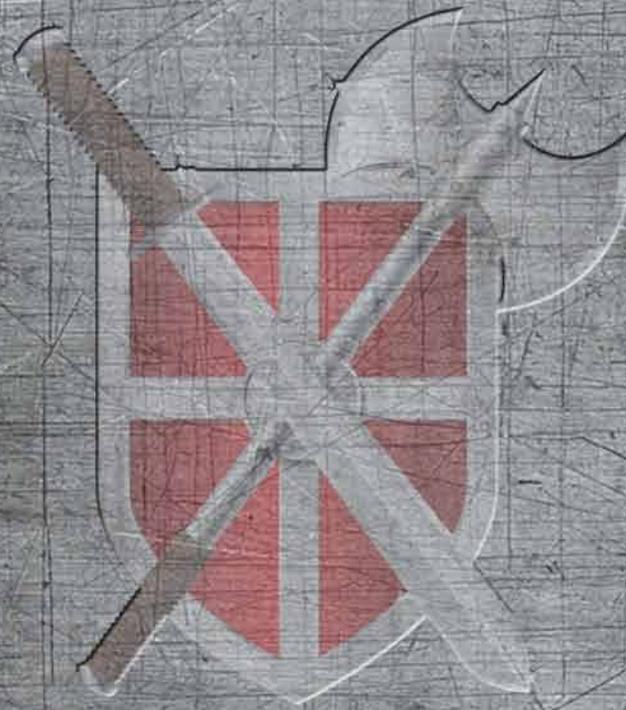


# Combat Swipes

For Better and Easier Combat Descriptions



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## Dedication

Thanks to Adam Marafioti for the inspiration for the Combat Swipes contest and this ebook. Keep asking those great questions, Adam.

Comments, errors or questions? [johnn@roleplayingtips.com](mailto:johnn@roleplayingtips.com)

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# Introduction

In Roleplaying Tips #541 I answered a tips request made by a member of my [Faster Combat GM course](#). One cool tip from that article advised you to save snippets of great combat descriptions you find in books, movies and websites.

I call this your Combat Swipes File.

I then held a contest where RPT readers sent in combat descriptions for a chance to win some great prizes.

This PDF is the result of those fantastic content entries, giving you your own combat swipes file for use during combats.

The combat descriptions had to fall within five categories:

- ◇ **Melee Attack Success**
- ◇ **Ranged Attack Success**
- ◇ **Attack Miss**
- ◇ **Spell Attack**
- ◇ **Insults & Challenges**

And that's how I've organized this ebook, to make finding an entry type you need faster.

Thanks to all the Roleplaying Tips readers who entered the contest!

Before we dive into the combat swipes, I'll share with you the original tips article on how to add more story to your combats.

# 3 Easy Ways To Add More Story To Combat

**By Johnn Four, as featured in RPT#541.**

I received a tip request from a Faster Combat member and decided to answer it in this newsletter as well as posting it in the Faster Combat members area.

Adam wants to know how to roleplay better in combat:

*Hi Johnn and Tony,*

*I call for initiative and the game changes from an RPG to tactical combat. I am definitely as guilty of this as anyone at the table (if not more so).*

*A major part of the problem is my brain is kept so busy managing the combat (whose turn is next, how does this rule work again, answering various questions about the room and their opponents, figuring out what action to take for the bad guys, etc.)*

*I don't have enough time to hold a conversation with the PCs, let alone think up any witty comments or anything like that.*

*A couple of my players have tried on multiple occasions to trade banter, or even negotiate, with their opponents in battle and I've tried to keep the conversation up, but it is really hard to do.*

*This is especially true when it may be 20-30 minutes between rounds and you can't remember what insults were hurled last round (i.e. 6 seconds of game time ago!).*

*Similarly, describing the combat more in narrative terms and less in mechanical terms is something I want to do, but am struggling with.*

*Instead of saying he hits you for 15 of points damage, I'd love to say, "He parries your lunging thrust towards his rib cage, counters with a slicing motion under your sword arm, before changing the arc at the last second with a flick of his wrist, sending his blade deep into the top of your shoulder."*

*Being able to describe the combat like that would be great, but I just don't seem to have the time to do it.*

*The other issue is coming up with descriptions that aren't repetitive after the third combat.*

*Any advice through the lessons on how to achieve any of the above would be great.*

*Thanks,*

*Adam*

This is a great tips request, Adam! Hopefully the techniques and solutions below help out.

# 1. Create Mission Stat Blocks & Combat Encounter Plans

Adam says:

*“I call for initiative and the game changes from an RPG to tactical combat.”*

In Faster Combat we teach two techniques that hard code story into your fights. The players cannot help but trip on story, even if they seek to avoid it!

This is important in groups that have a mix of personality types. You know, the groups with a couple of storytellers, a couple of combat monkeys and a casual player?

This style conflict comes out in their gaming. And it can ruin sessions or even campaigns.

Because when you roleplay, the monkeys get bored. When you run combats, the dramatists get bored. And the casual player - well, who knows what makes him bored? Just pat him on the head once in awhile maybe.

But there is a way to get everybody leaning forward during a fight, highly engaged and very entertained.

That's through story. Everybody loves a story. We can't help but get engaged when there's a rip roaring good story on the line.

Hell, I get hooked even when I don't want to when my wife watches her favourite TV programs. You wouldn't catch me dead watching Gilmore Girls on purpose, but if I get hooked into an episode's story by accident, I'll stay to see how it ends. (Don't tell my wife I like her shows.)

That's the power of story.

## Why Add Story?

Add story to your combats, and you hook any type of player with any playing style.

Even though player preferences can be worlds apart, story works to bring them together for several reasons:

- ◇ Combat stories are fast relative to how long adventure or campaign story lines are. You can tell several combat “stories” in a session, if you want.
- ◇ Drama is inherent. Combat means someone's going to die or could die.
- ◇ Fights engage primary character attributes. The DNA of most characters in D&D style games is their combat stats and abilities.

Telling a story while engaging these character attributes means you not only make combat monkeys happy, but you are working in synch with the game's design focus.

- ◇ The structure of story is inherent in the structure of combat. Every good story has a beginning, middle and end. So do good combats.
- ◇ Roleplayers love story any way they can get it. Add story to your combats and they will think they've died and gone to heaven.
- ◇ Embedding story into combat can actually make combats shorter! At the least, they add no overhead to your DMing when done right.

As you can see, it's all wins for doing this.

So how do you do it?

In Faster Combat we teach two techniques:

## 1) Mission Stat Blocks

This is fancy lingo for “give your combats plot.”

Do that by adding an objective to your fights beyond “last hit point wins.”

We’ve developed an actual stat block for this, and provided members our top 10 cool combat objective templates using the stat block, but it all boils down to giving the PCs a goal for the combat.

For example, save the hostage. The PCs must rescue a friend. This changes the whole context of the melee and adds a fun story to it. Will the hostage be freed? Will the PCs sacrifice themselves to save a friend?

Part of the stat block is to add a twist. In this example, we might make the hostage a zombie created by and serving a necromancer foe. The PCs now have to fight off their friend without destroying him.

This adds a nice follow-up quest of getting the friend un-zombified.

Or, perhaps the PCs decide their goal during the middle of the combat is to see their friend laid to rest. Screw the rez - kill the necromancer and give Judd the Blacksmith peace in the afterlife.

Even when your players descend into toe-to-toe fury to the last hit point, your mission objective still turns this into an interesting story about the fate of the friend and the PCs’ decisions.

Cool eh?

## 2) Combat Encounter Plans

There are 8 story structure elements:

◇ Distinctive, Memorable Characters or Groups

- ◇ Overcoming Challenges
- ◇ Suffering Setbacks
- ◇ Complications
- ◇ Powerful or Sudden Revelations, Discoveries or Events
- ◇ Building Tension or Friction
- ◇ Releasing the Tension or Friction
- ◇ Multiple Paths, Solutions or Conclusions

Now that you have a Mission Objective for your combat, you add in your story structure elements.

We call this a Combat Encounter Plan because you are layering on these elements to your typical planning, which is foe selection, location selection and crunch prep.

### For Example...

Overcoming Challenges could take the form of hazardous terrain. Perhaps the fight takes place in a field of thistle bushes. The undead won’t care about thorns and scratches, but poorly armoured PCs will. And heavily armoured PCs will get slowed down by the clawing plants.

And the Complication would be the friend turning out to be a zombie fighting against them. Perhaps you wait until round two to reveal this surprise to help fulfill the story structure.

(Because all stories take place along a timeline, you need to space some things out. That gives us opportunities like Building Tension, Sudden Revelations and Suffering Setbacks. If everything happens in the first round, it’s a boring fight and a broken story.)

*“A major part of the problem is my brain is kept so busy managing the combat.”*

Above, I've suggested you embed story into the combat itself. This solves your problem of being too busy running the logistics of combat to tell a story in a couple of ways.

## **Help Your Brain**

First, the structure I've recommended ensures story is present regardless of whether you have time or not during combat to think about or tell the story.

Story JUST HAPPENS because of the Mission Objective and your Combat Encounter plan.

Second, the little bit of work you do in advance by planning a Mission Objective and various encounter elements in your Combat Encounter Plan means you have MORE FREE BRAIN CYCLES available to handle combat logistics.

You see, when you get overloaded with the details of managing combat you create a mental backlog. You can only do one thing at a time, try as you might to multi-task. You can't sing and chew gum at the same time (try it, your jaw stops chewing when you sing :).

So you start up a mental queue of what you need to do next. That queue takes brain cycles of its own. As your queue grows, you have fewer free cycles for other things, making your mental backlog grow even more.

Meantime, you are tracking a pool of details about who's got what modifier, which minis belong to which foes, what the rules for a certain spell are, and so on. This further clogs up yer noggin'.

But stop everything for a sec.

Having a Combat Encounter Plan detailed out a bit ahead of

time gives you fewer things you have to conjure up during fights. This frees your brain up to pitch in with other areas, like role-playing or details tracking.

The Faster Combat course Module 3 will help relieve you of tracking so many details, and tips in past newsletter issues also will help anyone GM combat easier with various efficiency and organization techniques.

But at the core level, the story unfolds all by itself, relieving you of that stress and mental expense, and your players will notice the difference. They'll love having combat objectives other than clobbering.

## **2. Add A New Phase To Each Round**

*“I don't have enough time to hold a conversation with the PCs...”*

Multi-tasking is a myth. We've already covered that in our singing and gum chewing experiment.

What people actually mean when they say they can multi-task well when GMing is they are great at rapid task switching.

These GMs can hold a lot of temporary details in their head while retrieving memorized information like rules and names and what happened last session.

These GMs are also good at stopping something, doing something different, and then returning to the previous task while recalling the state things were in before the switch.

And these GMs are good at making these transitions back and forth fast. It might seem like they are thinking about the past, present and future all at once, but they are really just rapidly switching back and forth.

Most of us are not good at this. Talk to the brain scientists about why. I rely on my players to help me out. A couple are

experts at the rules, one keeps great notes, a couple help track foe wounds and other details.

I also rely on GM aids and software.

And I also rely on structure. Just as adding story structure relieves you of some GMing stress, so too can you add a new bit of structure to combat rounds to make sure you have some roleplaying time and ability.

## **The New Phase**

Here's how it works. You know how in game systems there is an order of combat operations? It typically goes like this:

1. Initiative
2. Declare actions
3. Movement
4. Ranged attacks
5. Melee attacks
6. Magic

Games vary, but there's always some order you need to resolve combat in.

All you need to do is add a new item in your order of operations devoted to roleplaying. Let's call it "free speech."

And let's add it to the end of the round. I'll explain why in a bit.

Our new order of operations now looks like this:

1. Initiative
2. Declare actions
3. Movement
4. Ranged attacks

5. Melee attacks

6. Magic

### **7. Free speech**

During the free speech phase, you stop doing your other stuff. You switch to free speech mode. And you roleplay.

This gives you the structure and THE SELF-PERMISSION you need to roleplay a bit EVERY ROUND. It's now hard-coded into your game. It's a done deal.

### **Allow Yourself To Concentrate**

Use this phase as a focused and safe time to include narrative and roleplaying.

Further, this structure lets you stop doing the other stuff for a moment so you can concentrate on having fun roleplaying.

Before, you were fighting with yourself. You were trying to do several things at once (i.e. the myth of multi-tasking).

Instead, do one thing at a time. Do each thing as best you can (and you'll be great at it - I know it).

Be as efficient and organized as possible so you move through phases faster and faster (i.e. task switching) as your experience and learning progresses.

Soon you'll be switching between tasks like a pro! Just like those lucky DMs with the natural gift for it.

And you will not even feel the new free speech phase makes combat longer or more complicated. Your group might actually look forward to this phase the most.

You see, I placed it at the end for a reason: all the results are in. Let the reactions begin!

It's not as fun doing the free speech phase at the start of the round because nobody's done anything to anyone yet in the

round. Instead, you do free speech at the end so players and NPCs can scream in pain, trash talk each other, and negotiate based on being closer to winning or dying.

### **What About D&D Round Order?**

Games like D&D do rounds a bit differently. They give each PC autonomy within their turn in the initiative order.

It doesn't matter if you are shooting a bow, lashing out with a sword, casting a spell or moving, your action triggers on your turn, not within a category in a certain combat phase.

In this case, you add free speech to the end of the round, after each combatant has had their turn.

The same benefits apply. Everybody has had their actions and now they can have their say!

### **What About Groups That Don't Roleplay?**

If your group already has good banter, then you do not need to add this new phase to the combat round. But if your group is all about the numbers or are reluctant to roleplay during combat for any reason, adding this new phase will help draw them into more roleplaying.

If you prompt each round for the group to speak freely in-character to each other and to their foes, you will see this activity grow.

Nurture it yourself by serving as an example - always get a bit of roleplaying in during the free speech phase. What PC can resist replying to an insult?

Once everybody starts roleplaying often and freely, you can remove the free speech phase if you find it a bit too structured. But until then, it's a great technique.

Another case might be your group already roleplays well in combat, but as DM you might be too overwhelmed to join in.

A free speech phase is your way into the conversation. It lets you stop the other tasks and join the fun for a while.

The phase serves the purpose of letting the players know this is when you'll reply to their characters. It gives YOU a bit of structure so you can sort through things fast and easy.

It's like clearing a little space on your desk where you can keep a notepad and make notes. While the rest of your desk gathers growing piles of folders and clutter, your sacred note space lets you do this task well whenever you want.

Giving yourself a free speech segment of each combat round clears your DMing desk to make way for this important part of the game every round.

## **3. Create A Combat Description Swipe File**

*"I don't have enough time...let alone think up any witty comments or anything like that.*

*"Similarly, describing the combat more in narrative terms and less in mechanical terms is something I want to do, but am struggling with."*

I know what you mean. It's not that you're tongue-tied. It's that your mind comes up with a blank.

Nadda. Nothing.

So you move on.

Try this for an interesting experiment. Multiply 24\*12 in your head without using a calculator. Now quick - come up with a great NPC quip.

It's extraordinarily difficult because you are trying to do mental

back flips. No, it's not just that.

Because in-game you are busy doing a million things in front of an audience with no safety net.

So it's more like you are trying to switch trains by hopping on to the other as it passes your train at high speed!

### **Create A Creative Space Each Round**

As DM, you have a bunch of left-brained tasks to manage, like doing math to determine damage and hit points, interpreting the rules as written, tracking initiative and analyzing character actions.

These are procedural things and need a certain type of thinking to achieve.

Then you are expected to create poetry on the fly and draw perfect verbal sketches of the action?

That's a whole new type of brain function. And it's a whole lot of pressure to put on yourself, flipping back and forth like that.

It's amazing we don't slam face first into the water tower when we switch trains like that mid-stream.

Creating a safe space each round to get into verbal creative mode is a great way to help you roleplay foes better.

But, as you learn how to do this better with practice, here's a shortcut.

Create a cheat sheet, or as I prefer to call it, a swipe file.

Record brief yet awesome combat descriptions in a file or notebook.

When GMing, just pick a line out of the notebook for instant witty or nasty commentary!

Add sections so you can find the kind of quote you need fast:

◇ Melee attacks

◇ Ranged attacks

◇ Spell attacks

◇ Defenses and misses

◇ Insults and challenges

### **Why do I call it a swipe file?**

When you read or hear something that should go into your file, add it in immediately! Swipe that great line from the movie, book or game.

Better yet... queue up evil DM music...

Swipe the best lines from your own players and use them for your foes in the future!

When players hear their own words from the lips of their foes they'll go bananas.

Good times.

### **Use Any System You Want - Or This Cool Tool**

Use whatever recording and filing system you want. Pencil and paper. Treasured Moleskine. Notepad or Notes software.

Here's the bonus round for digital DMs. Get randomization software like **Tablesmith** and create random generators for yourself.

Now it's really fast and easy for you to roleplay in combat. While your brain is still calculating the speed of a dire sparrow, the random generator feeds you the perfect line when a PC misses their foe:

"You fight like a cow!"

[Tablesmith \(\\$10 wisely spent\)](#)

# Melee Attack Success

It's time to dive into the combat swipes, starting with successful toe-to-toe whacks. There are 50 entries. You can pick them as you need, or roll d100 and divide by 2 for random selection.

1. Your weapon whistles past with almost no resistance, but torn clothes and a shallow cut on the skin beneath confirm the hit.
2. Torchlight glints off the cruel blade of your axe as it arcs through the air, biting into your foe's neck with a satisfying Tchunk! Your forearm is numb from the impact, and your face is soaked warm with crimson in the resulting arterial spray.
3. (Result: First attack near miss, second attack critical hit) With a single step and a nimble swing, your bastard sword arcs toward the nape of your opponent's neck.

He barely shifts his weapon in time to prevent the blow from connecting, but pushes too far. You deftly draw your stroke in just a few inches, barely making contact with his blade, before thrusting it straight through his left eye.

His body locks up, twitching, your blade nearly pulled from your hand as you try to withdraw it. He falls, still writhing, but not for long....

4. Dropping low under his attack, you stomp on his instep with a satisfying crunch. While he reels with pain, you drive

forward and sink your blade into his gut. His dying breath, sour and rotten, fills your nose before you kick him off your sword and move on.

5. The blade bites deep, leaving a gushing wound.
6. Your weapon slices across your foe's chest. He screams in rage, clutching his breast as blood pours down his torso. You notice a ragged bit of flesh on the floor; it appears to be a nipple.
7. Seeing the opening, you quickly wheel, driving your weapon into the side of your opponent's knee. He falls as his support is knocked out from under him.
8. You deflect his attack with your sword and chop his face with your free hand.
9. As you strike, your opponent raises an arm, absorbing the hit that would have otherwise have landed squarely on the nape of his neck. However, you can feel your blade scrape bone, and as he retracts his blocking arm you clearly see a trail of blood streaming from his wound.
10. Even with your clumsy hands, you manage to jab your weapon into the face of your foe, who roars in pain.
11. You grasp your sword by the blade and swing, causing the pommel to dent your enemy's pauldron. His collarbone cracks, and you feel the satisfying reverberations quiver up your sword.
12. You leap into the air, viciously driving your weapon behind your opponent's collar bone as you narrowly miss his skull.
13. Sidestepping your opponent's clumsy lunge, you slice open his undefended arm.

14. Your weapon's flashing arc terminates directly in the enemy's chest with a crunch.
15. You duck underneath your foe's wild attack, lashing out as your blow connects with her kneecap with a crunch.
16. You hit. He parries. He hits. You parry and you realize he has left himself open... Swipe... HIT!
17. Your blade whistles as it sweeps across the shoulders of your enemy. A second later, a severed head rolls past your feet.
18. You hear a dull thunk as your axe blade chops into your opponent's armor. Blood starts seeping from the wound as you extract your gruesome weapon.
19. You deflect a wide swing and take the opportunity to plunge your blade deep into the enemy. His eyes bulge before his face goes blank.
20. You feel your blade cut through skin, through muscle, through sinew. Your opponent lets out a scream of pain, but turns away from the blow and strikes back.
21. The foe's attempt to parry comes too late to stop the blow from making contact.
22. The weapon strikes the foe's helmet, knocking it to the side and making vision more difficult.
23. You feint to the right before cutting back and slicing a nasty gash into your opponent's side.
24. You thrust into your foe's side until your blade meets bone. Then with a loud crunch, you push through the ribs further for X damage.
25. You deflect his attack with your sword and smash his face with your free hand.
26. Your blade punches through your foe's armor, and you feel the sickening clunk as it digs into bone. Your foe reels and cries in pain, stumbling backwards and pulling your blade from the wound.
27. Your foe grabs your weapon arm and wrenches it away from him, and you feel tendons burn and twist. But you're ready, so you grab his hair with a free hand and smash his face into the corner of the table, feeling his nose crack with the impact.
28. A trail of blood follows your blade when you strike at her shoulder.
29. With the adrenaline of battle rushing through your mind, you add an unexpected last-second curve to your swing and make full contact with your opponent, slashing diagonally up his chest.
30. You sidestep with smooth flowing tactics and easily parry an attack. Spinning with precision, you find an opening and thrust your blade up in between armor plating. Your opponent screams out in pain.
31. Your weapon glances off your foe's chest, eliciting a grimace of pain and forcing him to turn away slightly.
32. Your opponent falls for a high feint, allowing you to connect solidly with a low swing. Your foe remains standing but will surely have a limp from that one.
33. Your spear punches through your foe's armour, sinking deep into his stomach before exploding out of his back in a welter of blood, flesh and intestines.

34. Your weapon severs both armor and flesh, releasing a chilling howl from your opponent.
35. You jam your weapon through his foot (pinning it to the floor?).
36. Feinting to the left and low, you quickly reverse your swing and take advantage of the opening you created, slashing your opponent across the arm.
37. Dodging a hasty swing, you exploit the opening and thrust into your enemy's face.
38. You step aside from a clumsy lunge, spin on your heel and slash open your enemy's back.
39. You knock away his weapon with your shield, drop to your knees, and thrust up into his stomach.
40. You parry a flurry of attacks, then seize the chance for a quick riposte into your foe's neck.
41. You beat your opponent's weapon to the left and then crush his nose with the butt-end of your weapon.
42. You feint high and then slice low at your opponent's leg, causing him to wince in pain and stagger.
43. With deft skill your blow snakes past your opponent's defense and draws his blood!
44. You strike your opponent's weapon aside and use his own strength against him to drive your weapon home!
45. Even after years of campaigning, the grinding sound of your axe blade successful digging deep into collar bones still makes you wince a little. But in this case of finally overcoming the raging foe in front of you, you're prepared to put up with it.
46. Your punch connects squarely to his solar plexus, interrupting his seemingly-endless stream of insults. He staggers backwards, short of breath.
47. As your weapon strikes home, your foe screams involuntarily, "Aaagh! Don't kill me!"
48. Your weapon lands with a solid THUD on your foe's armor, clearly dealing damage. Now there's a good sound!
49. Your blade cleaves the air and flesh, biting deep into your foe's shoulder.
50. With a heavy and meaty thud your weapon rends through your opponent's body, splitting his flesh and exposing bone.

# Ranged Attack Success

Whether it be bow or thrown weapon, these swipes are sure to make your combat descriptions entertaining. In most cases, you can switch the weapon mentioned in a swipe with the one the combatant is using.

There are 50 entries. Pick one or roll d50 (d100 / 2).

1. The missile sings through the air, an aria that ends between the ribs of your foe.
2. The target winces in pain as the shot grazes their thigh and embeds itself in the floor behind.
3. Your bolt slams into your foe with so much force he is staggered by the impact and spins wildly 90-degrees, barely avoiding the blazing brazier behind him.
4. You pick up your bow and swiftly loose an arrow at the foe chasing your compatriot. It's arc dips too low and pierces the outside of his right thigh. The strike is too high to pierce anything but a little muscle.
5. You spin at the sound, and the knife leaves your fingers as if it had wings. It flies true, but your assailant ducks at the last second, so that the knife buries itself in his shoulder instead of his neck. He glares murder at you but keeps coming.
6. Your shot flies true. It whistles through the air, and punches through your opponent's armour.
7. Your bolt whistles across the distance with the blur of a hummingbird's wings and sinks into your opponent's thigh with a sickening THWACK!
8. From behind your place of cover, you draw back and fire. Across the din of the battle, your foe never knew what hit him.
9. As your opponent raises his weapon, you pull a flintlock from your belt and loose a round into his chest.
10. Your dart hits the juncture between two chunks of armor, impaling itself into your opponent's flesh. Your enemy gasps from the pain, rapidly pulling your dart out of the wound.
11. Despite the crossbow recoil, you manage to at least make the dart fly in a straight line, delivering a glancing blow to your opponent.
12. The first two rounds of your burst thunk into the wooden table your foe has taken cover behind. The third, however, strikes through his shoulder and you can see the bullet hole in the wall behind him.
13. You slowly squeeze the trigger and send your bolt arcing over the melee chaos, striking squarely through an opening in your target's armor.
14. Your sling whirs as it picks up speed. With a flick of the wrist, you send the stone smacking your target in the jaw with a solid thunk.
15. Though flying lower than you intended, the missile shatters your opponent's knee, pitching him face-first into the ground, unmoving.

16. Your aim is true as your foe doubles over in pain, clutching his stomach in agony, blood collecting in his hands.
17. By the time the TWANG from your bow is heard, an arrow has lodged itself in your opponent's torso.
18. The enemy caster raises his hand to deflect your missile with magic, but is too slow. A shrill screech escapes his lips as it pierces his outstretched palm.
19. You curse as your shot goes wide, but your enemy dodges a thrust from a comrade and dances right into your arrow. You hear a yelp of pain as the arrow lodges itself into the enemy's shoulder.
20. You whistle above the din of combat, and your intended target looks up just in time to get an arrow between the eyes.
21. He almost doesn't see it, but he turns at the last second. You graze his cheek, and he yelps with surprise and pain.
22. No, that wasn't an avalanche, just the cacophony of projectiles raining on your enemies.
23. A loud whistling sound is followed by a scream of agony from the foe.
24. Letting loose with your missile, you listen with satisfaction as the truth of your aim is announced by a painful scream from your opponent.
25. Your assailant looks down and sees the dagger thrust into its chest. He gives off a loud roar and bats a limb at it trying to pull it free.
26. Your foe is halted somewhat as the head of your arrow smashes through his rib cage. For the briefest of seconds, he looks calm, as if unharmed, and then erupts in agony.
27. You bring up your weapon, barely having time to aim, and fire on instinct. But you're lucky, and the shot buries itself in your enemy's gut. He cries out and doubles over in pain, and a flicker of fear enters the eyes of his friends as they watch helplessly.
28. A scream of pain and an angry look tells you hit him well.
29. Your arrow whistles through the air and hits your opponent in the chest. He suddenly inhales and staggers to maintain his balance. You see him looking at the ground with a blank stare as he attempts to regain focus on his surroundings.
30. Your opponent grunts deeply with the impact of your impaling arrow. He breaks off the end to avoid any unnecessary restriction to his movement and raises his blade toward you. "Coward! Come and meet my blade."
31. Your shot pierces your target's lower side, with both the impact and accompanying cry of pain going unheard amongst the din of battle.
32. Not noticing the incoming missile your target moves directly into its path turning the near miss into a bloody face as it creases his skull and blood erupts.
33. Your shot finds its way to, and through, your target's throat, leaving them gargling blood and clutching at the gushing wound before collapsing.
34. You quickly launch a volley of missiles, raining death onto your target.

35. Watching your foe, you notice he always ducks behind his shield and then pops up on the left to see what happened. Thus you are ready, and your arrow finds the mark the next time he ducks, slicing in and hitting as his face appears on the left of his shield.
36. You calmly focus on your target, ignore the battle raging around you, and loose your missile into a chink in your target's armour.
37. Ducking their attacks, you loose at short range and watch your missile strike home.
38. You hold your breath, pause for the perfect opening, then hit your foe square in the chest.
39. Your arrow sizzles through the air and embeds itself between your opponent's radius and ulna.
40. You think you have a head shot lined up, but your opponent throws up a protective arm as the missile streaks towards him, and it pierces his forearm instead. He rips it out with a roar.
41. Your shot draws a bloody furrow across your opponent's skin.
42. With a crunch heard across the battle, your strike flies true and leaves your enemy bleeding!
43. The "Whhhiiiiirrrr!" of your shuriken through the air seems to distract the enemy's mage even as he begins to cast his spell. But what distracts even more is the pain of it embedding itself in the side of his neck and the feeling of blood swiftly flowing from the severed artery.
44. CRACK! The bullet strikes your foe's carapace. For a moment, it seems like the tough armor deflected it – but then, the creature coughs up green, slimy blood. It's quite injured.
45. The arrow vanishes into the foe's armor. A second later, rivulets of blood spring forth from the wound.
46. The projectile travels through the enemy's left foot, temporarily pinning him to the ground.
47. Spinning like mad, the hand axe hits your foe's shield, then skids across its surface, right into his face.
48. Peppering your target with long spiked darts, you find the chink in his armor: right below his thigh, you strike him in the knee.
49. In a hail Mary shot, you watch the arrow fly its maximum distance, slowly closing with the running coward. You cheer as the arrow connects with his back, sending him reeling and then falling forward, ending his mad dash for escape.
50. Weaving and bobbing, your attempt to circumvent the enemy's shield is successful as you plant a knife in his shoulder.

# Attack Miss

What happens when an attack fails? A good description from the GM!

Pick your description of choice, or roll d50.

1. You try to bluff your awkward attack as a feint, but no one is buying it.
2. With a mighty grunt, you thrust your spear at your foe's exposed belly. But with surprising agility, he sidesteps your lunge and you stumble forward, off-balance from your attack.
3. You move in with a sharp flurry of blows, but his sword blocks yours each time with a ringing of steel and sparks. He meets your eyes and smiles slowly.
4. You strike well, but your blow glances off the brute's well-placed armor.
5. The skill of your opponent surprises you as he repeatedly parries your strikes, putting you further off-balance.
6. You lunge through his defense, too quick to be stopped. A tremor is sent up your arm as you realize your blade is blunted and stopped dead on his armor.
7. Even though your mage's clothing offers little or no protection, you succeed into misdirecting your opponent's blow, waving your vest to make it difficult to pinpoint your exact location.
8. Thanks to your short stature, your tower-shield completely covers you while the volley of arrows bounces off the shield's metallic surface.
9. You make several wild swings at your opponent, and he deftly dodges backward from your unskilled blows, a wry grin appearing on his face. But you know better, having scouted this clearing before the battle. He has backed himself into wet grass and unsure footing.
10. Your overzealous lunge is deftly sidestepped by your dexterous opponent.
11. Your opponent smashes the edge of his shield into your weapon, narrowly deflecting your blow.
12. Your grip on your weapon falters, almost imperceptibly. You recover gracefully, making it seem like a toying swipe.
13. Your weapon rings in your hand as your foe brings up his defense just in time.
14. You slash with your sword. CLANG! You hit him square in his chestplate. No damage.
15. The whirling melee seems to slow to a crawl as your opponent's weapon arcs toward you. You pull back at the last moment, and the blade slashes a line in your clothing.
16. You slice towards your opponent with an overhead chop, but it's deflected to the side at the last moment. Your enemy kicks your weapon away and grins triumphantly.
17. The enemy dodges out of the way just in time, and your weapon pierces an empty barrel. The enemies turn and snicker as you attempt to extract your weapon.

18. You swing low, but he skips lightly backwards, calmly scanning for an opening he can use.
19. Just as practiced, the blow lands firmly on the enemy's shield, causing no damage.
20. The attack was sound. No contact, no damage, just sound.
21. Something wet underfoot causes you to slip, and your thrust finds nothing but fresh air.
22. Fortune favors the bold, and so it seems that fortune favored the creature for daring to stand against you as your shot narrowly sails wide. Try again and make the creature's luck run out.
23. The foes on either side of you thrust with expert synchronization, but you twist sideways between their weapons and they barely avoid skewering each other.
24. With a blow that would fell a man cleanly, you overstep your mark and miss, taking a massive splintering chunk out of the tree to the side. With a grin, your foe rights himself and makes for his counter attack.
25. You swing your weapon but your enemy desperately bashes it away as hard as he can, and you feel the shock pass down through it, into the bones of your arm. It aches, but you keep on fighting.
26. Dodging your blow, your opponent adjusts the grip on his blade while glaring at you: "So close."
27. A spark flies from the strike of your two blades. "Ha, ha!" your opponent retorts confidently. "You missed."
28. You raise your sword to block the brute's overhead swing, but he lets out a roar and puts everything he has into it. He bashes your blade aside.
29. Your swing ends with a clash of steel as your foe's blade darts up to intercept yours. A mouthful of disgusting teeth leer at you as your opponent gives you a mocking grin beneath the locked blades.
30. Your opponent spins away from your well-placed swing with only the strain in their face showing how close to connecting you came.
31. You put all your weight into the swing when one foot slips, the momentum turning you. Your swing ends nowhere near your opponent, who seems as surprised by that as you are.
32. Your opponent smiles through rotten teeth, drooling at the prospect of his next attack.
33. At the last moment his sword flicks up and parries your attack.
34. Your target leaves himself open. But as you lunge forward, his weapon appears from nowhere and parries the attack. He grins at you with feral anticipation.
35. Your opponent raises their shield to absorb your attack, sending shock waves up your arm.
36. The opponent reads the attack in your eyes and easily deflects the blow.
37. Your attack slides past his shield, only to bounce off his sturdy armour.

38. Your opponent dances nimbly out of reach, laughing at your crude lunge.
39. As you charge forward, your opponent steps inside your reach at precisely the right moment, grasps your right arm in a spinning throw, and slings you over his hip. Somehow, you manage to land on your feet.
40. You see an opening and strike, but your opponent twists away from your blow and spins full circle, jamming into your side with weapon raised.
41. Your foe slips away from your strike, and you find yourself overextended.
42. You swing confidently at your foe, but your foot slips and you flail wildly for balance. Your enemy grins at you.
43. With urgent speed and deft finesse, your rapier twists in the air as your opponent lunges wildly at you with her cutlass. With confident skill you deflect each blow at the last moment, and now you are poised to strike back with deadly effect.
44. He parries your attack like you're hitting a wall. You almost bounce back from the sheer force – this guy is strong!
45. The enemy nimbly jumps out of the way. He continues jumping around, chanting, "Watch me dance! Watch me dance!"
46. The blow ends a few inches short of impact. The enemy taunts you, saying, "Ha! Nice try!"
47. You gotta love fighting defensively. Your foes can't seem to get their bearings on you as you show off your fancy footwork.
48. The riposte is your thing. First you make sure his weapon is out of the way, then you utilize the opening.
49. Parry, duck, raise shield, let the blow slide off to the side.
50. The wild duel this round ends in a bind of swords!

# Spell Attack

Casters need some description love too. It might be a bit tricky, but most descriptions should be adaptable to your current combat situation.

There are 55 entries in this section. You can roll a d50 and just ignore entries 51-55 from the results.

1. A bolt of energy screams towards your target. But it seems to fizzle and shrink in on itself as it goes. In the end, the impact is marked only by a hissing sound and a small grunt.
2. The sickly green orb you've conjured hurtles towards your foe, smashing into him, like a wave upon the rocks, absolutely drenching him in acid. He lets out a howl of pain as tendrils of smoke steam from his bubbling armor and skin.
3. "Vah bein sha'bannah!" The end of the incantation echoes through the hall. Your foe stops short, jerking his body unnaturally. He doubles over and a gentle glow begins to emanate from his body. It brightens for the next few moments, and his cry of surprise becomes an annoyed "meow!" The light dims and in his place is a small calico cat, sunning himself in the light coming through the window.
4. Arcane words and light reach a crescendo in your hands. With a whisper of your will, you unleash the power as a lightning bolt sizzles through the air to make your enemies dance and die.
5. The arcane power surges from your body, leaving the tips of your fingers tingling as it mangles your foe.
6. You stand with your hands raised in expectation as you finish your invocation. As the last syllable leaves your lips, a second of silence fills the air around you. You feel your clothing subtly shift and raise off your skin by a fraction of an inch. Then a loud ZZZZZZZT! fills the air as you feel a ball of energy gather and rush from between your outstretched hands. Although you see nothing, your enemy drops to his knees, roaring in agony as blood pools in his eye sockets. He begins to vomit black bile and gore.
7. Tracing the runes, you beckon the ethereal forces to do your bidding. With a crack, they rip into your opponent, turning his insides into hamburger.
8. Arcs of lightning streak from your fingers, engulfing your opponent and sending him into convulsive spasms.
9. Your spell flies through the air towards your enemy, hitting him over and over, every strike sapping your opponent's strength as the negative energy drains him.
10. Resisting the urge to blow the whole door with your disintegration, you aim the green ray directly through the lock, guiding it to the guard behind it. With a mischievous smile, you wave your hand to the thief, now free to pick the lock, the door now guarded only by a small pile of dust.
11. The thick black grease you conjured covers the floor directly in front of your charging foe. Seeing this, he attempts to vault over the mess. Rather unsuccessfully. He falsely times his jump and ends up face down in black gunk.

12. You lower your hand to witness the carnage wrought by your mere gesture and utterance. The smell of burnt flesh assails your nostrils as you gaze at the charred, smoking bodies left in the wake of your power.
13. As the orbs of energy leave your hand, you laugh as your target desperately tries to take cover, moments too late. The orbs unerringly seek him out and are painfully absorbed into his body.
14. The ray leaps from your hand, strikes your foe and traces a crooked, briefly glowing line across your foe's chest. A scent of singed flesh assaults your senses.
15. Your hands trace symbols of power through the air. They flash for a moment before fizzling back into the void. Your foe clutches their head in agony, defenseless before your mental assault.
16. Sizzling yellow light envelops your arm. It forms a bolt that flies forth and strikes true.
17. Your opponent stands mesmerized by your hand movements and hypnotic speech. He looks confused for a second, and then his eyes start darting back and forth as your spell of paranoia takes effect.
18. As you finish your arcane chant, you thrust your hand towards your foe in a grasping motion. Tendrils of smoke ooze forth and wrap around your enemy's throat.
19. Your arcane mutterings slowly drift away on the wind towards your target. A second later, you hear him scream and fall to the ground, clutching his ears and rolling on the ground.
20. This is a spell you know well. You don't even think of the words any more as they shape the fabric of reality, to your opponent's terror.
21. He must have been a violator because he just got TOAD.
22. The dance of spell gestures is followed by a motion similar to tossing a ball. The recipient does not look too happy....
23. With practiced movement of your hands and appropriate words, you summon the magical energy you require before unleashing it at your opponent, causing him to cry out in pain.
24. Neither Elmo's Fire nor Zeus' Thunderbolt could tear through the creature like your spell just did. Your foe flails in pain and terror as your spell takes its life force away.
25. Arcs of lightning streak from your fingers, engulfing your opponent and sending him into convulsive spasms.
26. The sounds of battle fade, replaced by comforting chanting. You slump to the ground, asleep almost before the mage turns his glowing gaze on the rest of the party.
27. The air around you goes oily and metallic as the arcane energies spurt from your fingertips to arrive writhing and sizzling in the center of your opponent's chest. The smell of ozone and charred meat is only outmatched by the wailing that emits from his lips.
28. You close your eyes and feel the golden threads of magic weaving through the world, sending your consciousness spiralling down one thread. You open your eyes, and with a noise of glass breaking, the spell springs into being and discharges into your enemy's chest, sending him flying.

29. A twisting greenish ray hits your opponent with a screeching sound. You see the armor and skin starting to melt off your opponent.
30. Concentrating on a fixed point, you complete the incantation and watch the exploding effect consume your opponent. They cry out in pain from the intensity of the energy.
31. With blinding speed the flash of energy erupts upon your target in a brilliant flare. Smoke rises from the sizzle of the blackened scorch mark of the wound.
32. Coruscating energy engulfs your target momentarily. As it dissipates you can see a satisfying vacant expression on their face.
33. Eldritch energy streams from your fingertips and slams into your foe, their cry of anguish dwindling as they fall backwards, nerves afire.
34. The fireball leaps from your hands and flames explode outward as it strikes amongst your foes, leaving burned skin, blackened armour, pain filled cries and the smell of cooked meat in its wake.
35. The hair on the back of your neck stands at attention as the energy discharges from your fingertips into the target, doubling him over in pain.
36. Your spell stops your opponent's movement and its eyes grow big as its jaw drops open.
37. You chant the words of power and your fingertips glow with energy, causing your target to writhe with pain.
38. A hollow pop sounds as you bring your fingers together in the proper somatic order. A flash of orange energy culminates in an explosion of flame at your target.
39. Mana surges through your body as you harness the elements to your command. The target is shrouded in a burst of arcane energy.
40. A wave of eldritch power bursts from your fingers and envelops your target.
41. Sidestepping a clumsy blow, you discharge your spell straight into their face.
42. That is the worst magic I've seen since Eron the Toothless cast Attack of the Collywobbles on a Death Elemental!
43. As the detonation of your spell echoes off the walls, you see the target writhing in agony.
44. Echoes of your incantation reverberate throughout the room before converging on your unfortunate target's eardrums.
45. The confident grin on your opponent's face fades to uncertainty and fear as the very air around him starts to energize.
46. Eldritch energies reach out and caress your foe, sending them reeling.
47. With visible effort, you control the energies you have just unleashed upon your poor, pitiable foe.
48. The buzz of arcane energy that courses through your skull when casting a spell always gives you a rush. The blast of cold air and cracking sound of frozen skin as the fire giant attempts to escape the ice storm just adds a hint of spice to the moment.

49. The enemy screams in pain as he's set ablaze, and the air is filled with the stench of burnt hair.
50. You finish the incantation and toss the magical energy at your enemy. The writhing and screaming verify the spell worked as planned.
51. As the staff points at the enemy, he reels backward from the spell's impact.
52. Dancing to a thunderous roar, the lightning strike makes your targets spasm involuntarily before they drop to the ground, burned and electrocuted.
53. With a malignant burning light in your eye, you smile as the former guards slowly turn towards you and bow stiffly, uttering a forced, "Your wish is our command."
54. It starts as a low whisper, but the volume steadily increases to a high pitch whistle. Fiery meteors streak down, sprinkling the target area with craters. Debris is tossed around as shrapnel, and explosive shock waves collide between impacts. Your enemies are devastated by the barrage.
55. Your foe seems to be no stranger to magic missiles. As the first one hits, he starts scanning around for the offending mage!

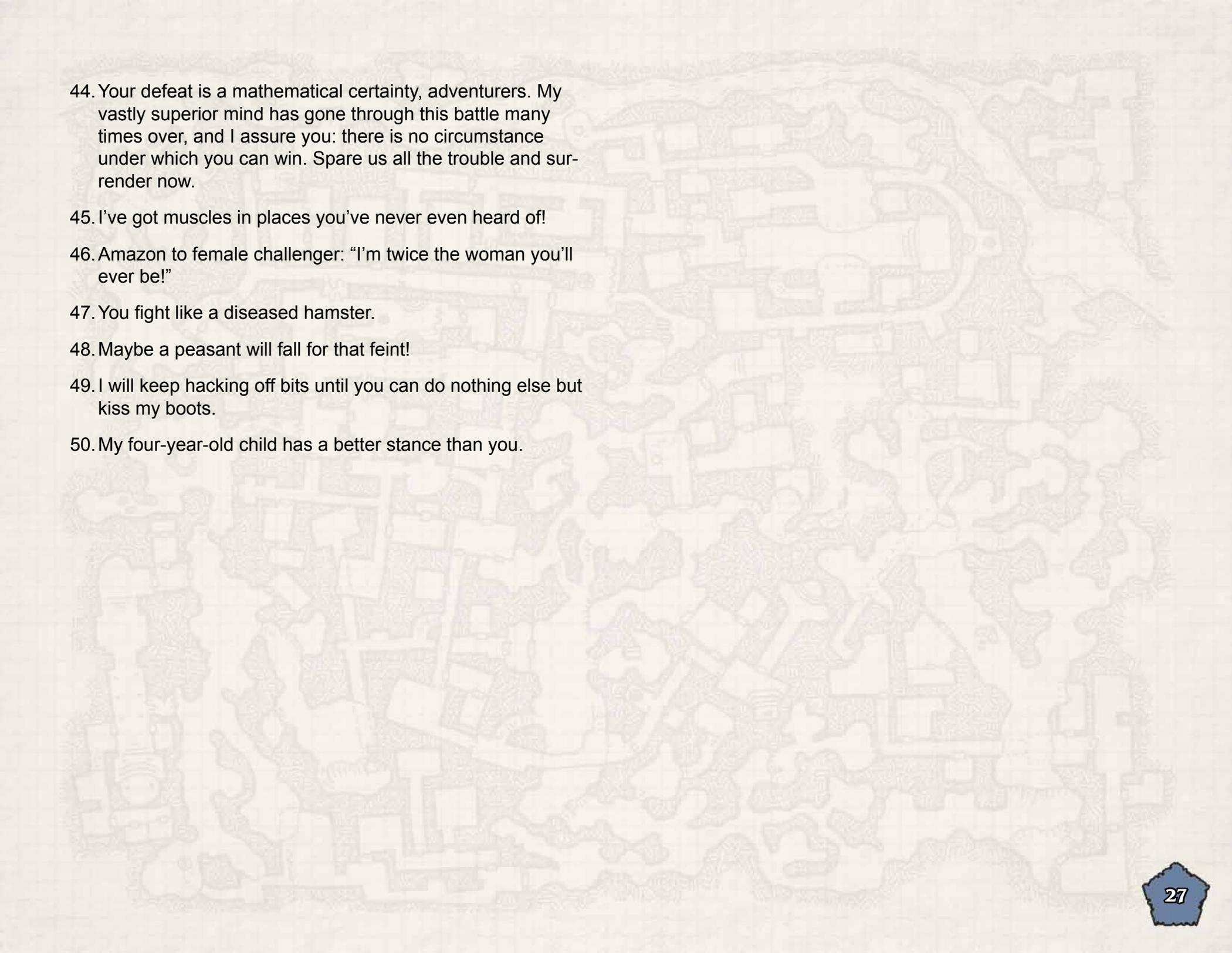
# Insults and Challenges

My favourite section! Insulting the PCs during combat is a sure way to get them roleplaying more. Who can resist a retort after suffering a scathing challenge?

There are 50 entries. Pick 'em as you need 'em, or roll a d50 (d100/2).

1. If your skill were half as sharp as your blade I might feel threatened. If your wit were half as sharp as your skill I might feel insulted. I'll wager neither has seen a whetstone in months.
2. You call that a sword? That's not a sword - THIS is a sword!
3. Your foe lifts his weapon high above his shoulders. "Now you will hear our demands! You and your people will leave immediately! If you stay, you will face us in battle. And if you face us in battle, then by high summer, we will strew the mourning sod of this forsaken land with your bleeding corpses!" "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"
4. Don't make me laugh. You'll never be half the man your mother was.
5. I'll oil my blade with your blood, and gamble with your bones.
6. You think I am afraid to die? What is life but suffering? No, friend, I welcome Death though Death has refused my embrace too many times. Perhaps she will welcome you more kindly!
7. You hit like a girl! Oh-wait! You are a girl!
8. Bring some friends, I'll wait.
9. Even if someone likes it hot, nobody likes it THAT hot!
10. My grandmother hits harder than you, and she's dead! Well, actually, being a vampire may give her some advantage, but let's not dwell upon the details.
11. When you speak it sounds like an accident. Please stop.
12. Your life is about to become like a halfling vampire: short and sucky.
13. You leave your defenses wide open - like your mom leaves her legs.
14. You come bearing weapons, children? I accept these gifts, that I may bestow them upon the least of my minions. As a token of goodwill, I will not even require you to grovel upon your way out.
15. The monster's roar resounds through the air, echoing off walls and ear-drums before settling in your heart....
16. You couldn't hit water if you were on a boat!
17. You filth! I'll send you back to your people in PIECES!
18. I'll cleave your skull to the teeth!
19. Everyone I've faced in battle is visiting their gods. Above and below, they tell stories of my prowess.

20. Ha! For a gnat railing against powers he has no comprehension of, that was impressive! Let me offer this simple riposte.
21. Aye, come to me, and prove your mother had children who lived!
22. What do you call that? I've seen better attempts from babes-in-arms!
23. Come at me, rogue!
24. The orc pulls your arrow out of his thigh and nocks it to his own longbow, wincing slightly. "This is gonna hurt you a lot more than it did me!"
25. Your foe spits out a gobbet of phlegm and blood, screaming, "I shall stamp you down as I'd stamp a mouse!"
26. I do love what you're wearing; it'll be a shame to kill you. Still, let us hope red goes with that outfit.
27. I'll bet your mother was poultry, you little chicken.
28. Your opponent looks at you with battle rage, saying, "At least make it challenging for me."
29. Is that your best? Maybe they should have sent someone with real skill!
30. Come and fight me you miserable son of a whore.
31. My dead grandmother could put up more of a fight than you.
32. Is that the best you can do? I've been hit harder by a three-year-old girl.
33. Are you just going to stand there and look ugly, or are you going to fight?
34. Oh how I pity you. You have no idea in how much danger you are.
35. I've seen goblins hit harder than that!
36. Your opponent grins at you revealing a large gap where one of his front teeth used to be, "Oh ho, boyo! Now I will skewer you and roast you over a fire like the suckling pig you are!"
37. I was once bitten by a rat, and that hurt me more than that.
38. Run back to Mama and send me a real warrior!
39. My toothless grandma had more bite than that last blow!
40. Your opponent mutters, "I'm not being paid enough for this."
41. Surrender now and save yourself the embarrassment of fighting me and proving yourself inferior!
42. With an evil grin, your opponent draws his weapon and cuts a shallow line across his chest. Then he smears the blood across the blade and points it at you!
43. I've grown used to Lord Turlan sending fluff-cheeked boys to face adults, armed with toys when only the tools of war will save them. But I did not expect your snivelling, cringing master to send a pompous, cowardly popinjay to challenge me when a brave and honest opponent might have earned my mercy in defeat. Contempt doesn't begin to describe how I feel for both him and you as you start on your short path to death.

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44. Your defeat is a mathematical certainty, adventurers. My vastly superior mind has gone through this battle many times over, and I assure you: there is no circumstance under which you can win. Spare us all the trouble and surrender now.
  45. I've got muscles in places you've never even heard of!
  46. Amazon to female challenger: "I'm twice the woman you'll ever be!"
  47. You fight like a diseased hamster.
  48. Maybe a peasant will fall for that feint!
  49. I will keep hacking off bits until you can do nothing else but kiss my boots.
  50. My four-year-old child has a better stance than you.

# GM Resources



## Faster Combat

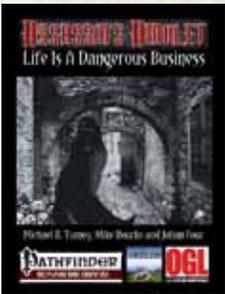
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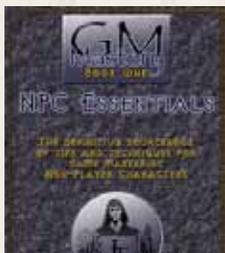
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