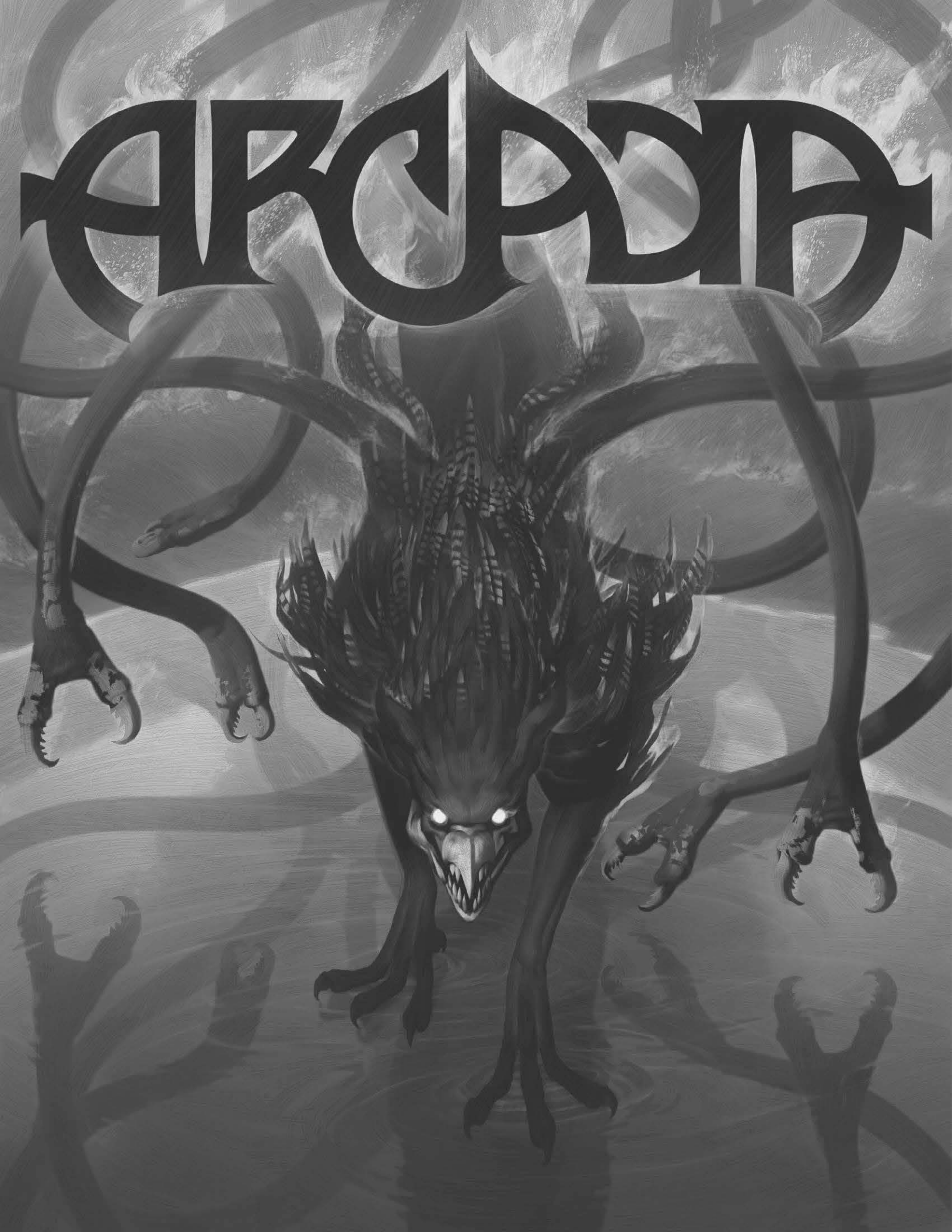


ARCANA



MANAGING EDITOR:
James Introcaso

**PRODUCTION AND
PLAYTEST DIRECTOR:**
Lars Bakke

EDITORS: Sadie Lowry,
Hannah Rose

AUTHORS: Celeste
Conowitch, Scott Fitzgerald
Gray, Anthony Joyce

SENSITIVITY READER:
Basheer Ghouse

**GRAPHIC DESIGN/
LAYOUT:**
Jen McCleary

COVER ART:
Nephelomancer

**ORIGINAL ARCADIA
LOGO:**
Töm Schmück

**ACCESSIBILITY
CONSULTANT:**
Chris Hopper

**COMMUNITY
COORDINATOR:**
John Champion

**MCDM CONTRACT QA
SENIOR TESTER:**
Spencer Hibnick

TESTERS: Nathan Clark,
Owen “Dig” Crary, Alecson
de Lima Junior, James Dewar

**INTERIOR
ILLUSTRATIONS:**
Arms of the Accord: Gustavo
Pelissari
Defend Yer Gobbo Cave!
Tulio Brito (Conceptopolis,
LLC)
Familiar Suspects: Nick De
Spain

CARTOGRAPHY:
Miska Fredman

MCDM IS:
Lars Bakke: Development &
Production
Jerod Bennett: Technology
Grace Cheung: Art
Matt Colville: Writing &
Design
Anna Coulter: Production &
Operations
Nick De Spain: Art & Art
Outsource
Management
Jason Hasenauer: Art & Art
Direction
James Introcaso: RPG Line
Developer

**PLAYTEST
COORDINATORS:**
alex_august/Alex Hencinski
Conjure Clay/Clayton
Salamon
EliasRavyn/John Bryant
F1zz3r/Aaron Flavius West
Lucritius/Janek Dalkowski
MeAndUnique/Shane Parker
Orphea/Madeleine Bray
TheDeadlyFly/Harley Kewish
Villainesis/AJ Metzger
Wickedfalsehood/Jarrad Tait

PLAYTESTERS:
abculatter_2
Alex Adkisson
Cole Guest
Cory Muraglio
Cristian Belleville
Kayla Gleeson
LukeZaz/Luke Z.
Nassinator/Nasse Williams
Ryan Madden
wm54/William Pfeiffer

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Playtesting made this issue (and every previous issue of *ARCADIA*) awesome. If you like what you read in this magazine, please join me in thanking our invaluable testers and Lars Bakke, the Production and Playtest Director for *ARCADIA* and MCDM Productions.

When I first started working with MCDM as a contractor, I was delighted to learn they had a full-time staff member overseeing playtesting. Every tabletop company I've worked with runs playtests a little differently, and none put as much care or as many rounds of testing into the process as MCDM. It's one reason I wanted to join the team full-time!

For *ARCADIA*, I go through my own suggested revisions with the authors, and then each article goes through two rounds of development testing. In the first round, a dedicated team of paid playtesters gives initial feedback on the article. I read their comments and summarize them for the author. Then the writer takes that feedback and makes any revisions they deem necessary. (It is their name on the byline, after all, so they get final say!) Round two is similar to round one, except that the article is playtested by a bigger group of volunteer testers (which also includes the contractors from round one).

Since *ARCADIA* is a monthly magazine, we're doing this process at least three times a month alongside everything else we test, like content for *The Illrigger* or *Kingdoms & Warfare* (which have much longer development cycles and many rounds of testing, including public playtests).

After going through two rounds of playtesting and revision, the articles head off to final edit, where [Sadie Lowry](#) and [Hannah Rose](#) perform incredible feats of language arts...and language maths. Once they've done their thing, [Jen McCleary](#) takes the words from the development side and the illustrations from our art team and lays it all out into a magazine...that goes back into playtesting.

The MCDM staff and our contract testers go through another few rounds of proofreading the layout to catch typos and other errors, which we report to Jen, who fixes them. Then we send the InDesign files to [Chris Hopper](#), who makes the articles accessible and tackles any very last-minute fixes we ask.

After all that, you get the magazine, but testing still ain't done! Our senior tester, [Spencer Hibnick](#), reads the community's reactions and compiles any new issues found after publishing, because someday we may do an updated compilation!

I've never been part of a team that tests this thoroughly. It is a huge boon that pays off in spades. Our authors love it, and *ARCADIA* is better for it. I know I'm grateful.

So when you're watching your players' faces light up as they use one of [Scott Fitzgerald Gray's](#) magic weapons, create a custom familiar using [Celeste Conowitch's](#) method, or wreak havoc as a goblin in [Anthony Joyce's](#) adventure, join me in giving a hearty thanks to the entire team who makes *ARCADIA* awesome.

Ex animo,
James Introcaso
Managing Editor

FAMILIAR SUSPECTS

MAKE ANY CREATURE A FAMILIAR!

by Celeste Conowitch

Collecting pets is a beloved pastime of so many players. I genuinely can't count the number of times as a GM that I've heard "Can we keep it?" Sometimes, it's better to lean into the fun than fight it, and equipping your party with the most magical creatures to love usually shakes out to be a lot of fun. However, running around managing the statistics for a cadre of monstrous companions can be a real headache for both GMs and players, so what's the answer? Make them mini, of course! Tiny creatures are cute, mechanically easier to manage, and fit easily into overhead storage compartments.

This article presents mechanics that allow any creature to be miniaturized into a functioning familiar, along with examples of several new familiars like the gelatinous cubelet and unicorn foal!

BUILDING FAMILIARS

The guidelines presented here allow you to take an existing creature and make it a magical familiar summonable by the *find familiar* spell. But these aren't just regular old familiars! The familiars you create become advanced familiar options.

You might be asking, "What if I don't play a warlock or have any warlock players? I want to use these new familiars!" I've got you covered with a brand new version of the *find familiar* spell right here. At the GM's discretion, the *find greater familiar* spell can conjure any familiar you create with the rules in this article. As a note, if you do have a warlock with the Pact of the Chain Pact Boon in your party, I would recommend reserving this spell just for them so you don't step on any toes—unless everyone in the group has a creature companion!

FIND GREATER FAMILIAR

3rd-level conjuration (ritual)

CASTING TIME: 1 hour

RANGE: 10 feet

COMPONENTS: V, S, M (100 gp worth of charcoal and incense, and a drawing of the familiar you wish to conjure, all which must be consumed by fire in a brass brazier)

DURATION: Instantaneous

CLASSES: Bard, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

You gain the service of a familiar, a spirit that takes a special form you choose: a gelatinous cubelet, gorgonette, imp, miniature xorn, pseudodragon, quasit, sprite, toy golem, or unicorn foal. Appearing in an unoccupied space within range, the familiar has the statistics of the chosen form.

Your familiar acts independently of you, but it always obeys your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn. A familiar normally can't attack, but when you take the attack action, you can forgo one of your own attacks to allow your familiar to make one attack with its reaction. The familiar can take other actions as normal.

When the familiar drops to 0 hit points, it disappears, leaving behind no physical form. It reappears after you cast this spell again.

While your familiar is within 100 feet of you, you can communicate with it telepathically. Additionally, as an action, you can see through your familiar's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of your next turn, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the

familiar has. During this time, you are deaf and blind with regard to your own senses.

As an action, you can temporarily dismiss your familiar. It disappears into a pocket dimension where it awaits your summons. Alternatively, you can dismiss it forever. As an action while it is temporarily dismissed, you can cause it to reappear in any unoccupied space within 30 feet of you. Additionally, if your familiar is hit with an attack or makes a saving throw to avoid taking damage, you can use a reaction to temporarily dismiss your familiar, which disappears before taking damage or suffering any other effects of the attack or triggering effect.

You can't have more than one familiar at a time. If you cast this spell while you already have a familiar, you instead cause it to adopt a new form. Choose one of the forms from the above list. Your familiar transforms into the chosen creature.

Finally, when you cast a spell with a range of touch, your familiar can deliver the spell as if it had cast the spell. Your familiar must be within 100 feet of you, and it must use its reaction to deliver the spell when you cast it. If the spell requires an attack roll, you use your attack modifier for the roll.

PICK YOUR CREATURE

Now you've got a way to give a character an awesome familiar, but where do you start when you want to create your own? First, you have to decide what creature you are going to convert into a familiar. This system works with every creature type except for humanoids. Before you get to work making a familiar, be sure to have your GM's approval. Your GM has final say on the creature's statistics.

MAKE MECHANICS

The easiest way to craft a well-balanced familiar is to look at the options that already exist, then make your familiar stat block similar in power.

Here are some helpful guidelines to keep in mind when creating a well-balanced familiar:

- Almost every familiar is Tiny size. (Portable is good!)
- The average Pact of the Chain familiar has AC 13.
- The average Pact of the Chain familiar has 6 hit points.
- A familiar's movement speed is typically 30 feet, and almost never greater than 40 feet. If a familiar has a flying speed, it usually has a walking speed of no more than 20 feet.
- The average Pact of the Chain familiar has a net +2 ability modifier. (This is the number you get when you add all the ability score modifiers together.)

- Most familiars don't have resistances or immunities. If your familiar does, keep them to one or two that make sense for their creature type.
- In general, a creature's languages and most special senses can stay the same for their familiar version, but blindsight and truesight have their ranges reduced to 10 feet each. Creatures keep any condition immunities, damage resistances and vulnerabilities they have, and any damage immunities they have become resistances.
- A familiar should never have a challenge rating higher than 1. This also means that every familiar's proficiency bonus is +2.

Use these guidelines and averages as a baseline for your creature's statistics and you'll be in a good starting place. The more complicated part of converting a creature comes from deciding what traits and actions to give it.

WHAT IS A TRAIT?

Traits refer to the parts of a creature's stat block listed below the challenge rating but before the "Actions" section, like Shapechanger, Magic Resistance, and Keen Senses. Typically, a familiar has one or two of these traits. Odds are the creature you've chosen to convert already has a couple of traits that make sense to keep in its smaller form. Because traits are challenging to design from scratch, look at creature stat blocks similar to the familiar you are creating and borrow traits for your own monstrous creations. Traits tend to vary widely in power, so you must choose traits that low-challenge rating creatures typically have. For example, giving your familiar a planetar's Innate Spellcasting trait would make it too powerful to be a familiar, but giving it something like an owl's Flyby trait makes sense.

The following list contains traits appropriate for familiars. You can modify the wording or traits to make sense for your familiar. For instance, if you gave a familiar the gnoll's Rampage trait and the familiar doesn't have a bite attack, you could replace the Rampage trait's reference to a bite attack with a different melee attack your familiar does have.

Attack-focused traits include:

- Aggressive (see the **orc** stat block)
- Blood Frenzy (see the **sahuagin** stat block)
- Brute (see the **bugbear** stat block)
- Charge (see the **centaur** stat block)
- Grappler (see the **mimic** stat block)
- Pack Tactics (see the **kobold** stat block)
- Rampage (see the **gnoll** stat block)
- Surprise Attack (see the **bugbear** stat block)

Defense-focused traits include:

- Brave (see the **gladiator** stat block)

- Evasion (see the **assassin** stat block)
- Fire Absorption (see the **iron golem** stat block)
- Flyby (see the **owl** stat block)
- Immutable Form (see the **flesh golem** stat block)
- Magic Resistance (see the **flesh golem** stat block)
- Relentless (see the **boar** stat block)
- Undead Fortitude (see the **zombie** stat block)

Mobility-focused traits include:

- Amorphous (see the **gray ooze** stat block)
- Amphibious (see the **chuul** stat block)
- Earth Glide (see the **earth elemental** stat block)
- Nimble Escape (see the **goblin** stat block)
- Running Leap (see the **lion** stat block)
- Shadow Stealth (see the **shadow** stat block)
- Spider Climb (see the **vampire** stat block)
- Standing Leap (see the **bullette** stat block)
- Sure-Footed (see the **goat** stat block)

Skill-focused traits include:

- Devil's Sight (see the **barbed devil** stat block)
- False Appearance (see the **cloaker** stat block)
- Illumination (see the **fire elemental** stat block)
- Iron Scent (see the **rust monster** stat block)
- Keen Senses (see the **pseudodragon** stat block)
- Limited Telepathy (see the **pseudodragon** stat block)
- Mimicry (see the **raven** stat block)
- Shapechanger (see the **mimic** stat block)
- Stone Camouflage (see the **stone giant** stat block)
- Transparent (see the **gelatinous cube** stat block)
- Treasure Sense (see the **xorn** stat block)
- Underwater Camouflage (see the **giant octopus** stat block)

It should be noted that not every familiar needs traits to be effective. It is totally okay to skip traits in favor of more hit points, better AC, increased damage output, or more special abilities. Dinosaurs, for example, don't have flashy traits but they can hit really hard in a fight!

WHAT ABOUT ACTIONS?

Now you've got to give your familiar something to do. At the very minimum, give it one melee weapon attack. A familiar's melee weapon attack typically uses natural weapons like claws, bites, or pseudopods. There's no need to make this complicated! Familiars, especially at higher levels, are very rarely useful for dealing damage. These weapons almost use the creature's Strength or Dexterity modifier for attack and damage rolls, have a reach no greater than 5 feet, and deal 1d4 damage.

You'll probably want to give your familiar one additional action that isn't just a normal attack. This second

option could be useful inside or outside of combat, like the sprite's Invisibility action or an attack that imposes a nasty condition like the imp's Sting action. When choosing these actions, think about how your caster will utilize this familiar, and choose an action they will genuinely find useful. As a rule, I prefer to make this second action something that will be useful in exploration or roleplaying scenes to diversify the benefits of having a familiar tag along during adventures.

When designing these actions, refer to your starting creature again. You might be able to use actions the creature already has, modifying them to fit the lower challenge rating of a familiar. Here are a few mechanical guidelines to keep in mind:

- Familiars typically don't get the Multiattack action.
- A standard familiar attack does an average of 4 damage on a hit.
- If any of your familiar's abilities require a saving throw, the DC should be 11.

POINT-BUY A FAMILIAR

If you're worried about creating a balanced creature, here's a speedy way to make sure you create a familiar that won't break the game.

Start with the generic greater familiar stat block below, decide what type of creature it is (like a Celestial, Beast, or Fey), then spend 10 points to make improvements listed on the Point-Buy a Familiar table. Each improvement costs 1 point. You can decrease a familiar's ability score by 2 to gain 1 point. No ability score can be lower than 4.

GENERIC GREATER FAMILIAR

Tiny [Creature Type], Unaligned

ARMOR CLASS 13 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 5 (2d4)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

LANGUAGES understands Common but can't speak

CHALLENGE 1 (200 xp)

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

ACTIONS

Placeholder. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage (you choose which one).

POINT-BUY A FAMILIAR

IMPROVEMENT

Increase Armor Class by 1 (up to a maximum of 15).

Increase Hit Die by one d4 (up to a maximum of 3d4 total Hit Dice).

Increase walking speed by 10 feet (to a maximum of 40 feet), or decrease walking speed by 10 feet and add a 30-foot burrowing, flying, or swimming speed.

Increase an ability score by 2 (so its modifier increases by 1; familiar ability scores have a maximum of 18).

Choose one ability score and gain proficiency in saving throws using the chosen ability.

Gain proficiency in two skills.

Gain resistance to two specific types of damage, or gain the damage resistances of the base creature.

Gain immunity to a specific type of damage or a condition.

Gain blindsight out to a range of 30 feet, darkvision out to a range of 60 feet, or tremorsense out to a range of 30 feet.

Speak and understand one language of your choice.

Gain one trait (up to a maximum of three total traits).

Gain one melee weapon or ranged weapon attack (can only be taken once for a maximum of two total attack actions).

Weapon attacks can deal a damage type other than bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing.

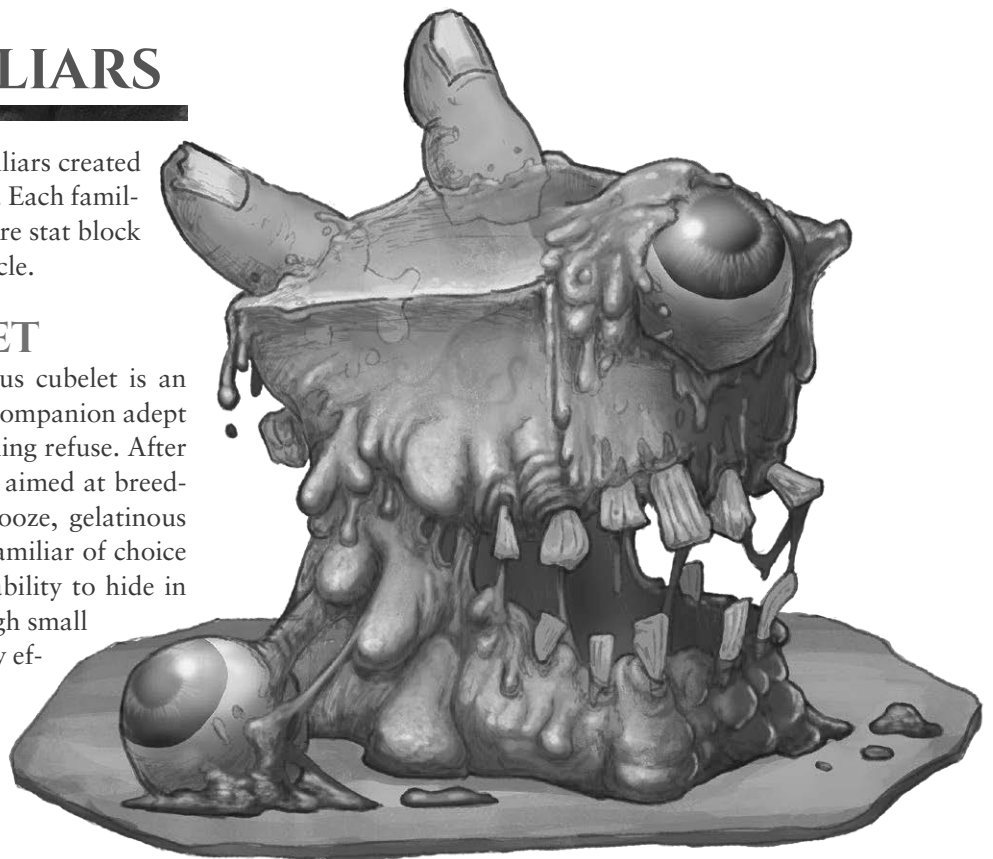
Gain one action that is not a weapon attack (can only be taken once up to a maximum of two actions that aren't attacks).

EXAMPLE FAMILIARS

Presented here is a collection of new familiars created for use with the *find greater familiar* spell. Each familiar was converted from a standard creature stat block using the guidelines presented in this article.

GELATINOUS CUBELET

Like its larger counterpart, the gelatinous cubelet is an ideal servant for a caster who requires a companion adept at defending confined spaces and consuming refuse. After a successful series of arcane experiments aimed at breeding a more intelligent and manageable ooze, gelatinous cubelets became a surprisingly popular familiar of choice for traveling spellcasters. The cubelet's ability to hide in plain sight, retrieve objects, and fit through small openings combines to make it a startlingly effective burglar.



GELATINOUS CUBELET

Tiny Ooze, Unaligned

ARMOR CLASS 13 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 11 (2d4 + 6)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

CONDITION IMMUNITIES blinded, deafened, prone

SENSES blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10

LANGUAGES understands Common but can't speak

CHALLENGE 1 (200 XP)

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

Amorphous. The cubelet can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Transparent. Even when the cubelet is in plain sight, it takes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to

spot a cubelet that has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter the cubelet's space while unaware of the cubelet is surprised by the cubelet.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) acid damage.

Engulf. The cubelet moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter the space of Tiny objects that are not being worn or carried. Whenever the cubelet enters an object's space, it can choose to engulf the object. A creature can attempt to forcefully remove an engulfed object by making a DC 11 Strength check as an action. On a failure, the creature takes 7 (2d6) acid damage and can't retrieve the object. On a success, the creature still takes the damage, but successfully removes the object. The cubelet can only engulf one object at a time.

GORGONETTE

Gorgonettes have all the ferocity and stubbornness of larger gorgons in a pocket-size package. Initially bred as prized hunting companions, the gorgonette breed have exploded in popularity as home protectors, racing monsters, and exotic pets. These familiars are excellent in combat situations with their Charge attacks and Petrifying Breath that can literally stop a foe in its tracks. Gorgonettes are incredibly ornery and not terribly bright, but they make valiant protectors once they decide you're worth saving.

GORGONETTE

Tiny Monstrosity, Unaligned

ARMOR CLASS 13 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 16 (3d4 + 9)

SPEED 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

SKILLS Athletics +6, Perception +3

CONDITION IMMUNITIES petrified

SENSES darkvision 60 feet., passive Perception 13

LANGUAGES understands Common but can't speak

CHALLENGE 1 (200 XP)

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

Charge. If the gorgonette moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Petrifying Breath (1/Day). The gorgonette exhales petrifying gas in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target's skin grows a layer of stone and the target is restrained for 1 minute. The restrained target can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turns, ending the condition on a success.

MINIATURE XORN

A clan of unfortunate dwarf miners accidentally discovered the miniature xorn. After the initial shock of contending with hundreds of ravenous pocket-sized xorn, the dwarves seized a golden opportunity. Miniature xorn quickly became an ideal familiar for treasure hunters, dungeoneers, or adventurers preparing to explore subterranean tunnels. While the miniature xorn aren't as ferocious as their larger counterparts, their ability to sense treasure, burrow through the earth, and speak Terran makes them invaluable members of any expedition (as long as you keep them fed, of course).

MINIATURE XORN

Tiny Elemental, Neutral

ARMOR CLASS 13 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 9 (2d4 + 4)

SPEED 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

DAMAGE RESISTANCES piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

LANGUAGES Terran

CHALLENGE 1 (200 XP)

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

Earth Glide. The xorn can burrow through nonmagical unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the xorn doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

Stone Camouflage. The xorn has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

Treasure Sense. The xorn can pinpoint by scent, the location of precious metals and stones, such as coins and gems, within 60 feet of it.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage.



TOY AUTOMATON

Constructs exist across the multiverse in all shapes and sizes, and even the fearsome iron golem has a handy, compact form. Creating, controlling, and housing a full-sized construct is a laborious and expensive task, one of the driving reasons behind the creation of the toy automaton. These resilient little creatures make perfect familiars for casters who often find themselves in the middle of explosions or can't handle the daily responsibility of feeding a living creature.

TOY AUTOMATON

Tiny Construct, Unaligned

ARMOR CLASS 13 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 11 (2d4 + 6)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

DAMAGE RESISTANCES psychic, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES fire, poison

CONDITION IMMUNITIES exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

LANGUAGES understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

CHALLENGE 1 (200 XP)

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

Fire Absorption. Whenever the automaton is subjected to fire damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

Immutable Form. The automaton is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The automaton has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Poison Breath (1/Day). The automaton exhales poisonous gas in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



UNICORN FOAL

Unicorns are wise and powerful celestial guardians, but they aren't born that way. The forces of good encourage unicorn foals to travel with worthy adventurers to gain experience. While a foal isn't as mobile or dangerous as its elders, their gifts of telepathy and ability to heal make them excellent companions for the pure of heart.

UNICORN FOAL

Tiny Celestial, Lawful Good

ARMOR CLASS 13 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 7 (2d4 + 2)

SPEED 30 ft.

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

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES poison

CONDITION IMMUNITIES charmed, paralyzed, poisoned

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

LANGUAGES telepathy 60 ft.

CHALLENGE 1 (200 XP)

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

Magic Resistance. The foal has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Hooves. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Healing Touch (1/Day). The foal touches another creature with its horn. The target magically regains 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points. In addition, the touch removes all diseases and neutralizes all poisons afflicting the target.



THE ARMS OF ACCORD

FIVE ANCIENT WEAPONS FOR LEGENDARY HEROES

by Scott Fitzgerald Gray

Many millennia ago, in the days before even the elves and lizardfolk first recorded their histories, a set of five great weapons were held by heroes of the humanoid realms—bugbears, goblins, and hobgoblins; dragonborn, kobolds, and lizardfolk; dwarves and gnomes; elves, halflings, humans, and tieflings; and goliaths and orcs. Fragments of lore whisper that these mighty weapons, the Arms of Accord, were not crafted by those ancient peoples, but rather were created by benefactors unknown, whose goal was to bind these great lines in accord and allegiance.

At great summits called the Quorum of Sovereigns, hundreds of representatives of the ever-growing humanoid nations would meet to share news and stories, discoveries and portents. An exchange of knowledge was the primary goal throughout this great age of peace, during which the Arms of Accord stood as symbols of leadership and pact—meant to maintain unity among the humanoids against the threats of monsters, magic, and malevolence that could be faced more strongly united than apart.

But as more recent history and the seemingly endless warfare among humanoids show, the dream of unity was not to be.

The identity of the forces that first splintered the realms is lost to time. The last Quorum of Sovereigns was held over ten millennia ago, and the fragmentary lore of those days suggest that representatives of only two of the humanoid peoples were in attendance, with other nations already falling to strife and warfare. The Arms of Accord became tools of war as nations clashed and collapsed, and the five great weapons were eventually lost to the ravages of war and the dust of time.

Or so it was thought.

NATIONS AND PEOPLES

The weapons of the Arms of Accord were implicitly created at a time when nations were largely defined by ancestry, but using these weapons in a campaign isn't meant to imply that all nations and cultures should be monolithic in that way. Even in many diverse fantasy cultures, characters of certain ancestries are assumed to have more heroic potential than others. The Arms of Accord show that characters of all ancestries can be heroes, and doesn't assume that most orcs are barbarians and kobolds are sneaky rogues. No matter how the nations and cultures of your world have evolved since the days of the Quorum of Sovereigns, you can use these weapons to help defy some of the stereotypes of ancestry where they still persist in the game.

WEAPONS OF A LOST AGE

The Arms of Accord were crafted for great leaders and heroes of the humanoid peoples. Each weapon can be attuned only by a wielder from two or three related humanoid ancestries, with its magic reflecting some aspect of how those peoples shaped their place in the earliest days of the world.

RAHNAKH (THE DAWN BLADE)

Weapon (longsword/shortsword), very rare (requires attunement by a goliath, half-orc, or orc)

Crafted for the goliaths and orcs when the folk of those ancestries first established order against the monsters that ruled the world, this sword is shaped from a single piece of smooth white stone, though it rings out like steel when it strikes its target. You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls with this magic weapon, which deals an extra 1d6 radiant damage when you hit with it.

As a bonus action, you can speak *Rahnakh's* command word to cause the sword to pulse with a blue-white radiance that sheds bright light in a 40-foot radius and dim light for an additional 40 feet. While the sword is glowing, the extra damage it deals increases to 2d6. Speaking the command word again (no action required) dims the light.

Radiant Aurora. When you fight outdoors in any amount of direct sunlight, you can increase the extra radiant damage dealt by *Rahnakh* to 4d6. This increase lasts until you finish a long rest, but comes into effect during that time only while you are outdoors in sunlight. This property of the weapon can't be used again until 7 days have passed.

Daylight. You can cast the *daylight* spell on *Rahnakh* while holding the sword. This property of the weapon can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Accord Adaptability. *Rahnakh* magically changes its form according to the will of the creature attuned to it at the end of a long rest, becoming either a shortsword or a longsword.



HYLRAHLA (THE CALLER)

Weapon (battleaxe/handaxe), very rare (requires attunement by a dwarf or gnome)

The magic of *Hylrahla* channeled the bonds of battle and comradeship when it was forged for the dwarves and gnomes, reflecting the highest values of their earliest shared societies. The blade of this axe is made of black steel inlaid with mithral, and its haft of living darkwood adjusts to fit its user's hand. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Call of Combat. As a bonus action, *Hylrahla* lets you call your allies into battle formation. Choose up to six creatures you can see within 30 feet of you, and which can hear you. Each creature gains a d6, which can be used for

1 minute. At the start of each of its turns during this time, a creature can roll this d6 and choose one of the following options:

- Add the number rolled to its AC until the start of its next turn.
- Add the number rolled to one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw made before the start of its next turn.

This property of the weapon can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Call of Fellowship. While you hold *Hylrahla*, you can use an action to establish a telepathic link with up to six willing creatures you can see or that you are familiar with, all of which must be on the same plane. For 1 hour, the linked creatures can communicate telepathically through the bond whether or not they have a common language, choosing to communicate with all creatures or only some. The communication is possible over any distance, though it can't extend to other planes of existence. This property of the weapon can't be used again until 7 days have passed.

Accord Adaptability. *Hylrahla* magically changes its form according to the will of the creature attuned to it at the end of a long rest, becoming either a battleaxe or a handaxe.

DAMALEAN (THE STORM'S LIGHT)

Weapon (longbow/shortbow), very rare (requires attunement by an elf, half-elf, halfling, human, or tiefling)

This exquisitely carved bow is shaped of fine-grained gray wood and white horn, and channels the power of wind and endless skies to mark the nomadic traditions of the earliest elf, halfling, and humanoid clans. When you hit with an attack using this magic weapon, you can choose one of the following effects:

- The target takes an extra 2d6 lightning damage.
- The target takes an extra 1d6 thunder damage and is pushed 5 feet away from you.
- The target is surrounded by a nimbus of crackling lightning until the end of your next turn. An affected target sheds dim light in a 10-foot radius and can't benefit from being invisible, and creatures that can see it have advantage on attack rolls against it.

Shape the Storm. While holding *Damalean*, you can cast the *control weather* spell. This property of the weapon can't be used again until 7 days have passed.

Accord Adaptability. *Damalean* magically changes its form according to the will of the creature attuned to it at the end of a long rest, becoming either a longbow or a shortbow.

KOSRIL (THE LIFE SHARD)

Weapon (pikespear), very rare (requires attunement by a dragonborn, kobold, or lizardfolk)

This weapon is forged of fiery red iron inscribed with a pattern of fine scales. *Kosril* was created to channel the magic of life as a sign of hope and renewal in the harsh lands where dragonborn, kobolds, and lizardfolk dwelled in the earliest age of those folk. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Additionally, if you or one creature you are touching receives magical healing while you hold *Kosril*, the target of the healing regains the maximum number of hit points. This property of the weapon can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Endure the Elements. While you hold *Kosril*, you can use an action to choose up to six creatures within 10 feet of you. For 24 hours, you and each chosen creature suffer no harm as a result of extreme cold or extreme heat, and can comfortably endure temperatures below 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius) or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius), even without drinkable water, without making saving throws to resist exhaustion. This property of the weapon can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Life Restored. While you hold *Kosril*, you can use an action to choose up to six creatures you can see. Each creature regains 4d8 hit points and can end the blinded or poisoned condition on itself. This property of the weapon can't be used again until 7 days have passed.

Accord Adaptability. *Kosril* magically changes its form according to the will of the creature attuned to it at the end of a long rest, becoming either a pike or a spear.

DHESOLIA (THE WORLD'S VOICE)

Weapon (mace/morningstar), very rare (requires attunement by a bugbear, goblin, or hobgoblin)

The great goblinoid nations channeled the power of nature and fate for the weal of all, and *Dhesolia* was crafted as an emblem of that legacy. This elegant weapon is carved of dark oak and set with studs of bronze, their patina matching the swirling gray-green of the weapon's heavy head. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Voice of the Wild. As a bonus action, *Dhesolia* lets you call on nature to scourge your foes. Choose up to six creatures you can see in a 20-foot cube within 100 feet of you, then choose one of the following effects:

- Each creature is surrounded by conjured swarms of gnats and other small vermin, imposing disadvantage on its attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks until the end of its next turn.



- Spectral vines erupt in the creature's space, forcing it to make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the creature has its speed reduced by half until the end of its next turn. On a failure, the creature is restrained until the end of its next turn.

This property of the weapon can't be used again until you finish a long rest.

Voice of Doom. As an action while you hold *Dhesolia*, you channel the power of fate to hinder a chosen foe. Choose one creature within 100 feet of you that you can see, and which can hear you. That creature must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be cursed. While cursed in this way, the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws, and saving throws against the creature's spells and other features are made with advantage. As a bonus action, the cursed creature can choose to take 2d8 psychic damage and repeat the saving throw, ending the curse on a success. This curse

otherwise lasts indefinitely or until subject to the *remove curse* spell or similar effects. This property of the weapon can't be used again until 7 days have passed.

Accord Adaptability. *Dhesolia* magically changes its form according to the will of the creature attuned to it at the end of a long rest, becoming either a mace or a morningstar.

RECLAIMING THE ARMS OF ACCORD

The Arms of Accord can be placed in a campaign like any other magic item that seems like a good fit for the characters, even to the point of ignoring the weapons' attunement requirements to allow them to be used by anyone. But by tapping into the full backstory of these ancient

weapons, GMs and players can engage in unraveling even a small bit of the colonialism wrapped around some of the oft-called-“monstrous” humanoid ancestries. The magic and history of these weapons hearken to a time before the stereotypical conflicts that have become the subtext of so much fantasy (dwarves versus goblins, elves versus orcs, humans versus everyone, and so forth).

Especially if the Arms of Accord have begun to reappear in the world as a result of some sort of active agency—whether driven by their unknown creators or by the weapons’ own desires to be wielded once more—their presence in the campaign provides the impetus to hearken back to a past in which orcs, goblinoids, kobolds, and lizardfolk were an equal part of the larger whole of humanoid culture. And by establishing a connection to an age before millennia of conflict splintered the humanoid world, a campaign dedicated to seeing all the Arms of Accord restored to worthy heroes might be a harbinger of a new age of harmony and understanding.

And, of course, if your campaign has already consciously rejected the colonialism built into the DNA of the game, the Arms of Accord make a great collection of lost relics tied to an ancient empire or a fallen order of heroes. Or, they could stand at the center of ancient legends of the time when the present state of a free and egalitarian world was shaped—and now their sudden and mysterious reappearance heralds the rise of new evils that must be defeated, lest they drag the peoples of the world back into strife and destruction.

CAMPAIGN HOOKS

GMs can use any of the following hooks to introduce one or more of the Arms of Accord into a campaign, or as inspiration for creating hooks of their own. Each hook indicates which weapons it would be most appropriate for, but any hook can be matched to any weapon.

Fortunes of War. A millennia-old war unleashed magic that left a dead battlefield perpetually scoured by elemental power. Those close to the site report a new disturbance among the destruction—a skeletal hand thrust up from the ground, holding aloft a pristine weapon. (*Damalean, Rahnakh*)

The Forest’s Heart. An ancient oak tree is a site of reverence for the folk of a forest realm. But when an unnatural storm fells the tree, it reveals a tomb within its roots, bearing the graven image of a weapon on its stone door. (*Damalean, Dhesolia*)

Guardians of the Past. A newly discovered temple is filled with timeless undead guarding a sealed vault. Within the vault, a weapon floats above a pool of mirrored liquid that slays all who gaze upon it. (*Hylrahla, Kosril*)

The Font of Heroes. A natural spring in a remote village has legendary healing properties. When the spring sud-

denly dries up, it reveals a series of caverns beneath—and an ancient weapon thrust into a stone from which the spring’s water once flowed. (*Dhesolia, Kosril*)

Forge of Fate. An ancient underground forge shows signs that it was intentionally destroyed by those who created it. Exploring the ruins reveals that the forge overheated in an attempt to destroy a magic weapon—which still sits atop a mound of slag at the forge’s heart. (*Hylrahla, Rahnakh*)

SPELLS OF ACCORD

When first created, the Arms of Accord channeled additional magic to further empower wielders who worked together for the common good of all folk. As you introduce the Arms of Accord into your campaign, you can decide whether this magic automatically manifests when two or more weapons are brought together, or whether it is dormant and needs to be sparked once more with a special quest, an ancient ritual, or some act proving that the new wielders channel the true spirit of alliance and unity for which the arms were created.

Whenever two or more attuned wielders of the Arms of Accord are within 1 mile of each other, a wielder can use the weapon to cast a specific spell, as noted on the table below. Attuned wielders do not have to be allies—or even aware of each other. The sudden ability to cast spells from one of the Arms of Accord might thus be used as a campaign hook for an attuned player character to seek out or be sought by an attuned NPC.

With more attuned wielders all within 1 mile of each other, the number of spells they have access to increases. The table is cumulative, so that connected wielders have access to all spells higher up on the table. A wielder can cast each of the spells of accord once, regaining the ability to do so when they finish a long rest.

Some of those who have studied the history of the Arms of Accord speculate that the *divination* and *commune* spells cast from the weapons forge a connection between a wielder and the unknown entities who first created the weapons.

ASCENDANT WEAPONS

Introducing more potent magic weapons into a campaign than the rules nominally allow is a natural inclination on both sides of the table. Players love getting magic weapons for the benefits their characters gain from them, both in and out of combat. GMs love giving out magic weapons as a means of rewarding fearless action and good play, and for the way powerful weapons and lost magic can connect characters to the history of a campaign.

SPELLS OF ACCORD

2	<i>lesser restoration, magic circle</i>
3	<i>divination</i>
4	<i>commune</i>
5	<i>guards and wards</i>

It's great fun when a 1st-level character claims their first *+1 weapon* in the aftermath of a thrilling fight. But too much combat magic at low levels can lead inevitably to even more combat magic through the mid-level range of a campaign. Likewise, the temptation to let lower-level characters claim rare or very rare weapons can be too much to resist sometimes—and suddenly the game's encounter math is thrown out of whack.

The following optional rules (which work with the Arms of Accord or with any magic weapons) create a framework for letting any magic weapon ascend in usability, advancing from a lower state to the height of its power. These rules are just an extension of the general setup of magic item benefits and properties, and are perfect for a GM who wants to tinker with the power creep that comes from too much magic—or who wants to intentionally bring a nominally overpowered weapon into the campaign for narrative purposes without that item potentially disrupting the game.

LOWER POTENCY

For a weapon with multiple distinct properties, the easiest option is to have the most powerful of those properties turned down or turned off. A very rare *dwarven thrower* has a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls, so dropping that bonus to +1 can effectively make it a rare weapon. Then deciding that its extra damage doesn't function until its wielder has gained more experience can decrease its power even further, making it easy to place a *dwarven thrower* into a lower-level campaign and letting its full power build up over time.

This approach also works for adjusting saving throws tied to a magic weapon's attacks or properties. As a general rule, saving throws of common and uncommon magic items should be DC 13, rare items should be DC 15, and very rare or legendary items should be DC 17.

ADDING RECHARGE

If a weapon has an always-on property (including the much-sought-after bonus to attack and damage rolls) consider limiting that property by requiring it to recharge,

ALL ABOUT STORY

Scaling back a magic weapon's properties and allowing the weapon to slowly advance as a character rises in level can also fuel all kinds of narrative development. Determining what happened to a weapon to limit its power in the first place might become a mystery the characters investigate alongside the main plot threads of a campaign. The party might need to take on side quests in search of lost lore, rare reagents, or reclusive weaponsmiths to actively restore a weapon's full might. Or, to further emphasize story, consider having the weapon's abilities unlock not just when the wielder reaches a certain level, but specifically in response to a climactic battle, emotional story beat, or act of heroism.

becoming usable again at the next dawn, at the end of an attuned user's next long rest or short rest, and so forth. A *scimitar of speed* can become appropriate for a low-level character by turning the ability to make an extra attack into a property usable only once per short or long rest. Or the weapon could have charges that fuel a limited number of extra attacks per day, adding narrative flavor by forcing a character to think about how best to use that magic. A weapon that runs out of charges could even risk losing its magic properties, like a staff or wand!

Likewise, a bonus to attack and damage rolls for a magic weapon more powerful than its wielder's level could become a limited bonus usable just once per day. Or to give the bonus more heft—and to prevent a player from feeling unimpressed if it fails to deliver a hit once too often—the bonus can activate and stay in effect until an attack with the weapon hits. For groups that like to experiment with mechanics, this approach also lends itself to playing around with the math behind a bonus to make using a weapon feel more dynamic, swapping a +2 bonus for rolling a d4 to be added to the attack roll, or trading a +3 for a d6.

LONGER RECHARGE

If a magic item property recharges on a daily basis, extend that recharge over a longer period. Look to magic items such as the *figurines of wondrous power* or the *horn of Valhalla* as examples, and have the special properties of a *sword of sharpness* only function every 7 days in the hands of a low-level character—or every 28 days, or even once per level. A weapon's signature ability can become even more iconic if its wielder must carefully weigh its power before using it—and serves as a promise of what it'll feel like to unlock the weapon's full power over time.

LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS

Some magic items might have hidden level considerations that can be easy to overlook. For example, a rare or rarer magic weapon can easily have a property that imposes a long-term effect that can only be dealt with using *dispel magic*, *greater restoration*, *remove curse*, and similar magic, since characters of a level appropriate for such an item should have access to those spells. The *rod of rulership* is one example, imposing the charmed condition for a long period on an effectively unlimited number of creatures—and potentially tipping the balance of a campaign where characters and NPCs can't shut down that condition with *dispel magic*, *greater restoration*, and similar effects. So when creating a usable-less-often, lower-DC version of such an item, consider also making conditions and effects time-limited, reducing the number of possible targets, or allowing conditions to be ended with a successful Intelligence (Arcana) check.

EXAMPLE: DAMALEAN'S RISE

As a specific example of how the ascendant weapons framework might be used to bring the Arms of Accord into a lower-tier campaign, consider *Damalean, the Storm's Light*. As an uncommon magic item, the bow might start out only with the ability to deal an extra 1d6 lightning damage, with that ability recharging after a long rest. As the character levels up, the other two options could come into play, even as the recharge is reduced to once per short rest, then eliminated altogether.

Likewise, instead of casting *control weather*, a 2nd- or 3rd-level character might be able to cast *gust of wind* using the bow, whether with a comic feel or a serious sense of tapping into some small part of a much greater power. That spell might even upgrade to *control winds* at 7th or 8th level before becoming *control weather*. Or the first castings of *control weather* might only recharge after 28 days have passed—letting a character fully tap into the world-shaping power of this ancient relic with little risk of breaking the game.

DEFEND YER GOBBO CAVE!

A ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR GOBBOS

by Anthony Joyce

If you need a casual one-shot adventure, *Defend Yer Gobbo Cave!* is for you! In this explosive and zany adventure, the players play as gobbos, a unique type of goblin, and build a magic cave together using five modular rooms, each with traps to fend off invaders. Then enemy adventurers invade, seeking a magic emerald called a *heart*. If they steal the *heart* from the cave, the dungeon collapses and the gobbos lose. If the gobbos successfully defend their cave, they win!

Fit for any setting, the flavorful cast of gobbos and the cave they protect can also serve as NPCs and a dungeon in a larger campaign.

GOBBOS NEVER SAY DIE!

Anyone learning a new game or trying to have a fun, casual one-shot session might find it frustrating to experience character death. *Defend Yer Gobbo Cave!* is specifically designed to avoid this frustration. When a gobbo is reduced to 0 hit points or otherwise dies, they instantly respawn anywhere within their cave, so you and your players don't need to worry about the burden of death. Unless the *heart* is stolen from the cave...then everyone might die. Yikes!

“Playing *Defend Yer Gobbo Cave!*” explains the rules for you and your players. When you play the game, you can give them the ruleset, which we have provided as a linked handout at the end of this issue of *ARCADIA*.

ATTACKING THE CAVE

After the players complete step 3 (see “Playing *Defend Yer Gobbo Cave!*”), enemies attack their cave in two encounters. You can add more encounters with creatures of higher challenge ratings if you want to play longer or the players want a more difficult challenge. The goal is to have fun, not to be adversarial—but these creatures really do want to steal the gobbos’ *heart*!

Enemies can enter the cave from any entrance the GM chooses. A group of creatures might enter from multiple entrances at once!

ENCOUNTER I: OLGA’S SWARM

Olga, an awakened saber-toothed tiger, leads her family of beasts to the gobbo cave to conquer it and establish a new home. Olga has an Intelligence score of 10 (+0) and can speak and understand Goblin. This encounter introduces new creatures at the start of each round of combat:

- **Round 1.** One giant badger per gobbo
- **Round 2.** Three stirges per gobbo
- **Round 3.** Olga the saber-toothed tiger

Each creature wears an ushanka-hat and a monocle. Once Olga’s family is defeated, proceed to the intermission.

SO YOU LIKE ROLEPLAY, AYE?

If the combat encounters get sluggish for your group, inject some roleplay into the fights to spice things up. As a standard, call for DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) checks when the characters interact with another creature that isn't Olga and Arden, and call for DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) checks when gobbos interact with Olga and Arden. Here are some options to add roleplay elements to these encounters:

Coup. Creatures from either Olga's family or Arden's army ask the gobbos to help kill their leader and free them. Choose a few creatures to help the gobbos.

Monster Union. The enemy creatures take a mandatory 10-minute union break. They chat about working conditions under their leader. Maybe the gobbos convince them to go on strike, who knows?

Unexpected Alliance. New settlements are being built in the area, encroaching on what little territory everyone has. The gobbos can convince Olga and Arden to unite and drive away the people in the nearby towns. Together they'll be unstoppable!

INTERMISSION: GRANNY NOOKINS

"Be a good little gobbo and help your Granny Nookins massage these bunions. Good gracious, they're on fire today!" —Granny Nookins

An elderly female **goblin** named Granny Nookins approaches the cave seeking rest and respite. With her tattered cloak, walking stick, and grandmotherly demeanor, she brings the gobbos together over her warm stew and asks to hear their best jokes. Each gobbo can tell one joke. After the jokes are told, the gobbos can each vote to pick the best one. A gobbo can't vote for themselves. In case of a tie, Granny Nookins votes as a tiebreaker. Granny Nookins gives the gobbo whose joke has the most votes a *helm of teleportation*, and the winner earns the "Granny Nookins Jokester" award (see "Gobbo Achievements"). Granny Nookins warns the gobbos that a powerful necromancer desires their *heart* and is coming to claim it! Some

of these Undead creatures can walk through walls, so the gobbos must be careful. Before leaving, Granny Nookins casts a spell on the gobbos and the entire cave to help them fight. Her spell turns each of the gobbo's attacks (as well as any bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage dealt by the cave traps) into a magical attack for the purpose of overcoming damage immunities and resistances for the duration of this adventure. Granny Nookins wishes the gobbos well, then vanishes in a puff of red smoke.

ENCOUNTER 2: ARDEN'S DEAD

Arden the Corruptor is a blue dragon obsessed with necromancy. His massive undying army marches toward the gobbo caves, intent on killing the gobbos and stealing their *heart* so Arden can use it to create more powerful Undead kobolds. Each Undead kobold that Arden sends forth is Small except for Arden and the giant kobold zombie, who are both Large. (Each creature's new size does not change their other game statistics.) This encounter introduces new creatures at the start of each round of combat:

- **Round 1.** One kobold **zombie** and one kobold **skeleton** per gobbo
- **Round 2.** One giant kobold zombie (use the ogre zombie statistics) per two gobbos
- **Round 3.** One kobold **wraith** per gobbo
- **Round 4.** Arden the Corruptor (use the **adult blue dragon** statistics)

Once Arden's army is defeated, the game ends.

GM TIP — CREATURE TACTICS

The creatures in these encounters have movement speeds (such as burrowing or flying) and traits (such as Incorporeal Movement) that help them move around. Use these tactically to challenge the gobbos and avoid bottlenecks in combat. These creatures can burrow through the ground, fly over the gobbos' heads, and pass through walls and other creatures. Reminder, creatures with Incorporeal Movement can't take the *heart* through walls, since the *heart* is not incorporeal.

Wraiths. Wraiths can use Create Specter to form a specter ally from the corpses of dead gobbos, even if those gobbos respawn elsewhere.

PLAYING DEFEND YER GOBBO CAVE!

*Why do they lie about us, calling us cruel, wicked, and bad-hearted?
If we make no beautiful things, why do they seek out our hearts?*
—Questions every gobbo ponders

This section provides step-by-step instructions for both the GM and the players on how to play and win *Defend Yer Gobbo Cave!*

Game Objectives at a Glance. Select your gobbo, build your gobbo cave, defend your gobbo cave, and have fun! Players win by defeating the invaders, and lose if the *heart* is taken out of the cave.



STEP 1. THE GOBBO BECOMES YOU

So you think you have what it takes to be a gobbo, do you? Good. First, select the gobbo you wish to play from appendix A, then name your gobbo and introduce them to your fellow gobbos.

Next, you and your fellow gobbos collaborate to establish the name of your new gobbo clan. Once you have your gobbos and clan name, inform your GM and proceed to step 2.

A MOMENT FOR GOBBOS TO SHINE

If your players enjoy roleplaying, ask each player to introduce their gobbo accompanied by a theme song and a catchphrase, just like a wrestling match! The players vote on which gobbo has the best entrance (a player can't vote for their gobbo), and the winner earns the "Gobbo Diva" award (see "Gobbo Achievements").

STEP 2. BUILDING YOUR GOBBO CAVE

After you select and name your gobbo and clan, it's time to build your gobbo cave! Building your gobbo cave is a team effort. The five gobbo rooms each feature a trap to defend your cave, so read the traps' triggers and effects closely! Each room in a gobbo cave is a 35-foot square with a 10-foot-high ceiling. The five gobbo cave rooms, their traps, and their respective musical vibes are detailed under "Cave Rooms."

After reading about each room, your gobbo clan picks one of the cave configurations and places each of five rooms however they want within the configuration they chose. Each room is available as a map tile, which you can find linked at the end of this issue. Feel free to come up with your own configurations to use, too!

HEART OF THE CAVE ROOM

While building your gobbo cave, pay special attention to the placement of your Heart of the Cave room. This room houses the *heart*, a special vessel that contains the souls of gobbos that died and willingly chose to inhabit the *heart* and watch over their gobbo clan from the afterlife. These gobbo souls interact with the living gobbos of their clan through emotional cues and natural connections unexplained by arcane studies.

STEP 3. DEFEND YER GOBBO CAVE!

Once you finish building your gobbo cave, place your gobbos anywhere in it. Inform your GM that you are ready to defend yer gobbo cave and begin! Keep track of the number of creatures your gobbo kills.

GOBBO DEATH

If the *heart* is in the cave and a gobbo is reduced to 0 hit points, the gobbo dies without making death saving throws. Upon a gobbo's death, the *heart* emits a radiant green light and projects a magical aura throughout the cave. This magical aura creates a clone of the dead gobbo. The gobbo clone instantly grows and is born out of a rotten cabbage on the cave floor.

The rotten cabbage's location in the gobbo cave is selected by the gobbo's player. The gobbo bursts out of the cabbage at the beginning of their next turn (and the cabbage and gobbo inside can't be harmed until the gobbo emerges). The clone gobbo is born with all of their hit points restored and any equipment the previous gobbo had. However, the gobbo doesn't regain other resources.

Sometimes killing another gobbo is a smart thing to do, especially if you need to get them somewhere far away quickly. Embrace the chaos!

CALCULATING KILLS

At the end of the session, you earn achievements, some of which tally how many enemy and friendly creatures you and the traps you activate kill. To earn a kill, your gobbo must reduce a creature to 0 hit points or activate a trap that reduces a creature to 0 hit points.

CAVE ROOMS

Use the following rooms to build your gobbo cave.

BICKY'S WORLD

Throughout this room, sweet birds chirp and butterflies fly pleasantly around a miniature castle that is 15 feet wide, 10 feet long, and 10 feet high. The castle is made of random trinkets, treasures, and weapons taken off the bodies of adventurers foolish enough to enter a gobbo cave. A large sign in front of the castle reads, "Welcome to Bicky's World."

Lil'boop gobbos (see appendix A) use this room to play with ten odd-looking toddler-size furry bugbears called buggybears that giggle as they bop about.

Buggybears. If a buggybear is destroyed, it is of no consequence, as a new one miraculously appears from the miniature castle to take its place.

Illumination. Bright light fills this room.

TRAP: IT'S A SMALL GOBBO WORLD

Lil'boops care for the buggybears...but there is more to them than meets the eye. Beware!

Trigger. To trigger this trap, a gobbo can touch the castle to become the costumed character "Bicky," a famous imaginative figure in gobbo culture. The Bicky costume includes red shorts, a pair of white gloves, and a giant rat mask that smells of sweat and cheese. Only one gobbo at a time can wear the Bicky costume.

Once in costume, the gobbo can use an action or bonus action to make a DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persua-



BICKY'S WORLD

sion) check to ask one creature within 10 feet of them, “Have you been a good little gobbo?” On a success, this trap is triggered and its effect is applied to the target. On a failed check, this trap’s effect is applied to the gobbo in the costume. Lil’boops have advantage when making the check to trigger this trap. This trap can only be triggered four times every minute.

Effect. *Cue lil’boop musical vibes.* The buggybears begin to cheerfully sing a song while sharp retractable teeth sprout from their mouths. The buggybears frantically rush toward the target, and the targeted creature must

succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 75 (30d4) slashing damage as the buggybears attempt to devour it with their razor-sharp teeth. If a creature drops to 0 hit points from this damage, the buggybears drag the creature’s body into the gobbo castle and kill it. Moments later, the buggybears reappear from the goblin castle with a new buggybear that resembles the slain creature, who then joins in singing the cheerful song. Trust me, you don’t want to ask questions.

Countermeasure. Destroying the castle destroys this trap. The castle has AC 18, 60 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

EMO TEMPLE

Emoblins use this room to carry out dark rituals, worship fallen goblin Celestials, and feel the weight of the universe's emotions upon them. They keep cursed weapons, demonic musical instruments, occult books, and a desecrated angelic altar in this room.

Illumination. Dim light fills this room.

TRAP: ALTAR OF THE EMO CELESTIALS

Fallen angels created the desecrated altar in the middle of the emo temple many millennia ago. The gobbos mastered a ritual to summon the powerful Celestials using this altar. Beware—a sacrifice is needed to summon the Celestials.

Trigger. A gobbo must stand on the altar and use a bonus action to trigger this trap. Summoning a fallen angel requires a sacrifice. The gobbo that triggers this trap must select another friendly gobbo anywhere in the cave as a sacrifice. Once a sacrificial gobbo is selected, a beam of radiant energy comes down from the celestial realms, instantly killing the friendly gobbo. This trap can only be triggered three times every minute.

Effect. Cue emoblin musical vibes. The gobbo that triggered the trap targets one other creature in the room they can see and shouts an edgy phrase at it. A deva in the form of a goblin with long black hair, black leather clothes, and heavy eyeliner appears in a space next to the



EMO TEMPLE

targeted creature and attacks it for 5 combat rounds or until the creature dies, at which point the deva returns to the plane of angst and sorrow. The deva only attacks its target, using its Multiattack action unless the GM deems otherwise. It casts no spells and doesn't interact with any other creatures.

Countermeasure. Killing the deva destroys this trap.

HEART OF THE CAVE

The Heart of the Cave is the most important room of a gobbo cave. It is where the goblins eat, sleep, and watch over their *heart*. Each goblin has their own bed and a small chest that contains their belongings at the foot of

their bed. The *heart* floats at the room's center. A creature can freely grab the *heart* in the same way it can interact with objects in tandem with its movement and action.

Illumination. Dim light fills the room.

TRAP: HEART BROKEN

Removing the *heart* from this room or destroying it spells disaster!

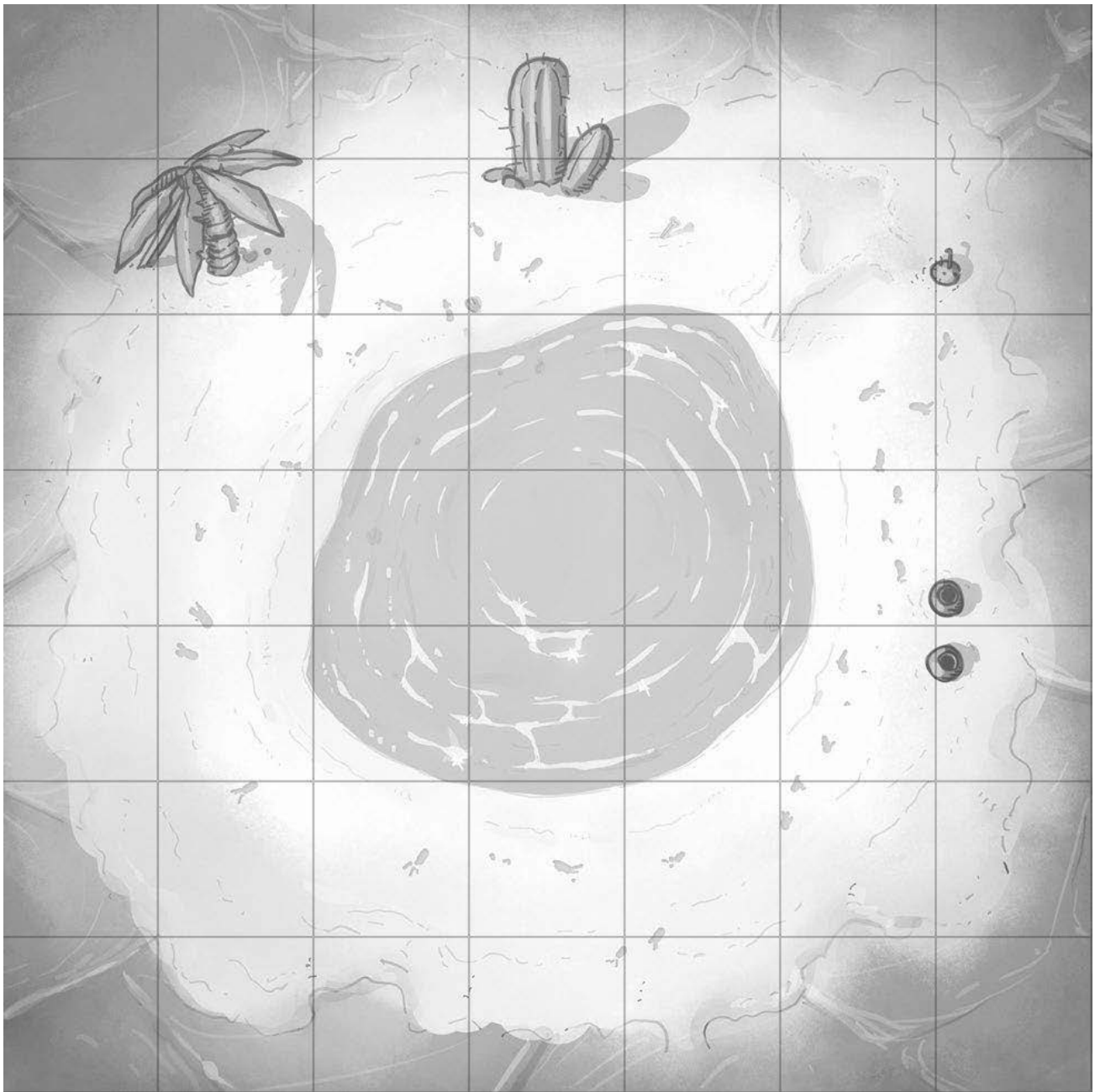
Heart Stats. The *heart* has AC 18, 115 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Trigger. If the *heart* is removed from this room, the trap is triggered.

Effect. Cue stolen *heart* musical vibes. When the *heart* leaves this room, the entire goblin cave quakes.



HEART OF THE CAVE



GOBBO BEACH

Each round on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), large boulders crash down from the ceiling throughout the cave. All creatures in the cave must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

If the *heart* is destroyed or removed from the cave, the entire cave collapses on itself. Every creature inside the goblin cave dies as boulders crash down on them.

If the *heart* is destroyed or removed from the cave, goblins aren't brought back to life after they die.

Countermeasure. This trap's effect ends if the *heart* is brought back into the room.

GOBBO BEACH

Flameblins use this room to bask in the warmth of the sun, relaxing on the sand of their homemade tropical beaches. These rooms naturally maintain a tropical climate and the ceilings look like bright blue skies, which a sentient miniature sun named Rico flies around constantly. White sand surrounds a 10-foot-deep pool of ocean water that occupies the middle of the room. Small waves emanate from the center of the pool due to the gravitational pull of the miniature sun orbiting above.

Illumination. Bright light fills this room.

TRAP: GOBBO BEACH DANCE-OFF

The sentient miniature sun, Rico, loves to watch creatures dance. But it hates creatures who insult the art by dancing terribly!

Trigger. A gobbo must be standing in this room and use a bonus action to trigger this trap. This trap can only be triggered three times every minute.

Effect. Cue flamblin musical vibes. Rico uses its sunbeams to engulf creatures in the room in brilliant light and shouts “Vamos a bailar!” to initiate the Gobbo Beach dance-off!

To begin the Gobbo Beach dance-off, a creature makes an ability check using any ability that captures its dance

skills and adds its proficiency bonus if it is proficient in the Performance skill. For example, a chonka gobbo might make a Strength (Performance) check as it shows off by flexing its muscles while dancing. Two creatures can choose to partner with each other if they are within 5 feet of each other, in which case the creature with the highest modifier makes the ability check with advantage, a reflection of the beauty of two creatures dancing salsa together. The creature or coupled creatures with the highest check made during the dance-off wins and Rico releases them from its sunbeam. If only one creature or only one couple dances, Rico becomes upset and does not release them from its sunbeam. All creatures engulfed in Rico’s



GOLDEN GYM

sunbeams take 28 (8d6) radiant damage as punishment for their pathetic dance failures.

GMs are encouraged to grant inspiration to characters who passionately dance during the dance-off and really show off their personal style.

Countermeasure. Destroying Rico destroys this trap. Rico has AC 10, 40 hit points, and immunity to fire and radiant damage.

GOLDEN GYM

Chonkas use this room to grow a healthy variety of organic shrubs and continuously work out until they ascend and achieve the pinnacle of chonka physique as beefcakes.

The workout equipment is possessed by a spirit called “Olympia,” who helps operate the workout equipment in this room. Additionally, a large 15-foot-tall bronze statue of Olympia in his former human form as a huge, hulking brute dominates the room near the full-service protein shake bar, where Olympia makes awesome shakes like the fruitinator!

Illumination. Bright light fills this room.

TRAP: GET SWOLE OR GET WRECKED

Bladed weights and dumbbells made from jagged dragon bones are sprawled throughout the entire room awaiting those who dare work out here.

Trigger. A gobbo must be standing in this room and use a bonus action to trigger this trap. This trap can only be triggered three times every minute.

Effect. Cue chonka musical vibes. The spirit of Olympia possesses the statue, which begins to move. All creatures in the room must make a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check as workout equipment comes to life around them. On a successful check, Olympia compliments the creature’s workout technique. On a failed check, the creature is grappled (escape DC 14) by Olympia and the workout equipment. Until this grapple ends, the creature takes 27 (6d8) bludgeoning damage at the start of its turn and is restrained.

Countermeasure. Destroying Olympia’s statue destroys this trap. The statue has AC 15, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

GOBBO REWARDS

At the **end of your session**, use the hashtag #ArcadiaGobbo on social media to share your favorite moments with us and tell us about your achievements.

GOBBO ACHIEVEMENTS

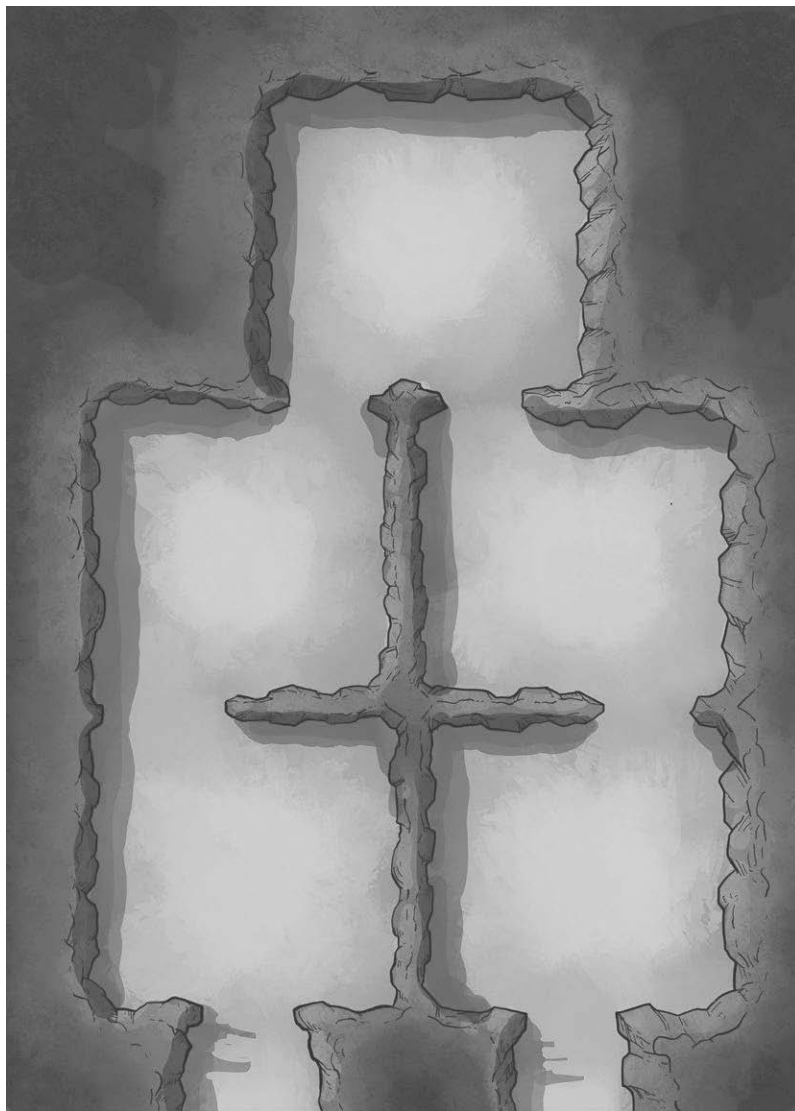
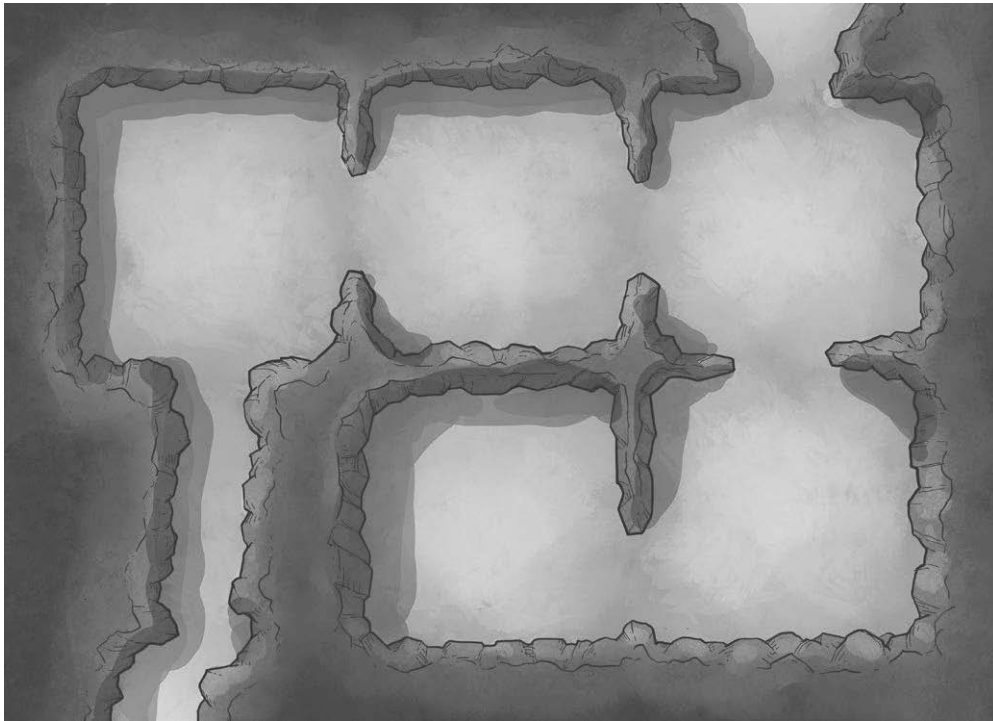
Your gobbos earn achievements based on their actions during play. Some of these achievements are objective and have specific criteria to earn them, while others are fun and subjectively awarded as your table sees fit. Ultimately, the GM determines which gobbos win which achievements.

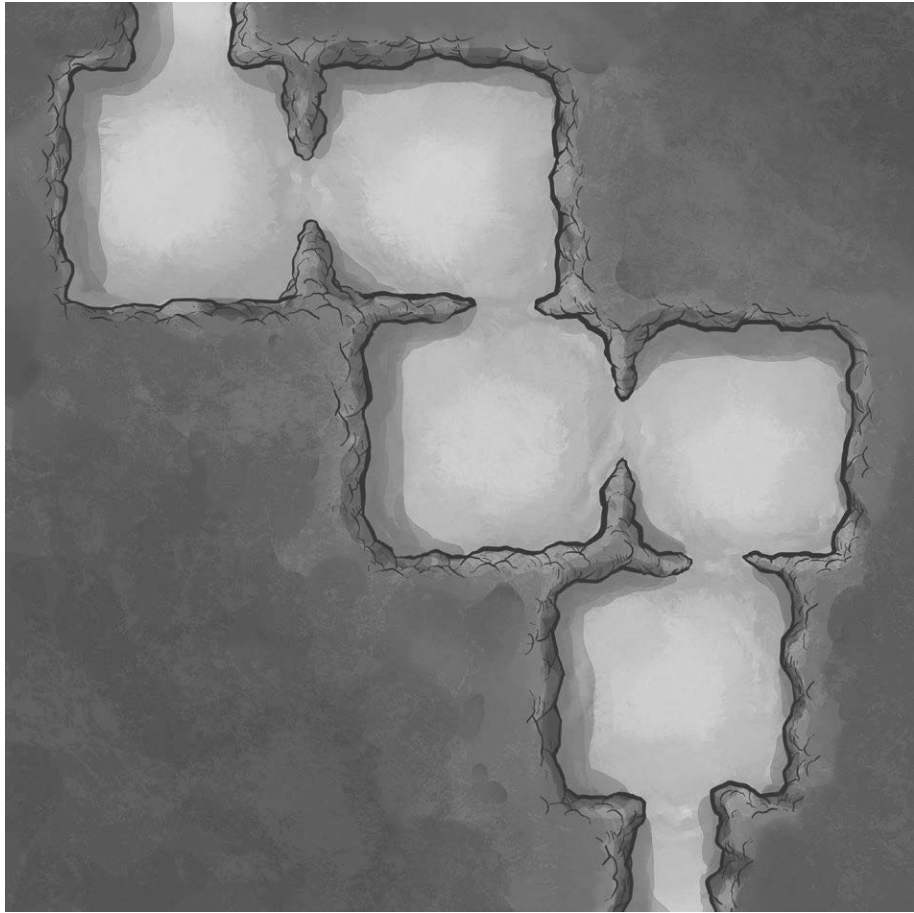
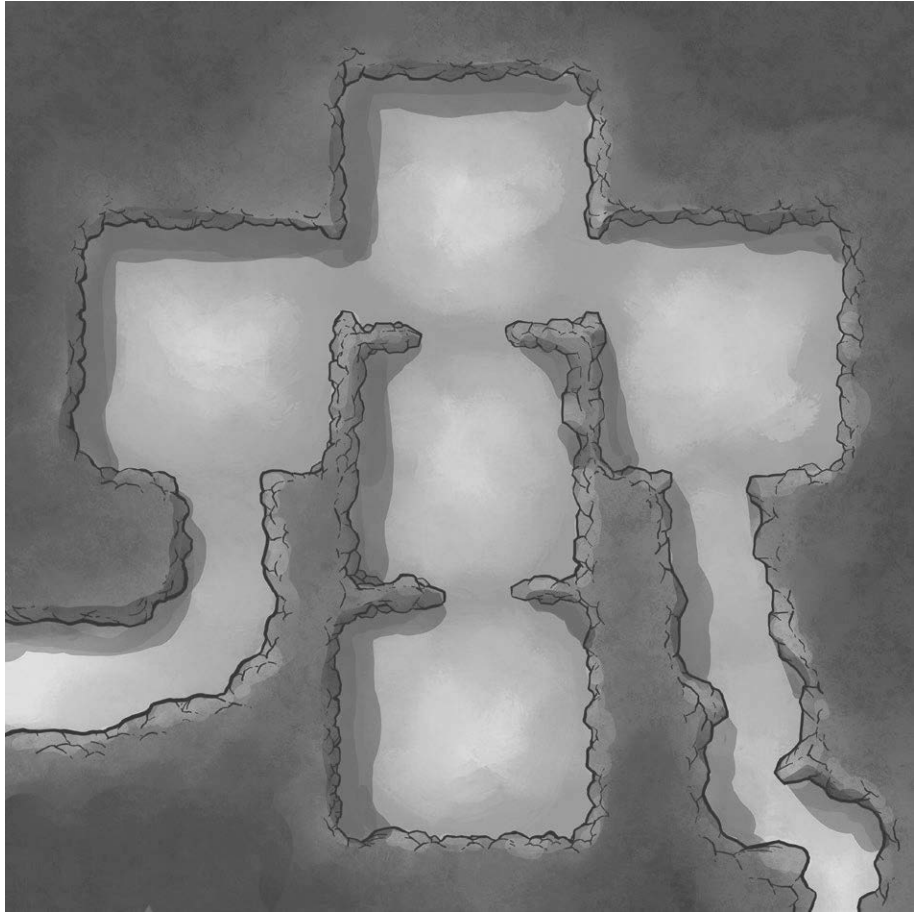
- **Order of the Arcadia Gobbo.** All gobbos earn this if they successfully defend their gobbo cave.
- **Gobbo Diva.** Voted the gobbo with the best introduction.
- **Granny Nookins Jokester.** Voted the gobbo with the best joke for Granny Nookins. I bet everyone here wishes you went into stand-up comedy. #Nosarcasmhere
- **Gobbonator.** This gobbo killed the most friendly gobbos.
- **Gobvenger.** This gobbo killed the most enemy creatures.
- **Gobbo of Death.** This gobbo killed the most creatures (friendly and enemy).
- **Trigger Happy.** This gobbo triggered the most traps.
- **Heart Defender.** Voted the gobbo that contributed the most to the defense of their gobbo cave.
- **Epic Death.** Voted the gobbo that had the most epic death.
- **I Am Invincible!** This gobbo died the most. We’re not sure if this means they played well or poorly...you decide!

GOBBO CHALLENGE

Now that you’ve played *Defend Yer Gobbo Cave!*, we have a gobbo challenge for you: create and share your own unique gobbo types, gobbo cave rooms, gobbo cave configurations, and gobbo traps with the *ARCADIA* community! Be sure to use #ArcadiaGobbo to share your creations on social media. We can’t wait to see what you dream up!

CAVE CONFIGURATIONS





APPENDIX A

GOBBOS AND GOBBO STATISTICS

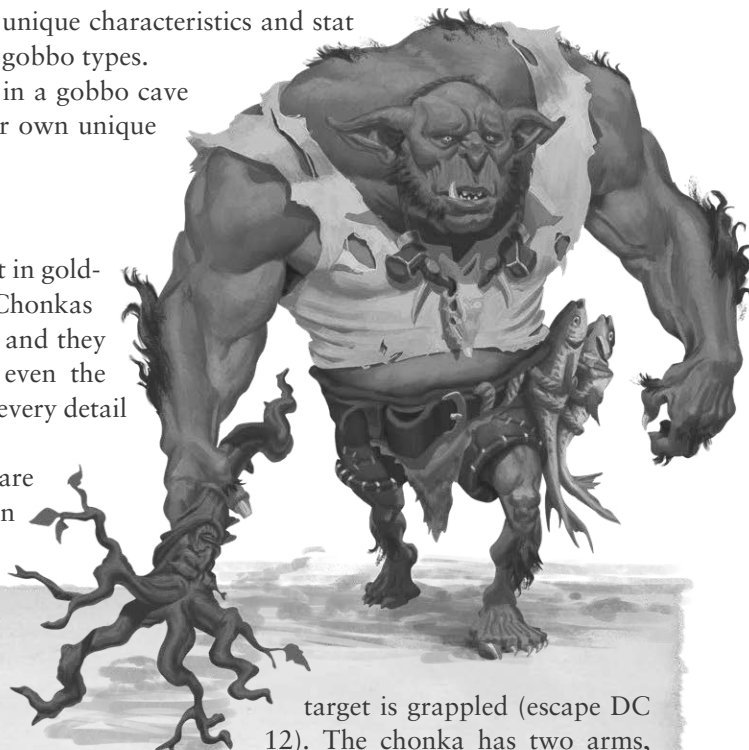
This section contains four types of gobbos to play, each with unique characteristics and stat blocks. Groups with more than four players can double up on gobbo types.

Gobbo Wards. A gobbo is part of a gobbo clan if they are in a gobbo cave that contains a *heart*. Gobbos in a gobbo clan each have their own unique gobbo ward feature.

CHONKA

Chonkas are tanky beefcake gobbos that get swole working out in golden gyms and use their massive, hulking arms as weapons. Chonkas love pain—each time they take damage, their muscles enlarge and they become jacked, empowering their next attack to decimate even the strongest creatures! If you run into a chonka, they will tell you every detail about their daily workouts and strange dieting habits.

Unfortunately, chonkas despise leg day; their upper bodies are huge, but their legs are so small that they move slower than other gobbos. They look really odd when they walk, trust me.



CHONKA

Small Humanoid (Goblinoid), Any Alignment

ARMOR CLASS 15 (natural armor, shield)

HIT POINTS 58 (9d6 + 27)

SPEED 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

SKILLS Athletics +4, Intimidation +1

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

LANGUAGES Common, Goblin

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

No Pain, No Gain. Whenever the chonka takes damage, their muscles swell with beefy might. When the chonka hits with a weapon attack, they deal an extra 1d6 damage for each instance of damage they have taken since their last weapon attack, up to a maximum of 10d6. This feature persists even if the chonka has died.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chonka makes two melee attacks.

Jacked Arms. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the

target is grappled (escape DC 12). The chonka has two arms, each of which can grapple one target.

Goblin Protein Bar. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

BONUS ACTIONS

Chonka Ward (2/Day). The chonka chooses a point anywhere in the gobbo cave. A pile of dilapidated workout equipment erupts in a 10-foot cube centered on that point. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 13 (3d8) bludgeoning damage and is restrained by the workout equipment. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't restrained. A creature restrained by the workout equipment can use its action to make a DC 14 Strength or Dexterity check (its choice), ending the effect on itself on a success.

Additionally, the chonka suffers 10 psychic damage due to the guilt of not working out.

GOBBO SCORE TRACKER

Use this area to keep track of the scoring elements of the game!

Total Enemy Creature Kills:

Total Deaths:

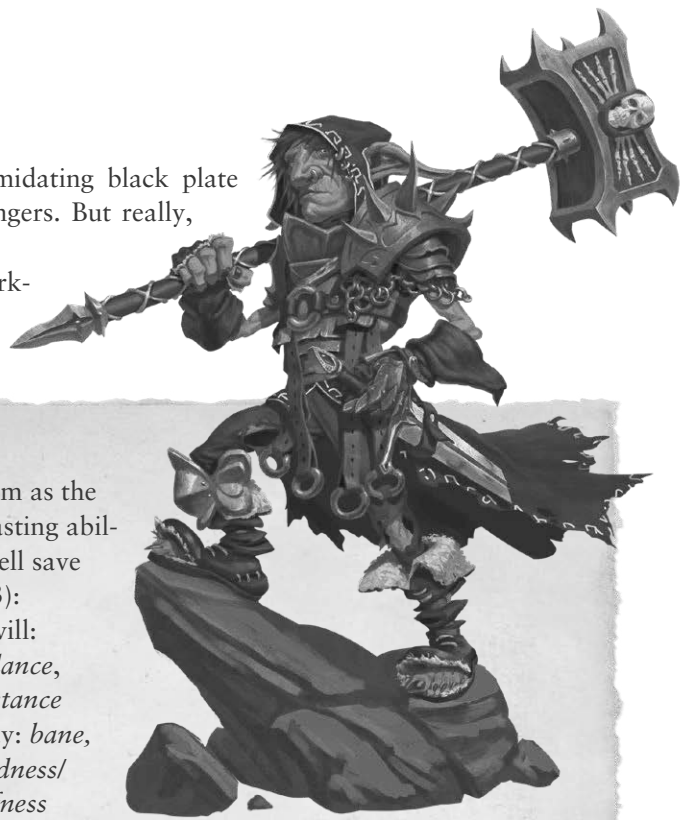
Total Friendly Gobbo Kills:

Total Trap Activations:

EMOBLIN

Emoblins are full of emotion and angst. They love wearing intimidating black plate armor and wielding the largest, scariest weapons to scare off strangers. But really, deep down, all they want to do is hug someone.

Emoblins lurk in emo temples, sharpening their edginess in the darkness of solitude. It is rumored that emoblins can summon powerful Celestials...but that can't be true, can it? Nah!



EMOBLIN

Small Humanoid (Goblinoid), Any Alignment

ARMOR CLASS 20 (plate armor, shield)

HIT POINTS 13 (3d6 + 3)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

SKILLS Arcana +2, Intimidation +2, Medicine +5, Religion +4

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

LANGUAGES Common, Goblin

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

ACTIONS

Abbadon the Annihilator (+3 Warhammer). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage when used with two hands. If the target is Humanoid or Undead, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (1d10) radiant damage and gain 1 level of exhaustion. Additionally, whenever a creature fails the save, Abbadon the Annihilator chants occult verses in Celestial, and the emoblin loses 1 hit point as part of its soul is consumed by the weapon.

Inflict Emotional Wounds (3/Day). *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d10) psychic damage.

Bring Me to Life (3/Day). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) radiant damage, and the next attack roll made against this target before the end of the emoblin's next turn has advantage.

Spellcasting. The emoblin casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using

Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At will:
guidance,
resistance
3/day: *bane,*
blindness/
deafness

1/day: *animate dead,*
spirit guardians

BONUS ACTIONS

Edgy Smite (3/Day). The emoblin imbues their weapon with the power of their angst. The next time they hit a creature with a weapon attack, the attack deals an extra 7 (2d6) radiant damage to the target, which becomes visible if it is invisible, and the target sheds dim light in a 5-foot radius and can't become invisible for 1 minute.

Emoblin Ward (2/Day). The emoblin chooses a point anywhere in the gobbo cave. The image of an unholy emo angel appears in a 10-foot cube centered on that point. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 13 (3d8) radiant damage and must spend its next turn trying to move as far away from the image as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 15 feet of the image. It also can't take reactions. The creature can only use an action to take the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and suffers no other effects.

GOBBO SCORE TRACKER

Use this area to keep track of the scoring elements of the game!

Total Enemy Creature Kills:

Total Deaths:

Total Friendly Gobbo Kills:

Total Trap Activations:

LIL'BOOP

Lil'boops are the cutest, sweetest little gobbos you'll ever meet. They make human babies look like monstrosities by comparison. You can find lil'boops sneaking around the shadows or dancing in Bicky's World with strange buggybears. If you're wise, you'll stay away from that place. It gives me the cold sweats just thinking about it, yeesh!



LIL'BOOP

Small Humanoid (Goblinoid), Any Alignment

ARMOR CLASS 14 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 17 (5d6)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

SKILLS Deception +6, Perception +4, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

LANGUAGES Common, Goblin

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The lil'boop deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the lil'boop that isn't incapacitated and the lil'boop doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lil'boop makes two Retractable Claw attacks.

Retractable Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Cutiebeans Dance (3/Day). The lil'boop begins to dance like a little cutiebean. Each creature within 30 feet of the lil'boop that can see it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or take 5 (1d10) psychic damage and fall prone in awe of the dance until the end of the lil'boop's next turn. Goblinoids are immune to this effect.

BONUS ACTIONS

Lil'boop Ward (2/Day). The lil'boop chooses a point anywhere in the gobbo cave. Maniacal childish giggles and evil laughter emanate from the point. All creatures within 5 feet of the point must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become paralyzed by fear until the end of the lil'boop's next turn.

Lil'boop Ward Master (2/Day). The lil'boop can use the ward feature of any type of gobbo.

GOBBO SCORE TRACKER

Use this area to keep track of the scoring elements of the game!

Total Enemy Creature Kills:

Total Deaths:

Total Friendly Gobbo Kills:

Total Trap Activations:

FLAMEBLIN

Flameblins are spicy little creatures! It's rumored that they are children of the sun, given their affinity to fire and explosive tendencies. Flameblins hang out in Gobbo Beach, dancing the nights away to fierce passionate music.

Someone once told me there is a sun hanging out in Gobbo Beach...a sun in a room? Are you kidding me? Get outta here with that nonsense!



FLAMEBLIN

Small Humanoid (Goblinoid), Any Alignment

ARMOR CLASS 12 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 22 (4d6 + 8)

SPEED 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

SKILLS Arcana +3, Medicine +3, Performance +5, Persuasion +5

DAMAGE RESISTANCES fire

SENSES darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

LANGUAGES Common, Goblin

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

Sorcery Points. The flameblin has 3 sorcery points. They regain all their spent sorcery points when they finish a long rest. They can spend sorcery points on the following options:

Feel the Burn: When the flameblin deals fire damage to a target, they can spend 1 sorcery point to deal an additional 1d8 of fire damage to that target.

Glimpse of the Sun: The flameblin can spend 1 sorcery point as a bonus action to create a magnificent light source that blasts forth from their body. The flameblin chooses three creatures they can see within 20 feet of the flameblin. The targets must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded until the end of the flameblin's next turn.

ACTIONS

Sun Blade. *Melee Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Fire Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) fire damage. A flammable object hit by this attack ignites if it isn't being worn or carried.

Rico's

Rays (3/Day).

Ranged Spell Attack:

+5 to hit, range 120 ft., three targets. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Commit Arson (2/Day). The flameblin creates a magical explosion of fire centered on a point they can see within 120 feet of the flameblin. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spellcasting. The flameblin casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At will: *dancing lights, light, minor illusion, prestidigitation*

BONUS ACTIONS

Flameblin Ward (2/Day). The flameblin can target all friendly gobbos, including themselves, in the gobbo cave and imbue them with the power of the sun. The power of the sun is overwhelming for other gobbos, causing each gobbo except the flameblin to take 27 (6d8) fire damage. Each creature within 10 feet of a gobbo must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 15 (6d4) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

REACTIONS

Big Boom Defense (3/Day). When they are hit by an attack, the flameblin protects themselves with a sudden red burst of magical force. Until the end of the flameblin's next turn, they gain a +5 bonus to AC, including against the triggering attack.

GOBBO SCORE TRACKER

Use this area to keep track of the scoring elements of the game!

Total Enemy Creature Kills:

Total Deaths:

Total Friendly Gobbo Kills:

Total Trap Activations:

RESOURCES

DEFEND YOUR GOBBO CAVE!

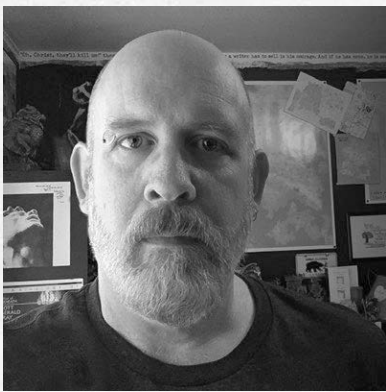
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<https://mcdm.gg/Arcadia202111/GoblinCave-VTT-140ppi.zip>



CELESTE CONOWITCH is a game designer based out of Seattle. She is the producer, DM, and editor of the actual play podcast *Venture Maidens*. When not plotting behind the screen, you can catch her championing new voices as co-founder of the Penwitch Studio podcast network. She works as a full-time designer at 2CGaming and has freelanced with companies like Wizards of the Coast, and Kobold Press. To keep up with Celeste, follow her on Twitter [@cconowitch](https://twitter.com/cconowitch).



SCOTT FITZGERALD GRAY (9th-level layabout, vindictive good) is a writer of fantasy and speculative fiction, a fiction editor, a story editor, and an editor and designer of roleplaying games—all of which means he finally has the job he really wanted when he was sixteen. He shares his life in the Western Canadian hinterland with a schoolteacher, two itinerant daughters, and a number of animal and spirit companions. More info on him and his work (some of it even occasionally truthful) can be found by reading between the lines at insaneangel.com.



ANTHONY JOYCE is a Hispanic, ENnie nominated Dungeons & Dragons fifth edition designer, and an active duty U.S. Army Strategist. His notable works include *The Tenacious Bard vs. Orcus*, *Baldur's Gate: The Fall of Eitrel*, *Elminster's Candlekeep Companion*, *The Blood Hunter*, *Darkhold: Secrets of the Zhentarim*, *The Monster of Wonderia*, *Weekend at Strahd's*, *The Little Astronaut*, and more. You can find him on Twitter at [@Thrawn589](https://twitter.com/Thrawn589) or at <https://anthonydreams.com>

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