

EPIC THREATS HIGH LEVEL NPCs

AS MANY FIFTH EDITION CAMPAIGNS REACH THE upper levels of the game, Game Masters are finding the lack of high challenge rating monsters fails to provide a variety of encounters. While bounded accuracy allows hordes of lower challenge rating monsters to create a threat to high-level player characters, more high-CR monsters are needed to give your legendary encounters variety. Epic Threats provides creatures to bolster the ranks of creatures challenge rating 11 and higher, starting with five new non-player characters.

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Years of practicing magic and combat are not enough to make an arcane blademaster. Only those rare individuals with a talent for both spells and swordplay have the potential, but even they undergo decades of study and training to truly be called a blademaster.

Arcane Blademaster

XP 25,000

CR 20

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Initiative: +1

DEFENSE

AC: 20 (plate and shield)

hp: 256 (27d8 + 135)

Saving Throws: Con +11, Int +11, Wis +8

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Multiattack: The arcane blademaster makes four attacks.

Melee Attack—Longsword: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) slashing damage.

Ranged Attack—Longbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Con** 20 (+5)

Int 20 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+1)

Languages: any six languages

Skills: Arcana +11, Athletics +11

Senses: passive Perception 12

TRAITS

Blade Channeling: Once per turn when the blademaster hits a target with a melee weapon attack, it can cast a cantrip which requires a spell attack roll against the target. This spell attack automatically hits.

Improved War Magic: When the blademaster uses an action to cast a spell, it may make one weapon attack as a bonus action.

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

Magic Weapons: The blademaster's weapon attacks are magical.

Steel Focus: The blademaster has advantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration on spells.

Superior Heavy Armor Master: While wearing heavy armor, the blademaster reduces any bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage taken from nonmagical weapons by 5.

Spellcasting: The arcane blademaster is a 20th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The arcane blademaster has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at-will): *acid splash, blade ward, fire bolt, shocking grasp, true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, charm person, magic missile, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *magic weapon, misty step, see invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, fireball, fly, lightning bolt, tongues*

4th level (3 slots): *fire shield, stoneskin, wall of fire*

5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold, conjure elemental, hold monster, telekinesis*

6th level (2 slots): *globe of invulnerability, sunbeam*

7th level (2 slots): *prismatic spray, teleport*

8th level (1 slot): *power word stun*

9th level (1 slot): *meteor swarm*

RECOMMENDED MAGIC ITEMS

The arcane blademaster may be equipped with one or more of the following magic items at the GM's discretion: +3 *longsword*, *dwarven plate*, *ring of mind shielding*, and two *potions of supreme healing*.

Ascetic grandmasters lead some of the finest monasteries in the world or travel as hermits seeking worthy challenges and students. They appear unassuming, but challenging the speed and strength of these legendary martial artists is akin to challenging a hurricane.

Ascetic Grandmaster

XP 15,000

CR 16

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Initiative: +5

DEFENSE

AC: 20 (Unarmored defense)

hp: 172 (23d8 + 69)

Saving Throws: Str +8, Dex +10, Con +8, Int +7, Wis +10, Cha +8

Damage Resistances: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunity: poison

Condition Immunities: charmed, frightened, and poisoned

OFFENSE

Speed: 60 ft.

Multiattack: The ascetic grandmaster makes six melee attacks.

Melee Attack—Unarmed Strike: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

STATISTICS

Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 20 (+5) **Con** 16 (+3)

Int 10 (+0) **Wis** 20 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Languages: any one language (usually Common)

Skills: Acrobatics +10, Athletics +8, Perception +10, Stealth +10

Senses: passive Perception 20

TRAITS

Athlete: The grandmaster only uses 5 feet of movement when standing from prone, climbs at full speed and not half, and can make a running jump after moving only 5 feet rather than 10.

Evasion: If the grandmaster is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

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

Magic Weapons: The grandmaster's unarmed weapon attacks are magical.

Reactive: The grandmaster can take 1 reaction on every turn in combat.

Stunning Strike: Once per turn when the grandmaster hits a creature with a melee attack, the grandmaster can force that creature to make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is stunned until the end of the grandmaster's next turn.

Unarmored Defense: When unarmored, the grandmaster monk's Armor Class increases by a number equal to their Wisdom modifier.

RECOMMENDED MAGIC ITEMS

The ascetic grandmaster may be equipped with one or more of the following magic items at the GM's discretion: *boots of speed*, *cloak of protection*, *ring of jumping*, and two *potions of superior healing*.

High priests are the heads of religious orders and often serve on a monarch's council. Sometimes a high priest is the highest leader in the land, and are often considered the direct mouthpieces of their gods by those who worship.

High Priest

XP 11,400 (CR 14)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Initiative: +0

DEFENSE

AC: 20 (plate and shield)

hp: 150 (20d8 + 60)

Saving Throws: Int +7, Wis +10, Cha +8

Damage Resistance: radiant

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Multiattack: The high priest makes two melee attacks.

Melee Attack—Mace: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage and 10 (3d6) radiant damage.

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Con** 16 (+3)

Int 14 (+2) **Wis** 20 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+3)

Languages: any three languages

Skills: Insight +10, Medicine +10, Persuasion +8, Religion +10

Senses: passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Anointed Healing: Whenever high priest casts a spell that restores hit points, that spell restores an extra 11 (2d10) hit points.

Magic Resistance: The high priest has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Radiant Weapons: All of the high priest's melee weapon attacks deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage (already included in the high priest's attacks) and its weapon attacks are magical.

Spellcasting: The high priest is a 20th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). The high priest has the following cleric spells prepared.

Cantrips (at-will): *light, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, bless, cure wounds, inflict wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, dispel magic, revivify*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, guardian of faith, stone shape*

5th level (3 slots): *contagion, flame strike, greater restoration, mass cure wounds*

6th level (2 slots): *blade barrier, planar ally, true seeing*

7th level (2 slots): *conjure celestial, divine word, fire storm*

8th level (1 slot): *antimagic field*

9th level (1 slot): *mass heal*

RECOMMENDED MAGIC ITEMS

The high priest may be equipped with one or more of the following magic items at the GM's discretion: +2 mace, pearl of power, ring of protection, and a potion of invulnerability.

Knight captains are battle-hardened warriors with countless victories to their names. Their mere presence makes even the most novice warriors better in battle and their peerless swordplay allows them to change the tides of entire battles.

Knight Captain

XP 8,400 (CR 12)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Initiative: +1

DEFENSE

AC: 20 (plate and shield)

hp: 171 (18d8 + 90)

Saving Throws: Con +9, Wis +5

Condition Immunity: frightened

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Multiattack: The knight captain makes four melee attacks.

Melee Attack—Longsword: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) slashing damage.

Ranged Attack—Heavy Crossbow: *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Command the Attack (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest): As an action, the knight captain may issue a command to all non-hostile creatures within 30 feet. Creatures who can see or hear the knight captain may make a single melee or ranged attack with advantage as a reaction.

Inspiring Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest): As an action, the knight captain rouses its troops to vigilance for one minute. Any nonhostile creature within 30 feet who can see or hear the knight captain adds 1d6 to any attack rolls and saving throws for the duration. A creature can only benefit from one Inspiring Leadership bonus at a time. If the knight captain is incapacitated or otherwise unable to speak, the effect ends.

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Con** 20 (+5)

Int 12 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+1) **Cha** 16 (+3)

Languages: any two languages

Senses: passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Magic Resistance: The knight captain has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Superior Heavy Armor Master: While wearing heavy armor, the knight captain reduces any bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage taken from nonmagical weapons by 5.

RECOMMENDED MAGIC ITEMS

The knight captain may be equipped with one or more of the following magic items at the GM's discretion: +1 plate, +2 longsword, javelin of lightning, and two potions of greater healing.



Master assassins always get their mark. These killers never play fair, and aim to kill before they are ever seen. They have far more money and resources than the average contract killer, allowing them access to rare, potent poisons.

Master Assassin

XP 20,000 (CR 18)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Initiative: +5

DEFENSE

AC: 16 (leather)

hp: 147 (22d8 + 48)

Saving Throws: Dex +10, Int +7, Cha +7

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Multiattack: The master assassin makes two attacks.

Melee Attack—Shortsword: *Melee Weapon Attack:*

+10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.

Ranged Attack—Light Crossbow: *Ranged Weapon*

Attack: +10 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+5) **Con** 14 (+2)

Int 15 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+1)

Languages: any three languages

Skills: Acrobatics +10, Deception +7, Perception +7, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +15

Senses: passive Perception 17

TRAITS

Assassinate: During the first turn of combat, the master assassin has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't acted. Any hit the master assassin scores against a surprised creature is a critical hit.

Crossbow Expert: The master assassin ignores the loading quality of light crossbows and being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on the master assassin's ranged attack rolls.

Deadly Poison: The master assassin can use an action to apply a deadly poison to its weapons (already included in the master assassin's attacks). The master assassin carries four doses of this poison. The poison lasts one hour and a single dose can coat 1 melee weapon or 10 pieces of ammunition.

Death Strike: When the master assassin hits a creature that is surprised it must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the master assassin doubles the damage of its attack against that creature.

Evasion: If the master assassin is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack: The master assassin deals an extra 28 (8d6) damage when it hits 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 master assassin that isn't incapacitated and the master assassin doesn't have disadvantage on the roll. A sneak attack may only be made once per turn.

RECOMMENDED MAGIC ITEMS

The master assassin may be equipped with one or more of the following magic items at the GM's discretion: *boots of elvenkind*, *cloak of the bat*, *sword of life stealing*, *potion of invisibility*, and two *potions of supreme healing*.