

The Complete Guide to Doppelgangers

The Firebrand

By Keith Baker

This prestige class, which couldn't quite fit into the printed edition of the Complete Guide to Doppelgangers, examines those who hunt doppelgangers and other shapechangers: the firebrands.

Doppelgangers are not the only creatures that hide behind false masks. Werewolves and wererats are a thorn in humanity's side. Rakshasa and other infernal creatures can hide in plain sight. Encountering these creatures – and realizing the extent to which unnatural creatures have infiltrated humanoid society – can be a shocking and disturbing experience. For some, hunting down and destroying these shapeshifters becomes an obsession. These are the firebrands – warriors who use the fire of truth to destroy those who live by deception.

There are a variety of reasons that people become firebrands. Most seek to protect the innocent from what they perceive to be dangerous supernatural conspiracies. For others, it is more of a game – a chance to hunt the ultimate prey, creatures can hide in plain sight. In either case, firebrands tend to keep their activities a secret. Altruistic firebrands wish to avoid causing panic; they worry about the innocent deaths that would ensue if a superstitious public learned that there were doppelgangers in its midst and start an inquisition. The thrill-seekers just want to enjoy the pleasure of the hunt and don't want anyone else to get in their way. Both seek to identify and eliminate their inhuman enemies without revealing their presence. They learn to be as inconspicuous as the creatures they hunt – slipping into an area, burning out their prey, and disappearing into the night. Firebrand rangers often hunt rustic doppelgangers and packs of wereboars or werewolves; fire-

brand rogues frequent cities, tracking down wererats and urban doppelgangers.

Firebrand Prestige Class

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

The qualify to become a firebrand, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Alignment: Non-lawful

Base Attack Bonus: +3

Sense Motive: 6 ranks

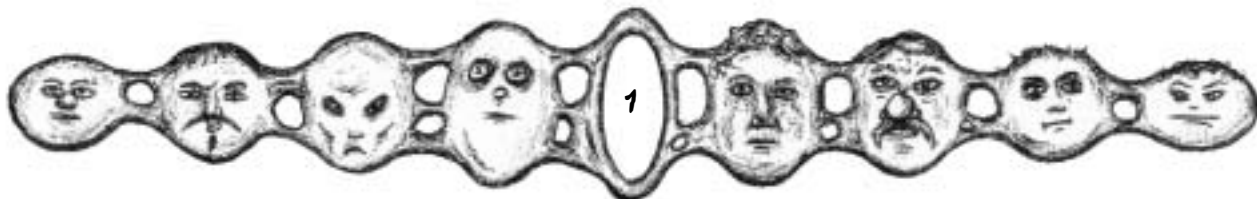
Spot: 6 ranks

Special: The character must have exposed and eliminated a shapechanger, either alone or in the company of no more than five other people.

Class Skills

The class skills (and the key ability for each skill) for firebrands are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (shapechangers) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier



Class Features

All of the following are class features of the firebrand.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Firebrands are proficient with all simple weapons and light armor. While firebrands are skilled warriors, they spend little time learning to use new weapons and instead rely on the tools of their previous trade.

Closed Mind: Many shapechangers – like doppelgangers and rakshasa – use telepathic abilities to maintain a disguise. Firebrands learn to hide their thoughts below a shield of static. For each firebrand level that a character possesses, she receives a +1 bonus to saving throws made against *detect thoughts*, *mind probe*, or other objects or abilities that duplicate the effects of these spells.

Open Eyes: The most important skill of the firebrand is the ability to cut through deception. For each firebrand level a character possesses, she receives a +1 bonus to Spot or Sense Motive checks for purposes of countering Bluff or Disguise. So a 4th level firebrand will receive a +4 bonus to a Spot check when examining a mimic.

Sense the Unnatural: At 3rd level, a firebrand develops an innate sense for spotting disguised monsters. She can make a Wisdom check (DC 15) whenever she comes within 30 feet of a dragon, fey, shapechanger, outsider, or undead that is concealing its true nature; she may add her firebrand levels to her roll. If the check is successful she senses that someone in the area is not what he appears to be, although she cannot pinpoint the individual. With a successful Knowledge (shapechangers) roll (DC 15) she can determine the type of creature that she sensed. She may only make one check against a particular individual per day. This is a supernatural ability.

Touch of Truth: At 4th level, a firebrand's mystical senses become more acute. By touching a target and maintaining the contact for a standard action (which may require a touch attack), the firebrand can sense whether the victim is what he appears to be. The firebrand must make a Wisdom check opposed by the target's Charisma check; the firebrand may add her class levels to her roll. If she succeeds, she may follow up with a Knowledge (shapechangers) check to determine the creature type of her target; if she fails, she knows that the target is an imposter, but not what he actually is. The firebrand must consciously choose to activate this ability, and she can only attempt to use it once per day on any single individual. Note that this has no effect on a humanoid disguised as another humanoid; it will only catch creatures that are hiding their fundamental nature. This is a supernatural ability.

Frozen Flesh: At 5th level, a firebrand develops the power to fix a shapeshifter in its current form, which may limit its combat abilities or prevent it from escaping. To perform this action the firebrand must make a touch attack against her intended victim. If she is successful, the victim must make a Will save (DC 16 + the firebrand's Wisdom modifier). If the victim fails his save, he cannot use any form of shapechanging magic (including spell-like abilities or supernatural powers) for the next 1d6 minutes. This is a supernatural ability that can be used up to five times per day.

Frozen Flesh is effective against humanoids as well as monsters. It even affects involuntary transformations; someone who is under the influence of Frozen Flesh is completely immune to *polymorph other* or similar spells for the duration of the effect. Note, however, that it will not cancel a spell that is already in effect.

A doppelganger under the influence of Frozen Flesh cannot use any of the following feats: Bonehammer, Chameleon, Extend Limb, Springheels, Wings.

Dealing with Firebrands

A gamemaster may find that firebrands can spoil a carefully planned mystery. What is the point of coming up with a doppelganger conspiracy if Cedric is sure to spot them? How could the Doppelgangers have spread so far without being exposed by firebrands?

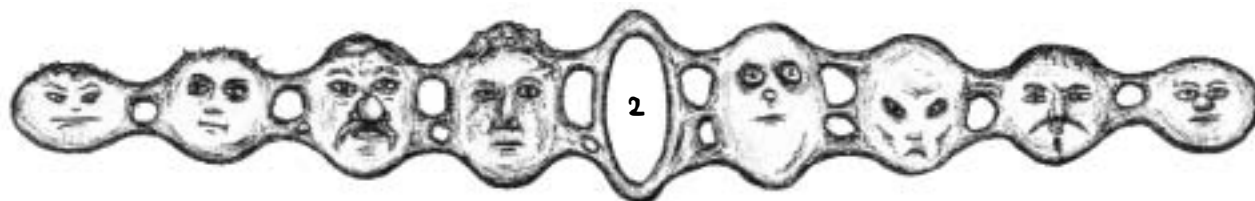
The first thing to remember is that a firebrand cannot share the information his mystic senses gather with other people. Touch of Truth may show him that Jesse Black is a doppelganger, but he can't prove it to anyone else – unless he somehow tricks her into exposing her true nature in front of witnesses. And if the shapechangers have influence within a local guard or government, a firebrand who voices his suspicions to the authorities may simply be exposing himself to danger.

The second thing is that if a firebrand *does* expose the presence of a vast conspiracy, he is most likely to trigger a panic – and a panic that the shapechangers will take advantage of. Wererats and doppelgangers are clever individuals, and if a firebrand starts an inquisition, one of the shapechangers may end up in charge of it. In which case, the end result may harm more innocent people than anyone else.

Together, these are the reasons most firebrands are silent vigilantes. They can identify conspiracies and hidden monsters, but generally, they have to handle these problems personally.

Table 1-1: Firebrand

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+1	+2	Closed Mind, Open Eyes
2	+2	+0	+2	+3	
3	+3	+1	+2	+3	Sense the Unnatural
4	+4	+1	+3	+4	Touch of Truth
5	+5	+1	+3	+4	Frozen Flesh



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