

CARCASS CRAWLER

The official Old School Essentials zine

Issue #2

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

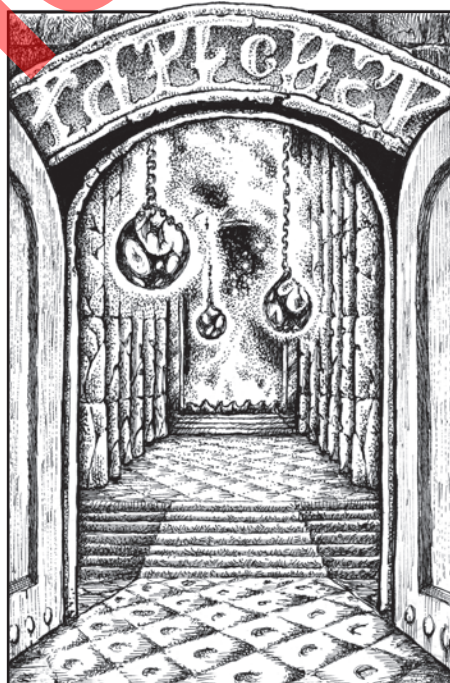
Welcome to issue 2 of *Carcass Crawler*—the official *Old-School Essentials* zine. Each issue of *Carcass Crawler* is packed with new material for your games, including new character classes and races, new spells and magic items, new monsters, optional and expanded rules, referee advice, previews of in-development products, short adventures, and more.

IN THIS ISSUE

- ▶ **New elves:** 2 new elf classes / races.
- ▶ **Town services:** Guidelines and prices for commonly used services in town.
- ▶ **Hiring retainers:** Tables and guidelines for hiring dungeon helpers.
- ▶ **Quick equipment:** A method for speeding up character creation.
- ▶ **Snake cult monsters:** 8 brand new monsters: creepy undead, guardian constructs, and devious serpents.
- ▶ **Mini adventure:** The trap-filled ruins of a snake cult temple.
- ▶ **Energy weapons:** Futuristic energy weapons to bring a post-apocalyptic science-fantasy feel to your games.
- ▶ **Item-based encumbrance:** An alternative system for tracking encumbrance.
- ▶ **Adjudicating traps:** Optional guidelines for adjudicating traps and making them an engaging part of the game.

COMPATIBILITY

Content in *Carcass Crawler* is compatible with all flavours of *Old-School Essentials* (e.g. Classic Fantasy, Advanced Fantasy). By extension, this means that the content is also compatible with the classic Basic/Expert game and with other games that are based on the Basic/Expert rules.



PHASE ELF & WOOD ELF

By GAVIN NORMAN

INTRODUCTION

This article presents two new, optional types of elves for your *Old-School Essentials* games, presented as both classes and separate races (for those using the optional rules for choosing race and class separately).

Introduce these new types of elves as NPCs for player characters to encounter or add them to the roster of character types players may choose from when creating a character.

The Many Kindreds of Elves

Following the tradition laid down by J.R.R. Tolkien, fantasy gaming has always featured many kindreds or sub-species of elves. For campaign worlds that feature multiple elven kindreds, the basic elf class presented in *Old-School Essentials* may be viewed as representing *high elves*. *Old-School Essentials Advanced Fantasy* adds the drow (or *dark elves*) as a playable option. This article now adds two more kindreds: the otherworldly *phase elves* and the secretive *wood elves*.

The relationship between the various kindreds, the details of their shared origins, and the reasons for their sundering should be detailed by the referee, as befits the individual campaign setting.

Too Many Options?

The new classes and races in this article are entirely optional. Some groups love a wide selection of character types, relishing the variety that offers. Other groups prefer a more limited number of options. As always: do what makes your games most enjoyable for your group.

One approach that works well is for the referee to select a limited set of around 7–10 classes / races that suit the flavour of the campaign. For example, in one campaign, wood elves may replace standard elves.

In this way, the number of options available to players when creating characters is kept within reasonable bounds, while the hand-picked set of allowed classes and races can heavily reinforce the flavour of the specific campaign.



Phase Elves

Old-School Essentials is principally inspired by the 1980s Basic/Expert game and the 1970s Advanced 1st Edition game. The phase elf class, however, is inspired by the 1974 Original Edition game, with its idiosyncratic rules whereby a Player Character elf is able to switch between the fighter and magic-user classes in between adventures.

Wood Elves

Secretive elves dwelling in wild, Sylvan forests are undoubtedly one of the most commonly encountered tropes in fantasy fiction. While it is possible to use the standard *Old-School Essentials* elf class to represent such woodland denizens, that class (a heavily armoured wielder of powerful arcane magic) is not an especially good match for the trope. The wood elf class presented here is a better fit, with druidic magic and a range of abilities suited to life in the deep forest.



SEPARATE RACE AND CLASS (OPTIONAL)

The two new types of elves are also presented here as separate races, for groups who prefer to select character race and class separately.

If using this rule, each player may decide individually whether to create their character by selecting a class alone or by selecting race and class separately.

Character Creation Procedure

If selecting character race and class separately, the following procedure should be used, after rolling ability scores:

1. **Choose a race:** Choose a race from those available, bearing in mind their ability score requirements.

2. **Apply ability score modifiers:** Some races list ability score modifiers. Once you have chosen a race, adjust your character's ability scores as indicated. These modifiers cannot raise an ability score above 18 or lower it below 3.
3. **Choose a class:** The selected character race determines the classes that are available to choose from. Also bear in mind the ability score requirements of some classes. (Note that only core *Old-School Essentials* classes are listed. The referee must decide which races are able to use classes from other sources, e.g. issues of *Carcass Crawler*, if allowed.)

Native Languages

When choosing race and class separately, the character's native languages are determined by the race. The languages listed in the class should be ignored.

PHASE ELF

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum INT 9

Prime requisite: INT and STR

Hit Dice: 1d6

Maximum level: 10

Armour: Any, including shields / none

Weapons: Any / dagger

Languages: Alignment, Common, Elvish, Doppelgänger, Dragon, Pixie



Phase elves are slender, fey demihumans with pointed ears. They typically weigh about 120 pounds and are between 5½ and 6 feet tall. Their hair tends to be violet or silver and their eyes are either pure black or pure white—without an iris or pupil (see *Dual Persona*). Phase elves originate from an alternate dimension which is inaccessible to other races, and about which they never speak.

Prime requisites: A phase elf with at least 13 INT and STR gains a 5% bonus to experience. A phase elf with an INT of at least 16 and a STR of at least 13 receives a +10% XP bonus.

Arcane Magic

In their magic-user phase (see *Dual Persona*), a phase elf can make use of the following arcane abilities. See *Magic* in *Old-School Essentials* for full details on arcane magic.

Magical research: A phase elf of any level may spend time and money on magical research. This allows them to add new spells to their spell book and to research other magical effects. When a phase elf reaches 9th level, they are also able to create magic items.

Spell casting: Phase elves carry spell books containing the formulae for arcane spells. The level progression table (opposite) shows both the number of spells in

the phase elf's spell book and the number they may memorize, determined by the character's experience level. Thus, a 1st level phase elf has one spell in their spell book, selected by the referee (who may allow the player to choose). The list of spells available to phase elves is found in *Old-School Essentials* (phase elves have the same spell selection as magic-users).

Using magic items: As spell casters, phase elves are able to use magic scrolls of spells on their spell list. They can also use items that may only be used by arcane spell casters (e.g. magic wands).

Combat

A phase elf's combat ability depends on which phase they are in (see *Dual Persona*).

Fighter phase: The phase elf can use all types of weapons and armour.

Magic-user phase: The phase elf can only use daggers and is unable to use shields or wear any kind of armour.

Detect Secret Doors

Phase elves have keen eyes that allow them, when actively searching, to detect hidden and secret doors with a 2-in-6 chance (see *Dungeon Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Phase Elf Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THACO	Saving Throws					Spells (MU Phase)				
				D	W	P	B	S	1	2	3	4	5
1	0	1d6	19 [0]	12	13	13	15	15	1	–	–	–	–
2	2,500	2d6	19 [0]	12	13	13	15	15	2	–	–	–	–
3	5,000	3d6	19 [0]	12	13	13	15	15	2	1	–	–	–
4	10,000	4d6	19 [0]	12	13	13	15	15	2	2	–	–	–
5	20,000	5d6	17 [+2]	10	11	11	13	12	2	2	1	–	–
6	40,000	6d6	17 [+2]	10	11	11	13	12	2	2	2	–	–
7	80,000	7d6	17 [+2]	10	11	11	13	12	3	2	2	1	–
8	150,000	8d6	17 [+2]	10	11	11	13	12	3	3	2	2	–
9	300,000	9d6	14 [+5]	8	9	9	10	10	3	3	3	2	1
10	450,000	9d6+2*	14 [+5]	8	9	9	10	10	3	3	3	3	2

THACO: Attack matrix row to use.
(Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)

*: Modifiers from CON no longer apply.

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands;

P: Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;

S: Spells / rods / staves.

Dual Persona

A phase elf has two independent but interconnected personae or *phases*—their *fighter phase* and their *magic-user phase*.

Phasing: Each morning, upon awakening, the character may choose to switch to their other phase. This is called *phasing*. Phasing is possible at most once per day.

Class abilities: Certain class abilities (see *Arcane Magic* and *Combat*) are dependent on the active phase.

Eye colour: When in the fighter phase, the character's eyes are pure white; when in the magic-user phase their eyes are pure black.

Personalities: The two phases have complete knowledge of the other's actions. They usually share the same name, but their personalities and goals may differ.

Alignment: The two phases may be of different alignment.

Immunity to Ghoul Paralysis

Phase elves are completely unaffected by the paralysis that ghouls can inflict.

Infravision

Phase elves have infravision to 60' (see *Darkness* under *Hazards and Challenges* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Listening at Doors

Phase elves have a 2-in-6 chance of hearing noises (see *Dungeon Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).

After Reaching 9th Level

A phase elf may bring an extra-dimensional space into being, accessible via a magical doorway in a location of the character's choosing. The extra-dimensional space contains a 10 mile diameter area, consisting of (possibly otherworldly) terrain and wildlife agreed with the referee. No buildings or sentient creatures are present, but the phase elf may construct a stronghold inside their extra-dimensional domain.

Wood Elf

Demihuman Class

Requirements: Minimum DEX 9, minimum INT 9

Prime requisite: DEX and WIS

Hit Dice: 1d6

Maximum level: 10

Armour: Leather, shields

Weapons: Any

Languages: Alignment, Common, Elvish, Bugbear, Dryad, Gnoll

Wood elves are slender, fey demihumans with pointed ears. They typically weigh about 110 pounds and are between 5 and 5½ feet tall. Wood elves dwell in hidden, treetop settlements in deep forests, and are seldom seen by humans. They are reclusive and defend their homelands against trespassers. Like druids, wood elves worship the force of nature and the myriad deities that personify it.

Prime requisites: A wood elf with at least 13 DEX and WIS gains a 5% bonus to experience. A wood elf with a DEX of at least 16 and a WIS of at least 13 receives a +10% XP bonus.

Awareness

Wood elves are only surprised on a roll of 1. This may mean that a wood elf is able to act in the surprise round while their companions are surprised.

Combat

Because of their need for stealth and free movement, wood elves cannot wear armour heavier than leather. They can use shields and any weapon.



Detect Secret Doors

Wood elves have keen eyes that allow them, when actively searching, to detect hidden and secret doors with a 2-in-6 chance (see *Dungeon Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Divine Magic

See *Magic* in *Old-School Essentials* for full details on divine magic.

Deity disfavour: Wood elves must be faithful to the tenets of their alignment and religion. Wood elves who fall from favour with their deity may incur penalties.

Magical research: A wood elf of any level may spend time and money on magical research. This allows them to create new spells or other magical effects associated with their deity. When a wood elf reaches 9th level, they are also able to create magic items.

Spell casting: A wood elf may pray to receive spells from nature. The power and number of spells available to a wood elf are determined by the character's experience level. The list of spells available to wood elves is found in *Old-School Essentials Advanced Fantasy* (wood elves have the same spell selection as druids). If not using *Old-School Essentials Advanced Fantasy*, wood elves have the same spell selection as clerics (but cannot memorize *cure light wounds* until reaching 2nd level).

Using magic items: As spell casters, wood elves can use magic scrolls of spells on their spell list. They can also use items that may only be used by divine spell casters (e.g. some staves).

Foraging and Hunting

A party with a wood elf succeeds at foraging with a 2-in-6 chance and finds prey when hunting with a 5-in-6 chance (see *Wilderness Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Wood Elf Level Progression

Level	XP	HD	THACO	Saving Throws					Spells				
				D	W	P	B	S	1	2	3	4	5
1	0	1d6	19 [0]	12	13	13	15	15	1	–	–	–	–
2	3,000	2d6	19 [0]	12	13	13	15	15	2	–	–	–	–
3	6,000	3d6	19 [0]	12	13	13	15	15	2	1	–	–	–
4	12,000	4d6	17 [+2]	10	11	11	13	12	2	2	–	–	–
5	24,000	5d6	17 [+2]	10	11	11	13	12	2	2	1	–	–
6	48,000	6d6	17 [+2]	10	11	11	13	12	2	2	2	–	–
7	100,000	7d6	14 [+5]	8	9	9	10	10	3	2	2	1	–
8	200,000	8d6	14 [+5]	8	9	9	10	10	3	3	2	2	–
9	350,000	9d6	14 [+5]	8	9	9	10	10	3	3	3	2	1
10	500,000	9d6+2*	12 [+7]	6	7	8	8	8	3	3	3	3	2

THACO: Attack matrix row to use.
(Ascending AC attack bonus in [].)

*: Modifiers from CON no longer apply.

D: Death / poison; **W:** Wands;

P: Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;

S: Spells / rods / staves.

Hiding

Wood elves have an uncanny ability to disappear from sight. In woods or undergrowth, a wood elf can hide with a 90% chance of success.



Immunity to Ghoul Paralysis

Wood elves are completely unaffected by the paralysis that ghouls can inflict.

Infravision

Wood elves have infravision to 60' (see *Darkness under Hazards and Challenges* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Listening at Doors

Wood elves have a 2-in-6 chance of hearing noises (see *Dungeon Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).

Missile Attack Bonus

Wood elves' keen coordination grants them a +1 bonus to attack rolls with all missile weapons.

After Reaching 9th Level

A wood elf may construct a treetop stronghold in the depths of the forest, blending in with the natural environment of a site of great beauty. The stronghold must be made of wood, but construction costs as much as similar work in stone, due to the exquisite quality of craftsmanship involved.

Forest animals within a 5 mile radius of the completed stronghold will become friends with the wood elves. They may warn of intruders, carry messages and news, and so on. In exchange for this friendship, the wood elf ruler must protect the animals from harm.

A wood elf ruler may only hire elven mercenaries. Specialists and retainers of any race may be hired.

PHASE ELF (RACE)

Requirements: Minimum INT 9

Ability modifiers: -1 CON, +1 DEX

Languages: Alignment, Common, Elvish, Doppelgänger, Dragon, Pixie

Phase elves are slender, fey demihumans with pointed ears. They typically weigh about 120 pounds and are between 5½ and 6 feet tall. Their hair tends to be violet or silver and their eyes are either pure black or pure white—without an iris or pupil (see *Dual Persona*). Phase elves originate from an alternate dimension which is inaccessible to other races, and about which they never speak.

Available Classes and Max Level

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| ▶ Acrobat: 10th | ▶ Knight: 10th |
| ▶ Assassin: 10th | ▶ Magic-user: 11th |
| ▶ Fighter: 7th | ▶ Ranger: 10th |
| ▶ Illusionist: 11th | ▶ Thief: 10th |

Detect Secret Doors

Phase elves have keen eyes that allow them, when actively searching, to detect hidden and secret doors with a 2-in-6 chance (see *Dungeon Adventuring in Old-School Essentials*).

Dual Persona

A phase elf has two independent but interconnected personae or *phases*, each with a different character class. When creating a phase elf character, the player must select *two classes*, one per phase (e.g. a fighter phase and a thief phase).

Phasing: Each morning, upon awakening, the character may choose to switch to their other phase. This is called *phasing*. Phasing is possible at most once per day.

THACO and saves: The character uses the values for their current phase's class.

Class abilities: The character can only use abilities of their current phase's class. This includes spell-casting and allowed weapons and armour.

Hit points: The character has a single pool of hit points, shared by both phases. When rolling for hit points at character creation, roll the HD of both classes and divide the total by two. Upon gaining a level, any hit points gained are also divided by two. Fractions are tracked and may add up to a whole number later on.

Experience points: The character has a separately tracked experience level and XP count for each of their two classes. XP earned is divided between the two classes as the referee sees fit, based on which phase (or phases) the character was in while adventuring. When the character has gained enough XP in one of their classes, that class increases in level.

Eye colour: When in the one phase, the character's eyes are pure white; when in the other phase their eyes are pure black.

Personalities: The two phases have complete knowledge of the other's actions. They usually share the same name, but their personalities and goals may differ.

Alignment: The two phases may be of different alignment.

Immunity to Ghoul Paralysis

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Listening at Doors

Phase elves have a 2-in-6 chance of hearing noises (see *Dungeon Adventuring* in *Old-School Essentials*).