

# COMBAT ADVANTAGE

## VOLUME ONE



This collection contains the following editions of the Combat Advantage series from Emerald Press PDF Publishing:

### **#1 - Power Knowledge**

An optional rule for mixing powers.

### **#2 - Bleeding**

A new keyword for a new type of ongoing damage.

### **#3 - The Centry**

A new monster from the land of the fey.

### **#4 - Heroic Talents**

Gain powers for your skills at the heroic tier.

### **#5 - Paragon Talents**

Gain powers for your skills at the paragon tier.

### **#6 - Reputation Feats**

New experience rewards beyond mere XP.

### **#7 - Sidekicks**

A new NPC class to join your party.

# COMBAT ADVANTAGE

Not everyone has time to play two or three times a month, or even once a month, for that matter. My original group was under that same curse: we were barely able to play once every month on the big 3E campaign going on for years and it was complicated when one of them moved away.

When 4E came out, the sentiment was "Cool, new powers. But why can't I have some more?" When you never get a chance to play as often as you would like, the idea of having more options to make the most out of your character seems appealing. And once every character class has 50+ at-will powers at their disposal, something like power knowledge could come in handy.

Todd Crapper

## Power Knowledge

Class powers are the primary feature of the game, an extension of their innate, arcane, or divine abilities against the evil forces of the world. In many cases, however, characters will know the same powers from 1st-level to their final voyage at 30th. Rules for swapping powers exist, but the inevitable surge of at-will, encounter, and daily powers available to players will create a need for additional power knowledge.

**Power knowledge** refers to the number of powers a character knows compared to the number of powers used per day. Martial characters have trained themselves in more than what they can produce at any encounter but need to recite their lessons and practice maneuvers; arcane characters review their spellbooks or meditate on the astral energies around them; while divine characters fall deep into prayer with their deities to recollect their role in the universe.

Characters can know an additional number of powers equal to their Intelligence modifier. At-will powers cost one power per modifier, while encounter powers cost two modifiers, and daily and utility powers cost three modifiers. These additional powers do not increase the number of powers used per day, simply the number of powers known to the character. As characters increase in level, they can teach themselves to put aside previous powers as they lose touch with their original lessons and take on new ones. These powers must be swapped as per the standard rules for swapping powers but the number of additional powers known to the character can never increase by more than the character's Intelligence modifier. Any temporary or permanent increase to the character's Intelligence score can increase the number of additional powers for as long as this Intelligence bonus remains (such as from magic items).

1st-level characters select their additional powers during character creation, but this can be put off until higher levels when a new power catches a player's attention. After an extended rest, the character must select which powers he will have active for the day. His active powers must be selected at

the beginning of the day (which is any point after an extended rest) and must take 10 minutes per power learned to practice and recite the fundamentals of the power. If the character plans to keep the same active powers as the previous day, then no additional time is required.

**Wizard Spellbooks:** Power knowledge can still apply to wizards to gain at-will and encounter spells. Daily and utility spells can be learned too, but it is not as common considering the additional choices they have per level.

# COMBAT ADVANTAGE

In the process of creating a new class for playtesting, I wanted something that would add a little spice and originality to a design that was lacking that certain spark. "Bleeding" is a keyword for a type of ongoing damage that fits the class perfectly... but you don't get to see the class.

Not yet.

- Todd Crapper

## New Keyword: Bleeding

**Bleeding damage** is a type of damage caused when a character tears open an enemy and causes them to lose fluid at an alarming rate, typically resulting in ongoing damage per round.

Despite the term, bleeding is not limited to humanoid creatures with blood pumping through their veins. Any type of vital liquid within the target's body considering crucial for the target to continue living can be considered blood for the purpose of this keyword. Only elementals and constructs are immune to bleeding damage (unless you have the Gaping Wound feat).

Bleeding damage can always be stopped with a saving throw or with a **Healing DC 15 check**. Dying characters will continue to bleed after they have passed 0 hit points. Bleeding can be stopped by applying pressure to the wound as a standard action, thereby preventing any further ongoing damage for as long as pressure is maintained, but the wounded character must continue to make a saving throw until they succeed.

## New Feat: Gaping Wound

**Benefit:** You can now affect elementals and constructs with bleeding damage.

**NOTE:** Some campaigns may determine undead and other creatures are immune to bleeding, such as they lack any traditional organs or are filled with sand that is not required to live. Individual exceptions to this rule are expected.

# COMBAT ADVANTAGE

The problem with creating your first 4E original monster is gauging its strengths, especially in a way so that you can assign the appropriate level and challenge to players. When you're doing it for your own group, you can have a little leeway with it and tailor the monster to suit your players. But doing the same thing for published material is trickier: if it comes off as too weak or too powerful, it doesn't look like you know what you're doing. And that's the beauty of these Combat Advantages. I can post them up here for hundreds of gamers to look at, playtest, and comment.

The centry is a new creature designed for our upcoming adventure, *The Key of the Fey*. Designed as a type of "mutated fey," we wanted something that was unique and unexpected for a low-level adventure, but doesn't become unbelievable to the point that its abilities are nothing more than window dressing. Have a read and let us know what you think by clicking here.

Todd Crapper

## New Monster: The Centry

There is nothing to see in this invisible, ethereal creature save for the glowing head. Fully illuminated and shining its beam like a lantern, centries are mysterious fey creatures originating around the temple of Anamupet, they are guardians, scouts, and hidden stalkers in the woods of the Feyrealm.

<b>Centry</b> Medium fey	<b>Level 3 Controller</b> XP 150	
<b>Initiative</b> +5	<b>Senses</b> Perception +5	
<b>Partial Invisibility</b> personal; gains concealment (stats adjusted); closing the eye makes it totally invisible.		
<b>Tingling Throb</b> aura 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; target suffers -2 penalty to all actions (save ends)		
<b>HP</b> 42; <b>Bloodied</b> 21		
<b>AC</b> 21, <b>Fortitude</b> 16, <b>Reflex</b> 19, <b>Will</b> 17		
<b>Speed</b> 6		
☹ <b>Eyebeam</b> (immediate interrupt, when attacked by any character directly facing it, at-will) • <b>Radiant</b> Close blast 5; +11 vs Reflex; 1d6+2 radiant damage. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +7 vs Fortitude; target is blind (save ends).		
⊕ <b>Rippling Touch</b> (standard; at-will) • <b>Force</b> +9 vs AC; 1d4+1 damage.		
<b>Lawful Good</b>	<b>Language:</b> Special (clicking noises)	
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +8, History +6		
<b>Str</b> 12 (+2)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+4)	<b>Wis</b> 14 (+3)
<b>Con</b> 10 (+1)	<b>Int</b> 15 (+3)	<b>Cha</b> 14 (+3)
<b>Equipment</b> None.		

*A seering white light shines in your eyes, projecting from a glowing head hovering in the air.. The head bobs back and forth, side to side with a humanoid twist to its body, and a clicking noise to follow it.*

## **Powers**

**Eyebeam:** This powerful white light projects at a blast range of 5 squares, causing radiant damage and potentially blinding the target. The eyebeam is triggered by any attack made against it by a character who does not have combat advantage over it. Any item that can block light can be used as total cover against an eyebeam attack as a free action, but the attacker grants combat advantage to the centry.

Centries can turn their illumination off and nullify their eyebeam (move action) or abruptly turn it right back on (also a move action). Doing so causes complete invisibility (see below).

**Ripping Touch:** With concentrated effort, a centry can physically strike a target with a melee attack.

**Partial Invisibility:** Due to their illuminated heads, centries do not gain full benefits to invisibility, but they do gain concealment bonuses to AC as their “bodies” are invisible and make it difficult to locate an exact strike on the creature. This is reflected in the centry’s base stats.

Centries can turn off their illumination as a move action for an indefinite period of time and thereby gain total concealment benefits, thereby raising their AC to 25. See the section on Invisibility in the *D&D 4E Player’s Handbook*.

**Tingling Throb:** Centries emit a low sonic frequency to sicken and disorient their opponents. Once a character saves against it, he is considered immune for that encounter.

As such, centries are never used for stealth-related activities, but to confuse and weaken opponents while other creature break enemy defenses and strike simultaneously.

## **Centry Tactics**

Disruption and interference are the duties of centries: with their tingling throb and eyebeams, they spread out along the battlefield and weaken opposition while other creatures connected to or serving with the centries take them down. When confronted directly, they will flaunt their incorporeal natures and surprise opponents with a rippling touch attack. Not fiercely loyal, they will attempt to flee when bloodied.

## **Centry Lore**

As centries are a rare and unique creature to a specific part of the Feyrealm, a character will have to make a significant Arcana check.

**DC 25:** There are rumours of bizarre creatures in a pocket of the Feyrealm, but as the rumours state these creatures as invisible, it is difficult to garner gossip from fact. But these rumours did fall around a fallen deity named Anamupet, a god of evolution and change. It is said his only temple still stands in the Feyrealm, but has yet to be found.



# COMBAT ADVANTAGE

4th Edition D&D streamlined the skill process and concluded that all heroes should be able to accomplish the same tasks outside of combat. This made no one dependent on anyone, but also reduced the impact of skills and the uniqueness of an individual character's training. If the only thing separating two characters' skills are their level modifiers and a +5 training bonus, skills are just a background facet of a character. This is why I wanted to come up with something that would bring skills into the forefront for those who sought the same outcome.

Talents are "skill powers," a means by which a player can stand out and perform a deed other characters in his party cannot. A talent is written up and used exactly as powers and create exceptions to the standard rules. For example, anyone with training in Thievery can open locks, but someone with an Open Locks talent can open the lock and re-lock it without anyone ever knowing someone broke in.

These talents are for the heroic tier, but there are more to come. In the meantime, we'd like to hear from you and get some feedback, as always. Let us know what you think we'd love to see some more out there, so feel free to post them on our boards for others to share in.

Todd Crapper

## Heroic Talents

Talents are a form of utility power concentrated on skill use. They are a means by which a character stands out amongst others to display a knack or exception training in a particular skill. A talented character can put a skill to use that most other characters can only think about and make themselves more useful in non-combat encounters.

The talents presented here are designed for heroic tier characters, but any character can select one at any level in which they gain a new utility power or can select a replacement utility power. A talent replaces a utility power and functions just as a power would, except that it rarely has any combat application (save for a player with an active imagination – if a player can find a way to use a talent in combat, it is allowed but rare) and can be used once per encounter or daily. There are no at-will talents and selecting a talent does not grant any modifiers to an overall skill (save any modifiers provided during the use of a talent).

A character can only select a talent for a skill he is trained in, no matter how high his level modifier is. Trained characters are the only ones capable of accomplishing such tasks and most talents utilize the "trained only" function of a skill (such as detecting magic with the Arcana skill).

Below are a list of talents divided into the skills they are connected to and are available to any character in the heroic tier and beyond.

### How to Read a Talent

Talents are presented as powers and function exactly as they do, since they are designed to replace utility powers at heroic levels. They can only function as encounter or daily powers and are listed as heroic, paragon, or epic talents. (Only heroic talents are provided at this time; stay tuned for paragon and epic talents to be released later.) The power source of the talent remains blank as a talent is suited to any class, regardless of their power source.

## Acrobatics

Flexible, quick, and dangerous, an acrobatic hero can twist himself into positions to gain advantage over opponents and seize the upper hand. More often, they can use their agility to avoid danger or prevent it from getting any worse, particularly from traps. Last Second Escape is an acrobatic talent for curious explorers who find themselves dodging danger in a heartbeat's notice.

### Last Second Escape

Acrobatics Talent (Heroic)

Just as the trap is sprung, your body unconscious avoids it.

#### Encounter

#### Immediate Interrupt Personal

**Trigger:** Any attack is made against your Reflex defense.

**Effect:** You can make an Acrobatics check against the total attack roll made against you. If you roll higher than the attack, you dodge and avoid any damage or other effects.

## Arcana

Knowledge of the deepest workings of magic can change a person in strange and unforeseen ways. For those who take its oddest secrets to heart, they find themselves able to decipher and sense magic beyond those of their peers.

### Detect Elements

Arcana Talent (Heroic)

You can feel the presence of magical elements.

#### Daily

#### Minor Action Burst 5

**Effect:** You can detect the presence of powers using the core, fire, lightning, or thunder keywords specifically. While this can be used to apply to mundane events, you can decipher the use of magical or extraordinary acts of these keywords. This talent functions just as the detect magic ability of the Arcana skill.

## Athletics

Physical abilities are the key to surviving the dangers of dungeon exploration and many heroes train themselves long and hard to surpass those ordeals. A select few harden themselves like steel to go beyond survival and accomplish some extraordinary.

### Burst of Strength

Athletics Talent (Heroic)

Surging with adrenaline, you can accomplish just as much with one hand as you can with two.

#### Daily

#### Move Action Personal

**Effect:** You avoid suffering any penalties to an Athletic check when you are impaired in any way. For example, you can still pull yourself up the side of a cliff with one good arm.



Special: The use of this talent applies to a single Athletic event, such as climbing a wall, swimming across a small channel, and jumping a single gap. This talent can only last up to your Constitution score in rounds.

## Bluff

Understanding the guiles and quirks of people, there is a way to bend their thoughts to your will... even if for a short moment in time. A split second is all that's needed to gain the upper hand in any situation and training past the norms can grant that extra second.

### Slippery Shift

Bluff Talent (Heroic)

Psyche them out and avoid some serious harm.

#### Encounter

#### Immediate Interrupt Personal

**Trigger:** You can struck by any AC or Fortitude attack.

**Effect:** Replace your AC or Fortitude defense with your Reflex defense.

## Diplomacy

As the sole skill to which there is no combat application, Diplomacy talents focus on snatching the upper hand in negotiations at any cost. One sly remark or insight comment can shift someone in just the right way to gain whatever you need from them.

### Snide Remark

Diplomacy Talent (Heroic)

A simple, well-placed word slips everyone off their guard and gives you the chance to seize it all.

#### Encounter

#### Standard Action Close burst 1

**Target:** One person in which you can use the Diplomacy skill during a skill challenge.

**Attack:** Diplomacy vs. Will

**Effect:** The target is taken aback by your comment and suffers -2 to all checks in this skill challenge.

## Dungeoneering

There is much to read on the topic of Dungeoneering, but you have to experience a dungeon for yourself to truly walk away with anything. More to dungeon crawling than just avoiding traps and identifying monsters, a master dungeoneer can use the dungeon against itself.

### Blend

Dungeoneering Talent (Heroic)

Your knowledge of your surroundings gives you an edge to infiltrating it.

#### Daily

#### Minor Action Personal

**Effect:** Make a Diplomacy check and divide the result by 5. This is the bonus you receive to all Dungeoneering, Perception, and Stealth checks for a number of rounds equal to your Intelligence score.

## Endurance

Some heroes get stuck in a bind to which they have to endure and hang on until they can escape. Seeing a well-toned body and determination as the last measure of survival any hero can have, these trainees step up their capabilities to perform amazing feats of stamina.

### Meditation

Endurance Talent (Heroic)

When the going gets rough, you can fall into a trance and stretch out your endurance.

#### Daily

**Free Action**      **Personal**

**Requirement:** You must be in a skill challenge with Endurance as the dominant skill.

**Effect:** While making your Endurance checks, you fall into a meditative trance. If you roll a natural 20 during this skill challenge, you gain a surge of strength and continue the skill challenge with the DC for any Endurance check restored to its original level.

For example, you have to make five Endurance checks to stay afloat in rising water with the base DC of 10 and increasing by +2 per check. On your third check, you roll a natural 20. From this point on for the remaining of the skill challenge, your next Endurance DC will be 10 instead of 16 and increasing from +2 per following check.

## Heal

There is only so much the mortal body can withstand on its own and those who understand its physiology are best served to treat their comrades because no good deed goes unpaid. Heroes with the Heal skill do not rely on magic and potions to aid their fellows and can accomplish some powerful aids in battle.

### Restore

Heal Talent (Heroic)

Your ally is beaten and sore, but your healing care can boost his strength back.

#### Daily

**Move Action**    **Close burst 1**

**Target:** One bloodied ally.

**Effect:** The ally is no longer considered bloodied, even though his hit points remains the same.

## History

Commonly regarded as the pursuit of scholars and wizards, History is a skill of great memory and passion. Many a hero has found the incredible memory of a historian valuable in recalling legends used to bring down the fall of a wicked villain. For some, it is more than just conscious memory.

## Unconscious Memory

History Talent (Heroic)

There is little a well-read mind can't recall...

### Encounter

**Free Action**      **Personal**

**Effect:** You can make passive History checks with a base score of 15 instead of 10.

## Insight

Intuition is what leads you on when all training fails you. Standing in darkness, with all senses failing you, it is that inner voice inside your head that can pull you out of the fire and leave you wondering how you did it. Insight is commonly used for personal interaction with other characters, but an intuit hero can do more than just read thoughts with this knack...

## Gut Feeling

Insight Talent (Heroic)

Something is not right and you're instincts tell you there's danger.

### Daily

**Immediate Reaction** Area burst 5

**Trigger:** An undetected danger awaits in range; this danger can be a trap, hidden monster, or anything else that can cause damage and has not been perceived by any character in the party.

**Effect:** You can feel something in the back of your mind telling you that something is wrong and allow everyone in your party to re-roll any Perception checks or other means to discover the danger in the room.

**Special:** If the danger remain undetected after the re-rolled attempts, this talent is still considered spent.

## Intimidate

A useful means for getting information or simply getting some space to draw your sword with, intimidation is a ploy long used by many heroes. Some are more skilled at it than others and use unique methods to extract fear from your opponents.

## Shout

Intimidate Talent (Heroic)

Your voice booms into the ears of your targets and forces them to fear you even more.

### Daily

**Minor Action** Area blast 2

**Effect:** You gain a +2 power bonus to your next Intimidate check this round. In addition, you can use this talent to attempt another Intimidate check on a target who has already passed a previous attempt.

## Nature

The natural world is a wide open place with thousands of undiscovered reaches to find. Wandering the wilds in search of treasure and monsters can lead to a curious wonderment of the wilderness and those who revere nature for its beauty can interpret many helpful signs when the going gets rough.

### Back on the Path

Nature Talent (Heroic)

You won't be lost for long with a good understand of nature on your side.

#### Daily

#### Immediate Interrupt Personal

**Requirement:** This talent must be used during a skill challenge to discover a location in the wild.

**Effect:** You can re-roll a Nature or Perception check during the skill challenge.

## Perception

A swift blur in the distance, a faint odor of body sweat, or a slight breeze between two stones can make the difference between surviving a quest or dying in it. Perception is the most commonly used skill in the system and its use should never be taken lightly. You never know what minute detail could keep you alive for the next level.

### Finely Tuned Senses

Perception Talent (Heroic)

There is very little that can escape your five senses...

#### Daily

#### Standard Action Close burst 1

**Effect:** While actively detecting something using the standard Perception skill rules, you gain a +5 bonus to your Perception check for anything within range.

## Religion

The presence of the gods is all around us and evidence of their intent can be seen every day. Following their path can be tricky and left to much interpretation, but you have studied their teachings and know how others perceive their objectives. This kind of knowledge can come in handy from time to time and one never knows when a small deed can be rewarded in the afterlife.

### Obscure Knowledge

Religion Talent (Heroic)

The study of gods and immortals can often lead to an interesting fact that can be recalled at any time.

#### Daily

#### Minor Action Personal

**Effect:** Make one Religion check with a +5 bonus and gain an extra healing surge if you roll 25 or higher. This healing surge can be used at a later time in the day, but expires when you take an extended rest.

## Stealth

To be hidden is to continue and there are times when drawing a weapon will not guarantee your success in a quest. The subtle steps of an assassin or thief is called for and even the burliest fighter must learn this.

### Deep Cover

Stealth Talent (Heroic)

Just when it looks like you'll be caught, your skill overcomes and you can remain hidden.

#### Daily

#### Immediate Reaction Personal

**Trigger:** You failed an opposed Stealth check.

**Effect:** Re-roll your Stealth check against the opposed Perception check. If it is higher than your previous, you can replace it and try to remain hidden from your target.

## Streetwise

Some areas of town were never meant for civilization, but they are the streets you must pass through. Information is your guide and keeping a close ear to the cobblestone can spare you long nights of aimless wandering. In some cases, it's not who you know, but who you pretend to know that matters.

### False Source

Streetwise Talent (Heroic)

There's nothing a small lie can get when the truth fails you.

#### Daily

#### Immediate Interrupt Close burst 1

**Trigger:** You failed a Streetwise check.

**Effect:** Re-roll the Streetwise check and use the new result to replace your previous roll.

## Thievery

Never viewed as an honest profession, there are uses to a pick pocket and skilled locksmith, but sometimes you need to pin the blame on someone else to make a clean getaway. Especially if that decoy just happens to be a guard looking to arrest you...

### Divert Attention

Thievery Talent (Heroic)

You can snatch an item while making the target think someone else did it.

#### Daily

#### Immediate Reaction Close burst 1

**Trigger:** A successful Thievery check used to pick pockets.

**Effect:** You make it appear that someone else within the burst tried to pick the target's pocket.

# COMBAT ADVANTAGE

If you picked up Heroic Talents before, you'll know exactly what these talents are for. If not, you COULD pick those up (they're free, just like this one) or get the quick summary below.

Talents are skill-based powers designed to highlight your character's abilities in non-combat encounters. Whenever your character gains a new utility power, you can replace it with a talent so long as the skill connected to the talent is one of your trained skills. Otherwise, they function exactly as class powers. The ones you find in this edition of Combat Advantage are designed for paragon-level characters. Talents at this level elevate your skills and give you new and sometimes bizarre alternate uses unavailable to anyone else. Enjoy!

Todd Crapper

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** This copy is a revised edition based on feedback and a customer review by Jim Clunie. Thanks to everyone for their recommendations and I hope this version suits your campaign better.

## Paragon Talents

Many talents provide alternate uses for action points, just as paragon path powers would, opening up new possibilities for your character. In the case of talents, action points are used to replicate surges of adrenaline, a burst of strength, or a sudden flash of memory.

### How to Read a Talent

Talents are presented as powers and function exactly as they do, since they are designed to replace utility powers at heroic levels. They can only function as encounter or daily powers and are listed as heroic, paragon, or epic talents. (Only heroic talents are provided at this time; stay tuned for paragon and epic talents to be released later.) The power source of the talent remains blank, as a talent is suited to any class, regardless of their power source.

### Acrobatics

Lithe to perfection, the ultimate acrobat can bend and twist their way out of anything in such a way they can become impossible to hit. In the spur of the moment, they can step past any trap and avoid dangers everyone else must face.

#### Danger Snap

#### Acrobatics Talent (Paragon)

A cloud of acid, a ball of fire, or a spray of ice cannot move as fast you.

#### Encounter

**Immediate Reaction**      **Personal**

**Trigger:** An area attack targeted on you.

**Effect:** You can slide up to 5 squares to avoid an area attack.

**Special:** If you cannot avoid the attack with this talent, you are instantly subject to it but can make saves as normal.

### Arcana

The study of the supernatural can bring great knowledge and power, but there are few who can handle its massive power fluxes. As with everything in the arcane studies, some have found a way to master more from their rituals.



## Ritual Boost

## Arcana Talent (Paragon)

The myriad lyrics of the ritual are yours to master.

### Daily

#### Standard Action (Special)

#### Personal

**Effect:** A single ritual cast with this talent enhances the strength of the ritual or quickens the time to complete a ritual. You can choose to increase the duration by 50% or decrease the time of the ritual by 5 minutes.

**Special:** While listed as a standard action, this power is used for the time of the ritual. Should you use the ritual under duress, concentrating on the ritual with this talent requires at least a standard action each round.

## Athletics

The activities of the athlete are long and arduous, relying on long, extended rolls of their abilities. There are times when a sudden recuperation is required and those with talents such as these can accomplish just that.

## Blast of Strength

## Athletics Talent (Paragon)

You surge forward and increase your effort.

### Daily

#### Minor Action

#### Personal

**Requirement:** You must spend an action point.

**Effect:** You can lock down one Athletic skill check of your choice. After making your initial Athletics check, you continue to use the same result for every round for the remainder of the encounter or until you must use another skill to complete a task. For example, if you are swimming across a channel, you can lock down your Athletics score and continue swimming across without impediment, but as soon as you make a Perception check, the use of this talent ends and you must roll your Athletics skills round-by-round as normal. You can lock down your Athletics result as soon as you activate this talent.

## Bluff

Long-winded conversations and slow-witted minds create a gold mine of opportunity for those talented distractions with this talent. Picking up on the slightest nuances of someone's personality, they can use a much better play of words against them.

## Insightful Bluff

## Bluff Talent (Paragon)

As your interaction with a character continues, you gain a stronger advantage against them.

### Encounter

**Minor Action**      **Personal**

**Effect:** You gain a +2 bonus to your Bluff check for every 2 rounds you have been talking to another character until your Bluff check modifier is doubled.. This talent can be used in a skill challenge. Any bonuses gained come from rounds prior to the activation of this talent.

## Diplomacy

There is great pride and honor in speaking openly with another in heated dialogue, but there are also times where a good lie or a firm word can go a long way. Sometimes, the only thing that matters is that the other side has agreed with you.

## Sharp Tongue

## Diplomacy Talent (Paragon)

With a quick response and a firm gaze, you can tilt the argument in your favor.

### Encounter

**Minor Action**      **Personal**

**Effect:** You can replace a Diplomacy check with a Bluff or Intimidate check or re-roll a Diplomacy check.

## Dungeoneering

Learning the typical traps, designs, and dangers of the dungeon never comes from books, but through the accounts of others who have lived to tell their experiences. But the dead can tell even more.

## Death Recall

## Dungeoneering Talent (Paragon)

A corpse tells many tales...

### Daily

**Minor Action**      **Personal**

**Prerequisite:** There must be the remains of a body or evidence of trauma to a person or creature in the dungeon when this talent is used.

**Effect:** You can use visual clues provided by the corpse or traumatic sign learn the specifics of the trap or creature that killed or injured it with a DC 20 Dungeoneering check.

## Endurance

There is only so much the physical body can withstand before sheer willpower takes over and one's memory can have a lot to play with that. While meditation has been used to soothe the aching muscles, those in dire circumstances can reflect on another time in their life and find relief in the past.

## Terrain Recollection

## Endurance Talent (Paragon)

When your surroundings are too intense, you can think back to easier days.

**Daily**

**Standard Action (special)      Personal**

**Prerequisite:** You must be situated in an environment that causes hit point loss. It must be the overall environment causing the damage, such as the extreme heat inside a volcano or walking the polar icecaps.

**Effect:** By concentrating every round in which you use this power, you can temporarily ignore any additional rolls to ignore or minimize environmental damage. You are treated as if you succeeded in your required roll. As soon as you break concentration, this power is used.

**Sustain Minor:** The talent persists.

## Heal

Some wounds are worse than others and anyone facing a blade on a daily basis will one day fall. Many of those who live past such moments recall the aid of their compatriots calling them back from the dead as the sole reason for their life today. For those trained in the art of medicine, there are multiple survivors telling that story about them.

## Last Moment's Rush

## Heal Talent (Paragon)

Just as your ally is about to fade away, you bring her back.

**Daily**

**Standard Action      Target One ally**

**Attack:** Charisma vs. Will

**Effect:** This power can replace a fallen ally's last ditch save throw against dying. . On your next turn after the ally has failed one of his last ditch save throws against death, you can use this talent and use your result to replace the ally's result. Any modifiers given to the ally also apply to your save throw.

## History

There is too much in the past to forget and much it can teach us. Those schooled in the lessons of history know this well and look to the past for guidance in the present... and possibly to the future.

## Vivid Tales

## History Talent (Paragon)

Remembering a childhood bedtime story, a means to your problem is at hand.

**Daily**

**Standard Action      Personal**

**Effect:** Add your History skill modifier to any skill roll in this round.

## Insight

With time and countless fallen dungeons behind you, an adventurer develops a sixth sense to danger. Their experience into the macabre and deceitful grows into an innate voice from just ahead of them, telling them something is amiss, yet never knowing until it is too late or they have stepped well away from the risk.

### Step Back

### Insight Talent (Paragon)

At the last second, you rebuke your initial attempt and make another.

#### Daily

**Immediate Interrupt**    **Personal**

**Requirement:** You must spend an action point.

**Effect:** You can re-roll any skill check or force an opponent to re-roll an attack made against you.

**Special:** This power does not work on close or area attacks.

## Intimidate

Ferocity, rage, and bloodlust have their part to play in battle and in any number of social encounters. When you strike an opponent with a blow that would drop a horse and he merely become enraged, it leaves its mark on your will to fight.

### Fearsome Gaze

### Intimidate Talent (Paragon)

A painful strike makes you mad and your enemies can feel it.

#### Daily

**Immediate Reaction**    **Close burst 1**

**Requirement:** You must spend an action point.

**Trigger:** You have just become bloodied.

**Effect:** All enemies within range of the burst are considered bloodied for one round.

## Nature

Simply walking through the forest does not endow you with an understanding of it. Many wild wanderers learn the ways of nature and can use it to their favour in any number of ways.

### Hidden Nature

### Nature Talent (Paragon)

Sneaking up on your opponent is easier when you're in your element.

#### Encounter

**Minor Action**    **Personal**

**Requirement:** You must be in a wilderness environment.

**Effect:** You can add a +4 bonus to any skill check until the end of the encounter.

## Perception

There is no adventure without the thrill of experiencing it. To see the sight you will see, taste the terror, and smell the fear in your enemies, you need to be alerted and focused. Keen attention doesn't always mean how much you can detect at the moment, but whether or not you can recall it to exact detail later on.

### Unseen

### Perception Talent (Paragon)

You saw it the first time, but it only hits you now.

#### Daily

#### Standard Action

#### Personal

**Requirement:** You must spend an action point.

**Prerequisite:** You must have failed a previous Perception check early in the adventure.

**Effect:** Re-roll the previously failed Perception check. If you succeed, you can gain the effects of the Perception check now as it would have been before.

## Religion

When demons, dragons, wizards, and portals to other worlds surround you, it helps to have faith. There is a sense of peace in knowing how your soul will be treated in the afterlife and that knowledge comes in handy under pressure. Sometime, a little faith can go a long way. And sometimes, faith can pay you back in turn.

### Faithful Reward

### Religion Talent (Paragon)

Filled with belief, you offer a prayer to the gods and act with confidence.

#### Daily

#### Minor Action

#### Personal

**Requirement:** You must spend an action point.

**Effect:** You gain +10 on any skill check in this round.

## Stealth

There is more to subtlety than dark shadows and silent feet. You will have to hide in plain sight every now and then and it's the ability to mask your appearance without cover that impresses your fellows.

### Plain Sight

### Stealth Talent (Paragon)

With a quick tuck of the hood, you conceal your face from notice.

#### Daily

#### Move Action

#### Close blast 5

**Attack:** Stealth vs. Reflex

**Effect:** You gain the effects of a Stealth check without the need for darkness, cover, or any other distractions. You can essentially attempt to hide in plain sight. If a target already had sight of you before activating this power, you gain a +4 to the DC of the skill check.

## Streetwise

Knowing the right people to spread your message can take you places. Leaking out a rumor that someone's life is in danger unless they pack up and head out of town can quickly and simply remove an annoyance or draw someone out of hiding. Time and reputation are your allies to get what you need.

### Bait

### Streetwise Talent (Paragon)

You need to get the word out and put the fear of the gods into them.

#### Daily

#### Standard Action

#### Target Special

**Attack:** Streetwise vs. Will

**Effect:** You plant a rumor of your choosing onto the street. Within 24 hours, the rumours have become the centre of attention and everyone believes it to be true. After this initial period, you choose a target to become subject to this talent. The target will believe the rumour to be true if your check succeeds and will act accordingly (though not always as you want). This results in the target disregarding any Intuition check against your Bluff for the remainder of the encounter.

## Thievery

Nobody likes having their things stolen, but anybody is willing to take a little something now and then. Professional thieves, or those with the knack for it, take pride in their accomplishment, particularly when no one is ever the wiser until he is long gone.

### Decoy

### Thievery Talent (Paragon)

The real copy is in your pocket and the fake one is still on the shelf.

#### Daily

#### Immediate Reaction

#### Special

**Trigger:** A successful Thievery check to steal an item.

**Attack:** Thievery vs. Will

**Effect:** You can use minor bits and scraps to forge a fake item (either in crude appearance or approximate weight). Anyone investigating the fake item becomes the target of the roll; this roll is done once per person investigating the fake item. If successful, the target believes it is genuine enough to ignore 24 hours or until he requires the item.



# COMBAT ADVANTAGE

## Reputation Feats

I have to admit something here: I'm not as big a fan of feats in 4E like I was in 3E. Playing a fighter in 3E was the only way to go for me because I could choose so many feats to make me a unique fighter and stand out from all others that came along. At one point, I was playing a half-orc with Improved Unarmed Combat – I was punching more than I was using my two-handed hammer. This was the benefit of feats, now toned down with powers and reducing feats to little perks here and there.

I've always been a fan of giving out feats as rewards and this was an idea devised for **Campaign Options: Commoners**. As a bonus prize to adventurers, they gain a feat to represent their infamy in the community. As adventurers go up in level and become famous for their deeds, they will gain some clout for good and bad. Reputation feats are a way to bring that into the game and give your players feats for which there is a story. A character with the Dragon Killer feat can use it to beef up his presence in town before the locals or can even suffer the consequences when another dragon specifically tracks him down to avenge its brother's death. No one said getting a free feat was a good idea.

Todd Crapper

Reputation feats are bonus feats given to players or available for selection at any tier. They are representations of specific actions and outcomes in their travels across the World and can be used to gain minor or extremely significant benefits during or in-between adventures.

Reputation feats are divided into three types: minor, major, and significant. Minor feats can be given away by the DM as part of a story-based award and provide an average bonus of +2 to social encounters within the local community. These benefits are level-based, allowing higher level characters to carry the word of their deeds further than lower level adventurers. Minor reputation feats cannot be selected by a player, they have to be awarded by the DM.

Major feats can only be purchased by the player when a new feat is available to him and have prerequisites which must be met in a previous adventure. For example, the Doomsayer feat requires the character to have survived an encounter with a powerful demon, devil, or other immortal creature. Major reputation feats grant unique bonuses for specific creature types or keywords and commonly have a conditional side effect connected with the event. In many cases, the hero will be targeted by monsters similar to those connected to the feat for the remainder of the campaign or until the player replaces the reputation feat with another. Major reputation feats are not recommended for story-based awards.

Significant reputation feats are rare and reserved for unique events in a character's career. These feats are granted for those near-impossible tasks where the hero was certainly beyond their scale to complete and yet succeeded nonetheless. Almost all significant reputation feats provide a new feat power for the hero's disposal. Significant reputation feats are not awarded as minor feats are and must be purchased by the player after accomplishing their impossible task. One example of a significant reputation feat, Lone Warrior, is provided below.

**NOTE:** Most major reputation feats list their benefits to creature which have been marked, but this is not exclusive to marking an opponent. Rangers may use these feats against any creature listed as their quarry. Warlocks can also use these feats against any creature they have cursed. So long as the intended creature falls under the conditions of the reputation feat, it is allowed.

## **Incorporating Reputation Feats into the Campaign**

Simply having the feat does not have to be the sole function of a feat – they are historical markers of past adventurers and DMs and players are highly encouraged to devise character elements to explain the feat. While such details are not provided in the individual feat descriptions below, there is nothing to stop a player from drafting up a visual connection to the feat.

For example, a druid with the Dragon Slayer feat can carry a large dragon scale with him and stitch it into the back of his cloak, forever marking him as a dragon slayer.

Reputation feats continue to function without these cues, but DMs may choose to provide a +2 bonus to their benefits for players who provide such details.

### **Corpse Killer (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Must have slain an undead creature at least three levels higher than yourself.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to resisting necrotic attacks and inflict twice as much damage against a marked undead creature.

**Special:** You are instantly marked by any other undead while in combat, even if the undead does not have the ability to mark an opponent. This only applies to creatures with the undead keyword.

### **Aberrant Slayer (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Must have slain an aberrant creature at least three levels higher than yourself.

**Benefit:** You add your Intelligence modifier to your damage roll against any aberrant creature.

**Special:** You are instantly marked by any aberrant creature while in combat, even if the aberrant creature does not have the ability to mark an opponent. This only applies to creatures with the aberrant origin.

### **Doomsayer (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** You must have survived an encounter with an immortal creature.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 bonus to all Knowledge checks involving immortal creatures. You also gain a +2 bonus to any binding, divination, scrying, travel, or warding rituals (player's choice).

**Special:** You are instantly marked by any other immortal while in combat, even if the immortal does not have the ability to mark an opponent.

## **Dragon Slayer (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Must have slain a dragon at least three levels higher than yourself.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 bonus to any Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Streetwise checks with any member of the core races in your campaign (DMs discretion) and receive a -10% bonus to the cost of any armour purchased from them.

**Special:** You are instantly marked by any other dragon while in combat, even if the dragon does not have the ability to mark an opponent. This only applies to creatures with the dragon keyword.

## **Elemental Killer (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Must have slain an elemental at least three levels higher than yourself.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 bonus to all Perception, Nature, or Knowledge checks to detect a hiding or concealed elemental and gain a +2 bonus to your Reflex defence against elemental attacks.

**Special:** You are instantly marked by an elemental creature while in combat, even if the elemental does not have the ability to mark an opponent. This only applies to creatures with the elemental origin.

## **Favourite Guest (Minor Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** You must have completed a quest involving a local innkeeper or other appropriate establishment.

**Benefit:** You can sleep and eat for free at the establishment. Any party members or guests can do so for 50% off.

## **Fey Tracker (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Must have slain a fey creature at least three levels higher than yourself.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 bonus to all Knowledge and Nature checks involving fey creatures and can increase your speed by 2 while in pursuit of a fey creature.

**Special:** You are instantly marked by any fey creature while in combat, even if the fey creature does not have the ability to mark an opponent. This only applies to creatures with the fey origin.

## **Giant Killer (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Must have slain a creature at least two sizes larger than yourself.

**Benefit:** You gain one action point whenever you encounter any creature at least two sizes larger than yourself.

**Special:** You are instantly marked by any creature engaged in battle using this feat, even if the creature does not have the ability to mark an opponent.

## **Infamous Blade (Minor Reputation)**

**Requirement:** You must choose a specific weapon in your arsenal and display it for others to see.

**Benefit:** Holding your weapon or implement before others enralls them. You gain a +2 bonus to any Diplomacy or Intimidate skill check.

## **Legend (Minor Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Saviour

**Benefit:** You gain the Saviour feat to the number of communities equal to one-fourth your level. The DM chooses those communities for you.

## **Lone Warrior (Signifcant Reputation)**

**Requirement:** You have must have defeated a solo opponent single-handedly.

**Benefit:** You gain the Lone Warrior power as described below.

### **Lone Warrior**

### **Feat Power**

Summoning the strength and courage from your inspiring past battles, you rise above your weaknesses and lash out with your sword.

#### **Daily \* Martial**

#### **Immediate Reaction**

**Melee weapon**

**Trigger:** You are bloodied.

**Attack:** Strength vs. AC

**Damage:** 2[W] plus Charisma modifier damage

**Effect:** You recover a number of hit points equal to the amount you have inflicted on your opponent.

## **Mark of Death (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** You must have been reduced to less than 0 hp and survived on your third and final save throw.

**Benefit:** You can receive a fourth save throw to avoid death when dropped to less than 0 hp.

## **Professional Touch (Minor Reputation)**

**Benefit:** You can save 20% off equipment repairs or other costs to restore a damaged or weakened item, such as a weapon, armour, or an implement.

## **Royal Seal (Minor Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Meet and establish good communication with any member of a royal family.

**Benefit:** You can use this feat to automatically succeed at a skill check of your choice.

**Special:** This feat grants you a physical seal or marker to demonstrate your allegiance and servitude to the royal family. You can use this feat any number of times up to one-half your level and gain an additional use for every two levels increased in the campaign.

### **Saviour (Minor Reputation)**

**Benefit:** You save 40% off any purchases made within the community.

**Special:** This feat is only connected to a particular community. You must be present within the community when given this feat.

### **Shadow Scar (Major Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Must have slain a shadow creature at least three levels higher than yourself.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 bonus to all Dungeoneering, Perception, or Insight checks involving shadow creatures and gain a +2 bonus to all defenses against any shadow creature you have marked.

**Special:** You are instantly marked by any shadow creature while in combat, even if the shadow creature does not have the ability to mark an opponent. This only applies to creatures with the shadow origin.

### **Swooning Fans (Minor Reputation)**

**Prerequisite:** Any other minor reputation feat.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to any skill check involving a member of the opposite sex while using any other minor reputation feat. For example, if you are using the Favourite Guest feat to stay for free at an inn, you gain a +2 bonus to your skills while flirting with the barmaid.



# COMBAT ADVANTAGE

Now that this idea is done and finished, it's not exactly turning out as planned. The original concept was to make a "gag role" for 4e that was a neat concept but presented as more of a joke but when I actually started putting the pieces together, it actually works. So what was intended to be nothing more than a moment's snicker has now become an interesting prospect that could add a little bit of flavor to your campaign.

Sidekicks are for any GMs and players who enjoyed characters like gully dwarves, hobbits, and any traditional view of a stereotypical gnome or halfling; or the addition of a humanizing element to the campaign by taking on the vengeful villager seeking revenge for his family; or the young apprentice without the proper tutelage. These are special NPC members of the party who hold a personal place in the players' hearts for their charm and personality – they never hold a strategic importance to the battle, yet they make our favourite games richer for their presence.

Todd Crapper

## Sidekicks

They are the loyal followers of mighty heroes, firm believers in the cause, sworn to repay a PC for his deeds with his life while offering no incredible skills. In time, they become an equal force within the party and contribute that unique element to the campaign to make it one of your most memorable ventures.

Sidekicks are a special role in that they are minions designed to aid the PCs. Typically beginning as NPC guides, packmules, and sources of comedy relief, a sidekick can become a precious member of the party over time and can learn to take on the rigors of a class to fight side-by-side with the rest of the party... possibly even becoming a player character themselves.

This special edition of Combat Advantage provides complete rules for creating sidekicks in your campaign, along with three examples and rules for expanding sidekicks into class-based NPCs.

### The Sidekick Role

"Sidekick" is a special role assigned to an NPC allied with the heroes. They are treated as minions initially and expand into more competent members of the party over time. Any existing minion can be easily converted to a sidekick with very little effort should you choose to incorporate one into your campaign. They are considered allies and gain the benefits of any powers and rituals invoked on the party (unless a player chooses not to allow the sidekick).

Sidekicks each have a special ability involving hit points. Rather than gain experience in the traditional sense as the PCs, sidekicks gain additional hit points as they assist the party in quests through combat and non-combat encounters. For more details on this ability, see the Expanding Sidekicks section.

### Creating a Sidekick

Use the following guidelines for creating your own sidekick. Choose an appropriate level for the sidekick based on the average level of the party (typically half of the party's level), but it is rare to find a sidekick higher than the heroic tier.



**Initiative** (1/2 level)

**Hit Points** 1; a missed attack never damages a sidekick

**AC** 12 + (4/5 level; round up)

**Other Defenses** 10 + (4/5 level; round up)

**Attack vs AC** 3 + (level)

**Attack vs Other Defenses** 2 + (4/5 level; round up)

All sidekicks have the Lucky Break power, as detailed below.

### Lucky Break

### Sidekick Power

*That last one should have killed you...*

**Daily**

**Immediate Reaction**      **Personal**

**Trigger:** The sidekick is reduced to 0 hit points or less by a single attack.

**Effect:** Make a save throw. If you succeed, you are instead unconscious and helpless until attended to by an ally (as a minor action by the ally).

## Sidekick Examples

### Helpful Guide

### Level 5 Sidekick

**Small/medium natural humanoid**

**XP -**

*Leaning heavily on his walking stick, this stout figure wears a wide smile on his face. He'll know the way.*

**Initiative** +2      **Senses** Perception +8

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damage a sidekick

**AC** 16, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14

**Speed** 6

⊕ **Walking Stick** (standard; at-will) • **Martial, Weapon**

+8 vs AC; 1d6+2 damage

[R] **Sling** (standard; at-will) • **Martial, Weapon**

Range 2/5; +9 vs AC; 1d4+2 damage

**Lucky Break** (immediate reaction, when the sidekick is reduced to 0 hit points or less; daily)

The helpful guide makes a save throw and remains at 0 hit points if successful. He is considered unconscious and helpless until attended to by an ally (minor action from the ally).

**Neutral**

**Languages** Common

**Skills** History +7, Nature +10

**Str** 11 (+2)    **Dex** 12 (+3)    **Wis** 14 (+4)

**Con** 10 (+2)    **Int** 14 (+4)    **Cha** 12 (+3)

**Equipment** walking stick, sling, backpack

Helpful guides are commonly found in major communities and remote villages. Their knowledge of the surrounding terrain is impressive and they know secret routes and whispered rumours regarding some of the nasty elements of their region. They rarely accept payment and enjoy the pleasure of company or are swayed to the heroes' cause and will back them up in any way they can.

### Combat

While untrained in combat, helpful guides can swing a wicked walking stick over the heads of many monsters. They are never helpless and carry a sling with them to hunt game or fend off orc attacks.

#### Young Follower

Medium natural humanoid

Level 3 Sidekick

XP -

*His face is soiled, his back is sore, and his fingertips are bloody but he carries the widest grin of anyone in the party.*

**Initiative** +1      **Senses** Perception +4

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damage a sidekick

**AC** 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13

**Speed** 6

⚔ **Frying Pan** (standard; at-will) • **Martial, Weapon**

+6 vs AC; 1d4+1 damage

#### Determination

A young follower gains a +2 bonus to his Strength score for encumbrance when carrying supplies within 5 squares of his allies.

**Lucky Break** (immediate reaction, when the sidekick is reduced to 0 hit points of less; daily)

The young follower makes a save throw and remains at 0 hit points if successful. He is considered unconscious and helpless until attended to by an ally (minor action from the ally).

#### Neutral

**Languages** Common

**Skills** Nature +5, Streetwise +5

**Str** 10 (+1)    **Dex** 11 (+1)    **Wis** 12 (+2)

**Con** 12 (+2)    **Int** 11 (+1)    **Cha** 12 (+2)

**Equipment** pot and pans, backpack, tattered blanket

Naïve and possibly misguided fans, young followers want to become adventures just like the heroes they tag along with. Eager to carry their backpacks, cook their meals, and forage for herbs needed in rituals, they are beyond willing to prove their worth to the heroes under any circumstances.

### Combat

Without any proper weapons training, they swing whatever they can get their hands on and hope it either kills the target or gives them a chance to run away before the target turns around and stabs them to death.

**Lone Survivor****Level 8 Sidekick****Medium natural humanoid****XP -***There is a rage in his eyes that will never be quenched until his family has been avenged...***Initiative** +4      **Senses** Perception +7**HP** 1; a missed attack never damage a sidekick**AC** 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16**Speed** 6⚔ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Martial, Weapon**

+11 vs AC; 1d6+2 damage

↩ **Hateful Strike** (standard; encounter; the targets must be the lone survivor's mortal enemy)

Close burst 1; +10 vs Fortitude; 1d6+5 damage

**Lucky Break** (immediate reaction, when the sidekick is reduced to 0 hit points or less; daily)

The lone survivor makes a save throw and remains at 0 hit points if successful. He is considered unconscious and helpless until attended to by an ally (minor action from the ally).

**Neutral****Languages** Common**Skills** History +7, Nature +8**Str** 12 (+5)    **Dex** 12 (+5)    **Wis** 13 (+5)**Con** 13 (+5)    **Int** 12 (+5)    **Cha** 12 (+5)**Equipment** short sword, daughter's burned teddy bear

As the only villagers remaining from a vicious attack, the lone survivor was discovered by the heroes and travels with them. He is eager to learn the ways of the sword, master the arcane energies of a spell, or perfect his skill in the shadows to one day avenge his loved ones.

**Combat**

Lone survivors have a propensity for excessive and thoughtless violence. They dive into combat without strategy or consideration for their own safety and unleash untapped rage on their mortal enemies. Given time and patience, they can become a formidable member of the party... if they can stay alive that long.

## Apprentice

Medium natural humanoid

Level 6 Sidekick

XP -

*That youthful gaze betrays a raw power just out of his control.*

**Initiative** +3      **Senses** Perception +6

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damage a sidekick

**AC** 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16

**Speed** 6

☹ **Force Blast** (standard; at-will) • **Force**

Range 5; +9 vs AC; 1d8+2 damage

↩ **Disruption** (standard; at-will) • **Thunder**

Close burst 2; +8 vs Fortitude; 1d4+2 damage thunder and target is stunned (save ends)

**Lucky Break** (immediate reaction, when the sidekick is reduced to 0 hit points of less; daily)

The apprentice makes a save throw and remains at 0 hit points if successful. He is considered unconscious and helpless until attended to by an ally (minor action from the ally).

### Neutral

**Languages** Common

**Skills** Arcana +10, History +7

**Str** 8 (+2)      **Dex** 11 (+3)      **Wis** 14 (+4)

**Con** 10 (+3)      **Int** 15 (+4)      **Cha** 12 (+3)

**Equipment** homemade spellbook, torn robe

Many cultures rich in magic will only endow their lessons to the wealthy and fortunate, forsaking genuine talent due to lineage. Apprentices seek out the knowledge of magic but lack the means to gain a formal education and so they travels the wilds in the hopes of joining forces with an adventuring party.

### Combat

With only small range spells at his disposal, the apprentice can make do by pushing around opponents with a few Force Blasts and breaking up crowds with his Disruption spell.

## Expanding Sidekicks

When run properly, sidekicks can become an integral part of the adventuring team. They develop quirks, habits, and personality to endear themselves to the players and heroes will throw themselves in front of imminent danger to save them. Without their sidekick, the party is no longer complete. When that day comes, it is time to make them more than just a sidekick.

These rules provide guidelines for adapting sidekicks into complete NPCs or even player characters.

**Skills:** Sidekicks are treated as supporting characters and, as such, are not as detailed as PCs. As time progresses, they will be called upon

to perform any number of skills not listed in their initial design. Treat all skills provided in the initial sidekick design as trained skills; all other skills are considered untrained.

**Accomplishments:** Sidekick earn accomplishments as they grow and develop into more than just sidekicks. Every time a sidekick performs an action that would provide a PC with experience points, they gain an accomplishment. Once the sidekick has earned a number of accomplishments equal to their level, they gain one permanent hit point. The sidekick increases any modifiers to his attack rolls, ability scores, and so on as per the standard rules for level adjustment and the sidekick creation guidelines given above.

The sidekick gains one aspect from a template he should choose to train in for every increase to his hit point total. For example, if the sidekick is training to become a cleric, he can choose the XXXX prayer to add to his repertoire. When the sidekick has gained three such powers from the appropriate NPC template, he becomes a full-fledged character from that template at his current level.

**Converting Roles:** Converting the sidekick to a NPC template removes the sidekick role and any corresponding powers, such as Lucky Break, from the character's power list.

**Experience Points:** Once the sidekick gains a full NPC template, he earns XP as every other member of the party, but the former sidekick does not count as a party member when dividing XP. For example, if there are five PCs and one NPC in the party, the XP award for an encounter is only divided by five and the NPC receives equal share.

**Becoming a Player Character:** Instead of rising from sidekick to NPC, any willing player can take the character on as a PC. Simply create a fully detailed player character at the former's sidekick's level or at a level chosen by the DM (particularly in the case of a former sidekick in the heroic tier while the other PCs are in the paragon tier). Such choices can be tricky and are difficult to cover under this article – be sure to involve all players in a discussion as to allow a co-operative introduction of a new PC to the group.

*Combat Advantage is a series of free supplemental material for the  
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