CORRUPTION OF THE TARRASQUE MUTATION SUPPLEMENT BY J.M. PERKINS

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Corruption of the Tarrasque Mutations Supplement For the Salt in Wounds Campaign Setting Utilizing the Pathfinder Ruleset Written by J.M. Perkins Designed by J.M. Perkins & Neal Powel Copyright 2017 J.M. Perkins & Pangolin Press Edited by Mike Myler Art by Jeffrey Chen Additional art used under license from Jess Stock & Big Stock, copyright Jess Stock & Big Stock Layout by J.M. Perkins



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To Win the Battle, To Lose the War

From a Speech Delivered by General Clausiax to his Imperial Officers

While we know not when the Tarrasque might return I give this speech to you now, to prepare yourself for the day that will surely come. First and foremost know this: the beast cannot be slain. In the course of my years of campaigning against it I have seen it die—always at great cost—half a dozen times, yet it inevitably it rose again to tear and rend and eat my soldiers. All who promise they can deliver the miracle of a final end to the monster are either con-artists or adventuring fools; and as a man, a soldier, and eventually a general I learned to avoid both sorts of empty-headed vapidities.

And yet, merely because an enemy cannot be defeated does not mean an enterprising soldier is without options. When facing a superior opponent in the course of normal circumstances you have several potential paths:

1. Surrender, though this is not possible with the monster.

2. Fighting retreat to reinforce—also impossible as in this case the kingdom doesn't have legions enough to kill that which will not stay slain (even if we managed to ally with our neighbors).

3. Wait out the siege. Perhaps we could hold out behind high walls but the monster seems to take special delight in knocking them down.

And so we are left with simply "not being worth it," of fighting not to end a threat but merely redirect it. Insofar as I "won" against the beast it was because I was able to change its course. For you to be victorious should it return you as well must be able to guide it as one would guide a surging river, or perhaps more accurately as one would guide a donkey—with carrot and stick.

The beast is driven by ravenous hunger—all know this is so—but more importantly it likes to fight, to smash forces arrayed against it. As such, it often chooses the path of **most** resistance. However, it does not like to chase. It was with these tools in mind that I selected the path the Tarrasque would take.

With harassing strikes from archers on horseback and well-placed encampments firing siege weaponry I led the Tarrasque from battle to battle until finally I brought it to Xansay's border, where our former enemies had amassed their army in anticipation of the invasion I'd led them to believe was imminent (convincing them that we intended to flee through their lands in an all-out conquest attempt as our stratagem to avoid the Tarrasque). After it cut through Xansay our spies report that it has had forty years of traveling steadily west and so I—Clausiax son of Clausacine, General of the Fourth Imperial Army—won the battle against the Tarrasque, even as I leave to you, my successors, the task of completing the war.

Because the war is not over—everywhere the beast bled the land has been corrupted. All know that huge, heavily armored animals with faces twisted to resemble the Tarrasque plague our villages and prey upon travelers. Many of our citizens are fouled with horrible mutations, most originating where waters are tainted red with the taste of blood that seems to be steadily growing. And there are sorcerous stirrings, individuals who seem to surge with magic that threatens the safety and order of the empire.

Yes, I 'bested' the Tarrasque.

But we have yet to purge the corruption it has left in our land.

MUTATIONS

Tarrasque-fed mutations can occur seemingly at random across the globe (it has bled on every continent and isolated pockets of its essence are still occasionally discovered, left over from some long forgotten battle). However, such twistings of the flesh are commonly gained through drinking the "red water" tainted by the Tarrasque's essence around the sprawling city of Salt in Wounds, making them particularly common amongst the most impoverished citizens of the bizarre metropolis and native wild creatures lacking access to imported water.

In addition, for the residents of Salt in Wounds "common sense" holds that mutations are also often gained via consumption of undercooked Tarrasque flesh (prudence demands that all flesh consumed in Salt in Wounds must be well-done to a charred black, even if taste would prefer other, rarer cuts) or by utilizing Tarrasque derived alchemy or healing, especially when delivered by unskilled practitioners. But there is no universal factor towards gaining a mutation—even the scrupulously careful can sometimes find that merely living in the city will lead to startling transformations.

As expected due to their work habits, approximately 90% of the Marrow Miners are afflicted with one or more mutation. Oddly the God-Butchers of Salt in Wounds seldom suffer mutations, the occurrences so rare that Journeyman Briddu Yittano's mutated arm is seen as an exceptional aspect to be ogled.

For a hefty fee the greatest alchemists in Salt in Wounds can remove mutations from the afflicted. Even rarer are those masters able to coax a specific mutation from the flesh of a willing subject—without the risk of randomization, Tarrasque-fed mutations could turn a humble street urchin into a powerful warrior.

GM Note

As currently designed the acquisition of specific mutations is not a "service" normally available for sale and should be offered as a special reward for the completion of a quest or similar great deed.

ALCHEMY, MUTATIONS & MAGIC

Standard alchemist charges for mutation related services:

- 500 gp (wealth equivalent to owning a small apartment) or DC 15 Craft (Alchemy) check to induce a truly random mutation.
- 2,000 gp (wealth equivalent to owning an uncommon magic item) or DC 25 Craft (Alchemy) check to induce a mutation that is as likely to be Tarrasque Blighted or Tarrasque Favored.
- 5,000 gp (wealth equivalent to owning a rare magic item) or DC 35 Craft (Alchemy) check to remove a mutation. (Mutations can also be removed through certain powerful magics like greater restoration.)

Note: Craft (Alchemy) checks as de-

scribed above can only be attempted once a month and a failed check results in a guaranteed Blighted Mutation.

Powerful alchemists and especially dangerous creatures are known to possess several beneficial mutations at once, or mutations with double the benefit usually associated with its type. This is generally beyond the access of PCs however, who can usually only have a single Favored type mutation at any time.

Favored & Blighted Mutations

Tarrasque mutations are divided Tarrasque Favored amongst (somewhat beneficial) and Tarrasque Blighted (generally detrimental) with Blighted mutations being far more common. However, even beneficial Favored mutations can still negatively affect a creature as individuals possessing Tarrasque-Fed mutations are generally viewed as some combination of: low class, irrational, uncareful, a woeful reminder of the terrible fate that awaits so many residents of Salt in Wounds.

Mutated creatures (possessing either a Favored or Blighted mutation) suffer – 4 mutation penalty on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

If a creature acquires a random



mutation, roll 1d6 to determine the type of mutation (on a 1 or 2 the creature gains a **Favored** mutation but results between 3-6 grant the creature a Blighted mutation) then roll 1d10 to determine the specific mutation gained.

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TABLE : FAVORED MUTATIONS

D10	Name	Description	Effect
1	Beast's Strength	Muscles bulge all over your body, breaking through skin at places.	You gain a +3 Mutation Bonus to Strength
2	Frightful Presence	Something about the preda- tory curve of your smile or your smell terrifies others.	You gain a +4 Mutation Bonus to Intimidation.
3	Enhanced Senses	Your eyes and nose change shape, gaining an inhuman quality and granting you ad- vanced senses.	You gain the scent Ability.
4	Armored Hide	Thick armor scales grow over your body.	You gain +2 to Natural Armor .
5	Spell Reflection	Your skin dries out, becomes reflective, and interferes with spells cast upon you.	You gain spell resistance equal to $5 + your$ character level which can be lowered for 1 round as a bonus action.
6	Regeneration	Your wounds and cuts close faster.	As a bonus action, you can activate Fast Healing 5 for 10 consecutive rounds once every 24 hours.
7	Claws	Your fingers and nails elon- gate, thickening into useable claws of preternatural sharp- ness.	Your unarmed strikes deal 1d6 piercing or slashing damage and you are proficient with your unarmed strikes.
8	Spines	Thick spines grow out of pores in your body, and— with a little practice—you are capable of firing them as offensive weapons.	As an attack action, 6 times a day you can fire spines as a 1d6 ranged attack with a range of 60ft, adding dexterity modifier and base attack bonus to hit.
9	Tail	A tail that you can control grows from the base of your spine.	While you cannot wield weapons with your tail, you can use it to retrieve small, stowed objects carried on their persons as a swift action.
10	Rush	Your legs and knees grow thicker allowing you to run incredible sprints.	For 6 nonconsecutive rounds a day, you can -as a free action- choose to double your move speed.

TABLE : BLIGHTED MUTATIONS

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D10	Name	Description	Effect
1	Spell Failure	Whatever magical abilities you possess become difficult to utilize as your mind swims with odd thoughts whenever you attempt to use your supernatural powers.	When casting a spell Roll 1d10, on a 1 the spell fizzles; it counts as a use even as it has no effect.
2	Tumor	Somewhere on your body there is a mass of flesh that keeps growing.	An untreated tumor will kill a character in 2d6 weeks (average 7). 'Treatment' requires a DC 15 Heal check +1 for every time the tumor has been previously treated. After every treatment, 'reset' the tumor and roll an additional 2d6 (average 7 weeks) to determine how long the tumor can go untreated before killing the character.
3	Extra Eye	You grow an additional eye—perhaps it is on your face, perhaps not—but wher- ever it grows it confuses your vision.	You suffer -4 to mutation modifier Perception Checks.
4	Stupidity	You have increasing difficul- ty putting together coherent thoughts.	You suffer-3 Mutation Modifier to Intelligence (to a minimum score of 4).
5	Frenzied	You are liable to to fly into a frenzy over any pettiness: a spilled glass, a wound, or even an insult.	When dropped to below 50% of your hitpoints, you enter a rage as per the barbarian class ability with none of the bonuses and all the limitations. You can not leave this state until regaining above 50% hp or there are no enemies present. Alternately, if the character is already utilizing the 'rage' class feature when dropped below 50% hitpoints, they can choose to double the duration with all benefits/limitations at no additional cost or disadvantage.
6	Impulsive	You have lost much of your impulse control and thus have developed a tendency to grab at whatever interests you.	You suffer a -2 Mutation Modifier on Will Saves.
7	Beast's Maw	Your throat is growing thick and bestial, making you una- ble to shape intelligible words.	You are now mute, can only communicate verbally through grunts. While you can still approximate verbal components to cast spells, doing so forc- es you to treat your caster level as one level lower for purposes of deter- mining duration and potency.
8	Extreme Hunger	You are always hungry and must eat incessantly or grow ill.	If you have not eaten a meal equal to a day's rations within the last 2 hours, you gain the sickened condition, if not eaten within the last 4 hours you gain the nauseated condition.
9	Misshapen Hands	Your fat, knobby fingers are full of rapidly-fused joints that make it difficult for you to use your hands.	You suffer a -4 Mutation Modifier to Attack Rolls and skill checks that involve the use of your hands
10	Misshapen Body	Your spine or limbs twist in ways they weren't supposed to.	Your movement speed is reduced by 10 feet.

GM Note

Many of the Blighted mutations are meant to be extremely punishing, with some severely limiting character options if not serving as an existential risk. If at all possible, grant PCs an opportunity to get a mutation removed by performing a worthy deed or quest (if not through the expenditure of gold).

Optional Mutation Methods

In addition the previously mentioned alchemical services that can voluntarily induce mutations, PCs may gain mutations by any of the following (GM optional) methods.

GM Fiat The simplest method for a PC to gain a mutation is for a GM to simply rule they have acquired one. This method is not recommended for any GMs except those especially skilled, particularly knowledgeable about their players, and ultimately confident in their ability to use narrative fiat to effectively advance the story in a way that feels 'right' to all parties.

Percentile (Simple) Every time a PC is 'exposed' to a mutagenic source (see below), roll a D20. On a 1, they gain a random mutation.

Percentile (Cumulative) Every time a PC is 'exposed' roll a D100. On a 1,

they gain a random mutation. On any other result, increase the mutation result by one for the next exposure (first exposure: 1 results in a mutation, second exposure: 1 or 2, on third exposure: 1-3 so forth and so on).

Exposure Sources include (but are not Limited to):

- Consuming undercooked Tarrasque flesh.
- Using Tarrasque derived drugs.
- Using Tarrasque derived alchemical supplies on themselves.
- Taking physical, non-weapon damage from a mutated or Tarrasquetransformed creature (once per fight).
- Doing melee damage to a mutated or Tarrasque transformed creature (once per fight).
- Drinking tainted Red Water.
- Swimming or otherwise coming into physical contact to tainted Red Water.
- Being a target of divine spells cast by a devotee of Renesec: Lord of Mutation.

A PC may only have a single 'favored' in addition to two 'blighted' mutations at any time.

Generally, if a PC has been cured of their mutation(s) they are not subject to additional mutations except those gained voluntarily by utilizing the services of an alchemist.

TARRASQUE-TRANSFORMED MONSTER TEMPLATE

A beast, humanoid, giant, or monstrosity can be transformed by the corruption of the Tarrasque's essence. These creatures are often covered in armored scales, recover from wounds with ease, and are known to spark fear into the hearts of all who oppose them. Tarrasque-transformed are driven by ravenous hunger and often exhibit tactics more single-mindedly focused than others of their species (although due to their strength and prowess they are often found leading groups of criminals or monsters).

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Challenge. The Tarrasquetransformed increases its Challenge Rating by 1.

Quick Rules: +2 on to hit and damage rolls; (melee), +4 to AC; +5 Fast Healing, scent ability, DR 5—Adamantine Rebuild Rules: AC Increase natural armor by +4; Ability Scores +4 to Strength. Special Add Fast Healing +5, scent special ability, DR 5— Adamantine.



SORCEROUS ORIGIN PRIMORDIAL BLOODLINE

Your innate magic comes from exposure to the true essence of the primordials; those antecedents of the gods of which the (cursed) Tarrasque is the last living example. Unlike those mutated by the Tarrasque's corruption, you draw strength and are transformed by the runaway surging of primordial life, creativity, and artistic performance that transformed the nascent elemental world and gave birth to all later forms of life and sentience. Most often, sorcerers (or their ancestors) with this origin were exposed to the essence of the primordials via the traces of the Tarrasque or one of the mammoth primordial corpses that litter the world. The potential of this bloodline can lay dormant in the family line for generations, oftentimes as it seeks a (non-cursed) expression. Primordial bloodline sorcerers frequently push the reshaping of themselves and magic to amoral heights.

Bonus Spells silent image (3rd), invisibility (5th), fly (7th), resilient sphere (9th), wall of stone (11th), programmed image (13th), grasping hand (15th), polymorph any object (17th), time stop (19th).

Bonus Feats Combat Casting, Improved Familiar, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (any), Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus, Spell Penetration, Silent Spell.

Bloodline Arcana Whenever you cast a spell from the transmutation subschool you gain a circumstance bonus equal to the spell's level on the next Craft or Perform check you make that day (only one such bonus can be active at any time).

Bloodline Powers The essence of the primordials courses through your veins, but you must take care or it will corrupt and consume you.

Class Skill Perform (Cha)

Boundless Creativity (Ex) At 1st level, you are able to harness your creativity to help you accomplish virtually any task. You may choose to use a Craft skill check bonus and apply it to a different skill check (i.e. Craft (Alchemy) skill check bonus in place of Sense Motive, because "you whipped up an aerosolized truth serum") You may use this ability a number of times each day equal to 3 + your charisma modifier.

Performance Boundless (Ex) At 3rd level, you gain the ability to use a Perform skill to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with you. This acts as the fascinate bardic perform ability, except the save DC is 10 + 1/2 your sorcerer level + your Charisma bonus, and it lasts 1 round/level. You may use this ability once per day at 3rd level, twice per day at 8th level, three times per day at 13th level, and four times per day at 18th level.

Boundless Spellcasting (Su) At 9th level, you can add any one spell from any spellcasting list. This spell must be of a level that you are capable of casting. You can also add one additional spell at 13th level and 17th level.

Boundless Transformations (Sp) At 15th level, your caster level is increased by 3 when casting spells of the transmutation subschool. In addition, once per day you can catastrophically transmute the internal order of a single creature (retouring veins, energy flows, musculature, etc.) within 30 feet if it fails a Fortitude save. The save DC is equal to 10 + 1/2 your sorcerer level + your Charisma modifier. The target can attempt a new saving throw as a full-round action each to reassert its internal order. While catastrophically transmuted in this way, the target is unable to act and takes 6d6 points of precision damage per round.

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Boundless Sorcery (Ex) At 20th level, your body surges with the ability to transform and modify even magic itself. You may add any met-

amagic feat to your spells up to three times a day. In addition, you can add any metamagic feats that you know to your spells without increasing their casting time. In both cases, you must still expend higher-level spell slots.



WANT MORE?

The City of Salt in Wounds

Everyone knows how the City of Salt in Wounds came about. But for those who have not visited in person, it is hard to conceive of the scale of the place. It is even harder for outsiders to understand how wholly the economic engine of butchering the bound Tarrasque has transformed the society of Salt in Wounds in addition to the surrounding landscape.

Upon approach to the city, the first thing a traveler will note is the sounds of the monster screaming. Its roar echoes for dozens of leagues, and the ground occasionally trembles as the creature at the core of Salt in Wounds thrashes. Most times, the God-Butchers and Marrow Miners keep the creature unconscious but even they -toiling night and day- can not extract enough to keep the creature down every hour. Drawing closer, the traveler will notice the shift in ecology and weather; the deciduous forest with its seasonal snows gives way to a humid, almost tropical...

Salt in Wounds is a campaign setting, made possible by numerous patrons and kickstarter backers with new supplements published bimonthly.

Learn more or Pre-Order at <u>www.saltinwoundssetting.com</u>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



J.M. Perkins is an action horror author, game designer, and writer of other things. By day he is an Administrator for a biotech company, by night he's asleep... mostly.

He's sold over twenty short stories and used three successful kickstarter campaigns to publish his work. Currently, J.M. Perkins is creating his Tabletop RPG Setting 'The City of Salt in Wounds.'

Other Titles by J.M. Perkins:

CHEMO: How I Learned to Kill (Novel)

The Adequate Commoner (PF)

You're Gonna Die Screaming (PF)

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You can learn more about J.M. Perkins at his website <u>www.jmperkins.com</u>

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