

ROOKBLADE

"Say hello to my blade. It is the least of your worries."

—A lone rookblade before a squadron of enemy soldiers.

Summary

The rookblade is a stealthy supernatural striker. He is one with the spirits of the shadow, spider, and thief constellations, and is highly mobile and capable of striking out of nowhere, often with deadly results. Rooks are often adept with traps, poison, and other unsavory means typical of rogues and assassins; however, they mostly augment their stealth with occult rites to enjoy a supernatural edge. Rooks have tremendous flexibility as they pursue their career and no two are alike. One may be an urban roof jumper skilled at bypassing magical alarms while another could be a dungeon-delving explorer skilled at sneaking up on even the keenest monsters.

Background & Adventures

Use the following information to help define a rookblade's background, motives, and interactions with others.

Adventures: Like all pactmakers, a rookblade adventures to discover and master new spirits. He is most interested in spirits of the shadow, spider, and thief constellations; the more binding options, the more likely he is to excel at his craft. While a rookblade might easily be an urban roustabout, a wise leader will seek to entice a rookblade or three to engage in scouting, spying, and quiet advancement behind enemy lines. Like their cousin the rogue, rookblades prize treasure.

Characteristics: A rookblade is almost as stealthy and as full of deadly tricks as a rogue. However, he directs some attention to pactmaking to obtain a supernatural edge. A rookblade can deliver sneak attacks, disable traps, dodge surprise blows, and evade powerful magic. In a pinch and at a moment's notice, he can also call upon spirits of darkness, stealth, poison, and thievery. The most adept rookblades can dispel magical defenses and suddenly appear from nowhere to pounce upon unsuspecting foes.

Alignment: Rookblades may hold to any morality or ethos. Most are chaotic and neutral if not evil; they are as self-serving and capricious as the spirits they bind. Others are loyal to kin or liege and use their occult powers to disrupt otherwise-unreachable foes, often to right an injustice or even topple a corrupt or cruel overlord from his tyrannical throne.

Religion: A rookblade's religious views depend on societal and divine attitudes about pactmaking and unsavory activities like assassination. Even when one or more gods support pactmaking, a rookblade may remain agnostic and cynical. After all, he is an adept killer even if he doesn't care to kill or works in the name of a greater good.

Background: Every rookblade has a unique story to tell. Some begin as street urchins or scoundrels who turn to magic after repeated failures in their "profession" or after coming across an arcane tome or powerful magic item that inspires occult interests. More than a few start as budding career criminals; a powerful pactmaker notices their potential and introduces them to magic as well as generous coinage. The first secret rite grants the rookblade a minor trick of calling upon supernatural energy for a few minutes. Later rites and indoctrination immerse him in the darkest spirits. Rarely, a budding rookblade may attend an elite college. He hones his craft in the name of his king or emperor. Such rookblades are usually snatched at a young age to help ensure their absolute loyalty. Oddly, some

rookblades claim that they took up pactmaking against their will: the initial rite that teaches an occult knack also instills a deep, undeniable urge to continue down a shadowy path.

Races: Humans, elves, half-elves, and hobgoblins make outstanding rookblades. These folks are flexible, stealthy, adept with magic, and/or suitably talented deceivers. Indeed, hobgoblin rookblades are common among some pactmaker cabals. Halflings are stealthy and some would say well-included to thievery; the few who can stomach this dark line of work are terrors told of for generations. Gnomes are adept with magical traps and surprisingly hearty when channeling supernatural power. The dark, occult themes of a rookblade's study also greatly appeals to the savage races like orcs and troglodytes.

Other Classes: Rooks get along well with most other pactmakers as well as stealthy types including rangers and rogues. Depending on societal and divine views of pactmaking, a rookblade may or may not get along with clerics and paladins. Rooks are sometimes mistaken for blackguards and can get along quite well with these vile fellows. That said, there is rarely true honor among evil, and a rookblade may happily play himself as a party's friend while it suits him before backstabbing his would-be allies and taking loot for himself. Often times, rookblades view themselves as superior to rogues and assassins—as natural leaders with occult knowledge that trumps experience or guile. However, rookblades are not as stealthy or as diverse in their skills as rogues and are wise to temper their pride.

Role: A rookblade plays a role similar as a rogue but with fewer skills and more magic at his disposal. Rooks best apply themselves against singularly powerful foes, usually with an accomplice or two who can help distract the enemy and create openings for the rookblade to strike hard and deep.

Game Rule Information

Rooks have the following game statistics.

Abilities: The rookblade's key scores are Dexterity, Charisma, and Constitution. High Dexterity is boosts stealth to move silently and hide in shadows to deliver sneak attacks. High Charisma helps the rookblade seal pacts and gather information. High Constitution makes it harder for foes to resist the rookblade's granted abilities. High Intelligence grants more skills, high Strength improves weapon damage, and high Wisdom improves the rookblade's ability to spot, listen, and call others' bluffs, as well as resist mental influence of others.

Alignment: Any.

Starting Age: As rogue.

Starting Gold: 5d4 x 10 (125 gp).

Hit Die: d6.

d6

Class Skills

The rookblade's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Perform (Cha), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are class features of the rookblade:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A rookblade is proficient with all simple weapons plus the hand crossbow, rapier, shortbow (normal and composite), and short sword. Rooks are proficient with light armor, but not with shields.

Sneak Attack: This works like a rogue's sneak attack ability. You apply extra damage to your attacks whenever an opponent is flat-footed or denied its Dexterity bonus. The extra damage starts at +1d6 at 1st level and increases every three levels (4th, 7th, 10th, etc) thereafter to a maximum of +7d6 at 19th level. When a rookblade gets a sneak attack bonus from another source, the sneak attack dice stack.

Trapfinding: Beginning at 1st level, a rookblade can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a DC higher than 20. Finding a nonmagical trap has a DC of at least 20, or higher if it is well hidden. Finding a magic trap has a DC of 25 + the level of the spell used to create it.

A rookblade can also use the Disable Device skill to disarm magic traps. A magic trap generally has a DC of 25 + the level of the spell used to create it. When you beat a trap's DC by 10 or more with a Disable Device check, then you can study the trap, figure out how it works, and bypass it (with your party) without disarming it.

Occult Knack (Su): Every rookblade's first packmaking rite introduces him supernatural secrets. Once daily a rookblade gains the benefits of the Augment Pact feat for 2 minutes. Pact Augmentations are listed in *Secrets of Pact Magic*, Table 5-1, page 181. Activating a pact augmentation is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. You can select this option even if you are not bound with a spirit (you draw upon your supernatural training rather than a specific pact).

Bind Spirit (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, a rookblade may seal pacts with spirits. Each day, you may bind one spirit of your choice. The spirit's level must be equal to or less than the maximum level indicated on Table 3-4: The Rookblade under Maximum Spirit Level. Your binding check equals d20 + your class level + your Charisma modifier. The DC to resist one of your granted abilities is 10 + 1/2 your class level + your Constitution modifier (a hearty body is required to effectively channel a spirit's energy). See *Secrets of Pact Magic*, Chapter 4: Spirits (pages 63–67) for all other rules regarding binding and use of spirits.

Spirit Swift and Deadly (Su): Once daily starting at 2nd level, you may quickly and briefly bind a spirit of the shadow, spider or thief constellation, subject to the spirit level indicated in Table 2-2: The Rookblade under Maximum Spirit Level. You don't need to conduct the spirit's ceremony, but you must meet its requirements and attempt a binding check as usual. Binding this way is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The pact lasts 2 minutes and then dissipates.

Evasion (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, a rookblade can avoid magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If you make a successful Reflex save against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, you instead take no damage. You can use evasion only if you are wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless rookblade does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Rookblade's Option: At 3rd level and again at 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 18th level, you may select one stealth talent or one binder secret, as you desire. The option is fixed for your career once you select it. Stealth talents are extraordinary abilities and binder secrets are supernatural abilities. See the last page for a list of options. Once during your career, you may take any feat that you qualify for in place of the usual rookblade's options.

Trap Sense (Ex): At 4th level, you gain an intuitive sense that alerts you to danger from traps, giving you a +1 bonus on

TABLE 2-2: THE ROOK

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Saving Throws			Maximum Spirit Level	Special
		Fort	Ref	Will		
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	—	Sneak attack +1d6, trapfinding, occult knack
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	1	Bind Spirit, spirit swift and deadly
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	1	Evasion, rookblade's option
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	1	Sneak attack +2d6, trap sense +1
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	2	—
6	+4	+2	+5	+5	2	Rookblade's option, uncanny dodge
7	+5	+2	+5	+5	2	Sneak attack +3d6
8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	3	rookblade's move (1/day)
9	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	3	Rookblade's option, trap sense +2
10	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7	3	Sneak attack +4d6
11	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	4	—
12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	4	Improved uncanny dodge, rookblade's option
13	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	4	Sneak attack +5d6, trap sense +3
14	+10/+5	+4	+9	+9	4	Rookblade's move (2/day)
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+9	5	Advanced talent, rookblade's option
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	5	Sneak attack +6d6
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	5	Rookblade's move (3/day)
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11	6	Rookblade's option, trap sense +4
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	6	Sneak attack +7d6
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	6	Occult master striker

Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps. These bonuses rise to +2 when the rookblade reaches 9th level, to +3 when she reaches 13th level, and to +4 when she reaches 18th level. Trap sense bonuses gained from multiple classes stack.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Starting at 6th level, you retain your Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker (you still lose any Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized). If you gain uncanny dodge from a second class then you automatically gains improved uncanny dodge (see below).

Rookblade's Move (Su): At 8th you gain the rookblade's signature ability, one that reflects an ever-deepening link to spirits of the shadow, spider, and thief constellations. Once daily, you can slip magically between spaces; this works like *dimension door* except you are limited to Close range, can only move yourself, and are still capable of actions when you arrive at your destination. Moreover, when you arrive, you may attempt a Hide check as a free action as if making a normal Hide check.

At 14th level, you may move twice daily up to Medium range, you gain a free move action upon arriving at your destination, and you can attempt a Hide check even while being observed. As long as you are within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, you can hide yourself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. You cannot hide in your own shadow.

At 17th level, you may move three times daily up to Long range, you gain a free standard action upon arriving at your destination, and you can attempt to hide yourself from view in the open even if there is no shadow.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 12th level, you can no longer be flanked. This defense blocks sneak attacks against you. The exception to this defense is that a rogue or foe hunter at least four levels higher than you can flank (and thus sneak attack you). If you gain uncanny dodge (see above) from a second class you automatically gain improved uncanny dodge, and levels from those classes stack to determine the minimum level required to flank you.

Advanced Talent: On attaining 15th level, a rookblade may select an advanced stealth talent rather than a standard stealth talent. Here are the advanced talent options.

Crippling Strike (Ex): A rookblade with this ability can sneak attack opponents with such precision that blows weaken and hamper them. An foe damaged by one of your sneak attacks also takes 2 points of Strength damage. Ability points lost to damage return on their own at the rate of 1 point per day for each damaged ability.

Defensive Roll (Ex): The rookblade can roll with a potentially lethal blow to take less damage from it than usual. Once per day, when you would be reduced to 0 or fewer hit points by damage in combat (from a weapon or other blow, not a spell or special ability), you can attempt to roll with the damage. To use this ability, you must attempt a Reflex saving throw (DC = damage dealt). If the save succeeds, you take only half damage from the blow; if it fails, you takes full damage. You must be aware of the attack and able to react to it in order to execute a defensive roll—if you are denied your Dexterity bonus to AC, you can't use this ability. Since this effect would not normally allow a character to make a Reflex save for half damage, the rookblade's evasion ability does not apply to the defensive roll.

Improved Evasion (Ex): This ability works like evasion, except that while the rookblade still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against attacks, you henceforth take only

half damage on a failed save. A helpless rookblade does not gain the benefit of improved evasion.

Opportunist (Ex): Once per round, the rookblade can make an attack of opportunity against a foe who has just been struck for damage in melee by another character. This attack counts as the rookblade's attack of opportunity for that round. Even a rookblade with the Combat Reflexes feat can't use the opportunist ability more than once per round.

Skill Mastery: You become so certain in the use of certain skills that you can use them reliably even under adverse conditions.

Upon gaining this ability, select a number of skills equal to 3 + your Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check with one of these skills, you may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent you from doing so. A rookblade may gain this special ability multiple times, selecting additional skills for it to apply to each time.

Slippery Mind (Ex): This ability represents the rookblade's ability to wriggle free from controlling or compelling magical effects. If a rookblade with slippery mind is affected by an enchantment spell or effect and fails the saving throw, the rookblade can attempt it again 1 round later at the same DC. You get only this one extra chance to succeed on the saving throw.

Occult Master Striker (Su): At 20th level, whenever you use rookblade's move, your melee weapon (or weapons) are improved until the start of your next turn, counting as magical adamantine for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction and dealing +3d6 sneak attack damage.

Character Themes

Consider the following archetypal character themes when role-playing your character.

Occult Templar: This path is a direct response to divine templars who hassle pactmakers. Like their sworn foes, these rookblades are trained in stealth and coordinated tactics that allow two or more rookblades to corner foes and inflict multiple sneak attacks. They may serve a good or evil patron or work as a star-chamber. They take an orderly, monastic approach to their training to ensure everyone in their strike force is on the same page and missions are successful with few surprises. A danger of this path is that spirits can influence a rookblade in unpredictable ways.

Sly Pactmaker: This rookblade thrives in societies that are hostile to pactmaking, or alternatively, in societies rife with pactmaking where intense competition between magic users demands a stealthy edge. A rookblade is well equipped for survive when there is an exorcist on every corner or a binder queen who tracks down anyone who might threaten her rule. For this rookblade, stealth is a wise defense and he may not wish anyone harm. The danger of this path is that everyone may wonder if he has something to hide even when he doesn't.

Supernatural Scoundrel: This rookblade cares for no one but himself; pactmaking is a convenient tool to help him get what he wants, when he wants it, regardless of who is hurt. A supernatural scoundrel may appear the essence of charm, wit and looks—he is skilled at bluffing, gathering information, and even diplomacy. Yet woe to those who invest trust in him. He acts the moment he senses weakness, an opportunity to fill his purse, or a paramour to take the fall. Other supernatural scoundrels are less smooth. Their erratic behavior, rude mannerisms, and roving eye betray them. This rookblade may live well, or at least near-do-well, for years before meeting the deadly hand of an avenger.

BINDER SECRETS

Rookblades acquire various secrets that enhance health, senses, stealth, will-power, and even their soul. At 3rd level and every three levels thereafter you may select either a stealth talent (at right) or one of the secrets listed below. The level indicated in parentheses with each secret indicates the minimum class level required to select that secret. The secrets are supernatural and function only when you have bound a spirit. When a spell is mentioned, your effective caster level equals your binder level. Here are fourteen secrets. More may exist.

Cloak of Night (3rd): Once daily you enjoy a +6 insight bonus on Hide, Jump, and Move Silently checks for a period of 1 minute per binder level.

Spider Climb (3rd): You can use the *spider climb* spell once daily.

Undying Aid (3rd): Once per day, as a swift action, you can heal a number of hit points equal to 1d4 + your binder level.

Detect Pact Spirits (6th): You can use the *detect pact spirits* spell at will to detect spirits in the same way a paladin detects evil.

Skewer Magic (6th): Once daily you can use *dispel magic*.

Wraith Form (6th): Once daily you can use *gaseous form*.

Analyze Pact Spirits (9th): You can use the *analyze pact spirits* spell at will.

Nondetection (9th): You gain the benefits of the *nondetection* spell for a period of 24 hours.

Spiritual Killer (9th): You can use *spiritual killer* once daily.

Everbound Spirit (12th): Any attempt by spell or ability to exorcise any of your bound spirits automatically fails.

Nightmare Form (12th): You can use *form of nightmares* once daily.

Resilient Body (12th): You gain the benefits of the *death ward* spell for a period of 24 hours.

Undying Salvation (15th): Once per day, if you should die, your spirit immediately restores you to life, as if you were subjected to a *raise dead* spell but without need of materials or level loss.

Unhinging (15th): You can use *unhinge the spirit* once daily.

Vicious Blade (15th): Weapons that you wield gain the vicious quality. At your option, your melee weapon attacks deal +2d6 damage to opponents and 1d6 damage to yourself.

Deadly Aura (18th): Once daily you can use *horrid wilting*.

Occult Body (18th): You can use the *gaseous form* spell at will.

Resilient Mind (18th): You gain the benefits of the *mind blank* spell for a period of 24 hours.

BLAZ'AR STARTING CHARACTER

male hobgoblin (civilized) rookblade

Str 13 **Dex** 16 **Con** 14 **Int** 12 **Wis** 8 **Cha** 14

HP 1d6+2 (8 hit points)

BAB +0, **Grapple** +0, **Speed** 30 ft., **AC** 15, **Init** +3

Fort +2, **Reflex** +5, **Will** +1

Skill Ranks: Disable Device+2, Gather Information+4, Hide+4, Move Silently+4, Open Lock+2, Survival+4, Tumble+4, Use Magic Device +4.

Class Features: Sneak attack (+1d6), trapfinding, occult knack (1/day, gain one pact augmentation for 2 minutes).

Racial Abilities: Darkvision 60 ft., +4 bonus Move Silently checks, speak Common and Goblin.

Level 1 Feat: Vatic Strike (+2d6 damage 1/5 rnds).

Gear: Leather armor, dagger, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, 2 darts, spiked bracer, thieves' tools, backpack, wine skin, 10 pieces of chalk, 1 day's rations, belt pouch, flint and steel, grappling hook, sunrod, silk rope.

Gold: 32 gp 5 sp.

STEALTH TALENTS

Like a rogue, a rookblade learns with experience a number of stealthy talents that aid him and confound his foes. At 3rd level and every three levels thereafter you may select either a binder secret (at left) or one of the stealth talents listed below. A rookblade cannot select an individual talent more than once.

Bleeding Attack (Ex): A rookblade with this ability can cause living opponents to bleed when hitting them with a sneak attack. This attack causes the target to take 1 additional point of damage each round for each die of the rogue's sneak attack (i.e. 4d6 equals 4 points of bleed). Bleeding creatures take that amount of damage at the start of each of their turns. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 15 Heal check or the application of any effect that heals hit point damage. Bleeding damage from this ability does not stack with itself.

Combat Trick: A rookblade may gain a combat feat that she qualifies for in place of a stealth talent.

Fast Stealth (Ex): This ability allows a rookblade to move at full speed using Stealth without penalty.

Finesse Rogue: A rookblade may gain the Weapon Finesse feat in place of a stealth talent.

Ledge Walker (Ex): This ability allows a rookblade to move along narrow surfaces at full speed using Dexterity-based skills without penalty.

Quick Disable (Ex): It takes a rookblade with this ability half the normal amount of time to disable a trap using Disable Device (minimum 1 round).

Resiliency (Ex): Once per day, a rookblade with this ability can gain a number of temporary hit points equal to the rookblade's level. Activating this ability is an immediate action that can only be performed when he is brought to below 0 hit points. This ability can be used to prevent her from dying. These temporary hit points last for 1 minute. If the rookblade's hit points drop below 0 due to the loss of these temporary hit points, he falls unconscious and is dying as normal.

Rogue Crawl (Ex): While prone, a rookblade with this ability can move at half speed. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal. A rookblade cannot take 5-ft steps while crawling.

Slow Reactions (Ex): Opponents damaged by this rookblade's sneak attack cannot make attacks of opportunity for 1 round.

Stand Up (Ex): A rookblade with this ability can stand up from a prone position as a free action. This still provokes attacks of opportunity for standing up while threatened by a foe.

Surprise Attacks (Ex): During the surprise round, opponents are always considered flat-footed to a rookblade with this ability, even if they have acted. Opponents who cannot be caught flat-footed (such as through improved uncanny dodge) are immune.

Weapon Training: A rookblade may gain the Weapon Focus feat in place of a stealth talent.

