

Wrath of the Righteous



Ecology of the Demodand

In the Abyss, I clung to a god who let my prayers go unanswered. And so, as I languished alone, my god deaf to my pleas, it was my captor's voice I heard. His master understands the futility of goodness and order. More importantly, he can use this understanding to give me—to give us—power over even the gods themselves. This realization I share with you, my dark flock. I beseech you: Become my titanic master's children. Spread his beautiful anarchy. Destroy the fallacy of all that is good and usher in a new world!"

—EXCERPT FROM A CULT RECRUITMENT SPEECH GIVEN IN RURAL MOLCHUNE
BY HANALINE WOLLENTUN, FALLEN CLERIC OF ERASIL

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The multiverse's most powerful beings require like-minded subordinates; goodly gods guide angels, archdevils command infernal dukes, and thanatotic titans rule demodands. For millennia, demodands have committed heinous acts of destruction and cruelty while attempting to expand the thanatotic titans' territory and increase their influence. These horrors worship thanatotic titans as though they were gods, seemingly unaffected by their masters' lack of any true divine power. If anything, that lack has motivated demodands to compensate by torturing even more creatures and enslaving more mortals in their quest to impose their progenitors' will upon existence.

Created by thanatotic titans, cruel children of the gods who were shackled to the Abyss long ago when they lost their war with their creators, demodands will do almost anything to curry their lieges' favor. The resentment toward divinity inherited from their titanspawn masters drives them to serve eagerly as generals, shock troops, grunts, and slavers, sating their thirst for violence on the blood of all who find their power through faith in the divine. Not content to conquer enemy territory through warfare alone, demodands also spread the insidious tenets of their masters' false faith, seeking to usher in a new world order in which good decays into evil, order descends into chaos, and thanatotic titans rule over all.

Physically, demodands are horrific mockeries of their creators' humanoid bodies: the titanspawn's chiseled physiques find their twisted reflections in demodands' folds of thick, obsidian skin. The sculpted iron visages of the creators have devolved into lopsided grins with warped lips and jagged teeth on the faces of those the titans created. Demodands have ragged, batlike wings, and when they walk, their gates are exaggeratedly uneven, as if one leg were shorter than the other. Most demodands fall into one of several categories, which carry names connected to the hideous creatures' appearances, such as the shaggy demodand, the slimy demodand, tarry demodand, and the lesser-known stringy demodand.

Genesis

Long ago, as mortal life first dawned on the Material Plane, mortals began to offer their adoration to the multiverse's gods. The race said to be the first children of the gods, the thanatotic titans, grew more piqued with jealousy as mortals' praise grew louder. The titans were near to divinity themselves, and their lack of full omnipotence infuriated them as they observed the worship the gods received and the power they bestowed. In a covetous rage, the thanatotic titans launched an all-out war against mortal life, believing that by destroying the gods' worshippers they would supplant the gods.

As the war escalated, the gods began to consider direct intervention to salvage creation. Just as it appeared that

the conflict would spiral out of control, however, the gods were approached by the goodly Elysian titans, who had been watching the destruction wrought by their thanatotic kin in growing concern. The Elysian titans offered to sacrifice some of their own astonishing power if the gods would agree to banish their warmongering kin to the Abyss, on pain of death. The gods readily agreed, and thanatotic titans quickly found themselves shackled to the Abyss's depths.

As the thanatotic titans sulked in their planar prison, their jealousy and desire for divine power grew into the hubristic belief that they could create their own life. To prove this and cultivate their own group of worshippers, the thanatotic titans created the first demodands from clay they mixed from the foul black earth of the Abyss and the toxic waters of the River Styx. After shaping this dark clay into their own likenesses, the thanatotic titans spilled their blood into their creations' veins and blew breath into the puppets' lungs.

For a brief moment, when life first flickered in their eyes, demodands were nearly physically perfect—then the titans' folly manifested. Shortly after taking their first breaths, the demodands' flesh began to warp. Their grins became maniacal, and their majestic wings frayed and wilted. Their finely sculpted bodies bloated and swelled. Some grew folds of sweating, bulbous skin, while others lost all muscle tone and became emaciated. Some sprouted thick, putrid fur. Others found themselves with froglike heads or covered in thick, tarry goo. These first imperfect creations became the basis for the demodand race.

Although demodands were hideously deformed, they still held the prime quality sought after by their titan creators—they were more loyal than even the titans could have hoped. Rather than feeling anger or resentment for their grotesque forms, demodands delighted in being given the spark of life, and reveled in their hideousness, which they considered the ultimate expression of their chaotic origins. They were intrinsically devoted to their blasphemous cause, having even inherited their masters' disdain for the divine. The titans tasked them with supplanting goodly gods' peaceful orders and fomenting anarchy everywhere they ventured.

Demodands are not just revoltingly fearsome and impossibly strong; their devotion to chaos and fondness for intimidation also enables their words to wriggle into a mortal's faith and crumble it from within. Demodands particularly delight in killing, torturing, or turning divine agents such as clerics and paladins away from their faiths and divine patrons. Ever since the thanatotic titans decided to embrace their imperfect creations, demodands have served them with pleasure as generals, soldiers, slavers, and lackeys, waiting for the day when their masters' particular brand of anarchy and chaos will burst forth from the Abyss and consume all of creation.

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Ecology

Although demodands vary wildly by type, they all share a basic physiology rooted in their common origin. Created as lesser versions of thanatotic titans, all demodands possess a small portion of their creators' power. This imbues demodands with incredible strength, intelligence belying their hulking forms, and an age-old hatred of the gods and their divine servants. This blasphemy grants them some measure of resistance against divine spells as well as a love of tormenting those who refuse to adopt their heretical ways.

Most demodands consider reproduction to be nothing more than a whim, as they care for little beyond spite and the concept of family is alien to them. All demodand types reproduce by laying and fertilizing eggs. Regardless of

which type of demodand lays or fertilizes an egg, the type of demodand that hatches forth is always random.

Though demodands have little regard for their reproduction, some take to eating the eggs of their kind, as the midnight-colored syrup inside seems to induce a euphoric and hallucinogenic effect for adult demodands. Both demons and thanatotic titans have tried ingesting demodand eggs, but quickly discovered that the intoxication appears to be specific to demodands alone, as other creatures experience nothing significant upon consuming the eggs. While under the effects of their cannibalized eggs, demodands are exceptionally volatile. They may sit in a stupor for hours or even days, or they might cavort through the Abyss in destructive rampages, killing every creature in sight and obliterating whatever they come across. Some demodands become addicted to eating their eggs, obsessively searching out hidden clutches, or tracking down demodands that are about to lay or fertilize eggs.

When demodands' eggs hatch, hundreds of tiny, ravenous monsters emerge, their eyes still closed, and commence a brutal battle for survival. For a few days, the stronger hatchlings kill and consume the weaker ones, driven not by hunger, as outsiders don't need to eat, but by rage. Eventually, their eyes open and their ravenous fury abates. Only one or two demodands per brood usually survive these first savage days, and some scholars believe juvenile demodands' violent beginnings give them an early thirst for the chaos that will characterize the rest of their lives. If nothing else, the period of unrestrained violence prepares the creatures for life in the Abyss.

Demodands don't rear their young. Instead, they lay their eggs in a dark, secluded spot and then leave the incubating brood alone forever. Further, nothing in the admittedly sparse scholarly research about these outsiders indicates that demodands are ever aware of how many of their brood survived, or that they see the life or death struggles of their hatchlings as anything other than proper rearing. These violent creatures show allegiance to nothing but their thanatotic masters, and have no emotional connection to their children or to each other.

Though there are many similarities between the different types of demodands, they all have their own set of physical and psychological traits. Below are details for the best known types of demodands.

Shaggy: These hulking, toad-faced demodands boast thick, putrid fur that typically comes in an array of grays, browns, or blacks. The largest of all demodands, shaggy demodands emit a noxious, rotten odor from their morbidly obese bodies.

Slimy: More muscular than the larger shaggy demodands, slimy demodands have powerful, compact bodies covered in a warm, viscous slime, which weeps



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constantly from their skin. These rotund creatures superficially resemble frogs. They have wide mouths full of tiny, pointed teeth and wide-set, beady eyes.

Stringy: Lean and strong, stringy demodands have rope-like growths of black skin that hang from their putrid bodies. Stringy demodands lash out with these exceptionally dexterous prehensile growths and ensnare their enemies. This ability makes these creatures well suited to serving as captors and slavers for those who oppose their masters' plans.

Tarry: Lithe and agile compared to other types of demodands, tarry demodands produce a black, tacky discharge that seeps from their skin like tar. In battle, they use this discharge to mire the weapons of their opponents and disarm them. Tarry demodands' claws, while still menacing, are not as formidable as other demodands', so most tarry demodands prefer to use a light weapon in each hand, favoring short swords of wicked design.

Society

Among demodands, one simple rule governs the creatures' hierarchy—might makes right. The simplicity of this doctrine likely derives from demodands' lack of interest in creatures other than the titans. They eschew any semblance of family structures, alliances among themselves, and social contracts. Instead, demodands almost always act to further thanatotic titans' agendas, and when doing so they usually work in concert with one another or as members of larger Abyssal armies.

Their servitude to the thanatotic titans encompasses all creatures of that race. Some demodands, however, are dedicated to individual titans and refuse service to any titans who oppose their patron. But even if a titan chooses not to destroy a demodand for such a refusal, that defiance usually spells death for it anyway, for it must then defend itself against demodands devoted to serving that particular titan.

The ways in which demodands resolve clashes among their kind depend on the manner of the conflict. If mere words are involved, the disputes usually are quickly resolved with tests of physical might that aren't always lethal. Any conflict that escalates beyond verbal disagreement results in a fight to the death. When instructed by their thanatotic masters to fulfill their missions at any cost, demodands don't hesitate to cut down their own kind if they get in the way or impede the demodand's orders.

Demodands fulfill many roles to meet thanatotic titans' needs, working as generals, shock troops, grunts, slavers, enforcers, and torturers, although special qualities possessed by certain types of demodands lend themselves to specialized roles. Demodands' greatest role, however, is as the ultimate champions of the thanatotic titans, who they believe are destined to rule all planes. Toward this

The Origin of Demodands

The word "demodand" derives from the noun "deodand," which is type of creature in Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* series. In Vance's stories, originally published from 1950 to 1984, deodands are well-formed, muscular humanoid who resemble human men. However, their skin is black and lusterless, and their eyes are long, red slits. These deodands are incredibly strong, murderous, carnivorous creatures, although they are susceptible to offensive spells. According to Vance, deodands inhabit a far-future Earth in which the sun is dying, civilization is ruined or in decline, the human population wanes, and people make use of both technology and magic while truly understanding neither.

Outside of fiction, deodands have a long and superstitious history as a legal concept that dates to the 11th century. With origins in the Latin phrase "deodandum," which means "to be given to God," a deodand is an object or animal that has caused a person's death—a guilty object. The English common law practice of declaring property deodands traces to 1066; this legal concept was used on and off until Parliament abolished it in 1846. Under most versions of the law, personal property was deemed a deodand whenever an official inquest—usually consisting of a judge, government official, or jury—decided it had caused the death of a human being. In theory, deodands' owners forfeited them to the crown, which was supposed to sell the property and use the proceeds for a pious cause.

end, demodands take great pleasure in undermining divine followings. They often capture and torture mortal worshipers who have wandered into the Abyss, hoping—after long periods of taunting and suffering—to flip their captives' allegiance. Once captives are truly brought around to believing that the thanatotic titans deserve to rule creation, they are sent to the titans to receive their orders. This usually involves establishing cults on the Material Plane where they spread the titans' abhorrence of the gods. Mortals who refuse to break face long lives of forced labor or, more often, death at the hands of their cruel demodand captors.

In addition to performing their insidious duties in all corners of the Abyss, demodands frequently visit the Material Plane. There, they foment heresy and rebellion among all religious orders. Demodands deface temples and sacred sites, kill or capture holy leaders, and generally cast doubt upon deities' abilities to protect their flocks, typically under the cover of night or through other subversive methods. As the thanatotic titans cannot leave the Abyss without provoking the gods and their

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celestial agents, the expendable demodands serve as the titans' proxies on the Material Plane. Demodands may also find themselves on the Material Plane after being called into service by cults dedicated to chaos and destruction, or by anti-theists who have a grudge against the gods and seek aid in thwarting their power.

To gather minions to serve these goals for the thanatotic titans, demodands engage in far-reaching slavery. They particularly enjoy capturing and enslaving enemies to serve as potential recruits, trusting to their slave pits and torture chambers to break their captives' wills. But the most valuable captives are celestial beings, whom demodands consider the incarnate form of the concepts they were created to destroy. Angels, in particular, are high-value targets, and anyone who seeks to bring down one of these powerful holy creatures can count demodands as allies. Demodands also hate the religious, laboring to subvert their faiths and disrupt their churches. And though they both dwell in the Abyss and have similar natures, demodands count demons among their enemies—though this conflict occurs primarily because of their struggle for dominion in the Abyss.

Demodands delight in making demon slaves for their masters. The strongest captured demons are used for their myriad individual talents. Some who've been properly cowed serve as bodyguards, while others are used as living magic items for their spell-like and special abilities. The more unruly demons find themselves serving as entertainment in the thanatotic titans' fabled arenas, where a single, massive gladiator brawl can last for weeks.

Though demodands have similar mind-sets, each type is inclined to fill its own role in the ranks of the thanatotic titans' servitors. Below are details for the best-known types of demodands.

Shaggy: The uncontested champions of the demodands, shaggy demodands often are the leaders of the thanatotic titans' Abyssal armies or battalions, taking pride in claiming the most kills and causing the most destruction. Though they use their wits to keep their armies in line, these vile creatures typically lead through strength. When the thanatotic titans wish to expand their Abyssal holdings, shaggy demodands are tasked to map battle plans and win the day. Similarly, shaggy demodands often lead forces into alternate planes of the Abyss, where they capture demons to enslave—particularly incubi and succubi. Rarely, shaggy demodands also serve the titans as military advisors, although they prefer the feeling of blood dripping down their claws to that of words passing their lips.

Slimy: The thanatotic titans' shock troops, these disgusting demodands use their physical repulsiveness to great effect. Whether in large demodand armies or in small, isolated groups, the creatures use intimidation to break enemies' conviction, then descend and tear their

foes apart with acidic teeth and claws. Although some slimy demodands take up the mantle of slavers, they typically prefer to leave the duties of slave-keeping to their stringy kin.

Stringy: Adept at hunting and bringing back their quarries alive, these demodands oversee Abyssal slave pits, where captives are kept for as long as it takes to break their wills and turn them to worship of the thanatotic titans. The demodands' only deficiency in this role is their tendency toward savagery and violence, which can cause them to forsake the role of slave-keeper for that of torturer.

Tarry: The most numerous of all demodands, tarry demodands take pleasure in doing grunt work for their masters. Tarry demodands are the most likely to work together to overwhelm their enemies with their numbers. They perform routine reconnaissance, infiltration, and other tasks that make use of their agility.

Lairs

Demodands live in various realms across the Abyss, and their lairs differ from place to place depending on the nature of the realm. Almost all demodands live close to the homes of thanatotic titans, relying on the protection of their powerful masters to claim various places in the Abyss. Yet this protection only goes so far, forcing demodands into conflict with demons for ideal lairs. In these places, demodands gather to form small holdings that radiate out from the titans' palaces. Here demodands herd their slaves to the titans for "redemption," hunt for stragglers in their territory, and plan raids on nearby demonic enclaves.

Rarely, small groups of demodands cluster together on their own and form gangs. Such gangs are often migratory, and camp in caves, canyons, and other dark, closed spaces. Although demodands often work together, if grudgingly, they may serve rival titans or clashing shaggy demodands, seeking out their rivals' holdings in hopes of laying ambushes. Once they defeat an enemy, the demodands raze most of its holding and rebuild the place to suit their own needs and whims.

Strangely, despite the physical bulk of many demodands, they prefer to live in tight, enclosed spaces such as caves, rift hollows, or even inactive volcanoes. Their cities are always cramped affairs with buildings abutting or even stacked atop one another, as if some great being swept the entire city into a single, unstable pile.

When not sent by the titans, demodands usually make their way to the Material Plane after being called by powerful spellcasters to aid in some inscrutable plot. In these situations, demodands dwell in the lairs of those who called them, serving multiple roles as advisors, guardians, and even weapons. Demodands have been known to bargain with liches and other evil spellcasters, particularly if they serve the creatures' masters.

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For the rare demodands that find their way to the Material Plane by venturing through one of the Abyss's transitory rifts, the need for secure shelter is incredibly important. They often make homes in places similar to those they occupy in the Abyss—dark caves, cramped warrens of tunnels, sunless canyons, and even the murky sewers of some of Golarion's biggest cities. Curiously, spending too much time on the Material Plane seems to decay demodands' sanity, driving them to paranoia about divine agents conspiring to destroy them. These obsessed demodands are unpredictable and dangerous foes.

Demodands on Golarion

Although demodands' presence on Golarion is rare, a few such creatures are notorious for spreading their filth and subversion among civilization. Below are a few examples of known demodands that terrorize Golarion and its various pious peoples.

Gulagote: Unaffected by his long residence on the Material Plane, the slimy demodand Gulagote has spent extensive time honing and channeling his rage, both to calm his mind in battle and to terrify his opponents with a mere glance. Gulagote's control over his emotions makes him a powerful leader of several tarry demodands. Together, Gulagote and his horde terrorize the clerical orders in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. They love to subvert the faiths of Gorum and Torag, whose strength and popularity with the Ulfen is particularly loathsome to Gulagote and his minions. Along with outright warfare and guerrilla attacks, Gulagote takes pleasure in turning settlements—particularly those with large congregations of faithful—against each other. Fomenting such chaos is not difficult, as most of the Linnorm Kings are always looking for reasons to fight.

Kaathoth: This remarkably vicious and volatile shaggy demodand has made it her personal mission to destroy followers of Desna, whom she considers a traitor to the cause of chaos. Kaathoth rampages through Kyonin, destroying Desna's temples, murdering Desnan clerics, and writing blasphemous messages in the clerics' blood in hopes of shaking the faith of any who witness the carnage left behind. Although shaggy demodands sometimes undertake less conspicuous missions, Kaathoth seems to have no problem with letting those in the wilds of Kyonin know she exists, remaining constantly on the move to stay ahead of the elves who hunt her.

Oozetooth: This tarry demodand periodically emerges from the wastelands in Qadira to wreak havoc on the missionaries of Sarenrae. Oozetooth typically attacks isolated caravans on his own under the cover of night. Still newly arrived on

the Material Plane, he has struck only a handful of times and claimed just a few dozen kills. The fear he has sown among the Dawnflower's faithful is arguably more potent than the destruction he's caused. Whether Oozetooth is working for a rogue master or is the harbinger of a larger, more powerful demodand force is still unclear.

Tedat: A powerful wizard in Nidal brought this sinister stringy demodand to his tower outside of Pangolais nearly a year ago. Called from the Abyss, Tedat is tasked with overseeing the wizard's growing collection of servants, slaves, and future biological experiments. Tedat serves to the best of his ability, but often goes too far with torture, which leads to periodic clashes with his new master. Tedat's year of servitude will be over in a few weeks; the creature hopes to stay on the Material Plane—after killing the shadowy wizard.

