

ARCHETYPES – FIRE ELEMENTAL CAT

GUIDELINE

The Pure Fire Archetype in my game, a member of the default Cat Team, is aggressive and powerful. Its base stats reflect that of a typical pure Fire Archetype, but its unique abilities and playstyle is where its true, fiery nature lies. High accuracy, high damage output, low movement, and moderate health/attack range create a decent base for this character.

OVERVIEW

With access to three different attacks and the ability to buff its damage and accuracy, there are many different ways for this character to deal with its foes. Through their Ascendance Levels, this Cat earns each of its attacks and buffs as the game goes on, building up towards more options and more damage. Choosing what stat to buff is crucial to this Cat. Going all out damage is possible and exciting as it turns all attacks into devastating blows. This can be great for taking out Traps, as they have no dodge to them. However, no buffs to accuracy gives the Smugglers a reasonable chance to dodge, keeping this from being unengaging and broken. Buffing accuracy gives each attack a far better chance of hitting, giving this Cat the ability to land steady blows on the Smugglers. Between these two stats, this Cat is able to mix and match to find the right combination that fits the players style, but stays true to the archetype.

As this Cat gains more points, it unlocks new attacks. Each one has its own pattern (direction/range), damage, and unique ability. Having these different stats gives each attack purpose throughout the entire game, so the first one still has its place once the final attack has been acquired. Pairing this with the passive stat bonuses gives this Cat some serious damage output, perfect for the players who love playing that archetype. Overall, the Fire Elemental Cat's incredible accuracy and damage, decent movement and dodge, and access to an array of attacks makes it an interesting and unique character. However, a lower health pool and pretty bad movement capabilities make it hard for this Cat to reach the Traps and Smugglers on its own.

HOW THIS CHARACTER CHANGED

The Fire Archetype went through a decent amount of change, solely on player feedback. Initially, it gained bonuses to accuracy and damage in addition to three attacks over the course of the game. However, over the course of many playtests, I found that it was not exciting to earn these cards. They weren't interesting (since they initially just increased range and damage) and it made the old cards obsolete. I changed this to be three separate attacks, each with their own range and damage to increase the desire to earn them all, but players still weren't impressed. They needed a reason to have to choose between each attack. The last change I made to them, which successfully increased their desire and use was adding special abilities to the cards. Doing this achieved my goal of having all three of them viable throughout the whole game.

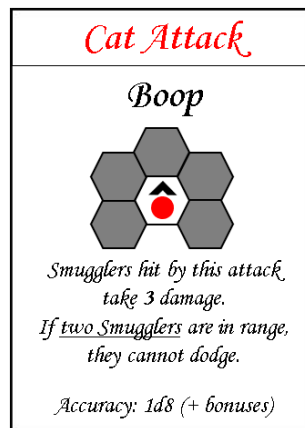
Overall, the Fire Archetype started out in a pretty crappy place. Testers didn't enjoy playing them and ultimately were unengaged with the rest of the game. Even with a pass of changes, there was no reason to have multiple attacks. With no actual choices, there were no real consequences either, so player agency was completely gone. The biggest tell of this was that in multiple playtests, the player of the Fire Elemental Cat only ever played movement cards. While there were some other problems back then as well, it was troubling to see them never use their attacks, their most important aspect. However, adding special abilities to the less desirable cards made them far more important and useful. Each attack now had a scenario it could be extra useful for, in addition to its base version. With the addition of the Vermin Tokens, the Fire Elemental Cat attacked more than ever and was engaged with the game. It played its role well in the team and worked side-by-side its counterpart to get the job done and win the game.

USER APPEAL

My game doesn't really dig into representation since half the players are animals and the other half are Smugglers in Ancient Egypt. These two elements don't leave much room for a wide-variety of characters, so I decided to leave them at that. User appeal to characters comes from the characters stats, abilities, and role rather than their outward appearance.

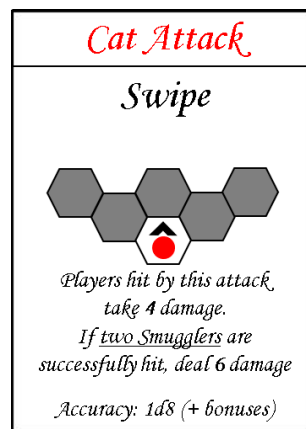
SPECIAL ABILITY – BOOP

At Ascendant Level 1, Boop is unlocked. This attack hits one space in every direction around the Cat except for behind it. Its purpose is to allow the Cat to hit multiple enemies in close proximity and if it can, it gains a special bonus. If two Smugglers are within range, they cannot dodge this attack. This can pay off when Smugglers are close together and scare them off of you, but your back is exposed and the range is short. This attack hits for three damage, just barely enough to get around the armor of both Smugglers. This makes it a reasonable starting option, but its special bonus allows it to play a hand in the late game.



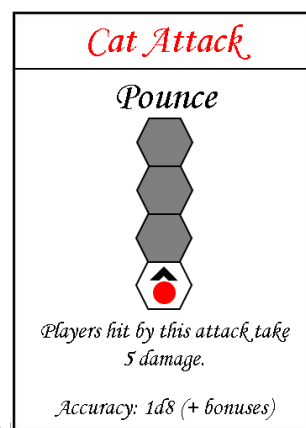
SPECIAL ABILITY – SWIPE

At level five, Swipe is unlocked. This attack hits one space in front of the Cat and two spaces to the upper right and upper left. Its purpose is to allow the Cat to hit multiple targets who are spread out and in doing so, can create some nasty damage with its bonus damage for striking two enemies at once. Its flaw is that it cannot hit behind, nor does it have much frontal range. Its bonus damage scales with damage buffs as does its base damage, making this a hard-hitter in the right scenarios. This attack hits for four damage, a sizable number when it comes to both Trap durability and Smuggler health. Its special bonus adds two to that, making this capable of almost one shotting Smugglers with full bonus damage since its special bonus is hard to trigger.



SPECIAL ABILITY – POUNCE

At the final level, level nine, Pounce is unlocked. This attack hits in a straight line in front of the Cat, three spaces long. This attack gives the Cat a lot of versatility and power, which is the point. The range allows the Cat to attack from a distance, which keeps it safe from the range of Traps and the Smuggler's abilities. This attack hits for five damage too, making it a serious powerhouse, a reward for those who ascend to maximum level. This doesn't have a special bonus to it though because it is just so good on its own. This does a bit less damage than the special bonus of Swipe, because that bonus can be hard to trigger. This card is just a good, all around attack.



ARCHETYPES – AIR ELEMENTAL CAT

GUIDELINE

The Pure Air Archetype in my game, a member of the default Cat Team, is agile and movement heavy. Its base stats reflect that of a typical pure Air Archetype, but its unique abilities and playstyle is where its true, quick and pokey nature lie. High movement capabilities, high dodge, a moderate health pool, and poor attack capabilities create a strong base.

OVERVIEW

Their core gameplay and playstyle comes from their enhanced movement and three unlockable agility cards. These cards, as with the attacks for the Fire Elemental Cat, are unlocked over the course of the game through the Ascendant Levels. These agility cards buff the Air Elemental Cat's movement capabilities, but when in range of the other Cat, these buffs can be applied to them as well. Buffs earned throughout the Ascendant Levels can go into the distance and radius categories. These allow the agility cards to be enhanced, creating a teamplay dynamic to give both Cats a better chance of winning. Overall, this Cat is able to get around the map quickly, dodge attacks, and slow down the Smugglers. However, a good dodge can only go so far. With low accuracy and poor attack options, this Cat is unable to take out Smugglers and Traps, leaving it defenseless when ganged up on.

HOW THIS CHARACTER CHANGED

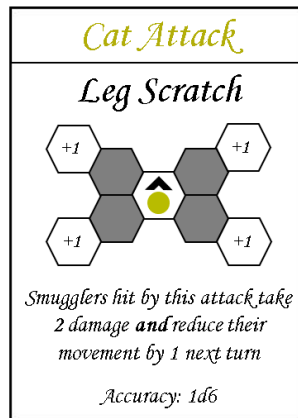
This character has been fairly similar throughout the tests because I didn't really want to change it. From the start, this character had the toolkit to buff itself and the other Cat, they just never had a reason to do that until the most recent iteration. Once that reason was there, this Cat found its purpose and its abilities were finally used throughout the game. It isn't perfect now, but it is far better than before, mainly due to the teamplay for the Cats increasing.

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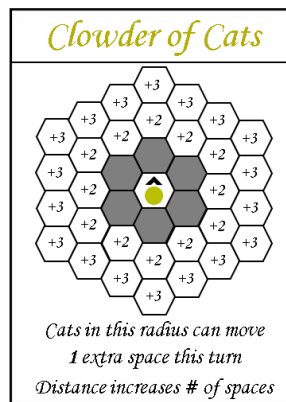
SPECIAL ABILITY – LEG SCRATCH

This is the Air Cat’s basic attack that they start with. This attack hits to the sides of the Cat, but not the front or back. The range of this can be increased with upgrades to radius as well. This attack hits for 2 damage, which isn’t much at all. This can’t even make it past the Earth Smuggler’s armor! However, it slows Smugglers movement by one next turn, which is the main reason of this attack. It can be offensive but also defensive and not much more.



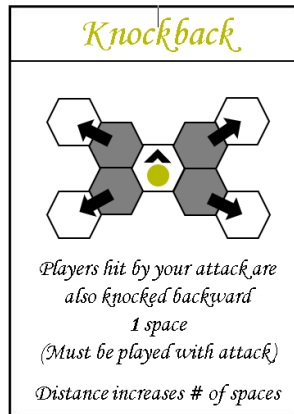
SPECIAL ABILITY – CLOWDER OF CATS

This oddly named ability gives Cats in the radius (and the Air Cat) the ability to move one extra space this turn. Both the radius and the distance of the buff can be increased. This card is probably their best. It allows them to move the other Cat with them, if they are really gunning for the artifacts or try to escape. Just a good tool for teamwork.



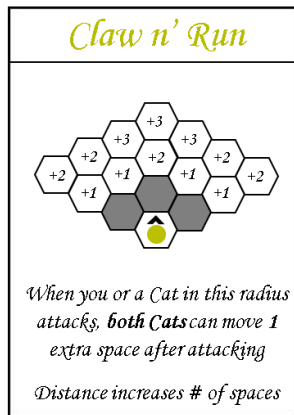
SPECIAL ABILITY – KNOCKBACK

This ability gives the Air Cat’s attack, Leg Scratch, knockback in addition to the slow and the damage. However, the cost of this is the fact that both the attack and this buff need to be played. This just makes the attack better, can be combined with the Fire Cat’s attacks, and can be used to get out of crappy situations.



SPECIAL ABILITY – CLAW N’ RUN

This ability allows affected Cats to move again after combat. This can be useful when in situations where they attack but cannot move after. This allows the pokey nature where the Cats get in, attack, and get out. Can be buffed in both radius and distance.



ARCHETYPES – EARTH/AIR ELEMENTAL CAT

GUIDELINE

This character is a Hybrid Earth/Air Archetype and a member of the Cat Team. This character has speedy actions which control the field. Its base stats reflect that of both an Air archetype and an Earth Archetype, leaning more to the Earth side. Moderate movement capabilities, high dodge, a moderate health pool, and poor range/attack capabilities create a strong base for this hybrid.

OVERVIEW

This character is all about using the terrain around it. Its Ascendant Tree gives it access to three ability cards, in addition to its starting attack card. The starting attack card has a small range, a circle around the character. It deals 2 damage and pushes players back two spaces. Over the course of the Ascendant Tree, it gains access to three Ascendant points like the rest of the Cats. These can go into either passively gaining access to special movement tiles that push players in a certain direction when hit or tiles that act as barricades which the Cats can climb, but not the Smugglers. The first ability card allows this Cat to play Pushing Tiles. The second ability card allows this Cat to play the climbing tiles. The third ability allows this Cat to gain temporary armor, which allows it to tank a hit from traps and save a dodge.

HOW THIS CHARACTER CHANGED

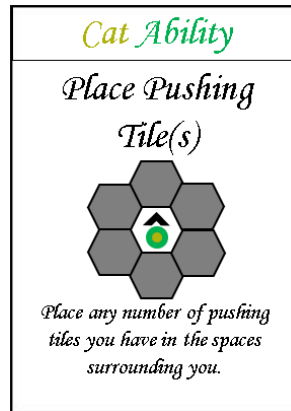
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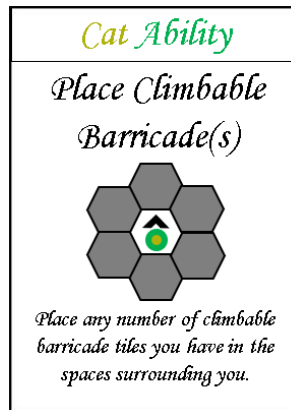
SPECIAL ABILITY – PUSHING TILES

This ability allows this Cat to earn tiles which push characters in the direction the tile is facing in. These can be combined to create paths in which you hit multiple tiles at once, allowing you to zoom across the map. These can be used both defensively and offensively, giving it that Earth/Air feel.



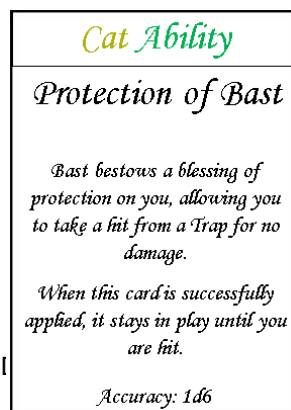
SPECIAL ABILITY – CLIMABLE BARRICADES

This ability is very similar to that of the Earth Elemental Smuggler’s barricades. The difference here is these are climbable, so Cats can move through them. These combo well with the pushing tiles as they stop Smugglers but allow Cats to pass. The movement aspect paired with the controlling of the surroundings show that Earth/Air nature.



SPECIAL ABILITY – PROTECTION OF BAST

This ability is purely Earth. It allows the Cat to take a hit from a Trap, so as not to waste the Cat’s limited dodges. This is defensive and could save the Cats from doom.



ARCHETYPES – WATER/AIR ELEMENTAL CAT

GUIDELINE

This character is a Hybrid Water/Air Archetype and a member of the Cat Team. This character has speed and the ability to buff and debuff those in need or those that get in the way. Its base stats reflect that of both an Air archetype and an Water Archetype, leaning more to the Water side. Moderate movement capabilities, moderate dodge, a moderate health pool, and moderate range/attack capabilities create a strong base for this hybrid.

OVERVIEW

This Cat is all about buffs and debuffs. Its Ascendant Tree gives it access to three ability cards, in addition to its starting attack card. The starting attack card has a small range, going straight forward and backward one space. It deals 1 damage, but also makes a Smuggler vulnerable to its own Traps for a short duration. Over the course of the Ascendant Tree, it gains access to three Ascendant points like the rest of the Cats. These can go into either buff/debuff duration or base movement increases. The first ability card stops a single Smuggler attack from hitting. Its second ability increases movement when hit by an attack. Finally, its third ability allows affected players to life steal.

HOW THIS CHARACTER CHANGED

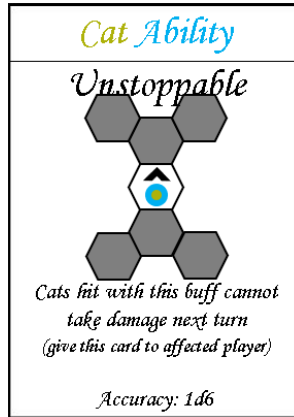
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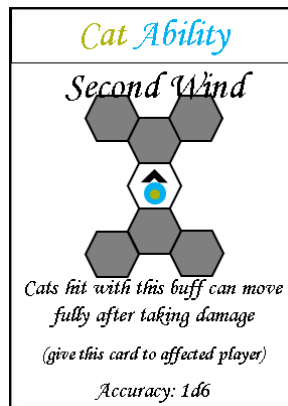
SPECIAL ABILITY – UNSTOPPABLE

This buff allows a Cat to go all in with attacks because it saves them from getting hit. Absorbing an attack can be helpful in a bunch of scenarios and paired with a variety of characters. This is a Pure Water Archetype ability.



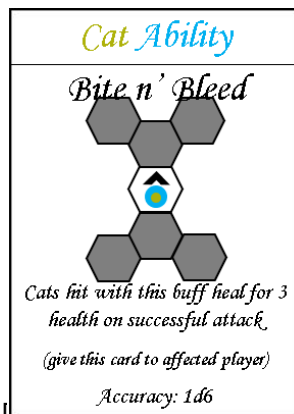
SPECIAL ABILITY – SECOND WIND

Second wind gives the affected player the ability to move fully again after taking damage. This is a hybrid ability as it buffs the character and gives them a big movement boost after taking damage. This is mainly defensive, but can be used to purposely gain more ground.



SPECIAL ABILITY – BITE N' BLEED

This is a Pure Water Archetype ability. It gives the affected Cat life steal, which can heal them slightly, but since I didn't test it, I don't have healing in my calculations. This ability can be paired nicely with Second Wind to create some interesting combinations.



ARCHETYPES – EARTH ELEMENTAL SMUGGLER

GUIDELINE

The Pure Earth Archetype, a member of the default Smuggler team, is powerful but slow. Its base stats reflect that of a typical pure earth archetype, but its unique abilities and playstyle is where it's true, slow and environment controlling nature lie. High stopping power, high health, moderate range, and poor movement create a strong base.

OVERVIEW

The Earth Elemental Smuggler stays true to the slow but powerful nature of the Earth archetype. With the ability to stun and pull targets as well as place permanent barricades, this Smuggler is able to control the field and stop the Cats. As with most of the Smugglers, this one also has the ability to buff the Traps that are placed around the map. The durability of Traps, which is their health, can be buffed by this Smuggler, increasing their longevity on the field. Overall, this Smuggler is able to control the field around it. However, with poor movement capabilities, it needs some help in getting those Cats within range of the Traps. The Earth Elemental Smuggler fits its archetype with its incredible survivability and map control, decent accuracy and range, and access to an array of terrain buffs.

HOW THIS CHARACTER CHANGED

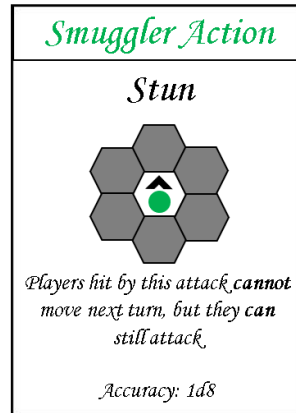
This character started out with nothing but crappy movement and a stun. It was a boring character to play because it couldn't get within range of Cats, so its stun was useless. Buffing trap health has always been a part of this character, but it used to buff armor too, which made traps too OP. This was removed really early on and armor stayed exclusive to Smugglers to increase their TTK. Once I added the pull to the game, things were a lot better... for the Water Smuggler, who had both push and pull. After a playtest where the Earth Smuggler sandwiched out with nothing to do, I move the pull over to work in tandem with the stun. I added placeable barricades as well, to give it that feel of controlling the Earth around it.

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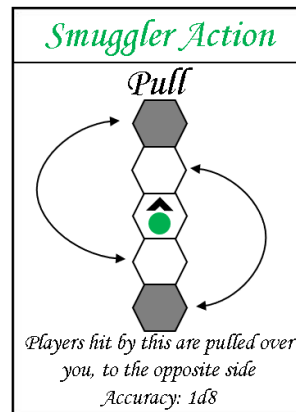
SPECIAL ABILITY – STUN

This ability allows this Smuggler to stop Cats in their tracks. It has a range of one space in every direction around the Smuggler, so a good area of effect with a low range stat. This ability pairs nicely with the others, especially the pull ability and the push of the Water Elemental Smuggler. Stunning the Cat, manipulating terrain around them, then pushing them into a trap makes all the difference.



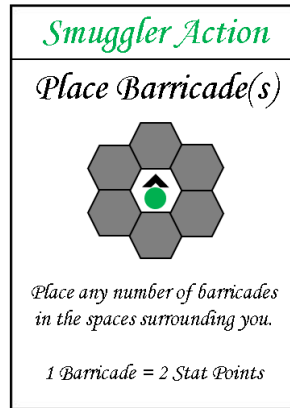
SPECIAL ABILITY – PULL

Pull is very similar to push, just does the opposite. Pulling enemies in after they have been pushed or saving the other Smuggler from certain doom makes this ability interesting. Pulling brings the enemy into range of a stun as well, which can create a deadly combo, especially when paired with the Water Smugglers push or a nearby Trap.



SPECIAL ABILITY – PLACE BARRICADE(S)

The third ability of this Smuggler allows it to earn barricades. These are small, hexagonal pieces that stay on the board indefinitely. They can block paths or stop a Cat from running away. These cannot be destroyed, so the Smuggler can really change the landscape of the board, without the need of a Trap.



ARCHETYPES – WATER ELEMENTAL SMUGGLER

GUIDELINE

The Pure Water Archetype, a member of the default Smuggler team, is a utilitarian machine. Its base stats reflect that of a typical Pure Water Archetype, but its unique abilities and playstyle is where it's true, utility heavy nature lies. Moderate movement, dodge, accuracy, and health a mediocre base.

OVERVIEW

With the ability to push and weaken targets, this Smuggler is able to stop Cats from attacking and force them into range of Traps and the Earth Smuggler's stun. As with most Smugglers, this one also has the ability to buff the Traps that are placed around the map, however this Smuggler can buff two aspects. In line with their utilitarian nature, this Smuggler can buff the range and accuracy of Traps. Accuracy makes traps more accurate while range increases the amount of spaces they cover. Overall, this Smuggler is able to buff traps to make them more lethal while also debuffing Cats, putting them in far more danger. However, even with average stats across the board, this Smuggler needs some help in getting those debuffed Cats into the buffed Traps!

HOW THIS CHARACTER CHANGED

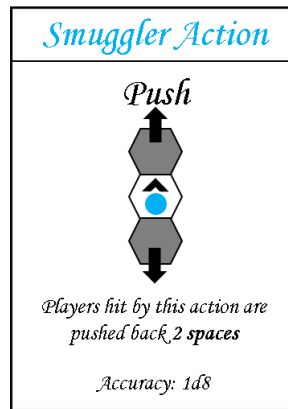
The Water Elemental Smuggler was always a buff heavy character, but it wasn't until the push and pull were added that this character really shone. With both, this character was really interesting, although there was no reason to have both since you wouldn't use them on the same turn, wasting a good combo opportunity. So, I gave it to the less-desirable Earth Elemental Smuggler. Once that happened, this character fell back into the role of being a buffer who helps out, which was the whole point of the character in the first place. Additionally, this is the only character that can buff multiple trap elements.

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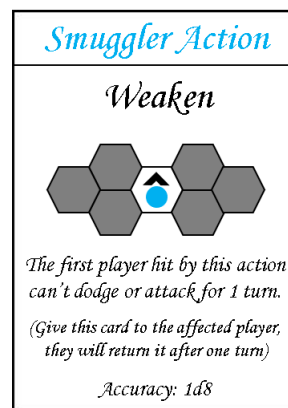
SPECIAL ABILITY – PUSH

The first ability for this Smuggler is push. This hits one space in front of and behind the Smuggler, forcing them to be near their target. However, it hits them two spaces backwards, which can be pretty significant. This can be used to push Cats into a stun, a trap, or on a friendly target to get them closer to a Cat! The versatility defines the character and its support role.



SPECIAL ABILITY – WEAKEN

The weaken ability is a debuff that is applied to Cats within one-ish spaces to the right and left. This ability is unique because it is the only debuff in the game. This allows the Water Elemental Smuggler to prevent a player from dodging and attacking. Pair this with a stun and they can do absolutely nothing. This shows the teamplay needed between the Smugglers and the support nature of this character.



SPECIAL ABILITY – BUFF MULTIPLE TRAP ELEMENTS

The third ability that is unique to this character is the ability to buff multiple elements of Traps, not just one. Range on Trap Range cards have a various amount of patterns. Some spaces in these patterns are unlocked right away, but some of these spaces which can make the Trap completely different, require points in the range stat. This Smuggler has the ability to do that, which can alter each Trap so much that it becomes something else entirely. The other buff this Smuggler can give the Traps is to accuracy. All Traps Weapons have a base accuracy to them,

but this can be drastically increased based on the buff here. This allows Traps to be more accurate which is bad news for the Cats.

ARCHETYPES – FIRE ELEMENTAL SMUGGLER

GUIDELINE

The Pure Fire Archetype, a member of the Smuggler team, is a strong and aggressive. Its base stats reflect that of a typical Pure Fire Archetype, but its unique abilities and playstyle is where it's true, fiery nature lies. High accuracy and damage, moderate movement, dodge, and health is a strong base.

OVERVIEW

This character is all about the offensive. It's buff to Traps is to their Weapon damage. In addition, this Smuggler has the longest ranged attacks of all the Smugglers, allowing it to take on Cats from a distance. Those attacks, or abilities, are unique because Smugglers cannot deal damage to the Cats. The first attack increases the amount of damage a Cat takes from the Traps. The second attack creates a pillar of fire that is left on the ground, similar to the barricades of the Earth Elemental Smuggler. However, these do deal damage when passed through, which creates another interesting dynamic for the Smugglers.

HOW THIS CHARACTER CHANGED

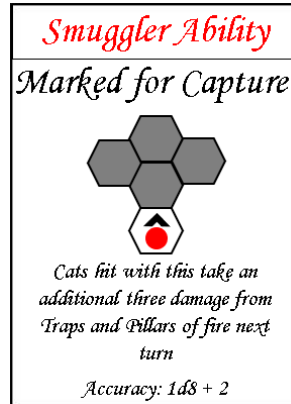
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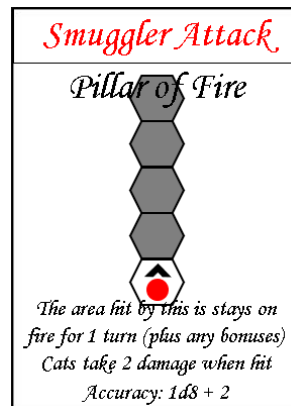
SPECIAL ABILITY – MARKED FOR CAPTURE

This ability marks the targeted Cat for Capture, meaning they take more damage from Traps. This can be a nasty combo with either increased accuracy of the Water Smugglers Traps or the increased damage from this Smuggler. This can really make the Cats think about their dodges.



SPECIAL ABILITY – PILLAR OF FIRE

This ability is unique because it can deal damage to Cats. It is similar to an Earth type ability by closing off the distance, but the damage it deals makes it more aggressive than Earth typically is.



SPECIAL ABILITY – BUFF TRAP DAMAGE

The buff that this Smuggler can apply to Traps is to their damage. This can be extremely crazy, especially when paired with the Water Smuggler's accuracy buffs and weaken effects. The extra damage can make Traps extremely lethal, which is scary for the Cats.

ARCHETYPES – AIR ELEMENTAL SMUGGLER

GUIDELINE

The Pure Air Archetype, a member of the Smuggler team, is a quick and cunning. Its base stats reflect that of a typical Pure Air Archetype, but its unique abilities and playstyle is where it's true, smart and agile nature lies. Moderate accuracy and damage, high movement and dodge, and mediocre health is a strong base.

OVERVIEW

This character is all about movement. It's buff to Traps is nonexistent. While part of this reason is because all other elements of the Traps are taken by other characters, it is not the sole reason. I want this character to be focused on moving themselves and their fellow Smuggler around the map, making it easier for them to collect bonus points and Trap Parts. So, instead of Trap buffs, this Smuggler can buff the movement of itself and fellow Smuggler. Also, it can force players to move in certain directions. It can also move through barricades. These movement focused buffs and debuffs give this Smuggler a unique place in the game and prove it is of the Air archetype.

HOW THIS CHARACTER CHANGED

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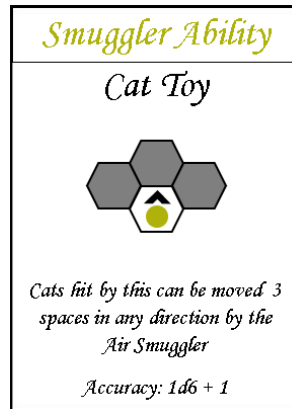
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SPECIAL ABILITY – BUFF BASE MOVEMENT

This special ability allows this Smuggler to make it and its fellow Smuggler just plain faster. With the inability to buff Trap Parts, this buff goes instead to the Smugglers themselves and feels like a Pure Air Archetype ability.

SPECIAL ABILITY – CAT TOY

This special ability allows this Smuggler to make Cats move in a certain direction. This distraction can lure them into Traps, out of the way, or stall them. Good with Fire Smuggler's pillar of fire.

**SPECIAL ABILITY – LIGHT AS A CLOUD**

This ability allows this Smuggler to bypass hard cover and barricades. This can be combined with other characters to create some fast and agile trap part collection and placement. This can happen during normal movement, so there is no card to represent it.