

Torn Asunder Critical Hit System Demo

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Introduction:

This is series of 4 demonstration encounters designed to show off Bastion Press' new critical hit system in *Torn Asunder: Critical Hits*. There is little subtlety and nuance in these encounters since they are demonstrating a new combat mechanic. The setup is quite straightforward (characters thrust into a gladiatorial stadium), and tailored to maximize the chances of having many critical hits. So set the expectations of your players properly, and you can have some quick fun in pure hack-n-slash carnage.

If they seem to enjoy the new mechanic, suggest using it for a few sessions in regular play. Unless there is a large disparity between attacker attack modifier and defender AC, these hits will happen rather rarely, so also suggest using the called shots system incorporated into these rules. Having a consistent mechanic for wounding a fighter's sword arm or having your archer blind a beast is one of the great benefits of this system.

The encounters are designed for a party of 4 PCs of approximately 7th level. Some guidelines are included in the encounters for scaling each battle for different size groups. This may also be a good time for the players to try out very different characters. Although *Torn Asunder: Critical Hits* is not tied to any single campaign setting, the encounters set up here assume it is on the world of the Forge from the *Oathbound*® campaign setting. This world is host to a mind-boggling array of races; so feel free to let your players go wild and choose any sort of creature to play. In fact, that can help demonstrate the rules for other body profiles quite effectively. With the players on the receiving end, the danger of a damaged wing will strike much closer to home!

Preparation:

You should take a few minutes before hand to look this over and read the appropriate sections of *Torn Asunder: Critical Hits*. This demo uses the Body Profiles variant presented in that book. Overall, it is rather simple.

1. If the initial attack roll is within the critical threat range, and is 5-9 higher than what was necessary to hit, a Mild Critical Effect has occurred.
2. If the initial attack roll is within the critical threat range, and is 10-14 higher than what was necessary to hit, a Moderate Critical Effect has occurred.
3. If the initial attack roll is within the critical threat range, and is 5-9 higher than what was necessary to hit, a Severe Critical Effect has occurred.
4. Determine the creature's body profile (i.e. humanoid, four-legged beast, etc.). These should be listed with the encounter information below.
5. Look up that body profile in *Torn Asunder* (page reference should be included in the encounter for quick reference), and randomly determine where the critical effect landed (i.e. head, arm, leg, wing, etc.).
6. Whatever the effect is for that severity and location takes place. For example, a player rolls to attack a

four-legged beast and the roll is within the critical threat range, and it is 12 over what was needed to hit. Looking up "Four-legged beast" in *Torn Asunder* (page 13), we see that you roll a d8 to determine where the hit landed, say Leg (C). Since it was a Moderate Critical Effect, you look on the following couple pages for Leg (Appendage) – Moderate and discover that the creature's movement rate is reduced by ½, etc.

7. Also, feel free to remind players that there is a called shots system incorporated into this critical hits variant. Encourage them to give that a try as well.

Background:

Within the Plains of Penance, about 2 days' journey south of the city along the River Hebrus is a single civilized canton called TerraKai's Tomb. The name is somewhat misleading as TerraKai is not dead, but the bloodlord over this holding. However, many of those who come to this place (willingly or not) soon become entombed. The canton is little more than a large circular gladiatorial arena with a meager number of supporting buildings. TerraKai was originally pulled into Arena, but soon moved to Penance and founded this holding.

Great riches can be won within TerraKai's Tomb, but there are great risks as well. Anyone who dies within the ring is buried where they fall. Raising the dead is illegal in TerraKai's Tomb (though the dead buried there are known to often rise as undead in the middle of a battle). The bloodsport here is very popular because it seems far deadlier here than in other areas. This is because of a minor artifact buried in the center of the stadium. Being near it increases the chances of a critical attack. The closer you are to the artifact, the larger your threat range. In the center of the stadium, directly above the artifact, every hit is in fact a critical threat.

The characters have all been corralled into fighting in the stadium today - perhaps by choice, perhaps as a form of prison sentence, or possibly because of pure bad luck. To make the danger more "real" to the spectators, TerraKai decided that everyday, one person from the audience would be randomly chosen to fight within the stadium. Today may be a character's lucky day. But whatever the reason, all of the characters have been stripped all of their items save their weapons, armor, and some magic items.

When their time comes, they are thrust into the stadium completely unaware of what awaits them.

The Stadium:

The stadium is very basic. It is a circle 180' in diameter. Buried in the center of the stadium is the key to what causes combat to be so deadly here. An artifact that increases the critical threat range of all who fight here. For every 10' closer a character gets to the center of the stadium, their critical threat range increases 2 points. So in the outer ring (80-90' from the center) critical threat ranges are normal. At 70-80', all combatants critical threat ranges increase by 2, etc. **[Note: If you wish to simplify this, you can rule that within the stadium, all attacks are critical**

hits. This is far deadlier, but you are demonstrating a critical hits system after all, so why not have plenty of critical hits?]

If two combatants are fighting from within different “rings”, then it is the attacker’s placement that determines the extent of the critical threat range. Also, to prevent flying combatants from escaping, there is a “no-fly zone” about 90’ off of the ground. Wizards are ready to dispel anything flying up there magically, and crossbowmen (rumored to be armed with a wide variety of *Arrows of Slaying*) are ready to deal with any others. So best bet for the PCs and NPCs is to keep within that range.

The Fight:

There is little need for build up to the fight. This is primarily a mechanics demonstration, and one based entirely on combat at that. Go ahead and put the characters into the ring, let them see their opponents, roll initiative, and go!

Encounter A:

For this battle, the characters face 4-6 Faustus. Use the same number of faustus as there are PCs. Faustus appear in the pdf product *Minions: Rebirth* and the print product *Minions: Fearsome Foes* by Bastion Press.

The faustus will try to pair up and flank whenever possible, seeking to disable an opponent as quickly as possible. You may want to consider having them use called shots to wound limbs of the PCs.

The faustus’ body profile is humanoid and appears on page 24 of *Torn Asunder: Critical Hits*.

Faustus CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Init +6; Spd 40; AC 22 (+6 Dex, +6 natural); Atk 2 claws +13 melee (1d8+3), and 1 bite +8 melee (2d4+1); SA: Sneak Attack (+5d6); SQ: Darkvision, Scent; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +13, Will +9; STR 16, DEX 23, CON 14, INT 10, WIS 14, CHA 8.
Skills: Climb +4, Hide +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Spot +5, Survival +6.
Feats: Multiattack, Track, Weapon Finesse (claws).

Encounter B:

For this encounter, the characters will face 2 gnarls and a yowl. There is little finesse in their attacks, and they typically come in fast and hard, and will not relent until one side or the other is dead. The gnarl and yowl are also both from the pdf product *Minions: Rebirth* and the print product *Minions: Fearsome Foes* by Bastion Press.

The gnarl body type is humanoid (located on page 24 of *Torn Asunder: Critical Hits*). The yowl pretty much has a body type of Beast, eight-legged. However, they actually have 10 legs as well as 2 wings. In this case roll a d20, with the following additions to the chart:

13	Appendage (I)	-5
14	Appendage (J)	-5
15	Wing (Right)	-5 (see Draconic body profile, pages 21-24)
16	Wing (Left)	-5
17	And above, re-roll.	

Gnarl CR 7; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 10d8+50; hp 95; Init +8; Spd 40, Climb 20; AC 23 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +10 natural); Atk 2 claws +16 melee (1d6+7), and 1 bite +14 melee (2d6+3); SA: Improved grab; SQ: None; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +7; STR 24, DEX 18, CON 20, INT 8, WIS 11, CHA 6.

Skills: Climb +18, Hide +16, Jump +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +16, Spot +8.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Yowl CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 9d10+9; hp 59; Init +9; Spd 15, fly 75 (average); AC 19 (-1 size, +5 Dex, +5 natural); Atk 2 talons +13 melee (1d4+5), and 1 bite +11 melee (2d4+2), or 2 shreds +11 melee (4d8+2) and 1 bite +11 melee (2d4+2); SA: Dusting, Snatch; SQ: None; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +3; STR 21, DEX 21, CON 13, INT 2, WIS 10, CHA 7.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +7.

Feats: Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Dusting (Ex): Three times a day, the yowl can spray a poison dust on its victims that saps at their strength. The spray has a range of 50 feet and can cover a 20-foot by 40-foot area. Anyone caught in the area comes in contact with the spores and feels their effects. Anyone affected must successfully make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or lose 1d6 temporary points of strength. Then, for each 10 minutes of the following hour, unless the poison is slowed or neutralized, another roll must be made. Failure at one of these rolls results in the loss of another 1d4 points of strength.

Snatch (Ex): If the yowl hits a Medium-size or smaller creature with its talons or mandibles, it attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. The yowl’s grapple bonus is +16. If it gets a hold, it can then fly off with the victim. It normally shreds the victim with its claws, but it may drop a PC that proves particularly troublesome.

Encounter C

For this encounter, the characters face a white dragon. Although not as intelligent as other dragons, he is still a clever opponent to deal with. He will try to remain airborne as long as possible unleashing with his breath weapon and making dive attacks. He isn't overly concerned with his spells, especially given their low power, but may use one or two if they appear more useful.

His aware of the flight limitation, and will stay well below that range unless magically forced to fly higher.

The dragon's body profile is draconic and appears on page 21 of *Torn Asunder: Critical Hits*.

Dragon, White Adult CR 9; Large Dragon (Cold); HD 20d12+80 (Dragon); hp 210; Init +0; Spd 60, Swim 60, Burrow 30, Fly, Poor 200; AC 26; Atk +25 base melee, +19 base ranged; +25/+23/+23/+23 (2d6+6, Bite; 1d8+3, 2 Claws; 1d6+3, 2 Wings; 1d8+3, Tail slap); SA: Breath weapon (Su), Frightful presence (Ex), Spells, Spell-like abilities; SQ: Damage reduction (Su), Immunity: Sleep (Ex), Immunity: Paralysis (Ex), Immunity: Cold (Ex), Blindsight (Ex), Keen senses (Ex), Resistance: Spell (Ex), Cold subtype (Ex), Icewalking (Ex); AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +12, Will +12; STR 23, DEX 10, CON 19, INT 10, WIS 11, CHA 10.

Skills:

Climb+10, Concentration+25, Escape Artist+10, Listen+21, Search+10, Spellcraft+19, Spot+21, Survival+10.

Feats:

Flyby Attack, Hover, Multiattack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability, Wingover.

Spells Known (SA Spells: Sor 5): 0 - *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*.

Encounter D:

For this encounter, the PCs will face first hand another "feature" of TerraKai's Tomb. With the great many buried dead within the stadium, undead are a common occurrence. Often, they will rise when their killers are fighting and try to exact their revenge. This is the case now.

The battle will start off with 4-6 "Graftz" fighting the characters. They are a gang of orcs that graft weapons onto their hands. (Even orcs will do anything in order to be part of the "in-crowd"). There should be an equal number of Graftz as PCs. They are easy to deal with, and depending on how aggressive the PCs are, many of the Graftz might fall in the first round of combat.

However, in the second round of combat, 8-12 wights rise from the ground (number of PCs x2). They quickly finish off any remaining Graftz and focus in on the PCs. If the players are using new characters, pick 2-3 of them as the wights' targets. Those PCs were the ones who killed the wights (originally half-elves) not very long ago. The wights will primarily focus on those PCs, but a few will engage other PCs in melee (especially spellcasters) in order to prevent them from interfering. They will primarily rely on their greater numbers to flank and overwhelm a small number of PCs.

The body types of both the Graftz and the wights are humanoid (page 24 *Torn Asunder: Critical Hits*). Note: even though wights are immune to critical hits, they can still suffer critical effects, another useful advantage of this system.

Graftz, Male Orc Ftr3; CR 3; Medium-sized Humanoids (Orc); HD 3d10; hp (average) 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+3 studded leather); Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/x3, masterwork battleaxe) or (1d8+2/19-20, masterwork longsword); SQ Weapon Graft; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +4, Jump +4, Listen +2, Search +2, Spot +2; *Feats*: Alertness, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Search), Weapon Focus (battleaxe or longsword).

Weapon Graft (see sidebar in *Episode 1*): They have a melee weapon grafted to one of their hands, making them impossible to disarm.

Possessions: Masterwork battleaxe or masterwork longsword, studded leather armor painted with gang insignia, 40gp, and 15gp jewel (varies by individual).

Wight CR 3; Medium Undead; HD 4d12 (Undead); hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30; AC 15; Atk +3 base melee, +3 base ranged; +3 (1d4+1, Slam); SA: Energy drain (Su), Create spawn (Su); SQ: Undead; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; STR 12, DEX 12, CON --, INT 11, WIS 13, CHA 15.

Skills: Climb+5, Hide+8, Listen+8, Move Silently+16, Search+7, Spot+8.

Feats: Blind-Fight.