

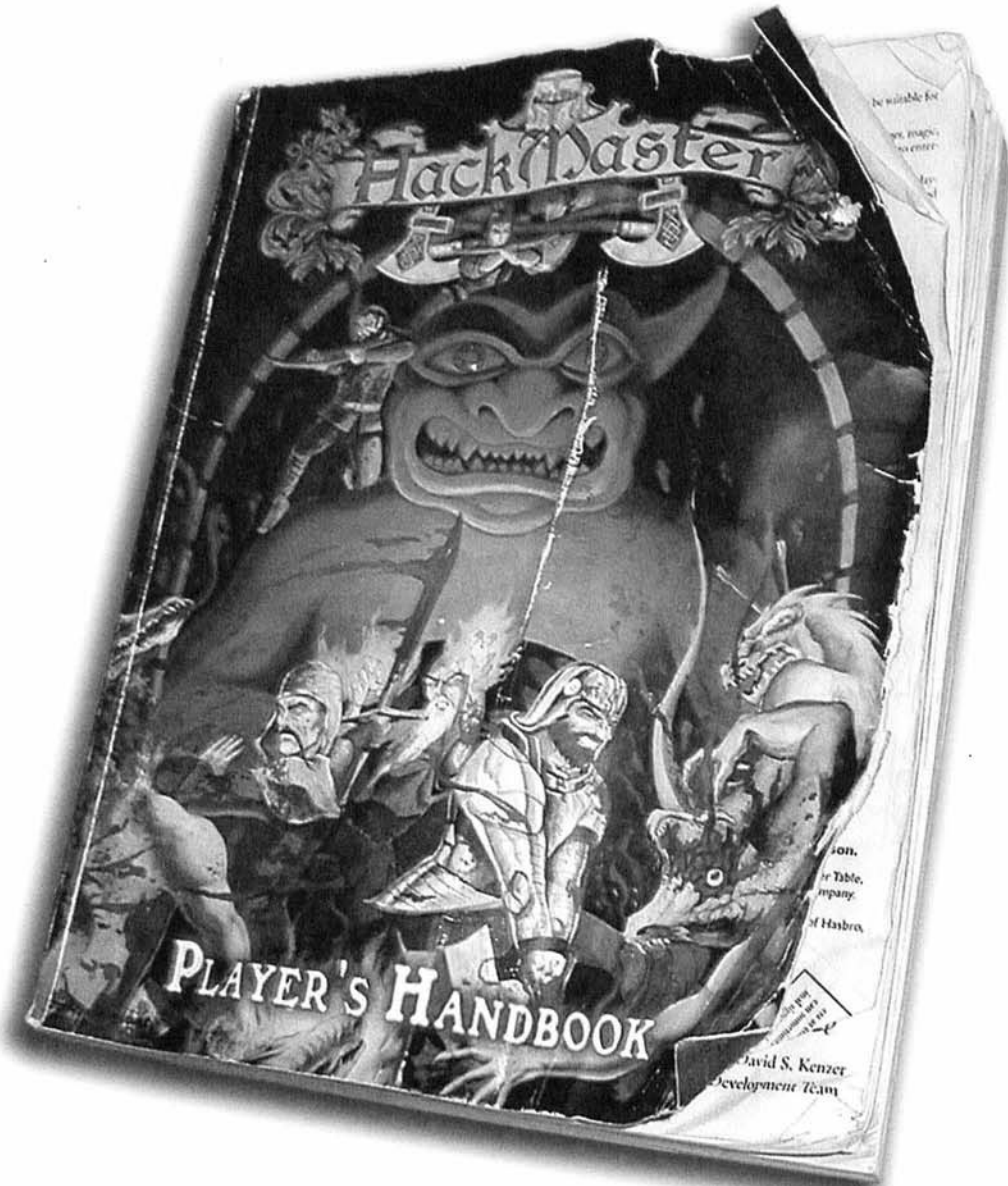
# HackMaster™

THE GRIFTMASTER'S GUIDE  
to LIFE'S WILDEST DREAMS:



THE FAST TRACK TO RICHES AND INFAMY

Sometimes you CAN  
judge a book by its cover...

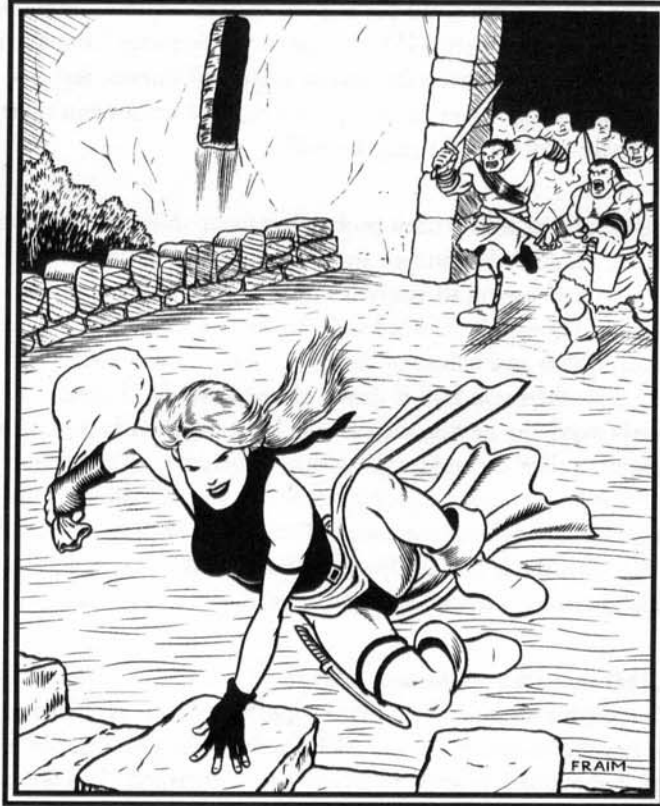


*There are some games that simply end up on the shelf — condemned to gather dust. Then there are games that are subjected to the **rigors of play** time and again.*

Last year, in a market crowded with quality fantasy role-playing games, HackMaster™ was singled out as 'Game of the Year' by the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design.

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SPECIAL REFERENCE WORK

# GRIFTMASTER'S GUIDE TO LIFE'S WILDEST DREAMS

The Fast Track to Riches and Infamy

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Welcome friend.

It seems that you are a breed apart. For not only are you a participant in HackMaster, the single greatest game ever created and pursued by mankind, but you are also either a GameMaster (GM) or you run a character from the most often overlooked and underrated class: the thief. For those of you who are GameMasters or veteran players of thieves, feel free to skip ahead a bit. But for those of you who are new to the art of stealthily lightening the purse strings of nearly all whom you meet, I will answer that nagging question forming in your novice little brain: "Exactly why should I play a thief?"

Possibly you think that poor armor choices and weak attack probability make this character choice a last resort, a better role for sidekicks than heroes. This, dear novice, couldn't be further from the truth and shows a complete lack of understanding of the HackMaster system. Right now, you are likely saying to yourself, 'but how can my lowly thief succeed with piss-poor fighting skills in a world of Hack?' 'After all,' you think to yourself, 'is not HackMaster fundamentally a game of killing things?' Well, my friend, being half right all of the time guarantees doom and failure of the most embarrassing sort, for HackMaster is not all about the killing, it is also about the taking of treasure! Yes, when you boil it down HackMaster is all about defeating your enemies and taking their stuff. Of the four classes, fighters clearly excel the best at the carnage bit, but when it comes to the other half of the job, it's thieves that rule the day. Yes, your scrawny, weak, under-armored, yellow thief is better than all the rest at one of the two most important (if not THE most important aspect) of this revered game: acquiring other folks' stuff. All the thief subclasses shine in this area, whether through pick-pocketing, grifting, con games, outright lies or a well-placed knife in the back, it's the thief that thinks cash first, violence second. In a lot of ways, this makes this class the most ideally suited for survival; why fight and risk nasty critical hits, when you can take what you want and leave your duped enemy scratching his head in foolish annoyance?

While we're at it, let me point out that the other important element of HackMaster, defeating one's enemies, can often be accomplished without splashing their blood to the four winds. Tricking the local noble out of a deed to his castle would most certainly count as a victory for the clever grifter who has the mettle to do so. Defeating a local politician in a free (though possibly slightly rigged) election would certainly smell as sweet as the morning after on a victorious battlefield. You see, in spite of all the rhetoric about killing stuff and taking things, HackMaster is still a role-playing game. And thieves come with some of the best skills, scams and methods for role-playing your way to victory in this detailed yet fantastic simulation of everyday life.

To this nose for loot, the thiefling classes add various skills unavailable to others. Who needs spells that are quickly exhausted when you can slip invisibly into the shadows whenever you'd like, silently sneak up on your foe at any time, climb the sheerest surface whenever needed, eavesdrop on your mark whenever it suits your mood, unlock any barrier at your leisure, remove the best-laid trap as the need arises, etc.? The point here is that spells are limited and granted only after hard work or piety (and who needs all that hassle?), and even then, those precious few have expensive components, time and other limitations while your skills are always at the ready. And what of healing? It's hardly necessary when you're not in combat. Ignore the aspersions of cowardice, caution is prudence and they'll mutely agree as you go through their corpses' pockets on your way back to town; there's a reason 'foolhardy' is a synonym for 'brave'.

So now you should be as excited about thieves as I am. Read on, and you will learn what massive wealth awaits your next thief player character.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'JoJo Zeke'.

JoJo Zeke  
Director of HackMaster Development  
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## REALITY CHECK, A DISCLAIMER

The fictional works collectively known as "HackMaster" are what is known as a fantasy role-playing game. Some of the material may not be suitable for children and/or young readers, which is why we strongly suggest parental discretion. It has also come to our attention that some people have no backbone for high fantasy or the concept of heroic deeds which often involve fighting evil monsters and taking on supernatural beings intent on the down fall of all things good and noble. If you are such an individual and are squeamish about such things, you may want to accept the fact that this book is not for you and read no further (but please do send in a 25¢ royalty payment for the portion you HAVE read up to this point, to do otherwise is tantamount to THEFT).

HackMaster is a game and as such, the creators have tried to imbue it with a bit of ambiance that reflects a mysterious world fraught with danger, magic and wondrous creatures. We want to emphasize the term 'game'. HackMaster has very little to do with reality. It's an escape mechanism designed to entertain players for a few hours, after which the game is shelved and everyone returns to their boring 'real lives'.

As a game, HackMaster throws players into situations (conflict) which must be resolved using wit and/or any skills, weapons or other means the players' in-game personae may possess. All of this action, of course, exists only in the mind of those playing the game. Such make-believe conflicts are resolved with equally make-believe solutions. Some conflicts are resolved peacefully through negotiation, parley and other non-violent means. Sometimes they're resolved with magic. Oft times, however, such conflicts are resolved through force (i.e., violence).

Again, all the action in HackMaster takes place in the imaginations of the players and the GameMaster. Are you getting all this?

HackMaster has nothing to do with advocating the occult, drug use, teen suicide, random acts of violence or any of the many sinister agendas which those harboring a grudge against role-playing have attempted to lay at our feet. The writers do not condone violence to solve 'real life' situations. In fact, we frown upon it. Again, this book is a work of fantasy and the reader should remind himself of that. If you cannot separate reality from fantasy you should put this book down and seek professional help (or at the very least make a photo-copy of this disclaimer and review it before and after EVERY session of HackMaster).

Just so we're clear on this — attempting to worship the demons presented in Hacklopedia will result in nothing but ridicule from your peers (our demons are 'made-up'). Likewise, with the 'magic spells' presented in HackMaster. They are fake. Made up. Not real. No matter how hard you try to cast Invisibility on yourself, it just ain't gonna to happen. If you jump off a roof because you believe your 'boots of flutter soft' will protect you and you end up shattering your hip, do not come crying to us. We will merely show you a highlighted photo copy of this disclaimer and marvel at your stupidity. Are we on the same sheet of music here? Good. 'Nuff said.

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# Introduction

There is little wonder as to why, since the dawn of the HackMaster game system, the thief has been one of the most popular character classes. He has been a happy collector of all treasure hoards great and small. With a little strategy the thief can hold his own in combat and he has access to special class skills that no other character class can reproduce. He is a very versatile, self-sufficient adventurer and the favorite choice of countless players.

With the release of the HackMaster 4th Edition game, none of that has changed. The thief is the same conniving, backstabbing hero that he always was. And in the GriftMaster's Guide to Life's Wildest Dreams, we're going to see to it that he's even more than that. In this supplement, we elaborate on what the thief group (including everyone's favorite entertainer, the bard) is to the campaign, to the setting's civilization, and to the adventuring party.

We'll be providing information that will help the GM role-play the thief's chosen guild, including, but not limited to, the kingpin or ruling council he serves, the rules and mores he follows, the scams and jobs he practices, the restrictions he suffers, the skills he possesses, and the relations he and the others of his ilk have with the rest of society.

We'll show you how to play thieves that are a little different in their focus and skills. New character classes, including the charlatan, infiltrator and yakuza bring role-playing to a new level. And with the large number of thief packages available, there are even more ways to conveniently customize your thief character for nearly any role-playing challenge.

We'll give you pointers on how to improve your role-playing of your thief character. Certainly, all thieves don't have the identical personalities (the kindly trap detector to his adventuring friends with the bloody dagger behind his back for those who get in his way), that many dim-witted players imagine them all to have. HackMaster is not about leaving the fool behind, so much as tutoring him to a level worthy of his GM and the HackMaster game. Thus, if you're one of those ranked among the ignorant, read on and be enlightened.

Further, we'll describe the sort of equipment that thieves use when pulling a job and while on adventures, including new weapons, armor, climbing tools, stealth devices, and other items.

The GriftMaster's Guide to Life's Wildest Dreams is equally useful if you're a GameMaster or a player. It adds depth to the campaign

world and the range of non-player characters (NPCs) for smacking around or shaking down the PCs. For players, the coveted GriftMaster's Guide adds detail to the abilities, backgrounds and responsibilities of player character thieves. For GMs, it allows you to keep abreast of the latest thieving technology, practices and scams.

In case you're a complete imbecile and have forgotten our typical disclaimer, in the text, for reasons of simplicity, we normally use masculine nouns and pronouns inclusively. When we say "gawdfather," "thief," or "man," we're normally also implying "gawdmother," "female thief," "woman" and possibly "babe", "cutie", "tramp" or even "ambiguously androgynous being". So if you're some kind of new-age male basher, don't freak out on us; we're obviously thinking of you and clearly sensitive enough to bother with adding this note. In fact, you ought to be honored.

In order to be able to effectively use this supplement, you must use all the rules in the Player's Handbook (PHB) and (for GMs) the GameMaster's Guide (GMG) from the HackMaster 4th Edition game. If you're not yet familiar with them, you ought to read them before continuing with this rulebook. And if you're still playing older editions, what the hell is wrong with you? Why don't you get your butt out of the Stone Age and get with the program? HackMaster 4th Edition won the freakin' Best Game of the Year award in the first year it came out, so take the advice of your peers and give it a try!

Now we know there might be some of you out there who didn't start gaming when you were six years old and might not know a great game if it hit you in the face. That's ok. We forgive you and we're here to gently nurture you into readiness for one of the best darn gaming experiences of your life. Or perhaps you come from a third world country whose game shops just haven't been able to upgrade to HackMaster 4th Edition because the military government stops the shipments and diverts the books to the army as a morale booster, making the common man suffer with outdated rules sets. That's ok, too. The GAME MUST GO ON no matter what antiquated rules system you are forced to use. So here is a special note for those of you who are using this, The GriftMaster's Guide to Life's Wildest Dreams, with your original HackMaster game instead of the new edition, through no fault of your own, of course. This supplement may mention some page numbers from the PHB and the GMG. The page numbers cited are for the newest edition, not the original; they won't be correct for those of you using the old books.

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# Chapter 1

## Character Classes

This chapter presents information on each of the thief group classes from the Player's Handbook as well as several of the other standard classes that have access to thief-like skills and abilities. We will also present some new HackMaster 4th edition character classes that are part of the thief group. Table 1A: Class Restrictions and Level Limits presents information applicable to each character class in the thief group. Unless otherwise specified in their individual class descriptions, assume the new thief subclasses must abide by the same armor and weapon restrictions as normal thieves.

### ACROBAT

Acrobats are masters of tumbling, tricks, and other physical feats. They train extensively to hone their balance, strength and agility so that they can perform dangerous feats. Many acrobats live for the adrenaline rush associated with risking life and limb, others narcissistically feed off the fear and awe of the crowd, while some start out as down and out freaks with no other way to earn their living.

Acrobats are related to bards, as both ostensibly have the profession of entertaining others. Some would say they do this to avoid "real" work. Both classes are also known to support themselves by unorthodox means when there's a slump in their regular business.

Although acrobats are good at entertaining crowds, it is not considered a noble profession. Society in general rarely admires even those few acrobats not inclined toward larcenous behavior. People who become acrobats or actors often were born into the middle class, or lower. The middle class delights most in the entertainment provided by such performers, and thus it supplies the bulk of its members. The lower classes are usually too busy struggling to survive, and may be tied to their land or profession in the manner of serfs. The nobility and wealthy people are "above" the crude entertainment of the crowd; even if they might [secretly] enjoy a circus on occasion, it would be socially impermissible to join it. Except in unusual circumstances, then, acrobats come from the middle class. A PC might be different, if a player

<b>Acrobat</b>	
<b>Ability Requirements:</b>	Str 12+, Dex 14+
<b>Prime Requisites:</b>	Strength and Dexterity
<b>Hit Dice Type:</b>	d6
<b>Allowed Races:</b>	Any but half-ogre or pixie fairy
<b>Allowed Alignments:</b>	Any but lawful good
<b>Building Point Bonus:</b>	8 BP

wishes, but he will need a plausible explanation of the situation. Because of the social disgrace, it is likely that any entertainer from a wealthy or noble class will be disowned.

But then, many people who seek employment as entertainers don't leave their previous lives out of choice. A noble-born acrobat was probably disowned (or worse) before he took up that profession, and might even have assumed a new identity. Acrobats from other backgrounds may have histories, too – things to hide and enemies to fear. One thing they like about the circus is that nobody removes anyone else's mask or make-up.

The circus may also have its own history. Run by a competent swindler, a circus may make piles of money from gullible spectators. It could bring in even more by having its own cutpurses, who are permitted to work the crowds so long as they give a percentage of their take to the circus management. Overpriced concessions are also a profit center.

Acrobats are almost always wanderers. A small town quickly tires of its entertainers (and has limited supplies of coin), so they must move on to the next, where their tricks and displays may be considered new and impressive.

To become an acrobat, a character needs a minimum Strength of 12 and a minimum Dexterity of 14. This sort of thief leaves off extensive training related to manual dexterity and begins a regimen of physical exercise in order to build coordination, muscle tone, and balance. Acrobats with Strength and Dexterity scores of 16 or better add a 10% bonus to earned experience. In addition, acrobats gain jumping bonuses based on high Strength scores as shown in Table 1C: Jumping Adjustments for Strength. Maximum height and distance restrictions defined later still apply. Furthermore, acrobats gain bonuses to certain class abilities based on high Dexterity scores as shown in Table 1D: Class Ability Adjustments for Dexterity.

This program of gymnastics precludes the acrobat from progressing in some traditional thief skills (pick pockets, open locks, read languages, find traps, and remove traps), though he gains unique benefits in other areas. The primary functions of an acrobat are jumping, pole vaulting, tightrope walking, and tumbling. In addition to these functions, the acrobat can climb walls, move silently, hide in shadows and detect noise as a normal thief. Acrobats do not gain the ability to read magical scrolls. Most count themselves fortunate to be able to recognize their own name on the circus placards.

**Table 1A: Class Restrictions and Level Limits**

Class	Dwarf	Elf	Gnome	Gnomeling	Half-elf	Halfing	Half-orc	Half-ogre	Pixie Fairy	Human
Acrobat	5	10	8	8	U	8	5	no	no	U
Assassin	12	10	8	U	11	10 <sup>2</sup>	U	7	no	U
Bard	no	no	no	no	U	no	no	no	no	U
Brigand	8	12	10	15	15	11	U	14	9	U
Charlatan	no	no	no	no	20	no	no	no	no	U
Infiltrator	12	15	15	15	15	15	8	no	12	U
Minstrel	3	12	5	5	U	5	no	no	6	U
Ninja	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	U
Pirate	8	11	10	8	13	9	9	7	13	U
Thief, Standard	U	12	13	U	U	U	8	7	15	U
Yakuza	no	no	no	no	U	no	no	no	no	U

1) Increase the numbers on the chart by 2 for demi-humans that are not multi-classed. 2) Thugs only.



**Table 1B: Acrobat Progression Table**

Experience Points	Experience Level	6-sided Hit Dice	Level Title
0-1,250	1	20+1d6 *	Apprentice Tumbler
1,251-2,500	2	2	Tumbler
2,501-5,000	3	3	Gymnast
5,001-10,000	4	4	Tightrope Walker
10,001-20,000	5	5	Rope Dancer
20,001-45,000	6	6	Burglar-Acrobat
45,001-75,000	7	7	Second-Story Thief
75,001-125,000	8	8	Cat Burglar
125,001-180,000	9	9	Master Cat Burglar
180,001-250,000	10	10**	Acrobat
250,001-500,000	11	10+2	Master Acrobat
500,001-750,000	12	10+4	Master Acrobat (12th)
750,001-1,000,000	13	10+6	Funambulist
1,000,001-1,250,000	14	10+8	Equilibrist
1,250,001-1,500,000	15	10+10	Aerialist
1,500,001-1,750,000	16	10+12	Skywalker
1,750,001-2,000,000	17	10+14	Lieutenant Acrobat
2,000,001-2,250,000	18	10+16	Captain Acrobat
2,250,001-2,500,000	19	10+18	Major Acrobat
2,500,001-2,750,000	20***	10+20	Acrobat Boss

\* At first level, acrobats receive 20 hit points + 1d6. This twenty point "kicker" is received at first level only.  
 \*\* Acrobats gain 2 hit points per level after the 10th.  
 \*\*\* 250,000 experience points per level for each additional level beyond the 20th.

An acrobat may be of nearly any race, just as regular thieves can be (though half-ogres never practice the art due to the tremendous penalties for their bulk and pixie fairies can fly, which renders many acrobat abilities superfluous). Acrobats may use any weapon normally permitted to thieves. Note, however, that they usually prefer a lighter weapon such as a dagger.

The acrobat's remarkable skill even allows him to reduce thief special ability penalties associated with wearing light armor. He deducts only 5 x (10-AC) of armor if in padded leather, leather armor, studded leather, or elven chain mail (minimum of zero). He suffers the standard penalty for any other type of armor.

Acrobats gain the jumping, tightrope walking, and tumbling skills at 50% each and at no BP cost (though they can spend more to improve them normally). They gain the skills juggling, riding (land-based) and rope use at no initial cost. They also gain the acrobatic skill suite talent for free at first level (regardless of race). At first level, acrobats gain base scores in climb walls, move silently, hide in shadows and detect noise (adjusted for race, Dexterity and armor as with normal thieves). Racial adjustments for the various tumbling skills (attack, evasion and falling) are defined in Table 1E: Acrobat Tumbling Maneuvers Racial Adjustments. The acrobat may also add 60 discretionary points to these class skills (including jumping, tightrope walking and tumbling) as a normal thief. Every level thereafter, he may add 35 discretionary points to these skills as a normal thief. Note that he may also raise jumping, tightrope walking and tumbling skill mastery levels through normal schooling.

**Jumping**

Acrobats are especially adept at jumping. They gain several advantages over lesser characters when employing their unique skill. The acrobat uses the coordinated strength and discipline of his continual practice to outdo his non-acrobat counterparts.

The acrobat gains a bonus to the distance of his broad jump depending on his level (in addition to the normal 2d6+level (in feet). Table 1F: Acrobat Function Table indicates this bonus. These are not cumulative. The listed bonus applies to the character's final total at that level. He still needs a 20-

**TABLE 1C: Jumping Adjustments for Strength**

Strength Score	High Jump	Standing Broad Jump	Running Broad Jump
16	-	-	1 1/2'
17	+ 1/4'	+ 1/4'	+ 1'
18	+ 1/2'	+ 1/2'	+ 2'
19	+ 1/2'	+ 3/4'	+ 3'
20	+ 3/4'	+ 1'	+ 4'
21	+ 3/4'	+ 1 1/4'	+ 5'
22	+ 1'	+ 1 1/2'	+ 6'
23	+ 1'	+ 1 3/4'	+ 7'
24	+ 1 1/4'	+ 2'	+ 8'
25	+ 1 1/4'	+ 2 1/4'	+ 9'

Note: All bonuses given above are used to adjust Table 1F: Acrobat Function Table detailed herein. The adjustments for Strength are added to acrobat's jump attempt but still subject to maximum height and distance restrictions.

**Table 1D: Class Ability Adjustments for Dexterity**

Dexterity Score	TW	PV	TA	TE	TF
16	+5%	-	+1%	+2%	-
17	+10%	+5%	+2%	+3%	-
18	+15%	+10%	+3%	+5%	+5'
19	+20%	+15%	+4%	+8%	+10'
20	+25%	+20%	+5%	+11%	+15'
21	+30%	+25%	+6%	+14%	+20'
22	+35%	+30%	+7%	+17%	+25'
23	+40%	+35%	+8%	+20%	+30'
24	+45%	+40%	+9%	+23%	+35'
25	+50%	+45%	+10%	+26%	+40'

Abbreviations: TW = Tightrope Walking, PV = Pole Vaulting, TA= Tumbling (attack), TE= Tumbling (evasion), TF = Tumbling (falling)

**Table 1E: Acrobat Tumbling Maneuvers Racial Adjustments**

Race	Attack	Evasion	Falling
Dwarf	+10%	+5%	-10%
Elf	-5%	+5%	+5%
Gnome/Gnomeling	+5%	+5%	-
Half-elf	+5%	-	-
Halfling	-5%	+10%	+5%
Half-orc	-	-	+10%

foot running start to achieve maximum distance. Standing broad jump distance is calculated as 1d6+half the acrobat's experience level (in feet). He also gains 1 inch per level to his vertical leap, with maximum height increasing as indicated on Table 1F: Acrobat Function Table. Vertical leap for a skilled jumper with a 20-foot running start is normally 1d3+half level (in feet), as stated in the PHB, while vertical leap from standing is normally 1d3 feet. Acrobats have the unique ability to extend these distances.

The high jumper clears the obstacle in a near-horizontal position but lands on his feet. If some elevated step, or a series of such steps, enables the character to maintain rapid motion, he can then high jump from such an elevated step just as if doing so normally. Alternately, the jumper can opt to land atop some higher surface. This surface must be no more than 4 feet above the level from which he makes the jump, or 2 feet under the maximum height

**Table 1F: Acrobat Function Table**

Character Level	Running Broad Jump	Standing Broad Jump	Maximum Distance	High Jump	Maximum Jump Height	Maximum Falling Distance
1	+1'	+1/4'	6 x height	+1"	1.5 x char. height	10'
2	+1 1/2'	+1/4'	6 x height	+2"		10'
3	+1 1/2'	+1/2'	6 x height	+3"		10'
4	+2'	+1/2'	6 x height	+4"	1.75 x char. height	10'
5	+2'	+1/2'	6 x height	+5"		10'
6	+2'	+1'	6 1/2 x height	+6"		20'
7	+2 1/2'	+1'	6 1/2 x height	+7"		20'
8	+2 1/2'	+1'	6 1/2 x height	+8"		20'
9	+2 1/2'	+1'	6 1/2 x height	+9"	2 x char. height	20'
10	+3'	+1 1/2'	6 1/2 x height	+10"		20'
11	+3'	+1 1/2'	6 1/2 x height	+11"		30'
12	+3'	+1 1/2'	6 1/2 x height	+12"		30'
13	+3 1/2'	+1 1/2'	6 1/2 x height	+13"		30'
14	+3 1/2'	+1 1/2'	7 x height	+14"	2.25 x char. height	30'
15	+3 1/2'	+1 1/2'	7 x height	+15"		30'
16	+4'	+1 1/2'	7 x height	+16"		40'
17	+4'	+1 1/2'	7 x height	+17"		40'
18	+4'	+2'	7 x height	+18"		40'
19	+4'	+2'	7 x height	+19"	2.5 x char. height	40'
20	+5'	+2'	8 x height	+20"		50'

for normal high jumping, whichever is the greater. In either case, the acrobat lands on his feet in 1 segment.

A jump of any sort requires but a single segment to accomplish. A running broad jump requires a run of at least 20 feet. In standing jumps, the acrobat can leap forward (or to the side) up to the maximum distance, or backward up to half the maximum distance, in order to attack or avoid being in attack range, if the GM agrees this is possible. Much like Boots of Springing and Striding, this ability allows the acrobat character to fight in melee and jump away from his opponents without suffering the normal penalties for retreating from melee. However, if his attacker has sufficient movement available, he may choose to pursue. Also, during the round the acrobat wishes to leap away from melee, he may not move before or after his attack(s) (other than the leap).

The acrobat can even use his leaping ability to jump over opponents, assuming there is sufficient overhead clearance and landing room and he can clear the height of the creature he is trying to jump over. However, when leaping over hostile creatures, he is subject to attack as if he had run away from combat with that creature (even if he was not engaged with it in the first place). Keep this in mind Jesse Owens wanna-bes.

All successful jumps assume the character lands on his feet. If the character wishes to leap in an extended position, he can achieve 2 feet of additional distance, but then lands prone and takes 2 full segments to get back on his feet (much faster than non-acrobat characters, who take 9 segments to stand from a prone position). If he fails this check, it takes the acrobat 7 segments to stand from prone (as opposed to 9). He can attempt a 3-foot extension, but this has a 25% chance of failure and a 3-segment period of recovery. A 4-foot extension has a 50% chance of failure and a 4-segment recovery time; an extension of 5 feet has a 75% chance of failure and a 5-segment recovery period. Failing to achieve an extended distance still results in a prone landing and applicable recovery period based on the distance attempted.

When attempting any kind of jump, an acrobat must make a jump skill check. If he succeeds he is able to execute the jump according to the rules defined above. If he fails the attempt, he still makes a jump, just not to the extent he was intending. In this case, determine the relative degree of failure by taking the ratio of the number needed for the skill check to be successful to the number actually rolled for the skill check. Multiply this number by the distance that the jumper would have obtained had he been successful in his skill check. For example, Rasputin, a first level human acrobat, tries to leap over a two-foot high embankment to take cover from a volley of arrows launched by a screaming horde of Orc Slavers hot on his trail. Since the bar-

rier is less than 1.5 times his height he should have no trouble clearing it but let's see how the skill rolls pan out. Rasputin's jumping skill is 25%. Because the height of the jump is reasonable and the ground is clean and firm, the GM rules that this is an average level of difficulty. Per page 71 of the GMG, this gives Rasputin a +20% modifier to his skill mastery (for a "sophisticated" skill such as jumping). However, there happens to be ominous thunder going on in the background and the Orc Slavers are making a violent outburst of noise. The two factors combine to give Rasputin a -15% penalty to his skill mastery (see the GMG page 70). Thus, his modifiers come to a net +5%. Combining this with his base skill mastery we get 30%. Rasputin rolls his skill check and he gets 90%, clearly not a Bruce Jenner gold-medal-winning performance. To see how just how bad he failed we divide 30% by 90% to come up with a .33 multiplier on his degree of failure. For a running high jump, Rasputin can jump 1d3+half level (in feet) plus an inch for being a first level acrobat. He rolls a 2 on his 1d3 for a total of 2' + 1/2' + 1" = 2' 7". We multiply this by his degree of failure (.33) and get a height of about 10 1/4". Thus, because he failed his skill roll so badly he trips on the barrier and falls prone. Had he succeeded in his skill check or failed with only a 38% on his skill roll, he would have cleared the obstacle.

### Pole Vaulting

Pole vaulting includes any jumping which employs a leverage device to assist the individual in gaining height from momentum; i.e. a teeter board or springboard might serve as well or better than a pole in some cases. A successful pole vault requires at least a 30-foot running start and a sturdy pole of at least 4 feet greater height than the vaulter. It also requires a small hole, rock or other rigid barrier against which the vaulter can brace his pole when he makes the jump. The vaulter drops the pole behind him when he finishes. The vaulter can achieve a maximum height of half his own height plus the height of the pole and a maximum distance of 1.75 times the height of the pole. He can also land on his feet atop a surface of one-half foot less height than the maximum height of the pole vault if so desired – assuming such a surface exists. Otherwise, the vaulter lands and tumbles, recovering his feet and balance in 3 segments.

Finding a sturdy pole that is 20 feet or longer becomes increasingly difficult without the aid of magic. Furthermore, such long poles are difficult for the vaulter to use effectively. Thus, for every inch of pole length beyond 20 feet, apply a 3% penalty to the skill roll. Treat a failed pole vaulting attempt as a failed jump attempt, as described previously.

### Tightrope Walking

In addition to the normal benefits of the tightrope walking skill, the acrobat gains several advantages when walking a tightrope. As with any tightrope walker, the acrobat can ascend up a rope or beam of about a 45-degree angle (maximum) or descend at a slightly steeper angle, if upright and with hands generally free. He can move at up to half his normal move (6" for humans, 3" for halflings and dwarves, etc.) and must make a skill check every 60 feet. Unlike non-acrobats, he suffers only a -25% penalty to this ability for a very narrow surface (such as an actual rope) and -10% for a surface two to six inches wide. He need not even check his skill under normal conditions if he can balance on a beam one foot wide or wider. As the acrobat gains experi-

ence, this width decreases by one inch at every third level, so that he need not check at 11 inches or wider at 3rd level, 10 inches at 6th level, 9 inches at 9th level, 8 inches at 12th level, 7 inches at 15th level, 6 inches at 18th level, and 5 inches at 21st level and every level thereafter. He accomplishes this by superior balance, perfect muscle coordination, and superb reflexes.

Moderate winds decrease the chance of success by 10%, strong winds by 20%. Strong gale-force winds impose a -30% penalty and when a check becomes necessary there is always a 5% chance of failure, regardless of other modifiers. In storm conditions, the penalty remains only -30%, but the minimum chance of failure increases to 20%. Not even an acrobat can walk a tightrope in a hurricane although some particularly daft ones have tried. In non-windy conditions, a balance pole increases the chance of success by 10%. Failure to perform successfully means that the character falls to the area below, taking falling damage accordingly.

**Encumbrance**

The acrobat can bear no more than the encumbrances indicated in Table 1G: Acrobat Encumbrance Limits at any time if he is to be able to perform the functions of his class (except for tightrope walking, as outlined in the next paragraph). Thus, acrobats typically carry loot in an easily dropped hand-held container so as to be able to vault, jump, or tumble. No backpack can ever be worn while using any acrobat skills other than tightrope walking. Climbing functions of the acrobat assume that he bears only the stipulated weights/encumbrances.

The term Additional (carried) Encumbrance in Table 1G refers strictly to the weight borne when tightrope walking. Since this movement is very slow anyway, such great encumbrance is of no matter as long as it is evenly distributed and properly balanced. Thus, a 14th level acrobat can carry an additional burden of 100 pounds in encumbrance in tightrope walking, but he cannot expect to otherwise move freely during vaulting, jumping, or tumbling routines, or even to climb walls with an extra 100-pound load. At 22nd level, the acrobat could carry a 400-pound person (perhaps a man in plate mail)-on his back, but only so long as that individual did not move and throw the acrobat off balance. Individuals with a fear of heights are not good candidates for such portage. Note that the acrobat can never exceed encumbrance limits imposed by his own Strength, nor can he walk tightropes at all if he exceeds the encumbrance limits in Table 1G.

Note: The term Body-associated Encumbrance refers strictly to the clothing, accessories, armor, and weapons of the character. Consider the following example of this for a typical character:

Clothing (partial only due to armor)	2 lbs.
Leather armor	15
Boots, soft	2
Belt	.5
Belt pouch, large	1 lb.
Belt pouch, small	.5
Cloak, good cloth	3
Dagger and scabbard	1
Short sword and scabbard	3
TOTAL	28
Balance for additional equipment and/or loot	(no more than) 17
GRAND TOTAL	45 lbs. (maximum for 6th level)

**TUMBLING**

Tumbling includes all sorts of gymnastic skills - tumbles, rolls, hops, hand-stands, and so on. Aside from the standard uses of the skill, the acrobat uses these routines in attack, defensive evasion, and in jumping/falling. The acrobat special abilities are described below.

**TABLE 1G: Acrobat Encumbrance Limits**

Experience Level	Body-associated wt./encumbrance	Additional (carried) wt./encumbrance
1	40	1
2	41	2
3	42	5
4	43	7
5	44	10
6	45	12
7	46	20
8	47	30
9	48	40
10	49	50
11	50	60
12	51	70
13	52	85
14	53	100
15	54	156
16	55	200
17	57	225
18	60	250
19	62.5	270
20	65	300
21	67.5	330
22	70	360

**Tumbling (attack)**

A tumbling attack is a special combat skill available only to acrobats. When fighting unarmed (punching or wrestling), an acrobat may make a tumbling (attack) skill check. Divide the acrobat's skill mastery in tumbling (attack) by 10 and round down. This is the number of additional segments a tumbling attack requires. If he fails the check, the attack is a normal attack. If he succeeds, add the same number as the initiative penalty as a bonus to hit for that tumbling attack. Resolve the results of the attack per the standard punching or wrestling rules. The acrobat cannot make a tumbling attack while armed.

**Tumbling (evasion)**

Instead of attacking, a cowardly acrobat may attempt to evade ranged or melee attacks directed at him. If an acrobat has not attacked in a combat round and the GM indicates an attack on the acrobat is a hit, the acrobat may attempt to evade. He rolls a skill check with a +2% penalty to the roll for every point above the number needed to hit on the attack roll. A successful tumble (evasion) check indicates that the attack misses. A failed skill check indicates that the attack hits as normal. Successful or not, evasion uses up the acrobat's next attack for that round.

For example, an Orc Slaver needs an 11 to hit Rasputin. He hits with a 13. Rasputin can attempt to evade the attack, but he adds 4 to his tumbling roll, making it more difficult than a straight skill check. With a 30% tumbling mastery, he rolls a 28. Add 4 to make that a 32. Uh-oh, Rasputin's got problems - he could not evade the blow.

**Tumbling (falling)**

Falling percentage indicates the chance for the acrobat to take no damage from a fall of the distance indicated on Table 1F: Acrobat Function Table. If damage is taken, the converse of the percentage to avoid damage is used as a multiplier on the falling damage rolled. In the case of an acrobat with a skill mastery of 25% in tumbling (falling), he only takes 75% of normal (1d6) damage for a 10 foot fall (rounded down) if he fails his tumbling (falling) skill check).

## GUILD AFFILIATION

Acrobats may be a part of the normal thieves' guild – they generally don't have the numbers to set up their own organizations, though they do consider themselves elite within an existing guild. They can be leaders in such organizations, since they are treated the same as regular thieves by their brethren, though most acrobats prefer to be "close to the action" rather than administrators.

## ASSASSIN

In any reasonably corrupt culture, there are those who wish to eliminate someone whose very existence stands in the way of their plans. To serve them there are assassins: trained killers whose services are for hire. Now one might think that the idea of an assassin, a hired killer, could easily be divorced from any particular character class. Indeed, a character can be any class and still be hired to kill someone. But why trust your fortunes to an amateur when you can have an efficient, discreet killer? Characters of other classes still can (and often will) act in the role of assassins, but keep in mind, there are professionals out there, so it would be best not to let down one's guard.

Thugs and bounty hunters may be seen as close relatives of the assassin. It is important, then, to understand their differences and what makes their roles distinct. Thugs typically serve as crude muscle, using bullying and intimidation. If a thug does kill someone, he likely makes a big deal of it to frighten others who might cross his bosses. The assassin, on the other hand, thrives on anonymity, on surprise – on his victim not even realizing that he is a target until it is much too late. A clever assassin might never be seen by his victim. Here, too, the assassin differs from the bounty hunter, for the hunter often seeks his quarry alive, and typically must bring back his prey (or the corpse thereof) as proof of his project's success.

Player character assassins work best when the GM has a story line in mind specifically for them. A PC might be the agent of some monarch, paid to arrange the discreet demise of those who threaten the kingdom's safety.



While this certainly is not good (in the moral sense), the other characters might regard it as a justifiable evil because of the deaths the action prevents by obstructing rebellion, invasion, or whatever.

Many professional assassins (members of the assassin class) belong to guilds. The guilds use them to serve their own needs, and act as an intermediary for outsiders who wish to take out a contract on someone's life.

Because of their specialization in the art of killing, assassins, unlike thieves, are permitted the use of any weapon. An assassin often selects one favored weapon, such as a garrote or serrated dagger (or even something exotic, such as blowgun darts with an exotic insect poison from a distant jungle), to use for his killings. If the assassin achieves infamy, the marks of this weapon may become known as a sort of "calling card."

Assassinations carried out by PC assassins are described on page 102 of the GMG. The intent of this paragraph is to define rules for a somewhat longer term mission in which an assassin is sent to kill a specific person. However, there are times when an assassin may want to perform a spontaneous assassination, especially if there are any witnesses that get in the way of one of his missions. He can do this spontaneous assassination if he successfully performs a backstab on his victim. In that case the assassin and the victim should roll for surprise. If the victim is not surprised, the attack is a normal backstab. If the victim is surprised, the assassin may roll on Table 8W: Assassination Success in the GMG to determine if the victim will be instantly killed on a successful hit. If the surprise lasts for more than one segment the assassin may make more than one attack (assuming he is close enough) but subsequent attacks are not assassination attempts. He only gets one chance to roll on Table 8W.

Recommended skills and talents for assassins include alchemy, begging (general), begging (panhandling), botany, disguise, glean information, herbalism, identify poison, observation, secret persona, slip away into shadows, tracking, trailing, ventriloquism, voice mimicry, acute alertness and forgettable face. Assassins favor the class skills of move silently, hide in shadows, detect noise and climb walls. They also make occasional use of the pick pockets skill – not for lifting purses, but for similarly delicate tasks, such as slipping poison unnoticed into a target's goblet of wine.

Note that the assassin's disguise ability is superior to this generally available skill. Assassins learn secret techniques so effective that the burden is on observers to uncover them; they need not check to see if they have properly prepared a disguise unless it's something completely ridiculous like a dwarf posing as a teenager girl. As if!

As described in the Player's Handbook, when an assassin character reaches third level, he gains the thieving abilities of a first level thief. He gains 65 discretionary points to distribute amongst the thieving abilities, adhering to the same restrictions as a first level thief.

Assassins are familiar with and make frequent use of a wide array of deadly devices. See Chapter 6: Tools of the Trade for details on all sorts of special items, such as blade boots, death knives and folding bows. Equipment to help their preferred skills, such as clawed shoes and gloves and camouflaged clothing, is also popular.

If the GM permits, poison is also available and frequently used by the assassin. The assassin may purchase poison (expensive and usually illegal), or attempt to manufacture or extract it himself (which can be dangerous as well; see page 37 of the GMG for more information). Also note that assassins gain a +25% bonus to the identify poison skill.

While assassins often serve as spies for the unscrupulous, they need not have the spy package to accomplish their missions. When assassins spy to set up an assassination, they need only watch a target to observe his movements. This can be considerably less involved than a traditional spy mission, but it can also involve convoluted covert actions (such as getting inside a compound to get a look at an important figure) just to plan the assassination.

## BARBARIAN

Barbarians have certain class abilities that are similar to those practiced by many thieves. Mentioning this to your average barbarian, however, is likely to result in a black eye – or worse! Two of these are climb cliffs and trees and

hide in natural surroundings. When a barbarian wears elven chain, chain mail, studded leather, ring mail or padded armor, he uses the same penalties to these skills as those defined for thieves on page 68 of the Player's Handbook. However, since barbarians may wear any armor, it is necessary to define the penalties associated with using these class skills for other armor types because you just know that "Conan" is going to try to use them despite wearing field plate. These are defined in Table 1H: Thief Skill Armor Adjustments. Unless otherwise noted, standard metal armor is made of steel. Using thief-like barbarian skills is not possible in gold or silver armor. Bronze armor has the same modifiers as standard steel armor (except for bronze plate mail, of course).

**BARD**

Bards have certain class abilities that are similar to those practiced by many thieves, namely climb walls, detect noise and pick pockets. According to page 41 of the Player's Handbook, bards can wear any armor up to chain mail. This includes leather, padded, ring mail, studded leather, scale mail, hide, brigandine, chain mail and elven chain mail. Bards may also wear any of these armor types crafted from unusual metals as described on page 205 of the GameMaster's Guide.

When a bard wears standard elven chain, chain mail, studded leather, ring mail or padded armor, he uses the same penalties to these skills as those defined for thieves on page 68 of the Player's Handbook. However, since bards may wear additional armor types, it is necessary to define the penalties associated with using these class skills for other armor types. These are defined in Table 1H: Thief Skill Armor Adjustments. Unless otherwise noted, standard metal armor is made of steel. Using thief-like bard skills is not possible in gold or silver armor. Bronze armor have the same modifiers as standard steel armor (except for bronze plate mail). Also, see the discussion of magic armor under the ranger section in this chapter.

Because of a bard's penchant to be a jack-of-all-trades, he is able to learn skills in ways that most characters of other classes simply cannot. First, bards may learn advanced skills without having prior training in the prerequisite skills. This limits them in how far they can advance the skill, but it does allow them to "get to the good stuff" that much faster than other classes. A bard may not advance his skill mastery in a skill beyond his skill mastery in the prerequisite skill until the prerequisite reaches 51%.

Furthermore, a bard may attempt to use any skill untrained. The mastery level is equal to the relevant ability. Bards suffer no ill effects - other than embarrassment - from failed attempts at using untrained skills.

**Influence Reactions:** As described in the PHB, when performing for an audience, the bard can attempt to alter the mood of his listeners. The nature of the performance depends on the bard's primary medium. Most often he uses music, but he could use rhythmic chanting, acrobatic displays,

**Table 1H: Thief Skill Armor Adjustments**

Armor	Weight <sup>1</sup> (lbs.)	Climb	Hide in			
			Natural Surroundings	Detect Noise	Pick Pockets	Move Silently
Banded mail	35B	-60%	-53%	-30%	-50%	-60%
Banded mail, adamantite	26B	-44%	-39%	-30%	-50%	-60%
Banded mail, elven steel	18B	-31%	-27%	-30%	-50%	-60%
Banded mail, fine steel	32B	-54%	-48%	-30%	-50%	-60%
Banded mail, iron <sup>2</sup>	44B	-75%	-66%	-37%	-60%	-75%
Banded mail, mithril	23B	-39%	-35%	-30%	-50%	-60%
Brigandine	35F	-20%	-12%	-25%	-20%	-40%
Brigandine, adamantite	26F	-15%	-10%	-19%	-15%	-30%
Brigandine, elven steel	18F	-10%	-7%	-13%	-10%	-20%
Brigandine, fine steel	32F	-18%	-11%	-23%	-18%	-37%
Brigandine, iron <sup>2</sup>	44F	-25%	-15%	-31%	-25%	-50%
Brigandine, mithril	23F	-13%	-7%	-16%	-13%	-26%
Chainmail	40F	-25%	-15%	-10%	-25%	-15%
Chainmail, adamantite	30F	-22%	-15%	-8%	-19%	-11%
Chainmail, elven steel	20F	-18%	-13%	-5%	-13%	-8%
Chainmail, fine steel	36F	-25%	-15%	-9%	-23%	-14%
Chainmail, iron <sup>2</sup>	50F	-35%	-25%	-13%	-31%	-19%
Chainmail, mithril	27F	-21%	-15%	-7%	-17%	-10%
Chainmail, heavy	50B	-85%	-75%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Chainmail, heavy, adamantine	38B	-65%	-57%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Chainmail, heavy, elven steel	25B	-43%	-38%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Chainmail, heavy, fine steel	45B	-77%	-68%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Chainmail, heavy, iron <sup>2</sup>	63B	-107%	-95%	-63%	-95%	-100%
Chainmail, heavy, mithril	34B	-58%	-51%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Chainmail, elven	20N	-20%	-10%	-5%	-20%	-10%
Chainmail, elven, adamantite	15N	-15%	-8%	-5%	-15%	-8%
Chainmail, elven, elven steel	10N	-10%	-5%	-5%	-10%	-5%
Chainmail, elven, fine steel	18N	-18%	-9%	-5%	-18%	-9%
Chainmail, elven, iron <sup>2</sup>	25N	-25%	-13%	-5%	-25%	-13%
Chainmail, elven, mithril	13N	-13%	-7%	-5%	-13%	-7%
Field plate	60B	-102%	-90%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Field plate, adamantite	45B	-77%	-68%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Field plate, elven steel	30B	-51%	-45%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Field plate, fine steel	54B	-92%	-81%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Field plate, iron <sup>2</sup>	75B	-128%	-113%	-88%	-119%	-119%
Field plate, mithril	40B	-68%	-60%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Full plate	70B	-119%	-105%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Full plate, adamantite	53B	-90%	-80%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Full plate, elven steel	35B	-60%	-53%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Full plate, fine steel	63B	-107%	-95%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Full plate, iron <sup>2</sup>	88B	-150%	-132%	-88%	-119%	-119%
Full plate, mithril	47B	-80%	-71%	-70%	-95%	-95%
Hide	35F	-25%	-15%	-10%	-60%	-30%
Leather	15N	-	-	-	-	-
No Armor	-	+10%	+5	-	+5%	+10%
Padded	10F	-25%	-15%	-5%	-25%	-15%
Plate mail	50B	-85%	-75%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Plate mail, adamantite	38B	-65%	-57%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Plate mail, bronze	45B	-77%	-68%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Plate mail, elven steel	25B	-43%	-38%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Plate mail, fine steel	45B	-77%	-68%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Plate mail, iron <sup>2</sup>	63B	-107%	-95%	-70%	-94%	-100%
Plate mail, mithril	34B	-58%	-51%	-50%	-75%	-80%
Ring mail	30F	-25%	-15%	-5%	-25%	-15%
Ring mail, adamantite	23F	-18%	-10%	-4%	-19%	-11%
Ring mail, elven steel	15F	-13%	-8%	-3%	-13%	-8%
Ring mail, fine steel	27F	-22%	-12%	-5%	-23%	-14%

(continued next page)

Armor	Weight (lbs.)	Climb	Hide in	Detect	Pick	Move
			Natural Surroundings			
Ring mail, iron <sup>2</sup>	38F	-30%	-20%	-7%	-31%	-19%
Ring mail, mithril	20F	-15%	-10%	-3%	-17%	-10%
Scale mail	40F	-25%	-15%	-30%	-50%	-60%
Scale mail, adamantite	30F	-22%	-15%	-23%	-38%	-45%
Scale mail, elven steel	20F	-18%	-13%	-15%	-25%	-30%
Scale mail, fine steel	36F	-25%	-15%	-27%	-45%	-54%
Scale mail, iron <sup>2</sup>	50F	-35%	-25%	-38%	-63%	-75%
Scale mail, mithril	27F	-21%	-15%	-20%	-34%	-40%
Splint mail	40B	-68%	-60%	-25%	-40%	-40%
Splint mail, adamantite	30B	-51%	-45%	-25%	-40%	-40%
Splint mail, elven steel	20B	-34%	-30%	-25%	-40%	-40%
Splint mail, fine steel	36B	-61%	-54%	-25%	-40%	-40%
Splint mail, iron <sup>2</sup>	50B	-85%	-75%	-31%	-50%	-50%
Splint mail, mithril	27B	-46%	-41%	-25%	-40%	-40%
Studded leather	25F	-25%	-15%	-5%	-25%	-15%
Studded leather, adamantite	19F	-15%	-10%	-4%	-19%	-11%
Studded leather, elven steel	13F	-10%	-5%	-3%	-13%	-8%
Studded leather, fine steel	23F	-18%	-10%	-5%	-23%	-14%
Studded leather, iron <sup>2</sup>	31F	-26%	-16%	-6%	-31%	-19%
Studded leather, mithril	17F	-14%	-9%	-3%	-17%	-10%

1) B = Bulky, F= Fairly bulky, N = Non-bulky  
 2) Including dwarven iron.

heroic stories dramatically told, jokes, or whatever might evoke some emotions in a crowd.

The audience must not be attacking or preparing for an immediate attack. The player determines the intended effect on the listeners/viewers. He may want to make the audience friendlier or more hostile, for instance. The bard must spend 1d10 rounds performing, during which he must stick to one

medium (songs, for instance), and cannot attack, cast spells, etc. A saving throw or damage dealt to him during this performance ruins his chance to deliberately influence reactions.

NPCs in the audience capable of observing the performance (regardless of whether or not they are paying attention) must roll the saving throw versus paralysis. For small groups, roll individual saving throws. For large groups, the GM may split the audience into groups of ten or so and roll a separate saving throw for each group using an average number of hit dice.

**Countersong:** A powerful use of story, song, or tale when voiced by a bard is that of countersong. This intricate art allows him to cancel the effects of hostile sound, whether it be songs, chants, wails, or even commands and suggestions from magical spells. The exertion prevents a bard from making more than one countersong attempt per encounter or battle.

Countersinging does not prevent hostile spell casters from reading scrolls, using magical item command words, or casting spells (with or without verbal components). Countersinging does prevent all other hostile sounds from functioning, including spell effects that require the caster to speak (e.g. Command, Quest, Suggestion, Tongues, etc.).

**Jack-of-All:** One of the most useful abilities of the bard is his knowledge of famous magical items, combined with his uncanny knack for figuring out how they function. To perform legend lore, the bard must scrutinize the item closely. This does not necessarily require actually handling the item (particularly in the case of very ominous-looking and presumably evil artifacts!), but it must be fully visible to the bard.

Scrutiny takes 1d10 minutes, after which the player makes a percentile roll is made. The bard has a 5% chance per level of knowing something about the item. The bard draws upon history, rumors, and clues based on the item's construction to gain this information. The GM, of course, determines the exact nature of the information the bard gains. Typical information revealed includes the item's history, maker, name, and other less technical aspects. Information such as the number of pluses, exact command words, etc., are rarely learned unless the player is observant ("It's a very, very, very good short sword..."). Still, exacting specific information as desired is best left to spells, such as Identify, Commune, Limited Wish, and so on.

The GM uses Table II: Jack-of-All Results to determine what information the bard gains (unless he has something else specific in mind). If the bard player rolls a number equal to or less than the bard's level, he gains some very



**Table II: Jack-of-All Results**

3d6 Roll	Information Gained
3	How many charges/uses left (approximately)
4	Whether item is intelligent
5	Whether items is cursed/evil
6	(Approximate) value on the open market
7	Name of item
8	Famous past owners
9	Age of item
10	Race of crafter
11	Location/area of its make
12	Who crafted it
13	Alignment of owners
14	Who can use it
15	General effects
16	How to activate it
17	Item type (as per GMG)
18	Let player read GMG entry

detailed information. Furthermore, if the roll is 1, the bard should know almost everything there is to know about the item.

To get to this table, the bard must first succeed with the percentile roll for knowing jack-of-all. If this roll succeeds, the GM (or the player if he's been good) rolls on the following table once per level of the bard. Do not re-roll results that come up more than once; the bard simply knows a lot about this aspect of the item. After rolling, the GM might need some time to reference his notes for background and history of the item. Players are advised to be patient while the GM consults his 'reference' material (i.e. makes it up on the fly.)

**BRIGAND**

The brigand is either a fighter with larceny in his heart or a roguish type who relies more on muscle and ambush tactics than sneaking about. Brigands often dwell near roads or paths frequently traveled by merchants (but not soldiers). While they don't actually fear a good fight, they simply find it easier to attack where the money is and where it's easier to get at richer, weaker targets. Brigands prefer to gain the advantage early and decisively.

Many brigands find the idea of fighting to the death foolish. They simply want to rob their victims; they'll kill 'em if they cause too much trouble, but it's not a specific goal. If a typical brigand is clearly going to lose a fight, he'll run. Better to live to raid another day, he figures. (When a brigand does flee combat, any temporal Honor penalties are reduced by 1 point; at best he suffers no Honor hit at all.) None of this endears brigands to their fighting counterparts (especially those wussified spellcasters who are counting on their living body shield), much less to the citizenry in general, but they have their own priorities.

A brigand is not born, but made. Circumstances may have conspired to force him into the lifestyle, he may have run away and fallen in with the "wrong" crowd, or he may have been captured as a youngster by other brigands who saw his potential. Part fighter, part thief, part ranger, each brigand has his own tale to tell. Best to take it with a grain of salt, though, as guile and intimidation are cornerstones of the brigand's approach to life.

A brigand needs to be knowledgeable in a variety of areas just to survive, and he must excel at one or a few if he is to thrive. While most prefer to avoid a direct confrontation by using wits, threats and good planning, it can be very dangerous to assume that a brigand can't or won't fight.

While he prefers lighter armors such as chain mail or studded leather, the brigand can wear any type of armor, even plate mail or other bulky armor (he just can't run away as fast). He can gain proficiency in any small or medium-sized weapon, as well as the blowgun and quarterstaff.

**Know Terrain:** A brigand can size up terrain for the purposes of hit and run tactics with amazing acumen. Given 1d6 days to explore, he can locate several (1d4+1 or more) prime ambush locations and nearby hiding areas (1d4). Typically he does this along well-traveled caravan routes. With his knowledge and inspiration, he can improve the morale of his followers by 25%. For every experience level of the brigand, he can affect one follower.

For each level, he can retain this information for one area (barring drastic changes to the landscape, such as forest fires). Thus, a high level brigand can work quite efficiently out of many different locations.

**Stealth:** Brigands need stealth to set up their ambushes. Aside from simply knowing the terrain, they must be able to move without being heard and hide from potential victims. They improve their ability to move silently and hide in shadows as they advance in level. As they frequently need to climb cliff sides, buildings, or trees in order to set up or escape from an attack, the

<b>Brigand</b>
<b>Ability Requirements:</b> Str 12+, Dex 12+
<b>Prime Requisites:</b> None
<b>Hit Dice Type:</b> d8
<b>Allowed Races:</b> Any
<b>Allowed Alignments:</b> Any but lawful good or lawful neutral
<b>Building Point Bonus:</b> 12 BP

**Table 1J: Brigand Skills**

Brigand Skill	Base Score
Hide in Shadows	5%
Move Silently	5%
Climb Walls	15%

**Table 1K: Brigand Progression Table**

Experience Points	Experience Level	8-sided Hit Dice	Level Title
0-2,250	1	20+1d8*	Ne'er-do-well
2,251-4,500	2	2	Hooligan
4,501-9,000	3	3	Mugger
9,001-18,000	4	4	Robber
18,001-36,000	5	5	Bandit
36,001-72,000	6	6	Outlaw
72,001-140,000	7	7	Highwayman
140,000-210,000	8	8	Desperado
210,001-300,000	9	9	Marauder
300,001-500,000	10	10	Brigand
500,001-750,000	11	10+2**	Greater Brigand
750,001-1,000,000	12	10+4	Master Brigand
1,000,001-1,300,000	13	10+6	Master Brigand (13th level)
1,300,001-1,600,000	14	10+8	Master Brigand (14th level)
1,600,001-1,900,000	15	10+10	Brigand Lord
1,900,001-2,200,000	16	10+12	Brigand Lord (16th level)
2,200,001-2,500,000	17	10+14	Bandit Prince
2,500,001-2,800,000	18	10+16	Bandit King
2,800,001-3,100,000	19	10+18	Brigand King
3,100,001-3,400,000***	20	10+20	Brigand High King

\* At first level brigands receive 20 hit points +1d8. This twenty point "kicker" is received at first level only.  
 \*\* Brigands receive 2 hit points per level after the 11th.  
 \*\*\* 300,000 experience points per level for each additional level above the 20th.

brigand has some ability to climb difficult surfaces, as well. See Table 1J; Brigand Skills for the brigand's base score in each of these abilities. At 1st level, the brigand gets 20 points to distribute among them, with not more than 15 to a single skill. Each level thereafter, he gets 14 points to distribute among his three thief skills as he sees fit, with no more than 7 going to a single skill. (Some might say 14 is a peculiar number for each advancement, but those people lack the hard-edged dedication of a team of researchers that determined the value. Just be glad we didn't round down or put it at 13.571428). Apply racial and Dexterity modifiers to these abilities as defined in the Player's Handbook (see PHB Tables 3NN and 3OO). Adjust these skills according to the type of armor worn as defined in Table 1H: Thief Skill Armor Adjustments. Consider hide in shadows equivalent to hide in natural surroundings for this table (brigands can attempt to hide anywhere there's cover). Also, see the discussion of magic armor under the ranger section in this chapter.

**Sneak Attack:** Brigands can inflict extra damage when attacking foes in melee from behind. This ability functions in a manner similar to the thief's backstab, except that the brigand only gains a total of +3 to-hit from behind (+2 for the standard bonus, +1 for his class). Usually, they try to use this ability with surprise. A brigand can only use his sneak attack on Small or Man-sized bipedal creatures with the same general shape as a human (elves, halflings, gnomes, Orcs and Kobolds, for example, but not Gnolls or Ogres). Each extra die inflicts 1d6-1 points of damage (regardless of the type of weapon used).

Level 1-5	+1 die
Level 6-10	+2 dice
Level 11-15	+3 dice
Level 16-20	+4 dice
Level 21+	+5 dice

Also note that using the sneak attack ability, as with the backstab ability, generally requires one to move silently or hide in shadows. Thus, this maneuver is difficult to execute in bulky armor.

**Combat Training:** A brigand gains multiple attacks as a ranger of the same level.

**Fast Movement:** A brigand can run at +3" beyond his normal speed. This only applies when running, as his base speed when walking or traveling long distances is unaffected. Note that he is still subject to the normal fatigue rules.

**Contacts:** Brigands have a habit of acquiring loot that may be easily traced to its original owner. Some buyers do not really care, but they would still prefer not to deal directly with brigands. Thus, a brigand character is 50% likely to begin play with a known NPC fence, someone who will buy a famous work of art (for example) without inquiring too closely as to how it was acquired. Many of these fences realize that such items must be gained through nefarious means, but they do not ever want to hear it explicitly stated for legal reasons (and in hopes of dodging Detect Lie spells).

Because of this, and the fact that few brigands can shop around for a better deal, such fences get even bigger discounts than their city-dwelling counterparts. Typical payouts for such recognizable treasure amounts to some 5-30% of its actual value. For generic loot less obviously connected to specific individuals, noble Houses, or museums, the brigand may get 10-40% of the value. Filing off serial numbers may, at the discretion of the GM, yield a slightly larger payout.

**Reputation and Fear:** Brigands can become well known in their areas of operation. A brigand who achieves Fame of 75 or greater has acquired a significant reputation. Any character who has heard of the brigand character must roll twice on the reaction chart. The brigand chooses which reaction applies. (He can appear fierce and dangerous or as an honest civilian at odds with "the pigs" who have singled him out for harassment.)

**Intimidation:** At 1st level, a brigand gains the feign toughness skill at 50% and the intimidation skill at no initial cost (1 roll of the mastery die and 1 roll of the Honor Die). He can spend further Building Points normally to improve these skills.

If he takes one other social interaction skill before attaining 5th level, he gains a superior intimidation when he reaches 5th level. (If the brigand does not acquire a third social interaction skill until later, he must advance to the next experience level before gaining this superior intimidation.) On a successful Wisdom check, he can alter his Charisma or Comeliness with respect to one viewer by his experience level minus 4. He can lower his effective Charisma or Comeliness, if he wishes to scare or incite someone, or raise it if he wishes to appear more amiable. This means that a 7th level brigand with a 13 Charisma can, on a successful Wisdom check, appear to one person to have either a 10 or 16 Charisma (brigand's choice). All reaction rolls and adjustments for interaction between the brigand and that person function as if he truly had the adjusted score.

This ability applies only to one person and only for the duration of one encounter (maximum of one day). If the affected individual leaves and returns an hour later, the GM must decide based on the situation if the adjusted score still applies. Usually, so long as the brigand does nothing to break his charade (acting abnormally, being mean to the person – unless that's the point, etc.), he continues to function with his seemingly altered score (to that individual). If the brigand has since used the ability on someone else, it no longer functions on the first person.

Note that the brigand can not use this ability on races different from his own. Well, he can *try* but it won't be effective.

Though not specifically excluded from guilds, brigands work in rural areas between towns and thus rarely actually join guilds. Few brigand leaders can tolerate such remote direction, anyway, and if a guild sends an ultimatum, the brigands can simply find a new area to plunder (or refuse and fight back – on their own terrain).

## CHARLATAN

The charlatan is part liar, part faker, and part learning savant. Unlike the other classes, he possesses no special powers or talents, save the ability to copy what he sees. The charlatan is a true jack of all trades, able to learn anything another teaches him. Whimsical storytellers often claim that life is the charlatan's teacher, but do not listen to such pansies. The charlatan learns from

everyone around him, putting in hours of study when the rest of the party is drinking themselves into unconsciousness.

The charlatan, more than any other class, must rely on his Intelligence and his Charisma to get him through life. Where the fighter has his sword, the magic-user his spells, the cleric his faith, and the thief his skills, the charlatan truly has only his wit and his charm. Charlatans travel the world learning from those around them, and to do so they must be quick on the uptake and pleasant to have around. Most charlatans have to lie and deceive in order to join an adventuring party, for inexperienced heroes often believe that a fellow with no discernable abilities is a liability and the charlatan may quickly find a torch thrust into his hand with the instruction, "Hold it high so we can see."

However, if he can find a suitably supportive environment, the charlatan can flourish. Using his skills and abilities to complement those of his fellows, a smart charlatan is indispensable. He can heal the injured, fight with the warriors, function as a face man for the party, and provide occasional spell support. As a last resort, he can even fake an ability he doesn't have.

The shortsighted player might turn his nose up at such a class, but do not fall prey to this foolishness. The charlatan possesses the most powerful of all powers: the ability to become whatever he chooses. What other HackMaster class has such freedom? None, I tell you. But this is not a power to be wielded lightly. Let this serve as a warning to inexperienced or weaker players: the charlatan is only as much as you make him. In the hands of a lesser individual, he is doomed to certain failure and an early death. Do not be that player!

Intelligence and Charisma are the prime requisites for the charlatan. A charlatan with scores of 16 or higher in both Intelligence and Charisma receives a 10% bonus to all experience points he earns. This is in addition to any bonus from high Honor or talents.

### Learning Abilities

The charlatan is the world's greatest imitator. By watching and studying others, he can learn to mimic exactly the actions or skills of another person. Charlatans have honed this ability to such an incredible level that they are able to

### Charlatan

#### Ability Requirements:

Int 12+, Cha 13+

#### Prime Requisites:

Intelligence and Charisma

#### Hit Dice Type:

d6

#### Allowed Races:

Human, half-elf

#### Allowed Alignments:

Any but lawful good

#### Building Point Bonus:

15 BP

**Table 1L: Charlatan Progression Table†**

Experience 6-sided			
Experience Points	Level	Hit Dice	Level Title
0-2,500	1	20+1d6*	Quack
2,501-5,000	2	2	Quacksalver
5,001-10,000	3	3	Empiric
10,001-22,500	4	4	Pretender
22,501-40,000	5	5	Imposter
40,001-60,000	6	6	Mountebank
60,001-90,000	7	7	Humbug
90,001-135,000	8	8	Fourflusher
135,001-250,000	9	9	Cozener
250,001-375,000	10	10	Charlatan (10th level)
375,001-750,000	11	10+2**	Charlatan (11th level)
750,001-1,125,000	12	10+4	Charlatan (12th level)
1,125,001-1,500,000	13	10+6	Charlatan (13th level)
1,500,001-1,875,000	14	10+8	Charlatan (14th level)
1,875,001-2,250,000	15	10+10	Master Charlatan
2,250,001-2,625,000	16	10+12	Master Charlatan (16th level)
2,625,001-3,000,000	17	10+14	Master Charlatan (17th level)
3,000,001-3,375,000	18	10+16	Master Charlatan (18th level)
3,375,001-3,750,000	19	10+18	Master Charlatan (19th level)
3,750,001-4,125,000***	20	10+20	Master Charlatan (20th level)

\* At first level charlatans receive 20 hit points + 1d6. This twenty point "kicker" is received at first level only.

\*\* Charlatans receive 2 hit points per level after the 10th.

\*\*\* 375,000 experience points per level for each additional level above the 20th.



**Table 1M: Charlatan Available Powers By Level**

Starting Abilities	Cost	Original Class	Copy Modifier	Level 2 (continued)	Cost	O.C.	C.M.
Attacks as a magic-user	-	magic-user	-	Cast magic-user spells <sup>3a</sup>	250	magic-user	-20%/S.L.
Makes saving throws as a fighter	-	fighter	-	Countersong	380	bard	+0%
Standard weapon proficiencies as a magic-user (PHB p 101)	-	magic-user	-	Fame multiplied by 1.25	400	knight errant	-
Weapons and armor allowed of a fighter	-	fighter	-	Gain +1 to-hit with the lance	400	cavalier	+0%
As a thief for all other abilities (EP awards, Honor, etc.)	-	thief	-	Gain a species enemy	400	ranger	-5%
				Gain the backstab ability <sup>a</sup>	210	thief	+0%
				Gain the spy ability	400	assassin	+10%
				Hide in natural surroundings <sup>b</sup>	200	barbarian	+5%
				Increased move <sup>a</sup>	220	monk	+5%
				Inspire with performance <sup>a</sup>	200	bard	+5%
				Intimidating display	380	monk	+0%
				Make saving throws as a cleric	400	cleric	+0%
				Make saving throws as a magic-user	400	magic-user	+0%
				Targets of spells of one school cast by you receive -1 to their saving throw	400	magic-user specialist	-5%
				Standard weapon proficiencies as a fighter (PHB p 101)	430	fighter	-
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>O.C.</b>	<b>C.M.</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>O.C.</b>	<b>C.M.</b>
Attack using the cleric attack matrix	250	cleric	+10%	Attack as 1 level higher <sup>4</sup>	650	cavalier	-10%
Attack using the thief attack matrix	200	thief	+20%	Attack at 5 levels higher with lance <sup>5</sup>	600	cavalier	-5%
Bonus to AC equal to level when parrying <sup>a</sup>	100	cavalier	+0%	Attacks per round as a specialized fighter	600	fighter	+0%
Cast magic-user cantrips <sup>a</sup>	80	magic-user	-15%	Bonus damage with a lance	600	cavalier	-5%
Climb cliffs and trees <sup>a</sup>	80	barbarian	+0%	Chain casting <sup>6</sup>	600	battle mage	+10%
Decreased chance of surprise <sup>a</sup>	100	monk	+0%	Command undead <sup>a</sup>	300	cleric	+0%
Disguise oneself	200	assassin	+0%	Detect illusion <sup>a</sup>	320	barbarian	+0%
Dodge or deflect missiles	250	monk	-5%	Double Armor Class bonus from Dexterity	700	barbarian	-15%
Evaluate a mount	200	cavalier	+0%	Fall up to 10 feet without taking damage	600	monk	+0%
Fight with two weapons without penalty <sup>1</sup>	200	ranger	-5%	Gain 15% on your chance to learn new spells from one school	620	magic-user specialist	+10%
Faster movement (+3")	150	barbarian	+0%	Heal wounds <sup>7a</sup>	350	paladin	-5%
Gain +1 to saving throws against one school of spells	200	magic-user specialist	+0%	Identify plants, animals and pure water with perfect accuracy	600	druid	+5%
Gain access to cleric group only skills, talents and special class proficiencies	180	cleric	-	Identify purpose of a magic item	600	bard	+0%
Gain access to fighter group only skills, talents and special class proficiencies	250	fighter	-	Inflict wounds <sup>8a</sup>	350	dark knight	-5%
Gain access to magic-user group only skills, talents and special class proficiencies	150	magic-user	-	Open hand attacks as a monk <sup>9a</sup>	350	monk	+0%
Gain climb walls ability <sup>10a</sup>	80	thief	+0%	Pass without trace	590	monk	+5%
Gain detect noise ability <sup>10a</sup>	80	thief	+0%	Spell prepping <sup>a</sup>	300	battle mage	+0%
Gain find traps ability <sup>10a</sup>	100	thief	-5%	Spell-jack <sup>10a</sup>	300	battle mage	+0%
Gain remove traps ability <sup>10a</sup>	110	thief	-5%	Turn undead <sup>a</sup>	300	cleric	+0%
Gain hide in shadows ability <sup>10a</sup>	70	thief	+10%				
Gain move silently ability <sup>10a</sup>	80	thief	+10%	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>O.C.</b>	<b>C.M.</b>
Gain open locks ability <sup>10a</sup>	80	thief	+5%	Bonuses to saving throws	900	barbarian	+0%
Gain pick pockets ability <sup>10a</sup>	80	thief	+5%	Detect Magic <sup>a</sup>	450	barbarian	-5%
Gain read languages ability <sup>10a</sup>	120	thief	-15%	Detect the presence of evil	800	paladin	+5%
Go berserk <sup>a</sup>	100	berserker	-10%	Detect the presence of good	800	dark knight	+5%
Influence others <sup>a</sup>	90	bard	-5%	Function at negative hit points	850	cavalier	+10%
Know trivia	100	bard	+0%	Gain +1 to-hit with broad sword, long sword or scimitar	830	cavalier	+0%
Leaping and springing	150	barbarian	+5%	Improvise weapon <sup>11</sup>	800	monk	+0%
Make saving throws as a thief	200	thief	-5%	Pass through overgrown areas without leaving a trace at full movement rate	800	druid	+0%
Modify wild and tamed animal reactions <sup>a</sup>	100	ranger	+0%	Self induce hackfrenzy <sup>12</sup>	750	berserker	+0%
Run confidence games and scams	150	bard	+10%	Simul-casting <sup>13a</sup>	420	battle mage	-10%
Track without penalty <sup>2a</sup>	100	ranger	+0%	Spell-jack <sup>10a</sup>	400	illusionist	+5%
Unlikely to be thrown from saddle or injured in a fall from a horse(85%)	200	cavalier	-5%	Vault into the saddle with bulky armor and have the steed underway in 1 segment	800	cavalier	+0%
Use a skill <sup>1</sup>	50	any	+5%				
Standard weapon proficiencies as a thief/cleric (PHB p 101)	200	thief/cleric	+10%				
<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>O.C.</b>	<b>C.M.</b>				
Apologize ability	440	knight errant	-10%				
Attack as a fighter	450	fighter	+5%				
Attacks per round as a cavalier	450	cavalier	+0%				
Attacks per round as a fighter	400	fighter	+5%				
Cast cleric spells <sup>a</sup>	220	cleric	-20%/S.L.				
Cast druid spells <sup>a</sup>	220	druid	-20%/S.L.				

continued next page

Table 1M: Charlatan Available Powers By Level

Level	Cost	Original Class	Copy Modifier	Level	Cost	O.C.	C.M.
Level 5				Level 12			
Attack as 5 levels higher with a broad sword, long sword, or scimitar <sup>5</sup>	1,050	cavalier	+0%	Gain +2 to-hit with the horseman's mace, horseman's flail, or horseman's military pick	2,400	cavalier	+0%
Back protection <sup>#</sup>	500	barbarian	+5%	Handle and ride a Griffon	2,250	cavalier	+10%
Damage bonus with weapons <sup>14#</sup>	570	monk	-5%	Use magic items useable by clerics	2,500	cleric	-5%
Fall up to 20 feet without taking damage	1,000	monk	+0%	Level 13			
Hit creatures requiring magic weapons <sup>#</sup>	550	barbarian	-10%	Resist poison	2,600	monk	+0%
Memorize one additional spell of a certain school <sup>15</sup>	1,100	specialist	-5%	Level 14			
Use magic items useable by fighters	1,000	fighter	+10%	Fall any distance without taking damage	2,900	monk	-5%
Level 6				Gain +3 to-hit with the lance	2,800	cavalier	+5%
Cure disease	1,300	paladin	-5%	Mind mask as a monk	2,200	monk	+5%
Gain +1 to-hit with horseman's mace, horseman's flail, or horseman's military pick	1,200	cavalier	+0%	Level 15			
Improved surprise	1,250	barbarian	+5%	Telepathic resistance	3,000	monk	+10%
Really intimidating display <sup>16</sup>	1,200	monk	+10%	Use magic items useable by magic-users	3,100	magic-user	-20%
Ride a unicorn as a steed <sup>17</sup>	1,200	cavalier	+0%	Level 16			
Self-healing <sup>#</sup>	650	monk	+0%	Retarded aging	3,200	monk	+0%
Spur mount to 2" greater speed	1,200	cavalier	+5%	Level 17			
Take no damage on a successful saving throw	1,300	monk	-15%	Speak with plants and animals	3,400	monk	+0%
Level 7				Level 18			
Attack as 5 levels higher with a horseman's mace, horseman's flail, or horseman's military pick <sup>3</sup>	1,400	cavalier	+0%	Fasting	3,600	monk	+0%
Fall up to 30 feet without taking damage	1,500	monk	-5%	Level 19			
Gain +1 to-hit bonus with monk weapons	1,400	monk	+10%	Flame walk	3,800	monk	+0%
Weapon strike	1,300	monk	+0%	Level 20			
Level 8				Survive without air	4,000	monk	-10%
Gain +2 to-hit with the lance	1,600	cavalier	+0%				
Gain immunity to charm spells cast by woodland creatures	1,600	druid	-5%				
Handle and ride a Pegasus as a steed	1,550	cavalier	+0%				
Resist disease	1,600	monk	+5%				
Scrutinize others and force an alignment audit	1,640	paladin	+10%				
Write magical scrolls	1,620	magic-user	-10%				
Level 9							
Brew magical potions	1,820	magic-user	-10%				
Painful strike	1,800	monk	+0%				
Stun and kill with open hand attacks	1,900	monk	+0%				
Level 10							
Gain +2 to-hit with the broad sword, long sword or scimitar	2,000	cavalier	+0%				
Handle and ride a hippogriff as a steed	1,900	cavalier	+5%				
Shape Change into a reptile, bird or mammal three times per day	2,100	druid	-15%				
Use magic-user and cleric scrolls as a thief	2,000	thief	+0%				
Level 11							
Take only half damage on a failed saving throw and no damage on a successful saving throw of the appropriate type	2,300	monk	-15%				
Water run	2,200	monk	+0%				

# This power has a power level.

+ This thief skill has a base percentage equal to the base score plus Dexterity and armor modifiers. Each level it increases by 5%.

† The charlatan can learn any skill he has seen in use. He need not have the prerequisite skill to do this.

1 The character must be wearing studded leather or lighter armor.

2 This does not grant the character the tracking skill; it merely removes the non-ranger penalty. He must still acquire the skill normally.

3 This ability includes the ability to cast cantrips.

4 This does not grant the character the use of the attack matrix of a cavalier.

5 This does not grant the character the use of the attack matrix of a cavalier; but it does grant the increased number of attacks of a cavalier with the chosen weapon only.

6 This ability only works for magic-user spells. Use the power level of the spell casting ability for the purposes of chain casting.

7 Must be lawful good.

8 Must be chaotic evil.

9 Only useable when not wearing armor or carrying a shield.

10 This ability is useless without the ability to cast magic-user spells. The level of this ability determines how many spells the character can spell-jack, not the level of his spell casting ability. It only applies to magic-user spells.

11 When using this power, the character gains the damage and attacks per round of a monk with a level equal to the power level. This only applies to improvised weapons. It does not grant the user this ability with his unarmed attacks.

12 Must be able to go berserk as a berserker as a prerequisite.

13 This ability is useless without the ability to cast magic-user spells. The power level of this ability determines how many spells the character can simul-cast, not the level of his spellcasting ability or his class level.

14 The cap to weapon damage still applies.

15 This ability applies only to magic-user spells. One level of this ability allows the character to memorize an extra spell at every spell level he cast.

16 The character does not need to have the intimidating display ability to have this ability.

17 Female elves only.

learn the abilities of other classes through careful imitation. After days of study, they permanently gain the other class's ability.

The charlatan's greatest asset is his ability to learn the abilities of other classes. Starting at first level, the charlatan can spend some of his earned experience points to permanently gain an ability of any other class. Refer to Table 1M: Charlatan Available Powers By Level for a list of available powers. Each power has several important descriptors, including level, cost, and original class.

A power is listed under a certain level. This is the minimum level the charlatan must be to learn the power. A charlatan can always learn a power listed in a level lower than his charlatan level, but not higher. This is NOT the power level, which is described below.

The cost of the power represents the cost in experience points to learn the power and the cost in gold pieces to train in using the power. This is described in more detail below.

The original class is listed at the end of each power. This is the class that possesses the power the charlatan can mimic. Unless specifically stated otherwise, all powers function exactly as described in the class description. For example, if a charlatan learns to cast magic-user spells, he must keep and study from a spell book.

To learn a power, the charlatan spends a number of experience points equal to the listed cost. These must be experience points that he has already earned. You cannot buy powers on credit, no matter how you rationalize it! He must have enough EP to purchase the power and stay within his current level's EP range, because EP spent on a power are gone for good. He must also spend four weeks by himself practicing the power, two weeks if he practices under the guidance of someone who can use the power, or one week if he pays to go to school. The cost of the schooling is equal to the cost of the power in gold pieces. At the end of his training time, he makes a learning ability check (based on Intelligence). If he rolls under his learning ability, he has learned the power. If he rolls above, he fails to learn the power. The charlatan gains a +1% bonus to his learning ability per experience level.

Alternatively, when making a first level charlatan character, you may pick up to three powers with which to begin play. These powers cost a number of BPs equal to one-twentieth of the power's cost. A beginning charlatan may only begin play with first level abilities, and does not need to roll to learn them.

Some powers have an associated power level. When first gained, such powers have a power level of one. When using a power, it functions as if being used by a character of the listed type with a level equal to the power level. For example, the ability to cast magic-user spells is a power with an associated power level. When casting a spell, the charlatan would cast the spell as a magic-user of a level equal to the appropriate power level.

As the charlatan gains experience, he can increase the power level of his powers. To do so, he once again pays the power's cost in experience points. However, to increase the power level of an ability past one, he MUST go to school to learn the power (he cannot train by himself). To attend school, he finds a school of the appropriate class and pays the power's cost in gold pieces to train. If he makes a successful learning ability check, he has increased the power level by one. A charlatan may never raise the power level of any power above his current charlatan class level.

Powers that do not have a power level lack them for one of two reasons: either the power's effect does not change with level, or its level is based off of the level of the charlatan. Powers without a power level function as if used by a character of the listed type at the minimum level required to use the power. A charlatan can only purchase these powers once.

Finally, a charlatan cannot learn a power he has never seen in use. The GM may allow a charlatan to learn a power if he sees a similar power in use (for example, learning to turn undead as a cleric by watching a paladin turn undead).

### Copying Abilities

The charlatan can also use his incredible powers of imitation on a short-term basis. He may not wish to use every skill he can find on a permanent

basis. Likewise, sometimes he does not have the time to learn an ability permanently before he needs to use it. In situations like this (and many more) the charlatan can attempt to temporarily copy the ability of another character.

The charlatan can copy any skill and any ability on Table 1M: Charlatan Available Powers By Level unless it is magical. For magical abilities, he must have seen the ability in action before having a chance at copying it. His base chance to copy a skill or ability is 25%. This is known as his Base Copy Chance, or BCC. For each level of charlatan he has attained (including first), he receives a 3% bonus to BCC. Thus, a third level charlatan would have a BCC of 34% (25% + 9%).

In order to copy an ability, the charlatan must roll equal to or lower than his BCC plus the ability's copy modifier on a d100. Skills or abilities that are part of a listed ability use the overall ability's copy modifier. If the ability has no copy modifier (0% is considered a modifier), he cannot copy it. If he is successful, he can use the ability as if he were a member of the appropriate class with levels equal to his charlatan level. If he does not have enough charlatan levels, he uses the minimum level required to use the ability. For skills, a successful check indicates he can make a skill check with a skill mastery level equal to half his BCC. The ability lasts for one round. Any resulting effects of the power (damage, lasting spells, etc.) are permanent. Failing the BCC roll indicates that he cannot use the power and he loses his action for the round. So if a charlatan tries to copy the ability of using the cleric attack matrix and he fails, he loses his attack and may spend the rest of the round pondering if he really wasn't better off just making his attack as a lowly magic-user. Furthermore, when trying to copy any magical effect (even those of clerics), if the charlatan fails the spell results in a spell mishap.

For abilities in which timing is important, such as copying a monk's ability to resist surprise, the charlatan must decide to make the copy attempt after the GM has announced the need for a surprise roll but before his party actually makes the roll. Other abilities are handled similarly. The charlatan can't go back in time to try to copy an ability that will give him a result on something he already rolled for.

The charlatan can copy any ability included on Table 1M, but he receives a cumulative -15% penalty per level if he copies an ability he is not high enough level to learn. Thus, a first level charlatan can copy any first level abil-



ity with no penalty, a second level ability with a -15% penalty, and third level ability with a -30% ability, and so on. If the charlatan attempts to copy an ability he saw in use as recently as one round ago, he receives a bonus to his check equal to 5% plus twice his charlatan level.

### Skills

Due to their uncanny ability to imitate and fake, the charlatan can learn any skill, regardless of prerequisites based upon class, race, or other skills. This means that he does not have to have a skill mastery level of 50% in any prerequisite skills in order to learn a skill. In fact, he doesn't even need to know the prerequisite skill at all. Only Ability Score requirements (such as those for Dragon Speak) still apply.

## INFILTRATOR

<b>Infiltrator</b>
<b>Ability Requirements:</b> Dex 12+, Int 12+
<b>Prime Requisites:</b> None
<b>Hit Dice Type:</b> d6
<b>Allowed Races:</b> Any but half-ogre
<b>Allowed Alignments:</b> Any but lawful good
<b>Building Point Bonus:</b> 12 BP

Infiltrators are a subclass of thief that combines elements of several classes to make a unique raider and saboteur. Originally a crude humanoid plague on peaceful settlements, members of the infiltrator class have become proud of their skills and put them to use in a variety of situations. Infiltrators might function as spies, assassins, bandits or highwaymen. They might also be stealthy scouts, dependable guides, tough caravan guards or honest hunters.

Infiltrators work alone or in small groups, making them ideal fits for an adventuring party.

Since they typically know the local geography, have good contacts and are familiar with hazards of travel, they are an excellent addition to an adventuring team. They adventure out of a desire for excitement, a love of trouble or an irrepressible urge to wander and explore.

Infiltrators combine the stealthy aspects of a thief with martial skills and a certain amount of woodcraft. Their skills are similar to the ranger, but their mindset is closer to that of the thief. Whereas rogues rely on Dexterity, infiltrators need Intelligence, Wisdom and often Charisma to help them ply the skills useful in their trade. In a pinch, though, they find they often cannot avoid brute force, thus they also need Strength as well.

**Table 1N: Infiltrator Progression Table**

Experience Points	Level	Hit Dice	Level Title
0-1,250	1	20+1d6*	Sneak
1,251-2,500	2	2	Slip
2,501-5,000	3	3	Creep
5,001-10,000	4	4	Tout
10,001-20,000	5	5	Probe
20,001-40,000	6	6	Shadow
40,001-70,000	7	7	Operative
70,001-110,000	8	8	Spook
110,001-160,000	9	9	Investigator
160,001-220,000	10	10	Infiltrator
220,001-420,000	11	10+2**	Espion
420,001-660,000	12	10+4	Intruder
660,001-880,000	13	10+6	Invader
880,001-1,100,000	14	10+8	Penetrator
1,100,001-1,320,000	15	10+10	Master Infiltrator
1,320,001-1,540,000	16	10+12	Master Espion
1,540,001-1,760,000	17	10+14	Master Espion (17th level)
1,760,001-2,400,000	18	10+16	Master Espion (18th level)
2,400,001-3,000,000	19	10+18	Master Espion (19th level)
3,000,001-3,300,000***	20	10+20	Master Espion (20th level)

\* At first level infiltrators receive 20 hit points +1d6. This twenty point "kicker" is received at first level only.

\*\* Infiltrators receive 2 hit points per level after the 10th.

\*\*\* 300,000 experience points per level for each additional level above the 20th.

Infiltrators, like others who prefer to work alone, lean toward chaotic alignments. They might be either good, neutral or evil. Those who work on behalf of a government tend more towards neutrality or even law.

Infiltrators prefer gawds of luck, chance and skill. They worship Kishijoten, Rigel, Ralishaz, Tymora, Vergadain and the Xochipilli most often. They generally dislike constraining faiths such as those of Fapeki the True or E'Patali the Overlord.

Originally a humanoid class, it arose from the need to quickly sneak into another settlement and steal supplies or stir up trouble with arson or other mayhem. This practice is so common among these cultures that certain members of the elf and gnome races have adopted it for striking back at the humanoids. Bands of woodland infiltrators sneak into orcish fortifications or gnoll camps with flint and tinder or raunchy elf porn in order to inflict as much harm or distraction as possible depending on the alignment of the saboteurs. Ironically, orcs are particularly distasteful by the latter material.

Wood elves, high elves or gnomes of any sort are the most likely player character infiltrators. Dwarven infiltrators, enhancing their class skills with the dwarven racial traits, make highly effective underground adventurers. Some braver halflings adopt it also, and these are more likely to use their skills against human or other "friendly" races. A bare handful of pixie fairies adopt the lifestyle in order to defend their favored lands and kin. Among humans, pirates, press gangs and buccaneers might include infiltrators as well. The snobbish gray elves are possibly the only subrace that virtually never embraces this class finding its methods to be astoundingly crass.

While infiltrators are very self-reliant, they appreciate the strengths of other classes. A magic-user can be useful for bestowing Invisibility or other enhancing spells. Heavily armored warriors such as fighters and paladins are useful in certain situations, but limited in their versatility. The right cleric or druid can be a fun-loving, valuable companion, but the wrong cleric can be a stick-in-the-mud. Barbarians might have the right frame of mind, if they lack a little subtlety. Rangers are close kin, but infiltrators consider their emphasis on protecting wildlife pointless; most animals can take care of themselves and those that can't deserve their Darwinian fate. While bards have a range of useful abilities, infiltrators keep a wary eye on them.

A high Dexterity is useful for avoiding attacks, since the infiltrator cannot wear bulky armor. Many of his skills also rely on Dexterity. For infiltrators who routinely deal with stolen documents and other such items, Intelligence can also come in handy. A high Constitution score is useful because the infiltrator is often alone and might need that extra bit of durability in order to survive.

The infiltrator gains the following skills at no initial cost: current affairs, customs and etiquette, forestry, history (local), history (world), religion (general), wilderness lore, languages (modern), shaving/grooming, dancing (ballroom), animal handling, map sense, seduction (art of), and slip away into shadows. Other skills that help compliment the functions of the infiltrator include arcane lore, animal lore, military (small unit tactics), forgery, glean information, intelligence gathering, liar (skilled), maintain self discipline, mapless travel, mimic dialect, read lips, stealthy movement, and ventriloquism. The infiltrator must train in one of these skills each time he advances an experience level. If he learns any of these skills upon character creation, he may buy them for one fewer BP.

Infiltrators are proficient with the same armor and weapons as standard thieves. Additionally, they may wear heavier armor and use alternate weapons when they are incognito on a mission to infiltrate an enemy organization. They suffer only a -2 to hit when using weapons with which they are not proficient.

**Sneak Attack:** The infiltrator can make a sneak attack just as a brigand does.

**Fast Movement:** The infiltrator has a bonus of +3" to his base movement rate when wearing no armor or non-bulky armor, or when wearing fairly bulky armor and carrying no more than a light load. This movement increases by 1" every three levels.

**Woodland Stride:** At second level, the infiltrator may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at her normal speed and without suffering damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars

and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect the infiltrator.

**Uncanny Dodge:** Also at second level, the infiltrator can react to danger without consciously sensing it. He gains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when attacked from the rear and/or rear flank.

**Trackless Step:** At 3rd level, the infiltrator leaves no trail in natural surroundings and thus cannot be tracked by visual means.

At 4th level the infiltrator gains the ability to use all thief class skills (except for pick pockets) as a first level thief. Racial, Dexterity and armor modifiers apply. Adjust these skills according to the type of armor worn as defined in Table 1H: Thief Skill Armor Adjustments. Consider hide in shadows equivalent to hide in natural surroundings for this table. Also, see the discussion of magic armor under the ranger section in this chapter.

**Moving Target:** At 10th level, the infiltrator is hard to hit when she is moving. If an infiltrator moves more than five feet during a combat round, he gains a +4 bonus to Armor Class for that round.

## MONK

The monk class has several thief-like abilities (find traps, move silently, hide in shadows, hear noise and climb walls) which is why it warrants mention in the GriftMaster's Guide. However, these have all been fully described with fantastic clarity in the Player's Handbook and require no further discussion here. Even so, it has come to our attention that some people have a misunderstanding of how certain other monk class abilities work so we will spell out explanations of those items here in plain English for those of you who were sleeping in HackMaster 101. Items are presented in alphabetical order by subject matter.

**Attack Bonus Talent:** Monks may take the attack bonus talent, but they may not apply it to their unarmed attacks, only one of their allowed weapons.

**Henchmen:** When a monk gains henchmen at 6th level, the may include multi-class characters, provided that they possess at least one of the required classes and none of the restricted classes.

**Intimidating Display:** The monk's intimidating display ability works on any creature with an Intelligence of 5+ that can see the monk.

**Maximum Damage Bonus:** The maximum bonus to damage for any weapon is the maximum potential damage for that weapon, before penetration. That means that a character with +7 to damage from Strength and +2 from specialization will only have a +8 to damage with a weapon that does 1d8. The exception to the rule is magic weapons. Using the previous example, if the character were using a Long Sword +2, he would have a maximum damage bonus of +10 (+8 due to Strength and all other bonuses, +2 magical bonus). This means that the magical bonus to damage is always used in full, and is exempt from the cap. Similarly, if a weapon's damage changes when used against different sized creatures, so does the maximum damage bonus.

Open hand damage for non-monk characters does not have a Strength damage cap. This is because only 25% of the damage is real, it is not considered lethal force, and it does not do penetration damage. On the other hand, a monk's open hand damage is capped for Strength, as a weapon. Unlike a non-monk, a monk's open hand attacks are considered lethal force, all the damage is real, and penetration does apply.

**Multiattack Bonus Talent:** A monk that takes the multiattack bonus talent applies it to both his armed attacks and his unarmed attacks.

**Tough Hide Talent:** A monk may take the tough hide talent, but it does not improve his special monk AC. If he is ever denied his special monk AC, he could then use the natural AC 8 from the tough hide talent.

**Unarmed Attacks:** Because the monk's unarmed attacks are considered lethal combat, he is not subject to the unarmed attack rules on page 100 of the GMG. His opponents do not get a free attack, nor do they get +4 to hit and damage.

## MINSTREL

The minstrel is rather like a bard who focuses primarily on music and song. In fact, as a matter of preference, nearly all his communication with others is

done in clever songs that he creates impromptu. Some people in Garweeze World love minstrels for their beautiful songs and nimble wit. Some people despise them for their saucy attitude and poor tact. But whether you love them or hate them, the minstrel tradition continues.

Minstrels fight as thieves and may wear the same armor (leather, padded, ring mail, studded leather, elven chain mail) but have a slightly more limited weapon selection. Though they can use other thief weapons, their swordplay is limited to the rapier (both normal and petite varieties). A minstrel with Dexterity score of 16 or higher receives a 10% bonus to all experience points he earns. This is in addition to any bonus from high Honor or talents.

All minstrels begin play with the following skills at no initial cost: artistic ability, culture, current affairs, customs and etiquette, history (local), history (world), religion (general), percussion instruments, any one of the other instrument skills, maintenance/upkeep, shaving/grooming, dancing (ballroom), graceful entrance/exit, idle gossip, interpret/perform mime, joke telling, juggling, oration, poetry, singing, seduction (art of) social etiquette, and joke telling. He can buy the following skills during character creation for one fewer BP: brass instruments, exotic instruments, stringed instruments, wind instruments, Angawa battle cry, diplomacy, gaming, glean information, knowledge of courtly affairs, mingling, Manu weasel dance, mocking jig, mimic dialect, parley, reading lips, rousing speech, ventriloquism, taunting (minor) and taunting (major). In addition to the skill mastery points he gains from the relevant ability, and the roll of the mastery and Honor dice, the minstrel gains 400 discretionary mastery points at first level that he may apply to any of the above skills in any manner subject to a maximum of 100 discretionary points per skill. Thereafter, he may increase skill mastery points in any of his skills in the normal manner.

Upon first inspection, one might think that a minstrel is more of a profession than an adventuring character class. Well, that might be true if we stopped our description of the class right here. But has Hard Eight

**Minstrel**

**Ability Requirements:**  
Dex 9+, Wis 9+

**Prime Requisites:**  
Dex

**Hit Dice Type:**  
d6

**Allowed Races:**  
Any but half-orc and half-ogre

**Allowed Alignments:**  
Any

**Building Point Bonus:**  
15 BP

**Table 10: Minstrel Progression Table**

Experience Points	Experience Level	6-sided Hit Dice	Level Title
0-1,250	1	20+1d6*	Player
1,251-2,500	2	2	Performer
2,501-5,000	3	3	Entertainer
5,001-10,000	4	4	Balladeer
10,001-20,000	5	5	Skald
20,001-40,000	6	6	Troubadour
40,001-70,000	7	7	Rhapsodist
70,000-110,000	8	8	Laureate
110,001-160,000	9	9	Maestro
160,001-220,000	10	10	Master Maestro
220,001-320,000	11	10+2**	Master Maestro (11th level)
320,001-420,000	12	10+4	Master Maestro (12th level)
420,001-520,000	13	10+6	Master Maestro (13th level)
520,001-620,000	14	10+8	Master Maestro (14th level)
620,001-720,000	15	10+10	Lord Maestro
920,001-1,120,000	16	10+12	Lord Maestro (16th level)
1,120,001-1,320,000	17	10+14	Lord Maestro (17th level)
1,320,001-1,520,000	18	10+16	Lord Maestro (18th level)
1,520,001-1,720,000	19	10+18	Lord Maestro (19th level)
1,720,001-1,920,000***	20	10+20	Lord Maestro (20th level)

\* At first level minstrels receive 20 hit points +1d6. This twenty point "kicker" is received at first level only.

\*\* Minstrels receive 2 hit points per level after the 10th.

\*\*\* 200,000 experience points per level for each additional level above the 20th.



FRAM

**Table 1P: Minstrel Spell Selection**

First Level	Shatter
Alarm	Whispering Wind
Audible Glamer	Third Level
Bash Door	Dispel Magic
Charm Person	Murgain's Migraine
Throw Voice	Suggestion
Yudder's Whistle of Hell's Gate	
Second Level	Fourth Level
Deafness	Charm Monster
Hypnotic Song (a.k.a. Hypnotic Pattern)	Confusion
Knock	Emotion
	Shout
	Stirring Oration

Enterprises ever let you down before? Before you think too hard on that, read on and find out the difference between a musician and a minstrel.

Musicians are people who have learned to play an instrument. They might be good or bad at it but they seem to know enough to scrape by. A minstrel is more of an entertainment personality. While a musician might be in a band, a minstrel would be the leader of the band.

The minstrel is an opportunist who is not afraid to verbally take someone to the mat. Consequently, he gains the opportunist and taunt talents for free at first level.

Upon attaining the title of Maestro, a minstrel can find a link between the harmonics of ordinary sound and the arcane rhythms of certain spells. They can actually reproduce certain spell effects by playing their instruments and using their voice in such a way as to reproduce the spells without material or somatic components. Though, playing one's instrument to produce a spell effect could be considered a somatic component, it is clearly different from the way magic-users approach the craft. Over the years, various minstrels

**Table 1Q: Minstrel Spell Progression**

Minstrel Level	Spell Level			
	1	2	3	4
9	1	-	-	-
10	2	-	-	-
11	2	1	-	-
12	3	1	-	-
13	3	2	-	-
14	3	2	1	-
15	3	3	1	-
16	3	3	2	-
17	3	3	2	1
18	3	3	3	1
19	3	3	3	2
20	3	3	3	3

have discovered the musical to a very limited spell selection. These are listed on Table 1P: Minstrel Spells Selection. It is possible that other spells could be tapped into musically, though no minstrel has yet figured out how.

In order to learn how to reproduce one of these spells through music, a minstrel must experience the spell by witnessing someone casting it. He must also have access to a scroll or spell book that contains the spell. He then studies the spell and puts it to music according to his field observations of the effects in order to determine the appropriate score to duplicate the effect. This is much like a magic-user studying a new spell. If he makes a successful learning ability check, the minstrel has created the proper score and may record it in his sheet

music book (similar to a magic-user's spell book). Thereafter, in order to invoke the magic of the music, the minstrel must perform the piece on his chosen instrument and make a successful skill check for that instrument. Once the performance skill check is successful, he must make a spellcraft skill check. If that check is successful, the spell goes off just as if cast by a magic user of the same level as the minstrel. Should either one of the minstrel's skill checks fail, the spell results in a mishap. See the GameMaster's Guide for more information on spell mishaps.

A minstrel may learn a number of spells from Table 1P: Minstrel Spell Selection according to his level and the level of the spell as shown in Table 1Q: Minstrel Spell Progression. Once he has learned the score, a minstrel may play his song spells as often as he likes. However, if he does so more than once per day, he becomes exhausted as if he had engaged in vigorous exertion for a number of rounds equal to his fatigue factor. He may rest to reduce his exhaustion and any weakened Ability Score points associated with it per the normal rules. See the GameMaster's Guide page 107 for rules on fatigue. In order to continue to perform his spell songs effectively, the minstrel must study and practice the scores at least once per week. He needs his sheet music in order to do this. For each day he fails to study his songs, the chance of spell mishap increases by 1% though returning to regular practice will eliminate this penalty. A minstrel studies his music in much the same way and for the same duration as a magic-user studies his spells, though the minstrel needs his instrument and makes an ample amount of sound when practicing. This can be rather annoying to other party members attempting to get a good night's sleep.

## NINJA

From distant lands and foreign realms comes the "invisible" warrior in the night. Ninja act as spies and assassins, using their extensive and secret knowledge of concealment, trickery, perception, acrobatics and stealth. Many attribute their abilities to supernatural forces, and the ninja do nothing to counter this impression. They may very well spread the stories themselves, even as they work to convince the world that ninja do not really exist. Such confusion only enhances the reputation of these mysterious, highly skilled killers.

To become a ninja, a character must have minimum Ability Scores of 15 in Dexterity, 14 in Charisma, 14 in Constitution, and 13 in Intelligence. Ninja do not gain a 10% experience bonus for high Ability Scores.

As they do not really exist (or would prefer the world believe that), ninja must appear as anything other than a shadowy figure in the night. All ninja automatically gain the secret persona

### Ninja

**Ability Requirements:**

Dexterity 15, Constitution 14, Intelligence 13, Charisma 14

**Prime Requisites:**

None

**Hit Dice Type:**

d6

**Allowed Races:**

Human

**Allowed Alignments:**

Lawful or neutral evil

**Building Point Bonus:**

4 BP

and ulterior motive skills at expert levels (90%). Lurking in wait in a "normal" life as an absent-minded shopkeeper or mild-mannered librarian, many lead entirely unremarkable lives except when commanded to perform a specific job. This could be once in a lifetime or once a week. To maintain their terrible secret identity, a ninja must purchase at least one skill (more at the GM's discretion, if necessary to portray the "public persona") related to his cover. On character creation, he must purchase a mastery die roll in that skill no fewer than three times (more at the GM's discretion).

Ninja have a d6 for Hit Dice, gaining 1-6 hit points for each ninja level. Ninja always plan a quick, efficient end to combat rather than getting into drawn-out battles. Stealth, wits, and knowing their enemies better than they know themselves form the primary weapons of the ninja's arsenal.

Ninja use the combat (to-hit) and saving throw tables of thieves. Ninja can wear any armor but rarely do so when on a mission. Most of their unique abilities require maximum mobility and they don't want to risk compromising their skills. They suffer repeated role-playing EP penalties (-10% per day for that adventure) if they wear armor for any reason other than as part of a disguise. Ninja can only use magic items specifically usable by their class or usable by any character regardless of class.

Ninja gain three weapon proficiency slots at 1st level, at least two of which they must spend on ninja weapons. They can also use certain weapons considered dishonorable by most without penalty, usually insisting that training with the weapon is part of an obscure martial art. Observers must save versus apology at -4, and more than half of those who actually see the ninja using the weapon must succeed for the ninja to suffer an Honor loss (3 points). Characters of other classes lose 1 point of temporal Honor in any combat where observers see them use ninja weapons. Table 1S: Ninja Weapons lists these items. Chapter 6: Tools of the Trade contains descriptions of these items. Note that GMs may rule that these weapons are not available to other classes or in certain areas, but he should let a ninja PC at least begin play with some.

Ninja have a number of abilities they can use to sneak about and accomplish missions. Their missions need not involve assassination; ninja also frequently spy, steal documents, or even leave warnings for errant lords. They gain the intelligence gathering skill right off, without spending any BP. They also get the two basic prerequisites, disguise and stealthy movement, at 50% each.

First level ninja can hide in shadows, move silently, find and remove traps, climb walls, assassinate, tightrope walk as acrobats, have improved jumping ability, resistance to falls, backstab, and escape tight confines or even ropes and manacles! These abilities are described below.

**Jumping and tightrope walking:** A ninja can jump and walk tightropes as well as an acrobat of the same level.

**Escape:** Ninja can slip out of ropes, chains, and tight squeezes through a combination of physical and mental will beyond the ken of most mortals. They dislocate joints, contort their bodies, and force their way out of confines. The GM may adjust the percentage chance of escape under extreme circumstances (such as being tied up by another ninja). If the ninja succeeds on his escape check, he wriggles free of his bond. This effort takes 2d4 rounds to complete and the character's intentions are obvious to any observer particularly those who wish to thwart the attempt (such as guards). However, the ninja can attempt to escape any physical confinement, regardless of how

**Table 1R: Ninja Progression Table**

Experience 6-sided			
Experience Points	Level	Hit Dice	Level Title
0-1,900	1	1	Ninja Toe
1,901-3,800	2	2	Satsu
3,801-7,000	3	3	Ninja Foot
7,001-14,000	4	4	Satsujin
14,001-25,000	5	5	Ninja Hand
25,001-50,000	6	6	Ansatsushu
50,001-80,000	7	7	Ansatsusin
80,001-125,000	8	8	Satsujinhan'nin
125,001-180,000	9	9	Supai Suru
180,001-250,000	10	10**	Ninja
250,001-500,000	11	10+2	Ninja (11th level)
500,001-750,000	12	10+4	Ninja (12th level)
750,001-1,000,000	13	10+6	Ninja (13th level)
1,000,001-1,250,000	14	10+8	Master Ninja
1,250,001-1,500,000	15	10+10	Ninja Lord
1,500,001-1,750,000	16	10+12	Ninja Lord (15th level)
1,750,001-2,000,000	17	10+14	Ninja Lord (16th level)
2,000,001-2,250,000	18	10+16	Ninja Kunshu
2,250,001-2,500,000	19	10+18	Superninja
2,500,001-2,750,000	20***	10+20	Supreme Ninja

\* At first level, ninja receive 20 hit points + 1d6. This twenty point "kicker" is received at first level only.

\*\* Ninja gain 2 hit points per level after the 10th.

\*\*\* 250,000 experience points per level for each additional level beyond the 20th.

"inescapable" the situation might appear to some. They cannot use this ability in any way to escape magical effects such as those of a Slow, Hold Person, or Rigor Mortis spell.

**Falling:** Again, through a combination of secret mental practices, almost unnaturally honed acrobatic ability, and sheer toughness, ninja can avoid damage from falls. They need not be anywhere near a vertical surface to benefit from this ability. As they grow in experience, the distance they can fall without suffering any damage increases. At first or second level, the ninja suffers all falling damage normally. At third level, he can fall up to 10 feet without suffering any damage at all. Table 1T: Ninja Special Abilities indicates the distances the ninja can fall without damage at each level. (This distance increases by 3 feet per level after the 20th.)

**Backstab:** The ninja's backstab works much like the thief's. However, it lacks some of the advantages of a true thief's backstab. For one thing, ninja can never backstab to subdue - they must always attack to kill. Also, they must pay 3 extra BP for the improved backstab talent, should they choose to take it.

**Kawarimi:** At 10th level, the ninja gain the legendary kawarimi. Through this art, they can make people see what the ninja wish them to see. Though it appears to many to be a magical effect, actually the ninja accomplishes this illusion through extensive knowledge of people's perception and quick action. One classic use of the kawarimi is to make an enemy believe he is being

**Table 1S: Ninja Weapons**

Weapon	Cost	Weight (lbs.)	Damage		Speed Factor	Damage vs.						Base Availability		
			Size	Type		T	S	M	L	H	G	Hi	Med	Low
Kawanaga	1gp	1	L	P	4	1d4	1d3	1d3	1d3-1	1d3-1	1d4-2	50	20	10
Kumade ("climbing rake")	2gp	2	L	P	2	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d3	1d4-1	1d4-1	40	15	5
Kusari-gama ("sickle on chain")	6gp	3	M	H	3	1d8	1d6	1d6	1d6-1	1d4	1d4-1	40	15	5
Kyoketsu-shogi ("bladed whip/chain")	3gp	1	M	P/C	2	1d4+1	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4-1	1d4-1	40	15	5
Ninja-to ("short sword")	2gp	3	S	H/P	0	1d8	1d8	1d8	1d6	1d6	1d6-1	60	30	10
Nekode, pair (climbing claws)	15sp	4	S	P	-1	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4-1	1d3	1d4-2	50	25	5
Shuriken ("throwing stars")	2sp	.1	S	P	0	1d6	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4-1	1d4-2	65	45	25
Tetsu-bishi (caltrops)	3sp	.3	S	P	4	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4	60	40	20

**Table 1T: Ninja Special Abilities**

Level	Fall	Escape	Backstab
1	0 ft.	5%	+1 die
2	0 ft.	10%	+1 die
3	10 ft.	14%	+1 die
4	10 ft.	18%	+1 die
5	15 ft.	23%	+1 die
6	15 ft.	28%	+2 dice
7	20 ft.	34%	+2 dice
8	20 ft.	40%	+2 dice
9	25 ft.	44%	+2 dice
10	25 ft.	48%	+2 dice
11	30 ft.	52%	+3 dice
12	30 ft.	56%	+3 dice
13	35 ft.	60%	+3 dice
14	40 ft.	64%	+3 dice
15	40 ft.	68%	+3 dice
16	45 ft.	72%	+4 dice
17	50 ft.	76%	+4 dice
18	55 ft.	80%	+4 dice
19	60 ft.	83%	+4 dice
20	70 ft.	85%	+4 dice

**Table 1U: Ninja Skill Base Scores**

Ability	Base
Hide in Shadows	5
Move Silently	10
Find Traps	15
Remove Traps	15
Climb Walls	70

attacked. The ninja needs one round and some basic materials (a few boards, an iron stake, some twine) and at just the right moment releases the thing on his foe. A battle cry accompanies the visual aid, and the victim must save versus death magic or believe that a fierce warrior (the board) is attacking him. Meanwhile, the ninja has circled around to the opposite side to gain a back attack against his enemy. Note that the ninja must be able to construct the device and move unseen by the potential victim.

The GM should be open to more creative uses of the *kawarimi*, but not let a ninja character run rampant. It takes at least one round to prepare to use the ability and some kind of material object. The effect the ninja wishes the victim to see must last less than one full round (such as a single attack), and it must be in some way believable. A warrior who is pursuing a ninja can reasonably expect the ninja to leap out from a hiding place to attack him, thus the example above. A guard pursuing a ninja might reasonably believe that the ninja has fallen into the moat. A victim who successfully saves sees what is happening, but unless he knows a lot about ninja, he will simply find the activity confusing. Ninja, being the ultimate opportunists, can often take advantage of that as well.

### Inner strength.

Ninja have a reserve of inner willpower, sometimes referred to as “ki”, upon which they draw to perform some of their pseudo-magical abilities. These abilities are not actually magical, though, and do not go away in an Antimagic Shell, for instance. They are similar to the mystical powers of monks.

**Breath of Life:** To begin with, even the lowliest ninja learns to hold his breath for up to 1 round per ninja level beyond normal time (1/3 Con), once per day. He must spend a round summoning his spiritual energy before holding his breath at all to accomplish this feat.

**Step Lightly:** At 5th level, a ninja can cross water or similar surfaces as if it were solid earth. With 1d4 rounds of preparation, he can cross 5 feet of smooth water per experience level as if it were solid earth once per day. This ability does not work on raging whitewater or storm seas, of course. Furthermore, it requires intense concentration that may be broken by attacks, spells targeting the character, or surprise rolls. In one of these instances the ninja must save versus apoplexy to continue walking on the water, with a –1 penalty for each previous check.

**Wall Passage:** At 12th, ninja gain an ability that strikes terror into the hearts of those who might cross their path. With three rounds of intense concentration (automatically broken if struck by weapon or spell, or if forced to make a surprise roll), the ninja can pass through walls. If struck and/or distracted, he cannot use any ki powers for the following 24 hours. He is “phased” for one round, during which he can move through solid rock, up to one foot per experience level. The ninja cannot use this ability if he has used any ki powers in the previous 36 hours.

**Invisibility:** At 20th level, simply by focusing his ki energy for one round, the ninja can use Invisibility (as per the 2nd level magic-user spell) on himself. He can do this but once per day, and must not have used any ki power in the previous 24 hours.

### Ninja operate within a clan

Superiors have the right to kill any subordinate ninja at any time. Of course, since they are all evil, the subordinates usually fight back. However, superiors have the support of other underlings and can usually kill upstarts anyway (or have them assassinated).

#### Special Honor Penalties for Ninja:

- Refusing to follow orders: instant *nukenin* status
- True alignment revealed “Joe’s actually evil!” –10 base Honor
- Secret revealed “he’s a ninja!”: –30 base Honor
- Betrays clan: –95% of base Honor

Sometimes a ninja sees the error of his ways and seeks the path of righteousness. He becomes a rogue ninja or *nukenin*, protecting the unfortunate and generally behaving like the opposite of a ninja. *Nukenin* must adhere by all the ninja restrictions, including keeping their identity secret (the populace would turn on them despite their help if they admitted to having been ninja at one time!) Any non-rogue ninja of any clan will hunt and kill these affronts to the profession.

*Nukenin* slowly lose their abilities. The paths by which they learn them are so stringent that a change in the character’s outlook (alignment) is incompatible with continued use. Each week, one special ability disappears, starting with the most powerful (often those with the highest percentage). The GM chooses which on any given week. The ninja loses points in thief skills, normal skills, and so on. Only the character’s hit points, saving throws, and to-hit numbers remain unchanged. The last ability lost is the ability to use ninja magic items. As rare as *nukenin* are, those who survive long enough to lose many abilities are even rarer. They could become cloistered monks.

Ninja who become *nukenin* by refusing an order may still be evil, but typically die very quickly (or slowly if their superior is particularly sadistic...)

## PIRATE (ROGUE)

Pirates are the scourge of the seas. While many people consider pirates simply to be thieves on boats, the *Combatant’s Guide to Slaughtering Foes* presents a pirate class as a sub-class of fighter. Because many pirates approach their living more from the thief’s perspective, this book presents a separate pirate class as a sub-class of thief. While their methods may vary, their goals are nearly always the same: live a life a freedom on the open ocean, avoid alcohol poisoning from cheap grog and acquire as much treasure as the gawds see fit to grant (and then some, if you’re lucky).

Thief pirates, or rogue pirates as they are often called, never wear armor. To them the risk of drowning in the stuff is just too great. However, they can use shields and often choose a wooden one that they can use as a makeshift flotation device should they find themselves in deep, rough seas for a long period of time. Another advantage of the shield is that it can be easily discarded should swimming become necessary. Rogue pirates use many of the same weapons as standard thieves but instead of broad sword or long swords, they can use rapiers or sabers. Rogue pirates can backstab as a standard thief.

A pirate player character rolls on Table 1W: Pirate Skills to determine which skill he gets for free initially (at 70% + one roll of the mastery die and one roll of the Honor Die). He can spend Building Points normally to increase this skill further. In the case of the navigator, sailor or shipwright

### Pirate

#### Ability Requirements:

Str 9+, Dex 14+, Con 9+

#### Prime Requisites:

None

#### Hit Dice Type:

d8

#### Allowed Races:

Any

#### Allowed Alignments:

Any neutral or evil (except LN)

#### Building Point Bonus:

11 BP



**Table IV: Pirate Progression Table**

Experience Points	Level	Experience 8-sided	Hit Dice	Level Title
0-1,500	1		20+1d8*	Scurvy Knave
1,501-3,000	2		2	Knave
3,001-6,000	3		3	Picaroon
6,001-13,000	4		4	Freebooter
13,001-27,500	5		5	Raider
27,501-55,000	6		6	Marauder
55,001-110,000	7		7	Scalawag
110,000-225,000	8		8	Corsair
225,001-450,000	9		9	Pirate
450,001-675,000	10		10	Rogue Pirate
675,001-900,000	11		10+2**	Rogue Pirate (11th level)
900,001-1,250,000	12		10+4	Dread Pirate
1,250,001-1,350,000	13		10+6	Dread Pirate (13th level)
1,350,001-1,575,000	14		10+8	Dread Pirate (14th level)
1,575,001-1,800,000	15		10+10	Pirate Lord
1,800,001-2,025,000	16		10+12	Pirate Lord (16th level)
2,025,001-2,250,000	17		10+14	Pirate Prince
2,250,001-2,475,000	18		10+16	Pirate King
2,475,001-2,700,000	19		10+18	Pirate King (19th level)
2,700,001-2,925,000***	20		10+20	Rogue Pirate King

\* At first level pirates receive 20 hit points +1d8. This twenty point "kicker" is received at first level only.

\*\* Pirates receive 2 hit points per level after the 10th.

\*\*\* 250,000 experience points per level for each additional level above the 20th.

**Table IW: Pirate Skills**

Roll 1d100	Free Pirate Skill
1-10	Nautical Navigation
11-20	Navigator Skill Set
21-85	Sailor Skill Set
86-100	Shipwright Skill Set

**Table IX: Pirate Abilities**

Pirate Level	Climb Walls	AC/Save Bonus
1	51%	+1
2	54%	+1
3	57%	+1
4	60%	+2
5	63%	+2
6	66%	+2
7	69%	+3
8	72%	+3
9	75%	+3
10	78%	+4
11	81%	+4
12	84%	+4
13	86%	+5
14	88%	+5
15	90%	+5
16	91%	+6
17	92%	+6
18	93%	+6
19	94%	+7
20	95%	+7

skill sets, the mastery die is listed in the skills section. Your GM has details on these suites in the GMG.

Pirates gain the talent acrobatic skill suite as well as a climbing ability, the better to climb up the sides of ships for raids or rigging when at sea (rigged nets count as "abundant handholds" and increase a climber's chance of success by +40%). Climbing ability is based on level and summarized in Table IX: Pirate Abilities. When a pirate learns tightrope walking or weather sense he gets two mastery dice for the price of one. Despite rumors to the contrary, all pirates know how to swim. They begin with the skill swimming, dog paddle at 50% mastery. Though rogue pirates do not gain standard thief skills, they do begin play with slip away into shadows at 50% mastery and stealthy movement at no initial cost.

When fighting aboard a ship, a pirate gains +1 to his AC for every three experience levels (or fraction thereof). This can apply to any similar situation (airborne ships, on top of a dragon, etc.). It also applies to saving throws, if agility and dodging can affect the outcome. For example, it would apply to dodging a Lightning Bolt or most breath weapons, but not to a Rigor Mortis spell or a gas cloud.

Pirates also have the ability to hold the naked blade of a Small weapon

(usually a dagger or short sword) in their mouths while climbing riggings or swinging on ropes. They need not make any checks for cutting themselves unless they fall (by failing a check or someone else cutting a rope).

Pirates suffer no penalties for fighting while precariously balanced on ropes, riggings or even on narrow planks. They live for these moments and are well practiced at compensating for the limitations on movement and difficulties in range of motion.

**RANGER**

Like several other fighter classes, rangers have certain thief abilities associated with their class. In particular, these are hide in shadows and move silently. While page 57 of the Player's Handbook states these abilities are not possible in any armor heavier than studded leather, that statement applies to rangers only. Obviously from previous discussions, other classes such as barbarians and brigands are capable of performing such feats. And even standard thieves may wear ring mail (which is 5 pounds heavier than studded leather) and still attempt those skills. But rangers just don't have the same flexibility. In fact, their chances for executing those skills are halved when they are not in natural surroundings. Talk about primadonnas! However, it is possible for rangers to wear a wide variety of armor and if it is manufactured out of certain unusual materials as described on page 205 of the GMG, it is possible that some of these armors will weigh less than 25 pounds (the weight of studded leather). Thus, it is necessary to define armor penalties to the ranger's hide in shadows and move silently class abilities for additional armor types beyond those found in the Player's Handbook. Adjust these skills according to the type of armor worn as defined in Table 1H: Thief Skill Armor Adjustments. Consider hide in shadows equivalent to hide in natural surroundings for this table.

In addition, rangers may wear a wide variety of magical armor. According to page 205 of the GameMaster's Guide, magic armor weighs the same as normal armor but counts as only half its weight for purposes of encumbrance (when worn, not when carried). It also allows movement as if its bulk were one category less. For purposes of ranger skills, treat all magic armor whose base armor type is normally fairly bulky as non-bulky and do not apply any penalties. For magic armor whose base armor type is normally bulky, consult Table 1Y: Magic Armor Thief Skill Adjustments for the appropriate modifier. If the magic armor is also made of an unusual material, consult Table 1H: Thief Skill Armor Adjustments and use the worse modifier of those given on Table 1H and Table 1Y.

**THIEF, STANDARD**

Like some of the other standard character classes mentioned in the Player's Handbook, there are a few aspects of the thief that apparently require clarification because we keep getting questions on them from sub-par gamers. To begin with, the thief (sometimes referred to as the "true" or "pure" thief) can use the read languages ability starting at first level, and can begin to put points into it at first level. Just because his base score in read languages is zero doesn't mean he can't spend a few points beefing it up. Of course, unless you want to role-play being the party interpreter, we suggest leaving the linguistics to the magic-users and putting those points into something more useful for a thief, such as move silently.

**Table 1Y: Magic Armor Thief Skill Adjustments**

Armor	PP	OL	FRT	MS	HS	DN	CW
Banded mail	-20%	-10%	-10%	-40%	-15%	-25%	-20%
Chain mail, heavy	-40%	-20%	-20%	-40%	-40%	-25%	-40%
Splint mail	-25%	-15%	-15%	-15%	-15%	-10%	-25%
Plate mail	-40%	-20%	-10%	-40%	-40%	-25%	-45%
Field plate	-50%	-40%	-40%	-50%	-45%	-35%	-50%
Full plate	-50%	-40%	-40%	-50%	-50%	-35%	-60%

PP = Pick Pockets, OL = Open Locks, FRT = Find and Remove Traps, MS = Move Silently, HS = Hide in Shadows, DN = Detect Noise, CW = Climb Walls

Apparently there has also been some confusion on the extra damage dice associated with the backstab ability of thieves. If you use a weapon that does 1d6 and you backstab someone, as a first level thief that grants you one extra roll of 1d6. Simple enough, right? But let's say you're doing the deed with a weapon that does 2d4 points of damage? What do you roll for your extra damage die? If you answer this question with 1d4, you've been cheating yourself. The answer is 2d4. For purposes of a backstab, the range of the weapon (in this case, 2-8) is considered the extra damage die, not the actual physical type of die you use to generate the result. If you've been doing it wrong this should be a magnificent discovery for you. And by the way, don't forget to include penetration on all dice rolled. Your guild will thank you for it.

Finally, it is possible for a thief to wear magical versions of the armor allowed by the character class. As described in the ranger section in this chapter, for purposes of thief skills, treat all magic armor whose base armor type is normally fairly bulky as non-bulky and do not apply any penalties associated with armor. And you thought that suit of Ring Mail +1 was a waste of time.

### YAKUZA

The enigmatic yakuza is many things, but simple is not one of them. Though he makes a living with a disregard for actual laws which makes him a criminal, many see him as the protector of the common man. Some yakuza are open criminals who run their organizations like businesses. Some are more mercenary than thief, some are thugs, and some even serve as a type of supplemental police force. Pragmatic lords often have agreements with yakuza defining the limits of their activity (and thus encouraging those not restricted). Some actually cooperate with yakuza organizations.

The yakuza represents the underworld of society, committing and controlling illegal activity. Yet he also watches over those under his care, with what seems to outsiders to be an odd affection for his victims. This may come from taking a long-term view: yakuza serve their "family" first, and so are more concerned with ongoing activity than a large individual score. This means they can't take too much from the populace, and (for example) realistic commoners just see protection money as another kind of tax. Because yakuza gain most of their advantages from interacting with others, they prefer urban environments. Yakuza feel despondent and alone in the countryside, and they really hate getting rocks in their sandals.

To become a yakuza, a character must have a minimum Strength of 10, a Dexterity of 14, an Intelligence of 12, and a Charisma of 15. They have no prime requisite and thus do not gain an experience point bonus for high Ability Scores.

Yakuza use 6-sided dice for hit points. They use the attack and saving throw tables of thieves. Yakuza can use and gain proficiency with any weapon, but can only use padded or leather armor. At 1st level, the yakuza has three proficiency slots. Yakuza must be adopted by an organization of their brethren that they call their "family", but must renounce all ties to any biological family. Add +5 to the yakuza's roll on PHB Table 4L: Order of Birth.

Yakuza gain the gaming skill at no initial cost. Also, every time they purchase a roll of the mastery die they gain two rolls (and two rolls of the Honor die!). A yakuza also begins play with the thief skills pick pockets, open locks, move silently, hide in shadows and detect noise. Table 1AA: Yakuza Abilities shows the initial ratings in each of these skills:

Yakuza gain 25 points to distribute among these abilities at 1st level (no more than 10 can go into any single skill). They gain 20 points at each subsequent experience level (no more than 10 can go into any single skill).

Yakuza are experts at gleaning information with their area of operation. They begin play with the glean information skill at no BP cost. Because they

**Table 1Z: Yakuza Progression Table**

Experience Points	Level	Hit Dice	Level Title
0-2,000	1	1	L'il Yak
2,001-4,000	2	2	Chinpira
4,001-8,000	3	3	Dorobo
8,001-16,000	4	4	Zaisha
16,001-30,000	5	5	Hanzaisha
30,001-60,000	6	6	Boryokudan
60,001-130,000	7	7	Sori
130,001-260,000	8	8	Kossori
260,001-520,000	9	9+1	Yakuza
520,001-800,000	10	9+2	Yakuza (10th level)
800,001-1,100,000	11	9+3	Yakuza (11th level)
1,100,001-1,400,000	12	9+4	Yakuza (12th level)
1,400,001-1,700,000	13	9+5	Yak Boss
1,700,001-2,000,000	14	9+6	Yak Lord
2,000,001-2,300,000	15	9+7	Yakuza Lord
2,300,001-2,600,000	16	9+8	Yakuza Lord (16th level)
2,600,001-2,900,000	17	9+9	Yakuza Lord (17th level)
2,900,001-3,200,000	18	9+10	Super Yak
3,200,001-3,500,000	19	9+11	Yakuza Master
3,500,001-3,800,000	20***	9+12	Yakuza Daimyo

\* At first level, yakuza receive 20 hit points + 1d6. This twenty point "kicker" is received at first level only.

\*\* Yakuza gain 1 hit point per level after the 9th.

\*\*\* 300,000 experience points per level for each additional level beyond the 20th.

**Table 1AA: Yakuza Abilities**

Ability	Base Score
Pick Pockets	10
Open Locks	10
Move Silently	10
Hide in Shadows	10
Detect Noise	15

know the lay of the land, understand the people, and spend so much time in their specific territory, the yakuza gain bonuses to glean information within that realm. The yakuza adeptness at discreetly acquiring floor plans, finding out where a lord hides a particular item, ferreting out informers, finding fences, knowing which bars have the best 'Happy Hour' and so on is remarkable, though not magical.

Table 1BB: Yakuza Investigation indicates the skill bonus and the territory at each experience level. The bonus only applies to the skill within the area a yakuza of that level covers. This area centers on the yakuza's base of operations, the yakuza may have an investigative range larger than the actual territory he directly controls.

A number of major streets define a block. A square block has a road on each of the four sides, though technically blocks may have odd shapes. A typical block contains 10-20 buildings.

A ward consists of at least 5 blocks. Usually, local governments and police forces cover one ward, with a ward captain reporting to his superior for all activity within that area. Yakuza territories typically mirror these borders.

A district contains three or more wards. This division may be unofficial, as districts can be defined by building types (such as a certain type of business, nobles' residences, or temples). Natural features such as rivers may also bound it, or it may be a walled "old city" area.

A province may be a state in a larger empire, the entire city-state in which the yakuza dwells, or some other large geographical boundary. However, the province must have similar politics (usually the same ruler) and a common language for the yakuza to exercise his extraordinary investigative abilities.

Another restriction on this ability is that it must be logically possible to determine the information gleaned. For instance, if no one in the area knows that a dragon has taken up residence nearby, the yakuza could not possibly learn that information. However, if the dragon has been taking livestock in the night, and a few people have seen a "large, odd bird" flying in the distance at night, the yakuza might be able to put the pieces together. For simple

information (such as a schedule for changing guards), the yakuza often need not even make a skill check. He might fail only if the information is difficult to acquire or known to but a few. Such difficult information (but not actual secrets) requires him to spend 1d3 days talking to people, in addition to 2d6 gold pieces for drinks, bribes, and the like. Secret information (known only to high ranking individuals and meant to be restricted) requires 3d6 days of investigation and 10d4 gold pieces or more.

GMs will note that information can become outdated or simply be inaccurate. Common information is always accurate (the yakuza can sort through competing versions until he arrives at the truth). Difficult to obtain information is correct 90% of the time. Uncommon information (known only to a few) is correct 75% of the time. Secret information is correct 60% of the time. Outdated information may have some use, but often does not (a guard schedule may have changed completely). Inaccurate information contains some type of error, but it is not necessarily all false (a new wall may have been added to a floor plan). Note that particularly astute civil authorities may purposely disseminate false information as counter-espionage so the Yakuza must always be cautious for this ruse.

Yakuza have a knack for dealing with others that they hone with training and experience. They know when it's best to threaten, cajole, bribe, befriend, or demand. For this reason, they gain a +2 to reactions (on Table 8C: NPC Reactions in the GMG) in encounters where social status is a factor.

In addition to their knack for dealing with others, yakuza have a number of special contacts. A contact can provide the yakuza with special information, aid, or items otherwise unavailable to him. Many confuse contacts with cronies and sidekicks. Contacts are NPCs who will not join a yakuza on adventures, but will support his efforts by buying stolen goods, providing a safe hideout, carrying messages, providing information and so on. Contacts will not endanger themselves to help the character, but will risk their reputations or resources to help out. A contact might help bury a body, but most would be more likely to just suggest a good spot to dig. If fairly treated, not threatened, they remain loyal and keep silent. A bad incident or two can cool a character's relationship with his contacts, but it generally takes some significant problem (betraying the contact to the authorities, the death of a contact's family member, etc.) to lose one.

A contact might become a henchman, sidekick, or crony at some point, if the GM allows it. However, the contact is not replaced unless the GM is feeling unusually generous. The player should propose a contact by defining his name, position, and connection to the yakuza character when he wishes to use one. [Don't even think of trying something like, "Sir Percival, Holy Lord Regent of the Ralm and ironically my fourth cousin once removed shall be my contact." Your GM will be perfectly justified in applying *several* rolls on the Smartass Smackdown Table - or worse!] Though he need not be a leveled character at all, a contact cannot ever be more than four experience levels higher than the yakuza (if he advances to that level after being established, he has simply moved out of the yakuza's social echelon and cannot deal with him any more). Good contacts might be ship captains, gatekeepers, guards, minor samurai, corrupt judges, or wealthy merchants. The GM must approve the contact. The GM can further define the contact NPC if he wishes, but the player must keep track of his contacts himself (the GM has no obligation to inform a player when a contact might be useful). The GM must remember

**Table 1BB: Yakuza Investigation**

Level	Bonus	Area
1	+10%	1 block
2	+13%	1 block
3	+15%	2 blocks
4	+19%	2 blocks
5	+23%	3 blocks
6	+27%	3 blocks
7	+31%	1 ward *
8	+35%	1 ward
9	+40%	1 ward
10	+45%	2 wards
11	+50%	2 wards
12	+55%	2 wards
13	+60%	1 district **
14	+65%	1 district
15	+70%	1 district
16	+75%	2 districts
17	+80%	2 districts
18	+85%	2 districts
19	+90%	3 districts
20	+95%	3 districts
21+	+95%	Province ***

\* 5+ blocks

\*\* 3+ wards

\*\*\* 4+ districts

that, thought the contact is an NPC under his control, he is an ally of the yakuza character and does want to help him when possible.

Once a contact is established, the yakuza can use that contact again when necessary. Contacts, like anyone, resent being pestered (especially if communicating with a yakuza is risky for them, as is sometimes the case). They are not walking treasuries or servants of the yakuza, but there is no rule restricting how often a character might try to use a contact. Helping a yakuza with minor favors (borrowing a sword) no more than twice a month is unlikely to strain a contact. More significant ("medium") favors (letting a yakuza past the gate without authorization) count as 2-4 minor favors. Major favors (letting a yakuza into the lord's keep unseen) count as 2-4 medium favors.

A yakuza begins at 1st level with one contact and gains a new contact at every odd experience level (3, 5, 7 etc.). These need not be defined immediately. If he loses a contact (through death of the contact or the contact advancing beyond his range, he does not necessarily gain a replacement contact. He must advance at least one experience level before trying to replace the lost contact, and the GM must approve, of course. A yakuza who loses a contact primarily through his own actions (betraying him, getting his family killed, excessive favors, etc.) gains no replacement contact, though he may gain further contacts through level advancement.

### Inner strength.

Yakuza originally hail from distant lands, where it seems virtually every character learns to focus his "ki" to enable some impressive abilities. At 1st level, the yakuza can use his special training to anticipate opponent's moves for short periods of time. This allows him to partially block attacks, sidestep strikes at the last moment, or in some similar way reduce the effectiveness of the attack. The damage from the attack (and the crit BSL, if appropriate), is halved (round fractions up).

To use this ability, the yakuza must not have attacked yet that round. He also suffers a -2 to-hit on any attacks made until the end of that round. He can use this power a number of times per day up to his experience level, but only once per round. The yakuza must determine if he wants to use this power after the GM announces he has been hit but before the GM rolls for damage.

As stated above, yakuza must belong to a family, but this is not a natural family. The organization of yakuza adopts the new member into the fold, and these ties replace all blood ties. The yakuza family uses the same terms (*oyabun*, or family head, uncle, father, brother, cousin) to indicate connections, and the character is expected to treat these individuals as others treat their blood relations. The yakuza does not consult tables for his family Honor, instead the Honor of his yakuza organization (Zingi) becomes his family Honor. His own Honor reflects his yakuza family's, as his own actions can affect that family's Honor. A yakuza in good standing receives 2 gp per experience level as a stipend to cover expenses for performing his duties for the family.

A yakuza who harms his family's Honor greatly may be called upon to make amends. This can take a number of forms, from simply paying a huge sum to completing a spectacularly dangerous mission. Most of the time, however, amends are made in the presence of the *oyabun*. To prove his loyalty and remorse for his misdeeds, the offender receives a dagger. In front of the *oyabun* (and anyone the family head wishes present), the character must cut off half of his own fifth finger. These types of amends can only be made twice - obviously. Thereafter, an offending yakuza will likely be killed (after appropriate torture) for betraying the family.

Starting at 2nd level, the yakuza can call on his *kyodai-bun* (fellow yakuza) to assist him in an enterprise. He can do this once per level. Each must be one or more experience level below the yakuza, and in no case can any be higher than 8th level. Furthermore, the total experience levels summoned cannot exceed those of the summoning yakuza character. The yakuza must get the approval of the family member who oversees the area involved for a specific enterprise. At 9th level or higher, the summoning yakuza must have the approval of the *oyabun*.

A yakuza family has a base of operations that covers a political territory within a city (or, sometimes, more than one city). Each family protects its

**Table ICC: Requirements for Dual Classing**

New Class	Training Time	Cost
Acrobat	1 month	1,000 gp
Assassin	1 month	1,000 gp
Bard	2 months	1,200 gp
Brigand	2 weeks	500 gp
Charlatan	2 months	2,000 gp
Infiltrator	6 weeks	1,100 gp
Minstrel	6 weeks	1,000 gp
Ninja	3 months	2,500 gp
Pirate	2 weeks	700 gp
Yakuza	1 month	*

\*A "Major" favor (see class description)

territory fiercely, as they gain their power, influence, and income from that area. Secret wars and bloody feuds often take place as one family tries to retain or usurp the territory of another. These areas co-exist within more traditional political boundaries and often share boundaries, but they need not be exactly the same. The family makes its headquarters within this area, wherever the head of the family decides to place it. Each new character has responsibility for overseeing a part of this area and reports (along with several other family members parallel to him who oversee other areas) to a

higher ranking member. When a yakuza advances in level, he may be assigned to oversee more territory. This typically occurs every 2-3 levels. While a yakuza in a higher position of power is usually of higher experience level also, this need not be the case.

Members of a certain family mark their allegiance through tattoos. These designs also serve to indicate rank within the family, not least simply by the number of tattoos and how much of his body they cover. With each level advance, the yakuza receives new tattoos. Yakuza cannot have any tattoos covering the face, hands or feet as these parts of the body are frequently visible to outsiders. If the yakuza wishes to make someone know his allegiance, he will show him his tattoos, typically in dramatic fashion. Yakuza also cannot have tattoos other than those given to them by the family. High level yakuza have tattoos covering the entire chest, back, arms, legs, and sides. Any character from the yakuza's culture understands the meaning of these marks. They are both a badge of honor and warning.

**Table IDD: Thief Group Name Level**

Class	Name	Level
Acrobat	Acrobat	10
Assassin	Assassin	9
Bard	Scheister	10
Brigand	Brigand	10
Charlatan	Charlatan	10
Infiltrator	Infiltrator	10
Minstrel	Maestro	9
Ninja	Ninja	10
Pirate	Rogue Pirate	10
Thief, standard	Highwayman	10
Yakuza	Yakuza	9

If a yakuza's Honor falls below that of his family, they cast him out. He becomes a non-person, lower than a stray dawg. They will not avenge his death nor even recognize his existence. "Civilians" will not deal with him nor even speak to him in any way. However, enemy families still treat the cast out as an enemy.

Though many legal entities recognize yakuza and do not wish to war with them, yakuza are criminals. They can be arrested, punished, or even executed.

Duddley-Do-Right may have been appointed as the new Colonel of the city watch, or the family may need a sacrifice to keep the law in general at bay. Whatever the case, the yakuza must always be wary of the law. Watchmen hate cocky criminals more than successful ones.

Because of their odd position in society and the need for stability, yakuza coordinate family activities carefully. The family does not want to demand too much in protection money or kidnap one too many merchants. Any enterprise must be approved by a higher-ranking official (except of course those coming from the *oyabun* himself). Those who threaten this stability, whether yakuza or not, are often hunted down and turned over to the government, severely maimed, or killed. Thus, in an odd way, yakuza actually serve as stabilizing forces within society and (under normal circumstances) even keep the crime levels down to a low simmer.

## DUAL CLASSING

It is possible to dual class between classes within the same class group. Thus, a thief can dual class and become an acrobat or a bard, if he meets all the standard requirements. Note that all dual classed characters are still bound by the rules in the Player's Handbook (page 73-74). Thus, the new first level acrobat must use first level saves, to-hit charts, etc. Even after his level in the new class surpasses his experience level the old class, these levels do not "add together" in any manner (though you may use the better of the two).

The player can choose which attack values and bonuses to use. If he chooses a benefit from his old class (such as the ability to backstab), he is using abilities of his old class. He gets no experience points (EP) for that encounter (he is not learning anything new) and half EP for the entire session.

Note that the GM determines what time span of play constitutes one session. It should be a four to eight hour span of gaming without breaks of more than one hour, but that could be part of a split session, in which case the PC faces an even greater loss of EP. The GM's decision on the span of one "session" applies to all "per session" awards for EP and related matters, including the player-selected most valuable player and ratings concerning the quality of each player's role playing of his character. However, if a session goes more than two sittings and/or more than eight hours, the GM must provide an explanation of why he wants to call the split or excessive time one session.

A dual classed character gains no additional Building Points upon embarking on his new career path, but does improve his Fractional Ability Scores upon advancing each level in the new class.

Now, there is more involved in dual classing than simply deciding that you are sick of your current class and wanting to try something else. Those special abilities possessed by other classes don't magically appear. They are gained through a lengthy period of training (and perhaps indoctrination). Table 1CC: Requirements for Dual Classing lists the time and training costs required to assume a new class. Bear in mind that some of these classes have alignment restrictions.

## LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

As described on page 343 of the Player's Handbook, when a character advances in experience level he may roll his Honor Die and the appropriate polyhedron according to class (PHB Table 11A) and add the results to his Fractional Ability Scores. Because this book introduces some new classes, we provide supplemental information to expand and replace that available on Table 11A in the Player's Handbook for thief group characters, Table 1EE: Fractional Ability Die Roll by Class. The class level required to achieve "name" level is defined in Table 1DD: Thief Group Name Level for each character class in the thief group.

**Table 1EE: Fractional Ability Die Roll by Class**

Class	Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma	Comeliness
Acrobat	d20	d12	d6	d10	d8	d5	d4
Assassin	d20	d12	d8	d10	d6	d5	d4
Bard	d5	d8	d4	d10	d6	d20	d12
Brigand	d20	d12	d4	d5	d6	d10	d8
Charlatan	d5	d6	d8	d20	d10	d12	d4
Infiltrator	d10	d20	d5	d12	d4	d6	d8
Minstrel	d4	d20	d5	d8	d12	d10	d6
Ninja	d6	d20	d12	d8	d5	d10	d4
Pirate	d12	d20	d10	d8	d6	d5	d4
Thief, Standard	d8	d20	d6	d10	d4	d12	d4
Yakuza	d8	d12	d6	d10	d5	d20	d4

# Chapter 2

## Thief Group Priors, Particulars and Options

This chapter contains several new facets of fleshing out starting thief characters. First, we will look at extended quirk and flaw tables for thieves, and then we will cover new tables that supplement the character creation procedure detailed in the Player's Handbook. Next, we will discuss various background packages that you can purchase (with building points). These packages are additional options for the player character; they give a character individual detail, but also come with a price in building points and sometimes quirks and flaws as well. Next, we will look at some of the new skills and talents that are appropriate for thieves. Finally, we will look at some suggested personality types to help you role-play your thief.

### THIEF QUIRKS AND FLAWS

If you wish to commit yourself to playing a thief character (and if you're reading this book I can only imagine that is the case), you can roll on the thief group specific tables below instead of those quirks and flaws tables found in the Player's Handbook. To do so, roll on the new Player's Handbook Table 6A (geared towards thieves) instead of Table 6A in the Player's Handbook. This new table includes two new tables that have quirks and flaws detailed here. New Table 6A in this book supercedes Table 6A in the Player's Handbook in this case. A multi-class character with a thief class may choose on which table to roll initially, but once he has chosen, he cannot change his mind - especially after he gets screwed! Note that the new sub-tables that result from New Table 6A are not identified with the chapter number and then a sequential letter as done elsewhere in this book. They are numbered 6Q and 6R because they are extensions of the tables in Chapter 6 of the Player's Handbook.

### NEW FLAWS

**Arthritis:** This chronic condition results from swelling in the protective tissue surrounding the joints. As a result, fine movements can become very painful. A character with this flaw suffers a permanent -15% modifier to all his pick pockets and open locks checks. He also suffers a -15% to all musical instrument skills. In addition, they must spend 1 minute resting (they cannot use their hands for anything) after every use of the listed thieving abilities or a musical instrument skill. (Major: 8)

**Big Hands:** A character with this flaw was born with disproportionately sized hands or "sausage fingers". Because of this, he must have gloves and gauntlets custom made, costing between ten and twenty times the base cost of the item. In addition, he suffers a -5% penalty to all pick pockets, remove traps, and open locks rolls. He also suffers a -5% penalty to all stringed instrument and exotic instrument checks, but receives a +5% bonus to all brass, wind and percussion instrument skill checks. (Minor: 6)

**Club-Footed:** A character born with this unfortunate condition has a hard time finding footwear that fits. Boots, sandals, slippers, shoes and other footwear must be custom made, which is both expensive and easy to identify. Custom footwear will cost between three and five times the base cost of the item. In addition, anyone tracking a club-footed character gets a +10% to his Tracking roll, and the character is more likely to be identified by his misshapen footprints. Finally, he suffers a -15% to any climb walls check and -5% to any dancing skill check. (Minor: 7)

**Impotent/Barren:** Whether because of a genetic defect, inbreeding or a nasty critical hit, this character is no longer able to have children. Though the character may not tell anyone, others have a sixth sense for detecting his shortcoming. Thus, the Charisma of this character is reduced by 2 with respect to members of the opposite sex. In addition, he loses 1 point of Honor (temporal) every time someone learns of his specific "disability." Despite the recent publicity given this affliction by a maimed ex-Senator, this flaw is not that common and it doesn't happen to all guys (or girls). For males, the flaw is impotent, and for females, the flaw is barren. (Major: 8)

**Loud Talker:** A character with this flaw has a normal speaking volume that is much louder than the average person. His normal speaking voice is akin to that which most people would use in a crowded bar. He is often oblivious to the need to lower his voice. If others point out to him the importance of keeping his voice down in a given situation, he may comply for a brief period of time but quickly forgets (usually within a round) and often resorts to his normal loud speaking voice. With practice, in these situations the character may learn to make a Wisdom check before continuing to speak loudly. (Minor: 7)

**Precious Metal Allergy:** A character with this flaw is extremely allergic to a specific type of precious metal. Whenever he is within five feet of the specific metal, he will start sneezing uncontrollably. This gives him a +2 penalty to all initiative rolls, a +2 to all his opponent's surprise rolls, and disrupts any spells requiring continuous concentration. He may also suffer additional modifiers or embarrassment

### New Table 6A

Roll	Table
1-9	Table 6B (PHB)
10-19	Table 6C (PHB)
20-31	Table 6D (PHB)
32-44	Table 6E (PHB)
45-60	Table 6Q (herein)
61-66	Table 6F (PHB)
67-73	Table 6G (PHB)
74-80	Table 6H (PHB)
81-88	Table 6I (PHB)
89-100	Table 6R (herein)

### Table 6Q: Flaws, Thief

Roll	Flaw	BPs
1-11	Arthritis	8
12-21	Big Hands	6
22-31	Club-Footed	7
32-41	Impotent/Barren	8
32-56	Loud Talker	7
46-55	Precious Metal Allergy	11
56-67	Shaky Hands	10
68-78	Sleep Stealer	12
79-90	Small Ears	6
91-100	Suspicious Mannerism	15

### Table 6R: Quirks, Thief

Roll	Flaw	BPs
1-7	Afraid of the Dark	11
8-15	Anal Retentive	7
16-26	Attention Deficit Disorder	10
27-33	Close Talker	3
34-39	Expanded Personal Space	4
40-44	Identity Paranoia	4
45-48	Mask Fetish	13
49-55	Nervous Laugh	6
56-59	Overly Competitive	5
60-69	Poor Impulse Control	6
70-75	Secret Identity	7
76-84	Social Guilt	12
85-90	Tourette's Syndrome, Minor	7
91-94	Tourette's Syndrome, Major	13
95-100	Whisperer	10

**Table 2A: Precious Metal Allergy**

Roll (d20)	Metal
1-3	Copper
4-6	Silver
7-12	Gold
13-15	Platinum
16-17	Electrum
18	Hard Silver
19-20	Roll twice ignoring this result

with the metal. During this time, he suffers a -2 or -10% penalty to all his rolls. This penalty always works against the character (it would be a +2 on an ability check, for example).

Roll on Table 2A: Precious Metal Allergy to determine the metal the character is allergic to. (Major: 11)

**Shaky Hands:** When he is nervous, a character with this flaw has very shaky hands. Under stressful situations, his hands will begin to shake violently and delicate or precise movements will become more difficult. Stressful situations include, but are not limited to, combat, instances in which failure may result in injury or death, and instances in which failure may result in detection by another party or parties. The GM is the ultimate arbiter of what constitutes a stressful situation.

In such situations, the character suffers a -1 to-hit on all ranged attacks (but not melee attacks) and -5% to any skill or class skill roll requiring the hands (such as open locks or pick pockets). In addition, there is a 2% chance that he will drop any items that he is holding. This increases to 5% if silence is needed. (Major: 10)

**Sleep Stealer:** They say crime never sleeps, but for some characters, that's not entirely accurate. This serious flaw is related to the more common problem of sleep walking. A sleep stealer often rises in the middle of the night and takes things from anyone nearby. The whole time he is pilfering his companions' valuables, he remains asleep and unaware of the deeds. Every night, the character must succeed at a Wisdom check at half his Wisdom, or he will steal in his sleep. The GM makes this roll, and whether or not the character succeeds, he will be unaware. The GM should make all appropriate rolls behind his shield to keep the results from the sleep stealer. Tying or binding the sleep stealer when he sleeps will help prevent the theft, but the GM may give the sleeping thief an open locks roll to see if he is able to shed his bindings. (Major: 12)

**Table 2B: Suspicious Mannerism**

Roll 2d8	Mannerism
2	Shifty eyes
3	Hunched shoulders
4	Dark eyebrows
5	Evil laugh
6	Slinking walk
7	Handlebar mustache
8	Unkempt hair
9	Crotch grabber
10	Nail biter
11	Questioning attitude ("Who wants to know?")
12	Inquisitive attitude ("How many guards does this joint have?")
13	Runs from lawmen
14	Nervously watches doors
15	Prefers "street" fashions
16	GM choice

depending upon the situation, as determined by the GM.

If the allergic character ever physically touches the offending metal, he immediately breaks out in hives (in addition to the sneezing). The hives will last as long as he is in contact with the metal, plus fifteen additional minutes for every hour he is in contact

**Small Ears:** A character with this flaw was born with ears that are smaller than the average for their race. They suffer a -10% to all detect noise checks and -1 to their surprise rolls. In addition, there is a 5% chance that any headgear not secured by a chinstrap will fall off when this character is attacked. (Minor: 6)

**Suspicious Mannerism:** A character with this flaw has something distinctive about his appearance that makes him always appear guilty or suspicious. As a result, the authorities are more likely to arrest him for crimes, both those he did and didn't commit (he is one of the "usual suspects"). In addition, any temporal Honor loss is doubled, as people are more likely to remember him and his deeds. Positive Honor gains are not doubled, however (the public is fickle, after all). Roll on Table 2B: Suspicious Mannerism to determine what feature the character possesses. (Major: 15)

## NEW QUIRKS

**Afraid of the Dark:** A character with this quirk is very uncomfortable in dark situations. If possible, they will always stay near a source of light like a torch or a lantern. A character with this flaw will not willingly go into a dark place without a light source unless some greater concern (such as a life or death situation) warrants it. If they ever find themselves in the dark, they will try to escape as soon as possible. While in the dark, they suffer a -5% or -1 penalty to all dice rolls. A character with this quirk cannot take the blind-fighting or blind-casting talents. (Major: 11)

**Anal Retentive:** This quirk makes a character obsessed with cleanliness, order and organization. Everything must be done just so. His weapons and clothes must always be meticulous and his backpack and sacks are always organized and labeled, etc. While attention to detail is considered a virtue, this character simply goes too far. As such, any task he performs takes twice as long be it attempting to pick a lock or donning armor. (Minor: 7)

**Attention Deficit Disorder:** A character with this quirk has a difficult time focusing on one task for an extended period of time. In order to continue doing a task for more than five rounds in a row, the character must make a Wisdom check. He makes a check for every round of continued activity beyond the fifth. On the sixth round, the check is made against the character's Wisdom without modifiers. On each successive round, the character suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to the roll. As soon as he fails his Wisdom check, he must stop what he is currently doing and begin something else. (Major: 10)

**Close Talker:** A close talker is a person who, when talking to someone, stands so close to that person that they make that person uncomfortable. A character with this quirk always stands as close to someone as he can when talking. Ideally, they are close enough that they could kiss with very little movement, but other circumstances may prohibit this. This effectively reduces the Charisma and Comeliness of such a character by 1 point. (Minor: 3)

**Expanded Personal Space:** This quirk causes a character to become very uncomfortable when anyone gets close to him. They demand their personal space, and in the case of a character with this quirk, that space extends out to two feet from their body. A character with this flaw will do everything in his power to move away from someone that invades his personal space, and will not be afraid to let someone know that he has done so. Likewise, they will not engage in any activity that forces another to invade their personal space. As long as another creature is within 2 feet of a character with this quirk, he will suffer a -1 or -5% penalty to all his rolls. Engaging in melee combat is normally not an invasion of one's personal space though wrestling certainly would be. (Minor: 4)

**Identity Paranoia:** A character with this quirk is terrified of revealing his true identity. When asked, they refuse to give their real name, and they periodically change the name they give. Once a character with this quirk changes his name, he will never acknowledge the old name, refusing money, rewards and titles in the old persona's name. If he is repeatedly referred to by the old name, he will become violent, possibly attacking the offending parties. (Minor: 4)

**Mask Fetish:** Whether he's horribly disfigured or just thinks it's cool, a character with this quirk always wears a mask. Unfortunately, most people are extremely suspicious of a man in a mask. Law enforcement will pay extra attention to him, and they are twice as likely to arrest him for a crime, whether he committed it or not. In addition, all negative Honor awards are doubled (he's assumed to be nefarious), but not positive awards. (Major: 13)

**Nervous Laugh:** When nervous, some people sweat or become queasy; a character with this quirk laughs uncontrollably. A nervous laugh is not a quiet chuckle but a loud, uncomfortable guffaw. This can be very disrupting in delicate situations. The GM must decide when the character is nervous, but any stressful situation, such as sneaking around armed guards or engaging in combat usually qualifies. (Minor: 6)

**Overly Competitive:** This character is competitive to a fault. They must win every competition and be the best at everything they can do. Whenever a creature completes a difficult task, an overly competitive character *must* also try to complete that task. If he succeeds, he'll make sure that everyone knows it. If he fails, however, he will pout for one hour, during which time he suffers a -1 or -5% penalty to all his dice rolls. It is up to the GM to decide what exactly constitutes a difficult task, but all uses of thief abilities and all to-hit rolls requiring a 16 or better to succeed are difficult tasks. A character with this quirk will try to use a skill even if he does not possess it. It will not allow him to attempt something he would otherwise be unable to do, such as cast a spell (if he doesn't have a spell-casting class) or use a skill he cannot use untrained. (Minor: 5)

**Poor Impulse Control:** A character with this quirk is very weak willed when it comes to a specific desire. Whenever he encounters the object of his desire, the GM may force him to make a Wisdom check, with any modifiers the GM sees fit. If he makes his Wisdom check, the character may act however he chooses. If he fails, however, he must attempt to acquire the object of his desire. The character will take reasonable risks to get what he wants. Roll on Table 2C: Poor Impulse Control to determine what desire the character cannot control. (Minor: 6)

**Secret Identity:** Perhaps this character has heroic delusions or perhaps he just wants to protect his family, either way, a character with a secret identity has two personas: one for adventuring, and one for mundane life. When this character has assumed one of his identities, he will refuse to answer to the other identity or acknowledge that he has anything to do with it. He will attempt to keep his adventuring identity from his non-adventuring companions, and vice versa. If someone demonstrates knowledge of both identities, this character will attempt to convince them otherwise. If this fails, they will attempt to silence the knowing character. A character with this quirk should maintain two Honor values, one for each persona. These separate Honor values will be equal when the character is created, but Honor gained while in one persona will only apply to that persona's Honor score. In this way, it is possi-

ble to be in Great Honor with one persona, gaining all the benefits of Great Honor, and to be without those benefits in the other persona. (Minor: 7)

**Social Guilt:** The character cannot help but give out money to any beggars or panhandlers he sees. He feels sorry that life has treated them so unfairly while he gets to go on grand adventures. Social guilt compels him to give at least 10% of the total amount of money he currently has on him to every person he meets who asks for money and is clearly destitute. (Major: 12)

**Tourette's Syndrome:** A character with this flaw has a severe neurological disorder that causes involuntary tics and possibly verbal outbursts. There are two levels of this quirk: minor Tourette's Syndrome and major Tourette's Syndrome. A character with minor Tourette's Syndrome suffers frequent, involuntary movements of his hands and face. As a result, he suffers a -5% to all skill rolls (including thief skills or other class skills). A character with major Tourette's Syndrome also suffers verbal outbreaks, usually cursing, in addition to more severe involuntary movement. He suffers a -1 to attack rolls, -5% to all skill rolls (including thief skills or other class skills) and -1 to Charisma and Comeliness. (Minor: 7, Major: 13)

**Whisperer:** In a passive attempt to call attention to himself during normal conversations, the character with this flaw has decided that he will only speak in whispers. The volume of his voice is barely perceptible to those outside approximately 10 feet. He thinks this makes it seem like what he has to say is more important and that it makes him seem cool, tough and mysterious. Over time, characters with this quirk become incapable of uttering loud expressions with their voice. This usually is not a problem, unless they are trying to yell for help. (Major: 10)

**Table 2C: Poor Impulse Control**

Roll	Desire
1-3	Sex
4-5	Gems
6-7	Coins
8	Tobacco
9-10	Rings
11-12	Necklaces
13-14	Daggers
15-16	Cloaks (preferably black)
17-18	Sweets
19-20	Musical Instruments



## THIEF GROUP PACKAGES

Are you tired of playing plain, old, pick-a-few-pockets-and-open-a-few-locks thieves, even if HackMaster Fourth Edition makes them much more interesting than their predecessors? Do you want still more interest, more variety-but do not want to worry about working out all the details yourself? In the last chapter, we presented you with new thief character classes to choose from. Certainly, that range of choices will make it easy for you to individualize your thief character – to make him different from the rest of the campaign's thieves.

In this chapter, we will make that even easier. You can further customize your thief by taking a thief package for him. (Note that in this sense, "thief" refers to a single-classed character of the thief group; for a given package it may include assassins, bards, classic thieves, and others). A package is a collection of skills, proficiencies, restrictions, benefits and hindrances that give the thief more background and personality, further define his role in the campaign and in the campaign's cultures, and give him advantages and disadvantages to make him more colorful.

A thief character does not need to take a package; it is the player's option. If you wish to do so, choose one just after step 9 of character creation, but before rolling for Priors and Particulars. Table 2D: Thieving Skill Thief Package Adjustments lists a summary of the available packages.

### Thief Group Packages and Individual Classes

Packages are culturally based. Certain classes match up naturally with certain packages. However, a player can assign any package to any thief group character as long as the class is not barred. Classes neither barred nor preferred can take the package with a 4 BP penalty (unless otherwise indicated in the relevant description).

You can only take one thief package for your character, and only when you first create the character. Before approving your character, your GM will certainly look at the package you chose and consider several factors.

First, he will consider whether a package makes sense for his campaign. Not all packages will be consistent with his milieu. Perhaps all the bandit thieves in his campaign belong to a nefarious organization meant to oppose and harass the PCs, or he may simply prefer you to be a PC burglar thief to a sleuth thief so he can more easily manipulate you. Before you waste a lot of valuable time that you could be spending memorizing crucial HackMaster reference material, find out which packages your GM forbids before creating your character.

Assuming the GM says that the panhandler package exists in his campaign, he needs to decide which details are specific to the panhandlers of his world. What causes people to be panhandlers? In a predominantly lawful evil society, for example, there may be a class of people that is systematically oppressed. (This sort of society, by the way, is a perfect setting for thief player characters, whose campaign goal can be to overthrow the oppressive system...or to become part of the ruling class in the system.) The GM should inform the players of all these details specific to his campaign.

While GMs spend a lot of time developing many aspects of their campaign, they cannot fully prepare a background for every possible package combination. When you inquire about the details of a package, pay careful attention to your GM's responses. Even if he has not worked up too many details, he will more readily discuss certain backgrounds and packages than others he may not even have considered at all. Inevitably, he will clue you in as to what areas, classes, packages and characters are important in his game. Consider these factors diligently before finalizing your selection.

### Thief Packages and Multi-Class Characters

These thief packages add depth to a single-classed character of the thief group. If the character is already multi-classed (for example, a dwarven fighter/thief), he does not need any more depth. Therefore, only single-class thief types can take one of the packages described here.

### Thief Packages and Dual-Class Characters

A player may only take a package during character creation. Pay attention!

If a character starts as a thief type, he may take any of the thief packages within the restrictions indicated. If, later, he decides to change classes according to the normal dual class rules, he doesn't lose any of the benefits or hindrances of the package he chose; he is still that sort of character. If that second character class also has a range of packages available to it, he may NOT choose a new, additional package. However, while all of the benefits of that package (granted abilities and so on) count as belonging to his previous class (for the purposes of halving or negating experience point awards), all restrictions remain in effect even before the new class level exceeds the old.

If a character starts off as some other character class, does not take on a package appropriate to that class, and then later switches to one of the thief classes, he may try to convince the GM to allow him to take a thief package at that time. The player can only do this if he rolls on the Quirks and Flaws Table to garner sufficient BPs to offset the cost of the package. Leftover BPs are lost. In addition, the GameMaster may insist that certain campaign events be accomplished in order to allow him to do this.

For instance, let us say that a human magic-user decides, later in life, to become a thief, and he wants to be a con man. Well, there is nothing wrong with that. Who wouldn't want to finally get what is coming to him after wasting years pulling rabbits out of pointy hats? Nevertheless, your GameMaster will insist that the next several adventures deal with that transformation. The character must come up with some scams and put them into practice, at the very least. There must be some reason for him to head down this path. Perhaps he needs to swindle a competitor (or colleague) to win a bet, or perhaps his magic has failed him for the last time. In any case, good GMs like it when you can add something to the background of your character and therefore the entire campaign.

On the other hand, if that same player wanted to adopt the thug package after spending time playing a schooled magic-user, it just would not make sense. A proper GM tells the player he's being disruptive to the game and threatens to roll on the Smartass Smackdown Table (GMG p. 134) if he persists in his petitioning.

### Recording Packages on the Character Sheet

To record your thief package on your character record sheet, do the following: (1) When you write down the character's thief class, also add the name of his thief package there. If the character were a bard and also a panhandler thief, you would write "Bard/Panhandler Thief." (2) Where you write down the character's skills, add the ones you got free from the thief package, and put an asterisk beside them to indicate that they are free proficiencies provided by the package. (3) Wherever you have space for notes, mark down the character's special boons and banes, and any other facts you want to remember.

### Abandoning a Package

A character created with a thief package might, later in his adventuring career, decide that he has to abandon it. For instance, a spy thief might be crushed when his actions resulted in the death of someone he was spying on and got too close to, and he might decide to abandon his duplicitous nature.

The player must tell the GM that he wishes his character to abandon the package. If this choice is the result of some traumatic event, as in the example above, the character may simply wish to declare his intent. If the choice is a gradual one, the GM may want to work it into the story line.

Once the player declares his intent to abandon the package and the GM agrees, he must role-play out his decision and its consequences. He loses all benefits of that package but keeps any special banes or hindrances. If you do this soon after creating the character, expect to be immediately plunged into dishonor (dumping a package within 3 sessions of creating the character results in a 90% loss of base Honor. Before completing the fourth session, the loss is 80%, the fifth 70%, and so on until the character is safe after the twelfth session). He must also suffer the reactions of his allies (and the other members of his clan!), whether good or ill. Once he has abandoned a thief package, the character may not take another thief package to replace it. At this point, he is a normal thief of his specific class within the thief group for the rest of his playing life.



**Table 2D: Thieving Skill Thief Packages Adjustments**

Package	BP cost	Pick Pockets <sup>1</sup>	Open Locks	Find Traps	Remove Traps	Move Silently	Hide in Shadows	Detect Noise	Climb Walls	Read Languages
Actor	9	+5%	-5%	-5%	-5%	-	-	+5%	-	+5%
Bandit	13	-5%	-	+10%	-	-	+5%	-	-5%	-5%
Blade	19	+5%	-5%	-	-5%	-	-5%	+5%	+5%	-5%
Bounty Hunter	10	- <sup>2</sup>	-	+5%	-	-	-	-	-5%	-
Burglar	5	-10%	+5%	-	+5%	-	-	-	+5%	-5%
Con man	11	-	-5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	+5%
Corsair	10	-5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+5%
Fence	21	-	+5%	+5%	-	-5%	-5%	-	-5%	+5%
Gallant	20	-25%	-	-5%	-5%	-	-	+10%	-5%	+5%
Gypsy	11	+10%	-	-	-	-	-	+5%	-10%	-5%
Herald	11	-5%	-	-	-	-	-	+10%	-10%	+5%
Jester	19	+10%	-	-	-	+5%	-	-5%	+5%	-10%
Jongleur	13	+5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	+15%	+5%
Loxmaster	13	-5%	-	-	-	-	-	+5%	-10%	+15%
Panhandler	7	+10%	-5%	-5%	-	-	+5%	-	-	-5%
Puzzler	13	-	+5%	-	-	-5%	-5%	+5%	-	+5%
Robber	4	+10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-5%	-5%
Rover	2	+5%	-5%	-5%	-5%	+5%	-	-	+5%	-
Outrider	10	-10%	-	-	-	+5%	+5%	+5%	-	-
Skald	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	+5%	-	-25%
Sleuth	8	-5%	-	-	-	-	-	+5%	-	-
Smuggler	7	-5%	-5%	-	-	+5%	+5%	+5%	-5%	-
Spy	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Swashbuckler	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thug	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Troublesooter	9	-10%	+5%	+5%	+5%	-	-5%	-	-	-
Warbler	10	-10%	-	-	-	-	-	+10%	-	-10%

1. Includes similar feats of manual dexterity, such as legerdemain and slipping poison (see also note 2, below).

2. Bounty hunters are adept at slipping foreign substances (poison, sedative, etc.) into the food or drink of their targets. Success in such a feat of manual dexterity is determined by a pick pockets roll, and the bounty hunter gets +5% on the roll. This special bonus does not apply, however, to picking pockets or other tasks covered by this ability.

3. In the wilderness, the bandit gets +5% to this ability.

## THE PACKAGES

Each package described here is defined by different characteristics. The package consists of the following elements:

**Name:** The name of the package plus the cost in building points for choosing the package.

**DESCRIPTION:** This describes the cultural backdrop, appearance and style of characters associated with the package. It also lists any prerequisites your character must meet before taking the package. (For instance, a panhandler must be poor or at least appear so.)

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** This section lists those thief classes best suited to the package. As explained above, these do not lock out other classes. BP penalties for choosing a non-preferred thief type are spelled out here. When designing your character, compare the personality traits and attitudes of the typical character of that package with your PC's quirks, flaws and the way you plan to role-play him with those of the desired package. If a conflict arises, you must roll on Table 6H: Quirks, Minor (Personality) on page 93 of the PHB.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** This entry lists those thief types that are locked out of that package. When a thief class cannot choose a specific thief package, it is noted here.

**ROLE:** This section describes the role of a particular thief in the society that spawned him and in a typical campaign. A fence, for instance, exists because other thieves need to market stolen goods. The package therefore describes the role of the fence in his society, and may suggest

how he might function in relation to the rest of the fantasy adventure campaign.

**SKILLS:** This section covers skill benefits or skill requirements for the package. "No initial cost" means that a character gains a skill as if he spent the BP once (for one roll of the mastery die and one roll of the Honor Die), but does not actually spend any BP. He can buy further improvement normally (whether the skill is at no initial cost or a flat initial skill rating). Building point discounts apply each time the character purchases an improvement in that skill (until his adventuring career begins and he must train normally to improve them). Characters are not required to have skills from the "recommended" list, but watch out for those role-playing penalties GMs love to slap down on you.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** This section lists required or bonus weapon proficiencies. The bandit, for instance, must take one crushing weapon.

**TALENTS:** This section covers any required or bonus talents for the package.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** This section of each thief package description also suggests which of the traditional thieves' skills (picking pockets, etc.) are most valuable to that sort of thief. Characters choosing that package best try to rise in ability fastest in those skills, since those skills are likely to get the most practice. These are suggestions – the choice of how to allot skill improvements remains in the hands of the player, though going against the grain of a voluntarily chosen package is just silly.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Some thief packages gravitate toward certain types of equipment. Others have limitations or restrictions on the way they acquire or use equipment. This entry details any restrictions, bonuses, requirements or penalties as well as any adjustment to the starting money roll (on Table 4M: Character Starting Money in the PHB).

A panhandler, for instance, cannot beg very well if he is dressed in resplendent finery, with gilded armor and bejeweled weapons. Furthermore, panhandlers may lean towards clubs and other weapons that are relatively easy to come by.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Most packages grant special, unique benefits to characters. These may be straightforward special abilities. Often, however, they reflect the thief's relationship to his society; they may be defined as special reaction bonuses, special privileges in certain cultures or regions, and so forth. A fence, for instance, gets better reactions from other thieves (especially if they want him as a business partner), and also has less trouble than other characters in finding thieves willing to hire out their skills.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Each package carries certain disadvantages to hinder you.

**RACES:** Each package was written with the human character in mind. In a sense, demi-human thieves of each race are a package unto themselves, because of their non-human heritage. However, it is certainly possible for demi-humans to take one of these packages (pending the GameMaster's approval, of course). Before putting too much effort into a non-human character, be sure to approve the race/package mix with your GM. He might not appreciate dwarf pirates, for instance. Under the heading "Races", we note in each package special considerations for non-human thieves: races recommended (or the opposite) for that package, and any special modifications that might apply to a non-human choosing that package.

### Adjustments to Thief Skills

Because of their varying fields of specialization, thieves of the various packages differ in their aptitudes for various standard thieves' skills. A spy, for instance, would need to be better (or at least would have more practice) at detecting noise than a fence. To reflect the predisposition of the various packages, use Table 2-4: Thieving Skill Thief Packages Adjustments for beginning thieves. This table applies adjustments in a manner similar to Tables 3NN to 3PP on pages 67-68 of the Player's Handbook, and is cumulative with any bonuses or penalties derived from those tables.

After the adjustments have been totaled, the thief may distribute his discretionary points. There normally are 65 discretionary points to distribute (see Player's Handbook, p. 67). Some thief packages may not have as many discretionary points to distribute as beginning characters.

Additionally, if a character in the thief group takes a package that includes a bonus to a thief skill that the character class does not ordinarily have access to, the character gains access to the skill with the indicated bonus as his base chance for success. When advancing in level he may apply discretionary thief skill points to that skill in addition to those warranted by his class. For example, a bard who takes the troubleshooter package gains +5% to open locks. Although this is not normally a bard skill, he gains the skill at 5% at first level. When he advances to second level, he may increase his proficiency in that skill just as he would any of his normal thief skills. Note that all applicable modifiers apply to the newly acquired skills (race, Dexterity, armor, etc.) First level characters may not apply discretionary thief skill points to these package-acquired skills at first level.

### Actor (Building Point Cost: 9)

**DESCRIPTION:** Of all the various types of performers, actors put the most time and energy into their work, or at least are the best at convincing others of that. Actors are true thespians. The actor makes his living portraying other people. A player in drama and verse, he seeks to make people believe he could be anyone from an ancient hero to a lowly messenger boy. Actors

believe that they practice an Art. Their landlords, however, often believe that they are simply lazy deadbeats.

They display their talents in plays, skits, and dramatic productions. When an actor is not acting, he is likely writing scripts, reading for upcoming parts, or practicing questionable breathing techniques for better voice projection. Whereas charlatans act to deceive, though, actors act to make others believe.

An actor needs a Charisma of 12 or higher and a Comeliness of at least 13.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, charlatan, minstrel, thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Pirate.

**ROLE:** Actors entertain the masses, but they prefer to entertain rich audiences. From bawdy comedies to high drama, they must be able to speak in dialect, change their demeanor, and get audiences to believe that they may be any of dozens of different characters. Actors crave attention and approval, and so they learn other entertaining skills as well (dancing, juggling, singing, and the like). Most want nothing more than to achieve widespread acceptance and live in luxury at some noble's court.

Actors rarely travel from town to town unless they are on an acting tour. Even if they are on tour, they often return to their established home. Most actors belong to the local actor's guild and take part in regularly scheduled performances. Without movie studios, actors do not make enough to live in luxury. Especially traveling actors are notorious for relieving audiences of valuables as well as boredom. If accused they can seem offended at the very notion. Surely, somewhere there exists an honest actor....

Acting troupes have a hierarchy of responsibility. Every actor must spend time working sets, doing make up, and taking care of other incidental activity related to performance. In doing so, the thespian picks up a number of skills and abilities, though he rarely masters any one more than is necessary to make someone (even his own elders) believe that he can do it.

Occasionally, powerful people secretly hire actors to serve as spies, or temporarily fill in for a missing person, or stand in to guard against assassination attempts.

The adventuring actor is a rare person (player characters represent almost all of them). Some see adventuring as a way to get closer to various characters. Others seem to think that they are always in a play, and that the monsters cannot really hurt them. Surprisingly, they sometimes survive these encounters. Many are often out for "field research." After all, if you want to play the part of a mighty warrior, what better practice than to actually go dungeoneering? Other thespians adventure purely for the thrill of it all. They look upon such activity as taking a part in the "Grand Play of Life." Such actors often go to any length to mold the adventure into a dramatic production with themselves as the stars – often to the chagrin of their fellow party members.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Acting, disguise, graceful entrance/exit, interpret/perform mime, oration, reading/writing. Recommended: Artistic ability, crowd working, dancing, joke telling, juggling, jumping, languages (ancient and modern), musical instrument (any), poetry, read lips, riding land-based, seamstress/tailor, singing, social etiquette, tumbling, ventriloquism, weaving. Actors get two mastery dice for each purchase of the disguise, observation, or voice mimicry skill. They also gain +1 to every die rolled to improve a social interaction skill.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Since their roles often call for staged combat, successful actors spend a lot of time practicing with all types of weapons, in order to make their plays more realistic. This produces a unique situation. Actors understand the showy stage methods for using most weapons and might convince people they know how to use them, but actually, they practice carefully choreographed motions repeatedly. They rarely practice with any one weapon long enough to become truly proficient at it.

Therefore, first level actors are proficient only with the dagger. At second level, they become proficient with the knife and at fifth level actors gain their final weapon proficiency – the short sword.

This restriction is partially offset by the fact that an actor's penalty for using weapons without being proficient in them is reduced by one. All that practice has some value....

**TALENTS:** None.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Actors develop read languages as they need to examine scripts in poor handwriting with encoded instructions. They also sometimes need to hide in shadows, waiting for their cues. Many also excel at pick pockets to distract audiences from quick costume changes and to employ effects meant to maximize their dramatic effect of their performances.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Actors gain no special monetary advantages, though they certainly know how to spend any that they get. Successful thespians live highly extravagant lifestyles.

In the course of their acting, performers don all forms of armor for their various roles. This sets them apart from the norm. Consequently, they can wear any form of armor and even carry shields. However, they incur 2 points of Armor Class penalty when wearing armor or bearing a shield that is not standard for their class (their understanding of these armor types is imperfect).

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**General Acting:** Actors are masterful thespians. Using this ability, they can act as if a light blow was fatal, pretend to faint, or exaggerate their abilities. These skills are required on stage, but are also very useful during adventures.

Acting functions in much the same way as illusion spells. If the audience believes the act, then it works without question. If the audience is skeptical, they are allowed to roll a saving throw versus spell with a -1 penalty for every three levels of the actor. If the saving throw succeeds, they realize that the thespian is acting; otherwise, they accept the act.

Of course, acts can go only so far. It is impossible to act as if you are lifting a 700-pound boulder over your head unless you have the aid of magic (or a Strength of 20 or more).

Actors spend so much time portraying others, that they gain +5% to their effective disguise skill if given 20 minutes of solitary, quiet preparation (and they have observed the character their disguise imitates). Additionally, they need make no check at all if those observing the actor have no reason to think he could be other than he appears! For example, an actor posing as a guard at a drawbridge would draw no suspicion, even from characters with the observation skill. However, they would need to check if the Deputy Captain of the Guard staged a surprise inspection (and found a tabard out of place, the grip on the halberd too high, boots scuffed, and so on...). If the character can think of a good excuse (GM's discretion), he may attempt a second disguise check to fool the observer.

**Spell Acting:** Any actor with the spellcraft skill can act as if he can cast powerful spells. To put on such a performance, all those who will be affected must be able to easily view the actor. The actor then stands up, chants arcane words, gestures, and tosses "magical" powder (and possibly other props) about. During the spell acting, the thespian directs his attention and gestures toward the intended targets of the spell. After one round of this (if the actor succeeds at a spellcraft check), the targets must roll a successful morale check or flee in terror.

If the actor actually casts a flashy spell during the act (e.g. Burning Hands), apply the spell level as a penalty to the morale check. Once an actor spouts real fire from his hands, it is fairly easy to convince skittish Kobolds that something worse is coming, so long as the gestures are grand enough.

**Observe Motions:** Actors are trained to observe the motions of others. Usually they use this skill to see cues from fellow actors during a performance. This ability also enables them to predict the movements of opponents during combat. On any round after the first, an actor who wins initiative gains a +2 bonus to his Armor Class and saving throws and a +1 bonus to attack rolls.

**SPECIAL BANES:** All actors have the self-absorbed quirk, but they gain no extra BP for it.

**RACES:** Actors come from all races, though most are human, elven or half-elven. Some troupes seek out halflings and gnomelings to play the roles of children. Pixie fairies have a limited repertoire of roles. Dwarven culture has little acting tradition but a rich tapestry of story telling (typically including the acting out of a few scenes from a long epic), while half-ogres and half-orcs hardly ever become actors of any kind.

### Bandit (Building Point Cost: 13)

**DESCRIPTION:** Travel is rarely a safe affair in the medieval fantasy setting, whether one traverses the forbidding wilderness or the pastoral countryside. Beside the dangers of nature and fantastic menaces, such as dragons and giants, there are humans and demi-humans who prey on their journeying kin. One or more bands of highwaymen claim almost every stretch of road near civilization, and even the far wilderness hides the strongholds of robbers.

Bandits must be strong and hardy to withstand the harsh forces of nature, the people who seek their destruction, and each other. Thus, a character must have minimum Ability Scores of 10 in both Strength and Constitution to be eligible for the bandit package.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Brigand, thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Minstrel.

**ROLE:** Bandits are often vicious characters – desperate, cunning, and cruel. They are prone to fight or even betray each other, but two things keep them from doing so constantly. The utter necessity of cooperation in order to survive the perils of the wilderness (let alone to be successful robbers), and the strength of whoever has established himself as leader among them by force and cunning binds groups of bandits together.

Some leaders manage to weld together very large groups of bandits. In some HackMaster worlds, there are even kingdoms of bandits. Such things are rare, however, since few leaders have the strength or Charisma to bind



many of these thieves; or even if they do, the mob rarely stays together beyond the leader's demise. (Of course, in this, bandit leaders are often little different from more traditional lords....)

Bandits do not belong to guilds, as such. A large group of them, or a network of cooperating groups, may be similar to a guild, however – providing some training, intimidating nonmembers who operate in their "territory" (including humanoids and monsters), and so forth. A few bandit groups may actually have connections to a big city guild, though such ties would probably be very loose (perhaps occasional cooperation, rather than subservience).

Bandits rarely have pleasant reasons for pursuing their lifestyles. Most have a history better left behind, and many have a price (or three) on their heads in some place or another. The average Bandit would be better off outside the wilderness, but with enemies and authorities elsewhere, it is the closest available thing to a sanctuary.

Bandits can expect less than mercy at the hands of the law. Banditry itself is a (quite often severely) punishable offense, and most of these thieves already have a few other major crimes under their belt. However, like a city guild, bandits can work out arrangements with local military and civilian authorities. In exchange for bribes and a cut of the take, bandits may garner information on rich targets and how best to avoid the punitive expeditions that authorities periodically send against them (often at the behest of their lords or due to the demands of the populace).

Alternatively, a good-aligned player enamored of this package may portray himself and his fellows as "partisans". The local authorities treat these groups even more harshly than they would simply bandits perhaps even calling in foreign counterinsurgency troops to deal with problem.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Survival (in appropriate terrain). Recommended: Animal handling, animal training, animal noise, bowyer/fletcher, fire-building, gaming, hunting, intimidation, looting (basic and advanced), riding, rope use, set snares, swimming.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Bandits are particularly partial to brutal, heavy, crushing weapons. For this reason, they may use the following cudgel-like weapons, even if not normally permitted to his class: flail, mace, morning star and war hammer. The bandit must fill at least one initial weapon proficiency slot with a crushing weapon (and pay the standard 1 BP). Bandits must also take proficiency in the knife. They not only use this for fighting (some among them regard knife fighting as a spectator sport), but as practical equipment for wilderness survival. The bandit gains an additional initial weapon proficiency slot to fill with the weapon of his choice (from among those normally permitted to him), though he must still pay the normal 1 BP cost to fill that slot.

**TALENTS:** Bonus: Hit point bonus (regardless of race), tough hide at a mere 9 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** The skills favored by bandits are those useful for scouting and preparing ambushes – specifically, climb walls (for trees, fences, and defense works), move silently, and hide in shadows. A bandit might also develop his skill at finding and removing traps as his knowledge of (both setting and avoiding!) snares, pits and so forth improves.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** A bandit should be well equipped for wilderness survival. Vital items include provisions (at least a week), backpack and pouches, flint and steel (which are more reliable than a magnifying glass for starting fires – especially at night!), tinder, a blanket, and a knife. The bandit gains these in addition to any starting money as determined on PHB Table 4M: Character Starting Money.

Less vital, but often of use, are climbing equipment (crampons, pitons, etc.), fishing gear (hooks, line, net), light sources (candle, lantern, torch), rope, sewing needle and thread, sacks for loot, a signal whistle, spyglass, small tent, thieves' picks, and a whetstone (so you can sharpen your knife when there's nothing else to do).

Finally, some bandits like to have trained animals (daws, falcons, and pigeons) for hunting or carrying messages. To make effective use of such an animal requires the animal handling skill.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Because of their adeptness at ambushing, bandits gain +1 on any attempt to surprise targets in a wilderness setting.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Other characters generally despise bandits. Normal people hate and fear highwaymen, and other types of thieves tend to look at them with scorn, considering them outcasts and crude robbers. For this reason, any bandit recognized as such suffers a -2 reaction penalty among non-bandit NPCs.

**RACES:** Bandits are a motley group, and any race may be found among them – even races with a tradition of antipathy, although such characters are likely to fight each other as much as the band's targets. Humanoid and part-humanoid characters in particular favor the bandit package. Demi-human characters who join bandit groups with other races were probably outcasts from among their own people.

## Blade (Building Point Cost: 19)

**DESCRIPTION:** Master artisans with bladed weapons take their name from their most common (and dramatically used) tools. Everyone has seen a blade in action at fairs and carnivals. They are the knife throwers who pop balloons while blindfolded and swallow slender sabers similar to those used by lawless pirates on the high seas.

Blades also perform amazing displays of weapon skill and control as they flash various weapons all about their bodies with deadly precision. They put on amazing displays of rapid weapon movement, including offensive and defensive spins, katas, and ritual dances. They rapidly spin short swords, quarterstaves, or sickles about them.

Besides rapid displays of weapon skill, blades also perform slow, elegant dances, involving incredibly precise movement and timing. These dances include thrusts, lunges, leaps, graceful arcs, etc. If there is a showy way to wield, throw, or perform with a weapon, a blade does it better than anyone (except perhaps a higher level blade...).

Although blades do not receive a single bonus to damage or attack rolls, and they fight as thieves, they are still some of the flashiest combatants you will ever meet or play.

Blades must have a Dexterity of 13 or more, an Intelligence of at least 11, and a Charisma of 13 or more.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Acrobat, assassin, bard, ninja, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Minstrel.

**ROLE:** Blades have great reputations as the most deadly weapon masters in the land, something they endeavor to promote despite the fact that it really isn't true. Most fighters use weapons far more skillfully than a blade – in combat. Blades do not understand offensive and defensive weapon maneuvers as well as combatants do, nor do they know the locations of vital body parts. Blades use flash and flare, which can be effective in many combat situations. Certainly, blades hope to impress their enemies into surrender or flight. Blades add valuable flair to any party, as their amazing displays can have significant effects upon the resolve and morale of opponents.

Imagine what a Robold would think if it trapped in a hall with only two exits and a man blocking each. One man (a fighter) wears plate mail and calmly holds a long sword; the other (a blade) wears solid black studded leather armor and grasps a halberd. Both men advance upon the hapless creature, but the blade begins rotating his halberd in an ever-quickening offensive spin, demonstrating masterful control of his weapon. Which opponent would a Robold choose?

For every blade who leads an adventurous life, another serves a more sinister role. Even blades not of the assassin class make excellent killers. Some blades use their performing personae to gather information and even get themselves invited to perform within the homes of their victims. Of course inviting someone into your home so that they can display flashy swordplay is just *asking* for trouble!

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Graceful entrance/exit, Weapon Maintenance. Recommended: Disguise, Fast-talking, intelligence gathering, joke telling, juggling, looting (basic and advanced), poker face.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** At least half of a blade's weapon proficiency slots must be selected from the following: sword (any), dagger, knife. In addition, blades can only expend one slot on a purely missile weapon (one that cannot

be used in melee combat). This does not include such weapons as spears or hand axes, which can be thrown or used in melee. They may not use crushing weapons, but can use any hacking or puncturing weapons.

**TALENTS:** Bonus: Ambidextrous, blind-fighting.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Blades have problems reading languages. They tend to excel at pick pockets, particularly for the sleight of hand aspect. While they rarely need to move silently or climb walls, some have a knack for spatial relationships that lends itself well to picking locks. They are naturally observant, presumably to note what specific maneuvers might impress a particular foe. This also means that they do not miss much said even in a cacophonous environment, and so many detect noise very well.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** To complement their entertainment image as mysterious and fearsome men, blades often dress in black garb, even going so far as to wear masks, facial wraps, or black headgear. They always keep their weapons in perfect condition and highly polished for maximum effect during a performance. A man dressed in solid black, flashing gleaming silver blades, is truly an awesome sight, especially to himself near a mirror.

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**Weapons Display:** For this ability to have an effect, the blade must whirl a non-missile weapon about his body. The observer must be close enough to the blade to see the display (thus, a Darkness spell negates the effect). The display has no effect upon that already engaged in close combat, as they cannot pay attention to the show. In addition, Weapons Display works only on those of Low (5) or better Intelligence, who can either use weapons or have seen them used. (Green slime does not find a person deftly twirling a dagger in his fingers the least bit intimidating.) Likewise, even a highly intelligent creature that has never seen a weapon used will not understand the danger such a tool could actually present.

By whirling a melee or hurled weapon about, a blade can affect the morale and courage of others. Such a display of skill, precision, and deadly grace lowers opponents' morale by 2 (but it does not require an immediate morale check) and inspires allies, giving a +1 bonus to allies' attack rolls. This applies so long as the allies can clearly see the display and have not already been engaged in combat. They must also be within 30 feet of the blade.

The display must occur for a full round without interruption. During this time, any successful attack upon the blade or failed saving throw by the blade, disrupts the display.

Weapons Display may be used only once per encounter; the display lasts for one round per level of the blade.

This ability requires a lot of room; it cannot be done in a narrow corridor. Specifically, the blade must be able to stand with his arms extended while holding out the weapon (with either hand) and be able to move his arms in all directions without contacting any obstructions.

**Quick Weapon:** Blades train and perform with weapons in both hands at blinding speeds. Solely for the purposes of determining a blade's initiative, consider the blade to have a Dexterity 2 points higher than his actual score.

**Handle Weapon:** Through years of hard practice, blades develop the ability to use both hands equally well. They can shoot a bow equally well with either their left or right hand, they can wield a sword in either hand, and they can throw daggers with either hand—all with no penalties. Once the blade has officially earned first level, he is well practiced enough that this extends to activities outside of weapon use.

When a blade tries to catch small weapons that are thrown at him, he uses his level as a bonus on the attack roll (see the juggling skill).

**Trick Throw:** Although this ability is called "trick throw," it functions the same for both missile weapons and hurled weapons. Trick throw enables a blade to perform special called shots. For every five experience levels the blade has, add a +1 bonus to his chance to perform a called shot with a missile weapon (round fractions of 5 levels up). Thus 1st through 5th level blades gain +1, 6th through 10th level blades gain +2, and so on.

Because Blades throw weapons blindfolded, they extend the blind-fighting proficiency to include hurled weapons and missile weapons (to a maximum range of 30 feet).

**Defensive/Offensive Spin:** Defensive and offensive spins are elements of a good Weapon Display. They have other uses as well.

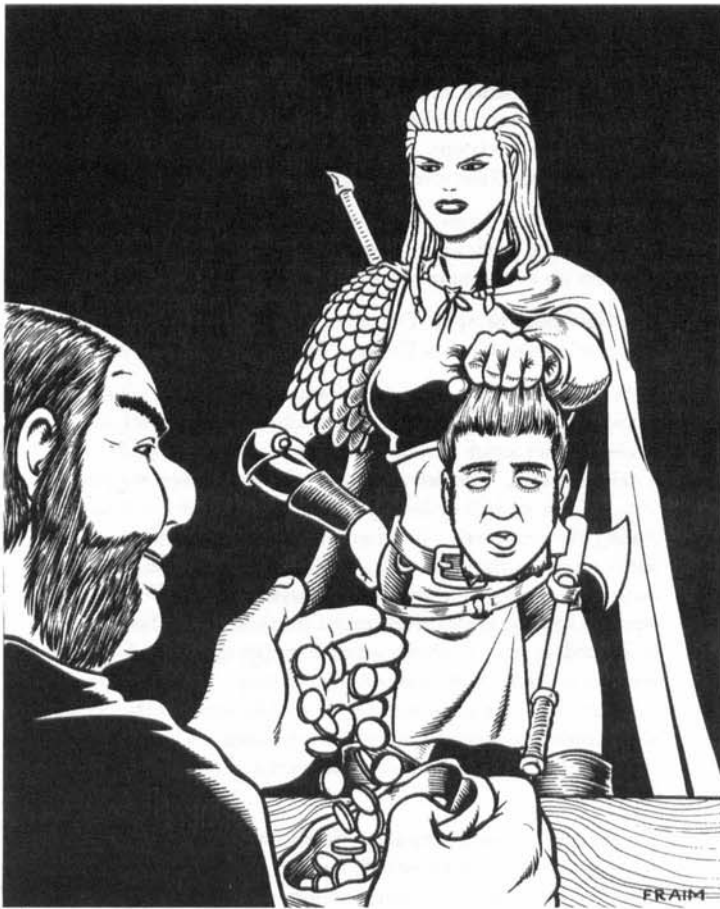
A defensive spin is a specialized form of parrying in which the blade whirls his weapon to create a deadly shell about his body. A blade may not attack during any round in which he is performing a defensive spin. The defensive spin effectively lowers the blade's Armor Class by half of his experience level (round fractions up) during the maneuver. In addition, any creature that makes a melee attack on the blade with a medium or smaller weapon must succeed at a saving throw versus paralyzation or suffer damage equal to half the blade's level (round fractions up). This damage is limited to the weapon's maximum damage, including any bonuses inherent to the weapon such as magic. A defensive spin can last for a maximum number of rounds equal to the blade's Constitution or until he stops the maneuver. A successful hit upon the blade disrupts his concentration and ends the defensive spin.

For the much more threatening offensive spin, the blade creates a fearsome-looking display of skill directed at a specific opponent. The spin must last for an entire round, during which the Blade does not attack (nor does he receive any Armor Class adjustment for parrying or Dexterity, as he would for a defensive spin). On the next round, the blade makes a normal attack roll. If he hits with this attack, the victim must roll a successful morale check or try to stay at least ten feet from the blade (going off to attack other members of the blade's party or fleeing in terror if the blade is the only available opponent). Offensive spins may be attempted only once per level on a particular creature. Furthermore, the blade cannot have been damaged by that creature prior to the offensive spin attack, since a creature won't fear someone it has already injured in quite the same way. This is a difficult condition to fulfill, as the creature gets a free round to attack while the blade performs the offensive spin. Offensive spins function only against creatures of Low (5) or better Intelligence that have seen or understand weapons in use.

If the spin of the blade is interrupted (either voluntarily or by a successful attack), the blade gets no attack that round.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Blades study weapons, not scrolls, maps, and books. Thus, if they want to increase their read languages skill, they must spend 3 discretionary points to raise read languages by 1%. Unlike most bards and thieves, these blades do not gain the ability to use all forms of written magical items or even just scrolls. In order to keep their skills in top shape blades must practice daily. In spite of their aptitude, this constant training causes them to suffer 1d4 hit points per day as they inadvertently slash themselves with their sharp weapons. If a blade fails to practice on any given day, he will take 1d4 points of damage when using any of his special boon abilities. Practice takes about an hour to complete.

**RACES:** Any but gnomeling, half-ogre or pixie-fairy. Most blades are human or half-elven, but some members of other races are occasionally drawn into the fold.



### Bounty Hunter (Building Point Cost: 10)

**DESCRIPTION:** The bounty hunter is a ruthless mercenary, worshipping little besides the price on his target's head, recognizing few laws save the contractual distinction between "kill" and "capture", because that likely affects his reward money. He is a hunter of men (and demi-humans, and hyper-intelligent aardvarks if the pay is good). One may find a bounty hunter serving the state, capturing criminals and bringing them to justice; or he may serve the shadowy lords of the underworld, avenging the twisted honor found among thieves and criminals. Pursuit of his quarry may take him through a thousand hostile environments, to foreign lands, even to alien planes.

The bounty hunter's vocation is rigorous and demanding at every level: physical, psychological, and even moral. It requires a sure hand and a stable mind. To be a bounty hunter, a thief must have minimum Ability Scores of 11 in every ability except Charisma and Comeliness. One thing that does not really matter to a tough, independent thief like this is whether or not people like him and how well his hair looks.

A further requirement is that the thief version of the bounty hunter be of a non-lawful alignment.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Brigand, infiltrator, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Minstrel.

**ROLE:** It is important to draw a distinction between the bounty hunter package and the assassin class, for their vocations are similar.

The assassin works within a larger network or organization – either a society of assassins for hire, a guild or crime family, or even a government. That organization retains the assassin to discreetly eliminate its enemies; he is strictly a killer. The assassin also is a predominantly urban figure, though his missions may take him out of that setting on occasion. Most organizations that have assassins would deny their existence, because of the illegal and unpopular nature of their activities.

By contrast, the bounty hunter is a loner. He may be solicited directly by an employer, but more often he simply learns of a price offered for the body (living or dead) of some person and goes after him.

While the assassin requires secrecy and anonymity, the bounty hunter thrives on infamy (though this may only apply to a bounty hunter nickname). Fear leads his prey to make mistakes, and each such mistake brings the bounty hunter one step closer to success. While an assassin is often hired to kill relatively normal, or at least unsuspecting people, the bounty hunter tracks fugitives – people who know who's after them, or at least that SOMEONE is after them, and are therefore exceptionally desperate and dangerous.

Pursuit of such people may lead the bounty hunter literally anywhere, even to other planes of existence (if the prospective reward makes the venture worthwhile), and so the bounty hunter becomes adept at survival and tracking in all manner of hostile environments.

Bounty hunters do not track only fugitives. They may be hired to perform such tasks as kidnapping, freeing kidnapped persons, or (especially at lower levels) recovering property.

Like the fighter group version of the bounty hunter (which is a separate class) the bounty hunter thief often works freelance. He can be an independent contractor, sometimes even keeping his adventuring identity secret (just in case a companion shows up on his list). He uses subterfuge more often than the bounty hunter class, working from the shadows to surprise his prey, hopefully avoiding the messy bit with the stabbing and the fighting before subduing an opponent. Nonetheless, he shares the relentless mindset of the bounty hunter class. Bounty hunter thieves and the bounty hunter fighter class have an ancient rivalry, as the fighter types see the package types as moonlighters, while the thief package bounty hunters see the fighter types as interlopers who need spells as a crutch.

The law and authorities rarely look kindly upon bounty hunter thieves, as they typically do not bother with permits or regulations. After all, they are thieves. Thieves' guilds tolerate the bounty hunters because of their usefulness, despite the fact that many bounty hunters do not join. That and hunters rarely work the traditional thieving jobs with which guilds primarily concern themselves.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Tracking. Recommended: Animal handling, animal training, animal noise, boating, disguise, fire-building, intelligence gathering, herbalism, hunting, intimidation, map sense, observation, riding, set snares, survival, trailing.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** The bounty hunter may use any type of weapon. As part of his persona and fearsome public image, a bounty hunter thief often gains proficiency in a rare or bizarre weapon, such as the khopesh sword or man-catcher. Non-thief weapons take up two of the bounty hunter's weapon proficiency slots, but he gains a bonus slot at 1st level.

**TALENTS:** Forest movement at a mere 8 BP, grace under pressure at a mere 4 BP, stealth at a mere 6 BP, tough hide at a mere 8 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Bounty hunters make frequent use of almost all thief skills, except perhaps pick pockets (in the traditional sense). Note that "pick pockets" includes all sorts of delicate feats of manual dexterity, such as slipping poison or a "mickey" into a drink. Deadly poisoning is more frequently the province of the assassin, but a carefully placed, powerful sedative may save a bounty hunter a great deal of trouble. (To have access to sedatives or understand their use, a bounty hunter must have herbalism skill.)

**Example:** Jean-Luc Bjorg takes the bounty hunter thief package.

This means he has 3 initial weapon proficiency slots. Two he fills with a non-thief weapon, the two-handed sword. With the third he takes the hand crossbow. He must also spend 3 BPs to gain these proficiencies.

**TALENTS:** Acute (high) Alertness (for a mere 2 BP)

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Besides the usual range of thief equipment, bounty hunters take interest in items meant to kill and capture their prey. Special items from the equipment chapter, such as blade boots, death knives, folding bows, and the like, are frequently the favored weapons of the bounty hunter. A rope for holding live prisoners is, of course, vital, and it may also be used

for setting snares. Blinding powder and incapacitating poisons (paralytic ones or those that make their victim ill and helpless) also have value.

Bounty hunters make little use of deadly poison, as that is more the province of the assassin (who may not want anyone to realize it even was an assassination). If a bounty hunter is out to kill a fugitive, he probably will not be worrying about how messy it will be.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Due to their resourcefulness, bounty hunters can add +20 to availability of the special thief equipment described in this tome.

**SPECIAL BANES:** None.

**RACES:** Members of any race could become bounty hunters. Among the non-humans, however, those of mixed blood (e.g. half-elves) favor it most, since they are often already outsiders, loners not accepted by either side of their ancestry. A fair number of dwarves are also bounty hunters, drawn to the trade by the extensive "grudge lists" that wealthy clans periodically open their vaults to settle.

### Burglar (Building Point Cost: 5)

**DESCRIPTION:** The consummate burglar (or "cat burglar") is an expert at breaking and entering the most difficult buildings, bypassing walls, locks, traps and guardians, grabbing the loot with the best value/portability ratio, and escaping unnoticed as stealthily as he arrived.

The cat burglar requires a minimum Strength of 10 and Dexterity of 13.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Acrobat, infiltrator, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Pirate.

**ROLE:** In many ways, the cat burglar is the stereotypical professional thief. He uses more of the traditional thief skills, and more frequently, than any other package.

Even within the ranks of burglars, however, thieves often specialize even further. Some specialize by skills. A "box-man," for instance, is an expert at opening locks, especially safes and well-protected chests. A second-story thief specializes in climbing walls (which can be a remarkably effective protection, especially if ground-level entrances have people around them). Teams of burglars who specialize by skill often find the most success.

Other burglars specialize by target. Jewel thieves in particular consider themselves elite among burglars; the protection found around the objects of their attention demands that they hone their skills and cleverness to perfection.

Burglars can have any background. Thrill-seekers of the privileged classes may take up jewel burglary as a challenging and exciting pastime. The prof-it is almost secondary to many of them. Those of the lower classes concentrate on targets of opportunity within their own neighborhoods. This might include breaking into the home of a game designer while he's attending a convention but I digress...

Most successful burglars have some sort of guild affiliation. In order to get rid of the loot they take, they of course need a fence (especially if their score is distinctive e.g. fabulous gems, famous artwork, and so on). Guilds provide the burglar with innumerable benefits: easy means to fence even the most distinctive items, connections with potential "business" partners, access to specialized equipment, and, not least of all, protection. A guild can arrange the fix (to free an imprisoned burglar) and provide deterrence, protecting its burglars from other guilds and powerful criminals (people who don't take kindly to being robbed themselves and are likely to make hasty decisions about a suspect character's guilt as they begin planning punishment).

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Looting (basic and advanced). Recommended: Begging, intelligence gathering, jumping, observation, rope use, tightrope walking, tumbling.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Better burglars do not bring weapons with them on a job; it only means more serious penalties if they are caught – either legal penalties, or more immediate ones (such as a jumpy victim panicking and attacking them). On some jobs, however (e.g. stealing from dangerous criminals) a burglar needs to have means of self-defense. They favor small, quiet, easily concealed weapons, though a burglar may choose proficiency in any weapon among those normally permitted to him.

### THE SPECIALIST BURGLAR

Adventurers tend to choose a broad, general range of skills, but for the urban burglar, specialization is the way to go (for a number of reasons)

A specialized thief is simply more marketable. People in the underworld want someone perfectly suited for a particular job. That could mean a high-level generalized thief, one who has been in the business long enough to be good at everything. However, it is not easy for a thief to reach that level and they are ludicrously expensive. Therefore, by concentrating on one skill, a relatively low-level thief may compete with a thief many levels higher for jobs of a specific type.

Consider, for instance, a "box man" named Sufur. By concentrating as many points as possible in his open locks skill, he can have a score of 85% at only 4th level (not including modifiers for race, Dexterity, or package). Since he can put no more than half of what he earns at each level into any one skill, he distributes his remaining points more or less evenly among the other skills. He would probably neglect pick pockets and read languages, however, since as a burglar he rarely uses them.

Compare this to the rover, who strives to be a more generalized thief. On Table 4I: Average Thief Skills, you can see that Sufur's adventuring counterpart would not attain that level of skill at opening locks before 16th level.

Now imagine that a gang of jewel thieves is preparing for a job. They have diverse skills-except that they need some lock picking expertise. They need to bring a box man into their gang. Who would they choose? Well, first off, a 16th level thief is bloody rare. In addition, even if such a highly experienced thief were available and willing to work with less-experienced thieves, he would demand a share of the take appropriate to his position. Otherwise it would not be worth his time: he is so skilled that he could probably commit this robbery on his own. The type of job for which he would need assistance would be well out of the range of these thieves.

This makes Sufur the box man an attractive option. He might climb walls little better than an asthmatic fish, but that is the cat burglar's expertise. After the cat burglar mounts the building, he can lower a rope for the less sure-footed. By offering Sufur a reasonable share of the loot, the other burglars know that the difficult lock(s) will probably be opened.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** The skills most vital to a burglar's success are open locks, find traps, remove traps, move silently, hide in shadows, detect noise and climb walls (they are essentially a classic type of thief). As mentioned before, an individual burglar may concentrate particularly on one of these, but he would make sure not to neglect any of those remaining.

**TALENTS:** Acute (high) Alertness for a mere 2 BP

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Burglars love to use specialized hardware to increase their chances of success. For a thorough examination of some specialty items available, and their effects on thief skills, consult the Tools of the Trade section in this hallowed tome.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** None.

**SPECIAL BANES:** None.

**RACES:** Members of any race may be burglars, and it is a favorite package among demi-human thief types. Non-human thieves often specialize in areas that offer excellent racial bonuses. For instance, dwarves may specialize in picking locks and trap detection. Elves may specialize in reconnaissance (they sneak about and report on the presence and nature of obstacles).

### Con Man (Building Point Cost: 11)

**DESCRIPTION:** The con man is the master of deception. While burglars and pickpockets profit through stealth, bandits and thugs garner their earnings through force, the con man relies on his wits. Using his high Intelligence and understanding of human nature, the con man preys upon the foolish,

overconfident, and greedy. Other thieves take their booty; the con man swindles his victim into giving it freely. When not on their guard, they gladly admit that swindling is among the oldest professions.

The life of the expert con man has its downside, too. When victims pierce a con man's facade, he is in grave danger, as they often get violent. In these situations, the con man's quick feet may serve him better than his quick wit.

A con man must have an Intelligence of 13 or higher and a minimum Charisma score of 12. Con men cannot be of lawful alignments.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, charlatan, and thief

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Ninja.

**ROLE:** There are numerous names for the con man – confidence (con) artist, swindler, mountebank, quack, investment counselor and numerous insults (hopefully after the scam is done). The types and names of scams he employs are even greater in number.

Each con artist is unique and develops his own mode of operation. One could specialize in selling bogus items such as medicines (the “snake-oil salesman”); while another may prepare long, elaborate scams to net the wealth of the affluent (the “Dot Con”).

Con men must operate either in a large city or take on a nomadic lifestyle. In large cities, there are many potential victims, though even then they usually target visitors to the city, especially foreigners. Wanderers, ready to move on to a new place when they've made too many enemies or too great a percentage of the population has gotten wise to their scams, con men only need to stay one step ahead of their victims.

Con men have a knack for acquiring jobs that allow them to bluff their way through each day, at least for a time. They can sometimes be found masquerading as businessmen, clerics, healers, sages, diplomats, powerful magicians, and retired heroes, but not without plenty of practice at lesser scams.

Because of their lifestyle and nature, con men rarely join thieves' guilds on a permanent basis. Out of wise deference to the “local boys,” however, a con man that begins to operate in guild territory makes friendly overtures to it, perhaps even offering a share in his take. A most daring con man may even try to con the guild....

Con man PCs are wise not to let the rest of their party in on their secrets, unless they help run the scams. The true con man is so tempted by a good scam that sometimes that desire actually overrides the desire to gain money or resources, which is the reason for all his scams in the first place.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Fast-talking, liar (skilled), poker face, ulterior motive. Recommended: Appraising, artistic ability, dancing, disguise, etiquette, forgery, fortune telling, gaming, local history, observation, singing, and ventriloquism.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** The con man can use the normal range of weapons permitted to his class.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** The con man usually uses his thieving skills in preparation for a con. A little secret scouting can often be handy, for instance, to observe his victim's habits. For all of this, the stealth skills (move silently, etc.) are invaluable. Reading languages is also of more use to the con man than to thieves of many other packages, but a high rating in pick pockets is crucial to any game involving sleight of hand.

**TALENTS:** May take expert cheater for a mere 2 BP.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** A con man uses special equipment as props for his scams (e.g. tarot cards for a sham fortune teller; pen, ink and paper for forgery; and so forth), but the specific needs vary among characters, according to their plans and objectives.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Con men have a natural ability to distract their marks. Anyone attempting to observe the activities of a con man closely suffers -25% on his chance to do so, whether by skill or Ability Score check.

**Charm:** Con men fully use their unique charm and flair. They have learned to use this gift to sway the reactions of others. However, the con man must carefully tailor such charm to a specific audience. Con men can affect only a small group of people, no larger in number than their current level.

To be charmed, a group must be in average to high spirits. (You cannot charm a merchant who has just been robbed unless you're running an insurance scam.) The con man must mingle among the intended group and chat for at least 1d10 rounds. After this time, those in the group roll a saving throw versus apology with a penalty of -1 per three levels of the con man. Those who succeed are unimpressed with the con man and may even find him an irritation. If they succeed on a natural 20, they see through the con man's facade.

Those who fail have been caught up in the con man's tales and find him to be a most remarkable person. The effects of the charm are identical to the 1st level magic-user spell. However, it is not magical in any way, and future saving throws are not made based on Intelligence and time. Rather, every time the con man stresses the relationship (by calling for a favor, or requesting delicate information) they re-roll the saving throw versus apology. The GM can give bonuses or penalties depending on how much stress the request puts on the relationship. Once the victim succeeds, chances are he turns hostile to the con man.

**Detect Fakery:** Because con men are so skilled at faking their personalities, lying, and concealing their feelings and reactions, they can see right through false personae and verbal trickery when others attempt them. As the old saying goes, “You can't con a con man.” Any time a con man character's player requests it, he can try to determine if someone is lying, operating under false pretenses, or swindling him. The con man must succeed at a Charisma check to determine this. If he fails, he can tell nothing either way. On a natural 20, he is absolutely convinced of the opposite of what's happening (thinking a lie is true or an honest man lies).

Furthermore, a Charisma check with a -10 penalty enables the con man to determine a person's alignment. This requires that the con man speak with and observe the individual for 1d10 rounds.

**Swindling:** Major cons, such as duping a king into believing that you are a highly respected sage, drawing him into your inner confidence, and then relieving him of the crown jewels, should be done only through role-playing. However, con men hone such skills by constantly performing minor swindles and tricks. These are far too numerous and insignificant to role-play every time. Swindling covers this aspect of a con man's skill repertoire.

By performing various cons, sleight-of-hand, and other deceptions, a con man can often walk away from a merchant with far more than a fair deal. The same is true of any common outlay of coins, such as buying meals at a tavern, paying for a room at an inn, and purchasing ordinary items. In instances such as these, the con man makes a pick pockets roll. If successful, the cost of the item is reduced by the percentage rolled; this is what the con man pays. If the roll fails by a margin that exceeds the con man's Charisma, the mark sees through the con. Victims always detect swindling attempts if the roll exceeds 95.

For example, Shira tries to swindle a barkeeper for a 10 gp glass of imported wine (she has only six gold coins left). Her pick pockets roll is a 53 and she has a Charisma of 16. She rolls a 25 and swindles her way into paying only two gold and one electrum for the wine (25% of the original cost). If she had rolled a 54-69, the barkeeper would have noticed the error and politely requested the remainder of the money. On a 70 or above the barkeeper would not only have noticed the error, but he would have realized that Shira tried to swindle him (and responded appropriately).

Swindling rolls should not be used for amounts more than 10 gp per level of the con man. Such grand swindles demand full role-playing.



**SPECIAL BANES:** In more sophisticated areas, the authorities recognize many classic cons and seek out con men to punish them. Some simply want the con man to move on and not harass the populace (particularly in wealthy areas), but some have laws against con games and impose heavy fines or even imprisonment!

**RACES:** The life of the con man attracts many half-elves for some reasons. The smaller races (halflings, gnomes) can often get away scams because humans see them as child-like. Gnomish con men have almost become a cliché among certain bourgeois human-dominated societies. While half-orc and half-ogre con men are very rare, most assume that members of those races are simply too stupid to run a scam, something a con man of that type can use to great advantage. Pixie fairies have well deserved reputations for trickery, so those con men often face rather suspicious audiences.

### Corsair (Building Point Cost: 10)

**DESCRIPTION:** Corsairs are thieves of the high seas, plying the trade lanes in search of prey. They intermix with and complement their piratical warrior cousins – to the extent that any of these scoundrels can be said to complement anything.

A corsair must have a hardy Constitution (no less than 11) to survive long months at sea.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, brigand, pirate, thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** None.

**ROLE:** Corsairs closely resemble their land-dwelling cousins, bandits. They, too, are desperate and cruel, fiendishly cunning, and likely to have a lot of internal squabbles.

Like bandits, corsairs cooperate only as far as necessary for survival and success, but that happens to be quite a bit. In addition, like bandits, they frequently have sordid pasts – the type of pasts that provide a kind of brotherhood (the kind with a gold piece limit...). Many a pirate ship was once put to legitimate use, but its crew rose in mutiny, took the ship, killed everyone not party to the act, and turned to piracy.

As both mutiny and piracy are punishable by death, on the high seas any warship or merchantman will gladly carry out that sentence, if given a chance. Corsairs therefore fight to the death, against all odds, rather than face capture and inevitable summary execution.

Corsairs do not belong to guilds although, like bandits, a ship of them may be considered a guild of sorts. A single pirate ship likely includes both pirates (of the fighter or thief group) and corsairs (of the thief group), and perhaps a swashbuckler or two as well. Even a renegade magic-user might be found among them. (Privateers are even more likely to have the services of a magic-user, especially one with talents in the manipulation of water and wind.)

Corsairs like to have secret sanctuaries, probably in a secret cove or on a tiny island. They rest there between raids, store treasure and provisions, and plan their activities. Such sanctuaries have the best protection available to the corsairs, possibly including magical defenses.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Gaming, seamanship suite, swimming. Recommended: boating, fishing, intimidation, looting (basic and advanced), map sense, rope use, tightrope walking, weather sense.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** The corsair may take proficiency in any weapon available to his class. In addition, he may take proficiency in classic corsair weapons such as the cutlass, rapier and stiletto.

**TALENTS:** Acrobatic skill suite at a mere 2 BP, balance bonus at a mere 6 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Corsairs make much less use of the traditional thief skills than characters of other packages. Climbing around the rigging of their ships requires wall climbing skill, and the delicate step needed to work high above the deck may carry over into excellence at moving silently. Finally, corsairs favor the read languages skill – they often encounter strange, secret codes adorning maps, codes that may tell a sly captain the location of a rival's buried treasure, and become adept at deciphering them.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Corsairs dress themselves as sailors (armed sailors, of course), and carry similar equipment when at sea. Also, like sailors, they will avoid armor – it gets in the way of climbing around the rigging and pre-

## LEARNING THE ROPES

Corsairs often find themselves fighting among the ropes and masts of their ships. Indeed, they train for such events. These rules are clarifications of those for climbing as described in the Combatant's Guide (consider rigging to be a severe slope). These rules help simulate the difficulty and excitement of such a scenario. The basic modifiers in climbing combat are as follows:

- \* A climbing character loses all Armor Class bonuses for Dexterity and shield (he can gain the AC bonus for a shield strapped to his back).
- \* A climbing character suffers a -2 penalty on attack, damage, and saving throw rolls that involve dodging or evading.
- \* A character attacking from above a climber gains a +2 bonus on his attack roll (per the GMG p 131).
- \* A character attacking from below a climber suffers a -2 penalty on his attack roll (per the GMG p 131).
- \* A rear attack (e.g. against a character trying to climb up a rope – but NOT a corsair climbing and dodging at the same time, as explained below) gains the standard +2 bonus.
- \* Attackers gain a +2 bonus on to-hit rolls against an off-balance defender. (GMG p 88.)

NPC sailors, also familiar with nautical rope climbing, should, for the purpose of these rules, have a base climbing percentage of 65% when climbing ropes. This percentage does NOT apply to other sorts of climbing (walls, mountains, etc.); in such areas treat the sailor as untrained.

Remember that modifiers are cumulative!

## LOSING AND REGAINING BALANCE

Any character engaged in combat on ropes runs the risk of losing his balance. A character struck by a weapon or attempting to climb in the course of combat must succeed at a climbing check or lose his balance.

Lost balance means that the next round the character must either choose to fall or attempt to regain his balance. In either case, the character can perform no other action. A successful Dexterity check means that the character regains his balance. Failure means the character falls (and, of course, may suffer falling damage). Do not forget that all attacks against an off-balance character are at +2.

sents a massive problem for someone unfortunate enough to find himself overboard.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Because of their familiarity with ropes, much used in the nautical arts, corsairs gain a special bonus of +5% on climbing rolls if ropes are involved, +10% if the ropes are on a ship, bringing their total to +50% on rigging, which counts as "abundant handholds".

Corsairs also can fight from a rope (usually on a ship), so long as the feet and one hand can grasp it, and they are much better at this than other types of characters. They suffer no penalties on attack rolls in such awkward positions and actually gain +1 on saving throw rolls made in rope combat (+2 on such rolls in shipboard rope combat).

The saving throw bonus for a corsair in rope combat applies to physical effects that can be dodged or reduced in some way. This requires some GM interpretation; while the bonus would apply to dodging a Lightning Bolt and even a Fireball, it would not apply to saving against a Charm or Hold Person spell.

For more information on shipboard combat, see "Learning the Ropes" below.

**Dodging:** Thieves with the corsair package may choose to spend a round in rope combat dodging. When doing so, the thief may not attack, but he may move at half his normal rope-climbing speed. If he succeeds at a climbing check, the corsair can add his Dexterity bonus to his Armor Class for that round of combat. If

unsuccessful, the thief goes off-balance the next round; he must spend that round regaining his balance or fall (see below), and opponents gain +2 on attacks against him (in addition to losing his Dex bonus to AC!).

**Example:** While plying the sea lanes, a ship carrying Bart the Corsair assaults a merchantman whose crew refuses the corsairs' demand for their cargo and puts up a surprising amount of resistance. Bart and his men board the vessel, and he finds himself fighting high above the deck, facing an ugly sailor armed with a long, curved dagger. Bart himself wields a rapier. Neither combatant wears armor.

The modifiers for this melee are as follows: Neither gets a Dexterity bonus. Since both are unarmored, both have AC 10. The sailor attacks at -2 for climbing (Combatant's Guide page 117), but +2 for attacking from above, so they balance out to zero. Bart the corsair suffers no penalties for attacking while climbing ropes on a ship but does take a -2 penalty for attacking from below, for a total penalty of -2.

In one round of combat, the sailor strikes Bart knife. He must roll his climbing percentage to avoid losing his balance. His base climb walls percentage is 75%; but thanks to his package and the situation he gets a +50% bonus. He only falls on a roll of 96-100.

If he does fail, Bart loses his balance. The next round he attempts to regain it (the only alternative is to drop to the deck), which he succeeds in doing. Meanwhile the ugly sailor strikes with a +2 bonus. If he strikes Bart again, Bart must make another climbing check or lose another round of attacks, or even plummet to the deck below.

If the combat continues to go poorly, Bart should probably dodge blows while retreating down the rope. The sailor has the advantage when above him, but once Bart has returned safely to the deck, he can fight on an even footing again. If the sailor does not follow him down, however, he best not go too far—lest the sailor try to cut the rope above him!

**SPECIAL BANES:** As their expertise lies in rope climbing, corsairs suffer a penalty of -10% when they attempt to climb without one.

**RACES:** Almost all corsairs are human, since few demi-humans and humanoids make good seafarers. The occasional half-elf might be found among a corsair crew, or, even more rarely, a half-breed or full-blooded aquatic elf. For such an elf to leave his own people would indicate a turbulent past indeed.

## Fence (Building Point Cost: 17)

**DESCRIPTION:** The fence is a black marketer, a seller of stolen or otherwise illegal goods. He usually works in a city setting, where a large numbers of people serve as customers and suppliers (i.e. prey for thieves who supply them).

A good fence needs a sharp mind to appraise people as well as goods, and to stay ahead of the law. To take this package, therefore, he needs a minimum Intelligence of 12.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Thief, yakuza.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Pirate.

**ROLE:** The fence is the lynchpin in the complicated structure of the black market. Thieves sell their illicit acquisitions to the fence for some small percentage of their actual value. The fence then resells the "hot" goods on the black market to whomever can give him the highest price. In a large city, minor goods (not the crown jewels of the local royalty) may be sold directly to local buyers usually through a pawnshop which seemingly every fence owns. If the fence thinks they are "too hot," though he will probably arrange to have them smuggled and sold elsewhere.

Fences rarely measure their own power in terms of character level. Instead, they consider the breadth of their networks and reliability of their contacts. Of course a fence needs much cunning and experience – which may result in a higher character level.

The most powerful fences keep their identities secret; many never even see their clients, neither thieves nor buyers. They coordinate things from behind the scenes, and have minor fences and lackeys to serve as intermediaries. Even a close contact may never have seen the face of a great fence – at least, not knowingly. A fence may secretly play the role of an underling in his own network – or even that of a rival freelancer!

This may all start to sound familiar to those who know something about thieves' guilds. The networks of a powerful fence look increasingly like the structure of a thieves' guild. This is no coincidence. Those knowledgeable in these matters speculate that the thieves' guild was originally, and in many respects still is, primarily a formalization of a black market network.

Fences of the lower and middle classes may achieve great wealth, but the most successful ones keep their true fortunes secret and do not suddenly start living like lords. Fences may be from any social background, though wealthy and noble fences are rare. Certainly those that do exist diligently keep their identities well hidden, for obvious reasons. The stakes must be high to claim the attention of the socially and financially elevated.

For example, a rich merchant may deal with stolen jewelry on the side. A wealthy baron might be the secret mastermind behind a network of thieves smuggling and selling contraband. The world offers other examples – petty dictators who not only accept bribes and turn a blind eye to smugglers, but are in fact major smugglers themselves!

The black market network transfers information as well as goods. Fences are probably the best-informed figures of the underworld. For this reason they get the glean information skill at 50% at no initial cost. (They also receive appraising as a bonus skill, since it is vital to their vocation.)

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Appraising and glean information, each at 50% at no initial cost. Gain double (2 mastery and 2 Honor) dice whenever purchasing resist persuasion. Recommended: Appraisal: gemstone, art appraisal: painting, art appreciation: painting, fast-talking, forgery, gem cutting, local history, observation

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Any. (Fences prefer to have at least one small, concealed weapon in case a negotiation goes sour, but this is not required.)

**TALENTS:** Bonus: Expert haggler (regardless of race). May purchase evaluate gems at a mere 4 BP (regardless of race), opportunist at a mere 4 BP, sixth sense for a mere 3 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Less powerful fences (that is, those lower in the network hierarchy, with fewer contacts) may need to make more use of traditional thief skills. Picking pockets can provide a little income when business is slow; its use for sleight-of-hand may also have value (for fences daring enough to attempt cheating clients). Opening locks and finding and removing traps are useful for inspecting merchandise. It is not unknown for burglars, unable to open a strong box, to simply cart off the whole thing and hope their fence can get it open. Read languages is also sometimes useful when examining merchandise, especially rare, old books. The stealth skills (move silently etc.) have some value on the street, so fences who contact their clients directly may put some time into cultivating them, but more powerful fences often neglect these.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Most fences own equipment for examining merchandise, to determine if the goods are counterfeit or what their value might be. A magnifying lens, for instance, may be of great use here.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Because of his contacts, a fence is probably the best person for locating and hiring thieves and smugglers, especially in territory not claimed by a guild.

In addition, fences generally command a lot of respect from the underworld in their home territory. Unless a thief has a serious vendetta, he will probably court a fence's favor for business reasons. Fences receive a bonus of +3 on reactions with NPC thieves who recognize the fence's profession.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Fences are usually prominent underworld figures. Moreover, unlike freelance burglars and smugglers who can move from place

to place, the fences' black market network requires a stable home locale, so that they can stay in touch with their contacts. (The GM may wish to discourage PCs from being active fences because of this; the fence's life is very often more business than adventure.) This also means that the local authorities may be aware of a fence's identity and activities. These authorities may periodically harass a minor fence (demand bribes), or may shake him down for information every once in a while.

**RACES:** Fences may be of any race. Some demi-humans fences prefer to deal only in certain goods. Dwarf and gnome fences, for instance, are known as shrewd appraisers of stolen gems and jewelry.

### Gallant (Building Point Cost: 20)

**DESCRIPTION:** No other character represents the pure romance of the gallant. He portrays himself as a romantic warrior, traveling the lands on the wings of romance and true love, stealing the hearts of the young and lightening the spirits of the elderly. A gallant seems to be blessed with a grace and charm not given to others of his race.

Gallants are often mistaken for paladins or cavaliers. Though they dress and act much like heroic warriors, they are not driven by the same bloodlust or desire to slay monsters solely for the sake of destroying evil. Gallants are romantics at heart. They defend beauty, innocence, and love.

They never let go of their ideal, and thus are frequently doomed to the type of demise one would expect from such activity. Every famous gallant ended his life in tragedy. (Shakespeare's Romeo would be such a gallant.)

A gallant cannot be evil or chaotic neutral. Most are neutral good. The gallant must have a minimum Strength of 11, Dexterity of 13, and Charisma of 15 or higher.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, charlatan, and minstrel.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Assassin, ninja, and yakuza.

**ROLE:** Gallants travel the lands in search of beauty and true love. With their romantic outlook unbound by fetters of reality, they can always imagine a purer life just over the next ridge. Thus, they never stay in one place for long once reality sets in. Because of this, most gallants own a fine horse or two to travel the lands.

Gallants love to participate in traditional medieval tournaments (see the *Combatant's Guide*). Here they hone the skills of jousting, dueling, archery, and other combat practices. Such tournaments draw crowds of young men and women before which the gallants may perform. Though they can accomplish impressive feats in such formalized combat, they tend to be too concerned with appearance and flashiness, and such skill does not translate to use in real combat (they still use the thief group attack matrix). While fighter classes usually win these tournaments, gallants often win the hearts of the onlookers and steal the day's glory away from the victorious warriors. Of course, this causes a lot of friction between gallants and jealous warriors, but that is nothing unusual as virtually everyone has some reason for friction with gallants in any case.

When a gallant goes on an adventure, it is likely the result of some promise to a fair maiden that he got stuck fulfilling, to retrieve an item of beauty and love, or for some other romantic cause. In these situations, the gallant adopts the role of a heroic fighter and charges forward regardless of the dangers that lie ahead. This tactic is not as effective for gallant thief types as it is for true fighter types.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Dancing, graceful entrance/exit, knowledge of courtly affairs, mingling, language (ancient), poetry writing and comprehension, social etiquette, weapon maintenance. Recommended: Animal training, armorer, artistic ability, blind-fighting, bowyer/fletcher, languages (modern), leatherworking, musical instrument (any), riding (land-based), reading/writing, singing.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Gallants must gain proficiency in the jousting lance for use in tournaments (which costs them one slot). They may also use any kind of bow. They have no other requirements, but most also take proficiency with some sort of sword. Being romantic fighters more concerned

with apparent substance, gallants must always keep their weapons in perfect order and well polished.

**TALENTS:** Bonus: hit point bonus, perfect grooming. May purchase ambidextrous for a mere 4 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Gallants concern themselves with skills that have some use in impressing members of the opposite sex. Thus, they tend to neglect device-based skills (open locks, find and remove traps), in favor of read languages and detecting noise (to better hear the audience express their appreciation for their exploits). As they wish to be seen (and appreciated), they also neglect stealth skills. Some practice climbing walls, perhaps thinking to reach isolated maidens in towers.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Gallants gain no special benefits concerning starting money.

They may wear any form of armor, even those not normally allowed to their core class. However, gallants concern themselves more with quality and appearance than in the armor's actual protection. They will don a gleaming suit of chain mail instead of a dented suit of plate mail. A suit of impressive-looking Studded Leather +1 appeals to them more than the gleaming chain, but Padded +4 is even better (i.e. the bigger the magical bonus the better, unless for some reason the magical armor looks ratty). Gallants prize elven chain mail most of all (but for that they have to get in line!).

The same logic applies to all of their equipment.

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**Essence of Purity:** Because Gallants are so infused with love, beauty, and the aspirations of a romantic, they seem to hang on to life when others would allow it to slip away. Thus, gallants have the hit point bonus talent. Furthermore, if a gallant fails a saving throw that would result directly in his death (i.e. against a Fireball, but not a Rigor Mortis), he may re-roll the saving throw.

Even when slain, a gallant just will not drop dead immediately. Rather, he lingers on long enough to recite one final tragic poem for those who will listen. If the gallant is slain in combat while defending love, innocence, or beauty (including members of the opposite sex), he hangs on and fights for another 1d4 rounds or until struck for additional damage equal to his level. Then he recites his poem and dies. During this borrowed time, he may not be cured to bring him back to life though he may be revived by any of the spells that typically bring someone back from the dead. And for you wise guys out there, no, he is not considered undead during this time either. Sheesh, give a guy a break.

**The Code of the Gallant:** Gallants live by a code of ethics that has slowly evolved over the years. If a gallant remains true to this code, he gains an inner confidence and peace that results in a +2 bonus that can be applied to either his attack roll, damage roll, Armor Class, or saving throw each round. During the round, the player of a gallant may decide to use the +2 bonus at any time before making the roll that the bonus affects. Once he uses the bonus in a round, he cannot use it again until next round. The bonus cannot be split into two +1 modifiers.

If a gallant breaks this code, he loses the +2 bonus until the infraction is remedied. Furthermore, he must seek out a cleric to listen to his transgressions and cast Atonement upon him (such clerics typically require some form of penance). The cleric must be in some way concerned with romance, love, or some aspect of the gallant's lifestyle.

#### The Code of the Gallant

The Gallant will ...

- defend lovers, the innocent, and those of the opposite sex and aid them in times of need (unless they are enemies or hostile).
- never marry nor solemnly vow to love only one person.

- never retreat from combat until allies of the opposite sex have done so first (unless they are fellow gallants).
- never overstay his welcome at any place.
- spend at least half of his money on the innocent or romance.
- own only what he can carry with him.

**Romantic Appeal:** The romantic appeal of a gallant is so strong that non-hostile encounter reactions are adjusted one level in a more friendly direction, unless the individual succeeds at a saving throw versus paralyzation. Apply a -1 penalty per three levels of the gallant to this saving throw. However, if the encounter includes mixed genders, those of the same sex as the gallant are actually adjusted one level in the opposite direction if they succeed on their saving throw (as jealousy rears its ugly head).

**Poetic Charm:** A gallant who directs his attention to one person of the opposite sex can attempt to win that person's heart. This requires the gallant to perform many subtle acts of wit and charm. Among these, he must recite at least one poem concerning the person. The entire effort takes a minimum of 1d10 non-melee turns, after which the person rolls a saving throw versus Apology with a -1 penalty per three levels of the Gallant. Failure means that the person is affected as if the gallant cast a Charm spell on her (or him, for a female gallant).

The effect is not magical and does not wear off over time, unless the gallant exploits or treats the person badly. Each such abuse results in another saving throw to break the gallant's charm. The GM may apply adjustments based on the situation. For example, if a Gallant asks a princess to tell him where the king's treasure is hidden, she gains a saving throw adjusted by the degree of loyalty she has to her father. Striking the princess (something greatly out of character for a gallant) to gain this information is likely to result in at least a +5 bonus to break free of the gallant's charm. The GM may rule in such cases that success on the saving throw is automatic. Once a victim breaks the effect, the gallant suffers a -2 on reaction rolls with that individual and any close friends of the victim.

**SPECIAL BANES:** A gallant wanders and can never build a stronghold, nor does he attract followers for advancing in level. At 5th level, however, a Gallant gains a squire (a 1st level fighter). This squire is absolutely devoted to the gallant, maintains his equipment in top order, and accompanies him on all of his quests so long as the gallant continues to support him. If a gallant's squire dies or leaves for lack of support, a new squire arrives when the gallant acquires two more experience levels.

A gallant who fails to live up to the Code suffers the loss of his +2 bonus immediately until he atones (with the help of a cleric). Each week without penance results in a -1 penalty to NPC reactions and the loss of 1d6 temporal Honor. These penalties are cumulative.

**RACES:** Gallants are overwhelmingly human or half-elven. Halflings, gnomes, and gnomelings do not cut quite the same figure. Dwarves, half-orcs, and half-ogres never find the gallant's lifestyle appealing and have numerous derogatory terms for such characters. Pixie fairies do not become gallants. For one thing, they cannot really die for their ideals....

## Gypsy (Building Point Cost: 11)

**DESCRIPTION:** Gypsies can be treated as a coherent society or as any group with a nomadic lifestyle. Often they are called "forest nomads." They travel the lands in caravans comprised of carts, wagons, horses, and the gypsy folk themselves, all typically outfitted in bright colors. Gypsies are especially well known for music and dances. Some caravans survive by entertaining the communities they encounter. Not all gypsies are grifters, but enough fill their ranks to produce and support a certain stereotype.

Gypsy ways are strange to others and poorly understood by most. They do not recognize the existence of private property (or at least they claim so when caught!). The fruits of the land belong to all. If there is not enough to go around, it is easy enough to pack the wagons and move along. Likewise, gypsies use only what they need and do not seek wealth or possessions for their own sake, or for the influence or power that they bring. They do not have a king or queen, although sometimes they lay claim to these titles to gain advantage in bartering (when outsiders believe this, the gypsies take it as proof of their gullibility and stupidity). They appreciate valuable items for their use in obtaining things like food, repairs, wheels, and so on.

The gypsy philosophy of life consists of an entire collection of unconventional concepts:

- Gypsies are free thinkers. They dislike formality. For example, many do not marry, seeking companionship only for as long as both parties agree to the arrangement.
- Gypsies love nature.
- Many gypsies do not worship deities (although certain gawds may look over them). Instead, they worship the concepts of nature, free will, and life.
- Gypsies draw their energy and inspiration from their brethren and from their natural surroundings.
- A gypsy is loyal to and protects his friends, but friendship must be earned, and it is not gained easily.
- Possession and ownership are the same.
- Money is useless unless it brings pleasure; trade is a better form of commerce.
- One should always dress and act naturally and comfortably.
- The rigid customs and beliefs of non-gypsies are foolish and should be ignored.

Only a fellow gypsy truly understands the gypsy way of life. Others classify gypsies as thieves, beggars, hippies, carnival people, nomads, or any number of other names. Whatever they say, people with such disregard for the property of others are thieves, but gypsies simply consider themselves free people.

A gypsy cannot be of a lawful alignment. To be a gypsy, a character must have a minimum Dexterity of 14, a minimum Wisdom of 10, and a minimum Charisma of 13.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Acrobat, bard, charlatan, minstrel, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Assassin, ninja, and yakuza.

**ROLE:** Gypsies wander the land, experiencing life as they go. They travel until they find something of interest: a beautiful glade, an interesting village, an audience to sing and dance before, or someone who wants to trade with them. They then establish a temporary camp and remain until their need to see more of the world overpowers their desire to stay.

An adventuring gypsy may be on a personal quest to locate some special animal or flower for the "gypsy queen," or he could simply be out to experience the great wonders that appear along the adventuring path. In any event, a gypsy always has a purpose and philosophy to his adventuring, even if it is "to wander for the sake of wandering."

**SKILLS:** Bonuses: Animal handling, animal lore, dancing, fortune telling, language (modern – gypsy), map sense, musical instrument (exotic, percussion or stringed). Suggested: Ancient history, astrology, cooking, craft instrument, disguise, fast-talking, fire-building, gaming, herbalism, hunting, juggling, singing, spellcraft, survival, tracking, ventriloquism, weather sense.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Gypsies must take proficiency with either dagger or knife, and they must take proficiency with either khopesh or scimitar before any sword. Gypsies cannot ever become proficient with the following weapons: battle axe, lance (any), polearm (any), trident, two-handed sword, bastard sword, or war hammer.



**TALENTS:** May purchase astute observation for a mere 3 BP, blind-fighting for a mere 8 BP, expert cheater for a mere 4 BP, high tolerance for a mere 4 BP, keen sight for a mere 4 BP, and opportunist for a mere 4 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Gypsies excel at picking pockets, both for sleight of hand tricks and the traditional use. They often also excel at stealth, and their natural attunement to their surroundings lends itself well to detecting noise. Some are adept climbers and a few study traps and locks, mostly as a curious art form, not to simply bypass such things. Few gypsies seem to have a knack for reading languages, as most gypsy societies maintain records more through verbal traditions of song and dance than written records.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Gypsies gain no special advantages in terms of starting money or equipment. They can wear only leather, padded, studded leather, hide, or elven chain mail armor. The other types are too noisy, bulky, and gypsies consider them impure and unnatural.

Both male and female gypsies love to wear gaudy jewelry. Their garments are typically loose fitting, comfortable, and consist of many bright and often poorly matched colors.

#### SPECIAL BOONS:

**Animal Rapport:** Gypsies have an ability to associate with animals that nearly rivals that of druids. For this reason they automatically gain the animal handling and animal lore skills. Furthermore, if they acquire animal training and riding skills, these extend to any animal with which they become familiar.

At 5th, 10th and 15th levels, gypsies gain the ability to cause certain spell-like effects, each once per day. At 5th level, they can effectively use an Animal Friendship spell by speaking kindly in their own secret gypsy dialect (once per day, 1 full minute to use). At 10th level, they can concentrate and gain the benefits of a Locate Animals or Plants spell. Finally, at 15th level, they gain the ability to Speak with Animals at will.

**Allure of the Gypsies:** Certain gypsy songs and dances have so much allure that they can powerfully influence those who willingly listen or take part. For such performances to function, a group of at least three gypsies must perform together, or the audience must willingly participate.

These performances take at least 1d10 turns to complete. The effect of such performances can be identical to any one spell of the Enchantment/Charm school (as determined by the specific dance). However, at least one of the main performers must be able to cast the spell. The performer need not have the spell memorized, but he must have personal knowledge of it (in his spell repertoire). The spell range, duration, and other effects that vary by caster level are determined by the eligible performer's level, as if he actually cast the desired spell.

**Fortune Telling:** By using any magical item suited for scrying or divining the future, such as a Crystal Ball or Medallion of ESP, a gypsy can gain the benefits of an Augury spell. Each day, the gypsy can ask one question per five levels of experience (rounded up). Note that gypsies can even tell fortunes by using magical scrying items that they cannot otherwise use. For example, normally only magic-users can properly use Crystal Balls, but a gypsy can gain the typical benefits of the Ball. However, by looking into one and concentrating, the gypsy can use his fortune telling ability. Of course, many gypsies use fake devices and make up fortunes, too, especially when hungry or just looking for a good joke to play on the foolish non-nomads.

Besides items suited for scrying and divining the future, gypsies are able to perform the same feat with a Deck of Many Things. Additionally, when a gypsy uses the Deck of Many Things for this purpose, the cards turned never affect him (for good or bad). Drawing the Void or the Donjon card will not cause the deck to vanish. However, each card pulled disappears and the Deck still functions normally when used for purposes other than the Augury.

**Psionics:** An unusually large number of gypsies are psionic. If the GM allows it, all player character gypsies should be wild talent psionics. Psionic talents are determined by whatever method the GM prefers. Due to their inherent nature and distaste for discipline and order, however, no gypsy can ever become a true psionist.

**SPECIAL BANES:** A gypsy's climb walls ability works best when climbing trees. They are not skilled at climbing cliffs, building walls, or cave walls; they suffer a 25% penalty when scaling these surfaces.

**RACES:** Most gypsies are humans, half-elves, or elves, although such bands sometimes adopt halflings and gnomes. While no known gypsy bands include half-orcs or half-ogres, theoretically one could adopt such creatures. Pixie fairies cannot become gypsies and dwarves refuse to do so.

### Herald (Building Point Cost: 11)

**DESCRIPTION:** Heralds make their living by uncovering hidden truths. If a royal family has a closely guarded secret, best send a herald to uncover it. In the struggle for land and power among kingdoms, the herald is a key force. A good herald knows who plots against his king and why, and understands the influences and allegiances of a court better even than the nobles themselves.

Heralds are confident and well versed in matters of social etiquette. They often gather their information at royal events, such as balls and other celebrations. Often mistaken for nobility, they can easily make their way past guards. Heralds dress in the latest and most expensive fashions of the day, preferring silk and bright colors unless fashions demand otherwise. Members of the opposite sex find the arrogant self-confident manner of the herald enticing, if not actually irresistible even if he looks like Robin Leach.

Heralds make their living by mastering the arts of communication. They can speak dozens of languages, have extravagant vocabularies, can locate a

person's home village by his dialect, and can read almost everything they get their hands on.

In addition to Ability Score requirements for his class, a herald must have a minimum Intelligence of 13 and a minimum Charisma of 14.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, charlatan.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Assassin, ninja.

**ROLE:** There are two types of heralds. One travels from place to place, relating current events across the land. They sell their tales of travel and the news they learn to any who listen. Most medieval commoners cannot read or write, so heralds become crucial links to events outside the immediate area.

The other type of herald serves a king or high noble. Such a herald may be called a court bard, tasked with entertaining the sophisticated aristocrats by music, song, dance, and storytelling. However, his primary duty is to uncover plots against the king and royal family. The royal herald is quick-witted and fast-talking. Heralds of this stature often have reputations that precede them. They are recognized and feared by their foes. Thus, they occasionally deal with assassination attempts at inconvenient times (for instance, Delayed Blast Fireballs under the bed). Courts often employ them to preside over jousting tournaments, announce the arrival of important foreign envoys, and for personal counsel. Many common folk believe that this is actually the herald's primary duty.

Heralds turn to the adventuring life for several reasons. Primary among them are the fantastic stories that they can bring back. "News" has a very broad meaning in the campaign world, and tales of champagne wishes and caviar dreams not only qualifies, but often draws a larger crowd than local gossip and crop failure rates.

A king might send his royal herald on an undercover fact-finding mission – for instance, to investigate a rumor that a temple of Draper is secretly funding Orc raids against a Fangaerian outpost. Often, a herald's communication skills prove invaluable on such quests.

**SKILLS:** Bonuses: Heraldry, local history, observation, reading/writing, social etiquette. Suggested: Languages (ancient or modern), musical instrument (brass instruments). A herald must begin play knowing at least four languages. If he fails to learn at least one new language every three levels thereafter, expect the GM to lay down hefty role-playing penalties. Heralds must purchase the glean information skill normally, but gain two rolls of the mastery die (and two rolls of the Honor die) for every one purchased.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Heralds have no restrictions on weapon proficiencies beyond those of their class.

**TALENTS:** Bonus: Knack for languages. May purchase photographic memory for a mere 4 BP and perfect grooming for a mere 1 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Obviously, heralds excel most at reading languages. They also tend to concentrate on detecting noise; the better to overhear whispered secrets. Even those heralds skilled at finding traps prefer to avoid them rather than attempt to remove them. Other than that, they tend to distribute their knowledge evenly.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Standard. A royal herald may have access to some items normally outside his range of wealth, if his liege (and the GM) allows it.

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**Identify Rumors:** Heralds are always aware of their surroundings and have trained themselves to stay atop current events. Any time the GM generates any type of rumors for player characters, heralds learn twice as many as a normal character. Heralds can also determine the validity of a rumor. The herald makes a Charisma check; if successful, the herald knows whether the rumor is true or false. Even if rumors somehow do not come up in the course of a given adventure, the GameMaster should make up at least one rumor per three levels of the herald and inform him of the rumors at the adventure's onset.

**Local Lore:** After snooping about an inhabited area, a herald can learn who the important people are, what most of the buildings are used for, the quality of certain establishments, etc. It takes a herald one day per 1,000 inhabitants to gain a good information

base. Of course, the herald could concentrate on a specific quarter of town or neighborhood and accomplish the task much faster.

Once a herald finishes scouting, he can recall the name of an important official if he rolls a successful Intelligence check. If the check is successful with a -2 penalty, he can identify the person on sight. The herald can also use this roll if he wants to know other local lore, such as where to go for the best food in town, what neighborhoods are dangerous at night, what time the city watch rotates, or which brothels cater to little people. If the check is a natural 20, the herald believes he knows the desired information, but actually it is mostly or entirely false.

The GM must adjudicate this ability carefully. Penalties apply based upon the information's local significance. It is unlikely that a herald knows the name of a typical citizen in a large city (a -12 penalty might be appropriate). However, the name of the king's horse is a different matter (no penalty).

**Basal Communication:** As stated above, heralds are master linguists. In fact, they can often communicate with creatures of low Intelligence or better and who have a spoken language, even if the herald does not speak that language. The herald incorporates bits and pieces of fundamental root languages, certain universal gestures, and common expressions to get his meaning across. For the herald to perform such difficult communication, the "listener" must be within ten feet, clearly visible, and there must be no distractions (such as combat or raging bonfires) within 30 feet.

To determine success, make a read languages check (although the communication is rarely in written form). The herald must roll separately to send or to receive ideas. Thus, it is possible for a herald to understand a being, but be unable to communicate his own ideas (or vice versa).

**Persuade Crowd:** A herald can affect the mood of a crowd by telling them true (or slightly altered) local rumors and news tailored to his audience. The herald must be able to speak the crowd's language to use this ability. To determine a crowd's mood or opinion on a given topic, the GM should use the NPC Reaction table in the GMG.

After 1d10 minutes, those listening to the herald's words can attempt a saving throw versus Apology, with a -1 penalty per three levels of the herald. Those who fail have their reactions adjusted one level in favor of the herald's opinion. Those who succeed adjust their reactions one level in the opposite direction.

A herald could attempt to persuade a crowd not to eat at the Skinned Dog Tavern until owlbear eggs are back on the menu, to cast stones at the cruel teamster Tourack, or to go and plunder the local granaries. Of course, he can only alter reactions by one level with this method. For example, if everyone is indifferent to the fact that Tourack whips his horses cruelly, the herald can at most persuade them to be cautious about using the teamster's wagons to haul their goods.

**SPECIAL BANES:** None.

**RACES:** Because the herald exists in a very human culture, heralds must hail from human-dominated kingdoms and societies. The GM may allow an elf or half-elf to be adopted into this culture, but any non-human herald is very much an exception.

## Jester (Building Point Cost: 19)

**DESCRIPTION:** Jesters are known by many names: fools, clowns, jokers, buffoons, etc. The jester package covers them all. Jesters are comedians at heart. They love to have a good time and enjoy sharing their mirth and merriment with others (even when they are not welcomed). Most people enjoy having a jester about, as they raise morale, entertain, and make great scape-

goats when problems arise. Jesters are among the few (or indeed, perhaps, the only) characters who can mock kings with impunity.

Jesters are flamboyant, outrageous, and ridiculous. Many sages believe that jesters live in a constant state of borderline insanity. All agree that they live for attention and only feel anything close to relaxed when they are the focus of events or intoxicated.

A jester must have a minimum Dexterity of 14. Jesters must be of any chaotic alignment, since no mind attuned to law and order could possibly sustain such an odd personality.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Acrobat, bard, charlatan, minstrel, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Ninja, yakuza.

**ROLE:** Noblemen often hire jesters for entertainment. They dance, prance, and jump about while the more civilized folk look on and laugh at the fools. More often than not, these noblemen pay dearly for their entertainment, as the jester is liable to make off with a piece of gold for every laugh he hears. Other jesters serve as clowns in traveling carnivals or circuses. And of course every village has its idiot.

Few jesters take up the adventuring life, PC jesters being the obvious exceptions. Their motivations for doing so must be carefully constructed. A jester may be sentenced to escort a group of heroes on a dangerous quest as punishment for a joke about the queen's backside (throwing him in jail would hardly be appropriate; note that even when the king is fair game, his wife rarely is). A noble might assign a jester to accompany a band on a grim and deadly adventure, to combat the gloom and dread that they will encounter. Whatever the reason, having a jester in the party certainly results in more than one good laugh.

**SKILLS:** Bonuses: Acting, dancing, interpret/perform mime, joke telling, juggling, taunting (minor), taunting (major), tumbling. Suggested: Crowd working, disguise, jumping, musical instrument (any), poetry, singing, ventriloquism.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Jesters spend most of their lives entertaining others by playing the role of fool or clown. Large weapons do not fit into this role. Thus, jesters may become proficient only in the blowgun, hand crossbow, dagger, dart, hand axe, javelin, knife, quarterstaff, scourge, sling, short sword, and whip.

**TALENTS:** Bonus: opportunist. May purchase blind-fighting for a mere 7 BP and sixth sense for a mere 3 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Jesters tend to master the art of picking pockets (and little else) as quickly as possible.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Standard.

Jesters may wear only the following types of armor: leather, padded, studded leather, or elven chain mail. Other types of armor do not fit the image of fools.

Jesters usually act and dress in the most outlandish manner. Even when severe danger lurks, jesters still hop around in their flashy suits with tassels and foppish hats.

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**Fool's Luck:** In the minds of many sour onlookers, jesters share certain traits with cockroaches. They can be found in the most unlikely places, usually are not wanted by many, and are extremely difficult to kill. They are also careless, foolish, and given to whimsical decisions. Fool's luck has saved many a jester's life, which may be the only way many of them could survive.

Jesters receive a +1 bonus to most die rolls. They gain their opportunist talent +5% on percentile rolls. One or the other bonuses applies to most every roll the jester makes, including saving throws, initiative, surprise, proficiency checks, thief skill checks, ability checks, and ability sub-checks (e.g. bend bars/lift gates, resurrection survival, and so on). Fool's luck even adds a +1 bonus to the jester's Armor Class.

Certain die rolls remain unaffected by fool's luck and opportunism: attack rolls, damage rolls, initial character generation rolls, and Hit Die rolls.

**Jesting:** Jesting is the art of projecting meaning and mood using body motions. By jesting (or gesturing) with a successful check of his interpret/perform mime skill, a jester may communicate a single sentence each round to anyone who rolls a successful Wisdom check with a -5 penalty. Such communication is totally silent and does not rely upon a shared language, though it is only possible with creatures of essentially humanoid form (and Wisdom scores!). The jester must use his entire body for the communication; thus, he must be mobile, fully visible and within 30 feet for communication to take place.

Jesting may be done to taunt or tease. Such jesting affects only those who are within 30 feet of the jester and who can fully view him. Those who the jester uses his taunting (minor or major) skill on must immediately try to physically strike the jester for as long as the jesting continues. The effect ends when the jesting ends. Those affected ignore combat strategy, good tactics, their own proficiencies, their best attack methods, spells and all else in favor of a reckless charge directly at the jester. They will pass by more dangerous targets in an attempt to attack the jester. Thus, jesting is a wonderful way to break the ranks of enemy forces.

**Joke Telling:** The jester has elevated the practice of creating and telling jokes to a fine art. Jesters tell jokes in an attempt to alter encounter reactions. For any type of joke to function, the jester must speak a language known by the recipient of the joke. Furthermore, the jester must be within easy verbal range of the recipient. See the joke telling skill in the Player's Handbook for details.

A joke told by a jester at just the right moment can dispel the effects of fear. Such a joke requires one round to tell and a successful skill check enables all those affected by some kind of fear (normal or magical) to roll a second saving throw to avoid the fear effect. Note that those affected by the fear do not immediately run away, but remain until the jester finishes the joke. If no first saving throw was allowed, then this second save is a saving throw versus spell.

**A Jester's Mind:** Jesters are immune to attacks that cause insanity, probably because they are not entirely stable in the first place. Those brave souls who have looked into the mind of the jester report that it is a dark, disturbing place with no towels. Jesters gain a special saving throw bonus against magic-user spells of the Enchantment/Charm school and cleric spells of the charm sphere. This bonus is equal to the jester's experience level. A saving throw of 1 always fails, however.

Furthermore, any attempt to read a jester's mind has a percentage chance equal to the jester's level of causing confusion in the mind reader (treat as if under the effect of a Confusion spell).

**SPECIAL BANES:** None. Unless you count the floppy shoes.

**RACES:** Many, but not all, jesters are human. Gnomes and halflings frequently make excellent jesters.

**Note:** Jesters can be a lot of fun if properly played with the right gaming group. However, this package can devastate an overly serious campaign (you know the type, people with rods of various metals in various bodily orifices). GMs should consider whether their group and players could handle such a character before allowing one into the campaign.

### Jongleur (Building Point Cost: 13)

**DESCRIPTION:** Loosely based upon the French entertainers of the same name, jongleurs are masters at manipulating small items with their hands. They can catch and juggle almost anything. On top of this they are skilled acrobats, able to traverse tightropes, turn flips, pole vault, and perform any

number of acrobatic feats. Their agility provides them with excellent defensive resources.

A jongleur must have a Dexterity score of 15 or higher.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Acrobat, bard.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Brigand, infiltrator, and ninja.

**ROLE:** Most jongleurs accompany carnivals or circuses as entertainers. A troupe of jongleurs can put on a remarkable show all by themselves. They often perform in taverns or clubs, using their arts to draw in the crowd and captivate them long enough for the barkeeper (as well as the jongleurs) to drain the crowd's purses. Of course, a few freelancers work the streets out of greed or need.

Jongleurs are useful adventuring allies; their skills are invaluable when the going gets tough. They can squeeze into places where nobody else can go without the aid of magic. Finally, their skill at avoiding certain traps makes them excellent scouts.

**SKILLS:** Bonuses: Juggling, jumping, tightrope walking, tumbling. Suggested: Endurance, map sense, poetry, rope use, running.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Jongleurs can use all hurled weapons. A hurled weapon is any weapon that can be thrown (this does not include bows, blowguns, or other missile weapons that are fired or shot). Otherwise, jongleurs are restricted to the following weapons: polearms, quarterstaff, sling, staff sling, and whip, all weapons that can be used in their performances. For example, they can juggle daggers, pole vault with polearms, and balance with spears or quarterstaves.

**TALENTS:** May purchase breath weapon bonus for a mere 3 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Individual jongleurs progress in thief skills as they see fit.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** If a jongleur wears any type of armor other than leather, studded leather, padded, or elven chain mail, he cannot use any of his package's special benefits. All other forms of armor are simply too restrictive or bulky for him to properly perform.

Jongleurs tend to dress in rather flashy colors. However, they do not take this to the extremes that jesters do. They avoid large capes, robes, and other garments that might catch or tangle during movement. Of course, this does not mean that a jongleur is going to wear a flaming red suit that sparkles in the dimmest of lights when exploring ancient ruins (but he might...). They prefer flash and fanfare, but they are not (necessarily) stupid.

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**Extended Skills:** Because jongleurs are extremely skilled at all forms of juggling and acrobatics, they gain certain special benefits to their bonus skills.

#### Juggling:

- The jongleur adds his level to the attack roll when trying to catch small items.
- The jongleur can use this skill to deflect missile or hurled weapons too large to catch.

#### Jumping and Pole Vaulting:

- The jongleur doubles his level for all jumping calculations.
- The character can use poles up to 20 feet longer than himself without penalty.
- The jongleur can make vaults with a 15-foot run. He can choose to keep a hold of the pole with a second successful skill check.

#### Tightrope Walking:

- Divide all penalties by 2, dropping fractions (i.e. -5% in moderate winds, -10% in strong winds).
- Use of a balancing rod provides a +20% bonus.

#### Tumbling:

- The +4 Armor Class bonus applies during any round in which the jongleur wins initiative and he may still attack after a successful skill check with a "very difficult" level of difficulty.
- The character needs no skill check to reduce falling damage. However, a successful check doubles the falling distances (i.e. no damage up to 20 feet and only half damage up to 120 feet).

**Dodge:** Jongleurs have very quick reflexes, impressive even to other agile folk. This unique quick-twitch reflex enables them to jump free of many potentially harmful situations even after other characters are doomed. If the jongleur makes a successful saving throw versus breath weapon, he dodges aside at the last moment. The only bonus allowed to the save is the defensive bonus for high Dexterity.

If the attempted dodge fails, the jongleur suffers the full effects of the danger. He gets no other saving throw to avoid the threat, as the dodge takes the place of all other saving throws. The benefit of dodging is that he can completely avoid all harm, whereas many successful saving throws result in half damage. Of course, the jongleur player can opt to skip the dodge attempt in favor of any normally allowed saving throws.

Dodging does not affect missile weapons or hurled weapons, personal spells (those that affect only one person) directed specifically at the jongleur, or spells that have no physical effect to dodge (such as Hold Person).

Situations a jongleur can avoid include falls (into pits, through illusionary floors, down sliding stairways traps, etc.), being struck from above (by ceiling blocks, rocks, Piercers, collapses, bird crap, etc.), area-effect spells that can be dodged (Lightning Bolt, Web, Fireball, etc.), and any other situation that the GM deems appropriate. The character must be able to avoid the effects by a sudden agile leap (it may apply to some breath weapons). Of course, if a jump to safety is physically impossible, the jongleur cannot attempt to dodge. Note that jongleurs can also climb walls and might avoid certain situations by clinging to a wall (with a successful skill check, of course).

**Entertain Crowd:** By juggling, performing flips, or otherwise displaying his acrobatic talents, a jongleur can influence the reactions of an audience. This ability is similar to the bard's ability to influence reactions.

As with that ability, the crowd cannot be attacking or about to attack (anyone, not just the jongleur. It is tough to watch antics when naked blades thirst for your flesh.). The jongleur must perform for 1d10 rounds, after which all NPCs viewing the performance must roll saving throws versus paralyzation (split large audiences into groups of 10 and roll one saving throw for each group with the person having the best save represent each group). Each 3 levels of the jongleur imposes a -1 penalty to the saving throw (round down). Those failing the save must adjust their reactions by one level in a more friendly direction (hostile to uncertain, uncertain to neutral, etc.).

Unlike the bardic ability, the jongleur cannot use this influence to attempt to worsen the reactions of a crowd (it is very difficult to juggle or walk a tightrope in an offensive manner – even doing it poorly and falling is entertaining to onlookers). However, if the crowd saves with a natural 1, the onlookers disapprove of the jongleur and their reactions actually do worsen by one level.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Jongleurs can never gain the ability to use written magic items, such as spell scrolls or books (even if his character class normally permits it). They can use only those that any character can use (such as protection scrolls).



**RACES:** Gnomes, halflings, and gnomelings make excellent jongleurs. Nevertheless, most are human.

### Loremaster (Building Point Cost: 12)

**DESCRIPTION:** Loremasters are romantically entranced by the past. They believe in the circular nature of history and relate the lessons of ancient times to the problems of the present to help guide their people along the path to the future. As loremasters proceed through life, they record the events of their own times for posterity.

Loremasters love to relate the lessons of history to those who will listen. However, often people view them as being more reclusive and eccentric than magic-users. Their preoccupation with old tomes, arcane lore, ancient languages, and lost civilizations dominates their lives, when they are not putting on an oratorical performance to instruct the youth. From their research, loremasters gain unique wisdom and insight, allowing them to identify certain magical items, understand ancient writings and languages, gain special benefits in the arcane lore of magic, and incite crowds to action.

Loremasters must have an Intelligence and Wisdom of 14 or higher, in addition to any requirements of their class.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, minstrel.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Acrobat, assassin, charlatan, and ninja.

**ROLE:** There is a fine line between loremaster and sage; so fine that many loremasters call themselves sages and rarely get questioned about it. However, true sages are knowledge specialists who concentrate their efforts into mastering a specific field such as mushrooms, elven swords, or some such. Loremasters are fond of any aspect of history that makes a good story, though they usually give some nod to accuracy albeit colored by their own personal prejudices.

Many loremasters are travelers who wander the lands searching for great historical tales and facts to relate to crowds. In order to gain the substance of their tales, loremasters often take up adventuring. Unlike many other adventurers loremasters are not simply seeking gold or magic. Rather, they are searching for a new legend or tale. Loremasters are the first to open old tomes, read the runes on passage walls, and record the general events of an adventure. As such, they are useful stooges to pawn the 'map monkey' task off on.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Ancient history, languages (ancient), oration, reading/writing, rousing speech. Recommended: Animal lore, arcane lore, artistic ability, astrology, engineering, heraldry, languages (modern), local history, map sense, musical instrument (any), poetry, religion (general and specific), social etiquette, spellcraft, weather sense.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Due to their great interest in knowledge and their concentration on the past, loremasters only bother to learn the lightest and simplest of weapons. They select their weapon proficiencies from the following list: blowgun, dagger, dart, hand crossbow, knife, quarterstaff, sling, and staff-sling.

**TALENTS:** May purchase grace under pressure for a mere 4 BP and photographic memory for a mere 2 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Loremasters need to concern themselves with finding and removing traps, since they are often the first to open ancient tombs, lost tomes, and anything they think might be of interest. They tend to ignore pick pockets, as they are somewhat distracted, always thinking about history and tales from the past, how to relate some particularly subtle point to an audience, and the like. They rarely climb walls but quickly maximize read languages.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Loremasters get no bonuses to starting money and spend a lot of their gains on books and scrolls. In fact, they spend so much of their time studying arcane tomes and ancient civilizations that they do not bother to practice the use of heavy armor. Thus loremasters can use only leather or lighter armor. In fact, Loremasters generally dress and act much like magic-users.

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**Jack-of-All:** Loremasters have an ability that builds on the ability of bards. Loremasters have a 5% chance per level to identify functions of items encountered, and bard loremasters have a 7% chance per level.

**Arcane Lore:** Through their devoted study of the past, loremasters come across numerous texts on the arcane lore of magic. They devour all of this information, hoping to uncover some great tale. Loremasters eventually gain a fundamental understanding of many strange magical items not normally usable by their class. Thus, loremasters can attempt to use any magical item. To do so, the loremaster must succeed at a Wisdom check. This does not mean that the loremaster fully understands the operation of the item, only that he succeeds in his attempt to use it in this particular way, this particular time.

Loremasters also pore over scrolls and spell books whenever they get the chance. This enhances their understanding of magical spells so much that they memorize and cast spells, and use spell scrolls, as if they were one level higher. (Note that loremasters from classes without spell casting abilities gain no such ability from this package!)

**Persuasion:** Usually loremasters recite their collections of historical fables and legends to a crowd simply to entertain and educate. Although these performances are wonderful to hear, they do not necessarily have any direct impact upon the crowd.

When a loremaster wishes to affect the mood or actions of an audience, he uses his great skills of verbal persuasion, oratory, and rhetoric. He might relate the legend of the horrible massacre of Troggin Keep by Lizard Men in an attempt to incite the crowd to hate and despise Lizard Men.

Such persuasion efforts take at least 1d10 rounds. All who listen and can understand the loremaster are potentially affected. A successful oration skill check indicates their reactions are adjusted one level up or down (as desired by the loremaster). A failed skill check indicates that some loudmouth in the crowd has a different interpretation of historical events which the crowd favors, and a critical failure indicates they strongly disagree with the Loremaster's revisionist tale and have their reactions adjusted one level in the opposite direction.

**Etymology:** Loremasters can make their read languages attempt twice if the language in question is an ancient one (a language no longer spoken by a living population). They can also use their read languages ability to decipher runes, glyphs, pictograms, ideograms, or any other form of ancient visual communication.

Although a loremaster cannot be skilled in a newly encountered ancient language, with a successful ancient languages check, he understands the basics of the ancient language. He may gain elementary use of the language, allowing for written or even spoken communication of simple concepts at one-tenth the normal rate.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Because of their preoccupation with matters of knowledge and history, a loremaster suffers a -2 penalty on to-hit and damage rolls when forced to fight instead of study some ancient writing or other piece of knowledge. He must also go to any possible lengths to protect and preserve knowledge (often in the form of books). For example, if the long-lost Scroll of Medet falls towards a bonfire even as four Ogres surround the loremaster's sidekick, he must try to save the scroll. This sort of thing leads to a -4 loyalty base for loremaster henchmen (the penalty does not replace the Charisma modifier to loyalty base, it subtracts from it).

**RACES:** Creatures of any race can become loremasters, though half-ogres and half-orcs usually see books as nothing but kindling. Only a handful of dwarves have ever become loremasters, and they tend to get strange looks from their comrades (except when discussing architecture and the construction of ancient royal halls under the mountains). Pixie fairies, perhaps because of their brief lives, lack the typical concerns of loremasters, and none have ever been known.

**Outrider (Building Point Cost: 10)**

**DESCRIPTION:** An outrider operates in a wilderness setting, usually alone. Besides working as a guide, spy, or saboteur for hire in the wilderness, many outriders are also involved in illicit activities such as poaching. While outriders as a group have a reputation for toughness, skill and competence, each picks his own path. Though all focus on getting the job done, rarely do two outriders go about doing so in the exact same way.

The outrider package has no requirements beyond those of the thief class.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, brigand, infiltrator, thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** None.

**ROLE:** One might say that outriders are to thief types as rangers are to fighter types but they avoid the strict rather silly ethical nonsense of the ranger class. Outriders are not prohibited from being good (in fact they are overall more dependable than thieves in general), but they have a cutthroat streak that can be dangerous and unpredictable. However, their rugged individualism and harsh practical judgement often endears them to adventurers, and many are found among such steadfast, daring companions.

Unlike bandits (who also operate chiefly in the wilderness), the outrider usually shuns the company of other thieves, including guilds. The guilds, in turn, care little about outriders. Their poaching and small-time thievery is insignificant in the eyes of the great crime figures, especially when compared to the trouble and expense that would be required to identify, track down, and punish the elusive outriders (or force them to join the guild). If an outrider does become a guild member, either it is a voluntary arrangement (whereby the outrider benefits from access to special equipment and training) or he has spent enough "professional time" in the city or other explicitly guild-controlled territory and the guild "persuaded" him to join.

Of the many outriders not belonging to a guild, some have a single, consistent employer. The rest are freelance or mercenary, serving themselves or whatever employer may come along, taking the best pay they can find. Alternatively, if there is nothing else, they steal and poach to support themselves.

Several organizations regularly employ outriders, sometimes on a permanent basis. Reliable outriders, trained for reconnaissance and sabotage, are vital to any successful military operation. The key to having reliable outriders is to have well trained and (most of all) happy outriders. Commanders can bully a common grunt soldier into line and, if need be, force him out into battle by the spearheads of the rank behind him – but the outrider explores alone. Maltreated outriders have more opportunities to desert or, worse yet, betray vital information to the enemy than anyone else in an army.

Military outriders are carefully nurtured and well nourished. They get good pay, excellent equipment, and the best training available for their special and important activities. The training of military outriders is at least as intense and comprehensive as that of a thieves' guild. (Sometimes, after retiring from the army, military outriders go on to become some of the most illustrious and prosperous burglars and assassins of the underworld.) This, of course, invalidates their pension if they are found out.

A few other groups (secret societies, paramilitary groups, thieves' guilds that have operations across the wilderness, smugglers and agencies set up to connect clients with guides) may also employ outriders. Such agencies are normally found on the edge of vast wilderness areas undergoing colonization. With frequent exploration by people unfamiliar with the region, these areas have enough demand for guides that an agency can prosper on its percentage of the guide's fee.

As mentioned before, outriders often poach when the need (or opportunity) arises. Often royal decree, written law, or the monopoly of the hunters' or furriers' guild protects animals. In Garweeze Wurd, often only the noble classes have the legal right to hunt. A commoner caught slaying one of "the king's deer" could be summarily executed in many places.

When demand exceeds supply, there may be great incentive for the criminal killing and capture of animals. Poachers may seek animals for their meat, valuable pelts, ivory, feathers, magical purposes (e.g. eye of newt), or other esoteric ends. Thousands of animals have been killed because some body part is believed to be an aphrodisiac. Sometimes this is mere rumor and sometimes it is fact. Reliable outriders report that the horn of a Unicorn, for

instance, may be ground into powder and administered with liquid as a poison antidote.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Forage for food (appropriate climate), map sense, mapless travel, slip away into shadows, tracking. Recommended: Animal handling, animal lore, animal noise, animal training, boating, fire-building, first aid: sew own wounds, fishing, glean information, heraldry, herbalism, hunting, intelligence gathering, mountaineering, observation, riding – land-based, rope use, set snares, stealthy movement, survival, swimming, weather sense.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Outriders have the normal range of weapon proficiencies permitted to their class.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Outriders most favor skills relating to stealth, and members of this package have highly trained senses. They improve hide in shadows, move silently, and detect noise. They may also get considerable use out of climb walls – not from climbing walls, per se, but trees, cliffs, and so forth.

**TALENTS:** Bonus: Acute (high) Alertness (regardless of race). Acrobatic skill suite for a mere 4 BP, endurance for a mere 4 BP, photographic memory for a mere 3 BP, sixth sense for a mere 4 BP, tough hide for a mere 8 BP.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** No self-respecting outrider permits himself to go without a basic assortment of wilderness survival gear: adequate clothing, rations, fire starting materials, etc. They also favor special gear to assist climbing, hiding, and moving undetected, as well as devices for hindering or diverting pursuers. (What worth is an outrider's knowledge if he never reports back to his employer?).

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Due to their extensive wilderness experience and expertise, outriders gain +10% on both hiding in shadows and move silently when in wilderness environments. Outriders also have an increased chance (1 in 10 better) to surprise opponents in the wilderness because of their natural stealth and attunement with their surroundings.

**SPECIAL BANES:** While intimately familiar with the wilderness, outriders are not so comfortable in urban settings. In the city, consequently, the outrider suffers a -5% penalty on all thieves' skills.

**RACES:** The outrider package is a good choice for many demi-humans, since many of those races often already have an aptitude for wilderness adventuring. Elves make natural outriders in forested areas and dwarven outriders scour hills and mountains seeking goblinoid prey. Halfling and gnome outriders often excel at escaping notice and pursuit, while half-ogre and half-orc outriders typically do not mind one or two pursuers catching up with them....

**Panhandler (Building Point Cost: 7)**

**DESCRIPTION:** Circumstances have reduced some unfortunates to such a level of poverty and helplessness that the only possible way that they can survive is by imploring their fellow beings to give them whatever meager scraps can be spared. At least, so the panhandler would wish it to appear.

For a great many panhandlers this is the truth; misfortune, disability or alcoholism have dealt them sore blows, and they must rely on the charity of individuals and a few institutions, such as beneficent churches, for subsistence.

A more sinister class of panhandler is in fact an insidious variety of swindler or con artist. This character is usually perfectly able-bodied, but has taken up begging as a career, supplemented by minor theft (picking pockets and the like), and the gathering and selling of information to interested parties. Many panhandlers make a surprisingly good living doing this. This is the sort of panhandler this package describes.

The panhandler package has no requirements beyond those of the character's standard class.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Acrobat, assassin, bard, charlatan, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Minstrel.

**ROLE:** Professional panhandlers are usually raised into their role. This of course means a lower (indeed, in many places, lowest) class background, and meager financial resources at best. The panhandler has other resources, however: connections, street smarts, a sharp eye, and diverse skills for cajoling passersby out of their spare coins.

Effective begging requires consummate skills of acting and disguise, so that the panhandler can present himself in the manner most likely to garner the sympathy and money of the people he accosts.

As a matter of survival, the panhandler needs diverse sources of income. Few can avoid starvation solely by the charity of strangers in the street. Thus panhandlers also become dealers in gossip and information (such as the movement and activities of wealthy personages), with ears ever open for any tidbit of knowledge that may help fill their stomachs. Panhandlers also gladly hire themselves out as messengers or spies and are always eager to clean the windows of a noble's coach - even if not asked to do so!

Panhandlers are known to cooperate with other varieties of thieves, especially robbers. A favorite ruse involves one or more panhandlers accosting a wealthy-looking person. While they distract him with their pitiful (and more often than not, futile) pleas for assistance, a slick robber relieves the victim of his coin pouches. Shares of the score are divided among panhandlers and robber.

Many panhandlers are affiliates of the local thieves' guild. The guild makes use of them as messengers and informants. It also may have a sort of protection racket going with them: panhandlers must share their score with the local guild in exchange for protection from thieves of the guild, as well as freelancers and rival guildsmen. Guild-affiliated panhandlers also may gain some measure of protection from the local constabulary—a useful thing if local law prohibits panhandling.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Begging, disguise, glean information, observation. Recommended: Singing, trailing. A panhandler with marketable skills (e.g. crafts or trades) should have some reason in his background why he is no longer able to support himself through them. Economic recession usually suffices.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Panhandlers begin play familiar with only simple, inexpensive weapons. They favor the simple knife, as it is inexpensive, easy to use, and easy to conceal. Beginning thieves with the panhandler package should select their two proficient weapons from among the following: club, dagger, dart, knife, sling, or quarterstaff.

**TALENTS:** Gains cower talent for free.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Panhandlers become most proficient in picking pockets (to supplement begging income), as well as moving silently, hiding in shadows, and detecting noise (useful for gathering information and tailing people). They tend to be worst at opening locks and finding or removing traps, since these skills rarely come into play for them and require technical training that is not easily available.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** The basic equipment of a panhandler is a wooden bowl or cup in which passersby may place alms. More sophisticated panhandlers use false crutches, make-up and the like to make themselves seem as desperate, pathetic and poverty-stricken as possible.

Some panhandlers have children with them (rented from the true parents, or borrowed in return for a share of the day's income, if not the panhandler's own) to arouse still more sympathy. Others adopt the ever popular three-legged dog companion. A more sophisticated sort of panhandler offers a service of some kind – a song, or a tune from a simple instrument in exchange for food, drink, or a few coins.

Few panhandlers can afford to purchase armor; and even if they could, they would not want to wear it, since it would make them appear wealthier than they wish to appear.

Panhandlers who rise above their circumstances may of course equip themselves as they see fit, although other panhandlers will no longer accept them as one of their kind. A panhandler who appears well-off suffers penalties (ranging from -5 to -50, by GM discretion) to the following

**SKILLS:** begging (because the character doesn't look impoverished), glean information (because other panhandlers will distrust him), and even trailing (because he won't blend in as well with the city's masses).

**SPECIAL BOONS:** The most valuable benefits of the panhandler package are the bonus skills.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Most of society scorns panhandlers. Even characters who share their wealth with panhandlers tend to feel a sort of condescending dis-

gust, though they may try to hide it. Other thieves and nefarious operators, however, recognize the talents and value of panhandlers. For this reason, panhandlers suffer -2 on reaction rolls with non-thief NPCs.

Furthermore, because of their impoverished background, panhandlers start the game with only 3d4 gold pieces – and they've gotta hide any left over after purchasing initial equipment.

**RACES:** Panhandlers may be of any race. In regions with a lot of bigotry, where demi-humans have difficulty finding legitimate employment, panhandlers are commonly demi-humans. Most non-human panhandlers were forced into their position by unfortunate circumstances—they were not born into it.

## Puzzler (Building Point Cost: 13)

**DESCRIPTION:** Riddles, rhymes, and puzzles are the media of the puzzler. These characters look upon life as an intricate and challenging puzzle to be solved. Their seemingly strange ways cause many a commoner to label them crazy. However, puzzlers are exceptionally intelligent, and their minds work on a level above that of the common man. A puzzler claims that his mind is constantly in motion, that he is wiser than most clerics, and smarter than most sages. Always thinking, always plotting, always alert, they typically do not say such things when near powerful clerics or their allies....

Puzzlers devote their entire intellect to maximizing favorable outcomes for themselves and their friends. Some believe that puzzlers simply enjoy extraordinarily luck, but this is not the case. Puzzlers are always considering the environment around them, deliberately finding the best place to stand in a dangerous area, socializing with the most advantageous people, asking the best questions, and so on. They seek to develop the supreme mind.

When encountering someone, the puzzler analyzes him, evaluates his value to the puzzler, and acts accordingly. When he enters a tavern, he does not just grab the nearest chair. Instead, he scans the room, selects the most advantageous seat, and then evaluates the fare as he decides what to have. None of his decisions are made without deliberate, conscious thought.

To flaunt their skills, puzzlers often speak in riddles or rhymes, causing others to stop and think in order to understand them. Puzzlers love to pose questions, most often in the form of riddles, to everyday people. They carefully construct these riddles to conceal lessons or observations that apply to the puzzlers' audience.

Puzzlers must have an Intelligence of 15 or more and a Charisma of at least 11.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, charlatan.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Assassin, ninja.

**ROLE:** Each puzzler applies his intellect in a different way. Evil puzzlers seek to demean and put down others in order to somehow rise above them. Good puzzlers make their way through society attempting to educate the "less fortunate." Others simply travel around, enjoying the sport of poking fun at others while advancing their own intellectual understanding, and hopefully finding a challenge once in awhile.

Traveling puzzlers are most common, as their unique ways often irritate others, forcing them to maintain a mobile lifestyle. Adventuring puzzlers enjoy the supreme tests of judgment and intelligence that they must pass in order to survive perilous quests. Besides this, their input on decisions can be invaluable. Of course, some party members may find their manner difficult to put up with, especially impatient fighters.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Artistic ability (riddles), languages (modern), observation, poetry, reading/writing. Recommended: Appraising, blind-fighting, gaming, heraldry, map sense, musical instrument (any), read lips, weather sense, ventriloquism, voice mimicry.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Puzzlers prefer finesse weapons over those that require simple brawn. They can become proficient in the blowgun, bow, crossbow, dagger, dart, hand axe, javelin, knife, main-gauche, quarterstaff, rapier, short sword, sling, spear, staff sling, stiletto, or whip.

**TALENTS:** May purchase opportunist for a mere 3 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Puzzlers are very observant and good with puzzles, making them adept at detecting noise and understanding lock mechanisms. They rarely concern themselves with stealth.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Standard. Puzzlers concern themselves with intellectual matters, not material ones. They tend to let fine equipment degrade over time.

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**Probable Path:** Puzzlers can use their great intellects to make unusually good analytical decisions. When a decision must be made concerning multiple options (e.g. down which hallway to proceed, which door to open first, which opponent to attack first in order to achieve some goal, etc.), the puzzler can use his intellect to help make the decision. In such cases, the GM secretly rolls an Intelligence check for the puzzler, with a penalty equal to the number of previous probable path decisions made that day (representing mental fatigue). If the roll succeeds, the GM tells the player all significant clues that the puzzler might know or observe. If there are no clues, the puzzler gains no information. They are not lucky, just very intelligent – they need some knowledge with which to work. If the roll is a natural 20, the information gained is misleading.

This ability cannot be used multiple times in the same situation unless some significant element of it changes.

**Riddles/Puzzles:** If any adventure includes an actual riddle or puzzle that the players must solve, the player of the puzzler can make twice as many attempts to solve the riddle or puzzle as normally allowed. For example, an adventure might include an encounter in which the party runs into a Sphinx. The Sphinx may demand the answer to a riddle in exchange for safe passage. In this situation, if the puzzler gives the answer, the player can actually make two guesses, and if either is correct, he gains passage.

The same thing applies if the party comes across a room with a tiled floor that must be crossed in a specific sequence. The puzzler is allowed to make one mistake. Only on his second mistake does the character suffer any hazardous consequences.

If a problem has a time limit, the puzzler has twice the allotted time to solve it.

The puzzler can use his propensity for solving riddles and puzzles in a special way when attempting to understand a newly discovered spell. The puzzler has a +10% bonus to his roll to learn spells (to a maximum of 95%).

Furthermore, the puzzler gains the ability to use any written magical item at 8th level.

**Common Sense:** To signify the (often not really that common) “common” sense a puzzler has at his disposal, puzzlers gain certain benefits. Although these benefits are similar to those of the jester package, they are not luck, but rather a result of intellectual calculations made by the puzzler.

- The puzzler gains a +1 adjustment to his Armor Class.
- A puzzler receives a +1 bonus to many die rolls, including saving throws, individual initiative, surprise, to-hit rolls, and ability checks.

Common sense does not affect damage rolls, initial character generation rolls, Hit Die rolls, or percentile rolls.

**Riddling and Rhyming:** A puzzler affects audiences by chanting certain riddles and rhymes. This ability functions as the bard's ability to influence reactions. A puzzler who is a bard can attempt both on the same audience, should his first attempt fail (unless he

fails critically and they turn on him before he can try the second method).

**SPECIAL BANES:** Because so many people dislike smart alecks, puzzlers suffer reaction penalties among the unintelligent. This scale is relative, so that the character suffers a reaction penalty equal to 13 – the creature's Intelligence score. Creatures with Intelligence scores of 3 or lower cannot really understand riddles, so there is no adjustment for dealing with them. The puzzler can attempt to modify these reactions through careful analysis of what might entertain such creatures (though they must be able to understand the puzzler's language).

**RACES:** Every race has its puzzlers, though different ones treat them in different ways. Dwarves tend to see them as best suited to a certain time and place, setting aside nights for puzzles and games (and not appreciating such things while working in mines or adventuring). Half-orcs and half-ogres tend towards simpler but more violent puzzles such as how to piece together a dismembered corpse...

**Robber (Building Point Cost: 4)**

**DESCRIPTION:** This very common sort of thief: the pickpocket or shoplifter who engages in small-time larceny, usually at or near a level of meager subsistence. Since he is literally on the streets, he often knows more than any honest man should about things going on among the populace (both in general and the criminal). Thus, he supplements his income by working as an informant for the powerful figures of the underworld (or anyone else who is willing to pay).

The robber has no Ability Score requirements beyond those of his class.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Assassin, minstrel, and ninja.

**ROLE:** The robber falls near the bottom of the underworld hierarchy. His activities are not as risky as those of other thieves, but neither are they as profitable.

Many robbers are “freelancers,” not associated with any thieves' guild. Guilds, normally harsh on nonmember thieves who operate in their territory, pay little attention to lowly robbers. The profit and benefits that would accrue from their membership would not outweigh the trouble of trying to bring them into line. For this reason many chaotic thieves, who may dislike the structure and limitations of guild membership, become robbers.

Robbers need not be uncooperative, however. Some do join guilds, serving primarily as informants and tipsters, ears on the streets, catching gossip and scoping out prospective targets that the guild can then assign to other thieves. The robbers do not mind the lower reward because they face less risk simply watching a target.

Robbers who do not belong to a guild often form their own little mob. Such a small mob usually develops a standard modus operandi, and they use the same scam on every target. They may also design special, elaborate plans for lifting a particularly heavy purse. Robbers also may enlist the assistance of thieves of other packages in their operations (for example they might frequently work with panhandlers).

Suppose, for instance, that one thief has the job of accosting an affluent-looking stranger, whom the robbers have guessed to be an out-of-town merchant. This first thief presents himself as a street-vendor. While he tries to sell the merchant a hot cinnamon bun, a second thief comes by carrying a large load (perhaps a basket full of dirty sheets), which he “accidentally” drops on or around the merchant. In the chaos that ensues, the first two thieves appear to help the merchant, picking up the fallen items and apologizing profusely: while a third robber does the actual job of relieving the merchant of his cash.

Like panhandlers, most robbers come from lower-class backgrounds, born into their station.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Observation, trailing. Recommended: begging, intelligence gathering.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Robbers only use small, easily concealed weapons. Though they face no formal restrictions to that effect, expect role-

playing penalties for failing to include at least one (a dagger or club, usually, sometimes a short sword).

**TALENTS:** Robbers may purchase acute (high) alertness at a mere 4 BP, astute observation at a mere 3 BP, opportunist at a mere 3 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Robbers naturally specialize in picking pockets. Beyond this, they typically favor moving silently and hiding in shadows, as these supplement their picking of pockets.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** A few special items to aid in picking pockets are noted in the Tools of the Trade section. Robbers have somewhat easier access to these items than many, but they still have to pay for them.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** The effective pickpocket is one who chooses his target carefully. He must learn to ascertain the nature of a prospective victim. How dangerous will the attempt be? What could the target do in response? Moreover, does the chance of financial reward outweigh the risks involved?

This means that the robber can pick up on nonverbal cues and use experience to guess the class and level of another character. If the pickpocket makes a successful observation skill check, he can accurately determine the target's character class.

Another skill check allows him to determine the approximate level of the character. The GM rolls this check secretly. If the check fails, the difference between the number rolled and the target number determines the degree to which the robber has misjudged the target. For every 5 points or fraction thereof, he misjudges his target by one level. For example, a robber with a 70% observation skill rolls a 95. He has misjudged his target's level by 5 levels. Ouch! The GM determines randomly if this judgment skews high (1-3 on 1d6) or low (4-6 on d6), so an 8th level fighter could be seen as 3rd level or 13th level.

Sometimes a robber checks out a character who is in disguise. When this happens, the robber must see through the disguise to judge the individual's true nature. After checking for class (which reveals the class the disguised character wishes to portray), the GM secretly rolls a second check. He then compares this to a special disguise skill check. Whichever character succeeds by more wins.

Thus, if the robber succeeds at his roll by 50 and the disguised character succeeds by 30 (or the disguised character fails), the robber sees through the disguise and checks again to determine true class. If the disguised character succeeds by 50 and the robber by 30 (or the robber fails), the robber accepts the disguise. However, if the disguised character succeeded on his special disguise check, the robber suffers -25% on his effective observation skill to read that character for the duration of the encounter.

**Example:** Gorgar the robber eyes an opulent-looking foreigner. Gorgar succeeds in his first observation check, and determines that the man is a magic-user. This could be dangerous, he thinks, but potentially a good haul, so he tries to guess how powerful the magic-user is.

Gorgar has an observation skill of 64%. The GM rolls the dice secretly for him, and gets a 77. This means that Gorgar's estimate will be 3 levels off.

The wizard is in fact 4th level. The GM (rolling a 2 on 1d6) decides that, because of the magic-user's rich dress, Gorgar overestimates the character's level. "You think he's an Enchanter," says the GM. Gorgar decides that today is not the day to be polymorphed into a lemur so he slinks away to find an easier target.

**SPECIAL BANES:** The main hindrance for robbers is that thieves of other packages look down on them, consider them small-time thieves, just half a step above panhandlers. Much of this comes out in role-playing, giving the GM an excuse to slap a character silly with in-game suffering and discrimination.

**RACES:** Robbers may come from any race. Half-elves and halflings particularly favor this package; as do, to a lesser extent, gnomelings.

## Rover (Building Point Cost: 2)

**DESCRIPTION:** The rover is the jack-of-all-trades, the prototypical dungeon-delving thief. The rover is not so much a thief as a character who uses general thief (and sometimes bard) skills on professional adventures into dungeons and wilderness areas. The rover thief package has no requirements beyond those of the class itself.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, charlatan, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** None.

**ROLE:** Rover package thieves usually serve in parties of brave adventurers of various classes. They provide vital skills to support any expedition into wilderness or dungeon. The professional rover is, furthermore, preferred by many adventuring parties, because they believe he is much less likely than other thieves to betray or steal from his own companions. The successful rover knows the value of trust and cooperation, while many a "street thief" has been raised on duplicity and (often literal) backstabbing.

Many rovers are neutral or lawful. Few are evil, and any chaotic evil rover faces extreme challenges just to survive, let alone prosper in his ways.

Rovers may be part of a thieves' guild to gain easier access to equipment and training. They tend to be independent, however, and dislike guilds that have demands beyond a simple membership fee.

**SKILLS:** Recommended: Boating, fast-talking, intelligence gathering, looting (basic and advanced). May take the clever packer skill for a cost of one fewer BP.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Any.

**TALENTS:** May purchase acute (high) alertness for a mere 4 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Rover thieves tend to spread their skill improvements as evenly as possible, allowing them to deal with the many different challenges the adventuring life presents. Those who concentrate them tend to focus on opening locks, finding traps, and removing traps, since they likely use these skills most often.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Rovers are often very gadget-oriented, delighting in new ways to bypass monsters and raid their lairs. They also may have a good bit of money, from successful ventures, to reinvest in equipment (+15 to roll on PHB Table 4M: Character Starting Money).

**SPECIAL BOONS:** None.

**SPECIAL BANES:** None.

**RACES:** Any.

## Skald (Building Point Cost: 14)

**DESCRIPTION:** Skalds are honored and respected members of their clans. These great poets memorize the feats of each raid and battle, setting them down in the form of poetry.

Every Viking war party loves to have a skald in its midst. His presence assures that their great deeds and mighty skills will be honored in the skald's next recital, and thereafter immortalized for all time. Members of most bands treat skalds with utmost respect and courtesy. All know that the foolish warrior who maligns a skald will soon hear his name, reputation, and Honor slandered in innumerable ballads across the land.

Skalds honor others and themselves in the form of heroic, epic poems. They also use poems to relate the oral history of the clan. All major ballads are passed down from one generation to another via the skald's talents. In this way, the lessons and deeds of the past are related to those of the present to instruct the current generation and so they can be passed into the future.

A skald must have a Dexterity score of at least 12 and a Charisma score of at least 13.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, minstrel, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Ninja, yakuza.

**ROLE:** During battle, skalds sing war chants. At funerals, they chant dirges. Skalds ground their clans in the traditions and history that makes the clan what it is, while adding new tales and elements to society as they and their brethren commit new great deeds. Often kings, jarls, and nobles sup-

port and protect skalds to hear of great duels and mighty wars. When the skald tells these events in the form of poetry, it makes the telling all the more inspiring. Such men would prefer to hear skalds relate tales of *their* family's glory to visitors.

Skalds rarely perform together unless they have entered into a poetic duel.

Most skalds participate in adventures. Every skald is easily caught up in the fervor and majesty of adventure, danger, and combat. Great quests serve as source material for their ballads and poems, and they can find no better way to discover new tales than to live them.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Ancient history, chanting, local history, poetry, singing. Recommended: Armorer, blacksmithing, blind-fighting, bowyer/fletcher, crowd working, hunting, leatherworking, musical instrument (any), social etiquette, weaponsmithing. See "Special Banes" concerning the reading/writing proficiency.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Skalds must use one of their initial proficiency slots on one of the following: broad sword, hand axe, battle axe, or spear. At least half of the skald's weapon proficiencies must be spent on these weapons, until he gains proficiency with all of them.

**TALENTS:** May purchase axe, spear, or sword bonus for a mere 2 BP. May purchase hit point bonus for 8 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Skalds just cannot get the hang of reading languages, as they can only learn to read after establishing their credentials in a non-literate culture. They have highly trained ears, however, and generally improve detect noise quickly. They are much more likely to learn and use climb walls than open locks, as they tend towards a fighter's view of mechanical inconvenience (i.e. "bash it").

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Standard. Skalds lean toward fighter skills more than most of their roguish counterparts. Because of this, they can wear any form of armor up to plate (not full or field plate), and they can use shields.

#### SPECIAL BOONS:

**War Chant:** By chanting a war song, a skald can inspire allies as they go forward into combat. For the chant to have an effect, the skald must begin chanting at least three rounds before combat begins, otherwise his allies are too caught up in the events about them to benefit from this ability.

Such chanting has an effective range of ten feet per level of the skald. The effects end as soon as the skald receives his first wound. If the skald does not enter the fray (and avoids wounds), the effects end in a number of rounds equal to the Skald's level.

Chanting can elevate spirits, remove concerns about danger, keep men's minds focused on combat, and fill friendly forces with a sense of being larger than life. Translated into game terms, this results in the following six possible effects for the members of the skald's party.

At 1st level, the skald can choose only one of the following six effects per battle; at 3rd level he can choose two, three at 6th, four at 9th, etc. The skald player chooses the effects, and can change them from one battle to the next (but not from one round to the next).

- Bonus temporary hit points equal to the skald's number of Hit Dice.
- A morale bonus of +1 for every six levels of the skald (rounded up).
- A +1 bonus to all to-hit rolls.
- A +1 bonus to all damage rolls.
- A +1 bonus to all saving throws.
- A 1 point bonus to everyone's Armor Class.

**Influence Reactions:** If a skald spends 1d10 rounds singing ballads, he can attempt to improve the reactions of an audience. Everyone able to clearly hear and understand the Skald must roll a saving throw versus apology with a -1 penalty per three levels of the

skald. Those who fail have their reactions to the skald improved by one level. Those who succeed do not find the skald's ballad particularly moving. Those who succeed with a natural 20 find the song offensive and their reactions worsen one level.

**Battle Chant:** Skalds tend to be rather combative. This provides them with certain combat advantages. The skald gains a +1 on to-hit rolls any time he sings or chants during combat, even a soft chant under his breath. In addition, the skald gains a +1 bonus to damage rolls when using a broad sword, axe (any type), or spear while chanting, if he has proficiency with the weapon. These bonuses usually apply, unless the skald is silenced, under water, etc.

**Jack-of-War Trades:** Skalds love legends about war and combat. Legend lore works the same for skalds as it does for bards, except that Skalds can perform legend lore only upon magical items having to do with war or combat (e.g. weapons, armor, Potions of Strength, etc.). (Skalds of the bard class can attempt both abilities on such items, but only the class ability on those not dealing with war or combat.)

**SPECIAL BANES:** The skald's society has no written language. Because of this, skalds cannot take the reading/writing skill when created. Furthermore, they cannot gain the read languages ability if they stay in their home society. However, both of these limits are lifted once the skald encounters a culture that reads and writes. He can then pick up the reading/writing skill, though at twice the normal cost. With his -25% penalty to read languages, it takes him awhile to have even a 1% chance of success (he cannot put any points into read languages until 3rd level or higher).

Skalds never gain the ability to use any written magical item, even protection scrolls.

Magic-user spells are nearly unknown in the skald's society, and they are viewed with suspicion in any event. Thus, skalds cannot learn any spells until they encounter a spell casting culture, assuming his class allows him to cast spells. Once he makes contact, the skald can begin casting spells when he gains his next level. At this time he is considered a 2nd level spell caster (providing he is at least 3rd level by this time). His spell casting level increases by 1 every time he gains a level thereafter.

A skald character may have left his distant homeland and come far for adventure. This character can take reading/writing proficiency when he gains his next level, provided he can pay the costs of the skill. He gains the ability to cast spells as outlined above, if his class has spell casting abilities at all.

**RACES:** Skalds are usually human, but the lifestyle appeals to many dwarves as well. Elves, half-elves, halflings, gnomes, gnomelings and pixie fairies simply do not have cultures that produce skalds. Half-ogres and half-orcs often find unusual degrees of acceptance as skalds.

## Sleuth (Building Point Cost: 8)

**DESCRIPTION:** Though sleuths are listed as thieves, they are usually in fact the antithesis of criminals. Sleuths enforce law and order; these people know the skills of the thief intimately so that they can combat him.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Charlatan, thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Assassin.

**ROLE:** Sleuths can play a number of roles. They may be private, independent operators, selling their services one mission at a time. Alternatively, they may be employed by a government or organization. In each case their skills and activities are similar, but their roles and attitudes may diverge considerably.

A sleuth can be a vigilante, obsessed with uncovering crime wherever it may be hiding, and stopping it. Or he may be the "private eye," a mercenary sort, willing to sidestep laws to better serve his client or retained by an individual or organization.

Of course, even those sleuths who serve government bodies may not be good guys. A sleuth could be a sinister agent of a corrupt government (for example, a member of the NKVD or secret police.)

Sleuth thieves rarely form alliances with guilds, nor do they often even work with them except perhaps as moles. On rare occasions, a guild may employ a sleuth, however; though more often they would use a spy, or perhaps a troubleshooter.

In fact, a sleuth might not even realize that he is employed by a guild, if his ostensible employer is a “front” business. Interesting cloak-and-dagger style adventures could be built around a sleuth discovering in the course of his work that the shadow he follows actually lurks behind his own employer.

And of course, sleuths ostensibly employed by the government, like other magistrates and officials, quite often “go bad,” growing mad with power. A guild may buy them off or they may turn a blind eye towards guild activities, either for information or to extract bribes using threats of legal persecution.

**SKILLS:** Required: Glean information, observation. Recommended: Disguise, fast-talking, heraldry, intimidation, local history, modern languages (any), reading lips, religion (general), trailing.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Sleuths are permitted the normal range of weapons open to their class. They will normally carry two weapons, at least one of them concealed (knife, dagger, or something similarly small, perhaps in a wrist sheath).

**TALENTS:** Bonus: Acute (high alertness). Astute observation at a mere 3 BP, keen sight at a mere 4 BP, sixth sense at a mere 3 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** A balance of generalized skills serves sleuths well. Picking pockets is less important, although sleight-of-hand can sometimes serve a sleuth. Read language skills are a must for deciphering clues; some criminals write important information in obscure languages or secret codes, and being able to decipher those can spell the difference between success and failure for the sleuth. Other skills (picking locks, trap detection and disarmament, and so on) are useful for penetrating and examining the hideouts and houses of suspects.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Many technological devices available to the modern investigator (such as fingerprinting techniques, searches of computer data bases for information, and so forth) would of course not be available in the medieval fantasy setting. Still, some of the effects of such devices may be duplicated with magical items; or the GM can make liberal use of anachronism. Suppose sleuths are able to dust for fingerprints, for example. He may possess or have access to a large tome of such records that allow the sleuth to learn whose prints he has dusted. Avoid extensive use of these techniques though as it tends to ruin the player's suspension of disbelief.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Sleuths pick up a little bit of knowledge on just about everything, within their area of operation. Any time one needs to know some specific piece of information that could be acquired through discussion and careful observation he has a chance to figure it out quickly. This applies within a specific area and only to certain types of information (such as whom to seek to learn about an exotic item or the specific tradition a craftsman used to produce an item). This chance equals 10% per level. (Bards can add this to their percentage to determine the function of a magic item, if the item has some connection to his area of operation). Obviously, the GM must determine if this ability applies to a specific situation.

Use requires about ten minutes, so even if the sleuth fails he can try other means of investigation. In addition, the sleuth needs to maintain some sort of connection to the “word on the street”. Should he be imprisoned for years or re-locate to a new area, he needs to spend a number of weeks equal to his level “laying the ground work”, before he can use the ability. This allows him to get the general feel of an area, learning tidbits of information on which to base future deductions.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Most thieves and grifters do not want people examining them closely. Thus, sleuths suffer a -4 reaction adjustment from NPCs who figure out that they are sleuths.

**RACES:** Sleuths may be of any race, though those not of the dominant race in their area of operation face increased difficulty. A dwarf does his best investigative work in the dwarf-dominated quarter of a large city, for instance. This means that human sleuths dominate most areas. Operations that investigate guilds with many non-human members could of course make much more use of non-human sleuths.

## Smuggler (Building Point Cost: 7)

**DESCRIPTION:** A smuggler specializes in the illicit movement of goods, either goods that are themselves illegal (e.g. stolen) or whose movement is illegal (in some countries, for example, it may be illegal to move gold bullion; or a smuggler might secretly move cargo to avoid paying taxes on it). The smuggler often thinks of himself more as a businessman and trader than a criminal, but not always. He needs a host of practical skills to evade authorities, as well as connections in diverse places to acquire and unload his merchandise on the black market.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Charlatan, pirate, thief, and yakuza.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** None.

**ROLE:** The smuggler plays a vital role in the underworld, moving goods from place to place. Without the smuggler, fences could only sell to local buyers, which would mean they could not deal in exceptionally valuable goods. Thieves would have to ignore objects that were worth *too* much, the whole system would break down and anarchy would ensue. Guilds themselves might not even be able to function, at least on a large scale.

Smugglers use two general methods of protecting contraband from discovery: they either hide the goods within the transportation or hide the means of transportation itself. An example of the former would be a wagon or boat built with a false floor, beneath which the cargo is hidden. Hidden transportation would include sneaking oneself over the city wall late at night, with a pack full of stolen loot to be taken to a distant fence. Or, perhaps, traveling in a simple boat late at night without the nosy interference of harbor-masters and their ilk.

Plans for hidden transportation can become elaborate, but experienced smugglers claim that the trick is to stay small and fast. Small makes discovery more difficult; fast makes it likely that you can get through or at least get away, even if discovered. Sometimes the best smuggling routes go through treacherous territory or difficult terrain. Thus, a smuggler must be flexible. For instance, he may arrange to bring a canoe or even smaller craft to traverse a swamp or area of many small lakes and streams, portaging when necessary and leaving the canoe behind (and hidden, of course) when he has passed the natural obstacles.

If the smugglers pass through dangerous territory (plagued by bandits, humanoids or monsters, for instance), it is best to work out some means of protection. This means either bringing along a couple of thugs or mercenaries for the difficult parts, or paying “protection money” to the dangerous parties. Most bandits, humanoids, and even intelligent monsters, would be perfectly happy to let smugglers through in return for a cut of their merchandise, or to tell the smugglers that they can pass safely through, and then renege on the deal. The smuggler cannot go to the watch or the crown for help (if he survives)!

For such a situation, the smuggler best have some powerful muscle behind him – like a guild. A great many smugglers belong to guilds. Guilds that operate in more than one urban center, or in the countryside, usually employ a number of smugglers just to move people and items within their own networks. They may also have smugglers who specialize in dealing with other guilds. Such smugglers should have high Charisma scores because they must serve as diplomats as well as businessmen. Finally, there are freelance smugglers. They may operate between guilds, between guilds and freelance fences, or, on rare occasion, solely among freelance fences.

Remember that a smuggler operates between fences; he rarely, if ever, deals directly with thieves or non-wholesale customers. The fence or guild works out deals with prospective buyer fences, and then hires the smuggler to make the delivery. Guilds and organizations are not only in a better position to do this, they would prefer their thieves NOT have direct access to smuggling operations (they know what type of people they are dealing with, after all!).

**SKILLS:** Recommended: Animal handling, animal noise, animal training, appraisal, boating, disguise, fast-talking, fondling, forgery, gaming, intelligence gathering, map sense, mapless travel, navigation, observation, rope use, seamanship suite, swimming.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Smugglers have the normal range of weapons open to their class, and are not required to take proficiency with any in particular.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Above all, the smuggler needs to be able to detect noise – whether meddling competitors out to sabotage his hard work, authorities sticking their nose into his business, or humanoid bandits stalking him in the forest. After that, hiding in shadows and moving silently probably see the most use. A smuggler has the least use for picking pockets.

**TALENTS:** Bonus: Acute (high) alertness. May take astute observation for a mere 3 BP.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Two items are essential to the smuggler's vocation: means of transportation, and means of protecting the contraband from discovery.

The smuggler should use very basic, inconspicuous transportation: wagon or horse for land, boat for water, and so forth. More elaborate smuggling plans in the fantasy setting may include air transportation – a smuggler could secret stolen gems on his person and then fly out of a city late on moonless nights by Hipporiff! Very successful smugglers might invest in Teleportation magic, but such things require magic-users who know how to keep their mouths shut (whether purchasing a single spell or a device that will need maintenance and/or re-charging).

Smugglers make frequent use of items that help them evade or even prevent pursuit. Marbles (if the surface is right) or caltrops can do much to hamper pursuers, and aniseed or dawg pepper can throw dogs off the trail.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Smugglers must be exceptionally alert; they therefore get a +1 bonus to their surprise roll.

**SPECIAL BANES:** None.

**RACES:** While not prohibited from being smugglers, demi-humans rarely pursue this profession. Many are already outsiders and in some lands the punishments for any crime are actually harsher (or at least more likely to actually be handed down) for demi-humans.

### Spy (Building Point Cost: 13)

**DESCRIPTION:** The spy gathers information. At the lowest level, he is a common-informant, an eavesdropper with his ears open for salable information. Guilds and governments hire expert spies to infiltrate opponents' buildings and ranks to find vital, secret knowledge.

To take the Spy package, a character must have a minimum Intelligence of 11.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Assassin, bard, infiltrator, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** None.

**ROLE:** Spies are vital in supporting any large organization such as a guild or government. Information is the key to success, whether thieves prepare for a burglary or a nation prepares for war, and the spy provides that information.

Most spies serve one such organization on a permanent basis. A small number choose the extreme risk of playing double (or triple) agent. The few freelance spies face a problem: to find employment, they must be known in certain circles; but if known, they have difficulty being successful, since those same circles are the most likely to be the targets of their work!

Spies may come from any background. In fact, a large percentage of them come from the lower classes, close in touch with the word on the street and all the secret channels of society's seedier side. A smaller number of elite spies exist, either in permanent positions (e.g. a count who reports word on his liege's troop movements to a rival kingdom, or a treacherous castle steward). Such characters probably would not actually have the spy package, since spying is a sideline; the focus of their life is (or at least was) something else.

The spy package includes talented individuals ready to go anywhere, risk any danger, and encounter a lot of excitement on the way to finding the knowledge they seek. They excel at infiltration and finding information, not just in selling what they know. Exciting spies, and player characters with this package, are usually of this sort.

In most lands, the standard penalty for spying (if the crime goes beyond the low levels of spreading rumors, eavesdropping, and scoping out potential burglary targets) is death, and spies from one nation to another can hardly expect anything in the line of "diplomatic immunity." Many spies actually thrive on this danger.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Disguise, glean information, stealthy movement. Recommended: Begging, etiquette, forgery, intelligence gathering, local history, maintain self-discipline, reading/writing, read lips, skilled liar, tracking, trailing.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** A spy has the normal range of proficiencies open to his class. He can carry and even use non-thief weapons (for the purpose of disguises), but cannot take proficiency in them.

**Example:** To help impersonate a castle guard, a spy carries a halberd.

He could use it combat, but he suffers a non-proficiency penalty.

To increase his chances of success, he would probably switch to a different, familiar weapon – even a dagger or knife unless circumstances prohibit it (e.g. people around him would be surprised to see him not using the halberd, and might thereby see through the disguise).

**TALENTS:** Acute (high) alertness for a mere 3 BP, opportunist for a mere 3 BP, photographic memory for a mere 4 BP, sixth sense for a mere 3 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** An effective spy needs a fairly even distribution of thief skills, since his vocation can bring him into any number of diverse situations. Often hiding in shadows and moving silently are very important from early on, but spies also need to get into locked areas likely to be trapped. They need read languages to decipher codes; climbing walls allows access to and egress from many fortified areas. Even pick pockets can be useful for removing (or placing!) objects on or from contacts, not to mention pilfering seals or documents from some official. They might skimp on detect noise – if not too worried about getting caught.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Spies in the medieval setting do not have all the fancy gadgetry of their modern counterparts. They may equip themselves liberally with what is available, however, such as boots with hidden compartments in the soles, thieves' equipment, and so forth. See the Tools of the Trade section for a host of ideas.





**SPECIAL BOONS:** None.

**SPECIAL BANES:** None.

**RACES:** Elves and half-elves, with their love for knowledge, are especially predisposed toward this package. However, most demi-human spies face the difficulty of appearing disguised as a member of another race. They therefore risk having a rather limited range of professional assignments, part of the price they pay for getting along with their own kind better than humans do.

### Swashbuckler (Building Point Cost: 11)

**DESCRIPTION:** Part acrobat, part swordsman, part wit, and entirely roguish – this is the swashbuckler. He is a sophisticated city-dweller, the epitome of charm and grace. Note that there is a swashbuckler fighter class, but the thief-type swashbuckler package has certain differences.

To be a swashbuckler, a thief must have minimum scores of 13 in Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence and Charisma.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Acrobat, bard, charlatan, pirate, and thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Ninja.

**ROLE:** This is a happy-go-lucky thief, with ready wit and flashing rapier. His home is usually the city, where he can shine amidst the squalor. He is generally less interested than his warrior counterpart in poking people with his rapier, and is more involved and concerned with his wild theatrics and amazing displays of acrobatic skills. More often than not he also finds himself, justly or not, on the wrong side of the law.

The swashbuckler almost never aligns with thieves' guilds; he prefers to be "freelance." Swashbucklers who journey outside the cities may align themselves with bandits or pirates, however, and with their Charisma and skill, they frequently assume leadership. Such responsibility ill suits the true swashbuckler, however; the annoying details of organizing and leading a large group invariably set him packing in short order.

Most swashbucklers come from a wealthy or aristocratic background. Their skills of stealth and acrobatics came not from survival needs, but whim. This motivation typically remains the driving force behind the swashbuckler's career. Most of these young rakes retire when they get older and must assume responsibilities in the communities (family, noble title, business, and so forth). Many a swashbuckler has kept up his activities, however, in secret; his moonlighting may even be developed (usually purposely) to a point of distinguishable alter egos. The daytime character may be a foppish dandy, gruff businessman, or air-headed noblewoman. At night the swashbuckler emerges: a cunning, dashing, adventurous character à la the Scarlet Pimpernel.

Thief-type swashbucklers have varying goals. For the young ones, usually just thrills are enough: a chance to break into the impenetrable castle, to replace the Queen's necklace with a fake, to outwit the guildmaster of thieves.... A few have more serious goals (and these tend to keep up their habit). A swashbuckler may be a vigilante, charming and witty, but driven by an obsession for justice. His enemies may be criminals or, in an unjust society (where the aristocratic swashbuckler's alter ego may be an unwilling part of the apparatus of oppression), the authorities themselves.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Disarm (see *Combatant's Guide* p 50), social etiquette, tumbling. Recommended: Blind-fighting, disguise, expert disarm (he can purchase this skill for a mere 2 BP each time, but must first meet the prerequisite 50% in standard disarm, of course), fast-talking, intimidation, jumping, riding land-based, tightrope walking, trailing.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** The swashbuckler receives an extra weapon proficiency slot which must be devoted to a weapon among the following: main-gauche, rapier, saber, and stiletto. With this type of weapon, the swashbuckler's "weapon of choice", the swashbuckler fights on the fighter attack matrix (as a fighter of equal experience level). Throughout his career, he must devote half of his weapon proficiencies to these weapons, until he has gained proficiency in every one.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Swashbucklers tend to have fairly balanced thief skills. This includes picking pockets, though they more often use that skill in the form of sleight of hand.

**TALENTS:** Opportunist for a mere 4 BP, taunt (regardless of race) for a mere 4 BP.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** The swashbuckler must buy his weapon of choice, but other than that may spend his gold however he pleases.

**SPECIAL BOONS:** The swashbuckler makes frequent use of his disarming skills. When using his weapon of choice, he gains +2 on disarming attacks (offsetting the penalty for a disarm to -2 or an expert disarm to -6).

Being such a romantic figure, the swashbuckler gains a +2 reaction adjustment with members of the opposite sex. This remains even when fleeing from opponents and the thief-type swashbuckler suffers no Honor penalties for doing so.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Trouble seeks out the swashbuckler. This is something that the GM must play very carefully if the swashbuckler is to balance with the other thief packages. When there is another swashbuckler around (thief-type or fighter-type) bent on proving that he is the finest swordsman in the world, he seeks out the PC swashbuckler and challenges him (often in the middle of some illicit activities). Attractive members of the opposite sex always expect help and/or protection from a dashing swashbuckler. While the swashbuckler practices burglary on his uncle's mansion, the old man decides to return early from his journey. Life conspires to make things difficult for the swashbuckler, and the GM should throw just a little more good-natured bad luck at this thief type than at any other. Thief-type swashbucklers often gain more notoriety than fighter-types because they are more likely to flee.

**RACES:** Any demi-humans who'd look elegant in foppish dress (or think they would), wielding a narrow blade, will work fine as swashbucklers, especially elves, pixie fairies, and half-elves in particular. Dwarves, gnomes, and gnomelings are likely to have to defend their honor (with duels) in the face of numerous jokes about their curious looks. Half-orcs, half-ogres, and gnome titans are not likely to be swashbucklers as they tend towards a purer sort of violence.

### Thug (Building Point Cost: 18)

**DESCRIPTION:** The thug is a bully who never grew up and the most violent sort of thief. Assassins are killers, certainly, but they depend on refinement and subtlety. Bounty hunters also make expert use of violence, but are relatively restrained as well. The thug, on the other hand, comes as close to a fighter as any thief type.

Because of the package's emphasis on physique and physical prowess, a thug must have a minimum Ability Scores of 12 in Strength and Constitution. In designing the character's description, a thug should be as physically imposing as possible. Furthermore, his Intelligence may be no higher than 12.

Thugs are usually male, but nothing beyond historically popular custom prevents females from becoming thugs.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Thief, yakuza.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, minstrel.

**ROLE:** Historically, the "Thugee" were actually a cult of murderers found in India. Over the years, however, the term "thug" has come to mean any brutal sort of thief, such as an armed robber, hijacker, or goon (the latter specifically indicating a guild-associated thug, an enforcer).

If one compared a guild to the human body, thugs are definitely the muscles – the arms and legs used to beat offenders, traitors, and anyone else just for practice. Thugs function as enforcers, intimidating common people (especially in racketeering schemes), guarding the bodies of important guildsmen, and carrying out the guild's threats of violence often enough to keep people suitably afraid.

In fact, outside of the thieves' guild, the thug has no real place. Most thugs haven't the wit to become accomplished burglars or even pickpockets on their own, let alone con men, spies or fences. Even begging might be denied them on account of their imposing physique: a plea for alms from a huge, muscular man tends to look more like a demand backed up by a thinly-veiled threat. The guild pays them well and gives them a satisfying job that suits their inter-

ests. Often thugs need only scare the living daylights out of people, and not even face real combat.

The few thugs who are not guild-affiliated are armed robbers or perhaps (if they have slightly higher Intelligence scores) kidnapers or hijackers.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Attitude adjustment, cricket-in-the-pea-pod, eye gouge, intimidation, pimp slap. Recommended: Endurance, looting (basic and advanced), trailing. Thugs may purchase feign toughness, flex muscle, and poker face skills for just 1 BP each time. They gain two mastery dice for each purchase of a street cred or threat gesture skill. May take all combat skills for a cost of one fewer BP.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Thugs gain an extra weapon proficiency slot at first level. They may take proficiency in weapons outside those normally permissible to their class, but must spend one extra proficiency slot (and 1 extra BP).

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** There is no uniform preference among thugs for the distribution of points among their thieves' skills. Note, however, that they start out with fewer points to distribute than their comrades (see Special Banes, below).

**TALENTS:** May take dense skin for a mere 8 BP, hit point bonus for a mere 6 BP, tough hide (regardless of race) for a mere 8 BP.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** The thug's equipment usually consists of the biggest, most intimidating weapon available. Otherwise, it is a matter of common sense according to the job. A kidnapper, for example, could make use of a rope to bind his victim. Thugs do not bother themselves with more subtle equipment (or tactics).

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Because of their greater physical prowess in combat as compared to other thief types, thugs receive +1 on their to-hit rolls.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Thugs spend much of their early career learning about weapons and their use, and their initial training in the traditional thief skills suffers as a consequence. To compensate for the extra weapon proficiency slot and combat bonus, a thief of the Thug package has only 40 points to distribute initially among his thief skills (although he can still put up to 30 of them in a single ability, if he so chooses).

**RACES:** Half-ogres and half-orcs make particularly effective thugs, as they naturally tend to emphasize force over stealth. The thug lifestyle is primarily a human development, though, and not common in dwarven society (though some dwarves have the temperament, it does not suit their culture well). Virtually no elven, gnomeling, gnome, or pixie fairy thugs are known. A surprising number of gnome titan and halfling thugs exist in some larger cities.

## Troubleshooter (Building Point Cost: 9)

**DESCRIPTION:** The troubleshooter, like the sleuth, often works against other thieves. He has all the skills of the thief, but puts them to a different use. As a security consultant, he plays the part of the thief in order to test the worthiness of his clients' defenses.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, thief.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** None.

**ROLE:** The troubleshooter defines his professional role rather narrowly, but that is how he likes it. More than one has been known to moonlight in other (possibly illicit) activities. These range from legitimate recovery of stolen goods through genuine burglary.

As a "security consultant" this sort of thief has a legitimate reason for his thieving skills and equipment; and many cannot resist the temptation to use them. For this reason, officials often keep a suspicious eye on well-known troubleshooters. More sophisticated governments may even require that they have some sort of license.

Troubleshooters are rarely guild members, naturally enough (unless they have been bought off in exchange for information on their former clients). Of course, few such troubleshooters survive long; if one gives a location's security their "seal of approval" and then subsequently helps thieves break in, the troubleshooter's reputation will be shot. In addition, he can expect to have more than a little suspicion placed on his shoulders.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Observation. Recommended: Fast-talking, intelligence gathering, locksmithing, trailing.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** Troubleshooters are permitted the normal weapons open to their class.

**TALENTS:** Bonus: Astute observation, detect secret doors, determine stability. May take the opportunist talent for a mere 4 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Picking pockets and reading languages are not of much value to the troubleshooter, but he will probably seek a fairly even distribution among the other thief skills. Many emphasize find and remove traps, in particular.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Any troubleshooter worth his wages augments his thief talents with the best available equipment. Remember, he wants to try his absolute best to break down his client's defense – as does his client – so he will use whatever devices increase his chances. In addition, a wealthy client could even be persuaded to help the troubleshooter acquire hard-to-find thief equipment. Which he can always use on some other caper....

**SPECIAL BOONS:** Troubleshooters have an uncanny knack for...well, troubleshooting. If there is a glitch somewhere in a security system, the troubleshooter always seems to run into it.

In a way, the troubleshooter is a living manifestation of "Murphy's Law": "If anything can go wrong, it will." The troubleshooter thief, of course, capitalizes on this professionally. His job is to find everything that can go wrong, so it can be fixed.

**SPECIAL BANES:** While everything going wrong has its ironic professional advantage, the downside is of course that the things that go wrong often do so to the troubleshooter's personal disadvantage. This is difficult to quantify, and the GM is sure to abuse it at some point. He will claim it is to maximize excitement and role-playing fun. And while it may be, the troubleshooter's life is filled with astronomically improbable events and bizarre coincidences.

One rule the GM must consider is this: Everything should be balanced. For every freakish mishap that works in the troubleshooter's favor, there should be a complementary one that works to his disadvantage. This certainly does not preclude a string of unpleasant coincidences, however.

**RACES:** Of the demi-humans, dwarves, with their affinity for the mechanical and their lawful tendencies (and their dour stoicism in the face of all misfortune, however ludicrous), are most inclined to take this package.

Some gnomes also may be found as troubleshooters; as the special knacks suit their prankster personalities well, but their employers would best be on guard for practical jokes perpetrated in the course of the assignment. The goal of any gnome troubleshooter should be to turn all his mishaps into assets or amusement, if not both.

Half-ogres and half-orcs tend not to make good troubleshooters, often because they simply are not hired much. Gnomelings and pixie fairies can pursue this package, though some clients believe they cannot realistically simulate the efforts of larger creatures. Few elves or half-elves make their livings as troubleshooters.

## Warbler (Building Point Cost: 10)

**DESCRIPTION:** Warblers wander the woodlands, mountains, and deserts, seeking those who will listen to their songs. Warblers rarely perform for humankind. They tailor their music to the tunes of nature. Their audiences are the birds, the bees, and the behemoths.

Warblers have wandered unsettled lands since the dawn of civilization. Loremasters tell tales about how the ancient Dryads and Nymphs would find lost human children and teach them the ways of the forest. Druids took in others. Over the years, some of these children of nature developed a manner allied to but different from the druids – the warbler.

The concerns of warblers center on nature, especially animals. Lawful neutral, true neutral and chaotic neutral warblers see themselves as one with nature (although each views the structure of nature differently). They protect animals as humans protect those of their society. Neutral good warblers look upon animals as innocent children who should be isolated and protected from the harsh and uncaring realms of civilization. Neutral evil warblers see

animals as subjects to be controlled and exploited (by themselves, not by others). They use animals as some lords use slaves. True neutral warblers are closest to druids in their outlook.

A warbler must have a minimum Wisdom of 12 and a Charisma of 14. They must have some neutral component to their alignments.

**PREFERRED THIEF TYPES:** Bard, minstrel.

**BARRED THIEF TYPES:** Assassin, ninja, pirate, and yakuza.

**ROLE:** Warblers are the mortal enemies of ruthless and profiteering hunters, trappers, and fishermen. They believe such activities should occur only when the game is needed for survival and no part of the animal is wasted.

Typically, they adventure in forests, deserts, and mountains. Rarely does a warbler adventure anywhere unless he can protect animals – as mounts, as companions, or perhaps as captives who need to be set free.

**SKILLS:** Bonus: Animal lore, musical instrument (any), singing, survival. Recommended: Agriculture, animal training, blacksmithing, craft instrument (on type), dancing, fire-building, fishing, herbalism, hunting, map sense, mountaineering, riding (airborne), riding (land-based), rope use, set snares, swimming, tracking, weather sense.

**WEAPON PROFICIENCIES:** The following weapons are forbidden to the warbler: harpoon, lances, mancatcher, all polearms, and trident.

As a woodsman, a warbler must maintain a variety of weapons: some purely for melee, some purely missile weapons, and some for use in both melee and missile combat (hurled weapons). At first level, a warbler must select one melee and one missile weapon. Each additional weapon proficiency slot must be spent in the following repetitive sequence: hurled, melee, missile.

**TALENTS:** May purchase astute observation for a mere 4 BP.

**SKILL PROGRESSION:** Warblers favor read languages and detect noise. After that, they can distribute their skills as desired.

**EQUIPMENT & MONEY:** Standard.

**SPECIAL BOONS:**

**Song of Companionship:** At 1st, 5th, and 10th levels, a warbler can play the Song of Companionship, which lasts for 2d12 hours.

The GM and player should select six naturally occurring wild animals (not domesticated or fantasy-based) appropriate to the current terrain. Then roll a d6 to see which selected animal emerges from the nearby woods or over the next hill. The animal is a faithful companion to the warbler from that day onward.

The warbler and animal can communicate simple thoughts and desires. Such communication must be in the form of music or song by the warbler, and a growl, caw, hiss, or some other appropriate sound by the animal. Others cannot understand the communication. The companion has hit points equal to twenty less than those of the warbler at his current level. The companion's hit points do not increase as the warbler rises in level.

The companion gained at first level should be Tiny or Small (as per the "Size" entry in the Hacklopedia). The animal transfers its primary sensory power onto the warbler, in a manner similar to the Find Familiar spell, but it is not identical and does not take the place of that spell.

The 10th level companion should be medium or large. The warbler gains the ability to Shape Change (as the 9th level magic-user spell) into this companion's form once per day.

A warbler's companions are his best friends. If one is slain, the mental strain of the loss forces the warbler to roll a successful system shock check or die. (Likewise, if the warbler is slain, the companion animals must roll system shock checks, with their morale score counting as the Constitution score). If the check succeeds, the warbler goes into deep mourning for 101 days, during which he does not adventure (or if he does, gains no EP and 1d4 points of temporal Honor penalties per day). A warbler can call for one replacement companion each time he advances in level (though

he is not required to). The replacement is the same size as the lost companion and confers the same abilities upon the warbler.

**Song of Sanction:** This song envelops the warbler, creating a nearly magical barrier of good will around him. Any attacking animal or monster must roll a saving throw versus paralyzation with a -1 penalty per three levels of the warbler or ignore the warbler and those within one foot per level of him, for as long as he plays the song. The effect of the song ends if the warbler attempts to move or if anyone in the protected area attacks (including offensive spell use).

**Animal Charm:** Warblers know a number of songs that have special charm-like effects upon animals (including giant animals).

If the warbler concentrates, he can attempt to charm one animal within view by his singing. Only an animal with Hit Dice equal to or less than the warbler's level can be affected. Furthermore, the total Hit Dice of all such charmed animals accompanying the warbler cannot exceed twice the warbler's level.

The song takes 1d10 rounds to play, but the animal is held temporarily spellbound during the performance, as long as no hostile advances are made upon it. After 1d10 rounds, the monster rolls a saving throw versus paralyzation with a -1 penalty per three levels of the warbler. If it fails, it acts as if under the effects of a Charm spell. If it succeeds, it is unaffected and acts normally. If the roll was a natural 20, the animal is enraged and immediately attacks the warbler.

**Influence Reactions:** Warblers can attempt to influence the reactions of animals that are not attacking and that allow the warbler to play for them. This ability functions exactly like the bard's ability, but only works on animals.

**SPECIAL BANES:** Warblers do not gain followers, nor do they build typical strongholds. They may have one sidekick and hire individuals for the space of one adventure (1-3 sessions), but do not gain henchmen, proteges, and so on. Their animal companions serve as their followers, and they tend to build several small cottages or huts throughout the lands they patrol.

**RACES:** Warblers are most often human, with a smattering of elves, half-elves and gnomes. They are a little too concerned with creatures and not enough with creature comforts for most halflings. And of course, the few dwarven, half-ogre and half-orc warblers in the world must learn to endure severe ridicule. For unknown reasons, no pixie fairy warblers are known to exist.

## URCHIN DAYS

Though most rogues take to the streets out of necessity, they still have to be trained in the ways of their trade. And though this training may not be regimented or formalized, it is just as important as a magic-user's schooling or a fighter's basic training. All of the thief class types, from the bard to the assassin, receive their training in the same general way, as described in the tables that follow: thief class characters should roll on Tables 2E to 2P to determine the events and effects of their training.

Of course, very few people wake up one day and decide to become rogues, living in the gray area between right and wrong, legal and illegal. Most are thrust into the street, usually by forces beyond their control. If a person *does* choose to become a rogue, the choice is motivated by some underlying need or desire. To determine why your character chose to become a rogue, roll 3d6 on Table 2E: Reason for Turning to the Street. And since the less fortunate elements of society are more likely to turn to the street, you should modify your roll based on your social class, as follows: SLC -11, LLC -7, MLC -3, ULC -1, LMC 0, MMC +1, UMC +2, LUC +3, MUC +5, UUC +7. In addition, the reason you turned to the street often affects what career path you will take, so modify your roll based on your class as follows: Assassin -4, Bard +2, Brigand -2, Charlatan +1, Infiltrator +1, Minstrel +3, Ninja -1,

Pirate -2, Yakuza +4. Be sure to record any modifiers or other benefits or hindrances from your result on Table 2E. As with any chart in this chapter, you may spend a BP to re-roll if you choose.

Living on the street does not by itself make one a rogue; everyone must be introduced to the lifestyle in some way. Table 2F: Introduction to Roguishness determines exactly how this happened. Since willpower is necessary to resist many of the temptations of crime, you must add your Wisdom Magical Defense Adjustment, whether positive or negative, to your roll. How you learned about roguishness also affects what class you choose, so add the following modifiers based on character class to your roll as well: Acrobat -1, Assassin -3, Bard +2, Brigand -4, Charlatan -2, Infiltrator +3, Minstrel +3, Ninja -1, Pirate -4, Yakuza +3. Record the results of your roll on Table 2F and move on to the next table.

### Table 2E: Reason for Turning to the Street

Roll 3d6 Reason

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| <4    | You were orphaned early in life, and the rest of your relatives wanted nothing to do with you. You turned to life on the street because it was the only place you couldn't be thrown out. (-4 to Table 2F, -1 to Table 2G, gain the forage for food (urban) skill and 2 rolls of the mastery die for free) |
| 4-7   | Your parents were petty criminals that got locked up for stealing custom wagon wheels. They did manage to impart to you a few lessons before they were taken away, but it was mostly bad advice. (-3 to Table 2F, +1 BP)   |
| 8-10  | Your father was a poor sot with nothing to his name, and with no marketable skills to impart to you, you half-heartedly took to the street. (-1 to Table 2F, -2d10 to starting money roll)   |
| 11-15 | No one understood you when you were a kid. You rebelled against everything and everyone. Though you had no particular yearning for the roguish life, you followed that career path just to spite your parents. (+1 to Table 2F)  |
| 16-18 | As a child, your elders told you stories of thieves and grifters to scare you straight. However, it had the opposite effect, and you fell in love with the "underground life." You started wearing dark cloaks at an early age, and eventually you left home to pursue your dream. (+2 to Table 2F)        |
| 19+   | You actually demonstrated some real talent for roguishness. You gained encouraged and approval yourself on the street. (+4 to Table 2F, +2 to Table 2G)  |

Once your character has decided on the life of the rogue, he must find some way to get training. The training itself can vary greatly depending upon the class of the character, but the general types are all fairly similar. Whether your character learned from his own mistakes or trained under the finest guildmaster, Table 2G: Type of Initial Training will tell you how it happened. And since the more friendly and charismatic a character is, the more likely they are to find a teacher, you add your Charisma Reaction Adjustment, whether positive or negative, to your roll. In addition, you should modify your roll based upon your class as follows: Acrobat +1, Assassin -1, Bard +1, Brigand -2, Charlatan -4, Infiltrator +2, Minstrel +2, Ninja +0, Yakuza +2. Finally, add the following modifiers based upon your social class: SLC -4, LLC -3, MLC -2, ULC -1, LMC 0, MMC +1, UMC +2, LUC +3, MUC +4,

### Table 2F: Introduction to Roguishness

Roll 3d6 Introduction

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| <4    | Your first introduction to a life of crime was as a victim of it. Though your embarrassment served as motivation to become the predator and not the prey, you'll always know you were an easy mark. (-4 to Table 2G)   |
| 4-7   | You were arrested for vagrancy, landing you in jail. You shared a cell with an experienced criminal who taught you the tricks of the trade. However, his advice was tainted by the fact that he, too, was in jail. (-2 to Table 2G, roll once on Table 2L: Urchin Days Incarceration with a -4 modifier) |
| 8-10  | You quickly developed a crush on an older, more attractive, and more skilled rogue. You followed him or her whenever you could and collected any notice or piece of paper about him or her. You were never noticed, but you actually learned a thing or two through your imitation. (-1 to Table 2G)     |
| 11-15 | In order to survive, you joined a juvenile street gang. Their techniques were never very sophisticated, but they offered some protection and gained you some experience. (+1 to Table 2G)  |
| 16-18 | You were in the right place at the right time. A businessman noticed you practicing your skills, and decided to hire you for a small, discreet job. You gained some in the field experience and earned enough money to buy real equipment. (+3 to Table 2G)  |
| 19+   | Your natural abilities caught the eye of a prominent guild member. Luckily, he chose not to eliminate you and instead taught you many of his special tricks. (+5 to Table 2G)  |

### Table 2G: Type of Initial Training

Roll 3d6	Type	Initial Training
<4	Lone Wolf	You consider yourself to be a one-man team, a solo act, and a "Lone Wolf," and you believe that is why you had to train yourself. In fact, it was your total lack of talent and odious personal habits that drove away any prospective mentors. (-6 to Table 2H, -1 to Table 2I, -5 to Table 2N: Contacts, -15 to Table 2P: Loot Stashed)
4-7	Mob	After falling on hard times, you turned to the head of an organized crime family. In exchange for a favor, you began doing small jobs for the family. Eventually, they began giving you some basic instruction. (-3 to Table 2H, +4 to Table 2I, +5 to Table 2N: Contacts, roll once on Table 2L: Urchin Days Incarceration with a -3 modifier)
8-10	Accomplice	By fate or by chance, you found yourself the follower of a two-bit rogue. As his accomplice, he taught you what he thought you needed to know, which wasn't very much. (+0 to Table 2H, +2 to Table 2I, -15 to Table 2P: Loot Stashed, roll once on Table 2L: Urchin Days Incarceration with a -4 modifier)
11-15	Guild	You displayed enough promise (and hard coin) to enter a local guild for training. Though their resources were limited and the instructors apathetic, it was a decent learning environment. (+3 to Table 2H, -1 to Table 2I, +1 to Table 2N: Contacts, discounted guild membership)
16-18	Elite Guild	After all the strings were pulled and all the bribing done, you attended an elite guild for training. There you learned the fine arts of your class, and got to hobnob with the finest members of your profession. (+5 to Table 2H, +0 to Table 2I, +5 to Table 2N: Contacts, -10 to Table 2P: Loot Stashed, free guild membership)
19+	Exclusive	You were singled out by a street master to receive special training. More than likely you did not deserve the recognition, but you received excellent training nonetheless. (+6 to Table 2H, +1 to Table 2I, +2 to Table 2N: Contacts, -5 to Table 2P: Loot Stashed)

**Table 2H: Quality of Mentor: Technical Expertise**

Roll 3d6	Quality	Technical Expertise
<4	Horrific	Even at the end of your training, you're not sure if your teacher actually knew anything of the things he was supposedly "teaching" you, as he seemed to fail almost as much as you did. (-5 to Table 2J, -4d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), -3 BP).
4-7	Poor	You must have caught your mentor in one of the few times he was not incarcerated, so inferior were his skills. He was able to teach you the theories, but was sorely lacking in practice. (-3 to Table 2J, -3d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), -2 BP)
8-10	Sub-par	Though nothing your mentor told you was technically wrong, his method of teaching was inept, and you only learned half of the material. (-1 to Table 2J, -2d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), -1 BP)
11-15	Average	Your mentor was competent in all of the basic techniques and several advanced techniques as well. He had sound fundamentals and passed this on to you. (+0 to Table 2J, +1 BP)
16-18	Superior	Your mentor was quite experienced both in the classroom and the field, and was able to impart sound fundamentals and advanced techniques. He also imparted some personal "tricks of the trade" from his days as an adventurer. (+3 to Table 2J, +2d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), +2 BP)
19+	Excellent	You studying with the best of the best. Not only did he teach you all the basic and advanced techniques, but he also passed on lessons from his years of experience, and gave excellent hands-on examples. (+5 to Table 2J, +3d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), +2 BP)

**Table 2I: Quality of Mentor: Knowledge of the Street**

Roll 3d6	Quality	Knowledge of the Street
<4	Ignorant	Your mentor didn't even understand the obvious lingo of the street, let alone the subtleties necessary to communicate about illicit dealings. It is not clear if he even understood that what he did was of questionable legality. (-3 to Table 2J, -10% to all social interaction skills, -3 to Table 2N: Contacts, -20 to Table 2P: Loot Stashed)
4-7	Minimal	Your mentor introduced you to several contacts and showed you some of the things he'd learned. However, almost all of his contacts were undercover law enforcement, and the rest were ripping him off. You basically learned nothing. (-2 to Table 2J, -5% to all social interaction skills, -2 to Table 2N: Contacts, -10 to Table 2P: Loot Stashed)
8-10	Incomplete	Your mentor thought he knew the street, but that was far from the truth. What he taught you was good information, but he didn't give you the whole picture. (-1 to Table 2J, -1 to Table 2N: Contacts)
11-15	Average	Having spent some time as a freelancer and as part of an adventuring party, your mentor knew how to get things done. You certainly don't know anything special, but you have the basics down. (+1 to Table 2J, +1 BP (social interaction skills only))
16-18	Superior	Your mentor had his finger on the pulse of the street. He passed on to you some of his best contacts, his best tips, and his experiences. You now have a good idea of how to survive. (+2 to Table 2J, +3 BP (social interaction skills only), +1 Table 2N: Contacts, +10 to Table 2P: Loot Stashed)
19+	Excellent	When it came to contacts and knowledge, your mentor was the best of the best. You possess a knowledge of the workings of the street far superior to most of your fellows. Not only can you survive, you know how to manipulate and profit from the legal and illegal dealings that take place there. (+4 to Table 2J, +6 BP (social interaction skills only), +3 to Table 2N: Contacts, +20 to Table 2P: Loot Stashed)

**Table 2J: Quality of Training**

Roll d8+d12	Quality	Results
<3	Horrid	Your mentor didn't know a thing about how to teach or what he was teaching. That was inconsequential, however, because he wasn't even aware of your presence. Instead, you watched some hoodlum mug a drunk in an alley and called it an education. (-4d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), backstab as two levels lower, -20% to musical instrument skills, -15% to social interaction skills)
4-6	Poor	Your mentor tried, but he was an absolute moron. Nothing he taught you was factually correct or useful. You managed to learn a few things by not doing whatever he did. (-3d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), backstab as one level lower, -15% to musical instrument skills, -10% to social interaction skills)
7-9	Sub-par	Your mentor tried to impart to you the fundamentals of your trade, but he only possessed half of the necessary knowledge. What you learned was incomplete, and your training was severely lacking. (-2d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), -10% to musical instrument skills, -10% to social interaction skills)
10-12	Fair	Your mentor was lazy and apathetic, and wanted nothing to do with you. However, he realized that the best way to get rid of you was to teach you what he knew. This would have been much more beneficial if half of what he wasn't wrong. (-1d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), -5% to musical instrument skills, -5% to social interaction skills)
13-15	Average	Your mentor was completely unspectacular, but he could teach the fundamentals of your craft. He was average in every way, and so was your training. (+3 BP (musical instrument or social interaction skills only))
16-17	Above Average	Your mentor actually cared about your learning experience and took his role as teacher seriously. His work and dedication made a difference in your training. (+1d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), +4 BP (musical instrument or social interaction skills only))
18-19	Superior	Your mentor was a knowledgeable, experienced, and dedicated teacher. He passed as much information and skill to you as he could, and made sure that you learned it. (+2d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), +5 BP (spend only on skills), backstab as one level higher, +5% to all musical instrument skills)
20+	Top-notch	You learned from one of the best, and it shows. In addition to learning all the tricks and practices of your trade, you have an understanding of the general theories as well. Your mentor made sure that you left him well prepared. (+3d6 skill percentage points (can be applied to thief skills), +10 BP (spend only on skills), backstab as two levels higher, +10% on all musical instrument skills, one free weapon proficiency (uses a normal slot))

UUC +5. Be sure to add any modifiers from previous tables, and record all results from this table.

Once the type of training the character received is determined, you must determine how capable his mentor was. Every type of training has some kind of mentor-student relationship in it, even if the mentor doesn't know that he is teaching someone. Every mentor is rated in two areas: technical expertise and knowledge of the street. Technical expertise measures how skilled they are in the specific techniques of the class, such as picking locks or playing the lute. A mentor with a high technical expertise is better able to teach his student the skills needed for a particular class. Knowledge of the street measures how in tune with the underworld the mentor is. This includes knowing the best places to hide, knowing who to approach for a job, and who to talk to when you need something. A mentor with good knowledge of the street will be able to teach his student how to survive as a rogue. Roll first on Table 2H, adding +1 to the roll for every 3 full points of Intelligence above 10/01. Next, roll on Modifiers to Table 2I, adding +1 for every 3 full points of Wisdom above 10/01. Bonus or penalty skill percentage points must be added or subtracted from skills that the character possesses (including thief skills). They may not be used to get a new skill and they cannot bring a skill percentage below 1%.

When you have determined the quality of your mentor, you need to determine the quality of the overall education. A good mentor will help you get a better education, but ultimately it is up to you (and luck). Sometimes the lessons don't stick. There are no modifiers unique to this table, but previous tables (most notably the quality of mentor tables) modify this one. When you have determined the result, be sure to record any bonuses or penalties. If a backstab modifier lowers your backstab level to lower than one, you cannot backstab until you gain enough levels to bring the modified level up to at least one.

After determining the quality of your training, roll on Table 2K: Training Incidents to determine what events, if any, occurred during your training. Roll on Table 2K 1d4-1 times, with a result of 0 indicating that no significant incidents occurred. Record any results on your character sheet.

**Arrested:** During one of your "exercises," the authorities took a disliking to what you were doing. Roll once on the Table 2L: Urchin Days Incarceration.

**Big score:** Through a combination of skill and luck, you managed to come across the elusive "big score" during one of your training exercises. Gain +35 to your roll on Table 2P: Loot Stashed.

**Table 2K: Training Incidents**

Roll (3d6)	Incident
3	Broken leg
4-5	Sprained wrist
6-7	Phobia
8-13	Arrested
14-15	New skill
16-17	Guild membership
18	Big score

**Broken leg:** You suffered a broken leg during one of your more vigorous physical exercises. Permanently reduce your movement rate by .5".

**Guild membership:** An aging guild member happened by you as you were training with your mentor. Undoubtedly affected by his old age, he saw you as fresh new blood and sponsored your membership in the local guild. You get a free guild membership but suffer a -20 penalty to your roll on Table 2P: Loot Stashed for the first month's dues and fees.

**New skill:** As you were watching your mentor work, you happened to pick up a new skill. You receive one roll of the mastery die at no cost. Roll on the following table to determine what skill you picked up:

Roll (d8)	Skill
1	Bartering
2	Clever Packer
3	Fondling
4	Gaming
5	Glean Information
6	Haggle
7	Liar, Skilled
8	Torture

**Phobia:** You had a really bad experience involving a needle, and now you're a little on edge around them. You suffer a -5% modifier to all checks when dealing with needles.

**Sprained wrist:** Due to overuse, you injured the wrist on your dominant hand. You now suffer a -2% penalty to all skills or abilities based on or modified by Dexterity (including thief skills).

After determine what training incidents took place, roll 1d4-1 to see how many times you were incarcerated during and after your training (a 0 result indicates that you didn't do any time). This is in addition to any other events that may have resulted in your incarceration. Add any time spent in jail to your starting age, and mark any effects on your character sheet. If you end up serving any time, roll on Table 2M: Incarceration Events the number of times indicated in the Number of Events column.

For those who, in spite of the diligent efforts we expended to end their ignorance, would protest that a random table is used for sentencing, I say to you this: our exhaustive research into the laws and judicial systems of Garweeze Wurd, research that far exceeds your feeble understanding, conclusively demonstrates that there is NO correlation between the crime committed, evidence of guilt or innocence, and the sentence given. And though you would read fact and call it fiction, you have not the capacity to deny the accuracy and efficiency of such a table. So quit your bellyaching.

**Table 2L: Urchin Days Incarceration**

Roll 3d6	Result	Number of Events
<3	Charges dismissed	-
3	Not charged, but kept in jail overnight	0
4	Convicted of a lesser crime, served 1 week	0
5	Convicted, served 1 month	0
6-7	Convicted, served 3 months	1
8-10	Convicted, served 6 months	1
11-12	Convicted, served 9 months	1
13-14	Convicted, served 1 year, 1 additional roll on Table 2N: Contacts	1
15	Convicted, served 2 years, 1 additional roll on Table 2N: Contacts	2
16	Convicted, served 5 years, 2 additional rolls on Table 2N: Contacts	2
17	Convicted, served 10 years, 3 additional rolls on Table 2N: Contacts	3
18	Convicted, served 20 years, 4 additional rolls on Table 2N: Contacts	4
19+	Convicted, sentenced to death, and executed	-

**Table 2M: Incarceration Events**

Roll 3d6	Event
3	Stabbed
4	Latrine Duty
5	Solitary Confinement
6	Restricted Rations
7	Forced Entertainer
8	Prison Mortician
9	General Laborer
10	Rock Crew
11	Care Package
12	Work Crew Foreman
13	Cell Block Dueling Team
14	Riot
15	Old Cell
16	Veteran Cellmate
17	Friendly Librarian
18	Inside Tip

**Table 2N: Contacts**

Roll d8+d12	Contact
2-8	No Contact
9-13	Thief/Thug
14-15	Law Enforcement Official
16	Government Official
17	Adventurer
18	Guild Member
19	Mobster
20	Lord

**Table 20a: Contact Alignment**

Roll 3d6	Alignment
3-4	Neutral Good
5-6	Chaotic Good
7-10	Neutral
11-13	Chaotic Neutral
14-16	Neutral Evil
17-18	Chaotic Evil

**Table 20b: Contact Age**

Roll 3d6	Age	Value
3	Young	75% of base age
4-5	Youthful	Base age
6-10	Mature	Base age plus variable modifier
11-14	Middle-aged	Middle age
15-17	Old	Old age
18	Ancient	Venerable age

**Table 20c: Contact Appearance**

Roll d8+d12	Appearance
2-4	Dirty
5-7	Mysterious
8-9	Brooding
10-11	Dangerous
12-13	Rough
14-15	Non-descript
16-17	Imposing
18	Foppish
19	Clean
20	Respectable

**Table 20d: Contact Sanity**

Roll 2d6	Sanity
2	Very Stable
3-4	Normal
5-8	Neurotic
9-10	Unstable
11	Insane
12	Maniacal

**Table 20f: Contact Personality**

Roll*	(1-4) Average	(5) Extroverted	(6-8) Introverted
1	Arrogant	Aggressive	Solitary
2	Friendly	Forceful	Secretive
3	Secretive	Overbearing	Paranoid
4	Aloof	Antagonistic	Distrustful
5	Abrasive	Blustering	Aloof
6	Diplomatic	Diplomatic	Rude
7	Well-spoken	Friendly	Taciturn
8	Sly	Rash	Hostile

\* Roll (1d8) followed by another (1d8). Use the first roll to determine to which column the second roll applies.

**Table 20e: Contact Quirks and Flaws**

Roll 3d6	Rolls*
3-4	0
5-7	1
8-10	2
11-14	3
15-16	4
17	5
18	6

\* All contacts automatically have the greedy quirk. These are rolls in addition to this quirk. If greedy is rolled again, re-roll the result.

**Care Package:** When you first arrived at the prison, you continued to get mail from the previous resident. You were going to complain, but a care package from his aunt arrived. Now the toast of the cellblock, you were able to sustain yourself by trading away the dwarven treats you had been sent. You gain the bartering skill and four rolls of the mastery die.

**Cell Block Dueling Team:** When the prison guards ran out of things to bet on, they gave the inmates wooden sticks and formed dueling teams. Your cellblock had a ringer on it (a former fighter), so you won the championship. You gain the rapier proficiency for free, even if it's a weapon you cannot normally use (it does not take up a slot or cost BP).

**Forced Entertainer:** The guards, when bored, would make you juggle rocks for them. When you dropped one, they'd throw it at you and hit you in the head. You now suffer from short term memory loss (you gain the quirk, but not the BP), but you did gain the juggling skill and four rolls of the mastery die.

**Friendly Librarian:** In a freakishly liberal moment, your local government built a library on the premises of your prison. Most of the inmates used the books as weapons, but your interest in reading instantly made you the librarian's friend. He provided you with all the books you'd ever want. You gain 2d4+2 BP to be used on academia skills only.

**General Laborer:** Your days were spent as a general laborer, performing maintenance on prison buildings, moving large rocks into one pile and small rocks into another pile, and working on the mayor's bloated public works projects. You gain the laborer, general skill and 4 rolls of the mastery die free.

**Inside Tip:** After saving a fellow con's life in a big brawl, he lets you in on a big job he's been planning to run. When you get out, you score

**Table 20g: Contact General Tendencies**

Roll d100	Tendency
1-2	Optimist
3-8	Pessimist
9-12	Hedonist
13-14	Altruist
15-18	Helpful/Kindly
19-22	Careless
23-28	Capricious
29-31	Sober
32-34	Curious
35-40	Moody
41-42	Trusting
43-50	Suspicious
51-54	Precise
55-58	Perceptive
59-62	Opinionated
63-66	Violent
67-70	Studious
71-74	Foul
75-78	Callous
79-82	Prankster
83-84	Servile
85-88	Fanatical
89-95	Malevolent
96-100	Loquacious

**Table 2P: Loot Stashed**

Roll d100	Loot Stashed (gp value)
1-5	0
6-10	5+1d6
11-15	10+1d6
16-20	15+1d6
21-25	20+1d6
26-30	25+2d4
31-35	30+2d4
36-40	35+2d4
41-45	40+2d6
46-50	50+2d6
51-55	60+2d6
56-60	70+1d8
61-65	80+1d8
66-70	90+2d8
71-75	100+2d8
76-80	110+2d8
81-85	120+2d8
86-90	130+1d10
91-95	140+1d10
96-100	150+2d10

a huge payout with only a small amount of work. Add +15 to your roll on Table 2P: Loot Stashed and gain 50 EP.

**Latrine Duty:** When you beat the crap out of a fellow inmate, you were forced to clean the latrines. You caught gangrene and your right arm was amputated. You gain the Amputee, Arm flaw (but do not get any BP).

**Old Cell:** You were stuck in an old, poorly maintained cell. Most of the time, the lock wouldn't work, so in order to get any meals, you learned

several clever ways to pick locks. You gain 5% to your open locks percentage or 5 skill points applicable to any Dexterity-based skill mastery. You also can open locks with non-traditional tools, so your penalty for improvised lock picks is reduced by 5%.

**Prison Mortician:** You were given the unenviable task of burying the bodies of the executed prisoners. You gain the dig proper grave skill and 4 rolls of the mastery die for free.

**Restricted Rations:** Due to bad planning, the prison mess hall ran out of food. Instead of admitting their mistake, however, they punished every inmate for any infraction they could think of. Your cell bars weren't straight, so you ate only stale bread and water for five weeks. You lose 75 fractional points of Constitution.

**Riot:** A riot broke out in the prison while you are doing your time. You got swept up in the excitement and was branded as an instigator. Add 3 months to your sentence, but gain the ability to improvise weapons as a 2nd level monk.

**Rock Crew:** You spent most of your time on the prison work crew, breaking big rocks into smaller ones. It wasn't intellectually stimulating work, so you lost 50 fractional points of Intelligence. It did keep you in good shape, however, and you gain 50 fractional points of Strength and 50 fractional points of Constitution.

**Solitary Confinement:** You were accused of stealing bed sheets and stuck in solitary confinement for a month. Without a ball or any other form of amusement, you went just a bit loopy. You now have the agoraphobia quirk (you do not gain any BP).

**Stabbed:** You pissed off the local "big dawg" of the joint, and at lunchtime a shiv found your heart. You died.

**Veteran Cellmate:** Your cellmate was a veteran criminal, and had been in prison for years. He taught you how to acquire the things you needed most, and how to take those things from the other inmates around you. Add 10% to your pick pockets skill or 10 points to any Dexterity-based skill mastery.

**Work Crew Foreman:** When the prison warden was handing out jobs, you must have just shaved, because he made you the foreman of the work crew. Though you didn't have any experience, you learned on the job. You gain the orchestrate task and feign toughness skills and 2 rolls of the mastery die for each, free of cost.

Finally, all characters roll at least once on Table 2N: Contacts to determine what contacts, if any, they made during your training. Other factors, including the length of time spent in jail, may grant more rolls on the contact table. Record all contacts on your character sheet. During the game, you can go to your contact for information, favors, equipment, etc. The contact is under no obligation to help you, but since you know each other, he is much more likely to do so. Most contacts require some kind of favor or payment in return for their services. The type and value of the payment, as well as all other considerations for contacts, are up to the GM.

If Table 2N: Contacts indicates that you have made a contact, roll on Tables 2Oa - 2Og to determine character and personality of the contact. The GM should use this information when role-playing the contact, but is not bound by any of the results.

After all your training is said and done, you need to determine how much loot you scored during that time. Roll on Table 2P: Loot Stashed to find out how much treasure you have squirreled away. Though the values are listed in gold pieces, the treasure is not necessarily money. It could be gems, art objects, furniture, or any other form of treasure. The nature of the loot is up to the GM.

## Thief STPs

Because of their unique lifestyle and training, thief group characters have options and training opportunities that other classes do not. This is represented by the following skills, talents and proficiencies (STPs) that can be learned by thief group characters only or multi-classed characters with a thief class (unless otherwise specified). Characters acquire these skills, talents and proficiencies in the same manner as presented in the Player's Handbook.

Throughout this book, you will find references to the terms critical success and critical failure in regards to making a skill check. A critical success is defined as rolling less than or equal to one's chance to improve skill percentage during the skill check. A critical failure for purposes of skill checks is defined as rolling a 100 on a skill check and having it fail.

Also, note that some of the skill descriptions in this book are simply clarifications of skill previously published in the Player's Handbook.

Table 2Q: Skills and Table 2R: Talents summarize the new information.

## NEW SKILLS

### Acting

#### [(Wisdom)/Sophisticated/2 BP]

Acting enables a character to skillfully portray various roles. Acting is most often used as a form of entertainment, though it can also be useful in aiding a disguise or pulling a scam. A character with both the disguise skill and the acting skill adds a +5% bonus to either when using it. Of course, a character need only check his acting skill for ad-libs (unrehearsed roles) or on very short notice (less than 4 hours of time to memorize lines attitudes, and movements).

**Prerequisite:** None.

**Mastery Die:** 1d10    **Course Cost:** 800 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +0%

### Animal Noise

#### [(Wisdom)/Sophisticated/1 BP]

A character with this skill can imitate noises made by various animals. A successful skill check means that only magic can distinguish the noise from that of the actual animal being imitated. A failed check means that the sound varies from the correct noise in some slight way.

If the die roll fails, this does not mean that all creatures hearing the noise know that the sound is fake. While creatures and humanoids familiar with the noise know this automatically, other creatures or characters in earshot may require Wisdom checks to determine if they detect the fake, assuming they know anything about the sounds the actual animal makes at all. Those clueless as to that particular beast might still be duped.

Bandits, smugglers, and sometimes scouts use this ability to communicate on the job, almost as a variant dialect of thieves' cant.

**Prerequisite:** None.

**Mastery Die:** 1d8    **Course Cost:** 100 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +0%

### Begging (General)

#### [(Charisma)/Social Interaction/1 BP]

Begging involves debasing yourself in an attempt to get another person to stop the immediate action he is about to take. Of course, there is nothing prohibiting that person from taking that action at a later point in time. A begging character takes an immediate 4-point hit to his temporal Honor AND a 1-point hit to his base Honor.

On a successful skill check, the character forces his target to make a saving throw versus apology. If the character attempts to persuade a group, the individual with the best save versus apology in the group makes the check for all. If any character among the targets has the resist persuasion skill, he may choose to use that skill check instead of the saving throw. If the victim fails



**Table 2Q: Skills**

Skill	Type	Relevant Ability	BP Cost	Mastery Die	Course Prerequisite	Course Cost	Course Difficulty
Acting	Sophisticated Task	Wisdom	2	1d10	N	800 gp	+0%
Animal Noise	Sophisticated Task	Wisdom	1	1d8	N	100 gp	+0%
Begging (General)	Social Interaction	Charisma	1	1d6	N	350 gp	-10%
Begging (Panhandling)	Social Interaction	Charisma	2	1d4	Y	400 gp	+0%
Boating	Soph. Task	Wisdom	1	1d8	N	120 gp	-5%
Chanting	Performing Arts	Constitution	1	1d12	N	250 gp	-10%
Craft Instrument	Sophisticated Task	Wisdom	3	1d8	Y	1,600 gp	+5%
Disguise	Sophisticated Task	(Int. + Cha.)/2	6	1d6	N	900 gp	+10%
Fast Draw	Sophisticated Task	Charisma	2	1d6	N	175 gp	+5%
Fast-Talking	Sophisticated Task	Charisma	1	1d8	N	200 gp	+0%
Fortune Telling	Sophisticated Task	Charisma	2	1d8	N	550 gp	+0%
Identify Poison	Academia	Intelligence	2	1d8	N	500 gp	+5%
Juggling	Sophisticated Task	Dexterity	2	1d6	N	400 gp	+5%
Locksmithing	Sophisticated Task	(Str. + Dex. + Wis.)/3	3	1d6	Y	800 gp	+10%
Observation	Sophisticated Task	(Wis. + Int.)/2	2	1d8	N	250 gp	+5%
Set Traps, Advanced	Sophisticated Task	Dexterity	2	1d8	Y	400 gp	-5%
Trailing	Sophisticated Task	Dexterity	1 (2 for non-thief group)	1d8	N	300 gp	+5%
Voice Mimicry	Charisma	Sophisticated Task	2	1d6	Y	700 gp	+15%
Whistling/Humming	Charisma	Performing Arts	1	1d10	N	80 gp	-15%

his saving throw, he does not take whatever action he was about to take, nor does he do so within the next hour (unless circumstances dramatically alter). A character with advanced or higher level skill mastery imposes a -2 modifier to the saving throw. A character with master level skill mastery imposes an additional -2 modifier to the saving throw

Prerequisite: None

Mastery Die: 1d6 Course Cost: 350 gp

Course Difficulty: -10%

**Begging (Panhandling)**

**[Charisma/Social Interaction/2 BP]**

Panhandling, despite its unsavory reputation, is an effective means of earning money. Panhandling is more than just begging people for money – it is the art of separating people from their money, often by playing on pity and sympathy. When done properly, victims believe they acted voluntarily (and sometimes even apologize for not having more to give!) Achieving this means learning how to disguise yourself to appear more pitiable, stashing the coin you have earned, and knowing where and when to practice this trade.

Of course, a beggar must have a steady supply of people with enough money that they can be convinced to relinquish some. Beggars in abandoned castles or recently pillaged villages are virtually assured of failure. Assassins, bounty hunters and spies in the undercover pursuit of their assignments often make use of the skill.

When using this skill, a character takes a 2-point penalty to temporal Honor for each day of spent panhandling. Then the panhandler makes a skill check; the percentage by which the check succeeds is the amount of coins earned that day. The population size determines the type of coinage, as more wealth passes through a larger populace. Hamlets or villages yield coppers, towns yield silvers, cities yield electrum, and a metropolis yields gold. However, the larger the township, the more likely a thieves' guild demands its cut of the profits (and woe to the character who tries to cheat a guild of its share).

Failing the skill check means simply that the panhandler makes no money that day (though he still loses temporal Honor). Critical failure on the check with a natural 100 means that the local authorities have taken notice of (and exception to) the panhandler's activities. (A panhandler with a rating above 100% does not suffer this fate, though he does fail to make any coin.)

**Table 2R: Talents**

Talent	BP Cost	Restrictions
Breath Weapon Bonus	4	Any
Cower	5	Any
Expert Cheater	5	Elves, Gnomes, Half-elves, Humans
Forgettable Face	5	Half-elves, Humans
Good Immune System	5	Dwarves, Halflings, Half-ogres, Humans
High Tolerance	5	Dwarves, Half-ogres, Half-orcs, Humans
Knack For Languages	3	Humans
Magic Trap Sense	1	Any
Perfect Grooming	2	Elves, Half-elves, Humans
Quick Movement	5	Any
Simultaneous Backstab Attacks	2	Any

Prerequisite: Begging (General)

Mastery Die: 1d4 Course Cost: 400 gp Course Difficulty: +0%

**Boating**

**[(Wisdom)/Sophisticated/1 BP]**

A character with boating skill can guide a small boat down a rapid stream or reduce the dangers of capsizing a canoe or kayak. In addition, a character with the boating skill can ensure that a boat is propelled at its maximum speed. The boater need only make a skill check to avoid capsizing in heavy waves or if, say, a giant hurls a boulder at the craft.

Note that the navigation and seamanship skills are required to pilot large ships on oceans, seas, or at least large lakes, rather than small craft on smaller lakes, large ponds, and rivers.

Prerequisite: None.

Mastery Die: 1d8 Course Cost: 120 gp Course Difficulty: -5%

**Chanting**

**[(Constitution)/Performing Arts/1 BP]**

The character is an accomplished chanter and can use this ability to help fellow workers or soldiers keep pace. Skill checks are used to determine the effectiveness of the chanting.

On a successful check, those who can hear the chanter become slightly hypnotized by the rhythmic sound, causing the subjective experience of time

spent on arduous, repetitive tasks to pass quickly. Affected characters can perform such tasks as forced marching, rowing, digging, and so on for 10% more time than otherwise allowed. (This allows characters to gain an increment of 10% more movement out of forced march without suffering the ill effects for that 10%. Thus, they could increase movement by 40% but suffer only the effects of a 30% increase.)

**Prerequisite:** None.

**Mastery Die:** 1d12 **Course Cost:** 250 gp **Course Difficulty:** -10%

### Craft Instrument

#### [[**(Wisdom)/Sophisticated/3 BP**]

This skill applies to one type of instrument (brass, exotic, percussion, stringed, or wind). A craftsman must learn to construct each type of instrument separately. A craftsman who spends 12 BP when first acquiring this skill can learn craft instrument (all) and make any sort of instrument.

A craftsman must begin with materials equivalent to a quarter of the sale value of the instrument. It then takes 1d6 days to create a wind or percussion instrument, 2d8 days to form a brass stringed instrument, and 3d10 days to create an exotic instrument. These times assume that the craftsman spends 10 hours a day working on the instrument. If craftsman/carpentry tools (cost 25 gp, weight 5 pounds) are not available, all times are doubled.

A final skill check determines the quality of the instrument. Failure results in an instrument of poor quality (and about one-tenth the normal value), while success indicates average quality (about standard value). A failure with a roll of natural 96-100 indicates that the instrument does not function at all (worthless), while a natural 1 results in a superior masterpiece worth twice the normal value – if the crafter's skill rating is expert (76%-100%). A master craftsman (101%+) can create a superior masterpiece with a natural 1-5 on his check, or he can simply spend thrice the indicated time and do so on any successful skill check. (If he does this and rolls a natural 1-5, he has created an extraordinary masterpiece worth 5-10 times the listed value and boosts his Fame by 2d20).

Simple repairs take only 1d4 hours and require no skill check unless the proper tools are not available. However, repairing severe damage requires 1d8 hours and a successful skill check.

**Prerequisite:** Carpentry tools proficiency.

**Mastery Die:** 1d8 **Course Cost:** 1,600 gp **Course Difficulty:** +5%

### Crowd Working

#### [[**(Wisdom + Charisma)/2)/Social Interaction/2 BP**]

Almost every bard is familiar with the ways of a crowd. However, characters with the crowd working skill know all the tricks of the trade. Such bards are skilled at observing crowds and adjusting their performances accordingly.

Any bard who uses a special ability to adjust the encounter reactions of a crowd (e.g. influence reactions) can make a crowd working check. If this check succeeds, the bard can alter the reactions of the crowd by two levels instead of the standard one.

If the bard or his group solicit money from a crowd, a successful skill check indicates that the bard is particularly appealing and the crowd willingly donates twice as much money as it normally would.

Note that while not restricted to bards, this skill is of little use to non-bards.

**Prerequisite:** None.

**Mastery Die:** 1d8 **Course Cost:** 100 gp **Course Difficulty:** +0%

### Disguise

#### [[**((Intelligence+Charisma)/2)/Sophisticated/6 BP**]

A person versed in the art of disguise can alter his appearance to be unrecognizable - even to his own mother. He may choose to appear as a woman, a half-orc or possibly even a gnome. There are, of course, common sense limits to this skill. A gnomeling is gonna have one heck of a time pulling off disguising himself as an ogre even if he has access to stilts! In general, the following limitations apply:

- Height: +/-25% of actual height
- Weight: +/-50% of actual weight
- Sex: Male or female
- Hair: Any color
- Eyes: Any color
- Complexion: Any color
- Facial features: Highly mutable

Your GM will be the final arbitrator of your disguise attempt so be careful how far you go. The following examples may offer guidance on the ease or difficulty of pulling off any particular disguise.

**Easy [+40%]:** appearing as another individual of the same race, sex and age category

**Average [+20%]:** altering one's apparent sex OR apparent age

**Difficult [no modifier]:** altering one's apparent race (Note: you may only disguise your race to appear as another race of relatively similar height and build. Elves, half-elves, humans and half-orcs may attempt to disguise themselves as members of another race within this grouping



while dwarves, gnomes, gnome titans, gnomelings and halflings may alter their appearance so as to appear to be another race within the latter group. Pixie-fairies are simply too small and distinctive to disguise themselves as another player character race.)

**Very Difficult [-5%]:** multiple combinations of above

Note that the assassin's disguise ability is superior to this generally available skill. Assassins learn secret techniques so effective that the burden is on observers to uncover them; they need not check to see if they have properly prepared a disguise.

Elven chain mail is light and thin and can be worn under normal clothing. All other types of armor are stiff or too bulky to wear under normal clothes and thus can only be covered by a full body cloak. There is a base 50% chance that a normal suit of plain leather armor (not studded) can be concealed under normal clothing.

Finally, Comeliness cannot be altered upwards by means of this skill (though high Comeliness scores may be concealed). The ability to speak the language of the race you impersonate is not granted either.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Mastery Die:** 1d6    **Course Cost:** 900 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +10%

## Fast Draw

### [(Charisma)/Sophisticated/2 BP]

The fast draw skill allows a character to draw or sheathe a weapon freely. If he succeeds in his skill check, he automatically does so before someone without fast draw. (If his opponent also has fast draw, whoever succeeds by more draws first.) Successful use of this skill eliminates the 5 segment penalty to draw a weapon in combat.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Mastery Die:** 1d6    **Course Cost:** 175 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +5%

## Fast-Talking

### [(Charisma)/Sophisticated/1 BP]

Fast-talk is the art of distraction and conning targets with a torrent of words. If the fast-talker succeeds at a skill check, the target does not get a chance to notice whatever scam the talker attempts. Modifiers are based on the Intelligence and Wisdom of the target, as shown on Table 2S: Fast-Talking Modifiers. The GM may also introduce modifiers according to the difficulty or plausibility of what the character is attempting.

Modifiers are cumulative. Targets of Intelligence 3 or less are so dim that attempts to fast-talk them fail automatically because they cannot follow what is being said anyway. (Creatures that stupid are easy to fool in other ways, however.) Targets with an Intelligence or Wisdom of 21 or more are impervious to fast-talking.

**Example:** Guards discover Jandra the Silent, spy extraordinaire, as she sneaks around the emperor's palace. She quickly decides to fast-talk them into believing that she is the mistress of the steward of the palace and just got lost in the labyrinthine halls. Unknown to Jandra, the Steward is an elderly, faithfully and happily married gentleman; and the guards know of this reputation. The GM assumes the guards to have average Intelligence and Wisdom (no modifier), but he adds a -15% modifier because Jandra's story contradicts the Steward's reputation. Jandra has a 65% skill in fast-talking, modified to 50% by the implausibility. She rolls a 48! The guards buy her story, and suggest that she go where she belongs immediately. The Steward likely faces some new rumors, too. If she fails, they call her bluff – and perhaps escort her straight to the door of the Steward and his wife or the dungeon!

**Prerequisite:** None

**Mastery Die:** 1d8    **Course Cost:** 200 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +0%

**Table 2S: Fast-Talking Modifiers**

Target's Intelligence	Modifier	Target's Wisdom	Modifier
3 or less	n/a	3 or less	-25%
4-5	-15%	4-5	-15%
6-8	-5%	6-8	-5%
9-12	+0	9-12	+0
13-15	+5%	13-15	+5%
16-17	+15%	16-17	+15%
18	+25%	18	+25%
19	+35%	19	+35%
20	+45%	20	+45%
21+	n/a	21+	n/a

## Fortune Telling

### [(Charisma)/Sophisticated/2 BP]

This skill covers knowledge of a variety of methods of divination that share one factor in common – all of them fake. The thief with fortune telling is familiar with numerous devices and methods, such as tarot cards, palm reading, interpreting the flight of sparrows or the arrangement of a sacrificed animal's entrails, and so forth. At least, the thief is familiar enough with these practices to make him appear to be an authentic soothsayer. (Even if legitimate fortune telling exists, this skill does not allow a character to make accurate predictions. It confers no magical powers.) The thief makes up the prediction he wishes to tell.

A successful skill check indicates that the thief's customer or client believes the fortune he was told to be authentic. If the check fails, the sham is discovered in some way, or the prediction is simply too outrageous or unbelievable in some way (Thief: "Your father will go on a long journey." Target: "I'm an orphan!"). If the GM wishes, he may use the same modifiers described for fast-talking in Table 2S: Fast-talking Modifiers, based on the Intelligence and Wisdom of the subject and modify further by the believability of the fortune predicted. Telling a peasant he will be king one day is pretty wacky, but he will want to believe that his newborn son will one day be a great hero.

If the fortune teller rolls a natural 1 on his skill check (or some other number the GM chooses), the GM should make every attempt to see that the event the thief predicted actually comes true! This can certainly lead to some interesting adventures.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Mastery Die:** 1d8    **Course Cost:** 550 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +0%

## Glean Information (clarifications)

The following modifiers may adjust the skill check:

Characters' reaction adjustments (based on Charisma), multiplied by 5% should benefit or penalize the roll, assuming contact with people is involved in the search.

Thieves' guild members receive a bonus of +10%, because they have more and better-informed contacts than freelancers. In addition, their "territory" (below) is considered that of the guild, not just their own area of operation.

Since this skill depends on a network of informants and contacts, the thief suffers a disadvantage when in an area other than his own territory. "Territory" refers to his regular base of operation – a town, one neighborhood of a city, or even a whole province or countryside. Outside this territory the thief does not hear general rumors automatically (he needs to succeed at a normal skill check), and gathering specific information suffers a penalty of at least -15%. The GM may make it greater in truly foreign areas, due to great differences in language, culture and/or race.

Finally, any time a character needs to make a skill check to glean information, a small investment of money for drinks, bribes, and so forth must be made, or else he suffers an additional -15% penalty. A typical effort costs 1d10 gp, and this money must be spent whether or not the desired informa-

tion is found. (If the information is still unknown, the character can continue his search the next day, spending more money and making another skill check.) The GM may increase the cost of using this skill if he can justify it in his game.

#### Examples:

1. Goran hangs around the local tavern in his neighborhood when he hears rumors of a dragon to the north, recently slain as it raided a village. The dragon's cave and treasures remain undiscovered, but some bragging adventurers say they found a map on an ogre they slew. Goran's contacts provide this information to him automatically, while another PC would need to approach people, talk with them, and probably buy them several drinks in order to learn of the map and treasure.
2. His greed sparked, Goran wants to know who these adventurers are, so that he can steal their map and find the dragon's hoard for himself. This requires a couple of drinks (a 2 gp investment); and the skill check has a -5% penalty because of Goran's low Charisma (7). Goran has a 55% rating in glean information, so he must roll 50 or lower to find out who the adventurers are. If they are not very well known, he may need to make additional checks to track them down (find where they are staying, what temples they visit or whatever).
3. Jandra the Silent is hired as a spy to infiltrate the emperor's palace. She needs to find an easy way in – a sewer, service exit, or the like. She has an expense account from her employers for bribes. Her glean information skill rating is 70% and her modifiers are: +5% (due to reaction adjustment for a Charisma of 13), +10% (as a member of the thieves' guild in the Imperial city), and -15% (for this not being her home territory). She must roll 70 or lower on d100 to get the information she needs.

It is best to role-play information searches whenever possible.

A character can add his intelligence gathering rating to his glean information check in certain situations, if the GM allows it. Using glean information requires at least an hour of effort, however, while intelligence gathering (such as swiping documents) can sometimes be done in moments.

## Identify Poison

### [[Intelligence)/Academia/2 BP]

Characters with this skill can identify poisons used by others. Those with an intelligence of 13-15 get a + 5% bonus on the attempt; 16-17, a + 10% bonus; 18, + 15%; and for 19+, 20%. Assassin class characters gain a +25% bonus to this skill. Further adjustments depend on how the character attempts the identification: sight, smell, taste, or symptoms. The investigator may attempt one skill check for each investigative technique per poison encountered.

Sight means examination of the poison or poisoned article. Many poisons have a distinctive appearance, or they may have a corrosive or discoloring effect on metals, foods, etc. Identification by sight has a -20% modifier. Its advantage is that the observer need not worry about poisoning himself in the process.

A poison may also be identified by its odor. This carries a - 15% penalty. Furthermore, if it is an ingested or contact poison, there is a 10% chance that the character will be affected by the poison, though at half strength (i.e., no effect if the saving throw is successful, and if it's not, normal save damage is applied (See the GameMaster's Guide, p. 206).

Taste is a fairly reliable, if dangerous, method of identifying a poison. It carries a - 5 % penalty. After dabbing a tiny bit on his tongue, the investigator spits it out. There is still a chance that the poison will affect the character: 25% for injected poison, 75% for ingested, and 100% for contact. The poison's effects, if any, are half strength (see above).

The most certain way of identifying a poison is by its symptom (no penalty on the attempt). The drawback of this method is of course that you need a poisoned character to examine.

A character with the herbalism skill at apprentice level (>25%) gets a + 5% identification bonus because of his knowledge of toxins extracted from plants. When examining a poisoned creature that has an anatomy with which he is familiar, a character with the anatomy (vital) skill gets a +10% bonus to this skill. These bonuses are not cumulative.

An attempt to identify a poison takes one round; be sure to keep track of time elapsed and the onset time of the poison. If one method of identification fails, the next may be tried. If none of the four produce an answer then the poison will likely remain a mystery to that character though the character could attempt identification again after he has gained more skill mastery.

Identification of a poison also means knowledge of its antidote (if one exists); it does not mean that the antidote is available, however. A character with herbalism proficiency may attempt to make an antidote from scratch (See the GameMaster's Guide, p. 206).

**Prerequisite:** None.

**Mastery Die:** 1d8    **Course Cost:** 500 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +5%

## Juggling

### [Dexterity/Sophisticated/2 BP]

A juggler tosses many small objects into the air and catches them only to throw them up again. This difficult task can be quite entertaining and can also distract observers from their surroundings (including, perhaps, the juggler's accomplices picking their pockets). A juggler may attempt an individual trick with his juggling with the following modifiers:

**Difficult** (4 objects, crossing patterns, etc.) -10%

**Very difficult** (5 objects, complex patterns, etc.) -25%

**Exceedingly difficult** (6-7 objects, upside down, handstands) -40%

**High impossible** (8+ objects, swords, axes, etc.) -65%

Failing a check means the juggler drops the objects. Critical failure (100) or failure by more than 50 points indicates that 1d4 of the objects hit the juggler (usually on the head).

Juggling requires high degrees of concentration and motor coordination. These can translate into a +5% bonus on attempts to pick pockets for those who are advanced jugglers.

With a successful juggling check, the character can catch an object thrown (or shot) at him, though he still suffers half damage (rounded normally) when catching weapon projectiles.

**Prerequisite:** None.

**Mastery Die:** 1d6    **Course Cost:** 400 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +5%

## Jumping

The acrobat description includes a discussion of failed jump checks. These apply to other jumpers as well, skilled or unskilled (and therefore obviously much more likely to fail).

## Locksmithing

### [[((Strength+Dexterity+Wisdom)/3)/Sophisticated Task/3 BP]

This skill allows a character to fashion locks of all manners and types. While this accounts for the fashioning of the lock itself, the GM may require a skill check for placing a lock in an unusual object. Modify the locksmith's skill rating depending on the quality of the lock he attempts to construct:

**Wretched** +30%

Poor	+15%
Good	+0%
Excellent	-20%
Superior	-40%
Masterful	-60%
Impossible	-80%

A locksmith can also attempt to pick a lock by making a skill check. He needs 1d10 turns and the proper tools to make the attempt.

Because of his training (with proper tools and all), he suffers double the penalties listed for improvised lockpicks (see Chapter 4: Rules of the Road). These penalties have no limit (unlike the improvisation penalties for true thieves). In addition, the locksmith does not add his experience level to his effective Intelligence when checking to see if he can even attempt to pick the lock with improvised tools.

A thief with the locksmith skill gains a +10% bonus to his open locks skill.

**Prerequisite:** Metalworking

**Mastery Die:** 1d6    **Course Cost:** 800 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +10%

## Observation

### [(Wisdom+Intelligence)/2]/Sophisticated/2 BP]

Characters with this skill have trained themselves to use exceptionally acute powers of observation. The skill covers all the senses. Any time a check for “noticing something” comes up, the observer gets a skill check before making the ability check (or whatever roll) to notice the occurrence. Also, the GM should roll a skill check anytime there is something subtly askew that a character might notice, even if the player has not specifically stated that he is scrutinizing his surroundings. Characters with observation increase their chance of finding secret or concealed doors by 1 in 6. Thieves increase their chances of finding traps by 10% with a successful observation check.

**Example:** Jandra questions a man who claims to be a craftsman who has worked on the palace. She is searching for the most discreet entrance. The GM secretly rolls a successful observation check. He tells her player, “You notice that his hands are in beautiful condition, entirely lacking calluses.” From this observation, Jandra may deduce that the man is actually just posing as a craftsman; he may be a con man taking advantage of a few free drinks or coins, or he could even be a spy for her enemies. Simple observation reveals only the facts, not motivation.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Mastery Die:** 1d8    **Course Cost:** 250 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +5%

## Pinch

The pinch skill is restricted to members of the thief group. It cost 1 BP.

## Set Traps, Advanced

### [(Dexterity)/Sophisticated/2 BP]

This skill allows a character to devise and construct insidious traps more complex than simple pitfalls. The character makes a skill check when setting the trap; GMs make the check for PCs. The character always believes he has successfully set the trap unless he springs it while it is being set. The chance to spring the trap is the obverse of the chance to set the trap and must be rolled for separately after the initial skill check indicates a failed attempt at setting a trap. Thieves can add their skill rating in advanced trap setting to their find traps (see the GMG page 37) percentage when attempting to set a trap.

**Prerequisite:** Set Snares; Thief Group Only has no prerequisite

**Mastery Die:** 1d8    **Course Cost:** 400 gp    **Course Difficulty:** -5%

## Tightrope Walking (clarification)

Armor's bulk affects tightrope walking more than its weight. Even so, it is incredibly difficult to walk a narrow length in heavy armor. Ever wonder why you never see tightrope walkers working in armor? Fairly bulky armor imposes a -40 penalty on a character's tightrope walking skill. Bulky armor imposes a -80% penalty. Even non-bulky armor imposes a -10% penalty, so novices are not even going to try.

Encumbrance does not inherently make the walk more difficult, but it does accentuate the slightest imbalance. Obviously, there is no adjustment when unencumbered. Light encumbrance imposes a -5% penalty, moderate a -15%, heavy a -30%, and severe encumbrance imposes a -50% to the tightrope walking skill.

## Trailing

### [Dexterity/Sophisticated/1 BP for thieves (2 BP for other class groups)]

Trailing resembles tracking, except tracking is associated chiefly with the wilderness, and trailing typically is used in major urban centers (i.e. cities and large towns). Trailing involves tailing someone and keeping a certain distance or even catching up to him, though he may be attempting to blend into a crowd, or at least get lost in the confusion of a street full of people. A good trailer may not need to keep a mark in sight; he can attempt to follow fleeting signs of passage.

Trailing usually requires multiple skill checks. A first successful skill check means that the thief can trail his target without being noticed. If the target has the acute (high) alertness talent, the trailing character (trailer) suffers a -25% to his trailing skill.

If the trailer is noticed, the person being followed may attempt to evade, but the trailing character can still follow. To keep from losing the trail, the character must make another skill check. A modifier ranging from -15% to +15% (varying from first time in a foreign city to operating in the thief's home neighborhood) applies, to reflect how well the thief knows the area. The player should be made aware that there are modifiers, but not necessarily given the specifics. The trailer may need further checks to keep up with his target, but in no case should the checks occur more often than once per round.

The GM should feel free to use situational modifiers on these rolls. For example, if a street is relatively clear, the thief should get -2 to -10% on an attempt to follow unnoticed, but +2 to 10% if he has been seen and is chasing after his subject. Invert these numerical adjustments for exceptionally crowded situations, or at night.

For any trailing skill roll, apply a -15% penalty to the trailer's skill if the person followed has the trailing skill as well (and knows better how to foil the tricks of his own trade). If the person followed has the observation skill, the GM should make a special check after 1d4 minutes of being followed. The trailer also makes a check. If the observer fails or the trailer succeeds by a greater margin, he can continue trailing normally. If the trailer fails or the observer succeeds by a greater margin, he has spotted his tail (though he need make no obvious sign of this). If both fail, the trailer loses his mark but the target remains oblivious. If both succeed by an equal margin, the target notices he is being followed but reacts in some way as to make this obvious to the trailing character (such as stopping and staring right at the guy following him).

**Example:** Jandra trails an NPC through the Imperial capital, because she suspects that he spies for a rival employer and has information that would be valuable for her. It is night, on a nearly deserted street. The GM informs Jandra of this, and mentions that she will have trouble going unnoticed (-10% modifier on her first roll, he rules, but does not tell her). If her quarry does spot her, at least she will be better able to keep up with him. The GM decides that Jandra has been in the capital on this job long enough that she's fairly familiar with the streets and alleys, so she suffers no penalty on that account. However, unbeknownst to Jandra, the spy she

follows has both the acute (high) alertness (-25% modifier) talent and the trailing skill (another -15%).

Thus, her first roll has an adjustment of -40%. If it fails, the second will have an adjustment of -15%. Jandra has a trailing skill rating of 81. She needs to roll 41 or lower on her first roll, but fails with a 78. "The man speeds up and ducks around a corner, into an alley," the GM informs her. Jandra follows. To keep from losing him, she needs to get a 66 or lower. She rolls a 63, just barely making it. "The alley is empty, but as you are about to rush through to the next street, you spot a flash of red the same shade as the man's coat, and hear footsteps up a staircase in the building to your right."

**Prerequisite:** None

**Mastery Die:** 1d8    **Course Cost:** 300 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +5%

### Trap Sweep

The trap sweep skill is restricted to members of the thief group. It cost 1 BP.

### Tumbling (clarification)

A character cannot gain AC benefits from tumbling in bulky armor. He can get up to +2 AC in fairly bulky armor, and of course +4 AC in non-bulky armor.

### Voice Mimicry

#### [Charisma/Sophisticated/2 BP]

Voice mimicry is the art of convincingly imitating the voices of other people. This very demanding skill requires intense training and practice. A character with voice mimicry can imitate any accent he has heard though this skill is different than the mimic dialect skill because it allows specific voices to be imitated and is slightly more difficult to learn and use. Success is automatic unless people who themselves speak in that accent are his listeners. In such a case, he must make a skill check (with a +10% to his skill).

A more difficult and consequently more impressive use of the skill is the imitation of a specific person's voice (such as the general or a Lady's husband). To do this, the thief must, of course, be familiar with the voice. He must roll a skill check to determine if the audience detects the imitation. Modifiers apply depending on how well the listeners know the voice that is being mimicked. If the listener is a stranger who has never heard the original voice, no check may be required. To fool an acquaintance, there is no modifier; while attempting to fool a friend of the subject involves a -10% penalty, a close friend a -25% penalty, and someone extremely close (e.g. parent or spouse someone who has had close, regular contact with the person for years) is at -40%.

This ability complements the disguise skill. Which skill must be checked first depends on whether the character is seen or heard. If the disguise skill succeeds, the character gets a +25% bonus to his voice mimicry – the listeners have already accepted the appearance, and so are less likely to doubt the voice. If the disguise fails, it does not matter how good the voice imitation is. If the character successfully mimics the voice first, he gets a +5% modifier to the disguise check.

**Prerequisite:** Language, Modern.

**Mastery Die:** 1d6    **Course Cost:** 700 gp    **Course Difficulty:** +15%

### Whistling/Humming

#### [Charisma/Performing Arts/1 BP]

Almost anyone can whistle or hum. Those who take this skill do so with exceptional aplomb. They can produce tunes as captivating as many songs. A person with this skill is a true master whistler and hummer.

It is so easy to learn a new tune to whistle or hum that characters with this proficiency can learn numerous tunes after a single listen. In fact, if he succeeds at a skill check, a whistler or hummer can reproduce a tune he has only heard once. With two days of practice, he can automatically whistle or hum or tune. He need only check if involved in a contest or attempting a very difficult feat (such as humming two different tunes at the same time). In addition, a character with both this skill and the animal lore skill can mimic any bird call he has heard by combining the skill mastery of each skill.

However, most adventurers do not take whistling just for the entertainment value. Instead, they use it for communication. If both characters have the skill and both succeed with their skill checks, a single concept can be communicated. Examples include, "Go around to the side door," "I hear them coming," "Slowly reach out now, the guard doesn't see you." Only those with this skill can send messages, but others can receive them if they know the code, even without the skill. A code can include up to nine brief, distinct messages (such as "attack", "retreat", "flee", and so on). When in doubt, an unskilled message recipient must succeed at a Wisdom check to get it right. And of course, your GM may require a Detect Noise check to adequately hear the signals if noise, obstructions or similar impediments are a factor.

**Prerequisite:** None.

**Mastery Die:** 1d10    **Course Cost:** 80 gp    **Course Difficulty:** -15%

## NEW TALENTS

### Breath Weapon Bonus: (4 BP)

#### [Any]

Because of his natural reflexes and innate toughness, this character gains a +4 to saving throws against any form of breath weapon.

### Cower: (5 BP)

#### [Any]

Creatures with this talent know how to recoil exceptionally well in the face adversity. They can throw their arms up to cover their face, bend in odd ways, plead, cry and generally make it more difficult for an opponent to strike them. If a creature with the cower talent chooses to use it, he can improve his effective Armor Class by 1d4 (no penetration) per use of the talent, and is considered to be executing a fighting withdrawal, if moving. This bonus lasts for as long as the creature chooses to cower. However, a cowering creature also loses an amount of Honor equal to the AC benefit gained each round, if spotted by another character or monster that survives the encounter. Furthermore, the cowering creature may take no other actions while using the talent and may only move at half speed.

### Expert Cheater: (5 BP)

#### [Elves, Gnomes, Half-elves, Humans]

An expert cheater gains +25% when gaming if he decides to cheat (for a total of +35% - See the gaming skill in the Player's Handbook). Additionally, he gets a second gaming check to avoid being caught even if he fails to cheat successfully. Those without the expert cheater talent are usually caught when they fail (opponents need only succeed at a Wisdom or observation skill check to notice the cheater).

Note that this is an "in game" talent ONLY! You are **not** allowed a skill check if caught fudging die rolls or faling to mark off damage sustained.

**Forgettable Face: (5 BP)****[Half-elves, Humans]**

Something about this character's appearance simply prevents it from sticking in people's minds. Unless he engages in meaningful conversation with someone, that character has only a 20% chance to recall the forgettable face. This chance can be modified by circumstances:

High motivation	+5%
Each previous encounter	+1%
Each week since last meeting	-1%

If a character has had a meaningful conversation (a call made by the GM), his base chance to remember the "forgettable" face is 85%. A character with the photographic memory talent, who normally would recognize a face automatically, has a base 95% chance to recall the forgettable face.

**Good Immune System: (5 BP)****[Dwarves, Halflings, Half-ogres, Humans]**

The character has an unusually effective immune system. For purposes of immunity to disease, treat the character as if his Constitution were 4 points higher.

**High Tolerance: (5 BP)****[Dwarves, Half-ogres, Half-orcs, Humans]**

The character is far less susceptible to intoxication than other of his race. For purposes of immunity to alcohol, treat the character as if his Constitution were 4 points higher. He also gains +1 to all saves versus poison.

**Knack for Languages: (3 BP)****[Humans]**

A character with the knack for languages talent easily learns new vocabularies and even new grammar. He gains two languages for each purchase of the languages (ancient or modern) skill. When he improves a particular language skill, he gains two rolls of the mastery die (and two rolls of the Honor die) for every one purchased. This talent does not necessarily translate into reading/writing.

**Magic Trap Sense: (1 BP)****[Any]**

This talent allows a thief to attempt to find and remove magical traps, subject to the discussion in Chapter 4: Rules of the Road. Only characters of the standard thief class, not all characters of the thief group, can gain this talent.

**Perfect Grooming: (2 BP)****[Elves, Half-elves, Humans]**

A character with this talent never needs the shaving/grooming skill. He always appears as if ready for court. Despised by all, he can simply wake up, toss his head, and his hair falls into place. He never needs to trim his nails. When he smiles, his teeth glint. He always seems to have a "GQ" thing going on. His Comeliness goes up by one.

**Quick Movement: (5 BP)****[Any]**

This character is a natural sprinter. Instead of moving 1/10th of his movement in a combat segment, you can move twice that (1/5 of his movement) per segment. Still, he can only move a distance up to his normal movement

in a round. Any round he moves in this way counts as two rounds for the purposes of fatigue.

**Simultaneous Backstab Attacks: (2 BP)****[Any]**

This talent is only available to characters of the thief group (even if characters of other class groups have a backstab ability, they cannot have this talent). The talent allows the thief to make two attacks in the same segment when backstabbing, thus gaining the benefits of a backstab attack with each weapon. The thief must be proficient in both weapons. This talent may not be used with the sneak attack ability of certain thief group classes.

**NEW PROFICIENCIES****Improved Backstab**

This proficiency allows a thief (character of the thief class group who has the backstab ability) to strike opponents with backstabs of devastating effectiveness. The character trades some or all of his extra damage dice in exchange for an improved range of critical hits AND an increased crit BSL (See GMG page 110 for an explanation of crit BSL). Look to Chapter 5: Stealth Hack for details. The improved backstab proficiency cost 1 weapon proficiency slot and 1 BP. A thief can acquire it at any experience level.

**Shield Proficiency**

This proficiency allows thief group characters to learn how to employ shields for standard defensive purposes. It costs 1 weapon proficiency slot and 5 BP.

**Two-Shield Style**

This "weapon" proficiency allows a character to use and benefit from the AC bonuses of two shields simultaneously, provided he has enough limbs and Strength to wield the shields properly one at a time. It requires the shield proficiency as a prerequisite and costs one weapon proficiency slot and 1 BP.

**THIEF GROUP PERSONALITIES**

No two thieves are alike in their goals, desires, quirks and prejudices. It doesn't matter if they belong to the same thief class, have the same thief package, are at the same experience level and have rolled the same hit points – they're going to be different people.

By combining assorted settings, social backgrounds and motivations, you can create a world full of distinct thieves. You can also begin with a whole concept of what sort of thief he is, rather than building him one step at a time. But where do you get such a concept? History, folklore and literature all provide colorful examples of thieves. From these you can develop a plan, an archetype, upon which you base your beginning character. Though we present generalized sample personalities here, through effective role-playing you will expand your thief into a more detailed, interesting, and believable character.

Below we describe several common types of thief characters. All of these personalities are drawn from thief character archetypes. Novice role-players should read these descriptions and, if they wish, adopt one of these personality types for their thief characters, or at least let these descriptions inspire them to work out the details of their characters' personalities. Beginners should take notes so they can avoid penalties for bad role-playing and stumbling around in tricky situations, wondering what their PC might do. Experienced role-players should recognize elements of their own characters in the personalities below. Read each description, think about whether the description comes close to matching your conception about your character's

personality, and if it does, try to utilize that description's advice when role-playing and making decisions for your character.

Each specific personality in this chapter will be described in the following way:

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** These paragraphs explain the character's attitudes and motivations and how the character tends to act and interact in a normal campaign.

**BEST SUITED FOR:** In these paragraphs, we consider the alignments and packages best suited to this personality type. It is possible to come up with a good rationale for why a character of a specific personality type should have an alignment that doesn't (at first glance) seem appropriate for that personality type, but such ground can be very tricky for beginning or less skilled gamers. Keep within the recommendations at first or you will not know what you are doing. Don't screw it up.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** These paragraphs discuss how the character reacts in combat situations. Not all thieves whip out their daggers and move to backstab immediately; some approach battle situations more slowly, more cleverly, or more aggressively. Some hardly ever unsheathe their weapons in the first place.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** These paragraphs describe the character's general reactions to NPCs in role-playing situations. You can use them as general guidelines for your character's role-playing conversations and other such encounters.

## THE GENERAL THIEF PERSONALITY

*Do you think that a city, an army, or bandits, or thieves, or any other group that attempted any action in common could accomplish anything if they wronged one another?*

*-Plato's Republic, Book I*

One of the things that distinguishes a professional thief from the more common, vulgar variety slow-witted folk like Plato imagined, is the delicate balance of justice that even thieves must maintain among themselves to be successful.

Many thieves wish to be regarded as professionals, seeking a kind of grudging respect even from their victims. A well known (even by a pseudonym) thief enjoys a privileged status, indicating success and the respect of the underworld. It can be an asset for business, bringing increasingly lucrative jobs. Even in places not claimed as territory by guilds, there are circles of professional thieves, forming the elite of the underworld. In this nefarious realm, the thief dominates by knowledge, intimidation, and skill. No simple swordswinger or spellslinger can truly infiltrate the purview of the thief. (Even a "legitimate" group of rover and troubleshooter thieves knows how to deal with the underworld, though they will claim night and day that they do not *participate* in illegal activities.)

The most basic qualification of a professional is that other professionals recognize him. Gaining this recognition is not easy. A thief must build a reputation for excellence – for competence, reliability, and honor among his business partners. (That's right, as HackMaster show the world, there IS Honor among thieves. It is just a different type of Honor.)

A would-be professional also needs to hang out in the "right spots," taverns and less extravagant inns, particular places where the professional clique gathers. There they relax, share information, and make contacts and arrangements for professional cooperation with other thieves.

Attitude is the first and sometimes the most important element an aspiring professional must adopt. Often people, even the naturally suspicious types (i.e. any living thief or adventurer) accept others by how they present themselves, especially if they have no reason to doubt that presentation. The professional attitude says thieving is a business and should be conducted as such. The professional is not contemptuous of his victims; they simply failed

to protect their property adequately, and suffered the economic consequences.

Professionals develop an unwritten code of conduct, guidelines for behavior. Its exact contents vary from place to place; the only universal rule seems to be the prohibition of "squealing", though not practicing the trade against other professionals is often also a part of it. A typical "code" is as follows, with its elements listed in order of importance:

1. A professional thief does not squeal: If captured by authorities in the course or because of a job, he must not reveal the identities of his partners, fences, informants, or other professional contacts.
2. A professional thief honestly reports how much money or valuables he takes in a job; he does not "burn" his partners.
3. A gang of professional thieves share a score equally among themselves, or according to the contribution of each to the job, arranged and agreed upon beforehand.
4. A professional thief shares some of his earnings with other professional thieves who have been incarcerated (to help pay fines, bribe officials, etc.).
5. If a professional thief has valuable information (e.g. attractive targets, location of traps, and the activities of the town watch), he shares it with other professionals. If asked.
6. Professional thieves help one another, even in spite of personal differences or enmity between them.

As stated above, not all of these rules are recognized in each circle of professional thieves; but some sense of honor is vital to the attitude and behavior that mark a professional and gain him recognition as a "good burglar." Still, keep in mind that these rules are typically unwritten, and that the only penalty for violating them comes from other thieves, which can often be much more severe than that of "legitimate" authorities (except in certain theocracies).

The criminal community may overlook a few transgressions, but a pattern of consistent disregard for the code will cause a character's reputation to deteriorate. Other thieves will not invite the character to be a partner in jobs; silence and cold stares will greet him at his favorite social establishments; politically sensitive fences (and later, most fences) may even refuse to purchase the goods he acquires. He also runs the risk of former associates squealing on him. Clearly, the violator has shown he doesn't respect the rules, therefore why should they apply to him anymore? In the worst situation say (a thief burns his partners, squeals on them, and then skips town for some foreign port) the offending thief could not only expect his professional reputation to be ruined, but had better keep an eye over his shoulder. His former associates and their friends, families, and business partners have more and easier access to assassins and bounty hunters than ordinary folks.

Thieves who adhere to the code gain considerable benefits. He gains the respect and trust of his associates. He is not immune from dishonorable thieves, who may try to burn him or squeal on him; but he has the support and approval of others in exacting revenge on those who wrong him. In addition, if captured and imprisoned by authorities, he can expect the privilege of the fix: the guild contacts (or less formal contacts) may arrange his release through bribes or favors. Even if the professional does not have access to the money needed, other thieves, knowing that he'd do the same for them, will pitch in to help. Though there's always the matter of interest...



## SPECIFIC THIEF PERSONALITIES

Table 2T: Thief Personality Types summarizes the basic types of thief characters you might play.

### The Artist

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** This thief views his jobs as an art form. He chooses jobs for their challenge and aesthetic pleasure, not strictly for their payoff in wealth. The artist seeks spiritual satisfaction and appreciation for his cleverness and creativity in relieving people of their valuables. He is searching for the “perfect crime.” In addition, he often insists that people call him “the artiste.”

A drunken duke stumbling down an alley late at night, heavily laden with jewels and gold, would be of little interest as a target for the artist. In fact, the artist would be offended if someone suggested that he perform such a ludicrously easy theft, since it would be so far below the artist's caliber. Rolling drunks is for thugs.

However, the artist might play the situation into a bigger, grander scheme. For instance, he could play the part of a “good Samaritan”, escorting the foolish noble to his residence, and thereby gaining the duke's confidence. This gives the artist special privileges, not the least of which is the duke's trust. (After all, why would a thief escort the duke safely home rather than mugging him?) He would likely spend several weeks further gaining trust, perhaps even stopping other thefts (after all, he would know how).

From this position, then, the artist may plan a truly exceptional theft; the sort that would stir up an extraordinary amount of public interest, but could go unsolved for decades (he hopes). A true artist would plan a heist so spectacular as to be almost unbelievable, then join the duke in the search for the perpetrators. He could look his new friend in the eyes after the job and never become a suspect.

**BEST SUITED FOR:** The artist is usually found in an urban setting or, less frequently, wandering. His family was surely above the poverty level, and probably even wealthy; theft for the artist is chiefly a pastime, though it may have also become a livelihood due to the high-roller lifestyle most become accustomed to. Many artists develop unusual skills that allow them to execute otherwise impossible plans. Of course bards are the most likely to be artists, looking for the perfect con, but a fair number of acrobats, burglars and spies fall into the category as well. Puzzler artists enjoy the cat and mouse game following the art almost as much as the act itself. They will leave cryptic clues and drop hints on law enforcement types, getting ever more cocky the longer they go without detection. Minstrels often have many elements of the artist about them, but they tend to split the notion of their “art” between scams and music.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** The artist has but one concern that overrides his desire to practice his criminal art – protecting his hide. The world is darker without him, he thinks, and so he must preserve his own life even at high cost (perhaps not at ANY cost, unless he is thoroughly evil). Unless with a group of allies, the artist most likely avoids combat altogether when possible. If forced to fight, he prefers stealth – one well-placed backstab is safer than several rounds of melee. He prefers ranged weapons to melee combat, and when expecting danger might collect fighter-types to his side. He thinks of these people, even if they are old friends, as bodyguards and sometimes as an audience. Artists are ever the narcissist.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** An artist is almost pure ego, motivated by whim or a desire for fame – if not fame for himself, then for his crimes, since he probably prefers to remain anonymous. He spends a lot of time inquiring about well-known heists, often expressing admiration for the cad who pulled off such a deed. Artists enjoy parties almost as much as crime, and may seek to combine the two. Other partygoers make excellent alibis, if the artist can find a way to do a job and yet appear not to leave the sight of other guests for long enough to perpetrate it.

His monumental ego leads to one (of many, perhaps) flaws. The artist needs appreciation for his work. Eventually, he is going to break down and describe the job in detail to someone. If he is lucky, this person is a trusted

**Table 2T: Thief Personality Types**

Personality	Summary
The Artist	Art is theft, theft is art
Desperado	Anything to survive (or escape, or make a copper)
Folk Hero	Robin Hood
Kleptomaniac	Compelled to steal
Mobster	Crime is a business
The Professional	One job at a time; no mess, no distractions
Trickster	Thrills to watching reactions to his pranks
Victim of Circumstances	Took only way out of harsh life
Vigilante	Thief-catcher (you become what you hate)

companion, perhaps even an accomplice. If not, perhaps he will explain the whole thing to a disguised Inquisitor at a costume ball....

### Desperado

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** For some reason or another, this character is running from the law – or (perhaps even worse) the unwritten law of the underworld. In any case, he is ready and willing to do whatever is necessary, however drastic, to preserve his life. Desperation defines his nature. He knows all too well how soon his end may come and any act that prevents that is fair game. Delicacy and rational forethought are not the forte of the desperado. This is the sort of character that, when discovered picking pockets, might knife his target, lest his face be identified.

His motivation is simple survival, and he may be found in any setting. You must be certain that you know what circumstances have led to his desperation. A desperado may have been wrongfully accused of some horrendous crime, but chances are he has a long rap sheet (even if it is not as heinous as that for which he is blamed).

Desperados are often short-lived; either whatever's chasing them catches up and gets them or (rarely) they eliminate the threat and are able to shift to a less stressful lifestyle. The desperado either dies or changes to something else ... though surely his old habits die hard.

**BEST SUITED FOR:** The desperado character may be of any social background, although most likely he comes from extreme poverty. He is a thief, whatever else he may be, and not a high-society type at all. Few bards achieve such extremity of action, as they have some concern about how others see them. Any package or class requiring careful contemplation and planning does not suit the desperado. Jesters, jongleurs and the like have too much of a happy-go-lucky air about them. Spies, sleuths, and troubleshooters might actually be on the side of the authorities from time to time. Robbers and thugs are most likely to follow the path of the desperado. Most desperados cannot see beyond the next day and thus none make any long-term plans. The outlook of the desperado does not mesh well with good alignments. He tends towards chaotic alignments, given that his safety is the most important thing in any consideration.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** The desperado must keep himself alive at any cost. He does not trust surrender, and he does not rest until his enemies no longer threaten him. This could mean ensuring all his fallen foes are dead or fleeing a considerable distance. One advantage to the desperado's hyper-sensitive self-preservation instinct is that he often quickly identifies the greatest threat in a group and works to swiftly eliminate that threat.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** Desperados make brief partnerships, not alliances. They certainly do not give their trust easily, if at all. A desperado may take a sworn gawd oath from a stranger as a sign that this person MIGHT do what he says. He is thinking that the consequences of breaking oaths may be dire, but he only trusts what MUST happen. If it is physically possible for a desperado to be betrayed, he assumes he will be (or at least plans for the eventuality). A desperado is more likely than many other personality types to stab someone he has been talking to, if he thinks he needs to do so. This might seemingly come out of nowhere, but in the eyes of the desperado, there is always a reason.

## Folk Hero

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** When the system itself is unjust, those labeled “criminals” are sometimes in fact the good guys. The folk hero refuses to sit idly by while tyrants rule. He musters all his charisma and roguish skills, and leads the fight to right wrongs and, if he can, topple the evil regime. Robin Hood is a classic folk hero of great fame. According to legend he stole from corrupt nobles and clergy, and gave the money to the poor, overtaxed peasants.

Imagine, for instance, a thief from the lower classes who lives in a city ruled by an evil tyrant. He and his compatriots devote themselves to the freeing of maltreated slaves and falsely convicted prisoners, smuggling them to safety beyond the evil kingdom's borders. The chief motivation of the folk hero is, of course, justice (or at least so it must appear to the public eye).

**BEST SUITED FOR:** Robin Hood was of noble lineage, and his band did their work in the countryside, but a folk hero can operate in any setting and be of any social background. Bards and performers (such as acrobats and jugglers) make the best folk heroes. Often times, the cause of justice alone is not enough to wake the masses from their drudgery. Many thieves and even yakuza achieve this status, also. Folk heroes are not suited to evil alignments, nor are they commonly found among the more secretive professions (spy, assassin, etc.). They also need to see a larger picture to keep a vision of a better city, province, county, kingdom, etc. Thus, the packages that focus more on the moment (such as thug and robber) or that lack a certain inspirational quality (such as the panhandler) do not produce folk heroes.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** Folk heroes prefer to fight dramatically, but they tend to have a better grasp of tactics than many other personality types. They will avoid fights when possible and appropriate, but when they must join battle, they use all their resources to best advantage. They use magic items appropriately and take full advantage of backstabs or acrobatic abilities when possible. In crowds, they often seek to gain the approval and assistance of “their people” to defeat enemies or block pursuit.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** Folk heroes focus on fighting tyrants, but may do so in different ways. A noble folk hero may work to change the system from within in one persona, but plunder his corrupt brothers in the peerage to help the commoners in his alter ego. They tend to desire (or need) attention and so rarely slink into the background of any situation. Somehow, though, most avoid boorishly inserting themselves into every conversation. Some even know when to shut up.

## Kleptomaniac

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** The kleptomaniac is a character with a compulsion, perhaps entirely uncontrollable, to steal. This is not motivated by poverty as a wealthy celebrity may be driven to steal clothing she could well afford. This compulsion might be at odds with the rest of the character's personality or it may be a quirk that became an identity. Kleptomaniacs with the nagging conscience flaw present interesting role-playing opportunities (only doltish players cannot find their ways into role-playing bonuses to EP). His motivation might be classified (very loosely) as whim, since it lacks a rational reason. Kleptomaniacs with the absent minded quirk often have a useful excuse.

The kleptomaniac personality may not necessarily attempt to steal absolutely everything he sees, but he does lack control over his urges to take things that are not yet his. This urge can build over time, and it has little to do with how appropriate or easy a theft might be. For example, a “controllable” kleptomaniac might somehow be persuaded to leave behind fancy silverware in the dining hall of Duke Ramaas during a formal affair, but stash the considerably less valuable flatware from a good friends' house during a meal.

**BEST SUITED FOR:** This character may be of any background and setting. While any character can be a kleptomaniac, a true thief most likely gets away with it for a time. Combining his abilities with a package likely to be invited to wealthy homes (such as jester or loremaster) makes for a highly enabled psychological disorder.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** Kleptomania does not affect a character's strategy or tactics in battle. Whatever his nature (frontal assault preference or pure stealth leaning towards cowardice), he expresses that in combat. However, at some point, during some fight, the kleptomaniac will try to steal a dagger or pouch from an enemy (or perhaps an ally!).

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** The kleptomaniac appears oblivious to his “little problem”. He may discuss fine points of the history of Fangaerian art with a patron even as he nicks a gold statuette before his eyes. Nonetheless, his compulsion to steal can direct him (perhaps subconsciously) to act in a way most likely to get access to some good items. These need not be especially valuable items, just something that some part of his makeup wants to steal. Thus, periodically the kleptomaniac finds himself trying to get invited to the sorts of parties he hates and not knowing exactly why.

## Mobster

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** A mobster views crime as a profession, every bit as legitimate as any craft or service. He may even justify the crime as a way to protect the common man. Over the years, mobsters have developed their own codes of behavior and a twisted sense of honor (not the Honor statistic, but a complex system of favors and obligations).

Crime families may have considerable wealth, but if their illegal activities are well known, or at least the topic for popular rumors, they may have considerably lower esteem in the eyes of good citizens than those of comparable yet honestly wealthy. Many mobsters resent this. His primary motivation is usually greed or loyalty, and his alignment is most often neutral or neutral evil. Characters of this sort often make up the backbone of the more powerful thieves' guilds. Characters of this type often have an unusual alignment dichotomy. Because they ignore the laws of the land they most certainly would not fall under the lawful category yet within their crime organization they are often extremely loyal. However, perhaps this is more out of fear and self-preservation than any moral conviction.



**BEST SUITED FOR:** This character was literally raised in crime. A mobster is found in the city, and may be of any background. Perhaps he hails from a family of elite criminals, leaders of organized crime. Readers will recognize that most yakuza fall into this category. A mobster can be a thug, but those who rise within the organization likely have more forethought and patience. Every good mob needs a fence. Mobsters generally do not like drawing extra attention to themselves and so shy away from flashy professions, such as bard, jester or acrobat. While the vast majority mobsters are thoroughly evil and quite violent, they are not mindless killers.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** Mobsters rely on intimidation and threat. While they have no compunctions at all that prevent them from enthusiastically killing their foes, they do like to be feared. A mobster might cut down an arch-villain's henchman in an attempt to demonstrate his effectiveness to that villain, rather than target the leader immediately. This may stem from the twisted code of the mobster, which respects all leaders in some way. The natural instinct of a mobster is to obey or make arrangements with a superior. Sometimes, they plan to take out and replace that superior, but such things are the results of careful long-term planning, not whims. A mobster might also prefer to leave a living victim to spread word of his prowess in causing pain to leaving a trail of anonymously slain corpses.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** As in combat, mobsters rely on intimidation to deal with others. Given their preoccupation with threats, they are likely to take innocent comments as such. Mobsters frequently must prove themselves, and so they also have tendency to turn role-playing situations into combat situations. They interact with each other and others in a manner similar to a pack of animals, always conscious of standing (and always thinking about how to increase their social standing). This standing has nothing to do with traditional social status; it is purely based on the perception of those the mobsters actually cares about, i.e. other mobsters.

## The Professional

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** Thievery is simply a job for this character. He is often aloof from other, "lesser" thieves. He has little tolerance for flamboyant fools who take too many risks, such as the artist and trickster. He sees desperadoes and kleptomaniacs as undisciplined, obsessed, and sloppy in comparison to his refined talents and balanced temperament. Folk heroes are just silly. The vigilante is a dangerous foe for the professional, in part because the professional can comprehend the vigilante's motivation. The mobster would seem to be the professional's kindred spirit, but they are too tightly bound (in the professional's opinion) by such foolishness as family loyalty and taking orders. The professional does not bind himself with any kind of absolute codes, except perhaps a contract and a clean, efficient theft. He has honor and honesty inasmuch as it is necessary to maintain his reputation for dependability, but he takes on a single job at a time, then moves on without emotional attachment.

The professional is usually based in a city, or wanders, and his services are usually for hire. He may be associated with a guild, but would prefer to freelance - other people's involvement in his work is more often hindrance than help.

**BEST SUITED FOR:** The professional's motivation is hard to pinpoint. Clearly it is neither justice nor loyalty and he knows that greed, whim and lust for fame can cloud judgement. That sort of thing leads to fatal sloppiness. Perhaps "survival" would be the best description of the professional's motive; though, any professional worth his salt does better than merely survive. Of all the archetypes, he most likely has a businesslike, middle-class background, though others are possible. Most professionals come from the ranks of those classes and packages that require forethought and tend to have clearly definable missions. Spies, assassins, ninja, sleuths and troubleshooters all fit the bill. Those who rely more on audience approval than simply checking off deeds on a contract, such as bards, minstrels, and jesters, do not fit the professional's psyche.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** More than any other type, the professional knows when he actually needs to fight. If a combat does not further his job, he avoids it. When he must fight, his goal is to finish the battle as efficient-

ly as possible. If not matched, he simply dispatches his opponent as quickly as he can. If evenly matched, he looks to the situation for advantages, for example getting to higher ground or distracting his opponent and circling around for a rear attack. If overmatched, he carefully considers his options. Stealth or desperate tactics may be called for, but discretion may require flight.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** The professional tends to be calculating and even cold. He needs to judge his employers, many of whom are by their very nature untrustworthy. This may apply only to his professional-directed activities, though. He draws a distinct line separating business and pleasure, as recreational pursuits might interfere with a job. Even so, few professionals go to extremes even when not "on duty", for fear of losing reputation and, more importantly, money from contracts.

## Trickster

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** This is a thrill-seeker, a character who delights in pulling off the most outrageous and amazing scams. Deception and pranks are his food and drink; flirting with danger grants him an incomparable thrill. Thieves, such as Reynaldo the Fox, are often portrayed this way in fairy and folk tales.

**BEST SUITED FOR:** Obviously, tricksters need others to approve and enable their behavior. Bards and charlatans are notorious for this. Any type of thief character can become a trickster, but those prone to seriousness (fences, sleuths, spies) or killing (assassins, ninja) do not fit the archetype well. Tricksters tend to be individualistic and have chaotic alignments. They run the gamut of morality, though evilly aligned tricksters are more likely than good-aligned ones to pull tricks that result in grievous bodily harm.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** Tricksters do not stop their games just because combat ensues. They seek to use distraction and wild antics to impress both friend and foe. Tricksters may waste time (from an ally's point of view) playing with enemies rather than dispatching them. Certainly efficient does not top the list of motivations for a trickster in melee. Many prefer ranged weapons, not because of their tactical superiority, but because they can attempt to make patterns of ammunition or humiliate opponents by knocking weapons (or spell components) out of their hands. Desperate tricksters resort to stealth and back attacks.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** In role-playing, a trickster becomes more complicated. His light and frivolous behavior may conceal insecurity or even dark secrets. A character driven to prove himself the most clever probably has deep-rooted issues in his past. Such a character can even become dangerous to those around him if forced to face his own insecurities. A trickster becomes unpredictable when people do not appreciate his antics, outwit his pranks, or simply do not find him amusing. This frustration might turn to rage, but a trickster's revenge always involves taking his enemies "down a peg" (even if it is just before they die...).

## Victim of Circumstances

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** This thief grew up in an impoverished, harsh environment. There he learned that if you need something you have to take it, because no one will give it to you - ever. People may tell him that stealing is wrong, but he cannot believe that since to him stealing has always meant survival. He long ago lost any sense of regret for his actions. Driven to a life of crime long ago, he never considers any other lifestyle. He is a grown up street urchin.

**BEST SUITED FOR:** This character invariably knows his setting (typically a city) inside and out, and probably has many useful connections. His social background is always lower class or unknown. A street urchin that continues the thief's life may develop into a different archetype as he grows older; perhaps such a solitary young thief becomes a professional.

Victims do not take much ownership in the world around them. Classes and packages that lend themselves to long-term plans do not suit the victim of circumstance, but he need not be purely focused on the present. While

many panhandlers, thugs and robbers are victims of circumstance, a corsair or charlatan could just as easily be one as well.

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** These types do what they must in order to survive, but perhaps not to the lengths of the desperado. They seek to end combat quickly by any means at their disposal and have few qualms about fleeing. However, a victim can let his emotions get the best of him and take irrational risks at times. His view of avoiding combat stems from early experiences: a thug might have won most of his “playground” battles, but a victim who received severe beatings in his first few fights constantly looks for a safe place from which to watch the rest of a conflict.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** Victims of circumstance share the view that things simply happen to them. They may not like it, but they rarely do much to change it. This translates into a detached attitude in most situations. They do not draw attention to themselves if at all possible, unless they feel comfortable with their companions or think they can take anyone who might take exception.

The exception to this is when involved in whatever vices the victim acquired in his tragic youth. Most victims of circumstance have one or more serious vices, and they pursue these relentlessly. Those who learn to re-direct this energy elsewhere might become professionals or other personality types.

## Vigilante

**CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:** The vigilante is a loner, a curious sort of thief who preoccupies himself with defeating the schemes of criminals. He finds traditional legal enforcement tactics too restrictive and laws often unenforced, so he goes outside the law to bring about his vision of justice. Ironically, to do this, the vigilante trains himself in the very skills of the thieves he opposes. He comes to know their ways and their minds as though he was one of them.

Though he fights on the side of law, the law does not appreciate the vigilante. He is unsupervised, unpredictable, and extremely dangerous. This is especially true in the case of locales where the leadership is a bit on the shady side itself, perhaps riddled with bribery, graft, connections with crime, and other such corruption. In that case, the vigilante might soon turn his attention directly to the rulership. Lawful neutral and lawful good societies view the vigilante as an unregulated entity who clearly believes that he can choose which laws apply to him. The vigilante leads a dangerous life, for he can have many powerful enemies.

On the other hand, the vigilante may attain a revered status similar to that of a folk hero, if his successes become popular knowledge. Popularity might do little to ward off a powerful thieves' guild, but it can cow the more fearful of public officials into tacit approval of his extralegal exploits.

A vigilante will not, of course, join a thieves' guild – that is his antithesis. He may, however, be part of some secret society devoted to justice. Such a society may consist entirely of vigilante-type thieves, or it could include adventurers of many diverse classes.

Several comic book titles do an excellent job of illustrating the complex psychology found in characters of the vigilante archetype. They make excellent inspirational reading.

**BEST SUITED FOR:** The vigilante may be of any social background. He might work in any setting, but most frequently haunts the city. Regardless of his social class, he seeks to somehow right a wrong (or at least punish those who wronged him). His primary motivation concerns his own conception of justice (perhaps to comrades or relatives killed or ruined by criminals), and thus he is very rarely evil. The vigilante may kill people or have a strict code to prevent himself from falling to the moral level of his enemies, but he is not motivated by money. This rules out the assassin and ninja classes.

He also has an edge to his personality, which rules out the mirthful and jocular classes and packages (jester, minstrel, etc.). Puzzlers and loremasters are too contemplative; a vigilante is driven to take action. He does not take orders (or even suggestions) well, so spies and troubleshooters do not match the archetype. Most vigilantes are true thieves. Still, an individual vigilante might range from those directed towards immediate action (thugs), to those

bent on revenge of a less violent type (burglars), to careful, complex operators who seek to correct “the system's” failure that they see all the time (sleuths).

**IN COMBAT SITUATIONS:** The vigilante remains as single-minded in combat as in the rest of his life. He selects a target and pursues that enemy to the end. He may even get tunnel vision regarding his pursuit and fail to notice a new enemy coming on to the field. Vigilantes also do not leave jobs unfinished. When he puts an enemy down, it sticks (even if he does not kill the victim). Despite this, vigilantes do not join combat with those that they do not oppose.

**IN ROLE-PLAYING SITUATIONS:** A vigilante may not come off as obsessed with his mission, but if so, it is a cover. The vigilante never forgets what drove him to his cause, and it never slips far from his attention. He constantly scans conversations for clues that might help him pursue his version of justice. Those meeting him who do not know about a vigilante's cause might consider him simply a very driven individual. Not every action the vigilante takes leads directly to his cause, nor does every word he speaks concern his notion of justice, but he never speaks or acts in a way counter to his cause. He does not joke about it, either, except perhaps for very dark humor concerning his targets.

## Race

A thief character's race distinctly affects his personality. Thieves are one of the two HackMaster game classes that are open to any race (the other is fighter), so thieves of every race exist.

Throughout this book, we assume that humans are dominant race and the most common thieves. We include notes when special conditions or rules apply to non-human thieves. Below we have some observations on the behavior of thieves of the various demi-humans races. These guidelines apply to NPCs. PCs are exceptional in many ways, after all, not the least of which is personality. These pre-dispositions, as you might call them, may nonetheless be useful as a starting point for conceptualizing your demi-human thief.

Below we refer to the thief packages that the various races are likely to take. Descriptions of these packages are found in this chapter.

## Dwarf

Many dwarven thieves are not stealers, as such; but rather experts in mechanical things, such as locks and traps frequently used to thwart thieves. The dwarven thief often becomes an installer of such items or an advisor on security matters. Naturally, knowledge of how to put something together is also useful for taking it apart....

Because of this, many dwarves favor the troubleshooter package. Here he can make use of his knowledge and skills without engaging in the dishonorable activity of genuine theft. If you want to check how secure your jewels actually are, or whether your prison is in fact inescapable, a dwarven troubleshooter can often tell you in mere moments.

Bounty hunters also are found in the ranks of dwarven thieves. They may serve the kings under the mountains, bringing back scoundrels and criminals who have somehow escaped dwarven justice. Other dwarven bounty hunters specialize as re-possessors. They use the full range of thieves' skills to recover stolen items; and they are careful to take nothing else, thereby keeping their honor and reputation impeccable.

It may be dangerous to call either of these sorts of dwarves a thief, a grave insult in most dwarven cultures, in which tradition absolutely prohibits one dwarf from stealing from another. Theft within a dwarven community is punishable by banishment at the very least, and sometimes death.

The prohibition, of course, does not extend to stealing from other races, especially Goblins, but stealing is still less than honorable and a known thief is usually viewed with caution and suspicion by his neighbors.

Dwarven thieves living outside the dwarven world either became tired of that suspicion, or were expelled from their homes for theft or another transgression. They still tend to retain a great deal of honor and the professional attitude characteristic of their race; a former criminal may even have learned

from his crimes and youthful excesses, and could be a very reliable companion. A very dangerous few, however, have abandoned their racial legacy, and become treacherous and unpredictable.

Most dwarves found in thieves' guilds have been outcast from dwarven society. Many of these seek to take advantage of the reputation of their race to make full use of traditional thievery.

## Elf

Elven thieves are sometimes characterized as eavesdroppers or spies. Elven culture generally shows little interest in personal, material property. With their incredibly long lifespans, they are more aware than most of the transitory nature of things.

However, while material things come and go, knowledge is eternal, and most elven thieves covet information above all. With their knack for finding secret doors and superior senses in general, elves are excellent at gathering information. Of the various thief packages, they are most likely to become spies. An elf raised in a larger human community might be inclined to take the sleuth package, but this is a rare situation. The rover package is also popular, especially for the elven thief who wishes to traverse the world in search of exotic knowledge. (Note that multi-class thieves cannot take a package, however.)

Elves are careful with preparations; they can have patience that amazes other races. They like to do research before a mission is undertaken, whether a relatively simple burglary or a dive into a deep dungeon to track some precious artifact.

Because of their heritage, elves are more likely than other thieves to recognize the value of archaic or obscure items, such as books and artwork. An elf may be more likely to know where to fence the item although he would probably want to keep it for himself.

When elves do desire material goods, they are sure to be beautiful and innocent ones. Elves take a special interest in items that are long lasting and of intellectual value (art, rare books, etc.) or magical in nature.

Though enthralled by knowledge, elves are not overly secretive. They find information exciting, and may delight in sharing it with their friends. This gives rise to a popular dwarven saying concerning elves and secrecy that only some lesser game would lower itself to repeat explicitly.

Finally, elves are dependable. You can usually expect an elf to behave as a professional (though he might not be recognized as such) or a reliable guildsman (though elves prefer to be independent of such organizations). Elven assassins are rare but highly feared. Most can easily pass themselves off as "simple" thieves.

## Gnome (including gnomelings and gnome titans)

Gnomes are fond of burglary, though wall-climbing is difficult because of their small stature. They can make infallible "box-men" (experts at opening locks and disarming traps), having technical expertise comparable to dwarves', but being more willing to put it to larcenous (if not quite malicious) use.

Some have compared gnomish thieves to pack rats: show one something shiny and interesting, and he'll likely be so overcome by curiosity that he'll drop everything in eagerness to discover a way to put the object of interest in his own little paws.

Gnomes tend to avoid bulky treasures, such as coins or awkward items that must be fenced. They are collectors, hobbyists who like to admire their trophies: gems, jewelry and (perhaps favorite of all) fascinating magical devices.

In addition, gnomes love to put their magic items to clever use. They delight more than any other race in practical jokes. They may make themselves a nuisance to fellow adventurers and thieving partners; but, though embarrassing or amusing, such pranks are harmless. And at heart, a gnome, well treated, is a most loyal and reliable adventuring companion. A similar thing could be said about a gnomeling thief, but his seeming innocuousness

can cause the unwary to underestimate him. Gnome titans are often angry and dangerous, but probably not as strong as their fighter counterparts.

Gnome assassins express a darker side to the gnomish love of mechanical things. Many of their more successful jobs come off as accidents, if rather bizarre ones, involving devices (and sometimes barrels of Greek fire). Gnome assassins often work through intermediaries who accept and negotiate their jobs, since they have difficulty (even in shadows) looking imposing enough to get their rightful pay.

## Half-elf

Some half-elves favor the world of one parent or the other, if raised and accepted by that parent's society. Many more are wanderers, never quite feeling at home or accepted in either society.

By seeing and understanding two diverse cultural viewpoints, half-elves are acutely aware of peoples' differences in point of view – and how to capitalize on those differences. This helps develop a well-honed ability to shade the truth and, combined with the elven affinity for knowledge, makes half-elves excellent con men. Targets are sometimes further impressed by a half-elf's exotic appearance (pointed ears, lithe build, and so forth).

It is very easy, for instance, for a half-elf to enter a new town, find a likely target, discover what that person needs or desires and then appear at the target's doorstep with a fake for sale. A half-elf con man can milk a town or area for however much it's worth and move on when things get a little too hot. Between towns he may link up with adventurers for protection (and perhaps con *them*, too), but eventually he will move on when he has found new territory.

Many half-elves are loners and wanderers, which is not conducive to guild affiliation. Often the ties of a half-elf thief to a guild are loose at best, unless the character has been raised in the guild structure and well indoctrinated into its mentality.

Their wanderlust lends itself well to the life of the bard, a fact that, combined with their human blood, makes half-elves the only demi-human type that can become bards. Their talents seem well suited to that life. Half-elven charlatans, often mistaken for bards, seem closer to their human heritage, though they can try to fit in with any culture.

As so many of their kind find themselves thrown into a hostile world without a real heritage, half-elves in the right environment can become yakuza. They tend not to be the muscle, but as yakuza tend to work in areas overwhelmingly dominated by humans, they can become imposing, even terrifying, merely by being different. Their natural stealth and patience often allows them to advance quickly into the middle ranks of the clan.

Half-elves with a taste for revenge against the world at large can drift into the life of the assassin. They share many of the tendencies of full elves, particularly stealth, yet can sometimes pass for human when need be. Very few half-elven assassins lack the bitter edge acquired through years of oppression.

## Halfling

Sometimes portrayed as consummate burglars, many halfling thieves are really motivated by curiosity. The average halfling is content to lead a simple, safe, comfortable life. However, the thief longs to see and experience the world beyond the hills and burrows of his home shire.

Even halfling thieves usually have their race's characteristic shy caution, plus a healthy dislike for danger, discomfort, and uncertainty. They share (or exceed) adventuring companions in terms of greed (of a sort), but rarely in terms of wanderlust. Halflings make careful preparations whenever possible, and use their skills of self-concealment liberally. Careful scouting is always necessary, and frontal assaults (whether in combat or robbery) anathema.

Many halflings have remarkably little interest in simple coinage, which can be burdensome (especially for a small person). They will take a good amount of loot, certainly (enough for a pleasant period of ease and comfort before work is made mandatory) but they prefer more compact treasures that are as impressive to show their peers as they are valuable.

Of great puzzlement to sages is the question: Where do halflings get their extraordinary talent for thieves' skills? There is precious little locksmithing or metalwork found in most halfling cultures, and thievery amongst the halflings themselves is virtually unheard of – yet the halfling thief has an amazing knack for almost all thieves' skills.

Coupling this knack and the fierce loyalty to their friends, the halfling thief is understandably in high demand for adventuring expeditions.

The number of known halfling assassins can be counted on one hand. Perhaps there are many and they keep the secret well because most people have so much difficulty imagining the happy-go-lucky little person as a killer for hire. On the other hand, perhaps they do not wish to contemplate the potential effectiveness of such compact killers. Certainly, they would have an easier time than larger creatures slipping through crawlspaces and gaining access to victims in unexpected places. Whatever the case, the mere possibility of a halfling assassin does not make the career choice popular. It is safe to say that any such creature would need a highly unusual background.

### Half-ogres

To put it simply, half-ogres tend towards thuggery. Many grew up in human and demi-human society, likely stronger and tougher than their peers and always having to defend themselves. While this path leads many to become powerful fighters, the slightly brighter ones turn to light subterfuge as a way to gain revenge, particularly those whose major growth took place later (leaving them all the torment without the physical power to fight back).

Not a few half-ogre thieves grew up in Ogre society, where they suffered as runts next to full-blooded Ogres. Frequent beatings forced them to develop at least a rudimentary talent for deceit (otherwise, they would simply have developed a higher tolerance for pain, and probably have become fighters).

Nonetheless, few half-ogres develop much of a knack for swindling or spying. They grow accustomed to situations degrading into fights (whether desired or not), and they try to make full use of their backstab ability and surprise attacks. In thieves' guilds, half-ogres serve as muscle, enforcing the judgment of less physically imposing members. Half-ogre assassins also tend to be thuggish and unsubtle.

The rare few half-ogres clever enough to run their own scams have been known to cheat even other thieves and bards, largely because such cleverness is so unexpected. In addition, unlike many con men, these are not likely to avoid combat if it does occur.

In adventuring parties, half-ogre thieves find themselves searching for traps on the theory (that their companions have) that they are tough enough to take a hit if they fail and too stupid to realize that the party is taking advantage of them. Many half-ogres fall into adventuring almost by accident, often while seeking a target to discuss unpaid gambling debts.

### Pixie Fairies

Obviously, pixie fairies cannot carry heavy loot, making them unusually concerned with magical means of storage. Since they can fly, they often miss or forget about pit traps and pressure plates until one of their comrades succumbs to such a thing. On the other hand, they can move more stealthily than most larger folk and often find easy access to target's pockets.

Pixie fairies can be playful pranksters or sneaky little bastards, but most fall somewhere in between. Adventurers love having pixie fairies, even thieves, in the party because they can prevent surprise attacks. Another advantage of the pixie fairy is how frequently other characters, monsters, government officials, henchmen, rivals, and pets overlook them. No one thinks an eighteen-inch tall fairy kin can do much harm.

Ironically, most pixie fairy thieves end up as adventurers or troubleshooters. They do not make good thugs, obviously, and for some reason are hardly ever drawn to the con man lifestyle (though they certainly have been known to run a scam or two).

Pixie fairies cannot be assassins because they do not understand the concept very well. Some actually do not understand what death means to other

racers. Some pixie fairies think they are too delicate for the work, and a few regret that fact, since their innate powers of Invisibility and flight would be highly useful to the assassin. Even those fairies do not have the hard edges of character necessary to become an assassin.

### Other Non-human Races

As the GameMaster's Guide mentions, it is possible to design new character races for your campaign. Some of these characters likely will end up joining the thief class.

The races most commonly adapted for characters are humanoid – Ogres, Orcs, and half-breeds of those races; Goblins, Kobolds, Hobgoblins or Bugbears. As thieves, these characters favor the packages of highwaymen (that is, bandits) and thugs – they prefer armed robbery, where no great deal of finesse, delicacy, or dexterity is required. Many have entire cultures already based largely on banditry, anyway.

## CITIES AND GUILDS, LIFE IN THE UNDERWORLD

The descriptions above describe general tendencies of demi-humans who were raised among their own kind, and have picked up most of their race's cultural trappings. Some demi-humans, however, are found in other settings, such as human cities. Most such demi-humans still originally lived among their own people, but some areas may include second or even third generation displaced demi-humans. This particularly happens in large cities, where there may be ghettos of demi-humans, or where thieves' guilds have purposely raised demi-humans in their midst to take advantage of their races' special abilities and benefits, while suppressing natural and cultural inclinations (dwarven honor, halfling peacefulness, half-elven wanderlust, and so on).

Ghetto-born demi-humans undoubtedly still exhibit some stamp of their lost "homeland," but the tendencies are weaker. In fact, a guild-raised demi-human's personality might hardly be recognized for what it is, if the conditioning was done well. (Once in awhile there will even be such oddities as a claustrophobic dwarf or a repressed elf.)

Interesting role-playing could arise from an alienated, city-born demi-human thief breaking away from the guild that was the only parent he knew, and trying to find himself in the unfamiliar lands of his ancestors.

# Chapter 3

## Elements of the Thief Campaign

Terrak, the Master, looked through the hazy air of the hideout. The acrid scent of charcoal smoke mingled with the sweat dripping freely from his assembled thieves. Indeed, the air in the attic remained always fetid, for even on a cool night such as this they dared not open any passage to the outside. So precarious was their position in the city, so firm was the Black Duke's grip on the populace, that any hint of their presence here would bring swift and brutal reprisal.

For the hundredth time, Terrak examined the members of his small band. They were brave men and women, and he trusted them all. They were bound to him not by any bonds of love-though he knew they respected him-but instead by a common, flaming hatred. He wondered, again, if such a ragged assemblage could actually be a threat to one as mighty as the Duke. But then he sighed, knowing they had no choice.

Straight across from him, Terrak saw Ardina, the weaver. The old woman practiced her trade skillfully during the day, and none suspected that her bottles of dye, or her carefully wrapped bundles of cloth, were used to smuggle the gains of the band around the city, and even to locations beyond the high wall. Even now the band gathered in the attic of her shop, since she had risked her cover and her life to provide them this temporary hideout.

Wistfully, Terrak remembered the guildhall, built with the profits of his long labors, and even the sweat of his own brow. The building had contained secret passages, hidden compartments, deadly traps, and easily defensible combat stations. But it had all gone up in smoke when the Black Duke's enforcers had attacked. Terrak's eyes misted as he thought of Serana, his beautiful, young Serana, calling to him with her last words before the flames had taken her, had taken so many of them.

But the Master Thief hardened his mind and his plans. Indeed, it had been those same precautions, the secret doors and the hidden compartments, that had allowed this small remnant of his band to escape. Now they gathered here, dry kindling awaiting the spark that would ignite the flames of their revenge.

Terrak turned to an old man beside him. "And so, Rorden, the Duke's treasury awaits us now?"

The man nodded his balding head. Terrak reminded himself that the man was not as old as he looked. The Duke, however, had seized Rorden's wife for use as a concubine many years earlier. By threatening her with death, the ruler had forced the talented Rorden to keep his books and provide him with information. Now, the Duke's threat to claim the man's daughter for a similar fate had finally driven Rorden to fight against his brutal lord.

"Indeed, Master." Rorden spread a piece of parchment on the floor. "You see here the layout of the Duke's mansion. I have marked the secret passage to the vault, though I could not gain the key to the lock. I am sorry, but the Duke keeps it on a key around his neck."

Terrak waved away the man's apology. Once they found the lock, he knew Xenos could open it. Indeed, the lockpicker even now instinctively flexed his fingers and licked his lips. Xenos, too, had lost his woman in the Duke's raid. Terrak knew he would perform with skill on this night.

"And the painting?" asked Terrak, carefully watching the other members of his band. He saw Rocko flex unconsciously, grasping the stump of his right arm with his left hand. Rocko had lost his hand as a mere boy, when the Duke's watchmen had caught him stealing bacon in the marketplace. Rocko was brave, but not terribly bright. He, of all of them, had expressed the most misgivings about the plan to steal the piece of art along with the Duke's treasury of gems.

"Remember, the Duke is ruled by his vanity above all else," Terrak reminded them, directing his measured stare at the unflinching Rocko. "That painting of himself, the work he paid thousands of gold pieces for that it may hang in his great hall, serves as a symbol of his vanity. It has left a bitter taste in the mouths of the entire city. Its theft will put a large dent in the Duke's armor of rulership!" (At least, I hope it will!), Terrak concluded silently.

"Now, the challenges," the Master Thief continued. He looked at Kyrin, to his left.

"I will have the wagon ready," the girl answered solemnly. She had been just old enough to understand her loss when her parents had died in the inferno of the guildhouse. Terrak knew that she spoke the truth.

"Here are the magic mouths," Terrak gestured at the parchment as Rorden nodded.

"My spell of silence will be ready," nodded another thief, a thin and wiry man of indeterminate age. Only the golden sheen of his blond hair suggested his true race. The half-elf was a skilled thief, but at times his talents as a magic-user were even more valuable to the band.

"These walls are oiled to prevent scaling," explained Rorden, gesturing around the periphery of the courtyard.

A snicker came from a young woman across the room and Terrak allowed himself a slight smile of his own. The Black Duke would need more than slippery walls to stop Bria the acrobat and her grappling hook. "Just remember to drop a rope for the rest of us," reminded the Master.

"And finally, the guards," pointed Rorden. "They are commanded by Puroch, whose loyalty the Duke extorts by holding his family at knifepoint."

"The family is now safe in hiding?" asked Terrak, looking at the old weaver-woman.

She nodded with a toothless grin. "Puroch will join us now."

Terrak looked again at his small, capable band. He knew them all, understood their strengths and their weaknesses. He would not betray them, and he knew they would not betray him.

"We cannot hope that the theft of a painting and a few gems will bring the power of this duke crashing down," he said softly. "But if, by this theft, we can force the entire city to see him for the madman he is-and his madness will be plain to all when he discovers the defaced painting hanging above the outer gate of his mansion! -we can do him great harm."

"And too, we can pave the road to our return. Soon, my loyal comrades, we will become the influential guild that we were once before!"

The thief campaign resembles any other HackMaster game campaign in many respects: the PCs must face challenges. With a kindly GM, the challenges are balanced to the strength of the characters, and the rewards must be enjoyable enough to keep everyone having a good time, but not so abundant as to drastically inflate the finances of the campaign world. Hyperinflation is no fun - just ask your average South American.

In the specifics of play, though, some of these campaign aspects can take on unique and entertaining features when applied to a campaign involving many thief characters. This section explores some of these features, providing detail to GMs and also players. While much of it focuses on true thieves, much of it also applies to bards, minstrels, and other roguish types.

## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The cultural overview of the campaign setting is an important consideration for the adventuring careers of all PCs, none more so than the thief. Some cultures have a strong and deep-running tradition of thievery while others will be quite foreign to the concept.

Generally, the more primitive a civilization, the less likely it has a strong thief element within it. Savage tribesmen or aborigines have few possessions that a thief would deem worth stealing. While characters from these backgrounds might covet the possessions of other cultures, their methods of acquisition will be less subtle than those of more “civilized” thieves, not to mention that such primitive cultures need every resource just to survive. Theft becomes so detrimental to survival in primitive societies that penalties are severe, usually maiming or death. Minstrels require some development along musical and technological lines, though storytelling and music in some form predate civilization itself. Bards and charlatans have been around from the beginning.

Of course, nothing prohibits a character from a savage or barbarian background from joining a thief class. Ideally, the character has some opportunity to learn a little about his chosen trade before he meets up with an experienced city watch patrol.

Rural cultures, too, will be less likely to provide interesting settings for typical thief adventures than will urban locales. Thief characters can learn their trades in small town or country settings, but unless they have a steady stream of travelers passing through from which to select their victims, such thieves have difficulty maintaining a career of any long duration. In rural areas, thieves are more easily ferreted out. Also, rural folk are more likely than urban types to determinedly seek violent revenge for theft and most have a crossbow rack in their wagon.

But perhaps an even more significant cultural consideration is the view of that culture takes towards personal property and an honest day's labor. In this context a city, with a strong class of merchants, an important economic system, and reliance upon trade, becomes the ideal setting for the thief's activities. Cities also present the most opportunities (audiences and marks) for other thief classes.

The culture of such a bustling city cannot help but give rise to laws and law enforcers, to objects of value, and to interesting inhabitants. Below we discuss all of these factors.

## THE SOCIAL CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

Thieves, more than any other character class, must interact with NPCs in order to utilize the full capabilities of their class. Unlike the fighter or the magic-user, who can face an opponent from the safety of spell or missile range, or in the heat of melee combat, the thief must often communicate with his enemies, staying alive as much by his wits as by his strength. This is even more true of bards and minstrels!

The GM, of course, must provide the necessary environments for his players. For thief characters, and particularly in a campaign with numerous thief-types, this means the creation of numerous NPCs, detailed sufficiently for smooth interaction with the PCs, and a society or culture with enough features to provide motivation, ambition, and plenty of room for adventure.

## THE SOCIAL OVERVIEW OF THIEVES

How does this society view thieves? Are they vigorously exterminated wherever they can be found? Are they encouraged to leave town by the closest available gate? Or are they an integral part of the city's infrastructure, contributing to its economic life every bit as directly (if not, perhaps, as constructively) as the trading of merchants?

The answers to these questions determine, to a great extent, what kind of status a thief might hold in the society. Wealth alone always enhances status, but a wealthy thief, in many societies, is still regarded as mere scum, however cleansed and sanitized he may be on the surface. Still, people think better of a wealthy thief than a poor one! Minstrels and bards are rarely hunted

down and killed, but some societies treat confidence games the same way they treat theft. Sometimes worse...

In areas where authorities vigorously persecute thieves, thief characters must operate almost entirely underground. Even the location of such a major establishment as the thieves' guild must remain a carefully guarded secret. The guild headquarters might move around frequently, changing locations at the first hint of detection.

Thief group characters in these types of societies need to have several alternate hideouts lined up, ready for use at a moment's notice. Only small numbers of thieves work together, whether in a guild or a more informal band. Paranoia among the members is common, and even the hint of betrayal likely meets with gruesome consequences.

Indeed, thieves in societies that strive to root them out often must resort to a cover occupation or identity, simply to maintain appearances with neighbors, casual acquaintances, and even curious members of the city watch, seemingly defeating the purpose of avoiding “honest” work. The development of the cover can involve as much time and detail as player and GM want to spend. In this type of culture, a thief's success at his cover can affect his fortunes every bit as much as his performance on the job.

While a cover provides a thief character with an inherent professional weakness, even those thieves in regions more accepting to their trade might consider acquiring one. A thief who works to preserve a cover might find himself working in an area normally closed to thieves. This entails a corresponding increase in the likelihood of encountering lucrative targets for theft. Also, there is often a relative lack of competition from other thieves in such environments.

Of course, societies where thieves are at least tolerated, and those where thieves are accorded actual status of some kind present thief player characters with other challenges. Because of the notoriously chaotic nature of the class, thieves are constantly adjusting the status of members within their ranks. Thieves who would succeed must struggle to stand out from the masses. Where every street has its cutpurses and every neighborhood its petty boss, the thief PC finds himself in the midst of savage competition. He must nearly always choose sides. Although this selection can include the choice of independent operations, of course, thieves look upon those not declared friends as undeclared enemies. Competition from other thieves and thief organizations becomes a major center of conflict for these characters.

Another possibility faces a thief who pulls off a job so spectacular that every citizen takes note. Even perfectly law-abiding citizens can applaud such a thief as a popular celebrity. Every kind of celebrity has certain drawbacks, however. This type of “lovable rogue” must be careful about his reputation. For every door it opens (help from common folk, adoring looks from women, and so on), his reputation closes others. He may need to travel in disguise at all times, he may be unable to participate in simple, if profitable, jobs as the commoners expect bigger things out of him. The public hates disappointment (and a thief in this position may face the prospect of disappointed “fans” turning him in to the authorities!).

## DETAILED AND VARIED NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Obviously, NPCs are a major part of any social campaign environment. This must be one of the primary areas of GM concern. Details always matter. Because of the number of NPCs needed, though, experienced GMs develop a convenient shorthand procedure for keeping track of all these characters. They may not need, for example, to include full statistics, skills, and equipment for each shop-owner and innkeeper in the player character orbit. Often a name for the character and a one or two word personality description suffices to give the GM all he needs to role-play the NPC in an interesting and consistent manner. (Remember, if the innkeeper is “greedy and bigoted” the first time the PCs encounter him, he should be that way next time as well.) A good GM can expand this as needed, but also knows what to prepare before a session.

Of course, NPCs who might logically be expected to enter combat with the PCs (guards, rival thieves, thugs, bullies, etc.) need the relevant combat information. Other NPCs who fill the roles of the potential targets for PC



thievery (merchants, nobles, dandies, caravan travelers, fences, influential criminals and thieves, etc.) need additional information on valuables possessed and how those goods are secured. This includes notes on locks, traps, secret compartments, and the like – as well as enough combat information to allow the GM to quickly adjudicate an encounter should matters come to blows.

The HackMaster GMG includes valuable information on defining NPCs and on creating fast, realistic characters when needed. The GM must then keep this information close at hand where it can be easily referenced, in his official GM Campaign Record. He can then be ready for any encounters the characters might decide to find.

A variety of NPCs is every bit as important as the detail used to record them. In all campaigns, the player characters interact with folks from all walks of life – in a thief campaign such interaction has special importance, since they function primarily within that interaction.

Some of the NPCs must be peers of the PCs – fellow thieves and rogues inhabiting the same area. These NPCs serve as rivals, temporary helpers, sources of information, and even a sort of measuring scale for the PC's successes.

Thieves often develop contacts with NPCs even lower in status than the thieves themselves. These characters include beggars, urchins and orphans, harlots, and other low-life types. A stable of these NPCs provides the PCs with a ready source of information (“Here’s a copper, kid-go and count the guards outside the storehouse for me!”), as well as providing a touch of believability to the campaign background, separating a HackMaster campaign from some lesser, run-of-the-mill game. Note that the GM controls these NPCs, and that they do not serve the PCs. To get what they want, the players must learn and understand what motivates the NPCs, and even then sometimes they just can’t get it. While crucial to the nature of the thief campaign, these characters need make no effort to ease things for the PCs (unlike cronies or a yakuza’s contacts, who are under some obligation to help).



Low-life NPCs, of course, have the same variety of personalities and abilities as other NPCs. Because the PCs represent persons of power to them, however, player character actions can have a great rebounding effect in their relations. For example, a thief that always shares a (however small) portion of his take with the gang of urchins constantly roaming the neighborhood might find those urchins to be useful lookouts and helpful, willing sources of information. The thief who spends his time cursing and kicking the youngsters away from his abode may eventually find them leading an city watch SWAT team straight to his door.

Potential targets for robbery include a whole vast realm of NPCs: wealthy merchants, powerful nobles, influential foreigners, even thieves and other adventurers who have enjoyed a certain amount of financial success in their endeavors. A variety of characters gives the PCs the opportunity to determine for themselves what will be the site of the next furtive operation.

Here a group might try pacing the gaming sessions to give the players complete freedom of choice, while not burdening the GM with the task of detailing every mansion, noble house, and merchant shop in town. Simply use the expedient method of closing a gaming session with the PCs planning for the next operation. Then, when the target for the theft has been selected, the GM has the next week (or next few hours, depending on how often you play) to prepare a detailed layout of the setting.

Every campaign needs one, or several, strong villains to serve as antagonists for the PCs. Villains could often be low-lives and thieves themselves, but in the thief campaign they may be nobles, government officials, law enforcement, magistrates, foreign ambassadors, powerful magic-users, or corrupt clerics. A rival thief or even the characters’ own guildmaster can become villains, or at least foils.

Whoever serves as the central villain, he must be a very powerful character. He needs to instill fear, or at least respect, in characters that don’t typically give their respect (or fear) to anyone. Powerful villains need financial resources (estates, fortresses, treasure collections, etc.), authority (such as a commander of the watch or military), personal abilities (magical or combat), or best of all combination of these. He must be able to stand against the entire group of PCs, in one fashion or another (not necessarily direct melee). It takes a skilled GM to make a primary villain out of a character a PC could, theoretically, simply walk up to and strike dead. But this type of thing is not uncommon (the PCs may be able to kill a prince, and even do so, but they will face dire consequences).

Scenes involving such a villain must be staged and paced carefully – not in a back alley rolling drunks (unless they’re very unusual drunks!). Great villain characters are powerful, influential individuals and they are not stupid. When encountered, they rarely move without a legion of lackeys and henchmen (THOSE can be quite stupid).

Most of the time the party faces the lackeys and subordinates of the main villain. A good GM can make one of these lackeys into a memorable nemesis, though many lackeys are (by necessity) just so much arrow fodder.

Good villains might escape from their enemies once or twice, but great villains always have contingency plans. If he knows that, should the PCs break through their defenses they will probably end up in a specific location, the villain has several exit routes from the spot planned. No GM worth his HMGMA number would cheat to give the villain an out, but consider that the villain spends most of his time plotting. When he escapes from the party time after time, the players will develop a special hatred that cannot be imitated in any other way. The GM knows he’s succeeded when the players talk about the villain outside of gaming entirely, wondering what dastardly plans he has in mind and speculating on ways to cause his demise. Eventually, things come to a head and the party confronts the main villain in a climactic encounter. The lead-time makes success that much sweeter. And death in such a final meeting is particularly glorious.

One last category of NPCs includes the established authorities. The guards, watch officers, agents and cronies of the Law. Even in an anarchistic society, people take steps to protect their belongings. Several of these characters probably become very well developed recurring characters in a good campaign. A particular sergeant dedicates himself to stopping the PCs, using all his wits and

resources to foil their next plan. After being targeted by theft (or scams) more than once, a mercenary leader develops a personal grudge against the PCs. A liberal magistrate may keep giving the thieves “one last chance” to reform, or order them to serve the law in order to make up for their numerous crimes. Unless constrained by mandatory sentencing laws that is.

As early as character creation, the GM should have these elements of his game in mind. He can have most of the statistics at the level of detail necessary to keep the campaign going before the first adventure. Players and GMs can lay much of the groundwork for the thief-based campaign in advance!

## UNIQUE BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Whether temples, fortresses, vaults, inns, or manor houses, the importance of buildings in the thief campaign requires more detail than most. Window placement, high ceilings and the like can have dramatic effects upon PC and NPC actions, and color entire adventures.

A brick wall may be easier to climb than smooth plaster. Fancy houses might have vines clinging to their sides. A well-kept garden could be an important detail for a thief (an unkempt one might have more vegetation to break a fall, or more twigs to snap and ruin an attempt to move silently). Balconies, atriums, railings and the like may seem like mere architectural whim, but the burglar must know about these things to ply his trade. Are there chandeliers from which to swing? Can he reach a fishpond from a window? What sorts of draperies cover the duke's daughter's bedroom? Is there really a secret passage behind every bookcase? (Hint: probably not.) Specialized rooms, such as wine cellars and icehouses, could also be important.

Unusual settings can also provide fresh opportunities. A lord might have a dungeon beneath his home (as either a practice arena or a relic from an earlier day that he doesn't even know about). Plundering house after house may become slightly stale, and eventually thieves will likely want to try a tower or pyramid for a change of pace.

Knowing what buildings are and how they are put together can make or break a thief campaign. Unique structures require both GM and players to use some imagination and preparation, two crucial elements of the thief campaign.

## A WELL DEFINED ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Defining an economic system can be as simple as consistent use of the standard prices for equipment (modified for availability) or a complicated affair involving everything the GM thinks he learned in Economics 101. Even more than most characters, thieves measure their success in material terms. This makes a consistent measure of worth extremely important.

An oft-overlooked consideration within the economic system is the effect of theft on the items being re-sold. Certainly a jeweled tiara can be appraised at 1,000 gp. However, if word of its theft has traveled far and wide, PC thieves might have difficulty getting someone to pay half the listed amount. On the other hand, a good fence has the means to pay 25% and move the tiara out of the area where it would likely be recognized to sell for closer to its full value.

Other aspects of economics often overlooked in a campaign can be very relevant for thieves. Bribes are often necessary in order to gain information or persuade a guard to look the other way—keep rigorous track of this cost of doing business! Victims might offer protection money. Conversely, if a merchant is paying protection money to someone else (a thieves' guild, for example), those being paid will leave no stone unturned in seeking the one who has flaunted their warnings.

The GM must consider all such extra costs and hidden consequences, at least to the extent of their impact upon the campaign environment. It can be left up to the PCs to discover for themselves how these little extras can impact (perhaps even shorten!) their illicit careers.

## INTERESTING OBJECTS, ART AND OTHER TREASURES

A well-defined cultural store of valuable objects always gives a thief something to think about, and can provide some wonderful impetus for role-playing. (“I simply must have that last Ateryynn original!”) These items add a great deal of color and life to a campaign, encouraging players and the GM alike to think in terms beyond the material gp value of an item. Indeed, a valuable art object may be worth far more than its base value to a collector. By the same token, such an object might be recognized far and wide as stolen property – a complication that can make disposal of the goods an adventure in its own right. Imagine trying to sell the *Mona Lisa*!

Part of this aspect of the campaign involves establishing a consistent economic system for the world, of course, as mentioned above. Taking the time to specify treasures and their worth within that economic system carries the concept to a level of detail that greatly enhances any campaign – but particularly one involving many thieves and their illicit activities.

Objects can be classified by type and artist, most obviously, but also by such things as materials (especially in the area of gems and jewelry), intricacy of design, and size.

The GM should create enough detail about these items that the most treasured pieces are known to one and all, and enough other facts about the art to allow PC thieves to make proper value judgements.

Of course, establishing an artistic level of a culture is an ingredient of any campaign. Thieves and bards, however, are more apt to become involved in the gaining and losing of such items than are characters of other classes, and thus the thief campaign calls for a little extra attention to be paid here.

Whether these objects are paintings, statues, jewelry or gemwork, tapestries or rugs, ornate crystal, or religious icons, a well-defined set of existing treasures helps a thief put his own acquisitions and losses into context. GMs will find the time spent creating a detailed cultural and artistic background for the campaign well spent, and so will thieves. Player characters will doubtless find one or two more things that just might cause them to lick their chops, and the GM has one more motivational hook by which to lead the party towards the adventure.

## WELL DEFINED LEGAL SYSTEM

This does not mean that your campaign has to have a law-and-order basis with plenty of tough penalties for thieves and a gung-ho team of watchmen and sheriffs to see that unlawful perpetrators are quickly apprehended. It only means that the GM must give careful thought to the role of law and order in the campaign's culture (s). Penalties must be consistent in one area though they need not be harsh.

Once the GM establishes a consistent legal structure for the society, he should communicate a working knowledge of that structure to the players whose characters face that system.

In any event, the laws of a society usually reflect the standards and expectations of the majority (or at least the most influential portion) of the populace. The wealthy have great influence in any society, and they are particularly concerned with thievery in order to protect their own fortunes.

As always, game balance is important here as well. Societies with harsh penalties for thievery tend to discourage such nefarious activities. Because of the risk involved, potential gains should be correspondingly higher than in locations with more easy-going magistrates.

While the death penalty for a lawbreaker is not an unrealistic sanction in a medieval-based society (indeed, many a nail-biter of a rescue has pulled a character from the shadows of the gallows, headsman's axe or whatever) it is not the best region for a thief-based game.

Far better to have a character who has gotten himself in deep trouble be subjected to leverage from the law, perhaps being coerced to betray his companions or spy upon a powerful rival thief in exchange for his freedom and pardon. This way the sanction is a device propelling the character into another adventure instead of a one-way ticket out of the campaign. Also, PC deaths like this come too cheap and ruin the fun of a well-executed PC demise.

## COUNTER-THIEF TACTICS

Too often GMs neglect this area of campaign and city design. It reflects the truism that people who have been robbed, or who know they are susceptible to robbery, take steps to guard their belongings. Counter-thief tactics include structural features such as locks, walls, traps and alarms; NPCs such as guards, judges and investigators; magical procedures for locating lost objects or protecting items of value; and any other steps property-owners and societies might take to hamper the activities of thieves among them.

The degree of counter-thief tactics employed in a campaign can be a useful balancing tool for the GM, as well as a source of endless challenge and adventure for the PCs. As with any role-playing game situation, the degree of challenge should be compatible with the amount of reward offered. Not every small strongbox in a city has magical locks and a full-time patrol of high-level guards, but those that do contain better loot.

However, the protections employed by a society to counter thievery also relate directly to the amount of thievery to be expected. In places where robberies are common but wealth is valued, those who have the wealth take vigorous steps to protect it.

Such protections do not all have to be of the commonly expected kind (extra guards, a trap built into the lock, etc.). Some NPCs hide their loot in unexpected locations, a nightmare for many a burglar. Another occasionally employed tactic is the substitution of some worthless object for the real thing. A nasty twist on this latter case has the thief actually stealing something harmful to himself or others. For example, a thief who steals the Elixir of Youth from a savvy merchant might end up poisoning his guildmaster. While perhaps good for a brief laugh, this situation could become awkward. Only highly unlikely outcomes involve anything good happening for that thief.

## BACKGROUND OF INTERESTING CONFLICTS

A thief campaign can run for a long time on the central conflict of “haves vs. the havenots”, especially in lands where governments are corrupt (cynics will say that includes all lands). Players and GMs alike will find a lot more flavor and depth in a setting with a little broader background of conflict, however.

Conflicts appropriate to a thief campaign are little different from those that should liven up any campaign. Every social setting has tension between the various legs of the power structure, whether these are ruling houses, political parties, or even different members of the same ruling family.

Conflict between different classes or social strata is another common point of tension in society. The rich might seek to dominate the poorer folk, who strive in their own right to gain a share of the good life, or just want to take it by force. In a mercantile society there might be a middle class of merchants and artisans who seek to insulate their privileges from those less fortunate, while at the same time striving for financial betterment for themselves and their families.

Religious conflict is a common feature of campaigns, particularly with Draper, gawd of thieves, encouraging his followers. If every act of thievery honors the Thief Gawd, then even stealing from his temples is a means of worship. It doesn't take long to find convoluted paths when considering religious doctrines. Thieves could be employed by the clerics of different temples in order to spy upon, pilfer, or sabotage the centers of rival religions. Evil clerics might want a shortcut to advancement. Some clerics might want advice on how to scam people out of their money.

Conflicts among thieves themselves, and obviously between the law and breakers of the law, are standard features of the thief campaign. The conflict between a thieves' guild and independent (usually player character) thieves creates a tense background for a thief's activities. Just remember that this is not the only conflict around which the campaign is based.

Conflicts, as always, are most effective when they can be personalized. In a religious conflict, for example, the GM should detail the influential clerics on each side. If a thief PC encounters a challenge from an NPC thief working in the same territory, he should give that NPC a face and a personality. When conflicts are personalized, player characters develop a natural motivation and enthusiasm for their resolution.

## CHALLENGES TO THIEF CHARACTER CLASS

### ABILITIES

Finally, the thief campaign should include a multiplicity of opportunities for thieves to employ their own unique talents. Most significantly, this means many opportunities to pick locks, to find and remove traps, to climb sheer surfaces, and so on.

The GM should additionally tailor the challenges to the specific type of adventure suitable to the thief or thieves in the campaign. A character with great skill in disguise, for example, should have opportunities to use a cover identity, or to find work as a spy.

By successfully creating challenges that match the particular strengths of the player characters (of all classes), the PCs have a chance to carve out a solid niche for themselves in the campaign world.

This doesn't mean making things easy, of course. A master of disguise probably finds that his villains are adept at appearing as other people, also. Or perhaps, after being burned a few times, potential victims take magical steps to penetrate disguise. Challenging players and characters does not mean making things easy for them. Still, only a sub-par GM would run a campaign where the thief was never afforded the opportunity to pick a lock.

### WHAT'S IN THIS BUILDING?

Every good thief needs to know about the inns, smiths, armorers, jewelers, and wealthy lazy merchants in a given town. Sometimes, a thief might be forced to take refuge in a random building, or the player may need to decide which business to rob. Here we present a system for determining just what type of business can be found in that particular structure.

Certain business can be more easily found in cities of certain sizes. A traveler can walk through a tiny village in five minutes, but could take years to explore a large city. Not many jewelers hang out in hamlets. Thus, the GM needs to know the population of a town before he can use Table 3A: Business Types.



Few cities in Garweeze Wurld exceed 50,000. Keep in mind that player characters don't see (or probably even estimate) population numbers. They see a city that is either walled or open, well kept or in poor repair, bustling or deserted. Even so, most players care only if they can find someone to repair their armor. They'll travel the streets and look up at signs that are mere notes on the GM's maps, translating this sometimes-dry information into a thriving adventure.

Assume a cobbler needs to do business with 10 people a week in order to support himself. In a town of 50 people, that would mean replacing shoes every five weeks. Few cobblers have work in that much demand and if the shoes don't last two months he's probably in the wrong business. Thus, such a small settlement might have a part-time cobbler or no cobbler at all. Certainly an armorer is unlikely!

As a rough estimate, a city block stretches 100 to 200 yards on a side. One such city block can support the lives and work of 50 people. Thus a city of 25,000 would be about 500 to 1,000 yards wide and 1,000 to 2,000 yards long. Medieval cities tend to be cramped and include many narrow, winding

streets with numerous dead end alleys. This is exactly the place a thief wants to be, so long as he knows the ways and his pursuers don't. But even the most masterful GM cannot have every possible town completely mapped out, with every building labeled, before the PCs start ruining his game.

To simplify the matter of determining what type of building a character has come across, we consider towns in terms of population blocks/units. One block/unit consists of 500 people. These round numbers set the base number of customers for the essentials of life. Certain crafts, such as blacksmiths and cartwrights, have widespread use and can be found in some form virtually everywhere. Other crafts require a fairly large population, a lot of money, specialized customers, or some combination of all three.

Table 3A: Business Types indicates the frequency of all the basic types of services. Note that these ranges have minimum results of 0, not 1 (unlike weapon damage rolls). Thus, a range of 1d4-3 means there is really only a 25% chance of 1 example of that business for every 500 people. However, in a city of 10,000 people, there should be about 5.

### Table 3A: Business Types

Roll d1,000	Business Type	No. per 500 population
<b>Food, Drink, and Lodging</b>		
1-3	Almshouse	1d10-9
4-29	Baker	1d3-2
30-34	Boarding House	1d4-3
35-55	Brewer	1d3-2
56-76	Butcher	1d4-3
77-92	Cheesemaker	1d6-5
93-102	Grocer	1d4-2
	in agricultural area	1d10-9
103-107	Hostel	1d6-5
108-128	Inn	1d3-1
129-144	Provisioner	1d4-3
145-195	Tavern	1d3
196-211	Vintner	1d10-9
	in wine country	1d4-2

#### Common Crafts and Trades

212-262	Blacksmith	1d3
263-280	Trader/merchant	1d4
281-321	Cobbler	1d2
322-341	Cooper	1d3-1
342-361	Leatherworker *	1d3-1
	in grazing/herding area	1d4
362-373	Mason *	1d4-2
	in hills/mountains	1d4
374-378	Miller	1d2-1
379-393	Potter	1d4-3
394-407	Tanner *	1d3-2
	in grazing/herding area	1d3
408-420	Weaver *	1d4-3
421-470	Woodworker	1d2
<b>Rare Crafts and Trades</b>		
471-473	Apothecary	1d12-11
474-477	Armorer *	1d6-5
478-479	Bookbinder	1d10-9
480-496	Bowyer/Fletcher	1d3-2
	in forest/woodlands	1d2-1
497-498	Clockmaker	1d20-19
499-513	Chandler	1d6-5
514-528	Dyer *	1d6-5
529-535	Fine Clothier	1d10-9

536-542	Furrier *	1d10-9
543-549	Glassblower/Glazier	1d10-9
550-551	Herbalist	1d20-19
552-555	Jeweler	1d12-11
556-562	Locksmith	1d12-11
563-587	Seamstress/Tailor	1d3-2
588-592	Specialty Smith (gold, silver, etc.) *	1d6-5
593-597	Tilemaker *	1d6-5
598-601	Weaponsmith *	1d4-3

#### Transportation

602-611	Boat for hire **	1d2-1
612-646	Carter/Teamster	1d2
647-666	Cartwright	1d3-2
667-681	Porter	1d3-2
682-691	Saddler	1d6-5
692-701	Shipwright **	1d6-5
702-726	Stable	1d2-1

#### NPC Services

727-728	Alchemist	1d20-19
729-738	Assassin/Bounty Hunter	1d10-8
739-741	Astrologer	1d12-11
742-756	Barber	1d3-1
757-759	Barrister	1d12-11
760-765	Burglar	1d10-9
766-790	Dragoman (local guide)	1d8-5
791-795	Engineer	1d12-11
796-808	Fence	1d4-2
809-828	Healer	1d3-2
829-836	Interpreter	1d10-8
837-887	Laborer	1d4+1
888-897	Leech/Physician	1d6-5
898-902	Linkboy (torchbearer)	1d4-3
903-909	Minstrel/entertainer	1d4-2
910-919	Navigator (ports only) **	1d4-3
920-970	Cleric	1d3-1
971-980	Sage	1d12-11
981-990	Scribe/Clerk	1d10-9
991-1000	Magic-user	1d4-3

\* May be a major industry in town.

\*\* If town isn't near water, roll again.

This table does not replace common sense. For example, in an agricultural community, almost everyone is a farmer. (Hint: it's usually not lucrative stealing or grifting from farmers unless you've shorted the market in an agricultural commodity.)

Furthermore, if the GM needs only to determine the nature of one specific business, he can simply roll d100 to determine it. Keep in mind that, if he does this in small towns, he'll need to record what businesses come up, because there WILL be at least one example of it. (Occasionally, a master jeweler might retire to a quiet hamlet.)

With more time, the GM can actually list the businesses in a given town. He should place these on his map. Remaining buildings will be residences (80%) or government offices (20%) of some kind.

For villages of less than one population block/unit, consider the population after the roll. If a town of 100 people ends up with a blacksmith, 100 divided by 500 is 0.20, thus there is a 20% chance that there really is a professional blacksmith. (Chances are the locals plod along shoeing horses and such for themselves, but no one is skilled enough to hire out blacksmithing services.)

## THE THIEVES' GUILD

The details of a city's guild form a central focus of the gaming careers of thief player characters, whether they join or not. Guilds provide many interesting conflicts, and also require a certain amount of GM commitment in order to exist believably in a campaign.

Consequently, creating a guild is not to be taken lightly. They are more or less standard in most gaming environments and if everyone in the campaign expects there to be a thieves' guild, there probably should be a guild. Beyond that, GMs will mess with player expectations.

Thieves' guilds can provide many opportunities for adventure, as detailed later in this Chapter. Many of the ideas in that section can be used in creating storylines for a campaign environment.

Remember also, should a GM decide not to have a guild in his campaign, that the absence of a guild also affects the thieves in a city. There are still plenty of thieves running around out there, looking for their share of the spoils and working actively to defend their "turf".

## BASIC STORYLINES FOR THIEF CAMPAIGNS

Perhaps the player character thieves will be content at the start of a campaign to plunder this noble mansion and that opulent gallery, staying one or two steps ahead of the city watch. Such campaigns require little planning beyond the next gaming session for the GM, and work well with players who can only attend occasional gaming sessions.

However, the repetition of objectives and motivations can prevent players from exploring the full possibilities of their characters and the game. Even if each mission involves a different setting, new monsters, and unique, challenging traps and NPCs, players and GMs alike may find themselves wanting more.

The addition of a basic storyline adds a theme tying the campaign together giving the player characters a cause higher than mere plunder for their exploits. Ongoing storylines allow for greater development of NPCs, and also provide the PCs with more opportunities for interactive role-playing (as opposed to combat and other physical encounters).

Below we generously provide several potential storylines. Many GMs prefer to create their own, which is fine once they know what they're doing. The examples can be specifically tailored for a unique fit to any campaign.

### The Great Artifact

This is the type of story that gets the old thieves talking late into the night, sipping their mugs and reminiscing wistfully about the big job that they never quite got around to.

The great artifact is a unique object, a one-of-a-kind wand, gem, statue or something else of tremendous worth. Famed for its power (if a magic item)

or its symbolic value (as the crown jewels of a proud government) or perhaps simply for its mind-boggling worth financially (the mint or gold repository of a powerful city-state). Occasionally, an artifact combines features of all these types, and more. Objects labeled as "artifacts" in the HackMaster GMG usually fall into this category.

Whatever its nature, some generalities about the theft of the great artifact apply. Its worth is fabulous. Although not *everyone* actually seeks it, many people would give anything to own it.

Acquiring the great artifact should be a process requiring many gaming sessions. Perhaps several additional quests are required before the theft of the artifact can even begin (a key must be obtained before the magically warded chest can be opened or perhaps the PCs need to solve an ancient, complex riddle to figure out where the thing even *is*).

The protections of the artifact will be many, and their effectiveness will increase the closer the PCs get to their goal. These barriers should ideally include obstacles to the mental as well as the physical abilities of the characters. Pulling off such a theft requires a great deal of planning and coordination. Luck also helps.

Indeed, there might be a body of lore surrounding the artifact. Player characters willing to do their homework might be able to find survivors of previous expeditions, or at least hear tales handed down from earlier years. Such cautionary tales, of course, may contain more fiction than fact. They may also be couched in obscure language (as, for example: "Beware the witching moon when the hawg walks upon the water"), containing a meaning that only becomes clear when certain conditions come to pass.

The quest for the great artifact does not have to end with its acquisition. Once its removal becomes public knowledge, any such object becomes the focus of attention for bounty hunters, master thieves, and whoever had the object stolen to begin with. Especially in the case of potent magic, the PCs might find themselves holding onto a lot more than they bargained for. Fencing such an object is a multi-session adventure in itself.

### The Mysterious Client

A mysterious client contacts the PCs and asks them to perform some task worthy of their thievery abilities.

This storyline is easy to start because the client can always direct the PCs toward the first encounter. The most important feature here is for the GM to surround the client with an air of mystery. Perhaps the characters never see the client's face, or learn his name. Maybe all of their communications are in writing, and they are allowed no information as to where the client can be found.

Mysterious clients can be drawn from any and all character classes, or even from the ranks of monsters. A powerful and intelligent monster that cannot mingle freely with humans might seek thieves to perform some of its business. In the extreme, of course, the client turns out to be a powerful gawd or other extraplanar being, and the PCs are involved in really big time trouble before they know what's happening.

The task required of the thieves by the client can include theft, of course. Other possibilities include the search for a lost object, often requiring investigative work as well as stealth; gaining of information through serving as spies or scouts; or other even more nefarious tasks invented by the client or the GM.

### Role Reversal

An interesting challenge to player characters, and particularly *thief* player characters, is the task of protecting some object from an imminent theft. This story can be combined with the mysterious client plot line to create another twist.

The PCs can be assigned to move the object somewhere, guarding it on the way, or simply to protect it where it is. The challenge arises from anticipating the plans of whatever thieves might be inclined to make the attempt.

Generally, the PCs will be tested with one or two easy probes before the real challenges occur. The guardianship role can easily be extended through several gaming sessions, as enemy thieves mount more and more vigorous attempts to acquire the loot. This storyline may be useful if you've mistakenly allowed an unbalancing item into your campaign and want to remove it from play.

This storyline is not as well suited for a long-running series of adventures as are some of the others. Eventually, the thieves either deliver the object, the deadline passes, or the "bad guys" steal it. However, characters who spend most of their time attempting to obtain items of value might find the change of perspective interesting. If they failed, they may have to steal the thing back to restore their own reputations.

### Foul Betrayal

This storyline is best combined with one of the others. It fits well in the thief subculture and can be wrapped around any significant non-player character in the campaign. It provides PCs with strong motivation and can dramatically shake up a campaign that starts to run too smoothly.

The NPC who betrays them should be an important figure in the campaign, and one who is fairly well known to the player characters. He can be their employer, or a respected neighbor, or even a mentor or family member to one of the PCs. Ideally, in one of the latter cases, the NPC has a deep and compelling motivation for the betrayal. Most characters, even including thieves, would not be too terribly likely to sell their brother or grandmother down the road for a small profit.

The betrayal should be set up carefully by the GM. Perhaps one or two clues might indicate the NPC's true nature, but only if the players are exceptionally alert. The betrayal itself should not be the end of the story, however; the PCs have a long and difficult road to follow in their quest for an accounting.

The betrayal story works best in campaigns where there are many highly detailed NPCs. If used capriciously in a setting with few NPCs, players may become inclined to distrust *every* NPC introduced to the game. In order for betrayal by an NPC to mean something, there must be NPCs who don't betray the party.

### The Spy

This plotline works most effectively for small groups of player characters, or even individuals. More complex evolutions can involve large groups, all cooperating on an intelligence-gathering mission, but these are harder to run and more confusing to play. If you've ever seen *Mission Impossible* you know what I mean!

Perhaps more than any other, a spying storyline allows the GM to draw upon a vast store of novels, films, and other media. Plotlines involving spies (even when set outside the fantasy area) can often be converted into challenging role-playing situations. Substitute a Crystal Ball for satellite reconnaissance, Clairaudience for a phone tap, and a Flying Carpet for a helicopter, and you might reproduce the essential heart of many a modern thriller in a HackMaster format.

The spy storyline offers another advantage to many players in that it serves as a non-evil alternative for thief player characters. Of course, spies can be evil, but a spy may also be motivated by grander ambitions than perhaps the common thief. A character or group sent to infiltrate the ranks of a menacing warlord or bandit king can perform great service for the good of society if he or they can succeed in their mission.

## PLAYING IN AND RUNNING A THIEF CAMPAIGN

One of the great strengths of the HackMaster game is the diversity of character types present, both as NPCs and PCs. The mixture of combat, stealth, sorcery, and spiritual abilities all add to the whole in ways that can help keep the game fresh and imaginative even after many years of play.

However, this should in no way inhibit players with similar interests from creating PCs of the same class. Indeed, there are many situations where such groups make ideal adventuring parties – a small group of captains commanding several companies of soldiers upon a mission of conquest, for example, might all be fighters.

Nowhere does this sort of specialization lend itself so well to a campaign setting as when a band of thieves gather to embark upon missions of stealth. The presence of a fighter, with his heavy boots and clanking armor, can be a serious hindrance to such a group. Characters of other classes will find sheer surfaces to be serious obstacles, even as the thieves are already scrambling down the far side. And indeed, no character can move so quietly, or remain hidden so effectively, as can a thief. (Magic-users can come close, but they need to know the right spells, need hours for specific preparation, and even so cannot use the ability anytime they like in a day.)

The tactics discussed in this section do not imply that a campaign must be populated exclusively with player character thieves. Players who wish to run characters of other classes should be able to do so, and the GM should be sure to provide appropriate challenges to all characters. However, if most PCs choose to play thief characters, a variety of adventure opportunities beckon. Additionally, interesting roles and activities for other character classes are easy to generate.

## MAGIC-USERS WORKING WITH THIEVES

Of all the other classes, magic-users might best perform with a band of thieves. They have no metal armor or heavy weapons to make noise, and spells such as Levitate and Invisibility can provide cover for themselves, and even enhance the abilities of the thieves. Magic-users can be found in all alignments, and many have no particular moral qualms about engaging in theft and other illicit activities. Some even know how to keep their mouths shut.

Magic-users can provide a variety of useful services to thieves as well. Even at low levels, spells such as Sleep, Charm Person, Spider Climb, and Haarfang's Floating Cart offer obvious possibilities on a mission of thievery.

Many thieves' guilds have one or more magic-users of low to medium level in their employ, even occasionally among its leadership. High level magic-users generally grow beyond the need for such companionship and assistance. They tend to treat thieves generally as if they were slightly odiferous servants, if they deal with them at all.

### Levels of Magic in the Thief Campaign

As with any campaign, the amount of magic depends on the culture, the GM's desire, the levels of the PCs, and perhaps the fall of the dice. The GM must consider these factors when designing an adventure. If none of the characters have magical capabilities, a series of magical traps could end the game very quickly. Mechanical traps and mental challenges are good for any campaign.

In general, more appropriate challenges for a specific party make for better campaigns (and more satisfying kills for the GM who doesn't take the easy way out). If the setting isn't riddled with powerful magic, the people making the defenses against thieves won't use them without a very good reason. Powerful magic-users, for example, always use magic to protect their stuff. And if they've lived long enough to gain serious power they probably have some stuff worth protecting.

## MULTI- OR DUAL CLASSED THIEVES

Thieves who can perform the tasks of one or more other character classes have clear advantages on certain missions. The fighter/thief might have many opportunities to demonstrate his combat abilities while his comrades go about their work.

However, thief characters who exhibit knowledge of another character class sometimes undergo the scorn and mistrust of their more "pure" comrades. Very rarely does a magic-user/thief or cleric/thief rise to a position of prominence in a thieves' guild. Fighter/thieves are subject to less prejudice, perhaps

because thieves can clearly understand that class's abilities. Nonetheless, most thieves consider fighter/thieves to be of somewhat lower status than they are.

## HENCHMEN AND HIRELINGS OF THIEVES

Though thief characters often function as lone wolves or in small, stealthy groups, they often have need of the skills (or sometimes simply the reinforcing numbers) of others. Since thievery activities generally flourish in urban environments, there is usually no shortage of NPCs for the characters to meet and use as henchmen or hirelings.

Hirelings are particularly easy to come by, and can include craftsmen and merchants as well as those of the other adventuring classes.

Hirelings, however, are not generally trusted with the knowledge of a guild or hideout. They should be contacted in their own place of residence or work, their information or services gained there, and then the mysterious thief disappears into the alleys and back streets. Even when hirelings are used on a mission, they should often be joined at a rendezvous outside the guild, and left there when the mission is over.

This is not a hard and fast rule, however. Particularly in cases where a guild location is well known, or where hirelings are necessary to the functioning of the guild (there aren't enough PCs and henchmen to maintain a watch, for example) a hireling could be brought into the lair. Of course, generally some effort will be expended in describing to the hireling the consequences of his betraying the great amount of trust that has just been shown him. Indeed, in large thieves' guilds it is unrealistic to assume that most members will be PCs or the henchmen of those PCs.

Henchmen, of course, differ from hirelings. They can generally be trusted to know almost everything the PC knows. As with any PC, some of his hirelings who have served loyally and bravely through the years might rise to the rank of henchmen.

Ideally, however, the player and GM should give some thought to interesting backgrounds for other henchmen, based specifically on the player character's background. This is especially important if the character adventures in the same city or nation where he spent his childhood and youth. It is likely that some contacts would have been made during that period—contacts that now offer the potential of valuable help to the aggressive young thief.

In the tangled world of the thief, such long-running relationships are often the best way to develop a trustworthy companion. Players and GMs should combine efforts to define a henchman character drawn from a PC's background. Such a character should not be too powerful (he must be of a lower level than the PC), but should have a few useful abilities.

## DENS AND HIDEOUTS

Of course, the guildhouse is the most common type of thieves' den, but nearly all thieves require some sort of secret lair from which to conduct their illicit activities. Dens and guildhouses vary by size, in relationship to the number of thieves living or working there; and by obscurity, appropriate to the level of secrecy the guild needs to maintain in the community.

Some societies expect thieves to flourish in their midst, and among these cities the guildhouse could be a large, perhaps even prominent building. Of course, it is not likely to have a sign posted, describing the building's nature, but a few discreet inquiries will usually allow one to discover the guildhall. Certainly the city watch and other law enforcement types will know the location. Indeed, sometimes a watch captain or lord-mayor might allow a thieves' guild to function in a known location simply to keep better tabs on it.

But more often the guildhall's location will be a secret, guarded jealously and ruthlessly by the guild. Likewise, a den or hideout serving as a shelter for a small group of thieves will have a discreet and carefully protected location.

Privacy can be found underground, of course. Subterranean lairs offer the advantage that their presence is easily concealed from the outside world. However, many humans and demi-humans (excluding dwarves, of course) dislike the chilly, damp nature of most underground living quarters. Thieves who risk their lives to gain objects of value are not likely to hide their wealth and themselves away in a hole in the ground.

Additionally, the underground lair presents problems in construction. Large amounts of dirt must be hauled away and much labor is required in order to create a lair of any size. Both considerations add major difficulties to the secrecy of lair construction. A magic-user with a Dig spell, on the other hand, can make the excavation a whole lot easier, but doesn't solve the problem of dirt disposal.

The easiest type of lair to set up is found in some already existing structure, or perhaps group of structures. A long row of town houses, for example, might be interconnected into a single, convoluted guildhouse. Or the attic of some merchant's shop can be taken by a small band to use as a hideout until they can get something better. Of course, if the merchant doesn't know about the thieves, chances of discovery increase dramatically. The best hideouts are buildings inhabited only by thieves or by thieves and those in league with them.

In some cities the hideout itself needs some kind of cover. Perhaps it is enough that the neighbors think it abandoned. Maintaining this appearance requires diligence on the part of the thieves, however, for a pattern of noise or light detected from the "abandoned" house will surely arouse suspicions.

If a cover is necessary, often a cooperative merchant or craftsman will labor in part of the house, maintaining the pretense of a place of business. Such a worker might even be a thief, but unless he can put forth a reasonable appearance of knowing his cover occupation, the craftsman and the hideout can both be in danger.

Guildhouses and dens may also be maintained as private residences. Such locales are not so likely to be visited by strangers as are cover locations in places of business. However, neighbors probably know the residents of the house, at least by sight. Large numbers of strangers may give rise to suspicion.

The hideout should ideally have several entrances, at least one of which is a block or two away from the actual den. A large guildhouse has several such access points, usually connected via underground passages or secret corridors passing through surrounding buildings. Thus, in a secret guildhall, the number of people entering and leaving the hall is not visible to neighbors or other observers. Indeed, if an access route is sufficiently torturous, a visitor can be brought into the guild without being shown the building's exact location. He might know nothing more than that the guild is within several blocks of a certain alley where he stepped through a secret trapdoor in the ground.

A major guildhall also has several built-in traps to deter unwelcome intruders. If enough thieves man the lair (more than a dozen or so), they can maintain a fulltime watch.

Only the most permanent of thieves' dens has a built-in vault or storage chamber for the loot. When such a chamber exists it is only used for the temporary storage of objects that cannot quickly be fenced. Thieves know only too well that such storage sites are all too easily penetrated. Those who make a living relieving others of treasures know how to protect their own hoard in some other nearby, but secret, location. Of course, very brazen thieves, or those very confident that they face no competition in a given locale, may well keep large amounts of valuables in their guildhall. Such a hoard might even be a source of pride to the guild, a sort of challenge to the unwary.

## What is a Thieves' Guild Anyway?

This section answers this question in appallingly explicit and voluminous detail, but you need a basic working idea of the definition first. A thieves' guild is a grouping of thieves who work together, in at least some ways. Often they do so because of external threat and danger – it makes better sense for them to cooperate a little than face similar dangers alone. This group typically has a leader – a Guildmaster or maybe a small ruling council. It has regulations by which members must abide, though the specifics vary from guild to guild. Guilds typically exist in any town or city of reasonable size, but not villages and thorps. There must be enough work to support multiple thieves and a certain willingness (even a grudging one) by the population at large to accept theft as part of life. Most guilds also have a central meeting place, almost always secret; usually referred to as the guild house. Finally, the large

majority of these thieves are not of good alignment – they tend towards neutrality at least, if not towards actual evil.

Note that much of this discussion also applies to assassins' guilds. Those guilds tend to have more focus on one particular crime. Any competent reader should be able to discern elements of the discussion that apply to assassins' guilds, and where such things may not be immediately obvious brief notes will be included.

## DEVELOPING THE THIEVES' GUILD

This chapter sets out first to explain what benefits a PC thief derives from membership in a thieves' guild, and what responsibilities and duties he takes on in return. This is a good place to start, for two reasons. First, it briefs the GM on luring the PC into guild membership so that instead of being onerous, it becomes interesting and rewarding. Dragooning a PC thief into guild membership isn't as good as the lure of the carrot (with the threat of the stick in the background). Second, looking at the "rights and responsibilities" guild members have makes many of the functions of the thieves' guild clear. This helps to explain why such guilds exist.

The next section describes what thieves' guilds do. We divide the activities of the guild into core and secondary functions. Secondary functions may be carried out or wholly avoided, depending on the guild in question. We lay out these various activities for the GM here to make guild design easier. Players may also get ideas for sneaky and nefarious behaviors for their PCs here. Many "secondary functions" relate to the specialized packages presented in Chapter 2. This section provides recommendations and guidelines related to packages, since different GMs will handle these differently.

Next, we consider the relation of a thieves' guild to other groups. These can vary from minimal to very highly organized. The GM will find briefings on major associations (with merchants, the law, other guilds) and the general social background to thief activities.

Immediately before the section on designing guilds, there is the crucial issue of the power at the top of the guild. This is usually the Guildmaster or small group of dominant thieves (a ruling council). The personalities involved here put their stamp on the personality of the guild, something the GM needs to consider when determining how the guild acts and reacts, particularly when it comes to PC thieves.

An extensive design section is then provided to enable the GM to develop thieves' guilds for the major urban setting(s) in his campaign. This section uses a flexible approach to guild design. That is, these tables and dice rolls alone can generate workable guild structures. However, the GM can also use a guided semi-random approach, tailoring or omitting certain aspects of the guild and choosing design options that produce the most suitable overall picture for his game. This also covers the possibility that there is no formal thieves' guild, with design options for very loose affiliations or even anarchy!

An example, the thieves' guild of Treimainn, shows how to use the design system. This example takes an apparently contradictory set of dice rolls, and shows how to resolve them; the result is that the intrigues and tensions in the resulting guild structure can form a focus for adventures for any PCs. The guild becomes far more than just an anonymous body to which a PC thief pays dues!

A short section on unusual thieves' guilds (travelers on the road and other such oddities) follows, then a very valuable GM resource: the section on handling PC Guildmasters. The straightforward system laid out here handles guild income, hassles, arrests, trials and tribulations, followers arriving and leaving, morale, and the day-to-day business of running a thieves' guild. This should make life a lot easier for the GM!

## BENEFITS OF GUILD MEMBERSHIP

A player with a thief character might ask, "What do I get out of it?" when his GM strongly suggests he should join a guild. Answering the question clarifies many of the functions of the thieves' guild that benefit its members. The GameMaster's Guide provides rules on training and notes concerning thieves' and assassins' guilds (page 188). Below we expand on that information and detail the most common benefits gained. Although these can vary from guild

to guild, with an example of one additional benefit typical only of membership in a certain kind of guild – a highly organized and resourceful one!

Not every guild provides all the benefits listed below, but certainly all guilds provide training, permission to operate within their jurisdiction, access to necessary equipment, and the like.

### Training

Time spent training, aside from allowing a character to improve on his skills at the trade, allows him to catch up on rumors and news, make new friends and contacts, learn of new scams and equipment, find more enemies, etc. Because thieves' and assassins' guilds are considerably more dynamic entities than stodgy old universities, the GM may choose to roll twice on the Training Events Table (Table 14J in the GMG). He can choose whichever event result fits his campaign and will likely expand upon it. The GM may also feed a character in training information, summarizing what he sees and learns in the weeks spent back in training. Intrigues and scams can be plotted, gossiped about, and initiated; employment can be offered; schisms and factions within the guild can become a focus for adventuring.

Unlike many other training organizations, a guild stands to gain as well when its members improve in ability. Any guilds see to it that their members receive excellent training. Though a PC may have to wait for a prized mentor to become available (this would occur at the GMs discretion, before rolling on Table 14G: Class Size/Conditions in the GMG), he'll have his best chance to find one at the guild. Some guilds actually go to great lengths to find the best mentors for their members.

### Equipment

This is a major advantage for a guild member. It goes without saying that many items of use to a thief are hardly available on the open market in almost any society! Armor and weapons can be had, and likewise straightforward items such as ropes, iron spikes, crowbars, and the like. But where does the thief get lockpicks, tiger's claws, razor rings, silenced armor, and similar equipment? He gets them from the thieves' guild, of course.

In addition to being a source of equipment for sale (and possibly even for loan), here is an obvious chance for role-playing possibilities. A simple trip to buy some new lockpicks at the guild can become an encounter with a very resourceful and entertaining NPC.

In some powerful guilds, magical items may be available for exchange (for other magical items, obviously ones of superior value!) or even possibly for loan (with a fat deposit securing the item). Loans allow thief PCs to enjoy having a magical item without the GM letting them have it permanently. It goes without saying that rates are usurious, absconding with the item leads to relentless and murderous pursuits, and penalties for losing or destroying items apply whether by accident or otherwise (and the debtor's death doesn't stop the guild – family debt is a well established concept in Garweeze Wurd!)

### Information

A guild makes it its business to know many things of interest to its members, and that can mean just about anything, so here we give a few examples:

**Security:** The blueprints for sewer networks (allowing ingress and egress through manhole covers), times of changing guards at major guarded buildings (the Treasury, the Main Gates, etc.), times of watch patrols (in rich residential areas), the nature and positions of guards (warriors, dogs, etc.) known traps in key buildings, etc..

**Commercial:** Who is richer than he looks (and why, and how), arrivals and departures of valuable cargoes and items, where certain valuables are cached, hidden, disguised, and so on.

**Friends and Enemies:** This depends in a big way on the relationship of the guild with other associations, a topic discussed later. Sometimes a novice thief gets such information for obvious reasons; "do not rob merchants X, Y, Z or else. Understand?" (The reasons may be that X and Y pay protection money and Z is actually Deputy Guildmaster;



the novice probably won't learn of this immediately, though). Other possibilities include: which corrupt officers of the law are in the pockets of the guild (and therefore should not be dealt with too harshly during a robbery), which servants of the rich are very happy to talk for what magnitude of bribe, which barmen in the rough taverns in the docks might help thieves (e.g. by putting a little something in someone's drink so they can be "helped home" by the thief later) for what sort of cut of the take, and so on.

**General Information:** This is a catchall category. To take but one possible illustrative example: a guild might keep records of legal punishments for various crimes in neighboring (maybe even distant) locations ("Over there? Not if you value your hands, brother!"). These may not always be accurate and up-to-date, of course, but are sometimes better than nothing.

What the guild knows, who within the guild knows it, and whether they will tell what they know obviously depends on how "hot" the information is, the seniority of the person inquiring, and other factors. It also implies some of the responsibilities guild members have to the guild; information sharing is a two-way process. The thief will be expected to report certain information to the guild seniors!

## Fencing

Often players attempt to gloss over the fact that some of their stolen goods need to be fenced, not merely sold. PC thieves may haul in items for which they have no idea concerning value. If he acquires a bag containing a jade idol (actually imitation jade so it's mostly worthless), a crystal vase (exceptional elfin work, worth a fair sum), a crude wooden carving of a cat (an antique, and thus worth far more than the thief thinks), and more, he'll most likely need help. Indeed, in the absence of any special skills (such as appraisal) the thief may often have no idea how much certain non-monetary stolen treasures are worth. Even with appraisal skills, the thief's estimates may often be wrong, and a fair proportion of items are simply too unusual or singular for the thief to be sure anyway. This is one area where the fence can help the thief.

A resourceful guild has members who can accurately value different sorts of items, and also has contacts with certain specialists who lack just enough ethics to help in such situations. They can handle real rarities, and the guild can ensure that it doesn't get cheated. The fence thief package gives a basic design option for fences, and a resourceful GM can develop several different types for his campaign.

Magical treasure presents a special case. A simple Detect Magic spell from a magic-user/thief member or an allied magic-user, working with the fence, can tell a thief that the nice gold signet ring he filched from the drunk fighter is a magic item, worth far, far more than its value as gold. The same character (even a lowly 1st level Prestidigitator) PC can tell the thief (via an Identify spell) that the ring is a Ring of Protection +2, worth thousands. Thieves want access to 1st level magic-users!

The other rather obvious role for the fence is that of getting hot property off the thief's hands quickly. A good fence can get it out of town very quickly, to be sold in some distant location where its illicit nature will not be suspected (or at least to a buyer who doesn't care). Obviously, fences never pay more than a fraction of the market price for goods; but a fraction might still be a fair sum and the thief runs no risk of being apprehended.

## Specialist Help

Obviously, the fence is a form of specialist help, but the guild can also put members in touch with specialists to help them with certain ventures in more direct ways.

First, certain guild members themselves specialize within the traditional thief skills (exceptional open locks skill levels or expert trap finders may be invaluable resources at times). Multi-class thieves can also boost the chances

for many a job – a magic-user/thief with such spells as Invisibility, Levitate, and Knock is of obvious value, and those are just 2nd level spells. Even if the multi-class cannot accompany the thief on the job itself, a pre-cast Invisibility spell provides obvious advantages for a thief (not to mention an assassin!)

Less obviously, other classes might provide valuable assistance. Depending on the guild's relations with other bodies, a cleric (with Find Traps, among other spells, not to mention various types of healing) would be a most useful accomplice for many tasks. Clerics and zealots of Draper should be most willing to help a guild honor their common patron gawd, and most have excellent relations with local guilds.

If the GM's campaign world has a deity who is an obvious patron for thieves (such as Olidammara of Oerth, or Mask of the Forgotten Realms), clerics of such a deity might well have very cordial relations with a thieves' guild. This is considered in more detail below.

The guild can thus act as a clearinghouse, with names and meeting places to assist a PC thief hoping to pull a job but needing help. Again, whether these contacts actually agree to help depends on many things, notably the reputation of the PC thief but just the fact that they are there at all can help a thief and his friends. They can also allow a thief to pull a job off while separate from his nosy party and his overly judgmental, lawful companions.

Of course, sometimes a thief just needs a little help from brothers in his profession for a particular job he has planned. This may be a simple decoy person to help with picking pockets in the streets or an eagle-eyed lookout for a warehouse job. Either way, the guildhouse is a better bet than hanging around dubious taverns and hostleries. The flip side of this, of course, is that an impoverished PC can hang around the guildhouse touting himself to join others on their jobs.

Finally, a well-organized guild can help its members if they get into serious difficulties. Jailers can be bribed, magistrates can be blackmailed (or vice versa), a legal expert can be acquired to plead the thief's case in the courts. If the captured thief is very senior in the guild, the situation may even call for commando-style "liberation". (Assassins' guilds can also try to start wars this way.) Rest assured that such actions will leave the thief indebted to his guild for some time to come, something no guild member is likely to forget.

These, then are the main functions of the thieves' guild, as far as a PC thief entering the guild can see them. There are certainly other things the guild can and will do, and we'll look at them in due course. Before that, let's look at the other side of the coin – the responsibilities the thief has to the guild. For all the advantages, what must the guild member pay – one way or another?

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF GUILD MEMBERSHIP

### Guild Dues

Most obviously, the guild member must pay dues to the guild. These vary considerably. To reflect this, the GMG lists monthly thieves' guild dues at 1d100 gp per month (assassins' dues at 50+1d100 gp per month). Dues depend on size and power of the guild, size of the jurisdiction, wealth of the jurisdiction, services required and services provided, and so on. One guild may include seminars on new types of equipment in the basic dues, which can then be fairly high. Another guild might have low dues, but fees for use of guild services, or a high initial fee just to join. Some might demand payment in service to the guild. When the GM designs a thieves' guild using the detailed system outlined later, this is an important element to consider!

In addition to basic membership dues, most guilds take a certain percentage cut of the rewards the guild member gains from his thieving activities. Here, it is likely that there will be a "basic rate" for normal operations, with guild seniors considering special cases individually. For example, if the guild provided the thief with certain important information that made a big difference (or even something without which a robbery would have been unsuccessful or not even attempted), the guild takes a larger slice of the goodies than normal. The exact cut to the guild varies. Some guilds may discount the yearly dues in exchange for later cuts from income.

## Secrecy

This is just as important as paying dues. Any guild member who knows the identity of the guildmaster must keep this knowledge to himself, as well as keeping knowledge concerning the guildhouse and planned guild activities secret from outsiders. He must never inform on a guild member.

In a guild dominated by an order-minded guildmaster or group, secrecy may be the most important of all commitments the guild member has to make. Any guild demands some form of oath of loyalty of the novice.

## Providing Information

There are two quite specific ways in which a thief is expected to supply his seniors within the guild with information. First, information concerning his own plans; second, general information possibly of value to guild members.

A thief will be expected to keep the guild informed about important ventures he has planned. This does not include dungeon bashing, wilderness adventures, and the like. Rather, robberies and break-ins that may net particularly good rewards or strike at "sensitive" targets (such as a temple, or the warehouse of a notable merchant), particularly nefarious crimes such as kidnapping, and major scams require a thief to notify the guild seniors or guildmaster. Many guilds insist that such major crimes can only be committed with the guildmaster's direct, explicit permission. This is especially true of strong guilds and in lawful or repressive societies where such actions must be profitable enough to justify stirring up a hornet's nest of trouble for the guild.

Feeding general information to the guild also helps to keep a thief in good standing with his fellows. A thief casing a joint for a later break-in might see an unusual number of guards in the courtyard of an adjacent building as some crates are being taken inside from a wagon, and one crate splits slightly at the top revealing the glint of gold or ivory in the bright sun. The thief knows that he cannot organize a robbery over there as well as in the place he's casing already, so he reports the observation to the guild. Doing so keeps the thief in good favor and allows the guild to score big (which in turn gives all

members access to better resources). The thief is expected to provide such information should he come across it, but the guildmaster might well reward particularly helpful guild members, mark them for promotion, give them a secure role in some other guild job, or pay a small percentage of the guild take to the helpful informant.

**Snitches:** These can be of special importance to a thieves' guild.

Basically, a snitch is someone paid to provide "inside information." A snitch can be a corrupt officer of the law, a valet or servant of a rich man (or at a club of some kind), a night watchman, and so on.

A few guilds might insist that only the very senior guild members could have their own snitches; juniors must turn over promising contacts who could be developed into snitches to the guild. More likely, though, is that individual members can have their own snitches who are regarded as sacrosanct by other guild members. A guildsman does not tamper with another thief's pet snitch! This becomes easier (and indeed, even possible) if the identities of the snitches are actually commonly known within the guild – how can you avoid poaching a snitch if you don't know who is one, after all? But, because some thieves may be very nervous about this, the identity of certain highly important or politically sensitive snitches may be kept secret. The guild protects them by warning thieves away from the key snitches indirectly (e.g. with an edict that no one is to try to "make friends" with the staff of such-and-such an establishment). This does not make the identity of the snitch known, but serves to warn other thieves away.

## Limited Territory

The thief will all be told that certain areas and activities are definitely off-limits. This applies most often to major crimes and big heists when junior thieves are the hopeful plotters (the guild is unlikely to allow such inexperienced people the chance to bring the wrath of the law down on everyone's head). But territorial restrictions may be just as important.

The simplest form of this system is one where certain thieves have their "own patch". Pickpockets are the most clear-cut example. A notably busy thoroughfare, one where merchants and (especially) foreigners throng, is a patch that a skilled group of pickpockets fights determinedly to keep as their own, exclusive territory. Protection rackets are another obvious case of a demarcated territory in which other guild members do not stick their noses. These will include warehouses and offices and homes that are off-limits to burglars, because their owners pay a sum to the guild to avoid being robbed.

A more complex example involves sub-guilds controlling definite sections of a city so that only their own people are allowed any activity at all within that section (except in extraordinary circumstances). This situation can occur with a weak guildmaster whose former second-rankers start carving out territory for themselves, but it might arise for simple reasons of historical accident (in a walled city with major internal divisions, gates between town quarters, or simply in a city of tremendous geographical size). At its most extreme, a city might in effect (if not in name) have several thieves' guilds, each controlling one section or quarter of the city, with the boss of each splinter faction meeting with the others at regular times to try to co-ordinate efforts and defuse tensions. The bosses may also engage in underworld warfare, but these types of situations tend to be resolved one way or another within a limited time.

Assassins' guilds hardly ever splinter in this way. They tend to be less exact about geographical limits anyway, especially when the pay is high enough. Sometimes, though, even the thieves' guild is unaware that assassins lurk in their midst. In the ancient city of Siddion, a "civil war" between thieves' guilds ensued when the guildmaster learned that his number two man ran a sub-guild of assassins within his organization. The bloody conflict that followed brought the wrath of the law on every criminal in or near the city, even involving the army. After a year, things stabilized with a decimated remnant of the original thieves' guild in place and an exhausted, smaller military and watch. This set the stage for Siddion's fall to its neighbor and longtime rival Kaddow. Multiple thieves' guild can be more stable.



## Other Duties

Depending on the individual guild, the thief may have other responsibilities. Some of the more common cases are detailed here.

**Training:** The thief may only be allowed to train apprentices of his own with the knowledge and permission of the guild, and the guild usually wants a cut of the training fee. Some guilds regulate the allocation of apprentices to designated trainers. In busy times when the guild is expanding, though, the guild may demand that middling level thieves give up a certain amount of time every month or year to train new apprentices.

**Legwork:** Especially with apprentices and low-level thieves, the guild may require members to do some of the tedious day-to-day legwork, at least as backup reserves. This can involve collecting money from victims of protection rackets, collecting and carrying bags of small change from illegal street gambling, acting as a messenger boy, keeping a watch on a warehouse, and so on. This shouldn't be too oppressive, but GMs often find a sudden need for extra help on the part of the guild a nice plot device for keeping a thief PC in town and maybe having him see things, and meet people, that widen the scope of his future adventuring. GMs also like to use such devices to mess with PC thieves.

## THE RECALCITRANT PC THIEF

Despite the advantages, a player may decide that he doesn't want to have his thief PC join any guild. This may be especially likely with chaotic characters (and chaotic players!). It's best not to pressure the player in this case, but as his thief PC gains experience and inevitably treads on the toes of the thieves' guild (he'll rob someone they have an "understanding" with, beat or meet members at a job, etc.). Sooner or later, the guild and the recalcitrant PC thief will need to deal with each other. Guilds usually provide warnings to skilled thieves first, and stress the benefits of joining (as explained above). Eventually the carrot becomes the stick and the thief must join up, ship out, or be beaten and exiled. There is also the matter of training, of course; if he doesn't get this from the guild, where else does he come by it? Luckily, very few players decide to take such chances on their own.

Some of those players may worry that their thief PCs will have their freedom of action massively curtailed, or their alignment may be compromised (especially if the PC is of good alignment), or their PC may simply be ripped off. These are legitimate worries. Alas, part of the burden of plying the trade that leads to the greatest financial reward is dealing with such matters. (And heavy-handed GMs won't be any less manipulative to any class on any adventures, anyway.)

## ACTIVITIES OF THIEVES' GUILDS

There are certain obvious core activities of thieves that guilds consider staples of their activity. But there are also more uncommon activities in which not all guilds participate. We must consider the range of possible guild activities for several reasons. First, it is a useful precursor to guild design, to come later. Second, it is a natural lead-in to the issue of relations that exist between thieves' guilds and other groups. Since these are often based on mutual interests and spheres of activity, it is logical to consider these interests and activities first, to make sense of the associations to be reviewed later.

Importantly, the activities reviewed here do not involve all the thieves of the guild. If PC guild members find some activities run by a guild objectionable (e.g. because they are good-aligned), they shouldn't be forced to do so. The idea here is simply to give an idea of the range of activities with which guilds may be involved on more than an occasional basis. Good-aligned thieves will have to deal with the consequences and potential conflict between their chosen profession and their professed morality, however.

## Core Activities

These are the bread-and-butter activities of thieves. Virtually any guild includes these as everyday activities. That is, guild members regularly indulge in them and they will provide the bulk of operating income for both the guild and for most of its members (especially lower-level thieves).

Picking pockets, burglary, robbery, street theft, street gambling, and mugging are the most obvious core activities. There's little need to say much more about them here. Almost all players will be familiar with them. Dictionaries, standard HackMaster game rules, and many equipment items and thief packages presented in this volume give exhaustive detail about them.

## Other Activities

The GM can look upon the listing here as a menu from which he can later make choices when designing a thieves' guild. The list isn't exhaustive; deviant GMs can no doubt add to it for unusual guilds in any particular area. The activities described here involve the guild as a body, or many of its members, on a systematic basis. In turn, they affect the nature of the guild significantly. Many of the activities listed below involve specialists, and the thieves' packages outlined elsewhere in this volume can be very useful in such cases.

## Protection Rackets

Thieves and merchants may come to some negotiated (or imposed) understanding. Thieves agree not to rob or harass certain establishments (warehouses, shops, private residences) with those who pay a premium for the privilege. Merchants who don't pay are fair game for future robbery or arson, and may be specifically targeted.

Only the senior members of the guild negotiate this kind of arrangement, and guild members will be told in no uncertain terms that specific places are strictly off-limits in the future. Such agreements most likely come about in places where the thieves' guild is strong, the rule of law is fairly weak (or corrupt), and the guildmaster is of a very orderly mind.

A notable consequence of such agreements is that if a freelance thief burles a property owned by a merchant who pays the local thieves' guild, that thief can expect the thieves' guild of the town to make determined efforts to find him and administer summary justice. These penalties make all but the most draconian laws look tame! Note that the traditional simplest form of protection racket – "pay up or we break your legs" – is not exactly what is implied here, although thieves denied payment by a merchant might resort to the threat of violence to drive away the merchant's customers or staff. Only a guild dominated by evil and top-heavy with thugs will be likely to use actual violence in most cases.

## Smuggling

This activity is most likely organized in a port, or possibly in a major inland trade city built on a nexus of trade roads. In the case of a port, thieves might also be allied with pirates, both through smuggling and through getting messages to the pirates regarding the sailing times, cargoes, and protections of sailing vessels leaving the port. Any prohibited or highly taxed items can (and will) be involved in smuggling operations. In troubled lands, the smuggling of weapons (a longtime favorite) can be particularly lucrative.

Subtle variants on this theme are possible. Consider a thieves' guild that has good connections with the rulers in a weak country ruled by evil-aligned forces. The country might officially outlaw slavery (for fear of offending stronger neighboring countries that are not ruled by evil and might find slavery offensive), while the thieves actually carry this on as a subterfuge activity, smuggling slaves into and perhaps through the weaker evil country. This is done with the full knowledge and connivance of the rulers, who take a percentage of the profits. Selling the slaves to another, more distant, evil land could raise plenty of funds for both the thieves and the rulers. In time, this evil land could flourish and become strong on the profits of its wicked trade. Both the rulers and the thieves prosper, so long as their doings remain secret from stronger nations.

## Forgery and Coin Clipping

A strong thieves' guild may regulate the activities of forgers and "clippers", to keep the proportion of forgeries and clippings within reasonable limits. If there are too many forgeries floating around, the value of coin sharply deteriorates, to no one's benefit (including the thieves). Clipping is simply the art of shaving fine slivers from the edges of coins and using the salvaged metal for subsequent coin-forging or other purposes. A shaved-off margin of some 5% from the original usually goes undetected (even observing 10 to 15% missing requires a very difficult observation or related skill check), but an individual coin may be clipped several times during its lifetime! In advanced societies, the dies used to make coins may have milled or marked edges to prevent clipping, or at least make it obvious.

## Entertainments

This catchall term covers a fairly wide range of dubious behavior. Some examples of systematic operations which a thieves' guild might run are listed below.

**Gambling:** A guild might well run casinos and similar establishments. These provide a source of income, a good meeting-place for underworld people, and the opportunity to rip off large sums of money from patrons who are rich, drunk, stupid and quite frequently all three. The more organized the guild, the more strongly involved it is in these operations. Even with odds already massively stacked in favor of the house, cheats can boost income to obscene levels. And to whom can the victims complain (assuming gambling is illegal).

**Good Time Girls:** Gambling goes well with prostitution, and thieves generally participate on both sides of these transactions, at one time or another. Even where prostitution is legal, guilds tend to get involved. Guilds can also make a fair sum just by giving half-elven dancing girls a safe place to work and taking a cut of their earnings.

**Bawds:** A bawd is a character who knows the seamier side of life, and makes an in-demand "tourist guide" for the rich and bored (or the foreigner) who seek to stimulate his jaded appetites in the seedy parts of town. Bawds often freelance, but they may hand over a certain percentage of their clients to muggers and other thieves. This type of activity might well involve the thieves' guild, even though the bawds themselves do their own work independently. They are frequently of chaotic evil alignment.

## Lawful Operations

As noted above, some of the guild's activities may actually be legal, or at least not in conflict with the law. This happens for several reasons. First, it may simply be too profitable to ignore but considered seedy or unseemly by a large segment of the population. Second, it might have many lawful members (though this is implausible except in a very lawful society). Third, it might have strong contacts with some outside group which makes some lawful operation a special case – for example having good relations with merchants could lead to the protection scenario detailed below. Fourth, it might just be good public relations. The guild does some "legal work" to maintain a veneer of public respectability while blaming its really nefarious activities (kidnapping, drug smuggling, etc.) on rogue elements outside the guild's core. It might also be a temporary diversion to keep the heat off when the guild has over-reached itself or been blamed for some particularly spectacular heist or wicked crime.

Surprisingly, there are lots of reasons why poachers may turn gamekeeper for a while. Two examples are:

**Security testing:** Thieves might be employed to test defenses of a secure area. Who better, after all? Gem cutters and jewelers, pawnbrokers, and rich merchants who keep a lot of money around are obvious potential customers. Equally obviously, they won't approach the thieves' guild unless they already have some understanding with them.

They will also top up the defenses after the thieves have tested the first set, even if the thieves say the defenses are very sound (or maybe especially if they claim this).

Of course, if freelance good-aligned (or lawful-aligned) specialists in such work are available as independents, they will be the most likely to carry out this work. A thieves' guild is likely to go to great lengths to get these specialists to join the guild (or else to eliminate them!).

**Transportation:** Sometimes, someone wishes to move something (a fabulously valuable gem, a religious icon, etc.) from one place to another by normal means (e.g. not Teleporting) and is fearful that it may be stolen en route. Thieves are employed to create decoys and diversions and to smuggle the object in secrecy. Since thieves are masters of concealment, and also know a thing or two about stealing things in transit, their skills will be put to good use here. In the case of a really important item being transported, a thief might be asked to submit to a spell such as *Quest/Geas* to ensure his cooperation.

## THIEVES' GUILDS IN THE CAMPAIGN WORLD

A thieves' guild doesn't exist in a vacuum. It will be strongly influenced by the society within which it exists. Considering this is an important backdrop to the more specific matter of how a thieves' guild gets on with other associations and groups.

### Size and Wealth of Communities

A first simple point is that (hopefully obviously) a thieves' guild has to have enough work to support it. A hamlet of 50 or so subsistence farmers wouldn't support a single cutpurse, let alone a thieves' guild (not to mention an assassins' guild!). A busy working town along a trade route, though, might well attract several thieves, even if the actual population was fairly low. If the village relied on monies passing through the place (coaching inns, hospitality, markets, etc.), it would be much richer in terms of money available for thieves to filch than a place with the same population but dependent on the turnip harvest. In the design process, we provide specific rules for determining how many thieves various communities can support.

## SOCIAL ALIGNMENT

The other factor which will always be of importance in determining the nature of a thieves' guild is the dominant societal alignment (see pages 50-51 of the GMG – unless you're a player that is). Usually the ruler(s) share the same alignment as the society, but this may not always be so: the possibility of a "divided alignment" society is discussed later. Also, the alignment descriptions are tendencies, not absolutes. The paragraphs on Special Social Factors shows how, for example, two lawful good societies dominated by different religions could have very different views on thieves.

### Lawful Good

Since thieving is by definition unlawful and few thieves are good, this type of society strongly dislikes them. The penalties for thievery are harsh, but usually involve banishment, confiscation of goods, and long sentences of socially useful labor rather than death, mutilation or such other cruel treatment. Lawful good rulers may go to some lengths to extirpate thieves' guilds, and lawful good people will certainly inform on thieves. There is a strong sense of civic duty among most people to report any observations suggestive of thievery to the authorities. It's possible to work here, but why bother when more suitable environments exist? Tip for thieves: find somewhere else devoid of an active community watch program.

## Neutral Good

Thievery is not disapproved of in quite the same way as in a lawful society, but thieves are rarely good, and neutral good societies are unlikely to have much regard for them. However, punishment for thievery may not be so severe, the rulers may feel there are better things to do, and often concern themselves with more important social priorities than persecuting thieves. Assassins, for example, will be rated a much more important target for the authorities.

However, while the authorities (and society generally) may tolerate a certain level of thievery, there is likely a “threshold level” above which the government must crack down. Over-powerful thieves may be deemed a major social evil, and neutral good societies may be less fussy (neutral) about the means taken to achieve the (good) ends. Do not forget that a viable interpretation of the neutral good philosophy is “war on evil without remittance or mercy,” such that only direly evil ends will be eschewed in the prosecution of good! Certainly the authorities make use of plants, spies, and moles within guilds to work against over-powerful thieves. Tip for thieves: high caution! Keep a low profile and you can get away with it, but otherwise-watch out.

## Chaotic Good

Such societies do not often have effective, strong law enforcement, because the people prize personal freedom as a primary virtue. For this reason, thieves' guilds can grow strong in a chaotic good society. Even if the will is there to do something about the thieves, the means may not be adequate to the task.

Ordinary people may have more complex attitudes here. Some may regard thieves in a heroic light, as individualists and nonconformists, and be positively disposed to them. Others regard thieves as taking the fruits of the labors of others away, which curtails personal freedoms especially when it the fruit of *their* labor that is being taken! Reactions tend to be individualistic (as with most chaotic societies) and somewhat unpredictable. Tip for thieves: stick around!

## Lawful Neutral

This may be among the most intolerant of all societies. Nowhere is outright theft explicitly legal, and punishments for transgressions are likely to be harsher, more cruel, and unforgiving (e.g. amputation of a hand or two, crucifixion) than in a lawful good society. Lawful neutral rulers tend to be rather stern, and worst of all, law enforcers are likely to be as numerous and unbridgeable as anywhere. The only bonus for the thief is that lawful neutral societies are appallingly bureaucratic and its civil servants lack imagination and initiative. Simply tying up a trial in “red tape” can result in years of freedom for those with the right resources.

Lawful neutral citizens will snitch on thieves at the drop of a hat, out of a real sense of civic duty. Tip for thieves: very dangerous, but highly profitable with a little imagination and effort!

## Neutral

True neutral rulers tend to be rare, except perhaps in countries that border on extreme alignment societies. Here, performing some kind of balancing act might be the only way to survive. Such rulers probably ignore thievery unless it gets out of hand, their instinct is to take whatever steps are necessary to restore the balance – more militia, more watch, more night watchmen and lamplighters in the streets and so on. They will be highly pragmatic in their response and unlikely to drastically alter laws or institute new severe punishment.

Though absolutely neutral rulers are very rare, ordinary people are often of this alignment. This reflects the fact that they aren't clearly of any other alignment: they just do what they need to do to get by day to day and do not concern themselves with moral or ethical questions. The average person in Garweeze Wurld is hardly rich; even the middle class has a standard of living that could barely be termed comfortable. Survival is the name of the game,

and clearly demarcated principles could be considered a costly luxury to some. The resulting blurred alignment can often be summarized as neutral. Neutrals tend to regard thievery as something they can't do a great deal about; thieves are mysterious, dangerous people with secret organizations. Neutrals look the other way – they don't want to get involved and won't unless forced. Corruption can operate on a wide scale, it can even become a staple of commercial exchange. Tip for thieves: good pickings!

## Chaotic Neutral

A chaotic neutral society is by essentially in anarchy – there is no rule. A chaotic neutral ruler is unlikely to survive for any time at all – rule by whim and caprice causes even the most apathetic subjects to rise up and put an end to such arbitrariness.

Such societies, or ones comprised of chaotic neutral people, will likely not care a fig about thievery. Gambling, corruption, bawdery, muggings, and lowlife likely flourish in such societies, and thieves may grow very strong organizing such activities. Tip for thieves: Excellent pickings and a strong guild can effectively rule a society behind the scenes.

## Lawful Evil

While, like all lawful societies, lawful evil cultures do not care for unlawful acts, the strong accept what is necessary to maintain their own power. If allowing thieves to prosper off the general populace helps, or at least does not hinder, those in power, so be it. Fear rules here. A lawful evil ruler may use thieves to backstab (literally!) his enemies. The ordinary people cower as the thief swaggers around – providing that the thief has the muscle to back any threats he makes. Harsh punishment for the most basic offenses (mutilation for stealing a loaf of bread) may be the rule, but intimidation, bribes, and violence can bend and break most rules. Thieves' guilds in such lands may be very strong, but they must have an emphasis on the brutal and thuggish to survive. Assassins will be stronger than thieves here, and the two may work closely together. Tip for thieves: walk loudly and carry a big stick.

## Neutral Evil

Neutral evil individuals are uncaring and unconcerned. Such people, whether rulers or ordinary folk, are out for what they can get. How one gets what one has doesn't matter at all. Neutral evil folks are often cleverer than lawful evil ones, being more flexible and having less respect for a dumb “superior” just because he is in a position to push people around. They are also better organized by far than chaotic evil people, and therefore that much more dangerous. Neutral evil societies make for flexible, smart, highly dangerous areas.

Thieves have excellent chances here, but they have to watch their own backs more than in any other society. Rival thieves' guilds may be particularly likely here. Since there is no stricture other than “don't get caught”, competing guilds and gang wars are highly likely. Tip for thieves: good prospects for the pragmatic amoralist.

## Chaotic Evil

Such societies are always likely to be in ferment, since the arbitrary cruelty of the rulers drives even a fairly docile population to revolt before long. Only chaotic evil societies with a powerful clerical group, demonic presence, etc., have the shear force needed to tyrannize for any length of time.

At all levels of chaotic evil society, backstabbing, intrigue, treachery and betrayal, is the basic coin of exchange. The strong take whatever they want however they like, and ground the rest into dirt. Since organization and cooperation are minimal, a guild can grow to dominate behind the scenes very swiftly if members don't spend all their time backstabbing each other. Tip for thieves: trust nobody, sell your granny into slavery, and stock up on magic items allowing a fast exit.

## SPECIAL SOCIAL FACTORS

Many possible unusual social factors are an important backdrop to the role of thieves and their guilds in society. A few examples only are given here for inspiration, since the possibilities are almost infinite.

### Divided Alignments

In some societies the alignment of the ruler(s) differ sharply from the general societal alignment. For example, a lawful evil dictator might rule over a society mostly comprised of freedom-loving chaotics enslaved by military might. Here, while the agents of law enforcement would have a very punitive attitude towards thieves, the common population might regard them as heroes and potential allies, possibly giving shelter to a thief on the run, or at the least not giving the thief away.

### Racial Divisions

Possibly the strongest antipathy between the races in many HackMaster campaigns is that between elves and dwarves. This can strongly affect guild structures. In the worst case, a city might have an elven guild and a dwarven guild, both vying for humans and halflings to join their side, and with other races tending to ally one way or the other. The antipathy of the two might override even alignment factors. This could break out into open warfare between the factions, or result in a string of tit-for-tat assassinations.

### Religious Factors

Not all societies with the same dominant alignment need have the same attitude toward thieves. One lawful good society might be dominated by clerics of Nudor, stressing mercy, forgiveness, and humility; another might be dominated by clerics of Benyar sternly preaching obedience so that justice and order prevail in all circumstances. Their attitudes to thieves would be significantly different, to say the least!

### Historical Factors

Thieves may be especially notorious (or maybe especially famous!) in a society for some unique historical reason. The people may speak of how brave Enar the master thief backstabbed the wicked tyrant Baron Noltob and brought about the downfall of an evil tyranny. Hence thieves are somewhat better tolerated there than elsewhere. Or they may speak of how evil Enar the treacherous backstabber foully slew the greatly loved consensus-builder Baron Noltob, the wisest ruler in the history of the land, and since this time thieves are deemed especially wicked, base, treacherous fellows and death is an automatic punishment for them. These extremes allow many variants.

All these general social backgrounds can easily merge into personal obsessions or idiosyncrasies of rulers, in dictatorial countries. There are many idiosyncratic reasons why a particular leader might have an especially punitive or lenient (the latter far less likely) attitude to thieves than the general social alignment might suggest, but there should always be a good reason why. For example, a paladin ruler of a city-state might be unusually lenient toward thieves because a neutral good thief companion saved his life more than once in their adventuring days. Such oddities need to be recognized as such.

## THIEVES' GUILDS AND OTHER GROUPS

Here, we'll look at the general pattern of relationships that can hold between the thieves' guild and other social groups of importance – the law, merchants and their fellows, other guilds, and the like. We use the broad patterns outlined later in the guild design section.

The two most important relationships thieves' guilds have will be with the people they steal most from (merchants) and the people doing their best to stop them (the officers of the law). Several possible types of relationships are outlined with each group. These are dominating themes only; check the

Complex/Mix entry at the end of each group for variations on the dominant themes.

## THIEVES AND THE LAW

The alignment of a society's rulers dominates this relationship. However, there will be other factors of importance, too. Consider the example of a lawful good state at war with a powerful, evil neighbor. Almost all of the country's resources go into the war effort; able-bodied men and women who might otherwise be law enforcers putting down thieves are fighting battles instead. Thus, thieves find life much easier than usual in such a land. From the patterns below, some will obviously tend to align with certain alignments, and this will be reflected in the guild design process later. But nothing is ever cut, dried and 100% predictable – which is why thieves need to think on their feet!

### Persecution

Typical of lawful societies, officers of the law are vigilant against thieves and their guilds. They are not easily bribable, and there may be rewards (money, medals, etc.) for watch officers arresting many thieves or busting a guild. Penalties for thievery are usually harsh. Very few officers of the law are corrupt. Busting a captured thief from prison will be very difficult – prisons are strongly built, heavily guarded, and tough to get into (cue for an exciting adventure here!).

### Hassle

The law comes down fairly heavily on thieves, and penalties for thievery are moderately harsh. However, officers of the law may feel they have better things to do than deal with thieves (e.g. in a rough-and-tumble port city), and with petty thievery in particular. A thief may get away with handing over the spoils, paying a spot fine, and getting a gauntleted hand across the back of the head. In an odd way, the thieves may even have a sneaking regard for the law. The law is firm, but fair and not arbitrary or excessively harsh, and the thieves feel they are up against an enemy worthy of their skills, but not one that's likely to try to kill them.

### Opposition

This is perhaps the commonest state of affairs. The officers of the law do their best to enforce the law. However, a small number are corrupt, they don't have enough manpower, they know their chances of recovering stolen property are very low and this adversely affects morale and motivation, and so on. The lawmen aren't uncaring, they're just somewhat disillusioned and their morale isn't so good. They perk up and make a determined effort to find out who has pulled a big heist when one takes place, and if thieves resort to real violence they will redouble their efforts to come after them. Otherwise, they just go through the motions. One or two bright and enthusiastic younger officers may resent the cynicism and world-weariness of their elders, but not for long; they soon capitulate to the prevailing attitudes.

Many thieves with experience in such places have a proverb which (there are several versions) runs along the lines of, "if you get round the corner you're a free man". That is, get away from any watch officer in the street with your pilfered gains and they won't put any real determination into the chase.

### Tolerance

The picture here might seem to be similar to opposition at first glance, but the law is still weaker in dealing with thieves, for any number of reasons. Underfunding and under-manning may be especially important. Significant corruption may be present (especially at high levels). The society may be chaotic or anarchic. There may be a reason why thievery is not a major worry (a weak thieves' guild, major external threats to a city-state so that most able-bodied men must fight in the militia, a very rough port where serious assaults and worse are a much bigger headache than thieves, etc.).

In such situations, the law not only doesn't do anything about all but the most serious crimes, but officers of the law may even get testy and irritated with people who complain about them too much, especially if they are foreigners!

### Corruption

Here, thieves pay bribes and kickbacks to officers of the law on a regular and major basis. Not all lawmen are corrupt, but a thief with serious financial resources can manage to avoid being charged with almost anything. If somehow he ends up in prison, he can buy a way out somehow. Law officers may actually be members of the thieves' guild, cooperating with smuggling, protection rackets, and similar organized activities.

There is a tendency to overplay this, and to make it too obvious to PCs. Corrupt law enforcers aren't going to advertise the fact, even in a corrupt society, save for the most stupidly sociopathic. Corruption may be extensive, but still takes place behind the scenes, making it more deadly for the unfortunate outsider who blunders into it. Lawfully aligned PCs can arouse the ire (and even the violent attentions) of corrupt officers of the law they attempt to "assist" with their work!

### Complex/Mix

This covers a variety of more detailed or subtle relationships. An obvious example is an opposition within the forces of law, which can be exploited by thief PCs (or by a GM with lawful PCs). For example, in one city the dominant relationship between thieves and law officers is corruption. Senior officers, and many of the watchmen, are corrupt, and readily take bribes. A small number of decent but disillusioned juniors have tried to get firm evidence to nail their superiors and try to eradicate the corruption, but they haven't been able to manage this yet. Objective evidence hasn't been accumulated, and witnesses are too scared to talk. There is concern that even some of the judges and magistrates are in the pockets of criminal bosses or the guildmaster of thieves. In come lawful and/or good PCs to help out in a dangerous urban jungle of intrigue and treachery....

Relationships may also be mixed. Thus, in one city ward, the commander of the ward watch may be an iron-willed, ultra-lawful, dominating man who drills his men to persecute thieves night and day. In another, richer ward at the far end of the city, the inexperienced new junior leader follows a kindly, somewhat impractical faith, and does not think that crime deserves stern punishment unless violence is involved. Because of his inexperience, his men don't respect him. Morale is falling, and an increasing number of watchmen leave public service or else just don't care about enforcing the law any more. One city, two radically different sets of possibilities for thieves. There may be major tensions within a guild, as the thieves from the "tough end" of town start trying their luck uptown!

Many possibilities exist in the Complex/Mix end of the spectrum. Imaginative GMs can mix and vary the other themes to create many possibilities themselves.

## THIEVES AND MERCHANTS

The overall wealth of a society has an important influence on this relationship. In a poor society, merchants are not rich and cannot afford any regular thievery. They will not be able to bear such losses without going bankrupt. Here, merchants fight tooth and nail to minimize the depredations of thieves. In richer lands, a little "stock loss"<sup>TM</sup> (among other things) can be tolerated rather better.

Alignment can modify this somewhat. In chaotic and/or evil societies that are rich, merchants may be very greedy, and may take many measures against thieves out of a love of money, not out of a need to survive. There may also be an important element of pride in a society which stresses individualism (chaotic) rather than one where merchants form groups, ally with each other, and try to regulate business practices (lawful). Overproud merchants may resent monies or goods being stolen, not primarily because of the loss of value

(which could be negligible) but because of the loss of face. This can be an important factor in merchants putting pressure on authorities to suppress thieves, and in their hiring PCs for sums which exceed the value of their stolen goods!

### Warfare

The merchants hate and fear the thieves. They go to extreme lengths to protect their property, and many able-bodied folk get jobs as night watchmen. Even ordinary warehouses have traps and many secret hidey-holes, wall safes and guard animals. Some have magical traps as well. Merchants often have bodyguards, and they won't pay protection money. They may even band together to form mutual "insurance policies" to help. The merchants exert all their political clout to get the authorities to suppress thieves. Even small-scale pilferage results in an offender being dragged off to face the sternest justice the merchant's advocate can plead for.

Under these circumstances, the thieves' guild may react in a number of ways. It may turn to other forms of crime. It may turn to imported help to crack the merchants (more thugs for protection racketeering, more thieves for daring robberies recruited from a friendly guild from a nearby town). It may use methods such as abductions and blackmail to force its way back into a position of strength. A really powerful guild will effectively "declare war" on the merchants if it thinks that forcing a few to cave in will lead to other merchants giving in also. Many options exist. This situation is a real struggle of wills, and the life of a thief will be dangerous but never dull.

### Opposition

Somewhat like the state of affairs described above, while the merchants strongly oppose thieves they don't go to such lengths to protect themselves or keep thieves off their backs. They don't like thieves, they don't accept them as a part of society or a tolerable evil, but they don't go overboard about them either. Such merchants stoutly resist any attempt at coercion or blackmail, and they use their influence with the powers-that-be to keep life tough for thieves.

### Standoff

This is a fairly common state of affairs. The merchants don't like thieves, but they are somewhat fatalistic about them. A strong element of pragmatism influences their attitudes. If the merchants lose less money paying protection money than suffering theft, they pay up. This is a major difference from the state of opposition, where merchants will actually suffer extra loss rather than connive with thieves.

Merchants in a standoff do what they can to get by and often see protection money as a business expense. Unless thievery gets wildly out of hand, they won't get up in arms, and they either pay off thieves or accept a certain level of theft as they must.

### Submission

This is a rare case. Here, the merchants are running scared. Coercion is rife; merchants pay a lot of money to avoid being robbed or having their homes burned down. Their profits may be almost all eaten away by this. The law is of little help, usually because it is corrupt, maybe because it is ineffectual. Thieves have many spies in the midst of the merchants. This is an unstable state of affairs; it cannot persist long. Either the commercial life of the society falls apart (merchants quit, flee, or die), or the picture changes. Often this situation shifts into infiltration as described below.

### Infiltration

Here, thieves have so many dealings with merchants that they actually start to get directly involved in commerce. This often happens as a natural evolution from either a standoff or a submission relationship. Thieves start to become merchants. They may have been spies in merchants' employ before,

they may “take over” the businesses of merchants they have bankrupted or driven off, or they may enter businesses for which their talents suit them (e.g. as locksmiths, gem cutters, moneylenders, pawnbrokers, etc.).

This has several attractions for the thief. First, they can produce additional income. Second, the business can be a simple exploitation of a skill the thief already has. Third, it can provide a good cover for a thief. Fourth, there may be a more nefarious motive or two (“Ah, sir wants a combination lock which will be absolutely thief-proof! I have just the thing...”). Why shouldn't a locksmith have the best lockpicks in town when apprehended by the constables down a dark alleyway at night?

At its most extreme, thieves can actually come to dominate commercial life, or at least to play a major role in it. Organized crime becomes big business. The thieves may even become important figures in society, and have political power. Of course, many find that they simply don't have the business skills to continue the enterprise they've taken over and ironically may find themselves in the position of trying to hire back the very merchants they scared off to manage their operation.

### Complex/Mix

Again, the GM can easily develop examples of complicated or tense, opposing relationships from the examples above. One group of merchants could be trying desperately to fend off thievery, while a second faction argues for accommodating thieves and paying them off. This leads to a major schism, with the more principled merchants accusing the pragmatists of collusion with crime. Insults start to fly, then a few fists, then somebody's warehouse suffers a small fire one side blames on thieves.... Involving the PCs in what quickly becomes a triangular conflict (two sets of merchants at each other's throats with the thieves gleefully picking up the spoils from anyone they can get at) leads to endless adventure possibilities.

## THIEVES AND OTHER GUILDS

Two guilds must be considered here: the assassins' and the beggars'. We must deal with each separately below, as well as with bards. Other guilds can be considered in a single section.

### Craft Guilds

These are the myriad guilds of gem cutters, barbers and dentists, butchers and bakers, and other professions. Thieves as a group do not have dealings of note with many of them, with one or two exceptions. Pawnbrokers are an obvious possible “front” for thieves and fences, likewise moneylenders (with their safes and secure chests). Thieves may thus cooperate with many such guilds, and maximize robberies of the rest! Guilds that take young apprentices may receive small sums for handing over quick-fingered youngsters to the thieves' guild. In special instances (e.g., thieves allied with seafaring smugglers), other alliances (e.g., with the seamen's guild) may be of note.

If the GM decides there are unusual thief-craftsmen alliances (or oppositions), he should script them individually. Such things need individual rationales that he should explain and note!

### Adventuring Guilds

In some cases there may be an unusual reason why thieves strongly oppose (or ally with) an adventuring guild (including temples, etc.) in a city. The most notable example is a cordial alliance with clerics of a deity favoring thieves (particularly Draper). If some particular type of multi-class thief is common in a city for some reason, there is often a stronger link between the two relevant guilds than usual. For example, if magic-user/thieves abound, the Guild of Wizardry will take a definite interest in the activities of thieves. Under such conditions, the magic-users probably do not attract unwanted attention from light-fingered thieves (although few sane thieves try stealing from magic-users persistently, anyway).

Other possibilities exist. Consider a burgeoning frontier town close to wild hills and forests with bountiful resources. Furs, gold from prospectors, meat from hunted animals, even some gems from a small mine all flow into town. It grows rich and attracts many new settlers. Unfortunately, it attracts external threats such as humanoids, bandits, many thugs, foreign cutthroats and evil thieves (as opposed to the neutrally aligned indigenous thieves). The rulers of the town grow fearful.

A twin alliance springs up to defend the town by stealth and cunning. Rangers patrol the distant countryside to give advance warning of marauding humanoids or bandits. Within the city, the thieves use their skills to tip off the powers-that-be about unsavory types arriving from outside, conspiring robbers and thugs (and may deal with a few of them themselves). Bandits beyond the town have spies inside their organization; the thieves tip the rangers off about this, and pass on intercepted messages. The thieves trade a magical shield (which they cannot use) they got from one of the thugs they dealt with to the rangers (who can use it). The rangers hand over a magical short sword they took from a Hobgoblin leader in return. Half-elven thieves and rangers share a drink together in an elven tavern, sharing the latest dwarf jokes. The two groups then save money with a joint bulk purchase of leather armor, and so it goes on.

Having an unusual, unexpected alliance like this can spice up any adventure locale. It's well worth a GM's time to devise such a backdrop, to make a town or city unusual and particularly memorable.

### Thieves and Assassins

Assassins band together mostly because they need networks to acquire new jobs. An individual assassin in a city may not ply his trade more than a few times a year, if that, as few societies tolerate that much high-profile killing (killing lowlifes doesn't pay well.)

Still, they need to practice to keep their skills up to snuff, maintain contacts and stay current on the most recent equipment. Even though stealth is



FRAIM



the primary tool of the assassin, some groups may allow others to ally or even join in.

Assassins are most likely to be extremely pragmatic: their concern is with the job and they have no sense of “professional pride” when it comes to their character class. Wicked clerics and magic-users might actually be full members (if hardly ever high-ranking ones) in an assassins’ guild! The multi-class assassin is also a strong option. He can hide his nature and yet function fully as a character of another class, throwing off suspicion. Combining stealth with even a few low-level spells makes for a potent assassin indeed. The fighter/magic-user/thief could be a very effective killer-for-hire, although advancement is slow. Nonetheless, any character who profits by assassination must deal with a guild of assassins.

The link between thieves and assassins makes certain that the two guilds must deal with each other. Cool relationships are possible if the thieves have “gone respectable” (become merchants themselves, etc.), or if the assassins are especially evil, ruthless sorts under a truly heinous guildmaster while the thieves are more of the popular “lovable scoundrel” variety. Usually the two have at least moderately friendly relations. They likely exchange information for mutual benefit. The guild seniors may meet occasionally to fraternize and discuss prospects, assassins may buy spying groundwork from thieves to set up a kill, apprentices of one guild better suited to the work of the other may be exchanged. Cooperation on many levels is possible and common.

While most every town has a band of thieves, many (even some rife with thieves’ guilds) have no assassins’ guild. In these cases, certain individual thieves (members of the guild or not) may attempt to take contracts. They succeed less often than members of a true assassins’ guild and more often do collateral damage. Thieves’ guild higher-ups also may find such activity an overstepping of boundaries and discipline a thief, especially in areas where theft is tolerated but murder is not.

However, there may be situations where the two are antagonists or even outright violent enemies. Thieves can’t have assassins branching out into simple burglary, and assassins need to make sure they are responsible for contracts on important peoples’ lives. Some even go out of their way to make sure other criminals aren’t killing victims. The only contract killing (or anything similar) must be done by the assassins’ guild.

## Thieves and Beggars

Beggars make excellent spies; they say the truly blind ones can hear better. Their presence anywhere outside of the higher-class areas of cities and towns goes unmentioned, if they are seen at all. Beggars ply their trade everywhere, though some may just be sleeping off the effects of drink. If one hunches up against packing boxes by a warehouse, so what? In any case, no one wants to get too close to beggars. They have an unpleasant range of startlingly contagious diseases, and approaching them is an open invitation for lice to infest your person – just as an appetizer. And, of course, true beggars are harmless (in the sense that they are too feeble, dim-witted, drunk, etc. to cause anyone any harm).

For all these reasons, well-trained beggars are a real boon to the enterprising thief. They can get into places where other people would look suspicious, they often go unnoticed, and they don’t have a lot to do apart from keeping their eyes and/or ears peeled. Just the people to have hanging around places a thief intends to rob. After the job, the grateful beggars can be given a little percentage of the take.

Beggary can even be semiprofessional, particularly in large cities. Dominant beggars control lucrative patches of territory, where they know they can find the richest pickings. Fit and able-bodied people, with senses undulled by illness, insanity or drink, can pose as beggars for a better living (in a rich city) than they can make by honest means (e.g. as farm laborers or even craftsmen). Such people make excellent spies. A guild of beggars is by no means unlikely in many city settings. And, since children make very appealing beggars (as they look soulfully up from their sad little eyes, begging for a copper more for a poor orphan), such a guild finds and trains such rascallions. The more talented (dexterous and/or intelligent) ones may well be sold to the thieves’ guild, to become apprentice thieves.

## Thieves and Bards

Although thieves and bards often work in the same circles, they have no need of extensive contact with each other. While bards do learn some thief skills, this part of the jack-of-all-trades range of talents the bard possesses more than an affinity with the thief. Bards don’t think like thieves (they claim they’re far more clever), and they don’t behave like them (they prefer a little “honest” trickery to just taking stuff).

Little can be generalized about relations between thieves’ guilds and bards. While they may work together on individual jobs, they are not generally allies. While they may run competing scams, they are rarely enemies. Most of the time they are aware of each other.

## GUILDMASTERS AND GUILD STRUCTURES

How a thieves’ guild is organized and how it is led, is crucial to the success of thieves in any town or city. Usually, life is very hard for thieves, and that’s why they deserve to reap such rewards for all their work!

## ORGANIZATIONS

Five basic patterns have been identified and are used later in guild design. They aren’t exhaustive, and some clearly shade into others. But these patterns are perhaps the most common, and any GM can develop them to suit his campaign. A thorough understanding requires the GM to understand guild design as well, for many reasons. One factor given more consideration in guild design is how many solo operators (non-guild members) lurk in the area. This affects (or reflects) the strength of the guild, but doesn’t much affect its style of organization.

For purposes of this discussion, let us assume that an individual guildmaster leads any particular guild. This won’t always be so, but the convention saves a lot of tediously repeated qualifiers.

### Centralist

In this strongly organized guild, all guild members have a powerful primary loyalty to the guildmaster. Loyalty runs high, the guildmaster is usually a powerful and dominant figure who takes an interest in virtually every aspect of guild affairs, and the guild house is a major meeting place. Thieves from such a guild work with a notable degree of co-ordination.

### Cohesive

Again, this guild maintains a fairly strong central authority and organization. The guild is a unified body with rules readily accepted by all. However, there is some room for “local latitude”. This may mean that senior thieves below the guildmaster can make a few important decisions about affairs on their own patch (quarter, neighborhood, etc.) of the city, or that the central rulership deliberately restricts the use of its authority in some cases, and so on.

### Fractionated

In this case, a central thieves’ guild still exists. However, individual figures within the guild have taken power unto themselves in important ways. Local thief leaders may insist on almost complete discretion to do what they want in their areas, while agreeing not to intrude on other local leaders’ territory. Power struggles, but not violent conflict, within the guild become commonplace under these circumstances.

### Oppositional

The guild has been burst asunder by tensions within it, and there may well be several competing guilds in the same town or city. This can happen because of a weak guildmaster, because of ambitious young Turks seceding

from the guild, or for special reasons of many sorts (e.g. racial enmity between a guild of dwarven thieves and one of elven and half-elven thieves, in the same town).

Relations between the different sub-guilds can vary considerably. If there is still the shell of a central guild, then the different guilds may be on fair terms still. However, at another extreme, the tensions and oppositions degenerate into street warfare and gang assaults.

If there are, in effect, several guilds, then the GM must determine the organization and leadership of each one separately.

### Anarchic

There is no guild organization to speak of, although there may be the remnants of a once-strong guild or perhaps an emerging guild. However, the large majority of thieves work as unregulated individuals. This may lead to a dog-eat-dog outlook, with lots of backstabbing of all types (both metaphorical and literal). However, it's equally possible that thieves get by with individual one-to-one agreements, helping each other out as and when the need arises (this may be especially likely in a chaotic good society with an anarchic guild, for example). Anarchy doesn't preclude enlightened self-interest and cooperation; it just tends to preclude such things happening on a systematic and organized basis.

### Complex/Mix

As usual, this covers a range of options. There may be a facade of one organization, whereas behind the scenes a quite different organization presides. It may seem that anarchy rules among the thieves of one town, but a few run a tight knit group that wishes it to appear that way. Or a guild might seem to be centralist, whereas in fact local leaders hide much of their activity from others so that the guild is in reality fractionated. A complex situation could exist whereby the guild looks centralist at first sight, then looks fractionated (as above), and then is seen to be part of each (a couple of the strongest local leaders are secretly allied to carve up more territory while other leaders are fractionated). Ample scope exists for GMs to develop intrigues and onion-skin puzzles here!

## GUILD LEADERS

Clearly, a guild's organization influences how it is ruled (and vice versa). The rules for designing and developing guilds take this into account, of course. At this stage, we'll just consider the commonest patterns of leadership, which again can be developed by the GM as he wishes.

### Guildmaster

By far the commonest style of leadership, the single leader of a thieves' guild is the guildmaster. His style of leadership may vary considerably, of course. He may be a stern, harsh despot, ruling by force and fear. He can also be a kindly despot, a firm but wise ruler. He might be a weak, querulous, but kindly leader – rather ineffectual, having lost his old strength and daring, but still smart enough to eliminate young pretenders to his rulership when he sees them preparing a bid for or power.

### Council

A (usually fairly small) number of individuals rule the guild and act as a central conclave, Praesidium, ruling council, or under any one of a variety of titles. This is often the equivalent of an oligarchy in government – a self-perpetuating elite body, who appoints replacements from senior ranks as and when necessary to maintain or expand their number.

### Democracy

Rather unusually, the guild members elect the rulers of the guild. This does not mean that these rulers need be weaklings, or afraid of using their powers sternly and firmly when they need to (imagine a ruler elected for a 10-year term for example!). The "elections" may be the source of notable corruption, bribery, fixing and vote rigging of all sorts. The devious GM can imagine dozens of ways of embroiling PCs in the kind of scandals and scams such a state of affairs will present!

### Leaderless

This is mostly a temporary state of affairs, when the guildmaster has just been killed, the ruling council been arrested, etc.. However, in a very few guilds this may be a permanent state of affairs. Here, the guild carries on only a few of the usual functions, and primarily acts only as a practical resource. Thus, members can find a trainer, buy equipment, and gossip with fellow thieves at the guild house. Guild dues are not excessive, and members pay them for reasons of pragmatism. However, regulation of thievery activities will be minimal or non-existent and resources tend to be lower.

A leaderless guild is ripe for a coup, of course, which can set the stage for any competent GM to start numerous adventures!

### Complex/Mix

In this context, this means some kind of power struggle in most cases. A guildmaster may have had an ultimatum put to him by powerful seniors within the guild – accept a ruling council or else. Likewise, an ambitious and smart thief may be trying to take over a democratic guild and install himself as the undisputed leader.

### Special

Because the ruler(s) of the guild are of such major importance, most GMs put some extra effort into designing them in some detail. For the more industrious, why settle for the usual option of (say) a human or half-elf guildmaster with the usual high skills and appropriate magic items, or the sourpuss old dwarf with his smelly leather armor who is the secret behind-the-scenes master thief? Guild design does include such natural racial possibilities, but there are also other more exotic options.

The GM will want to design these cases individually. He can use these examples with or without further development, or use them to spur to his imagination.

**Dragon:** A dragon makes an excellent guildmaster. Many can Polymorph Self into human (or half-elf, etc.) form as a natural ability, others can use the spell of the same name. Others still might have a magical item permitting this change of appearance, throwing jaded adventurers for a loop. Dragons are vain and love treasure, so what more natural than a stream of junior thieves bringing pretty treasures to the "guildmaster" as a tithe? The guildmaster can also, of course, use spells such as Charm Person to create many servants.

**Netherdeep Creature:** Drow and Illithid make excellent candidates. They can alter appearance with illusion magic, the use of a mask (cowled, masked thieves protecting their identities in a council meeting – a very sensible set of precautions), a Hat of Disguise, or in other ways. The guildmaster could aim at gaining wealth, power, and information for nefarious purposes that PCs should want to stop. Combating such a guildmaster (or even a ruling council) is an excellent introduction to deepseeping, a pleasure no player should be denied (that of watching hideous NetherDeep powers brutalize his character as the GM grins over the screen, that is).

**Nefarians:** Denizens from evil planes make excellent guildmasters. They enjoy power, gaining information, and wealth. Plus they have lots of time on their hands to indulge themselves in the mortal world as a

thieves' guildmaster. Their powers of disguise and concealment make it easy to maintain the pretense of humanoid form.

**Undead:** A Lich might lead an operation to fund its bizarre experiments, a Vampire might try to maintain the standard of living it had before undeath, or just run an assassins' guild. Any type of intelligent, free-willed undead could take control of a group of unscrupulous humans and demi-humans for a variety of reasons - especially if he was a former thief and still retains his former abilities in unlife.. Penalties for violating guild regulations can be chilling and brutal. Few players expect undead guildmasters and so they will likely not be fully prepared if they do meet.

**Intelligent Monster:** A Troll as guildmaster is not terribly likely, but an Eye Tyrant, Efrete, or Rakshasa just might find it useful and convenient. There are many possibilities!

If the GM decides on a special guild ruler, he must consider several questions:

- Can the ruler pass itself off as a normal race? This will usually be important for retaining the loyalties of guild members. It needs a spell, magical item, innate power, or some other plausible reason for seclusion. Of course raw power coupled with adequate administrative skills goes a long way.
- How did the creature get to the top? Either it must have thief skills, or be able to simulate these (with spells, magical items such as Gauntlets of Dexterity, etc.), if it has worked its way up through the ranks. Or, it must have been able to replace someone at the top of the guild (through assassination, possession, etc.).
- Why does this creature want to be guildmaster? Possible reasons include money (tithes), information (thief spy reports), power or amusing itself (a Faerie Dragon, or an evil denizen with a few decades to kill).

If the GM carefully thinks through such issues, he can use a special ruler type to great effect for many memorable adventures.

## GUILD RULERSHIP

It is vital to know what style of rulership the guildmaster brings to the guild. This section covers styles of rulership that can be applied to guilds whether ruled by guildmasters, councils, or any other type of authority.

### Weak/Strong

This is an obvious distinction. A guildmaster can be strong and authoritative, so that his commands and rules are obeyed (willingly or otherwise), or he may be weak, with his edicts increasingly challenged by his underlings. Factors such as Charisma, experience level, notable achievements, age, and Honor affect the guildmaster's perceived strength. The most important factor, however, is likely to be the general perception of the force the guildmaster has up his sleeve.

### Cruel/Just

Within the guild, this distinction dominates many members' concerns. The guildmaster may be harsh, handing down stiff (and sometimes arbitrary) punishments for real or imagined infringements of guild rules. He may punish any signs of over-ambition among juniors very sternly. A cruel guildmaster rules his guild by fear of what he does -crucially different from a strong guildmaster, who rules in part by fear of what he could do if opposed. A just guildmaster is the opposite of this, but is rarely weak. That is, he acts swiftly and decisively to oppose any enemies within the guild, and to enforce important guild rules and rulings. However, his punishments are seen as fair

and justified ("he's tough but fair"). While the opposite of cruel would more strictly be "kindly," nice guys simply do not become guildmasters.

### Despotic/Populist

This rather high-sounding term describes a simple dichotomy. A despotic guildmaster decides on rules, punishments, policies and important guild matters by himself. He does not consult others, and while he may listen to advice from his juniors he need not take any notice of it. However, this does not mean that the guildmaster is a tyrant, nor that he is cruel or even necessarily strong (woe to a weak despot, though). It means simply that no one besides the guildmaster has real say in his decisions, implying nothing about his potential wickedness or cruelty. He could be very intelligent, wise and far seeing. And just because a despot rules the guild does not mean that members are okay with that. A smart guildmaster gains the loyalty of the guild members through his wisdom and the way his rulings clearly benefit the guild.

A populist guildmaster, on the other hand, goes to some lengths to listen to all (or most) opinions within the guild. He readily listens to advice and may even delegate some of his authority and decision making to others within the guild. Again, this need not necessarily make the guildmaster popular. Members often see a populist guildmaster as weak, especially if the affairs of the guild are not in good order. He may leave himself wide open to backstabbing.

These styles of guildmaster rulership can be combined to generate individual styles, such as the ever loved "strong-cruel-despotic" and (at the other extreme) "weak-fair-populist", and all points in-between. Combining these should be fairly straightforward for the GM, but The Thieves' Guild of Treimainn develops an example of how to combine these different elements into an overall picture for a guildmaster's style of leadership.

## DESIGNING A THIEVES' GUILD

### INTRODUCTION

This section covers the design of a thieves' guild. As you flesh out the details of your own guild, you'll want to record them for reference during play. Following the details of the system, a worked-out example shows how to build up a well-detailed, atmospheric guild from the tables. We provide this example for novice GMs and those wishing to brush up a bit on expanding table results into cool adventures.

Players may view this section and even help the GM by doing some work for or him. A player can roll up a guild for the GM to use in some other setting, or some distant city (which the PCs may visit later, after the GM has tweaked the players' invariable biased dice rolls). Also, a GM can allow a player to roll up details of a guild that the PC is about to take over as guildmaster, if he trusts the player enough (this may simply be what the guild appears to be at first)! A special section later on discusses PC guildmasters.

### Using the Tables

The following pages contain numerous tables that simplify the job of detailing a guild for the GM. Making sense of the tables, especially results that seem mutually exclusive, can be an excellent exercise of GM imagination to develop interesting guilds and can be the springboard to many adventures.

The system that follows is detailed. The GM can use the tables that follow to roll for each aspect of guild creation or deliberately select some (or all) results on individual tables to suit a particular guild. Also, a few sections of design do not use tables.

Lastly, the tables mostly have modifiers for basic d20 rolls. For example, the attitude of the law is determined on a d20 roll, modified by societal alignment (more hostile for lawful societies, etc.). Only the key modifiers have been listed in each instance. The GM can easily add further modifiers as he sees fit, to reflect special circumstances.

This system does not cover certain idiosyncratic guild details. For example, the specific oath of fealty the thief may have to pledge, and the exact rules and constitution (if one exists) of the guild isn't covered here because they vary so widely.

In summary, all the really important stuff you are going to need is here. You are encouraged to add any frills you see fit. If you were such a dullard as to not want to insert your own thunbprint you obviously wouldn't have risen to the challenge of being a HackMaster GM!

**Guild Background**

First, we need to establish the background of the guild. Social factors such as alignment affect details of the guild, including its size and rulership. Therefore, this background is developed first. In this way, later dice rolls for aspects of the guild can receive modifiers for previously established background.

Many of the tables in this section refer to background elements already detailed in the previous section, so the GM knows what brief entries mean. This obviously aids the process of GM selection, if he needs to cherry pick certain results.

**Societal Alignment**

In proper game settings, communities have definite dominant societal alignments. Sometimes, while a specific alignment cannot be stated, a general trend (for example, to good rather than evil) can be given. The GM should record the societal alignment or tendencies if he knows them and extrapolate them from evidence if he has not yet done so.

If the society's alignment is divided, use the ruler's alignment for later dice roll modifiers, but note the fact that the common people are different.

**Special Social Factors**

These include racial divisions, religious persecution of thieves and unique historical factors. The GM should note any of these that might affect a guild or its members. Since such factors are unique, no system here can account for them. The GM must ascribe modifiers to certain dice rolls for these factors as he sees fit!

**Size of Community**

The GM should have a reasonable idea of how many people live in the town or city where the thieves' guild is located. For GMs uncertain about this, use the rule of thumb that only capital cities have numbers of inhabitants in the six-figure range, and many villages and hamlets have but a few score. Prosperous major towns would have on the order of 4-10,000, and important cities perhaps 20-60,000. The number of thieves a population supports determines how many can be in a guild.

**Wealth of Community**

Some towns have few coins among the entire population while some seem to swim in gold. Table 3B: Wealth of Community With Thieves' Guild uses relative terms to describe the amount of wealth available in a community.

D20 Roll	Relative Wealth of Community
1	Very Poor (subsistence) *
2-5	Poor
6-9	Fair
10-14	Average
15-17	Comfortable
18-19	Wealthy
20+	Rich

\* Maximum population around 1,000.

Remember here that this dice roll does not actually indicate how wealthy the average citizen is. What the dice roll indicates is how much money whizzing about is up for grabs (literally). Thus, in a port in which a lot of trade passes through, many coins change hands, and the trade (and wealthy merchants) passing through makes the city much richer in effect than the average income would suggest. The effective wealth level is an important factor in determining how many thieves will be guild members in the city.

Modifiers to d20 Roll on Table 3B: Wealth of Community with Thieves' Guild:

- Capital City: +5, never less than Average
- Major Town: +3
- Port: +3
- On Major Inland Trade Route: +2
- Population 500 or below: -1
- Purely Agricultural Economy: -2

**Attitudes of the Law**

This major factor affects the makeup and function of any thieves' guild. Roll d20 on Table 3C: Legal Attitudes to determine the attitude of the militia, watch, police force, etc., in the city or town where the thieves' guild is located. Modifiers to this d20 roll are listed below the table as before.

D20 Roll	Attitudes of the Law
1-3	Persecution
4-7	Hassle
8-11	Opposition
12-13	Complex/Mix
14-17	Tolerance
18-20	Corruption

**Relationship with Merchants**

The attitude of merchants in the area also has a slight effect on the number of thieves in the guild. The more amenable merchants are to extortion and protection rackets, the more light-fingered thugs sign up to be part of the organization responsible for extracting the shiny gold stuff from them! Roll on Table 3D: Merchants' Attitudes Towards Thieves to determine the relationship the thieves have with the merchants.

D20 Roll	Merchant's Dominant Attitude to Thieves
1-2	Warfare
3-7	Opposition
7-14	Standoff
15-16	Complex/Mix
17-19	Infiltration
20	Submission

Modifiers to d20 Roll on Table 3D: Merchants' Attitudes Towards Thieves:

- Lawful societal alignment: -2
- Chaotic societal alignment: +1
- Society is Poor (or worse): -4
- Society is Wealthy: +1
- Society is Rich: +2 (but a roll of 1 still means Warfare!)
- Law is tolerant of thieves: +1
- Law is corrupt: +2

**Relationships with other Guilds**

Table 3E: Thieves and Other Guilds provides GMs a way to determine at random the relationship between thieves and the guilds they are most likely to cooperate with: assassins, beggars, and bards. Many GMs prefer to select this result rather than roll, but the table helps those who are uncertain. Use separate d20 rolls for each guild.

**Table 3E: Thieves and Other Guilds**

Relationship of Thieves Guild With			
D20 Roll	Assassins	Beggars	Bards
1-2	Hostile	Hostile	Hostile
3-4	Indifferent	Hostile	Indifferent
5-6	Indifferent	Indifferent	Indifferent
7-8	Indifferent	Neutral	Indifferent
9-10	Neutral	Neutral	Indifferent
11-12	Neutral	Favorable	Neutral
13-14	Neutral	Favorable	Neutral
15-16	Favorable	Cooperative	Neutral
17-18	Favorable	Cooperative	Neutral
19	Cooperative	Close	Favorable
20	Close	Close	Cooperative

A Hostile result doesn't mean open aggression unless the GM wants a running feud as a storyline! For example, if hostility exists between thieves and assassins this is most unlikely to explode into open aggression (unless, say, an assassin has slain the thieves' guildmaster - or worse, failed in the attempt). Indifferent means the groups have few dealings; Neutral differs in that the two groups have more dealings, maybe for practical reasons, although they have neither fondness nor enmity for each other. Favorable means that the two guilds get on well enough, though they may not always trust each other too well! Cooperative means that the groups enjoy a good relationship, may plan together, and that a fair level of trust exists between members of the different guilds. Close means that the two guilds work closely together, exchanging information, helping with common-interest tasks, with one guild even prepared to help the other if it is under threat or attack.

Modifiers to d20 roll on Table 3E: Thieves and Other Guilds:

Law attitude is persecutory or hassling: +1 to assassins and beggars

Societal alignment is good: -2 to assassins, +1 to beggars

Societal alignment is evil: +2 to assassins

**Details of the Guild**

Having established these background details, it's down to the nitty-gritty. The first crucial determination is how many thieves there are in the city or town where the guild is. This is not necessarily the same number as are in the guild, but working out how many light-fingered gents (or ladies) lurk about town is a necessary precursor to that.

Table 3H: Thieves in Towns and Cities does not use a d20 roll. Rather, it provides a matrix from which the GM only needs to read off one figure. If the GM knows the population of the town or city, and the wealth level, a single entry gives the range for the potential number of thieves. After each dice roll a rounded average given in parentheses provides a number he can use for that town.

Totals from Table 3H: Thieves in Towns and Cities are not cumulative, unless the population is over 10,000. In that case, each "per extra" is added to the entry from the "5,001-10,000" entry.

Modifiers to Table 3H: Thieves in Towns and Cities:

Add the following percentages to the total rolled, rounding fractions over one-half upward:

**Table 3H: Thieves in Towns and Cities**

Population	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Average	Comfortable	Wealthy	Rich
Up to 500	0	1d2-1 (1)	1d2-1 (1)	1d2-1 (1)	1d3-1 (1)	1d3-1 (1)	1d3 (2)
501 to 1,000	1d2-1 (1)	1d3-1 (1)	1d3-1 (1)	1d3 (2)	1d3 (2)	1d4 (3)	1d4+1 (4)
1,001 to 2,000	n/a	1d3 (2)	1d4 (3)	1d3+1 (3)	1d4+1 (4)	1d3+2 (4)	1d4+2 (5)
2,001 to 5,000	n/a	1d4+1 (4)	1d6+1 (5)	1d6+2 (6)	1d6+3 (7)	1d8+3 (8)	2d6+2 (9)
5,001 to 10,000	n/a	1d6+2 (6)	1d10+2 (8)	2d6+2 (9)	2d8+2 (11)	2d10+2 (13)	4d6+2 (15)
Per extra 5,000 *	n/a	1d4+1 (4)	1d6+1 (5)	1d6+2 (6)	1d6+3 (7)	1d8+3 (8)	2d6+2 (9)

\* Or fraction above 2,000.

**Table 3F: Guild Leadership**

D20 Roll	Guild Leadership
1-13	Guildmaster
14	Complex/Mix
15	Democracy
16-19	Council (1d3+2 members)
20 *	Re-roll on Table 3G: Unusual Guild Leadership

\* Natural 20 only (regardless of modifiers).

**Table 3G: Unusual Guild Leadership**

D20 Roll	Guild Leadership
1-2	Leaderless
3-8	Complex/Mix
9-10	Special Guildmaster (dragon, undead, nefarian, etc.)
11-12	Special Council (concealed Drow, Illithid, etc.)
13-20	Re-roll on Table 3G: Unusual Guild Leadership

Societal alignment is chaotic: +10%

Attitude of law is tolerant or corrupt: +10%

Merchants are infiltrated or in submission: +10%

Using Table 3H: Thieves in Towns and Cities we now know how many thieves there are in the town or city, but how many are actually in the guild? This depends in large part on the rulership of the guild, which we now determine.

**Guild Rulership**

A roll on Table 3F: Guild Leadership determines the nature of rulership of the guild. The GM wishing to select, rather than roll, this rulership should look through the following section to look at the effects of rulership on the guild before making his choice.

Modifiers to die roll on Table 3F: Guild Leadership:

Societal alignment is lawful: -1

Societal alignment is chaotic: +2

At this stage, the GM can also determine the leadership style of the ruler(s). Table 3I: Leadership Style can be used for all cases in which the guild has a guildmaster or ruling council leaders. It is not suitable for democratic guilds, where there is no rulership in that sense as such. Table 3I: Leadership Style requires three d20 rolls, one to determine strength of leadership, one for cruelty of leadership and one for type of rule. Note the modifiers for each roll provided in the table.

The final step in describing the overall guild is determining guild organization, and this is done with a single d20 roll on Table 3J: Guild Organization. Some of the results from this table may need particularly careful thought, because some odd-looking results can emerge. The GM can crop out such oddities if he wishes.

Rolling an Oppositional or Anarchic guild organization may shake up what the GM had planned. An "Oppositional" result means that two or

**Table 3I: Leadership Style**

	Strong-Weak		Cruel-Just		Despotic-Populist	
	D20 Roll	Leadership	D20 Roll	Leadership	D20 Roll	Leadership
	1-5	Strong	1-4	Cruel	1-4	Despotic
	6-12	Pretty Strong	5-11	Pretty Cruel	5-11	Pretty Despotic
	13-17	Pretty Weak	12-16	Pretty Just	12-16	Pretty Populist
	18-20	Weak	17-20	Just	17-20	Populist
lawful societal alignment		-1		+1		-1
chaotic societal alignment		+		1		+2
poor or fair wealth		-1				
Evil societal alignment				-2		-1
Good societal align.				+2		+1
Weak leadership style				-1		
Strong leadership style						-1
Cruel leadership style						-4 (pretty cruel -2)

**Table 3J: Guild Organization**

Roll d20	Guild Organization
1-6	Centralist
7-12	Cohesive
13	Complex/Mix
14-17	Fractionated
18-19	Oppositional
20	Anarchical

more small guilds compete in the town, Anarchic means that there is no real guild at all. (Fractionated means there are sub-guilds within the guild). The worked example later shows that the combination of such results with others that at first seem at-odds (e.g. guild rulership by a single guildmaster) is actually workable, and the overall picture that

emerges provides ample opportunities to hack!

Some results may seem odd at first, but the situation simply provides the spark for a little imaginative effort. An Oppositional structure with a small number of thieves in town is one example. You can't really have a plausible collection of competing guilds with only six thieves in town, for example, but two very small gangs could exist, and no doubt their hatred for each other would put larger organizations to shame. (They want to humiliate and destroy their enemies, rather than simply beating them to death....)

Finally, the GM must determine how many of thieves in town actually belong to the thieves' guild.

**Guild Members and the Rest**

The base percentage of thieves who will be members of the thieves' guild is 75%. The following modifiers are applied to this number:

- +10% if societal alignment is lawful
- 20% is societal alignment is chaotic
- +10% if the attitude of law is persecutory
- +10% if merchants are submissive or infiltrated
- +10% (+5%) if guild leadership is strong (including pretty strong)
- 10% (-5%) if guild leadership is weak (including pretty weak)

Of course no more than 100% of the thieves in a town can belong to the guild! Smart ass. However, if a guild has fewer than 50% of the thieves in town, the situation is ripe for a rival guild to develop.

The GM may modify these numbers further if he wishes. For example, in a land with a legend of a heroic band of thieves who helped overthrow

**Table 3K: Guild Attitudes Towards Non-guild Thieves**

D20 Roll	Dominant Attitude
1-6	Hostility and Persecution
7-13	Hostility
14-16	Neutrality
17-18	Cooperation
20	Special Relationship

an ancient tyrant, an additional 10% of thieves may belong to the guild.

Now we must consider thieves without guild affiliation, assuming there are any (and there probably are a few). What is the attitude of the guild towards residual freelancers? The GM can roll on Table 3K: Guild Attitudes Towards Non-guild Thieves to answer this question, which may also be taken to reflect the guild's attitude to outsiders who stray onto its patch. Thus, a guild which is punitive to indigenous non-guild members ("join up or we'll cut your hands off") will likely be hostile to outsiders as well.

Hostility means that the guild members make it very clear to a non-guild member working in the guild's territory that he is not at all welcome. They may rough up the offender, send him threatening messages, play an unpleasant and

only half-joking practical joke on him (one that involves personal injury), and perhaps worse. The message is simple: join up or get out of town – or else. Add Persecution to Hostility and the offender receives an even simpler choice: join up or die. Neutrality means that the guild members may try to persuade non-guild members to join up, but they tend to stress the benefits to all concerned rather than using threats for not joining. Such thieves probably let a determined freelancer go his own way, but they certainly do not assist him or have any fellowship for him. They may seek to keep an eye of him, too, just in case. The guild will not sell equipment or offer training to the freelancer, except perhaps at exorbitant prices. If a guild is neutral to foreign thieves, it may allow them to work on the guild's patch providing that only small-scale operations are involved and/or they pay a fee to the guild.

Cooperation suggests that freelancers may work with the guild members on certain special cases. The guild may take the attitude that if these people won't join, it's better to keep them friendly. They still charge freelancers a premium for equipment and training, though. Special Relationship suggests some unusually close link between guild members and outsiders. The example of the Thieves' Guild of Treimainn gives an example of how a GM could script this.

**Experience Levels of Thieves**

Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves shows the ranges of experience levels for thieves as a function of how many members there are in a guild. More populous guilds, which always tend to be in major cities, towns, and wealthy regions, attract (and produce) more experienced thieves to them.

Use Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves as follows. In the left-hand column find the number of thieves (the total number in town, not just in the guild). The next five columns show dice rolls to determine the level of the five highest level thieves in town. The following column shows numbers and levels for the middle-echelon ("journeymen" thieves; those above the level of apprentice, but not members of the senior ranks). All remaining thieves are 1st level apprentices.

For example, if there are 40 thieves in a town, roll 1d6+5 to determine the level of the highest level thief. In this example, the result is 9. The highest level thief in town is 9th level. The next highest-ranking thief has his level determined by 1d6+4. Let's say the result is 8. The next highest level thief is 8th level. The next thief has his level determined by rolling 1d4+4. With a roll of 6 he would be 6th level. The next highest level thief's level is determined by rolling 1d6+2. The result is 3 so he's third level. The next highest level is determined by rolling 1d4+2. The result is 5. But since by definition this guy is not as high level as the previous thief we must lower his level to 3rd. Then we look at the "middle echelon" thieves. This column on the table indicates there are four thieves with a level equal to 1d4+1. The roll is a three so there are four third level thieves who rank under the two upper echelon third level thieves previously determined. There are five thieves with level 1d3+1. If we roll a 2 here it indicates that there are five second level thieves

**Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves**

No. of Thieves	A	B	C	D	E	Middle Echelon
1-5 *	1d3	1d2	1d2	-	-	n/a
6-10	1d4+1	1d4	1d4	-	-	2xd2
11-15	1d4+2	1d3+1	1d3+1	1d2+1	1d2+1	3xd2
16-20	1d4+3	1d3+2	1d3+2	1d3+2	1d2+2	2x(d2+1), 5xd2
21-25	1d6+3	1d4+2	1d4+2	1d4+1	1d2+2	5xd3, 5xd2
26-30	1d8+3	1d6+3	1d4+3	1d4+2	1d4+1	4x(d3+1), 4xd3, 6xd2
31-40	1d6+5	1d6+4	1d4+4	1d6+2	1d4+2	4x(d4+1), 5x(d3+1), 8xd2
41-50	1d6+6	1d6+4	1d6+4	1d4+4	1d6+2	6x(d4+1), 8x(d3+1), 12xd2
51-75	1d6+8	1d6+6	1d6+5	1d6+4	1d6+3	8x(d4+1), 12x(d3+1), 15xd2
76-100	1d8+8	1d6+7	1d6+5	1d6+4	1d6+3	15x(d4+1), 20xd4, 30xd3
101+	1d10+8	1d6+8	1d6+6	1d6+5	1d6+4	5% d8+1, 10% d6+1, 20% d4+1, 30% d4, 35% d3

A: Level of highest ranking thief; B: Level of next highest ranking thief; C: Level of next highest ranking thief; D: Level of next highest ranking thief; E: Level of next highest ranking thief

in the guild. The total determined so far out of the original forty is 1+1+1+2+4+5 = 14. The remaining 26 thieves are all first level.

Senior guild members make up the top echelon of the guild. The highest level rolled will be the guildmaster (if there is one), or the most powerful guild-affiliated thief. The other seniors can make up a ruling council (if there is one), or fill key positions such as accountant, quartermaster, deputy guildmaster, sub-guildmaster (for one quarter of town), and so on. The GM may increase the number of seniors for really sizeable guilds. Freelancers come equally from the middle-echelon and apprentice levels. If the GM wants any middle to high-level freelancers, he should script these as individual NPCs, or else roll (only 10% of high-level thieves in a town can be freelancers, if any). At this stage, the GM must make sure to separate out guild members and freelancers when listing the thieves in a town.

The levels from Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves are low to medium, except for guildmasters of major guilds. This is designed to be suitable for campaigns that are not top-heavy with over-powered, high-level characters. If a GM has PCs running around at 15th level or higher and he wants a thieves' guild as a source of enemies, he must up the levels somewhat. For somewhat lower level thieves, co-operation and special equipment can make for very challenging thieves, especially on their home territory! A guildmaster may hire specialists to deal with extremely annoying high-level PCs – even if he doesn't have the firepower necessary within his guild, he has the information and connections to get what he wants!

**Multi-classed thieves**

Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves suffices for describing single-classed thieves, but many demi-humans are likely

**Table 3M: Thief Races**

Roll d100	Thief Race
1-9	Elf
10-13	Pixie Fairy
14-24	Half-elf
25-58	Human
59-63	Gnome
64-66	Gnome Titan
67-70	Gnomeling
71-83	Halfling
84-88	Half-ogre
89-91	Human, dual-class
92-99	Dwarf
100	Special (natural 100 only)

multi-classed. To determine this, the GM needs to know how many thieves are not human.

Roll on Table 3M: Thief Races to determine the race of each thief in the guild. One roll is made for each thief (determine freelancers at this stage, also). This table assumes a definite human dominance (which most locations have). However, this is obviously unsuitable for determining, say, the composition of the thieves' guild of the core community of an elven heartland, where virtually all the thieves will be elves or half-elves. In such cases, the GM can bypass Table 3M: Thief Races and simply decide race on a per-capita basis. For example, if 70% of the inhabitants are elves, then roll for each

**Table 3N: Thief Multi-classes and Dual-classes**

D20 Roll	Character Classes	Half-orc
Dwarves		1-8 Thief only
1-11	Thief only	9-11 Berserker/thief
12-20	Fighter/thief	12-20 Fighter/thief
Elves		D1000 Roll
1-6	Thief only	Humans
7-10	Fighter/thief	Previous Class
11-17	Magic-user/thief	1-900 Thief only
18-20	Fighter/magic-user/thief	901-926 Fighter
Gnomes		927-930 Barbarian
1-8	Thief only	931-933 Berserker
9-3	Fighter/thief	934-936 Cavalier
14-20	Cleric/thief	937-939 Dark Knight
Gnome Titans		940-942 Knight Errant
1-6	Thief only	943-945 Monk
7-20	Fighter/thief	946-948 Paladin
Gnomelings		949-957 Ranger
1-10	Thief only	958 Combatant*
11-20	Illusionist/thief	959-971 Magic-user
Half-elves		972-977 Battle mage
1-6	Thief only	978-982 Specialist magic-user
7-11	Fighter/thief	983 Spellslinger*
12-15	Fighter/magic-user/thief	984-986 Assassin
16-20	Magic-user/thief	987-992 Bard
Halfings		993 Griftmaster*
1-15	Thief only	994-997 Cleric
16-20	Fighter/Thief	998-999 Druid
		1000 Zealot*

\*This human's old class was one described in the class book of the same name. The GM should assign whichever one makes his campaign the most interesting.

thief; on a 1-7 on d10 he is an elf. Lazy GMs can assign numbers based on the straight percentages without rolling, but that is not as much fun. The GM should also consider modifiers for societal factors. For example, if elves dominate dwarves in a mixed society, he could apply a -5 to the dice roll on Table 3M: Thief Races.

Table 3N: Thief Multi-classes and Dual-classes contains sub-tables the GM can use to determine whether the thief is a multi-classed demi-human or a dual-classed human.

Given the race and possible multi-class nature of each thief, the final step is to adjust the levels from Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves for multi-and dual-class thieves. For multi-classed demi-human thieves with two classes, reduce the thief level by 1d2 from the original dice roll from Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves. Reduce the level by 1d2+1 for a triple-classed fighter/magic-user/thief. Obviously, no reductions can take an NPC below 1st level. Assign the character an EP amount in the middle of the range for a thief of that level, then assign the levels in the other classes based on that EP value.

With dual-class human characters, experience gained in the "old" class will be 1d4 levels lower than that gained as a thief (but never below 2nd level). Do not adjust the thief level from Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves in this case.

A fallen paladin or ex-druid would not fall into thievery, without truly extraordinary reasons. Such things belong in the province of GM ingenuity.

## Non-Thief Guild Members

The guild may well have very close affiliations with a small number of NPCs – particularly tough fighters and sly magic-users – who may be "honorary guild members." These men may guard the guildhouse, go on planned jobs as lookouts and muscle, provide muscle to enforce protection rackets, act as bodyguards, provide firepower when necessary, examine stolen treasure, and other activities for which thieves are ill-suited. However, they are rarely full members of the guild. The GM should design such NPCs as the need arises.

## FLESHING OUT GUILD MEMBERS

The GM now has a basic description of the guild and its members. Using this list of guild members and his list of other thieves in the town, he can develop these characters as far as his campaign requires.

### Alignment

The thieves' alignments have a powerful effect on the way the guild operates, guild intrigues, and so on. The leadership style rolls should be strongly suggestive of certain options for the alignments of the senior thieves and guildmaster. A pretty strong, cruel, and pretty despotic guildmaster looks like a good candidate for neutral evil, whereas a pretty strong, just, and populist member of a ruling council would be closer to chaotic good. The GM must select these alignments to suit his game; knowing what he now knows about the guild he should not decide them randomly.

For other thieves (juniors and middle echelons) he can roll on Table 3O: NPC Thief Alignments to determine alignment. This table is biased away from lawfulness and towards neutrality, which accurately reflects most thieves. However, if the GM wants more goody-goody types or lawfulness he can adjust the rolls.

Modifiers to dice roll:

D20 Roll	Thief Alignment
1	Neutral Good
2-4	Chaotic Good
5	Lawful Neutral
6-10	Neutral
11-13	Dominant Societal Alignment
14-15	Chaotic Neutral
16	Lawful Evil
17-19	Neutral Evil
20	Chaotic Evil

+2 if societal alignment is evil

-2 if societal alignment is good (But a natural roll of "20" still means Chaotic Evil)

Note: If the GM is uncertain about the dominant societal alignment, it should be neutral. If dominant societal alignment is lawful good, take neutral good (1-4 on 1d6) or lawful neutral (5-6 on d6) instead.

### Prime Requisite Ability Scores

All thieves have a Dexterity score of at least 9. You can roll NPC thief Dexterity on 8 + 1d10, adding +2 for characters of 4th or higher level and +4 for characters of 8th or higher level. Elves and halflings gain an additional +1 to Dexterity scores. Other ability scores are discussed below. The GM should record the Dexterity scores for all thieves, since it directly affects their AC and thief skills.

### Senior Thieves

Such thieves – including the guildmaster! – require a little more detail. Keep the following points in mind when adding detail to their basic profiles:

**Physical Factors:** Simple details like age, height, weight, and appearance can be determined or rolled. Senior thieves (if human) should be 25+1d20 years old, if the GM does not simply assign an age. Gender can also be determined randomly (1-4 male, 5-6 female on d6).

**Exceptional Ability Scores:** Thieves of high or medium level should have decent Ability Scores to have survived so long. Allow a flat 1-in-4 chance for each attribute other than Dexterity to be rolled on 2d4+10 and record them.

**Magic Items:** Senior thieves certainly have magic items suitable for thieves. Take a look at thief PCs (and other NPCs) in your own campaigns and others, and take hints from these about the nature and number of magic items possessed. When in doubt always be stingy. It's just easier to add more magic later than take it away.

**Guild Position:** Non-guildmasters can still occupy key positions (especially if council members). A shrewd guildmaster, for example, keeps the second-rankers happy with important things to do. Quartermaster, deputy guildmaster, chief of blackmail, chief of espionage, liaison officer (with other guilds), and many other options can be assigned here.

**Other Stuff:** Personal idiosyncrasies round off an NPC nicely. Cover identities are also important; what face does the thief present to the public? Does he have a trade, is he a merchant, is he perhaps the Constable of the Watch or a trusted official?

The most important case, obviously, is the guildmaster himself (or the ruling council). Such an NPC must be individually designed by the GM to suit the campaign.

### Junior Thieves

These probably do not need the kind of detailing the seniors do, unless the GM plans for the party to encounter some! Race, class, prime requisite, and level are sufficient for most, especially mere 1st or 2nd level peons. The addition of names should round off these basic details.

## A FINAL RECORD

Now that the basic descriptions of the thieves have been rounded off (and modified) by race, dual/ multi-class options, the details for the guild thieves can be determined. The GM should summarize or sketch out information



on guild seniors, minor magic items for juniors, exceptional Ability Scores, hit points, and other important character attributes.

## Guild Dues

Guild members have to pay fees to belong to the guild, and they may also have to pay cuts of their take on jobs “licensed” by the guild. For guild dues, the GM must realize that they increase with the thief’s experience level. Guild members get cheaper training, and training is longer and more expensive at higher levels, so higher dues reflect this. Fixing a cut needs to be done on a case-by-case basis. If the guild has tipped off the thief with a lot of information important to pulling a robbery, essentially making it possible in the first place, it could well ask for a third or more of the take, for example.

The GM should record the dues and other payments due to the guild, together with a brief note on what the PC thief gets in the way of special benefits for his dues.

## Normal Resources

A roll on Table 3P: Availability of Resources can be used to determine the availability of standard, non-magical equipment items. This reflects how well the guild can equip its members with illegal and dubious items (dubious items may be illegal in highly lawful societies). Add +1 to the dice roll for every 10 thieves in the guild, to a maximum of +4 for a guild with 40 or more thieves.

**Table 3P: Availability of Resources**

D20 Roll	Equipment Availability
1-4	Spotty (roll again)
5-10	Low
11-17	Medium
18-20	High

A roll indicating Spotty availability means that individual illegal items (as shown in Table 6A: Thief Equipment, in the Tools of the Trade Chapter) cost 50-100% (40 +d6x10) more than usual, even if it can be found. Roll a second time to see what the overall availability of such items is. Spotty but High availability could occur in a large city with a new constable deliberately cracking down on thieves. Items noted in Table 6A: Thief Equipment as being rare will be almost impossible to obtain for less than 200-250% of their normal price (190+1d6x10), possibly more. A thief who wants an illegal item that is “out of stock” can only try again after a gap of two weeks to see if fresh supplies have been obtained.

A roll indicating Medium or High availability (not Spotty) allows items to be had for the usual price. If one is not “in stock”, the thief can try again after just one week.

Always remember, though, that if the GM wishes to deny the thief some equipment item, it simply isn't there. Conversely, the GM may wish to rule that there are always lock picks available in a city of more than 2,000 inhabitants, since these are so essential for very basic thief skills (picking locks, finding and removing certain types of traps).

## Special Resources

We provide no table for randomly determining these special resources, because they require careful attention and thought on the part of the GM. From the list below, the GM should select a small number (0-3) of special resources that suit his campaign. This list is only a partial one, and the GM can add similar special resources if he desires.

**Tame Magic-user:** The guild has a helpful magic-user on tap who casts spells to help thieves (but doesn't take risks himself). If the guild has a magic-user/thief or two, this magic-user is of high enough level to train these magic-user/thieves.

**Tame Cleric:** The guild can call on this tame clergyman and expect him to drop most other work to help. Again, this individual does not take risks for the thieves, but does help them with healing (after a job goes wrong), divination, and possibly interceding with the authorities, if his

church has such influence. Even in a city where Draper the Thief Gawd is popular, having a tame cleric is not guaranteed.

**Expert Fence:** The guild works regularly with, or has, a fence with truly exceptional knowledge, information networks, and/or the ability to ship hot goods out of the country fast (possibly even access to Teleportation).

**Government Snitch:** The guild has a man in City Hall. He's very helpful in informing the guild about the shipment of government goods, the Mint, secrets of political officials for blackmail, and lots more.

**Merchant Snitch:** The guild has a man in the warehouses, docks, etc. Not merely a night watchman, this person holds a much more important position – harbormaster, Commander of the Night Watch, etc. He can supply the guild with watch hours, incoming and stored cargo lists, and much more.

**A Friend at Court:** The guild has a person with the ear of the King/Queen/Baron/Royal Physician/Courtesan/Bimbo Princess/Chamberlain/etc. Subtly different from a government snitch, and more suited to a swashbuckling campaign or guild than a band of vicious robbers.

**Friends in other Guild(s):** The guild has very cordial relations with the thieves' guild in another major city, even the capital, for reasons of blood relation, old friendships and co-adventuring, etc.

These special resources clearly open up all kinds of adventure possibilities: getting a message to the important NPC, obtaining a reward for them (e.g. the tame magic-user wants that nice Wand of Lightning his enemy has and could the guild steal it for him in return for all of his friendly Invisibility and Identify spells?), rescuing an allied NPC from imprisonment, etc. Subtler possibilities include finding out who has sniffed out the guild's government snitch and to blackmail him into providing false information.

## Major Activities

Here, the GM should determine and make a record of the secondary activities in which the guild involves itself. These include (but aren't limited to) protection rackets, smuggling, kidnapping, slavery, forgery, clipping, gambling, entertainment, and similar fun and games as reviewed earlier. The GM should consider social alignment, the nature of guild rulers, and his plans for his campaign when determining which activities the guild is involved with most strongly. For example, a strong-cruel-despotic neutral evil guildmaster is a lot more likely to get the guild involved with slavery and kidnapping than a just, populist good-aligned guildmaster. Some GMs may also wish to exclude certain activities such as slavery or kidnapping because players of good-aligned thieves might not want their characters part of such activities. However, it is up to the PCs to do something about such evil goings on if they cannot accept them – a spur to their creativity and scheming, or a ticket to more alignment infraction points than a fallen paladin can handle!

## THE GUILDHOUSE

Four major points relate to the nature of the guildhouse:

**Location and Cover:** Where is the guildhouse, and what does it look like? The GM must choose a location and cover suitable to the town or city and to the nature of the guild. It could be a large, fortified building among warehouses or down by the docks, an underground cellar complex below the private home of a senior thief (entered via the old sewers), or the basements and cellars of a tavern in a shady part of town. A small guild may just meet in the back room of a shady tavern, of course, but any significant guild needs somewhere fairly secret and secure.

**Contents:** What's in the guildhouse? Is equipment kept hidden there or does the quartermaster carry it with him (in which case he probably has a Bag of Holding)? Are there hidey-holes? How many exits are there (there should be several)?

**Guards:** Who protects the guildhouse? Can they summon reinforcements quickly? If there is a building that is a front for the place (e.g. a tavern above the cellars of the guildhouse below), can extra help (hefty fighters) arrive quickly?

**Traps and Protections:** The guildhouse almost certainly has magical and mechanical traps – the entrance may be a very strong door, with a couple of locks (and only guild members have keys). Down a passage, a secret door might allow entrance, whereas simply following the passage all the way down leads into very unpleasant traps. The guild must pay for magical traps or have its own magic-user/thieves to place and maintain them. Mechanical traps can take many forms, but often use disabling/paralyzing attacks just in case a novice makes a mistake and takes the wrong turn somewhere! Or in case a snooping official or adventurer can be ransomed for a considerable sum.

The GM should keep all these points in mind when locating and designing the guildhouse floor plans and maps.

## THIEVES' GUILD OF TREIMAINN

### An Example of Guild Design

Here we describe the thieves' guild for the large town (or small city) of Treimainn. Having placed it on the map, we know some basic social facts about this place. The town has issues with weak rulership, something the GM plans to use to construct future adventures. Likewise, we know that Treimainn is in a civilized area of the country, and on a major inland trade route. The population is set at somewhere around 17,000 (not too large, not too small!), including 5% halflings and 5% half-elves; there are no full elves, and only a smattering of dwarves and gnomes. Half-orcs, half-ogres and pixie fairies are exceedingly rare. The culture has a slight tendency towards lawfulness, but not enough to affect overall societal alignment, which we set as neutral.

How wealthy is Treimainn? A roll of 7 on Table 3B: Wealth of Community with Thieves' Guild would indicate a region with only a fair amount of wealth to be had. However, we add +2 to the roll because the town is on a major trade route. Since Treimainn is a large town surrounded by mostly small towns and hamlets for several days' travel, we add another +2. This gives an adjusted total of 11, for an average wealth level.

On Table 3C: Legal Attitudes, a dice roll of 17 indicates tolerance from the legal authorities. Why? One clear reason jumps out: under-manning. The ruler of the land is weak and his militia kept small in this safe, secure land. There simply isn't the manpower to go around chasing the thieves.

Table 3D: Merchants Attitudes Towards Thieves reveals how the merchants think of thieves. A roll of 14, modified to 15 by the tolerance of the law, indicates a complex/mix. Our somewhat inexperienced GM isn't sure enough of how to script a complexity here, so he opts for a mix, and makes two more dice rolls on the same table to see what the mix is (adding +1 to each roll for the tolerance of the law). He rolls 12 (+1 for a 13), which indicates a standoff; his second roll is 1, and even with a +1 modifier this indicates warfare! How to synthesize this into a whole?

The GM reasons that most merchants described by a standoff put up with the thieves in a fairly resigned way. A minority, though, are furious about thieving for some reason; maybe they have suffered particularly heavy losses as repeated targets of the guild. This place isn't rich, after all. They try hard to persuade the ineffectual militia to do something about the thieves.

Deciding on thieves and other guilds, the GM does not roll on Table 3E: Thieves and Other Guilds for assassins and beggars. The GM has decided that no assassins' guild exists in this town. Also, he wants the beggars to be

in close cooperation with the thieves' guild. This is a plot element for him to exploit later on. If the beggars spy on the merchants, facilitating robberies in a place of only average wealth, it could help explain why some of the merchants are at the end of their tether, too. Matters are beginning to come together fairly nicely, but much remains. How about bards? The GM rolls a 1, hostility! Very odd, and at this stage the fledgling GM just records this without thinking about why. He decides to come back to this problem later.

From Table 3H: Thieves in Towns and Cities, the GM makes an initial recording of how many thieves live and work in Treimainn. The population is 17,000. The GM rolls in the "5001-10,000" row and twice in the "Per extra 5,000" row, using the Average (wealth) column. These rolls are respectively 2d6+2, and 1d6+2 (twice), for a total of 4d6+6. This is rolled as a total of 19, but a tolerant law agency adds 10% to this, for a total of 21. They need not all be guild members, of course, but we need to know about the guild's leadership to determine how many freelance. Recording the figure of 21, the GM moves on.

A roll of 5 on Table 3F: Guild Leadership shows that the guild is ruled by a guildmaster. From Table 3I: Leadership Style we produce a picture of what this guildmaster is like. A first roll of 18 shows he is weak. A second roll of 12, reduced to 11 because of this weakness, makes him pretty cruel. A final roll of 12, reduced to 10 because of this cruelty, makes him pretty despotic. In summary: weak, pretty cruel, pretty despotic. A rather pathetic creature all told. This makes sense to the GM when he rolls on Table 3J: Guild Organization and comes up with a 20 – Anarchy!

The beginner GM is taken aback. There is a guild here, with a guildmaster, and now he is plunged into a real complication. After a minute or two, and preparing to re-roll, his GMing instinct finally kicks in! Perhaps, after all, this is workable. A once-effective guildmaster has become a feeble old man and lost his authority. He has resorted to cruelty and despotism in a desperate attempt at holding on to his guildmaster status, but lacks the strength even to do this effectively. Guild members have drifted away in open contempt, but have not yet formed a separate guild (that would be Opposition, not Anarchy). They don't have the heart to kill the old thief, either (the guildmaster appoints his own successor in this particular guild, so he'd have to be killed).

The GM rolls on Table 3K: Guild Attitudes Towards Non-guild Thieves before all this has sunk in (if there isn't really a guild, how can it have relations with outsiders and freelancers)? But the roll of 19, Special Relationship, stimulates some further thoughts in the GM's mushy head.

The GM decides that the guildmaster has managed to hang on to a small rump of the guild – he rolls 4 individuals on a 1d6. Later on, he selects these as primarily senior thieves with alignments compatible with the guildmaster's alignment. There is no need for the standard percentile roll to determine the percentage in the guild, because this is a special and very unusual circumstance. The other 16 thieves all work independently, maybe allying with each other in small groups for the odd job now and then. Perhaps a lack of coordination among them means that some targets are hit too often, which wouldn't happen if the guild properly coordinated matters. For this reason, some merchants are so desperate that they want warfare declared on the thieves. This ties together the merchants' attitudes. It also helps to explain why the law tolerates thievery; they know it's going to be hard to track down and deal with any central organization.

The "Special Relationship" still holds between the rump of the guild, and the freelancers still in town. To complete the picture, though, the GM rolls another d20, a result of 6 indicating hostility. This is the attitude of all the thieves of Treimainn (or most of them!) to outsiders from beyond the town, which completes the picture of attitudes among the thieves.

The GM now has to determine the levels of the thieves in Treimainn. There are 21 thieves in the town, and from Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves the GM determines the levels of the seniors as 8th, 6th, 4th (two), and 3rd. From the 5xd3 and 5xd2 rolls, another two 3rd-level and four 2nd-level join the mix. The remaining 10 thieves are all first level Apprentices. The GM records these figures.

From the race, class and alignment tables, the GM makes die rolls to detail these thieves. There are 5% half-elves and 5% halflings in Treimainn, but no full elves or gnomes, so the GM decides in advance to replace any elf rolled up with a half-elf, and any gnome with a halfling. Two thieves he does not roll randomly; the 8th-level human guildmaster and the 6th-level half-elven thief the GM wants to use as a plot element to advance the theme of anarchy within the guild.

The half-elf is a dashing, romantic rogue-figure who is the focus of the opposition to the ailing old guildmaster. He has musical skill and a brother who is a bard – hence one reason for the guildmaster's hostility to bards (a detail to add to the record sheet). This half-elf is a very chaotic character and one who doesn't really wish to be guildmaster, anyway. But the old guildmaster hates his charisma, youthfulness, and luck with the ladies, and has always blocked his progress, refusing to even give the half-elf offers to reject. Now he sees him as the enemy who has drawn away the other thieves – a special relationship indeed, a very tempestuous and intrigue-ridden state of affairs. Added to this is the fact that even though the half-elf doesn't want to be guildmaster, the juniors who have deserted the guild beg him to lead them in a coup against the old guard. He alone has the experience and charisma to do this. (The GM has been watching a few Errol Flynn movies of late.) However, while Larami the half-elf is chaotic good, the old guildmaster is neutral – making him evil is too obvious and unsubtle, which would submerge many of the intrigues into a simplistic good-versus-evil battle. But most of those staying loyal to the old man are evil.

After this flight of fancy the GM comes back to earth. The guild is in a state of uproar and anarchy, but there are still some practical details to attend to. Guild dues still have to be decided (these will be the old rates that applied when the guild was not torn asunder, but they are useful as a guide to what the reformed guild (if it does reform) will accept). A similar consideration applies to normal resources, but the GM also notes the present availability (low) by way of an update. Special resources are important, especially so in the current power struggle, and the GM determines that the thieves' guild has a government snitch, a personal friend of the guildmaster. He uses this stool pigeon to prime the military to arrest the hapless half-elf, in turn driving him further underground, and making him an even more elusive and mysterious figure. The war between old Hastador and Larami gets hotter by the moment.

As for major activities, the GM decides that in such a fairly boring town like Treimainn there is no scope for anything especially unusual. The declining guildmaster does not have the strength of will to maintain any really nefarious activities. Individual thieves may involve themselves in kidnapping, but the guild doesn't organize such actions. The guildhouse is located in the cellars of a local tavern, the GM decides; the Baron's Bistro, run by one of the few thieves left who stays loyal to Hastador. This isn't a particularly creative design element, but the GM knows that matters are likely to change in Treimainn soon, and so can't be bothered to think up anything especially unusual. The tavern will make a good location for a final shoot-out in any event.

What began as a short exercise in rolling up a thieves' guild has turned into a powerful intrigue which could cast a long shadow over most aspects of life in this town. The central struggle between an old guildmaster, with a small evil coterie, and desperate young thieves looking to a reluctant new leader will enmesh the unwary PCs as soon as they enter the place!

The guild design system gives a wealth of detail on the traditional (in the HackMaster game) town or city thieves' guild. However, numerous other possible guild structures abound, just waiting for a chance to enrich and spice up even an experienced GM's campaign world.

## THE TRAVELING GUILD

A group of traveling thieves who work as a body and are effectively a guild on the road, makes for an interesting encounter. Three variants on this theme include:

**Gypsy Folk:** This group travels in horse-drawn wagons. The community is just that – a complete community with many sniffing children, goats, snarling dogs, a few chickens kept for eggs, and everything else that might be found in a village. In towns, the gypsies sell dried herbs and pressed flowers, and the wise woman of the group may read fortunes for money (with or without real precognitive abilities). The gypsies are usually of neutral (or chaotic neutral) alignment and fiercely loyal to each other. If such folk are a common sight on the roads of the land, then the gypsy people may have extended clans related by intermarriage. If any violence is done to one of them, relatives (close and distant) can assemble an entire horde to track down and punish the offender.

**River Folk:** A variant on the gypsy theme is the group (or groups) of traveling folk who work the waterways of the country. These people almost certainly have merchant interests, or convey cargoes for others; thieving would not be an adequate income for them and their lifestyle is perfectly suited to more legitimate types of trade. They supplement their income with thievery in and around the rougher ports, usually inland or estuarine. They are significantly more likely to be of evil alignments than are road-travelers.

**The Circus:** This theme should always be used in a campaign at some time. Thieves can make up the bulk of a traveling circus, which comes to towns and cities and cheerfully robs them. Bards and charlatans abound in circuses, gleefully taking advantage of visitors with rigged games of skill and chance. If the circus has monsters on show, then there is a rationale for having other character classes along for or the ride who help the thieves and give the NPC band some diversity. Thus, clerics can be on hand to employ Snake Charm and Speak with Animals spells, while magic-users use Charm Monster or Comprehend Languages. Thieves with specialist skills such as acrobats, burglars, and so on fit well into such a group.

Players with some degree of gaming experience will have learned to keep well away from circuses. Old tricks such as having evil, high-level NPCs Polymorphed into monsters or animals are well known to such devotees of the game. This makes it more of a challenge for a clever GM to spring a surprise on his players. A traveling troupe of actors and musicians serves a similar purpose. They can perform the equivalent of passion plays, act and sing charming ethnic curiosities, sing madrigals, and the like. A group of light-fingered choir elves with halflings could make for a lot of fun (they look so sweet and innocent, how could anyone suspect they are actually expert thieves?).

## Piratical Guilds

Also travelers in some fashion, a guild of thieves who spends most of their time engaged in piracy is a complex and shifting structure requiring careful thought by the GM. There will not be any form of guildhouse for such thieves, although a small number of secret guild hidey-holes (caves in the cliffs, deserted coves, desolate gull-haunted islands that served as graveyards in ancient days) could exist where spare equipment and vital emergency supplies might be placed at strategic locations. Guildmasters could exist, but pirates much more likely have a loosely affiliated structure where several senior thieves, maintaining their positions by force and wit, share equal power. They might well all call themselves guildmasters! Such a guild would have a very strong tendency towards chaotic alignments, and a nearly equal tendency towards evil.

Some type of organization and regularity would be necessary to make this a guild at all. Meetings half-yearly, with a quorum for votes and decisions to have any binding quality at all, would be a possibility. These could take place in the major piratical port, perhaps a town or city of unparalleled iniquity (a place to send some PCs to track down the wicked pirates and stop their evil trade in press-ganging/slavery/drug smuggling/etc.). Certainly, some mechanism for obtaining equipment and training (at the least) must exist.

For a notably more structured and stable leadership of a piratical-type operation involving slavers, see the adventure *Smackdown the Slavelords*.

### The Guild of Honorable Gentlemen

This type of really unusual guild could exist in parallel with the established thieves' guild in a large city. The members are aristocrats, men of learning, education, and exalted social position (preferably by birth). Bored with their lives of sybaritic self-indulgent possibilities, easy comforts, and gold-digging members of the opposite sex, they steal for the thrill of it. All refined, dignified gentlemen, they have impeccable manners and superior charisma. They keep their group small, and thief solely for the excitement of it all. Indeed, they might take the suggestion that they needed the money as an insult!

What motivates these people is a challenge to their skill. They steal things not because they are valuable or important, but because they are there to be stolen (though they usually do steal objects of value). Such a thief steals the Emerald of Kulitor not because it's worth a fortune, but because popular wisdom says that it is impossible to steal.

Such thieves tend to be of notably high level, and they often have exceptional Intelligence and Charisma scores. Very rarely evil, they also tend to shy away from chaotic alignments. For these reasons, they can become excellent mentors for a PC thief if the GM allows it – for example, a PC thief can come across one of them at work, or find evidence of the person's true identity as a renowned master thief.

### The Good-Aligned Guild

The good-aligned thieves' guild has to be a rarity. Thieves are the epitome of roguishness and believe the world owes them a living. Most thieves want to do as little work as possible and live as well as they can off the efforts of others. This often conflicts with a good alignment. The major problem with a good-aligned guild is simple: The large majority of thieves are not of good alignment. If a good-aligned guild comes into being (e.g. a good-aligned guildmaster comes to power) many, if not most, thieves will actively seek a non-good (preferably neutral) guild as soon as the guildmaster seeks to impose his values on them.

The intelligent good-aligned guildmaster does not impose or accentuate the values of good within the guild. Rather he quietly squeezes evil thieves out, puts them at risky jobs, and tries to make sure that evil activities (slavery, etc.) are downgraded or made to fail. They see efforts to eliminate evil as a much smarter path than trying to establish good.

However, some good-aligned guilds can certainly exist and even persist. A classic example is a guild of "freedom fighters", a guild that stresses the values of chaotic good, in a lawful evil country or state. Such a guild attracts thieves of CG, NG, and CN alignments, with pure neutrals going along as usual. Even chaotic evil thieves might join, hating the repressive lawfulness of the state (especially if the guild rulers have the sense to play up chaos and freedom in their pitch). Such a guild is one with the classic Robin Hood ("robbin' hoods") spirit. It could exist "underground" in an evil land. A rural equivalent, [partisans] with scout-type thieves allied with tough rangers and others combining their skills to chip at the edges of a strong evil state, is another example, more suited to campaigns stressing lots of tactical skirmishing and hack than political intrigues and tense urban chases.

Other good-aligned guild possibilities exist, certainly, but require more careful thought by the GM. They are possible in a fractionated or oppositional guild structure, in a country where the good/evil division mirrors or parallels some other (e.g. good-aligned elves and predominantly evil-aligned humans). They could also exist in super-goody-goody nations serving as a domestic intelligence service that keeps an eye out for individuals that seek to disrupt the good order and domestic tranquility its citizens treasure.

## PLAYER CHARACTER GUILDMASTERS

This section is for GMs who have a PC in a campaign who has become a guildmaster of thieves (either through campaign events or attaining high enough level). The same rules apply to a thief who holds a similar position (e.g. the most powerful member of a ruling council). Such situations can be handled with minor modifications of the system outlined here for determining guild numbers, activities, economics, brushes with the law, and similar events in the everyday story of thieving folk.

### Determining Guild Members

This can be done in three ways. First, Table 3RR in the *Player's Handbook* can be used (with tweaking to reduce the proportion of non-humans if this is too large for your campaign). Second, you can use the tables earlier in this book (we suggest the 11-15 row from Table 3L: Experience Level of Thieves). Or you can use one of the other systems and introduce a few, individually scripted pet thieves of your own into the results from the dice rolls. In particular, you may wish to design the deputy (assistant) guildmaster since this will be an NPC that the PC will need to lean on a lot.

### Guild Income

Table 3Q: Modifiers to Guild Income lists economic modifiers for societies of different wealth. These modifiers should be applied to all monetary sums referred to later such as guild dues and cuts from planned jobs. Recall that the community wealth is specified by the GM or randomly determined by Table 3B: Wealth of Community with Thieves' Guild.

The income the guild receives comes from two sources; guild dues, and the cut the guild takes from planned robberies, burglaries, heists and other legal and illegal activities. The system given here is a simple one for calculating month-by-month income; we documented some extras later.

Social Wealth	Modifier
Very Poor	x0.25
Poor	x0.5
Fair	x0.75
Average	None
Comfortable	x1.2
Wealthy	x1.5
Rich	x2.0

**Dues:** Usually fixed as a yearly sum, these are payable anywhere from monthly to semi-annually (thieves prefer the latter). A reasonable base sum to work from is 39 gp per level as a yearly due, to a maximum of around 390 gp/year (for thieves of 10th or higher level). A standard guildmaster takes 5% of these dues as a personal fee, and his assistant takes the same (these two do not pay fees, nor do members of a ruling council unless democratically elected). The guildmaster may take up to 15%, but for every 1% above the 5% standard the morale of the guild members drops by -1. Extorting over 15% often leads to revolt! The rest of the income goes to the expenses of running the guild (bribes, buying equipment, paying fines, etc.). Note that guild dues are separate from training costs.

**Cuts:** The guild is entitled to exact a levy on robberies and burglaries that it had some role in planning. The guildmaster doesn't have to plan these activities; his right- (and left-) hand men take the leading role in this. The levy can be taken as a base 10% (this is pretty much standardized). If a PC guildmaster seeks to extort more, every extra 1% leads to a decline of -1 in morale; over -10 leads to immediate revolt). Of this 10%, the guildmaster gets 10%, as does his assistant (that is, 1% of the gross). If a revolt occurs, see Table 11PP: Underling Rebellion in the GameMaster's Guide to determine the consequences.

Table 3R: Guild Monthly Income shows how much money is gained per 10 thief-levels by a guild from this kind of guild-guided activity. Use the standard economic multiplier to adjust this number. Divide the total number of thief levels in the guild (exclude the guildmaster and his assistant, and any guild members not actively thieving) by 10 to determine how many rolls

a guild gets per month. So, a guild with six 3rd level, six 2nd level, and eight 1st level thieves gets 4 dice rolls (total levels 18 + 12 + 8 = 38. Round fractions below one-half down, others up). Table 3R: Guild Monthly Income gives the gross; the guild gets 8% of this, the guildmaster and his assistant 1% each.

Modifiers to Dice Roll on Table 3R: Guild Monthly Income:

- 2 if the attitude of the law is persecutory
- 1 if the attitude of the law is hassling
- +1 if the law is corrupt or tolerant
- 1 if the merchants' attitude is one of warfare
- +2 if the merchants are submissive or infiltrated

D20 Roll	Income per 10 Thief-Levels
1-2	5d6 gp
3-5	5d8 gp
6-9	5d10 gp
10-11	8d10 gp
12-15	2d6 x 10 gp
16-18	3d6 x 10 gp
19	4d6 x 10 gp
20	6d6 x 10 gp
21	6d10 x 10 gp
22	10d10 x 10 gp
23	12d12 x 10 gp

**Levels of Operations**

The guildmaster gives general instructions concerning the level of thieving activity. These affect total income, but they also affect morale. Below we summarize the possible levels of operation, along with the income multipliers:

**Income Multipliers**

- Easygoing operations: x0.5
- Routine operations: x0.8
- Average operations: x1.0
- Pushy operations: x1.5
- Aggressive operations: x2.0

**Easygoing:** Guild members take life very easy. No morale modifiers.

**Routine:** Guild members take life fairly easy, but keep their hands in the game. A +1 modifier applies to morale for the first month (after this some of them get bored and touchy).

**Average:** The standard level of operations, this has no effect on morale.

**Pushy:** The guild pushes its members into doing some extra jobs here and there, and grand, ambitious activities are eagerly pursued. This gives +1 to morale for the first month (excitement), but -1 per month after the first if sustained, cumulative to a maximum of -4).

**Aggressive:** Guild members are told by the guildmaster to steal anything not bolted to the floor. This has an immediate effect on morale of -2, and adds -1 per month (cumulative) to a maximum of -10; at which point a revolt is automatically triggered (if it hasn't been already).

The more active the guild, the more likely thieves are to be apprehended by the law, however!

The sums of money gained by the guildmaster this way are not great, unless the guild is a large one, the community is rich, and/or the guildmaster gets away with aggressive thieving tactics. This is likely to be ale (maybe wine) money for guildmaster-level thieves, so they'll need other activities to generate income. The player must consult with the GM to plan and organize these jobs. Shopkeepers cannot afford to pay too much as protection money, for example. These sums are usually lower than most players think! Players can easily attempt too great a shake down, with potentially disastrous results. Guildmasters best make sure their targets are rich enough to take a hit and complacent enough not to pursue a particular treasure to the edge of the world!

**The Long Arm of the Law**

Each month, the guild might face a confrontation with the law. Determine this on Table 3S: Confrontations with the Law.

Modifiers to Die Roll on Table 3S: Confrontations with the Law:

- +4 if attitude of law is persecutory
- +2 if attitude of law is hassling
- 2 if attitude of law is tolerant
- 4 if attitude of law is corrupt
- 3 if activity of guild is easygoing
- 1 if activity of guild is routine
- +2 if activity of guild is pushy
- +5 if activity of guild is aggressive
- +1 for each group of 10 thieves (round up) past the first 10 (maximum modifier +5)

Note that when rolling on the table above, a roll of natural 20 indicates a confrontation with the law, regardless of modifiers.

If a confrontation arises, roll on Table 3T: Nature of Confrontations to determine the nature of the confrontation. Apply the same modifiers to the die roll as for Table 3S: Confrontations with the Law, except for the last one regarding the number of thieves. Also, natural rolls of 1 and 20 are not subjected to modifiers on Table 3T: Nature of Confrontations.

Any arrest of three or more thieves reduces the morale of guild members by -1.

Clearly, a guild that can manage to corrupt the law somewhere along the line stands a better chance of enduring. It is up to the player of a PC guildmaster to set about corrupting the law, if it isn't corrupt already, and up to the GM to determine at what point the corruption has gone far enough to apply dice modifiers in the tables above.

**Arrested Thieves:** Different realms have very different legal systems and degrees of punishment. However, it should be acceptable for the guildmaster to attempt to get his followers back by paying their fines, unless the GM rules otherwise (e.g. the country is lawful neutral and very punitive, the attitude of the law is persecutory or hassling, etc.). The fine varies considerably. The base fine is 30 gp, but several modifiers apply. If the thief is of 3rd or higher level, double the fine (he probably has a record). If the guild's activity level was pushy, double the fine. If the guild's activity level was aggressive, multiply the fine by five. Finally, roll 1d4 and multiply the fine by this figure to get a final sum.

Many GMs will want to detail such punishments further for themselves, but for an average guild at an average level of operation, a fine of 75 gp or 150 gp for a seasoned criminal, is not so much to pay. The guild can afford to pay half the fine (part of running expenses) up to 250 gp, but the guildmaster has to fork out the rest from his personal wealth to maintain loyalty.

D20 Roll	Result
1-16	No confrontation
17-20	Confrontation

D20 Roll	Result
1	Arrest of 1 thief (1st level)
2-5	Arrest of 1 thief (level 1d2)
6-9	Arrest of 1d2 thieves (1st level Apprentices)
10-15	Arrest of 1d2 levels (levels 1d2 each)
16-18	Arrest of 1d2+1 thieves (levels 1d3 each)
19	Arrest of 1d3+1 thieves (levels 1d3 each)
20	Reroll, but thieves are killed rather than arrested
21-23	Arrest of 1d2+3 thieves*
24+	As above, but a 50% chance for each thief to be killed

\* determined at random from active member list



A guildmaster who gets a thief out of jail by paying the fine, or by busting him out, gains the confidence of his followers, who add +1 to their morale for the next month. On the other hand, if the guild suffers a loss of several (3 or more) members there may be a morale drop of -1 or more (but the GM may waive this for large guilds of 30 or more).

These fines apply if the thieves were arrested on some minor trumped up charge. More than likely the authorities know who some members of the guild are and often seek to pin certain crimes (real or fictitious) on them to get them off the street. For specific crimes in which the thieves are caught not by rolling on Table 3T: Nature of Confrontations but in an actual role-playing scenario, use the criminal justice system defined on Table 15B in the GameMaster's Guide. Penalties are often more severe in these cases.

### Guild Morale

Unless there are special reasons to the contrary, the base morale for guild members begins at 15. If morale falls below this level, the situation calls for a morale check (remember that morale is 5% times the morale rating, and checked on percentile dice). Failing the check means that 1d2 thieves leave the guild to become freelancers elsewhere. For each 2 points that morale falls below 14, add 1 extra deserter. If the morale check comes up 98-100 (unmodified), add 1d4 extra deserters. Do not add alignment modifiers (for the PC) to these morale checks.

As an alternative to leaving the guild the thieves may put their grievances to the guildmaster. The GM can make a secret check against the guildmaster's Charisma, if successful the thieves complain rather than desert. They may ask for lower dues or cuts to the guild, more resources from the guild, or anything the GM determines. This makes sense if morale falls due to ill-fortune (an unfortunate number of arrests and other problems) rather than the guildmaster having been reckless or careless.

If morale falls to 5 or lower, however, the guildmaster suffers an open revolt and attempted *putsch* (and, at the GMs discretion, this may happen sooner if

### Table 3U: Special Events in Thieves' Guilds

D20 Roll	Special Event
1	Senior thief from next town defects to PC's guild asking for protection; brings minor magical gift
2	Randomly selected guild member kidnapped by evil adventurers and ransomed
3	Freak success with burglary; guild gets extra 1d6 x 100 gp but needs a good fence
4	Junior thief manages to acquire a police snitch
5	Deputy guildmaster is diseased/cursed/kidnapped/caught by the law
6	1d3 dumb thugs offer services to the guild for a retainer (they may be loyal fighters or stool pigeons for another organization)
7	Powerful NPC (magic-user) commissions a tough break in and burglary from guild
8	Guildhouse located by authorities; 50% chance a junior thief discovers this 1d3 hours before the raid
9	Local assassins' guild requests simple manpower help with a "little job" that turns out not to be so little...
10	NPC specialist (fence, cleric, etc.) arrives and applies for guild membership
11	Randomly selected junior guild member suffers accident that leaves him unable to thief
12	Guildhouse burgled! Brilliant NPC outsider, perhaps working for another guild, gets away with valuables stored there
13	Mid-level thief and apprentice disappear mysteriously
14	Failed assassination attempt against guildmaster
15	Thieves panic and accidentally kill guards – law becomes persecutory for next month (if already persecutory, adds +33% agents). 15% chance they also killed the son of a noble or important merchant – law becomes persecutory for 2d4 months (or add +66% agents)
16	Potential mole discovered in guild – does he work for another guild, the law, or is he a scout for criminal organization?
17	Job turns up magic item unusable by any thief in the guild
18	1d3 thieves botch a job and get beaten, reduce guild income by 25% for that month
19	Relations with beggars' guild improve (if bad) or worsen (if good) due to actions of junior thieves
20	Outsider claims to know PC's identity as guildmaster and blackmails him to keep from revealing evidence

the PC is being cruel, arbitrary, reckless, or otherwise abusing his position. Consider this if morale falls by 4 or more in a single month.)

### New Followers

Losing old members is not the only possibility; new followers may arrive, new apprentices found on the street, and so on. The GM should check for this monthly. The base chance is 10% for each 10 thieves (or portion thereof) already in the guild for example, a guild with 27 thieves has a 30% chance

### Table 3V: Modifier to New Followers' Check

Per morale point above 15	+10%
Per morale point below 10	-10%
Guildmaster's Charisma	+1% per point above 10
Society is rich	+10%
Society is wealthy	+5%
Society is poor	-5%
Society is very poor	-20%

each month of attracting a new follower. Modifiers to this base percentage chance are shown in Table 3V: Modifier to New Followers' Check.

Whatever the final percentage chances, no more than two new thieves arrive in any single month. New arrivals are 1st level apprentices, with the standard chance for being demi-human and possibly multi-classed. The GM may allow greater chances for new recruits if the guildmaster goes on a recruiting drive after a series of arrests or similar misfortunes weakens the guild.

### Special Events and Occurrences

A number of annoying unforeseen happenings can make life far from boring for any guildmaster. Allow a flat 1 in 6 chance per month of one event (rolled from Table 3U: Special Events in Thieves' Guilds) to take place. The GM must be prepared to do some necessary work fleshing out the event, and he may also add his own occurrences to those in the table. If an event is irrelevant, then no special event occurs that month. Note that these events only apply to guild-specific items. Natural disasters, wars, floods of refugees, famine, plague and all sorts of other occurrences are always possible, too!

### Thieves' Guilds of Garweeze Wurld

As noted previously, characters of the thief group classes often need to band together to achieve their goals, or at least to thrive. Below you will find several examples of current organizations found in Garweeze Wurld. The list is by no means exhaustive.

Note that in some cases it is possible to belong to a city guild and to a larger group. However, certain organizations (Dunayrion Lymest) and classes (yakuza, ninja) preclude such dual membership. One cannot spread his loyalties too thin, especially in the world of griftmasters and thieves, where your word is your only bond (everyone already knows what you think of written law).

Each organization's description includes the following information:

**NAME:** The name by which the Wurld knows the group as a whole.

**MEMBER'S NAME:** The name by which individual members of the group go.

**LOCATION:** The region where the organization operates.

**HISTORY:** A brief summary of important parts of the organization's past.

**PURPOSE:** The basic reasons for the organization's existence.

**MASTER OF THE GUILD:** The person or persons in charge of the organization.

**ALIGNMENT:** The moral and ethical bent of the majority of members of the group.

**PREFERRED:** The types of characters the organization seeks to attract to its membership.

**BARRED:** The types of characters not allowed to join, usually because they diametrically oppose the goals and beliefs of the organization.

**SYMBOL:** The standard image representing the group.

**ADVANCEMENT:** How one gains advancement in the hierarchy of the organization.

**MEMBERS:** A description of typical members of the organization.

**STPs:** Recommended skills, talents and proficiencies that the organization looks for in candidates for membership. Bonus skills are in parentheses.

**FAVORED WEAPONS:** The types of weapons used most frequently by members in combat.

**FAVORED ARMOR:** The type of armor used most frequently by members in combat.

**ABILITY RESTRICTIONS:** Any minimal requirements that members must meet beyond those needed to be a member of the character's class.

**POWERS:** Special abilities taught to members of the organization.

**PERKS:** Benefits of membership.

**DRAWBACKS:** Potential down side to becoming a member.

**FRIENDS/ALLIES:** Organizations with which this group has friendly relations.

**ENEMIES/FOES:** Groups this organization does not like.

**SAYINGS:** Common phrases a member might spout, given to aid in role-playing the characters.

### Lords of Crime

**MEMBER'S NAME:** Crime Lords.

**LOCATION:** This guild's main headquarters is in the port city of Barcen, but its reach extends to all cities, within 150 miles of Barcen, large or small.

**HISTORY:** The Lords of Crime thieves' guild has been in existence for many years and is said to have its finger in every dirty deed in every major city. This boast of the Crime Lords may be a bit of an exaggeration, but their presence is felt in many segments of society. Some of the most famous exploits of The Lords of Crime are The Great Diamond Heist of '84, The Sageem Nephew Kidnapping and The 83-Day Pickpocket Spree of Aber Danz.

**PURPOSE:** To get rich and maintain power.

**MASTER OF THE GUILD:** Globus Smat is now the Head Crime Lord of the Lords of Crime. He lives on a vast estate on an island, the location of which is known only to a few close associates. He runs operations with a very sharp eye, in spite of his immense size and failing health. Globus rarely bathes, and emits a distinct stench. His estate is home to several thousand pigs, which he sells at market as a legitimate business front. Everybody knows that his "employees" are in fact slaves, either captured children or small demi-humans such as halflings and gnomelings. His right-hand man is Simik Swiligus, a smarmy man who does Lord Smat's dirty work.

Globus has his dirty fingers in several pies at the moment, including running a fleet of pirate ships off the coast of Barcen to intercept trading vessels and a string of expert pick pockets operating in Aber Danz. Disloyalty is not tolerated. Members are expected to treat their lord with utmost respect and submission. When they come into his presence, they must bow and kneel before him until given permission to speak or arise. Executions of turncoats and the incompetent take place frequently. Globus employs several large half-ogres (thugs and fighters) to enforce his decrees and also to pressure merchants into paying him protection money.

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral and evil

**PREFERRED:** Thieves that are experts at picking pockets, with a pick pockets ability of at least 60%.

**BARRED:** None.

**SYMBOL:** A pig's head with a crown.

**ADVANCEMENT:** Advancement in the Lords of Crime is simple. When one does well, his superiors recognize this and reward him for it. Sometimes, however, Globus is not fair. Those who flatter him and give gifts may rise in position more quickly than those who do not. High Charisma is often more important for advancement than anything else, though truly exceptional ability and work is always recognized. Sometimes, however, rivals within the organization recognize it. Therefore, those who have performed well either keep low key or risk attempts on their lives by jealous compatriots.

**MEMBERS:** Crime Lords have two overarching goals in life and they are: 1) get rich and 2) don't piss off Globus. No one is allowed to retire from the Crime Lords. Most members don't ever get to that point anyway: they end up in prison or dead before retirement is even a consideration. Still, young, brash thieves swarm to become members of this guild, where they feel their talents are put to good use.

**STPs:** Glean information, intimidation, pinch, skilled liar, street cred.

**FAVORED WEAPONS:** Daggers and swords.

**FAVORED ARMOR:** Leather.

**ABILITY RESTRICTIONS:** Normal for thieves.

**POWERS:** Because of the reputation of The Lords of Crime, members sometimes (50% of the time) receive a 10-30% discount on goods purchased in a city where the guild has operations. Of course there is also a 50% chance that a merchant hates the Crime Lords enough to refuse to sell them anything, or else charge an exorbitant amount (10-30% higher). However, whether people love or hate the Crime Lords, they most certainly fear them, which makes gathering information easier for members. If a Crime Lord wants to know something, and he asks a 0-level townsman, there is a 75% chance that person reveals everything he knows on a subject simply upon being asked. Twenty-five percent of those asked either refuse to answer unless persuaded more forcefully or give answers that are misleading or vague. They may also simply play dumb.

Also, because of Lord Smat's penchant for kidnapping slaves, any Crime Lord who attempts to subdue a person for capture by Lord Smat is highly motivated. He gets +1 to hit.

**PERKS:** Thieves who join this guild receive 2 points of base Honor upon acceptance into this well-respected organization. They also receive stipends for their work so that they are never completely without money. Crime Lords do not starve.

**DRAWBACKS:** Crime Lords are expected to give Lord Smat a 40% cut of everything they make in their work. This money is considered to be dues for belonging to the organization, and the price of being able to do business in Lord Smat's territory without having your throat cut.

Also, Lord Smat is notorious for his terrible temper and a wicked sadistic streak. If a member of this guild fails in any task, there is a 20% chance that Lord Smat finds out about it, and if he does a 40% chance that he sends out his goons to bring the bungler back to him for a good thrashing.

Any member who betrays the guild in any way (usually by informing authorities or outsiders about the details of the guild's organization, location or leadership) will be dragged before Lord Smat and killed in as slow and painful a manner as such a deviant mind can imagine.

**FRIENDS/ALLIES:** Sadoks.

**ENEMIES/FOES:** Law enforcement officials.

**SAYINGS:** If you know what's good for you, you'll pay up. – I swear by Lord Smat's filth. – Fat pockets are ripe for picking. – Once a Crime Lord, always a Crime Lord. – Nobody crosses a Crime Lord.

## The Highwaymen

**MEMBER'S NAME:** Highwayman.

**LOCATION:** Transitory, but for now, along the Melet Way and Aramar Way between Fangaerie and Abos.

**HISTORY:** The Highwaymen have been the bane of merchants and travelers around Fangaerie and other centers of trade for 25 years now, ever since a band of like-minded young thieves decided that waylaying caravans was the best way to get rich. Lately, they have focused most of their activity along the Melet Way and the stretch of the Aramar Way that leads from Fangaerie to Abos. However, because of increased patrols and a decidedly vigorous campaign by the officials of Fangaerie to root them out, they are considering moving their operations elsewhere for a time.

**PURPOSE:** To get rich, avoid capture, and look good doing it.

**MASTER OF THE GUILD:** The guild is run by a "Pack" of six, representing the six original founders. All of the original six were caught and executed for their crimes long ago, except for one, who was never found, and is believed to be at large to this day. The Sixth Founder, as he is called, is not directly involved in the organization anymore, and most believe that he is dead. However, his legend continues to inspire members, and some believe he will return to lead them once again. It is said that he escaped from the back of a locked and guarded prison wagon traveling at great speed. No one is sure

how he accomplished such a feat. This Sixth Founder went by several aliases, but his real name was Yancey Pillerson, a human former soldier drummed out of his unit after being accused of stealing from his unit's treasury. He met up with the other founders of the guild in a pub while drowning his sorrows.

His daughter, Bailey, is on the guild's "Pack" now, representing her father. She believes her father is still alive, and that he will return. Taught the ways of highway robbery at an early age, she is an expert in the art of disguise and hand-to-hand combat. The other current members of the "Pack" include:

**Toralim Dex**, a half-elf expert with a crossbow and a born leader.

Toralim was a former aide to one of the original founders.

**Ulugun Pon**, an outcast Grevan who was taken under the wing of one of the members after almost being caught robbing a group of men who turned out to be members of the Fangaerie patrol. Ulugun became extremely loyal to his mentor, and learned eagerly and quickly. He soon became an expert at establishing ambush zones and camouflage.

**Langara Traghont**, a half-orc female, and the niece of one of the founders. She knows the intricacies of gleaning information and stealthy movement. Her abilities to hide and sneak about have earned her a reputation for nearly magical skill.

**Rotarim Nohald**, the bored young son of a wealthy but minor noble. A perpetual troublemaker, his father Baron Nohald disowned him seven years ago. Rotarim made off with more than a few jewels, which the Highwaymen took when they captured him. Rotarim spent a week trying to convince them to let him join, since he knew the Baron would never pay a ransom. The ne'er-do-well learned quickly and rose through the ranks. He attempts to bring a sense of style and flair to the group, while establishing an ill-gotten fortune of his own.

**Lager Wilhelm**, last but hardly least. Wilhelm is a human ex-guard from Fangaerie who thought he might end up richer on the other side of the law, and so joined The Highwaymen. At first, he worked for the guild on the inside, passing on information about the locations and schedules of patrols, as well as other vital facts. But, when the captain of the guard discovered his deceit, he ordered Wilhelm's arrest. With his former comrades closing in on him, Lager made a mad dash into the hills where he laid low and later joined up with the guild. He still puts his knowledge of the Fangaerian guard to good use, and is the guild's best tactician. He is also adept at administration and the management of money.

Together, the "Pack" does its best to keep guild members from being captured, organizes raids on caravans and teaches its members what they need to know to succeed. In spite of their unlawful activities, within the organization, all members are expected to abide by a code of conduct. The "Pack" ensures compliance with this code for the preservation of the guild. While generally fair leaders, certain infractions are dealt with swiftly and permanently.

**ALIGNMENT:** Any neutral alignment (other than CN), and lawful evil.

**PREFERRED:** Any who follow the code.

**BARRED:** Chaotic alignments.

**SYMBOL:** A black mask.

**ADVANCEMENT:** Valorous deeds on behalf of the organization are always rewarded. Those who gain the most wealth find themselves quickly rising in leadership positions. These thieves also tend to gain higher prices on their heads. Therefore, one way of keeping track of rank within the organization is by the wanted posters. Those with higher rewards for their capture are usually the higher rank within the guild. Many members see this as a kind of game. Honor is also important within the organization. No matter how much a person does for the guild, if he falls into dishonor, he will not rise in position within the guild until he not only restores his honor, but achieves great Honor.

**MEMBERS:** Highwaymen come from all walks of life. Some were born and bred in the cities, some in more rural settings. Members represent every race



in Garweeze World. Pixie fairy highwaymen make excellent lookouts and many are high ranking, though none have ever served on the "Pack".

The guild's code of conduct attempts to keep its members from performing acts of senseless cruelty or brutality when ambushing caravans. Such acts only serve to incense citizenry making it harder for the guild to conduct business without being hunted relentlessly or becoming the targets of vengeance by very determined angry relatives or friends of victims. Other parts of the code that members are expected to abide by include prohibitions against humiliating clerics, harming of children or innocents, fighting within the organization and talking about the activities of the guild to outsiders. The code also encourages politeness when robbing caravans, paying respect to the "Pack" and reporting all valuables gained in a raid.

One of the biggest taboos within the guild is "ratting out" another guild member, or on the guild itself. Any member found informing on any other member, or on the guild, is bound over for trial before the "Pack." If found guilty of any of these offenses, all lumped under the term "treason," the member will be swiftly executed. The condemned is dispatched by being tied to a tree facing a firing squad of 5-8 archers. On command, the firing squad fire arrows into the condemned's body until the offender is dead (however long that takes).

**STPS:** Acrobatic skill suite, disguise, establish ambush zone, hide in shadows, military operations: battle sense, riding: land based, skilled liar, (slip away into shadows – trained on acceptance), sword and bow proficiencies.

**FAVORED WEAPONS:** Swords and bows or crossbows.

**FAVORED ARMOR:** Studded leather.

**ABILITY RESTRICTIONS:** Normal for thieves except for Charisma, which must be 11+.

**POWERS:** Highwaymen are known for their chivalry and their daring raids on caravans. Therefore, people with a low Wisdom score may give the Highwaymen what they want without putting up a fight. Any caravan members with an average Wisdom score of 10 or lower have a 50% chance of simply giving up their money and goods to the Highwaymen. Members of the opposite sex often fall for the derring-do of the Highwaymen; treat Highwaymen as if they had Comeliness scores toward the opposite sex 7 points higher than they actually are when engaged in guild activity.

**PERKS:** Highwaymen always look out for each other. It's part of the "code." Any time a Highwayman is arrested, for instance, a band of his brothers will do their best to effect an escape (or post bond in a pinch). In a fight, a Highwayman never leaves another Highwayman in trouble. If a Highwayman is struck down, his comrades do everything they can to retrieve his body and have him Resurrected. All Highwaymen in good standing are entitled to Resurrections using the guild's treasury, so long as they didn't get killed doing blatantly stupid things just because they knew they could get Resurrected. The Pack determines this in council.

**DRAWBACKS:** All Highwaymen are expected to contribute to the treasury. A Highwayman must give 10% of all funds to the guild each month, from whatever source he gains them. He must abide by the code, which can be rigid. Anyone who willfully violates the code must face a tribunal. If it is determined that the violation is deliberate, the Highwayman is required to pay a 2,000 gp fine for the first violation, unless the violation was serious enough to cause the imprisonment, injury or death of another guild member. The Highwaymen punish such serious violations by death and forfeiture of all assets to the guild. Any Highwayman convicted of two lesser violations is fined 4,000 gp. Anyone convicted of three lesser violations is executed to avoid them informing on the group (and the guild takes all his assets). Guild members who are fined and who cannot afford to pay their fines get a chance to work off their debts.

**FRIENDS/ALLIES:** Some individuals get on well with Five City Minstrels.

**ENEMIES/FOES:** Sadoks. City guards and patrols, especially those of Fangaerie.

**SAYINGS:** And now we will be relieving you of your valuables, thank you. – We may be thieves, but we do have style. – The heart of a Highwayman beats free and rich. – Now, now, let's not make any false moves and we'll all

come away from this with our dignity. – Pardon me ma'am, but is that bauble made of gold?

## The Sadok Thieves' and Assassins' Guild

**MEMBER'S NAME:** The Sadoks, The Wolf Pack.

**LOCATION:** The Sadok Forest.

**HISTORY:** The Sadok Thieves are legendary. They have prowled the Sadok Forest since before most people can remember. Just hearing the name strikes fear into most peoples' hearts. They have made the forest where they dwell a very frightening place to be for even a short time. There are other inhabitants of this dark forest, however, and they have been terrorized by Sadoks for generations. Several clans of high elves call the Sadok Forest their ancestral home. They have a special hatred for the Sadoks. Sadoks have massacred whole villages of elves and continually prey on them. Still the elves remain, choosing to fight back rather than flee.

Drow and humans make up the bulk of Sadok membership. Some Grel have also joined, but given their mutual hatred for drow and the fact that the dark elves severely outnumber them within the organization, most Grel former members have been slain.

**PURPOSE:** To strike terror into the populace and to prey on the weak.

**MASTER OF THE GUILD:** Malik Lackabar is the current Leader. Lackabar is a large, muscular human with a long mane of raven-dark hair flowing down to his waist. He wears a thick moustache and beard covering the lower half of his face. He wears the beard hanging to his waist and braids it in the dwarven style. His eyes are brown, with a glint of red in the pupil. At certain times of the year, Lackabar's form changes from a man to a wolf, for he is in fact a Werewolf. Only his inner circle knows that for certain, however. Because of Lackabar's condition, all Sadoks are forbidden to kill any wolf or Werewolf. In fact, the Sadok's have a long history of alliance with the Werewolves of the Sadok forest and use the wolves as the symbol for the organization.



**ALIGNMENT:** Any evil.

**PREFERRED:** Thieves and assassins.

**BARRED:** Good-aligned thieves, elves except for drow and grel.

**SYMBOL:** A wolf's head with bared fangs.

**ADVANCEMENT:** Sadoks must prove themselves on a regular basis. Each member must participate in one of the group's regular activities (waylaying, robbing and murdering travelers, kidnapping the children of wealthy elves and humans, assaulting, robbing and killing the elves living in the forest) all at least one month to stay in the group. Sadok's gain advancement only by time and experience. A Sadok must have been a member in good standing for at least two years before even being considered for promotion. Exceptional deeds sometimes bring a Sadok additional attention before their superiors. This can result in a faster promotion. It can also result in the Sadok having a "target" on his back. Advancing too quickly or behaving too much like a "show off", is apt to raise suspicion within the group. If a Sadok is seen as a threat to the leadership of the group, he may find himself unceremoniously backstabbed and left for carrion.

There are 10 ranks in the Sadok organization. The ranks are as follows:

- Rank 1 — Cub
- Rank 2 — Clawer
- Rank 3 — Fang
- Rank 4 — Howler
- Rank 5 — Growler
- Rank 6 — Snarler
- Rank 7 — Mauler
- Rank 8 — Wolf
- Rank 9 — Wolf Overseer
- Rank 10 — Leader or Pack Leader (this rank is only for the master of the guild. To become master, one must attain rank 9 and kill the current master.)

**MEMBERS:** Sadoks are usually born into the group, meaning most current members are the sons or daughters of former members. Whole families are Sadoks, and they take pride in their lineage. The organization does periodically accept some outside thieves and assassins, but these must undergo a grueling initiation and stringent probation period. Seeking initiation into the Sadok Thieves' Guild is a risky venture. Anyone who attempts to get into the group and fails is killed.

Initiation includes the ceremonial "toughening" days where candidates are beaten repeatedly by several veteran members. If their demeanor during this time is anything but stoic and brave, they are refused membership. Initiation also requires the successful backstabbing three chosen victims. One of the victims will be a random individual. One will be either a human or elf noble or a ranking member of a law enforcement organization. The last victim will be the initiate's closest family member or friend.

Once the initiate is finally accepted, his probation lasts for a year. During that time four specially chosen Wolf Overseers watch the initiate very closely.

**STPS:** Animal lore, art of beating, botany, dagger proficiency, establish ambush zone, forestry, jugular swipe, plant identification: holistic, riding – land-based, set snares, slip away into shadows, woodland lore.

**FAVORED WEAPONS:** Any, but all must be skilled with daggers, dirks or knives.

**FAVORED ARMOR:** Leather.

**ABILITY RESTRICTIONS:** Wisdom 12+.

**POWERS:** Any opponent with a Wisdom of 12 or lower and Hit Dice or levels lower than the Sadok must make a successful saving throw against fear (paralyzation) at –1 upon laying eyes on a Sadok. Those who fail must drop

their weapons and valuables and run away. Even those unaffected by fear due to high Wisdom or a successful save must stand paralyzed for a moment, suffering a 3 segment penalty to initiative for 1d4 rounds. Sadoks get a –3 initiative edge in their own territory. Sadoks are experts at living in the forest. Because of this, they all get the skill Forest Movement, which functions as the druid ability. Also, because of the Sadok's affiliation with Werewolves and wolves, most get along quite well with them. There is a 90% chance that any of these creatures sees a Sadok as a friend. There is, however, a 10% chance that a Sadok will run across such a creature too crazed by hunger, fear or other strong emotion to refrain from attacking, or one who simply does not understand the connection.

**PERKS:** All Sadoks receive a Dagger +1 upon acceptance into the guild. Any Sadok who comes into the group without a horse receives a light riding horse as well. With every rank advancement, a Sadok's base Honor goes up by one point.

**DRAWBACKS:** All Sadoks who don't already have the sadistic character flaw acquire it upon joining the group though they gain no BPs for it. All those wishing to join the group must undergo the previously mentioned initiation and probation periods, and if anyone fails to prove that they are worthy to join the group during this time, they will be targeted for execution to prevent information about the group from leaking. Also, once someone joins the Sadoks, he is a member for life. No one may voluntarily leave the guild. Anyone who tries is immediately killed. The rare few who successfully left the group spent the rest of their lives in hiding.

**FRIENDS/ALLIES:** The Crime Lords.

**ENEMIES/FOES:** City guards and patrols, the high elves of the Sadok forest, the Highwaymen.

**SAYINGS:** Time to die. – No mercy, no weakness, no defeat. – There's no greater enemy than your best friend, so always watch your back. – When life hands you lemons, beat them to a pulp, preferably in someone's face. – Look, isn't he cute the way he squirms on the end of my dagger like that?

## Dunayrion Lymest

**MEMBER'S NAME:** The Grevan Terrors, the Bloody Fists.

**LOCATION:** The Grevan Steppes.

**HISTORY:** Dunayrion Lymest translates from the Grevan tongue as "Blood Fist". The Bloody Fists, also known by outsiders as the Grevan Terrors, have been wreaking terror for at least one hundred years. They are a special group of assassins whose job is not only to kill, but also to terrorize and demoralize the enemy. Assassinations carried out by this group are always political and meant to serve the cause of the Grevan people. At least that's what the Bloody Fists claim.

**PURPOSE:** To further the cause of the Grevan people.

**MASTER OF THE GUILD:** Garesta Garl has been the master, or chief, of this organization since her father was captured and executed for a string of political murders within Grevan society. His targets had been several key leaders who were seen by the Bloody Fists as being "soft" on the Grevans' traditional enemies. Garesta has instituted a bloody campaign of terror and assassinations in retaliation for her father's death.

Garesta has a stony countenance to match her rock-solid determination. She is not what one would call attractive. Most who see her would describe her appearance as terrifying. She has a perpetual scowl on her harsh, tattooed face. Her right eye is green, while her left eye is an amber color. Her thin, dark brown hair is kept cropped short, in the required style for the Bloody Fists. She wears large earrings in each ear, one with a holy symbol of Gronfyr (See Gawds & Demigawds), the other with the Bloody Fist's symbol (a severed hand with fist closed and dripping with blood). Her earrings are so heavy that her ear lobes have become elongated. Her face is bony and angular. Her voice is filled with venom, and her eyes always glint with a not-quite-bridled madness and rage. Her tongue cuts like a whip when she lashes out at those who fail her. Fail her too often, and find yourself facing death. Many former members of the group are now in hiding for fear of Garesta's wrath.

**ALIGNMENT:** Any evil.

**PREFERRED:** Grevan assassins.

**BARRED:** Non-Grevans, non-assassins.

**SYMBOL:** A severed hand with fist closed and dripping with blood.

**ADVANCEMENT:** To advance as a Bloody Fist, one must consistently and successfully carry out assigned tasks. Many times those tasks include murder, but there are other tasks assigned as well. Sometimes tasks consist of burning entire villages. Sometimes they include poisoning the water supply of a town. In other words, not only do the Bloody Fists kill people, they also seek to terrorize them into submission. Actually, any member of the group who fails to perform a task is severely punished. Scourges are used on the backs of failures. After three failures, a member is no longer considered part of the group and is marked for death and humiliation. The disgraced being is stripped of all weapons and clothing, branded with runes of shame, loaded onto the back of an ass, herded toward the village of an enemy and set aflame.

Thus advancement means life to a Bloody Fist. After every seven successful missions, a Bloody Fist is honored with awards and a promotion in rank. There are 14 ranks within the organization. They are:

- Rank 1 – Blood Private
- Rank 2 – Blood Private First Class
- Rank 3 – Blood Corporal
- Rank 4 – Blood Sergeant
- Rank 5 – Blood Sergeant First Class
- Rank 6 – Blood Master Sergeant
- Rank 7 – Blood Sergeant Major
- Rank 8 – Blood Lieutenant Second Class
- Rank 9 – Blood Lieutenant First Class
- Rank 10 – Blood Captain
- Rank 11 – Blood Major
- Rank 12 – Blood Lieutenant Colonel
- Rank 13 – Blood Colonel
- Rank 14 – Blood General

**MEMBERS:** Bloody Fists are recruited from the ranks of Grevan assassins who stand out for their brutality and success against the enemy. These assassins receive invitations to submit themselves for membership. They must offer proof of their great brutal deeds by addressing the chief and her closest aides and recounting the details of at least five kills. These facts are then checked for accuracy. Once a potential member has passed the "brutality test," he is initiated and sworn to loyalty in an elaborate and bloody ceremony. In this ceremony, initiates are required to slice their fists with a ceremonial dagger, then squeeze the drippings into a ceremonial chalice. Once he does this, every member at the ceremony does likewise. After squeezing all of their bloody fists into chalices, they then drink the blood, mixing it with good Grevan ale for taste.

Besides failure to accomplish tasks, other deeds that draw the ire of the commanders of this unit include giving aid or mercy to an enemy. Anyone caught dealing with any member of another race, especially any other type of elf or pixie fairies, in any manner other than brutally killing them, is marked for punishment. Three of these infractions mark the member for death.

**STPs:** Angawa Battle Cry, basic and vital anatomy of elves, drow and pixie fairies, fire building, heat resistance, (intimidation), slip away into shadows, stealthy movement, torture, tracking, vandalism/desecration.

**FAVORED WEAPONS:** Daggers, scourges, swords, bows.

**FAVORED ARMOR:** Leather.

**ABILITY RESTRICTIONS:** As for assassins.

**POWERS:** A Bloody Fist can strike terror into any heart that fails a saving throw versus paralyzation, even other Grevans. Victims of with fewer HD or

levels than the Bloody Fist must save versus paralyzation or suffer from terror. This terror does one of two things: 50% of the time it forces the victim to flee, 50% of the time it causes the victim to freeze up and be unable to move for one round.

Bloody Fists get +1 on all to-hit and damage rolls against elves, drow or pixie fairies.

**PERKS:** Bloody Fists are some of the most well respected members of Grevan society. Therefore, they can always find someone to repair their armor free of charge. They also get a 50% discount on all goods they buy in Grevan lands. They get the finest tables at all restaurants, the finest room at any inn, and the choice food at any gathering in Grevan territory. To Grevans, all Bloody Fists are treated as if they have an 18 Charisma. They also get two points of base Honor when accepted into the society.

**DRAWBACKS:** Their code of conduct is extremely strict, as stated above. Failure is not an option, and incurs the sole punishment: a violent death. Members must also pay a 100 gp tribute to the chief every year, in addition to their 20 gp/month dues to the guild.

**FRIENDS/ALLIES:** None.

**ENEMIES/FOES:** All non-Grevan

**SAYINGS:** Send all the infidels to the Abyss! – Our enemies deserve only three things: terror, suffering and death. – For the Grevan! – Every day is a good day to kill. – A Bloody Fist cannot fail! – My fist is not righteous unless it's drenched in blood. – (to enemies) Thou hath felt the wrath of the Bloody Fist! – (battle cry) Die infidels!

## The Five City Minstrel Society

**MEMBER'S NAME:** Five City Minstrels

**LOCATION:** Fangaerie, Groutet, Ruhrz, Arz and Farrel.

**HISTORY:** The Five City Minstrels were formed by a group of minstrels from Fangaerie and the surrounding cities to provide a more organized method of seeking employment, managing money and, on occasion, defending against legal troubles. In spite of an occasional incident, the group is well thought of, and has several wealthy nobles and rulers as patrons. They are known for their fine musical abilities and their humorous musical farces (even though these farces sometimes get them into trouble).

**PURPOSE:** To earn a decent living.

**MASTER OF THE GUILD:** Lonnya Grasswillow, a tall, graceful young woman is the current Artistic Director of the Five City Minstrels. She oversees training and maintains a high degree of professionalism and talent within the organization. Pietrach Conneran is the Comedy Director of the group. The Minstrels also have a Governing Board divided into a Booking and Contacts Division, a Finance and Accounting Division and a Legal Division.

Lonnya's talent was evident when she was barely able to walk. She showed remarkable musical ability and played complicated symphony pieces on a borrowed violin by the time she was five years old. She was taken in and apprenticed by an old maestro, Professor Borawood Plimpson. At the time, he was Artistic Director of the Minstrels, and Lonnya became a full-fledged member at the age of seven. Her musical abilities soon outstripped her mentor, and she was the most requested minstrel of the guild. Her haunting hazel eyes seem to look into the very soul of anyone she gazes at. Her beautiful face mesmerizes people, especially with her intense expressions while she plays. She keeps her fine, straight blonde hair pulled back when she plays to keep it from falling into her eyes. Her body and fingers are lean and lithe. Besides being a virtuoso on the violin, she can skillfully play virtually any instrument known. She specializes in the violin and harp, however. Additionally, she is an accomplished ballerina, and can dance with such feeling as to bring a grown man to tears. She expects the members of the guild to do their very best at all times. She understands that not everyone is as talented as she is, but what she doesn't brook is laziness. Anyone not pulling his fair share of the workload, and failing to practice on a regular basis, may be ousted from the group by Lonnya.

Pietrach Conneran is a rather crude individual, especially when compared to Lonnya. Pietrach loves to carouse. He also has an uncouth sense of

humor. In spite of his faults, there is an irresistible charm to the rascal. He is a rather short and squat individual with short, uncombed light brown hair. His face is lined with the signs of a man who lives life a little too hard and his chin is perpetually covered with fine stubble. His blue eyes twinkle with mischief, and his mouth always sports a crooked smile. He wears fine clothing, but it is always just a little disheveled. His breath most commonly smells of ale or mead. When it comes to his job, however, his credentials are of the highest order. He has been court jester to many a king and noble, and the farces that he writes and directs have earned him quite a following. He directs all of the Minstrel farces, overseeing them with an unwavering vision. He expects his entertainers to perform to the best of their abilities, even if he does understand an occasional lapse in judgement. His students love him, and he revels with them every chance he gets. When time for preparing or performing comes, however, he always gets the job done.

Lonnya and Pietrach don't always see eye to eye, but they are both professional enough not to let their disagreements get out of hand. Pietrach thinks Lonnya is a bit too stuffy, while Lonnya is of the opinion that Pietrach is a little bit unprofessional and too lenient on his students.

In spite of this, the two both have an underlying respect for each other's talent and expertise.

The Governing Board answers to them, but the two give the board free reign over most everyday operations. The Board makes sure that the members of the organization have plenty of jobs lined up, that the group maintains contact with the movers and shakers of the five cities and other important people, that everyone gets paid what they should and that the guild's books are in order and free of error or confusion. The group generally operates within the boundaries of most civil laws. It also makes sure that any legal disputes are settled as quickly and painlessly as possible. The board is an invaluable asset to the group.

**ALIGNMENT:** Good and neutral.

**PREFERRED:** Minstrels, bards.

**BARRED:** Thieves, evil alignments.

**SYMBOL:** A laughing theater mask and a violin.

**ADVANCEMENT:** Advancement within this organization is simple and straightforward. Minstrels who are popular with patrons, who are the most requested, etc. advance higher and faster than minstrels who are not hired as often. New minstrels in this organization must prove themselves. Often, however, more experienced minstrels take younger members under their wings. When a minstrel decides to take on a protégé, he often takes his charge with him on jobs and, when he feels the young minstrel is ready, asks the patron to listen to the young minstrel play. That is how the younger minstrels build their reputations and clientele. The guild's masters also do what they can to offer the younger minstrels lesser paying jobs in order to build up their resumé's. Younger minstrels with initiative might also do work on street corners and at celebrations, or in inns, for free, or for tips, in order to become recognized. Some cities do not approve of musicians on certain street corners, usually in more upscale neighborhoods, and so these young minstrels must be careful to get guild approval and guidance before attempting this.

Guild members with certain useful skills, such as business management, legal knowledge or connections in high places may find places on the guild's Governing Board.

The Artistic and Comedy Directors' positions are not up for grabs unless those who currently hold the positions retire or die. Then, the Governing Board votes on the successors after a two-day intensive series of auditions.

**MEMBERS:** Most of the members of the Five City Minstrels are citizens of Fangarrie, but there are a few from the four other nearby towns. Members must pay monthly dues, depending on their earning ability. Because there are so many varied levels of salaries earned in the group, the dues are set at a straight 10% of all wages earned through performing. Tips are not part of this percentage, and minstrels who earn these can keep them with no problem. Some members in the past have attempted to cheat, however, and the Governing Board does its best to keep tabs on the members. In the past, some members have claimed part of their salary were tips so as to get a larger chunk of the money. Now, if a member is caught cheating on his dues'

payment, he forfeits ALL the monies from his next three jobs, including tips, to the guild.

The directors are not extremely harsh with this, but the Governing Board, especially the members of the Finance and Accounting Division, refuse to let anyone get away with such trickery. Repeated offenders are ousted from the group, and often legally forbidden to perform!

While all members have some sort of weapons' skills, fighting is not emphasized, and is studied only for self-defense. Sometimes, self-defense is necessary in this profession, however. Many travel into seedier areas of towns at night where they become targets for unsavory types. Sometimes patrons become drunk and belligerent, or are offended by something the minstrels portray in their performances, and there have been scuffles in these situations. Not a few minstrels have gotten into dangerous, even deadly situations, over members of the opposite sex. Members of the group generally avoid combat when possible. This guild doesn't want trouble.

**STPs:** Acrobatic skill suite, ballroom dancing, etiquette, joke telling, juggling, knowledge of courtly affairs, mingling, singing, various musical instrument proficiencies.

**FAVORED WEAPONS:** Daggers.

**FAVORED ARMOR:** Leather.

**ABILITY RESTRICTIONS:** As for minstrels (except for charlatans).

**POWERS:** They say that laughter is the best medicine. Members of this guild prove that saying to be true. Whenever a Five City Minstrel performs and makes a successful performance skill check in his chosen medium, all within earshot who happen to be injured or sick are healed as per the clerical spell Heal Light Wounds. Unlike the cleric spell, however, the healing is not limited to one creature. All within earshot of the minstrel's performance receive 1d4 points of healing per performer level. Penetration does not apply in this instance, however, nor can individuals unable to hear the performance benefit from the effects. Because of this ability, these minstrels are often requested to perform in hospitals, orphanages, battlefields and the like.

**PERKS:** Any member of the Five City Minstrels who performs at the best of his abilities and spends a large amount of time practicing and performing is sure to catch the eye of more experienced fellow minstrels. There is a 10% chance per level that a member of this organization will attract the services of a mentor.

Also, members of this organization receive help with any legal conflicts that arise, including arrest. The Legal Division oversees these types of problems, and they are experts at finding loopholes, using contacts, offering counsel and defense services, as well as, if necessary, providing just the right combination of intimidation and monetary incentive to the right people.

**DRAWBACKS:** Some outsiders consider minstrels to be pansies, especially fighter types. They often bully and pick on minstrels, sully their honor and leading to altercations, which usually end badly for minstrels. Also, minstrels often get blamed for any trouble that happens when they're around, whether they are guilty or not. They just have that look about them.

**FRIENDS/ALLIES:** Rich patrons.

**ENEMIES/FOES:** Sadoks. Dunayrion Lymest.

**SAYINGS:** Don't bother me, I'm practicing! – Ladies and gentlemen, we are the Five City Minstrels and we are here to bring you a fine evening's entertainment. – Music and laughter are life's highest aims. – If you have a funny bone, we'll find it. – Hey, hey, hey, that wasn't me, I swear! I never TOUCHED your daughter!

# Chapter 4

## Rules of the Road

In this chapter, we clarify, expand and introduce new rules for use in your campaign. Do not forget what you learned in the PHB when studying this new information. While they focus on thieves and thief group classes, they are not exclusively limited to the thief character. Those rules that modify specific thief activities are, of course, useable only by thieves. New rules cover aspects of classic thief group skills and thief-directed applications of more generic skills.

### THIEF SKILLS

The generic term "thief skills" applies to the following abilities, regardless of what class might also have them: pick pockets, open locks, find traps, remove traps, move silently, hide in shadows, detect noise, climb walls, read languages. Each of these abilities could be considered a special type of skill. While some of them can be learned by characters other than thieves, many classes cannot learn them at all.

Note that thieves have a number of other abilities not included in this term (backstab, thieves' cant, etc.). These are abilities of the thief class, not "thief skills".

Thief skills cannot be raised above 95%, no matter what modifiers are applied.

However, even a thief with modifiers adjusting a thief skill to negative numbers has a better chance at success than some clumsy fighter attempting the same thing. Thievery is mostly about resourcefulness. A single-classed thief with such a negative percentage (including all modifiers) in a skill can attempt it anyway. He succeeds (barely) on a 1. Note that this only applies to true thieves, not all characters of the thief group. Certainly it doesn't apply to other classes!

### Armor Skill Penalties

Thieves aren't meant to ply their trade in armor. Those boneheads who do attempt so should consult Chapter 1: Classes for penalties to skills resulting from various types of armor.

### THE ART OF PICKING POCKETS

Relieving marks of the burden of heavy purses is a fine and ancient art. This skill relies primarily on simple manual dexterity, distraction and swiftness (though a few items might help; see Chapter 6: Tools of the Trade). Few outside the Trade realize the effort and skill that goes into a successful lift.

According to the master thief Rufus the Green, the most important element of the lift is choosing the mark. Taking a man's last purse can lead to unnecessary pursuit and combat – people who lose everything go to great lengths to regain it. By the same token, some of the richest merchants are also the most well defended and well connected. Rufus suggests that lesser thieves not bother with such high-risk jobs, despite the high rewards. For most burgeoning lifters, the best target is a middle class type, preferably with a family (or lady of the evening). They have enough coin to make the heist worthwhile, and with their family/audience nearby, they can't afford to get too worked up. Of course, as with all guidelines, individuals still need to use some judgment.

The mechanics of picking a pocket vary quite a bit. The easiest technique is simply slitting the string that holds a small bag of coin, but this requires that a single string hang from the belt enough to make room for the cut. And the heavier the purse, the more likely the mark will notice.

Slitting the pouch itself is an option, but performing the cut properly is difficult and the thief must catch all the falling coins so that they don't make noise. Still, sometimes people's purses rip without assistance, or on branches, or came with holes in the first place, and often it's easier to get away with the loot. But then how much loot is a poor sap with a holey pouch gonna have anyway?

The greatest thieves, such as Rufus, can actually literally reach into a man's pockets or pouches without being noticed, quickly feel for the most valuable objects, and lift them without sound. The missing weight of the coins (or gems, or small jewelry) is rarely noticed for some time. According to Rufus,

**Table 4A: Pick Pockets Success Results**

Wealth of Area

Success By:	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Average	Comfortable	Middle class	Wealthy	Rich
0-5	1-2 cp	1-4 cp	1-8 cp	1-3 sp	2-5 sp	2-12 sp	3-18 sp	1-3 gp
6-10	1-3 cp	1-6 cp	2-8 cp	1-3 sp	2-5 sp	3-12 sp	4-24 sp	1-3 gp
11-15	1-4 cp	1-8 cp	3-12 cp	1-4 sp	2-8 sp	4-16 sp	4-24 sp	1-4 gp
16-20	1-6 cp	2-8 cp	1-2 sp	1-4 sp	3-9 sp	1-2 gp	1-3 gp	1-4 gp
21-25	1-8 cp	3-10 cp	1-2 sp	1-6 sp	3-12 sp	1-3 gp	1-3 gp	2-5 gp
26-30	2-8 cp	3-12 cp	1-3 sp	1-8 sp	4-24 sp	1-3 gp	1-4 gp	2-5 gp
31-35	3-10 cp	1-2 sp	1-4 sp	2-8 sp	1-2 gp	1-4 gp	1-4 gp	2-7 gp
36-40	3-12 cp	1-2 sp	1-6 sp	3-9 sp	1-3 gp	1-4 gp	1-6 gp	2-8 gp
41-45	1-2 sp	1-2 sp	1-6 sp	3-12 sp	1-3 gp	1-6 gp	1-6 gp	2-8 gp
46-50	1-2 sp	1-3 sp	1-8 sp	4-16 sp	1-4 gp	1-6 gp	1-8 gp	3-9 gp
51-55	1-2 sp	1-3 sp	1-8 sp	1-2 gp	1-4 gp	1-6 gp	1-8 gp	3-9 gp
56-60	1-3 sp	1-4 sp	2-8 sp	1-4 gp	1-6 gp	2-7 gp	2-8 gp	3-12 gp
61-65	1-3 sp	1-6 sp	2-8 sp	2-4 gp	1-6 gp	2-7 gp	2-8 gp	3-12 gp
66-70	1-4 sp	1-8 sp	3-12 sp	2-5 gp	2-7 gp	2-8 gp	3-9 gp	4-13 gp
71-75	1-4 sp	3-10 sp	4-16 sp	2-7 gp	2-7 gp	2-8 gp	3-9 gp	4-13 gp
76-80+	1-6 sp	4-16 sp	1-2 gp	2-8 gp	2-8 gp	3-9 gp	3-12 gp	5-14 gp

20% of the volume a mark carries contains 80% of the available wealth. Identifying which 20% comes with diligence and practice.

But just how much can a thief actually make picking pockets? Assume it takes a bare minimum of 30 minutes to stake out a mark and lift his pouch. The peak picking hours fall along normal business hours, since there are more people walking about and it's easier to go unnoticed. Of course, working a town square for 8 straight hours and hitting 16 marks is more than a little risky. Even the laziest watch force could take note and spend some serious hunting time at that sort of spree. Most thieves' guilds won't allow members to hit the population that much, either, as they need to keep stealing down to levels that the populace will grumble about but tolerate.

GMs should use Table 4A: Pick Pockets Success Results when thieves pick pockets from random individuals. If the nature of the victim is known beforehand (say, the PC targets a henchman of his archenemy who is traveling through a Poor area), this table does not apply. The table assumes that coins make up the majority of what pick pockets grab. Of course, the GM may substitute other logical items.

Only a master pickpocket can support himself well by filching in most areas. Few towns allow just anyone to wander the streets in their wealthy areas, and often it costs money to get into the ritzier districts even on legitimate business. Usually an expert pickpocket has bigger scores in mind.

Still, there are occasions when times are rough and all you need is a few coppers for some crusty bread, or you just want a new short sword. While most checks for picking pockets are for each individual heist, a character could spend hours or days just trying to put together a certain amount of coin. This most often relates to NPC thieves, but a GM may choose to advance the timeline (perhaps while others in the party are training) and average out the day's work. Note that the GM (NOT the player) may insist on checking each individual attempt to pick pockets.

If he does not, in this case, make a single check on Table 4A: Pick Pockets Success Results for each day. On a success, roll the indicated coin range twice (it takes time to avoid suspicious guards, move around, carefully choose marks, etc.). If a victim discovers the thief picking his pocket, roll 1d6. This indicates on which attempt the discovery occurred. If it occurs on attempt 3-4, the character only scores half the coins (one roll of the indicated range), but he may be in for other problems if that victim takes the attempt poorly. Especially if he's packing a weapon.

## SLEIGHT OF HAND

The same skills used in picking pockets are used in sleight of hand. In fact, the thief's practiced hands are superior to lesser practitioners of this particular art.

Sleight of hand allows a character to make small objects (such as lock picks or material components for most spells) seemingly disappear (or re-appear). Success requires quick, deft motions and a certain understanding of how to manipulate an audience's attention. Normally, the whole point of picking pockets is not to be detected at all, but things change a bit when people actually look directly at the thief.

With a successful pick pockets check, a thief can make a small object seem to disappear even in full view of many people. If he fails by less than 10, he still puts it away, but those with the observation skill can make a check to see if they notice where it went. If he fails by more than 10, anyone can see where it went. On a critical failure (96-100), he fails in some drastic way, such as dropping the picks.

Thieves with the pick pockets skill do not need to study sleight of hand separately (though it is a spellslinger skill). They automatically gain the ability to use sleight of hand via their pick pockets skill and can do anything a character with the mere sleight of hand skill can do.

## Concealing Weapons

Often municipalities have annoying laws against carrying weapons and protecting yourself (or assaulting others...). Avoiding these laws can take a little effort, but it's worth it.

A character of the thief group can successfully conceal a Small weapon if it is no longer than one-third his height. Thus, a half-ogre might conceal a short sword, but a halfling could only conceal a dagger. Successful concealment requires a Dexterity check. A character can attempt to hide additional weapons, but he suffers a -4 to his Dexterity to check for the second weapon's concealment, -8 for the third, and -16 for the fourth. No character can hide more than four weapons on his person. Characters of other classes suffer an additional -6 penalty to Dexterity for each weapon they attempt to conceal.

Observers with the observation skill can, with a successful check, notice that a character "looks suspicious". They need a successful second check or a critical success to know for a fact that the character carries a concealed weapon.

## THE ART OF OPENING LOCKS

"In order to pick a lock, we must understand the lock. We must BECOME the lock we seek to master. We must know the mechanical details, but these pale before the sheer WILL that this barrier must be opened. Every lock is different, though all share certain crucial characteristics..."

One of the central abilities (some even say duties) of the thief is opening locks. Understanding locks and similar mechanisms takes careful study of things like tumblers and levers, but also takes the honing of instincts. Utilizing this instinct, though, even for a master thief, takes some effort. As stated in the Player's Handbook, picking a lock takes 1d10 rounds. If the thief uses improvised lockpicks, this duration increases to 1d20 rounds.

Other ways of bypassing locks take rather longer; one reason adventuring parties need thieves. Immensely strong fighter might argue but even their talents are often frustrated. Using a lock chisel and hammer takes one turn; metal-eating acid takes 1d6 turns; cutting around a lock takes 2d6 turns (assuming that the door is a wooden one of average thickness); cutting through a lock takes 3d6 turns. The GM may roll randomly for time needed, or may select a value within the range to reflect the quality and size of the lock. Size will most affect acid and cutting around a lock, whereas quality affects cutting through a lock. These ranges only get longer with superior locks, reinforced doors, inset locks and so on.

Note that thieves can work on an open lock in an attempt to lock it. The same open locks roll applies in order to effectively secure the lock without a key. Notable exceptions include locks such as pad locks which any fool can secure without a roll.

## Improvised Lockpicks

Lockpicks are made for the job, and standard chances of success assume that the thief has them available, but it is possible for a resourceful thief to improvise a lockpick from a length of wire, a hairpin or hatpin, or some similar ready-to-hand item. Obviously, such makeshift tools never function as well as the specially crafted ones, but they're better than nothing. As stated in the Player's Handbook, a penalty of anywhere from -5 to -60 can be applied to the use of such improvised lockpicks.

GMs will take into account Table 4B: Improvised Lock Picking Penalties for guidance regarding the penalty for specific types of improvised picks. GMs can adjust these for similar items ("-12 for a pin with two barbs"), but the penalty cannot be worse than -60.

To create an improvised lockpick of any kind, the thief must first succeed at an Intelligence check, with a bonus to his effective Intelligence equal to his experience level (reflecting the resourcefulness greater experience brings). If he succeeds at this check, he uses the penalty above for the appropriate object, as determined by the GM. If he fails the modified Intelligence check, the thief can cook up something, but it is a feeble and pathetic effort. Double the penalty (or increase it to -60). Note that no amount of experience can

**Table 4B: Improvised Lock Picking Penalties**

Category	Penalty	Example
Suitable	-5	Blacksmith's tools
Rather suitable	-10	Long, barbed pin
Moderately suitable	-15	Long pin without barbs
Fairly suitable	-20	Stiff, twisted wire
Somewhat suitable	-25	Barbed wire from fence
Awkward and somewhat suitable	-30	Loose wire
Barely not unsuitable	-35	Loose barbed wire
Unsuitable	-40	Stiletto
Awkward	-45	Dagger
Awkward and somewhat suitable	-50	Narrow short sword
Awkward and not exactly unsuitable	-55	Chopstick
Awkward and unsuitable	-60	Twig

make a twig into an effective pick – at that point even an experienced thief is pretty much whistling in the dark. Improvised picks cannot open locks of masterful or impossible quality, though the thief attempting to pick that lock cannot tell simply by his failure that it IS a lock of such quality.

**Critical Failure:** When opening locks, either with proper or improvised lock picks, on a skill check roll of 96-99 the tool snaps but can be wangled out with a successful Dexterity check. On a roll of 100, the snapped tool is wedged in the lock and cannot be removed (save for disassembling the whole lock!).

**Critical Success:** A thief who succeeds on his skill check with a number 1/10 or less of what his percentage is (rounded normally, thus 7 or less with 74, 8 or less with a 76) has mastered the lock. Not only can he open it at will (though still with 1d10 rounds of effort), he can actually lock it again without rolling a skill check.

### Lock Quality

The uninitiated (particularly dullard fighter types) often assume that a lock is a lock, regardless of its make or mechanism. In fact, a great variety of locks exist, and while many might provide little challenge to the skilled thief, some prove daunting even to the most experienced veteran. Any device can have a modifier of up to +30% or -80%, reflecting the quality inherent to the lock, no matter the skill of a thief attempting to open it. The modifier applies to the thief's chance of success with the obstacle; a -40 lock, for example, lowers the thief's chances of picking it by 40%. If his normal percentage is 65%, then his chance with this lock is only 25%.

The more detail the GM can provide regarding the obstacle facing the thief, the greater the player's options in facing it. Unless the player has ticked off the GM with incessant questions, it's generally worth getting some of the specifics about the lock to improve chances of success. Locks can include simple latches, keyhole locks with a single or multiple tumblers, puzzles that involve performing several procedures in a set sequence (pushing a stone, turning a handle, and pulling outward, for example).

### Modifying Open Lock Checks

Three major considerations affect the difficulty of a lock: the skill of the locksmith, the materials used for the job, and the purpose of the lock or trap. The locksmith's skill primarily comes out in the final quality rating of a lock (see Table 16H in the GMG p. 202). While a locksmith needs certain materials to even attempt a high-quality lock, materials alone do not justify an adjustment to the difficulty of picking the lock.

The purpose of the lock affects how much effort, money, and resources the person who wants the lock puts into it. While an assiduous locksmith may attempt to make every lock in his house a masterpiece, most locks fit into general classes and can be treated as such. Some examples for locks are listed:

- +15% Typical latch on small house, guestroom of an inn, storage, closet, etc.

- 0 Lock on a merchant's house, weapons locker, wine cellar of a large inn, etc.
- 20% Door to a cell or keep, security checkpoint within a dungeon, lock on a gem cutter's shop or moneychanger's house.
- 40% Lock on a major vault or intricately designed cell door

**Combination Locks:** A thief who makes a successful detect noise roll when trying to open a combination lock can cut the usual negative modifier due to lock quality in half for such formidable locks, as he is able to detect the sound of tumblers falling! Note that opening a combination lock only requires that the thief be able to set the combination. Unless he cannot do this without some sort of pick (for example, if the number wheels are hidden in a hard-to-reach place), the thief can make an attempt in 1d10 rounds and does not suffer penalties for improvised lockpicks. If he does need some sort of device to reach the combination-setting mechanism, however, he will suffer the improvised lockpick penalties.

### Building Better Locks

A locksmith must decide on the quality of lock he wishes to construct before beginning work. Of course, he needs access to high quality materials to attempt to build a higher quality lock. Even a master craftsman cannot make a superior lock out of wretched materials. See Chapter 2 for modifiers to the smith's skill when attempting to make a lock of a given quality.

A locksmith can also attempt to improve an existing lock. This takes half the time of constructing a new lock, and increases the penalty to open the lock by 1d10%. An individual lock can be improved up to three times in this way, though if the locksmith fails on any attempt to improve a given lock he cannot try on that one again.

A simpler way to make a room or chest more secure against thieves is to just protect it with more than one lock. Paranoid nobles often build iron-bound chests with two or three built-in locks in rich treasure vaults. Certainly a powerful and suspicious magic-user would not entrust his spell books to a cabinet with only a single lock. Thieves who need to bypass these measures need to think carefully about how easily they achieve a certain goal. Trust your instincts: if it feels too easy, it is. There are undoubtedly traps and perhaps even hidden locks or false compartments. Don't fall for the 'dummy treasure' improperly concealed and intended to distract you from the real score.

### Noise

Normally, opening a lock and finding or removing a trap creates a fair amount of noise. It's not like shouting down a hallway, but it's more than enough for any perceptive creature in the area to notice. Creatures who succeed at a detect noise check know something's up, and in many cases they may automatically hear something.

A thief can attempt to pick a lock or remove a trap with complete stealth, not producing any significant noise (not even triggering a detect noise check). He suffers a -10% modifier to his skill, but performs the task quietly unless he rolls 1-10. In that case the lock or trap makes a sharp click, snap, or other sound, audible to anyone within earshot. If he rolls a 96-100, he triggers several loud clicks, snaps, or similar sounds as he fails disastrously and makes a lot of noise (more than he would have made with a normal attempt).

If a thief fails a silent attempt, he cannot try to open the same lock normally (unless he advances a level and improves his open locks skill).

### FINDING AND REMOVING TRAPS

Traps generally earn more detailed descriptions than some thief skills ("a poison needle flicks out of the panel beside the lock," for example), but even so, some GMs rarely describe the actual workings of the device. A good trap

design includes at least some vague description of how the two elements are connected. A thief needs to know how a trap works, but it's not a good idea to harangue the GM about traps that are physically impossible. It should be fair to try similarly outlandish ways to bypass such a trap.

Before we continue this discussion, though, consider that the easiest way to find a trap is for someone else to trigger it. Prisoners and unruly NPCs are best for this sort of thing. Many adventurers think they can risk their torchbearers, but that can create other problems (if you don't have infravision). A popular mechanism among unethical (evil) parties involves a gnome or gnomeling and a length of rope for pulling corpses out of pits. Slightly less unethical parties might try horses, pigs or cows, though many claim that sacrificing such useful creatures for finding traps is a cardinal sin. No legitimate adventuring society advocates anything like that, nor do they even say that this sort of thing is okay. (On the other hand, strict adherence to outdated moral codes can be incompatible with surviving a truly nasty dungeon.)

Traps have many more varieties. Generally a character triggers some moving part, such as a cage, block, blade, needle, sluice gate, or trapdoor, by stepping on a surface, pulling on a handle, or some similar, normally innocuous behavior. A good thief understands how all these levers, springs (both leaf and coil), pivots, bellows, deadweights, block and tackle, and hinges work. When searching for traps, he looks for clues as to their placement and original construction, subtle marks and irregularities that characters of other classes simply miss and his carefully honed intuition zeroes in on.

The difficulties in finding or removing a trap involve the skill of the trap maker, the materials used for the job, and the purpose of the trap. The many varieties of traps are too great to list, but the same principle of quality modification as per improving locks applies. However, the GM should not adjust the chances to either find or remove a trap by more than + or -30%.

When attempting to find traps, failure means the character simply detects no traps (they could be there or not). Be sure to tell the character that he is "sure there are no traps".

When attempting to remove a trap, failure means that the thief simply fails. The trap still functions. Critical failure (96-100) means the thief has set off the trap and suffers a -3 penalty to any saving throws. Granted, this penalty may not matter (if there is no save).

A thief who successfully removes a trap with 1/10 of his skill rating can reset the trap behind him. All he needs is another successful "remove" traps check and it will function as if never disarmed, except that the thief can now automatically bypass that specific trap in the future. He only gains the EP for bypassing it once, of course.

### The Right Equipment for the Job

Because the nature of traps can vary considerably, a wide range of equipment might conceivably be helpful on different occasions. A magnifying glass, for example, might help a thief locate concealed traps and pressure plates. A moderately clever player can find some item that applies a +5% modifier to his character's find traps and/or remove traps rolls. The GM must decide such on a case-by-case basis. Wise players don't argue these modifiers too much, especially once their GM has ruled. Let the GM have a little victory and save the effort for bigger moments (unless death lurks at the edge of this trap...).

Lock picks are actually quite useful when searching for and disarming traps. They are, in fact, necessary to discover small traps commonly hidden in locks or desk drawers, coffer, and so on. Without the picks, a thief cannot find or remove traps at all on these things! Using bare fingers is far more likely to simply set off the trap. Improvised lock picks impose a -30% penalty on use of these skills.

### Experience Points for Traps

Thieves earn experience for bypassing traps. The specific amount depends on the threat the trap presents. Obviously the most dramatic threat a trap can pose is instant death. Unless, of course, the thief's body is destroyed by the trap. That would certainly be more dramatic. In any case, bypassing such

**Table 4C: EP for Traps**

Thief Level	Trap EP*
1	246
2	251
3	359
4	460
5	595
6	861
7	1,132
8	1,495
9	1,707
10	2,112
11	2,525
12	2,912
13	3,660
14	4,448
15	5,252
16	6,056
17	6,860
18	7,664
19	8,468
20	9,272
Each +1 level	+804 per level

\* for defeating instantly deadly trap

**Table 4D: EP Multipliers**

Average Trap Damage	Multiplier
1 to 5	1/20
6 to 11	1/15
12 to 14	1/12
15 to 21	1/10
22 to 32	1/8
33 to 42	1/4
43 to 53	1/3
54 and up	1/2

#### Other Factors

Save for half allowed	1/2
Deafness	1/8
Blindness	1/4
Paralysis	1/3
Disease	1/4

vaguely resemble thought, but clearly lack any of the more important characteristics of thinking. Consider this elementary lesson in gaming: A deadly trap kills those who fall prey to it. Bypassing it means the thief has saved one particular life – his own. He might argue he saved the entire party, but there is no proof of that. The only character definitely risking anything is the thief himself. Thus, a higher level thief who removes a trap has done something more significant than some green apprentice who saves his own scrawny self. Besides, a newbie thief who manages to bypass a major trap makes significant progress towards advancing in level. He can only learn so much before his tiny brain overloads and can't absorb any more information – rather like the majority of those who criticize HackMaster in their vast ignorance.

To use these tables, find the thief's level and determine the maximum EP on Table 4C: EP for Traps. Then, for a less than deadly trap, the GM determines the multiplier to that EP on Table 4D: EP Multipliers. The GM may further modify this multiplier to reflect special circumstances. A trap that does damage (without necessarily causing instant death) should be considered

an insidious trap is worth the full EP a character would gain for defeating a powerful character (similar in power to himself) in single combat. This depends on the thief's experience level. Lesser traps award EP based on the amount of damage the trap can potentially deal. This system presents some problems in that it does not account for non-damaging traps (those that cause blindness or similar effects). Also, if a trap can do 5-50 points of damage and a first level character tries to disarm it, is it worth 50 EP or is it worth the "deadly" trap EP because it has the potential to kill him? Of course, as highly skilled game designers we know the answers to these questions. But for those of you who are still struggling with the concepts or perhaps if you are just too lazy to calculate the EP value of your PC thieves, we present the following alternate trap EP award system.

Table 4C: EP for Traps indicates the number of EP a thief of a given level gets for defeating a trap that is instantly deadly. This means massive falling blocks, plunging 300 feet into lava pools, poisons that cause Death + 1d6 damage

(with no save), that sort of thing. Table 4D: EP Multipliers indicates the fraction of that EP a thief gets (at any level) for defeating a lesser trap. Bypassing means that the thief has specifically discovered the trap and figures a way around it, either by simply removing it or devising a clever means of circumventing the trap. He gets nothing for simply not falling prey to the trap by means of sheer luck.

Some ignorant types have argued in the past that awarding more EP to higher level characters is somehow unfair. Whatever mental processes in the minds of such critics may



deadly if the average damage is more than the character's maximum hit points.

No modifiers can reduce the multiplier below 1/40.

### Magical Traps

Page 35 of the GM states that thieves cannot find "magical or magically hidden traps". In fact, this is true of the vast majority of thieves. However, some thieves have been discovered that carry the blood of ol' Rusuf the Master (or some of his best students). It is said he could open many traps with a simple knock. Magical traps presented only slightly more difficulty. Those who carry his (or his students') heritage (via the magic trap sense talent) actually can attempt to find and disarm magical traps, magically enhanced traps, and even traps hidden by magic.

A thief's chance to find a magical trap equals the thief's standard chance to find a trap. However, the remove traps skill works a little differently in the case of magical traps. Normally when a thief makes a successful remove traps check for a magical trap it indicates he has figured out a way to bypass the trap without setting it off. For all other purposes the trap remains in place and active. If the thief wants to actually remove a magical trap such that its effects will not linger after he has finished tinkering, he may specifically announce his intention to do so. In this case, his chances for removing the trap are divided by the spell level. In the case of first level spells and cantrips, the chances are halved. For traps that do not reproduce a specific spell effect, the GM should approximate the spell level by comparing the trap effect to a similar spell. As a minimum, the chances are halved.

Some of these expert trap dodgers become so skilled that their mastery can overcome the magic in the trap, to some degree. These thieves are about undoing traps; it doesn't matter to them how much magic is involved. To get to this point, the thief must thoroughly master mundane traps. In fact, they have to study traps beyond the point where it really helps, i.e. they must raise the skill above 95%, though 96-100 always fails. He gains no benefits at all until his raw find or remove traps skill exceeds 100%. Each point over 100% adds directly to the modified removal percentage for that modified trap. Thus, 95/3 for a 3rd level spell = 32%. A 105 skill rating in remove traps makes that a 37%.

A thief who completely disarms (not just bypassing) a magical trap gains bonus EP equal to 10 times the spell level times his thief level. For remedial types (most critics), that bonus adds to the EP award for bypassing a mundane trap as described above.

### Moving Silently

If you need to avoid being seen, you have to hide in shadows. Your only safe bet to move unseen is behind a wall or similar barrier. Silent movement generally means your target hasn't noticed you yet. Remember that when choosing which method you need at a given time.

A character moving silently moves at his normal movement rate – or slower. He cannot run and remain silent. Unfortunately for the player, the GM always checks to see if a PC moves silently. Since the techniques remain the same whether your chance is 2% or 102%, the only variation comes from execution. As far as your character is concerned, you always move silently. Keep that in mind lest your EP penalty-happy GM decides to smack you down for using out-of-character knowledge.

Of course, a simple solution presents itself: allies. It's always best if you have a sidekick or henchman of some kind, but in a pinch even a lunkhead fighter PC will do. Because you only need to check once (until you stop moving), start near the party. In view of the rest of your party, begin stalking. A simple "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" can reveal if you were successful.

If you do successfully move silently, you can continue movement until you stop completely. You need to stop to fight, cast spells, search a chest, etc. Nothing prevents you from moving silently again once you resume stalking – you just need to make another check. Or rather, the GM makes a check for you. So watch out.



Consult Chapter 6: Tools of the Trade for equipment to assist your attempts to move silently.

### Hiding in Shadows

The first and most basic rule of not being seen is not to stand out. This may seem ludicrously obvious, but the simple fact is that most people only notice someone when something catches their eye, even when they're looking! Guards only recognize what they expect to see when it comes to people being where they aren't supposed to be. They spend hours a day looking at the same walls or fields and don't notice much of that background around them unless something catches their eyes. So don't catch their eyes.

A handful of people (highly paid elite guards, adventurers, other thieves) are actually trained to notice what others miss. Powerful creatures can also recognize the signs of someone hiding nearby as easily as they notice the signs of some invisible creature nearby. Avoiding detection by these types requires a little extra effort, but once again the first step is to make sure to not draw their attention.

Moving is the easiest way to fail a hide in shadows check. When hiding, a thief cannot move. He need not stand totally still as if afflicted with a Rigor Mortis spell, but he's not covering any ground (and it really does help if he can stand perfectly still). The GM may allow him to drink a potion or draw a weapon of Small size, but any more significant movement gives potential observers another chance. They may check observation skills or Wisdom scores to notice "something out of the corner of their eye", after which most creatures will investigate the disturbance.

The method of having an ally gives thumbs up or down is not as effective here. If they can see you, you failed. If you're hiding from something in a different direction from your allies, they're view does no good.

You cannot hide at all if someone is actually looking straight you. This sort of thing should be obvious, but if it were (to everyone) do you think we'd have to explicitly state it now? In that case, you need to find some way to

**Table 4E: Detect Noise Specifics**

Roll d100

1-29	Number of Beings
30-40	Type of Beings (goblinoids, dragon-kin, nefarian, etc.)
41-45	Race of Beings (halfings, half-ogre, Gibbering Goblins, etc.)
46-65	Exact Direction
66-79	Movement (walking, running, marching, etc.)
80-85	Bits of Conversation
86-100	Distance to Beings

move out of sight before even attempting to hide. Jumping over a wall or ducking behind a pillar can work, but we'd suggest hiding somewhere other than the exact area to which you just moved.

Some good news, though, is that you don't need real, physical shadows to hide. Bushes, trees, rushes, walls, pretty much any kind of barrier to sight or camouflage allows you to make an attempt. True shadows are always good, though, as most creatures need light to see.

This leads to the next topic: infravision. Hiding from creatures with infravision is considerably more difficult, but not impossible. As long as the thief has some barrier or cover for the heat of his body (such as hiding near a furnace or in a crowd of prisoners), he can still make a hide in shadows check. His chances of success are half of normal, but that's better than zero, which is his chance of avoiding infravision by hiding behind a leafless bush in a field.

Another difficulty arises when considering creatures who do not rely on sight. Many beasts rely more on smell than on sight. Hiding in shadows from a scorpion is impossible – they sense creatures by vibrations in the sand. The hide in shadows skill does not help you evade senses other than sight. You're stuck with your brain (Levitating and not moving above the ground produces no vibrations in sand or air, so the scorpion won't notice; smearing the right type of animal's stink on yourself can alter your scent to something less threatening.

Consult Chapter 6: Tools of the Trade for equipment to assist your attempts to hide in shadows.

### Detect Noise

Unique among thief skills, any character can at least try to detect a noise. The key to success is paying attention, noting the fine differences and intonations between the voices of Orcs and Hobgoblins. Experts at detecting noise are not more sensitive to sounds than their oblivious counterparts, they



simply know to what they should be paying attention. Much of this comes from instinct, and a character's early experiences define how careful he might be in the future. Success encourages him to actually think and concentrate next time. Thus, any character who succeeds on his very first try to detect noise on an adventure gains a permanent +5% bonus to his chance to detect noise in the future. On the other hand, a critical failure on that first attempt means that the character won't expect success in the future. He tends to just go through the motions much of the time. A 96-100 on that first "live" detect noise check results in a permanent -5% penalty to that percentage.

Of course, detecting noise does require some sound to penetrate an obstruction. The volume, distance, and nature of barriers all affect the amount of noise even subject to detection. While success requires enough sound and concentration, one or more of several different factors can explain failure.

A listener may attempt to pick up faint sounds any time he wants, simply by standing still and listening for one round. Any head covering (hat, helmet, etc.) must be removed to avoid penalties and there cannot be any noise in the immediate vicinity (i.e. party members must be quiet). Because detecting noise remains the forte of thieves, don't bother trying it with those penalties for wearing a helmet. Leave that to the blockheads who couldn't tell a rush of water from a stream of rushing Kobolds, anyway.

The GameMaster makes the check secretly. Success means that the listener picks up some noise. With a second check, assuming his first succeeds, a listener can attempt to determine any of many factors. He may listen for a specific factor on Table 4E: Detect Noise Specifics, or just attempt to "hear something more" (with a -15% penalty to his skill because he isn't attuned on one element of the sound). If he succeeds, roll to determine what the listener can figure out. Note that simply hearing a conversation doesn't impart the ability to understand the language.

Once a check fails, the listener can gain no more information unless conditions change considerably and in his favor.

**Table 4F: Detect Noise Modifiers**

Situation	Modifier
Distance (indoor/outdoor)*	
Up to 5 feet/yards	+10%
Up to 25 feet/yards	—
Up to 50 feet/yards	-10%
Up to 100 feet/yards	-25%
Up to 150 feet/yards	-50%
Up to 200 feet/yards	-75%
Up to 300 feet/yards	-100%
Ear Covering	
Cap	-5%
Scarf/Cloth	-5%
Hat (that covers ears)	-5%
Leather helmet	-5%
Open-faced helm	-10%
Close-faced helm	-15%
Great Helm	-20%
Sound Obstructions	
Closed door	-30%
Ear pressed to door	-10%
Bend in corridor	-5%
Curtains	-5%
Thick curtains	-10%
Sound Volume	
Whisper	-25%
Personal conversation	—
Speaking to an audience	+10%
Shouting	+25%
Yelling	+50%

\* Measure distances in feet indoors and in yards outdoors.

**Climbing Walls**

At some point, every character has to climb a wall. A few skilled mountaineers become experts, but only thieves (thief group characters with the climb walls skill) truly master this skill to the point where they don't need special equipment. They make do with what they have, or even with no equipment at all.

Still, the ability is neither quick nor magical. Climbing a high wall is not a good way to escape angry guards or rampaging Orcs. The ability is impressive, but it does not allow a thief to perform physically impossible feats.

That said, you need to understand where you're going with that climbing skill before you use it.

As with certain other thief skills, climb walls does not literally apply only to walls. It applies to any largely vertical surface that a character cannot simply walk over. Also, the skill is not unique to thieves. Everyone has some chance to climb a "wall"; thieves are just better at it.

Thieves use their climb walls skill any time they attempt to climb. In all likelihood, many modifiers apply to this skill. Calculate these before making the check.

Thieves with the mountaineering skill can simply add their percentage ratings together, if the GM determines that mountaineering skill applies.

In ideal conditions, any character has a base 40% chance to make a climb. Mountaineers can add their skill to that, if applicable, and thieves can add their climb walls skill to that. This may make it look like even 1st level thieves can virtually always make a climb, but there are a number of modifiers, including many penalties. Table 4H: Climbing Success Modifiers lists the modifiers that apply to your climb walls checks. These apply to any climber, not just thieves.

You only need to make a climb check to move ten feet or more. Make the first check before ascending the first ten feet. Success means that the climber can make that first section, while failure indicates that he cannot even find a path to begin. In that case, the character cannot even try again without a significant change in conditions (advancing a level, a rope thrown down, moving a considerable distance, etc.).

Once a climber ascends a surface, he needs to check every 50 feet, and each time the surface type changes (becoming rougher or smoother, for example, or a change of more than 10 degrees in slope).

When you fail a climbing check, you may stop making progress or you may actually slip. Slipping does not necessarily mean falling (you get a modified Dexterity check to try to regain your grip), but it is the first step. Your GM has the details on these changes, but just understand that it's much easier to slip from a smoother surface than a rough one.

Maximum movement rates while climbing are indicated on Table 4G: Rates of Climbing (also detailed in the GMG). Non-thief characters can move up, sideways, or down (in a controlled fashion) at up to the indicated rate. Multiply the number in Table 4G: Rates of Climbing by the character's current movement rate (don't forget encumbrance!). The result is his move-

**Table 4G: Rates of Climbing**

Type of Surface	Surface Conditions		
	Normal	Slightly Slippery	Slippery
Very Smooth *	1/4	-- **	-- **
Smooth *	1/2	1/3	1/4
Rough *	1	1/3	1/4
Rough with ledges	1	1/2	1/3
Ice wall *	-	-	1/4
Tree	4	3	2
Sloping wall	3	2	1
Rope and wall	2	1	1/2

\* Non-thief characters must be mountaineers and use the appropriate tools to climb these surfaces.  
 \*\* Thieves (thief group characters with the climb walls skill) can climb these surfaces at 1/4. Other characters cannot climb them at all.

ment rate in feet per round. He can go slower, but not faster. Thieves can move at up to twice the indicated rate.

Many factors though, will slow down a thief's progress up or along a wall. Surfaces sloped inwards (towards the climber) count as one category smoother, while surfaces sloping away from the climber (such as a steep hill) count as one category rougher. Most dungeon walls are smooth (or rough). Ice walls require a climbing check every round unless you have the proper tools (even for thieves).

Generally climbing takes a character's full attention. Spell casting and fighting are extremely difficult while climbing, and totally impossible in some cases. You can't cast a spell that requires both hands if you have only handholds and no footholds. Your GM has details on these penalties.

**Table 4H: Climbing Success Modifiers**

Situation	Modifier
Abundant handholds*	+40%
Rope and wall**	+55%
<b>Surface inclined</b>	
Greater than 120 degrees	+60%
From 95 to 120 degrees	+30%
From 65-85 degrees	-40%
Less than 65 degrees	-90%
<b>Armor</b>	
none	+10%
Banded, splint	-40%
Plate (all types)	-60%
Ring, hide, brigandine	-25%
Scale, chain	-25%
Studded leather, padded	-25%
Elven chain	+0%
<b>Character Race***</b>	
Dwarf	+5%
Gnome	-15%
Gnomeling	-15%
Halfling	-15%
Pixie fairy	-50%
Half-ogre	+20%
Half-orc	+5%
<b>Encumbrance</b>	
Light	-10%
Moderate	-25%
Heavy	-45%
Severe	-70%
<b>Surface Condition</b>	
Wall is very smooth	-20%
Wall is smooth	-5%
Wall is fairly rough	+10%
Wall is non-slippery	+5%
Slightly slippery (wet or crumbling)	-25%
Slippery (icy, slimy)	-40%
Climber wounded below 1/2 hp	-10%

\* Brush, trees, ledges, etc.  
 \*\* The PC must be able to brace his feet on the wall as he pulls himself up the rope.  
 \*\*\* Same as PHB Table 3NN:Thieving Skill Racial Adjustments.

Mountaineering tools such as spikes and pitons help climbers, but players need to keep in mind that they serve mostly to avert or reduce disaster. Pitons can be pulled free, weight can be improperly distributed, and ropes can be cut. Any thief skilled at climbing knows not to trust his life to his equipment. Trust yourself first.

Roping characters together can be a good strategy for less skilled climbers, but for thieves it's just a way for clumsier types to pull you to your death. Don't fall for it. Ropes should be tied to anchor points above the wall or higher on the mountain. A thief is better off placing those himself than tying his fate to 400-pound half-ogre berserkers. Again, that type of thing is only obvious to a surprisingly small percentage of folk (no one you know, of course).

**Getting Down**

The fastest way to get down a wall is immediately obvious except to the most dull-witted and certain brain-damaged gnomes. The fastest way that is relatively safe is rappelling. Rappelling requires gloves (or else the character's hands suffer 1d4 points of friction burn damage per ten feet of movement). If the end of the rope is loose, you get a +30% bonus to your chance of success. If someone braces the bottom of the rope, you get +50%. If you slip, the GM rolls percentile dice to see what percent of the distance you fall (it doesn't matter by how much you fail).

Upon further review, perhaps Feather Fall or Levitate spells are actually the safest way to get down. But you can't move as fast with them. While rappelling, you can move up to your full normal movement rate (120 feet per round for humans, etc.) even if encumbered.

### Assisting Others

A climber (usually a non-thief and non-mountaineer) might not have a good chance to overcome a barrier. As a thief, you'll often have to help others get over rudimentary walls and even on mountainsides. If the spell or combat support from these individuals isn't worth this effort, reconsider your adventuring band.

To assist a climber, you need some physical means of supporting him, whether that means locked hands, a solid grip on his forearm, a rope or whatever. An assist can, with a successful climb walls check of the person doing the assisting, add 25% to the target's chance to successfully climb the wall. Two characters can assist one simultaneously for a total of 50%, but not three or more. All the appropriate modifiers that the assisted climber faces (slippery walls, etc.) affect the assistants' checks. Assistants must make these checks before the assisted climber makes his. While failure to assist does not necessarily mean something bad for the assistants, the climber suffers all the consequences of his slip and/or fall, as with any failed climbing check.

### Combat While Climbing

Combat is both difficult and dangerous while climbing. Spells can be cast only if the caster is in a steady, braced position. If the spell has a material component, the caster must have one hand free. Somatic components require the use of both hands (i.e. the climber must be able to steady himself with rope and legs alone).

The following additional adjustments occur while climbing:

- Dexterity and shield Armor Class bonuses are lost.



- Most attackers gain the +2 rear attack bonus when attacking a climber.
- Climbers suffer a -2 penalty to attack, damage, and saving throw rolls (except against purely mental-based spells).
- Attacking from above results in a +2 attack roll bonus and attacking from below results in a -2 attack roll penalty. These two adjustments apply whether the attacker is climbing or not.
- Two-handed weapons are rarely usable by climbers.
- If struck for any amount of damage while climbing, a climber must immediately roll a climbing check. A free-climbing character falls if this roll fails, while an assisted climber loses his balance for a round (he can't attack, suffers an additional -2 penalty to saving throws, and opponents gain an additional +2 bonus to their attack rolls).

All adjustments are cumulative. Thus, an Ogre standing atop a cliff gains a +4 to attack a climber below him (+2 for the climber's position below the Ogre, +2 for a rear attack, as the climber's back is exposed while he faces the cliff).

Further details concerning climbing, tools and grapples are found in Chapter 6: Tools of the Trade.

### READING LANGUAGES

Very few thieves should bother raising this skill quickly, as GMs just screw you over on it anyway. A thief must be familiar at least with the alphabet of a strange tongue to have any chance of being able to read it. You simply can't even guess at a long-forgotten ancient civilization's inscriptions without some common basis of understanding. If the civilization's language was similar to a known ancient language, you have a shot.

On the other hand, intercepted notes and coded orders are quite likely to cross your hands at one time or another. A successful read languages check usually gets the gist of such missives. You can even use it to attempt to crack codes. Success in this case does not mean the code is easily read, but it does require the GM to give some useful clue regarding the meaning ("this section has something to do with Orcs").

A true thief willing to risk a curse can attempt to see what spell is on a scroll by looking at it. He must have achieved 10th level and be able to read scroll spells. Success indicates that he knows the basic effects of the spell he sees, but does not have to read it. Failure means nothing, so there's nothing to lose, although he is subject to any curses attendant to the scroll.

### Use Magic Scrolls

As a thief reading a scroll is risky no matter how you look at it. Alas, you can't work to eliminate or even reduce that failure ratio, and 1 in 4 is more than you'd think. The opportunist talent can effectively take it to a 20% chance to reverse the effect (1 in 5), but the same logic applies. The simple fact is that non-spell casters aren't supposed to be reading spell scrolls.

And if you think healing scrolls are safe, don't. An incorrectly read scroll of a healing spell might do nothing, but it might do the exact opposite of the intent. Some thieves think they're safe with innocuous spells such as Light or Detect Magic. Maybe your GM isn't creative enough to smack you down on these, but even if you can't figure out how a "reversed" spell could hurt you, don't rush in. GMs get together and salivate over that sort of thing almost as much as they do over Wish spells. You don't even want to contemplate the horrors of a misread Raise Dead or Teleport. Believe me. Just ask a magic-user about his last spell mishap.

### Thieves' Cant

As stated in the Player's Handbook, Thieves' Cant is not a language in itself. Rather it is a means of communicating about matters important to thieves (finding marks, warning of law enforcement, etc.) As such, only

thieves can properly learn this way of speaking. It is NOT a “modern language” skill. Much of Thieves’ Cant is simply attitude and outlook, something no outsider can ever learn. Even if some idiot thief tried to teach his non-thief companions, they’re out of luck.

**AVERAGE THIEF SKILLS**

Sometimes a GM needs a quick skill for an NPC thief. Table 4I: Average Thief Skills describes a generic progression by a thief attempting to balance out all his skills. Note that before 4th level, thieves simply have too much to worry about besides reading languages – he’s got to survive first! This table can be used for a quick reference for any thief who chooses not to specialize in any particular field.

More important, note that this table includes ONLY points spent to improve thief skills – it does NOT take into account race, Dexterity, magic, talents, craftsmanship, illness, weather patterns, migratory swallows or anything else! Because this extraordinarily simple concept seems so difficult for many to understand, we include this notice three times.

**Table 4I: Average Thief Skills**

THIS TABLE DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY MODIFIERS FOR ARMOR, RACE, DEXTERITY, ETC.!

Pick Thief Level	Open Pockets	Find Locks	Remove Traps	Move Traps	Hide in Silently	Detect Shadows	Climb Noise	Read Walls	Languages
Base	15	10	5	5	10	5	15	60	0
Level 1	24	18	13	13	18	13	23	68	0
Level 2	29	22	18	17	22	17	27	73	0
Level 3	34	26	23	21	26	21	31	78	0
Level 4	38	30	27	25	30	25	35	82	3
Level 5	42	34	31	29	34	29	39	85	7
Level 6	46	38	35	33	38	33	43	88	11
Level 7	50	44	39	37	42	37	47	89	15
Level 8	54	48	44	41	46	42	51	90	19
Level 9	58	54	48	45	50	46	55	91	23
Level 10	62	58	53	50	54	50	59	92	27
Level 11	66	62	57	54	58	54	63	93	33
Level 12	70	66	61	58	62	59	68	94	37
Level 13	74	70	65	62	66	64	73	95	41
Level 14	78	74	69	66	70	69	79	95	45
Level 15	82	79	75	70	74	73	83	95	49
Level 16	86	85	79	75	78	77	87	95	53
Level 17	90	89	83	79	83	81	90	95	60
Level 18	92	91	87	82	86	83	94	95	75
Level 19	95	95	91	88	90	91	95	95	80
Level 20	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95

THIS TABLE DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY MODIFIERS FOR ARMOR, RACE, DEXTERITY, ETC.!

**Animal Assistants**

The GMG (p. 199) gives details of animal training, including numerous tasks and tricks. Many of these are useful for animal accomplices, and a thief with an exceptional ability at animal handling and training (76% or higher) can make useful assistants out of these beasts. This section discusses new tricks based on the basic tasks that animals can learn per the GMG. Table 4J: Combined Tasks indicates the training time and appropriate creatures for these tasks. Thieves of all types can attempt to develop other tasks using these three as examples, with the approval of the GM. To learn a combined task, an animal must first be successfully trained to perform the elements of that task. Thus, a dawg must master attack and track before you can train him to “track & attack”.

When an animal learns one of the new, special combined tasks below, its chance of successfully performing the task is determined by the skill of its trainer. The animal’s chance of success equals the trainer’s skill rating, though the GM may make the roll himself. For example, a ferret that is trained to find & fetch gems by a character with an animal handling skill at 75% has a 75% chance of success. Some animals may have such exceptional Intelligence (or Strength, or speed, for their species) that their ratings are granted a +5% or even a +10% to specific tasks.

Dawgs serve primarily as protectors, requiring little training before they become alert and aggressive watchdawgs. However, dawgs can also be trained to track a character or other animal. The dawg requires some scent information about the object being tracked and a general location of the trail. With the combined “track & attack” trick, the dawg will attack the target even

without a specific command (normally the dawg needs the attack command and the victim in sight).

The first skill check determines if the dawg has found the trail. Another check must be made every 1-4 turns, and also whenever the trail takes an unusual turn (through water, along tree limbs, etc). Dawgs specially bred for this (including many hounds) gain a +5% or +50% to tracking. Once the dawg locates his victim, he attacks immediately.

Ferrets can fit through openings as narrow as two inches, and thus have an ability to go places other animals cannot. Ferrets can be taught the “find & fetch” task to acquire gems, coins, or other small objects that their masters might not be able to reach. They need to learn what objects the master wants, of course (“small shiny things”) and simply can’t be taught the difference in value between, say, a diamond ring, and a large fake diamond made of glass. They have a knack for this task, though, and can learn it in a mere 2d4-2 weeks (minimum one).

Monkeys are the most adaptable of these animals. A monkey can be trained to be selective in its fetching. Monkeys can easily traverse gateways, high windows, and other obstacles.

Animals can be trained to retrieve specific types of items from a general area such as a room or yard. Specific objects include coins, gems, jewelry such as chains or bracelets, or even items of food and drink. Generally, trainers teach animals to not make noise when doing this. Many animals can perform these tasks in the dark, another advantage for human thieves with animal assistants.

For any of these tasks, the animal must be sent by gesture in a specific direction. It will seek for some time in the area indicated, finally returning to its master. Generally, the animal spends no more than 1d20 minutes on its search before returning to its master.

If an animal is discovered or frightened during this task, it attempts to flee to its master (except for monkeys, which have a natural instinct to attack). An animal can be trained to flee in a different direction or to attack anyone who interrupts it with an additional 1d4 weeks of effort.

**Table 4J: Combined Tasks**

Task	Time to Train	Time to Perform	Animals capable
Find & Fetch	2d4+1 weeks	Variable	Cat, dawg, ferret, monkey
Return Home & Hide	2 months	Variable	Any
Track & Attack	4 months	Variable	Cat, dawg, ferret, monkey, pack ape*, rat

\* 35% chance of the pack ape going ape-sh\*t when attacking.

## POISON

A great equalizer against those who consider thief types weak is poison. Sure, it's unethical and often considered evil, but it works.

The GMG provides detailed rules on poison types and effects. The following rules apply in addition to the poison rules described in the GMG (p. 206), introduce poison gases, and describe some poison antidotes.

Poison gases are rare, expensive, and highly dangerous. A typical dose can be held in a clay or glass jar and weighs 5 pounds. If the jar is shattered or opened, gas fills a 10-foot by 10-foot by 10-foot cube centered on the broken jar. It disperses after one round unless contained on all sides. The gas lasts for 2d6 turns in an enclosed room and 2d6 rounds in a room with at least one open door, window, arrow slit, etc.

Smaller doses of poison gas can be made, but larger ones virtually always fail (90% fail in some way – usually by escaping the container and afflicting the person trying to contain them).

Most poison gases have the effects of poison Class D (4d6 points of damage each round on a failed save for 1-2 rounds, 2d6 each round for 1-2 rounds on a successful save) or Class S (sleep setting on in one round on a failed save). Other classes of poison may not be viable in gas form. Rumors of Class J poison gas (death on a failed save, debilitating sickness on a successful save) abound.

Note that a victim must breathe to be affected by this gas. It has no effect on golems or characters in gaseous form.

Unlike injected or ingested poisons, however, poison gas does not remain in a character's system after death. Thus, attempts to raise characters who have perished this way do not have to contend with the venom in the character's system.

Preparing poison gas requires a sealed room and specialized tools (basically, a magic-user's or alchemist's laboratory). It takes 8 straight hours to prepare a single dose, during which the preparer can do nothing else. His chances of successfully preparing the poison are half of normal. Failure simply means he could not contain the gas and feels sick for 1d6 turns (-1 to hit and saving throws), assuming he gets out into fresh air immediately. Critical failure means he breathes a full dose himself and is subject to all the standard effects of the poison he was brewing.

## POISON ANTIDOTES

### Healing Skill and Poison

The basic healing skill rules for poison, from the Player's Handbook, are as follows.

A character with healing skill can attempt to aid a poisoned individual, provided the poison entered through a wound. If he can tend the victim immediately (the round after the character is poisoned) and the care continues for the next five rounds, the victim gains a +2 to his saving throw (delay his saving throw until the last round of tending). No skill check is required, but the poisoned character must be tended to immediately (so that the skilled healer must forgo any other action he meant to perform) and cannot do anything himself. If the care and rest are interrupted, the poisoned character must immediately roll a normal saving throw for the poison. This result is unalterable by normal means (i.e. more healing doesn't help). Only characters with both healing and herbalism proficiencies can attempt the same treatment for poisons the victim has swallowed or touched (the character uses his healing to diagnose the poison and his herbalist knowledge to prepare a purgative).

Note that these rules only obliquely discuss antidotes, through the herbalism skill.

### Antidote Effects

Characters can produce antidotes for most poisons. To use an antidote you must match it with its poison, or just administer an antidote and hope that by chance it is the right one. (Many herbalists claim to manufacture some

antidotes that counter more than one poison.) An antidote takes effect if administered immediately or at least before the toxin's onset time. It then either negates the poison entirely (if the poisoned character made his saving throw in the first place) or reduces its effectiveness. If the recipient failed his saving throw, the antidote reduces the effects to the level of a successful save.

### Producing Antidotes

Most of the time an antidote has not been prepared in advance, and a character with herbalism skill must attempt to produce an antidote from scratch.

This presupposes an assortment of herbs, mosses, and such necessary materials, already selected and close at hand (e.g. gathered, dried and stored in a pouch). If the herbalist needs to gather the materials as well (and there are materials around to be gathered, not the case in most dungeons), he requires at least half an hour to do so and a successful skill check. Once materials are available, putting together and administering an antidote takes 1d6 +4 (5-10) rounds.

If it turns out that it takes longer to gather materials and make the antidote than the poison's onset time, the efforts are in vain. If not, the herbalist must succeed at a skill check to determine the antidote's success or failure. He suffers a -50% penalty to this check if the poison has not been identified. If the check succeeds, the antidote takes effect.

Unless the herbalist knows the class of poison affecting the victim, he must first determine this. His base chance is his herbalism skill rating. However, he can find multiple ways to identify the poison (if the GM accepts the player's reasoning). Each time his chance of success goes down by half. Once his chance reaches 5% or lower, he can no longer attempt to identify the poison, even if he finds some other form of evidence. Also, each examination of one type of evidence takes 1d4 rounds.

For example, the assassin Kusakus travels with his companion Molene when a poisoned blade strikes her. Kusakus dispatches the assailant and turns his attention to her wound. Molene, meanwhile, has failed her saving throw. The poison is Class O, injected paralytic, with an onset time of 20 rounds (rolled on 2d12). The GM noted this information secretly; Kusakus' player doesn't know it. It took 5 rounds to finish combat. If the poison is not successfully treated, Molene will be paralyzed for nine (rolled on 2d6) hours.

Kusakus is a 7th level assassin with herbalism skill at 45%; he does have a kit of useful herbs with him just for such emergencies as this.

He first sets out to identify the poison, with a 45% chance. This is his chance of learning the nature of the poison from Molene's symptoms. He rolls a 48 on percentile dice and fails. He has half the chance to identify the poison by some other means. His eyes fall on the dagger. Examining the slain opponent's blade gives him a 22% chance of successfully identifying the poison, but this also fails. Concerned about time (that all took another 5 rounds), a desperate Kusakus puts a dab on his tongue. He's now down to an 11%, but he rolls a 6! He spits out the poison, recognizing it as Class O. The GM doesn't need to see if the poison affects Kusakus, since a paralytic poison at this strength has no effect. (That was the GM's decision, of course, but this GM is reasonable.)

Kusakus works to produce an antidote with the materials in his pouch. This takes him six rounds. He then makes a skill check, needing a 45% or less. He rolls a 46! The poison has had 16 rounds to move through Molene's system. He hurriedly attempts to concoct the antidote again. This time it takes just 5 rounds.... Kusakus rolls a 19 this time, though, so he succeeds. Alas! It is the 21st round, so Molene is paralyzed for 2d6 hours. Now he'll need a Remove Paralysis spell to restore her mobility.

If only Kusakus wasn't such a slow mope, the antidote could have totally halted the paralytic poison, since that is what the result of a successful saving throw would have been.

Table 4K: Monster Poisons lists the poisonous beasts commonly known in Garweeze Wurd, along with the effects of that poison. While largely cautionary, it can also serve as a guide for herbalists to produce antidotes. Generally (unless otherwise stated in a monster's description), the same parts of the creature that produce a poison can be used to manufacture its antidote.

Table 4K: Monster Poisons

Monster	HoB	Volume	Page	Price	Delivery	Damage	Per	Duration
Aarakian - warrior	1		8	n/a	injection	2d8	immediate	n/a
Ant, Giant - warrior	1		19	n/a	injection	1d6	round	death or cured
Ant Men - warrior	1		21	n/a	injection	4d4	immediate	n/a
Bandy Tailed Fighting Cock, Giant	1		44	n/a	ingested	2d6	immediate	n/a
Basilisk, Greater - claw	1		49	n/a	injection	1d12	immediate	n/a
Basilisk, Greater - breath	1		49	n/a	ingested	death	immediate	n/a
Bear, Poisonous	1		55	600 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Bee, Giant - warrior	1		62	n/a	injection	5d4	immediate	n/a
Bee, Giant - soldier	1		62	n/a	injection	5d4+1	immediate	n/a
Bee, Queen	1		62	n/a	injection	5d4+2	immediate	n/a
Beetle, Giant Flesh Eating	1		63	n/a	injection	stunned	rounds	1d4
Beetle, Goldbug	1		66	150 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Black Poppy	1		79	n/a	ingested	10d10	immediate	n/a
Brownie - Quickling	1		93	n/a	injection	unconscious	rounds	2d6
Bullfrog, Giant	1		100	n/a	contact	1d10/1d6	immediate/rounds	death or cured
Carcass Seether	1		104	n/a	ingested	death	immediate	n/a
Catfish, Giant	2		9	n/a	injection	1d4	immediate	n/a
Centipede, Huge	2		17	n/a	injection	immobilized	hours	1d6
Centipede, Megalo	2		17	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Chaos Feeder	2		21	n/a	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Couatl	2		35	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Dragonfish	2		104	200-900 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Drider	2		111	n/a	injection	paralyzation	rounds	1d2
Drow Elf	2		111	n/a	injection	unconscious	hours	2d4
Dungeon Anemone	2		116	n/a	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Dwarf, Derro	2		118	n/a	injection	2d6	immediate	n/a
Dwarf, Derro	2		118	n/a	injection	Ray of Enfeeblement	immediate	n/a
Eel, Weed	2		126	n/a	injection	death	rounds	1d6
Dragon, Green - breath	2		89	n/a	ingested	see chart page 89	immediate	n/a
Dragon - blood	2		74	n/a	ingested	death	immediate	n/a
Ettercap	3		24	1,000 gp	injection	death	turns	1d4
Fire Ants	3		31	n/a	injection	lose 1 point Dex, Str	round	cured
Frog, Poisonous	3		39	50 gp	injection	death	rounds	1d6
Frog, Poisonous	3		39	50 gp	contact	death	rounds	1d6
Fungroid	3		43	n/a	ingested	death	days	2d8
Gnome, Svirfneblin	3		74	n/a	injection	stunned	rounds	1
Grendel	3		104	n/a	contact	death	rounds	1d6
Grizzled Bankrass	3		110	n/a	injection	paralyzation	rounds	2d12
Homonculus	4		12	n/a	injection	sleep	rounds	5d6
Hornet, Giant	4		16	150 gp	injection	5d6/incapacitated	immediate/rounds	2d6
Hydra	4		22	n/a	ingested	death	turns	2d6
Iron Cobra	4		36	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Jabberwock, Vile	4		37	n/a	injection	death	rounds	2
Jarvin-Taur	4		42	n/a	contact	sleep	hours	1d4
Jellyfish	4		46	n/a	ingested	death	immediate	n/a
Triloblight	4		57	n/a	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Kraken	4		66	n/a	contact	1d4/blindness	immediate/rounds	1d4+1
Larantula	4		74	2000 gp	injection	death	days	1d10
Leechman	4		81	n/a	contact	stunned	rounds	2d6
Lurker, Cactus	4		101	n/a	injection	1d4	immediate	n/a
Mantari	4		114	100 gp	injection	19-Constitution	immediate	n/a
Medusa, Lesser	4		127	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Medusa, Greater	4		127	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Medusa, Greater - blood	4		127	n/a	contact	death	immediate	n/a
Medusa, Gorgon	4		127	n/a	contact	death	immediate	n/a
Mold, Russet	5		36	n/a	ingested	death	immediate	n/a
Mold, Yellow	5		36	n/a	ingested	death	hours	24
Monkey, Poison	5		41	n/a	injection	death	rounds	1
Murk Slither	5		55	10 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Naga - all	5		60	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a

Monster	HoB Volume	Page	Price	Delivery	Damage	Per	Duration
Pisco Daemon	5	71	300 gp	injection	death	rounds	6
Nefarian -							
Dread, Prince of Undead	5	78	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Zyandal	5	85	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Lord Gargruss Vlaadmaar	5	107	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Malfane	5	107	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Dark Soulstress	5	112	n/a	injection	unconscious	rounds	1d6
Bullweiller - meat	5	118	n/a	ingested	death	immediate	n/a
Imp	5	125	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Impling	5	126	n/a	injection	10d10% of HP	immediate	n/a
Impling - blood	5	126	n/a	ingested	death	immediate	n/a
Newt, Giant Jelly Banded	6	9	n/a	contact	1d6	immediate	n/a
Obsidian Lotus	6	16	n/a	contact	coma	rounds	2d10
Pied Viper	6	70	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Porcupine, Poison	6	88	n/a	injection	death	rounds	1d4
Psuedo-Dragon	6	94	n/a	injection	coma	days	1d6
Psuedo-Psuedo-Dragon	6	94	n/a	injection	coma	days	1d6
Pudding, Deadly	6	99	n/a	ingested	3d6	immediate	n/a
Purple Death Bloom	6	100	n/a	contact	death	immediate	n/a
Ray, Punji	6	118	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Storoper	7	18	n/a	injection	immobilized	rounds	1
Scorpion, Giant	7	30	18 gp	injection			
Scorpion, Hell	7	30	18 gp	injection			
Scorpion, Huge	7	30	75 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Scorpion, Large	7	30	75 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Sedusa	7	40	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Serpent, Cerastes	7	45	1,000 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Serpentine	7	45	150 gp	injection	trance	hours	2d6
Shank Shrub	7	50	n/a	injection	sleep	hours	24
Skunk	7	73	n/a	ingested	nauseated	rounds	1d4
Slithering Slasher	7	80	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Snake			10-1,000 gp				
Amphisbaena	7	84	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Heway	7	84	n/a	ingested	30	immediate	n/a
Venomous	7	84	n/a	injection	see chart page 85	n/a	n/a
Venomous, Giant	7	84	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Sea, Giant	7	84	n/a	injection	death	rounds	1d4
Spitting	7	84	n/a	contact	see chart page 85	n/a	n/a
Solitary Wasp, Giant	7	92	200-500 gp	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Spider, Giant							
Large	7	96	12 gp	injection	2d4	rounds	2d6
Huge	7	96	12 gp	injection	2d4	rounds	2d6
Giant	7	96	75 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Giant Trapdoor	7	96	8 gp	injection	1d6	immediate	n/a
Gargantuan	7	96	100 gp	injection	coma	turns	2d4
Spider, Subterranean							
Crab	7	97	35 gp	injection	30	immediate	n/a
Tarantubat	7	97	100 gp	injection	Strength -1	turn	1
Cave	7	97	120 gp	injection	nauseated	turn	2d6
Dire Cave	7	97	75 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Spider, Uncommon							
Phase	7	97	75 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Water	7	97	75 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Sea	7	97	150 gp	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Sprite, Common	7	104	n/a	injection	sleep	hours	1d6
Sprite, Spite	7	104	n/a	injection	sleep	hours	1d6
Sprite, Grig	7	104	n/a	contact	sleep	immediate	n/a
Stegocentipede	7	111	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Tenta-kill	7	133	n/a	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Thri-kreen	7	140	n/a	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Thunderherder	7	141	n/a	injection	death	rounds	3d4
Tiger Fly - male	7	144	500 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Tiger Fly - female	7	144	300 gp	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Toad, Giant Poisonous	8	12	n/a	injection	coma	immediate	n/a



Monster	HoB	Volume	Page	Price	Delivery	Damage	Per	Duration
Troglodyte	8		22	n/a	ingested	Str - 1d6	turn	1
Tunnel Squid	8		34	3,000 gp	injection	paralyzation	immediate	n/a
Typhon	8		38	n/a	injection	coma	hours	1d4
Urchin, Giant Red	8		47	n/a	injection	sleep	rounds	1d4
Urchin, Giant Silver	8		48	n/a	injection	coma	days	1d3
Urchin, Giant Yellow	8		48	n/a	injection	paralyzation	turn	1d4
Urchin, Giant Land	8		48	n/a	injection	paralyzation	turn	6
Venom Sparrow	8		60	n/a	injection	1d8	immediate	n/a
Viper, Spit	8		66	100 gp	contact	15	immediate	n/a
Virulent, Giant	8		66	n/a	contact	Con and Str -1	rounds	death or cured
Wasp, Giant	8		75	330 gp	injection	paralyzation	immediate	death or cured
Web Queen	8		79	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Whip Scorpion, Giant	8		84	n/a	ingested	to hit -3	rounds	1d6
Witherstench	8		89	n/a	ingested	nauseated	immediate	n/a
Witherweed - burning	8		90	n/a	ingested	death	immediate	n/a
Witherweed - ground up	8		90	n/a	injection	death	rounds	1d6
Wolverine	8		93	n/a	ingested	nauseated	rounds	1d4
Wolverine, Giant	8		93	n/a	ingested	nauseated	rounds	1d4
Worm, Belch	8		96	n/a	ingested	unconscious	immediate	n/a
Worm, Giant Canker	8		98	100 gp	injection	1d8	rounds	death or cured
Worm, Purple	8		99	500 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Worm, Purple Mottled	8		99	500 gp	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Worm, Tenebrous	8		100	n/a	injection	paralyzation+ double damage + death	rounds	1d4
Wyvern	8		106	n/a	injection	death	immediate	n/a
Xyloid	8		110	n/a	contact	blinded	rounds	1d4
Zephyr Rider - standard arrow	8		120	n/a	injection	cramps	rounds	2d6
Zephyr Rider - gray arrow	8		120	n/a	injection	weightless	rounds	2d6
Zephyr Rider - sleep arrow	8		120	n/a	injection	sleep	turn	1d6

Note: The n/a listing in the price field for a poison simply indicates there is no good market data to define a going market rate for the poison. The GM should determine prices for these based upon the economics of his campaign and comparable poisons.

Chances for this are standard (a simple herbalism check) and the herbalist must know precisely what creature's poison the antidote counters. Antidotes counter only one specific poison. Still, if a creature has, say, Class C poison, an antidote produced from that creature counters all Class C poison. If the creature's poison is unique to its type (as many are), the antidote does nothing to poison from any other type of creature, even a closely related one. Many adventurers died to bring you this information. Use it well.

Note: The n/a listing in the price field for a poison simply indicates there is no good market data to define a going market rate for the poison. The GM should determine prices for these based upon the economics of his campaign and comparable poisons.

## SCAMS

*The old rogue slurped his ale noisily, complaining to the bartender, "The thieves these days, they've lost the art of it all. Like a bloody bunch of half-orc bandits. Their idea of an elegant theft is a rich victim bashed neatly on the head, so his fancy clothes don't get scuffed so much and can be fenced more dear." The young bartender raised his eyebrows, a little wary but curious about what the wizened old coot had to say. "Now, in my day, the thief we all looked up to was one whose only weapons were his wits and a steady, speedy hand. It would be hours before his victim even knew'd he was robbed, and then he couldn't be sure who done it.*

*"There was this one guy, Willie Cool Willie, they called him, 'cause he never lost his cool. He know'd ALL the scams ..."*

Since day one, there have been people eager to get a free ride, to trick others out of anything they can. These people, it has been observed, are typically the best targets for the sharp-witted thief. After all, how likely are you to report a con man, when the reason he succeeded was that you thought you

were taking advantage of him? Playing off other peoples' greed is the key to a successful career as a con artist, on whatever scale it is performed.

An astute con man is always on the lookout for opportunities for a good racket. Some of these situations and scams have been nearly immortalized, and are now classics. Not only does it seem that everyone knows them, but everyone still uses them – and they still work.

What follows is a sampling of scams for the novice pigeon-plucker.

### Short Change Swindles

On the simple level, you have the short-change swindle. This classic scam allows you to have that personal face-to-face interaction that seems lost these days. It's an excellent scam for an up and coming young thief to cut his teeth. Typically you do this to merchants – or merchants do it to you! Through fast-talk, distraction and sleight-of-hand, you trick them into giving you more change than they should out of what you paid them. You can get change for a gold piece after spending a silver piece.

The following is an example of a short change swindle.

*"How much d'I owe ya?" asked the old rogue, upon finishing ale and tale.*

*"Four coppers," said the bartender.*

*The rogue fished in his pockets. "Hmm," he said. "All I have is this gold piece. Have ya got change?"*

*"Believe I do," said the bartender, taking the gold coin and putting out an electrum coin, four silvers and six coppers in change.*

*"Say, why don't you get me a slab of cheese for the road?" asked the rogue, sliding over two coppers for it.*

*While the bartender retrieved the cheese from beneath the counter, the rogue opened his pouch to put the remaining coppers inside. "Well, look here! Guess I had a silver after all!" he declared. He moved his hand toward the others, palming his newfound silver and hiding the electrum beneath the other coins, while appearing just to set the new silver coin with the rest. "Say," he tells the bartender. "I'd be hatin' to take all yer change like that. Why dontcha gimme an electrum for these five silvers?"*

*"Sure," said the bartender, handing him an electrum. The old rogue turned toward the door. "Wait!" said the bartender. "Ye left an electrum coin here with the silver!"*

*"So I did! Thank you. Honesty's a difficult quality to find these days! Well, to keep you with enough change, why don't I just give you this silver?" he then produced the coin he had palmed, "and you give me back the gold piece?"*

*"All right," said the bartender. "Have a nice day, then!"*

*As he walked down the street from the tavern, five silvers richer, the old rogue permitted himself a grin and a little skip of delight. All these years, and Cool Willie hadn't lost his touch.*

A simple variation on the classic short change theme is to work (or appear to work) the counter and have an accomplice take the "incorrect" change. Done properly, this scam is considered a mistake even when you're caught doing it.

## Gambling

Gambling is a fine racket. Gambling is irresistible to many people, and the con artist loves to take advantage of this weakness. Every sort of gambling – dice, coin matching, the shell game, races and gladiatorial contests (or other organized sports) – presents an opportunity for the swindler to make a load of silver. A thief needs the gaming skill to work any of the following scams, and any other character with the skill who succeeds at a gaming skill check by more than the swindler will probably be wise to the con man's tricks.

**Dice Games:** Dice-throwing developed in ancient times, and has remained popular since, on its own and as a part of various other games. An astute gambler understands the odds of winning in any dice game, such as craps, and a skilled con artist knows how to rig the game in his favor. Loaded dice (with imperceptibly rounded faces, or weighted pips, and so forth) are one way, but the true master can even throw dice so that they will land as he wishes. To do this trick, a thief must succeed at a pick pockets roll (with a -40% penalty) for each die he throws.

**Coin Matching:** Coin matching is a simple, age-old game, appearing in various forms since the days of the pharaohs, and is simple to run a scam around.

The favorite variation for two con men working a sucker is "odd man wins". Three coins are tossed, or revealed simultaneously (like the rock-paper-scissors game). If two come up heads or tails, and the other is the opposite, the holder of the odd coin wins. If all three are the same, no one wins.

To set this up as a scam, there should be two con artists. One plays the steerer, gaining the confidence of the pigeon, while the other pretends to be a foolish stranger. The steerer conspires with the real target, ostensibly to swindle money out of the stranger, his true partner. In the course of the game, the steerer winds up with all the money.

Of course, he's not able simply to share it with the pigeon, since they've supposedly just pulled a fast one on the "foolish stranger". The steerer instead agrees beforehand to meet the pigeon somewhere else and share the spoils. Of course, the steerer never shows up to share and the would-be con artist (the target) is left penniless. Furthermore, since he was duped on account of

his own greed, trying to do what was done to him, he'll probably swallow his chagrin and never report the incident to the local authorities!

**The Shell Game:** The shell game is another age-old classic. The thief sets up at some event, such as a circus, fair, or even a busy street corner. He has a single pea and three shells, which he rearranges. It is a test of observation, he says: Anyone who can identify which shell covers the pea, after they've been shifted around, will win whatever he bet. If he guesses wrong, he loses his money.

Someone takes on the challenge, and wins of course. This is an accomplice of the shell man (known as a "capper"). The crowd thinks the con man is playing honestly. Then a real target places his bet. He, too, will win. The con man carefully nurses the target's self-confidence to raise the stakes, and then (mysteriously!) the victim's powers of observation decline and he fails to spot the right shell! This of course is done through sleight-of-hand. (To do it unnoticed, the thief needs to make a successful pick pockets roll.)

Variations can use cups and a ball or three playing cards, with one a different color.

Here are some other nefarious activities that a thief might want to engage in to his advantage.

## Forgery and Counterfeiting

Forgery, including counterfeiting, may also be a con artist's calling. On Garweeze Wurd, coin counterfeiting is often performed successfully. Of course, to do this a thief needs to have the metalworking tools proficiency and the metalworking skill. He must also make a successful skill check when attempting to duplicate coinage.

Of course, such activity is a very serious crime in many locations, and punishments can be severe. Several forgers have been hanged for passing off bogus coins.

To successfully commit forgery, a thief needs to have the forgery skill, and make a successful skill check. Of course, anyone else with the forgery skill



may make a successful skill check and determine the authenticity of any document, so be forewarned.

Items that can be forged include: identification papers, deeds, IOUs, contracts or any other legal documents. The uses for such forged documentation are as varied as the imagination of the clever thief.

### Jewelry Swindles

For the well-trained rogue, jewelry swindles can be both the most lucrative and the easiest, because it is so difficult for the untrained eye to identify or judge the value of a precious stone. Besides dealing in paste and glass fakes, jewelry swindlers may pass off a lesser stone as something more valuable (e.g. quartz for diamond), or pay someone (especially naive but treasure-laden adventurers) for a diamond as if it were quartz. A nimble-fingered master of grift may also replace fake jewels for real ones, and the owner may never know the difference!

Sly NPC jewel swindlers are a great way for GMs to relieve characters lacking the appraising, fondling (covert appraisal technique) or the jeweler skill of their coins and jewels (provided the GM doesn't foolishly spew out at the start, "The dragon's treasure includes 12 opals at 1,000 gp each!").

### Quackery

Quackery is simply the art of the mountebank or "snake oil salesman". Actually, the swindler can sell all sorts of oils, unguents, charms, or any thing he can convince the rubes is actually a medical wonder. Even in a world with real magic, there is big money to be had in selling fake potions that do whatever people want them to do. (It may even be easier, since the real items DO exist. Just watch out for Detect Magic spells!)

One of many good tricks is to have accomplices, especially attractive women and children, mark newcomers to an area. They could pin a flower or a ribbon to newcomers' clothes or, in cold areas with very effective scams, even provide "free" cloaks to them. Whatever the system, it's a good way to spot the out-of-town rubes.

### Herding the Goat

Working in teams of five to ten men, the operators select a victim and "herd" him to a side alleyway where they proceed to subdue him and take anything of value. Darker, angrier types might simply kill the victim. One man acts as the key-man, engaging the target in conversation. Typically he pretends to know the stranger's homeland, share his faith, or where to find a fantastic bargain. As the victim follows, his accomplices stealthily move in from both sides and the rear, blocking the victim in. Usually, he's not even aware of his predicament until it's too late, thinking the others are simple travelers moving about town on normal business.

### Flipping the Coin

A target approaches a vendor and inquires about a commodity or item he's selling. The vendor sizes up the buyer and spots easy prey. He demands to see hard coin before discussing business, complaining that too many people waste his time asking questions when they have no gold. The eager buyer produces a pouch full of coin and insists that he is sincerely interested. The vendor simply grabs the pouch and begins screaming for a guard or watchman (who often get a cut of the take). The vendor shows the authority figure (or someone dressed as one) a handful of worthless lead coins merely gilded with gold and angrily points to the buyer. He claims the (now very surprised) buyer tried to pass the fake coins off as gold.

From here, there are a few options. A real guard could haul the victim before a judge (probably also in on the take), but more likely he simply implies that a reasonable bribe will prompt him to forget the incident. He could also haul the victim to an alley or other secret place, subdue or kill him, and take everything else he has. Most con men aren't into killing victims, though. It's messy and much more likely to bring unwanted attention.

### Animal Scams

A good animal trainer can run a special scam. He does need the time and resources to really train a few beasts of burden (horses, camels, elephants, whatever), though. He needs them so well trained that observers marvel at the antics. When asked his age, the beast stamps it out on his foot. When asked to kneel, the creature lowers itself into position immediately.

The most important trick, though, is to return to his home. The con man sells these incredibly smart steeds (often to adventurers) at appropriately inflated prices. Once laden with loot or goods, the creature throws its rider and flees back to its home (which may not be the place where the buyer purchased it) and master. The master could also employ disguise techniques so that if the buyer returns, he cannot find the animal that threw him.

A simple illusion of health around a sickly animal can also bring in a lot more than a creature is worth, too. When it dies later, the buyer may never know. (Again, watch out for those pesky Detect Magic and Detect Illusion spells, not to mention rangers!)

### Robbing the Robbers

Thieves as a class group enjoy toeing the line when it comes to taking risks. Some take it so far as to actually steal from other thieves, or even thieves' guilds.

This extremely dangerous activity does have certain advantages. Foremost among these is the simple fact that thieves cannot report theft to the authorities (unless said authorities are entirely corrupt). And authorities don't pursue thefts meant to restore property to the original owner (as a bounty hunter might do).

Rival guilds might offer sanction and some degree of protection. Mob wars provide many opportunities for a daring thief willing to risk the crossfire. The big trick is to steal from those who eventually lose the conflict.... Not to be overlooked is the fact that a big score from a single criminal can score enormous wealth with quick, concentrated effort (assuming you survive).

Of course, intelligent thieves understand themselves and therefore other thieves as well. No successful thief got where he got by trusting the wrong people or neglecting to protect his own wealth. This all means that stealing from other thieves is difficult, sometimes excessively so. More than nobles, certain thieves are known for investing sums close to or even more than the value of the treasure hoard they seek to protect.

On the other hand, some of the most successful thieves are quite flippant about their wealth. They leave it seemingly unprotected and throw it about town without a care for what "decent society" thinks or knows. Only very powerful crime lords with many connections can get away with this for long, however. They have the means to punish any who transgress against them in ways that make victims beg they had simply been assassinated in their sleep.

The underworld is far harsher on thieves than most legitimate governments. They do not presume innocence, have different standards of proof (if any), and prefer vengeance to justice. A wronged crime lord has no time for principles of fairness, mercy or proportionate response.

What does all this mean to you? Be careful. If you want to make a name for yourself (even if it's your alias), just try stealing from or scamming other thieves. If you get away with it, you could become a legend. If not....

# Chapter 5

## Stealth Hack

This chapter covers all things hack as they relate to thieves. You will find advice, rule clarifications, discussion on effective backstab techniques and more. So grab your weapons, read on and learn about one of the most important aspects of surviving a HackMaster campaign, the art of Stealth Hack.

### FACING

During the heat of combat, one question many players (and even some GMs!) forget to consider is that of facing. How many men can fight your halfling boxman at once? This question has proved to need explicit answering, given the behavior of certain elements of HackFandom that have had trouble understanding the basic issue (not you, of course...).

Most adventurers are Man-sized creatures: humans, elves, even dwarves. Each takes up a square precisely 5 feet on each side. For true old-school gamers, a hex 5 feet wide serves the same purpose. It also shows how 6 men can surround one during a fight, something a little less clear with a purely square grid (the fifth and sixth attackers each "use up" two corners of the defender's square in this case). Obviously, if an ally stands next to a defender that's one less attacker that can reach him. Also, any time all the creatures attacking a single defender are the same size, a maximum of 6 can make effective, direct, close-in melee attacks in one round.



Now, many thief characters are Small sized. Halflings, gnomes, and gnomelings take less space than a human. Each needs only 2 and 1/2 feet to effectively attack. Thus, ten can attack a Man-sized character (the last two still take up two corners each). Alas for many adventurers, many vicious beasties are also Small-sized: Goblins, Kobolds, Robolds and dread feral gnomes, for example. Large creatures need ten feet to move and swing their oversized axes, so fourteen Small creatures can attack your half-ogre barbarian ally. Only eight Man-sized creatures can directly attack him in close melee combat. This sort of thing should worry fighter types, front-line clerics and foolish magic-users. As a thief, your job is to strategically target leaders and elite troops – from behind. Bards can make good use of stealth tactics, as well, though they lack the crucial ability that makes true thieves (and assassins!) so formidable: the backstab.

### BACKSTAB

One of the best abilities of the thief class is often overlooked, or at least misinterpreted. A well executed backstab is a work of art, involving proper planning, set up, and the swift elimination of the target.

There are a number of advantages to the backstab, not the least of which is the increased effectiveness of the attack. This arises from the thief's careful study of critical points in humanoid anatomy and the fact that the target is clueless. Any character attacking from behind his target gains a +2 bonus to hit, but the thief nets a +4 bonus. He also gets any standard bonuses to-hit for Strength and magic. He's not likely to miss.

Once he strikes his target, his damage is calculated normally, but he adds a die range depending on his weapon and his level. His Strength bonus (or penalty), magic bonus to damage, and so on each apply to the attack only once. Honor bonuses also apply to each die roll. Furthermore, since the potential damage range of the attack increases, a Strength bonus is capped by the total "natural" damage of the weapon (i.e. a dagger is capped at 6 points of Strength bonus rather than 3, for a 1st-4th level thief).

A thief character can backstab with any weapon he can use, including weapons allowed from other classes he possesses. When using a missile weapon to backstab, the thief must also execute a successful called shot in addition to the normal requirements of a backstab. Furthermore, the target must be stationary. A thief with the simultaneous backstab attacks talent can make two attacks in the same segment, thus allowing him to backstab with two weapons at once. He must be able to wield both weapons at once, and suffers the regular penalties associated with attacking with two weapons (offset by the backstab bonus to net +2/+0, further modified by Strength, magic, etc.). In this case, any Strength bonus to damage applies to each attack, and

**Table 5A: Improved Backstab**

Dice Traded	Extra Critical Hit Range*	BSL Bonus
0	20	+0
1	19-20	+1
2	17-20	+3
3	14-20	+6
4	10-20	+10

\* Assuming the shot has no other modifiers to the critical range.

both weapons gain the extra damage dice. Otherwise, only the first attack a character makes is truly a backstab (even if it is a miss), as the target is aware of him afterwards.

### Backstabbing Larger Opponents

Rookie players and wannabes often assume that a backstab, because of its name, is necessarily a strike to the back of a creature. This could not be further from the truth. A backstab is an attack aimed at a vital, unprotected area of an unknowing opponent. This *may* be the back, but it could just as well be the head or the knee. All enemies have several weak points that a talented thief can exploit. Thus, a thief can use his backstab ability on creatures of all sizes.

There are some limitations to this. The larger a creature is, the harder it is for a thief to find a vital area or reach an area he has found. All thieves can backstab a creature up to one size larger than themselves without penalty. For each size greater than that, the thief suffers a -1 damage modifier.

### Called Shots and Backstab

A normal backstab assumes that the thief is aiming for a vital area of the target. However, if a player wishes to be more specific, he can make his backstab a called shot. A backstab that is a called shot functions as any other called shot. A called shot can be combined with the improved backstab proficiency (see below).

### Critical Hits and Backstab

First off, remember that the base severity level (BSL) for an attack depends on the CURRENT total to-hit bonus. Thus, a thief backstabbing gains +4 to his standard critical hit BSL with that weapon. Furthermore, practiced thieves can improve their critical hits further with an improved backstab proficiency.

The improved backstab is a weapon proficiency available to a thief group character (who has the backstab ability) at any experience level. The proficiency applies to a single weapon type when taken (usually the dagger or short sword). It allows the thief a choice: he may trade one or all of his extra damage ranges (usually 1 die each) for an increased frequency of critical hits. For example, a thief with +3 damage dice on his backstab could use only 1 of those dice for traditional extra damage and trade in the other two for a chance to score a critical hit on a roll of 17-20. The increased chance of a critical hit depends on how many dice of damage the thief trades. The first die allows 1 extra chance on a 20-sided die at a crit (19 or 20, though if he can normally score a critical hit on a 19 or 20, this would be 18-20), the second allows 2 more (3 total, usually 17-20), the third allows 3 more (6 total, usually 14-20) and so on. He also increases the critical hit BSL by the same increased frequency in the d20 (in the case of the example, +3).

This is purely at the thief's option once he has acquired the improved backstab proficiency. He can trade all or none of his damage dice on any individual attack he makes with that specific type of weapon.

If a backstab does become a critical hit, any damage multipliers (x2, x3, etc.) apply to the weapon damage and the additional bonus damage dice from the backstab.

### The Coldcock Attack

The coldcock attack is an attack designed to knock out but not kill a target. Also called the blindside, it is usually a surprise attack, though it can be used at any time. Members of all classes can make a coldcock attack, but thieves and assassins are especially adept at it. To make a coldcock attack, the attacker must begin the round next to his target and must attack from the rear or rear flank position with the victim unaware of the attacker. When making a coldcock attack, he cannot move before he attacks, and receives only one attack per round. In addition, he must target the head of his opponent, thus making the coldcock attack a called shot to the head (with the appropriate

penalties). While making a coldcock attack, the attacker gains no Dexterity benefit to Armor Class.

If a coldcock attack hits, the character should roll his full damage, including bonuses for Strength. Thieves may backstab with a coldcock attack, gaining the +4 to-hit bonus and additional damage dice. All damage done by a coldcock attack is temporary damage, but there is a chance of knockout equal to 2% per point of damage inflicted.

Ideally, a character makes a coldcock attack with a blackjack (also known as a sap), but he can do so with any weapon. However, not all weapons are suited to coldcock attacks. Open hand attacks suffer no penalty to-hit (though they don't do much damage). Crushing weapons (other than a sap) receive a -2 to coldcock attack rolls (in addition to the called shot penalty), as the wielder must control the power of his swing. Hacking and piercing weapons receive a -4 to coldcock attack rolls (in addition to the called shot penalty), as the wielder must use the flat of his blade or hilt.

### Two-Shield Style

In their endless quest for self-preservation, thieves develop a number of ways to keep themselves alive when lesser characters might fall. To preserve their bodies, thieves become experts at avoiding unnecessary danger. Most danger is unnecessary (especially when opponents fight to protect treasure that they actually have to leave to defend). One situation that vexes other character involves being surrounded by hordes of enemies. Frequently Orcs and Kobolds, for example, try to overrun parties with sheer numbers.

Thieves who have taken the shield proficiency may also take the two shield style proficiency to benefit from two shields at the same time. While this does preclude using a weapon, it also provides a generous AC bonus to avoid nasty blows.

### Allowed Weapons

A recent shake-up of the thieves' guilds across Garweeze Wurd has led to a redefining of the standard bard and thief weapon curriculum. Due to the greatly increasing lethality of the average combatant, these schools have begun focusing more on ranged weapons and maximizing their effectiveness. As such, the new list of allowed thief weapons is as follows: blowgun, club, dagger, dart, hand crossbow, light crossbow, knife, lasso, short bow, sling, broad sword, long sword, short sword, staff, and the new weapons presented in Table 5B: New Thief Weapons. Likewise, the new list of bard weapons is as follows: blowgun, club, dagger, dart, hand crossbow, light crossbow, javelin, sling, scimitar, spear, staff, bastard sword, broad sword, long sword, short sword, and the new weapons presented in Table 5B: New Thief Weapons.

Table 5B: New Thief Weapons lists new weapons appropriate to certain types of thieves. Like the hand crossbow, these weapons are not restricted to thief characters. The listed statistics for light and heavy crossbows apply to standard ammo shot from that particular weapon; there is no need for different types of quarrels for each new type of crossbow. Though the quarrels are standard light or heavy types according to the PHB, they work a bit differently when fired from a variant type of crossbow.

**Crossbow, Double-barrel.** This light crossbow has two tracks set side by side or one beneath the other. It takes one round to load, but the shooter can make two attacks in one round or fire two bolts at one target. If he fires both at one target, he uses a single to-hit roll. If he fires at separate targets, he suffers a -4 penalty to-hit on his second attack. When the crossbow is loaded and ready the shot at separate targets go of on segment 1 and 6. The weapon uses standard light quarrels, though the statistics are somewhat different.

**Crossbow, Double-barreled pump action.** This type of double-barreled crossbow has a special lever that slides along the track underneath, automatically placing the string to fire the second bolt. When both bolts are fired at once, it functions as a normal double-barreled crossbow. When fired separately, the first suffers a -2 to-hit and the second a -6. However, the first shot goes on initiative 1 and the second on initiative 4. Obviously, the shooter still

**Table 5B: New Thief Weapons**

Weight Weapon	Cost	DamageSpeed		Type	Factor	Damage vs.				Base Availability				
		(lbs.)	Size			T	S	M	L	H	G	Hi	Med	Low
Crossbow, double-barreled	450 gp	10	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55	30	5
Lt. quarrel/bolt	1 sp	1/10	S	P	-	1d4	1d4	1d8	2d4	2d6	2d6+1	90	85	80
Crossbow, double-barreled pump action	550 gp	12	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	15	1
Lt. quarrel/bolt	1 sp	1/10	S	P	-	1d4	1d4	1d8	2d4	2d6	2d6+1	90	85	80
Crossbow, 12-gauge	78 gp	18	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	25	5
Hvy. quarrel/bolt	2 sp	1/10	S	P	-	1d6+1	2d4+1	3d4	3d4+2	4d4+1	4d4+2	90	85	80
Crossbow, repeating (chu-ko-nu)	880 gp	17	L	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	5	1
Lt. quarrel/bolt	1 sp	1/10	S	P	-	1d4	1d4	1d6	1d8	2d6	2d4	90	85	80
Cutlass	12 gp	2	M	H/P	1	1d5	1d6	1d6	1d8	1d10	1d12	80	70	60
Garrote	5 gp	0.5	S	C/S	2	1d6-2	1d6-2	1d6-2	-	-	-	50	30	10
Kawanaga**	1gp	1	L	P	4	1d4	1d3	1d3	1d3-1	1d3-1	1d4-2	50	20	10
Kumade** ("climbing rake")	2 gp	2	L	P	2	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d3	1d4-1	1d4-1	40	15	5
Kusari-gama** ("sickle on chain")	6 gp	3	M	H	3	1d8	1d6	1d6	1d6-1	1d4	1d4-1	40	15	5
Kyoketsu-shogi** ("bladed whip/chain")	3 gp	1	M	P/C	2	1d4+1	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4-1	1d4-1	40	15	5
Main-gauche*	4 gp	2	S	H	-1	1d6	1d6-1	1d4	1d4-1	1d4-1	1d4-2	60	30	15
Ninja-to** ("short sword")	2 gp	3	S	H/P	0	1d8	1d8	1d8	1d6	1d6	1d6-1	60	30	10
Nekode, pair** (climbing claws)	15 sp	4	S	P	-1	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4-1	1d3	1d4-2	50	25	5
Prybar/crowbar	10 sp	10	M	C	3	1d6+1	1d6+1	1d6	1d6-1	1d6-1	1d6-2	90	85	80
Rapier*	16 gp	4	M	P	1	1d6-1	1d6	1d6+1	1d8+1	1d10	1d8	70	50	25
Saber*	20 gp	5	M	H	1	1d5	1d6	1d6	1d8	1d10	1d8	80	60	40
Shuriken** ("throwing stars")	2 sp	.1	S	P	0	1d6	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4-1	1d4-2	65	45	25
Stiletto*	5 sp	0.5	S	P	-1	1d4	1d4	1d4-1	1d4-2	1d4-2	1d4-3	80	55	25
Tetsu-bishi** (caltrops)	3 sp	.3	S	P	4	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4	1d4	60	40	20

\* These weapons can only be used one handed. \*\* Ninja weapons. See Chapter 1 for special rules.

gets no extra actions for the remainder of that round! The weapon uses standard light quarrels, though the statistics are somewhat different.

**Crossbow, 12-gauge.** This is a powerful type of heavy crossbow guaranteed to pierce 12 gauge steel plate. Only expert craftsmen can construct the weapon. It fires standard heavy quarrels just as a normal heavy crossbow would, but they inflict more damage due to the weapon's powerful mechanism. A minimum Strength of 13/01 is required to cock this weapon.

**Crossbow, Repeating (chu-ko-nu).** First constructed in distant lands of legend, master weapon makers have manufactured these based on rumors and eyewitness accounts. This type of light crossbow has a vertical magazine that drops bolts into place right after the previous one has been fired. The weapon can hold ten bolts in this fashion, with an additional ready to fire. However, in practice the device needs one space left open within the magazine for the bolts to drop properly, so it can hold a total of ten bolts rather than eleven.

To cock and reload the weapon after firing, the shooter pushes a single lever forward and then pulls it back. As each must be carefully placed, only two bolts can be loaded each round. Thus it takes five rounds to completely load the device. This crossbow cannot be loaded and fired in the same round.

Once loaded, the shooter can fire one or two bolts each round (with no to-hit penalties). However, on a natural roll of 1 (1 or 2 for accident-prone characters), the weapon jams. The first bolt misfires and the others become stuck in the magazine. These must be removed and the device entirely re-loaded (which takes a full turn). The weapon fires standard light crossbow quarrels.

**Cutlass.** This type of sword has a short, thick, curved blade with one shard edge. The curve is slight and the handle often has a flared hand guard. Many sailors, pirates, and corsairs favor the weapon.

**Garrote.** See Zealot's Guide.

**Kawanaga.** Both a tool and a weapon, the kawanaga consists of a length of rope with a small grappling hook at one end and a weight at the other. It can be used as a minor grapple for climbing or swung by the hook or the weight for use as a weapon. The wielder needs four feet of space free on either side of him to properly swing the kawanaga in combat. Though a large weapon when in use, it can be concealed as a small weapon, as the rope and weight take up little more room than the grapple alone. Obviously, a character can also use rope to trip or garrote targets.

**Kumade.** This long wooden shaft has a rake-like head at one end. By setting the rake prongs in a crack, on a ledge or on a sill, the user can use the pole to assist in climbing (+15% to his skill). It also serves as a weapon, and since it may be considered a simple gardening tool, wielders can often carry it into areas where weapons are forbidden.

**Kusari-gama.** This has a slightly curved blade at the end of a handle, with a length of weighted chain attached to the butt end of the handle. The user can hold the shaft and hack with the blade while keeping the chain in his other hand to attempt to block or strike his victim. Alternately, he can hold the weighted end and whirl the blade; this use requires four feet of space on either side. Relatively easy to make, the weapon appears far more impressive when used this way than it really should.

**Kyoketsu-shogi.** This simple length of rope has a sharp, hooked blade at one end and a heavy iron ring at the other. It can be used like a chain, or the wielder can swing either blade or weight to strike opponents. When rolled up, the weapon is considered Small and fairly easy to conceal. If the user strikes an opponent, he may choose to use his next attack to entangle (unless his opponent attacks him in the intervening time).

If the wielder hits successfully, the victim must make a Dex check or fall, entangled in the rope. He takes no further damage from this fall, but needs to succeed at a Dex check at half Dex to wriggle free, or a Bend Bars/Lift Gates check to break free. Either method takes 4 segments, after which the victim can stand up from prone (which takes a round in itself).

**Table 5C: New Missile Weapon Ranges**

Weapon	ROF	Range (yards)		
		S	M	L
Crossbow				
Double-barreled	1 or 2	40	80	120
Double-barreled, pump action	1 or 2	40	80	120
12-gauge	1/2	90	180	270
Cho-ku-no	1 or 2	50	100	150
Shuriken	proficiency*	5	10	20

\*1 (non-proficient), 3 (if proficient)

**Main-gauche.** This double-edged dagger is fitted with a triangular guard. This intricately detailed guard often has prongs with which to parry an opponent's blade. The main gauche is most effective as an off-hand weapon for users trained in wielding two weapons at once.

**Nekode.** This consists of a pair of straps or gloves with spikes attached the palm. It primarily assists in climbing (as clawed claws, see above), but can also be used to claw opponents for minor damage. The user can handle small items while wearing the claws, but wearing them at all pretty much shouts "ninja" to any observer.

**Ninja-to.** This is the trademark ninja weapon. It is a short sword with a straight blade of lesser quality than the katana. The length of the blade appears to be just as long as it should be for its scabbard, but usually the scabbard is actually "false" and has secret compartments (see false scabbard above). Ninja are known for carrying a wide variety of items (poison, powders, daggers, anything they can think of and fit) in their scabbards. The standard scabbard is strong enough to be used like a ladder rung. Ninja often wrap silk cord around the scabbard for use to unravel when climbing walls.

**Rapier.** A straight two-edged sword with a narrow pointed blade. The weapons are favored by gentlemen.

**Saber.** A sword with an arched guard that covers the back of the hand and a tapering flexible blade with a full cutting edge along one side and a partial cutting edge on the back of the tip.

**Shuriken.** These small throwing weapons are much like darts, but come in a variety of amusing shapes and sizes (all Small, of course). Four and eight-pointed stars are common versions. With razor-sharp edges, they pretty much guarantee that they will stick in a victim when thrown. Though limited in range (S-1/2, M-1, L-2), they are easily concealed in folds of cloth or even in the hair. Unskilled individuals can throw only one per round, but proficient characters can hurl up to 3 in a round.

**Stiletto.** A slender dagger with a blade that is relatively thick in proportion to its breadth. The blade is typically retractable inside of its handle casing. The blade is released and locked into place out the top of the handle with a simple click of a button that is often a surprisingly intimidating action when done by a crafty rogue.

**Tetsu-bishi.** These small caltrops are not melee or thrown weapons. Due to clever design, they spread evenly and virtually always have a pointy end up. Creatures who must save versus paralyzation to avoid them suffer a -1 penalty on the roll.



# Chapter 6

## Equipment for the Thieves' Skills

Rosolkov leaned away from the thick oaken door regretfully. "I can't hear a word of what's being said in there," he said miserably. His mentor Thrayen smiled at him and reached into the voluminous folds of his robe. Hardly the time for a conjuring trick, the miserable apprentice thought. But Thrayen swiftly flourished a polished bronze hemisphere topped with a cone, the open surface of the hemisphere wrapped about with a thin metal mesh. With only the hint of a flourish, he placed the end of the cone to his right ear and leaned closer to the door, gently placing the mesh-covered surface to the wood. A smile with just the slightest hint of smugness beamed from the older thief's face. "Try again," Thrayen urged his apprentice. Rosolkov craned his neck closer and placed the cone against his own ear. Now he could hear the Guildmaster's voice faintly, to be sure, but the words were clear enough. . . .

"Just one thing, Master," Rosolkov said in a newly-respectful tone on the way to the Footpad for an ale, "what is the wire mesh for?"

"To keep the ear seekers out, of course," Thrayen said mildly. "The GuildMaster is very fond of using them as a defense against snoopers."

"But-but before you gave me the listening cone I . . . I tried to listen anyway, I placed my ear against the door . . . . . cried the apprentice, suddenly aghast.

"Indeed you did," Thrayen replied coolly. "Better nip off and see the clerics for a Cure Disease spell. I get ten per cent of their fees in such cases, you know. See you later, I trust. . . .

Over the years, thieves have had made a living off their nimble wits as much as their nimble fingers. Those who have gone before used their ingenuity to develop a number of useful devices that enhance (or even allow) a thief to practice his art. Few towns have general stores that offer lock picks, but the thief who knows where to look can find a wide variety of special equipment.

Knowing what to look for is equally important. This chapter details many such items. Many of these are specific to particular thief skill, as noted in the item descriptions. However, there are also many miscellaneous items that clever thieves (i.e. not dead thieves) are likely to find useful in their work. Table 6A: Thief Equipment is a tabular summary of likely prices and encumbrance values.

While these items may not be entirely restricted to use by thieves, in most cases other characters are simply too clumsy, oafish, or stupid to use them effectively. Lockpicks are useless for picking locks in the hands of anyone but a thief, for example. However, many other items do not necessarily have such restricted use. Tar paper could potentially be useful for characters other than thieves, but such things are particularly likely to be encountered in the subculture of thieves, and to be used by them when going about their nefarious activities. Also, only thieves should really take a lively interest in equipment that assists stealth, concealment, silently breaking into places you shouldn't be, and relieving overburdened old merchants of excess coinage, as this is part of properly playing a thief.

In the full equipment listing below, it is entirely for the GM to determine whether certain items may or may not be available in certain areas. For example, combination locks may only exist in the most advanced cultures in the world, and thus the use of a small listening cone to assist in opening such locks would be irrelevant in such a game world. Also, certain items may well be available, but not openly so. Only shadowy, illegal sources supply such items as lock picks to strangers. Availability of many items depends on the

nature of the society within which the thief operates, as detailed in Chapter Three.

These items can be introduced to PC thieves in different ways. Going on a job with an NPC thief who uses one or two specialty items is one way of educating a PC thief. A second possibility is regular attendance at the informal "seminars" of the Thieves' Guild, or contacts within the thief's organizational affiliation. A third possibility is that during training by a higher-level thief, the student may learn of a small number of items relevant to thief skills. If the PC allocates a large portion of his 35 percentage points for improving one skill (often the case), he should acquire information about 1d3 items relevant to the use of that skill and also 1d2 miscellaneous items as part of his fees. A fourth and final possibility is that the PC hears about such items from popular stories and tales concerning a legendary master thief NPC in the area, or even from overhearing some officers of the law discussing such matters at the next table in the tavern!!

### Modifiers

Many equipment items detailed below give a modifier to the chance for success for a skill check. In any event, do not forget that the maximum chance for success after all modifiers are applied (for race, Dexterity, conditions, equipment, etc.) is 95%; a natural roll of 96-100 on d100 always fails!

There is also an analogous 1% chance for success: a natural 1 always succeeds, regardless of modifiers. The poor 1st level thief trying to pick a superior lock in the dark with improvised lock picks rolls 1! He's done it! The lock clicks open.

In some cases, several different items of equipment add to a character's chance for success when climbing walls, opening locks, etc. In the case of non-magical items, no more than a total of +20% can be added to any chance for success in such a skill test, no matter how many items are employed to assist the thief's natural talent. Sometimes it's just overkill, and wits and skill trump the fanciest equipment. Also, certain combinations of equipment simply don't do any good. For example, a character cannot benefit from both climbing daggers and spikes for climbing walls. The thief could not add the individual modifiers for these two equipment items together, because, although they have important, individual, additional uses, when it comes to climbing walls they both do the same thing.

Many more equipment items exist than are detailed here. Virtually none of these are restricted to usage by thieves only. However, as stated before, thieves are the most likely characters to use them or to know where to find those that are not legally available.

### Self-protection and Combat

Protecting treasure is of course a quite noble goal, but a thief must ensure his own protection first. When it comes to it, a good thief can always steal again, so long as he is alive. Some of the equipment detailed here offers combat options for thief group characters, who must face the world without heavy armor or powerful magics. Unlike the other classes, the thief (the entire thief group of classes: assassin, bard, charlatan, etc.) must live or die by his wits. Many items listed help him do so. Other classes lose Honor for using certain of these items (see the individual item descriptions).



**Table 6A: Thief Equipment**

Item	Legality	Cost	Weight	Availability		
				Hi	Med	Low
Acid, Metal-eating (1 vial)	L	50 gp	1 lb.	45	25	5
Aniseed (1 vial)	L	2 sp	*	70	45	20
Arm Sling	L	3 cp	*	85	65	45
Arrow, major grapple	L/S	10 gp	*	30	15	2
Arrow, minor grapple	L/S	6 gp	*	40	25	10
Arrow, stone biter	L	1 gp	*	45	25	10
Arrow, stone biter, adamantite	L	7 gp	*	20	10	1
Arrow, wood biter	L	8 sp	*	65	45	25
Biased Dice, bone (4)	I	5 gp	*	75	60	45
Biased Dice, ivory (4)	I	20 gp	*	50	35	10
Blade Boots	I	15 gp	3 lbs. (C)	55	40	25
Blade Pole	S/I	3 gp	7 lbs.	60	30	5
Blinking Powder	var.	var.	*	50	35	10
Calotrops (10)	L/S	3 gp	1 lb.	80	55	30
Camouflage Clothing						
Darksuit	S	30 gp	5 lbs.	40	20	5
Woodland Suit	L/S	35 gp	5 lbs.	75	65	55
Catstink (1 vial) **	S/I	40 gp	1 lb.	40	20	3
Charcoal (bundle)	L	2 cp	*	95	90	85
Climbing Tools						
Clawed Gloves**	I	20 gp	1 C	50	35	10
Clawed Overshoes	I	15 gp	1 C	50	35	10
Climbing Dagger	L	5 gp	1 lb.	45	30	5
Climbing Pole	L/S	4 gp	9 lbs.	65	45	25
Climbing Spike (piton), iron	L	3 cp	.5 lbs.	90	70	50
Grappling Hook**	L	8 sp	4 lbs.	90	85	80
Coin, Sharpened (Cut Purse) <sup>§</sup>	I	5 sp	.25 lbs.	95	90	85
Crowbar/Prybar <sup>§</sup>	L	10 sp	10 lbs.	90	85	80
Dawg Pepper (packet)	S	1 sp	1 lb.	70	50	30
Death Knife **	S/I	12 gp	1 lb.	50	20	5
False Scabbard **	L/S	12 gp	1-2 lbs.	65	55	45
Folding Bow	L/S	45 gp	2 lbs.	45	30	15
Footpads	I	8 gp	3 lbs. (C)	55	45	25
Funnel, small	L	3 cp	*	90	80	70
Glass-cutter (handled)	L/I	120 gp	1 lb.	50	35	15
Hacksaw (hardened) <sup>§</sup>	L/S	5 sp	3 lbs.	85	75	70
Hacksaw Blade	L	6 sp	*	60	45	20
Hand Lamp (w/silvered mirror)	L/S	10 gp	1 lb.	75	60	35
Hand Warming Lamp	L	2 sp	3 lbs.	60	40	20
Hollow Boots	I	15 gp	3 C	55	35	15
Hooked Pole	S	5 gp	5-8 lbs.	75	65	55
Housebreaker's Harness **	I	25 gp	2 lbs.	60	40	20
Key Making set <sup>§</sup>	L/S	50 gp	3 lbs.	75	65	55
Limewood Strips (2)	L	3 cp	*	80	60	40
Listening Cone (brass)	L	2 gp	0.5 lb.	70	50	30
Lock Chisels (set of 3)	L	2 gp	1 lb.	80	60	40
Lockpick Artificial Arm	I	50 gp	3 lbs.	40	20	1
Lockpick Set <sup>§</sup>	I	30 gp	1 lb.	70	65	60
Locksmithing Tools <sup>§</sup>	L/S	100 gp	5 lbs.	85	75	70
Marbles, bag (30)	L	2 cp	1 lb.	95	90	85
Marked Cards, Deck**	I	5 gp	0.5 lbs.	70	50	20
Metal File	L	5 sp	*	90	85	80
Mini-Blade	L	5 cp	*	70	60	45
Mirror Pole	S	22 gp	8 lbs.	70	60	50
Pin Ring (iron)	S/I	2 gp	*	65	55	45
Pin Ring (silver)	S/I	10 gp	*	55	40	25
Razor Ring (iron)	S/I	2 gp	*	50	40	30
Razor Ring (silver)	S/I	10 gp	*	50	20	5
Salimic Acid (1 vial) <sup>§</sup>	S	150 gp	*	65	55	45
Sharkskin (per sq. ft.)	L/S	12 gp	1 lb.	60	40	10
Silenced Armor **	S	750+ gp	50 lbs.	65	45	15
Skeleton Key	I	var.	*	55	35	5
Soot/Face Black <sup>§</sup>	L/S	10 sp	*	95	95	95
Strapping, leather (pair)	L	3 sp	1 lb.	90	85	80
Sword Stick **	L/S	25 gp	4 lbs.	65	45	25
Thieves' Picks	I	30 gp	1 lb.	60	50	40
Water Shoes, pair	S/I	5 gp	1 lb.	55	45	35
Wax, block	L	3 cp	2 lbs.	65	55	45
Weaponblack (1 vial)	S	2 gp	1 lb.	50	35	10
Wire Cutters (small)	L/S	1 gp	1 lb.	60	50	30
Wrist Sheath	S	3 sp	*	60	40	20

L - Legal (freely available on open market)

S - Shady (likely to cause suspicion and/or be regulated by a government or guild body)

I - Illegal (thieves guild only)

\*These items weigh little individually. Ten of these items weigh approximately one pound.

§ in PHB

**COST AND AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT**

Table 6A: Thief Equipment lists the cost, weight, and legality of equipment items. Clothing items have weights listed for them but are also denoted by the letter "C." They add nothing to encumbrance if worn normally.

Legality of the items is important. Items are listed as L (legal; freely available on the open market), S (shady; available in more liberal countries and in dodgy back-street shops under the counter), and I (illegal; from a thieves' guild only). Some items get a split classification, e.g. "L/S." This may be because they are borderline, or because they are legal for some narrow, specific occupational usage only (and there are restrictions on their sale).

Finally, items marked with two asterisks (\*\*) may be hard to obtain even if not illegal, for various reasons. It may require a craftsman of rare skill to make, basic ingredients may be hard to find (e.g. Black Dragon acid!), and such. The item description should make clear why an availability problem may exist. The GM may decide that such an item simply cannot be found in certain areas (or at certain times).

**Acid, Metal-eating**

If faced with a lock that his best efforts cannot pick open, a thief may turn to metal-eating acid. Such acids can eat through a lock if the lock fails a saving throw (for metal) vs. acid (most locks save as soft metal and thus need a 13 against acid; the very finest of locks may save as hard metal). If the lock succeeds at the saving throw, it cannot be opened. If it fails a second saving throw, it will be ruined (and unopenable!). Only the most daring of thieves risk metal-eating acid, as the acid easily eats through most other substances as well...especially flesh.

Use of metal-eating acids is difficult because only acids of great strength do the job effectively, making their use difficult. Some of the few known effective metal-eating acids include those from a Black Dragon or a Thessalhydra. The GM should restrict the availability of such acid. A clever thief does not seek to collect such things himself, despite low availability and high cost.

Thieves usually avoid such acids in any event. First, the acid is very hazardous to carry. While it may be contained in glass (and possibly ceramic) containers, such vessels are fragile. Imagine falling down a pit and hearing the sound of breaking glass as double-strength acid begins to seep through

clothing and over one's back.... Second, if the acid does not do the job, it may ruin the lock and any hope of opening it in another way, as described previously. Third, it is a calumny on the professional reputation of a thief to have to resort to such means as acids! A thief (or assassin) who resorts to acid to open locks takes a -1 hit to temporal Honor for each person who hears of it (up to 12 maximum).

Note that salimic acid (described in the PHB) is a unique case; it is far more common in Garweeze Wurld, though it works somewhat differently than this standard class of metal-eating acids.

### Aniseed

A small quantity of this simple, plant-derived flavoring can be used to throw off creatures that track by scent (such as dawgs). Dropping a vial of aniseed in an appropriate place (crossing a stream, at a fork in the trail, at the base of wall) can ruin the pursuing beast's sense of smell for 1d4+1 hours. Even so, trained guard dawgs (and similar creatures) can avoid this smell with a successful saving throw versus poison. Even after the aniseed affects the mutt (or whatever), a spell such as Neutralize Poison or Slow Poison can remove the effect. Still, the beast must pick up the scent anew once the aniseed has done its work. As aniseed is designed to work against dawgs, the GM may allow other creatures a +1 to +3 bonus on the saving throw. Once dropped, the aniseed remains potent for 5-20 (5d4) minutes.

### Arm Sling

This is simply a cloth sling that the thief wears to appear as if he has a broken or injured arm, and speedily withdraws his hand from it for the pocket-picking attempt. The sling actually reduces the chances of successfully picking pockets by 5%, but the payoff is that the chances for being discovered are halved (though a natural 100 on d100 always means discovery). People simply do not expect to see a man with a broken arm picking pockets and the expectation affects the perception.

The use of this unusual strategy makes sense when the priority is not to be discovered, rather than to be sure of success. When a thief works in a city where he is not a guild member, or one where legal penalties for picking pockets are extremely harsh, he should keep this ruse in mind.

A thief obviously cannot use this trick for an extended period of time in the same place (save possibly by posing as a beggar). There is a limit to how long an arm can plausibly need for healing, after all. GMs may restore full chances of being discovered after two weeks in the same town, or one week in the same village or market.

### Biased Dice and Marked Cards

These are standard trappings for any self-respecting swindler. Use of suitably marked cards or biased dice allows a +10 modifier to the character's gaming skill. The risk, of course, comes from the harsh penalties imposed by officials or (worse yet) lowlifes in seedy taverns.

If actually playing the game out, the thief PC is allowed (in effect) to replace any one card drawn or die thrown with a successful gaming skill check. Thus, if the PC plays blackjack and has drawn a king and a five, the effect of using marked cards is simulated by allowing a redraw on one card, if the player wishes to do so (in this case, most likely the five). When making the skill check, a result of 91 or more (even if successful!) indicates that the cheat has been noticed. For obvious reasons, the GM rolls this check in secret!

### Blade Boots

This exotic title is a catchall for specially modified boots that have concealed blades within them. The blades have to be small, of course; they are usually little more than two inches long. Concealed in secret compartments in the heels of boots (see the entry for hollow boots), slender blades can even be hidden in the soles of boots. Such blades are of little use as weapons, but

can be used to draw blood to distract people, slit pouches and purses, to cut ropes, and so on.

### Blade Pole

This is a substitute for or a polearm, but is not used as a combat weapon (the blade is too fine for such use. Those who try face a speed factor of 7, do 1 point of damage, and have a 50% chance of breaking the blade every time they strike something with it). The device consists of a small blade wedged into one end of a pole, which the welder uses for cutting objects at a distance. The most notable use for the blade pole is in cutting trip wires (at a distance, if the thief is unsure whether traps may be triggered).

### Blinding Powder

This general term includes any powder that is highly abrasive, irritating to the eyes, and disabling to the victim as a result. Blinding powder can be made from powdered stone, pepper, dust soaked in onion juice, strong ammonium salts – or just about anything a clever thief can think up.

Blinding powder is only useful if it is thrown right into the eyes of a victim. This counts as a called shot to the eyes, so the attack roll is made at -10 to-hit. However, the Dexterity bonus of the person throwing the powder applies to the attack roll. Further, the base AC of the target ignores any armor or shield used, save for the helmet or great helm. Magical protections (such as from Bracers of Defense or a Ring of Protection) also apply, as does Dexterity (unless the attacker has an element of surprise).

If blinding powder strikes a victim, he must make a successful saving throw versus poison or be struck blind and suffer a coughing fit. The victim suffers all the effects of blindness and cannot make any attacks (or cast spells, or use skills) for the rest of that round and the entire next round. Thereafter, he suffers a -8 penalty to any attacks, -75% to any skill, and a base 55% chance of spell mishap if he does attempt any of those actions. This lasts 1d4 rounds.

If the victim can wash his eyes with plenty of water, he can spend one full round washing the powder away. Although blinding powder can contain some unpleasant ingredients, it causes no permanent damage.

Non-thief (group) characters who use blinding powder suffer the loss of 2 points of temporal Honor per use.

### Caltrops

Numerous different forms of caltrops exist. The most common design is a metal ball with four to six sharp prongs at wide angles. Thus, when dropped at least one spike usually points pretty much straight upward. The thief drops caltrops to slow pursuit; these things cannot be used as missile weapons.

The exact effect of caltrops depends on how many are thrown. The basic density is 10 in 25 square feet (one 5-foot by 5-foot square). Any creature stepping into this area must make a saving throw versus paralyzation. Characters use their Dexterity reaction bonus (or penalty) on this save. Success indicates that the character has avoided all the dangers, failure means that it has stepped on one and suffers 1d4 points of damage. It must also immediately halt its movement that round. Note that creatures moving at one-third their normal speed need make no save; they can pick their way through and avoid all the caltrops automatically.

With only five caltrops in a 25-square-foot area, the creature gains +4 to its saving throw. For every full five used beyond the base ten, the creature suffers -2 on its save.

A creature must remove a caltrop before continuing movement, a process that takes one full round. It must then make a second saving throw versus paralyzation (without any Dex bonus for reaction adjustment) to see if it has gone lame. A lame creature is reduced to one-third movement for 24 hours until magically healed (restoring all of the points of damage inflicted by the caltrops) or just 1d4 hours with a successful use of the healing skill.

Clever thieves can also improvise caltrops, though the GM will certainly apply modifiers to saving throws. For example, a thief with a bag of nails and a sack of potatoes could make fairly effective caltrops (+2 on creatures' initial saving throws versus paralyzation to avoid all the spikes).

## CAMOUFLAGE CLOTHING

As the Player's Handbook explains, hiding in shadows is not literally just the knack of hiding in areas of shadow while not moving. It also covers hiding in bushes, shrubs, behind drapes, in alcoves – anywhere that offers cover, where a thief can hope to skulk about immobile and hope to remain unseen. Consider equipment for this skill in this light.

Blending in with a background begins with the largest cross section of visibility – clothes. The right color of clothing (usually dark, since a good thief works best at night) goes a long way towards getting sleepy people's eyes to slide off oneself. There may be exceptional variants on this – for example, a thief who needs to hide in shadows amongst the crimson curtains of a lady's boudoir might use a crimson set of clothing. But he should have some more generic camouflage as well, if he intends to get away with her jewelry and make his way across the courtyard. Apart from such singular special cases, two general types of camouflage clothing have proven useful in various situations: the darksuit and the woodland suit.

### Darksuit

This comprises black or very deep blue clothes, usually fairly voluminous robes or what might be termed a "utility suit." Such clothing is properly made lightweight so it can be carried about easily and worn under normal clothing if needs be. It always includes significant facial covering, often in the form of a hood but frequently as a scarf attached to the neck of the suit. Such a suit adds +5% to a hide in shadows chance in any area which is shadowy, has a light level equal to dusk or early dawn, or equivalent. In significant darkness (a thick forest, an unlit room), it adds +15%. In a moonless night, an unlit interior room, or similar situation a darksuit adds +25%. These bonuses are halved against creatures using infravision.

### Woodland Suit

This has a similar basic design to a darksuit but is made of light clothing dyed in irregular patterns of greens and browns. It adds +10% to the hide in shadows chance when the thief attempts to conceal himself in any suitable outdoors setting such as woodland, a field, or the garden of a town house.

### Plant Dyes

Analogous to the use of charcoal in dim lighting, a thief can use plant dyes (crushed leaves, berries, certain oily barks, etc.) to disguise his exposed face and hands and add a further +2% to his hide in shadows chance in suitable outdoor settings. Such plant materials are usually rather sticky and smelly, however! This can be a problem if the grounds have guard dawgs or other animals. Note that a thief can use either plant dyes or charcoal, not both at once. No known store actually sells such plant dyes; the thief must make the concoction himself.

### Catstink

Even the most highly trained guard dawgs find it nigh impossible to avoid chasing cats. A few alchemists have been able to manufacture a substance that closely imitates the crucial elements of scent by which dawgs recognize feline creatures. While many know that alchemists use ingredients taken from real cats, the secret ingredients of this mixture remain just that. Thieves' guilds pay well for this thick, foul-smelling reddish gray liquid known as catstink.

The substance is specifically designed to distract dawgs by overwhelming them with the odor of felines, allowing the thief to make his escape without

being clawed, bitten, and rent in pieces. No matter how well trained the dawg, it must succeed at a saving through versus apology (at -4) to continue pursuing a thief rather than investigating the pungent odor of a nearby cat to chase. Spells such as Slow Poison and Neutralize Poison can counter the effect, but if the dawg is still near enough to smell the catstink, it must make a new saving throw.

The catstink can also be used to delay dawgs tracking a thief who makes his escape. In this use, it functions much like a more expensive (and more effective) version of aniseed. Catstink can be detected by dawgs up to 200 yards away, or up to a half mile away if the dawg is downwind.

### Charcoal

Even wearing a darksuit, the glint of moonlight on a pallid white face can give a thief away. Blacking up the face (and neck) with charcoal adds a further 3% to a thief's chance to hide in shadows in dim light, shadowy areas, etc. Burnt cork and soot are work similarly. A keen thief should not forget to blacken the backs of his hands either!

## CLIMBING TOOLS

Certain tools can be used to aid characters making a climb. Tools serve both to increase the chance of a climb's success and to decrease the chance of a character getting hurt in a fall. The disadvantage of tools is that they can often lengthen the time needed to make a climb, and often make enough noise to attract unwanted attention. This noise is the main reason that thieves limit the use of these tools in the course of their usual missions.

Certain tools require the use of rope to be of much use, but thieves can do more with this sort of equipment than less ingenious classes in any case.

### Arrows, Special Function

Throwing grapples is by no means the most efficient way of attaching a rope to a wall, battlement or similar structure. Arrows allow a greater range and thus many special arrowheads have been developed to help the thief's chances with such operations.

Thieves have two distinct options when using special function arrows. The first is known as the one-rope method. The shooter simply affixes a single rope to the arrow, and when the projectile finds its mark the thief merely climbs directly up the rope. This method is simple, but the rope attached must be strong enough to bear the thief's weight, and this considerably reduces the effective range of the bow (and incurs penalties of -2 to hit and -2 to damage rolls, if the arrow is used in combat for any reason). It also means that the bow shot, being less accurate and powerful, is less likely to provide a good purchase on the target. (Once the arrow catches, if the thief fails a check against his Dexterity -6, the arrow pulls free after 1d6 rounds of a supporting a load. The thief may catch himself with a successful climbing check, if the GM allows it.)

The second method is the two-rope method. Here, the shooter threads a light string through a loop attached to the arrow, and keeps both ends of the string. The string is light enough not to affect the flight of the arrow. When the arrow has struck the target, the climber attaches a stout rope to one end of the string and pulls the string through to play out the rope, thread it through the loop, and extend it fully in place of the string. This method is obviously more time consuming than the one-rope method; it takes one round to play out 20 feet of rope in this manner. Also, the climber needs twice the length of rope, of course, since the rope goes from the thief to the target and back. However, this method is more likely to obtain a firmly fix the arrow into the target. (Once the arrow catches, the thief must succeed at a Dexterity check or the arrow pulls free after 1d6 rounds of supporting a load; see the one-rope method above).

Either of these two methods can be used with any of the special function arrows below, with the exception of the major grapple arrow (which can only be used with the one-rope method).



**Table 6B: Special Function Arrows**

Arrow Type	Special Effects
Major Grapple	+15 for stone parapet, tree branches; +10 for rocky lodge, wooden wall; +5 to stone wall top
Minor Grapple	+10 for stone parapet, tree branches; +5 to all others
Stone Biter	+10 for stone parapet, stone wall top; +5 for wooden wall
Stone Biter*	+20 for stone parapet, stone wall top; +5 for wooden wall
Wood Biter	+15 for tree branches and wooden walls

\* adamantite

**Arrow, Major Grapple:** The major grapple is a far more complex piece of apparatus than the minor grapple, and because of its method of use it can only be employed with the one-rope method (see above). The head of this arrow at first appears to be a fairly long arrowhead of normal width. Its true function is apparent to the uninitiated only when fired. The shooter must securely fix the rope at one end. As the major grapple arrow closes in on its target, reaching as far as the rope allows, the sudden tension pulls at the head of the arrow, which opens out into a large three-pointed grappling hook. This is some 6 to 8 inches in width, fully the equal of most ordinary grappling irons. The major grapple has better aerodynamics than the minor grapple and a better chance of gripping, but a considerably reduced range.

**Arrow, Minor Grapple:** This has a small, three-pointed grappling hook as its head, perhaps some three inches in total width. This arrow is usually shot through a window, over a palisade, etc., in much the same way as a conventional grappling iron is thrown.

**Arrow, Stone Biter:** The stone biter has a narrow, heavy head of metal, with small ridges rather than barbs. Careful craftsmanship is needed to produce these arrows from the highest quality metal being and sharpen them to the greatest possible extent. The arrows are designed to give a grip when shot into stone, but only work on relatively soft stone such as sandstone or brick.

**Arrow, Stone Biter (Adamantite):** This is as the same as the above arrow, save that adamantite is used in its manufacture. This makes the arrow capable of biting into all but the hardest stone surfaces, but also makes it extremely expensive.

**Arrow, Wood Biter:** This has a broad, flat head with backward-facing barbs. It is specifically designed to give a good grip when shot into wooden surfaces.

Table 6B: Special Function Arrows shows modifiers to dice rolls on Table 6C: Grappling Success when using a special function arrow.

**Table 6C: Grappling Success**

Grapple Target	Miss	Catch and Slip	Catch
Stone Parapet	1-72	73-78	79-100
Stone Wall Top	1-83	84-89	90-100
Tree Branches	1-66	67-70	71-100
Rocky Ledge	1-88	89-93	94-100
Wooden Wall	1-70	71-74	75-100

**Clawed Gloves and Shoes**

Clawed overshoes or boots, similar in design to the more common clawed gloves, also exist in many of the more sophisticated areas of Garweeze Wurd. The thief slips the overshoes over his normal footwear. These items provide extra grip on small nooks and crannies of whatever surface the thief climbs, so the bonus to the climb walls roll depends on the type of surface involved.

On very smooth surfaces where almost no nooks and crannies exist, clawed gloves and boots add nothing to the thief's chance to climb walls. For smooth/cracked surfaces, clawed gloves add +5% to the climb walls chance, boots also add +5%, and the two together add +10%. For any other type of surface, clawed gloves add +10%, clawed boots add +10%, and the combination adds +20% to the chance to climb walls successfully. Neither alters rates of movement.

The use of clawed gloves reduces the chance to move silently by -5%, the use of clawed boots by -10%, and the combination by -15% if the thief attempts to move silently during his climb (such as trying to evade detection by guards atop a parapet).

Clawed gloves can also be used as melee weapons, though they require no weapon proficiency for a character of the thief group. A successful hit inflicts 1 point of damage in addition to that normally delivered by a fist blow. Clawed overshoes may similarly be used as a weapon, adding 1 point of damage to a kick attack. All damage is real.

**Climbing Daggers**

Daggers have been used to aid climbing from time immemorial, so it is to be expected that generations of thieves have devised a more specialized form especially for this task. Climbing daggers have relatively short blades (some 6 to 8 inches long) which are stiff, strong, flat, and very sharp. This allows the dagger to be inserted into wood or between bricks with greater ease than an ordinary dagger. They can aid in climbing on any surface other than very smooth ones. The handle is also flat and quite broad, and usually bound with leather strips or thick string to make a good grip, or even to allow a foot easy purchase when the dagger is used as a step. Also, in place of a normal pommel a climbing dagger has a broad, smooth iron ring. This allows the climber to pass a rope through or attach the dagger to one of the straps of a housebreaker's harness (q.v.).

Climbing daggers add +15% to a thief's chance to climb walls, although their main use is with a housebreaker's harness. They may be used in com-

bat, but due to their very different design they require a separate weapon proficiency from the standard dagger. Characters using climbing daggers in combat without this to proficiency suffer the standard penalty (climbing dagger: small puncturing weapon, speed factor -3, damage 1d6-1 on creatures up to Small size, 1d6-2 on Man-sized creatures, and 1d6-3 on creatures of Large or greater size).

### Climbing Pole

This 10-foot long (or longer) pole must be stout and strong to be of any real use. It has notches cut into it at regular intervals (approximately every two feet, often alternating on each side so that each notch is but one foot from one on the opposite side) to enable the thief to climb using it. Proper use of the climbing pole requires the user to set it at a suitable angle against the wall. Thieves often do not need such an item, but it can be quite useful in dealing with very slippery or smooth surfaces, walls made with broken glass shards in the mortar, and similar unusual cases.

### Grapples

Grappling irons, or grappling hooks, are relatively heavy iron tools with at least two, and usually three or four separate hooks branching from the end. The other end is attached to a rope. A character hurls the hook above to catch on protrusions and thus support the rope and the climber(s).

A character can throw a grappling hook upward a distance in feet equal to one-third of his Strength score (rounded up) times 10. For example, a character with a 12 Strength could throw a grappling hook 40 feet vertically. The character can throw a grappling hook a horizontal distance equal to the vertical distance, unless he has enough room to swing the hook in a circle several times before the cast. In this case, if a character has the area within 10 feet from his body cleared of obstacles, he can throw the hook twice as far horizontally as he could vertically. (Throwing a grappling hook normally has a speed factor of 3, spinning to throw it horizontally has a speed factor of 7. A grappling hook used as a weapon inflicts 1d6-1 points of damage on creatures of Small or lesser size, 1d6-2 on Man-sized creatures, and 1d6-3 on creatures of Large or greater size).

Throwing a grapple takes one round. Table 6C: Grappling Success indicates the chance for success when throwing a grappling hook. A character of the thief group (but not characters of any other class) can add his experience level to the roll.

For an ice wall, the GM must determine which structure listed in that table most closely matches the shape of the wall, if it can catch a grapple at all.

If a character is directly underneath his target, and the unmodified die roll on the throw is 1-5, the falling hook strikes the thrower for 1d6 points of damage.

A "miss" result indicates that the grapple has not caught at all. Reeling in the rope and retrieving the iron for another attempt after a failure takes 1d4 rounds.

A "catch and slip" result means that the grapple seems to have caught solidly, as far as a character pulling on the rope can tell. In reality, the grapple slips free after 1d6 rounds of supporting a load. Characters who pull on the rope for that many rounds are able to dislodge the hook, so characters with functioning brains (and time) check the grapple for six rounds whenever possible.

A "catch" result indicates that the grapple is securely fastened and ready for use.

A thrown grappling hook does not make as much noise as a hammered spike, but it is not silent. A successful throw can be heard automatically for 50-100 ((1d6+4) x10) yards in ideal conditions; an unsuccessful throw raises an audible clang 100-400 (1d4 x10) yards away. A successful detect noise check allows a character to hear the grapple at double that range. The GM may allow certain conditions to reduce these ranges. A thief can cut these ranges in half by using a muffled grapple (one with padding or coarse cloth around most of the metal).

Climbing a wall using a grappling hook and rope adds +40% to the normal climb walls chance.

**Surprise!** Thieves need to watch out for GMs (or PCs) who set shards of glass into walls to sever the rope of a grappling line in 2d6 rounds. Broken glass is best set into the tops of walls, of course. In this case, the GM may allow a thief near the top of the wall a Dexterity check to avoid falling as the rope severs. Success means that his hands are now impaled on savagely sharp wedges of glass coated in dust and filth, inflicting 1d4+1 points of damage per round (and probably giving him some disease if he lives long enough to worry about it).

### Rappelling

Rappelling is a means of hastily descending a sheer surface by means of a rope attached at the top, usually by a grapple. The character lets the rope wind around his body and uses its friction to slow his descent.

In order to rappel successfully, the character must make a successful climb check with a +50% modifier. The difficulty depends on weather factors, wind, etc. Failure means a fall of the appropriate distance. You can rappel down a free-hanging rope if there is no wall to brace against, but in this case the modifier is only +25%.

A character can rappel up to 120 feet per round. All normal climbing restrictions apply to checks and movement rates (encumbrance, armor, etc.)

### Spikes (a.k.a pitons)

A climber can hammer these into a normal rock surface and use them to anchor a rope that subsequently protects a climbing character against falls. The character must have a hammer and spend 1d4 rounds pounding in each spike. The clanging of such activity can be heard up to a mile away in windless conditions, though this requires a successful detect noise check beyond 200 yards. Putting a piton in a very smooth surface takes 2d4 rounds per spike.

The usual function of a spike is to shorten the distance that a character falls, should such an accident occur. If, for example, a character hammers in a spike 200 feet up the face of an underground cliff, and then connects a rope between himself and the spike, he has protected himself against falling the entire distance. If, 20 feet farther up, he loses his grip, he only falls 40 feet (20 feet down to the spike, and another 20 feet to use up the slack in his rope).

Nevertheless, a character who needs a rope to break his fall in this manner suffers the full damage of a normal fall of that distance (the rope jerks him around and he bounces against any available surface).

Whenever a spike is called upon to arrest a fall, as in the above example, there is a 5% chance per 100 pounds supported that it gives way. For example, if two roped together 100-pound half-elves rely upon a spike to arrest their fall, the spike has a 10% chance of popping free. If the spike comes free, the characters fall the full distance to the ground (or twice the distance of rope to the next spike). Characters can help prevent such accidents, or at least lessen the injuries from them, by using more than one spike.

## SPECIAL SURFACES

### Ice Walls

Climbing an ice wall is a dangerous act that absolutely requires the use of tools, usually spikes. In fact, even a thief character must drive a spike into the ice wall before he can begin to climb. The climber must repeat this process each round, and since it takes 1d4 rounds to drive in a single spike, the process is excruciating slow. In addition, spikes placed in ice have a 10% chance per 100 pounds of pulling free if something suddenly pulls against them.

Grappling hooks are limited by the height of the ice wall and the conditions at the top; many cannot catch a grapple at all. If the hook rests against a "hook" made of ice, there is a 20% chance that it pulls free as the ice shat-

ters on any failed climbing check. This chance increases to 40% on a critical failure (96-100).

### Thick Poles

Ropes are often used in combination with other climbing tools, but a climber can use a rope alone in one special condition. When a character wishes to climb a pole that is of too great a diameter for him to ascend unaided, he may wrap the rope around the pole and pull against it as he climbs. He uses the rope to brace when moving his feet, and his feet to brace when moving the rope.

This technique can be used to climb a pole whose diameter measures from about one foot up to the character's height. Any pole wider than that is considered a wall.

### Dawg Pepper

This may be dropped on the floor, like aniseed, to put dawgs pursuing the thief off the chase. It is less effective than aniseed, however, as the pursuing dawg gets a saving throw versus poison (with a +4 bonus to the save) to avoid the effect of the dawg pepper completely. If it fails the save, the dawg cannot continue pursuit for 1d4+1 turns.

Dawg pepper may also be scattered into the air, a small packet holding enough to fill a 10-foot by 10-foot by 10-foot cube (or the equivalent). The pepper hangs in the air for 1d4 rounds after the thief flings it. A dawg entering the area during this time gets no saving throw to avoid the effect of the pepper. If a dawg gets pepper thrown right into its face, the unfortunate animal gets no saving throw and becomes hysterical for an hour, during which time it is totally uncontrollable.

### Death Knife

This sinister instrument can appear to be a blade-less knife, but more often it is disguised as something more innocent, such as a case for a comb or spectacles or quill pen, an innocuous tool of some sort, etc. The disguise will not fool anyone who closely inspects the device, however. The blade of the knife is within a barrel inside the handle and is spring-loaded. Pressing a catch on the handle triggers the blade mechanism, which thrusts the hidden blade forward with considerable force. The weapon does the same damage as a normal dagger, plus one point of additional damage for the first strike (when the blade is triggered).

The obvious advantage of the death knife is its capacity for surprise. Since it doesn't look like a weapon until the blade is sprung, a victim can be taken totally off guard by its use. If the target does not realize a blow is coming and the thief manages to get the weapon close enough (close melee range), the thief can actually make a backstab attack with the death knife (if he gains surprise). A backstab is not always literally a stab in the back!

An envenomed death knife in the hands of a skilled assassin is an extremely dangerous weapon. The GM will check each turn to see if the poison on the blade has lost its potency. The chance is 15% per turn, cumulative, and is checked the first round of each turn.

A non-thief (group) character using a death knife loses 4 points of BASE Honor each time he springs the blade mechanism to attack. A thief or assassin actually gains 1 point of temporal Honor for such boldness.

As with most concealed weapons, these are more easily available through an assassins' guild than a thieves'.

### False Scabbard

Thieves can employ stout scabbards that are slightly longer than the swords that fit into them, leaving a length of scabbard at the end. This separate, hollow compartment can be accessed via a sliding panel at the end of the scabbard. The scabbard can also be used to store a blade, and even the most observant characters cannot easily match up the length of a drawn blade to

the scabbard. Technically, this means the scabbard is not actually "false", though it need not carry a weapon, of course.

This hollow compartment can be used to conceal a great many things, either to smuggle them in (poisons, dog pepper, blinding powder, etc.) or smuggle them out (gems and such). Some are so well designed that the compartment can be entered from above or below, and the thief can use the false scabbard as an underwater breathing tube if he has to stay concealed in the water for some reason.

### Folding Bow

Bows are very useful for thieves, but are very hard to conceal because of their size and shape. A folding bow solves this problem, dividing neatly in half when unstrung, making it a much more suitable size and allowing concealment – for example, in a thigh sheath. Only short bows have folding-bow equivalents.

The joint in the middle of the bow weakens it, however, reducing the effective ranges to Short 40 yards, Medium 80 yards, Long 130, and imposing a -1 penalty per die on damage rolls (but any hit causes at least one point of damage).

Non-thief (group) characters suffer the loss of 1 point of temporal Honor if found carrying or seen using a folding bow.

### Footpads

These little pieces of equipment items are so useful that they've even had a type of robber named after them. They do have some disadvantages, however. Footpads can be improvised from rags or cloth tied to the feet, or built into footwear – which negates any risk of cloth falling off!

While the devices are popular in the trade, a thief's standard equipment does not include footpads. A thief using footpads gains +5% to his chance to move silently. But the pads also reduce traction, so their use imposes a -5% penalty to any climb walls checks the wearer makes. Additionally, they reduce movement rates by 2" when running. A character wearing footpads suffers a -2 to Dexterity checks that require nimble leg movement and footwear (such as negotiating a floor covered with ball bearings or similar loose footing). Cat burglars are advised to use detachable footpads that can be donned after getting over the wall on the way in!

As an aside, the normal, unmodified move silently chance assumes that the thief wears normal, everyday footwear. If for some reason he wears, say, hob-nailed boots or dangling anklets, the GM may readily apply a penalty modifier ranging from -5% to -25% to any attempt to move silently.

### Funnel, Small

Some locks may grow rusty with age and disuse, and be harder to pick than newer locks of the same quality. Seasoned thieves know only too well that the locks of doors in dungeons often fall into this category.

A thief may apply a little light oil to the inside of rusted and fairly dirty locks applied to their insides, usually with the use of a long-necked funnel (and maybe with a short length of rubbery tubing on the end of that). This may negate the penalty (ranging from -5% to -25% for the lock's condition) in whole or in part. It takes one round to apply the oil and 5-10 (d6 +4) rounds for the oil to have its effect on the mechanism.

Of course, using oil as intended (to lubricate hinges) also helps a thief move unheard. Oil also helps keep lock picking efforts quiet (granting the thief a +10% to his chances of manipulating the lock without being heard, that is negating the -10% penalty for silently opening a lock. See Chapter 4).

### Glass Cutter

This very simple instrument usually consists of a small diamond set into a suitable handle, or even one set into a ring. The diamond must be cut to a fine point. Such a tool cuts through glass fairly quickly. Attempting an entry through a window is always superior in principle to attempting to force a

door, since windows cannot be as physically tough as doors and are less likely to be locked. The glass cutter proves quite useful when a thief does encounter locked windows.

Using this item with tar paper considerably increases its effectiveness.

### Hacksaws (Cutters and Files)

A thief who cannot get through a lock the proper way or his own way, but who has an unreasonable amount of time and patience on his hands, may resort to these desperately slow methods of bypassing the lock. With a file or hacksaw blade the thief can try to saw through the lock apparatus; a pair of small wire cutters may also be useful for disabling part of the internal mechanism (usually only smaller locks). A thief may also cut around a lock with a hacksaw blade.

Again, use of such instruments is noisy (although not as noisy as using a lock chisel). The main drawback to cutting through or around locks is that it takes a very, very long time (about thirty minutes per half inch to cut through). However, in most cases the attempt will be certain to succeed, unless there are special circumstances (e.g. the thief has only one small rusty file and the lock is a huge combination lock device!).

### Hand Lamp

This is usually a small metal pot about the size of a night candle. It has a hinged lid with a mirror on the inside; often a silver mirror, so the item is not cheap. The mirror directs the light, and the lid also works as a snuffer when closed. The lamp provides enough light for the thief to work by (e.g. when trying to pick a lock in a dark place), while not shedding enough to give the thief away (hopefully). Certainly, the dim, focused light is unlikely to be visible at all further than some 20 feet from the thief, and even within this range it is very, very dim. The device also shields heat from infravision (though the thief himself is probably clearly noticeable to creatures with infravision). The GM may allow a suspicious guard a chance to spot the light: check against half his Wisdom (rounded down, and guards are not very wise).

### Hand Warming Lamp

This small lamp burns oil from a reservoir via a small wick sunk into an earthenware shell. The thief uses it to warm his hands, cupping them around the lamp, if cold would otherwise impair his talents (try picking a lock with frozen fingers in a cold clime!). The lamp produces virtually no light, the aim simply being to warm the hands. The simplest version of this is a corked earthenware sphere that the thief can fill with hot oil before setting off on his work. He can later draw it from a pocket to hold in the hands when needed.

### Hollow Boots

These come in various forms, but a common design has swiveling heels. The heel of the boot is grasped and twisted firmly toward the inside surface. The heel swivels and reveals a small, hollow compartment within the boot. Such compartments are very small, typically holding only one gem of moderate size or up to four small ones. The design of the boot is such that it gives no sign external sign that it holds a compartment (the heel is normally sized), but nonetheless a thief wearing these boots suffers a -5% penalty to any move silently rolls. The best use of these is when a thief can impersonate a legitimate guest and need not sneak out; these boots stand up well even in the houses of suspicious lords who might have their guards search visitors.

### Hooked Pole

A strong hook set into the end of a pole has several uses. The first is to yank discovered trip wires, if this is what the thief wishes to do, although typically a blade pole serves that purpose better. The more common use is to catch the hook on objects so they can be retrieved. Depending on the size of the hook, a thief can hook anything from a key ring or small jewelry casket

(hooked through the catch) to a rich man's joint of beef. Successful use of the hooked pole requires a pick pockets check (though there are no penalties for working at a distance). The pole cannot be used as a weapon. In medieval England, fishing through windows with hooked poles was so common that a subclass of thief who made a living in this way was commonly known and called "the hooker."

### Housebreaker's Harness

Any decent cat burglar or housebreaker needs a housebreaker's harness in his arsenal. Known in thieves' cant as a "spider" it is made of linked leather straps, one around each thigh, one running around the waist, and one over each shoulder. The user links the straps together to form a tight harness that can be worn over clothing or leather armor. Attached to the harness are up to eight straps, of varying lengths up to two feet. At the ends of these straps are small metal rings, upon which the user can affix many different devices: tools, climbing daggers, and the like. The principal uses of the harness are as follows:

If the thief uses rope to climb, he can run the rope through one or more of the rings of the harness, removing any chance of falling from letting go of the rope.

Once the thief has reached the point where he hopes to effect a break-in, he can fix two of the straps to either side of him (usually with climbing daggers, or perhaps with wedges in a window frame, etc). This provides him a firm base and allows him free use of his hands to open a lock, cut glass, check for traps, and so on.

Imaginative thieves can think up many other uses for this handy, versatile piece of equipment.

### Keymaking Set

This expensive item allows a thief to make duplicates of keys he holds in his possession or from impressions of keys made using a wax pad (available as a separate item; see below). The keymaking set includes a number of molds, files, small blades, metal-working instruments and the like. It also uses a small oil-burning apparatus for softening and molding metal, so its use is usually restricted to a safe, secure lair where the thief will not be disturbed. Duplicating a key takes 1d4 hours, plus 0-5 turns (non-combat) as determined by the GM, depending on the size and intricacy of the original. A character cannot use a keymaking set to duplicate a skeleton key.

The keymaking set permits the manufacture of poor-to fair-quality soft metal replicas of keys, which are rough in appearance and do not resemble the work of a professional. However, the duplicate key opens the same locks as the original if the thief makes a successful Dexterity check (the GM should roll this in secret). If the thief made his duplicate from a wax pad impression, there is a penalty of -2 to the thief's effective Dexterity for purpose of this roll. The thief always thinks his duplicate is a successful piece of workmanship, of course. Only when it is actually tried on the appropriate lock(s) will the thief know for sure.

Any character not of the thief group must make a successful locksmithing skill check (untrained or otherwise) to even attempt to use a keymaking set. Thief characters not only have easier access to such sets, but also need no special skill to use it. If they do have the skill, a successful check eliminates the penalty to the effective Dexterity.

The keymaking set does not preempt the role of locksmiths or their skill. Professional locksmiths can duplicate keys with a 95% chance of success and have tools far superior to the keymaking set described here. Each locksmith's set of tools are individually crafted and modified to suit the locksmith and are too complex for thieves who are not themselves locksmiths to employ.

### Limewood Strips

These are thin strips of wood, usually around 4 to 6 inches long and an inch or so high. They are also very tough, however, being made of resilient wood (such as limewood, although other similar woods can be used) and

often coated on one or both sides with a very thin coat of toughening varnish. The thief slips the limewood strips between a door and its door frame so that he can raise a latch on the other side of the door and open it normally (possibly after picking a lock). The strips can help open a normal latch, but a bar is too strong for the limewood to lift.

### Listening Cones

The simplest listening cones consist of bronze or brass (or similar material) constructed with a wide end and a narrow end. The thief using the device places the wide end against the surface through which he wishes to hear and the narrow end against his ear. Such listening cones add +10% to a character's chance to detect noise. A generous GM may allow a thief to improvise such an item from a humble wineglass (with a +5% bonus). While the cone itself must be hollow, wise thieves use some kind of wire mesh over the wide end to exclude ear seekers!

If such an item is used for a combination lock (listening for falling tumblers to assist in the open locks roll), the thief can gain +3% to his chance with a special miniaturized cone.

### Lock Chisel

A thief may attempt to force a lock open with a lock chisel and a small hammer. The base chance for success is equal to the open doors percentage (which is Strength-based, of course). A thief may add one-fourth of his open locks chance to this base chance, as knowing something about locks does give a slight advantage in this operation. Obviously, forcing a lock is a noisy activity and any hope of subtlety and surprise evaporates with the first blow.

### Lockpick Artificial Arm

A one-armed thief has enough problems when trying to use his special abilities. Many years ago, Lefty the Squinter devised the artificial lockpick arm so that he could continue his career after a vicious assault by Dire DoppelEwe. The arm includes a socket specially designed to fit into any of several picks and files. The user holds one pick in place with this artificial arm and works the tumblers with a pick in his good arm. Note that the arm must be severed below the elbow for this device to work properly.

Even so, the user suffers a -25% penalty to his chance to open locks with this device. (Still, picking a lock takes two arms, so without it he has no chance at all.) A thief with an arm severed above the elbow can attempt to use the device, but his chance of success is penalized at -40%.

### Lockpick Set

These are essential for the thief to use this skill at anything like his "natural" ability level, and are listed in the PHB. They are usually short lengths of rigid wire and flat, narrow plates of iron or steel, specially designed for dealing with locks, and a set holds a dozen or so. They will be supplied either on a ring (like keys) or in a cloth or leather wallet which unrolls. These items are not freely available on the open market.

### Magnifying Glass/Lens

To many less clever characters, a magnifying lens is simply an oddity. However, a thief using a magnifying glass or lens to inspect a lock may add +5% to his chance to open it. Of course, this only applies if the thief has some element of the lock apparatus exposed to his view – he must see something of the inner workings of the lock. The GM may disallow this bonus due to other conditions, as well (such as poor light, inaccessibility, poorly ground lens, etc.). It can also be used to help start fires or roast insects. As proven by the once-proud thief Gruver the Charred, it does not effectively reflect Lightning Bolts.

### Marbles

The term "marbles" here includes any collection of small spherical objects, whether made of glass, metal, or ceramic materials. When unleashed upon a smooth floor (best when it is stone or marble), they roll and impede any creature moving over them. These creatures have their movement slowed to half normal or else must make Dexterity checks each round. On failure, the creature falls and must spend one full round regaining its footing. A creature that tries to move faster than its normal (walking) movement rate (including encumbrance and any other factors) suffers a -2 penalty on his effective Dexterity for this check and suffers 1d4 points of damage when he falls.

Because marbles roll around a lot, a small bag (30 or so) can cover a 10-foot by 30-foot area (or the equivalent). Small stones and pebbles can only be substituted for marbles if they have been polished, filed, or otherwise smoothed so that they are almost perfectly round – a time-consuming business.

### Mini-Blade

This generic term refers to a very small (and usually very sharp) blade that can be held (with care!) between the fingers or in the "edge of the hand". A very sharp coin, filed down, can be used in this way. A more sophisticated (and rarer) version is the razor ring, a hollow signet ring with a flip-top and a very sharp blade within.

The thief uses the mini-blade to cut a soft container – most often a purse or pouch – so that the thief can get at what is inside it. This is the most effective technique for getting at coins, gems, etc., inside a purse with drawn and tied strings. With a mini-blade the thief has only to make a single pick pockets roll to effect the larceny. Trying to open the purse strings on a closed pouch and then extract what's inside can require two pick pockets rolls for success (one to open the purse, one to get at the goodies) – which also means two chances at getting caught!

### Mirror Pole

This device has mirrors at both ends of the pole, set at a suitable angle so that the thief can peer, periscope-like, around corners using the instrument. More sophisticated mirror poles allow the user to adjust the angles of the mirrors to some degree.

### Pin Ring

This simple weapon is a ring with a flip-up lid, below which is a needle capable of delivering a dose of poison (or knockout drug for wuss thieves, or in those rare circumstances where a victim is preferred alive, etc.) to the target. The most primitive version has a pin simply sitting in a small reservoir of liquid drug or toxin. Since administration of the poison/drug is rather haphazard here, the victim receives a bonus of +2 to any saving throw against its effects. Subtler and more refined designs have a needle capable of drawing up liquid from a reservoir, so that only a normal saving throw (or even a penalty) applies. This potential penalty is equal to the normal penalty imposed by the poison, up to -2.

An attack with a pin ring is a special called shot (with a -6 penalty to the attack roll) because it must strike exposed flesh – the pin will not deliver poison through any but the flimsiest clothing. A strike to the neck is the time-honored way of making sure the toxin gets into the bloodstream quickly. The GM may rule in unusual cases that the attack requires no called shot (e.g. the thief surprises a victim in his bath) or that the pin ring cannot be effective at all (e.g. the victim is clad from head to toe in field plate armor).

If a non-thief (group) character uses a pin ring, he loses 2 points of BASE Honor.

### Prybar

The prybar (a.k.a crowbar) is a wondrous invention. A crowbar is usually a metal rod three to four feet in length, with one end slightly crooked and



often with a snake-tongue division in it. This simple all-purpose tool can be used to force windows open, lever open chests with locks that refuse to be picked, and (in a pinch) getting retribution.

At the GM's option, use of a crowbar adds +10% to a thief's chance on any bend bars roll when trying to force open some portal. The GM may allow a thief to use a crowbar as a weapon, although a character needs to use a weapon proficiency slot to avoid a non-proficiency penalty when using the device in this way. See Chapter 5: StealthHack for game statistics.

## Sharkskin

Sharkskin gets its name because it resembles the skin of a shark. Thieves' sharkskin is made from thick cloth with hundreds of tiny curved and barbed hooks rather like miniature fishing hooks, sewn into it. These hooks are very sharply curved, and are all sewn with the hooks lying in the same direction. Thus, when stroked in one direction the cloth feels relatively smooth, but in the other it grips tightly and even tears skin or cloth.

Sharkskin can be used as a form of hanging board; a square of the material affixed to a surface with hooks pointing downward can be used to keep tools and such in place. Small items can simply be pressed down on the surface of the sharkskin, and they will effectively stick to it. This is most useful for a thief climbing a wall and has utility in many other circumstances. Sharkskin-coated gloves can be used to assist in climbing walls, in which case they can be treated as clawed gloves (see above) in all respects.

## Silenced Armor

Some thieves' guilds provide access to a special form of silenced chain mail armor (or even elven chain). With each individual link of chain armor wrapped in thin leather or light cloth binding, the armor is to some extent "silenced". The tradeoff for this quietude is encumbrance increased by one-third above that of the normal armor. Due to the amount of labor involved, it is also fiendishly expensive. Any type of silenced armor is, of course, even rarer than ordinary elven chain. Finding a craftsman and persuading him to make such a suit of armor could be a challenging adventure in itself for an enterprising thief. Table 6D: Silenced Armor Effect on Thieves' Skills shows the net differences for thief skills in silenced armor. Add these to the standard armor penalties depending upon the material from which the armor is made (and the type of craftsmanship, e.g. elven chain). See Chapter 1 and the Player's Handbook for more information.

Silenced armor is particularly useful when subterfuge and sneaking around unobserved are very important, but one suspects a high probability of combat at some stage during his mission (perhaps due to lack of faith in his own abilities or perhaps because the mission is so incredibly dangerous).

Armor heavier than chain is simply too bulky to "silence" in this manner.

## Skeleton Key

Many GMs drastically restrict availability of skeleton keys, and rightly so, but they must be considered as part of the innovative thief's potential tool set.

The best skeleton keys can open individual locks of up to a certain complexity level. Skeleton keys may be of good, excellent, or superior quality (wretched and poor don't warrant them), and a skeleton key of any particular level of quality can open all locks with a quality the same as, or lower than, that of the skeleton key itself. Be assured that competent GMs will not hand these things out – they'll be as rare as magic items. And sometimes, a skeleton key simply won't work on a particular lock. There may be some cocka-

**Table 6D: Silenced Armor Effect on Thieves' Skills**

	Chain Mail
Pick Pockets	-5%
Open Locks	-
Find Traps	-
Remove Traps	-5%
Move Silently	+10%
Hide in Shadows	+5%
Detect Noise	+5%
Climb Walls	-
Read Languages	-

mamie explanation for this, but what it really means is simply: the GM has something planned here. So consider it useful as a warning device even if it can't open the lock.

Many skeleton keys can be treated as a "master keys" that can open all the locks in some particular area (such as all the non-residential rooms in the east wing of the Vampire's castle). In this instance it is really only a glorified substitute for a bunch of keys, although it saves time having just one key to use. Most often a skeleton key can open all the locks commissioned from a particular locksmith (in the last few years, perhaps) or even the students of a certain master craftsman. If the locksmith (and his students) were well thought of and often hired, there could be adventures built around just finding out which locations he had built the locks for, let alone going around opening them all!

Finally, note that a skeleton key may open a particular lock, but it does not disarm any trap(s) attached to the lock or portal unless the original key would do so.

## Strapping

A thief may use lengths of strapping – usually of stiff, hardened leather – to improve his chances of moving silently if these would otherwise be reduced by such factors as squeaky floorboards (but not otherwise). These straps typically range from 30 to 36 inches or so in length, and they help distribute the thief's weight over a wider area. Their use negates any negative modifier arising from squeaky floorboards, but the thief must pick up the strips and move them before him as he walks along. This reduces his movement rate to only one-half of that which normally applies for attempting to move silently – i.e. one-sixth of normal walking move rate!

## Sword Stick

This is simply a long, slender, rapier-like blade concealed within what appears to be a simple walking stick or cane. The long, thin blade can be considered a short sword or a rapier. Swashbucklers and thieves with a sense of flair are particularly fond of this weapon. The blade deals damage according to the weapon type. It takes one round to draw the blade from the sword stick and ready it for use. The main use of the weapon, obviously, is the possibility of smuggling it into places where weapons are not permitted.

Non-thief (group) characters using a sword stick lose 1 point of temporal Honor each time they reveal the blade from within its secret sheath to use for combat.

## Tar Paper

This is simply any kind of heavy paper or (more usually) cloth that has been soaked in tar, honey, treacle, or any suitably sticky substance. The thief usually uses it by slapping it on a window before breaking the glass in a windowpane. The sticky surface keeps all the fragments together as the glass breaks. This procedure considerably reduces noise both by cushioning the impact of a hammer on glass and by preventing broken glass from scattering all over the floor beyond the window. If there is someone within fairly close listening distance, the GM may make a secret move silently check for the thief using this stratagem.

Tar paper can also be used with a glass cutter (see above), being affixed to the center of the area of glass to be cut out, so that it can be simply pulled out when the cutter has done its work.

## Water Shoes

Water shoes are simply large, wickerwork basket-like devices that a thief wears over his feet (they come to mid-calf height). The thief balances in an upright position and propels himself across the water with a paddle or oar. The GM may insist on a move silently check to avoid falling over and into the water. Also, if anything happens to startle the thief (such as an arrow whizzing past his head or some monster rising up in the water), he must make

a Dexterity check (with a –2 penalty to his Dex) to avoid falling over into the water. If the waters get choppy, he must make this check every round.

## Wax, Block

A thief keeps this small stick of wax in a rigid container to keep it all in one piece (often something like a large snuffbox). Using the wax, the thief can make an impression of a key he wishes to duplicate later. Obviously, he must have access to the key (at least briefly). The thief can use this impression with a keymaking set himself or hire a locksmith to do a more thorough job.

With very soft wax (which likely needs to be softened by heat on the spot) a thief might even make a wax impression of such things as heavy seals – but success requires someone with expert knowledge of constructing seals to use the model. A thief can attempt such a thing on his own has a base 5% chance of success.

## Weaponblack

Inexperienced thieves who carry their weapons on jobs frequently reveal themselves by the glint of a steel weapon in moonlight, torchlight, and the like. A knowledgeable thief often leaves his weapons (other than a dagger) behind when on a job – if caught (even though unlikely) he could face charges of attempted assassination. Without weapons, he might lose the loot but he'll be better able to escape. Of course, this may not apply in rural areas or locations where the authorities are weak and ineffective. In any case, a thief who must have weapons with him can use weaponblack, a thick, oil-based emulsion.

Weaponblack can be coated on to any metal surface and renders it almost completely matte black and reflection free. A thief with exposed blades can gain a +5% bonus to his hide in shadows skill when employing weaponblack. Use of this substance also saves the thief having to make a second hide in shadows roll if he draws a weapon while hiding, and saves him from any penalty modifier if he has a weapon already drawn when he attempts to hide in shadows initially.

Once the weapon actually strikes a blow, though, the weaponblack is wiped off. Because it is oil-based, it is also highly flammable. If ignited it burns brightly, turning the weapon into a light source equivalent to a torch and capable of lighting webs, paper, etc. for 1d4+1 rounds. It also reveals the thief rather dramatically, and makes it impossible for him to hide in shadows (without dropping the weapon and spending two rounds to re-establish the possibility). Also, the thief is still vulnerable to fire – he suffers 1d4 points of damage per round (no saving throw) while holding the weapon (unless he has some other means of protection from fire).

## Wrist Sheath

This small leather sheath holds a knife or dagger. The user straps it to his forearm (below the sleeve of a garment) so that the weapon can be flipped to the hand by a small arm movement, readying the blade for action. A dexterous thief can work a blade into his hand by arm movements disguised in the context of changing posture while sitting in a chair, or similar, seemingly innocuous moves. (He must make a successful Dexterity check or else observers get a Wisdom check to notice "something odd" about the movement. Experienced observers, i.e. those who have seen it before, will recognize the motion as readying a knife from a wrist sheath.) Again, the obvious advantage is that of concealment. The weapon functions as a normal knife or dagger.

A similar variant on this theme is called the drop sheath, which is usually sewn into a leather jacket or similar articles of clothing. Here, release of the dagger from the sheath can be triggered by mechanical means (pressing a jacket sleeve stud, etc.) or by muscular stimuli triggering pressure pads (tensing the biceps firmly against the fist of the other arm, etc.).

A non-thief (group) character using a wrist or drop sheath loses 3 points of temporal Honor if caught (whether he actually uses it or not).

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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**DO NOT BELIEVE  
IN MIRACLES -  
RELY ON THEM**

Automatically succeed  
at any skill check



To Redeem: present to Game Master. No cash value. Authorized by the HMPA. Limit one coupon per player per gaming session. Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.

**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**PRETTY SNEAKY SISI!**

Automatically succeed at a Hide in  
Shadows or Move Silently check



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**MCgyver MOMENT**

You may perform one outlandish task  
even if benefit of proper equipment



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**THE RED WIRE, NO THE  
GREEN WIRE**

Play this coupon to negate [and  
retry] a failed Remove Traps  
attempt



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**KING OF THE WALL  
CLIMBERS**

Play this coupon to automatically climb  
any surface regardless of difficulty



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**SWEET SPOT**

Play this coupon to add +2  
to-hit and two extra dice of  
damage to a backstab  
attempt



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**WHATEVER IT IS -  
I DIDN'T DO IT!**

Play this coupon to automatically  
succeed in a save vs. apology



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**EAGLES MAY SOAR, BUT  
WEASELS DON'T GET  
SUCKED INTO JET ENGINES**

Play this coupon to negate any  
blow suffered in melee



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**THERE IS, IN FACT, HONOR  
AMONGST THIEVES  
(JUST NOT ENOUGH OF IT)**

Gain +2 Honor



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**PARTING [WITH YOUR CASH]  
IS SUCH SWEET SORROW**

Play this coupon to automatically  
succeed at a Pick Pockets attempt



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**TRAVEL DICTIONARY**

Automatically succeed at a  
Read Languages attempt



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**HACKMASTER COUPON**

**NOISE PROVES NOTHING**

Play this coupon to  
automatically succeed at a  
Detect Noise check



To Redeem: present to Game Master. No cash value. Authorized by the HMPA. Limit one coupon per player per gaming session. Not valid in conjunction with any other coupon.



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You are years younger than your fellow adventurers.

You come from the lower class.

You're always expected to walk alone out in front of the party and act as bait for traps and ambushes.

You never could fight very well and your leather armor might as well be made of tissue paper.

When something is missing everyone thinks you are responsible.

In short, you're a glorified torchbearer who gets no respect and none of the glory.

But in the end, you just know that you'll be the one with most treasure stashed away. All you need is a little help along the way. Finally, help arriveth:

## The GriftMaster's Guide to Life's Wildest Dreams: The Fast Track to Riches and Infamy.

Whether you profess to be the greatest grifter in the Wurld, or need to gird yourself for battle with one of those sneaky backstabbers, this book is for you! What you hold in your hands is the codex that will guide your quests for fantastic riches that sparkle like a brilliant beacon amidst a coastal storm. This tome will assist your rise above the elitist quacks, thugs and bookworms otherwise known as everyone you've ever met (outside of your guild, of course). This thoroughly researched and finely detailed reference work includes everything you ever wanted to know about the masters of stealth and cunning. Here's just a sampling of the inventory of secrets revealed herein:

- Detailed information on eight new thief group character classes including the charlatan, the infiltrator and the ninja, with clarifications of the features of old standbys such as the bard and assassin.
- 25 new thief quirks and flaws including loud talker, sleep stealer and mask fetish.
- 19 new thief skills including disguise, fast draw and locksmithing.
- 14 new talents and proficiencies including expert cheater, quick movement, simultaneous backstab attacks and improved backstab.
- 36 new convenient thief packages and personalities, each with their own special benefits.
- New thief priors and particulars detailing your early experiences on the street.
- New rules for backstabs, coldcock attacks and a greatly expanded weapon list.
- Quality advice and descriptions of how to build and take over your own guild.
- A primer on how to get started with (or avoid) common scams.
- An expanded equipment list of really useful items, such as silenced armor, blade boots, marked cards and loaded dice.
- Detailed poison research compiled from the Hacklopedia of Beasts.
- And much, much more!

