

# Van Richten's Arsenal

## A Web Enhancement from Sword & Sorcery Studios

### Weaponry

**Crook:** This is a reinforced version of the simple tool well known to shepherds everywhere. A crook is essentially just a quarterstaff with a curving, blunt hook on one end. Shepherds use the hook to guide their livestock; a hunter can use it to yank a foe off its feet.

**Crook:** A crook is a simple, double weapon. You can fight with it as if fighting with two weapons, but if you do, you incur all the normal attack penalties associated with fighting with two weapons as if you are using a one-handed weapon and a light weapon. A creature using a double weapon in one hand, such as a Large dread golem using a crook, can't use it as a double weapon. A crook grants a +2 circumstance bonus to trip attacks.

### Explosives

**Dragon Rocket:** I'm told that the people of Rokushima Taiyoo mastered the creation of gunpowder long ago, but for whatever reason, they have never widely incorporated it into their frequent conflicts. Instead, they have turned gunpowder's explosive force into a strange form of entertainment seen during their holidays and celebrations. These *hanabi*, or "fireworks," of which the *ryuu noroshi* ("dragon rocket") is an example, are a kind of bomb designed to explode in a display of light and sound, rather than shrapnel and destruction.

A dragon rocket is a two-foot long, hollowed tube filled with a gunpowder mixture. This tube is inserted in a slightly larger barrel that helps to aim the rocket, like a bullet in a musket. The rocket's fuse dangles out the back. When the rocket is lit, its rear bursts into flame, propelling the rocket through the air on a fiery trail. After flying about one hundred feet, the rocket explodes in a shower of colorful sparks.

I know of hunters who have used dragon rockets as missile weapons against their foes, but by all accounts the results were unimpressive. A rocket is woefully inaccurate when compared to a musket or bow, and a dragon rocket's destructive force is but a fraction of a true bombard. On the other hand, a dragon rocket can

be reliably fired high into the air, and with its conspicuous explosion, it can be invaluable when a hunter needs to raise a signal over a great distance.

**Ghost-Cracker String:** Another example of Rokuma fireworks, *yurei-kodako* (or "ghost-breakers") are small, sealed bamboo tubes, filled with a gunpowder mixture and linked by a common fuse. One string typically holds about twenty ghost-breakers. When lit, ghost-breakers explode one after the other in a deafening cacophony, not unlike the sound of a score of musketeers battling to the death. Indeed, ghost-breakers take their name from the Rokuma belief that their noise can frighten away evil spirits. (I have seen no evidence of this myself, however.) Although ghost-breakers have no real offensive power, they can be used to distract or intimidate foes, particularly simple-minded beasts.

**Fuses:** I've seen all manner of flammable objects used as fuses in emergencies, from trails of gunpowder to brandy-soaked rags to balls of yarn. A hunter can never predict just how quickly these makeshift fuses will burn, however, so I recommend against their use in critical situations. The most reliable sort of fuse, which any gunsmith can produce, is a thick cord that has been saturated with sulfur. When lit, these fuses can be trusted to burn at the rate of close to ten inches per minute, making it a simple affair for hunters to control exactly how long their bombs can be left to sizzle before they explode.

**Dragon Rocket:** A dragon rocket always flies a full 100 feet before exploding; its short range increment merely reflects the rocket's tendency to veer off course. If a rocket connects with a solid target (requiring a successful ranged touch attack) before it has flown its full 100 feet, it ricochets in a new direction. If your attack roll successfully strikes the target against its full Armor Class, then the target takes 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage.

Roll twice on the "Grenadelike Weapons" diagram in Chapter Eight of the *Player's Handbook* to determine the rocket's new trajectory. The first roll represents its horizontal direction (like other grenadelike weapons); the second roll represents its vertical direction. On a result of 4–6, the rocket skids and bounces along the

Weapon	CL	Cost	Damage	Melee Weapons			Weight	Type
				Critical	Craft (DC)			
Large Crook	2+	2 gp	1d6/1d6	x2	carpentry (8)	5 lb.	Bludgeoning	

### Grenadelike Gunpowder Weapons

Weapon	CL	Cost	Damage	Blast Radius*	Range Increment	Weight
Dragon rocket	8+	60 gp	1d6**	5 ft.	10 ft.**	3 lb.
Ghost-cracker string	8+	30 gp	—	—	10 ft.	1 lb.

\* A miss requires a roll for deviation as for regular grenadelike weapons, but rather than dealing splash damage to all creatures within 5 feet, the weapon deals the same damage to all creatures within the blast radius of where it actually lands.

\*\* See text.

ground; on a result of 1, 2, or 8 it soars skyward.

If the rocket passes through another occupied space, you can make another ranged attack roll to see if the rocket strikes that target as well, but each ricochet imposes a cumulative  $-5$  penalty to the attack roll. The Deflect Arrows feat is effective against dragon rockets.

A dragon rocket explodes at the end of its 100-foot flight, inflicting 1d6 points of fire damage to everything within a 5-foot blast radius. Creatures caught in the blast radius can make a Reflex save (DC 20) to take half damage.

**Ghost-Cracker String:** Once lit, these firecrackers noisily pop over the course of 1d3+1 rounds. During that time, the racket imposes a +10 circumstance penalty to the DC of Listen checks (to hear anything *but* the ghost-breakers) for any creatures within 50 feet. This may provoke Fear saves (DC 12) in creatures of animal intelligence, but a successful Handle Animal check (DC 15) can prevent an animal from panicking.

On the first round that a ghost-breaker string goes off, characters within 50 feet gain a +2 synergy bonus to any Bluff checks made to feint or create a diversion to hide from any creatures that did not expect the commotion.

**Fuses:** A standard fuse burns through two inches of its length per round. An explosive goes off on the round its fuse burns down to nothing. (Thus, a bomb with a 2-inch fuse explodes one round after it is lit.) A lit fuse can be snuffed with a successful Disable Device check (DC 5) or by submerging it in water.

If using a makeshift fuse, roll 1d4 to determine the fuse's burn rate. **1:** 1 in./round. **2–3:** 2 in./round. **4:** 3 in./round. If a lit bomb has only 1 inch of fuse left, it goes off at the end of the round.

**Petard, Triggered:** These clarified rules supercede the second paragraph of the triggered petard description given on pg. 16 of *Van Richten's Arsenal Volume I*.

Each time a creature moves into a 5-foot-square area occupied by a triggered petard (or spends a round fighting while standing in such an area), the creature may step on the petard. The petard makes an attack roll (base attack bonus +0) against the creature. For this attack, the creature's shield, armor and deflection bonus do not count. (Deflection averts blows as they approach you, but it does not prevent you from touching something dangerous.) If the petard succeeds at the attack, the creature has stepped on its trigger and it explodes. The petard deals 2d6 points of damage to everything in

its blast radius, and the triggering creature's speed is reduced to one-half because its foot is wounded. This penalty lasts until the damage is healed. A charging or running creature must immediately stop if it steps on a petard. Any creature moving at half speed or slower can step around a petard with no trouble, assuming that it notices the lurking bomb.

## Tools of the Hunt

**Jaw Trap:** A familiar tool to any trapper, the jaw trap is aptly named, resembling a massive, spring-loaded iron maw. A pressure-sensitive trigger — very similar to that of the triggered petard — sits in the center of the open jaws. Should a creature step on this trigger, the jaws slam shut on the creature's leg, hobbling the beast. Most jaw traps are so powerful that they can only be ratcheted open with the use of a winch.

Jaw traps are usually attached to thick chains that can be anchored in the ground, ensuring that a creature not incapacitated by the pain of the trap's bite still has nowhere to run.

Jaw traps come in several varieties. First, size: smaller jaw traps are generally known as wolf traps, while their larger, more powerful cousins are commonly called bear traps. In addition to size, a trapper can choose whether to use a lethal trap or a non-lethal trap; both varieties cost the same. Lethal jaw traps are lined with angry-looking iron teeth, designed to maim the creature they bite. Non-lethal jaw traps feature a thick, blunt ridge, which still causes pain but does not tear the creature's flesh.

I have often used bear traps when hunting werebeasts. However, just like a mundane trapper, a hunter of evil must take care not to leave his prey in the trap too long. Some lycanthropes, particularly those afflicted with the curse, are overwhelmingly ruled by their animal instincts. I have encountered several werebeasts that were willing to gnaw off their own trapped limbs rather than submit to capture.

*Editor's Note: Hunters should pay particular attention to George's warning when their intent is to trap a lycanthrope as a mission of mercy. Dr. van Richten's records mention several incidents where hunters managed to lop off the paw of a savage beast before it escaped them. The next morning, the afflicted — and often unwitting — lycanthrope woke up maimed. —LWF*

**Knot Skein:** Knot skeins are simply long lengths of thread tied into a tangled webbing of countless knots; they resemble failed attempts at tatting lace. Any hunter can create a knot skein with a ball of string and some patience. Although I've never studied why it is — Doctor van Richten was always the one who sought to analyze these things — these tangled strings can sometimes act as powerful protective talismans. My only theory is that some supernatural creatures, particularly hags and the fey, seem to be tightly bound to and thus inherently fascinated by the patterns of nature. Perhaps they are simply obsessed with the *ruin* of those patterns. This obsession can be used against them.

I have seen shadow fey and hags stop cold at a doorway or window adorned with a knot skein, despite their obvious desire to pass it by. Although these fey creatures could easily destroy the skein — or simply toss it aside — they seemed eerily compelled to meticulously count and untie every last knot before they could continue on their way. A knot skein can thus seal an entryway against fey intrusion, even if this is but a temporary defense.

In one instance in Viktal, I witnessed as a murderous little sprite — which the locals called a “redcap” — was forced to retreat from the coming dawn after a complex skein had kept it worrying at our door all night. Rather than simply abandon its project, the creature actually tore the skein from its mooring and carted it off as it fled. When I tracked the redcap down to its hiding place at the bottom of a dry well later that morning, the malicious little sprite was *still* busily untying those knots.

**Jaw Trap and Jaw Trap, Masterwork:** A “wolf trap” is a standard jaw trap. A “bear trap” is a masterwork jaw trap. Each time a creature moves into a 5-foot-square area occupied by a jaw trap (or spends a round fighting while standing in such an area), the creature may step on the trap. The jaw trap makes an attack roll (base attack bonus +0) against the creature. For this attack, the creature’s shield, armor and deflection bonus do not count. (Deflection averts blows as they approach you, but it does not prevent you from touching something dangerous.) If the creature is wearing metal armor or otherwise reinforced footwear, it gets a +2 armor bonus to AC. If the jaw trap succeeds at the attack, the creature has stepped on its trigger and the jaws clamp shut on the creature’s leg.

A lethal jaw trap deals 1d6+2 points of damage as a piercing weapon, while a nonlethal jaw trap deals 1d6+2 points of subdual damage as a bludgeoning weapon. In either case, the creature’s speed is reduced to one-half because its leg is wounded. This movement penalty lasts for one day, until the creature is successfully treated with the Heal skill (DC 15), until all the damage inflicted is healed, or until it receives at

least one point of magical curing. This damage cannot heal or be cured until the creature is freed from the trap. A charging or running creature must immediately stop if it steps on a jaw trap. Any creature moving at half speed or slower can step around a jaw trap with no trouble assuming that it notices the trap.

Once the jaws snap shut, the creature is trapped. It cannot move beyond the length of the trap’s chain (10 ft.) until it is free, assuming the chain has been anchored. The trapped creature can use the Escape Artist skill to slip free (DC 32 for a wolf trap, or DC 37 for a bear trap). Prying open the jaws requires success at a Strength check (DC 24 for a wolf trap, or DC 26 for a bear trap). Snapping the chain requires a successful Strength check (DC 26 for a wolf trap, or DC 28 for a bear trap). A wolf trap has a hardness of 10 and 15 hit points. A bear trap has a hardness of 10 and 20 hit points.

A wolf trap can trap creatures of up to Large size. A bear trap can trap creatures of up to Huge size. Larger creatures take damage from the trap, but their legs are too big for the trap to gain a firm grip. Winching a jaw trap open is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. A jaw trap can be disarmed with a successful Disarm Device check (DC 20).

**Knot Skein:** Make a Use Rope check to create a knot skein from a ball of string. The result of this check is the number of knots in your skein and the number of standard actions (provoking attacks of opportunity) it takes to tie the skein. You can take 20 on this check. Chaotically aligned fey creatures and hags must make a successful Will save (DC = your Use Rope check result) or stop and untie every knot in the skein before they can cross it. The creature can make a Use Rope check each round (DC 15) as a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. If it succeeds at this check, it unties one knot. If it beats the DC by 5 or more, it unties two knots. The creature can stop untying knots at any time, but once it fails the Will save it cannot cross the opening “sealed” by the skein until all the knots have been untied or the skein is removed.

#### Adventuring Gear

Item	CL	Cost	Craft (DC)	Weight
Fuse (50 ft.)	1+	1 sp	gunsmithing (5)	1/2 lb.
Jaw trap	2+	30 gp	trapmaking (15)	5 lb.
Jaw trap, masterwork	2+	75 gp	trapmaking (20)	10 lb.
Knot skein	1+	1 cp	Use Rope	1 lb.

## Medical Devices

**Lightning Box:** Lightning boxes are rarely seen outside the Core’s asylums. Apparently, a reclusive Lamordian doctor occasionally sells one of these devices to alienists whenever he wants to swell his coffers. I have yet to hear of anyone else who has ever unlocked the secrets of their creation.

This device is a heavy, oblong crate with a hand crank at one end. One side features a gauge (marked one to ten in Lamordian) and two long, flexible metal wires. These wires have been coated in a black, tarry substance, leaving only the last few inches of each wire exposed. By rapidly turning the crank for ten minutes (a test of endurance in itself), the user builds up an electrical charge, as measured by the gauge. This electricity is then discharged into the first thing to touch the exposed wires.

Somehow, through some means well beyond my understanding, the lightning box produces this energy without the use of magic of any kind. When one lightning box was pried open by a suspicious group of alienists in Maykle, they discovered that the heart of the contraption was simply a rotating drum coiled in hundreds of feet of fine copper wire.

While the shock produced by a lightning box pales before even the simplest spells, it is still quite painful. A lightning box is cumbersome and fragile, however, rendering it useless in combat. A lightning box is of most use in two situations; both require that the creature it is to be used on be restrained. First, as mentioned, these devices are used by alienists in several of the Core's asylums. These alienists claim that, when used in combination with hypnosis, skillful application of electric shocks to a diseased brain can actually hasten its recovery. Again, I am at a loss to explain just how this might work.

Of course, the judicious use of pain is just as useful when interrogating defeated foes.

*Editor's Note: Laurie and I have observed the use of these devices at Saulbridge Sanitarium here in Mordentshire. While producing a most gruesome display, they do appear to be effective as medical devices. We cannot in good conscience support their use as torture devices, however. A hunter must never stoop to the level of the monsters he hunts, no matter how convenient it may seem. —GWF*

**Plaguemask:** Healers often use plaguemasks when battling outbreaks of disease, but hunters may also find them useful when breathing the foul air of a long-sealed tomb. A plaguemask is a close-fitting leather hood fitted with a long, conical "nose," making the wearer look like some kind of bizarre bird. (Indeed, doctors working in plague-ridden areas are often called "carrion crows" due to this resemblance.) The wearer sees through large eyeholes covered in thick glass. The plaguemask is stuffed with a quarter-pound of aromatic and medicinal herbs, which shield the wearer from contaminated vapors. These fresh herbs must be replaced each day. Hunters should be aware, however, that wearing a plaguemask will greatly impair their hearing and vision.

**Lightning Box:** A lightning box can be used only on immobile subjects. Each jolt of electricity deals 1d6 points of subdual damage to the subject, and the subject must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 20) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. A lightning box grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Hypnosis checks when aiding an insane subject's recovery (see "Recovering from Madness" in the **Ravenloft** setting book). A lightning box also grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks.

To date, only Dr. Victor Mordenheim has mastered the creation of these devices; they are beyond the grasp of other craftsmen.

**Plaguemask:** A plaguemask provides the wearer a +4 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saves to resist inhaled diseases and poisons, as well as effects caused by foul odors (such as a ghastr's stench). The wearer suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to Listen and Spot checks and cannot use the Scent ability.

Medical Devices				
Item	CL	Cost	Craft (DC)	Weight
Lightning Box	**	2,000 gp	**	20 lb.
Plaguemask	6+	1 gp	Leatherworking (5)	2 lb.
** See text.				

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