MEDIEVAL FANTASY MECHS POWERED BY STEAM, MAGIC, OR THE LABOR OF A THOUSAND SLAVES

DRAGONMECH
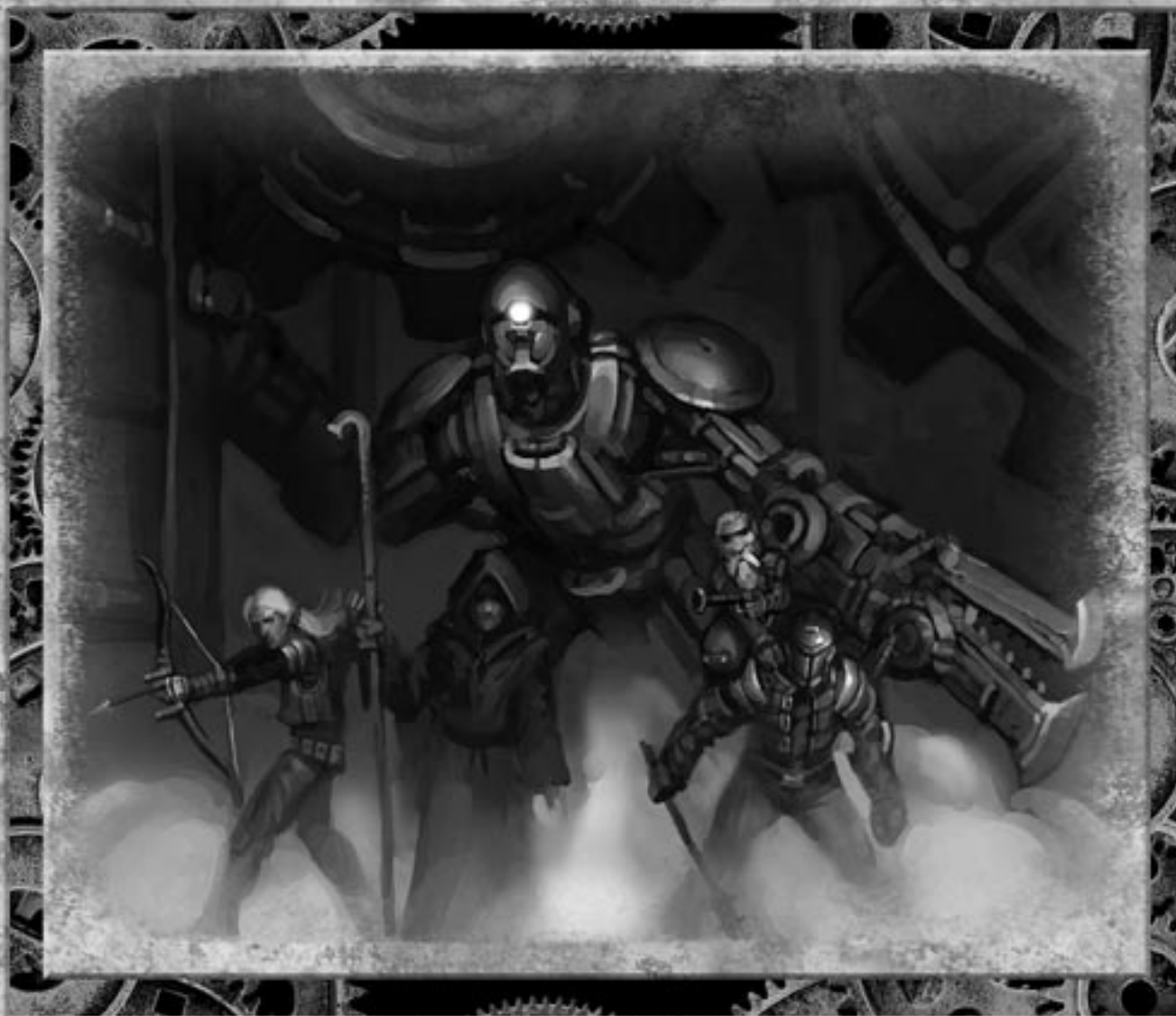
SWORD & SORCERY

d20 system

PLATE 2 *The heroes of DragonMech include the traditional classes as well as those who build and pilot mechs.*

CHARACTERS

G IVEN THE MASSIVE CHANGES ROCKING THEIR WORLD, THE PEOPLE OF HIGHPOINT SUFFER NO SHORTAGE OF ADVENTURERS. SOCIAL STRUCTURES HAVE COLLAPSED LEFT AND RIGHT, LEAVING MANY COMMONERS WITH NO RECOURSE BUT TO FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES. MOREOVER, THE ADVENT OF MECHS HAS CREATED NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVENTURING. COLLECTING RESOURCES TO KEEP THEM GOING IS AN IN-DEMAND OCCUPATION THESE DAYS, AND THE MECHS HAVE RAISED THE IMPORTANCE OF A SKILL SET NOT FORMERLY VALUED: THE TALENTED PILOT. EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, NEW ADVENTURERS ARE WANDERING THE LAND.

CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS

T he world of **DragonMech** offers all the usual reasons to adventure and many more. Many clerics adventure to contest the lunar aberrations and their gods, while fighters are more concerned with claiming their exotic treasures. Mechs introduce a whole new level of adventuring opportunities, whether they're used simply as transport or as the focus of a campaign.

Before you begin creating your character, stop for a moment to think about *why* your character has become an adventurer. How has he been affected by the forces shaping Highpoint? As you go through the character creation process, keep these questions about your character in mind:

- Where did his ancestors live before the lunar rain? What happened to their hereditary home?
- Where did they turn for shelter during the lunar rain? What enemies and allies did they make?
- What interaction has the character had with the dragons and other lunar aberrations?
- How does he feel about steam technology? Does it offer salvation or is it an affront to the old ways? Does it threaten the supremacy of magic or challenge the power of the gods?
- After all the devastation wrought by the lunar rain, and the hardships your character has endured, does he still have faith in his gods?
- Does the Gearwrights Guild speak the truth about the first Age of Walkers, even though the ancient elven texts make no reference to such an era?
- What does your character think about mechs? Are they vehicles, mere "wagons with legs," or a revolutionary new concept? Are those who pilot mechs merely using them as a crutch, or are they powerful in a manner that is new for the world?
- Does your character see the world's current state of unrest as a clarion call for heroic defenders to fight the lunar aberrations and end the lunar rain, or a once-in-a-lifetime chance for profit and power?

Considering your character's motivations throughout the creation process will also help your gamemaster focus his campaign.

If your party is composed of traditionalist mages and clerics who see mechs as a thinly veiled threat to the dominant role magic once played in the world, your DM will likely focus your campaign on fighting *against* mechs. On the other hand, if your party is composed of coglayers, steamborgs, and mech jockeys who see mechs as the best chance for defeating the lunar dragons, your adventures will be completely different.

With that in mind, here are some potential character motivations that have special places in **DragonMech**. Of course, a character is much deeper than a single motivating factor, so you can pick more than one, or adjust them as you see fit.

- Defeat the lunar aberrations
- Restore faith in the traditional gods
- Gain followers for a personal belief system from those who now have nothing left to believe in
- Oppose the plans of the lunar gods
- Explore (or loot) the ruins left by the lunar rain
- Restore the surface world (or your own hometown or nation) to its former glory
- Explore the depths of the underdeep, those exposed only since the surface-world refugees pushed ever deeper
- Locate the legendary Master Repository of the Gearwrights Guild
- Restore order and law throughout the world
- Fight against the oppressive policies of the Stenian Confederacy
- Acquire a personal mech
- Build your own mech
- Advance the art of mechcraft through whatever means necessary
- Join the Irontooth Clans and become a mech devil
- Join the Gearwrights Guild
- Find a way to travel to the moon and destroy the lunar dragons at their source
- Forge an alliance between the splintered factions of the world, so the larger threats can be confronted in unison
- Pursue personal power through whatever means necessary, ensuring that you aren't affected by such disasters in the future
- Prove that steam-powered mechs are superior to magically powered ones (or vice versa)

- Restrict knowledge of mechs to those who can use it wisely
- Rise to a senior pilot position in the mech jockey hierarchy of the city-mechs
- Discover what lives in the endless engine rooms that power the city-mechs
- Prove that life on the surface is possible without the city-mechs
- Unravel the mystery behind the Pretominin Heads and the Great Standing Dwarf
- Hunt monsters, find treasure, and become a hero in this shattered world

RACES IN DRAGONMECH

The standard races are well represented in the land of Highpoint. Though they have been traumatized by the world's collapse around them, none has been completely exterminated.

Although Shar Thizdic has used racial tensions and hate-filled rhetoric as a ploy to grab power, interracial interaction has actually grown since the lunar rain. The chaotic nature of the world frequently throws together adventurers who never would have met before. The city-mechs are far too concerned about recruiting those with useful skills to worry about race (although tall humans certainly have difficulties on the low-ceilinged dwarf mechs), and independent mech operators are no different. Prospectors and treasure-seekers take whoever does the best job, and life on the surface is more about who can help you survive than who has pointed ears.

This section describes the major races in **DragonMech** and the ways they interact.

HUMANS

Historically, the humans of Highpoint have been nomads, and rather uncivilized nomads at that. The center of human "civilization" was the endless plains. Relative-ly few natural obstructions, combined with well defined boundaries preventing outside invaders, made this the perfect realm for nomads; the open plains were protected from invasion by the steppes to the west, the forests to the north, the sea to the east, and the swamps to the south. Between the nomad tribes, however, no shortage of conflict existed. Human civilization has always been wild and malleable to begin with, with entire kingdoms rising and falling within a few short generations, and the endless plains are no exception. The many tribes bickered constantly over territory, resources, and prestige. The orc hordes that also walked the plains made for still more conflict. The few nonnomadic cultures retreated to impregnable fortress-cities that the combative nomads couldn't invade.

Now, however, the endless plains are decaying. With little shelter from the lunar rain, they are eroding with every passing night. The human cities were easy targets for the lunar dragons, and many have been battered into the ground, their remains used by some dragons as lairs. At the same time, brave humans survive in the tunnels and small places under the ruins. The ruined cities are still home to hundreds or thousands of refugees, who hide where the dragons can't reach them.

The nomadic tribes were not as vulnerable as the cities. They fared well against the lunar dragons, being last on their list of targets. As wanderers with no fixed shelters, they were hit hard by the lunar rain. The luckiest found caves, mountains, or forests on the plains, which they were soon forced to defend against endless waves of refugees. The less fortunate had to travel hundreds of miles to the western steppes or northern forests, where some were accepted by the elven villages. Most died en route.

Humans living in other regions, such as the flatland, were less affected by the catastrophe. They were closer to underdeep havens, or on good terms with nearby dwarves, and fared better than their nomadic brethren. Many took shelter in the dwarven strongholds. There they forged life-long alliances, standing side by side with their dwarven hosts to defend against later waves of refugees.

Older human characters are likely to be embittered, cynical refugees. Their personal history includes constant flight or fight for the past fifty-odd years. They've never known peace, stability, or true safety, nor have their fathers or grandfathers. To them, the mechs aren't hope; the mechs are merely the latest in a string of refuges. They adventure solely for survival.

Younger humans, however, were born into this world. Never knowing anything else, they take it for granted. To them, the mechs are simply there — some friends, others enemies, but all merely aspects of the environment, like mountains or houses. It is these new generations of humans that have the greatest potential for reshaping Highpoint, for they make the most of what is there rather than try to return to the old ways. They adventure out of a sense of hope and possibility, searching for the innovations that will restore the world (or at least their tribe) to greatness.

Human characters may hail from the specialized nomad tribes of the endless plains, some of which confer special abilities and limitations. The wild Stavians are excellent riders, while the Wisps are stealthy forest dwellers. See page 157 for information on these tribes.

DWARVES

Of all the races, the dwarves are the least affected by the catastrophes. Their underground homes were never in any danger from the lunar rain. The lunar

dragons were only a small threat; no large creature can fit very far into a dwarven tunnel. But the dwarves suffered mercilessly from the secondary effects of the catastrophes: When the surface dwellers looked for shelter from the lunar rain and dragons, they headed to the mountains. The dwarves were forced to defend their underground caves against almost every living surface-dweller in the world.

The dwarven kingdoms have been in a constant state of war for nearly a century. The more recent years have seen less violence, since most of the invaders are dead by now, and the development of mechs gives refugees another option. But the first few decades were horrible. Most dwarves now refer to these as the Years of the Blood Rain, for the invasions caused by the lunar rain spilled more dwarf blood than any other war or catastrophic event within memory.

During the Years of the Blood Rain, almost every dwarf household lost at least two thirds of its numbers. Some were exterminated entirely. Some mountaintop dwarven cities are now occupied entirely by humans, elves, and orcs. Some still have dwarven residents, who are the slaves of the current owners. Other cities have been successively occupied by wave after wave of invaders, each of which wipes out the preceding one. These "sanctuaries" from the lunar rain are testaments to its disruptive power.

Dwarven characters are likely stoic, tired defenders. After decades of invasion, they are distrustful of anyone who is unfamiliar, particularly if they are approached in their strongholds. To them, the mechs are a mixed blessing. They relieve the pressure on the dwarven kingdoms. At the same time, for those dwarves who now live in mechs, they represent the abandonment of thousands of years of dwarf stone-dwelling tradition. They adventure to escape their confines, search for new solutions, beat back the attackers who have threatened their way of life for so long, or free the dwarven cities that are still occupied by invaders.

The dwarven bonus to Craft checks related to metal applies to Craft (Mechcraft). Dwarves raised in mechs do not receive the stonecunning ability, but in its place receive a +2 bonus to Mech Pilot skill checks. The

dwarven bonuses in combat against giants, orcs, and goblinoids do not apply to combat with orc mechs. The bonus is due to generations of training in personal martial combat, not mech combat.

ELVES

The elves were well protected by their dense forest realms, which shielded them from the lunar rain for some time. Although the forests were eventually worn down, they bought time for their residents.

Even so, the elves suffered hard. The elven lifespan is long, and their traditions are strongly cemented. While humans had short memories and several generations to adapt to a new world, and the dwarves at least retained the vestiges of their former realms, the elves have had every last woodland village utterly destroyed. Tens of thousands of years of advanced civilization have been reduced to a few portable libraries, the occasional rolled-up painting, and remembered songs. Humans give birth to children who never knew anything different, but barely half an elven generation has passed since the lunar rains began. Each and every living elf is painfully aware of all that has been lost. To make it all the worse, they are now forced to live in confined spaces, a condition which is anathema to the elven psyche. A deep sadness permeates elven society.

Nonetheless, elves welcome the mechs with open arms. From the perspective of those used to woodland groves and high forest homes, living in a tall, mobile mech is a monumental improvement over living underground. Although the mechs were invented by dwarves and developed by humans, the most advanced are the product of elven magic. They have taken the denuded ancestor trees that were once the centers of their villages and magically recrafted them into still-living mechs. These wooden mechs must root in the earth for one hour each day, but they are still far more powerful than any others, wielding barrages of fireballs and other spells at their fingertips. They carry with them the villages' traditions.

Elven characters are sad and distant, but among all player character races they are the most hopeful. They have a seven-hundred-year lifespan — more than sufficient to use their mechs to eradicate the lunar dragons, use their magic to shield them from the lunar rain, and re-establish the culture they once had. They adventure with very long-term goals: to recover the artifacts and icons their villages lost, seek new sites to reroot their ancestor trees, establish alliances with others who would help them fight the lunar creatures, and find magical solutions to the world's problems.

GNOMES

The gnomes have suffered much as the dwarves have, with their underground burrows raided and used as shelters by other races. Unfortunately, the gnomes lack the extensive defenses of the dwarf kingdoms, and they have fared much worse. Despite their illusions, most gnomes were evicted from their burrows and forced to seek shelter elsewhere. Their burrows were then batted back and forth between successive invaders until the constant activity finally attracted the attention of the lunar dragons. Most gnome villages are now flattened wastes.

Although the dwarves invented the mechs and the humans developed them, gnomes actually constructed many of them. The few gnomes to survive their forcible displacement have been welcomed by mech crews, who deeply appreciate their technical prowess. They are less needed on the magically powered elf mechs, but most other mechs include a cadre of gnome technicians, and many gnome clans have traded their services for safety on a human or dwarven mech.

Gnomes are welcomed for another reason: They're fun to be around. The gnomish sense of humor has sustained the race, and their jokes and pranks are welcome diversions in the bleak land of Highpoint. Of course, their jokes these days tend be a little darker, but they still make people smile.

Gnomish adventurers are jovial tricksters, as they always have been, but at night, when

they're alone in their bedrolls, they silently weep for the clan members they have lost.

HALF-ELVES

Half-elves on Highpoint have always had difficulty defining themselves. The radically different lifestyles of their two parents certainly never helped: The stable, ancient elves in their woodland towns lived a very different life from the whirling, wandering human nomads. Many half-elves split their time between their two cultures. Being from two races that respected one another, they were always accepted, even when they never belonged.

Each half-elf usually identified more strongly with one parent or the other and spent more time with that society, though he took pride in the accomplishments of both of his heritages. Now that the lunar rain has decimated the landscape, half-elves have, for the first time, had a chance to define their own identity as something other than a confused, misplaced mixture. Although it would be an enormous exaggeration to say that any half-elf actually appreciated the catastrophes, it is true that many have "found themselves" in the new world. As social structures which confused them have broken down, they have had less difficulty fitting into the newly reformed societies. They have flocked to the mechs, seeing the new culture as a place they can fit into from the start. Relative to their percentages in the overall population, half-elves are quite common in human and elven mech crews.

HALF-ORCS

Orcs have always been despised by the other races of Highpoint, and half-orcs are unfortunately subject to similar disdain. They are accepted by no society, and most become wanderers or adventurers. The few who settle usually live with the tribes of their orc parents, where they are considered weaklings.

Half-orcs are found in mechs only as paying passengers (when their payment is high enough to overcome natural prejudices) or as slaves or laborers on an orc mech.

Half-orc characters are coarse, crude mercenaries, as they have always been. The lunar rain is a catastrophe for others, not them; since half-orcs were never fully accepted by either parent, they don't feel a deep sense of loss for what has been destroyed. Of all the races, the half-orcs are perhaps the best adjusted, for they took the least pride in what they were to begin with.

HALFLINGS

The halflings of Highpoint never had a specific city or region to call their own, nor a civilization quite as advanced as that the elves lost. They settled everywhere and moved often; halfling neighborhoods existed in most human cities, throughout elven territory, in the halls of Duerok, and along the banks of the Endless River.

For many reasons, the halflings have adapted well to the catastrophes. First, their small size let them escape the lunar dragons easily. Many halfling communities were able to survive in the nooks and crannies beneath the rubble of cities destroyed by the dragons. Others became worm farmers. Unlike the larger races, they were not forced to battle for the underground homes of the dwarves and gnomes. Second, halflings are always quick to adapt to new opportunities, and they did so en masse after the catastrophes. Many became traders, scouts, guides, prospectors, and technicians.

Thus were born the "coglings": halfling laborers and technicians who tend to mechs. The huge, complex steam engines of the dwarven mechs require extensive maintenance, ranging from simple janitorial duties (cleaning off oil residues, monitoring wear and tear, etc.) to complex technical assignments (calibrating gears, checking pressure valves, etc.). Halflings can fit into smaller crevices than even the gnomes, and they were quick to recognize the utility of their size in the complicated regions of a dwarven mech. Many halfling communities have now relocated to mechs, where they provide most of the unskilled and semiskilled labor required to keep the steam engines running. In many cases, these coglings are illicit stowaways unknown to the mech's leaders. In the most extreme cases, they have become feral gear-dwelling creatures, forgetting their heritage and living as perpetual stowaways in the harsh engines. (For more information on coglings, see page 183.)

Halfling adventurers are cynical, as are all the races, but not quite as jaded as others. After all, halflings see change as opportunity. Many halflings are now protected by the same mechs that protect the dwarves, gnomes, and humans, despite the halflings' absence in the innovation of such mechs. As usual, they have adapted rapidly and found places to support themselves.

ADAPTING CLASSES TO DRAGONMECH

Most traditional classes can be easily integrated into **DragonMech**, although a few require adaptation.

Barbarians

Barbarians have always been common, especially among the nomadic human tribes. Now, as new generations come of age in the rain-scalded world of Highpoint, they are even more common. Any character raised on the surface (in the rubble of old cities, in shallow cave complexes, or any other such area) is far more likely to be a barbarian than a fighter. Barbarians adventure to locate kin who were lost in the disasters, to acquire whatever vestiges of steam technology they can for their tribes, or because they have lost their tribes and have nothing left to go back to.

Bards

In a world with little to hope for, bards are in high demand. They are welcome wherever they go for the diversions they provide. While

most survivors of the lunar rain are naturally suspicious of anyone or anything they encounter, the one exception to their suspicion is the bard. They'll wait to ask questions until *after* the bard performs, and if he performs well, they might never ask any questions. Bards adventure to piece together what bits of knowledge they can, hoping to uncover the ultimate secrets behind the lunar rain. Even while joking and singing, they pursue the big questions: Why did it happen? What is life like on the moon? How can this be stopped?

Clerics

Few clerics have survived the catastrophes unscathed. The damage has been not to their bodies (although many were killed) but to their faith. What sort of god would allow such disaster to befall his followers? Either the gods allowed such inexplicable disaster, which would make any follower question his own piety, or the gods did not allow the disaster, in which case they are ineffectual and lack the strength to stop whatever power *did* cause the disaster. Either way, a cleric's faith will be shaken, and many attribute their declining powers to these causes.

In reality, the old gods are being overrun by the lunar gods, particularly those of the lunar dragons. The physical interaction between the moon and surface has given these gods a strong foothold in the affairs of the surface world. On other planes, they battle the old gods and are slowly overwhelming them.

Clerics in Highpoint must contend with the battles between their deities and the lunar gods. They receive spells only when their deities have the strength and divine focus to spare. Each day, after the cleric completes her hour of supplication, check to see if she receives spells. This is resolved with a Wisdom check against a base DC of 6. A roll of 1 always fails.

The base DC is modified as follows.

- For each day that the cleric did not receive spells, the DC on the following day is increased by 2.
- If on the previous day the cleric succeeded in a major defeat of the lunar gods or their allies and agents, in any way, the DC is decreased by 2.
- If on the previous day the cleric otherwise aided his deity in some significant way, such as completing a temple, founding a new sect, defeating an enemy cleric, or significantly enlarging an existing sect, the DC is decreased by 1.
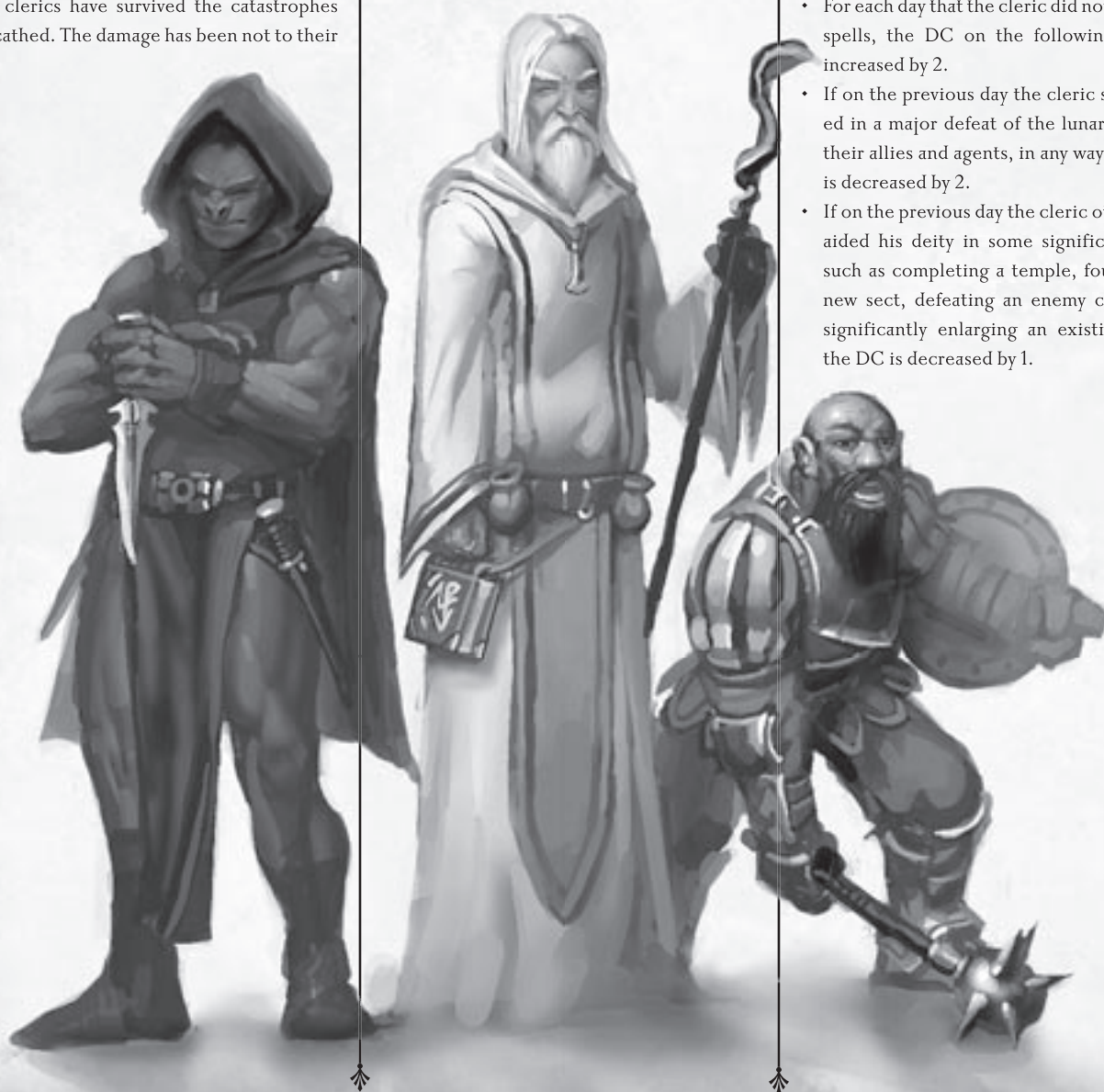
This check is rolled separately for each and every cleric, even two of the same faith, as it depends not just on the deity's ability but also the cleric's piety and the deity's power on that day. Clerics still receive their spells most of the time, but the few days on which they don't are certainly disturbing.

This weakness of clerics reflects the distraction and limited power of their gods as they battle the lunar gods. However, there is a silver lining. The deities are now focusing much more of their energy on thwarting the invading lunar gods and their minions. Any cleric of any faith can attempt to channel divine energy spontaneously into a spell opposing any lunar dragon or other lunar creature or effect, including attempts to protect or heal someone from the consequences of lunar rain, damage from dragons, and other such causes — but only if he receives his normal spells that day.

To attempt such spontaneous casting, the cleric simply tries to cast any spell he could normally cast, regardless of whether it is in his daily allotment. A Wisdom check determines success. If the check is successful, the cleric casts the spell as normal without losing one of his allotted spells for that day. If the check fails, the cleric does not lose an allotted spell, but no spell effect occurs and his action is wasted. The cleric must still meditate to be able to cast these spontaneous spells.

These spontaneous spells can be cast more than once per day. The DC for the first spontaneous spell cast each day is 20, modified by the same adjustments as the cleric's chance to get spells. The DC for each subsequent spell rises by 4 for each attempted spontaneous casting, whether successful or not. For example, the initial DC is 20. After one attempt, whether failed or successful, it rises to 24. After a second attempt, again regardless of success, it rises to 28.

In addition, clerics and paladins of terrestrial deities may automatically sense if a creature is of lunar origin. They must already be aware of the creature's presence. This is resolved with an unadjusted Wisdom check against DC 15. On a success, the cleric successfully determines if a creature is lunar in

origin. This free action is a flash of insight provided by the cleric's deity in its war against the lunar gods and requires no effort on the cleric's part. The DM should make the check.

Clerics now feel a compelling urge to set forth in the name of their gods, or at least to fight *against* the lunar gods. They adventure out of a sense of faith, dedicated to reviving their faith and solving the root causes of the disaster, not merely profiting in its wake.

Druids

The lunar rain has had two effects on druids. First, not as many of them exist. Forced to seek shelter, many had to abandon their groves. Lacking the natural world with which to instruct new followers, they have had a hard time increasing their numbers. At the opposite extreme is a corollary effect: those druids who remain, and the few who have appeared since the lunar rains, are dedicated to their cause as no others before them. They see themselves as participants in a sacred battle of epic proportions, warring against the lunar denizens for the sake of all things natural. Few enemies of the lunar rain are so dedicated. They are utterly driven in their cause to protect what little remains of the natural world. In many cases, their dedication borders on insanity, so hard it is to take the losses that their groves have seen.

A player must explain how his druid character has come to such a profession in the world of Highpoint. He may be apprenticed to an older druid who roamed the woods before the catastrophes, or perhaps he is a refugee raised in a burrow, whose knowledge of nature is limited to the razed environment of the postcatastrophe world.

Fighters

Fighters are always in abundance, whether on Highpoint or any other world, but fewer of them are around now. The armies, dedicated training, and military schools necessary to produce fighters have been disrupted. Most fighters now hail from Chemak or Duerok. Fighters adventure to test their skills against the new challenges of this world and to defend the homelands

that trained them. Many also succumb to the allure of glory and treasure waiting to be had, and seek profit from the new world growing up around them.

Monks

The monasteries of Highpoint are traditionally located in the higher altitudes: the roughlands, the foothills of the Boundary Peaks, or even on the Peaks themselves. Some monasteries are in the Lilat and Hereál forests, and two extremely isolationist orders have set up camp west of the Boundary Peaks, far from civilization. All of these areas are far from the worst ravages of the lunar rain, and monks have endured the pain of the catastrophes as stoically as one would expect. Although monks have never been particularly common in Highpoint, they're as common (or as rare) now as they have been.

Some monks have reinterpreted their heritage in a new way. The mech devils of the Irontooth Clans have clear roots in monastic martial tradition, though they apply it to combat with mechs rather than personal melee. Many monks have joined these clans, where they are welcomed with open arms and taught the ways of the mech devils.

Paladins

Paladins are needed now more than ever before. As with the clerics, many have questioned their gods, but as the ultimate champions of their faith, none has held such doubts for long. Paladins have emerged as true champions, battling the lunar dragons where others flee, and their numbers have actually grown thanks to the examples they have set.

Paladin spellcasting is limited as a cleric's is (see above). None of the paladin's other abilities are affected.

Rangers

As with the druids, rangers have found their homes destroyed. Rangers can still be found among the elves and surviving human nomads, but new recruits are rare. Some have responded similarly to the druids, declaring a sacred war against the lunar creatures; others have simple given up, living the rest of

their lives in the meteor-pocked wastes of what were once great forests.

A variation on the traditional ranger, called the clockwork ranger, can now be found haunting the gear forests of city-mechs. Clockwork rangers are described in detail below.

Rogues

Rogues will always have a place, in any location and any time. The rogues of Highpoint have been unaffected by the catastrophes, except insofar as it has been a great time for opportunists and looters. Life on a mech doesn't particularly favor a rogue — the quarters are a little too cramped to get away with much — but rogues have found their skills are perfectly suited to infiltrating enemy mechs, which are little more than walking buildings. Some rogues have even specialized in such skills, and rumors exist of a secretive organization of "stalkers" who are dedicated to taking down mechs without ever being seen. Rogues adventure for the same reasons they always have: loot, experience, fame, infamy, and the challenge of a great heist.

Sorcerers

The moon's low orbit has caused all manner of strange events on Highpoint, not least of which is a huge jump in the number of natural-born spellcasters. Sorcerers are on the rise, apparently driven by some magical side effect of the moon. Many of the "new blood" manifest spells that are moon-themed variations on the traditions, such as *magic missiles* that launch meteorites instead of arrows. In some cases they are hated for this, being seen as part of the world's problems; in other cases, they are treasured as bearers of unique magic. In any event, the respect they enjoy must now be shared with mech jockeys and coglayers, a fact many sorcerers find grating. They adventure to test their limits and find their purpose, especially those whose talents indicate they are connected to the lunar catastrophes in some inexplicable way.

Wizards

Fewer places exist to learn magic these days, and fewer people are training to become wizards. Much magical knowledge was destroyed along with the great cities, and the destruction of the ancestral elven villages dealt a powerful blow to the study of magic. Furthermore, the age favors steam power, not magic — except among the elves, it is the coglayers who are protecting their societies, not the wizards.

Wizards are not as common as they used to be. Those who remain are motivated to return magic to its place of preeminence. They adventure to prove the worth of their skills, to gain new knowledge, and to track down the few remaining archmages who can teach them the greatest secrets of all.

NEW CORE CLASSES

CLOCKWORK RANGER (VARIANT RANGER)

The clockwork ranger is a fighting man who has adopted the mech as his home. On a normal world he may have grown up studying the creatures of the woods, but, raised as he was on a mech, he has instead made the world of metal his domain. Most clockwork rangers live in the gear forests, the vast engine rooms that occupy multiple levels of every city-mech.

Clockwork rangers are in most respects just like traditional rangers. They study the creatures that occupy the gear forests, both natives (like coglings) and invaders (which can include practically any creature that threatens the engines regularly). They tend to be standoffish loners who retreat to the engine rooms for solace and skill. Clockwork rangers have a natural understanding of engineering rather than the affinity for nature found with woods-dwelling rangers, though their natural talent is not as well developed as that of the coglayers.

The personal history of a clockwork ranger usually motivates him to adventure. In many cases, their lives were saved by mechs early on. Their worship of the gear forest is intertwined with a desire to protect it as an environment, in part to preserve the city-mech itself. They adventure to foil those who would threaten the lumbering city-mechs, to find resources to benefit the city-mechs, or simply to further the cause of steam technology. They oppose those who advocate a return to the old ways, not just because it threatens the denizens of the gear forests, but because they see it as a deceptive solution.

Clockwork rangers are also known as metal rangers or enginekeepers.

Game Rule Information

Clockwork rangers are identical to normal rangers with the following modifications.
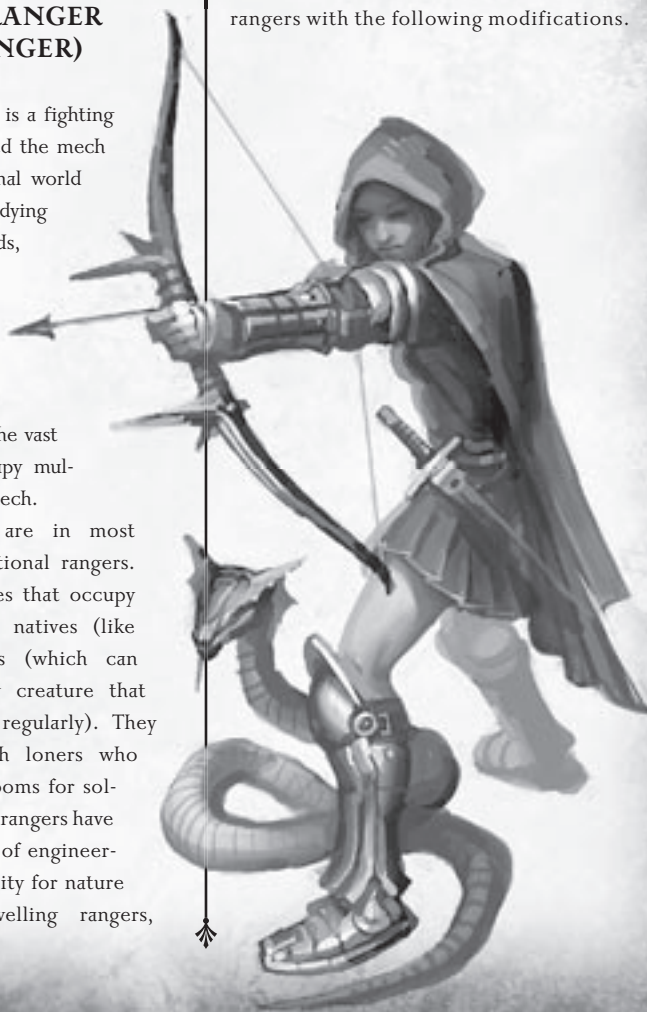
Class Skills

The clockwork ranger's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Use Rope (Dex).

Clockwork rangers have the unique ability to use Handle Animal to influence constructs. See page 42 for details.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Clockwork rangers are like rangers except for the following.

Spells: Though the gear forest is a man-made environment, its inhabitants are creatures of nature. Many gear forests develop their own unique ecologies, albeit it with creatures far removed from those that walk the woodland dale. Clockwork rangers may still draw on nature to cast divine spells, though the spells available to them are slanted more toward mechanical life. See page 48 for their spell list.

Track: Clockwork rangers still receive the Track feat. The grime and grease that coat the floors of gear forests count as firm ground for purposes of the feat. Particularly sludge-covered areas are considered soft ground.

Favored Enemy: Clockwork rangers still have favored enemies. They may choose from the traditional categories, provided they have had exposure to those enemies.

Animal Companion: The clockwork ranger's animal companion must be a creature native to the gear forests. Choose from this list: dire rat, grease lizard, monstrous centipede (Medium or Large), monstrous spider (Medium), or snake (Small or Medium viper).

COGLAYER

A coglayer is a tinkerer and mechanic. Most coglayers are obsessed with steam engine technology, working tirelessly to eke out every last drop of performance from the engines they build. They experiment constantly and are always eager to learn about others' advances in the field. If anyone can build a bigger, better mech, it's a coglayer. Coglayers gain power through the devices they build, and they have special mastery over an area of technology known as steam powers. Steam powers enable them to construct fantastic engines with amazing powers.

Adventures: Coglayers adventure for two reasons. First, they like to test their inventions. The best way to find out if your mech is *really* up to snuff is to send it into battle. Second, they have a very expensive hobby. As if steam engines weren't expensive enough, mechs are downright exorbitant. Adventuring is a good way to fund this hobby.

Characteristics: Coglayers are shy and reclusive. They prefer to spend their time with machines, not people. They maintain a conservative appearance and don't draw attention to themselves — except when demonstrating new inventions, at which point they are happy to show them off.

Alignment: Coglayers tend toward neutrality and even chaos. Their belief structure places a high premium on knowledge and truth, as well as the advancement of technology through contributions to the greater body of knowledge. They consider these timeless values to be far more important than the temporal loyalties of mortal life.

Religion: Coglayers have no respect for the old gods. They are utterly atheistic. They worship only technology and the power it can bring them. If they exhibit any religious leanings at all, it is toward Dotrak, the "great engine."

Background: Many coglayers are officially trained by the Gearwrights Guild, or a similar organization in their hometown. If not part of the guild, they are almost always apprenticed to an older, more experienced coglayer, who teaches them the basics and then helps them advance. This apprenticeship is usually quite informal; it happens naturally due to the close camaraderie of coglayers, who seek each other out to discuss their studies. A strong feeling of fellowship exists among coglayers, since they have few other people with whom they can discuss their interests.

Races: Gnomes and dwarves are by far the most common races among coglayers. Human and half-orc coglayers aren't uncommon, though the latter rarely advance beyond simple mechanical contraptions. Coglayers of any other races are exceedingly rare: Elves prefer magically constructed mechs, and halflings are more interested in selling mechs than building them.

Other Classes: A coglayer is perceived by other classes as an odd eccentric. For most of an adventuring career, he'll be the small guy in the back hiding behind some weird contraption. But as he advances in level he gains the ability to construct ever more elaborate weapons, and eventually he can

TABLE 1-1: THE COGLAYER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Steam Powers
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Machine Empathy, Exotic Weapon Proficiency	2+Int
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Mech Weapon Proficiency	3+Int
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Integrated Parts	4+Int
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	5+Int
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Mech Weapon Proficiency	6+Int
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	—	7+Int
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Integrated Parts	8+Int
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	8+Int
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Mech Weapon Proficiency	9+Int
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	—	10+Int
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	Integrated Parts	10+Int
12	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	11+Int
13	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Mech Weapon Proficiency	12+Int
14	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	—	12+Int
15	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	Integrated Parts	13+Int
16	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	14+Int
17	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Mech Weapon Proficiency	14+Int
18	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	—	15+Int
19	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	Integrated Parts	16+Int
20	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Exotic Weapon Proficiency	16+Int

build mechs. It is at this point that coglayers start earning some respect.

Game Rule Information

Coglayers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Intelligence is exceedingly valuable for coglayers, as is Dexterity. The former lets them dream up ever more powerful contraptions, and the latter lets them build them.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d4

Class Skills

The coglayer's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Craft (blacksmithing) (Int), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), and Mech Pilot (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the coglayer.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Coglayers are proficient with club, dagger, heavy crossbow, light crossbow, and quarterstaff. They are proficient with all shields except the tower shield, and the following armor types: padded, leather, studded leather, pilot's armor, chain shirt, scale mail, gearmail, and chainmail. As they advance, they gain proficiency with certain exotic weapons (see below).

A coglayer is always considered proficient with any weapon he has built using his steam powers.

Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Coglayers tinker constantly. They are always learning how to use new mechanical devices, including exotic steam-powered weapons. At each indicated level, a coglayer can become proficient with one of the following exotic weapons: buzzaxe, buzzsaw, chattersword, flame nozzle, lobster claw, steambreather, steam gun.

Machine Empathy (Ex): A coglayer is finely attuned to the functions of machines. He can identify problems from the slightest hum or whir. Coglayers receive the Craft Steam Gear feat for free at first level. Coglayers add their class level as a bonus to all checks in Craft (mechcraft), Knowledge (mechs), and Knowledge (steam engines).

Mech Weapon Proficiency: Coglayers spend far more time building and studying mechs than piloting them, so they do not learn to operate mech weapons as quickly as their mech jockey counterparts. Nonetheless, they become skilled with those they focus on. At each level indicated, the coglayer becomes proficient with any one mech weapon.

Steam Powers (Ex): A coglayer can construct a number of steam powers as indicated in Table 1-1. He receives a number of additional steam powers equal to his Intelligence modifier. Steam powers at 1st level are granted for free; future steam powers must be built and paid for per the usual rules.

These steam powers aren't indicative of what the character *knows*; they're indicative of what he is capable of maintaining. The character doesn't have to specify what each steam power slot is until he actually builds a device of some sort that uses the steam power. He can maintain only the number of steam powers indicated in Table 1-1. If for some reason he wants to alter the steam powers he is currently using, he can dispose of an existing device and create a new one. As long as the total steam powers in use do not exceed his limit as indicated in Table 1-1, that's not a problem. The old steam powers and the device they were used with are considered destroyed, however; even if they aren't actively destroyed, they fall apart from lack of maintenance.

Each morning the coglayer must spend one hour maintaining his steam powers. This includes adding oil, recalibrating parts, checking measurements, and so on. The coglayer must be capable of reasonable concentration during this time, though he is not affected by any distractions that might be normally experienced on a city-mech (such as engine noise or cramped quarters). For each day in which he doesn't maintain his steam powers, the coglayer temporarily

loses one steam power. All lost steam powers are restored as soon as the coglayer spends a full hour on maintenance.

Integrated Parts: Most coglayers are Small creatures, such as gnomes, halflings, or coglings. With their low Strength, these coglayers have been forced to develop new ways to carry around all their gear. At 3rd level and every 4 levels thereafter, the coglayer can integrate two steam powers into one. These powers must be built into the same device. The two parts combined then weigh the same amount as the smaller of them did before they were combined. For example, an imagemaker combined with an iron arm would have a total weight of 8 lbs., the same weight as the iron arm by itself. Parts integrated in this manner cannot be separated once combined; to replace them, the coglayer has to build two whole new parts from scratch. It is perfectly acceptable to integrate disparate parts of radically different size, weight, and dimensions – after all, this is fantasy engineering!

That Piece is Important: At 12th level (or higher), a coglayer may take the *that piece is important* ability (per the stalker class description) in place of a normal feat. A coglayer with this ability may identify stalker sabotage in half the usual time (which nets to one-fourth the time the stalker spent finding the piece).

CONSTRUCTOR (VARIANT WIZARD)

A constructor is a wizard who specializes in building constructs. Constructors are a new phenomenon, having appeared only in the last several decades. A formal organization known as the College of Constructors is responsible for much of the growth in the field, as its members have expanded the science of magical constructs far beyond golems and guardians. Constructors learn spells that mimic the traits of constructs, just as they push the envelope of construct-building in an attempt to match the fabulous creations of the coglayers.

Characters become constructors because they exhibit a talent for both engineering and arcane magic. If they lacked the ability to cast spells, many would have become coglayers. Instead, they fuse their two skill sets to create creatures far beyond the scope of simple engineering (or so they hope).

The constructor class is a mix between a normal character class and a prestige class. Constructors are always members of the College of Constructors. This membership is freely available to anyone who professes an interest. In that regard, the constructor is like a prestige class, as it requires membership in a world-specific institution. On the other hand, this is hardly more specialized than what is required of a specialist wizard (an illusionist, for example). Constructors are essentially specialist wizards whose specialization includes membership in an organization. Unlike normal specialists, however, their specialization does not fall along the lines of a specific school.

Players may select constructor as their class at 1st level.

Game Rule Information

A constructor is identical to a normal wizard with the following modifications.

CLASS SKILLS

The constructor's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

Spells: The constructor class has its own list of spells. This includes all wizard spells, a few divine spells that have been adapted for use by the constructors (such as *animate objects*), several variant spells focused on affecting constructs rather than their previous targets, and a number of restricted spells.

The constructor school spell list appears on page 48. The restricted spells were developed by the College of Constructors and are strictly regulated. Members of the college

never teach these spells to nonmembers. The only way to learn them is to be a member of the college or to discover them in a member's spellbook.

Specialist: Constructors are specialists. As described in the *PHB*, a constructor can prepare one additional spell of each level per day, and receives a +2 bonus to Spellcraft checks to learn the spells of her chosen college. The extra spell selection may be any spell from the constructor school spell list (page 48).

To become a constructor, a wizard must select any single other school as her prohibited school. Almost all constructors choose necromancy as their prohibited school, since spells of *all* other schools are required for the creation of all typical constructs. Those who don't choose necromancy as their restricted school often have foul ambitions involving the creation of smoking dead and other undead semiconstructs.

Familiar: A constructor may build a clockwork familiar (see page 47).

MECH JOCKEY

A mech jockey pilots mechs. The mech jockey embodies technical inclination combined with lightning reflexes, extraordinary spatial abilities, an emotional sensitivity to machines, and an unflinching belief that a mech can do anything a human can.

While the earliest mechs were piloted by the technically minded people who built them, it soon became clear that technical talent and piloting ability are two separate things. The mechdoms now select mech jockeys based on piloting skill, not technical aptitude. Low-level mech jockeys merely understand the controls of a mech, while high-level mech jockeys can make their mechs do things the builders never thought possible.

In the lands of Highpoint, mech jockeys are the new wave of heroes. Their skills protect and shepherd their peoples. The ace pilots of the lightweight fighters speed their mechs across the landscape, sparring with monsters and repelling raiders. The more

cautious pilots of the massive city-mechs stride mightily above the ground, plotting their steps with expert precision so as to avoid disaster.

Adventures: Mech jockeys adventure because it's the only way they can get behind the controls of a mech. Most of them are in love with mechs from the moment they set sight on one. On top of that, mech jockeys get a thrill from the rush of piloting and love excitement, danger, battle, and loud noises. The transition from there to active adventuring isn't very far. Mech jockey adventures involve ferrying cargo, passengers, or even contraband; scouting out new locations for settlements or mines; patrolling safe zones; defending city-mechs against invading mechs; and going head to head with lunar dragons and other huge monsters.

Characteristics: The mech jockey is like the quintessential fighter pilot: cocky, self-assured, and good at what he does. Mech jockeys have a specific ability which has never before been recognized as useful. In the past, they may have become chariot drivers in the military, or simply raced buggies with the lads back in the village. Now their piloting talent finally has a productive, respectable outlet, and they're very proud of that.

Mech jockeys are always amateur technicians, and some start out as coglayers before multiclassing into piloting. Unlike coglayers, however, their technical abilities aren't directed at building new kinds of machines. Rather, they are most interested in "souping up" their "legs." They focus on customizing their mechs and jerry-rigging repairs.

Alignment: Mech jockeys can be of any alignment. A chaotic mech jockey sets out to acquire his own mech (whether legally or not), while a lawful mech jockey joins the military in order to be assigned to a mech.

Religion: Mech jockeys are not as atheistic as some of the other newly appearing classes, but their faith is still solidly planted on the side of machinery, not gods. They may retain some residual worship of the divine, but most espouse a belief in Dotrak.

Background: Mech jockeys love speed, thrills, and excitement. They were interested in mechs and steam technology from an early age, but rather than learn how the mechs worked, they just wanted to make them go, go, go! They hail from cultures where mechs are common, or at least familiar: usually one of the mechdoms, or Duerok. Mech jockeys from the underdeep are unheard of.

Races: Although dwarves and gnomes are most common among the technical professions, mech jockeys are far more likely to be human. Humans love the thrill of piloting. Whenever you see a mech doing something extraordinary — dancing, fighting "unarmed" with its elbows and knees, moving faster than even the builder thought possible — it is almost guaranteed to be a crazed human mech jockey behind the controls. Mech jockeys of other races do exist, of course, but they're neither as crazy nor as common. Many dwarven mechs are still piloted by coglayers.

Other Classes: Mech jockeys get along well with the wild, roughneck classes: barbarians, bards, rogues, and most fighters. The more conservative classes consider them a little too much to handle, including coglayers, who appreciate the mech jockey's love of their creations but really can't quite connect with them. Sorcerers and wizards often feel a sense of rivalry with mech jockeys, as they embody the steam technology that is rapidly challenging the predominance of magic. Clerics and paladins disdain them for their lack of faith, and monks consider them undisciplined and rowdy (except for the mech devils, whose own brand of monasticism intersects perfectly with that of a mech jockeys).

Game Rule Information

Mech jockeys have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Dexterity is by far the most important ability for mech jockeys. It helps them control their craft with precision and skill. Intelligence is useful for understanding the engineering that powers the mechs.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d6

CLASS SKILLS

The mech jockey's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Mech Pilot (Dex), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the mech jockey.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Mech jockeys are proficient with all simple weapons, plus the rapier, short sword, all crossbows, and the steam gun. They are proficient with light and medium armor, including
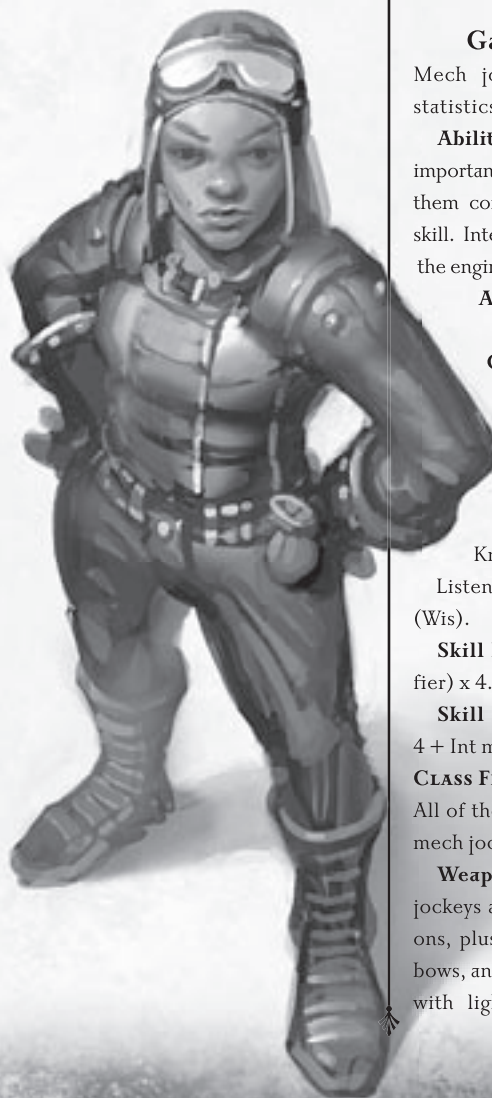
TABLE I-2: THE MECH JOCKEY

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Mech Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
I	+0	+I	+0	+2	+0	Extraordinary Pilot,
						Mech Fingers – Warrior Instinct, Hand Speed
2	+I	+2	+0	+3	+0	Bonus Feat, Patchwork Repairs
3	+2	+3	+I	+3	+I	Push the Envelope I/day
4	+3	+4	+I	+4	+I	Bonus Feat
5	+3	+5	+I	+4	+I	Roll with the Punches – I increment
6	+4	+6/+I	+2	+5	+2	Push the Envelope 2/day
7	+5	+7/+2	+2	+5	+2	Bonus Feat, Mech Fingers – Skill Transfer
8	+6/+I	+8/+3	+2	+6	+2	—
9	+6/+I	+9/+4	+3	+6	+3	Push the Envelope 3/day
I0	+7/+2	+I0/+5	+3	+7	+3	Bonus Feat
II	+8/+3	+II/+6/+I	+3	+7	+3	Roll with the Punches – 2 increments
I2	+9/+4	+I2/+7/+2	+4	+8	+4	Push the Envelope (Extreme Redlining) 4/day
I3	+9/+4	+I3/+8/+3	+4	+8	+4	Bonus Feat
I4	+I0/+5	+I4/+9/+4	+4	+9	+4	—
I5	+II/+6/+I	+I5/+I0/+5	+5	+9	+5	Push the Envelope (Extreme Redlining) 5/day
I6	+I2/+7/+2	+I6/+II/+6/+I	+5	+I0	+5	Bonus Feat
I7	+I2/+7/+2	+I7/+I2/+7/+2	+5	+I0	+5	—
I8	+I3/+8/+3	+I8/+I3/+8/+3	+6	+II	+6	Push the Envelope (No Overheating) 6/day
I9	+I4/+9/+4	+I9/+I4/+9/+4	+6	+II	+6	Bonus Feat
20	+I5/+I0/+5	+20/+I5/+I0/+5	+6	+I2	+6	Roll with the Punches – 3 increments

pilot's armor and gearmail, but not shields.

Mech jockeys are automatically proficient with all mech weapons. They are the only class to gain full mech weapon proficiency as part of the class package.

Extraordinary Pilot (Ex): Mech jockeys add their class level as a bonus to checks in the Mech Pilot skill.

Hand Speed: A mech jockey is a highly skilled warrior who is most effective in a mech. Many of the talents that make him a skilled mech pilot — hand speed, quick reflexes, excellent hand-eye coordination — are also extremely useful in normal hand-to-hand combat. The mech jockey receives the feats Quick Draw and Weapon Finesse for free at first level, even if he does not meet the prerequisites. These reflect the ways his natural abilities can be used outside the mech.

Mech Fingers: Mech jockeys eventually learn to feel a mech as if it were an extension of their own self. Their strong spatial perception abilities make them acutely aware of the mech's dimensions. In effect, their fingers become the mech's fingers.

Warrior Instinct (Ex): At 1st level a mech jockey gains bonuses to attack while in personal combat and while using a mech. His attack bonus is divided into "Base" and "Mech" because he gets a higher bonus when attacking with a mech. This higher bonus applies to any attack he makes while acting as pilot or gunner on a mech.

Skill Transfer (Ex): At 7th level, a mech jockey is so skilled at fighting with his mech that his personal combat abilities carry over to the mech. With this ability, a mech jockey who possesses the following feats may use them with the mech and its weapons: Dodge, Expertise, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Trip, Power Attack, and Whirlwind Attack. (The following feats already apply to combat in a mech, even without the skill transfer ability: Improved Critical (on any mech weapon), Improved Initiative, and Improved Sunder. Shot on the Run and Spring Attack can be used without the skill transfer ability provided the mech jockey has the necessary prerequisites and the Mechwalker feat. The various two-weapon fighting feats do not

apply to mechs, and their abilities are subsumed by the new Mechidextrous feat.)

Patchwork Repairs (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, a mech jockey can perform patchwork repairs once per day to get his mech back on its feet quickly. Making patchwork repairs takes a full round action (and in a large mech, additional time may be required to move to the damaged area). Patchwork repairs fix the effects of one critical hit, but do not increase the mech's hit points. The repairs last for 1d6 hours plus one hour per two mech jockey class levels; after that, the critical damage recurs. For example, a steam-powered mech that suffers gyroscope damage must normally make a Reflex save (DC 16) with every move or fall over, and it suffers a –4 penalty to trip checks. A 4th-level mech jockey could temporarily fix the gyroscope so the effects disappear, but they reappear after 1d6+2 hours.

Push the Envelope (Ex): Mech jockeys have an uncanny ability to judge the limits of their mechs. They can redline a steam engine, push its boiler to the blasting point, yet judge the pressure just right so they max out performance without causing permanent damage.

A mech jockey can push the envelope a number of times per day as indicated on Table 1-2. When pushing the envelope, the mech jockey's mech gains a temporary +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls, +2 to all saving throws, and +10 ft. to its movement speed. The mech jockey can keep his mech redlined for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the mech jockey's Int modifier. At the end of the redline duration, the mech is overheated for 1d4 rounds. An overheated mech suffers a –2 penalty to attack and damage rolls.

A mech jockey who controls a specific function on a larger mech (for example, the gunner) gains the benefits of redlining only for the specific function he controls (generally one weapon).

At 12th level, the mech jockey can push the envelope to an extreme redline point. From now on, his bonuses for pushing the envelope are doubled: +4 to attack and damage rolls, +4 to the mech's saves, and +20 ft. to the mech's movement speed. The modifiers for an overheated mech are unchanged.

At 18th level, the mech jockey can continue to push the envelope to an extreme redline point, and the mech no longer overheats when the redlining is over.

Pushing the envelope is a free action that can occur at any point in a round, usually at the beginning of a mech jockey's turn. It is acceptable to declare that the pilot begins pushing the envelope after an attack or effect hits that forces a save.

Roll with the Punches (Ex): A mech jockey learns to move his mech with the momentum of incoming blows, reducing the likelihood of critical hits. At 5th level, a mech jockey piloting a mech of average maneuverability or better treats critical thresholds as one increment less dangerous. Yellow critical hits are treated as green, orange critical hits are treated as yellow, and red critical hits are treated as orange. This means he rolls on the lower threshold column to determine the effects of critical hits.

At 11th level, a mech jockey treats critical hits as two increments less dangerous. Yellow and orange critical hits use the green column, while red critical hits use the yellow column.

At 20th level, a mech jockey treats critical hits as three increments less dangerous. All critical hits use the green column, regardless of threshold.

Bonus Feat: At each of the indicated levels the mech jockey may take one of the following feats for free, provided the feat's prerequisites are met: Dodge, Expertise, Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (any mech weapon), Greater Weapon Specialization (any mech weapon), Improved Critical (any mech weapon), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Mech Dancer, Mech Fu, Mechidextrous, Mechwalker, Power Attack, Shot on the Run, Speed Freak, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (any mech weapon), or Weapon Specialization (any mech weapon). A mech jockey who takes Weapon Specialization, Greater Weapon Specialization, or Greater Weapon Focus counts his mech jockey levels as fighter levels for purposes of meeting the feat prerequisites.

STALKER (VARIANT ROGUE)

Stalkers are rogues who specialize in infiltrating and destroying mechs. Although their abilities are generally similar to traditional rogues, their training departs in a few important ways. They study steam engine technology and mech piloting extensively, and the focus of their rogue skills is on infiltration and concealment at the expense of certain other areas. For game purposes, they are considered a different class than the traditional rogue.

Stalkers are described in more detail on page 179. They are not a formal organization, simply a type of rogue with specialized interests.

Game Rule Information
Stalkers are identical to normal rogues with the following modifications.

CLASS SKILLS
The stalker's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (any) (Int), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), Mech Pilot (Dex), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

The key differences between these skills and those of a rogue are as follows:

New Skills: Stalkers have access to these new skills: Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Knowledge (mechs) (Int), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Mech Pilot (Dex).

Lost Skills: These traditional rogue skills are not class skills for a stalker: Appraise (Int), Forgery (Int), Perform (Cha), Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES
All class features are identical to those of a rogue except as described here.

Special Abilities: On achieving 10th level and every three levels thereafter (13th, 16th, and 19th), a stalker gains a special ability. At 10th level the stalker must take the *contortionist* ability. At 13th level the stalker must take the *that piece is important* ability. At future levels he may choose from the usual options.

Contortionist (Ex): A stalker with this ability can contort her body into a bewildering variety of shapes. She can dislocate joints at will, contract her body into unnaturally

small shapes, and fit through incredibly tiny spaces. She receives a +5 competence bonus to Escape Artist checks. This stacks with the Agile feat. Stalkers use this skill to squeeze into the tiniest openings on a mech, often finding entry through narrow air vents and seemingly impassible exhaust pipes.

That Piece Is Important (Ex): A stalker with this ability can assess weak points in a mech's engines with expert ability. After extensive study of the mech's engine rooms, she can identify a single piece that, if destroyed, will bring the entire mech to a grinding halt.

Using this ability requires studying the mech's engines for at least one full hour on a small mech, and as long as several months on the endless gear forests of a city-mech. After the period of study, the stalker can make a Disable Device skill check. The stalker cannot take 10 or take 20 on this roll. The time required and the DC depends on the mech's size as follows:

Size	Study Time	Disable Device DC
Large	1 hour	16
Huge	2 hours	18
Gargantuan	4 hours	20
Colossal	8 hours	22
Colossal II	2 days	24
Colossal III	5 days	26
Colossal IV	2 weeks	28
Colossal V	3 weeks	30
City-mech A	1 month	32
City-mech B	2 months	34
City-mech C	3 months	36
City-mech D	4 months	38
City-mech E	5 months	40
City-mech F	6 months	42

If successful, she brings the entire mech to a grinding halt. Within 2d6 minutes of her sabotage, every single system connected to the mech's central engines has failed, from the legs to the arms to the water supplies to any weapons connected to the main engines. The mech loses no hit points but must be repaired as if its hit points had been reduced by 15%. Repairs take an unusually long time because the mech's coglayers must locate the specific part damaged by the stalker. Before repairs can begin, the mech crew

must spend at least half as much time finding the damaged piece as the stalker spent identifying it.

If the check fails, the stalker can continue searching for another week, then make another check. After each failed attempt the stalker must pass a Bluff check of the same DC as the Disable Device check or have her activities in the engine rooms detected (probably by investigating coglayers). This routine of a new check each week can continue until the stalker gives up or is detected.

This ability is far more subtle than simply bashing in an important gear. It's sabotage in the most inconspicuous possible manner. The stalker might remove a single bolt, cut a single wire, or file the edges of a gear by a single millimeter. This ability sums up the very motto of the stalker: cause maximum damage with minimum visibility.

Necromantic and animated mechs are not affected by this ability.

Favored Class: Regardless of race, any rogue may multiclass as a stalker as if stalker were a favored class, and vice versa.

STEAMBORG

The steamborgs are a profession unlike anything the world has seen before. They are human, dwarf, and gnome engineers who have taken steam engine technology to a dangerous new level. Rather than experiment in building enormous mechanized walkers, they took the next logical step: They turned *themselves* into mechanized walkers. They are, in essence, self-constructed cyborgs built from steam engine technology.

The rise of steam engine technology, coupled with the nihilism of a world in tatters, led to the creation of steamborgs. The early impetus was artificial limbs. A peg-legged dwarven engineer named Darius had long experimented with a variety of articulated legs, both magical and mundane. As steam engine technology improved he applied it to his prosthetics, with surprising results. He was able to produce an artificial leg that worked *better* than his normal leg. Not only

was it faster and stronger, it was modular and easily repairable.

From Darius' experiments formed a coterie of obsessive dwarven engineers. It wasn't long before they dispensed entirely with the pretense of helping the crippled. Soon they were voluntarily performing surgery on one another, replacing natural limbs and organs with steamborg parts. In time, they were more steam engine than dwarf, and thus were born the steamborgs.

Adventures: Steamborgs adventure because it provides a source of funds for their experiments and a chance to test their latest accouterments. Some are also motivated to adventure because they have no homes and nowhere else to go. Low-level steamborgs may still have a place in their society, but as they advance and become progressively less human (or dwarven or gnomish, as the case may be), they invariably become outcasts. Some are treated as deranged eccentrics — useful allies, but certainly not someone to leave unattended with your children — while others are deemed a bad influence and chased out of town.

Characteristics: Steamborgs acquire power through the addition of steam engine technology to their own bodies and their improved proficiency in using it. Over time they become more and more adept at operating steampunk equipment. Not only can they use the powers built into their artificial body parts, they can surpass the limitations of humanity, mixing the best aspects of machine and mortal. Their ability to operate technology is similar to that of gearwrights, but their talent with technology is focused more on applying it in creative ways than inventing new techniques.

Alignment: Steamborgs tend toward neutrality and chaos. Becoming a steamborg requires overstepping cultural boundaries common to almost all societies. Little discipline is involved; rather, it entails comfort with risk and, in a world where steamborgs are still extremely rare, a great degree of daring the unknown.

Religion: Steamborgs have no respect for the old gods. Where are they now that the world is falling apart? For a steamborg, power

comes from the steam technology that infuses his being, not through worship of absent gods. Steamborgs worship only technology and the power it can bring them. If they exhibit any religious leanings at all, it is toward the quasigod Dotrak, the "great engine."

Background: Steamborgs are born tinkerers. Those who had normal professions before the catastrophe were often blacksmiths, metalworkers, and other craftsmen. Many were known for their fabulous handcrafted devices, such as complex clocks and self-loading crossbows. After the catastrophe, they were drawn to the developing field of steam engine technology. Without exception, a steamborg has been involved in the construction of at least one mech. Some have worked on more than one, and many became technicians or coglayers.

Just what spurs the leap from coglayer to steamborg is a matter of debate and often varies by individual. Some saw mechs as the wrong direction for steam engine technology, believing instead that personal power was more important. Others have no objections to mechs but pursue steamborg technology for self-defense. Still others always aspired to personal power but lacked the requisite talent to become fighters or wizards.

Races: High-level steamborgs are universally dwarven, for it was the dwarves who developed the class in the first place. Mid-level steamborgs may be dwarves or gnomes. Beginning characters tend to be dwarves or gnomes, as they are the most advanced in steam engine technology, but human steamborgs are also known, since humans are ambitious, innovative, and willing to experiment for personal gain.

Other Classes: No one doesn't have a strong opinion about steamborgs. In general, most other classes find steamborgs disturbing, to say the least. They are most accepted among gnomes and dwarves, but even then are seen as freaks. Among druids, rangers, bards, and monks, as well as most elves, they are viewed as twisted, depraved mockeries of nature. The only exception is the drow, whose own magical adamantine limbs lend them to accept steamborgs more readily. Some wizards, with their own ambitions and willingness to make sacrifices for personal improvement, sympathize with the steamborgs' motivations. Fighters, barbarians, and some rogues (as well as most orcs) respect the improved abilities that come with steamborg parts, even if they see the process as unnatural. Coglayers sympathize with the reverence for technology but still see steamborgs as freaks. Clerics and paladins disdain the steamborg's abandonment of religion.

Game Rule Information

Steamborgs have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Constitution is the defining trait of a steamborg. He gains power by pushing his body to its absolute limits. At the upper levels of advancement, the body is almost completely replaced by steam engine technology, and only through sheer physical vitality are the body's basic systems able to sustain themselves.

Intelligence and Charisma are also important to a steamborg. With Intelligence, he comprehends the technology that he will build into his body, expressed in his acquisition of skills. With Charisma, he retains his essential humanity as his body becomes more and more metal.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The steamborg's class skills (and the key abilities for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (mechcraft) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Heal (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (steam engines) (Int), Listen (Wis), and Profession (engineer).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the steamborg.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Steamborgs spend little time learning about weapons. They devote their energy to other things. As a result, they are proficient only with simple weapons and the following exotic weapons (which they learn about in their engineering studies): buzzaxe, buzzsaw, chattersword, flame nozzle, lobster claw, steambreather, and steam gun. Their armor proficiency is limited to light and medium armors, and shields (except the tower shield).

A steamborg is always considered proficient with any weapon he has built using his steam powers.

Steam Engine (Ex): A steamborg becomes a steamborg when someone implants a steam engine into his body. All 1st-level steamborgs are the recent recipients of steam engine implants. The steam engine is usually implanted into the chest cavity but can be anywhere: inside the thigh, in a metal sheath in the small of the back, even on the crown of the head. The steam