

BOOK of BLADES

EXPANDING THE FIGHTER



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KOBOLD
Press





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INTRODUCTION

Fighters are masters of weapons and tactics, drawing on years of combat training—enough to overcome any obstacle. They are versatile, proficient in all manner of weapons and armors, and rely on athletic prowess to outmaneuver and overpower their enemies.

TACTICAL OVERVIEW

Fighters fill a classic niche in fantasy roleplaying games as versatile weapon masters. They rarely shrink from a fight and are stalwart shields, ferocious blades, and expert marksmen. With high hit points, proficiency in Strength and Constitution saving throws, and multiple attacks provided by class features, fighters can deal out massive amounts of damage and take their fair share of damage in return.

Because fighters are so flexible, consider the type of fighter you want to portray and your role you in battle. Will you be a front-line tank in heavy armor and with a sword and shield, holding the line against your foes? Will you be a dual-wielder, forgoing the extra AC from a shield to dish out more pain? Or will you rush into the fray with a massive two-handed axe, cleaving enemies in a wave before you? Do you want to dabble in magic or stick to mastering the mundane?

This isn't even everything! Consider the angles to pick a specialty that feels fun to play.

INSPIRATION

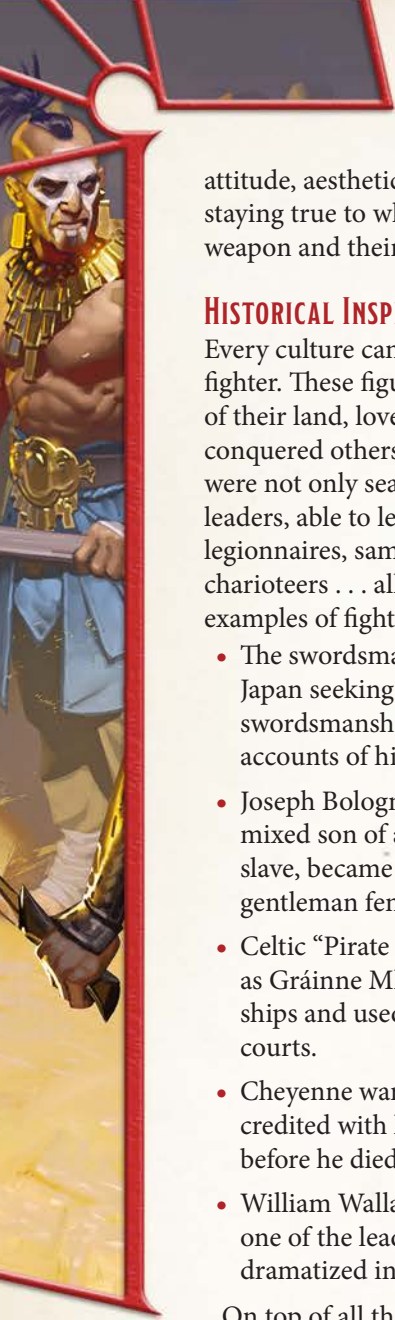
There is no lack for inspiration across media. Books, TV, and movies, historical and fictional alike, brim with heroes who wield sword or axe or bow. Sometimes they train at the feet of a master and often develop their own style after years of study and practice.

Perhaps one of these figures made you want to play a fighter in the first place. If you're looking for inspiration, the following sections call out a few of our favorites.

FICTIONAL INSPIRATION

Fighters fill the pages of fantasy novels and grace combat scenes on both the big and small screens. Concepts to make a fighter character in early RPGs were drawn from classical literature all the way up to “weird” fiction from the 20th century. Odysseus, Zorro, and John Carter of Mars are seminal examples.

In modern times, there is no lack of fantasy fighter inspiration at your fingertips. Consult any fantasy novel, TV show, or video game in the last twenty years to find ample guidance. Each brings their own



attitude, aesthetics, and fighting styles to the role while staying true to what makes a fighter a fighter—their weapon and their spirit.

HISTORICAL INSPIRATION

Every culture can point to their own version of a fighter. These figures wielded weapons in defense of their land, loved ones, or livelihood—or they conquered others. Many of the most famous fighters were not only seasoned warriors but also great leaders, able to lead their people to victory. Knights, legionnaires, samurai, Inca warriors, Egyptian charioteers . . . all over the globe, history teems with examples of fighters and fighting styles to inspire you:

- The swordsman Miyamoto Musashi wandered Japan seeking challengers to perfect his swordsmanship. Musashi documented the accounts of his duels in *The Book of Five Rings*.
- Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the mixed son of a French nobleman and an African slave, became a swordsman of great renown—a gentleman fencer.
- Celtic “Pirate Queen” Grace O’Malley (also known as Gráinne Mhaol) commanded a fleet of raiding ships and used her wit to humiliate the English courts.
- Cheyenne warrior, Buffalo Calf Road Woman is credited with knocking General Custer off his horse before he died at the Battle of Little Big Horn.
- William Wallace, the Scottish knight who became one of the leaders for Scottish independence, was dramatized in the movie *Braveheart*.

On top of all this, a number of interesting books were written by or for warriors, offering tactics, codes, ethics, and mindsets that can help in developing a fighter character:

- *Hagakure* by Yamamoto Tsunetomo was written as a spiritual guide for samurai.
- *Meditations on Violence* by Sgt. Rory Miller looks at martial arts and the realities of violence.
- *The Book of Chivalry* by Geoffroi de Charny describes the ethics of knighthood.
- *The Warrior Ethos* by Steven Pressfield examines the ethos and codes held by a variety of ancient and contemporary warriors.

CHARACTER OPTIONS

While fighters are proficient in all types of armor and weapons, not all fighters opt for heavy armor and hand-to-hand combat. Some focus on ranged fighting, others pick up magic to support their martial skills, and still others want the flexibility to adapt as the flow of combat changes.

When you create your fighter, picture their favorite fighting style. Do they want to be a stalwart shield between their friends and enemies, or do they wish to move across the battlefield, striking down danger as it rears its head and aiding allies as the need arises?

This section includes two new fighting style options for fighters at 2nd level, a new martial archetype for a fighter to choose when they reach 3rd level, and two new backgrounds for the fighter class.

FIGHTING STYLE OPTIONS

Fighters choose a specialty fighting style at 2nd level. Add these styles to your options list.

ARBALIST SKIRMISHING

You can wield a one-handed ranged weapon with the loading property in one hand and a light weapon in your other hand. You can still load the ranged weapon while doing so. In addition, whenever you gain an extra attack while using a ranged weapon with the loading property in one hand, you can take the extra attack with a light weapon in your other hand.

If you wield a heavy crossbow, you can use the shoulder stock to make a melee attack that deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Finally, you can use your weapon’s ammunition as a melee weapon that deals 1d4 piercing damage. Using ammunition in this manner destroys it.

LIGHT ARMOR STYLE

You learn advanced maneuvers to avoid attacks while wearing light armor. When fighting in light or no armor, add your fighter class proficiency modifier to your AC.

NEW SUBCLASS: SKIRMISHER

The Skirmisher is a versatile fighter who uses ranged attacks, melee attacks, and mobility to evade incoming strikes and reach enemies anywhere on the battlefield. They typically use a crossbow with a light weapon in the other hand for flexibility, taking aim at one foe while dodging another’s attacks, slipping away to a more advantageous position.

Skirmishers fill rank and file positions of many armies. Most come from the common class—sons and daughters of farmers and shepherds dragged into conflict. Lacking the wealth to purchase heavy armor and swords, any training they receive is hasty and informal. To their commanders, skirmishers are expendable. They make strategic strikes against enemies to whittle them down until the heavy infantry rolls in.

Skirmishers train with light armor, crossbows, daggers, and other light throwing weapons. They practice hit-and-run tactics, focusing on deadly ranged attacks and guile to offset their movement.

AGILE

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain +2 to all Dexterity saving throws and Dexterity skill checks made while you're wearing light or no armor.

CROSSBOW FINESSE

Also at 3rd level, you can fire more than once in a turn with a crossbow, or other ranged weapon with the loading property, which you are proficient with, ignoring that property's typical penalty against it.

In addition, if you use the Attack action and make a ranged weapon attack with a hand crossbow, you can use your bonus action to make an attack with a light melee weapon you are holding in your other hand.

FOCUSED AIM

Starting at 7th level, you may use your bonus action to take precise, specific aim. When you do so, you gain a bonus equal to your proficiency modifier on ranged weapon attacks against one target and disadvantage to hit all other targets until the start of your next turn.

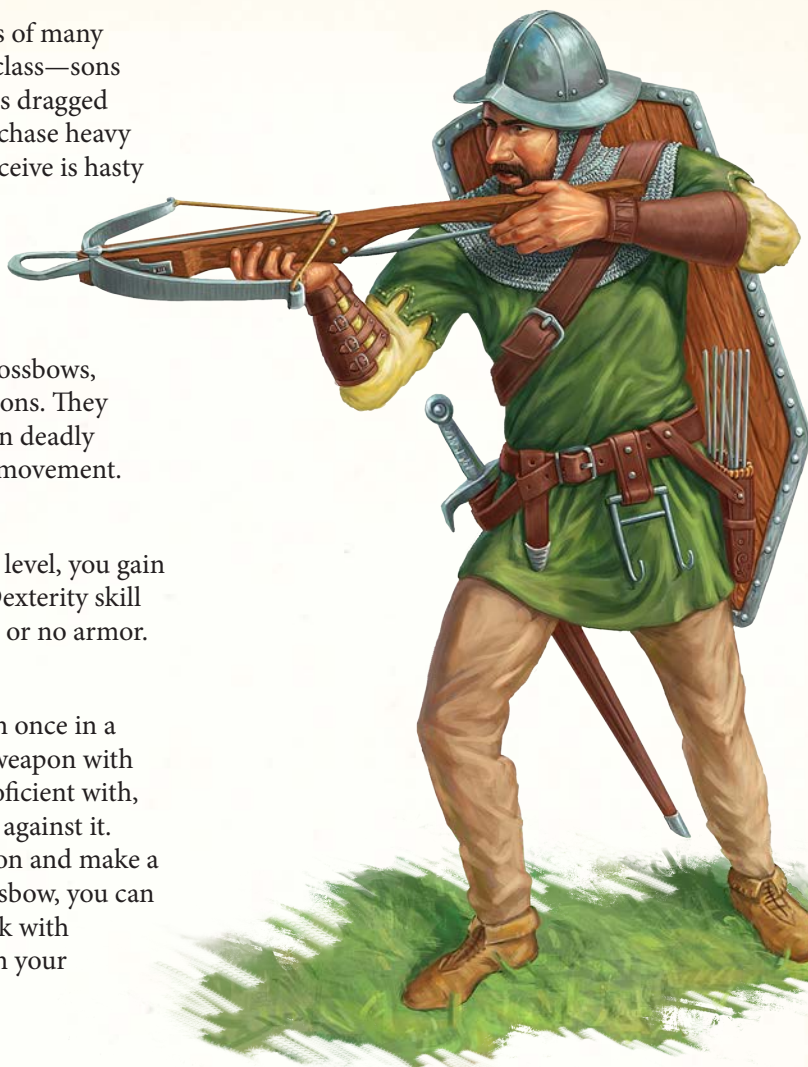
JUKE

At 10th level, you become more difficult to pin down on the battlefield. When a creature misses you with an attack roll, you can use your reaction to immediately move up to half your movement without provoking attacks of opportunity.

In addition, when a creature makes a melee attack roll against you, if you are wielding a light weapon in one hand, you can use your reaction to increase your AC by a number equal to your Dexterity modifier.

ADDITIONAL FIGHTING STYLE

Also at 10th level, you can choose a second option from the Fighting Style class feature.

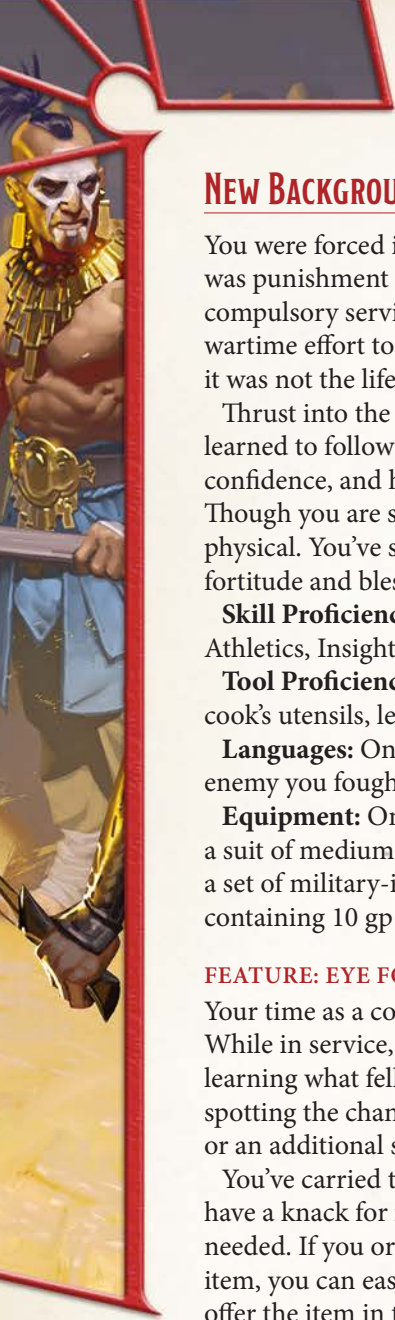


BLEEDING STRIKE

Starting at 15th level, when you hit an opponent with a crossbow bolt, your ammunition strikes an artery or similarly sensitive spot, and the target bleeds profusely. At the start of the target's next turn, it takes one additional weapon die of damage. Each round thereafter, the target must make a Constitution saving throw against DC 8 + your Proficiency bonus + your Wisdom bonus. Success ends this effect. On a failure, the target takes another weapon die of damage.

KEEN REFLEXES

Starting at 18th level, you are particularly adept at responding to changes on the battlefield. You can take two reactions in a turn.



NEW BACKGROUND: CONSCRIPT

You were forced into military service. Perhaps it was punishment for a crime, part of your realm's compulsory service, to pay off a debt, or due to a wartime effort to bolster forces. Whatever the reason, it was not the life you would have chosen.

Thrust into the world of the military, you quickly learned to follow orders, wield your weapons with confidence, and hold the line against enemy forces. Though you are strong, your true strength isn't physical. You've survived on a mixture of mental fortitude and blessings from the gods of luck.

Skill Proficiencies: Choose two from Acrobatics, Athletics, Insight, and Medicine

Tool Proficiencies: Choose one from cobbler's tools, cook's utensils, leatherworker's tools, and smith's tools

Languages: One of your choice (associated with an enemy you fought against)

Equipment: One martial weapon (of your choice), a suit of medium armor, a military-issue boot knife, a set of military-issue common clothes, a pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: EYE FOR OPPORTUNITY

Your time as a conscript taught you how to get by. While in service, this meant making quick alliances, learning what fellow soldiers liked and disliked, and spotting the chance to bargain or barter for boot laces or an additional serving of rations.

You've carried this skill into the civilian world and have a knack for finding just what's needed, when needed. If you or any of your allies need a mundane item, you can easily track down someone willing to offer the item in trade or sale.

Additionally, you're good at reading people. You can easily pick out the person in the crowd to talk to regarding whatever it is you need. This might not get you directly to your goal though, and you often find yourself doing a string of favors for several people before you achieve your objective.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Conscripts can come from a variety of backgrounds and lifestyles, but all have one thing in common: they did not choose this path. Whatever the reason for their forced service, conscripts had other plans and dreams to pursue before they ended up in war. Whether you have since found a new home among your fellow soldiers or resent every moment of your service, your time in the military fundamentally changed you.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I would do anything to avoid returning to service.
- 2 I'm resentful of those in power, particularly those I view as reckless with their authority.
- 3 I tell inappropriate jokes to mask the trauma of war.
- 4 I can sleep anywhere.
- 5 I prefer the structure of routine and keep my belongings in impeccable order.
- 6 I prefer to let others make the hard decisions.
- 7 My time in service has hardened me to sights of suffering.
- 8 I think less of those who have not served.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Loyalty.** We are all part of something greater than ourselves, and we all have our part to play, regardless of our own wants and needs. (Lawful)
- 2 **Freedom.** No one should be forced into a life they do not want. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Comradeship.** I'm loyal to those who fight beside me, not to some ruler in a far-off ivory tower. (Neutral)
- 4 **Force.** The laws and morals of men mean nothing on the battlefield. The only thing that matters is that you defeat your enemies. (Evil)
- 5 **Compassion.** We're all in this together and must do what we can to help those around us. (Good)
- 6 **Optimism.** Every situation has a silver lining. You just have to look for it. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I would sacrifice everything for my fellow soldiers.
- 2 The weak need defending from those who would exploit them. I never want anyone to go through what I went through.
- 3 The only things I can rely on are my weapon and myself.
- 4 I lied to get conscripted in place of a loved one. No one must ever know the truth.
- 5 I have a list of those who have wronged me, and I will not rest until I've seen vengeance.
- 6 I look upon my companions and fellow conscripts as family.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I was the lone survivor after a horrible battle. That moment still haunts me. I will never forgive myself for failing my fellow soldiers.
- 2 I never truly know the measure of a person until I see them in battle, and then I judge them harshly.
- 3 I'm a deserter. If I'm ever discovered by my former company, it would mean my death.
- 4 I use alcohol to cope with my past and often drink to excess.
- 5 Anyone who reminds me of the horrors of my conscripted life triggers flashbacks and verbal outbursts.
- 6 I sometimes steal trinkets or small items as an act of rebellion.

NEW BACKGROUND: JUDICIAL CHAMPION

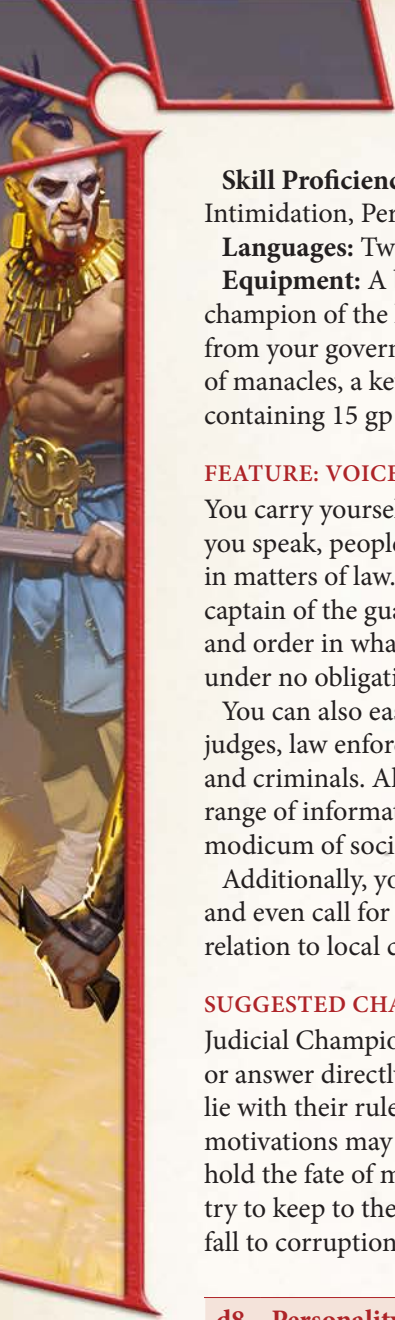
You serve the law, acting as judge, jury, and executioner in matters of trial by combat for your village, town, or city. Or perhaps you roam the realm, hearing cases and presiding over trials in more remote areas of the countryside where you act as the voice of the regime, meting out justice as you see fit. You've studied history and law as much as you've learned to wield your weapon, and you consider yourself the authority in such matters.

Additional responsibilities include protecting judges and court officials, detention and transport of prisoners, and delivering summons and warrants. Trials by combat, public floggings, and even literal executions might also fall to you.

The court expects you to uphold your duties and act lawfully when you display or announce your position. Still, judicial champions face moral quandaries, such as upholding sentences they feel are unjust and criminals attempting to work the system through bribery and extortion.



BRYAN SYME



Skill Proficiencies: Choose two from History, Intimidation, Perception, and Sense Motive

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A brooch identifying you as a judicial champion of the local court, a writ of authority from your government, a set of fine clothes, a set of manacles, a key to the local jail, and a pouch containing 15 gp

FEATURE: VOICE OF AUTHORITY

You carry yourself with an authoritative air. When you speak, people listen, and your voice carries weight in matters of law. You can gain an audience with the captain of the guard or the primary authority on law and order in whatever town you're in (though they are under no obligation to capitulate to your will).

You can also easily make acquaintance with local judges, law enforcement agents, legal arbitrators, and criminals. All these connections provide a broad range of informational access, legal support, and a modicum of social privilege.

Additionally, you can detain citizens for questioning and even call for arrest, provided you establish a relation to local court activities.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Judicial Champions may serve a crown, a parliament, or answer directly to the people. Their loyalties may lie with their ruler, the law, or themselves. Their motivations may differ, but all judicial champions hold the fate of multitudes in their hands. While some try to keep to the path of righteousness, others may fall to corruption, greed, and manipulation.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I take my duty seriously and consider my position a mark of pride.
- 2 I view profanity as base and beneath me.
- 3 I strive to deliver justice in a way that is both fair and merciful.
- 4 I consider authority figures worthy of unquestioning respect.
- 5 Public displays of affection make me uncomfortable.
- 6 I can't help but get sucked into arguments about philosophy and law, whether real or theoretical.
- 7 I have a fondness for sweets and often overindulge.
- 8 I speak with impeccable grammar to demonstrate my education and virtue.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Law.** Law and order are the cornerstones of a civilized society. Without them, we are no better than animals. (Lawful)
- 2 **Battle.** Combat separates the righteous from the immoral. A loss in battle indicates a weak sense of self. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Power.** Prowess in combat is but a path to authority. Those with such power should not be afraid to wield it. (Neutral)
- 4 **Victory.** Winning is more important than integrity. (Evil)
- 5 **Honor.** No victory is worth sacrificing your principles. No law that is unjust should be enforced. (Good)
- 6 **Authority.** Those in positions of power are in those positions for a reason. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I'm committed completely to the rule of law. To violate that would be to undermine my very core.
- 2 The common folk are the heart of every civilization. I do what I do to keep them safe and honor them.
- 3 I or someone I love was the victim of an awful crime when I was younger, and the perpetrator was never brought to justice. I hope that one day our paths will cross again, so I can right the wrong done so long ago.
- 4 Leaders die, laws change. People are what matter.
- 5 The only way to get what you want from the world is to take it. Having authority just makes it easier.
- 6 My voice is the only one that matters.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I never miss the opportunity to express my disdain for lawbreakers, even those who claim they have reformed.
- 2 I think I know best, even in matters and topics I'm not familiar with.
- 3 I once won a trial combat against someone who was innocent. My victory meant their death. The doubt has plagued me ever since.
- 4 I abandoned my post rather than enforce an unjust law. I fear what will happen if I'm found.
- 5 I struggle to understand cultural norms that differ from mine.
- 6 I am attracted to criminals and once had an affair with a thieves' guild member who used me to get information from a judge.

SINGLE COMBAT

Adventurous sorts occasionally find themselves in circumstances that pit a single combatant against another single combatant, especially in matters of honor. These fights often manifest as duels, jousts, wrestling matches, and trials by combat.

Standard combat might not fit the flow or atmosphere of such situations, so an alternate optional ruleset is presented here. These single combat mechanics provide GMs and players a method for resolving contests of nonlethal intent to create dramatic, fast-paced resolutions.

SINGLE COMBAT RULES

The core mechanics of all types of single combat are described here and then expanded in the following sections to represent specific scenarios.

Single combat doesn't use standard initiative. Instead, each combatant makes an initiative roll at the beginning of each round of single combat to determine which creature acts first that round.

Most types of single combat have a set number of rounds before the combat ends—the default is 3.

In the event of a tie after the set number of rounds ends, combatants continue for an additional round until one participant earns more successes. Combatants can only fight a number of additional rounds equal to their Constitution modifier (minimum 1) before they succumb to exhaustion and can no longer fight. If a round ends and one combatant can no longer fight, that combatant falls unconscious, and the combatant left standing is the victor.

Each combatant may make one weapon attack roll on their turn during each round of single combat. This attack roll is made by rolling a d20 and adding the attacker's relevant weapon attack bonuses to hit the defending combatant's AC. If an attacking combatant rolls a 1 on this attack roll or misses the target by 5 or more, the defender can immediately make an additional attack—allowing for a maximum of two attacks in a round.

Each time a combatant lands a successful hit, they gain 1 point. When the set number of rounds ends, or another win condition is triggered, each combatant tallies their points, and the combatant with the most points wins the combat.

The losing combatant is automatically reduced to 0 hit points and considered unconscious but stable—unless their opponent declared they wished to deal lethal damage at the start of the single combat (see specific single combat rules). Unless the GM rules otherwise, a losing combatant can be restored to full health after completing a short rest.

Optional Rule. If you would like to track damage as part of a single combat, a GM can choose to calculate weapon damage normally or have combatants reduce their hit points by a larger percentage each time an attacker lands a successful hit against them. Damage tracked in this way is assumed to be nonlethal.

CHEATING

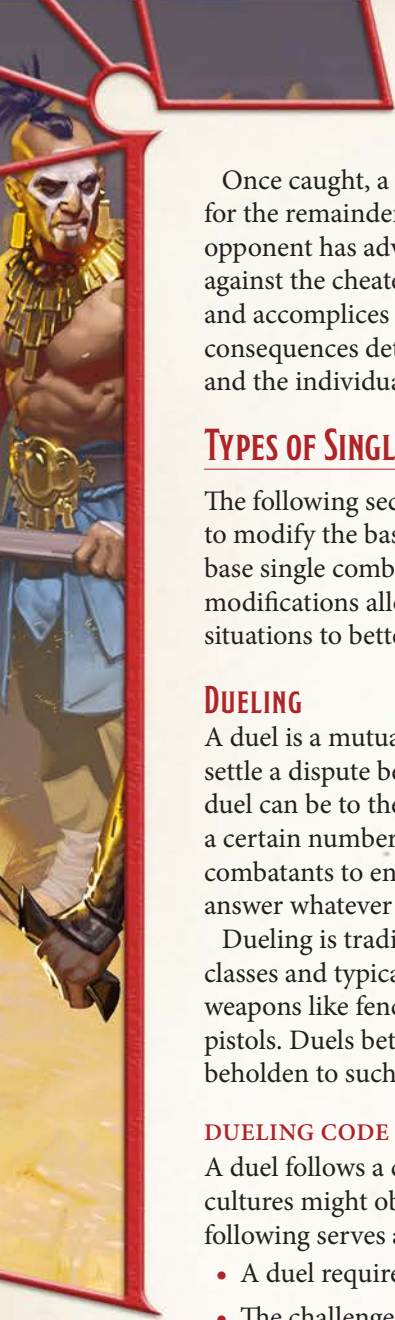
During single combat, an attacker can attempt to cheat once per round. To do so, an attacker must declare an attempt to cheat after they make their attack roll but before the GM declares the results of the attack.

The cheater immediately rerolls their d20 and must use it to determine the new attack roll. If the new roll exceeds the target's AC by more than 5, misses the target's AC by more than 5, or is a 1, the cheater is caught.

SPELLCASTING AND SINGLE COMBAT

If the GM allows it, a combatant can use a spell in place of making a weapon attack roll on their turn. A spell used in single combat must have a casting time of 1 action and must be a spell that requires the caster to make a spell attack against the target.

All other spellcasting rules apply to single combats, including the inability to cast two spells of 1st level or higher on the same round—even in the instance that a defender gets an extra attack in response to a failed attack roll against them.



Once caught, a combatant cannot attempt to cheat for the remainder of the single combat, and their opponent has advantage on the next attack roll made against the cheater. At the GM's discretion, cheaters and accomplices might well face additional narrative consequences determined by the nature of the contest and the individuals running it.

TYPES OF SINGLE COMBAT

The following sections introduce additional options to modify the base single combat rules. While the base single combat rules work universally, these modifications allow a GM to tailor single combat situations to better represent unique situations.

DUELING

A duel is a mutually agreed upon fight arranged to settle a dispute between two single combatants. A duel can be to the death. However, more often, it is to a certain number of hits or until first blood, allowing combatants to engage in just enough violence to answer whatever insult triggered the duel.

Dueling is traditionally a practice reserved for noble classes and typically uses lighter, more “refined” weapons like fencing foils, rapiers, and on occasion, pistols. Duels between soldiers or others are not beholden to such niceties.

DUELING CODE

A duel follows a certain code of conduct. Different cultures might observe different codes, but the following serves an excellent guide:

- A duel requires a formal challenge and acceptance.
- The challenger names a time, a location, and terms of the duel (standard duel, ranged duel, or to the death). The defender declares the types of weapons to be used in the duel and can elevate (but not reduce) terms of the duel as they see fit.
- If more intricate terms are necessary, such as the allowance of armor or magic, one duelist can make a demand, followed by a demand made by the second combatant. The first duelist can then make another demand or set another parameter, if necessary, followed by the second duelist. Demands and parameters continue in turns until both parties are satisfied or until one duelist forfeits their opportunity to make a demand. If either party refuses a demand, they forfeit the duel.
- Each duelist must name a second, who fights in their stead if they are unable to meet the challenge at the prescribed time and place.

- Once the duel begins, no one may intercede, and the duel must continue until the terms are satisfied. Once the terms are satisfied though, any duelist who continues fighting automatically loses and is considered disgraced.
- Negotiation of terms is often part of the duel itself, and a character's ability to gain favorable terms is a mark of pride. Such negotiations may take place in private, before the head of a noble household, or even in the presence of a judge or liege who must approve the agreed-upon terms.
- A duelist's conduct during a duel is just as important as winning. Bad behavior can cause a winner to be shunned by society, and their opinion may hold less weight in future disagreements. Few honorable fighters accept a duel from one who has previously exhibited poor behavior—or cheating of any kind—in such settings.

RULES MODIFICATIONS

This section covers suggested modifications to the base single combat rules when engaging in specific types of duels.

STANDARD DUEL

A standard duel ends when a certain number of hits are scored by one of the combatants, typically 3. In such instances, follow the base single combat rules with the following exceptions:

- The single combat ends as soon as one combatant makes three successful attacks—or whatever the target number is—against their opponent. The combatant who reaches this number first is the winner.
- In a standard duel, both combatants are typically limited to wearing light armor or no armor. Weapons in such a duel are usually dull or have their points capped so as not to needlessly injure the combatants unless use of lethal weapons are part of the negotiated terms.

RANGED DUEL

Duelists using ranged weapons make only one opposed attack roll. Hit or miss, this ends the duel. The highest successful attack roll wins.

Unlike melee duels, ranged duels have a greater chance of being lethal. If both shots hit, both duelists take damage—there is no “first touch” in a ranged duel. A duelist who takes a fatal shot may roll death saves to see if they survive. If neither opponent hits, the matter is settled. They only need fire again if both duelists wish it.

DUEL TO THE DEATH

Duels to the death might operate under different terms. Duelists may find themselves as armored as they wish and may use whatever weapons and abilities they have at their disposal as long as they remain within the agreed-upon parameters.

WRESTLING

Wrestling pits two opponents against one another in a feat of contested strength and agility. A wrestling match consists of very simple rules: no armor, no weapons, no magic.

RULES MODIFICATIONS

Wrestling uses regular single combat rules with the following exceptions.

Instead of determining victory by gaining points, a combatant's goal is to pin their opponent. If a new round begins with one combatant pinned, the pinning combatant is the victor! In some cases, an alternate victory condition is putting an opponent outside a circle on the ground (or other defined wrestling area).

- **Pin.** You pin a creature grappled by you. The target becomes restrained until the grapple ends. A pinned target can only use its action to attempt to escape (DC equals $10 + \text{your Strength or Dexterity modifier}$) the pin, which also escapes the grapple. If the escape attempt fails and you have the target pinned when a new round of single combat begins, you win the match!

JOUSTING

Jousting is a form of entertainment for many royal courts and provides an opportunity for knights to prove their prowess and earn the favor of their sovereign.

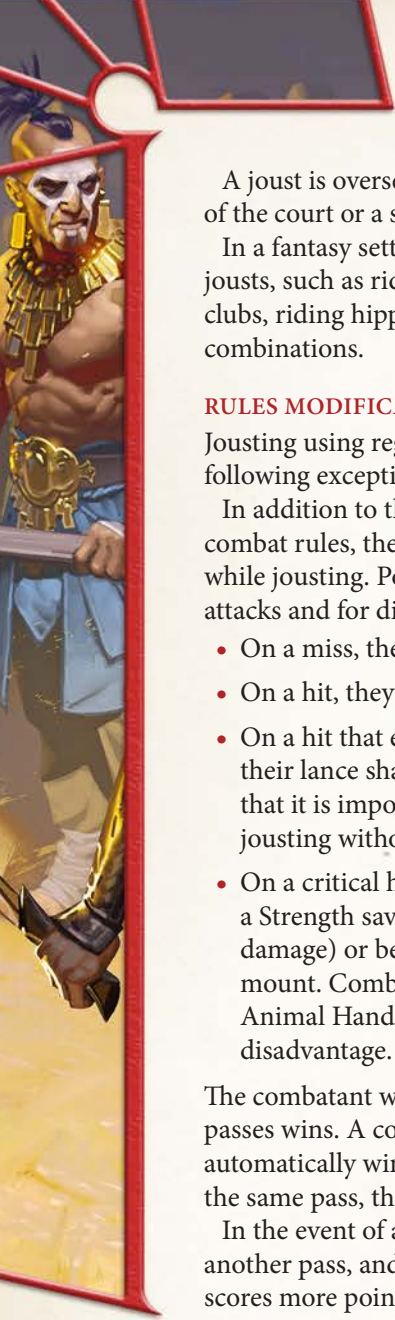
Traditional jousting is a mounted event where two opponents, armed with lance and shield, charge at each other across a tilt yard or jousting field, attempting to hit their opponent and knock them off their mount. Participants are heavily armored and require the assistance of a squire.

For a traditional joust, the tilt yard must be at least 300 feet long. Each combatant starts on their own side of the tilt yard, opposite the other, wielding a buckler in one hand and a lance braced under their other arm. At the signal, the combatants ride their mounts at full speed until they meet at the center.

Whenever a combatant makes a successful attack, they choose one of the following options to affect the target:

- **Grapple.** The target becomes grappled by you (escape DC equals $10 + \text{your Strength or Dexterity modifier}$). The target's speed becomes 0, and it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed. Note that a grappled target is still free to grapple their grappler.
- **Throw.** The target is pushed 10 feet away from you and falls prone—note, this ends any grapples affecting either combatant. The thrown target has disadvantage on its next attack.
- **Counter.** You ready yourself for your opponent's next move and gain advantage on your next ability check or attack roll made to escape a grapple—whichever comes first.





A joust is overseen by a judge, who might be a royal of the court or a skilled fighter designated for the event.

In a fantasy setting, you can have less traditional jousts, such as riding dinosaurs and wielding clubs, riding hippogriffs in flight, or any number of combinations.

RULES MODIFICATIONS

Jousting using regular single combat rules with the following exceptions.

In addition to the points scored in the base single combat rules, there are additional ways to score points while jousting. Points are awarded for successful attacks and for dismounting opponents:

- On a miss, the combatant receives 0 points.
- On a hit, they receive 1 point.
- On a hit that exceeds the target AC by 5 or more, their lance shatters, and they receive 3 points. Note that it is impossible to cheat and score 3 points in jousting without being caught.
- On a critical hit, the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 10 + weapon damage) or be unseated, knocked off their mount. Combatants without proficiency in Animal Handling make this Strength save with disadvantage.

The combatant with more points awarded after three passes wins. A combatant who unseats their opponent automatically wins. If both combatants are unseated in the same pass, the combatant with more points wins.

In the event of a tie in points, combatants ride another pass, and the bout ends immediately if one scores more points than the other. If three more passes occur and a tie remains, the bout is considered a draw.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

A combatant can be disqualified from a joust for several reasons; the most serious is injuring an opponent's mount. Injuring your opponent by striking off target (against any part of their body that's not their chest or their shield) may also be a disqualification, but the decision falls to the judge. Drawing a weapon other than a lance may lead to disqualification, though if the opponent answers with their own weapon, melee combat is typically allowed until first blood.

Killing an opponent in a joust is dishonorable and an automatic disqualification.

TRIAL BY COMBAT

Trial by combat is a method used by some realms or cultures to determine the fate of an individual accused of a heinous crime, such as murder or conspiring against a ruler. In some jurisdictions, the accused can demand trial by combat for almost any charge. Such a strategy can be risky, but when you face the gallows, some chance is better than none.

In other locales, trial by combat is a standard ritual to determine an individual's rank, rights, or worthiness. In these cases, trial by combat is meant more to challenge combatants than kill them.

TRIAL BY COMBAT RULES

Trial by combat follows standard single combat mechanics, though the rules can vary by region. For instance, some cultures regard combat only with particular weapons or certain types of armor to be valid. Magic might also be explicitly barred.

Most regions have standard rules for their trials by combat. As such, combatants cannot choose their opponent, nor can they set terms. In some cases, a volunteer from the community may step forward to fulfill the duty of combatant, or a ruler may appoint one. In other cases, a jurisdiction may have a champion that represents the realm in such matters. Such judicial champions are well known locally and offer little hope for the less skilled to prevail.

EXAMPLE TRIAL BY COMBAT RULES

If you need quick rules for trial by combat, this example ruleset might be found in many realms:

- Trial by combat is public, held in an arena.
- The local judicial champion fights for the prosecution. The defendant must represent themselves.
- The defendant is provided with armor and weapons if they cannot provide their own.
- Magic is disallowed. If either combatant is caught using magic, they immediately forfeit.
- The local ruler oversees the fight and is the final judge in all matters.
- Combat continues until the judge has determined one party to be the obvious victor. If the defendant loses and was accused of serious crimes, they may be executed immediately by the judicial champion. For less serious crimes, the defendant may be returned to their cell to await sentencing.

SCORING FOR TRIAL BY COMBAT

Trials by combat for purposes other than determining guilt or innocence can involve points awarded by a judge. These points can be explicit awards for outperforming other combatants or more abstract representations of growing honor or prestige that accrues from victory. They can also be used cumulatively to track success in tournament situations.

The example point scheme reflects how a larger society might value a combatant's performance in trial by combat.

TRIAL BY COMBAT SCORING

Action	Points
Perform a poor attack (Attack Roll 1)	-1
Perform an impressive attack (Attack Roll 20)	+1
Defeat an opponent	+2
Defeat a known opponent with multiple wins	+3



20 SOBRIQUETS

Fighters of great renown often acquire monikers that speak to their deeds in battle and give them a larger-than-life reputation. Sobriquets typically describe actions, mood, or appearance and can be ironic. Some are deserved while others are a result of embellishment or even outright lies.

If you're searching for a title to strike fear into your enemies and awe into the adoring public, the **Sobriquets** table provides a list of examples for use, alteration, or inspiration. These nicknames might be used on their own, such as the Blackspear or Harbinger of the Red Tides, or they might be part of your character's name, such as Ivan Forkbeard or Harold the Conqueror.

SOBRIQUETS

d20	Sobriquets
1	Bladebreaker
2	Brutal
3	Ceaseless Vengeance
4	Doombringer
5	Duchess of Calamity
6	Firebrand
7	Goldenheart
8	Hellbringer
9	Laughing Doom
10	Merciless
11	Pious
12	Ravenhair
13	Redblade
14	Savage
15	Scourge of the North
16	Shard of Midnight
17	Stalwart
18	Trollslayer
19	Unforgiving
20	Unrelenting

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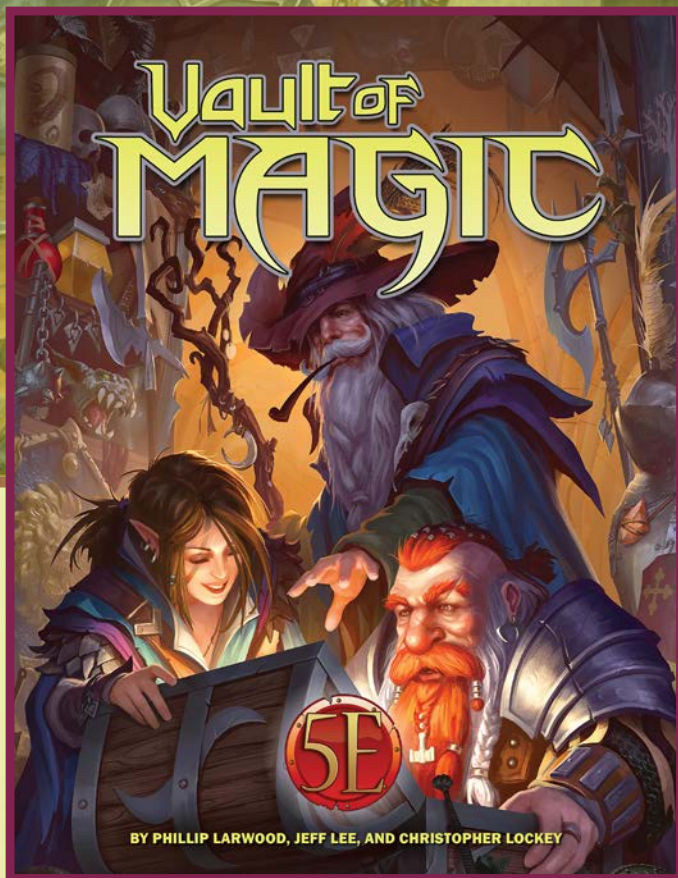
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