Pathways

MARNIXE

Pathways Magazine

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Editorial

by Dave Paul; Illustration by Publisher's Choice

To what or whom are you devoted?

It's not unreasonable, in the game, to assume that devotion applies to clerics and paladins, but there are many good reasons to focus on the wizard devoted to scholarship, the barbarian devoted to a clan, the fighter devoted to expertise in a weapon, or just about anyone else devoted to some aspect of their profession, craft, or occupation.

I've GMed adventures where the core element was figuring out a ghost's devotion to a person who was still alive, where the main BBEG was devoted to nothing but revenge, where the PCs were devoted to overthrowing their efreet imprisoners, and where a very, very old blue dragon was devoted to extending his own life.

I've played characters devoted to overthrowing unjust laws, fulfilling their obligations to prophecies, protecting the lore of a land, finding out what claimed their parent's lives, and remaining hidden in plain sight. Friends I've gamed with have had their characters devoted to becoming the greatest wizard the world had ever known, bringing the wisdom of Osiris to everyone in the land, being the best crime solver in the city, and having the most amazing collection of swords.

I've encountered players with amusing devotions to their dice (and one player with an absurd devotion to a mechanical pencil). I've played in games where it felt like the GM was devoted to preventing players from succeeding, and I've played in scores more games where the GM was clearly devoted to helping the players have a great time at the table.

I've participated in online discussions where some people accused gaming companies of being more devoted to making money than making good games. I've participated in online discussions where people in the gaming industry have argued most convincingly that their devotion is to the game itself or the game company they work for.

I've been at conventions where I've seen people in costume quite devoted to their costumes. I've seen gamers demonstrate their devotion to one another by having the backs of other gamers in spaces where those other gamers needed an ally. I've been heartened by organizations and companies devoted to making conventions and games safe for all gamers.

Happy gaming.
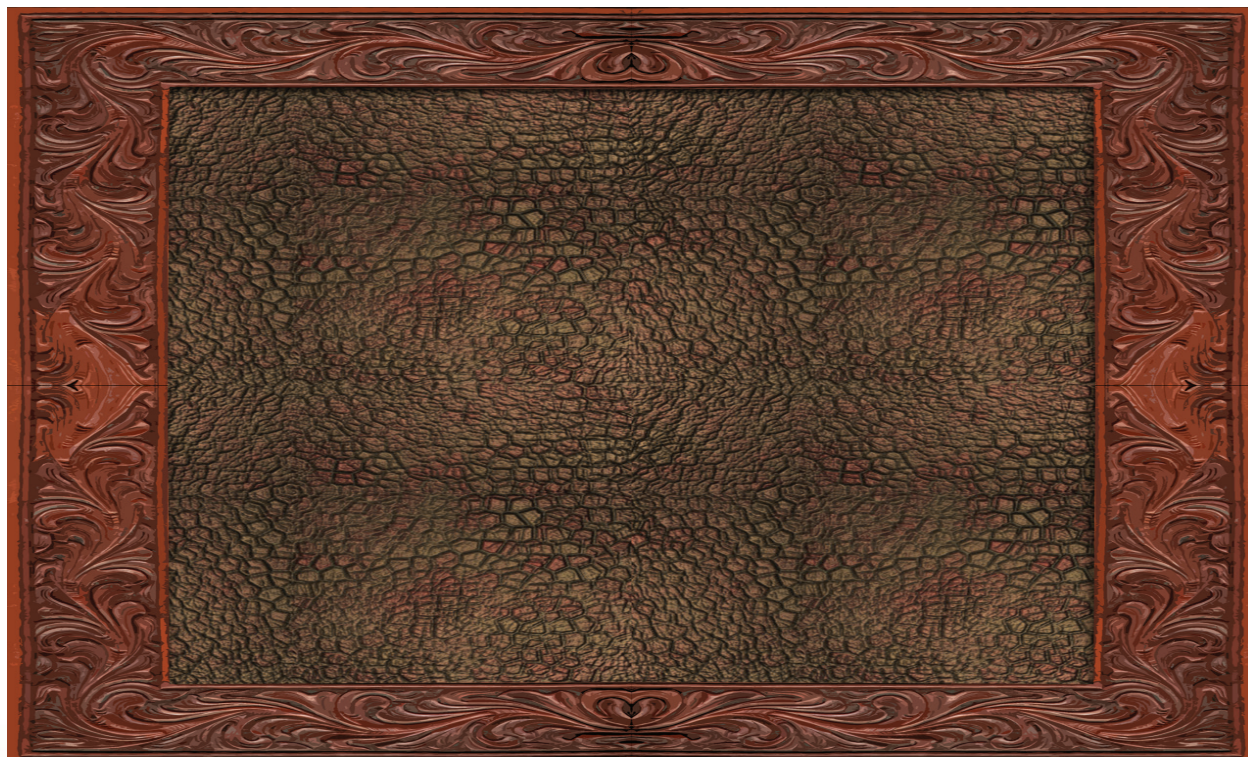
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Agent of the Gods Creature Template

by Owen K.C. Stephens, Illustration by Marnixe

An agent of the gods is a creature that has been elevated, or created from scratch, by a divine entity to serve as a mortal agent. While these are often outsiders, the heralds of archdemons, favored servants of demigods, and even handmaidens to entire pantheons, some are simply mortals, undead, or even constructs imbued with power to serve a divine entity, usually in a specific task. Agents of the Gods often deliver messages from the divine forces they serve, but may also be set to guard sacred (or unholy) sites, give advice to the heads of a faith, and even attack and kill enemies of their divine masters.

Creating an Agent of the Gods Creature

Any creature may become an agent of the gods.

CR: +3

Alignment: An agent of the gods has an alignment that matches the divine master or masters it serves. If it serves an entire pantheon, its alignment may change based on which divine power it is currently serving.

Ability Scores: An agent of the gods gains +6 Str, Dex, and Con. Their minimum Int, Wis, and Cha are equal to 18 + ½ their final CR, and is raised to this level if below it. If the agent of the gods has one of these three ability score that is —, they can make decisions and use skills as if it was the above minimum, but do not actually gain the score.

Defenses: An agent of the gods gains DR equal to half its new CR that is bypassed by weapons of one alignment element and one special material (usually cold iron, silver, or adamantine), or by a single unusual material (such as wood, obsidian, or jade). It gains energy resistance to two resistances appropriate to its divine masters equal to it's CR (rounding up to the nearest multiple of 5). If it already has resistance against one of those energy types, it increases by this amount.

Divine Smite (Su): An agent of the gods can smite foes of the deity or pantheon it serves. This normally includes all foes of one specific alignment (for example, a lawful good agent of the gods can usually smite any chaotic evil creature) and creatures with the subtype of any opposing alignment (a lawful good agent of the gods can smite any creature with the chaotic or evil subtypes). However, the GM may add other smite targets, as appropriate to the divinities it serves. For example, an agent of the gods that served a deity of guarding tombs might be able to smite anyone engaged in tomb robbing, while an agent of the gods that represented safety from wildfires might be able to smite any creature with the fire subtype. Ultimately, it is a GM call on what an agent of the gods can smite.

An agent of the gods can smite only one creature at a time, and it is a swift action to designate a creature to smite. The agent gains a bonus to attack rolls and the save DC of its spells and special abilities equal to its Cha bonus against the target of the smite, and a bonus to damage equal to its HD against that target. This lasts for 1 round per HD of the agent. If the target of the smite is defeated while this duration is ongoing, the agent can use another swift action to transfer the smite to another legal target.

Once an agent of the gods has used its divine smite, it cannot do so again for an hour.

Spellcasting (Sp): Agents of the gods gain the ability to cast spells drawn from a single divine spellcasting class. They gain spells for the three highest spell levels the creature has access to. These are cast as swift actions, regardless of the spell's normal casting time. They can a number of spells of each level determined by their final CR and the charts below, and may cast each spell once per day. The number and level received depend on whether they are drawn from the spell list of a 4-spell level caster, 6-level caster, or 9-level caster, as determined below.

Prophecy (Sp): Agents of the gods are often agents of prophecy. They can receive messages from the gods that empower them... at those beings' convenience. However, this channel also grants them some ability to divine the future. An agent of the god can use *augury* once per hour. If it is CR 10 or higher, it can also use *divination* once per day. If it is CR 18 or higher, it can also use *commune* once per day. However, the answers received always assume the agent of the gods first concern is to further the goals of the divine forces it serves. Thus if using *augury* to determine if opening a door is a good idea, and doing so will utterly destroy the agent

Table: 6- and 9-level (Cleric, Druid, Inquisitor, Shaman) Spell Slots

CR	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1–4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
5–9	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
10–14	—	2	2	1	—	—	—
15–19	—	—	2	2	1	—	—
20–24	—	—	—	2	2	1	—
25+	—	—	—	—	2	2	1

Table: 4-Level Class (Antipaladin, Paladin, Ranger) Spell Slots

CR	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1–4	2	1	—	—	—
5–9	2	2	1	—	—
10–14	—	2	2	1	—
15–19	—	—	2	2	1
20–24	—	—	—	2	3
25+	—	—	—	4	3

of the gods but also achieve a goal of its master it otherwise could not, it will show as "weal."

Treasure: An agent of the gods always has at least standard treasure. Those that normally have standard treasure instead have double, and those that normally have double instead have triple.

Sample Agent of the Gods

The Voice of the Desert

This two-headed cobra displays a glowing holy symbol on its two chests, and a pair of sleek wings sprout from its serpentine body.

Uraeus Agent of the Gods   CR 8

XP 4,800

LN Medium magical beast

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+6 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 73 (7d10+35)

Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

DR 4/chaotic and cold iron; **Immune** disease; Resist acid 10, fire 20

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., **climb** 20 ft., **fly** 50 ft. (average), **swim** 20 ft.

Melee 2 bites +14 (1d8+7 plus poison)

Special Attacks breath weapon, divine smite (+6 attacks/DCs, +7 damage, 7 rounds), poison

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; inquisitor spell list)
Augury (1/hour)

2nd-level (1/day): *blistering invective* (DC 18)

1st level (2/day): *protection from chaos*, *true strike*

0-level (2/day): *create water*, *detect magic*

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 22, **Con** 20, **Int** 22, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 30

Feats Acrobatic, Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative

Skills Acrobatics +18, Climb +21, Fly +14, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (nature, religion, nobility, planes) +9, Perception +20, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +12, Swim +21; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics, +8 Perception

Languages Aquan, Celestial, Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, as a standard action, a uraeus's head can expel a 30-footline of poison. All creatures in the area are blinded for 1 round and must save against poison (Reflex DC 18 negates both). As a full-round action, a uraeus can either expel two lines or bite with one head and breathe poison with the other. Each head tracks its breath weapon's availability separately.

Poison (Ex): Bite or breath weapon—contact or injury; **save** Fort DC 18; **frequency** 1/round for 2 rounds; **initial effect** blinded and paralyzed for 1 round; **secondary effect** blinded for 2d4 rounds; **cure** 2 consecutive saves.

ECOLOGY

Environment any desert

Organization unique

Treasure double

20 Unfortunate Discoveries to Make in an Abandoned Temple

*By Creighton Broadhurst; Illustration by Jacob E. Blackmon*

Brave adventurers are always poking around in abandoned temples. Whether they are cleansing the taint of a dark power from a temple's holy precincts or exploring a shrine dedicated to a now forgotten power, they always hope to find hidden or lost treasures.

Use this table, to generate the details of minor unfortunate, foreboding or worrisome discoveries the PCs make in the abandoned temple. Reroll inappropriate results.

1. The raven-headed gargoyles of this room shift their poses when no one is looking.

2. Ghastly voices whispering a sacrificial chant continuously echo through the halls.

3. A great thirst strikes any PC entering this chamber. No amount of drinking can slake it.

4. A black book is chained to the altar of this temple. When PCs approach, the book twists and struggles against its chains.

5. Ghostly monks travel through this temple with arms crossed and heads bowed in prayer. Every few minutes they pause to write dire warnings for the PCs on the walls.

6. Hundreds of spiders cover this stone altar. Each has its two forelegs raised into the air as if in a trance.

7. A sacrificial dagger floats in the air of this blood-stained chamber. It points its tip directly at the heart of the nearest good-aligned PC.

8. A bottomless pit drops away into darkness. Strange runes surround the edge of the pit and faint sounds of wet breathing echo up from its ebon depths.

9. Littered across the floor, ancient skeletons and ruined weapons signal a battle from long ago. Yet fresh blood still covers the ground and sounds of fierce combat ring through the air.

10. The plants of this peaceful temple garden are gently swaying against the wind. Any blood spilled in this garden immediately soaks into the earth.

11. A dead dwarf lies at the end of a long hallway with a message written in blood on his shield. It reads, "Look behind."

12. The sinful prophecies inscribed on this tablet reference people very similar to the PCs.

13. The stone lids of these six sarcophagi were all broken open from the inside.

14. The monks of this temple were all transformed into statues of salt, horrified looks still upon their face.

15. Empty rat skins, with no meat or bones left inside, are piled atop this holy text.

16. Gigantic clawed footprints lead away from an ancient summoning circle covered with dust.

17. The skeleton of an ancient adventurer moulders here, still impaled on a deadly trap.

18. Twelve corpses hang by their ankles from the ceiling. Each has the word "infidel" scratched into its chest.

19. Two rows of obsidian obelisks stand in this hall. PCs who touch an obelisk are granted visions of squamous shapes writhing beneath a starless night sky.

20. A large bronze bull stands triumphantly in this temple hall. Sounds of agonized screaming echo from within its hollow belly.

Want More?

If you enjoy the table above and like dungeon dressing, check out *GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing*—an essential part of any GM's arsenal and winner of Endzeitgeist's Top Ten of 2014! If you are setting an adventure in an abandoned temple, check out *Alternate Dungeons: Abandoned Temple* and (finally) if you want more free content check out our Free Stuff page.
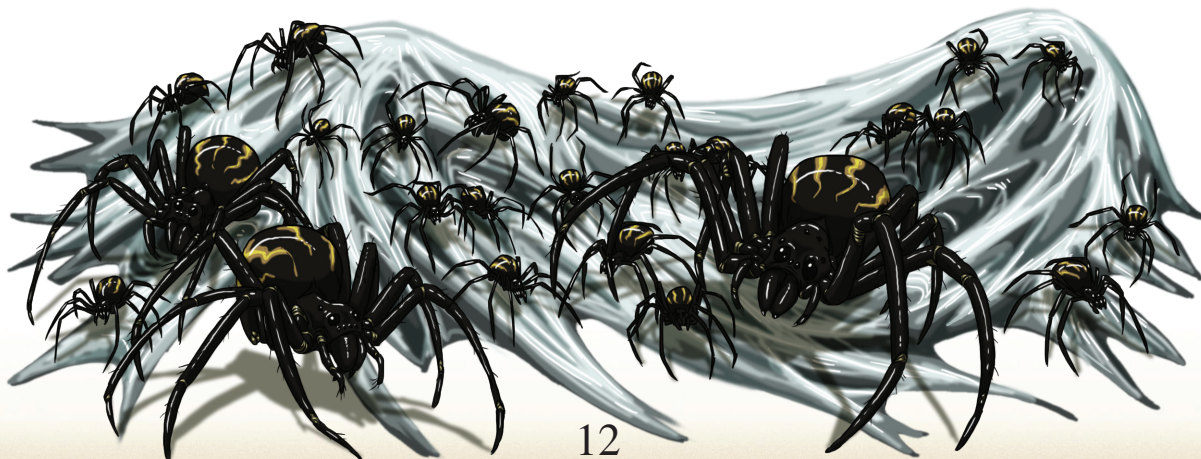
Spells Showcase: Devotion

By Dave Paul

The *blessing of the dead* spell appeared first in [101 Subterranean Spells](#), and *defend the homeland* appeared first in [101 Urban Spells](#).

—

It's worth asking whether one can express devotion without also expressing allegiance. In a campaign setting with multiple deities, especially one with a great many deities, why couldn't individuals express devotion without themselves being full-fledged worshippers? With *blessings of the dead* I'm exploring what it might mean for a cleric or paladin to acknowledge the appropriate authority of a god of the dead in a campaign setting where that cleric or paladin does not also directly worship gods of the dead. Of course it's entirely up to the GM how the spell operates behind the scenes. Maybe the caster's deity grants the spell, maybe the caster's deity permits a god of the dead to grant the spell.

Blessing of the Dead
School: Abjuration**; Level:** Cleric/Oracle 2, Paladin 2
Casting Time: 1 round
Components: V, S
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: 1 hour/level; see text
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)**; Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

You acknowledge the powers of the gods of the dead as you speak a prayer of protection against life-draining energies and the powers of undeath. For as long as the effect lasts, the target receives a +4 morale bonus on saving throws to remove negative levels. Additionally, if the target is affected by any special attack or special ability by an undead creature that allows a saving throw, the target receives a +2 morale bonus on that save. At any time while the spell is in effect, the target can choose to end the spell as a free action to grant itself a saving throw against a death attack when that attack normally would not allow a save.

—

With *defend the homeland* I was playing with an alternative mechanic (rolling a d20 and a d12 in order to determine degree of success). The aim is to empower allies, all of whom are devoted to one another and some homeland. The particular twist at the end of the spell (doubling the number of targets and increasing the duration of the spell) aims to offer a sort of stirring scene as a whole host of allies gain supernatural abilities and work together to support one another and protect their home against, presumably, over-powered enemies.

Defend the Homeland
School: Enchantment (compulsion) [language-dependent, mind-affecting]**; Level:** Bard 4, Cleric/Oracle 5, Paladin 4
Casting Time: 1 minute
Components: V, S, DF
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Targets: One ally/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

You spend a minute building the confidence of your allies. At the end of this minute each ally who hears and can understand you receives a significant morale boost. Until the spell ends, each recipient rolls a d12 in addition to a d20 whenever a d20 roll is required for an attack roll, saving throw, or ability or skill or other check (see below).

When an attack roll is required, if the rolls on both the d20 and the d12 would succeed, then the attack succeeds and deals an additional 1d6 damage. If the result on the d20 is a critical threat and the result on the d12 would hit, then the threat is confirmed (though if a confirmation roll *is* required, roll both d20 and d12 to confirm). If the result on the d20 would miss but the result on the d12 would hit, then the attack hits. If both results would miss, then the attack misses. If the result on the d20 is a natural 1, then the result is treated as a natural 1 only if the d12 is also a natural 1. In any case, if the results on both dice would succeed, then the attack succeeds even if it would normally still have to overcome concealment or some other miss chance.

When an attack roll is required for a combat maneuver, the maneuver fails only if the result on both dice would fail. If the results on both dice would succeed, then the maneuver succeeds even if it would normally still have to overcome concealment or some other miss chance.
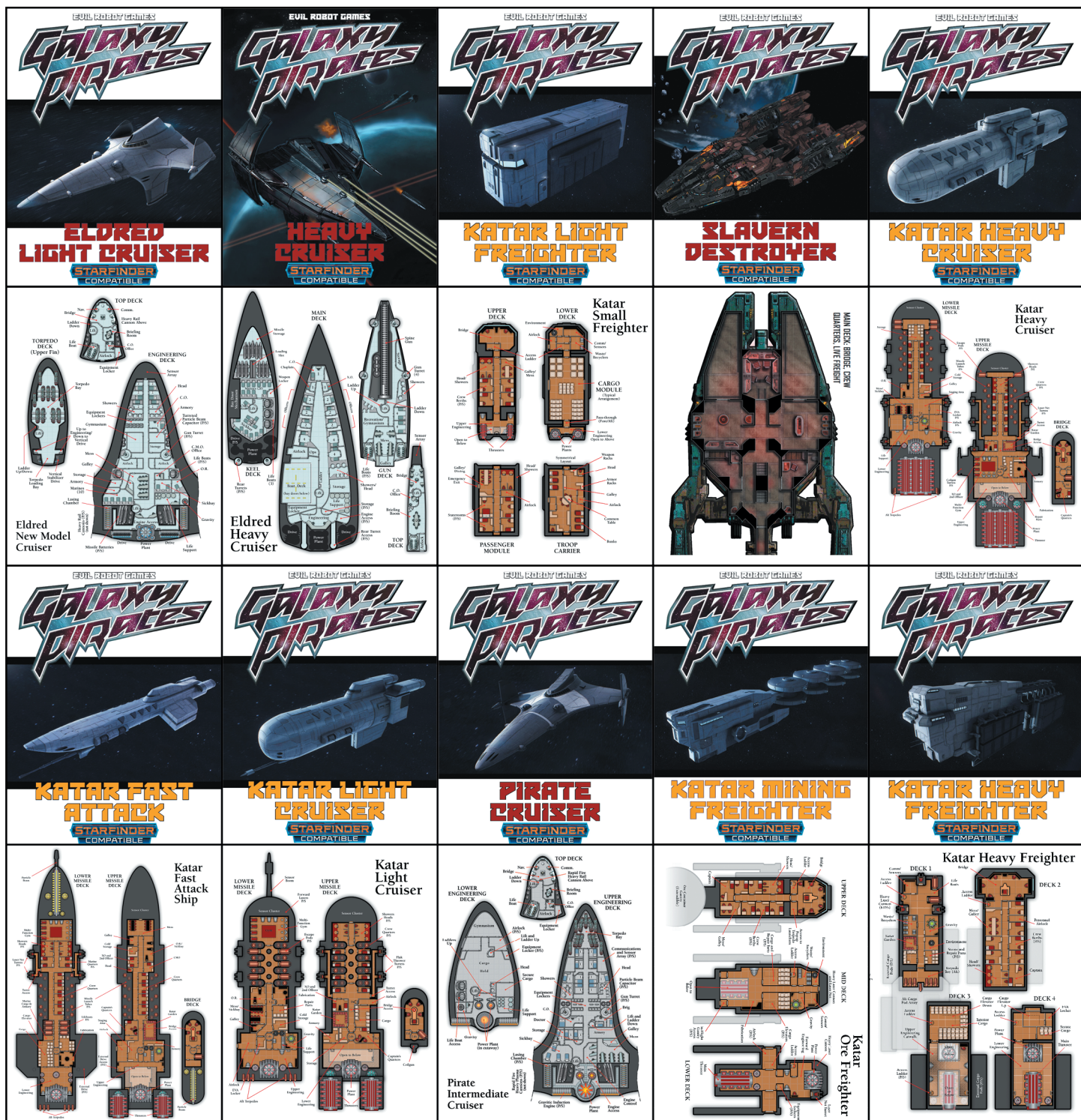
When a saving throw is required, if the rolls on either the d20 or the d12 succeed, then the save is a success. If the result on the d20 is a natural 1, then the result is treated as a natural 1 only if the d12 is also a natural 1.

When an ability, concentration, dispel, initiative, skill or other check is required, use the higher result of the two dice to determine the outcome. If the result on both dice would result in a success, then, at the GM's option, some greater success may result.

When the spell ends, each recipient is staggered for 1d4 rounds.

If all the targets and the caster are in the same settlement for the entire time the spell is cast, and that settlement is where the caster normally resides, then the duration of the spell is 1 minute/level and the number of affected allies is doubled.

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Prayers

By Scott Gladstein

Too often, a prayer in game is misconstrued as a divine spell with some sort of arcane spell as its equivalent. This alternate rule allows for things to happen based on a deity's whim based on what a player requested. This functions much like a *wish* spell, though requires the divine character to gamble a little bit. This subsystem takes the game into a more role-playing focused direction and abstracts the system of divine casting. It should not be used in mechanically-focused tactical games.

A character with divine spell slots can expend a single spell slot as a standard action to beseech their deity for a favor. This plea cannot contain any reference to game mechanics ("Heal my wounds so that I might continue to do your will!" is fine but, "Please stabilize me and restore me at least 5 points of health!" is not). A player should try to involve the deity in their plea, giving them a reason to help beyond just "Help me!" An example might be, when beseeching a god who hates evil, "There be devil's before me! I call upon your holy name to help me continue your holy war against the darkness!" If a player acts mostly out of self-interest, the deity may find it hard to muster the full fury required to fulfill their request (unless the deity rewards narcissism, perhaps). In instances where a character requires that a deity help them for what seems purely self-interest reasons, it might behoove the character to promise something in exchange (an hour of prayer later, an offering at their temple, self-flagellation, an act of contrition, a sacrifice in their name, confession, a donation to their temple, a good act, etc.).

The GM, acting on behalf of the deity, will consider it and can generate an effect based on what the GM thinks the deity would be willing to do. The GM should consider the deity's (or theology's) views, domains, personality, their relationship with the character, code of ethics, etc., before responding to a prayer.

If, for whatever reason, a prayer is unable to be answered, the action is not expended and the GM may offer an out of game explanation (if they wish). A second prayer may then be made. This is effectively a "mulligan" (a do over). If still unsuitable, the spell slot is expended (GM discretion).

All effects emanate from the character who prayed and uses their stats, as if it were a spell cast by them. It uses their attributes (ability scores, attack rolls, actions, caster level, etc.) for the spell's variables. The caster of a prayer does not actually know the spell cast or have the ability to recreate the divine effect as a result of a payer. As such, a prayer may not be used for item creation or scribing scrolls. If a spell has a casting time beyond a standard action, it is typically not acceptable as a prayer. However, if the player and the GM agree, and the player has enough actions left on the turn they prayed, a prayer may consume a full round action.

The result of a prayer should be on par with a spell no more than 1 level higher than the level of the spell slot sacrificed, even if it's not from the character's spell list. There is a little bit of a judgement call here and some wiggle room, as with a *wish* spell. The result of a prayer does not have to conform strictly to an existing spell and is best used situationally ("Smite my enemies!" cries the cleric of the Earth god, sacrificing 4 levels of spells, who promptly causes a fissure to appear and causes the cliff they are on to plummet hundreds of feet, spilling her foes onto the rocks below. This would be a better result for that prayer than "They are dealt 4d6 points of acid damage.")

When generating the result of a prayer, the deity (or some agent of theirs) may send an accompanying message (telepathically, in an auditory fashion, in giant burning letters, etc.) or demand of the character who prayed. A GM should use this to help develop the relationship between the character and themselves.

Using this Alternate Rule and Its Effect on Game Balance

Prayer can be a fantastic way for divine characters to differentiate themselves from arcane casters. However, it does afford them a wider range of effects, even if these effects are far more dependent on the GM's whim. It's a gamble, but one that can pay off. You may want to speak to your GM before game about using this as it does rely on a certain degree of trust. For example, you may agree that if the effect is not really what you intended, the player may reserve the right to just cast a spell of the same level from their spell list or that the player might be able to suggest (or in some way) be involved in the selection of the effect out of games.

A prayer should never "end" an adventure in a fashion another divine spellcaster casting a spell of the same level could not or offer an inappropriately easy solution to a problem or puzzle that another spell of the same level could provide. Prayers are not "win buttons" or workarounds to gain more powerful spells, but relevant answers to a call for aid in the heat of a moment. For example: if you were praying with low level spells (1st to 3rd level, for example) and asking a deity over and over to "smite the evil lich in his castle" that you are hunting, it would probably have no effect. This is because many lower level damage spells require that you have line of effect to your target and the GM probably doesn't want you to kill the villain before it

is narratively relevant to do so. This does not mean a prayer cannot have a creative outcome, but they are designed to offer relevant aid to a situation at hand. If tracking the lich, it may be acceptable to pray for aid in that task or even for help in dispelling the magic barrier to his castle. Prayers, as a general rule, have a line of effect component to them.

This abstracts the game's mechanics a bit. There are guidelines on Table 1: Guidelines for Prayer Modifiers, but if you're still a bit uncomfortable, here are some suggestions on further limitations.

- The resulting effect should never be stronger than a spell 1 level higher than the highest level spell the character could already cast, even after being adjusted.

- A prayer should never go unanswered. This doesn't mean the outcome has to be predictable, or wanted.

- A prayer should never backlash and intentionally harm the caster (without prior out of game agreement).

- A prayer's effect should never be less effective than 2 levels lower than the spell level sacrificed, even after adjustment (sacrificing a 4th level spell slot should never result in a 1st level result).

- A prayer's effect should never anger the player and should always meet the expectations (even if not obviously, at first) of not only the player and the GM, but also other players in the party.

Choir of Prayer

You pray with the convictions of a priest but with the soul of a layman.

Prerequisites: Your character must follow a deity or theology, Cha 15

Benefit: You gain three 1st-level divine spell slots per day that can only be used for prayers. For the purpose of prayers, your divine caster level is equal you character level.

Note: This requires the alternate prayer rules.

Table 1: Guidelines for Prayer Modifiers

Act	Description	Effect's Equivalent Spell Lvl Mod
Deity Makes a Minor Demand	An hour of prayer later, an offering at their temple, self-flagellation, an act of contrition, a sacrifice in their name, confession, a donation to their temple, a good act, etc.)	+0 to +1
Deity Makes a Major Demand	A minor quest (taking several days to a week), a large or valuable sacrifice (first born son, a limb, a favorite magic item, etc.), making a long-term vow (fasting for a month, giving up material things for a year, entering into cloistered meditation for a day, etc.), or something similar.	+3 to +5
Character Offers Minor Act of Service to Deity	An hour of prayer later, an offering at their temple, self-flagellation, an act of contrition, a sacrifice in their name, confession, a donation to their temple, a good act, etc.)	+1 to +2
Deity is Annoyed at the Character	Character has committed recent minor transgression against their code of ethics, character has made more than 2 prayers in 3 rounds or more than 10 prayers an hour.	-1 to -3
Character is in the Good Grace of the Deity	Character has just completed a task or done a minor act of service for the deity. A character who has championed many causes for a deity and/or held a particularly high position for a deity may also find themselves in the good graces of a deity from time to time (not all the time, however, once per day is typical). Other things may tickle the fancy of a deity such as killing a large number of their favored enemies, offering a prayer of thanks after an ordeal, etc.	+1 to +3
Effect/Spell Prayed For is Not Traditionally Associated With Deity	A peaceful healing deity is not likely to be able to smite their enemies with fire and an evil pain deity is not about to heal the sick. Asking for a spell that is out of their wheelhouse may also annoy a deity.	-2 to -5
Effect/Spell Prayed For is Very Relevant to a Deity	Asking a peaceful healing deity to heal the sick or quiet a fever is a good use of their powers. The same could be said of asking an evil pain deity to torture a prisoner and wrack his body with pain.	+1 to +3

Note: Any reference to a "deity" on this chart may be replaced by the term "theology."

Devoted Companions:
Shapeshifting Cohorts

By Margherita "Bardess" Tramontano

Rarely is devotion shown more greatly than by an animal companion ready to sacrifice for its master or follow him anywhere. And, even if most adventurers never gain a loyal steed or a faithful falcon, indicating their relative rarity, there are nevertheless many different forms of companions. Some of them can be familiars (with the Eldritch Steed familiar archetype from *Pathways #79*) or shaman spirit animals that assume a larger form and enhanced abilities; some can even be cohorts who prefer the animal to the humanoid form, and whose devotion is such that they choose to smell a track for their master or carry him on their back in battle. In this article we present some options for such assistants, blurring a little bit more the line between cohorts, familiars, and companions.

Companion Archetypes

These archetypes are designed for cohort NPCs. PCs need GM permission to take them.

Natural Companion
(Druid Cohort Archetype)

Some druid circles are devoted to assist heroes who further the cause of their deities or of Nature. Some of these druids do more than become cohorts: they become true animal companions for their allies.

Dedicated Vow: A natural companion can never take the Leadership feat or select other feats or options that would allow her to take a cohort, familiar, or animal companion of her own. She cannot select an animal companion for her nature bond, nor a domain that would grant her a familiar or an animal companion.

Diminished Spellcasting: A natural companion's number of spells per day for each spell level is one less than normal (for example, a 4th-level natural companion can cast three cantrips, two 2nd-level spells, and one 1st-level spell per day). If this reduces the number of spells for a level to 0, she gains only the bonus spells for that level she would be entitled to based on her Wisdom score, plus her domain spell if she chose a domain for her nature bond.

Companion Status: A natural companion counts as an animal companion for all feats, spells, abilities and prerequisites. She does not count as her own companion. A natural companion can select animal companion feats as she increases in level, but can only use those feats when in wild shape.

Enhanced Wild Shape: A natural companion gains the wild shape ability at 1st level. She uses wild shape as a druid of her level +3.

At 11th level, a natural companion can use wild shape to change into a Small or Medium magical beast or a Medium dragon. When taking the form of a magical beast, her wild shape functions as *beast shape III*. When taking the form of a dragon, her wild shape functions as *form of the dragon I*.

At 13th level, a natural companion can use wild shape to change into a Tiny or Large magical beast or a Large dragon. When taking the form of a magical beast, her wild shape functions as *beast shape IV*. When taking the form of a dragon, her wild shape functions as *form of the dragon II*.

At 15th level, a natural companion can use wild shape to change into a Diminutive or Huge magical beast or a Huge dragon. When taking the form of a magical beast, her wild shape functions as *magical beast shape*. When taking the form of a dragon, her wild shape functions as *form of the dragon III*.

Faithful Friend (Ex): At 1st level, a natural companion gains the link ability of an animal companion. This replaces wild empathy.

Magical Protection (Ex): A natural companion who is the cohort of a character able to cast spells gains an animal companion's share spells ability. This replaces the druid's ability to spontaneously cast *summon nature's ally* spells. If the character is not a spellcaster, the natural companion doesn't receive this ability.

Natural Evasion (Ex): At 3rd level, a natural companion gains the evasion animal companion ability. This replaces trackless step.

Devoted Friend: At 6th level, a natural companion gains the devotion animal companion ability. This replaces resist nature's lure.

Naturally Uncatchable (Ex): At 15th level, a natural companion gains the improved evasion animal companion ability. This replaces timeless body.

Mount Servant
(Shifter Cohort Archetype)

Some druid circles are devoted to assist heroes who further the cause of their deities or of Nature. Sometimes, a shifter affiliated to such a circle can decide to serve a worthy cavalier or paladin by becoming her mount as well as her cohort.

This archetype can be selected both by standard shifters and the alternate Legendary Shifter class from Legendary Games.

Dedicated Vow: A mount servant can never take the Leadership feat or select other feats or options that would allow her to take a cohort, familiar, or animal companion of her own.

Aspect of the Steed: A mount servant gains access to a different set of animal aspects with her animal focus. A legendary mount servant loses access to any animal aspect that cannot be used as a mount (in many campaigns, this means the deinonychus, falcon, frog, monkey, mouse, snake, or wolverine aspects). Instead, she gains access to the following new aspects. A legendary shifter gains access only to the minor forms of these aspects.

Capybara

Minor Form: You gain a +1 resistance bonus on Fortitude saving throws. This bonus increases to +2 at 8th level and +3 at 15th level.

Major Form: Your shape changes to that of a Medium capybara. While in this form, you gain a base speed of 30 feet, a swim speed of 20 feet, a bite attack (1d6 damage), low-light vision, and scent. At 8th level, you gain the Skill Focus (Perception) feat and can hold your breath underwater for double the normal time. At 15th level, your swim speed increases to 40 feet and you can hold your breath underwater for triple the normal time.

Camel

Minor Form: You double your Constitution score for the purpose of determining how long you can resist without food or water before beginning to starve. At 8th level, you count your Constitution score as three times higher, and at 15th level, as four times higher.

Major Form: Your shape changes to that of a camel. While in this form, you gain a base speed of 50 feet, a bite attack (1d4 damage), low-light vision, and scent. At 8th level you gain the Endurance feat and a spit attack (see below). At 15th level you gain two hoof attacks (1d4 damage), the trample universal monster ability, and become immune to starvation and thirst damage.

Spit: Once per hour, you can regurgitate the contents of your stomach, spitting it at a single target within 10 feet. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC = 10 +1/2 your shifter level + your Constitution bonus) or be sickened for 1d4 rounds.

Dog

Minor Form: You gain a +4 competence bonus on Survival checks to follow tracks. At 8th level, this bonus increases to +6 and you gain the scent ability with a range of 15 feet. At 15th level, the bonus increases to +8.

Major Form: Your shape changes to that of a Medium dog. While in this form, you gain a base speed of 40 feet, a bite attack (1d6 damage), low-light vision, and a +4 competence bonus on Survival checks to follow tracks. At 8th level, you gain the scent universal monster ability with a range of 15 feet, a +4 racial bonus on the drag, grapple and trip maneuvers, and your bonus to follow tracks increases to +6. At 15th level, your bonus to follow tracks increases to +8, and you gain a grab special attack.

Horse

Minor Form: You gain an enhancement bonus of +5 feet to your base speed. This bonus increases to +10 feet at 8th level and +20 feet at 15th level.

Major Form: Your shape changes to that of a heavy horse. While in this form, you gain a base speed of 50 feet, low-light vision, scent, a bite attack (1d4 damage), and two secondary hoof attacks (1d6 damage). At 8th level, you gain the Multiattack feat. At 15th level, your speed increases to 60 ft. and you gain the trample universal monster ability.

Pony

Minor Form: You treat your Strength score as 4 higher for the purpose of determining your carrying capacity. At 8th level, you treat your Strength score as 6 higher for that purpose, and at 15th level, as 8 higher.

Major Form: Your shape changes to that of a pony. While in this form, you gain a base speed of 40 feet, low-light vision, scent, and two hoof attacks (1d3 damage). At 8th level, you gain the Endurance feat and your carrying capacity doubles. At 15th level, your base speed increases to 50 ft., your carrying capacity triples, and you gain a bite attack (1d4 damage).

Reindeer

Minor Form: You gain a +2 resistance bonus on Fortitude saving throws against cold exposure. This bonus increases to +4 at 8th level and +6 at 15th level.

Major Form: Your shape changes to that of a Medium reindeer. While in this form, you gain a base speed

of 50 feet, low-light vision, scent, a gore attack (1d6 damage), and snow adaptation (see below). At 8th level, you resist to cold as if you were constantly affected by *endure elements* and can move at your normal speed while carrying a medium load. At 15th level, you can move at your normal speed while carrying a heavy load.

    Snow Adaptation: You ignore difficult terrain from ice and snow.

Wolfdog

Minor Form: You gain a +4 competence bonus on Survival checks to follow tracks. At 8th level, this bonus increases to +6 and you gain the scent ability. At 15th level, the bonus increases to +8.

Major Form: Yous shape changes to that of a Medium wolfdog. While in this form, you gain a base speed of 40 ft., a bite attack (1d6 damage), low-light vision, and scent. At 8th level, you cause 1d4 bleed and can make a grab attempt with your bite attack. At 15th level, you gain the ferocity universal monster ability.

Zebra

Minor Form: You gain an enhancement bonus of +5 feet to your base speed. This bonus increases to +10 feet at 8th level and +20 feet at 15th level.

Major Form: Your shape changes to that of a Medium zebra. While in this form, you gain a base speed of 50 feet, a bite attack (1d4 damage), 2 hoof attacks (1d4 damage), low-light vision, and scent. At 8th level, you gain a +4 bonus on Acrobatics checks to move through threatened squares. At 15th level, you gain Run and Improved Overrun as bonus feats. If you already possess these, you can instead select any other feats that require them as prerequisites.

Companion Status: A mount servant counts as a cavalier's bonded mount for all feats, spells, abilities, and prerequisites. She does not count as her own animal companion. A mount servant can select bonded mount feats as she increases in level (a legendary shifter can also select them as her shifter bonus feats), but can use those feats only when in wild shape.

Feeble Claws: A standard shifter mount servant gains the shifter claws ability at 4th level, and the power of her claws increases as if she were a shifter of her actual level -3.

Enhanced Wild Shape: A standard shifter mount servant gains the wild shape ability at 1st level.

Natural Evasion (Ex): At 3rd level, a mount servant gains the evasion animal companion ability. This replaces woodland stride for a standard shifter and the shifter evolution gained at 3rd level for a legendary shifter.

Devoted Friend: At 6th level, a mount servant gains the devotion animal companion ability. This replaces trackless step.

Naturally Uncatchable (Ex): At 15th level, a mount servant gains the improved evasion animal companion ability. This replaces timeless body for a standard shifter and the shifter evolution gained at 15th level for a legendary shifter.

Devoted Feats

These new feats are suitable for animal companions and mount servant shifters.

Devotion Against the Blight (Companion)

The animal's devotion increases its vitality and resistance to the forces of decay.

    Prerequisites: Animal companion, devotion special ability.

    Benefit: The animal companion gains a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of oozes, plant creatures, and vermin. The animal companion also can roll twice for any save against the mind-control abilities that some of these creatures have, and choose the better result.

Devotion Against the Constructed (Companion)

The animal's devotion gives it a special strength again constructs.

    Prerequisites: Animal companion, devotion special ability.

    Benefit: The animal companion gains a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of constructs. The animal companion also can intimidate constructs as if they were living creatures.

Devotion Against the Whimsy (Companion)

The animal's devotion protects it from the tricks and glamour of fey.

    Prerequisites: Animal companion, devotion special ability.

    Benefit: The animal companion gains a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of fey and magical beasts. The animal companion is also immune to enchantment spells or abilities of fey or magical beasts that target animals.

Pathways Magazine

Devotion Against the Wyrm (Companion)

The animal's devotion allows it to stand against the most frightful dragons without fear.

Prerequisites: Animal companion, devotion special ability.

Benefit: The animal companion gains a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of dragons. The animal companion is also immune to dragons' frightful presence ability.

Extra Shifter Aspect

You have gained affinity with an additional animal.

Prerequisites: Shifter aspect class feature.

Benefit: Select one animal aspect you don't already possess. You gain access to the minor form of this aspect.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take it, select a new minor form.

Greater Devotion (Companion)

The animal can resist any outside influence for its master's sake.

Prerequisites: Animal companion, devotion special ability, Improved Devotion.

Benefit: As long as it is within 30 feet of its master, the companion is immune to enchantment spells and effects.

Improved Devotion (Companion)

The animal companion resists to magical lure out of affection for its master.

Prerequisites: Animal companion, devotion special ability.

Benefit: As long as it is within 30 feet of its master, the companion can reroll any Will save against enchantment spells and effects. This ability must be used before the results of the roll are revealed. The animal must take the second roll, even if it is worse.

Improved Extra Shifter Aspect

You have gained affinity with an additional animal.

Prerequisites: Shifter aspect class feature, Extra Shifter Aspect.

Benefit: Select one animal aspect you gained access to with the Extra Shifter Aspect feat. You gain access to the major form of this aspect.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take it, select a new minor form you gained with Extra Shifter Aspect.

Creature Components
Volume 1

For generations wizards have sought ways to augment their already substantial magical abilities.

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PLAYGROUND ADVENTURES

Devotee Archetype

By Mike Welham; Illustration by GrandFailure

While divine influence is more downplayed in an era of technological ascendency, there are many people who hold to their beliefs. Some folk divert training and study from their main vocations to establish a stronger connection with their deities. The deities share their power to bolster these devotees, so they can awe non-believers and increase the number of worshippers as a result. Devotees are expected to follow their deities' tenets and spread word of the deities far and wide.

Alternate Class Features

The devotee archetype gains alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 9th, 12th, and 18th levels. Features based on domains (touch of divinity and greater touch of divinity) allow you to choose two domains related to the deity you worship (these domains will be the same for all class features). Work with your GM to determine appropriate domains for the chosen deity.

Touch of Divinity   2nd Level
You reach into reserves of faith to gain inherent knowledge related to your deity or to create a divine effect. You gain abilities from two of your chosen domains in the list below.

Air (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a creature within 30 feet with a bolt of lightning. This ranged attack targets the creature's EAC and deals 1d6 electricity damage plus 1 electricity damage per 2 class levels.

Animal (Ex): You gain Life Science and Survival as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, once per day you can choose to roll a check with that skill twice and take the better result.

When you use Survival to handle an animal, you only require a full action to change its attitude.

Artifice (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to touch an object to repair or damage it. If you target a creature with this ability, your touch attack targets the creature's EAC. This ability inflicts or repairs 1d6 damage plus 1 damage per 2 class levels.

Chaos (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a creature within 30 feet with a bolt of multicolored energy. This ranged attack targets the creature's EAC and deals 2d6 damage plus 1 damage per class level. If the target is chaotic, it takes no damage. If the target is neutral (neither chaotic nor lawful) it takes half damage.

Charm (Ex): You gain Bluff and Diplomacy as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, once per day you can choose to roll a check with that skill twice and take the better result.

Community (Sp): You can spend 1 Resolve Point to cast *lesser remove condition*, which affects one creature within 10 feet of you per 4 class levels (minimum 1).

Darkness (Sp): You can spend 1 Resolve Point to shroud a creature you touch in darkness, granting the creature concealment for a number of rounds equal to half your class level.

Death (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to make a touch attack against a living creature. Your touch attack targets the creature's EAC, and inflicts the bleeding condition (1d6) on a successful attack.

Destruction (Su): You can spend 1 Resolve Point as a swift action to bypass damage reduction or hardness equal to half your class level. This ability lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

Earth (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a creature within 30 feet with an acid dart. This ranged attack targets the

creature's EAC and deals 1d6 acid damage plus 1 acid damage per 2 class levels.

Evil (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a creature within 30 feet with a black blot that screams in pain on a successful strike. This ranged attack targets the creature's EAC and deals 2d6 damage plus 1 damage per class level. If the target is evil, it takes no damage. If the target is neutral (neither evil nor good) it takes half damage.

Fire (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a creature within 30 feet with a fiery spark. This ranged attack targets the creature's EAC and deals 1d6 fire damage plus 1 fire damage per 2 class levels.

Glory (Sp): You can spend 1 Resolve Point and touch a creature as a standard action, granting it a bonus to a single Charisma-based skill or ability check equal to half your class level. This ability lasts for 1 hour or until the creature applies the bonus to a roll.

Good (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a creature within 30 feet with a bolt of pure light. This ranged attack targets the creature's EAC and deals 2d6 damage plus 1 damage per class level. If the target is good, it takes no damage. If the target is neutral (neither evil nor good) it takes half damage.

Healing (Sp): You can spend 1 Resolve Point and touch a living creature with the dying condition as a standard action, restoring 1d8 Hit Points plus 1 Hit Point per 2 class levels.

Knowledge (Ex): You gain Engineering, Life Science, and Mysticism as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, once per day you can choose to roll a check with that skill twice and take the better result.

Law (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a creature within 30 feet with a silver regular tetrahedron. This ranged attack targets the creature's EAC and deals 2d6 damage plus 1 damage per class level. If the target

is lawful, it takes no damage. If the target is neutral (neither chaotic nor lawful) it takes half damage.

Liberation (Su): As a reaction, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a restrained creature within 30 feet. The target can immediately attempt an Acrobatics check to escape, with a bonus equal to half your class level.

Luck (Sp): You can spend 1 Resolve Point and touch a willing creature to grant it luck. Until the beginning of your next turn, any time the target rolls a d20, it may roll twice and take the better result.

Madness (Sp): You can spend 1 Resolve Point to cast *lesser confusion*, which affects one creature within 10 feet of you per 4 class levels (minimum 1).

Magic (Sp): You can spend 1 Resolve Point to cast *detect magic* as a swift action. You automatically learn about one magic source as if you had concentrated on the same area, regardless of whether you concentrate on the same area (allowing you to learn about two magic sources if you do concentrate on the same area).

Nobility (Ex): You gain Culture and Diplomacy as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, once per day you can choose to roll a check with that skill twice and take the better result.

If you fail a Diplomacy check against a creature with noble ranking, as a swift action you can attempt the check again, albeit with a –5 penalty. You must take the result of the second check.

Plant (Ex): You gain Life Science and Survival as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, once per day you can choose to roll a check with that skill twice and take the better result.

If you have access to plants with medicinal properties, you can make Medicine checks even if you are not trained in the skill. If you are trained in the skill, you gain a +2 bonus to the skill check.

Protection (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point and touch an ally. The target gains DR 2/— for 1 round per 2 class levels.
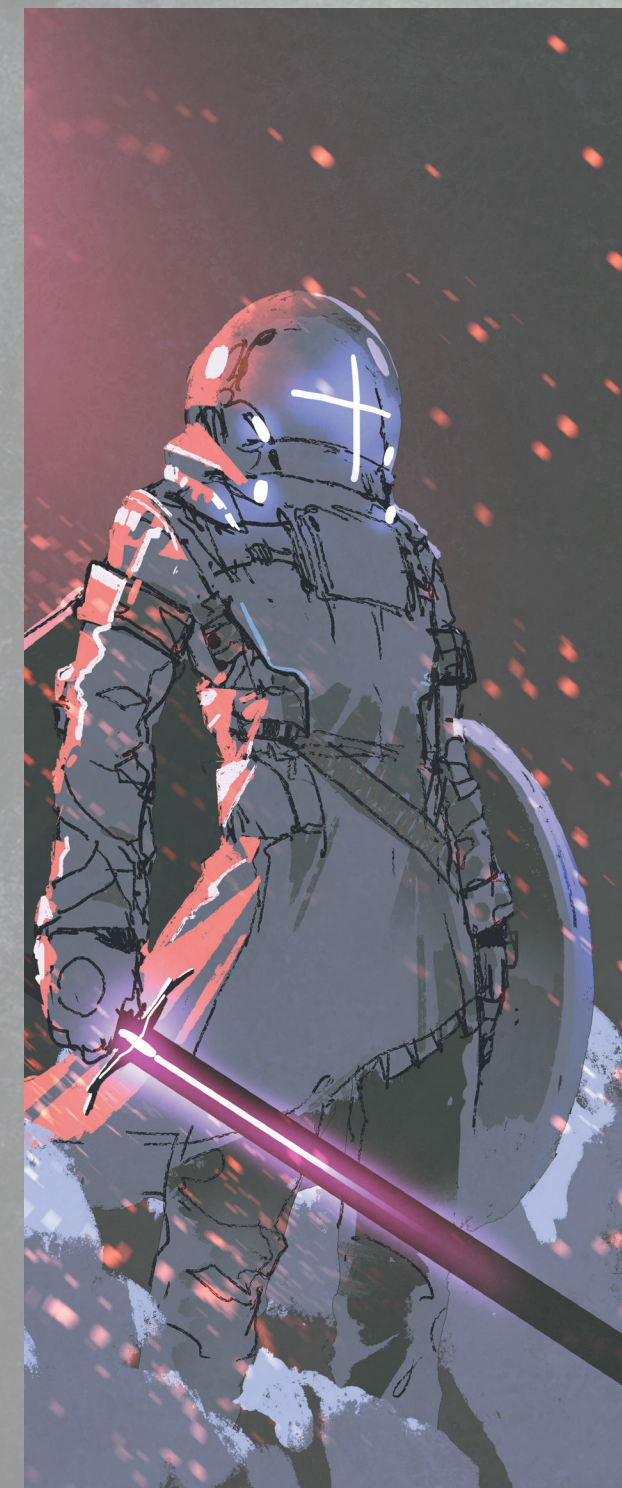
Repose (Sp): You can spend 1 Resolve Point and make a touch attack against a creature. You target the creature's EAC with the attack. If you make a successful attack, a living creature gains the staggered condition for 1 round; if the creature is already staggered it falls asleep for 1 round. Undead creatures hit by this attack are staggered for a number of rounds equal to your key ability score modifier.

Rune (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to create a blast rune in any adjacent square unoccupied by a creature. A creature entering the square takes 1d6 damage plus 1 damage per 2 class levels. The rune deals acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage, which you decide when you create the rune. The rune is invisible and lasts 1 round per class level or until discharged. It can be discovered with a Perception check and disarmed with a Mysticism check (DC 10 + half your class level + your key ability score modifier).

Strength (Su): You can spend 1 Resolve Point and touch a willing creature as a standard action. Until the beginning of your next turn, the target gains a divine bonus equal to half your class level to melee attacks, and Strength-based skill and ability checks.

Sun (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target an undead creature within 30 feet with searing light. This ranged attack targets the creature's EAC and deals 2d6 damage plus 1 damage per level.

Travel (Su): As a swift action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to ignore the effects of difficult terrain until the beginning of your next turn.

Trickery (Ex): You gain Bluff and Sleight of Hand as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, once per day you can choose to roll a check with that skill twice and take the better result.

   If you fail a Bluff check against a creature, as a swift action you can attempt the check again, albeit with a –5 penalty. You must take the result of the second check.

War (Su): You can spend 1 Resolve Point and touch a willing creature a standard action. Until the beginning of your next turn, the target gains a divine bonus equal to half your class level on melee damage rolls.

Water (Sp): As a standard action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to target a creature within 30 feet with an icicle. This ranged attack targets the creature's EAC and deals 1d6 cold damage plus 1 cold damage per 2 class levels.

Weather (Ex): You gain Physical Science and Survival as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, once per day you can choose to roll a check with that skill twice and take the better result.

When you make a Survival check to endure severe weather, you can spend 1 Resolve Point as a swift action to attempt the check again, with a +5 morale bonus. You must take the result of the second check.

Commune with Deity (Sp) 4th Level

You gain the ability to contact your deity to learn the consequences of an action you plan to take. Once per day, you can cast *augury*. At 9th level, you can use this ability twice per day. At 12th level, this ability allows you to instead cast *divination*. At 20th level, you can use this ability three times per day.

If you cast *augury* or *divination* using this ability or as a spell granted by your class, and the question directly concerns your deity's goals, the chance for a correct answer increases to 85%.

Greater Touch of Divinity 9th Level

As you bond more with your deity, the deity grants you even more power. You gain abilities from two of your chosen domains in the list below.

Air (Ex): You gain electricity resistance 10. At 16th level, this resistance improves to 20.

Animal (Sp): You can communicate with any creature of the animal type, though this doesn't make it friendly. This ability allows you to use Intimidate to bully animals, and you can use any other language-dependent effect against animals.

Once per day, you can make an animal regard you as its trusted friend and ally as if you cast *charm monster* on it (the animal receives a Will save as per the spell). At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Artifice (Ex): You gain a drone, treating your mechanic level as your class level -6 for purposes of determining the drone's abilities. You also gain the repair drone mechanic trick. At 16th level, you gain the drone meld mechanic trick.

Chaos (Su): Once per day as a swift action you can touch a weapon to give it the *anarchic* weapon fusion, which lasts for a number of rounds equal to half your class level. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Charm (Sp): You can cast *charm person* once per day as a swift action, but the duration is limited to 1 minute per 2 class levels. At 12th and 20th levels, you can use this ability one additional time per day. At 16th level, you can instead cast *charm monster*, and the duration increases to 1 hour per 2 class levels.

Community (Su): Once per day as a reaction, whenever a spell or effect targets you and one or more allies within 30 feet, you can use this ability to allow your allies to use your saving throw in place of their own. Each ally must decide individually before rolls are made. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Darkness (Ex): You can take a swift action to see in absolute darkness, even in areas of magic darkness that prevent the use of darkvision. You can use this ability for a number of rounds per day equal to half your class level. These rounds need not be consecutive.

Death (Ex): As a swift action on a successful attack against a living creature, you can inflict maximum damage to the target with a weapon or damage-dealing spell or effect. You can use this ability once per day. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Destruction (Ex): Once per day as a swift action, you become exceptionally destructive for 1 minute. You gain a divine bonus equal to half you class level on attack and damage rolls against an object, as well as on Strength checks to break an object. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Earth (Ex): You gain acid resistance 10. At 16th level, this resistance improves to 20.

Evil (Su): Once per day as a swift action you can touch a weapon to give it the *unholy* weapon fusion, which lasts for a number of rounds equal to half your class level. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Fire (Ex): You gain fire resistance 10. At 16th level, this resistance improves to 20.

Glory (Sp): You can cast *synaptic pulse* once per day. At 16th level, you can instead cast *greater synaptic pulse*. At 20th level, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Good (Su): Once per day as a swift action you can touch a weapon to give it the *holy* weapon fusion, which lasts for a number of rounds equal to half your class level. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Healing (Su): Once per day, you can spend 10 minutes to magically heal an ally up to 5 Hit Points per class level. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Knowledge (Sp): You can cast *clairvoyance/clairaudience* as a swift action once per day, but the spell lasts for only 1 minute. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can cast this one additional time per day.

Law (Su): Once per day as a swift action you can touch a weapon to give it the *axiomatic* weapon fusion, which lasts for a number of rounds equal to half your class level. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Liberation (Su): Once per day as a standard action, you can touch a creature to grant it the ability to move and attack normally for 1 minute, even if affected by a spell or effect that impedes movement. The target automatically succeeds on Acrobatics checks to escape a grapple or pin. This also allows the target to move and attack normally underwater or in other environments that would penalize movement or attacks. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Luck (Ex): Once per day as a reaction, you can reroll any one d20 roll you have just made before the results of the roll are revealed. You gain a +2 divine bonus on this reroll, but you must take the result of the second roll regardless of the result. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Madness (Su): You know when you are targeted by a spell or effect that causes the confused condition, and you can choose to fail your Will save against the spell or effect. While you are confused, you gain a +2 divine bonus on attack and damage rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws.

Once per day, you can target yourself with the *confusion* spell (no save), which lasts for 1 minute. You can target yourself with *confusion* one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Magic (Sp): Once per day, you can make a melee touch attack, which targets a creature's EAC. On a successful attack, you cast *dispel magic* as a targeted dispel to end a spell affecting the target. You gain a +2 divine bonus on your dispel check. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Nobility (Su): Once per day as a standard action, you can inspire all allies within 30 feet of you that can see and hear you. An affected ally receives a +2 divine bonus on attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws for 1 minute. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Plant (Ex): Once per day as a swift action, you can change the composition of your flesh into wood. This ability grants you DR 5/— and the benefits of the Improved Unarmed Strike feat for 1 minute. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Protection (Su): Once per day as a swift action, you emit a 30-foot aura of protection for 1 minute. All allies within the aura gain DR 2/— and energy resistance 2 that protects against acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic damage. At 12th level, the damage reduction improves to DR 5/—. At 16th level, the energy resistance increases to 5.

Repose (Sp): Once per day as a standard action, you can touch a corpse to prevent it from rising as an undead creature for 24 hours. If the target died as the result of an affliction that would cause it to rise as an undead creature, this ability delays that effect for 24 hours. The target does not count this 24-hour period against the amount of time it had died for purposes of *raise dead* and other similar spells and effects. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Rune (Su): Once per day, you can create a fusion seal as a rune that lasts for 1 hour. The fusion seal has a level equal to half your class level. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Strength (Su): Once per day as a standard action, you grant yourself a divine bonus equal to your class level to your Strength. This bonus lasts for 1 minute and applies only to Strength-based skill and ability checks. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

Sun (Sp): Once per day, you can cast *irradiate* centered on yourself. You are immune to the effects of this ability. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day.

Travel (Su): Your base speed increases by 10 feet, and you gain a fly speed equal to half your base speed. Once per day, you can impart this ability to another creature for 1 minute.

Trickery (Sp): You can cast *holographic image* (2nd-level) as a swift action once per day. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, the level of casting increases by 1.

War (Ex): Once per day as a swift action, you can grant yourself the benefits of one Combat Feat, for which you must have the prerequisites. This ability lasts for 1 minute. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day. When you use this ability, you can sacrifice an additional use to grant yourself the benefits of one Combat Feat for which you do not have the prerequisites.

Water (Ex): You gain cold resistance 10. At 16th level, this resistance improves to 20.

Weather (Sp): Once per day over the course of 1 minute, you can incrementally change the existing weather in a 1-mile radius centered on you (clear day to rain, rain to torrential downpour or thunderstorm, etc., or the reverse). This also includes wind force. This change in weather persists for 1 hour. At 12th level and every 4 levels thereafter, you can use this ability one additional time per day (allowing for stacked incremental changes).

Divine Aegis (Su)   12th Level

Once per day as a swift action, you gain the equivalent of a force field armor upgrade that lasts for 1 minute. The force field's level cannot exceed your class level -2. At 16th level, you can use this ability twice per day, and at 20th level, you can use this ability three times per day. You can sacrifice one use of this ability to extend the protection to all allies within 10 feet of you.

Divine Smite (Su)   18th Level

Once per day as a swift action, you can designate an individual creature as an enemy of your deity. For 1 minute, your weapons are treated as having the *bane* fusion against the target, and you ignore damage reduction possessed by the creature. You also gain a +4 divine bonus on saving throws against spells or effects generated by the target.
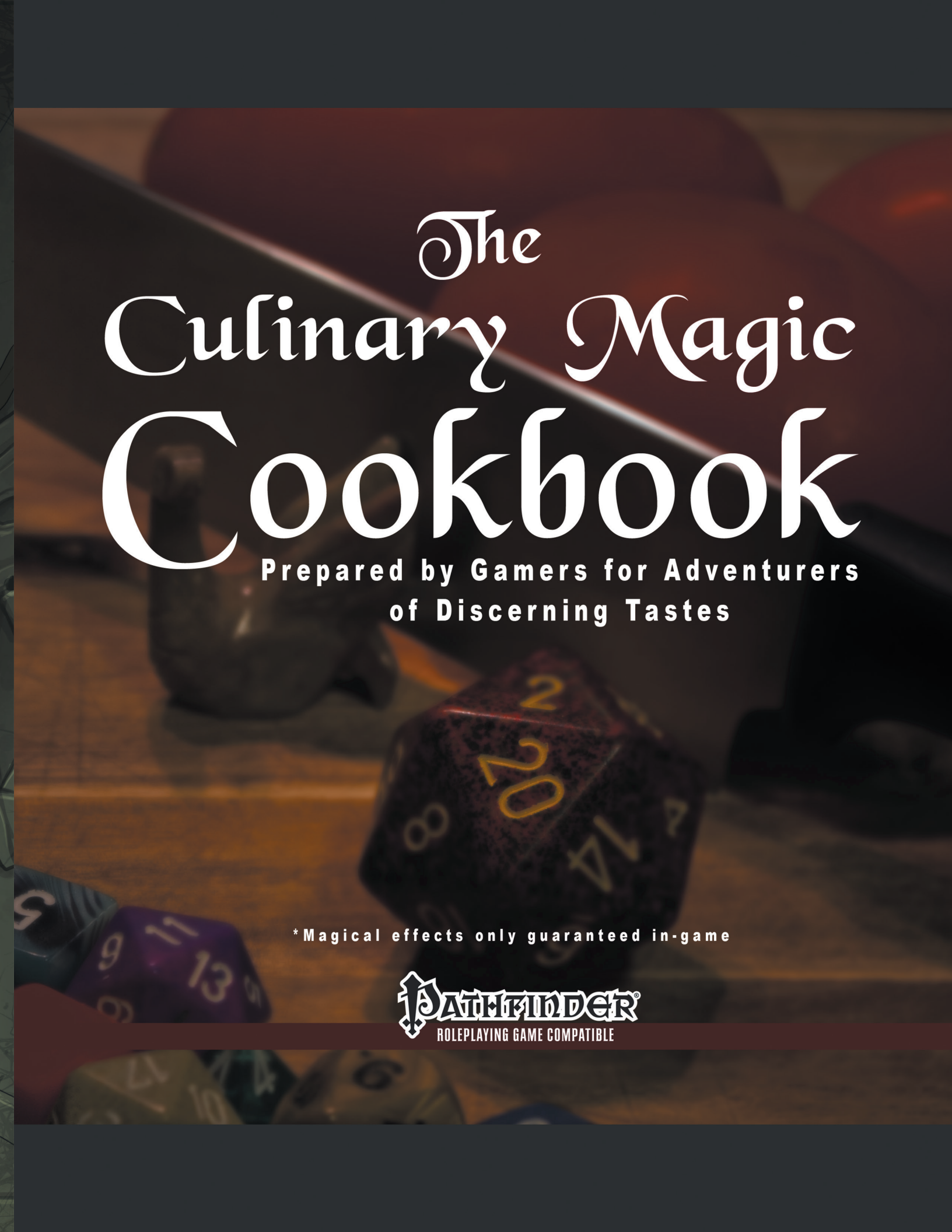
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10 Minor Weapon Modifications (5e)
an excerpt from Rite's 55 Minor Weapon Modifications

By Owen K.C. Stephens

1. Ailerons: (any) +25% The armor has fold-out control surfaces that increase maneuverability when flying. This does not grant you the ability to fly, only assist you if you can fly from another source or system. Your maneuverability when flying increases by one step, and the armor's armor check penalty does not apply to Acrobatics checks made to fly. If you already had perfect maneuverability, you instead gain a +4 bonus to Acrobatics checks made to fly.

2. Ammo Lugs: (any) +10% The armor has fold-out lugs that can have ammo magazines, batteries, or similar ammunition containers attached, and pop-out into the correct position to reload weapons. You do not need a spare hand to pull out ammunition or load it into a weapon you are wielding.

3. Anticorrosion Coasting: (any) +5% The armor has been treated to prevent corrosion, and does not normally degrade over time even if it goes without maintenance. If you take the corrode critical hit effect, you take half damage from it each round. Other forms of acid damage effect your normally.

4. Armordroid System: (heavy or powered) +20% The armor has an artificial neutral network that can link the armor's systems to its wearer's physiology. The armor can place one cybernetic augmentation in an armor upgrade slot (at the normal cost and time for adding an augmentation). The wearer benefits from the augmentation when wearing the armor as if it was their augmentation. A suit of armor cannot have more than one augmentation with the armordroid system.

5. AutoDoc System: (heavy or powered, must be item level 11 or higher) +100% The armor has an advanced system of build-in medical equipment and an onboard computer capable of using them. If you are reduced to 0 Hit Points, your autodoc can attempt to administer emergency medical treatment to you, even despite you being unconscious. On subsequent rounds on your turn, your autodoc takes a standard action to administer first aid. Once it has done so, you can spend 2 Resolve Points to recover a number of Hit Points equal to the armor's item level. Your armor cannot use this mod on anyone but you nor use it if you are dead or have fewer than 2 RP remaining. You can't benefit from this treatment more than once every 24 hours.

6. Automatic Fitting System: (any) +10% The armor has a series of motors and latches that can be programed to cause the armor to fit itself automatically to one preprogramed wearer. This is a full action, and you must be adjacent to the armor. Programming the system to fit to a new wearer takes one hour and requires you to have ranks in Computers and Engineering equal to the armor's item level.

7. Bitter: (any) +10% The armor is coated in a mix of chemicals that are specifically designed to be extremely unpleasant to taste to most species in the galaxy. If a creature bites or swallows whole the armor, the creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 13 +1/2 armor's item level). On a failed save, the creature takes a -1 penalty to any other bite attacks against the target, or vomits up the target if the armor was swallowed whole.

8. Blessed: (any) +50% The armor is made of materials blessed by various priests, and includes patterns, talismans, and materials shown to resist accursed energies. You gain a +1 enhancement bonus to saving throws against curses.

9. Blueprinted Articulation: (any) +25% The armor is custom-designed to work with the movements, size, and joint builds of one specific creature. When wearing the armor, this creature treats its armor check penalty as being one less severe (though it never becomes a bonus).

10. Camera: (any) +5% The armor has a camera which can record and broadcast, as if it had the camera mechanic drone mod.

Table: Minor Armor Upgrades Costs

Ailerons	+25%
Ammo Lugs	+10%
Anticorrosion Coasting	+5%
Armordroid System	+20%
AutoDoc System	+100%
Automatic Fitting System	+10%
Bitter	+10
Blessed	+50%
Blueprinted Articulation	+25%
Camera	+5%

Voices of the Industry
an Interview with Liz Courts

By Lj Stephens

Heya Liz! Thank you very much for giving us a few minutes of your time!

Thank you for the interview! I don't do these very often, do I look alright?
adjusts human mask, brushes off bits of animal hair

Perfect! You are an illustrator, an editor, you've done web content, layout, graphic design. Whew! You are quite accomplished! What else have you done?

Oh dear. I have done quite a bit, haven't I? In addition to those skills, I am also a cartographer, author, and developer, and I'm dipping my toes into video editing. I also have a host of craft and homesteading skills.

You want me on your side in the Post-Apocalypse or the Hopepunk future, just sayin'. Just don't call on me to knit or crochet, though.

Really? So what secret crafting and homesteading skills do you have that would surprise us?

Hah! I don't know if they're *secret*, but I know how to quilt, garden, butcher, safely cut down a tree, take care of chickens, and am generally pretty good at basic engineering problems.

What did you do officially for Paizo and what did you do unofficially for freelance there?

I worked at Paizo for six years, and in that time, I went from customer service representative to community manager, but the bulk of the time I was there was as the webstore specialist. If it was for sale on Paizo's website, I usually had my fingers on it at some point, and I made a special effort to make the experience for third-party publishers the best it could be there. Freelance-wise, the work I've done for Paizo includes an Adventure Path support article here and there, some creatures, but my favorite that I've done is probably Cayden's Hall in Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Temples. For Starfinder, I designed several of the maps in the Starfinder Flip-Mat line...and I am not sorry for anything that happens on either the Ghost Ship or Hospital maps.
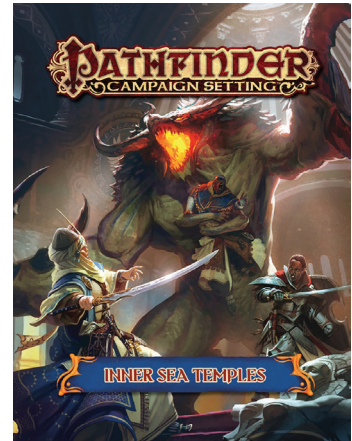
What are you doing now?

I am a full-time self-employed graphic designer and illustrator, currently at large in the high deserts of New Mexico.

How did you get into the gaming industry?

Kind of by accident? This is back in the Before Times, when Paizo still had the Dragon and

Dungeon magazine licenses from Wizards of the Coast. I was very active in the forum community at the time, and I was approached by a group of industry writers (the Werecabbages) to assist with building a forum site for them. At the time, I was working in web design and IT, so this was pretty close to what I did every day (and was certainly more interesting, content-wise). There were a lot of writing prompts and tasks to help you noodle through creative blocks, and edited versions of those forum threads ended up being published in GM Gems from Goodman Games.

What was your first roleplaying experience? The game? What kind of experience was it?

I'm pretty sure I've always been telling stories and acting them out in some fashion, so my origin story is a bit blurry. I do recall when my brother brought home a thin red book, though, with a fierce-looking dragon and a fighter on the cover. It was a lovely summer day, that kind of dry, warm, and pine-scented hour that feels unique to the high deserts of the world (I was living in Oregon at the time). I can distinctly recall my wet hair dripping onto my shoulders as I was mesmerized by the art, the words, and the map symbols. So, yeah--Dungeons & Dragons was my first game, my first character was a mage named Fireball, and I remember her first death was related to being crushed by one of those map symbols in the Caves of Chaos (chay-oss, because I didn't know how to pronounce the word at the time).

Not too long after that, my dad was reassigned to England, and was that ever fuel for the creative fire. Plus, "Hey, do you play D&D" was the best icebreaker for the new kids that just arrived on base.

How long were you in England? What sort of experiences did you have there?

I lived there for five years, and I turned ten on the flight over, and it was pretty great overall--even though we were in a friendly, allied country, there was still a sense of not really belonging, and it was a surreal experience when you were forcibly reminded that you were a minor on a military base in a foreign country. It's an experience that not a lot of kids have, and though there were downsides, I do value that perspective that it gave me. My dad was stationed at RAF Chicksands, which is one of those Air Force bases that has no airstrip of any kind. (He was in "electronic intelligence", which is a fun euphemism.) The base in question had a thousand year-old Cistercian monastery that got

converted into a manor when Henry VIII was doing his reorganization. It had cedars that the Crusaders brought back. It even has a great ghost story. Huge hedges that you could get lost in.

It was the best imagination fuel.

We did make an effort to visit a lot of castles while we were there. Dover Castle is still my favorite though.

Any interesting stories from your early career?

Several, but I'll keep to the short ones. The first one is how my name came to be in every copy of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. At the time, Adam Daigle was doing some freelance work for Paizo with Wes Schneider, and in preparation for the release of the first edition, they needed some grunt work done on formatting the System Reference Document text over for the new system. I *think* I worked on the magic items?

I suppose it says something that I've done so much and many different kinds of work that I honestly have forgotten a lot of them. This is also probably why I keep a list of my credits, because much like Dr. Henry Jones, I wrote it down so I wouldn't *have* to remember it.

I can't mention my career in gaming without mentioning PaizoCon and Wayfinder, though. PaizoCon started out as a "Huh, what if..." thread on Paizo's forums, Tim Nightengale, being local to Paizo AND playing in one of James Jacobs' games at the time, corralled some Paizo staff into gathering together, and that's how it started: a bunch of fans, proudly holding their printed alpha copies of Pathfinder, eating Costco pizza, and gaming with the staff. Looking back on it, it's surreal to see how much it's grown since then. After Paizo took over the convention officially, Tim, Hugo Solis, and I mused that some sort of fan offering for the staff would be awesome to do. One of the things that I think we all loved about the monthly Dragon and Dungeon magazines was the monthly dose of inspiration and ideas that it provided, but as anybody who's worked on a product before, and as BB King sang, the thrill is gone by the time it shows up. What we wanted to do was to recapture that sense of joy

for Paizo's staff with a fanzine, filled with articles and illustrations done by fans, expanding upon the world of Golarion that was slowly being created and revealed to us. I hope we did that (still hope), and I know that under Tim's able guidance, that is still one of the goals of Wayfinder.

My last story is that I got appendicitis less than a week before my first Gen Con, where I was going to be volunteering for Paizo. Great times!

Ack! Did you make it? How much did that suck?

I did! I am ever so glad that I had an upgraded first class flight on my way there, because airplane belt rubbing across sutures and scars would not have been great. It was my first time visiting the Midwest as well, and it came for me it all of its muggy hot humidity. The first couple of days were rough, mostly because the tap water really did a number on my recovery process. Once I figured that out, sleep, pain meds, and water saved me.

Are you still involved with web design? Asking for a friend.

Kind of sort of? I like to say that I know enough to get me in trouble.

So moving from Seattle to New Mexico … that must have been a change. What took you there? Is Taos the artist's dream that everyone talks about?

It should come as no surprise to anybody living in the greater Seattle area that it is *expensive* to live there. After my partner was laid off from his job, the cost/agony analysis of finding a job that could pay well enough plus commute plus plus plus just didn't add up. He's got family in New Mexico, so having a support network available while we got back on our feet was essential. I have not been to Taos (yet), but Santa Fe is amazing--I went to an artist material expo recently and ugh. So good. Over all, it feels like artists are more embraced here, especially indigenous creators. I recently attended Indigenous Comic Con, and it was such a beautiful eye-opening experience to go to a show where white European culture was not the focus.

But enough about the real world, let's get back to fantasy! I understand you're now publishing stock art. (Editor's note: In the interest of full disclosure, the interviewer is part owner in the company that publishes Liz's stock art)

I am! I am always drawing characters and creatures, but I don't really have an outlet for the results,

and being self-employed, I gotta be able to recoup my time investment on a piece. A lot of the work that I have done with third-party publishers involves how a supplement gets made, and one of the biggest stumbling blocks has always been art. Stock art allows publishers to push past that block to the finish line. I also have my Tabula Arcanum maps, which are stock maps that publishers can use. Tabula Arcanum is a means to also do a pet project of mine: take an existing historical structure and modify it for tabletop roleplaying games. The next one I want to do is the Roman Baths, but someday I want to do the Palace of Knossos or Hearst Castle.

So many ideas, so little time in the day!

Any last bits of advice for anyone out there who's just starting out?

Ask yourself, "Who do you want to work for?" and set your goals to there—always keep an eye out for open calls! Build up samples of work by publishing writing on a blog or a portfolio (only work for free if it's for yourself). Rejection will happen--everybody goes through this. Choose to use it as a learning opportunity and always keep moving forward.

Editor's note: Also available from Liz is the Section 15 Generator site. Great resource for OGL compliance. It just didn't come up during the interview. :D

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Reviews

This issue's reviews, like the last issue, are all Starfinder-related, all from Everyman Games, and they all get Endzeitgeist's Seal of Approval. Enjoy!
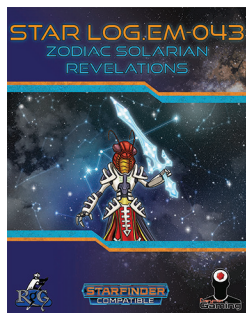
Star Log.EM-043: Zodiac Solarian Revelations (SFRPG)

Rules precision and amazing mythweaving – take to the stars!

This installment of the Star Logs.EM-series clocks in at 8 pages,1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 2 pages of SRD, leaving us with 4 pages of content, so let's take a look!

So, know how the solarian's powers are drawn from the stars? Yeah, you indubitably are familiar with the flavor of the class…so it's…kinda weird how the abilities don't actually tie in with, you know, the stars, right?

Enter this pdf! To explain this: let's take a look at "Akyrea, the Noble" – a photon revelation, this one lets you target 1 + photon attunement points targets within 30 ft. to dazzle them for one round AND make the target take a -2 penalty to the next attack roll against an ally of your choice, or a -2 AC penalty versus the next attack against it. Basically, a variant of covering/harrying fire that doesn't stack with it, but feels right. A Fort-save negates them, but here's what sets this apart. This is not just an ability. Ähem. *

"Akyrea was a vain kitsune who boasted of her nine, resplendent tails.

According to legend, the god Azan grew tired of her bluster, and placed her among the heavens where she could no longer garner for the attention of his subjects. To his dismay, Akyrea transformed into a constellation so she might dazzle mortals for all time."

And suddenly, a per se nice ability has what was sorely missing from many a Starfinder ability: A mythological underpinning. A context. A solarian screaming "Akyrea shall blind you! Or "Akyrea guide my allies!" is intrinsically more awesome than just rattling off mechanical benefits. There is a graviton revelation based on the scholar that developed the Xa-Osoro-system's first thrusters. "Bloodstar, the Fiend" lets you generate a gravity field that penalizes Strength for carrying capacity – and here would be a good note to state that, mechanically, attunement really matters here. The more attunement points you have, the more effective many of these are. This makes the whole attunement engine run more strategically and helps make the material within stronger.

What about inhaling and absorbing nearby poison effects that, if you succeed, can be converted into a line of plasma? Heck yeah, and guess what? The persistence of plasma points to unleash these scaling lines are dependent on your attunement for duration. This is mechanically complex, slots seamlessly into the solarian engine AND it has flavor, tying it to the legendary Celestion Star Dragon. Come on! (And yes, fyi – radiation, toxic atmosphere etc. are all covered. No cheesing here.)

Adding a conservative steal to attacks, making weapons behave as thrown weaponry…and what about a dazzling anti-laser shield that may actually be a nasty surprise for targets that would end e.g. an invisibility on you (Nitpick: spell reference not italicized)? Natural weapons that are made from stellar matter, in a nod towards Rovagu…wait, Rovathun, the Beast? Yep. What about a photon attunement tailored after a famous seeress, which allows you to reduce photon attunement as a reaction to get to roll twice and take the better result, or impose rolling twice and taking the worse result on an enemy? What about tapping into the powers of Valkrona, the angel, to imbue your vehicle with photon energy, increasing its speed – or, for starships, their mobility? Badass solarian pilot? Check. There also is a vacuum channel, and a temporary Hit Point grant, that taps into mighty Yggdrasil itself. And guess what? No, the latter can't be cheesed.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good on a formal and rules-language level. I noticed no serious glitches. Layout adheres to the series' two-column full-color standard, and the pdf comes with nice artworks by Jacob Blackmon. The pdf has no bookmarks, but needs none.

What happens when Alexander Augunas and David N. Ross join forces? Awesome, that's what! This pdf remedied something that I didn't notice I was missing in SFRPG – it adds some mythweaving to class abilities. As much as I like my precise and very tech-like aesthetics in how clinical and precise rules-language in SFRPG works, I never realized how much context like these little paragraphs within actually adds to the game, particularly for a class like the solarian. Beyond being mechanically interesting and tapping seamlessly into the core attunement engine, the revelations herein ooze style, context and flair. They are more than numbers, clinical debuffs or buffs or damage. They have character and identity, and that makes them intrinsically more compelling. When I do get to play as a player (I mostly GM), I tend to be quite the power-gamer, but much like many power-gamers

I know, sometimes an ability just fits too well into a vision you have, and you take it for the fluff. I know I do that. Well, here, we have the best of both worlds: Mechanically relevant and distinct ability that also ooze flavor, that can inspire warcries, concepts and builds. I love this little pdf. It ups the game for what small class-rules expansions can bring to the table. 5 stars + seal of approval, given sans hesitation.

You can reward this pdf for having both compelling lore AND neat rules by getting it here on OBS!

Endzeitgeist out.
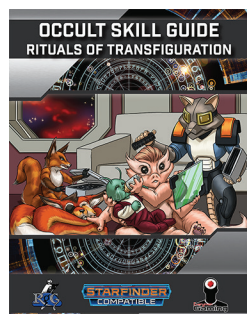
Occult Skill Guide: Rituals of Transformation (SFRPG)

Yep, age-changing rituals included…

The first installment of the Occult Skill Guide series clocks in at 27 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 2 pages of SRD, leaving us with 23 pages of content, so let's take a look!

This review was moved up in my reviewing queue as a prioritized review at the request of my patreon supporters.

All right, we begin this pdf with a brief and concise sense of what we nowadays, in a nonacademic context, associate with the term "occult", in particular in conjunction with roleplaying games, wherein the paranormal, the magical may even be mundane. This brief paragraph already establishes a goal regarding the tone of the designs within, is easy to grasp. An important note: While this supplement does contain sample rituals, its focus lies on presenting the ritual engine and allowing you to make your own rituals. If you just want plug and play, this will have a few rituals for you, sure – but the main draw is that this provides you the ability to make your own rituals.

After this, we take a look at the rituals known in the Nova Age, beginning, as is prudent, with the establishing of terminology. A "Ceremony" denotes the physical acts that must be performed in order to make use of a ritual. The "Lore" section details the history and key information of a given ritual. Thirdly, there would be the "Seal" – this would be a complex physical marking, a pattern, a circle – you get the idea. These three are collectively known as "ritual components" and must be known to learn a ritual.

A "Failure Consequence" denotes pretty much what it says on the tin. Of course, where there's failure, there also is success, and "Success Consequences"

are similarly codified. Rituals also have a "Focus Component" – specific items used to cast a ritual. These are NOT destroyed by performing the ritual. In contrast to that "Material Components" are required as well, but these ARE consumed by performing the ritual. Rituals have a Primary Ritualist, who determines the ritual's caster level, attempts all skill checks and makes decisions for the ritual's effects. Secondary ritualists can attempt a skill check to assist the primary ritualist (here, there's a little typo – should be ritualist, not ritual) with an enhancement bonus to ONE skill check attempted during the ritual. A ritual may have a number of secondary ritualists equal to the primary ritualist's highest mental ability score modifier.

So that's the terminology – simple, precise, and pretty much analogue to spellcasting.

I already mentioned that rituals need to be learned – in order to do so, you have to have 3 times the ritual's level skill ranks in the ritual's key skill. Researching one of the three ritual components takes a number of days equal to the ritual's level, so researching all 3 components of a level 7 ritual would take a total of at least 21 days (3 components times 7, 7 days per component). However, in order to make a day count towards reducing research, you need to make a Mysticism skill check against DC 15 + 1.5 times the ritual's level. Beating a DC by 10 or more earns you two successes towards the research. Once you have thus mastered all components of the ritual, you add it to your rituals known. There is no maximum number of rituals you can learn.

If this sounds elegant, you'd be right – we have basically a pretty smooth research framework here. The pdf goes further and walks the reader, step by step, through the research process as well as the respective limitations – for example, a ritual that affects an area must have a seal large enough to encompass said area. The respective aspects are concisely presented – secondary ritualists can, for example aid or act in place of a primary ritualist. Interesting here – while the entirety of secondary assistance is treated as an enhancement bonus, these may explicitly stack up to twice the level of the ritual, which renders the wording (the bonus here is untyped in the verbiage) makes sense upon close reading. The ritual's save DC would be 10 + ½ the primary ritualist's caster level + highest mental ability score, +1 for each successful skill check attempted by a secondary ritualist, up to a bonus equal to the half the ritual's level. (Nitpick: Should state round down, but that's a convention by now, so chalk this up to being an aesthetic gripe.) Rituals

may be paused, but doing so makes things harder – and can disrupt the ritual. There is a hard cap to how long you can suspend it. Still, this codifies one of the most iconic scenes in proper rules – you know, the "disrupt the ritual" angle featured in a gazillion of books?

The pdf, however, goes beyond simply describing rituals and how they're formatted; the book also spends a sidebar explaining the archaic ritual practices and why they work in a meta-reality context. I was surprised to see this, and while not necessarily required to subscribe to the explanation offered, it does provide GMs that don't want to dream up their own explanations a way to properly explain their function when in a pinch. I really appreciate this.

Rituals are presented in a format that obviously makes use of the former, and as such, is pretty close to how spells work, though casting times can be significantly longer. Similarly, the rituals may have characteristics as prerequisites, like being of a certain age, race, etc. An alternate way to call components would be reagents, and this is indeed how the terminology is used in the rituals themselves. The ardent reader will notice a difference between material component and reagent – I assume this to be due to didactic reasons: The beginning introduces the notion that rituals have material components, the detailed side of things clarifies that they are called reagents. Still, I couldn't help but feel that a sentence à la "Material components for rituals are commonly known as Reagents." Would have further enhanced clarity here. A living creature is required sometimes to power a ritual – while known as "Sacrifice", said creatures need not necessarily be slain, but they're always negatively impacted by the ritual. Some rituals also require specific sites to perform them. It should be noted that, obviously, the sacrifice and site components do not universally apply. In cases where SR applies, the primary ritualist is used to determine a ritual's means to bypass SR.

And that's the theoretical framework, the rules-chassis, if you will. You may have noticed that this does work completely in line with the best ritual engines as well as the Advanced Skill Guide, though the latter book obviously is not required to make use of this pdf.

Before we get to the meat of the rituals, it should be noted that quite a bunch of supplemental material is provided. Assume appearance, a level 3-6 spell, is based on Alien Archive 2#s polymorph, save that it allows you to assume the appearance of a target of whom you have a piece of their body (blood,

hair, etc.) or a photo. The pdf also features a new race, SROs – short for "sentient robotic organism." These may be Small (+2 Dexterity) or Medium (+2 Strength), are constructs with the technological subtype (but do have a Constitution score), and get 2 Hit Points. SROs count as living creatures for the purpose of healing, but spells that are not targeted at repairing constructs are halved in their potency – but RAW for Hit Points. Engineering is used instead of Medicine. SROs have an integrated standard datajack and comm. Unit that may be removed from a helpless SRO. They also have a built-in cybernetic component with an item level no greater than ½ character level, minimum 1. These systems do not count towards the cybernetics systems limitations. SROs are immune to bleed, disease, death effects, poison, nonlethal damage and sleep effects, unless these also affect constructs. They are affected by spells or effects that usually only target humanoids, but get a +4 racial bonus to saves versus the like. They need to recharge (sleep equivalent) and are unimpeded by vacuum. While I do like this race in concept and, for the most part, in execution, it is a very potent one – the immunity to poisons and diseases in Starfinder is a potentially very potent draw. Depending on the power-level of the campaign, I probably would ban them.

The pdf tightly codifies the new aging descriptor, which manipulates the target's age and is something I enjoyed to see. (Fyi: Aging rules for SFRPG can be found here!) We also get a doppelgänger graft template, and an organic variant of steel that heals itself – cool! One of the main draws, however, would be the concise and easy to grasp step-by-step procedure that provides the tools for the GM to design her own rituals: You basically tally up component points, and can use backlash and similar things to make the ritual less costly. Skills associated with ritual types, sample DCs,s kill checks per step, tables that list prices by component points…this section is pretty much inspired and ensures that you'll get a ton more out of this pdf than the sample rituals presented. Other designers probably would have sat on these, but here, we get the raw ingredients for unbridled creativity.

The pdf also contains 5 sample rituals that are interesting indeed; beyond aforementioned supplemental components, the rituals also feature encounter-suggestions for their use and legends that contextualize the rituals. Incantation of Homogenization allows a homogeneous group of ritualists to change race, class, age, feats, features …and can be utterly inspiring (a ceremony of magical adoption) or frightening (Resistance is

futile!). Roboticizing Rites allow you to change augmentations, transform into droids or make a target into a SRO. Seal of Stolen Time can be sued to get rid of diseases, regrow limbs, adjust ability scores, restore ability scores or, you guessed it, modify age! Skinsuit Transmogrification would be the Starfinder iteration of the skinsuit ritual in general theme; however, the execution is completely different, making e.g. use of the cool Pop Culture Catalogue: Clothing pdf. Aforementioned encounter hooks/adventure seeds? Pretty damn exciting, mind you! One for this ritual is "The Ultimate Cosplay." Twisted. Speaking of which: Twisting of Flesh and Soul is basically the ultimate ritual of transfiguration: Race change,ody repair, turning into mindless objects, and so on, this is level 6 for a reason. Notice something? The rituals all have the leitmotif noted in the title, but become progressively better and thus, higher level, teaching by showing here.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting on a formal level isn't as tight as usual for Everyman Gaming – I noticed 2 "See page $"-references and "reagents" is misspelled "regents", for example. On a rules language level, this may require a bit of close-reading from the reader, but generally is a precise example of the technical and efficient writing we're accustomed to see from the other, though the "rounded down" note did go missing a few times. These generally don't impact the integrity of the file in a negative manner, though. Layout deserves special mention: The sci-fi-occult border with its blending of tech- and esoteric aesthetics is AWESOME. It's a small thing, but I love it. The pdf comes with plenty of cool, original full-color artworks by Jacob Blackmon, and it comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

I'll come out and say: Formally, when it comes to typos and the like, this is not exactly Alexander Augunas' most refined book. While fully functional, it does sport some minor snafus. THAT BEING SAID, I rate books on more aspects than my ability to nitpick details in the rules-language: Components like complexity of attempted design, originality, usefulness for the GM/player, impact on the game, potential etc. all feature in the equation… and more. And while I try, very hard, to be neutral in my ratings, I can't always help myself. This is one such case.

You see, if there is something about Starfinder that I thought it was lacking regarding magic, it's rituals. I'm a huge fan of the concept, and seeing an engine this robust this early in the life-cycle of the system, particularly from an author

and publisher with a history of providing further support to released books made me smile from ear to ear. Furthermore, this book does go the extra mile in plenty of instances: From the legends to the encounters, this oozes the feeling that the author really cares, that he's passionate about the subject matter. This is particularly evident in e.g. the skinsuit ritual's Starfinder version. It may be the same concept as in PFRPG, but the execution is rather different. It's small touches like this that elevate the pdf for me. This genuinely made me more excited about the game. It's a pdf I will use again and again. And it makes Starfinder's magic feel more magical, more distinct from technology – which is a huge boon as far as I'm concerned. I can't wait to see more of them. I genuinely loved this little supplement.

As noted in the beginning:

While this supplement does contain sample rituals, its focus lies on presenting the ritual engine and allowing you to make your own rituals. If you just want plug and play, this will have a few rituals for you, sure – but you may end up slightly disappointed. The main draw is that this provides you the ability to make your own rituals. It empowers you to let your creative juices flow, and add some genuinely cool cyber-esoterica to your game – and I know that I'll certainly be using these rules in conjunction with the GrimmerSpace setting that'll hit kickstarter soon.

How to rate this? Difficult. I could see this being a 3-star-file for folks that want plug and play rituals and that are nitpicky about typo-level glitches. For me, as a person, this is probably one of my favorite SFRPG-supplements to date; as a person, this is easily 5 stars +seal of approval to me, and if you're like me and enjoy making magic feel mysterious and potentially dark, then consider this to be an all but required EZG Essential as well. I know I do. As far as my official verdict is concerned, I will designate this in between the two, at 4.5 stars, rounded up. This does get my seal of approval, seeing how much I loved it, but whether you like this one or not, is more contingent on your personal tastes and what you want of SFRPG than most files.

You can get this cool and inspiring book here on OBS!

Missed the Pop Culture Catalog that makes clothes matter? You can find it here!

Do you think that age should matter in SFRPG? You can find a handy pdf to make that happen here!

4.5, rounded up – not perfect, but inspired and capable of providing years of cool moments!

Endzeitgeist out.

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And be sure to mark your calendars for 4/19 because we're celebrating my dad's birthday by opening up print on demand for the Book of Many Things: Campaign Exclusive Content from 2018. Available only for 3 days (through 4/22) on Drivethru RPG.

Art Credit: Alex Wisner - Shellback Press