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LETTERS FROM THE FLAMING CRAB PUPPET SHOW

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Letters from the Flaming Crab is a monthly series of Pathfinder-compatible supplements. Each Letter focuses on exploring a different topic to give gamemasters and players new, exciting options that can be dropped into any campaign.

Coming in May: Gnomes vs. Gremlins

Coming in June: Learning & Libraries



FROM: Lieutenant Michelle Crosby. Chief of Security. UCS Flaming Crab.
TO: Lieutenant Commander Molly Shell. Captain. UCS Flaming Crab.
SUBJECT: Intruder

Sorry to send you a report while you're on leave with the priestess, Captain, but we've got a situation here. I think we picked up a stowaway during that last port of call. We've had random acts of vandalism all over the ship. I'm sure it isn't any member of the crew breaking things, stealing junk, and scribbling on the walls. The weird thing? I've been getting reports of a puppet skittering around the lower decks, all on its own. Normally I'd think our crew's been nipping at the moonshine they make in the engine room, but we've seen a lot of strange things during our hops from plane to plane.

If our stowaway really is a puppet, that means magic, and if it is magic we could use the help of your lady friend the priestess to track it down. Could you and she please come back to the Flaming Crab to help us solve this problem?

Michelle Crosby
Chief of Security, UCS Flaming Crab



In modern, and especially Western culture, puppets usually mean one of two things. Either they're super creepy (see the letter from Lt. Crosby above) or they're for entertainment for kids. Looking back over the history of the medium, however, you might realize puppetry has always been one of humanity's most inspired and passionate art forms. In writing *Letters from the Flaming Crab: Puppet Show* we didn't want to go the easy route of puppet monsters and haunts. Instead, we chose to draw on the wellspring of traditions from around the world to create a new class and new character options. Maybe you might even learn something along the way.

Enjoy!
J Gray

The Marionetteer

Though easily confused with mundane toymakers and entertainers, marionetteers do more than make figures of wood and string. Through a blend of magic and skill a marionetteer literally brings their creations to life, if only for a time. Often meek and unobtrusive, marionetteers can take their innocent-seeming creations nearly anywhere, only to bring them to life at the most opportune moment.

Role Marionetteers are versatile characters, who can adapt their marionettes to many situations (in particular, combat) if given time. Even without the aid of their marvellous puppets, they are guileful and socially graceful, allowing them to excel in social and investigative encounters.

Alignment Any.

Hit Die d8.

Parent Classes Summoner and Vigilante.

Starting Wealth 4d6 × 10 gp (average 140 gp).

Class Skills

The marionetteer's class skills are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all) (Int), Perception (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Ranks per Level 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following are the class features of the marionetteer.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency Marionetteers are proficient with all simple weapons. Marionetteers are also proficient with light armor.

Hide Puppet (Ex) At 1st level, a marionetteer learns to disguise the relationship between their marionette's animate and inert forms. Should anyone suspect the inert marionette as being anything more than a simple puppet, the marionetteer can immediately attempt a Disguise check with a +20 bonus to hide even the normal passing resemblance between the marionette's two forms.

Marionette (Su) A marionetteer begins play with a carefully crafted Tiny puppet called a marionette. Although physically the marionette is a mundane puppet (hardness 3, 5 hp, 3 lbs.), it is bonded to an outsider or spirit who brings it to life under the marionetteer's command. In effect, the marionette is two things at once: an inanimate puppet, and a living outsider, referred to simply as the inert



and the animate form of the marionette.

The marionette's physical appearance in both inert and animate form is up to the marionetteer, though there must be at least a passing resemblance between the two and the control of the animate marionette is not fine enough to make it appear like a specific creature. A marionetteer can call the animating spirit to their inert marionette in a ritual that takes 1 minute to perform and requires touching the puppet, transforming it into its animate form.

Unless the marionetteer chooses otherwise, characters seeing the animate marionette do not recognize the inert marionette, or vice-versa, and Knowledge checks about one do not reveal information about the other unless the truth of the marionette's transformation is revealed to the world at large. Any attempts to scry on the marionette work only if the marionette is in the form the scryer is searching for. The spirit bonded to the marionette is under the full control of their marionetteer, but is a separate creature and has its own alignment. A marionette itself is not a summoned creature, and can touch or attack creatures warded by *protection from evil* and similar effects. However, it can be forced into its inert form by any effect that would dismiss a summoned creature, such as *banishment*, though spells that simply dismiss magical effects such as *dispel magic* are not sufficient.

Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Hide puppet, marionette, social talent, supernatural performance
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Social grace
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Marionette maintenance
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Social talent
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Animate puppet I
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	Puppet collector
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Animate puppet II, social talent, subtle strings
8	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	No strings
9	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6	Animate puppet III
10	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	Social talent
11	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7	Animate puppet IV
12	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	Marionette control, puppet collector
13	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	Animate puppet V, social talent
14	+10/+5	+4	+4	+9	Instant animation
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+9	Animate puppet VI
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	Social talent
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	Animate puppet VII
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11	Puppet collector
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	Animate puppet VIII, social talent
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Puppet Master

A marionette acts on the same initiative as the marionetteer, and takes only the actions a marionetteer commands of it. Commanding the marionette to act is a move action that requires physical movements on part of the marionetteer, and provokes attacks of opportunity. Only a character able to see both animate marionette and marionetteer has a chance of identifying the connection between these actions, and must succeed on a Sense Motive check with a DC equal to 15 + the marionetteer's level + the marionetteer's Charisma modifier to recognize that they are related.

A marionetteer cannot command a marionette that is further than 100 feet away from them, or that they do not have line of sight to. Without commands, a marionette waits patiently and takes no actions, but is not helpless.

When animated, the marionette's hit points are unchanged from the last time it was animated. Marionettes do not heal naturally, and remain animated until destroyed or returned to inert form as a standard action. Additionally, if the marionetteer is unconscious, asleep, or killed, their marionette immediately returns to its inert form. If destroyed in either form, the inert marionette must be replaced before it can be animated again.

The marionette takes a form shaped by the marionetteer's desires. The marionette's Hit Dice, saving throws, skills, feats, and abilities are tied to the marionetteer's class level and increase as the marionetteer gains levels. In addition, each marionette receives a pool of evolution points, based on the marionetteer's class level, that can be used to give the marionette different abilities and powers.

Whenever the marionetteer gains a level, or when the marionette is replaced, the marionetteer must decide how these points are spent, and they are set until they gain another level of marionetteer or chooses to replace the marionette once more.

Replacing an inert marionette is a process that takes 12 uninterrupted hours, requires materials equal to the marionetteer's level times 10 gp, and heals the animate marionette to half of its maximum hit points if it had fewer hit points remaining or if it had been destroyed. Additionally, a marionetteer can discard and replace their inert marionette at any time in the same way, although they can only maintain one inert marionette at a time.

Social Talent At 1st level, 4th level, and every 3 levels thereafter, a marionetteer gains a vigilante social talent, using their marionetteer level as their effective vigilante level. A marionetteer is always considered to be in a social identity.

Supernatural Performance (Su) Beginning at 1st level, a marionetteer gains a bonus on Perform checks equal to 1/2 their class level when using their inert marionette as part of the performance.

Social Grace (Ex) At 2nd level, a marionetteer learns to either stand out or blend in. They choose either Perform or Bluff, and gain a bonus equal to 1/2 their class level on skill checks for the chosen skill.

Marionette Maintenance (Su) At 3rd level, a marionetteer can repair damage done to their marionette through careful workmanship and a touch of magic. As a standard action usable a number of times per day equal to 3 + their Charisma modifier a marionetteer can use magic and skill to mend their animate marionette's form, restoring 1d8 hit points. At 6th level, and every 3 levels thereafter, this healing increases by 1d8. This ability can only be used while the marionette is in their inert form.

Animate Puppet (Sp): Starting at 5th level, a marionetteer can bring life not only to their marionette, but to any other object. As a standard action the marionetteer can bring any Tiny, non-magical, unattended object within 100 feet to life as if casting *animate object*. The object remains animated and under the marionetteer's control for a number of rounds equal to 3 + their class level per day. These rounds need not be consecutive. The marionetteer can choose to return the object to a lifeless state at any time and animate another object later in the day so long as they have rounds remaining.

Objects animated by this ability act on the marionetteer's initiative and take actions only as the marionetteer commands. Commanding an animated puppet requires a move action and it will continue to carry out the action until it is no longer possible to do so or they return to a lifeless state, whichever comes first.

At 7th level and every odd level thereafter the size or number of objects a marionetteer can animate and control increases according to the chart below. When commanding multiple animated objects the marionetteer can give the same command to any number of them as a single move action.

Lvl	Puppets
7	1 Small or 2 Tiny objects
9	1 Medium, 2 Small, or 4 Tiny objects
11	2 Medium, 4 Small, or 6 Tiny objects
13	1 Large, 2 Medium, 4 Small, or 1 swarm of Tiny objects
15	1 Huge, 2 Large, 4 Medium, 1 swarm of Small, or 2 swarms of Tiny objects
17	1 Gargantuan, 2 Huge, 3 Large, 6 Medium, 2 swarms of Small, or 4 swarms of Tiny objects
19	1 Colossal, 2 Gargantuan, 3 Huge, 4 Large, 8 Medium, 4 swarms of Small, or 8 swarms of Tiny objects

Puppet Collector (Ex) At 6th level, 12th level, and 18th level a marionetteer can create and maintain an additional inert marionette, although they can still animate only one marionette at a time. The additional marionette can be of the same type as the original or of a different type. It can also have a different collection of evolutions. If the second marionette must be replaced it has the same time

and material cost as the original.

Subtle Strings (Sp) At 7th level, a marionetteer can engage and enthrall a creature watching one of their performances. Once per day, the marionetteer can force one creature watching their performance to attempt a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the marionetteer's class level + the marionetteer's Charisma modifier) or be affected as if under the effects of the *suggestion* spell.

No Strings (Su) At 8th level, a marionetteer can control their marionette indirectly, and no longer needs line of sight in order to command their marionette so long as it is still within 100 feet of their current location.

Marionette Control (Sp) Starting at 12th level, a marionetteer can ensnare their opponents in mystical strings and control their movements. As a standard action, the marionetteer can force a humanoid target to attempt a Reflex Save (DC 10 + 1/2 the marionetteer's class level + the marionetteer's Charisma modifier). The target must be within 100 feet and the marionetteer must have line of sight. On a failure, the creature is controlled as though it were controlled, as if by *dominate person*, by the marionetteer for a number of rounds equal to the marionetteer's Charisma modifier. The controlled creature acts on the marionetteer's initiative. Commanding the creature to act is a move action that requires hand gestures on the part of the marionetteer and provokes attacks of opportunity. Once ensnared the controlled creature can attempt to free themselves by making a Strength or Escape Artist check against DC 10 + 1/2 the marionetteer's class level + the marionetteer's Charisma modifier.

Instant Animation (Su) At 14th level, the marionetteer can animate their marionette as a full round action and can do so even if they cannot touch the marionette so long as it is within 100 feet and they can see it.

Puppet Master At 20th level, a marionetteer's bond with the spirit animating their marionette has grown so powerful, they can guide it into multiple vessels at once. The marionetteer gains one of the following abilities:

Accompaniment (Su) When a marionetteer animates their marionette, they can choose to split the animating spirit into two of their puppets. The two marionettes each have their full abilities but suffer a -3 penalty to all d20 rolls for as long as the spirit is divided. The two marionettes can be ordered to perform the same task as a single move action. Otherwise, a separate move action is needed to order each marionette.

Shared Soul (Su) When a marionetteer animates their marionette, they invite a portion of the marionette's animating spirit into their own body. This allows them to command their marionette as a swift action, and also to see and hear through their animate marionette's eyes and ears. While seeing or hearing through their marionette's senses, the marionetteer is considered blinded and deafened.

Marionettes

A marionette's abilities are determined by the marionetteer's level and by the choices made using its evolution points. A marionette's base statistics are equal to those of a summoner's eidolon of the same level, with the marionetteer being considered its summoner. A marionette does not gain the share spells ability. Instead of an eidolon's base forms, each marionette is built to one of the following templates that modifies these base statistics and determines which evolutions the marionette can take.

Arsenal

An arsenal marionette is typically big and bulky, often resembling a powerful knight or frightening monster.

Starting Statistics: Size Medium; **Speed** 20 ft.; **AC** +2 natural armor; **Saves** Fort (good), Ref (good), Will (bad); **Attack** 2 claws (1d4); **Ability Scores** Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 11; **Free Evolutions** claws, limbs (arms), limbs (legs).

Available 1-point Evolutions: claws, climb, improved damage, improved natural armor, magic attacks, unnatural aura^{UM}, pounce, resistance, scent, slam, sting, sure-footed*

Available 2-point Evolutions: ability increase, constructed body*, energy attacks, head^{UM}, gore, grab,

limbs, rake, weapon training

Available 3-point Evolutions: damage reduction, firearm training*, frightful presence

Available 4-point Evolutions: fast healing, large, spell resistance, survival tactic*

* New evolution from LftFC: Puppet Show

Proxy

A proxy marionette is small and lithe, often hard to notice or easy to overlook until it is too late.

Starting Statistics: Size Small; **Speed** 30 ft.; **Saves** Fort (poor), Ref (good), Will (good); **Attack** 2 claws (1d3); **Ability Scores** Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 11; **Free Evolutions** claws, limbs (arms), limbs (legs), precise strike.

Available 1-point Evolutions: basic magic^{UM}, claws, climb, low-light vision^{UM}, magic attacks, precise strike*, pull, push, reach, scent, scramble*, skilled, startling*, sure-footed*

Available 2-point Evolutions: ability increase, constructed body*, flight, head^{UM}, limbs, minor magic^{UM}, poison, tremorsense

Available 3-point Evolutions: blindsense, frightful presence, major magic^{UM}, see in darkness^{UM}

Available 4-point Evolutions: blindsight, dimension door^{UM}, no breath^{UM}, spell resistance, survival tactic*

* New evolution from LftFC: Puppet Show



Eidolons and Puppets

Because a marionetteer's marionette functions similarly to an eidolon, the rules for determining an eidolon's base statistics are reprinted here for convenience. See the marionetteer class on page 2 and the marionette on page 5 for details on how a marionette differs from an eidolon.

Class Level: This is the character's summoner level.

HD: This is the total number of 10-sided (d10) Hit Dice the eidolon possesses, each of which gains a Constitution modifier, as normal.

BAB: This is the eidolon's base attack bonus. An eidolon's base attack bonus is equal to its Hit Dice. Eidolons do not gain additional attacks using their natural weapons for a high base attack bonus.

Good/Bad Saves: These are the eidolon's base saving throw bonuses. An eidolon possesses two good saving throws and one bad saving throw, determined by the creature's base form.

Skills: This lists the eidolon's total skill ranks. An eidolon can assign skill ranks to any skill, but it must possess the appropriate appendages to use some skills. Eidolons with Intelligence scores above the base value modify these totals as normal (an eidolon receives a number of skill ranks equal to 6 + its Intelligence modifier per HD). An eidolon cannot have more ranks in a skill than it has Hit Dice. Eidolon skill ranks are set once chosen, even if the creature changes when the summoner gains a new level.

Feats: This is the total number of feats possessed by an eidolon. Eidolons can select any feat that they qualify for, but they must possess the appropriate appendages to use some feats. Eidolon feats are set once chosen, even if the creature changes when the summoner gains a new level. If, due to changes, the eidolon no longer qualifies for a feat, the feat has no effect until the eidolon once again qualifies for the feat.

Armor Bonus: The number noted here is the eidolon's base total armor bonus. This bonus may be split between an armor bonus and a natural armor bonus, as decided by the summoner. This number is modified by the eidolon's base form and some options available through its evolution pool. An eidolon cannot wear armor of any kind, as the armor interferes with the summoner's connection to the eidolon.

Str/Dex Bonus: Add this modifier to the eidolon's Strength and Dexterity scores, as determined by its base form. Some options available through the eidolon's evolution pool might modify these scores.

Evolution Pool: The value given in this column is the total number of points in the eidolon's evolution pool. Points from this pool can be spent on a wide variety of modifications and upgrades that add new abilities, attacks, and powers to the eidolon. Whenever the summoner gains a level, the number in this pool increases and the summoner can spend these points to change the abilities of the eidolon. These choices are not set. The summoner can change them whenever he gains a level (and through the transmogify spell).

Max. Attacks: This indicates the maximum number of natural attacks that the eidolon is allowed to possess at the given level. If the eidolon is at its maximum, it cannot take evolutions that grant additional natural attacks. This does not include attacks made with weapons.

Special: This includes a number of abilities gained by all eidolons as they increase in power. Each of these bonuses is described below.

Darkvision (Ex): The eidolon has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

Link (Ex): A summoner and his eidolon share a mental link allows for communication across any distance (as long as they are on the same plane). This communication is a free action, allowing the summoner to give orders to his eidolon at any time. In addition, magic items interfere with the summoner's connection to his eidolon. As a result, the summoner and his eidolon share magic item slots. For example, if the summoner is wearing a ring, his eidolon can wear no more than one ring. In case of a conflict, the items worn by the summoner remain active, and those used by the eidolon become dormant. The eidolon must possess the appropriate appendages to utilize a magic item.

Share Spells (Ex): The summoner may cast a spell with a target of "you" on his eidolon (as a spell with a range of touch) instead of on himself. A summoner may cast spells on his eidolon even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the eidolon's type (outsider). Spells cast in this way must come from the summoner spell list. This ability does not allow the eidolon to share abilities that are not spells, even if they function like spells.

Evasion (Ex): If an eidolon is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex save for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw.

Ability Score Increase (Ex): The eidolon adds +1 to one of its ability scores.

Eidolons and Puppets (continued)

Devotion (Ex): An eidolon gains a +4 morale bonus on Will saves against enchantment spells and effects.

Multiattack: An eidolon gains Multiattack as a bonus feat if it has 3 or more natural attacks and does not already have that feat. If it does not have the requisite 3 or more natural attacks (or it is reduced to less than 3 attacks), the eidolon instead gains a second attack with one of its natural weapons, albeit at a –5 penalty. If the eidolon later gains 3 or more natural attacks, it loses this additional attack and instead gains Multiattack.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, an eidolon takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and only half damage if the saving throw fails.

Class Level	HD	BAB	Good Saves	Bad Save	Skills	Feats	Armor Bonus	Str/Dex Bonus	Evolution Pool	Max. Attacks	Special
1st	1	+1	+2	+0	4	1	+0	+0	3	3	Darkvision, link, share spells
2nd	2	+2	+3	+0	8	1	+2	+1	4	3	Evasion
3rd	3	+3	+3	+1	12	2	+2	+1	5	3	—
4th	3	+3	+3	+1	12	2	+2	+1	7	4	—
5th	4	+4	+4	+1	16	2	+4	+2	8	4	Ability score increase
6th	5	+5	+4	+1	20	3	+4	+2	9	4	Devotion
7th	6	+6	+5	+2	24	3	+6	+3	10	4	—
8th	6	+6	+5	+2	24	3	+6	+3	11	4	—
9th	7	+7	+5	+2	28	4	+6	+3	13	5	Multiattack
10th	8	+8	+6	+2	32	4	+8	+4	14	5	Ability score increase
11th	9	+9	+6	+3	36	5	+8	+4	15	5	—
12th	9	+9	+6	+3	36	5	+10	+5	16	5	—
13th	10	+10	+7	+3	40	5	+10	+5	17	5	—
14th	11	+11	+7	+3	44	6	+10	+5	19	6	Improved evasion
15th	12	+12	+8	+4	48	6	+12	+6	20	6	Ability score increase
16th	12	+12	+8	+4	48	6	+12	+6	21	6	—
17th	13	+13	+8	+4	52	7	+14	+7	22	6	—
18th	14	+14	+9	+4	56	7	+14	+7	23	6	—
19th	15	+15	+9	+5	60	8	+14	+7	25	7	—
20th	15	+15	+9	+5	60	8	+16	+8	26	7	—

Eidolon Skills: The following skills are class skills for eidolons: Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Knowledge (planes) (Int), Perception (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Stealth (Dex). In addition, at 1st level, the summoner can choose 4 additional skills to be class skills for his eidolon. Note that eidolons with a fly speed receive Fly (Dex) as a free class skill, even if they do not gain a fly speed until a later level.

Evolutions

The following new evolutions are designed for marionettes but can be taken by any eidolon that meets the prerequisites.

1-Point Evolutions

The following evolutions cost 1 point from the marionette's evolution pool.

Precise Strike (Ex) The marionette has the ability to strike a foe's most vulnerable points. Whenever it deals damage to a target who is denied its Dexterity bonus, it deals an additional 1d4 points of precision damage. This evolution can be taken once for each two levels the marionetteer possesses. Each time it increases the precision damage by 1d4.

Scramble (Ex) The marionette moves more quickly than it appears to be capable of. Its base speed increases by 5 feet.

Startling (Ex) The marionette learns to use the element of surprise to its advantage, startling foes that are unaware of its presence. Whenever it attempts an attack against a foe that is completely unaware of the marionette's presence, the foe is treated as flat-footed for the rest of the marionette's turn (uncanny dodge or a similar ability prevents this effect unless the marionette has at least 4 more hit dice than the foe with uncanny dodge). The marionetteer must be at least 5th level before selecting this evolution.

Sure-Footed (Ex) The marionette can move at full speed while using the Acrobatics or Stealth skills.

2-Point Evolutions

The following evolutions cost 2 points from the marionette's evolution pool.

Constructed Body (Ex) Because of the marionette's construction, it is resistant to damage. Choose one damage type: bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing. The eidolon gains DR 5/the chosen type. At 9th level, this protection can be increased to DR 10 by spending 2 additional evolution points. The marionetteer must be at least 4th level before selecting this evolution.

3-Point Evolutions

The following evolutions cost 3 points from the marionette's evolution pool.

Firearm Training (Ex) The marionette learns to use a firearm, gaining proficiency with one firearm type. If 2 additional evolution points are spent, the marionette instead gains proficiency with all firearms. The marionette must possess the weapon training evolution to select this evolution.

4-Point Evolutions

The following evolutions cost 4 points from the marionette's evolution pool.

Survival Tactic (Ex) When a marionette would be reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, it is instead banished as though it were destroyed but actually survives on its home plane with 1 Hit Point remaining, allowing it to be summoned again the same day. The benefits of this evolution can only be used once per day.



Performer (Marionetteer Archetype)

Enthusiastic and engaging, a performer's power is as much in their performance as it is in their marionette.

Performance (Su) At 1st level, a performer can buoy their allies with their performances. This gain the bardic performance ability of a bard, using their marionetteer level as their effective bard level, and can purchase bardic masterpieces as if a bard. This ability replaces social talent.

Standout (Ex) At 2nd level, a performer is the center of attention. They gain a bonus equal to 1/2 their marionetteer class level on Diplomacy checks. This ability replaces social grace.

Puppetry and Role-Playing Games

Over the course of human history, puppetry has played a role in the spirituality and daily lives of numerous distinct cultures. Like any other form of performing art, puppetry has allowed humanity to interpret higher concepts such as death, morality, and the meaning of life. Through the use of visual aids, storytellers have enraptured audiences by giving their words physical form without the physical limitations involved with the use of human actors. Over the ages, puppetry has evolved from a vital form of passing on information before the written word to an artistic medium which has remained relevant even in an increasingly digital world. From convincing practical effects, to a medium used to educate children, to a real-life connection to the historical legacy of many present-day cultures, puppetry continues to maintain diverse roles in our society.

Even in our hobby, the legacy of puppetry enriches our role-playing games. Are miniatures on a battlemat not puppets and the players at the table not puppeteers manipulating physical props in order to enhance their story? As tabletop gamers, we understand better than most the power of telling stories and the importance of making those stories as visceral and engaging as possible. We are modern-day puppeteers, engaging in a brand-new form of the storytelling art which is uniquely ours. By learning from the techniques of our artistic forebears, we can look at role-playing games from a new angle, breathing fresh life into our hobby.

The following section introduces a wide variety of historical puppetry styles from cultures across the globe, complete with options for introducing them into your games. Each section includes read-aloud text for quickly inserting a relevant scene into your game, an introduction to the historical context of the style, a bardic masterpiece inspired by the puppetry style, and additional character options from archetypes to magic items to kingdom edicts! While all of these puppetry styles have real-world roots, they can be easily re-flavored by adding, removing, or renaming aspects of the artform to fit comfortably into your campaign setting.



Bunraku

The stage is a carefully crafted illusion. The masterfully made puppets draw the eye, their expressive faces nearly human. Puppeteers in black blend into the background, giving life to the cast, while musicians sit on one side and a narrator on the other. The three groups of artists weave their talents into a single, captivating performance.

Bunraku is a traditional form of Japanese puppetry that's known for its very large, costumed puppets. In a production of this kind the puppets tend to be quite complex, often requiring multiple puppeteers to appear on stage (typically garbed in black robes) in order to operate the puppets. There are three elements to the cast of a Bunraku production; the puppeteers, the musicians, and the chanters. The dialogue tends to be read by a single chanter, who puts on different voices for all the characters.

Bardic Masterpiece Phantom Puppeteers (String)

Bards who have learned the intimate secrets of Bunraku can script the actions of a scene using their music.

Prerequisite Perform (string) 7 ranks
Cost Feat or 3rd-level spell bard spell known

Effect By playing the proper notes, you summon three shadowy assistants who all flock around a single target. These figures attach themselves to the target, altering its movements like puppeteers. The target gains a +1 insight bonus on attack rolls for every 4 bard levels you possess. When the target is attacked or the subject of a spell that requires an attack roll, roll a d4 to determine whether the attack hits one of the puppeteers instead. On a 1 the attack misses the target and one of the phantom puppeteers is destroyed. Area effect spells, abilities, and weapons, spells,

and effects which do not require an attack roll affect the target normally and do not harm the puppeteers.

The bonus from *phantom helpers* ends either when you stop playing, or when all the puppeteers have been destroyed. *Phantom helpers* may be maintained as a free action after the first round.

Use 1 bardic performance round per round

Action 1 standard action

Joruri (Marionetteer Archetype)

Small puppets don't need much in the way of detail. They're meant to give an impression, and to act as an archetype. Larger puppets, though, demand more craft from their creators and puppeteers. They need more detail and show the same grace and skill that living performers would on stage. Joruri are masters of their art, but that dedication means that other skills fall by the wayside.

Big As Life (Ex) A joruri's puppet is larger than most puppets, and masterfully crafted. The face and head, in particular, are difficult to forget. The inert form of a Joruri puppet is either Small or Medium sized, and as a result it becomes easier to identify if someone has seen the animate form. Unless the puppet's costuming is changed, and its face obscured, then the joruri's Disguise check to keep their puppet from being recognized only receives a +10 bonus instead of the +20 bonus. This ability modifies *ari-onette* and *hide puppet*.

Gifted Hands (Sp) A joruri knows their puppets will be under extra scrutiny, and has developed a supernatural bond with them. At 5th level, a joruri can cast *make whole* as a spell-like ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + their Charisma modifier. This ability replaces *animate puppet I*.

Tireless Spirit (Su) A joruri's puppet is tethered to their own spirit, and they share a close bond with the outsider that animates it. At 7th level, the joruri's puppet can remain animated while the joruri sleeps, but it takes no actions other than watching over and defending the joruri. If the joruri is threatened, the puppet will attempt to waken them (such as by shaking or slapping the joruri). It will attack enemies only if they attack the puppet or the joruri. If the joruri falls below 0 Hit Points, the puppet becomes inactive. This ability replaces *animate puppet II*.

Undying Protector (Su) At 9th level, the spirit that animates the puppet grows even closer to the joruri. The puppet no longer reverts to its inert form when the joruri Hit Point total drops below 0. As long as the joruri lives, the puppet returns to their side to try and help them. It can perform Heal checks to stop the joruri bleeding out, and it can deliver healing potions if it or the joruri has them in their possession. The puppet can also use spell completion items like wands and scrolls if it has the appropriate skills to activate them. This ability replaces *animate puppet III*.

Restoring Sleep (Su) At 11th level, the spirit that dwells within a joruri's puppet infuses the object with its essence. For every 8 hours that the puppet remains inert, it heals an amount of damage equal to the joruri's caster level. This ability replaces *animate puppet IV*.

The Art of Suffering (Su) At 13th level, the Joruri's bond with their puppet, and its spirit, draws even tighter. Whenever the puppet takes damage, the joruri may choose to accept the harm instead. Additionally, once per round when the puppet would gain a status effect, the joruri may accept the effect instead of the puppet. This ability replaces *animate puppet V*.

Two Become One (Su) At 15th level, the joruri and the spirit animating the puppet further mingle their essence. The joruri and the puppet share senses, and can communicate telepathically within the reach of their spiritual tether. Additionally, while giving commands still requires actions, it no longer requires hand movements. This ability replaces *animate puppet VI*.

Chew The Scenery (Sp) There is creation in destruction, and joruri understand this. At 17th level, as a standard action, a puppet can siphon energy from a spell completion object. The object must be in the puppet's hand. For wands, the puppet may drain one charge per level of the spell contained within the wand, and the puppet gains fast healing 5 for a number of rounds equal to the amount of charges drained. For scrolls, the puppet gains fast healing 10 for a number of rounds equal to the level of the spell it consumed. This ability replaces *animate puppet VII*.

Magic Eater (Su) The spirit inside a joruri's puppet can grow voracious for power. At 19th level, anytime the puppet succeeds on a save caused by a single-target spell it devours the spell to heal itself. The puppet gains a number of temporary hit points equal to the spell's level, as well as an insight bonus equal to the spell's level on attacks against the spell's caster for 8 hours. If there would be reduced effects on a successful save, the puppet ignores those effects. This ability replaces *animate puppet VIII*.



Buz-Baz

The puppeteer produces a markhor, a narrow lute-like instrument, and begins to strum. As if brought to life by the music, a toy goat begins to buck and dance beneath the puppeteer's strumming hands.

Like in many cultures, the serpent is a symbol often associated with danger in Afghan culture. So it's inevitable that a creature like the markhor, a mountain goat known for eating snakes, would gain a mystical reputation. This mystique lies at the heart of buz-baz puppetry, which revolves around a markhor marionette controlled via string on the puppeteer's wrist. As the puppeteer strums on the dambura, a narrow lute-like instrument, the markhor seemingly dances to the music's rhythm.

Notable performers in historical record often pursued buz-baz puppetry as a side job alongside other professions such as barbering, shepherding, and other working-class professions of the era.

Bardic Masterpiece **The Bolero of Obedience (String)**

You pluck the strings of your instrument at a frequency that causes your foes bodies to act against their will.

Prerequisite Perform (string) 4 ranks.
Cost Feat or 2nd-level bard spell known.

Effect As you perform the bolero, you weave in a low, unheard frequency that triggers involuntary movements in the limbs of those that hear it. At the start of each round, you can issue a *command* or *murderous command* to a single creature (Will negates) that can hear your performance. The creature has full control of verbal and mental function while it carries out these commands, allowing it to shout warnings to allies or use spells or abilities with solely verbal components while under the performance's effects.

Use 1 bardic performance round per round
Action 1 standard action

Markhor Maestro **(Druid Archetype)**

A markhor maestro uses a deep understanding of natural rhythm to command nature's forces. The strum of the markhor maestro's dambura is at one with the wild.

Class Skills A markhor maestro adds Perform (string) to their list of class skills. This ability alter's the druid's class skills.

Charm of the Wild (Ex) A markhor maestro uses their Charisma instead of their Wisdom as their primary spellcasting trait. This ability alter's the druid's spellcasting ability.

Natural Rhythm (Ex) A markhor maestro can use their Perform (string) skill bonus in place of their bonuses for the Handle Animal and Ride skills. This ability replaces nature sense.

Nature Bond (Ex) A markhor maestro must choose to bond with an animal companion and must select a ram as their animal companion.

The markhor maestro also gains the inspire courage

bardic performance ability of a bard of their level, except that only their animal companion and/or creatures summoned by the markhor maestro's *summon nature's ally* spells benefit from the performance's morale bonuses. The morale bonus is doubled if an affected creature is attacking a snake or serpent-like creature (as determined by the GM). This ability alters nature bond.



Giant Marionettes

At first seeming to be a giant creature, upon closer inspection this amazing construct proved to be a cunningly constructed puppet. Following the almost invisible wires one can see hidden puppeteers high above.

Some puppeteers, when looking to create an impact on their audience, resort to giant marionettes. Such puppets, seen in classical Sicilian and Parisian plays as well as parades in Brazil, are far more mechanically complex than their smaller counterparts and often require entire trained crews to operate. Due to the sophistication of their design, giant marionettes resemble clockwork automatons more often than they resemble puppets.

Bardic Masterpiece

Manipulation of the Massive (Puppetry)

You apply your mastery of puppetry to control the movements of targets larger than you.

Prerequisite Perform (puppetry) 7 ranks.

Cost Feat or 3rd-level bard spell known.

Effect The performance of this masterpiece is interwoven into another performance that affects enemy creatures. Enemy creatures that are at least one size category larger than you and are affected by the other performance take a -2 penalty to saves made against your performances and mind-affecting spells cast by you or your allies during the performance. Creatures don't get to attempt a saving throw against this penalty.

Alternatively, this masterpiece can be interwoven into a performance that benefits allies. Combat maneuvers performed by you or affected allies during the performance ignore all size modifiers and restrictions against creatures at least one size category larger than you.

Use 1 bardic performance per round (in addition to the rounds expended for the other performance).

Action 1 free action during another performance.

Giant Puppeteer (Marionetteer Archetype)

A giant puppeteer takes the principles of puppetry to new heights, mastering their craft to control bigger and better puppets as opposed to multiple smaller ones.

Giant Marionette At 6th level, a giant puppeteer's marionette increases its size by one size category and is altered as shown on the table below. The marionette grows an additional size category every six levels after, reaching maximum size at 18th level. The marionette does not gain bonuses to Strength or Constitution due to this size change and gain no benefits from evolutions which increase an eidolon's size. As the puppet grows in size, it becomes harder and harder to conceal the marionette's true nature. For each size category beyond the marionette's normal size (see the marionette's original stats in the marionetteer's abilities), the giant puppeteer takes a -4 circumstance penalty to Disguise checks made using



the hide puppet class ability. This ability replaces puppet collector ability and modifies hide puppet.

Glove Puppetry (Bu Dai Xi/Po Te Hi)

The puppeteer slips out of view and moments later two elaborate puppets rise over the stage's edge. The musicians behind the stage begin to play. Strains of stirring, heroic music rise as the puppets are brought to life by subtle movements of the puppeteer's wrists and fingers. As the two figures engage in dialogue, their manipulator is forgotten, and there is nothing left but the story and the action.

Giant Marionette Size Modifiers

Size	Space/Reach	Modifier to			
		Attack & AC	CMB & CMD	Stealth	Fly
Small	5 ft.	+1	-1	+4	+2
Medium	5 ft.	+0	+0	+0	+0
Large	10 ft.	-1	+1	-4	-2
Huge	15 ft.	-2	+2	-8	-4
Gargantuan	20 ft.	-4	+4	-12	-6
Colossal	30 ft.	-8	+8	-16	-8

Glove puppetry (known as *bu dai xi* in Mandarin, or *po te hi* in Taiwanese) is a popular traditional art form in parts of Asia. Performed in the style of an opera, complete with musical accompaniment, this form of puppetry tells grand tales of heroic adventure, epic romances, local legends, and popular comedies. The puppets themselves are intricate sleeves for the puppeteer's hand and wrist. The heads are wooden and intricately carved to provide each puppet with recognizable features, and topped with hair, hats, or whatever additional dressing the puppet requires. Its hands can be simple carvings, fitted with weapons or other props, or articulated so the fingers can extend or clench into fists by pulling on a string with a finger. The puppeteer uses deft finger movements to give the puppets the life-like motions of a humanoid form. The legs are cloth, weighted with wooden feet, allowing them to swing to the movement of the puppeteer's arm, making the puppet appear to walk, run, or even dance. A skilled puppeteer will typically perform the roles of two main characters as they interact, working them through elaborate scenes such as fights and dances while other puppeteers work secondary characters.

Bardic Masterpiece

The Battle of Sheng Mountain, Final Act (Puppetry)

Your performance instills a fierce fighting spirit into your allies.

Prerequisite Perform (puppetry) 10 ranks.

Cost Feat or 4th-level bard spell known.

Effect By performing the final act of the epic of Iron-Arm Lu and his battle against the demons of Sheng Mountain, you inspire your allies to great feats of heroism. For 1 hour per level of bard you possess, you and your affected allies gain the benefits of your inspire courage performance without you having to perform. Additionally, once while under the effects of this masterpiece, each affected creature can double the granted bonus for one round as a swift action, as if affected by *moment of greatness*, losing any further benefits of the masterpiece afterwards.

Use 10 rounds of bardic performance, + 1 round of bardic performance for each additional creature over four affected by the performance.

Action 5 minutes.

Puppet Partnership

School evocation; **Level** bard 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (hand puppet)

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one creature

Duration concentration, up to 1 minute per level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance no

You create a link between an ally and a puppet you control, allowing your deft movements of the puppet to enhance your ally's performance in combat. As long as you are concentrating on the spell, the target gains a +1 insight

bonus to attack rolls, armor class, weapon damage rolls, and Reflex saving throws for every four caster levels you possess (to a maximum bonus of +5).



Puppet Protector

Aura moderate enchantment and transmutation; **CL** 11th
Slot none; **Price** 15,000 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Each type of *puppet protector* appears to be a finely crafted hand puppet depicting a heroic warrior. When the correct command word is spoken, the puppet transforms into a fighter of the same size as a typical member of the owner's race. While the puppet protector appears to be living, it is actually a construct. All puppet protectors are 6th level fighters with the following statistics, modified by any feats or other modifications listed under the puppet's type. **AC** 18 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural armor.); **hp** 47; **Str** 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1; **Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21. The *puppet protector* obeys its owner, and understands and follows spoken commands.

If a *puppet protector* is broken or destroyed in its puppet form, it is forever ruined and all magic is lost. If slain in warrior form, the protector changes back into a puppet that can be used again at a later time. Any weapons or items carried by a *puppet protector* cannot be dropped or disarmed, but they can be sundered. Any damaged or destroyed items are restored when the *puppet protector* returns to its puppet form, and are whole and undamaged the next time it is activated. A *puppet protector* can be used once per week, for up to 4 continuous hours.

Archer: This *puppet protector* wields a mwk composite longbow and a quiver with an unlimited supply of nonmagical arrows and has a Dex 16 and AC 19. The archer has the following feats: Clustered Shots, Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, and Shot on the Run.

Champion: This *puppet protector* wields a mwk greatsword and has 53 hp. The champion has the following feats: Cleave, Furious Focus, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Step Up, Toughness, and Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Shield Bearer: This *puppet protector* wields a mwk longsword and a heavy steel shield and has an AC 21 and 53 hp. The shield bearer has the following feats: Bodyguard, Combat Reflexes, Lunge, Shield Focus, Shield Specialization, Stand Still, and Toughness.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*, *heroism*; **Cost** 7,500 gp

Glove Puppetry Festival Edict

This edict allows a kingdom to celebrate a holiday with performances of glove puppetry, celebrating local heroes and raising morale. Treat this as one of the holidays included in a normal holiday edict, raising Loyalty levels as normal. However, during turns when this holiday is part of the kingdom's edicts, if the kingdom is involved in combat, then all its armies gain a +1 bonus to Morale. If an army already has the maximum allowed morale bonus, then it gains a +1 bonus to its Offense Modifier.



Ondel-ondel

The gathered villagers begin to sing. Out of the meeting hall step two towering figures, stooping to clear the doorway. Male and female, they have an otherworldly look, the former bright red, the latter white as snow. As the song rises, the two figures begin an intricate dance, circling each other as they make to the outskirts of the village from its center, then start a circuit around its edge.

The name of both the style and the puppet used for the performance, ondel-ondel is a folkloric tradition of the Betawi people of Indonesia. This form of puppetry uses giant puppets woven of bamboo that fit over the puppeteer's torso, forming figures over eight feet in height. The puppets are garbed in brightly colored ceremonial robes, which drape down to the ground to hide the puppeteer beneath them. The heads are carved of wood and are also painted in bright colors; traditionally red for male puppets and white for female puppets. The hair of a puppet is made of shredded palm leaves dyed with bright colors, standing off the puppet's head like a halo. The puppet performances are done to protect against calamities or to ward off evil spirits, with the puppets representing ancestor spirits who protect their homeland and descendants from harm.

Bardic Masterpiece

Invocation of the Guardian (Puppetry)

Your performance summons a protective spirit to aid you and your allies.

Prerequisite Perform (puppetry) 10 ranks

Cost: Feat or 3rd-level bard spell known

Effect Using your ondel-ondel to perform a spinning dance, you summon an ancestral spirit. This spirit appears as a vaguely humanoid, glowing form and sheds golden light with a radiance equal to that of a torch. While summoned, the spirit radiates a *magic circle against evil* that moves with it. The guardian spirit can take no offensive actions and cannot be harmed by physical attacks or spells, but can be affected by spells that banish extraplanar creatures, such as *dismissal*. The guardian spirit remains for 1 round after you cease performing, then vanishes.

Use 1 bardic performance round per round

Action 1 round

Ondel-ondel Sentinel

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 12th

Slot none; **Price** 30,000 gp; **Weight** 30 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This expansive puppet consists of a bamboo frame covered in traditional robes and topped with a painted wooden head framed with a halo of woven palm leaves, painted gold. The ondel-ondel is held aloft and manipulated from the inside with slits in the clothing on the torso that allow the puppeteer to see. A creature must be Medium-sized to use the *ondel-ondel sentinel*. While the puppet is in use, the puppeteer can focus on a single creature or object to determine if it is evil, as the paladin special ability.

As a standard action, puppet and puppeteer can merge to form a giant, otherworldly figure. When activated, the puppeteer's size becomes Large, providing a +4 size bonus to Strength and Constitution and a -2 penalty to Dexterity. All carried equipment increases in size as well. The puppeteer gains DR 5/evil, their base movement increases by 10 feet, and they gain a 2 slam attacks (1d6+Str modifier). The slams are primary attacks. While transformed, the puppeteer can use smite evil as a swift action, gaining a +2 to attacks rolls and +6 to damage rolls against a chosen evil foe. The puppeteer can remain in this form for up to 12 rounds per week. These rounds need not be consecutive, but must be used in 1 round increments. The puppeteer can dismiss the sentinel form as a free action.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *detect evil*, *righteous might* or *transmutation*; **Cost** 15,000 gp



Ondel-ondel Festival Edict

This edict allows a kingdom to celebrate a holiday with performances of ondel-ondel puppetry, soliciting the spirits of their ancestors for guidance and protection. Treat this as one of the holidays included in a normal holiday edict, raising Loyalty levels as normal. However, during turns when this holiday is part of the kingdom's edicts, if a dangerous kingdom event or dangerous settlement event is rolled during the event phase, an immediate reroll is allowed. The results of the reroll must be taken, even if they indicate another dangerous kingdom or settlement event. This edict cannot be used in conjunction with any of the other edicts presented here.



Punch and Judy

The theater is small and mobile, perfectly designed for entertaining children in marketplaces and village squares. The language and antics of the bat-wielding puppet, though, are harsh enough for an adult's palate.

Punch and Judy shows are puppet plays with a single puppeteer who performs with two hand puppets. The infamous Mr. Punch is the star of the show, and the second puppet (which is most commonly Judy) is the victim of his antics (and typically his bat). Punch and Judy, as a comedy style, is low-brow, outrageous, and slapstick. The dialogue tends to be crass, often full of puns, and the violence of Mr. Punch draws most of the laughter. Despite being accessible to the masses, Mr. Punch draws on the complex and ancient lore of classic trickster figures. Always smiling, and typically two-faced, he always seems to come out okay in the end. Just like the divine comedians who always seem to dodge the gavel, Mr. Punch manages to avoid any real punishment for the mischief he's responsible for.

Bardic Masterpiece Slapstick Reaction (Comedy)

Your physical comedy is infectious, often to the detriment of viewers.

Prerequisite Perform (Comedy) 7 ranks.

Cost Feat or 3rd-level bard spell known.

Effect Your physical comedy routine calls out for someone to follow through. Choose a target creature that can both see you and hear you within 30 feet. If the target fails a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your bard level + your Charisma modifier) the target must attack any ally it can reach, or if it cannot reach anyone, it spends its round moving toward an ally and shouting verbal abuse at them. This effect continues until you stop maintaining the masterpiece or until the target successfully saves against the effect. The target receives a new save every round. Targets who do not share a common language with you receive a +4 on their save. If the target has no allies present, this masterpiece automatically fails. A target who succeeds on a save versus this masterpiece cannot be affected by it again for 24 hours.

Use 1 bardic performance round per round.

Action 1 standard action.

Punchman (Bard Archetype)

Those who deal in the raw baseness of Mr. Punch often take on some of his bullying characteristics. For those looking for an ally who's quick with a verbal barb, there's no one better than a punchman.

Bully (Ex) At 2nd level, a punchman embraces the harsh nature of their art. Whenever a punchman successfully uses Intimidate to demoralize an enemy, the duration is increased by 1 round. If the Punchman demoralizes a target for 5 rounds or longer with a single Intimidate check, they can choose to make the target frightened for 1 round instead. This ability replaces well-versed.

Motivating Taunt (Ex) A punchman is never kind, but their taunts and jibes can be oddly motivating. At 5th level, as an immediate action that uses 1 round of bardic performance, a punchman can launch a cutting remark at a companion who has just failed a saving throw against an enchantment or compulsion spell. The ally may then reroll that saving throw, but must take the second result even if it is worse. This ability replaces the use of lore master gained at 5th level (though a punchman still gains the use of lore master once per day at 11th level and twice per day at 17th).

Browbeat (Sp) A punchman's taunts eventually take on supernatural levels of vitrol and can bully even magic itself. At 6th level, a punchman can spend 1 round of bardic performance to cast *dispel magic* as a spell-like ability, using their bard level as their caster level. Unlike normal *dispel magic*, though, this ability can only be used as a targeted dispel against a single creature. This ability replaces suggestion.



Shadowgraphy

The dark, hunched monster looms. A guttural bellow echoes throughout the hall, followed by a chorus of laughter from tavern patrons as it becomes clear the hunched figure is, in fact, a projected shadow created by a skilled performer.

As long as there has been light, darkness, and humanity, cultures have dabbled in the dance of shadows. Shadowgraphy is a form of puppetry with real-world origins in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, ancient China, and a burst of popularity in 19th-century France. The technique involves the use of hand gestures and cutouts positioned between a bright, direct light source and a blank screen or surface, creating puppet-like silhouettes shaped into anything from animals to gods. The usage of thin, colored paper introduced even more variety in subjects for would-be shadowgraphers. This complexity allowed for ancient performers to tell intricate sagas with topics ranging from war to Buddhist theology.

Due to its simplicity, shadowgraphy is a form of puppetry that adventurers can encounter in a variety of locales and cultures; from the light of a roaring campfire against a cave wall, to a sophisticated parlor with a projector of arcane light.

Bardic Masterpiece

The Nightmare Revue (Puppetry)

You create the silhouette of a terrifying abomination that strikes fear into the hearts of those that see it.

Prerequisite Perform (puppetry) 13 ranks.

Cost Feat or 5th-level bard spell known.

Effect Using a combination of hand gestures and cutouts, you manipulate the shadows into the animated shape of a horrifying creature. This performance functions like the *phantasmal killer* spell (using the bard's class level as the caster level) except that you can target any number of creatures within 30 feet of you (provided you expend enough rounds of bardic performance). A creature that makes a successful Will save to disbelieve is immune to the effects of the performance for 24 hours.

This performance is only possible if you're capable of casting a shadow, and is therefore impossible to perform in situations such as total darkness. Other lighting conditions increase or decrease the reach of the performance. If you're in an area of bright light, your performance's reach is doubled to 60 feet. If your light source is dim (like a candle), then the reach is halved to 15 feet. Dim lighting will also make the image blurred and undefined, decreasing the DC of the Will save against it by 2. Other lighting conditions and their effects are subject to GM discretion.

Use 2 bardic performance rounds per creature targeted.
Action 1 full-round action.

Umbral Puppeteer (Summoner Archetype)

An umbral puppeteer mystically manipulates the surrounding darkness into allies to fight on their behalf.

Shadow Eidolon An umbral puppeteer's eidolon begins play with the shadow creature template, the light blindness universal monster trait, and two fewer evolution points than a typical eidolon. The ritual to summon the umbral puppeteer's eidolon can only be performed in areas of dim light or darker; this area can be as small as two adjacent 5 ft. squares (such as in the shadow of a building or large object). This ability alters eidolon.

Shadow Puppetry (Sp) At 1st level, an umbral puppeteer can create creatures and effects out of raw shadow. This ability functions as *shadow conjuration* (using the umbral puppeteer's level as the caster level), except that an umbral puppeteer can only mimic conjuration spells of a spell level up to the highest level summoner spell they can cast. An umbral puppeteer can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + their Charisma modifier. Upon reaching 10th level, this ability functions as *greater shadow conjuration*. The DC for this ability is equal to 10 + 1/2 the umbral puppeteer's level + their Charisma modifier. This ability replaces summon monster.



Ventriloquism

The ventriloquist sits calmly, nodding her head as her puppet delivers barb after pointed barb directed at her, as well as members of the audience. Her lips don't move, but it's a mark of true mastery when a task so difficult can be done so effortlessly.

As entertainers, ventriloquists combine a unique vocal tradition with stagecraft, "throwing" their voice so that it seems to come from another place. These acts often

involve puppets, creating an artificial dialogue between the ventriloquist and their assistant. However, ventriloquism grew out of a more spiritual tradition. Oracles and diviners capable of throwing their voices were thought to take a second voice inside of them, channeling the spirits of the dead. The oracle would either interpret the sounds coming from the corpse's stomach, or the spirits would sit in the ventriloquist's stomach, making their desires known by speaking in a way that was different from the medium's normal voice. The mystical aspects of the art form fell away over time, leaving only the stagecraft behind.

Bardic Masterpiece Phantom Voice (Oratory)

A skilled ventriloquist can make her voice seem to come from somewhere else. A master of the art can literally put words into someone else's mouth.

Prerequisite: Perform (oratory) 5 ranks.
Cost: Feat or 2nd-level bard spell known.

Effect: Your mastery of ventriloquism allows you to put your voice into someone else's mouth. One target within close range (25 feet + 5 feet/2 bard levels) must make a Will save (DC equal 10 + 1/2 your bard level + your Charisma modifier). If the target fails the save, you can make it sound as if the subject is speaking. Their mouth moves along with the speech you plant there, but no other part of the subject is controlled. The target can speak words in any language you know but do so in your voice unless you disguise it with a DC 15 Bluff check. This masterpiece is considered an enchantment effect, and a target receives a new saving throw every round to break this effect. You seem to remain silent while using this masterpiece and your mouth does not move. This masterpiece may be continued as a free action every round.

Special A target who is under the effects of this masterpiece cannot cast spells with verbal components.

Use 1 bardic performance round per round
Action 1 standard action

Gastromancy (Focused Arcane School) Associated School Necromancy

The following school power replaces the Grave Touch ability of the necromancy school.

Death Speaker Gastromancers are skilled in the art of reaching out to the dead and interpreting their wishes. If you can lean your ear against a corpse and listen to their stomach, you may cast *speaking with dead* as a spell-like ability with a caster level equal to your wizard level. This requires a corpse to be whole enough to still have a stomach. A corpse that is too decomposed can be restored through the *gentle repose* spell, however, which makes it a valid target for your efforts once more. Corpses of creatures without stomachs cannot be targeted by this ability. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Intelligence modifier.



Water Puppetry (Mua Roi Nuoc)

A crescent-shaped backdrop, painted with a scene of pastoral lowlands, sits on posts encircling a section of the reflecting pool. As musicians sitting at the pool's edge strike up a folk tune, a figure rises from the water. The intricate, miniature likeness of a young woman begins to move in time with the music, seeming to dance over the surface of the pool.

Originating in the Red River Delta region of Vietnam, this style of puppetry is performed with the puppeteers standing in a pool of waist-deep water. From behind an ornamental screen, they control lacquered wooden puppets mounted on long bamboo poles. These puppets, entering the performance area from the sides of the screen or rising from the pool, appear to move and dance on the water's surface. Originally a form of entertainment during the rice harvest season, these shows took place in flooded rice paddies. Musicians play and sing songs that tell the stories acted out by the puppets. These short skits are typically about day-to-day life in agrarian society, often told with humorous twists, or stories from folklore and children's tales.

Bardic Masterpiece

The Crocodile and the Farmer's Daughter (Puppetry)

Your performance allows allies to dance upon the water like your puppets.

Prerequisite Perform (puppetry) 8 ranks

Cost Feat or 3rd-level bard spell known

Effect You perform the tale of a young girl attacked by a crocodile in her father's rice paddy. The family's patron goddess blesses the child, allowing her to run atop the water to keep from being eaten as the crocodile swims in pursuit. The girl races toward the trees at the edge of the farm, where she escapes into the branches while the crocodile goes from hunter to prey, seized by a python lurking among the tree's roots.

When you perform this masterpiece, those watching and participating in the performance gain the ability to walk on water, as *water walk* (*communal*), using your bard level as the caster level. Each affected target can choose to gain the benefits of *expeditious retreat* for one round as a swift action while under the effects, so long as they are still moving on the surface of a liquid.

Use 10 rounds of bardic performance.

Action 1 minute.

Water Dancer

School transmutation; **Level** bard 5

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, F (a puppet)

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 round/level

You are able to leap and dance across the surface of water and other liquids with great agility. This functions as *water walk*, but you are always considered to have a running start for purposes of Acrobatics checks made to jump, so long as you start the jump from atop a liquid. Your movement is unimpeded by steep terrain, and you can even move up waterfalls against gravity at half your normal speed, and down them at your normal speed.

Water elementals do not gain their bonus to attack and damage rolls against you while in water while you are under the effects of spell.

Flood Festival Edict

This edict allows a kingdom to celebrate flood season with performances of puppetry, honoring the farmers that work through these conditions as well as the bounty that comes from the flooded paddies. Treat this as one of the holidays included in a normal holiday edict, raising Loyalty levels as normal. However, during three consecutive turns (representing the year's flood season) Consumption is lowered by 1 for every two hexes in the kingdom that contain both a river and a farm. Consumption cannot drop below 0.



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