

LEECH MAN

Also Known As: Shepherd's Bane

I remember one time I was in this mountain stronghold full o' soldiers — you'd reckon a place like that would be safe — and some of the local leech men slipped up outta the river and into the stable, so they could start feedin' on the horses. The stable boys noticed a few bite marks each night, but the lazy sods didn't do anythin' about it until one of the prize stallions dropped dead at an officer's feet.

It took a few days fer them to call me in, since they figured that a guard patrol oughta spot any intruders and tried that first, but the guards had no joy at it. The horses kept gettin' bit each night even with guards watchin' the stable doors — from a safe distance, I bet.

Well, I suspected what was goin' on, so once they showed me some coin I went to work. I cleared the horses outta the stables and made right sure there was only one workin' door and one open window. Then I commissioned a couple of sheep from the main pen and tethered them up right in the center of the stable floor, and splattered a bunch of cow blood around fer good measure.

It didn't take long after night fell fer those blood thieves to come climbin' up the outer wall and slippin' in through the stable window. Once they started feedin', I slipped around and barred the window behind them. Then me and a dozen soldiers went in through the only remainin' door and slaughtered the whole lot o' them. It was a hell of a mess. Took days to get the stink out. - †

These cowardly, disgusting blood thieves feed off their victims while they sleep.



Leech men can infest an area for months, going undetected while killing local livestock.



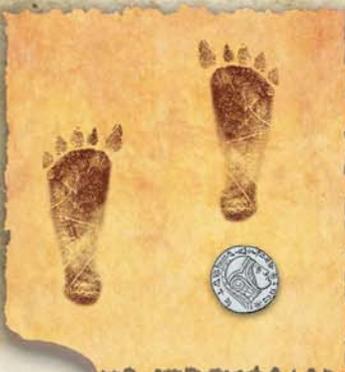
Leech men is a pejorative term given to these little bastards ('blood thieves' is another), since their true name is a mystery. These spindly creatures stand about a yard high with lanky black hair, large dark eyes and mere slits for a nose. A leech man's mouth is large and protruding, filled with razor-sharp teeth like that of a lamprey. Their hands and feet are clawed, but these are for maneuverability rather than combat.

Leech men feed on mammalian blood exclusively. Since this tends to coagulate quickly and cannot be ingested in

that state, they prefer to suck the blood from a live animal.

They are nocturnal and utilize the cover of darkness to forage. They make use of low light vision to find prey from a distance and then sneak up under cover of darkness, using intervening terrain to hide their movements. They possess the Climbing/Rappelling, Hiding and Sneaking skills at 40% mastery and use both to gain silent access to their next meal. They are also unusually swift and agile, capable of better speed than many other creatures of their size. Their darting movements make them difficult to both strike and defend against in combat.

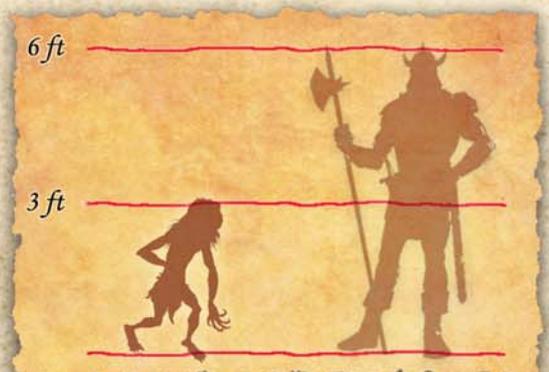
SIGN/TRACKS



RANGE ON TELLENE



SIZE COMPARISON



Combat/Tactics:

Leech men try to avoid battles completely, preferring not to chance injury. If forced to defend themselves from attack, they will bite fiercely. Cowards, they will seek to flee any encounter with armed foes, fighting only if cornered. Their razor maws are capable of inflicting serious wounds but, more insidiously, inject an anesthetic. Anyone bitten by a leech man must save vs. Virulence Factor 8 poison or suffer a 1-point penalty to Attack and Defense for 30 minutes. Subsequent bites compound this penalty.

They are most dangerous against sleeping or prone foes; they are just as capable as a thief of completing a coup-de-grace by biting a creature's jugular.

Habitat/Society:

Leech men seek out a good locale for feeding (a barn or corral where large animals are kept is ideal), then take up residence nearby in a thicket, a hollow old tree or even a hole in the ground and emerge at night to prey on the herd.

A leech man typically makes a small bite in a sleeping animal and then sucks the blood from the wound, draining 4p Hit Points before becoming sated. A mild anesthetic allows the leech man to go undetected in most cases. Of course, they have no qualms about feeding on humans either, emerging from the sewer at night to suck the blood of derelicts, or even being so bold as to sneak into a home through an unlocked window.

As noted previously, leech men are cowardly creatures who avoid getting embroiled in a pitched battle. However, if they are being systematically hunted, they may launch a stealthy raid in the middle of the night to murder their foes in their sleep. Though cunning and potentially malicious, they are not particularly bright. Since they must feed daily, they are quite susceptible to being baited and trapped using a readily accessible sheep or goat as a lure.

Ecology:

Leech men are parasites, living off the blood of larger creatures. They never attack a smaller animal as the effort is not worth the payoff. They can survive by eating rats, squirrels, rabbits and the like, but never willingly do so. A herdsman can detect their presence by the tell-tale round sores on the undersides or hind quarters of his larger beasts of burden (horses and cattle are favorites). Large predators that hunt similar herd animals are their main natural competitors. Lions and hyenas, for example, hunt the same prey and actively kill leech men.

On Tellene:

Leech men can be found across Tellene. They avoid colder climates and alpine settings for lack of prey, but may migrate to the valleys along with their prey as the cold weather strikes. They are very prevalent in Tarisato, Mendarn, northern Zazahni and other locations where year-round grazing is readily available for large bovines and herd animals. They avoid central Svimohzia because of the prevalence of big hunting cats.

LEECH MAN

HIT POINTS:	10+d4
SIZE/WEIGHT:	5/30 lbs.
TENACITY:	Cowardly
INTELLIGENCE:	Obtuse
FATIGUE FACTOR:	-3

MOVEMENT

CRAWL:	2½
WALK:	5
JOG:	10
RUN:	15
SPRINT:	20

SAVES

PHYSICAL:	+3
MENTAL:	+3
DODGE:	+6

SPEED 6	INIT -1
ATTACK +4	DMG REDUCTION 0
DEFENSE +7	DAMAGE 2
short REACH	TOP SAVE ▼

ATTACK:

Bite deals 2d4p points of damage and requires a save vs d20p+8 or suffer 1 point penalty to Attack and Defense for 30 minutes; leech men drain 1d4p HP of blood before becoming sated

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Mastery of the Climbing, Hiding, and Sneaking skills at 40% each; can coup de gras as a thief

GENERAL INFO

ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal
NO. APPEARING:	3-10
% CHANCE IN LAIR:	10%
FREQUENCY:	Infrequent
ALIGNMENT:	Non
VISION TYPE:	Low Light Vision
AWARENESS/SENSES:	Standard
HABITAT:	Any, usually isolated spot near prey
DIET:	Sanguivorous
ORGANIZATION:	Individuals or band
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate to tropical, near water

YIELD

MEDICINAL:	healers may use leech man venom as anesthetic
SPELL COMPONENTS:	nil
HIDE/TROPHY:	nothing you'd want to hang on your wall
TREASURE:	nil
EDIBLE:	no
OTHER:	nil
EXPERIENCE POINT VALUE:	50