

The Jekuzai



BY MICAH MULDOWNEY

A NEW MARTIAL CLASS
FOR THE MOUNTED COMBATANT



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ON THE COVER

Georg Linebreaker, veteran of a hundred skirmishes, surveys the plain of battle and lays plans for a full charge against an entrenched foe.

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The Iskuzai Glass

*Whoever gulps down wine as a
horse gulps water is called an
Iskuzai.*

–Athenaeus



he savage cries of the invading goblins turn to shrieks of dread, only to be drowned out by the thunder of hooves. The townsfolk peer over their blockade just in time to see the line of horses slice through their would-be tormentor's ranks with deft ease. Haven Enraged, a hill giant tries to chase down the puny warrior atop its steed, but it dances continually out of reach, new-flow arrows sprouting from his hide with each new attempt.

An old woman chants, spreading her arms, and out of the mist forms a faintly glowing steed of otherworldly beauty. As it solidifies, it paw the earth and snorts, sparks fly from its flaring nostril.

All of these heroes are Iskuzai – fierce warriors and raiders sworn to the saddle. From a young age, Iskuzai learn to understand and train their mounts using secret husbandry techniques based on for generations until horse and rider seem to mend into a single unit in combat, swift fierce, and deadly.

As mounted specialists, Iskuzai are often wide travelers, preferring open country to cramped cities, mountains or swamps. With a reputation as profoundly effective cavalry, many work as soldiers for hire, while others only wish to protect what is theirs and hold the world at a distance. A true Iskuzai never



believes that she or he can have enough horses or other mounts, collecting them whenever they can afford to, and they painstakingly train them in their peculiar riding style and tactics. But they always have a favored steed that they will return to time and again whenever the going gets rough.

CREATING AN ISKUZAI

Iskuzai are often deeply attuned to the thoughts and feelings of animals and the land around them. When creating an Iskuzai, consider your character's background. How did they come to join the Iskuzai? Were they born into a Iskuzai family? Where they a foundling? Did they seek an apprenticeship? As world travelers, Iskuzai

are often aware of much that happens in the world, and they meet and share news with each other often, so consider what kinds of events might have impelled you to venture forth into the larger world. Did you plan to join a campaign or help a fellow in need?

QUICK BUILD

You can make an Iskuzai quickly by following these suggestions. First, make Strength of Dexterity your highest Ability Score, depending on your battery and whether it focuses on heavy melee or ranged / finesse weapons. Your next highest should be Wisdom, followed by Constitution. Second, choose the Outlander or Mercenary Veteran background.

THE ISKUZAI TABLE

| Level | Prof. Bonus | Features | Spirit Points |
|-------|-------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1st | +2 | Whisperer, Fighting Style | - |
| 2nd | +2 | Rough Rider, Battle Hardened | - |
| 3rd | +2 | Harras Feature | 3 |
| 4th | +2 | Ability Score Improvement | 4 |
| 5th | +3 | Second Attack | 5 |
| 6th | +3 | Move as One | 6 |
| 7th | +3 | Harras Feature | 7 |
| 8th | +3 | Ability Score Improvement | 8 |
| 9th | +4 | Iron Will | 9 |
| 10th | +4 | Harras Feature | 10 |
| 11th | +4 | Fight as One | 11 |
| 12th | +4 | Ability Score Improvement | 12 |
| 13th | +5 | Rough Rider (improved) | 13 |
| 14th | +5 | Harras Feature | 14 |
| 15th | +5 | Battle Hardened (x2 uses) | 15 |
| 16th | +5 | Ability Score Improvement | 16 |
| 17th | +6 | | 17 |
| 18th | +6 | Harras Feature | 18 |
| 19th | +6 | Ability Score Improvement | 19 |
| 20th | +6 | Dread Rider | 20 |

CLASS FEATURES

As an Iskuzai you gain the following class features:

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 1d10 per Iskuzai level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 10 + CON modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d10 (or 5) + CON modifier per Iskuzai level after 1st

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: Light and medium armor, shields

Weapons: Simple and martial weapons

Tools: Leatherworker's tools.

Saving Throws: Wisdom, Strength

Skills: Animal Handling and two skills of your choice from Acrobatics, Athletics, Insight, Nature, Perception, and Survival.

Language: One language of your choice beyond those of your race and background.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- Any martial weapon
- 6 javelins
- Leather armor, Hide, Scale Mail, or Chain Mail (if proficient)
- A horse bow and 30 arrows
- An explorer's pack
- Leather Worker's tools
- A War Horse and tack

WHISPERER

An Iskuzai training begins by connecting with an animal and forming a bond. Starting at the 1st level, you may use a make an animal handling check on a suitable steed within 10 feet with a DC depending on the type of creature and its relationship with the character (i.e. a domesticated riding horse would have a very easy DC, while a strange, wild Dire Wolf would be extremely difficult). On a success, you create a bond with the animal that allows you to ride it for 24 hours. If you own the creature or are able to create an enduring friendship, the effect becomes permanent.

You enjoy certain advantages while riding a bonded mount:

- You are attuned to what your mount is feels and senses, particularly when they sense danger. You may add your proficiency bonus to your passive perception, perception checks, and initiative rolls while you are mounted.
- You have advantage on saves against any effect that would dismount you. If you do fall off your mount, you land on your feet if you are not incapacitated, and can use your reaction to remount if you have at least one



- hand free and fall no more than 10 feet (i.e. to grab the saddle or reigns on the way off).
- Mounting and dismounting take only 5 feet of movement.

FIGHTING STYLE

You adopt a particular style of Fighting as your specialty. Choose a Fighting style from the list of optional features.

Archery: You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls you make with ranged weapons.

Defense: While you are wearing armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC.

Great Weapon Fighting: When you roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with a melee weapon that you are wielding with two hands, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for you to gain this benefit.

Interception: When a creature you can see hits a target, other than you, within 5 feet of you with an attack, you can use your reaction to reduce the damage the target takes by 1d10 + your proficiency bonus (to a minimum of 0 damage). You must be wielding a shield or a simple or martial weapon to use this reaction.

Protection: When a creature you can see attacks a target other than you that is within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll. You must be wielding a shield.

Thrown Weapon Fighting: You can draw a weapon that has the thrown property as part of the attack you make with the weapon. In addition, when you hit with a ranged attack using a thrown weapon, you gain a +2 bonus to the damage roll.



Two-Weapon Fighting: When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

ROUGH RIDER

At the 2nd level, once per turn you may grant yourself advantage on a melee attack you make while mounted against unmounted enemies that are smaller than your mount. At the 13th level this extends to all attacks that you make.

BATTLE HARDENED

At the 2nd level, your reassuring presence and deft handling emboldens your mount. When you roll initiative, you may grant your mount 2 temporary HP per Iskuzai level. You may use this ability once per short rest. You may use this twice per short rest at the 15th level.

ISKUZAI HARRAS

At the 3rd level you choose an Iskuzai Harras that exemplifies your style and approach as a rider and mounted warrior.

The Harras you choose grants you features at 3rd Level and again at 7th, 10th, 14th, and 18th level.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENTS

When you reach 4th level, and again at 6th, 8th, 12th, 14th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1.

EXTRA ATTACK

Beginning at 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

MOVE AS ONE

When you reach 6th level, your expert ability to guide and control your mount through the flow of battle protects them from harm. A bonded mount has the same AC that you have, and you can force an attack that targets your mount to target you instead. Your mount uses your dexterity save if it is higher than its own, and adds your wisdom modifier to stealth checks.

IRON WILL

Beginning at 9th level, your presence calms and strengthens the mind of your steed. It uses your savings throws for wisdom saving throws and throws against effects that would frighten it. It is immune to being charmed.

FIGHT AS ONE

When you reach 11th level, you and your mount learn to move as one. At this point, as a free action you can command you mount to use their action to make an attack. You may add your wisdom modifier to their attack roll.

Your mount may also move through the space of any prone creature. They must make a DC equal to 11 + your wisdom modifier dexterity saving throw or take damage equal to one of



their attacks as they trample them on a failed save.

The effects of the dodge or disengage action are shared between mount and rider, regardless of who took them, and you may have your mount take your reaction in your place.

DREAD RIDER

At the 20th level, you reach the pinnacle of riding skill. Add your wisdom modifier to all attacks rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws that it doesn't already apply to while mounted. You cannot be forced to dismount by any means, and get a +10 bonus to any animal handling checks.

ISKUZAI HARRAS

When an Iskuzai warrior is trained for battle, they focus on the style and technique of a particular Harras, which has been handed down by generations of warriors before them. At level three, you choose your Harras. There are three major Harras, each specializing in a particular form of mounted combat: The Shock Trooper, the Harrier, and the Horse Shaman.



Shock Trooper

Iskuzai from the Shock Trooper Harras specialized in heavily armored, close quarters combat where they can use their mount's speed and strength as weapons against their enemies. Shock Troopers and their mounts fight as one to strike, move, and demoralize their enemies.

Bonus Proficiencies

Shock Troopers gain proficiency in heavy armor and proficiency in specialized shock weapons, the Bill or Hooked Glaive, and the Dacian Falx.

Shock Weapons

At the 3rd level, you gain the use of shock weapons specialized for mounted combat:

Bill or Hooked Glaive: Identical statistics to a regular Glaive, except on a hit you may choose to make a grapple attempt as a free action as long as the target is large or smaller. If you succeed, you cannot use the weapon on another target until the grapple ends. The target can repeat the grapple check as an action to end the grapple early on their turn. This does not apply to attacks from the butt of the weapon.

Dacian Falx: Identical statistics to a longsword, except on a hit you may choose to make a grapple attempt as a free action as long as the

target is large or smaller. If you succeed, you cannot use the weapon on another target until the grapple ends. The target can repeat the grapple check as an action to end the grapple early on their turn.

SURGING CHARGE

Starting at level 7, if your mount moves 20 feet or more on your turn before hitting a target with your first attack, you get a +2 bonus to damage and the target must make a Strength save against an 8 + your Strength modifier + your Wisdom modifier DC. On a failed save, they are knocked back 10 feet and fall prone.

WEIGHT OF MOMENTUM

Starting at the 10th level, you learn how to use your mount's speed and weight to fuel the strength of your strikes. Attacks made while your mount is moving deal maximum damage. If you grapple a creature with your shock weapon and drag them, they take 2d4 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they are dragged in this way.

DESTRIER

At the 14th level, your expert guidance improves your mount's combat capabilities. Add your wisdom modifier to its attack bonus, and also to damage rolls if it is greater than its own modifier for the attack.

PEERLESS CHARGER

At level 18, once per turn, if you miss with an attack roll after a charge, you may attempt to target another creature in range instead. Reroll the attack for the new target.





HARRIER

Iskuzai from the Harrier Harras specialized in engaging enemies from a distance and use their mounts speed to keep them out of harm's way. Harriers and their mounts move like smoke, striking and disappearing before the alarm can be sounded.

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

Harriers gain proficiency in the acrobatics skill and in the Horsebow, a specialized recurved compound bow that is the size and weight of a shortbow, but with the range and damage capacity of a longbow.

HARRIER WEAPONS

At the 3rd level, as a warrior trained in mounted archery, making a ranged attack roll while within 5 feet of an enemy with your Horsebow doesn't impose disadvantage on your roll. In addition, if you hit a creature within 10 feet of you with your horsebow on your turn, that creature can't take reactions until the end of this turn.

Further, when you use thrown weapons while mounted and moving, you may add your wisdom modifier to the damage roll.

PARTHIAN SHOT

At the 6th level, if a hostile creature approaches within 10 feet of you, you may use your mount's reaction to move up to half its speed in a direction away from the creature. As long as you remain outside of their melee range, you may use your reaction to make an attack with your horsebow.

TRICK RIDING

Starting at the 10th level, if your mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity save to take only half damage, it takes no damage if it succeeds and half damage if it fails. If one of you succeeds in a dexterity save, both do.

QUICK DRAW

At the 14th level, you may make an additional horsebow attack as a bonus action. You may use this ability twice per short rest.

PEERLESS ARCHER

At level 18, mounted archery becomes second nature to you. Your horsebow attacks ignore half and three-quarters cover, do not suffer penalties for long range, and add your wisdom modifier to damage rolls.

HORSE SHAMAN

Iskuzai from the Horse Shaman Hurras are particularly in tune with the spirits of their warrior forbearers and the steeds of legend that they rode. Channeling the magical energies of their people, they can summon forth great steeds from the past to obey their bidding.

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

Horse Shamans gain proficiency in the religion skill and expertise in animal handling.

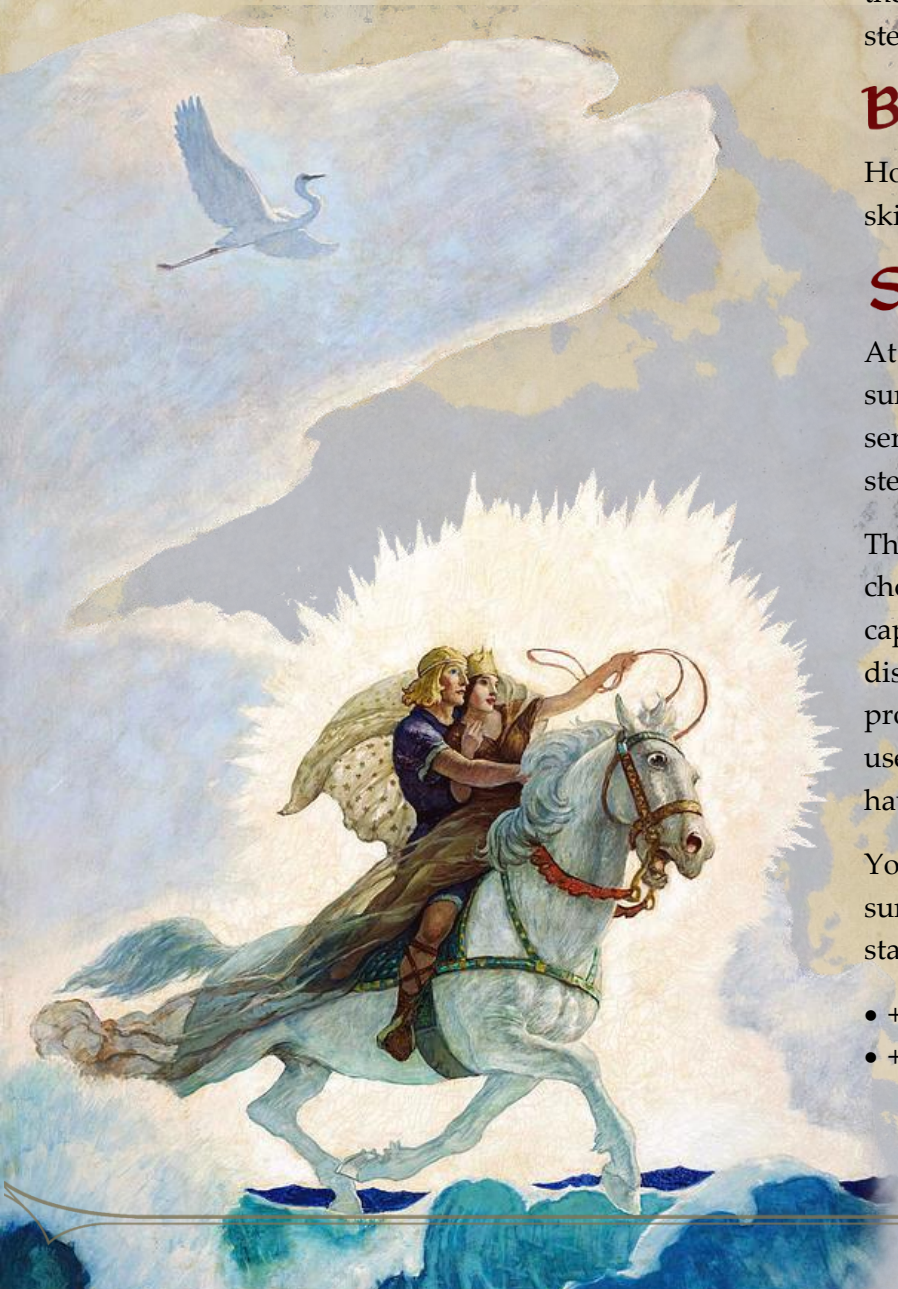
STEED OF LEGEND

At the 3rd level, you learn the Iskuzai ritual to summon the spirit of an ancestor's steed to serve as your mount. You may summon a spirit steed using a 1 minute ritual.

The summoned steed takes the form that you choose, though it has the base stats and capabilities of a warhorse. If it dies, it disappears and you must repeat the ritual to procure another steed of legend. You may also use your action to dismiss it. You may only have one summoned steed at any given time.

You may choose the characteristics that your summoned steed possesses in addition to its stats.

- +1 to base AC (1 SP)
- +10 feet to base speed (1 SP)



- Proficiency in a saving throw (1 SP)
- +10 HP (1 SP)
- Your steed can communicate with you telepathically at a distance of up to 10 miles. (1 SP)
- Your steed may use its turn at will to touch a creature and give it the benefit of the guidance or resistance cantrip. (1 SP)
- Gives off dim light in a 30 foot radius (1 SP)

You have 1 point to spend in this way per Iskuzai level. You regain all expended points after a long rest.

HEART OF MAGIC

At the 6th level, you may imbue your steed with magical properties. When you summon your steed, you gain access to 6 of the following optional magical effects, which your steed may use as an action. These effects come with a single charge per time the price is paid:

- Thunderwave (1 SP)
- Feather Fall (1 SP)
- Hunter's Mark spell. This can be used either by the mount or the rider, but not both (1 SP)
- Sanctuary (1 SP)
- Sleep (1 SP)
- Dragon Breath (2 SP)
- Calm Emotion (2 SP)
- Enlarge/reduce (applies to rider and steed) (2 SP)
- Invisibility (applies to rider and steed) (2 SP)
- Levitate (2 SP)
- Misty Step (2 SP)
- Pass without a trace (2 SP)
- Silence (2 SP)
- Spider Climb (2 SP)

The rider maintains concentration for any concentration effects.

FIERCE SOUL

Starting at the 10th level, your mount's attacks are magical for the sake of overcoming resistance, and their attack bonus is your proficiency bonus + your wisdom modifier. They use your wisdom modifier as the damage modifier for the attack.

GREATER HEART OF MAGIC

At the 14th level, you may take 2 cantrips of your choice from any list, which your mount may cast as an action cantrips with a range of self include the rider in the effect. Additionally, you choose an additional 6 Heart of Magic Options that you can use when summoning a steed, including from the following options:

- Blink (3 SP)
- Fear (3 SP)
- Fly (3 SP)
- Gaseous Form (applies to rider and steed) (3 SP)
- Haste (applies to steed only) (3 SP)
- Spirit Guardians (3 SP)
- Water Breathing (applies to rider and steed) (3 SP)
- Water Walk (3 SP)
- Freedom of Movement (4 SP)
- Greater Invisibility (4 SP)

LEGEND INCARNATE

At level 18, choose an additional three Heart of Magic effects you may choose from when summoning a steed. When you summon a steed, you may choose one effect that you have paid for that does not deal damage. Your steed may create that effect at will.