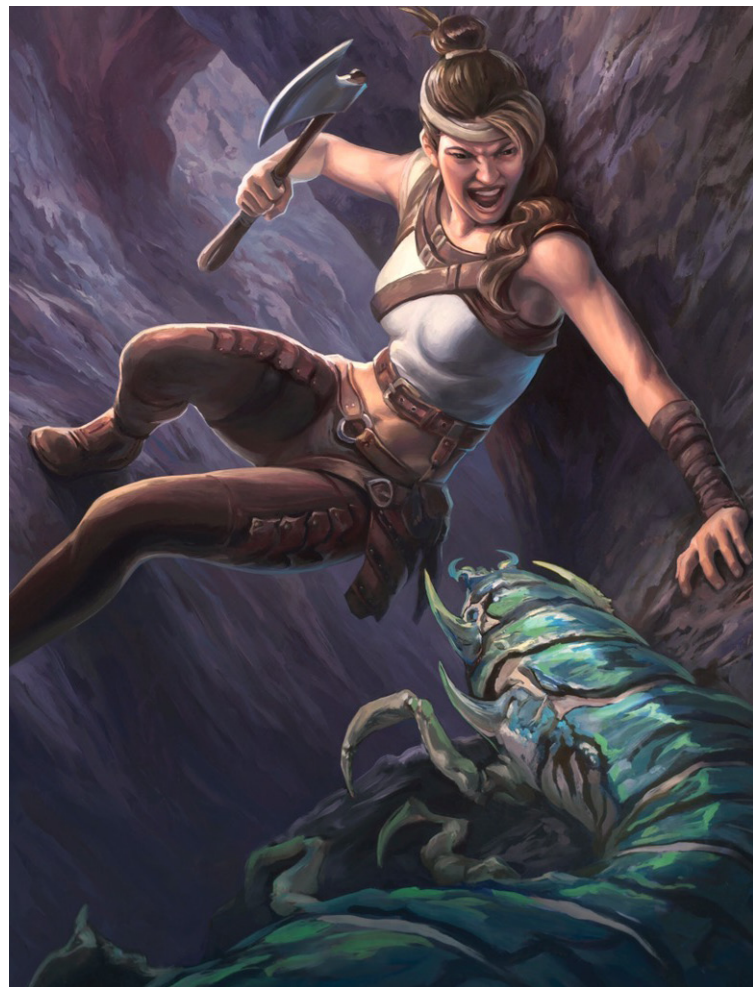# TIDES OF BATTLE
Fifth Edition Stunts

COMBAT IS A CHAOTIC, unpredictable thing, full of victories and setbacks and unexpected developments. This should be even truer of fantasy combat, chronicling the deeds of near superhuman heroes and mythical beasts. The requirement that combat in RPGs be relatively simple and straightforward to play, however, has the unfortunate side effect of lessening that unpredictability, as well as minimizing the potential for characters to perform unanticipated feats of prowess.

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"Tides of Battle" presents an optional stunt system, inspired in part by other RPGs of fantasy gaming's current age. This allows for more heroic opportunities as well as making combat slightly more unpredictable, at the cost of only a minor increase in complexity. These stunts are available to any character or monster, PC or NPC.

The Basics

You can attempt a stunt whenever you make an attack roll and the die shows an 18 or higher. Stunts take place in addition to the normal effects of the attack; it is possible for a missed attack to trigger a stunt. Unless specified otherwise, a stunt and its effects apply to only a single creature, even if the triggering attack targeted more than one. If a stunt's effects could apply to more than one target, the attacker chooses the one affected.

An attack or roll caused by a stunt—such as the extra attack allowed by Disarming Attack and Swift as the Serpent, or the reroll allowed by Mid-Swing Correction—cannot itself trigger another stunt, regardless of roll.

The stunt must be declared immediately, even if the attacker has additional attacks or actions on that turn. It cannot be saved for later use.

Some stunts require the target to make a saving throw to resist the stunt's effects. The saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

Stunt save DC = *8 + your proficiency bonus + ability modifier used to make the triggering attack*

For instance, you would use your Strength modifier to determine the DC of a stunt following a greatsword attack, but you would use your Intelligence modifier instead for a stunt following a *shocking grasp* attack.
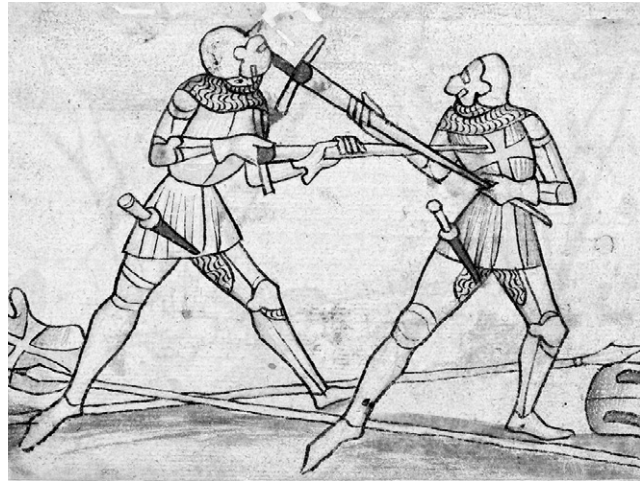
Stunts and Critical Hits

The "Tides of Battle" stunt system replaces the game's system of critical hits. A natural 20 is still an automatic hit, but no longer automatically does extra damage. Similarly, a natural 1 is still an automatic failure.

Other third-party critical systems exist, of course, but those are often entirely random, or are designed primarily to add effects—damage, penalties, etc.—to critical hits. While some such options do exist in "Tides of Battle," the intent is less to make critical hits more powerful and more to provide additional tactical options for players and GMs alike.

Abilities that do extra damage on critical hit, such as the barbarian's Brutal Critical or the half-orc's Savage Attacks, still do that extra damage on a natural 20, even though criticals themselves are absent under this optional system.

Stunt Availability

Attack Roll	Stunt Option
18	minor stunt
19	standard stunt *or* minor stunt
20	superior stunt *or* standard stunt plus minor stunt *or* two minor stunts

Expanded Critical Range

Mechanics that normally increase an attacker's critical threat range, such as the champion fighter's Improved Critical, instead increase the character's range of stunts by the same amount.

For instance, in the core game, a 4th-level champion fighter inflicts a critical hit on a 19 or 20, instead of just a 20. Under the "Tides of Battle" stunt system, that same champion would be able to execute a minor stunt on a roll of 17, a standard stunt on a roll of 18, or a superior stunt on a roll of 19–20.

List of Stunts

Minor Stunts

Battlefield Awareness. You make a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Fancy Footwork. You immediately move up to 10 feet without provoking an opportunity attack from the target of this attack. Standard impediments to speed—such being grappled, restrained, or magically slowed—still apply.

> ### What About the Battlemaster?
>
> The battlemaster fighter archetype is meant to be the primary user of combat maneuvers. This stunt system doesn't negate that fact; the battlemaster rolls random stunts as often as anyone else, and still has their own combat maneuvers to draw on as normal.
>
> Some players, however, may feel that the battlemaster's superiority in combat should apply to random stunts as well. With the GM's permission, a battlemaster character can choose to execute the following stunt in place of other superior stunt options on a natural roll of 20.
>
> #### Optional Superior Stunt
> **Expert Attack.** You can execute a maneuver on this attack without expending a superiority die. (If you've already spent a superiority die on this attack, you instead regain it.)

Fearsome Blow. Your attack strikes particularly hard. If one of your damage dice comes up a 1 or a 2, treat the result as a 3 instead. (If you already have the option of rerolling a 1 or 2, such as via the Great Weapon Fighting style, you may choose 3 or the result of the reroll, whichever is higher.)

Rally. Your spirit is heartened by your potent attack. You gain temporary hit points equal to half the damage dealt by the triggering attack.

Skirmishing Attack. You attempt to move the target 5 feet to the side or away from you (but not toward you). If the target is one size category larger than you or smaller, it must make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be moved.

Standard Stunts

Cunning Maneuver. Until the end of your turn, your movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Dirty Fighting. Via a sneaky blow, a strike near the eyes or below the belt, or some other means, you distract the target, creating an exploitable opening. The next attack roll made against this creature before the end of your next turn has advantage.

Disarming Attack. You make an attempt to disarm the target, as per the optional combat rules in the Game Master's core rulebook, if your campaign is making use of those options.

Mid-Swing Correction. If the triggering attack missed the target, you may reroll the attack. This rerolled attack can also trigger stunts as usual.

Pinning Blow. Your attack causes a flash of pain and weakness in the target. If the target is no more than two size categories larger than you, its speed is reduced to 0 until the start of your next turn.

Smashing Blow. You attempt to knock the target off its feet. If the target is no more than one size category larger than you, it must make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone.

Superior Stunts

Critical Hit. Your attack causes an immense amount of damage. Roll all the damage dice twice when determining how much damage you've done. Do not double any static modifiers. (This is functionally identical to a critical hit in the standard Fifth Edition rules.)

Master of the Field. You may move up to your movement speed. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from the target of the attack that triggered this stunt.

Rhythm of Battle. Your strike has changed the tempo of the fight. Your initiative for the remainder of the fight increases by 5.

Setup Strike. Your attack has rendered the foe distracted and off balance. As a reaction, one of your allies within melee range may make a melee weapon attack against the target of the attack that triggered this stunt.

Swift as the Serpent. Make an extra melee or ranged weapon attack against the target, or against another target in range. Alternatively, you may cast a cantrip instead of making a weapon attack.
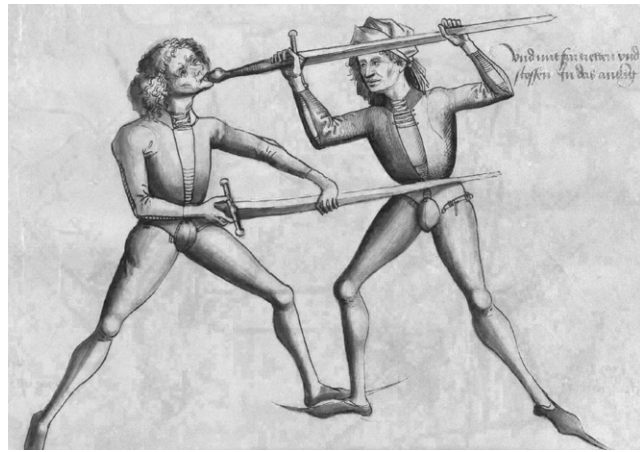
Variant: Mishap Stunts

If you wish to make natural 1s even more devastating, use these variant mishap rules.

In addition to stunts that an attacker grants herself via impressive rolls, it is also possible for a combatant to leave herself open to an opponent's stunts through failure. On an attack roll of a natural 1, the target instead may execute a stunt against the attacker. The GM may choose one of the following stunts as appropriate to the circumstances and the abilities of the target, or roll a d8 for a random result. (A generous GM might allow the player to choose, if it was an NPC or monster that rolled a natural 1 against a PC, but be warned that some of these options are distinctly better than others.)

1. Opportunity Attack. The target or one of its allies adjacent to you may spend its reaction to make a melee weapon attack against you.

2. Slow to Recover. Starting at the beginning of the next round, your initiative for the remainder of the fight decreases by 10.

3–4. Stumble. You've thrown yourself momentarily off balance. The next attack roll you make before the end of your next turn has disadvantage.

5–6. Unexpected Opportunity. The target may immediately use either the Fancy Footwork or Skirmishing Attack minor stunts against you.

7–8. Wide Open. You've left a hole in your defenses. The next attack roll made against you before the end of your next turn has advantage.