DUALINK

Dream Leeches



Records of Shattered Time Series

Dreamling

Small Aberration, lawful evil

Armor Class: 12
Hit Points: 9 (2d6 + 2)
Speed: 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6	14	12	5	11	6
(-2)	(+2)	(+1)	(-3)	(+0)	(-2)

Skills: Stealth +4
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages: Understands the languages of its host but can't speak
Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

Psychic Camouflage. The Dream Leech has advantage on Stealth checks in dim light or darkness.

Actions

Dream Siphon. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) psychic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or fall asleep.

Bonus Action

Ethereal Jaunt. As a bonus action, the Dream Leech can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa.



Lore

Ethereal Predator of the Dream World

The Dream Leech thrives as an entity of both awe and terror. With its ability to silently float and manipulate the dreams of those unaware, it bears the haunting characteristics of both jellyfish and leech. This creature's translucent, luminescent body glows faintly in the darkness, often mistaken for a simple trick of the light or a fleeting illusion.

One of the Dream Leech's most alarming abilities is its capacity for dream manipulation. It preys on the emotional energies released by dreams and nightmares, intensifying or altering these experiences to extract information or implant suggestions. Victims often wake with only fragmented memories of their manipulated dreams, leading to confusion and potentially irreversible behavioral changes. The psychological and emotional impact of such manipulations is profound, often resulting in chronic fatigue, paranoia, hallucinations, and even complete psychological breakdowns due to the creature's continuous disruption of restful sleep.

Moreover, the Dream Leech's ethereal mobility allows it to phase through physical barriers, such as walls and closed doors, making it a particularly elusive and pervasive threat.

Despite its powerful abilities, the Dream Leech is not invincible. It is particularly vulnerable to psychic defenses and magical protections against mind-affecting powers.

Cultural symbols and substances associated with sleep and dreams can also repel or harm it. Effective defense against a Dream Leech requires specialized knowledge and abilities to detect and counteract ethereal entities and disturbances within the dream realm. Recognizing and implementing these protective measures can safeguard individuals from the insidious effects of this spectral predator.

Structure and Reproduction

The Dream Leeches, ethereal creatures steeped in the mysteries of the subconscious, display a complex array of social behaviors and reproductive methods that underscore their otherworldly nature.

Organized into structured colonies, these entities are not merely solitary predators but part of a sophisticated hierarchy that maximizes their efficiency and survival. Each colony is typically governed by a dominant leech or a council of elder leeches, which directs the collective's movements and feeding strategies. This hierarchical organization is essential for coordinating large-scale feeding operations and defending against threats, allowing them to exploit extensive feeding grounds collectively.

Communication within these colonies transcends typical boundaries through a psychic network, enabling Dream Leeches to instantaneously share crucial information about feeding grounds, emotional states of potential victims, and emerging threats.

This advanced form of communication supports their ability to launch coordinated attacks on whole towns or regions ripe with emotional turmoil, illustrating their strategic depth and communal nature.

Reproduction among Dream Leeches is a spectacle tied deeply to celestial rhythms, such as lunar phases, reflecting their connection to natural and cosmic cycles. They engage in communal mating rituals that feature synchronized movements and striking displays of bioluminescence, captivating any observer with their eerie beauty. The offspring, affectionately known as dreamlings, are nurtured within communal nests where they are fed on harvested dreams, preparing them to join the colony's active feeding cycles as they mature.

The environmental impact of Dream Leech colonies is profound, particularly through the establishment of ethereal nests within areas rich in psychic energy on the ethereal plane. Their preference for locations near human settlements, especially those experiencing high emotional distress like near battlefields or hospitals, leads to an accumulation of psychic residue. This saturation significantly alters the mental states and dreams of the local population, blurring the lines between reality and the dream world and often causing frequent hallucinations and surreal encounters. Through these interactions, Dream Leeches not only influence the psychic ecosystem but also drive evolutionary changes in their prey, continuously shaping the dynamics of their habitat.