

ARCADIA



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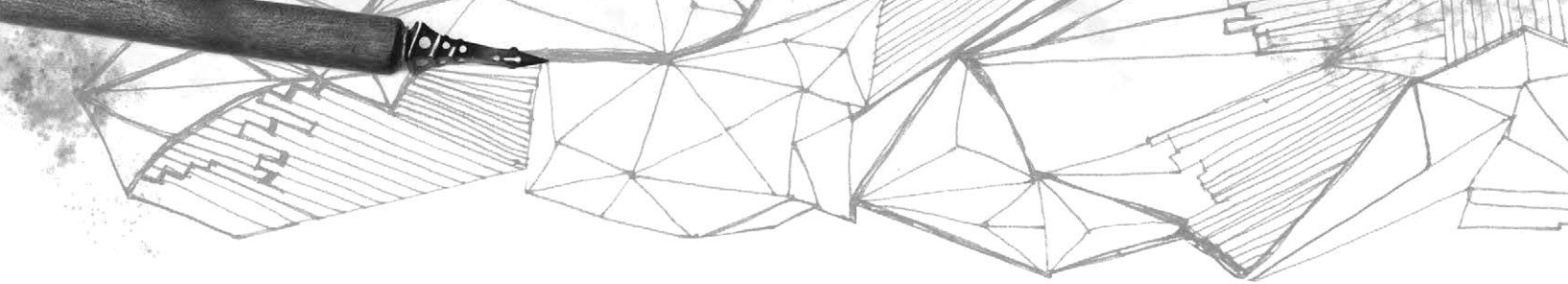
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dragons.

They're pretty cool. That about covers it, right?

Okay, there's a *lot* more to say about dragons than I can touch on in one letter! I need to get that out of the way. Dragons are a big deal in mythology, folktales, and fantasy stories around the world: the Bakunawa who swallowed the moon in Filipino mythos; the multi-headed Greek hydra; Apep, the Egyptian serpent-dragon god of chaos; the many dragons of Chinese mythology who embody power, luck, and water; the Norse dragon Níðhöggr who guards the World Tree....

Dragons are *the* quintessential fantasy creature, perhaps because their many variations can fulfill different roles—a defender, a predator, an ancient keeper of wisdom, an embodiment of avarice—yet remain recognizable as *dragons*. Since dragons have a mix of reptilian, feline, and avian characteristics (scales, powerful and lithe bodies, and sometimes wings), they're easy to visualize based on familiar creatures in our world. They're iconic because of their versatility, their ubiquity, and the fact that they are just fantastic enough to feel like awesome fantasy creatures *but* just familiar enough to feel like they could really exist.¹

In fact, a lot of fantasy is like that—what if this thing were weird and wild and totally different, but in other ways profoundly the same?² What if there were magic and dragons and demons, but people still create civilizations and art and fall in love? What if we could go on epic adventures and punch bad people in the face with no legal repercussions and not pay freelance taxes *and* know that we did something important and worthwhile that no one else could do? And also ride a majestic dragon into battle against the forces of evil?

Right. So, anyway. Dragons.

The pages of this month's *ARCADIA* are filled with a delightful variety of draconic creatures. In “Granny’s Concoctions,” [Jessica Marcrum](#) taps into the archetype of a dragon disguised as another creature (I won’t spoil any more than that, just in case). In “The Gilded Flight,” [Carlos Cisco](#) explores the idea of a gold dragon whose noble intentions were corrupted and twisted into greed, manipulation, and an unhealthy devotion to becoming a god via the free market economy. And in “We Ride Dragons,” [Willy Abeel](#) of “Mounted Combat” fame brings us new draconic mounts, a guide to creating your own mounts (check out the [video version](#), too!), and two legendary omnimounts to carry the entire party between worlds.

Lots of things are happening here at MCDM, but our love for telling epic fantasy stories is a constant. Dragons were the first peoples of Orden (stay tuned for more lore on the world of Orden and on the Timescape) but they aren’t around anymore—so adventurers are one of the few people likely to meet one. In your own settings, dragons can be as rare or numerous as you want (a world of only dragons—little dragons, bigger dragons, biggest dragons? I’m going to write that down...). The dragons that appear in your settings and stories are *your* twist on classic fantasy and part of what makes your adventures yours alone. Dream your dragon dreams—then forward, into adventure!

De somnio ad itinere,
Hannah Rose
Managing Editor

¹ Speaking of which, Google results for “dragon” include “When did dragons go extinct?” and “Is there any real dragon in the world?” Are people okay?

² Side note: I love stories that sit in the overlap of fantasy and sci-fi, like the *Dragonriders of Pern* (a little dated, but absolutely formative for me) and *The Locked Tomb* series.

WE RIDE DRAGONS

MIGHTY DRACONIC MOUNTS
(AND GUIDELINES FOR MAKING YOUR OWN!)

by Willy Abeel

THE DRAGONS FOUND BETWEEN THESE PAGES HAVE ALL BEEN RECORDED WORKING IN TANDEM WITH RIDERS. SOME DRAGONS MAY CHALLENGE THE NOTION OF FORGING BONDS WITH THE SMALL AND SHORT-LIVED. OTHERS KNOW FULL WELL HOW POWERFUL SUCH A BOND CAN BECOME.

WILL YOU FUMBLE THE REINS AND BE OVERWHELMED BY THE MIGHT OF THESE BEINGS,
OR WILL YOU RIDE A DRAGON?

In “Jumping on Mounted Combat” in *ARCADIA 1* and the sequel “Swimming Through Sand to Sea” in *ARCADIA 4*, we’ve been exploring new mounted stat blocks, new actions for the rider, magic items and features for transporting mounts, modifying powerful creatures to be easier to ride, and alternative locomotion options. It’s all led to this: allowing adventurers to ride dragons!

This article provides a thunder of dragon mounts who are ready to ride. Then, it explores how mounts are made using the mounted combat rules in *ARCADIA* and provides a method for making powerful creatures into more manageable stat blocks. Finally, it tops things off with two new omnimounts who can carry the entire party across vast distances and even between planes.

RIDING IN RE-REVIEW

You use the following rules (which are largely the same as in the core rules) to control a mounted creature in combat:

- A creature must be willing, be at least one size category larger than the rider, and have the proper anatomy to serve as a mount.
- In combat, the mount shares the rider’s turn. The rider and mount work in tandem, and can take their respective actions in any order during their turn. The mount

can move and take the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge action on their own, or they wait for the command of their rider.

- The rider can expend half their movement to dismount or remount (unless they take the Vaulting Attack bonus action described below).
- If an effect moves the mount against the mount’s will, or the rider is knocked prone while mounted, the rider must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall off the mount.
- If the mount provokes an opportunity attack, the attacker can target the mount or the rider.

With the Mounted Combat ruleset, the rider also gains access to two new bonus actions while mounted.

Mount Action. While mounted, the rider can use a bonus action to command the mount to take one of the actions in the mount’s stat block.

Vaulting Attack. While mounted, the rider can use a bonus action to dismount spectacularly. The rider must make a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a success, the rider vaults from their mount up to a distance equal to 5 feet × their proficiency bonus, and the next attack they make before the end of their turn has advantage. Otherwise, the rider falls prone in an unoccupied space adjacent to the mount and the rider’s speed becomes 0 until the start of their next turn.

DRACONIC MOUNTS

In addition to the green dragon mount below, three new dragons—the cobblewyrms, the draconfly, and the shadogar—appear in this article as new mount options. They are new dragon types, separate from chromatic or metallic dragons.

The cobblewyrms and draconfly mounts were found to be more approachable to greenhorn adventurers than true dragons, whereas green dragons need training from

an early age before they're ready to ride. But approach the shadogar with caution—only the craftiest adventurers will find a way to mount one successfully.

COBBLEWYRM

Said to be the smallest dragons in existence, cobblewyrms defy this superlative with the innate ability to accumulate stones into their rocky bodies and instantly change their size. They're normally found in the wild where deposits of delicious limestone are plentiful, though some are raised in homesteads after one of their pebble-like eggs gets tracked inside by a worker's boot.

COBBLEWYRM MOUNT

Tiny Mounted Dragon, Typically Any Chaotic Alignment

Armor Class 14 + PB (natural armor)

Temporary Hit Points 4 times the rider's character level or challenge rating

Hit Points 35 (10d4 + 10)

Speed 10 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +2 plus PB

Condition Immunities prone

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Draconic, understands Common but can't speak it

Proficiency Bonus equals the rider's bonus

Mounted. During a long rest, the cobblewyrms can designate one creature who rode them within the last 10 days as their rider. The cobblewyrms gain temporary hit points equal to 4 times the rider's level or challenge rating after completing the long rest.

Anchored. The cobblewyrms are considered mounted while they are touching their rider, and can occupy their rider's space while they are Medium or smaller. The rider cannot perform a Vaulting Attack while the cobblewyrms are smaller than they are.

Conglomerate. Once per turn, the cobblewyrms can change their size (up to the maximum possible size in the space available). Their AC, speeds, and the range and damage die for their Sandspit and Boulder Breath actions change with their size category according to the Cobblewyrms Size table. If their new size is the same as or smaller than their rider's size, the rider can choose to land in any space previously occupied by the cobblewyrms.

Plated Protection (Large Size Only). The cobblewyrms' rider can ride on the cobblewyrms while they burrow.

Stony Shielder (Tiny Size Only). The cobblewyrms' rider has a +2 AC bonus while the cobblewyrms are in their space.

ACTIONS

Sandspit. Ranged Weapon Attack: +2 plus PB to hit, range 10 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage. If the target has eyes, the range of their vision is reduced to 10 feet until they use an action to clear the sand out of their eyes.

Cobble. The cobblewyrms repair an object they touch as if they had cast the *mending* cantrip.

Boulder Breath (3/Day). The cobblewyrms exhale sand and rocks in a 10-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a successful DC 10 + PB Strength saving throw or take 15 (6d4) + PBd4 bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone. In addition, the ground underneath the blast becomes difficult terrain until cleared (a creature can clear their current space as an action). The cobblewyrms' maximum size decreases by one category (to a minimum of Tiny). If their current size is greater than their new maximum size, they automatically Conglomerate to the new maximum size. When the cobblewyrms complete a long rest, their maximum size becomes Large again.

COBBLEWYRM SIZE

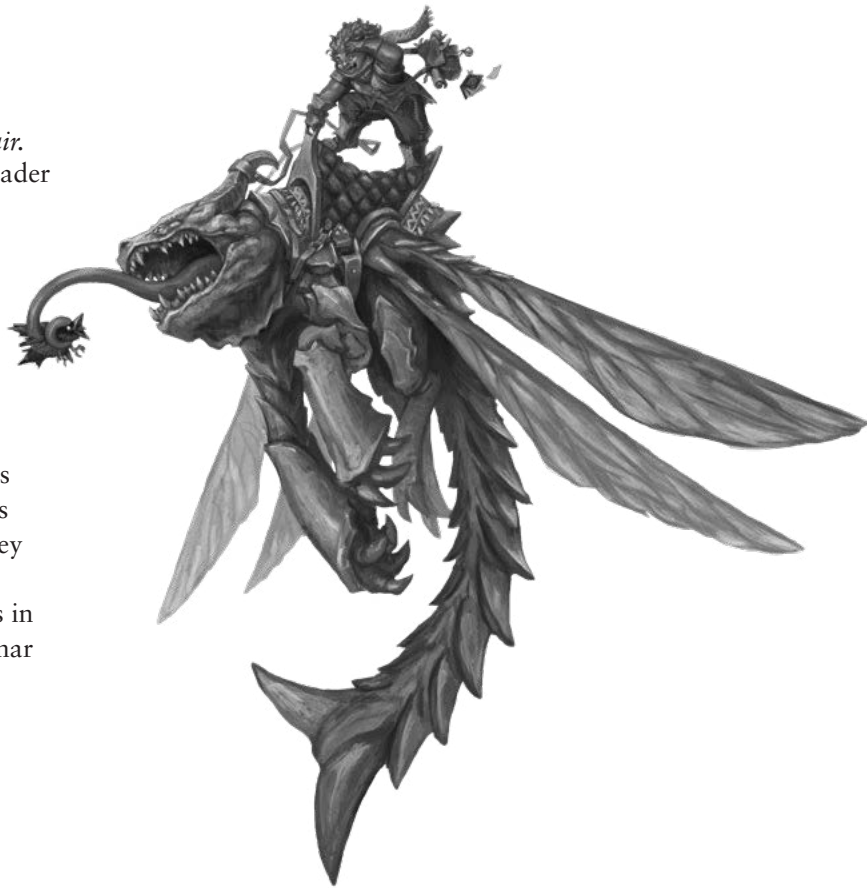
SIZE	AC	SPEED/RANGE	DAMAGE DIE
Tiny	14 + PB	10 ft.	d4
Small	12 + PB	20 ft.	d4
Medium	10 + PB	30 ft.	d6
Large	10 + PB	40 ft.	d8

DRACONFLY

When the draconfly buzzes blare, a dragon is in the air.
—Captain Raccol, Squadron Leader
of the 3rd Swarm Fleet

The magic that surges through a dragon's hoard can impact the flora and fauna living nearby, especially so when the hoard contains treasures not native to its plane. Insects like the draconfly transform into quick and powerful new dragons, ready to venture out and make new hoards of their own.

These draconflies are capable of beating their wings fast enough to cut through the border between planes where it's thinnest. When they zip through the air, they literally tear into and out of the Ethereal Plane in the blink of an eye. City patrols utilize their unique traits in draconfly fleets, scouting city limits for both interplanar and draconic threats.



DRACONFLY MOUNT

Large Mounted Dragon, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 + PB

Temporary Hit Points 4 times the rider's character level or challenge rating

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 15 ft., fly 15 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Cha +1 plus PB

Condition Immunities charmed, deafened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Draconic but can't speak

Proficiency Bonus equals the rider's bonus

Mounted. During a long rest, the draconfly can designate one creature who rode them within the last 10 days as their rider. The draconfly gains temporary hit points equal to 4 times the rider's level or challenge rating after completing the long rest.

Blinkflight. Once on the draconfly's turn, they can use 5 feet of movement to teleport themselves and their rider up to 20 feet to an unoccupied space they can see. If the draconfly has taken the Dash action on that turn, the range of this teleportation increases from 20 feet to 40 feet. This trait doesn't function if the draconfly is incapacitated.

Dragonscry. The draconfly's buzzing is twice as loud and the reach of their Sonic Buzz is doubled while within 500 feet of another dragon on the same plane of existence.

Flight Noise. While the draconfly's rider is mounted on the draconfly, the rider cannot be charmed or deafened.

ACTIONS

Sonic Buzz. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 plus PB to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) thunder damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 + PB Constitution saving throw or become deafened until the start of the draconfly's next turn. While deafened in this way, a creature can't speak.

Draconic Wingbeat. The draconfly flaps their wings rapidly, shifting the air in and out of the Ethereal Plane. Each creature of the draconfly's choice within 10 feet of them must succeed on a DC 10 + PB Constitution saving throw or gain 1 level of exhaustion. If the draconfly uses this action more than once before completing a long rest, they and their rider must make the saving throw as well.

Ethereal Zip. The draconfly and their rider magically shift to the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

MOUNTS AND CHALLENGE RATING

Mounted creatures no longer have a CR associated with them, given that their strength and defense grow alongside their rider. If you are running an enemy riding a mount using these rules, it would be best to calculate the mount's CR within that particular encounter.

That said, not all mounts are created appropriately for all tiers of play. As a general rule, mounts that receive temporary hit points equal to 5 or 4 times the rider's character level work well for tier 1 and up, mounts that receive temporary hit points equal to 3 or 2 times the character level work for tier 2 and up, and anything goes for tiers 3 and 4.

GREEN DRAGON

True dragons achieve self-awareness as juveniles, the liminal age between wyrmling and young dragon. Though they know their own might, they don't yet bear the pomp of their forebears. Rather, they are more willing to make a life amongst those who would cherish them—for better or worse.

Green dragons of any age carry as much capacity to be machiavellian as they do to be thoughtful and prepared. They utilize nature magic to carry their compatriots out of danger, lead their victims into it, or both.

JUVENILE GREEN DRAGON MOUNT

Large Mounted Dragon, Typically Any Lawful Alignment

Armor Class 13 + PB (natural armor)

Temporary Hit Points 2 times the rider's character level or challenge rating

Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +3 plus PB, Cha +2 plus PB

Skills Perception +1 plus PB, Stealth +1 plus PB

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 15 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11 + PB

Languages Draconic, can communicate with Beasts

Proficiency Bonus equals the rider's bonus

Mounted. During a long rest, the dragon can designate one creature who rode them within the last 10 days as their rider. The dragon gains temporary hit points equal to 2 times the rider's level or challenge rating after completing the long rest.

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

Unseen Green. If the dragon is in a 10-foot radius or larger area of dense foliage at the start of their turn, they and their

rider can blend in with the leafy camouflage and become impossible to see without the aid of magic. Attack rolls against the dragon and their rider have disadvantage, and both creatures' attack rolls have advantage. If either the dragon or the rider makes an attack, casts a spell that affects an enemy, deals damage to another creature, or leaves the area of foliage, this effect ends.

ACTIONS

Numbing Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 plus PB to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage. Until the end of the dragon's next turn, the target loses any resistance or immunity to poison damage and can't use reactions.

Poison Breath (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The dragon exhales poisonous gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 10 + PB Constitution saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) + PBd6 poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Verdant Presence (1/Day). While on the ground, the dragon causes foliage to grow thick and wild in a 15-foot radius centered on themselves. The area becomes difficult terrain and is heavily obscured. The effects end if the dragon moves more than 60 feet from the area.

SHADOGAR

Dragons who embrace the might of powerful shadows inevitably lose themselves to it. Their majesty erodes, washed away by darkness year after year. Eventually, all that remains is a shadogar, a faint wisp of the proud dragon they once were, their great wings but mere flecks, their booming voice forgotten. Yet their ambitions still burn bright.

SHADOGAR MOUNT

Medium Mounted Dragon, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 + PB

Temporary Hit Points 3 times the rider's character level or challenge rating

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Dex +3 plus PB, Cha +8 plus PB

Skills Stealth +3 plus PB

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, petrified, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands Common and Draconic but can't speak

Proficiency Bonus equals the rider's bonus

Mounted. During a long rest, the shadogar can designate one creature who rode them within the last 10 days as their rider. The shadogar gains temporary hit points equal to 3 times the rider's level or challenge rating after completing the long rest.

Dragon Might. Medium and smaller creatures can ride the shadogar.

Shadow Sneak. The shadogar's speed is doubled and their movement makes no sound when they start their turn in dim light or darkness.

Shadow Games. While mounted, the shadogar's rider's voice changes to sound like that of an adult dragon and the rider has advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

Shadogars bend and twist the dark around them until glimpses of their former grandeur spring forth in bursts of black fire. They tag along in the shadows of others who seek power, influence, or forbidden knowledge, instinctively wanting the same for themselves.

ACTIONS

Frightful Presence (1/Day). The shadogar musters a shadow puppet of a dragon. Each creature of the shadogar's choice within 20 feet of the shadogar and aware of them must succeed on a DC 12 + PB Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on themselves on a success.

Slink. The shadogar flattens themselves into a Small, shadowy disk and their rider immediately dismounts. While in this form, the shadogar is invisible in dim light or darkness and can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing or provoking opportunity attacks. The only action the shadogar can take in this form is to return to their original form.

Sunspot. The shadogar creates a 5-foot-diameter mote of volatile shadow centered on a surface they can see within 30 feet of them. When a creature enters or starts their turn in this area, the sunspot explodes. Each creature in that area must make a DC 10 + PB Dexterity saving throw, taking $PBd6 + 8$ fire damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. A sunspot lasts for 10 minutes or until it explodes, and is invisible in dim light or darkness. The shadogar can have up to PB active sunspots.

REACTIONS

Veil. If the shadogar or their rider are the target of an attack or an effect the shadogar can see, the rider can use their reaction to have the shadogar briefly make themselves and the rider like shadows, granting them both half cover until the start of the shadogar's next turn. The shadogar can't use this feature again until they start their turn in dim light or darkness.

MAKING A MOUNT

Making monsters into mounts requires a few hard rules and a lot of soft considerations. This section will guide you through each aspect of creating a mount for a player character at your table (including your own, subject to your GM's approval!).

You're ultimately creating a stat block that works best for your table, but the ideal mount is a creature that:

1. Augments the rider's **movement**
2. Creates **openings** for the rider's actions
3. Stays relevant to the rider's **level**

Start by giving the creature the following Mounted trait. We'll break down each part of this trait and how it affects the creature. Then, we'll look at the creature's traits and actions:

Mounted. During a long rest, the mount can designate one creature who rode them within the last 10 days as their rider. The mount gains temporary hit points equal to X times the rider's level or challenge rating after completing the long rest.

PROFICIENCY BONUS

Mounts use the rider's proficiency bonus (PB) in place of their own. Update the stat block accordingly, using this new proficiency bonus to calculate the creature's skills, saving throws, save DCs, and attack rolls. The rider's PB also gets added to the creature's AC, reflecting the rider's skill at keeping their mount out of harm's way.

It's worth adding proficiency in a relevant saving throw if the creature doesn't already have one—it's an easy opportunity to show the creature's growth alongside their rider.

AC AND HIT POINTS

Recalculate the creature's AC to be 10 + the creature's Dexterity or Constitution modifier (whichever is more relevant) + the rider's proficiency bonus.

The goal of adding temporary hit points with the Mounted trait is for the creature to end up with around 100 hit points when their rider is level 20. This gives them a scaling baseline for survivability akin to a wizard adventurer; no longer a liability at higher levels, but still important to take care of. Check out the Temporary Hit Points Multiplier table to determine how many temporary hit points the creature receives at the end of each long rest.

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS MULTIPLIER

BASE CREATURE HIT POINTS	TEMPORARY HIT POINTS
9 or fewer	5 × rider level
10–39	4 × rider level
40–59	3 × rider level
60–79	2 × rider level
80–99	1 × rider level
100 or more	—

HEROIC MOUNT VARIANT

If you're interested in boosting the survivability of mounted creatures and making them as durable as the party bard rather than the party wizard, consider increasing the mount's temporary hit point multiplier by 1 in each row in the Temporary Hit Points Multiplier table. For example, a creature with 9 hit points would receive (6 × rider level) temporary hit points while mounted, and a creature with 103 hit points would now receive (1 × rider level) instead of nothing.

It's still advised to use temporary hit points instead of adding to the creature's regular hit points, as it will prevent the rider from using the creature like a second health bar they can keep refilling. If you **don't** foresee that being an issue, instead of using temporary hit points, you can add Hit Dice to the mount until they have at least the same number of Hit Dice as their rider. The mount can then grow in the same manner as the rest of the adventuring party, gaining a Hit Die each level.

TRAITS

What qualities of the creature can be imparted to the rider or the battlefield? What is unique about the creature's movement that would call the rider away from using their own movement? 1–2 unique traits are great for creatures who derive a lot of their identity from attacking, or 3 for creatures who only have one type of attack.

Consider some of the cool things frogs can do, for example. They jump really high, and they extend their tongues like fishing lines. If you were making a giant toad mount, you can turn these cool frog things into flavorful toad traits—now the toad mount can leap 20 feet into the air and grab creatures from far away with their tongue, sometimes simultaneously!

ACTIONS

A mounted creature only needs 2–3 actions, since they’ll be acting in tandem with their rider. These actions can be a mix of extra damage and afflicting conditions, utility abilities like healing or shielding, or controlling the immediate landscape. Don’t feel constrained by the original capabilities of the creature either; thematic, new actions that provide support to the whole party are always welcome.

One of the mount’s actions should be a reliable standard attack; it can derive its identity from one or more of the creature’s original actions while providing a useful effect in addition to damage. If you also want to utilize a particularly strong signature action for the mount (such as a dragon’s Breath Weapon), limit its uses per day so it doesn’t overshadow the rider or other members of the party.

The rider’s proficiency bonus can also be utilized for scaling attack damage, number of action uses, and number of objects created by an action. You can get creative with showing creature growth, but try to avoid mixing different modifier sources in the same action. Clarity is king.

REACTIONS

Mounts won’t have many opportunities to use bonus actions in combat, but reactions come in clutch for establishing synergy between mount and rider. A mounted creature can’t take reactions unless their rider uses their reaction, and mounted creatures can’t make opportunity attacks. When adding or adjusting a mounted creature’s reaction, make sure to add that they also use the rider’s reaction to activate.

MAKING JUVENILE CREATURES

Dragons and other powerful creatures can overshadow the abilities of the adventurers and limit the effectiveness of other tools the heroes have accrued, especially so as a mount. A juvenile version of a monster can preserve the flavor of the fantasy without souring the fun.

It might be worth reviewing the “Creating a Monster” advice in the core rules before diving into smalling big creatures, but these guidelines should get you started quickly.

SIZE AND HIT DIE

Gargantuan creatures should be reduced to (at least) Huge size, and Huge creatures should step down to Large. Changing the size will also affect the Hit Die used (for example, a Gargantuan creature has d20 Hit Dice, but Large creatures have d10 Hit Dice).

If the creature’s size stays the same, like with the juvenile green dragon, you can halve the number of Hit Dice

the creature uses (such as from 16d10 to 8d10). This also works for particularly meaty Gargantuan creatures who are too tough even as juveniles, like the purple worm.

If you need to come up with a juvenile’s statistics on the fly (I’m sorry), you can halve the creature’s hit points instead of adjusting Hit Dice for a quick approximation. This may lead to complications involving features that rely on Hit Dice, but it *will* get you to the end of the session.

PB, AC, AND MOVEMENT

Reduce the creature’s proficiency bonus to a maximum of +3. Remove any bonuses to Armor Class that aren’t the creature’s Dexterity or Constitution modifiers. Reduce any unique movement speeds, such as flying, by 10–20 feet.

ACTIONS AND SPELLCASTING

Halve the maximum spell level that the creature can cast, if any. Damage dice can be reduced by one step (d12→d10→d8→d6→d4), especially when an action uses three or more damage dice at once. Add daily limits to especially strong signature attacks to further alleviate damage concerns. The creature can still do cool things, just not as reliably.

Remove any Multiattack action, and find flavorful ways to combine similar actions, such as turning Bite and Claw attacks into a Tantrum action.

CHALLENGE RATING

The higher the original CR of the creature was, the more it’ll be affected by these adjustments. CR 15 creatures can be brought down to around CR 5, whereas a CR 6 creature comes down to only CR 3. If you’re creating a juvenile creature with the intent of making them into a mount, your goal is to bring the CR down to around the rider’s current level or lower. You should use the rider’s current proficiency bonus in your CR calculations.

And don’t be afraid to adjust the size, hit points, and base stats further if the creature is still too tough. As long as the numbers are in a similar proportion, such as a warhorse favoring Strength above the rest of their ability scores, they will still feel like that creature. Some juveniles experience growth spurts later than others!

EXAMPLE: WHY NOT THE WYVERN?

The following **juvenile wyvern mount** was made using the **wyvern** stat block and both sets of guidelines. Wyverns are infamously ruthless combatants armed with a deadly stinger. One raised for war can channel their

proress into slinging their riders into the fray and shredding their enemies' defenses.

For reference, the original wyvern stat block is provided below. In the new stat block, mount changes are shown *italicized* while juvenile changes are shown underlined. As mentioned in the "Mounts and

Challenge Rating" sidebar, mounted creatures don't have a Challenge Rating. The juvenile wyvern mount's Challenge Rating is listed to showcase how the stat block is adjusted to bring it down in power to the rider's current level or lower.

WYVERN

Large Dragon, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)

Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages —

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wyvern makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

JUVENILE WYVERN MOUNT

Large Mounted Dragon, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 + PB

Temporary Hit Points 3 times the rider's character level or challenge rating

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +0 plus PB

Skills Perception +1 plus PB

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11 plus PB

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus equals the rider's bonus

Mounted. During a long rest, the wyvern can designate one creature who rode them within the last 10 days as their rider. The wyvern gains temporary hit points equal to 3 times the rider's level or challenge rating after completing the long rest.

Dragoon. The wyvern uses their powerful tail to propel their rider through the sky. The rider can use a Vaulting Attack to target a creature up to 30 feet away, or 60 feet directly below the wyvern. If successful, the attack made using Vaulting Attack

deals an extra PBd4 poison damage, and the wyvern can immediately move up to their speed to catch the rider.

ACTIONS

Viper Thrash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 plus PB to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage, and the next attack made against this target before the end of the wyvern's next turn has advantage.

Burning Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 plus PB to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. Once per day when the wyvern hits a creature with this attack, they can inject the creature with venom, dealing an extra PBd4 poison damage. For the next minute, whenever the target takes damage from an attack, they also take an extra PBd4 poison damage. The target can make a DC 10 + PB Constitution saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on themselves on a success.

REACTIONS

Timely Arryvern. If the wyvern's rider or another creature within 30 feet of the wyvern is knocked prone or is falling, the rider can use their reaction to have the wyvern move up to their speed and catch the creature.

NEW OMNIMOUNTS

In *ARCADIA 4*, we learned of the omnimounts, titans who carry multiple riders across massive distances. Omnimounts are NPCs (or creatures controlled by NPCs) that can be introduced into globe-spanning, plane-spanning, or multiverse-spanning campaigns.

The following two dragons may lend their services as omnimounts, possibly right when your adventuring party needs them most.

FALOO, THE LAST LUCKWYRM

Centuries ago, luckwyrms flew the skies and shaped the course of reality. They were the protectors of fate until they were overtaken by malevolent chromatic dragons. Luckily, at least one grand luckwyrms survives to this day.

Faloo appears whenever they are needed and never a moment sooner. They use their incredible speed to ensure that the fated reach their destination or escape their doom. When Faloo isn't ferrying passengers, they search the entirety of existence for evidence of other luckwyrms. They stay optimistic, assuring anyone who asks that "they've got luck on their side" with a wink.

Faloo's canine-shaped face and the patches of fur across their pearlescent body are reminiscent of a kobold. Fortune might favor the bold soul who finds a record of this mysterious draconic connection.



GRAND LUCKWYRM

Gargantuan Dragon, Typically Lawful Good

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 777 (42d20 + 336)

Speed 60 ft., fly 200 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	30 (+10)	26 (+8)	19 (+4)	26 (+8)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Dex +17, Con +15, Wis +15, Cha +17

Skills Insight +15, Perception +15, Survival +15

Damage Immunities force

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Dragonpower. If the luckwyrm moves at least 50 feet in a straight line on their turn, the luckwyrm and each creature riding them gain resistance to all damage except psychic damage until the end of the luckwyrm's current turn.

Legendary Fortune (7/Day). Once per turn, the luckwyrm can replace the d20 roll for an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw made by a creature they can see with either a 1 or a 20 (luckwyrm's choice). The target (excluding the luckwyrm) is immune to the luckwyrm's Legendary Fortune for the next 24 hours.

Lucksense. When a creature on the same plane of existence as the luckwyrm makes an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw and the d20 roll for it is a 1 or a 20, the luckwyrm can detect the creature's exact location and can instantly teleport to them, along with any of the luckwyrm's riders (no action required).

Fatal Serendipity. Each creature who witnesses the luckwyrm die is blessed for the next seven days. The luckwyrm is

restored to life with all their hit points if the blessed creatures roll a total of seven 20s on the d20 roll for any ability checks, attack rolls, or saving throws they make before the blessing ends.

ACTIONS

Tongue Lash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage and the target is knocked prone.

Crash. The luckwyrm moves up to their speed in a straight line. If the luckwyrm moves at least 50 feet and ends their movement within 5 feet of a surface or a Huge or larger object, they can crash into it. Each creature in a 40-foot radius of that point other than the luckwyrm and each creature riding them must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, taking 73 (7d20) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

After crashing, the luckwyrm's hit point maximum is reduced by 111. This reduction lasts until the luckwyrm finishes seven long rests.

Dual Fates. The luckwyrm uses both Weal and Woe.

Weal. The luckwyrm grants a creature they can see 3d8 temporary hit points and advantage on the next ability check, attack roll, or saving throw they make before the end of their next turn.

Woe. The luckwyrm targets a creature they can see. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Charisma saving throw or take 13 (3d8) psychic damage and have their hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. A target who fails the saving throw also has disadvantage on the next ability check, attack roll, or saving throw they make before the end of their next turn.

GALDRASHAN, THE FIRST SAGE

Galdrashan is an astral dragon who carelessly crashes through people's dreams as they drift through the Astral Plane. The First Sage is a misnomer the dragon chooses not to correct; their hoard of knowledge is impossibly vast, but Galdrashan is not the first being to contemplate any of it (that would be their mother, Circinus Endovstars).

The dragon offers "safe" passage through the Astral Plane in exchange for any reading material they've never paged through before. They enjoy the prospect of travel

with hurried creatures lining their back and invite nearly any opportunity to do so. They ask their passengers lots of questions and offer rambling anecdotes all while haphazardly weaving between the dangers of the plane.

There's a chance Galdrashan may barge into another dream along the journey and lose contact with their riders, potentially leaving them stranded in the dreamscape of a Far Realm entity or a young kobold. While they'll never forget anyone they meet, it may take a while before the lost passengers come back to their mind.



GALDRASHAN

Gargantuan Dragon, True Neutral

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 546 (28d20 + 252)

Speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	12 (+1)	29 (+9)	28 (+9)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +16, Wis +13, Cha +11

Skills Arcana +16, History +16, Insight +13, Perception +13, Stealth +8

Damage Immunities psychic

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Primordial, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 23 (50,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Hypnopedia. Galdrashan can gain proficiency in a skill, language, or tool they don't already know if they focus on dreaming about it over the course of finishing five long rests. If Galdrashan learns a new language, the failure chance of their Wishmind trait is reduced by 20%, to a minimum of 0% (see Legendary Mindshield).

Legendary Mindshield. If Galdrashan fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead. Each time they use this feature, Galdrashan forgets a random language they know, and their Wishmind trait gains a cumulative 20% chance of failure. If Galdrashan knows no languages, they forget how to breathe.

Nova. If Galdrashan dies, they are reborn as a gold dragon wyrmling 1 hour later, unless they were destroyed using the *wish* spell.

Star Cloak. Each creature who rides Galdrashan gains the benefits of the *pass without trace* spell while riding them.

Wishmind. Galdrashan can recall details of any person, place, or object they are asked about, as if they had cast the *legend lore* spell. Galdrashan can also ascertain where to find information they don't already know.

ACTIONS

Silver Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 15 ft., three targets. *Hit:* 21 (2d10 + 10) piercing damage. On a critical hit against a target in an astral body (as with the *astral projection* spell), Galdrashan can cut the silvery cord that tethers the target to their material body, instead of dealing damage.

Astral Gate (1/Day). Galdrashan opens a gate to the Astral Plane (or from the Astral Plane to a destination of their choice on a different plane of existence) for themselves and up to 10 creatures of their choice. The gate closes after 1 minute or when each chosen creature passes through it.

Astral Leap. Galdrashan and each creature riding them teleport to an unoccupied point Galdrashan can see within 60 feet of them.

Overwhelming Presence. Each creature of Galdrashan's choice within 120 feet of them must succeed on a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw or become stunned by unspeakable amounts of knowledge until the end of their next turn. Creatures who succeed on the saving throw have advantage on saving throws against Galdrashan's Overwhelming Presence for the next 24 hours.

Star Breath (Recharge 5–6). Galdrashan exhales dust and space debris in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 71 (13d10) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature who fails the save by 5 or more takes an extra 22 (4d10) psychic damage.

GRANNY'S CONCOCTIONS

POTIONS, POISONS, AND MORE
FROM A FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD "HAG" AND HER "CAT"

by Jessica Marcrum

WELCOME! DO COME IN! DON'T MIND FLUFFTAVIUS. HE SNORES LOUDLY BUT WON'T HURT YOU. NOW! WHAT BRINGS YOU TO SEE OLD GRANNY? LOOKING FOR LOVE? VENGEANCE? OR MERELY A NIP TO GET THROUGH THE DAY? I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE ON MY SHELVES.

—GRANNY GREENWINKLE

A GNOME FOR BUSINESS

Granny Greenwinkle is a friendly gnome in her third century, and proprietor of Granny's Concoctions. She realized long ago that implying she has a touch of haggishness about her would advance her further in the potion business than simply setting up shop as a standard herbalist. As such, she wears tattered robes and bones hung on strings, mostly those of rodents caught by her enormously fat cat Flufftavius.

Granny is constantly accompanied by Flufftavius, who she loudly declares is her witch's familiar. The huge ginger cat is primarily seen sleeping on various scrolls, books, and dried herbs throughout Granny's shop, their loud musical snores just barely covering the sound of bubbling cauldrons in the back room.

Granny's Concoctions can be placed anywhere an apothecary's place of business might be found. The shop is suitably cluttered, as Granny expects a hag's lair might be, with its shelves covered with bottles, dried herbs, tiny bones, and discarded recipe scrolls. To complete the effect, random symbols are scrawled haphazardly across the walls, shelves, and ceiling. Navigating the shop is difficult due to its complete disorganization, and

finding anything without Granny's help is a fool's errand. Fortunately, Granny is quick to aid any customer and has a knack for finding exactly what they need—even if it's not what they want.

FRIENDLY "FAMILIAR"

Any character with truesight or some other ability to see through illusions is immediately aware that Flufftavius is an adult copper dragon shapechanged into a fat, fluffy ginger cat. If this is brought to Granny's attention, she flatly denies it, joking that "everything seems a little funny in my shop after a while ... magic in the air and all ..." If a character politely addresses Flufftavius in Draconic, they cheerily respond by holding a paw to their nose in a shushing motion.

Flufftavius and Granny have been best friends since childhood, and the dragon-turned-cat now snoozes in her shop to support Granny's haggish hoax. Flufftavius responds to Granny as if they are her familiar, and walks through the occasional acid spill with ease. Any customer who pets Flufftavius gains inspiration that lasts until they finish a long rest. However, if any harm comes to Granny or the shop, Flufftavius reverts to their true form in defense of their friend.

The shop serves as Flufftavius’s lair, with whatever city or village the shop is located within subject to the dragon’s regional effects. (Granny’s back room, off-limits to customers, is a massive, wide-open space with vaulted ceilings. Anyone sneaking back there might wonder what the tiny gnome needs with all that space, or what was recently moved out of it.)

ROLEPLAYING GRANNY

Granny presents herself as a woman of mystery—or rather, a hag of mystery, sometimes hinting that she escaped from a coven. A fearsome haggler, she alludes to possessing powers beyond mortal knowing, and is not above frightening customers into a sale. With her wares available in a wide variety of prices, she is quick to size up a customer’s potential wealth and skill, and presents them with the best fit for their needs and purse size. For example, tier 4 characters are offered the premium items Granny keeps “in the back for special occasions,” such as *leprechaun’s gift* and *peppy pop* potions. By contrast, lower-level adventurers might be offered discount wares such as a *cat’s milk* or *zoological mimicry* potion.

What Granny Wants: To make a profit regardless of the consequences to others

What Granny Needs: To keep her mundane nature a secret

What Granny Hates: Unsupervised children and people who pay with electrum



GRANNY GREENWINKLE

Small Humanoid (Gnome), Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Medicine +6, Nature +5, Perception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Draconic, Druidic, Gnomish

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Gnome Cunning. Granny has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

Special Equipment. Granny’s staff is a magic weapon, and she uses Wisdom for attack and damage rolls made with it.

ACTIONS

Druid’s Dragon-Scale Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Spellcasting. Granny casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12):

At-will: *druidcraft*, *produce flame*

3/day: *entangle*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*

2/day: *barkskin*, *locate animals or plants*

POTENT POTABLES APLENTY

Granny has a wide assortment of potions, poisons, and explosives for sale. For some strange reason, most of her wares use copper dragon scales, saliva, and acid as ingredients. Characters proficient with alchemist's supplies, an herbalism kit, or a poisoner's kit can use seven days of downtime to reverse engineer one of Granny's potions and discover its formula.

The GM can decide how much of any one item Granny has in stock. While perusing her special potions and poisons, characters have a 60 percent chance of finding any other potion, poison, or trinket in her shop each time they visit. Likewise, they have a 20 percent chance of finding any common or uncommon magic item and a 5 percent chance of finding any rare magic item, though Granny's Concoctions does not carry weapons or armor.

VERY IMPORTANT POTIONEERS

To encourage return visits, Granny offers a punch card for her customers (available as a handout in the Resources section). After purchasing ten items worth at least 25 gp each, a customer can get their next item valued at 125 gp or less for free. Granny also wishes to encourage the upcoming generation of eccentric herbalists, and offers to train anyone kind to her who professes skill in herbalism. Hoping to earn a spot in Granny's "coven," these students are given "Very Important Potioneer" badges, gain proficiency with alchemist's supplies or an herbalism kit (their choice), and can purchase supplies for their own potions from Granny's shop at the GM's discretion.

Training with Granny involves three weeks of intensive daily learning and assisting her in the shop. After that, VIPs are free to adventure, but must return and spend at least a few days every year assisting Granny to maintain their skills and VIP status.



POTIONS

Granny has a knack for sizing up what people want and need, as well as what might inspire them to return to her shop in the future. Many of her potions come in less potent versions at a cheaper price for beginning adventurers, such as the *zippy cantrip* and *bottled wyrmling scales* potions that are sourced from the *zappy cantrip* and *bottled dragon scales* potions.

Certain potions even have nonmagical variants Granny offers to low-level adventurers who "might not be ready for the hard hitters" yet. These include bottled coffee, garlic, whiskey, and assorted hallucinogens, all in potion bottles appearing similar but not quite identical to "the good stuff."

GRANNY'S POTIONS

POTION	PRICE
<i>Bottled Dragon Scales</i>	1,200 gp
<i>Bottled Wyrmling Scales</i>	300 gp
<i>Cat's Milk</i>	50 gp
<i>Damsel's Dream</i>	7,000 gp
<i>Enhancement Potion</i>	350 gp
<i>Instant Mouse</i>	500 gp
<i>Leprechaun's Gift</i>	10,500 gp
<i>Leprechaun's Gift, Diluted</i>	2,500 gp
<i>Lucky Shot</i>	25 gp
<i>Mist of Attraction</i>	150 gp
<i>Peppy Pop</i>	15,000 gp
<i>Perky Brew</i>	300 gp
<i>Quick Nap</i>	8,000 gp
<i>Scholar's Aid</i>	300 gp
<i>Uncanny Mimicry</i>	1,000 gp
<i>Uncomfortable Mimicry</i>	250 gp
<i>Wild Perfume</i>	40 gp
<i>Zappy Cantrip</i>	1,500 gp
<i>Zippy Cantrip</i>	150 gp
<i>Zoological Mimicry</i>	30 gp



BOTTLED DRAGON SCALES

Potion, Rare

This copper-colored potion smells slightly bitter, and has a sharp metallic tang. When you drink this potion, your skin is covered with a bright copper sheen and you gain the following benefits for the next hour:

- Your AC can't be less than 16. If it is already 16 or greater, you have a +1 bonus to AC (to a maximum of AC 20).
- You have advantage on saving throws against the Frightful Presence and breath weapons of copper dragons.
- You have resistance to acid damage.

BOTTLED WYRMLING SCALES

Potion, Uncommon

This copper-colored potion smells slightly bitter. When you drink this potion, your skin gains a subtle copper sheen and you gain the following benefits for the next hour: you have a +1 bonus to AC (to a maximum of AC 20) and resistance to acid damage.

CAT'S MILK

Potion, Common

This opalescent white potion smells sweet, though fur can be seen floating in it. When you drink this potion, your walking speed is doubled for 1 hour. During this time, any Wisdom (Animal Handling) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks you make to interact with feline Beasts and feline Humanoids are made with advantage.

DAMSEL'S DREAM

Potion, Very Rare

This chartreuse potion smells like apple pie. When you drink it, you fall into a catatonic sleep indistinguishable from death. While unconscious in this way, you appear dead to all outward inspection and to magic used to determine your condition, and you have immunity to all damage except psychic damage. You remain asleep for 7 days or until a creature truthfully confesses their love to you for the first time. When you awake, you gain the benefit of a long rest.

ENHANCEMENT POTION

Potion, Uncommon

Each *enhancement potion* has a different appearance and affects a different ability score. For 1 hour after you drink the potion, you can roll a d4 whenever you make an ability check or saving throw using the ability score tied to that potion, adding the d4 roll to your d20 roll.

ENHANCEMENT POTIONS

POTIONS	ABILITY SCORE	DESCRIPTION
<i>Bard's Tongue</i>	Charisma	Gleams silver and whispers softly
<i>Druid's Nose</i>	Wisdom	Mossy green
<i>Fighter's Belly</i>	Constitution	Bronze color, smells of sour mash and ale
<i>Knight's Arms</i>	Strength	Contains an intact copper dragon scale
<i>Sage's Brains</i>	Intelligence	Glowing a royal blue and smells of parchment
<i>Thief's Hands</i>	Dexterity	Smells of smoke and looks like liquid shadow

INSTANT MOUSE

Potion, Rare

This potion's muddy-brown liquid swirls with bits of claws, teeth, and fur when shaken. When you drink the potion, you gain the ability to cast the *polymorph* spell on yourself at will for 1 hour, but you can only turn into a Tiny Beast using the spell.

LEPRECHAUN'S GIFT

Potion, Very Rare

This fizzy golden potion smells like cinnamon and second chances. When you drink the potion, you gain a surge of luck. For the next minute, when you or an ally you can see within 30 feet of you makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a saving throw, you can use a reaction to allow the creature to reroll. You make this decision after you see whether the roll succeeds or fails. The creature must use the second roll.

LEPRECHAUN'S GIFT, DILUTED

Potion, Rare

This fizzy golden potion smells like cinnamon. When you drink this potion, you feel luck flowing through you. For the next 10 minutes, when you make an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can use your reaction to reroll. You make this decision after you see whether the roll succeeds or fails. You must use the second roll.

LUCKY SHOT

Potion, Common

This opaque brown liquid smells like strong whiskey. When you drink this potion, you gain a modicum of luck, granting you advantage on the next attack roll, ability check, or saving throw you make. The potion's magic fades if not used within 1 hour.

MIST OF ATTRACTION

Potion, Uncommon

This gold-flecked purple liquid leaves a golden sheen on your skin. When you spray this potion on yourself, you gain advantage on Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) checks for 1 hour.

PEPPY POP

Potion, Legendary

This fizzy red liquid tastes hot, bitter, and oddly refreshing. When you drink this potion, your speed is increased by 10 feet for the next minute. During that time, you can also take either an additional action or bonus action on each of your turns.

PERKY BREW¹

Potion, Uncommon

This mouthful of hot brown liquid tastes earthy, and is packaged in a tiny edible container. You can drink this potion as a bonus action, increasing your speed by 10 feet for the next minute. Additionally, twice in that time, you can take an additional bonus action on your turn. You can't use this benefit more than once per turn.

QUICK NAP

Potion, Very Rare

This lavender potion smells of jasmine, and swirls with silvery wisps when shaken. If you drink half the potion, you gain the benefit of a short rest, and can use the remainder of the potion in the same way again. If you drink the full potion, you gain the benefit of a long rest, except that *quick nap* can't reduce exhaustion. You also must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

¹ Granny additionally sells ingredients for a nonmagical version of perky brew for those who need a slight energy boost. For 1 gp, a character can procure enough ingredients to make twelve cups of nonmagical perky brew. "Just add hot water to get your day started the Greenwinkle way!" This libation is especially popular with students and shift workers, who swear it is "so much better than the pre-ground stuff."

SCHOLAR'S AID

Potion, Uncommon

This tiny vial is filled with creamy pink liquid that glows in the dark. When you drink this potion, you gain the ability to memorize everything you read or see for the next hour, and can accurately recall it anytime thereafter. In addition, select one of the following effects.

Skill Proficiency. Choose one skill. For the next hour, you gain proficiency in that skill if you did not have it already, or your proficiency bonus for that skill is doubled if you already have proficiency in it.

Language Fluency. Choose one language you do not speak but have either heard or seen in written form. For the next hour, you are considered fluent in the chosen language, and can speak, read, and write it with ease.

UNCANNY MIMICRY

Potion, Rare

This potion cackles faintly when first unstopped. When you drink the potion, you gain the ability to perfectly mimic any humanoid voice you have previously heard, and can do so for the next 8 hours. In addition, you can choose to have your mimicry emanate from any point you can see within 30 feet of you. A creature who hears the mimicry can tell that it is an imitation with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check.

UNCOMFORTABLE MIMICRY

Potion, Uncommon

This potion sighs when first unstopped. When you drink the potion, you gain the ability to perfectly mimic any humanoid voice you have previously heard, and can do so for 8 hours. A creature who hears the mimicry can tell that it is an imitation with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

WILD PERFUME

Potion, Common

This vibrantly purple atomizer holds gold-flecked purple liquid that appeals to wild beasts. When you spray this potion on yourself, each Beast within 300 feet of you that can smell you becomes fixated upon you, following you until the perfume is removed using soap and hot water, the *prestidigitation* spell, or similar methods at the GM's discretion. Beasts with an Intelligence score of 4 or higher can choose to ignore this effect.

ZAPPY CANTRIP

Potion, Rare

The liquid inside this bottle crackles and sparks harmlessly. When you drink this potion, your casting time for simple spells is decreased. For the next minute, whenever you cast a cantrip that has a casting time of 1 action, you can instead cast it as a bonus action.

ZIPPY CANTRIP

Potion, Uncommon

The liquid inside this bottle burbles and sparkles with potential. When you drink this potion, your casting time for simple spells is decreased. The first time you cast a cantrip that has a casting time of 1 action within the next minute, you can instead cast it as a bonus action.

ZOOLOGICAL MIMICRY

Potion, Common

This potion whistles like a songbird when first unstopped. When you drink the potion, you gain the ability to perfectly mimic the sound of any Beast you have previously heard, and can do so for 1 hour. A creature who hears the sounds you make can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check.

EXPLOSIVES

The magical explosives section of Granny's Concoctions is cordoned off by a rope of living vines. She is especially cautious with these wares, and warns clients away from handling them carelessly or tipping them over. Flufftavius trots freely through the area, however, whipping their tail nonchalantly among bundles and bags of highly volatile concoctions.

GRANNY'S EXPLOSIVES

EXPLOSIVE	PRICE
<i>Bang!</i>	350 gp
<i>Chaos Kaboom</i>	375 gp
<i>Cocktail Explosive</i>	125 gp
<i>Dragon's Breath</i>	2,500 gp (1,000 gp for copper)
<i>Flash Bomb</i>	1,000 gp
<i>Illusory Cats</i>	900 gp
<i>Portable Door</i>	400 gp
<i>Sleep Grenade</i>	800 gp
<i>Slow Bomb</i>	1,200 gp
<i>Stink Bomb</i>	1,200 gp
<i>Suppressing Fire</i>	100 gp
<i>Time-Out</i>	12,000 gp

BANG!

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

This volatile clay ball releases a cloud of blue-gray smoke that smells like gunpowder and ozone. As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact. Each creature within 5 feet of the explosion point must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be blinded and deafened until the end of their next turn.

CHAOS KABOOM

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

This glass ball is filled with dancing, vibrant, pink and green lights. As an action, a creature can throw the ball at a point up to 60 feet away, where it shatters on impact and fills a 20-foot cube with a magical cacophony of jumbled ideas and emotions. Each creature who starts their turn in the cube must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be subject to a random effect on the Chaos Effects table during their next turn. The cube disperses and all chaos effects end at the end of the thrower's next turn.

DAZED

Dazed is a new condition used by some of the monsters in MCDM's upcoming book, *Flee, Mortals!* A dazed creature can do only one of the following things on their turn: move, use an action, or use a bonus action. If a creature becomes dazed during their turn, their turn ends.

COCKTAIL EXPLOSIVE

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

This explosive is created by combining several dwarven liquors, alchemist's fire, and one of Granny's secret recipes. As an action, a creature can light the explosive and throw it at a point up to 20 feet away, detonating it on impact and unleashing a blast of flame in a 5-foot radius. The explosion ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried. Each creature in the area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or catch on fire, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of each of their turns. A creature on fire, or another creature within 5 feet of them, can use an action to extinguish the flames.

CHAOS EFFECTS

d10	EFFECT
1	Flee! The creature is frightened of whoever detonated the explosive, can't take bonus actions or reactions, and takes the Dash action to move as far as its speed allows away from you. The creature doesn't move into obviously dangerous ground, such as a fire or a pit.
2	Fight! The creature loses the ability to differentiate friend from foe, regarding all creatures as enemies and making a melee or ranged attack against a randomly determined creature they can see. If no targets are available to attack, the creature attacks itself.
3	Freeze! The creature takes 7 (2d6) cold damage and is restrained.
4	Friend! The creature loses the ability to differentiate friend from foe, regarding all other creatures as friends. The creature is charmed by whoever detonated the explosive, and must use their action to offer a random creature one of their own possessions worth no more than 50 gp. If the character has no gift to offer, they instead take 4 (2d4) psychic damage.
5	Frogs! Hundreds of illusory frogs fill the cube, making the area difficult terrain for any creature without truesight or blindsight.
6	Forget! The creature temporarily loses the will to fight. They drop any weapons they are carrying and can't take any actions.
7	Faint! The creature falls prone, dropping any items they're holding, and falls unconscious if they normally sleep. They wake early if another creature uses an action to shake or slap them awake.
8	Fail! The creature makes attack rolls and saving throws with disadvantage.
9	Flip! The creature must use their action and all their movement to attempt feats of acrobatics. When they do so, they must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or become dazed (see the "Dazed" sidebar).
10	Fie! An explosion of chaos unfolds as multiple effects occur simultaneously. The creature takes 7 (2d6) force damage and 7 (2d6) acid damage. Then roll again on this table and resolve the additional effect, rerolling any 10s.

DRAGON'S BREATH

Wondrous Item, Rare

Each type of this explosive contains bottled dragon's breath that shifts inside its shimmering glass container. As an action, a creature can throw the explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact. Each creature within 20 feet of the explosion point must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 35 (10d6) damage of the type associated with the dragon whose breath was bottled.

TYPE OF DRAGON	DAMAGE TYPE
Black	Acid
Blue	Lightning
Brass	Fire
Bronze	Lightning
Copper	Acid
Gold	Fire
Green	Poison
Red	Fire
Silver	Cold
White	Cold

FLASH BOMB

Wondrous Item, Rare

This bottle contains the smushed essence of dozens of will-o'-wisps. As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact. Each creature within 5 feet of the explosion point must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become blinded until the end of their next turn. A creature who fails the saving throw by 5 or more is also stunned until the end of their next turn.

ILLUSORY CATS

Wondrous Item, Rare

As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact. For the next minute, illusions of cats fill a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on the explosion point, meowing and seeking attention. Each creature of the thrower's choice within the sphere when it appears must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw to see through the illusion, treating the sphere as difficult terrain on a failure. A creature who fails the saving throw by 5 or more is also deafened while the effect persists.

PORTABLE DOOR

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

Anything can be a door—with enough firepower. As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact. Each creature within 5 feet of the explosion point must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) fire damage and 10 (3d6) thunder damage. The damage is doubled for plants (including Plant creatures), and structures and objects in the area of the explosion automatically take double damage. The sound of the explosion can be heard up to 300 feet away.

SLEEP GRENADE

Wondrous Item, Rare

As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact. Each creature within 20 feet of the explosion point must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1 minute. Creatures affected remain asleep until they take damage, or until another creature uses an action to shake or slap them awake. Undead and creatures immune to being charmed are unaffected.

SLOW BOMB

Wondrous Item, Rare

As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact. A cloud of smoke fills a 20-foot-radius area around the explosion point, making that area heavily obscured. A creature who starts their turn in the smoke or enters it for the first time on a turn must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be hindered as if affected by the *slow* spell until the start of their next turn. A moderate wind (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses the smoke after 4 rounds. A strong wind (at least 20 miles per hour) disperses it after 1 round. The cloud dissipates on its own after 1 minute.

STINK BOMB

Wondrous Item, Rare

As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact and releasing a foul smell. Each creature within 20 feet of the explosion point feels the urge to retch, and must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become dazed (see the "Dazed" sidebar) and poisoned until the end of their next turn.

SUPPRESSING FIRE

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact. A spray of heavy magical foam fills a 20-foot-radius area around the explosion point, extinguishing all fire in that area. The slick foam then makes the area difficult terrain for 1 minute.

TIME-OUT

Wondrous Item, Legendary

As an action, a creature can throw this explosive at a point up to 60 feet away, detonating it on impact and creating a 15-foot-radius sphere centered on the explosion point that is temporarily locked in time. The sphere lasts for 1 minute. Each creature in the sphere when it appears or who enters the sphere for the first time on a turn must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is stunned while the sphere lasts. On a success, the creature is dazed (see the “Dazed” sidebar) and their speed is reduced to 0 while the sphere lasts. A stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, instead suffering the lesser effect on a success. A dazed creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending all effects on themselves on a success.

The sphere disperses early if an action taken or an effect created from outside the sphere affects a creature within the sphere or an object they are wearing or carrying.

POISONS

In addition to standard poisons as described in your core rulebooks—displayed in their own small section and labeled “The Boring Ones”—Granny also sells her own particular poisoned brews, cordoned off far from her potions so as to allow no confusion between the two. She cackles with delight when asked how her poisons work, talking about “hag magic” as she speaks of devising new methods of debilitating, maiming, or merely confusing the general populace.

Poisons come in four types: contact, ingested, inhaled, and injury. See the core rules for more information.

GRANNY'S POISONS

POISON	TYPE	PRICE
Bad Breath	Ingested	30 gp
Bottled Ambition	Inhaled	250 gp
Dirt Nap	Contact	150 gp
False Drowning	Ingested	125 gp
Freaky Flask	Inhaled	5,500 gp
Homegrown Automaton	Injury	1,000 gp
Infested Growth	Ingested	750 gp
Phial of Medusa	Injury	2,000 gp
Tincture of Night	Contact	300 gp
Toxic Mediocrity	Inhaled	1,000 gp
Twisted Blood	Injury	125 gp
Werewolf's Tears	Ingested	800 gp
Witch's Brew	Ingested	200 gp
Whispers	Contact	800 gp
Vial of Aging	Inhaled	1,800 gp

BAD BREATH

Ingested

A creature subjected to this poison has disadvantage on Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) checks for the next hour. Additionally, they must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 2 (1d4) poison damage.²

BOTTLED AMBITION

Inhaled

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, which they can willingly fail. On a failure, the creature has advantage on Charisma checks for the next 8 hours, but can't take the Help action or use a spell, magic item, or class feature to do any of the following:

- Restore hit points or grant temporary hit points to another creature
- Increase another creature's AC
- Provide any benefit to another creature's ability checks, attack rolls, or saving throws

² Granny sells a deeply discounted version of bad breath poison that is potent, albeit nonmagical, garlic oil. This version costs 1 gp and causes the target creature to have disadvantage on Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) checks made to influence creatures within 5 feet of them. This effect lasts for 15 minutes or until the target brushes their teeth. This “poison” is also used in very small doses as a cooking aid.

When the poison's effect ends, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion.

DIRT NAP

Contact

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and have their speed reduced to half for the next hour. If the poison is not neutralized by *protection from poison* or similar magical means before its effect ends, the creature gains one level of exhaustion.

FALSE DROWNING

Ingested

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 12 Intelligence saving throw, but shows no immediate effect on a failed save. The first time after each long rest that the creature drinks a liquid, they take 5 (2d4) psychic damage, as they falsely believe they are choking on their drink. This effect lasts for 7 days.

FREAKY FLASK

Inhaled

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the creature's highest ability score is switched with their lowest ability score for the next 8 hours.

HOMEGROWN AUTOMATON

Injury

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw, which they can willingly fail. On a failure, the creature's skin is coated with a bronze sheen, and their Armor Class increases by 1 each time they finish a long rest for the next 7 days (to a maximum of 20), regardless of what armor they are wearing. Additionally, the creature's Wisdom score is reduced by 1 each time they finish a long rest for the next 7 days.

The creature can repeat the saving throw after each long rest, increasing the DC by 1 each time. If the poison is not neutralized within 7 days, the creature gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks, but has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws and automatically fails saving throws against being charmed. In addition to *protection from poison*, the *greater restoration* spell or similar magic can end these effects, restoring the creature's original Armor Class and Wisdom score.

INFESTED GROWTH

Ingested

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, but shows no immediate effect on a failed save. For the next 7 days, each time the creature finishes a long rest, they take 5 (2d4) piercing damage and 9 (2d8) poison damage as a spiked vine grows inside their organs. The creature can repeat the saving throw after each long rest, increasing the DC by 1 each time. On a success, the creature vomits up the plant and ends the effect on themselves.

At the end of 7 days without a successful save, a plant sprouts from the creature's orifices, dealing 20 (8d4) piercing damage and 36 (8d8) poison damage. The plant can be removed from the creature as an action, but doing so deals the creature 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the creature removing the plant succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, the affected creature takes half as much damage.

PHIAL OF MEDUSA

Injury

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or they begin to turn to stone and are restrained. The creature must repeat the saving throw after 1 minute, becoming petrified for 24 hours on a failure, or ending the effect on themselves on a success.

TINCTURE OF NIGHT

Contact

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, but shows no immediate effect on a failed save. The creature gains no benefit from their next long rest, instead having horrific nightmares that deal 10 (3d6) psychic damage. At the end of the long rest, the creature gains one level of exhaustion.

TOXIC MEDIOCRITY

Inhaled

A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, each of the creature's ability scores becomes 10 unless it is already lower, their attunement to any magic items ends, and they can't attune to magic items. These effects last for 8 hours.

TWISTED BLOOD

Injury

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or lose control of their limbs for 1 minute. During this time, the creature must

use their action to make a melee attack against another random creature within their reach. If unable to attack, the creature takes 3 (1d6) poison damage. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on themselves on a success.

WEREWOLF'S TEARS

Ingested

This poison is brewed from wolfsbane in a silver cauldron. A creature subjected to this poison must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, which a lycanthrope makes with disadvantage. On a failure, the creature takes 13 (3d8) necrotic damage, and their hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. In addition, the creature can't be affected by any effect that would alter their form (willingly or unwillingly) for the next hour.

WITCH'S BREW

Ingested

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, whenever the creature makes a saving throw, they roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from the d20 roll. Additionally, whenever the poisoned creature takes damage, they take an extra 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on themselves on a success.

WHISPERS

Contact

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or hear voices in their head talking about them. For 1 minute, these voices cause the creature to be deafened, to automatically lose concentration on spells and other features, and to be able to take only an action or bonus action on each of their turns. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on themselves on a success.

VIAL OF AGING

Inhaled

A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature's age increases to that of an elderly member of their

ancestry, if they are not in that age group already. Their Wisdom score is increased by 2, to a maximum of 20, and their Constitution score is reduced by 2. In addition to *protection from poison*, this effect can be ended by *remove curse*, *greater restoration*, or similar magic.

GRANNY'S QUESTS

As busy as she is, Granny Greenwinkle can always use help around the shop or aid in procuring special items for her concoctions. In addition to their regular interactions with characters, Granny and Flufftavius can offer the following quest hooks.

THE COVEN AROUND THE CORNER

Granny is distraught that a "rival coven" has opened a shop in the same area as her business. The characters are charged with discerning what these hags are up to (if they are in fact hags; Flufftavius is reluctant to jump to conclusions) and help the herbalists put their feud to rest. The rival store might be run by some of Granny's old schoolmates, eager to expose her scheme. Or the coven might be a group of actual hags who've seen how well kindly Granny's customers have responded to her, and who are attempting to try something new.

THE WITCH HUNTER

A new paladin has come to town and is determined to cleanse the area of all unnatural influences. Flufftavius fears for Granny's life, and urges the characters to convince her to come clean about who she really is. Granny would prefer to rid the town of the witch hunter—and perhaps rid the witch hunter of their own life while she's at it. The party must help Granny and Flufftavius decide what to do and aid them in their task before it's too late!

FLUFFTAVIUS'S FLAME

Granny requires more bottled silver dragon's breath, and is willing to pay an exorbitant fee to anyone who can retrieve the necessary expectoration. Flufftavius is suspicious that the town's wealthiest elf is a silver dragon in disguise, and suggests that the characters start there. In fact, the elf is not only a silver dragon, but an old flame of Flufftavius's with an interest in rekindling their romance. However, the dragon is intent on remaining incognito from fear of Granny's anger over breaking her best friend's heart two centuries ago. Can the characters reintroduce the trio without catastrophe—or, failing that, at least acquire the silver dragon's saliva and get paid?

THE GILDED FLIGHT

A RAPACIOUS ROGUES' GALLERY OF ENTRENCHED CAPITALISTS
IN NEED OF HEROIC REGULATION

by Carlos Cisco

Content Warning: This article contains an NPC villain with drug addiction, an NPC villain with past suicidal ideation, and an operation that involves prison labor and trafficking people, none of which are essential to the story. We recommend using the [MCDM Safety Toolkit and Checklist](#) and adjusting these elements as needed to ensure everyone has a good time.

THE MORE YOU FACED THE LIGHT, THE BRIGHTER IT GREW, AND ONE DAY FOR THE BRIEF RESPITE THAT IT BROUGHT YOU'D LOOK OVER YOUR SHOULDER. AND YOU'D SEE HOW LOVELY AND RICH AND DARK AND BEGUILING YOUR SHADOW HAD BECOME...

—TERRY PRATCHETT, *A BLINK OF THE SCREEN*

INTRODUCTION

While overt displays of violence, chaos, and raw power make it easy to spot a villain, they're also a rallying cry for heroes the world over. More insidious are those who work within unfeeling legal frameworks, shattering unwritten norms and codifying strife into daily existence. The Gilded Flight is a set of capitalistic villains designed to frame a campaign around (or incorporate as a facet of an existing campaign), with an eminently punchable plutocrat to topple at each tier of play.

The Gilded Flight is a massive pyramid scheme masterminded by Tamir'Khashchu (tah-MEER-hush-CHOH), an antediluvian, corrupt gold dragon who believes the world is best governed by the invisible hand (or claw) of commerce. Tamir's subordinates are compartmentalized to minimize any single thread leading back to him. Garin Najis, a cleric who's all business, evangelizes in his home city. Sym, a draconically empowered doppelganger, sows financial discord wherever they travel. Hecta Glintstone,

a disgraced druid, has a lock on a highly disputed diamond trade.

This article includes descriptions and stat blocks for each foe, as well as a high-level view of their operations. They fit well into any setting with cities, gods, commerce, and inequality—and even if your setting lacks gods, a religion based around a prosperity gospel could certainly disrupt the lives of the people and be an engine for story. Groups interested in intrigue, politics, and uncovering a grand mystery will get the most use out of this article. That said, if your party just wants to break out the proverbial guillotines and eat the rich, that's a perfectly viable approach.

TAMIR'KHASHCHU

Tamir is an ancient gold dragon who believes himself a force for good. Unfortunately, the gulf between what he believes and what's true is vast. In his youth, Tamir fit the mold of the goodly metallic dragon, selfless and

brave. He took many forms to subtly guide adventurers and rulers, attempting to fix the problems of the world—inequality, poverty, and more—through a mix of grand quests and moral lessons. But something changed as he watched well-meaning folks of all stripes fail to make progress ... or worse, ignore his words entirely.

Perhaps it was time for a more direct intervention. For the next several decades, Tamir engaged in silver-tongued negotiation, strong-armed intimidation, and economic skullduggery. Monarchs, clergy, and powerful adventurers found themselves doing his bidding, whether they knew it or not. Such alliances were mutually beneficial, of course—all the more so as Tamir’s influence grew and grew.

While his original motives were good, a rot set in as the centuries wore on. The common folk? All he saw was their demands. These unproductive layabouts constantly ask for handouts but contribute nothing, taking no steps to solve their own problems. Tamir, on the other hand, was important, beloved, inexorable. His generosity became greed. Compassion devolved into cold calculus. There was nothing he couldn’t monetize and lives became no different than the other numbers on his ledgers. His priorities shifted and his paradigm realigned so that his belief—that only through him could the world achieve true prosperity—became his reality. A reality where everything exists to slake his endless appetites. Far removed from the Tamir he once was, now he’s nothing but a craven serpent waiting to swallow the world.

GLORY TO GOLD

Ultimately, Tamir desires an ascendance normally reserved for only the most powerful and virtuous dragons. He plans to rewrite reality by manipulating the world into believing in his self-serving definition of “good,” placing himself at the apex of a new divine order. His path to ascension has never been closer: Tamir walks among the people as Alexi Boein, a charismatic gold dragonborn priest—and the chief evangelical officer of the Dictum of Prophets, a new religion that rejects true divinity while deifying the wealthy.

He has his sights on high-profile converts—those with power or popularity—and perhaps a few converted sovereigns have already declared the Dictum of Prophets to be their national religion, which the populace accepts readily. The rich are placated, as the Dictum states that they are wealthy because they’re already divine, and the poor are just as happy to join, for unquestioning

devotion and tithes are presented as a path to financial salvation. His followers are fanatically devoted, militantly evangelical, and far too fond of debating in bad faith. Any serious religious scholar finds their arguments meritless and their dogma hollow.

PROPHET HOUSES

The Dictum’s followers congregate in Prophet Houses and are “empowered” to tithe generously. These Prophet Houses are popping up in major cities, attending to the wretched and extolling the wealthy. These behemoth structures are topped with gleaming pyramids—the very definition of opulence and excess—yet they somehow feel cheap and mass-produced, sticking out like tumors of marble and gold. Inside, they house thousands of worshippers simultaneously. All sightlines lead up to a raised dais where evangelical officers, or Alexi himself, deliver sermons.

Each Prophet House has four main exits for the public, and complicated networks of tunnels descending beneath the stage, leading into a distended vault. The exits are all guarded by 2 **conduces** (see the end of this article for their stat block) posing as semi-abstract sculptures of Alexi. Should a temple be threatened, the conduces lock the doors, sealing the worshippers inside to use as a bargaining chip. Every temple employs eight **veterans**, six evangelical officers (**priests**), and ten actuaries (**cult fanatics**). Any temple Tamir currently occupies acts as a gold dragon’s lair.

TOME OF ACCOUNTS

Tamir keeps fastidious accounts of every financial transaction, contract, and deed of ownership throughout his millennia of making the world a colder, more unequal, and increasingly commodified place. While each Prophet House boasts an engorged vault, Tamir’s true “hoard” is decentralized across a multitude of real estate portfolios, businesses, and displayed art, all precisely recorded within an ever-growing tome.

But the truth of his records runs much deeper. Kingdoms have risen and fallen at his behest. Movements for change lasted only as long as they were economically viable. Tamir has had his talons in nearly every major conflict and is implicated in the deaths of millions, and all of the damning evidence is within the tome. Separating Tamir from this book would be a dangerous endeavor—but it could also be the key to unraveling his entire operation.



A NOTE ON SPELLS

Some creatures have magical actions, bonus actions, and reactions. When these features should be considered spells (for the purpose of *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, and similar effects), the spell level is noted in parentheses. If the spell requires concentration, this is also noted in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, these spells have somatic and verbal components.

In addition to combat-focused spells, some creatures can cast spells that are primarily used outside of combat. To streamline the stat blocks, these spells aren't included in the creature's combat-oriented "Actions" section. Instead, they appear in a separate "Utility Spells" section at the end of the stat block. After each spell name, the casting time is indicated in superscript, as shown in the Casting Times table.

CASTING TIMES

SUPERSCRIPT	CASTING TIME
A	1 action
B	1 bonus action
R	1 reaction
+	Longer than 1 action (see spell description)

For example, a spellcaster's utility spells might appear as follows (indicating these casting times are 1 bonus action, 1 action, and longer than 1 action, respectively):

1/day each: *expeditious retreat*^B, *mage armor*^A, *phantom steed*⁺

STRATEGY

Tamir is as tactical off the battlefield as on it. Through magic and patience, he's accumulated favors and leverage across political, religious, and commercial enterprises. He's a powerful spellcaster in his own right, though much of his magic is less useful in a scrape. Tamir can cast the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 24) and requiring no material components:

At will: *calm emotions*^A, *charm person*^A, *healing word*^B, *lesser restoration*^A, *suggestion*^A

3/day each: *dominate person*^A, *geas*⁺, *greater restoration*^A, *mass cure wounds*^A,

1/day each: *antipathy/sympathy*^A, *glibness*^A, *mass suggestion*^A, *resurrection*⁺, *teleport*^A

Battle Tactics. Tamir prefers to rely on the labor of others when engaging directly in battle, and he is rarely without an ally nearby. He eschews using healing magic, knowing the quickest way to victory is the swift destruction of the competition. If confronted in a Prophet House, he deploys his minions and worshippers as fodder while he concentrates on dispatching any divine casters. If the heroes manage to confront Tamir alone, he relies on his villain and legendary actions to keep his assailants at bay before attempting to escape and regroup. Cravenness is not sinful, for survival is paramount.

Villain Actions

Tamir has three villain actions. He can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. He takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

Villain Action 1: Defensive Investiture. Tamir summons each coin within 500 feet of him (from a pocket, bag, or vault ... no coin is safe), covering him and up to six creatures of his choice within 60 feet of him in an armor of glittering opulence. He gains a +5 bonus to his AC and his allies gain +1 to their AC until he uses his Explosive Dividends villain action. If there are no coins nearby, he begrudgingly draws them from the nearest House of Prophets. When this villain action ends, any summoned coins fall in a 10-foot radius around Tamir and each creature affected by this villain action.

Villain Action 2: Explosive Dividends. Coins surge around Tamir in a maelstrom of money before exploding outward. Each creature in a 60-foot radius of Tamir must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Tamir can then move up to his speed.

Villain Action 3: All that Glitters. Tamir summons blazing goblets above his opponents' heads that pour molten gold over them. Tamir chooses up to six creatures he can see within 60 feet of him. Each creature must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 45 (10d8) fire damage and have molten gold flow over their face. Until a creature takes an action to rid themselves of the molten gold, the target is blinded and takes 9 (2d8) fire damage at the start of each of their turns.

GARIN NAJIS

Garin Najis, who originally appeared in *ARCADIA* 5, twists the dogma of his god of commerce to suit what he believes to be true as he converts the populace as a high-ranking prosperity preacher. Tamir only requires that Garin's preaching lines up with the prosperity gospel espoused by the Dictum of Prophets, and in return for Garin's evangelizing, Tamir crushed his competitors, allowing Garin to gain a financial stranglehold on Garin's home city—but Tamir takes a substantial cut from all Garin's ventures in return. Garin is not without his vices and hides an addiction to Scarab Snuff, a stimulant made from pulverized desert scarabs that produces mild euphoric effects.

A CAPITAL IDEA

You may have noticed some retreading of ideas from a previous article. In "Goldmonger Subclasses," I engaged in a wee bit of moral relativity to make avaricious adventurers seem heroic. Personally? I believe greed to be the root of most evils in the world and I wanted to expand on the themes, characters, and a few of the mechanics I created in that article. These are villains who reflect those same ideals. Now, I cannot extol the efficacy or legality of throat-punching a venture capitalist or pile-driving a prosperity preacher, but giving you the ability to put them to the fantasy sword felt like a reasonable middle ground.

—Carlos Cisco

GRAND NAJIS VENTURES

Garin is the first of these rapacious bastards the player characters are likely to encounter. His business conglomerate, Grand Najis Ventures, can provide kernels of information that paint a bigger picture, one that could unravel Garin's entire operation and point to the next link in the chain. The ledgers stored in his office have information on all his shell companies. Additionally, he has a number of undervalued but ambitious middle managers who fancy themselves sharks. Sowing chaos among them could grind his operations to a halt. If his holdings are threatened, Garin acts fast but lowballs any mercenaries he hires ... useful information for adventurers who can outspend him.

Garin's operation can be introduced with one of the following plot hooks, or one of your own creation:

Chain(mail) Gang. The smiths making "masterwork" chainmail are required to reside in company housing and are paid in company scrip. Attempts to unionize have been crushed and the smiths dare not rise up for fear of losing their jobs and homes.

Golden Trough. An outbreak of gastrointestinal blockage (also known as "stone stomach") leads back to the dubious dry-aged meats originating from Garin's chain of fast-casual restaurants. His restaurants are all built near sewer access points, and those who brave the muck-filled tunnels beneath find a well-guarded cockatrice breeding pit.

Marble Misappropriation. Garin hires the party to solve why one of his vaults is empty. This leads the party to discover a coin from the *misappropriator coin pouch* (see "Slicing the Salami" later in this article), which is a gateway to Sym, the tier 2 villain, and reveals that Garin has purchased prison labor for use in his marble quarries and gem mines. Records discovered here could reveal that Garin is the Dictum's main supplier of marble and raw gems.

TACTICS

Garin goes nowhere without his surly (and criminally underpaid) half-orc **gladiator** bodyguard, Mai Hardoo, and if he catches wind of potential assailants, he adds two actuaries (**cult fanatics**) to his retinue. He first casts *haste* on Mai so he can also gain the benefits with his Prophet Motive feature, then uses Fiscal Cyclone to control the battlefield and *sacred flame* to weaken opponents while Mai mops them up. If forced into close combat, he'll attack with his dragonfang kris. Outside of combat, Garin wields a powerful suite of divine magic and uses the *glyph of warding* and *symbol* spells to keep his investments secure.

GARIN NAJIS

Medium Humanoid (Human), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 17 (+1 breastplate)

Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +8, Cha +5

Skills History +3, Insight +8, Intimidation +5, Religion +3

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Celestial, Common, plus any two languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Prophet Motive. When casting a spell requiring concentration on another creature, Garin can replicate the effect on himself. If the spell ends, the effect ends on him as well.

ACTIONS

Dragonfang Kris. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) radiant damage.

Sacred Flame (Cantrip). Flame-like radiance descends on one creature Garin can see within 60 feet of him. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (3d8) radiant damage, gaining no benefit from cover.

Haste (3/Day; 3rd-Level Spell; Concentration). Garin chooses a willing creature he can see within 30 feet of him. Until the spell ends, his and the target's speeds are both doubled, they both gain a +2 bonus to AC, they have advantage on Dexterity saving throws, and they each gain an additional action on each of their turns. That action can be used only to take the Attack (one weapon attack only), Dash, Disengage, Hide, or Use an Object action. When the spell ends, the target (but not Garin) can't move or take actions until after their next turn, as a wave of lethargy sweeps over them.

BONUS ACTIONS

Fiscal Cyclone. Garin creates a swirling mass of spectral coins in a 5-foot cube centered on a point within 60 feet of him. A creature who starts their turn in the area of one or more of these cyclones, or who enters one for the first time on a turn, takes 14 (2d8 + 5) force damage. The effect lasts until Garin dismisses it (no action required) or falls unconscious.

REACTIONS

Divine Kleptocracy (1/Day). When another creature Garin can see within 30 feet of him is targeted by a spell that requires concentration, Garin can duplicate the spell's effect on himself (requiring no concentration). If the spell ends for the other creature, the effect ends for him at the end of his next turn.

Object of Desire (2/Day). When another creature within 30 feet of Garin targets him with an attack or spell, he can hold up his holy symbol and make it appear as the object the attacker desires most. The attacker must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of Garin's next turn.

UTILITY SPELLS

Garin can cast the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16) and requiring no material components:

At will: *detect magic*^A, *light*^A, *mending*⁺

2/day each: *calm emotions*^A, *command*^A, *cure wounds*^A, *detect poison and disease*^A, *lesser restoration*^A, *locate object*^A

1/day each: *create food and water*^A, *daylight*^A, *find the path*⁺, *forbiddance*⁺, *geas*⁺, *glyph of warding*⁺, *hallow*⁺, *heroes' feast*⁺, *locate creature*^A, *remove curse*^A, *scrying*⁺, *sending*^A, *symbol*⁺

SYM

A doppelganger born unable to shapechange, Sym was ostracized and eventually cast out by their people. Abandoned and alone in an unforgiving world, they found no solace among the “solids.” When Sym was about to end their own life, it was not divine intervention that stayed their hand, but a sympathetic and dazzlingly charismatic dragonborn—Alexi Boein, Tamir’s alter ego, who offered them healing, friendship, and a new purpose. Grateful, Sym devoted themselves to the Dictum of Prophets and was rewarded when Tamir used an ancient draconic ritual to imbue them with a form of shapechanging more powerful than even the oldest doppelgangers enjoy. Ultimately, Sym has no greater ambition than service to Tamir, who unfortunately sees them only as a dangerously effective tool.

SLICING THE SALAMI

Sym’s assignment is simple: Be everyone’s friend, be the life of the party, and always, **always** pay for the drinks at the tavern. Sym’s operation is contingent on a single tool: a *misappropriator coin pouch*. This cursed currency is designed to circulate in secret, siphoning fortunes away so slowly that only the most shrewd accountants would notice. When circulating coins from the *misappropriator coin pouch*, Sym travels under the guise of Plix Goldjaw, a gregarious goblin paladin and C-list celebrity adventurer. The real Plix is unaware of Sym’s impersonation but is happy for the adulation she receives as a result.



This element of Sym’s operation can be introduced with one of the following plot hooks, or one of your own creation:

Closing Time. A week after a raucous visit from Plix, the party’s favorite tavern suddenly hangs up its hat, unable to afford the overhead. Soon, all the merchants in town are bankrupt.

Plix Paradox. Plix Goldjaw is somehow slated for two charity events in the same city, on the same night. What gives?

Empty Threat. A small, rural bank is going out of business—and if it does, so will the local shopkeepers, tavern owners, and farmers who rely on it. Their vault drained too slowly for anyone to notice before it was emptied, and all that remains is a single, strange coin ... one that everyone is afraid to touch.

MISAPPROPRIATOR COIN POUCH

Wondrous Item, Rare

This ornately gilded coin pouch contains ten gold coins minted with a dragon’s face on both sides. As an action, you can pull a coin from the pouch and activate it. A coin from the pouch only functions on the Material Plane. After 24 hours, the coin begins slowly siphoning other coins within 60 feet of it that are not blocked by a solid barrier. Siphoned coins are transported to a vault in the nearest House of Prophets at a rate of 2d8 coins per day, starting with copper, then silver, then electrum, and so forth. The coin dissolves into sand if it siphons no coins for 24 hours, reappearing in the coin pouch the next dawn.

DESPERATE DEBTORS

Shapeshifting, blackmail, and a bit of light murder have been Sym’s tools to gain controlling interest in a major metropolis’s prison(s). From there, they managed to shift the local laws, naming debt as a jailable offense. The poorest of the city are suffering, but it’s clear no one is safe.

This element of Sym’s operation can be introduced with one of the following plot hooks, or one of your own creation:

Serve and Collect. The town guard has been prowling the city for debtors, making citizens less likely to report real crimes.

Administrative (T)error. The prison is full, and dock warehouses have been licensed as overflow facilities. But those wishing to visit their relatives or pay off their debts have found that these prisoners have been erased from the record books or have disappeared entirely.



Sym quickly discovered they needed a more prominent and respectable face and found it in Thollos Tluay, a minotaur merchant prince. Using this stolen identity, Sym has used Thollos's extensive merchant network to traffic debt prisoners, selling them as free labor. This operation is not without its vulnerabilities, as Thollos' business partners are just as culpable and not nearly so resourceful as Sym.

This element of Sym's operation can be introduced with one of the following plot hooks, or one of your own creation:

A Nasty Piece of Work. "Thollos" does his business in a busy port. Trafficking people is highly illegal—but transferring prisoners between jails is merely a matter of paperwork. Several mining, construction, and delving ventures in other cities have reclassified themselves as prisons and conveniently accept transfers from the metropolis's overflowing jail.

Smuggling Snuff. If "Thollos" is trafficking people, it's likely that other types of contraband are moving on his ships and through his warehouses. Weapons, illegal drugs (perhaps even Scarab Snuff from "Garin Najis" earlier in this article), forbidden magic—all of it is on the table.

COMPLICATIONS

If Sym catches folks sniffing around, they quietly go on the offensive, often abducting or murdering a trusted friend of the party and replacing them. Sym's Read Thoughts action keeps them one step ahead as they attempt to destroy the party's relationships with the people they love and rely on.

REMINDER: AVOIDING HARM

Criminalizing poverty, abuse of power by police, trafficking people, and prison labor are particularly heavy topics among the real-world parallels throughout this article. We recommend getting explicit permission to include these elements from each player (using the [MCDM Safety Toolkit and Checklist](#) if you find it helpful). If anyone isn't comfortable with this content in your game, omit or replace these parts of Sym's operation.

TACTICS

In combat, Sym is pure chaos, with collateral damage as part of the equation. Sym uses the environment and populace (if available) to shape the surroundings to their advantage. This could mean leading adventurers on a chaotic chase through a city or skulking amongst the myriad critters of a dangerous forest. Sym favors a few forms they find particularly effective in combat:

- A **dragon priest** (see the end of this article for their stat block), often aping Alexi's image, is useful for crowd control and area of effect fire damage at range.
- An **assassin** is perfect for first-turn strikes as a disguised character.
- A **giant owl** is handy for fleeing dangerous situations.
- A **tyrannosaurus rex**—because sometimes you just have to eat someone.

Sym takes full advantage of Prophetic Metamorph. They often start with the devastating actions of the dragon priest or tyrannosaurus rex, then shift into a giant owl to gain a more advantageous position. From there, they either flee or resume ranged attacks, such as the dragon priest's Fire Breath and Fire Bolt.

GM TIP: PREPARATION

Running a shapechanger as a boss fight can be a challenge even for experienced GMs. Be sure to familiarize yourself with Sym's stat block (especially their Prophetic Metamorph action) and the stat blocks of creatures they might turn into. Also, consider whether your group would find more enjoyment in Sym's Face-Off villain action being used on a player character, unlucky bystander, or underpaid decoy—the former is most rewarding for groups who are comfortable with a little metagaming during combat.



SYM

Medium Monstrosity (Shapechanger), Neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 130 (20d8 + 40)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +6, Cha +7

Skills Deception +7, Insight +6, Persuasion +7

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common plus any two languages

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Pyrite Resistance (3/Day). If Sym fails a saving throw, they can choose to succeed instead. They revert to their true form (if they are not in it already) and lose access to their Prophetic Metamorph bonus action until the start of their next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sym makes two Gold Claw attacks.

Gold Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Read Thoughts. Sym magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 feet of them. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 feet of wood or dirt, 2 feet of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, Sym can continue reading their thoughts, as long as their concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, Sym has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

BONUS ACTIONS

Prophetic Metamorph. Sym magically polymorphs into a Humanoid or Beast with a challenge rating of 12 or less, or back into their true form. Any equipment they're wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (Sym's choice). In a new form, Sym retains their hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, immunities, Read Thoughts action, Prophetic Metamorph bonus action, villain actions, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Their statistics are

otherwise replaced by those of the new form, including the form's spell attack bonus and saving throw DCs. They revert to their true form if they die.

VILLAIN ACTIONS

Sym has three villain actions. They can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. They can take these actions in any order but can only use one per round.

Villain Action 1: Face-Off. Sym swaps places with one creature they can see within 60 feet of them and simultaneously takes on the target's appearance, without changing their statistics, until they use their Prophetic Metamorph bonus action. A creature with a passive Perception score of 17 or higher who can see Sym and the target automatically notices the swap; otherwise, a creature who interacts with Sym or the target can use a bonus action to make a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight or Perception) check, detecting the ruse on a success.

Villain Action 2: Form & Function. Sym rapidly shifts between their favored forms to create a devastating (and visually exquisite) combination blow. Sym chooses a creature within 30 feet of them, shifts into the minotaur Thollos, and moves within reach to make a Gore attack against the target that tosses the target 5 feet into the air.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sym then shifts into the goblin Plix and uses their maul to make a Slam attack against the target, leaping up to hit the target midair if they were tossed by the Gore attack. If the target is prone, the Slam attack is automatically a critical hit.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Sym then uses their Prophetic Metamorph bonus action.

Villain Action 3: Divine Molt. Sym regains 60 hit points and transforms into a **young gold dragon**, as though they had used their Prophetic Metamorph bonus action. This effect lasts for 1 minute or until they use Prophetic Metamorph again.

HECTA GLINTSTONE

Hecta is an embittered duergar druid, banished from her Gilded circle (see the Circle of the Gilded druid in “Goldmonger Subclasses” in *ARCADIA 5*). Hecta is ruthless, greedy, and completely unpersonable; she prefers the company of elemental servants to the company of other mortals. She’s completely loyal to Tamir, believing that, should he succeed in his machinations, Tamir will give her dominion over this world—but Hecta is so effective that Tamir has no designs to keep her as anything but a cog in his machine.

ENFORCED INFLATION

Hecta has designs on a diamond mine situated between two nations that both rely on it. To clear out the mine, she makes extensive use of elemental allies, both conventional and not, including a detachment of **noxa**, **combuero**, and **earth elementals**. These elementals have filled the mine’s lower chambers with toxic gases, created dangerous explosions, and posed as cavern walls that then assault the miners. Hecta also keeps a personal guard of four ornate **conduceres** around her at all times. (These nova elementals can be found in “Periodic Table of Elementals” in *ARCADIA 2*.)

Hecta is choking the diamond market, causing ripple effects through both nations. Each nation blames the other, and a very costly war is on the horizon—exactly what Hecta is counting on.

DIAMOND DEPRESSION

The core game rules establish certain price requirements for spellcasting components, such as “diamonds worth 300 gp” for the *revivify* spell. Some might question if the market price of the diamond is what matters—the socially assigned value of an item—or if that’s merely a game-mechanics abstraction for the quality of gem necessary for the spell. Both schools of thought are perfectly valid interpretations! For the purposes of this article, the cost printed in the game rules is a shorthand for quality—the *revivify* spell requires, for example, one carat in flawless diamonds, regardless of whether their market price is 300 gp, 400 gp, or 1200 gp.

RESURRECTIONS INCORPORATED

Diamonds are one of the most important spellcasting components for divine and arcane magic users alike, and the price has soared. Much to their dismay, spellcasters have discovered that even the modest diamonds some spells once required—like *chromatic orb*’s diamond



worth 50 gp—now have quadrupled in cost. Merchants are hawking even the tiniest diamonds for hundreds of gold pieces, making a simple *revivify* spell cost prohibitive. Want to cast *stoneskin* or *greater restoration*? You better have an amazing line of credit—and don't even think about a *true resurrection*.

With both nations blaming each other, internal discord grows by the day. This element of Hecta's operation can be introduced with one of the following plot hooks, or one of your own creation:

Pointing Fingers. Multiple groups are looking for someone to blame. The peasants and nobles are at each other's throats, both feeling the other is hoarding the diamonds. The military is accusing the arcane students of using diamonds in experiments instead of bolstering the troops.

Outsourced Crime. Hecta makes extensive use of thieves' guilds to rob jewelry stores and fence the diamonds at exorbitant prices. These robberies could be a mystery for low-level characters to solve, hinting at the larger plot to come.

RUMORS

If her thieves' guild contacts are burned, Hecta has no problem withdrawing from cities and retreating into the mine she controls. She is well stocked and prepared to endure if the mine is besieged, and she and her elementals hold a supreme advantage within its tunnels—drawing her out is the best way to challenge her on equal footing. But even if she loses the mine, she has other means of keeping a stranglehold on the diamond market.

Other elements of Hecta's operation can be introduced with one of the following rumors, or one of your own creation:

Lightning-Quick Ambush. Storms waylaying gem shipments from a neighboring country are giving local merchants pause. Survivors speak of men made of lightning attacking the convoys.

Selectively Impossible. Rock slides and otherworldly winds in the mountains have prevented gem imports from a different region, despite other trade caravans passing through without incident.

TACTICS

Hecta is always accompanied by her four **conducere** guards, which affect her challenge rating and are tied directly to her villain actions. She uses her Subordinate Synergy villain action as early as possible to redirect damage to her **conduces**, who subsequently redirect it to enemies. She'll attempt to bait a party into close range, where her passive abilities and the energy grid

established with her Arc Reaction villain action punish melee attackers. If necessary, she uses *thunderwave* to push enemies through the damaging lines while picking off would-be snipers with her Pineal Precious action, which shoots fiery beams out of the gem on her forehead. Hecta is a Circle of the Gilded druid and, while she relies most on her weapon and villain actions in battle, she does have a selection of out-of-combat utility spells prepared.

QM TIP: LINES AND GRIDS

Hecta's second villain action, Arc Reaction, creates a network of damaging lines throughout the battlefield. A combat encounter with Hecta works best if you use a grid and miniatures or tokens to represent the position of each creature and the damaging lines. When marking Hecta's connections with her **conduces**, draw the shortest possible line from Hecta's space to the closest corner of each **conducere's** space.

THE OLIGARCH

Weapon (Maul), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This +3 maul, wrought from marble and cut with thick veins of gold, was gifted to Hecta by Tamir. To honor her unflinching subordination, those struck by it grovel like the worms they are.

Grovel. A creature hit by this maul must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or fall prone. If the creature fails this save during their turn, their turn ends.

UNGILDING THE LILY

While the world is a much worse place for Tamir and his minions' presence in it, consider the world left behind in their absence. Systems are especially difficult to dislodge once they've calcified into daily life. People generally find complacency more comfortable than action, so when those systems collapse, often their first instinct is to ask "how do we return to normal," for it's much more terrifying to acknowledge a new reality from which there is no return. What new systems can you and your players build in the wake of this capitalist nightmare? Will your world edge toward equality, or will more bad actors seep in to fill the gaps?

Imagining what comes after the collapse is difficult work, and it's very easy to slip into nostalgia for what was. Player characters may also struggle to envision what a new system might look like. But the true work of heroes is not just to envision, but to build a better future ... and there's no time like the present to start thinking about what that looks like.

HECTA GLINTSTONE

Medium Humanoid (Duergar), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 17 (+3 hide armor)

Hit Points 204 (24d8 + 96)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +9, Int +6, Wis +10

Skills Athletics +8, Insight +10, Nature +6, Perception +10

Damage Resistances acid, fire, thunder

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages any six languages

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Caustic Humors. A creature who touches Hecta or hits her with a melee attack while within 5 feet of her takes 6 (1d12) acid damage.

Rock Solid (3/Day). If Hecta fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead. Her Caustic Humors trait ceases to function until the start of her next turn.

Thundering Aegis. Diamonds embedded in Hecta's skin pulse with thunderous energy, surrounding her in an aura that repels projectiles. Ranged attacks made against Hecta have disadvantage, and being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on Hecta's ranged attack rolls.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hecta makes two Oligarch attacks, or one Oligarch attack and one Pineal Precious attack.

Oligarch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 6 (1d12) acid damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or fall prone. If the target fails this save during their turn, their turn ends.

Pineal Precious (4/Day). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (4d12 + 5) fire damage.

Thunderwave (3/Day; 5th-Level Spell). A wave of thunderous force bursts out from Hecta. Each creature in a 15-foot cube originating from Hecta must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 27 (6d8) thunder damage and is pushed 10 feet away from her. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.

BONUS ACTIONS

Worm Crusher. Immediately after Hecta knocks a creature prone, she can make one Oligarch attack against that creature.

REACTIONS

Redirect. When Hecta takes damage while connected to conducteres (from her Subordinate Synergy villain action), she can split that damage between one or more connected conducteres, dealing a total amount of damage equal to the damage she would have taken. Each conductere who takes damage in this way can immediately use their Energy Conductor without using a reaction.

VILLAIN ACTIONS

Hecta has three villain actions. She can take each action once during an encounter after an enemy creature's turn. She takes villain action 1 during the first round of combat, villain action 2 during the second round, and villain action 3 during the third round.

Villain Action 1: Subordinate Synergy. Hecta establishes connections with each conductere within 30 feet of her, creating 5-foot-wide lines of harmless crackling energy that connect her to them. The lines remain and move with her and the conducteres until Hecta uses her Elemental Liquidation villain action. The connection with a conductere ends if that conductere dies or ends their turn more than 30 feet from Hecta.

Villain Action 2: Arc Reaction. The lines of energy connecting Hecta and the conducteres connected to her flare with raw primordial power. Additional energy lines form between connected conducteres within 30 feet of each other. Any creature (except a connected conductere) who starts their turn in a space these lines pass through, or enters such a space for the first time on a turn, takes 14 (4d6) fire damage.

Villain Action 3: Elemental Liquidation. Hecta makes four Pineal Precious attacks, originating from conducteres of her choice. These attacks do not count against her daily uses of this attack. If there are no conducteres within 120 feet of her, Hecta can cause the gem in her forehead to explode with fiery energy and make four Pineal Precious attacks; she then takes 14 (4d6) force damage and can't make a Pineal Precious attack until the next day. After Hecta uses this villain action, the lines created by her Subordinate Synergy villain action disappear.

UTILITY SPELLS

At will: *detect magic*^A, *druidcraft*^A, *guidance*^A, *mending*⁺, *produce flame*^A

2/day each: *animal messenger*^A, *create or destroy water*^A, *locate object*^A, *meld into stone*^A, *pass without trace*^A, *plant growth*^{A+}, *speak with animals*^A, *speak with plants*^A, *stone shape*^A

1/day each: *commune with nature*⁺, *conjure elemental*⁺, *control weather*⁺, *hallucinatory terrain*⁺, *locate creature*^A, *move earth*^A, *planar binding*⁺, *scrying*⁺, *transport via plants*^A, *wall of stone*^A

ADDITIONAL STAT BLOCKS

Combueros, conduceres, and noxas originally appeared in “Periodic Table of Elementals” in *ARCADIA 2*.

The dragon priest originally appeared in “Appendix NPC: Part 2” in *ARCADIA 20*.

COMBURO

Combueros are extremely volatile elementals composed of metals like lithium and potassium. Cracks in their dull, metallic grey exteriors reveal a searing explosive fire at their cores. This fire takes on a characteristic hue depending on the primary composition of the comburo, with flames ranging from deep purple to brilliant blue.

COMBURO

Large Elemental, Neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 110 (20d8 + 20)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Primordial

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Death Burst. When the comburo dies, it explodes in a fiery burst. Each creature within 15 feet of the comburo must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (4d6) fire damage.

Ductile Form. The comburo can enter a hostile creature’s space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Explosive Reactivity. A creature that hits the comburo with an attack while within 15 feet of it must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Illumination. The comburo sheds bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light in an additional 15 feet.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The comburo makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Volatile Burst (Recharge 6). The comburo launches a hailstorm of explosive projectiles that land at three different points the comburo can see within 120 feet of itself. Each creature in a 15-foot-radius sphere centered on each point must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 21 (6d6) fire damage and is knocked prone on a failure. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and is not knocked prone. The spheres spread around corners. A creature in the area of more than one explosion point is affected only once. This ability damages objects in the area and ignites flammable objects that aren’t being worn or carried.

CONDUCERE

Made of precious metals like gold and copper, conducere are known for their incredibly flexible nature and ability to transfer energy across long distances. Conducere are the most docile of the nova elementals, and many mages keep a conducere in their study purely for its glittering aesthetic.



CONDUCERE

Large Elemental, Neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (12d10 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances fire, lightning, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities acid, cold, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Primordial

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Ductile Form. The conducere can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Flexible. The conducere has advantage on Dexterity saving throws.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The conducere makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Energy Conductor. When the conducere takes damage from a spell or magical effect, it can use its reaction to redirect that magical energy to another creature. The conducere takes no damage and instead chooses a target within 30 feet of itself. The target must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target takes the damage originally intended for the conducere; this damage is equal to the amount of damage the conducere would have taken had it not used its reaction in this way. On a success, the target only takes half this damage.

DRAGON PRIEST

*“I wield the very flame of Corzivax-Baloroth!
Her power is mine!”*

Ancient dragons are so suffused with magic that they can impart a fraction of their power to their most loyal pawns. The dragon priest is one such servant—a cultist dedicated to the will of a powerful dragon, partially transformed by their patron into a quasi-draconic figure. The ancient dragon bestows “gifts” upon the priest that typically take the form of sharpened claws, filed teeth, reptilian eyes, and patches of diamond-hard scale.

The dragon priest stat block assumes that the dragon priest’s master is a red dragon, which is reflected in its immunity to fire damage and the fire damage dealt by its actions. You can change this to suit another type of dragon by swapping the damage type.

DRAGON PRIEST

Medium Humanoid, The Alignment of Their Patron

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (21d8 + 84)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +8, Wis +4, Cha +8

Skills Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Perception +8, Stealth +8

Damage Immunities fire

Condition Immunities frightened

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft.,
passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The priest makes three Claw attacks, and they make a Fire Bolt attack or use Spellcasting.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage.

Fire Bolt (Cantrip). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d10) fire damage. A flammable object hit by this spell ignites if it isn’t being worn or carried.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The priest exhales fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Additionally, a creature loses any resistance or immunity to fire damage for 1 minute if they take or would have taken damage from this action.

Spellcasting. The priest casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16):

3/day each: *dimension door, dispel magic*

1/day each: *eyebite, mass suggestion, true seeing*

NOXA

Composed of toxic, odorless gases like helium and neon, noxas are some of the most dangerous nova elementals. The combination of their invisible presence and poisonous nature means they can easily suffocate a target before anyone notices something is wrong. However, more whimsical mages have been known to trap noxas in glass tubes and feed them energy to create softly glowing fluorescent lamps of various colors.

NOXA

Large Elemental, Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Primordial

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The noxa makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Asphyxiation. The noxa chooses one creature within its space and floods the creature's lungs with poisonous gas. The creature must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, it takes 27 (6d8) poison damage, is restrained, and begins suffocating. On a success, it takes half as much damage, is not restrained, and does not begin suffocating. If the targeted creature is already suffocating when the elemental uses this action, the creature has disadvantage on the saving throw. A restrained and suffocating creature can repeat this saving throw at the start of each of its turns, ending both effects on a success.



RESOURCES

MCDM TABLETOP SAFETY TOOLKIT

<https://mcdm.gg/SafetyToolkit>

GRANNY'S CONCOCTIONS PUNCH CARD

<https://mcdm.gg/Arcadia202301/GrannysConcoctionsCard.png>

You can find all issues of *ARCADIA* on [Patreon](#) and in the [MCDM shop](#).



WILLY ABEEL Signs of frogs, clowns, and dynamic game material have been discovered in products by MCDM, 2CGaming, Ghostfire Gaming, and EN Publishing. Willy-01 is on the loose and is approaching critical gonzo levels. Last correspondence with Willy-01 occurred across several social media channels under the handle [@thewillyboo](#). Should you choose to engage, be ready for anything.



JESSICA MARCRUM, also known as angrynerdgirl, is a social worker and gold ENNIE award-winning writing director. A co-founder of Unselie Studios, she has created numerous games and supplements including *Dumpster Fire: A Game for 2020* and *Oops, All Draculas!*, as well as contributing to publications for A Thinking Ape, Cubicle 7, Hit Point Press, MCDM, and The Onyx Path. Jessica can be contacted on Twitter [@Miss_Jess03](#), on [Twitch](#), on [Mastodon](#), and via her [website](#).



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