

# CARCASS CRAWLER

The official Old-School Essentials zine

Issue #5



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PETER FAGIANO



# INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME

Welcome to issue 5 of *Carcass Crawler*—the official *Old-School Essentials* zine.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Character Classes and Races

Introduce these new races as NPCs for player characters to encounter or add them to the roster of character types players can choose from. Both are presented as demihuman classes and as separate races.

**Changeling:** Magical demihumans with powers of deception and shape-stealing, possibly related to doppelgängers.

**Ratling:** Furry, rat-like, bipedal humanoid with long prehensile tails, large ears, and sensitive noses.

### Cantrips

Minor arcane spells practiced by apprentice spell casters before they are able to cast full 1st level spells.

### Level 0 Characters

Rules and tables for creating level 0 “normal humans”, for use as retainers or in specially designed funnel adventures.

### Special Materials

Rules for weapons and armour constructed of bone, stone, bronze, adamantine, silver, and mithral.

### Expanded Poisons

Names and flavour details for the 9 poison types presented in *Old-School Essentials*, along with 11 new types.

### Magic Swords

Traits tables and minor magical quirks to add unique flavour to every sword +1.

### Lake & River Monsters

Eight new monsters themed around freshwater rivers and lakes.

### Up Chaos River

A short adventure in two parts, designed as a funnel for level 0 characters (or for a normal party of 1st level adventurers).

**Part 1:** A desperate journey up a chaos-infested river.

**Part 2:** The lair of a river hag and her corrupted giant beaver minions.

# NEW CHARACTER CLASSES

BY BRAD KERR AND GAVIN NORMAN

## RATLING

By Brad  
Kerr

### Demihuman Class

**Requirements:** Minimum CON 9

**Prime requisite:** DEX

**Hit Die type:** 1d6

**Combat aptitude:** Semi-martial

**Maximum level:** 8

**Armour:** Leather, shields

**Weapons:** Any

**Languages:** Alignment, Common, the secret language of rats

Ratlings are fur-covered, rat-like, bipedal humanoids. They stand 4' to 5' tall and have 3'-long prehensile tails, large ears, and sensitive noses. Though industrious and adaptable, their association with vermin tends to place them in the fringes of human settlements. Ratlings are born in broods of 3-5, reach maturity around age 7 or 8, and rarely live past 40. Naturally gregarious, their relatively short lifespans lend the species a certain devil-may-care outlook that other races find amusing.

### Awareness

Ratlings are only surprised on a roll of 1 due to their strong sense of smell. This may mean that a ratling is able to act in the surprise round while their companions are surprised.

### Infravision

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



CHRIS WUTH

### Prehensile Tail

Ratlings can hold an item (up to 50 coins weight) in their tail, though the tail does not have the coordination to attack with a weapon or to manipulate fine objects like keys or scissors. A ratling cannot climb when holding an object in their tail, as it is required for balance.

### Rat Affinity

Ratlings live alongside many different species of rats, including giant rats. They can speak the secret language of rats and gain a +1 bonus to reaction rolls when encountering rats.

### Ratling Skills

Ratlings can use the following skills, with the chance of success shown opposite:

**Climb Sheer Surfaces (CS):** A roll is required for each 100' to be climbed. If the roll fails, the ratling falls at the halfway point, suffering falling damage.

## Ratling Level Progression

| Level | XP      | HD | THACO   | Saving Throws |   |    |    |    |
|-------|---------|----|---------|---------------|---|----|----|----|
|       |         |    |         | D             | W | P  | B  | S  |
| 1     | 0       | 1  | 19 [0]  | 8             | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| 2     | 2,000   | 2  | 19 [0]  | 8             | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| 3     | 4,000   | 3  | 19 [0]  | 8             | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| 4     | 8,000   | 4  | 19 [0]  | 8             | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 |
| 5     | 16,000  | 5  | 17 [+2] | 6             | 7 | 8  | 10 | 10 |
| 6     | 32,000  | 6  | 17 [+2] | 6             | 7 | 8  | 10 | 10 |
| 7     | 64,000  | 7  | 17 [+2] | 6             | 7 | 8  | 10 | 10 |
| 8     | 128,000 | 8  | 17 [+2] | 6             | 7 | 8  | 10 | 10 |

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

**D:** Death / poison; **W:** Wands;  
**P:** Paralysis / petrify; **B:** Breath attacks;  
**S:** Spells / rods / staves.

**Detect Poison (DP):** A ratling can smell poisons mixed into food/drink or coated on an object. For poisons with a specified detection chance (e.g. the poisons on *p18*), the ratling's DP is added to the normal detection chance.

**Hear Noise (HN):** In a quiet environment (e.g. not in combat), a ratling can attempt to listen at a door or to hear the sounds of something (e.g. a wandering monster) approaching.

**Hide in shadows (HS):** Requires the ratling to be motionless—attacking or moving while hiding is not possible.

**Move Silently (MS):** A ratling can attempt to sneak past enemies unnoticed.

### After Reaching 8th Level

A ratling may construct a warren: either a burrow in soft soil or a hidden sewer stronghold beneath a major city. The construction will attract 2d6 1st level ratlings who are loyal to the character. In addition, giant rats within 5 miles will treat the ratling as friends and may warn of intruders, carry messages, and so on. This friendship is contingent on the character's protection of the giant rat population.

### Ratling Skills Chance of Success

| Level | CS | DP | HN  | HS | MS |
|-------|----|----|-----|----|----|
| 1     | 87 | 30 | 1–2 | 10 | 20 |
| 2     | 88 | 35 | 1–2 | 15 | 25 |
| 3     | 89 | 40 | 1–3 | 20 | 30 |
| 4     | 90 | 45 | 1–3 | 25 | 35 |
| 5     | 91 | 50 | 1–3 | 30 | 40 |
| 6     | 92 | 55 | 1–3 | 35 | 45 |
| 7     | 93 | 60 | 1–4 | 40 | 50 |
| 8     | 94 | 65 | 1–4 | 45 | 55 |

### Rolling Skill Checks

**Hear noise:** Is rolled on 1d6. If the roll is within the listed range of numbers, the skill succeeds.

**Other skills:** Are rolled on d%, with a result of less than or equal to the listed percentage indicating success.

### Player Knowledge

The referee should roll for DP, HN, HS, and MS on the player's behalf, as the ratling does not immediately know if the attempt was successful. If a HS or MS roll fails, the referee knows that the ratling has been noticed and should determine enemies' actions appropriately.

# CHANGELING

By Gavin  
Norman

## Demihuman Class

**Requirements:** Minimum INT 9

**Prime requisite:** CHA and DEX

**Hit Die type:** 1d6

**Combat aptitude:** Semi-martial

**Maximum level:** 10

**Armour:** Leather, shields

**Weapons:** Any

**Languages:** Alignment, Common,  
Doppelgänger

Changelings are magical demihumans with powers of deception and shape-stealing. In their natural form, a changeling appears to be a normal human.

**Prime requisites:** A changeling with at least 13 in one prime requisite gets +5% to XP. If both CHA and DEX are 16 or higher, the character gets a +10% bonus.

## Back-Stab

When attacking an unaware opponent from behind, a changeling receives a +4 bonus to hit and doubles damage dealt.

## Increasing Damage (Optional Rule)

Back-stab attacks optionally inflict triple damage at 6th level and above.

## Changeling Skills

Changelings can use the following skills, with chance of success shown opposite:

► **Beguile (BE):** On a successful check, the changeling's words take on a supernatural potency. A person of HD no greater than the changeling's level must **save versus spells** or believe the changeling's words. The beguilement lasts for 1 round per level of the changeling. Afterwards, the beguiled person realises they have been tricked. This skill may only be used on any given person once per day.

► **Hear noise (HN):** In a quiet environment (e.g. not in combat), a changeling can attempt to listen at a door or to hear the sounds of something (e.g. a wandering monster) approaching.

► **Hide in shadows (HS):** Requires the changeling to be motionless—attacking or moving while hiding is not possible.

► **Move silently (MS):** A changeling can attempt to sneak past enemies unnoticed.

## Shape-Stealing

A changeling can alter their form to exactly mimic another person. This requires 1 round of physical contact.

**Slain victims:** The changeling can steal the form of a person they have killed within the last turn.

**Unconscious victims:** The changeling can steal the form of a sleeping or unconscious victim.

**Conscious victims:** From 5th level, the changeling can steal the form of a conscious victim. This requires a successful melee attack in combat. The victim may **save versus spells** to resist.

## Effects of Successful Shape-Stealing

**Duration:** The changeling remains in the new form for up to one turn per level.

**Stats:** The changeling retains their own intelligence, hit points, saving throws, and attack probabilities.

**Capabilities:** Physical capabilities of the new form (e.g. strength, physical attack forms, modes of movement) are acquired. Non-physical special abilities (e.g. immunities, breath weapons, spells) are not.

**Clothing and gear:** Items visibly worn or carried by the victim are copied. Copied items do not possess any magical properties of the original and vanish if dropped.

## Changeling Level Progression

| Level | XP      | HD   | THACO   | Saving Throws |    |    |    |    |
|-------|---------|------|---------|---------------|----|----|----|----|
|       |         |      |         | D             | W  | P  | B  | S  |
| 1     | 0       | 1    | 19 [0]  | 11            | 12 | 12 | 15 | 12 |
| 2     | 2,500   | 2    | 19 [0]  | 11            | 12 | 12 | 15 | 12 |
| 3     | 5,000   | 3    | 19 [0]  | 11            | 12 | 12 | 15 | 12 |
| 4     | 10,000  | 4    | 19 [0]  | 11            | 12 | 12 | 15 | 12 |
| 5     | 20,000  | 5    | 17 [+2] | 9             | 10 | 10 | 13 | 10 |
| 6     | 30,000  | 6    | 17 [+2] | 9             | 10 | 10 | 13 | 10 |
| 7     | 60,000  | 7    | 17 [+2] | 9             | 10 | 10 | 13 | 10 |
| 8     | 120,000 | 8    | 17 [+2] | 9             | 10 | 10 | 13 | 10 |
| 9     | 240,000 | 9    | 14 [+5] | 7             | 8  | 8  | 11 | 8  |
| 10    | 360,000 | 9+2* | 14 [+5] | 7             | 8  | 8  | 11 | 8  |

**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.

## After Reaching 9th Level

A changeling may construct a secret hideout, attracting 2d6 apprentices (changelings, thieves, or similar characters of 1st level). Apprentices are usually loyal to the character, but are not automatically replaced if killed. The character may use their apprentices as the beginnings of a Thieves' Guild.



PETER FAGIANO

## Changeling Skills Chance of Success

| Level | BE | HN  | HS | MS |
|-------|----|-----|----|----|
| 1     | 20 | 1-2 | 10 | 20 |
| 2     | 25 | 1-2 | 15 | 25 |
| 3     | 30 | 1-3 | 20 | 30 |
| 4     | 35 | 1-3 | 25 | 35 |
| 5     | 40 | 1-3 | 30 | 40 |
| 6     | 43 | 1-3 | 36 | 45 |
| 7     | 46 | 1-4 | 45 | 55 |
| 8     | 50 | 1-4 | 55 | 65 |
| 9     | 55 | 1-4 | 65 | 75 |
| 10    | 60 | 1-4 | 75 | 85 |

## Rolling Skill Checks

**Hear noise:** Is rolled on 1d6. If the roll is within the listed range of numbers, the skill succeeds.

**Other skills:** Are rolled on d%, with a result of less than or equal to the listed percentage indicating success.

## Player Knowledge

The referee should roll for HN, HS, and MS on the player's behalf, as the changeling does not immediately know if the attempt was successful. If a HS or MS roll fails, the referee knows that the changeling has been noticed and should determine enemies' actions appropriately.

# NEW CHARACTER RACES

BY BRAD KERR AND GAVIN NORMAN

## CHANGELING

By Gavin  
Norman

**Requirements:** Minimum INT 9  
**Ability modifiers:** -1 CON, +1 CHA  
**Languages:** Alignment, Common, Doppelgänger

### Available Classes and Maximum Level

- Acrobat: 8th
- Assassin: 10th
- Fighter: 6th
- Illusionist: 9th
- Magic-user: 7th
- Thief: 9th

Changelings are magical demihumans with powers of deception and **shape-stealing**. In their natural form, a **changeling** appears to be a normal **human**.

### Listening at Doors

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

### Shape-Stealing

A changeling can alter their form to exactly mimic another person. This requires 1 round of physical contact.

**Slain victims:** The changeling can steal the form of a person they have killed within the last turn.

**Unconscious victims:** The changeling can steal the form of a sleeping or unconscious victim.



**Conscious victims:** From 5th level, the changeling can steal the form of a conscious victim. This requires a successful melee attack in combat. The victim may **save versus spells** to resist.

### Effects of Successful Shape-Stealing

**Duration:** The changeling remains in the new form for up to one turn per level.

**Stats:** The changeling retains their own intelligence, hit points, saving throws, and attack probabilities.

**Capabilities:** Physical capabilities of the new form (e.g. strength, physical attack forms, modes of movement) are acquired. Non-physical special abilities (e.g. immunities, breath weapons, spells) are not.

**Clothing and gear:** Items visibly worn or carried by the victim are copied. Copied items do not possess any magical properties of the original and vanish if dropped.

# RATLING

By Brad  
Kerr

**Requirements:** Minimum CON 9  
**Ability modifiers:** -1 CHA, +1 DEX  
**Languages:** Alignment, Common

## Available Classes and Maximum Level

- ▶ **Acrobat:** 8th
- ▶ **Assassin:** 7th
- ▶ **Fighter:** 6th
- ▶ **Illusionist:** 6th
- ▶ **Thief:** 8th

Ratlings are fur-covered, rat-like, bipedal humanoids. They stand 4' to 5' tall and have 3'-long prehensile tails, large ears, and sensitive noses. Though industrious and adaptable, their association with vermin tends to place them in the fringes of human settlements. Ratlings are born in broods of 3–5, reach maturity around age 7 or 8, and rarely live past 40. Naturally gregarious, their relatively short lifespans lend the species a certain devil-may-care outlook that other races find amusing.

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Ratlings are only surprised on a roll of 1 due to their strong sense of smell. This may mean that a ratling is able to act in the surprise round while their companions are surprised.

## Detect Poison

A ratling has a 25% chance of smelling poisons mixed into food/drink or coated on an object. For poisons with a specified detection chance (e.g. the poisons on *p18*), this 25% is added to the normal detection chance.

## Infravision

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



CHRIS RUTH

## Listening at Doors

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

## Prehensile Tail

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# CANTRIPS

By GAVIN NORMAN

This article presents optional rules for minor magical effects usable by arcane spell casters. These add fun flavour to wizardly classes, and can sometimes be used in creative ways when adventuring.

## About Cantrips

Before beginning their adventuring career, arcane spell casters undergo years of arduous study, learning the theories of magic, the words and gestures to manipulate arcane energies, and finally the techniques for memorising spells. For a beginner, even lowly 1st level spells are too taxing, so apprentices first practice with simple spells of lesser power. These are known as *cantrips*.

## Learning Cantrips

Dedicated arcane spell casters (e.g. illusionists, magic-users) know a number of cantrips depending on their level. The table below shows both the number of cantrips in the character's spell book and the number they can memorise. Cantrips are selected by the referee (who may allow the player to choose or roll).

### Number of Cantrips

| Level | Cantrips |
|-------|----------|
| 1-2   | 2        |
| 3-4   | 3        |
| 5+    | 4        |

**Adding cantrips:** An arcane spell caster can add new cantrips to their spell book in the same way as other arcane spells. See *Spell Books* in *Old-School Essentials*.

## 1. Book Leaf

**Duration:** Concentration

**Range:** 10'

The caster can magically open a book and leaf through its pages without touching it.

## 2. Cleaning Brush

**Duration:** 1 turn

**Range:** Touch

A broom or mop takes on a life of its own and cleans an area designated by the caster (up to a 30' × 30' area in 1 turn).

## 3. Coloured Flame

**Duration:** 1 turn

**Range:** 20'

A flame within range is imbued with a hue of the caster's choosing.

## 4. Floating Trinket

**Duration:** Concentration

**Range:** 10'

The caster causes a small possession within range to levitate and float through the air at up to 1' per round.

**Object weight limit:** 10 coins or less.

**Possessions:** Only objects owned by the caster for at least a day can be affected.

**Manipulation:** The object cannot be manipulated with enough force or precision to enact its function as a tool.