

Fall 2010 Issue 15

DRUIDS & FOREST BLOOD

# KOBOLD™

Quarterly

The Switzerland of the Edition Wars

Thief

## RIGS

10 New

## WEAPONS

It's a

## TRAP!

Giant

## ANTS!

Unstoppable

## HORSEMEN

OPEN  
DESIGN

100% Official Content

US \$7.99 CAN \$10.99 EURO €6.99



Living Traps / Collaborative Killers / Pit Traps / Side-View Dungeons  
Margaret Weis Interview / Zobeck Underworld / Monte Cook on Simulation  
Skill Stances / Satanic Panic / Make Criticals Awesome / Book Reviews

[www.koboldquarterly.com](http://www.koboldquarterly.com)



# YOU GAME?

REGISTER TODAY FOR  
NEONCON LAS VEGAS

Take **10%** off with promo code **KQ10**

**NOVEMBER 4 – 7, 2010**

TROPICANA LAS VEGAS HOTEL & CASINO

**PLAY GAMES. MAKE FRIENDS. DEFEAT EVIL.**

- The Bazaar – Our dealer room is open to the public
- Pathfinder Society – Play an exclusive interactive
- Independent Games Festival – Story Games Galore
- White Wolf Camarilla – Southwest Featured Game
- Warhammer Fantasy/40K Grand Tournament
- D&D Miniatures - North American Arena Championship
- Cthulhu Mythos – Call of Cthulhu and Cthulhu Live
- Living Forgotten Realms – All the latest adventures
- Magic: The Gathering – Exclusive Tournament Events
- Starfleet Battles – Rated Ace & Open Patrol Tourneys
- Board Games – The hottest US & Euro Games

**GAMESU — THE GAME DESIGN UNCONFERENCE**

Learn about the craft and business of game design from seasoned industry pros. Visit <http://youtube.com/neoncon>

[www.neoncon.com](http://www.neoncon.com)  
[www.twitter.com/neoncon](http://www.twitter.com/neoncon)

# NEONCON

CREATE. EDUCATE. CELEBRATE. GEEK LIFE.



Ferelden

# Needs YOU!



A new age of fantasy roleplaying has begun! Based on the hit *Dragon Age: Origins* computer game, the **DRAGON AGE ROLEPLAYING GAME** brings the excitement of BioWare's rich fantasy world to the tabletop. This classic-style boxed set includes a *Player's Guide*, *Game Master's Guide*, a poster map of the land of Ferelden, and three six-sided dice. All this for the low price of **\$29.95!**

The core system is easy to use and fun to play, featuring an innovative stunt system that keeps combat and spellcasting tense and exciting. So gather your friends, grab some dice, and get ready to enter a world of heroes and villains, of knights and darkspawn, of gods and demons...

The world of *DRAGON AGE!*



Dragon Age, the Dragon Age logo, BioWare, and the BioWare logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of EA International (Studio and Publishing) Ltd. in the United States, Canada, and other countries. Green Ronin, Adventure Game Engine, and their associated logos are trademarks of Green Ronin Publishing.



# PATHFINDER

ROLEPLAYING GAME™

*Release  
the Hordes!*

**MORE THAN 300 NEW MONSTERS CULLED**

**FROM MYTHOLOGY, PATHFINDER ADVENTURES,**

**AND 35 YEARS OF FANTASY GAMING!**

**PATHFINDER BESTIARY 2**

**AVAILABLE NOW!**



Paizo Publishing, LLC, the Paizo golem logo, and Pathfinder are registered trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game is a trademark of Paizo Publishing, LLC. ©2010 Paizo Publishing, LLC.

[PAIZO.COM/PATHFINDER](http://PAIZO.COM/PATHFINDER)

# Contents

## EDITORIAL

Trapped! . . . . . 4

## FEATURES

**Nature's Orders** . . . . . 8

by Ryan Costello, Jr.  
PATHFINDER druids wild shape their class.

**Ecology of the Giant Ant** . . . . . 14

by Jonathan McAnulty  
The ants come marching two by two.

**Reasons to Ride** . . . . . 26

by David Adams  
4th Edition mounted combat springs into a gallop.

**Rig This!** . . . . . 34

by John Flemming  
Portable traps for thieves on the go.

**Pits of Despair** . . . . . 38

by Andrew Hind  
A pack of petrifying PATHFINDER pit traps.



### On the Cover

The art of William O'Connor appears on KQ covers frequently, but nothing quite like this piece, "Merlin and Arthur."

## CHARACTERS

**Masters of Great Skill:** . . . . . 42  
4e Skill Stances and powers

by Anthony Eichenlaub

**Collaborative Killers** . . . . . 44

by Michael Kortez

**Blades from the Past** . . . . . 47

by Alex Putnam

**Those Dark Dungeons Blues.** . . . . . 52

by James Lowder

**Children of the Wood** . . . . . 61

Woodland magic for PATHFINDER  
by Stefen Styrsky

## DESIGN AND DMING

**King of the Monsters: Horakh** . . . . . 50

by Jobe Bittman

**A Call to Awesome.** . . . . . 58

Story Critical for 4e  
by Quinn Murphy

**Going Vertical.** . . . . . 64

Using side-view dungeons  
by Mario Podeschi

**Jack in a Trap** . . . . . 70

by Philippe-Antoine Menard

## COLUMNS

**Simulating Game Reality** . . . . . 54

by Monte Cook

**Dragons, Con Artists, and Space Outlaws.** . . . . 56

An Interview with Margaret Weis  
by Wade Rockett

**Coming Next Issue.** . . . . . 67

**Book Reviews** . . . . . 68

by Pierce Watters

**Free City of Zobeck: The Cartways** . . . . . 72

by Wolfgang Baur

## COMICS

**10' x 10' Toon.** . . . . . 41

**Bolt & Quiver.** . . . . . 51



Editorial:

# Trapped!

The world around us seems safe, but it's so clearly not. Disease, slippery stairs, and currents carrying us out to sea are all part of the natural world: it's not just butterflies and flowers out there. Traps take this fear of invisible dangers to an extreme, playing on our fear and suspicion of the world around us. That's what lurks behind them.

Certainly the obvious dangers are, well, obvious. Fire burns, dragons bite, no one is surprised by this.

Traps are different. Their dangers are hidden right on top of us while remaining oblivious; then suddenly, traps change the world we know. Elevators fall. Air turns poisonous. Boulders tumble, and ceilings collapse.

That unexpectedness makes traps a joy for the GM ("Gotcha!"). Traps can be a giant physics lesson. You know, the approach that says: "Hey, your hero may defeat dragons, but he still plummets at  $9.8 \text{ m/s}^2$ ." Or they might be fiendishly well hidden, exploiting a moment of weakness when PCs are rummaging through loot.

While traps make players rightfully wary, traps can—in theory!—be a lot of fun for players as well. Finding them, knowing how to circumvent them, and turning them against foolish monsters can all be pretty satisfying. As a player, I find great satisfaction in not falling for a trap, in outwitting the trapsmith (and outwitting the GM by

proxy). And hey, there's XP in defeating that as well.

Traps are the ultimate expression of competitive, head-to-head rivalry between players and GMs. Unlike monsters, traps reveal how clever a GM is in dreaming up places to put them while lulling PCs into a false sense of security. Monsters are expected and planned-for. Traps, on the other hand, are just lurking around the edges, invisible until they make everything more exciting and potentially lethal. The best are baskets brimming with ticking bombs and secondary cascading triggered runes and tertiary explosions and spikes rigged in clever ways.

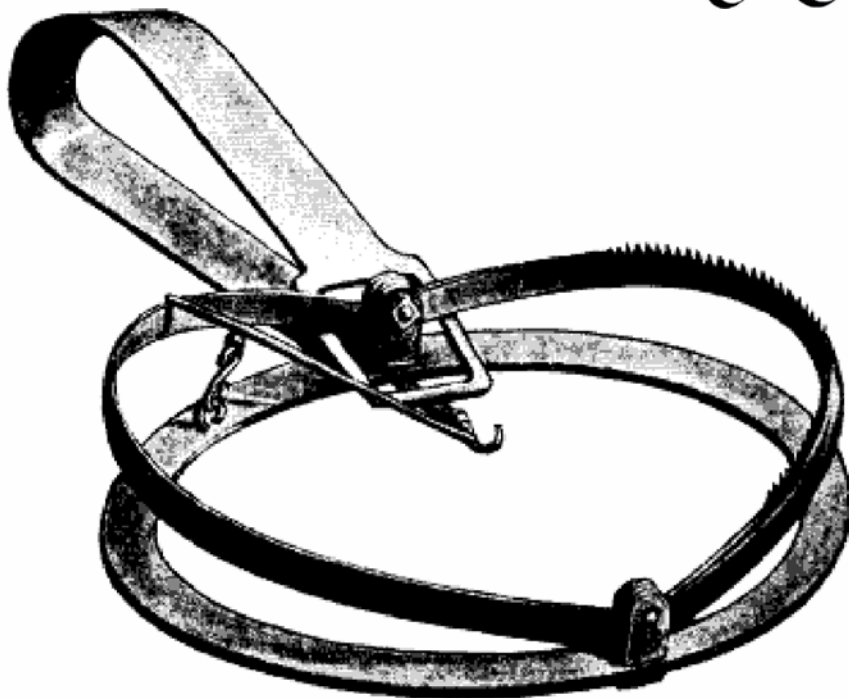
As a designer, I'm often stumped by ways to make traps live up to their potential. So this issue features different takes on them for players (with thief rigs in "Rig This!") and for GMs (with "Pits of Despair"). The trap needs reinvention every now and again. And we're happy to provide the trigger.

Let's remember the value of a little wariness. Even among the boldest heroes, victory is not quite certain, and death may claim even the stoutest heart when a hidden adder strikes. So celebrate the trap. Go forth, and set your snares for the foolish.

Until next time,

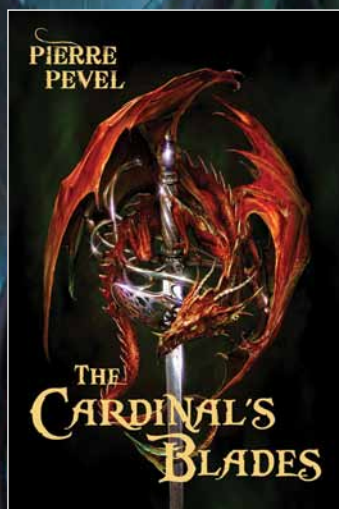
**Wolfgang Baur**

Kobold in Chief



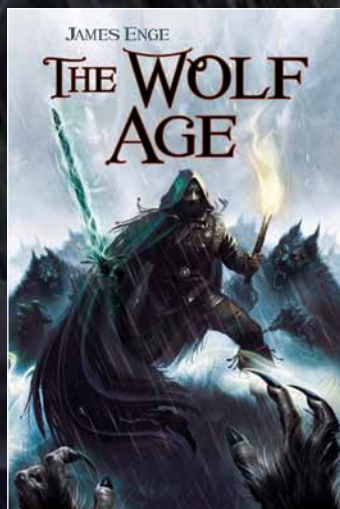
TAKING THE FIGHT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

COMING FROM PYR  
HEROIC ADVENTURE  
AT ITS FINEST



"... breathless, swashbuckling tale of intrigue, spying, and sword fights. . . . Likely to charm Anglophone audiences who enjoy action-packed adventure with a true historical sensibility."

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY  
starred review



"Werewolves clash with legends in the harrowing and beautiful third novel. . . . Will enthrall fans of the dark and sinister."

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY  
starred review



". . . rival religions, vividly choreographed fights, and lots of bloody battle. . . . This heroic fantasy should please fans of, say, George R. R. Martin's Song of Ice and Fire novels."

—BOOKLIST

# OPEN DESIGN™

## KOBOLD Quarterly™

**Kobold-in-Chief:** Wolfgang Baur

**Circulation Director:** Pierce Watters

**Cover Design:** Richard Clark

**Assistant Editor:** Scott Gable

**Consulting Editors:** Jeff Grubb and Neal Hebert

**Graphic Designer:** Crystal Frasier

**Ad Manager:** Shelly Baur

**Gearforged Copywriter/Marketer:** Wade Rockett

**Contributing Authors:** David Adams, Wolfgang Baur, Monte Cook, Ryan Costello, Jr., Anthony Eichenlaub, John Flemming, James Graham, Andrew Hind, Michael Kortez, James Lowder, Jonathan McAnulty, Quinn Murphy, Mario Podeschi, Alex Putnam, Wade Rockett, Pierce Watters

**Cover Artist:** William O'Connor

**Contributing Artists:** Michael Bielaczyc, Jobe Bittman, Louis-Léopold Boilly, Edward Burne-Jones, Gustav Dore, Nordisk Familjebok, Francis Grose, Rick Hershey, Joseph Jacobs, Michael Jaecks, John Reinhard Weguelin, Joe Slucher, Cory Trego-Erdner

**Cartographer:** Jonathan Roberts

**Court Calligrapher:** Shelly Baur

KOBOLD QUARTERLY™ Magazine is published four times a year by OPEN DESIGN LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced (except for review purposes) without the prior written consent of the publisher. Material published herein may not necessarily reflect the opinions of OPEN DESIGN, its owner and patrons, or its contributors, who are not liable for opinions expressed herein. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. Golarion and its place names are copyright Paizo Publishing and used by permission. Pathfinder is a registered trademark of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility Logo are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and are used under the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility License. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/compatibility> for more information on the compatibility license. Open Design, Free City of Zobeck, Kobold Quarterly, KQ, Kobold Magazine, the Advanced Feats logo, the Midgard logo, and the Kobold logo are trademarks of Open Design LLC.

**Subscriptions:** Please subscribe at [koboldquarterly.com](http://koboldquarterly.com), or send a check or money order to PO Box 2811, Kirkland WA, 98083, USA. PDF subscriptions are US\$16 per year, €11 in Europe. Paper and PDF combined subscriptions are US\$36 per year in the United States, US\$45 in Canada and Mexico, and US\$60 elsewhere.

**Back Issues:** Visit [koboldquarterly.com](http://koboldquarterly.com) to pick up back issues of KOBOLD QUARTERLY. Single paper issues of KOBOLD QUARTERLY are \$7.99 plus shipping. Single PDF issues are \$5.99 and are available at [koboldquarterly.com](http://koboldquarterly.com).


**Advertising:** Contact the staff at [shellybaur@koboldquarterly.com](mailto:shellybaur@koboldquarterly.com) for current rates. All ads are subject to approval, and KQ reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason.

**Open Game Content:** The Open content in this issue includes the weapon statistics in "Blades from the Past", the character class statistics for variant druids in "Nature's Orders" and the trap statistics in "Pits of Despair". All other material is Product Identity. No other portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission.

**Submissions and Design:** Each issue of KOBOLD QUARTERLY Magazine supports Open Design, an RPG design community. Article queries are accepted from freelancers, from KQ subscribers, and from Open Design members. To become a member, visit [koboldquarterly.com](http://koboldquarterly.com) and sign up as a patron of the Open Design community.

Printed in the U.S.A.

©2010 Open Design LLC



## This Kobold Courier is Lost

Help! Despite his glorious garments, this kobold courier is lost and confused. The address he wishes to deliver to has changed — and no one told him!


Poor sad courier.

Don't let this happen to your subscription; keep your courier going to the right address!

To update your address, please send an email with your old and new address to [subscriptions@koboldquarterly.com](mailto:subscriptions@koboldquarterly.com), or send a letter or postcard to

**Change of Address**  
 C/O KOBOLD QUARTERLY  
 PO Box 2811  
 Kirkland, WA 98083

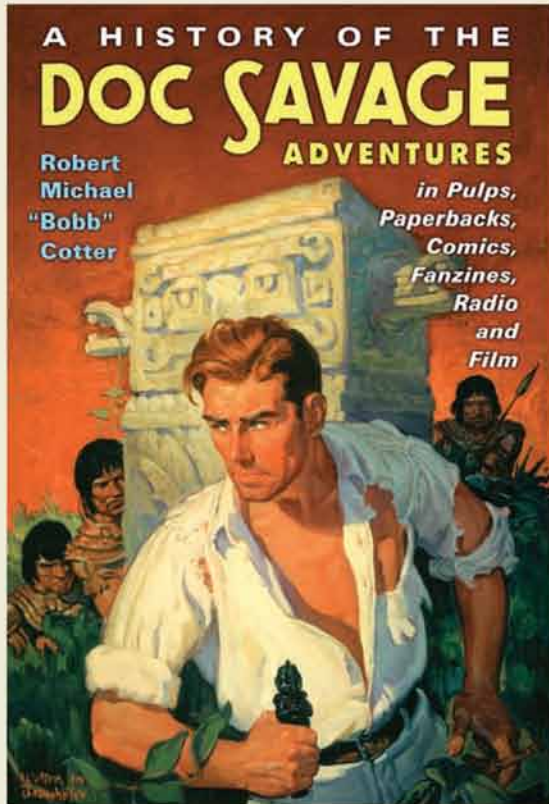
And we'll make sure that your issue is delivered correctly and with minimal delay.



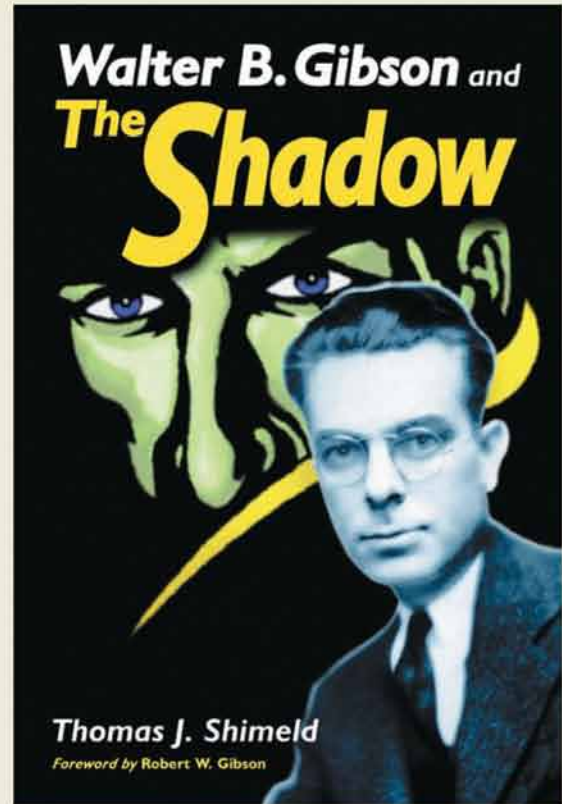


Designing a professional project? Homebrewing the group's next campaign?

# Refer to McFarland!

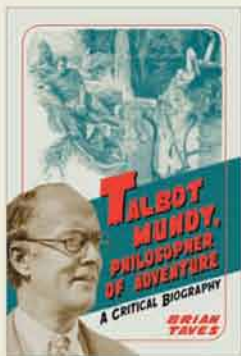


978-0-7864-4135-8 \$ 55 hardcover (7 × 10)



978-0-7864-2361-3 \$35 softcover (7 × 10)

**Serious books for gamers, designers, authors and libraries.**



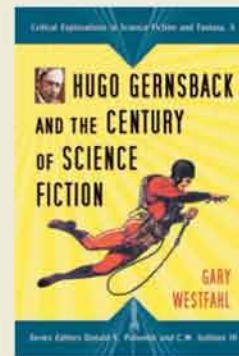
978-0-7864-2234-0  
\$39.95 softcover (7 × 10)



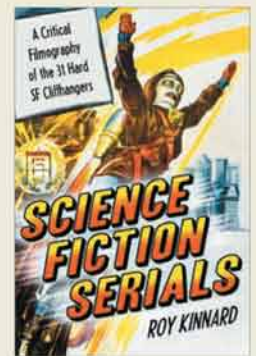
978-0-7864-1902-9  
\$35 softcover



978-0-7864-2351-4  
\$35 softcover



978-0-7864-3079-6  
\$35 softcover



978-0-7864-3745-0  
\$35 softcover



# McFarland

To order, call toll-free 800-253-2187, or go to [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com)

# Nature's Orders

## *Variant Druid Classes for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*

By Ryan Costello, Jr.

Art by Cory Trego-Erdner and Francis Grose

**A**nimals adapt to their environment for survival. Climates change, prey and predators migrate, humanity encroaches. If a creature cannot defend itself or cannot find a source of food, it dies. Very simple.

In some ways, druids have more in common with animals than with members of their own race. This is particularly true of druids that live in remote areas. The druids that city dwellers most often encounter revere nature as a whole, devoted to all its forms equally. Away from colonized lands, however, many druid orders favor specific aspects of the natural world. Like animals, they adapt to survive.

Approximately translated from the Druidic language, three of the more common deviated druid orders include **bestial druids**, who have unlocked wild shape's subtle secrets; **godai druids**, masters of the classic elements; and **purist druids**, driven to extinguish undead perversion. Their means may be different, but druids of these deviated orders see themselves the same as any other druid: guardians of the natural world and purveyors of balance.

The following three variant druid classes function exactly like the core druid with specific exceptions. Consult each variant druid's chart and class features. Any class features that have been omitted or modified from the core druid are listed. Any class features of the core druid that are not listed function normally. Characters that possess levels in druid or one of these variants cannot gain levels in another variant druid class.

### The Bestial Druid Order

Zoos prove that even heartless city dwellers with no concept of the natural order find animals fascinating. Animals are often stronger and faster than humanoids, capable of things it took the intelligent races magic or technology to accomplish.

Bestial druids aspire to fly like eagles, climb like apes, fight like lions, swim like fish, and wrestle like bears.

As a bestial druid, you function exactly like a standard druid with the following exceptions:

**Skills** Intimidate is a class skill for you; Spellcraft is not.

**Spells** You do not gain spells.

**Orisons** You do not gain orisons.

**Wild Weapon (Su)** At 1st level,

you can form a natural weapon as a swift action; it deals standard damage for a creature of your size, counts as a primary attack, and lasts until the beginning of your next turn. You can form a bite attack (1d4 Small, 1d6 Medium), two claw attacks (1d3 Small, 1d4 Medium), a gore attack (1d4 Small, 1d6 Medium), a slam attack (1d3 Small, 1d4 Medium), or a sting attack (1d3 Small, 1d4 Medium). Every time you use this ability, you choose the type of natural weapon formed. You cannot use this ability while wild shaped.

Starting at 8th level, you can form two natural weapons as a swift action, both counting as primary attacks. Starting at 15th level, you can form three natural weapons as a swift action, all counting as primary attacks. (Natural weapons that are formed in pairs, such as claws, count as a single wild weapon for the purpose of forming multiple natural weapons.)

**Wild Quality (Su)** With your deeper understanding of animals, you take on some of their qualities. Starting at 2nd level and every 4 levels thereafter, you gain one wild quality. You cannot select an individual wild quality more than once. These wild



**Table 1: Bestial Druid**

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Nature Bond, nature sense, wild empathy, wild weapon
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Wild quality, woodland stride
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Trackless step, wild shape (1/day)
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Resist nature's lure
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Wild shape (2/day)
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Wild quality
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Wild shape (3/day)
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Venom immunity, wild weapon
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Wild shape (4/day)
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Wild speed, wild quality
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Wild shape (5/day)
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	A thousand faces
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Wild shape (6/day), wild speed
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Timeless body, wild quality
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Wild shape (7/day), wild weapon
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Wild speed
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Wild shape (8/day)
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Wild quality
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Wild speed
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Wild shape (at will)

qualities work exactly like the special attacks and special qualities of the same name except where noted. The DC for wild qualities with saving throws is  $10 + 1/2$  your druid class level + your Con modifier. (See the Universal Monster Rules in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* for more information.)

At 2nd level, you can select one of the following wild qualities: blindsight 20 ft., darkvision 60 ft., hold breath (as a dolphin), scent, stench, and web.

At 10th level, you gain additional options to choose from: constrict (with slam natural weapon, damage equal to slam), grab, pounce, powerful charge (with gore natural weapon, damage equal to gore), rake (with claws natural weapon, damage equal to claws), rend (with claws natural weapon, damage equal to claws), spider poison (with bite or sting natural weapon; damage—injury; *save* Fort DC  $10 + 1/2$  your druid class level + your Con modifier; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Strength damage; *cure* 1 save).

**Wild Shape (Su)** You gain wild shape more quickly than a standard druid (see **Table 1: Bestial Druid**).



**Wild Speed (Su)** Beginning at 10th level, you can move like an animal without using wild shape. As an immediate action, you gain either a +5 ft. bonus to your base land speed or one of the following movement types (with a speed equal to your base land speed): burrow, climb, fly, or swim. You can only gain one benefit of this ability at a time; for example, you cannot gain a fly speed and a swim speed in the same round. Wild speed lasts until you wild shape, fall asleep, or choose a different type of wild speed.

Wild speed applies only when you are wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor, and not carrying a heavy load. Apply this bonus before modifying your speed due to load carried or armor worn. This bonus stacks with any other bonuses to your speed.

At 13th level and every 3 levels thereafter, all forms of your wild speed increase by +5 feet.

## The Godai Druid Order

The four classic elements—air, earth, fire, and water—are nature's most powerful forces. Left unchecked, they are also nature's most destructive.

In the hands of a magic user, they are devastating. For this reason, godai druids strive to master the elements. Good godai druids use this mastery to defend nature. Evil godai druids use it to destroy "civilization."

As a godai druid, you function exactly like a standard druid with the following exceptions:

**Spells** You cast divine spells drawn from the Air, Earth, Fire, and Water cleric domains. You can cast any spell you know without preparing it ahead of time. To learn or cast a spell, you must have a Wisdom score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The DC for a saving throw against your spell is 10 + the spell level + your Wisdom modifier.

Like other spell-casters, you can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day (see **Table 2: Godai Druid**). In addition, you receive bonus spells per day for a high Wisdom score.

Your selection of spells is extremely limited. You know all the spells on the Air, Earth, Fire, and Water cleric domain spell lists that you are high enough level to cast. Additionally, whenever you gain access to a new spell level, you learn the *summon nature's ally* spell of that spell level. Although you prefer to summon elementals and creatures of energy subtypes, your selection is not limited; for example, at 3rd level, you know and can cast *burning hands*, *obscuring mist*, *magic stone*, and *summon nature's ally I*. Upon reaching 4th level (and thus gaining access to 2nd level spells), you can also cast *fog cloud*, *produce flame*, *soften earth and stone*, *summon nature's ally II*, and *wind wall*.

Unlike a traditional druid, you need not prepare your spells in advance. You can cast any spell you know at any time, assuming you have spells remaining for the day for that spell level.

**Domains** By drawing spells from a specific divine force, you unlock new powers few other druids command. You gain access to the following four cleric domains: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. You derive your entire spell list from these four domains (as well



If you don't want to be  
like this guy, buy...

**THE  
STARFARER'S  
GAZETTE**

oh, and avoid that asteroid while you're at it.

**Cross • Dougherty • Lees**

**TRAVELLER**

Compatible Product



For use with...

**TWILIGHT SECTOR**

SPACE PERA<sup>10</sup>



as *summon nature's ally* spells). When determining the powers granted by these domains, your effective cleric level is equal to your druid level.

**Nature Bond (Ex)** This ability functions like that for the standard druid except you can choose one of the following cleric domains: Animal, Plant, or Weather. You add the spells gained from your chosen domain to your spells known and can cast them just like any other spell you know.

**Orisons** You do not gain orisons.

**Wild Shape (Su)** You gain wild shape more slowly than a standard druid (see **Table 2: Godai Druid**).

## The Purist Druid Order

Although clerics are better known for their hatred of undead, many druids are utterly sickened by such a perversion of life. As much as all druids revere and respect nature, purist druids worship it as priests worship their gods. Through holy rituals, sermons, and prayer, purist druids ask for the power to decimate living death. Their adamant devotion is rewarded by gods of nature or possibly by nature itself.

As a purist druid, you function exactly like a standard druid with the following exceptions:

**Spells** Your spellcasting ability is identical to a standard druid except you cannot spontaneously cast *summon nature's ally* spells. Instead, you can “lose” any prepared spell that is not an orison in order to cast any cure spell of the same spell level or lower (a cure spell is any spell with “cure” in its name). Unlike clerics, however, both good and evil purist druids spontaneously cast cure spells.

**Channel Energy (Su)** You can channel positive energy as a good cleric equal to your class level. Unlike clerics, both good and evil purist druids channel positive energy.

**Wild Shape (Su)** You do not gain wild shape.

## Variant Druids in Golarion

Standard druids can be found all over the Known World, but certain areas feature variant druid orders more prominently. Bestial druids and godai druids are more common within the Kellid and Mwangi regions with bestial druids a slight majority amongst the Mwangi and godai druids a visible majority amongst the Kellid. This includes Bandu Hills, Bloodcove, Desolation Cape, Mwangi Coast, Mwangi Expanse, Numeria, Realm of the Mammoth Lords, Rahadoum, Sargava, the Screaming Jungle, the Shackles, Sodden Lands, Thuvia, and the Worldwound. Generally, any region that is considered barbaric or savage by city-dwellers will see an increase in bestial druids and godai druids.

Purist druids are found in more urban regions—although in particular urban regions. Cities with temples dedicated to Urgathoa and other death gods, cities with loose or no restrictions on the religious tomes in their libraries, and cities on the verge of desperation tend to house large amounts of undead and therefore attract large amounts of purist druids. Such cities include Brevoy, Varisia, and particularly Ustalav. Ω



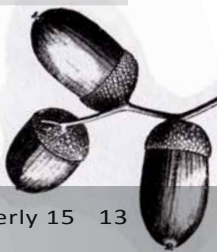
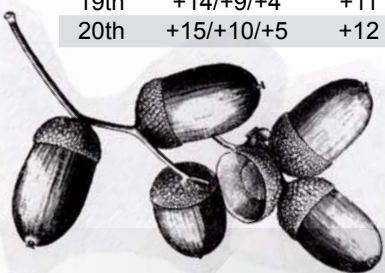
**Table 2: Godai Druid**

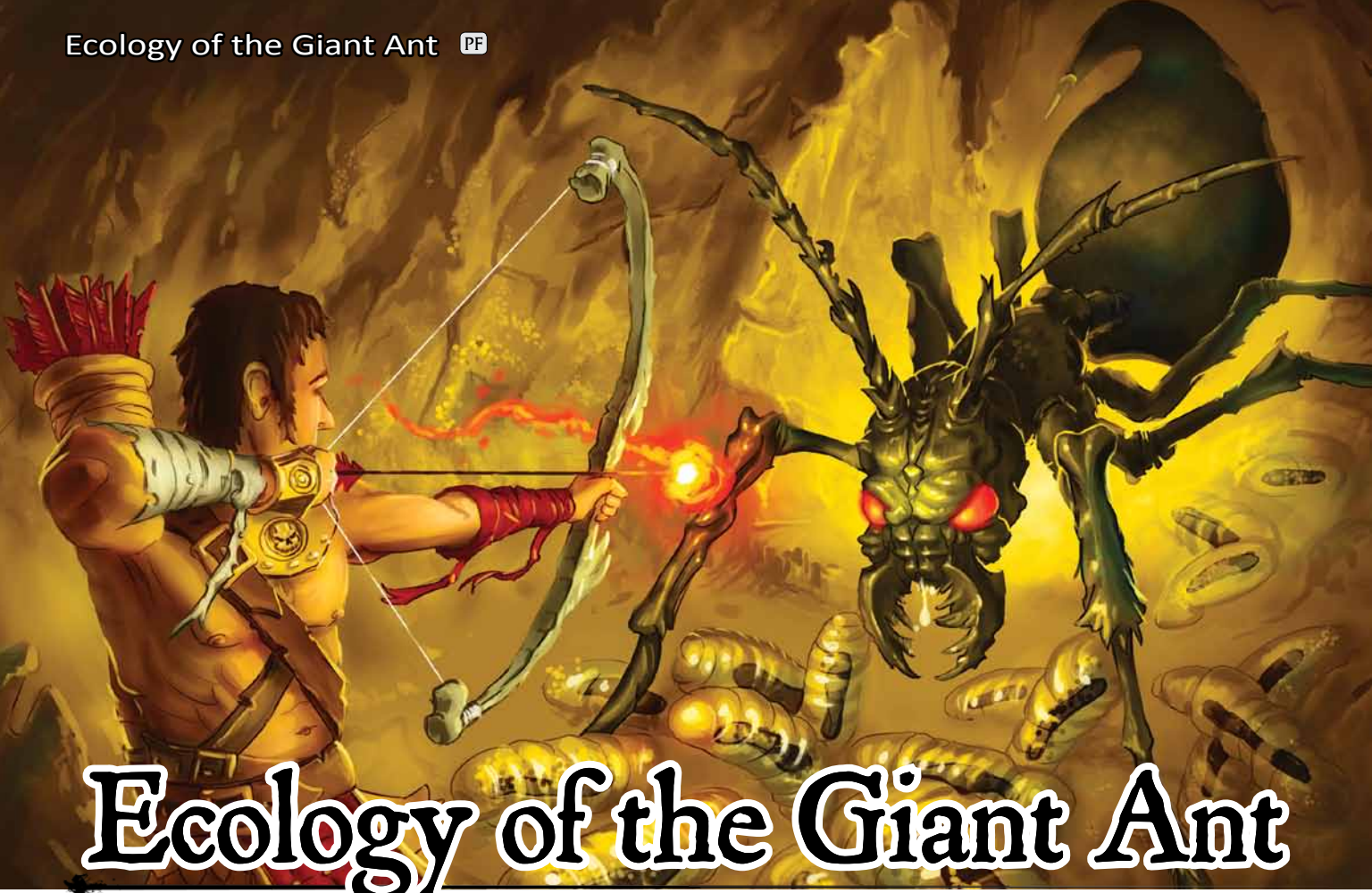
Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day								
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Domains, nature bond, nature sense, wild empathy	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Woodland stride	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Trackless step	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Resist nature's lure	6	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Wild shape (1/day)	6	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5		6	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Wild shape (2/day)	6	6	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6		6	6	5	3	—	—	—	—	—
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Venom immunity, wild shape (3/day)	6	6	6	4	—	—	—	—	—
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7		6	6	6	5	3	—	—	—	—
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Wild shape (4/day)	6	6	6	6	4	—	—	—	—
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8		6	6	6	6	5	3	—	—	—
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	A thousand faces, wild shape (5/day)	6	6	6	6	6	4	—	—	—
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9		6	6	6	6	6	5	3	—	—
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Timeless body, wild shape (6/day)	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	—	—
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10		6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	—
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Wild shape (7/day)	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	—
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11		6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Wild shape (8/day)	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Wild shape (at will)	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6



**Table 3: Purist Druid**

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells Per Day									
						0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Channel energy, nature bond, nature sense, orisons, wild empathy	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Woodland stride	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Trackless step	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Resist nature's lure	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4		4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5		4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5		4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6		4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Venom immunity	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7		4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7		4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8		4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	A thousand faces	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—	—
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9		4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Timeless body	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	—
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10		4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	—
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4





# Ecology of the Giant Ant

12 *Astonishing Variations on the Ants You Think You Know*

By Jonathan McAnulty

Art by Michael Jaecks and Joseph Jacobs

*“GO TO THE ANT YOU SLUGGARD; consider her ways and be wise.”*

—Proverbs 6:6

**A**nts are almost everywhere. One of the most successful and ubiquitous of life forms, ants thrive in nearly every ecosystem across the planet; the exceptions being frozen arctic environments and a few isolated, rocky islands.

They are a varied race, with 12,000 recognized species, each with its own idiosyncrasies. There are ants that farm, ants that swim, ants that glide, and ants that explode. Though giant ants are less populous than their smaller cousins, they too are a widely spread and varied creature.

## General Physiology

Before we note the differences separating one species of giant ant from another,

let us consider those traits they all have in common. Giant ants are biologically similar to their smaller kin. They possess a hard exoskeleton, six legs, elbowed antennae, and three distinct body segments. Being insects, giant ants do not possess lungs; instead, they process air through spiracles in their exoskeleton. Likewise, they lack true hearts.

Most giant ants have multifaceted eyes designed to sense minute movements. Higher castes have larger eyes than those below them and do not see details well. Many giant ant species have secondary eyes atop their heads, which can sense changes in light intensity and polarization. The secondary and primary eyes combine to grant giant ants their darkvision.

However, the giant ant relies much less on its vision than on its sense of “smell.” The antennae, or feelers, atop a giant ant’s head are highly sensitive and sense

trace chemicals (or odors) in the air. These feelers can detect vibrations and air currents and, like fingers, can feel textures. A giant ant’s feelers guide it through life.

Giant ants are truly mindless, operating almost entirely on instinct in response to outside stimuli. Chief among these stimuli are their own pheromones. Giant ants mark objects using glands located throughout their bodies. They mark their trails, their food, and their enemies. The scents they create allow them to communicate with others in their colonies. A giant ant’s entire life is guided by the pheromones it detects as it travels from labor to labor.

## Life Cycle

Regardless of species, all giant ants begin life as eggs laid by a queen. Fertilized eggs develop into female giant ants while unfertilized eggs yield male



# From the Publishers of the BEST-SELLING

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Paizo Publishing Presents:

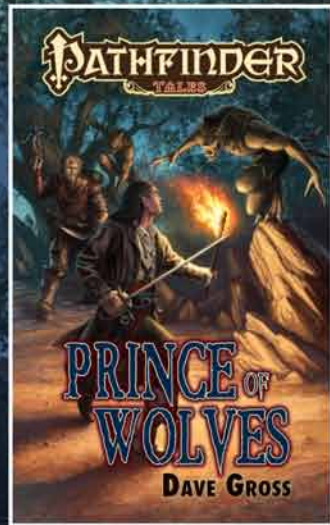
## PATHFINDER TALES™

*Stellar Fiction* from the  
Pathfinder Fantasy World

Half-elven Pathfinder Varian Jeggare and his devil-blooded bodyguard Radovan enter the mist-shrouded mountains of gothic Ustalav seeking a fellow Pathfinder Society adventurer. Beset on all sides by noble intrigue, mysterious locals, and the deadly creatures of the night, Varian and Radovan uncover a secret of unimaginable proportion.

From fan-favorite author Dave Gross comes a new sword & sorcery mystery set in the award-winning world of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

978-1-60125-287-6 Paperback \$9.99



## PLANET STORIES

See Where it All Began!  
Fifteen science fiction and fantasy greats

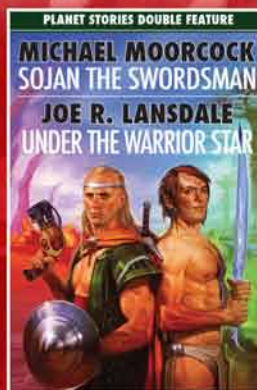
Sword & Planet  
Moorcock & Lansdale UNBEATABLE



Fifteen of science fiction and fantasy's most important authors present their first published stories, many of them rare and never before collected. Brand-new retrospective critiques and interviews from the authors themselves discuss the stories' geneses, humorous anecdotes surrounding their publication, and what the authors know now about writing that they wish they'd known then.

Piers Anthony, Greg Bear, Ben Bova, David Brin, Cory Doctorow, William Gibson, Nicola Griffith, Joe Haldeman, China Miéville, Larry Niven, Kim Stanley Robinson, Spider Robinson, R. A. Salvatore, Charles Stross, and Michael Swanwick

978-1-60125-266-1 Trade Paper \$15.99



Two new science fantasy adventures in one volume from legends Michael Moorcock and Joe R. Lansdale! Read modern masters at their pulpy, planetary best, forging legends on far-off worlds! SOJAN THE SWORDSMAN features the revised adventures of Moorcock's first Eternal Champion in a tale of swordplay, airships, and bizarre landscapes. In Joe R. Lansdale's brand new novella UNDER THE WARRIOR STAR, Braxton Booker travels to a new universe and finds a barbarous world with its terrible creatures and beautiful women to his liking.

978-1-60125-288-3  
Trade Paper \$15.99

Cover Art Not Final

paizo.com

Paizo Publishing, LLC, the golem logo, Pathfinder, Planet Stories, and the Planet Stories "planet" logo are registered trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC. Pathfinder Tales and Pathfinder Roleplaying Game are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC. © 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC.



drones. The soft eggs take 1–2 weeks to hatch. What emerges is a larva: a large, white, translucent slug-like creature that needs constant care and feeding for another week until it pupates. The giant ant reaches its adult form 2 weeks after entering the pupa stage.

### CASTES

All giant ants are divided into physical castes, meaning some giant ants are bigger than others. Most common in a giant ant colony is the female worker giant ant, typically 4–5 ft. in length. Next largest is the caste often called the “soldier.” The name is a bit of a misnomer, for though soldier giant ants have more than twice the mass of the workers and an enhanced combat ability, their daily chores are little different than those of their smaller sisters. In most giant ant species, the ratio of worker to soldier is approximately 5 to 1.

About one giant ant in 100 is born as a queen or drone. These giant ants are much bigger than their kin and typically begin life with wings. Drones are often mistaken for wasps or elongated giant flies. In most species, mating occurs annually and begins when the drones leave their colony. These males fly far and gather in groups, waiting for the females of other nests to fly. When the unmated queens do fly, the males chase them, and only the strongest and fastest of the drones catch their queen.

### QUEENS AND REPRODUCTION

Despite this flying courtship, a single queen is often fertilized by a dozen or more males. This single act of insemination enables the queen to lay eggs for up to 30 years. Their duty done, drones die within 1–2 days of their mating flight.

Once fertilized, the young queen finds a suitable spot to construct her nest. The hive style depends on the specific species, but queens are not overly picky, typically choosing the first likely spot they find. Giant ant nests have been discovered in burnt out buildings, beneath empty barns, and within city sewers. Not every nest is successful, but once entrenched, a giant ant nest can prove extremely hardy.

The queen loses her wings as soon as she begins laying eggs. Her first clutch is small: typically no more than 10 worker eggs. The young queen tends to the first few young herself, but once they mature, she spends her days either laying eggs or being fed.

Following the first clutch, a queen lays up to 100 eggs at a time. The exact number depends on how much the queen has eaten and on any deprivation the nest has suffered. Each colony regulates itself, growing smaller when times are lean and larger when food is in abundance.

The older a nest, the more members it has. A very young nest may have two or three soldiers, a dozen workers, and a single queen. Older, more established nests can have hundreds of workers, two dozen soldiers, and nearly a dozen winged giant ants. The winged giant ants are primarily drones, but one or two of them will be young queens. The difference is mainly discernable through their scent, not visible signs.

### LIFESPAN AND COLONY TUNNELS

Most giant ants live only 2–3 years before dying naturally. Queens, however, live for 30 years or more, laying eggs the entire time. Male drones live for less than 1 year after reaching maturity.

The typical giant ant makes its home in self-dug tunnels. From these tunnels, the giant ants emerge to forage and raid for food. They carry consumables back to the nest to feed both queen and young. The tunnels contain multiple egg chambers and nurseries; colonies seldom keep all their young in one place. The queen stays in the center of the nest where numerous workers and soldiers wait upon her.

### GIANT ANTS AND COMBAT

Attacking a giant ant nest is generally a bad idea: an injured giant ant releases pheromones and prompt the entire colony to react violently against any and all intruders within a matter of 1d6 rounds. The sight of an ant tunnel disgorging workers and soldiers every round often convinces adventures of the value of flight; those who fight often feed the next generation of giant ants as

## Giant Ant Venom

Giant ant venoms vary wildly from species to species, and even from hive to hive within a species – but the strength of a venom is always identical among all members of a hive. Here are three typical examples:

### STANDARD GIANT ANT POISON

Bite-injury; *save* Fort DC 12; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con damage; cure 1 save. Five doses of this poison can be distilled into an anesthetic with a DC 18 Craft (alchemy) check, useful in surgery and healing.

### STRONG GIANT ANT POISON

Bite-injury; *save* Fort DC 13; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 acid damage and 1d2 Str damage; cure 1 save.

### REMARKABLE GIANT ANT POISON

Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 acid damage and 1d3 Con damage; cure 2 saves.

Giant ant poison sells from 50 gp to 500 gp/dose because of the difficulty in obtaining it. Just as common is the acquisition of giant ant acid in the same collecting expedition.

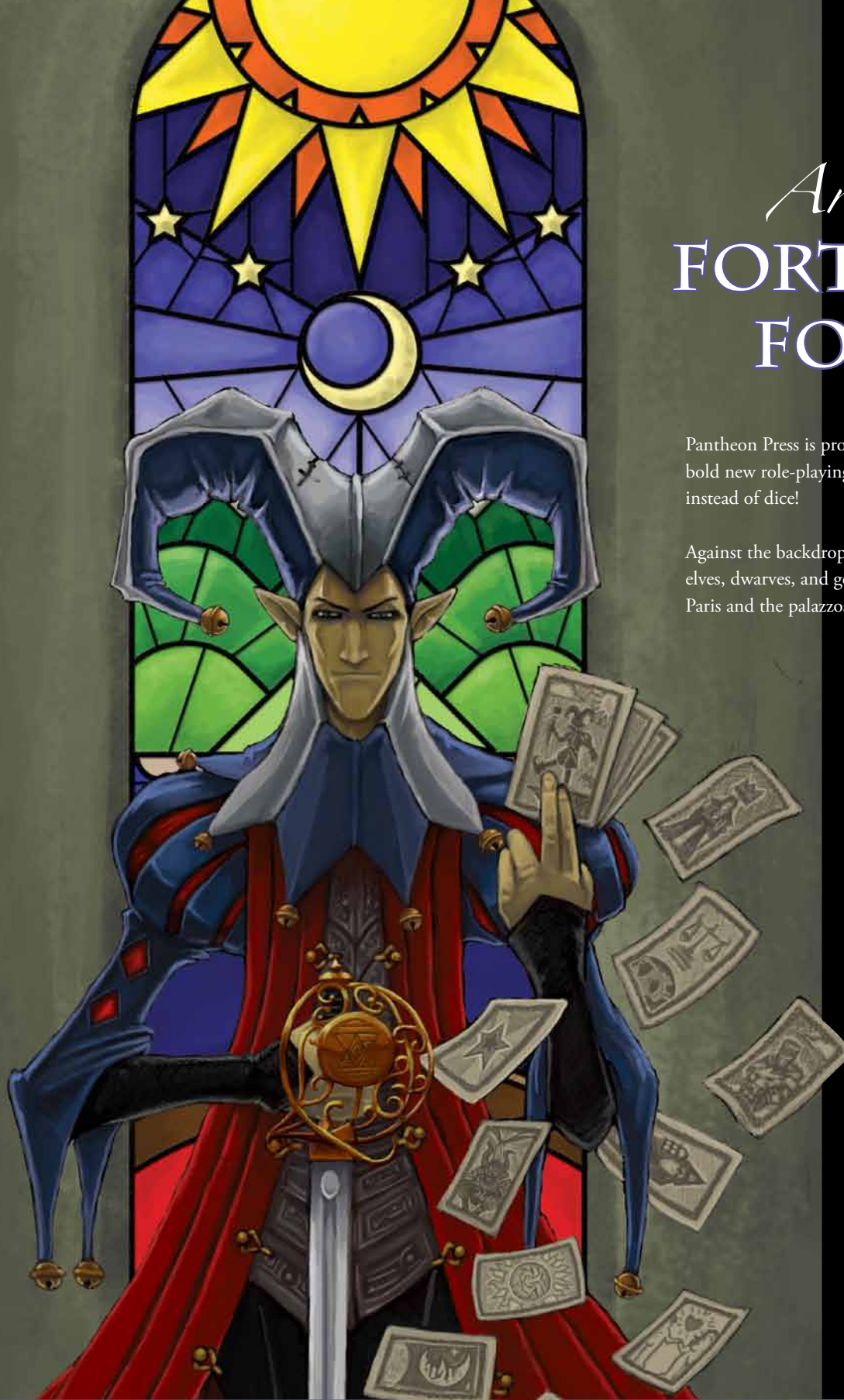
valuable fodder for pupae and queen.

The average giant ant is largely fearless and will not hesitate to attack anything that is up to roughly twice its own size, although they are seldom aggressive nor will they attack if they are carrying food to their nest. When a giant ant is injured, all giant ants within 60 ft. sense its pheromones and become aggressive.

## Variations on a Theme

Having observed some of the commonalities of giant ants, let's turn our attentions to those things that distinguish each individual colony.





# Are you FORTUNE'S FOOL?

Pantheon Press is proud to present Fortune's Fool – the bold new role-playing game that uses the Tarot Deck instead of dice!

Against the backdrop of Renaissance Europe, men, elves, dwarves, and goblins cross swords in the courts of Paris and the palazzos of Venice.

Through an intuitive character generation system, you can control every aspect of your character, from race to religion, and social class to birthright, even including your luck!

But Fate is a capricious mistress. Will your next card be Strength for a devastating blow, or will the Tower sour your fate? Perhaps the Fool will flip everything on its head? And somewhere in the deck lurks Death itself, patiently waiting to claim its next victim.

**Fortune's Fool ...**

*Your fate is in the cards!*

**PANTHEON**  
PRESS

WWW.PANTHEONPRESS.COM

# HERO LAB

## CHARACTER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE FOR PLAYERS AND GMS

Hero Lab® - Hakkon Truesilver - sample-barbarian-cleric.pdf

Name: Hakkon Truesilver Human Bbn 4, Clr 3 HP: 95/95 AC: 17 Cash: ~791 GP

Ability Scores: 20 of 20

STR	12/16	+1/+3
DEX	12	+1
CON	16/20	+3/+5
INT	11	0
WIS	16	+3
CHA	12	+1

Attack Bonus: +6/+1  
Attack (Melee): +9/+4  
Attack (Range): +7/+2

Combat Maneuvers  
CM Bonus: +9  
CM Defense: 18 / 17FI

Defenses  
Fortitude Save: +14  
Reflex Save: +3  
Will Save: +9

Armor Class: 17 / 9Tch / 16FI

Miscellaneous  
Initiative: +1  
Speed: 40 / 30 feet  
Hit Points: 95/95  
Encumbered: 57.82/230lbs, Lgt Medium (5' space, 5' reach)

Basics  
16' +3" Strength  
12 +1 Dexterity  
20' +5" Constitution  
11 0 Intelligence  
16 +3 Wisdom  
12 +1 Charisma

Skills  
+4 Acrobatics  
+0 Appraise  
+1 Bluff  
+7 Climb  
+6 Diplomacy  
- Disable Device  
+1 Disguise  
- Escape Artist  
- Fly  
+7 Handle Animal  
+9 Heal  
+7 Intimidate  
- Linguistics  
+9 Perception  
+2 Ride  
+1 Sense Motive  
- Sleight of Hand  
+5 Spellcraft  
-4 Stealth  
+9 Survival  
+3 Swim  
- Use Magic Devic

Feats  
Acrobatic Armor (Light)  
Armor (Medium)  
Great Fortitude  
Weapons (All Martial)  
Shield Proficiency  
Weapons (All Simple)  
Focus: Climb (Climb)  
Throw Anything  
Toughness +7

Hakkon Truesilver

Male Human Barbarian 4, Cleric 3 - CL 7 - CR 6  
Chaotic Good; Dely; Bhran Bhor; Age: 21; Height: 6';  
Weight: 220lb; Eyes: Blue; Hair: Dark; Skin: Tan

Ability	Score	Modifier	Temporary
STR	12	+1	
DEX	12	+1	
CON	16	+3	
INT	11	0	
WIS	16	+3	
CHA	12	+1	

Saving Throws

Total	Base	Ability	Resist	Misc	Temp	Notes
FORTITUDE	+12	+7	+3		+2	
REFLEX	+3	+2	+1			
WILL	+7	+4	+3			

Total AC: 19 = +6 +1 +1 +1

Touch AC: 11 = Flat-Footed AC: 18

CM Bonus: +7 = +6 +1 +1

CM Defense: 18 = 10 +6 +1 +1 +1

HP: 81

Base Attack: +6 Initiative: +1  
Speed: 40 / 30 ft

+2 Battleaxe, Flaming, Keen  
Mainhand: +9/+4, 1d8+3 Crit: 19-20/x3  
1-Hand, S  
Two Hands: +9/+4, 1d8+3  
Unarmed Strike  
Mainhand: +7/+2, 1d3+1 Crit: 20/x2  
Light, B

Breastplate  
+6 Max Dex: +3, Armor Check: -4  
Spell Fail: 25%, Medium, Slows

Shield, Light Steel  
+1 Max Dex: -, Armor Check: -1  
Spell Fail: 5%, Shield

Skills

Skill Name	Total	Ability	Rank	Misc
Acrobatics	+4	DEX (1)	3	
Appraise	+0	INT (0)	-	
Bluff	+1	CHA (1)	-	
Climb	+5	STR (1)	3	
Craft: Weapons	+0	INT (0)	-	
Diplomacy	+6	CHA (1)	2	
Escape Artist	-4	DEX (1)	-	
Fly	-2	DEX (1)	-	
Handle Animal	+7	CHA (1)	3	
Heal	+9	WIS (3)	3	
Intimidate	+7	CHA (1)	3	
Perception	+9	WIS (3)	3	
Ride	+7	DEX (1)	3	
Sense Motive	+7	WIS (3)	1	
Spellcraft	+5	INT (0)	2	
Stealth	-4	DEX (1)	-	
Survival	+9	WIS (3)	3	
Swim	+1	STR (1)	2	

## FIGHT THE MONSTERS... NOT THE TOOLS!

- Create and manage heroes for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, d20 System, 4th edition, or one of many other RPGs.
- Intuitive interface walks you through all the stages of character creation, letting you play instead of worry about the rules.
- Print your hero, save it to PDF, generate a statblock, or use Hero Lab as an electronic character sheet at the game table.
- Extensive in-play support tracks in-game effects and conditions with just a few clicks of the mouse.
- GMs can build NPCs and experienced characters in minutes, or use the Tactical Console to smoothly manage entire encounters.
- Real-time validation alerts you to rules violations, while still allowing custom rules and content created in Hero Lab's editor.

The only officially licensed character management tool for Pathfinder. Available supplements include the Pathfinder Bestiary, Advanced Player's Guide, Player Companion books and more.

Featuring support for:



2008 ENnie Award Winner  
Best Aid or Accessory



TRY IT FOR FREE AT  
WWW.WOLFLAIR.COM



## Ant Pouch

These small leathery sacks made from the bodies of giant ants. A single giant ant will yield six such pouches. Anyone carrying a giant ant pouch will never be attacked by a giant ant from the same colony as the original giant ant so long as the pouch remains active. However, giant ants from a different colony attack the carrier immediately.

Giant ant pouches remain active for 1 week after creation or until the user kills a giant ant. Crafting an ant pouch requires Craft (alchemy) (DC 25) and Knowledge (nature) (DC 15) skill checks and the fresh corpse of a giant ant.

**Cost** 50 gp

First, though all giant ants are roughly the same shape, each species is readily distinguishable by its appearance. The exoskeleton of a giant ant comes in a wide variety of styles: some are horned, others quite smooth, and many – but not all – are covered with hair like fibers. The exoskeleton's color varies. While black, brown, and red predominate, yet quite a few variations are known, including green, white, and pale yellow giant ants.

The diet of a giant ant depends entirely on the species. Most are opportunistic in what they eat. They hunt creatures they can catch and kill, but just as often, they subsist as scavengers. Most giant ants are omnivorous, but some species have very specific diets.

What follows are nine giant ant variations. Some are identical, statistically, to standard giant ants: giant army ants, giant carpenter ants, and giant tree cutter ants. The other nine are different enough to warrant some changes from the base species.

Each entry notes any changes to the base CR, their preferred environment, and a suggested colony size. All of these variations, including the giant exploding ant, are based on real world ants. Many other variations



are possible, including giant jumping ants, giant aquatic ants, and blind giant subterranean ants.

### GIANT ACROBAT ANTS

**CR** +1; **Environment** any temperate; **Colony Size** 10–100

Giant acrobat ants are black with highly glossy exoskeletons. Its abdomen is heart-shaped and comes to a sharp point. They dig their nests into loose soil or make homes in or around decaying wood. Like the giant carpenter ant, this species can sometimes be found in urban areas.

When threatened, a giant acrobat ant raises its abdomen high in the air, looking a little like a man walking on his hands. At the same time, it releases a noxious gas to ward off opponents.

Soldiers are less common in this species than in others, roughly one in 15 or 20. The soldiers do not sting but, instead, spray poison in a stream from their tails to a distance of 15 feet. All giant acrobatic ants gain the formic fumes special ability; soldiers replace their normal sting attack with the ranged spray attack:

**Ranged spray** +1 touch (poison; range 15 ft. cone)

**Formic Fumes (Ex)** When threatened or hurt, giant acrobatic ants release noxious acidic fumes as a free action. All living creatures within 15 ft. of the ant are sickened for 1d6 rounds (Fortitude DC 12).

**Poison (Ex)** *Giant Acrobat Ant Venom*—contact; *save* Fort 12 (Constitution-based); *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex damage; *cure* 1 save.

### GIANT ARMY ANTS

**Environment** warm forest; **Colony Size** 10–60

Giant army ants are most frequently black with shiny smooth exoskeletons. These ants are unique in that they form no permanent nest. Instead, the hive forms an “igloo” of ants each night with the queens and drones in the middle. During the day, they march, eating anything living they find along the way. Though their colonies tend to be small, rarely containing more than 60 members all told, the fact that they march (and fight) en masse makes them

a very grave danger when encountered.

Unlike other giant ants, giant army ant queens lay their eggs over a period of 2 days each month. The hive remains stationary for these 2 days, moving again only when the egg laying ceases. Workers and soldiers carry the eggs, larvae, and pupae – along with the queen! – when the colony marches.

One other distinguishing feature of the species is that army ant queens are born without wings. Drones fly from one colony to another to find mates. Newly mated queens subsequently leave their birth colony, taking a dozen ants with them to begin a fresh legion.

### GIANT CARPENTER ANTS

**Environment** temperate/warm forest or urban; **Colony Size** 10–100

Black with slim smooth bodies, giant carpenter ants are normally found in forests of massive trees although they sometimes make their nests in old wooden buildings. These ants do not eat wood but they derive their name from their habit of chewing through wooden walls and logs to make their homes. Giant carpenter ants make their hives only in dead wood, not in living trees. In the wild, this means massive dead and rotting trees. Unfortunately, buildings made from cut lumber also attract their attention.

The species is largely carnivorous although they have a noticeable sweet tooth. Carpenter ants are strongly attracted to syrups and rotting fruits. From their nests, the ants forage for dead animals, but they are not above attacking live prey.

Giant carpenter ants are the most common species in urban areas, especially in districts containing abandoned empty buildings.

### GIANT DEATH ANTS

**CR** +1; **Environment** any temperate/warm; **Colony Size** 20–120

All giant ants are poisonous, but some are especially deadly. The giant death ant is an example of one of these. Bright red in color with a smooth exoskeleton, these ants make their home in sandy soils, building great

mounds from which they forage.

They primarily eat rotting fruits and carrion, but they are quite aggressive and require little or no provocation before attacking opponents many times their own size.

The bite and stings of giant death ants both contains their toxin; the venom of the soldiers is especially deadly.

**Melee bite** +3 (1d6+2 plus grab and poison), **sting** +3 (1d4+2 plus poison)

**Poison (Ex)** *Giant Death Ant Poison*—injury; *save* DC 12 (Constitution-based); *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1 Dex damage; *cure* 1 save.

**Soldier Only: Poison (Ex)** *Giant Death Ant Venom*—injury; *save* Fort DC 14 (Constitution-based); *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Con damage; *cure* 2 saves.

#### GIANT EXPLODING ANTS

**CR** +1; **Environment** any forest; **Colony Size** 10–80

Giant exploding ants are a subspecies of giant carpenter ants with an odd defense mechanism. When a giant exploding ant finds itself losing a combat, its head explodes, coating those around it in sticky glue and toxic poison. Giant exploding ants gain the following special ability:

**Exploding Head (Ex)** When a giant exploding ant is reduced to less than 3 hp, it expands and constricts certain internal organs that make its own head explode, releasing poison and a gelatinous glue. If killed while flatfooted, the ant does not have enough warning to begin this process.

Anyone adjacent to a giant exploding ant takes 1d6 hp damage and is covered with poison and glue (Reflex DC 12 halves the damage and avoids glue and poison). The affects of the glue are identical to those of a tanglefoot bag. The poison is identical to giant acrobat ant venom.

#### GIANT GLIDING ANTS

**CR** +1; **Environment** warm forest; **Colony Size** 10–40

This species of arboreal giant ants possess a black, horned exoskeleton and a wide, flat head. They live in huge trees, subsist on vegetation and wildlife, and have a unique hunting technique:

they fall out of trees and knock prey over. Amazingly, the gliding ant can direct a fall, steering its own body with almost perfect accuracy. Groups of giant gliding ants wait in trees, 80–100 ft. off the ground. When prey presents itself, the ants drop, gliding in for a surprise attack. They are sometimes used as living traps by kobolds and wood elves.

Giant gliding ants gain the following special abilities:

**Falling Charge (Ex)** When falling, a giant gliding ant can make a bull rush attack is if it had the Improved Bull Rush feat. In addition to being pushed back, those struck take 1d6+2 hp damage and are knocked prone (Reflex DC 12 avoids falling prone).

**Glide (Ex)** Giant gliding ants take no damage from falls of less than 100 ft. Additionally, after falling at least 10 ft., the giant gliding ant can direct its fall to move 5 ft. in any direction for every additional 5 ft. that it falls. This movement does not have to be in a straight line.

#### GIANT GRAVEL ANTS

**Environment** any warm/temperate; **Colony Size** 30–300

Giant ants of this species have a large black abdomen, a slim thorax, and a large dark red head, giving them

a waspish appearance. The species has no sting and no soldier caste. As omnivorous scavengers, the giant gravel ant feeds chiefly on carrion and rotting fruit. They make their homes in sandy or gravelly soil, piling large rocks into mounds around the entrances to their nests.

Despite having no soldiers, giant gravel ants are aggressive. They react violently to intruders in their nests, and when times are lean, they actively hunt for prey. Though they lack stings, the bite of the worker ants is poisonous. Giant gravel ants replace their normal bite attack:

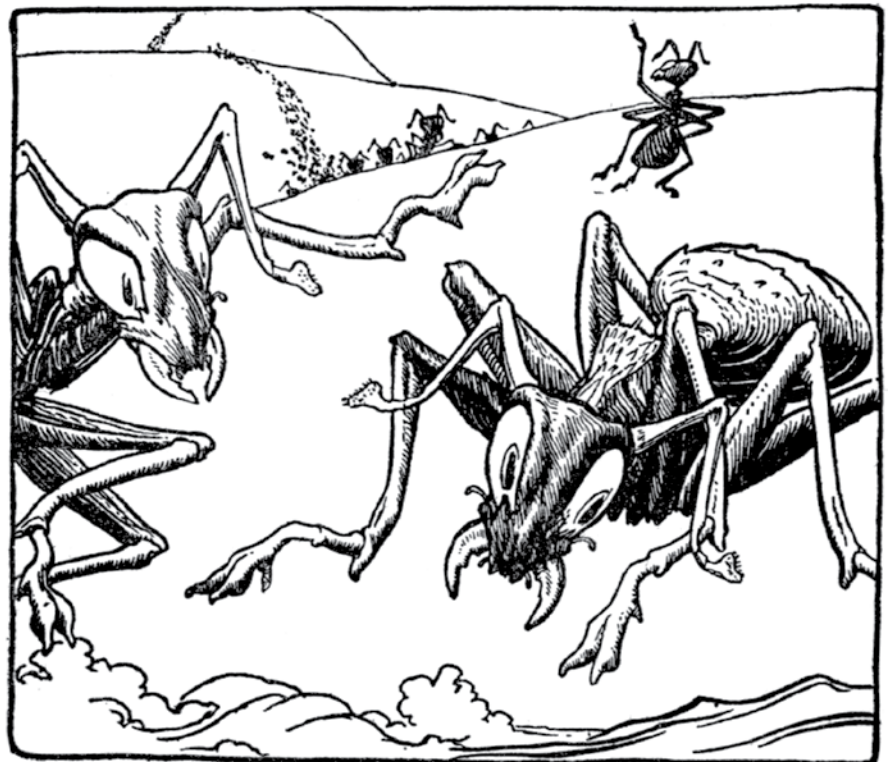
**Melee bite** +3 (1d6+2 and poison)

**Poison (Ex)** *Giant Gravel Ant Venom*—injury; *save* Fort DC 12 (Constitution-based); *frequency* 1/round for 3 rounds; *effect* 1 Str damage; *cure* 1 save.

#### GIANT TRAP-JAW ANTS

**CR** +1; **Environment** any warm forest or plain; **Colony Size** 10–100

Giant trap-jaw ants have a black abdomen and a dark-red thorax and head. Their exoskeleton is smooth and glossy. Their most distinctive feature is their huge pair of mandibles, with which they can grab and crush opponents. Before combat, they lock





# Troll & Toad

[.com](http://www.trollandtoad.com)

**"ALL THE GAMES, ALL THE TIME"**

**THOUSANDS OF RPGS**

**GREAT PRICES**

**WE BUY  
RPG COLLECTIONS**

(visit our website to view our buy list)

**[WWW.TROLLANDTOAD.COM](http://WWW.TROLLANDTOAD.COM)**

their mandibles wide open. In combat, the pincer-like jaws snap shut doing incredible amounts of damage.

The jaws of the giant trap-jaw ants are not suited to digging, so they make their nests above ground, using dead vegetation to build tunnels in which they can raise young. Surprisingly, the ants cannot chew solid foods and live on a liquid diet. Giant trap-jaw ants have a more powerful bite attack than other giant ants:

**Melee bite** +3 (2d6+3 plus grab), sting +3 (1d4+2 plus poison)

**Special Attacks** constrict (2d6+3)

They also gain the following special ability:

**Leaping Bite (Ex)** Such is the force of the bite of the giant trap-jaw ant that when they strike their mandibles against the ground they can propel themselves into giant leaps. As a move action, a giant trap-jaw ant may strike the ground and leap 30 ft. forward or backward. They cannot do this while constricting an opponent nor while carrying anything in their jaws. They cannot use this movement in connection

with their bite attack, but they can use it before or after a sting attack. Moving in this way does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

#### *GIANT TREECUTTER ANTS*

**Environment** any forest; **Colony Size** 20–200

Giant treecutter ants are normally red, with their smooth exoskeletons covered with hairlike fibers. Like their small cousins the leafcutter ants, giant treecutter ants eat a fungus grown in their underground nests. To grow this fungus, the ants must continually mulch green vegetation. Worker ants are rarely encountered outside their nests; the soldier ants harvest the needed fungus-food, using their massive jaws to cut apart entire trees when necessary. Each colony carefully chooses the vegetation it feeds to its fungus, basing their choices entirely on how their food smells at any given time. Some varieties of giant treecutter ants live symbiotically with special forms of fungus such as brown or yellow mold, and are immune to cold or Constitution damage as a result. Caravans of the soldiers forage far from the nest and often come into conflict with farmers who grow the plants desired by the colony. Giant treecutter ants rarely attack unless provoked since they are not interested in meat. Nevertheless, trying to rid an area of these pests is a dangerous proposition.

Giant treecutter ant colonies tend to be much larger than those of other giant ants, containing as many as 100 workers and an equal number of soldier ants (this 1:1 ratio of soldier to worker is unique to the species.). Treecutting colonies often have multiple queens, and legends tell of entire cities, miles wide, where the treecutter ants thrive in proximity to jungles and other rich food sources. Treants and giant treecutter ants are mortal foes.

#### **Relationships with other races**

Giant ants are large, aggressive, and poisonous. They are rightly considered dangerous pests by nearly every sentient race. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions to this general rule.

Mites, in particular, enjoy the presence of giant ants and utilize them as both mounts and bodyguards and seem to have mastered ways to be considered friendly by an ant hive. Mites do not return the favor; indeed, mites consider giant ant eggs a delicacy.

Some goblin druids also employ giant ants as mounts, using magical devices that mimic ant pheromones to control the creatures. Their control is always suspect, but when it works, the ant-riding goblins can spearhead major raids against other humanoids.

Many humanoid races view giant ants as potential—albeit dangerous—meals. The ants themselves are sometimes mashed into pulp and cooked. Some humanoids even make acidic beverages by mixing ant pulp with water and other substances. More often, giant ant eggs and larva are harvested, cooked, and consumed. Some orc and hobgoblin tribes allow queens to establish nests near the tribe's lair for the purpose of killing the ants and taking the eggs and larvae as food. Such nests are never allowed to grow very big, but they do provide a constant source of protein.

A particularly-prized species of giant ant is the immobile and mostly docile giant honeypot ant, which can be found in certain arid regions of the world. Some intrepid farmers steal the bloated creatures from their nests and keep them as livestock; even other giant ant species farm these specialized creatures. The honeypots are docile, easily fed with scraps and compost, and yield a constant harvest of sweet nectar. The only danger in this practice is that the secretions of the giant honeypot ants eventually attract other giant ants.

The venom of giant ants is harvested by races wise to their uses, from goblins to dark elves and derro. The toxin of most ants is acidic in nature, and aside from the obvious use of the venom by assassins and trapsmiths, giant ant bodies can be rendered, producing formic acid with a DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check. Certain giant ant venom can

**DOLMEN CREATIVE**

**YOUR DESTINY AWAITS!**

Dolmen Creative seeks patrons to be a part of the **DESTINY6 RPG: CORE RULEBOOK**. Patrons can receive:

- development credit
- a PDF copy of the final book
- a signed copy of the printed book
- a trip to GenCon 2011 (on us)

Seize your Destiny!  
Become a patron!

**Destiny**  
Roleplaying Game

**WWW.DOLMEN-STUDIOS.COM**



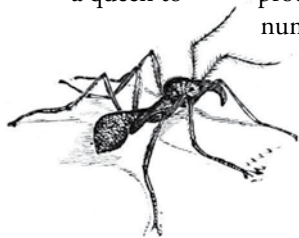
be distilled into an anesthetic. Such toxins are prized by medical doctors familiar with their use.

## Dealing with Giant Ants

Giant ants can be encountered anywhere. While lone giant ants are dealt with easily, no ant lives alone. The presence of a single giant ant indicates a colony somewhere nearby. When a colony establishes itself, the only way to eliminate it is to kill the queen.

Frequently, would-be giant ant exterminators mistakenly assume that if they can only kill enough of the workers and soldiers, the hive will slowly wither. This is not the case since the queen produces eggs her entire life. In fact, hive deprivation often causes a queen to

produce ever-greater number of eggs, and those eggs mature into adults within



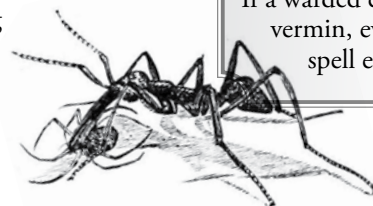
5 weeks. Thus, colonies quickly spring back to life in greater numbers than before.

Killing a giant ant queen is a daunting task. Not only is she bigger, tougher, and more dangerous than her soldiers are, but she lives in the middle of the nest, and every ant in the colony fights to the death to defend her.

Nevertheless, the death of a colony's queen insures the complete death of the colony within 2 years. Of course, once the queen is dead, there remains the problem of leaving the hive alive.

Some alchemists fashion pouches from the bodies of dead giant ants that allow other creatures to move freely through the tunnels of a giant ant colony (see "Ant Pouch" sidebar). Likewise, giant ant hunters use the spell *hide from vermin* to avoid attack. Those who harvest giant ant young or seek to kill a queen benefit greatly from such techniques and tools.

Ω



## Hide From Vermin

**School** abjuration; **Level** bard 3, druid 2, ranger 2

**Casting Time** 1 Standard Action

**Components** V, S

**Range** touch

**Targets** 1 touched creature/level

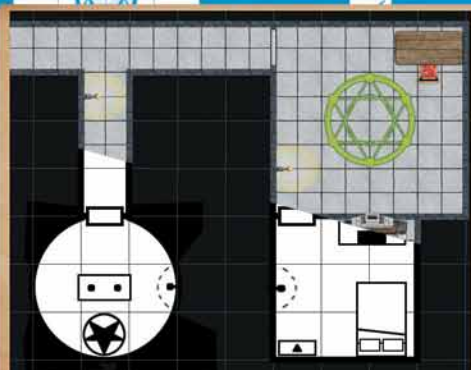
**Duration** 10 min./level

**Saving Throw** no ; **Spell**

**Resistance** yes

When cast, you must choose a single type of vermin (ant, spider, centipede, etc.). Vermin of that type cannot sense the warded creatures. Even extraordinary or supernatural sensory capabilities such as blindsense, blindsight, scent, and tremorsense cannot detect or locate warded creatures. Vermin simply act as though the warded creatures are not there.

If a warded character attacks any vermin, even with a spell, the spell ends for all recipients.



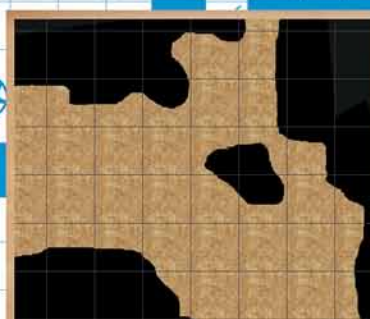
Create 1 Map; View it 2 Ways with just 2 Clicks!



Print a Map or Any Part as a 1" Scale Battlemat



Use the Notes Tool to Describe Areas & the 1st Part of the Note Title ("1a" of "1a Entrance") is Added to the Map



Caverns are Easy to Draw

- Richly featured Free and Pro versions
- Very low learning curve; Everything is point & click; Advanced options are hidden on the "Options" menu
- GM-Only tags make managing GM and player's map versions easy
- Graphics support 300 pixel wide hexes or squares (perfect for printing 1" scale battlemats)
- Customizable hex/square numbering
- Dungeonographer can export a "1-Page Dungeon"
- Hexographer includes a terrain generator and a terrain wizard (completes a roughed-in map)
- Hexographer has 50+ terrain types, 50+ features, cosmic icons & more
- Dungeonographer has 30+ map objects built in
- Add your own map objects to either program



Hex Numbers; Black & White Icons



# WWW.NOBLEKNIGHT.COM

'Where the Out-of-Print is Available Again'



## Noble Knight Games

Specializes in New &  
Out-of-Print RPG's, CCG's,  
Wargames & Miniatures

Deep discounts on new books and games

- Over 30,000 unique products in stock and ready to ship
- Easy to use website with shopping cart and secure checkout
- Worldwide shipment
- Fast and friendly customer service
- Receive your order within 3-7 days
- Weekly email update with new and rare finds
- Accurate grading methods for the discerning collector
- Fair and reasonable prices for out-of-print and rare items
- We pay CASH or TRADE for your unwanted gaming items



View our full inventory online at [www.nobleknight.com](http://www.nobleknight.com) or email us at [nobleknight@nobleknight.com](mailto:nobleknight@nobleknight.com)

No computer? Call 608-758-9901 or write for a free catalog to: 2242 Kennedy Rd. Janesville, WI 53545

**MAGICAL MEMORIES  
FROM BEYOND:  
FORGOTTEN RITUALS**



**NEW 4E RITUALS**

**WILD WIDE WEB**



**A SHORT 4E ADVENTURE  
FOR CHARACTERS  
LEVELS 3-6**

**D100 Discoveries Series:  
Volume I, II & III**



**ENCOUNTER TABLES  
FOR USE WITH ANY  
FANTASY ROLE  
PLAYING SYSTEM**



XII

**TAURUS**  **TWELVE**



**DISCOVER OUR BRAND NEW LINE OF 4E &  
SYSTEM NEUTRAL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE  
EXCLUSIVELY ON:**

**RPGNOW**  
THE LEADING SOURCE FOR INDIE RPGS

**DriveThruRPG**  
The Largest RPG Download Store!

**DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Compatibility Logo™ & © Wizards of the  
Coast in the USA and other countries. Used with permission.**



# Reasons to Ride

## *Expanding Mounted Combat*

By David Adams

Art by Joe Slucher

**M**ounted combat has an illustrious history: from barbarian archers thundering across the taiga to heavily armored knights charging with the sun glinting off their sharpened lances, little is more awe-inspiring and terrifying than a well-trained mounted warrior. For this reason, owning a powerful horse—or a more exotic mounts—has always been a point of pride and a symbol of wealth, status, and nobility.

Heroes are drawn to mounted combat because it gives them more than status, though. It gives them power.

### **Four Reasons to Ride: Speed, Melee, Resistances, Movement Types**

Even without advanced training, mounted rider gains several notable advantages. The most obvious is an

increase in speed. Though you can't typically use the movement powers of your class while mounted, many classes have few such powers and can benefit from their mount's speed. Better yet, many mounts offer unique movement modes like flight, swimming, and burrowing that make them incredibly useful in the right situations.

Any adequately trained warrior can excel in mounted combat, and spellcasters in particular see significant benefits from the right mount. Mounts can make formidable natural attacks that rival melee basic attacks from many weapons.

For instance, a horse's trample attack allows riders to move through enemy positions and inflict damage along the way. This makes it an effective melee attack for those lacking proficiency with more substantial weapons – and makes it a means of escape when surrounded by foes.

Creatures serving as mounts are also

nearly always larger than their riders. When making a ranged attack, a rider can choose which square occupied by their mount serves as the origin of the attack. In other words, mounts serve buffers to prevent unpleasant opportunity attacks against anyone who relies on ranged attacks.

Several mounts – such as the rimefire griffon or the wyvern – confer unique resistances or abilities on their riders. These resistances to cold or fire, or abilities to trample or shift damage, can significantly improve a rider's combat odds.

Despite all of these advantages, mounts still suffer vulnerabilities. Mounts significantly lower in level than their riders can be too frail for common encounters, movement powers rarely apply to mounts, some conditions seriously impair their function, and the size difference between mount and rider means that close burst powers may accidentally inflict damage to a mount.

**Table 1: Adventuring Gear**

Item	Price	Weight
Endurance Saddle	15 gp	12 lb.
Jousting Lance	10 gp	5 lb.
Martingale	8 gp	10 lb.
Military Saddle	25 gp	25 lb.
Spur	35 gp	1 lb.

## Finding the Right Equipment

The easiest way to compensate for the frailty of a mount is to equip it with the best magical gear available. Unfortunately, mounts are only able to take advantage of a single magic item at any given time.

### ADVENTURING GEAR

As the art of mounted combat has been refined over generations, creative riders have developed mundane gear to supplement the tack they use to outfit their mounts. These non-magical items are easily used in conjunction with magical gear and help address the vulnerabilities faced by mounts and their riders.

**Endurance Saddle:** This lightweight riding saddle reduces the stress to mount and rider during long and difficult journeys. An endurance saddle grants a +1 item bonus to Endurance checks made by the mount to avoid the effects of inclement weather or adverse terrain during overland travel.

**Jousting Lance:** These specialized lances are only seen in tournament competition. Instead of a sharp point, they have a flat or inwardly cupped head. Most are hollow or made of weak woods so that they break on impact and deal no damage.

When used by a mounted rider, a jousting lance allows a charging bull rush to knock a mounted opponent prone (effectively, dismounting them). Their cost prohibits many lesser knights from competing in the joust.

**Martingale:** A series of straps that connect the bridle and saddle around the mount's chest helps restrict the range of motion of the mount's head. This reduces panic in the mount. When properly attached, a martingale

**Table 2: Military Melee Weapons**

<i>One-Handed</i>							
Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
<i>Riding Lance</i>	+2	1d8	—	15 gp	5 lb.	Spear	Cavalry

grants the mount a +1 item bonus to saving throws against fear effects.

**Military Saddle:** The straps securing this saddle to the mount are less restricting to the mount's natural range of motion than standard saddles. A mount ridden with a military saddle gains a +1 item bonus to Acrobatics and Athletics checks.

**Spurs:** These metal devices attach to nearly any style of footwear and come in a variety of shapes. They enable riders to communicate with mounts with less pressure than would otherwise be required. Riders using spurs grant their mounts a +1 item bonus to saving throws against the immobilized, restrained, and slowed conditions as long as the rider is in the saddle.

### WEAPONS

**Riding Lance:** The riding lance resembles a spear but is adapted for use by cavalry during a mounted charge. The lance is stouter and somewhat longer than most spears, and it features a rounded vamplate to prevent the hand from sliding up the shaft on impact.

### WEAPON PROPERTIES

**Cavalry:** When used as part of a charge while mounted, the weapon gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll instead of the usual +1 bonus for charging and deals an extra 2 damage/tier.

## Proper Tactics and Training

Equipment might be the most cost-effective way of improving the durability of a creature serving as a mount, but the most permanent is specialized training. Riders long-ago perfected dozens of tactics to protect their mounts or to allow them to push the limits of what is ordinarily possible. A rare few arcanists have even developed rituals that conjure spectral steeds that aren't faced with the same problems as mundane creatures.

## Feats

### BRUTAL LANCER

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat, proficient with riding lance

**Benefit:** When you make a mounted charge attack, your riding lance gains the high crit property.

### CAUTIOUS RIDER

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat

**Benefit:** When you are mounted and your movement would provoke an opportunity attack, your mount cannot be targeted by the attack.

### CAVALIER [MULTICLASS]

The iconic cavalier sits astride a handsome steed, but being a true cavalier is more about the attitude than anything else. Full of bravado and swagger, they revel in using mounted tactics to dominate and disorient their enemies.

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat

**Benefit:** When you make a mounted charge attack, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls for every opportunity attack an enemy makes against you or your mount. Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to saving throws made to avoid being dismounted.

### FEARSOME RIDER

**Prerequisite:** Warlock, Mounted Combat, Shadow Walk class feature

**Benefit:** When you trigger the benefit of your Shadow Walk class feature while you are mounted, your mount also gains concealment. While both you and your mount have concealment, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with powers that have the fear keyword.

### FURY OF THE HORSELORDS

**Prerequisite:** Barbarian, Mounted Combat, *rage strike* power

**Benefit:** You can use *rage strike* in place of a melee basic attack when you make a charge attack while mounted. Additionally, if you are mounted when you use *rage strike*, you can move your mount up to your speed before or after the attack.

### HUSSAR'S THAUMATURGY

**Benefit:** You can master and perform the Phantom Steed ritual (see *Player's Handbook*) as though you had the Ritual Casting feat. Additionally, you can perform the ritual without expending the component cost (1/day).

## Counter-Cavalry Feats

Naturally, where there is cavalry, there are countermeasures. These feats help out the poor adventurer on foot who faces a mount and rider.

### CHARGE BREAKER

**Benefit:** If you are using a spear and ready an attack against a mount when it charges, your attack ends the mount's movement if you successfully hit.

### FORCED DISMOUNT

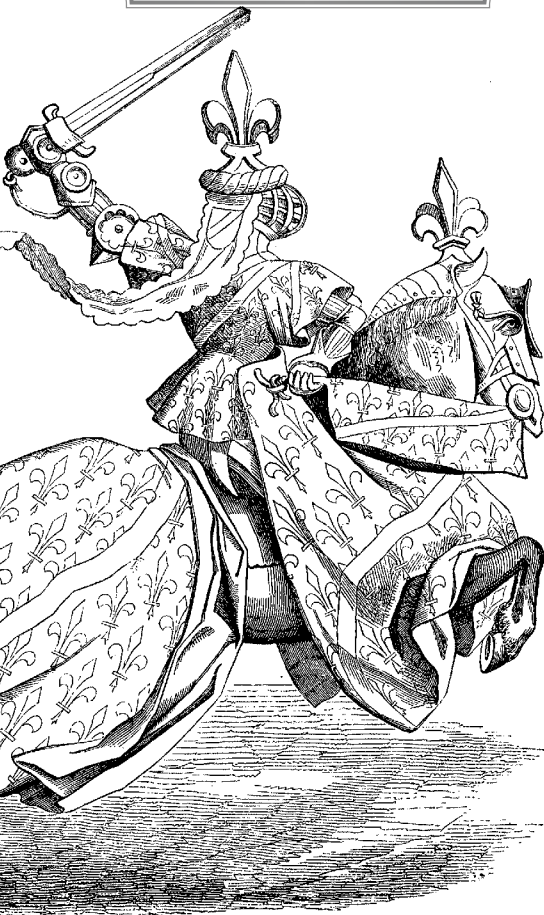
**Prerequisite:** 11th level

**Benefit:** When you knock a mounted rider prone with an attack, they do not receive a saving throw to avoid being dismounted.

### STARTLE MOUNT

**Prerequisite:** Trained in Intimidate

**Benefit:** When you reduce a non-minion enemy to 0 hp, you can push 1 square any single creature with the mount keyword within 5 squares. If that creature is being ridden, the rider must make a saving throw to avoid falling prone in a square adjacent to the mount at the end of the forced movement.



While riding one of the phantom steeds, you gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls on attacks made with an implement.

### MOUNTED ARCHERY

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat

**Benefit:** While mounted, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with ranged weapons against targets within 2 squares of your mount.

### MOUNTED SPELLCASTING

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat, proficiency with an implement

**Benefit:** When you use an area burst or blast attack while mounted, you do not have to make attack rolls against your mount.

### OVERRUN

**Prerequisite:** 8th level, Cavalier

**Benefit:** You can swap one 6th-level or higher utility power you know for the *overrun* utility power.

### OVERRUN

### FEAT POWER

*You use the bulk of your steed to shove foes out of your way as you press forward.*

### Encounter • Martial

#### Move Action

#### Personal

**Requirement:** You must be riding a creature with the mount keyword.

**Effect:** You move your mount up to its speed, and you can move through enemy's spaces, provoking opportunity attacks as normal. When you enter a square occupied by an enemy, you can push them 1 square.

### PRACTICED RIDER

**Prerequisite:** 11th level, Mounted Combat

**Benefit:** When you are mounted and a class feature or power would grant you any movement other than teleportation, you can have your mount make this movement instead of you.

### RECKLESS ADVANCE

**Prerequisite:** 4th level, Cavalier

**Benefit:** You can swap one 3rd-level or higher encounter attack power you know for the *reckless advance* attack power.

### RECKLESS ADVANCE

### FEAT POWER

*In a reckless move, you leap toward your foe, sacrificing balance for power.*

### Encounter • Martial

#### Standard Action

#### Melee weapon

**Target:** One enemy

**Attack:** Your highest ability vs. AC

**Effect:** Before the attack, you can move 1/2 your speed. If you are riding a creature with the mount keyword, you can instead use this power in place of a melee basic attack made as part of a mounted charge.

**Hit:** 3[W] + your highest ability modifier damage. You grant combat advantage to your enemies until the start of your next turn.

*Level 13 swap*—4[W] + your highest ability modifier damage.

*Level 23 swap*—5[W] + your highest ability modifier damage.

### SAFEGUARD

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat

**Benefit:** When an adjacent enemy makes a melee attack against your mount, you may make a melee basic attack as an immediate interrupt against that enemy.

### SPIRIT RIDER

**Prerequisite:** Shaman, Hussar's Thaumaturgy, *call spirit companion* power

**Benefit:** While you are mounted on a phantom steed conjured by the Phantom Steed ritual, you can use the steed's space as the origin for any powers that have the Spirit keyword.

### SPUR MOUNT

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat

**Benefit:** While you are mounted, your mount can make saving throws against the dazed, immobilized, slowed, and stunned conditions at the start of your turn. On a successful save, the condition immediately ends and your mount can act normally. Your mount cannot make a second saving throw attempt against one of these conditions at the end of your turn.

### TRAMPLING RUSH

**Prerequisite:** 10th level, Cavalier

**Benefit:** You can swap one 9th-level or higher daily attack power you know for the *trampling rush* attack power.

### TRAMPLING RUSH

### FEAT POWER

*As your mount tramples enemies, you strike out at a foe as you pass.*

### Encounter • Martial

#### Standard Action

#### Melee weapon

**Requirement:** You must be riding a creature with the Mount keyword.

**Effect:** You move your mount up to its speed, and you can move through enemy's spaces. This movement provokes opportunity attacks, and you must end your move in an unoccupied space. When you enter a square

# Elevate your game

with our stackable magnetic markers



## Stick.

Use our easy peel and stick conversion material on the base of your plastic or pewter miniatures. Pre-cut circles to fit standard bases, or trim with scissors for a custom fit.



## Click.

Strong neodymium magnets (Neos), stick to each other vertically and adhere to the converted base of your mini. The Neos use smaller but stronger magnets than our original design to completely eliminate side-to-side polarity issues.



## Play.

Now you can move the mini and all of its status markers around the table as a unit – like a chess piece. No more hassle of moving a pile of loose tokens.

Use a variety of colors to visually distinguish common conditions.

- Bloodied
- Helpless
- Wounded
- Marked
- Unconscious
- Grappled
- Stunned
- Dazed
- Flying
- Keep track of buff spells and ongoing conditions

### Dry/Wet erase safe for flexibility.

- Write numbers on markers to distinguish multiple creatures
- Write words for unusual conditions

### Step Up! Your table will love you for it!

- Stop making do with clumsy tokens and markers.
- Upgrade to the patented RPG status marker system that finally makes this easy!

Table 3: Mounts

Mount	Price	Speed	Per Hour	Per Day	Normal	Heavy	Push/Drag
Astral Courser	425,000 gp	12	6 miles	60 miles	260 lb.	520 lb.	1,300 lb.
Feyblooded Destrier	45,000 gp	10	5 miles	50 miles	180 lb.	360 lb.	900 lb.
Thoroughbred Palfrey	2,600 gp	9	4-1/2 miles	54 miles <sup>1</sup>	170 lb.	340 lb.	850 lb.

(1) This entry is for a 12-hour travel day (see *ambling gait* power).

occupied by an enemy, that enemy is knocked prone and takes damage equal to your mount's Strength modifier. At any point during this movement, you can make the following attack.

**Target:** One enemy

**Attack:** Your highest ability vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 2[W] + your highest ability modifier damage

*Level 19 swap*—4[W] + your highest ability modifier damage

*Level 29 swap*—6[W] + your highest ability modifier damage

## Suitable Mounts

The most important choice for those considering mounted combat is the mount itself. Every creature with the Mount keyword has one or more

abilities that a rider with the Mounted Combat feat can utilize. Some of these abilities are more suited for heroes looking to deploy the power of their mount in the thick of melee combat. Others benefit ranged weapons or grant a defensive bonus.

Making sure your mount compliments your capabilities ensures that you get the most use out of it. The new mounts presented below are most effective for characters frequently engaged in melee combat, though each has unique features.

### ASTRAL COURSER

These near-perfect equine specimens were gifts to the most valued exarchs of the gods. During many a brutal conflict, the glorious countenance of these impressive steeds inspired allied forces of the divine. Surviving exarchs prize these coursers above all their other treasures and rarely part with them other than to reward the exceptionally faithful.

#### ASTRAL COURSER LEVEL 23 SOLDIER

Large immortal beast (mount) XP 5,100  
 HP 219; Bloodied 109 Initiative +20  
 AC 39, Fort 37, Ref 35, Will 34  
 Perception +16

Speed 12

Resist 15 radiant

#### TRAITS

#### Glorious Presence • Aura 5

Allies within the aura recover an additional 15 hp when they spend a healing surge.

#### Noble Rider (mount)

The courser's rider (23rd level or higher) is immune to fear effects and gains a +5 bonus to Diplomacy checks.

#### STANDARD ACTIONS

#### ✕ Kick • At-Will

Attack—Melee 1 (one creature); +30 vs. AC

Hit—3d6+8 damage

#### ✕ Trample • At-Will

*Effect*—The courser moves up to its speed and can enter enemies' spaces during the move: this movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the courser must end its move in an unoccupied space. Each time the courser enters an enemies' space for the first time during the move, it can use *kick* against that enemy. In addition, targets are knocked prone and dazed until the end of their next turn.

#### TRIGGERED ACTIONS

#### Valorous Charge (mount) • Encounter

*Trigger*—The courser's rider (23rd level or higher) hits with a charge attack.

*Effect (No Action)*—Attack deals extra 4d12 radiant damage to the target.  
**Str 26 (+19) Dex 24 (+18) Wis 21 (+16)**  
**Con 27 (+19) Int 14 (+13) Cha 18 (+15)**  
 Alignment good Languages —

### FEYBLOODED DESTRIER

Attuned with the wild magic of the Fey Realms, the feyblooded destrier is seen among the cavalry forces of the eladrin. Favored for their ability to be teleported by the eladrin's racial abilities, they are deployed with cunning tactics that make the knights of the fey courts uncommonly feared among their peers.

Such horses may seem almost normal, or may reflect the fashions of their court: those of the River King, for instance, are often translucent and with greenish manes, while those of the Birch Queen are known for their peeling, silvery coats and their shivering green and golden manes. A few do speak Elvish.

#### FEYBLOODED DESTRIER LEVEL 16

#### BRUTE

Large fey beast (mount) XP 1,400  
 HP 194; Bloodied 97 Initiative +12  
 AC 28, Fort 28, Ref 28, Will 27  
 Perception +12  
 Speed 10





*There's no such thing as too many monsters.*

*Welcome to the jungle!  
Please, watch out for mosquitofolk...  
and wastehounds...  
and south thief trees...  
and werejaguars...*

ZombieSky.com



Zombie Sky Press, Here Be Monsters, and associated marks and logos are trademarks of Zombie Sky Press. Pathfinder and associated marks and logos are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and are used under license. See paizo.com/pathfinderRPG for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.



# WORLD OF TREXLIN



Xephyr Card Game  
Available Now!

## System Independent Fantasy RPG Setting

- 👑 - Dynamic and Highly-Detailed World
- 👑 - Integrated Design Approach
- 👑 - Unique Monsters, Spells, and Items
- 👑 - New Races and Cultures
- 👑 - Detailed Economies
- 👑 - Rich Histories and Backstories
- 👑 - Filled with Adventure Hooks
- 👑 - Accessories, Supplements, and Miniatures

[WWW.TREXLIN.COM](http://WWW.TREXLIN.COM)



## STANDARD ACTIONS

**X Kick • At-Will**

*Attack*—Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC

*Hit*—2d8+7 damage

**X Trample • At-Will**

*Effect*—The destrier moves up to its speed and can enter enemies' spaces during the move: this movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the destrier must end its move in an unoccupied space. Each time the destrier enters an enemies' space for the first time during the move, it can use *kick* against that enemy. In addition, targets are knocked prone.

## TRIGGERED ACTIONS

**Feyblooded** (mount, teleportation) • At-Will

*Trigger*—The destrier's rider uses a power to teleport.

*Effect (Free Action)*—The destrier can be teleported as well.

**Silverwind Charge** (mount, teleportation) • At-Will

*Trigger*—The destrier's rider (16th level or higher) attempts a charge attack.

*Effect (Immediate Interrupt)*—Any enemy that hits with an opportunity attack against the destrier or its rider is teleported 2 squares.

**Str** 18 (+12) **Dex** 25 (+15) **Wis** 19 (+12)

**Con** 24 (+15) **Int** 3 (+4) **Cha** 20 (+13)

**Alignment** unaligned  
**Languages** — (Elvish)

**THOROUGHBRED PALFREY**

The thoroughbred palfrey is a relatively rare horse that has been bred to have a particular ambling gait that is nearly as fast as a full gallop but with a stride that makes movement less exhausting for the palfrey and smoother for the rider. It allows these horses to travel easily for greater distances and for a longer period of time than other horses running at a gallop.

**THOROUGHBRED LEVEL 7 SKIRMISHER PALFREY**

**Large natural beast (mount)** **XP** 300  
**HP** 77; **Bloodied** 38 **Initiative** +9

**AC** 21, **Fort** 19, **Ref** 20, **Will** 18

**Perception** +4

**Speed** 9 (see also *ambling gait*)

## TRAITS

**Ambling Gait**

The palfrey can travel up to 12 hours/day, allowing it to travel 54 miles/day.

## STANDARD ACTIONS

**X Kick • At-Will**

*Attack*—Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC

*Hit*—2d6+5 damage

**X Trample • At-Will**

*Effect*—The palfrey moves up to its speed and can enter enemies' spaces during the move: this movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the palfrey must end its move in an unoccupied space. Each time the palfrey enters an enemies' space for the first time during the move, it can use *kick* against that enemy. In addition, targets are knocked prone.

## TRIGGERED ACTIONS

**Nimble Charger** (mount, teleportation) • At-Will

*Trigger*—The palfrey's rider (7th level or higher) attempts a charge attack.

*Effect (Free Action)*—The palfrey can shift up to 2 squares after the attack.

**Str** 17 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+4)

**Con** 13 (+4) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+1)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** —

Ω



# MegaCon

MARCH 25th - 27th 2011

ORANGE CO. CONVENTION CENTER • HALL D • ORLANDO, FL

## MEDIA GUESTS

**WILLIAM SHATNER**

SATURDAY ONLY

*Captain's Reception - Special limited meet & greet Saturday evening! See our website for details*

Bruce Boxleitner • Joe Chin • Robb Demarest  
Lou Ferrigno • Jonathan Frakes • Mira Furlan  
Gil Gerard • Erin Gray • Cindy Morgan  
John Schneider • Kevin Sorbo



## COMIC BOOK LEGEND

**STAN LEE**

SATURDAY ONLY

Amanda Conner • Terry Cronin • Geoff Johns  
Nelson DeCastro • Michael Golden • Ron Marz  
Kenneth Rocafort • Roy Thomas • Mark Waid  
Allen Bellman • Rob Hunter • Mike McKone  
Khoi Pham • Jimmy Palmiotti • Mike Perkins  
Steve Scott • Jim Valentino • Ethan VanSciver  
Renee Witterstaetter

[www.megaconvention.com](http://www.megaconvention.com)

LARP, RPG, BOARD, CARD  
& MINIATURE GAMING!

VISIT OUR GAMING GROUP SITE:  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/megacon\\_gaming](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/megacon_gaming)

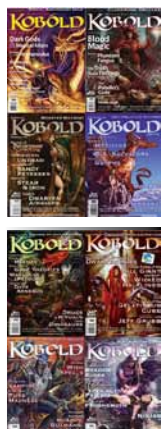
facebook twitter flickr

For ticket or exhibitor information email: [info@megaconvention.com](mailto:info@megaconvention.com) or call: 386-364-1826



# Kobold Scroll of Holiday Wishes

To activate the scroll, circle the items you desire and give it to your friends and family members six to eight weeks before your culture's major gift-giving holiday. Your chance of success may be increased by other items such as an *Amulet of Wheedling*.



## Kobold Quarterly

**KOBOLD QUARTERLY Subscription: \$15.99 PDF / \$35.99 print** (includes shipping to U.S.) — Four issues of the award-winning roleplaying magazine, packed with ideas and inspiration for players and DMs alike.

**KOBOLD QUARTERLY #1: \$29.95** — Collectible issue includes the Underdark Monster Table, Titivillus the Scribe of Hell, The Ups and Downs of Tripping Attacks, and Steam and Sorcery!

**KOBOLD QUARTERLY #2: \$24.95** — Collectible issue includes Assassins: the Core Class, Ecology of the Barghest, Joining the Noble Classes, and Griffon Towers of the Margreve!

**KOBOLD QUARTERLY Back Issue PDF Bundles: \$17.95 each**

**YEAR 1** — Includes the Lords of Hell, cinematic combat, gangs of Zobeck, new gnomes, and mithral and undead dragons!

**YEAR 2** — Includes the truth behind Tieflings by the creator, Paladin codes, medieval medicine, magical swords and dwarven airships!

**YEAR 3** — Includes the goddess of ale, 4th Edition *wish* spells, how to torture PCs, and Ecologies of the Vampire and Frogemoth!



## Gazetteer

**Sunken Empires (Pathfinder RPG): \$9.95 PDF / \$18.95 print**

Everything you need to explore ruins beneath the waves! Includes oceanic Sorcerer bloodlines, underwater equipment, Glyph Magic, and lost technology of the ancients.



## The Kobold Guides to Game Design

**\$14.95 PDF, \$18.95 print**

**KOBOLD Guide to Game Design Vol. 1** — One of our most popular items! Become a better DM or join the ranks of professional game designers with this guide that distills years of professional experience into one volume.

**KOBOLD Guide to Game Design Vol. 2** — Get serious about your game, with advice from the pros on all the major facets of design. More than a dozen essays to help you succeed in freelancing, playtesting, and publication.

**KOBOLD Guide to Game Design Vol. 3** — In-depth essays on the how and why of game design from an all-star lineup of industry veterans, including Ed Greenwood, Rob Heinsoo and Monte Cook.

## Open Design

**Tales of the Old Margreve (Pathfinder RPG): PDF \$14.00 / Print \$29.95** — Deep in the Margreve Forest's misty hollows, those who ignore the old ways are never seen again. The glories of medieval Eastern Europe unfold in eight Old World adventures.

**Courts of the Shadow Fey (4th Edition D&D): PDF \$14.00 / Print \$29.95** — A new sandbox-style planar adventure by Wolfgang Baur. Match wits and blades with the aristocracy of the Shadow realm!

**Red Eye of Azathoth (Call of Cthulhu): PDF \$14.00 / Print \$29.95** — Five sanity-smashing adventures across time. Fight Mythos horrors from the age of the Vikings to the Old West!

**The Lost City (4th Edition D&D): Patronages at \$24.95 / \$74.85 / \$149.70 / \$249.50** — Join former Wizards of The Coast designer Logan Bonner to create a lost city of adventure, the treasures buried within, and factions to compete against — or ally with!

**Dark Deeds in Freeport (Pathfinder RPG) : Patronages at \$24.95 / \$74.85 / \$149.70 / \$249.50** — Join Wolfgang Baur, Chris Pramas and Michael Furlanetto to create swashbuckling adventures with supernatural horror in the Freeport tradition.



Conjure up Your Holiday Spirits at [Kobold Quarterly.com](http://KoboldQuarterly.com)



# Rig This!

## *Mechanical Traps for PCs*

By John Flemming

Art by Nordisk Familjebok

**F**earless experts in the ways of traps, heroes trained in Thievery can master detailed schematics to build mechanical contraptions known as rigs. Using these clockwork mechanisms and strange alchemical oils, pastes, or solutions, a hero can harass enemies, create blinding clouds, and protect allies. Though many rigs mirror magical powers, they are solely the dominion of technology.

A rig is a makeshift trap or device that can be assembled in just a few hours and carried until needed. They provide a slight advantage in certain situations and help small parties make up for the lack of a controller.

A rig schematic is required to build a rig—this is similar to a ritual. You must master the schematic before assembling the rig. Once assembled, anyone may use the rig, gaining the use of its power in place of another power. Each specifies a power that may be switched out to use the rig.

### Acquiring a Rig Schematic

You may find or purchase rig schematics, learn them from trapsmiths, or break down existing rigs. No matter the method, analyzing the design and practicing building it safely always involves a certain cost. Rig schematics typically cost only half of the listed market price, the other half of the cost is spent mastering the schematic and represents components used in the practiced assembly and disassembly of the rig.

- **Existing Rig:** Finding an already assembled rig is more common

than finding rig schematics (Thievery DC 20 identifies a device as a rig). However, they must be identified before they can be mastered (Thievery DC 20 + 1/2 rig's level; requires 5 min. study, and additional attempts require an extended rest). This method has one clear advantage: after you have mastered the rig, you retain the assembled rig.

- **Found Schematics:** You can find rig schematics in forgotten tomes or manuals. GMs may include rig schematics as treasure; they should be valued at only half their market price when determining treasure value since a character must still pay to master the schematic.
- **Purchase Schematics:** If you can find someone who deals in rig schematics, you can purchase them outright. In some areas, dealing in the designs and plans of traps without the proper licenses may be illegal.
- **Taught by a Trapsmith:** Any character who has mastered a particular rig schematic can teach others how to build the rig. Trapsmiths can be NPCs or other PCs. If learning from another player, you need not pay the cost for obtaining the schematic, only the cost for mastering the rig (see below).

### Mastering a Rig Schematic

You must master a rig schematic before you assemble the corresponding rig:

- Acquire the schematic.

- Possess the Trapsmith feat.
- Meet or exceed the rig's level requirement.
- Be trained in at least one of the rig's key skills.
- Study the rig schematic for a total of 8 hours.
- Pay 1/2 the rig's market value for materials.

If you pay a trapsmith to teach you the schematics, the process of mastering the rig takes place simultaneously as you acquire the schematics although you must still pay the cost. If you acquire the schematics in any other way, you may break up the time required to master the schematics as desired, learning it all in 1 day or spending only 1 hour or so each day over an extended period.

### Assembling a Rig

Assembling a rig takes some time, but once completed, the rig can be carried and used whenever it is needed.

**Time:** Assembling a rig requires a quiet area to work and often a great deal of time.

**Component Cost:** Value of the components required to construct a rig. The key skill used to assemble the rig determines the kind of components required. The final component costs can vary depending on the accuracy of the rig.

- **Alchemical Reagents (Arcana skill):** These consist of rare minerals, metals, powders, and liquids, often containing a magical substrate.
- **Mechanisms (Thievery skill):**

These consist of pulleys, lines, springs, pitons, hooks, rods, oils, powders, and various small contrivances. Mechanisms weigh roughly 1 lb./100 gp.

- **Rare Herbs (Nature skill):** Distilled plant extracts, rare venoms, and obscure roots and berries prepared and preserved under strictly guarded circumstances.
- **Residuum:** Residuum cannot be used to assemble rigs, regardless of the key skill used.

**Skills:** Each rig schematic has one or more key skills, and you must be trained in at least one of these skills to master and assemble the rig. Once built, some rigs require a skill check to determine accuracy; this bonus is added into the attack and damage rolls (if any) from the rig. These rigs require you to pay an additional component cost based on the final accuracy, but you may always voluntarily take a lower result in exchange for a rig with a lower accuracy and cost.

Check Result	Rig Accuracy
19 or lower	+0
20–24	+1
25–29	+2
30–34	+3
35–39	+4
40 or higher	+5

Unless the rig schematic says otherwise, you cannot take 10 on these checks, nor can you gain assistance since the detailed components are often too small for two or more characters to work on together. If you are using the Thievery skill to assemble the rig, you can use thieves' tools to gain a +2 bonus on the check.

### Interruption

When you begin assembling a rig, you must devote a certain component cost. You can stop assembling a rig at any point before it is completed, but the component cost is still paid. You can resume assembly at a later time, and when you have spent the total required time, you make the appropriate skill check (at which time an additional component cost based on the accuracy

of the rig may be required; see individual component costs for rigs). You can voluntarily abandon assembly of a rig at any time before it is completed to gain back any components spent, but if you do so, you must start over from the beginning if you wish to assemble the rig.

### Disassembly

You can regain 1/5 of the component cost of a rig by disassembling it. Disassembling a rig in this manner requires a Thievery check at the same DC required to disable the rig (requires 5 min.).

### Effects of Assembling a Rig

After you assemble a rig, you gain the rig as an item in your inventory. The description of each rig details the weight of an assembled rig.

### Using a Rig Power

You do not need to have mastered a schematic to use a rig although many require that you be trained in Thievery. When using a rig, you spend a short amount of time (typically a short rest) readying the rig, then you may substitute the power granted by the rig for a power that you normally have. Many rigs create a zone with lasting effects; zones created by a rig cannot be dispelled by powers or abilities that terminate zones, such as *dispel magic*.

When using a rig power, if you and the zone in which the rig is placed (if any)

## Rigs by Level

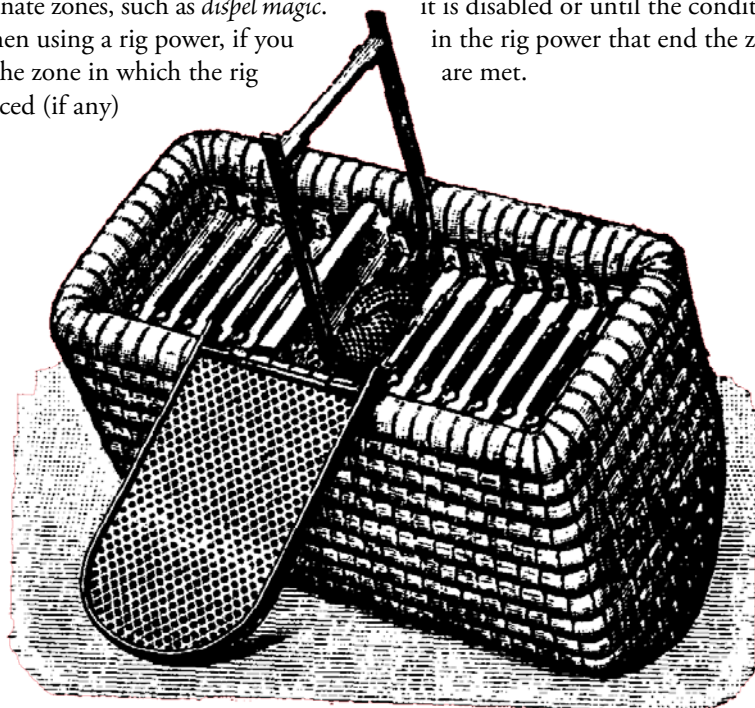
Level	Rig	Key Skill
1	Tripline Tangle	Thievery
2	Alarm Bell	Thievery
3	Dirty Trick	Arcana, Nature, or Thievery
3	Steam Popper	Thievery
6	Ash Bomb	Arcana or Thievery
6	Tracker's Spill	Arcana, Nature, or Thievery
7	Bursting Bottle	Arcana or Thievery
7	Marbled Floor	Thievery

have total concealment from a creature, the rig is hidden from that creature. A hidden rig can be noticed with a Perception check (DC 20 + 1/2 rig level). A rig gains combat advantage against any creature that is unaware of its presence.

Rigs cannot benefit from bonus damage from Sneak Attack, Hunter's Quarry, Warlock's Curse, or similar class abilities. Rigs cannot be enchanted.

### Disabling a Rig

Any creature adjacent to a zone generated by a rig can attempt to disable the rig as a standard action. Otherwise, it remains active, and the zone it generates (if any) persists until it is disabled or until the conditions in the rig power that end the zone are met.



## New Feats

### TOUCHY TRIGGER

**Prerequisite:** Trapsmith feat.

**Benefit:** Instead of the normal triggering action, your rigs may be set to activate when a certain physical action is performed (such as opening a door, picking up a specific object, etc.). The triggering action must be within the rig's primary zone (or along one edge in the case of a door or similar portal).

### TRAPSMITH

**Prerequisite:** Trained in Arcana or Thievery.

**Benefit:** You can master rig schematics and construct rigs. You acquire one rig schematic that you have mastered of your level or lower.

## Rig Descriptions

### ALARM BELL RIG

**Level 2**

**Time** 4 hours

**Component Cost** 75 gp

**Market Price** 104 gp

**Key Skill** Thievery (no check)

**Weight** 1 lb.

This rig functions as an early alarm.

**Power (Short rest) • Consumable**

At the end of a short rest, you can replace any level 2 or higher utility power with the *alarm bell* utility power.

### ALARM BELL RIG UTILITY 2

*You cleverly attach this device to the only available entrance. If anyone opens the door, you and your allies will know.*

**Encounter • Rig, Zone**

**Standard Action** Close blast 1

**Perception/Thievery (disable trap)** DC 21

**Requirement:** You must be trained in Thievery.

**Effect:** The blast creates a primary zone. At the end of your next turn, choose 1 square that you occupy to designate as the secondary zone. Both zones lasts until the end of your next rest or until the rig is disabled.

**Trigger:** A creature enters the primary zone.

**Effect:** The triggering creature makes a Stealth check as a free action against the rig's Perception DC. A failed check creates a noise in the secondary

zone (Perception DC 15), normal Perception penalties for distance and intervening objects apply.

**Special:** The rig can be disabled as a standard action by any creature adjacent to either of the primary or secondary zones.

**Sustain:** At the end of a rest, you can sustain the zone until the end of your next rest by expending 1 healing surge.

### ASH BOMB RIG

**Level 6**

**Time** 4 hours

**Component Cost** 160 gp

**Market Price** 360 gp

**Key Skill** Arcana or Thievery (no check)

This rig creates an obscuring cloud allowing you to hide from your enemies.

**Weight** 1 lb.

**Power (Short rest) • Consumable**

At the end of a short rest, you can replace any level 6 or higher utility power with the *ash bomb* utility power.

### ASH BOMB RIG UTILITY 6

*A tightly packed animal skin bladder filled with alchemical reactants and blinding powders bursts open as an enemy approaches.*

**Encounter • Rig, Zone**

**Minor Action** Close blast 1

**Perception/Thievery (disable trap)** DC 23

**Requirement:** You must be trained in Thievery.

**Effect:** The blast creates a primary zone that lasts until the end of your next rest or until the rig is disabled.

**Trigger:** A creature enters the zone.

**Effect:** The rig is disabled and the primary zone ends. The area (close burst 3) centered on the triggering creature becomes a secondary zone. The secondary zone is heavily obscured until the end of your next turn.

**Aftereffect:** The secondary zone becomes lightly obscured until the end of your next turn, at which time the zone ends.

**Special:** Any creature that is aware of this rig may trigger it by directing an attack into the primary zone. The attack must hit a defense equal to the rig's Thievery (disable trap) DC.

### BURSTING BOTTLE RIG

**Level 7**

**Time** 4 hours

**Component Cost** 175 gp + 50 gp/point of accuracy

**Market Price** 520 gp

**Key Skill** Arcana or Thievery

**Weight** 1 lb.

This rig releases a crippling spray of acid.

**Power (Short rest) • Consumable**

At the end of a short rest, you can replace any level 7 or higher attack power with the *bursting bottle* attack power.

### BURSTING BOTTLE RIG ATTACK 7

*A small metal cone erupts, spewing forth a stream of acid onto a nearby creature.*

**Encounter • Acid, Rig, Zone**

**Standard Action** Close blast 2

**Perception/Thievery (disable trap)** DC 23

**Requirement:** You must be trained in Thievery.

**Effect:** The blast creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next rest or until the rig is disabled.

**Trigger:** A creature that enters the zone is subject to an attack as an immediate interrupt.

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** Dexterity vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 2d8 hp acid damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn. The rig is disabled, and the zone ends.

**Miss:** Half damage. The rig is disabled, and the zone ends.

**Sustain:** At the end of a rest, you can sustain the zone until the end of your next rest by expending 1 healing surge.

### DIRTY TRICK RIG

**Level 3**

**Time** 4 hours

**Component Cost** 100 gp + 50 gp/point of accuracy

**Market Price** 136 gp

**Key Skill** Arcana, Nature, or Thievery

**Weight** 1 lb.

This rig releases a cloud of irritating poisonous powders.

**Power (Short rest) • Consumable**

At the end of a short rest, you can replace any level 3 or higher attack power with the *dirty trick* attack power.

### DIRTY TRICK RIG ATTACK 3

*As your enemies come closer, the ceramic bottle bursts, spraying a powdery cloud of irritants into their faces.*

**Encounter • Poison, Rig, Zone**

**Standard Action** Close blast 2

**Perception/Thievery (disable trap)** DC 21

**Requirement:** You must be trained in Thievery.

**Effect:** The blast creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next rest or until the rig is disabled.

**Trigger:** A creature that enters the zone is subject to an attack as an immediate interrupt.

**Primary Target:** The triggering creature.

**Attack:** Dexterity vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 1d6 poison damage plus a secondary attack (close burst 2) centered on the primary target.

**Effect:** The rig is disabled and the primary zone ends.

**Secondary Target:** The primary target and each creature in burst.

**Attack:** Dexterity vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** The target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

**Sustain:** At the end of a rest, you can sustain the zone until the end of your next rest by expending 1 healing surge.

### MARbled FLOOR RIG

**Level 7**

**Time** 4 hours

**Component Cost** 175 gp + 50 gp/point of accuracy

**Market Price** 520 gp

**Key Skill** Thievery **Weight** 5 lb.

This rig creates an area of difficult terrain.

**Power (Short rest) • Consumable**

At the end of a short rest, you can replace any level 7 or higher attack power with the *marbled floor* attack power.

### **MARbled FLOOR RIG ATTACK 7**

*As you toss the ceramic jar behind you, the floor becomes covered in a mixture of oil, grease, tallow and glass marbles. Your pursuers should be delayed long enough for you to gain a significant lead.*

**Encounter • Rig, Zone**

**Minor Action Area** burst 2 within 5 **Perception/Thievery (disable trap)** DC 23

**Effect:** The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of your next rest or until the rig is disabled.

**Trigger:** A creature that enters the zone or stands up while in the zone is subject to an attack as an immediate interrupt.

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** Dexterity vs. Reflex

**Hit:** The creature is knocked prone.

**Special:** Flying creatures or creatures that jump over the zone are not affected.

**Sustain:** At the end of a rest, you can sustain the zone until the end of your next rest by expending 1 healing surge.

### STEAM POPPER

**Level 3**

**Time** 4 hours

**Component Cost** 100 gp + 50 gp/point of accuracy

**Market Price** 136 gp

**Key Skill** Thievery **Weight** 5 lb.

This rig can release a burst of obscuring steam or a stream of boiling liquid.

**Power (Short rest) • Consumable**

At the end of a short rest, you can replace any level 3 or higher encounter power with the *steam popper* attack power.

### **STEAM POPPER RIG ATTACK 3**

*A tiny brass hemisphere bristling with nozzles and tubes sputters to life with a burst of steam when anyone comes near it.*

**Encounter • Fire, Rig, Zone**

**Standard Action Area** burst 1 within 5 **Perception/Thievery (disable trap)** DC 21

**Requirement:** You must be trained in Thievery.

**Effect:** The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next rest or until the rig is disabled.

**Trigger:** A creature enters the zone is subject to an attack as an immediate interrupt.

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** Dexterity vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 1d6 fire damage. The rig is disabled and the zone ends.

**Miss:** The zone becomes lightly obscured until the end of your next turn.

**Sustain:** At the end of a rest, you can sustain the zone until the end of your next rest by expending 1 healing surge.

### TRACKER'S SPILL RIG

**Level 6**

**Time** 4 hours

**Component Cost** 160 gp

**Market Price** 360 gp

**Key Skill** Arcana, Nature, or Thievery (no check)

**Weight** 1 lb.

This rig makes it easier to track any who pass through the area.

**Power (Short rest) • Consumable**

At the end of a short rest, you can replace any level 6 or higher utility power with the *tracker's spill* utility power.

### **TRACKER'S SPILL RIG UTILITY 6**

*A mixture of powders and chemicals spreads over a large area, creating a substance that allows you to easily track any creature that passes through it.*

**Encounter • Rig, Zone**

**Minor Action Area** burst 2 within 5 **Perception/Thievery (disable trap)** DC 23

**Effect:** The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next rest or

until the rig is disabled. If a creature enters the zone, any attempt to track that creature gains a +5 bonus.

This effect lasts long enough to track the target until the end of your next rest, at which time the benefit ends.

**Special:** If an affected creature passes through water or 5 minutes of rain or snowfall, the effect on that creature ends immediately although the zone remains.

Rainfall or sufficient quantity of water or other liquid (roughly 1 gallon or 1 waterskin's worth) in the zone can disable the rig. Flying creatures or creatures that jump over the zone are not affected.

**Sustain:** At the end of a rest, you can sustain the zone until the end of your next rest by expending 1 healing surge.

### TRIPLINE TANGLE RIG

**Level 1**

**Time** 4 hours

**Component Cost** 50 gp + 50 gp/point of accuracy

**Market Price** 75 gp

**Key Skill** Thievery

**Weight** 1 lb.

This rig creates an area of tangled wires that makes movement difficult.

**Power (Short rest) • Consumable**

At the end of a short rest, you can replace any level 1 or higher encounter power with the *tripline tangle* attack power.

### **TRIPLINE TANGLE RIG ATTACK 1**

*You release the binding on a tightly packed coil of tangled wire that unravels into a large area, making movement difficult.*

**Encounter • Rig, Zone**

**Standard Action**

**Close Blast 3**

**Perception/Thievery (disable trap)** DC 20

**Effect:** The blast creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next rest or until the rig is disabled. Any creature that begins its turn in the zone is slowed until the end of your next turn.

**Trigger:** A creature enters the zone is subject to an attack as an immediate interrupt.

**Target:** The triggering creature.

**Attack:** Dexterity vs. Reflex.

**Hit:** The target is slowed (save ends) and knocked prone. The rig is disabled and the zone ends.

**Sustain:** At the end of a rest you can sustain the zone until the end of your next rest by expending 1 healing surge. Ω

# Pits of Despair

## 12 New and Lethal Pit Traps

by Andrew Hind

Art By Nordisk Familjebok

Pit traps are the most common and most underappreciated of the various obstacles that dungeon-delving adventurers encounter. Since other traps offer such wondrous variety to choose from, each with a unique and insidious way to slay the unwary, the humble pit trap seems rather mundane in comparison.

It doesn't have to be that way. Witness these 12 new and unique pit traps to spring on characters. The more complex ones are complete traps with a specific CR and, when relevant, stats for related creatures (unless specified otherwise, associated creatures are considered separately for purposes of CR). This allows a harried GM to just select a trap and run with it, no preparation needed. Others, those that

simply and easily modify an existing trap, include a CR adjustment.

All of the traps presented can be altered to suit adventuring parties of almost any level with minimal effort.

### 1. Madthorn Whiptail

This wilderness path is protected by a pair of primitive traps. A branch from a madthorn bush is rigged, so when a character triggers the trip-wire, the branch whips across the trail with considerable force.

Characters hit by the branch suffer damage from the thorns, are subject to its poison, and are thrown forward, triggering the adjacent pit trap. Razor-sharp madthorn nettles grow at the bottom of this simple pit. For an additional threat, add poisonous vipers lurking within the shrubs.

#### MADTHORN TRAP CR 1

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 18

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** manual

**Effect** atk +8 melee (madthorn branch, 1d6 damage plus madthorn poison)

#### MADTHORN POISON

**Type** poison, injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 15

**Frequency** 1/hour for 3 hours

**Effect** confused for 1 hour; **Cure** 1 save

#### CAMOUFLAGED MADTHORN PIT TRAP CR 4

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 24; **Disable Device** DC 20

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 10-ft.-deep pit (1d6 falling damage); nettles (1d8 piercing damage plus madthorn poison); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); **Reflex** DC 20 avoids falling

#### VIPERS (6) CR 1/2

**XP** 200 each

**hp** 3 each (see "familiar" in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

### 2. Carrion Pit

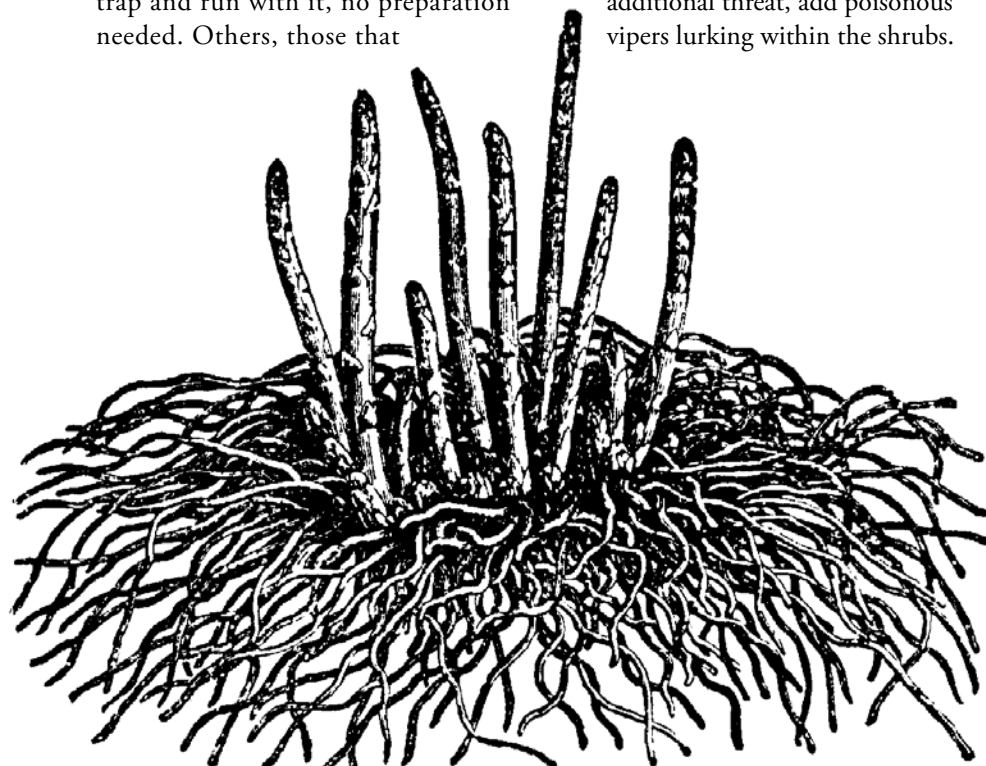
A repulsive rotting odor pervades the pit; hundreds of flies swarm on rotting carrion on the floor. PCs in the pit retch and vomit for 1d4 rounds, and this is generally when kobolds, goblins, or a swarm of giant rats attack their weakened foe.

#### CARRION PIT TRAP CR 2

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling





damage) nausea for 1d4 rounds (Fortitude DC 15 negates); multiple targets (two targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

### 3. Lodestone Pit

The floor of this pit is a lodestone. Iron-based items are pulled toward it and are very difficult to pry away (Strength DC 23). As a result, the pit is littered with rusting metal armor and weapons that adventurers had to abandon to escape – and that add slightly to falling damage (+1 per 10 ft.).

A lodestone floor can be added to any pit and adds +1 to a pit trap's CR.

#### LODESTONE PIT TRAP CR 2

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6+2 falling damage plus holds armor and weapons); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

### 4. Invisible Spike Pit

The floor of this pit is spiked in the usual way --- and much worse, the walls of this pit are lined with invisible shards of glass, making it difficult to climb out without hurting oneself. Climbing causes 1d6 damage/round, and characters lacerate one of their hands (Reflex DC 18 avoids).

Lacerated hands are useless for 1 hour; the character drops anything held in that hand. The character can neither use two-handed weapons nor engage in any action that requires the use of both hands (such as the climbing or picking locks).

The invisible shards of glass add +1 to a pit trap's CR.

#### INVISIBLE SPIKE PIT TRAP CR 3

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 22; **Disable Device** DC 22

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 damage each); climbing causes 1d6 damage/round; multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling, Reflex DC 18 avoids climbing damage

### 5. Pit of Corpses

The walls of this pit consist of dozens of intertwined and writhing corpses: the corpse wall is 3 ft. thick, hardness 5, 60 hp. To climb out or to assist those within, characters must overcome the revulsion at the sight of the twisted corpses (Will DC 13). Climbing the walls subjects a character to a gauntlet of biting teeth and clawing hands: 1d3 attacks/round, +2 melee, 1d6+1 damage.

Clerics may attempt to open a passage through the corpses using the Command Undead or Turn Undead feats. Treat each corpse as a human zombie. If the attempt is successful against six or more zombies, a 3-ft.-wide passage opens that allows characters to safely climb the stone wall behind. The corpses automatically disentangle themselves and part to allow passage for clerics with the Death domain.

In the same way, arcane spellcasters may use *command undead* and similar spells.

#### CORPSE-LINED PIT TRAP CR 4

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 24; **Disable Device** DC 19

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage plus corpse wall attacks [see above]); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

### 6. Tanglefoot Pits

Several skeletons lie crumpled at the bottom of the pit, deadly spikes protruding between their ribs and through their grinning skulls. The tanglefoot bags tied to the spikes are triggered by falling victims. The skeletons animate and attack once the trap is sprung.

#### TANGLE-SPIKE PIT TRAP CR 4

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 24; **Disable Device** DC 20

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage plus entangled by 1d4 tanglefoot bags); pit spikes (atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes/target for 1d4+2 damage each); multiple targets (all

## 10 Pit Modifications

Sometimes, even adding a bit of color in the way of descriptive detail can be enough to make a pit trap go from mundane to memorable. An out-of-place item, unusual sounds or smells, puzzling ornamentation... that's all it takes to arouse the curiosity and paranoia of players.

1. A half-completed treasure map is scratched into the wall.
2. Bloodstained clothes, some still wet, lie in the pit, but there are no bodies. Several flightless bats pull themselves along on fragile arms.
3. A bricked-over door stands in one wall of the pit.
4. A strange murmur echoes from the pit with no apparent source.
5. Any food brought into the pit rots immediately, and all water fouls.
6. The floor is littered with scraps of torn paper: the remains of used scrolls.
7. Burial niches line the walls, each one holding a corpse clad in moldering rags.
8. A dead rat, its eyes replaced by red rubies, is secured to one corner by a dagger.
9. The pit's floor tilts and wobbles – and can be pried up to reveal an underground stream.
10. Smoke and the scent of brimstone seep through cracks in the floor.

targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 15 avoids falling

#### HUMAN SKELETONS (3) CR 1/3

**XP 135 each**

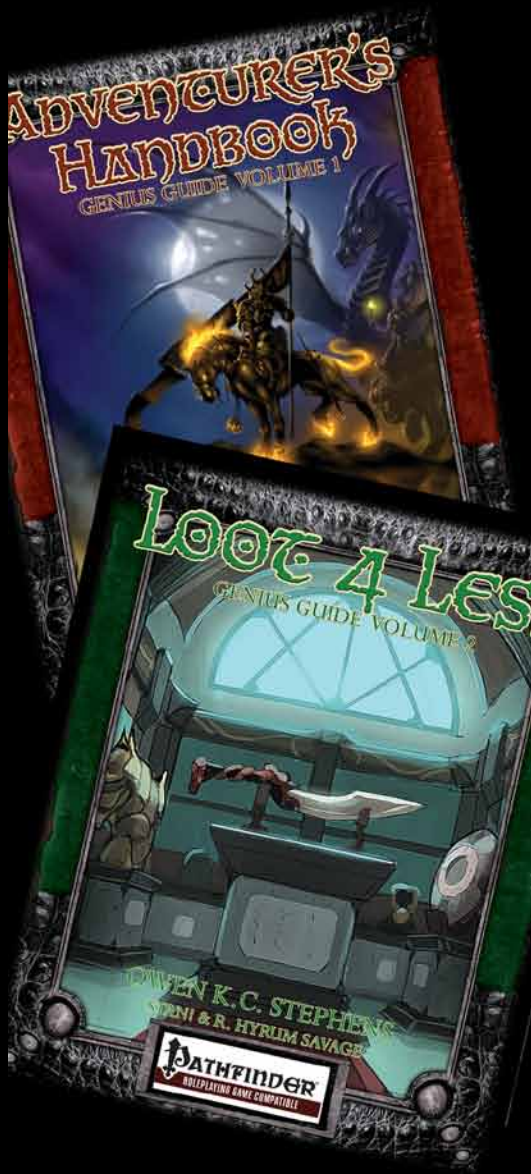
**hp 4 each** (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

### 7. Watery Jelly Pit

The pit appears flooded with cold, murky, rancid water. Bloated corpses float at the surface. A gelatinous cube is wedged into the pit just under the surface, so victims who fall into the pit automatically fall into its embrace.

The murky water makes it difficult for characters to detect the gelatinous

WE ERR ON  
THE SIDE OF  
AWESOME!



Two Books  
in Stores  
NOW!



www.supergeniusgames.com

cube when motionless in the water (Perception DC 25).

(The pit may extend below the gelatinous cube, with a drastic affect on characters interaction with this trap – characters freeing themselves from the cube may fall further, but with a cube between them and safely. Increase the CR accordingly.)

**GELATINOUS PIT TRAP CR 4**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 20-ft.-deep pit (0 falling damage plus engulfed by gelatinous cube); creature (gelatinous cube, hp 50; see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

**8. Silent Vanishing**

Characters falling prey to this pit trap drop into a 40-ft.-deep shaft. A *permanent image* of a floor and a *permanent silence* spell (CL 10th) are centered 10 ft. from the bottom. From above, victims disappear quite suddenly. The lid of the pit snaps back into place 1 round after it opens.

If the door closes, the characters above are likely to find and reopen the pit. At this point, the image of a floor is gone, replaced by the *permanent image* of a dark shaft with no apparent bottom. The pit walls are almost perfectly sheer and very difficult to climb (Climb DC 40).

**VANISHING PIT TRAP CR 6**

**Type** magic and mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 17

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** 40-ft.-deep pit (4d6 falling damage); spell effects (*permanent image*, *permanent silence*; CL 10th; centered 10 ft. from bottom of pit); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

**9. Sinking Net Pit**

This pit is filled to a depth of 20 ft. with water. Midway between the trapdoor above and the water's surface is a net with heavy iron

sinkers attached.

Victims plummet down the shaft and become entangled in the net (Escape Artist DC 20, Break DC 25, 5 hp). Now weighted down, the victim hits the water and immediately begins to sink 10 ft./round. (See *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for rules on drowning.)

Because of the weight, the character's encumbrance penalty is doubled for Swim checks.

**DROWNING PIT TRAP CR 7**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 25

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 40-ft.-deep pit (1d3 nonlethal damage plus entangled and drowning); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

**10. Furnace Pit**

When this pit trap is triggered, the walls of the shaft glow with extreme heat. Anyone within the pit suffers fire damage every round.

Trying to climb out is extremely difficult. Touching the red hot walls inflicts fire damage, and climbing characters must make a Will save (DC 20) to retain a hold on the burning walls.

**FURNACE PIT TRAP CR 5**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 50-ft.-deep furnace (5d6 falling damage; 1d8 fire damage/round, Fortitude DC 16 for half); burning walls (Will DC 20 maintains contact); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

**11. Geyser Pit**

This pit trap is built over a geyser that is magically set to erupt once the trap is sprung. The geyser shoots superheated water and steam 2d8x10 ft. into the air, blasting the pit with boiling sulfurous water, dealing 8d6 fire damage (Reflex DC 15 for half) to all creatures within the area.

A geyser adds +5 to the CR of a pit trap. Those that reset more quickly

than every 3 rounds may be considered as a +7 to CR.

#### GEYSER PIT TRAP CR 6

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 25

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic in 3 rounds

**Effect** 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); superheated steam for 8d6 fire damage (DC 15 Reflex halves); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

### 12. Worm Pit

The shaft of this pit is well over 100 ft. deep, but instead of splattering themselves on stone far below, victims are swallowed by the toothy maw of the purple worm that resides within. The unfortunates literally fall into its mouth: they are immediately swallowed whole. As a result of the shaft's confines, the worm cannot use its tail sting in combat.

#### PURPLE WORM GIZZARD TRAP CR 10

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** 100-ft.-deep pit (0 falling damage plus swallowed whole by purple worm); creature (purple worm, hp 200; see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*); multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

### 13. Camouflaged Dispellng Pit

This hidden pit is difficult to see, and once sprung it drops victims into spears in a shallow mess of vile ichor. This magical goo disenchant armor, boots, weapons and other items it touches.

#### DISPELLING PIT TRAP CR 11

**Type** magic and mechanical; **Perception** DC 27; **Disable Device** DC 22

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** 60-ft.-deep pit (6d6 falling damage); pit spikes (+17 melee, 1d4 spikes per targets for 1d6+5 damage each); dispelling ichor effect; multiple targets (all targets in 10-ft. square area); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

**Effect (after 1 round)** spell effect (*dispel magic*, disenchant as CL 10)

### 14. Chilling Bath

This pit drops victims into a pool of dark, freezing water that happens to mask the spears embedded into the floor. When the trap is triggered, a sheen of ice forms on the walls, causing cold damage at the touch and making it extremely difficult to climb out (Climb DC 35).

Shortly after the trap is triggered (3 rounds), the water flash freezes (*freezing sphere*, CL 15th). A character who is submerged at the time of the flash freeze risks drowning. (See *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for rules on cold dangers and drowning.)

#### FREEZING PIT TRAP CR 12

**Type** magic and mechanical; **Perception** DC 18; **Disable Device** DC 15

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** 30-ft.-deep pit (1d3 nonlethal damage); freezing water (1d6 nonlethal damage plus fatigued, Fortitude DC 15 negates; see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* for cold dangers); ice walls (1d6 cold damage); pit spikes (atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes/target for 1d4+2 damage each); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Reflex DC 20 avoids falling

**Effect (after 3 rounds)** spell effect (*freezing sphere*, 15d6 cold damage, Reflex DC 17 for half) Ω

## 10'x10' Toon

by Stan!



Copyright ©2010 Stan!

www.10x10Toon.com

# Masters of Great Skill

## 13 New Skill Stances

By Anthony Eichenlaub

Art by Rick Hershey

When you measure your character against the greatest foe he or she has ever faced, that's when you know that no skill the character has ever trained has been a waste.

They stand as arcanists, historians, and dungeoneers, facing enemies with skill as well as blade and spell.

The skills they train determine how they hold themselves in combat. Skill powers – particularly those allowing new stances – are a great way for characters to get the most of skill training.

Whether highly situational gimmicks or simple bonuses, these daily skill stances offer new strategies for both players and GMs. The four presented characters are the pinnacle of success, having taken their chosen skills to the absolute limit. Merely ask, and they will impart secrets known only to the greatest in their fields. They offer not only knowledge, but also its practical application.

### Gavin Hallowlocket, Wordsmith

Gavin Hallowlocket has a reputation for trustworthiness. His word is like gold among the courtiers and nobles. Any pauper on the street will tell you, Gavin Hallowlocket speaks no falsehood. Rumor has it, Gavin is bound by a curse: he cannot tell a lie.

None of this is true.

In truth, Gavin is the best bluff the world has ever known. His reputation is formed of rumor and lie, most of which originated from him. He knows the value of a lie, and he is willing to do the work to make it convincing.

Winning the confidence of a liar is not easy, but if you can do it, he might just teach you a thing or two.

**WHOSE SIDE IS HE ON?** BLUFF UTILITY 2

*You sow confusion in the ranks of friends and enemies alike. Nobody really knows whose side you're on.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** Enemies grant you flanking. However, you can now be used by enemies to grant flanking against your allies.

**I MEANT TO DO THAT** BLUFF UTILITY 2

*A tremendous whoosh cleaves the air, provoking a smirk from the missed foe. The smirk fades, though, as he sees a trusted minion take the full force of the blast.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** When one of your ranged or melee attacks misses, you can instead target a different enemy within range (1/round). Do not reroll the attack, but calculate the attack against that enemy instead. Attack powers that have an effect on a miss only affect the second enemy.

**MY BROTHER HAS A LOT MORE MEAT** BLUFF UTILITY 16

*The troll considered this new information. That other guy does have a lot more muscle. Wouldn't it make sense to eat him first?*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** Mark an enemy on behalf of an ally as a free action (1/round).



### Lorian DaLorian, Rebel Historian

The fiery-haired Lorian DaLorian has never been one to sit still reading a book, but she knows her history. Her people belong to a nomadic tribe: one which tells its history through song and a complex martial dance. History lessons have always been action-packed for her, and she expects no less from fellow scholars. Show a comparable interest in history, and she will show you how to put that learning to good use.

**ON THIS VERY SPOT** HISTORY UTILITY 2

*According to legends, many a hero has fallen in this dungeon. Invoke their names, and their help will be forthcoming.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** Gain a +4 bonus to Arcana, Dungeoneering, History, and Nature checks; a +2 bonus to damage rolls; and a -1 penalty to attack rolls (due to the distracting voices).

**THE EASTWOLD HISTORY UTILITY 10**  
**OFFENSE**

*Given a strong defense, the eladrin mages of Eastwold Vale were able to cut down their enemies with great efficacy.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** Gain a +10 bonus to all damage rolls. Taking any damage causes this effect to end until the end of your next turn. Gain vulnerability 5 all damage.

**THE BATTLE MARCH HISTORY UTILITY 16**  
**OF TOMPTON HILL**

*It was a slow, grudging advance. Shields locked, the dwarves of Tompton Hill advanced upon their enemies. One step at a time, they slowly edged their foes into a disadvantageous position.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** You cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid when adjacent to two or more allies. You can slide yourself and all adjacent allies 1 square as a minor action (1/round).

**THE OPEN BOOK HISTORY UTILITY 16**

*One hand occupied with reference material, you quickly research your enemy's vulnerabilities and reconfigure your attacks to best take advantage of them.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** You know the defenses and vulnerabilities of your enemies. If the enemy you attack has a vulnerability, you can change at-will attacks to use that type of damage. You also gain a -2 penalty to Reflex and AC.

## Caspin Kraethar, Wizard's Librarian

Caspin's bespectacled eyes have not seen daylight in over 20 years. He stays in the library of the great wizard Scorgroth.

Organizing books is his profession; it is his passion. Deep within the vaulted halls of this great library, Caspin memorizes arcane tomes. What better way to organize and classify than to read and understand?

Not once has he practiced a spell. Never has he seen combat.

But he has some theories.

These are theories he would love to share. In fact, it may be difficult to not

absorb a theory or two when visiting this great, hidden library. In the hands of one formally trained in the arcane arts, some of these theories might just be worthwhile.

**COUNTERCAST STANCE ARCANA UTILITY 10**

*Your understanding of the arcane allows you to quickly undo spells as your enemy casts them.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** You are slowed. You can attempt to dispel one arcane attack that you can see, making the following attack:

**Immediate Interrupt Ranged sight**

**Target:** One creature

**Attack:** Arcana vs. Will

**Hit:** Negate the effects of one arcane attack on one target.

**ARCANE ARCANA UTILITY 16**  
**DUELIST'S STANCE**

*The world fades away as you face off against an opponent. The duel has begun.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** Gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls against a chosen target when using ranged or area attacks (choose another target when this one drops):

You mark your enemy.

You may make a basic attack as a free action against the chosen enemy if that enemy makes an attack that does not include you.

You may take a basic attack as a free action against any enemy other than the chosen enemy that hits you.

Your chosen enemy may take a basic attack against any of your allies who attack it.

**BLINK OF ARCANA UTILITY 10**  
**CHAOS STANCE**

*Teleport? Yeah, that's easy. It's standing still that's hard.*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** Gain teleport 4 as a movement type. You can teleport 2 squares as an immediate interrupt if hit by a melee attack. You automatically teleport 2 squares in a random direction (roll a d8) at the end of your turn. If that square is occupied, then stay where you are.

## Dwerton Dowrenstone, Wanderer

Dwerton Dowrenstone strayed from

the beaten path more than 50 years ago. Some say that he just got lost; some say that he was driven away. He was presumed dead 49 years ago. Evidence suggested he had wandered into some abandoned mines, and adventurers immediately went to recover him.

However, his trail ended where the mines connect with the Underdark.

Nobody above ground has seen him since.

Dwerton still lives. He wanders in the dark, becoming one with the cold stone and the dank fungi. He lives, and even prospers, in those dark tunnels.

If, by chance, you find him down in that twisted maze, he might share some of his more inventive survival strategies, teaching you how to endure the perils of the Underdark.

Just don't ask him to return home.

**STONESENSE DUNGEONEERING UTILITY 2**  
**OF THE KRUTHIK**

*"Touch flesh to the stone. In its tiniest vibrations you will sense the movements of your enemies."*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** Gain tremorsense 5. If you take radiant damage this power is disabled until the end of your next turn.

**CAVE DUNGEONEERING UTILITY 10**  
**FISHER STANCE**

*"Use this filament, harvested from the cave fisher itself. Draw your enemies closer, then keep them from running."*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** When you hit with a ranged attack, you can pull the target 3 squares. When you hit with a melee attack, your target is immobilized. Due to camouflage, you gain concealment from any creature farther than 5 squares away.

**DROW'S FOIL DUNGEONEERING UTILITY 16**

*"The dark elves expect a person to react a certain way when blinded. Do just the opposite."*

**Daily • Stance**

**Minor Action**

**Personal**

**Effect:** Gain blindsight 10, resist poison 10, and a -2 penalty to all defenses when in bright light. Ω

# Collaborative Killers

## *Tactical Maneuvers for Groups*

By Michael Kortez

Art by Rick Hershey

*“Easy now—we got this. Take a breath. You hit ‘em high—and I’ll hit ‘em low.”*

A cohesive tactical unit makes for a terrifying opponent. Flanking and the aid another action are two key ways that PCs can simulate group tactics in a roleplaying game, but there is still room for more. Below is a list of additional combat maneuvers for a party seeking to enhance its effectiveness and work together as a team.

### AMBUSCADE

*“Then when he bends over to heal your wound, that’s our signal. The rest of us step out of the trees and attack. By the gods, I love banditry.”*

An ambush can be even more effective if, rather than simply waiting for an opponent to walk into range, the ambushers instead plan for someone to provide a distraction. With the ambuscade maneuver, one or more attackers act as the bait, perhaps tricking their opponents into chasing them to the ambush site or otherwise getting their prey to focus all of their attention on them. Meanwhile, the rest of the attackers remain hidden, performing Stealth checks.

The bait makes a Bluff check opposed by each target’s Sense Motive. For each point by which the bait beats a target’s Sense Motive, that target takes a corresponding penalty to their Perception check to detect the ensuing ambush. In addition, if a

target ultimately fails their subsequent opposed Perception check against the ambushers’ Stealth check and a surprise round ensues, the attackers receive an added bonus: each ambusher participating in the surprise round receives a +1 bonus to hit and damage against flat-footed targets.

### ELDRITCH FLANK

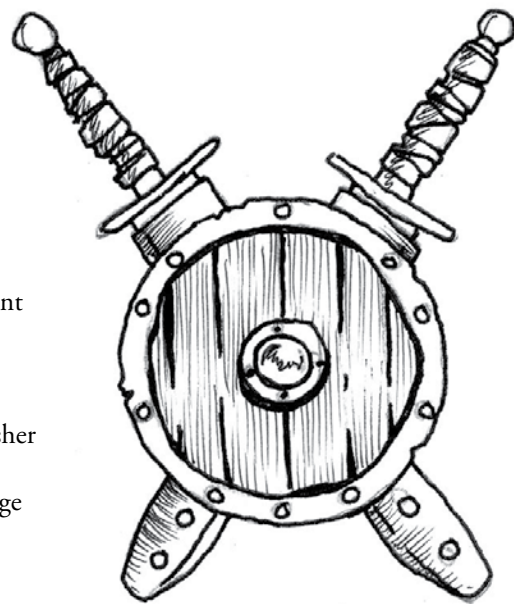
*“You may be able to resist my magic, foul one, but you cannot resist the might of us all!”*

Spellcasters working in teams have found they can batter away at an opponent’s natural spell resistance by timing their spells for a single assault. When spellcasters coordinate their spells to fire at the same target on the same initiative count and when each spell targets the same category of save (Fortitude, Reflex, Will, or no save), each caster gains a bonus to their CL check to overcome the target’s spell resistance.

Each caster gains a +2 bonus for each allied spellcaster who has joined in their assault: that is, if three casters work together, they each get a +4 bonus. The bonus, however, can never exceed the spellcaster’s CL, regardless of the number of spellcasters working together. Note that if a caster overcomes their target’s spell resistance, the target still receives any applicable saves, as normal.

### LURE

*“Steady. Fan out. When the ghoul smells*



*the blood on Aravan’s cloak, he’ll turn. Then we close.”*

Well before humans first harnessed the power of deception, wolf packs had already long mastered the art, having one wolf feign a foot injury to lure prey into committing a mistake so the rest of the pack could pounce. With the lure maneuver, a group typically encircles or otherwise flanks a single opponent. One among them pretends to be injured, exhausted, or simply presents an attractive opening. When the target turns its attention to the false offering, the rest of the group strikes.

To execute the lure maneuver, one person (the lure) selects a target and then takes a voluntary penalty to their AC against that target, simulating vulnerability. The penalty chosen cannot be greater than either the lure’s charisma bonus or the number of ranks the lure has in the Bluff skill. The lure must then succeed on an opposed Bluff check against the target’s Sense Motive skill.

If the lure is successful, for the rest of the round, any ally of the lure who also has a flank against the target receives a bonus to both hit and

damage equal to the lure's voluntary AC penalty. This bonus stacks with the +2 bonus otherwise provided by a flank. Performing the role of a lure is a standard action, but those with the Improved Feint feat may do so as a move action.

### **PILE ON**

*"Hey! He's a wizard! Quick, everyone! Grab em!"*

The rules already cover that multiple creatures may assist one another with grappling by using the aid another action whenever a grapple is initiated. The pile on maneuver presents an additional option for truly devoted groups who work together to grapple single opponents over successive rounds.

As normal, once a grapple is successfully initiated, the target gains the grappled condition and, as such, cannot move; it receives a -4 penalty to Dexterity and a -2 penalty to attack rolls and combat maneuver checks (such as checks to break the grapple). However, for each additional attacker who elects to remain involved in aiding the grapple as a full round action on subsequent rounds, the target's penalty to attack rolls and combat maneuver checks increases by a further 2 points, making the victim's attempts to escape more difficult.

In addition, when multiple grapplers combine using the pile on maneuver, the defender's increased attack roll penalty is also applied to any Escape Artist checks. Note that anyone "piling on" to aid an ally in this manner also gains the grappled condition although they will have only the standard -2 penalty, not the growing penalty that the victim of the pile on experiences.

For example, Aram and Fergus aid Sonja (who has the Improved Grapple feat) as she grabs hold of a pesky goblin shaman, tying him into a pretzel. On the first round, assuming Aram and Fergus each succeed with their attack rolls against AC 10, they provide Sonja with +4 to her CMB as she initiates the grapple. If Sonja succeeds and exceeds the goblin's CMD and if Aram and Fergus

continue to devote their turns to the pile on the following round, the goblin suffers a -6 to its attack rolls and combat maneuver checks instead of the usual -2 penalty.

### **THICKET OF STEEL**

*"Only dead men get past a wall of blades."*

When two or more attackers take a readied action to set their weapons against the same opponent, they gain a bonus to hit equal to 2x the number of adjacent allies set against the same target (as well as any benefit they might also gain from wielding a weapon with the brace feature).

For example, Aram, Fergus, and Sonja perform the thicket of steel maneuver, forming a line as they each set their spears against an onrushing lizard folk chieftain. Aram and Sonja who are on the wings each gain +2 to hit because they are adjacent to Fergus. Fergus in the center gains a bonus of +4. Note that an attacker who is unable to reach the target with a melee weapon to attack does not confer a bonus to their allies, even if they are adjacent.

It is difficult for groups to perform the thicket of steel maneuver against skilled mounted foes. A rider with the Mounted Combat feat who times an attack against a thicket of steel may negate the bonuses that would otherwise be granted by the maneuver (Ride DC 20; free action).

### **TIMED CHARGE**

*"Ready now, rush him on three."*

Evading one onrushing opponent is hard enough, but it gets tougher still when several come at once. With the timed charge maneuver, a group of attackers all select the charge action and charge the same opponent on the identical initiative count. Once performed, each attacker participating in the timed charge receives a pack bonus (see **Pack Bonus** sidebar) equal to the number of allies in the charge.

For example, Aram the Battle Mad

## **Pack Bonus**

Two of the maneuvers described in this article, the timed charge and the volley shot, provide pack bonuses. A pack bonus is a new type of combat modifier that simulates the ability of a larger group to gang up and negate a single opponent's defenses. A pack bonus may be stacked with a bonus of any other type. Like most typed bonuses, a pack bonus cannot be stacked with itself: that is, one can never add the benefit of two pack bonuses together in the same round.

A pack bonus, however, has one unique limiting characteristic, which differentiates it from other types of bonuses. Because a pack bonus simulates taking advantage of an opponent's distraction, a pack bonus can never be greater than the combination of the target's combined Dexterity and shield modifiers. A pack bonus is a method of countering an opponent's defenses, so with opponents that have no defenses, a pack bonus offers no material advantage.

For example, performing a timed charge against an ogre wielding a great club provides no advantage—the ogre has a Dexterity penalty and no shield. But if that same timed charge is executed instead against a tengu, to the PCs may gain a bonus as high as +3 (the tengu's Dexterity bonus). If the tengu carried a large shield, the party could theoretically orchestrate a pack bonus as high as +5.

Note that the ambush, eldritch flank, lure, and thicket of steel maneuvers in this article provide regular un-typed bonuses, which are not limited by the target's shield and Dexterity bonuses.

elects to delay his action until initiative count 10 when Fergus the Frenzy's turn will come up. On count 10, both Aram and Fergus charge the same skeleton with their hammers. They both get a +1 pack bonus to hit for executing their timed charge. The bonus stacks

with the normal +2 bonus for the charge as well as any other bonuses they may have.

Had Aram and Fergus waited until initiative count 5, when their ally Sonja's turn would have come up, all three could have charged simultaneously and each received a +2 pack bonus. However, unless they positioned themselves very carefully, it is unlikely there would have been sufficient space for all three to charge the skeleton at the same time.

#### SÉANCE SUMMONING

*"Come my sisters. Only with our voices as one will the great beast answer our dark song."*

Cultists working in groups to summon creatures greater than their power would otherwise allow is a classic trope of fantasy literature. At the GM's option, some of this effect may be simulated using the *summon monster* and *summon nature's ally* spells.

When a group of spellcasters casts

the identical summoning spell at the same time, they may instead choose to collectively summon a single creature from a list higher than the spell's level normally allows. With two spellcasters working together, the pair can summon a creature from a list 1 level higher. With four, the group can summon a creature from a list 2 levels higher. With seven, the group can summon a creature from a list 3 levels higher.

For example, two allied druids cast *summon nature's ally II* together in a séance. Instead of each summoning a creature from the 2nd-level list, such as a small elemental or wolf, they may instead summon a single creature from the 3rd-level list, such as a dire bat or shark. Only the access list of monsters is increased, the spell's duration and range remain unchanged.

To perform a séance summoning, the spellcasters must link hands or be connected by carefully drawn lines of a magic circle or other symbol. As normal, the casting requires 1 round to complete. If any one of the casters in the séance fails

a Concentration check during that time or is slain or otherwise rendered unable to cast, the séance fails and all of the summoning spells are lost. Arcane and divine spellcasters may work together to perform a séance summoning.

#### VOLLEY SHOT

*"Hold your fire! Patience—we shoot together. Pick them off one at a time. Stand ready..."*

Similar to a timed charge, each attacker who targets the same foe and fires a missile weapon on the identical initiative count gains a pack bonus equal to the number of allied shooters. Because a volley shot requires rigorous discipline, an individual shooter's pack bonus for participating in a volley shot can never be greater than his or her Wisdom modifier, regardless of how many allies work together.

Note that spellcasters may participate in a volley shot maneuver by casting spells that require ranged touch attacks, such as *disintegrate* or *scorching ray*. Ω

# OATHBOUND ECLIPSE

## The Legend Continues - August 2010 -

Enter a domain of eternal darkness, where the restless mists offer no respite from the creatures of the night....

- Full color, 224 pages, \$29.99
- All new material by the original authors
- New races and classes for Eclipse
- A new system for werran and vampire characters
- Monsters, spells, maps, magic, and more
- Pathfinder Compatible
- A new approach to the sourcebook

Core Oathbound rules for Pathfinder, adventures, and more available online at <http://www.epidemicbooks.com>





# Blades from the Past

## 10 Weapons from the History Books

By Alex Putnam

Art by Michael Bielaczyc



When it comes to weapons for your roleplaying game, a small portion get all the fame: the heroic knightly swords and greatswords, the longbow and crossbow, maybe even the halberd. Here's 10 more real-life weapons that don't get the credit they deserve.

### New Weapon Special Features

**Armor-Piercing:** When you wield an armor-piercing weapon in two hands, you may treat an opponent's armor bonus or natural armor bonus as if it were 1 lower (to a minimum of a +0 AC bonus).

**Defensive:** When you fight defensively, use the total defense action, or use the Combat Expertise feat, a defensive weapon grants you a +1 shield bonus to your AC.

**Finesse:** You may use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to attack rolls with a finesse weapon sized for you.

**Hand-and-a-Half:** Hand-and-a-half weapons are too large to use in one-hand without special training, making them exotic weapons. You may also use one as if it were a two-handed martial weapon.

**Resilient:** A resilient weapon's flexible or sturdy construction gives you a +2 circumstance bonus to your CMD against foes attempting to sunder it.

**Sundering:** When you use a sundering weapon, you receive a +2 bonus to combat maneuver checks made to sunder objects using that weapon.

### New Weapons

**Cinquedea:** A variant of the short sword whose name refers to its five-finger width at its guard, the resilient cinquedea is typically worn as a self-defense weapon, and its wide blade allows for easy parries.

*In Your Game*—A civilian sword that's worn sideways across the back, the cinquedea is popular with merchants and nobles, who often carry elaborately decorated versions.

*In History*—The cinquedea was a style of weapon most popular in Italy from 1470-1520, with the style being applied to daggers, short swords, and full-sized, single-handed swords.

**Estoc:** A hand-and-a-half weapon designed to pierce heavy armor and sharpened only on the tip, an estoc is 4 ft. long, sometimes with a second crossguard.

*In Your Game*—The estoc is sometimes used by knights who expect to fight other heavily-armored warriors although its anti-armor properties make it popular with monster hunters and dragon slayers.

*In History*—As plate armor improved, the estoc (or tuck) was developed in response. Although its cross section varied, the tuck's rigid blade was optimized for thrusting through chain and finding gaps in plate armor.

**Hurlbat:** The hurlbat (or whirlbat) is a plain yet brutal variety of throwing axe, about 8 in. long and made from a single piece of metal, a hurlbat is gripped at the center shaft, since every available point is sharpened. Some are simply stamped and sharpened iron, while masterwork varieties are forged

steel. A hurlbat used in melee is an improvised weapon.

*In Your Game*—Hurlbats are favored by knights, cavaliers, and other professional warriors who throw hurlbats before advancing into melee to catch enemies off guard.

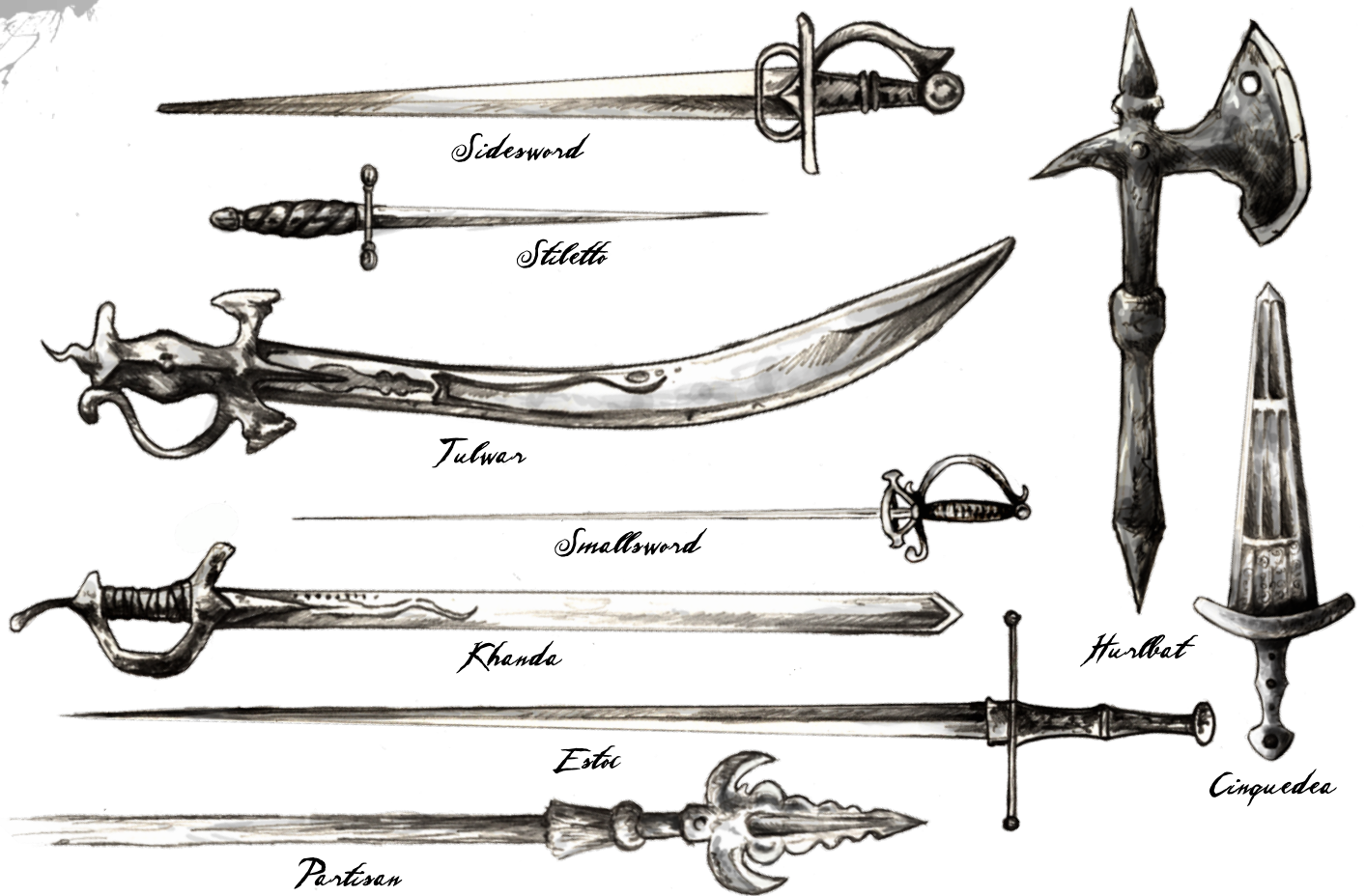
*In History*—The hurlbat (along with the throwing hammer) were most popular in Central Europe, from the High Middle Ages through the Renaissance, and while often overlooked, a simple hurlbat, sometimes known contemporarily as the "throwing cross," was a lightweight addition to a knight's arsenal that came in a variety of shapes.

**Khanda:** A broad, heavy double-bladed sword that averages 3 ft. in length, the khanda has a distinct rectangular blade tip and a triangularly profiled edge. It is unusually heavy for a weapon of its length, making it an exotic weapon.

A khanda's heavy blade lets it cleave into foes, armor, and shields with equal ease: when using a khanda, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to damage when using the Power Attack feat to sunder objects (+2 if used in two hands). The khanda has the sundering special feature.

*In Your Game*—Although the khanda is thought to have originated with distant human cultures, most folk are more familiar with its unfortunate copying and adoption by orcs, who reserve the margpros (or "crushing blade") for their champions.

*In History*—The khanda (whose name roughly translates to "cutter") is one of



the oldest styles of swords from India and is associated with the Rajputs, Marathas, and Sikhs. To the Sikhs, it is a religious symbol, and across India, the khanda is given the same level of cultural respect as the katana is in Japan.

**Partisan:** A sword-like spearhead with axe-like prongs mounted on a 7-ft. pole, the partisan is equally capable of piercing or slashing.

*In Your Game*—Peasants needing a good polearm will sometimes cut down and mount old sword blades on a pole to convert them into partisans.

*In History*—A combat weapon during the Renaissance, partisans were retained long after as a ceremonial tool, all but losing their side prongs in the process.

**Sidesword:** With a double-edged blade about 3 ft. long, the rapier-like sidesword is equally capable of thrusting or cutting. Unlike a rapier, you can wield it in two hands to apply 1-1/2 times your Strength bonus to damage. Characters with abilities restricted to one-handed piercing

weapons may substitute a sidesword, even when slashing. A non-proficient wielder may treat the sidesword as a rapier (using a rapier's rules).

*In Your Game*—A favorite of duelists, the sidesword sees equal use among human and elven adventurers and is often paired with the buckler.

*In History*—"Sidesword" is a recent term for the predecessor to the rapier. While the rapier was a civilian weapon, the sidesword was also used as a military weapon.

**Smallsword:** A thin, flexible stabbing sword about 2 ft. long, the smallsword is just as much intended as an element of dress as it is a weapon. You can't wield it in two hands to apply 1-1/2 times your Strength bonus to damage.

*In Your Game*—Even more aristocratic than the rapier, most smallswords are masterwork weapons with fine engravings and bejeweled, gold-inlaid hilts.

*In History*—First popular in the 17th century, the smallsword was the follow-

up to the rapier and the predecessor to the épée and foil used in sport fencing.

**Stiletto:** As a dagger with a narrow, rigid blade, the stiletto is optimized for piercing and is easy to conceal. Its extremely narrow profile provides a +4 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks to conceal it on your body.

*In Your Game*—Although elaborate examples are worn by nobles, the stiletto is favored by rogues and assassins who need to ensure that a single, deadly blow strikes true despite a foe's armor.

*In History*—The stiletto was originally used by knights for delivering the coup de grace against mortally wounded yet heavily armored foes. It survived through the gunpowder age both as a weapon and as a tool to clean the fuse hole for cannons.

**Trump:** A 2-ft. long, bronze-lined barrel packed with an alchemical mixture on a pole, the trump projects fire a few feet in front of it. Attacking with a trump is a melee touch attack that can be part

**Table 1: Historical Weapons**

Martial Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Weight	Special
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>							
Cinquedeas	40 gp	1d4	1d6	×2	—	2 lb.	P defensive, resilient
Stiletto	10 gp	1d3	1d4	19–20/×2	—	1 lb.	P armor-piercing
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Smallsword	25 gp	1d3	1d4	18–20/×2	—	1 lb.	P finesse, resilient
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Partisan	10 gp	1d6	1d8	19–20/×2	—	9 lb.	P or S brace, reach
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>							
Hurlbat	4 gp	1d3	1d4	×3	20 ft.	1 lb.	S —
<b>Exotic Weapons</b>							
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Estoc	40 gp	1d8	1d10	×2	—	3 lb.	P armor-piercing, hand-and-a-half
Khanda	30 gp	1d6	1d8	×3	—	8 lb.	S sundering; see text
Sidesword	25 gp	1d4	1d6	18–20/×2	—	2-1/2 lb.	P or S finesse; see text
Tulwar	70 gp	1d6	1d8	18–20/×2	—	5 lb.	P or S hand-and-a-half
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Trump	100 gp	2d4	2d6	×2	—	12 lb.	fire reach; see text
Trump Fuel	15 gp	—	—	—	—	2 lb.	— Craft (alchemy) DC 15

of a full attack action. A trump's damage is unaffected by Strength or feats that increase damage, such as Power Attack or Vital Strike. Loading a trump with fuel is a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

**Trump Fuel**—An alchemical mix of resins, pitch, sulfur, and straw, wrapped in cloth or burlap, a single billet of trump fuel burns for 5 min.

**In Your Game**—While the human word “trump” describes its resemblance to the trumpet, the dwarven term translates to “troll stick,” indicating the dwarves’ favored use for it.

**In History**—The trump was most famously used by the Knights Hospitaller during the Great Siege of Malta in 1565 to discourage Ottoman soldiers from charging through wall breaches.

**Tulwar:** The tulwar (or talwar) is a long slender scimitar with a moderate curve, typically 3–4 ft. long, with a distinctive disc-shaped pommel and delicate knuckle guard. Its blade is shorter and more rigid than the elven curve blade. The tulwar is primarily intended for slashing but can also be used for thrusts.

**In Your Game**—The tulwar shares a similar niche with the scimitar and can be found in cultures that use its smaller cousin.

**In History**—The shamshir, kilij, and

pulwar are similar weapons originally from the Middle East (although slashing only) that probably inspired the Indian tulwar in the 13th century.

## New Weapons in Golarion

**Cinquedeas:** The cinquedeas was first a fad in Absalom and Egorian several decades ago, though it is still popular among urban nobility across the Inner Sea.

**Estoc:** No one is quite sure who modified the familiar bastard sword into the estoc or when, but more than a few Hellknights have confiscated the weapon from their opponents.

**Hurlbat:** The hurlbat is found in army kits across Avistan, although shunned by Kellids and the Ulfen. It is most commonly seen in the martial cultures of Lastwell, Mendev, and Molthune.

**Khanda:** The khanda originated in Vudra, as a revered weapon used by the padaprajna caste of warriors—most khandas are masterwork items passed down through families or given to great heroes. To be granted a khanda sword is a great honor.

**Partisan:** Partisans range from the grand ceremonial weapons paraded through Almas on Independence Day to the “sword-staves” cobbled together from old longswords by peasant militia.

**Sidesword:** Though largely eclipsed by the rapier in popularity, duelists across Golarion are rediscovering the sidesword as a versatile weapon, with only the Aldori school of fencing protesting, claiming the superiority of their founder's style of sword.

**Smallsword:** Smallswords originated as a less-threatening ornamental rapier given to favored underlings of House Thrune. While they remain very much a Chelish indulgence, the highly-decorated smallsword has slowly gained popularity elsewhere.

**Stiletto:** Despite their usefulness, stilettoes have a dark reputation in the Inner Sea as the favored instruments of professional killers and cutthroats, leading some major cities to specifically ban them, with varying degrees of success.

**Trump:** The trump was first used in Qadiran invasion of Taldor that led to the centuries-long Grand Campaign, seeing use as a Taldan siege-defense weapon. It has remained a valuable tool for adventurers facing foes vulnerable to fire.

**Tulwar:** Like the scimitar, the tulwar originated in Casmaron, though Keleshite and Vudran migration brought it westward. Today, the tulwar is most often seen in Qadira, Katapesh, Nex, and Jalmeray, though many faithful of Sarenrae who favor a larger weapon will opt for one. Ω

# Horakh

## *The Eater of Eyeballs*

By Jobe Bittman

Art by James Keegan

In the deepest recesses of dank dungeons and deep caverns, hideous creatures struggle for survival. Life is short and brutal.

Only the most vicious live to breed and fight another day. One of the most feared subterranean denizens is the horakh, an insectoid killing machine with a penchant for consuming the eyes of its victim.

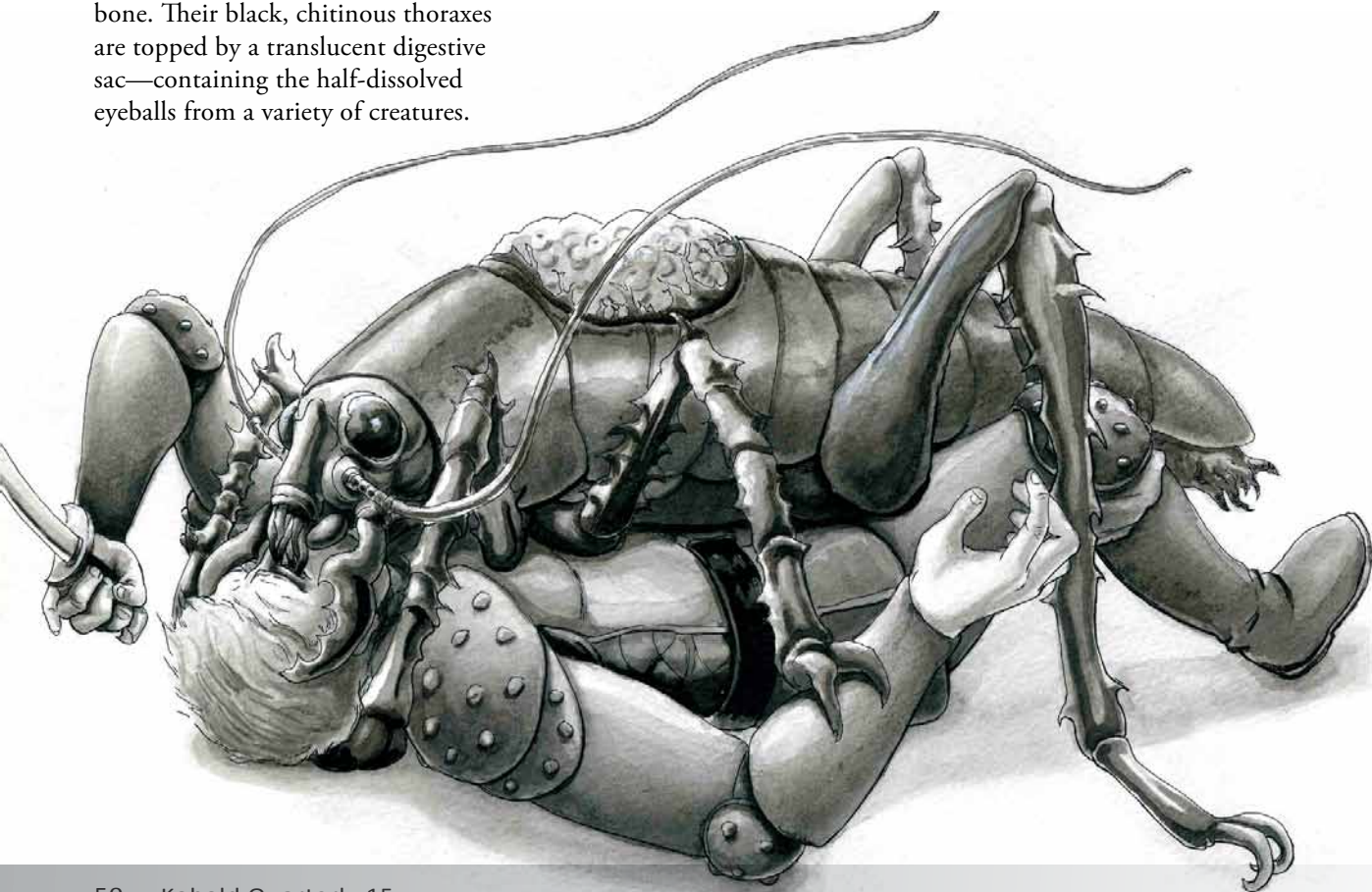
Horakh have powerful rear legs, allowing them to make bounding leaps. Sharp hooks extend from each powerful claw, allowing them to climb any surface and latch on to prey. Their heads are dominated by scooped mandibles that shoot forward like pistons, shearing meat from bone. Their black, chitinous thoraxes are topped by a translucent digestive sac—containing the half-dissolved eyeballs from a variety of creatures.

# KING of the MONSTERS

**Horakh in Combat:** Horakh silently skulk at the edges of larger groups of monsters, waiting to pick off the weak and wounded. Eyeless beasts, such as grimlocks, destrachan, and gricks have nothing to fear from horakh and often tolerate losing some spoils of battle to them for the sake of mutual protection.

When attacking, horakh leap from hiding with a deafening screech. Generally, horakh first attempt to grab

targets with a *double slash* attack and follow up with an *eye scoop* in the next round. Horakh are highly mobile on the battlefield. If threatened, they leap back into the shadows to attack again from a more advantageous position. They never fight to the death and flee if the assault goes poorly. Horakh have been known to harry adventuring parties over the course of multiple encounters, looking for a chink in their defenses.



**Lore (Dungeoneering DC 17):** Even battle-hardened dungeoneers quiver at the mere mention of the horakh. These bloodthirsty insects travel in small packs and make lightning-fast attacks against the weak and vulnerable. Horakh have specialized scooping mandibles they use to rip out victims' eyes.

Horakh do not always immediately consume their prey. They occasionally use the maimed as bait to capture other creatures. Some say the horakh will even herd blind victims like sheep back to their hidden colony deep in the bowels of the earth to a fate unknown.

**HORAKH** **LEVEL 12 LURKER**  
Small natural beast **XP 700**

**HP 90; Bloodied 45 Initiative +17**  
**AC 22, Fort 23, Ref 26, Wil 20**  
**Perception +13**  
**Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)**  
Darkvision

**TRAITS**

**Deafening Screech • Aura 3**

All creatures within the aura are deafened.

**Implant Egg**

If the horakh reduces a grabbed creature to 0 hp, it jams its ovipositor deep into the target's eye socket and inserts a pebble-sized egg. The target contracts horakh incubation disease (see below).

**STANDARD ACTIONS**

**✗ Claw Slash • At-Will**

*Attack*—Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC.

*Hit*—1d8+7 damage, and the target is grabbed; the horakh can only grab one creature at a time.

**✗ Double Slash • At-Will**

*Effect*—The horakh uses *claw slash* twice.

**✗ Eye Scoop • At-Will**

*Requirement*—The horakh must have grabbed the target.

*Attack*—Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex; the horakh attempts to scoop out an eye of the grabbed creature.

*Hit*—3d6+3 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends); on a critical hit, the target is blinded until the end of the encounter and permanently loses an eye.

**MOVE ACTIONS**

**Unnatural Leap • Recharge 4, 5, 6**

*Effect*—The horakh can move 10 squares as if it had a fly speed: it must end its movement on the ground or by clinging to a surface with spider climb.

**FREE ACTIONS**

**Skitter • Encounter**

*Effect*—The horakh can shift 3 squares.

**Skills** Stealth +18

**Str 21 (+11) Dex 25 (+13) Wis 15 (+8)**

**Con 17 (+9) Int 8 (+5) Cha 11 (+6)**

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** —

**King of the Monsters Contest**

Fans create and submit monsters for their favorite edition in this semiannual contest at **KoboldQuarterly.com**. The entries are judged by talented industry professionals and by the fans. Among other prizes, the winning entry appears in **KOBOLD QUARTERLY**.

Jobe Bittman is the newly crowned champion with his gruesome, eye-gouging horakh. Visit **KoboldQuarterly.com** and maybe you'll be the next champion.

**HORAKH INCUBATION LEVEL 11 DISEASE**

**Endurance** improve DC 22 maintain 18, worsen DC 15 or lower

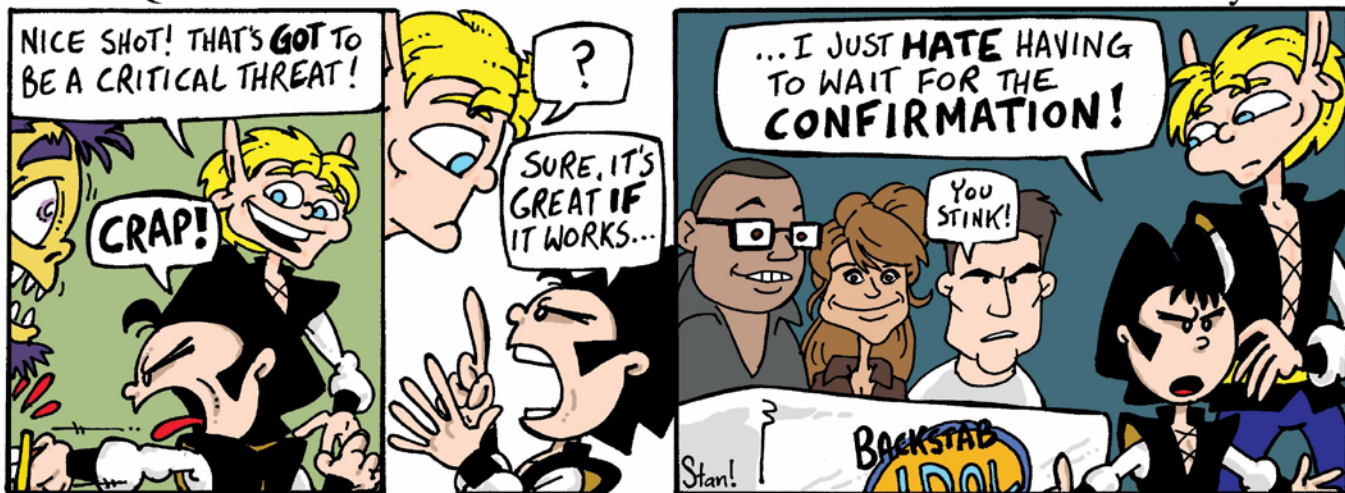
Once the egg hatches, the host organism is plagued by nausea and headaches. The hatchling feeds on the brain tissue until the host dies:

You are cured.
<i>Initial Effect</i> You take a -2 penalty to Will.
You suffer from constant, debilitating migraines. Creatures beyond 5 squares have concealment from you.
<i>Final State</i> A horakh explodes from your head, and you die.

Ω

**Bolt & Quiver**

by Stan!



Copyright ©2010 Stan!

www.boltandquiver.com

# Those Dark Dungeons Blues

By James Lowder

Illustration by Louis-Léopold Boilly

Like comic books in the 1950s and video games in the past decade, *Dungeons & Dragons* was the target of reactionary hysteria—a real moral panic—in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The game drew the wrath of religious groups for its fantasy elements while headline-seeking “experts” decried roleplaying games as psychologically crippling obsessions. The media frenzy surrounding the 1979 suicide attempt by James Dallas Egbert III in the steam tunnels beneath Michigan State University, erroneously linked to *D&D*, served as the first major national eruption of the panic.

Egbert’s disappearance spawned countless wildly inaccurate newspaper articles on RPGs, as well as Rona Jaffe’s 1981 fictionalized account, *Mazes and Monsters*, which was quickly filmed in 1982 as a made-for-TV movie starring a young Tom Hanks. 1982 also saw Patricia Pulling suing TSR, Inc. (unsuccessfully) over her own troubled son’s suicide and forming an advocacy group, *Bothered About Dungeons & Dragons*.

As a longtime hobby gamer I was quite familiar with the controversy. I had been playing *D&D* since 1977. I had firsthand experience with a few conservative Christian classmates—or parents of friends—reacting negatively to gaming. I’d read many of the books and pamphlets that cast roleplaying games as a menace. I’d even been given a copy of the infamous Jack Chick tract *Dark Dungeons* in 1986 by a concerned student after I mentioned in one of the classes I taught at the University of Illinois that I played *D&D*. Shortly thereafter, my then-fiancée was handed another copy of the same tract as we were walking across campus.

This isn’t as remarkable a coincidence as it might sound. Champaign-Urbana was one of panic’s epicenters, thanks to the local presence of psychiatrist Thomas Radecki, founder of the National Coalition on Television Violence and Pat Pulling’s most stalwart ally in her war against *D&D*.

By 1988, when I landed a job in TSR’s book division, the controversy had started to wane. Jim Bakker’s downfall and similar scandals had discredited some of the louder critics of RPGs, and other religious conservatives had moved on to higher-profile targets, such as Larry Flynt, who had triumphed over Jerry Falwell in the Supreme Court earlier in the year. There were still letters showing up in local papers warning of the *D&D*’s dangers, but those were echoes of the intense hue and cry raised by *Mazes & Monsters* and the alarmist *60 Minutes* segment years earlier. When I took the TSR job, I had assumed that the folks in Lake Geneva would have been aware that the worst was over. I couldn’t have been more wrong.

When I moved into my first office at TSR, I still had the two copies of *Dark Dungeons* from my time at Illinois, so I broke them up and posted them in sequence on the door. The pages were up for only a few minutes before Jim Ward, then vice president of game design, passed by. He stepped into the doorway, pointed to the pages, and said, “If you want to be working here this afternoon, you’ll take them down immediately.” For a moment I assumed that he was kidding, but he explained that TSR’s owner, Lorraine Williams, and the rest of upper management had no sense of humor about the panic and that I’d be wise never to joke about the subject within hearing range of any of them.

I’d soon learn that Ward was not exaggerating. In fact, TSR had become so hypersensitive to the criticism connected to the panic that demons and devils were going to vanish from *AD&D* with the publication of the second edition. I discovered, too, that the company was attaching a rider to all novel contracts, a very slightly modified version of the old Comics Code Authority guides for editorial content. None of the editors enforced it, though, and when I asked why, given the lack of enforcement, the guidelines were included in the contract at all, I was told that they provided cover. If anyone complained, the company could hold up the list of proscribed content and say we had the same guides as the people publishing such wholesome fare as *Archie* and *Superman*.

During the time I was an employee, TSR received occasional letters and phone calls from concerned non-gamers wanting to talk about *D&D*’s reported satanic connections. For all that management was quite anxious about public perception—concerned enough to modify the game’s content and to adopt at least the appearance of strict rules for the fiction—there wasn’t a designated contact person or even formal staff guidelines for dealing with these questions, at least not any I ever saw. Reporters were directed to marketing, but everyone else who called landed wherever the receptionist happened to find someone at a desk. The *Dragon* editors handled a fair number of these contacts; the subject of the panic was a frequent topic for the gamers writing to the magazine’s letters pages, so it was natural for the *Dragon* staff to field queries from non-

gamers, too. One of the receptionists knew I was interested in the topic, and she routed some of them my way.

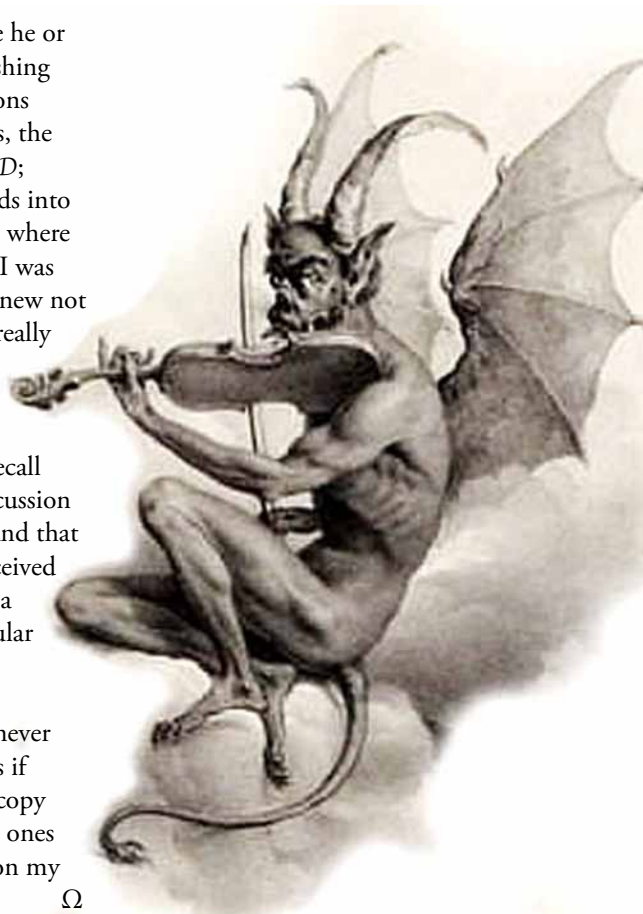
The calls got fewer and fewer as the 1980s became the 1990s. There were never all that many, but by the time I left my full-time position with the company in 1992, it was unusual to hear anyone mention answering one.

In fact, as Jeff Grubb recently reminded me, even *Dark Dungeons* became fair game again by the early 1990s. The comic was the subject of a particularly acerbic recaptioning contest, conducted on the whiteboard hung in the company's Games Library. It should be noted that TSR's management tacitly acknowledged the whiteboard as something of a free speech zone, but the fact that the staff felt comfortable enough to post the tract for commentary says a lot about how the company as a whole was finally relaxing.

The calls I ended up answering were a mixed lot. Sometimes the callers were full of righteous indignation

and just wanted to tell someone he or she was going to Hell for publishing the game. Most just had questions about roleplaying or, sometimes, the connection of the novels to *D&D*; TSR's fiction was making inroads into bookstores and even classrooms where RPGs were still unwelcome, so I was never surprised to get those. I knew not to argue with anyone who was really upset, but I also understood the topic well enough to discuss it rationally with people who had genuine questions. I recall only one person ending the discussion angrier than when he'd called, and that was because I mentioned I'd received my undergraduate degree from a Jesuit university; for this particular fellow, that was an even bigger offense than working on *D&D*.

In hindsight, I'm just sorry I never thought to ask any of the callers if they knew where I might get a copy of *Dark Dungeons* to replace the ones I'd destroyed to post so briefly on my office door. Ω



# We Build Character

**Advanced Feats** series takes the standard character classes and provides new builds, new feats, and design breakdowns to create characters that click -- or NPCs that can hold their own!

- ✦ **Secrets of the Alchemist** – Explosive new feats like Create Wondrous Creature, Fire in the Hole, and Sundering Bomb compliment builds such as the Mad Scientist, Carpet Bomber, and Mighty Mutant.
- ✦ **The Witch's Brew** – Trick or Treat with the Wicked Witch, the White Witch, or the mighty Arch Witch and feats such as Craft Magic Tattoo, Hexing Familiar, and Soul Mate.
- ✦ **Summoner's Circle** – Meet my little friends the Warmaster, Serpent Lord, and Mythic Knight and enjoy feats including Sizershifter, Toss Foe and Wall Mastery

**Advanced Feats** for Pathfinder RPG are just \$3.95



Available now at [KoboldQuarterly.com](http://KoboldQuarterly.com)

# Simulating Game Reality

By Monte Cook  
Art by Rick Hershey

For years, there's been talk in RPG circles (and by that, I mostly mean Internet messageboards) about simulation versus game play and storytelling in roleplaying games. Simulation, of course, is the reproduction of either true reality or a fantasy reality. In the first case, we're talking about our own real world. In the second, it's either a specific milieu, such as Narnia or the Star Wars universe, or a widely recognized general world, such as "the fantasy world," like our own world but where dragons fly and wizards hurl fireballs and where everyone basically understands how it all works.

What many gamers and even game designers don't always understand, however, is that a game can create a

simulation without even trying. It creates a simulation of itself.

Allow me to explain.

Let's say you're a GM who doesn't care about simulation much. There are plenty who don't, and there's nothing wrong with that. You like to focus on the characters and the story, on making sure the game is fun. You lay out the (likely simple) rules you want to use and get started.

More than likely, your players will—at some point—begin to look very closely at whatever rules system you're using. Maybe it will be before the game starts, maybe it will be in between sessions well into the campaign, or maybe it will be in the middle of the session, during a desperate situation. The point is, the rules are all that the players have to tell them how the world their characters are operating in works. The rules tell them what they can and can't do.

Some systems give more power to GM fiat or player ingenuity than others, but that's still a rule, and it still tells a player something. If players understand that success or failure might be based on their creative ideas and use of the environment, situation, and other characters' traits—such as in a game using something like the FATE system—then that's going to modify their behavior in the game.

Of course, in this context, "success" and "failure" might be relative. Success might mean advancing the story in an interesting way rather than personal character victory. That's really beside the point. The point is, a player wants to achieve something, and the rules offer the only guide to do so. That is, after all, why the rules exist.

## Rules are Reality

From a player's point of view, the rules are the laws of reality. Even if, as the GM, you play fast and loose with the rules, the players likely have less power over them than you do. They can't take your own manipulations of events in the game (if any) for granted. They only have the rules that are presented to them to tell them what's possible and what's not, what's easy and what's hard.

The latter point is the more important one. The rules teach the players the proper avenues to use to reach their goals, whether accumulating as many success dice as feasible; choosing the right feats, equipment, and spells; making as many friends as they can; or just being as creative and observant as possible.

Armed with this information—sometimes without even realizing it—players begin to make unique, game-specific assumptions and alter their behavior based on those assumptions.

## Assumptions Lead to Action

Most of the time, these assumptions affirm certain actions. It's easier to climb a knotted rope in *Pathfinder* Roleplaying Game, for example, than a non-knotted one. That's probably a good thing because it's pretty much true in the real world as well. Reading a mythos tome in *Call of Cthulhu* is dangerous. That's different, of course, because reading books in the real world isn't going to blast your sanity. I mean, probably.

It's easier to use a dagger than a greatsword in *Dungeons & Dragons*, but you're more likely to kill a foe with that greatsword. These are the kinds of things that, inadvertently or not, shape the game world. It means that if the PCs see a foe with a dagger, that fact alone conveys information.





The wielder's either a fighter with an equipment problem or not a fighter.

In 1st Edition D&D, if you saw a guy with a short sword and not a shield, he was probably a thief. If he had a shield, he was probably an assassin. Both could use short swords (and no fighter would use a short sword if he could get a longsword), but only the assassin could use a shield. Quirky, but knowledgeable players knew that these were the rules that shaped the world they lived in and, thus, used this knowledge to their advantage. Can you blame them?

Sometimes, it's the absence of rules that forms the assumptions. For example, in D&D, historically, one has to do three things to cast a spell. A wizard uses three components to work magic: magic words, magic ingredients, and magic gestures.

The design assumption, however, is that there's a lot more to it than that. Always has been. Wizards have to go to school for years to learn all the ins and outs of spellcasting. It's mentally challenging and even sometimes physically taxing. But some players, having read the rulebook, don't believe or understand that to be the case. They think that the fighter, with a handful of bat guano who copies the words and gestures of the wizard precisely, should be able to toss a fireball at the enemy. Because the rules don't suggest that it shouldn't work that way.

Rightly or wrongly, the rules at that point aren't always simulating reality or a fictional world. They're simulating a reality that they themselves have created. The game simulates itself.

### What Should the GM Do?

So rules—or the lack thereof—shape player choices and character actions, even in ways in which we might not be aware. So what's a GM to do?

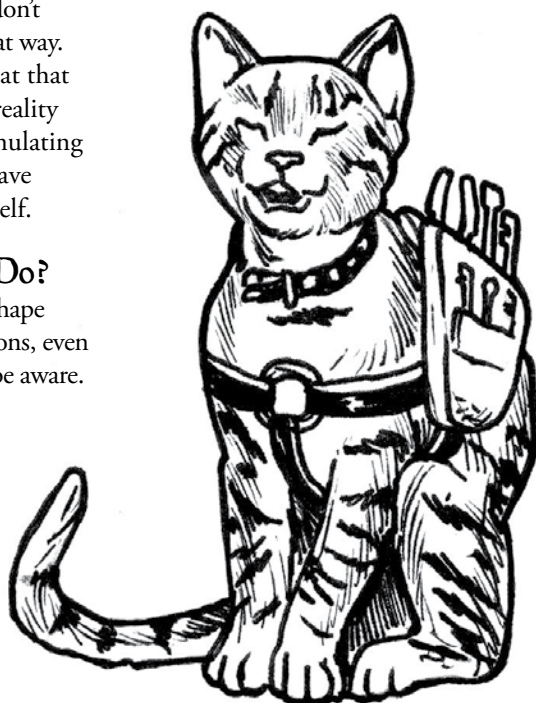
Maybe nothing.

Maybe nothing, that is, other than be aware of the situation. Don't be surprised when your players don't understand why the D&D fighter's not wearing armor or the drow wizard isn't evil. If you don't

want the rules to shape players' choices, you're going to have to be frank with them and explain that the game reality exists beyond just the rules. That there are assumptions to be made beyond the rules as written, either taken from reality (which is to say, common sense) or from GM inspiration and fiat as it comes. The latter is always important, regardless of the game system you're using. The GM trumps the rules.

As the GM, you can also play against type sometimes. You can stage a D&D encounter with a fighter who's really skilled with daggers. You can have your *Call of Cthulhu* investigators find a mythos tome that somehow adds to a character's Sanity score. This would certainly shake things up now and again. But really, before you go implementing things of that nature, you have to ask yourself, is violating the assumptions created by the rules a good thing? Or to put it another way, is it really so bad that rules define the world?

Maybe it's not. It puts the players all on an equal footing, and it allows the players to understand the world of their characters, which is often a strange place with unfamiliar creatures, technologies, and even supernatural powers. Maybe knowing that it happens is enough. Ω



## LATEST PRODUCTS FROM 4 WINDS FANTASY GAMING!



Strategists and Tacticians

\$18.95

Luvén Lightfinger's

Gear and Treasure Shop \$18.95



Albion Armitage's Astounding Arsenal  
(adventure for mid-level characters)

\$4.99 PDF \$10.95 PoD

Player's Aid IV: Character Record  
Portfolio

Form-Fillable PDF \$1.49

Print-Out Version FREE!

### COMING SOON:

Tome of Monsters, Phantasia Zoologica II and III, The Apothecary's Handbook

[www.4windsfantasygaming.com](http://www.4windsfantasygaming.com)

*Bringing unique RPG products to all corners of the world!*

Pathfinder and associated marks and logos are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and are used under license. See [paizo.com/pathfinderRPG](http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG) for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.



# Dragons, Con Artists, and Space Outlaws

*An Interview with Margaret Weis*

By Wade Rockett

Photo by Stella Photographs, photographer Elizabeth Setterfield

As a KOBOLD QUARTERLY booth monkey at Gen Con Indy 2010, I spent the week meeting an array of amazing people—many of whom were already legendary figures in the gaming industry when I was just a kid in the early 80s, clutching my 1st Edition AD&D *Players Handbook* in my chubby little hands.

One of these giants was Margaret Weis, who graciously took a few moments to chat with me at the Margaret Weis Productions booth. We talked about games, novels, and the art and craft of worldbuilding. Ms. Weis is, of course, the author of dozens of best-selling fantasy novels, including the *Dragonlance* series, which she co-authored with Tracy Hickman. Margaret Weis Productions adapts popular television series and movies into roleplaying games using the Cortex System.

**Rockett: What are some of the new games you're promoting at Gen Con this year?**

**Weis:** Our newest game this year is the *Smallville Roleplaying Game*. The other one we're promoting right now is *Leverage: The Quickstart Job*, which we'll be bringing out in 2–3 months. It's different from more combat-oriented games where you punch down walls and so on. I mean, you do still get to punch down walls in *Leverage*, but you can be thoughtful about it.

The creator of *Leverage* is actually a gamer, which is really neat.

**As a novelist and game designer, you've had very diverse experience**

**in worldbuilding. What are some of the more interesting projects you've worked on?**

One of the most interesting things I did in terms of worldbuilding was for a series called *Rose of the Prophet*, which has an Arabian style setting. I needed to research medieval Arabian cities, how people lived at that time, and what life was like in a nomadic tribe. I learned so much about that culture, and it was really interesting to me.

My latest series, *Bones of the Dragon*, is about Vikings, so I did a lot of research on Vikings and the histories of the Scandinavian countries.

When I'm building out a world, I do a lot of research. I try to base as much of it as I can on reality, even in a fantasy setting. With fantasy, there's so much we ask the reader to do in terms of suspending disbelief that it's good to give them something familiar to hold on to. It's easier to ask them to believe in dragons if you have horses too.

**Patrons of Open Design projects create fantasy settings in collaboration with a lead designer and with each other. Many of your projects are collaborative: do you have any tips for our community?**

Oh sure, that's how we did

*Dragonlance*. Everything we did at TSR was as a community. I compare it to an orchestra: the musicians all play different instruments, but each contributes to the larger piece under the leadership of the conductor.

For *Dragonlance*, that conductor was Tracy Hickman. He was in charge of the project, and I was on the book side of things. My job, when I was hired at TSR, was to edit the *Dragonlance* novels, so I sat in on the game design side. Eventually, Tracy and I ended up writing the novels together.

**So as the conductor of the Dragonlance Orchestra, did Tracy ever have to bring the baton down and say**

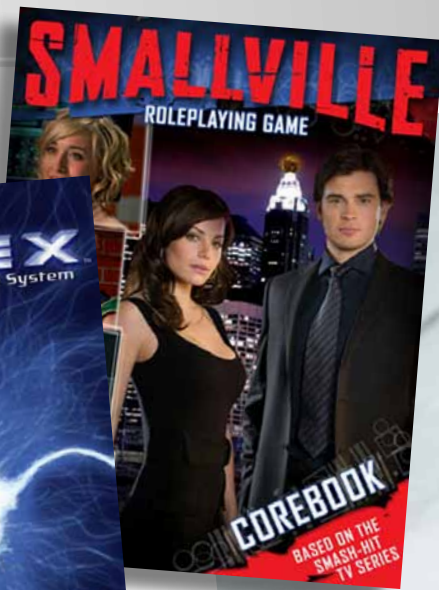
*I compare it to an orchestra: the musicians all play different instruments, but each contributes to the larger piece under the leadership of the conductor.*

**no, that idea isn't appropriate for this setting?**

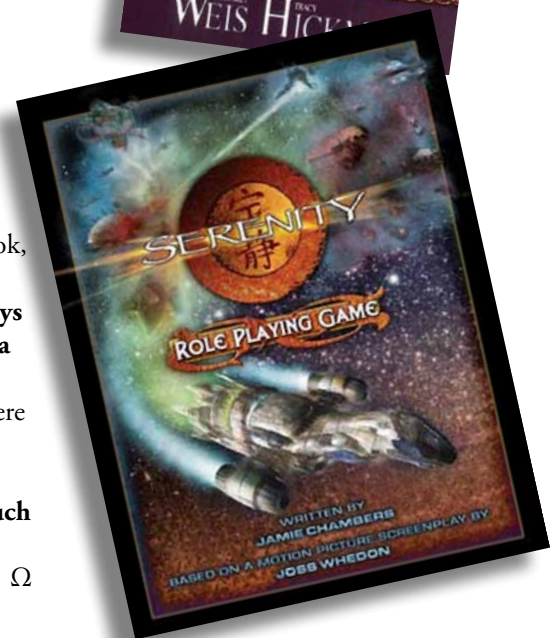
No, generally he didn't have to do that. There was so much excitement and enthusiasm for *Dragonlance*—Tracy said it was as if we all lived in this world.

**Are there any common pitfalls that aspiring worldbuilders should watch out for?**

I would not go too wild and too fantastic. As I said, it's great to base some of it in reality. For *Dragonlance*, we had maps showing the prevailing winds, when the tides were coming in and going out, the positions of the stars, when the



Margaret Weis, with daughter Lizz Baldwin Weis



moons were rising. All of that stuff.

**At your current company, you turn other types of media—movies and television shows—into games. How do you fill in the blanks in those fictional worlds?**

That was actually somewhat difficult when we did the *Serenity Role Playing Game* because there wasn't a lot there. Joss Whedon and his people gave us everything they had, but because he hadn't developed it to a great extent, we kind of had to fill in the blanks—and not step on Joss's toes while we were doing this. It was kind of like walking on eggshells, but it was a lot of fun.

**Did you check in periodically with Joss and his people to make sure you were on the right track?**

When we could. But they were so involved with making the *Serenity* movie at the time, they really couldn't help us. We were sort of flying blind.

We also had to get approval from Universal Studios for that game. They were very good and basically liked everything we did, but the one thing they took out of the game was kind of odd: when we did Wash's character, we included two little dinosaurs with him. Universal said, "No, you have to take the dinosaurs out."

We said, "But... they're part of the character." They said, "No, because we don't want people to think this is a

game about dinosaurs!" Bear in mind, we had to explain to the Universal people what a roleplaying game was, so there you go.

**Your games represent many different genres: teenage superhero dramas, con artist capers, and stories about refugees on a battlestar. But they all use the same rules, the Cortex System. How do you give each game the unique feel of its source material?**

We have the basic rules engine, so then, we develop special rules for each universe. If you play *Serenity* and then pick up *Smallville*, you'll recognize some of the rules, but there will also be some changes. Each game has everything you need to play in one book: you don't have to buy a core rulebook or a GM's guide for the Cortex System. If you want to play *Smallville*, you buy the *Smallville* book, and you're ready to play.

**Are there any worlds you've always wanted to play in but haven't had a chance to yet?**

Oh, there are some licenses out there we're currently exploring. But I can't talk about that right now!

**Darn it! Well, thank you very much for your time.**

Thank you.

Ω

# A Call to Awesome

## Expanded Criticals

By Quinn Murphy

Illustration by Rick Hershey and John Reinhard Weguelin

**C**riticals are great! Roll a natural 20 and deal max damage. More damage is always good, isn't it? It is, but a critical hit can do more than damage. Critical actions and scene criticals turn natural 20s into on-the-fly special effects. Criticals then become a call to awesome action and creativity on the part of players.

### Using Story Criticals

The basics of using a story critical are simple: when players score criticals, they can choose the standard critical effect (as stated in the *Player's Handbook*), or they can choose either a critical action or a scene critical.

If the player chooses a critical action or scene critical, he rolls damage normally (extra damage is applied, as are other critical hit effects) and then the effects of the critical action or scene critical are immediately applied.

Players trade maximum damage in this system for effect; this system is optimized for story and not pure mechanical advantage! Some players will find high damage dramatic enough, but when players are feeling creative, the system of expanded critical hits listed here rewards their creativity.

### Critical Actions

A player choosing a critical action chooses one effects from the critical action table at the Heroic tier, or two different effects at Paragon and above. The actions are meant to combine to make unique effects that are hard to replicate with any single power or

feat. The critical actions you use can establish the style and tone of your game. (See examples of critical actions in **Tables 1 and 2.**)

#### CRITICAL ACTIONS IN PLAY

In a high fantasy campaign, Theldan the dwarf barbarian is fighting a demon lord. He rolls a 20, but instead of dealing extra damage, he has something better in mind. Using the Knockdown and Take Hold critical actions, he throws himself at the demon, sweeping the monster off his feet with the axe and then grabbing the demon by the horns. Face to face with the demon, Theldan mutters, "You and I are just getting started, ugly."

Later in that same fight, Adrian the human wizard launches a spell at the demon lord. The demon lord has been driven to within a few squares of a cliff. Adrian scores a critical. The wizard uses the Steer the Foe critical action twice, hurling the demon into the air and over the cliff. The demon fails the saving throw and falls, potentially to its doom.

#### CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR MONSTERS

Should you use critical actions for monsters as well as PCs? In most campaigns, only "important" monsters—solos, elites, and other monsters and NPCs playing vital roles in your game—should use critical actions.

In dark fantasy games or any campaign with deadliness as a theme, you may decide that all creatures can use the critical actions.

### Scene Criticals

The other choice that players have when scoring a critical is to use a scene critical, providing the GM has created one for use in the encounter.

A scene critical "unlocks" a new location or effect, ratcheting up the drama of an encounter and creating new stages where the combat can be fought or adding unique effects.

Whenever a player scores a critical against a nominated target, the GM informs them of the scene critical and its effect. If the player chooses to use that scene critical, apply the effect immediately. Scene criticals can be used once, a limited amount of times, or infinite times in the same encounter.

#### SCENE CRITICALS IN PLAY:

##### CLIMB THE BEHEMOTH

Theldan the barbarian and his party are fighting against a behemoth monster. In the fight, the dwarf scores a critical hit. The GM informs him of the Climb the Behemoth! scene critical, which allows him to climb the creature and gain access to a vulnerable place on the monster.

As a result, for the next 1d4 rounds, the dwarf can make attacks against the behemoth for additional damage as he strikes the monster in vital spots around its body. Excited at the prospect of taking the fight to the beast, Theldan takes the scene critical effect, using his axe swing to gain purchase and climb up the behemoth's side...

The presence of a prepared scene critical never prevents a player from accomplishing the same effect through



other powers or actions. The coolness of a scene action should be accessible in multiple ways; a scene critical is one easy way to access it and still deal damage, but it's not the only way to make it happen. Stunting rules, special powers, and so forth still make cool things happen normally.

#### ***SCENE CRITICALS IN PLAY:*** ***DRIVEN FROM THE CHURCH***

Yarde the halfling rogue fights an evil priest inside the villain's unholy church. Sneaking up behind the priest, the halfling scores a critical hit. The GM informs him that the Driven from the Church scene critical is available to him: this forces the priest from his church (which has given him bonuses and special effects) and shifts the fight outdoors, where the evil spirits provide the priest less aid.

Yarde's player decides to trigger this effect. The rogue's dagger cracks the gem on the priest's necklace, causing eldritch energy to flow from it, burning the villain. Unable to control the evil energies

without the necklace, the priest casts the pendant aside. He dives through the nearest window, taking the fight outside. The combat moves to a new map!

#### ***CREATING SCENE CRITICALS***

Implementation of scene criticals is a two-step process. First, choose a target that can be affected by the critical. This could be any combatant or just a special elite or solo. Next, choose the effect. There are several great effects to consider:

- Change the location of an encounter.
- Add or subtract terrain to the encounter.
- Make a villain temporarily vulnerable.
- Give a PC a temporary power or special ability.

The most important rule for creating scene critical: never make a scene critical that is required for victory! Scene criticals should never be bottlenecks to a win.

Initiating a scene critical should always

be "free"; don't use extra skill checks or rolls for scene criticals. Players sacrificing extra damage from critical hits should not have a further gateway to gaining effect from the critical.

When creating scene criticals, choose effects that alter the nature of the fight. Change the scenery, change the target, or even change the player in some beneficial way. Create methods for interacting with the encounter terrain or the combatants in unique, refreshing ways.

If you want more scene criticals, lower the threat range for scene criticals only. You could say that a scene critical triggers on a natural roll of 18–20 while critical actions and standard critical hits remain unchanged.

#### ***SCENE CRITICAL IDEAS***

**Snatch the Pearl:** *Single Use*—The villain has an item that creates an effect on the battlefield or that controls another monster or set of minions. This scene critical allows the player to reach out and grab the device, crushing it or usurping control of the item as a free action.

**Cracked Shell:** *Single Use*—You strike the monster perfectly, weakening its defense permanently. The enemy’s defenses are lowered for the rest of the encounter, or it becomes vulnerable to a new type of damage.

**Two for the Price of One:** *Unlimited Use*—You drive the endless hordes back. This critical works on minions only: slide target minion 4 squares. If the minion enters the space of another minion, both are immediately killed.

**SCENE CRITICALS FOR MONSTERS**

Want your solo encounters to really leave an impression on your players? Make scene criticals with the players as targets. Your NPC might toss a player into new terrain, move to a more advantageous position, change the terrain, or even give the players a disease. Countless possibilities for monster criticals exist.

Use of critical actions and scene criticals turn your PCs’ (and NPCs’) critical hits into your encounter’s special effects budget. Spend liberally from this budget to add drama and excitement to your game. Give your PCs extra rewards for their creativity and good fortune! Ω



**Table 1: High Fantasy Critical Actions**

Critical	Action	Effect
1	Hindering Attack	Target is slowed until the end of your next turn.
2	Knockdown	Target is knocked prone.
3	Perfect Positioning	You shift half your speed.
4	Rise Again	Use you second wind as a free action, even if you have already used it this encounter.
5	Sight the Flaw	You attack the target’s lowest defense score with any attack (save ends).
6	Staggering Attack	Target is weakened until the end of your next turn.
7	Steer the Foe	Slide target 2 squares. May be picked twice for same critical action.
8	Take Hold	Target is grabbed.

High fantasy critical actions focus on dramatic turnarounds and deeper interaction with surrounding terrain. PCs can use these powers to position themselves for bold maneuvers and heroic comebacks.

**Table 2: Dark Fantasy Critical Actions**

Critical	Action	Effect
1	Deadly Stakes	Increase your threat range by 1 until the end of this encounter. This effect may be chosen up to four times, and the effect stacks.
2	Disarm	Target must be wielding an implement or weapon. Place the target’s implement or weapon in a square within a burst 3 of the target. While disarmed, the target suffers a –2 penalty on attack rolls and deals only half damage with attacks with the Implement or Weapon keyword.
3	Drive Back	Target is pushed 2 squares.
4	Kicked in the Vitals	Target takes –2 to all defenses until the end of your next turn.
5	Menacing Speech	Make an Intimidate check against the target as a free action instead of a standard action.
6	Pierce the Defense	Target gains vulnerable all—5 (heroic tier), 10 (paragon tier), 15 (epic tier)—until the end of your next turn.
7	Sand in the Eyes	Target is blinded until the end of your next turn.
8	Wounding Attack	Target takes ongoing damage equal to 5 + 1/2 your level (save ends).

Dark fantasy critical actions support grim, gritty campaigns. Players have less control over movement but can deliver more damage and devastating effects. Battles utilizing these critical actions become deadly.



# Children of the Wood

## *Forest Bloodlines, Domains, and School of Wizardry*

By Stefen Styrsky

The Margreve is a wellspring of nature's potent vitality, and it exerts a powerful influence on the creatures living in its shadow. Some are born with the forest's magic latent in their veins. Others worship Porevit and Yarila, the mysterious twin gods who reign amid the leaf-dappled sunlight, and a school of wizardry has even learned to tap the arcane power inherent in the old growth.

Wander beneath the dark canopy and witness the power of the Green.

### Green Bloodline (Sorcerers)

Born on the spring equinox or summer solstice, you are the master of abilities derived from the Blood of the Green. You are said to have three parents: mother, father, and forest.

**Class Skill:** Survival.

**Bonus Spells:** *renewal* (3rd), *lesser restoration* (5th), *plant growth* (7th), *reincarnate* (9th), *animal growth* (11th), *liveoak* (13th), *animate plants* (15th), *control plants* (17th), *regenerate* (19th).

**Bonus Feats:** Craft Staff, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Self-Sufficient, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Climb), Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature]), Skill Focus (Survival).

**Bloodline Arcana:** Choose one of the following domains: Animal, Forest, Harvest, or Plant. You can cast 1 domain spell/day provided you can cast a spell of that level.

**Bloodline Powers:** You embody the natural powers of growth and renewal, and you find companionship with woodland creatures. The strength of life flows in you and imbues your allies with

vigorous strength. Your body is resistant to the forces of death and corruption.

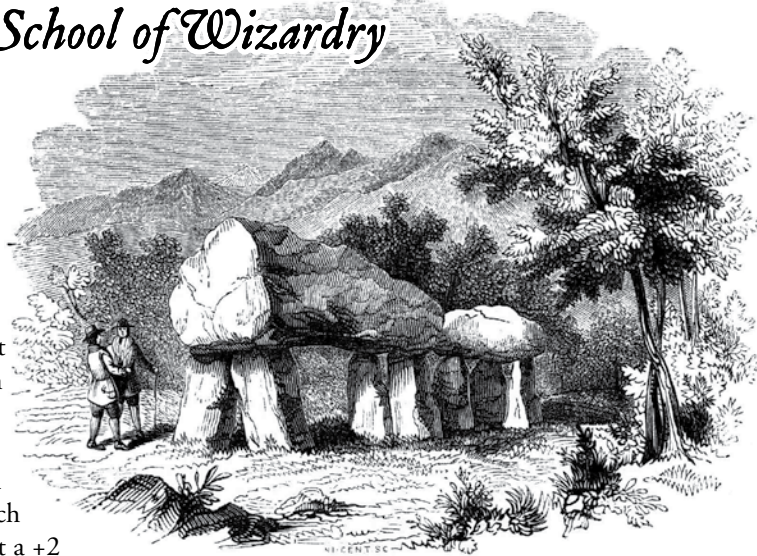
**Invigorating Touch (Sp)**—As a standard action, you can touch a creature to grant it a +2 enhancement bonus to either Strength or Constitution for 1 round/sorcerer level. At 11th level, your bonus increases to +4. You may do this a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

**At Home in the Woods (Ex)**—At 3rd level, you can *speak with animals*, as the spell, a number of rounds per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier. In addition, you gain woodland stride as per the druid class ability.

**Nature's Mien (Su)**—At 9th level, you emit a 30-foot aura of positive energy and renewal for a number of rounds per day equal to your sorcerer level. You and your allies within this aura gain fast healing 1 and a +2 bonus to saving throws against negative energy effects. At 15th level, the save bonus increases to +4 and the fast healing increases to 2. These rounds need not be consecutive.

**Tree Stride (Sp)**—At 15th level, you can transport yourself between two trees a number of times per day equal to your sorcerer level as per the *tree stride* spell. The distance between two trees cannot exceed 500 ft.

**Spring Eternal (Su)**—At 20th level, you are immune to negative energy and effects caused by negative energy such as level drain, level damage, and ability drain and damage. You can return



to young adulthood (1/day) without losing any bonuses to characteristics gained from old age. This state lasts for a number of hours equal to 1/2 your sorcerer level. You cannot be magically aged, and you do not die of old age. When your time is up, you turn into an oak tree; younger druids may consult you or similar bloodline characters using *speak with plants*.

### Green Domains (Clerics and Druids)

Clerics and druids who revere the twin gods of nature, Porevit and Yarila, gain access to the Forest and Harvest domains.

#### FOREST DOMAIN

**Deities:** Porevit, Yarila.

**Granted Powers:** You are the forest's protector. As part of that role, you can speak with plants and befriend intelligent flora. In addition, you treat Survival as a class skill and gain Sylvan as a bonus language.

**Speak with Plants (Sp)**—You can *speak with plants*, as per the spell, for a number of rounds per day equal to 3 + your cleric or druid level.

**Woodland Stride (Ex)**—Starting at 4th level, you can move through undergrowth (including natural thorn, briars, overgrown areas, and similar

terrain) at your normal speed without taking any damage or suffering any other impairment. Thorns, briars, and overgrown areas magically manipulated to impede motion, however, still affect you.

**Domain Spells:** 1st—*shillelagh*, 2nd—*tree shape*, 3rd—*quench*, 4th—*tree stride*, 5th—*awaken* (trees only), 6th—*liveoak*, 7th—*change staff*, 8th—*control plants*, 9th—*shape change* (plant only)

## HARVEST DOMAIN

**Deities:** Porevit, Yarila.

**Granted Powers:** You dispense or withhold the bounty of the earth to bolster allies or punish the deserving.

*Sated Touch (Sp)*—As a standard action, you can touch a creature to grant it temporary hp equal to 1/2 your cleric level (minimum 1). You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

*Riotous Growth (Su)*—At 8th level, you can affect a 30-ft. radius around you as an *entangle* spell for a number of rounds per day equal to your cleric level. You can do this even in an area barren of plant life. Allies are unaffected. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

**Domain Spells:** 1st—*goodberry*, 2nd—*bear's endurance*, 3rd—*plant growth*, 4th—*blight*, 5th—*insect plague*, 6th—*hero's feast*, 7th—*restoration*, 8th—*horrid wilting*, 9th—*storm of vengeance*.

## The School of Nature (Wizards)

Some master the power of the forest with intellect rather than with devotion or innate talent. These green wizards or “nature mages,” as they are called, study the cycle of life and death rather than a single aspect of arcane knowledge such as illusion or enchantment.

Green wizards control both the forces of generation (conjunction) and destruction (necromancy), which represent the natural world's limitless power. Nature school wizards develop class abilities slightly differently from other wizards.

*Nature Magic*—You choose your

spells from the druid spell list and may substitute Sylvan (instead of Draconic) as one of your bonus languages available because of your race. You have no opposition schools and do not gain any bonus spells.

*Arcane Bond*—You may have a bonded object only if it is made of wood.

*Generative Energy (Su)*—Whenever you cast a conjuration (creation) spell, increase the duration by 50%. This stacks with the Extend Spell feat. At 20th level, you can change the duration of all conjuration (creation) spells to permanent. You can have no more than one such spell made permanent in this way at one time. If you designate another conjuration (creation) spell as permanent, the previous spell ends.

*Wood Spikes (Sp)*—As a standard action you can unleash a wooden spike targeting any foe within 30 ft. as ranged touch attack. The spike deals 1d6 piercing damage +1 damage/2 wizard levels. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Intelligence modifier.

*Wild Bane (Su)*—At 8th level, you can bestow the *bane* special weapon quality upon a weapon for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 your wizard level. This *bane* quality works against animals, fey, magical beasts, plants, and vermin. You can use this ability 1/day at 8th level and an additional time every 4 levels.

## Nature Spells

### GREEN SHADE

**School** illusion (glamour); **Level** bard 2, druid 2, ranger 2, sorcerer/wizard 3

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a cat's whisker)

**Range** personal or touch

**Target** you or a creature or object weighing no more than 100 lb./level

**Duration** 2 min./level (D)

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless) or Will negates (harmless, object);

**Spell Resistance** yes (harmless) or yes (harmless, object)

*Green shade* works as the *invisibility* spell, except the affected creature or object is invisible only to animals, fey, magical beasts, plants, and vermin.

### RENEWAL

**School** evocation; **Level** druid 1, ranger 1

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (plant leaf)

**Range** touch

**Target** one creature touched/level

**Duration** see text

**Saving Throw** none (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

You strengthen the divine life force running through all creatures, enhancing the natural healing process. The affected creature heals at double the normal rate when recovering hp or ability score damage during a full night's rest.

### WALL OF WOOD

**School** conjuration (creation); **Level** druid 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (tree bark)

**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Effect** anchored plane of wood, up to one 10-ft square/level, or circle of wood with a radius of up to 3 ft. + 1 ft./level

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** see text; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell creates a vertical, impenetrable row of trees. *Wall of wood* sprouts from the ground and creates either a straight plane or a circular fence. A *wall of wood* cannot form in an area occupied by physical objects or creatures. Its surface must be smooth and unbroken when created. Fire burns a *wall of wood* but only deals the normal 1/2 taken by objects.

*Wood Plane*—A plane of trees appears. The wall is 1 inch thick/4 CL. It covers up to a 10-ft.-square area/CL (so a 10th-level druid can create a *wall of wood* 100 ft. long and 10 ft. high, a wall 50 ft. long and 20 ft. high, or any other combination of length and height that does not exceed 1,000 ft. square). The plane must be vertical and must be anchored on the floor.

Each 5-ft. square of wall has hardness 5 and 10 hp/inch of thickness. Creatures can hit the wall automatically. A section of wall whose hp drop to 0 is breached. If a creature tries to break through the wall with a single attack, the DC for the Strength check is 20 + CL.

*Circle*—The wall becomes a hemisphere with a maximum radius of 3 ft. + 1 ft./CL. The hemisphere is as hard to break through as the plane form.

You can trap mobile opponents within a *wall of wood*, provided the wall is shaped to hold the creatures. Creatures can avoid entrapment with successful Reflex saves.

Wood created by this spell is not usable as material for other objects. When removed from its anchored location, it decays too quickly to be sold. Ω



# TAKE THE HIGH GROUND!



THIS FIELD-READY SOURCEBOOK EQUIPS YOU WITH EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO RUN SOLDIERS, VETERANS, FREEBOOTERS AND MERCENARIES -- THE REAL BACKBONE OF POWER AT THE EDGE OF A BLADE.

*Soldiers of Fortune* is the definitive guide to warfare and military campaigns in any 4th Edition game and includes:

- Six new veteran paragon paths from Mercenary to Spellscourge
- More than a dozen military-grade rituals, plus new guidon banners
- Dozens of at-will, encounter, and utility powers
- New rules for skirmishes and sieges, including siege engine stats
- A ready-to-run military adventure for 4th Edition D&D
- Details of nations and mercenaries in the World of Midgard
- How to run a smart military character or campaign in a fantasy setting

Designer Matt James (U.S. Army, ret.) is a graduate of the American Military University and recipient of the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. His design skills and service experience combine to make *Soldiers of Fortune* one of the most authentic and playable depictions of military life in any role-playing game.

Preorder available now at [koboldquarterly.com](http://koboldquarterly.com)

**4e OPEN DESIGN™**

**MIDGARD™**

Open Design, the Open Design logo, and the Midgard logo are trademarks of Open Design LLC. All Rights Reserved

# Going Vertical

## Side-View Dungeons

By Mario Podeschi

Cartography by Jonathan Roberts

*The drider's spider-like limbs clutched the walls effortlessly as it crawled its way up the king's eight-story tower.*

*Chaser pursued from the roof of the central keep. It was a breathtaking jump for both her and the halberdiers in the courtyard. She leaned forward with her legs and arms, dropping into a narrow door and somersaulting twice to absorb the force of the impact.*

*Maids gasped as the adventurer charged past them, clearing spiraled steps two, three at a time until she was stopped by the sturdy, locked door that separated the king's chambers from the tower proper. Lacking the time to batter it down, she darted to a nearby, open window.*

*Above her, she saw Aladar. Borne on some arcane wind, the wizard was dancing about the drider. He pelted the creature with fire and frost alike, trying to stall it on its way to the king's curtained window. Chaser flinched as the creature responded with arcane magic of its own, blasting the flying wizard with a bolt of lightning and sending him spiraling end-over-end into an adjacent tower.*

*Both the king and Aladar needed her help. But first, she would need to monkey her way up 20 ft. of hanging red banner, balance on the banner pole, and then leap 10 ft. to the parapets outside the king's private chambers. On a good day, it would have taken a half hour and a dozen pitons to make such a climb.*

*Today, she had 30 seconds.*

### Action Scenes and Camera Angles

Grappling guns. Rooftop escapes. Downhill sledding chases. Vertical stunts such as these are bread and butter to action scenes. In tabletop RPGs, players choose from a variety of skills and special abilities that allow them to deal with vertical challenges.

The great limitation, though, is one of camera angle. The vast majority of games are drawn from a bird's eye view. Though great for most indoor battles and tactical overland movement, the top-view approach is highly limited when it comes to vertical encounters.

The sample map on the following page demonstrates a variety of vertical perils. The drider clings to the side of the tower; on its initiative, it will use its climb speed to pick its way up to the king's chambers. The initial leap is made easier due to gravity, and this is followed by a spiral staircase that ends at a locked door and the nearby window next to the royal banner. Determining falling damage and ranges is effortless, as squares can be counted. The character Chaser starts atop the central keep while her wizard companion Aladar exits his hallway to cast a spell like *fly* or *levitate*.

To draw a similar map from bird's eye view would require ten maps: eight for the tower, one for the bottom level of the keep, and one for the top. More likely, the GM would settle for a simpler map, one without the intricate challenges and architecture provided in this example.

For vertically themed encounters, side-view is the superior choice.

### Gauging Difficulty

Sweeping, death-defying altitudes add loads of excitement to a scene, but falling hundreds of feet is rather lethal in most game systems. Falls also demolish characters' vertical progress, forcing them to either start an encounter over or resort to ranged attacks.

A simple rule of probability applies to side-view encounters: the more rolls you require from your players, the more likely they are to fall. This tendency can be countered by leaning toward easier target numbers, particularly late in a climb when the consequences have grown more serious.

Another trick to keeping difficulty in check is to provide terrain that breaks a character's fall before falling the full distance of the object they are climbing. Cloth awnings, balconies, and nearby buildings can make it possible to fall partway down a map instead of a full, fatal plummet.

Before subjecting characters to a side-view dungeon, look at the top-most area where a check of some sort is required. If that fall threatens to kill a character outright, then either lower the difficulty or add something to break the fall.

### Tools for Vertical Movement

Every tabletop RPG affords some means of vertical travel although the exact method depends on the genre. While one group of players might approach a vertical encounter with jetpacks, grappling guns, and bionic extendo-arms, another might come equipped with aerial mounts, magical

flight, and the ability to transform into giant spiders. Storytellers can design their encounters to highlight these individual powers while compensating for characters who lack them.

Side-view encounters prompt characters to use the best vertical movement available. Relatively simple powers and tactics allow players to bypass vertical challenges entirely, and players with such powers can be expected to lower ropes to their less athletic allies. When framing side-view encounters, storytellers should keep their players' powers in mind, perhaps even awarding equipment or treasure in an earlier adventure with the future encounter in mind.

Ranged attacks have a special impact on side-view encounters. Guns and arrows aren't nearly as limited in a side-view encounter as swords are, yet simple cover can render them ineffective. Putting in a vantage point that minimizes these options makes them highly valuable to ranged attackers, which can encourage players to set up on hills and in nearby structures to fire down on their enemies.

Some characters will simply be crippled. Heavily armored and clumsy characters will shy from even easy skill checks, waiting for their more agile allies to assist them. Storytellers can preempt this by creating easy "wheelchair ramps" that let players move slowly but safely through an encounter. Additional challenges can be placed along this route such as minor enemies and locked doors to further impede progress.

## Ideas for Side-View Encounters

Side-view encounters require two elements to function: a method for players' movement, stylistic justification, and urgency. Swinging vines, bridges, ladders, staircases, and water can all allow characters to move vertically, while simple walls and open spaces can allow characters with climbing and flying powers to move with abandon. These terrain features are easy to justify as storytellers by simply sending players to jungles, castles, chasms, or mountains as needed.

Lack of urgency is where many challenging encounters fail. The sample text at the start of this article addresses this concept as Chaser ponders how she would take her time in any other situation—quite rationally, she would not undertake such death-defying stunts without just cause. Ranged superiority is one way to create urgency—if the player's don't want to get shot, they have to climb as quickly as they can. Time limits are also effective—flooding chambers, escaping enemies, collapsing terrain, and time bombs are all ways to force characters to move quickly rather than safely.

Following are 20 ideas for sword-and-sorcery side-view encounters that meet these needs for urgency, justification, and transportation. They can spice up published encounters or serve as unique set pieces around which brand new encounters are based. Some might be used for a single battle while others could account for an entire side-view adventure.

1. Rising water levels restrict movement in a sinking ship while sahuagin block the only exit.
2. After stealing the bugbears' hang gliders, the PCs find themselves in a dogfight with a manticores. Because of the gliders' design, they can only attack when the monster is beneath them.
3. Goblin snipers fire from atop a winding mountain trail. While the cleric takes the scenic route, the barbarian starts climbing.
4. After being shrunk to the size of mice, PCs must assemble a potion by climbing the shelves and beakers in a wizard's lab. Though normally a mere housecat, the wizard's familiar uses the statistics of a dire tiger while retaining its massive balance check.
5. A colossus can only be deactivated by climbing its carved exterior to its head. Meanwhile, harpies harry the adventurers.
6. The PCs work their way up a massive clock, climbing chimes, swinging on pendulums, and dodging gears.
7. The PCs retrieve a magic cutlass

## Further Inspiration

Old side-scroller video games are ripe with ideas for side-view dungeons. Games like *Contra*, *Castlevania*, and *Super Mario Brothers* used timed jumps to allow characters to avoid dangers and reach new areas of a map. The Guardia prison level in *Chrono Trigger* featured several side-view encounters, including an ingenious treasure-finding puzzle where the title character climbed down into a sealed prison room from a crack in the wall above it. In *Gradius III*, side-views allowed the Vic Viper to dart and weave through waves of lava crashing in from above and below.

from a maze of razor-sharp coral before running out of air.

8. A hidden lever in the rakshasha's throne sends PCs plummeting into a trap-filled pit. Dusting themselves off, they make their way back up.
9. The PCs fend off a roc from the balconies and rigging of a massive airship.
10. Four triangular side-view maps combine to form the sides of a pyramid that PCs must ascend while a mummy bombards them from its pinnacle.
11. The rogue tails his mark across moonlit rooftops.
12. The bridge may be out, but PCs can still cross the chasm by clinging to the (mostly) inanimate gargoyles on the wall.
13. PCs leap between floating boulders on their way to a genie's extraplanar palace.
14. The fighter leaps from howdah to howdah as she makes her way to an enemy commander. Though the fall itself would only bruise her, the same cannot be said for the mammoths' sharp tusks.
15. Snakemen attack in a jungle canopy, using their snake forms to easily slither from branch to branch.

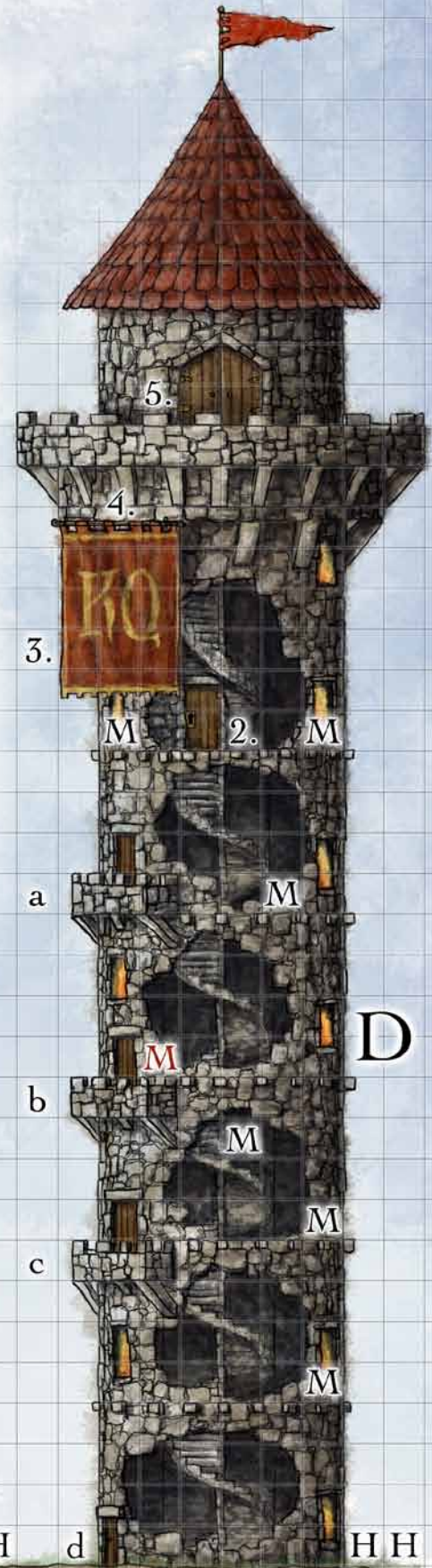
16. An enemy army charges up crisscrossing stairs to the top of an important wall. Among the defenders' assets are cauldrons of boiling oil that, if targeted perfectly, could hit several foes at once.
17. Phantom warriors battle trapped PCs while a descending ceiling threatens to crush them.
18. Two swordsmen duel atop their shields as they sled down a mountainside.
19. As a floating island crumbles, high-level combatants continue their fight by leaping up slowly falling rocks.
20. A massive creature swallows the PCs, who must swing from a dangling uvula to avoid being plunged into stomach acid.

### Map Key: "Drider Pursuit"

- C = Chaser, a nimble swordswoman.
- A = Aladar, a flight-ready wizard.
- D = A drider intent on regicide.
- H = Halberdiers, ready to help if the drider is knocked from the tower.
- M = Maids, who stay out of Chaser's way
- M = A maid with the key to the door at area 2.
- Windows on either side of tower can be crawled through by Medium-sized characters. Attacks can be made

through these but only with cover.

1. A character can leap from here to one of the four entrances with an Athletics check:
  - a. DC 50
  - b. DC 30, with 10-ft. worth of falling damage
  - c. DC 20, with 30-ft. worth of falling damage
  - d. A failed check, with 70-ft. worth of falling damage
2. A sturdy door blocks the spiral staircase (20 hp, hardness 5, Break or Thievery DC 20). The maid on the third floor has a key as well, which she will gladly hand over if she knows the king is in danger.
3. This banner can be climbed with an Athletics or Climb check (DC 20), with a +2 bonus if a dagger or similar tool is used.
4. The banner's support can be balanced on (Acrobatics DC 15), at which point characters can pull themselves up to the royal balcony with a move action.
5. These reinforced double doors protect the king (30 hp, hardness 5, Break or Thievery DC 25). The king will gladly let a PC in when the battle is over, but the drider will have to bash its way in. Ω



# Coming Next Issue

Well, we might have a few tricks up our sleeves for the Winter Wonderland, and first among those is the Midgard preview that our esteemed king failed to deliver in this issue. Something about "getting it right" and "making other deadlines first." We have no idea what he's talking about either. We're not gonna hold him to it, but seems like it's coming next time.

Also, we're hoping for at least one of the following to happen:

## Ranger Talents

An expansion of the spell-less Ranger into territory claimed by the *Advanced Player's Guide*. Yes, it's true, Marc Radle suggested it, and we have high hopes for this one. Assuming the rangers can find their way here.

## Ecology of the Gearforged

Full details of the mechanical marvels, living souls in a shell of brass and iron! This is one of the most-requested ecology themes, and it's underway even now. We captured these dwarves see, and it turns out that torture doesn't work, but feeding them endless ale does. We've been taking notes.

## Dangerous Holidays

Some festivals are full of presents and laughter, warmth and candlelight. These are not those festivals.

Plus maybe harem babes, mermaids, elven cuisine, and the return of Ask the Kobold and our Letters page. If any of that appears next issue, we'll be just as pleased (and surprised!) as you are. See you next time, dear reader!



### OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards").

All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and

includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy,

edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royaltyfree, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If you are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content You Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You

must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

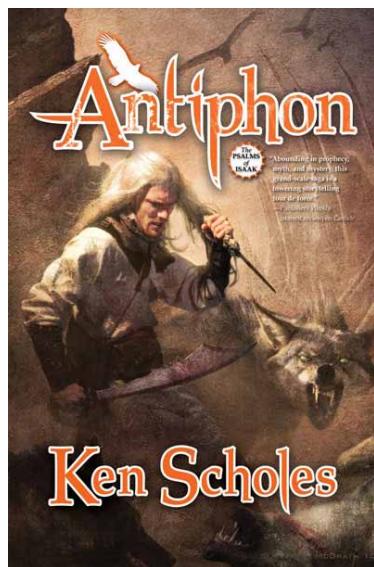
13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc. System Reference Document. Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook. Copyright 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams. The Book of Experimental Might. Copyright 2008, Monte J. Cook. All rights reserved. Tome of Horrors. Copyright 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Authors: Scott Greene, with Clark Peterson, Erica Balsley, Kevin Baase, Casey Christofferson, Lance Hawvermale, Travis Hawvermale, Patrick Lawinger, and Bill Webb; Based on original content from TSR. Kobold Quarterly issue 15, Copyright 2010, Open Design LLC, www.koboldquarterly.com. All rights reserved.

# Book Reviews

By Pierce Watters



## ANTIPHON (BOOK 3 IN THE PSALMS OF ISAAK)

**Ken Scholes**

Tor, September 2010

384 pages, \$25.99

Review by Pierce Watters

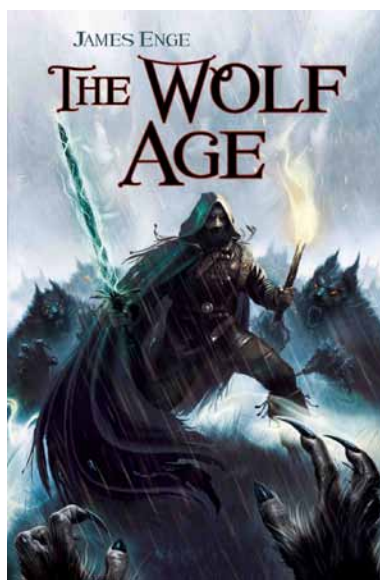
Author Ken Scholes is a literary wonder. His first novel *Lamentation* premiered in February of 2009 with great and well-deserved acclaim. October of that same year saw the second installment of the planned five-book series, *Canticle*, released in hard cover. As good as *Lamentation* was, *Canticle* was even better. Scholes showed great and rapid growth in his writing skills.

Now, in September of 2010, the third book in *The Psalms of IsaaK* series, *Antiphon*, sees the light of day. And, once again, Scholes manages to top himself.

The series began with the total and absolute destruction of the city of Windwir, leaving a great crater of ash and bones and a weeping, steam-powered robot, IsaaK. In this third

volume, there are mysteries within mysteries. The ancient blood faith of the Y'Zerites has resurfaced in frightening and unexpected places. The blood magick they wield is powerful and threatens the long-held peace in the Known Lands. But another force must be reckoned with. *Antiphon* and its companion novels are rich in story, character, and setting. As one mystery is resolved, others are revealed.

Scholes writes with power, control, and confidence; his novels revolve around many strong characters. Start with *Lamentation*, then *Canticle*, and on to *Antiphon*. This remarkable series deserves to be read. Highly recommended.



## THE WOLF AGE

**James Enge**

Pyr Books, October 2010

470 pages, \$17.00

Review by Pierce Watters

This is a book about werewolves. Werewolves? Not again! Wait, these are

not your mother's werewolves.

Listen, James Enge has now written three novels about a "Maker" named Morlock Ambrosius: *Blood of Ambrose*, *This Crooked Way*, and now, *The Wolf Age*. Morlock Ambrosius is the son of Merlin, and father and son are not very fond of one another. Morlock lives on a world with three moons and a monster under every rock. There's usually a monster on top of every rock, too.

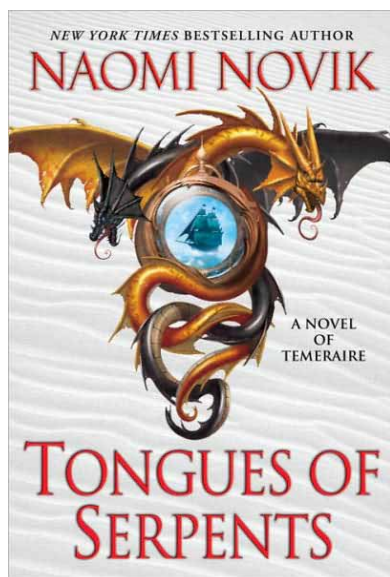
Morlock is a Maker... he makes things. These things can be sort of magical and follow a sort of weird science. He also has mental powers, is over 500 years old, and has a magic sword, Tyrfin, that makes the wielder suffer terribly anytime it is used to kill someone.

*The Wolf Age* begins with Morlock on the run, ducking his father. While helping a local human tribe, however, Morlock is kidnapped by werewolves. Right, so here they are... werewolves. In this book, we see pretty much an entire werewolf culture. These beasts are intelligent. They have two spoken languages and two written languages. They hold elections... well, not your mother's elections—I hate to keep bringing your mother into this—they have politics, and they like meat, especially human meat. These werewolves can be human-shaped in the day and wolf-shaped at night.

Morlock gets himself kidnapped and imprisoned. In the process, he encounters an old werewolf buddy from a past adventure, and sets himself against the powers that be. While all this is happening, unbeknownst to our human Maker, a group of gods known as The Strange Gods, manipulate Morlock to achieve their own ends. At least they try to. The werewolves

all have wolfy names like Rokhlenu, Liudhleoo, Hrutnefdhu (not to be confused with Halupnafengu), and Wuinlendhono. The female names end in “o.” There is a helpful index in the back along with an appendix or two.

Enge writes enjoyable adventures. With *The Wolf Age*, he has taken a step up. One cares about the characters, and we see as much of the werewolves as we do of Morlock. Will there be more of the Strange Gods in the future? It is so hoped. And who in the heck is Iacomes? It is assumed he will appear again. Recommended.



## TONGUES OF SERPENTS

**Naomi Novik**

Del Rey, July 2010

Hard Cover

288 pages, \$25.00

(Read on a Kindle, \$9.99)

Review by Pierce Watters

In 2006, Naomi Novik burst onto the fantasy scene with *His Majesty's Dragon*. Then 1 month later came the sequel, *Throne of Jade*. And a month after that *Black Powder War*. Suddenly the world was very much aware of English sea captain Will Laurence, his British-born, China-bred Celestial dragon, Temeraire, and of Naomi Novik.

Now, with *Tongues of Serpents*, Novik brings us a sixth installment

in the adventures of Laurence and Temeraire. This delightful series is set in an alternate universe during the Napoleonic Wars, but this time, it is fought with dragons. There are big dragons and little dragons and immense dragons... on both sides. Some dragons are so large they are outfitted like sailing ships with crews and cannons. And the battles are heroic.

In book six, our heroes find themselves banished to New South Wales, Australia, for crimes against the state. Novik depicts the early Australian settlement as the squalid, seamy mess that it was, peopled with first and second-generation criminals who are mostly controlled with rations of rum and ruled by rebellious British officers. The governor of the colony, William Bligh, has been deposed by mutiny—not again!—and is living in exile.

Temeraire and Laurence must not make waves if they ever hope to return to England, but Bligh is alternately unctuous and vile.

The bulk of the book takes Laurence and Temeraire, along with a motley assortment of officers, crew, and a gang of criminals on work release, into the Australian outback. A dragon's egg has been stolen, and the group flies deeper and deeper into the outback in desperate and frantic search for it.

Along the way, they have dreadful encounters with bunyips, semi-intelligent reptiles straight out of Australian mythology, battle the desert itself, and on the coast, have a rousing fight with a host of sea serpents.

This book is a must for all fans of Novik, Laurence, and Temeraire. The true stars are the dragons. Temeraire and his fellow dragons, including the always-difficult Iskierka, grow in character, and several in size, as the story progresses. *Tongues of Serpents* might have benefitted from a little more interaction with the native peoples of the island continent, but the writing is sharp as always. One can never get enough Temeraire and Laurence. Highly recommended. Ω

# Black & Read

Your Friendly Local  
Game Store

\* Buy

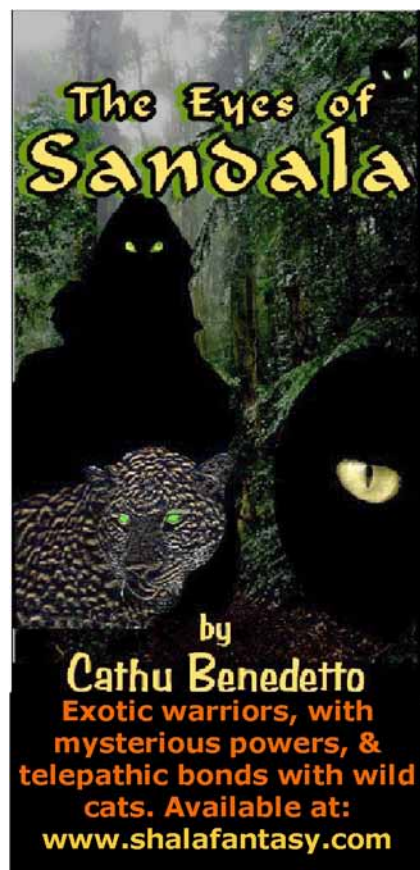
\* Sell

\* Trade

Arvada,  
Colorado

(800) 467-3236

[blackandread.net](http://blackandread.net)



# Jack in a Trap

By Philippe-Antoine Menard

Art by unknown caricaturist from *Punch*

The 4th Edition's game design encourages GMs to build their adventures by expanding or retooling classic categories. You have many ways to mix and monsterize available, of course, but one of the most effective is to combine living monsters with the established trap mechanics.

This creates a threat whose role changes as the combat encounter progresses.

The combination involves an encounter with a creature that has two distinct forms. One hides its monstrous origins and is indistinguishable from a terrain feature or trap, like a boulder or a self-powered ballista. The monstrous form shares some elements of the structure it springs from. For example, a rolling boulder trap could turn into a roughly carved stone humanoid that smashes enemies with its rocky fists. It could also climb up walls and transform back into boulder form to roll down and crush nearby enemies. Each form features its own stats, including mechanics for switching from one to another.

A good way to achieve such transformable constructs is to blend the features of each form into the other to create thematically and mechanically balanced hybrids. For instance, PCs should have a way (if a risky one) to use countermeasures on the monstrous form. Conversely, the trap form should be harder to hit with attacks or be more resistant to damage than the alternate form.

The trap should share some of the monster's elements like damage types. For example, a series of swinging pendulum blades from a trap form

could become multiple rotating arm blades on the monstrous form. As a single, though versatile, challenge, the hybrid should usually provide the XP value of a monster of its given level (or maybe a little higher) – not the sum of the trap and the monster.

While it may seem natural to assign the lurker type to this hybrid creation, other roles may be better suited. A pillar of scything blades that becomes a mobile whirlwind of blades makes for a great skirmisher, for instance. Similarly, a huge tower housing duergar crossbowman could turn into a colossal brute, smashing everything in its path while its crew rains death from the top turret.

The following are two fully developed examples of the trap-creature hybrid concept.

## The Darkforge Guardians

Throughout the rise and fall of civilizations, the dwarf kingdoms have lacked the numbers to defend against threats from both the surface and the depths. Thus, many have relied on eldritch-powered constructs to protect their holdings.

Some were obvious death-dealing engines made of stone and metal, hammering and slicing anyone foolish enough to invade the dwarven demesnes. Others were more subtle, hiding their mobile features under the guise of static defensive wards and traps, ready to surprise even experienced adventurers delving in lost tombs and long-sealed dwellings.

Darkforge guardian designs recently resurfaced, and paranoid overlords

and other powerful beings seeking protection for their valuables have quickly adopted the designs and reproduced these constructs. The crawler and bladeshrikes are two of these elegant designs of destruction.

### DARKFORGE CRAWLER LEVEL 12 BLASTER

**Trap** XP 700  
An intricately decorated, 4-ft.-high dome of polished stone starts humming menacingly. A thin line of light lines its apex as the top rises and a bolt of destructive eldritch energy shoots out.

**Trap:** This is a large spell turret, and each round on its initiative, it fires a bolt of lightning that targets anyone within range.

#### PERCEPTION

**DC 23**—You recognize the dome for a spell turret.

**DC 25**—You spot the location of the secret control panel on the turret.

**Initiative:** +4.

**Trigger:** The darkforge crawler rolls initiative as soon as one or more characters come into line of sight.

#### Attack

**Standard Action** Ranged 10

**Target:** Any enemy target within range (does not incur attacks of opportunities).

**Attack:** +13 vs. Reflex.

**Hit:** 3d8+5 lightning damage, and target grants combat advantage until the start of the darkforge crawler's next turn.

**Miss:** Half damage.

#### Transform

##### Move Action

**Effect:** The darkforge crawler changes into monster form (see stat block below).

#### COUNTERMEASURES

- This trap can be attacked; it has the same hp and defenses as its monster form, but it gains resist all 5 in trap mode.



- When adjacent to it, as a minor action, you can make a Thievery check (DC 23) to open the secret access panel (if discovered) and stun the darkforge crawler (save ends). On a failed roll, the trap attacks you as a free action.
- As a standard action, you can make an Athletics or Thievery check (DC 25) to permanently disable (that is, destroy) a stunned darkforge crawler. On a failed roll, the trap transforms into its monster form as a free action and is no longer stunned.

#### DARKFORGE CRAWLER LEVEL 12 ARTILLERY

Large natural animate (construct) XP 700  
*The semi-spherical stone and metal construct walks surprisingly nimbly on its three short, stubby legs. Its rapidly swiveling head features a pulsating "eye" of crackling white light.*

**HP 91; Bloodied 46 Initiative +7**

**AC 24, Fort 26, Ref 21, Will 21**

**Perception +6**

**Speed 6**

#### STANDARD ACTIONS

##### ✕ Tripod Kick • At-Will

*Attack*—Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC.

*Hit*—2d6+9 damage.

##### ☀ Pulse Bolt • Recharge 4, 5, 6

*Attack*—Ranged 20 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex.

*Hit*—4d6+13 lightning damage.

##### ⚡ Pulse Blast • At-Will

*Attack*—Close blast 3 (enemies in blast); +17 vs. Reflex.

*Hit*—1d10+9 lightning damage, and target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone.

*Miss*—Half damage.

#### MOVE ACTIONS

##### Hunkering down • At-Will

*Effect*—The darkforge crawler transforms into trap form, retaining its current hp.

#### SPECIAL ACTIONS

##### Countermeasure • At-Will

*Attack (Minor Action)*—An adjacent character can make an Athletics or Thievery check (DC 23).

*Hit*—The darkforge crawler turns back into trap form (save ends).

*Miss*—The darkforge crawler can make an opportunity attack against an adjacent character.

**Skills** Athletics +15

**Str 19 (+10) Dex 13 (+7) Wis 11 (+6)**

**Con 13 (+7) Int 8 (+5) Cha 11 (+6)**

**Alignment** chaotic evil

**Languages** Giant, Primordial

#### DARKFORGE BLADESHRIKE LEVEL 14 LURKER

**Hazard XP 1,000**

*A series of blood-red, linked metal plates are laid out on the floor covered with 1-ft.-long sharp spikes and serrated blades. They whip out, attached to flexible coils of steel, whenever foes approach.*

**Trap:** This trap fills 8 contiguous squares, turning them into difficult terrain. When it attacks, it sends forth several whip-like bladed tendrils up to 2 squares away.

#### PERCEPTION

The metallic plates and blades are obvious and automatically detected.

**DC 27**—You spot the key mechanical components to deactivate the trap (see countermeasures).

**Initiative:** +5.

**Trigger:** The darkforge bladeshrike rolls initiative as soon as one or more characters come into line of sight.

**Effect:** The squares occupied by the trap are difficult terrain. Creatures entering such a square them takes 5 damage.

#### Attack

**Standard Action Melee reach 2**

**Target:** Any enemy target within reach.

**Attack:** +19 vs. AC.

**Hit:** 3d10+6 damage, and the target gains ongoing damage 10 (save ends).

**Miss:** Half damage.

#### Transform

##### Move Action

**Effect:** The darkforge bladeshrike changes into monster form (see stat block below).

#### COUNTERMEASURES

- This trap can be attacked; it has the same hp and defenses as its monster form, but it gains resist all 5 in trap mode.

- When adjacent to it, as a minor action, you can make a Thievery check (DC 25) to disable key components and stun the darkforge bladeshrike (save ends). On a failed roll, the trap attacks you as a free action.

- When adjacent to it, as a standard action, you can make an Athletics or Thievery check (DC 27) to permanently disable (that is, destroy) a stunned darkforge bladeshrike. On a failed roll, the trap transforms into its monster form as a free action and is no longer stunned.

#### DARKFORGE BLADESHRIKE LEVEL 14 SKIRMISHER

Large natural animate (construct) XP 1,000

**HP 134; Bloodied 67 Initiative +17**

**AC 28, Fort 26, Ref 27, Will 24**

**Perception +6**

**Speed 6**

**Darkvision**

**Immune** disease, poison, sleep

#### TRAITS

##### Dance of the Upright Blades

A darkforge bladeshrike takes no penalty to attack rolls while squeezing and does not grant combat advantage while squeezing.

#### STANDARD ACTIONS

**✕ Thunder of Cross Slashes • At-Will Attack**—Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC.

*Hit*—1d12+8 damage, and target takes ongoing damage 10 (save ends).

**✕ Whirlwind of a Thousand Cuts • Recharge 4, 5, 6**

*Effect*—The darkforge bladeshrike shifts up to its speed, dealing 10 damage to all creatures it moves adjacent to during the move (no more than once per creature).

**⚡ Cyclone of the Dervish Swords • At-Will**

*Attack*—Close burst 2 (enemies in burst); +19 vs. AC.

*Hit*—1d12+11 damage.

#### MOVE ACTIONS

##### Bladeshrike Barrier • At-Will

*Effect*—Replace the darkforge bladeshrike with its trap form over 8 contiguous squares that include the bladeshrike's original position. The trap retains the same initiative and hp. The bladeshrike can return to its original form as a move action, reappearing in any squares occupied by the wall.

**Str 23 (+13) Dex 26 (+15) Wis 8 (+6)**

**Con 14 (+9) Int -1 (+1) Cha 1 (+2)**

**Alignment** unaligned

**Languages** —

Ω



# The Cartways

By Wolfgang Baur  
Art by Edward Burne-Jones

The underbelly of Zobeck is a strange place indeed: wet and cavernous stone, smooth passages clearly carved by magic, alchemical runoff, river channels—and the cart tracks that give the tunnels their name. In addition, an underground kobold market serves as the hub of a great deal of nightside dealing, shady trade in poison, blood, stolen property, magical items, hexes, and arcane lore.

Many visitors to the city refer to these as the “sewers of Zobeck,” but that’s only true in the sense that scum and filth are common enough below ground.

## The Cart Tracks

The cartways served the nobles of House Stross: old nobles threw lavish parties in the winter and moved through the tunnels on festival days without fighting the crowds. More commonly, servants used the tunnels to bring firewood, casks of ale, foodstuffs, and other goods to the noble houses quickly and quietly.

After the revolt, the cartways fell into disuse although young merchants used them for assassinations and smuggling. Their upkeep deferred, the tunnels fell into gradual decline. Only a few cataphiles continued to map the tunnels, but this grew dangerous: goblins, kobolds, and wererats took up residence. Some even say that the devils once bound to service by the old nobles and young merchants were released from their bonds and now roam the tunnels freely, devouring or enslaving incautious visitors.

## The Smuggler’s Market

Some visitors press on into the darkness, regardless. With access from the docks

around the Gullet (see *Tales of Zobeck*) and from the Kobold Ghetto (see *Kobold Quarterly* #5),

the Smuggler’s Market is a wet, foul, and violent place to do business. Presided over by the tiefling and gargoyle gang lords known as the Nine (see *Kobold Quarterly* #4), the gates are well sealed, and the tradition is that the Nine allow only 50 people to enter each night.

Those lucky cutthroats and nervous merchants trade their secrets, lorebooks, and stolen jewels or sell their swords and wands in service to any cult, muletrain master, or patron who seeks stout hearts and ready courage. At dawn, the market ends and its visitors scatter. Some claim its location is not truly underground at all but a closed mews in the kobold ghetto; others say the location changes weekly, and a sharp ear in low places is required to stay ahead of the lawmen’s searches.

The Smuggler’s Market is forbidden by the laws of the city and occasionally raided by a flying company of hussars, wizards, and clockwork guardians of the Order of Griffon Knights, but few normal citizens of the Free City even know of its existence. Those who visit require both stealth (to evade the other dangers of the Cartways) and smooth speech (to enter the hall where the Nine rule).

## The Black Chamber of Anu-Akma

Persistent rumor claims that a hidden great god inhabits the underworld of Zobeck: Anu-Akma, the guardian god



of death and the underworld is said to have a shrine set with silver pillars and warded by ancient undead spirits of the city’s defenders. This may all be lies, but adventurers do seek out the Black Chamber. Here, resurrections may be performed more easily because souls return from the Gate of the Dead more readily, crossing the River Styx to return to the realms of the living without the difficulty, weakness, and peril that such a journey sometimes imposes.

This may be nothing less than the truth, for the priests of Anu-Akma certainly do have power over the lands of the dead. And yet, more cynical whispers declare that the Black Chamber is nothing but a maw of the god, and those seeking resurrection there are little more than fools feeding ghouls and demons.

## Underworlds and Change

The undercity of Zobeck changes frequently; its upper levels are simple tunnels for alchemical waste and tannery slop, and its depths are deadly places, whether from gang leaders, devils, or proximity to Hell itself. Wise adventurers tread carefully and bring a full complement of dungeoneering equipment. The everyday streets of the Free City quickly give way to the unfamiliar in the Cartways, and help from the town watch is never available below ground level. Ω