

Weekly Wonders

Archetypes of Intrigue

Volume I

Spies

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*Necromancers
of the Northwest*

PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

Credits

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Introduction

Intrigue is a staple of the fantasy genre, and many players and GMs are drawn to the idea of a grand campaign of political intrigue, in which the players face the dangers of scheming politicians, backstabbing assassins, high-society soirees, and similar trials, instead of the usual drudging through moldy old dungeons, killing things and taking their stuff. A proper political drama or heist adventure can be hard to run and even harder to write, but perhaps the hardest is for players to get in the appropriate mindset, and deal with their problems with finesse, rather than a blunt weapon. One thing that can help players get in the mood—and get themselves an edge—when it comes to intrigue is having an archetype that kits their preferred class out a bit more for the type of adventure they'll be playing. Each installment of *Weekly Wonders: Archetypes of Intrigue* presents six new archetypes tied to a particular role common in intrigue adventures.

For this book, we focus on spy archetypes. While spies have a role outside of the realm of intrigue (and, in fact, we've already touched on spies in the past, in *Weekly Wonders: Archetypes of War: Scouts and Spies*), it is here that they really shine, providing the information needed to outmaneuver, scandalize, or blackmail foes. A good spy is able to gather information, and is able to do so without attracting too much suspicion onto herself. Each of these archetypes focuses on gathering information, while at the same time limiting the information that foes can gain about her.

New Archetypes

The following archetypes are presented in alphabetical order, based on the name of the class that they modify.

Diversionsary Agent (Bard)

Not all spies are hidden away in the background. Some spies have the job of serving as a distraction, drawing all eyes to them in order to allow others to go unnoticed. Diversionsary agents are one such type of spy, whose performances can be counted on to clear the way for other spies.

Master of Disguise (Su): A diversionsary agent gains a bonus on Disguise checks equal to 1/2 his bard level.

This ability replaces the bardic knowledge class feature.

Bardic Performance: A diversionsary agent gains the following bardic performances, each of which replaces an existing performance.

Diversion (Ex): At 1st level, a diversionsary agent is able to use his performance to create a distraction and attract attention. Although the performance itself is far from subtle, it is often used as a more subtle means of distracting onlookers than the fascinate performance, as the lack of saving throws and the lesser effect reduces the chance of someone becoming suspicious. He must succeed on a DC 20 Perform check. If he does, each creature that can see or hear him (as appropriate for the performance) suffers a -4 penalty on Perception checks.

This penalty increases by 2 for every 5 points by which the diversionsary agent's check exceeds the DC.

This ability replaces the distraction bardic performance.

Song of Sleep (Su): At 8th level, a diversionsary agent can deliver a performance that renders his audience comatose. Each creature within 60 feet must succeed on a Will save or have the performance lull them towards slumber. If the affected creature's CR is greater than 1/2 the diversionsary agent's bard level, or if the affected creature is currently in combat, the creature becomes fatigued. Otherwise, the creature falls asleep, as though affected by a *deep slumber* spell.

This ability replaces the dirge of doom bardic performance.

Oppressive Solo (Su): At 14th level, a diversionsary agent can force all eyes on him during combat. While performing this bardic performance, each opponent that can see and hear the diversionsary agent must succeed on a Will save at the beginning of their turn each round, or be compelled to focus their attacks on the diversionsary agent. Affected creatures are not compelled to use any particular tactics against the diversionsary agent, and can assault him with spells, ranged attacks, melee attacks, or other abilities, and if they would prefer to heal their allies or perform other non-offensive actions instead, they are free to do so, but they must include the diversionsary agent in any offensive action they make.

This ability replaces the frightening tune bardic performance.

Ambush Agent (Fighter)

In general, fighters are expected to be better at fighting than at things like subterfuge, but that doesn't mean that they can't make for excellent spies. Ambush agents are fighters that specialize in stealth and deceit, and have utilized these talents to cultivate a fighting style that focuses on exploiting the upper hand in the first few moments of combat.

Class Skills: An ambush agent adds Acrobatics, Bluff, Disguise, and Stealth to his list of class skills.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: An ambush agent does not gain proficiency with tower shields.

Quick Reactions (Ex): Ambush agents are always ready to react to the slightest signs of danger. Beginning at 2nd level, an ambush agent gains a +2 bonus on initiative checks. At 6th level, and every four levels thereafter, this bonus increases by an additional +2 (to a maximum of +10 at 18th level).

This ability replaces the bravery class feature.

False Start (Ex): Beginning at 5th level, an ambush agent can attempt to get the drop on an enemy that is already aware of him, either through standard deception, or simply by confusing his foe long enough to make the first move. The ambush agent must use this ability after it has been determined whether or not there will be a surprise round

(and who will be in it), but before combat begins, and can only use this ability if there is either no surprise round, or if the ambush agent is part of the surprise round.

If there is no surprise round, the ambush agent makes a Bluff check (DC = 15 + the CR of the opponent with the highest CR). If the check is successful, the combat gains a surprise round, in which only the ambush agent acts.

If there is a surprise round, the ambush agent makes a Bluff check, and compares the result to each opponent acting in the surprise round. For each opponent for which the result of the Bluff check is greater than 10 + the opponent's Hit Die + the opponent's Wisdom modifier), that opponent is unable to act in the surprise round.

This ability replaces the weapon training gained at 5th level.

Ambush Expert (Ex): At 9th level, an ambush agent is able to deliver brutal strikes against foes that aren't expecting them. He gains a +2 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls made during a surprise round or against creatures that are flat-footed. At 17th level, this bonus increases to +4.

This ability replaces the weapon training gained at 9th and 17th levels.

Sudden Fury (Ex): Beginning at 13th level, an ambush agent is able to take full advantage of surprised foes. Whenever she acts during a surprise round, she can take a full round's worth of actions, instead of being limited to a single action.

This ability replaces the weapon training gained at 13th level.

Effortless Armor (Ex): At 19th level, an ambush agent is no longer hindered by his armor at all. The armor check penalty of any armor and shield he wears is reduced to 0.

This ability replaces the armor mastery class feature.

Deadly Ambush (Ex): At 20th level, an ambush agent can kill most foes before they even begin to fight. Whenever he successfully damages a creature that has not acted yet that combat, the target must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the ambush agent's fighter level + the ambush agent's Dexterity modifier) or die. Once a creature has been the target of a deadly ambush, regardless of whether or not the save is made, that creature is immune to that ambush agent's deadly ambush for 24 hours.

This ability replaces the weapon mastery class feature.

Shadow Seeker (Investigator)

Most investigators are already skilled at gathering information, but in order to be a true spy, they must be able to do so unseen. Shadow seekers are investigators with supernatural abilities tied to darkness and shadows, which allow them to better avoid detection. Most shadow seekers learn these abilities through magical study, but for some, they are gifts from dark patrons, or the result of lingering traces of magical ancestry, similar to a sorcerer's bloodline.



Stealthy (Ex): A shadow seeker gains a bonus equal to 1/2 his class level (minimum 1) on Stealth checks.

This ability replaces the trapfinding class feature.

Shadowy Shroud (Su): Beginning at 3rd level, a shadow seeker is able to surround himself in a light shroud of darkness, which makes him more difficult to detect. This allows him to make Stealth checks in areas of bright light, even if he is not invisible and has no cover. Additionally, he can take 10 on Stealth checks.

This ability replaces the keen recollection class feature.

Shadow Fighter (Su): Beginning at 3rd level, a shadow seeker becomes more adept at fighting in dark conditions. As long as he is in an area of dim light or darkness, the shadow seeker's miss chance due to concealment (or total concealment) is increased by 10%. At 6th level, and every three levels thereafter, it increases by an additional 10%. This cannot cause the shadow seeker's miss chance to exceed 95%.

If the shadow seeker is in an area of dim light or darkness, but does not gain the benefits of concealment (such as because the attacker has darkvision), he gains concealment with a miss chance equal to 1/2 the bonus this ability would normally apply (5% at 3rd level, 10% at 6th level, and so on).

This ability replaces the trap sense class feature.

Darkness (Sp): At 4th level, a shadow seeker is able to create his own darkness. He can cast *darkness* as a spell-like ability once per day.

This ability replaces the swift alchemy class feature.



Lotus Infiltrator (Monk)

Specializing in stealth and quiet take-downs, lotus infiltrators are experts on getting past defenses undetected, and silently disabling those defenders they aren't able to completely avoid. This special training makes them highly desirable agents as spies, and many are sworn to neutrality in terms of political concerns, obeying only their contracts.

Deft Infiltrator (Ex): A lotus infiltrator of 3rd level or higher gains a +2 competence bonus on saving throws against traps, and a +2 competence bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

This ability replaces the still mind class feature.

Infiltrator's Fist: A lotus infiltrator learns to disable his foes in different ways than other monks, and he gains the following special abilities.

Silencing Fist (Ex): Beginning at 4th level, whenever the lotus infiltrator uses Stunning Fist, instead of applying another effect, he may choose to have his target be winded for a number of rounds equal to his monk level. A creature affected by this ability has the breath knocked from his lungs, and is unable to speak properly. The DC of Perception checks made to hear the winded creature shout is 10, plus additional modifiers based on distance and obstacles. Further, the winded creature suffers a 20% spell failure chance on any spell she casts with verbal components. The winded creature can still potentially make noise in non-verbal ways.

This ability replaces the ability to make the target of a stunning fist attack fatigued, gained at 4th level.

Oblivion Strike (Ex): Beginning at 12th level, whenever the lotus infiltrator uses Stunning Fist, instead of applying another effect, he may choose to strike his target in such a way that unconsciousness is guaranteed, albeit delayed. This has no effect for 1d3+1 rounds, after which the target immediately falls unconscious. A creature that falls unconscious in this way awakens if he suffers any damage, and can be awakened with an application of the aid another action, but is not awakened by even the loudest of noises. Upon waking, the creature has no recollection of the events for 1d4 minutes prior to falling unconscious.

This ability replaces the ability to make the target of a stunning fist attack staggered, gained at 12th level.

Silent Steps (Ex): At 5th level, a lotus infiltrator gains a bonus equal to 1/2 his monk level on Stealth checks. In addition, by spending 1 point from his ki pool as a swift action, a lotus infiltrator can gain a +10 bonus on Stealth checks for 1 minute.

This ability replaces the high jump class feature.

Undetectable (Ex): Beginning at 5th level, a lotus infiltrator becomes immune to all spells of the divination school of 2nd level or lower. At 7th level, and every two levels thereafter, this ability improves, making him immune to divination spells of the next-highest spell level (3rd-level spells at 7th level, 4th-level spells at 9th level, and so on).

This ability replaces the purity of body class feature.

A Thousand Faces (Su): At 17th level, a lotus infiltrator gains the ability to change his appearance at will, as if using the *alter self* spell. His caster level for this effect is equal to his monk level.

This ability replaces the timeless body class feature.

Faceless Stalker (Shifter)

Named for the shapeshifting creations of the aboleths, faceless stalkers have no direct connection to that race, but nonetheless share their ability to mimic other creatures' forms, including the ability to create a nondescript, virtually "faceless" appearance that allows them to go unnoticed in a variety of situations. They are highly sought after as spies, although some of them wind up going through so many identities that they lose track of who they really are.

Nondescript (Su): A faceless stalker can easily adjust her appearance to seem nondescript. Doing so is a standard action that physically alters her hair and facial features, causing her to take on an unremarkable appearance matching the local population. This functions as a Disguise check, except that the faceless stalker can use either her normal Disguise modifier, or add her level + her Charisma modifier, whichever is higher. Any creature whose Perception check to scrutinize the faceless stalker is less than the result of

this check is unable to identify her, and is later unable to recall any remarkable features of her appearance (although unique or eye-catching equipment might ruin this effect). Depending on the situation, the faceless stalker may still attract attention even though she appears nondescript (such as if she is in a restricted area).

This is a physical change that occurs to the faceless stalker's face. It cannot be disbelieved or seen through with divination effects (except for *true seeing*), although those with a high enough Perception result may be able to recognize the faceless stalker anyway. It can be dispelled. The effect lasts for one hour or until the faceless stalker ends it with another standard action.

The faceless stalker can use this ability three times per day.

This ability replaces the wild empathy class feature.

Shift Clothing (Su): At 2nd level, a faceless stalker learns to shift her clothing in a fashion similar to her body. She can alter the appearance of any clothing she wears as a standard action. This otherwise functions as though she were using a *hat of disguise* to change her outfit's appearance.

This ability replaces the track class feature.

Shift Aura (Su): At 3rd level, a faceless stalker can control her aura as effectively as she controls her form. She can affect herself as though with the spell *aura alteration*^{OA} as a spell-like ability at will.

This ability replaces the woodland stride class feature.

A Thousand Faces (Su): At 5th level, a faceless stalker gains the ability to change her appearance at will, as if using the *alter self* spell.

This ability replaces the trackless step class feature.

Arcane Deceiver (Wizard)

Knowledge is power, and few know this as well as the wizard. While most wizards are quite happy to share their knowledge with others—albeit, sometimes, at a price—there are some who actively seek to use their magic to deceive and dissemble, in order to hoard their knowledge, and, thereby, their power. Known as arcane deceivers, these wizards are crafty and cunning, and make excellent spies.

Spy's Bond: An arcane deceiver's arcane bond reflects his training in spycraft, and provides an additional avenue for him to gain information. The exact benefit depends on the type of arcane bond he chose at 1st level.

Bonded Item: The arcane deceiver's bonded item serves as a means for him to spy on others. By concentrating, he can create a scrying sensor within his bonded item that allows him to see and hear in a 20-foot-radius area around it. This functions similarly to *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, except that it transmits both sights and sounds simultaneously. The arcane deceiver is considered blind and deaf while using this ability. He can use this ability for a total number of minutes per day equal

to his wizard level, which must be spent in 1-minute increments. Finally, by concentrating for 1 round, the arcane deceiver can become aware of the direction and relative distance to his bonded item.

Possess Familiar: The arcane deceiver can possess his familiar, as though with the spell *familiar melding*^{UM}, for a number of rounds per day equal to twice his wizard level.

This ability replaces the Scribe Scroll class feature.

A Thousand Faces (Su): At 5th level, an arcane deceiver gains the ability to change his appearance at will, as if using the *alter self* spell.

This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 5th level.

Alter Aura (Ex): Beginning at 8th level, an arcane deceiver gains the ability to alter auras as he sees fit. He can cast *aura alteration*^{OA} as a spell-like ability at will.

This ability replaces the arcane school ability gained at 8th level.

Detect Secrets (Sp): Beginning at 10th level, an arcane deceiver learns to supernaturally detect secrets. This ability takes one of two forms. The arcane deceiver must choose which of these abilities to gain at 10th level, and this choice cannot later be changed. Any time the arcane deceiver gains a feat (including wizard bonus feats), he may choose to instead gain the option presented below that he did not choose at 10th level.

Read Thoughts (Sp): The arcane deceiver gains the ability to read the thoughts of others. This functions as his choice of *detect thoughts*, *detect anxieties*^{UI}, or *detect desires*^{UI}, except that instead of having an area of a 60-foot cone, the arcane deceiver must target a single creature within 60 feet that he can see. He can choose which version to use each time he uses this ability. The arcane deceiver can use this ability at will, but any creature that succeeds on its Will save to resist this effect is immune to it (in all three forms) for 24 hours.

Secret Seeker (Su): The arcane deceiver gains the ability to see things which have been hidden. He is constantly affected as though by the spell *detect secret doors*. Additionally, he gains a bonus equal to 1/2 his class level on Perception checks.

This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 10th level.

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Knowledge is Power!

Intrigue is a staple of the fantasy genre, and many players and GMs are drawn to the idea of a grand campaign of political intrigue, in which the players face the dangers of scheming politicians, backstabbing assassins, high-society soirees, and similar trials, instead of the usual drudging through moldy old dungeons, killing things and taking their stuff. A proper political drama or heist adventure can be hard to run and even harder to write, but perhaps the hardest is for players to get in the appropriate mindset, and deal with their problems with finesse, rather than a blunt weapon. One thing that can help players get in the mood—and get themselves an edge—when it comes to intrigue is having an archetype that kits their preferred class out a bit more for the type of adventure they'll be playing. Each installment of *Weekly Wonders: Archetypes of Intrigue* presents six new archetypes tied to a particular role common in intrigue adventures.

For this book, we focus on spy archetypes. While spies have a role outside of the realm of intrigue, it is here that they really shine, providing the information needed to outmaneuver, scandalize, or blackmail foes. A good spy is able to gather information, and is able to do so without attracting too much suspicion onto herself. Each of these archetypes focuses on gathering information, while at the same time limiting the information that foes can gain about her. This book includes the following archetypes:

- The diversionary agent, a bard archetype that draws all the attention to himself to allow his allies to go unnoticed.
- The ambush agent, a fighter archetype that specializes in attacking from surprise.
- The shadow seeker, an investigator archetype that can shroud itself in darkness and gains better benefits from concealment.
- The lotus infiltrator, a monk archetype that dispatches foes silently and is especially hard to detect.
- The faceless stalker, a shifter archetype that can take on the appearance of anyone, or become decidedly nondescript.
- The arcane deceiver, a wizard archetype that can change its face and aura, and can pry others' secrets from them with magic.

Whether you're about to embark on a campaign of courtly intrigue (such as one of multiple official Paizo adventure paths), or you just want to play a character with a political bent, this book has lots of tantalizing options to offer. Even GMs can get in on the fun, as several of the archetypes here are perfect for NPCs tied to royal courts as well, and can make for exciting and memorable encounters.



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