

BOOK of BLADES

EXPANDING THE RANGER



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INTRODUCTION

The word ranger conjures many different images: the hunter on the edge of society, the guide who knows hidden paths, the primal warrior who defends nature, the deadly marksman splitting her first arrow with her second, whirling steel and tumbling evasion while fighting against overwhelming odds; all of these call to mind a ranger. The ranger we know today has been evolution of a few key tropes.

RANGERS IN GAMING HISTORY AND MEDIA

The ranger first appeared in the Summer 1975 issue of *Strategic Review* as part of an article by Joe Fischer. The creation of this subclass of the Fighting Man, rangers have been a popular part of fantasy role-playing games ever since.

The fantasy role-playing game ranger is almost certainly based on the character Aragorn from J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. The Rangers of the North in Middle-Earth were skilled woodsmen and hunters, wandering the wastes of Eriador hunting orcs.

Many traditional ranger class features are found in Tolkien's text. Aragorn, a grim, stealthy man, was known as a strong fighter, talented archer, and skilled with healing herbs in a way that might have been magical. He was an expert guide who could track and escort others through the wilderness. While Aragorn was probably the basis for the ranger, he wasn't the only one. The *AD&D 2e Player's Handbook* also lists Robin Hood, Orion the Hunter, Jack the Giant Killer, and the huntress Diana, as inspirations for the ranger class.

The image of the ranger as a fast-moving warrior wielding a blade in each hand came with the popularity of R.A. Salvatore's Drizzt Do'Urden character, who also had a magical panther companion named Guenhwyvar. This also cemented the idea that rangers had animal companions; a class feature Aragorn did not possess. In the *AD&D 1e Player's Handbook*, rangers gained followers upon reaching 9th level, some which might be might have been animals. It wasn't until 2e's *Player's Option: Skills and Powers* and the Animal Master kit when rangers could reliably get an animal companion. After that, it was common for rangers to acquire an animal companion as a class feature or gain access to the animal friendship spell and find a furry friend.



The idea of the favored enemy developed from a bonus against giants in the original Fischer article. It has since morphed into bonus damage against a type of creature of the ranger's choice, and in the most recent edition, into knowledge of a language and advantage on skill checks. There has always been a benefit of some kind against some foe, and this likely also goes back to once again Aragorn and the hated orcs.

WHAT MAKES A RANGER?

Several tropes come to mind when one thinks of a ranger. Consider the type of ranger you want to play, and which class abilities you want to highlight. In particular, you can customize your ranger by choosing a focused subclass at 3rd level and picking specific feats or spells to hone your concept.

Animals. Rangers are often considered good with animals. This might just manifest in your character choosing proficiency with the Animal Handling skill so you know how to coax an animal into doing what you want or taking proficiency with land vehicles so you can drive a wagon. For a stronger connection, you might choose a subclass with access to an animal companion. This is a commitment to add a second personality and requires you to keep track of a second character. While an animal companion isn't a full second character, it requires a little more effort to track and care for.

Archery. The classic ranger is an expert marksman, quick to draw their bow and quicker to release. The Hunter subclass embodies this classic trope, but even without specializing, owning a bow can let you dish out some ranged damage. Add a feat or two specializing in archery and the archery fighting style, and you can be very effective at range.

Favored Enemy. While the favored enemy class feature has changed from edition to edition, it has been a staple since Aragorn hunted his first orc. Work this feature into your backstory. What enemy troubles your homeland most? They are likely your favored enemy. Even better is to ask your GM what creatures will feature in their campaign so you can work yourself into the story through your favored enemy.

Magic. Most rangers have limited spellcasting ability, but those spells augment their other abilities, increasing damage or allowing additional versatility in the wild. Some of these spells overlap with the druid, but the ranger never achieves the raw power of devoted spellcaster. However, they more than make up for it with martial prowess. Think of spells a little something extra for when you get into a tight spot.

Two-Weapon Fighting. This trope was not originally part of the ranger but became a standard of the class later. Today's ranger is a spinning top of flashing blades moving in and out of cover, attacking several times before an enemy can respond. Taking the two-weapon fighting style helps you mimic this flavor of ranger, but you might also add feats that help you move and do more damage.

Rangers are guerrilla fighters that don't have the armor class of a fighter or paladin in full plate, so they take advantage of mobility and ambushes in combat. You want to be careful about standing next to your foe without at least attacking from surprise. Rangers have the hit points of a fighter, so you can do that and live. But they shine as a skirmisher with spells like *jump* or *longstrider* to move out of enemy reach before they can hit back too many times. This is especially effective when combined with the mobile feat to avoid opportunity attacks.

Wilderness Expert. Rangers thrive in the wilds. Natural Explorer, Primeval Awareness, and Land's Stride class features help them move through the wilderness and spot trouble. Mix this with proficiency in Perception, Stealth, and Survival skills, and the ranger is a ghost in the wild, seeing trouble before it sees them and guiding allies around difficulties. They also gain bonuses to tracking in their favored terrain or against their favored enemy.

PLAYING A RANGER WELL

Perhaps more than any other trope, what makes a ranger is independence. They are a strong combatant in melee with two-weapon fighting that, when augmented with the *hunter's mark* spell, keeps up with a fighter. When specialized with a bow, a ranger does single target ranged damage like a sorcerer or warlock. In a pinch, the ranger has spells that can heal like a cleric or druid. Like the rogue, a ranger can be stealthy, often with a better passive Perception due to their higher Wisdom. The ranger is the ultimate solo operative.

However, the roleplaying game the ranger is a part of relies on teamwork. A ranger's player must keep in mind their utility role. They can fill in gaps and work for a party's benefit, especially in the wilderness. They can get in and out without being detected. They have high hit points, moderate armor class, and the ability to dish out continuous damage. They can even cast a few spells when an arrow won't solve the problem. Rangers are well positioned to help keep everyone in good shape.

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Interested in more examples of rangers? These notable pieces of fantasy literature, comics, cinema, and video games contain exemplars of the ranger class. There are many, many more, but these should get you started.

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NEW RANGER SUBCLASSES

Flavor your ranger by taking a ranger subclass at 3rd level. Blade Dancers are rangers that specialize in two-weapon fighting, while Peerless Scouts are spell-less rangers that hone their capabilities with tracking and traps.

BLADE DANCER

A Blade Dancer is as beautiful to behold as they are dangerous. They artfully whirl through melee, flowing across the battlefield dodging blows and rapidly slicing foes to bloody pieces. While rangers are often associated with the longbow, the Blade Dancer embodies the spirit of two weapon fighting. Facing a Blade Dancer with a weapon in each hand, is a dance with death.

BOB AND WEAVE

When you choose this subclass at 3rd level, you become adept at moving in and out of combat with two weapons in hand, attacking before your target





can defend themselves. You may treat any melee weapon that does not have the two-handed property as if it had the light property.

During your turn, if you make a melee attack against a creature as a bonus action while two-weapon fighting, that creature can't make opportunity attacks against you for the rest of your turn. On a turn in which you make an attack while two-weapon fighting, difficult terrain doesn't slow your movement.

PARRY

At 7th level you may use your reaction to add your proficiency bonus to your AC against one melee attack that would hit you. To do so, you must see the attacker and be wielding a light melee weapon in each hand. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again. Starting at 13th level, you can use it twice before a rest, but only once on the same turn.

SUPERIOR TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

At 15th level, when you engage in two-weapon fighting, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with each weapon. Once while two-weapon fighting on your turn, you can rend a creature that you hit with two attacks, dealing an extra 3d6 damage to that creature.

DANCE OF DEATH

Starting at 17th level, as a bonus action you can perform a dance of whirling death that lasts until the end of your turn. When you take an Attack action while engaging in two-weapon fighting, you may make a melee attack for every 5 feet that you move, up to a maximum number of attacks equal to your proficiency bonus. No more than half of your attacks can use the same weapon. Your movement does not provoke opportunity attacks while using dance of death. Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

PEERLESS SCOUT

To protect the edges of society from encroaching monsters, rangers learn to navigate various terrains, and acquire nature magic to make them better hunters. The Peerless Scout forgoes those spells to strengthen their relationship to the terrain they fight in. They become consummate guides who can sense subtle changes in terrain or an enemy's demeanor and use that information to protect their allies. They control the battlefield with a supernatural ability to quickly set traps and predict the movement of their foes.



The Peerless Scout takes advantage of the Tracking in Combat and Booby Traps optional rules found in this supplement.

PRETERNATURAL AUGMENT

When you choose this subclass at 3rd-level, you undergo a ritual that strengthens your connection to the world around you at the expense of your ability to work magic. You lose the ability to cast ranger spells but continue to gain spell slots. You can use spells slots, from this or other classes, to enhance your ability to track in combat and create magical booby traps. You gain two of the following Preternatural Augments of your choice. You gain another one at 9th and 13th level. You can use only one Preternatural Augment at a time, unless otherwise noted.

Cunning Trap. When placing a Booby Trap, you expend one spell slot to increase the DC to find, disable, and save against the trap by 1 per level of the slot expended.

Extra Ally. When Tracking in Combat, you expend one spell slot to affect additional allies equal to the level of the slot expended.

Deadly Traps. When placing a Booby Trap, you expend one spell slot to increase the damage done by a trap that does damage by an additional 1d6 per level of the slot expended.

Focus Ally. When Tracking in Combat, you expend one spell slot to increase the bonus granted to one ally equal to the level of the slot expended.

Fueled By Magic. When creating a Booby Trap, you expend one spell slot to create one trap or improvement per level of the slot expended. This allows you to add more than one improvement to a trap. These traps do not require any raw materials but disappear after 1 hour.

Long Range Plan. When Tracking in Combat, you expend one spell slot to extend the duration of the benefit granted to one ally by a number of rounds equal to the level of slot expended.

Rapid Deployment. You place a Booby Trap as a bonus action by expending one spell slot. The trap remains for a number of rounds equal to the level of the slot expended.

Safe Path. When Tracking in Combat, you expend one spell slot to make your allies affected by a Tracking in Combat benefit able to pass through your Booby Traps without triggering them. The number of allies affected is equal to the level of the slot expended.

Swift Assessment. When Tracking in Combat, you expend one spell slot to Track in Combat as a bonus action. The granted benefit lasts a number of rounds equal to the level of the slot expended.

Widen Trap. When placing a Booby Trap, you can expend one spell slot to have the trap affect a number of additional 5-foot squares equal to the level of the slot expended.

EXPERIENCED EXPLORER

At 7th level your Booby Traps placed while in your favored terrain automatically gain one improvement with no additional cost or time to construct it. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to Track in Combat while in your favored terrain.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: IMPROMPTU AMBUSH

At 15th level, your experience and training coalesce into a state of heightened situational awareness. As an action, you may expend your situational awareness while Tracking in Combat or placing a Booby Trap. You can expend your situational awareness to magically create one of two effects: Contingent Attack or Unseen Trap.

Contingent Attack. You declare a perceivable action the target of your Tracking in Combat might take as a triggering event. Allies who gain a benefit from your Tracking in Combat may immediately make one single melee or ranged weapon attack against the target if they witness the declared triggering event. An ally's attack gains a bonus to hit equal to your proficiency bonus. This attack requires no action from your allies and may only occur once per target per day.

Unseen Trap. While in direct line of sight of your foes, you can expend your situational awareness to place a Booby Trap at exactly the right time when no one is looking at you, even if you are not hiding. The trap is considered hidden and must be found with a Wisdom (Perception) check as normal.

When you expend your situational awareness to use Improptu Ambush, you choose which effect to create. You must finish a short or long rest to use your situational awareness again.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS: MASTER AMBUSER

Starting at 17th level, as an action you can expend your situational awareness to access the battlefield, give suggestions to your allies, and place a flurry of traps. You automatically succeed on a roll for Tracking in Combat against one creature that you can see and place six Booby Traps within 30 feet of you. These Booby Traps cannot be placed in the same spot or adjacent to another Booby Trap. Additionally, you may expend two spell slots, one to augment your Booby Traps and one to augment your Tracking in Combat benefit at no additional cost in money, time, or materials.

When you expend your situational awareness to use Master Ambush, you must finish a long rest to use your situational awareness again.

FABLED MAGICAL WEAPONS

Rangers are hard on their equipment, but a few fabled magical weapons survive their rigors.

FEATHERWING

This magical longbow is crafted from colorful feathers, each arm resembling a bird's wing with the string tied between their tips.

In times of legend, the wood elven ranger Syllania, sometimes called the Silverstar among her people, rescued a giant owl from ravenous harpies. Unbeknownst to Syllania, that owl was Prince Amylix of the Feathered Kingdoms, and grateful for his





rescue by the young elf, he ordered a magical longbow created for her using the feathers of his avian subjects.

Called *Featherwing*, Sullania would use her magical longbow in the defense of woodland realms until her death at the hands of the dragon GadirtheX. *Featherwing* then passed into the dragon's hoard where it is assumed to still lie, though there are rumors that the dragon has bestowed the weapon upon one of its minions in exchange for loyal service.

FEATHERWING

Weapon (Longbow), Fabled (5th Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement by an Elf)

While holding *Featherwing*, gentle breezes rustle your hair and stir your clothes. Should you fall, comforting winds buoy your descent, and you take no damage from falls of 60 feet or less. For falls of greater than 60 feet, subtract 60 from the total fall height to determine falling damage.

Favored Winds (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wielding or holding this longbow.

5th level. You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic longbow. Whenever you roll a 20 on your attack roll with this weapon, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 5 feet away from you by violent winds.

9th level. Whenever you attack with this magic longbow, you gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed until the end of your turn.

13th level. While holding *Featherwing*, you have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight. In addition, when you hit with an attack using this magic longbow, the target takes an extra 1d6 force damage as invisible claws tear at them.

17th level. You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic longbow. While holding this magic longbow, you always have a flying speed equal to your walking speed and you don't provoke opportunity attacks when you fly out of an enemy's reach.

DEADFALL AND FETCH

These paired handaxes have well-worn, coppery wooden handles and dull gray blades that show signs of heavy use. A fallen tree is engraved upon the head of Deadfall, and a thunderhead is engraved on the head of Fetch.

Deadfall and *Fetch* are set of paired handaxes first owned by the hill dwarven ranger Deblim Flintcoat. Deblim came from a long line of lumberjacks and coal miners in the Red Hills but was filled with a wanderlust uncommon in dwarves. Shortly after leaving home with a pair of axes given to him by his parents, he met and became a traveling companion of the wizard Anishan Fateshaper who is believed to have enchanted the axes for his friend.

DEADFALL AND FETCH

Weapon (Paired Handaxes), Fabled (5th Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement by a Creature with the Two-Weapon Fighting Style)

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with both *Deadfall* and *Fetch*. When holding both handaxes, you can activate them to gain advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks for 1 hour. Once used, this property can't be used again until the next dawn.

Swiftly Hewn (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wielding or holding both of these paired axes. You cannot use any of these abilities unless holding both axes.

5th level. Whenever you roll a 20 on your attack roll with *Deadfall*, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. When throwing *Fetch*, you may make ranged attack at long range without disadvantage.

9th level. When you use an action to make an attack with one of these handaxes while two-weapon fighting and use a bonus action to make a melee attack with the other of these magical handaxes, you may make an additional attack with either handaxe.

13th level. *Deadfall* gains 3 charges. You spend 1 charge and use an action to slam *Deadfall* to the ground, causing violent vibrations to spread out from you in a 30-foot cone. Creatures within the area of effect take 6d6 thunder damage and fall prone unless they succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that succeed take half damage and do not fall prone. *Deadfall* regains all expended charges daily at dawn. *Fetch* returns to your hand immediately after it is used to make a ranged attack.

17th level. Melee attacks with *Deadfall* do an additional 2d6 thunder damage to Constructs and

Plants. Ranged attacks with *Fetch* do not incur disadvantage when made within 5 feet of a hostile creature.

TRAINER'S WHIP

The wood-bound handle of this braided whip ends in a small animal paw. The leather is embossed impressions of claws, hooves, beaks, and pointed teeth.

The *trainer's whip* was the property of Cruinna Finnthighern, a ranger known for her menagerie of animal friends. Unfortunately, the ship carrying Cruinna sank in a violent storm. While the ranger and her companions survived the ordeal by working together, she was forced to leave behind much of her gear. When the ship went down, a trunk containing the *trainer's whip*, among other things, was lost. Whether her magical whip lies at the bottom of the sea, or the trunk washed up on some beach remains to be seen.

TRAINER'S WHIP

Weapon (Whip), Fabled (5th Level and Higher Properties Require Attunement)

Each day after completing a long rest, you may choose one friendly Beast that you can see within 60 feet of you. That Beast gains 1 trick until you activate the magic whip again.

Beast Friend (Requires Attunement). As your level increases, you gain the following benefits while wielding or holding this magical whip.

5th level. While within 5 feet of your chosen Beast, you each gain +1 AC.

9th level. Your chosen Beast's attacks become magical. When you take an attack with this magical whip, your chosen Beast may use a reaction to make an attack against the same target.

13th level. Your chosen Beast has a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. When your chosen Beast hits a creature with an opportunity attack, that creature's speed becomes 0 until the start of your next turn.

17th level. Each day when you choose your Beast, you can store a single spell of 1st through 5th level in your Beast by touching the whip to the Beast as the spell is cast. If you attempt to store another spell in your Beast, any previously stored spell is lost. The spell uses the slot level, spell save DC, spell attack bonus, and spellcasting ability of the original caster, but is otherwise treated as if the Beast cast the spell. The Beast does not choose when to cast the spell, but rather it takes effect when a certain circumstance occurs. You choose that circumstance when the

spell is stored. The spell is cast with any parameters set by the original caster, requiring no components, immediately after the circumstance is met for the first time, whether or not you want it to.

OPTIONAL RULES

This section provides a number of optional rules for use by any character class, but they are especially appropriate for rangers.

DOWNTIME ACTIVITY: ANIMAL TRICKS

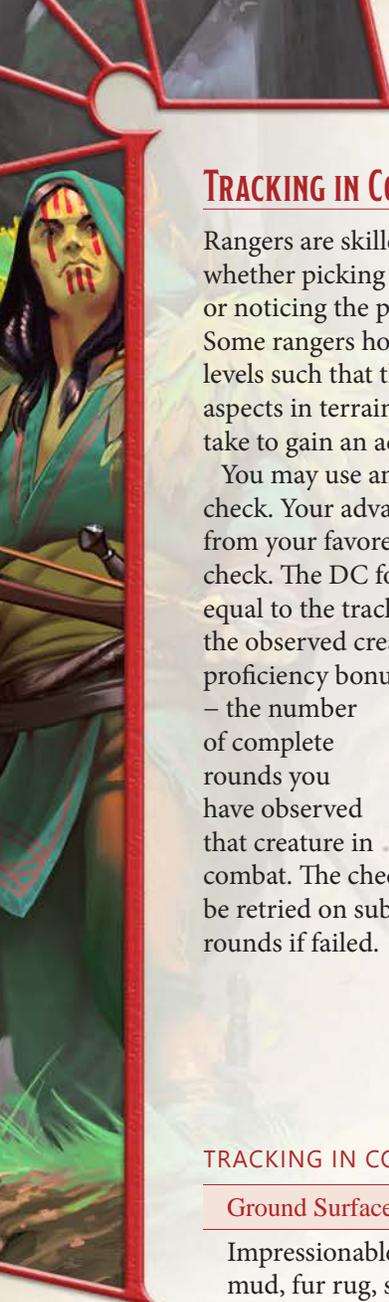
A ranger's animal companion sometimes seems like an extension of their will, taking necessary actions without needing to be told. While many rangers share a special bond with their Beast friend, they also spend a lot of time training them to take useful actions without requiring a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check in combat to just to coax them into a useful position.

You can spend 10 downtime days and 1 gp per day to teach a trick to a friendly Beast. A Beast can learn a maximum number of tricks equal to their Intelligence score. You can verbally order a creature to perform a trick without requiring an action by you.

Here are a few sample tricks, though your GM might allow others where appropriate for their campaign:

- **Defend.** The Beast protects a person or place that you designate, attacking creatures that approach that creature or location.
- **Fetch.** The Beast retrieves an object or takes an object somewhere or to someone.
- **Heel.** The Beast follows you closely, even into places it might not want to go. It withdraws from combat when ordered.
- **Help.** Unless given a command otherwise, the Beast uses its action to assist your next attack against an enemy that you have already attacked.
- **Hunt.** The Beast uses its natural talents to hunt for game and brings it back to you.
- **Perform.** The Beast performs for an audience with entertaining tricks such as playing dead or walking on its hind legs.
- **Stay.** The Beast waits somewhere for you. It avoids combat and hides, if possible, but defends itself if it is cornered.
- **Track.** Beasts with the Keen Smell trait attempt to follow a trail.





TRACKING IN COMBAT

Rangers are skilled at recognizing patterns in terrain; whether picking out the best path up a mountainside or noticing the passage of others by tracks left behind. Some rangers hone this skill to almost supernatural levels such that they can quickly assimilate subtle aspects in terrain with actions they have seen enemies take to gain an advantage in combat.

You may use an action to make a Wisdom (Survival) check. Your advantage to Wisdom (Survival) checks from your favored enemy class feature applies to this check. The DC for the Wisdom (Survival) check is equal to the tracking DC for the ground surface + the observed creature's proficiency bonus – the number of complete rounds you have observed that creature in combat. The check can be retried on subsequent rounds if failed.



If you succeed on a Wisdom (Survival) check to track in combat, you grant one benefit of your choice from this list below to yourself and a number of allies that can hear you up to your proficiency bonus.

- **Be Not Where They Are.** Gain +1 AC the target for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus.
- **Rallying Cry of a Thousand Screams.** Gain temporary hit points equal to your proficiency bonus. Any remaining temporary hit points are lost if the creature is defeated or the combat ends.
- **Strike Where They Will Be.** Gain +1 to hit the target for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus.
- **Swift as the Wind, Hard as a Thunderbolt.** If the target attempts to move away from you, you may spend your reaction to move up to your speed

TRACKING IN COMBAT DIFFICULTY TABLE

Ground Surface	DC
Impressionable surface: leaf covered, mud, fur rug, snow	10
Average surface: dirt, grass, woven rugs	15
Hard surface: brick, rock, wood floor	20

For example, Tersk Greenfellow is startled to see a burly orc run down a rocky hillslope to attack his friends. Fearing a rockslide, he spends his first round getting his horse under control and moving away from the slope. He keeps the orc in sight that entire round. In round two, Tersk tries to help his friends by making a check for Tracking in Combat. The DC for Tersk's Wisdom (Survival) check is 21: 20 (rocky terrain) +2 (the orc's proficiency bonus) –1 (the number of rounds completed since the start of the combat). Tersk's player rolls a 10 and adds Tersk's bonus of +4 for a total of 14. The terrain is too hard and the orc too unpredictable for Tersk to get a useful read this time.



towards them. This benefit ends if the creature is defeated or the combat ends.

- **Slip the Grasping Hand.** You gain a +1 bonus on Escape checks against the target for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus.
- **Walk Unseen.** You gain a +1 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks made against the target for a number of rounds equal to your proficiency bonus.
- **What Will Be.** You gain a +1 bonus to Wisdom (Insight) and Wisdom (Perception) checks made against the creature.

BOOBY TRAPS

As hunters who spend much of their time in wilderness areas, rangers are experts in setting traps. However, the core rulebook lists only one example: the hunting trap. Temporary and quick to set up, traps are useful not just for catching dinner, but for offering a measure of battlefield control normally reserved for druids or wizards. While dungeon traps usually require extensive construction, time, and expense, Booby Traps can be laid quickly for almost no cost.

MAKING BOOBY TRAPS

While some traps, like a hunting trap, can be purchased, others must be built. Constructing a trap takes 10 minutes using appropriate tools and raw materials. Tools are contained in an appropriate tool kit, as specified by the trap. Raw materials can be found in any general supply store. If you spend 1 minute dismantling an existing trap, you can recover materials for reuse.

You can add improvements to the basic version of each trap by spending an additional 10 minutes in its construction and using additional materials. Some booby traps have more than one option for improvement. You may only add one improvement to a trap unless a class feature allows you to add more than one.

SETTING BOOBY TRAPS

You can quickly deploy preconstructed booby traps (that you built or bought ahead of time) by making a Wisdom (Survival) check. The total of your check becomes both the DC for another creature's attempt to discover the trap and the DC to disable it. Placing and hiding a preconstructed trap requires an action. The Dexterity saving throw for your traps is $DC = 8 +$ your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier.

USING BOOBY TRAPS IN COMBAT

If a creature sees you deploy a trap, the creature does not need to make a check to locate it. That generally makes the trap less useful, but not useless. Traps can be used to deny ground to an enemy or delay pursuit. An enemy that witnesses a path being trapped must likely spend time disabling the trap or finding a way to bypass it, possibly by a less advantageous route. During combat, a foe can be forced into a trap by using the Shove action or other forms of forced movement.

Rangers are also known for their stealth, so you might be able to set a trap during combat without being observed. A hidden trap requires a Wisdom (Perception) check to spot it.

SAMPLE BOOBY TRAPS

Here are a few example booby traps. Your GM might allow you to create others using these as a guideline.

ALARM TRAP

Required Construction Tool: None

Raw Material Cost: 5 gp

Weight: 2 lbs

This trap consists of several small bells or other noise makers attached to a thin wire up to 10 feet long which creates a noise when tripped or an attached item is moved. It deals no damage, and the wire is not strong enough to cause a creature to trip.

Improvement: You can extend the trip wire by 10 feet for every additional 2 gp you spend in materials.

EXPLOSIVE TRAP

Required Construction Tool: Alchemist's Supplies

Raw Material Cost: 25 gp

Weight: 1 lb

You craft an alchemical mixture that explodes in a 1-foot diameter doing $1d4 +$ your proficiency bonus fire damage to the creature that triggers the trap. A creature takes half damage on a successful Dexterity saving throw.

Improvement: For an additional 15 gp, you improve the trap, so the explosion is a 5-ft radius. You can also improve the trap so that victim is sprayed with oil or other flammable fluid causing them to burst into flame if they fail their Dexterity saving throw, taking $1d4 +$ your proficiency bonus fire damage at the start of each turn until they make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames. You can also improve this trap to change the type of damage to acid or thunder.



POISON CLOUD TRAP

Required Construction Tool: Herbalism Kit or Poisoner's Kit
Raw Material Cost: 25 gp
Weight: 1 lb

By mixing poisonous herbs, you create a trap that sprays a 5-foot diameter poisonous cloud that deals 1d6 + your proficiency bonus poison damage to a creature that can breathe. The creature takes no damage on a successful Dexterity saving throw. A strong wind gives the target advantage on their saving throw.

Improvement: For an additional 10 gp, you improve the trap, adding another 5 feet to the cloud's radius. You can also improve the trap so that the cloud persists for an additional round and causes the area to be heavily obscured. Creatures that can breathe take damage at the end of each turn they are in the affected area. A strong wind instantly disperses the cloud.

RESTRAINING TRAP

Required Construction Tool: None
Raw Material Cost: 5 sp
Weight: 2 lbs

This trap is made by crafting a snare out of rope or natural materials that triggers when stepped in, restraining the victim in a specific location.

Improvement: You improve the trap so that it also knocks the target prone if they fail their saving throw and pulls the victims 5 feet off of the ground. You can also increase the size of the snare area to a 10-foot square by including a large net. These improvements cost an additional 1 gp.

SLOW TERRAIN TRAP

Required Construction Tool: None
Raw Material Cost: 2 sp
Weight: 3 lbs

This trap causes stones, marbles, or other loose material to fall in a 10-foot radius around the victim, making the terrain difficult. A creature that fails its Dexterity saving throw also falls prone.

Improvement: You improve the trap to use caltrops for 1 gp, causing a creature that fails its Dexterity saving throw to take 1 point of piercing damage and reduces the creature's walking speed by 10 feet until the creature regains at least 1 hit point.

TRIP ROPE TRAP

Required Construction Tool: None
Raw Material Cost: 5 sp
Weight: 4 lbs

This trap is made by stretching a strong rope across two points up to 20 feet apart. Creatures that fail their Dexterity saving throw fall prone.

Improvement: You can extend the rope by 10 feet for every additional 2 gp you spend in materials. You can also embed wicked barbs in the rope that do piercing damage equal to 1d3 + your proficiency bonus for an additional 1 gp. If the target succeeds on their saving throw, it takes no damage.

ANIMAL MESSENGERS

Animals can't talk, but it's thematic to use them as messengers. Whether it's the classic "get help" or warning travelers away from danger, the animal messenger is a common trope and useful adventure hook. These twenty story hooks begin with an interaction with an animal that you can use for a random encounter or to spark an entire adventure. In these hooks, the type of animal is intentionally kept vague so you can tailor them to the environment of your game.



TABLE HEADING

d20 Animal Story Hooks

- 1 Steirie Greenapple has fallen in a pit dug by some dastardly goblins. Her animal companion runs up to the characters loudly making noise and running back the way it came, hoping to bring help to its master.
- 2 A very thin animal stops a short distance and whines for food. The animal looks like it's starving. What happen to its ranger companion?
- 3 The animal cries out a warning and stomps on the ground trying to warn the characters away from a giant's lair that is in the direction they are traveling. The animal interposes itself if the characters ignore its warning.
- 4 The animal companion sees the characters coming and marks its territory so the party knows whose territory this is.
The animal companion stands over an unconscious man, growling threateningly if the characters approach.
- 5 They must find a way to prove their good intentions if they want to approach without being attacked. Carllon, a young ranger, was ambushed by a rabid mountain lion before his animal companion chased it away.
- 6 An animal notices one of the characters is upset or agitated and lays its head on the character, trying comfort them.
- 7 The animal brings a fresh kill, large stick, or shiny rock. If the character takes it, the animal tries to take some food or other item the character has that is of interest to the animal.
- 8 An animal soils a character's bedroll or shoes to make its displeasure known. What did they do that has upset the animal, but not enough to force it to attack?
The party hears shouting and angry animal noises. A group of bandits, the Black Hoods, have caught the animal in a trap and plan to take it alive so they can use it draw out the ranger when she comes to rescue her companion.
- 9 The animal watches the party from a tree, bush, or other concealment, doing its best to follow them stealthily at a distance. If approached or attacked, it runs off to alert its ranger companion of intruders in the ranger's territory.
- 10 The animal is acting anxious, moving in circles, and making noise. It refuses to be calmed. An hour later there is a small earthquake in the area.
- 11 The animal is lazing beneath a crumbling statue that depicts a long-forgotten nature deity. At night, the statue glows and the animal's Intelligence becomes 8 for one hour. Why the statue only works for this animal is just the start of the mystery.
- 12 The animal drops a blood-soaked glove at the characters feet. If the characters show interest, the animal leads them to a merchant caravan that has been attacked by orcs. Illustia, an apprentice wizard, is the only survivor and she is unconscious when the party arrives.
- 13 While caught in a wildfire, the animal rushes past the party, showing a path to safety. Unfortunately, the fire is rushing towards a nearby village and the character must act quickly to save the village.
- 14 Drawn to the sound of an animal in distress, the characters find it injured from an owlbear attack. The animal doesn't initially trust the characters but if healed, can lead them to the owlbear's lair.
- 15 Digging in the ground, the animal unearths an explorer's pack. In the backpack is a scroll tube with a map to buried treasure!
- 16 The animal bursts into the party's camp, chased by a pack of dire wolves.
A heavy dirty rope around its neck, the animal drags three more feet of rope behind it, having chewed its way free. The obvious trail leads back to a hut where its ranger companion has been charmed by a hag. The ranger tries to protect the hag from rude visitors.
- 17 The animal is unconscious in a patch of flowers. Animal bones litter the area. The flowers emit a heady aroma that poisons those who fail a Constitution saving throw. A long rest in fresh air rouses any victims.
- 18 The characters come across two animals fighting each other. The rivalry between two rangers, Arthux and Tiazas, has grown to such heights that their animal companions have attacked each other on site. A third party is needed to mediate the dispute.
- 19
- 20

ROLEPLAYING ANIMALS

Animals don't communicate in the same ways that humans do, so roleplaying animals without talking can be a challenge. Here's a few suggestions for GMs:

Come This Way. To encourage a character to follow it, animals will run or fly towards the character and then back the way it came while making a lot of noise. Some animals feign injury if trying to lure a potential predator away from mates or children. Other animals might also try to bite a piece of clothing and drag a character along.

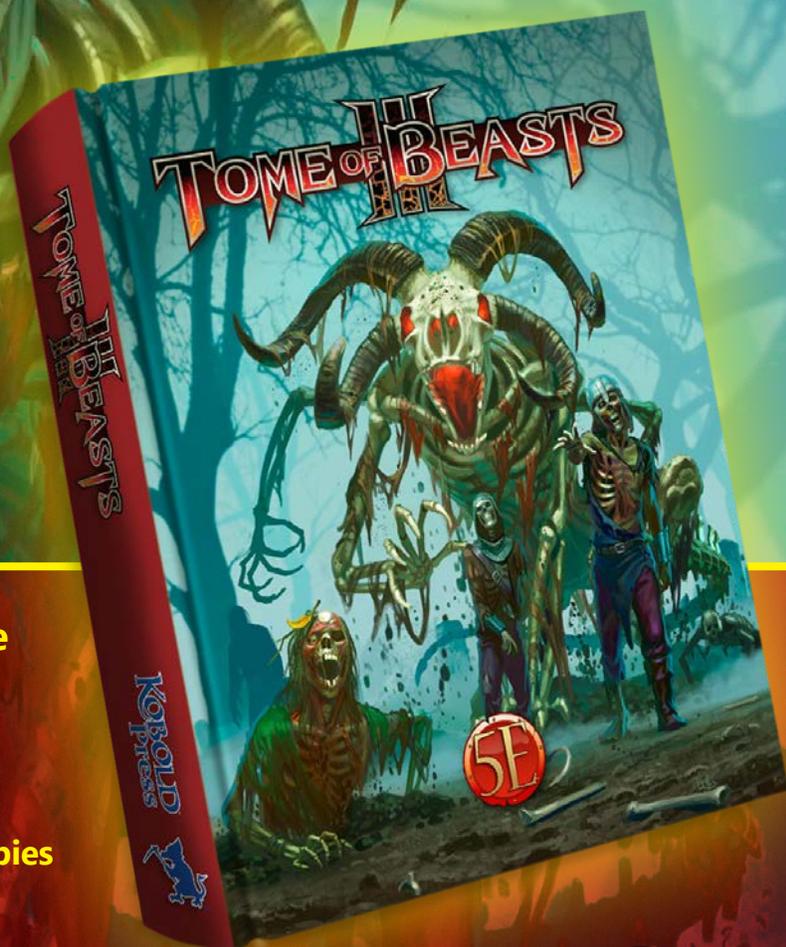
Getting Attention. Animals often try to get attention by making noise and moving around. If the animal wants food or attention for itself, it often makes a pitiful whining sound. If the animal wants to comfort a character, they place a paw or head on the character or lie down next to the character. In the animal world, a grinning like expression frequently signals submission.

Territorial. Animals warn others away from their nests or lairs by marking the area with urine. If a character still approaches, the animal likely charges threateningly, or if capable of flight dives, at the character veering off at the last moment. Some animals throw things if they are capable. Many animals rear up, change color, raise their arms, or puff up to get larger and more threatening.

Warning. Animals frequently warn others of predators or danger by loudly barking, growling, or chirping. Some animals also pound or stomp on the ground before running away. If an animal is insistent in preventing a character from walking into danger, it will interpose itself between the character and that danger.



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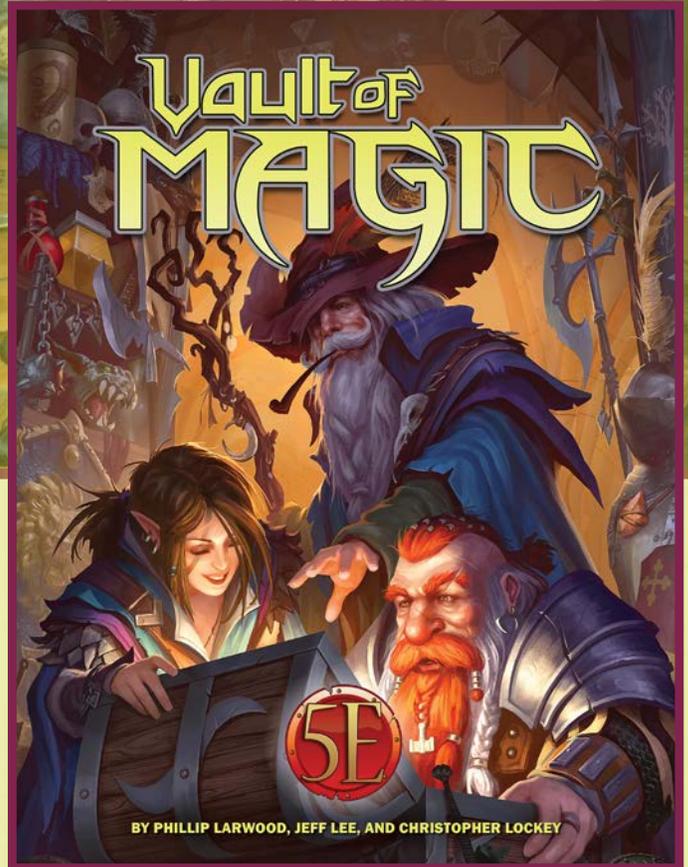
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