



Character Themes Heroes for Hire

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Developing your character into someone who has a rich story can be a fun and rewarding process. You likely have an idea of what race and what class you want to play, but you might have only a general idea of what your character's life was like before you start playing the character at the gaming table. A theme can help you flesh out your character and provide some interesting options for developing his or her background.

This article details four character themes: the explorer, the guttersnipe, the mercenary, and the outlaw.

CHARACTER THEMES

Your character's theme is a career, calling, or identity that describes who he or she is in the world. Just as race and class create basic definitions about who your character is, theme adds a third character component to help refine your story and identity. For example, if you're a human wizard who chooses the guttersnipe theme, you might have started your life on the streets, picking up a few arcane tricks here and there from several different wizards. Perhaps a wizard took you under his or her wing, more or less, but without the formality of taking you in as an apprentice. Each theme can encompass several unique stories within the same concept.

For information on using themes as part of character creation and rules for how to gain and use theme powers and features, see "Heroes of Nature and Lore," the first article in this series.

EXPLORER

Seekers of new lands and lost places, explorers are masters of the trackless wilderness. Formal exploration is not very common in the world; a few wealthy kingdoms and mercantile cities charter expeditions to distant lands or reward travelers who return home with descriptions of far-off places. Most explorers, however, are individuals whose interests or duties lead them to venture into places where other people rarely go. They can be hunters, scouts, pathfinders, merchants, or emissaries to distant realms. Pursuing their private interests or carrying out important missions entrusted to them leads these travelers into the wild places of the world.

Many explorers begin their adventures as professional treasure-seekers. Searching out legends about lost hoards, hidden artifacts, or unplundered tombs, they put their talents to use in locating the rich score that no one else has found. Other explorers are engaged in searches, quests, or missions that lead them to places no one has visited before. For example, an order of knights or wizards might charge its members with traveling the world to battle a specific threat. A few explorers are true wanderers—travelers who feel compelled to see for themselves what lies beyond the next ridge or to seek out legendary challenges. Fortune or fame is of little concern to these wanderers; they live to satisfy their personal curiosity or to measure themselves against the dangers they overcome.

Regardless of individual motivation, explorers must master a daunting set of skills if they hope to be successful. They must be tough and enduring, capable of traveling great distances over difficult terrain, and must have the ability to survive the worst extremes of weather. They must be expert beast hunters

and foragers with a talent for living off the land no matter where they are, since they're not likely to find friendly inns or trading posts once they leave civilization behind. A knack for direction is indispensable; roads are nonexistent in the wilds, and missing an important landmark or choosing the wrong turn off a poorly marked trail might be a fatal mistake. Finally, explorers had better be ready to defend themselves from the attacks of vicious raiders and hungry monsters.

Creating an Explorer

The explorer theme works well with any character class. Rogues are drawn to this theme as treasure-seekers; legends of vast hoards in lost cities or fantastic treasures hidden in deep caverns are the meat and drink of many bold rogues. Wizards take to the explorer's path for less materialistic reasons, drawn by the lure of knowledge and discovery. Rangers are perhaps the most iconic explorers. At home in the deepest wilderness, skilled in the hunt, capable and enduring, rangers are pathfinders and trackers of extraordinary skill. They can venture through wilderness that no other explorers could survive.

Starting Feature

Scrambling over broken ground, balancing on fallen logs, determining which direction to take to get to your goal, and setting your feet in the firmest patch of a bog or a streambed are second nature to you. You have an uncanny knack for knowing which direction you face. You can tell which branch of a trail is likely to lead in the direction you want to go, and you can gain your bearings by studying the landscape around you.

As you venture through various environments, and as the tenderfoots around you flail for balance or slog



through the muck, you're already on the other side of the obstacle. Broken ground and heavy undergrowth can impede others who aren't familiar with the wilderness, but by using *surefooted stride*, you know how to cross the worst terrain without difficulty and turn it to your advantage in a fight. Almost any sort of ground can offer some cover if you know what you're doing, or if you can distract an enemy that needs to pay attention to where it is standing.

Benefit: You can tell which way is north, and you gain a +5 bonus to any skill check to avoid becoming lost, find your way to a specific location, or spot a distant landmark.

In addition, you gain the *surefooted stride* power.

Surefooted Stride Explorer Utility

Your expert woodcraft allows you to move easily through difficult terrain and use it to your advantage in battle.

Encounter ♦ Primal
Move Action Personal

Effect: You move up to your speed, ignoring difficult terrain. Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex if you are in difficult terrain, and you gain combat advantage against enemies that are in difficult terrain.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

You can push yourself to make better speed over distance than most people can. By choosing easier paths and showing those around you the best way to handle harsh conditions, you can help a small company make exceptional time through the worst sort of wilderness and ensure that your companions survive the experience in the best possible condition.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Endurance checks. In addition, for the purpose of determining how far you and up to ten companions can travel in

an hour or a day, treat the group's speed as the slowest member's speed + 1. While the group travels with you, its members also gain a +2 power bonus to Endurance checks.

Level 10 Feature

You've been toughened up by long journeys and hard treks. You have built up a resistance to the hazards of your profession and are more likely to shake off poisons and stand your ground.

Benefit: You gain a +1 power bonus to Fortitude and a +2 bonus to saving throws against ongoing poison damage.

Optional Powers

Whether you venerate the primal spirits of the wilderness or not, you have learned much by observing the ways of the wild creatures around you.

Level 2 Utility Power

Many obstacles such as slippery branches, high ledges, deep gorges, and torrential streams are best crossed with a feat of pure athleticism or balance. Like the wild stag fleeing the hunter, you hurl yourself over whatever lies in your path or swiftly run across a treacherous surface without breaking stride.

Stag's Bound Explorer Utility 2

Fleet-footed as the wild deer, you fly over a treacherous surface or make a daring leap.

Encounter ♦ Primal
Move Action Personal

Effect: You move up to your speed +2. During this movement, and until the end of your next turn, you gain a +5 power bonus to Athletics checks to jump and Acrobatics checks to balance or reduce falling damage. Any jump you make is considered to have a running start, and you can move at full speed while balancing.

Level 6 Utility Power

The eagle is legendary for its ability to see prey at great distances. With a moment's concentration, you sharpen your own eyesight for a short time, giving you the ability to strike distant targets with your ranged attacks or spot a foe before it spots you.

Eagle's Eye Explorer Utility 6

You fix your eye on a distant target, seeing it with exceptional clarity.

Encounter ♦ Primal
Minor Action Personal

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain combat advantage with your ranged attack powers and area attack powers, and your weapon attacks take no penalty for long range. You also gain a +4 power bonus to Perception checks to detect hidden objects or creatures.

Level 10 Utility Power

Your travels often lead you into places guarded by deadfalls, pits, or hidden traps. But like the wildcat, you have an uncanny nose for danger and lightning-quick reflexes. When the trap closes around you, you leap out of the way in the blink of an eye.

Lynx's Reflexes Explorer Utility 10

Sensing a sudden threat, you throw yourself out of danger's way.

Encounter ♦ Primal
Immediate Interrupt Personal
Trigger: A trap attacks you.

Effect: You shift up to 2 squares and gain a +4 power bonus to AC and Reflex against the trap's attack.



GUTTERSNIPE

Heroes can rise from unfortunate circumstances, and few circumstances are less fortunate than to begin life as a penniless street urchin in a hard, unforgiving city. Orphaned, abandoned, or mistreated as children, guttersnipes can grow into hard-bitten, cynical adults. Marked by the lower-class manners and speech patterns of the poorest quarters, guttersnipe heroes struggle to be seen as something more than the dregs of society. Guttersnipes live their lives under constant suspicion from the more fortunate people in the world. Most are seen as greedy, lying cutpurses, footpads, or ruffians who would slit a throat for a handful of silver pieces. Common people openly distrust them, constables and watch officers routinely harass or question them, and aristocrats are surrounded by watchful guards or counselors who make it a point to keep the riffraff, especially dangerous riffraff, away.

Under this cloak of distrust, some guttersnipes choose to live down to others' expectations, nursing bitter grudges against their "betters." Others desperately try to escape their poor origin by concealing their street manners and lack of education behind carefully rehearsed facades of gentility; they dread the day when someone sees through the disguise. Some happy-go-lucky souls choose not to be troubled by suspicions and slights, refusing to be defined by others' ill-informed judgments. Finally, benefactors who see potential in them pluck a lucky few guttersnipes out of the streets and give them a chance to make something of themselves. A powerful wizard might detect a spark of greatness in a street urchin and teach the boy or girl a few tricks; a compassionate priest might offer a poor child a chance to become an acolyte in a temple. As recounted in more than one legendary tale,

guttersnipes are sometimes picked up from the streets by royalty or high nobles and adopted after doing some great service or showing tremendous pluck.

Whether a guttersnipe meets life with wry wit or scheming self-interest, every one is a survivor who excels in recognizing and seizing opportunity. Gutter-snipes who through good fortune or hard work leave the streets behind to become wizards, clerics, or wards of nobles might not look or sound much like the beggar children they once were, but inside they still have the quick wits and daring that got them noticed in the first place.

Creating a Guttersnipe

Naturally, a great number of rogues are guttersnipes; growing up in the streets provides a perfect opportunity for learning the rogue's talents. Fighters, especially slayers, also fit this theme well. Gutter-snipes of exceptional talent sometimes turn to magic and master the warlock's art, determined to earn respect through power. Beyond that, characters of any class could be plucked from the streets or succeed in their efforts to improve their circumstances. A guttersnipe is most likely a human, dwarf, halfling, drow, or tiefling, since the lowborn folk of these races are most likely to congregate in the sort of poor, desperate slums from which guttersnipes come.

Starting Feature

In the worst quarters of cities, packs of nearly feral guttersnipes pose a threat to careless passersby. Darting out of alleyways or scurrying through thick crowds, they descend like swooping hawks, cutting purses or grabbing parcels before disappearing into the shadows. For those victims who seem a little too ready to draw a blade to defend their property, a

quick slash to the hamstring or the calf cripples any pursuit. You are a master of this art, using the technique to make a single swift attack before retreating to a safe distance.

Benefit: You gain the *running slash* power.

Running Slash

Guttersnipe Attack

You dart past a foe, attacking as you pass by.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Standard Action **Melee 1**

Effect: You move up to your speed and make the following attack at any point during your move. This movement does not provoke an opportunity attack from the target.

Target: One creature

Attack: Highest ability modifier vs. Reflex

Hit: 1[W] + highest ability modifier damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 11: 2[W] + highest ability modifier damage.

Level 21: 3[W] + highest ability modifier damage.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Buying and selling valuables of uncertain origin is second nature to you. No matter where you go, you can establish contact with the most motivated sellers and buyers. Whether you're selling a statuette you found in a dungeon or buying new rituals to add to your spellbook, you can get a better price than anybody else.

Benefit: When you buy an item, you pay 90 percent of the listed price. When you sell an item, you receive 10 percent more than the price normally quoted for selling that item.

Level 10 Feature

You know from personal experience how much street urchins, beggars, pickpockets, and other petty criminals understand about the goings-on in a city.

Better yet, your reputation as a hero of humble origins means that poor folk seek you out and keep you well informed at all times; you have a ready-made spy network waiting for you wherever you go.

Benefit: You gain a +5 power bonus to Streetwise checks. You can make a Streetwise check once per day as a free action as long as you are in a town or a city.

Optional Powers

Growing up on the streets, you quickly learned how to get away from trouble and stay out of the authorities' reach. You're nearly impossible to corner, and when enemies box you in, you have a knack for making them look like buffoons. Now that you're grown, you can't rely on a child's stature to get you out of danger, but you can still lure an enemy into making a mistake with a few barbed words and your own quick reflexes.

Level 2 Utility Power

As any city watch member could tell you, guttersnipes are renowned for their ability to taunt and infuriate their betters. You have mastered the stinging insult, the rude gesture, and the mocking laugh. When an enemy misses you, you make sure everyone knows about it. Even unintelligent foes can be baited into wild swings if you look like you're leaving yourself open to an attack.

Infuriating Taunt

Guttersnipe Utility 2

You enrage an enemy by mocking its failure.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Immediate Reaction **Close burst 5**

Trigger: An enemy within 5 squares of you misses you with an attack.

Target: The triggering enemy in the burst

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (including rolls against you) until it hits you with an attack.

Level 6 Utility Power

If you've learned one thing, it's how to make fools out of bigger, tougher enemies, especially when they outnumber you. It's difficult for them to keep track of you, and you dart away from the swings of swords or take cover from a foe by ducking behind its allies.

Fools' Dance

Guttersnipe Utility 6

When pressed by your enemies, you turn their numbers against them. The closer you are to your enemies, the farther you are from harm.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, each time you are attacked, you gain a power bonus to all defenses against that attack. The bonus equals the number of enemies adjacent to you when the attack is made. In addition, until the end of your next turn, each time you are missed by an attack, you can shift 1 square as a free action.

Level 10 Utility Power

Just when it seems you're trapped, you somehow wriggle out of trouble. You go limp, slip an arm out of a sleeve, tear your cloak or tunic, or buck and kick with such suddenness that you shake free of any restraint. In the blink of an eye, you're on your feet again 10 or 15 feet away, ready to run for it—or resume the fight.

Unlikely Escape

Guttersnipe Utility 10

With a quick twist of your torso, you slip free from a situation that impedes you.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Move Action **Personal**

Requirement: You must be restrained, slowed, immobilized, or flanked by enemies.

Effect: You end one effect on you that is immobilizing, restraining, or slowing you, and you shift up to 3 squares.

MERCENARY

Sellswords, spellslingers, soldiers of fortune, freebooters—regardless of their appellation, mercenaries are heroes who work for pay. Capable warriors and spellcasters are always in demand, and the more desperately they're needed, the better paid they are. More than a few young heroes begin their careers by striking out in search of opportunities to turn their fighting skills into high-paying jobs. Although most people expect that mercenaries do only what they're paid to do, it's not unusual for a heroic mercenary to show a soft spot after coming across people in need who can't afford his or her services. It might not be good business, but one of the advantages of being unencumbered by loyalties and obligations is the ability to follow the dictates of one's conscience whenever they strike.

Each adventuring mercenary falls into one of two broad categories: retainer or freelancer. A retainer signs on with a patron, providing service in exchange for a regular stipend or salary. Nobles, merchants, and royal officials often find it useful to keep a small number of talented troubleshooters at their beck and call for escorting them during travels, guarding their homes or interests, or dealing sternly with rivals. Retainers are naturally expected to follow their employers' orders, but they spend less time looking for work.

A freelancer hires on for one specific job at a time or works on speculation—for example, hunting down outlaws who have prices on their heads or searching out prospective employers who have problems in need of fixing.

Mercenaries might be more flexible in their standards than high-minded characters who serve

others without thought of reward, but that doesn't mean they'll do anything for money. Heroic mercenaries won't hesitate to walk away from jobs that require them to murder, rob, or oppress commoners. Likewise, the best mercenaries pride themselves on their loyalty and professionalism even under difficult conditions. Any thug can take a paymaster's gold to swagger around and look capable when danger's far away, but honest mercenaries don't slink off into the shadows when called upon to earn their pay. Building a reputation for having standards and being reliable is the best way to impress future employers. Some mercenaries, however, are little more than brigands who are perfectly happy to earn a living through plundering and banditry if they can't find more respectable work that pays them well enough. Heroic mercenaries therefore face a good deal of suspicion and prejudice from people who expect sellswords to behave like thugs.

Creating a Mercenary

Characters of any class might call themselves mercenaries, or at least make a habit of choosing their quests based on the likely rewards. Rogues and fighters naturally fit the mercenary's approach to adventure, and they often flourish as sellswords. Clerics and paladins can be driven by higher ideals than pure self-interest, but a devout or pious individual might nonetheless fall in with a company of freebooters. Serving as voices of conscience and spiritual shepherds to their more worldly companions, they encourage their allies to take on causes that are both worthy and well paying. On the other hand, wizards can be every bit as avaricious as martial characters who sell their loyalties for gold. Ambitious nobles and powerful merchants find it useful to



retain house wizards who can advise them on arcane matters, spy on rivals, and defend against the wizards employed by their rivals.

Starting Feature

Mercenaries learn to incorporate all sorts of pragmatic tactics into their fighting. Although some might think of these moves as dirty, it's a simple matter of expedience; the best fight is one in which you put your foe at a disadvantage early on and don't give it a chance to recover. However you have come by the experience, you've learned a few different ways to take down an enemy. Maybe you cut your adversary's feet out from under it, maybe you stick your foot behind it and knock it over with a hard shove, or maybe you aim a *magic missile* at a kneecap or dizzy your foe with a *phantasmal assault*. With your enemy on the ground, you have an opportunity to move on to another foe, or beat a retreat—or finish it off while you have the advantage.

Benefit: You gain the *takedown strike* power.

Takedown Strike

Mercenary Attack

You sweep or shoot through an enemy's legs and knock it to the ground—hard.

Encounter ♦ Martial

No Action Melee 1

Trigger: You hit an enemy adjacent to you with an attack.

Target: The triggering enemy

Effect: The target takes extra damage from the triggering attack equal to the ability modifier used in the triggering attack, and you knock the target prone.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Mercenaries spend a lot of time in rough quarters; you don't scare easily. You know the sorts of people you need to approach to find out what's going on in town or learn whether any work is available for a person of your special talents. Naturally, you learned long ago how to project just the right amount of experience, suspiciousness, and willingness to use violence to get your way.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Intimidate checks and Streetwise checks.

Level 10 Feature

Mercenaries are notorious for looking out for their own necks first. You might be more willing than most to run big risks, but that doesn't mean you don't care about surviving the job. The more dangerous the situation gets, the more your finely tuned instinct for survival kicks in.

Benefit: While you are bloodied, you gain a +1 power bonus to all defenses.

Optional Powers

Fighting for pay means that you look on most battles and skirmishes as business transactions, carefully weighing the potential rewards against the likely costs. Fair fights do not exist in your world; you don't see any reason at all to meet your enemies on an even footing if you can find a way to tilt things in your favor.

Level 2 Utility Power

You've seen every trick in the book, and you've thought up a couple of new ones for yourself. By feigning injury, giving up an advantageous position, or pretending to be distracted, you lure an enemy into attacking when you appear to have dropped your guard—but it's a clever trap.

Sellsword's Ploy

Mercenary Utility 2

Your enemy attacks when it appears to have an advantage, but you're ready for it.

Daily ♦ Martial

Immediate Interrupt

Personal

Trigger: An enemy attacks you while it has combat advantage against you.

Effect: You gain temporary hit points equal to 3 + one-half your level. Until the end of your next turn, you do not grant combat advantage to the triggering enemy, and it grants combat advantage to you.

Level 6 Utility Power

The first step in fighting smart is to control the range of the engagement. Some enemies are best dealt with at a distance, and any mercenary worth his or her salt stays out of their way. Other enemies—for example, dangerous archers or spellcasters—should be kept right under the menace of your blade. You know a

technique or two for keeping enemies from getting away from you when you don't want them to.

I'm Right Here

Mercenary Utility 6

When an enemy tries to slip away from you, you stick to it.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Immediate Reaction

Personal

Trigger: An enemy adjacent to you moves away from you.

Effect: You shift up to 2 squares to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy.

Level 10 Utility Power

To a mercenary, the most important objective is to live long enough to collect a reward. That doesn't mean you should stay out of the fighting—the best way to avoid getting killed is to make sure your side wins as quickly and decisively as possible. After all, they say that the best defense is a good offense.

Brutal Survivor

Mercenary Utility 10

The best way to survive a fight is to take out your enemies as fast as you can.

Daily ♦ **Martial**

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, each time you reduce an enemy to 0 hit points or score a critical hit, you gain temporary hit points equal to 3 + one-half your level.

OUTLAW

The world is a hard place. Many people are forced to do unfortunate things to survive; some are wrongly accused, and others find that the laws and structures that are meant to shield the weak from their depredations protect oppressors. Outlaw heroes are wanted by the authorities in their native realms. They risk arrest every time they show themselves, and they must develop a talent for disguise, take to a life in the wilderness, or master the art of the quick escape if they want to avoid the executioner's axe.

Outlaws might come to be outlaws for a variety of reasons. An insecure tyrant might decree the destruction of a noble family that poses a threat to his reign, leaving the survivors destitute and hunted by royal authorities. A tragic misunderstanding or accident might condemn an individual, who is discovered standing over a murdered archmage's body with a bloody dagger in her hand. No one believes her when she tries to explain that she found him already dead. In a realm where the powerful are free to oppress the weak, standing up to a cruel official or lord who injures or mistreats someone can easily turn a hero into an outlaw. However, it's far more common for an outlaw to justly stand condemned for her actions. She might be a habitual scofflaw who defies authority, or she might have made one tragic mistake in a moment of desperation or anger. Many paths can lead a person to earn a price on his or her head, and not all are undeserved.

Outlaw heroes often win the gratitude and loyalty of the poor people in the lands nearby, especially if they're standing up for commoners against oppressive rulers. In lands where the lawful authorities are weak or corrupt, outlaw heroes might be the only resource for defeating dangerous monsters and putting a stop

to villainous plots. In addition, some officials and nobles deliberately cultivate contacts with capable outlaws. Sometimes it's useful to hire agents to do illegal things for good reasons . . . or for selfish ones. Ambitious nobles or courtiers often find employment for criminals and have ways to protect them from arrest or set them free again if they prove useful. Friends at court can make life much more comfortable for outlaw heroes.

Creating an Outlaw

Obviously, rogues are drawn to the outlaw's path; few rogues are ever in the law's good graces, even if they spend most of their time pilfering hoards in monster-haunted dungeons. Fighters and rangers are also well suited to the rigors of an outlaw's life, since they're tough and self-reliant. Clerics and wizards are less likely to be outlaws, but such a combination is not unheard of; a cleric who sees that the authorities are corrupt might be compelled by conscience to aid outlaws who resist injustice. Warlocks are often practitioners of arts frowned upon (or banned outright) by the powers that be, and they become accustomed to following their own paths regardless of the local laws.

Starting Feature

As an outlaw, you've learned that you can't afford the luxury of a fair fight. The best fights are those you win with your first attack, and if you don't, it's helpful to discourage pursuit. *Surprise strike* lets you cripple an enemy right at the start of an encounter, making it your choice whether to fight it out or make your getaway. If you don't have a chance to use it before the fight begins, it's a handy tactic for gaining a good head start by dazing your adversary for a brief moment.

Benefit: You gain the *surprise strike* power.

Surprise Strike

Outlaw Attack

You follow up on the advantage granted by a surprised or distracted enemy to strike a crippling blow.

Encounter ♦ Martial

No Action Special

Trigger: When using a basic attack or an at-will weapon attack power, you hit an enemy that is granting combat advantage to you.

Effect: The enemy is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Additional Features

Level 5 Feature

Staying out of sight can mean a life in the outdoors, hiding out in tangled thickets and lonely heaths. You learned long ago how to cover your tracks, keep up your best speed over rough ground, and use terrain to elude pursuit. Few foes can keep up with you—or get away from you—when you're on your home ground.

Benefit: Choose a terrain type: desert, forest, hills and mountains, marsh and swamp, or snow and tundra. In your chosen terrain, you can't be tracked and you ignore difficult terrain.

Level 10 Feature

You have achieved an impressive level of notoriety in the districts you haunt. Commoners are quick to provide you with information, either in gratitude for your exploits or (if you're a less heroic sort of outlaw) to avert your wrath. Poachers, bandits, and other criminals regard you with respect, envying your success. To your enemies, your name is a byword for swift and certain doom. When you appear on the scene, weak-willed foes are quick to take to their heels rather than face the person behind the terrifying tales.

Benefit: You gain a +2 power bonus to Intimidate checks and Streetwise checks.

Outlaw Utility Powers

The first rule for a successful career as an outlaw is "Don't get caught." Outlaws need to be quick on their feet and quicker with their wits. Your talents help you to launch stealthy ambushes and fade back into the forests or alleyways before your enemies realize that you're around. Even if they flush you from your hiding place, you've got the speed to outrun almost anything on two legs.

Level 2 Utility Power

The best way to avoid capture is to be faster than the enemies trying to catch you. Clumsy watch members or city guards struggling to run you to ground don't have a chance when you decide to lengthen your stride and leave them puffing and panting in your dust. Of course, your fleetness of foot means that many people can't run away from you when the situation is reversed; you can run most enemies down in the space of less than 100 feet.

Burst of Speed

Outlaw Utility 2

You put on an impressive burst of speed.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You gain a +2 power bonus to speed until the end of this turn. Until the start of your next turn, you do not grant combat advantage or take a penalty to attack rolls for running.

Level 6 Utility Power

If you can't outrun your pursuers, you can try to disappear into the terrain around you. You are a master of concealment, and with a few quick steps you can break contact with your enemies and vanish like a ghost.

Out of Sight

Outlaw Utility 6

You slip into the underbrush or the shadows, vanishing with uncanny skill.

Encounter ♦ Martial

Move Action Personal

Effect: You shift 1 square, and then you move up to your speed. If you end your movement in a square with partial cover or partial concealment, you can make a Stealth check as a free action to hide from nonadjacent enemies.

Level 10 Utility Power

Every encounter offers the opportunity for a bold and fast-thinking outlaw to seize the advantage over his or her foes. You can spot a hiding place just before your enemies see you, launch an attack at the very instant a distraction diverts their attention, or start acting with decisive swiftness while your enemies are still taking in the scene.

Improvise Ambush

Outlaw Utility 10

With a sudden distraction, a bluff, or a quick motion, you turn a fair fight into a surprise attack.

Daily ♦ Martial

Free Action Personal

Trigger: You roll initiative at the start of an encounter and are not surprised.

Effect: You and each of your allies gain a +5 power bonus to initiative checks for this encounter.

About the Author

Richard Baker is an award-winning game designer who has written numerous adventures and supplements, including *Manual of the Planes*™, the *DARK SUN*® Campaign Guide, and the *D&D*® GAMMA WORLD™ Roleplaying Game. He's a New York Times bestselling author of *FORGOTTEN REALMS*® novels such as *Condemnation*, the Last Mythal trilogy, and the *Blades of the Moonsea* series. Rich is currently the Design Manager for the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® game at Wizards of the Coast.