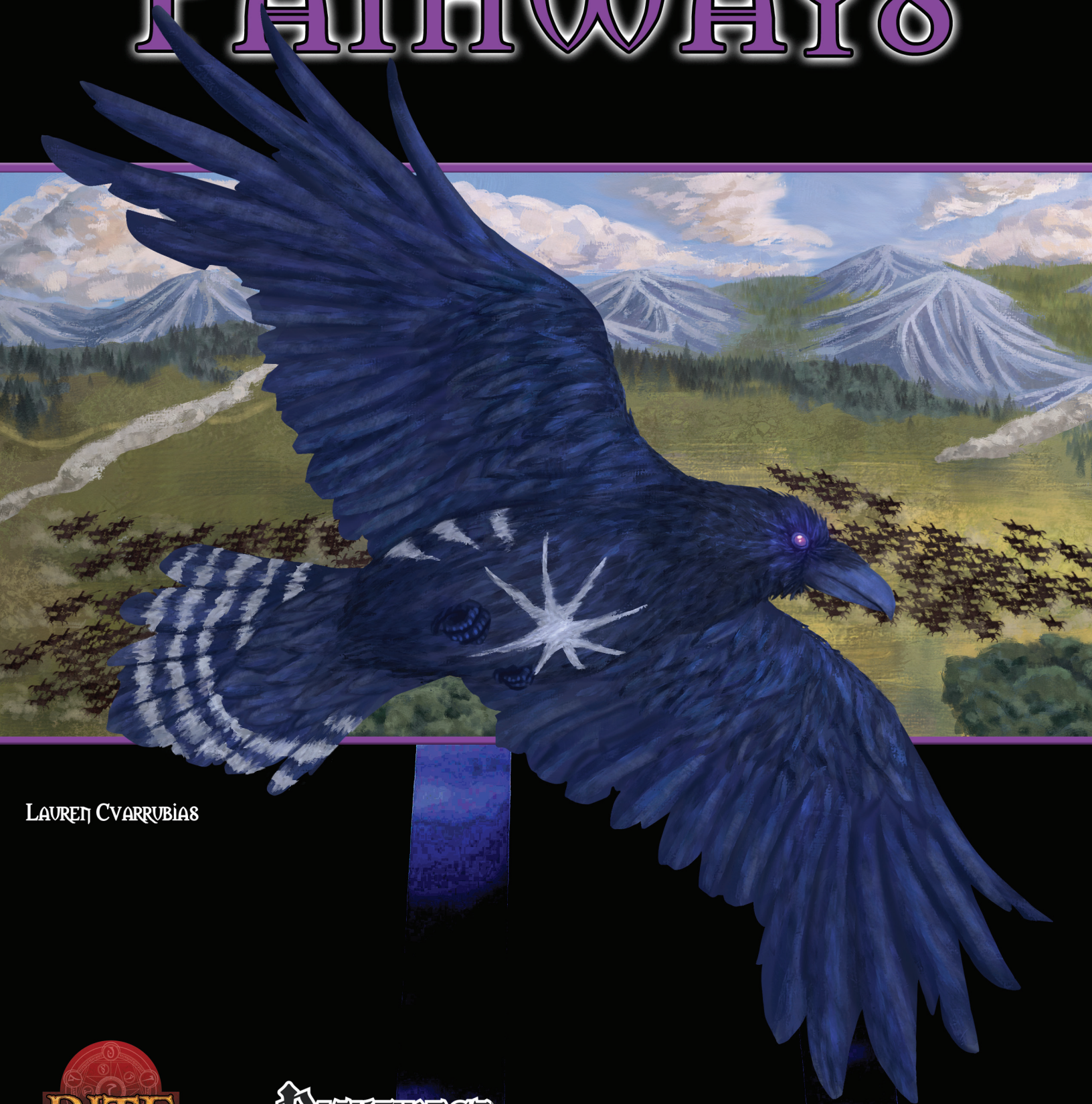


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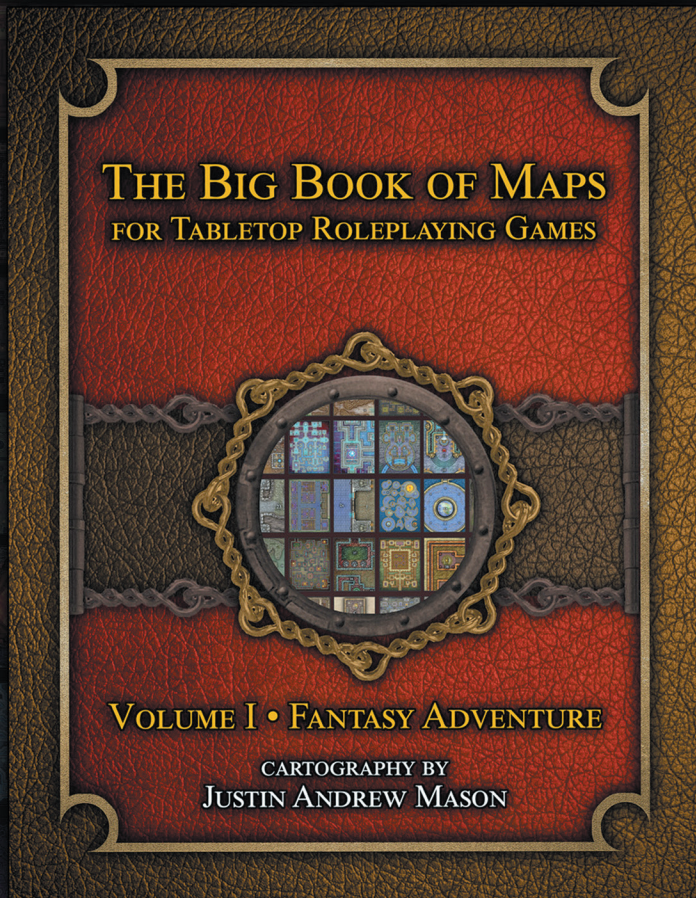


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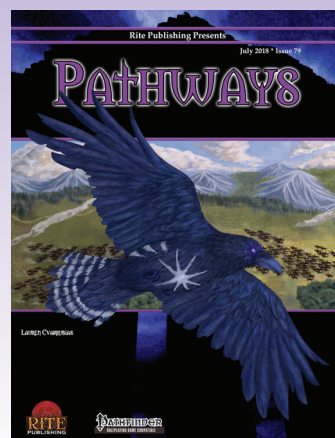
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Editorial

by Dave Paul

There is so much good stuff in here! Endzeitgeist's Top Ten of 2017 is available and many of you will see it here before you'll see it anywhere else. Sure, this has nothing to do with the theme this month, but that's neither here nor there. It's Endzeitgeist's Top Ten!

In keeping with the theme though, here's what's inside. We have some pieces by Margherita Tramontano, Mike Welham, and Scott Gladstein this month. Whether you play Pathfinder or Starfinder, there's loads of new material for you if you are interested in characters with familiars. If you're running a game and are looking for something new to throw at your players, you have lots of options here. I'm actually jealous of your players if you are running a game, because all of my current GMs are operating a little differently and though I enjoy my sessions with them, there's really no room for any of this month's content in my own personal games.

While I think there are lots of opportunities for familiars, the classic example still has to be the wizard. In that regard, we've dipped into Creighton's plentiful vault and pulled up a resource to help GMs populate a wizard's laboratory. While not specifically about familiars, the connections are obvious. And, for me, anyway, having ready access to resources like this are incredibly valuable. While I'd be willing to pit myself against almost anyone (largely because I'm not afraid to lose), I'm not as mentally quick as I was 30 years ago (mind you, I wouldn't trade the wisdom I've gained for the speed). So whenever I can just pull up a PDF and roll some dice, I have a great substitute for my own creativity. And, given all the descriptive options, I

can mix-and-match or make minor changes and the options are endless.

Fiction is full of examples of familiars, not all of them belonging to wizards. From a certain point of view, I suppose it's a simple enough extension from pets to familiars and given how long human beings have lived with domesticated animals, it makes sense that our myths would be full of modifications of pets. I suspect many of the familiars of recent fiction (including science fiction and comics, of course) would object to being considered familiars. Is R2-D2 a familiar? Is Groot? Is Pluto?

Keeping up with the folklore traditions most likely to be recognized by most readers, familiars are pretty clearly demons (possibly other spirits) in the service of witches. I'm curious about how these sorts of things are connected to other notions, such as changelings. In some cultures there were legends of children who'd be swapped by fairies such that human parents would end up with a fairy child. I suppose that this was a way that people rationalized anomalous infants (which have always existed), especially once things like Christian religions views and rituals became incorporated into people's lives. I'm not surprised, then, that the historical precedent of the RPG familiar is the creature affiliated with a witch (who very often might be someone opposed to the new religious views but also seen as powerful). Whatever the case, they've been turned into a lot of fun in the games that we play and I hope you enjoy the great new opportunities this issue offers.

Happy gaming.



Behind Every Great Wizard ... is a Great Familiar



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Improved Familiar Creature Template

by Wendall Roy, Illustration by Lauren Covarrubias

The temptation to gain an outsider or other exotic familiar with unique powers lures many spellcasters. However, there are those who hesitate to break the mystic bond that exists between them and their original animal familiar. For those spellcasters a special ritual has been devised, one that allows them to infuse their existing familiar

with augmented powers. Familiars improved by this ritual change outwardly in form, becoming marked with runes, patterns of unusual color, blazing eyes, or other physical changes that clearly show they have been altered. These familiars can even retain a portion of the rituals power long after their master's death.

Creating an Improved Familiar Creature

"Improved Familiar" is a template that can be added to any spellcaster's familiar by the spellcaster taking the Improved Familiar feat. It can also be added to any animal from the familiar list, representing such a former familiar from a slain master (known as a free familiar). Free familiars retain the magical beast type, alignment, natural armor bonus, Intelligence, and improved evasion ability, and any references to a free familiar's master are based on their slain master's statistics at time of death.

CR: Same as the base creature +0, +1 or +2. An improved familiar's CR increases by +1 if their master is 5th or higher level, and by +2 if their master is 11th or higher level.

Senses: An improved familiar gains darkvision 60 ft.

Additional Abilities: An improved familiar gains one of the following special or spell-like abilities, and another ability for every 2 effective levels of their master above 1st (to a maximum of five abilities at 9th level):

Augmented Familiar Bond: An improved familiar increases any bonus their special ability based on type provides to their master. Bonuses to skill checks and hit points increase by an additional +2, and bonuses to saving throws, initiative, or natural armor increase by +1. Free familiars who take this ability can use the base familiar special ability by type (without this increase) on a single ally, and can change the designated ally once per week.

Damage Reduction (Ex) An improved familiar gains DR 5/magic. This increases to DR 10/magic when their master is 11th or higher level. The

master must be 5th or higher level for the improved familiar to take this ability.

Energy Resistance An improved familiar chooses two of the following energy types: acid, cold, electricity, fire. They gain energy resistance 5 against those types. This increases to energy resistance 10 when their master is 5th or higher level, and to energy resistance 15 when their master is 11th or higher level.

Spell Resistance An improved familiar gains spell resistance equal to their Hit Dice +5. A free familiar's effective Hit Dice is equal to their master's level for the purpose of this ability.

Spell-like Abilities An improved familiar gains one of the following spell-like abilities. Caster level equals the master's level, and the improved familiar uses their master's ability scores to determine the effects of the spell-like ability. This ability can be taken more than once, gaining a different spell-like ability each time. The improved familiar's effective caster level must be equal to or greater than the minimum needed to cast a spell-like ability of its given level in order for the improved familiar to take that particular spell-like ability.

- At will: any cantrip from the master's spell list, *comprehend languages*, *crafters fortune* (master only), *detect secret doors*, *endure elements*, *magic aura*, *miserable pity* (self only)
- 3/day: *expeditious retreat*, *hypnotism*, *identify*, *invisibility* (self only), *shield*
- 1/day: *feather fall*, *liberating command*, *locate object*, *magic missile*, *minor image*, *spell gauge*



Sample Improved Familiar

This is a free familiar whose former master was a 5th level wizard.

Improved Familiar Raven

CR 1/4

XP 100

N Tiny magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural armor, +2 size)

hp 3 (1d8-1)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **DR** 5/magic

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee bite +4 (1d3-4)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +9)
1/day – *locate object*

STATISTICS

Str 2, **Dex** 15, **Con** 8, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 6

Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse

Skills Fly +6, Perception +6

Languages Common

SQ augmented familiar bond, language

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Augmented Familiar Bond (Su) The improved familiar raven can designate an ally to gain a +3 bonus on Appraise checks as long as the ally is within 1 mile. The improved familiar raven can change the designated ally once per week.

Language (Su) The improved familiar raven can speak and understand Common.

ECOLOGY

Environment any temperate

Organization solitary

Treasure standard



Ysabot Vaskel

*See "changeling" entry in the Bestiary of Pathfinder Adventure Path #43: The Haunting of Harrowstone

**See Advanced Player's Guide

†See Carrion Crown Player's Guide

††Abbreviated, see "Languages" in the official campaign setting book

YSABOT VASKEL

Female changeling* witch 1

CG Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +1

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 7 (1d6+1)

Fort +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee claw +0 (1d4), dagger +0 (1d4/19–20), quarterstaff +0 (1d6)

Ranged dagger +2 (1d4/19–20), dart +2 (1d4)

Special Attacks hexes** (*cauldron*, *evil eye* [–2, 6 rounds])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1/day—*mage hand*

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 14), *hypnotism* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*message*, *spark***, *stabilize*

Patron Agility

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats Brew Potion, Extra Hex**

Traits Magical Talent**, Teacher's Pet†

Skills Bluff +2 (+4 vs. anyone sexually-attracted to her),

Craft (alchemy) +11, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge

(history) +9, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +1 (+3

if familiar is within arm's reach), Sense Motive +1 (+3 if

familiar is within arm's reach), Spellcraft +7, Stealth +5;

Racial Modifiers +2 Bluff vs. anyone sexually-attracted to her

Languages Abyssal, Common, Aklo, 1 additional

(suggested: Varis.††)

SQ hag trait* (green widow), witch's familiar (cat named Persimmon)

Gear dagger, darts (6), quarterstaff, backpack, bedroll,

candles (3), cauldron, chalk (1 piece), fortune teller's deck

(common), ink (1 vial), inkpen, parchment (5 sheets),

scroll case, spell component pouch, tindertwigs (3), trail

rations (5 days), traveler's outfit, waterskin, whetstone

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Claws* (Ex) As a changeling, Ysabot's hands and fingernails have hardened and become sharp since her adolescence.

This gives her the claw (1d4) natural attack.

Hag Trait* (Ex) Descended from a green hag, Ysabot finds it especially easy to lure and trick potential mates into pursuing her. This grants her a +2 trait bonus.

Magical Talent† (Sp) Through a combination of inborn talent and obsessive study of the Professor's strange tomes, Ysabot mastered the use of the *mage hand* cantrip. She may cast it once per day as a spell-like ability at the same caster level as her witch spells, but using her Charisma modifier for concentration checks instead of Intelligence.

Natural Armor* (Ex) As the secret offspring of a hag, Ysabot has uncommonly tough skin, granting her a +1 natural armor bonus.

Teacher's Pet† (Ex) Ysabot once studied as the Professor's student, often debating with him over the finer points of local history. She gains a +2 trait bonus on Knowledge (history) checks and Knowledge (history) is always a class skill for her.

PERSIMMON, CAT FAMILIAR

N Tiny magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)

hp 3 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities improved evasion

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +4 (1d2–4), bite +4 (1d3–4)

Space 2-1/2 ft. **Reach** 0 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 15, **Con** 8, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 6 (10 vs. trip)

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +6, Perception +5, Stealth +14; **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Climb, +4 Stealth

SQ alertness, empathic link, share spells

Stored Spells 0—all; 1st—*burning hands*, *cure light wounds*, *hypnotism*, *identify*, *inflict light wounds*, *obscuring mist*

Background: Ysabot Vaskel (EEZ-uh-BOE VAZZ-kuhl) spent her first ten years assuming she was her mother's natural born daughter. But when orc raiders stole her mother away, Ysabot's entire world came crashing down. Her stricken father nearly drank himself to death. And, from his drunken ramblings, she pieced together the truth of her adoption. Some soul had left her on the doorstep of a local church as a baby, and the priests of the Lady of Graves convinced the Vaskel family to take her as their own. After all, her father's impotence had failed to give his wife a child. So, it all made perfect sense.

But the trauma of her mother's abduction, combined with her coming adolescence, began to unravel poor Ysabot's mind. Strange voices began calling to her at night. Voices only she could hear. She tried to ignore them at first, afraid to mention their disturbing whispers lest everyone doubt her sanity. She left home at the first opportunity, enrolling in a nearby all-girls' school. Only when the Professor ventured to her school as a guest lecturer and took an active interest in her exceptionally bright mind, did she finally confide in someone. He helped her understand her changeling nature, the unlikely offspring of a green hag, left to be raised by some unwitting family until her real mother called her home. He cautioned Ysabot against heeding the hag's call, explaining in detail what would happen if she did. Instead, he offered her a chance to travel and study with him until the voices stopped.

She did exactly that. But, ever curious, she also plied the Professor to further research her origins while learning under his tutelage. Together, they conducted various auguries and harrow readings into the guiding influences on her life. She never learned anything more about her real mother, but she did learn of her adopted mother's fate, as well as the existence of the half-orc baby, Agrimar, to which she'd given birth while in captivity. Ysabot made it her goal to seek him out, to rescue Agrimar from the dark influence of the orcs, and also to punish those who'd abused her mother. The Professor helped her complete that task. And now she, and her "brother" Agrimar, owe him a great debt. One they can only hope to repay.

Physical Description: Ysabot is quite diminutive and rail-thin compared to her "brother" Agrimar. She weighs only 110 pounds, but stands 5-feet, 6-inches tall with long black hair and a very pale complexion. She most frequently wears a blue, hand-made robe and matching cloak, and is almost always accompanied by her black cat, Persimmon.

Personality: Ysabot typically keeps her own counsel until she can thoroughly process every bit of information about a particular situation. Many take the quietly thoughtful girl as timid, but she proves calculating and bold when

she chooses to speak her mind. Ysabot also takes great satisfaction and confidence in outlasting her hag mother's call. Even as she broadens her study in the mysteries of witchcraft, she's determined not to let it sway her to the evil her true mother intended. In this regard, she feels a kinship with the inner struggles of her half-orc "brother" and looks after him as surely as any true sibling would.

Advancement

Ysabot adds a level in the witch class each time she advances. She prefers to always enhance her skills in Craft (alchemy), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nature), and Spellcraft, but adds a new rank in Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive as she can. At 2nd and 4th level, Ysabot picks up the misfortune and fortune hexes, respectively. At 3rd level, she spends her new feat on an Extra Hex to gain access to cackle, thereby extending the effects of her other hexes. In terms of advancing her spells, Ysabot learns dancing lights, jump, and mage armor at 2nd level. She then adds false life at 3rd level, followed by cat's grace, hold person, and ray of enfeeblement at 4th level. As soon as she can, Ysabot acquires an alchemist's lab so she can use her Brew Potion feat and Craft (alchemy) skill to create items to further support her companions.

Roleplaying Ideas

- On occasion, Ysabot still hears the siren call of her hag mother, urging her to join their coven and become a green hag.
- Ysabot is an especially curious girl, particularly when it involves mysteries of arcane alchemy and spellcraft. She obsessively collects unusually gross reagents from the strangest specimens.
- Ysabot's cat familiar, Persimmon, often spies on her acquaintances, allies, and enemies alike. He seemingly shows up at the most inopportune times and unreachable places, unnerving those who cross his path.
- Ysabot views herself as a protector, first and foremost of her "brother" Agrimar, but to the rest of her companions, as well. She always seems to know more than she lets on, maintaining an air of cleverness and playfulness that can annoy the impatient. And she sometimes lashes out at those who belittle or devalue her "brother" upon learning of his orc heritage.

Scaling the PC

Under a 15-point buy, Ysabot reduces her Intelligence by 1 point and her Wisdom by 2. This drops the DCs of her spells and her Will save by 1. It also causes the removal of 1 skill rank (in Knowledge [history]) and 1 language (Abyssal).

Gothic Campaign Compendium

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20 Things to Find in a Wizard's Laboratory

By Creighton Broadhurst

The PCs are always defeating evil wizards and looting their libraries and laboratories.

Such locales are filled with strange, esoteric (and often distasteful) things of unknowable and unguessable purpose linked to the wizard's unfathomable research. Such things, though, are often glossed over in the mad stampede toward the wizard's spare potions, scrolls and (of course) their spellbooks.

Use the table below to "populate" a wizard's laboratory with minor objects of interest. It is up to the GM to determine whether any of these objects has much value.

1. A disembodied, gray hand ending in sharp claws hangs suspended in a jar of dirty water. It might be a trick of the light, but every now and then the hand seems to flex.
2. One long wooden box of polished wood holds carefully arranged and straightened lengths of hair. Each set is tied together with bright blue string.
3. A small box holds an ancient coin minted thousands of years ago by a nation or race famed for its evil and brutality. The coin's features are nearly worn smooth such is its age. Perceptive PCs may be able to make out a few faint details—the suggestion of a face on one side and what looks like some kind of fantastical creature on the other. The coin rests on a black velvet cushion.
4. A small earthen vial contains a thick dark red viscous fluid. This is the semi-coagulated blood of a basilisk.
5. A small stone beaker holds a small amount of carefully harvested green slime. There is not enough slime to fully consume a creature; the wizard studied the slime and occasionally used it as a means of getting rid of otherwise dangerous leavings from his experimentations.
6. This silver dagger's tip is broken off and the remaining blade is dull with age. A gem once decorated the pommel, but it fell off long ago.
7. The surface of the wizard's workbench is scorched and burnt. Perceptive PCs can just make out the remains of carvings in the wood, but their meaning is impossible to fathom.
8. One small earthen jar is full of the carcasses of dried insects.
9. A velvet pouch lies discarded on a shelf. It is empty, but flecks of glimmering dust inside the pouch hint at what it once held.
10. A skull stands atop a high shelf. Flickering light emerges from its eye sockets (this is a continual

flame spell) equivalent to a pair of candles. A small velvet cloth lies nearby. Perceptive PCs notice the top of the skull is detachable. If it is removed, heatless flames burst forth from the interior and provide light equivalent to that of a torch.

11. A wooden bin contains a small quantity of burnt or otherwise damaged laboratory equipment. All is worthless until repaired.
12. A rack holds a half-dozen potion vials. Each has been scrupulously cleaned and bares a label: healing, flight or invisibility. Sadly, all are empty.
13. A workbook lies on the desk. It details—in broad strokes—the beginnings of research into lichdom. The wizard has not got very far; to date he has only listed a lich's various abilities and characteristics.
14. A big sack stuffed in a corner holds a large quantity of damaged, scorched or dirty clothes. The stench of chemicals and strange reagents hangs over all.
15. A small bucket of wet earth sits under the bench. The earth contains nothing of interest; rather it is kept here to extinguish any unwanted (or sudden) fires.
16. This long, low wooden box has many compartments within; each compartment contains a commonly available spell component—bat guano, coloured sand and so on. There is enough here to replenish five spell component pouches.
17. A cracked crystal ball stands on a bronze tripod. The tripod is obviously very old and the crystal ball falls apart if removed from the stand. If the ball breaks, it emits a small puff of smoke redolent with the smell of incense.
18. A high-backed wooden chair stands in a corner. Its intricately carved back is highly polished and depicts the entwined heads of two noble dragons.
19. A sheaf of parchments spilling from a leather folder depict the various types of summoning circles and lists the kinds of creatures they are designed to contain.
20. Hidden in a concealed niche carved into the underside of the wizard's workbench (DC 25 Perception spots) lurks a small transparent gem. Golden sparkles glimmer within and the thing radiates faint magic.

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Spells Showcase: Familiars

By Dave Paul

My various 101 Spells products contain a wide variety of spell types. One type I've worked hard to develop is spells useful for NPCs. Another is spells that developed in a world of spell research. I think *false path* fits into both these categories. Utilizing a familiar (or similar creature), it is both useful for a GM who wants to lead players somewhere, and to a PC who wants to avoid detection.

False Path*

School: Transmutation; **Level:** Druid 2, Ranger 2, Shaman 2, Sorcerer/Wizard 2, Witch 2

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Components: V, S, DF

Range: Touch

Target: Animal companion, familiar or spirit animal

Duration: Concentration; see text

Saving Throw: None; **Spell Resistance:** No

You impart to your animal companion, familiar or spirit animal the ability to leave a trail that is otherwise identical to the trail that you would have left behind in that same space. If your animal companion, familiar or spirit animal flies, the trail it leaves behind is on the ground in the spaces directly beneath its path. While the spell is in effect you can suspend or resume this ability for your animal companion, familiar or spirit animal to leave a false trail as a free action. You may, for instance, suspend the effect, have the animal companion, familiar or spirit animal move to some other location, and then resume the effect. The false trail created by your animal companion, familiar or spirit animal is nearly indistinguishable from the trail you would leave behind (a creature with scent would detect you at the other trail and, following it, would assume it would eventually find you on that trail). The trail created by the spell faintly gives off the signature of transmutation magic to anyone who might be able to detect that, and a successful Perception check (DC 10 + 1/2 your caster level + your spellcasting ability modifier) reveals that there is something amiss with the false trail. The trail left behind by the spell lasts as long as your own trail would normally be left behind.

Your own ability to move without leaving a trail (should you have this ability) is not compromised in any way by this spell. If you are a ranger (or have the ability to have a favored terrain) and the trail that you create is in one of your favored terrains, you add the skill bonus that you would add in that terrain to the DC of the Perception check for others to identify that the trail is false.

I remember reading (or imagining having read) about instances of fantasy fiction in which a wizard takes control over another wizard's ally, companion or familiar. It occurred to me that I didn't really like any of the ways in which the game handled how this might work and so I created *seize fiendish familiar* to do this. I thought that it would be more likely for evil or neutral casters to go after someone's familiar than that a good caster would do so. I also figured that clerics or other divine casters might use some other means of being rid of such creatures and would be less likely to try to take control of them and treat them as familiars (though this offers some interesting ideas). I decided to aim this at urban areas, figuring that some GMs might have distinctive differences between city wizards and country wizards, and that unbound fiends might enjoy the abundance of souls in populated areas.

Seize Fiendish Familiar

School: Enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting] [evil]; **Level:** Sorcerer/Wizard 7

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Components: V, S, M (2,000 gp gem)

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One spellcaster with a familiar

Duration: Instantaneous; see text

Saving Throw: Will negates and Will negates; see text; **Spell Resistance:** Yes and Yes; see text

You target a spellcaster who has a cacodaemon, imp or quasit as a familiar who must succeed on a saving throw or dismiss its familiar. If the spellcaster fails its Will save and dismisses its familiar, the familiar then must succeed on a Will save or become bound to serve you.

The familiar does not serve you willingly, but it is compelled by magic to do so. Treat the familiar as if it were affected by *dominate monster* (which has a duration of 1 day/level). When this aspect of the spell expires, the familiar is released to its own devices.

Fiendish familiars are often eager to be released from their bondage as a familiar, especially those who have lived for a while in cities full of opportunity. If *seize fiendish familiar* is cast in a settlement, add the size modifier (if positive) to the DC of the spellcaster's saving throw but if the spellcaster fails its save, add that same modifier to the familiar's save.

*The *false path* spell appears in Rite Publishing's [101 Plains Spells](#) and *seize fiendish familiar* appears in Rite Publishing's [101 Urban Spells](#).

Creature Components

Volume 1



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Miniature Steeds: “Pseudo-” Creatures as Familiars

By Margherita “Bardess” Tramontano; Illustration by Jacob E. Blackmon

Pseudodragons, pseudosphinxes... and then what? It’s always compelling for a magic user to have a miniature version of a larger monster on her shoulder. And it’s reasonable that powerful wizards or magic-using monsters would engage in research to create such creatures, or that they should already exist somewhere in the wild, ready to be found and made into familiars. A whole new field of discovery is open for bizarre little friends. So here are some examples of beautiful “pseudo” familiars, together with an archetype for those bloodragers, magi, or even sorcerers and witches who always dreamed of a monster companion of their own to ride.

Pseudogriffon

With the body of a slender tabby cat and the front quarters, head, and wings of a falcon, the little beast dives on its prey with a shriek not so different from a yowl.

Pseudogriffon (Peregrowlie) CR 2

XP 600

N Tiny magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)

hp 19 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee 2 talons +8 (1d2-4), bite +8 (1d3-4)

Space 2-1/2 ft., **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks dive

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 6, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 10 (14 vs. trip)

Feats Flyby Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +11, Fly +11, Perception +13; **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Climb, +8 Perception

Languages Common (cannot speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate hills or urban

Organization solitary, pair, or pack (6–10)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dive (Ex): When airborne, a peregrowlie can dive at three times its normal flying speed. This is the equivalent of a charge, granting a +2 bonus on the attack roll and a -2 penalty to AC. If its charge begins 40 or more feet above its target, its first attack deals double damage. It must be flying downward at an angle of 45 degrees or steeper to use this ability.

Smaller relatives of the better known great beasts, pseudogriffons share the hunt cunning of a wild cat and the ferocity of a peregrine falcon. They are able to adapt to nearly any environment. In a forest, they most often climb high trees to drop on their prey, while on hills and mountains they hunt performing deadly and fast dives.

A peregrowlie is strictly carnivorous and hunts mostly small rodents and lizards, but can confront even young goats or groundhogs when hungry. Pseudogriffons found in cities often become pests, swooping on the heads of passersby from the top of buildings.

A spellcaster of at least 7th level of any alignment who has the Improved Familiar feat may select a pseudogriffon as a familiar.

Pseudopegasus

An incredibly small, yet perfect horse flutters in the air on beautiful, bright-colored butterfly wings.

Pseudopegasus (Pixiemare) CR 1

XP 400

CG Tiny fey

Init +4; **Senses** detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +12

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +2 size)

hp 13 (3d6+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

DR 2/cold iron; **Immune** charm

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (good)

Melee bite +7 (1d3-2), 2 hooves +2 (1d2-2)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +8)

Constant—*detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law*
1/day—*hideous laughter* (DC 17), *invisibility* (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 11 (15 vs. trip)

Feats Acrobatic, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +15, Escape Artist +10, Fly +22, Perception +12, Sense Motive +8;

Racial Modifiers +4 Diplomacy, +4 Perception

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ undersized rider

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization solitary, pair, or herd (3–8)

Treasure Incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Undersized Rider (Sp): Three times per day, a pseudopegasus can shrink one willing creature by 2 sizes and allow it to ride on its back. Medium creatures reduced to Tiny are considered to have

the Undersized Mount feat, even if they don't meet the prerequisites. The effect lasts as long as the creature is riding the pixiemare.

Created by magic, pixiemares are often used as mounts by atomies and other diminutive fey. There are legends of bold atomie squadrons riding pixiemares and charging hordes of hostile humanoids to victory.

Pseudopegasi are happy, whimsical creatures, spreading joy and revelry wherever they go. They are found in all colors of the rainbow, with their mane and tail often strikingly contrasting with the color of their coat. Pixiemares live on tender leaves and nectar.

A spellcaster of at least 7th level with an alignment within 1 step of chaotic good who has the Improved Familiar feat may select a pixiemare as a familiar.

Pseudounicorn

This creature very closely resembles a cat, but it swaggers on four tiny golden hooves. Its coat and mane is a motley of soft pastel nuances, and a minuscule horn spires from the center of its brow.



Pseudounicorn (Phantasia)

CR 2

XP 600

CG Tiny magical beast

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size; +2 deflection vs. evil)

hp 16 (3d10)

Fort +3; **Ref** +6; **Will** +4; +2 resistance vs. evil

Immune charm, compulsion, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee gore +2 (1d3-3)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks magical strike

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

Constant—protection from evil

At will—detect evil, speak with animals

3/day—cure light wounds, protection from evil, communal

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 17, **Con** 11, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 11 (15 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative

Skills Knowledge (nature) +4, Perception +9, Sense Motive +6

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ companion's care

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests or fairy-touched places

Organization solitary, mated pair, or boon (3–8)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Companion's Care (Sp): If a pseudounicorn chooses another creature as its companion, it gains a permanent *greater status* effect on that creature. The pseudounicorn can end this bond as a free action.

Magical Strike (Ex): A pseudounicorn's gore attack is treated as a magic good weapon for the purposes of damage reduction.

A miable and gracious miniature versions of the unicorn, pseudounicorns are not believed to be a subspecies of the larger and better known magical beast but rather an example of convergent evolution or of a different magic-touched species.

Pseudounicorns protect nature and the environment in their way, often forming durable bonds with good-willed humanoids (both male and female) who they deem capable of doing good for the world. A pseudounicorn is a gregarious creature, and tries to choose a mate or a friend as a companion for all its life. Pseudounicorns are roughly as big as normal housecats, and can live up to 100 years.

A spellcaster of at least 7th level with an alignment within 1 step of chaotic good who has the Improved Familiar feat may select a pseudounicorn as a familiar.

Eldritch Steed (Familiar Archetype)


Eldritch steeds are familiars in contact with their monstrous roots, and able to assume a rideable form for their masters. Creatures with larger cousins like tiny dragons, eagles, bats, or monsters with "pseudo-" in their name are favorites for this archetype, but any familiar can take it if the GM is willing to stat its mount form.

Alertness (Ex): At 1st level, an eldritch steed gains the Alertness feat itself, instead of granting it to its master. This modifies alertness.

Mount Form (Sp): At 3rd level, an eldritch steed familiar gains the ability to turn into a larger version of itself and back again once per day. This ability transforms the familiar into a Medium or Large animal or a Medium magical beast, functioning as *beast shape III*. The effect lasts for 1 hour per familiar level, or until it chooses to change back. For the eldritch steed, changing into its larger form is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. When in its mount form, the familiar has the same statistics of an animal companion or a monstrous companion of its level, and any abilities and spells affecting an animal companion affect the eldritch steed. The eldritch steed retains its increased Intelligence score and the empathic link and speak with master abilities while in mount form, but its other abilities, statistics and skill ranks are replaced by those of an animal companion.

The familiar can use this ability an additional time per day at 10th and 17th level. At 8th level, it can become a Large magical beast, as *beast shape IV*. If the familiar is a pseudodragon, at 13th level it can become a Medium dragon, functioning as *form of the dragon I*, and at 15th level, a Large dragon, as *form of the dragon II*. This ability replaces deliver touch spells and scry on familiar.

Challenge your PCs Like Never Before!

The background of the entire page is a dark, atmospheric illustration of a tomb or dungeon. In the center, two characters are depicted: on the left, a character with red hair wearing a green hat and tunic, holding a spear; on the right, a character with blue hair wearing a blue and orange tunic, holding a sword. They are standing in front of a large, cracked stone sphere. The surrounding walls are covered in ancient carvings and skeletal remains, including a large skeleton on the left and a smaller one on the right. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the characters.

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Familiars

By Scott Gladstein

Part of the mystique of magic users is their attendant familiar; small creatures they consort with to further their mysterious agendas. Historically, familiars were associated with witchcraft and had a duplicitous nature. Merely having a familiar was enough to be convicted of witchcraft (which lead to many people with nice old cats being burned at the stake). They were often pitch black in color and were fed from blood or breast milk from the witch.

Pathfinder treats them a little differently. They are not as sinister, more a conduit for magical power and a spiritually linked animal guide to the realms of deeper mysteries. They act as spy, guide, compatriot, and servant, doing the will of their master without the dark connotations.

Choosing the type of your familiar is an important thematic step for any wizard. This entry will give you new creatures to use as familiars. Your choice of familiar will largely be contingent on the place you come from or find yourself in and, in general, a familiar will be a creature that people wouldn't find particularly odd contacting you (or at least following you). An antelope might be appropriate for the savannah but would look out of place in a northern forest and a dolphin might be great for an aquatic campaign but be ill-equipped in an urban intrigue game. History recounts many examples of human, humanoid, or demonic familiars. Some of these can be best represented with the Improved Familiar feat.

New Feats

Familiar Familiar

Your familiar has become quite familiar with your wants and needs, sometimes helping you achieve them without you even asking.

Prerequisite: Familiar

Benefit: Any familiar you have gains a +2 bonus when attempting any Aid Another check.

Master's Sacrifice

Your link with your familiar is particularly strong and you can take some physical punishment on its behalf by feeding it with your own life energy.

Prerequisite: Familiar

Benefit: Once per day per Intelligence modifier you possess (minimum once per day) you can take any hit point damage that your familiar would take as an immediate reaction done in response to your familiar taking damage. This does not apply to non hit point damage (such as ability score damage or conditions).

Sacrifice Familiar

You can temporarily sacrifice your familiar to empower your spellcasting.

Prerequisite: Familiar

Benefit: You can dismiss your familiar as part of the casting of a spell, allowing you to apply a metamagic feat with a level adjustment of +1 without increasing the level of the spell slot required. After dismissing the familiar in this fashion, the familiar reappears in the nearest safe space to you in 1 minute. The dismissal is merely a mental command made as part of the same action as casting the spell.

Special: If you have multiple familiars, this dismisses all of them.

Improved Sacrifice Familiar

The power you gain from sacrificing your familiar to your need for greater arcane energy is more than most.

Prerequisite: Sacrifice Familiar, Caster Level 7th

Benefit: You can dismiss your familiar as part of the casting of a spell, allowing you to apply a metamagic feat with a level adjustment of +2 without increasing the level of the spell slot required. After dismissing the familiar in this fashion, the familiar reappears in the nearest safe space to you in 1 minute. The dismissal is merely a mental command made as part of the same action as casting the spell.

Special: If you have multiple familiars, this dismisses all of them.

Second Coming

You acquire a second, weaker, familiar.

Prerequisite: Improved Familiar

Benefit: You gain a second familiar, though it is not an improved one. If this is a witch's familiar, only one familiar stores the spells of the witch.

Special: The Improved Familiar feat can be taken a second time to improve your second familiar.

Soul-Bonded Familiar

Its master having given it a piece of its soul, the familiar returns in kind, granting the master immense power.

Prerequisite: Familiar, Caster Level 7th

Benefit: The benefit provided by the special ability of the familiar doubles.

Special: A character may not have this and the Improved Familiar feat.

Familiar's Light

The magic that binds you and your familiar now binds your allies as well.

Table #-1: New Familiar Options

Familiar	Benefit	Source
Antelope	Master gains a +4 bonus on Initiative checks	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Badger	Master gains +3 hit points	<i>Bestiary 2</i>
Baboon	Master gains a +3 bonus on Climb checks	<i>Bestiary 2</i>
Dog* (Common)	Master gains a +3 bonus on Survival checks	-
Flea (Giant)	Master gains a +3 bonus on Acrobatics checks	<i>Bestiary 4</i>
Isopod (Giant)	Master gains a +1 natural armor bonus to AC	<i>Ultimate Wilderness</i>
Lemming	Master gains a +3 bonus on Stealth checks	<i>Ultimate Wilderness</i>
Porcupine	Master gains a +1 natural armor bonus to AC	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Puffin	Master gains a +3 bonus on Swim checks	<i>Ultimate Wilderness</i>
Rabbit	Master gains a +3 bonus on Stealth checks	<i>Ultimate Wilderness</i>
Red Panda	Master gains a +3 bonus on Climb checks	<i>Bestiary 5</i>
Scorpion, Ghost	Master gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Spider, Giant Crab	Master gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Swan	Master gains a +3 bonus on Swim checks	<i>Bestiary 4</i>
Tarsier	Master gains a +3 bonus on sight-based and opposed Perception checks in shadows or darkness	<i>Ultimate Wilderness</i>
Thylacine (Tasmanian Wolf)	Master gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Tardigrade, Giant	Master gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves	<i>Ultimate Wilderness</i>
Trilobite	Master gains a +1 natural armor bonus to AC	<i>Bestiary 5</i>
Vulture	Master gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Water Strider (Nymph)	Master gains a +3 bonus on Swim checks	<i>Bestiary 4</i>

* There is a famous story from the 17th century where Prince Rupert of the Rhine had a poodle that never left his side during the English Civil War named Boye. Enemies were terrified of this creature because they thought it was his familiar and had to kill it with a silver bullet after his defeat.

Prerequisite: Soul-Bonded Familiar

Benefit: Half the benefit provided by the special ability of the familiar is granted to all allies of its master within 30 feet of the master. This takes the form of a visible, pale-blue aura. You can suppress or reactivate this as a swift action. This does not stack with the bonus that the familiar normal grants to their master.

Totemic Mage

An Archetype for Wizards in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Bound fully to an animal spirit for guidance, totemic mages take on the traits of their familiar as they advance in power.

Totemic Familiar Qualities (Ex):

A totemic wizard takes on some characteristics of their familiar as they progress in level. This causes them to physically and mentally take on the familiar's traits as well. A rat-totem wizard might grow buck teeth, gain some extra hair, and their hands might subtly resemble rat claws; while a hawk-totem wizard might have intense eyes, a hawkish profile, feathered hair, and develop a taste for small game animals. These features are hard to cover up (Disguise DC 10 + wizard's level). The familiars listed here only cover the familiars covered in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. If you are using alternate familiars, find the one that best suits it.

Table #-2: New Improved Familiar Options

Familiar	Alignment	Arcane Spellcaster Level	Source
Archon, Lantern	Lawful Good	7th	<i>Bestiary 1</i>
Blink Dog	Lawful Good	7th	<i>Bestiary 2</i>
Clockwork Servant	Neutral	7th	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Crawling Hand	Any Evil	3rd	<i>Bestiary 2</i>
Crystal Dragon, Wyrmling	Chaotic Good	7th	<i>Bestiary 2</i>
Demon, Dretch	Chaotic Evil	7th	<i>Bestiary 1</i>
Faun	Chaotic Good	5th	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Foo Dog	Good	7th	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Ghoul	Evil	5th	<i>Bestiary 1</i>
Gryph	Evil	5th	<i>Bestiary 2</i>
Hippocampus	Neutral	5th	<i>Bestiary 2</i>
Kappa	Chaotic Neutral	7th	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Krenshar	Neutral	5th	<i>Bestiary 2</i>
Nixie	Neutral	5th	<i>Bestiary 3</i>
Phantom Armor, Guardian	Evil	7th	<i>Bestiary 4</i>
Shocker Lizard	Neutral	7th	<i>Bestiary 1</i>
Skeleton	Evil	3rd	<i>Bestiary 1</i>
Warg	Evil	7th	<i>Bestiary 1</i>
White Dragon, Wyrmling	Chaotic Evil	7th	<i>Bestiary 1</i>
Wolf	Neutral	5th	<i>Bestiary 1</i>
Zombie	Evil	3rd	<i>Bestiary 1</i>

At 1st level a totemic mage gains:

- **Sympathetic Echolocation (Bat) (Ex):** The wizard gains darkvision 60 ft. If the wizard already has darkvision, the darkvision improves by 60 ft.
- **Feline Reflexes (Cat):** The wizard gains Improved Initiative as a bonus feat.
- **Hawk's Eye (Hawk) (Ex):** The wizard halves any range penalty on Perception checks due to distance.
- **Chameleon Camouflage (Lizard) (Su):** The wizard gains a +4 circumstance bonus on any Stealth checks made to blend into surroundings.
- **Monkey Mischief (Monkey):** The wizard gains Catch Off-Guard as a bonus feat.
- **Track (Owl):** The wizard adds half its level (minimum 1) to Survival skill checks made to follow tracks.
- **Miserly (Rat):** The wizard gains Eschew Materials as a bonus feat.
- **Gift for Tongues (Raven):** The wizard gains 4 bonus languages.
- **Snake Charmer (Viper) (Ex):** The wizard cannot accidentally poison themselves when applying poison to a weapon and gains a 1/4th wizard level bonus on saves against poisons.
- **Sticky Tongue (Toad):** The wizard gains a prehensile, sticky, tongue. The wizard cannot wield weapons with it but can reach objects up to 10 feet away and grab them by having the tongue stick to it. A tongue can only ever exert 1/2 the wizard's Strength score against an object. It is not dexterous enough for tasks like reloading a weapon or retrieving objects but can deliver touch spells at a range of 10 feet.
- **Compressible Body (Weasel) (Ex):** The wizard can move through an area as small as one-quarter its space without squeezing or one-eighth its space when squeezing (as if it had the compression universal monster rule). In addition the wizard gains a +4 bonus on Escape Artist checks made to escape a grapple.

At 5th level a totemic mage gains:

- **Echolocation (Bat) (Ex):** The wizard gains blindsense 20 ft.
- **Cat's Evasion (Cat) (Ex):** The wizard gains the evasion class feature of the monk.
- **Wings of the Raptor (Hawk) (Sp):** The wizard gains the benefit of a *featherfall* spell as a constant spell-like ability. This can be suppressed or reactivated as a swift action.
- **Finger Pads (Lizard) (Sp):** The wizard gains the benefit of a *spider climb* spell as a constant spell-like ability. This can be suppressed or reactivated as a swift action.
- **Arboreal Wizard (Monkey) (Ex):** The wizard gains a climb speed equal to 1/2 their base land speed. In addition, a monkey-totem wizard can cast spells with somatic components while hanging or climbing, even if both their hands are full. This does not eliminate the need for a somatic component, but simply shifts it to another kind of movement while climbing.
- **Stealth Mage (Owl) (Ex):** The wizard can move at full speed while using the Stealth skill. In addition an owl-totem wizard gains a +8 bonus on Stealth checks to remain unnoticed after casting spells.
- **Rat King (Rat) (Su):** The wizard gains the wild empathy class feature of the druid, though this functions on vermin rather than animals.
- **Thing (Raven) (Sp):** The wizard gains constant *comprehend language* as a spell-like ability. This can be suppressed or reactivated as a swift action.
- **Potent Venom (Viper):** The DC of the Fortitude save of their familiar's poison is now equal to 10 + 1/2 wizard's level + Intelligence modifier.
- **Toad Hop (Toad) (Sp):** The wizard gains the benefit of a *jump* spell as a constant spell-like ability. This can be suppressed or reactivated as a swift action.
- **Attach (Weasel) (Ex):** The weasel-totem wizard gains Improved Grapple as a bonus feat and treats their BAB as being equal to their level when making or escaping grapple checks.

At 10th level a totemic mage gains:

- **Drain Blood (Bat):** Any time a bat-totem wizard successfully affects a creature with a spell from the necromancy school, the wizard recovers the level of the spell in hit points. A given spell can only ever heal the wizard once so they do not recover additional hit points if multiple creatures are affected or if it has a persistent effect.

- **Improved Cat's Evasion (Cat) (Ex):** The wizard gains the improved evasion class feature of the monk. In addition, whenever a cat-totem wizard falls from a great height the wizard can choose to land on its feet. This does not lessen the damage but does grant a +4 bonus on Acrobatics checks made to fall safely.
- **Fly (Hawk) (Sp):** The wizard gains the benefit of a *fly* spell as a constant spell-like ability. This can be suppressed or reactivated as a swift action.
- **Stilio Rex (Lizard) (Sp):** The wizard can use *dominate monster* as a standard action at will, but only on reptiles whose HD is equal to or less than their wizard level. Any reptile that successfully saves against this spell-like ability cannot be subject to it again for 24 hours.
- **Arms of the Gorilla (Monkey) (Ex):** A monkey-totem wizard counts as one size category larger for the purpose of determining what kind of items it can wield. In addition, it treats its Strength as being 8 points higher for the purposes of determining carrying capacity.
- **Night Hunter (Owl) (Sp):** For a number of round per day equal to 1/2 wizard's level + Intelligence modifier the wizard can turn invisible, as per *greater invisibility*. These rounds need not be consecutive and are recovered after 8 hours of rest. This ability only functions at night or in areas of darkness and immediately ends if the wizard enters an area of bright light.
- **Scurry (Rat) (Ex):** A rat-totem wizard knows how to flee expertly. Its movement does not trigger Step-Up (or any feat dependent on it) and the first 5 feet of movement made on its turn never provokes an attack of opportunity.
- **Chorus of Ravens (Raven):** When a raven-totem wizard casts a spell modified by the Silent Spell metamagic feat the level adjustment is +0 so long as the wizard's familiar, regardless of its location, caws loudly as the spell is cast.
- **Viperous Spell (Viper) (Su):** When a viper-totem wizard casts a spell that has a Fortitude save, the wizard can also use a dose of viper poison from the totem as an extra regent in their spell. If this is done and their target fails its save, the target is additionally afflicted with their viper's poison. While using this, the spell cannot be modified by any metamagic feats.
- **Massive Tongue (Toad):** The wizard's tongue now has a range of 20 ft.
- **Snake Hunter (Weasel):** The weasel-totem wizard becomes immune to fear effects.

A totemic mage doesn't gain Scribe Scroll at 1st level or the wizard's bonus feats at 5th and 10th levels.

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

D&D 5e: Serpentkin Roguish Archetype

By Brandes Stoddard

Some rogues swear themselves to strange and squamous gods or dark powers. Others are dedicated to the totemic spirit of the Snake or came into contact with a single drop of blood from the World Serpent. With training, they can develop venom and gain great control over it, as well as other powers common to mythic serpents.

Serpent's Maw

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn to speak, read, and write Draconic. You can use this language to speak to and understand snakes of all kinds.

Your canines becomes fangs, and you can express venom through them. While you have a weapon or projectile that deals piercing or slashing damage in hand, you can use a bonus action to coat it with venom. The next time you hit a creature with that weapon or projectile, it rolls a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it is poisoned until the end of your next turn. You can use this feature once, and regain use of it when you finish a short or long rest.

Serpent's Skin

Also at 3rd level, you gain fine scales over your arms, legs, and torso. You can choose whether these scales also cover your face, neck, hands, and feet. While you are not wearing armor, your AC equals 10 + half your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier.

Further, you gain resistance to poison and advantage on saving throws against the poisoned condition.

Shed Skin

Beginning at 9th level, you can shed damaged scales and rapidly heal your wounds. As a bonus action, you can expend a hit die and regain a number of hit points equal to the result plus your Constitution modifier or Charisma modifier (your choice). You can use this feature once, and regain expended uses when you finish a short or long rest.

Further, you regain additional Hit Dice equal to your Constitution modifier or Charisma modifier (your choice) when you finish a long rest.

Asklepian

Starting at 13th level, small doses of your venom can balance out the humors of your patients and quicken their healing. As an action, you can touch yourself or another creature and choose one of the following:

- The creature can make a new saving throw against one disease that is affecting it.
- The creature ends one blinded, paralyzed, or poisoned condition that is affecting it.
- The next time it regains hit points before the end of your next turn, it regains additional hit points equal to half your rogue level.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to either your Constitution modifier or Charisma modifier (your choice), and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. Constructs and undead can't be affected by this feature.

World Serpent's Spawn

Beginning at 17th level, your venom becomes much deadlier. You can use your Serpent's Maw feature 3 times, and regain all expended uses after 1 minute.

When you use your Serpent's Maw feature, you deal an additional 4d6 poison damage.

Further, you can also modify your poison to be acidic or neurotoxic, as a bonus action. While your Serpent's Maw feature is an acidic toxin, your weapon instead deals 4d6 acid damage. While your Serpent's Maw feature is neurotoxic, your weapon instead deals 2d6 psychic damage, and the creature rolls a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it is paralyzed until the end of your next turn.

Design Notes

Not to put too fine a point on it, but I've been struggling with the core mechanic of this subclass for a couple of months now. At first I wanted to use a pool of venom points (per long rest) that they'd expend for poison damage and healing effects. Earlier today I tried something more like Combat Superiority dice (so per short rest). I liked how that looked even less. Don't get me wrong, I love the crap out of ki points and Battle Masters; it was just too obvious to me that I was being lazy.

It may be weird that they don't improve their damage output until 17th level, but the poisoned condition is a serious (if short-term) debuff that should help the party a good bit. If I were to change anything about Serpent's Maw, I'd increase its frequency of use, because some number of misses on a per-short-rest feature means that it's fairly limited.



Shed Skin is a pretty direct lift from King's Gate, but also possibly a nice survivability boost for rogues.

[Asklepian](#) is all about the mythic meaning of serpents, of course. I hope it's fun for rogues to offer a "healing received" buff, which they can use on themselves to trigger with their Shed Skin feature or a healing potion.

World Serpent's Spawn touches on a concept I put into one of my early-early 5e feat designs, where you can turn a poison into a caustic agent or a neurotoxin to get around poison/poisoned immunity. I *did* also want Serpentkin to deal additional damage, so it shows up here.

My big design question is how much extra damage it's okay for rogues to derive from their subclass

in ways that they can easily, reliably trigger (as compared to the unreliability of Assassin damage boosts). I can imagine retuning World Serpent's Spawn (and maybe Serpent's Maw) extensively. If you're especially wise in the ways of roguish archetype design, talk about it in the comments.

I have a lot of features use either Constitution or Charisma, because I couldn't justify using Dex. I think either physical resilience and control or mystical connection suit the Serpentkin theme pretty well, but at the same time I get that it's a little weird. Allowing either of the two options is my half-nod to avoiding multiple attribute dependency. After all, rogues probably want good Con or Cha anyway.

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Familiars for Mystics and Technomancers

By Mike Welham

I've always been intrigued with the idea of an animal or other companion acting as an extension to its master and becoming uplifted as a result. At the very least, they were better behaved and knew enough not to leave messes in the library where I worked when I was whole.

—Melnor, Sage (First Class, head in a jar)
Questhaven Station

The use of familiars is not solely limited to fantasy fiction and, by extension, gaming. One only has to look at a certain oversized crime boss's Muppet familiar, even if the familiar served no traditional function other than to hideously laugh to punctuate its master's words.

The possession of a familiar isn't enough to warrant an entire archetype, but it grants a spellcasting character enough options to require modifications to the spellcasting classes.

Mystic: A mystic with a familiar gains connection powers at a slower rate. Thus, the connection power gained at 1st level is instead gained at 3rd level, and each other subsequent connection power is gained 2 levels later. The mystic gains the 18th-level connection power upon reaching 20th level.

Technomancer: A technomancer's familiar replaces and acts as the technomancer's spell cache. The technomancer must wait until 2nd level before being able to activate the familiar to cast an additional spell, as per the spell cache class ability.

Rules for Familiars

Familiars have similar rules to their counterparts in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, but they are a little more durable. Rather than individual stat blocks for familiars, they all start with similar statistics: **Size** Tiny, **Speed** 30 feet, (with certain animals and hybrid familiars gaining one or more of: climb 20 feet, fly 30 feet [average], or swim 30 feet); **AC** EAC 10, KAC 12 (or EAC 11, KAC 11); **Good Save**

Fortitude or **Reflex**; **Poor Saves** Will, and **Reflex** or **Fortitude** (whichever is not the familiar's good save); **Ability Scores** Str 10 or 14, Dex 10 (if Str 14) or 14 (if Str 10), Con 10 or — (for hybrid familiars), Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6. Familiars that grant bonus to Hit Points, Fortitude saves, or Strength-based skills typically have higher KAC, good Fortitude saves, and higher Strength scores. Familiars also possess 1 master skill and 2 good skills. Their master skill is the skill for which they grant a bonus to their masters, or, if they don't provide a bonus to a skill, one of the following: Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Intimidation, Perception, Sleight of Hand, or Stealth. Their good skills also come from this list.

When a familiar is lost or dies, or its master dismisses it, the master can replace the familiar after 1 week through a specialized ritual that takes 8 hours to complete.

As familiars grow in power, they improve their statistics and gain special abilities. A familiar has half its master's Hit Points, but it has no Stamina Points, and uses its master's base attack bonus (modified by its appropriate ability score). Additionally, a familiar's master skill has a bonus equal to its master's class level plus the appropriate ability modifier +5, and its good skills have a bonus equal to its master's class level plus the appropriate ability modifier. The rest of its abilities and changes to its statistics are noted in the table below.

KAC/EAC Bonus: Add this value to the familiar's starting KAC and EAC.

Empathic Link: The master has an empathic link with the familiar out to a range of 1 mile. The master can communicate empathically with the familiar, but cannot see through its eyes. The familiar can only share general emotions (anger, fear, sadness, etc.) but not specific thoughts.

Share Spells: The master may cast a spell with a range of "personal" on the familiar (as a touch spell) instead of on the master.

Master Class Level	KAC/EAC Bonus	Good Save	Poor Save	Int	Ability Adjustment	Special
1st	+0	6	+2	+0	—	Empathic link, improved evasion, share spells, Skill Focus (Perception)
3rd	+2	7	+3	+1	—	Deliver touch spells
5th	+3	8	+4	+1	+1	Mindlink, share language
7th	+4	9	+5	+2	—	Speak with animals of its kind
9th	+6	10	+5	+2	+1	—
11th	+7	11	+6	+3	—	Spell resistance
13th	+8	12	+7	+3	+1	Scry on familiar
15th	+10	13	+8	+4	—	—
17th	+11	14	+8	+4	+1	Greater share spells
19th	+12	15	+9	+5	—	—

Improved Evasion: When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw and half damage even if fails on the saving throw.

Deliver Touch Spells: The familiar can deliver touch spells for its master. It must be in contact with its master at the moment its master casts the spell, and the master must designate the familiar as the deliverer of the spell. The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as its master would. If the master casts another spell before the familiar delivers the touch spell, the touch spell dissipates.

Mindlink: The familiar's master can use *mind link* as a spell-like ability targeting the familiar at will.

Share Language: At will, the familiar's master can use *share language* as a spell-like ability targeting the familiar.

Speak with Animals of Its Kind: The familiar gains the ability to speak with animals or constructs of approximately the same kind as itself. Such communication is limited by the Intelligence of the conversing creatures and does not cause the creature to become positively predisposed to the familiar.

Spell Resistance: The familiar gains spell resistance equal to the master's class level +5. To affect the familiar with a spell, another spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the familiar's spell resistance. The familiar's master automatically bypasses its spell resistance.

Scry on Familiar: Once per day, the familiar's master may observe it at any distance. The master can see and hear the familiar and its nearby surroundings (approximately 10 feet in all directions of the familiar). The master can use divination spells (such as *detect affliction* or *detect thoughts*) through this scrying as if the familiar were the origin of the divination spell.

Greater Share Spells: The familiar's master may cast a spell with a single target or a range of "personal" and target the familiar simultaneously with the master. The familiar must be in contact with its master when the master casts the spell. Spells with a duration have their duration halved for both the master and the familiar, and spells with an instantaneous duration (such as *mystic cure*) have 50% effectiveness for both the master and the familiar (for example, in the case of *mystic cure*, the

Familiar	Special Ability
Archaeopteryx, Fox, or Weasel	Master gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves
Bat or Flying Squirrel	Master gains a +4 bonus on Acrobatics checks to fly
Cat or Whisper Droid (hybrid)	Master gains a +3 bonus on Stealth checks
Centipede or Raccoon	Master gains a +3 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks
Chicken or Toad	Master gains +3 Hit Points
Crab	Master gains a +2 bonus when performing grapple combat maneuvers
Dodo or Scorpion	Master gains a +2 bonus on initiative checks
Flying Fox or Rat	Master gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves
Goat or Tuatara	Master gains a +3 bonus on Survival checks
Hawk	Master gains a +4 bonus on sight-based and opposed Perception checks in normal or bright light
Hedgehog	Master gains a +2 bonus on Will saves
Lizard, Sloth, or Spider	Master gains a +4 bonus on Athletics checks to climb
Monkey or Red Panda	Master gains a +3 bonus on Acrobatics checks
Octopus, Otter, Penguin, Platypus, or Seal	Master gains a +4 bonus on Athletics checks to swim
Owl	Master gains a +4 bonus on sight-based and opposed Perception checks in dim light and darkness
Pig or Thrush	Master gains a +3 bonus on Diplomacy checks
Raven	Master gains a +2 bonus on Perception checks and the raven can speak one language of its master's choice
Spike Ball (hybrid)	Master gains a +3 bonus on Intimidation checks
Spy Eye (hybrid)	Master gains a +3 bonus on sight-based and opposed Perception checks
Trilobite or Turtle	Master gains a +1 bonus to KAC
Viper	Master gains a +3 bonus on Bluff checks

spell restores half the number of Hit Points and applies that to both creatures).

Familiars grant special abilities to their masters as noted on the table below and must be within 1 mile of their masters to grant these abilities. The table includes most of the options available in the *Starfinder Roleplaying Game*, which either mystics or technomancers can take as familiars. The table also includes hybrid familiars, which

only technomancers can take. For “alien” animals, follow the general guidelines presented below, granting a +1 bonus to KAC (or EAC, as appropriate to the familiar), a +2 bonus on a saving throw or combat maneuver, a +3 bonus on all aspects of a skill check, or a +4 bonus on a specific or limited application of a skill (for example, the hawk only provides its bonus to Perception in conditions of good visibility).



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Rite Product Highlights:

Forge of Destiny

(from *Demiplanes Valhalla*)

by Andrew Mullen, Jennifer Povey, and Stephen Rowe; Illustration by Markus Designs

Fate is a combination of opportunity and choice, with mortals possessing the freedom to decide their future. Nothing is certain, and even the gods can only prophecy in a grand scope or for only immediate events. However, a mortal can choose to sacrifice free will in exchange for a destiny of their choosing. This is a dangerous game to play, and usually only the desperate or foolish lock their lives to a path.

The Forge of Destiny was perhaps constructed by some trickster god, a well-intention (but shortsighted) archmagus, or functions as a natural way for fate to simplify the world. Regardless, it exists to remove elements of choice from those with the greatest power to enact sweeping change. It is a deceptively simple bargain: create whatever you require to accomplish a destiny of your choosing, but understand the destiny can never be abandoned. For individuals seeking revenge over seemingly invulnerable foes, or wishing to accumulate power at all costs, this seems a reasonable enough bargain. Unfortunately, most come to regret the choice long before the tragedy plays out.

The Forge alters to suit the needs and tastes of whoever it seeks to tempt. Sometimes it is a simple roadside smithy, but it can as easily be a sprawling volcanic temple fueled by dragon's fire and bound efreeti. It is always a hot place, where sweat and toil are more vital than magical power. Any who might accept the demiplane's offer can instinctually sense its potential, and know it comes at a cost.

The demiplane fuels item creation with the power of destiny. Within the Forge, a person without a hint of magic and only minor skill could craft a blade of legendary might, and individuals with true power can even create artifacts.

Unfortunately, calling on raw fate and giving it shape is often ill-advised. While items birthed in the Forge are not necessarily intelligent, they do possess a sort of will. What leads many crafters to woe is the incorrect assumption completing a discrete quest or task is the same as destiny.

Secrets

The Forge of Destiny has the following secrets.

Cycles: The fate woven into an item does not simply disappear with the completion of some singular

task. Instead, strange coincidences seem to always cause the task to continue forever. For example, if a weapon is forged to kill for revenge, when the specific individual dies, it is discovered they were merely the tool of a sprawling, entrenched secret society.

Set Fate: If the Forge of Destiny is used to repair an item, including a completely destroyed item or artifact, the crafter does not get to dictate the item's fate. Instead, the crafter becomes locked into whatever destiny most suited the original item, the item's history, or the original crafter.

Unending: The destinies crafted within the Forge do not ever cease while the item survives. Even if the crafter should perish, the fate they made simply waits to infect the next poor soul claiming the item.

Planar Traits

The Forge of Destiny has the following trait.

Fate Crafting: The Forge of Destiny does not merely reshape itself to meet an inhabitant's needs. The tools it provides sing with the knowledge of a thousand crafts — enhancing and guiding a user's skills.

While within the demiplane, creatures possessing 5 or more ranks in the Craft or Spellcraft skill can craft magical items as if they possessed the Master Craftsman, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, and Craft Wondrous Item feats.

If an individual possesses any item crafting feat, they can use the forge to function as if they automatically fulfilled all spell requirements for any item they craft of that type. In addition, they can ignore any caster level minimums for an item they desire to craft. The item's caster level is its normal minimum, regardless of the crafter's caster level.

Any item created within the Forge of Destiny is crafted at half the normal cost in materials and in half the normal time for construction. Only permanent items can be crafted in the Forge. Single-use items or items with limited charges cannot be created.

Minor artifacts can be created or repaired using the Forge, but the crafter must have a relevant item creation feat, and be caster level 20th or mythic tier 5 or higher. Creating a minor artifact in this manner costs 100,000

gp and requires 200 days. Repairing a minor artifact costs 50,000 gp and 100 days. Crafting or repairing a minor artifact requires a DC 30 Spellcraft check.

The crafter of an item gains the *forged destiny* curse (see Additional Rules below). If the crafter perishes, the next creature to touch the item then gains the curse unless the crafter is resurrected (which causes the curse to immediately return to the creator).

Connections

The Forge of Destiny can be reached by anyone venturing deep below the surface of Valhalla. These caverns feature dangers of their own, and anyone actively seeking the Forge in this manner is always faced with a series of three trials. These are tests of resolve, bravery, and honor. Creatures which have broken an important oath must atone for the oathbreaking before they can undergo these tests. If these tests are passed, it forces the Forge to cease manifesting (see below), forcibly causing anyone currently crafting within it to pause any progress they make toward an item's construction. They must wait for the traveler of the Forge's true path to finish their work or else journey to Valhalla themselves to take the trials and confront them.

The Forge also possesses a permanent connection to the heart of the Plane of Fire. The path from the demiplane is always through the hottest portion of the Forge, and is deadly to any creature lacking immunity to fire.

Conjunction

In extreme circumstances, a creature could be allowed to take the three tests without first journeying to Valhalla. As with one who performs the journey before the tests, this allows the creature to wrest control over the demiplane for their purposes, preventing anyone else from using it in the meantime. However, this requires either some vital conflux of destiny attracting the demiplane itself, or a god with a related portfolio intervening.

Manifestation

Unlike most demiplanes, manifestation is not a rarity for the Forge of Destiny, which is almost always manifested somewhere on the Material Plane. It appears in a location where it is found by an individual who is likely to use it. It disappears to the next viable location as soon as they are finished, abandon the crafting, or decide not to accept the demiplane's deal. If possible, the demiplane merely overlays some feature of a city or terrain which could conceivably be used as a forge, but if necessary it can completely rewrite reality within a small area to better tempt a crafter. The demiplane never manifests for an oathbreaker, until they are able to atone for their actions by some means. The demiplane treats an individual who abandons their crafting as an oathbreaker, forcing them to seek it out and pass the trials in order to atone.



The demiplane only ceases to continually manifest when an individual travels to it by the permanent Valhalla connection or manages to create a conjunction.

Locations

Fire: The Forge of Destiny always has a fire, whether it is the mouth of a chained great wyrm or a simple smithy with bellows. This fire is impossibly hot, fueled by the heart of an elemental plane. The space close enough to the fire to make use of the Forge's magic requires continual exposure to extreme heat (air temperatures over 140° F). Breathing the air deals 1d6 points of fire damage per minute (no save), and a Fortitude save every 5 minutes (DC 15 + 1 per previous check) or the creature takes 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Creatures wearing heavy clothing or armor take a -4 penalty on their saves. The *endure elements* spell or any fire resistance prevents this damage.

Omens: While the details of the demiplane vary based on who is making use of it, there are always omens hinting at the future hidden within the demiplane's corners. As the crafting of the item progresses, these signs become increasingly obvious. These clues grant a crafter insight into the inevitable fate they are accepting, and offer a final chance to retain their free will. They crafter can cease at any time, but lose any raw materials used up to that point.

Water: The Forge always features a source of water, usually a well, stream, or pool. This water is perfectly clear, clean, and cool. Regardless of appearance, it can be used to cast the *scrying* or *greater scrying* spell in place of the material components and focus. If used for this purpose, the caster can ask a single question once per day regarding the immediate future of a creature viewed (as the *divination* spell with a 100% chance of accuracy).

Important NPCs

Walan: The only permanent inhabitant of the demiplane is Walan, a variant theletos aeon (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary* 2) with the monk creature simple template (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Monster Codex* for details) and the following 1/day spell-like abilities: *discern location*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), and *plane shift* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only). Embracing an axiomatic philosophy, Walan is considered a rogue aeon. Having deviated from the apathetic whims of the multiverse, the theletos

has come to believe the notion of maintaining a balance is grossly flawed. The error rests in the core assumption things are balanced to begin with. Entropy is transcendent, and the ultimate fate of all. The destiny of the multiverse must be constrained and controlled for this to change. So, it studies the Forge of Destiny, and how it interacts with mortal fates. It hopes to perhaps, someday, apply the Forge's power to the Monad itself.

Walan can always be found in a state of apparent meditation by whatever form the demiplane's water source takes. The enigmatic being explains without deception the demiplane's purpose and the associated cost, though it cannot predict any specific outcomes. Walan rarely volunteers additional information, only answering questions when specifically asked. It also actively encourages creatures to use the Forge, albeit only in a dispassionate and logical manner. It is also willing to assist visitors with whatever they require in crafting an item while within the demiplane as an excuse to study them.

As a rogue, Walan is considered a high-priority disturbance in the balance of the multiverse by other aeons. It avoids destruction by tying itself to the demiplane's fate, and only rarely leaving. In return for this protection, Walan sometimes finds the Forge compelling it to seek out and punish those who somehow outwit or defy the demiplane's curse. To the aeon, this seems an equitable arrangement.

Plot Hooks

The following plot hooks can help incorporate the Forge of Destiny into a campaign.

When the PCs face some daunting or even impossible task, the Forge appears to offer them a potential solution. Does one accept the cost or deny the possibility in favor of an uncertain future? Unfortunately, the nature of the Forge makes it far more difficult to simply leave it and return.

One of the antagonists is in possession of an item they created within the Forge, and the curse serves as a tragic driving force in their destructive life. Killing the foe does not end the curse, which might pass to a PC who takes up the item in victory.

An NPC ally of the PCs reached the Forge in their youth, and used the demiplane's power to create a magical item which helped them in some pivotal way. However, they have since experienced a change of heart, or simple weariness after a lifetime of obeying the strictures of destiny. They are attempting to thwart the curse, but it is both difficult, and attracts the ire of the theletos Walan.

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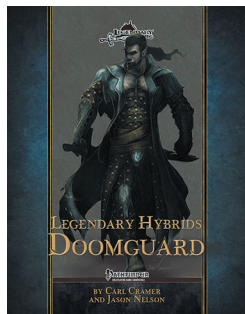
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Reviews



Legendary Hybrids: Doomguard

Publisher: Legendary
Reviewer: Endzeitgeist
Stars: 5 of 5

This hybrid class clocks in at 37 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page inside of front cover, 2 pages of editorial, 1 page ToC, 2 pages of introduction,

1.5 pages of SRD, 1 page of back cover, leaving us with 27.5 pages of content, so let's take a look!

This hybrid class was created from cavalier and ranger, and gets d10 HD, 4 + Int skills per level, proficiency with simple and martial weapons, light and medium armor and shields, excluding tower shields. The doomguard gets full BAB-progression and good Fort-saves. The class gets solid favored class options for the core races.

The doomguard's challenge-equivalent, usable 1/day at first level (plus an additional time per day for every 3 levels thereafter) is activated as a swift action, nets a scaling bonus to atk and damage as well as saves prompted by the target, and also nets immunity to fear prompted by that foe if that foe is a fated enemy. The bonuses scale every 4 levels. Here's the unique thing: This is called defiance, and as such, the doomguard gains temporary hit points versus said foes, and defiance may delay the onset of a negative condition.

As for fated enemy – this is obviously the equivalent of favored enemy, though it does come with meaningful variations – you can, for example, choose character classes! Witch or sorcerer hunter? There you go. I adore this choice. It's so simple, yet incredibly flavorful. Also unique: This ties in with the doom – falling to the fated enemy makes returning the doomguard to life hard – this enemy, after all, was fated to defeat the doomguard! I love how this ties in flavorful concepts and leitmotif of the class.

Beyond that, the class begins play at 1st level with a so-called doom. This doom represents the “doom” component and behaves somewhat akin to an oracle's curse, sporting btw. advice for multiclassing – kudos! Unless I have miscounted, we get a staggering 45 (!!!) such dooms, and they are somewhat akin to curses in that they have a linear progression. Doods provide benefits at 1st level, 5th, 10th and 15th level. The dooms are, in a way, one aspect that really carries the class.

Is your body slowly rotting away? Do you destroy objects held? Are you haunted by disembodied voices? Are you mutating? Are you slowly becoming undead? Do sacrilegious voices constantly try to tempt you to a new credo? Do you bear stigmata? Perhaps, you are truly star-crossed, and natural rolls of 11 under stress are treated as 1s. Perhaps, you suffer from somnambulism...or perhaps the solipsism that has affected you crippled you, yes...but it also grants you significant powers! The interesting thing here is that the dooms range in their power-levels – they oscillate rather strongly, in fact...but at the same time, so do their benefits. When struck by a potent doom, you'll also have considerable advantage bred from this. Some are in line with curses, while others are truly unique – and here, we can see LG's crunch-design experience. I found no single doom that I'd consider to be off regarding this ratio. You can choose a doom that doesn't severely impact the core playing experience...or you can go for a doom that radically changes how you need to play, but which also grants you unique benefits. Doods take up a significant amount of the page-count, and the pages are, I'm happy to report, well-spent indeed. Curse-spread, internal parasites...there is one minor hiccup, a reference in the introduction to a Cursed feat that has been cut, but this does not compromise the integrity of the section in any way.

2nd level nets a ranger combat style as well as +2 to saves versus curses, hexes, compulsions or bad luck/reroll enforcing abilities. 3rd level eliminates the penalties for charges and 4th level provides Heroic Defiance, but only for use with fated enemy-caused effects, but also for more uses and condition delays. 5th level nets +2 to Con-checks to avoid becoming fatigued/exhausted and quicker tracking. Some conditions may be offset by expending defiance (yay for more player-agenda!). At 7th level, we get a cohort, a familiar or an animal companion at -3 levels...and yes, this gets interactions right. At 8th level, attacking a foe other than the doomguard while threatened elicits an AoO – making the class work as a nice blocker. 9th level allows the doomguard to detect fated enemies, and may choose to further limit this detection ability, ensuring it's actually useful. At 11th level, having line of sight to fated foes increases movement rate and the doomguard can also immediate action move 10 feet to pursue fated enemies trying to flee. 12th level allows the doomguard to forego critical bonus damage in other to impose the negative aspects of the doom on foes. Cool: Can't be cheated.

17th level provides the means to bypass DR/hardness and cause full damage versus incorporeal

foes. The capstone makes the doomguard a super-deadly foe for fated enemies, including the chance to permanently destroy even creatures that can potentially rejuvenate.

The pdf also includes 4 different archetypes, the first of which would be the Challenger, who loses medium and shield proficiency, and uses Charisma instead of Wisdom as governing attribute for doomguard abilities. Instead of the companion, the class gets a scaling AC and CMD bonus while wearing light or no armor. Instead of combat style, the archetype gets a few bardic performances, and the 8th level ability is replaced with uncanny dodge. Okay engine tweaks. The second archetype is the Doomwarden, who does get heavy armor and tower shield proficiency. Instead of combat style, the doomwarden gets a massive array of armor-style feats sans prerequisites. 5th level provides improved maneuverability in armor (less armor check penalty, better maximum Dexterity) as well as better movement. This does replace defiance. The class otherwise gets a modified 5th level ability to prevent save bonuses or pinpoint creatures etc. 12th level allows for reflexive use of defiance, including negating incoming damage. The archetype also comes with a potent 1/day last stand capstone that makes him a fearsome tank.

The third archetype would be the fey foundling, who is prohibited from wearing metal armor. They do get woodland stride and resist nature's lure, but does gain a unique companion (including pipefoxes, faerie dragons, etc.). That being said, the archetype learns to *entice fey* I, can at higher levels traverse the secret crossroads and backroads of the fey (amazing) and convert damage to nonlethal damage, adding curses on hits...or even causing targets to suffer from an iron allergy! Heck yeah! Oh, and becoming ageless. Kudos!

Finally, there'd be the raven banner, who becomes fortified versus negative energy, death effects and energy levels. Instead of the 3rd level charge-enhancer, a simultaneous attack versus targets criting the raven banner can make for amazing mutual takedowns. 5th level nets banner (14th greater) and the banner retains its powers at higher levels for a couple of rounds when the raven banner's slain. Badass: When slain by a non-fated enemy, the character can expend defiance to *auto-breath of life!* F*** YES! Good example for a fun engine tweak!

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good on a formal and rules-language level. Layout adheres to

legendary Games' two-column full-color standard and there is a lot of content per page. We get a couple of gorgeous full-color artworks, including full-page pieces. Neat! The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

As you all know, I'm pretty much in favor of constant player-agenda and choice – and in a way, the doomguard doesn't deliver that. It's not a class sporting a lot of choices, and building one is super-simple. That being said, it's one of the single best examples ever for a simple, easy to grasp, yet superbly creative class. The doom-angle and vastly diverging playstyles and playing experiences born from them, rocks. From the dooms to the archetypes, the class is incredibly METAL. The concept of the doomed, potent hunter suffuses the whole class, offering exciting tweaks, and manages to be totally distinct from the parent classes.

In short, this is not only a hybrid that stands out, and does so in a category of design that I usually loathe (linear classes), it does so with panache aplomb. Carl Cramér and Jason Nelson deliver a super cool hybrid here, one that absolutely deserves my highest accolades – 5 stars + seal of approval. Super recommended, one of the best hybrid classes out there! If you wanted to play a truly metal warrior-style character, look no further!

You can get this amazing, incredibly metal hybrid class [here on OBS!](#)

Endzeitgeist out.



The (Pathfinder) Roleplaying Game Dictionary

Publisher: Straight Path Games

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 of 5

This massive book clocks in at 53 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial/

ToC, 1 page SRD, 1 page back cover leaving us with 49 pages of content, so let's take a look!

"So, the other day while the GM had almost TPK'd us, he told me off as I was above character, describing how I'd be able to RAW Take 20, and then he'd suddenly argue my character build's baseline, without which I could have never gotten to this level of being able to tank DPR, right? Which I btw. only did to make the cleric-guy less of a heal-bot, and then, suddenly, this whole thing became the tired old RAI-discussion..."

If you're reading this review, then chances are you understood the entirety of the above, which

you may very well overhear at a table. Once we take a step back, though, we'll realize that, for non-gamers, this sounds like gobbledygook.

Every hobby, every science, every component of our lives does have its own terminology, its technical terms. Roleplaying games, as a medium, have more than most, as the hobby is wholly contingent on language and the associations you can conjure forth. As such, we have developed quite a set of terms, and while some, like THAC0 have gone on towards more obscure old-school games, the more rules-heavy recent games have added a copious amount of terms, while also borrowing heavily from video games.

This, surprisingly, can present a quite distinct entry barrier for new gamers. Enter this book.

What we have here, is basically a dictionary of game- and gamer-lingo, focused on Pathfinder.

We begin with the very basics that include shorthands like RPG and describe roleplaying games; Game Master and player, level-ranges, mechanics, dice and their notation – we move, in a sensible manner, from the large categories and frame to the smaller components: The book categories the sections from Rules and Game Mechanics to terms denoting adventures etc., gaming materials, etc. SRD, 3PP, difficult terrain, light, planar basics, conditions – and we even get explanations of pure slang in the end – from GMPCs to TPKs, from rollplayer to roleplayer...

Oh, and we even get a detailed Index!

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no serious hiccups or omissions. Layout adheres to a nice two-column full-color standard and the pdf features nice stock art. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience and comes with an EPUB-version.

Michael McCarthy's Roleplaying Game Dictionary for Pathfinder is amazing. It is a godsend for new players and really handy as a starting point for people wanting to understand gamer-lingo. This book, in short, is a really great supplement that achieves its goal remarkably well. Organization is excellent...and it's PWYW (pay what you want)! This must have been a ton of work, and frankly, I wholeheartedly suggest dropping the author a tip for this book – any supplement that helps new folks get into our hobby should be applauded. 5 stars + seal of approval, highly recommended for new players!

STRAIGHT
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How Do I...Rest? (SFRPG)

Publisher: Straight Path Games

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 of 5

This installment of the PWYW-series of rules-explanations clocks in for Starfinder and clocks in at

7 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial/ToC, 1 page SRD, 1 page back cover, leaving us with 3 pages of content. The pdf comes with a second version optimized for e-readers, which clocks in at 12 pages and is presented in a landscape layout. Content-wise, the two versions are identical.

So, resting in SFRPG is more complex than it was previously, so I found myself somewhat surprised that the rules pertaining rests never were truly collated in one place in the SFRPG-core rules. This pdf remedies that oversight.

First of all: A character does not necessarily have to be asleep to rest, but the precise restrictions are presented. 10-minute rests and how they work, as well as the means to mitigate the exhausted condition to fatigued via a 1-hour rest, are noted.

The pdf then concisely lists the differences between a full night's rest and a full day's rest. How and what constitutes interruptions, the interaction with *rings of sustenance*...and the limit of "full night's rest" in a universe where a night may be rather brief or agonizingly long, are presented and acknowledged – in short, only one 8-hour rest per 24-hour period. Medicine's long-term treatment is also noted in this context.

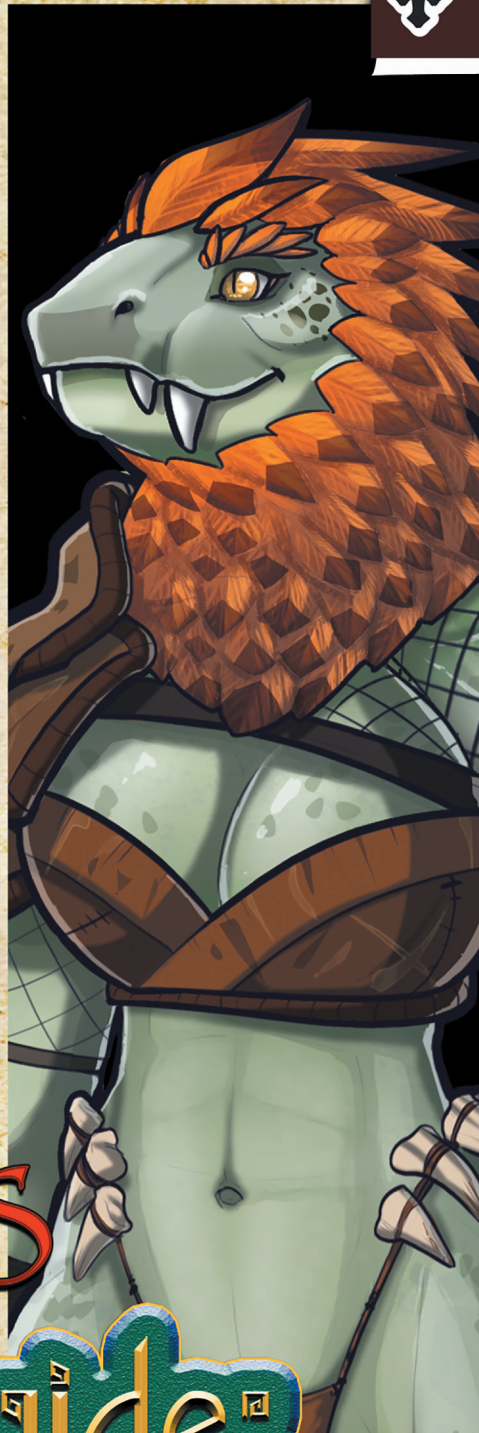
The pdf then concludes with noting effects that are not necessarily healed by resting, or unaffected entirely.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no hiccups. Layout adheres to a printer-friendly 2-column b/w-standard and the pdf has no artworks. The pdf comes fully bookmarked, in spite of its brevity – kudos!

Michael McCarthy's summary of resting mechanics is handy to have and should prevent some book-flipping. What more can you ask from such a humble little game-aid pdf, particularly from one that comes as PWYW? This is very much worth leaving a tip for and makes playing more smooth. No complaints. 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this handy pdf [here on OBS for PWYW!](#)
Endzeitgeist out.



ROGUE'S Field Guide RARE RACES



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Endzeitgeist's Top Ten of 2018

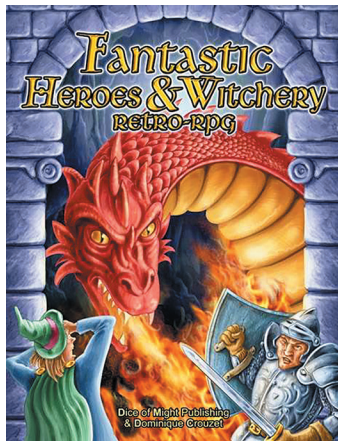
Dear readers,

It's been a long time coming, but here it is, in time for Gencon! My Top Ten list of RPG products I reviewed last year. As always, only books I actually reviewed are on the list; additionally, I should note that, more than in my regular reviews, this list reflects my personal taste. Books released 2017 that I didn't cover in time automatically qualify for 2018's list.

There is one catch to note: If a part of a compilation product or revision was featured on a previous list, it is disqualified from featuring on the list once more.

All right, without further ado, let's get it on!

Honorable Mentions:

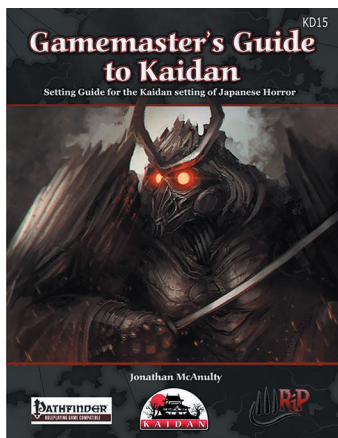
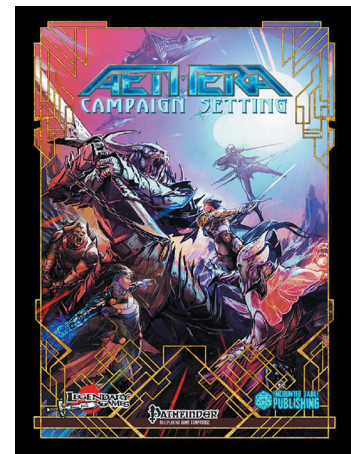


Fantastic Heroes & Witchery by DOM Publishing:

This rules-set allows you to seamlessly bridge OSR and d20/PFRPG-gameplay and is just brilliant in a ton of different ways. That being said, I chose against including this one, mainly because it has been released a couple of years ago. Still, if that sounds intriguing to you, then check this out!

Aethera Campaign Setting by Encounter Table Publishing/ Legendary Games

I love this setting to bits. It's creative, inspired and gorgeous. I adore the world-building, story, etc., and there needs to be more Aethera! The only reason this narrowly missed the list, was that I wasn't as intrigued by the archetypes as by the races and other rules. Considering that this was Encounter Table Publishing's first book, we can expect great things!



#10: The Gamemaster's Guide to Kaidan by Rite Publishing

I'll freely admit to this being my most disputable of choices; choosing "The Long Walk: Life on the Grand Stair" here would have probably made more sense for many folks. However, I can't help myself. I adore the singular vision this book champions, the courage to say no, the down-to-earth aesthetics. And I'm a huge fan of the Japanese Kaidan tradition, so yeah...this is very much one of my favorite books this year. Not because of crunch, but because of the purity of its vision.

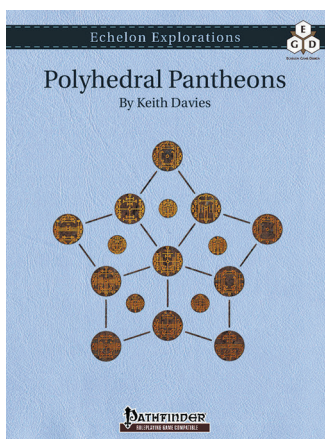
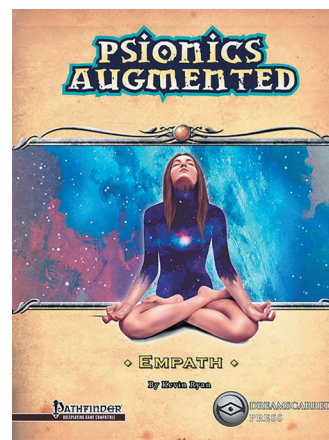


#9: FAITH – The Sci-Fi RPG 2.0 by Burning Games

This book sports the single most intriguing sci-fi campaign setting I have read in ages; the world-building is master-class and even if you're not at all interested in the game, there are still more than 300 pages of amazing prose, cultures and inspired ideas. One of the most interesting campaign settings I've ever read.

#8: Psionics Augmented: Empath by Dreamscarred Press

The single coolest archetype I have read in ages, the empath redefined what I dare to hope for from an archetype, all while oozing flavor and panache galore. It is inspired in the best of ways.

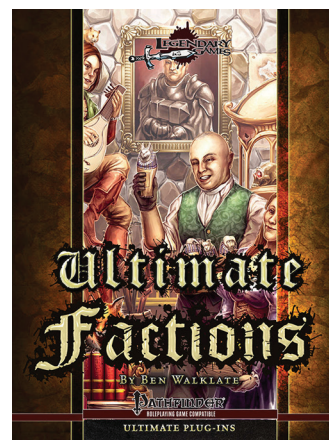


#7: Echelon Explorations: Polyhedral Pantheons by Echelon Game Design

I am rarely this surprised by a file – while geared towards PFRPG, this humble file allowed me to think about pantheon creation in a whole new way, speeding up the process in a brilliant and concise manner. Truly, a must-have for any aspiring world-builder.

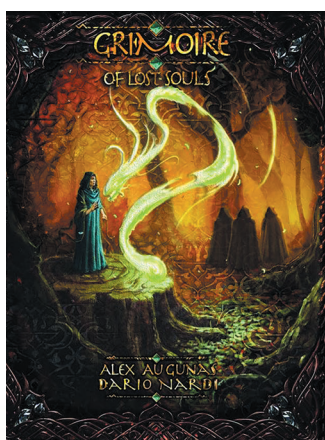
#6: Ultimate Factions by Legendary Games

This humble little book allows for the seamless, inspired transition from kingdom building to the personal and back up, acting as a brilliant bridge between subsystems. A masterpiece of clear, easy to grasp and fun design, which also helps you play wholly new storylines.



#5: Grimoire of Lost Souls by Radiance House

The Ultimate Psionics equivalent of Pact Magic, this tome can carry whole campaigns. Creative, full of great flavor and oozing passion and cool ideas, the Grimoire is an amazing supplement that further cements Pact magic as one of the coolest alternate systems out there.



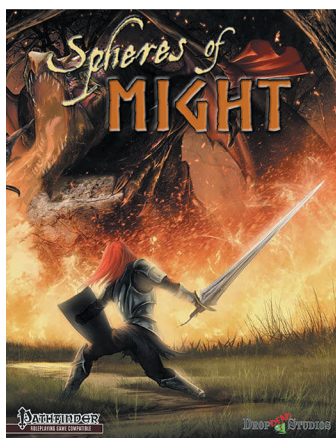


#4: Wraith Wright's The Comprehensive Equipment Manual (5e) by Wraith Wright/DM's Guild

If there is ONE book I'd consider to be non-optional for 5e, it'd be this one – expanding equipment by an exponential amount, this treasure trove of a tome collates and expands information in an inspired manner, provided a staggering wealth of rules with precise and fun effects. Oh, and it's well-cared for, expanding to account for system developments!

#3: Be Awesome At Dungeon Design (system neutral) by Raging Swan Press

A massive, super-useful, well-written guide that truly helps you design better dungeons, Creighton Broadhurst delivers one of the most concisely-written, extensive GM-advice books that I've had the pleasure of reading.

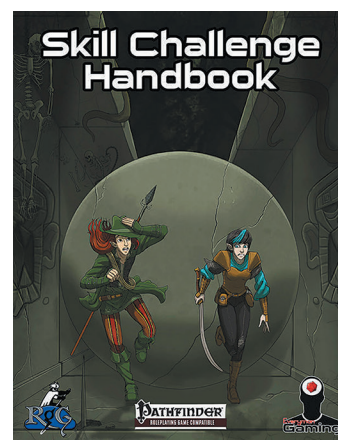


#2: Spheres of Might by Drop Dead Studios

A masterpiece of design, this tome makes playing martial and non-magical characters infinitely more exciting and compelling. It is complex, fun and truly inspired – if anything, I wished it had been released years ago. Few books have made me smile so much – whether you like far-out or down-to-earth combat, this delivers. A masterpiece.

#1: Skill Challenge Handbook by Everyman Gaming

Okay, who was genuinely surprised by this choice? The Skill Challenge Handbook is a masterpiece in pretty much every conceivable way, and I whole heartedly believe that PF 2.0 would greatly benefit from taking a look at this masterpiece. If you even remotely like any d20-based game, this is worth getting. Perhaps the most essential 3pp-book I know, this enriches any game.



And that's it – congratulations to the winners and everyone who even made the list for being a candidate! This year's been a tough year indeed, with truly glorious releases!

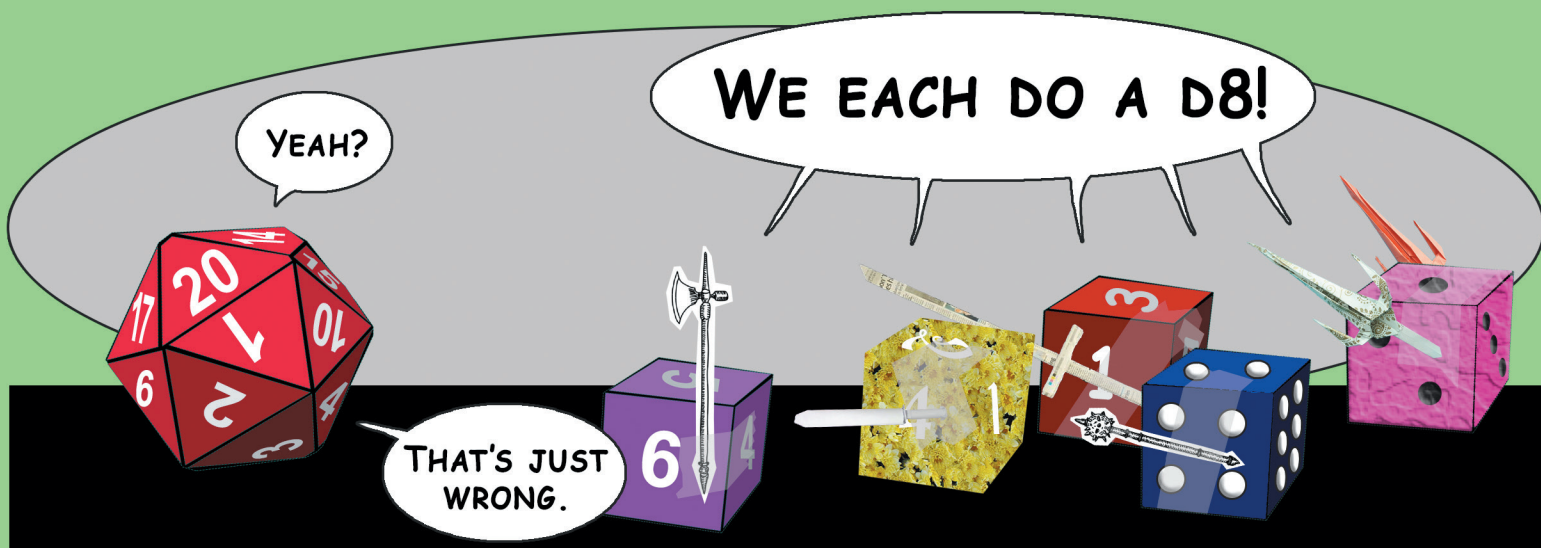
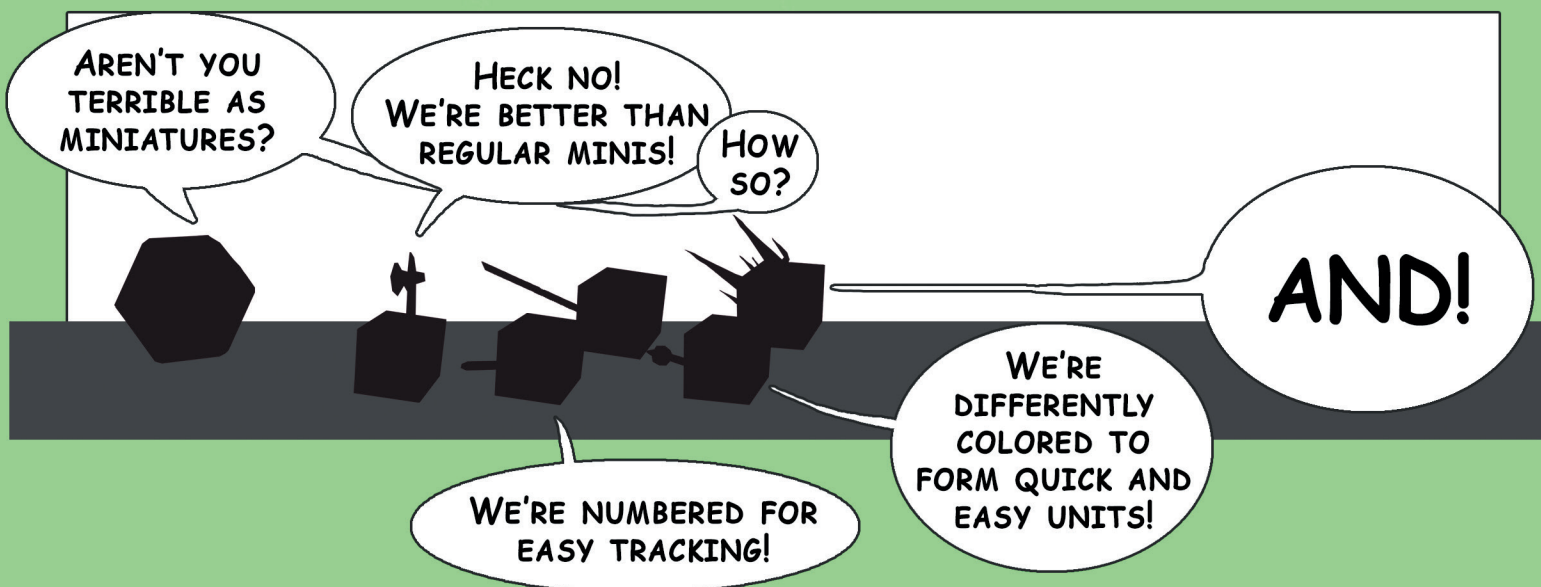
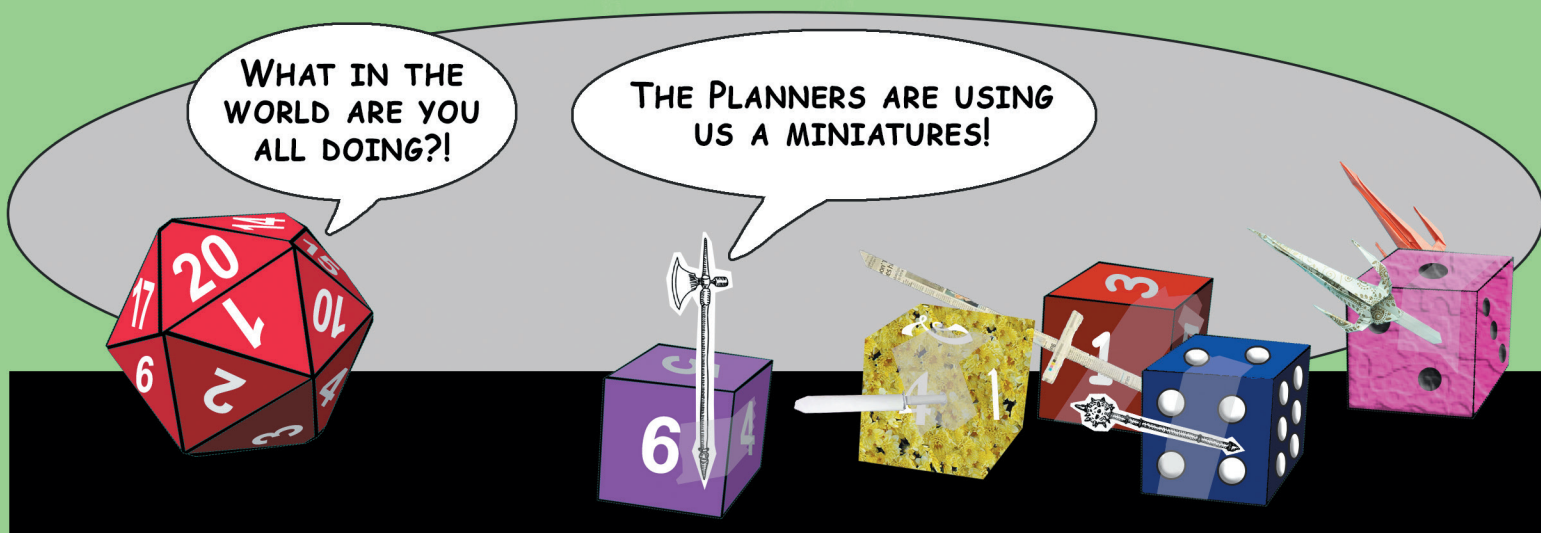
Endzeitgeist out.

ON A ROLL

WRITTEN BY OWEN K.C. STEPHENS

ILLUSTRATED BY LJ STEPHENS

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