

# Explosive Knots

Explosive Knots are an example of sufficiently-advanced technology, at least from the point of view of primitives still mired in pre-starflight cultures. It's not really their fault; at that level of savagery many of them don't even understand the *concept* of space-time, let alone how to manipulate it with a piece of string and some manual dexterity. Calling it 'magic' at least allows some of the marginally brighter ones to conceptualize the **idea** of Explosive Knots, which is really quite admirable of the pig-ignorant brutes.

Creating an Explosive Knot is simple enough, assuming that one knows the Knot one wishes to tie. Once tied, the Knot is 'armed' until unraveled, which is done by pulling on one particular loop and then moving quickly back (or throwing it, if it is large enough). Fortunately, the larger Knots are of course heavier, which will allow the average civilized explorer to safely throw them. Savages probably **would** be able to throw an Explosive Knot farther, of course, but one does not give weapons to barbarians too foolish to properly use them.

Generally speaking, only five Knots are taught to explorers from the civilized races of the Galaxy, and all of them are strictly for survival purposes:

- Knot A sets off enough heat to light dry kindling.
- Knot B can be used as either a flare, or as a sparkler to frighten off local aborigines.
- Knot C is a standard animal killer.
- Knot D can be used in the same way that primitive tribes might use chemical explosives for mining and construction.
- Knot E is generally strong enough to smash the average savage's war machine.

Explosive Knots rated above those require special cords; and, at any rate, setting off nuclear-equivalent explosions on backward worlds is Simply Not Done. If the five Knots are insufficient for the task at hand, well, that is on the explorer for not planning things out properly beforehand. Weakness of moral fiber and all that, yes?

One last thing: *never* construct a Knot in front of a member of a primitive species. Obviously, virtually all of them lack the sophistication needed to even hope to duplicate the knot, but they still might be able to describe the process to an entity that could do so. Besides, it is unwise to be rude

towards benighted savages by reminding them *too* forcefully of their essential ignorance and backwardness.

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