

# NUOVARDEN

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## UMBRUL (IMPRINTS)

(UM-BROOL)



Art by Jack Ropes

**DISCIPLINE:** Element (Fire/Earth only)

**BASE HEIGHT:** 5ft.

**BASE WEIGHT:** 100 lbs.

## FEATURES

The Umbrul are humanoids similar to Lanplac but not as big in stature. The

Umbrul also refer to themselves as “Imprints,” a sort of morbid joke for being under the heel of the colossi. Their coloration matches the landscape of Umult, from dark orange and red to brown. Their hair is a smoldering mane of flame-colored light. They wear little or no clothing, choosing armor when facing combat but otherwise eschewing general outerwear. They are binary, though rather than sexual in the common sense, reproduction occurs when a mated pair joins to manifest a flame comprised of both energies. The exchange is intimate and private, and the experience trancelike as both parents share energies in the forming of the flame. The offspring develops from flame, to fire column, to full being within half a season. In its final stage the offspring fully develops from flame to its humanoid form. Umbrul mature at that time and the average individual lifespan is 90 seasons. At the end of a natural life, the individual returns to pure flame and then gradually burns out in a reverse order of the birth process.

The Umbrul do not wear shoes, and their soles are stone-like in their natural form.

## Innate ability

### FIRE FORM



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As a manifestation may transform into a fire being of their same size and shape. When in this form the Umbrul gains an Armor Factor (AF) 1(!) and a Damage Factor (DF) +1 fire. AF does not stack with other armor types. High Success doubles the AF.

## UMBRUL SUBCULTURE: UMBUR (*UM-BURR*)

There is little difference in appearance between an Umbrul and an Umbur except for coloration. The Umbur tend toward stonier colors of slate and lava black. They have the same orange eyes and fiery hair, as well as the same build and other features. In terms of their innate ability, however, they benefit more immediately from their form than the Umbrul, but can be slightly less effective in melee.

## INNATE ABILITY STONE FORM

As a manifestation may transform into a stone being of their same size and shape. When in this form the Umbur gains an Armor Factor (AF) 2(!). AF does not stack with other armor types. High Success additionally grants a Damage Factor (DF) +1 on physical attacks.

## PLAYING AN UMBRUL

Either form of Umbrul plays the same, though the primary Umbrul are limited to **fire** in their manifestations, and the Umbur may only manifest **earth**.

As denizens of Umult their lives are commonly spent dodging colossal elementals and various other dangers of the dimension. But as an explorer in Nuovarden they bring an unusual presence to the local residents of the garden.

They serve equally well as skirmishers or scouts. Their natural ability to enhance their form with elemental features helps them survive danger, while their experience subverting massive threats in Umult make them experienced overlanders.

Play an Umbrul if you want to bring a new culture type into the garden that begins as a cousin to the Leni while developing toward other aspects of resident cultures based on how you chose to evolve them.

## UMBRUL NAMES

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Umbrul names are based on their terms for ember (Umbrul proper) or stone (Umbur). When an Umbrul child is born, it is given one of these names based on its final elemental form. Umbrul do not differentiate between female and male naming conventions.

### UMBRUL NAME EXAMPLES

Amush, Charbur, Charmur, Embrel, Flambur, Glowmur, Searbrel, Simbur, Singemur, Smolbrel, Sparbrel

### UMBUR NAME EXAMPLES

Basbrel, Boulmur, Cragmur, Gembrel, Granbur, Igneomur, Pebbrel, Quartzmur, Rokmur, Slatbrel, Silibrel

### UMBRUL HISTORY

From within the dead rock of Umult, long before that name was given to the dimension, Aeos stirred. From Aeos came the disruptive force of the elements, and from within the magmatic ooze of that disruption came the colossal elementals. The elementals marched across the land and formed the first citadels - little more than gigantic rock stacks and leaning towers. In time they would refine their structures leading to the

impressive, albeit naturalistic structures that now exist.

Aeos witnessed Nephes, the birth of the Varden, and the arrival of the Lanplac people to that once tame garden. At the same time the Umbrul appeared in Umult.

For thousands of seasons the Umbrul have survived in the lava tunnels and caves of Umult, battling against the colossi for their place in the realm.

### AESTHETIC

Umbrul aesthetic matches the landscape of their origination: rugged and rudimentary. Clothing is sparse and may or may not feature expressive markings. Artistic expression simply isn't a priority for the Umbrul.

Technology doesn't fare well in the elemental dimension of Umult, and as such the Umbrul make their homes into the stone walls of the lava tunnels and subterranean caverns. Items are made from the natural elements and retain most or all of those aspects, such as pure stone, raw ore, water, and vegetation.

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There are very few Umbrul explorers in Nuovarden. Those that do appear arrived by different means; whether via random portal or by following interdimensional travelers from Nuovarden.

Once an Umbrul establishes their explorer career the allure of more expressive styles usually influences these brave individuals to adopt a variety of fashions. Given their stone-like feet, however, the Umbrul rarely adopt footwear.

The lack of architectural and technological awareness leads to a consistent sense of awe whenever an Umbrul encounters a new technological design, regardless of the size of the item or building. The individual explorer may find such items fascinating, curious, or even frighteningly suspicious. Only the most powerful Umbrul explorers eventually fully adopt technology into their lives.

## THE UMBUR

Everything that can be said of the Umbrul is true for the Umbur. The only difference is their innate elemental form. In close combat the Umbur sometimes form an earthen wall of

protection for the Umbrul, using their natural armor to fend off attacks while the Umbrul use elemental distance attacks from behind the "wall."

## FAMILY STRUCTURE

Umbrul mates are assigned when there is a need to increase the population. Once an offspring is produced, however, the mates return to their individual lives and carry on as before.

Leadership in Umbrul communities falls to the most vocal, shifting from member to member when one or more are willing to take the role. There is no formal name for an Umbrul leader, and the belief among the people is that an individual incapable of leadership is incapable of survival. Given the great dangers of Umult, it is a widely held tenet that survival could come down to the actions of anyone, and all must be prepared.

Umbrul children mill about their home centers for the duration of their development after which, upon maturing in the first half season, they join the other adults without particular ceremony.

## RITUALS



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#### **BIRTH**

Umbrul offspring are born as a flame manifested from the energy of both parents. The flame is nurtured for two phases, after which it strengthens into a small column of whirling fire. This form is true regardless of whether the final form of the adult is Umbrul or Umbur.

Once the offspring takes its columnar form, it is freed into the community where it wanders about observing and learning from the adults. During this part of the offspring development it does not take repose. A visitor to an Umbrul community may find it odd that the village is active with these roaming fire columns.

At the midpoint of the season of their birth, the column transitions over the course of the last phase until it "solidifies" into the humanoid it will become. At that point the new member chooses a place within the community to establish its home, manipulating the elemental stone into a hovel where it lives and stores its possessions for the duration of its life.

#### **DEATH**

The death of an Umbrul takes the same two forms as many of the cultures in Nuovarden: natural life span or premature illness or injury. In Umult, the risk of death by injury is especially pronounced.

Umbrul death rituals, when possible, involve loved ones attending the dying at a location of the dying members choosing where they witness the end of the individual's life. The end of a lifespan comes upon the dying in reverse form of their birth, but at an accelerated pace. In the final phases the person's body begins flickering with thin, faint flame. Within a few phases the body turns to a column of flame.

Loved ones are made aware before the conversion to the final form, and once the end time arrives there is a procession from the home to the final site, led by the dying individual. Upon arrival the attendees observe the dying process, grieving as the fire column dims and flares in the final moments until it fades and then finally burns out.

Those Umbrul that die prematurely are cremated if possible (it does not turn to a column of flame on its own),



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in a place chosen for them if none was previously established. The rest of the ritual is the same. If the body is unrecovered then the ritual is forfeit and a remembrance is shared within the village.

## **A THOUSAND LIGHTS**

It is said among the Umbrul that during their first seasons within Umult the first of their kind tried in earnest to battle the colossi head on. Hundreds of Umbrul would attack in waves against bands of colossi as wind-blown sands against a mountain. Before the attack the Umbrul took their elemental form, and the light of the hundreds of fire-forms illuminated the battlefield.

“A Thousand Lights” continues to hold various meanings for the current generations; it means to organize in number, to honor tradition, or to recognize numerous other events where the Umbrul gather in person or spirit. It is both a literal and a figurative term. The phrase is most spoken when affirming solidarity between allies, even between a few individuals.

## **CRAFT FAIRE**

Once each season the Umbrul take time to celebrate life in the form of a competition among crafters. The master of them all is Amush, an elder Umbrul living in the huge city of Usoot. Among the living Umbrul crafters none have the reputation of Amush.

During the event a host of judges travel about their local region, evaluating the naturalistic designs of the crafters brought to large population centers like Usoot, to be judged for originality, usefulness, and beauty. All aspire to reach the skill of Amush, but few can get close enough. Nonetheless, the Craft Faire is a grand time of celebration and creativity for the Umbrul and the highlight of their season.

It must be noted that these designs are not technological in the manufactured sense, but are rather manipulations of the elements, mostly stone and some other material, in making unique items unlike those in Nuovarden.

## **HARNESS THE COLOSSUS**

For the majority of Umbrul there is another practice they engage in -

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something of a coming of age challenge. When such a circumstance arises that an Umbrul wishes to prove their worth to the community, they set off into Umult to literally harness and ride a colossus.

The practice is obviously dangerous and the purpose of taking such a risk is rarely worth the return. Still, those that accomplish the feat earn the respect of their companions and peers, though they also become favored recruits of skirmish groups that seek out and engage with isolated colossus.

## VALUES

Umbrul value their communities and the sanctity of life in a realm that is hard to survive in. In Umult the colossi are the dominant life form, but the Umbrul persist. These “Imprints” appreciate the morbid humor of their condition and do their best to demonstrate their will to survive.

Unlike explorers in Nuovarden, the Umbrul are not seeking to understand their realm and uncover its secrets. Umult is an old realm, a source of fundamental building blocks for other dimensions. As a people the Umbrul

are first and foremost survivors that know their world and what it offers to them.

In the rare event that people from outside Umult appear, the Umbrul immediately take them in. They know the risk that these visitors are exposed to and offer them safety with little hesitation.

The rare Umbrul that finds its way to Nuovarden discovers a world almost entirely unlike their own. They approach the garden with overwhelming awe and trepidation. In time, however, the Umbrul make excellent explorers and, after a period of adjustment, find themselves more or less comfortably fitted in among their allies.