



AXIOMS

**AUTARCH'S QUARTERLY SUPPLEMENT FOR
THE ADVENTURER CONQUEROR KING SYSTEM**

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June 2017

\$3.⁹⁹

ADVENTURER CONQUEROR KING SYSTEM™

AXIOMS

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HEDGE WIZARDRY AND VILLAGE WISDOM

ADDING CANTRIPS TO YOUR ACKS CAMPAIGN

Hedge wizards – cunning-folk, wise women, witch doctors – were a genuine historical phenomenon. We must be skeptical of their alleged magical abilities, of course, but that they existed in large numbers is well-attested throughout history. For instance, Owen Davies’ book *Popular Magic: Cunning-folk in English History* investigates how common the various practitioners of magic were in England during the Tudor era. He concludes that every parish (of which there were 15,000) likely had a handful of minor magic-workers, fortune-tellers, and witches, with professional hedge wizards numbering 3,000 to 5,000. More aggressive estimates argue for several hundred thousand magical practitioners in England during the Tudor era, when the total population was only 3 million. There were, of course, another 15,000 parish priests and an entire hierarchy of deacons, monks, nuns, and other servants of the divine. In Tudor England, then, there was at least one practicing “spellcaster” for every 85 people, and possibly one for every 10 people!

According to the Demographics of Leveled Characters table in *ACKS*, a small hamlet of about 30 families (150 people) will likely count one 3rd level, one 2nd level, and seven or eight 1st level characters among their number. Of these, 20% will be divine casters and 10% will be arcane casters – three casters in total. We might imagine such a hamlet to include a 2nd cleric, a 1st level antiquarian witch or priestess, and a 1st level mage; or a 2nd level mage, a 1st level cleric and a 1st level priestess; or any other similar variant. *ACKS*, then, suggests one spellcaster for every 50 people, somewhere in the mid-range of historical estimates. As I wrote in the *Auran Empire Primer*, “magic is as abundant [in *ACKS*] as the ancients of our own world believed it to be in theirs.” And that’s clearly the case.

But what do all these spellcasters do? That’s a little less clear. Because *ACKS* is geared to be a game about adventurers and conquerors, its spell selection is heavily geared towards adventure, combat, exploration, and war. In contrast, history’s hedge wizards have tended to assist with more miscellaneous matters – frightening away minor spirits, curing the common cold, locating lost objects, and so on. A 1st level priestess can heal when you’ve been stabbed, but she can’t help you with a wart on your finger. A 1st level mage can put to sleep an entire squad of enemy soldiers – but he can’t help you find your missing ox-harness.

This article fills in the gap with new spells, new proficiencies, and more.

CANTRIPS

Cantrips are minor spells - easy to learn, and not unduly demanding to cast, but highly limited in scope and power. In game terms, a cantrip is a spell designed using the Player’s Companion Spell Power Guidelines that meets the following criteria:

- The spell’s effect does not scale with level.
- The spell’s duration is either concentration, instantaneous, or one day or less.
- The spell’s total cost (spell effect × modifiers) is one spell point or less.

Spell building notes are included with each new spell herein. New effects and modifiers are underlined.

LEARNING AND CASTING CANTRIPS

Arcane cantrips can be learned and cast by any character who possesses the Hedge Wizardry proficiency. Divine cantrips can be learned and cast by any character who possesses the Village Wisdom proficiency. These new proficiencies are described below. Cantrips are learned and cast like spells.

MAGICAL RESEARCH OF CANTRIPS

Cantrips can be learned through magical research, and enchanted into potions, scrolls, and permanent magic items like spells. For purposes of magical research, cantrips count as 1/5 level spells (e.g. they require 20% as much time and money as 1st level spells.)

PROFICIENCIES

Hedge Wizardry: The character gains the ability to learn and cast arcane cantrips. A character may take Hedge Wizardry multiple times. A character with Hedge Wizardry can cast a number of arcane cantrips per day equal to the maximum number of 1st level arcane spells he can cast per day plus his ranks in this proficiency. The character can have a number of arcane cantrips in his repertoire equal to the maximum size of his 1st level arcane repertoire plus his ranks in this proficiency. When this proficiency is first selected, and each time it is selected thereafter, the character immediately learns one arcane cantrip. The character can learn additional cantrips from his master when advancing in level, by finding scrolls with cantrips, or by finding a spellbook with cantrips, as per Adding New Spells to the Repertoire in *ACKS*.

EXAMPLE: Quintus is a 1st level mage with INT 16. He can cast one 1st level arcane spell per day, and he can have up to three 1st level arcane spells in his repertoire. Quintus selects Hedge Wizardry as his 1st level class proficiency. He can now cast two arcane cantrips per day and have up to four arcane cantrips in his repertoire. He immediately learns one arcane cantrip, and can learn others through the usual methods. When he reaches 6th level, Quintus is able to cast two 1st level spells per day and can have up to four 1st level spells in his repertoire. He decides to select a second rank of Hedge Wizardry as his 6th level class proficiency. Now Quintus immediately learns another cantrip, can have up to six arcane cantrips in his repertoire, and can cast up to four arcane cantrips per day.

In some campaign settings, it may be possible for a character to select Hedge Wizardry without having the ability to cast spells. Such a character gains the ability to learn and cast arcane cantrips. The character can cast a number of arcane cantrips per day equal to his ranks in the proficiency. The character can learn a number of arcane cantrips equal to his ranks in the proficiency plus his INT modifier. The character can use magic items such as scrolls or wands enchanted with arcane cantrips, but cannot perform magic research or use other restricted magic items.

Village Wisdom: The character gains the ability to learn and cast divine cantrips. A character may take Village Wisdom multiple times.

A character with Village Wisdom can cast a number of divine cantrips per day equal to the maximum number of 1st level divine spells he can cast per day plus his ranks in this proficiency. The character's repertoire of divine cantrips will be equal in size to his repertoire of 1st level divine spells. The character's specific spell list will depend on his class and deity as well as the Judge's discretion. Suggested spell lists for various classes in the Auran Empire campaign setting are described below.

In some campaign settings, it may be possible for a character to select Village Wisdom without having the ability to cast spells. Such a character gains the ability to learn and cast divine cantrips. The character can cast a number of divine cantrips per day equal to his ranks in the proficiency. The character will gain a spell list, selected by the Judge to reflect his class and deity, of four divine cantrips. The character can use magic items such as scrolls or staves enchanted with divine cantrips, but cannot perform magic research or use other restricted magic items.

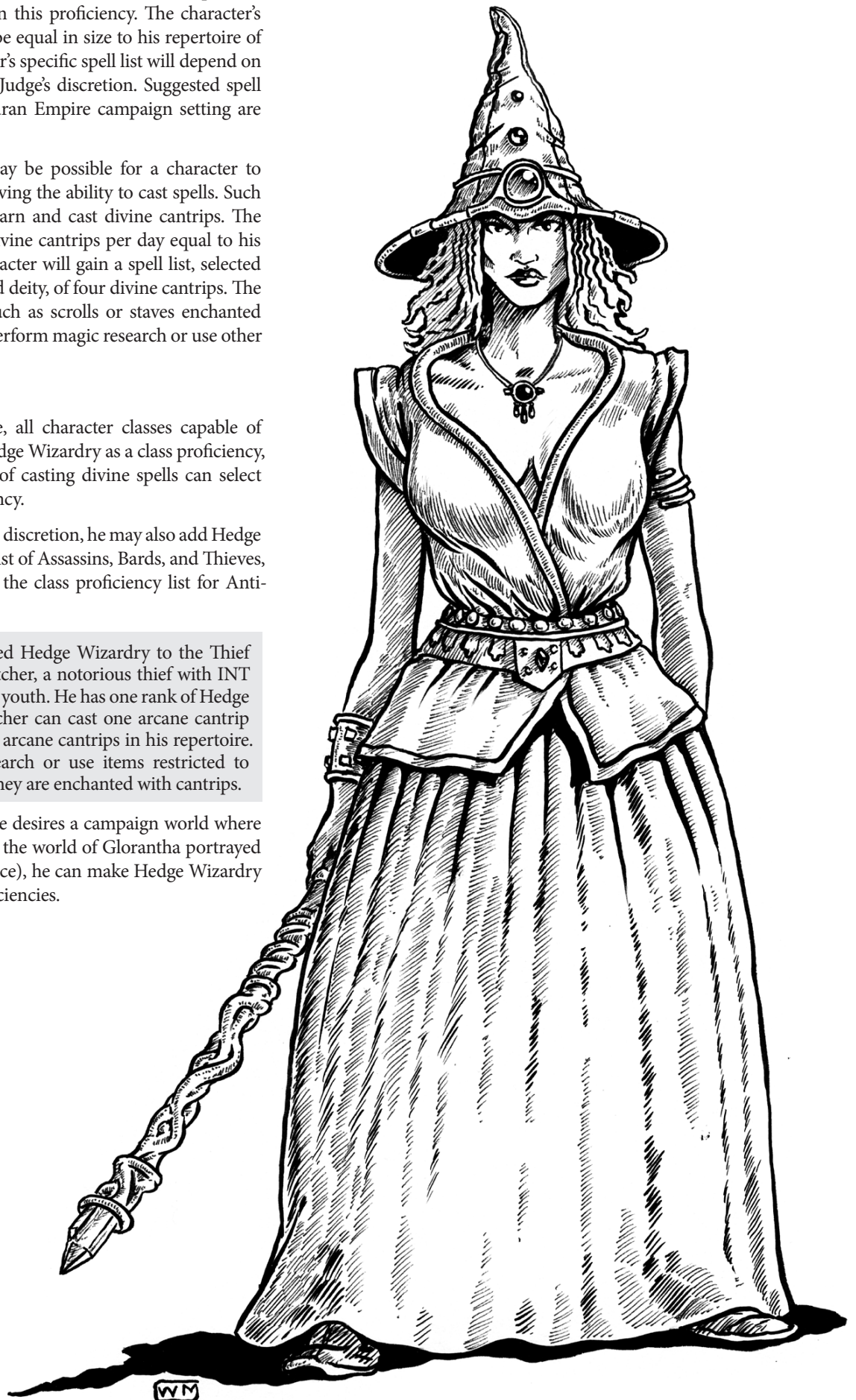
PROFICIENCY LISTS

Unless the Judge rules otherwise, all character classes capable of casting arcane spells can select Hedge Wizardry as a class proficiency, and all character classes capable of casting divine spells can select Village Wisdom as a class proficiency.

Dabblers in the Art: At the Judge's discretion, he may also add Hedge Wizardry to the class proficiency list of Assassins, Bards, and Thieves, and may add Village Wisdom to the class proficiency list for Anti-Paladins, Mystics, and Paladins.

EXAMPLE: The Judge has added Hedge Wizardry to the Thief proficiency list. Ashen Mice-Catcher, a notorious thief with INT 13, was a mage's apprentice in his youth. He has one rank of Hedge Wizardry. The Ashen Mice-Catcher can cast one arcane cantrip per day, and can have up to two arcane cantrips in his repertoire. He cannot perform magic research or use items restricted to arcane casters, however, unless they are enchanted with cantrips.

Folk Magic Abounds: If the Judge desires a campaign world where folk magic is common (similar to the world of Glorantha portrayed in the RuneQuest RPG, for instance), he can make Hedge Wizardry and Village Wisdom general proficiencies.



CANTRIP SPELL LISTS

Arcane Cantrips

- 1 Alarm ill
- 2 Bludgeon elm(earth)
- 3 Call Woodland Creature
- 4 Daze enc
- 5 Detect Spirits
- 6 Exterminate Pest dth
- 7 Find Wealth
- 8 Guidance trn
- 9 Frostbite elm(water)
- 10 Lullaby enc
- 11 Overlookability ill
- 12 Phantasm of the Fire elm(fire) ill
- 13 Recover Object
- 14 Shock elm(air)
- 15 Singe elm(fire)

Divine Cantrips (Priestess)

- 1 Call Woodland Creature
- 2 Cure Minor Wounds*
- 3 Detect Spirits
- 4 Guidance trn
- 5 Moon's Call
- 6 Mother's Awareness
- 7 Mother's Insight
- 8 Mother's Prediction
- 9 Mother's Ministry
- 10 Purify Meal*
- 11 Relaxing Respite
- 12 Remedy*
- 13 Remove Affliction*
- 14 Sleepy Creature enc
- 15 Tame Animal enc

Divine Cantrips (Witch)

- 1 Bestow Affliction*
- 2 Call Woodland Creature
- 3 Detect Spirits
- 4 Infection*
- 5 Moon's Call
- 6 Mother's Awareness
- 7 Mother's Insight
- 8 Mother's Prediction
- 9 Mother's Ministry
- 10 Putrefy Meal*
- 11 Relaxing Respite
- 12 Remedy*
- 13 Remove Affliction*
- 14 Sleepy Creature enc
- 15 Tame Animal enc

Divine Cantrips (Bladedancer)

- 1 Call Woodland Creature
- 2 Cure Minor Wounds*
- 3 Daze enc
- 4 Detect Spirits
- 5 Guidance trn
- 6 Purify Meal*
- 7 Recover Object
- 8 Remove Affliction*
- 9 Sleepy Creature enc
- 10 Tame Animal enc

Divine Cantrips (Cleric)

- 1 Cure Minor Wounds*
- 2 Daze enc
- 3 Detect Spirits
- 4 Guidance trn
- 5 Purify Meal*
- 6 Relaxing Respite
- 7 Remove Affliction*
- 8 Remedy*
- 9 Sleepy Creature enc
- 10 Tame Animal enc

Divine Cantrips (Shaman)

- 1 Call Woodland Creature
- 2 Detect Spirits
- 3 Moon's Call
- 4 Mother's Awareness
- 5 Mother's Insight
- 6 Mother's Prediction
- 7 Remedy*
- 8 Remove Affliction*
- 9 Sleepy Creature enc
- 10 Tame Animal enc

CANTRIP SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

Alarm

Arcane Cantrip

Range: 10' per caster level

Duration: special

An **alarm** is an audible illusion hung on a chosen non-living object, such as a tree, rock, door, or chest, and triggered when a specified audible or visible event occurs nearby. The **alarm** may consist of one sentence of up to three words long (“Warning! Intruder Alert!”), spoken any volume from a whisper to a yell, in any language known by the caster. The voice created by the cantrip resembles, but is not identical, to the caster’s own, and cannot be mistaken for an actual voice. The voice cannot use command words or activate magical effects. Once it begins, the **alarm** will be repeated each round, up to a maximum number of rounds equal to the caster’s level. However, the **alarm** immediately ends if the object is touched by an intelligent creature or attacked.

Triggers can be as general or as detailed as desired. Triggers react to what appears to be the case. Disguises and illusions can fool them. Normal **darkness** does not defeat a visual trigger, but magical **darkness** or **invisibility** does. Silent movement or magical silence defeats audible triggers. Audible triggers can be keyed to general types of noises or to a specific noise or spoken word. Actions can serve as triggers if they are visible or audible. An **alarm** cannot distinguish level, Hit Dice, or class except by external garb. The range limit of the trigger is 10' per caster level. Regardless of range, the **alarm** can respond only to visible or audible triggers and actions in line of sight or within hearing distance.

Alarm: *create illusion, non-visual mono-sensory (3), illusion limited to 1 obviously fake, harmless category (×0.2), target 1' × 1' × 1' cube (×1), range 10' per caster level (×1), duration 1 round per level (×1), duration does not begin until triggered (×2.75), expires if attacked (×0.75), expires if touched by an intelligent creature (×0.75), total cost 0.93*

Bludgeon/ Frostbite/ Shock/ Singe Range: 150'
Arcane Cantrip Duration: instantaneous

The caster can smash the target with a small shard of hard earth. If the caster makes a successful attack throw against the target, he deals 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage to it.

Similar cantrips exist for other elemental damage types – **frostbite** freezes the target with a short blast of cold, **shock** electrocutes the target with a small bolt of lightning, and **singe** burns the target with a hot ball of cinders.

Blast: 1d6 damage per level (27), maximum 1d damage (×0.1), elemental (×1), target 1 creature (×1), attack throw required to hit target (×0.35), range 150' (×1), duration instantaneous (×1), arcane (×1), cost 0.95

Call Woodland Creature Range: 10'
Arcane and Divine Cantrip Duration: 1 turn

This cantrip calls a nearby animal of up to 1 HD to serve the caster. The animal may make a saving throw versus Spells to resist the effect. If the save fails, the animal will approach the caster and do whatever is commanded of it. The effect lasts so long as concentration is maintained or until one turn elapses, whichever comes first. Once the cantrip ends, the animal will return to its original location. Its disposition towards the caster will depend on how it was treated when called.

Call Woodland Creature: summon a creature (65), creature may have up to 1 HD (×0.15), caster must concentrate to control creature (×0.5), summoning restricted to animals (×1), target summoned only from within spell's range (×0.66), range 10' (×1), duration 1 turn (×0.5), saving throw avoids spell effect (×0.5), arcane (×1) or divine (×1.2), 0.80 or 0.96

Cure Minor Wounds* Range: touch
Divine Cantrip Duration: instantaneous

This cantrip heals the creature touched of 1 point of damage. Any given creature can only benefit from **cure minor wounds** once per day. Like other cure spells, **cure minor wounds** never increases a creature's hit points beyond the normal amount.

The reverse form of this cantrip, **cause minor wounds**, causes 1 point of damage to the creature touched. A successful attack throw is required in this case. Like other cure spells, undead are affected by this spell and its reverse in opposite fashion; they are injured by **cure minor wounds** and healed by **cause minor wounds**.

Cure Minor Wounds: 1 point curing (3), target 1 creature (×1), attack throw required (×1), range 0' (×1), duration instantaneous (×1), spell can only be cast on each target once per day (×0.33), divine (×1), beneficial effect (×1), total cost 0.99

Daze Range: 10'
Arcane and Divine Cantrip Duration: 1 round

This cantrip can momentarily daze a target humanoid creature of up to 4+1 HD. The target may make a saving throw versus Paralysis to resist the effect. If the save fails, the creature spends its next action in

a stupor, unable to take any action. It is not helpless, however, and can still defend itself if attacked.

Daze: Target mesmerized for duration of spell (30), 1 creature of up to 4+1 HD (×1), only target humanoids (×0.5), range 10' (×0.5), duration 1 round (×0.1), saving throw avoids spell effect (×0.5), arcane enchantment other than hold (×1) or divine enchantment (×1.5), total cost 0.38 or 0.57

Detect Spirits Range: 60'
Arcane and Divine Cantrip Duration: 1 turn

This spell detects the presence of incorporeal undead within 60'. If the incorporeal undead are within the caster's line of sight, the caster sees them as surrounded by a sickly grey-green aura. The more powerful the undead, the thicker the aura. If the incorporeal undead are not within the caster's line of sight, he is nevertheless aware of them in his mind's eye, gaining a sense of their proximity, number, and relative power. The cantrip can only be performed once per week, typically being limited to a day associated with a psychopomp to the dead.

Detect Spirits: Detect incorporeal undead (5), spell can only be performed once per week (×0.2), range 30' (×1), duration 1 turn (×0.5), no saving throw (×1), arcane (×1) or divine (×1.5), cost 0.5 or 0.75

Exterminate Pest Range: 30'
Arcane Cantrip Duration: instantaneous

This cantrip deals 1d8 points of damage to affected swarming creatures. Up to 1 HD of such creatures can be affected per level of experience of the caster. All of the creatures to be affected must be within a 30' radius of the caster. Swarming creatures include ordinary bats, ordinary rats, and ordinary insects, but not any kind of giant animals or giant vermin. Creatures with the fewest HD are affected first. The swarming creatures do not receive a saving throw.

This cantrip is commonly used to delouse children, eliminate pests from a house, etc., but adventurers have found it useful against actual swarms. When **exterminate pest** is cast against a swarm, treat the swarm as a number of 1HD sub-swarms equal to its HD, and deal damage accordingly, then apply the total damage dealt to the swarm's hit points.

EXAMPLE: Yrsa Raghildottir, a 3rd level antiquarian witch, casts **exterminate pest** on a 4HD insect swarm with 18 hp. A 4HD insect swarm counts as four separate sub-swarms of 1 HD each, of which Yrsa can affect three. She deals 1d8 points of damage to each of the three sub-swarms, rolling 7, 4, and 2 respectively. The Judge applies the total of 13 points of damage to the insect swarm, leaving it with (18 – 13) 5 hp left.

Exterminate pest: 1d8 damage per level (44), maximum 1d damage (×0.1), target 1 HD of creature per level within 60' diameter (×1.5), creatures with fewest HD are affected first (×0.5), only works on swarm-sized creatures (×0.5), range 60' (×0.6), duration instantaneous (×1), no saving throw (×1), arcane (×1), cost 0.99

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|--------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Find Wealth | Range: | 120' |
| Arcane Cantrip | Duration: | 1 round per level |

The spellcaster may, by concentrating for one turn, sense the direction and distance of the most valuable treasure within 120'. In order to be detected, the total value of the treasure must meet or exceed a value of 50gp. No physical barrier will impede detection, with the exception of magical wards or lead. The cantrip can only be performed once per week, typically being limited to a day associated with the god of fortune or wealth.

Detect Wealth: *Detect treasure (15), 1 small area, object, or creature in range (x0.7), spell takes 1 turn to cast (x0.8), spell can only be performed once per week (x0.2), range 120' (x1.5), duration 1 round per level (0.25), no saving throw (x1), arcane (x1), cost 0.63*

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| Guidance | Range: | touch |
| Arcane and Divine Cantrip | Duration: | 1 round |

This cantrip grants the creature touched a +1 bonus on its next proficiency throw within one round. The bonus does not apply to attack throws or saving throws.

Guidance: *current form gains +1 to proficiency throw (5), target 1 living corporeal creature (x1), range 0' (x0.6), duration 1 round (x0.25), beneficial effect (x1), arcane (x1) or divine (x1.25), total cost 0.75 or 0.9*

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| Lullaby | Range: | 0' |
| Arcane Cantrip | Duration: | concentration |

By singing a song, the caster can cause a nearby living creature of less than 1 HD to fall into a peaceful, dreamless slumber. The target must be close enough to touch, although neither actual physical contact nor an attack throw is required. An unwilling target may make a saving throw v. Paralysis to resist the effect. The caster must remain stationary and concentrate on singing the **lullaby**. The cantrip expires when the caster stops singing or otherwise loses concentration. However, a willing subject of this cantrip will not necessarily wake up if he was otherwise tired or in need of rest. This cantrip is commonly used to help agitated, ill, or sleepless people get some rest!

Sleeping creatures are helpless and can be killed in one round by unengaged opponents. Slapping or wounding awakens an affected creature, but normal noise does not. **Lullaby** does not affect creatures that are already unconscious or undead, constructs, oozes, and other creatures that do not rest.

Lullaby: *Target asleep for duration of spell (15), 1 creature of less than 1 HD (x0.5), only target living creatures (x0.75), range 0' (x0.4), duration concentration, must remain stationary (x0.8), saving throw avoids spell effect (x0.5), arcane, cost 0.9*

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| Moon's Call | Range: | touch |
| Divine Cantrip | Duration: | instantaneous |

This cantrip can cause the creature touched to immediately enter menses. This cantrip is commonly used by women to end unwanted pregnancies. If the pregnancy had advanced to more than 50% of its term, the subject will have to suffer through a stillbirth in 2d6+7 days; otherwise, the pregnancy ends with the menstruation. An unwilling

target of moon's call may make a saving throw v. Death to resist the effect. If the cantrip is cast on a creature incapable of entering menses, the caster begins bleeding from her nose and suffers 1 point of damage.

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| Mother's Awareness | Range: | touch |
| Divine Cantrip | Duration: | 1 round |

This cantrip allows the caster to detect whether the creature touched is pregnant, and if so, how far into the term and with how many young. The caster feels the presence of each child within as a warmth in her hands, with the temperature indicating how long the child has been carried. This warmth cannot be felt by anyone else. The cantrip does not reveal any information about the characteristics, gender, health, or race of the child or children. If this cantrip is cast on a subject incapable of giving birth, it has no effect except that the caster begins bleeding from her nose and suffers 1 point of damage.

Mother's Awareness: *Detect pregnancy (5), range 0' (x0.5), all creatures within range (x1), duration 1 round (x0.2), no saving throw (x1), divine (x1), cost 0.5*

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| Mother's Insight | Range: | touch |
| Divine Cantrip | Duration: | 1 round |

This cantrip allows the caster to determine the likely sex of the child or children being carried by an expectant mother. The caster intuitively "knows" the sex of each child, but there is no sensory indicator. The cantrip does not reveal any other information about the child or children. The cantrip is not perfectly accurate; when cast, the Judge should secretly roll 1d20. If the result is a 1, the cantrip yields a random result for each child. If this cantrip is cast on a subject that is not carrying children, it has no effect except that the caster begins bleeding from her nose and suffers 1 point of damage.

Mother's Insight: *Detect gender (5), range 0' (x0.5), all creatures within range (x1), duration 1 round (x0.2), no saving throw (x1), divine (x1), cost 0.5*

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| Mother's Prediction | Range: | touch |
| Divine Cantrip | Duration: | 1 round |

This cantrip gives the caster insight into the potential talents of an unborn child or children carried by a creature touched. The cantrip is not perfectly accurate; when cast, the Judge should secretly roll 1d20. If the result is a 5 or more, the cantrip correctly reveals what the child's ability scores will be as an adult. If the result is a 2-4, the cantrip reveals a random set of ability scores unrelated to what the child's will be as an adult. If the result is a 1, the cantrip reveals an opposite set of ability scores, diametrically opposed to what the child's ability scores will be as an adult (the Judge may calculate each diametrically opposed score as 21 less the child's actual ability score, or make up values). If this cantrip is cast on a subject that is not carrying children, it has no effect except that the caster begins bleeding from her nose and suffers 1 point of damage. More than one village wise woman has been killed when **mother's prediction** incorrectly predicted a healthy, beautiful child and a misshapen monster was born instead...

Mother's Prediction: *Gain insight into potential (5), range 0' (x0.5), all creatures within range (x1), duration 1 round (x0.2), no saving throw (x1), divine (x1), cost 0.5*

Mother's Ministry

Divine Cantrip

Range: touch

Duration: special

This cantrip eases the pain of childbirth. For the duration of the spell, the creature touched experiences a mild analgesic-like effect. The cantrip expires when the subject gives birth or dies. If this spell is cast on a subject that is not giving birth, it has no effect except that the caster begins bleeding from her nose and suffers 1 point of damage.

Overlookability

Arcane Cantrip

Range: self

Duration: 1 round per level

The spellcaster, along with any worn or carried items that extend less than 10' from him, becomes easily overlooked by casual observers. Provided the caster remains stationary, and does not speak, move, attack, or cast a spell, he is detected as if he were a secret door. The spell ends when the duration expires, or if the caster speaks, moves, **attacks**, casts a spell, or if the caster is successfully attacked.

Overlookability: *Target becomes partially invisible (12), target self (x0.33), duration 1 round per level (x1), if target creature speaks (x0.9), expires if target creature successfully attacked (x0.9), expires if target creature casts spell (x0.75), expires if target creature attacks (x0.75), expires if target creature moves (x0.5), cost 0.9*

Phantasm of the Fire

Arcane Cantrip

Range: 0'

Duration: concentration

This spell creates the visual illusion of an object, creature, or area to appear in the flickering flames of a fire within reach. The illusion can be up to 1'x1'x1' in size. The **phantasm of the fire** can be anything the caster can visualize, but it is not accompanied by any sound, smell, texture, or temperature save that of the fire itself. The caster can move the image within the limits of the size of the effect. The **phantasm of the fire** persists so long as the caster concentrates upon it.

Create Illusion: *create illusion, visual mono-sensory (9), illusion can only be cast into a fire (x0.25), illusion dynamic (x1), target 1' x 1' x 1' cube (x1), range 0' (x0.5/.), duration concentration (x1), expires if touched (x0.75), arcane (x1), total cost 0.85*

Purify Meal*

Divine Cantrip

Range: 10'

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell makes spoiled, rotten, poisonous, or otherwise contaminated food and water pure and suitable for eating and drinking. This spell will purify a single glass of water or one meal for one person. This spell does not prevent subsequent natural decay or spoilage. The spell has no effect on creatures of any type, nor upon magic potions or unholy water.

Reversed, this spell becomes **putrefy meal**. It will spoil a single glass of water, or one meal for one person. Anyone consuming putrefied food and water must make a saving throw versus Poison or become violently ill for the next 2 hours (12 turns), unable to do anything save retch and heave. The spell has no effect on creatures of any type, nor upon magic potions or holy water.

Recover Object

Arcane Cantrip

Range: 120'

Duration: 1 round per level

The spellcaster may, by concentrating for one turn, sense the direction to a well-known or clearly visualized object. The caster can search either for a unique item that he has observed firsthand (not through divination), or he can search for a general item, in which case the nearest one of its kind is located if more than one is within range. The spell is not impeded by most physical barriers but is blocked by even a thin sheet of lead or gold. Creatures cannot be found by this spell. The cantrip can only be performed once per week, typically being limited to a day associated with the god of fortune or thievery.

Detect Known Object: *Detect known object (8), spell can only be performed once per week (x0.2), spell requires one turn to cast (x0.8), range 120' (x1.5), duration 1 round per level (0.25), no saving throw (x1), arcane (x1) or divine (x1.5), cost 0.6 or 0.9*

Relaxing Respite

Divine Cantrip

Range: touch

Duration: special

This spell allows its subject to enjoy soothing, peaceful sleep, free of pain and sorrow that night. As a result of this **relaxing respite**, the subject of the spell will heal an extra hit point in the coming day if he rests completely. The spell ends when the subject stops completely resting or takes any damage, or after one full day of rest.

Remedy*

Divine Cantrip

Range: touch

Duration: instantaneous

This spell aids the subject in recovering from minor acute illnesses such as the common cold. When **remedy** is cast, the subject immediately makes a saving throw versus Death. If the save succeeds, the subject will recover in half the usual time. If the save fails, the subject receives no benefit. **Remedy** can be cast repeatedly on the same subject, but no more than once per day.

The reverse of this spell, **infection**, can infect the target with a minor acute illness. The target receives a saving throw versus Death. If the save succeeds, the target resists the spell. If the save fails, the target is infected with a cold. While infected, the character suffers a -1 penalty to reaction rolls due to his irritable state and he cannot force march. (If using the Campaign Play rules from Axiom Special Issue, the character cannot work overtime.) An infected character will recover naturally after 2d6 days.

Remedy: *remedy minor disease (1), target 1 creature (x1), range 0' (x1), duration instantaneous (x1), beneficial effect (x1), divine (x1), total cost 1*

Remove Affliction*

Divine Cantrip

Range: 30'

Duration: instantaneous

This cantrip instantaneously removes all **afflictions** on a creature. (An **affliction** is a type of minor curse caused by a cantrip.) Any **affliction** cast by a character of equal or lower level than the **remove affliction** caster's level is ended automatically. Those curses bestowed by higher level casters might not be removed; there is a 5% chance the **remove affliction** will fail for each level the afflicting character's level exceeds the level of the caster removing the curse.

The reverse of this spell, **bestow affliction**, allows the caster to place an **affliction** on a target creature. A saving throw versus Spells is allowed to resist. The caster can choose one of the following effects:

- Bad body odor, unsightly skin condition, or similar blemish causing a -1 penalty on reaction rolls
- Chronic body aches and pains causing a -1 penalty to initiative rolls
- Misfortune at work causing a 5% decrease in the character's daily construction rate with one proficiency

The caster may also invent his own **affliction**, but it should be no more powerful than those described above. The **affliction** thus bestowed cannot be **dispelled**, but it can be removed with a **remove affliction** or **remove curse** spell. There is no limit to the number of different **afflictions** a character may suffer from.

Sleepy Creature Range: touch
 Divine Cantrip Duration: 6 turns

This cantrip can cause the animal touched to fall asleep. The animal must have 4+1 HD or less in order to be affected, and may make a saving throw v. Paralysis to resist the effect. Once asleep, the animal is helpless and can be killed in one round by an unengaged opponent. Slapping or wounding awakens the affected animal, but normal noise does not. A creature that was wide awake when this cantrip was cast will always awaken when the duration expires, but if the animal was already tired or in need of rest it may continue to slumber.

Sleepy Creature: *Target asleep for duration of spell (15), 1 creature of up to 4+1 HD (x1), only target animals and giant animals (x0.5), attack throw required to target spell (x0.4), range touch o' (x0.4), duration 6 turns (x1.2), saving throw avoids spell effect (x0.5), divine (x1.5), cost 0.71*

Tame Animal Range: 15'
 Divine Cantrip Duration: concentration

This spell can temporarily tame one or more wild animals. The spell can affect up to 1d4 animals (including giant animals) of up to 4 HD. The caster may decide which individual animals in range are to be affected. Any animals that make a successful saving throw versus Spells resist the effect. The animals remain tame as long as the caster concentrates upon the spell.

A tame animal is not necessarily under control, but it is much less dangerous than a wild animal. If left alone, the animal will ignore the caster and his allies. If the animal is approached, make a reaction roll. Apply a +2 bonus if the character approaching it has the appropriate Animal Training proficiency. (Characters with Beast Friendship or under the effects of **speak with animals** always count as proficient for the purposes of handling trained animals.) If the reaction roll is 9 or higher, the character can handle the animal safely for the duration of the spell. A tame, handled animal can be held helpless and slain, if desired. Since the duration is short, the handler is advised to quickly leash, muzzle, cage, or kill the animal.

Tame Animal: *Target tame for duration of spell (4), 1d4 creatures of up to 4 HD (x1.2), only targets animals and giant animals (x0.5), range 15' (x0.6), duration concentration (x1), saving throw avoids spell effect (x0.5), divine (x1), cost 0.72*



POTIONS, LOTIONS, AND OTHER COMMOTIONS

MINOR MAGICAL ITEMS FOR YOUR VILLAGE WIZARDS AND HEDGE WITCHES TO BREW AND CRAFT

Hedge wizards and village witches (introduced in the article Hedge Wizardry and Village Wisdom in this issue) are abundant in the world of *ACKS*, with every hamlet and village having its wise woman or cunning-man. While most of these casters will never exceed 2nd level, some will reach 3rd, 5th, or even 9th level and become capable of creating potions, scrolls, and permanent magic items. Since hedge wizards and village witches have access to the minor magical effects known as **cantrips**, some of their magic items will almost certainly make use of these minor magics. In this article we present rules for enchanting cantrips into items, as well as offer 15 new cantrip items inspired by folk magic and faerie tales.

ENCHANTING CANTRIPS INTO ITEMS

Cantrips can be enchanted into potions, scrolls, and permanent magic items following the rules for magical research in *ACKS*. For purposes of magical research, cantrips count as 1/5 level spells (e.g. they require 20% as much time and money as 1st level spells). The costs in time and gold for various types of cantrip items are summarized on the Cantrip Item Creation table, below.

| Cantrip Item Creation | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Item Type | Base Cost | Time |
| One Use Effect | 100gp | 1.5 days |
| Charged Effect | 100gp × charges | 0.4 days × charges |
| Permanent Effect, Unlimited Use | 5,000gp | 20 days |
| Permanent Effect, Use 1/turn | 3,300gp | 16 days |
| Permanent Effect, Use 1/3 turns | 2,500gp | 14 days |
| Permanent Effect, Use 1/hour | 1,600gp | 12 days |
| Permanent Effect, Use 3/day | 1,200gp | 10 days |
| Permanent Effect, Use 1/day | 1,000gp | 8 days |
| Permanent Effect, Use 1/week | 600gp | 6 days |

CANTRIP SPECIAL COMPONENTS

When a spellcaster creates potions, scrolls, and permanent magic items, the enchantment process always requires special components. Items enchanted with spells of 1st level or higher typically require special components extracted from slain monsters; items enchanted with cantrips require more readily-available special components, such as animal byproducts, herbs, oils, spices, powdered rocks, and cut woods.

Special components for cantrip items can be purchased at a market or gathered from the wilderness by a naturalist. A character with Naturalism proficiency can gather 15gp worth of special components each week with a proficiency throw of 11+.

CANTRIP QUACKSALVES

Quacksalves are a type of one-use magic item similar to potions but of much lower cost and far more dubious efficacy. They are typically

brewed by mountebanks (introduced in the article Of Mischief and Mountebanks in this issue), who specialize in them. However, any character with either Hedge Wizardry or Village Witchcraft proficiency and at least one rank Alchemy proficiency can brew cantrip *quacksalves* based on the following items: **herbal tonics**, **moon teas**, **mother's teas**, and **oils of relaxing respite**.

Brewing a cantrip *quacksalves* costs 10gp and requires 1 hour. After the money and time is invested, the Judge makes a magical research throw on behalf of the brewer against the target value for their class. The brewer gains a +2 bonus on the throw per rank of Alchemy. Regardless of the target value, a natural roll of 1-3 always fails. All the usual rules for magic research and *quacksalves* (INT bonus, brewing equipment, etc.) apply.

If the proficiency throw is successful, a *quacksalve* potion of the desired type has been successfully created. It functions exactly like the normal item of the same type. If the proficiency throw fails with a natural 1, a **counter-potion** has been created. The **counter-potion** somehow does the opposite of the potion's intended effect. (A **counter-potion herbal tonic** might cause the character to develop a minor disease; a **counter-potion moon tea** might make the drinker more fertile.) If the proficiency throw fails with a natural 2-3, or by missing the target value by at least 4, then a potion of delusion is created. On any other result, the *quacksalve* is completely ineffectual.

EXAMPLE: Hanna fears she may have gotten pregnant by a rogue who will not support her. She visits Helga, the village witch, to ask for **moon tea**, with old family jewelry worth 10gp to pay. Actual **moon tea** costs 100gp to brew, but **quacksalve moon tea** can be brewed for just 10gp, so that's what Helga brews. Helga is a 3rd level antiquarian witch with one rank of Alchemy. Based on her level, the target value for her magic research throw is 14+, reduced to 12+ because she has one rank of Alchemy. The Judge secretly rolls 1d20 and the result is a 7.

Helga has unknowingly brewed a **potion of delusion**. Later, when Hanna drinks what she thinks is **moon tea**, she is deluded into thinking she has taken care of her problem. Only when she begins to show does she realize her mistake...

CANTRIP ITEMS

Candle of Comfort: The **candle of comfort** appears as a foul-scented taper of waxy white fat. If lit, the candle burns swiftly, lasting only 6 rounds (60 seconds) if not snuffed out. Each round that the candle burns, it deals 1d8 points of damage to the lowest-HD swarm of creatures within 30'. Swarms may be made of ordinary bats, ordinary rats, and ordinary insects, but not any kind of giant animals or giant vermin. The affected swarm does not receive a saving throw. **Candle of Comfort** gained their name from their use in eliminating bedbug infestations in the chambers of the nobility. (effect: **exterminate pest** cantrip; base cost: 600gp; base time: 9 days)

Charcoal of Phantasms: This magical briquette smells of peat and exotic woods. If burned in a brazier, the **charcoal of phantasms** creates a visual illusion of an object, creature, or area to appear in the flickering flames. The image is 1' × 1' × 1' in size and not accompanied by any sound, smell, texture, or temperature. If the character who set the charcoal alight is aware of its properties, he can control the image that appears in the fire through concentration. If the character is not aware of its properties, or does not concentrate on the illusion, the illusion will be random (Judge's discretion). The illusion persists so long as it is concentrated upon, or up to 1 turn (10 minutes) if no one concentrates on it. (effect: **phantasm of fire** cantrip; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

Cursed Doll: The **cursed doll** resembles an ordinary children's toy, albeit with a slightly sinister mien. Over time, a **cursed doll** brings misery and misfortune to any household it resides in. A **cursed doll** could be given as gift to an unsuspecting child in the household, or placed within a household by means of stealth. In any case, once it has taken up residence in the household, its magic begins to take hold. Each day, whoever spent the most time near the **cursed doll** must make a saving throw versus Spells. If the save succeeds, the character resists the effect. If the save fails, the character suffers an **affliction**. The Judge should select one of the following effects:

- Bad body odor, unsightly skin condition, or similar blemish causing a -1 penalty on reaction rolls
- Chronic body aches and pains causing a -1 penalty to initiative rolls
- Misfortune at work causing a 5% decrease in the character's daily construction rate with one proficiency

The **affliction** thus bestowed lasts indefinitely and cannot be **dispelled**, and there is no limit to the number of different **afflictions** a character may receive from the **cursed doll**. Any given **affliction** can be removed with a **remove affliction** or **remove curse** spell but the only way to remove them all at once and restore good fortune to the household is to destroy the doll. (effect: **affliction** cantrip; base cost: 1,000gp; base time: 8 days)

Dowsing rod (A): A **dowsing rod** is constructed from a forked branch cut from a witch hazel tree. An arcane caster in possession of a **dowsing rod** can, by concentrating for one turn, determine the direction and distance of the most valuable treasure within 120'. The **dowsing rod** will magically rotate to point in the appropriate direction and will shake to indicate proximity, with a more violent tremor indicating a more proximate treasure. After 9 rounds (90 seconds) the **rod** will cease its movement. In order to be detected, the total value of the treasure must meet or exceed a value of 50gp. No physical barrier will impede detection, with the exception of magical wards or lead. A **dowsing rod** will only function in the hands of an arcane caster, and only once per week, typically being limited to a day associated with the god of fortune or wealth. (effect: **find wealth** cantrip; base cost: 600gp; base time: 6 days)

Explorer's Mess Kit: The **explorer's mess kit** resembles an ordinary collection of portable eating and cooking utensils designed for troops on extended military campaigns, including a mess tin, cooking pot, skewer, and cutting knife. Close inspection of the utensils shows that the mess tin bears the embossed symbol of Naurivus, god of travelers, and that the utensils have no tarnish or wear. When used to consume a meal, the **explorer's mess kit** will render the food pure and suitable

for eating, regardless of how spoiled, rotten, poisonous, or otherwise contaminated it might have been. The magic of the **explorer's mess kit** can be used on three meals per day. (effect: purify meal cantrip; base cost: 1,200gp; base time: 10 days)

Healing Salve: The **healing salve** is an enchanted liniment based on camphor, wormwood, and oil. If rubbed on a wound, it heals the creature of 1 point of damage. Any given creature can only benefit from the **healing salve** once per day. (effect: **cure minor wounds** cantrip; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

Herbal Tonic: The **herbal tonic** resembles an amber-hued tea or infusion and smells of garlic, ginger, honey, and vinegar. If drunk an **herbal tonic** aids the drinker in recovering from minor acute illnesses such as the common cold. The drinker immediately makes a saving throw versus Death. If the save succeeds, the drinker will recover in half the usual time. If the save fails, the drinker receives no benefit. A character can only drink one **herbal tonic** per day; additional tonics cause stomach distress and cannot aid recovery. (effect: **remedy** cantrip; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

Lyre of the Lullaby: The **lyre of the lullaby** appears as a well-made music instrument with a tortoise shell chest painted with scenes of hearth and home. Each **lyre** has a particular **lullaby** that triggers its magical effects, analogous to the manner in which a command word triggers the effects of a wand. By strumming the **lyre** while singing the controlling **lullaby**, a character can cause a nearby living creature of less than 1 HD to fall into a peaceful, dreamless slumber. The target must be close enough to touch, although neither actual physical contact nor an attack throw is required. An unwilling target may make a saving throw v. Paralysis to resist the effect. The lyrist must remain stationary and concentrate on singing the **lullaby** and strumming the **lyre**. The effect ends when the lyrist stops singing and strumming or otherwise loses concentration. However, a willing subject of the effect will not necessarily wake up if he was otherwise tired or in need of rest. It is commonly used to help agitated, ill, or sleepless children get some rest, and wealthy patricians will almost certainly maintain one in their home for use by their child-tenders.

Sleeping creatures are helpless and can be killed in one round by unengaged opponents. Slapping or wounding awakens an affected creature, but normal noise does not. The **lyre** does not affect creatures that are already unconscious or undead, constructs, oozes, and other creatures that do not rest. The magical effects of the **lyre** can be used once ever 8 hours. It can be safely used as an ordinary music instrument at all other times. Using the **lyre** does not require **Performance** proficiency, but if the lyrist has one or more ranks in that proficiency, the target will suffer a -1 penalty per rank. (effect: **lullaby** cantrip; base cost: 1,200gp; base time: 10 days)

Moon Tea: This herbal tincture causes the creature that drinks it to immediately enter menses unless it succeeds on a saving throw versus Poison. The tea is used by women to end unwanted pregnancies. If the pregnancy had advanced to more than 50% of its term, the subject will have to suffer through a stillbirth in 2d6+7 days; otherwise, the pregnancy ends with the menstruation. If **moon tea** is drunk by a creature incapable of entering menses, the drinker begins bleeding from his nose and suffers 1 point of damage. (effect: **moon's call**; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

Mother's Tea: When drunk by a woman in labor, this herbal tincture eases the pain of childbirth. The drinker enjoys a mild analgesic-like effect until she either gives birth or dies. When drunk by anyone that

is not giving birth, mother's tee causes the drinker to begin bleeding from his nose and suffer 1 point of damage. (effect:

Nondescript Cloak: The **nondescript cloak** is so ordinary-looking, so overlookable, that it should not even be mentioned by the Judge when he is first describing a room's furnishings, creature's inventory, or chest's contents. A successful search for secret doors, or a **detect magic** spell, will reveal the cloak, although even then it will appear unremarkable.

Should a character don the nondescript cloak, he becomes as easily overlooked as the cloak itself. Provided the wearer remains stationary, and does not speak, move, attack, or cast a spell, he is detected as if he were a secret door. The **overlookability** effect if the caster speaks, moves, **attacks**, or casts a spell, or if the caster is successfully attacked, but can be renewed again after one round if the wearer returns to stationary silence. (effect: **overlookability** cantrip; base cost: 5,000gp; base time: 20 days)

Oil of Relaxing Respite: The oil of **relaxing respite** has the pleasant aroma of the lavender herbs which form its primary reagent. A character who massages the oil onto his temples, his forehead, and the back of his neck will enjoy soothing and peaceful sleep that night, free of any pain and sorrow, and will heal an extra hit point in the coming day if he rests completely. The effect of the oil ends when the subject stops completely resting or takes any damage, or after one full day of rest. (effect: **relaxing respite** cantrip; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

Shillelagh of Stunning [A/D]: The **shillelagh of stunning** appears as a blackthorn walking stick with a stout knot at its top. With the expenditure of one charge and a successful attack throw, the **shillelagh** can momentarily daze a target humanoid creature of up to 4+1 HD. The target may make a saving throw versus Paralysis to resist the effect. If the save fails, the creature spends its next action in a stupor, unable to take any action. It is not helpless, however, and can still defend itself if attacked. When found, a **shillelagh of stunning** will have 3d10 charges. Like other staves, its use is limited to arcane and divine casters. (effect: **daze** cantrip; base cost 100gp per charge; base time 0.4 days per charge)

Warning Skull: The **warning skull** resembles an ordinary human skull, but is in fact a magical device used by spellcasters to protect their demesnes. Each **warning skull** is enchanted with a trigger and an **alarm**. When the trigger occurs, the **skull** will issue its **alarm**.

A **warning skull's** trigger can be any audible or visible event specified by its owner. Triggers can be as general or as detailed as desired. Triggers react to what appears to be the case. Disguises and illusions can fool them. Normal **darkness** does not defeat a visual trigger, but magical **darkness** or **invisibility** does. Silent movement or magical silence defeats audible triggers. Audible triggers can be keyed to general types of noises or to a specific noise or spoken word. Actions can serve as triggers if they are visible or audible. However, the **warning skull** cannot distinguish level, Hit Dice, or class except by external garb. The range limit of the trigger is 90', and regardless of range, the **skull** can respond only to visible or audible triggers and actions in line of sight or within hearing distance.

When the trigger occurs, the **warning skull** will issue its **alarm**. The **alarm** may consist of one sentence of up to three words long ("Warning! Intruder Alert!"), spoken any volume from a whisper to a yell, in any language known by the **skull's** owner. The voice created by

the **skull** resembles, but is not identical, to the owner's, and cannot be mistaken for an actual voice. The voice cannot use command words or activate magical effects. Once it begins, the **alarm** will be repeated each round, up to a maximum number of rounds equal to the caster's level. However, the **alarm** immediately ends if the **skull** is touched by an intelligent creature or attacked.

Once the **warning skull** has issued its **alarm**, it will fall dormant and not react again to its trigger until the following day. The **skull's** trigger and **alarm** can be changed if desired by touching the **skull** and speaking its command phrase, once per day. (effect: **alarm** cantrip; base cost: 1,000gp; base time: 8 days)

Woodwind of the Woodlands: The woodwind of the woodlands appears as a reed pipe carved with pastoral images. If a character plays the woodwind while an animal of 1 HD or less is nearby (10'), the animal must make a saving throw versus Spells. If more than one animal is nearby, the closest one must save. If the animal's save succeeds, it resists the woodwind's magic. If the animal's save fails, the animal falls under the pipe-player's sway and thereafter does whatever he commands. The pipe-player's commands are magically conveyed to the animal by the music of the pipe.

The effect of the **woodwind of the woodlands** lasts for as long as the pipe-player continues to play it. Every turn (10 minutes), however, the animal receives another saving throw. When freed of the woodwind's enchantment, the animal will immediately seek to return to its original location; its disposition towards the pipe-player will depend on how it was treated when ensorcelled. Once the pipe-player stops playing the **woodwind** or the animal succeeds on a saving throw, the **woodwind** cannot be used for another turn (10 minutes).

Using the woodwind does not require **Performance** proficiency, but if the pipe-player has one or more ranks in that proficiency, the target will suffer a -1 penalty per rank. (effect: **call woodland creature** cantrip; base cost: 3,300gp; base time: 16 days)



OF MISCHIEF AND MOUNTEBANKS

JUST BECAUSE MAGIC IS REAL DOESN'T MEAN EVERY MAGICIAN IS!

BY JEFF BINDER

The hedge wizard and the village witch may be limited in the scope of their power, but they are, nevertheless, powerful – genuine representatives of the arcane and the divine. But the existence of the real thing doesn't mean that charlatans and tricksters won't exist; indeed, they're likely to be even more common. In this article, we present two such classes, the **fool** and the **mountebank**. These classes aren't spellcasters in the traditional sense, though they often pretend to be. And sometimes, to their own surprise, they just may succeed...

FOOL

Prime Requisite: CHA
 Requirements: None
 Hit Dice: 1d6
 Maximum Level: 14

Fools are characters illuminated by a spark of divine luck but who lack the means, focus, inclination, emotional balance, or moral fortitude to embrace their divine gift fully or bring it to productive fruition. Fools are misfits - societal, physical, or mental. Many are knaves, rascals, and/or children. They are fate's mirror, reflecting luck's harsh mockery to those harboring delusions of grandeur and the belief that one day, their power will rival that of the whims of the gods. As living embodiments of the divine comedy, fools are typically touched with a bit of madness. Some find comfort in the dust and filth of humanity because they see more than most that no matter the grand achievements, dust is the inevitable and eternal throne of all man. Others are quite sane and just along for the ride. As fools gain experience and notoriety, they are welcomed to grand courts and into the bosom of the most powerful and influential as living vessels touched by the divine, fonts of homespun or awkward wisdom, and as a breathing reminder of one's infinitesimal place in the hierarchy of the gods, no matter how besotted one becomes with temporal power.

| Fool Level Progression | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------|----------|----------|
| Experience | Title | Level | Hit Dice | Backstab |
| 0 | Nuisance | 1 | 1d6 | x2 |
| 3,000 | Mischief | 2 | 2d6 | x2 |
| 6,000 | Knave | 3 | 3d6 | x2 |
| 12,000 | Rascal | 4 | 4d6 | x2 |
| 24,000 | Imp | 5 | 5d6 | x3 |
| 48,000 | Larker | 6 | 6d6 | x3 |
| 95,000 | Scapegrace | 7 | 7d6 | x3 |
| 190,000 | Varlet | 8 | 8d6 | x3 |
| 310,000 | Fool | 9 | 9d6 | x4 |
| 430,000 | Fool of Fools | 10 | 9d6+2* | x4 |
| 550,000 | Lord of Fools | 11 | 9d6+4* | x4 |
| 670,000 | High Fool | 12 | 9d6+6* | x4 |
| 790,000 | Prince of Fools | 13 | 9d6+8* | x5 |
| 910,000 | King of Fools | 14 | 9d6+10* | x5 |

*Hit point modifiers from constitution are ignored

As they often incite (however unintentional) or find themselves witness to violence, fools are surprisingly accurate (some might say uncannily lucky) combatants, though they lack the toughness, protection, and damaging power of truly experienced warriors. At first level (Nuisance), they hit an unarmored foe (AC 0) with an attack throw of 10+. They advance in attack throws and saving throws as fighters, by two points every three levels of experience. Fools cannot wear armor heavier than hide armor, though they may use shields, and typically wear a motley patchwork of hide, skins, and padded heavy quilts (treated as hide). They are quite limited in the weapons they may wield – clubs, daggers, bolas, and slings. Fools may fight with two weapons or with a weapon and a shield. Through prescience, luck, or the ability to make the best of an opening when they see one, fools can **backstab** as thieves of equal level.

All fools begin play with a number of skills germane to their unique calling. They are adept in some kind of **performance**, though the specific type of **performance** varies and may be chosen by the player. They take naturally to slight-of-hand and other dexterous tricks and are able to **pick pockets** as a thief of equal level. Additionally, fools possess no mean skill in **acrobatics**. They are experts at presenting themselves as harmless or beneath notice or can blend into crowds and groups (treat as **hiding in shadows**). Finally, all fools have an uncanny ability to hear noise.

Beginning at 2nd level (Mischief), a fool can **taunt** an intelligent creature (through word, gesture, or other action) in order to goad them into heedlessly berating or attacking the fool in preference to all else. The taunted creature must be within 30', be able to see or hear the fool, and must succeed at a saving throw versus Spells or be overcome with rage for 1d4 rounds plus 1 round per level of the fool. In combat environments, hostile creatures who have been successfully taunted will heedlessly attack the fool in preference to all others for the duration with disregard for their own safety, while in more social situations (such as at court), the creature's reaction immediately turns unfriendly (see page 99 of the ACKS core rulebook) or hostile (if already unfriendly) and the creature will become verbally or possibly physically abusive to the fool should the chance present itself. The Judge may grant bonuses or penalties to the saving throw depending on circumstances, the temperament or natural inclinations of the creature, and/or their training (such as a diplomat in court possessing ranks in Diplomacy). A fool may **taunt** a creature no more than once per hour.

At 3rd level (Knave), a fool has learned a series of physical tricks, confusing nonsense, or baffling patter so profound or confusing that it serves to preternaturally **distract** creatures. Up to 1d6 living creatures within 30' of the fool may be affected. Creatures with the fewest HD are affected first. Each affected creature may make a saving throw versus Spells to resist the distraction. Creatures already engaged in an extremely stressful or life-threatening situation (such as combat) gain a +4 bonus to saving throws to resist the distraction.

Those that fail the saving throw will take no actions (though they are not helpless) while they are beguiled by the antics of the fool, and are considered distracted for purposes of sneaking and surprise (see page 98 of the *ACKS* core rulebook). The fool may attempt this sort of distraction no more than once every 8 hours.

At 4th level (Rascal), a fool may spend an action to whisper a quick prayer or charm to grant himself **fool's luck**. For the next 6 turns, an enemy attempting to attack or cast a spell upon the fool will be foiled in the attempt and spare the fool of any potential damage or malevolent effect. Until 6 turns have passed, the fool may be spared 1d4 times before his luck is exhausted. Area-effect spells and area **attacks** cannot be protected against, nor will they exhaust any potential instances of **fool's luck** the fool currently possesses. **Fool's luck** may be invoked no more than once every 8 hours.

By 5th level (Imp), a fool's white luck presence immediately influences the reactions of others. Whenever a reaction roll is made in the presence of a fool, the reaction is rolled twice and the better (or worse, fool's choice) roll is taken.

An 8th level fool (Varlet) may attempt to use wands, staffs, and other magical items only usable by mages. A failed proficiency throw means the attempt backfires in some desultory way.

At 9th level a fool gains the uncanny ability of **prophecy**. The fool is subject to mad jibberings, dreams, riddles, obtuse insights, or the random attention of various gods and godlings. These visions will be both cryptic and useful, and functions as the **commune** spell. This ability may be called upon once per week.

| Value of a Patron's Favor per Month | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Class Level of Patron | Maximum Value (gp) |
| 0 | 12 |
| 1 | 25 |
| 2 | 50 |
| 3 | 100 |
| 4 | 200 |
| 5 | 400 |
| 6 | 800 |
| 7 | 1600 |
| 8 | 3,000 |
| 9 | 7,250 |
| 10 | 12,000 |
| 11 | 32,000 |
| 12 | 50,000 |
| 13 | 135,000 |
| 14 | 350,000 |

At 9th level (Fool), a fool does not gain land or establish a domain, but he may find a **patron**. A patron is a wealthy or well-connected individual who provides aid and succor to the fool in exchange for his services and insight. Patrons are typically grand or powerful nobles such as kings or queens, grand dukes or duchesses, emperors and empresses, but may also be extremely wealthy and influential merchants. The fool is automatically granted lodging within his patron's seat of power and support within the patron's domains by those loyal to the patron. The fool gains the patron's allies and enemies while in the patron's service.

Furthermore, through his patron's resources a fool may request one favor per month (such as goods and services, loaned soldiery,

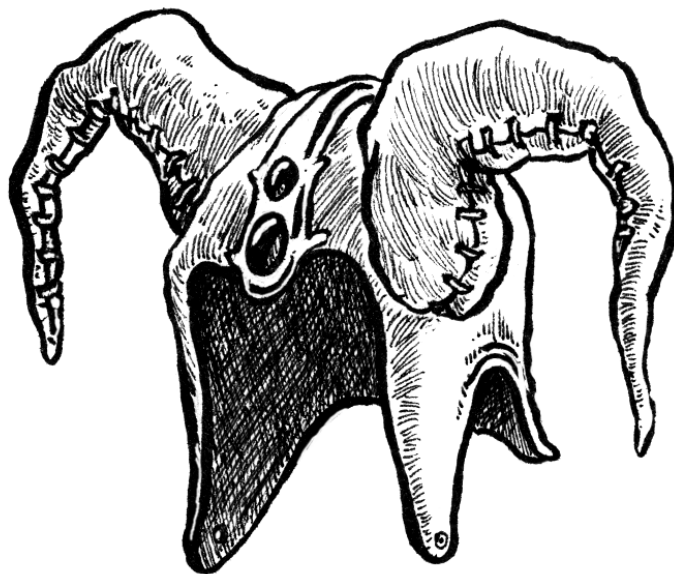
introductions to other powerful patrons, a loaned permanent magical item with each month held counting as that month's favor, or several disposable magical items). The maximum value of the monthly favor (in gp) is determined by the level of the fool's patron as detailed in the adjoining chart.

The Judge determines the extent of a favor's fulfillment and the availability of favors requested. In general, the favor may not encompass more goods, services, or personnel beyond what may be acquired monthly in the patron's largest controlled Market (or in the case of a merchant, the largest Market they operate in or where they have established successful ongoing mercantile ventures).

Fools use the Henchman Loyalty table (*ACKS* Core Rulebook, p. 51) to determine their relationship with their patron. They begin with a Loyal (9-11) patron. However, the fool is always subject to the whims of the powerful, and they must roll on the Henchman Loyalty chart once per year and whenever their relationship with their patron is tested to determine how their relationship with their benefactor fairs. A fool gains a +1 bonus to the Loyalty roll for every level they are above their patron, and a -1 penalty to their Loyalty roll for every two levels they are below their patron. Requests for more than one favor per month forces an immediate reaction roll at a -2 penalty from their patron. A modified roll of 5 or less indicates the dismissal of the fool from the Patron's service, and a roll of 2 or less indicates an uncivil parting. It is possible for a fool to maintain service with a patron for many years or to move from patron to patron, depending on the whim of the dice.

At 14th level (King of Fools), a fool is gifted with **luck's boon**, and once per day may reroll (or force a reroll) on an attack roll, saving throw, or any other randomly rolled effect within 60'. The fool automatically chooses the most beneficial of the two rolls.

Proficiencies: Alertness, Animal Training, Blind Fighting, Combat Reflexes, Combat Trickery (disarm, incapacitate, knock down), Contortionism, Diplomacy, Disguise, Divine Blessing, Divine Health, Endurance, Fighting Style, Gambling, Intimidation, Lip Reading, Mimicry, Mystic Aura, Performance, Precise Shooting, Prestidigitation, Riding, Running, Skirmishing, Swashbuckling, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.



| Fool Skill Progression | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Level | Acrobatics | Pick Pockets | Hide in Shadows | Hear Noise | Arcane Dabbling |
| 1 | 18+ | 17+ | 19+ | 14+ | - |
| 2 | 17+ | 16+ | 18+ | 13+ | - |
| 3 | 16+ | 15+ | 17+ | 12+ | - |
| 4 | 15+ | 14+ | 16+ | 11+ | - |
| 5 | 14+ | 13+ | 15+ | 10+ | - |
| 6 | 13+ | 12+ | 14+ | 9+ | - |
| 7 | 12+ | 10+ | 12+ | 8+ | - |
| 8 | 11+ | 8+ | 10+ | 7+ | 4+ |
| 9 | 10+ | 6+ | 8+ | 6+ | 3+ |
| 10 | 9+ | 4+ | 6+ | 5+ | 3+ |
| 11 | 8+ | 2+ | 4+ | 4+ | 3+ |
| 12 | 7+ | -1+ | 3+ | 3+ | 3+ |
| 13 | 6+ | -3+ | 2+ | 2+ | 3+ |
| 14 | 5+ | -5+ | 1+ | 1+ | 3+ |

* -1 penalty on the proficiency throw per each level the acrobat is lower than the victim.

| Fool Attack and Saving Throws | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------|--------------|
| Level | Petrification & Paralysis | Poison & Death | Blast & Breath | Staffs & Wands | Spells | Attack Throw |
| 1 | 15+ | 14+ | 16+ | 16+ | 17+ | 10+ |
| 2-3 | 14+ | 13+ | 15+ | 15+ | 16+ | 9+ |
| 4 | 13+ | 12+ | 14+ | 14+ | 15+ | 8+ |
| 5-6 | 12+ | 11+ | 13+ | 13+ | 14+ | 7+ |
| 7 | 11+ | 10+ | 12+ | 12+ | 13+ | 6+ |
| 8-9 | 10+ | 9+ | 11+ | 11+ | 12+ | 5+ |
| 10 | 9+ | 8+ | 10+ | 10+ | 11+ | 4+ |
| 11-12 | 8+ | 7+ | 9+ | 9+ | 10+ | 3+ |
| 13 | 7+ | 6+ | 8+ | 8+ | 9+ | 2+ |
| 14 | 6+ | 5+ | 7+ | 7+ | 8+ | 1+ |

| FOOL TEMPLATES | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--|---|
| 3d6 | | | |
| Roll | Template | Proficiencies | Starting Equipment |
| 3-4 | Outcast | Combat Trickery (Incapacitate) Intimidation | Sling, 20 rough-hewn bullets, club, raggedy tunic and leggings, ratty leather belt, well-worn low boots, backpack, small bag of marbles, small bag with collected knickknACKS (trash), moldy bread, pet mouse, 4gp |
| 5-6 | Fortune's Child | Divine Health Mimicry | Piecemeal armor (hide), rough worn leather boots, carved rod showing many childlike images (club), dagger, sling with 12 colored marble bullets, hemp belt, pouches with colored chalk and string, pouch full of jACKS, a ragdoll, backpack, waterskin, 7 gp |
| 7-8 | Jester | Prestidigitation Performance (clowning) | Mottled yet colorful patchwork armor (hide), soft boots, bell-laden leather belt, heavy stick with bell-tipped clown face on end (club), dagger, theatrical makeup, sheep's bladder, flame juggling sticks (torches), "Punch and Judy" puppets, backpack, 7gp |
| 9-10 | Wildcard | Swashbuckling Alchemy | Patchwork armor (hide), dagger, bola, sling with 20 bullets, leather belt with 2 small pouches, evergreen and yellow cloak, bag of smooth marbles, 50' rope, backpack, wineskin, 10gp |
| 11-12 | Addertongue | Seduction Intimidation | Formfitting dyed armor sewn from unknown skins (hide), bola, two slender daggers, sling with 20 polished black bullets, high hard boots, sable cloak, black leather belt with several pouches, flask of hard liquor, 25' silk rope, 15gp |
| 13-14 | Odd Diplomat | Diplomacy Seduction | Well appointed padded (hide) armor, fine tunic and leggings, patterned gray cloak, fine dagger, platinum-tipped walking stick (club), fine hard black boots, fine leather belt, 4 belt pouches, pepper box, backpack, 1 week's iron rations, wineskin, 10gp |
| 15-16 | Luckbender | Divine Blessing Gambling | Hardened, pale, skin-stitched hide armor, ivory-handled dagger, iron rod shaped like a dragon with ivory grip (club), sling with smooth white-marble stones, off-white tunic with black embroidery on cuff and collar, ermine and sable cloak, fine black belt with four belt pouches, backpack, 1 week's iron rations, wineskin, 15 gp |
| 17-18 | Godtouched | Mystic Aura Intimidation | Lionskin hide armor, heavy oaken club carved into the shape of a snarling-toothed maw, bone-handled dagger, brass-rimmed heavy oaken shield, ivory holy symbol, lionskin cloak, hide belt with three belt pouches, pouch brimming with strange mushrooms, 1 week's iron rations, wineskin, 20gp |

MOUNTEBANK

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Prime Requisite: | DEX and CHA |
| Requirements: | None |
| Hit Dice: | 1d4 |
| Maximum Level: | 14 |

Mountebanks are charlatans, swindlers, and con artists, typically from society's underclass but not always so. Roguish connivers and grifters, mountebanks separate people from their possessions using guile, fast-talk, charm, and trickery. Unlike thieves, who pride themselves on the possessions they can take from others, the mountebank is a master at tricking marks into freely giving up the things they value most.

Mountebanks are trained combatants, although not as skilled as fighters. At first level (Dodger), mountebanks hit an unarmored foe (AC 0) with an attack throw of 10+. They advance in attack throws and saving throws by two points every four levels of experience. Mountebanks cannot wear armor heavier than leather, and they cannot use shields. They may use any missile weapons and any one-handed melee weapons, and may wield a weapon in each hand if desired.

Like thieves, mountebanks have the ability to **backstab** surprised opponents, usually because the mountebank is disguised or **distracts** them in some way. When **backstabbing**, the mountebank will receive an attack bonus of +4 and, if successful, deal additional damage for every four levels he or she has attained. A mountebank at 1st through 4th levels does double the normal damage, at 5th-8th levels does triple the normal damage, at 9th-12th levels does quadruple the normal damage, and at 13th level or higher does quintuple the normal damage.

Mountebanks have a range of other skills to assist them their profession. All mountebanks are expert bargainers and showmen peddlers, possessing both the **Bargaining** and **Profession (huckster)** proficiencies at the start of play. They are also masters at creating minor magical effects, trickeries, and distractions to impress or draw attention away from what they are actually doing (as the **Prestidigitation** proficiency). Mountebanks can also **hear noises** and **pick pockets** with the same efficacy as thieves.

Mountebanks often have cause to create a persona, disguise their appearance, or take the identity of another individual in order to avoid retribution, put a mark at ease, or potentially surprise a target -- particularly in places where they have already plied their trade. Therefore, all mountebanks possess the ability to **impersonate others**. The chance of mountebanks successfully impersonating others improves by level, as shown on the Mountebank Skills Progression table below. Mountebanks who select the Disguise proficiency gain a +4 bonus to their proficiency throws to **impersonate others**. Mimicry and other relevant proficiencies may add additional bonuses to the throw, depending on the circumstances.

The Judge should adjust the target value depending on the impersonation intended and the tools, trappings, and time available to the mountebank. Typically, general impersonations (such as impersonating an orc soldier in a large military encampment) are far easier to accomplish than impersonations of individuals (such as impersonating Ugrok One-Hand, advisor to the Orc Chieftain). A character who is intimately familiar with the impersonated subject may make a proficiency throw of 14+ to see through the mountebank's impersonation. The character may add his WIS modifier to the roll, but must apply a penalty based on the mountebank's level, as shown on the Mountebank Skills Progression table.

All mountebanks know a smattering of **alchemy** (as the proficiency), but rather than pursue true alchemical expertise they instead favor the dubious practice of **brewing quacksalves**. **Quacksalves** are similar to the potions brewed by alchemists and mages, but of much lower cost and far more dubious efficacy. Thus a **quack potion of healing** is similar to a **potion of healing** but cheaper and less reliable.

Brewing a quacksalve costs 50gp per level of the spell effect imbued in the quacksalve. The brewing process requires one day per spell level. After the money and time is invested, the Judge makes a proficiency throw on behalf of the mountebank against the target value listed on the Mountebank Skills Progression table. The mountebank gains a +2 bonus on the throw per rank of Alchemy. The mountebank suffers a -2 penalty on the throw per level of the spell effect. Regardless of the target value, a natural roll of 1-3 always fails.

If the proficiency throw is successful, a quacksalve potion has been successfully created. It functions exactly like a normal potion of the

| Mountebank Level Progression | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------|----------|---|----------|
| Experience | Title | Level | Hit Dice | Special Abilities | Backstab |
| 0 | Dodger | 1 | 1d4 | Alchemy, Brew Quacksalves, Backstabbing, Bargaining, Hear Noise, Impersonation, Pick Pockets, Prestidigitation, Profession (huckster) | x2 |
| 1,250 | Cheat | 2 | 2d4 | - | x2 |
| 2,500 | Slicker | 3 | 3d4 | - | x2 |
| 5,000 | Rascal | 4 | 4d4 | Read Languages | x2 |
| 10,000 | Grifter | 5 | 5d4 | - | x3 |
| 20,000 | Gouger | 6 | 6d4 | - | x3 |
| 40,000 | Fraud | 7 | 7d4 | - | x3 |
| 80,000 | Rook | 8 | 8d4 | - | x3 |
| 180,000 | Mountebank | 9 | 9d4 | Hideout | x4 |
| 280,000 | Mountebank Lord | 10 | 9d4+2* | Read Scrolls | x4 |
| 380,000 | Jack of Knaves | 11 | 9d4+4* | - | x4 |
| 480,000 | Jack of Patches | 12 | 9d4+6* | - | x4 |
| 580,000 | Jack of Spades | 13 | 9d4+8* | - | x5 |
| 680,000 | King of Knaves | 14 | 9d4+10* | - | x5 |

*Hit point modifiers from constitution are ignored

same type. If the proficiency throw fails with a natural 1, or with a modified roll of 1 or less, a **counter-potion** has been created. The **counter-potion** somehow does the opposite of the potion's intended effect. (A **counter-potion of healing** might deal damage; a **counter-potion of invisibility** might make the character glow brightly.) If the proficiency throw fails with a natural 2-3, or by missing the target value by at least 4, then a **potion of delusion** is created. On any other result, the quacksalve is completely ineffectual.

The Judge should keep the results of the mountebank's proficiency throw to brew the quacksalve a secret, so that the mountebank is unsure whether or not his quacksalve is effective. If the mountebank (or another character) uses an Alchemy proficiency throw to identify a quacksalve, a successful result will reveal what the quacksalve is intended to do, but not what it actually does. Since many quacksalves cause delusion or death, wise characters simply don't drink them!

To create a quacksalve potion, the mountebank must possess a formula or sample of the equivalent (genuine) potion (e.g. to brew a **quack potion of healing**, the mountebank must have a formula or sample of a genuine **potion of healing**). A mountebank without any formulas or samples of genuine potions cannot make quacksalves at all!

The mountebank must also possess a **set of brewing equipment**. A minimum of 400gp must be invested in the brewing equipment to allow the creation of 1st level quacksalves. For each subsequent level of quacksalve to be created, an additional 200gp must be invested in the brewing equipment. For every 1,000gp of value in brewing equipment above the minimum required for the item, the mountebank receives a +2 bonus on his proficiency throw to brew quacksalves. Unlike the workshops and laboratories of mages and alchemists, the equipment a mountebank uses to brew quacksalves is typically very portable, as there is often a great need to gather belongings quickly and make a hasty exit from his or her current location! For encumbrance purposes, each 500gp worth of brewing equipment counts as 1 stone of weight.

Regardless of their available formulas, samples, and equipment, mountebanks can only attempt to brew quacksalves with spell effects equal to one-half their class level, rounded up. Thus a 1st level mountebank can only brew 1st level quacksalves, while a 7th level mountebank can brew 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th level quacksalves.

EXAMPLE #1: Fornata the Glib, a 1st level mountebank, has 400gp in brewing equipment and a sample **potion of healing**. She wishes to create a **quack potion of healing**. The cost to create the quacksalve is 50gp and 1 day of brewing. Fornata spends the time and gold required, then makes a proficiency throw to brew quacksalve. As a 1st level mountebank, Fornata has a target value of 18+. Fornata has one rank in Alchemy, so she gains a +2 bonus to her throw. Because a **potion of healing** uses a 1st level effect in its creation, so she suffers a -2 penalty to her throw. The Judge makes the throw secretly on behalf of Fornata. The die roll is an 18, a success! When quaffed, the **quack potion of healing** will actually work as intended.

EXAMPLE #2: Fornata, now a 5th level mountebank, has become a well-known purveyor of potions. She now owns brewing equipment worth 600gp, and her level allows her to brew 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level **quacksalves**. She is approached by a band of adventurers seeking a potion of **invisibility** and a potion of polymorph. They have formulas for both that she can work from. Fornata cannot create a quack potion of polymorph, as polymorph is a 4th level effect and a 5th level mountebank can only create 3rd level quacksalves ($5/2 = 2.5$ rounded to 3). She can, however, brew a quack potion of **invisibility**, because **invisibility** is only a 2nd level effect. The cost to create the quacksalve is 100gp and 2 days of brewing. Fornata spends the time and gold required, then makes a proficiency throw to brew quacksalve. As a 5th level mountebank, Fornata has a target value of 14+. Fornata has one rank in Alchemy, so she gains a +2 bonus to her throw. **Invisibility** is a 2nd level effect, so she suffers a -4 penalty to her throw. The Judge makes the throw secretly on behalf of Fornata. The die roll is an 11, modified (+4 - 2) to a 9. Since the target throw is 14, Fornata failed to create the potion of **invisibility**. Furthermore, because she missed the target value by 4 or more, she accidentally creates a **potion of delusion** instead! When Fornata learns of the disastrous effect her quacksalve has on the expedition into the dwarven mines, she wisely gathers her belongings and hurries out of town.

EXAMPLE #3: Fornata is now a 10th level mountebank. Despite occasional "incidents" with adventurers, she has become quite wealthy, and upgraded her brewing equipment to a value of 2,200gp. She has decided to create a potion of polymorph for her henchman to take with her on a dangerous adventure. The cost to create the quacksalve is 200gp and 4 days of brewing. Fornata spends the time and gold required, then makes a proficiency throw to brew quacksalve. As a 10th level mountebank, Fornata has a target value of 6+. She now has two ranks in the Alchemy proficiency, so she gains a +4 bonus to her throw. Polymorph self is a 4th level effect, so she suffers a -8 penalty to her throw. The Judge makes the throw secretly on behalf of Fornata, and the die roll is a natural 1. A **counter-potion** has been inadvertently created. Since a potion of polymorph allows the imbiber to choose to transform into new forms, the Judge secretly decides that the **counter-potion** will cause the imbiber to randomly transform into new forms each round. This ends badly for the henchman.

Upon attaining 4th level, a mountebank gains the ability to **read languages** (including ciphers, treasure maps, and dead languages, but not magical writings). The mountebank succeeds with a proficiency throw of 5+ on 1d20. If the roll does not succeed, the mountebank may not try to read that particular piece of writing until he reaches a higher level of experience.

When a mountebank attains 9th level (Mountebank), he can establish a **hideout**, and 2d6 mountebank apprentices of 1st level will come to work with the character. If hired, they must be paid standard rates for ruffians. These apprentices may be used to engage in hijinks. Mountebanks may substitute **disguise** ability as the required skill for the **spying** and treasure hunting hijinks. Additional rules for hideouts are detailed in the Campaigns chapter of the *ACKS* Core Rulebook.

At 10th level, a mountebank can **read and cast magic from arcane scrolls** with a proficiency throw of 3+ on 1d20. However, a failed throw means the spell does not function as expected, and can create a horrible effect at the Judge's discretion.

Mountebank Proficiency List: Acrobatics, Alertness, Animal Training, Arcane Dabbling, Bargaining, Bribery, Climbing, Combat Trickery (disarm, incapacitate), Contortionism, Diplomacy, Disguise, Fighting Style, Gambling, Healing, Intimidation, Illusion Resistance, Lip Reading, Mapping, Mimicry, Performance, Running, Seduction, Signaling, Skirmishing, Sniping, Swashbuckling, Weapon Finesse.

| Mountebank Skill Progression | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Level | Impersonation* | Hear Noise | Pick Pockets** | Read Languages | Quicksalves |
| 1 | 14+/-0 | 14+ | 17+ | - | 18+ |
| 2 | 13+/-1 | 13+ | 16+ | - | 17+ |
| 3 | 12+/-1 | 12+ | 15+ | - | 16+ |
| 4 | 11+/-1 | 11+ | 14+ | 5+ | 15+ |
| 5 | 10+/-1 | 10+ | 13+ | 5+ | 14+ |
| 6 | 9+/-2 | 9+ | 12+ | 5+ | 13+ |
| 7 | 8+/-2 | 8+ | 10+ | 5+ | 12+ |
| 8 | 7+/-2 | 7+ | 8+ | 5+ | 10+ |
| 9 | 6+/-2 | 6+ | 6+ | 5+ | 8+ |
| 10 | 5+/-3 | 5+ | 4+ | 5+ | 6+ |
| 11 | 4+/-3 | 4+ | 2+ | 5+ | 5+ |
| 12 | 3+/-3 | 3+ | -1+ | 5+ | 4+ |
| 13 | 2+/-3 | 2+ | -3+ | 5+ | 4+ |
| 14 | 1+/-4 | 1+ | -5+ | 5+ | 4+ |

*The first number indicates the throw necessary to succeed, while the second number indicates the penalty applied to someone intimately familiar with the subject of the impersonation to notice some flaw in the mountebank's ruse.

**-1 penalty on the proficiency throw for each level the mountebank is lower than the victim.

| Mountebank Attack and Saving Throws | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------|--------------|
| Level | Petrification & Paralysis | Poison & Death | Blast & Breath | Staffs & Wands | Spells | Attack Throw |
| 1-2 | 13+ | 13+ | 16+ | 14+ | 15+ | 10+ |
| 3-4 | 12+ | 12+ | 15+ | 13+ | 14+ | 9+ |
| 5-6 | 11+ | 11+ | 14+ | 12+ | 13+ | 8+ |
| 7-8 | 10+ | 10+ | 13+ | 11+ | 12+ | 7+ |
| 9-10 | 9+ | 9+ | 12+ | 10+ | 11+ | 6+ |
| 11-12 | 8+ | 8+ | 11+ | 9+ | 10+ | 5+ |
| 13-14 | 7+ | 7+ | 10+ | 8+ | 9+ | 4+ |

MOUNTEBANK TEMPLATES

| 3d6 Roll | Template | Proficiencies | Starting Equipment |
|----------|----------------|--|---|
| 3-4 | Villain | Combat Trickery (Incapacitate) Intimidation | Sling, 20 rough-hewn bullets, short sword, tattered leather armor, rough hewn cloak, tunic and pants, ratty leather belt, well-worn low boots, backpack, sap, 1 week's iron rations, 4 gp |
| 5-6 | Ringleader | Animal Training Performance (Oration) | Trainer's whip, bola, net, serviceable leather armor, ruffled tunic and breeches, worn red coat with tails, top hat, short sword, leather belt with large buckle, high black boots, hair grease, moustache wax, backpack, 1 week's iron rations, 7 gp |
| 7-8 | Imposter | Disguise Mimicry | Crossbow, case with 20 bolts, makeup kit, short sword, leather armor, gray tunic and pants, dark gray traveling cloak, high boots, leather belt, 2 flasks of common oil, lantern, wineskin, 1 week's iron rations, 2 daggers hidden in boots, 7 gp |
| 9-10 | Rake | Seduction Diplomacy | Crossbow, case with 20 bolts, fine rapier, form fitting leather armor, ruffled tunic and tight pants, gentleman's cloak, fine low boots, leather belt, dagger with sheath, cologne, well groomed riding horse with tack, 1 week's iron rations |
| 11-12 | Fortune Teller | Arcane Dabbling Knowledge (Occult) | Crossbow, case with 20 bolts, leather armor, billowy robes, leather belt, 2 belt pouches, crystal ball (non-magical) with stand, occult fortune cards, backpack, flash powder, incense bowl, short sword, concealed dagger, low soft boots, 1 week's iron rations, 4 gp |
| 13-14 | Physic | Alchemy Healing | Shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, leather armor, university robes and cap, leather belt, 2 belt pouches, backpack, soft low boots, physicians apparatus, brewing equipment, several phials filled with liquid, riding horse with tack, 1 week's iron rations, 7 gp |
| 15-16 | Four Flusher | Lip Reading Gambling | Crossbow, case with 20 bolts, short sword, leather armor, respectable tunic and pants, high boots, smoking pipe and tobacco, leather belt, backpack, belt pouch, playing cards or plaques, concealed thin dagger, 3 shells and 1 marble, 1 week's iron rations, 7 gp |
| 17-18 | Grafter | Bribery Intimidation | Shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, fine rapier, fine leather armor, well cared for tunic and pants, fine cloak, snuffbox, leather belt, belt pouch, high hard boots, riding horse and tack, leather saddlebags, 1 week's iron rations, 7 gp |

DESIGN NOTES

The Mountebank is a straight re-skin of the Thief class, built as HD 0, Fighting 1, Thievery 3. Like the Thief, the class has ten custom powers, with nine selected at 1st level and one custom power traded for a power at 4th and 10th level.

The Fool is a much more complex build. While all other existing human custom classes were built with 4 build points across the Class Category Values, the Fool was built with just 3: Fighter 2 (1000 XP) and Hit Die Value 1 (500 XP). The Fool's inordinate number of custom powers comes from taking 10(!) Fighter Trade offs (1500 XP). The Fool spends many of these Custom Powers on thief abilities – which normally cannot be taken with Fighting Value trade-offs. We again made an exception for this unusual class. The nature of the Fool is, after all, to be a breaker of rules, and if it's a broken class, it's broken in a way that isn't game-breaking.

- We traded Unlimited Armor for Restricted Armor to gain 3 Custom Powers.
- We traded Unlimited Weapons for Restricted Weapons to gain 4 Custom Powers.
- We traded Two-handed Weapons fighting style to gain 1 Custom Power.
- We traded Fighter Damage Bonus to gain 2 Custom Powers.
- We then bought **Backstab**, **Acrobatics**, **Performance**, **Pick Pockets**, **Hide in Shadows**, and **Hear Noise** for 6 Custom Powers.

- We traded 2 Custom Powers to take additional Custom Powers at levels 2, 4, and 9.
- We traded 2 Custom Powers to take additional Custom Powers at levels 3, 5, and 7.
- We traded the Custom Power at level 7 to take additional Custom Powers at level 8 and 14.
- The **Taunt** power is a variation of the spell Hideous Laughter from ACKS Dwimmermount, and was bought as a spell-like ability.
- The **Distract** power is a variation of the spell Hypnotism from ACKS Dwimmermount, and was bought as a spell-like ability.
- The **Fool's Luck** power is a variation of the spell Mirror Image from ACKS, and was bought as a spell-like ability.

A BLIGHT UPON THE EARTH

DESPOILING THE LAND FOR POWER

BY JAMES KERR



There is no shortage of spellcasters who wish to find a shortcut to power, and there are plenty of shortcuts available, for those who are prepared to pay the price (or have someone else pay it for them). Many chaotic sects perform blood sacrifice - dark rituals that use the very souls of living creatures to fuel their magic.

But there is more than one way to steal life, and some chaotic casters have taken to sacrificing the life force of nature itself, using a terrible rite called despoilment. Despoilment extracts life energy from a 6-mile hex (32 square miles) and transforms some of the hex's life energy (as measured by the hex's land value) into divine power. Despoilment can only be performed by spell casters of at least 9th level who are able to make use of divine power. Despoilment is a highly chaotic act, and spellcasters whose magic system uses a moral code must be chaotic to be able to practice **despoilment**. A spellcaster who uses shaded magic (see Axioms Issue 1) will suffer 5 points of corruption for performing despoilment.

THE PROCESS OF DESPOILMENT

To despoil a hex a spellcaster must form a **spiritual connection** to the land. If the hex to be despoiled falls entirely within the spellcaster's personal domain then the spellcaster automatically has a spiritual connection to the land - the old adage "the King and the Land are One" has truth in the world of ACKS.

Otherwise, the spellcaster must construct a **monument** to the powers they serve within the hex, be it an altar to their chthonic masters, a dread obelisk that taps into the dark forces of the world, or whatever alternative the Judge deems appropriate for the magic system and setting. The monument's value must be at least 500gp per point of land value of the hex. The monument will create a Sinkhole of Evil in the manner of any chaotic altar, as described in the ACKS core rules.

Having constructed the monument, the caster must spend a day in close contact with the monument and make a magic research throw with a penalty equal to the land value of the hex. If the throw succeeds, the connection has been established, and despoilment can begin. If the throw fails, the caster has failed to form the

necessary spiritual connection. He may make another attempt in one month, but each attempt requires that the monument be improved with an additional 1,000gp expenditure. Only one spellcaster can have a spiritual connection to each hex. If a spellcaster attains a connection to a hex, it breaks the connection any other caster has to it.

THE EFFECTS OF DESPOILMENT

Despoilment reduces the land value of the hex by 1 permanently and generates 8,580 divine power per month for 3 months. If the process of despoilment is interrupted before the despoilment is complete (by destroying the monument, breaking the caster's connection to the hex, or slaying the caster performing the despoilment) the land value will recover after 3 full months have passed since the interruption, but all divine power accumulated from the despoilment is lost. This can cause a magic item to lose its enchantment. If another despoilment attempt is made on the hex before the land value recovers then the point of land value is permanently lost without benefit.

If the despoilment is successful, another despoilment can be performed on the hex after a month. This can continue indefinitely until the land value of the hex is reduced to 0, at which point there is no longer enough life energy in the hex to drain.

THE EFFECTS OF DESPOILMENT

So long as the land value of a hex is at least 3, the effects of despoilment are obvious, but not catastrophic. Rivers and lakes will shrink, while deserts and standing water will expand, ruining once-fertile land. Crops will grow poorly while stone and metal deposits will grow strangely tainted and weak, making them useless for mining or working. When the land value drops due to despoilment, reduce the land income of any peasants in the hex accordingly.

If the hex contains a market or markets, the demand modifier for a random good in each market will increase by 1, to reflect falling production. All domains or settlements within the hex will suffer a -1 penalty too their next morale roll due to the disturbing effects of the dark magic on the land.

Once the land value falls to 2, the unnatural nature of the despoilment becomes more clear. At land value 2, the chance of encountering any living creature (other than vermin) as a wilderness encounter will halve.

At land value 1, the hex's terrain will change to either badlands (if it was a mountain), swamp (if it includes or is adjacent to a body of water), or desert (in all other cases). Former forest hexes retain their old encounter distance, reflecting thickets of dead trees obstructing the view.

At land value 0, the entire hex is devoid of life; no living things will be encountered as wandering monsters (other than NPC parties and Wyrms). The soil is so blighted that not even the dead will rot.

REVERSING THE EFFECTS OF DESPOILMENT

A lawful spellcaster (or a neutral spellcaster affiliated with nature in some way) capable of using divine power may attempt **envivification** - increasing the life energy flowing through the land. Envivification might be used to reverse the despoilment of some evil priest, or might aim to simply enhance the livelihood of those who dwell under their god's beneficence.

Envivification requires a spiritual connection to the land even greater than that of despoilment. A hex can only be envivified by either

the lord or the spiritual advisor of the domain that encapsulates the hex. In the event of multiple domains sharing the hex, all the rulers / spiritual advisors of the domain must work in concert. Any monuments built to despoil the hex must be destroyed before the despoilment can begin.

Envivification does not require a magic research throw, but it costs 25,740 divine power to increase the land value of a hex by 1. This divine power may only come from congregations that are part of domains covering the hex. The divine caster(s) working envivification must be at least 5 levels higher than the land value to which they are trying to raise the land value. The maximum land value for a hex is 9.

In addition to increasing the land value, envivification will decrease the demand modifier of one random good in each market in the hex by 1 point, to reflect rising production. Envivification also acts as if it were agricultural investment - counting as 25,000 GP of investment in the month it is completed.

Envivification takes place gradually, with the in-game effect occurring 3 months after the divine power is spent.

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