

TABLE 2–1: PRESTIGE CLASS CATEGORIES

Category	Prestige Classes
Bad guys	Avenging executioner
Good guys	Gray guard, malconvoker
Melee	Avenging executioner, gray guard
Ranged	Spellwarp sniper
Magical	Magical trickster, malconvoker, spellwarp sniper
Sneaky	Avenging executioner, cloaked dancer, master of masks, mountebank
Support	Combat trappingsmith, master of masks, psibond agent
Tricky	Battle trickster, fortune's friend, magical trickster, uncanny trickster

AVENGING EXECUTIONER

"Scream. Scream like you made me scream."

—Peck, the Swan Street Slicer

In the broken hearts and shattered dreams of the tragically wronged, seeds of vengeance take root. Avenging executioners are victims pushed past the limits of endurance who hunt sentient creatures out of a need for justice. Relentless and inventive, these stalkers wield psychology as deftly as their weapons. The fear they inspire can be even more deadly than their rusted blades.

BECOMING AN AVENGING EXECUTIONER

Hatred so intense as to be obsession inspires an avenging executioner to take up his bloody path. Rangers who have suffered mind-shattering tragedies might be compelled to choose fellow humanoids as their favored enemies. Rogues who turn to the path of vengeance use their lethal precision to dreadful effect. Druids who have seen their lands despoiled and sorcerers or wizards who have been victims of witch hunts might turn their spells toward revenge. Any

individual so driven can excel as an avenging executioner, regardless of class.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Any nongood.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Hide 4 ranks, Intimidate 6 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks.

Special: Must have been tragically wronged in some manner.

CLASS FEATURES

Hardened and tenacious, you use surprise and dread to weaken the subjects of your hatred.

Bloody Blade (Ex): The fury of your attack is terrifying to see. Whenever you deal sudden strike damage (see below) with a melee weapon, the target of the sudden strike and all opponents within 30 feet of you who can see the target are shaken for a number of rounds equal to your avenging executioner level. A successful Will save (DC 10 + your avenging executioner level + your Cha modifier) negates this effect. Creatures whose HD exceed your character level are not affected. Bloody blade is a mind-affecting fear ability.

TABLE 2–2:

THE AVENGING EXECUTIONER

HIT DIE: d8

	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bloody blade, sudden strike +1d6
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Rapid intimidation
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Sudden strike +2d6
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Dread blade
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Bloody murder, sudden strike +3d6

Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Bluff, Climb, Craft, Disguise, Escape Artist, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Profession, Spot, Use Rope.

BIRDMEN AND ROBBING

POSTED, by the Duskgate Watch Captain.

The Warbling Blades silversmithy was the scene of a robbery as daring as it is puzzling in today's early morning hours. Owner Temril Tomay and his son reported a waste bin was thrown through the display window of their shop on Redwind Road by an unknown vandal, shattering the glass and laying bare several hundred gold kings' worth of silverwork and jewelry. Remarkably, nothing was stolen at this point.

The city watch was summoned. While the Tomays waited for the patrol, the sound of numerous quick explosions was heard from Duskgate Road a mere block away, followed by the sound of watch whistles being blown. The noise attracted the attention of numerous citizens, including the Tomays, who left their vandalized and only hastily repaired shop to investigate. The patrol heading to the Warbling Blades also diverted to answer the whistles, which are issued exclusively to the city watch.

On reaching the scene, the patrol found no source of the explosions and no guards who had sounded the watch whistles. The watch dispersed the crowd and returned with the Tomays to their defaced shop. Upon arriving, they found the shop nearly emptied, with silver merchandise valued at upward of 300 platinum emperors missing. Answers given by the Tomays during questioning suggested few suspects, but watch investigators did discover several abnormally long black feathers at the crime scene. Eyewitnesses also reported that three black-clad figures wearing masks with ridiculously long noses had entered and then swiftly left the Warbling Blades not long after the strange sounds on Duskgate Road. Several vendors on Duskgate also noted a fourth masked and shrouded figure entering a nearby alley from which the strange sounds seemed to emanate not long before the incident.

Members of the watch wish to question these masked "birdmen." Anyone seeing figures matching this description should alert the nearest patrol.

Sudden Strike (Ex): If you can catch an opponent when he is unable to defend himself effectively from your attack, you can strike a vital spot for extra damage. See the ninja's sudden strike class feature in the sidebar below.

Rapid Intimidation (Ex): Beginning at 2nd level, you can attempt to demoralize an opponent as a move action instead of a standard action. See the Intimidate skill (PH 77) for details.

If you have the favored enemy class feature, you can add your favored enemy bonus to Intimidate checks made to demoralize foes of the chosen type (and subtype, if applicable).

Dread Blade (Ex): Starting at 4th level, you can exploit the terror you inspire to further brutalize your target. You treat shaken, frightened, or panicked creatures as flat-footed for the purpose of dealing sudden strike damage.

Bloody Murder (Ex): Starting at 5th level, if you deal enough damage with a melee attack to drop a creature (typically by reducing it to below 0 hit points or killing it), all enemies within 30 feet of you who can see the target become frightened for 1 round. A successful Will save (DC 10 + your avenging executioner level + your Cha modifier) lessens the effect to shaken. Creatures whose HD exceed your character level are not affected. Bloody murder is a mind-affecting fear ability.

PLAYING AN AVENGING EXECUTIONER

You are a warrior of dark passions and an agent of your own brand of justice. Your path is not one of wanton bloodletting, but a search for righteousness where none exists, a measure of punishment no court would dare impose, and a way to finally silence screams that long have gone unanswered. By your blade you are judge and executioner in a world where innocence is yours alone to decide and forgiveness is weakness. And for your prey there can never be restitution.

As an avenging executioner, you are driven by a thirst for revenge, whether against a person, a group, or even a whole race. You seek to share your fear and suffering with those you perceive as responsible. You are often alone in your quest—few understand your obsession. Occasionally you find others as impassioned as you and together strive for vengeance against a common enemy, but such kindred spirits are rare.

Your past is gone, and many fear you. You operate on the fringes of society. In darkened alleys, dank sewers, and lonely moors, you build your reputation and grow in strength.

SKIRMISH AND SUDDEN STRIKE

Many of the prestige class examples presented in this chapter, as well as new feats presented in Chapter 3, refer to the ninja and scout from the *Complete Adventurer* supplement. Each of those classes has a signature special attack (sudden strike and skirmish, respectively). For ease of reference, these class features are summarized here.

SUDDEN STRIKE (EX)

If a ninja can catch an opponent when it is unable to defend itself effectively from her attack, she can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Whenever a ninja's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), the ninja deals an extra 1d6 points of damage with her attack. This extra damage increases by 1d6 points for every two ninja levels after 1st (to a maximum of 10d6 at 19th level). A ninja can't use sudden strike when flanking an opponent unless that opponent is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC.

This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sudden strikes. A ninja can't make a sudden strike while attacking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are out of reach.

A ninja can't use sudden strike to deliver nonlethal damage. Weapons capable of dealing only nonlethal damage don't deal extra damage when used as part of a sudden strike.

The extra damage from the sudden strike ability stacks with the extra damage from sneak attack whenever both would apply to the same target. For the purpose of qualifying for feats,

prestige classes, and similar options that require a minimum number of extra damage dice, treat the ninja's sudden strike ability as the equivalent of sneak attack.

SKIRMISH (EX)

A scout relies on mobility to deal extra damage and improve her defense. She deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on all attacks she makes during any round in which she moves at least 10 feet. The extra damage applies only to attacks taken during the scout's turn. This extra damage increases by 1d6 for every four levels gained above 1st (2d6 at 5th, 3d6 at 9th, 4d6 at 13th, and 5d6 at 17th level).

The extra damage applies only against living creatures that have a discernible anatomy. Undead, constructs, oozes, plants, incorporeal creatures, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are not vulnerable to this additional damage. The scout must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. Scouts can apply this extra damage to ranged attacks made while skirmishing, but only if the target is within 30 feet.

At 3rd level, a scout gains a +1 competence bonus to Armor Class during any round in which she moves at least 10 feet. The bonus applies as soon as the scout has moved 10 feet and lasts until the start of her next turn. This bonus improves by 1 for every four levels gained above 3rd (+2 at 7th, +3 at 11th, +4 at 15th, and +5 at 19th level).

A scout loses this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load. If she gains the skirmish ability from another class, the bonuses stack.

Combat

The aspects of fear—surprise, intimidation, and hopelessness—are vital weapons in your arsenal. Given the opportunity, you should always attack unexpectedly to cripple your prey with terror. Those who stand their ground must face your blade and the dread you wield along with it. Retreat and strike again from hiding against more powerful opponents or those unaffected by fear. When your prey flees, hunt it down and ambush it repeatedly, inspiring ever greater dread and panic with which to slowly tear it apart.

Advancement

Tragedy led you to your current life. The loss of a friend to a savage raid, betrayal by a church that promised sanctuary, abandonment by friends who swore their support—any such great wrong might have caused you to break from those you once trusted. Your hunger for revenge is insatiable. You are constantly on the move, pursuing quarry gone to ground or members of the group that wronged you, or striving to wipe out every last one of a hated people.

Stealth and intimidation are your favored tools, so improving related skills is key to both your hunt and your survival. Choose feats such as Combat Reflexes and Mobility, or movement skill tricks such as Twisted Charge or Dismount Attack, that allow you to get past obstacles to reach even the best-guarded target.

Resources

Most of what you have you took, whether out of necessity or as possessions “reclaimed” from defeated prey. The laws of the world no longer serve you, so you take what you see as yours by right. You don’t seek to harm innocents, but the ignorant and complacent cannot be allowed to impede your mighty work.

AVENGING EXECUTIONERS IN THE WORLD

“If she didn’t wake up screaming, she wouldn’t wake up at all.”

—Lieutenant Nanci Tomason,
discussing an avenging executioner

Avenging executioners fall into a gray (perhaps dark gray) area between heroes and villains. One might slaughter priests of St. Cuthbert because he believes the deity forsok him at a vital moment, while another remorselessly hunts yuan-ti to exact vengeance from the creatures who slaughtered his children. The former could be a fearsome enemy, but the latter might share the same goals as the party and be a formidable ally—at least until he has taken his revenge.

Organization

The life of an avenging executioner is often lonely. His single-minded determination sets him on a path few can follow, and he distances himself from those he might care

for, realizing that any who share his life also risk sharing his death. Having lost so much, an avenging executioner grows accustomed to the bitter freedom of an outcast.

Loneliness is not the way of all avenging executioners, however. Those who did not face their tragedies alone take up arms with their fellow victims. The survivors of a tribe wiped out by gnolls or of a mercenary party betrayed by its cold-hearted employer might band together for retribution. The most intelligent and cool-headed avenging executioners master their hatred and control their thirst for justice. These individuals see the need for and benefits of companionship just as others do, although they have a more calculating perspective that takes into account who might aid them in their bloody work. Such a mastermind might create an entire organization, turning a thieves’ guild into an army of assassins, a band of barbarians into a berserker horde, or an adventuring company into a lethal strike force.

NPC Reactions

Fear not only empowers an avenging executioner, but also shackles him like a chain. Reports of murders move swiftly through an area as the corpses pile up. Avenging executioners earn frightening appellations, such as Jack-in-Irons, the Lantern Man, or the Swan Street Slicer, inspired by their methods or hunting grounds. As the body count increases, so do the rumors grow from murmured warnings to fearsome legends. Few stop to consider whether an avenging executioner might have an agenda beyond wanton slaughter. Fear is never rational, and terrorized bystanders are quick to imagine themselves in the place of the hunted, even if the killer’s victims are related in a way that does not apply to them (such as belonging to a powerful thieves’ guild).

However, exceptions do exist. Those wronged who cannot or will not take matters into their own hands might adopt an avenging executioner as their personal champion. Some in power see avenging executioners as useful vigilantes and might step outside the bounds of their offices to support—or, far less ethically, create—such desperate hunters.

AVENGING EXECUTIONER LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research avenging executioners to learn more about them. When a character succeeds on a skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: Avenging executioners are serial killers who haunt the alleys and lonely places beneath the surface of society.

DC 15: Avenging executioners make deft use of fear to incapacitate and control those they hunt. They are remorseless and single-minded in their pursuit of prey.

DC 20: While often unhinged, avenging executioners are not random murderers. A great wrong or tragedy leads them to hunt down those they hold responsible. Only those

who guard an avenging executioner's prey or who hinder his pursuit need fear his blade.

DC 30: Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific avenging executioners in your campaign, including notable individuals currently operating in specific areas, possible reasons for their actions, and theories about their targets.

Avenging executioners are notoriously difficult to find. Some set up trophy-laden hideouts, while others range abroad to track down their prey and might be encountered nearly anywhere. The most likely way to encounter an avenging executioner is to determine the location of his next target and wait there. Even then, attempting conversation might have to wait until after he completes his grisly work, lest the PCs become mere obstacles to be dealt with.

AVENGING EXECUTIONERS IN THE GAME

Whether an avenging executioner becomes your campaign's next villain or a somber addition to the party depends on the targets of his hatred. If the prime antagonist is a nation of cannibal gnolls, a cult of the devil lord Levistus, or a similar evil entity, an avenging executioner could be a PC traumatized by such a group. This driven loner is little different from most druids, rangers, warlocks, or other characters who commonly operate outside society. Thus, integrating a heroic avenging executioner requires only that both he and the party fight the same enemy.

As an antagonist, an avenging executioner can be an ongoing dark legend. His career begins with a single murder, then another, and another, each with the same hallmarks. Perhaps a witness gets a glimpse of the killer. Such a chain of events should interest PCs in the slayings, leading them to learn what connected the victims and figure out who might be next. Their investigations lead them to confront the avenging executioner, either to end the killings or, depending on the nature of his targets, aid in his fearsome hunt.

Adaptation

An avenging executioner can fit into any campaign setting. In worlds where a specific nation or race faces prejudice, some members of that people might fight back as avenging executioners. Campaigns that take place far from the intrigues of the city might see avenging executioners as dark woodland hunters, radical allies of druids and rangers and punishers of those who despoil nature. Another option might have avenging executioners of

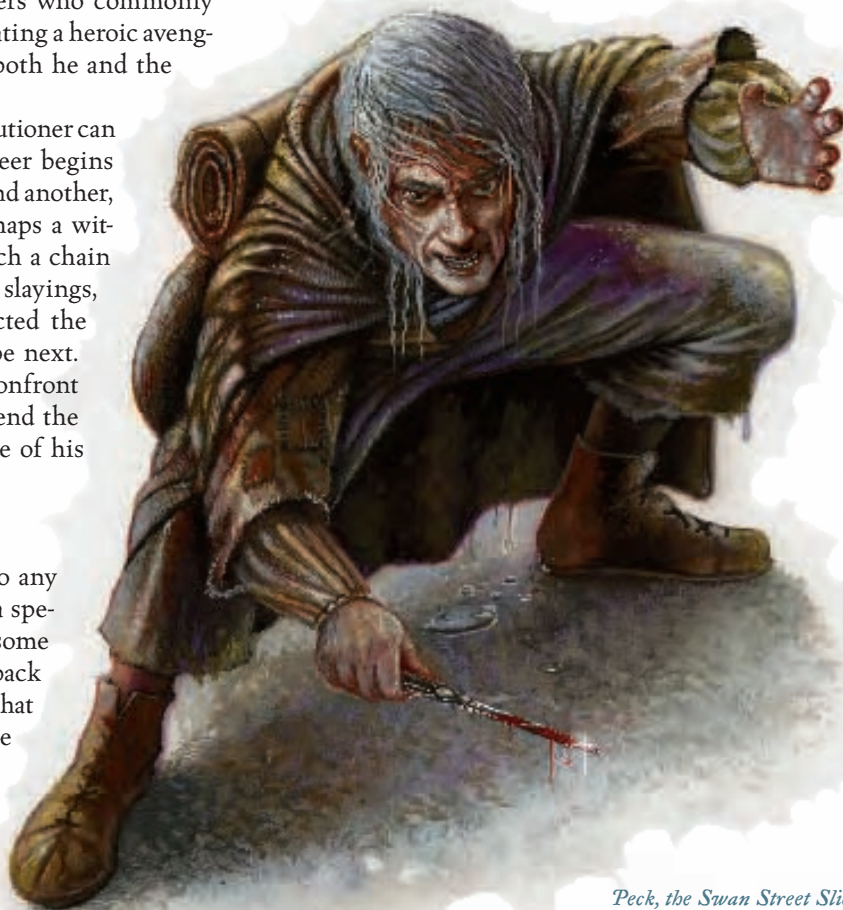
terrible ability but dull wit adopted by a government or church as secret police, deadly hounds set loose upon the group's enemies.

Sample Encounter

An avenging executioner presents PCs with a moral quandary. Having been terribly wronged, he can be a sympathetic figure, one whose cause is righteous even if his methods are distasteful. Lawful PCs might be forced to ask themselves how just a society can be that allows obvious injustices to occur.

EL 10: A homeless mute, Peck (as his masters called him) was discovered as a child huddled on the doorstep of a noble household on posh Swan Street. He was taken in by the family but did not find comfort or generosity there; rather, he was pressed into domestic service with only a dog's cage for a room. Little more than a slave to the old, sybaritic, and abusive family, the halfling faced demeaning chores and daily physical and verbal abuses. Eighteen years of constant exploitation left Peck deathly ill, and his cruel-hearted masters merely pitched him out of their manor like so much refuse.

Against all odds, though, Peck endured and recovered. Finally free after a lifetime of indignities, the mute halfling took up a blade and headed back toward Swan Street. Now



*Peck, the Swan Street Slicer,
an avenging executioner*

he takes revenge on the city's fiscally rich but morally bankrupt, starting with those who had used him for so many years.

PECK, THE SWAN STREET SLICER

CR 10

Male halfling rogue 7/avenging executioner 3
CN Small humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +11, Spot +13

Languages Common, Halfling (cannot speak)

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 21; **Dodge**, **Mobility**, **uncanny dodge**

(+1 size, +4 Dex, +5 armor, +1 natural)

hp 61 (10 HD)

Resist evasion

Fort +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7 (+9 against fear)

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +1 *short sword* +13/+8 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)

Ranged tanglefoot bag +13 touch (special)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +2

Atk Options bloody blade, poison (giant wasp poison, Fort DC 14, 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex), sneak attack +4d6, sudden strike +2d6

Special Actions rapid intimidation

Combat Gear 5 doses of giant wasp poison, 2 tanglefoot bags

Abilities Str 8, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 13

SQ trap sense +2, trapfinding

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +9, Climb +1, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information +3, Hide +21, Intimidate +13, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +11, Move Silently +20, Open Lock +9, Spot +13, Tumble +, Use Rope +7

Possessions combat gear plus +2 *studded leather armor*, +1 *short sword*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *boots of elvenkind*, 2 *potions of darkvision*, 2 *potions of invisibility*, *rope of climbing*, masterwork thieves' tools

Bloody Blade (Ex) Whenever Peck deals sudden strike damage, opponents with 10 or fewer HD within 30 feet are shaken for 3 rounds; Will DC 14 negates.

BATTLE TRICKSTER

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry. Is that my blade in your gut?"

—Elabor Gunter, battle trickster

The battle trickster engages in combat not only to defeat enemies but to impress them with martial and acrobatic prowess. He amazes onlookers with daring and death-defying stunts, making a spectacle of war.

TABLE 2–3: THE BATTLE TRICKSTER HIT DIE: D10

	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bonus trick
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus trick, tricky fighting

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Bluff, Climb, Craft, Handle Animal, Jump, Profession, Ride, Swim, Tumble, Use Rope.

BECOMING A BATTLE TRICKSTER

Swashbucklers make up the majority of battle tricksters, since their abilities already so closely mimic those of the prestige class. Most of the rest are rangers, along with the occasional fighter whose high Intelligence provides extra skill points. Bards or rogues sometimes pick up a few levels of battle trickster, though such characters prefer the uncanny trickster prestige class (page 67).

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Any three skills 6 ranks each.

Skill Tricks: Any two.

CLASS FEATURES

The battle trickster excels at combining skill tricks with normal combat.

Bonus Trick: At 1st level, and again at 3rd level, you gain a bonus skill trick for which you meet the prerequisite. These bonus tricks do not cost skill points and do not count against your maximum number of skill tricks available.

Bonus Feat: At 2nd level, you gain a bonus feat for which you meet the prerequisite. This feat must be selected from the list of fighter bonus feats.

Tricky Fighting (Ex): At 3rd level, you have mastered incorporating skill tricks into your combat routines. In any round when you perform a skill trick, you gain a +1 competence bonus on the next attack roll you make that round.

PLAYING A BATTLE TRICKSTER

Whereas magical tricksters (page 45) and uncanny tricksters (page 67) can be show-offs, you never use your tricks to get attention, no matter how flashy they are. You might not be quiet about your abilities, but you don't flaunt them. When combat begins, they speak for themselves.

You work well with both combat specialists and other kinds of tricksters. Becoming a skill trick expert instantly affiliates you with a very loose fellowship of tricksters (magical, uncanny, and battle). You don't get along with every trickster you meet, though: Some jealously guard their secrets and view others of their kind as rivals.

Combat

Whereas other tricksters might flit about the battlefield, looking for just the right opportunity to perform a spectacular combat-ending strike, you stand near the front lines. Your fighting experience, solid hit points, and repertoire of feats and skill tricks offer you the flexibility to serve as a front-line battler or in a supporting role. You don't see your tricks as ways to impress onlookers or intimidate foes, but rather as additional weapons in your arsenal.

Advancement

You don't become a battle trickster in a vacuum. You probably had a mentor at some point, someone who sensed

your boredom with traditional fighting techniques. Or you might be self-taught, watching other unconventional combatants and endlessly repeating the movements you saw. Once you learned the basics, you decided to move on to more advanced battle techniques.

Through self-sacrifice and hard work, you managed to learn enough basic skill tricks that picking up more has become easy. You know some skills, perhaps a wider array than most who pursue your profession, but you are not necessarily a master of any one of them.

Just as you spent so much time learning basic skill tricks, you must continue to practice the more advanced techniques. Fortunately, this prestige class offers strong support in skill points and access to bonus tricks. Your feat selection should support your skill tricks as well as your preferred mode of combat. If you focus on movement tricks, choose feats that allow you to move faster or traverse difficult obstacles more easily; if you rely on Combat Expertise to thwart attackers, you'll get more punch by focusing on that feat tree.



*Elibor Gunter,
a battle trickster*

Resources

Although you might not have realized it when you became a battle trickster, you are part of a larger (albeit very loosely organized) group. The benefits and requirements of this group are few, but it does offer the camaraderie of shared experiences as well as the chance to learn new tricks.

Nevertheless, tricksters owe no more to one another than do any other people with similar, nonbinding interests.

BATTLE TRICKSTERS IN THE WORLD

"He came at me from out of nowhere. One moment he's not there, and the next he is. I don't know what he did to me, but it hurt."

—Theta Sunglory,
survivor

The battle trickster makes an excellent irregular soldier operating in a small group of specialists, such as an adventuring party. Whether scrumming toe to toe in the front line or engaging a distant foe, the battle trickster holds his own in any combat situation. He usually continues to specialize in whatever role he held before joining the prestige class, albeit with unusual techniques.

BUYER BEWARE

My Good Lord Siekes:

Your lordship, I hope this missive finds you, the illustrious lady Siekes, your noble heirs, your impressive holdings in Saerb, and your vast portfolio well and more than well. With your indulgence, as your dutifully attentive and personally appointed agent to your southern claims, I have news of interest to report.

I'll not trouble your valuable time with the specifics of my journey: the crass caravaneers, the fetid foods, the ramshackle flyspeck villages, the sanctimonious droning of my fellow passenger (a would-be devotee of the Saint), nor the dark-eyed things that scampered and leaped in the shadows of the surrounding woodlands, their sharp faces full of quiet menace whenever they appeared. Worry not; we Shimblese are no complainers.

My news in fact is most exciting: I have already opened dealings to acquire for you a lucrative holding, from a most unlikely source. A local halfling I've recently ingratiated myself with turns out to be the owner of one Felfeather Bridge, a lengthy span

crossing a swift river, and the only viable crossing from here to all points west. For a reasonable sum (the entire allowance you've afforded me, plus a bit more), I've made a deposit toward purchasing this bottleneck on all trade in the region.

My new compatriot did ask me to relay a strange bit of "advice" to you, though—as if such a scallywag had any means to instruct upon my lordship. His words were: "Rooks don't live in Saerb alone." The yokel's turn toward ornithological interests baffled me, and I've seen no crows in the area of your soon-to-be-purchased bridge, but as a competent and attentive servant I'm bound to report this detail.

That brings a merry close to my report, your lordship. If, with all wisdom and haste, you might send an additional 270,673 gold crowns, I will see to the final acquisition of your new holdings here.

Your perspicacious servant,

Bysryn Shimbles

Organization

Battle tricksters congregate only on an occasional basis, usually along with magical tricksters and uncanny tricksters (although they make up the smallest number in such a mixed group). They swap techniques, introduce newly developed tricks and trick-supporting equipment and magic, and share experiences. Outside observers might assume such a meeting is part of a circus or carnival, with tricksters springing about performing for the enjoyment and education of onlookers.

These gatherings, though enjoyable, do not represent a structured organization. Battle tricksters looking to become part of something more permanent usually join groups that appreciate both their abilities and their moral choices: police forces, thieves' guilds, and military or guard units.

NPC Reactions

Battle tricksters are impressive and terrifying in combat. People who have witnessed them in action treat them with respect, even awe. Most strangers have a friendly attitude, or at least a false warmth brought on by intimidation (whether intended or not). Some are jealous of battle tricksters and their abilities, or covet such prowess for themselves. They treat battle tricksters with calculated indifference, and the most petty of such people are unfriendly.

Because tricksters run the entire gamut of morality, some use their abilities to take advantage of less talented folk. A victim of such exploitation has a negative view of all tricksters and is unfriendly at best.

BATTLE TRICKSTER LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) can research battle tricksters to learn more about them. When a character succeeds on a skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: Battle tricksters employ unusual talents in combat.

DC 15: Battle tricksters don't stop practicing other abilities just because they start to learn tricks.

DC 20: Not every battle trickster is a swashbuckling acrobat—some of them are also raging barbarians or righteous paladins. They use skill tricks to enhance their existing talents.

DC 30: Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific battle tricksters in your campaign, including a notable individual, the area in which he operates, and the kinds of activities he undertakes.

Because battle tricksters operate in small groups of mixed abilities or in connection with military units, the easiest way to find one is to contact the local garrison or sheriff and inquire about individuals with unique fighting talents.

BATTLE TRICKSTERS IN THE GAME

Battle tricksters are frighteningly effective opponents with a few surprises in store. A single one in a group of standard combatants makes an excellent leader. The majority of battle tricksters are not villains, but they can be entertaining bodyguards for the party's antagonist.

Anyone who enjoys playing swashbucklers and similar characters who perform over-the-top, cinematic acts of daring should find the battle trickster an interesting PC choice. The prestige class does not hamper a fighting class's abilities, so even someone who prefers the role of front-line combatant might enjoy the slight change of pace and increased flexibility offered by the prestige class.

Adaptation

The battle trickster is already a very generalized prestige class that can easily fit into any campaign setting. It does rely on the new rules for skill tricks, however, so it is not suitable for a campaign that does not incorporate them. Replacing bonus tricks with extra feats from the fighter list can repurpose the character as a combat specialist with a more generalized approach to skills.

Sample Encounter

Battle tricksters are always looking for ways to do what they do best. If there's a fight nearby, a battle trickster moves toward it as fast as he can.

EL 15: The PCs might run across Elibor Gunter just before, during, or just after a combat in which he faces numerous opponents. He takes any opportunity to pick a fight, whether it be a bar brawl, a back-alley rumble, or a challenge to loitering thugs. The more opponents, the better—he plunges into their midst, mad with battle lust, whirling his spiked chain to disarm anyone within reach. Depending on the situation, the PCs might befriend Elibor by helping him against overwhelming odds, or they might make him into a terrible foe by trying to keep him out of a fight.

ELIBOR GUNTER

CR 15

Male dwarf fighter 12/battle trickster 3

CN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, Dwarven, Terran, Undercommon

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 21; Dodge, Mobility, +4 AC against giants

(+1 Dex, +9 armor, +1 deflection, +1 natural)

hp 117 (15 HD)

Resist stability (+4 against bull rush and trip)

Fort +13 (+15 against poison), **Ref** +6, **Will** +5; +2 on saves against spells and spell-like effects

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); Spring Attack

Melee +2 *ghost touch spiked chain* +24/+19/+14 (2d4+13)

Base Atk +15; **Grp** +20

Atk Options Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Quick Draw, Whirlwind Attack, +1 on attacks against orcs and goblins, skill tricks, tricky fighting

Abilities Str 20, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 6

SQ stonecunning (PH 15)

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Freerunner*, Greater Weapon Focus (spiked chain)^B, Greater Weapon Specialization (spiked chain)^B, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip^B, Mobility, Quick Draw^B, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (spiked chain), Weapon Specialization (spiked chain)^B, Whirlwind Attack^B
^BNew feat described in Chapter 3

Skills Balance +6, Bluff +3, Climb +17, Diplomacy +0, Disguise –2 (+0 acting), Intimidate +8, Jump +14, Listen +0, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +0, Tumble +6

Skill Tricks* Corner Perch, Extreme Leap^B, Hidden Blade, Leaping Climber, Never Outnumbered, Nimble Charge, Speedy Ascent^B, Spot the Weak Point, Twisted Charge^B, Up the Hill, Walk the Walls^B, Wall Jumper
^{*}Described in Chapter 3

Possessions +4 mithral breastplate, +2 ghost touch spiked chain, amulet of natural armor +1, ring of protection +1, gauntlets of ogre power

CLOAKED DANCER

“Watch me. Watch my dance. Ignore my hands. Ignore your death.”

—Mina Longacre, reciting the cloaked dancer’s mantra

The cloaked dancer dances into the hearts and minds of her audience, beguiling those around her with boundless charm and careful dance moves, leaving her victims in a state of ecstasy even as she kills them.

BECOMING A CLOAKED DANCER

Bards most often and most easily become cloaked dancers, although a substantial number of rogues and some monks also enter the prestige class. Ninjas and spellthieves occasionally travel the path of the cloaked dancer, although they have difficulty qualifying unless they multiclass, usually with a few levels of bard.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Skills: Hide 5 ranks, Perform (dance) 10 ranks, Sleight of Hand 5 ranks.

CLASS FEATURES

The cloaked dancer distracts and fascinates her enemies, allowing her to strike unexpectedly . . . and with deadly effect.

Spellcasting: At each even-numbered level, you gain new spells per day and an increase in caster level (and spells known, if applicable) as if you had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class to which you belonged before adding the prestige class level. You do not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If you had more than one arcane spellcasting class before becoming a cloaked dancer, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day, caster level, and spells known.

Enchanting Dance (Su): Once per day per cloaked dancer level, you can use your dance to produce supernatural effects on those who observe you. Each ability requires both a minimum cloaked dancer level and a minimum number of ranks in the Perform (dance) skill to qualify; if you do not have the required number of ranks, you do not gain the enchanting dance ability until you acquire them. This ability can be used only if you are wearing light armor or no armor and carrying no more than a light load. Enchanting dance is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability.

Starting an enchanting dance effect is a standard action. You must concentrate each round to maintain the dance; no dance can be maintained for more rounds than your cloaked dancer level + your Con modifier (minimum 1 round).

The save DC for your enchanting dance effects is 10 + your cloaked dancer level + your Cha modifier. A creature can’t be affected again by your enchanting dance effect for 24 hours whether or not it succeeds on the saving throw.

Beguiling Dance: A cloaked dancer with 10 or more ranks in Perform (dance) can use her enchanting dance to distract her enemies. Whenever you start or maintain a beguiling dance, all enemies within 30 feet who can see you must succeed on a Will save or be dazed for 1 round. Creatures that fail this save also have their attitude improved by one step for as long as you maintain the dance (see *Influencing NPC Attitudes*, PH 74). This attitude adjustment does not prevent any subsequent attitude changes. For example, an enemy that becomes indifferent toward you as a result of this effect still turns hostile if you then attack it.

Wearying Dance: A 3rd-level cloaked dancer with 12 or more ranks in Perform (dance) can use her enchanting dance to tire her enemies. Whenever you start or maintain

TABLE 2–4: THE CLOAKED DANCER HIT DIE: D6

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Enchanting dance (beguiling dance)	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Surprise strike +1d6	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Enchanting dance (wearying dance)	—
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Surprise strike +2d6	+1 level of existing arcane spellcasting class
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Enchanting dance (frightful dance)	—

Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Appraise, Balance, Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Disguise, Escape Artist, Gather Information, Jump, Perform, Profession, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language, Swim, Tumble, Use Magic Device, Use Rope.

a wearying dance, all enemies within 30 feet who can see you must succeed on a Will save or be fatigued for as long as you maintain the dance. Creatures failing this save that are already fatigued become exhausted.

Frightful Dance: A 5th-level cloaked dancer with 14 or more ranks in Perform (dance) can use her enchanting dance to scare her enemies. Whenever you start or maintain a frightful dance, all enemies within 30 feet who can see you must succeed on a Will save or be shaken for as long as you maintain the dance. Creatures failing this save that are already shaken become frightened, and those that are already frightened become panicked.

Surprise Strike (Ex): Beginning at 2nd level, you can make a particularly effective attack against creatures distracted by your dance. As a full-round action, you can maintain your enchanting dance and make a melee attack with a light weapon, dealing an extra 1d6 points of damage. At 4th level, the extra damage you deal increases to 2d6.

The extra damage from the surprise strike ability stacks with the extra damage from sneak attack whenever both would apply to the same target.

A target under the effect of your enchanting dance is considered flat-footed against the attack. Any creature that is not vulnerable to extra damage from sneak attacks is immune to this effect.

This ability counts as sudden strike for the purpose of meeting prerequisites or using ambush feats (page 71).

PLAYING A CLOAKED DANCER

You are the center of attention, the person everyone wants to talk to, the “face” of the party. Even if you aren’t the most attractive or charismatic member of your group, your unequalled skill at dance creates an irresistible appeal born of justified confidence and supernatural influence. You are more than just an eye-catching butterfly, though. Your mark rarely survives the encounter if you don’t want him to.

Combat

You have two roles in combat: distracter and killer. When your group’s plan calls for a diversion, you shine. You draw

the attention of opponents, allowing your allies to position themselves for their most devastating attacks. You can perform this role near the front lines of battle, but you have a better chance of survival if you stay near the back. As the killer you move in close, drawing the enemy’s eye, and deliver one debilitating or deadly blow that turns the tide of battle.

None of your enchanting dance effects can influence creatures immune to enchantments or mind-affecting abilities, so against those foes you’ll need to fall back on the abilities of your other class or classes.

Advancement

An exquisite physical specimen, you drew the attention of patrons and audiences as often with your unquestionable attractiveness as with your extraordinary artistic talents. Perhaps you sought to give your art a more practical use, or perhaps you grew disgusted with the unhidden lust of those who watched you, but eventually you brought together your love of dance with your martial abilities.

Since the first killing from your enchanting dance—by your own hand or that of a partner—you have grown steadily in both fame and notoriety. You are beloved for your talents but feared for the death that follows you. You must walk a fine line, never letting the dread of the latter outweigh the appeal of the former.

Obviously, you must continue to max out your ranks in Perform (dance), but don’t forget other useful skills such as Bluff, Hide, and Diplomacy. The new ambush feats in Chapter 3 present additional options for your surprising strike ability, particularly if you already have sneak attack or sudden strike from another class. Weapon Finesse and Weapon Focus greatly enhance a mission’s chance of success. Interaction skill tricks are an excellent choice as well.

Resources

You rarely work alone, yet your involvement with an organization is transitory at best. As your needs or whims dictate you flit from town to town, dance troupe to dance troupe, and are sought out by thieves and assassins’ guilds. For the short time you join such groups, you can rely on whatever resources they provide. Most of the time, however, you are on your own.



*Mina Longacre,
a cloaked dancer*

CLOAKED DANCERS IN THE WORLD

"She was a rare beauty: charming, graceful, talented. It's too bad she killed the king."

—Tessa Senchan, spellwarp sniper
and royal guard officer

In any setting that includes assassins and bards, cloaked dancers slip comfortably into the space between the two. They can act as alternative assassins or as especially influential bards who focus on their love of dance.

Organization

Cloaked dancers typically work with trusted partners or small groups, making them well suited to adventuring parties. In rare circumstances they work alone, but such cloaked dancers often have short careers. On entering a new town or city, a cloaked dancer who expects to stay for more than a few days usually joins a dance troupe or thieves' guild (or both). These alliances are rarely permanent, lasting just long enough to benefit both parties. A cloaked dancer who travels regularly between a small number of cities might have membership in several organizations but no loyalty to any of them.

NPC Reactions

Reactions to a known cloaked dancer vary widely. The nobility both prize and fear cloaked dancers, welcoming them cautiously, since having one perform brings much prestige but also the risk of death. Bodyguards and law enforcers despise them for the murders that inevitably follow their performances. Common folk strain to catch glimpses of cloaked dancers, treating them with the awe and jealousy that accompany celebrity.

CLOAKED DANCER LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (nobility and royalty) or Perform (dance) can research cloaked dancers to learn more about them. When a character succeeds on a skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: A cloaked dancer can charm watchers with her dance.

DC 15: A cloaked dancer creates an effective diversion while her comrades rob or murder with ease.

DC 20: A cloaked dancer can slide a dagger between your ribs and still leave you happy.

DC 30: Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific cloaked dancers in your campaign, including a notable individual, the area in which she operates, and the kinds of performances in which she specializes.

Finding a cloaked dancer is rarely difficult if the PCs have a connection to the criminal underworld. A thieves' guild can usually set up a meeting. If the PCs know of a specific cloaked dancer, they can also inquire of a dance troupe operating in that city.

CLOAKED DANCERS IN THE GAME

A cloaked dancer can be attractive to the player who enjoys the role of a specialized killer but does not want to play an evil character. For players who are interested more in social interaction than in assassination, the prestige class ensures that they are the center of attention in any encounter involving intrigue and diplomacy.

Introducing cloaked dancers into your campaign should not be difficult. Famous dancers might already exist, perhaps as part of a traveling show or as members of an exclusive school of dance—their extra talents can be revealed at an opportune time.

Adaptation

Cloaked dancers are most appropriate for campaigns that focus on urban adventures and social encounters. In campaigns involving large combats, exploration, or dungeon delving, they are as out of place as songbirds on the battlefield. Against intelligent humanoid enemies they can hold their own in any campaign, though, with abilities resembling those of enchanters and bards. If your campaign's main antagonists are creatures immune to enchantments or mind-affecting abilities, such as undead, you might need to adjust the enchanting dance to affect such beings. Consider changing the entry requirements to include ranks in the Knowledge skill appropriate to that type of creature.

Sample Encounter

The PCs might meet a cloaked dancer at a social function, whether they are guests or guards. In either case, they might become involved if one spots the cloaked dancer's weapon or realizes that she has allies in the crowd. Their attempt to thwart her can earn them the thanks of one group and the hatred of another.

EL 10: Flighty and driven by whims, Mina Longacre is every bit the diva of her reputation. The PCs encounter Mina during one of her deadly performances, or in the frantic minutes after she concludes a dance and makes to flee. Depending on how they feel about her intended target, the PCs might attempt to stop her or simply watch.

MINA LONGACRE

CR 10

Female human bard 7/cloaked dancer 3

CN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Dodge, Mobility (+1 Dex, +1 armor, +1 deflection)

hp 48 (10 HD)

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 *human bane dagger* +7/+2 (1d4/19–20) or +9/+4 (1d4+2/19–20) against humans

Ranged +1 *human bane dagger* +9 (1d4/19–20) or +11 (1d4+2/19–20) against humans

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +6

Atk Options skill tricks, surprising strike +1d6

Special Actions bardic music 7/day (inspire courage +1, *fascinate* 3 targets, countersong, *suggestion*), enchanting dance 3/day (beguiling dance, wearying dance; DC 17)

Combat Gear *panic button* (escaping)*, 2 potions of *cure light wounds*

*New item described in Chapter 5

Bard Spells Known (CL 8th):

3rd (2/day)—*dispel magic*, *slow* (DC 17), *create fetch**

2nd (4/day)—*alter self*, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *enthrall* (DC 16), *invisibility*

1st (4/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *cure light wounds*, *lesser confusion* (DC 15), *sleep* (DC 15)

0 (3/day)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*

*New spell described in Chapter 4

Abilities Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 19

SQ bardic knowledge +9

Feats Chord of Distraction*, Dodge, Mobility, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Perform [dance])

*New feat described in Chapter 3

Skills Balance +3, Bluff +17, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +19, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Gather Information +9, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +1, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +14, Listen +0, Perform (dance) +20, Sleight of Hand +16, Spot +0, Tumble +14, Use Rope +3

Skill Tricks* Hidden Blade, Shrouded Dance, Social Recovery, Timely Misdirection

*Described in Chapter 3

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *human bane dagger*, *bracers of armor* +1, *cloak of Charisma* +2, *ring of protection* +1

COMBAT TRAPSMITH

"Go on ahead. I've got a surprise for those guys."

—Alexan, combat trapsmith

Combat trapsmiths can litter a battlefield or dungeon with devices of their own cunning design. They can put together a variety of traps, ranging from annoying to deadly, in mere seconds. With a bit of preparation, a combat trapsmith can turn a difficult battle into an easy exercise or vice versa.

BECOMING A COMBAT TRAPSMITH

Rogues and scouts make up the majority of combat trapsmiths, with ninjas and multiclass rangers forming the bulk of the rest. These four classes rely most often on traps and (except for the ranger) are also the best able to find and disarm them.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Skills: Craft (trapmaking) 8 ranks, Disable Device 6 ranks, Search 6 ranks.

Special: Trapfinding.

CLASS FEATURES

The combat trapsmith takes trapmaking to new heights, rapidly installing temporary devices for use on the battlefield.

TABLE 2–5: THE COMBAT TRAPSMITH HIT DIE: D6

	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Combat Traps Known
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Combat trapping, trap sense +1	2
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Skill Focus (Craft [trapmaking])	3
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Trap sense +2	4
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Improvised materials	5
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Expert trapsetter, trap sense +3	6

Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Appraise, Balance, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Profession, Search, Spot, Tumble, Use Rope.

Combat Trapping (Ex): You know how to create combat traps to aid your allies. At 1st level, you can learn two traps from the list in Table 2–6: Combat Traps, provided you meet the prerequisites. At each level thereafter, you add one additional trap to your repertoire, to a maximum of six traps known. Whenever you attain a new level in this class, you can choose to replace any one previously learned trap with a new trap.

A combat trap is triggered by any Tiny or larger creature entering the trapped square. Flying or incorporeal creatures don't trigger combat traps. You can build a combat trap only on solid ground—you can't place it on a wall or ceiling, in the air, or floating in the water. A combat trap functions only once. Once set, it lasts for 1 hour or until triggered, whichever comes first.

Crafting a combat trap requires a full-round action (which provokes attacks of opportunity) and a Craft (trapmaking) check. Each trap's entry lists the required Craft check DC. If the check is successful, you can place the trap in any square adjacent to your space. A failed check means that the action and materials are wasted to no effect, but you can try to set the same trap again later.

Some combat traps allow a saving throw, as noted in a trap's entry. The save DC is 10 + your combat trapsmith level + your Int modifier. Locating or disabling a combat trap requires a successful Search or Disable Device check with a DC equal to 20 + your combat trapsmith level + your Int modifier. You can automatically find and disable your own combat traps. Because a combat trap is built quickly and crudely, it is also possible to discern with a successful Spot check (using the same DC as given above), whether or not the observer has the trapfinding class feature. All combat traps produce extraordinary effects, so *dispel magic* or spell resistance cannot interfere with them.

Unless otherwise noted, an ongoing effect from a combat trap lasts for a number of rounds equal to your combat trapsmith level. Multiple effects from the same kind of combat trap don't stack; use only the longer duration.

Creating combat traps requires a special kit containing raw materials and tools. A combat trapsmith's kit costs 100 gp, weighs 10 pounds, and provides components sufficient to create ten traps. A combat trap can't be cannibalized for raw materials, nor can its materials be retrieved if the trap isn't triggered.

Trap Sense (Ex): Beginning at 1st level, you become more adept at evading the effects of traps. See the barbarian class feature, PH 26. If you already have trap sense, this class feature provides no additional benefit.

Skill Focus: At 2nd level, you gain Skill Focus (Craft [trapmaking]) as a bonus feat. If you already have this feat, you can instead select any other feat for which you meet the prerequisite.

Improvised Materials (Ex): Beginning at 4th level, you can craft combat traps from raw materials at hand instead of relying on your combat trapsmith's kit. Doing so increases the Craft (trapmaking) check DC by 5 but otherwise has no effect on the trap's potency.

Expert Trapsetter (Ex): At 5th level, you can set a combat trap as a standard action without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Combat Trap Descriptions

Entering the trapped square produces the stated effect.

Befuddler: A pungent spray applies a –2 penalty on Concentration checks, as well as ability checks and skill checks based on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma (Will negates).

Enfeebler: A puff of acrid powder renders the target fatigued (Fortitude negates).

Entangler: A hidden cord loops around the target, holding it in place as a tanglefoot bag does. A successful Reflex save negates the effect; alternatively, a DC 20 Strength or Escape Artist check (made as a full-round action) allows the stuck creature to break free.

Equalizer: The first creature entering the trapped square must succeed on a Reflex save or fall prone. The trap reputedly gets its name from its gnome inventor, who used it to bring taller foes down to his level.

Flashbang: The trapped square emits a blinding burst of light accompanied by a loud thunderclap. Any creature in the trapped square or any adjacent square becomes blinded and deafened; a successful Fortitude save lessens the effect to dazzled.

Footspiker: This trap effectively fills the designated square with caltrops, potentially slowing the target's movement (PH 126).

Glitterburst: A fine cloud of silver dust clings to any creature within the trapped square (no save). Any creature affected by a glitterburst trap takes a –20 penalty on Hide checks and, if invisible, is visibly outlined for the duration of the effect.

Scorcher: The trapped square releases a cloud of fine dust followed by a spark, setting off a small explosion that

TABLE 2–6: COMBAT TRAPS

Trap Name (Craft DC)	Prerequisites	Effect
Befuddler (15)	—	–2 penalty on Concentration, Int-, Wis-, Cha-based checks
Enfeebler (15)	Craft (alchemy) 1 rank	Fatigues target
Entangler (17)	Class level 2nd	Entangles target
Equalizer (17)	Class level 2nd	Target falls prone
Flashbang (19)	Craft (alchemy) 3 ranks, class level 3rd	Blinds and deafens target
Footspiker (15)	—	Halves target's speed
Glitterburst (15)	Craft (alchemy) 1 rank	Makes invisible target visible
Scorcher (15)	Craft (alchemy) 1 rank	Deals 2d6 fire damage
Scorcher, great (23)	Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks, class level 5th	Deals 5d6 fire damage in larger area
Sleeper (21)	Craft (alchemy) 4 ranks, class level 4th	Target falls asleep
Spiderweb (19)	Craft (alchemy) 3 ranks, class level 3rd	Web fills small area
Stinkburst (21)	Craft (alchemy) 4 ranks, class level 4th	Stinking cloud fills trapped square

deals 2d6 points of fire damage to each creature in that square (Reflex half).

Scorcher, Great: This works like a scorcher trap (see above), except that it deals 5d6 points of fire damage to each creature in the trapped square and in all adjacent squares (Reflex half).

Sleeper: A slumber-inducing vapor makes the target fall asleep. A successful Fortitude save lessens the effect to fatigued.

Spiderweb: The trapped square releases a burst of sticky tendrils that toughen when they contact air. This trap duplicates the effect of a *web* spell, except that the strands fill only the trapped square and all adjacent squares.

Stinkburst: A cloud of noxious vapors duplicates the effect of a *stinking cloud* spell, except that the effect fills only the trapped square. A successful Fortitude save negates the effect, but a creature must make a new saving throw each round it remains within the cloud.

PLAYING A COMBAT TRAPSMITH

From an early age you were fascinated by all aspects of traps, from their elegant engineering to their ingenious lethality. Perhaps you fell victim to a particularly innovative device, or witnessed the effectiveness of one. You might have had a teacher, but just as likely you learned from studying the mechanisms of sprung or disabled traps. You have dedicated yourself to the ultimate expression of the trapmaker's craft.

Preparation and care are the keys to your survival. You have great respect for traps and what they can do, so you never rush headlong into anyplace new and unfamiliar.

Your role in the party depends on its needs: You might take point, searching for the handiwork of other trapmakers, or follow up the rear, rigging nasty surprises to cover the group's withdrawal. In either case you take your responsibility, like everything else in life, very seriously.

Combat

You can hold your own in combat, thanks to the training you received before becoming a combat trapsmith, but you should stay out of melee as long as you can. Try not to draw attention to yourself while "enhancing" the battlefield with your special creations. Only after you've given yourself and your party the edge with your expert skills should you get involved in the fight.

Advancement

Even though you have reached a high degree of proficiency, you must continue to hone your craft. Max out your ranks in Craft (trapmaking), as well as in Disable Device and Search. If you have the skill points to spare, consider investing in Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Knowledge (dungeoneering), if your journeys take you into appropriate environments. Choose feats that help you keep out of enemies' reach, or that let you move easily around the battlefield, such as Dodge (and related feats), Improved Initiative, and Dash (from *Complete Warrior*). Luck feats (page 72) are useful for those times when even your impressive skills fail you.

Taking a level in a spellcasting class (likely wizard, with your high Intelligence) can be a smart choice. Having even a few extra magical tricks up your sleeve gives you an edge against foes who think they know all your secrets.

Resources

Popular with thieves' guilds, hunting lodges, and nobles looking for added protection, you never want for work or opportunity. Whether employed by an organization or an individual, you can name your own price—and only the wealthy can afford you.

You can expect to receive assistance from an employer to help you do what you do best, usually in the form of

extra combat trapsmith's kits. The amount of aid depends on your employer's wealth and needs, as well as the project for which you were hired. When not employed or when plying your trade on the side, you expect and require no support—you can manage quite well on your own.

COMBAT TRAPSMITHS IN THE WORLD

"We spent the day in town shopping. By the time we returned, he'd rigged our rooms top to bottom!"

—Elbor Gunter, battle trickster and friend of Alexan

Combat trapsmiths turn traps from elaborate set pieces into tactical battlefield additions, but otherwise don't have much overall impact on the world. Thus, you can easily incorporate a combat trapsmith into a campaign. For example, if the party raids the headquarters of a thieves' guild but cannot complete the mission, place a combat trapsmith among the surviving guild members. Even as the PCs try to make their escape, they might fall victim to devilish traps in previously cleared hallways and rooms.

Organization

Each combat trapsmith comes to his trade in his own way. No guild or organization links these staunch individualists, who freely join or leave an employer as their interests and values dictate. A combat trapsmith joins a larger group only if doing so makes sense to him; another might reject the same organization as offending his ideals or technical sensibilities. A group honored by the company of such an insidious and deadly specialist treats him with honor and respect.

NPC Reactions

The combat trapsmith's trade is of questionable legality in some places, and highly illicit in others. Those who care about such things and who know a character to be a combat trapsmith treat him with scorn, usually having an initial reaction of indifference at best. Dwarves, gnomes, and others who appreciate skilled craftsmanship look upon his abilities



Alexan,
a combat trapsmith

with a bit of awe, and are usually at least friendly to a combat trapsmith.

COMBAT TRAPSMITH LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research combat trapsmiths to learn more about them. When a character succeeds on a skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC 10: Combat trapsmiths are equally skilled at creating and disabling nasty traps.

DC 15: A skilled combat trapsmith can whip up a trap in a few moments that might take an ordinary person hours or days.

DC 20: Some combat trapsmiths can make traps seemingly out of almost nothing.

DC 30: Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific combat trapsmiths in your campaign, including a notable individual, the area in which he operates, and the kinds of traps in which he specializes.

Members of a local thieves' guild always know who the combat trapsmiths are within their city, even if none are currently working for the guild. PCs wishing to meet a specific combat trapsmith should contact his employer (if he has one) or the guildmaster. This information never comes cheap.

COMBAT TRAPSMITHS IN THE GAME

Combat trapsmiths work best in campaigns set within an urban environment, particularly if the PCs have a home base to protect. Some wilderness-based campaigns might also provide enough opportunities to keep combat trapsmiths busy. Players who enjoy establishing and protecting a home base for their characters, or who are looking for a new direction for their rogues, might enjoy playing combat trapsmiths. Engineering-focused dwarves and gnomes find the class especially appealing.

Even a single combat trapsmith NPC can make an interesting series of encounters, harassing the PCs with infuriating new traps in areas they thought were clear. The party faces a substantial challenge in tracking down and putting a stop to the interference, especially if the combat trapsmith has an influential employer.

Adaptation

The combat trapsmith prestige class requires no special rules sets and can fit into any campaign. Additional trap effects are easy to design, following the trapmaking guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the examples in the above list. For a stronger magical theme, consider adding a level of spellcaster to the prerequisite and expanding the range of traps to encompass low-level spell-like effects (such as *hypnotism*, *daze monster*, *shatter*, or *cause fear*).

Sample Encounter

Alexan was assigned to a group of irregulars during a recent war. Having grown up as a hunter and trapper, he attempted to put his snare-laying experience to use against the enemy but worked too slowly for the hit-and-run tactics of his brigade. After the war, Alexan honed his craft until he could set up a trap in a fraction of his previous best time.

EL 11: The PCs most likely encounter Alexan in the wilds admiring his latest creation. Although no longer a soldier, he still enjoys setting up traps against roughly human-sized creatures. He usually takes down his traps shortly after installing them, having no desire to cause the accidental death of a forester or traveler. The PCs might locate one of his traps and be impressed by its ingenuity, or they might dismantle it to prevent the hazard, not understanding Alexan's intent.

ALEXAN

CR 11

Male human scout 9/combat trapsmith 2

N Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +12, Spot +14

Languages Common, Elven

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 19; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge

(+3 Dex, +5 armor, +1 deflection)

hp 73 (11 HD)

Resist evasion

Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +3; trap sense +1

Speed 45 ft. (9 squares); Shot on the Run

Melee +1 *longsword* +10/+5 (1d8+3/19–20)

Ranged +2 *composite longbow* +12/+7 (1d8+4/x3)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +9

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, skirmish (+3d6, +2 AC)

Special Actions combat trapping (enfeebler, footspiker, scorcher; DC 13)

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ battle fortitude +1, camouflage (use Hide in terrain that doesn't grant cover or concealment), flawless stride, trackless step, trap sense +1, trapfinding

Feats Dash*, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes^B, Mobility^B, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Shot on the Run, Skill Focus (Craft [trapmaking])^B

*Feat described in *Complete Warrior*

Skills Appraise (alchemy, traps) +3, Balance +19, Craft (alchemy) +13, Craft (trapmaking) +18, Disable Device +17, Hide +17, Jump +8, Listen +12, Move Silently +17, Search +15, Spot +14, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks), Tumble +17

Possessions combat gear plus +3 *leather armor*, +1 *longsword*, +2 *composite longbow* (+2 Str bonus) with 60 arrows, *ring of protection* +1, combat trapsmith's kit, masterwork thieves' tools

Battle Fortitude (Ex) Bonus on initiative checks and Fortitude saves while wearing light or no armor and carrying a light load. Included above. *Complete Adventurer* 12.

Flawless Stride (Ex) Alexan ignores movement penalties from any sort of hindering terrain. *Complete Adventurer* 13.