

THE FENKSWORLD PIT THING

In the depths below the hives of Fenksworld, pale things writhe. Varying between two and three metres high at the shoulder, Pit Things are vicious predatory beasts that are fuelled by hate. The strong chemical reek that surrounds these creatures is often the first sign of their presence, and Fenksworld underhivers heed that warning well. Pit Things are bulky, colour-leached carnivores with four stumpy legs. Pit Things also possess webbed claws and feet, making them agile swimmers, and they seem to be resistant to the typical chemical and toxic hazards of industrial hives. Their four eyes are arranged symmetrically in a vaguely canine skull, while their mouths are circular, lamprey-like maws studded with razor-sharp teeth meant to rend and tear. They are nonsentient and seem singularly unintelligent, perhaps the only reason why the Pit Thing has not claimed the title of apex predator on Fenksworld.

The Pit Thing uses its size and strength aggressively in combat, often charging into battle with furious rage. Those unfortunate enough to fight the Pit Thing must be as wary of its acidic drool as its rending claws, as every savage bite inflicts wounds that burn through armour and flesh alike.

Sump-skiffs cruise the polluted vaults below Fenksworld's hives, seeking out Pit Things to capture with gaffs, nets, hooks, and electro-poles. A handful of men never make it back from each trip, torn from the skiffs and pulled down into the burning, toxic sludge. Usually, these hunters lace a piece of meat with powerful soporifics to use as bait, a tactic that enhances the odds of each hunt's success. The Adeptus Arbitres struggle to suppress these heretical hunts. However, the value of each Pit Thing makes this highly dangerous occupation extremely lucrative. Thus, every time the Arbitrators shut down one beast-hunting group, two more form from the remnants to begin operations.

Once a Pit Thing is captured, it is placed into an iron cage and delivered to the arenas to provide bloodsport for the hive populace. The Pale Pits of Volg Hive are the most infamous for utilising alien beasts in their gladiatorial matches, but the sheer savagery and unthinking malice of the Pit Things make them unique even in these blood-soaked environs. These terrifying beasts rampage through as many as a dozen men a time, painting the sand red with blood only to crush the final few beneath its rubbery bulk.

There are some indications that link the Pit Things to the Blight of Nova Castilia, a gene-atrocity committed by the Logician cult. Tech-heresy on a planetary scale, the Blight spread like wildfire through the hive population. There are whispers that during this event, several families simply went missing, replaced by pallid, raging monstrosities.



Pit Thing Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	—	⁽¹⁰⁾ 56	⁽¹⁰⁾ 54	40	10	35	24	—

Move: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 30

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S) +10.

Talents: Berserk Charge, Furious Assault, Iron Jaw.

Traits: ††Aura of Hate, Bestial, Brutal Charge, Fear 2 (Frightening), Natural Weapon (Bite and claws), Quadruped, Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

††**Aura of Hate:** The Fenksworld Pit Thing generates such a raw torrent of emotion that it can disturb psychic abilities used in close proximity. If a psychic power is used within 15 metres of a Pit Thing, the power's threshold increases by 5.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Bite or claws (1d10+10[†] R; Pen 3; Primitive).

[†]*Includes Strength Bonus.*

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

An influential Imperial Noble asks the Acolytes to look into the disappearance of his wastrel son and heir. A trail of clues leads to Fenksworld and the Pale Pits of Volg Hive. There, the Acolytes discover the wayward son has lost a considerable sum gambling on arena fights. After defaulting on his debts, the heir has been dosed with combat drugs and will be placed into a battle with a Pit Thing for the crowd's entertainment. The Acolytes must somehow save the raving, drug-addled heir from a violent end.

Disembarking from their shuttle, the Acolytes witness a group of men cursing and struggling to load a huge iron crate onto a nearby orbitus transport via a crude hydraulic crane. The crane arm fractures, dropping the crate with a thunderous crash—exposing a Fenksworld Pit Thing. The creature is furious at being sedated and confined... and it is ravenously hungry. The Acolytes now have a solid link to xeniform smuggling in the Calixian extent, and a dangerous creature on the loose.

CHAPTER IV: VERMIN & PREDATORS



FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT: 164.788.M41

Fenksworld: location of the most callous and bloody fighting pits of the Calixian worlds, a fitting mirror to the misery and poisons beyond its hives. It was many years ago that I and my pledged delved beneath Volg Hive in search of a cult bound to the Ruinous Power of blood sacrifice. In finding the heretics in the Pale Pits, we found also a xenos breed most foul—and yet most suited—to the taint of that violent underhive. It knew only blood-soaked arena sands and desired only to rend and tear; it was by the blessings of the God-Emperor alone that none of my acolytes fell to that beast.

Terrified cultists loosed the creature upon seeing our rosettes, a desperate attempt to purchase time in which to flee the hammer. It might have worked upon lesser men. The thing's bubbling roar almost froze us, its rage a near-physical assault on the heart and mind. My vat-psyker's suspensor transport faltered and dipped—he moaned in anguish within as the beast's four reddened, hate-filled eyes rolled independently to look at each member of my retinue. It was an abomination to the God Emperor's sight, drooling acidic slime and casting forth a loathsome, alchemical reek, seeming sure in its ability to cow human prey.

We did not slay it, though it wounded Lammdin and Half-Amend most grievously in its charge. Foul and deserving of death as it was, the heretics, our true targets, were escaping. Adept-militant Prandus bore a plasma weapon, and by that we drove it back to the cage-pit, steaming skin hanging in flaps from its charred flanks. Of the heretics, I will say no more here, save they were crushed, their fanes and influence torn from the hive.

It was many years before I again had cause to visit Fenksworld, but memory of the xenos pit-beast lingered. I was engaged in research upon certain signs in the void, rather than some more vigorous action, and time was made for other investigations. Beneath crumbling manufactoria bastions, I and my savants learned more of the xenos. The beast is known to the low-hivers as a "Pit Thing," and wagering on the deaths it causes is a sport of the pale pits. Arena magisters promise a wealth of Thrones to any who can prevail against a Pit Thing in hand-to-hand combat, a feat of arms none have claimed in living memory, or so the low-hivers tell.

After the Feast of the Ascendance that year, I resigned myself to call upon the service of Lexographer Morria within the Library of Knowing. There is a certain eagerness of the Library elders I find distasteful, and so have as little to do with them as possible—they await bad news with undecorous glee, and seek obsequious favour with anyone who might be its bearer. Still, with Messia's assistance I traced hints of an origin to the Pit Thing breed. One carefully inked account faithfully recorded the ramblings of a mad seer thought-touched by the Lux Imperia. His visions were of a treacherous clade of workers banished to the depths of Volg Hive and forgotten there for centuries amidst the poisons and darkness. Could these Pit Things have once been human? Or are they a beast native to the poison sumps of Fenksworld, altered by the effluvium of the hive? Some records claim the existence of mindless xenos upon Fenksworld prior to the first hive spine construction. I suspect the latter explanation to be far more likely than the former—but such dire mutation of the God-Emperor's holy form would be just cause for purge and flame throughout the low hive if shown to be true. Beyond all this are the persistent tales of vanishment in the low hives, but I see little of value there. They may well be true, gangers cast as live food into beast pits, or taken by xenos rising from the poison-sumps. I would believe worse of Volg from what I have seen of it. But such tales are told in the depths of every Imperial hive, as the black-hearted prey upon the faithful. Volg is no different, and no less deserving of purification by flame and sword.

