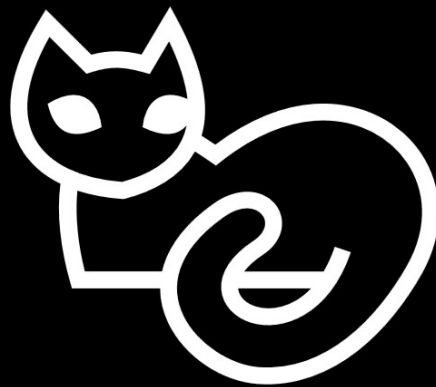


THE CAT HACK



**Written by Kirt Dankmyer
Made using The Black Hack**

The Black Hack created by David Black

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WHAT IS THIS?

The Cat Hack is a traditional role playing game, played with paper, pencils and dice, where the player characters are all cats. *The Cat Hack* is based on *The Black Hack* by David Black, which in turn uses **that** Original 1970s Fantasy Roleplaying Game. This base was added to and subtracted from to get something a bit different, a bit streamlined. Some familiarity with the original is assumed.

SETTING?

The **basic premise of this game** is that cats have a unique relationship with the supernatural, and protect humans and other animals from things that others cannot even see. Whether the cats are dealing with Lovecraftian entities, ghosts, faeries, spiritual parasites that encourage mental illness, or something else, is up to the GM.

The game assumes a world somewhat like modern Earth, but that is not writ in stone. While there is more setting detail here than in most games based on *The Black Hack*, it's left deliberately sketchy as possible.

PLAYER CATS

Any character controlled by a player is a Player Cat (PC). Any living being or supernatural entity controlled by the Game Master (GM) is called a Non-Player Creature (NPC). An NPC's relative power is determined by their **Hit Dice**, or **HD**.

CATS ARE SPECIAL

In *The Cat Hack*, cats have important abilities that others lack. Nothing can be invisible to a cat, especially if it is a supernatural creature. Cats can interact with the spirit realm, and their teeth and claws do more damage to the supernatural than one might expect, including harming insubstantial beings. Most notably, all cats can cast spells.

CAN CATS TALK?

In the default "setting," a Player Cat can understand, but not speak, a single human language of the player's choice. Cats can communicate with each other and other mammals, *excepting* humans, humanoids, and other "civilized" creatures, so long as the animal being "spoken" to is **Close** or **Nearby** (as per the **Movement & Distance** section). This is because cat "language" is a matter of body language more than sounds. If further way, a cat can only communicate by sound, and this is much more primitive, limited to concepts like "I'm hurt," "I'm hungry," "It's dangerous here," etc.

Cats can also understand the "language" of animals that they can speak to, which might be more vocal than the cat "tongue." All mammals are secretly as intelligent as humans in their own way, and the GM may choose to extend this to other animals as well, such as birds. If other animals are considered to be "secretly smart," they can talk to cats and vice-versa just like a mammal would.

THE CORE MECHANIC

Everything a Player Cat might possibly attempt that could result in failure is resolved by testing attribute **Stats**. In order to successfully test a stat, a player must roll *below* it on a d20.

Non-Player Creatures don't make tests; a PC must avoid their attacks by making a test.

STATS

Stats are generated with 3d6 in the following order:

Dexterity (DEX), Strength (STR), Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Charisma (CHA), Wisdom (WIS).

If a stat of 15+ is rolled, the next must be rolled with 2d6 + 2, then continue with 3d6 until the end or another 15+ is rolled. Once all **Stats** are generated 2 may be swapped around.

CLASS

There are four (4) class choices for PCs: Battle Cat, Lithe One, Shaman Cat, and Pretty Kitty. Your class determines how much damage you do with your claws or bite, your **Hit Points** and your unique abilities.

SCALE

When converting from other OSR games and similar systems, it is important to note that everything in this game is scaled to a cat. What would be a human with 1 **HD** in another system would be *at least* 8 **HD** in *The Cat Hack*.

On the other hand, part of the premise of this game is that cats are uniquely powerful when it comes to supernatural beings. In that case, the GM might want to keep the **HD** for a supernatural creature from another game as-is, or even make it *weaker* than it would be in another game. At the very least, the claws of cats should be considered to be magical weapons.

LUCK

Even more so than in other games, in *The Cat Hack*, **Hit Points** represent luck and stamina more than physical beefiness, at least for PCs. Until a cat is nearly out of **HP**, a “hit” on a cat should be described as a near miss, as the cat uses up their preternatural luck. For NPCs, the GM may want to describe things differently.

And, of course, all cats have nine lives. More on that in the **Healing** section.

ARMOR

Armor is not factored into the system in *The Cat Hack*. Cats have a talent for finding the most vulnerable spots on the most armored foe, and even a scratch is surprisingly painful, especially as cat claws are often a vector for certain kinds of bacteria.

If you absolutely want to represent, for example, that a particular human is wearing a flak jacket, give them anywhere from 1 to 10 extra **Hit Points**, depending on how strong you feel the armor is. (I’d say a flak jacket counts for about 6.)

CONVERTING SAVES

If you’re used to a system that uses saving throws, you should know that *The Cat Hack* ignores saves and instead asks the player to roll **Stat** tests when any spell, trap, situation or effect would impact them, using the table below as a guide.

Note also the advice in the **Powerful Opponents** section on the next page.

STR	DEX	CON
Physical Harm that <i>cannot</i> be dodged.	Physical Harm that <i>can</i> be dodged.	Poison, Disease or Death.
INT	WIS	CHA
Resisting Spells and Magic.	Deception and Illusions.	Charming effects.

PLAYERS TURN

During a player’s turn a character may move and perform an action. They could attack, look for a clue, talk with an NPC, cast a spell, clean their tail, and so on. Interacting with the world is an action. Often they will test their **Stats** to determine the outcome.

TIME & TURNS

There are 2 important types of tracked time: **Moments** (rounds) and **Minutes** (turns). **Moments** are used during combat and fast paced scenes of danger and **Minutes** are used when exploring and adventuring. A GM may advance the clock as they need, substituting **Hours**, **Days** or even **Months** for **Minutes** should the adventure require it.

MOVEMENT & DISTANCE

Rather than track precise numbers, *The Cat Hack* uses 4 abstract ranges for measuring distances: **Close**, **Nearby**, **Far-Away** and **Distant**. On their turn every PC can move somewhere **Nearby** as part of an action, performing that action at any stage of the move. They can forgo their action and move somewhere **Far-Away** instead. Anything beyond **Far-Away** can be classified as **Distant** and would take 3 moves to get to.

Note that Lithe Ones move a little faster than normal; see their class description for more detail.

For converting existing movement rates or measures from other games (for spells or areas of effect) use the following guide:

CLOSE	NEARBY	FAR-AWAY
0 – 3 ft	3 – 20 ft	20 – 60 ft

INITIATIVE

When combat breaks out, everyone must be sorted into an order so they each get to act and react in turn. Every character tests their **DEX**, those that succeed, take their turn before their opponents. They must then act as a group, deciding their own order for actions. Those that fail their **DEX** tests, go after their opponents.

NPC HIT DICE

Hit Dice (HD) represents an NPC's level and the number of **d8** rolled to determine their **Hit Points (HP)**. All the sample NPCs have an average number of **HP** listed, in case you don't want to roll.

See also the note on **Scale** on the previous page.

ATTACK, DEFENSE & DAMAGE

When a character attacks an NPC in melee, they must roll below their **STR Stat**. Cats cannot engage in ranged combat, except with spells. When an NPC attacks, the character must roll below their **STR** against a **Melee Attack** and **DEX** against a **Ranged Attack** to avoid taking damage. If a Player Cat's opponent is at least twice the size of the cat, the player can choose to test **DEX** instead of **STR** when avoiding a **Melee Attack**. A GM will often give the **Stat** required for the test.

The damage an attack deals is based on the character's class or the number of **HD** an NPC has. To make a **Melee Attack** an opponent must be **Close**. **Ranged Attacks** against **Close** opponents are possible, but the defending PC gains **Advantage**, as per the **Advantage & Disadvantage** section.

NPCs deal damage based on their **HD**. *Refer to the table on the next page.* Note that the damage is a static amount, rather than a die roll. If you'd prefer to use the damage listed in a module or other compatible source that you are using, you can certainly do that instead. In that case, either roll damage or use the average damage amount for the dice given.

CRITICAL DAMAGE

If a player making an attack rolls a 1, they double the result of the damage dice they roll. If they roll a 20 when avoiding an attack, they take double damage.

NPC HD	DAMAGE
1	2 points
2	3 points
3	4 points
4	5 points
5	6 points
6	8 points
7	9 points
8	10 points
9	11 points
10	12 points

DEATH & DYING

When a character is reduced to zero **Hit Points (HP)** they are taken **Out of Action (OofA)**; they are unconscious and cannot make any actions. When the fight is over and/or they are out of danger, an PC that was **OofA** can roll 1d6 on the table in the **Healing** section (*facing*) to see what happens to them. **If they survive they gain 1d4 HP.**

If the characters lose the fight or are unable to recover the body of a character, all PCs that are **OofA** can spend a **Life** to re-appear somewhere else with an unlikely tale of how they escaped death. *If a Life is not used, they are lost forever!*

See the **Healing** section on this page for more on the nine **Lives** that cats have.

POWERFUL OPPONENTS

For every **HD** above the character's level, add +1 to every roll the player makes for any **Stat** test that would determine the outcome of a conflict between them and an NPC.

Frex, a level 2 character defending against a HD 5 NPC attack would add +2 to their roll.

HEALING

Player Cats can gain **Hit Points** several different ways. They can never gain more than their maximum and can never go below zero.

When healing a character who is **OofA**, just start at zero and count up. That character is now back on their feet and no longer **OofA**.

Every cat has nine (9) **Lives** to start with. After a combat, you can spend a **Life** to no longer be **OofA** without rolling on the **Out of Action** table below, gaining 1d4 **HP** as usual. In addition, if you are not **OofA**, you can spend a **Life** to heal all damage, returning your **HP** to maximum.

OUT OF ACTION

- 1 **KO'd** – Just knocked out.
- 2 **Owie** – **Disadvantage** on all tests for the next hour.
- 3 **Cracked Bones** – **STR**, **DEX** and **CON** are temp. -2 for **the next day**.
- 4 **Crippled** – **DEX** is permanently reduced by 2
- 5 **Scarred**– **CHA** permanently reduced by 4.
- 6 **Dead** – Use one of your nine **Lives** to re-roll, or else you are no longer alive.

NAPTIME

When the PCs take a group nap that lasts for at least half an hour, they may roll the **Hit Die** associated with their class and regain that many **HP**.

ADVANTAGE & DISADVANTAGE

A GM may decide that a particular roll has a higher or lower chance of success than usual. The GM will ask a player to roll an additional d20 when making the test. With **Advantage** the lower result is used and with **Disadvantage**, the higher. These modifiers do not stack and **Advantage** and **Disadvantage** cancel each other out.

CARRYING & CLAIMING

A cat can only carry a single small item, in their mouth. A cat with something in their mouth cannot make loud noises, but they can still silently communicate with other cats in range.

A Player Cat can, however, **Claim** an item, creature, or location by spending several minutes rubbing against the thing in question. Only other cats cannot be **Claimed** this way. The player should keep a list of the things that have been **Claimed** in this way.

When dealing with one of their **Claimed** things, a PC gains **Advantage**.

A cat can **Claim** a number of things equal to the PC's level. If a PC rubs against one more item that they can currently **Claim**, the player must remove one of the other items on their list.

A cat, and other animals at the GM's discretion, can always tell if another cat has **Claimed** a given thing. A cat can "overwrite" another cat's **Claim** by rubbing against the item in the normal way. In that case, the item is removed from one list and added to the other.

NPC cats can also **Claim** things, and dogs can **Claim** something by urinating on it. Such NPCs can **Claim** a number of things equal to their **HD**. The GM may also rule that other animals can **Claim** things as well.

CURSE OF DISTRACTION

When confronted with a laser pointer, a fluttery piece of paper, a jangly thing, or anything else that might distract a cat, a PC must make a **WIS** check or else spend at least 1d6 **Minutes** playing with the thing in question, no matter how important other matters are. This trance is broken if the PC is attacked or harmed, of course.

EXPERIENCE

The "standard" experience system used by most OSR games and related systems is not used in *The Cat Hack*.

Instead, for every session / quest / mission / major event the character survives they gain a level.

The GM will decide which. It's recommended that this decision remains more or less a constant throughout the campaign, and a GM should be clear and upfront with the players so they know where the "goalposts" are.

GAINING LEVELS

When a character levels up, their maximum **Hit Points** increase by rolling the **Hit Die** for the class. Also a player should roll a d20 for each **Stat**. If the result is higher than the **Stat**, that **Stat** increases by one (1).

Since all cats can cast spells, when leveling up, a cat gains 1d4 spells of a level that they can cast. See **Spellcasting** for more details.

All cats have a maximum level of 5!

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The GM should roll a d8 every 30 minutes of real world play. A result of 1-2 means the players will encounter a randomly generated NPC or distraction in the following **Minute** (turn).

NPC REACTIONS

Some NPCs will have predetermined personalities and goals that will guide a GM when choosing their actions and feelings towards the characters. For those that do not, such as randomly encountered NPCs, make a reaction roll on the following table:

d8	REACTION
1	Flee then roll again.
2	Avoid the PCs entirely.
3	Trade with PCs.
4	Give the PCs aid.
5	Mistake the PCs for friends.
6	Trick the PCs (roll again).
7	Call for Reinforcements.
8	Capture/Kill/Eat the PCs.

Alternately, when a human is involved, the GM may allow one PC to check **CHA** to make a favorable impression by looking cute. “Aw, it’s a kitty!”

BACKGROUNDS

The GM should allow each player to describe their cat’s background in more detail, including the cat’s breed, whether they are a housecat, a farm cat, or a feral cat, and so on.

Once per game hour, a cat may make a roll with **Advantage** if this fits with their background. A fluffy Maine Coon is better than most cats in the snow, a feral cat is likely better at hunting, and a house cat might have *some* clue how a remote control works.

ADVENTURES

Since playing cats is a little more unusual compared to the theme of other OSR games, it’s worth going over the sort of adventures that cats can have.

Combat can get even more deadly than in typical OSR games; even the average human can kill a cat. Despite the amount of space in the rules given over to combat, adventures with cats are going to focus more on stealth, exploration, and mystery solving. This is sort of thing is handled almost entirely with the **Core Mechanic**.

Gathering clues is usually covered with a **WIS** check. Keep in mind that cats can see in the dark much better than humans, have a better sense of smell, and so on.

Given this, while any mystery shouldn’t be *easy* to solve, it’s important to make sure the game doesn’t grind to a halt because a character blows a roll. The GM may want to take a page from the GUMSHOE series of games, and have certain clues always be available if a character looks, with no roll required. A roll would simply garner additional clues or more detail.

In the spirit of sandbox play, there should probably be multiple supernatural threats in a given area that the PCs can find out about and follow up on. Taking a page from the *Monster of the Week* RPG, the GM should have a sense of what will happen over a given time with a situation *if the players do not otherwise intervene*, or, in a more old school manner, have some tables to roll on to allow the situation to progress if the players do not follow up.

“Dungeon crawls” are not out of the question. The PCs may have to investigate a haunted house, for example. One may even use these rules, with a bit more conversion effort than usual (see the **Scale** section), for a traditional crawl in a fantasy world with a party of cats! *Where the rules mention humans, this should include fantasy humanoids, like elves!*

BATTLE CAT

aka Scrapper, Warrior, Mouser, Pouncer, etc.

Starting HP : d10 + 4

HP Per Level/Nap : 1d10

Attack Damage : 1d8

SPECIAL FEATURES

Once per hour, whilst in combat, a Battle Cat can regain d10 lost **HP**.

As part of their action a Battle Cat can make 1 attack per level.

Gain **Advantage** for any roll involving insects, birds, rodents, or any other category of thing that can be considered “natural prey” for a cat. Note that this includes birds or whatnot that are larger than cats and might even eat them, such as owls; in that case, the **Advantage** might be used more to escape than to attack...

LEVELING UP

Roll to see if attributes increase, roll twice for **STR** *and* **DEX**. Gain spells as usual.

LITHE ONE

aka Sneak, CATrobat, Escape Artist, Climber, Tracker, etc.

Starting HP : d8 + 4

HP Per Level/Nap : 1d8

Attack Damage : 1d6

SPECIAL FEATURES

Rolls with **Advantage** when testing **DEX** to dodge, whether during combat or when avoiding something like a trap. They also roll with **Advantage** if they are using **DEX** to escape confinement or bindings.

Lithe Ones are *fast*. When in doubt, a Lithe One can always move further than any other cat class. Initiative is rolled with **Advantage**, and they need one less move to get to a given range in combat.

*For example, a Lithe One can move **Far-Away** without forgoing an action.*

Rolls with **Advantage** when sneaking, jumping, climbing, running, scouting, or using the five senses (hearing, smelling, etc.)

LEVELING UP

Roll to see if attributes increase, roll twice for **DEX** or **WIS**. Gain spells as usual.

SHAMAN CAT

aka Magic Cat, Healer, Spooky Cat, Witch's Familiar, etc.

Starting HP : d6 + 4

HP Per Level/Nap : 1d6

Attack Damage : 1d4

SPECIAL FEATURES

A Shaman Cat takes half damage (round up) from any supernatural creature.

When casting spells, a Shaman Cat may use **WIS** instead of **INT** to determine whether they “use” a spell slot when casting. See the **Spellcasting** section.

LEVELING UP

Roll to see if attributes increase, roll twice for **STR** *or* **WIS**. Gain spells as usual.

DIVINE SPELLCASTING

In addition to the usual spell list that all cats share, Shaman Cats may learn and cast spells from a special spell list of their own. Also, they have more spell slots than usual. See the **Spellcasting** section for more details.

In addition to the spells that all cats start with, a Shaman Cat starts with 1d4 spells from the Level 1 and 2 Advanced Cat Spell lists.

PRETTY KITTY

aka Snookums, Adorable Kitten, Cuddly Cat, Show Cat, etc.

Starting HP : d8 + 4

HP Per Level/Nap : 1d8

Attack Damage : 1d6

SPECIAL FEATURES

The first time a human or NPC creature otherwise susceptible to cuteness (including an NPC cat) tries to harm a Pretty Kitty or might suspect the Pretty Kitty of doing something wrong, the Pretty Kitty must fail a **CHA** check or else the NPC can't bring themselves to harm the Pretty Kitty or suspect the Pretty Kitty of wrongdoing. Do not forget the **Powerful Opponents** rule! However, *all humans **do not** get the benefit of the **Powerful Opponents** rule for this ability **only**.*

The NPC may try again, again causing the Pretty Kitty to roll **CHA**, either 2d6 **Minutes** later outside combat, or the next **Moment**, if a fight is going on. Once the Pretty Kitty fails the **CHA** roll, they cannot affect that NPC with this ability ever again. Being attacked by the kitty also "breaks the spell."

A Pretty Kitty can "sing," which is melodious to cats *only*. The kitty can sing and move and take no other action, but as long as the singing continues all allies in earshot gain **Advantage** on any defensive roll. However, during the singing and for a bit after the singing stops, chance of a **Random Encounter** is *doubled*, though there should always be some chance that nothing shows up. In addition, add +1 to **Reaction Rolls** during and immediately after singing.

Rolls with **Advantage** when attempting to look pretty, cute, or innocent, and on any roll involving a social interaction, such as ingratiating oneself with another animal.

LEVELING UP

Roll to see if attributes increase, roll twice for **INT** and **CHA**. Gain spells as usual.

SPELLCASTING

All cats have the ability to cast spells that are chosen from the list on the following page. They start knowing 1d4 spells from the Level 1 Basic Cat Spell lists. Upon leveling, a cat learns 1d4 spells that they can currently cast.

A kitty can cast any spell that they know. They have a number of 'spell slots' they can activate each day, as shown in the two tables opposite. One table is for Shaman Cats, and the second is for other cats.

These 'slots' represent a cat's energy and the taxing nature of casting spells over a long period. When they run out of spell slots, they can't cast spells.

Once a spell is cast, the cat must test their **INT**, adding the spell's level to the roll. (As noted in their class description, Shaman Cats may choose to test their **WIS** instead.)

If the cat fails the test then they reduce the number of 'spell slots' corresponding to the spell level just used by one (1). A used spell is not forgotten.

After roughly *8 hours rest* (laying around bonelessly and napping), the number of spell slots a character has refreshes to its maximum. If a spell converted from another game calls for a creature to make a save, the character must test their **INT** to see if the spell that was activated was powerful enough to overcome the NPC's defenses, taking into account the **Powerful Opponents** rule.

If a cat gets wet, not damp but drowned rat sort of wet, they can't cast spells until they rest for 8 hours to regain spell slots, even if they dry off.

Spellcasting for cats is perfectly natural, requiring only that they take an action to will the magic into being. This, plus their status as nature's vanguard against the supernatural, is the source of the arrogant and entitled nature of cats so loathed by many.

SHAMAN CATS DAILY SPELLS

- spell slot level -			
	1	2	3
- character level -	1	1	-
	2	2	-
	3	3	1
	4	3	2
	5	4	2

OTHER CATS DAILY SPELLS

- spell slot level -			
	1	2	3
- character level -	1	1	-
	2	1	-
	3	2	1
	4	2	2
	5	2	2

DISBELIEF

Some spells won't work or will stop working if someone who isn't aware of a cat's supernatural nature notices the effect. In most settings, this means humans. In the spell lists, spells that are affected by disbelief are marked with an asterisk *

OTHER MAGIC ANIMALS?

Of course, the GM may always chose to have other animals have magical powers as well. Certainly ravens and crows have interesting associations with death, and dogs might have magics involving supporting their pack leader, which could be a human. The cats might not even be aware that they're not the only animals with supernatural powers!

BASIC CAT SPELLS

Charm : A Nearby target that can understand you obeys commands. Test **CHA** each turn to see if the effect lasts.

Door : A human in line of sight opens a door you are meowing at or staring at, if they can.

- 1 **Dinner Dance** : Walk around a human 1d4 times. They grant 1 request that fulfills a basic need (e.g. feed me).

Filch : If no one's looking, steal any Close or Nearby small item & hide it somewhere Nearby or Far-Away, without moving.

Land on Feet : If falling Far-Away or less, take no falling damage. Yes, you land on your feet.

Naptime : Puts 3d6 HD 'worth' of beings to sleep - 8hrs. You must take a 10min nap after casting or spell is broken.

Invisible Human* : A Nearby door or lock is opened.

Invisibility : A Nearby creature that no one is looking at is made invisible to non-cats until it attacks or dispelled.

- 2 **Levitate*** : The caster floats up to 6 feet from the ground - 10mins/level.

Find My Stuff : Sense direction of a Claimed object - 1 minute/level.

Gravity Test : Push an object off a surface. By "luck," object takes the most damage possible, and/or is ruined somehow

Pain for Pain* : When you are hit in melee, attacker takes same damage. - 1d4 Moments

Darkvision : See in absolute darkness - 60min/level.

- 3 **Dead Can Dance*** : Turn one corpse into a 1d4 HD zombie or skeleton under your control.

Dispell Magic : Removes a Nearby spell. GM may require an **INT** check for success.

Speak with Dead : Ask a Nearby corpse 3 questions. Only cats can hear the corpse speak.

ADVANCED CAT SPELLS

Detect Magic : Everything Nearby that is magic glows, to your sight only - 5mins.

Lick Wounds : Lick Nearby target to heal 1d10 HP.

- 1 **Protection from Evil** : Advantage on all harmful tests from an Evil source - 1hr.

Spoil Food and Drink : Befouls and ruins all Nearby food and drink.

Steal Breath : A Nearby target has trouble breathing, takes 1d6 damage/level. Only works on creatures that breathe. You may also do a normal attack this same Moment.

Alter Self : If no one's looking at you, assume form of a similar creature, such as a small dog or another cat - 1hr.

Clean : Clean up to five targets with your tongue. Targets gain +1 to stats when making attacks and saves - 1hr.

- 2 **Dread Gaze*** : Paralyse 1d4 Nearby targets. Test **WIS** each turn to see if the effect lasts.

Sneaky* : Magical silence covering everything Nearby to a target. If target is an ally, can break silence voluntarily. - 1hr.

Zone of Truth : All Nearby creatures that can understand the cat cannot lie unless the cat fails a **WIS** roll.

Cross the Path : Cross in front of a target to curse them. Advantage to anyone who attacks target.

Curing Cuddle : Removes a curse from a Nearby target that you cuddle with.

- 3 **Hissy Fit** : Hiss at a Nearby enemy. Cures a Nearby ally of all diseases. Succeed at **CON** test and the enemy catches those diseases. If no enemy, can still cure disease by cursing "all dogs," but only succeeds in curing if **CON** check made.

Shadow Portal* : Teleport a target that is standing in a shadow to a Distant location that is also in shadow.

Water Walk* : Walk on water without getting wet! Impress other cats! - 1d4 minutes

Only a Shaman Cat can learn and cast the spells from the Advanced list. All cats can learn and cast spells from the Basic list.

* Spells marked with an asterisk are affected by disbelief. See the **Disbelief** section on the previous page.

NPC	HD	AVG HP	ACTIONS, SPECIALS, & NOTES
Demonic Minion	1	4	2 Claws (dmg 1) + 1 Bite (dmg 2), Half damage from non-magic weapons. Full damage from cat claws. Same stats can be used for lesser fae.
Mouse / Small Bird	1	1	Only 1 HP. Birds can fly, mice cannot (duh).
Human Baby	1	2	HP 2, cannot do any damage unless a 20 is rolled, then damage 1. Doesn't trigger Disbelief.
Human Toddler	1	4	Doesn't trigger Disbelief. Pulls tails!
Greeneye*	1	4	Sits on human shoulder, whispering of envy and greed
Rat/Bat/Crow/Raven	1	8	Unusually hardy and always have max HP. Rats can't fly.
Ghoul	2	9	2 claws (dmg 2) + 1 bite (dmg 3) + CON test or Paralysed.
Preschool Child	2	9	Human. Doesn't trigger Disbelief.
<u>Despair Sprite*</u>	2	9	Make WIS check or you despair of every being able to harm it
Wererat	3	13	Cannot gain Advantage when attempting to surprise a Wererat.
<u>Shadow*</u>	3	13	Damned soul in shadow form. Touch (dmg 2 and -1 STR), only hit by magic weapons and cat claws.
Doppelganger	3	13	Change form in a moment, disadvantage against magic tests.
Wight	3	13	Can only be hit by cat claws, magical weapons, or silver weapons, Drain 1 Level with Hit.
Thing Under the Bed*	3	13	Make WIS check or paralyzed with fear for 1d2 rounds
Dog	3	13	Double damage to cats. -1 HD for small dog, +1 HD for large dog
Elementary Age Kid	4	18	Human. Only 1 in 4 chance to trigger Disbelief
Werewolf	4	18	Can only be affected by silver weapons and cat claws, double damage to cats
<u>Depression Spider*</u>	4	18	Make WIS check or too depressed to attack it. Covers humans in invisible webs. Can attack to cover you w/ webs, +1 to rolls while entangled
Mummy	5	22	Attacks stop healing until lick wounds (or similar) cast, immune to normal weapons, half damage from magic weapons and cat claws.
Ragewolf*	5	22	Spirit animal that's cousin to werewolves. Causes humans to go berserk. Berserk humans do double damage to cats.
<u>Poltergeist*</u>	5	22	Can perform 1d6 attacks per Moment by throwing around objects
<u>Space Fungus</u>	5	22	Supernatural fungus from another planet, steals human brains & takes over human bodies. Spells as Level 3 Shaman Cat, or spells as lvl 3 Conjurer or Cleric from <i>The Black Hack</i> . Sometimes chatty, always creepy.
<u>Incubus/Succubus*</u>	6	27	2 Claws (1d3), Advantage on magic tests, only affected by magic weapons and cat claws, level drain (-1) with kiss. Can cast Charm (spell) once per hour. Same stats can be used for Leanan Sidhe
<u>Banshee*</u>	6	27	Shriek - CON test or Paralyzed for 2d6 Moments.

NPC	HD	AVG HP	ACTIONS, SPECIALS, & NOTES
<u>Spectre*</u>	6	27	A person or cat killed by Spectre will become Spectre in 1d6 minutes
Spectral Hound*	6	27	Double damage to cats.
Tween Human	6	27	Only 50% chance to trigger Disbelief
Djinni*	7	31	Can take Gaseous Form, Create Objects, Create Illusions as action.
Teenage Human	7	31	Usually unarmed (dmg 8), but see Adult Human for options
<u>Ghost*</u>	7	31	Corrupting touch: Test CON or lose 1d4 CHA .
Human Cultist	7	31	Very sharp dagger, knife, or machete (dmg 11). Knows a spell, usually Cross the Path.
Greater Demon	8	36	Sword (dmg 8) + Whip (0) DEX test or be pulled Close to the demon and burnt for 11 fire damage. Same stats can be used for angels if you like!
Adult Human	8	36	Choose weapon: Unarmed (dmg 8), improvised (dmg 9), club (dmg 10), gun (dmg 12)
Shoggath	8	36	Giant gibbering pile of protoplasm. Half damage from non-spell attacks, including cat claws. Has Disadvantage when dealing with spells.
<u>Vampire</u>	8	36	Can take gaseous form, rat form, Charm (spell) - level drain (-1) bite
Warrior Human	9	40	Soldier or cop. Club (dmg 10), pistol (dmg 12), rifle (dmg 13)
<u>Human Cult Leader</u>	9	40	Magic dagger (dmg 11). Spells as Level 5 Shaman Cat, adapted for human use. (Or spells as lvl 5 Conjurer or Cleric from <i>The Black Hack</i>)
<u>Serpent Folk</u>	9	40	On bite, CON check or lost 1d3 CON from venom. Can appear human. Often leads cults of unsuspecting humans. Spells as Level 4 Shaman Cat.
<u>Wraith*</u>	9	40	On Hit, test CON or lose 1d4 CON .
Will-O'-The-Wisp*	9	40	Immune to magic! Prefers to lead people into dangerous terrain instead of fighting.
<u>Qlippothic Daemon*</u>	10	45	Entity of decay and stagnation. Test WIS or lose 1d4 INT from seeing its metaphysically twisted body.
Ogre	10	45	Gives advantage on all CHA tests made against it.
Ethereal Cat*	10	45	Only evil cats become ghosts. Half dmg from cats, others need silver. Stats can serve for Cait Sidhe, except Cait Sidhe also immune to cat spells.
Faerie Lord	10	45	Spells as Level 5 Shaman Cat. (Or spells as lvl 5 Conjurer or Cleric from <i>The Black Hack</i>) Cats need CHA check to affect with spells.

NPC NOTES

Remember that in a fantasy world, "human" should include elves, dwarves, halflings, orcs, etc.

NPCs with an asterisk* after their name are invisible to humans, visible to cats. Can appear to humans if they choose. They do *not* automatically appear to humans when they attack, and their attacks may be attributed to other causes.

NPCs with their name in **bold** do double damage to humans.

NPCs with names that are underlined can drain one **HD**/level from a human every week by feeding on them. Most supernatural beings can and will feed on humans, but the underlined ones especially so. At 0 **HD**/levels, human commits suicide, wither and die, are taken to an asylum, or whatever else seems appropriate to the GM for the creature and human in question.

CROSSOVER

If all the PCs are cats, playing in a fantasy world like that assumed by *The Black Hack* or a science fiction world like that of *The Space Hack*, uses these rules more or less unchanged. You may need to scale the creatures and the damage of weapons, but don't sweat armor too much. In a fantasy world, you may have to define the role of cats in a slightly different way, and you might want to do away with the **Disbelief** section. In a science fiction world, "humans" can include a lot of aliens, and there may be species equivalent to cats from other worlds. But in a SF world, it's best to keep the assumption that mainly only the cats and their equivalents know about the supernatural, and the effects of the **Disbelief** section could be stronger or weaker depending on how much technology is like magic to the average person.

If you want to use these cat classes alongside humans and whatnot in either *The Black Hack* or *The Space Hack*, the only issue is scale. Use the scale from the other game, and keep in mind that cats generally don't start with money or property, and can't carry more than what's defined in these rules. Generally, use these rules for cats and the other rules for non-cats. However, to change the scale of the cat classes, change the hit die and damage of the different classes as follows:

CAT CLASS	HD	DAMAGE
Battle Cat	d6	d4
Lithe One	d4	d4
Shaman Cat	d2	d2
Pretty Kitty	d4	d4

Cats don't use armor or weapons. You may want to scale the damage on the cat spells to some degree, though they're probably fine as-is.

CREDIT AND INSPIRATION

I'm aware of at least *three* different role-playing games, besides this one, where the player characters are all cats. I've borrowed liberally from all three, and they're all excellent inspiration for games of *The Cat Hack*.

They are:

* *Call of Catthulhu* by Joel Sparks

* *Cat*, by John Wick

* *The Secrets of Cats* for Fate Core, by Richard Bellingham

PDFs of these games should be available from the same place you got *this* PDF. Nano-reviews of the games follow.

John Wick's *Cat* has the best setting background and the worst system. Cats win a great spirit duel between the different species of animals, and part of the "reward" is they have to look out for the losers... humans. As far as the system goes, there's almost no reason to not put all your points in magic, and it's a bit confusing in spots.

The Secrets of Cats is a solid second place in both system and setting. This isn't faint praise: If you want to move outside of the realm of the OSR into something more cinematic, Fate is a great choice. In the case of *The Secrets of Cats*, the background is solid and there are some real interesting types of magic for different cats to specialize in. And the art is pretty keen, as well.

Call of Catthulhu has the best system of the three and my least favorite setting of the three, though it's still good. The system is a very simple d6-based thing that favors the cats just enough but not too much. It is easy enough to understand for children to use, but has some sophisticated nuances that are great for older gamers. (One of my friends is considering adapting the system to do humans in a sort of "Film Noir" setting.) As far as setting, *Call of Catthulhu* features cats facing against animal-based parodies of Lovecraftian gods and creatures. It's cute, but it doesn't have quite the personal flair that John Wick's *Cat* does.

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