace the idea that it will end soon—whether or not they believe there will be a reward or a new beginning after that end. Those who enjoy the suffering of others believe their victims deserve punishment as part of Groetus's plan, or feel better about their own fate after witnessing harm to another. Many people who deliberately choose to venerate Groetus like the idea of living without long-term consequences; these folk live in the moment, not caring how their actions affect others or that they risk being punished for their slights and crimes. If, as the prophets say, the world is to end soon, there is no point in following laws or customs that promote stability in ownership or culture.

Followers of Groetus who aren't prone to mad ravings or grand plans tend to be skulkers and hangers-on, content to lurk near battlefields or in the rear of adventuring parties, watching the conflict unfold and only taking action at the end of a fight to dispatch the wounded—an act of mercy that still sickly parallels the morbid interests of their god. The desperate and depressed do this out of compassion, and feel jealous for the dead; the casually sadistic do it because it lets them feel important, as tools of the god's will; the mad do it because the voices or visions suggest it must be done. Groetus's cultists are prone to suicide, either as an attempt to join their god before the end times or to gain some measure of relief from their madness or misery.

THE DOOMS OF GROETUS

Just as there are dozens of world-ending prophecies, and the exact definition of "the end of all things" varies among religions and destructive races, there are many interpretations of Groetus's role in armageddon. Most of his cultists follow one of these ideologies (called "dooms"), and each doom can be considered a splinter cult of the god's vague faith. However, their identification with these dooms is not because of any reasoned preference

for or aversion to a particular ideology, but instead is a reflection of the cultists' particular forms of madness and the visions these types madness inspire (both the madness and the visions are often the result of exposure to the god's presence or will). Two worshipers with different ideologies may ally with each other or ignore each other; only rarely do they fight to determine who is correct, for time itself will prove one or both of them wrong.

The best-known dooms of Groetus are as follows.

MOUTH OF APOCALYPSE

When the end times come, Groetus will consume the shattered pieces of the planes, all the judged souls, and the remnants of every once-living creature, until he is the last thing in the multiverse, floating alone in an endless dark void. Stories differ as to whether the god will literally consume all with his mouth, or whether he will indirectly devour everything through unspecified fanged servants that he will then absorb, or even if all physical and spiritual matter will fly through the void to embed itself within his core. Fanatics of this doom are called the Teeth of Oblivion, and live recklessly, as they expect the world to end at any moment. They often ally with the cult of Urgathoa because of a common interest in indulgence, though the nihilists scoff at the idea of living forever as undead.

PORTAL OF INCARNATION

As the last soul is judged and creation erodes, Groetus collects the greatest essences of heroes, villains, dragons, earth, fire, and other fundamental concepts. While the multiverse collapses and is reformed into something greater than its current state, he shelters these essences from destruction and distills them into purer forms so they may become the first gods and the raw materials for the next reality. He will then wait countless ages for the cycle to end again. The members of this cult are the Heralds of the Incarnate Moon, and they believe the current world is an impure predecessor to the next, clarified world. They wish to hasten the cycle so the next world comes sooner, and believe that their souls will be part of the next cycle's gods.

SIGN OF THE DESTROYER

Groetus is merely a sign that the end times are nigh, not actually an agent of destruction. He is part of the natural order. Just as ants, humans, and even gods are born and die, so too must all of creation. When his moon approaches the Boneyard and turns red, Golarion's own moon will bear the shadow of a skull to let all mortals know that the end of the world is but days away. Members of this cult call themselves the Followers of the Gray Sign, and they are the most benign members of Groetus's doomsday cult. They are mostly content to preach warnings and observe omens rather than trying to accelerate the end of the world, but they are still



SHATTERED STAR

prone to unexpected mercy killings and other creepy habits. They do not know whether the end will be gentle or violent, sudden or drawn out, but—like the death of any mortal—it is inevitable.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Members of the cult of Groetus have little interest in devoting time to building; they usually take over abandoned or ruined temples of other faiths, or any ruin of a building that was once a popular and celebrated place. The more popular sites are ones with windows or holes in the ceiling that allow a view of the full moon.

The oldest temples—ones that have been used by the cult for thousands of years—tend to conceal strange portals called *Doomsday Doors*. These secret doors are said to open onto horrific realms. When the end of the world is nigh, all of these doors will open and unleash various apocalypses onto the world. Loot-crazed adventurers have managed to temporarily open some of these portals; few

have defeated the horrors that crawled out and even fewer have investigated what lies beyond the doors—none have ever returned sane or whole.

For a small cult run by lunatics, the church has a remarkable number of tiny shrines. Most are large rocks carved with faint skull symbols aligned toward lunar conjunctions. Strange whispers hiss from the rocks on some nights, especially when prompted by the blood of heroes or the essence of destroyed magic.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

Groetus has no organized faith. Most of his worshippers are loners—either madmen who live on the street and prophesize the end of the world, or more dangerous megalomaniacs who actively seek methods to bring about the end of existence and please their insane god. They may act alone or attract like-minded followers, establishing whatever organization (or lack thereof) that is comfortable for their insanities. Because Groetus does not provide any direction for them, they are left to their own devices, and an individual priest's activities and duties depend on which doom she believes is paramount.

Priests of the Mouth of Apocalypse encourage others to live as if armageddon were only days away. They steal, murder, and pillage as they see fit, and may ally with doomsday cults to celebrate the arrival of the end of everything. Priests of the Portal of Incarnation scrutinize everyone they meet, mentally cataloguing those whose essences are worthwhile and dismissing those who have no value (though this perception is filtered by madness and may have no basis in reality). They may sacrifice the “worthy” ones to speed their essence to the afterlife and Groetus's collecting. Priests of the Sign of the Destroyer speak prophecies in public, warn others about horrible fates, and generally make nuisances of themselves in peaceful societies.

Regardless of their dooms, the priests have a morbid curiosity about the dead and dying, and frequently use *deathwatch* to observe others. They are unpopular among adventurers because they often refuse to heal even the most gravely injured allies—believing that healing only staves off the inevitable deaths dealt by monsters.

HOLIDAYS

Despite their rampant madness and tendency to group in independent cells, the faithful of Groetus are united in celebrating one holiday.

The Final Day: On the last day of the year, the faithful observe silent prayer for an hour at sundown, hoping for guidance from Groetus or a sign that the end times will come soon. Some cults follow this with other rituals such as sacrifices and chanting.



APHORISMS

The god's mad prophets often utter these phrases.

The Patient Moon Pulls the Tides: The moon creates the high and low tides that wear away the shores and strand sea creatures on the beach. Even the mightiest cliffs eventually collapse into the water. Haste and urgency may not be the best course. Wait. Persist. Watch.

Ruin for Everything: Every single living thing—even the world, and even the planes—is doomed, and will be torn apart at the end of everything. Do not grow attached to friends, wealth, or even the familiar configurations of mountains and rivers, for one day they will be gone, and that foolish sentimentality will have been wasted.

HOLY TEXT

As most of his clergy are insane, there is no codified list of Groetus's teachings, only fragments collected from the journals of the mad, scrawled ramblings written on asylum walls, and the inked skins of murder victims. Some of it is unclear or contradictory. The more rational members of the church keep scraps of lore called the *Book of the Last Moon*; most readers find it disturbing and have nightmares after reading it.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Groetus has little to do with any other deities. Some suspect he is allied with Rovagug because of their common interest in destruction, but he has no overt ties to the Rough Beast. Even Pharasma does not contact him more than once every so often. It is known that the souls in Pharasma's Court draw his moon-realm closer, and a few know that the crystallized souls of true atheists repel him—both incidentally by their proximity, and sometimes directly when the Lady of Graves “feeds” him the essence of one (though whether this is a literal feeding or a transfer of essence is unknown) to push him farther away. The accepted premise is that a planar apocalypse will occur when his moon contacts the Spire itself, and even the most violent gods agree that is something that should be forestalled as long as possible.

PLANAR ALLIES

Groetus makes no effort to create unique servants, but many creatures have fallen under his power by traveling to his moon-realm. The following are well-known supernatural servitors of Groetus, suitable for conjuring with *planar ally* or similar spells.

Geg Noam Gyeg: This insane barbed devil is paranoid and adorns its spikes with the eyes of its victims so it can watch in all directions. It prefers payment in silver mirrors and divination-based magic items.

Yles: This gray naunet protean (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 216) is more insane than others of its kind, and constantly

CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Groetus's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

Summon Monster II

Akata* (*Bestiary 2*) (CN)

Summon Monster VI

Chaos beast (*Bestiary 2*)

Mothman* (*Bestiary 2*)

* This creature has the extraplanar subtype but is otherwise normal for its kind.

babbles narration of its current activities. It collects spellbooks and other magical writings.

NEW SPELL

Clerics of Groetus may spontaneously cast *death knell* and *deathwatch*. Clerics with the Madness or Void domain may prepare *lesser confusion* as a 2nd-level spell and *confusion* as a 4th-level spell. His clerics also have access to the following spell.

CURSE ITEM

School necromancy [curse]; **Level** cleric 2 (Groetus)

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S, DF

Range touch

Target object touched

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates (object); **Spell Resistance** yes (object)

The object becomes flawed and prone to failure. The effects of this spell depend on the nature of the object.

Magic Item: The item functions intermittently, gaining either an unreliable curse or a random dependent curse (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook 536*).

Nonmagical Armor or Shield: The item gains the fragile armor quality (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment 8*).

Nonmagical Weapon: The item gains the fragile weapon quality (*Ultimate Equipment 22*).

Tool: The item gains the broken condition if a creature rolls a natural 1 while making a skill check with the tool.

Other Item: Each day it is used, the item has a 5% chance of gaining the broken condition.

This spell does not affect artifacts. The item can be sold or discarded as normal (the bearer is not compelled to keep it). If a cleric of Groetus is using an item that is affected by this spell, he or she may make a DC 20 Will saving throw to override the item's curse for 1 day (using it as if the item were not cursed).