

## OF MISCHIEF AND MOUNTEBANKS

*Just because magic is real doesn't mean every magician is!*

By Jeff Binder

The hedge wizard and the village witch may be limited in the scope of their power, but they are, nevertheless, powerful – genuine representatives of the arcane and the divine. But the existence of the real thing doesn't mean that charlatans and tricksters won't exist; indeed, they're likely to be even more common. In this article, we present two such classes, the **fool** and the **mountebank**. These classes aren't spellcasters in the traditional sense, though they often pretend to be. And sometimes, to their own surprise, they just may succeed...

### FOOL

Prime Requisite: CHA

Requirements: None

Hit Dice: 1d6

Maximum Level: 14

Fools are characters illuminated by a spark of divine luck but who lack the means, focus, inclination, emotional balance, or moral fortitude to embrace their divine gift fully or bring it to productive fruition. Fools are misfits - societal, physical, or mental. Many are knaves, rascals, and/or children. They are fate's mirror, reflecting luck's harsh mockery to those harboring delusions of grandeur and the belief that one day, their power will rival that of the whims of the gods. As living embodiments of the divine comedy, fools are typically touched with a bit of madness. Some find comfort in the dust and filth of humanity because they see more than most that no matter the grand achievements, dust is the inevitable and eternal throne of all man. Others are quite sane and just along for the ride. As fools gain experience and notoriety, they are welcomed to grand courts and into the bosom of the most powerful and influential as living vessels touched by the divine, fonts of homespun or awkward wisdom, and as a breathing reminder of one's infinitesimal place in the hierarchy of the gods, no matter how besotted one becomes with temporal power.

| Fool Level Progression |                 |       |          |          |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------|----------|----------|
| Experience             | Title           | Level | Hit Dice | Backstab |
| 0                      | Nuisance        | 1     | 1d6      | x2       |
| 3,000                  | Mischief        | 2     | 2d6      | x2       |
| 6,000                  | Knave           | 3     | 3d6      | x2       |
| 12,000                 | Rascal          | 4     | 4d6      | x2       |
| 24,000                 | Imp             | 5     | 5d6      | x3       |
| 48,000                 | Larker          | 6     | 6d6      | x3       |
| 95,000                 | Scapegrace      | 7     | 7d6      | x3       |
| 190,000                | Varlet          | 8     | 8d6      | x3       |
| 310,000                | Fool            | 9     | 9d6      | x4       |
| 430,000                | Fool of Fools   | 10    | 9d6+2*   | x4       |
| 550,000                | Lord of Fools   | 11    | 9d6+4*   | x4       |
| 670,000                | High Fool       | 12    | 9d6+6*   | x4       |
| 790,000                | Prince of Fools | 13    | 9d6+8*   | x5       |
| 910,000                | King of Fools   | 14    | 9d6+10*  | x5       |

\*Hit point modifiers from constitution are ignored

As they often incite (however unintentional) or find themselves witness to violence, fools are surprisingly accurate (some might say uncannily lucky) combatants, though they lack the toughness, protection, and damaging power of truly experienced warriors. At first level (Nuisance), they hit an unarmored foe (AC 0) with an attack throw of 10+. They advance in attack throws and saving throws as fighters, by two points every *three* levels of experience. Fools cannot wear armor heavier than hide armor, though they may use shields, and typically wear a motley patchwork of hide, skins, and padded heavy quilts (treated as hide). They are quite limited in the weapons they may wield – clubs, daggers, bolas, and slings. Fools may fight with two weapons or with a weapon and a shield. Through prescience, luck, or the ability to make the best of an opening when they see one, fools can **backstab** as thieves of equal level.

All fools begin play with a number of skills germane to their unique calling. They are adept in some kind of **performance**, though the specific type of performance varies and may be chosen by the player. They take naturally to slight-of-hand and other dexterous tricks and are able to **pick pockets** as a thief of equal level. Additionally, fools possess no mean skill in **acrobatics**. They are experts at presenting themselves as harmless or beneath notice or can blend into crowds and groups (treat as **hiding in shadows**). Finally, all fools have an uncanny ability to **hear noise**.

Beginning at 2<sup>nd</sup> level (Mischief), a fool can **taunt** an intelligent creature (through word, gesture, or other action) in order to goad them into heedlessly berating or attacking the fool in preference to all else. The taunted creature must be within 30', be able to see or hear the fool, and must succeed at a saving throw versus Spells or be overcome with rage for 1d4 rounds plus 1 round per level of the fool. In combat environments, hostile creatures who have been successfully taunted will heedlessly attack the fool in preference to all others for the duration with disregard for their own safety, while in more social situations (such as at court), the creature's reaction immediately turns *unfriendly* (see page 99 of the ACKS core rulebook) or *hostile* (if already unfriendly) and the creature will become verbally or possibly physically abusive to the fool should the chance present itself. The Judge may grant bonuses or penalties to the saving throw depending on circumstances, the temperament or natural inclinations of the creature, and/or their training (such as a diplomat in court possessing ranks in Diplomacy). A fool may taunt a creature no more than once per hour.

At 3<sup>rd</sup> level (Knave), a fool has learned a series of physical tricks, confusing nonsense, or baffling patter so profound or confusing that it serves to preternaturally **distract** creatures. Up to 1d6 living creatures within 30' of the fool may be affected. Creatures with the fewest HD are affected first. Each affected creature may make a saving throw versus Spells to resist the distraction. Creatures already engaged in an extremely stressful or life-threatening situation (such as combat) gain a +4 bonus to saving throws to resist the distraction. Those that fail the saving throw will take no actions (though they are not helpless) while they are beguiled by the antics of the fool, and are considered *distracted* for purposes of sneaking and surprise (see page 98 of the ACKS core rulebook). The fool may attempt this sort of distraction no more than once every 8 hours.

At 4<sup>th</sup> level (Rascal), a fool may spend an action to whisper a quick prayer or charm to grant himself **fool's luck**. For the next 6 turns, an enemy attempting to attack or cast a spell upon the fool will be foiled in the attempt and spare the fool of any potential damage or malevolent effect. Until 6 turns have passed, the fool may be spared 1d4 times before his luck is exhausted. Area-effect spells and area attacks cannot be protected against, nor will they exhaust any potential instances of fool's luck the fool currently possesses. Fool's luck may be invoked no more than once every 8 hours.

By 5<sup>th</sup> level (Imp), a fool's **white luck presence** immediately influences the reactions of others. Whenever a reaction roll is made in the presence of a fool, the reaction is rolled twice and the better (or worse, fool's choice) roll is taken.

An 8<sup>th</sup> level fool (Varlet) may attempt to use wands, staffs, and other magical items only usable by mages. A failed proficiency throw means the attempt backfires in some desultory way.

At 9<sup>th</sup> level a fool gains the uncanny ability of **prophecy**. The fool is subject to mad jibberings, dreams, riddles, obtuse insights, or the random attention of various gods and godlings. These visions will be both cryptic and useful, and functions as the **commune** spell. This ability may be called upon once per week.

At 9<sup>th</sup> level (Fool), a fool does not gain land or establish a domain, but he may find a **patron**. A patron is a wealthy or well-connected individual who provides aid and succor to the fool in exchange for his services and insight. Patrons are typically grand or powerful nobles such as kings or queens, grand dukes or duchesses, emperors and empresses, but may also be extremely wealthy and influential merchants. The fool is automatically granted lodging within his patron's seat of power and support within the patron's domains by those loyal to the patron. The fool gains the patron's allies and enemies while in the patron's service.

Furthermore, through his patron's resources a fool may request one favor per month (such as goods and services, loaned soldiery, introductions to other powerful patrons, a loaned permanent magical item with each month held counting as that month's favor, or several disposable magical items). The maximum value of the monthly favor (in gp) is determined by the level of the fool's patron as detailed in the adjoining chart.

| Value of a Patron's Favor per Month |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Class Level of Patron               | Maximum Value (gp) |
| 0                                   | 12                 |
| 1                                   | 25                 |
| 2                                   | 50                 |
| 3                                   | 100                |
| 4                                   | 200                |
| 5                                   | 400                |
| 6                                   | 800                |
| 7                                   | 1600               |
| 8                                   | 3,000              |
| 9                                   | 7,250              |
| 10                                  | 12,000             |
| 11                                  | 32,000             |
| 12                                  | 50,000             |
| 13                                  | 135,000            |
| 14                                  | 350,000            |

The Judge determines the extent of a favor's fulfillment and the availability of favors requested. In general, the favor may not encompass more goods, services, or personnel beyond what may be acquired monthly in the patron's largest controlled Market (or in the case of a merchant, the largest Market they operate in or where they have established successful ongoing mercantile ventures).

Fools use the Henchman Loyalty table (*ACKS Core Rulebook*, p. 51) to determine their relationship with their patron. They begin with a Loyal (9-11) patron. However, the fool is always subject to the whims of the powerful, and they must roll on the Henchman Loyalty chart once per year and whenever their relationship with their patron is tested to determine how their relationship with their benefactor fairs. A fool gains a +1 bonus to the Loyalty roll for every level they are above their patron, and a -1 penalty to their Loyalty roll for every two levels they are below their patron. Requests for more than one favor per month forces an immediate reaction roll at a -2 penalty from their patron. A modified roll of 5 or less indicates the dismissal of the fool from the Patron's service, and a roll of 2 or less indicates an uncivil parting. It is possible for a fool to maintain service with a patron for many years or to move from patron to patron, depending on the whim of the dice.

At 14<sup>th</sup> level (King of Fools), a fool is gifted with **luck's boon**, and once per day may reroll (or force a reroll) on an attack roll, saving throw, or any other randomly rolled effect within 60'. The fool automatically chooses the most beneficial of the two rolls.

**Proficiencies:** Alertness, Animal Training, Blind Fighting, Combat Reflexes, Combat Trickery (disarm, incapacitate, knock down), Contortionism, Diplomacy, Disguise, Divine Blessing, Divine Health, Endurance, Fighting Style, Gambling, Intimidation, Lip Reading, Mimicry, Mystic Aura, Performance, Precise Shooting, Prestidigitation, Riding, Running, Skirmishing, Swashbuckling, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

| Fool Skill Progression |            |              |                 |            |                 |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| Level                  | Acrobatics | Pick Pockets | Hide in Shadows | Hear Noise | Arcane Dabbling |
| 1                      | 18+        | 17+          | 19+             | 14+        | -               |
| 2                      | 17+        | 16+          | 18+             | 13+        | -               |
| 3                      | 16+        | 15+          | 17+             | 12+        | -               |
| 4                      | 15+        | 14+          | 16+             | 11+        | -               |
| 5                      | 14+        | 13+          | 15+             | 10+        | -               |
| 6                      | 13+        | 12+          | 14+             | 9+         | -               |
| 7                      | 12+        | 10+          | 12+             | 8+         | -               |
| 8                      | 11+        | 8+           | 10+             | 7+         | 4+              |
| 9                      | 10+        | 6+           | 8+              | 6+         | 3+              |
| 10                     | 9+         | 4+           | 6+              | 5+         | 3+              |
| 11                     | 8+         | 2+           | 4+              | 4+         | 3+              |
| 12                     | 7+         | -1+          | 3+              | 3+         | 3+              |
| 13                     | 6+         | -3+          | 2+              | 2+         | 3+              |
| 14                     | 5+         | -5+          | 1+              | 1+         | 3+              |

*\* -1 penalty on the proficiency throw per each level the acrobat is lower than the victim.*

| Fool Attack and Saving Throws |                           |                |                |                |        |              |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------|--------------|
| Level                         | Petrification & Paralysis | Poison & Death | Blast & Breath | Staffs & Wands | Spells | Attack Throw |
| 1                             | 15+                       | 14+            | 16+            | 16+            | 17+    | 10+          |
| 2-3                           | 14+                       | 13+            | 15+            | 15+            | 16+    | 9+           |
| 4                             | 13+                       | 12+            | 14+            | 14+            | 15+    | 8+           |
| 5-6                           | 12+                       | 11+            | 13+            | 13+            | 14+    | 7+           |
| 7                             | 11+                       | 10+            | 12+            | 12+            | 13+    | 6+           |
| 8-9                           | 10+                       | 9+             | 11+            | 11+            | 12+    | 5+           |
| 10                            | 9+                        | 8+             | 10+            | 10+            | 11+    | 4+           |
| 11-12                         | 8+                        | 7+             | 9+             | 9+             | 10+    | 3+           |
| 13                            | 7+                        | 6+             | 8+             | 8+             | 9+     | 2+           |
| 14                            | 6+                        | 5+             | 7+             | 7+             | 8+     | 1+           |

## FOOL TEMPLATES

| <b>3d6</b>  |                 |  |   |
|-------------|-----------------|--|---|
| <b>Roll</b> | <b>Template</b> | <b>Proficiencies</b>                           | <b>Starting Equipment</b>   |
| 3-4         | Outcast         | Combat Trickery (Incapacitate)<br>Intimidation | Sling, 20 rough-hewn bullets, club, raggedy tunic and leggings, ratty leather belt, well-worn low boots, backpack, small bag of marbles, small bag with collected knickknacks (trash), moldy bread, pet mouse, 4gp  |
| 5-6         | Fortune's Child | Divine Health<br>Mimicry                       | Piecemeal armor (hide), rough worn leather boots, carved rod showing many childlike images (club), dagger, sling with 12 colored marble bullets, hemp belt, pouches with colored chalk and string, pouch full of jacks, a ragdoll, backpack, waterskin, 7 gp  |
| 7-8         | Jester          | Prestidigitation<br>Performance (clowning)     | Mottled yet colorful patchwork armor (hide), soft boots, bell-laden leather belt, heavy stick with bell-tipped clown face on end (club), dagger, theatrical makeup, sheep's bladder, flame juggling sticks (torches), "Punch and Judy" puppets, backpack, 7gp   |
| 9-10        | Wildcard        | Swashbuckling<br>Alchemy                       | Patchwork armor (hide), dagger, bola, sling with 20 bullets, leather belt with 2 small pouches, evergreen and yellow cloak, bag of smooth marbles, 50' rope, backpack, wineskin, 10gp   |
| 11-12       | Addertongue     | Seduction<br>Intimidation                      | Formfitting dyed armor sewn from unknown skins (hide), bola, two slender daggers, sling with 20 polished black bullets, high hard boots, sable cloak, black leather belt with several pouches, flask of hard liquor, 25' silk rope, 15gp  |
| 13-14       | Odd Diplomat    | Diplomacy<br>Seduction                         | Well appointed padded (hide) armor, fine tunic and leggings, patterned gray cloak, fine dagger, platinum-tipped walking stick (club), fine hard black boots, fine leather belt, 4 belt pouches, pepper box, backpack, 1 week's iron rations, wineskin, 10gp   |
| 15-16       | Luckbender      | Divine Blessing<br>Gambling                    | Hardened, pale, skin-stitched hide armor, ivory-handled dagger, iron rod shaped like a dragon with ivory grip (club), sling with smooth white-marble stones, off-white tunic with black embroidery on cuff and collar, ermine and sable cloak, fine black belt with four belt pouches, backpack, 1 week's iron rations, wineskin, 15 gp |
| 17-18       | Godtouched      | Mystic Aura<br>Intimidation                    | Lionskin hide armor, heavy oaken club carved into the shape of a snarling-toothed maw, bone-handled dagger, brass-rimmed heavy oaken shield, ivory holy symbol, lionskin cloak, hide belt with three belt pouches, pouch brimming with strange mushrooms, 1 week's iron rations, wineskin, 20gp   |

## MOUNTEBANK

Prime Requisite: DEX and CHA

Requirements: None

Hit Dice: 1d4

Maximum Level: 14

Mountebanks are charlatans, swindlers, and con artists, typically from society's underclass but not always so. Roguish connivers and grifters, mountebanks separate people from their possessions using guile, fast-talk, charm, and trickery. Unlike thieves, who pride themselves on the possessions they can take from others, the mountebank is a master at tricking marks into freely giving up the things they value most.

| Mountebank Level Progression |                 |       |          |   |          |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-------|----------|---|----------|
| Experience                   | Title           | Level | Hit Dice | Special Abilities   | Backstab |
| 0                            | Dodger          | 1     | 1d4      | Alchemy, Brew Quacksalves, Backstabbing, Bargaining, Hear Noise, Impersonation, Pick Pockets, Prestidigitation, Profession (huckster) | x2       |
| 1,250                        | Cheat           | 2     | 2d4      | -   | x2       |
| 2,500                        | Slicker         | 3     | 3d4      | -   | x2       |
| 5,000                        | Rascal          | 4     | 4d4      | Read Languages  | x2       |
| 10,000                       | Grifter         | 5     | 5d4      | -   | x3       |
| 20,000                       | Gouger          | 6     | 6d4      | -   | x3       |
| 40,000                       | Fraud           | 7     | 7d4      | -   | x3       |
| 80,000                       | Rook            | 8     | 8d4      | -   | x3       |
| 180,000                      | Mountebank      | 9     | 9d4      | Hideout   | x4       |
| 280,000                      | Mountebank Lord | 10    | 9d4+2*   | Read Scrolls  | x4       |
| 380,000                      | Jack of Knaves  | 11    | 9d4+4*   | -   | x4       |
| 480,000                      | Jack of Patches | 12    | 9d4+6*   | -   | x4       |
| 580,000                      | Jack of Spades  | 13    | 9d4+8*   | -   | x5       |
| 680,000                      | King of Knaves  | 14    | 9d4+10*  | -   | x5       |

\*Hit point modifiers from constitution are ignored

Mountebanks are trained combatants, although not as skilled as fighters. At first level (Dodger), mountebanks hit an unarmored foe (AC 0) with an attack throw of 10+. They advance in attack throws and saving throws by two points every four levels of experience. Mountebanks cannot wear armor heavier than leather, and they cannot use shields. They may use any missile weapons and any one-handed melee weapons, and may wield a weapon in each hand if desired.

Like thieves, mountebanks have the ability to **backstab** surprised opponents, usually because the mountebank is disguised or distracts them in some way. When backstabbing, the mountebank will receive an attack bonus of +4 and, if successful, deal additional damage for every four levels he or she has attained. A mountebank at 1st through 4th levels does double the normal damage, at 5th-8th levels does triple the normal damage, at 9th-12th levels does quadruple the normal damage, and at 13th level or higher does quintuple the normal damage.

Mountebanks have a range of other skills to assist them their profession. All mountebanks are expert bargainers and showmen peddlers, possessing both the **Bargaining** and **Profession (huckster)** proficiencies at the start of play. They are also masters at creating minor magical effects, trickeries, and distractions to impress or draw attention away from what they are actually doing (as the **Prestidigitation** proficiency). Mountebanks can also **hear noises** and **pick pockets** with the same efficacy as thieves.

Mountebanks often have cause to create a persona, disguise their appearance, or take the identity of another individual in order to avoid retribution, put a mark at ease, or potentially *surprise* a target -- particularly in places where they have already plied their trade. Therefore, all mountebanks possess the ability to **impersonate others**. The chance of mountebanks successfully impersonating others improves by level, as shown on the Mountebank Skills Progression table below. Mountebanks who select the Disguise proficiency gain a +4 bonus to their proficiency throws to impersonate others. Mimicry and other relevant proficiencies may add additional bonuses to the throw, depending on the circumstances.

The Judge should adjust the target value depending on the impersonation intended and the tools, trappings, and time available to the mountebank. Typically, general impersonations (such as impersonating an orc soldier in a large military encampment) are far easier to accomplish than impersonations of individuals (such as impersonating Ugrok One-Hand, advisor to the Orc Chieftain). A character who is intimately familiar with the impersonated subject may make a proficiency throw of 14+ to see through the mountebank's impersonation. The character may add his WIS modifier to the roll, but must apply a penalty based on the mountebank's level, as shown on the Mountebank Skills Progression table.

All mountebanks know a smattering of **alchemy** (as the proficiency), but rather than pursue true alchemical expertise they instead favor the dubious practice of **brewing quacksalves**. Quacksalves are similar to the potions brewed by alchemists and mages, but of much lower cost and far more dubious efficacy. Thus a **quack potion of healing** is similar to a **potion of healing** but cheaper and less reliable.

Brewing a quacksalve costs 50gp per level of the spell effect imbued in the quacksalve. The brewing process requires one day per spell level. After the money and time is invested, the Judge makes a proficiency throw on behalf of the mountebank against the target value listed on the Mountebank Skills Progression table. The mountebank gains a +2 bonus on the throw per rank of Alchemy. The mountebank suffers a -2 penalty on the throw per level of the spell effect. Regardless of the target value, a natural roll of 1-3 always fails.

If the proficiency throw is successful, a quacksalve potion has been successfully created. It functions exactly like a normal potion of the same type. If the proficiency throw fails with a natural 1, or with a modified roll of 1 or less, a **counter-potion** has been created. The counter-potion somehow does the opposite of the potion's intended effect. (A **counter-potion of healing** might deal damage; a **counter-potion of invisibility** might make the character glow brightly.) If the proficiency throw fails with a natural 2-3, or by missing the target value by at least 4, then a **potion of delusion** is created. On any other result, the quacksalve is completely ineffectual.

The Judge should keep the results of the mountebank's proficiency throw to brew the quacksalve a secret, so that the mountebank is unsure whether or not his quacksalve is effective. If the mountebank (or another character) uses an Alchemy proficiency throw to identify a quacksalve, a successful result will reveal what the quacksalve is intended to do, but not what it actually does. Since many quacksalves cause delusion or death, wise characters simply don't drink them!

To create a quacksalve potion, the mountebank must possess a formula or sample of the equivalent (genuine) potion (e.g. to brew a **quack potion of healing**, the mountebank must have a formula or sample of a genuine **potion of healing**). A mountebank without any formulas or samples of genuine potions cannot make quacksalves at all!

The mountebank must also possess a **set of brewing equipment**. A minimum of 400gp must be invested in the brewing equipment to allow the creation of 1<sup>st</sup> level quacksalves. For each subsequent level of quacksalve to be created, an additional 200gp must be invested in the brewing equipment. For every 1,000gp of value in brewing equipment above the minimum required for the item, the mountebank receives a +2 bonus on his proficiency throw to brew quacksalves. Unlike the workshops and laboratories of mages and alchemists, the equipment a mountebank uses to brew quacksalves is typically very portable, as there is often a great need to gather belongings quickly and make a hasty exit from his or her current location! For encumbrance purposes, each 500gp worth of brewing equipment counts as 1 stone of weight.

Regardless of their available formulas, samples, and equipment, mountebanks can only attempt to brew quacksalves with spell effects equal to one-half their class level, rounded up. Thus a 1<sup>st</sup> level mountebank can only brew 1<sup>st</sup> level quacksalves, while a 7<sup>th</sup> level mountebank can brew 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> level quacksalves.

EXAMPLE #1: Fornata the Glib, a 1<sup>st</sup> level mountebank, has 400gp in brewing equipment and a sample **potion of healing**. She wishes to create a **quack potion of healing**. The cost to create the quacksalve is 50gp and 1 day of brewing. Fornata spends the time and gold required, then makes a proficiency throw to brew quacksalve. As a 1<sup>st</sup> level mountebank, Fornata has a target value of 18+. Fornata has one rank in Alchemy, so she gains a +2 bonus to her throw. Because a **potion of healing** uses a 1<sup>st</sup> level effect in its creation, so she suffers a -2 penalty to her throw. The Judge makes the throw secretly on behalf of Fornata. The die roll is an 18, a success! When quaffed, the **quack potion of healing** will actually work as intended.

EXAMPLE #2: Fornata, now a 5<sup>th</sup> level mountebank, has become a well-known purveyor of potions. She now owns brewing equipment worth 600gp, and her level allows her to brew 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> level quacksalves. She is approached by a band of adventurers seeking a **potion of invisibility** and a **potion of polymorph**. They have formulas for both that she can work from. Fornata cannot create a **quack potion of polymorph**, as polymorph is a 4<sup>th</sup> level effect and a 5<sup>th</sup> level mountebank can only create 3<sup>rd</sup> level quacksalves ( $5/2 = 2.5$  rounded to 3). She can, however, brew a **quack potion of invisibility**, because **invisibility** is only a 2<sup>nd</sup> level effect. The cost to create the quacksalve is 100gp and 2 days of brewing. Fornata spends the time and gold required, then makes a proficiency throw to brew quacksalve. As a 5<sup>th</sup> level mountebank, Fornata has a target value of 14+. Fornata has one rank in Alchemy, so she gains a +2 bonus to her throw. **Invisibility** is a 2<sup>nd</sup> level effect, so she suffers a -4 penalty to her throw. The Judge makes the throw secretly on behalf of Fornata. The die roll is an 11, modified (+4 – 2) to a 9. Since the target throw is 14, Fornata failed to create the **potion of invisibility**. Furthermore, because she missed the target value by 4 or more, she accidentally creates a **potion of delusion** instead! When Fornata learns of the disastrous effect her quacksalve has on the expedition into the dwarven mines, she wisely gathers her belongings and hurries out of town.

EXAMPLE #3: Fornata is now a 10<sup>th</sup> level mountebank. Despite occasional “incidents” with adventurers, she has become quite wealthy, and upgraded her brewing equipment to a value of 2,200gp. She has decided to create a **potion of polymorph** for her henchman to take with her on a dangerous adventure. The cost to create the quacksalve is 200gp and 4 days of brewing. Fornata spends the time and gold required, then makes a proficiency throw to brew quacksalve. As a 10<sup>th</sup> level mountebank, Fornata has a target value of 6+. She now has two ranks in the Alchemy proficiency, so she gains a +4 bonus to her throw. **Polymorph self** is a 4<sup>th</sup> level effect, so she suffers a -8 penalty to her throw. The Judge makes the throw secretly on behalf of Fornata, and the die roll is a natural 1. A **counter-potion** has been inadvertently created. Since a **potion of polymorph** allows the imbiber to choose to transform into new forms, the Judge secretly decides that the counter-potion will cause the imbiber to randomly transform into new forms each round. This ends badly for the henchman.



Upon attaining 4<sup>th</sup> level, a mountebank gains the ability to **read languages** (including ciphers, treasure maps, and dead languages, but not magical writings). The mountebank succeeds with a proficiency throw of 5+ on 1d20. If the roll does not succeed, the mountebank may not try to read that particular piece of writing until he reaches a higher level of experience.

When a mountebank attains 9th level (Mountebank), he can establish a **hideout**, and 2d6 mountebank apprentices of 1<sup>st</sup> level will come to work with the character. If hired, they must be paid standard rates for ruffians. These apprentices may be used to engage in hijinks. Mountebanks may substitute **disguise** ability as the required skill for the **spying** and **treasure hunting** hijinks. Additional rules for hideouts are detailed in the Campaigns chapter of the *ACKS Core Rulebook*.

At 10th level, a mountebank can **read and cast magic from arcane scrolls** with a proficiency throw of 3+ on 1d20. However, a failed throw means the spell does not function as expected, and can create a horrible effect at the Judge's discretion.

**Mountebank Proficiency List:** Acrobatics, Alertness, Animal Training, Arcane Dabbling, Bargaining, Bribery, Climbing, Combat Trickery (disarm, incapacitate), Contortionism, Diplomacy, Disguise, Fighting Style, Gambling, Healing, Intimidation, Illusion Resistance, Lip Reading, Mapping, Mimicry, Performance, Running, Seduction, Signaling, Skirmishing, Sniping, Swashbuckling, Weapon Finesse.

| Mountebank Skill Progression |                |            |                |                |             |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Level                        | Impersonation* | Hear Noise | Pick Pockets** | Read Languages | Quacksalves |
| 1                            | 14+/-0         | 14+        | 17+            | -              | 18+         |
| 2                            | 13+/-1         | 13+        | 16+            | -              | 17+         |
| 3                            | 12+/-1         | 12+        | 15+            | -              | 16+         |
| 4                            | 11+/-1         | 11+        | 14+            | 5+             | 15+         |
| 5                            | 10+/-1         | 10+        | 13+            | 5+             | 14+         |
| 6                            | 9+/-2          | 9+         | 12+            | 5+             | 13+         |
| 7                            | 8+/-2          | 8+         | 10+            | 5+             | 12+         |
| 8                            | 7+/-2          | 7+         | 8+             | 5+             | 10+         |
| 9                            | 6+/-2          | 6+         | 6+             | 5+             | 8+          |
| 10                           | 5+/-3          | 5+         | 4+             | 5+             | 6+          |
| 11                           | 4+/-3          | 4+         | 2+             | 5+             | 5+          |
| 12                           | 3+/-3          | 3+         | -1+            | 5+             | 4+          |
| 13                           | 2+/-3          | 2+         | -3+            | 5+             | 4+          |
| 14                           | 1+/-4          | 1+         | -5+            | 5+             | 4+          |

\*The first number indicates the throw necessary to succeed, while the second number indicates the penalty applied to someone intimately familiar with the subject of the impersonation to notice some flaw in the mountebank's ruse.

\*\*-1 penalty on the proficiency throw for each level the mountebank is lower than the victim.

| Mountebank Attack and Saving Throws |                           |                |                |                |        |              |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------|--------------|
| Level                               | Petrification & Paralysis | Poison & Death | Blast & Breath | Staffs & Wands | Spells | Attack Throw |
| 1-2                                 | 13+                       | 13+            | 16+            | 14+            | 15+    | 10+          |
| 3-4                                 | 12+                       | 12+            | 15+            | 13+            | 14+    | 9+           |
| 5-6                                 | 11+                       | 11+            | 14+            | 12+            | 13+    | 8+           |
| 7-8                                 | 10+                       | 10+            | 13+            | 11+            | 12+    | 7+           |
| 9-10                                | 9+                        | 9+             | 12+            | 10+            | 11+    | 6+           |
| 11-12                               | 8+                        | 8+             | 11+            | 9+             | 10+    | 5+           |
| 13-14                               | 7+                        | 7+             | 10+            | 8+             | 9+     | 4+           |

## MOUNTEBANK TEMPLATES

| <b>3d6<br/>Roll</b> | <b>Template</b> | <b>Proficiencies</b>                              | <b>Starting Equipment</b>   |
|---------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| 3-4                 | Villain         | Combat Trickery<br>(Incapacitate)<br>Intimidation | Sling, 20 rough-hewn bullets, short sword, tattered leather armor, rough hewn cloak, tunic and pants, ratty leather belt, well-worn low boots, backpack, sap, 1 week's iron rations, 4 gp   |
| 5-6                 | Ringleader      | Animal Training<br>Performance (Oration)          | Trainer's whip, bola, net, serviceable leather armor, ruffled tunic and breeches, worn red coat with tails, top hat, short sword, leather belt with large buckle, high black boots, hair grease, moustache wax, backpack, 1 week's iron rations, 7 gp                   |
| 7-8                 | Imposter        | Disguise<br>Mimicry                               | Crossbow, case with 20 bolts, makeup kit, short sword, leather armor, gray tunic and pants, dark gray traveling cloak, high boots, leather belt, 2 flasks of common oil, lantern, wineskin, 1 week's iron rations, 2 daggers hidden in boots, 7 gp                      |
| 9-10                | Rake            | Seduction<br>Diplomacy                            | Crossbow, case with 20 bolts, fine rapier, form fitting leather armor, ruffled tunic and tight pants, gentleman's cloak, fine low boots, leather belt, dagger with sheath, cologne, well groomed riding horse with tack, 1 week's iron rations                          |
| 11-12               | Fortune Teller  | Arcane Dabbling<br>Knowledge (Occult)             | Crossbow, case with 20 bolts, leather armor, billowy robes, leather belt, 2 belt pouches, crystal ball (non-magical) with stand, occult fortune cards, backpack, flash powder, incense bowl, short sword, concealed dagger, low soft boots, 1 week's iron rations, 4 gp |
| 13-14               | Physic          | Alchemy<br>Healing                                | Shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, leather armor, university robes and cap, leather belt, 2 belt pouches, backpack, soft low boots, physicians apparatus, brewing equipment, several phials filled with liquid, riding horse with tack, 1 week's iron rations, 7 gp       |
| 15-16               | Four Flusher    | Lip Reading<br>Gambling                           | Crossbow, case with 20 bolts, short sword, leather armor, respectable tunic and pants, high boots, smoking pipe and tobacco, leather belt, backpack, belt pouch, playing cards or plaques, concealed thin dagger, 3 shells and 1 marble, 1 week's iron rations, 7 gp    |
| 17-18               | Grafter         | Bribery<br>Intimidation                           | Shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, fine rapier, fine leather armor, well cared for tunic and pants, fine cloak, snuffbox, leather belt, belt pouch, high hard boots, riding horse and tack, leather saddlebags, 1 week's iron rations, 7 gp                               |

## DESIGN NOTES

The Mountebank is a straight re-skin of the Thief class, built as HD 0, Fighting 1, Thievery 3. Like the Thief, the class has ten custom powers, with nine selected at 1<sup>st</sup> level and one custom power traded for a power at 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> level.

The Fool is a much more complex build. While all other existing human custom classes were built with 4 build points across the Class Category Values, the Fool was built with just 3: Fighter 2 (1000 XP) and Hit Die Value 1 (500 XP). The Fool's inordinate number of custom powers comes from taking 10(!) Fighter Trade offs (1500 XP). The Fool spends many of these Custom Powers on thief abilities – which normally cannot be taken with Fighting Value trade-offs. We again made an exception for this unusual class. The nature of the Fool is, after all, to be a breaker of rules, and if it's a broken class, it's broken in a way that isn't game-breaking.

- We traded Unlimited Armor for Restricted Armor to gain 3 Custom Powers.
- We traded Unlimited Weapons for Restricted Weapons to gain 4 Custom Powers.
- We traded Two-handed Weapons fighting style to gain 1 Custom Power.
- We traded Fighter Damage Bonus to gain 2 Custom Powers.
- We then bought Backstab, Acrobatics, Performance, Pick Pockets, Hide in Shadows, and Hear Noise for 6 Custom Powers.
- We traded 2 Custom Powers to take additional Custom Powers at levels 2, 4, and 9.
- We traded 2 Custom Powers to take additional Custom Powers at levels 3, 5, and 7.
- We traded the Custom Power at level 7 to take additional Custom Powers at level 8 and 14.
- The Taunt power is a variation of the spell *Hideous Laughter* from ACKS Dwimmermount, and was bought as a spell-like ability.
- The Distract power is a variation of the spell *Hypnotism* from ACKS Dwimmermount, and was bought as a spell-like ability.
- The Fool's Luck power is a variation of the spell *Mirror Image* from ACKS, and was bought as a spell-like ability.