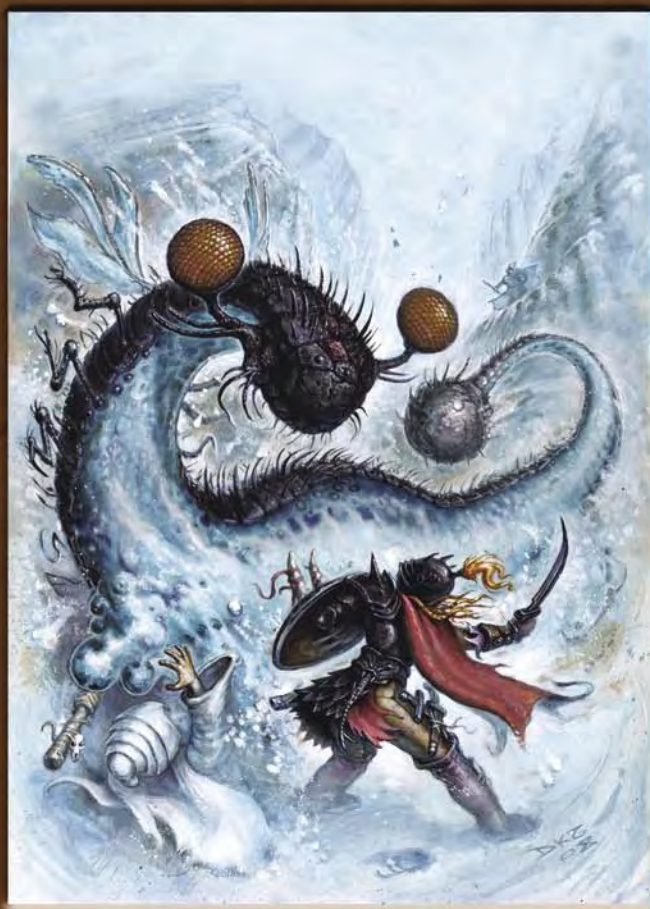


THE RANDOM ESOTERIC CREATURE GENERATOR

FOR CLASSIC FANTASY ROLE PLAYING GAMES
AND THEIR MODERN SIMULACRA



BY JAMES EDWARD RAGGI IV



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AND THEIR MODERN SIMULACRA**

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional fantasy role-playing games stand at a crossroads. In one direction lies development – different designs, new paradigms, and modern influences that fundamentally change the gaming experience – stimulating a role-playing community fatigued by decades of gathered assumptions and play. In the other direction lies preservation, where the old ways and standards are continued and the classic procedures, influences, and traditions of the games, and the hobby as a whole, are celebrated and exposed to new generations of gamers.

The first approach tends to fragment the hobby – and the community – and create confusion over the meaning of commonly shared, but differently used, terms. Not all change is progress. The other path leads to stagnation and orthodoxy. That's wonderful if traditional games are to be kept as museum pieces, but it tends to wring the magic and delight out of a game intended for actual play.

I am far more sympathetic to the traditionalists. I've been playing these games for twenty-five years now. I enjoy playing the game, and it's not for nostalgic reasons. The best gaming I have ever done has been in just the past couple of years, using the exact same systems I used when I was a pre-teen. I believe these games are not old, but rather timeless, and are in no way deficient when

directly compared to current games. And to prove this point, I do not just game with people like me; I have dice that are older than many of the players in my current group. Most of them never played these classic games before I came along. But every single one of them knows about the standards of the game, about the little tricks, and most importantly, about the monsters.

The monsters, a critical piece to any game that strives for the fantastic, have lost all sense of wonder. The common foes have bled into every other role-playing game, into video games, into "literature." A referee can come up with interesting settings, and players will react appropriately. A referee can come up with all sorts of plots, mundane and sublime, and players will react appropriately. A referee can devise fiendishly clever traps and players will exercise due caution. But no matter how obliquely a monster is described, you can be sure the second that description ends, players will act with almost-robotic predictability in their approach to fighting the monster. Of course they do!

Classic games challenge the player as much as the character, but when you're faced with a familiar monster, where's the challenge? Where is the fear, or the courage to overcome it? Where is the adventure?

This lack of wonder has to end for the sake of the game. The true sense of danger must be restored. The cause of promoting traditional games as vibrant and timeless is hurt when a new player already knows all about an encountered monster even though his character has never seen one before. The cause is hurt when a referee has to scour three official monster books and still wants to look up things in periodicals and websites and third-party releases for ideas because he's desperate for something different with which to challenge players ... and the cause is hurt when the players are so experienced that they recognize the creature immediately anyway.

This publication is my attempt to help referees everywhere reintroduce that sense of wonder by making it easy to introduce new and unique creatures into their game, on a consistent and constant basis, without taxing the referee's creative urges or putting unreasonable demands on his time. This is also for all the players who wish for fresh experiences from the game they so dearly love. This is for the game...

Or maybe you just want some cool new critters for your game and you wish I'd shut the hell up with all this ideology and commentary. Maybe your sense of wonder hasn't dulled after three decades. Don't worry, this book is for you, too.

This document is 100% compatible with any and all classic, class-based-with-six-ability-score fantasy role-playing games published before 1989 by those with knowledge of Tactics, Strategy, and Resourcefulness. It's also 100% compatible with modern recreations of those same games.

While the content in this book is not in any way "open," I want to make it perfectly clear that any creatures you create using this book are yours. Publish them on the Internet, publish them in your own commercial work, or just keep a notebook filled with your creations. Whatever you want. The method is mine, the results are all yours.

I do hope you will use this in your game, and I hope even more to hear about your play experiences using creatures generated with this book. Send me an e-mail at lotfp@lotfp.com, or leave a note on the Goodman Games forums. Simple praise or constructive criticism is also more than welcome.

May your notebook become filled with the sheets of dead characters played by those who thought they had seen it all.

EGG forever.

James Edward Raggi IV



BUILDING THE MONSTER

A wizard's tower filled with the abominations of countless unknown experiments. The long-deserted shrine of a dread, forgotten god. Unexplored, hostile wilderness. The deepest recesses of the great underworld, between the strongholds where dark elves and mind-blasting squid-men dwell. In all these places, and more, lurk strange and terrifying creatures, the likes which have never been seen before. When in alien environments such as these, the tests to adventurers' bravery should be equally alien. Never mundane.

Creating suitable monstrosities for these locations is as simple as using the tables on the following pages and using a little bit of mindpower to meld them together into pieces of living imagination. After basic familiarity with the tables is gained, creating one of these creatures can be done in mere minutes – certainly in no more time than it takes to flip through a volume of game monsters, select a suitable example, and copy down its statistics into your adventure notes.

Each creature begins with the same base values, and as the details are filled in about the creature, these values will change. Referees should note that if they have a flash of inspiration, whether on their own or inspired by these tables, they are encouraged (urged!) to ignore the tables and die rolls in favor of their inspiration, using them only to fill in whatever details are needed. If a referee already has an idea for a creature and just needs some help in a few areas, they are free to use only the tables they wish.

Here is the basic information each creature starts with:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Alignment | At best, these creatures are merely animals. Perverted inversions of what was meant to be natural, yes, but perhaps they are just very hungry, very hostile animals and would be considered neutral in the grand wars of good and evil, law and chaos. If they are not natural, they are surely the worst of evil, living only to rend and tear without the intelligence to be formally aligned with any faction. Very chaotic in their actions, and very evil in their intent. |
| AC | Different versions of the game use AC differently. Some have a basic value of 10, or 9, and lowers as armor improves. Some have a basic level of 11 and increase as armor improves. Some use different values. No matter which version of the game is being used, every new creature's AC begins at the value possessed by an average, unarmored human. Whenever a creature is said to gain a bonus or penalty to AC, that respectively improves or lowers its AC, of course. |
| Damage | The base damage of each of the creature's attacks is 1d6. If there is a call during creature creation to increase a die <i>type</i> , then a d4 would become d6, d10 would become d12, 3d6 would become 3d8, etc. Decreasing a die type would make a d8 become a d6 and so on. Increasing the <i>number</i> of dice would result in 1d6 becoming 2d6, 2d4 becoming 3d4, with decreasing number of dice simply being the opposite. |
| Experience | Each game has its own way of calculating the experience value of defeated opponents. Use those guidelines, as it is out of the scope of this book to specifically note such details for each possible game. |
| HD | This is the most important detail for any new monster, and it is the one that is impossible to assign according to any set rule. It is up to the referee to decide how the creature is to be used. |

As one rough guideline, if the player characters are all first, second, or third level (on average), then the creature should be 1d4–2 + (average character level) HD. If the characters are between fourth and seventh level, then the creature should be 1d6+(half of the average character level) HD. If the characters are eight level or higher, then the creature should be 1d10+(half of the average character level). Perhaps the "dungeon level" where the creature is encountered could instead be used as a guide, with creatures on the first through third dungeon levels having 1d3–1 + (dungeon level) HD and, above that, 1d4+(dungeon level) HD. Note that these are very rough guidelines, and with the random nature of these creatures it would be impossible to give any sort of solid guidelines to determine what hit dice would be appropriate for any monster opposing any particular character level party.

Not that it is necessary to *balance* one of these creatures to the party. As long as the creature is not blocking any required goal or necessary path, a creature that the adventurers *must* run from can be a very good lesson for the foolhardy party. Adventurers are in hostile territory every second that they explore the unknown – and if they trust that a referee will never throw anything too tough in their way, the players will never respect their environment the way they should. Referees should nonetheless avoid an "instant-kill" situation, because that is just as unfair as making every creature a pushover.

| | |
|--|---|
| Intelligence | The creatures within this book are for all intents and purposes mindless killing machines on the level of rabid animals. They are intended to be foes for characters in an adventurous fantasy role-playing game. This does not mean that they are stupid combatants or lack cunning! Nothing stops a referee from granting any creature great intelligence (or any other feature he damn well pleases!), but an intelligent foe should be carefully considered and placed and utilized in a campaign, and should never be a mere random encounter. Such usage is generally beyond the scope of this book, although we touch upon a creature's "uniqueness" later on. |
| Morale | Some games give creatures a morale statistic to determine their reliability and bravery in combat, and referees using those systems should simply roll 1d8+4 to determine morale. It should be assumed, given the supernatural and bestial nature of all of these creatures, that they are fierce and relentless predators that are accustomed to preying on whatever crosses their path. |
| Movement | A creature's base movement is identical to that of an unarmored, normal human. Adjustments are to be applied to this base movement rate. Any creature that ends up with a 0 movement must have some sort of attack or special ability that allows it to lure prey from a distance. |
| Attacks | Each creature starts with 1 attack per round. |
| Appearing | Each of these creatures is intended to be utterly unique. As fantasy literature evokes the fantastic and eschews standardization with the wild beasts, so shall this book. Nothing stops a referee from enjoying a creature so much that it becomes a regular campaign feature, but be warned that a monster will never inspire the same sense and wonder in players the second time it is encountered. |
| It is possible that smaller or less powerful creatures could be encountered in a pack. As long as such a pack is still a one-time encounter, it should provide a suitable amount of distress for an adventuring party. | |
| Saves | It seems standard that most monsters save as warriors of the same HD. If a creature seems closer to another save archetype, a referee should free to use those tables instead. Or if your game uses a different save mechanic, the nature of these creatures would make them primarily physical beings, unless a certain special ability suggests to the referee that it should be otherwise. |
| Treasure | It is impossible to come up with exact specifications for the treasure these creatures will have. In general, they do not purposefully collect treasure. However, there may be a significant trove to be found in the creature's lair, if the heroes are willing to sift through the creature's waste and the remains of its earlier prey. This is up to the referee to decide in his own game. |



To recap, all creatures start off with AC equal to that of an unarmored normal man, they have the movement rate of an unarmored normal man, and they have one attack that does 1d6 damage.

From here, most of the details about these creatures will be randomly generated. There will be times where these random combinations of characteristics will make no sense. This is not a bad thing; anything that challenges the players' sense of normality and complacency will benefit the game. Much of the particulars will be mere appearance and fluff, and not threatening to characters. A referee should never let the players know this, as an assumed threat is always better than an actual threat. They'll jump through all of the hoops and act the way they should in their alien environment, even if you know the creature doesn't pose a major threat. These circumstances should be relished and pushed whenever possible.

And when the players think their characters face an easy challenge and blindly charge into battle ... show them no mercy.

BASIC BODY SHAPE

The first step in putting together a unique creation is determining the basic body type of the creature. Roll 2d10 and consult the following table:

| 2d10 | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| 2 | Flat | The creature is almost, but not quite, a two-dimensional being, similar to a manta ray or other flat creature. It travels on land by slithering. The creature has a -10-foot movement penalty. |
| 3 - 4 | Amoeba | The creature has no definite physical form at all. This creature will have no limbs and will move by slithering. The creature has a -10-foot movement penalty. |
| 5 - 10 | Biped | This creature walks upright on two limbs, and has two limbs it uses for basic manipulation. |
| 11 | Combination | Re-roll twice and combine the results. If this result comes up again, keep making the additional rolls and combining the rolls. If the combinations make no sense... good. Do not combine movement bonuses; instead use the most advantageous to the creature. One example: |
| <i>Biped and Quadruped:</i> The creature will walk on four limbs, but still have two additional limbs used for manipulation. Whether the creature has an additional torso (to be like a centaur) is entirely up to the referee. | | |
| 12 - 16 | Quadruped | The creature walks on four limbs, although the creature may be capable of raising its forelimbs to attack. The creature has a +10-foot movement bonus. |
| 17 - 19 | Serpentine | The creature has a slim, long body with no limbs and moves by slithering. The creature has a -10-foot movement penalty. |
| 20 | Polyhedron | The creature is some sort of geometric shape. Roll 2d10: |
| 2 | Icosahedron | The creature has twenty sides. It will simply roll around at standard speeds if it does not have some sort of flight. |



| | | |
|---------|--------------------------|---|
| 3 – 5 | Pentagonal Trapezohedron | The creature has ten sides. It will be immobile if it does not have some method of moving itself. |
| 6 – 8 | Tetrahedron | The creature is shaped as a pyramid. It will be immobile if it does not have some method of moving itself. |
| 9 – 13 | Sphere | The creature is essentially a sphere. It will simply roll around at standard speeds if it does not have some sort of flight. |
| 14 – 16 | Hexahedron | The creature is shaped as a cube. It will be immobile if it does not have some method of moving itself. |
| 17 - 19 | Octahedron | The creature has eight sides. It will be immobile if it does not have some method of moving itself. |
| 20 | Dodecahedron | The creature has twelve sides. It will simply roll around, with a +20-foot movement bonus (it just won't stop!), if it does not have another movement method. |



BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Now that the basic shape of the creature is known, the first identifying characteristics of the body can be determined. These results should be layered on top of the basic body shape to discover its overall form. Roll 2d10 and consult the following table:

| 2d10 | | |
|--------|---------|--|
| 2 – 3 | Fish | The creature is able to breathe water and is covered in scales or has a thick hide. The creature has a 1d4 AC bonus. |
| 4 – 7 | Avian | The creature is warm-blooded and covered with feathers. The creature has a 1d4–1 AC bonus. |
| 8 | Plant | This creature is a plant of some sort. Precisely what sort – fungus, lichen, tree-like, etc. – should be determined by its native habitat and referee decision. The creature is immobile and has no “obvious” attack form at this point. The referee should be sure to add some threat capability – and, if he desires, a movement ability – before completing the creature. |
| 9 – 10 | Reptile | The creature is cold-blooded and covered in scales. It will have a maw full of sharp teeth, giving it a bite attack. The creature also gains a bite attack and a 1d8 AC bonus. |

| | | |
|---------|-------------|---|
| 11 | Combination | Re-roll twice and combine the results. If this result comes up again, keep making the additional rolls and combining the rolls. If the combinations make no sense ... good. Do not add AC adjustments; instead use the most advantageous for the creature. |
| 12 – 14 | Mammal | The creature is warm-blooded and has body hair or fur. This provides a 1d6–1 AC bonus; the higher the bonus, the thicker the fur. |
| 15 – 18 | Insect | The creature has hard, chitinous skin, giving it a 1d6 AC bonus. It also has a minimum of six limbs; if the creature currently has less than this amount, add additional legs until it has six. The creature will have the wall-crawling movement method as well. . |
| 19 – 20 | Crustacean | The creature has a hard shell around its body, providing a 1d6+4 AC bonus. Its limbs are claws, and the creature has 1 claw attack per manipulating limb. |

To help flesh out the basic characteristics, here are some examples of each type. Some are intentionally misclassified (whales as fish, for example), but the important thing is the general type, not zoological classification. Note that nothing on this table suggests special abilities of any sort – this is just for the sake of appearance.

| | Avian | Crustacean | Fish | Insect | Mammal | Plant | Reptile |
|----|-------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| | 1d20 | 1d6 | 1d20 | 1d3 then 1d6 | 1d3 then 1d10 | 1d2 then 1d8 | 1d6 |
| 1 | Albatross | Barnacle | Angelfish | Ant | Aardvark | Cactus | Alligator |
| 2 | Bat | Clam | Barracuda | Bee | Antelope | Fern | Frog |
| 3 | Blue Jay | Conch | Bass | Beetle | Ape | Flower | Lizard |
| 4 | Cardinal | Crab | Carp | Butterfly | Bear | Flytrap | Salamander |
| 5 | Crane | Horseshoe Crab | Catfish | Cricket | Beaver | Fruit | Snake |
| 6 | Crow | Lobster | Dolphin | Dragonfly | Camel | Grass | Turtle |
| 7 | Duck | | Eel | Earwig | Cat | Mold | |
| 8 | Eagle | | Gar | Fly | Cattle | Mushroom | |
| 9 | Hawk | | Lamprey | Grasshopper | Deer | Shrub | |
| 10 | Hummingbird | | Loach | Mantis | Dog | Sundew | |
| 11 | Oriole | | Manatee | Scorpion | Elephant | Thorn Bush | |
| 12 | Owl | | Piranha | Spider | Fox | Tree, Leafy | |
| 13 | Parrot | | Ray | Caterpillar | Giraffe | Tree, Needle | |
| 14 | Pigeon | | Seahorse | Cockroach | Hippo | Tree, Willow | |
| 15 | Raven | | Shark | Flea | Horse | Vegetable | |
| 16 | Roadrunner | | Shark, Hammerhead | Ladybug | Human | Vines | |
| 17 | Sparrow | | Snapper | Mosquito | Kangaroo | | |
| 18 | Swan | | Swordfish | Termite | Koala | | |
| 19 | Vulture | | Trout | | Monkey | | |
| 20 | Woodpecker | | Whale | | Panda | | |
| 21 | | | | | Pig | | |
| 22 | | | | | Platypus | | |
| 23 | | | | | Porcupine | | |
| 24 | | | | | Rabbit | | |
| 25 | | | | | Rat | | |
| 26 | | | | | Rhino | | |
| 27 | | | | | Skunk | | |
| 28 | | | | | Squirrel | | |
| 29 | | | | | Weasel | | |
| 30 | | | | | Wolf | | |

SIZE

Determine how large the creature is by rolling 2d10 and consulting the following table. If the size of the creature is too big for the environment in which it is encountered, the referee should simply use the largest size that makes sense. Of course, if the creature later turns out to have a movement ability like tunneling or phasing, the creature should be restored to its originally rolled size.

| 2d10 | | |
|---------|---------------------|---|
| 2 – 3 | Tiny | –2 HD; decrease damage by two die types; 2d10 creatures appearing |
| 4 – 6 | Small | –1 HD; decrease damage by one die type, 1d8 creatures appearing |
| 7 – 10 | Human-Sized | No changes |
| 11 – 13 | Large | +1 HD; increase damage by one die type |
| 14 – 16 | Huge | +2 HD; increase damage by two die types; +10 feet movement |
| 17 – 19 | Enormous | Double HD; add an extra die to damage; +20 feet movement |
| 20 | Run! It's Godzilla! | Triple HD; damage is increased two die types and doubled (1d4 becomes 2d8, 1d6 becomes 2d10, etc.); +30 feet movement |



MOVEMENT

A referee should have a decent idea of how the creature moves along just from its basic characteristics. The following table is to suggest alternate forms of movement for the creature. Roll 2d10:

| 2d10 | | |
|--|------------|---|
| 2 | Phasing | The creature can pass through walls and surfaces made of a specific material without leaving evidence of its passing. Note that weapons made of this material will do no damage to the creature, and the creature ignores any armor made of the material. Magical bonuses still apply in all cases. For example, if a character with a +1 sword struck a creature able to move through metal, it would still do 1 point of damage because of the +1 magical bonus. To determine the material, roll 1d4: |
| | | 1 Stone |
| | | 2 Soft Earth |
| | | 3 Metal |
| | | 4 Wood |
| Creatures that phase also need a conventional method of movement, so roll again. | | |
| 3 | Tunneling | The creature is able to burrow through earth or stone, leaving a tunnel behind it. This will always be in addition to the creature's regular movement method. The movement rate will be one-third that of its fastest movement rate. |
| 4 – 5 | Slithering | The creature moves along its belly. Although it may have limbs that it uses to propel itself forward, it does not stand on those limbs. The creature suffers a –10-foot movement penalty. This movement method replaces any other land movement method. |

| | | |
|---------|------------------|--|
| 6 – 12 | Standard | This is the standard movement method suggested by the creature's basic shape and features. If it looks like a creature would therefore have no real movement method, then it is immobile. |
| 13 | Multiple Methods | Roll twice and give the creature both movement types. If the same movement method is rolled both times, give it a +30-foot movement rate with that method. |
| 14 – 15 | Flying | The creature can move through the air in any direction at its standard movement rate. |
| 16 – 17 | Swimming | The creature can move across (and under) water at its standard movement rate. |
| 18 | Wall-Crawling | The creature can move along walls and ceilings just as easily as it can move on the ground. This will always be in addition to the creature's regular movement method. If the creature has no land movement method to start, it does not gain wall-crawling abilities. |
| 19 | Jumping | The creature moves its full movement rate but is only in contact with the ground at the very beginning and very end of its movement, as well as any point at which it turns. |
| 20 | Levitating | The creature never touches the ground. Instead, it floats in the air. This is not true flight; the creature must remain within, say, ten feet of a solid surface. |



ATTACK METHODS

A creature's physical attack methods may already be suggested by its basic characteristics. In that case, simply use the descriptions here as a guide to flesh out those attack forms. Otherwise, roll on the following table to determine what sort of basic attack the creature has:

| 1d10 | | |
|-------|---------------------|---|
| 1 | Projectile | The creature has an additional ranged attack that does standard damage. The range of the attack should depend on the creature's HD. If it is a low (less than 4) HD creature, then the attack has the range of a dagger. If it is a high (more than 8) HD creature, it has the range of a longbow; otherwise, it has the range of a shortbow. |
| 2 – 3 | Claw | The creature has rending claws. Its main attack does +1 damage per die. For example, a 1d6 attack now becomes 1d6+1, a 2d8 attack becomes 2d8+2. |
| 4 – 5 | Bash | The creature merely mauls its prey with clubbing blows, doing standard damage. |
| 6 – 7 | Bite | The creature has a dangerous bite, whether due to pure strength, razor-sharp teeth, or mandibles, as dictated by the creature's other features and referee decision. Increase the creature's main attack by one die type. |
| 8 | Spikes/Horns | The creature's method of attack has horns, spikes, thorns, or other such pointy bits protruding from it. Add a damage die to the attack. |
| 9 | Tail | The creature has a tail that gives it an additional attack. This attack does one die type of damage less than its regular attack. |
| 10 | Multiple | Roll twice; the creature has both attack forms. If the same attack form comes up, the creature gains an additional attack with that form or, in the case of Spikes/Horns, all attack options gain an additional die of damage. |



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The key to making a creature truly memorable is in its physical description. Once the dice start rolling and people start taking damage, the in-game mystique often takes a turn toward practical combat matters ... which might be a good thing, and “realistic,” as that adrenaline rush certainly removes all distracting factors in the real world, right? So the moment to burn a new creature into your players’ memories is when you describe it to them for the first time. Roll on the following table until the creature feels complete. And yes, there is a “multiple features” entry which would seem to make that statement redundant, but that roll should force some added creativity ... perhaps.

| d% | | |
|---------|------------------------------|--|
| 01 – 02 | Beak | Instead of (in addition to?) teeth, the creature has a sharp stabbing surface around its mouth. At minimum, the creature will have a bite attack. |
| 03 – 04 | Blood-Drenched | The creature is continually covered in blood, which it secretes much in the same the way people sweat. Every movement the creature makes, every attack it makes, and every blow it takes will spatter blood around the battlefield. |
| 05 – 06 | Boiling/Steaming Body | The creature has a ridiculously high body temperature, emitting steam constantly, along with occasional jets of boiling water. Any bite it has is increased by one die type (boiling saliva), and any hold attacks are increased by one additional die. Any cold-based spells only have one-half their normal effect, or no effect at all if a save is made. |
| 07 – 08 | Constantly Shedding | The creature loses its skin at a rapid rate, making it very easy to track and making its lair very distinctive. The shed skin should be repulsive. Until the characters see the creature itself, the true nature of the discarded skin should be a macabre mystery. |
| 09 – 10 | Distinctive Markings | The creature has some sort of distinctive markings or patterns on its body. Roll a 1d20: |
| | 1 – 3 | Spots |
| | 4 – 6 | Stripe |
| | 7 – 10 | Stripes |
| | 11 | Tattoos |
| | 12 | Shifting patterns |
| | 13 – 15 | Colored bands |
| | 16 – 18 | Geometric patterns |
| | 19 – 20 | Colored patches |

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|
| 11 | Elongated Neck | The creature's neck is long and articulated, so it may attack past the front rank of foes much as a spear can. |
| 12 | Hood | When the creature enters combat, a hood of skin (much like a cobra, but not limited to such a shape) expands behind the creature's head, giving it a more fearsome appearance. |
| 13 | Expanded Bone Structure | The creature's bones are outside of the body as well as inside, giving it a 1d6 bonus to its AC. |
| 14 | Albino | The creature's outer surfaces and hair are extremely pale (often white), and its eyes are pink or red. |
| 15 – 16 | Eye Stalks | The creature's eyes are outside of its head, allowing for a greater field of vision. Its chances of being surprised are reduced by 1 in 6. |
| 17 – 18 | Glowing Eyes | The creature's eyes glow in the dark. This gives it a 1 in 6 less chance to surprise foes that do not have the ability to see in the dark – but no penalty to surprise those that can! |
| 19 – 20 | Hair | The creature has hair of some sort, even if totally inappropriate for its body type or other characteristics. Roll a d10 to determine how hairy it is, a 10 meaning it is completely covered with long, thick fur. |
| 21 | Horns | The creature has large horns on its head, although it does not use these for combat purposes. |
| 22 | Fin | The creature has a large fin across its head and back, as some lizards do. |
| 23 | Fin | The creature, even if land-based, has fins much like those of a fish or shark. |
| 24 | Icy/Cold Body | The creature's body is so cold that the moisture in the surrounding air freezes and forms a solid layer of ice around the creature's body. Any magical cold attack does –1 damage per die, and the first fire-based attack of a combat does no damage, but it does remove the ice. While the ice is present, the creature receives a 1d4 AC bonus. |
| 25 – 26 | Illusionary Features | Roll again on this table to determine another feature. There is a 25% chance it will have a special attack associated with it. The thing is, it isn't real. It's just an illusion. |
| 27 – 28 | Metal-Like Features | The creature's hide resembles a hard metal surface. It receives a 1d4+4 bonus to AC. |
| 29 – 30 | Multiple Arms | The creature has double the number of arms, or one set of arms if the body type usually has none. Add one bashing attack or double the usual number of attacks delivered by limbs as appropriate. |
| 31 | Multiple Heads | The creature has an additional head. Its chances of being surprised are reduced by 1 in 6 per additional head. If it has a bite attack, it gains an additional such attack for each additional head. |
| 32 | Antlers | The creature has a large rack of antlers on its head. |
| 33 - 34 | Multiple Legs | The creature has double the usual number of legs. Increase all land movement rates by 20'. |
| 35 – 36 | Multiple Eyes | The creature's chances of being surprised are reduced by 1 in 6.. |



| | | |
|---------|------------------------------|--|
| 37 – 38 | Stinger | The creature has an additional attack, doing standard damage from a stinger located on its tail or backside area. If the creature already has a tail attack, this replaces that attack. This stinger will automatically deliver some sort of special attack. |
| 39 – 40 | Odor | The creature emits a strong, recognizable odor. This decreases its chance of surprising opponents by 1 in 6. |
| 41 – 42 | On Fire! | The creature is actually on fire, and any attack it makes, or any physical contact made against it, results in the touched opponent taking damage as if getting splashed by burning oil. Flammable items (clothing, wooden weapons, etc.) may also catch fire. |
| 43 – 44 | Oozing Sores | The creature is covered with slime, pus, and foul goop streaming from open sores on its body. If the creature has a special attack, then coming into physical contact with the ooze is a good way to deliver the attack. |
| 45 – 46 | Plant Features | The creature has characteristics of plant matter: leaves, branches, roots, and/or vines growing out of random places on its body. Perhaps there is even fruit or berries growing on the creature. What happens if you eat it? |
| 47 – 48 | Prehensile Tongue | The creature's tongue is able to grab things. If the creature is Enormous or Run! It's Godzilla!, this gives the creature a hold special attack. |
| 49 | Pulsating Skin | The creature's skin constantly shifts and bubbles and throbs disturbingly. |
| 50 | Faces | The creature has 1d4 additional nonfunctional faces on its body. If a 4 is rolled, roll again; if a 4 comes up again, then the creature is <i>covered</i> with faces. |
| 51 – 52 | Rocklike Features | The surface of the creature's body resembles rocky formations more than skin. This gives it a 1d4+2 AC bonus. |
| 53 – 54 | Rubber-Boned | The creature's bones are soft and pliable and impossible to break – or perhaps it doesn't have any real bones at all. Blunt weapons do no damage to the creature (although any magical bonuses do count toward damage). |
| 55 – 56 | Rubbery Body | The creature's internal structure is more or less normal (or better yet, recognizable), but its skin is very rubbery and things tend to bounce off of it. If the attack is successful, but the rolled damage is less than half the weapon's natural maximum (for example, a roll of 1–3 for a weapon that does d6 damage, before any modifiers), then the weapon bounces off and does no harm to the creature. Missile weapons that bounce off have a 10% chance of bouncing directly at another randomly chosen combatant, and if this happens, the original attacker should make new to-hit and damage rolls against the new target. |
| 57 – 58 | Scales | The creature has scales on the surface of its body, giving it a 1d4 bonus to its AC. |
| 59 – 60 | Serpent Appendages | The creature has snakes coming out of certain parts of its body in addition to its normal characteristics. The referee should decide where the snakes are. This gives the creature an additional attack in melee, and anyone being hit by this attack must save versus poison or die. |
| 61 – 62 | Shade Form | The creature can become a living shadow. It becomes effectively invisible in low lights or shadowy environments, and has a 5 in 6 chance of surprising foes. Note that while in this form, it cannot attack physical beings, and can only be attacked by magical effects or magic weapons. |
| 63 – 64 | Shambling Gait | The creature moves in a jerky, unpredictable manner. The creature's movement is decreased by 10'. |
| 65 – 66 | Shell | The creature has a shell similar to that of a turtle or crab, giving it a 1d4+2 bonus to its AC. |
| 67 – 68 | Shimmering Body | The creature's hide reflects light in a way similar to an oil/water mixture, with shifting, kaleidoscope-like colors. |
| 69 – 70 | Skeletal Appearance | The creature's appearance is so lean and drawn that the internal bone structure is the most striking visible feature. |
| 71 – 72 | Slimy | The creature is covered in a thick, viscous ooze that trails behind it. |
| 73 – 74 | Speech | The creature can speak in a language at least one of its foes can understand. This does not mean the creature has any measurable intelligence, but merely is able to parrot what it has heard before. The referee should do his best to unnerve the players with what this thing says. Likely the only speech it has ever heard is what its previous prey has said (and screamed) before being devoured. Imagine what a parrot would have picked up in Jeffrey Dahmer's apartment and embellish from there. |
| 75 – 76 | Suction Cups on Limbs | The creature automatically has wall-crawling ability. |

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| 77 – 78 | Tail | The creature has a tail that can be used to make an extra attack. | | | |
| 79 – 80 | Tentacles | The creature has tentacles that can be used to attack and/or entangle enemies. The creature gains an additional attack, which allows it to use the hold special attack, and there is a 50% chance the tentacles can give the same effect as a tail attack and the creature gains two additional such attacks. | | | |
| 81 – 82 | Transparent | The creature's outer features are completely transparent, allowing all of its internal structure to be seen. This is very unpleasant to look at. | | | |
| 83 – 4 | Unusual Color | The creature's pigmentation is unusual. Roll 1d10 twice, once for primary color and second for "detail" color. Roll another die if you wish to judge brightness (lower roll means darker color). | | | |
| | | 1 | Red | 6 | Violet |
| | | 2 | Yellow | 7 | Black |
| | | 3 | Orange | 8 | White |
| | | 4 | Green | 9 | Gray |
| | | 5 | Blue | 10 | Brown |
| 85 – 86 | Weapons for Hands | Instead of its standard mauling paws, claws, talons, or thorny fronds, the creature strikes with a randomly chosen non-dagger or non-staff melee weapon in its place. This weapon is an intrinsic part of the creature, and does damage as the weapon normally does (adjusted for the creature's size). If the weapon would do less damage than the creature's normal claw attack, use the creature's existing damage value. Beware The Bardiche-Handed Terror! | | | |
| 87 – 88 | Wet/Drenched Body | The creature sweats or otherwise is perpetually soaked to such a degree that it leaves a wet trail everywhere it goes. Any place it sleeps quickly becomes a pool. Any fire- or heat-based spells only have one-half their normal effect, or no effect at all if a save is made. | | | |
| 89 – 90 | Wings | The creature has wings of a type appropriate to its form (or not, as the referee desires) and automatically has flight as a movement method. | | | |
| 91 – 92 | Mechanical Features | The creature is in some way mechanical, whether being clockwork, steam-powered, or fueled by another source determined by the referee. Movement is reduced by half and AC is increased by 1d4+2. | | | |
| 93 – 99 | Multiple Features | Re-roll twice and combine the results. If this result comes up again, keep making additional rolls and combining the rolls. If the combinations make no sense ... good. Use all modifiers for all options. | | | |
| 100 | Special! | The creature has some <i>very</i> special qualities about it. Roll 1d6: | | | |
| | 1 | The creature is merely a baby, and if it is defeated, its mother is going to be <i>pissed</i> . At some point, 1d4 weeks in the future, the creature's enemies will be attacked by this larger version of what they have just defeated, which will have half-again the HD, be one size category larger, and it will be in quite a foul mood. | | | |
| | 2 | The creature is actually a polymorphed adventurer of a random class and level. This character has no control over his actions, and only if the polymorph is dispelled will the character regain his or her faculties. | | | |
| | 3 | The creature is an infernal being from the pits of hell, or some lower dimension of evil. It has all the abilities such creatures possess in a particular game system. | | | |
| | 4 | The creature is protected by some unholy power, and whoever strikes the killing blow upon it will suffer some horrible curse that can only be removed by a high-level priest ... and only after the character has gone on a dangerous quest. | | | |
| | 5 | The creature is a mad elder god that is not happy with his current form. The first character to do damage to the creature has his soul linked with the creature's own, although the character will be unaware of this development ... briefly. Each retains control of their original body, but the creature will no longer attack that character. If the creature's body dies, then the elder god's soul will transfer to the character and take control of his body – and it will seek to hide the change until such time it can leave the party peacefully to rebuild its lost cult. Likewise, if the character dies before the elder god, then he takes control of the monster's body, but remember it won't be able to speak (unless the creature has the speech feature) and possibly not even gesture, depending on what limbs it has. | | | |
| | 6 | The creature is a gate to another plane, and killing the creature will open the gate. | | | |



SPECIAL ABILITIES

The base chance of a creature to have a special ability is its HD x 10%. To determine how many special abilities a creature has, roll percentile dice. For every full 10% under its base chance, the creature has one special ability. Special abilities marked with an asterisk will have a specific way they are performed; roll on the Delivery of Special Attacks table for each ability.

Some of the abilities talk about saves. As each individual game handles saves somewhat differently, exact information on what type of saves are not given, but referees should use common sense and common traditions for the game. If saves are based on attributes, then match the attack to the attribute as best as possible. If the game uses a more classic save table, start at the left-most save category and move to the right, using the first save category that fits for the attack.

| 2d% | | |
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| 2 | Drain: Charisma: 2 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose two points of charisma with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 3 | Drain: Charisma: 3 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose three points of charisma with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 4 | Drain: Constitution: 2 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose two points of constitution with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 5 | Drain: Constitution: 3 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose three points of constitution with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 6 | Drain: Dexterity: 2 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose two points of dexterity with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 7 | Drain: Dexterity: 3 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose three points of dexterity with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 8 | Drain: Intelligence: 2 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose two points of intelligence with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 9 | Drain: Intelligence: 3 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose three points of intelligence with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 10 | Drain: Strength: 2 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose two points of strength with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 11 | Drain: Strength: 3 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose three points of strength with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 12 | Drain: Wisdom: 2 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose two points of wisdom with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 13 | Drain: Wisdom: 3 points* | Characters subjected to this attack lose three points of wisdom with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 14 | Absorption | All damage rolled against the creature add to its hit point total rather than subtract from it. The creature can never inflict harm upon itself to increase its hit points (such as jumping off of a cliff) ... or maybe it can, if the referee wishes. There will always be one sort of attack that will cause the creature actual harm (nothing lame like healing spells – some actual damaging sort of attack) to the creature. |

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| 15 | Acid for Blood | The creature has powerful acid for blood, and being struck by any cutting or piercing weapon will cause acidic blood to issue forth, destroying the weapon and splashing the attacking character, causing him to take damage as if he were doused in flaming oil. |
| 16 | Undead Arise! | The creature can animate corpses as skeletons or zombies as appropriate at a rate of 2d6 per round. |
| 17 | Animate Non-Living Object | The creature can make inanimate objects come to "life" and move around and fight on its behalf. The amount of material that may be thus animated is 5 cubic feet per HD of the creature. Animated objects will move slowly, and strike (attacking as well as the creature animating them) for anywhere between 1 point of damage (small, hard objects) to 5d4 points of damage (huge, heavy objects). The animated objects' AC and hit points are to be determined by the referee. |
| 18 | Animate Plant | The creature can make plants come to "life" and fight on its behalf. The amount of material that may be thus animated is 5 cubic feet per HD of the creature. The referee must decide on the power of the animated plants based on what is in the environment. Shrubs and tall weeds or grass and such can only slow down an enemy, while an average tree could have 10HD and strike for 2d6 damage per round, for example. |
| 19 | Animate Rock | The creature can make stone objects come to "life" and move around and fight on its behalf. The amount of material that may be thus animated is 5 cubic feet per HD of the creature. This ability pretty much only works on loose stones and boulders, as it does not change the shape of rock, so pseudopods wouldn't grow out of a cave wall to strike enemies, for example. It could make stalactites drop from cave roofs and other similar effects, however. |
| 20 | Anti-Animal Sphere | No mundane living creature may come within 10 feet of the creature. "Mundane" includes any creature that has no inherent magical properties. |
| 21 | Anti-Magic Sphere | Magic will not work for, against, or around the creature in any way whatsoever, in a 10-foot radius around the creature. Any fantastic or magical spell, item, or power simply will not work. Characters under the effect of a spell can't approach, dragons can't breathe, etc. If it wouldn't work in the real world, it can't get within this circle. A creature with this ability can have no special attack that a real-world animal couldn't have. |
| 22 | Anti-Plant Sphere | No living vegetable matter (including plants, fungus, molds, slimes, etc.) can come within 10 feet of the creature without instantly dying. |
| 23 | Blurred | The creature is out of synch with the physical dimension. The first attack any character makes against it automatically misses, and it gets a 1d4 bonus to its AC and a 1d4 bonus to all saves. |
| 24 | Damage Does Not Heal | Any damage inflicted by the creature will never heal. Only powerful (seventh or greater level) magic can heal these wounds. All other damage a character takes can be healed by the usual means. |
| 25 | Dance* | A character subject to this attack must make a save or begin dancing uncontrollably for 1d4+1 rounds. A dancing character can cast no spells and make no attacks, automatically fails any saves, and suffers a -4 penalty to AC (and cannot use a shield). |
| 26 | Destroys Stone* | The creature's attack destroys any stone object it touches. If it is not an area effect attack, then it destroys one item per hit (start with the largest and work down from there). Magical items are not affected. |
| 27 | Destroys Wood* | The creature's attack destroys any wood object it touches. If it is not an area effect attack, then it destroys one item per hit (start with the largest and work down from there). Magical items are not affected. |
| 28 | Disintegrate* | Any creature or object subject to this attack must make a save or be vaporized. |
| 29 | Dismissal* | A character subjected to this attack must save or be teleported up to 1,000 feet away (1d100 x 10) in a random direction. |
| 30 | Dispel Magic | Instead of attacking during a round, the creature can dispel magic, using its HD to determine effectiveness. |
| 31 | Duplicates Upon Being Hit | Whenever the creature is damaged, it separates into two creatures, each with the new lower hit point total and each acting independently, attacking the same target as the "full" creature did. |
| 32 | Duplications | The creature may generate 1d4+1 mirror images once per combat. |

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| 33 | Drain: Charisma: 1 point* | Characters subjected to this attack lose one point of charisma with no save. The lost point returns after 1 hour. |
| 34 | Drain: Charisma: Random Effect* | Characters subjected to this attack lose 1d6 points of charisma (roll for each attack) with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 35 | Drain: Constitution: 1 point* | Characters subjected to this attack lose one point of constitution with no save. The lost point returns after 1 hour. |
| 36 | Drain: Constitution: Random Effect* | Characters subjected to this attack lose 1d6 points of constitution (roll for each attack) with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 37 | Drain: Dexterity: 1 point* | Characters subjected to this attack lose one point of dexterity with no save. The lost point returns after 1 hour. |
| 38 | Drain: Dexterity: Random Effect* | Characters subjected to this attack lose 1d6 points of dexterity (roll for each attack) with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 39 | Drain: Intelligence: 1 point* | Characters subjected to this attack lose one point of intelligence with no save. The lost point returns after 1 hour. |
| 40 | Drain: Intelligence: Random Effect* | Characters subjected to this attack lose 1d6 points of intelligence (roll for each attack) with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 41 | Drain: Strength: 1 point* | Characters subjected to this attack lose one point of strength with no save. The lost point returns after 1 hour. |
| 42 | Drain: Strength: Random Effect* | Characters subjected to this attack lose 1d6 points of strength (roll for each attack) with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 43 | Drain: Wisdom: 1 point* | Characters subjected to this attack lose one point of wisdom with no save. The lost point returns after 1 hour. |
| 44 | Drain: Wisdom: Random Effect* | Characters subjected to this attack lose 1d6 points of wisdom (roll for each attack) with no save. The lost points return at a rate of 1 per hour. |
| 45 | Clairaudience | The creature can hear things within 50 feet even if there are interposing barriers such as walls, floors, or ceilings. |
| 46 | Clairvoyance | The creature can see things within 50 feet even if it has no direct line of sight (through walls, around corners, etc.). |



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| 47 | Confusion* | A character subject to this attack must make a save versus spells every round or act in a random manner. Roll 1d4: |
| | | 1 Attacks nearest creature |
| | | 2 Stands perfectly still, doing nothing |
| | | 3 Runs in a random direction |
| | | 4 Attacks friends |
| 48 | Contagious: Reincarnates | If the creature kills a character, within 3d12 hours the character will transform physically into another such creature and rise as a mindless beast unless the curse is removed. Merely raising the character from the dead doesn't stop the process or remove the infection. |
| 49 | Damage Heals Only By Natural Healing | Any damage inflicted by the creature can only be healed through natural rest; magical healing (spells, potions) of less than seventh level in power will not cure it. All other damage a character takes can be healed by the usual means. |
| 50 | Death* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or die instantly. |
| 51 | Destroys Metal* | The creature's attack destroys any metal object it touches. If it is not an area effect attack, then it destroys one item per hit (start with the largest and work down from there). Magical items are not affected. |
| 52 | Destroys Weapon Hitting It | Mere contact with the creature's body is dangerous. Any weapon striking the creature is destroyed (although the weapon's damage is applied), and any creature physically striking it takes 1d6 damage. |
| 53 | Barrier, Damaging* | The creature is able to make some sort of standing enclosure that causes damage to all within it, with fire being the primary example of this type. This ability is different than the massive damage ability, or similar damaging attacks, in that the barrier remains independent of the creature's actions after exercising the ability. The area of the barrier is 5 square feet per HD of the creature. Characters take 1d4 points of damage per HD of the creature each round they are within the barrier, or half damage if they make a save. The creature may create a barrier once per turn. |
| 54 | Blindness* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or be stricken blind for 3d4 turns. |
| 55 | Bonus Damage on Great Hit: 2d10 | If the creature's main attack roll hits by 4 or more, or is a natural twenty, the creature inflicts 2d10 points of damage in addition to the normal damage. |
| 56 | Bonus Damage on Great Hit: 2d8 | If the creature's main attack roll hits by 4 or more, or is a natural twenty, the creature inflicts 2d8 points of damage in addition to the normal damage. |
| 57 | Darkness | The creature generates a sphere of darkness up to 30 feet (1d3 x 10) in radius. The creature can see in this darkness. |
| 58 | Deafness* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or be stricken deaf for 3d4 turns. |
| 59 | Degrades Armor* | This special attack degrades the armor of any character it hits. Every time a foe is hit, his AC worsens by 1 point. Natural armor heals back at a rate of 1 point per week, but artificial armor must be repaired. |
| 60 | Disease* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or be stricken by some disease that will slowly kill the character over the next 2d10 days – the referee can define the specifics. |
| 61 | Fear* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or run away from the creature as quickly as possible for 1d4 turns. |
| 62 | Immune to all Mind-Affecting Magic | |
| 63 | Immune to Cold, No Damage | |
| 64 | Immune to Crushing Attacks, No Damage | |
| 65 | Immune to Cutting Attacks, No Damage | |
| 66 | Immune to Fire, No Damage | |
| 67 | Immune to Lightning, No Damage | |
| 68 | Immune to Magic: Resistance | The creature has a 1d20 x 5% base chance to ignore any magic spell cast against it. For every level of the caster greater than 11, lower the percentage 5%. For every level of the caster lower than 11, raise the percentage 5%. |

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| 69 | Immune to Magic: Spell Immunity | The creature is immune to a certain wizard spell. Roll 2d4-1 to determine which level the immune spell is taken from, and randomly determine the spell. |
| 70 | Barrier | The creature is able to make a solid barrier made out of some hard material, such as stone, iron, ice, or pure force. The exact nature of the barrier must be determined before the creature enters play. The length of this barrier is 5 square feet per HD of the creature. The creature may create a barrier once per turn. |
| 71 | Barrier, Trapping* | The creature is able to make a barrier out of some material that traps people within it, or who come into contact with it, with webbing or strangling vines being primary examples of this type. This ability is different than the hold or paralysis abilities in that there is a physical thing holding characters that may be attacked and chopped away in order to free them. The area of the barrier is 5 square feet per HD of the creature. Creatures coming into contact with the barrier must make a save or become ensnared in the barrier until cut out by someone. The creature may create a barrier once per turn. |
| 72 | Bonus Damage on Great Hit: 1d10 | If the creature's main attack roll hits by 4 or more, or is a natural twenty, the creature does an additional 1d10 damage in addition to the normal damage. |
| 73 | Bonus Damage on Great Hit: 2d6 | If the creature's main attack roll hits by 4 or more, or is a natural twenty, the creature does an additional 2d6 damage in addition to the normal damage. |
| 74 | Contagious: Infectious | A character damaged by this creature has a chance (equal to the percentage of original total HP that the creature inflicted in damage) to become infected and will slowly transform into another creature within 2d20 days unless the curse is removed. |
| 75 | Immune to Acid, Half Damage | |
| 76 | Immune to Acid, No Damage | |
| 77 | Immune to Cold, Half Damage | The creature takes half damage from cold effects, or no damage if it makes its save. |
| 78 | Immune to Crushing Attacks, Half Damage | |
| 79 | Immune to Cutting Attacks, Half Damage | |
| 80 | Immune to Fire, Half Damage | The creature takes half damage from fire effects, or no damage if it makes its save. |
| 81 – 82 | Bonus Attack if Attacks Hit | If the creature has more than one normal attack and if at least half of those attacks hit the same target, then the creature gets a bonus attack against that target using its most damaging attack form. |
| 83 – 84 | Bonus Damage on Great Hit: 1d6 | If the creature's main attack roll hits by 4 or more, or is a natural twenty, the creature does an additional 1d6 damage in addition to the normal damage. |
| 85 – 86 | Bonus Damage on Great Hit: 1d8 | If the creature's main attack roll hits by 4 or more, or is a natural twenty, the creature does an additional 1d8 damage in addition to the normal damage. |
| 87 – 88 | Camouflage | The creature can change its colors to match its background. This gives it a +2 in 6 chance to surprise foes, and it also allows the creature to be effectively invisible if it can get 50 feet away from the nearest foe. |
| 89 – 90 | Charging Attack | The creature may enter melee with a charge, doing double its normal damage with its main attack form. |



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| 91 – 92 | Charm* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or come under the control of the creature. Since the creature is not intelligent, for the most part this control will manifest either as defending the creature from harm (including attacking fellow party members to defend it), or presenting himself as a defenseless meal for the creature. |
| 93 – 94 | Continuous Damage | This special attack is coupled with one of the creature's normal attacks. When it hits with this attack, it may continue to do damage with that attack in subsequent rounds without needing an additional to-hit roll. The character does not get the benefit of dexterity bonuses or a shield for AC purposes against other attacks when so held, and the creature cannot use this attack on anyone else while continuing to do damage to the original target. |
| 95 – 96 | Dark Vision | The creature can see perfectly well in the dark. All underground creatures should be assumed to have this. |
| 97 | Detect Invisibility | The creature can see invisible creatures, items, and people as if they were visible. |
| 98 | Improved AC | The creature gets a 1d6 bonus to its AC. Roll this bonus just once before the creature enters play. |
| 99 | Improved Chance To-Hit | The creature gets a 1d4 bonus to its attack rolls. Roll this bonus just once before the creature enters play. |
| 100 | Combined Ability! | Roll twice on this table, and both results are combined into a single, inseparable ability. |
| 101 | Improved Damage | The creature's main attack form is increased by one die type. |
| 102 | Improved Damage | The creature does an extra 1d8 damage with its main attack form. Roll this bonus just once before the creature enters play. |
| 103 | Improved Movement | The creature has 1d10 x 10 feet added to its normal movement rate. Roll this bonus just once before the creature enters play. |
| 104 | Improved Saves | The creature gets a 1d6 bonus to all of its saves. Roll this bonus just once before the creature enters play. |
| 105 – 106 | Only Hit By +1 or Better Weapons | |
| 107 – 108 | Only Hit By Silver Weapons | Magical weapons also affect this creature. |
| 109 – 110 | Shape-Shifting, One Form | The creature can, at will, change into one other form. This form can be pretty much anything – from a human form to an animal or even another monster form. If the referee has no immediate ideas, he can use these tables to create the creature's alternate form. |
| 111 – 112 | Surprised Less Often: –1 in 6 chance | |
| 113 – 114 | Surprised Less Often: –2 in 6 chance | |
| 115 – 116 | Poison, Weak +2 | A character subjected to this attack must make a save with a +2 bonus or die instantly. |
| 117 – 118 | Poison, Weak +1 | A character subjected to this attack must make a save with a +1 bonus or die instantly. |
| 119 | Immune to Lightning, Half Damage | The creature takes half damage from lightning effects, or no damage if it makes its save. |
| 120 | Immune to Piercing Attacks, Half Damage | |
| 121 | Improved Damage | The creature's main attack form is increased by one die. |
| 122 | Only Hit By Bronze Weapons | Magical weapons also affect this creature. |
| 123 | Only Hit By Cold Iron Weapons | Magical weapons also affect this creature. |
| 124 | Only Hit By Wooden Weapons | Magical weapons also affect this creature. |
| 125 | Poison* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or die instantly. |
| 126 | Stun* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or be unable to take any action for 1d8+1 rounds. |
| 127 | Surprised Less Often: –3 in 6 chance | |
| 128 | Surprises Foes More Often: +1 in 6 chance | |
| 129 | Surprises Foes More Often: +2 in 6 chance | |
| 130 | Immune to Mental Attack | The creature is unaffected by spells or abilities that target the mind, including sleep, charm, ESP, or any such abilities. |
| 131 | Immune to Piercing Attacks, No Damage | |

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| 132 | Improved Damage | The creature does +1 damage per die with its main attack form. |
| 133 | Invisible | The creature is fully invisible as a natural state, and may attack while invisible. |
| 134 | Large Damage Attack* | The creature has an attack that causes large amounts of damage but which can only be used three times per day. The damage caused is HDd6, that is, 1d6 for every HD the creature has, and a character subject to this attack takes only half damage if he makes a save. |
| 135 | Level Drain: 1 Level* | A character subjected to this attack loses one level of experience immediately with no save. Any creature possessing this attack is an undead or infernal creature and is subject to being turned by a priest as an equivalent (as per hit dice) undead type. |
| 136 | Non-Solid, At Will | The creature is able to transform into either a liquid or gaseous state (to be decided by the referee before the creature enters play). While it's in this form, physical attacks do not affect it (although magical effects do, and magic weapons' bonuses do count for damage even if the base weapon's damage does not), and it is unable to engage in physical combat with others. However, it may retain other special abilities in its non-solid form, at the referee's discretion. |
| 137 | Only Hit By +2 or Better Weapons | |
| 138 | Paralysis* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or be unable to move for 3d4 turns. |
| 139 | Regeneration: 1 Point Per Round | The creature regains one HP at the beginning of every round. When the creature reaches zero HP, it dies and regeneration ceases. |
| 140 | Shape-Shifting, Multiple Forms | The creature can, at will, change into 1d4 other forms. These forms can be pretty much anything – from a human form to an animal or even another monster form. If the referee has no immediate ideas, he can use these tables to create the creature's alternate forms. |
| 141 | Spell Use: Priest Spells | The creature can cast spells as a priest. The creature has an effective level of 2d4-1 to determine how many spells it may cast per day, but uses its own HD to determine actual spell effects. If the game includes priest subclasses, there is a 25% chance the creature will cast spells as the subclass. |
| 142 | Spell Use: Wizard Spells | The creature can cast spells as a wizard. The creature has an effective level of 2d4-1 to determine how many spells it may cast per day, but uses its own HD to determine actual spell effects. If the game includes wizard subclasses, there is a 25% chance the creature will cast spells as the subclass. |
| 143 | Surprises Foes More Often: +3 in 6 chance | |
| 144 | Surprises More Foes Often: +4 in 6 chance | |
| 145 | Poison, Strong -1 | A character subjected to this attack must make a save with a -1 penalty or die instantly. |
| 146 | Fast Reflexes +1 | The creature gets a +1 bonus to its initiative rolls. |
| 147 | Enlarge* | Any character subjected to this attack must make a save or grow by d8% x the creature's HD. This effect is cumulative and lasts 1d4+1 turns. This will not enlarge non-living material, so a character's armor and clothing may be destroyed as he grows, and he may have trouble wielding weapons. However, his carrying capacity and ability to inflict damage is increased by the same percent as his size for the duration of the effect. Creatures using this effect will be cunning about using it only when enlarging an enemy will cause discomfort and danger for the enlarged foe. |
| 148 | Hinders Foe* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or suffer a -2 penalty to saves, to-hit rolls, and AC for 1d4 turns. |
| 149 | Illusion | The creature can cast illusions of some sort, most often used to distract its prey to set up an ambush. As the creature is not intelligent, the illusions will always be something simple (but not easily seen through!). |
| 150 | Immune to Magic: Spell Vulnerability | The creature is immune to all spells, with the exception of 1d4+1 spells (randomly determined). Each spell has a 50% chance to be a priest or wizard spell. Non-combat spells will have to be specifically explained and an effect determined, so if the creature is being made under any sort of time limitations, keep re-rolling until only combat or very obvious spells are rolled. |
| 151 | Immune to Physical Attacks, Half Damage | |

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| 152 | Incorporeal, At Will | The creature's body is non-physical. Only magical attacks (and attacks with magical weapons) affect it, and it cannot physically attack others. This creature must have some sort of special attack that allows it to combat physical beings. The creature decides each round on its turn whether it will be physical or incorporeal. |
| 153 | Level Drain: 2 Levels* | A character subjected to this attack loses two levels of experience immediately with no save. Any creature possessing this attack is an undead or infernal creature and is subject to being turned by a priest as an equivalent (as per hit dice) undead type. |
| 154 | Light | The creature can create light, as per the spell. |
| 155 | Magic Drain: Temporary* | The creature has the ability to drain the magic out of items for 3d4 turns. It will always go for the largest items first. |
| 156 | Non-Solid, Constant | The creature is in either a liquid or gaseous state at all times (determined by the referee before the creature enters play) and is unable to become solid. Physical attacks do not affect it (although magical effects do, and magic weapons' bonuses do count for damage even if the base weapon's damage does not), and it is unable to engage in physical combat with others. This creature should have at least one special ability that allows it to interact (or threaten!) the solid world. |
| 157 | Only Hit By +3 or Better Weapons | |
| 158 | Planar Travel | The creature can physically travel to a dimension other than the "main," physical one. |
| 159 | Reflexive Attack | The creature's body reacts to damage in a way that whenever it takes damage in melee combat, it immediately gets a free attack on the offender. |
| 160 | Regeneration: 2 Points Per Round | The creature regains two hit points at the beginning of every round. When the creature reaches zero hit points, it dies and regeneration ceases. |
| 161 | Regeneration: 3 Points Per Round | The creature regains three hit points at the beginning of every round. When the creature reaches zero hit points, it dies and regeneration ceases. |
| 162 | Shape Shifting, Unlimited | The creature can, at will, change its form into that of any living creature it desires. It will retain all purely physical properties of that form, but no magical abilities. |
| 163 | Summon Creatures | The creature is able to summon other creatures from the surrounding area. In most cases, this should be some sort of natural wildlife (or whatever passes for natural in the environs the creature inhabits). |
| 164 | Swallows Whole | A creature that can swallow whole automatically has a bite attack and is some sort of huge monster. When this creature succeeds with its to-hit roll by 5 or more, or rolls a natural 20, the victim is immediately swallowed whole and takes damage equal to the original attack every round until the creature dies. Characters so swallowed may attack only with small-sized thrusting weapons, with the creature's interior being the normal unarmored AC. |
| 165 | Poison, Strong -2 | A character subjected to this attack must make a save with a -2 penalty or die instantly. |
| 166 | Fast Reflexes +2 | The creature gets a +2 bonus to its initiative rolls. |
| 167 | ESP | The creature is able to read the minds of all around it. Even though the creature may not have a cognitive intelligence, it will still instinctively know how injured its foes are, any spells that are about to be cast against it, and general combat tactics being prepared by its enemies, and will act accordingly to protect itself and slay its foes. |
| 168 | Fairy Glow | The creature is able to make its foes light up, inflicting no damage but causing those foes to have a -2 AC penalty. 2d6 characters are so affected at a time. |
| 169 | Heat Metal* | The creature is able to make the metal equipment of one character become blazing hot. A character subject to this attack may make a save to avoid its effects. If the save is failed, then his equipment heats up over a period of four rounds. The first round it merely gets warmer, giving him a chance to discard it without harm (although plate mail might be more difficult to remove – referee discretion). On the second round, if the character is still holding or wielding metal, he takes 1d6 damage; on the third round, he takes 1d8; and on the fourth round, he takes 1d10. After that, the metal has cooled down enough to not cause further damage. |
| 170 | Immune to Physical Attacks, No Damage | |
| 171 | Incorporeal, Constant | The creature's body is permanently non-physical. Only magical attacks (and attacks with magical weapons) affect it, and it can not physically attack others. This creature must have some sort of special attack that allows it to combat physical beings. |

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| 172 | Insanity* | A character subject to this attack must make a save or become insane. Insanity is permanent unless cured by strong magic; it can be removed as a curse or disease. Details of the insanity are left to the referee (although it should be concretely defined before the creature enters play), but examples would be drastic alignment change, sociopathy, kleptomania, or any other significant, inconvenient behavior change. |
| 173 | Magic Drain: Permanent* | The creature has the ability to permanently drain the magic out of items. It will always go for the largest items first. |
| 174 | Magic Erasure* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or immediately loses any spells he has memorized that day. |
| 175 | Maiming* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or one of his limbs becomes completely and permanently useless. |
| 176 | Memory Loss* | A character subject to this attack must make a save or lose all of his memories. The memory will not return until the memory loss is dispelled (either with a dispel magic or remove curse). |
| 177 | Mimicry | The creature is able to change its shape to be any inanimate object of its general size. It uses this ability to lure victims close so that it may attack with surprise. |
| 178 | Phased | The creature is out of alignment with the physical world. It shifts into the physical world to attack and then quickly shifts out again. This creature may not be targeted for any attack, physical or magical, unless the strike is made on the same initiative number as the creature during combat, or if the caster is also out of phase with the physical world. |
| 179 | Psychic Blast* | The creature can mentally attack its foes. The target must roll percentile dice, and if the roll is under the total of their wisdom, intelligence, and character level, they are unaffected. Otherwise, they are stunned for two rounds, plus one additional round per 10 points by which they miss the percentile roll. |
| 180 | Regeneration: 1 Point Per Round, Undying | The creature regains one HP at the beginning of every round, even after reaching zero HP or lower. The referee must decide on a certain attack form that causes permanent, non-regenerable damage. |
| 181 | Regeneration: 2 Points Per Round, Undying | The creature regains two HPs at the beginning of every round, even after reaching zero HP or lower. The referee must decide on a certain attack form that causes permanent, non-regenerable damage. |
| 182 | Regeneration: 3 Points Per Round, Undying | The creature regains three HPs at the beginning of every round, even after reaching zero HP or lower. The referee must decide on a certain attack form that causes permanent, non-regenerable damage. |
| 183 | Shrink* | Any character subjected to this attack must make a save or be shrunk by d8% x the creature's HD. This effect is cumulative and lasts 1d4+1 turns. This will not shrink non-living material, so a character's armor and clothing may fall off, he may have trouble wielding weapons, and his carrying capacity and ability to inflict damage is decreased by the same percent as his size for the duration of the effect. |
| 184 | Silence | The creature has the innate ability to create a zone of complete silence (with a 30-foot diameter sphere area of effect) at will. It can only have one such zone active at any time, however. |
| 185 | Slow* | A character subject to this attack must make a save or move at half speed and attack half as often for 1d6+4 rounds. |
| 186 | Spell Reflection | Offensive spells cast at the creature will instead "bounce back" and affect the caster. Only spells of up to 1d6 level (roll this value when the creature is created) will be reflected in this manner. |
| 187 | Spoil Rations* | The creature's attack spoils all perishable items. Any food that a target is carrying becomes inedible and water goes bad if the character fails to make a save. Potions can also be ruined; the character should make individual saves for each potion. |
| 188 | Sticky | The creature's body is adhesive, and any weapon striking the creature sticks to it. The wielder can make an open doors roll or strength check the next round to pry it off. If he attempts to do so, he may take no other action that round. |
| 189 | Swift Reflexes | The creature can make all of its normal attacks twice as often. |
| 190 | Telekinesis | The creature can move objects with its mind without touching them. The maximum weight, in pounds, it can move is the creature's HD x (d8+2 x 10). |

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| 191 | Teleportation | The creature blinks in and out of physical space. When making an attack, there is a 15 in 20 chance it appears behind its target for a rear attack, 3 in 20 chance of appearing in a flanking (unshielded) position, and 1 in 20 chance of moving well out of combat range in a particular round. |
| 192 | Transform Metal to Wood* | The creature is able to transform metal into wood. If the attack is directed at a character or his equipment, then he must make a save to avoid its effect. The creature can transform 5 pounds of metal per HD it possesses. It is up to the referee to judge the effectiveness of items so transformed, but generally wooden armor and weapons should be considered useless in a fight. |
| 193 | Transform Rock to Mud* | The creature is able to transform rock into soft mud. Walls so transformed will collapse, pillars and boulders will become goop, and floors will effectively turn into deadly quicksand. The creature can transform 5 square feet per HD it possesses. If the ability is used to cause direct damage to characters, those characters must make a save to avoid the effect. |
| 194 | Penetrating Sight | The creature can see through any illusions, invisibility, or any such similar magical effects. |
| 195 | Turn to Stone* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or be permanently turned to stone. |
| 196 | Untraceable | The creature leaves no trail that is able to be followed short of magical means. |
| 197 | Vanish* | A character subjected to this attack must make a save or be both paralyzed and turned invisible for 3d4 turns. The creature will be able to detect the character, but the victim's fellows will think he has simply vanished. |
| 198 | Ventriloquism | The creature can throw its voice (er, growl?) to make it seem as if it is in another location. |
| 199 | Water Breathing | The creature can survive underwater as well as on land. |
| 200 | Fast Reflexes +3 | The creature gets a +3 bonus to its initiative rolls. |



DELIVERY OF SPECIAL ATTACKS

Roll once on the table for every special attack the creature has. If the same delivery method is rolled for multiple attacks, then the attack may have a combined effect rather than being two separate attacks if the referee so decides, and such combined attacks require only one save (what kind should be determined at this stage when the creature is created, not in mid-combat) to avoid/mitigate its effects.

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| 2d10 | | |
| 2 | On Sight | Merely seeing the creature causes the special attack to affect the onlooker. |
| 3 – 4 | Gas | The special attack affects everyone within 1d10 x 10 feet of the creature (roll once when th[e creature is created). The creature itself is not affected. This is different from Area Effect, Centered (see below) only because there are different defenses and precautions against gas than general “on-contact” attacks. |

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| 5 – 6 | Gaze | The special attack is delivered through line of sight and the victim must meet the creature's gaze. Characters who wish to avoid any possibility of meeting the creature's gaze cannot attack it at all and must keep their eyes firmly shut, and any attacks against them in this state counts as a "back attack." Characters seeking to attack a creature while avoiding its gaze suffer a –4 to-hit penalty, and have a 10% chance per round of meeting its gaze anyway. A character can attack normally, with a 33% risk of meeting its gaze. Simply looking at the monster from afar gives a 50% risk of meeting its gaze, being surprised by the creature gives a 75% risk of meeting its gaze, and being completely surprised creates a 90% risk. Characters meeting the gaze must then make the save or suffer its effects. |
| 7 – 8 | Area Effect, Cone | The creature projects an area effect that starts at the creature's location and spreads as it moves away from the creature. It has a 45° arc and a range of 3d6 x 10 feet (roll once when the creature is created). |
| 9 – 11 | Projectile | The special attack is made at range as a missile attack. |
| 12 – 13 | Touch | The special attack is delivered when the creature hits with one of its normal attacks. |
| 14 – 15 | Ray | The special attack is delivered through a ranged attack that ignores physical armor or shields, and only magical and dexterity bonuses to the target's AC apply. |
| 16 – 17 | Area Effect, Centered | The special attack affects everyone within 1d10 x 10 feet of the creature (roll once when the creature is created). The creature itself is not affected. |
| 18 – 19 | Area Effect, Circle | The creature's special attack can be centered on a point up to 3d6 x 10 feet away from it, affecting everyone within 1d10 x 10 feet from that point (roll once for each random factor when the creature is created). |
| 20 | Voice | The special attack is delivered through the creature's voice and affects anyone who hears it. |

COMBAT STRATEGY

The same-old feeling that accompanies encounters with many classic fantasy role-playing monsters isn't necessarily because the same monsters have been used for thirty-plus years. Sometimes, a referee just can't help being one man controlling an entire world of adventure, and sometimes he's going to go on autopilot when presenting certain encounters – especially random encounters. This is somewhat mitigated when using adventures and locations written by others, but in classic games, it is often the home referee creating his own milieu and fashioning his own encounters.

This section is merely an aid to varying the motivation of individual creatures so that the referee has something to riff off of instead of having the burden to invent every last creature's combat strategy. The referee should roll percentile dice to determine a creature's basic combat strategy. The dice should then be reversed (a 54 becoming a 45, for example) to determine a creature's backup strategy should the primary strategy prove to be unfeasible. Keep in mind these options are only suitable for more or less savage and bestial creatures; truly intelligent foes should have more refined ways to go about slaying their foes.

It is highly recommended that when using less intelligent creatures, the referee play them to their maximum potential. They are there to rend, tear, kill, and perhaps – if they're acting naturally – feed. Character death is hard-coded into these games, and it's there for a reason. Player investment in their characters should encourage smart and careful play in order not to lose said characters ... but that investment should never result in a referee fudging or coddling in order to save a character during fair play. If a referee made an error and introduced an unavoidable, unconquerable foe, then perhaps (perhaps!) that is another matter...

d%

01 – 10

Closest

The creature will always attack the closest available foe.



| | | |
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| 11 – 20 | Random | The foe attacked by the creature should be randomly determined every round. |
| 21 – 30 | Inflicted the Most Damage | The creature will always attack the foe that inflicted the most damage to it earlier in the round, or in the prior round depending on how the referee handles combat declarations. |
| 31 – 40 | Spellcasters | The creature will always attack spellcasters before non-casters, wizards before priests. |
| 41 – 50 | Most Heavily Armored | The creature will always attack the most heavily armored foe in combat. |
| 51 – 60 | Least Armored | The creature will always attack the least armored foe in combat. |
| 61 – 70 | Toughest | The creature will always attack the foe with the most remaining hit points. |
| 71 – 80 | Weakest | The creature will always attack the foe with the least remaining hit points. |
| 81 – 90 | Humans | The creature will always attack humans before non-humans. |
| 91 – 100 | Non-Humans | The creature will always attack demihumans and humanoids before humans. |

MOTIVATION

Sometimes it's good to know just why a creature is interested in armed conflict with ready and capable enemies. This enables better strategic (and tactical) thinking by the players as they can think of ways to avoid combat, nullify the hostility of the creature, or even escape a combat that is going badly for them.

| d10 | | |
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| 1 – 2 | Abomination | The creature is so unnatural that it cannot abide the existence of natural beings. Any magically affected character (cursed, polymorphed, etc.) will not be attacked by the creature except in self-defense. |
| 3 | Fear | The creature is something of a psychic vampire, feeding off of the fear of its victims. If those it attacks show no fear whatsoever (referees should gauge the <i>players'</i> reaction to the creature to determine this), the creature will attempt to disengage from combat and escape – there is nothing for it here. |
| 4 – 5 | Hunger | The creature is constantly hungry, much like a shark, and will attack in order to feed on its foes. |
| 6 | Mating | The creature is able to reproduce through sexual contact with humans and demihumans, and attacks in order to procreate. Very important: Referees should not use this as a license or even a suggestion to rape characters in play. Don't be gross or disrespectful. However, if the creature finds itself alone with unconscious or otherwise helpless characters, then they're going to have a bad day. Keep the details "off-camera," but certainly inflict whatever nasty diseases are appropriate on the character, and in d% weeks' time, another of these creatures is going to come ripping out of the character's belly, killing him instantly. Creatures do not differentiate, or even recognize the differences, between the sexes of human-like beings, so referees shouldn't specifically target female characters or players with this creature. |
| 7 | Parasite | The creature encountered is merely the host for another organism. Any foe left alone and unconscious will be infected with the parasite, which will slowly destroy the mind of the infected and transform it into another creature like the one encountered. |
| 8 | Spawning | The creature procreates by laying eggs (or something similar) inside dead bodies of a certain (human?) size, and seeks to kill characters for this purpose. |
| 9 – 10 | Territorial | The creature merely seeks to defend its home area, and it considers any intruder to be a threat. The creature will not pursue any fleeing enemies beyond its territory. |



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There are three things that must be addressed to make this series of tables coalesce into a usable creature: appearance, abilities, and suitability.

Figuring out a creature's appearance is either going to be extremely easy ("OK, quadruped, mammal, horse-looking thing...") or an exercise in abstract thinking ("a 20-sided die with the characteristics of a skunk that's made out of water"), but it needs to be done before the creature can be presented in play. All a referee really needs is enough to present a general description, and then he can just make stuff up if and when the players want more detail. Appearance is easy to simply invent since it doesn't affect any of the stats. A referee should have fun with it.

The special abilities, on the other hand, have an actual in-game effect beyond description and atmosphere. That stuff can take a player's mind out of the game if not presented well, so special attention needs to be paid to it. A referee needs to be familiar with how the creature attacks and how it appears the creature is attacking so it can be described to the players. The referee needs to know how each of the attacks work, especially in cases of area effect attacks, so that the players don't see indecision and hesitation from the referee mid-combat. The referee also needs to determine what saves will apply to which attacks before a creature is brought into play.

Suitability is all about the creature making sense for its environment. Don't worry about applying "ecology" so much as common sense. A game shouldn't get sidetracked because players get completely

distracted by something that has no meaning at all. If the creature's abilities suggest a certain environment, that environment should be present. A creature can drive the setting in this way. For example, a creature with crustacean features that breathes underwater should have some water nearby. A very large creature shouldn't be somewhere if it can't fit through any of the exits. A creature randomly encountered on a major underworld trade route better not be an immobile killing machine.

These creatures should inspire wonder and fear. They should be fantastic and perhaps even completely unrealistic. Yet if they risk breaking the verisimilitude of the setting, they need to be adjusted. A referee should never let random tables derail the game, and a referee should never sacrifice a setting's integrity for the sake of "That's cool!" or any sort of instant gratification. The best-case scenario is for the situation to be bizarre, as in the case of these examples, but with a reasonable explanation for it. Not that the players ever need to know, but if the referee knows, then the players will be able to sense, in the long run, that the world has an order to it and it's not just a glop of thrown-together ideas. Perhaps that immobile killing machine is something of a toll keeper, and if players can figure out what the toll is and how to pay it, they can pass without trouble. Maybe that gigantic creature that is too big to leave that cavern was raised from a little bitty monster by someone or something and it just grew there until it couldn't leave. Or maybe if a referee had so many ideas ready to go, he wouldn't be using a book of random tables in the first place.



Whatever. A referee should use whatever makes his job easier, ignore the things he doesn't like about it, and make sure that everything, as in every single last little thing, serves the game and helps make actual play more satisfying and compelling.

THE EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF MONSTERS IN FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING

Good referees know that it's not enough to merely come up with a list of appropriate challenges for an adventure. In role-playing games, presentation is everything. Even the most mundane creature – yes, even kobolds – can inspire some real dread in the players if handled well.

But that's the trick, isn't it? It is important to make every encounter seem dangerous, or important, or at least make sure that the smaller combats of attrition aren't boring. Familiarity can hurt this, but it is certainly possible to have a rich, fulfilling campaign just using monsters straight out of the official books. (Don't tell anyone else that until they've already bought *this* book, m'kay?)

The trick is to do everything possible to make the players forget that they are playing a game that has been a standard for more than three decades. The trick is to make the players treat their gaming experience as brand new.

Here are some suggestions for making monsters in your campaign more memorable, more menacing, and more mystical – the way they were meant to be!

SURPRISE!

The first suggestion can be used in any referee's game, right now, without introducing a single new creature into the game. Indeed, many referees likely already practice it. The trick is to give the players as little information as possible while still giving an adequate description of what their characters are experiencing.

Just by virtue of having surprise rules included, classic fantasy role-playing games are stating that it is possible for enemies to attack characters unaware. It's a basic definition. So always roll for surprise (or better yet, have the players roll their own surprise die) before announcing whatever it is the characters are encountering. Don't even mention something is there yet. The referee shouldn't tell the players that they are rolling a surprise die! If the characters are surprised, the referee should roll the

monsters' attacks and damage, and players should make any appropriate saves, and all effects should be applied before the referee gives one single detail about what is there.

This will freak many players out. Even if the damage is not so much, there will be an immediate question of whether that's because the foes are weak or if it was just luck. If the damage was great, players will assume that's what they're in for every round, no matter if the referee made a lucky roll or not. Players' brains will be buzzing with possible tactics and responses and actions because of a threat they cannot yet identify.

Now consider the expectations that this creates in each player's mind. "What foul menace now



confronts us?” That so many of the monsters of fantasy role-playing are hard-coded in players’ skulls invariably leads to a letdown. “You see two trolls!” Ask yourself: Are your players looking worried because of the horror of the mysterious creatures facing their characters, or are they calculating hit dice/hit point probabilities and damage capacities in their heads to determine whether they should run or fight? Is there a reliable way to hold onto the tension once players finally comprehend what they’re facing?

The answer to that question is why this book even exists.

SUMMONING!

Certain spells and magical items summon monsters. While games have their particular tables for determining what is summoned, wouldn’t it make more sense if nobody really knew what was going to show up? The summoning spells even make things easy by specifying how powerful and how many creatures will show up. A referee with some practice with these tables can probably get away with creating creatures on demand, but a resourceful referee will know what summoning spells the players (and NPCs!) will have at their disposal and have some nasty little critters ready.

That same preparation can be used for wandering-monster tables as well; just have a selection of pre-created random nasties so they can be instantly presented for play when the time comes.

Obviously, certain summoning spells, animal summoning in particular, should probably use the system-provided tables and effects. But for that mysterious arcane summoning?

Hit them with the weird stuff.

MIX AND MATCH

An endless variety of creatures is sitting right there in every referee’s monster list. Monster statistics are not canon. They can, and should, be changed often. A referee obviously doesn’t have time in his life to agonize over every single possible encounter that could happen in his game, but there are still adjustments that can be made quickly and easily.

Select a monster, and use its physical form, including attacks. Then select another monster, and just use its temperament and special abilities. You’re done! You know, say you like the idea of a manticore. Awesome creatures for a dynamic mid-level challenge. But hey, the leucrotta has an interesting ability there.... So transfer that to the

manticore for a nice combination of mythological beasts. It’s the little things like that which can make for a long, long night for assumptive players.

USE MONSTERS ONLY ONCE

Monsters that are not unique are not mystical creatures of wonder. They are simply animals, and the typical adventuring party is more on an African safari than participating in High Adventure when they face such foes. In fact, the idea of a standardized monster list for anything other than setting an example is probably the worst thing that happened to role-playing games.

Take back the fantastic by limiting it. Use any particular creature once during a campaign. Unusual, supernatural creatures don’t belong on random encounter lists, and they shouldn’t be chosen to fill out some extra rooms in a dungeon complex. They should be special, and the way to make them so is to treat each one as a unique creature.

It should be noted that “unique” does not necessarily mean “only one” in this instance. Some creatures propagate themselves. Energy draining undead do this, as do lycanthropes. When these creatures are used, it wouldn’t even be logical (and in fantasy role-playing, “realistic” may not be a desirable goal, but “logical” is certainly attainable) to have only one exist. When the creatures do appear, use them to their fullest horrific potential. Also, some creatures are intended to be used in packs, or to infest a limited area. These intentions should be honored, with the “grouping” being counted as unique rather than the individual creature.

There are three exceptions to this. Some of the creatures will be “animals” in a campaign world, and thus be a standard part of the game world. A referee should use common sense. Should a *unicorn* really be something popping up here and there if the “monsters are unique” method is to be used? Slimes and oozes are a good candidate for this “animal” treatment, as are plant creatures. In most cases, though, if a “monster” is going to be treated as an “animal,” shouldn’t a referee simply use ... an animal (perhaps a giant version if the characters are far enough off the beaten track)? Obviously for some alien environments, that would not even make sense (“Oh, we just got attacked by 2d6 more moles down here in these dark caverns miles under the Earth!”), but keeping “verisimilitude” in mind for the game world, with the only exceptions happening as part of the players’ experiences (or being related to their activities), can go a long way toward capturing a player’s sense of wonder.

The second exception is the “culture.” Certain creatures are tribal in nature, so their influence will be a bit more widely felt. See the “Prejudices” section below.

The third exception covers the creatures that are created by spell effects. Elementals won’t be limited if certain items or spellcasters can summon them. Certain types of undead are created with a spell effect, and so forth. These creatures will be encountered more often than a “monsters are unique” approach would indicate. Yet it is still important for a referee to manage these monsters as much as possible, and be able to explain and pinpoint (not necessarily to the players, simply to himself) how and why these creatures are appearing in terms of the game world.

The important thing to remember is that the players should never be notified if a campaign is going to be handled in this manner. One can imagine them creating a checklist as they work to knock off the “standard” creatures one by one. “Well there’s the vampire! Check!”

Of course, a referee can get a similar effect without limiting a particular monster to *one*, or even *one group* as described above. Remember how Tolkien’s “The Nine” were a fairly fearsome bunch? They weren’t limited to one geographic area, or even found together much of the time. And with all the variations in dragons these games seem to have, restricting your campaign to one of each type of dragon seems like wasting opportunities. It is suggested that if the “unique monster” approach is to be used, and if there are going to be exceptions, that those exceptions be a campaign focus, something that the players can discover. They still shouldn’t be told that there is only one of everything else, of course!

UNNAMED TERROR

This suggestion is mainly for creatures created with this booklet. A referee should never give these monsters a name! “What was that?” is going to be a question commonly asked by players. They should be told nothing. Perhaps it is best if they don’t know that a random generation method is being used to come up with their foes. If they think these oddities are *planned*, maybe they’ll view the referee’s other creations with more caution and respect.

Or perhaps the players should know that they are not fighting “standard” monsters. Part of the behavior of players is dependent on the unchanging,

traditional nature of classic gaming foes. Take that away from them and the entire game, perhaps even the entire genre, seems far less certain, it definitely won’t seem so “old,” and more and more of that feeling of nostalgia disappears and is replaced by that genuine sense of wonder from the time when everything about the game was new.

Or “The Locally Named Terror” can be used. If creatures are non-standard, then townsfolk will know nearby creatures by names having to do with the local environment or legends. “You can’t go *there* – that’s where the Beast of Boggy Downs hunts!” “If you really are planning on going up to the old ruins, you must beware of Azerkon’s Folly!” If a referee manages to not give the creature any more proper name than that, all the better.

PREJUDICES

That should raise an eyebrow or two. The first basic problem with creating a sense of wonder in fantasy role-playing is there is too much of it in most settings and campaigns. It’s very simple: If everything is fantastic, then nothing is. A referee should use every opportunity to strip nonessential magical and mythic elements from his game. While this seems counterintuitive for fantasy role-playing, it can enrich a campaign by making the weird stuff really count.

The first place this can be done is by changing the approach to demihumans and humanoids in the campaign. The classic fantasy role-playing campaign has elves, dwarves, and halflings standing side-by-side with humans, with teeming masses of orcs, goblins, and more serving as cannon fodder.

Eliminate them from the game. If it has two legs and two hands, remove it and replace it with humans. The important thing is – don’t change the cultures or characterizations involved! The ones that were “dwarves” are now mining clans, short and stocky, the “elves” are forest-dwelling hunters, “orcs” are remorseless and savage barbarians, etc. Perhaps they should even keep their special racial abilities (now labeled “cultural abilities”), although it might be difficult to justify seeing in the dark. But really, is there any reason to use an ogre when a human warrior with a few levels on him will do? Is that adding to the danger, the suspense, or the mystery of the game? Details don’t even have to be changed in doing away with non-humans. Normal unclassed humans have roughly the same stats as goblins in most of the individual systems, so there would be no real balance issues in doing this. Don’t make the converted humanoids any more cultured, either.

Just play them as orcs or goblins or whatever, but describe them as humans. They can still have their own separate language, and they'll still be unquestionably evil foes. This is why the header of this section is "prejudices": in the game world, certain portions of humanity would be genetically hard-coded to be evil, or savage, or diggers, or forest dwellers, or stealthy, or what have you. The game is fiction, and a referee should never allow comparisons between his real-life attitudes and how he handles orc analogues in his game.

Taking this approach will remove the "mundane" special creatures out of a campaign. It can also serve to increase tension and perhaps drama, as questions such as "What do we do with the tribe's noncombatant women and children?" become much more interesting to answer. The goal here is not simply to facilitate the motions of playing classic fantasy role-playing games, but to restore the wonder we felt when we first played and allow that to be an ongoing element of play.

Such issues may not be of interest to every referee or player group. And perhaps the classic fellowship of characters as presented by Tolkien, his peers, and followers is the basic lure for fantasy gaming in the first place. Fine. Use the races, but go back to the source if you do so – Tolkien brought his races together only in the direst of circumstances. The average human never came into contact with elves or dwarves.

Assuming a humanocentric focus to the game, every other demihuman and humanoid should be very rare. This does not mean limiting your players' character choices! Let them be as they wish, but a referee should always be sure that the players are aware that their non-human characters are unusual and never trusted by more superstitious members of the population. Enhancing the isolation and "otherness" of these races in a campaign, and only using them for specific purposes, will make their appearances special.

Most importantly, consider this a warmup exercise for the hard part: doing the same with the evil humanoids. They simply must be eliminated as a commonplace foe in order for them to have any credibility, or use, in a campaign at all. Note their uses in the core literature. They aren't everywhere, they aren't common foes. They have specific territories and are used for specific reasons. They don't crawl all over Middle-Earth like rats.

There is something to be learned from this approach. If anything, defining an "orc" as "a humanoid from *this* region who serves *this* master" prevents the thoughtless use of orcs (and so forth) as ho-hum brutes that can be found and slain anywhere. If these creatures are only used when there is a purpose, then simply having that purpose will render their use within the game more memorable for the players.





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