

ELEMENTAL CRUX

Huxtrophy



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Silent **7** Seven

ELEMENTAL CRUX

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"To learn the luckiest of the Chaos," had been the gypsies' slogan. The winner would reign over the others as the richest and most devious of gamblers. The game was huxtrophy, though what name it went by then none know.

From the brass city came Saif-al-Dahyh, a powerful and shrewd efreet. From the ranks of a glacial primordial's army came the ice archon Ambaniel. From the most powerful tribe of storm giants came their craftiest member, Thjok. And hailing from the abyss of the Chaos came the most cunning of gambling demons, Malifeign.

Each bringing a horde of astral diamonds to make jealous even a god, they sat at the table the gypsies had provided. Felavusix—whose name meant "misfortune hiding within fortune"—had been appointed overseer of the game.

"Greetings," he said with a great smile upon his face, "to our elemental fellows. Here we shall determine for once and all the greatest of gamblers; we shall learn the luckiest of all the Chaos."

The first antes were placed, and the first cards were dealt, and Felavusix grinned. With a song, a gesture, and a pinch of magic dust, the clever gypsy completed the rituals of binding he had prepared, and from that day til now, and for some time in the future still, the four players play their game. From their trap, Felavusix took from each of them a bit of luck, which he put into his own deck, that he might become the luckiest.

It is said that the four players still play in whatever place they are trapped, and if one were to win, the spells would be broken. And the players, so angered, would seek their revenge on Felavusix and the gypsies. However, it is also said that each is too stubborn and too skilled to lose, and that this is Felavusix's second trick.

— Desajukl, grandfather storyteller
of the Klief clan Chaoschal traveling caravan

After Felavusix bound the efreet, ice archon, storm giant and demon, he siphoned power from them and their game to enhance his own deck with elemental magic. He shared his trick with a few family members, who shared it with a few others. Today, many gypsies, and even a few non-gypsies, know of these tricks. Even more people possess decks that are infused with the magic of the elemental gamblers.

While the term huxtrophy refers to a game of chance, it can also refer to the deck used in such a game. This deck is also used by the gypsies in fortune telling, and it is the only type of card deck that can be infused with the magic power of the elemental gamblers.

The Deck

A huxtropy deck consists of fifty-four cards: 1-9, plus a Jack, Queen and King in each of four suits, plus two unsuited Joker cards. A standard deck of this sort, used in fortune telling or to play the game huxtropy, is simply referred to as a 'deck'. Departure from this convention occurs in places with many forms of gambling, such as casinos, where the name of the game is required to differentiate it from other games played in the vicinity.

The term 'huxtropy deck' is more commonly used to refer to a magically imbued instance of such a deck, as the word 'huxtropy' itself refers to the source of the magic's power, and the risks involved in wielding it. Some people believe that the game used to go by a different name, but that it was changed some time after Felavusix's trickery.

The Cards

Some crotchety gamblers, who believe themselves much more scholarly than they truly are, will tell you that the game's suits were changed to match Felavusix's elemental gamblers. However, these are the same old men who would disbelieve the story entirely.

More romantic-minded individuals, such as the gypsies, say that Felavusix carefully selected his quarry in order to match the game's existing suits.

What even the gypsies might have trouble explaining, though, are the meanings of the Jack and Queen cards. While they describe the Kings of each suit as representing the corresponding elemental gambler, it is likely that the entire suite of royalty is a remnant from a previous version of the game.

King of Death

According to the gypsy legend, Malifeign was the "most cunning of gambling demons". He had the head of a large crocodile, and his piercing blue eyes were said to see through any bluff. His entire body dripped with rot, and—like his piercing gaze—his scent was a feature that unsettled other players in any gambling game.

He could wait for hours, patiently weathering any bad luck, knowing that the right hand would come. It is said that he learned this patience as he would wait for prey to pass near him, where only his eyes and snout emerged from whatever elemental pool he occupied. Whether a lake of fire, puddle of caustic ooze, or sea of frigid water, he would wait, knowing that soon a victim would appear.



King of Flame

Saif-al-Dahyh, the shrewd efreet, is embodied as the pinnacle of the suit of flame. He was a strong copper-skinned figure with a roaring laugh. While he was known to manipulate many people through pejorative ridicule, all while laughing ostentatiously, some who thought they were friends of al-Dahyh would sometimes find themselves the victims of his more subtle schemery.

When the efreet looked at his cards and bellowed with laughter, one could not know whether it was true joy or a bluff. However, when he stared at his cards with consternation, one would be hard pressed again to make such a distinction.

King of Frost

While the largest of any other ice archon at the time, Ambaniel was also the most intelligent. It were these qualities that earned him his position among the glacial primordial whom he served, though the time frame of the legend is unclear on whether this primordial had yet been bound.

Nonetheless, Ambaniel's intelligence is also what earned him a spot in Felavusix's game, and the archon's size put him on par with the other elemental gamblers. Just as his tactical intelligence proved a boon on the battlefield, it was this skill and his cold calculations that allowed him to read other players, or count the cards themselves, in order to earn him the best benefit.

King of Storms

Thjok is the least understood of the elemental gamblers. If the story of Felavusix is true, then the history of Thjok must have been shrouded so that it could not be passed down. If the stories are nothing but fable, then it seems the storytellers are not interested in the storm giant. Or perhaps they fear his mystery, and believe that to define him would be to call lightning down upon themselves.

Indeed, one detail of Thjok that tends to persist is that he was a prince of the storm giants, who snuck away to participate in Felavusix's game. It is said that Thjok's father still searches for him, and this is why wielders of the huxtropy deck stow it when a storm comes, and why gamblers cease their games at the first sound of thunder.

Aces

Both in the game of huxtropy and in fortune telling, Aces are considered low, and indicate a value of one. They are also seen as transcending just the numbers, though, and while the Kings of each suit embody their respective suits, the Aces are considered to represent chaos itself. Though each displays its own suit, they are more connected to the other suits than any other cards in the deck.

For these reasons, Aces are sometimes treated as wild cards in the huxtropy game, or even treated as high cards, either falling between the ten and the Jack, or beating even the Kings.

Jokers

Felavusix's first magic huxtropy deck is rumored not to have included Jokers. However, the elemental gamblers eventually learned of their situation. Even knowing that the game's end would mean their release, they are unwilling to concede their pride and their fortune to any of the other prisoners.

These four powerful beings, though, forced just a bit of their spite through the magical filters Felavusix enacted to steal their energies. When they did so, the first Jokers appeared in all huxtropy decks that stole power from the elemental gamblers. Creating a magic huxtropy deck uses Felavusix's initial formula, and so the deck that is to be enchanted must not contain Jokers; they will soon appear on their own.

After the first appearances of Jokers, they were added to some mundane decks to reflect the magical decks versions. Some players prefer to play without them, while others with, and the same goes for fortune tellers. Authentic fortune tellers whose powers truly can predict the future must work with enchanted huxtropy decks, and thus must risk the Jokers.

The Fortune

Fortune tellers of the gypsy families primarily use the huxtropy deck for their readings. This art is usually kept secret, though it has sometimes leaked to normal folk—many of whom pretend to be gypsies for authenticity in their readings.

When reading, the fortune teller faces the customer. Generally the two sit at a table in the gypsy's cart of the caravan in the case of the Chaoschal groups, or in a similarly small room of a Primorda gypsy's shop. The cards are then shuffled, sometimes by the customer, and are then turned face up one at a time as the fortune teller reads.

The fortune teller will begin interpreting the meaning after each card, before drawing the next one, though the reading will usually begin very vague. The drawing of a face card many times indicates that sufficient information has been drawn from the cards, and the reader can then formulate an exact telling. Other times, the reader must continue to draw until she feels enough information has been pulled from the cards and she can formulate her final meaning from the 'hand'.

If the reading demands more context, or the customer paid extra, the fortune teller may read a second hand (or third, etc.)

Each card has meaning during a huxtropy reading, though no card can be completely defined, as they are constantly in flux, in the way they interact with other cards in the hand, the reader's interpretations, and even the customers themselves.

The face cards refer to individuals in the customer's life. A Jack will usually mean a friend or acquaintance; a Queen refers to a close friend or spouse; and a King

indicates some superior to the customer, whether a deity or baron, or something more local such as a parent or master. Defining the individual indicated by the face card can be difficult, as it is usually in the hands of the customer, who is generally untrained in such readings. However, the card's suit, as well as context from other cards the fortune teller's insight can be significant help.

Cards from the suit of death mean that sickness or misfortune are coming, whether toward the customer, or an individual indicated by a face card. The numeric value of the card defines the severity of the misfortune, with a nine or ten potentially spelling death. A face card in the suit of death may refer to a sick or recently deceased individual, or one who causes misfortune on others.

The suit of flame is a passionate suit, leading to readings of ferocious love or unadulterated hate, though the numeric value of the card indicates the degree of passion. A one of flames can mean that a marriage or relationship has lost its vigor. A face card of flame can refer to one toward whom the customer feels passionately, or a person the customer knows who has a passionate way of interacting with the world.

Cards in the frost suit mean that a time of stagnation or unchangingness is upon the customer. Whether this time has yet begun or is soon to come is up to the interpretation of the hand, though the value of the frost card can help define the length of this period. What is unchanging can vary, whether it is a fifty year profession, or a grudge held too long. Generally this suit is seen as a negative thing, as gypsies especially enjoy change, but it is hard to argue with a reading that foresees a long, steady and loving relationship.

Essentially the opposite of the suit of frost, the suit of storms portends coming change in the life of the customer, or an individual he or she knows. This may be a positive or negative change, but the severity of it is defined by the card's numeric value. A face card in the suit of storms can mean someone who has recently undergone drastic change, who changes frequently, or even one whom the customer wishes would change.

Huxtropy decks generally carry two Jokers. In gambling, some tables agree to remove them, but this is even more common in fortune telling decks, as they make readings unpredictable and sometimes difficult. A Joker drawn into a reading's hand forces the meanings to reverse, causing confusion and potential embarrassment for the fortune teller as she attempts to justify the hand in its altered state. While they have been known to turn otherwise ugly tellings into much more positive ones, they are still considered by many to be more hassle than they are worth.

Gifted readers, who are actually mystically connected to the cards and the elemental gamblers for their readings, find themselves or their customers to literally become cursed for a short while when a Joker is drawn. However, the accuracy of their readings and their uncanny powers are oftentimes seen as well worth the risk of a Joker's mild trick.

The Game

Huxtropy's history prior to the legends of Felavusix and the elemental gamblers is unknown, and indeed to the gypsies it is irrelevant. Most people who consider the topic believe that the game existed with perhaps some other name and without the elemental connotations given by the gypsies, but with cards and rules almost identical to those used today. Indeed, Felavusix's game and magic (if these legends are true) in many ways preserved the game as it was, since the ritual to create a new huxtropy deck requires exact cards to be present.

When playing the gambling game of huxtropy cards, three to eight players sit around table, and each antes a predetermined amount of money. Usually this is a single copper coin in taverns of small towns, and richer cities will have higher antes ranging up to astral diamonds and perhaps beyond. Alternatives to money can also be used. Members of a baker's guild may play with cooking ingredients, wizards can play with ritual reagents, and demons sometimes play the game with young animals, such as kittens

Once the antes have been put into the pot in the center of the table, the dealer—who may be one of the players or a separate entity—passes out a face-up card to each player. A Joker dealt at this time forces the player dealt the Joker to immediately concede. Each player is then dealt a face-down card, and if the player's face-up card was a face card, he or she gets an additional face-down card.

Once these initial cards have been dealt, the betting begins. Starting with a player to the left of the dealer, or a randomly determined player, the bets start. From hand to hand, the starting player (and the dealer, if applicable) rotates to the left. The starting player can bet additional money, and the next player to the left must match that bet or else fold his or her hand. This process continues around the table until each player has met the minimum bet without raising. Additionally during this process, each player chooses a single card that is face-up in front of a different player. For each time his or her card is chosen by another player, that player gets another face-down card. In this way, players will generally have different numbers of cards in their hand, based on the strength of his or her face-up card, and its usefulness to the other players.

Once the first round of bets have been placed, and the bonus cards have been passed out, another round

of face-down cards is dealt. Another round of betting occurs (though the face-up card choices have already been made, so that process isn't repeated).

The remaining players then reveal their hands, and, according to a hierarchy of card combinations, a winner is decided. In order to build these hands, players use all of their own face-down cards, plus their own face-up card and the face-up card they chose during the first round of betting.

If a player concedes at some point during the hand, any player who already chose his or her face-up card may still use it up until the end. If a player concedes before his or her card is chosen by any other players (for example because he or she was initially dealt a Joker), then that card cannot be chosen by any other player, and the conceding player's cards are entirely removed from play.

After the winner is determined, that player claims the entire contents of the pot for him or herself and the next hand starts. The dealer and starting better positions rotate to the left around the table, antes are placed, and cards are dealt. Players with no remaining money are usually removed from the game, though other players may allow a player to go into debt or permit non-standard currencies commensurate to the values of the game's normal betting currency, in order for the losing player to attempt to reclaim his or her money.

Play continues until a predetermined point in time, until a consensus is reached between the players, or until only two players remain. Some high profile games force even just two remaining players to determine a single winner, winner-take-all. During this phase, stakes are generally raised greatly to reach a conclusion quickly.

Some locations or groups of players prefer special rules. A common one is the removal of Jokers, though this is impossible with the enchanted huxtropy decks. Since Jokers are not used in any hands (card combinations), they are essentially blank cards, making them terrible to draw, even face-down when they don't immediately exclude you. For this reason, many groups who preserve the Jokers make them wild when face-down, so that they still can have a positive effect on a player's hand.

Other cards can sometimes be determined wild; a popular choice is Aces, because of their preconception in players' minds as being chaotic and powerful. Sometimes the dealer makes decisions about wild cards or other special rules, and so the game can slightly or significantly change from hand to hand.



Huxtropy in Your Game

When one or more player characters play a game of huxtropy in a D&D session, there are more than one ways to handle it. One method is to fully play out the game, dealing hands to each participating PC and NPC, and running the bets as normal. This works best when all of the players are playing, and there are few if any NPCs.

When using this method, it may be hard to accurately represent the players' abilities compared to their characters'. For example, a character may have a high Bluff or Insight skill, while the player is unable to keep a straight face or insightfully read the other players. If there are multiple NPCs, then the DM can hopefully roleplay them, giving each one different abilities to hide their own hands through bluffing. The DM could even have the NPCs roll Bluff checks against the characters' Insights to reveal information that way, or alternatively have a particularly insightful NPCs roll against the characters' Bluff skills. If the NPC beats one or more of their Bluffs, that player is forced to reveal whether their character's hand is poor or good. This is to represent the NPCs ability to read the characters (but not necessarily the players), and the characters' inability to hide their reactions.

Players (and NPCs) can also use Thievery during such a game. Here are a few uses. The character must beat the DC indicated to perform the action, plus the passive Perception of other players or bystanders, or the active Perception of any suspicious characters. Penalties for attempting to cheat may vary, but will usually be harsh.

Huxtropy Hands

Duo	Two cards of the same value
Trio	Three cards of the same value
Procession	Four cards in succession
Chaos	One card of each suit
Surge	Four cards of the same suit
Discord	Chaos, but the cards have the same value
Cascade	Four cards of the same suit in succession
The Gamblers	Discord, but all Kings. Wild cards can't be used to make this hand.

Cards in succession must follow this order: Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace. Though the Ace can be high or low for this purpose, a succession cannot loop. For example, Queen, King, Ace, 2 is not a valid succession.



THIEVERY IN GAMBLING

- ♦ **DC 20:** The dealing character can set up a particular card to be dealt to a particular player. When dealing out the cards, set the chosen card aside, then give it to the chosen character when the dealer chooses.
- ♦ **DC 30:** The dealing character can set up a player's entire hand, according to the method described above.
- ♦ **DC 40:** The dealing character can set up the entire deal, including every card dealt to every player.
- ♦ **DC 15:** A player can switch a face-down card in his or her hand for a card in his sleeve or pocket, etc. This requires that the switched cards be of identical design. Generally a character who plans to perform this trick will supply the deck to the game, and carry another copy of that same deck hidden.
- ♦ **DC 15:** A player can view another player's hand, though this requires the player to be sitting on the same side of the table. With a DC 20 check, the trick can be performed on players on the opposite side of the table using things like mirrors, windows, or the reflective glasses worn by the player. With a DC 25 Bluff check, the character can trick a player into accidentally revealing his or her hand for a moment so that the character can make the above Thievery check. Passive Insights from other players can reveal the character's intentions.

The players will undoubtedly present their own tricks and will describe what they want to perform. When this happens, the DM may set a DC for the attempt. If the player succeeds, move around the cards as necessary to support the described cheat.

Keep in mind that many tricks that involve stacking the deck or adding or removing cards to the deck, such as the first four examples above, will not function with enchanted huxtropy decks, as these decks magically shuffle themselves when any semblance of shuffling is attempted, and removed cards appear back in the deck while extraneous cards fall out like lead dropping to the bottom of a clear pond. That said, enchanted decks have tricks of their own, and some magics have been created specifically to manipulate them.

The second method of playing huxtropy within a D&D game is to ignore actual cards, and gloss over a hand, game, evening of play, or entire card tournament with some roleplaying, skill rolls, and/or perhaps a full skill challenge. In order for a skill challenge to be warranted, though, the game should play a role in the plot, and have roleplaying and certain skill checks pertain to whatever the plot is, as opposed to playing through such a skill challenge using only a series of Bluff, Insight, and Thievery checks with no overall impact on the story.

With that out of the way, there is the matter of the gambling skill to discuss. Some characters may be better at gambling than others, though this skill can come

from a variety of sources. First of all is the matter of luck, which pervades all gambling. For this aspect, there is no skill, though characters who are especially lucky may get bonuses to gambling rolls. In the absence of actual dealt cards, the random roll of the d20 plays the role of luck.

Some characters cheat, and use this as a means to win. Such characters use Thievery, though low skill rolls can have higher penalties than the other options. Some characters are able to read other players, and achieve wins thusly. Such players use Insight to play gambling games. Other players use Bluff, hiding the values of their own hands and sending incorrect messages about them. Finally, some characters simply try to read or count the cards, and use information seen in the game and mathematical probabilities to calculate odds of winning, compared to the risks generated by current pot size and bid amount. These characters use Intelligence, and those who study the game may train in a special Gambling skill.

For a single game of chance, each participant may roll a single skill check from above based on his or her preferred style of play. (The GM may determine that characters both NPC and PC do not add their 1/2 level bonus to these checks, in order to help even the playing field.) Each player also rolls a bid size once the skill results are compared. The bid sizes are based on how much better the winner's result was than the one rolling. The character with the highest skill check receives the amount rolled from each other participant.

Winner's Check Result . . .	My Bid Size
Beat mine by 10+	1d10 units
Beat mine by 5 to 9	1d6 units
Beat mine by up to 4	1d4 units

Units may be copper pieces, silver pieces, gold pieces, astral diamonds, or some other value depending on the location of the game and style of play.

For entire nights of gambling between important PCs and NPCs, have each participant instead roll a single d20, but add all of his or her relevant skills. A character should add his or her Bluff (Cha), Insight (Wis), and Gambling (Int), plus Thievery (Dex) in the case that the character wishes to cheat throughout the session. (As with the single-game mechanic, the GM may determine that characters both NPC and PC do not add their 1/2 level bonus to these checks.) There should also be an agreed-upon buy in which each character supplies for him- or herself.

To determine each character's results, roll a d20 one more time, and subtract the total from each character's skill check; this simply serves as a randomizing factor. (If you did not remove the 1/2 level bonus from characters' rolls, then add the 1/2 level bonus of the highest character to this d20 roll. It is best, though, to remove all these bonuses.) The remaining difference for each character is his or her total of winning points. Find the percent of winning points for each character by dividing

his or her value into the total number of winning points, treating negative values as 0. Then multiply that percent by the total buy in of all players combined to find the character's money at the end of the night.

For example, a group of five players decides to gamble with each other for an evening in a tavern. The rogue rolls a total of a 30; the warlock gets a 27; the warlord gets a 24; the ranger gets an 18; and the paladin, most reluctant to play in the first place, rolls a 12. They all agreed to play with 100 gp, to keep things simple. Then, the extra d20 is rolled, resulting in a 14. We subtract 14 from each roll for: 16, 13, 10, 4, and -2, which is treated as 0. The combined total of these winning points is 43, so we calculate percentages and winnings starting with the rogue. Sixteen divided by 43 is about 37 percent, then multiplied by the 500 gp total is 186 gp. Using a calculator for the warlock, simply divide 13 by 43 and multiply that result by 500, for 151 gp. The warlord ends up with 116 gp, the ranger with 47 gp, and the paladin walks away with nothing. Quickly adding up all the players' gold totals reveals that our rounding worked out nicely.



Huxtropy and Playing Cards

Well a huxtropy deck uses the exact same cards as a real world deck of playing cards . . . So that means the game that huxtropy used to be in the fantasy setting must have been poker or something, right? Well that's up to you.

We just fit the standard playing card deck into D&D because it's something we can expect most players to have access to.

The Weapon

While Felavusix is the first person fabled to have been a master card thrower, most who closely consider such things believe that the practice preceded him.

Regardless, some believe that his card throwing was Felavusix's primary incentive for binding the elemental gamblers, as a magic huxtropy deck seems to be more of a boon to a card thrower than to a wielder who uses a deck simply for gambling.

The art of card throwing isn't nearly as popular as swinging a sword or aiming a bow, but it is much more frequent within the gypsy families. Sometimes more of an art than wielding other weapons, though, throwing cards is not unheard of as a self-taught talent. This is especially true in the case of razor cards, which some street savvy rogues find appealing. Indeed, among non-gypsies, some delinquents create their own first razor decks before ever learning that such a practice is not uncommon in certain parts of the world. A gambler or trickster who has learned to deftly shuffle and handle cards has only a short step before he or she attempts to throw one.

New Weapon Group

Card: A rectangle of specially treated and thick paper, a card is usually found with many other cards in a stack called a deck. They can be thrown, but are much more effective as weapons when enchanted or otherwise modified. It takes skill and practice to throw a card with significant distance, accuracy or effect.

A deck of cards is listed as a two-handed weapon, as it takes one hand to hold the deck, and the other hand to draw and throw a card from the deck. However, most card throwers wear deck holsters at various accessible places on their bodies, allowing freedom to the hand that would otherwise have been required to hold the deck.

New Weapon Property

Draw free: While weapons with the load free property can be loaded as a free action when using powers with them, a draw free weapon can be drawn and thrown as part of the attack or action to throw (or otherwise use) it.

New Weapons

Standard deck: A standard deck of cards is a collection of designs, including numbers, on rectangular pieces of specially treated paper. One who has learned to accurately throw these cards is still restricted by the

fact that an accurate hit is still not much more effective than a kamikaze dragonfly. Though standard cards have no damage dice, powers that utilize them can still deal ability score bonus damage, and other additional damage that isn't weapon die-related.

A standard deck of cards can be enchanted with traditional magic ranged weapon properties, though these are not what is meant when referring to an enchanted huxtropy deck. For example, a +1 *magic standard deck* provides the wielder with a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with the standard deck weapon. The damage bonus applies even though the weapon has no damage die.

Standard decks can be used as a implements with arcane and/or elemental powers by any character proficient with the standard deck, even if a standard deck is not an implement listed as usable by that character's class(es). For each attack made, a card is thrown. (An area or burst attack is a single attack though it has multiple attack rolls, and thus uses one card. An attack power that makes up to three ranged attacks, for example, will use one card for each attack.)

A standard deck purchased comes with either 52 or 54 cards, depending on whether or not the deck includes Jokers. A thrown card is generally destroyed in terms of having a playable card as a result, though the DM may decide that a successful Perception check can recover one or more cards thrown during an encounter, depending on the circumstances. Generally cards thrown as implements are destroyed by the power of the spell, and cards thrown at fire elementals or during rain showers are unlikely to be usable again.

An enchanted standard deck, such as a +1 *magic standard deck*, follows the normal rule for magic ranged weapons: a thrown card returns to the deck at the end of its attack, and it is highly resistant to being damaged. (Some magic weapons return through teleportation, and others return in a boomerang-like fashion; magic cards simply teleport back into the deck from which they were thrown.) This makes simple enchantments on decks extremely useful, as the thrown cards are never exhausted, and a deck can potentially survive an infinity of normal wear and tear. It is common for rich casinos across the planes or for wealthy kingdoms to thus utilize these decks.

Standard decks of cards, while not as effective as weapons, can also be sometimes used as fancy tools. Some very delicate switches or buttons may be triggered with a thrown card, with ACs as low as 20.

Razor deck: Some aficionados of card throwing find that embedding razors into the corners of the cards make them much more effective as weapons. The process and

SUPERIOR RANGED WEAPONS

Two-Handed

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Standard deck	+2	—	4/8	5 gp	1/2 lb.	Card	Light thrown, draw free
Razor deck	+3	1d6	6/12	50 gp	1 lb.	Card, light blade	Light thrown, draw free

additional resources make the resulting deck much more expensive, but roguish types who enjoy cards find that a razor deck is a much more stylish replacement for other thrown blades.

The price of 50 gp once again includes a full deck of either 52 or 54 cards, and the process of building in the razors hardly makes the cards any more durable than the standard lot. Thus, these decks become more valuable and are even better candidates for magic enchantment. Like the standard deck, an enchanted razor deck becomes nigh invulnerable and thrown cards teleport back into the decks from which they are thrown.

The razors are usually placed in the corners of the cards, making the middles flexible, and the decks just as shuffleable as normal cards. However, razors present obvious risks to the fingers. Games of huxtropy have been known to be played with such decks, though it is most common in gambling-themed thieves guilds.

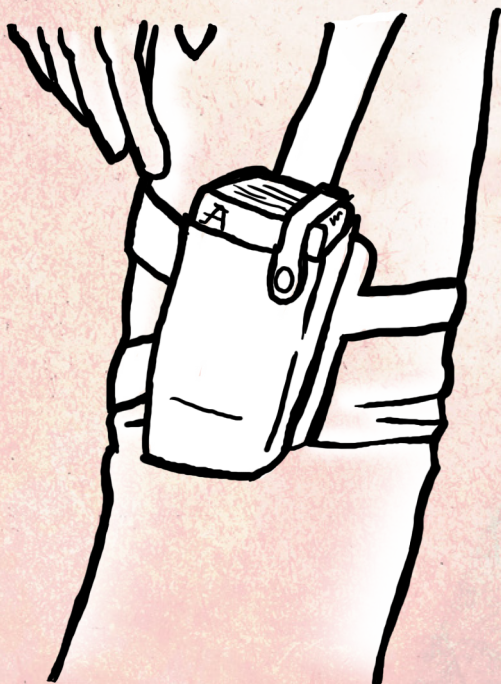
Equipment

A deck, whether standard or razor, requires two hands to be used as a weapon; one hand must hold the deck, and the other must be free to retrieve and throw the next card. However, almost all card throwers wear a deck holster so that they do not have to hold the deck.

The holster can be attached to the belt, or otherwise harnessed on the wearer's body. It carefully secures the deck so that only the most extreme of upsidedown positions could allow the deck to slip free, while still allowing the card thrower easy access to the next card to be thrown without interfering with the deck's draw free property.

ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Price	Weight
Deck holster	1 gp	1/2 lb.



The Magic

Magic decks that draw on the power of the elemental gamblers through the rituals put in place by Felavusix are usually what're thought of when someone mentions a huxtropy deck. The unique enchantment that draws on this chaotic elemental power creates several unique properties to distinguish such a deck from other enchanted weapons—even other enchanted decks.

Huxtropy Deck

Level 4+

While seemingly innocuous, each card surges with a unique elemental signature as it flies through the air.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Weapon: Standard deck

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: Special; see below.

Property: Damage type and amount, plus additional effects, from this weapon are determined by a deck of cards. See below.

When an attack using a *huxtropy deck* deals one or more [W] damage, the type and amount are determined using a deck of cards instead of dice, following the process below. Refer to these rules for ways that using a *huxtropy deck* is different than a standard attack process.

HUXTROPY DECK WEAPON

- ♦ **1—Shuffle** your deck at the start of each encounter. It should contain 54 cards: Ace through 10 of four suits, plus a Jack, Queen and King of each of those suits, and two Jokers. Place the deck on the table after shuffling so all players can see, and don't shuffle again until instructed.
- ♦ **2—Begin an attack** by drawing the top card of your deck and revealing it.
 - 2a—If you drew a card from Ace through 10 (called damage cards), that card will determine the type of damage dealt according to its suit (see the table), and the amount of damage. The amount is equal to the card's value, with Ace being 1.
 - 2b—If you drew a face card (Jack, Queen, King, Joker), apply its effect to this attack according to the table, then draw another card. If you draw another face card, continue applying these effects and redrawing until you get a damage card.
 - 2c—For multiple [W] attacks, continue drawing cards (and applying face cards) until your number of damage cards is equal to the number of [W] in the damage entry of the attack.

♦ **3—Roll your attack**, adding your weapon proficiency, enhancement, ability score, and other bonuses as with any other weapon attack. Make sure to include any bonuses from your Queens. Once you have your total attack roll, consider as normal if you hit your target.

3a—If you scored a critical hit, whether by rolling a natural 20, or by rolling some other number through the use of feats or the special ability of any Kings you drew for this attack, refer to step 4a below.

3b—If you rolled a natural 1, your attack automatically misses, as with any other attack. However, you suffer an additional effect if a Joker was one of the cards you drew for this attack.

♦ **4—If your attack hits**, apply the amount and type of damage determined in step 2. For multiple [W] attacks, the damage type is determined by the first damage card you drew. Also remember to add any bonus damage from Jacks you drew for this attack.

4a—If your hit was a critical hit, double the values of your damage cards. Then, draw a number of additional cards equal to the enhancement bonus of your *huxtropy deck*. Those cards, along with the other cards you've drawn so far with this attack are used as your suite. Use your suite to build a hand from the table, and apply its effects. You can only choose to make one hand, even if you have enough of the right cards to build multiple hands.

♦ **5—If your attack missed**, and you didn't roll a natural 1, proceed to step 6. If you did roll a natural 1, refer to step 3b above.

♦ **6—Put all of the cards used for this attack into your discard pile**. Your discard pile sits face-up next to your shuffled face-down deck, reminding you of what cards you will not be drawing for the rest of this encounter.

♦ **7—Empty decks**. If you make an attack, and then draw into face cards, realizing that there are no further damage cards in your deck, the attack deals 1d4 untyped damage on a hit. Once your deck is empty, you cannot make attacks with it.

♦ **8—Regenerating**. At the end of a short rest, your *huxtropy deck* regenerates. Shuffle your discard pile back into the remainder of your deck in preparation for your next encounter. You cannot choose not to regenerate your deck; whenever you take a short rest, your deck does as well.

A *huxtropy deck* is an enchanted version of a standard deck, as described in the weapons section above. Thus, the *huxtropy deck* follows the same rules as a standard deck except as specifically overwritten by its magic property. One such rule is that a standard deck (and therefore a

huxtropy deck) can be used as an implement with arcane and/or elemental powers by any character proficient with the standard deck, even if a standard deck is not an implement listed as usable by that character's class(es). Refer to the process below for rules on how to use a *huxtropy deck* as an implement.

HUXTROPY DECK IMPLEMENT

♦ **1—Shuffle** your deck at the start of each encounter. It should contain 54 cards: Ace through 10 of four suits, plus a Jack, Queen and King of each of those suits, and two Jokers. Place the deck on the table after shuffling so all players can see, and don't shuffle again until instructed.

♦ **2—Begin an attack** by drawing the top card of your deck and revealing it.

2a—If you drew a card from Ace through 10 (called damage cards), compare the card's suit's corresponding damage type (according to the table) to the damage type or types of the spell you used. If any of these damage types match, add 1 to your damage roll.

2b—If you drew a face card (Jack, Queen, King, Joker), apply its effect to this attack according to the table, then draw another card. If you drew another face card, continue applying these effects and redrawing until you get a damage card.

2c—For powers with multiple damage dice (e.g. 3d8), continue drawing cards (and applying face cards) until your number of damage cards is equal to the number of damage dice in the damage entry of the attack. (Add 1 to your damage roll for each card that matches the damage type of your power.)

♦ **3—Roll your attack**, adding your deck's enhancement, ability score, and other bonuses as with any other implement attack. Make sure to include any bonuses from your Queens. Once you have your total attack roll, consider as normal if you hit your target. For close and area attacks, you make a separate attack roll for each target as normal. Your damage card or cards, along with any face cards drawn, are applied to each attack roll associated with the power. If you are making multiple attacks with the same power—as with a ranged power with “one, two, or three creatures” as targets—you will need to draw a new card or cards for each attack.

3a—If you scored a critical hit, whether by rolling a natural 20, or by rolling some other number through the use of feats or the special ability of any Kings you drew for this attack, refer to step 4a below.

3b—If you rolled a natural 1, your attack automatically misses, as with any other attack. However, you suffer an additional effect if a Joker was one of the cards you drew for this attack.

♦ **4**—If your attack hits, roll damage according to the spell's damage entry. Remember to add any bonus damage determined from step 2 or from Jacks you drew for this attack.

4a—If your attack was a critical hit, maximize your damage as normal. Then, draw a number of additional cards equal to the enhancement bonus of your *huxtropy deck*. Those cards along with the other cards you've drawn so far with this attack are used as your suite. Use your suite to build a hand from the table, and apply its effects. You can only choose to make one hand, even if you have enough of the right cards to build multiple hands.

♦ **5**—If your attack missed, and you didn't roll a natural 1 proceed to step 6. If you did roll a natural one, refer to step 3b above.

♦ **6**—Put all of the cards used for this attack into your discard pile. Your discard pile sits face-up next to your shuffled face-down deck, reminding you of what cards you will not be drawing for the rest of this encounter.

♦ **7**—Empty decks. If you make an attack, and then draw into face cards, realizing that there are no further damage cards in your deck, then you lose any potential +1 bonus to damage from a suit matching your power's damage type. Once your deck is empty, you cannot make attacks with it.

♦ **8**—Regenerating. At the end of a short rest, your *huxtropy deck* regenerates. Shuffle your discard pile back into the remainder of your deck in preparation for your next encounter. You cannot choose not to regenerate your deck; whenever you take a short rest, your deck does as well.

Standard Suit	Huxtropy Suit	Damage Type
Spades	Death	Necrotic
Hearts	Flame	Fire
Clubs	Frost	Cold
Diamonds	Storms	Lightning

Face Card Bonus Effects

King	The natural roll required for you to score a critical hit with this attack is reduced by 1.
Queen	Add +1 to your attack roll.
Jack	Add +1 to your damage roll.
Joker	Take a -2 penalty to your attack roll.

If you rolled a natural 1 on an attack roll, and a Joker was one of the cards you drew for this attack, you are pushed 1 square from your target and knocked prone at the end of your attack. In addition, you are exposed to bad luck (see below).

Other Magic Decks

Though the *huxtropy deck* is the most well-known magic deck property, it is also subject to the most superstition and potential risk. A card-throwing gypsy wouldn't be caught dead carrying a magic deck that wasn't infused with the power of Felavusix's trick, but peoples not from that exotic community may find that while they enjoy throwing cards, the elemental gamblers' power just isn't up their alley.

Indeed, as ranged weapons, both standard decks and razor decks can be enchanted with any magic item property fitting a ranged weapon. This may range from something as simple as a +1 *magic standard deck* all the way up to the extreme +6 *perfect hunter's razor deck*. Of course, razor decks are more popular choices for their ability to inflict more damage.

Magic Aces

Mages who have bothered attempts at modifying Felavusix's magic have failed. Whether the gypsy's game was simply designed completely impregnable, or if the elemental gamblers themselves prevent modifications to the spells in hopes that they might one day win the game and be free, none know.

However, some gypsies many years ago were able to make slight additions to the *huxtropy game* through the addition of magic aces. It could be a gypsy talent, but many suspect it is that the magic aces are based on a respect for the particular element, and so the gamblers allowed it.

One who possesses a magic ace and a *huxtropy deck* may place the ace into the deck. The redundant ace is immediately removed through the combined magic of

Bad Luck

The power you wield is harnessed through a dangerous gamble, and the players bound in Felavusix's game are happy to curse you when they can.

Curse; level equal to that of the afflicted creature

Bluff, Gambling, Insight or Thievery improve DC hard, maintain DC moderate, worsen DC easy or lower

The curse ends

Initial Effect The natural value of each of the target's d20 rolls is reduced by 1. (So a natural 10 counts as a natural 9, etc.) This continues until the curse ends.

Until the curse ends or the target improves, he or she has to sometimes make checks with moderate or hard DCs for simple tasks such as walking or carrying objects.

Final State Within 24 hours, the target suffers some kind of [trap-like] misfortune somewhere from his or her level up to his or her level +2, then the curse ends.

Huxtropy Hand	Hand Description	Critical Effect
High card	In lieu of any of the following hands, the highest card of a player's suite is used to determine a winner. For critical effects, consider the suit of that card.	Death —1d4 necrotic damage per plus and the target takes a -1 penalty to its Will defense until the start of your next turn. Flame —1d6 fire damage per plus. Frost —1d4 cold damage per plus and the target takes a -1 penalty to its Fortitude defense until the start of your next turn. Storms —1d4 lightning damage per plus and the target takes a -1 penalty to its Reflex defense until the start of your next turn.
Duo	Two cards of the same value	Apply the high card effect of one of the cards in the duo, and the target is knocked prone.
Trio	Three cards of the same value	Apply the high card effect of one of the cards in the trio, and the target is knocked prone and can't stand on its next turn.
Procession	Four cards in succession	Apply the high card effect of the highest card of the procession. The target also takes ongoing 5/10/15* damage (save ends) of the type corresponding to the second highest card of the procession.
Chaos	One card of each suit	Apply the high card effect of the highest card of the chaos. The target also takes ongoing 5/10/15* damage (save ends) of the type corresponding to the second highest card of the chaos. Each enemy adjacent to the target takes 5/10/15* damage of the type corresponding to the third highest card of the chaos.
Surge	Four cards of the same suit	Apply the high card effect of the surge suit three times; the defense penalties stack.
Discord**	Chaos, but the cards have the same value	Apply the high card effects of two cards of the discord. The target also takes ongoing 5/10/15* damage (save ends) of the a third type. Each enemy adjacent to the target takes 5/10/15* damage of the fourth type.
Cascade**	Four cards of the same suit in succession	Apply the high card effect of the cascade suit three times; the defense penalties stack. The target also takes ongoing 5/10/15* damage (save ends) of the type corresponding to the cascade suit. Each enemy adjacent to the target takes 5/10/15* damage of the same type.
The Gamblers**	Discord, but all Kings. Wild cards can't be used to make this hand.	Apply all four high card effects twice; the defense penalties stack. In addition, you have bested the elemental gamblers, and you can overcome the unluck they try to sneak into your decks. If you choose, Jokers no longer exist in any <i>huxtropy deck</i> at the time you wield it.

* These damage amounts are based on the enhancement bonus of the huxtropy deck. A +1 or +2 deck indicates the 5 is used; a +3 or +4 means the 10 is used; and a +5 or +6 huxtropy deck uses the 15 damage amount.

** The three highest hands—discord, cascade, and the gamblers—represent a special event when they are drawn on a critical hit. See the huxtropy upgrade sidebar.

Huxtropy Upgrade

A character who chooses the path of a card thrower is generally disinterested in other options of ranged weapons. Also, hordes of treasure containing huxtropy decks tend to be uncommon. These combined factors can make it difficult for a card thrower to upgrade his or her deck.

However, a wealth of luck can cause a deck's connection to the elemental gamblers to grow stronger, thus increasing its enhancement bonus. When a character scores a critical hit and builds the discord, cascade, or the gamblers hand, and the next level upgrade of his or her deck is within 5 levels of his or her own level, the deck immediately upgrades in a surge of power. The DM may count this increase in value against the party's treasure parcels per level.

these forces, making the new ace the replacement.

A single deck can only support one magic ace, and so a wielder must select whether he or she wishes to favor death, flame, frost or storms. A second magic ace will be shunted out like any other extraneous card or item placed in the deck. In addition, a magic ace's powers and properties can't be used unless it is within a *huxtrophy deck* from which it can draw its power.

When the deck wielder no longer wishes to use the magic ace, he or she can remove it, and the previous ace will reappear.

Magic aces are special in that they have magical properties beyond those of the *huxtrophy deck*. They are also generally more intricately designed and patterned, sometimes with gorgeous and elaborate gypsy art.

Ace of Death

Level 8

A black skull resides solitary in the center of this card's design, surrounded by ornate floral patterns like a rose bush in a cemetery. When held individually, the card seems to leak a shroud of darkness.

Lvl 8 3,400 gp Lvl 28 2,125,000 gp

Wondrous Item

Property: When you hit with an attack with the *ace of death* as a damage card, set aside the top five cards of your deck face-up, then discard any of these cards not from the death suit. Whenever you make an attack with your *huxtrophy deck*, choose one of the cards from your revealed cards and treat it as the first card you drew from your deck for that attack. (Continue drawing necessary cards from your deck as normal for the attack. Discard the chosen card at the end of the attack as normal.) As long as there are remaining cards removed face-up in this way, the shroud of death billows around you, granting you concealment.

Level 28: Against creatures more than 1 square away from you, you have total concealment instead.

Ace of Flame

Level 8

The emblem of the suit of flame is surrounded by a stippling inferno on this card's design. When activated, the fiery magic of this ace suffuses the entire deck.

Lvl 8 3,400 gp Lvl 28 2,125,000 gp

Lvl 18 85,000 gp

Wondrous Item

Property: When you hit with an attack with the *ace of flame* as a damage card, set aside the top five cards of your deck face-up, then discard any of these cards not from the flame suit. Whenever you make an attack with your *huxtrophy deck*, choose one of the cards from your revealed cards and treat it as the first card you drew from your deck for that attack. (Continue drawing necessary cards from your deck as normal for the attack. Discard the chosen card at the end of the attack as normal.) If the attack deals fire damage, add 1d6 to that amount.

Level 18: 2d6.

Level 28: 3d6.

Ace of Frost

Level 8

Hundreds of tiny snowflakes surround a larger one on this card, representing the freezing magic of the card that can cause victims of its effects to be overcome with cold.

Lvl 8 3,400 gp

Lvl 28 2,125,000 gp

Lvl 18 85,000 gp

Wondrous Item

Property: When you hit with an attack with the *ace of frost* as a damage card, set aside the top five cards of your deck face-up, then discard any of these cards not from the frost suit. Whenever you make an attack with your *huxtrophy deck*, choose one of the cards from your revealed cards and treat it as the first card you drew from your deck for that attack. (Continue drawing necessary cards from your deck as normal for the attack. Discard the chosen card at the end of the attack as normal.) If the attack deals cold damage, the target is also slowed on its next turn.

Level 18: Immobilized instead of slowed.

Level 28: Restrained instead of slowed.

Ace of Storms

Level 8

The whirling storm cloud represented on this card, along with the surrounding bolts of lightning, mark it as the ace of storms. When thrown, its residual power conjures an aura of storm around the wielder, putting everyone nearby at risk of deviant lightning.

Lvl 8 3,400 gp

Lvl 28 2,125,000 gp

Lvl 18 85,000 gp

Wondrous Item

Property: When you hit with an attack with the *ace of storms* as a damage card, set aside the top five cards of your deck face-up, then discard any of these cards not from the storms suit. Whenever you make an attack with your *huxtrophy deck*, choose one of the cards from your revealed cards and treat it as the first card you drew from your deck for that attack. (Continue drawing necessary cards from your deck as normal for the attack. Discard the chosen card at the end of the attack as normal.) At the start of each of your turns where there are remaining cards removed face-up in this way, a small bolt of lightning strikes a random creature within 10 squares of you for 1d8 lightning damage.

Level 18: 2d8.

Level 28: 3d8.

Other Magic Items

Charlatan's Holster

Level 2

While some prefer mundane-looking holsters to help convince people they are not using magic, others prefer more flamboyant patterns and designs to match their gaudy performer attire.

Wondrous Item 520 gp

Property: You know the top card of any deck held in this holster. If the top card is removed, you know the next card, etc. (This does not counteract the fact some decks, such as *huxtrophy decks*, magically shuffle themselves at the start of an encounter.)

The Deckslinger

A character who wishes to specialize in the art of card throwing may walk the path of the deckslinger. Deckslingers traditionally forge their own connections to the elemental gamblers, and it is through this energy that they fuel some of the class features and powers, as well as gain their ability to create their own *huxtropy decks*.

A deckslinger uses the class statistics and powers of the ranger, as found in the **D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK**, with the following changes.

- ◆ **Power Source:** The deckslinger can be considered to use the martial power source, but some of its power is elemental as well. Since the powers they borrow from the ranger are martial, though, this can be considered the predominant power source.
- ◆ **Key Abilities:** Dexterity, Charisma. Deckslingers use a ranged build, and so favor Dexterity and not Strength (though they may still use Strength for other ranger powers they pick up). However, deckslingers use Charisma instead of Wisdom as part of their connection to the elemental gamblers. Replace all instances of Wisdom in ranger-related powers and abilities with Charisma.
- ◆ **Trained Skills:** All deckslingers are trained in Thievery, while both Dungeoneering and Nature are removed from the class skill list. Bluff and Gambling are added to the list.
- ◆ **Fighting Styles:** The deckslinger uses the Cards Fighting Style, detailed below.
- ◆ **Elemental Hex:** Deckslingers have an Elemental Hex instead of the Hunter's Quarry feature. This feature is the same other than the name. Replace all mentions of the quarry in deckslinger/ranger powers and abilities with the hex.
- ◆ **Prerequisites:** Deckslingers qualify as rangers for prerequisites and requirements, and can also enter paragon paths that require the Archer Fighting Style.

A deckslinger uses the Cards Fighting Style option of the Fighting Style class feature, rather than Archer Fighting Style or Two-Blade Fighting Style.

Cards Fighting Style: Because of your focus on throwing cards, you gain Card Throwing as a bonus feat, granting you proficiency with weapons in the card weapon group. When you throw a card from a standard deck with a damage die of “—”, you can infuse the card with elemental energy through your own connection to the gamblers, thus increasing the weapon's damage die to a d10. (This has no effect when the damage die is otherwise altered, such as with a *huxtropy deck*.)

In addition, you can use the Enchant Magic Item ritual for the purposes of creating or upgrading a *huxtropy deck*.

Deckslinger Build Option

All deckslingers use the Cards Fighting Style, but there are still many options when building your character. One possible deckslinger build is detailed below.

Deckslinger

You are a wielder of the cards, and a scion of the elemental gamblers. When without a *huxtropy deck* of your own, you can infuse any standard card with elemental power—an untyped explosive energy. You prefer ranged attack powers and a wide berth to your enemies, giving you room to aim and throw your cards. Your attacks should use Dexterity, so that should be your primary ability score. Charisma is your second-most-important, for Bluffing and as a connection to the elemental power that helps fuel your powers. If you wish to mix in some two-weapon melee attacks, you should also have a reasonable Strength score.

Suggested Feat: Aces High

Suggested Skills: Acrobatics, Bluff, Perception, Stealth, Thievery

Suggested At-Will Powers: *nimble strike*, *twin strike*

Suggested Encounter Power: *two-fanged strike*

Suggested Daily Power: *split the tree*

Deckslingers and Elemental Power

Some deckslingers may wish to forego the elemental connection to the class. These characters have little work to do: simply describe the d10 damage upgrade of cards to a trained practice in throwing, and revert the Elemental Hex feature to something more like the original Hunter's Quarry concept. They use such enchantments to their cards as *magic weapon*, *vicious weapon*, and later, the *phasing weapon*.

Deckslingers who wish to fully embrace the elemental theme may wonder where the energy is in the original class features. These deckslingers should quickly strive to come into possession of a *huxtropy deck*, or else a *frost standard deck*, *flaming standard deck*, or something of the sort.

Alternatively—or additionally—you may roll 1d4 each time you attack with your cards that you've infused with elemental energy. If the attack would have otherwise dealt untyped damage, it instead deals a type of damage according to the die roll: 1—necrotic; 2—fire; 3—cold; 4—lightning. Unless modified by some other factor, your Elemental Hex damage is the same type as the attack that it's added on to.

A deckslinger of any style or preference would do well to take a careful look at his or her suite of powers and rename and describe them according to the card-throwing theme. For example, while *split the tree* is very evocative mechanically as throwing two cards at once, the name has a very rangery feel not fitting a 'slinger.

The Pact

As an extraplanar source from which power is drawn, the elemental gamblers and Felavusix's magic have of course attracted the attention of many inquiring minds. One such collective set of minds is that of warlocks seeking avenues to power.

Below is described a new eldritch pact for the warlock, which is found in the *D&D 4E Player's Handbook*.

Gamblers Pact

Prerequisite: Card Throwing feat; a warlock who wishes to delve into the pact of the gamblers must be proficient with the throwing of cards.

You have followed the pathways of arcane magic to, from, and between *huxtropy decks* and Felavusix's prison. With the knowledge you have gained, you can draw power from the gamblers just as the decks do, making the power source yours to command. But beware—just as the gamblers snuck the Jokers into *huxtropy decks*, they will surely seek to wile their tricks and chaos into your life.

Touch of Chaos: As long as you wield a non-magic standard deck of cards or a *magic standard deck*, it is infused with the elemental power of the gamblers, and thus follows the same rules as a *huxtropy deck*. This ability qualifies your deck for other effects and abilities that refer to your *huxtropy deck*.

A non-magic standard deck uses *huxtropy deck* rules, except that it has no enhancement bonus and you do not get additional effects on a critical hit. The deck regenerates as a magic deck would through the magic you supply it.

A *magic standard deck* is treated as a *huxtropy deck* with the same enhancement bonus.

You cannot apply your Touch of Chaos to a standard deck with an enchantment other than *magic weapon*, such as a *vicious standard deck*.

Why the Ranger?

When building the mechanics for card throwing and the *huxtropy* concept, it seemed prudent to consider what class would best wield such weapons. As the most in tune with ranged weapons, the ranger was the clear fit . . . in every way but thematically. Thus the deckslinger was born as essentially a reskin of the ranger.

To broaden the scope and appeal of the *huxtropy deck* and cards in general, the rules for using them as implements were . . . erm, implemented. A class such as bard would be great for using the cards as both ranged weapons and implements, and the artificer—though less of a thematic fit—makes a nice mechanical choice as well. As seen on this page, the warlock is a great class for using the deck just as an implement.

Elemental Fusion: Your *eldritch blast* spell and other warlock implement powers that deal untyped damage can be altered with elemental magic. Whenever you use such a power while wielding your *huxtropy deck*, the power deals typed damage according to your first damage card drawn for the power instead of untyped damage. The power gains the relevant keyword. You do not get bonus damage from your *huxtropy deck* for the card's suit matching the damage type.

Entropic Tricks: When you use a warlock encounter spell with a class feature name entry for a class feature you do not have, you may use your *huxtropy deck* as a weapon instead of an implement for this attack, thus using the value of your damage card(s) for damage instead of the damage dice of the attack. Treat the power as though it had a number of [W] equal to the number of dice it would normally have. (So 3d8 becomes 3[W].) You do not add your weapon proficiency bonus to this attack, and the power is still considered to be an implement power.

Double-Dealing: You know the *double-dealing* at-will spell.

Double-Dealing

Warlock Attack 1

While many nimble fingers can manipulate cards, it takes a nimble mind like yours to cheat the elemental huxtropy entities. You conjure back a powerful card to expend it again.

At-Will ♦ Arcane, Implement; Varies

Standard Action **Ranged 10**

Requirement: You must be wielding your *huxtropy deck*, and there must be at least one damage card in its discard pile.

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex

Hit: 1[X] + Charisma modifier damage. The amount of X and type of damage are determined by your choice of damage card from your *huxtropy deck* discard pile. Then, put the chosen card at the bottom of your *huxtropy deck*.

Level 21: 1[X] + 1d8 + Charisma modifier damage.

Stack Fate: You have the Stack Fate pact boon. As your foe is consumed by the elemental hex you placed upon him, you transfer the entropic energy into a gamble at controlling the fate of your next attack.

When an enemy under your Warlock's Curse is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer, you may look at the top three cards of your *huxtropy deck*, shuffle any of them back into the deck, then put the rest back on top in any order.



The Path

The following paragon path is for characters who wish to focus on their card-throwing capabilities and connection to the elemental gamblers, regardless of class and other background. While common for deckslingers and gamblers pact warlocks, this path is good for anyone with the Card Throwing feat and a *huxtropy deck* who wants to pursue a striker-oriented paragon path.

Chaos Gambler

"Playin' for keeps is still playin', so take a card . . . any card!"

Prerequisite: Card Throwing feat

You've come a long way since you first picked up a deck of cards and shuffled. You're past the point of throwing cards at objects for practice. Even the elemental power surging from your *huxtropy deck* through your fingertips is old hat to you now.

To further your skill, you tap into the chaos of the elemental plane to heighten both your deck and your card throwing abilities. With your chaos gambler attacks, you allow the power of each card to speak for itself.

Chaos Gambler Path Features

Chaos Wager (11th level): You gain a +2 bonus to Bluff, Gambling, Insight and Thievery skill checks made to gamble as long as your *huxtropy deck* is being used for the game. However, natural 1s and 2s on such checks are automatic failures.

Expert Scaler (11th level): Choose an expertise feat. You gain that feat as a bonus feat with the Cards weapon group as the selected weapon and/or implement.

Gambler's Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, choose a *huxtropy* suit. On this action, for each attack with your *huxtropy deck* that draws a damage card of the chosen suit, you can apply the critical properties of the deck other than double damage (for weapons) or maximum damage (for implements).

Besting the Kings (16th level): When building a hand with a suite of cards from your *huxtropy deck*, such as when scoring a critical hit, Kings can be treated as wild cards.

In addition, when you draw a King with an attack roll with your *huxtropy deck*, you may treat it as a damage card of your choice rather than its normal effect.

Chaos Gambler Powers

High Card

Chaos Gambler Attack 11

Grabbing the top card of your deck, you let the innate energy of the chaos suffuse the card. As it shoots through the air, the entropic energies surge up to consume your enemy.

Encounter ♦ Elemental, Weapon; Varies

Standard Action

Ranged weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding your *huxtropy deck*.

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity or Charisma vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Charisma modifier damage, plus additional effects according to the damage type as determined by your *huxtropy deck*.

♦ **Cold (Frost)**—The target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

♦ **Fire (Flame)**—1d10 additional fire damage.

♦ **Lightning (Storms)**—The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

♦ **Necrotic (Death)**—The target is weakened until the end of your next turn.

Karmic Luck

Chaos Gambler Utility 12

Though you have succumbed to the elemental gamblers' bad luck, you manipulate the magic to create a karmic effect of good luck.

At-Will ♦ Elemental

Free Action

Personal

Trigger: You miss with an attack while wielding your *huxtropy deck* and there is a Joker in its discard pile

Effect: Reroll the attack roll with a +2 bonus. Use the second result even if it's lower. Shuffle a Joker in your *huxtropy deck* discard pile back into the deck.

Special: If you have managed to remove the Jokers from your deck, you may use this power once per encounter without requiring any Joker in your *huxtropy deck* discard pile.

Chaos Fan

Chaos Gambler Attack 20

In swift sequence, you draw and sling three cards at various opponents; each card surges with its own suit's power.

Daily ♦ Elemental, Weapon; Varies

Standard Action

Ranged weapon

Requirement: You must be wielding your *huxtropy deck*.

Target: One, two, or three creatures

Attack: Dexterity or Charisma vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Charisma modifier damage, plus additional effects according to the damage type as determined by your *huxtropy deck*.

♦ **Cold (Frost)**—The target is immobilized (save ends).

♦ **Fire (Flame)**—Ongoing 1d10 fire damage (save ends).

♦ **Lightning (Storms)**—The target is dazed (save ends).

♦ **Necrotic (Death)**—The target is weakened (save ends).

Miss: Half damage

HEROIC TIER FEATS

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Aces High	Card Throwing	Aces deal 11 damage in <i>huxtropy decks</i> ; +1 damage in other decks
Card Throwing	—	You gain proficiency with cards as weapons and implements
Distance Dealer	Card Throwing	Increase range of your thrown cards
Focused Infusion	Cha 13, deckslinger	Increase damage dice of Elemental Hex with Prime Shot
Gambler's Soul	Sorcerer	Change spells' damage to <i>huxtropy</i> suit types with resistance
Healing and Dealing	Bard	Grant resistance to <i>huxtropy</i> suit types with healing
Improved Stack Fate	Warlock, gamblers pact	Rearrange six cards instead of three
Luck of the Draw	Rogue	Make a good <i>huxtropy</i> hand to gain combat advantage
Practiced Spellscaling	Dex 13, wizard	Use cards instead of a wand; ignore some penalties
Scaling Initiate	Dex 13, Cha 13	Multiclass deckslinger; Gambling skill, Card Throwing bonus feat
Wild Cards	Card Throwing	Treat some cards as wild for building hand with <i>huxtropy deck</i>

The Feats

The following feats are available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Aces High

Prerequisite: Card Throwing

Benefit: When wielding a *huxtropy deck*, an Ace as a damage card indicates 11 damage instead of 1.

In addition, you gain a +1 feat bonus to damage rolls with weapons from the card weapon group other than *huxtropy decks*.

Card Throwing

Benefit: You gain proficiency with all weapons in the card weapon group.

Distance Dealer

Prerequisite: Card Throwing

Benefit: Increase the range of your thrown cards to 6/12 for standard decks and 8/16 for razor decks.

Focused Infusion

Prerequisite: Cha 13, deckslinger

Benefit: As long as you benefit from your Prime Shot class feature, the dice from your Elemental Hex feature are increased by one die size. (Your d6s would become d10s; d8s would become d12s.)

Gambler's Soul

Prerequisite: Sorcerer

Benefit: While wielding a *huxtropy deck* with an arcane power, if the damage card you draw represents the same damage type as one you currently resist through a sorcerer feature, you may change the damage types of your arcane power to the damage card's type.

In addition, if you have the Wild Soul feature, you may ignore rolls other than 2, 3, 5 and 6 for that feature.

Healing and Dealing

Prerequisite: Bard

Benefit: Whenever you use a power with the healing

keyword to heal an ally while you wield a *huxtropy deck*, you may grant that ally resist 5 + 1/2 your level to either cold, fire, lightning or necrotic until the end of your next turn.

Improved Stack Fate

Prerequisite: Warlock, gamblers pact

Benefit: You may now look at and rearrange six cards with your Stack Fate pact boon rather than three.

Luck of the Draw

Prerequisite: Rogue

Benefit: When you roll initiative at the start of the encounter, you may shuffle a deck and draw the top five cards. If you can make a hand of a Trio or better, you have combat advantage against creatures you're attacking until you miss with an attack or the encounter ends.

If you make a Discord or better, you gain a +2 bonus to your defenses for the same duration.

Practiced Spellscaling

Prerequisite: Dex 13, wizard

Benefit: You can treat your deck of cards as a wand for the purpose of effects that consider what implement you are wielding, such as the Wand of Accuracy Arcane Implement Mastery feature.

In addition, when you use the Wand of Accuracy feature with your cards, you may ignore up to your Dexterity modifier in penalties to your attack roll.

Scaling Initiate [Multiclass Deckslinger]

Prerequisite: Dex 13, Cha 13

Benefit: You gain training in the Gambling skill. You gain Card Throwing as a bonus feat.

Wild Cards

Prerequisite: Card Throwing

Benefit: When you choose this feat, select a card from Ace through 10, Jack, Queen or King.

When building a hand with a suite of cards from your *huxtropy deck*, such as when scoring a critical hit, Jokers and the chosen card can be treated as wild cards.

The Skill

Referenced several times previously in this supplement, the Gambling skill is both new and narrow. It has no combat capabilities, virtually no relevant knowledge-related checks, and even its primary function can be replaced with other skills: Bluff, Insight and Thievery. For these reasons, you may choose to ignore Gambling in your game. However, for the character that prefers it, Gambling has its role to play. To compensate for the relatively low power level of the skill, the character background below grants training in the skill rather than the normal background skill benefit options.

Gambling (Intelligence)

You have played enough gambling games to know not just the rules of the games, but the rules of winning. While you may employ bluffing, reading others' bluffs, and perhaps the occasional cheat, your greatest winnings are due to your ability to simply know how a game works—and exploit it.

You may count the cards in a huxtropy game, calculating the chances of winning and making appropriate bets. In a game of dice, you may study the table to find its faults or the preferences of the dice. Regardless of the game, you are able to find aspects of it to study and master, turning your prowess to gold.

The Gambling skill may be used in resolving tavern or casino games, or perhaps any time a character participate in a game the rules of which can be studied and exploited.

The Background

Gambler: You may have been born into a family or community of gamblers, or you may have learned the trade on your own, frequenting taverns for long nights of ale, gold and cards. Either way, you have mastered the art of counting cards and otherwise learning your way around a game. However, you've likely had to change venues frequently, as others—whether the house or other players—are never willing to put up with your “lucky” winnings for long.

Additional Trained Skill: Gambling

