

LAST STAND

A WORTHY DEATH



DAVE PANEILO

A flexible new system that makes permanent player character death satisfying, dramatic, and impactful

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INTRODUCTION

Are you interested in running a campaign that combines the threat of high stakes, permanent player character death with epic, satisfying incentives for going out in a blaze of glory? More than a magic item or even a setting, players in a *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign grow attached to their characters themselves. When an encounter turns deadly, it makes a big difference to a player's experience whether or not their character's demise feels like a worthy sacrifice.

Last Stands are a class-based character option that add reliable, powerful retaliation to imminent player character death - at the cost of any hope for recovery. Each Last Stand is designed to evoke a class-specific fantasy of (literally) once-in-a-lifetime character impact on a battle. The goal is for players to choose a Last Stand with the understanding that even if they never use it, it will provide an extra incentive to play bravely in the face of particularly dangerous foes. If they do invoke their character's Last Stand, the goal is for it to make their death a story worth telling at the table for years to come.

This supplement contains three options for each of the twelve core classes in *Dungeons & Dragons* Fifth Edition, plus support for the Artificer, Blood Hunter, Mystic, and Gunslinger. But first, you'll find some "New Rules", "Advice for Play", and a few "Variant Rules" provided below. What follows are the 46 new options themselves, sorted alphabetically by class. Lastly, you'll find a set of guidelines describing how these new options were designed, with the hope that DMs and aspiring developers will design their own!

NEW RULES

All of the options presented here share certain common features for when and how they are used, unless otherwise noted. This is the part of the supplement you are most likely to refer back to when making sure you are interpreting a Last Stand option correctly.

CHOOSING AN OPTION

Each player chooses one Last Stand option for their class at level 3, and may change to a different option for that class with the DM's permission at any level-up. Multiclass characters select only one Last Stand option, but may choose from the options of any class in which they have at least 3 levels.

USING YOUR OPTION

Last Stand may be invoked by a player when they would be reduced to zero hit points, or when they roll a death saving throw, or when they would die. Whatever the trigger, that player immediately resolves their Last Stand and takes no further actions other than those included in their option. Invoking a Last Stand is a free action, and does not require a reaction, or consciousness, or any other functionality but player choice.

When a player invokes their character's Last Stand, they forego all otherwise available options to prevent their imminent death or to be resurrected afterwards, including *true resurrection* and *wish*. The invoking character **must** permanently die once they have resolved their Last Stand, after five minutes at the longest (see Variant Rule 2 for an alternative).

YOUR TURN

Players treat their initiative normally once they invoke a Last Stand, but may only take actions, including movement, that are indicated in their option. Only options which specifically refer to “each of your turns” have a repeated effect on your initiative. The mechanisms of a Last Stand do not determine narrative decisions such as a character getting a dying monologue after the battle or leaving behind a personal letter to their comrades.

MAGIC

Characters casting a spell as part of their own Last Stand may not themselves be subject to *counterspell*, but may have their spell effects targeted by *dispel magic*. Spells cast as an effect of a Last Stand are limited to one standard or bonus action in their casting time. Spells that require concentration may not be maintained after death, unless otherwise noted (generally in an option's second bullet point). Spells last for the shorter of their duration or five minutes.

POSITIONING

Last Stand options use a character's location when they invoked it as their origin for all effects that make reference to range or movement. Ongoing effects from a Last Stand apply to their targets at the time of their invocation, and then continue to apply so long as they remain within range, suspending their effect but not being removed while outside that range. All consequences of these effects, such as spells cast, damage dealt, or saving throws failed, persist normally.

ADVICE FOR PLAY

Rule zero for any RPG group is that the social contract between each player, including the DM, supersedes all else. That notwithstanding, here are some tips for making sure that Last Stands fit in socially and tonally with your game.

The brightest spotlight. Every Last Stand places the focus squarely on the invoking character, at least initially. Be sensitive to whether the invoking player or anyone already engaged in a dramatic moment might feel robbed of their “spotlight time” by someone else. It is in this spirit that Last Stands are *not* recommended for use by non-player characters.

Be prepared. Some Last Stands, particularly those involving casting a spell from a large list, should be planned in advance by their player.

Don't throw away your shot. Dungeon Masters should consider whether they will be prompting players to invoke Last Stands or whether player characters hoping to be rescued or resurrected from hopeless circumstances are allowed to miss their opportunity.

A worthy death. Last Stands are generally designed to be used upon falling in a high-stakes combat encounter. If a player character permanently dies from slipping on an icy lake, how fine was their hour really going to be, anyway?

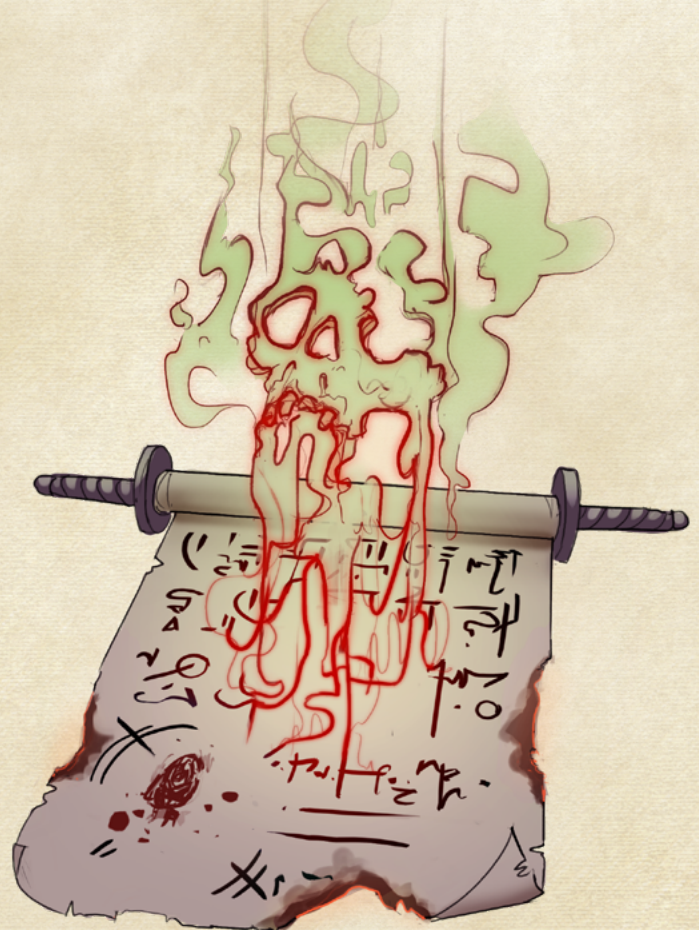
Often spicy, never mild. Last Stands usually fit in with a “high power” or “epic fantasy” campaign setting. See Variant Rule 1 for a Last Stand implementation that works better in “medium power” campaigns.

You decide the style. All normal standards of roleplay or lack thereof for your campaign apply. A bard's *Swan Song* does not need to be a song at all, or it could be a prepared lyrical piece with backing music.

VARIANT RULES

While of course any group might decide to “hack” or “homebrew” an RPG to their heart's content, some modifications will play better than others. Here are a few variant rules that fit in neatly with Last Stands as written, broadening the variety of campaigns they can be used in.

1. You may play with only the first bullet point of each Last Stand in effect, making them less powerful and more easily mitigated by the DM. Such a Last Stand might receive its second bullet point later on as an “upgrade”.
2. In what is anticipated to be the final battle of a character's player-controlled career, their Last Stand may be invoked on their turn without dying. Options that transform or replace the character revert the character to their state before invocation after their duration expires, as the *polymorph* spell.
3. Players may be required to level up some number of times after starting play as a character before unlocking their Last Stand. For example, setting this value at 2 would mean that freshly rolled level 1 characters unlock it at level 3 (as normal), but that a newly rolled level 5 character would unlock it at level 7.
4. Last Stands may be granted as options based on a character having completed a particular narrative milestone, such as acquiring a legendary artifact or defeating a nemesis from their backstory.
5. Your group might agree to untether some or all Last Stands from their associated classes if you are comfortable recontextualizing them in the narrative. This dramatically increases the flexibility of players to “respec” their options at each level-up.
6. To create a more flexible Last Stand (though perhaps less tied to a character's playstyle in life), allow each class the ability to choose among their eligible Last Stands at the time of invocation.



LAST STAND OPTIONS

Whether turning the table against a potential total party kill, or securing the defeat of an elusive villain, a Last Stand is always a moment of truth. Choose an option that reflects your character's role in their party, and which you feel shines a spotlight on what you love about *D&D*. Run it by your Dungeon Master, including any unique spin you want to put on it, and don't be afraid to change it when leveling up if it's no longer an evocative fit for your character.

ARTIFICER

When leaving their mark on the world, an Artificer may wield their grasp of epic logistics, their most daring prototype, or their talent for magical design. (Requires the Artificer class from *Unearthed Arcana* or *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*)

APPRECIATION

A bittersweet truism: the death of the artist increases the value of the art. The enchantments, like your legacy, will never fade.

- Teleport the magic items you possess to allies within 100 feet, divided as you see fit. Your allies within 100 feet may equip, unequip, and attune magic items as a free action for the next five minutes, and they do not require a free hand or any other physical capacity to do so. As a bonus action on their turn during this time, they may teleport a magic item they possess to a creature within 100 feet of you.
- For the next five minutes, your allies within 100 feet have unlimited attunement slots.

AUTOMATION

In your hour of need, the beta version will have to do. Here's hoping it can hold together until victory, with only your life force to animate it.

- Summon a construct, a giant, or a dragon with a challenge rating up to your character level. Its type becomes construct if it wasn't before. Play as your character controlling this automaton for one minute, after which its spark, like yours, goes out.
- The automaton loses all vulnerabilities and is immune to hostile abjuration while you control it.

GREAT DIVIDE

A feat of arcane engineering worthy of the history books, the folk songs, and the constellations.

- Summon an invincible 1-inch-thick wall centered on yourself. It may be up to 1000 feet tall and 1000 feet wide, and lasts for 5 minutes. Your allies may see and pass freely through the wall.
- When you invoke this option, you may shunt creatures within 1000 feet of you to the nearest unoccupied space on either side of the wall, your choice.

BARBARIAN

When earning their death in battle, a Barbarian focuses on their iconic Rage feature, their propensity for deadly critical strikes, or their role as a party's shamanic warrior.

FINAL RAGE

The scent of your own blood unlocks a clarity of purpose that your kind are rarely afforded. Kill *and* be killed.

- Enter a Persistent Rage for one minute. During this rage you may act normally, cannot have fewer than 1 hit point, and are immune to all involuntary conditions.
- You may ignore any effect which would reduce the damage of your hits, and are immune to the effects of exhaustion.

LAST LAUGH

You thrust your weapon with all the malice of a cornered animal, skewering your foe and dying empty-handed with a grin upon your face.

- Move up to your speed and deal a critical hit to one target within range. The target then makes a Constitution saving throw. The DC equals 12 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier. On a failure, they begin bleeding for force damage equal to twice your character level at the end of each of their turns for the next five minutes.
- The saving throw is not subject to Legendary Resistance.

WRATH OF THE WORLD TOTEM

Your ancestors join you in celebrating the fury of your brothers and sisters still among the living.

- Your allies within 100 feet gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, and add your Rage Damage to all of their damage rolls for attacks and spells for the next five minutes.
- Your allies within 100 feet add your Constitution modifier to their Armor Class for the next five minutes (minimum +1).

BARD

When making their final curtain call, a Bard plays up their unparalleled magic versatility, their mastery of rumor, or their unique performative talent.

BEST KEPT SECRET

You swore you would never use it so long as you lived. Seems you won't live much longer, so all bets are off.

- Cast a spell from any class up to your highest known spell level. It requires no components or spell slot.
- You may maintain concentration on the spell from beyond death for the shorter of its maximum duration or five minutes.

FRIENDS ON THE OTHER SIDE

After crossing over to the great beyond, you manage to persuade the gatekeeper to let you slip back just this once to visit some old friends

- Choose a number of allies anywhere up to your Charisma modifier. You come into a piece of crucial new information about a foe, and relate it to them when next they dream. The nature of the information must be decided within the next five minutes, and may include any one of the following: a full map to or of their hideout, knowledge of a credible enemy they have made in the past, or an ulterior motive of theirs that could be exploited.
- Your chosen allies may access this information whenever they rest.

SWAN SONG

As your voice breaks, all the passion of a life well-lived can be heard in a question: tragedy or triumph?

- Sing your last verse. You cannot be silenced, and your voice carries through magical barriers that would normally stop it. All allies who can hear you receive a number of your Bardic Inspiration dice equal to your Charisma modifier. These dice may be spent normally, but disappear after five minutes.
- When your allies who heard your *Swan Song* use your Bardic Inspiration dice during the next five minutes, they also cancel all sources of disadvantage for the roll.

BLOOD HUNTER

When the bell tolls for them, a Blood Hunter answer with their deathly insight, their ecstatic monstrous power, or their hateful cacophony of curses. (Requires the [Blood Hunter Class](#) by Matthew Mercer)

CLARETY

As the wine-red concoction causes your own blood to evaporate, it forms a tenebrous plasma between your comrades and their quarry.

- For the next five minutes, your allies within 1000 feet can sense the current hit points, saving throws, spell slots, spells prepared, resistances, immunities, and vulnerabilities of creatures they can see.
- For the next five minutes, your allies within 1000 feet can sense the surface thoughts - such as what action they plan to take - of creatures they can see.

GAZE OF THE ABYSS

You learned such burdensome secrets. And, in time, they learned you. Let this be the final lesson.

- Summon a monstrosity, an undead, or a humanoid shapechanger with a challenge rating up to your character level. Play as your character controlling this transformation for one minute, after which you collapse into a motionless mess.
- The transformation loses all vulnerabilities and is immune to hostile abjuration while you control it.

INSULT TO INJURY

An ill word in a friendly voice. At last, you and your allies are speaking the same language!

- Choose one of your Blood Curses granted by your Blood Maledict feature. For the next minute, your allies within 100 feet may each use this Blood Curse as if they were a Blood Hunter of your level, with your Intelligence score or theirs, whichever is higher. Amplifying this Blood Curse does not self-inflict damage.
- This Blood Curse is usable any number of times, regardless of your Blood Hunter level.

CLERIC

When preparing to meet their god, a Cleric focuses on their role as a radiant battle mage, their eternal support of their allies, or their drive to protect the vulnerable.

HEAVEN'S GATE

Their kingdom come, your deity accepts you into their presence through an open portal that briefly reveals their fury and splendor.

- All enemies within 1000 feet must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC is equal to 10 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. On a failure, they take radiant damage equal to twice your character level and are blinded and deafened for one minute, as well as being knocked prone and dropping whatever they are holding. On a success, they take radiant damage equal to your character level and are knocked prone.
- This option does not require line of effect to its targets, and the saving throw is not subject to Legendary Resistance.

SECOND COMING

Before accepting you into paradise, your deity humbly asks that you answer some rather urgent prayers.

- Regain all of your expended spell slots. For the next minute, your allies within 100 feet may cast your prepared spells using your spell slots on their turn, using your Wisdom as their spellcasting ability for the spells and their save DCs.
- These spells do not require material components.

ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Beseeking your deity for one last miracle, your eyes widen at the whispered cost. So be it. You know they'd do the same for you.

- Choose a creature anywhere. You grant them your protection: they gain resistance to all damage, and may not be reduced below 1 hit point. At the end of each of your turns, you may change the recipient of your protection. After one minute, you may no longer protect anyone.
- Your protected creature succeeds on all saving throws.

DRUID

When it comes time to rejoin the cycle, a Druid relies on their iconic Wild Shape feature, their inherent connection with fey magic, or their vision of a world renewed.

FINAL FORM

You clear your mind and unleash the beast within, knowing it will never need to be caged again.

- Wild Shape into a beast, a plant, or an elemental with a challenge rating up to your character level. You must maintain this form and act normally for as long as you can, up to five minutes.
- Your form loses all vulnerabilities and is immune to hostile abjuration magic.

LEY WASTE

You repeat the words, again and again, each time a little softer than the last, as your body sinks into bark and stone.

- Choose a Druid cantrip or spell up to your highest known spell level minus 1. You may cast this spell at the end of each of your turns for the next minute. It requires no components or spell slot each time you cast it.
- Each time you cast this spell, you may either maintain concentration on one previous instance of the spell, or on the new instance. You may maintain concentration on one instance of the spell from beyond death for the shorter of its maximum duration or four minutes.

UNCIVILIZE

You beseech the spirits of the Feywild to reclaim their progeny, surrendering your time among mortals for a glimpse at that viridian dream.

- For the next five minutes, your enemies within 1000 feet halve their speeds, and they may not teleport or *plane shift*.
- For the next five minutes, your allies within 1000 feet gain *freedom of movement*.

FIGHTER

When only blood will turn the tide, a Fighter can count on their pure martial prowess, their peerless battlefield bravado, their tactical brilliance, or their rarefied firearm.

DIE BY THE SWORD

They always used to call you a troublemaker. One thing's for sure: they won't call you a hypocrite.

- Move up to your speed and make four times as many attacks as you are allowed in a standard attack action.
- You are not subject to any hostile effect which would stop your movement, prevent your attacks, or reduce the damage of your hits.

FINEST HOUR

When at last you falter, your allies rise to your example. Each of them, in their own way, is determined not to let you down.

- Your allies within 100 feet currently below 1 hit point regain 1 hit point. Your allies within 100 feet then gain temporary hit points equal to four times your character level for the next five minutes.
- Grant your Second Wind feature to all allies within 100 feet. Allies you grant Second Wind use your Fighter level for its value, and lose the feature after five minutes.

WARLORD'S CONTINGENCY

Through the thunder and grit, you manage to shout your last words loud enough for your comrades to hear:

"... Now!"

- Grant your Action Surge feature to all allies within 100 feet. Allies you grant Action Surge lose the feature after five minutes.
- When your allies use your Action Surge feature, they also end one effect on themselves that would normally require a saving throw at the end of their turn.

DESPERADO

With no regard to cover or clemency, you let loose with everything you have. Your steely eyes never blink, until they close forever. (Requires the [Gunslinger Martial Archetype for Fighters](#) by Matthew Mercer)

- Repair and reload any firearms you are carrying. Move up to your speed and make twice as many attacks as you are allowed in a standard attack action. Any hits with these attacks are critical.
- Any saving throws against effects of these attacks are not subject to Legendary Resistance, nor can any hostile effect reduce the damage of your hits.

MONK

When they reach their journey's end, a Monk makes use of their most taxing skills to destroy their rival, rescue their friends, or strike a perfect balance.

EMPTY SUN TECHNIQUE

Hand to hand, soul for soul, you employ the forbidden strikes that expend your ki for good.

- Move up to your speed and deal two critical hits to one target within range. The target makes one Wisdom saving throw. The DC is equal to 12 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. On a failure, the target is placed under the Slumber effect of the *imprisonment* spell, with the 'special component' being your dead body.
- The saving throw is not subject to Legendary Resistance.

INTO THE MIST

You surrender your body in a self-immolating flourish that ferries your comrades to safety across untold distances.

- Evaporate into a vast cloud of steam, smoke, colored powder, or shadow into which your allies within 100 feet disappear. Any or all of them may choose to teleport to any location in which they took a long rest within the past week.
- Locations in which they took a short rest within the past week are also valid destinations.

TRANSCENDANCE

You guide your friends and confound your foes, a spiritual essence that lingers in the material world before finally rising above all this havoc and desire.

- After you die, remain on the battlefield as a faint invincible image with Truesight for the next five minutes. You grant disadvantage on all d20 rolls to all enemies within 10 feet of you, and advantage on all d20 rolls to all allies within 10 feet of you. You may move normally and gain a fly speed of 50 feet.
- You may communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet and you may see and move through all physical and magical barriers.

MYSTIC

When their physical being fails them for the last time, a Mystic may lash out with their index of psionic techniques, their intense mental dominance, or their unwavering focus. (Requires the Mystic class from *Unearthed Arcana*)

ENTHRALL

Escaping death for a few fleeting moments, you eject your very consciousness into a tactically optimal target in your final stroke of brilliance.

- One enemy of your choice within 100 feet must make an Intelligence saving throw. The DC is equal to 10 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier. On a success, the target is completely under your control for one round. On a failure, the target is completely under your control for the next minute. This effect cannot end early by any means except your willful release.
- The saving throw is not subject to Legendary Resistance.

PSIONOMICON

Through everything, they feel it. The surety of your familiar mind like a beacon beyond the planes, guiding their bodies to victory.

- You grant your allies within 100 feet the Psychic Focus effect of all of your known Disciplines for the next five minutes. Your allies within 100 feet may also communicate with one another telepathically for the next five minutes.
- The telepathy granted by this option allows for superior conveyance of information. Your affected allies may communicate entire paragraphs of information to one another on each of their turns.

LIMITLESS

The neural pathways are sealed. The gift fades. But these burned bridges will catch your foes in the firestorm.

- Regain all of your expended psi points and treat your psi limit as 7. Perform a number of psionic disciplines you know up to one half of your Mystic level rounded up.
- You may maintain concentration on up to two disciplines from beyond death for the shorter of each of their maximum durations or five minutes.



PALADIN

When they join their final battle against corruption, a Paladin focuses on their duty to preserve the living, or on their iconic smiting or turning features.

ENDLESS MERCY

You subject yourself to a living hell, dissolving your soul into respite for your comrades. What's one more burden, at this late hour?

- Your allies within 100 feet regain missing hit points equal to your character level, and they are cured of all poison and disease at the end of each of your turns for the next five minutes.
- Your allies within 100 feet gain +3 to a saving throw of your choice (such as Wisdom or Strength) for the next five minutes.

TRUE SMITE

Your deity uses your body as a conduit for its full unbridled wrath, destroying your mortal vessel and banishing the object of its ill favor.

- Move up to your speed and deal a critical hit to an enemy in range. The target makes a Charisma saving throw. The DC is equal to 12 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier. On a failure, the target is transported to a plane of your choice, and may not leave its destination plane for 1d12 + your Charisma modifier months.
- The saving throw is not subject to Legendary Resistance

TURN FATE

You clutch your holy symbol so hard that it breaks skin, and channel divinity not against your foes themselves, but against the future they would beckon.

- All enemies within 100 feet must make a Wisdom saving throw. The DC is equal to 12 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier. Each enemy that fails is turned as if by the Turn Undead feature for one minute, even if it takes damage during that time. Evil creatures have disadvantage on this saving throw.
- This option does not require line of effect to its targets, and the saving throw is not subject to Legendary Resistance.

RANGER

When the hunt is finally over, a Ranger can leverage their signature tracking magic, their insight into monster slaying, or their eye for a sudden killshot.

END OF WATCH

You send what looks like a flare from your fingertips, but it is your very soul that you now dispatch as a beacon to doom your quarry.

- Leave a Final Mark on an enemy of your choice for five minutes, which cannot be resisted or dispelled and does not require line of sight or effect. Your allies' attacks have advantage against the subject of your Final Mark, and they always know its exact location.
- No source of disadvantage may cancel this advantage.

FAVORED FRIENDS

With one last salute, you pass your duty on to your allies. Here's hoping they learned something after all this time.

- For the next five minutes, your allies within 100 feet ignore all of their enemies' resistances and one type of immunity (such as to necrotic damage or the restrained condition) determined by you when you invoke this option.
- Your allies within 100 feet gain the ignored immunity for the next five minutes.

SHOOT THE MOON

At this stage, the impossible shots are the only ones worth taking.

- Deal a critical hit to an enemy in range. The target makes a Constitution saving throw. The DC is equal to 12 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier. On a failure, the target is reduced to 0 hit points.
- The saving throw is not subject to Legendary Resistance.

ROGUE

When the first law finally catches up with them, a Rogue makes use of their iconic Sneak Attack feature, their talent for misdirection, or their singular focus on the real prize.

CHEATERS NEVER LOSE

You give your life for a crucial double feint, opening a gap in your foe's defenses that your allies are quick to recognize, fighting through the tears.

- Move up to your speed and deal a Sneak Attack critical hit to an enemy in range. Your allies who saw this hit gain your Sneak Attack damage dice to their first damage roll each round against the target of your hit. They lose this feature after five minutes.
- The target of your hit cannot be healed for the next five minutes.

PARANOIA

Your clothes collapse into an empty heap, and soon every snapped twig and glinting rock provide a distraction from the real danger.

- For the next five minutes, your allies within 1000 feet may dash or hide as a bonus action, cannot be hit by opportunity attacks, and may use your Dexterity modifier and proficiency bonus in place of theirs for any Dexterity (Stealth) ability checks they make.
- For the next five minutes, your allies have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) ability checks.

THE PRESTIGE

If you had told them how you were going to do it, they never would have believed you.

- At any point within the next five minutes, you may reveal that some item within 100 feet — magical or otherwise — worn, carried, wielded, or protected by an enemy, has been stolen or sabotaged by you. It confers no benefits if still possessed by the enemy, being effectively ruined and disenchanting. If stolen, it remains functional and can be found on your body by any ally who has shared a short or long rest with you.
- Enemies cannot repair the item if sabotaged, or discover it before your allies if stolen.

SORCERER

When things finally fall apart, a Sorcerer will rely on either amplifying or sharing their iconic Metamagic feature, or on their unmatched rapidity of spellcasting.

INCANTATRIX

No longer burdened by physical constraints, your last spell is a rule-shattering symphony of arcane creativity.

- Cast a Sorcerer spell you know with any combination of different Metamagic effects applied once each. It requires no components, spell slots, or sorcery points.
- You may maintain concentration on the spell from beyond death for the shorter of its maximum duration or ten minutes.

CROSSWEAVE

As your own heart stops beating, the Weave dances briefly through the veins of those closest to you.

- Regain all of your expended sorcery points. For the next five minutes, your allies within 100 feet may use your Metamagic feature, as you have developed it, for their own spells. They may spend your sorcery points for this purpose.
- Spells cast by your allies using your Metamagic may not be targeted by *counterspell* or *dispel magic*.

WILD MAGIC CASCADE

Your bones feel as if they are shaking apart, the reverberations of uncorked power that was once your birthright, now your death bed.

- Cast seven Sorcerer spells you know, which may be any combination of cantrips and spells as high as your highest known spell level minus 3. They require no components or spell slots.
- You may maintain concentration on up to three of these spells from beyond death for the shorter of their maximum duration(s) or five minutes.

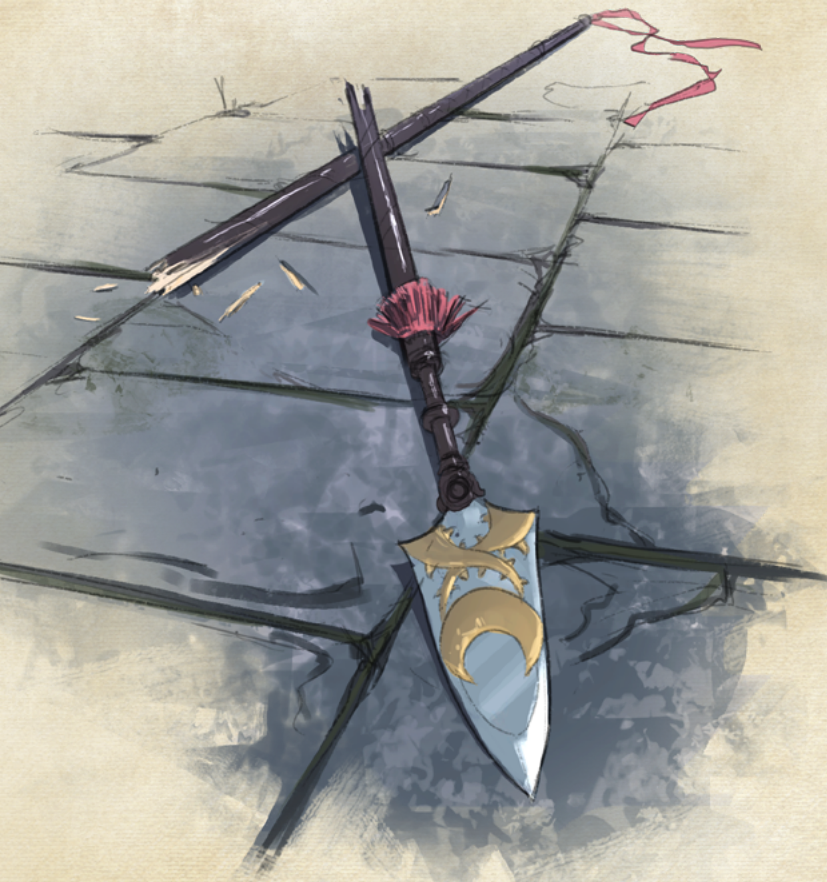
WARLOCK

When their Patron claims them for good, a Warlock can receive boons to their allies' magic, their own arcane potential, or their soon-to-be-annihilated body.

EQUIVALENT EXCHANGE

You light the wick of your own potential, burning away your future for the sake of these fools. At least they'll have to live on knowing you were right.

- Choose one creature within 1000 feet. At the end of each of your turns, they regain the use of one of their expended spell slots up to their highest known spell level minus 1 (minimum spell level 1).
- After each spell slot restoration, you may choose to change which creature will receive the next spell slot restoration.



HUBRIS

You didn't intend to die, but for what you asked, should you really have expected a happy ending?

- Cast a Warlock spell you know up to your highest known spell level. This spell does not require a spell slot, components, special circumstances (such as having to be cast at night), or a casting time.
- You can maintain concentration or control over your spell and its creations for the shorter of their duration or five minutes.

PACT'S END

Closing your eyes and speaking in a tongue beyond mouths, you reveal the blood-signed scroll you once promised to destroy.

- Summon a fiend, a fey, or an aberration with a challenge rating up to your character level. Play as your character controlling this avatar for one minute, after which your Patron reclaims control of both.
- The avatar loses all vulnerabilities and is immune to hostile abjuration spells while you control it.

WIZARD

When enacting the spell contingent on their own death, a Wizard may emphasize their influence over time, their mastery of arcane foci, or their theory of what is magically possible.

AHEAD OF YOUR TIME

As your consciousness recedes, the sieve of reality finds itself briefly clogged by a mind so mighty.

- Choose a number of allies within 100 feet equal to your Intelligence modifier. They interrupt the current round to each take one extra turn in their initiative order as if under the effects of a *time stop* spell that cannot end early.
- This effect can be delayed for up to one minute after your death, taking place immediately after one of your turns within 10 rounds of its invocation.

GHOST IN THE SPELL

When your body falls, your spellbook stays aloft. The pages begin turning on their own, a focus for your friends in their time of need.

- For the next five minutes, your allies within 100 feet may not have their concentration involuntarily ended, even by death. Their magic may not be countered or dispelled during this time.
- For the next five minutes, your allies within 100 feet may maintain concentration on two spells at one time.

SYMPOSIUM

You suppose there's no one in the next life who'll chastise you for attempting this. A pity there isn't a control group.

- Cast any Wizard spell of your choice up to one spell level above your highest known spell level. It requires no components or spell slot. If you know any spell of 9th level, you may cast two Wizard spells instead of one. They require no components or spell slots.
- You may maintain concentration on one of the spells from beyond death for the shorter of its maximum duration or five minutes.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

You'll notice that there is significant variation in the complexity and versatility of each Last Stand, and this is by design. A player who chooses to play a Fighter likely values quantity of attacks quite highly, as it is a core feature of every Fighter specialization. Thus, *Die By the Sword* is a sufficiently intense and thematic option for the class in spite of its simplicity. Likewise, *The Prestige* requires a fair bit of text to get right because it is meant to appeal to a complex aspect of the Rogue class fantasy that revolves around theft and subterfuge. However, one thing every Last Stand has in common is that its direct consequences fade after about five minutes, so as to encourage character death as a last resort of *participation* rather than *preparation*.

Appeal to a class's core thematic fantasy is a great starting point, but Last Stands are also structured to be digestible. "Digestible" here means that each entry is at most a bit longer than that of a fifth edition Feat, and that they don't include common but elaborately restated rules, such as those for shunting. This is because a player will be choosing their Last Stand and then relegating it to the back of their mind for potentially the rest of the campaign - months or years of real-world time! It should never introduce its own complex subsystem or require checking its exact functionality more than a round or so before it is invoked. For precisely this reason, most Last Stands include a long range or some free movement to help ensure that they find legal targets.

In addition, each Last Stand is written to be two-tiered so that the crucial Variant Rule 1 (for "Medium Power" campaigns) is always compatible. This means writing a standalone, worthy and internally coherent option in the first bullet point, followed by a layer of additional effectiveness that "stacks" with it in the second bullet point. Notice that the few "save or lose" Last Stands use immunity to Legendary Resistance as this second bullet point. This is because a reduction in possible Dungeon Master "counter-play" is another way of viewing the goal of bullet point two, and the LR system generally represents DM counter-play.

Within each class, a rough, flexible balance is struck between damage-dealing, party support, and unique exaggerations of existing features (such as spellcasting). The "feature-sharing" options such as the Sorcerer's *Crossweave* are fairly intuitive to conceive, but can be tricky to actually write. Make sure to check on how a class supports a core feature in the context of its other features before designing a Last Stand that shares it piecemeal. Finally, spellcasting options are designed to serve a player who is excited about their class's spell list, and they use spell level as a balancing mechanism for the often otherwise impossible combinations they provide.

But the most general guideline for designing this sort of material is to solicit criticism from interested friends and players. Speaking of which; feel free to swing by the [DM's Guild page](#) to leave a comment or a review! When this supplement first hit Silver back in 2018, I added the Artificer, Mystic, and Blood Hunter classes - in addition to an option for Gunslinger Fighters - as a free expansion. That's ten new Last Stands!

Here's to the adventure - and if you die, die well!

TOTALLY CHILL MAILING LIST

If, hypothetically, I were to release more tabletop content in the future, would you be interested in getting a notification? If your answer was "sure man, this was pretty cool actually", then head on over to [this humble Google Form](#) and sign up for my mailing list! I promise to send only one email for each piece of new content I launch, and not to spam you in between.

MIGHT VS. MAGIC!

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