

FORTUNE'S FRIEND

"Don't worry about it. I have a feeling our luck is about to change."
—Sar Pios, layabout and fortune's friend

The fortune's friend lives by his luck. He doesn't worry about much of anything, including where his next meal comes from, and trusts to luck—perhaps more than he should.

BECOMING A FORTUNE'S FRIEND

Clerics of Olidammara, monks, and rogues qualify most easily for this prestige class and make up the largest group within it, though every class finds representation. To adopt the ways of the fortune's friend, a character need only embrace his luck.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Base Attack Bonus: +3.
Skills: Any skill 8 ranks.
Feats: Any luck feat.

CLASS FEATURES

A fortune's friend survives by and trusts to his luck.

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 a 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 spellcasting class before becoming a fortune's friend, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day, caster level, and spells known.

Easy Luck (Ex): Luck comes to you naturally. The swift or immediate action to use a luck feat (page 72) does not count against your limit of one swift action per turn. However, you still can't expend a luck reroll more than once per turn to influence the same result.

Extra Fortune (Ex): At each odd-numbered level, you gain one extra luck reroll per day. This reroll is in addition to those granted by luck feats.

More Luck than Skill (Ex): Even if you have some talent in a particular area, you still depend on your luck to see you through. Once per day as a swift action, you can add your class level as a luck bonus on all skill checks you make until the start of your next turn.

Bonus Luck Feat: At 2nd and 4th level, you gain a bonus luck feat for which you meet the prerequisite. See page 75 for a complete list of luck feats.

Fortune's Favorite (Ex): By 3rd level, you have learned to rely on your luck to stay alive. Once per day as an immediate action, you can add your class level as a luck bonus on all saving throws you make until the start of your next turn.

Lucky Strike (Ex): Even the greatest warriors, those who train and drill constantly, occasionally win through sheer luck, so why shouldn't you? Beginning at 5th level, once per day as a swift action, you can add your class level as a luck bonus on all attack rolls you make until the start of your next turn.

PLAYING A FORTUNE'S FRIEND

Who needs skill? You've got luck on your side! Even in the heat of battle, when your very life is at stake, you remain calm and cheerful, confident that something will give you and your comrades the upper hand. Your carefree attitude is uplifting to some and grating to others. To the latter you say, "Sour grapes!" They are envious of your ability to slide through life without a care, easily finding food, gold, lodging, and love. In your rare contemplative moments, you feel sorry for those who have to work so hard to make ends meet.

Combat

As a fortune's friend, you are an unusual combatant, often jumping in over your head and relying on luck to get you out of a jam. Your talent isn't a license to be stupid, though. You're lucky, not invulnerable, and your good fortune doesn't necessarily protect your allies.

Advancement

You don't become a fortune's friend so much as realize you've always been one. From your earliest days, good things happened to you, and others would comment on

THE GREAT ESCAPE

"It wasn't easy, y'know? First I had to get past them bars, see. Inch-thick steel! How ya gonna get through that without magic?"

"Well, I got me a connection on the outside. Someone who wants to see me get outta there right quick. So I receives a little present: a loaf o' fresh bread in a wood box. Now the warden, he's pretty smart for a bugbear, so he cuts up the bread into little slices to check for hidden shivs and files. He don't find none, so he lets me have the bread. The fool lets me have the box, too—for a few minutes while I'm eatin' the bread, anyway. He watches me the whole time, so I takes my time chewin' the

bread and eyein' that box. Then I seen it—in the grain o' the wood is a long sliver o' metal.

"I hide my hand behind the loaf and even give the warden a piece. He ain't no fool, like I said, so he takes it but doesn't eat it right way. But I's pickin' at that sliver with my hidden hand. By the time I finish the bread I got me a wee blade o' adamantine.

"So I sets to work on the bars that night, sawin' away with that little sliver. I only gotta cut out two bars to get out, and I finish up just before dawn. All sneaky-like I slips out the window, takin' the sawed-off bars with me fer weapons. But I didn't need 'em. I kept runnin' 'til noon and ain't been back since."

TABLE 2-7: THE FORTUNE'S FRIEND HIT DIE: D6

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Easy luck, extra fortune, more luck than skill	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Bonus luck feat	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+1	Extra fortune, fortune's favorite	—
4th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Bonus luck feat	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
5th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Extra fortune, lucky strike	—

Class Skills (6 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Bluff, Climb, Craft, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Escape Artist, Gather Information, Hide, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Perform, Profession, Search, Sleight of Hand, Spot, Swim, Tumble, Use Magic Device, Use Rope.

how lucky you were. As you grew older you trusted more and more to your luck, and it never let you down. Eventually you forswore practice and discipline, relying entirely on your luck to get by. On that day you truly became a fortune's friend.

You pick up bits of know-how here and there, which translate into a smattering of skills: some generally useful (such as Spot) and some of narrower utility (such as Use Rope). Having a varied repertoire of skills comes in handy, even if you don't practice them often. Of course, you can't go wrong selecting even more luck feats. Each one not only gives you a new avenue of luck to explore, but another crucial luck reroll.

Resources

As in everything else, you've been fortunate in finding the right people to know. Many enjoy your company and marvel at your incredible string of luck. However, since most people secretly envy your good fortune, these contacts are at best helpful acquaintances. Most such so-called friends are quick to abandon you when the going gets tough. For the most part, your luck is all you have.

FORTUNE'S FRIENDS IN THE WORLD

"I used to want to be that guy. Good things always seem to happen to him. But you know what? That life is too unpredictable even for me, never knowing where your next meal is going to come from."

—Dram Cicaeda,
man on the street

Individualistic and free-wheeling, fortune's friends fit easily into any campaign that uses the luck rules.

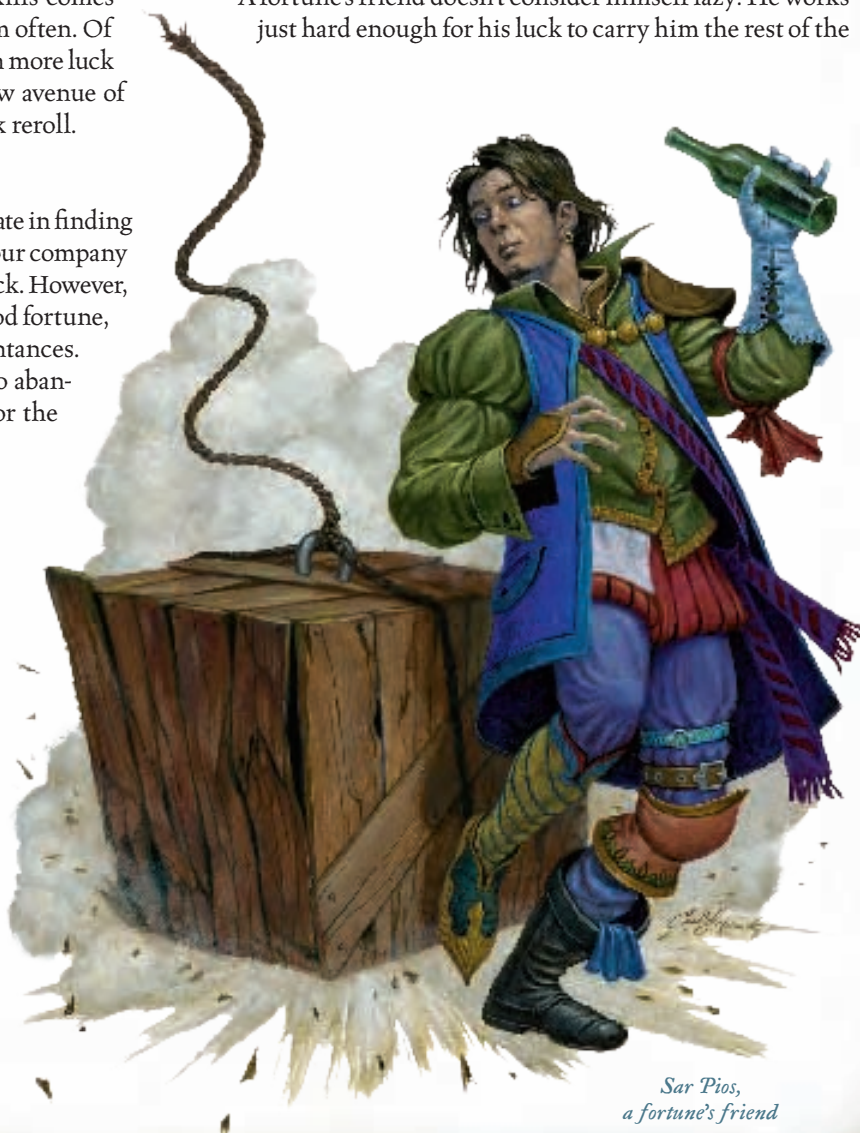
Organization

Though a fortune's friend belongs to no one but himself, he seeks out companionship wherever he can find it. He isn't picky about his comrades, as long as they aren't judgmental about him.

This arrangement does not always work out well, however. Some who recognize his abilities keep a fortune's friend around simply as a good-luck charm. More unscrupulous groups take advantage of his good fortune, making him the fall guy for their crimes or sending him on suicide missions.

NPC Reactions

A fortune's friend doesn't consider himself lazy: He works just hard enough for his luck to carry him the rest of the



Sar Pios,
a fortune's friend

way. This apparent tendency toward laziness causes many people to turn against a fortune's friend.

Dwarves in particular despise those who benefit without hard work. A dwarf who recognizes a fortune's friend has an initial unfriendly attitude toward him, and Diplomacy checks to influence that attitude have a –10 penalty. Even the luckiest fortune's friend is unlikely to convince a dwarf to be helpful toward him. Other characters treat a fortune's friend with a mixture of envy and awe. Most are neutral overall: They appreciate his abilities but resent his easy life. Two fortune's friends, should they meet, repel one another like similar magnetic poles.

FORTUNE'S FRIEND LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (local) can research fortune's friends 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 fortune's friend is lucky. Almost *too* lucky.

DC 15: A fortune's friend lives by luck alone. Nothing ever seems to get him down because—for him at least—everything works out in the end.

DC 20: A fortune's friend can sometimes cheat death.

PCs rarely go looking for a fortune's friend. A meeting just happens, as long as that would be lucky for him.

FORTUNE'S FRIENDS IN THE GAME

Fortune's friends can be fascinating if frustrating antagonists, but they work better as allies, cohorts, or minions of more powerful foes. They make great comedic foils, bringing their brash personalities to bear against the PCs in over-the-top, melodramatic ways.

Players who like to have some control over their characters' luck should enjoy this prestige class, which can work easily with any character type. It might also appeal to those playing clerics or worshipers of a deity of fortune, particularly if they have access to the Luck domain. One fortune's friend can join a party without endangering the overall scheme of things.

Adaptation

A fortune's friend fits easily into almost any campaign world. You can customize the prestige class by specifying his source of luck as a deity: Olidammara in the core setting, Tymora in Faerûn, the Traveler in the world of Eberron, or an equivalent deity of your campaign. To strengthen this divine theme, you could adjust the entry requirements to include 4 ranks in Knowledge (religion) and perhaps being a worshiper of the appropriate deity.

Sample Encounter

A fortune's friend doesn't stand out in a crowd, unless his incredible luck is on display. Some fortune's friends supplement their income with petty larceny, though if their luck fails, they might end up in jail for a while.

EL 8: Sar Pios's luck hasn't really been with him the past few days, and he's starting to get hungry. In order to survive until his luck changes, he has gone back to picking pockets. This time, though, he's been caught with his hand in the cookie jar—or rather, a PC's coin purse.

SAR PIOS

CR 8

Male human fighter 2/rogue 3/fortune's friend 3

CN Medium humanoid

Init +3, **Lucky Start**; **Senses** Listen +11, Spot +11

Language Common

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Dodge, Mobility (+3 Dex, +2 armor)

hp 50 (8 HD)

Resist evasion

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); Spring Attack

Melee mwk dagger +7 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +9 (1d4+1/19–20)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +6

Atk Options Fortuitous Strike, luck reroll 6/day

Special Actions fortune's favorite (+3 saves), more luck than skill (+3 skill checks), sneak attack +3d6

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure light wounds*

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

SQ trap sense +1, trapfinding

Feats Advantageous Avoidance^{B*}, Dodge^B, Fortuitous Strike*, Mobility^B, Lucky Catch*, Lucky Start^{B*}, Spring Attack

*New feat described in Chapter 3

Skills Balance +5, Climb +12, Hide +9, Intimidate +4, Jump +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +9, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +11, Tumble +12

Possessions combat gear plus leather armor, 2 masterwork daggers, *gray bag of tricks*, *deck of illusions*

GRAY GUARD

"Does your stout armor give you peace of mind? Does your holy sword help you sleep at night? Mine do not."

—Ambros Brasmere, gray guard

The typical image of a paladin is a proud knight of noble bearing, resplendent in armor bright as sunlight and bearing a sword shining with the purity of his cause. This archetype, upheld by both idealistic knights and their enemies, has killed countless honorable warriors. Taking a cue from the enemies of their faith, many good-aligned religions have established secretive orders of the most dedicated and hardened soldiers. These gray guards are less restrained by their knightly vows, doing what must be done, no matter how unpleasant.

BECOMING A GRAY GUARD

Only the most realistic and battleworn paladins become gray guards. They know the cruelties of the world cannot be expunged merely by good example and kind words. Though no less virtuous than other paladins, they join the order's bloodstained ranks out of a sense of necessity. Those who seek membership merely because they resent the yoke of their code of conduct are unfit to be gray guards or paladins;

Melee +1 *holy heavy mace* +9/+4 (1d8+2)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +8

Special Actions *deceptive summons* (fury), *greater turning* 1/day, *spontaneous casting* (cure spells), *turn undead* 6/day (+5, 2d6+11, 8th)

Combat Gear *potion of resist energy* (fire), *scroll of summon monster VII*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 11th):

6th—*blade barrier*^D (DC 18), *summon monster VI*

5th—*dispel evil*^D (DC 17; CL 12th), *lesser planar binding* (DC 18), *summon monster V*

4th—*dismissal* (DC 16), *fire shield*^D, *lesser planar ally*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*daylight*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle against evil*^D (CL 12th), *searing light* (+9 ranged touch), *summon monster III*

2nd—*aid*, *align weapon*, *augury*, *eagle's splendor*, *heat metal*^D (DC 14), *sound burst* (DC 14)

1st—*bless*, *detect evil*, *divine favor*, *magic stone*, *magic weapon*, *protection from evil*^D (CL 12th), *sanctuary* (DC 13)

0—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *purify food and drink*, *resistance*

D: Domain spell. Deity: Pelor. Domains: Good, Sun.

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 17

SQ able to notice secret or concealed doors, strong aura of good, unrestricted conjuration

Feats *Augment Summoning*, *Iron Will*, *Persuasive*, *Run*, *Skill Focus* (Bluff)^B, *Spell Focus* (conjuration)

Skills Bluff +18, Concentration +3, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +8 (+10 acting), Heal +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Listen +4, Search +3, Spellcraft +6, Speak Language (Abyssal, Infernal), Spot +4, Survival +2 (+4 on other planes)

Possessions combat gear plus +2 *leather armor*, +1 *holy heavy mace*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *everburning torch*, *potion of undetectable alignment*, healer's kit, 4 vials of holy water

MASTER OF MASKS

"Every creature is but a role."

—Beriel, Comedian of Calamity
and Tragedian of Triumph

Belief and perception shape reality. In worlds where religions derive might from the faith of believers and where amazing magic sways the mind, those who command the senses hold great power. In such an environment, the master of masks takes center stage. Wearer of a thousand faces, with an identity as fluid as that of a crowd of strangers, this thespian of possibilities decides what is real and what can be.

BECOMING A MASTER OF MASKS

A master of masks must be a consummate actor. Anyone capable of shifting from role to role convincingly might enter the prestige class. Many are bards, who are the most obviously talented in the performing arts. Particularly theatrical rogues or those who specialize in disguise also sometimes become masters of masks, as do some multiclass sorcerers or wizards—especially those with a fondness

for illusions. Characters of a more martial bent or serious personality usually see acting as frivolous and do not pursue the class.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Skill: Bluff 8 ranks, Disguise 8 ranks, Perform (act) 8 ranks.

Languages: Any four.

Special: Must have successfully impersonated an individual, fooling even that person's friends and associates.

CLASS FEATURES

You take on roles as befits your situation. Whether donning the mask of the jester to entertain a crowd or the mask of the gladiator and joining battle, your greatest talent is your versatility.

Spellcasting: At 2nd, 4th, 7th, and 9th 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 a 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 spellcasting class before becoming a master of masks, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining spells per day, caster level, and spells known.

Persona Masks (Su): You gain the ability to craft potent magical masks, each of which allows you to take on a different persona and gain some aspect of that creature or archetypal character. At 1st level, you learn to create and use two masks selected from those described below. At 2nd level, and at every odd-numbered level thereafter, you can create and use one more mask from the list.

Creating a new persona mask requires 8 hours of work and costs 100 gp. You can use only persona masks that you have crafted. No one else (not even another master of masks) can benefit from a persona mask that you create.

To gain the benefit of a mask, you merely wear it. Putting on a mask is a standard action, and removing one is a move action. Once it is worn, the mask's benefit immediately applies. Your master of masks level is your caster level for any spell-like abilities produced by a mask.

In addition to its other benefits, a mask conceals your alignment, replacing it (for the purpose of detection spells or abilities) with an alignment appropriate to the mask. You still retain your normal alignment for all other purposes (such as if a paladin uses *smite evil* against you).

One or more persona masks can be worn at the same time, occupying the eye lenses/goggles body slot.

Angel: The image of an androgynous face with eyes serenely upturned to the heavens forms this mask, carved from flawless alabaster. Cultic runes adorn the forehead and cheeks, and its edges are ringed by downy feathers.

As an immediate action, you can use *feather fall* as a spell-like ability any number of times per day, but only on yourself.

Once per day as a swift action, you can use *fly* as a spell-like ability; the effect lasts for 5 rounds. As you advance in the master of masks class, you can use this ability more often: twice per day at 4th level, three times per day at 7th level, and four times per day at 10th level.

Your alignment appears to be lawful good while you wear an angel mask.

Archmage: This mask of deep purple fluorite is sculpted in the image of a heavily wrinkled old man. A roughly circular tangle of arcane runes appears where the visage's mouth should be.

You can use each of these spell-like abilities once per day: *charm person*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, and *magic missile*. As you advance in the master of masks class, you can use additional spell-like abilities, each once per day: 4th level, *invisibility* and *scorching ray*; 7th level, *lightning bolt* and *slow*; and 10th level, *dimension door* and *ice storm*.

Your caster level is treated as two higher for the purpose of casting arcane spells (up to a maximum of your character level). If you have no arcane spellcasting ability, this effect grants you no benefit.

Your alignment appears to be chaotic good while you wear an archmage mask.

Assassin: Hardened black leather and metal clasps create the disturbing aspect of the assassin. A jagged, cruel slit forms the opening for the mouth, and the mask's edges are worn and stained.

You can deliver a sneak attack that deals an extra 1d6 points of damage when you are flanking an opponent or at any time when the target would be denied its Dexterity bonus (see the rogue class feature, PH 50). As you advance in the master of masks class, your sneak attack becomes more devastating: This extra damage improves to 2d6 points at 4th level, 3d6 at 7th level, and 4d6 at 10th level. If you get a sneak attack bonus from another source (such as rogue levels), the bonuses on damage stack.

In addition, you gain a +2 competence bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. This bonus improves to +4 at 4th level, +6 at 7th level, and +8 at 10th level.

Your alignment appears to be lawful evil while you wear an assassin mask.

Demon: This obsidian mask bears the visage of a darkly handsome fiend. Small, black horns adorn the demon's forehead, and its black ears rise to points. Its smiling mouth shows rows of sharp teeth.

Once per day, you can use *summon monster III* as a spell-like ability, only to summon creatures of chaotic evil alignment. As you advance in the master of masks class, you can summon increasingly powerful creatures: At 4th level, you can instead use *summon monster IV*; at 7th level, *summon monster V*; and at 10th level, *summon monster VI*.

Your alignment appears to be chaotic evil while you wear a demon mask.

Dragon: This multihued mask of precious metals and scintillating gemstones forms the terrible visage of a snarling wyrm. A sunburst of metallic and bejeweled scales flares out around the reptilian face.

Three times per day you can breathe a cone of fire as a standard action. The cone is 30 feet long and deals 2d8 points of fire damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + your master of masks level + your Cha modifier) halves the damage dealt. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again for 1d4 rounds. As you advance in the class, you can deal additional damage with this ability: 4d8 points at 4th level, 6d8 at 7th level, and 10d8 at 10th level.

Your alignment appears to be neutral evil while you wear a dragon mask.

Faceless: Only a pair of empty eyeholes break this otherwise featureless oval, porcelain mask.

You gain a +5 competence bonus on saves against mind-affecting spells and abilities. You are protected from divination effects as if by a *nondetection* spell; the DC of the caster level check is 15 + your master of masks level.

Even if the *nondetection* effect is overcome, your alignment appears to be neutral while you wear a faceless mask.

Gladiator: This wyvern-hide mask is shaped like the face of a grim warrior. Scars cover its surface, and silver chainmail rings surround its outer edge.

You gain proficiency with all martial and exotic weapons. You also gain a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls. As you advance in the master of

TABLE 2–11: THE MASTER OF MASKS

HIT DIE: d6

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting	Masks Known
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Persona masks	—	2
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	—	+1 level of existing spellcasting class	3
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+3	Mask specialist	—	4
4th	+2	+1	+4	+4	—	+1 level of existing spellcasting class	4
5th	+2	+1	+4	+4	Many faces (2, move)	—	5
6th	+3	+2	+5	+5	Hidden mask	—	5
7th	+3	+2	+5	+5	—	+1 level of existing spellcasting class	6
8th	+4	+2	+6	+6	Many faces (3, swift)	—	6
9th	+4	+3	+6	+6	—	+1 level of existing spellcasting class	7
10th	+5	+3	+7	+7	Many faces (4, immediate)	—	7

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Appraise, Bluff, Craft, Disguise, Forgery, Perform, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language.

masks class, you become more expert in weapon use: This bonus improves to +2 at 4th level, +3 at 7th level, and +4 at 10th level.

Your alignment appears to be neutral while you wear a gladiator mask.

High Priest: This mask of rose porphyry has a wide mouth open in song, but instead of eyes it has slits twisted into runes (these do not restrict your vision).

You can use each of the following spell-like abilities once per day: *bless*, *cure light wounds*, *protection from evil*, and *sanctuary*. As you advance in the class, you can use additional spell-like abilities, each once per day: At 4th level, you can use *aid* and *lesser restoration*; at 7th level, *cure serious wounds* and *remove curse*; and at 10th level, *death ward* and *neutralize poison*.

Your caster level is treated as two higher for the purpose of casting divine spells (up to a maximum of your character level). If you have no divine spellcasting ability, this effect grants you no benefit.

Your alignment appears to be neutral good while you wear a high priest mask.

Jester: Gaudy ribbons, tinkling bells, and a bobbing cockcomb adorn this leather mask. Brightly hued eyeshadow, lipstick, and alternating red, black, and white diamonds flamboyantly paint the form's angular features.

You gain a +2 competence bonus on Balance, Perform, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble checks. As you advance in the master of masks class, you become more proficient with these skills: This bonus improves to +4 at 4th level, +6 at 7th level, and +8 at 10th level.

Your alignment appears to be chaotic neutral while you wear a jester mask.

Lich: This mask is made of poorly cured, purplish skin stretched over yellowed bone. Bloodless cuts and old bruises mar its surface, and tufts of long, white hair sprout from its wrinkled brow.

Once per day you can use *cause fear* and *detect undead* as spell-like abilities. As you advance in the master of masks class, you can use additional spell-like abilities, each once per day: At 4th level, you can use *false life*; at 7th level, *halt undead*; and at 10th level, *fear*.

Additionally, you gain resistance to cold 10.

Your alignment appears to be neutral evil while you wear a lich mask. Furthermore, you register as an undead creature with Hit Dice equal to your character level to any form of magical divination (such as *detect undead*).

Lord: A swirling mixture of gleaming copper and silver forms the regal countenance of a smiling man. A gem-studded diadem adorns its brow, and stamped across its surface are layered images of coins.

Once per day, you can use *remove fear* as a spell-like ability. As you advance in the master of masks class, you can use additional spell-like abilities, each once per day: At 4th level, you can use *eagle's splendor*; at 7th level, *heroism*; and at 10th level, *dispel chaos*.

In addition, you gain a +2 competence bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks. This bonus improves to +4 at 4th level, +6 at 7th level, and +8 at 10th level.

Your alignment appears to be lawful neutral while you wear a lord mask.

Savage: Bright, flaking warpaint streaks this battered wooden image of a snarling, fang-toothed wild man.

Your hands transform into claws, granting you two primary natural weapon attacks, each dealing 1d4 points of damage (assuming you are Medium), plus your Strength modifier. You are considered to be proficient with your natural weapons. Your claws overcome damage reduction as if they were magic weapons.

As you advance in the master of masks class, you can deal more damage with your claws: 1d6 points at 4th level, 1d8 at 7th level, and 2d6 at 10th level.

Your alignment appears to be chaotic neutral while you wear a savage mask.

Mask Specialist (Su): Starting at 3rd level, you innately enhance the abilities of any magic mask you wear (such as the *mask of the skull*, DMG 262). If the mask creates an effect that requires a saving throw, the save DC increases by 2. If the mask grants a bonus on skill checks, that bonus is increased by 2. Otherwise, the mask's caster level is treated as two higher.

This ability has no effect on the persona masks you create and use.

Many Faces (Ex): At 5th level, you can wear more than one persona mask simultaneously. You can use the abilities of only one mask at a time, but you can switch between masks more quickly.

While wearing a persona mask, you can don a second without taking off the first. The appearance and benefit of the second replace those of the first. As a move action, you can have the first mask appear instead, granting its effect in place of the other's.

At 8th level, you can wear up to three masks simultaneously and can switch masks as a swift action.

At 10th level, you can wear up to four masks simultaneously and can switch masks as an immediate action.

While wearing multiple persona masks in this way, you can remove any worn mask as a move action (regardless of which one is active).

Hidden Mask (Su): Beginning at 6th level, you can make any mask you wear become invisible (or return an invisible mask to visibility). Activating or deactivating this ability requires a swift action. The mask's benefit applies regardless of whether it is visible.

PLAYING A MASTER OF MASKS

Your power lies in your talent at manipulating reality through the secret knowledge of those who have come before. You are secure in the perfection of your artistry; masters of masks often adopt grandiose titles. When not in character—a rare occasion—your own personality might

reflect either inner confidence or the aloofness and lack of direction that come from being without a role.

Few others share your consummate skill in the performing arts. Some are teachers, others are rivals, and the rest to you are mere hacks, but all participate in an old and little-understood tradition. This loose guild of like-minded thespians helps you refine your abilities, creating new personas and new powers, though mastery depends on intense practice and personal epiphanies. Nonperformers could never understand how your craft submerges you in a role so completely that the role becomes reality.

Combat

Your role on the battlefield depends on your character background and the masks you have created and mastered. If you prefer stealth, you likely avoid detection behind the faceless mask and don the mask of the assassin to surprise your opponents. On the other hand, if you are a front-line combatant, you might wear the mask of the gladiator or the savage. The masks of the high priest and the lord help you bolster allies, while the mask of the demon brings allies to your side. Those of the archmage and the dragon give you magical offensive power. Your versatility is your greatest strength.

Advancement

You have always been intrigued by the malleability of perceived truth: The most subtle hint, emphasis, or rearrangement of facts can lead others to think and act exactly as you wish. You grew adept at becoming what you weren't, either onstage or in the employ of those who had uses for such a talent. Eventually you discovered the fellowship of like artists who had been sculpting truth for seemingly as long as civilization has existed. You either sought them out yourself or were introduced by another who recognized your talents, and now you perfect the method of the masters of masks.

Since you manipulate belief and perception, you must continue to improve skills related to this expertise, such as Bluff, Disguise, Perform (act), and Sense Motive. Interaction skill tricks (page 82) give you more options to exploit your talents. Your abilities range widely, depending on the masks you've constructed, so you might also take ranks in other skills that work with them. Feat choices likewise should

improve your mastery of deception or amplify the benefits of your masks.

Resources

You receive no material aid from others who share your talents, but a measure of professional respect exists among peers dedicated to upholding the secrets of your art. Rather than a formal organization, fellowship in the acting profession is acknowledged among its members. A mentor might have trained you, or you are friendly with other masters of masks. Such allies can help you practice and refine your skills or suggest new masks.

A single rule binds masters of masks: One cannot use his abilities against another. Violation of this principle results in no physical or material penalty, but the offender is forever cut off from his fellows. His ill reputation precedes him throughout the acting community, which can result in financial hardship. Most adhere strictly to this injunction, but in a profession that depends on warping reality, morality is flexible as well, and a few masters of masks pay this warning no heed.

MASTERS OF MASKS IN THE WORLD

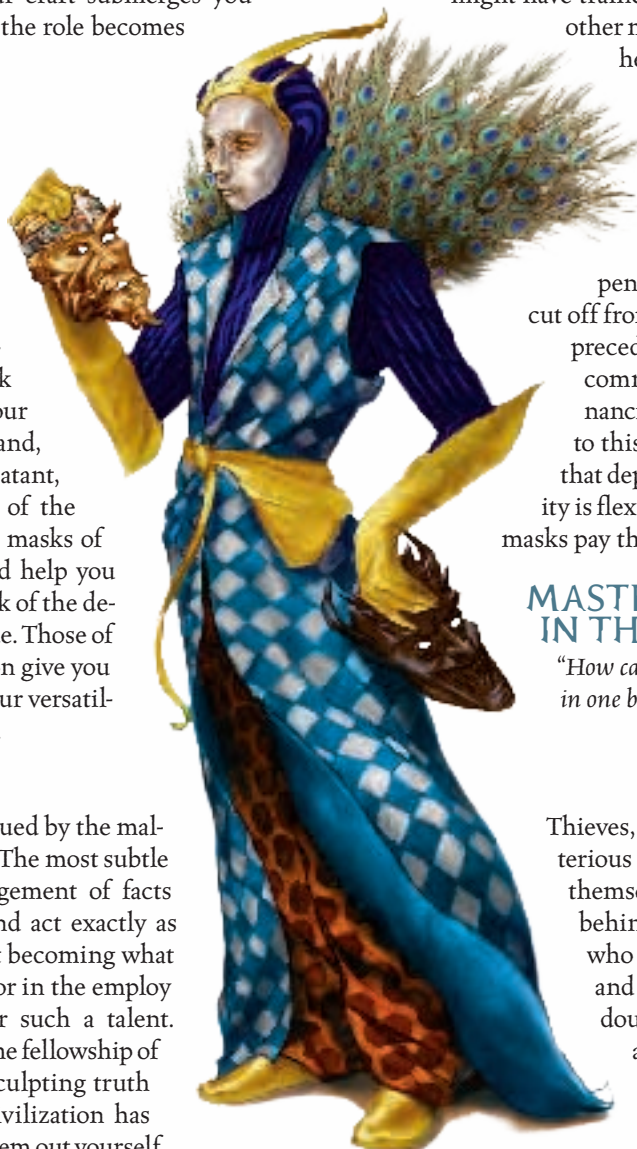
"How can both an angel and a demon exist in one body?"

—Aptura Iris, critic at the Free City's Grand Theatre

Thieves, spies, truth-benders, and mysterious figures, masters of masks cloak themselves within their roles and hide behind their elegant personas. Those who do not belong to their shrouded and ancient tradition have tremendous difficulty learning anything about their ranks or true powers. Thus, these master impersonators add new layers of intrigue to any campaign, as well as a strange new kind of magic.

Organization

Masters of masks rarely form substantial organizations: Disputes over personal expression and technique, as well as clashes between egos, are barriers to cooperation. Those initiated into the class's secrets acknowledge a loose fellowship defined by their shared abilities. Still, many masters of masks see others as threats, rivals who could reveal their complex subterfuges to further their own ends. Masters



*Beriel,
a master of masks*

of masks usually ingratiate themselves with groups of wandering performers, con artists, or adventuring parties that need their duplicitous abilities.

NPC Reactions

Few know that masters of masks even exist, so the average person has no preexisting attitude toward them, even if one declares himself openly. Those who are aware of these truth-shapers treat them as exceptionally skilled actors, or perhaps as spies or assassins, and react accordingly.

Bards usually know of masters of masks and see them as incredibly talented performers. Their admiration borders on awe, so their attitude toward members of this class is typically friendly. Other spellcasters usually treat masters of masks with respect, out of interest in the strange magic these roguish actors possess, and seek interviews and demonstrations at every opportunity. Their attitudes too tend toward friendly, though out of personal interest and curiosity.

Those who hold positions of political or military authority consider masters of masks to be dangerous spies. Any member of a lawful organization or of a secretive group fears and distrusts them, with a starting attitude no better than unfriendly.

MASTER OF MASKS LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research masters of masks 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: Masters of masks are actors and disguise artists who use masks in their performances and deceptions.

DC 15: Masters of masks are spies just as often as they are entertainers.

DC 20: A master of masks relies on different personas to use a wide repertoire of abilities, including many potent magical effects.

DC 30: Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific masters of masks in your campaign, including a notable individual and the title

he goes by, the area in which he operates, and what masks he wears.

Masters of masks are difficult to find. PCs wishing to make contact might inquire through the criminal underworld or at local playhouses. A master of masks follows up if he is interested, or remains elusive otherwise.

MASTERS OF MASKS IN THE GAME

The master of masks is perfect for players who are not satisfied with just one party role. Since each mask bestows a different ability, the prestige class is as versatile and varied as the player customizes it to be.

As an NPC, a master of masks might be a consummate impersonator who is nearly impossible to pin down, or an expert agent in the employ of rivals.

Adaptation

The master of masks is flexible enough to fit a variety of roles in nearly any campaign setting. One interpretation of the class might have a more sinister nature, with each mask drawing its abilities from trapped outsiders bound within. Masters of masks might be members of an organized group of spies or assassins in the service of an unscrupulous government, arcane organization, or deceptive religion. Alternatively, masters of masks and their signature disguises might be far rarer than suggested above. Perhaps each mask is unique, and a handful of masters compete to find a legendary mask, each hoping to make its powers his alone.

Sample Encounter

PCs might become embroiled in the plots of a master of masks for a variety of reasons, whether allied with him in pursuit of a shared goal, intrigued by his strange magic, or opposing some deception or infiltration.

EL 10: Five years ago Rilvvin Baralstol, son of the infamous crime lord Rossoul "Clamp" Baralstol, decided to seek his own fortune away from his family's felonious business. A recent heist has put the criminal boss in possession of embarrassing documents that implicate a local noble in some tawdry affair or caper, and now he is extort-

FIRESIDE TALE

"Sit. Sit down and hear my tale. I swear to you it is the honest truth, and Olidammara take my tongue if I stray but a few dozen yards from actual fact.

"It was not long ago that I was a prettier girl—don't snicker, you!—and could work my way into a nobleman's house and go through his cabinets with nothing more than a wink, a smile, and a generously padded corset. Ah, those were the days.

"During my youth I spent as many nights in the arms of noblemen as I could—I did not often sleep alone, I can tell you that! One night, I caught the eye of a particularly wealthy and foolish young lord (how often those traits coincide!). Lured by his os-

tentatious display of finery, I approached him and sent him into a world of joy with a slight brush of my lips.

"This foolish lad put up nary a struggle as I led him into a place quieter and lonelier than the furious press of the ballroom. As time wore on and he wore down, I coaxed him into gentle sleep before regaining my adornments of the evening. Once more able to endure public scrutiny, I brought with me the silly boy's sword, hidden in the folds and bustles of my now-bulky dress.

"That sword now hangs there, above the fireplace, released from the drudgery of service rendered to such an easily swayed man-child."

ing that prominent citizen. The noble has hired Beriel, an egotistical but incredibly skilled actor, to pose as the newly returned Rilvvin and gain Rosscoul's trust to steal back the documents. The PCs accompany Beriel to complete his disguise as authentic-looking adventuring companions. Beriel's face has never been seen in public, and not even the actor's employer knows whether the master of masks is a male or a female.

BERIEL

CR 10

Human rogue 7/master of masks 3
CG Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages Celestial, Common, Elven, Halfling
AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 15; **Dodge**, **Mobility**, uncanny dodge
(+2 Dex, +2 shield, +1 deflection)
hp 38 (10 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +3, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +1 *keen dagger* +6 (1d8–1/17–20)
Ranged +1 *keen dagger* +9 (1d8–1/17–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Atk Options sneak attack +4d6
Special Actions persona masks (angel, assassin, lord, jester)
Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace*
Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 16
SQ mask specialist, trap sense +2, trapfinding
Feats Deceitful, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Persuasive
Skills Appraise +12, Balance +9, Bluff +18, Climb +5, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +18 (+20 acting), Forgery +7, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +1, Knowledge (local) +14, Listen +6, Open Lock +7, Perform (act) +16, Perform (dance) +5, Perform (oratory) +6, Perform (wind instruments) +5, Search +11, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +11, Spot +6, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks), Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +8
Possessions combat gear plus +1 *keen dagger*, *ring of force shield*, *ring of protection* +1, *dust of disappearance*, masterwork flute, masterwork thieves' tools, noble's outfit, sunrod, 3 smokesticks

MOUNTEBANK

"The best defense is to never let an enemy see your true self."

—Laughing Cedric, mountebank

Mountebanks are frauds and con artists, capable of slipping into new identities as others change clothing. While they can fit in just about anywhere they go, they are also adept at getting out of tight situations.

BECOMING A MOUNTEBANK

Bards are the most likely to branch into the mountebank prestige class. Their versatile skill selection enables them to meet the class's Knowledge and Spellcraft requirements and to develop other skills. In addition, the bard's spellcasting ability enhances the mountebank's class features.

TABLE 2–12: THE MOUNTEBANK

HIT DIE: d6

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Tongue of the devil
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Sneak attack +1d6
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Alter ego
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sideslip 1/day
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sneak attack +2d6
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Alter ego, sideslip 2/day
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Slippery mind
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	Sideslip 3/day, sneak attack +3d6
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	Alter ego
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Sideslip 4/day, sudden escape

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Appraise, Bluff, Concentration, Diplomacy, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (psionics), Listen, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Spellcraft, Spot, Tumble.

Rogues, sorcerers, and spellthieves sometimes become mountebanks to improve their battlefield mobility or to enhance existing talents of deception. Spellthief plus mountebank makes an excellent class combination for characters who fight creatures that use spell-like abilities.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Alignment: Any nonlawful.

Skills: Bluff 8 ranks, Knowledge (arcana), (local), or (psionics) 4 ranks, Spellcraft 4 ranks.

Feats: Deceitful.

CLASS FEATURES

This prestige class is all about deception in combat. As you advance, you develop sneak attack in addition to enhancing your Bluff skill, which keeps your opponents flat-footed. By the time you reach the apex of the class, you can transport yourself about the battlefield as you please, preventing your opponents from effectively fighting you.

Tongue of the Devil (Ex): Your cunning misdirection leaves others at your mercy. You add your Intelligence bonus (if any) to Bluff checks.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Beginning at 2nd level, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage when you are flanking an opponent or at any time when the target would be denied its Dexterity bonus. See the rogue class feature, PH 50. The extra damage dealt by your sneak attack increases to 2d6 at 5th level and to 3d6 at 8th level. If you get a sneak attack bonus from another source (such as rogue levels), the bonuses on damage stack.

Alter Ego (Sp): Starting at 3rd level, you establish an alternate identity. This alter ego has its own distinct physical characteristics, quirks, preferred clothing, and so on. At will, you can switch your form between that of your normal identity and that of your *alter ego*. This ability works like the *alter self* spell, except that you can assume only the

appearance of your alternate identity. Your caster level for this ability is equal to your mountebank class level.

As you advance in this prestige class, you develop additional *alter egos*, gaining a new one every three levels beyond 1st (two at 6th and three at 9th).

Sideslip (Su): Beginning at 4th level, you become supernaturally elusive. Once per day as an immediate action, you can transfer yourself from your current space to another up to 20 feet away. This ability otherwise works like the *dimension door* spell, except that you cannot transport other creatures with you. At 6th level, and at every two levels thereafter, you gain an additional daily use of sideslip.

Slippery Mind (Ex): Starting at 7th level, whenever you are affected by an enchantment spell or effect and you fail your saving throw, you can attempt it again 1 round later at the same DC. You get only one extra chance to succeed on your save using this ability.

Sudden Escape (Sp): Beginning at 10th level, you can expend two daily uses of your sideslip ability as a swift action to use *dimension door*, as the spell. Your caster level is equal to your character level.

PLAYING A MOUNTEBANK

Shrewd and quick-witted, you construct numerous false identities to keep your enemies off balance and do whatever it takes to complete your mission. With your ability to assume a flawless disguise and to slip away if the situation sours, you are nearly impossible to pin down. You are confident, irreverent, even insolent.

Combat

You're certainly no front-line fighter, but you have the potential to deal considerable damage against enemies who never see it coming. Your work best with teammates, maneuvering to get flanks and help bring down opponents with your sneak attacks. Use your sideslip ability to pop around the battlefield, slipping in and out to distract opponents while the real heavy hitters in your group mop them up.

Advancement

You were born to become a mountebank. Prior to entering the prestige class, you were probably a ne'er-do-well, a daring rogue and adventurer. The mountebank's deceit and elusiveness let you express yourself fully in the only way you know.

Now you have at least one alternate identity to maintain cover and to put distance between who you really are and how you want others to perceive you. An *alter ego* is especially useful for brokering secret deals with unsavory types, letting you keep "your" hands clean.

As you advance in the class, continue to max out your ranks in Bluff, and invest skill points in Disguise and Sleight of Hand. Ambush feats (page 71) and many feats in the *Complete Adventurer* supplement make the most of

your sneak attacks. Improved Feint is an excellent choice with your expertise in Bluff, and Combat Reflexes lets you take advantage of your battlefield repositioning to land unexpected attacks. Deft Strike and Expert Tactician, both from *Complete Adventurer*, are good choices. If you play up the infiltrator aspect of this class, consider magic (or psionic) items that help you cloak your true intentions, such as an *amulet of proof against detection and location*.

Resources

Under your various identities, you could belong to several organizations, taking advantage of the benefits derived from each. You might even join opposing groups, selling information from one side to the other, whether for noble or selfish ends. At heart, though, you are a loner. You exploit an organization only for as long as it offers you some benefit, then abandon it when it ceases to be useful.

MOUNTEBANKS IN THE WORLD

"It's all smiles and pleasantries until a knife ends up in your back."

—Cralbus, high priest of Dispater

A mountebank's chaotic tendencies and ability to mask his appearance enables him to infiltrate cults and other secretive organizations, to learn more about them and ultimately find their weak points. Those who serve the cause of good are invaluable in the fight against evil. On the other hand, wicked mountebanks use their deceptive abilities to spread discord and suffering.

Organization

Mountebanks are not attached to any particular organization. Many operate in several, often contradictory groups, working to bring them down from inside. Good mountebanks infiltrate cults devoted to devils and demons, while evil ones slip inside good-aligned religious organizations, working to dissolve the clergy from within.

NPC Reactions

Since mountebanks develop multiple personalities to move freely within communities, reactions to a given individual depend on the nature of the persona he assumes. Those within an infiltrated group see him as an ally and colleague, and react positively as long as he maintains his cover. If the mountebank's true nature is revealed, he finds less than a warm welcome. People do not like to be deceived, and NPCs who discover they have been fooled by a mountebank are unfriendly or hostile. Indeed, an evil or overzealous organization might kill the unmasked infiltrator.

MOUNTEBANK LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research mountebanks 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: Mountebanks are con artists and varlets, a thoroughly untrustworthy lot.

DC 15: What separates a mountebank from a common charlatan is his ability to switch personas. A mountebank can have several alter egos.

DC 20: Mountebanks are hard to capture. Not only do they avoid being connected to anything, they also have a knack for slipping out of impossible situations.

Player characters trying to locate a mountebank must succeed on a DC 20 Gather Information check to locate someone who can set up a meeting. It's entirely possible that the contact is the mountebank himself, though he might never reveal his true identity.

MOUNTEBANKS IN THE GAME

Mountebanks can easily fit into an ongoing campaign, since they can pass for anyone—even established NPCs. A long-standing ally could secretly be a mountebank who works against his own or another organization, using the PCs as a source of information. Alternatively, a character whom the PCs regard as a villain might be in fact a double agent who has infiltrated an evil organization.

The mountebank prestige class is a great non-evil alternative to the assassin. It is particularly attractive to players who like versatility and adaptability. In game terms, the prestige class offers a mechanical advantage when interacting with NPCs. In roleplaying terms, the class's toolkit is tailor-made for fighting insidious evil. In a campaign that centers on foiling a dastardly plot, the mountebank gives rogues specialized abilities to fight hidden masterminds.

If a campaign includes a mountebank PC, the DM should provide opportunities for him to use his *alter ego* ability. Perhaps someone he crossed in the past has learned of his true identity, forcing him to spend more and more time in his alternate personas. Challenge the PCs with dangerous plots requiring subterfuge and deception; mountebanks can come up with plans that can get the party in the door without resorting to hack-and-slash combat.

Adaptation

The mountebank class has the strongest appeal to rogues and similar characters with social expertise, but it offers little to spellcasting characters. To make this class appeal to intrigue-loving spellcasters, remove its sneak attack class feature. Instead, the character gains one level of an existing spellcasting class at each level that ordinarily grants sneak attack damage. In this way, he can load up on more enchantment, illusion, and transformation magic to enhance the class's misdirection talents.

Sample Encounter

PCs might encounter a mountebank in one of his many guises.

EL 10: Laughing Cedric is a knave and a cheat. He was always interested in magic and dabbled in spellcasting a bit, but lacked the discipline to make a serious go of it. Instead, he has become adept at snatching spells and magical abilities from those he encounters.

For a while, this tactic worked well. The spells he filched allowed him to further his larcenous nature without having to work hard. One day, he targeted a passing individual whom he took for a wizard. Much to Cedric's surprise, the spell he seized was unfamiliar—and thoroughly evil. Terrified, he released the spell's energy without casting it. The "wizard" fled, disappearing into the streets.

Cedric lay low for a while, hoping his victim would forgive the mistake, but not long afterward strange things started occurring. He was followed by black-robed people wearing queer masks. His rooms were searched, and his friends began to vanish.

Cedric can't report what he has learned to the authorities, since knowledge of his "hobby" could land him in legal trouble. He had to get away quickly, so Cedric invented "Philden Phrent," a minor oil merchant from a nearby city. He wears the merchant's identity in public while he tries to uncover who and what he made the mistake of robbing.

Cedric works at a small stall in the marketplace during the day. So far he has learned that the "wizard" is in fact a cultist of the archdevil Mammon. He needs help to destroy the cult, so he's on the lookout for a group of adventurers to back him up.



*Laughing Cedric,
a mountebank*

LAUGHING CEDRIC

Male half-elf spellthief 5/mountebank 5
 CN Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

(+2 Dex, +2 armor, +2 natural)

hp 38 (10 HD)

Immune sleep

Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4 (+6 against enchantments); +1 against spells

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk light mace +8/+3 (1d6+1)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +9 (1d8/19–20)

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

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +4d6, steal energy resistance 10, steal spell (2nd, maximum 5 levels), steal spell effect (CL 8th, maximum 5 minutes), steal spell-like ability

Special Actions sideslip 1/day

Spellthief Spells Known (CL 2nd):

1st (1/day)—*shield*, *silent image* (DC 15)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th):

At will—*alter ego* (as *alter self*, Philden Phrent only)

4/day—*detect magic*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 18

SQ trapfinding

Feats Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Improved Feint, Sly Fortune*

*New feat described in Chapter 3

Skills Balance +9, Bluff +19, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +9 (+11 acting), Escape Artist +7, Forgery +8, Gather Information +6, Hide +7, Intimidate +11, Jump +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Search +3, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +9, Spellcraft +8, Spot +4, Tumble +12, Use Magic Device +10, Use Rope +2 (+4 involving bindings)

SQ trapfinding

Possessions masterwork light mace, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +2, cloak of Charisma +2

CR 10**PSIBOND AGENT**

"Now I see you, now I see through you."

—Dieste Karisa, psibond agent

A psibond agent sees through the eyes of others, gently guiding (or in some cases forcefully commanding) her puppet to go places she could never enter herself.

BECOMING A PSIBOND AGENT

Most psibond agents begin as rogues, though a few ninjas and bards also enter the prestige class. Such individuals commonly draw the needed psionic power from the Wild Talent feat, but some psibond agents belong to naturally psionic races (such as the kalashtar from the *EBERRON* campaign setting), and others take some levels in a psionic class, usually lurk or telepathy psion.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Skills: Gather Information 8 ranks, Sense Motive 4 ranks.

Languages: Any three.

Psionics: Power point reserve of at least 1.

Special: Sneak attack +1d6.

CLASS FEATURES

A psibond agent starts as an effective spy but eventually can influence or even control the minds of others through a powerful telepathic link.

Psibond (Su): As a member of this class, you know how to create a mental link between yourself and a subject. You must be psionically focused to forge the psibond, but afterward you can expend your focus as needed to use other abilities. Establishing a psibond requires a standard action, and an unwilling subject is allowed a Will save (DC 10 + your psibond agent level + your Cha modifier) to resist. Once established, a psibond lasts as long as you concentrate, up to a maximum of 1 minute per class level. The maximum range at which a psibond can be established

LETTER OF REQUEST

To Kolven "the Poet," master of the Forbidden Craft and Creator of Fear:

My boss, Tosey "Sharkarms" Guyver, leader of the Slaughterhouse Guild, extends his greetings and most sincere commendations on your skill. I will not insult you by declaring my name, for I am unimportant.

Only my boss can even approach your greatness. I say "approach," for he knows that you are unequaled in your craft. We know of your exploits to the south—how you eliminated Baron Longacre with a spoon as he supped in a crowded room. That and other accomplishments you have performed leaves my boss greatly moved and deeply impressed. You are truly a singular power in this world, and one worthy of respect from the gods themselves.

While this letter would be justified in simply listing and prais-

ing your many inspiring acts, it has a secondary intent, which I shall relate to you now. As you undoubtedly know, artisan as you are of the Forbidden Craft, my organization is in a war against the most damnable foes: the Dead Rabbits gang. These thugs dared attack us without reason on our own turf, killing a number of our companions in cold blood.

For this reason my boss, Tosey Guyver, humbly begs your services in the quiet retirement of the Dead Rabbits' leadership. He hopes you might forgive him this request and the humble and probably insulting gift he has appended to it in the form of a small bag of gems. If you desire another form of recompense, please let it be known, and the Slaughterhouse Guild will extend it to you.

Thank you for your time.

K.H.

TESSA SENCHAN**CR 12**

Female half-elf rogue 1/wizard 6/spellwarp sniper 5
 LN Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +12 (+15 in shadow)
Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Halfling, Infernal, Undercommon, empathic link

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13
 (+2 Dex, +1 deflection, +2 natural)

hp 50 (12 HD)

Immune sleep

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk quarterstaff +6/+1 (1d6–1)

Ranged ray spells +9 touch

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Enlarge Spell, Empower Spell, sneak attack +1d6, spellwarp (maximum 5th), sudden raystrike +2d6

Special Actions ray mastery

Combat Gear 3 *potions of cure light wounds*

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 11th; 1d20+13 to overcome SR):

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 22), *repulsion* (DC 22)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *cone of cold* (DC 22), *empowered fireball* (DC 20)

4th—*dimension door*, *empowered scorching ray*, *ice storm* (2) (DC 21)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *fireball* (2) (DC 20), *ray of exhaustion*

2nd—*enlarged ray of enfeeblement*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray* (3), *web* (DC 18)

1st—*mage armor* (2), *protection from evil*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*

0—*mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (2)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 22, Wis 12, Cha 10

SQ familiar, share spells, trapfinding

Feats Alertness^B (if familiar within 5 ft.), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot^B, Enlarge Spell^B, Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll^B, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (ray)

Skills Concentration +16, Decipher Script +16, Diplomacy +2, Gather Information +6, Hide +12, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (local) +16, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +8, Search +7, Spellcraft +21, Spot +12 (+15 in shadow)

Possessions combat gear plus masterwork quarterstaff, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *ring of protection* +1, *brooch of shielding*, *headband of intellect* +4, spellbook

Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*protection from chaos*, *true strike*; 2nd—*glitterdust*; 4th—*bestow curse*, *remove curse*; 5th—*wall of force*, *wall of stone*

HOLAND, OWL FAMILIAR**CR —**

NE Tiny magical beast (augmented animal)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +14, Spot +6 (+14 in shadows)

Languages empathic link, speak with master

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 17
 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 25 (6 HD)

Resist improved evasion

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee talons +11 (1d4–3)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** –5

Atk Options deliver touch spells

Abilities Str 4, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 4

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Concentration +15, Hide +21, Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Search +0, Spot +6 (+14 in shadows)

UNCANNY TRICKSTER

“If you liked that, just wait’ll you see what’s next!”

—Ameslan Trag, uncanny trickster

The uncanny trickster combines the features of his primary class with a wider range of skill tricks than any other character can achieve.

BECOMING AN UNCANNY TRICKSTER

Because of the simple requirements for entry, the uncanny trickster appeals to a wide range of characters. Rogues, bards, rangers, and other skill-focused characters are the most likely to enter the prestige class, but the entry requirements are well within the reach of intelligent members of any class. Pure spellcasters prefer the magical trickster prestige class (page 45), while warriors find the battle trickster (page 28) more to their liking.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Skills: Any four skills 8 ranks each.

Skill Tricks: Any four.

CLASS FEATURES

The uncanny trickster excels at using skill tricks. He can use more tricks than any other character.

Class Features: At each level after 1st, you gain class features (including spellcasting ability) and an increase in effective level as if you had also gained a level in a class to which you belonged before adding the prestige class level. You do not, however, gain the benefit of your previous class's Hit Dice, attack progression, skill points, or saving throws. If you had more than one class before becoming an uncanny trickster, you must decide to which class to add each level for the purpose of determining class features.

Bonus Trick (Ex): At each 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.

Favorite Trick (Ex): You have a limited repertoire of signature stunts. At each level, choose one skill trick you know that you can perform only once per encounter. You can now use that trick one additional time per encounter. You can't choose the same skill trick more than once.

Tricky Defense (Ex): At 3rd level, you have mastered incorporating tricks into your personal defenses. In any round when you perform a skill trick, you gain a +1 competence bonus on saving throws until the start of your next turn.

TABLE 2–15: THE UNCANNY TRICKSTER

HIT DIE: D6

Level	Base				Special	Class Features
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save		
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Bonus trick, favorite trick	—
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Bonus trick, favorite trick	+1 level of existing class features
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Bonus trick, favorite trick, tricky defense	+1 level of existing class features

Class Skills (8 + Int modifier per level): Appraise, Balance, Bluff, Climb, Craft, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Perform, Profession, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Spot, Swim, Tumble, Use Magic Device, Use Rope.

PLAYING AN UNCANNY TRICKSTER

You know more tricks than anyone else, and you can use your tricks more frequently. Many scoundrels use tricks to augment their other abilities, but you take the opposite outlook: You rely on your tricks and use your other abilities in support of them.

You work well with others, especially those who can perform skill tricks or have abilities that emulate tricks. Becoming a trick expert instantly affiliates you with a very loose fellowship of tricksters (battle, magical, and uncanny). 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

"Full of surprises" best describes your fighting style. You enter combat cautiously, setting the tone of your contribution. While the fighters slug it out and the casters stay in the back slinging spells, you move around unpredictably, always looking for an opportunity to deliver a sudden finishing blow.

If you prefer fighting from range, use movement tricks to get yourself somewhere safe on the battlefield, as far from the main engagement as possible. From this more secure vantage point, you can use your ranged attacks (including appropriate skill tricks) to support your allies.

Advancement

Becoming an uncanny trickster requires hard work and sacrifice. While others devote their training to learning only skills, you seek a balance between skills and tricks. You need to invest in skills, since you need a minimum level of competence in a skill before attempting new and spectacular applications of it, but you devote as many skill points as you can to tricks. Thus, you know many skills but have mastered few (if any).

Interaction and mental tricks can be very useful in combat, but you should focus on movement tricks to get yourself safely around the battlefield. The prestige class offers both plentiful skill points and more bonus skill tricks than any other, so buy as many tricks as you can afford. Maximize your potential by picking up feats that grant bonus skill tricks as well (see Chapter 3).

Resources

Although you might not have realized it when you became an uncanny 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.

THE CLERIC AND THE CON

Ambersmill, 714 CY

The setting sun cast a hellish glow over the abandoned hamlet of Ambersmill, its red light turning fields of tobacco and devilweed to seas of blood.

Or at least, that's how it seemed to the shaky acolyte of Pelor.

In reality, the dusk warmly illuminated a peaceful, ordinary-looking farm village. The chill breeze of the coming night blew through still-open windows, the whistle of its passage the only noise.

"So where are the devils?" Essan whispered, the novice barely able to keep the tremble from his voice. "The refugees said the town was crawling with them! Why did they send us to scout if—"

"Shhh! How am I supposed to bloody know?" came Sheis's hiss. "Just keep your voice down."

Even though the woman was supposedly a veteran scout,

Essan could see her knuckles stark white against the dark hilt of her long, black-bladed knife. Hunched behind her as the pair hid in a shadowy alley at the village's edge, the nervous cleric scrutinized her heavy leather pack, her new-looking belt, and her barely scuffed boots. Sheis had been hired by the church to investigate reports of demons, and every inch of her looked the woodwise hunter—too much so.

"You're not really a ranger, are you?" Essan blurted the words before he could even think to bite them back.

Sheis spun around, momentarily wide-eyed, then her look quickly lightened. "Do you know how much the church pays for these little forays? Why should some forest-skipper get that much coin?" She turned back to look out over the town, her beaded red hair jingling as she nodded toward a manor overlooking the hamlet.

"Up there. I think I see something," she whispered, standing. "It's too late to back out on this now."

Essan took a long gulp and whimpered as he rose to follow. "Pelor preserve us."

UNCANNY TRICKSTERS IN THE WORLD

"I've seen his kind before. Just when you think you've seen everything he has to offer, he surprises you."

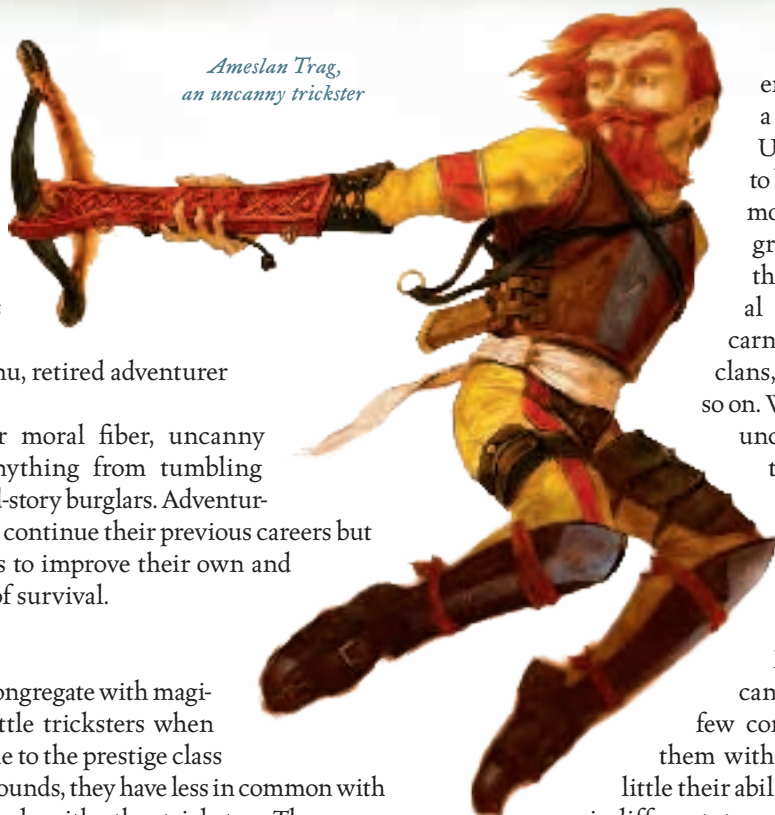
—Guled Conu, retired adventurer

Depending on their moral fiber, uncanny tricksters can be anything from tumbling entertainers to second-story burglars. Adventuring characters simply continue their previous careers but use their many tricks to improve their own and their allies' chances of survival.

Organization

Uncanny tricksters congregate with magical tricksters and battle tricksters when possible. Having come to the prestige class from different backgrounds, they have less in common with one another than they do with other tricksters. 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.

*Ameslan Trag,
an uncanny trickster*



These gatherings, though enjoyable, do not represent a structured organization. Uncanny tricksters looking to become part of something more permanent usually join groups that appreciate both their abilities and their moral choices: thieves' guilds, carnivals, monasteries, ninja clans, adventuring groups, and so on. Within an organization, an uncanny trickster performs the role of his former adventuring class, enhanced with unusual techniques.

NPC Reactions

Most people look on uncanny tricksters with awe. A few conceited individuals view them with contempt and try to belittle their abilities, generally displaying indifferent to unfriendly attitudes. Adventurers respect uncanny tricksters for their discipline and training, and are generally friendly toward them.

Common folk do not understand the difference between uncanny tricksters and other trickster classes, so their atti-

UP IN SMOKES

Ambersmill, 714 CY

Bloody clerics! Sheis waved her hand rapidly, motioning for the overweight Pelorian to join her where she crouched at the base of a statue near the abandoned town's center. *I should never have conned my way into this job.*

With a trundling charge, Essan crashed into the statue next to the supposed ranger. He huffed in a most unstealthy manner, an irregular wheeze that turned Sheis's thoughts momentarily to suffocation. Refocusing her mind on the matter at hand, she pointed at the nearby manor house until the cleric composed himself enough to follow the line of her finger.

"Up there. See that?" she whispered, still holding onto at least the illusion of stealth. "Smoke."

Indeed, from the open doors of the many-pillared manor trailed several long wisps of gray-white smoke. Not the billowing clouds of some uncontrolled blaze, but a number of thin tendrils.

Trying to keep to the shadows, the pair approached the manor and climbed its cracked marble steps. The whitewashed front doors were thrown wide, allowing the smoke to issue forth. As Sheis neared, she caught a whiff of one of the lazily curling wisps, a scent that reminded her of every seedy dockside tavern or devilweed den she'd ever slumped in. Holding up a hand to stay the cleric behind her, Sheis slowly peered around the corner of the door frame.

Within lay the lavish entry hall of a landed noble's manor: a gaudy, self-indulgent display of fine stone, polished wood, rococo sculpture, and pretentious art. At its center smoldered a small fire surrounded by tobacco-leaf wrappings and empty humidors, giving off a column of intoxicating smoke that filled the room with its heady scents. Gawking at the sight, Sheis stumbled backward at the sound of the harsh, wheezing voice that boomed from the fire.

"Foolish human! Know you not that I am feared among your kind? Bow down and cower! Hide your face from Abernathanorial, Doom of Dryads, Dearth of Light, Demon of Darkest Smoke!"

Essan nearly bolted, but Sheis quickly drew one of her smaller blades—her luckiest one—and threw it directly at the pillar of smoke.

"Ooow!" came a shrill squeak, followed by a racking cough. Knitting her brow, Sheis marched right up to the smoking fire. She reached into the column of smoke and, to Essan's amazement, yanked out something dark and writhing. A minuscule form only about 2 feet tall, the gray thing looked like a human caricature, with a beaklike nose and beady black eyes, seemingly made of living smoke. In one wispy hand it clutched a fine, long pipe.

"Here's the 'demon invasion' those superstitious villagers were ranting about." She is barely held back a chuckle as she shook the spluttering creature at the amazed cleric. "A mephit with a bad habit and a sharp tongue!"

tudes span the spectrum. However, because some tricksters use their abilities to take advantage of less talented folk, a victim of such exploitation has a negative view of all tricksters, magical or otherwise, and is unfriendly at best.

UNCANNY TRICKSTER LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research uncanny 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: Uncanny tricksters know more skill tricks than anyone else.

DC 15: An uncanny trickster continues to practice his other abilities even as he masters tricks, so he's capable of much more than just a few stunts.

DC 20: Uncanny tricksters don't have a formal organization, but they do occasionally gather with others who respect their talents.

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

The easiest way to find an uncanny trickster is at a trickster gathering. Because such events are rare, however, PCs seeking out an uncanny trickster should contact groups that are likely to seek out their talents, as described above.

UNCANNY TRICKSTERS IN THE GAME

Uncanny tricksters make interesting opponents. They have such a wide variety of abilities available to them that no two are ever the same. Their abilities, particularly those that allow for escape and evasion, can make them particularly frustrating opponents and set them up well as recurring villains.

A player who likes to surprise the DM or other players or who wants to bring cinematic action into a campaign would probably enjoy playing an uncanny trickster. The prestige class offers opportunities to perform actions otherwise not covered in the rules. An uncanny trickster character can fill any number of roles in a party, depending on his other class or classes.

Adaptation

The uncanny 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 that enhance movement and defense can repurpose the character as a sneaky combatant with a more generalized approach to skills.

Sample Encounter

Unpredictable and talented, uncanny tricksters could show up anywhere, doing anything. PCs might encounter one at a trickster gathering, or in battle beside one or opposite one.

EL 10: Ameslan Trag uses his many abilities to protect the weak and punish the wicked. He always has a trick up his sleeve and can readily get out of scrapes that would otherwise finish him. PCs might run into Ameslan in the middle of a seemingly desperate fight—he tends to get in over his head, then pulls out several tricks to suddenly win the day. Depending on the situation, the party might come to his aid or merely watch in amusement.

AMESLAN TRAG

CR 10

Male gnome rogue 7/uncanny trickster 3

CG Small humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +5, Spot +13

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnome, Orc

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 19; +4 AC against giants, improved uncanny dodge

(+1 size, +3 Dex, +3 armor, +1 deflection, +1 natural)

hp 68 (10 HD)

Resist evasion

Fort +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +5; +2 on saves against illusions

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee mwk short sword +7/+2 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +11 (1d6+1/19–20)

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

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, +1 on attacks against kobolds and goblinoids, sneak attack +5d6

Special Actions favorite trick (Slipping Past, Spot the Weak Point, Twisted Charge), skill tricks

Combat Gear *panic button* (strengthening)*

*New magic item described in Chapter 5

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):

1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 10), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals* (burrowing mammal only, duration 1 minute)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 9

SQ trap sense +3, trapfinding, tricky defense

Feats Freerunner*, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse

*New feat described in Chapter 3

Skills Balance +18, Bluff +12, Climb +12, Craft (alchemy) +3, Diplomacy +1, Disguise –1 (+1 acting), Escape Artist +16, Hide +20, Intimidate +1, Jump +14, Listen +5, Move Silently +17, Sleight of Hand +18, Spot +13, Swim +4, Tumble +18, Use Rope +3 (+5 involving bindings)

Skill Tricks* Acrobatic Backstab, Back on Your Feet, Corner Perch, Escape Attack, Leaping Climber, Mosquito's Bite, Quick Swim, Slipping Past, Spot the Weak Point, Twisted Charge, Wall Walker

*Described in Chapter 3

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *leather armor*, masterwork short sword, +1 *light crossbow* with 40 bolts and 10 adamantine bolts, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of feather falling*, thieves' tools