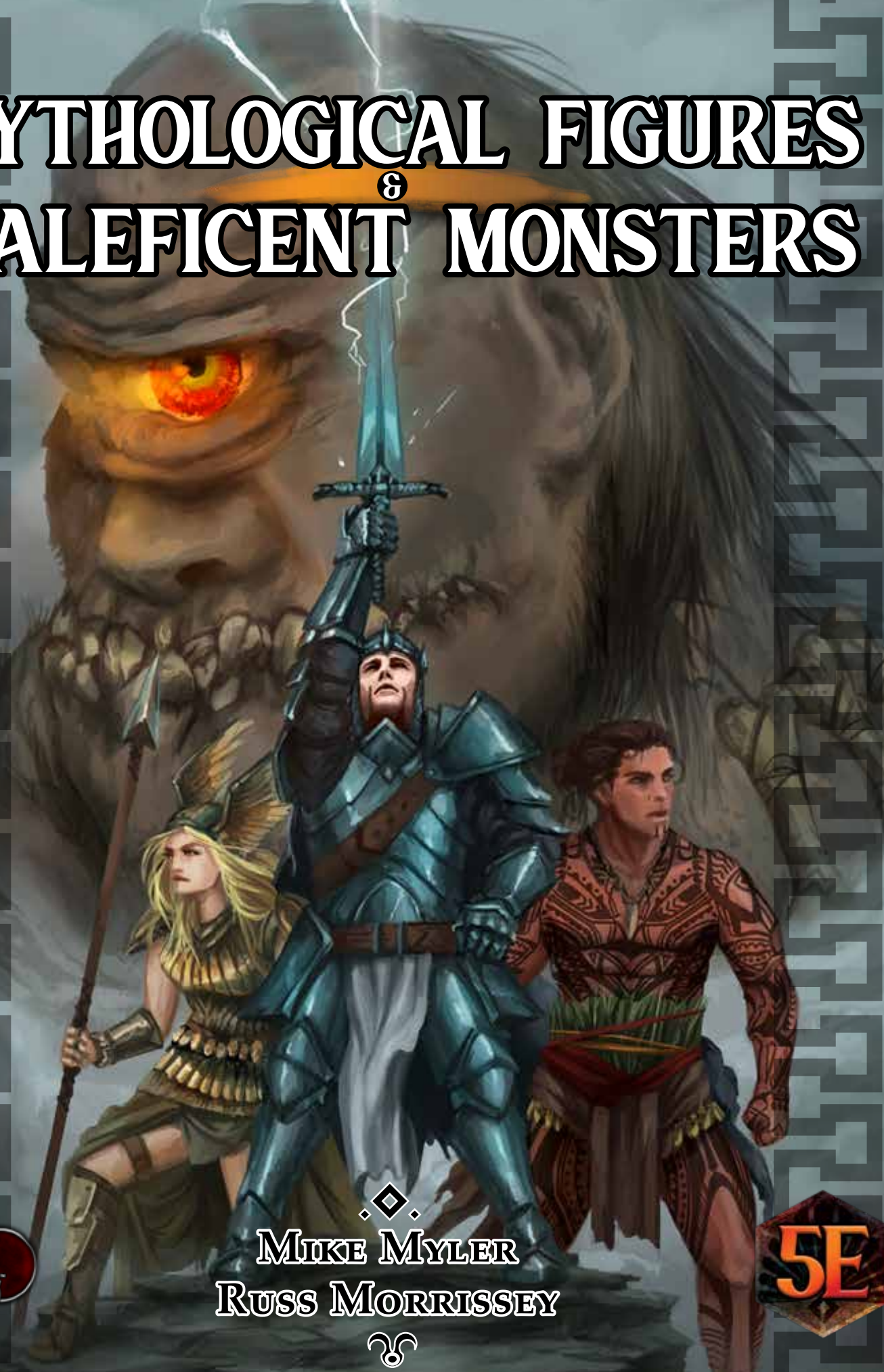


MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES & MALEFICENT MONSTERS



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MIKE MYLER
RUSS MORRISSEY





**MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES
MALEFICENT[®] MONSTERS**



BY MIKE MYLER & RUSS MORRISSEY

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WE HAVE MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES FROM A VARIETY OF WORLD CULTURES IN THIS BOOK. TO ENSURE THAT WE REMAIN RESPECTFUL AND AUTHENTIC, WE HAVE EMPLOYED A RANGE OF EXPERT SPECIALIST AND SENSITIVITY READERS: DANIEL KWAN, DAVID ORIÓN PENA, HEBE ELSHERIEF, MEHR HUSAIN, AND SACHIKO BURTON. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK SALT AND SAGE BOOKS FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN ARRANGING SPECIALIST READERS.

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FOREWORD

I started playing the original edition of the world's first fantasy RPG in 1974. Gary Gygax was my GM. His games were amazing, and the dungeon and city areas he described came to life for his players. I always favored wizards, but I appreciated the actions of clerics. One day I suggested to Gary that some type of book on historical and fictional pantheons would be appreciated by players who like clerics and GMs who wanted themes for their clerical players. He allowed me to work on *GODS, DEMIGODS & HEROES*. That book was an instant success for TSR, the publisher.

We come to the creation of *1st Edition* and I was right there with the suggestion that we do a pantheon book for that game. In 1980 TSR printed my *DEITIES & DEMIGODS*. That book was also an instant success, and over the past forty years I have received many letters from people using my work as a resource for their love of mythologies.

In creating *DEITIES & DEMIGODS* there was no internet to take research from. I went to many libraries and researched each pantheon. I wanted to know the legendary devices they used. I wanted to discover the ways of the various deities. While doing that research I also discovered a host of creatures that gave those deities trouble.

Over the past forty years there have been other pantheon books. In 2009 Troll Lord Games produced my *OF GODS AND MONSTERS*, a hardcover which presented a range of historical and fictional pantheons. In that work I tried to give clerics special powers related to the deities they worshiped. It was a hit and I'm very proud of it.

That brings us to *MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES & MALEFICENT MONSTERS*. First, I'm very envious that I didn't think of it. Second it's fifth edition compatible. I love the range of heroes, gods, and monsters that are included in this book. The artwork is fantastic, and the text on each selection is highly useful for people to use in their games. The choices of who was included in this text is going to make for some amazing gaming.

GMs are always looking for fun quests and situations, and this book presents dozens of them. Imagine Billy the Kid appearing in your game with his six-guns shooting. Do you send him back to his dimension, or do you kill him and take his six-guns? Genghis Khan and his horde of riders appear in the north. Does one ignore this invader hoping others will stop him and his army, or does one help raise the forces to fight the greatest mounted general of all time? Robin Hood is here, and I can think of dozens of fun adventures to make that character useful. Imagine, if you will, Dracula appearing in his castle. The dangers of the vampire and his forces can wreak havoc with a fantasy campaign.

I looked hard for something critical to say about this great work. I failed miserably. I truly can't wait to get my hands on this book. It is going to be incredibly useful for any game referee wanting to present new challenges for their players.

James M. Ward
Spring of 2020

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Mythological Figures & Maleficent Monsters*! This book is a compilation of Mike Myler's popular *Mythological Figures* column on EN World, and features a range of legendary characters and creatures from fables and tales all across the world. Here you'll find an eclectic mix of Greek, British, Chinese, Egyptian myths and more—even critters from American folklore! You'll meet characters like Achilles, Robin Hood, Captain Nemo, Sinbad, and Loki as well as monsters like the chupacabra, headless horseman, and the legendary dragon Fafnir! Most of the entries here were requested by readers of the column.

The world's oldest roleplaying game is itself an extension of mythology and sometimes it's a good move for the GM to bring a proper legend into their game. Whether you mean to have an epic NPC make an impact on the plot, slack a few jaws in awe, or just introduce a legend as a lark, this book brings you some of the greatest figures of mythology with statistics for *Fifth Edition*!

Of course, this book can't be an exhaustive compilation of the world's myths and legends. What you hold here is a sprinkling, a smattering, a handful or three of just some of the iconic characters and critters from fables around the world.

METHODOLOGY

There are two types of entries in this tome. Here's a quick peek behind the curtain at how they were devised.

Mythological Figures are characters of legend. They are built rules-as-written using player character builds. In your world, *your* PCs are the greatest heroes of the realm; they are the warriors and wizards about whom the bards sing. At least, if they survive to high level! In your world, your PCs are the Lancelots, the Odysseuses, the Thors, and the Sherlock Holmeses. While there is an obvious temptation to make all these mythological figures much more powerful than player characters in terms of ability scores and other abilities, this takes away from the fact that

the powerful individuals detailed in this book are merely *our* world's versions of your world's player characters! For that reason, the legendary figures use the same rules as player characters including their ability scores which use a standard ability buy using 27 points. There are a couple of exceptions where we have added a feature not normally available to a player character; Achilles' invulnerability is an example of this. However, this has been done sparingly and only when necessary to match the myth.

Maleficent Monsters, on the other hand, do not use player character builds. These are designed like monsters with fantastical abilities, such as Baba Yaga's *Agonizing Cackle*, Dracula's *Misty Escape*, and Dorian Gray's *Regeneration*.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

There are three ways you might choose to use the material herein.

Firstly, you can use the figures and monsters as non-player characters and foes in your game as-is.

Secondly, you might use them as 'archetypes'—if you need a master archer, you can pull out Robin Hood and file off the name. A super-strong warrior can be represented by Hercules. A legendary general might borrow Genghis Khan's stats. As well-known mythological figures, you already know what you're going to get, so it's easy to pluck out Aladdin and know you have a solid thief stat-block.

Finally, the mythological figures can be used not only as player characters, but as examples of player character builds. If you envisage your character as a piratical Blackbeard type, or want them to develop along the lines of a master swordsman like Miyamoto Musashi, these builds can be a useful guide as your character develops.

DESIGN NOTES

There are instances in this book (like Confucius' access to Turn Undead, for example) that are obviously not historically accurate simply because of how *Fifth Edition* is written. GMs should feel free to ignore these features wherever they appear, or replace them with something more fitting.



WARLORDS

Occasionally we use an archetype called the Warlord, created by one of the 5th Edition designers. The warlord archetype's features are a little long in the tooth and several characters utilize them, so to open up some breathing room in the stat blocks all of the possible warlord Tactics and Tactical Maneuvers a warlord can have are located here.

Some warlord features require targets to make a saving throw to resist the feature's effects. The saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

***Tactical save DC =
8 + the warlord's proficiency bonus +
the warlord's Intelligence modifier.***

WARLORD TACTICS

Warlords throughout this book have the Tactical Focal Point feature. This allows them to apply Warlord Tactics to a designated area on the battlefield. The available benefits are listed in a warlord's statistics; the details of those Tactics are found below.

WHAT'S THAT CLASS?

A handful of these builds use classes from the popular 5E supplement, *The Masterclass Codex*, which contains 16 new classes for your 5E games. You do not need that book to use these characters, as we have included all the information you need to play right there in the stat block. However, for reference, we have called upon *The Masterclass Codex* for:

- ◆ Billy the Kid (gunfighter)
- ◆ Harry Houdini (fatebender)
- ◆ Nikola Tesla (tinkerer)
- ◆ Sherlock Holmes (savant)
- ◆ Zhuang Zhou (geomancer)

Area Clear

When an ally inside the warlord's tactical focal point hits a creature with an attack, the ally can move that creature 5 feet.

Cover the Flank

As many as three target creatures of the warlord's choice can use a reaction to move up to their speed when an enemy that the warlord can see enters the tactical focal point, so long as that movement does not end in the tactical focal point. If a target creature is ending their movement adjacent to the enemy that triggered this feature, they do not have to use their reaction.

Lock Phalanx

Until the start of the warlord's next turn, any allies that are within the tactical focal point and using a shield grant their shield bonus to the AC of other allied creatures they are adjacent to. A creature can only benefit from one shield bonus.

Phalanx Sidestep

An ally inside of the warlord's tactical focal point doesn't provoke opportunity attacks as long as they move from a square adjacent to an ally and into another square adjacent to an ally. In addition, the warlord and their allies can end their movement in a space occupied by an ally. The ally immediately moves 5 feet away from the direction they came in and must end movement inside of the tactical focal point.

Run Away!

When an ally inside of the warlord's focal point is forced to make a Dexterity saving throw, they move up to their speed by using their reaction and are no longer subjected to the triggering effect if their movement takes them outside of the area or range.

TACTICAL MANEUVERS

Warlords have some special actions called Tactical Maneuvers. The specific Maneuvers available to a Warlord are listed in the

Actions section of their statistics; the details of those Maneuvers are found below.

Confounding Maneuvering

Enemy creatures that are inside of the warlord's tactical focal point make an Intelligence saving throw against the warlord's tactical DC or can't leave that area until the end of the warlord's next turn. In addition, the warlord can take the Attack action.

Coordinated Blows

The warlord takes the Attack action and uses deft commands to coordinate his companions to attack enemies and set them off-guard, knocking them down. Until the end of the warlord's turn, enemies inside of the tactical focal point make a Strength saving throw against the warlord's tactical DC whenever they are hit by an attack or they are knocked prone.

Fearsome Display

The warlord and their allies unleash their intimidating battle rage, forcing creatures within 60 feet that are not their allies to make Wisdom saving throws against the warlord's tactical DC. A creature that fails its save is frightened of the warlord's tactical focal point. At the end of each of its turns, a frightened creature repeats the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. In addition, the warlord can take the Attack action.

Feinting Attack

The warlord takes the Attack action, and if they use a melee weapon attack to hit a creature on their turn, it makes a Wisdom saving throw against the warlord's tactical DC. On a failure, the warlord and their allies are invisible to it until the end of the warlord's next turn.

Group Assault

The warlord takes the Attack action and chooses a creature they can see within the tactical focal point. The creature makes a Constitution saving throw against the

DESIGN NOTES

At first glance, you might wonder why all the mythological figures in this book don't have maxed out ability scores. For example, why isn't Robin Hood's Dexterity 20? That would make him a better archer, surely?

5E allows you to choose between ability score increases and feats. Oftentimes, a feat is the better choice. For example, Robin Hood has 18 Dexterity. He could have higher, but then he wouldn't have the Superb Aim feat, which is better than a +1 Dexterity increase. He's a better archer for that choice.

We could certainly give every character in this book 20 in their primary ability scores. But then they'd all be the same, and they'd miss out on strong feats which make them better at their archetypal roles than ability score increases do.

If you simply must have maxed out ability scores, then you can easily drop the feats and increase the ability scores. Removing a feat either increases one ability score by 2, or two ability scores by 1. It's your game!

warlord's tactical DC at the start of the warlord's next turn provided that the warlord or an ally hits it with an attack after this feature is activated. The creature has disadvantage on the saving throw if it has been hit by 3 or more attacks this turn. On a failure, it is stunned until the end of the warlord's next turn.

Move to Flank

The warlord takes the Attack action and calls out to as many as 2 allies that can see or hear them. These allies can use their reactions to move up to their speed. A creature makes a Strength saving throw against the warlord's tactical DC if it is adjacent to these allies or the warlord and one of these allies at the end of their movement. On a failure, it is restrained until the end of the warlord's next turn.

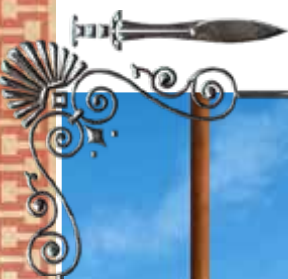
ACHILLES

What better place to begin this book than the protagonist of the *Illiad*, slayer of Hector—that son of a nymph, Achilles! Most people remember the legendary soldier from the Trojan War as an invincible warrior, made so by his mother Thetis dipping him into the River of Styx in his infancy. While this is definitely entertaining, it's debatable if that's the original story; some sources have his mother covering him with ambrosia then burning the mortal bits off, and in other parts of the epic poems he gets wounded elsewhere than his left heel. That's the one players are most likely to expect though and we've got a feature to include to that effect.

Achilles was the greatest warrior of the Trojan War and leader of the Myrmidons. Achilles' rage was legendary, and when his companion Patroclus was killed by Hector the Trojan prince during one of that war's many battles, he rampaged, slaughtering many foes, before finally slaying Hector at the gates of Troy itself. His rage was such that even after Hector's death, the Greek demigod treated the prince's body with great disrespect, dragging it behind his chariot. Achilles also defeated the Amazon queen Penthesilea, and Memnon, king of Ethiopia, on the battlefield.

BACKGROUND

Soldier. Achilles commands respect from his time serving in the army. Soldiers loyal to the same forces view him as their superior, and Achilles can use his influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, possibly even gaining entrance to military fortresses and outposts.



ACHILLES

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful neutral fighter (champion) 18

Armor Class 19 (breastplate, shield, fighting style)

Hit Points 135 (18d10+36)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +8

Skills Athletics +9, Insight +8, Perception +8,
Religion +7

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Greek

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Action Surge (2/short rest). Once on his turn, Achilles can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Blessing: Bestowed Invulnerability.

Achilles' mother Thetis dipped him into the River Styx in his infancy, turning his skin nigh-invulnerable. He is immune to sneak attack damage, ignores extra damage from critical hits, and has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. A creature targeting Achilles' singular point of vulnerability (his left heel) has a -10 penalty on its attack roll, but on a hit the attack deals normal damage (ignoring the immunities and resistances of this feature).

Indomitable (3/long rest). Achilles can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Remarkable Athlete. Achilles adds +3 to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check he makes that doesn't already use his proficiency bonus. In addition, when he makes a running long jump, the distance he can cover increases by 4 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Achilles can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+18 hit points.

Superior Critical. Achilles' weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18-20.

Survivor. At the start of each of his turns, Achilles regains 7 hit points if he has no more than half of his hit points left. He doesn't gain this benefit if he has 0 hit points.

FEATS

Fortune Points (3/long rest). Achilles can spend one fortune point to reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, or to force an attacker to reroll an attack made against him.

Leader's Words. Achilles can inspire up to six creatures friendly to him (or up to five creatures and himself) that are within 30 feet of him and can see him, or hear him and understand him. Any that listen to Achilles' inspiring speech for 10 minutes gain 19 hit points. Temporary hit points can only be gained from this feature once per short rest.

Mobile. Achilles can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

Soldier Tactics. A creature hit by Achilles' opportunity attack reduces its Speed to 0 until the beginning of the next round and disengaging from Achilles still provokes opportunity attacks. In addition, Achilles can use his reaction to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 5 feet when it makes an attack against a target other than Achilles.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Achilles attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) piercing damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage when thrown.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.



ALADDIN

Aladdin is our first entry from the Middle East and an interesting example of what makes a myth just that—for starters, despite being the most popular character from *1,001 Arabian Nights*, he's a late addition to the book by a Frenchman translator (who heard it from a Syrian storyteller). Additionally, the character was originally Chinese. This amalgamation of misconceptions and changes (the much-changed narrative seen in modern renditions of the tale) is one of the defining traits of a myth and what makes it a wonderful cultural artifact.

Aladdin was an urchin who falls in love with a princess, something which resulted in his arrest. In prison, the Grand Vizier, disguised as an old man, recruited Aladdin to sneak into a cave and recover a magic lamp—a lamp which the young thief soon discovered contains a genie! With the help of the genie, Aladdin escaped the cave, becomes a prince, and won Princess Jasmine's heart. That's just the cartoon version, of course; older versions of the story portray some of the details differently, but the core is consistent.

That said you can use the standard **spy** NPC for a more 'authentic' version of the original character, upping his Intelligence to a 15. Those who are keen for something a little more exciting (and durable) should use the House-of-Maus version of Aladdin below—complete with a feat for the gimmicky and sneaky throwing of things and skill bonuses to support plenty of fun rogue action. Regardless of which version of the character you use, be very wary of giving him a proper magic lamp (ie a *ring of wishes*) because nothing gets adventurers to instantly lose their valor like the prospect of wishes only one quick thief's death away.

DESIGN NOTES

At the end of the day Aladdin's a proper thief and that's the build I went with, although picking out feats was a little bit of a struggle. Eventually I landed on "Fortune" and "Stealth" ;) to represent his narrative power—when using him as an NPC, utilize his high skill bonuses and lucky nature to play politic or bait the party into a chase (or dungeon, or cave hidden beneath the desert sands, or the plans of a corrupt vizier in a nearby city).

BACKGROUND

Urchin. Aladdin and his allies (while outside of combat) move at double their normal speed when traveling between two locations in the same city.

ALADDIN

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral good rogue (thief) 8

Armor Class 14 (padded)

Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +5

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +6, Deception +5,
Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth
+9; thieves' tools +9

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Arabic, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Cunning Action (1/turn). Aladdin can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide or Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Evasion. When Aladdin is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Aladdin extra movement. When he makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 3 feet.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Aladdin deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Aladdin that isn't incapacitated and Aladdin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

FEATS

Fortune Points (3/long rest). Aladdin can spend 1 fortune point to reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, or to force an attacker to reroll an attack made against him.

Stealthier. Aladdin can attempt to hide even when he is only lightly obscured from a creature he's trying to hide from. In addition, Aladdin's position isn't revealed when he misses with a ranged weapon attack against a creature he's hidden from, and he does not have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks in dim light.

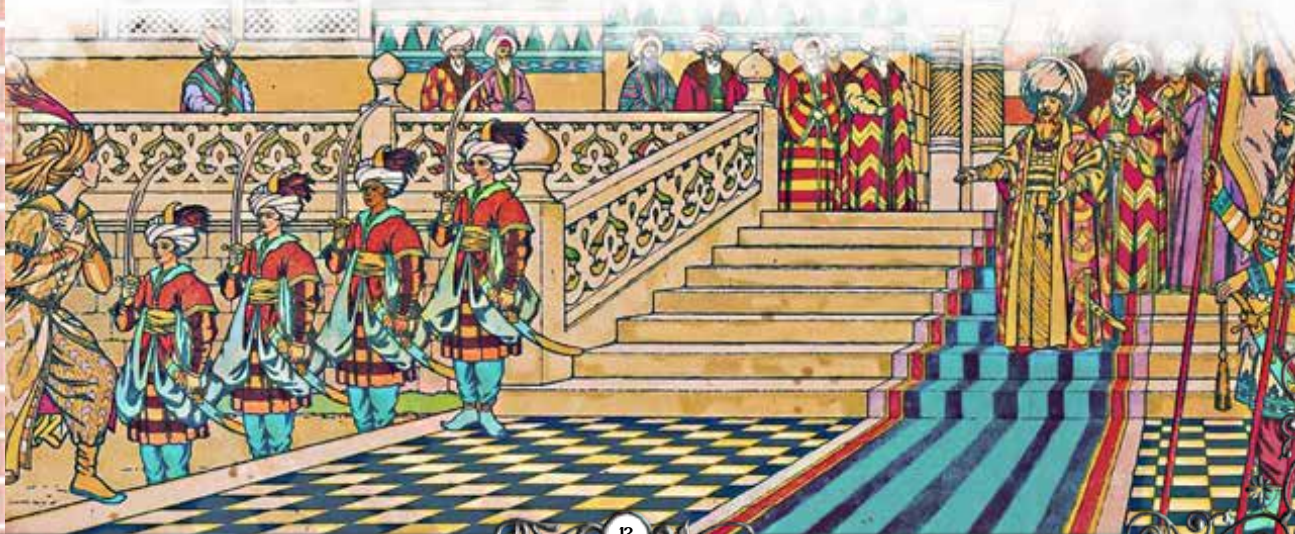
ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Stone. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Aladdin can see hits him with an attack, Aladdin can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.





ALLAN QUATERMAIN

Introduced in *King Solomon's Mines*, Allan Quatermain is a colonial gentleman, treasure seeker, and explorer of Africa. There's something like a score of books about this guy but chances are good that if you've ever heard the name at all, it was in the *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. The real takeaway is that he's the 19th century's version of Indiana Jones. Plundering tombs, getting involved in tribal skirmishes, saving white women from danger—you get the idea. He is described as small and unattractive (a trait which was clearly discarded when film stars like Sean Connery and Patrick Swayze played him!), but unequalled in marksmanship.

It's said that *King Solomon's Mines* was the first novel in the 'lost world' genre of literature. In that book, Quatermain leads a search in a remote region of Africa to find the missing brother of one of his companions. Cue African warriors to whom the white explorers pretend to be gods, a treasure hoard inside a mountain, and a deathtrap.

When he appears in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, Quatermain is portrayed as the team leader and a mentor, pulled out of retirement to join a group of Victorian 'superheroes' to save the world from a dastardly plot, eventually to be stabbed to death by Sherlock Holmes' old adversary Professor Moriarty! You'll find many of these characters in this book.



BACKGROUND

Outlander. Allan never forgets the geographic arrangement of terrain, settlements, and areas of wilderness. In addition, he can forage fresh water and food each day for as many as 6 people as long as the environment nearby can support it.

DESIGN NOTES

Gentleman wilderness adventurer? I can do that! My strongest impression of this character is when Sean Connery played him and I suspect most people checking out this article know that version so we're generally aiming at that. Allan's proverbial hat is hung on the sharpshooter fighter archetype, sprinkled with a little ranger to make him competent out in the wild and great at going after beasts, and then complemented with some feats to make him more survivable (upping his ability scores) and supplement that killer shooting accuracy.

With all that said: let's do the numbers. Because of his Sharpshooter feat there are several ways this can play out—either with or without that damage boost. Note that statistically here the tradeoff is weighted negatively. The DMG rubric comes out to either a 9.75 for accuracy or a clean 7 for damage, then the Blog of Holding at either a flat 10 for accuracy or for damage a 9.2. Averaging the higher scores brings it in as a high 9 while all four together are juuuuuuuust on the cusp (8.9875), so for Allan's challenge rating we're going with a 9.

ALLAN QUATERMAIN

Medium humanoid (human),

lawful good fighter (sharpshooter) 12/ranger 1

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 96 (12d10+1d8+26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +9, Con +7

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +7, Perception +7, Survival +7

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages English

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, Allan can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Attentive Gaze. Allan can use a bonus action to take the Search action.

Excellent Aim (3/short rest). Allan can spend a bonus action to aim a wielded ranged weapon at a target within its range. Until the end of his turn, ranged attacks that Allan makes against the target deal an extra 5 damage.

Favored Enemy. Allan has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track beasts, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Allan can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Marksman Combatant. Allan doesn't have disadvantage from making ranged weapon attack rolls against targets within 5 feet of him. In addition, whenever he makes a ranged weapon attack against a creature on his turn, that creature is unable to take reactions until the end of his turn.

Natural Explorer: Grassland. When Allan makes an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to the grassland, his proficiency bonus (+5) is doubled if he is using a skill

that he's proficient in. While traveling for an hour or more in his favored terrain, Allan gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Difficult terrain doesn't slow his group's travel.
- ◆ Allan's group can't become lost except by magical means.
- ◆ Even when he is engaged in another activity while traveling (such as foraging, navigating, or tracking), Allan remains alert to danger.
- ◆ If Allan is traveling alone, he can move stealthily at a normal pace.
- ◆ When he forages, Allan finds twice as much food as he normally would.
- ◆ While tracking other creatures, Allan also learns their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Allan can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+12 hit points.

FEATS

Resistant. Allan has proficiency with Dexterity saving throws (included above).

Superb Aim. Allan ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and he doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Allan makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Allan attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Cutlass. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Dagger. Ranged Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Revolver. Ranged Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

Hunting Rifle. Ranged Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target. **Hit:** 15 (2d10+4) piercing damage.



ANNE BONNY

Mythological Figures takes to the high seas in pursuit of the pirate that may be Ireland's fiercest, most notorious buccaneer: the one and only Anne Bonny!

Born as the illegitimate child of William McCormac and one of his servant girls (Mary Brennan) sometime around 1700, Anne mostly grew up in London while disguised as a boy. Eventually her father's charade failed, he lost his allowance from his wife, and then they moved (along with Mary) to the Province of Carolina. Of note from this time: Anne's mother passed away when she was 12, the next year she used a knife to stab another girl, she met and married James Bonny, and her father disowned her because he disapproved of her husband. Sometime before 1718 the pair moved to Nassau, the Republic of Pirates, where James became an informant for the royally appointed governor.

Anne was not a fan of her husband's snitching and soon fell in with John Rackham a.k.a. Calico Jack, becoming both his lover and (disguised as a man) a

member of his crew. Together they had a child (for the pregnancy and birth she stayed in Cuba) and went about pirating for a couple of years aboard a ship they stole called *William*—until Jonathan Barnet captured Calico Jack's (at the time very drunk) crew. Everyone else got the rope but Anne and Mary Read “pleaded their bellies”, using pregnancy to get a stay of execution until their babies were out.

Nobody is certain what happened to Anne Bonny after that. Signs point to her not dying in prison, however where she ended up is a mystery. Did she head back to the colonies to remarry and raise a family? Take up a new identity for some piracy on the high seas? Spend decades incarcerated and perishing in Jamaica as an old woman? We might never know!

BACKGROUND

Sailor. Anne is able to acquire passage on a sailing ship for her and her allies free of charge. She has no control over the ship's route, departure, or return, and although no coin is required she and her companions do have to help crew the vessel.

ANNE BONNY

Medium humanoid (human),
chaotic neutral rogue (thief) 5/fighter (sharpshooter) 5

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 60 (5d8+5d10+10)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +5

Skills Athletics +5, Deception +9, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +9, Stealth +8; artisan's tools (pick one) +5, navigator's tools +5, thieves' tools +8, vehicles (water) +8

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages English, Gaelic, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On her turn, Anne can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Anne can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, Use Object action, to make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Excellent Aim (3/short rest). Anne can spend a bonus action to aim a wielded ranged weapon at a target within its range. Until the end of her turn, ranged attacks that Anne makes against the target deal an extra 4 damage.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Anne extra movement. When she makes a running jump, the distance she covers increases by 4 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Anne can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+5 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Anne deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is

within 5 feet of an ally of Anne's that isn't incapacitated and Anne doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

FEATS

Mobility. Anne can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever she makes an attack against a creature, she doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of her turn.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Anne attacks twice when she takes the Attack action.

Cutlass. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Pistol (4). Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Anne can see hits her with an attack, Anne can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.

DESIGN NOTES

Anne here was a pretty easy build to approach—a solid combatant and a crafty rogue. She's a reliable pirate and sailor, and she can hold her own in a fight. In the months to come if you're planning on doing some adventuring on the water and need a ship full of formidable pirates, her build should be simple enough to make crewmembers challenging for higher level PCs but not overly complicated.



ANTAEUS

This is the wrestler of all wrestlers, the man who can't be beat while he's still on his feet, the Hercules-grappling, earth-loving, skull-temple building Antaeus!

The son of Gaia and Poseidon, Antaeus was a giant who really liked to wrestle. The wrestler had bested and killed countless opponents, so many that he built a temple to Poseidon out of their skulls. He wrestled anyone willing, challenging all who passed by—even the mighty Hercules!

Antaeus gained his incredible strength from the very earth, and while he remained in contact with the ground he was utterly invincible. His final wrestling match was with Hercules while the hero was on his way to steal the golden apples from the Garden of Hesperides. In order to defeat the giant, Hercules picked him up, held him aloft so that he was no longer in contact with the ground, and crushed him to death in a bear hug.

DESIGN NOTES

So as far as I can tell Antaeus isn't actually any bigger than a regular fellow but he's many times referred to as a giant. It is a relatively small distinction but gives him some neat mechanical immunities (giants aren't humanoids) that fit with his real trait: he can't be beat while he's on the ground. When we go to do the numbers though, the DMG and Blog of Holding rubrics (3.3/2.2 and 3.05/2.8, depending on whether or not you're factoring in Power Attack) can only guide us so far. This is a special case because you really need to do one specific thing to beat him. So where do we go from here? He's accurate with his swings, he's tough and keeps getting back up, and for low level parties without access to telekinesis or the foresight to have levitate prepared presents a very enduring challenge. However Antaeus here doesn't really hit very hard and isn't that difficult to strike either. Given his lack of lethality I'm inclined to weight his relative invincibility at only a +1 CR increase, bringing him up to CR 4.

ANTAEUS

Medium giant, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 57 (6d8+30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Skills Athletics +7, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Gaea's Strength. As long as Antaeus is in contact with the earth, his Strength is increased by 4 (included in his statistics), and he has advantage on Strength checks and saving throws. This feature functions if he stands on earth, stone, sand, or mud; even a wooden or stone floor of a building or street is sufficient as long as that is in contact with the actual ground.

Gaea's Vitality. If he is knocked unconscious or killed while in contact

with the earth, Antaeus regains all of his hit points, ends any conditions other than prone that he is being affected by, and can take actions on his next turn. He can only be permanently killed while he is not in contact with the earth. To physically lift him up a creature must be grappling Antaeus and succeed on an opposed Strength (Athletics) check to pin, then has disadvantage on a second opposed Strength (Athletics) check to lift him into the air.

Power Attack. When Antaeus makes his first melee weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a $+10$ bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, Antaeus can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after he uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. Antaeus can only use this feature on his turn.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4+5) bludgeoning damage.





ANZÛ

We are headed way, way back into Mesopotamian myth for this creature. The divine monster in this entry is known for soaring through the skies, keeping the company of goats, and appearing in many ancient religions. Anzû is a lesser divinity, a great storm bird able to breathe fire and water.

In its oldest iteration Anzû was a form of Abu, a god that was himself an amalgamation of thunderstorm entities. Originally it was depicted as an enormous, black, eagle-shaped thundercloud, but later on gained a lion's head to cement the association with thunder (or sometimes goats!) Later on down the line, the Sumerians and Akkadians personified Anzû as the southern wind, a half-man and half-bird demon that stole the *Tablet of Destinies* from Enlil and angered the gods so much that he was killed for it.

DESIGN NOTES

God-like bird creature with vast weather powers and the ability to take human form—check! For the CR calculating folks in the audience: the DMG says 15 and the Blog of Holding's rubric landed on 14.3, but I decided to give an automated challenge rating calculator a shot and it said 16 so I'm going with the middle option.

ANZÛ

Huge celestial, neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 230 (20d12+100)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	21 (+5)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Arcana +9, History +9, Nature +14, Perception +14, Religion +9

Damage Resistances psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities lightning, necrotic, radiant, thunder

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 24

Languages Common, telepathy 200 ft.

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Anzû's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *tongues*

At will: *detect evil and good, detect magic, fog cloud, gust of wind, thunderwave*

3/day each: *lightning bolt, shatter*

1/day each: *conjure elemental* (air elemental only), *control weather*

Magic Resistance. Anzû has advantage on saving throws against magical effects and spells.

Shapechanger. Anzû can use its action to polymorph into a humanoid it has seen, or back into his true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Anzû reverts to its true form if it dies.

Tornado Aura. Ranged weapon attacks against Anzû have disadvantage. A creature can negate this trait for a single ranged weapon attack made immediately after using a bonus cation to aim.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Anzû makes two claw attacks, two talon attacks, and one bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10+6) magical piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) magical slashing damage.

Talon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8+6) magical slashing damage.

Create Whirlwind. A 15-foot-radius, 50-foot-tall cylinder of swirling air magically forms on a point Anzû can see within 200 feet of him. The whirlwind lasts until it is ended on Anzû's turn or Anzû makes a new whirlwind. Any creature but Anzû that enters the whirlwind must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be restrained by it. Anzû can move the whirlwind up to 60 feet as a bonus action, and creatures restrained by the whirlwind move with it. The whirlwind ends if Anzû loses sight of it.

A creature can use its action to free a creature restrained by the whirlwind, including himself, by succeeding on a DC 17 Strength check. If the check succeeds, the creature is no longer restrained and moves to the nearest space outside the whirlwind.

Tempest (Recharge 5-6). Each creature within 15 feet of Anzû must make a DC 18 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 19 (3d8+6) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a failure by 5 or more, a target is thrown 10 feet for every 5 points it failed the save. If a thrown target strikes an object, such as a wall or floor, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for each 10 feet it is thrown (minimum 1d6). If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or it takes the same damage and is knocked prone. If the saving throw is successful, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't flung away or knocked prone.



ARACHNE

Once again we turn to Ancient Greece to delve into one of the world's most infamous arachnids: the boastful weaver-turned-spider Arachne! Though her story differs here and there depending on the exact source, pretty much all of them tell of Arachne boasting of her weaving skills.

Her lack of humility was so great and so encompassing that Athena took notice and, disguised as an old woman, challenged Arachne to a weave-off. To Athena's dismay and frustration, the woman did a much finer job during the contest and even weaved a depiction of how divine beings have mistreated humans over the years. Athena was *not* amused by this insult and beat the weaver, transforming the poor Arachne into an eight-legged insect.

DESIGN NOTES

I have obviously taken some liberties here largely because we have enough standard spiders already—we do not have creepy human-spiders, or at least, not enough of those. That said she's a pretty simple creature: she's good at grappling, climbing, and jumping, so whether Arachne is encountered alone by lower-level adventurers or in large groups by high-level PCs, it should make for a creepy, fun, and frantic encounter.

ARACHNE

Medium monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (15d8+30)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +7, Investigation +4, Perception +7; weaver's tools +6

Damage Resistances poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Greek

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

8-Limbed. Arachne has advantage on Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks.

Expert Grappler. Arachne has advantage on attack rolls against a creature she is grappling, and she can grapple creatures up to two sizes larger than her. In addition, she can use her bonus action to try to pin a creature she has grappled. To do so, she makes another grapple check. On a success, the creature is restrained until the grapple ends. While restraining a creature in this way, Arachne kicks two fewer times than normal.

Magic Resistance. Arachne has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spider Climb. Arachne can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Standing Leap. Arachne's long jump is up to 30 feet and her high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, Arachne knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. Arachne ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Arachne kicks six times, or she attacks once with her web and kicks four times.

Kick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) bludgeoning damage.

Web (Recharge 5–6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 40/80 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 14 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 11; hp 8; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).



ARTHUR PENDRAGON

Arthur Pendragon, the Once and Future King, King of the Britons. Wielder of *Excalibur*, Lord of Camelot. Britain's greatest hero. Arthur's story is well known—he drew the sword from the stone, thus proving his right to rule, formed the legendary Knights of the Round Table, instigated the Quest for the Holy Grail, was advised by Merlin, betrayed by Lancelot and Guinevere, victor in battle at Badon Hill, and finally killed in battle at Camlann. Legend says he sleeps on the Isle of Avalon, ready to return when Britain needs him most. It is fair to say that Arthur exemplifies the British traditions of chivalry and knightly courage, tempered with wise and benevolent rulership.

“Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone is the rightwise born king of all England.”

King Arthur is easily one of the most enduring popular mythological figures in human history. What we do know is that there likely was some fellow named Arthur going about fighting Saxons in the late 400s and early 500s but there is a tremendous amount of folklore that's come in his wake in the millenium and a half since then. Whether or not he made as big an impact as some schools of thought claim (killing 960 men by his own in the Battle of Badon, for instance) is still a matter of academic debate.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to his lordship King Arthur receives a measure of respect wherever he goes. He is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see him if requested to do so).

DESIGN NOTES

For our purposes here I decided to gauge him against the other Knights of the Round Table but with a focus on the royalty aspect—what I consider to be the best known part, what with him

being a king and all—and that he's the center of the Arthurian legend. With that in mind I opened the throttle up and put him near 20th, with a nod towards fighter battlefield tactics and a heavy shoulder into divine sovereignty of rule via paladin.

KING ARTHUR

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good fighter
(warlord) 4/paladin (oath of the crown) 15

Armor Class 19 (scale mail, shield, fighting style)

Hit Points 142 (19d10+38)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +6, Con +12, Int +5,
Wis +5, Cha +8

Skills Athletics +9, History +7, Insight +7,
Persuasion +10

Condition Immunities disease

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Anglo-Saxon, Cymric (Celtic-Welsh)

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, King Arthur can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Aura of Courage. King Arthur and friendly creatures within 10 feet of him can't be frightened while he is conscious.

Aura of Protection. Whenever King Arthur or a friendly creature within 10 feet of him must make a saving throw, the creature gains a +4 bonus to the saving throw as long as the King Arthur is conscious (included in his statistics).

Channel Divinity (1/short rest). King Arthur can channel his divinity through the two following features.

Royal Challenge. King Arthur calls out a provocation to creatures he selects that are able to see him and with 30 feet. A challenged creature makes a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or can't choose to move further than 30 feet away from King Arthur until he dies, is incapacitated, or a

creature is moved more than 30 feet away from him by another effect.

Warrior Rally. King Arthur can use a bonus action to call out a rallying cry to creatures he selects that are able to see him and within 30 feet. If a selected creature has no more than half of its hit points, it regains 1d6+4 hit points.

Cleansing Touch (4/long rest). King Arthur can use his action to end one spell on himself or on one willing creature that he touches.

Divine Sense (5/long rest). As the paladin class feature.

Divine Smite. When King Arthur hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 5d8. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

Lay on Hands (75 points). As an action, King Arthur can touch a creature and restore a number of hit points to it, up to the maximum amount remaining in this pool. Alternatively, he can expend 5 hit points to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.

Royal Fortitude. King Arthur has advantage on saving throws made to resist the paralyzed and stunned conditions.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, King Arthur can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+4 hit points.

Spellcasting. King Arthur is a 7th-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18; +10 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared from the paladin's spell list:

1st-level (4 slots): *bless, command, compelled duel, detect evil and good, detect magic, divine favor, shield of faith*

2nd-level (3 slots): *aid, find steed, lesser restoration, warding bond, zone of truth*

3rd-level (3 slots): *aura of vitality, magic circle, remove curse, spirit guardians*

4th-level (2 slots): *banishment, death ward, guardian of faith*

Tactical Focal Point. Arthur selects a 10-foot square to be his tactical focal point as a bonus action or as part of the attack action, choosing a Tactic to apply to it (see page 8). This lasts until he cannot take actions or uses this feature again. Each time Arthur completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits for a different one: Area Clear, Cover the Flank, Run Away!

Tactical Mastery (3/long rest). King Arthur uses part of his Attack action or a bonus action to take mastery of the battlefield, granting it to himself and allies within his focal point by expending uses of this feature. A creature that is granted a use of King Arthur's Tactical Mastery can either regain 2d10 hit points when it is granted (any hit points greater than its maximum are temporary hit points) or

use it to deal an extra 2d10 damage with an attack.

Holy Avenger. While King Arthur is wielding his sword *Excalibur*, he and all creatures friendly to him and within a 10-foot radius have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. King Arthur attacks twice whenever he takes the Attack action on his turn.

Excalibur. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8+8) magical slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage. If the target is a fiend or undead, it takes 11 (2d10) radiant damage.

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Loyalty to the Crown. King Arthur can use his reaction to take the damage from an attack that would otherwise damage a creature within 5 feet of him. He is unable to reduce or prevent the damage he takes from this attack.

DESIGN NOTES

I would be hard pressed as a player not to immediately scheme on stealing this sword or killing King Arthur as soon as I figured out it has a bonus 66% higher than the normal game cap. Even at +4 I'd be like "oooooooooooooooooh hey guys" but it wouldn't be sufficient to really motivate straying errantly into very un-adventuring party like activities. To that end, it'd be a little odd to include this and not allow for PCs to wield it—unless you want to make them the king of the land, which is a fairly narrow field for GMs to make use of. It also seemed good to include something for his diplomacy but remembered a caveat because he's always getting shafted by his buddies (looking at you, Lancelot).



EXCALIBUR

To truly instill the power of the ages into King Arthur, give him this version of *Excalibur* (and the accompanying scabbard).

EXCALIBUR

Weapon (longsword), legendary (requires attunement)

This legendary weapon is said to grant powerful magic to its wielder and that only the rightful ruler of the land is suitable to carry it into battle. While attuned to it, *Excalibur* grants the following benefits:

If you are the rightful wielder of *Excalibur*, it instantly attunes to you and does not take up an attunement slot.

You gain a +4 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon.

When you attack an object with this magic sword and hit, maximize your weapon damage dice against the target.

When you attack a creature with this weapon and roll a 20 on the attack roll, that target takes

an extra 4d6 slashing damage. Then roll another d20. If you roll a 20, you lop off one of the target's limbs, with the effect of such loss determined by the GM. If the creature has no limb to sever, you lop off a portion of its body instead.

You can speak the sword's command word to cause the blade to shed bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet. Speaking the command word again or sheathing the sword puts out the light.

When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks made against anyone but creatures you consider to be your close allies and companions.

EXCALIBUR'S SCABBARD

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

While wearing this longsword scabbard, you have resistance to piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.

ATALANTA

Mythological Figures is headed back to Ancient Greece with a fierce huntress by the name of Atalanta!

This is one of Ancient Greece's righteous ladies—both because she was a devout follower of Artemis and because she was a supreme hunter and warrior. Atalanta survived in the wilds as a baby after her father, the King of Argos, angrily abandoned her on a mountaintop for not being a boy. She was also the first to bleed the Calydonian Boar, the slayer of the centaurs Hylaeus and Rhoecus, and the only woman to sail with the Argonauts

Atalanta rejected many suitors by beating them all in footraces (the losers were killed!) until Hippomenes distracted her with three enchanted golden apples given to him by the goddess Aphrodite. This subterfuge allowed Hippomenes, Poseidon's grandson, to win the race.

The couple had a son, but not long after were cursed by Zeus and transformed into lions for doing the dirty in one of his temples. The popular belief at the time was that lions could only mate with leopards, forever keeping them from being together.



BACKGROUND

Outlander. Atalanta never forgets the geographic arrangement of terrain, settlements, and areas of wilderness. In addition, she can forage fresh water and food each day for as many as 6 people as long as the environment nearby can support it.

DESIGN NOTES

This was a very straightforward character build—a talented archer and hunter raised in the wilds! I tried to keep her spell list on the more mundane side and I'm relatively sure that in future when I need a mysterious Aragorn-type character I'll be turning to her.

ATALANTA

Medium humanoid (any), neutral ranger (hunter) 8

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 68 (8d10+16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +7

Skills Athletics +5, Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +7, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Themysceran

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Defensive Tactics: Multiattack Defense.

When a creature hits Atalanta with an attack, she gains a +4 bonus to AC against all subsequent attacks made by that creature for the rest of the turn.

Favored Enemy. Atalanta has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track beasts and monsters, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Hunter's Prey: Colossus Slayer (1d8, 1/turn).

When the Atalanta hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 1d8 damage if it's below its hit point maximum.

Ranger Features. Atalanta has the Land's Stride, Natural Explorer (forest or grassland), and Primeval Awareness ranger class features.

Spellcasting. Atalanta is a 4th-level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). She knows the following spells from the ranger's spell list:

1st-level (4 slots): *detect poison and disease, jump, longstrider*

2nd-level (3 slots): *darkvision, pass without trace*

FEATS

Superb Aim. Atalanta ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and she doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Atalanta makes her first ranged weapon attack in a turn, she can choose to take a -5 penalty to her ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Atalanta attacks twice when she takes the Attack action.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.





BABA YAGA

Are you ready for the Witch of Wilds, gourmand of children, and crone of crones? I hope so because we're cooking up something special with Baba Yaga!

Baba Yaga is a capricious figure of Slavic folklore and the witch of witches—when you think of a witch, you're probably thinking of her whether or not you know it. She eats children and others who become lost in the forest, but is often sought out for her great knowledge and wisdom. The crone is reluctant to offer aid however, as she ages one year for each question she answers, and though she can make a blue rose potion to reverse her aging she's got better things to do.

Baba Yaga is likely best known for her chicken-legged hut and if you ever come across the walking building, remember: turn your back to the forest, your front to me.

DESIGN NOTES

I'm not sure a proper build exists for Baba Yaga—she does a lot of very weird things—so in a change of pace she's getting monster treatment. Fortunately a very excellent RPG company (Paizo!) already put her together in an adventure path, and I'm going to convert their statistics for her over to 5th Edition. Her Pathfinder statblock is very big (absolute maximum official challenge rating boss monster) but I'm watering it down as far as it seems proper and tweaking things to be a little more accessible.

BABA YAGA

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (Intelligence)

Hit Points 262 (25d8+150)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (in mortar and pestle)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	22 (+6)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)

Skills Arcana +14, Deception +12, Insight +11, Intimidation +12, Perception +11, Persuasion +12, Stealth +10, Survival +11

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

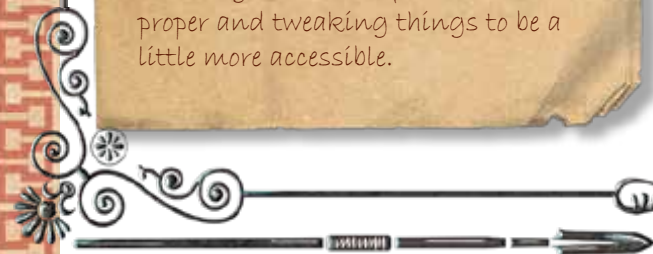
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, disease, frightened, madness, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic* and *see invisibility*, passive Perception 21

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Primordial, Sylvan

Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)



Agonizing Cackle. Baba Yaga can use a bonus action to cackle wildly, focusing her ire on a creature able to hear her that she can see within 60 feet. The target makes a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or is racked with intense pain and stunned. At the end of each of its turns, the target makes a new saving throw to resist the effect. On a success, the condition ends. A creature targeted by Baba Yaga's agonizing cackle becomes immune to it for 24 hours after resisting its effects.

Child Scent. Baba Yaga has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell, but only with respect to humanoid children and immature animals.

Contingency (1/day). When Baba Yaga is attacked, she is affected by *mislead*.

Elongating Limbs. Baba Yaga has a natural reach of 15 feet.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Baba Yaga fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Lifegiver (1/day). Baba Yaga can use an action to touch a dead creature and bring it back to life.

Long-Lived. Baba Yaga has greatly expanded her lifespan with complex arcane rituals. She adds +3 to any ability check she makes that doesn't already include her proficiency bonus.

Magic Items. Baba Yaga has a magic broom and dancing chicken hut (see below), a *portable hole* disguised as a wicker basket, a *gem of seeing*, a *hat of disguise*, a *ring of free action*, a gigantic mortar and pestle (which functions as a *carpet of flying*), and any other magic item the GM deems fit.

Magic Resistance. Baba Yaga has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Regeneration. Baba Yaga regains 15 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point.

Scar. Baba Yaga can use a bonus action to touch a creature and horribly scar it. The creature makes a DC 22 Charisma saving throw. On a failure it is permanently scarred. These

scars are visible through disguises, when the creature shapechanges, and even when the creature is brought back to life. Baba Yaga knows the scarred creature's location and can target it with her spells as long as it is within range, regardless of whether or not she can see it. Baba Yaga may have up to 7 creatures scarred at a time and can use a bonus action to remove permanent scars from a creature.

Spellcasting. Baba Yaga is a 20th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 22; +14 to hit with spell attacks). Baba Yaga has the following spells prepared and access to all class spell lists:

Cantrips: *eldritch blast*, *mending*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *thaumaturgy*, *vicious mockery*

1st-level (4 slots): *charm person*, *cure wounds*, *faerie fire*, *feather fall*, *hideous laughter*, *hunter's mark*, *magic missile*

2nd-level (4 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *mirror image*, *suggestion*, *web*

3rd-level (4 slots): *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *protection from energy*

4th-level (4 slots): *confusion*, *dominate beast*, *greater invisibility*, *polymorph*

5th-level (3 slots): *dominate person*, *geas*, *legend lore*, *scrying*

6th-level (3 slots): *chain lightning*, *disintegrate*, *eyebite*, *heal*

7th-level (3 slots): *finger of death*, *symbol*, *teleport*

8th-level (2 slots): *clone*, *control weather*, *feeblemind*

9th-level (1 slots): *foresight*, *time stop*, *weird*, *wish*

Sorcery Points (17/day). Baba Yaga can use sorcery points to gain additional spell slots, or sacrifice spell slots to gain additional sorcery points.

◆ **Creating Spell Slots & Sorcery Points.** As a bonus action on her turn, Baba Yaga can expend one spell slot and either gain a number of sorcerer points equal to the slot's level or create a spell slot by expending

sorcery points (1st-level—2 points, 2nd-level—3 points, 3rd-level—5 points, 4th-level—6 points, 5th-level—7 points).

- ◆ **Metamagic: Distant Spell.** When Baba Yaga casts a that has a range of 5 feet or greater, she can spend 1 sorcery point to double the range of the spell. When Baba Yaga casts a spell that has a range of touch, she can spend 1 sorcery point to make the range of the spell 30 feet.
- ◆ **Metamagic: Quickened Spell.** When Baba Yaga casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, she can spend 2 sorcery points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.
- ◆ **Metamagic: Subtle Spell.** When Baba Yaga casts a spell, she can spend 1 sorcery point to cast it without any somatic or verbal components.
- ◆ **Metamagic: Twinned Spell.** When Baba Yaga casts a spell that targets only one creature and doesn't have a range of self, she can spend a number of sorcery points equal to the spell's

level to target a second creature in range with the same spell (1 sorcery point if the spell is a cantrip). To be eligible for Twinned Spell, a spell must be incapable of targeting more than one creature at the spell's current level.

ACTIONS

Broom. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+6) magical bludgeoning damage.

Death Curse. Baba Yaga uses an action to point at a living creature she can see within 30 feet. The target makes a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw at the start of each of its turns. On a failure it gains one level of exhaustion. The creature continues making saving throws until it has 2 successes or dies. A creature targeted by Baba Yaga's Death Curse becomes immune to it for 24 hours after resisting its effects.

BABA YAGA'S BROOM

Weapon (club), artifact (requires attunement)

This artifact has the statistics of a +3 *weapon* and *dancing sword* (plus on a critical hit the target is blinded for 1 round), and while attuned to it you can innately cast *pass without trace* and *nondetection* at will. In addition, you can use a bonus action to knock the broom against a lock, door, lid, shackles, chains, or the like to open them. Once you have used this feature 3 times, you require a long rest before it can be used again.

BABA YAGA'S CHICKEN HUT

Wondrous item, legendary (attunement not required)

This item first appears to be a shuttered Huge-sized wooden hut able to fit up to 7 Medium or smaller creatures inside along with a simple bed and table permanently affixed to the floor. After taking a long rest inside of it, you make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, seeing through the veil and revealing its true nature on a success—

strange markings and other signs of witchcraft cover nearly every surface of the interior and it reeks of chicken effluent. There are 8 glowing runes on the table, each only half-illuminated. When you pass your hand over a rune, the energies inside respond and you can fully illuminate it or remove its glow entirely. When certain runes are illuminated, enormous chicken legs beneath the hut rise it up off of the ground. *Baba Yaga's Chicken Hut* is a Huge object with the following statistics:

Armor Class: 21

Hit Points: 320

Speed: 50 ft. or swim 10 ft. (or 0 ft. if the legs aren't extended)

Damage Immunities: cold, poison, psychic

To be used as a vehicle, the hut requires one pilot. While the hut's door and window shutters are closed, the interior is airtight and watertight. The interior holds enough air for 60 hours of breathing, divided by the number of breathing creatures inside.



The hut floats on water.

A creature in the interior can use an action to control the illumination of as many as two of the hut's runes, and a bonus action to control a third. After each use, a rune goes back to its neutral position. Each rune, from left to right, functions as shown in the Baba Yaga's Chicken Hut Runes table.

If you are not attuned to any magic items and spend a week inside of *Baba Yaga's Chicken Hut*, you can attune to it. The hut uses 2 of your attunement slots. Once attuned, you are always its pilot, and as long as you can see it you can use your bonus action to manipulate as many as 3 of its runes.

Table: Baba Yaga's Chicken Hut Runes

Rune	Lit	Dark
1	Chicken legs extend, allowing the hut to walk and swim.	Chicken legs retract, reducing the hut's Speed to 0 and making it unable to benefit from bonuses to speed.
2	Forward window shutter opens.	Forward window shutter closes.
3	Side window shutters open (two per side).	Side window shutters close (two per side).
4	Each extended chicken leg makes the following melee weapon attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit</i> : 9 (2d8) slashing damage.	The hut releases a disgusting and offensive miasma. All creatures in a 60-foot radius of the hut make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or are poisoned until the end of the pilot's next turn. If the interior is not sealed, this includes any creatures inside the hut.
5	The apparatus walks or swims forward.	The apparatus walks or swims backward.
6	The apparatus turns up to 180 degrees left.	The apparatus turns up to 180 degrees right.
7	Lanterns appear on the front of hut, emitting bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.	If there are lanterns conjured on the front of the hut, they disappear.
8	The front door unseals and opens.	The front door closes and seals.



BALOR

This entry takes us into the mythological wars of Ireland's supernatural legends with the Fomorian champion Balor, the smiter, he of the evil eye!

In the mythology of Ireland Balor was a giant with one incredibly destructive eye; he had petrifying and poisonous powers imbued when he was exposed to fumes from a potion being crafted by druids. Balor led the Fomorians, a magical race born from the earth and sea. Being a monocular titan, Balor is often compared to the Greek cyclops.

The Balor is best known from the Battle of Mag Tuired and for being murdered by his grandson, Lugh. When Lugh fired a sling-stone through his eye, it opened up the backside of his skull and harmed the Fomorian soldiers behind him, 27 of whom were crushed by his corpse. In other tales, he may have survived this eye shot and fled to Mizen Head where he was beheaded on a large rock that shattered from the act.

Balor knew his fate in advance and tried to prevent his murderer from ever being born, locking away his daughter Eithne in a keep.

DESIGN NOTES

Aside from his destructive eye and being very, very big there aren't many concrete details about Balor so what follows is an enhanced cyclops equipped with an improved petrification gaze and then one for the burninating. Some more speed and a few other key traits any supernatural monster champion ought to have (Legendary Resistance and Magic Resistance) round him out to be a creature that can stand against a party of adventurers long enough to make a big impact. So: let's do the numbers! This entry managed to find a very solid middle ground between the DMG chart landing at 15.3 and the Blog of Holding a bit lower at 15.2, obviously leaving him at CR 15.

This might have worked—but he stole Glas Gaibhnenn, the *magical cow of abundance*, and a hero named Cian mac Cáinte quested to get it back. He snuck inside Eithne’s tower and they conceived not one but three sons. Of course Balor drowned them, though unbeknownst to him one managed to survive—and years later brought about his death. This is a theme that we’ll see repeated later in this book when we visit with the greek hero Perseus!

There is some dispute about Balor’s magical eye. One story describes seven coverings over

the eye: removing the first caused the bracken to wither, with the next grass became copper-colored, the third heated the forest, the fourth made the trees smoke, the fifth spawned red glow, the sixth brought sparks, and the last finally set everything ablaze.

Modern scholars think that the Balor is one of many stories and harvest myths about cyclical rebirth: the woman (fertile earth) is imprisoned by an elder (winter and the past year) then impregnated by youth (the new year and spring).

BALOR

Gargantuan giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 262 (15d20+105)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	13 (+1)	24 (+7)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Skills Arcana +7, Athletics +14, Intimidation +9

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Giant

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Burning Gaze (Recharge 5–6). If Balor isn’t incapacitated and can see, he can use a bonus action to open his eye and wreak havoc in a 100-foot-cone. Each creature in the area makes a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. If the saving throw fails, a creature takes 7 (2d6) fire damage. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature instead takes 14 (4d6) fire damage. Flammable objects in the area that aren’t being worn or carried are ignited.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Balor fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Balor has advantage on saving throws made against spells and other magical effects.

Monocular Perception. When attacking a target more than 30 feet away, Balor has disadvantage on his attack roll.

Petrifying Gaze. When a creature that can see the Balor’s eye starts its turn within 30 feet of him, Balor can force it to make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw if he isn’t incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can’t see Balor until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at him in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Balor attacks three times with his slam or he throws two rocks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d8+9) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (4d12+9) bludgeoning damage.



BEOWULF

Welcome to another hero from Britain's ancient past, the star of the oldest epic in Olde English: Beowulf!

If you somehow missed the 2007 CGI film or forget learning about this fellow in English class, here's the breakdown. Hrothgar, king of the Danes, makes the great hall Heorot for his warriors to drink and revel in, but when the monstrous Grendel (a descendant of Cain) overhears their joy he is so pained by it that he goes to wreck the place as the revelers sleep, eating the men that he kills. Hrothgar beseeches the aid of Beowulf who waits in the mead hall for Grendel's next attack and proceeds to beat the monster to death with his bare hands, ripping off one of the monster's arms.

Grendel's mother is enraged that her son was killed in such a way and she comes the next night, killing Hrothgar's favorite warrior Æschere while Beowulf is elsewhere. Upon Beowulf's return they track the monster to a lake and, armed with a magical sword called *Hrunting*, the hero jumps in after her, discovering her cave lair at the bottom. Unfortunately the weapon proves ineffective so he throws it away until after the fight, taking up a giant's sword and hacking the monster to death with that instead. *Hrunting* is used to decapitate Grendel but dissolves in the creature's toxic blood, and the hero returns to gain many gifts from Hrothgar—including another magical sword, this one called *Nægling*.

Half a century later and Beowulf is the wise king of Geatland—part of what modern Sweden is now—when a dragon starts burning and killing his subjects indiscriminately after somebody steals a golden cup from its hoard. Beowulf, of course, goes out to meet it in single combat but *Nægling* shatters in his hands and he is only saved from defeat by the bravery of his ally Wiglaf. While victorious, Beowulf suffers mortal wounds and passes soon after, his remains burned away on a pyre.

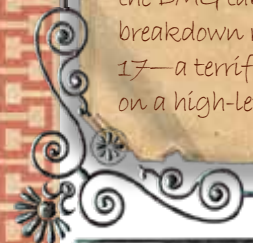
It's of interest that this might be the earliest known depiction of an actual fire-breathing dragon (Fáfnir breathed poison); this tale influenced Tolkien, who felt European literature featured only two significant dragons: "...we have but the dragon of the Völsungs, Fáfnir, and Beowulf's bane."

BACKGROUND

Folk Hero. Beowulf is always able to rely on the hospitality of commoners to help him hide or rest provided he poses no danger in doing so, going so far as to shield him from being discovered (though not at the cost of their lives).

DESIGN NOTES

Oh, Beowulf, you are so difficult to pin down. A large part of me feels that he's a fighter but his strength is referenced again and again. He rips off a monster's arm and breaks magic swords with his hands—not on the dragon he's fighting but because he is so freaking strong. With that so prominent I really felt to do Beowulf justice we need to hit that beat as hard as we possibly can and that landed me on full barbarian, falling back onto berserker because I wanted to make sure he can relentlessly pummel something to death. I'd like to have gotten him a proper brawling feat but he's wailing away with 8 damage anyway, and if raging he's doing 12 damage probably 4 times in a round so does he need it? Checking the CR on both the DMG table and the Blog of Holding breakdown results in the same cushy CR 17—a terrifying prospect I'm liable to drop on a high-level party soon.



BEOWULF

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful good barbarian (berserker) 20

Armor Class 18 (Constitution or scalemail, shield)

Hit Points 250 (20d12+120)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	14 (+2)	22 (+6)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +13, Con +12

Skills Athletics +13, Insight +7, Perception +7,
Survival +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and
slashing (while raging)

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened (while
raging)

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Olde English

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Brutal Critical. Beowulf can roll three additional weapon damage dice when determining the extra damage for a critical hit with a melee attack.

Danger Sense. Beowulf has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, he can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Feral Instinct. Beowulf has advantage on initiative rolls. Additionally, if he is surprised at the beginning of combat and isn't incapacitated, he can act normally on his first turn, but only if he enters his rage before doing anything else on that turn.

Indomitable Might. If Beowulf's total for a Strength check is less than 20, he can use 24 in place of the total.

Intimidating Presence. Beowulf can use his action to frighten someone with his menacing presence. When he does so, he chooses one creature within 30 feet that he can see. If the creature can see or hear Beowulf, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of Beowulf until the end of his next turn. On subsequent turns, Beowulf can use his action to extend the duration of this effect on the frightened creature until the end of his next turn. This effect ends if the creature ends its turn out of line of sight or more than 60 feet away from Beowulf. If the creature succeeds on its saving throw, Beowulf can't use this feature on that creature again for 24 hours.

Mindless Rage. Beowulf can't be charmed or frightened while raging. If he is charmed or frightened when he enters his rage, the effect is suspended for the duration of the rage.

Rage. On his turn, Beowulf can enter a rage as a bonus action. His rage lasts until Beowulf is knocked unconscious. Beowulf can also end his rage on his turn as a bonus action. Beowulf can go into a frenzy when he rages. If he does so, for the duration of his rage he can make a single melee weapon attack as a bonus action on each of his turns after his first turn raging. When his frenzied rage ends, he suffers one level of exhaustion. While raging, he gains the following benefits:

- ◆ advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws,
- ◆ when he makes a melee weapon attack using Strength he gains a +4 bonus to the damage roll,
- ◆ and he has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Reckless Attack. When Beowulf makes his first attack on his turn, he can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until his next turn.

Relentless Rage. If Beowulf drops to 0 hit points while he's raging and doesn't die outright, he can make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. If he succeeds, he drops to 1 hit point instead. Each time he uses this feature after the first, the DC increases by 5. When he finishes a short or long rest, the DC resets to 10.

FEATS

Power Attack. When Beowulf makes his first melee weapon attack in a turn using a heavy weapon, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, Beowulf can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after he uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. Beowulf can only use this feature on his turn.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Beowulf attacks twice when he takes the Attack action (and can use a bonus action to attack a third time if both raging and frenzied).

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 bludgeoning damage.

Hrunting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8+8) magical slashing damage or 13 (1d10+8) magical slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Giant's Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6+7) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Retaliation. When Beowulf takes damage from a creature that is within 5 feet of him, he can use his reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature

BILLY THE KID

It's out into the frontier of the Wild West! The subject? An infamous gun-wielding outlaw that could be held by no jail, the free-rambling drifter known by many names but one more than any other: Billy the Kid!

Billy the Kid a.k.a. Henry McCarty a.k.a. William H. Bonney was born sometime in 1859 in New York city, moving with his mother to Indianapolis where she met and married William Henry Harrison Antrim. Together they moved down to Kansas, then Santa Fe in the New Mexico territory where she died shortly thereafter of tuberculosis. Only 15 years old, in exchange for room and board he lived with Sarah Brown until made to leave for stealing food all of 10 days later. Then came his first real crime: stealing clothing and a pair of pistols from a chinese laundry alongside George Schaefer—he broke out of jail 2 days later, becoming a fugitive and living with his stepfather before stealing from him and making for the Arizona Territory.

Henry McCarty (he was still using his birth name at this point) was a gambling ranch hand, working with a Scottish criminal and US Cavalry private to steal horses from the local soldiers. It was here he got the 'Kid' part of his nickname, so-called for his "youth, slight build, clean-shaven appearance, and personality." In the village of Bonita in 1877, McCarty got into an argument with a blacksmith. Things got heated, a fight broke out, and in the end the smithy was shot, dying the next day.

McCarty fled, was captured, and escaped again on a stolen horse, making for the New Mexico Territory. Unfortunately this time the steed was taken by Apaches and McCarty had to walk to Fort Stanton, staying with a friend named John Jones and brought back into good health by the fellow's mother.

Next he joined up with rustlers stealing cattle from John Chisum in Lincoln County. The second part of his nickname began this year as he started calling himself William H. Bonney. During the Lincoln County War he was charged with three murders, and over the course of the rest of his outlaw career he was thought to have killed another eight men, and more impressively, broken out of prison another half dozen times.

Several men claimed to be Billy the Kid, and although *The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid* was published the next year the popularity of his legend took its time taking root.



BACKGROUND

Urchin. Billy and his allies (while outside of combat) move at double their normal speed when traveling between two locations in the same city.

BILLY THE KID

Medium humanoid,

chaotic neutral gunfighter (drifter) 8

Armor Class 16 (agile defense)

Hit Points 60 (8d10+16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Cha +5

Skills Animal Handling +2, Perception +2, Stealth +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Survival +2; disguise kit +4, gun kit +4, thieves' tools +7

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages English

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Fighting Style: Point-Blank Shooter. Billy does not have disadvantage on attack rolls when he is within 5 feet of a hostile creature who can see him and who isn't incapacitated.

Flushed Shot. Billy's ranged weapon attacks ignore half and three-quarters cover.

Lay of the Land. Billy doubles his proficiency bonus when making Intelligence or Wisdom checks relating to the outdoors. While traveling through the wilderness for an hour or more, he gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Difficult terrain doesn't slow his group's travel.
- ◆ Billy's group can't become lost except by magical means.
- ◆ Even when Billy is engaged in another activity while traveling (such as foraging, navigation, or tracking), he remains alert to danger.

- ◆ If he is traveling alone, Billy can move stealthily at a normal pace.
- ◆ When Billy forages, he finds twice as much food as he normally would.
- ◆ While tracking other creatures, Billy also learns their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

FEATS

Superb Aim. Billy doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Billy makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Billy attacks twice when he takes the Attack action. If he has a second revolver, he uses his bonus action to fire it (and does not gain his Dexterity bonus to damage).

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Revolver. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Fast Draw. As a reaction when a creature attacks Billy, he can make a ranged weapon attack against that creature. This attack occurs before the attacking creature's. Additionally, once per round Billy can draw and stow one or two firearms without requiring any action.

Reputation (2/long rest). As a reaction when a creature Billy can see makes an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw, he can impose disadvantage on that roll as the power of his reputation shakes its resolve.

DESIGN NOTES

DMG said CR 5 and change, Blog of Holding's rubric came down to 6 and change so I'm settling on 6. If you need an outlaw gunslinger this will absolutely do the trick, although the discerning GM in need of someone more lethal can swap in the

Bushwalker archetype instead (drop Lay of the Land, Fast Draw, and Reputation; add simplified 2d8 ranged sneak attack, Expertise with Stealth, double weapon ranges). For the man who apparently could not be jailed however, I think I hit all the really important marks. Plus it's surprisingly short which is a nice bonus.



BLACKBEARD

We're on the high seas with one of the most infamous pirates in all of history: Edward Teach, or as he's better known, Blackbeard.

The precise origins of Edward Teach have eluded historians but it's largely believed he was born sometime around 1680 and there's evidence he was a mariner (probably on a privateer ship, which isn't too far from piracy) during the War of the Spanish Succession. Blackbeard's beginnings are a little more concrete—the first reports of his infamous pirate career began in 1717—and he became a terror of the waters off the Americas and in the Bahamas for two years, the peculiarities of his appearance gripping the public's imagination near the end of that first year.

What marked Blackbeard as unique was that he avoided being particularly vicious or dishonorable, playing more on psychological fears than genuine, repetitive brutality, instead making the most out of his reputation and fierce, wiry, black-bearded, lit-fused appearance. Before he was finally killed (for a sizable bounty of 100 pounds and in a fight where his forces were outnumbered two-to-one) he blockaded Charles Town in South Carolina, formed a fleet of rogue ships able to overcome contingents of the British Royal Navy, commanded scores of buccaneers, and nearly acclimated into colonial society's nobility.

BACKGROUND

Sailor. Blackbeard is able to acquire passage on a sailing ship for him and his allies free of charge. He has no control over the ship's route, departure, or return, and although no coin is required he and his companions do have to help crew the vessel.

DESIGN NOTES

Blackbeard here is pretty high level partly because he definitely had one of those Rasputin-esque deaths: shot five times and cut twenty, felled at the end by somebody coming up behind him and nearly decapitating him with a two-handed sword. What's below makes for a fun NPC able to quickly move across a ship for some exciting combat!

HAIR FUSES

(1/10 lb., 3 gp).

These small wicks and glued strips powdered with gunpowder are worn in the hair, usually at the ends of long braids or in a voluminous beard. You can use an action or bonus action to light these fuses, rolling 1d12. On a 12, the fuses all ignite at once and you take 1d6 fire damage. Otherwise they burn for 1 minute and give you advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks, but disadvantage on all other Charisma checks.

BLACKBEARD

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful evil rogue (thief) 7/fighter (battlemaster) 7

Armor Class 16 (studded leather, fighting style)

Hit Points 98 (7d8+7d10+28)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +7

Skills Athletics +12, Deception +12, Insight +5, Intimidation +12, Perception +5, Stealth +8; artisan's tools (pick one) +7, navigator's tools +7, thieves' tools +8, vehicles (water) +13

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages English, Spanish, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, Blackbeard can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Blackbeard can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Evasion. When Blackbeard is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Maneuver Master (5d8 maneuver dice/short rest). Blackbeard can expend a maneuver die to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

- ◆ **Command.** Blackbeard uses his bonus action to forgo one of his attacks and direct a friendly creature who can see or hear him. The creature uses its reaction and makes a weapon attack, dealing 1d8 additional weapon damage on a successful hit.
- ◆ **Disarm.** A creature Blackbeard has hit with an attack takes 1d8 additional damage and makes a DC 16 Strength saving throw or drops one held item of his choice.
- ◆ **Feint.** Blackbeard can use his bonus action to feint against one creature within 5 feet. He has advantage on his next attack roll against that creature as long as it before the end of his turn. On a hit he deals 1d8 additional damage.

- ◆ **Sweep.** Blackbeard chooses a creature adjacent to him target and within his reach and on a hit, the adjacent creature takes 1d8 damage (of the same type as the weapon attack).
- ◆ **Trip.** Blackbeard deals 1d8 additional damage and if the target is a creature of Large size or smaller, it makes a DC 16 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Blackbeard extra movement. When he makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 3 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Blackbeard can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+7 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Blackbeard deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Blackbeard that isn't incapacitated and Blackbeard doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

FEATS

Athletic. Blackbeard can stand up from being prone with only 5 feet of his movement, climbing doesn't cost him extra movement, and he only has to move 5 feet before making a running long jump or running high jump.

Mobility. Blackbeard can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Blackbeard attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Cutlass. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage.

Dagger (4). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Pistol (6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) piercing damage.

Musket. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Blackbeard can see hits him with an attack, Blackbeard can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.



BLACK SHUCK

Although there are various ghostly black dogs in British mythology and folklore, this entry is easily one of my favorites—a big black dog which haunts the coasts of East Anglia in England, the one and only Black Shuck!

The name “Shuck” means “devil”. Legends about this terrifying canine go back to 1127 and accounts range from it being Satan himself, to a poor fellow’s lonely companion haunting the spot of his death, to a terrifying monster that liked to bust into churches to wreak havoc. One thing is for certain: Black Shuck is a great example of localized folklore really taking root, like the Jersey Devil but much, much older.

Even worse, legends say that should you meet Black Shuck, your death is guaranteed within one year.

“He takes the form of a huge black dog, and prowls along dark lanes and lonesome field footpaths, where, although his howling makes the hearer’s blood run cold, his footfalls make no sound. You may know him at once, should you see him, by his fiery eye; he has but one, and that, like the Cyclops’, is in the middle of his head. But such an encounter might bring you the worst of luck: it is even said that to meet him is to be warned that your death will occur before the end of the year.”

Highways & Byways in East Anglia, 1901

DESIGN NOTES

Like any proper myth many different stories are attributed to or similar to Black Shuck’s and pinning down a definitive one is tricky so I tried to do a catch-all here. I think altogether it’s pretty solid and should make for an interesting encounter or two—toss in a few dire wolves as a screen and let the party spot the odd one out of the pack, rewarding the first adventurer to do so with a spooky omen about how they might soon perish (utilizing Black Shuck to dole out some plot seeds).

BLACK SHUCK

Large fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 97 (15d8+30)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Skills Athletics +7, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +16

Damage Resistances cold

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common; telepathy 100 ft. (images of death omens only)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Black Shuck's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *pass without trace*

At will: *divination* (indefinite timespan; death omens only)

3/day: *fog cloud*, *hellish rebuke*, *hunter's mark*

Keen Hearing and Smell. Black Shuck has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Magic Resistance. Black Shuck has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Terrifying Howl. Black Shuck can use a bonus action to unleash a terrifying howl. Each creature of its choice within 120 feet of Black Shuck that is able to both see and hear it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Black Shuck's Frightful Howl for the next 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Black Shuck attacks twice.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) magical piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.





BLAS DE LEZO Y OLAVARRIETA, ADMIRAL

This mythological figure will stick with you like a peg-leg caught in a hole on deck. The astute historians among you may get the clue but if that's not you, read onward and check out Admiral Blas de Lezo y Olavarrieta, a legendary Spanish naval officer!

This career sailor of more than four decades lived to the age of 52 but it wasn't an easy life; among his nicknames were *Captain Pegleg* and *Half-Man* because so much of him had been blown off by hot lead. His list of injuries included but were not limited to: his left leg amputated below the knee, his left eye (he's not just winking), and the ability to fully use his right arm. He also managed to catch typhoid fever. That imagery of the one-eyed peg-legged pirate? That's more Blas de Lezo than any of Blackbeard's contemporaries. This character wore his many injuries like medals and refused to be limited by them.

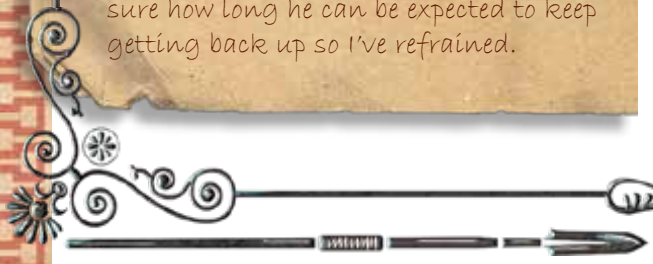
DESIGN NOTES

"A brute swashbuckler? Mike's gone mad!" I assure you I have always been mentally unstable but nay, this is not a display of one of those moments. This is (like Rasputin) another fellow who very clearly just refused to die easily, over and over and over again. The astute designers out there might realize he's leaving one hand free (because it is useless to him) but even so he's a tough son-of-a-gun, and because he seemed to have a lucky streak (definitely an odd one but all the same) he's got Lucky to make the most out of those death saves. With that in mind—it's time for the numbers. The DMG puts Blas de Lezo here at an 11 and the Blog of Holding's Rubric a little higher at 11.8. It's tempting to give him a little extra boost for his capacity (both historically and numerically) for surviving those mortal wounds, but by the time he's down that low I'm not sure how long he can be expected to keep getting back up so I've refrained.

Blas de Lezo was climbed the naval ranks in a host of battles and never suffered defeat, the most famous of which is the Battle of Cartagena de Indias (a city in Virreinato of Granada, what is today Columbia) where his forces were outnumbered at least 3 to 1. Thanks to his defense of Spanish forts in the area, King George II in Britain dropped out of supporting a Pragmatic Sanction around Austria and Europe was drawn into the War of the Austrian Succession. About four months after the siege Blas de Lezo died of typhus (and his efforts were largely initially disregarded because he unnecessarily scuttled several ships for no apparent gain but lots of expense).

BACKGROUND

Sailor. Blas de Lezo is able to acquire passage on a sailing ship for him and his allies free of charge. He has no control over the ship's route, departure, or return, and although no coin is required he and his companions do have to help crew the vessel.



ADMIRAL BLAS DE LEZO Y OLAVARRIETA

Medium humanoid (human), neutral rogue
(swashbuckler) 5/fighter (brute) 11

Armor Class 17 (breastplate, fighting style)

Hit Points 163 (11d10+5d8+80)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +10

Skills Athletics +7, History +12, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +12; navigator's tools +7, thieves' tools +7, vehicles (water) +7

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Spanish, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Blas de Lezo can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Brutal Toughness. Blas de Lezo gains a +1d6 bonus to saving throws and death saves (treating final results of 20 or higher on a death saving throw as a natural 20).

Combat Footing. Whenever he makes a melee attack against a creature on his turn, Blas de Lezo doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Blas de Lezo can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Blas de Lezo can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Blas de Lezo can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+11 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Blas de Lezo deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Blas de Lezo that isn't incapacitated and Blas de Lezo doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll, or when the only creature within 5 feet of Blas de Lezo is his target.

Swashbuckling. Blas de Lezo adds his Charisma modifier (+2) when rolling for initiative.

FEATS

Fortune Points (3/long rest). Blas de Lezo can spend one fortune point to reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, or to force an attacker to reroll an attack made against him.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Blas de Lezo attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

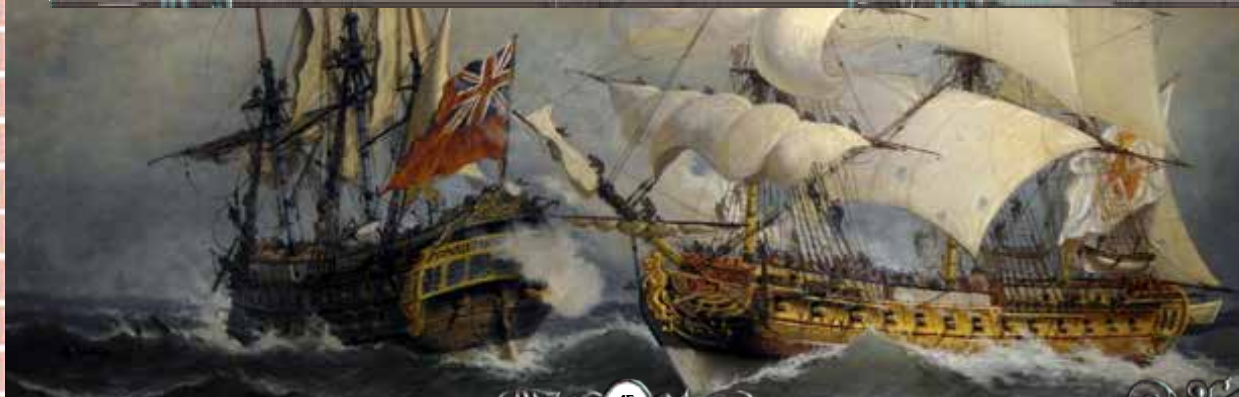
Saber. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 9 (2d6+2) slashing damage.

Pistol (6). Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 (1d10+1d6+2) piercing damage.

Musket. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 12 (1d12+1d6+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Blas de Lezo can see hits him with an attack, he can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.





BOUDICA, QUEEN

We're back in Britain for this *Mythological Figure* although this time we're going way, way back to 60 AD with Queen Boudica, leader of a British tribe who fought the Romans.

When her husband (King Prasutagus) passed away he left his kingdom – what's now Norfolk – jointly to both the Roman emperor and his own two daughters, but the lands of his Icenic tribe were annexed by the empire anyway, and Boudica and her daughters were terribly abused by the occupiers. Roundabouts 60 AD Queen Boudica convinced neighboring peoples to revolt and was chosen as the leader of the rebels, kicking off the campaign by releasing a rabbit, praying to Andraste (a British goddess of victory), and interpreting the direction it ran away. Here's a quote of hers that sums up how tough she was:

BACKGROUND

Folk Hero. Boudica is always able to rely on the hospitality of commoners to help her hide or rest provided she poses no danger in doing so, going so far as to shield her from being discovered (though not at the cost of their lives).

"It is not as a woman descended from noble ancestry, but as one of the people that I am avenging lost freedom, my scourged body, the outraged chastity of my daughters... This is a woman's resolve; as for men, they may live and be slaves."

DESIGN NOTES

I tried various different builds for Boudica—did she merit a few levels of war cleric, or a tactical fighter archetype for maneuvers or moving about allies?—before finally landing on valorous bard/scout. It's worth pointing out that while obviously as a queen she ought to have the Noble background but since that was stripped away from her by the Romans (and she needed proficiency with land vehicles) folk hero fit like a glove.

In short order her army destroyed three Roman settlements, killing between 70,000–80,000 people and took no prisoners. Governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus let one of these cities be taken in order to work a larger stratagem that ultimately allowed his 10,000-man army to beat her much larger force (upwards of 50,000 rebels with some estimates above 200,000). Superior tactics and discipline, better equipment, and the conditions of the battlefield (negating the revolt's superior numbers) led to a Roman victory. Queen Boudica poisoned herself, ending the rebellion.

Queen Boudica is definitely a real historical figure and her mythology is perhaps more stilted towards archeological evidence than anything else—what happened seems fairly agreed upon but precise numbers on the size of her forces are wanting. That said she was *definitely* awesome and as the years go by has accrued proper myth, surely with more to come long after we're gone: "There is a belief that she was buried between platforms 9 and 10 in King's Cross station in London, England. There is no evidence for this and it is probably a post-World War II invention."

QUEEN BOUDICA

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral good bard 5 (battle)/fighter (skirmisher) 6

Armor Class 16 (studded leather, fighting style)

Hit Points 66 (5d8+6d10+11)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Cha +7

Skills Animal Handling +5, Athletics +6, Medicine +5, Nature +4, Perception +5, Persuasion +11, Stealth +7, Survival +5; artisan's tools +4, vehicles (land) +11 (usually a chariot), any three instruments +7

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages English, Gaelic, Latin, Welsh

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On her turn, Boudica can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Bardic Inspiration 1d8 (3/short rest). As a bonus action on her turn, Boudica can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d8. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. In addition, they can add it to a weapon damage roll, or when they are hit by an attack they can use their reaction to add it to their AC (possibly causing an attack to miss). The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

Combat Excellence (4d8/short rest). Boudica can expend an excellence dice to perform one of the following:

- ◆ Boudica rolls the excellence die and adds half the result to an ability check that uses Athletics, Nature, Perception, Stealth, or Survival.
- ◆ Boudica adds the excellence die to a weapon attack roll.
- ◆ While wearing light or medium armor, Boudica uses her reaction to add the excellence die to her AC, either avoiding the attack or taking half damage from an attack that is still successful.

Jack of All Trades. Boudica adds +2 to any ability check she makes that doesn't already include her proficiency bonus.

Natural Explorer: Forest. When Boudica makes an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to the forest, her proficiency bonus (+4) is doubled if she is using a skill that she's proficient in. While traveling for an hour or more in her favored terrain, Boudica gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Difficult terrain doesn't slow her group's travel.
- ◆ Boudica's group can't become lost except by magical means.
- ◆ Even when she is engaged in another activity while traveling (such as foraging, navigating, or tracking), Boudica remains alert to danger.
- ◆ If Boudica is traveling alone, she can move stealthily at a normal pace.
- ◆ When she forages, Boudica finds twice as much food as she normally would.
- ◆ While tracking other creatures, Boudica also learns their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Boudica can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+6 hit points.

Song of Rest. After a short rest, Boudica or any friendly creatures who can hear her performance regain hit points by spending one or more Hit Dice, each of those creatures regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

Spellcasting. Boudica is a 5th-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability for spells (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list:

Cantrips: *dancing lights, mending, message*

1st-level (4 slots): *bane, charm person, cure wounds, longstrider*

2nd-level (3 slots): *enhance ability, suggestion*

3rd-level (2 slots): *clairvoyance, fear*.

FEATS

Leader's Words. Boudica can inspire up to six creatures friendly to her (or up to five creatures and herself) that are within 30 feet of her and can see her, or hear her and understand her. Any that listen to Boudica speak inspirationally for 10 minutes gain 14 temporary hit points. Temporary hit points can only be gained from this feature once per short rest.

Master of the Spear. Boudica can increase her reach with a spear by 5 feet until the end of her turn by using a bonus action. In addition, she can prepare her spear to resist a charge by using a bonus action. Boudica chooses a creature within 20 feet that she can see and if on her next turn it moves within her reach, she can use her reaction to make a melee attack against it using her spear. On a hit she deals an extra damage die. A creature that used Disengage does not provoke an attack from Boudica.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Boudica attacks twice when she takes the Attack action.

Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage or 7 (1d10+2) piercing damage if wielded in two hands.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.



BRÜNNHILDE

Are you ready for a Valkyrie? Let's hope so because this is one of Norse mythology's premier shield-maidens, Brünnhilde!

There's an enormous amount of information about Brünnhilde and I'll try to summarize it here. First off there are two versions of this Valkyrie: one Germanic and the other Norse. Whichever one you're looking at she's responsible for the death of Siegfried, an epic dragonslaying hero. She is likely based on a Visigothic princess named Brunhilda of Austrasia.

When Odin declared that the Valkyrie must marry, Brünnhilde vowed that she would only marry a man who could ride through a wall of flame. Siegfried, who had recently defeated the dragon Fafnir, proved worthy, but he had deceived the shield-maiden, for he was disguised as his friend Gunnar, who desired to marry the Valkyrie but was unable to pass through the flames. When, during a quarrel about whose husband was braver, Siegfried's wife revealed to Brünnhilde that she had been tricked into marrying the wrong man, she arranged for Gunnar to slay Siegfried, before ending her own life.

There are a bunch of different legends that frequently argue with one another.

In some versions, Brünnhilde and Siegfried vowed to marry earlier, but Siegfried's memory of this was wiped due to a magical potion. Sometimes Brünnhilde loves Siegfried so much that she has him killed because she can't have him, sometimes other people get involved and the murderer is someone other than Gunnar, and the prerequisites for marrying her change too (they must surpass the Valkyrie's strength, or prove fearless). However, the common theme is that Gunnar desires Brünnhilde and Siegfried wins the challenge for him.

DESIGN NOTES

We're harkening back to Pathfinder and updating their valkyrie build. To that end we've got a tough warrior with some neat extra abilities—she packs a wallop, has staying power, high mobility, and the ability to pop weakened targets (using Power Attack she has a decent chance to unleash a devastating 52 magical piercing damage with a melee vital strike).

BRÜNNHILDE

Medium celestial, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 133 (14d8+70)

Speed 30 ft., 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)

Skills Animal Handling +8, Athletics +8, Insight +8, Medicine +8, Perception +8

Damage Resistances acid, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, lightning, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Celestial, Common (tongues)

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Brunnhilde hits with it (included in the attack).

Choose the Slain (1/day). Brunnhilde can innately cast *imprisonment* without the need for material components. She is only able to target a recently killed creature, it must be a willing target, and Brunnhilde must choose the Minimus Containment effect. The target is stored inside of Brunnhilde's sword, regaining 1 hit point after 24 hours.

Innate Spellcasting. Brunnhilde's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *tongues*

At will: *aid*, *death ward*, *gentle repose*, *plane shift* (self and mount only)

3/day: *call lightning*, *geas*

1/day: *conjure celestial*, *heal*, *revivify*

Magic Resistance. Brunnhilde has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Powerful Attacks. When Brunnhilde makes her first melee weapon attack in a turn, she can choose to take a -5 penalty to her melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, Brunnhilde can use a bonus action or reaction to make one melee weapon attack after she uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it.

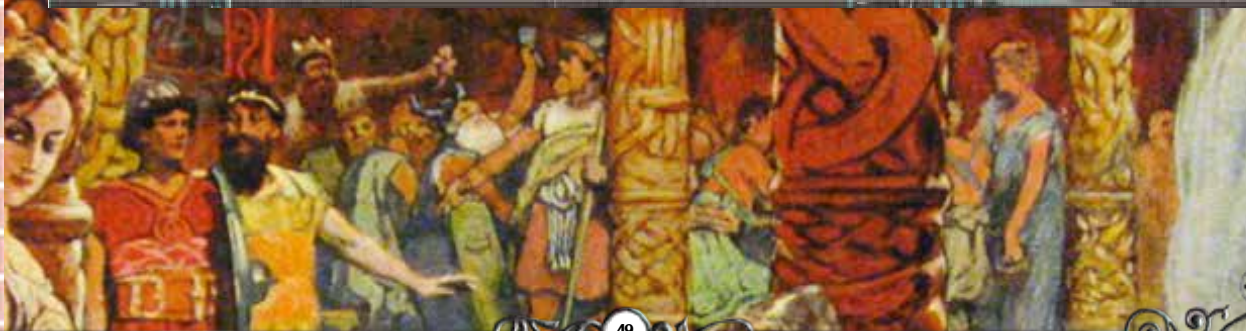
ACTIONS

Multiattack. Brunnhilde attacks six times: four times with her spear and twice with her shield bash.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) magical piercing damage. Immediately after hitting or missing the target, Brunnhilde's spear returns to her hand.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4+4) magical bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Vital Strike. Brunnhilde makes a single weapon attack, automatically hitting her target and scoring a critical hit. She makes an attack roll with advantage and if she would have successfully hit, the critical hit does twice the maximum damage.





CALIBAN

"You taught me language, and my profit on't

Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you

For learning me your language!"

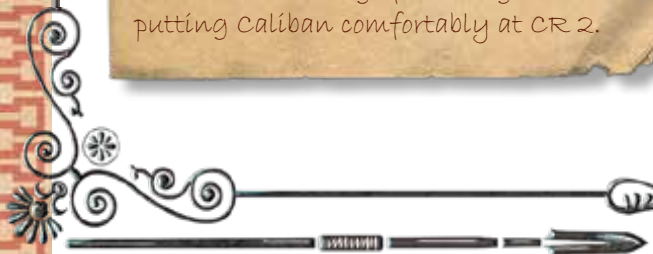
From Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, the creature known as Caliban is a half-man half-monster born of the witch Sycorax and abandoned on a remote island along with the air spirit, Ariel, who Sycorax imprisoned in a pine tree. Some time after Sycorax's death Prospero the magician – the former Duke of Milan – and his daughter Miranda were shipwrecked on the island, and using his powerful magic Prospero enslaved Caliban because the first time they met the beastman, Caliban tried to rape Miranda.

The resentful Caliban rejected Prospero and worshipped another shipwrecked traveler, a servant named Stephano. In the end, however he realized the servant was not the magician's equal, and accepted Prospero as his master.

"That, if I then had waked after long sleep, will make me sleep again and then in dreaming, the clouds me thought would open and show riches ready to drop upon me, that when I waked I cried to dream again."

DESIGN NOTES

There aren't many specifics about Calban's prowess or supernatural abilities so I used my own judgment with a focus on theme and playability. There's also not a ton of consensus on what kind of beastman Caliban is—simply a wild fellow, or deformed, or part cow, half fish, a dwarf, turtle-blooded—so I went for a generalized approach. Knowing all that: let's do the numbers. The DMG landed at 2.3 and the Blog of Holding at 2.25 putting Caliban comfortably at CR 2.



CALIBAN

Medium beast-humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d8+18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +5

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4, Stealth +6, Survival +6

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Doubletyped. For the purposes of features, spells, and traits, Caliban counts as both a beast and humanoid.

Keen Senses. Caliban has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, smell, and sound.

Nimble Escape. Caliban can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

Pounce. If Caliban moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the

target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Caliban can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Relentless Endurance (1/long rest). When Caliban is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, he can drop to 1 hit point instead.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, Caliban can long jump up to 40 feet.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of Caliban must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to Caliban's stench for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Caliban attacks once with its bite and twice with its claws, or twice with thrown rocks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) bludgeoning damage.





CERBERUS

Let's head down into the underworld - which means of course crossing paths with Hades' guard dog Cerberus! Cerberus has not only three heads, but a serpent for a tail and in many legends he is, indeed, part snake. This three-headed canine guards the gates of Hell, and keeps the dead from escaping the afterlife—really though Cerberus' claim to fame is his capture by Hercules as one of the Twelve Labors, a story celebrated again and again throughout both Greek and Roman arts.

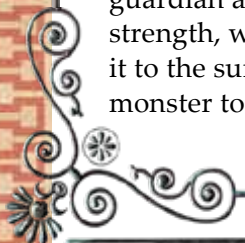
Hercules wasn't the first to get past Cerberus. Orpheus the bard slipped past by charming the beast with music, on his way to seek his beloved Eurydice. Aeneas threw the dog a honey cake spiced with 'drowsy essences' which sent Cerberus to sleep.

Hercules traveled into the underworld at the bidding of Eurystheus, by way of a cave in Tainaron, guided by Athena and Hermes. Once down there Hercules encountered the heroes Theseus and Pirithous, held captive for trying to rescue Hade's wife Persephone from Hell. He freed Theseus from the Chair of Forgetfulness to which they were bound by snakes, but sadly Pirithous remained trapped.

On the way out, of course, Hercules ran into the three-headed guardian and wrangled the hound, overcoming it with sheer strength, wrapping the dog in chains of adamant and dragging it to the surface, completing his Twelfth Labor by presenting the monster to Eurystheus.

DESIGN NOTES

This is actually a conversion from Sean K. Reynolds's excellent New Argonauts with a little bit extra tacked in (a breath weapon).



CERBERUS

Huge monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 152 (16d12+48)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6

Skills Insight +5, Perception +7, Stealth +5, Survival +4

Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic, radiant

Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Ageless. Cerberus cannot suffer from frailty of old age, die from old age, or be aged magically.

Snake-Tail. Cerberus' uses its Dexterity modifier for attack and damage rolls with its snake-tail.

Three Heads. Cerberus gains double his proficiency bonus to and has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks. In addition, he has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cerberus makes three bite attacks and one snake-tail attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10+6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Snake-Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Poison Foam (Recharge 5-6). Cerberus exhales a spray of toxic liquid in a 20-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.





CHUPACABRA

What follows is the feared beast of the lower North American desert, that eater of goats and terror in the night known to man as the Chupacabra! This creature actually originated in Puerto Rico in 1995 after sheep were discovered dead, and drained of blood; but shortly after its first 'appearance' a comedian there coined a name for the creature and it was suddenly witnessed in more than a dozen other countries.

Basically there are two different versions of this monster: one that's sort of a reptilian scaly kangaroo, and another that's more like a hairless dog or bear with spines down its back. The latter is the one we detail here. Studies into the victims of this creature don't show any signs of exsanguination but bleeding prey dry has remained a part of the Chupacabra's myth.

DESIGN NOTES

It's fast, it's great at grappling creatures, it can jump, it bites, it sucks blood AND it smells bad! What more can a GM ask for? This urban legend can take a pounding, won't wilt immediately under a barrage of spells (assuming spellcasters go for the most common fallbacks first anyway), and it's fast as hell—if you're finding the party is having an easy time with one, it won't take long for a second to suddenly join in the fight!

CHUPACABRA

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural)
Hit Points 210 (20d10+100)
Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +10
Skills Athletics +11, Perception +9, Stealth +9, Survival +9
Damage Resistances cold, fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 200 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages understands Common and Undercommon but can't speak
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Fast Run. When the chupacabra takes the Dash action, it moves triple its speed instead of double.

Jointed Limbs. The chupacabra has advantage on checks made to grapple.

Keen Senses. The chupacabra has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, smell, and sound.

Pounce. If the chupacabra moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the chupacabra can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the chupacabra can long jump up to 40 feet.

Stench. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the chupacabra must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the chupacabra's stench for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chupacabra attacks three times: once with its bite and twice with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8+6) piercing damage. The chupacabra regains hit points equal to the piercing damage taken.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6+6) slashing damage.





CHING SHIH / ZHENG SHI

Where to begin with the pirate queen Ching Shih, generally considered the single most successful pirate in history, commanding nearly 20,000 crew?

Well, she wasn't originally called Ching Shih (a name which means 'Widow of Ching'). She was born and named Shih Yang in 1775, then took on the nickname Shih Heang Koo while working on a flower boat (brothel) in Guangzhou until 1801 where she married the pirate Zheng Yi Sao. Together they created a massive coalition of pirates known as the Red Flag Fleet, sporting over 200 cannons and more than 1,300 rifles that made them a practically unstoppable force.

Zheng Yi died in Vietnam in 1807 and—in order to retain her power—Ching Shih married their adopted son Cheung Po. It's a little difficult to be certain, but this seems to be around when she took the name she's known for. While Cheung Po was the nominal head of the fleet (what with being a male and all) she held all the reins of power.

A rigid structure of rules helped Ching Shih turn her pirates into a fearsome navy that went undefeated for several years. In 1810 their daring victories came to an end when the Portuguese Navy gave them the what-for in the Battle of Chek Lap Kok. Ching Shih surrendered and accepted amnesty from the Qing Dynasty, and—this is the part that's really out of this world—only about 300

BACKGROUND

Sailor. Ching is able to acquire passage on a sailing ship for her and her allies free of charge. She has no control over the ship's route, departure, or return, and although no coin is required she and her companions do have to help crew the vessel.

of her pirates were banished, exiled, or executed leaving nearly 17,000 of her pirates to go free.

Actual money was turned over to the Squadron Leader, who only gave a small amount back to the seizer, so the rest could be used to purchase supplies for unsuccessful ships. According to Philip Maughan, the punishment for a first-time offense of withholding booty was severe whipping of the back. Large amounts of withheld treasure or subsequent offenses carried the death penalty.

Cheung Po joined the Qing Navy and with the governor of Guangdong's blessing the adoption by Ching Shih was annulled, making their marriage a proper one. He died in 1822 but she lived on, serving as an advisor against British forces in the first Opium War and running her own gambling house until she died in 1844 at the ripe old age of 69.

DESIGN NOTES

Look I know this woman was the most powerful pirate probably ever but she was definitely lawful—she set up a bunch of laws for her pirates. If nothing else Ching Shih was a canny operator and definitely a commander which is where I focused her design. Between Bardic Inspiration (or Cunning Action to Help), her spellcasting (which is as mundane-themed as I could manage), and Tactical features she has little reason to get into the thick of a fight and will be most effective when she's yelling at her subordinates. Let's take a look at the numbers: the DMG says 10.2, the Blog of Holding's rubric a little higher at 11.17. Considering that she's intended to be used with minions I'm inclined to go with the higher value.

PIRATE QUEEN CHING SHIH

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral bard
(battle) 5/rogue (mastermind) 7/fighter (warlord) 8

Armor Class 17 (studded leather, fighting style)

Hit Points 138 (12d8+8d10+40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Int +9

Skills Deception +15, Insight +14, Intimidation +15, Perception +8, Persuasion +15, Stealth +10; artisan's tools (pick one) +9, navigator's tools +9, thieves' tools +10, vehicles (water) +10

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Chinese, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On her turn, Ching can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Bardic Inspiration 1d8 (3/short rest). As a bonus action on her turn, Ching can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d8. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. In addition, they can add it to a weapon damage roll, or when they are hit by an attack they can use their reaction to add it to their AC (possibly causing an attack to miss). The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Ching can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Evasion. When Ching is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Jack of All Trades. Ching adds +3 to any ability check she makes that doesn't already include her proficiency bonus.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Ching can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+8 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Ching deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Ching that isn't incapacitated and Ching doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Song of Rest. After a short rest, Ching or any friendly creatures who can hear her performance regain hit points by spending one or more Hit Dice, each of those creatures regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

Spellcasting. Ching is a 5th-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability for spells (spell save DC 17; +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list:

Cantrips: *message, true strike, vicious mockery*

1st-level (4 slots): *bane, comprehend languages, hideous laughter*

2nd-level (3 slots): *calm emotions, silence, suggestion*

3rd-level (2 slots): *bestow curse, fear*

Tactical Focal Point. Ching selects a 10-foot square to be her tactical focal point as a bonus action or as part of the attack action, choosing a Tactic to apply to it (see page 8). This lasts until she cannot take actions or uses this feature again. Each time Ching completes a long rest, she can swap one of these benefits for a different one: Area Clear, Cover the Flank, Phalanx Sidestep, Run Away!

Tactical Mastery (7/long rest). Ching uses part of her Attack action or a bonus action to take mastery of the battlefield, granting it to herself and allies within her focal point by expending uses of this feature. A creature that is granted a use of Ching's Tactical Mastery can either regain 2d10 hit points when it is granted (any hit points greater than its maximum are temporary hit points) or use it to deal an extra 2d10 damage with an attack.

Tactician. Ching is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Ching and is within 30 feet of her.

FEATS

Brilliant. Ching always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything she's experienced within the last 31 days.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Ching attacks twice when she takes the Attack action.

Saber. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Dagger (4). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Pistol (8). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Ching can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.



CIRCE

We're back in Ancient Greece for this entry with Circe, transmuter of men and one of the truly unique antagonists in *The Odyssey*. The daughter of the sun god Helios and the Oceanid Perse, Circe was a renowned herbalist and enchantress with a penchant for transforming people into animals – including most of the crew of Odysseus' ship!

While ashore on the island of Aeaea some of Odysseus' sailing crew went inland and discovered a mansion where a beautiful woman treated them to a fine meal. The feast was drugged, however, and before they knew it, she'd changed them all into hogs. Odysseus came to look for his sailors but Hermes stopped him along the way, giving him a magical herb that kept the hero safe from the nymph's wiles.

All the same, Odysseus stopped with Circe for an entire year. When he set off, the sorceress told him how to enter the Underworld, and gave him a choice of two dangerous routes home: navigate between the monster Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis; or brave the Wandering Rocks of Planctae.

DESIGN NOTES

There's no proper nymph for 5E (making an oceanid out of the question) so I'm converting the statblock from *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary 4* with some extra bells and whistles specifically for Circe (for a standard oceanid, drop the *Somnambulatory Brew* and *Transformative Wand* traits and reduce Challenge Rating to 6).

CIRCE

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d8+50)

Speed 25 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +5, Insight +7, Intimidation +8, Nature +5, Perception +7, Persuasion +8, Stealth +7

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons not made from iron

Damage Immunities acid

Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 30 ft. (water only), passive Perception 17

Languages Greek, Sylvan

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Amphibious. Circe can breathe both air and water.

Innate Spellcasting. Circe's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16; spell attack +8). She can

innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components, as long as she is in the ocean or within 1 mile of the ocean.

Constant: *speak with animals* (sea creatures only)

At will: *create or destroy water*, *water breathing*, *control water*

3/day: *conjure animals* (sea creatures only), *conjure minor elementals* (ice and steam mephits only), *gust of wind*

1/week: *control weather*

Regeneration. Circe regains 10 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point and is in contact with saltwater.

Somnambulatory Brew. Circe can spend 1 minute preparing a tasteless liquid able to put those who drink it asleep. Any creature that drinks her concoction makes a DC 16 Constitution saving throw 1 minute afterward. On a failure, the creature falls unconscious for 1d4 hours, until it takes damage, or until someone uses an action to shake or slap the creature awake.

Transforming Wand. Circe possesses a very special *wand of polymorph* with 13 charges. While holding it, she can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the *polymorph* spell (DC 16 Wisdom saving throw) from it, transforming one target humanoid into a beast. Unlike normal castings of the spell, the effect lasts for 24 hours, at which point

a target can attempt a new save. After two failed saves, a polymorphed target is permanently transformed into its new form. The wand regains 2d6 expended charges daily at dawn. If the wand's last charge is expended, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

Water Telekinesis. While Circe is in contact with a body of water she can manipulate the water around it as if under the effects of the *telekinesis* spell without the need for concentration. This includes her waterspout attack (and when outside of water she cannot use it).

Waveglide. An oceanid can create waves and currents to double or halve the speed of creatures or objects traveling on the surface of the water, affecting up to 100 contiguous 5-foot squares in a shapeable area (typically enough for one warship or two small sailing ships). This ability has a range of 1,000 feet, requires line of effect to some part of the area, and lasts as long as the oceanid concentrates. An unwilling target can ignore the effect for 1 round by succeeding at a DC 16 Charisma saving throw.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage.

Waterspout. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (6d6+5) bludgeoning damage.

When bested the adventurers might find a few of Circe's trademark concoctions hidden nearby or recover her unique wand (still intact and ready to dispense magic).

SOMNAMBULATORY BREW

Potion, very rare

This concoction looks, smells, and tastes like water. An *identify* spell reveals that it is imbued with enchantment magic but nothing else.

If you drink it, 1 minute later you must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1d4 hours. You remain unconscious until you take damage, or until a creature uses an action to shake or slap you awake.

TRANSFORMING WAND

Wand, legendary

This wand has 13 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 of its charges to cast the *polymorph* spell (save DC 16) from it, transforming one target humanoid into a beast. Unlike normal castings of the spell, the effect lasts for 24 hours, at which point a target can attempt a new save. After two failed saves, a polymorphed target is permanently transformed into its new form. The wand regains 2d6 expended charges daily at dawn. If the wand's last charge is expended, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.



CLEOPATRA

This time we're examining the quintessential Queen of the Nile and a woman who personifies intrigue—the one and only Cleopatra! Cleopatra was the last ruler of the Ptolemaic Kingdom; after her death, Egypt became a Roman province. The end of her final reign marks the end of the Hellenistic period, which started with Alexander the Great.

Many of us know Cleopatra through the lens of "Egyptomania" solidified in pop culture since the Victorian Age but this woman's history is far, far, far more involved than that. Her reign isn't just one period of rule, it's several, sometimes as a sole queen, sometimes as a joint-ruler with her siblings, and sometimes by manipulating others from afar. Whether or not she was on the throne, she was constantly using her position to create other ties with figures of authority and note, siring children with both Julius Caesar and Marc Anthony before ultimately becoming the target of the Roman Republic's final war. In short, Cleopatra definitely led an interesting life.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to her position as a ruler, Cleopatra is treated with a measure of respect wherever she goes. She is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see her if requested to do so).

DESIGN NOTES

There are some real sly operators in the Mythological Figures lineup but after even a cursory scan of her life I think Cleopatra is quite possibly the most cunning of them all and her statblock is built to reflect that. Being the superior diplomat that she obviously was means investing heavily into mental ability scores and the skill feats for them essentially giving her Expertise in all of her skills plus some fun abilities for spice. Granted she probably deserves a higher score in Intelligence and Wisdom, but to make her feel unique and get more utility out of her for GM use I think she needs those feats. Unlike most of the builds I'm going to give her a little extra magical oomph because as a frequently-ruling queen it's a fair assumption that she'd have the resources for some magical trinkets. All told she's definitely table-friendly and will be appearing in some of my games soon (maybe with a different name, maybe not—I did just finally start a *New Argonauts* campaign...)



CLEOPATRA

Medium humanoid (human), neutral rogue (mastermind) 10

Armor Class 15 (*bracers of defense, ring of protection*)

Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +0, Dex +7, Con +2, Int +7, Wis +3, Cha +5

Skills Deception +12, History +10, Insight +10, Investigation +10, Perception +10, gaming set +6, thieves' tools +6

Senses passive Perception 20

Languages Coptic, Hittite, Latin

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Cunning Action (1/turn). Cleopatra can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Evasion. When Cleopatra is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Fast Learner. After Cleopatra has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, she can mimic its manner of speaking as long as she knows the same language as the creature (allowing her to seem like she is local to a given region).

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Cleopatra deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Cleopatra that isn't incapacitated and Cleopatra doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactician. Cleopatra is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Cleopatra and is within 30 feet of her.

FEATS

Diplomatic. Cleopatra can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can understand what she says during 1 minute of talking. On a success, as long as Cleopatra remains within 60 feet of it (and for 1 minute afterward) the target is charmed by her. Cleopatra automatically fails on the check if she or her companions are fighting the target.

Master of Intrigue. Cleopatra can use an action to fool one humanoid she can see within 30 feet of her. The target must be able to hear her make a Charisma (Deception) check contested by its Wisdom (Insight) check. On a success, the target is fooled until the end of Cleopatra's next turn or until she attempts to fool a different target. Cleopatra doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from movement around a fooled target and she has advantage when attacking a fooled target. On a failure, Cleopatra can't fool the target for 1 hour.

Medical Learning. A creature that Cleopatra uses a healer's kit to stabilize regains 1 hit point. In addition, she can use an action and a single use of a healer's kit to mend a creature's wounds. The creature regains 1d6 + 4 hit points, plus hit points equal to the creature's total hit dice. A creature can only benefit from this feature once between short or long rests.

ACTIONS

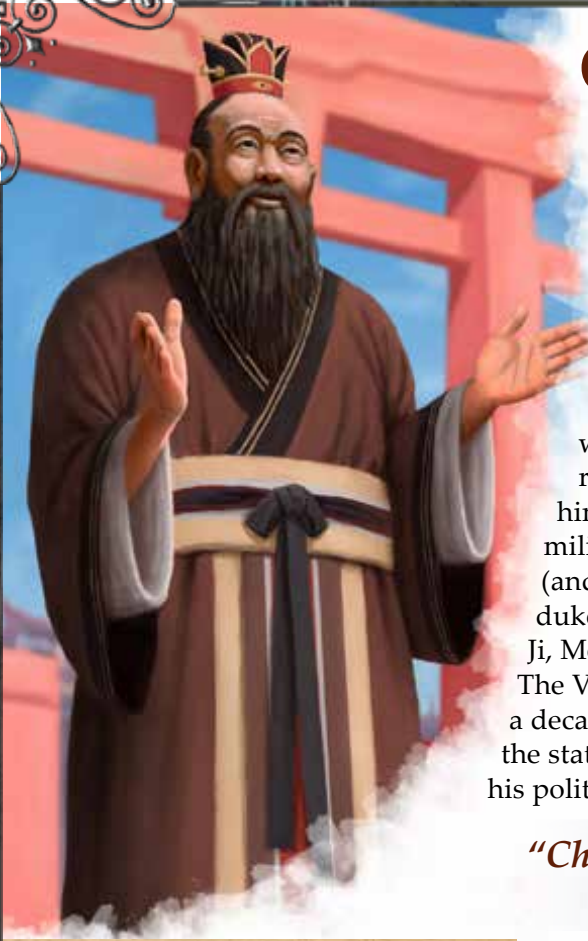
Magic Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Cleopatra can see hits her with an attack, Cleopatra can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.







CONFUCIUS

Mythological Figures once again heads to the Far East, this time considering one of the best known figures in all of recorded history, a Chinese philosopher from over 2,000 years ago with teachings that still have influence today!

Born in the state of Lu, Confucius' lost his father when he was very young. He grew up to be a politician. It might surprise you to learn that while alive Confucius didn't really get that much recognition other than that people of influence found him to be threatening. All the same and without any military power himself, he utilized diplomacy to try (and fail) to return rulership of the state of Lu to a duke rather than the triumvirate of ruling clans—the Ji, Meng, and Shu families - which had taken power. The Viscount Ji Huan became his nemesis, and for over a decade Confucius went into self-exile, traveling around the states of central and north-east China where he shared his political beliefs but never saw them implemented.

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

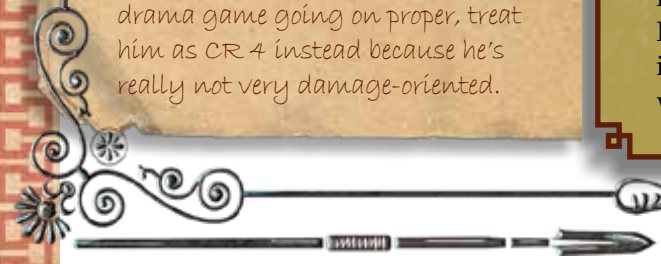
DESIGN NOTES

It was a struggle to figure out what classes fit best for Confucius here but I'm happy with where he landed—he's a multi-linguist with a +11 bonus in all of his skills and plenty of intrigue-related tricks. While I would've liked to get him a higher Intelligence, the balanced high mental ability scores seem appropriate and make him a fierce social combatant. For CR statisticians: the Blog of Holding rubric really had a big impact here rating him as a 6 and the DMG down at 3.9 so I went for CR 5. If for some reason combat breaks out before Confucius can get his intrigue and drama game going on proper, treat him as CR 4 instead because he's really not very damage-oriented.

In the twilight of his years Confucius returned to the province of Lu, teaching the *Five Classics* to more than 70 disciples before dying himself in his early 70s. Details on his legacy are fairly involved but to be short about it Confucius' teachings were widely adopted after his death and became the backbone of education in China until less than a century ago, though they are still very much a part of contemporary Chinese social norms and many ordinary people in China still see Confucian ideals as a means of obtaining spiritual nourishment. Following his death Confucius' followers collected his teachings (emphasizing self-improvement and self-realization) in the *Analects*, one of the most studied and widely-read books in the past 2,000 years of China's history.

BACKGROUND

Courtier. Confucius is able to use his position as a scholar-official to access the bureaucratic functionings of organizations that he encounters. He is able to identify who has authority and influence, what the group is recently concerned with, and how to acquire something from them.



CONFUCIUS

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good
 rogue (mastermind) 6/cleric (knowledge) 4

Armor Class 15 (*bracers of defense, ring of protection*)

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +0, Dex +7, Con +1, Int +8,
 Wis +4, Cha +4

Skills Arcana +11, Deception +11, History +11,
 Insight +11, Investigation +11, Perception +11,
 Persuasion +11, Religion +11; thieves' tools +6

Senses passive Perception 21

Languages Chinese and any four other languages

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Channel Divinity (1/short rest). Confucius can channel his divine energy to fuel one of two magical effects.

Divine Knowledge. As an action, Confucius gains proficiency with one skill or tool he chooses. This proficiency lasts for 10 minutes.

Turn Undead. As an action, Confucius presents his holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead within 30 feet that can see or hear him must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. When an undead of CR 1/2 or lower fails its saving throw the creature is instantly destroyed. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Confucius as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of him. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Confucius can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Fast Learner. After Confucius has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, he can mimic its manner of speaking as long as he

knows the same language as the creature (allowing him to seem like he is local to a given region).

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Confucius deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Confucius that isn't incapacitated and Confucius doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactician. Confucius is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Confucius and is within 30 feet of him.

Spellcasting. Confucius is a 4th level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared from the cleric's spell list:

Cantrips: *guidance, light, mending, sacred flame*

1st-level (4 slots): *cure wounds, protection from evil and good, sanctuary, shield of faith; command, identify*

2nd-level (3 slots): *calm emotions, enhance ability, zone of truth; augury, suggestion.*

FEATS

Diplomatic. Confucius can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can understand what he says during 1 minute of talking. On a success, as long as Confucius remains within 60 feet of it (and for 1 minute afterward) the target is charmed by him. Confucius automatically fails on the check if he or his companions are fighting the target.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Confucius can see hits him with an attack, Confucius can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.



CTHULHU

The Great Old One known as Cthulhu is the source of anxiety for all mankind and waits dreaming in the underwater city of R'lyeh deep in the Pacific Ocean, waiting to rise once more and lay ruin to creation. Worshipped throughout history by dark cultists, Cthulhu is a massive, tentacled entity of immense power and malevolence. Hundreds of feet in height, it is roughly humanoid in shape, with an octopoid head, wicked claws, and scaly wings.

*"Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu
R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn"*

This immense being is descended from Yog-Sothoth, an omniscient cosmic deity of great power.

The entity lies sleeping, its dreams affecting all of humanity, but legends tell of the day it will awaken. Scholars write of an ancient war between cosmic good and evil, Great Old Ones and Elder Gods, ancient deities who reside in the distant depths of space. Cthulhu's supposed birthplace is Vhoorl, in the 23rd Nebula.

As a Great Old One, Cthulhu is a foe beyond the powers of mortal heroes. Woe to those who should find themselves in conflict with such a being. Even the greatest of mages fear to scry upon Cthulhu for fear of being driven mad—if they don't die of sheer terror first.

DESIGN NOTES

Lair actions seemed extraneous and killing Cthulhu while in R'lyeh is pretty much impossible so taking those out of the mix sort of displaces that eventually anyway. On one hand it's a little bit easier to hit and less beefy than a tarrasque, but on the other hand Cthulhu just straight up kills creatures that can't handle its Mind-Shattering Presence, and even if the party has a paladin handy they are still in for some unpleasantness on a failed save. Speaking of saves you may notice a few weaker save DCs that are bereft of an ability modifier in the equation; this is to make the monster survivable and something that might judiciously be used at someone's table for either a really, really epic fight or a descent into TPK madness.

CTHULHU

Gargantuan aberration (great old one), chaotic evil

Armor Class 24 (natural armor)

Hit Points 585 (30d20+270)

Speed 60 ft., fly 200 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	19 (+4)	28 (+9)	28 (+9)	30 (+10)	27 (+8)

Skills Arcana +18, History +18, Insight +19, Intimidation +17, Investigation +18, Nature +18, Perception +19, Religion +18

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, necrotic, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from magical or adamantite weapons

Damage Immunities cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons not made from adamantite

Condition Immunities charmed, diseased, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

Senses darkvision 200 ft., truesight, passive Perception 29

Languages Deep Speech; telepathy 300 ft.

Challenge 30 (155,000 XP)

Immortality. If Cthulhu is killed, its body immediately fades away into a noxious cloud of otherworldly vapor that fills an area out to its reach. This cloud blocks vision as *fog cloud*, but can't be dispersed by any amount of wind. Any creature in this area must succeed at a DC 27 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for as long as it remains in the cloud and for an additional 1d10 rounds after it leaves the area. Cthulhu returns to life after 2d6 rounds, manifesting from the cloud and restored to life via *resurrection*, but has 5 levels of exhaustion and cannot take both a move and action in the same turn. At the end of each of its turns, Cthulhu makes a DC 20 Constitution saving throw to reduce its exhaustion level by 1. If slain again while suffering from this effect, Cthulhu reverts to vapor form again and its essence fades away after 2d6 rounds, returning to its tomb in R'lyeh until it is released again.

Innate Spellcasting. Cthulhu's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 27; spell attack +19). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *freedom of movement*, *true seeing*

At will: *astral projection*, *control weather*, *dispel magic*, *dream*, *phantasmal killer*, *sending*, *suggestion*, *teleport*

3/day: *antipathy*, *feeblemind*, *gate*, *plane shift*, *weird*


1/day: *power word stun*, *symbol*, *wish*

Insanity. Any creature that attempts to interact directly with Cthulhu's thoughts (such as via *detect thoughts* or telepathy) must succeed at DC 27 Wisdom saving throw or gain an indefinite madness. When using its telepathy to communicate Cthulhu doesn't activate this feature unless it spends an action to focus its mind on one opponent.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Cthulhu fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Cthulhu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Nightmare Haunting. While on the Ethereal Plane or Material Plane, Cthulhu magically touches a sleeping humanoid on the Material Plane. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the target prevents this contact, as does a magic circle. As long as the contact persists, the target has dreadful visions. If these visions last for at least 1 minute, the target gains no benefit from its rest, and its hit point maximum is reduced by 7 (2d6). If this effect reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies and its soul travels to R'lyeh. The reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until removed by the *greater restoration* spell or similar magic. For every 5 minutes the visions last, the target gains a short-term madness. For every 10 minutes the visions last, the target gains a long-term madness.



Non-Euclidean. Cthulhu does not exist wholly in the physical world, and space and time strain against its presence. Its apparent and actual position are never quite the same, and creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against it. A creature with truesight does not have disadvantage but a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw is needed each time it looks at Cthulhu. On a failure, the creature gains a short-term madness. On a failure by 5 or more, the target also gains a long-term madness.

Regeneration. Cthulhu regains 30 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

Starflight. Cthulhu can survive in the void of outer space and flies through the cosmos at incredible speeds. The exact travel time varies from one trip to the next, but a trip within a solar system normally takes Cthulhu 2d6 hours, and a trip beyond normally takes 2d6 days (or more, at the GM's discretion).

Summon Alien. Cthulhu can use a bonus action to conjure any aberration of CR 12 or lower. The creature appears in an unoccupied space that Cthulhu can see within 100 feet. This feature otherwise functions as *conjure elemental* but does not require Cthulhu's concentration.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cthulhu can use its Mind-Shattering Presence. It then makes six attacks: two with its claws and four with its tentacles.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 40 ft., all targets in a 10-foot square (any creature in the area whose AC is equal to or less than the result is hit). *Hit:* 26 (4d8+8) slashing damage plus the target is grappled (escape DC 25).

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d8+8) bludgeoning damage plus the target is grappled (escape DC 25). A target that takes 20 or more damage makes a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw or gains a short-term madness. On a failure by 10 or more, the target gains a long-term madness instead.

Mind-Shattering Presence. Each creature of Cthulhu's choice within 300 feet of it and aware of it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or die from terror. A creature immune to fear that fails its saving throw is stunned 1d4 rounds instead of killed. On a success, a creature is immune to Cthulhu's Mind-Shattering presence for 1 minute.

Swallow. Cthulhu makes one tentacle attack against a Medium or smaller creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, that creature takes the tentacle's damage and is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside Cthulhu. At the start of each of Cthulhu's turns the swallowed creature takes 42 (12d6) necrotic damage and makes a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature gains one short-term madness. On a failure by 5 or more, the creature also gains a long-term madness, and on a failure by 10 or more the creature gains an indefinite madness as well.

If Cthulhu takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, Cthulhu must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of Cthulhu. If Cthulhu dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.





CÙ-SÌTH

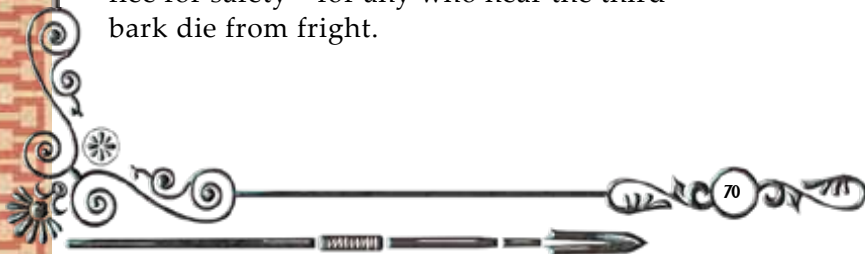
Humanity so often today personifies death as the Grim Reaper, but there are many other, similar legends. This subject brings our species' best friend into the mix to take on the job with the spectral dog known as the Cù-Sìth!

The Cù-Sìth is said to be as big a bull with paws the size of a human hand, shaggy dark green fur, and a long or otherwise strange tail. As mentioned above it's a harbinger of death and shows itself to people who are about to enter the afterlife.

Roaming the highlands and wild moors of Scotland, the Cù-Sìth can stalk as well as any hunter but is known to let out three terrifying barks able to be heard from miles away. Hearing one of these barks strikes terror and those who perceive it flee for safety—for any who hear the third bark die from fright.

DESIGN NOTES

What we have here is a very sneaky hunting ghost able to tear it up and take a beating while its more sinister ability—that howl that kills people—gradually mounts up to raise the tension of a fight. As usual here at the end: it's time to do the numbers. The DMG put the cù-sìth at a 6.5 and the Blog of Holding's rubric at a 7, but given the whole heart-seizing howls thing I'm inclined to go with the latter.



CÙ-SÌTH

Large fey, lawful neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (15d10+45)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int -1

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +9, Survival +8

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages —

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The cù-sìth can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. The cù-sìth can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Innate Spellcasting. The cù-sìth's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The cù-sìth can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *hunter's mark*, *misty step*

Keen Hearing and Smell. The cù-sìth has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Magic Resistance. The cù-sìth has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The cù-sìth attacks twice.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) magical piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Howl of Terror (Recharge 6). The cù-sìth lets loose with a howl that chills the very soul of mortals. All living creatures within 2 miles of the cù-sìth that are able to hear it make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or are frightened for 1 minute.

A frightened creature that fails its save becomes panicked instead. A panicked creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from the cù-sìth as it can. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

A panicked creature that fails its save makes an additional DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or it dies instantly.

As long as it is not able to see the cù-sìth, a frightened or panicked creature can use a bonus action on its turn to make a new saving throw, ending the effect on a success. Panicked creatures have disadvantage on this save.

Etherealness. The cù-sìth enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Invisibility. The cù-sìth magically turns invisible until it attacks or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).



DAEDALUS

In this entry we're circling back to Ancient Greece with one of history's most famous inventors—Daedalus!

Daedalus was an architect, a craftsman, and an artist. He built the famous Labyrinth on Crete in which was imprisoned the brutish Minotaur, and fabricated the wings that proved to be his son Icarus' downfall when the pair tried to escape from King Minos. I think we're all familiar with his larger achievements, but did you know he was credited with inventing carpentry and was murderously petty? Daedalus took on his nephew as an apprentice and after the lad invented the saw (and made two compasses) he was pushed off the Acropolis to a plummeting death!

BACKGROUND

Vizier. Daedalus is frequently made to take on apprentices, training them in the ways of the mechanical arts. His subordinates obey his commands and believe what he tells them (within reason).

DESIGN NOTES

There was a lot of "should I / shouldn't I" going on here and it took a bit to settle on his archetype and background. I wasn't feeling confident on the rogue class even until I finally figured on this premise: Daedalus is rolling 20s and has a generous GM. He doesn't really ever use magic, instead constructing things that are so sublime and perfectly-made that they move of their own accord—sounds like a classic case of "wow that's a high check! The god of _____ takes notice and _____." To that end I poured all the mechanical oomph I could into his carpentry and mason tool kits so at the very least he should be rolling a +10 on any given check with them. When he's not doing his thing (making stuff) he's savvy, has a crossbow (which is technically late-era Greece but as a master of the mechanical arts, not outside of the realm of possibility for him), and can figure some things out quickly but Daedalus is definitely not a combat-oriented character (outside of being good with pot shots).

DAEDALUS

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral good rogue (mastermind) 9

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 36 (8d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +9

Skills History +9, Insight +10, Investigation +13,
Perception +6, Religion +9, Stealth +6;
carpenter's tools +8, disguise kit +9,
forgery kit +9, dice set +6, mason's tools +12

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Greek and any two other languages

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Cunning Action (1/turn). Daedalus can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Evasion. When Daedalus is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Fast Learner. After Daedalus has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, he can mimic its manner of speaking as long as he knows the same language as the creature (allowing him to seem like he is local to a given region).

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Daedalus deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Daedalus that isn't incapacitated and Daedalus doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactician. Daedalus is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attack a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Daedalus and is within 30 feet of him.

Tactician's Insight. After Daedalus has observed or interacted with a creature for 1 minute, he learns whether or not it has higher or lower Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma scores than him. In addition, he learns if the target has more or fewer class levels than him. Daedalus also knows when he and the target have equal scores in one of these categories.

ACTIONS

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Daedalus can see hits him with an attack, Daedalus can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

WINGS OF ICARUS

(12 lbs., 850 gold).

These large wings of feathers and wax are attached to a leather harness, and though the design at first seems simple there is a remarkable beauty to its complex craftsmanship—there must be very few like it elsewhere in the world, if any at all. While you are wearing these wings, you can grasp at handles in the plumage and spend an action rapidly fluttering your arms to gain a fly speed of 30 feet until the start of

your next turn. You cannot wield weapons, hold a shield, or cast spells while grasping the handles. When you need to maneuver while using the wings to fly, you make either Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Dexterity (vehicle [air]) checks.

The wings have AC 13, 15 hit points, and vulnerability to fire damage. After 3d4 rounds of being exposed to direct sunlight and extreme heat at the same time, the wax holding the feathers together melts and the wings are destroyed.



DAVID

Remember that fellow so often shown using a sling to throw a stone into Goliath's eye, killing him despite his opponent's far greater size? Me too! Apparently there's much more to this character however, so let's dive into David.

There are few concrete facts known about this figure. It's generally agreed there was once a ruler named David but that's pretty much where all agreements about him stop. Shepherd, general, prophet, king—depending on who's asking and where, he's one or more or all of these things. For our purposes here we're going to stick with the biblical narrative (a young shepherd who slayed Goliath, the much greater champion of the Philistines) partly because we've already got a few ancient kings rolling around this book, and also because its far and away the most popularized representation of the character. That does not however mean that we should ignore the rest of his milieu, and it'd be remiss of me not to bring up David's place in various histories.

Christian: David kills Goliath, gains King Saul's favor, is spurned by the ruler, they die and he takes the throne, conquers Jerusalem and brings the Ark of the Covenant there, gets intimate with Bathsheba, and has her husband assassinated. As recompense God has David's son Absalom try to overthrow him, and he returns after said offspring has died to rule over the kingdom. During his reign he's said to have been a kind and just king, and just before dying he picks Solomon to take his place.

Judaic: This follows along similar lines as above, but here David goes about shepherding while his brothers go to school, and more importantly his transgressions with Bathsheba are decidedly less transgress-y (the narrative is more about

BACKGROUND

Entertainer. David is never without a stage or room to sing for entertainment whether in a queen's castle or a tavern. He receives free accommodations (including a room and meal) each night he performs and is recognized while going about a settlement where he's sung at least one evening (and is typically well-liked for his vocal talents).

DESIGN NOTES

As mentioned above we're going for the Sunday School cartoon version of David here – a rock-slinging fellow which any GM can make use of as a rote NPC marksman. With this information about chainmail however, I can't pass the opportunity to include it (and if you don't dig on that give him studded leather instead, or no armor and a shield—same AC either way, although no greatsword action for the latter option). For final touches he's got Sharpshooter and Lucky to really pound in that skill for aimed shots. Looking at the numbers he squeaked in above a 4 on the DMG's rubric and slightly under that on the Blog of Holding's, averaging out juuuuuuuuuust above the threshold for a final CR of 4.

repentance, and it may have not been adultery at all because of *get*, an old Jewish practice of conditional divorces declared on the eve of battle that shield a widow from becoming *agunah*, an abandoned woman forbidden from remarrying). This might actually be about being excessively self-conscious, in that David was specifically trying to test himself to have his name united with God's (like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

Islamic: This is where the prophet stuff comes in because David (aka داود or *Dāwūd*) was sent by God to guide the Israelites, gifted kingship, wisdom, and the *Psalms* (some wise books) from above when he slays Goliath to become the

divine's "*khalifa* (viceregent) on earth". These gifts of knowledge included how to work iron rather than just cast it and how to make chainmail—definitely an advantage against bronze weaponry and a means to great wealth. David's story holds true in the Islamic tradition as well. The *Bible* and *Torah* are also considered holy books in Islam, and though Bathsheba isn't elaborated on in the *Quran*, Muslim scholars might still hold the opinion that it happened based on those accounts. In addition, in this iteration he's more zealous and a faster, but still great with a tune.

All told, the veracity of his depiction is evident between the three faiths.

DAVID

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful good fighter (sharpshooter) 8

Armor Class 16 (chainmail)

Hit Points 52 (8d10+8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +4

Skills Acrobatics +7, Animal Handling +5, Insight +5,
Performance +4

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Hebrew

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, David can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Attentive Gaze. David can use a bonus action to take the Search action.

Excellent Aim (3/short rest). David can spend a bonus action to aim a wielded ranged weapon at a target within its range. Until the end of his turn, ranged attacks that David makes against the target deal an extra 5 damage.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, David can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+8 hit points.

FEATS

Fortune Points (3/long rest). David can spend one fortune point to reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, or to force an attacker to reroll an attack made against him.

Superb Aim. David ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and he doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When David makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. David attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 8 (2d6+1) slashing damage.

Sling. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d4+4) bludgeoning damage.



DON QUIXOTE

It's the beleaguered slayer of windmills, the man of La Mancha, the greatest knight errant (errant knight?) of Spain, Don Quixote!

The deluded protagonist of *The Ingenious Nobleman Sir Quixote of La Mancha* is an archetypal knight—just not the sort most warriors aspire to be. Actually named Alonso Quixano and a middle-aged *hidalgo* (a low nobleman who has no proper title, but owns some territory and is not required to pay taxes) in times of peace, too many romantic books have warped the mind of Don Quixote and he loses his sanity, deciding to become a knight rather than face the drudgery of lordly life. He recruits a farmer to be his squire (the erstwhile Sancho Panza) and sets off across Spain in search of adventure. Of the many characters given statblocks in this book, the man of La Mancha is far and away the most like one of my D&D characters and definitely a far cry from optimization.

Of course, Don Quixote is best known for mistaking a field of windmills for an army of giants, but he also went to war with a herd of sheep and thought a barber's washbasin was a legendary helmet. If you need a comedy NPC in your game, you could do far worse than this guy.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to his position as a noble, Don Quixote is treated with a measure of respect wherever he goes. He is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders (at least until it is clear he is quite mad), and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see him if requested to do so).

DON QUIXOTE

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good fighter (cavalier) 4

Armor Class 18 (breastplate, shield)

Hit Points 26 (4d10+4)

Speed 30 ft., (60 ft. mounted)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	9 (–1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +2, Con +3

Skills Animal Handling +1, History +4,
Performance +5, Persuasion +5, Survival +1

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Spanish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, Don Quixote can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Deluded. Don Quixote is thoroughly deluded, believing himself to be a knight from hundreds of years ago and in much better physical shape than he actually is. The complete breadth of his delusions is at the discretion of the GM but they can include seeing monsters where there are inanimate objects (such as a windmill appearing to be a giant) or mistaking a peasant for royalty.

Mark of Challenge (1/long rest). Don Quixote may choose to mark a creature when he hits it with a melee weapon attack. This

mark lasts until the end of Don Quixote's next turn, he dies, becomes incapacitated, or another creature marks the target. A marked creature has disadvantage on attack rolls targeting creatures other than Don Quixote while it is within 5 feet of him. In addition, Don Quixote can use a bonus action on his turn to make a melee weapon attack with advantage when a marked creature deals damage to someone other than him. On a hit, he deals 2 extra damage to the marked creature. Once Don Quixote has made this special mark and used it to hit a creature once, he cannot do so again until he finished a long rest.

Saddleborn. Don Quixote mounts or dismounts a creature with only 5 feet of his movement (not half his speed), has advantage when making a saving throw to avoid falling from his mount, and lands on his feet when he falls off his mount and falls less than 10 feet as long as he's not incapacitated.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Don Quixote can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+4 hit points.

FEATS

Charge. After Don Quixote uses his action to Dash, so long as he moves 10 feet or more in a straight line he can use a bonus action to immediately either shove a creature or make a single melee weapon attack. On a hit he either pushes the target up to 10 feet away from him or deals +5 extra damage.

ACTIONS

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12+2) piercing damage. This attack roll has disadvantage if the target is within 5 feet.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage or when wielded with two hands 5 (1d10) slashing damage.

SANCHO PANZA

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good rogue 2

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 13 (2d8+4)

Speed 30 ft., (40 ft. mounted)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +1

Skills Athletics +3, Deception +4, Insight +4, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Spanish, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action (1/turn). Sancho can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Sancho deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Sancho that isn't incapacitated and Sancho doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

BACKGROUND

Squire. Sancho is able to use his plight to access the bureaucratic functionalities of organizations that he encounters with Don Quixote. He is able to identify who has authority and influence, what the group is recently concerned with, and how to acquire something from them.





DORIAN GRAY

"A man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as easily as he can invent a pleasure. I don't want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them."

The above quote is the precarious proposition at the heart of the man, the portrait, the monster, Dorian Gray. The Victorian aristocrat Dorian Gray is the protagonist of Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* and if you're not familiar with the general idea, it's that his portrait ages and suffers injury instead of him.

This nobleman fell into some good fortune and moved to London, joining the upper crust of society and some unusual friendships. One such relationship was with Basil Hallward, an artist who created his best portrait ever because Dorian was such a marvelously handsome subject; another was Lord Henry, a narcissistic hedonist who convinced the newcomer that pleasure-seeking was the only way to live life.

Basil's painting of Gray was *so good* that Dorian wished he could remain as beautiful as it was rather than suffer the same fate of all beautiful things to wither and wane with age. The young man made a wish, so that the picture, rather than he himself, would age—and one day, after returning home from a play, realised that his wish had been granted: the picture was aging, while he, himself, remained unblemished. And, with that, he went on with a life of venality and debauchery, showing no effect for his sins.

Eventually Dorian became bored with what jolly old England had to offer and went traveling, journeying across the world to do all sorts of questionable and immoral things to entertain himself (after murdering the artist who painted his picture following a heated argument about the phenomenon). After a few decades this, too, lost its luster and he returned home.

Back in London, Dorian was stalked by a familiar young man. Dorian was convinced this fellow couldn't be the man he recognized—that was 18 years ago and how could he be so young! But that problem did not last long, for Gray's young stalker was shot while on a hunting trip.

Dorian turned over a new leaf, deciding to live righteously. He took the knife he used to kill Basil Hallward and stabbed into the supernatural portrait, destroying it, and killing himself in a final act of possible redemption. His servants found the body of a withered old man next to the portrait of a young Dorian Gray.

DESIGN NOTES

A worldly Victorian noble fellow with a portrait-based Rejuvenation trait—can do! A jacked up Jack-of-All-Trades trait for skills, a lot of feats to represent general combat mastery (without the devotion of a fighter or monk), and some Regeneration to keep him on his feet. Taking a look at the numbers, the DMG lands him at a 6 and the Blog of Holding at 6.8. With the movement control (via Mobility and Soldier Tactics) and the extremely high amount of hit points he gets back each round (which have been considered into those numbers) I think he's tougher than the book suggests. It's going to be a *steep* hill for some adventuring parties to take him out and if they don't figure it out quickly, they might burn the resources that need to be concentrated together to do the job and get forced into retreat. So I'm going with a 7.

DORIAN GRAY

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 85 (10d8+40)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +7

Skills Deception +11, Insight +8, Perception +8, Persuasion +11

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities disease, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Athletic. Dorian can stand up from being prone with only 5 feet of his movement, climbing doesn't cost him extra movement, and he only has to move 5 feet before making a running long jump or running high jump.

Diplomatic. Dorian can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can understand what he says during 1 minute of talking. On a success, as long as Dorian remains within 60 feet of it (and for 1 minute afterward) the target is charmed by him. Dorian automatically fails on the check if he or his companions are fighting the target.

Mobility. Dorian can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

Master of All. Dorian adds his proficiency bonus (+3) to any ability check he makes that doesn't already include his proficiency bonus.

Regeneration. Dorian regains 30 hit points at the start of his turn. He dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points.

Rejuvenation. While his treasured portrait remains intact, 1d4 hours after Dorian dies he regains all his hit points and becomes active again. Should the portrait ever be destroyed, Dorian immediately suffers decades of injuries and aging all at once, dying on the spot.

Soldier Tactics. A creature hit by Dorian's opportunity attack reduces its Speed to 0 until the beginning of the next round and disengaging from Dorian still provokes opportunity attacks. In addition, Dorian can use his reaction to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 5 feet when it makes an attack against a target other than Dorian.

Swordmaster. A sword deals one extra die of its damage when Dorian hits with it (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Dorian attacks three times.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

Revolver. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Master of the Sword. Dorian can use his reaction when wielding a sword to gain a +1 bonus to his AC until the start of his next turn or until he is disarmed. In addition, Dorian has advantage on opportunity attacks.

LIFE-CATCHING PORTRAIT

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This canvas, whether black or painted, radiates necromantic energies. Once you have attuned to it, you or another creature can make a DC 20 Dexterity (painter's tools) check to capture your likeness in a portrait on the canvas (AC 14, 20 hit points). On a success, the painting captures your soul.

While the *life-catching portrait* remains intact, the GM begins tracking how much damage you take and how much time has passed since the painting. Your image on the portrait shows what you would look like from all the injuries you've suffered and the passage of time. With a Dexterity (painter's tools) check (DC 20 + 3 per

previous check) some of the damage can be mitigated by touching up the painting, reducing the aging and damage your likeness has suffered by half.

Should the portrait ever be destroyed, you immediately suffer from all of the damage dealt to your likeness, and you age all at once. If this kills you, your soul is permanently destroyed.

You gain the following traits while your portrait is intact:

Regeneration. You regain hit points equal to half your level at the start of your turn. You die only if you start your turn with 0 hit points.

Rejuvenation. When you die, 1d4 hours later you regain all of your hit points and become active again.



DOUBAN

Meet the cunning and lethal sage Douban, another character from *1,001 Arabian Nights*! Douban's story is a simple one: he was a helpful sage and worker of medicine, an expert in plants and herbalism who cured King Yunan of leprosy. For this deed, he received honors and rewards.

However, a jealous vizier worked to convince the king that Douban was up to no good (planning the ruler's death) in an effort to have him renounced. Ultimately King Yunan fell for this deception and (ignoring pleas for mercy and the offer of an ancient book in exchange for staying the execution) had the poor sage beheaded.

After Douban perished the king took the book anyway and paged through the tome but, page after page, nothing was there—nothing except pages *made from poison*! Just before dying he realized his own death was punishment from Douban the sage for believing the jealous vizier's lies and killing the man who had saved his life.

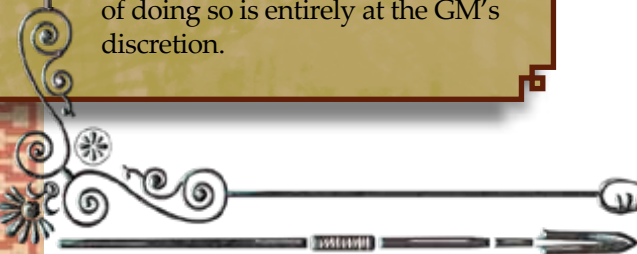
The legend says that the head of Douban spoke words just before the king fell dead, chastising the king for his tyranny and misuse of power.

BACKGROUND

Sage. Acumen or fate gently nudges Douban toward the answers to his questions. When he fails to recollect or discover more about a subject of lore, he knows where or whom can give him that information (usually from an athenaeum, library, institute of higher learning, another scholar, or mystical creature). The lengths to which he must go to acquire this information and the feasibility of doing so is entirely at the GM's discretion.

DESIGN NOTES

It would have been more appropriate to give Douban here the Linguist feat, but it's more useful for GMs I reckon if he's going full in on alchemy (although originally I had him down for Keen Mind). This is definitely going to be my go-to build for Old Man; that ancient sage hanging out in a cave waiting to hand the adventurers a sword telling them, "It's dangerous to go alone! Take this!" Note: this build uses the initial version of the artificer class, not the official version.



DOUBAN

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral inventor (alchemist) 5

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 23 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +3, Int +6

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Investigation +6,
Medicine +6, Nature +6; alchemist's supplies
+9, thieves' tools +6, tinkerer's tools +6

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Arabic, Greek, Persian

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Alchemists Formulas. Douban knows how to use his Inventor's Sack in order to fuel the following features:

- ◆ **Alchemist's Fire.** Douban uses an action to pull out a vial he throws at a target within 30 feet. All creatures and objects within a 5-foot radius of where it hits make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 fire damage.
- ◆ **Acid Flask.** Douban uses an action pull out a vial he throws at a target within 30 feet. All creatures within a 5-foot radius of where it hits make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 acid damage. Objects in the area take 18 acid damage.
- ◆ **Healing Tincture.** Douban uses an action to pull out a curative tincture. A creature that drinks it regains 3d8 hit points. A creature can only benefit from Healing Tincture once per long rest. The tincture vanishes after 1 hour or being drunk (whichever comes first). Douban can only have 1 healing tincture at a time.
- ◆ **Stepping Potion.** Douban uses a bonus action to pull out a potion of swiftens. A creature that drinks it gains a +20 ft. bonus to Speed for 1 minute. The potion vanishes after 1 minute or being drunk (whichever comes first). After using Stepping Potion, Douban cannot do so again for 1 minute.

Attuned. Douban can attune to up to 4 magic items at a time.

Enchanted Item Research. Douban knows *detect magic* and *identify*, and can cast them as rituals (in which case no material component is required).

Inventor's Sack. Douban has a bag filled with the reagents he needs to do alchemy but if he ever loses it, it takes him 3 days of working 8 hours each day as well as 100 gp of raw materials to replace it.

Magic Items. Douban has crafted and owns a *bag of holding* and *robe of useful items*.

Magic Inventions. Douban can cast an artificer spell with a casting of 1 action over the course of 1 minute instead, expending a spell slot and casting the spell into one mundane item that is not holding a spell. A creature with an Intelligence of 6 or higher that is holding the object can use an action to activate the spell inside (spell save DC 14 or spell attack +6) within 8 hours of Douban's casting. An area of effect spell targets the item holding it. Douban can have up to 3 Magical Inventions at one time.

Spellcasting. Douban is a 5th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). Douban knows the following spells prepared from the inventor's spell list:

1st-level: *cure wounds*, *detect magic*, *identify*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*.

FEATS

Alchemy. Douban can use an action to identify a potion within 5 feet (as if he tasted it) so long as he can see the liquid. In addition, over the course of a short rest he can use alchemists' supplies to improve a healing potion. If drunk before 1 hour has passed, the improved healing potion restores the maximum amount of hit points it can heal.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.



DRACULA

Often imitated, with countless versions and retellings this mythological figure has spawned variations which span literature and pop-culture. There are many vampires, but there is only one true Dracula!

The Count is well known for his journey from his castle in Transylvania to England, and his battle with the vampire hunter, Professor Abraham Van Helsing. After seducing and nearly killing the young solicitor, Jonathan Harker, during the latter's visit to Castle Dracula, the monstrous bloodsucker boarded the *Demeter*, a cargo ship, arriving in Whitby, England, the entire crew dead. He proceeded to stalk the young Lucy Westenra, visiting her during the night, slowly draining her until eventually the woman became a vampire herself, despite Van Helsing's attempts to protect her with garlic and other supernatural aids. Mina Murray, Jonathan's fiance, also succumbed to the dark lord's wiles.

DESIGN NOTES

What follows is more of a pop culture pastiche of the Lord of the Night with a big dose of turbo for fielding against high-level parties of adventurers. In addition to his robust list of traits Dracula can summon many, many creatures. His high mobility (flight with legendary actions to move) should be used in conjunction with conjured creatures to keep a party occupied—that way he can isolate and negate the dangers of the healer and/or the most potent spellcaster, quietly compromising them before renewing his assault. Moreover however he is a vampire antagonist with staying power. Any GM that introduces Dracula as the Big Bad Evil Guy of the campaign shouldn't fear his early death or destruction, instead indulging in excessive foreshadowing as the Master of the Night teases and frustrates anyone that dares rise against him. Kidnap beloved family members. Turn confidants into vampire spawn. Be big. Be bold. Be Dracula.

Van Helsing researched the vampire, and arranged a plot to fight back against Dracula—first by destroying all the boxes of soil that had been shipped to England on the *Demeter*, and then by pursuing the Count back to Transylvania for a final battle!

Of course, that's Bram Stoker's tale. The immortal Count has appeared in many other works over the last century, and his legend is far greater now than it ever was. Dracula is the master vampire, the template upon which many lesser creatures of the night are based. This bloodsucking fiend is ancient and powerful; many date him back to the warlord and occultist Vlad III, Prince of Wallachia, better known as Vlad the Impaler. Whether that myth is true is lost to the mists of history, but if it is, the creature of the night who stalked the streets of England no longer bears any resemblance to his mortal origins.



DRACULA

Medium undead (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 437 (46d8+230)

Speed 45 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	25 (+7)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	21 (+5)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Int +13, Wis +12, Cha +13

Skills Arcana +13, Deception +13, Insight +12, Intimidate +13, Perception +12, Persuasion +13, Stealth +14

Damage Resistances cold, fire, necrotic, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Aklo, English, French, German, Romanian, Russian, Turkish; telepathy 200 ft.

Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Dracula's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *comprehend languages, fog cloud, mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost, sleep*

5/day: *animate dead, detect thoughts, fireball, gust of wind, mirror image, nondetection*

3/day: *blight, greater invisibility, polymorph*

2/day: *animate objects, scrying*

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Dracula fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Life Stealer (5/day). By spending an action and bonus action, Dracula breathes inward, sucking away the life force of creatures within 40 feet of him. Creatures in the area of effect must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution save or take 21 (6d6) necrotic damage; half of this damage is granted to Dracula as temporary hit points. A successful saving throw reduces the necrotic damage by half. Damage dealt this way cannot be healed with the use of magic and is only restored when a

creature takes a short or long rest. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points from this trait die and rise the next evening as a vampire spawn under Dracula's control.

Master of Undeath. Dracula can use a bonus action to impose his will on an undead creature he can see. The creature succeeds on a DC 21 Charisma saving throw or falls under Dracula's control (as *dominate monster* but does not require Dracula's concentration).

Misty Escape. When he drops to 0 hit points outside his resting place, Dracula transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that he isn't in sunlight or running water. If Dracula can't transform, he is destroyed.

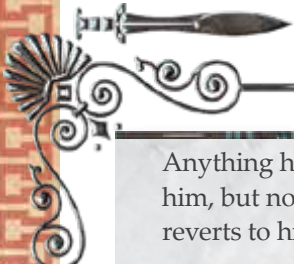
While he has 0 hit points in mist form, Dracula can't revert to his vampire form, and he must reach his resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in his resting place, he reverts to his vampire form. Dracula is then paralyzed until he regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in his resting place with 0 hit points, Dracula regains 1 hit point.

Overshadow the Sun. By spending 10 minutes performing a secretive ritual, Dracula draws cataclysmic energies from the Shadow Plane to create darkness in a 1-mile radius for up to 5 hours. This effect is treated as a spell of 9th level.

Regeneration. Dracula regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Dracula takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

Shapechanger. If Dracula isn't in sunlight or running water, he can use his action to polymorph into a Tiny bat, Medium wolf, or Medium cloud of mist, or back into his true form.

While in bat form, Dracula can't speak, his walking speed is 5 feet, and he has a flying speed of 30 feet. Dracula's statistics, other than his size and speed, are unchanged. While in wolf form, Dracula's statistics are unchanged.



Anything he is wearing transforms with him, but nothing he is carrying does. Dracula reverts to his true form if he dies.

While in mist form, Dracula can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. He is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and he can't pass through water. Dracula has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and he is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage he takes from sunlight.

Spider Climb. Dracula can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Unholy Strength. Dracula can enter a domicile uninvited when he succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. In addition, for the first minute of being staked, at the end of each round he makes a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, ignoring paralysis from the stake on a success.

Vampire Weaknesses. Dracula has the following flaws:

- ◆ **Forbiddance.** Dracula can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
- ◆ **Harmed by Running Water.** Dracula takes 10 acid damage if he ends his turn in running water.
- ◆ **Stake to the Heart.** If a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into Dracula's heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place, he is paralyzed until the stake is removed.
- ◆ **Sunlight Hypersensitivity.** Dracula takes 10 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Vampire Form Only). Dracula attacks once with his bite and three times with unarmed strikes.

Bite (Bat or Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature grappled by Dracula, incapacitated,

or restrained. *Hit:* 13 (1d6+5) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. Necrotic damage dealt this way cannot be healed with the use of magic and is only restored when a creature takes a short or long rest, and Dracula regains hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points from this effect die and rise the next evening as a vampire spawn under Dracula's control.

Unarmed Strike (Vampire Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) bludgeoning damage. Dracula can choose to grapple the target (escape DC 20) instead of dealing damage.

Charm. Dracula targets one humanoid he can see within 30 feet. If the target can see Dracula, the target must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by him. The charmed target regards Dracula as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under his control, it takes Dracula's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for his bite attack.

Each time Dracula or his companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Dracula is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of Darkness (3/day). Dracula summons 2d4 vampire spawn that appear after 1d4 rounds. These creatures disappear after 1 hour.

Children of the Night (3/day). Dracula magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or rats (swarm of bats, swarm of rats), provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, he can call 3d6 wolves or 2d4 dire wolves instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Dracula and obeying his spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Dracula dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

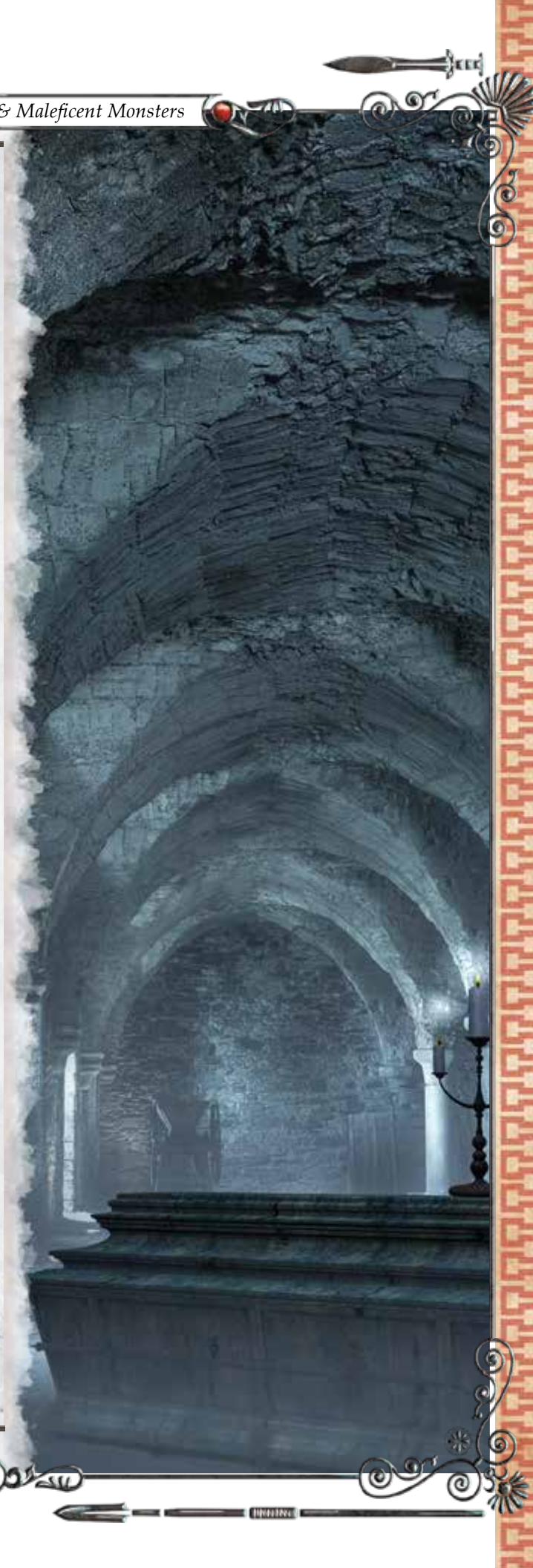
Dracula can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. He regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

- ◆ **Move.** Dracula moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.
- ◆ **Unarmed Strike.** Dracula makes one unarmed strike.
- ◆ **Bite (Costs 2 Actions).** Dracula makes one bite attack.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The areas around Dracula's lair are corrupted by his primordial evil, generating one (or more) of these effects.

- ◆ Areas within 20 miles of Dracula's lair are common with the whispers of spirits and the slinking of shadows, giving rise to tall tales of haunted manors, ghost ships, and unexplainable poltergeists.
- ◆ Fonts of blood appear in random locations throughout rivers and lakes in a 10-mile radius around Dracula's lair.
- ◆ Illumination is subdued by the oppressive evil suffused in a 3-mile radius of Dracula's lair, reducing the range of light sources by 5 feet (including torches, forever lanterns, the *light* cantrip, and similar effects).
- ◆ Maladies of the mind are more pervasive within 20 miles of Dracula's lair, doubling the duration of all forms of madness.
- ◆ Wounds fester as the vile energy suffusing areas within 10 miles of Dracula's lair, pulling at rent flesh, pressing on bruised muscles, and sucking at bleeding veins. When creatures within the area spend Hit Dice to heal, any dice that roll the highest possible number are treated as if a 1 was rolled instead (a barbarian spending Hit Dice treats a 12 as a 1, a fighter treats a 10 as a 1, and so on).





DROᅇA

In this *Mythological Figures* entry we're going after Drona, guru of princes and wielder of the world's first, greatest weapon!

Drona's name means "vessel made of leaf" because that's what he was born from! An overexcited sage saw a beautiful apsara (female spirit of the clouds and waters) in the Ganga River, catching his expulsion in a leaf that Dronacharya sprang out of.

Drona grew up poor but trained in the military arts, showing a talent for weaponry, and grew close to a local prince named Drupada. He married and had a son, Ashwatthama.

Drona heard that Parashurama, the sixth avatar of Vishnu, was giving his possessions away to priests but that unfortunately only weapons were left. Drona claimed those weapons along with the knowledge of their use, gaining the title of *ācārya*.

When Drona's childhood friend Prince Drupada became a king and wished for his son to know a better life, Drona tried to make good on a childhood promise. His former friend claimed that because they now had different statuses in life that the pledge was void, only agreeing to provide Drona some wealth if he asked as a priest instead—which he refused to do, walking away in silence and vowing revenge.

Drona started his own school to continue Parashurama's legacy, taking his family across northern India until he crossed paths with Kuru princes, who he helped out by solving some problems. They recognized Drona, asking him to become their guru. Before long they were joined by other royal progeny, and Drona became a teacher of princes.

A favorite pupil, Arjuna, emerged and impressed Drona, who taught him the mantras needed to invoke the supernatural weapons known as *Brahmāstra* with the promise they would not be used against ordinary warriors. Arjuna became a second son to Drona, and promised that one day he'd become the world's finest archer.

Ekalavya was a prince who Drona refused to teach archery because the boy's father was a general in the army of another empire. Despite that, Ekalavya trained hard and claimed he was taught by Drona, a lie that came to light when he shot a dog's mouth shut using arrows. When Drona found out he demanded the thumb on Ekalavya's right hand.

When Drona was done training all of the Kuru princes he told them to capture King Drupada, but they all failed until Drona's protégé Arjuna took over the task—and once captured, Drona took half of the kingdom to make him and his childhood friend equals. Obviously upset with this arrangement, Drupada performed a ritual of sacrifice to bear special offspring: Dhᅇᅇtādyumna, a son that would one day slay Drona, and Draupadī, a daughter that would marry Arjuna and see the Kuru fall.

BACKGROUND

Vizier. Drona is frequently made to take on apprentices, training them in the military arts. His subordinates obey his commands and believe what he tells them (within reason).

Notably, Droṇa held Asi: the sword of Lord Vishnu, a primordial weapon forged by the gods to destroy evil, and the personification and primary energy behind all weapons ever created. Just having it meant certain victory. That didn't help him in the end however, and on the 15th day of battle in the Kurukshetra War—after pretty much everyone mentioned above had been murdered or thought to

be dead—Droṇa lost the will to fight upon hearing that his son died and lay down on the battlefield to allow one of the Pandava princes to decapitate him.

DRONA

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral bard
(college of swords) 5/fighter (battlemaster) 11

Armor Class 15 (studded leather, fighting style)

Hit Points 115 (5d8+11d10+32)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Cha +8

Skills Athletics +13, History +6, Insight +11,
Perception +6, Religion +6; artisan's tools
(any two) +6, any one instrument +8

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Sanskrit

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Achilles can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Bardic Inspiration 1d8 (3/short rest). As a bonus action on his turn, Droṇa can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear him. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d8. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

◆ **Flourishing Blade (1/turn).** Droṇa's speed increases by 10 feet on any turn that he takes the Attack action. When he hits a creature with a weapon attack, he can choose one of the following.

◆ **Defend.** Droṇa spends a Bardic Inspiration die, dealing 1d8 extra damage. Until the start of his next turn, Droṇa's AC increases by the same amount as the extra damage.

◆ **Maneuver.** Droṇa spends a Bardic Inspiration die to deal 1d8 extra damage. The target is also pushed a number of feet away equal to 5 + the extra damage, at which point Droṇa can use his reaction to move up to 40 feet to a space within 5 feet of the target that is not occupied.

◆ **Slash.** Droṇa spends a Bardic Inspiration die to deal 1d8 extra damage and he deals the same amount of extra damage to another creature within 5 feet of him.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Droṇa can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Jack of All Trades. Droṇa adds +2 to any ability check he makes that doesn't already include his proficiency bonus.

Maneuver Master (5d10/short rest). Droṇa can expend a maneuver dice to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

◆ **Command.** Droṇa uses his bonus action to forgo one of his attacks and direct a friendly creature who can see or hear him. The creature uses its reaction and makes a weapon attack, dealing 1d10 additional weapon damage on a successful hit.

◆ **Disarm.** A creature Droṇa has hit with an attack takes 1d10 additional damage and makes a DC 16 Strength saving throw or drops one held item of his choice.

◆ **Feint.** Droṇa can use his bonus action to feint against one creature within 5 feet. He has advantage on his next attack roll against that creature as long as it before the end of his turn. On a hit he deals 1d10 additional damage.

◆ *Sweep.* Droṇa chooses a creature adjacent to him target and within his reach and on a hit, the adjacent creature takes 1d10 damage (of the same type as the weapon attack).

◆ *Trip.* Droṇa deals 1d10 additional damage and if the target is a creature of Large size or smaller, it makes a DC 16 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Droṇa can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+11 hit points.

Song of Rest. After a short rest, Droṇa or any friendly creatures who can hear his performance regain hit points by spending one or more Hit Dice, each of those creatures regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

Spellcasting. Droṇa is a 5th-level spellcaster

that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability for spells (spell save DC 16; +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list and can use a bladed weapon as his spellcasting focus:

Cantrips: *message, true strike, vicious mockery*

1st-level (4 slots): *bane, healing word, longstrider, thunderwave*

2nd-level (3 slots): *enhance ability, zone of truth*

3rd-level (2 slots): *bestow curse, fear*

FEATS

Mobility. Droṇa can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke

ASI

This weapon is the energy behind all of the weapons in creation concentrated into one powerful sharp-edged sword that glows with fire.

ASI

Weapon (longsword), legendary (requires attunement)

This magic, sentient longsword grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. Once you have attuned to the weapon, while wielding it you gain the following features:

- ◆ Weapon attacks using the sword score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.
- ◆ The first time you attack with the sword on each of your turns, you can transfer some or all of the sword's bonus to your Armor Class, instead of using the bonus on any attacks that turn. For example, you could reduce the bonus to your attack and damage rolls to +1 and gain a +2 bonus to AC. The adjusted bonuses remain in effect until the start of your next turn, although you must hold the sword to gain a bonus to AC from it.



- ◆ You can use a bonus action to speak this sword's command word, causing flames to erupt from the blade. These flames shed bright light in a 60-foot radius and dim light for an additional 60 feet. While the sword is ablaze, it deals an extra 2d8 fire damage to any target it hits. The flames last until you use a bonus action to speak the command word again or until you drop or sheathe the sword.
- ◆ You can use a bonus action to toss this sword into the air and speak a different command word. When you do so, the sword begins to hover and the consciousness inside of it awakens, transforming it into a creature. The creature is friendly to you and your companions, and it acts on your turn. You can use a bonus action to command how the creature moves and what action it takes on its next turn, or to give it general orders, such as to attack your enemies. In the absence of such orders, the creature acts in a fashion appropriate to its nature. You can transform the sword into a creature for up to 10 minutes, all at once or in several shorter increments, each one using a minimum of 1 minute from the

opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

Soldier Tactics. A creature hit by Droṇa's opportunity attack reduces its Speed to 0 until the beginning of the next round and disengaging from Droṇa still provokes opportunity attacks. In addition, Droṇa can use his reaction to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 5 feet when it makes an attack against a target other than Droṇa.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Droṇa attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Asi (Defender Longsword). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8+8)

magical slashing damage or 11 (1d10+6) magical slashing damage if wielded in two hands. The first time Droṇa attacks with the sword on each of his turns, he can transfer some or all of the sword's bonus to his Armor Class, instead of using the bonus on any attacks that turn. The adjusted bonuses remain in effect until the start of Droṇa's next turn, although he must hold the sword to gain a bonus to AC from it.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) slashing damage or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

duration. The sword regains 5 minutes of transforming capability for every 12 hours that feature is not in use.

When you act in a way that *Asi* finds contemptible (performing deeds that conflict with effecting the destruction of the enemies of the gods and restoring the Dharma), the sword acts under its own free will unless you succeed on an opposed Charisma check at the end of each minute.

Sentience. *Asi* is a sentient lawful good weapon with Intelligence 16, Wisdom 16, and Charisma 16. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. The weapon communicates telepathically with you and can speak, read, and understand Sanskrit and Tamil.

Personality. The sword's purpose is to effect the destruction of the enemies of the gods and restoring the Dharma. It is single-minded in its purpose and highly motivated, but not unreasonable or averse to compromising its interests for a short time while in the pursuit of the greater good.

Destroying the Sword. The sword can never be permanently destroyed. When reduced to 0 hit points, *Asi* fades into the Ethereal Plane, reappearing in a location of its choosing 1d4 weeks later.

ASI

Small construct, lawful good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 102 (12d6+60)

Speed fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +6, Cha +6

Skills Insight +6, Perception +6

Damage Resistances cold, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities fire, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Sanskrit, Tamil; telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Immutable Form. The sword is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The sword has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sword attacks twice with its blade.

Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) magical slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage.



EASTER BUNNY

The Easter Bunny is a mythological figure known to many a child. Every year, a rabbit travels around the globe delivering Easter eggs to lucky kids.

Originally the Easter Bunny judged children, gifting them with eggs depending on whether they'd been good or bad in a fashion not dissimilar to Santa Claus. The bunny carries a basket of chocolate eggs, and sneaks into the homes of deserving recipients during the night.

In medieval Europe, eating eggs was not allowed during Lent. Just before Lent began, children would go door-to-door begging for eggs. Then, when Lent was over, the eggs were decorated as part of the Easter celebration. The connection between eggs and Easter continued with German Lutherans, and evolved through the Eastern Orthodox Church (who still dye their Easter eggs red), and then spread to the United States in the 18th century, where the Pennsylvania Dutch told tales of the 'Osterhase' — the Easter Hare!

There are other theories about the bunny's origins, of course. Eostre, the Saxon goddess of fertility, had a hare as her companion.

Whatever this magical beast's origins, one thing is known for sure: every year the Easter Bunny delivers brightly-colored Easter eggs to every good child, wherever they are. Stealthy and quick, legends may vary as to the bunny's exact nature (the Swiss attribute the gifts to a cuckoo, and other parts of Europe believe it to be a fox) but, like Santa, there's no keeping the Easter Bunny from its vital task!

DESIGN NOTES

The Easter Bunny—quick enough to get into a home, drop off a dyed egg or two, then sprint back out before anyone is the wiser. To that end we've got a very quick creature able to run circles around most foes, using that quickness to achieve some speedster-inspired traits that should make for some interesting encounters (provided that it flees an initial fight and nobody is quite fast enough to give chase). Taking a look at the numbers, the DMG lands on 12.41666 and the Blog of Holding rubric at 12.5.

EASTER BUNNY

Small humanoid, neutral good

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 170 (20d6+100)

Speed 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Perception +6, Stealth +10

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Bag of Holding. The Easter Bunny carries a *bag of holding* filled with candy, chocolate, toys, and brightly decorated eggs.

Climbing Run. On its turn while it is moving, the Easter Bunny has a climb speed equal to its normal speed.

Dashing Dodge. When the Easter Bunny takes the Dash action, creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against it until the start of its next turn.

Evasion. If the Easter Bunny is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the Easter Bunny instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Fast Feet. The Easter Bunny ignores difficult terrain.

Fast Fighting. The Easter Bunny uses Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of its unarmed strikes and any weapon that does not have the Heavy property. In addition, it can roll 2d10 in place of the normal damage of any non-Heavy melee weapon it is wielding.

Igniting Throw. The Easter Bunny can throw objects so quickly that they catch flame, dealing 9 (2d8) extra fire damage (included below).

Knock Knock. No door or lock can bar the Easter Bunny's way. It can cast *knock* at will. This trait otherwise works like the spell, but the Easter Bunny can use a bonus action to cast, and no loud knock emanates from the object.

Naughty or Nice. At the start of its turn, the Easter Bunny can open up its senses to peer into the souls of those around it. Until the end of its next turn, the Easter Bunny knows the alignment of any humanoid within 60 feet of it that is not behind total cover, but not the identities of these humanoids.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Easter Bunny attacks five times.

Fast Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10+6) bludgeoning damage. A target that takes 10 or more damage falls prone if it does not make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw.

Thrown Object. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d4+6) damage determined by object type plus 9 (2d8) fire damage.

REACTIONS

Fast Kick. When moving away from a prone creature the Easter Bunny can make a Fast Strike attack.

Fast Reactions. The Easter Bunny can take 3 reactions each round, but never the same reaction twice in the same round.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker the Easter Bunny can see hits it with an attack, it can use its reaction to halve the attack's damage against it.





ELIZABETH BÁTORY

This lady is one of the most notorious serial killers in history. All told between 80 to 650 people—all of them young girls, mostly servants—are counted among the victims, and it took authorities decades to act on the murderous scourge. We're talking about the Blood Countess: Elizabeth Báthory!

Strap in for the ride, everybody. We're talking about a woman who would beat, burn, bite, starve, and freeze her victims to death and bathe in their blood!

Born in Hungary into one of the most powerful families in Europe, Elizabeth was well-educated and spoke German, Greek, Hungarian, Latin, and Slovak. She married Ferenc Nádasdy (feared across the Ottoman Empire as the 'Black Knight of Hungary') when she was 14—though not without having an affair with a peasant boy and giving the offspring away. When Nádasdy found out, he castrated the peasant and threw the child to the wolves. Ferenc Nádasdy got rich from war and they bonded over their mutual sadism, and also the 5 children they had together; but in 1601 Ferenc fell ill, losing the use of his legs, and died 3 years later.

At this point, servant girls started disappearing! Local clergy began getting suspicious. Elizabeth went right off of the rails, and when replacing murdered servants became a bother she started

luring girls in from the countryside. Elizabeth purportedly didn't do that much actual torturing with her own hands and instead left it to her sycophants. First they'd wait for a servant to make a mistake, then start battering the poor girl before gruesome violence took place—stabbing with sewing needles, cutting off fingers with knives, forcing them into cannibalism, tearing things away or out with pincers, and the like.

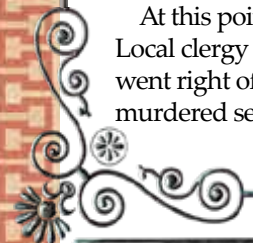
By 1609 there were rumors about what Elizabeth Bathory was up to spreading everywhere. With debts increasing, and all of her children married off she opened a finishing school for young noble women.

If she wasn't definitely insane yet, this is obviously where she went all the way nuts: if aristocrats were willing to pay for their children to attend her school, why would they suddenly not care when said children disappeared? They appealed to King Matthias II to investigate and he sent György Thurzó (the Palatine of Hungary) to figure out what was going on. They overheard Elizabeth and an accomplice making incantations, and then found the mutilated bodies of several girls.

Within a year all of Elizabeth's accomplices went to trial and several were executed. Elizabeth however received no trial, and was placed in solitary confinement until she passed away in 1614. She was then placed in a public cemetery before being exhumed not long after and taken to the Bathory family crypt—yet when it was opened in 1995, her corpse was missing.

DESIGN NOTES

Elizabeth Báthory was without doubt someone who delighted at inciting fear and inflicting pain upon others. With that in mind I decided she's definitely got a lot of bard going on (the College of Whispers is all about fear so a fine fit) and then was a keen manipulator so her build is finished out with some rogue (Mastermind) levels. As far as serial killers go, I think she's not bad at it (although for a more traditional compulsive murderer, I recommend swapping Arcana or Performance out for Athletics and Stealth). Time to do the numbers! The DMG rubric and Blog of Holding were almost in perfect agreement on this one—the former came in at 7.2, the later at 7.33.



ELIZABETH BÁTHORY

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil rogue
(mastermind) 5/bard (college of whispers) 5

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +6

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +13, History +6, Insight +7, Intimidation +13, Performance +9, Persuasion +13; harpsichord +9, thieves' tools +7

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages German, Greek, Hungarian, Latin, Slovak

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Bardic Inspiration 1d8 (5/short rest). As a bonus action on her turn, Elizabeth can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d8. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Elizabeth can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Fast Learner. After Elizabeth has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, she can mimic its manner of speaking as long as she knows the same language as the creature (allowing her to seem like she is local to a given region).

Jack of All Trades. Elizabeth adds +2 to any ability check she makes that doesn't already include her proficiency bonus.

Psionic Strike (1/turn). Elizabeth expends one use of Bardic Inspiration when she hits a creature with a melee weapon attack to deal an extra 10 (3d6) psychic damage to her target.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Elizabeth deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Elizabeth that isn't incapacitated and Elizabeth doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Spellcasting. Elizabeth is a 5th level spellcaster that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17; +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list:

Cantrips: *message, prestidigitation, vicious mockery*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, charm person, sleep, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, enthrall, suggestion*

3rd level (2 slots): *bestow curse, fear*

Song of Rest. After a short rest, if Elizabeth or any friendly creatures who can hear her performance regain hit points by spending one or more Hit Dice, each of those creatures regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

Tactician. Elizabeth is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Elizabeth and is within 30 feet of her.

Terrifying (1/short rest). Elizabeth can horrify a creature that can understand what she says during 1 minute of talking, forcing it to make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, for the next hour the creature is frightened of Elizabeth or a creature of her choosing. The effect ends if the creature is attacked, damaged, or witnesses an ally be attacked or damaged. On a successful save, the target doesn't recognize Elizabeth's attempt to frighten it.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to her position as royalty, Elizabeth is treated with a measure of respect wherever she goes. She is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see her if requested to do so).

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:*

+7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Elizabeth can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.



FAFNIR

Fatricide, patricide, and cursed gold? Dwarf turned dragon!? Inspiration for Smaug? I'm sure you know that we're talking about that envious stout-folk-turned-serpent Fafnir!

Odin, Loki, and their companion Hœnir were hanging out and noticed this unusual otter, but it was not actually a fuzzy little animal—it was Ótr, a dwarf who could shapeshift to take the form of an otter. Loki stoned the otter to death and they skinned it, showing it off soon after to the dwarf Hreidmar—who unfortunately happened to be Ótr's father. He was *not* happy about it, and together with his two not-dead sons Fafnir and Regin he captured the trio.

In order to set them free, he demanded that the otter skin be filled with gold, and Loki promised to do so. The trickster grabbed up gold and a magic ring, *Andvaranaut*, cursed by Andvari with the promise that whoever possessed them was doomed to an early death.

Fafnir was fearless and strong of arm but extremely greedy, so he killed his father to take all the accursed gold for himself then wandered into the wilds with his ill-gotten gains—where he turned into a dragon to protect it, poisoning everything around him to keep people away.

His brother Regin was greedy too and sent his foster-son Sigurd to kill the dragon, giving him a plan to do it: dig pits along a route Fafnir usually travels, hide and then strike from there. Odin stopped by and offered some additional advice, and when Fafnir finally appeared the warrior landed a critical hit on the dragon's shoulder. As Fafnir lay dying he figured out his brother was to blame for his death, and predicted that Sigurd would suffer a similarly early fate. Sigurd didn't much care—everybody dies some day, so why not die rich?

DESIGN NOTES

Slithering poisonous dragon coming right up! I tried to do a catchall with his traits (because surprise surprise there's more than one version of Fafnir) and have included bits to fit with the *Der Ring des Nibelungen* operas by Wagner. So I've put together a positively toxic serpent here, one without wings that should still make for a compelling fight (with Spew Poison giving it some battlefield control). Definitely going to be using this in a game soon. With that, let's do the numbers. The DMG lands Fafnir here at 11.33, but the Blog of Holding rubric goes further and hits right onto 13—so I averaged it out at 12.

FAFNIR

Huge dragon, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 168 (16d12+64)

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +8, Wis +5, Cha +6

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +9, Stealth +9, Survival +5

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Draconic, Dwarvish

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The dragon's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. The dragon can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *speak with animals* (birds only)

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Mythical Creature. All of the dragon's attacks are magical and it has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Scorching Blood. Whenever a creature damages the dragon with a melee weapon attack and it is using a weapon that does not have reach, the creature takes 3 (1d6) fire damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon can use its frightful presence. It then makes four attacks: one bite, two claws, and one tail slap attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) slashing damage.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet and aware of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's frightful presence for the next 24 hours.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 4–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Fire Breath. The dragon exhales fire in 90-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (14d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Poison Breath. The dragon exhales venomous mist in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that cone must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. When a creature has taken 40 poison damage from this attack, it is poisoned until the damage is healed.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- ◆ **Magic Detection.** The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check. This check is made as if the dragon had cast *detect magic*, though it does not require an action to see magical auras.
- ◆ **Tail Attack.** The dragon makes a tail slap attack.
- ◆ **Spew Poison (Costs 2 Actions).** The dragon coughs up a wave of caustic and toxic mucus in a 30-foot cone. All vegetation in the area immediately dies. In addition, for the next minute it becomes difficult terrain and any creature that ends its turn in the area takes 3 (1d6) acid damage and 3 (1d6) poison damage.



DESIGN NOTES

Take a seat Tarrasque! This epic wolf is an epic engine of destruction that will smash through most adventuring parties and could even give the Lord of Hell pause. Although not as intelligent or quite as likable as his father, Fenrir has hit points for days and is capable of dishing out epic amounts of damage every turn with a bite that's almost never going to miss and a stomach that is practically impossible to escape from without magic—hopefully adventurers fighting the world wolf are ready to do battle from inside of its tummy. Let's do the numbers! The DMG came in higher on Fenrir with 34.6, the Blog of Holding a touch lower at 33.2, and we end up with an average of 33.7 (which we'll round down to a flat CR 33).

FENRIR

This entry is for the world's most ferocious and deadly wolf, a colossal beast feared by the very gods themselves, a creature destined to consume Odin when Ragnarok finally comes. I am referring of course to Fenrir! This is the son of Loki and father of fellow wolves Sköll and Hati, raised in Asgard and fed only by Tyr, for the other gods lacked bravery enough for the task.

Eventually Fenrir grew too big for Asgard, and rather than let him run amok across the world tree, the Asgardians tricked the great wolf into being bound by increasingly heavier chains, encouraging and applauding his strength as he broke them all. When they realized that they had no metal links able to hold him they beseeched the dwarves of Svartálfaheimr to form a chain of unsurpassed strength. This chain was light and supple, however, making Fenrir suspicious of trickery.

When the gods went to bind the mighty wolf in the new chain, Fenrir agreed only so long as one of them put their hand into his mouth as a show of trust—once again only Tyr had the mettle for it, and after Fenrir failed to break out of the dwarven bindings Tyr lost that hand. Bound and unable to resist, the gods tied the colossal beast to a giant boulder in the middle of nowhere and jammed a sword into his mouth to keep it open, forcing Fenrir to drool so much that he formed a lake while waiting for Ragnarok—when he broke free once more and consumed Odin.

FENRIR

Gargantuan beast, neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 499 (30d20+240)

Speed 70 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
35 (+12)	20 (+5)	27 (+8)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +25, Stealth +15, Survival +25

Damage Resistances cold, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from magical weapons

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses passive Perception 40

Languages Old Norse

Challenge 33 (215,000 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Fenrir has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Fenrir fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Fenrir has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Fenrir's weapon attacks are magical.

Pack Tactics. Fenrir has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Regeneration. Fenrir regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

Siege Monster. Fenrir deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Fenrir can use his Frightful Presence. He then attacks twice with his bite and once with his massive paw. He can use his Swallow instead of his bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 51 (6d12+12) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 28). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained.

Massive Paw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d8+12)

bludgeoning damage and the target makes a DC 28 Strength saving throw. On a failure, it is pushed 30 feet away or knocked prone (Fenrir's choice).

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Fenrir's choice within 120 feet of him and aware of him must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if Fenrir is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Fenrir's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Swallow. Fenrir makes one bite attack against a Huge or smaller creature he is grappling. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside Fenrir, and it takes 54 (12d8) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of Fenrir's turns.

If Fenrir takes 50 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, he must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of Fenrir. If Fenrir dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Fenrir can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Fenrir regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

- ◆ **Move.** Fenrir moves up to half his speed.
- ◆ **Spit.** Fenrir regurgitates one swallowed creature. The creature exits prone in a square 30 feet away from Fenrir, taking 13 (3d8) bludgeoning damage.
- ◆ **Chomp (Costs 2 Actions).** Fenrir makes one bite attack or uses Swallow.
- ◆ **Destructive Roll (Costs 2 Actions).** Fenrir flings himself at the ground and rolls, crushing everything in an area 30 feet by 30 feet. Each creature in the area must make a DC 28 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 52 (8d12) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

We're going for one of the—if not *the*—most iconic creatures in all of literature, one who simply cannot stay dead and very frequently is misnamed. Did you guess Frankenstein? You're the target of a hundred internet memes but you're close: we're talking about Frankenstein's Monster!

If you don't know the story of Mary Shelley's famous novel yet, Dr. Victor Frankenstein collects dead body parts, splices them together, and then runs electricity through the stitched together corpse to scientifically bring life to that which was once no more than dead flesh!

"I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel!"

Frankenstein was successful in his endeavor, and built an eight-foot tall being he dubbed the Creature. The monster was hideous, Frankenstein was repulsed, and the Creature escaped! Alone in the wild, the Creature scavenged for survival and secretly helped out a poor family by collecting firewood for them. In the meantime, he learned to speak by listening in on them. When he finally got the courage up to approach the family, the blind father was accepting, but the rest of them were terrified of his appearance and fled.

The Creature was badly affected by this experience. He travelled to Frankenstein's home, murdered one of his brothers (and framed the nanny for it!) and demanded that Frankenstein build him a companion. Frankenstein started work, but fearing that his new creation would be evil, did not go through with it. Things happened—including the monster strangling Frankenstein's bride to death—and the scientist armed himself to fight the Creature, pursuing him to the North Pole, where Frankenstein died of hypothermia.

The Creature mourned his creator, and then drifted away into the darkness on a raft, never to be seen again.

BACKGROUND

Far Traveler. The monster's way of speaking, nonverbal communication, aphorisms, and what it looks like mark it as fundamentally different. Everyone's eyes are on it. While not always useful, it does sometimes make it possible to set up a meeting or otherwise gain the attention of people it wants to meet (like nobles, sages, traders, and the like).

FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER

Medium humanoid (human), neutral occultist
(abomination) 14/barbarian 1

Armor Class 14 (Constitution, toughened hide)

Hit Points 129 (14d8+1d12+60)

Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +9, Int +5, Wis +8, Cha +4

Skills Athletics +10, Insight +8, Perception +8,
Survival +5; ceremonial relics +8

Damage Vulnerabilities acid

Damage Resistances poison; bludgeoning, slashing

Damage Immunities lightning

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened,
poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft. (sees through magical
darkness), passive Perception 18

Languages English, French

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Abominable Nature. The monster has resistance to poison damage and immunity to the poisoned condition. It does not need to breathe, eat food, or drink water, though it still requires periods of rest similar to sleep. The monster has disadvantage on Charisma ability checks made against humanoids due to its strange appearance.

Dark Strike. The monster can roll a d10 for his unarmed strikes. When it uses the Attack action with an unarmed strike on its turn, it can choose to deal necrotic damage by spending a bonus action. The monster can use Constitution for the attack and damage rolls of its unarmed strike when dealing necrotic damage.

Devotee of Darkness. The monster has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks and Wisdom (Perception) checks made in darkness or dim light.

Otherworldly Brute. The monster has advantage on attack rolls made against objects and deals double damage when using Strength to damage an object.

Rage (2/long rest). On its turn, the monster can enter a rage as a bonus action. Its rage lasts for 1 minute, ending early if it is knocked unconscious or if its turn ends and it hasn't either attacked a hostile creature since its last turn or taken damage since then. The monster can also end its rage on its turn as a bonus action. While raging, it gains the following benefits.

- ◆ The monster has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- ◆ When the monster makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, it deals 2 extra damage.
- ◆ The monster has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Toughened Hide. The monster has a +1 bonus to AC (included in its statistics) and resistance to bludgeoning and slashing damage.

Unnatural Threshold. The monster ignores 5 damage whenever it is hit with an attack that deals piercing damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. The monster attacks three times when it takes the Attack action.

Dark Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 10 (1d10+5) bludgeoning damage.

DESIGN NOTES

Frankenstein's monster was the inspiration for the occultist class' Abomination archetype so figuring out how to stat it up was a simple task! I was a wee bit sad about level-dipping into barbarian for Unarmored Defense, but it wasn't known for wearing solid armor so that was an important sacrifice to make

to keep the creature viable (and he kinda rages, right?) For anyone upset about the vulnerability to acid, you can drop it and reduce immunity to lightning to resistance instead (totally doable via the class feature RAW). With that in mind let's take a look at the numbers: the DMG landed it at 9.25 and the Blog of Holding's rubric at 10 so we're averaged out at CR 9.



GENGHIS KHAN

It's time to consider one of history's most wide-reaching rulers, the founder of the Mongol Empire and brilliant tactician, Genghis Khan!

Born as Temüjin ("blacksmith") Khan, he was renamed Genghis Khan after founding the Mongol Empire which became the largest contiguous empire in history after his death at 65. When he died his children broke the Mongol Empire into smaller Khanates that they expanded across the world using similar bloody tactics. The Mongol Empire was said to be one of the most diverse empires in history, encompassing many cultures.

Genghis Khan was known for his brutality, and the word 'genocide' is often used in conjunction with his campaigns. By the early 1200s he was the sole ruler of the Mongol plains, uniting nomadic tribes in northeast Asia. He launched Mongol invasions that conquered most of Eurasia, often slaughtering the civilian populations.

The tactics which allowed Genghis Khan to conquer Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, were based on the Mongols' nomadic lifestyle. Horseback archery and siege warfare were specialties, although heavily armed lancers were a significant part of the Mongol forces, with a flexible command structure. Each soldier looked after three or four horses, which they could switch out quickly to maintain high speeds.

Among the many things he did, he decreed the adoption of the Uyghur script as the Mongol Empire's writing system, practiced meritocracy and encouraged religious tolerance in the Mongol Empire, and brought the Silk Road under one cohesive political environment, easing communication and trade between Northeast Asia, Muslim Southwest Asia, and Christian Europe.

Genghis Khan's life started off rough and wild. His father was poisoned by a rival tribe in his youth and after some impetuosity his family was cast out to fend for their own. He proved to be a canny warrior able to escape capture and win difficult battles, and in 1186 became leader of the Mongols. The rise to further power was fraught with betrayals and conspiracies, whether by his family or close friends. Throughout his life however, Genghis Khan displayed a mastery of military strategy, was extremely intelligent, wasn't afraid to incorporate new ideas or technology into his armies, and while capable of mercy was ultimately a ruthless fellow.



BACKGROUND

Soldier. Genghis Khan commands respect in the army. Soldiers loyal to the Khan know he is their superior, and he can use his influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, or gain entrance to military fortresses and outposts.

DESIGN NOTES

Horsework was extremely important in the Mongolian warrior culture (each soldier typically kept 3-4 horses), and for a while his family literally survived off of what they could hunt and gather so we're kicking it off with ranger. Speaking of soldiers, we're going to clad him in lamellar (scale mail) and give him a scimitar, lance, and longbow. Archery skill and mobility were important as well so he's got feats to represent that, plus to represent his position as a commander a bunch of fighter levels (using the 'warlord' archetype). Since he spent plenty of time ruling over others the build finishes up with rogue ('mastermind' archetype), making him a fine negotiator.

GENGHIS KHAN

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful neutral ranger (beastmaster)
3/fighter (warlord) 12/rogue (mastermind) 5

Armor Class 17 (scale mail, fighting style;
19 with shield)

Hit Points 164 (3d10+12d10+5d8+60)

Speed 40 ft. (mounted 60 ft.)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Dex +8

Skills Animal Handling +6, Deception +8, History +8,
Insight +12, Investigation +8, Persuasion +14

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Middle Mongolian

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Genghis Khan can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Animal Companion (Riding Horse). Genghis Khan's horse increases its AC, saving throws, attack bonuses, and damage rolls by +6. Telling the beast where to move does not require any action from Genghis Khan, but he can otherwise use an action to make the horse take either the Attack (in which case Genghis Khan makes an attack of his own), Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help action. While traveling through grasslands while only with his horse, they move stealthily at a normal pace.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Genghis Khan can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Fast Learner. After Genghis Khan has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, he can mimic its manner of speaking as long as he knows the same language as the creature (allowing him to seem like he is local to a given region).

Favored Enemy. Genghis Khan has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track humans, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Genghis Khan can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Ranger Features. Genghis Khan has the Natural Explorer (grassland) and Primeval Awareness ranger class features.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Genghis Khan can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+12 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Genghis Khan deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Genghis Khan that isn't incapacitated and Genghis Khan doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Spellcasting. Genghis Khan is a 1st level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared from the ranger's spell list:

1st-level (3 slots): *hunter's mark*

Tactical Focal Point. Genghis Khan selects a 10-foot square to be his tactical focal point as a bonus action or as part of the Attack action, choosing a Tactic to apply to it (see page 8). This lasts until he cannot take actions or uses this feature again. Each time Genghis Khan completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits for a different one: Area Clear, Cover the Flank, Phalanx Sidestep, Run Away!

Tactical Mastery (9/long rest). Genghis Khan uses part of his Attack action or a bonus action to take mastery of the battlefield, granting it to himself and allies within his focal point by expending uses of this feature. A creature that is granted a use of Genghis Khan's Tactical Mastery can either regain 2d10 hit points when it is granted (any hit points greater than its maximum are temporary hit points) or use it to deal an extra 2d10 damage with an attack.

Tactician. Genghis Khan is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Genghis Khan and is within 30 feet of him.

FEATS

Brilliant. Genghis Khan always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

Mobility. Genghis Khan can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

Mounted Combat. When Genghis Khan's mount is attacked, he can make himself the target of that attack. In addition, he has advantage on melee attack rolls when his target is an unmounted creature smaller than his mount (usually any unmounted target of Medium size or smaller). Finally, when Genghis Khan's mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Superb Aim. Genghis Khan ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and he doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Genghis Khan makes his first ranged

weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Genghis Khan attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Lance. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12+2) piercing damage. This attack roll has disadvantage if the target is within 5 feet.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Tactical Maneuver (4/long rest). Each time Genghis Khan completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits (page 8) for a different one (tactical DC 16): Coordinated Blows, Group Assault, Move to Flank.

REACTIONS

Leading Example. When Genghis Khan hits a creature with a weapon attack, until the end of his next turn the target of his attack has disadvantage on saving throws against his Tactical Maneuvers.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Genghis Khan can see hits him with an attack, Genghis Khan can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

GREAT-GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER OF THE KHAN

Khutulun (aka Aigiame, Aiyurug, Khotol Tsagaan, and Ay Yaruq) was a relative of Kublai Khan that lived in Mongolia between 1260–1306. By around her 20th birthday the athletic noblewoman's father Kaidu ruled a swath of Central Asia between the Central Siberian Plateau, India, western Mongolia, and Oxus (the Amu or Amo River), and as the favorite she often gave him advice and support. Marco Polo's book *Il Milione* depicts her as a superb warrior able to take captives while on horseback, making her mark in battles against the Yuan Dynasty. She demanded suitors to defeat her in wrestling, forfeiting horses should they fail—it's said that she collected as many as 10,000 steeds. Eventually somebody managed to do it, though who exactly that was is uncertain. It's also rumored that Khutulun attempted to make her his successor before dying in 1301, but her male kin objected. Afterward she guarded his tomb alongside her brother Orus and eventually died in 1306 defending challenges against her (due to disapproving of Duwa Khan's ascension).

BACKGROUND

Soldier. Khutulun commands respect in the army. Soldiers loyal to the Khan know she is their superior, and she can use her influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, or gain entrance to military fortresses and outposts.

KHUTULUN

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good ranger
(beastmaster) 4/fighter (banneret) 8/rogue 2

Armor Class 19 (scale mail, shield, fighting style)

Hit Points 103 (12d10+2d8+28)

Speed 40 ft. (60 ft. while mounted)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Dex +7

Skills Animal Handling +10, Athletics +13, Insight +5, Intimidation +7, Perception +5, Persuasion +12, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common (Middle Mongolian)

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on her turn, Khutulun can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Animal Companion (Riding Horse). Khutulun's horse increases its AC, saving throws, attack bonuses, and damage rolls by +5. Telling the beast where to move does not require any action from Khutulun, but she can otherwise use an action to make the horse take either the Attack (in which case Khutulun makes an attack of her own), Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help action. While traveling through grasslands while only with her horse, they move stealthily at a normal pace.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Khutulun can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Favored Enemy. Khutulun has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track humans, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Fighting Style: Unarmed. After successfully grappling a creature, Khutulun can deal 1d4 bludgeoning damage to it. Whenever she hits a creature she is grappling with a melee attack she deals an extra 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

Ranger Features. Khutulun has the Natural Explorer (grassland) and Primeval Awareness ranger class features.

Second Wind Rally (1/short rest). On her turn, Khutulun can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+8 hit points. In addition, she chooses 3 creatures within 60 feet that can see or hear her. Each target regains 12 hit points.

Spellcasting. Khutulun is a 2nd level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13; +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared from the ranger's spell list:

1st-level (3 slots): *hunter's mark*, *jump*, *longstrider*

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Khutulun deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Khutulun that isn't incapacitated and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

FEATS

Brawling. Khutulun is proficient with improvised weapons, and she can use a bonus action to grapple a target she hits with an unarmed strike or improvised weapon on her turn.

Grappler. Khutulun has advantage on attack rolls against a creature she is grappling and she can use an action to try to pin a creature she's grappled. To do so, Khutulun makes another grapple check. If she succeeds, Khutulun and the creature are both restrained until the grapple ends.

Mobility. Khutulun can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever she makes an attack against a creature, she doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of her turn.

Mounted Combat. When Khutulun's mount is attacked, she can make herself the target of that attack. In addition, she has advantage on melee attack rolls when her target is an unmounted creature smaller than her mount (usually any unmounted target of Medium size or smaller). Finally, when Khutulun's mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Khutulun attacks twice when she takes the attack action.

Unarmed. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage, or 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage if striking two-handed.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.



GEORGE WASHINGTON

We're getting positively colonial with the man most often credited with founding the United States of America. I'm of course talking about the Delaware River-crossing, cherry tree-chopping, ironic enemy of hero worship George Washington!

There are plenty of non-American readers here though so let me give you the quick rundown:

- ◆ George Washington was a surveyor by the age of 16.
- ◆ He kicked off the Seven Years War (or at the least was involved with the first battle).
- ◆ Didn't make any babies of his own although he had plenty of step-kids.
- ◆ Wooden teeth. Yes.
- ◆ He loved booze and ran the biggest distillery in the colonies/early USA.
- ◆ Led the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War. He lost more often than he won, although obviously achieved overall victory.
- ◆ First President of the United States.
- ◆ Founded the US Navy.
- ◆ Second inaugural address was 135 words and took less than 2 minutes.
- ◆ Didn't wear a wig! That's his hair!
- ◆ Very pro-mule.
- ◆ Released all his slaves upon his death (what a guy).
- ◆ The whole "chopped down his dad's cherry tree and admitted to it" is 100% myth.
- ◆ George Washington specifically did not want to be deified or worshiped, coining the term 'Mr. President' as opposed to 'Your Highness'.

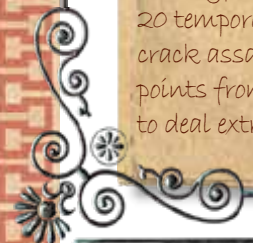
BACKGROUND

Outlander. George never forgets the geographic arrangement of terrain, settlements, and areas of wilderness. In addition, he can forage fresh water and food each day for as many as 6 people as long as the environment nearby can support it.

DESIGN NOTES

In my mind George Washington is all about commanding troops and that's where the build is focused, making good use of the Warlord fighter archetype. Considering what all he can do—grant 20 temporary hit points to his commanders or a crack assault squad, or heal (on average) 11 hit points from Tactical Mastery (or use that 2d10 to deal extra damage), control his Tactical Focal

Point—I'm able to believe this guy led militia-farmers to victory over the King's soldiers. That brings us to the end and as usual a look at the numbers: the DMG lands George here at 6.8 which feels pretty low, and the Blog of Holding's rubric put him at 8.166 which I feel is much more on the money. If for some reason he's caught in a duel or by himself in the wilderness or what have you, treat him as CR 7 as he's really designed to be used with soldiers and not all by his lonesome.



GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

Medium humanoid (human), fighter (warlord) 16

Armor Class 16 (studded leather, fighting style)

Hit Points 136 (16d10+48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +8

Skills Athletics +6, Insight +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +9, Survival +7

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages English, Latin

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, George can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Commanded Movement. Instead of moving on his turn, George can choose up to 3 allies able to hear him. These allies move up to half their Speed. An ally that cannot take actions cannot benefit from this feature.

Indomitable (2/long rest). George can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Leading Example. When George hits a creature with a weapon attack, until the end of his next turn the target of his attack has disadvantage on saving throws against his Tactical Maneuvers.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, George can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+16 hit points.

Tactical Focal Point. George selects a 10-foot square to be his tactical focal point as a bonus action or as part of the Attack action, choosing a Tactic to apply to it (see page 8). This lasts until he cannot take actions or uses this feature again. Each time George completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits for a different one: Area

Clear, Cover the Flank, Phalanx Sidestep, Run Away!

Tactical Mastery (16/long rest). George uses part of his Attack action or a bonus action to take mastery of the battlefield, granting it to himself and allies within his focal point by expending uses of this feature. A creature that is granted a use of George's Tactical Mastery can either regain 2d10 hit points when it is granted (any hit points greater than its maximum are temporary hit points) or use it to deal an extra 2d10 damage with an attack.

FEATS

Diplomatic. George can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can understand what he says during 1 minute of talking. On a success, as long as George remains within 60 feet of it (and for 1 minute afterward) the target is charmed by him. George automatically fails on the check if he or his companions are fighting the target.

Leader's Words. When George spends 10 minutes speaking inspirationally, he can choose up to 6 friendly creatures (including himself if he likes) within 30 feet that can hear and understand him. Each creature gains 20 temporary hit points but cannot gain more temporary hit points from this feature until after they have completed a long rest.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. George attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Saber. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage.

Musket. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) piercing damage.

Tactical Maneuver (6/long rest). Each time George completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits (see page 8) for a different one (tactical DC 15): Confounding Maneuvering, Group Assault, Move to Flank.



GILGAMESH

Now we're going way back to a figure thousands and thousands of years old—Gilgamesh, the Mesopotamian god-king and star of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Gilgamesh was the king of Urlik, a Sumerian city-state. A hero of the ancient world, he was two-thirds god, and one third mortal, and was a tyrannical ruler. The god Anu decided to punish Gilgamesh for his cruelty, and sent the wildman Enkidu to confront him. They wrestled (and why not?) but impressed each other so much that they became best friends. The two then begin adventuring together!

The list of exploits that this pair got up to is long indeed. They slew demigods, wrestled just about everything, cut down forests, entreated nature (and numerous gods), tracked down immortals—the list goes on. They killed Humbaba, the demon of the Cedar Forest; and the Bull of Heaven, sent to earth by the goddess of love as revenge for Gilgamesh's rejection of her marriage proposal.

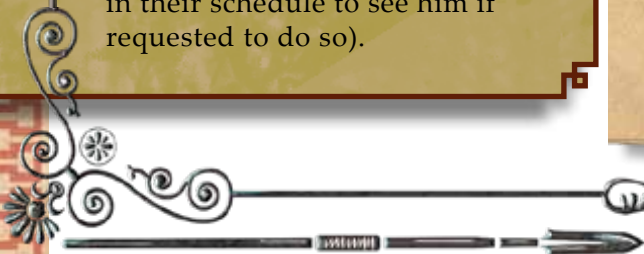
After Enkidu died, Gilgamesh undertook a quest to defeat death itself. He sought out the only survivor of the great Flood, and was given a task: remain awake for six days and six nights, and protect a magic plant. He fell asleep, and a snake ate the plant, dashing Gilgamesh's dreams of immortality. He returned home, a better and wiser king.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to his position as a god-king, Gilgamesh is treated with a measure of respect wherever he goes. He is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see him if requested to do so).

DESIGN NOTES

Ultimately the designers of days past probably had it right: "He is noted for going out and getting things done when others were unable." They are also what ultimately helped me figure out what build he ought to have, which is to say a mix of ranger, monk, and cleric (I'd prefer bard because he does a lot of pleading, but for the sake of keeping him within the bounds of stats we're reining in some attributes and putting a focus onto wisdom). The math puts his CR slightly lower but Gilgamesh here has a host of abilities (as a god-king ought to!) so I've bumped him up slightly.



GILGAMESH

Medium humanoid (demigod, human),
neutral good ranger (hunter)
8/monk (open hand) 8/cleric (nature) 4

Armor Class 16 (Wisdom)

Hit Points 148 (8d10+12d8+40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +11, Dex +9

Skills Athletics +11, History +5, Nature +5,
Perception +9, Persuasion +6, Survival +9

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Amorite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Sumerian

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Channel Divinity (1/short rest). Gilgamesh can channel his divine energy to fuel one of two magical effects.

Befriend Nature. As an action, Gilgamesh extends some of his natural divinity to befriend nature. Beasts and plants within 30 feet that are able to hear Gilgamesh make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or is charmed by him for 1 minute (or until it takes damage). Creatures charmed this way are friendly to Gilgamesh and his allies.

Turn Undead. As an action, Gilgamesh presents his holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead within 30 feet that can see or hear him must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Gilgamesh as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of him. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Defensive Tactics: Multiattack Defense. When a creature hits Gilgamesh with an attack, he gains a +4 bonus to AC against all subsequent attacks made by that creature for the rest of the turn.

Evasion. When Gilgamesh is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Favored Enemy. Gilgamesh has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track humans and monstrosities, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Fighting Style: Dueling. When Gilgamesh is wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, he gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

Hunter's Prey: Giant Killer. When a Large or larger creature within 5 feet of you hits or misses you with an attack, you can use your reaction to attack that creature immediately after its attack, provided that you can see the creature.


Ki (8 points/short rest). Gilgamesh can spend ki to fuel the following features:

- ◆ **Flurry of Blows.** Immediately after Gilgamesh takes the Attack action on his turn, he can spend 1 ki point to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.
- ◆ **Patient Defense.** Gilgamesh can spend 1 ki point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on his turn.
- ◆ **Step of the Wind.** Gilgamesh can spend 1 ki point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on his turn, and his jump distance is doubled for the turn.
- ◆ **Stunning Strike.** Gilgamesh can spend 1 ki point to attempt to stun a creature he hits with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of his next turn.

Open Hand Technique. Whenever Gilgamesh hits a creature with one of the attacks granted by a bonus action or expending ki, he can impose one of the following effects on that target:

- ◆ It must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or is knocked prone.
- ◆ It must make a DC 17 Strength saving throw. If it fails, Gilgamesh can push it up to 15 feet away.
- ◆ It can't take reactions until the end of Gilgamesh's next turn.

Ranger Features. Gilgamesh has the Land's Stride, Natural Explorer (desert or grassland), and Primeval Awareness ranger class features.



Spellcasting. Gilgamesh is an 8th-level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17; +9 to hit with spell attacks). Gilgamesh knows the following spells from the ranger spell list and has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips: *guidance, light, produce flame, resistance, thaumaturgy*

1st-level (4 slots): *cure wounds, jump, speak with animals; bane, command*

2nd-level (3 slots): *pass without trace, spike growth; aid, enhance ability*

3rd-level (3 slots): *beacon of hope, bestow curse*

4th-level (2 slots): *divination*

Stillness of Mind. Gilgamesh can use his action to end one effect on himself that is causing him to be charmed or frightened.

Wholeness of Body (1/long rest). Gilgamesh can spend an action to regain 24 hit points.

FEATS

Grapppler. Gilgamesh has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he is grappling and he can use an action to try to pin a creature he's grappled. To do so, Gilgamesh makes another grapple check. If he succeeds, Gilgamesh and the creature are both restrained until the grapple ends.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Gilgamesh attacks twice when he takes the Attack action (if attacking with unarmed strikes he can spend his bonus action to attack a third time, or his bonus action and 1 ki to attack a third and fourth time).

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) magical bludgeoning damage.

Godly Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d6+9) magical bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missile. Gilgamesh can spend his reaction to strike a missile when he is hit by a ranged weapon attack, reducing its damage by 16 (1d10+11). If he reduces the damage to 0, he can catch the missile if it is small enough for him to hold in one hand and he has at least one hand free. If Gilgamesh catches a missile in this way, he can spend 1 ki point to make a ranged attack with the weapon or piece of ammunition he just caught, as part of the same reaction (+9 to hit, range 20/60 ft., minimum 1d6+5 damage).

Slow Fall. Gilgamesh can use his reaction when he falls to reduce any falling damage he takes by 40.

ENKIDU

The goddess Aruru took water and clay to form a rival to Gilgamesh known as Enkidu. This beast man lived in the wilderness among the animals. King Gilgamesh sent a temple prostitute to tame him. She spent a week doing so but afterward her scent was so heavily upon him that beasts fled from him, forcing Enkidu to abandon the wild.

Now civilized, Enkidu traveled to confront Gilgamesh, but after losing to him at the end of an epic wrestling match the two become best friends. Together they killed the guardian monster of the Cedar Forest and Bull of Heaven, but the latter's demise was a great offense to the goddess Ishtar who afflicted Enkidu with a disease for which there was no cure other than death.

BACKGROUND

Background: Outlander. Enkidu never forgets the geographic arrangement of terrain, settlements, and areas of wilderness. In addition, he can forage fresh water and food each day for as many as 6 people as long as the environment nearby can support it.

ENKIDU

Medium humanoid (satyr), chaotic neutral
 barbarian (beast) 4 / fighter (champion) 13

Armor Class 18 (Constitution)
Hit Points 182 (4d12+13d10+85)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +11
Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +9,
 Perception +7, Survival +7
Senses passive Perception 17
Languages Sumerian, Sylvan
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Enkidu can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Danger Sense. Enkidu has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, Enkidu can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Fighting Style: Defensive Fighting. Enkidu can use a bonus action to activate a defensive stance that lasts until the start of his next turn. During this defensive stance, creatures within his reach provoke opportunity attacks when they move more than 5 feet, and he does not need to use his reaction to make opportunity attacks.

Fighting Style: Unarmed. After successfully grappling a creature, Enkidu can deal 1d4 bludgeoning damage to it. Whenever he hits a creature he is grappling with a melee attack he deals an extra 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

Improved Critical. Enkidu's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Indomitable (2/long rest). Enkidu can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Magic Resistance. Enkidu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Rage (2/long rest). On his turn, Enkidu can enter a rage as a bonus action. His rage lasts for 1 minute, ending early if he is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't either attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. Enkidu can also end his rage on his turn as a bonus action. While raging, he gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Enkidu has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- ◆ When Enkidu makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, he deals 2 extra damage.
- ◆ Enkidu has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- ◆ Enkidu gains a bite attack that deals 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage. When he damages a creature on his turn using his bite, he regains 5 hit points.

Reckless Attack. When Enkidu makes his first attack on his turn, he can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until Enkidu's next turn.

Remarkable Athlete. Enkidu adds +3 to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check he makes that doesn't already use his proficiency bonus. In addition, when he makes a running long jump, the distance he can cover increases by 3 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Enkidu can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+13 hit points.

FEATS

Mobile. Enkidu can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Enkidu attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Unarmed. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage, or 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage if striking two-handed.



GRACE O'MALLEY

The cunning pirate Grace O'Malley championed the seas around Ireland and even stood up directly to Queen Elizabeth I, taking word and sword to power whenever the need called for it.

Born in 1530 to Eoghan and Maeve O'Malley, Grace was something of a favorite and she got away with a lot. The O'Malleys were one of the relatively few seafaring clans, their lands protected on the coasts by a row of castles. She received a formal education, spent plenty of time on the water, and then married Donald O'Flaherty in 1546 and had 3 kids with him: Owen, Maeve, and Murrough.

BACKGROUND

Sailor. Grace is able to acquire passage on a sailing ship for her and her allies free of charge. She has no control over the ship's route, departure, or return, and although no coin is required she and her companions do have to help crew the vessel.

Unfortunately Donald died only a few years later, killed while hunting. A short time afterward she took a shipwrecked sailor as her lover who was also killed by warriors from a rival clan. O'Malley tracked his murderers down to Doona Castle in Blacksod Bay and slew them, earning the nickname the Dark Lady of Doona.

O'Malley married again, this time to 'Iron Richard' Bourke, so named because of his ironworks. Over the next three decades she continued enacting vengeance upon her enemies, acquired a reputation for defeating men in battle, capturing ships, and taking castles, and personally led her armies in battle during three separate rebellions against British governors. The English governor of Connacht, Sir Richard Bingham, eventually had enough of this and in the spring of 1592 her eldest son was killed, youngest son kidnapped, and her lands taken from her.

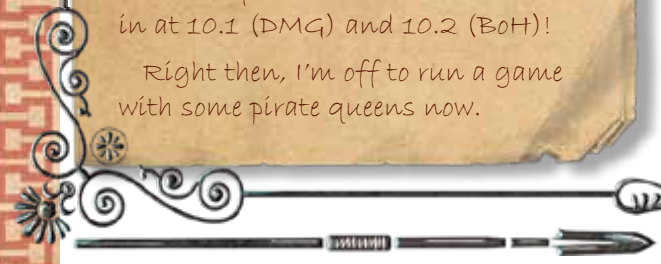
DESIGN NOTES

I didn't come across much about the particulars of Grace O'Malley's exploits, and mostly just a lot of material about her being a awesome so we're leaning into "tough as nails pirate queen" with her. Not a crack shot like Anne Bonny or a fleet commander of countless ships like Ching Shih, but a lady who can throw down with pretty much anybody and hold her own whether on the deck of a ship or in the court. As for the numbers—she came in at 10.1 (DMG) and 10.2 (BoH)!

Right then, I'm off to run a game with some pirate queens now.

At this point Grace was sixty-two years old, so rather than fight back with blades, she arranged to meet with Queen Elizabeth I. Grace snuck a dagger into the royal court and refused to bow (both offenses carrying the death penalty), and declined the title of Countess—maintaining that they were equals. In the end she got her offspring released, Sir Richard Bingham left Ireland, and Grace stopped supporting insurgencies.

But only for a while. Eventually the governor returned to Connacht and O'Malley supported Ireland in the 9 Years War against England, finally dying at the ripe old age of 72 years.



GRACE O'MALLEY

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral fighter (brute) 11/rogue (thief) 5

Armor Class 17 (studded leather, fighting style)

Hit Points 115 (11d10+5d8+32)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7

Skills Athletics +7, History +7, Insight +11, Perception +6, Persuasion +12; disguise kit +7, forgery kit +7, navigator's tools +7, thieves tools +9, vehicle (water) +14

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages English, Gaelic, Latin, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On her turn, Grace can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Brutal Toughness. Grace gains a +1d6 bonus to saving throws and death saves (treating final results of 20 or higher on a death saving throw as a natural 20).

Cunning Action (1/turn). Grace can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide or Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Fast Learner. After Grace has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, she can mimic its manner of speaking as long as she knows the same language as the creature (allowing her to seem like she is local to a given region).

Indomitable (1/long rest). Grace can reroll a saving throw that she fails but must use the new roll.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Grace extra movement. When she makes a running jump, the distance she covers increases by 4 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Grace can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+11 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Grace deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is

within 5 feet of an ally of Grace that isn't incapacitated and Grace doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactician. Grace is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Grace and is within 30 feet of her.

FEATS

Diplomatic. Grace can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can understand what she says during 1 minute of talking. On a success, as long as Grace remains within 60 feet of it (and for 1 minute afterward) the target is charmed by her. Grace automatically fails on the check if she or her companions are fighting the target.

Mobility. Grace can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever she makes an attack against a creature, she doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of her turn.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Grace attacks three times when she takes the Attack action. When she uses a bonus action to engage in two-weapon fighting using a dagger, she adds her Dexterity modifier to the damage of her fourth attack.

Cutlass. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d6+1d6+4) slashing damage.

Dagger (4). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d4+1d6+4) piercing damage.

Pistol (2). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (1d10+1d6+4) piercing damage.

Musket. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d12+1d6+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Grace can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.



DESIGN NOTES

Grendel has incredible hearing and I figured that's worth blindsight (and vulnerability to thunder). Aside from the Toxic Blood trait the rest of this statblock is fairly standard—he's very strong, can jump around well, and has a variety of (similar) natural weapons. Toxic Blood and Big-Handed Grappling should give adventurers pause and make for a fun fight, and remember that he can always flee to fight again later, maybe back at home.

GRENDEL

Get ready to visit upon the *Epic of Beowulf* for a giant like no other: Grendel! Grendel might be one of the inspirations for the average ogre or giant but he's definitely something more. In the saga of Beowulf he has tremendously powerful hearing and later on—a good while after he's already dead—his blood proves corrosive enough to ruin a magical sword. He's definitely not a match for Beowulf, but he's certainly no pushover.

Grendel's story is simple. In many ways, it's a sad story of a poor creature driven mad by its own keen hearing. Driven to anger by the sounds of singing from King Hrothgar's mead-hall, he attacked and consumed the revellers. Beowulf came to Hrothgar's aid, bedded down in the mead-hall, and awaited the monster—who he beat to death with his bare fists, tearing off the creature's arm in the process!

Beowulf has later encounters with Grendel's vengeful mother, but that's another story.



GRENDEL

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10+48)

Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Cha +1

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +8, Survival +5

Damage Vulnerabilities thunder

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Giant, Olde English

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Big-Handed Grappling. Grendel has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he is grappling and he can use an action to try to pin a creature he's grappled. To do so, Grendel makes another grapple check. If he succeeds, the creature is restrained until the grapple ends. Grendel only needs one hand to grapple a creature of Medium size or smaller.

Leap. Grendel increases the distances of his horizontal jumps by 20 feet and his vertical jumps by 10 feet.

Superior Hearing. Grendel has advantage on sound-based Wisdom (Perception) checks.

Toxic Blood. When a creature within 5 feet of Grendel hits him with a melee attack that deals piercing or slashing damage, that creature takes 7 (2d6) acid damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Grendel attacks three times.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8+6) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) slashing damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8+6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 250/500 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) bludgeoning damage.

Thrown Object. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 250/500 ft., multiple targets (determined by object size; make one attack roll per target). *Hit:* 13 (1d8+9) damage. The damage type depends on the object (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing) and at 100 pounds and every 100 pounds thereafter, the damage increases by 1d8 (up to a maximum of 10d8 1,000 pounds). A creature thrown at an object bigger than it takes regular damage, but only takes half damage when thrown at another creature.





GROOTSLANG

Let's get primordial with a legend from South Africa, a serpent as massive as it is devious: the Grootslang! This monster is said to lair in a diamond-filled cave in Richtersveld called the 'Bottomless Pit' or the 'Wonder Hole', a tunnel to the sea 40 miles away.

This enormous snake is 30 feet long and has a head nearly a foot across. Covetous and greedy, the Grootslang desires fine stones, and often trades the lives of its hapless victims in exchange for valuable precious gems.

Legend has it that the Grootslang is a type of primordial serpent from the beginnings of the world. The gods decreed that the creation of an elephant-sized serpent was a mistake, and so they split the Grootslangs into snakes and elephants—except for the one which escaped.

DESIGN NOTES

We're going to really lean into the big serpent monster thing and go for gargantuan size, complementing the shared traits of its root creatures (elephants and snakes) with a couple mystical traits and since it's so damn big a swallow attack. Getting to romp around with charges and constricting multiple enemies will make for an interesting encounter (particularly if there's water nearby). Let's do the numbers! The DMG's chart lands Grootslang here at 8.33 and the Blog of Holding rubric at a slightly higher 9.16, which averages out to a touch under 8 and three-fourths—not quite enough for a rounding up, so he's clocking in at CR 8 (albeit a beefy CR 8).

GROOTSLANG

Gargantuan monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 145 (10d20+40)

Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)

Skills Athletics +10, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +5, Stealth +7

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Ageless. Grootslang cannot suffer from frailty of old age, die from old age, or be aged magically.

Magic Resistance. Grootslang has advantage on saving throws made against spells and other magical effects.

Serpentine Charge. If Grootslang moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a bite or gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Grootslang can make one constrict attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8+7) piercing damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one prone target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10+7) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10+7) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained. The snake can constrict up to 2 targets at the same time.

Swallow. Grootslang makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, that creature takes the bite's damage and is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside Grootslang, and it takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of Grootslang's turns.

If Grootslang takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, Grootslang must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of Grootslang. If Grootslang dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement per round it was swallowed, exiting prone.





HARALD HARDRADA

We're going big and bold with this mythological figure, tackling the man whose life and death mark the very end of the Viking Age: Harald Hardrada, the last Viking!

Harald Sigurdsson lived from 1015 to 1066 AD and was King of Norway from 1046 to 1066. In the years before that, however, he was exiled, traveling across the world as a mercenary and military commander in the Byzantine Empire.

After defeat trying to help his half-brother Olaf Haraldsson (later Saint Olaf) reclaim the Norwegian throne from King Cnut the Great in the Battle of Stiklestad, Harald was exiled and joined the army of Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise until he left for Constantinople in 1034.

There he became very rich as the commander of the Byzantine Varangian Guard. He started planning on retaking the throne of Norway, now restored to Magnus the Good, a bastard child of his brother.

Four years later Harald fought alongside Sweyn II, the pretender of Denmark, but Magnus would not fight him, and instead agreed to rule together in exchange for some of Harald's wealth. A year later Magnus died and Harald became the only king of Norway, instituting a coin economy, encouraging trade beyond their borders, and snuffing out anyone that might oppose him. Afterwards, Harald raided the coast of Denmark for years in an unsuccessful attempt to conquer it

The ex-Earl of Northumbria, Tostig Godwinson, brother of the short-reigned King Harold Godwinson of England (the last crowned Anglo-Saxon king of England who ruled for less than a year before his death in the Battle of Hastings), convinced Harald to make a grab for the throne of England. So our viking hero took 10,000 soldiers and 300 longships to raid the English coast in 1066, claiming victory in Northumbria and Mercia. Despite these initial triumphs Harald was killed when Harold Godwinson's forces nearly annihilated his forces in the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Modern historians mark his death and the end of the campaign as the end of the Viking Age.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to his position as a ruler, Harald is treated with a measure of respect wherever he goes. He is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see him if requested to do so).

DESIGN NOTES

Wow. The last Viking—some big boots to fill! To start things off he's getting just a touch of rogue so he has the high Persuasion a commanding leader needs, and also the killer Athletics bonus expected of a viking hero. Picking up some barbarian for the bonus damage, hit points, and of course rage along with the Juggernaut archetype because it complements the best without inserting another theme or provide an essentially useless feature for him. The rest of the way it's all fighter levels to pick up feats to manipulate the battlefield and rove about unimpeded, and the Battlemaster archetype to really take control of a melee fight. For all the soldiering this guy did, it feels like a solid fit.

HARALD HARDRADA

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral rogue 2/
barbarian (juggernaut) 4/fighter (battlemaster) 12

Armor Class 19 (half plate, shield)

Hit Points 137 (2d8+4d12+12d10+36)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +7

Skills Athletics +16, Deception +8, History +7,
Insight +7, Intimidation +8, Persuasion +14;
thieves' tools +8

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Arabic, Dutch, Norwegian, Olde English,
Thieves' Cant

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, Harald can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Harald can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide action.

Danger Sense. Harald has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, he can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Harald can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll.

Maneuver Master (5d10 maneuver dice/short rest). Harald can expend a maneuver dice to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

- ◆ **Command.** Harald uses his bonus action to forgo one of his attacks and direct a friendly creature who can see or hear him. The creature uses its reaction and makes a weapon attack, dealing 1d10 additional weapon damage on a successful hit.
- ◆ **Disarm.** A creature Harald has hit with an attack takes 1d8 additional damage and makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw or drops one held item of his choice.
- ◆ **Feint.** Harald can use his bonus action to feint against one creature within 5 feet. He

has advantage on his next attack roll against that creature as long as it before the end of his turn. On a hit he deals 1d10 additional damage.

- ◆ **Menace.** On a successful hit with a melee weapon, Harald deals 1d10 additional damage and the target makes a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or is frightened of him until the end of Harald's next turn.
- ◆ **Sweep.** Harald chooses a creature adjacent to him target and within his reach and on a hit, the adjacent creature takes 1d10 damage (of the same type as the weapon attack).
- ◆ **Trip.** Harald deals 1d10 additional damage and if the target is a creature of Large size or smaller, it makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone.

Rage (3/long rest). On his turn, Harald can enter a rage as a bonus action. His rage lasts for 1 minute, ending early if he is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't either attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. Harald can also end his rage on his turn as a bonus action. While raging, he gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Harald has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- ◆ When Harald makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, he deals 2 extra damage.
- ◆ Harald has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- ◆ While conscious, he cannot be knocked prone.
- ◆ Once per turn, the target of a successful melee attack from Harald makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw or is pushed 5 feet away from him. Harald can immediately move into the square previously occupied by the target of his attack.

Reckless Attack. When Harald makes his first attack on his turn, he can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until his next turn.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Harald can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+12 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1d6/turn). Harald deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Harald that isn't incapacitated and Harald doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactician's Insight. After Harald has observed or interacted with a creature for 1 minute, he learns whether or not it has higher or lower Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma scores than him. In addition, he learns if the target has more or fewer class levels than him. Harald also knows when he and the target have equal scores in one of these categories.

FEATS

Athletic. Harald can stand up from being prone with only 5 feet of his movement, climbing doesn't cost him extra movement, and he only has to move 5 feet before making a running long jump or running high jump.

Mobility. Harald can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack

against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

Soldier Tactics. A creature hit by Harald's opportunity attack reduces its Speed to 0 until the beginning of the next round and disengaging from Harald still provokes opportunity attacks. In addition, Harald can use his reaction to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 5 feet when it makes an attack against a target other than Harald.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Harald attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d8+6) slashing damage.

Handaxe (6). Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d10+2) piercing damage.



VIKING TREASURE HOARD

- 1 Average party level × 600 gp worth of platinum and gold coins, plus average party level × 200 gp in miscellaneous loot, a randomly determined rare magic item, and two randomly determined uncommon magic items
- 2 Average party level × 500 gp worth of platinum and gold coins, plus average party level × 150 gp in miscellaneous loot, and two randomly determined uncommon magic items
- 3 Average party level × 400 gp worth of platinum and gold coins, plus average party level × 125 gp in miscellaneous loot, a randomly determined uncommon magic item, and a +1 *weapon*
- 4 Average party level × 300 gp worth of platinum and gold coins, plus average party level × 100 gp in miscellaneous loot, and a randomly determined uncommon magic item
- 5 Average party level × 200 gp worth of platinum, gold, and silver coins, plus average party level × 75 gp in miscellaneous loot, and a suit of +1 *medium armor* or +1 *shield*
- 6 Average party level × 150 gp worth of gold and silver coins, plus average party level × 50 gp in miscellaneous loot, and a +1 *weapon*
- 7 Average party level × 125 gp worth of gold and silver coins, plus average party level × 25 gp in miscellaneous loot, and a suit of +1 *light armor* or +1 *shield*
- 8 Average party level × 100 gp in miscellaneous loot, and a suit of +1 *light armor* or +1 *shield*
- 9 Average party level × 50 gp worth of gold, silver, and copper coins
- 10 50 gp worth of gold, silver, copper coins, and 50 gp in miscellaneous loot
- 11 Average party level × 25 gp of coins in gold, silver, and copper
- 12 Average party level × 10 gp in miscellaneous loot
- 13 Average party level × 100 gp of coins in gold, silver, and copper, a +1 *weapon* (any sword), and a +1 *shield*
- 14 Average party level × 125 gp of coins in miscellaneous loot, plus average party level × 25 gp worth of gold, silver, and copper coins, and a suit of +1 *light armor* or +1 *shield*
- 15 Average party level × 150 gp of miscellaneous loot, plus average party level × 50 gp worth of gold and silver coins, and a +1 *weapon*
- 16 Average party level × 200 gp in miscellaneous loot, plus average party level × 75 gp worth of gold and silver coins, and a suit of +1 *medium armor* or +1 *shield*
- 17 Average party level × 300 gp in miscellaneous loot, plus average party level × 100 gp worth of platinum and gold coins, and a randomly determined uncommon magic item
- 18 Average party level × 400 gp in miscellaneous loot, plus average party level × 125 gp worth of platinum and gold coins, a randomly determined uncommon magic item, and a +1 *weapon*
- 19 Average party level × 500 gp in miscellaneous loot, plus average party level × 150 gp worth of platinum and gold coins, and two randomly determined uncommon magic items
- 20 Average party level × 600 gp in miscellaneous loot, plus average party level × 200 gp worth of platinum and gold coins, a randomly determined rare magic item, and two randomly determined uncommon magic items

Note: *Miscellaneous loot is bulkier and often heavier than coins. As a general rule, GMs can treat miscellaneous loot as weighing 1/5th or more of its gold value in pounds.*



HARRY HOUDINI

Harry Houdini is the undisputed master of escapology, a born performer that nary a century ago easily worked his way into the mythology of not just America but the world at large.

We all know Harry Houdini as the original master of miraculous escapes, said to be impossible to imprison. He was 4 years old when his family moved from Hungary to America. Already a performer (“Ehrich, the Prince of the Air” started doing trapeze acts at the age of 9) he took the stage name Harry Houdini in 1890 after reading the autobiography of French magician Jean Robert-Houdin. A local magician coached him in sleight-of-hand and for a while he tried to make it as a card trickster, but ultimately found his calling with escape acts.

By 1900 Houdini’s star was rising and he became known as “The Handcuff King”, touring Europe and the world, and then back to the USA where he was a sensation throughout the 1910s. He also tried to rock a movie career but the money wasn’t there, and was something of an amateur aviator (often wrongly credited as being the first person to fly a plane in Australia). More interestingly, however, later on in life he became a noted spiritualist debunker and scholar on magic.

One of Houdini’s riskiest exploits was letting people hit him, allowing anyone who liked the opportunity to punch him in the stomach. In 1926 a college student caught him off guard and pummeled him in a chair, popped his appendix, and Harry died from peritonitis a few days later.



BACKGROUND

Entertainer. Houdini is never without a stage or room to do his act whether in a queen’s castle or a tavern. He receives free accommodations (including a room and meal) each night he performs and is recognized while going about a settlement where he’s performed at least one evening (and is typically well-liked for his unusual talents).

DESIGN NOTES

Houdini here just kept squeezing rogue levels out of me. Granted he could be done as just a fatebender but that’d go against my goals in this book—making him an even mix of the two, however, felt spot on. What we end up with is a quick and charismatic escape artist who, when things go awry for him, can draw upon fate to make sure he gets out of whatever situation he’s stuck in whether through a fate-fueled reroll or by creating a distraction for the audience.

HARRY HOUDINI

Medium humanoid (human),
fatebender (mascot) 6/rogue (thief) 6

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 78 (12d8+24)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Cha +7

Skills Acrobatics +12, Investigation +9, Perception +8 Performance +7, Sleight of Hand +8; disguise kit +5, thieves' tools +12

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages English, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Cunning Action (1/turn). Houdini can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide or Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Fate Points (5 points/long rest). Houdini can spend fate points to fuel various fate features. Whenever he finishes a short rest, he regains 3 fate points.

- ◆ **Chaos Theory (2 points).** Houdini can use an action to choose one highly unlikely event to occur within 50 feet of him. The exact nature of this event is left up to the GM's discretion but is otherwise limited to any event that could conceivably happen, however unlikely, but nothing that requires supernatural actions to occur (a cat distracting the guards, the barman's cask suddenly breaking, or drawing a hand of winning cards).
- ◆ **Fatebend (1 point).** Whenever a creature makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw within 50 feet of Houdini (including himself), he can use his reaction to force that creature to reroll the d20 after the result of the roll is known but before the outcome is determined. Houdini may not reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw that has already been rerolled using this feature.
- ◆ **Good Luck Charm (1 point).** As an action, Houdini causes good luck to radiate outward from him like a beacon. For the

next minute, creatures within 10 feet of Houdini (including himself) have advantage on attack rolls. As a bonus action on his turn, he can suppress this feature's effects for a creature of his choice until the beginning of his next turn.

- ◆ **Never Leave Home Without It (1 point).** Whenever Houdini would take bludgeoning, piercing or slashing damage, he can reduce the damage by up to 9 (1d6+6).

Favored Fortunes. Whenever a creature within 50 feet of Houdini rolls a d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw that results in a 20, he regains 1 fate point.

Luck Beats Skill. Houdini can add his Charisma modifier (+3) to attack and damage rolls with improvised weapons, simple weapons, and unarmed strikes instead of any other ability modifier.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Houdini extra movement. When he makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 4 feet.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Houdini deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Houdini that isn't incapacitated and Houdini doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Houdini attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 bludgeoning damage.

Improvised Weapon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+3) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage (determined by object).

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Houdini can see hits him with an attack, he can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.



HAYREDDIN BARBAROSSA

Let's tackle a man of many, many names, titles well earned and somehow less numerous than the literally countless battles he won on land and sea on behalf of the Ottoman Empire. Prepare yourself for Hayreddin Barbarossa!

Born with the name Khzır, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent gave him the honorary name 'Hayreddin'; the name 'Barbarossa', which means 'redbeard' was inherited from his older brother.

As a youth Khzır helped the family pottery business by working clay but eventually he and his 3 brothers Ilyas, Ishak, and Oruç became privateers to counteract the Knights of St. John privateering in the Mediterranean. Oruç was the first on the waves and pretty good at it, although eventually he and their father's ship were captured, Ilyas dying in the attack by the Knights Hospitaller. Khzır figured out where his older brother was being kept and effected an escape.

Oruç went on to Antalya where an Ottoman prince gave him a fleet of galleys, establishing a new base on the island of Djerba where Khzır joined him in 1503. They allied with the Sultan of Tunisia and raided many ships on the Mediterranean Sea, and the coasts of nearby countries. In the meanwhile they also helped transport Mudejars from Christian Pain to North Africa. Oruç lost an arm which he replaced with a silver prosthetic, they captured a ton of ships, and they built a gunpowder production facility at La Goulette (the island they called their own).

Eventually Oruç declared himself the Sultan of Algiers for a year before relinquishing the title to join the Ottoman Empire. He outmaneuvered Spanish rival Abu Zayan, capturing the city



BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to his position, Hayreddin is treated with a measure of respect wherever he goes. He is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see him if requested to do so).

of Tlemcen, but the Spaniards returned in force with Emperor Charles V and 10,000 men that over the course of a 20-day battle took it back, killing Oruç and Ishak, leaving Khzır without any living brothers.

Freshly reinforced by plenty of Turkish soldiers, and having fully adopted his new name, at the end of 1518 Barbarossa retook Tlemcen and for a decade and a half led offensives all over the region, kicking ass and taking names the entire time. During that time he was called back to Istanbul where at Topkapı Palace Sultan Suleiman named him Grand Admiral of the Ottoman Navy, Chief Governor of North Africa, and gave him the governments of the provinces of Rhodes, Euboea, and Chios in the Aegean Sea.

In 1533 King Francis the I of France hired Khzır and his fleet to subjugate the Corsicans and Genoans. In 1545 Barbarossa retired and dictated his memoirs, dying only a year later in his seaside palace in Istanbul. His mausoleum still stands today, a memorial for him (built in 1944) beside it—and rightly so, as few naval commanders anywhere in the world have a legacy like his.

DESIGN NOTES

Barbarossa was inspiring to his troops, a solid commander, and must've had a feel for being on the water to win so many fights. DMG 10.8 and BOTT 11.2, rounded up to 11 (for likely having allies nearby)

HAYREDDIN BARBAROSSA

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good fighter
(warlord) 11/bard (valorous) 5/ranger (hunter) 4

Armor Class 19 (half plate, fighting style, sealegs)
Hit Points 145 (15d10+5d8+40)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +8
Skills Athletics +8, History +11, Insight +9,
Nature +11, Persuasion +9, Survival +9
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Arabic, French, Greek, Italian, Spanish,
Turkish
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Hayreddin can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Bardic Inspiration 1d8 (3/short rest). As a bonus action on his turn, Hayreddin can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear him. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d8. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, saving throw, or weapon damage roll it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether a roll succeeds or fails. In addition, a creature can use its reaction when attacked to use the Bardic Inspiration die, adding the result to its AC and possibly causing the attack to miss.

Favored Enemy: Beasts. Hayreddin has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track beasts, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Fighting Style: Sealegs. As long as he is not wearing heavy armor or using a shield, Hayreddin gains a +1 bonus to AC, and he gains both climbing and swimming speeds equal to his speed.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Hayreddin can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Jack of All Trades. Hayreddin adds +3 to any ability check he makes that doesn't already include his proficiency bonus.

Ranger Features. Hayreddin has the Natural Explorer (coasts) and Primeval Awareness ranger class features.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Hayreddin can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+11 hit points.

Spellcasting. Hayreddin is a 7th level spellcaster that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability for bard spells and Wisdom for his ranger spells (spell save DC 17; +9 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following spells from the bard and ranger spell lists:

Cantrips: *mending, true strike, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *longstrider, thunderwave; alarm, fog cloud, hunter's mark*
2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability, hold person, zone of truth*
3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance, fear, sending*
4th level (1 slot): *none*

Song of Rest. After a short rest, if Hayreddin or any friendly creatures who can hear his performance regain hit points by spending one or more Hit Dice, each of those creatures regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

Tactical Focal Point. Hayreddin selects a 10-foot square to be his tactical focal point as a bonus action or as part of the Attack action, choosing a Tactic to apply to it (see page 8). This lasts until he cannot take actions or uses this feature again. Each time Hayreddin completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits for a different one: Area Clear, Cover the Flank, Phalanx Sidestep, Run Away!

Tactical Mastery (9/long rest). Hayreddin uses part of his Attack action or a bonus action to take mastery of the battlefield, granting it to himself and allies within his focal point by expending uses of this feature. A creature that is granted a use of Hayreddin's Tactical Mastery can either regain 2d10 hit points when it is granted (any hit points greater than its maximum are temporary hit points) or use it to deal an extra 2d10 damage with an attack.

FEATS

Brilliant. Hayreddin always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Hayreddin attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Hordebreaker (1/turn). When Hayreddin makes a weapon attack, he can make another attack with the same weapon against a different creature that is within 5 feet of the original target and within range of his weapon.

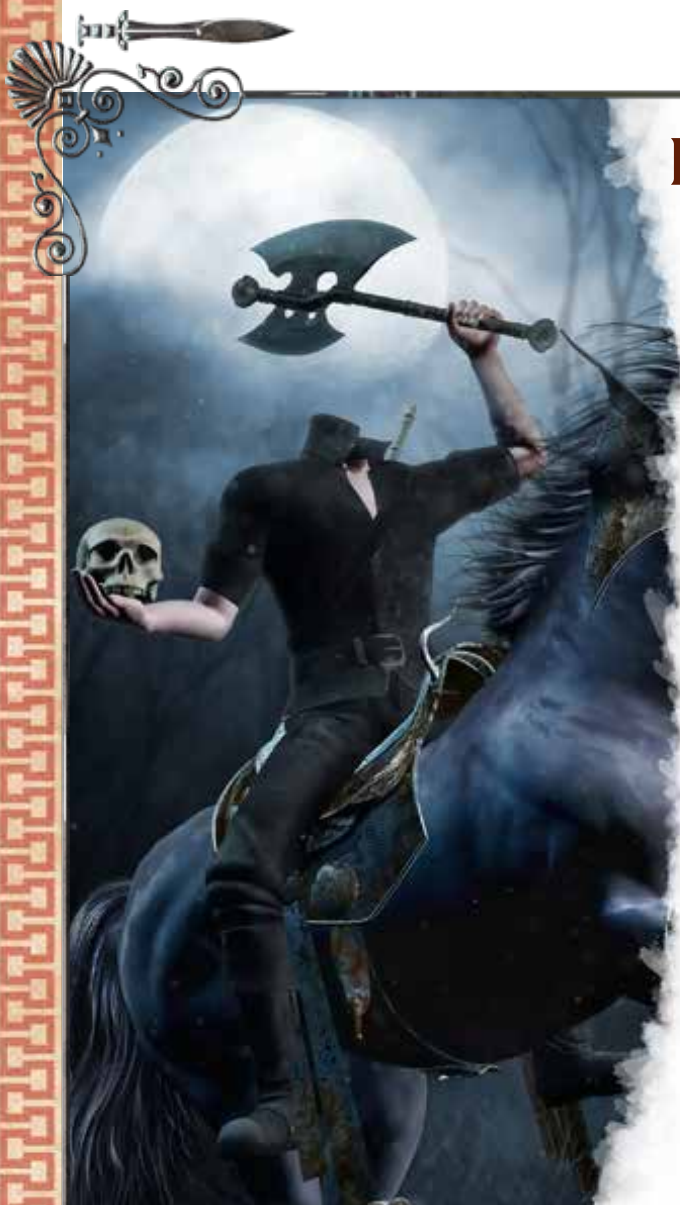
Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Musket. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d12+2) piercing damage.

Tactical Maneuver (4/long rest). Each time Hayreddin completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits (see page 8) for a different one (tactical DC 19): Confounding Maneuvering, Coordinate Blows, Move to Flank.

REACTIONS

Leading Example. When Hayreddin hits a creature with a weapon attack, until the end of his next turn the target of his attack has disadvantage on saving throws against his Tactical Maneuvers.



HEADLESS HORSEMAN

Although a common motif in European folklore, the Headless Horseman didn't really get its footing until *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. In the American tale, a Hessian soldier called Ichabod Crane loses his head when a cannonball decapitates him and, buried without it, he rises to find it.

There are other myths around the world with similar themes. The Dullahan in Ireland is an Unseelie fairy that knows precisely where its head is—tucked under one arm—and wields a spine-whip in one hand. In Scotland he's got no head again, but neither does the horse. In England it gets a little creepier with Gawain and the Green Knight; after being beheaded, the Green Knight picks up his own head and declares he'll be back to challenge Gawain again in a year's time. Germans like to give him a horn and sometimes fire-licking bloodhounds, but the Indians have the coolest version: *jhinjhārs*, heroes that are too stubborn to die and instead fight to protect innocents from unjust or wrongful deaths.

Our Headless Horseman here is the Ichabod Crane myth, with a healthy dose of the Dullahan and its spinal whip.

DESIGN NOTES

Most people associate the Headless Horseman with the Ichabod Crane story but given how nebulous this character is across countries I'm taking the opportunity to make a monster with my favorite parts from each that's ideal for GMs to use for striking a touch of terror in the hearts of players! For the CR statisticians out there, the Headless Horseman came in at 6.5 using the Blog of Holding system and 5.5 from the DMG so I settled on 6.

HEADLESS HORSEMAN

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural)

Hit Points 68 (8d8+32)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Skills Animal Handling +5, Athletics +7, Intimidation +6, Perception +5, Survival +5

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The Headless Horseman can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object. The Headless Horseman can use his bonus action to share his Incorporeal Movement trait with a creature he is touching until the start of his next turn.

Innate Spellcasting. The Headless Horseman's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *phantom steed*

3/day: *gust of wind*, *misty step*

1/day: *blight*

Magic Resistance. The Headless Horseman has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Regeneration. The Headless Horseman regains 5 hit points at the start of his turn. If the Headless Horseman takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Headless Horseman uses its Frightful Presence and attacks once, or he attacks twice: once with his chilling blade and once with his spinal whip.

Chilling Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) magical slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) cold damage.

Spinal Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) magical bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Death's Calling. The Headless Horseman can use an action to place a death's calling on a creature he can see within 60 feet. The target makes a DC 14 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, for 1 minute the target can't use reactions and on its turn, it can use either an action or a bonus action, not both. A target can use its action to repeat the saving throw, ending this effect on itself with a success. In addition, until the target takes a long rest all weapon attacks against it score a critical hit on a roll of 19–20 and it automatically fails death saves.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the Headless Horseman's choice that is within 100 feet of him and aware of him must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the Headless Horseman's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

When he is defeated most of the Headless Horseman's equipment falls to the ground, the magical energies suffusing them fully dissipated—except for the macabre collection of bones linked together to form his unholy whip.

SPINAL WHIP

Weapon (whip), very rare

This magic whip deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage, and when you hit a living creature with an attack using it, the target takes an extra 1d8 necrotic damage.

When you attack a living creature with this weapon and roll a 20 on the attack roll, it

rattles with the death throes of the damned. Each creature of your choice in a 50-foot radius extending from you must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of you for 1 minute. While it is frightened in this way, a creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 50 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If it has nowhere it can move, the creature can use the Dodge action. At the end of each of its turns, a creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.



HERCULES

Perhaps the best known Western mythological figure of all is hitting this book with his incredibly powerful fists. Let's see if it lives up to the task as we take on Hercules! There are plenty of heroes in the myths of Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire—Atalanta, Odysseus, Perseus, Achilles—but they are all in the shadow of the man of might: Heracles. Er, Hercules. Same guy, depending on whether you're a Greek or a Roman!

One of Zeus' many bastard offspring, as a baby Hercules fought off two snakes sent by Hera to kill him—but she didn't stop there. Later on, after he's been wed, she drove him to a fit of madness that ended with him slaughtering his family. So it is he undertook the famous Twelve Labors as penance, the feats for which he became best known. These included slaying the Nemean Lion, the nine-headed Lernaean Hydra, and the Stymphalian Birds, capturing the Golden Hind of Artemis, the Erymanthian Boar, the Cretan Bull, and Cerberus (yes, that Cerberus), obtaining the girdle of Hippolyta, the Mares of Diomedes, the cattle of the giant Geryon, and the apples of Hesperides, and cleaning the Augean stables in a single day. He accomplished all of them with a bit of cleverness and his immense strength.

These were only the beginning of his adventures, and he got into all sorts of trouble (the earth-loving giant Antaeus that he wrestles also appears in this book). He killed a fire-breathing giant, held up the sky for Atlas, rescued the princess Alcestis from the underworld, and freed the chained Prometheus. Hera kept interfering in his life in either mythos, causing the deaths of many with her lethal mischief that plagued him right up until his demise.

Hercules' end came after his final paramour, Deianira, was tricked into touching him with a cursed shirt covered in the blood of a centaur—blood tainted by the poison of the Lernaean Hydra. Hercules succumbed to the poison, and after Zeus recognized his greatness, he ascended to godhood.

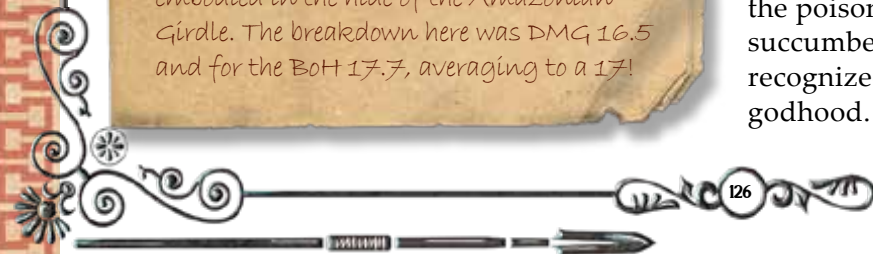
BACKGROUND

Folk Hero. Hercules is always able to rely on the hospitality of commoners to help him hide or rest provided he poses no danger in doing so, going so far as to shield him from being discovered (though not at the cost of their lives).

DESIGN NOTES

Hercules is all about strength! That and beating people with his fists. Folk Hero is an easy background to land on for him but given his divine nature I leaned into the zealot barbarian path before wrapping up the rest with champion archetype fighter levels. The grappling-focused core feats work with the remaining ABIs to give him decent physical stats, and then added

in a belt of storm giant strength embodied in the hide of the Amazonian Girdle. The breakdown here was DMG 16.5 and for the BoH 17.7, averaging to a 17!



HERCULES

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good
barbarian (zealot) 8/fighter (champion) 11

Armor Class 18 (Constitution, *cloak of protection*)

Hit Points 188 (8d12+11d10+76)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +16, Dex +4, Con +11, Int +1,
Wis +0, Cha +1

Skills Animal Handling +5, Athletics +15,
Perception +5, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Greek

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Hercules can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Amazonian Girdle. The Girdle of Hippolyta functions as a *belt of storm giant strength* that increases his Strength to 29. Without it, his Strength score is 20 (Str +11, Athletics +11, CR 14, running long jump distance decreased to 5 feet, Unarmed +11 [1d4+5], thrown +13 to hit, -4 damage).

Danger Sense. Hercules has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, he can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Divine Soldier. Spellcasters do not require material components when casting raise dead or similar spells targeting Hercules to bring him back to life.

Feral Instinct. Hercules has advantage on initiative rolls. Additionally, if he is surprised at the beginning of combat and isn't incapacitated, he can act normally on his first turn, but only if he enters his rage before doing anything else on that turn.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Hercules can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Improved Critical. Hercules' weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Nemean Hide. The impervious skin of the lion so famously slain by Hercules is treated as a *cloak of protection*. Without it, his AC becomes 17 and his saving throw bonuses are all reduced by 1.

Rage (4/long rest). On his turn, Hercules can enter a rage as a bonus action. His rage lasts for 1 minute, ending early if he is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't either attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. Hercules can also end his rage on his turn as a bonus action. While raging, he gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Hercules has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- ◆ When Hercules makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, he deals 2 extra damage.
- ◆ Hercules has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- ◆ Hercules first successful weapon attack on his turn deals an extra 1d6+4 radiant damage.
- ◆ Once per rage when he fails a saving throw, Hercules can reroll it.

Reckless Attack. When Hercules makes his first attack on his turn, he can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until his next turn.

Remarkable Athlete. Hercules adds +3 to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check he makes that doesn't already use his proficiency bonus. In addition, when he makes a running long jump, the distance he can cover increases by 5 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Hercules can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+11 hit points.

FEATS

Brawling. Hercules is proficient with improvised weapons, and he can use a bonus action to grapple a target he hits with an unarmed strike or improvised weapon on his turn.

Grappler. Hercules has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he is grappling and he can use an action to try to pin a creature he's grappled. To do so, Hercules makes another grapple check. If he succeeds, Hercules and the creature are both restrained until the grapple ends.

REACTIONS

Extra Attack. Hercules attacks three times when he takes the Attack action. When he uses a bonus action to engage in two-weapon fighting, he adds his Strength modifier to the damage of his fourth attack.

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d4+9) bludgeoning damage.

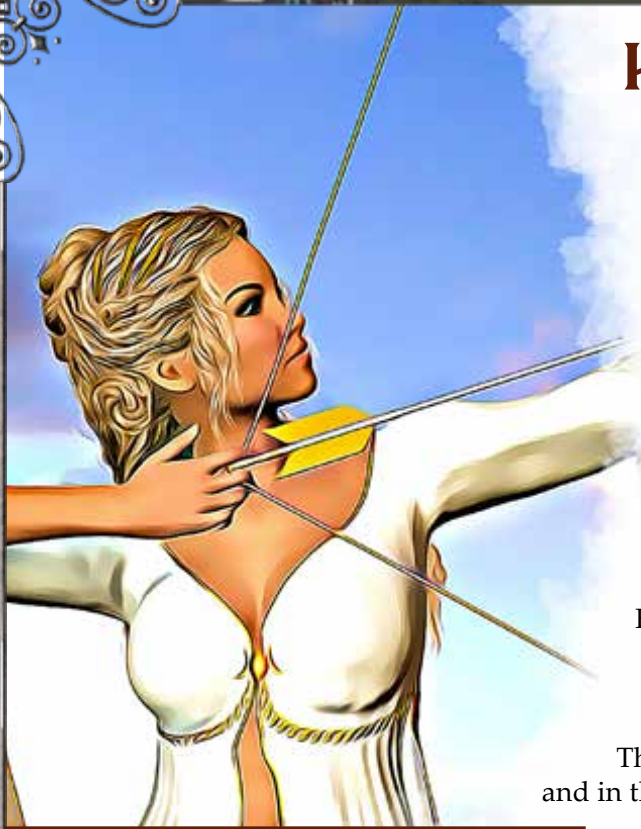
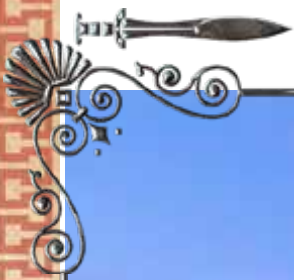
Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (1d8+9) bludgeoning damage.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d6+9) piercing damage, or 13 (1d8+9) piercing damage if wielded in with both hands.

Spear. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d6+9) piercing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d4+9) bludgeoning damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.



HIPPOLYTA, AMAZON QUEEN

We return to Ancient Greece and a queen of the Amazons who plays a part in not just the tales of Theseus but Hercules as well. We're talking about Hippolyta, daughter of Ares, the god of war.

Hippolyta changes from storyteller to storyteller and tale to tale. The start of her encounter with Hercules at least is fairly consistent. The girdle of Ares, which she wore, was the object of his ninth labor. Admete, the daughter of the king of Tiryns, wanted the girdle. After some adventuring Hercules and his crew sailed to Themiscyra, and while Hercules was putting the charm on the Amazon queen, the goddess Hera set about spreading rumors that he had kidnapped her. The situation escalated into a full-fledged battle and in the chaos Hercules slew Hippolyta, took the girdle and then quickly left the island.

Then we get to the Theseus business. Was he on the same expedition as Hercules? Was it earlier or later? Did Hercules interact with Hippolyta at all? Did the two of them strike a romance so intense that she left her people for him? It really depends on who's telling the tale. Generally it's agreed that afterward she's taken to Athens and marries Theseus, sparking off the Attic War—or perhaps not! Maybe he ditched her for Phaedra, inspiring the Amazons to crash the wedding, and *that's* where Hippolyta dies in this story. But who

slew her? Theseus? Or was he fighting back-to-back with her when another Amazon named Molpadia struck a killing blow, or even her sister Penthesilea? Or maybe it was another Amazon entirely or she doesn't die at all and instead has a son with Theseus named Hippolytus. The story of Hippolyta is filled with mystery.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to her position as a ruler, Hippolyta is treated with a measure of respect wherever she goes. She is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see her if requested to do so).

DESIGN NOTES

Given how much of an enigma the actual woman is, I'm opting to focus on making Hippolyta as a classic Amazon warrior-queen able to do everything she expects of her warriors—and to me that means feats! She's got them all—bopping people around with a shield, jumping and climbing, high combat mobility, great on a horse, can pen in opponents, and has excellent ranged prowess. For anyone doing the numbers, she just barely squeaked in at CR 9 thanks to the Blog of Holding Rubric (which put her at 9.4, averaging out with the DMG's 8.75).



AMAZON QUEEN HIPPOLYTA

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral ranger (hunter) 4/fighter (champion) 15

Armor Class 16 (leather, shield, fighting style)

Hit Points 123 (19d10+19)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +8

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +9,
History +7, Insight +7, Persuasion +8

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Greek, Themysceran

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on her turn, Hippolyta can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Colossus Slayer (1/turn). When Hippolyta hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 1d8 damage if it's below its hit point maximum.

Favored Enemy: Beasts. Hippolyta has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track beasts, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Indomitable (2/long rest). Hippolyta can reroll a saving throw that she fails but must use the new roll.

Ranger Features. Hippolyta has the Natural Explorer (forests) and Primeval Awareness ranger class features.

Remarkable Athlete. Hippolyta adds +3 to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check she makes that doesn't already use her proficiency bonus. In addition, when she makes a running long jump, the distance she can cover increases by 3 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Hippolyta can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+15 hit points.

Spellcasting. Hippolyta is a 4th level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as her spellcasting ability. She has the following spells prepared from the ranger's spell list:

1st-level (3 slots): *animal friendship*, *goodberry*, *hunter's mark*

Superior Critical. Hippolyta's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

FEATS

Athletic. Hippolyta can stand up from being prone with only 5 feet of her movement, climbing doesn't cost her extra movement, and she only has

to move 5 feet before making a running long jump or running high jump.

Master of the Shield. While she has her shield, Hippolyta adds +2 to Dexterity saving throws against spells or other harmful effects that only target her and she can use a bonus action to use it to shove a creature within 5 feet when she takes the Attack action.

In addition, Hippolyta can reflexively protect her body with her shield. When she is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Hippolyta can use her reaction to take no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw.

Mobility. Hippolyta can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever she makes an attack against a creature, she doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of her turn.

Mounted Combat. When Hippolyta's mount is attacked, she can make herself the target of that attack. In addition, she has advantage on melee attack rolls when her target is an unmounted creature smaller than her mount (usually any unmounted target of Medium size or smaller). Finally, when Hippolyta's mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Soldier Tactics. A creature hit by Hippolyta's opportunity attack reduces its Speed to 0 until the beginning of the next round and disengaging from Hippolyta still provokes opportunity attacks. In addition, Hippolyta can use her reaction to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 5 feet when it makes an attack against a target other than Hippolyta.

Superb Aim. Hippolyta ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and she doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Hippolyta makes her first ranged weapon attack in a turn, she can choose to take a –5 penalty to her ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Hippolyta attacks three times when she takes the Attack action.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.



HUA MULAN

Another entry in *Mythological Figures* that's had the House of Maus treatment, a warrior-general from ancient China, Hua Mulan!

There's a crater on Venus named after Mulan. More importantly she's one of the most enduring and popular characters in all of Chinese mythology, and because records going back to that area and era of the world are more plentiful, we know at least that she was likely a real person back in 386–536 AD. Her story is told in *The Ballad of Hua Mulan*.

Most of us have seen the animated movie but for anyone who hasn't, here's the lowdown: Mulan's father was conscripted into the army, but fearful for his life, Mulan dresses up as a man and enlists in his place. Her skill and leadership garnered her distinction as a fine soldier over twelve years of service before refusing reward and retiring back home. In early versions of this folktale, while everyone around her to surprised by her true identity, they accept her for who she is. In other, more tragic versions, she takes her own life rather than losing her freedom and becoming a concubine for the emperor.

BACKGROUND

Soldier. Mulan still commands respect from her time serving in the army. Soldiers loyal to the same forces view her as their superior, and Mulan can use her influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, possibly even gaining entrance to military fortresses and outposts

DESIGN NOTES

Mulan has reached a legendary status in Chinese culture so she's fairly high level. That said when she's entirely on her own, she's not going to be a wrecking ball like Thor. Consider using Mulan with other NPCs to use the warlord archetype features to their full effect, increasing her effective CR by +1 (if mooks like guards) or +2 (if using veterans or gladiators). With lots of allies to move around and boost she'll make for an exciting encounter, and given her talents for deception Mulan is somebody that can play a part off of the battlefield as well.

HUA MULAN

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good
monk (kensei) 4/fighter (warlord) 12

Armor Class 18 (breastplate, dextrous parry)

Hit Points 110 (4d8+12d10+16)

Speed 40 ft. (50 ft. when not in armor)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +7

Skills Athletics +7, Insight +5, Intimidation +7, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Chinese

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on her turn, Mulan can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Battle Maneuvers. Instead of moving her speed on her turn, Mulan can allow up to three allies who can see or hear her to move up to half their speed. Only allies able to take actions can benefit from Battle Maneuvers.

Dextrous Parry. When Mulan makes an unarmed strike as part of her Attack action, she gains a +2 bonus to AC until the start of her next turn as long as she is conscious and wielding either a longsword or longbow.

Forward Leader. Creatures that Mulan hits with a weapon attack have disadvantage against her Tactical Stratagems until the end of her next turn.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Mulan can reroll a saving throw that she fails but must use the new roll.

Ki (4 points/short rest). Mulan can spend *ki* points to fuel various *ki* features.

- ◆ **Patient Defense.** Mulan can spend 1 *ki* point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on her turn.
- ◆ **Step of the Wind.** Mulan can spend 1 *ki* point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on her turn, and her jump distance is doubled for the turn.

Path of the Weaponmaster. Mulan treats longswords and longbows as monk weapons.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Mulan can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+12 hit points.

Tactical Focal Point. Mulan selects a 10-foot square to be her tactical focal point as a bonus action or as part of the Attack action, choosing a Tactic to apply to it (see page 8). This lasts until she cannot take actions or uses this feature again. Each time Mulan completes a long rest, she can swap one of these benefits for a different one: Area Clear, Cover the Flank, Phalanx Sidestep, Run Away!

Tactical Mastery (9/long rest). Mulan uses part of her Attack action or a bonus action to take mastery of the battlefield, granting it to herself and allies within her tactical focal point by expending uses of this feature. A creature that is granted a use of Mulan's Tactical Mastery can either regain 2d10 hit points when it is granted (any hit points greater than its maximum are temporary hit points) or use it to deal an extra 2d10 damage with an attack.

Weaponmaster Strike. When she deals damage with a longbow attack on her turn, Mulan can use a bonus action to deal 1d4 extra damage on ranged attacks with her longbow until the end of her next turn.

FEATS

Acting. Mulan has advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Performance) checks made to impersonate. In addition, she can mimic the speech of other creatures she's heard speak for at least 1 minute. A suspicious listener can see through her mimicry by succeeding on a Wisdom

(Insight) check opposed by Mulan's Charisma (Deception) check.

Athletic. Mulan can stand up from being prone with only 5 feet of her movement, climbing doesn't cost her extra movement, and she only has to move 5 feet before making a running long jump or running high jump.

Mobility. Mulan can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever she makes an attack against a creature, she doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of her turn.

Soldier Tactics. A creature hit by Mulan's opportunity attack reduces its Speed to 0 until the beginning of the next round and disengaging from Mulan still provokes opportunity attacks. In addition, Mulan can use her reaction to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 5 feet when it makes an attack against a target other than Mulan.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Mulan attacks three times when she takes the Attack action (she can use a bonus action to attack a fourth time, or a bonus action and 1 *ki* to attack a fourth and fifth time).

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) slashing damage if wielded in one hand or 7 (1d10+2) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

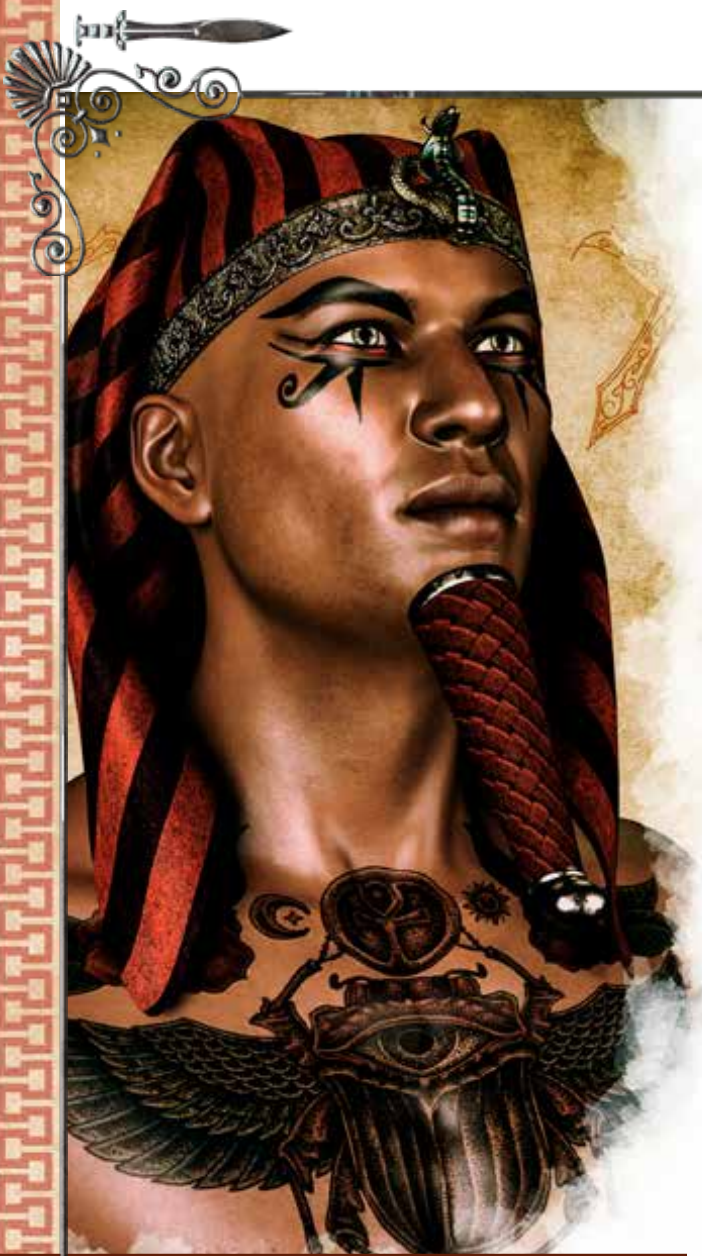
Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

Tactical Maneuver (4/long rest). Each time Mulan completes a long rest she can swap one of these benefits (see page 8) for a different one (tactical DC 16): Confounding Maneuvering, Feinting Attack, Move to Flank.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. Mulan can use her reaction to deflect or catch the missile when she is hit by a ranged weapon attack. When she does so, the damage she takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10+6. When the damage is reduced to 0, she can catch the missile if it is small enough for her to hold in one hand and she has at least one hand free. If she catches a missile in this way, Mulan can spend 1 *ki* point to make a ranged attack with the weapon or piece of ammunition she just caught, as part of the same reaction (+10 to hit, range 20/60 ft., 1d4+2 damage).

Slow Fall. Mulan can use her reaction when she falls to reduce any falling damage she takes by 20.



IMHOTEP

Ancient Egypt begat a man many believe to be the world's first true savant, a commoner who rose to the heights of mortal authority by virtue of his genius and offered counsel to personages no less than pharaohs. So great were his deeds that he rose higher still after his demise, ultimately getting deified. This character was popularized in the movie *The Mummy* but to many throughout history he was the god of medicine and healing: I'm talking about Imhotep!

This fellow initially served King Djoser, the first pharaoh to be entombed in a pyramid (purportedly of Imhotep's design), and then King Sekhemkhet. Not only did he design the Pyramid of Djoser, he was allegedly the first architect to use stone columns to support a building.

Imhotep was credited with bringing about the end of a seven-year famine, rescuing his sister from King Djoser, and defeating an Assyrian sorceress in a magical duel. Two millennia after his death Imhotep was deified as a god of medicine, his cult of followers mixing with those of Thoth, the god of architecture, mathematics, and medicine.

BACKGROUND

Sage. Acumen or fate gently nudges Imhotep toward the answers to his questions. When he fails to recollect or discover more about a subject of lore, he knows where or whom can give him that information (usually from an athenaeum, library, institute of higher learning, another scholar, or mystical creature). The lengths to which he must go to acquire this information and the feasibility of doing so is entirely at the GM's discretion.

DESIGN NOTES

So it's been pointed out that there's no evidence Imhotep was ever a physician, which makes it odd he became the god of healing—unless he had healing magic! With that in mind I'm going to invest his levels into cleric, specifically the knowledge domain. Taking a look at the numbers: the DMG lands him at 6.25 and the Blog of Holding rubric puts him at 7.3, which averages out just under 6.8. If he had more hit points I'd probably bump him up, but as it is now he'll go down pretty fast without someone else to get in the way and take hits on his behalf (you know, like a servant or guard or other underling).

IMHOTEP

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful neutral cleric (knowledge) 8

Armor Class 18 (breastplate, shield)

Hit Points 44 (8d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +5

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Insight +7, Persuasion +8

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Amharic, Coptic, Middle Egyptian

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Channel Divinity (2/short rest). Imhotep can channel his divine energy to fuel one of three magical effects.

- ◆ **Divine Knowledge.** As an action, Imhotep gains proficiency with one skill or tool he chooses. This proficiency lasts for 10 minutes.
- ◆ **Peruse Mind.** As an action, Imhotep forces one creature he can see within 60 feet to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the creature is immune to this feature until Imhotep finishes a long rest. On a failure, for the next minute Imhotep learns the surface thoughts of the creature (what is most on its mind) whenever it is within 60 feet of him. During the duration, Imhotep can use his action to cast the *suggestion* spell on the creature, which automatically fails to resist the spell, without expending a spell slot. Upon casting *suggestion* in this way the feature's other effects end.
- ◆ **Turn Undead.** As an action, Imhotep presents his holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring

the undead. Each undead within 30 feet that can see or hear him must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. When an undead of CR 1 or lower fails its saving throw the creature is instantly destroyed. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Imhotep as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of him. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Potent Magics. Whenever Imhotep deals damage with a cleric cantrip, he deals 4 extra damage.

Spellcasting. Imhotep is an 8th level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared from the cleric's spell list:

Cantrips: *guidance, light, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *command, create or destroy water, cure wounds, identify, inflict wounds, sanctuary*

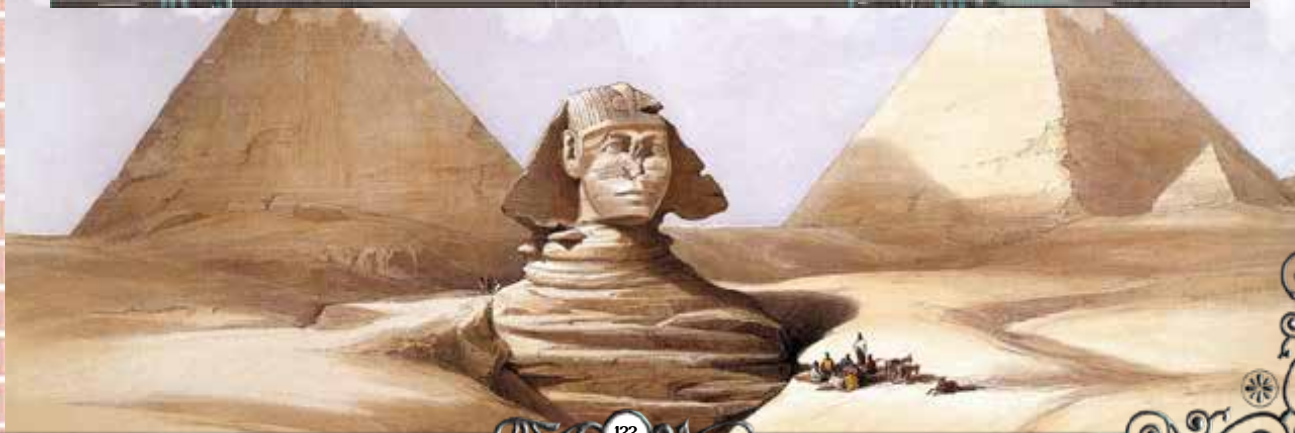
2nd level (3 slots): *aid, augury, hold person, spiritual weapon, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, nondetection, sending, speak with dead, spirit guardians*

4th level (2 slots): *arcane eye, confusion, death ward, stone shape*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.





THE INVISIBLE MAN

Since we have Captain Nemo later in this book, we're continuing that theme with the ever-unseen rogue, a fellow that drank too quickly and deeply from the wishing well and lived to regret his greedy choice: the one and only Invisible Man!

This is a more roguish version of the character in the spirit of the one you'll find in the *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. In the original tale, Griffin was the inventor and experimental subject of his own serum but he burned down his laboratory to cover his tracks, and things went downhill for him from there. His attempts at thievery didn't go so well—he failed to steal clothing from a department store and ended up taking some from a theater—but for a while he managed to get lodgings where he resumed his studies into the reproduction and reversal of the serum that made him invisible.

While trying to keep his secret he enraged a town and fled, committing his first murder with a lead pipe and then convinced a kid named Thomas Marvel to become his proxy. This lad eventually turned on him, and though Griffin thought he'd found an ally in an old medical colleague named Kemp, the doctor turned on him too after the Invisible Man boasted that he would undertake a 'reign of terror' upon the country.

After his death, the Invisible Man's body became visible again, and Thomas ended up with Griffin's damaged notes—though he didn't know Latin or Greek, so it is unlikely the world will ever see the concoction recreated.

DESIGN NOTES

"Mike I'd just use an invisible stalk—" shhhh. Shhhhh. Shhhhhhhhhhhhh. Be quiet, my sweet—that's not what we're doing here. Really, who's going to drink the potion that makes them invisible? The rogue, of course! While I didn't build this statblock as a rogue (thief archetype), I am cherry picking the class features for monster traits.

Which brings us to the compelling bit: doing the numbers. The DMG places the Invisible Man here smack on the nose of 4. Our other indicator, the Blog of Holding, comes out at a lower 3.6 but I disagree with the notion that *invisibility* as a trait doesn't merit a boost. Unless the PCs have some specific spell access (looking at you, see *invisibility*) or are in an area with terrain that gives away his position, the Invisible Man's AC and attack bonuses are effectively 4–5 points higher. That sounds like it's worth at least a small rounding up of the averages, so we're going with CR 4.

INVISIBLE MAN

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +3

Skills Investigation +4, Nature +4, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages English

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, the invisible man can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Invisibility. The invisible man is invisible.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost the invisible man extra movement. When he makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 4 feet.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). The invisible man deals an extra 28 (8d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and

has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the invisible man that isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Stealth. The invisible man can attempt to hide even when he is only lightly obscured from a creature he's trying to hide from. In addition, the invisible man's position isn't revealed when he misses with a ranged weapon attack against a creature he's hidden from, and he does not have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks in dim light.

ACTIONS

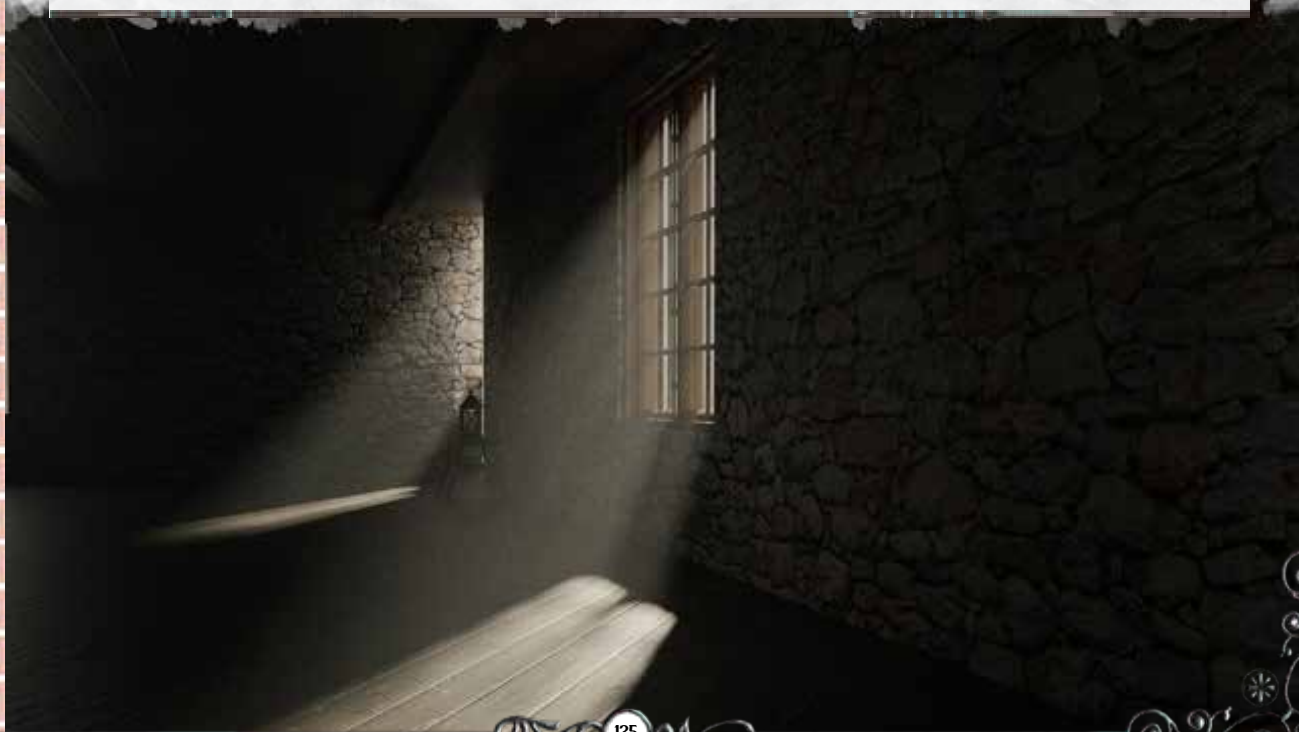
Multiattack. The invisible man attacks twice.

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 bludgeoning damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. The invisible man halves the damage that he takes from an attack that hits him. He must be able to see the attacker.





JEKYLL & HYDE

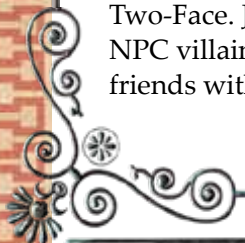
I learned to recognize the thorough and primitive duality of man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both.

In fewer words: here's Doctor Jekyll & Mr. Hyde! We all know this literary classic. Dr Henry Jekyll, an aspiring alchemist that concocted a mixture which transformed him into Mr Edward Hyde, a freakish, monstrous alter ego, unleashing the evil and foulness in his inner soul. The two identities had different appearances—Dr Jekyll was large, fifty-ish; Mr Hyde was small and younger. At first he did it for kicks, but soon began changing in his sleep and beyond his control, Hyde's violence and lust escalating, until Jekyll ultimately took his own life to bring an end to the torturous existence he made for himself—or maybe he didn't. It's unclear!

The gothic novella, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, by the Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson, is an influential work; Marvel fans will recognize *The Incredible Hulk* in this morbid tale, and DC fans will see shades of Two-Face. Jekyll and Hyde would make for a wonderful NPC villain, especially if the player characters become friends with the Jekyll side of the character.

DESIGN NOTES

Dr. Jekyll himself is essentially Sage Douban with some tweaks here or there—the real meat is with Mr. Hyde. Use the monstrous side's incredible mobility, great strength, and Big-Handed Grappling to literally take the party apart, or even throwing the players at each other. Don't forget the chase, either, and make sure any encounter the PCs have with Dr. Jekyll is somewhere that Mr. Hyde can burst out of for an exciting pursuit.



DR. JEKYLL

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 28 (5d8+5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +3, Int +6

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Investigation +6, Medicine +4, Nature +6; alchemist's supplies +9, thieves' tools +6, tinker's tools +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages English, French, Latin

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Alchemists Formulas. Dr. Jekyll knows how to use his Inventor's Sack in order to fuel the following features:

- ◆ **Alchemist's Fire.** Dr. Jekyll uses an action to pull out a vial he throws at a target within 30 feet. All creatures and objects within a 5-foot radius of where it hits make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d6 fire damage.
- ◆ **Acid Flask.** Dr. Jekyll uses an action pull out a vial he throws at a target within 30 feet. All creatures within a 5-foot radius of where it hits make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 acid damage. Objects in the area take 18 acid damage.
- ◆ **Healing Tincture.** Dr. Jekyll uses an action to pull out a curative tincture. A creature that drinks it regains 3d8 hit points. A creature can only benefit from Healing Tincture once per long rest. The tincture vanishes after 1 hour or being drunk (whichever comes first). Dr. Jekyll can only have 1 healing tincture at a time.
- ◆ **Stepping Potion.** Dr. Jekyll uses a bonus action to pull out a potion of swiftness. A creature that drinks it gains a +20 ft. bonus to Speed for 1 minute. The potion vanishes after 1 minute or being drunk (whichever comes first). After using Stepping Potion, Dr. Jekyll cannot do so again for 1 minute.

Attuned. Dr. Jekyll can attune to up to four magic items at a time.

Enchanted Item Research. Dr. Jekyll knows *detect magic* and *identify*, and can cast them as rituals (in which case no material component is required).

Experienced Alchemist. Dr. Jekyll can use an action to identify a potion within 5 feet (as if he tasted it) so long as he can see the liquid. In addition, over the course of a short rest he can use alchemists' supplies to improve a healing potion. If drunk before 1 hour has passed, the improved healing potion restores the maximum amount of hit points it can heal.

Inventor's Sack. Dr. Jekyll has a bag filled with the reagents he needs to do alchemy but if he ever loses it, it takes him 3 days of workings 8 hours each day as well as 100 gp of raw materials to replace it.

Magic Items. Dr. Jekyll has crafted and owns *goggles of night* and *robe of useful items*.

Magic Inventions. Dr. Jekyll can cast an artificer spell with a casting of 1 action over the course of 1 minute instead, expending a spell slot and casting the spell into one mundane item that is not holding a spell. A creature with an Intelligence of 6 or higher that is holding the object can use an action to activate the spell inside (spell save DC 14 or spell attack +6) within 8 hours of Dr. Jekyll's casting. An area of effect spell targets the item holding it. Dr. Jekyll can have up to 3 Magical Inventions at one time.

Spellcasting. Dr. Jekyll is a 5th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). Dr. Jekyll knows the following spells prepared from the inventor's spell list:

1st-level: *detect magic*, *false life*, *identify*, *jump*, *longstrider*

Transformation. When Dr. Jekyll takes a long rest, roll 1d20. On a result of 10 or above, he transforms into Mr. Hyde (see below). He can also cause this transformation by injecting himself with a special serum. When he is knocked unconscious or killed, or at the end of a short or long rest, Dr. Jekyll reverts to his regular form. While he is transformed, the following rules apply:

Dr. Jekyll's game statistics are replaced by Mr. Hyde's statistics. He retains all of his skill proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature, but he recalculates bonuses.

When Dr. Jekyll transforms, he assumes Mr. Hyde's hit points and Hit Dice. When he reverts to his normal form, he returns to the number of hit points he had before he transformed. However, if Dr. Jekyll reverts as a result of dropping to 0 hit points, any excess damage carries over to his normal form and he is knocked unconscious.

Dr. Jekyll's equipment is worn by Mr. Hyde, though it may not be intact after the transformation. Other equipment functions as normal, but the GM decides whether it is practical for the new form to manipulate a

piece of equipment. Dr. Jekyll's equipment doesn't change size or shape to match his new form, and any equipment that the new form can't wear falls to the ground.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.

Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

MR. HYDE

Large humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 92 (8d10+48)

Speed 45 ft..

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +9

Skills Arcana +2, Athletics +10, History +2, Intimidation +4, Investigation +2, Medicine +4, Nature +2, Perception +4; alchemist's supplies +5, thieves' tools +5, tinker's tools +2

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages English

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Assured Strength. Mr. Hyde has advantage on Strength ability checks and saving throws. When Mr. Hyde makes a Strength ability check or saving throw, he can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Big-Handed Grappling. Mr. Hyde has advantage on attack rolls against a creature he is grappling and he can use an action to try to pin a creature he's grappled. To do so, Mr. Hyde makes another grapple check. If he succeeds, the creature is restrained until the grapple ends. Mr. Hyde only needs one hand to grapple a creature of Medium size or smaller.

Incredible Might. Mr. Hyde can lift up 2 tons or more though doing so requires his full

attention and concentration. At the GM's discretion, he can lift (and likely throw) virtually anything he can touch and only requires additional actions to do so when an object's weight exceeds 1 ton.

Leap. Mr. Hyde increases the distances of his horizontal jumps by 30 feet and his vertical jumps by 20 feet.

Regeneration. Mr. Hyde regains 5 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

Siege Monster. Mr. Hyde deals double damage to objects and structures.

Transformation. When Mr. Hyde is knocked unconscious, or at the end of a short or long rest, he reverts to his regular form (Dr. Jekyll; see above).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mr. Hyde attacks three times or throws an object.

Smash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6+7) bludgeoning damage.

Thrown Object. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 250/500 ft., multiple targets (determined by object size; make one attack roll per target). *Hit:* 11 (1d8+7) damage. The damage type depends on the object (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing) and at 100 pounds and every 100 pounds thereafter, the damage increases by 1d8 (up to a maximum of 10d8 1,000 pounds). A creature thrown at an object bigger than it takes regular damage, but only takes half damage when thrown at another creature.

MASTER ALCHEMIST'S TREASURES

d8 Potion

- Fizzy Draught (Very Rare).** After drinking this potion, for the next 1d4 days you are significantly lighter. For the duration, your weight is reduced by 3/4ths, you gain advantage on Dexterity checks and saving throws, increase your Speed by 15 feet, and your jump distances are doubled. In addition, you have disadvantage on opposed Strength checks, disadvantage on saving throws to resist going prone, and take a -2 penalty to melee weapon damage rolls.
- Lifejolt Powder (Very Rare).** When this powder is sprinkled in the mouth of a creature that has died within the last minute, electricity spreads out in a 30-foot radius. Creatures in the area make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) lightning damage. In addition, the dead creature makes a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a success it returns to life with 1 hit point. When *lifejolt powder* is used to return to life a decapitated creature or creature that has died of old age, it takes 20 necrotic damage at the end of each minute. This damage can't be reduced or prevented in any way.
- Halo Potion (Rare).** After drinking this potion, for the next 10 minutes you ignore the resistances and immunities that creatures with the Incorporeal Movement trait have against bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, and you ignore any creature's immunity to the grappled and restrained conditions.
- Potion of See Invisibility (Rare).** When you drink this potion, for the next minute you can see invisible creatures and objects as if they were visible, and you can see into the Ethereal Plane. Ethereal creatures and objects appear ghostly and translucent. In addition, for the duration you have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) and Wisdom (Perception) checks made to find traps or secret doors.
- Perplexing Powder (Rare).** This fine powder resembles flour or another milled grain. It appears to be *dust of dryness*, and an *identify* spell reveals it to be such. There is enough of it for one use.
- You can use an action to throw the powder at a creature within 10 feet. If that creature needs to breathe, it must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or become confused for 1 minute. A confused creature can't take reactions and must roll a d10 at the start of each of its turns to determine its behavior for that turn. 1-3: The creature doesn't move or take actions this turn. 4-6: The creature can act and move normally. 7-10: The creature uses its action to make a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach. If there is no creature within its reach, the creature attacks itself with a melee weapon or unarmed strike.
- At the end of each of its turns, a confused creature can make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw with disadvantage, ending the effect on it with a success. A creature immune to the poisoned condition automatically succeeds on its saving throw. The *lesser restoration* spell can also end the effect on a creature.
- Shot of Ghost (Rare).** When you drink this concoction made from distilled ectoplasm, you become semi-transparent for the next 10 minutes. While semi-transparent, you can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. You take 5 (1d10) force damage if you end your turn inside an object.
- Heavy Draught (Very Rare).** After drinking this potion, for the next 1d4 days you are significantly heavier. For the duration, your weight is doubled, you gain advantage on Strength checks and saving throws, you ignore difficult terrain, you gain advantage on saving throws made to resist going prone, and you gain a +2 bonus to melee damage rolls. In addition, you take a -1 penalty to AC, your Speed is reduced by 10 feet, and your jump distances are halved.
- Potion of Fate (Legendary).** As soon as you drink this potion, you instantly visualize in your mind a creature you are very likely to come into significant conflict with in the future. The mental image is a perfect rendition of the creature in its current state and you instinctively know its name. When the creature is in the direct service of another creature you are destined to have significant conflict with, you receive vague details about its superior and know some of its nicknames. You retain these details forever, even when subjected to amnesia or memory-altering magic like *modify memory*.



JERSEY DEVIL

Meet the Devil of Leeds or, as it is more commonly known, the Jersey Devil! If you know about this creature at all you probably know it as a winged bestial demon picking off people in the state of New Jersey.

The Jersey Devil began with the tale of Jane 'Mother' Leeds, who, after finding herself bearing her thirteenth child, cursed the babe in frustration one stormy night. The child was transformed into a nightmarish creature, which flew away up the chimney and into the woods.

The Jersey Devil has haunted those woods for two centuries. Sometimes it is even seen in the company of the ghost of the pirate Captain Kidd! The area—the isolated Pine Barrens—is known for dozens of supernatural legends, ghosts, and beasts, including the Black Doctor, the Black Dog, the ghostly White Stag, and more.

DESIGN NOTES

There's not much said about this thing except that bullets and cannonfire are ineffective against this creature, so I tried to make that plausible. Aside from that it's got some staying power, and using Blood-Curdling Scream with grappling makes for a fun encounter.

JERSEY DEVIL

Huge dragon, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10+30)

Speed 60 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Realreflection. A mask of illusion covers the Jersey Devil, casting a reflection nearby and concealing its precise location. Attack rolls against it have disadvantage. When a creature hits the Jersey Devil with an attack, this trait stops working until the end of the Jersey Devil's next turn. While it is incapacitated or its speed is reduced to 0, the Jersey Devil cannot use this trait.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Jersey Devil makes three attacks: one with its bite, one with its claws, and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the Jersey Devil can grapple the target (escape DC 16).

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10+5) slashing damage.

Blood-Curdling Scream (Recharge 4-6). The Jersey Devil emits a horrific screech. Each creature within 60 feet of it that can hear it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of the Jersey Devil's next turn. While frightened by Blood-Curdling Scream, a creature must take the Dash action and move away from the Jersey Devil by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If the creature begins or ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to the Jersey Devil, the creature can make a Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, it is no longer frightened.





JOAN OF ARC

Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orléans, was a French hero and leader in the Hundred Years War between England and France. Born to a peasant family, the young Joan began to have visions of the saints beseeching her to drive out the English and see to the coronation of the rightful ruler of France.

Joan was sent by King Charles VII of France to the Siege of Orléans, a major battle of the war at one of the few cities still loyal to the rightful heir. The young commander was successful, ending the siege in just nine days, which won her the support of the clergy, while the English claimed she was possessed by the Devil.

Joan's strategy involved turning the conflict into a religious war, and acting as an inspirational leader and figurehead. She followed the siege with a series of victories, which led to Charles VII's consecration and the final French victory.

Towards the end of the war, Joan was captured by a group of French nobles allied with the English. After several escape attempts, she was tried for heresy and burned at the stake at the age of nineteen, her remains cast into the Seine River. Her executioner later revealed his fear of damnation, having burned a holy woman.

Twenty years after her death, the Pope's inquisitorial court debunked the charges, and declared Joan a martyr. Napoleon made her a national symbol of France nearly 400 years later, and she was finally elevated to sainthood in the early 20th century.

BACKGROUND

Hermit. Joan devoutly believes she has a divine mandate to liberate France from the English.

DESIGN NOTES

It was really, really hard to decide on what sort of build Joan of Arc should have—she infamously preferred to wield her banner in battle ('forty times' better than a sword) but as an NPC it's questionable if she'd be a lot of fun to encounter that way. Ultimately I settled on kicking her off with bard (all about inspiring others), fighter (to provide some oomph when engaged in combat), and then finally paladin (because while in this scenario she might have started out as sort of a crazy person, her faith is vindicated in the end).

JOAN OF ARC

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good bard (valorous) 5/fighter (battlemaster) 8/paladin 2

Armor Class 21 (platemail, shield, fighting style)

Hit Points 107 (5d8+10d10+30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +9

Skills Animal Handling +5, Athletics +8, Insight +10, Medicine +5, Perception +5, Religion +12

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages French

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)



Action Surge (1/short rest). On her turn, Joan can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Bardic Inspiration 1d8 (3/short rest). As a bonus action on her turn, Joan can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d8. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, saving throw, or weapon damage roll it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether a roll succeeds or fails. In addition, a creature can use its reaction when attacked to use the Bardic Inspiration die, adding the result to its AC and possibly causing the attack to miss.

Divine Sense (3/long rest). As an action, until the end of her next turn Joan knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of her that is not behind total cover. She knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence she senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, she also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the hallow spell.

Divine Smite. When Joan hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, she can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 3d8. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

Jack of All Trades. Joan adds +2 to any ability check she makes that doesn't already include her proficiency bonus.

Lay on Hands (10 points/long rest). As an action, Joan can touch a creature and restore a number of hit points to it, up to the maximum amount remaining in this pool. Alternatively, she can expend 5 hit points to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.

Maneuver Master (5d8 maneuver dice/short rest). Joan can expend a maneuver dice to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

- ◆ **Command.** Joan uses her bonus action to forgo one of her attacks and direct a friendly creature who can see or hear her. The creature uses its reaction and makes a weapon attack, dealing 1d8 additional weapon damage on a successful hit.
- ◆ **Disarm.** A creature Joan has hit with an attack takes 1d8 additional damage and makes a DC 16 Strength saving throw or drops one held item of her choice.
- ◆ **Precise.** Joan adds 1d8 to a weapon attack roll.

- ◆ **Sweep.** Joan chooses a creature adjacent to her target and within her reach and on a hit, the adjacent creature takes 1d8 damage (of the same type as the weapon attack).

- ◆ **Trip.** Joan deals 1d8 additional damage and if the target is a creature of Large size or smaller, it makes a DC 16 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Joan can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+8 hit points.

Spellcasting. Joan is a 6th level spellcaster that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16; +8 to hit with spell attacks). She knows or has prepared the following spells:

Cantrips: *mending, message, true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, longstrider, healing word, heroism; bless, divine favor*

2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability, zone of truth; aid*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, sending; revivify*

Song of Rest. After a short rest, if Joan or any friendly creatures who can hear her performance regain hit points by spending one or more Hit Dice, each of those creatures regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

FEATS

Leader's Words. When Joan spends 10 minutes speaking inspirationally, she can choose up to 6 friendly creatures (including herself if she likes) within 30 feet that can hear and understand her. Each creature gains 18 temporary hit points but cannot gain more temporary hit points from this feature until after they have completed a long rest.

Master of the Shield. While she has her shield, Joan adds +2 to Dexterity saving throws against spells or other harmful effects that only target her and she can use a bonus action to use it to shove a creature within 5 feet.

In addition, Joan can reflexively protect her body with her shield. When she is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Joan can use her reaction to take no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw.

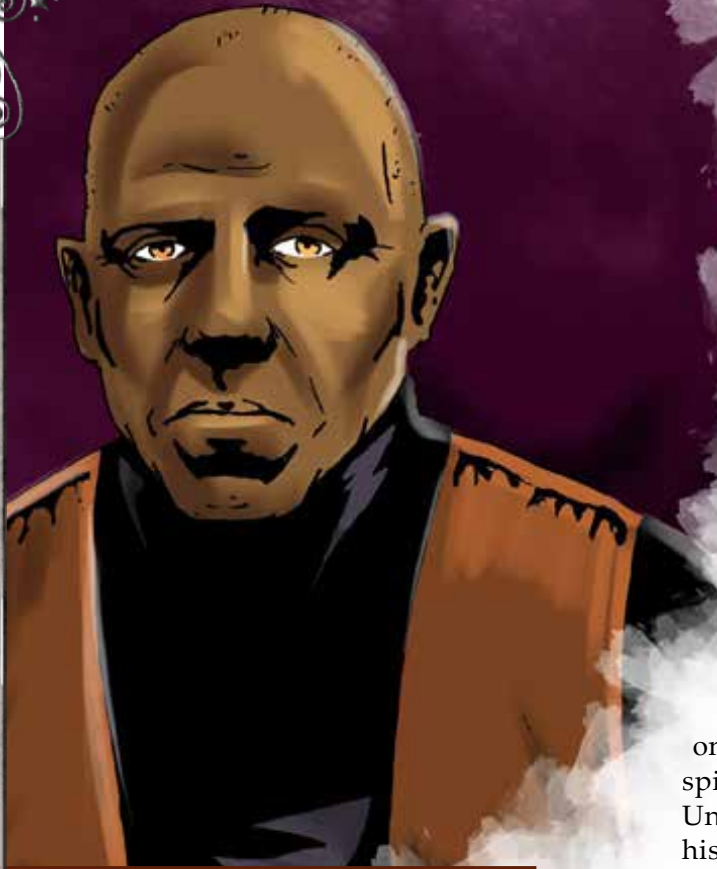
ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Joan attacks twice when she takes the Attack action.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage if wielded in one hand or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10+1) piercing damage.



JOHN HENRY

This entry in *Mythological Figures* is probably my favorite American myth: the steel-driving man known as John Henry!

While there's a lot of contention about where it happened (ranging from West Virginia to Virginia or Alabama, and even Jamaica), there's not much argument about what happened. An industrialist (or inventor or salesman—it's another contention in the folk tale) arrived with a steam-powered drilling machine he claimed could outperform any man, so it fell to John Henry to prove him wrong. For a day-and-a-half the two contestants—one man, one machine—drove countless spikes before finally the machine failed. Unfortunately John Henry died soon after, his heart giving out from the stress.

BACKGROUND

Folk Hero. John Henry is always able to rely on the hospitality of commoners to help him hide or rest provided he poses no danger in doing so, going so far as to shield him from being discovered (though not at the cost of their lives).

DESIGN NOTES

John Henry is as strong and tough as any human can be—and he's got genuine skill when it comes to swinging a hammer. He's got a great position to resist exhaustion (six rerolls), he hits like a tank, and he can attack rapidly, plus the bonus against death saves. Unfortunately he has no armor and no good reason for barbarian levels so his CR is a little low (Blog of Holding rubric at 11.45, DMG chart at 14 so I settled on 13). If you give him some decent armor his challenge rating is going to jump up by at least 2-3. Note that "Prodigious" is not an official feat (though it is very unlikely to be overpowered, cool as it is to carry more stuff around).



JOHN HENRY

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral good fighter (brute) 20

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 190 (20d10+80)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +10

Skills Animal Handling +6, Athletics +16, Insight +6,
Survival +6

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages English

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Action Surge (2/short rest). Once on his turn, John Henry can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Brutal Criticals. John Henry gains a +20 damage bonus when he scores a critical hit.

Brutal Toughness. John Henry gains a +1d6 bonus to saving throws and death saves (treating final results of 20 or higher on a death saving throw as a natural 20).

Fighting Style: Defensive Fighting. John Henry can use a bonus action to activate a defensive stance that lasts until the start of his next turn. During this defensive stance, creatures within his reach provoke opportunity attacks when they move more than 5 feet, and he does not need to use his reaction to make opportunity attacks.

Fighting Style: Great Weapon Fighting. When John Henry rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack he makes with a melee weapon that

he is wielding with two hands, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for John Henry to gain this benefit.

Indomitable (3/long rest). John Henry can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, John Henry can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+20 hit points.

FEATS

Fortune Points (3/long rest). John Henry can spend one fortune point to reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, or to force an attacker to reroll an attack made against him.

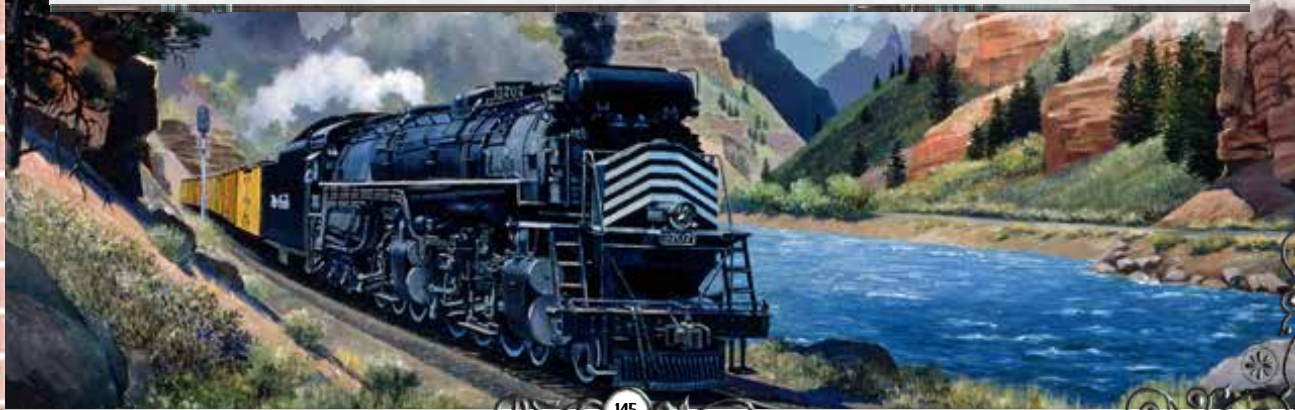
Hammer Mastery. When John Henry has advantage on a weapon attack roll using his maul, on a successful hit as long as both dice have a result that beat the target's AC it is knocked prone. When John Henry misses on an attack roll with disadvantage but would have hit on the higher result, the target takes 5 bludgeoning damage. In addition, when he uses the Help action to aid an ally making a melee weapon attack, the ally both gains advantage and if their target is making use of a shield the ally also gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll.

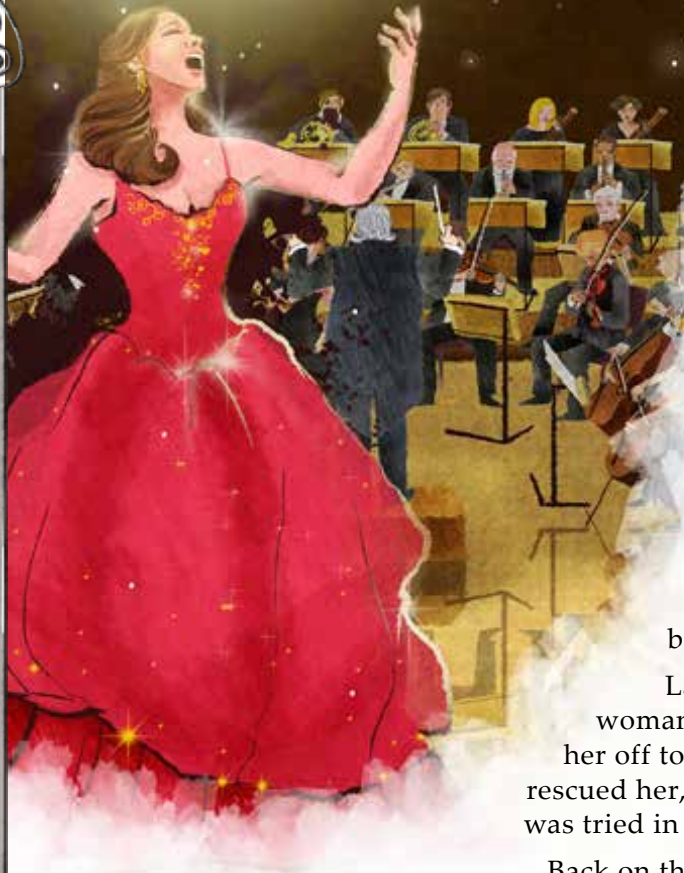
Prodigious. John Henry counts as Large-sized when determining his carrying capacity.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. John Henry attacks four times when he takes the Attack action.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d6+1d10+5) bludgeoning damage.





JULIE D'AUBIGNY ("LA MAUPIN")

The flamboyant 17th century opera singer Julie D'Aubigny, otherwise known as 'La Maupin' has earned a place in today's popular culture, and for good reason—she was the adventurer we all wish we can be.

La Maupin's life was extra-ordinary. Although married, she went on the run with her fencing tutor after he killed an opponent in a duel, and made a living as a traveling minstrel who dressed in men's clothing (although she did not conceal her identity as a woman). She joined the Paris Opéra, and the Marquis de Dangeau claimed that she had the most beautiful voice in the world.

La Maupin then fell in love with a young woman; the girl's family disapproved, and sent her off to a convent. La Maupin followed and rescued her, setting fire to the convent. On the run, she was tried in absentia and sentenced to death by fire.

Back on the road, she encountered a nobleman and dueled him. She badly wounded him, but nursed him to health, and they became lovers.

La Maupin was eventually pardoned for her crimes by the King, and went on to become a star. But that wasn't the end of her story! She managed to get herself challenged to three duels in one night while at a court ball dressed again in men's clothing, and she won all three fights. Dueling being illegal, she was forced to flee once more.

Later, pardoned again, La Maupin returned to the stage. Amongst other things, she got into brawls, defended the chorus girls from lecherous men, took multiple lovers, threatened to blow the brains out of the Duchess of Luxembourg, and attacked her landlord. The crowds loved all this adventure.

Eventually, after her final lover, the most beautiful woman in France, died of an illness, La Maupin joined a convent, where she soon passed away. She was only 33.

BACKGROUND

Entertainer. La Maupin is never without a stage or room to sing for entertainment whether in a queen's castle or a tavern. She receives free accommodations (including a room and meal) each night she performs and is recognized while going about a settlement where she's sung at least one evening (and is typically well-liked for her vocal talents).



JULIE D'AUBIGNY (LA MAUPIN, MADEMOISELLE MAUPIN)

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good
rogue (swashbuckler) 9/fighter (battlemaster) 7

Armor Class 16 (padded armor)

Hit Points 111 (9d8+7d10+32)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Int +6

Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +13, Insight +5,
Perception +10, Performance +13,
Persuasion +13

Senses passive Perception 20

Languages English, French, German, Italian

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On her turn, La Maupin can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). La Maupin can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Duelist's Edge. La Maupin has a +3 bonus to initiative rolls.

Evasion. When La Maupin is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Maneuver Master (5d8 maneuver dice/short rest). La Maupin can expend a maneuver dice to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

- ◆ **Counter.** La Maupin uses her reaction to make a melee attack against a creature that misses her with a melee attack, dealing 1d8 additional damage on a hit.
- ◆ **Disarm.** A creature La Maupin has hit with a melee attack takes 1d8 additional damage and makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw or drops one held item of her choice.
- ◆ **Feint.** La Maupin can use her bonus action to feint against one creature within 5 feet. She has advantage on her next attack roll against that creature as long as it made is before the end of her turn. On a hit she deals 1d8 additional damage.
- ◆ **Lunge.** La Maupin increases her reach by 5 feet for one attack, dealing 1d8 additional damage on a hit.

- ◆ **Menace.** On a successful hit with a melee weapon, La Maupin deals 1d8 additional damage and the target makes a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or is frightened of her until the end of La Maupin's next turn.

Martial Footing. When La Maupin makes a melee attack against a creature on her turn, she does not provoke opportunity attacks from it until the end of her turn.

Rakish Edge. La Maupin can use an action to make a Charisma (Persuasion) check opposed by a Wisdom (Insight) check from a creature able to hear and understand her. On a success, for 1 minute creatures other than La Maupin do not provoke opportunity attacks from the target and the target has disadvantage on attack rolls against anyone but her. The effect ends if a creature other than La Maupin attacks the target or until she is more than 60 feet away from the target. When La Maupin uses this feature on a creature that is not hostile, the target is charmed for 1 minute or until she or her companions harm it.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, La Maupin can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+7 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). La Maupin deals an extra 31 (9d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of La Maupin that isn't incapacitated and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll. La Maupin also deals her Sneak Attack damage if the only creature within 5 feet of her is the target of her attack and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. La Maupin attacks twice when she takes the Attack action.

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 (1d8+7) piercing damage.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/40 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d4+5) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 8(1d6+5) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker La Maupin can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.



LANCELOT DU LAC

We're back in the Arthurian age to design Camelot's greatest—and worst—knight. I'm talking of course about Sir Lancelot du Lac, First Knight of the Round Table!

Raised by the Lady of the Lake, it's no wonder that Sir Lancelot is so wrapped up in contradiction. Despite being a naturally talented knight and a genuine friend to King Arthur, ultimately his love for Queen Guinevere led him to betrayal. Vanquisher of Méléagant, frequently masquerading tournament knight, battling away the affections of Morgan le Fay, Lancelot pined over the queen until his death six weeks after hers. His final, penitance years were spent as a priest.

Lancelot is the archetypal knight—the greatest of the Arthurian age, the best swordsman and jousting in the land, his only weakness being his forbidden passion for his liege's queen. His adventures are legendary, his skill-at-arms unparalleled, and he was a paragon of courage and honor on the battlefield.

Lancelot's son with Elaine of Corbenic was Sir Galahad, who surpassed his father and, as the purest of all knights, found the Holy Grail along with Sirs Bors and Percival.

BACKGROUND

Soldier. Lancelot commands respect from his time serving the Round Table. Soldiers loyal to the same forces view him as their superior, and Lancelot can use his influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, possibly even gaining entrance to military fortresses and outposts.

LANCELOT DU LAC

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral good
fighter (champion) 7/paladin (oath of devotion) 6*

Armor Class 20 (plate mail, shield)

Hit Points 119 (14d10+42)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +4 (with shield), Con +5, Int +3, Wis +6, Cha +9

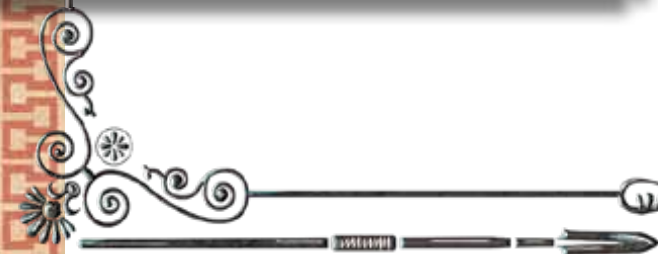
Skills Animal Handling +4, Athletics +8, Deception +7, Perception +4

Condition Immunities disease

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages English

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)



Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Lancelot can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Aura of Protection. Whenever Lancelot or a friendly creature within 10 feet of him must make a saving throw, the creature gains a +2 bonus to the saving throw as long as he is conscious (included above).

◆ **Channel Divinity (1/short rest).** Lancelot can channel his divinity through the two following features.

◆ **Sacred Weapon.** As an action, Lancelot imbues one weapon that he is holding with positive energy. For 1 minute, he adds +2 to attack rolls made with that weapon. The weapon also emits bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light 20 feet beyond that. If the weapon is not already magical, it becomes magical for the duration.

Lancelot can end this effect on his turn as part of any other action. If he is no longer holding or carrying this weapon, or if he falls unconscious, this effect ends.

◆ **Turn the Unholy.** As an action, Lancelot presents his holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring fiends and undead, using his Channel Divinity. Each fiend or undead that can see or hear him within 30 feet must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes damage.

A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Lancelot as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of him. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

Divine Sense (5/long rest). As an action, until the end of his next turn Lancelot knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of him that is not behind total cover. He knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence he senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, he also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the hallow spell.

Divine Smite. When Lancelot hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 3d8. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

Lay on Hands (30 points/long rest). As an action, Lancelot can touch a creature and restore a number of hit points to it, up to the maximum

amount remaining in this pool. Alternatively, he can expend 5 hit points to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.

Remarkable Athlete. Lancelot adds +2 to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check he makes that doesn't already use his proficiency bonus. In addition, when he makes a running long jump, the distance he can cover increases by 3 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Lancelot can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+7 hit points.

Spellcasting. Lancelot is a 3rd-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). Lancelot has the following spells prepared from the paladin's spell list:

1st level (4 slots): *bless, divine favor, heroism, protection from evil and good, sanctuary*

2nd level (2 slots): *aid, lesser restoration, magic weapon, zone of truth*

Superior Critical. Lancelot's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

FEATS

Master of the Shield. While he has his shield, Lancelot adds +2 to Dexterity saving throws against spells or other harmful effects that only target him and he can use a bonus action to use it to shove a creature within 5 feet.

In addition, Lancelot can reflexively protect his body with his shield. When he is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Lancelot can use his reaction to take no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw.

Master of the Sword. Lancelot can use his reaction when wielding a sword to gain a +1 bonus to his AC until the start of his next turn or until he is disarmed. In addition, Lancelot has advantage on opportunity attacks.

ACTIONS

Extra Attacks. Lancelot attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) slashing damage if wielded in one hand or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

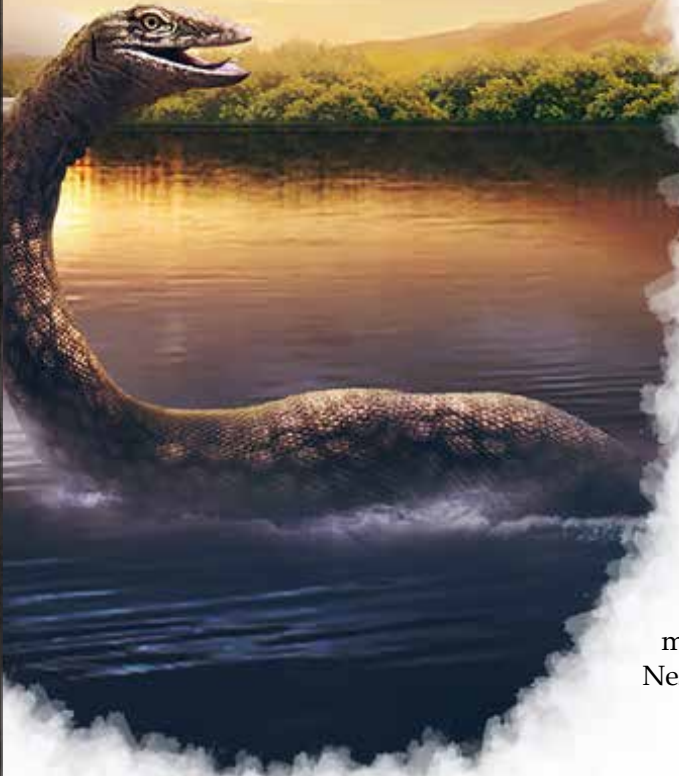
Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

LOCH NESS MONSTER

We head to the Scottish Highlands for one of the most famous mythical beasts in the world—the one and only Nessie, the Loch Ness monster!

First reported, along with who knows how many other fictitious aquatic beasts, at the start of the Middle Ages, when the monster was mentioned in the *Life of St. Columba*, the tale of an Irish monk staying in the Highlands. Modern civilization started to take an interest in Nessie since the *Inverness Courier* published an article about the creature in 1933. Since then photographs and reports of the creature have become commonplace, continuing to this very day.

Some people suggest that Nessie is a plesiosaur. Others think that there may be more than one monster. This version of the Loch Ness Monster is an intelligent, magical water beast.



NESSIE THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d12+30)

Speed 20 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +4, Stealth +9

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages English

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. Nessie can hold her breath for 1 hour.

Magnificent Swimmer. While in the water, Nessie is considered to be under the constant effects of a *freedom of movement* spell.

Meniscus Mirage. While underwater, Nessie can use a bonus action to cast *mislead* without the use of components (spell save DC 12). Only creatures above the water are affected by this trait and it ends whenever Nessie ceases concentrating on it or emerges from the water.

Watery Teleport (Recharge 6). Nessie may teleport (as the spell) from one part of a body of water to another part of the same body of water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nessie attacks twice: once with its bite and once with its tail slap.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8+5) piercing damage.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) bludgeoning damage.

DESIGN NOTES

We could just whip out a plesiosaur for Nessie here and call it a day so I took one, hit it with an *Awaken*, dialed a few things up, and added some traits to make it interesting for both the GM and players encountering, hunting, or chasing it.



LOKI

This is definitely not an entry about one of mythology's greatest liars and manipulators, the master deceiver and traitorous brother of Thor, the Norse trickster god known as Loki!

As is often the case with mythological characters (the Scandinavians especially) there's multiple sources for information about Loki.

Loki is known as a shapeshifter, and enjoys appearing in various guises, both human and animal.

Loki's mischiefs were many, and they often had serious consequences. During a game of 'target practice' in which the gods enjoyed throwing spears at the invulnerable Baldr, Loki engineered his death by giving the blind god Höðr a spear wrapped in mistletoe, the only substance which could harm the god.

Loki finally met his end during Ragnarök when he was slain by Heimdallr.

BACKGROUND

Charlatan. Loki has the papers, clothing, and contacts required to justify an entirely different identity. When Loki has access to an official document or example of a creature's handwriting, he can make forgeries of similar papers (whether personal or official).

DESIGN NOTES

Originally, I was thinking "oh golly he should have glibness" but then realized that with the feats, Expertise, and Reliable Talent that he can't get under a 31 on a Charisma (Deception) check so why bother? There's more sneakiness to get out of him with shapeshifting too—and don't forget the spellcasting either to greatly enhance one of his already ridiculously high skill bonuses (with advantage via enhance ability or a +10 bonus to Stealth from pass without trace, which he can keep concentrating on after changing into a cockroach or what have you). A quick look at the numbers: the DMG lands Loki at 17.2 and the Blog of Holding at 16 which averages out on the lower end, which I'm inclined to agree with. On the outset the huge numbers for his skill bonuses are intimidating, but his magical potency is limited and he's really not designed to stand in the front line of combat (and at 16 he's just a wee bit more powerful than his hammer-loving brother's build in this book).

LOKI

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil
 rogue (mastermind) 17/bard 1/druid (moon) 8

Armor Class 20 (+3 studded leather, cloak of protection, ring of protection)

Hit Points 143 (26d8+26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +1, Dex +13, Con +3, Int +13, Wis +12, Cha +7

Skills Deception +21, Insight +18, Intimidation +13, Performance +21, Persuasion +21, Sleight of Hand +19, Stealth +19; disguise kit +11, forgery kit +11, thieves' tools +11

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Old Norse

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Bardic Inspiration 1d6 (5/short rest). As a bonus action on his turn, Loki can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear him. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check or, attack roll, saving throw, or weapon damage roll it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether a roll succeeds or fails. In addition, a creature can use its reaction when attacked to use the Bardic Inspiration die, adding the result to its AC and possibly causing the attack to miss.

Blindsight. If Loki is able to hear, he's aware of the location of any hidden or invisible creature within 10 feet of him.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Loki can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Evasion. When Loki is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Fast Learner. After Loki has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, he can mimic its

manner of speaking as long as he knows the same language as the creature (allowing him to seem like he is local to a given region).

Liar Through and Through. Loki's thoughts are only readable when he allows it, and he can make a contested Charisma (Deception) check to project whatever thoughts (truthful or falsehoods) he likes. No magic can make Loki tell the truth or determine whether or not Loki is lying.

Reliable Talent. Whenever Loki makes an ability check that lets him add his proficiency bonus, he can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Loki deals an extra 31 (9d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Loki that isn't incapacitated and Loki doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Spellcasting. Loki is a 9th level spellcaster that uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability for bardic spells (spell save DC 21; +13 to hit with spell attacks) and Wisdom for druidic spells (spell save DC 18; +10 to hit with spell attacks). Loki knows the following spells bard's spells and has prepared these druid spells:

Cantrips: *druidcraft*^D, *friends*, *guidance*^D, *produce flame*^D, *vicious mockery*

1st-level (4 slots): *charm person*, *disguise self*, *hideous laughter*, *sleep*, *speak with animals*^D

2nd-level (3 slots): *darkvision*^D, *enhance ability*^D, *pass without trace*^D


3rd-level (3 slots): *conjure animals*^D, *dispel magic*^D, *speak with plants*^D

4th-level (3 slots): *confusion*^D, *conjure woodland beings*^D

5th-level (1 slot): *scrying*^D

Tactician. Loki is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attack a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Loki and is within 30 feet of him.

Tactician's Insight. After Loki has observed or interacted with a creature for 1 minute, he learns whether or not it has higher or lower Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma scores than him. In addition, he learns if the target has more or fewer class levels than him. Loki also knows when he and the target have equal scores in one of these categories.



Wild Shape (2/short rest). Loki can use his action to magically assume the shape of a beast that he has seen before that has a maximum CR of 2. He can stay in a beast shape for 4 hours. Loki then reverts to his normal form unless he expends another use of this feature. He can revert to his normal form earlier by using a bonus action on his turn. Loki automatically reverts if he falls unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or dies. While Loki is transformed, the following rules apply:

- ◆ Loki's game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the beast, but he retains his alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Loki also retains all of his skill and saving throw proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature. If the creature has the same proficiency as Loki and the bonus in its stat block is higher than his, use the creature's bonus instead of his. If the creature has any legendary or lair actions, Loki can't use them.
- ◆ When Loki transforms, he assumes the beast's hit points and Hit Dice. When he reverts to his normal form, Loki returns to the number of hit points he had before he transformed. However, if he reverts as a result of dropping to 0 hit points, any excess damage carries over to his normal form.
- ◆ Loki can't cast spells, and his ability to speak or take any action that requires hands is limited to the capabilities of his beast form. Transforming doesn't break Loki's concentration on a spell he's already cast, however, or prevent him from taking actions that are part of a spell, such as call lightning, that he's already cast.
- ◆ Loki retains the benefit of any features from his class, race, or other source and can use them if the new form is physically capable of doing so. However, he can't use any of his special senses, such as darkvision, unless the new form also has that sense.
- ◆ Loki chooses whether his equipment falls to the ground in his space, merges into his new form, or is worn by it. Worn equipment functions as normal, but the GM decides whether it is practical for the new form to wear a piece of equipment, based on the creature's shape and size. Loki's equipment doesn't change size or shape to match the new form, and any equipment that the new form can't wear must either fall to the ground or merge with it. Equipment that merges with the form has no effect until he leaves the form.

- ◆ Loki's natural weapon attacks made in beast form count as magical for the purposes of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

FEATS

Acting. Loki has advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Performance) checks made to impersonate. In addition, he can mimic the speech of other creatures he's heard speak for at least 1 minute. A suspicious listener can see through his mimicry by succeeding on a Wisdom (Insight) check opposed by Loki's Charisma (Deception) check.

Brilliant. Loki always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

Diplomatic. Loki can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can understand what he says during 1 minute of talking. On a success, as long as Loki remains within 60 feet of it (and for 1 minute afterward) the target is charmed by him. Loki automatically fails on the check if he or his companions are fighting the target.

Master of Intrigue. Loki can use an action to fool one humanoid he can see within 30 feet of him. The target must be able to hear him make a Charisma (Deception) check contested by its Wisdom (Insight) check. On a success, the target is fooled until the end of Loki's next turn or until he attempts to fool a different target. Loki doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from movement around a fooled target and he has advantage when attacking a fooled target. On a failure, Loki can't fool the target for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Magic Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) magical piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Loki can see hits him with an attack, Loki can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

Unintended Target. Loki can use his reaction to cause an attack targeting him to instead target a creature within 5 feet that is granting him cover from that attack.

LÆVATEINN

Lævateinn was forged in the underworld by Loki (who of the Æsir is the one most associated with dwarves) near the doors of death itself, spoken of in the very late Eddic poem *Fjölvinismál*. Some historians believe its translation ends with ‘wounding wand’ while others claim it is ‘wounding twig’, similar to the word for magic staff (*gambantein*). Either way it is this weapon and this weapon only that can kill the golden rooster Víðópnir (which sits in the branches of Yggdrasil and may be tied to Ragnarök, or possibly be another name for Gullinkambi) so that its wing joints (the only things that will suffice) can be used to distract the dogs guarding the flame-encircled castle holding Menglöd, a maiden fated to be married to the hero Svipdagr. The runed weapon awaits within however, protected by the jötunn Sinmara (a storm giant) who will only exchange it for a tail feather from the golden rooster—that can only be harmed by the very same sword, creating a paradoxical task. Its forger and the owner of the chest that contains it can reveal the secrets to bypassing the 9 locks holding its prison closed, although Loki would only ever do so if a cunning price is attached...

LÆVATEINN

Staff, legendary (requires attunement)

Until you are attuned to this staff, it appears to be a rotting quarterstaff or battered longsword. After you have attuned to it however, runes glow along the length of the wood or the blade.

This staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. While wielding it, you can use a bonus action to transform it into a magic longsword or back.



The staff has 10 charges for the following properties.

It regains 1d8+4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff loses its properties and becomes a nonmagical weapon

(whichever form it is in when the last charge is expended).

While it is in staff form, the runes grant access to magic.

Spell Runes. You can use an action to expend 1 or more of the staff’s charges to activate a rune and cast one of the following spells from it (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks): *hideous laughter* (1 charge), *speak with animals* (1 charge), *pass without trace* (2 charges), *dispel magic* (3 charges), *speak with plants* (3 charges), *confusion* (4 charges), *glibness* (8 charges).

You can also use an action to cast the *charm person*, *disguise self*, or *vicious mockery* spells from the staff without using any charges.

While it is in longsword form, the runes channel magic with less finesse and unleash lethal energies.

Death Rune. You can use a bonus action and 1 charge to activate this rune, causing shadows to flow out from the weapon for 1 minute. These shadows reduce dim light in a 40-foot radius to darkness, and bright light in a 20-foot radius to dim light. While the weapon is shadowed, it deals an extra 2d6 necrotic damage to any target it hits. The shadows last until you use a bonus action to speak the command word again, the duration expires, or until you drop the weapon.

Flame Rune. You can use a bonus action and 1 charge to activate this rune, causing flames to erupt from the weapon for 1 minute. These flames shed bright light in a 40-foot radius and dim light for an additional 40 feet. While the weapon is ablaze, it deals an extra 2d6 fire damage to any target it hits. The flames last until you use a bonus action to speak the command word again, the duration expires, or until you drop the weapon.



LUCIFER

Lucifer. The name means “light-bringer” or “morning star”, but this powerful archfiend is the true prince of darkness. The Devil goes by many names: Satan, Beelzebub, Mephistopheles, the Lord of the Flies, the Father of Lies, or simply The Beast or The Adversary. He is the ultimate personification of evil and the Lord of Hell.

A beautiful angel, Lucifer led a rebellion against God. His fall from grace was dramatic, when God banished the archangel and all his allies, damning them to rule in Hell forever more.

Lucifer is often associated with the serpent who deceived Adam and Eve. Deception is a large part of The Devil’s remit, and his appearance varies as often as his name. Dante portrayed him as a giant, winged creature frozen from the waist-down in ice, his three faces each devouring a famous traitor—Judas, Brutus, and Longinus. Later descriptions portray a horned, trident-wielding figure, and the *Book of Revelation* portrays him as a great red dragon. Sometimes he appears as a handsome, charismatic human; other times he is no more than a whisper or a dream.

Whatever his name, and however he chooses to appear, Lucifer is a powerful, malevolent entity; of all the villains and monsters in this book, he is the foulest of—and indeed the cause of—the world’s evils. Any fool that dares challenge, parley, or even bear witness to the Lord of Hell is almost certainly doomed.

Satan’s goals are to corrupt all of humanity, to thwart God’s will at every turn, and to tempt mortals into evil. His power and influence are immeasurable, and his resources incalculable. He - and his demonic minions—are opposed by God’s angels, led by the indefatigable archangel, Michael, leader of divine armies in the *Book of Revelation*.

DESIGN NOTES

To handle the ultimate bad guy of them all, the gloves are coming off—I am unlikely to ever build anything more powerful for 5E than what follows, and any adventuring party going after him will need all the boons, all the artifacts and legendary magic items, and all the luck in the world to succeed. This is a fallen angel but bigger, tougher to hit, more hit points (and hit points gained from traits), faster, harder to damage, able to see further, deals more necrotic damage, has unfettered magic at hand, an RP hook trait to lure foolish adventurers, higher damage output, more devastating soul sucking attack, a much higher DC and attack bonuses, another improvement on Change Shape, and finally some legendary actions (including a means to summon fiends in combat outside of gate). Let’s do the numbers! Without considering legendary actions the DMG lands the Lord of Hell at 30 and the Blog of Holding at a much higher 37.7. Access to so many new minions and the ability to become any creature in the game merits a solid boost so his Challenge Rating comes out at a mighty 35.

LUCIFER

Huge fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 24 (natural armor)

Hit Points 290 (20d12+160)

Speed 90 ft., fly 200 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	27 (+8)	26 (+8)	27 (+8)	25 (+7)	31 (+10)

Saving Throws Con +18, Wis +16, Cha +19

Skills Insight +25, Intimidation +28, Perception +25, Persuasion +28, Sleight of Hand +26, Stealth +26

Damage Resistances acid, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from magical weapons

Damage Immunities cold, fire, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, diseased, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, prone

Senses darkvision 300 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 35

Languages all, telepathy 300 ft.

Challenge 35 (255,000 XP)

Corrupted. Lucifer's natural and weapon attacks are magical. When he hits with a melee attack, he deals an extra 6d12 necrotic damage (included in the attack).

Infernal Tongue. It is impossible to tell when Lucifer is lying. Additionally, no matter what he says, magic that would determine if Lucifer is telling the truth indicates that he is being truthful, and magic cannot reveal his alignment.

Innate Spellcasting. Lucifer's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 27, +19 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *detect magic*, *freedom of movement*

At will: *animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *black tentacles*, *charm monster*, *chill touch*, *create undead*, *death ward*, *detect evil and good*,

disintegrate, *dispel evil and good*, *dispel magic*, *dominate monster*, *eyebite*, *hellish rebuke* (as a 5th-level spell), *improved invisibility*, *invisibility*, *finger of death*, *harm*, *mass suggestion*, *plane shift*, *produce flame*, *planar ally*, *suggestion*, *teleport*, *vampiric touch*, *wall of fire*

3/day each: *gate*, *incendiary cloud*, *imprisonment*, *time stop*, *weird*, *wish*

King of Darkness. Lucifer can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Lucifer fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Lucifer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Regeneration. Lucifer regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.


Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, Lucifer can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Unholy Boon. Lucifer can use his action to touch a creature, granting it infernal power in exchange for something precious to it. For the next 24 hours, each round the creature can roll 1d12 and add it to any ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lucifer uses his Frightful Presence. He then makes three melee attacks or he uses Soulsucking Touch and makes two melee attacks.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +19 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d8+10) slashing damage plus 39 (6d12) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Lucifer regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if



this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. If a humanoid is slain in this way, a fiend (with a CR equal to its CR + 3 or its level + 2) rises from the corpse 1 minute later. If a deva, planetar, or solar is slain in this way, a new fallen angel rises from the corpse 1d4 minutes later.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Lucifer's choice that is within 300 feet of him and aware of him must succeed on a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Lucifer's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Soulsucking Touch. Lucifer reaches out at a creature within 50 feet that he can see, drawing away its life force. The target makes a DC 27 Charisma saving throw or reduces its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores by 1d8 (roll separately for each). On a failure by 5 or more, the target rolls d10s instead. The target dies if this reduces an ability score to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a humanoid is slain in this way, a fiend (with a CR equal to its CR + 3 or its level +2) rises from the corpse 1 round later. If a deva, planetar, or solar is slain in this way, a new fallen angel rises from the corpse 1 minute later.

Change Shape. Lucifer magically polymorphs into any creature that has a challenge rating no higher than his own, or back into his true form. Lucifer reverts to his true form if he dies. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (his choice).

In a new form, Lucifer retains his alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, lair actions, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. His statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, including any lair actions of that form.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Lucifer can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. He regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

- ◆ **Attack.** Lucifer makes a melee attack.
- ◆ **Spell (Costs 2 Actions).** Lucifer innately casts a spell.
- ◆ **Conjure Fiend (Costs 3 Actions).** Lucifer summons a fiend of challenge rating 15 or lower, which appears in an unoccupied space that he can see within 90 feet. The fiend disappears when it drops to 0 hit points. It obeys any verbal commands that Lucifer issues to it (no action required by him). If he doesn't issue any commands to the fiend, it acts freely.







MARY READ

Born in 1685 in England, Mary Read was presented as a boy to gain access to her grandmother's money. It worked, and Mary kept the ruse going, first as a foot-boy then as a sailor, and then as a soldier in the British Army. Although a talented combatant she left the military to marry a Flemish soldier, the two acquiring The Three Horeshoes inn in The Netherlands. When he died however, Mary donned her disguise again and signed up with the Netherlands military before jumping on a ship headed to the West Indies.

Pirates took the vessel... and she joined them! Mary took the King's pardon and became a privateer for a short time before engaging in mutiny. By 1720 she—still disguised as a man—joined Calico Jack and Anne Bonny's crew, stealing the sloop *William* from Nassau. Later that year a pirate hunter, Captain Jonathan Baret, ambushed the *William's* crew while they were all drunk. The pirates made a poor show of it and only Mary and Anne put up a fight, Calico Jack eventually surrendering and asking for quarter. He and his crew were hanged for piracy but the women revealed their genders and that both of them were pregnant ('pleading the belly'), and convinced the court to stay their executions. Fever is said to have overtaken Mary in April of 1721, and with no record of birth it's thought that Mary was buried with her unborn child.

BACKGROUND

Charlatan. Mary has the papers, clothing, and contacts required to justify an entirely different identity. When Mary has access to an official document or example of a creature's handwriting, she can make forgeries of similar papers (whether personal or official).

DESIGN NOTES

With Grace O'Malley, Anne Bonny, and Ching Shih this book has got a serious collection of fierce lady pirates! In Mary's case it seems that she had a big penchant for disguising herself so we're going to lean into that for her build (the Mastermind archetype), and beyond that keep in mind her military background. The latter says soldier to me which is Champion territory, and then we'll use her ASI's as an

opportunity to elaborate on both those qualities with the Actor and Sentinel feats. Looking at the numbers the DMG lands at 6.25 and the Blog of Holding at 7.4, averaging out to 6.825. Usually I'm inclined to round up but there's not that much pulling for Mary to have a higher CR (Improved Critical and one extra turn during combat don't feel like they have enough extra weight to justify that).

MARY READ

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
 rogue (mastermind) 6/fighter (champion) 5

Armor Class 17 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 76 (6d8+5d10+22)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +5

Skills Athletics +5, Deception +10, Insight +8,
 Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +11;
 disguise kit +9, forgery kit +5, thieves' tools +7

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages English, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on her turn, Mary can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Mary can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Evasion. When Mary is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Improved Critical. Mary's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Mary can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+4 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Mary deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Mary that isn't incapacitated and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactician. Mary is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Mary and is within 30 feet of her.

FEATS

Acting. Mary has advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Performance) checks made to impersonate. In addition, she can mimic the speech of other creatures she's heard speak for at least 1 minute. A suspicious listener can see through her mimicry by succeeding on a Wisdom (Insight) check opposed by Mary's Charisma (Deception) check.

Soldier Tactics. A creature hit by Mary's opportunity attack reduces its Speed to 0 until the beginning of the next round and disengaging from her still provokes opportunity attacks. In addition, Mary can use her reaction to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 5 feet when it makes an attack against a target other than her.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Mary attacks twice when she takes the Attack action.

Saber. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) slashing damage.

Dagger (4). Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Pistol (4). Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Mary can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.





MĀUI

It's about time *Mythological Figures* had some fun in the surf and sun. Who better to make that happen than the island fishing, fire stealing, sun slowing Māui?

Māui is a major figure all across the Pacific Ocean. The Māori in what's today called New Zealand have legends about him, there are Māui stories out in the Hawaiian Islands, and more still across the whole of Polynesia. This tattooed fellow plays the role of a clever trickster wherever he appears.

Māui has a ton of exploits across various cultures and there's a fair bit of variation between them. He is credited with creating the North Island of New Zealand (or Hawaii, or the Tongan islands), which is actually a giant fish he caught with a magical fish hook, and with persuading the sun god to spend longer traveling across the sky. He stole the secret of fire from the gods and gave it to the world. In some legends he is even responsible for earthquakes, or for holding up the sky!

Many of the stories about Māui, whether Māori, Hawaiian, Tongan, Tahitian, Samoan, or Mangarevan involve him discovering fire, creating islands, and binding the sun. He's usually a folk hero rather than a deity, but his exploits certainly vary in scale!

DESIGN NOTES

Boy howdy we're in for a ride with this guy. Maui is a shapeshifting trickster god and that's easy enough to do, but the rest of his myth—the immense strength to affect the sun, dragging islands up out of the bed of the ocean—mean he's got to be incredibly strong as well, both in his ability score and traits. To represent his role with fire Maui's staff *Atua-tane* is getting treated as a staff of fire. Finally there's the magical fishhook which is cautiously being called *Manaiakalani* and treated as a very directional, focused wish spell. I'm very tempted to toss in some *Legendary Actions* to maybe summon giant waves or throw opponents around, but Maui's exploits don't really trend that way so to compensate a little bit for the action economy at high level play he's getting *Divine Action*. Let's do the numbers! The DMG puts Maui at 25.2 and the *Blog of Holding* flat on 24 even, but with the power locked away in that semi-wish trait and an extra (almost full) turn every couple rounds, it's an easy argument to round him up to Challenge Rating 25.



MĀUI

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 345 (30d8+210)

Speed 60 ft., climb 45 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
33 (+11)	21 (+5)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +13, Int +12, Wis +12

Skills Animal Handling +12, Athletics +27, Deception +23, Insight +12, Nature +12, Perception +12, Persuasion +15, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +13, Survival +12

Damage Resistance fire

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened

Senses passive Perception 22

Languages Hawaiian, Mangareva, Māori, Samoan, Tahitian, Tongan

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

Change Shape. Maui magically polymorphs into a beast that has a challenge rating equal to or less than his own, or back into his true form. Maui reverts to his true form if he dies. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (Maui's choice).

In a new form, Maui retains his alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. His statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any legendary actions of that form.

Divine Action (Recharge 5–6). At the end of the round, Maui can move his Speed and take an additional action.

Divine Might. Maui has advantage on Strength saving throws and ability checks. In addition, Maui counts as Gargantuan size when calculating his carrying capacity (3,960 pounds), and he can use his action and bonus action to drag, lift, or pull far any weight (up to a total at the GM's

discretion).

Magic Resistance. Maui has advantage on saving throws made against spells and other magical effects.

Manaiakalani (1/Day). Maui carries a magic fishhook able to catch anything, even objects that can alter the very foundations of reality. He can use an action to cast *Manaiakalani* into the seawater and state the name of any creature or object that he cannot see within the range of his sight. At the start of the next round, the stated creature or object appears grappled on the end of Maui's fishhook. A creature attempting to escape from *Manaiakalani* must succeed on an opposed Strength (Athletics) check against Maui.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Maui attacks five times when he takes the Attack action.

Atua-tane (Staff of Fire; 10 charges).

Melee Weapon Attack: +19 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 14 (1d8+11) magical bludgeoning damage. While holding it, Maui can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it (spell save DC 23): *burning hands* (1 charge), *fireball* (3 charges), or *wall of fire* (4 charges). The staff regains 1d6+4 expended charges daily at dawn. When Maui expends the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff blackens, crumbles into cinders, and is destroyed.

Iraiapatapata. Melee or Ranged Weapon

Attack: +19 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 40/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 18 (2d6+11) magical bludgeoning damage, and the target makes a DC 27 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone. Immediately after hitting or missing the target after it is thrown, *Iraiapatapata* reappears in Maui's hand.



MERLIN AMBROSIUS

Merlin, a prominent figure of Arthurian legend, is easily the world's most famous wizard. Traditionally, Merlin is a cambion: his mother was a mortal nun, and his father an incubus, and the source of his great powers. He is known as a druid, an enchanter, a diviner, a magician, and a wise advisor to the greatest king who ever lived on the British Isles.

There are many different versions of Merlin throughout history and, indeed, modern culture. In some legends, Merlin was responsible for erecting Stonehenge in Salisbury, and in others he is a wild man of the woods, or a shapeshifter. In most he is a diviner and a seer. In many ways, Merlin is the archetypal wizard and the inspiration for many to come.

Before Arthur arrived on the scene, Merlin served King Vortigen. The King's castle kept collapsing, but Merlin solved the conundrum—two dragons, one red, one white, battled in a pool beneath. These two dragons symbolised the Britons and the Saxons.

Merlin later served Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon, whose symbol was a dragon. He was responsible for arranging King Arthur's birth—he disguised Uther so that he could sneak into the kingdom of Tinatgel to be with Igraine, his enemy's wife. The wizard oversaw Arthur's ascendance, setting the legendary test of the sword in the stone, and remained his advisor in Camelot until eventually dispatched by his infatuation, the Lady of the Lake. Legend says that he was buried in the forest of Brocéliande, although it is also said that he is not dead, but imprisoned.

BACKGROUND

Sage. Acumen or fate gently nudges Merlin toward the answers to his questions. When he fails to recollect or discover more about a subject of lore, he knows where he can get that information (usually from an athenaeum, library, institute of higher learning, another scholar, or mystical creature). The lengths to which he must go to acquire this information and the feasibility of doing so is entirely at the GM's discretion.

DESIGN NOTES

You can go look it up but other D&D designers decided to give Merlin a druid/wizard build so I've fallen back on that. There aren't rules for above 20th characters however, and though I am wont to do so I've done gone and jumped the fence so he can get that full-blown wild shape and knowledge of 9th level spells (non-

ritual spells anyway) instead of just spell slot access. The Ageless feature is also not from the core rules, but everything else (ability scores, proficiency bonus, many, many features) is straight out of the core (using the monster progression for proficiency, obviously). For the numbers-oriented among you that crunch out his CR it should be one lower but I reckoned that all those spell slots merited an extra little bump.

MERLIN AMBROSIUS

Medium humanoid (tiefling), neutral good wizard
(illusionist) 17/druid (circle of the shepherd) 8

Armor Class 18 (*mage armor, ring of protection, staff of power*)

Hit Points 120 (17d6+8d8+25)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +5, Con +4, Int +16,
Wis +15, Cha +3

Skills Arcana +13, History +13, Insight +12,
Investigation +13

Damage Resistances fire

Senses passive Investigation 28, passive
Perception 19

Languages Druidic, Infernal, Olde English, Sylvan

Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Ageless. Merlin does not age, cannot suffer from frailty of old age, die from old age, or be aged magically.

Arcane Recovery (1/day). When Merlin finishes a short rest, he can choose to recover expended spell slots of a combined level that is equal to or less than 9th-level (although no single recovered spell may be higher than 6th-level).

Augmented Summoning. When Merlin conjures a fey or beast, the creature gains 2 hit points per Hit Die, and damage from its natural weapons is considered magical for the purpose of overcoming immunity and resistance to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Improved Figmentation. Merlin is able to simultaneously create a sound and image when he casts *minor illusion*.

Infernal Legacy. Merlin can cast *hellish rebuke* as a 2nd-level spell (DC 16), and he can cast *darkness*. These spells use Charisma for his spellcasting ability and once Merlin has cast one of them, he cannot cast it again until he finishes a long rest.

Instant Mirroring (1/short rest). Merlin can use his reaction when he is attacked by a creature to create an illusory duplicate of himself. The creature attacks this illusion, causing it to dissipate, and the attack misses Merlin.

Malleable Figments. Merlin can use an action to alter his own illusion spells so long as the spell has a duration of at least 1 minute.

Owl Spirit (1/short rest). Merlin can use a bonus action to conjure an incorporeal owl at a point he can see within 60 feet. He can also use a bonus action to move the owl up to 60 feet to a point he can see. The owl remains for 1 minute or until Merlin is incapacitated. You and your companions have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks while within 30 feet of the owl, and when a creature within 30 feet of the owl makes an attack roll Merlin can use his reaction to grant advantage to the creature's attack roll.

Spellcasting. Merlin is a 20th-level spellcaster that uses either Intelligence or Wisdom^D as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 21 or DC 20^D; +15 or +14^D to hit with spell attacks). Merlin has the following spells prepared from the wizard and druid^D spell lists, although it is rumored that he's gathered the formula for all arcane magic in his countless tomes:

Cantrips: *acid splash, fire bolt, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, ray of frost; druidcraft^D, guidance^D, mending^D; thaumaturgy*

1st-level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield; cure wounds^D, thunderwave^D*

2nd-level (3 slots): *arcane lock, locate object; animal messenger^D, enhance ability^D, pass without trace^D, spike growth^D*

3rd-level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt, major image, protection from energy; conjure animals^D, meld into stone^D, speak with plants^D*

4th-level (3 slots): *confusion, dimension door, stonewall, freedom of movement^D, hallucinatory terrain^D, wall of fire^D*

5th-level (3 slots): *hold monster, scrying, telekinesis*

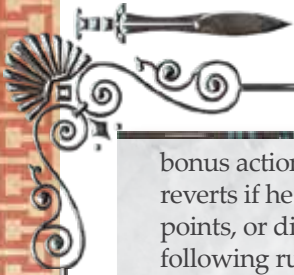
6th-level (3 slots): *true seeing*

7th-level (3 slots): *teleport*

8th-level (3 slot): *power word stun*

9th-level (2 slot): *foresight*

Wild Shape (2/short rest). Merlin can use his action to magically assume the shape of a beast that he has seen before that has a maximum CR of 1. He can stay in a beast shape for 4 hours. Merlin then reverts to his normal form unless he expends another use of this feature. He can revert to his normal form earlier by using a



bonus action on his turn. Merlin automatically reverts if he falls unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or dies. While Merlin is transformed, the following rules apply:

- ◆ Merlin's game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the beast, but he retains his alignment, personality, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Merlin also retains all of his skill and saving throw proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature. If the creature has the same proficiency as Merlin and the bonus in its stat block is higher than his, use the creature's bonus instead of his. If the creature has any legendary or lair actions, Merlin can't use them.
- ◆ When Merlin transforms, he assumes the beast's hit points and Hit Dice. When he reverts to his normal form, Merlin returns to the number of hit points he had before he transformed. However, if he reverts as a result of dropping to 0 hit points, any excess damage carries over to his normal form.
- ◆ Merlin can't cast spells, and his ability to speak or take any action that requires hands is limited to the capabilities of his beast form. Transforming doesn't break Merlin's concentration on a spell he's already cast, however, or prevent him from taking actions that are part of a spell, such as *call lightning*, that he's already cast.
- ◆ Merlin retains the benefit of any features from his class, race, or other source and can use them if the new form is physically capable of doing so. However, he can't use any of his special senses, such as darkvision, unless the new form also has that sense.
- ◆ Merlin chooses whether his equipment falls to the ground in his space, merges into his new form, or is worn by it. Worn equipment functions as normal, but the GM decides whether it is practical for the new form to wear a piece of equipment, based on the creature's shape and size. Merlin's equipment doesn't change size or shape to match the new form, and any equipment that the new form can't wear must either fall to the ground or merge with it. Equipment that merges with the form has no effect until he leaves the form.

Woodstongue. Merlin can be understood by beasts, and he is able to understand their grunts and pantomime.

FEATS

Brilliant. Merlin always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

Perceptive. Merlin is able to read lips.

War Magic. Merlin has advantage when he is concentrating on a spell and has to make a Constitution saving throw from taking damage, he can wield weapons or a shield in both hands and still make somatic components for spellcasting, and can use his reaction to cast a spell (maximum casting time: 1 action) at a creature that provokes an opportunity attack from him.

ACTIONS

Staff of Power (20 charges). *Melee Weapon*
Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 6 (1d8+2) magical bludgeoning damage. On a hit, Merlin can expend 1 charge to deal an extra 1d6 force damage to the target.

Merlin can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it (spell save DC 19, +13 to hit with spell attacks): *cone of cold* (5 charges), *fireball* (5th-level version, 5 charges), *globe of invulnerability* (6 charges), *hold monster* (5 charges), *levitate* (2 charges), *lightning bolt* (5th-level version, 5 charges), *magic missile* (1 charge), *ray of enfeeblement* (1 charge), or *wall of force* (5 charges).

Retributive Strike. Merlin can use an action to break the *staff of power*, releasing its remaining magic in an explosion that fills a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on it. There's a 50% chance Merlin instantly travels to a random plane (avoiding the explosion) otherwise he takes force damage equal to 16 × the number of charges in the staff.

Every other creature in the area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes an amount of force damage based on how far away it is from the point of origin (8 × charges if within 10 ft., 6 × charges if within 10 ft.–20 ft., 4 × charges if within 20 ft.–30 ft.). On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage.

In some legends, the wizard Merlin collected the thirteen treasures of the Island of Britain, and was buried with them. In others, they are stored, waiting Arthur's return.

Throughout the middle of the second millenium Welsh myths include *Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain*, and although some of them may change depending on the text in question, there are always thirteen. These particular treasures are similar to magic items from the core rules.

Dyrnwyn, the Sword of Rhydderch Hael (very rare). This *longsword flame tongue* only alights when wielded by you if you are worthy or of noble birth (and after finding this out none would willingly use Dyrnwyn the Generous' blade).

Horn of Brân Galed (uncommon). As it was owned by a stingy northern nobleman (transformed into a superior human by the bard Taliesin), despite its remarkable quality ("whatever drink might be wished for was found in it"), this horn (which functions as a *jug of alchemy*) was rarely shared.

Chariot of Morgan Mwynfawr (very rare). While you are driving this magical vehicle, you can choose for it to rapidly transport you and your occupants to whatever destination you wish to go (as a *helm of teleportation*).

Mantle of Arthur in Cornwall (legendary; requires attunement). While you wear this mantle over your head, you become invisible (as a *ring of invisibility*).

Mantle of Tegau Gold-Breast (uncommon; requires attunement by a virtuous adventurer). This *cloak of protection* was once worn by a Welsh heroine.

Stone and Ring of Eluned the Fortune (legendary; requires attunement). Merlin once carried this *ring of invisibility*.

HAMPER OF GWYDDNO GARANHIR & KNIFE OF LLAWFRODEDD THE HORSEMAN

Wondrous items, rare

You can use an action to cast *create food and water* by putting food into this large wooden basket or using this cutting knife to prepare a handful of food. You cannot use food created in this way to activate either of these magic items.

HANDY HALTER

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This noosed strap (also known as the Halter of Clydno Eiddyn as it was long stapled to the foot of his bed) has 3 charges. While holding it, you can use an action and expend 1 charge to cast the *find steed* spell from it. The rope regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

CAULDRON OF DYRNWCH THE GIANT

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a brave adventurer)

When you speak the command word this Medium-sized 50 pound cauldron glows red-hot. Any creature in physical contact with the object takes 2d8 fire damage. You can use a bonus action on each of your subsequent turns to cause this damage again. Liquid inside of the cauldron immediately comes to a roiling boil. If a creature is in the liquid, it must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion in addition to taking damage.

WHETSTONE OF TUDWAL TUDGLYD

Wondrous item, rare

When you spend 1 minute using this unremarkable-looking whetstone to sharpen a blade, if you are a fine warrior the next time you deal damage with that weapon, you deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage. If you are a coward however, for the next 24 hours you deal the minimum amount of damage with that weapon.

COAT OF PADARN BEISRUDD

Armor (medium), very rare (requires attunement by a brave adventurer)

While you are attuned to and wearing this suit of fine chainmail, your armor class equals 17 + Dexterity modifier (maximum 2) and the armor does not give you disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

CROCK AND DISH OF RHYGENYDD YSGOLHAIG

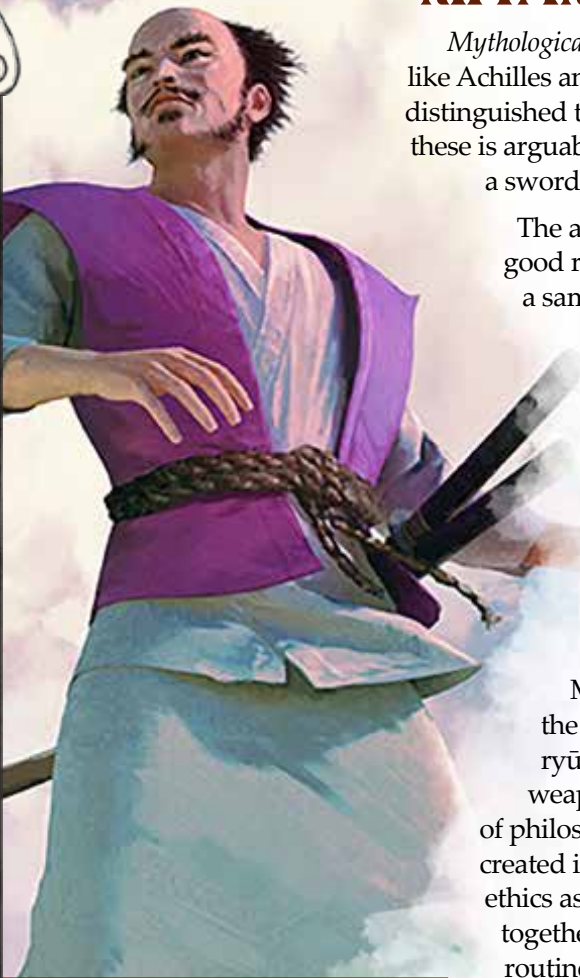
Wondrous item, very rare

You can use an action to cast *create food and water* from this cookware.

CHESSBOARD OF GWENDDOLEU AP CEIDIO

Wondrous item, rare

You can use 1d4-1 actions (minimum 1 action) to place each silver and crystal chess piece in its correct starting square on this gold chessboard. When you do so, the pieces emit noises and move themselves about the board in a thrilling game that lasts 1d4+1 minutes. Other creatures within 60 feet make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is compelled to use its action each turn watching the chess game and it has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks until the match ends or something harmful is done to it.



MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

Mythological Figures focuses on persons too big for true history like Achilles and Sir Lancelot, but some real individuals absolutely distinguished themselves to an equal status. Perhaps my favorite of these is arguably one of the most skilled people to have ever picked up a sword: the Japanese swordsman Miyamoto Musashi!

The accomplishments of Musashi are legendary and for good reason. His first duel took place at the age of 13 against a samurai, and he spent several subsequent years travelling and fighting duels. Later, Musashi found himself embroiled in war, fighting in multiple battles and sieges. At the age of 20, Musashi challenged the master of the eminent Yoshioka School in Kyoto to a duel and won, followed by a revenge duel instigated by his opponent's brother. His continued victory enraged the school, and they attempted to ambush him under the pretext of a *third* duel. Musashi beat them, too, fighting with a sword in each hand. In total, Musashi is said to have fought—and won—over 60 duels.

Musashi wrote the *Book of Five Rings* and invented the katana-and-wakizashi style of fighting (“Niten Ichiryū sword style”), a discipline that not only joined dual weapons, but also dual concepts in a beautiful synthesis of philosophy as expressed through martial arts. What he created is as applicable to the practice of spirituality, poetry, and ethics as it is to the actual movements of two swords working together towards the same goal. This kensei (a sword saint) routinely fought duels using a bokken (wooden sword) against opponents wielding blades (often showing up late to throw other samurai off of their game), including a famous swordsman with a two-handed nodachi known as “The Demon of the Western Provinces”, and finally died of cancer—but he even did that like a badass:

BACKGROUND

Folk Hero. Musashi is always able to rely on the hospitality of commoners to help him hide or rest provided he poses no danger in doing so, going so far as to shield him from being discovered (though not at the cost of their lives).

At the moment of his death, he had himself raised up. He had his belt tightened and his wakizashi put in it. He seated himself with one knee vertically raised, holding the sword with his left hand and a cane in his right hand. He died in this posture, at the age of sixty-two.

There is no brief recap able to do Musashi justice and his extremely well-documented life is worth reading up on if you haven't heard of him before. Consider including a wandering ronin in your next game and see how the adventurers fare against Japan's most famous swordsman!



MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

Medium humanoid (human),

lawful neutral fighter (samurai) 18

Armor Class 16 (padded, two-weapon fighter)

Hit Points 135 (18d10+36)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +8, Wis +5

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +9, Insight +5, Intimidation +7

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Japanese

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Action Surge (2/short rest). Once on his turn, Musashi can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Indomitable (3/long rest). Musashi can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Rapid Strike (1/turn). When Musashi has advantage on a weapon attack during his turn, he may choose to roll normally and instead make an additional attack against that target.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Musashi can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+18 hit points.

Warrior Spirit (3/long rest). Musashi can use a bonus action to gain 15 temporary hit points and advantage on weapon attack rolls until the end of his turn. When Musashi rolls for initiative and has no uses of this feature remaining, he regains one use.

FEATS

Maneuver Master (4d6 maneuver dice/short rest). Musashi can expend a maneuver dice to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

- ◆ **Counter.** Musashi can use his reaction to make a melee attack against a creature that misses him with a melee attack, dealing 1d6 additional damage on a hit.
- ◆ **Disarm.** A creature Musashi has hit with an attack takes 1d6 additional damage and makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw or drops one held item of his choice.

- ◆ **Feint.** Musashi can use his bonus action to feint against one creature within 5 feet. He has advantage on his next attack roll against that creature as long as it before the end of his turn. On a hit he deals 1d6 additional damage.

- ◆ **Trip.** Musashi deals 1d6 additional damage and if the target is a creatures of Large size or smaller, it makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone.

Master of the Sword. Musashi can use his reaction when wielding a sword to gain a +1 bonus to his AC until the start of his next turn or until he is disarmed. In addition, Musashi has advantage on opportunity attacks.

Mobility. Musashi can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

Two-Weapon Fighter. On his turn, Musashi can sheathe or draw two one-handed weapons, and he's able to use two-weapon fighting with one-handed melee weapons that are not light.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Musashi attacks three times when he takes the Attack action, and can use his bonus action to attack with his wakizashi and two-weapon fighting.

Katana. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage if wielded in one hand or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.

Wakizashi. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Warrior Undying. Musashi can use his reaction to immediately take one action, bonus action, and move when he is reduced to 0 hit points and not killed outright. This interrupts the initiative order and Musashi is treated as though he were unconscious and dying (taking death saving throw failures when he takes damage during this extra turn). Musashi falls unconscious after taking his extra turn if he has not regained any hit points.



MORGAN LE FAY

Mythological Figures is back in Britain and more specifically Camelot: Arthur's adversary, the enchantress Morgan le Fay!

There's a lot you can read about Morgan le Fay as she played an integral role to much of King Arthur's story but here are the highlights.

Morgan was sent to a convent when she was young, and trained in the magical arts under Merlin. She was one of Arthur's half-sisters and married to King Urien of Gaul, although she had a love affair with Accolon of Gaul (a Knight of the Round Table). At one point Morgan stole *Excalibur* and gave it to Accolon, who tried to kill both her husband and Arthur with it so that the pair might take the throne.

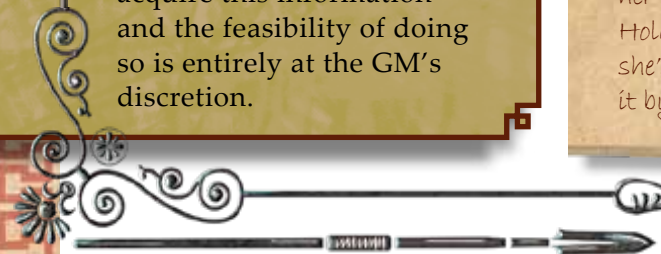
Although she stole the sheath of *Excalibur*, a source of magical healing for Arthur, and didn't return it to him so that he might heal from the Battle of Camlann, Morgan helped guide Arthur to Avalon during his final days. In many versions of the myth, Morgan is one of nine magical sisters who dwell on the fabled isle.

BACKGROUND

Sage. Fate gently nudges Morgan le Fay toward the answers to her questions. When she fails to recollect or discover more about a subject of lore, she knows where or whom can give her that information (usually from an athenaeum, library, institute of higher learning, another scholar, or mystical creature). The lengths to which she must go to acquire this information and the feasibility of doing so is entirely at the GM's discretion.

DESIGN NOTES

It wasn't long before I realized I was walking into a bit of a hornet's nest with Morgan le Fay here so I decided on a couple of things to hang her proverbial hat upon. First of all she's able to heal with her magic and frequently uses enchantments, so that makes up the bulk of her spellcasting via the divine sorcerer bloodline. Next is the witchcraft—for medieval Britain that strikes me as a very druid thing and I've loaded her up with the ritual feat to cover that bit. Finally—and I feel fairly confident that it will be a point of contention—she's got a scholarly background to represent her youth spent in a formal setting for education (a convent) and tutelage by Merlin Ambrosius. If you're looking for a solid evil-witchery-court-intrigue I think she's going to fit the bill nicely! For her Challenge Rating I think the DMG (7) and Blog of Holding (8) rubrics just aren't going to work right because she's got little in the way of damaging spells so I'm calling it by ear at 13.



MORGAN LE FAY

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral sorcerer (divine soul) 16

Armor Class 15 (*bracers of defense, ring of protection*)

Hit Points 88 (16d6+32)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +0, Dex +3, Con +8, Int +3, Wis +3, Cha +10

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +9, History +7, Insight +7

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities diseased, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Anglo-Saxon/Olde English, Ancient Scandinavian/Proto-Norse, Sylvan

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Divine Favor (1/short rest). Morgan le Fay adds 2d4 to a failed saving throw or missed attack roll, making the saving throw or hitting if the new result beats the DC or AC.

Faerie Wings. Morgan le Fay can use a bonus action to conjure forth upon her back the wings of a great insect, gaining a flying speed of 30 feet until she dismisses them (a bonus action), dies, or becomes incapacitated.

Holy Magic. Morgan le Fay's spells come from the cleric spell list as well as the sorcerer spell list, and she can cure wounds as a bonus spell known.

Sorcery Points (16/long rest). Morgan le Fay can use sorcery points to gain additional spell slots, or sacrifice spell slots to gain additional sorcery points.

◆ **Creating Spell Slots & Sorcery Points.** As a bonus action on her turn, Morgan le Fay can expend one spell slot and either gain a number of sorcerer points equal to the slot's level or create a spell slot by expending sorcery points (1st-level—2 points, 2nd-level—3 points, 3rd-level—5 points, 4th-level—6 points, 5th-level—7 points).

◆ **Metamagic: Extended Spell.** When Morgan le Fay casts a spell with a duration of 1 minute or longer, she can spend 1 sorcery point to double its duration, to a maximum duration of 24 hours.

◆ **Metamagic: Quicken Spell.** When Morgan le Fay casts a spell that has a casting time of

1 action, she can spend 2 sorcery points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

◆ **Metamagic: Subtle Spell.** When Morgan le Fay casts a spell, she can spend 1 sorcery point to cast it without any somatic or verbal components.

◆ **Powerful Healing (1/turn).** As long as she's not incapacitated, Morgan le Fay can spend 1 sorcery point to reroll any number of dice from a spell that restores hit points to herself or an ally within 5 feet.

Spellcasting. Morgan le Fay is a 16th level spellcaster that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17; +9 to hit with spell attacks). Morgan le Fay has the following spells prepared from the cleric and sorcerer spell lists:

Cantrips: *eldritch blast, fire bolt, light, mending, minor illusion, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st-level (4 slots): *charm person, command, cure wounds, sleep*

2nd-level (3 slots): *invisibility, suggestion*

3rd-level (3 slots): *bestow curse*

4th-level (3 slots): *confusion, dominate beast*

5th-level (2 slots): *dominate person, geas, hold monster*

6th-level (1 slot): *mass suggestion*

7th-level (1 slot): *regenerate*

8th-level (1 slot): *power word stun*

FEATS

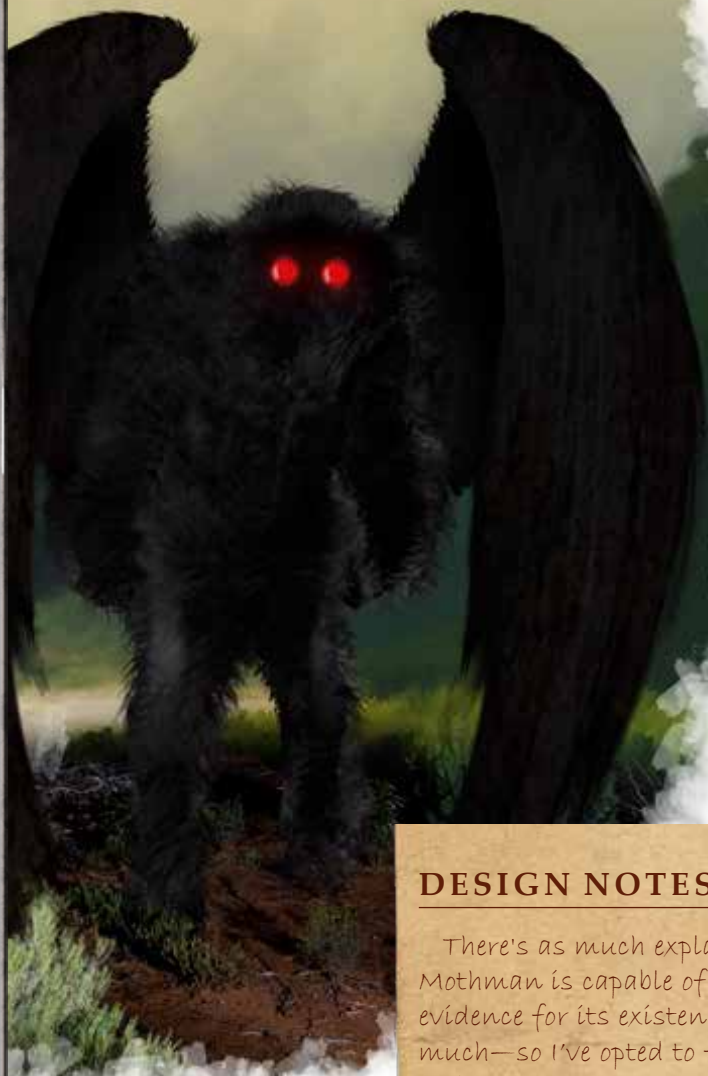
Ranged Spellcaster. Morgan le Fay ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged spell attack. In addition, she doubles the range of any spell she casts that has a ranged spell attack.

Ritual Spellcasting. Morgan le Fay has a ritual book that contains the following spells, all of which she's able to cast as rituals (using Wisdom as her spellcasting ability): *detect magic, detect poison and disease, purify food and drink, speak with animals, animal messenger, locate animals or plants, meld into stone, water breathing, water walk, commune with nature.*

ACTIONS

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.

Hit: 6 (1d4+2) piercing damage.



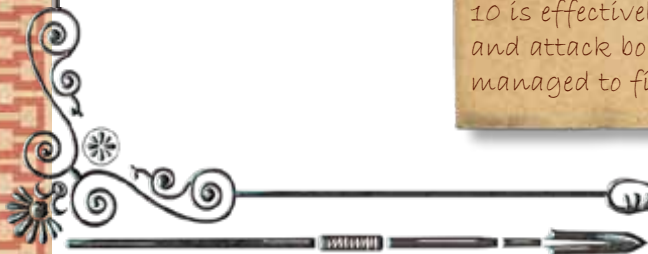
MOTHPMAN

Let's roam about in the valleys of West Virginia and see if we can't scare up that infamous furry flying cryptid known in the region as the Mothman! This is a relatively recent myth in American folklore born out of old Cold War paranoia and an unhealthy amount of superstition.

In November 1966 there were two sightings, first some gravediggers and then two couples from Point Pleasant, of a man-like shape flying low, a large, gray, red-eyed creature with 10-foot wings. Then all of a sudden everyone with a telephone happened to have seen it! The scientific community placed the blame on this or that bird managing to fly out of their migratory patterns, but after the ruinous collapse of the Silver Bridge, an event that claimed the lives of 46 people, the Mothman became inextricably tied to the tragedy.

DESIGN NOTES

There's as much explanation of what the Mothman is capable of doing as there is solid evidence for its existence—which is to say not much—so I've opted to focus on making it a fun, unique monster. The application of fire quickly incinerates the mothman just like a moth, but unlike an insect it is a source of immense knowledge for anyone able to understand its bizarre psyche and just trying to hit it will be a disappointing endeavor. Getting this to work with a precognition angle was difficult and meant a lot of number tweaking, but with low enough hit points, AC (remember that 10 is effectively a 15 thanks to Foresight), and attack bonuses (effectively +8 to hit) it managed to fit into CR 4.



MOTHPMAN

Medium aberration, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 42 (5d8+20)

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Athletics +5, Perception +7, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +7, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Damage Vulnerabilities acid, fire, lightning, thunder

Damage Resistances cold, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses blindsight 40 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Common, telepathy 100 ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Electrical Interference. The mothman's potent psionic energies create a roil in the air, disrupting the senses of mortal creatures and causing metal to behave erratically within 100 feet of it. Any creature within the aura and wielding a heavy weapon made of metal takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls. A creature wearing heavy metal armor within the aura reduces its speed by half.

In addition, the mothman is immune to *magic missile*.

Evasion. If the mothman is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the mothman instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Flyby. The mothman doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Foresight. The mothman can't be surprised and has advantage on attack

rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. Additionally, other creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against it. Unlike normal, if an attacking creature would have advantage twice or more (such as from *true strike* while making a melee attack against a prone mothman) the attacking creature has advantage.

Innate Spellcasting. The mothman's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). The mothman can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *tongues*

At will: *guidance*, *detect evil and good*, *detect magic*, *detect poison and disease*

3/day each: *augury*, *dream*, *identify*, *detect thoughts*, *fear*, *locate animals or plants*, *locate object*, *speak with animals*

1/day each: *arcane eye*, *clairvoyance*, *divination*, *locate creature*, *phantasmal killer*

1/week each: *commune*, *commune with nature*, *contact other plane*, *legend lore*, *screaming*

1/month each: *find the path*, *true seeing*

Prodigious. The mothman counts as Large-sized when determining its carrying capacity.

Siege Monster. The mothman deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mothman attacks twice: once with its claws and once with its wings.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) slashing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 11).

Wing. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage.



MUSŌ GONNOSUKE

We're back in Japan to take a look at another one of history's greatest samurai, perhaps the most famous foe of Miyamoto Musashi, and a fellow whose martial arts style is still practiced today: the staff fighter Musō Gonnosuke!

Hailing from a proper samurai family with a long military history, Musō was never ronin—unlike Miyamoto, he chose to undertake a *musha shugyō*, traveling across the countryside to try his skills against other martial artists and learn from different schools. He was apparently pretty good too and was undefeated until he ran afoul of Miyamoto Musashi. The details of their first duel remain murky but it's a certainty that he lost the fight.

Afterwards Gonnosuke retreated to a Shinto monastery to do thirty seven days of training and purification rituals, and this is where he got divine inspiration to create the Shintō Musō-ryū style designed to make use of a short staff specifically when fighting someone wielding one or more swords. Legend says that he noticed that his *bō* (six-foot staff) had sword cuts only near each end, and thus removed a foot from each end of the staff, creating the *jō*, a medium four-foot staff.

The second duel with Musashi is a point of contention—Gonnosuke's followers claim that he won, everybody else says that he lost—and there's no record outside of his school so there's uncertainty about whether it took place at all. Either way he's said to have become friends with Musashi, traveling across Japan with him until he settled down in Fukuoka to train folks for the Kuroda clan.

DESIG-HERESY!

Grab hold of your hats and britches people—Mythological Figures is making use of a feat that is not RAW. I didn't come up with this design tidbit however, it's the work of Guy Larke Jr. (albeit on my behalf) in *Mists of Akuma: Trade War*. A martial arts stance increases a creature's AC by 1 but otherwise only does what's listed for it (which in this case means more effectively using the staff). Because our boy Gonnosuke here invented a style of martial arts for the short staff (still used today!) it felt right to me to use up a feat to that effect.

If you're looking for a middle- to top-tier samurai this build will do the trick, although anyone employing more than one should consider dropping *Maneuver Mastery* for more stat boosts to Strength and Dexterity (increasing AC by 1, Strength save to +3, Athletics to +3, attack rolls by +1, and weapon damage by +1). Note that if you're out for a mounted general, Tomoe Gozen is the better choice.

BACKGROUND

Soldier. Musō still commands respect from his time serving in the army. Soldiers loyal to the same forces view him as their superior, and Musō can use his influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, possibly even gaining entrance to military fortresses and outposts.

MUSŌ GONNOSUKE

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful neutral fighter (samurai) 11

Armor Class 17 (breastplate, martial arts stance)

Hit Points 71 (11d10+11)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +5, Wis +4

Skills Animal Handling +4, Athletics +7, History +5,
Insight +4, Intimidation +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Japanese, Korean

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Musō can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Musō can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Musō can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+11 hit points.

Warrior Spirit (3/long rest). Musō can use a bonus action to gain 10 temporary hit points and advantage on weapon attack rolls until the end of his turn.

FEATS

Maneuver Master (4d6 maneuver dice/short rest). Musō can expend a maneuver dice to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

◆ **Counter.** Musō can use his reaction to make a melee attack against a creature that misses him with a melee attack, dealing 1d6 additional damage on a hit.

◆ **Disarm.** A creature Musō has hit with an attack takes 1d6 additional damage and makes a DC 15 Strength saving throw or drops one held item of his choice.

◆ **Lunge.** Musō increases his reach by 5 feet for one attack, dealing 1d6 additional damage on a hit.

◆ **Trip.** Musō deals 1d6 additional damage and if the target is a creature of Large size or smaller, it makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone.

Stance of the Outstretched Branch. While Musō is wielding a quarterstaff with one hand, it gains the Reach property. While he wields a quarterstaff with two hands, it gains the Finesse property. Finally, it has the Thrown property (range 10/30 ft.), and on a successful hit Musō can use his reaction to catch it out of the air as it bounces back to him.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Musō attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Quarterstaff (one-handed). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 10/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Quarterstaff (two-handed). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 10/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage.





NEMO, CAPTAIN

"Not a mistake has been made in the working. But we cannot prevent equilibrium from producing its effects. We may brave human laws, but we cannot resist natural ones."

Bold words from a brave and brilliant man, an inventor of the highest caliber, explorer of the deep blue, and anti-imperialist hero, the mysterious Captain Nemo!

When I was a wee little fellow I read a pocket edition of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* at least a dozen times, and while I can scarcely remember the other characters in that book Captain Nemo still stands out. You won't learn very much about him in that book (although he is definitely awesome throughout) aside from his hatred for imperialism, that his family was gone, and of course that he was a truly brilliant inventor who crafted his own, very large, submarine.

Another book, (*The Mysterious Island*), reveals that Captain Nemo was indeed royalty (the Prince of Dakkar and son of the Hindu raja of Bundelkhand), given a Western education, and toured Europe before he lost his family and kingdom in the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

Afterward he embraced science and constructed the Nautilus, traveling across the globe with his crew and recovering sunken treasure. Eventually he died of old age while on board his ship which was sunk into Dakkar Grotto, in the southern Pacific Ocean.

DESIGN NOTES

This is an OGL-ified build using the most recent (and finally officially published and no longer playtest material) artificer because frankly, how could we have the man who made the incredible Nautilus be anything else? After 10 minutes trying to justify other build routes to myself I gave up and decided to bite the bullet and go after this class' most recent version (Sage Douban uses the old one), leaning into the Artillerist archetype because I think his submarine used a combustible engine. I am frankly impressed by the quiet power locked inside this class. If you run his statblock through the numbers, the DMG lands him at juuuuuuuuuuuuuust 0.05 past a 9 and the Blog of Holding weights it even heavier at 9.83 so a solid 9. I would be inclined to drop this down to an 8 because he's a bit of a one-round-pony, but with shield I'm not 100% sure he is that vulnerable. Even so I'm putting this at a soft 9 with the consideration that he's almost certainly not fighting all by himself, dropped down to 8 if he's got no allies to help soak up attacks.

BACKGROUND

Sage. Acumen or fate gently nudges Captain Nemo toward the answers to his questions. When he fails to recollect or discover more about a subject of lore, he knows where or whom can give him that information (usually from an athenaeum, library, institute of higher learning, another scholar, or mystical creature). The lengths to which he must go to acquire this information and the feasibility of doing so is entirely at the GM's discretion.

CAPTAIN NEMO

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful good inventor (gunsmith) 9

Armor Class 17 (imbued breastplate)

Hit Points 49 (9d8+9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +9

Skills Arcana +9, History +9, Investigation +9,
Nature +9, Perception +1 (advantage)

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages English, French, German, Hindi

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Brilliant Suggestion (5/long rest). Captain Nemo can use his reaction when he or another creature he can see within 30 feet makes an ability check or saving throw, gaining +5 bonus.

Enchanted Firearm. At the end of a long rest, Captain Nemo can use woodcarver's tools to turn a rod, staff, or wand into an enchanted firearm. He can only modify one magic item at a time using this feature. Captain Nemo deals an extra 1d8 damage with any inventor spell he casts using this item.

Imbued Items. At the end of a long rest Captain Nemo can touch up to 3 nonmagical objects, turning them into magical objects containing one of the following abilities. If it requires attunement, Captain Nemo is automatically attuned to it unless he decides otherwise. The object retains this ability indefinitely or for 5 days following his death. When Captain Nemo imbues a fourth item, the effect ends on the oldest use of this feature.

- ◆ **Armor Protectives:** A creature gains resistance to a type of damage (acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, or thunder) while wearing this armor.
- ◆ **Auto-Ammunition:** A creature gains a +1 bonus to ranged attack and ranged damage rolls made with this weapon. It never needs to be reloaded.
- ◆ **Improved Defense:** A creature's AC increases by 1 while wearing this item.

- ◆ **Improved Weaponry:** A creature gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon.

Mechanical Enchantment: The item duplicates the effects of eyes of the eagle or gauntlets of ogre power.

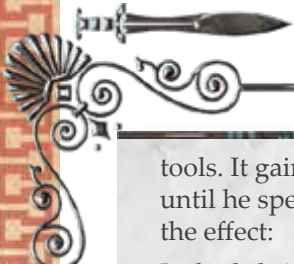
Mechanical Enchantment: The item duplicates the effects of gauntlets of ogre power.

Minor Artillery. Captain Nemo can use an action and either smith's tools or woodcarver's tools to craft a Tiny or Small cannon (AC 18, hit points 45; immune to poison, psychic, and all conditions) in an unoccupied space within 5 feet, choosing whether or not it has legs. He can only do so once between long rests, or by expending a spell slot of 1st level or higher, but can never have more than one minor artillery cannon at a time. Casting mending on a cannon restored 2d6 hit points. It lasts for 1 hour, until he uses an action to dismiss it, or until it is reduced to 0 hit points.

On his turn, if Captain Nemo is within 60 feet of it he can use a bonus action to fire his minor artillery cannon. If it has legs, as part of the same bonus action he can command it to walk or climb up to 15 feet. While within 60 feet of it, Captain Nemo can use an action to detonate the minor artillery cannon, destroying it. Creatures within 20 feet of it make a DC 17 Dexterity Saving throw or take 13 (3d8) force damage, or half as much on a successful save.

- ◆ **Abjorative:** Energy flows outward in a 10-foot radius, granting 14 (2d8+5) temporary hit points to creatures in the area.
- ◆ **Fire:** Flames spit out in a 15-foot cone adjacent to the cannon. Each creature in the area makes a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (3d8) fire damage, or half as much on a successful save. The fire ignites any flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.
- ◆ **Force:** Captain Nemo makes a ranged spell attack against a creature or object within 120 feet of the cannon, dealing 13 (3d8) force damage on a successful hit and pushing the target up to 5 feet away.

Minor Inventions. Captain Nemo uses an action to touch a nonmagical object, working on it with his tinker's tools or other artisan's



tools. It gains one of the following properties until he spends an action touching it to end the effect:

- ◆ It sheds bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet.
- ◆ It stores a spoken message up to 6 seconds long. Whenever a creature manipulates the object, it emits the spoken message loud enough for creatures as far as 10 feet away to hear it.
- ◆ It continuously discharges a scent or plays a nonverbal sound loud enough for creatures as far as 10 feet away to hear it.
- ◆ It displays a visual effect on one surface (as many as 25 words, simple illustrations, or a mixture of both).
- ◆ Captain Nemo can affect up to 5 number of objects at the same time, ending the effect on the oldest use of this feature when he exceeds his maximum.

Never Without A Toolbox. With 1 hour of uninterrupted work and using tinker's tools, Captain Nemo can craft a set of artisan's tools in an unoccupied space within 5 feet. He may do so during a short or long rest. Captain Nemo can only have a single set of artisan's tools crafted using this feature at a time.

Spellcasting. Captain Nemo is a 9th level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17; +9 to hit with spell attacks). He requires a set of tools he's proficient with to use this feature, one of his imbued items, a minor artillery cannon, or an enchanted firearm. Captain Nemo has the following spells prepared from the inventor's spell list:

Cantrips: *light, message*

1st-level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat, feather fall, grease, longstrider, shield, thunderwave*

2nd-level (3 slots): *enhance ability, heat metal, scorching ray, shatter*

3rd-level (2 slots): *fireball, haste, protection from energy, revivify, wind wall*

Tool Mastery. When Captain Nemo makes an ability check that uses a tool kit, he gains double his proficiency bonus (total +8).

ACTIONS

Imbued Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:*

+9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 8 (1d6+5) magical slashing damage.

Auto-Ammunition Rifle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:*

+8 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target.

Hit: 13 (2d8+4) magical piercing damage.

NOTE:

The languages Captain Nemo's statblock has are not RAW (as usual with the Mythological Figures side of this book, everything else is rules-as-written). It also seems like he's missing his proficiency with the organ but I am pretty sure musical instruments are treated as tool kits, so 'Tool Mastery' treats him as Expertise-proficient with it (and for that matter all other musical instruments).



NAUTILUS

Wondrous item, artifact

This vessel at first appears to be a Gargantuan sea monster 230 feet long by 30 feet in height and width, its body covered in hard reflective scales. Along the top there is a hidden catch, which can be found with a successful DC 23 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Releasing the catch unlocks a hatch revealing a cylinder wide enough for a Medium creature to crawl inside. The *Nautilus* is a Gargantuan object with the following statistics:

Armor Class: 25

Hit Points: 400 (damage threshold 20)

Speed swim 200 ft. (can turn a maximum of 15 degrees in a round)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Crew Capacity 25; **Passenger Capacity** 600

Travel Pace 58 miles per hour (460 miles per day)

To be used as a vehicle, the *Nautilus* requires one pilot at the helm. While the hatch is closed, the compartment is airtight and watertight. The steel submarine holds enough air for 15,000 hours of breathing, divided by the number of breathing creatures inside (at most 625 for 24 hours). There are 2 decks of interior compartments, most of which are 6 feet high. Interior doors are airtight, have AC 20 and 50 hit points, and can be bypassed with DC

18 Dexterity (thieves' tools) checks or DC 25 Strength checks.

The *Nautilus* floats on water. It can also go underwater to a depth of 9,000 feet. Below that, the vehicle takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage per minute from pressure.

A creature at the helm can use an action to pilot the *Nautilus* by making a DC 18 Intelligence (vehicle [water]) check, with disadvantage if there are no other creatures controlling the ballasts, hydraulics, and sensors (each an action), or with advantage if each position has a creature helping. On a success, the pilot can double the effects of any acceleration, deceleration, or turning they make with the *Nautilus* on their turn. In addition, the pilot can send the submarine careening into a creature or object, making an attack roll as usual.

Prow. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. **Hit:** 34 (8d6+6) piercing damage. On a natural 1, the *Nautilus* takes 34 (8d6+6) bludgeoning damage.

Any creature in the command room can pull a lever to activate its function, but the *Nautilus* only responds to the first 8 levers pulled in a round, and a lever only performs a function once per round. While traveling forward the lever to travel backwards does not function, and while traveling backward the lever to travel forwards does not function. After each use, a lever goes back to its neutral position.

NAUTILUS CONTROLS

Lever	Up	Down
1	Forward window shutter opens.	Forward window shutter closes.
2	Side window shutters open (20 per side).	Side window shutters close (20 per side).
3	Two manipulator arms extend from the front of the <i>Nautilus</i> .	The manipulator arms retract.
4	Each extended manipulator arm makes the following melee weapon attack: +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: The target is grappled (escape DC 20).	One or both extended manipulator arms release what they are holding.
5	The <i>Nautilus</i> accelerates forward, increasing its speed by 20 feet (to a maximum of 200 feet).	The <i>Nautilus</i> decelerates, reducing its speed by 50 feet (minimum 0 feet).
6	The <i>Nautilus</i> accelerates backward, increasing its speed by 20 feet (to a maximum of 200 feet).	The <i>Nautilus</i> decelerates, reducing its speed by 50 feet (minimum 0 feet).
7	The <i>Nautilus</i> turns 15 degrees left.	The <i>Nautilus</i> turns 15 degrees right.
8	Eyelike fixtures emit bright light in a 300-foot radius and dim light for an additional 150 feet.	The light turns off.
9	The <i>Nautilus</i> sinks as much as 50 feet in liquid.	The <i>Nautilus</i> rises up to 50 feet in liquid.
10	The top hatch unseals and opens.	The top hatch closes and seals.



NIKOLA TESLA

This subject is one right out of history, and given his forte we're using the tinkerer class to stat out the inventor and futurist Nikola Tesla!

Alternating current electricity (the kind used almost ubiquitously around the world), hydropower, radio, robots, x-ray photography, sparkplugs, fluorescent lights, remote controlled boats—this inventor had over 700 patents and you are almost certainly currently using *something* that would not exist without him. Born in 1856 in Croatia to a priest, Nikola convinced his father after contracting cholera at the age of 17 to send him to engineering school. At the age of 28, with just 4 cents in his pocket he traveled to New York City, and proposed his alternating current system to Thomas Edison. He was offered \$50,000 for his work, but Edison reneged on the deal.

When Tesla set up shop with the first induction motor, a lifelong rivalry began which ultimately ended up keeping both from winning the Nobel Prize. George Westinghouse eventually bought the design for \$60,000.

Then the mad science really began, as Tesla started trying to transmit energy directly through the air. He was the first person to figure out radio using 'Tesla Coils', imagining a 'wireless globe' of communications, but a fire destroyed his papers. This encouraged the success of Guglielmo Marconi—partly because the man was making use of more than a dozen of his patents.

Funding for Tesla's projects didn't go well as the Depression hit, and he started to display increasingly eccentric behaviour, saving injured pigeons, receiving messages from aliens, and talking about making a Death Ray, until he died penniless in 1943 after the government seized his notes. They probably weren't worth much though because purportedly he kept most of his designs up in his brain until they had to be drawn out.

DESIGN NOTES

I'm pretty pleased with how this one came out! Aside from Dingbats this feels like a good fit for such a prolific inventor with a spell list and class features that are very pro-electricity. The Mechanic archetype doesn't lean very heavily into combat until 10th level and is very focused on downtime activities, so the challenge rating is lower than usual for a level 9 NPC. I do regret not fitting another 5 languages in but reckon the higher Intelligence is worth it—Tesla was known to be able to recite books which to me says 'eidetic memory', so I went with that over the 20 he probably deserves.

BACKGROUND

Sage. Acumen or fate gently nudges Nikola toward the answers to his questions. When he fails to recollect or discover more about a subject of lore, he knows where or whom can give him that information (usually from an athenaeum, library, institute of higher learning, another scholar, or mystical creature). The lengths to which he must go to acquire this information and the feasibility of doing so is entirely at the GM's discretion.



NIKOLA TESLA

Medium humanoid (human), neutral tinkerer (mechanic) 9

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 49 (9d8+9)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +8

Skills Arcana +12, History +8, Insight +6,
 Investigation +12, Perception +6;
 artisan's tools (all) +8, vehicles (air, land) +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages English, German, Serbo-Croatian, 5 others
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Affect-Engines (Lightning; 2 total). Nikola can use an action to attach or detach an Affect-Engine to an object he is touching.

Affect Discharge. When Tesla hits a creature using a weapon with an attached Affect-Engine, he can expend a 1st-level spell slot to deal 2d6 extra damage to the target. The extra damage increases by 1d6 for each spell level higher than 1st (maximum 5d6). The damage type is according to the type of Affect-Engine (usually lightning).

Construction. Tesla can craft at a rate of 70 gp per hour as a light activity. While rapidly crafting, Tesla must expend material (such as wood, metal, or glass) with a value equal to the item he wants to make. The item can be an exact duplicate of a nonmagical item, such as a copy of a key, if he possesses the original. Items Tesla constructs that aren't weapons or armor have AC 16 and hit points determined by material: Tiny (fragile 2 hp, resilient 5 hp), Small (fragile 3 hp, resilient 10 hp), Medium (fragile 4 hp, resilient 18 hp), Large (fragile 5 hp, resilient 27 hp).

Dingbots. Tesla adds *find familiar* to his sparknotes and can cast it as a ritual. It is always prepared and doesn't count towards the number of spells he can have prepared. When Tesla casts this spell, his familiar is a dingbot (a construct immune to disease, resistant to poison, and without any need to drink, eat, or breathe). A dingbot reduced to 0 hit points disassembles, leaving behind no recognizable form or useful material. Constructing and reconstructing it requires 10 gp worth of material. Tesla's dingbot can craft at a rate of 300 gp per hour. When using Construction with his dingbot, Tesla adds their crafting rates together.

Flexible Creation. When Tesla begins crafting, he can double the crafting time or value of materials needed to double the item's hit points. Alternatively, he can

choose to craft an item with half the normal hit points, crafting time required, or materials consumed.

Improved Affect Discharge (1/turn). Whenever Tesla hits using a weapon attack with one or more attached Affect-Engines, he can deal 1d8 energy damage to the target (of the Affect-Engine's type), in addition to the weapon's damage.

Instacraft (4/long rest). Tesla can use an action to craft an item with a value of 1 gp or less.

Mechanic Proficiencies. Nikola doubles his proficiency bonus (+4) to tinkers' tools and Intelligence checks made with Construction or on power appliances.

Power Appliances. Nikola can incorporate Affect-Engines into his creations (see Masterclass Codex). When an item with an attached Affect-Engine is destroyed, both are destroyed.

Quick Engine. Using tinker's tools, Tesla can concentrate for 1 minute to construct an Affect-Engine. Each turn during this minute he can move, take bonus actions, and use his reaction, but must spend his action concentrating.

Spellcasting. Nikola is a 9th level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16; +8 to hit with spell attacks). Nikola has the following spells prepared from the tinkerer's spell list:

1st-level (4 slots): *alarm, floating disk, silent image, thunderwave*

2nd-level (3 slots): *darkvision, mirror image*

3rd-level (2 slots): *call lightning, lightning bolt*

Switch Function. Tesla can use an action or bonus action to change the elemental type of an Affect-Engine he is touching to another type. He can only do this to Affect-Engines that are not in use (an inactive weapon with an attached affect-engine is not in use).

FEATS

Brilliant. Nikola always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.

Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Revolver. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8+2) piercing damage.

Overload. Tesla can touch an Affect-Engine, expend a spell slot to overload it, and throw it to a space he can see within 60 feet causing it to explode in a 10-foot-radius sphere. Creatures in the area make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d10 energy damage for a 1st-level spell slot plus 1d10 for each spell slot level higher than 1st (maximum 7d10), or half as much damage on a successful one. The damage type is according to the type of Affect-Engine. For each spell slot level higher than 1st, the radius of the sphere increases by 10 feet.



ODYSSEUS

A Greek strategist and warrior, Odysseus is best known for his role in the Trojan War as recounted in *The Illiad* and his long, perilous journey back home known as *The Odyssey*. If you find yourself saying, “that word looks familiar...” that’s what I’m talking about with Odysseus’ lasting popularity—the whole reason we have a word for “a long series of adventures filled with hardship” is this man.

Odysseus was a warrior, but more importantly he was wise and cunning. He was not keen to join the Trojan War, and tried to escape it by feigning madness. This didn’t work, and so he found himself recruited as a crucial general in the conflict. It was Odysseus who recruited Achilles, and it was he who thought up the famous Trojan Horse, the strategem which ultimately won the war.

When the war ended, Odysseus set sail for home, a journey which would ultimately take him ten years. This voyage involved him escaping the land of the Lotus-Eaters, blinding Poseidon’s son Polyphemus the Cyclops, rescuing his companions from Circe the enchantress, visiting the underworld to talk with Agamemnon, and encountering the sirens and Calypso the nymph.

DESIGN NOTES

Odysseus needs to be a few things—he’s got to be clever and wise, have some agility, he’s not weak, and he’s good with a bow. With that in mind we’ve got our first ranged battlemaster build with a healthy dose of mastermind rogue to reflect his legendary cunning. The archery fighting style and a smattering of feats fill out the rest of his iconic profile, with Expertise ramping up the essential skills for his many successes to whopping +15s. For the CR equation this time around the DMG said 10.6, the Blog of Holding rubric claimed 11, and I’m inclined to agree with the latter—Odysseus here is definitely a considerably dangerous foe and as long as he’s not wasted in a suicidal charge will be an NPC that adventurers will quickly decide to focus their ire upon.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to his position as a prince, Odysseus is treated with a measure of respect wherever he goes. He is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders (at least until it is clear he is quite mad), and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see him if requested to do so).



ODYSSEUS

Medium humanoid (human),
rogue (mastermind) 9/fighter (battlemaster) 11

Armor Class 16 (breastplate or 18 with shield)

Hit Points 101 (9d8+11d10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Int +9

Skills Deception +14, History +9, Insight +16,
Investigation +15, Perception +10,
Persuasion +14; gaming set +9, thieves' tools +9

Senses passive Perception 20

Languages Greek and any two other languages

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Odysseus can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Odysseus can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Evasion. When Odysseus is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Fast Learner. After Odysseus has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, he can mimic its manner of speaking as long as he knows the same language as the creature (allowing him to seem like he is local to a given region).

Indomitable (1/long rest). Odysseus can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Maneuver Master (5d10/short rest). Odysseus can expend a maneuver dice to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

- ◆ **Command.** Odysseus uses his bonus action to forgo one of his attacks and direct a friendly creature who can see or hear him. The creature uses its reaction and makes a weapon attack, dealing 1d10 extra weapon damage on a successful hit.
- ◆ **Disarm.** A creature Odysseus has hit with an attack takes 1d10 additional damage and makes a DC 17 Strength saving throw or drops one held item of his choice.
- ◆ **Inspire.** Odysseus uses a bonus action and chooses an ally able to see and hear him. That ally gains 1d10+2 temporary hit points.
- ◆ **Maneuver.** On a successful hit with a weapon attack, Odysseus deals 1d10 extra damage and

chooses a friendly creature that can see and hear him. That creature can move half its speed by using its reaction. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from the target of Odysseus' attack.

- ◆ **Trip.** Odysseus deals 1d10 additional damage and if the target is a creature of Large size or smaller, it makes a DC 17 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Odysseus can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+11 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Odysseus deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Odysseus that isn't incapacitated and Odysseus doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactician. Odysseus is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Odysseus and is within 30 feet of him.

Tactician's Insight. After Odysseus has observed or interacted with a creature for 1 minute, he learns whether or not it has higher or lower Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma scores than him. In addition, he learns if the target has more or fewer class levels than him. Odysseus also knows when he and the target have equal scores in one of these categories. on it with his tinker's tools or other artisan's

FEATS

Brilliant. Odysseus always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

Diplomatic. Odysseus can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can understand what he says during 1 minute of talking. On a success, as long as Odysseus remains within 60 feet of it (and for 1 minute afterward) the target is charmed by him. Odysseus automatically fails on the check if he or his companions are fighting the target.

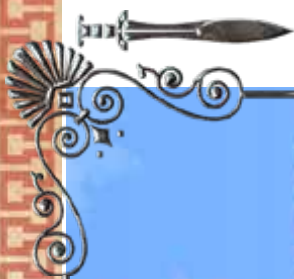
Superb Aim. Odysseus ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and he doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Odysseus makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Odysseus attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.



PAUL BUNYAN

The handful of *Mythological Figures* treatments made which use *A Touch More Class* include Sherlock Holmes (the savant), Nikola Tesla (the tinkerer), and Billy the Kidd (the gunfighter), but now we're going for someone *really* big. A myth most certainly far too large to be contained in my poor-minstrel-esque rambling prologue: the American folklore hero Paul Bunyan!

If you live in the US you know who Paul Bunyan is—a really, really, really big lumberjack accompanied by a blue ox called Babe. In true American fashion he's said to have traipsed all over the country inadvertently creating national landmarks by dragging his axe along behind him, including the Grand Canyon, the 10,000 Lakes, and the Mississippi River. Anyone that's from the northern states, particularly in the midwest, has probably driven by giant statues of Paul Bunyan and Babe.

BACKGROUND

Outlander. Paul never forgets the geographic arrangement of terrain, settlements, and areas of wilderness. In addition, he can forage fresh water and food each day for as many as 6 people as long as the environment nearby can support it.

DESIGN NOTES

This here is the biggest, baddest giant in the book and a statblock worthy of America's tallest tale! One might even say that this is quite the titan—you know, like the progenitor Hellenistic pantheon that begat the gods of Olympus? It'd be easy to substitute a few things (like a different CR 4 companion, or terrain-crushing lightning bolts instead of trees) to make this into a proper titan. Why one could even use this as the basis for a quick kaiju by swapping in a tail attack for Forest-Feller and dropping *Loyal Pet* for a *Breath Weapon*! Anyway let's take a look at the numbers: the DMG came in at 19.0833 and the Blog of Holding at 23.166, averaging out to just a mite past 21.

PAUL BUNYAN

Gargantuan giant, chaotic good

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 248 (16d20+80)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +10, Cha +9

Skills Animal Handling +10, Athletics +17, Insight +10, Nature +12, Survival +10

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison, thunder

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages English, French

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Hardy Metabolism. Paul has advantage on saving throws against exhaustion and poison.

Loyal Pet. Paul is accompanied by an enormous oxen (Babe the Blue Ox).

Magic Weapons. Paul's weapon attacks are magical.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. Paul attacks twice.

Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 46 (8d8+10) slashing damage and the target makes a DC 25 Strength saving throw. On a failure, it is either knocked prone or pushed away 20 feet (Paul's choice).

Tree. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 37 (6d8+10) bludgeoning damage and the target makes a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, it is knocked prone and restrained by the tree (escape DC 25).

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Paul can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Paul regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Attack. Paul makes one axe attack or one tree attack.

Babe. Paul asks Babe to help him, giving her a bonus action, action, and movement that she takes immediately.

Devastating Stomp (*Costs 2 Actions*). Paul slams his foot into the ground with tremendous force that ripples through the earth in a 50-foot radius. The ground in the area becomes difficult terrain. Each creature on the ground that is concentrating must make a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or its concentration is broken. In addition, each creature on the ground in the area must make a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

Depressions open throughout the area at the start of the next round. A total of 2d4 depressions open in locations chosen by the GM. Each is 1d4 × 10 feet deep with a radius of 1d4 × 5 feet. A creature standing on a spot where a depression opens must succeed on a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw or fall in. A creature that successfully saves moves with the depression's edge as it opens.

A depression that opens beneath a structure causes it to automatically collapse after 1d4 rounds (as the earthquake spell).

Forest-Feller (*Costs 2 Actions*). Paul swings his mighty axe in a 20-foot cone of destruction. Creatures and objects in the area make a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw or take 46 (8d8+10) slashing damage.



BABE THE BLUE OX

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d12+24)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Trampling Charge. If Babe moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Babe can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8+6) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 22 (3d10+6) bludgeoning damage.



PENTHESILEA

Penthesilea was a daughter of Ares, sister of Hippolyta, an Amazonian queen, and a skilled warrior who went toe-to-toe with Achilles in the Trojan War.

Penthesilea came to Troy with Memnon and a dozen of her fellow lady-warriors, looking to die honorably in battle. She spent a day distinguishing herself on the battlefield, cutting down Trojan soldiers before finally meeting her match with Achilles who, upon killing her and removing her helmet, was immediately heartstruck.

Another Greek soldier by the name of Thersites scolded him for having emotions and then proceeded to tear the eyes out of her corpse; unsurprisingly he was summarily slain by Achilles for it.

According to the 1st century BC text *Bibliotheca Historica* she was the last Amazon to distinguish herself in war, and afterwards her peoples and their accomplishments diminished into legend. Penthesilea became a popular figure for literature, plays, and other cultural objects as the centuries passed, even re-cast as a medieval warrior queen.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to her position as a ruler, Penthesilea is treated with a measure of respect wherever she goes. She is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see her if requested to do so).

DESIGN NOTES

Since we're talking about a woman who manages to put up a solid fight against the nearly invincible Achilles, my figuring is that she ought to be 18th level or thereabouts—also she's the queen of the Amazons. On top of being high level she still needs to be tough as hell for that kind of a match up so for her roots I went with some ranger, and then the rest is dumped into the Brute archetype fighter. At the end of the day she is fierce and I think would be a fitting companion for Diana of Themyscira. With that, let's do the numbers: the DMG puts Penthesilea at an even 12 and the Blog of Holding's rubric does as well, albeit .8 higher, so we're sticking with that.



AMAZON QUEEN PENTHESILEA

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral ranger (hunter) 4/fighter (brute) 14

Armor Class 19 (studded leather, fighting style, shield)

Hit Points 153 (18d10+54)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +10, Dex +10

Skills Athletics +10, History +6, Persuasion +7, Stealth +10, Survival +7

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Greek, Themysceran

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on her turn, Penthesilea can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Brutal Toughness. Penthesilea gains a +1d6 bonus to saving throws and death saves (treating final results of 20 or higher on a death saving throw as a natural 20).

Colossus Slayer (1/turn). When Penthesilea hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 4 (1d8) damage if it's below its hit point maximum.

Favored Enemy: Beasts. Penthesilea has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track beasts, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Indomitable (2/long rest). Penthesilea can reroll a saving throw that she fails but must use the new roll.

Ranger Features. Penthesilea has the Natural Explorer (forests) and Primeval Awareness ranger class features.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Penthesilea can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+14 hit points.

Spellcasting. Penthesilea is a 4th level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as her spellcasting ability. She has the following spells prepared from the ranger's spell list:

1st-level (3 slots): *cure wounds*, *hunter's mark*, *longstrider*

FEATS

Athletic. Penthesilea can stand up from being prone with only 5 feet of her movement, climbing doesn't cost her extra movement, and she only has to move 5 feet before making a running long jump or running high jump.

Brawling. Penthesilea is proficient with improvised weapons, and she can use a bonus action to grapple a target she hits with an unarmed strike or improvised weapon on her turn.

Mobility. Penthesilea can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever she makes an attack against a creature, she doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of her turn.

Soldier Tactics. A creature hit by Penthesilea's opportunity attack reduces its Speed to 0 until the beginning of the next round and disengaging from her still provokes opportunity attacks. In addition, Penthesilea can use her reaction to make a melee weapon attack against a creature within 5 feet when it makes an attack against a target other than her.

ACTIONS

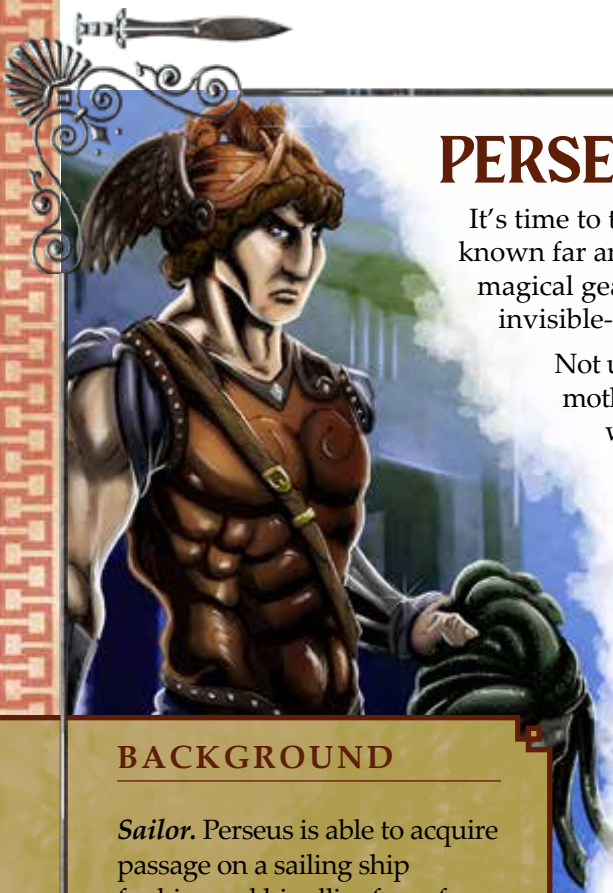
Extra Attack. Penthesilea attacks three times when she takes the Attack action. When she uses a bonus action to engage in two-weapon fighting using her shield, she adds her Strength modifier to the damage of her fourth attack.

Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) piercing damage or 12 (1d8+1d6+4) piercing damage if wielded in two hands.

Shield. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d4+1d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

Unarmed. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d4+1d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage.



PERSEUS

It's time to take a look at one of Greece's most beloved heroes, known far and wide for slaying Medusa and having an array of magical gear: Perseus! Read onward to find out more about the invisible-capped decapitating founder of Mycenaean.

Not unsurprisingly, Perseus was one of Zeus' offspring. His mother was Danaë, daughter of Acrisius the King of Argos, a woman prophesied to beget Acrisius' slayer, and who was thus locked away to no avail. When Perseus was born, the king was not willing to cross the gods directly, and so cast his daughter and grandson out into the sea in a wooden chest. They survived and washed up on an island where they were taken in by the fisherman Dictys.

Dictys' brother, Polydectes, was king of the island, and fell in love with Danaë but Perseus would have none of it; so Polydectes tricked him, requesting that all the guests of his banquet bring him horses. Perseus had no horses and asked Polydectes to name another gift, and in reply Polydectes chose the head of Medusa the gorgon.

Athena, the goddess of wisdom, told Perseus to find the Nymphs of the West and acquire the weapons to kill Medusa. To do that, he first had to seek out the Graeae, the three sisters of the gorgon—these old women shared one eye between them. To force them to share this information Perseus stole their eye, holding it hostage until they told him where to find the nymphs.

BACKGROUND

Sailor. Perseus is able to acquire passage on a sailing ship for him and his allies free of charge. He has no control over the ship's route, departure, or return, and although no coin is required he and his companions do have to help crew the vessel.

When he found

them, the nymphs gave Perseus a knapsack to hold Medusa's head, an adamant sword from Zeus, the helm of invisibility from Hades, a polished shield from Athena, and Hermes' winged sandals. In Medusa's cave, using the reflection of the shield, he safely snuck up on and decapitated the gorgon in her sleep. The winged horse Pegasus sprang from out of her headless body along with the golden sword *Chrysaor*. Two other gorgons chased after him but he escaped by using the helm from Hades, seeking refuge from King Atlas. Atlas refuses, and so Perseus turns him to stone.

That's far from the end of Perseus' adventures. He slew the sea-serpent Cetus, took a wife by turning her betrothed to stone, and returned home to find his mother being violently pursued by Polydectes—so guess who got turned to stone?

Afterward he returned his magical goodies, possibly tamed Pegasus, founded Mycenaean, killed his grandfather King Acrisius, and was killed by Megapenthes in revenge—but this is already overly long.

DESIGN NOTES

Why is Perseus a thief? So he can frequently reach into a bag to snag Medusa's head and pull off his favorite trick! I'm of the mind that most classical heroes ought to have some fighter levels and to make him useful to GMs (because dropping a petrification thief onto the party is at best very mean) amped him up to extra attack level. The astute mechanics among you might notice his CR is slightly higher than the math suggests—I argue that "turn people to stone once a turn" is worth an extra bit of oomph, and generally give a fairly generous number of hit points for calculating when a statblock has Uncanny Dodge. Might even be worth boosting to 11, although be warned—PCs are not going to want to part with his equipment after they've got their hands on it.

PERSEUS

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good
 rogue (thief) 7/fighter (champion) 5

Armor Class 17 (leather, +1 shield)

Hit Points 83 (7d8+5d10+24)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +6

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +4, Persuasion +10,
 Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +11;
 vehicle (water) +11

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Greek, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Perseus can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Perseus can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Evasion. When Perseus is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Improved Critical. Perseus' weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Magic Items. Perseus carries a reflective +1 shield, the Chrysaor (a golden *vorpal* shortsword), Hermes' talaria (*winged boots*), and the helm of darkness from Hades (treat as a *ring of invisibility*).

Medusa Head. Perseus carries the severed head of Medusa in a knapsack and can use his Cunning Action to wield the monster's Petrifying Gaze. When a creature that can see the medusa's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the medusa's head, it makes a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn

to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Perseus extra movement. When he makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 3 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Perseus can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+5 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Perseus deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Perseus that isn't incapacitated and Perseus doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

FEATS

Fortune Points (3/long rest). Perseus can spend one fortune point to reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, or to force an attacker to reroll an attack made against him.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Perseus attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Chrysaor (*vorpal* shortsword). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (1d6+8) magical slashing damage that ignores resistances. When the creature has at least one head and Perseus rolls a 20 on the attack roll, he cuts off one of the creature's heads. The creature dies if it can't survive without the lost head. A creature is immune to this effect if it is immune to slashing damage, doesn't have or need a head, has legendary actions, or the GM decides that the creature is too big for its head to be cut off with this weapon. Such a creature instead takes an extra 27 (6d8) slashing damage from the hit.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Perseus can see hits him with an attack, Perseus can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.



DESIGN NOTES

My initial impulse here was to make Peter Pan as a Mythological Figure using the feywalker class (as so many folks like to call that the Peter Pan class!) but upon thorough consideration it became clear that actually isn't a very good fit. Why? Let's review what this little guy can do: he's eternally young and has to forget things to retain that youth, he can fly under his own power, he apparently affects the entire region of Neverland while present, he's a swordsman on par with a pirate captain (who admittedly might not be that good, what with the amputated hand), has superior senses, can imagine things into existence, has a danger sense, and is a psychopomp.

With all that in mind: let's do the numbers. The Danger Sense trait gives Peter here an effectively higher AC (and if you want to be nuanced an abstractly higher hit point total) so if you boil him down into the DMG rubric it spits out a 7.5, the Blog of Holding ever so slightly higher at 7.8. With those nifty lair actions (which includes a minion option and shadow puppetry) we round up to an even 8.

PETER PAN

It's a bird! It's a plane! No, it's that half-bird half-boy shadow-fighting faerie-friend from Neverland, the lad who can never grow up but apparently can do anything else, Peter Pan! This is a literary character invented by the Scotsman J.M. Barrie, a novelist and playwright in the early 1900s. There's an extremely popular animated Disney film, as well as a great movie starring the late Robin Williams called *Hook*, that have introduced him to most modern audiences.

Peter Pan was a chaotic youth who never grew up, and who whisked children away to the wondrous island of Neverland where they, too, never became old, and joined his gang the Lost Boys. Captain Hook and his pirates were always trying to capture Peter and his friends, until the buccaneer was gruesomely killed by a crocodile. In the end Peter remains in Neverland while the Lost Boys return to England with his most recent batch of abductees, adopting the kids into their family and growing old—too old to fly and ever return.

There are three other original works beyond the narrative most of us know (*Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, *When Wendy Grew Up - An Afterthought*, and *Peter and Wendy*) in which Peter takes to shepherding the souls of dead children so they're not frightened on their way to the afterlife.

PETER PAN

Small fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 130 (20d6+60)

Speed 45 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +2, Deception +7, Nature +4, Perception +5, Persuasion +7, Stealth +10

Senses passive Perception 20

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Ageless Amnesia. Peter does not age. He cannot suffer from frailty of old age, die from old age, or be aged magically. He also suffers from partial amnesia. Peter knows who he is, retains racial traits and class features, and recognizes people he knows, but he doesn't remember any past events that occurred more than 1d4+1 months ago. If Peter is cured of his amnesia, he loses this trait.

Cunning Action (1/Turn). Peter can take a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Danger Sense. Peter can't be surprised and has advantage on saving throws. Additionally, other creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against him. Unlike normal, if an attacking creature would have advantage twice or more (such as from *true strike* while making a melee attack against Peter while he is prone) the attacking creature has advantage.

Ethereal Sight. Peter can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Fairy Dust. Peter can use an action to blow fairy dust into the air to produce a variety of effects.

- ◆ **Fly:** Each creature in a 10-foot cube originating from Peter gains a flying speed equal to its walking speed for 1 hour and can hover. If a creature is in the air when the dust wears off, it falls unless it has some other means of staying aloft.
- ◆ **Glitter:** Each object in a 20-foot cube originating from Peter is outlined in blue, green, or violet light (your choice). Any creature in the area when the dust is blown is also outlined in light if it fails a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. For 1 minute, objects and affected creatures shed dim light in a 10-foot radius. Any attack roll against an affected creature or object has advantage if the attacker can see it, and the affected creature or object can't benefit from being invisible.
- ◆ **Restore:** Each creature in a 15-foot cube originating from Peter is washed over with healing energy, regaining 17 (3d8+4) hit points.

Keen Senses. Peter has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or vision.

Mimicry. Peter can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Mobility. Peter can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

Neverdying. When Peter is 'killed', his body fades away and he reappears in Neverland after 2d6 days at maximum health. The only way to permanently destroy Peter is to cure him of his partial amnesia and force him to doubt himself with a DC 30 Charisma (Persuasion) check, three consecutive DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) checks, or by another means determined by the GM.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Peter attacks three times.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. and range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Master of the Sword. Peter can use his reaction when wielding a sword to gain a +1 bonus to his AC until the start of his next turn or until he is disarmed. In addition, Peter has advantage on opportunity attacks.

LAIR ACTIONS

Peter has a visceral effect on Neverland and the island seems to awaken when he is there. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), he takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; Peter can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- ◆ Peter imagines a nonliving object of vegetable matter within 15 feet: soft goods, rope, wood, or something similar. He can also create mineral objects such as stone, crystal, or metal. The object created must be no larger than a 5-foot cube. The duration depends on the object's material (as *creation*). If the object is composed of multiple materials, use the shortest duration. Unless he decides otherwise when making it, only Peter and other children are able to see the conjured object.
- ◆ Naturally drawn to him, one of the Lost Boys appears from a place of concealment within 200 feet of Peter and joins the fight, acting on his initiative (use the statistics for a Scout).
- ◆ Shadows wrap around the creatures casting them. Peter chooses up to 6 creatures he can see that are casting a shadow. Until the start of the next round, when one of these creatures moves 10 feet or more, makes an attack, or casts a hostile spell, it is ensnared by its shadow. The creature makes a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is grappled (escape DC 15).



PROSPERO

"My high charms work And these, mine enemies, are all knit up in their distractions. They now are in my power."

Prospero is the protagonist of *The Tempest* which is the last of the plays William Shakespeare wrote entirely by himself. In it he's the Duke of Milan, but after being betrayed by his brother is exiled on a remote island for over a decade. Prospero is quite taken with magic and uses it to control others (including the beastman Caliban and a spirit named Ariel), create storms, and entertain. Gradually as the play progresses he becomes a more sympathetic and likable character, ultimately renouncing magic by the end.

BACKGROUND

Sage. Acumen or fate gently nudges Prospero toward the answers to his questions. When he fails to recollect or discover more about a subject of lore, he knows where or whom can give him that information (usually from an athenaeum, library, institute of higher learning, another scholar, or mystical creature). The lengths to which he must go to acquire this information and the feasibility of doing so is entirely at the GM's discretion.

DESIGN NOTES

Prospero is an enchanter wizard of some considerable potency. For binding Aerial he's got planar binding and to account for the storm summoning bit, a staff of lightning and thunder as well (plus his own lightning bolt spells). So let's do the numbers! The DMG puts Prospero at 7.6 and the Blog of Holding at 8.7, which squeaks in at 8.2.

PROSPERO

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral wizard (enchanter) 11

Armor Class 16 (mage armor)

Hit Points 71 (11d6+33)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +8, History +8, Insight +4,
Investigation +8, Nature +8, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Italian

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)



Arcane Recovery. Once per day when Prospero finishes a short rest, he can choose expended spell slots to recover. The spell slots can have a combined level that is equal to or less than 5th-level.

Doubly Enchanting. When Prospero casts an enchantment spell that targets only one creature, he can target a second creature with the same spell. To be eligible for Doubly Enchanting, a spell must be incapable of targeting more than one creature at the spell's current level.

Gazed Thrall. Prospero can use action and choose a creature within 5 feet that can see or hear him. The target makes a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or remains charmed by Prospero until the end of his next turn. While it is charmed by Prospero in this way, the creature is obviously mesmerized, its speed is reduced to 0, and it is incapacitated. On each of his turns as long as he remains within 5 feet of the charmed creature, Prospero can use his action to continue using this feature and extend the duration an additional round. The effect immediately ends when the creature takes damage, it can't see or hear Prospero, or if he moves more than 5 feet from the creature. After a creature has been targeted by this feature or successfully saves against it, it is immune to Prospero's Gazed Thrall until he finishes a long rest.

Spellcasting. Prospero is an 11th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16; +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared from the wizard spell list:

Cantrips: *light, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shocking grasp, true strike*

1st-level (4 slots): *charm person, find familiar, mage armor*

2nd-level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, detect thoughts, misty step*

3rd-level (3 slots): *clairvoyance, fear, lightning bolt*

4th-level (3 slots): *conjure minor elementals, locate creature*

5th-level (2 slots): *planar binding, scrying*

6th-level (1 slot): *eyebite, programmed illusion*

ACTIONS

Staff of Thunder and Lightning. *Melee Weapon*
Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.

◆ **Lightning (1/day).** On a successful hit Prospero can cause the target to take an extra 7 (2d6) lightning damage.

◆ **Thunder (1/day).** On a successful hit Prospero can cause the staff to emit a crack of thunder, audible out to 300 feet. The target makes a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or is stunned until the end of Prospero's next turn.

◆ **Lightning Strike (1/day).** Prospero can use an action to cause a bolt of lightning to leap from the staff's tip in a line that is 5 feet wide and 120 feet long. Each creature in that line must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 31 (9d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

◆ **Thunderclap (1/day).** Prospero can use an action to cause the staff to issue a deafening thunderclap, audible out to 600 feet. Each creature within 60 feet of him (not including Prospero) must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 7 (2d6) thunder damage and becomes deafened for 1 minute. On a successful save, a creature takes half damage and isn't deafened.

◆ **Thunder and Lightning (1/day).** Prospero can use an action to use the Lightning Strike and Thunderclap properties at the same time. Doing so doesn't expend the daily use of those properties, only the use of this one.

REACTIONS

Elusive Presence. Prospero can use his reaction to dodge an attack when a creature he can see within 30 feet makes an attack roll against him and there is another creature within the range or reach of the attacker. When he does so, the attacker must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or target the creature closest to it other than Prospero. When there is more than one possible target, the attacker chooses which creature is its new target. An attacker that makes its saving throw is immune to Prospero's Elusive Presence until he finishes a long rest. In addition, a creature that can't be charmed is immune to this feature.



RASPUTIN

Grigori Rasputin, the Black Monk, was a peasant turned monk healer fanatically accepted into the family of Russia's last tsar for his miraculous ability to help heal the hemophiliac heir Nicholas. He became both influential and controversial, and was rumored to be having an affair with the Russian Empress, Alexandra.

The thing Rasputin is best known for, of course, is refusing to die. He was stabbed in the stomach in 1914 and survived, but that's not the noteworthy bit. In the best known version of events from the memoir of Felix Yusupov, a bunch of nobles invited him to dinner where Rasputin ate cyanide-laced cakes, then drank three glasses of poisoned wine, got shot in the chest, and got back up after a short period of time to attack his murderers before being shot in the head and dumped into an icy river. The man just wouldn't die!

BACKGROUND

Folk Hero. Rasputin is always able to rely on the hospitality of commoners to help him hide or rest provided he poses no danger in doing so, going so far as to shield him from being discovered (though not at the cost of their lives).

DESIGN NOTES

I struggled quite a bit trying to nail down what fit best for Grigori here but really it became a fight for "what's going to get him up off the ground again and again and again" and landed on the Brute archetype. He's got to have a ton of hit points so he's got quite a few class levels, great natural AC and the ability to shrug off lots of damage (barbarian ahoy), and finally the charlatan bit—since he's known to have grown up a peasant in the countryside I pushed into a level of rogue for Expertise in Deception and Persuasion. We could possibly do with fewer fighter levels or a reduced constitution (picking up the Diplomat feat would be very fitting!) but I really wanted that unwilling-to-die motif reinforced so went after the hit points. For the CR heads: the DMG chart puts him cleanly at CR 5 but the Blog of Holding rubric claims 6.8 which I'm inclined to agree with as he's got some surprising staying power.



RASPUTIN

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
rogue 1/barbarian 1/fighter (brute) 10

Armor Class 15 (Constitution)

Hit Points 114 (1d8+1d12+10d10+48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +8, Int +5

Skills Animal Handling +5, Deception +10, Medicine +5, Performance +6, Persuasion +10, Sleight of Hand +5, Survival +5; artisan's tools +5, vehicles (land) +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (while raging)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Russian

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Rasputin can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Brutal Toughness. Rasputin gains a +1d6 bonus to saving throws and death saves (treating final results of 20 or higher on a death saving throw as a natural 20).

Cunning Action (1/turn). Rasputin can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Indomitable (1/long rest). Rasputin can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Rage (2/long rest). On his turn, Rasputin can enter a rage as a bonus action. His rage lasts for 1 minute, ending early if he is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't either attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. Rasputin

can also end his rage on his turn as a bonus action. While raging, he gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Rasputin has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- ◆ When Rasputin makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, he deals 2 extra damage.
- ◆ Rasputin has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Rasputin can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+8 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Rasputin deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Rasputin that isn't incapacitated and Rasputin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

FEATS

Hardy. Rasputin has proficiency with Constitution saving throws.

Medicinal Knowledge. Rasputin can treat wounds for up to six beasts and humanoids over a short rest by making a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check on each. On a success, a target regains the maximum hit points from the use of a single hit dice during the short rest (forgoing the roll of that hit dice but not any others that are spent during that short rest).

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Rasputin attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 9 (1d6+1d4+3) piercing damage.

Revolver (6 bullets). Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target.
Hit: 15 (2d8+1d6+3) piercing damage.





ROBIN HOOD

Meet the master of the bow, leader of the Merry Men, and maybe the world's first and most beloved outlaw, Robin Hood! Robin Hood is about as mythological as it gets, with ballads that go back more than 600 years and a 543 year old play, not to mention countless books, films, and television shows. Nearly every retelling of the famous outlaw's story changes some detail or other, and the version below is a combination of several interpretations.

Robin Hood was the Earl of Huntingdon, ridiculously good with a bow, and quite clever—pretty much every story about him involved tricking somebody. Outlawed by the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, he took up residence in Sherwood Forest, where he gathered a band of Merry Men and took to robbing the rich to give to the poor.

Along the way, Robin competed for—and won—the Silver Arrow in an archery tournament, harried and fought the Sheriff and his henchman Sir Guy of Gisborne, robbed corrupt bishops and greedy clergymen, romanced Maid Marian, and resisted the Normans at every turn, until he was betrayed by the prioress of Kirklees Priory when he sought medical aid. Legend has it that he was buried at the landing place of his final arrow, shot with his dying breaths.

Robin's plucky band of Merry Men is equally famous—the mighty Little John, the jovial monk Friar Tuck, the incendiary Will Scarlet, and the bard Alan-a-Dale feature in many of the outlaw's escapades.

Robin Hood is a symbol of struggle against injustice and tyranny.

BACKGROUND

Folk Hero. Robin Hood is always able to rely on the hospitality of commoners to help him hide or rest provided he poses no danger in doing so, going so far as to shield him from being discovered (though not at the cost of their lives).

DESIGN NOTES

Because of the similarity between Robin Hood and Blackbeard's builds I was a slightly apprehensive about the Challenge Rating here, ultimately using both the DMG and Blog of Holding charts to land on CR 8. Note that this definitely assumes that he's being used correctly—flitting about in the darkness, attacking from hiding, and avoiding engaging in melee combat unless it serves a more important purpose than a simple fight.



ROBIN HOOD

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good
 rogue (thief) 5/fighter (sharpshooter) 7

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 61 (5d8+7d10+12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +6

Skills Animal Handling +5, Athletics +5, Deception +10, Investigation +5, Perception +5, Stealth +12, Survival +5; thieves' tools +8

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages English, Thieves' Cant

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, Robin Hood can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Attentive Gaze. Robin Hood can use a bonus action to take the Search action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Robin Hood can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Excellent Aim (3/short rest). Robin Hood can spend a bonus action to aim a wielded ranged weapon at a target within its range. Until the end of his turn, ranged attacks that Robin Hood makes against the target deal an extra 5 damage.

Second-Story Work. Climbing does not cost Robin Hood extra movement. When he makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 4 feet.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Robin Hood can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+7 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Robin Hood deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Robin Hood that isn't incapacitated and Robin Hood doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

FEATS

Stealthier. Robin Hood can attempt to hide even when he is only lightly obscured from a creature he's trying to hide from. In addition, Robin Hood's position isn't revealed when he misses with a ranged weapon attack against a creature he's hidden from, and he does not have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks in dim light.

Superb Aim. Robin Hood ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and he doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Robin Hood makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Robin Hood attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

Dagger (2). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Robin Hood can see hits him with an attack, Robin Hood can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.



SAINT GEORGE

What tome of legends would be complete without a bona fide dragonslayer? This entry in *Mythological Figures* is the martyr and patron saint of England, Saint George!

Saint George is a myth with fans all over the western world and beyond. There's argument over where and when he originated, and on top of that there are multiple cultures with different interpretations of him. He's the patron saint not just of England, but of Ethiopia, Georgia, and a dozen other cities and organizations. He's best known for two particular things, however: slaying a dragon, and being martyred.

The legend of St. George and the dragon tells of a fierce fire-breathing reptile terrorizing a town in Libya. The townsfolk gave the dragon two sheep a day to placate it, but when the sheep ran out, the dragon demanded humans! The town chose the sacrifices by lottery, and one day the king's daughter was chosen.

Enter George. He slew the dragon with a lance named *Ascalon*, and then gave his reward to the poor.

The other half of St. George's legend had him tortured by the Persian emperor over a period of years, before being beheaded. Other versions of the legend place the blame on a Roman emperor. Either way, he was persecuted as a Christian before being executed.

BACKGROUND

Soldier. Saint George commands respect from his time serving in the army. Soldiers loyal to the same forces view him as their superior, and Saint George can use his influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, possibly even gaining entrance to military fortresses and outposts.

DESIGN NOTES

A heroic holy mounted dragonslayer should be the design goal and I went after it with the cavalier fighter and then a touch of paladin (for smiting) and a big investment into cleric, choosing the protection domain because that appears to be one of his saintly things. Could he have gone 100% paladin? Yes, I suppose so but then he wouldn't be quite so good on a horse and any party worth their salt would pick out his shtick after a round or two. This way at least there are some surprises and he can get away with some downright saintly stuff (like hallow). CR statisticians: he came in at a 9.2 on the DMG charts but a 10.8 in the Blog of Holding rubric so I settled onto 10.

SAINT GEORGE

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good fighter
(cavalier) 6/cleric (protection) 8/paladin 2

Armor Class 19 (breastplate, shield, fighting style)

Hit Points 144 (8d10+8d8+64)

Speed 30 ft (60 ft. mounted)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +9

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +8, Intimidation +7, Perception +7; gaming set +5, vehicles (land) +7

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages English

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, Saint George can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Blessed Healer. When Saint George casts a spell of 1st level or higher that restores hit points to a creature other than him, he regains hit points equal to 2 + the spell's level.

Channel Divinity (2/short rest). Saint George can channel his divine energy to fuel one of two magical effects.

Divine Protection. As an action, Saint George chooses an ally within 30 feet that he can see. Within the next minute, the first time the target is hit by an attack, the creature that attacked the target takes 2d10+8 radiant damage.

Turn Undead. As the cleric feature (action, 30-foot radius, DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, on a failure undead of CR 1 or less are destroyed).

Divine Sense (2/long rest). As the paladin feature.

Divine Smite. When Saint George hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 3d8. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

Lay on Hands (10 points/long rest). As an action, Saint George can touch a creature and restore a number of hit points to it, up to the maximum amount remaining in this pool. Alternatively, he can expend 5 hit points to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.

Mark of Challenge Saint George may choose to mark a creature when he hits it with a melee weapon attack. This mark lasts until the end of Saint George's next turn, he dies, becomes incapacitated, or another creature marks the target. A marked creature has disadvantage on attack rolls targeting creatures other than Saint George while it is within 5 feet of him. In addition, Saint George can use a bonus action on his turn to make a melee weapon attack with advantage when a marked creature deals damage to someone other than him. On a hit, he deals 2 extra damage to the marked creature. Once Saint George has made this special mark and used it to hit creatures a total of three times, he cannot do so again until he finishes a long rest.

Saddleborn. Saint George mounts or dismounts a creature with only 5 feet of his movement (not half his speed), has advantage when making a

saving throw to avoid falling from his mount, and lands on his feet when he falls off his mount and falls less than 10 feet as long as he's not incapacitated.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Saint George can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+6 hit points.

Spellcasting. Saint George is a 9th level spellcaster that uses Wisdom or Charisma as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). Saint George has the following spells prepared from the cleric and paladin spell lists:

Cantrips: *guidance, light, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st-level (4 slots): *cure wounds, divine favor, guiding bolt, shield of faith, protection from evil and good*

2nd-level (3 slots): *augury, enhance ability, spiritual weapon; aid, protection from poison*

3rd-level (3 slots): *daylight, dispel magic, revivify; protection from energy, slow*

4th-level (3 slots): *death ward, divination; guardian of faith, resilient sphere*

5th-level (1 slots): *hallow*

FEATS

Charge. After Saint George uses his action to Dash, so long as he moves 10 feet or more in a straight line he can use a bonus action to immediately either shove a creature or make a single melee weapon attack. On a hit he either pushes the target up to 10 feet away from him or deals +5 extra damage.

ACTIONS

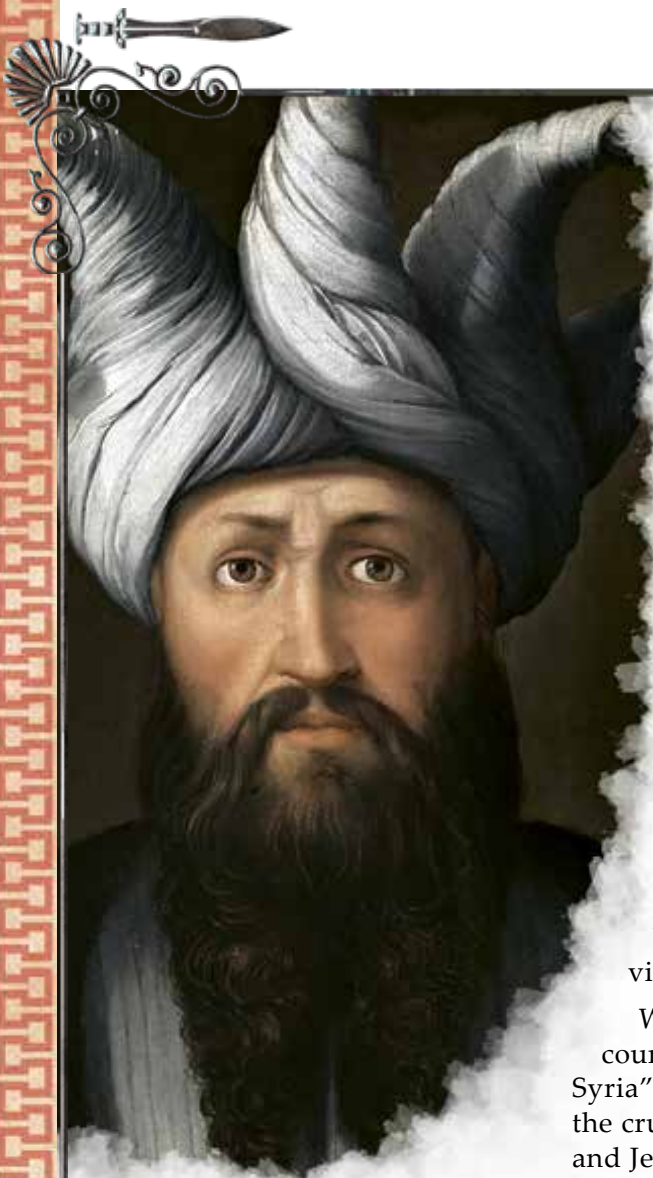
Extra Attack. Saint George attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Lance. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12+3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage. This attack roll has disadvantage if the target is within 5 feet.

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+3) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage or when wielded with two hands 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.

REACTIONS

Devoted Shield. Saint George can use his reaction to disrupt the attack of a creature he can see when it attacks a target other than him that is within 5 feet of Saint George and that he can see. The attacker has disadvantage on the attack roll.



SALADIN

Watch out for quicksand and be ready to weather the dunes because we're headed to medieval Egypt and what is today the Middle East for Saladin, one of history's greatest generals.

There's an abundance of history surrounding Saladin—well known for his chivalry, compassion, and generosity that I'm only going to touch upon here. A Sunni muslim of Kurdish ethnicity, this fellow led the war against the Crusader states rose to prominence to become vizier thanks to abundant military successes and the consequences of history (succeeding two others that might have ascended but died from natural causes or the blades of assassins).

Saladin ushered in new leadership with the caliphate, committing the country to the Sunni and the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad. He went on to beat back crusaders in Palestine, conquer Yemen, and quench insurrection in northern Egypt, then in 1174 he took Damascus without violence.

Within a year he finished taking most of the country of Syria, dubbed the "Sultan of Egypt and Syria". In 1187 Saladin led his army to victory over the crusaders at the Battle of Hattin, taking Palestine and Jerusalem as his prize. Even today his behavior as a commander is notable, the stories of his respected camaraderie with his enemy Richard the Lionheart a shining example of honorable conduct amongst war.

Six years later he gave away his fortune to his subjects and died, buried in a mausoleum beside the Umayyad Mosque and leaving behind over a dozen sons.

BACKGROUND

Vizier. Saladin is frequently overseeing things and has many servants, training them in the ways of the military arts and diplomacy. His subordinates obey his commands and believe what he tells them (within reason).

DESIGN NOTES

Are you looking for a solid general able to hold their own in a court of intrigue as well as the field of battle? Saladin will fit the bill! He's sneaky, he's brilliant, he's got great social skill bonuses, and most importantly he's a solid commander able to direct companions into being far more formidable than they might normally be.

SALADIN

Medium humanoid (human),
rogue (mastermind) 6/fighter (warlord) 11

Armor Class 17 (breastplate, fighting style; 19 with a shield)

Hit Points 121 (6d8+11d10+34)

Speed 30 ft. (60 ft. mounted)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +10

Skills Deception +8, History +16, Insight +14,
Perception +14, Persuasion +14, Religion +10

Senses passive Perception 24

Languages Arabic, English, Kurdish

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Saladin can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Saladin can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Fast Learner. After Saladin has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, he can mimic its manner of speaking as long as he knows the same language as the creature (allowing him to seem like he is local to a given region).

Indomitable (1/long rest). Saladin can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Saladin can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+11 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Saladin deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Saladin that isn't incapacitated and Saladin doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactical Focal Point. Saladin selects a 10-foot square to be his tactical focal point as a bonus action or as part of the Attack action, choosing a Tactic to apply to it (see page 8). This lasts until he cannot take actions or uses this feature again. Each time Saladin completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits for a different one: Area Clear, Cover the Flank, Phalanx Sidestep, Run Away!

Tactical Mastery (9/long rest). Saladin uses part of his Attack action or a bonus action to take mastery of the battlefield, granting it to himself

and allies within his focal point by expending uses of this feature. A creature that is granted a use of Saladin's Tactical Mastery can either regain 2d10 hit points when it is granted (any hit points greater than its maximum are temporary hit points) or use it to deal an extra 2d10 damage with an attack.

Tactician. Saladin is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Saladin and is within 30 feet of him.

FEATS

Brilliant. Saladin always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

Mounted Combat. When Saladin's mount is attacked, he can make himself the target of that attack. In addition, he has advantage on melee attack rolls when his target is an unmounted creature smaller than his mount (usually any unmounted target of Medium size or smaller). Finally, when Saladin's mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Saladin attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target.
Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

Tactical Maneuver (4/long rest). Each time Saladin completes a long rest, he can swap one of these benefits (see page 8) for a different one (tactical DC 18): Coordinated Blows, Group Assault, Move to Flank.

REACTIONS

Leading Example. When Saladin hits a creature with a weapon attack, until the end of his next turn the target of his attack has disadvantage on saving throws against his Tactical Maneuvers.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Saladin can see hits him with an attack, Saladin can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.



SANTA CLAUS

If any entry in this book needs no introduction, it's this one. Whether he's known as Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, or Kris Kringle, this benevolent grandfatherly figure circumnavigates the entire world every Christmas Eve and gives presents to children who have behaved well throughout the year. He's assisted in this task by an army of toymaking elves who live in a wondrous workshop at the North Pole, and a retinue of magical reindeer who pull his sleigh through the sky.

Santa's origins lie in the tales of the 4th-Century Greek bishop, Saint Nicholas, known for his generosity to the poor; and in the time of Henry VIII, the character of Father Christmas exemplified the spirit of good cheer. Santa also has roots in Dutch, Belgian, Swiss, and Germanic folklore. He's worn green, smoked a pipe, and is known for his "little round belly that shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly".

Whatever the mythical origins of this magical benevolent demigod, he's now a plump, white-bearded man with a jolly laugh and a list of who's been naughty, and who's been nice.

DESIGN NOTES

Jolly old Saint Nick. Creating an omniscient demi-god able to visit millions of households each night is certainly possible—and it'll be something GMs will have to do a lot of work to really use properly. But this version of the holiday icon has killer skills and can craft practically anything with superlative talent, there's quick and reliable rules for his flying sleigh, he can squeeze through most any chimney and otherwise make his way into a locked up building, he's got real magical potency and has some oomph in the action economy department, Jolly Bellow is awesome, and through Naughty or Nice he can easily pass judgment over others (and what a fantastic plot item that list becomes should it get dropped on the ground!) Let's do the numbers! The DMG came in higher on this one at 21.9 and the Blog of Holding at 20.2, averaging out to an infinitesimally small amount under 21.



SANTA CLAUS

Medium fey, lawful good

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 210 (20d8+120)

Speed 45 ft., climb 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	21 (+5)	26 (+8)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Con +13

Skills Animal Handling +15, Acrobatics +19, History +19, Insight +22, Investigation +19, Perception +22, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +19, Survival +15

Senses passive Perception 32

Languages Common, Sylvan; all (tongues)

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Ageless. Santa does not age, cannot suffer from frailty of old age, die from old age, or be aged magically.

Brilliant. Santa always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

Compress. Santa can move through a space as narrow as 6 inches wide without squeezing.

Divine Action (recharge 5–6). At the end of the round, Santa can move his Speed and take an additional action.

Epic Concentration. Santa is able to concentrate on up to 2 spells at the same time. If he fails a concentration check while concentrating on more than one spell, he loses both spells.

Innate Spellcasting. Santa's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 23). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *freedom of movement, tongues*

At will: *bless, conjure animals* (reindeer only), *cure wounds* (as a 4th-level spell), *improved invisibility, knock* (see Knock Knock), *misty step, scrying, sleep* (as a 6th-level spell; 15d8)

3/day each: *hold monster, sleet storm, teleport, time stop*

Jolly Bellow. Santa emits an infectious magical laughter filled with mirth. Each time he bellows before finishing a long rest, the laughter is louder and the effect is different, as detailed below. Each creature within 500 feet of Santa and able to hear the bellow must make a saving throw. When a creature has made 3 successful saving throws against it, the creature is immune to Santa's Jolly Bellow for the next 24 hours.

◆ **First Bellow:** Each creature that fails a DC 23 Charisma saving throw becomes indifferent about creatures that it is hostile toward. This indifference ends if a creature is attacked or harmed by a spell

or if it witnesses any of its friends being harmed. After 1 minute, the creature becomes hostile again, unless the GM rules otherwise.

◆ **Second Bellow:** Each creature that fails a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw falls prone, becoming incapacitated and unable to stand up for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, and each time it takes damage, the creature can make another Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

◆ **Third Bellow:** Each creature that fails a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw feels a compulsion to do good deeds and show kindness towards others. At the end of each of its turns, and each time it takes damage, the creature can make another Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Knock Knock. No door or lock can bar Santa's way. He can cast *knock* at will. This trait otherwise works like the spell, but Santa can use a bonus action to cast, and no loud knock emanates from the object.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If Santa fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Santa has advantage on saving throws made against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. Santa's weapon attacks are magical.

Naughty or Nice. At the start of his turn, Santa can use a bonus action to pull out his list of who's been naughty and who's been nice. Santa instantly finds the names of any creatures he can see, and the list details both the alignments and identities of all creatures within 1 mile.

Santa's Sack. Santa carries a *bag of holding* filled with an infinite number of toys and chunks of coal. Retrieving an item from it requires Santa to use a bonus action. When he reaches into the *bag of holding* for a specific item, the item is always magically on top.

Santa's Sleigh. Whenever Santa is steering or otherwise in control of a sleigh being drawn by 6 or more reindeer, the creatures and sleigh are treated as if they were a 6 ft. × 20 ft. *carpet of flying* with a fly speed of 120 feet and capable of holding up to 2,000 pounds.

Tool Mastery. When Santa makes an ability check that uses a tool kit, he gains double his proficiency bonus (total +14).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Santa attacks four times.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) radiant damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 21).

Kringle Coal. Ranged Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) cold damage. On a critical hit, the target makes a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or is blinded for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the creature can make another Constitution saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.



SHERLOCK HOLMES

Mythological Figures is doing something a little bit different with one of the most famous characters in all of literature. By jove, you may even have already deduced that I'm referring to the one and only Sherlock Holmes!

Sherlock Holmes was the world's greatest detective. He used his skills of observation and deduction to assist Scotland Yard—and others—with the most difficult of cases. Sharing rooms with the faithful Dr. Watson at 221B Baker Street in London, he consulted for monarchs, nobles, industrialists, prime ministers and more. His escapades featured in colorful titles such as *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and *The Red-Headed League*.

Elementary, my dear Watson.

Eccentric, untidy, and often dispassionate, Holmes was also a consummate showman, enjoying the use of disguises, and the dramatic reveal of a culprit at the last moment. His arch-enemy was the criminal mastermind Professor James Moriarty. Author Conan Doyle killed off Holmes in a battle with his foe, but eight years of public outcry led him to bring the master detective back, explaining to a shocked Watson that he had faked his own death.

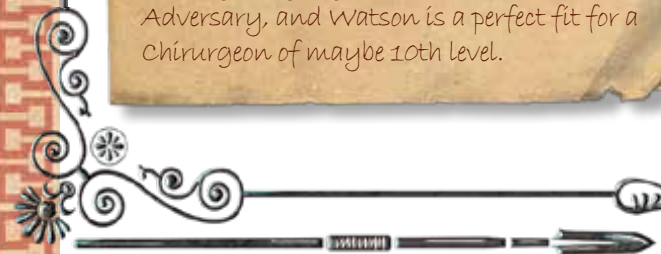
Holmes was awarded honors for his detective work. France gave him the Legion of Honor, and he turned down a knighthood for assisting the British government.

DESIGN NOTES

It's a general rule in this book that I keep things strictly in the 5th Edition ruleset. That means only content from the core books. There are however plenty of builds like that already for Sherlock Holmes so it felt a bit redundant to do one. Instead I've used the savant class from *EN5ider* because it was built exactly for characters just like him! The builds below use the Coordinator aptitude (one a true intellectual, the next a bit more pugilistic) but for a more Robert Downey Jr.-type you could make him an Adversary, and Watson is a perfect fit for a Chirurgeon of maybe 10th level.

BACKGROUND

Charlatan. Sherlock has the papers, clothing, and contacts required to justify an entirely different identity. When Sherlock has access to an official document or example of a creature's handwriting, he can make forgeries of similar papers (whether personal or official).



SHERLOCK HOLMES

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral good savant (coordinator) 13

Armor Class 18 (Intelligence)

Hit Points 84 (13d8+26)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +10

Skills Deception +5, History +15, Insight +6, Investigation +15, Nature +15, Perception +11, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +8; alchemist's supplies +10, disguise kit +10, forgery kit +10, thieves' tools +8, violin +5

Senses passive Perception 21

Languages English and any four other languages

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Analyzed Need: Survival. When Sherlock finishes a short or long rest, he can choose a skill. When making an ability check using that skill, he uses Intelligence instead of the ability score it normally uses.

Combat Deductions. Sherlock can use a bonus action to observe a creature and make an Intelligence (Investigation) check against a DC equal to CR + 5. On a success, he learns up to three of the following, and on a success by 5 or more, he chooses the categories: armor class, vulnerabilities, damage resistances, damage immunities, condition immunities, whether the target has lair or legendary actions, weakest saving throw, highest ability score.

Focused Defense. When Sherlock is facing more than one enemy he's able to use them against each other. As long as there's more than one enemy within 30 feet, Sherlock can use a bonus action to choose a creature within range. Until the end of his next turn, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against him.

Informed Coordinator (5/short rest). Sherlock can use a bonus action to give an ally a +5 bonus to their next d20 roll.

Languages. Sherlock has advantage on ability checks made to decipher codes and hidden messages. By spending 10 minutes studying he can make a DC 15 Intelligence check to translate any script, even if he cannot recognize the language it is written in.

Savant Tricks. Sherlock can use a bonus action to prepare a trick. A trick is prepared until he uses it. Sherlock can only have two tricks prepared at time. Once he uses the trick, Sherlock can prepare another trick in the same manner. Some of his tricks require the target to make a saving throw to resist its effects.

◆ **Disarming Flourish.** When Sherlock hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can activate this trick to force the target to drop an item in their hand, such as a weapon. The target makes a DC 18 Strength saving throw with advantage and on a failure, it drops one held item of Sherlock's choice.

◆ **Draw Out.** When Sherlock hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can use a bonus action to activate this trick. The target makes a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or reacts to a strike from him that never comes. As long as Sherlock remains within the target's reach, until the start of his next turn it cannot take the Attack action against anyone but him. After Sherlock has used this trick against a target, until the end of combat it has advantage on saving throws to resist Draw Out.


◆ **Grounded Reason.** Sherlock can use his reaction to reroll a Dexterity saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll.

◆ **Off-Balance.** When Sherlock hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, instead of dealing damage he uses pulls, shoves, and strikes to put his target off-balance. Until the end of Sherlock's next turn, the target moves at half speed and has disadvantage on ability checks.

◆ **Redirect.** When Sherlock is hit with a melee weapon attack, he can use his reaction to force the attacker to make a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, he takes no damage and the attack strikes another creature within 5 feet. A Huge-sized or larger target has advantage on the saving throw. Once Sherlock has used this trick against a target, until the end of combat that target has advantage on its saving throw to resist Redirect.

◆ **Sidestep.** When Sherlock is targeted by a spell or weapon attack, he can use his reaction to make a Dexterity check against the opponent's attack roll. On a success, he takes no damage from the spell or attack. Once Sherlock has used this trick against a target, until the end of combat he has disadvantage on checks to Sidestep that target.

◆ **Sweeping Stride.** Sherlock cannot activate this trick without moving at least 10 feet and traveling through a square adjacent to a



creature of Large size or smaller. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw with advantage or be knocked prone. On a success, Sherlock's movement ends in a square adjacent to the target.

Superior Deduction. Sherlock can spend 1 minute observing a creature to make a Wisdom (Perception) check against a DC equal to the target's CR + 5. On a success, he learns three of the following pieces of information (or other relevant details). If Sherlock succeeds the check by 5 or more, he chooses the categories instead.

- ◆ One part of the target's alignment (if it is chaotic, neutral, lawful, good, or evil)
- ◆ If the target is disguised
- ◆ If the target is armed
- ◆ If the target is under the effects of a spell
- ◆ What language(s) the target speaks
- ◆ If the target has a native terrain and the type of that terrain

FEATS

Brilliant. Sherlock always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything he's experienced within the last 31 days.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Sherlock attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Intelligent Caution (5/long rest). When Sherlock makes a saving throw against a spell or effect that deals damage, he can use his reaction to make an Intelligence saving throw instead. On a success, he takes no damage.

DOCTOR JOHN WATSON

DESIGN NOTES

It'd be weird to have Sherlock Holmes but not his stalwart companion! The savant is the natural choice for Watson as well, but the good doctor's much more at home using the Chirurgeon archetype through which he gains a bunch of nonmagical diagnostic and healing features that make him maybe the strongest support character in the book. Looking at the numbers the DMG places Watson at 4.83 and the Blog of Holding at 6.16 so we're sticking with a solid challenge rating of 5.

BACKGROUND

Soldier. Watson commands respect from his time serving in the army. Soldiers loyal to the same forces view him as their superior, and Watson can use his influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, possibly even gaining entrance to military fortresses and outposts.



DOCTOR JOHN WATSON

Medium humanoid (human),

lawful good savant (chirurgeon) 10

Armor Class 16 (Intelligence)

Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +7

Skills Athletics +5, History +7, Intimidation +4, Investigation +7, Medicine +11; poisoner's kit +4, tinker's tools +4

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages English

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Analyzed Need: Persuasion. When Watson finishes a short or long rest, he can choose a skill. When making an ability check using that skill, he uses Intelligence instead of the ability score it normally uses.

Chirurgeon's Care. Watson and any friendly creatures that take a short rest with him regain 7 additional hit points. In addition, Watson can choose one creature taking a rest with him. Using the right combination of herbs and pressure points, he removes an additional level of exhaustion from the target.

Chirurgy (6d4/short rest). Watson can use an action to spend one or more chirurgy dice and heal a creature he touches with his tools. For each chirurgy die Watson spends, the creature regains 1d4+3 hit points.

Focused Defense. When Watson is facing more than one enemy he's able to use them against each other. As long as there's more than one enemy within 30 feet, Watson can use a bonus action to choose a creature within range. Until the end of his next turn, it has disadvantage on attack rolls against him.

Knowledge of the Form. Watson's proficiency bonus is doubled for all Wisdom (Medicine) checks. In addition, you can use Intelligence instead of Wisdom when making a check that uses Medicine.

Savant Tricks. Watson can use a bonus action to prepare a trick. A trick is prepared until he uses it. Watson can only have two tricks prepared at time. Once he uses the trick, Watson can prepare another trick in the same manner. Some of his tricks require the target to make a saving throw to resist its effects.

◆ **Always With a Tonic.** Watson can use a bonus action to force an adjacent ally to drink a potion.

◆ **Diversion.** On his turn, Watson makes a Charisma (Deception) check opposed by the target's passive Insight. On a success, the target's attention is drawn to his hand and it has disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the start of Watson's next turn.

◆ **Exhausting the Body.** When Watson hits a creature with a weapon attack, instead of dealing damage he can give the target one level of exhaustion for 1 minute. On a critical hit, the target gains two levels of exhaustion instead. Watson cannot use this trick to give a target exhaustion more than once between short rests.

◆ **Guiding Steps.** When Watson hits a Large-sized or smaller creature with a melee weapon attack, the target makes a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw with advantage. On a failure, it is moved up to 10 feet in a direction of Watson's choice.

◆ **Relief to the Suffering.** Watson can use his action to allow an ally he can see to Disengage using their reaction.

Study of Suffering. Watson can identify maladies and rout them from a creature. Identifying a disease or poison requires a successful DC 15 Medicine (Wisdom) check (at the GM's discretion, more obscure maladies may have a higher DC). Once Watson knows the disease or poison, if it isn't magical he can use a bonus action to give the afflicted creature a new saving throw to resist it. A creature can only benefit from Study of Suffering once per disease or poison.

FEATS

Medical Learning. A creature that Watson uses a healer's kit to stabilize regains 1 hit point. In addition, he can use an action and a single use of a healer's kit to mend a creature's wounds. The creature regains 1d6 + 4 hit points, plus hit points equal to the creature's total hit dice. A creature can only benefit from this feature once between short or long rests.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Watson attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Intelligent Caution (4/long rest). When Watson makes a saving throw against a spell or effect that deals damage, he can use his reaction to make an Intelligence saving throw instead. On a success, he takes no damage.



SINBAD

This entry is a bit of a shipwreck because *Mythological Figures* is taking on the erstwhile sailor Sinbad! Sinbad's seven famous voyages included fantastic adventures which featured magic and monsters—and, with disturbing regularity, involved the unfortunate mariner being shipwrecked over and over and over again! In the typical fashion for *1,001 Arabian Nights* all of these stories are told via a framing story from an older man named Sinbad to a younger, poorer fellow also named Sinbad.

- ◆ He encountered a giant sleeping whale which he mistook for an island, and met a supernatural horse which lived underwater.
- ◆ He rode a roc, and discovered a valley of elephant-eating giant snakes.
- ◆ He blinded a huge beast intent on eating him and his crew.
- ◆ He escaped an island tribe and their madness-inducing herbs.
- ◆ He was buried alive with his dead wife, and escaped by murdering another woman who was being buried with her dead husband.
- ◆ He was enslaved by the Old Man of the Sea and escaped by trickery.
- ◆ He sailed a raft down a magical stream which led to a city of diamonds and pearls.
- ◆ He sailed another raft down another magical river to a city of bird-people.

BACKGROUND

Sailor. Sinbad is able to acquire passage on a sailing ship for him and his allies free of charge. He has no control over the ship's route, departure, or return, and although no coin is required he and his companions do have to help crew the vessel.

DESIGN NOTES

Sinbad is a survivor through and through, good at staying alive in the wilderness, not bad at sailing (just plagued by misfortune), and he's a talented archer. Breaking down his CR you get either 6 (accurate arrows) or 3.5 (more damaging arrows) so I'm inclined to put him at a 5—definitely a character that could be fun to include or play in a seafaring game but probably not wildly exciting on the land or in a city.

SINBAD

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good
 rogue 2/ranger 1/fighter (sharpshooter) 7

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 73 (2d8+8d10+20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +6

Skills Animal Handling +6, Athletics +4, Insight +6, Investigation +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +10, Stealth +7, Survival +6; thieves' tools +7, vehicles (water) +11

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Arabic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Attentive Gaze. Sinbad can use a bonus action to take the Search action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Sinbad can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Excellent Aim (3/short rest). Sinbad can spend a bonus action to aim a wielded ranged weapon at a target within his range. Until the end of his turn, ranged attacks that Sinbad makes against the target deal an extra 5 damage.

Favored Enemy. Sinbad has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track beasts, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Natural Explorer: Coasts. When Sinbad makes an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to the coast, his proficiency bonus (+4) is doubled if he is using a skill that he's proficient in. While traveling for an hour or more in his favored terrain, Sinbad gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Difficult terrain doesn't slow his group's travel.
- ◆ Sinbad's group can't become lost except by magical means. Even when he is engaged

in another activity while traveling (such as foraging, navigating, or tracking), Sinbad remains alert to danger.

- ◆ If Sinbad is traveling alone, he can move stealthily at a normal pace.
- ◆ When he forages, Sinbad finds twice as much food as he normally would.
- ◆ While tracking other creatures, Sinbad also learns their exact number, their sizes, and how long ago they passed through the area.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Sinbad can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+7 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Sinbad deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Sinbad that isn't incapacitated and Sinbad doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

FEATS

Superb Aim. Sinbad ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and he doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Sinbad makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Sinbad attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Dagger. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) piercing damage.



SUN WUKONG

I thought King Arthur was hard! For every bit of popularity the master of Camelot has in the west, the Monkey King matches him in the east. This entry tackles the untacklable—the star sidekick of *Journey to the West* and a hero more powerful than any we've seen yet, bodyguard of Tang Sanzang, the monkey with the unending pole: Sun Wukong.

The Monkey King is incredibly strong and fast, able to transform into different animals and objects, and a highly skilled warrior. His story is a journey from being an ignorant creature to becoming one of benevolence and enlightenment. What follows is just one version of the story, and in many he is just a regular (though highly intelligent) monkey to begin with.

Let's start at the beginning; this is a long story! A magic stone on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit burst open to reveal a stone monkey beaming golden light.

As it ate and drank, the stone monkey became more like the other monkeys, and befriended them. On a sort of bet he dove through a stream to find a cave which became the monkeys' home. Sun Wukong was declared Handsome Monkey King.

Sun Wukong eventually left this new home to seek a cure to death, and became a student of Subhuti, one of the disciples of Buddha. Subhuti taught the Monkey King the way of immortality, but bid him keep it secret.

Newly powerful, the Monkey King began to search for a potent weapon. He traveled across oceans to acquire his magical staff *Ruyi Jingu Bang* from Ao Kuang, the dragon-king of the Eastern Seas. Sun Wukong was the only one with the strength to wield the heavy (8 ton!) staff. In addition, he was gifted gold chainmail armor, a cap

BACKGROUND

Outlander. Wukong never forgets the geographic arrangement of terrain, settlements, and areas of wilderness. In addition, he can forage fresh water and food each day for as many as 6 people as long as the environment nearby can support it.

DESIGN NOTES

There is no easy way to do this, but I've tried my damndest by shuffling in the more extraordinary bits (lifting mountains or "leaping" across the world, for example) into his magic items, all of which are at the very least legendary if not artifacts. He is otherwise an awakened baboon with lots of class levels, although even this build is definitely a watered-down taste of a proper Sun Wukong—the real thing wouldn't be very useful to GMs other than to be walking fiat. I almost went for fighter just to keep his statblock simpler, but ultimately without getting a flurry of attacks the character just wouldn't feel right so it's to monk it went. The actual math brings him in at just CR 11 but I think given the very powerful magic items he's got that Wukong should be a touch higher so popped him up by 3

of phoenix feathers (one of the original gifts of the dragon kings), and some boots which enabled him to walk in the clouds—an outfit as regal as its wearer.

The Monkey King finally returned home. He allied with seven other demon kings, and when Hell came for him he resisted and wiped his name from the Book of Life and Death (along with the names of every monkey he knew). Then somebody snitched to the Jade Emperor, the first god and Heavenly Grandfather.

The Jade Emperor sought to appease the Monkey King, and so invited him to Heaven and gave him a special title—'Protector of Horses'. It was a veiled insult, though; the gods had made him Heaven's stable-boy. This angered Sun Wukong, who declared himself 'The Great Sage, Equal of Heaven'. The gods tried again, offering him 'Guardian of the Heavenly Peach Garden', but then excluded him from a big banquet. The Monkey King had had enough by this point, and absconded home with some stolen peaches of immortality, pills of longevity, and the Jade

Emperor's royal wine, to make ready for war.

The battle began! Wukong single-handedly defeated 10,000 celestial warriors, all of the constellations, a quartet of heavenly kings, and the greatest of Heaven's generals, Erlang Shen.

Finally with the help of the Bodhisattva of mercy, the Monkey King was captured. The gods tried to kill him a few times, but found they were unable to, so they decided to boil him down into an elixir so they could get back those pills of longevity. Wukong survived for 49 days, leaping out afterward with the new ability to spot evil.

I know what you're thinking, and it gets better. Buddha intervened, making a bet that Wukong couldn't escape from his palm. The Monkey King took him up on the bet and made a flying leap to the end of the world, marking his way by urinating on five pillars that turned out to be the Buddha's fingers. Obviously this didn't go over well and Wukong was sealed away beneath a mountain for 500 years, trapped there by a paper talisman.

This is where *Journey to the West* begins and Wukong becomes the bodyguard of Tang Sanzang.

SUN WUKONG

Small beast, neutral

rogue (thief) 12/monk (open hand) 8

Armor Class 19 (*golden chain shirt*)

Hit Points 110 (20d8+20)

Speed 55 ft., climb 55 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Int +6

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +9, Deception +10, Perception +14, Stealth +17, Survival +8; thieves' tools +11

Senses passive Perception 24

Languages Chinese

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Magic Items. Sun Wukong wears a *golden chain shirt* and *phoenix-feather cap*, and he wields the powerful *Ruyi Jingu Bang*. The full statistics for these items are on page 213

Cunning Action (1/turn). Wukong can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Hide, Use Object action, Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or to use thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock.

Cursed Circlet. This indestructible magical circlet is firmly attached to Wukong's head and cannot be removed. When a specific sutra is spoken within 1,000 feet, the band tightens and gives Wukong unbearable headaches, causing him to have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks for 1d4 rounds.

Evasion. When Wukong is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Blessing: Huōyǎn-Jīnjīng. Wukong can use his bonus action on his turn to light his eyes with golden fire and cast *detect evil and good* (evil only) without the need for components. In addition, he has disadvantage on saving throws against the blinded condition because of smoke.

Ki (8 points/short rest). Wukong can spend *ki* points to fuel various *ki* features.

- ◆ **Flurry of Blows.** Immediately after Wukong takes the Attack action on his turn, he can spend 1 *ki* point to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.
- ◆ **Patient Defense.** Wukong can spend 1 *ki* point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on his turn.
- ◆ **Step of the Wind.** Wukong can spend 1 *ki* point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on his turn, his jump distance is doubled for the turn.

Stunning Attack. Wukong can spend 1 *ki* point to attempt to stun a creature he hits with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of his next turn.

Open Hand Technique. Whenever Wukong hits a creature with one of the attacks granted by his Flurry of Blows, he can impose one of the following effects on that target:

- ◆ It must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- ◆ It must make a Strength saving throw. If it fails, Wukong can push it up to 15 feet away from him.
- ◆ It can't take reactions until the end of Wukong's next turn.

Pack Tactics. Wukong has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Reliable Talent. Whenever Wukong makes an ability check that lets him add his proficiency bonus, he can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Second-Story Work. When Wukong makes a running jump, the distance he covers increases by 5 feet.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Wukong deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Wukong that isn't incapacitated and Wukong doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Stillness of Mind. Wukong can use his action to end one effect on himself that is causing him to be charmed or frightened.

Supreme Sneak. Wukong has advantage on a Dexterity (Stealth) check if he moves no more than 20 feet on the same turn.

Wholeness of Body (1/long rest). As an action, Wukong regains 24 hit points.

FEATS

Mobility. Wukong can Dash through difficult terrain without requiring additional movement. Whenever he makes an attack against a creature, he doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature until the end of his turn.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Wukong attacks twice when he takes the Attack action (he can use a bonus action to attack a third time, or a bonus action and 1 *ki* to attack a third and fourth time).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) magical bludgeoning damage.

Ruyi Jingu Bang (Quarterstaff). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft.*, one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) magical bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. Wukong can use his reaction to deflect or catch the missile when he is hit by a ranged weapon attack. When he does so, the damage he takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10+13. When the damage is reduced to 0, he can catch the missile if it is small enough for him to hold in one hand and he has at least one hand free. If he catches a missile in this way, Wukong can spend 1 *ki* point to make a ranged attack with the weapon or piece of ammunition he just caught, as part of the same reaction (+11 to hit, range 20/60 ft., 1d6+5 damage).

Slow Fall. Wukong can use his reaction when he falls to reduce any falling damage he takes by 40.

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Wukong can see hits him with an attack, he can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

These potent magic items are quintessential to Sun Wukong's myth but GMs may reward them to players that manage to defeat him or help the Monkey King in a substantial way.

GOLDEN CHAIN SHIRT

Armor (light), legendary (requires attunement)

While wearing this incredibly light chain shirt your AC equals 14 + your Dexterity modifier. If you have the Unarmored Defense feature, you can also add half your Wisdom modifier to your armor class, and wearing this armor does not interfere with the Unarmored Movement feature.

Once per day when you take a critical hit, you can use your reaction to make the *golden chain shirt* blind your attacker. The creature makes a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or is blinded for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the blind creature makes another saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

In addition, your Strength increases to 17, you have advantage on Strength saving throws and ability checks, and your Carrying Capacity is determined as if your size is Gargantuan (8 times as much as normal).

PHOENIX-FEATHER CAP

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

While attuned to this stylish cap, you can cast *fly* on yourself at will without the need for components. In addition, the cap has 2 charges. You can use an action to expend a charge to use Wild Shape as if you were a druid of 10th level. While using Wild Shape, you always retain one distinctive visual characteristic no matter what beast you are transformed into. The cap regains all of its expended charges whenever you finish a short or long rest.

RUYI JINGU BANG

Weapon (quarterstaff), legendary (requires attunement)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this staff.

As an action you can command either or both ends of the staff to lengthen or shorten up to a total of 10 feet without increasing its weight. This expansion is quick but not fast enough to use as part of an attack. If the staff is longer than twice your height, weapon attacks with it have disadvantage. There is no limit to the length the staff can reach. The shortest it can shrink is 5 inches, at which point it has retracted entirely into its handle and appears to be a heavy sewing needle.

You can also use an action to command the staff to increase or decrease in weight and density by up to 1 pound per round. If the staff's weight exceeds 10 lbs., any attacks made with it have disadvantage, and if its weight increases to 17 lbs. or more it cannot be effectively used as a weapon. Like its length, there is no apparent limit to its maximum weight, but it cannot be reduced to less than 1 pound.

In addition, you can use a bonus action to toss this magic staff into the air and speak a command word. When you do so, the staff begins to hover, flies up to 30 feet, and attacks one creature of your choice within 5 feet of it (+11 to hit, 1d8+5 magical bludgeoning). While the staff hovers, you can use a bonus action to cause it to fly up to 30 feet to another spot within 30 feet of you. As part of the same bonus action, you can cause the staff to attack one creature within 5 feet of it. After the hovering staff attacks for the fourth time, it flies up to 30 feet and tries to return to your hand. If you have no hand free, it falls to the ground at your feet. If the staff has no unobstructed path to you, it moves as close to you as it can and then falls to the ground. It also ceases to hover if you grasp it or move more than 30 feet away from it.



TALOS

In this *Mythological Figures* entry we're introducing probably the only artificial being on the list: Talos, the metal man of ancient Crete!

Where precisely Talos is from isn't completely clear—was he made by Hephaestus and gifted to Minos, or the last bronze man from the third age of man and gifted to Europa by Zeus? It depends on which scripts and translations you're reading.

Regardless of his origins, Talos circled the island of Crete three times a day, throwing rocks at unwelcome visitors before they could come ashore. A critical weakness, in his ankle no less, led to his downfall when Jason and the Argonauts arrived on Crete.

Medea caused him to take a wound in this most vital vein, bleeding out his life fluid, killing him—again it matters what you're reading for how that came to happen. Did she blind him with magic, causing him to graze his vulnerable ankle? Or pull out a bronze nail plugging up the vein after tricking him?

BACKGROUND

Outlander. Talos never forgets the geographic arrangement of terrain, settlements, and areas of wilderness. In addition, he can forage fresh water and food each day for as many as 6 people as long as the environment nearby can support it.

DESIGN NOTES

Most anyone who remembers this character is thinking of the (amazing) depiction by Ray Harryhausen in *Jason & The Argonauts*, but the real nature of the myth isn't quite so colossal or even that clear. Some depictions say he's a giant bull even, and in most of the ones I could find about him being a metal man he's only 8 feet tall so that's what I went with here. There is no rules-as-written way to have a Large-sized PC however, so bear with me and shave off a foot. Since he's all about throwing things Talos has the sharpshooter archetype and even just chucking rocks can be pretty devastating—ships aren't hard to hit and he's slinging 33 points of damage a turn at vessels. Anyone using this build as PC can drop the Critical vulnerability trait and weapon damage resistances (unless the GM deems otherwise). Taking a look at the numbers, the DMG puts Talos at a 4.12 while the Blog of Holding cruises in at a 5.2 for an average just on the high side of 4 (and with no major circumstances to merit rounding up, we round down).



TALOS

Medium humanoid (forged folk),
neutral fighter (sharpshooter) 6

Armor Class 17 (light proficiency)

Hit Points 45 (6d10+12)

Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5

Skills Athletics +6, History +3, Perception +3,
Survival +3

Damage Resistances poison; bludgeoning,
piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities disease, sleep

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Greek

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On his turn, Talos can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Critical Vulnerability. Talos is immune to sneak attack damage and extra damage from critical hits, and has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. A creature targeting Talos' singular point of vulnerability (its heel) has a -10 penalty on its attack roll, but on a hit the attack deals normal damage (ignoring the immunities and resistances of this feature).

Efficient Steps. When traveling by himself for one or more hours, Talos can move stealthily at his normal speed at no penalty.

Excellent Aim (3/short rest). Talos can spend a bonus action to aim a wielded ranged weapon at a target within its range. Until

the end of his turn, ranged attacks that Talos makes against the target deal an extra 5 damage on a hit.

Forge Resistant. Talos has advantage on saving throws against being poisoned. He does not need to breathe, drink, or eat. Talos still requires a 6 hour resting period that emulates sleep in order to recharge his inner workings. While resting he is still conscious but any movement by Talos interrupts his rest. In addition, he does not become exhausted from lack of rest.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Talos can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+6 hit points.

FEATS

Brawling. Talos is proficient with improvised weapons, and he can use a bonus action to grapple a target he hits with an unarmed strike or improvised weapon on his turn.

Superb Aim. Talos ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and he doesn't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When Talos makes his first ranged weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Talos attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage.





TAMAR THE GREAT

We head to the ancient world and the nation of Georgia two centuries after the first millenium, taking a look at one of history's most fierce and accomplished rulers, Tamar the Great!

Tamar was appointed Queen of Georgia by her father George III in 1178 and ruled for 29 years over the Georgian Golden Age. Despite her royal appointment there were many who sought to stop her ascension, but she managed them well enough and proved to be more than a competent steward for the kingdom she inherited.

As part of the process of securing her rule Tamar agreed to wed Yury Bogolyubsky but he soon found himself divorced and exiled to Constantinople. Her next husband was her own choice: David Soslan, a prince from Alania. They had two children and he remained subordinate to her rule throughout.

With her power base solidified Tamar expanded Georgia's borders, taking over the Caucasus for two decades. Her expansionist polices were successful, and she liberated Armenia, fought off Muslim invaders, founded the Empire of Trebizond on the coast of the Black Sea. Tamar died of disease in 1207, and Georgia's 'Golden Age' ended soon after.

DESIGN NOTES

We've already got several savvy Queens and Kings on the list (and for that matter several downright badasses) so with that in mind, Queen Tamar has one foot in each bin. She has some military general qualities thanks to the Warlord fighter archetype—after reading through her history, she certainly seems like the kind of woman who wouldn't shy away from the battlefield (although it must be noted that I did not find any accounts to that effect). As usual to cover the social talents of a ruler Tamar has the Mastermind rogue archetype. Between that, her feat selection, and her Tactical Focus (and her relatively lacking physical ability scores) she really shines when commanding allies or in a court of nobles.

So—let's do the numbers! The DMG puts Tamar at an 8.5 and the Blog of Holding rubric a 9.4 which averages out to 0.05 under 9. Since it's almost certain she's going to be encountered with some allies around to make use of her many companion-focused features, like some of the other Warlord entries in this book she's getting bumped up.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to her position as a ruler, Tamar is treated with a measure of respect wherever she goes. She is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see her if requested to do so).



QUEEN TAMAR

Medium humanoid (human), neutral
rogue (mastermind) 6/fighter (warlord) 8

Armor Class 19 (half plate, shield, fighting style)

Hit Points 99 (6d8+8d10+28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +8

Skills Deception +13, History +13, Insight +13,
Intimidation +8, Perception +8, Persuasion +13;
thieves' tools +6

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Latin, Georgian, Russian

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). On her turn, Tamar can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Cunning Action (1/turn). Tamar can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, Help, or Hide action.

Fast Learner. After Tamar has heard a creature speak for 1 minute or longer, she can mimic its manner of speaking as long as she knows the same language as the creature (allowing her to seem like she is local to a given region).

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Tamar can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+8 hit points.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). Tamar deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Tamar that isn't incapacitated and Tamar doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tactician. Tamar is able to use the Help action to aid an ally attacking a creature as long as the target of the attack is able to see and hear Tamar and is within 30 feet of her.

Tactical Focal Point. Tamar selects a 10-foot square to be her tactical focal point as a bonus action or as part of the Attack action, choosing a Tactic to apply to it (see page 8). This lasts until she cannot take actions or uses this feature again. Each time Tamar completes a long rest, she can swap one of these

benefits for a different one: Area Clear, Cover the Flank, Phalanx Sidestep, Run Away!

Tactical Mastery (7/long rest). Tamar uses part of her Attack action or a bonus action to take mastery of the battlefield, granting it to herself and allies within her focal point by expending uses of this feature. A creature that is granted a use of Tamar's Tactical Mastery can either regain 2d10 hit points when it is granted (any hit points greater than its maximum are temporary hit points) or use it to deal an extra 2d10 damage with an attack.

FEATS

Brilliant. Tamar always knows how long it will be before the next sunset or sunrise, the northerly direction, and can perfectly remember anything she's experienced within the last 31 days.

Diplomatic. Tamar can make a Charisma (Persuasion) check contested by the Wisdom (Insight) check of a creature that can understand what she says during 1 minute of talking. On a success, as long as Tamar remains within 60 feet of it (and for 1 minute afterward) the target is charmed by her. Tamar automatically fails on the check if she or her companions are fighting the target.

Leader's Words. Tamar can inspire up to six creatures friendly to her (or up to five creatures and herself) that are within 30 feet of her and can see her, or hear her and understand her. Any that listen to Tamar speak inspirationally for 10 minutes gain 17 temporary hit points. Temporary hit points can only be gained from this feature once per short rest.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Tamar attacks twice when she takes the Attack action.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or thrown 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker Tamar can see hits her with an attack, she can use her reaction to halve the attack's damage against her.



TARZAN

Are you ready for some pulp? Because we're getting literary and going into the jungle with Tarzan!

Unlike many of the characters in this book Tarzan is a character from relatively recent fiction authored by Edgar Rice Burroughs. In his infancy John Clayton and his noble parents were stranded on the African coast. The parents died to the wilderness, but the child survived, turning feral before the Mangani great apes took him in as one of their own and named him Tarzan ('White-Ape').

After turning 18, Tarzan met Jane Porter, falling in love, and tracked her back to the United States only to find he despised civilization. They had a child together and moved back to Africa, where Tarzan went on many more adventures.

Tarzan is the archetypal feral man, athletic, and able to climb and leap in the manner of an ape. However, he is surprisingly intelligent; he is described as courageous and loyal, and inclined to protect those weaker than himself. He is eloquent and able to pass as a 'civilized' man, but he prefers the life of a wild man.

BACKGROUND

Outlander. Tarzan never forgets the geographic arrangement of terrain, settlements, and areas of wilderness. In addition, he can forage fresh water and food each day for as many as 6 people as long as the environment nearby can support it.

DESIGN NOTES

There was some consideration of monk levels or maybe even rogue to get that Expertise and wall climbing, but as a man raised in the wilds by nature I felt Tarzan ought to be a pure barbarian. I'd love for him to do some more damage—unfortunately the numbers just aren't there for it unless you want to give him a greatsword (which improves things a bit to about CR 6) but that's hardly canon for Tarzan.

TARZAN

Medium humanoid (human),
neutral good barbarian (animalist) 9

Armor Class 16 (Constitution)

Hit Points 85 (9d12+27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7

Skills Athletics +7, Nature +3, Perception +5,
Survival +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and
slashing (while raging)

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages English

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Beast Quality (Wolf). Tarzan can travel at a fast pace while he is tracking creatures, and while traveling he can move stealthily at a normal pace.

Brutal Critical. Tarzan can roll an additional weapon damage die when determining the extra damage for a critical hit with a melee attack.

Danger Sense. Tarzan has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, he can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Feral Instinct. Tarzan has advantage on initiative rolls. Additionally, if he is surprised at the beginning of combat and isn't incapacitated, he can act normally on his first turn, but only if he enters his rage before doing anything else on that turn.

Nature Speaker. Tarzan can cast *speak with animals* as a ritual. He can also spend 10 minutes performing a ritual on one willing beast he touches. For as long as he concentrates, up to 1 hour, he can see through the beast's eyes and hear what it hears, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the beast has. During this time, Tarzan is deaf and blind with regard to his own senses.

Rage (4/long rest). On his turn, Tarzan can enter a rage as a bonus action. His rage lasts for 1 minute, ending early if he is knocked

unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't either attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. Tarzan can also end his rage on his turn as a bonus action. While raging, he gains the following benefits:

- ◆ advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, Tarzan has
- ◆ When Tarzan makes a melee weapon attack using Strength he gains a +3 bonus to the damage roll.
- ◆ Tarzan has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- ◆ opportunity attacks made against Tarzan have disadvantage.
- ◆ Tarzan can take the Dash action as a bonus action on his turn.

Reckless Attack. When Tarzan makes his first attack on his turn, he can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until his next turn.

FEATS

Athletic. Tarzan can stand up from being prone with only 5 feet of his movement, climbing doesn't cost him extra movement, and he only has to move 5 feet before making a running long jump or running high jump.

Brawling. Tarzan is proficient with improvised weapons, and he can use a bonus action to grapple a target he hits with an unarmed strike or improvised weapon on his turn.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Tarzan attacks twice when he takes the Attack action.

Unarmed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+3) bludgeoning damage.



THOR ODINSON

The gods have spoken and demanded their brother, the hammer-wielding master of lightning and storm, that most iconic figure of Norse mythology, Thor!

Thor, son of Odin, the red-headed god of thunder, is long associated with strength, ferocity, and battle. Thor not only wields the mighty mountain-crushing hammer *Mjölhnir*, he also wears the magical strength-giving belt *Megingjörð* and the iron gloves *Járngreipr*, which allow him to handle his powerful hammer. Thor's magical flying chariot is pulled by two goats as he charges into battle, lightning and thunder crashing all around him.

Thor is known for his temper, and often rises to anger when taunted, or falls for the tricks of his foes. While he may be the strongest of the gods, he is far from the wisest. He is known for his epic rivalry with the giants, with whom he battles constantly, *Mjölhnir* in hand, levelling mountains and smashing the heads of giants. Unlike Odin or Loki, Thor prefers to meet challenges head-on, with a ferocity that strikes fear in the hearts of even the mightiest of giants.

Thor features in many Norse tales. Oftimes he was depicted fighting great monsters—giants, or Jörmungandr the Midgard Serpent. Doomed to die at Ragnarök, the end of the world, the thunder god succumbed to the Midgard Serpent's poison after killing it with *Mjölhnir*.

BACKGROUND

Folk Hero. Thor is always able to rely on the hospitality of commoners to help him hide or rest provided he poses no danger in doing so, going so far as to shield him from being discovered (though not at the cost of their lives).

DESIGN NOTES

Thor here is a straight-up power build (inspired by one of my PCs who I'm trying to retire because paladin + eldritch knight is devastating and multiclassing those archetypes is weird). The CR calculation brought him in at only 13 but I think given his damage potential (all those smites!) that it should be something more like 15.

THOR

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful good fighter (eldritch knight) 14/barbarian
(storm herald) 4/paladin 2

Armor Class 18 (Constitution)
Hit Points 198 (16d8+4d12+100)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +13, Con +11

Skills Animal Handling +6, Athletics +13,
Perception +6, Survival +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
(while raging)

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Old Norse

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Thor can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Bonded Weapon: Mjölfnir. Thor's hammer can only be disarmed from him when he is incapacitated. In addition, as long as he is on the same plane of existence as Mjölfnir he can use a bonus action to summon it into his hand.

Danger Sense. Thor has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, Thor can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Disrupting Arcana. When Thor hits a creature with a weapon attack, it has disadvantage on the next saving throw it makes to resist a spell before the end of Thor's next turn.

Divine Sense (2/long rest). As an action, until the end of his next turn Thor knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of him that is not behind total cover. He knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being

whose presence he senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, he also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.

Divine Smite. When Thor hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 2d8 for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 1d8 for each spell level higher than 1st (maximum 5d8). The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

Indomitable (2/long rest). Thor can reroll a saving throw that he fails but must use the new roll.

Járngreipr. Thor's magic iron gloves allow him to wield the hammer Mjölfnir in one hand as though it were a warhammer and are otherwise treated as *gauntlets of ogre power*.

Lay on Hands (10 points/long rest). As an action, Thor can touch a creature and restore a number of hit points to it, up to the maximum amount remaining in this pool. Alternatively, he can expend 5 hit points to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it.

Megingjörð. Thor's magic belt increases his Strength to 21 (as a *belt of hill giant strength*; without it his Strength score is 15). While wielding Mjölfnir, wearing this belt, and the gloves Járngreipr his Strength increases to 25.

Rage (2/long rest). On his turn, Thor can enter a rage as a bonus action. He is unable to cast or concentrate on spells while raging (although he can still use Divine Smite). His rage lasts for 1 minute, ending early if he is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't either attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. Thor can also end his

rage on his turn as a bonus action. While raging, he gains the following benefits:

- ◆ Thor has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- ◆ When Thor makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, he deals 2 extra damage.
- ◆ Thor has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- ◆ **Lightning Aura.** Thor can use a bonus action while raging to make lightning jump out from in him a 10-foot radius. Total cover blocks this lightning. He chooses a creature in the area when he activates this feature, forcing it to make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d6) lightning damage (success halves).

Reckless Attack. When Thor makes his first attack on his turn, he can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until Thor's next turn.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Thor can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+14 hit points.

Spellcasting. Thor is an 8th-level spellcaster that uses Intelligence as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks). Thor has the following spells prepared from the wizard's spell list. In addition, he can cast paladin spells^D as a divine spellcaster (using Charisma; spell save DC 15; +7 to hit with spell attacks).

Cantrips: *light, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*

1st-level (4 slots): *bless^D, charm person, detect magic, fog cloud, shield of faith^D, thunderwave*

2nd-level (3 slots): *misty step, shatter, suggestion*

3rd-level (3 slots): *lightning bolt, fly, haste*

4th-level (2 slots): none

War-Magician. Thor can use a bonus action to make one weapon attack after casting a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action.

FEATS

Fortune Points (3/long rest). Thor can spend one fortune point to reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, or to force an attacker to reroll an attack made against him.

Power Attack. When Thor makes his first melee weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, Thor can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after he uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. Thor can only use this feature on his turn.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Thor attacks three times when he takes the Attack action.

Mjölfnir (Hammer of Thunderbolts with 5 charges). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d6+8) magical bludgeoning damage. When Thor rolls a 1 or 2 on either of the damage dice, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll. On a critical hit against a giant, the giant must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or die.

Thrown Mjölfnir (1 charge). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d6+8) magical bludgeoning damage and all creatures within 30 feet must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of Thor's next turn.

The core rules' analog for Thor's enchanted hammer and other essential magic items do the job just fine, but to really have him pack a wallop give him these versions of *JárnGREIPR*, *Megingjörð*, and *MjölNIR*.

JÁRNGREIPR

Wondrous item, rare

These iron gauntlets are required in order to handle the mighty *MjölNIR*. Your Strength score is 19 while you wear these gauntlets. This benefit has no effect on you if your Strength is 19 or higher without them. The gloves have 5 charges. You can use your reaction to expend a charge to gain advantage on a Strength check or Strength saving throw. The gloves regain 1d4+1 expended charges daily at dawn.

MEGINGJÖRÐ

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

Thor's belt of power is said to double the god's strength. While wearing this belt, your Strength score changes to 21. The item has no effect on you if your Strength without the belt is equal to or greater than the belt's score. While wielding *MjölNIR*, wearing this belt, and the gloves *JárnGREIPR*, your Strength increases to 25.

In addition, you have advantage on Strength ability checks and Strength saving throws, and your Carrying Capacity is determined as if your size is Gargantuan (8 times as much as normal).



MJÖLNIR

Weapon (warhammer), legendary (requires attunement)

Forged by the dwarf brothers Brokk and Sindri, this hammer is said to be capable of leveling mountains. You gain a +4 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this warhammer. If you are not wearing the belt *Megingjörð* and the iron gloves *JárnGREIPR*, you have disadvantage on attack rolls using *MjölNIR*.

Giant's Bane. When you roll a 20 on an attack roll made with this warhammer against a giant, the giant must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or die. In addition, when making a weapon attack using *MjölNIR* against a giant, you may treat the giant as if its type were fiend or undead.

Hurl Hammer. The warhammer has 5 charges. While attuned to it, you can expend 1 charge and make a ranged weapon attack with the warhammer, hurling it as if it had the thrown property with a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet. If the attack hits, the warhammer unleashes a thunderclap audible out to 300 feet. The target and every creature within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of your next turn. The warhammer regains 1d4+1 expended charges daily at dawn.

Summon the Storm. While attuned to this warhammer, you can use an action to expend 2 charges and cast *call lightning*, or you can spend 1 minute swinging the warhammer to expend 5 charges and cast *control weather*.

Titanic Blows. While attuned to this warhammer, its weapon damage increases to 2d6.



TITANIA

*"Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land...
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity."*

The thespians among you likely already know who I'm quoting, but to everyone else take heed for in this entry *Mythological Figures* considers the fairy queen Titania!

In traditional folklore the fairy queen is nameless, but Shakespeare christened her 'Titania'. In the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* she is a proud and forceful woman who doesn't take any nonsense from the fairy king Oberon, getting into a quarrel over who should take a changeling boy.

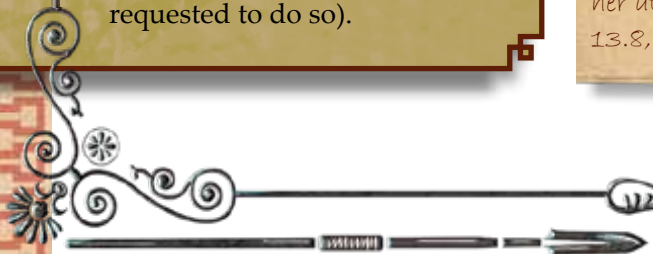
Titania appears elsewhere in literature and other media. The fairy queen as a concept goes back further than Shakespeare, and is usually portrayed as beautiful but capricious. In some legends, the fairy queen pays a tithe to Hell every seven years—a tithe paid with the sacrifice of mortal lovers. In *Peter Pan* she is more benevolent, and in Edmund Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene* the character represents the seventh holy virtue, Glory.

BACKGROUND

Noble. Due to her position as a ruler, Titania is treated with a measure of respect wherever she goes. She is treated as royalty (or as closely as possible) by most peasants and traders, and as an equal when meeting other authority figures (who make time in their schedule to see her if requested to do so).

DESIGN NOTES

She's the Fairy Queen and has a bad Wisdom saving throw, so aside from the power scale this was a pretty simple build, using high elf for her race and then the College of Glamor as her bard archetype. The Lucky feat and some killer ability scores round out her fey-ness I think, and though she's lacking in punch (the most directly damaging thing she can throw around are high spell slot thunderwave castings) with such a high DC and all those charm bells and whistles from her bard college, she ought to make a fun, durable, and enduring villain for most parties. Taking in the numbers, the DMG places her at 13.2 and the Blog of Holding on the higher end at 13.8, so I'm placing her at CR 13.



TITANIA

Medium humanoid (eladrin elf),
bard (college of glamor) 20

Armor Class 18 (*mage armor*)

Hit Points 130 (20d8+40)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Cha +11

Skills Arcana +12, Deception +17, History +6,
Nature +12, Perception +5, Persuasion +17;
any three musical instruments +11

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Bardic Inspiration 1d12 (5/short rest). As a bonus action on her turn, Titania can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d12. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. When Titania rolls initiative and has no uses of Bardic Inspiration left, she regains one use. In addition, Titania can use a bonus action to expend one use of Bardic Inspiration, choosing up to 5 ally creatures she can see within 60 feet. These creatures each gain 2d12 temporary hit points and, if they so choose, can use their reaction to move up to their speed without provoking opportunity attacks as long as they move towards Titania by using the safest and shortest route.

Captivate (1/short rest). When Titania performs a recital for at least 10 minutes, at the end of the performance she can choose 5 humanoids that are within 60 feet and who observed the entire performance. A targeted creature makes a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or is charmed by Titania for 1 hour, until taking damage, or until she attacks it or it witnesses her attacking one of its allies. While charmed these targets idolize Titania, hinder her opponents, and speak her praises—they do everything to help her short of engaging in violence unless they were already predisposed to do so. Creatures that successfully save against this feature do not realize that Titania attempted to charm them.

Countercharm. As the bard class feature.

Fey Ancestry. Titania has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Fey Step (1/short rest). Titania can use a bonus action to teleport herself or a willing creature she touches up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space she can see.

Jack of All Trades. Titania adds +3 to any ability check she makes that doesn't already include her proficiency bonus.

Majestic Power (1/long rest). Titania can use a bonus action to unleash fey power for 1 minute. For the duration, on each of her turns she can cast *command* as a bonus action. These castings do not use spell slots. In addition, while this feature is active any creature that is charmed by Titania automatically fails its saving throw against her *command* spells.

Song of Rest (1d12). As the bard class feature.

Sovereignty (1/short rest). Titania can use this feature to cast *sanctuary* on herself. When a creature fails its saving throw against the spell, for the next minute Titania has advantage on Charisma checks she makes against the creature, and during her next turn it has disadvantage on saving throws against her spells.

Spellcasting. Titania is a 20th-level spellcaster that uses Charisma as her spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19; +11 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared from the bard's spell list:

Cantrips: *light, minor illusion, true strike, vicious mockery*

1st-level (4 slots): *charm person, cure wounds, disguise self, mage armor, sleep, thunderwave*

2nd-level (3 slots): *invisibility, suggestion*

3rd-level (3 slots): *major image, sending*

4th-level (3 slots): *confusion, conjure woodland beings, polymorph*

5th-level (3 slots): *hold monster, scrying*

6th-level (2 slots): *conjure fey, irresistible dance, mass suggestion*

7th-level (2 slots): *forcecage, teleport*

8th-level (1 slot): *glibness, power word stun*

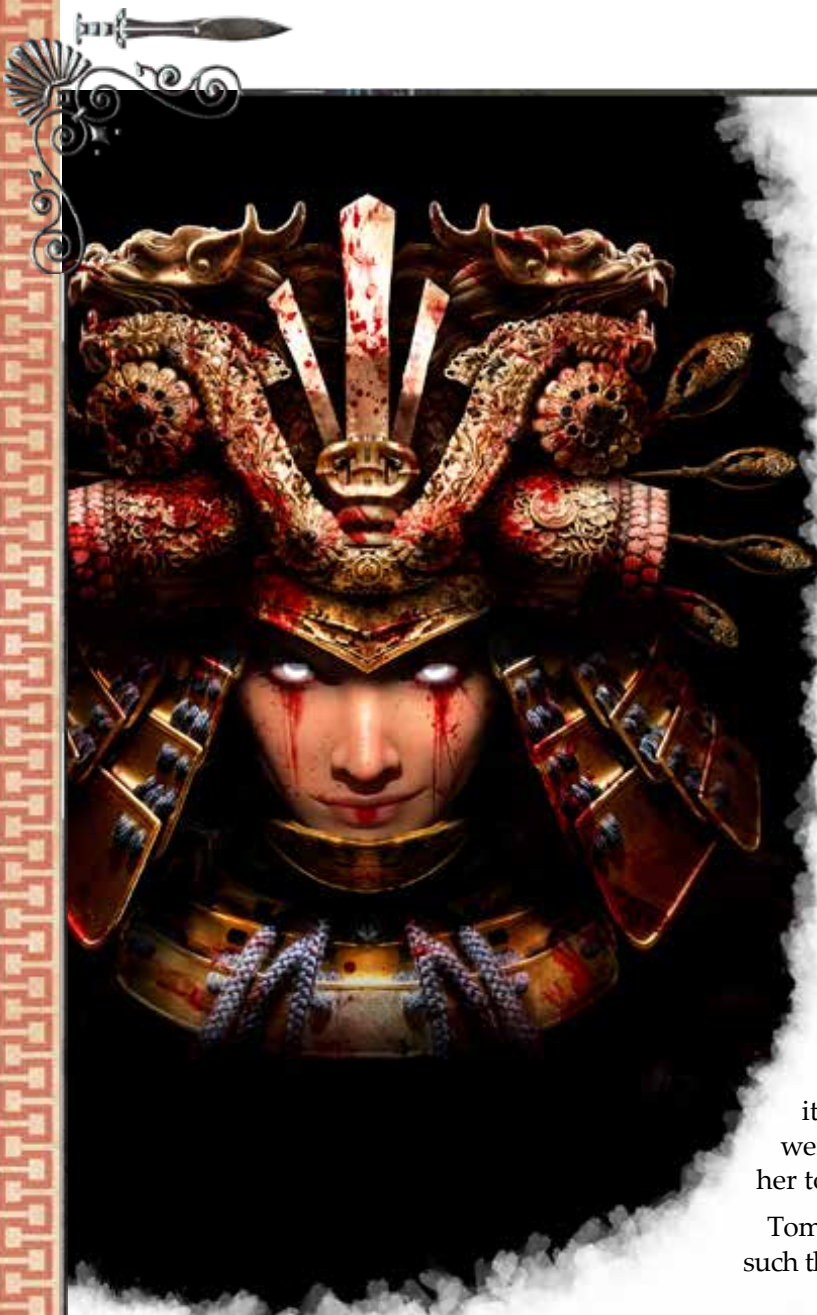
9th-level (1 slot): *foresight, true polymorph*

FEATS

Fortune Points (3/long rest). Titania can spend one fortune point to reroll an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, or to force an attacker to reroll an attack made against her.

ACTIONS

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4+5) piercing damage.



TOMOE GOZEN

This entry in *Mythological Figures* focuses on another epic warrior from the east, this time in Japan, with the feared samurai Tomoe Gozen!

Tomoe Gozen was a 12th-century samurai known for her bravery—it's said that she would stand against even demons and gods. She was a general who led an army of 1,000 during the Genpei War, and was "a highly respected leader, reputed to be beautiful, a strong archer and swordswoman, and a skillful horsewoman. When battle commenced she went out as the first captain and ferociously wielded weapons that include an "oversized sword" and "mighty bow", recognized time and again for her capability and valor.

The Genpei War was a civil war which established the first shogunate. At the Battle of Awazu, Gozen straight-up beheaded the leader of the opposing Musashi clan and presented it to Yoshinaka. Unfortunately, her forces were outnumbered so Yoshinaka ordered her to flee.

Tomoe Gozen's reputation as a warlord is such that she is considered Japan's first general.

BACKGROUND

Soldier. Tomoe commands respect from her time serving in the army. Soldiers loyal to the same forces view her as their superior, and Tomoe can use her influence to temporarily requisition simple equipment or horses, possibly even gaining entrance to military fortresses and outposts.

DESIGN NOTES

Tomoe's mostly known for the respect she commanded and being an impressive warrior with exceptional mounted combat skills, wielding weapons on the heavier side of armaments—pretty easy to check off the list. After that (which includes two different feats for riding about on a horse) it was a matter of picking out the right maneuvers in which case I focused on things that work both on horseback and on her feet.

TOMOE GOZEN

Medium humanoid (human),
lawful neutral fighter (samurai) 15

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 97 (15d10+15)

Speed 30 ft. (60 ft. mounted)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6, Wis +7

Skills Animal Handling +7, Athletics +8,
Intimidation +6, Perception +7

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Japanese

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on her turn, Tomoe can take an additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.

Indomitable (2/long rest). Tomoe can reroll a saving throw that she fails but must use the new roll.

Rapid Strike (1/turn). When Tomoe has advantage on a weapon attack during her turn, she may choose to roll normally and instead make an additional attack against that target.

Second Wind (1/short rest). On her turn, Tomoe can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+15 hit points.

Warrior Spirit (3/long rest). Tomoe can use a bonus action to gain 15 temporary hit points and advantage on weapon attack rolls until the end of her turn. When Tomoe rolls for initiative and has no uses of this feature remaining, she regains one use.

FEATS

Charge. After Tomoe uses her action to Dash, so long as she moves 10 feet or more in a straight line she can use a bonus action to immediately either shove a creature or make a single melee weapon attack. On a

hit she either pushes the target up to 10 feet away from her or deals 5 extra damage.

Mounted Combat. When Tomoe's mount is attacked, she can make herself the target of that attack. In addition, she has advantage on melee attack rolls when her target is an unmounted creature smaller than her mount (usually any unmounted target of Medium size or smaller). Finally, when Tomoe's mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Maneuver Master (4d6 maneuver dice/short rest). Tomoe can expend a maneuver dice to perform a single maneuver with an attack.

- ◆ **Lunge.** Tomoe increases her reach by 5 feet for one attack, dealing 1d6 extra damage on a hit.
- ◆ **Parrying Twist.** Tomoe uses her reaction when damaged with a melee weapon attack to reduce the damage by 1d6+2.
- ◆ **Precise.** Tomoe adds 1d6 to a weapon attack roll.
- ◆ **Sweep.** Tomoe chooses a creature adjacent to her target and within her reach and on a hit, the adjacent creature takes 1d6 damage (of the same type as the weapon attack).

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Tomoe attacks three times when she takes the Attack action.

O-Dachi. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage.

Naginata. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.



ZHUANG ZHOU

We're going way, way back to the distant past, far from the literary and historical figures we've recently looked at. Despite his influence, however, there's sadly not much information about the Chinese philosopher Zhuang Zhou!

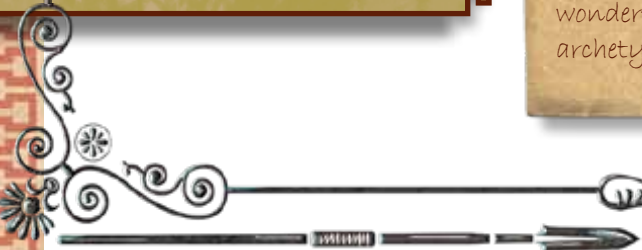
Zhuang Zhou was a very influential philosopher and scholar in 400 BC, penning the obviously named *Zhuangzi*, one of the most critical texts to the philosophical tradition of Taoism. It's written elsewhere that he also penned a lot of scathing satire as well as a few melodies, and he had some forerunner beliefs on evolution. Considering that we're coming up on two-and-a-half millennia between his time and ours, it shouldn't surprise us that there's not much material about him. Zhuang Zhou rejected proffered work in the court of Chu and had little care for material comforts, his clothing said to be patched and resewn in many places, and when others spoke of his funeral he insisted instead that nature would suffice as his coffin.

BACKGROUND

Hermit. As a close understudy of Lao-Tzu, Zhuang Zhou has always had a preternaturally unnerving and mystical understanding of the universe.

DESIGN NOTES

Since details about Zhuang Zhou are sparse I focused on making a geomancer's geomancer, concentrating on physicality with the architect geomancer order. Alternatively this might be reworked as an apothecary—drop the archetype features (The Ground of Being, Arrange Fates, Impenetrable Hermitage, and Mystic Masonry) and add Chi Healing (access to cure wounds, goodberry, lesser restoration, revify, and freedom of movement via Elemental Magic), Chi Abundance and Chi Empathy (as Disciple of Life and Blessed Healer from the Life domain). As it stands however I think this build is a great example of what the class is and does, wonderfully illustrating the difference between a warlock archetype and a proper class build using the same framework!



ZHUANG ZHOU

Medium humanoid (human),
chaotic good geomancer (architect) 7

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 38 (7d8+7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +6

Skills Insight +6, Medicine +6, Nature +5, Religion +5;
cartographer's tools +5, herbalism kit +6

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Chinese

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Elemental Magic (Recharges on short rest).

Zhuang Zhou is a 7th-level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; spell attack +6). To cast a geomancer spell, he must spend an elemental spell slot of that level or higher, and he must meet that spell's environmental availability requirement. He can cast the following spells from the geomancer's spell list as 4th-level spells (2 slots):

Cantrips: *mending, produce flame, resistance*

Earth—Zhuang Zhou always has access to these spells from The Ground of Being: *protection from energy, shatter, shield, stonewood, stone shape*

Fire—There must be a Medium-sized or larger flame within 30 feet of Zhuang Zhou: *burning hands, fireball, flame blade, heat metal, lightning bolt, wall of fire*

Metal—There must be a Medium-sized or larger metallic object within 30 feet of Zhuang Zhou: *banishment, dispel magic, hold person, magic circle, magic weapon, shield of faith*

Water—There must be a Medium-sized or larger body of water within 30 feet of Zhuang Zhou: *control water, create or destroy water, fog cloud, invisibility, sleet storm, water walk*

Wood—There must be a Medium-sized or larger plant or wooden object within 30 feet of Zhuang Zhou: *barkskin, blight, entangle, plant growth, spike growth*

Impenetrable Hermitage. Zhuang Zhou knows the spell *tiny hut*. He can cast it as a ritual or by using Elemental Magic spell slots.

Mystic Masonry. Whenever Zhuang Zhou casts *tiny hut*, he can instead use the spell to produce a stonework house. To do so, he must have adequate materials present. Available stone, clay, and other materials in a 20-foot cube are reshaped instantaneously into an earthen abode 20 feet on each side and one story tall. The floorplan is Zhuang Zhou's choice (average contains 4 rooms).

Numinous Acquaintance. Zhuang Zhou can cast *detect evil and good* at will, without expending a spell slot.

Stone's Blessing (3/long rest). If he is holding his sacred stone or if it is on his person, Zhuang Zhou can use a bonus action to grant 10 temporary hit points to himself and each friendly creature he can see within 30 feet.

The Ground of Being. Zhuang Zhou always has access to Earth element spells.

Written in Stone. Zhuang Zhou can cast *augury* with Elemental Magic or as a ritual. His sacred stone suffices for the material components. If a divination spell he casts requires a focus or material components which are not consumed, his sacred stone counts as a substitute material worth 175 gp.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Arrange Fates. Zhuang Zhou can use his reaction to apply a +5 bonus or -5 penalty to any one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw made by a creature he can see within 30 feet. He can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use this feature, but he must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Zhuang Zhou begins with 1 use of this feature, and gains 1 more use each time he uses Stone's Blessing (maximum 4 uses). His number of uses resets to 1 whenever he finishes a long rest.

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