

GUARDIAN TORTOISE

Overview

The Guardian Tortoise is an ancient creature native to the lands of the Dichu, revered for its tremendous strength, incredible resilience, and calm temperament. Though slow and deliberate under normal circumstances, a Guardian Tortoise is capable of surprising bursts of speed when the need arises, carrying a warrior into battle before planting itself firmly against the earth and becoming a nearly immovable living fortress.

The Dichu do not treat these ancient creatures as simple beasts of burden. A Guardian Tortoise that chooses to accompany a warrior is treated with great respect, and the bond between rider and guardian is one of trust rather than ownership.

On the battlefield, the Guardian Tortoise is a **heavily armored Companion and specialized mount**. Its natural durability allows it to withstand attacks that would overwhelm smaller creatures, while its broad shell provides a stable platform from which a Dichu Character can travel across the battlefield.

The Guardian Tortoise can fulfill several different roles depending on what its player needs. It can carry a Character rapidly into position using **Rolling Stone**, fight alongside its allies with **Crushing Bite**, or plant itself firmly in place with **Fortress Stance** and become an exceptionally difficult defensive position to remove.

Core Information

Summoning Points: 1 (Companion)

Alignment: Neutral

Affiliation: Dichu

Keywords

- Companion
- Dichu
- Guardian Tortoise
- Mount

Statistics

- **Health:** 8
- **Armor:** 3

- **Speed:** 4
- **Defense:** 7
- **Dodge:** 3
- **Willpower:** 5

Special Rules

Ancient Guardian

The Guardian Tortoise's enormous shell and naturally hardened body provide protection far beyond that of an ordinary creature.

The Guardian Tortoise's **Armor cannot be ignored or bypassed** unless an ability or effect specifically states that it bypasses **Ancient Guardian**.

The Guardian Tortoise may still lose Armor or suffer damage normally from abilities that do not ignore or bypass Armor.

Guardian Mount

The Guardian Tortoise may carry **one friendly Dichu Character** at a time.

If the Guardian Tortoise is in base contact with an eligible Character, the **Guardian Tortoise may use a Free Action** to mount that Character onto its back.

While mounted:

- The Character moves with the Guardian Tortoise whenever the Guardian Tortoise moves.
- The Guardian Tortoise and mounted Character remain **separate units**.
- The Guardian Tortoise and Character continue to activate separately.
- The mounted Character cannot perform its own Movement Action while mounted.
- The mounted Character may perform Ability Actions and Free Actions normally.
- The Guardian Tortoise and mounted Character may be targeted separately.
- Effects applied to the Guardian Tortoise do not automatically affect its rider, and effects applied to the rider do not automatically affect the Guardian Tortoise.

A mounted Character may use a **Free Action during its own activation** to dismount.

When dismounting, place the Character in base contact with the Guardian Tortoise in a legal position.

A Character that mounts the Guardian Tortoise **cannot normally dismount during the same round**.

The exception to this restriction is provided by **Rolling Stone**.

Abilities

Crushing Bite

Type: Melee (M)

Mechanic: Fate vs. Defense

Damage: Light Damage

The Guardian Tortoise lashes forward with surprising speed, crushing anything unfortunate enough to be caught between its powerful jaws.

Special Rules:

- If Crushing Bite successfully deals damage, gain **1 Fate Token**.
- Crushing Bite may generate a maximum of **1 Fate Token each round**.

Rolling Stone

Type: Special Ability, Free Action (FA)

Cost: 1 Fate Token

The Guardian Tortoise lowers its massive body and surges forward with surprising speed. Once it builds momentum, the enormous creature becomes an armored transport capable of carrying its rider rapidly across the battlefield.

Until the end of the Guardian Tortoise's activation:

- The Guardian Tortoise's **Speed becomes 6**.
- A mounted Character moves with the Guardian Tortoise normally.
- The Guardian Tortoise cannot use **Fortress Stance** during the same activation in which it uses Rolling Stone.

Rapid Dismount

If the Guardian Tortoise uses Rolling Stone during the same round that a Character mounted it, the controlling player may spend **1 additional Fate Token** when that Character activates to ignore the normal restriction preventing it from dismounting during the same round it mounted.

The Character must still use its normal **Free Action** to dismount.

After dismounting, the Character may continue its activation normally, including performing its normal Movement Action if it has not already done so.

Fortress Stance

Type: Special Ability
Cost: 2 Fate Tokens

The Guardian Tortoise plants its massive legs firmly against the ground and partially withdraws behind its enormous shell. Once settled into position, the ancient creature becomes a living fortress capable of protecting both itself and the warrior riding upon its back.

Until the beginning of the Guardian Tortoise's next activation:

- The Guardian Tortoise **cannot voluntarily move**.
- The Guardian Tortoise **cannot be moved by enemy abilities or effects**.
- The Guardian Tortoise gains **+1 Armor**.
- A Character mounted on the Guardian Tortoise gains **+1 Defense** while it remains mounted.

If a Character mounts the Guardian Tortoise after Fortress Stance has already been activated, that Character receives the +1 Defense while mounted.

If the Character dismounts, it immediately loses the +1 Defense.

The Guardian Tortoise cannot use **Rolling Stone** while Fortress Stance is active.

Tactics and Strategies

The Guardian Tortoise is an unusually versatile Companion whose role can change depending upon the needs of the Dichu player.

With **Health 8, Armor 3, and Ancient Guardian**, the Guardian Tortoise is designed to absorb punishment. Its Dodge is extremely low, making it relatively easy to hit, but successfully hitting the creature and actually getting through its defenses are two very different things.

Guardian Mount provides the Tortoise with its most unusual tactical role. A Dichu Character can ride upon its back while remaining a separate unit, allowing the Tortoise to transport Characters that may benefit from additional protection or need assistance reaching an important position.

The Guardian Tortoise's natural **Speed 4** means that simply riding it does not automatically provide superior mobility. Instead, you must decide whether spending Fate on **Rolling Stone** is worth the increased movement.

Rolling Stone transforms the Guardian Tortoise from a slow defensive creature into a **Speed 6 transport** for the remainder of its activation and could be used to take a critical point in the vortex. The optional **Rapid Dismount** creates an even more aggressive use for the Tortoise. By spending the additional Fate Token, a Character that mounted during the same round may dismount after being transported and continue its activation normally.

This can create a powerful deployment maneuver, but it requires significant investment. The player must coordinate the activations of both the Guardian Tortoise and its rider while spending Fate on both Rolling Stone and Rapid Dismount.

Crushing Bite ensures that the Guardian Tortoise remains useful once it reaches the fight. While it is not intended to be a primary damage dealer, successful attacks allow it to generate Fate that can later help power its defensive or transportation abilities.

Fortress Stance represents the opposite side of the Guardian Tortoise's battlefield role.

Rolling Stone asks:

Where do I need to go?

Fortress Stance asks:

Is this where I need to stay?

Once Fortress Stance is activated, the Guardian Tortoise sacrifices mobility for exceptional defensive stability. Its Armor increases, enemy abilities cannot move it, and a Character riding upon its back becomes more difficult to attack.

This makes the Guardian Tortoise particularly effective around important battlefield positions such as Pillars of Fate. The player can transport a Character into position with Rolling Stone and later establish Fortress Stance to create a difficult defensive position.

The Guardian Tortoise is therefore more than a durable Companion.

It is a mobile fortress