

# OD&DITIES

The Original Dungeons & Dragons Fanzine

## EDITORIAL

Well, welcome to Issue 2 of OD&DITIES, being posted on the OD&DITIES homepage on the 19th of August. We've had a quite good response already, with 98 hits over the past seventeen days. We even have our first submission, an article on Herbs by Geoff Gander. However, we still lack a letters page. We have received very few e-mails, and whilst these are welcome, more are required. Please send your letters to [Methuslah@tongue.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Methuslah@tongue.fsnet.co.uk), on any subject - discussions of articles, comments about the magazine, anything of that sort at all will be welcome.

Although we have had our first submission, we still require articles. Again, any piece relating to OD&D will be strongly considered for publication. New characters for the 'Compendium', reviews of OD&D products, rules articles, articles on Mystara, anything of that sort is fine. Again, please send them to [Methuslah@tongue.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Methuslah@tongue.fsnet.co.uk), and I will let you know if and when they will be published.

Another issue - hard copy. I need you, the readers of OD&DITIES, to e-mail me concerning whether you would be willing to pay for this fanzine in printed form. Information on this is on the website, but I require feedback from you in order to make the decision. Please send your comments to the e-mail address listed above.

Well, sorry this editorial was mostly just requests from you - I give you my word that will change next issue. Help make that issue possible- send us letters, or submissions. Enjoy the issue.

*Richard Tongue*

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By R.E.B.Tongue

This issue, two products are reviewed from the 'AC' series of supplements, two of the most obtainable sources for an OD&D campaign - the Creature Catalogue and the Book of Wondrous Inventions, both generally available through second-hand shops or auctions such as Ebay. If you disagree with these reviews, then by all means comment. If you have a product of your own that has not been covered here, then please send in a review of it - OD&DITIES hopes to eventually build up a database of reviews which any OD&D player can use when deciding to buy a product. Without further ado, on with the reviews.

### Creature Catalogue

(Compiled by Graeme Morris, Phil Gallagher and Jim Bamba)

The first thing which struck me about the Creature Catalogue upon reading it was the high quality of the interior artwork, and the excellent layout of the creatures involved - the book itself is clearly legible, and easy to read, as well as containing a full index detailing every creature published up to that point by TSR in it's OD&D rulebooks, making use of this book easy.

The quality of the creatures themselves is also high. Whilst there are a few of questionable quality, the vast majority would fit perfectly into many OD&D campaigns, or could even form the focus of one - saving the Qauriks from their 'Firelords' might make an interesting mini-campaign, or destroying an Hutaakan slave state.

Many of these creatures are taken from OD&D books (the Traldar, for example, come from module B10), but others have been made up for the book. The quality,

however, is always excellent. If you see a copy of this book for sale, buy it - any OD&D campaign can greatly benefit from it's infusion of logically presented, well-thought out creatures.

Score = 9 out of 10

### Book of Wondrous Inventions

(Compiled by Bruce A. Heard)

Whilst the Creature Catalogue is almost essential material for an OD&D DM, my first thought upon reading this book were disappointing. I had hoped for some detail on the use of technology in a fantasy setting, but instead this book presents a collection of 'Wondrous Inventions' that seem mostly designed for humour, rather than for any realistic use. There is nothing wrong with humour in a fantasy campaign, but some of these inventions go too far. 'Brandon's Bard-in-a-box', a ghettoblaster. 'Damos' Ball of Bowling'. 'The Train of the Dwarven Thane'. 'Ardraken's Refreshment Simulacrum', a vending machine!

There are some useful pieces of technology present. The 'Clockwork Dragon of Mai-Faddah' is interesting, as is the Gnomish Submarine. 'Volospin's Dragonfly of Doom' makes some sense, as does the Hot Air Balloon. But to find the wheat in this book there is an inordinate amount of chaff to be sorted through.

A saving grace in this book is a section in the rear, detailing 'Dorfin's Little Shop of Horrors', a shop selling reasonably realistic inventions, and also the process for creation of magical items, something not so fully covered in the OD&D game. This supplement is worth a read, and does provide a few laughs, but is of only limited use to an OD&D DM. If you can get it cheap, or see a complete collection, buy it, but otherwise don't unduly worry if you haven't got it.

Score = 5.5 out of 10

By R.E.B.Tongue

When a PC is first rolled up, he is often just a collection of statistics, and his equipment choice in no way improves this state of affairs. A Thief, for example, will always buy Thieves' Tools, a low type of armour, and usually a Dagger or Short Sword. Any other starting equipment is just as mundane. However, before beginning as adventurers, these PC's have lived for at least 16 years - yet the present system makes no account of their previous items other than a random amount of money. This does make some logical sense - the PC will have probably sold most of his items to fund his adventuring. Surely, though, he would have some item that he would want to keep, either for it's use or for sentimental value. A selection of items are given below, to add to a PC's starting equipment. Only one roll is suggested, but kind DM's may allow two or three. Explanations of how the PC obtained the item(s) may also serve to help provide hints about his background.

#### D20 Item

- 1 Ruby (Value d100 gp.)
- 2 *Potion of Healing*
- 3 Silver Arrow

- 4 Signet Ring
- 5 Map of the Local Area
- 6 Treasure Map
- 7 Pair of Lucky Dice (roll d6, on roll of 5-6 one of them is loaded to 6.)
- 8 Old Platinum Piece.
- 9 *Arrow +1*
- 10 Alchemist's Kit (Contains empty potion vials, items to make some potions.)
- 11 *Potion of Strength*
- 12 Old Holy Book
- 13 Lodestone
- 14 Shield (With family crest.)
- 15 Lucky Rabbit's Foot (No actual game effect.)
- 16 Emerald (Value 1d100 gp)
- 17 *Scroll of Protection from Lycanthropes*
- 18 Vial of Holy Water
- 19 Armour-Piercing Arrow (See Issue 1)
- 20 Runic Symbol

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By R.E.B. Tongue

*Part Two*

Once you have finished with the Basic Set, or the Challenger Edition, you really have two possibilities. Either you start over, retiring your original PC's and generating new ones at Level One, or you continue on. Whilst some groups may find starting over acceptable, it is far more likely that they will wish to proceed to the next levels.

To proceed according to the OD&D rules, it will first be necessary to purchase them. Two options exist here - the Expert Set, or the Rules Cyclopeda. Your choice may well be dependant on what is available, but both are fine choices. The Expert Set will take you from levels 4 - 14, whilst the Rules Cyclopeda will take you from 1 - 36. However, the Expert Set is somewhat more user-friendly than the Cyclopeda, and includes an adventure, Module X1 : Isle of Dread, as well as some limited information on the Known World, the campaign world designed for OD&D.

Either of these rules sets will serve you well in taking your campaign to new levels. ( Incidentally, if you are an experienced DM, it is a good idea to get one of these before you start if you can - they are invaluable for producing NPC's of higher levels. ) Once you have read through them, you are ready to proceed.

Up to this point, your adventuring group has probably been confined to a small area, geographically. They have been based in a small village or stronghold, or possibly a city, but have not travelled far outside it, dealing with threats directed at that city, or rummaging through nearby ruins or dungeons. It is even possible that the group has been exploring only one dungeon, that now has been completed with your PC's at third level. The adventures will probably have revolved around what low-level PC's are good at - killing relatively weak monsters, with maybe a few NPC's thrown in. They may have done some simple breaking-and-entering, but even at third level the skills of a Thief are not sufficient for any really difficult burglary.

Now, as the PC's gain increasing levels of power, their objectives have to change. They have had several sessions to begin to develop their character - they have probably worked out some bits of background, gained some friends and enemies, and acquired some hatreds for themselves. Now is the time for the PC's to start to have more of a say in the adventures. Their goals should be paramount - it can be a good idea to simply ask the player to select a goal for himself, within certain guidelines. A party goal is also appropriate, especially if they have acquired a powerful enemy.

( Note - one good way of establishing the transfer between Basic and Expert is to have the PC's defeat an old enemy, someone who has bothered them before. This can give them a real feeling of accomplishment. )

If the PC's will not get a party goal for themselves, you may have to switch to 'epic' mode, and begin to cast a great quest for them, which will help promote role-playing.

Such adventure is often not used with beginners, but it can be best for them, providing clearly definable goals and a target beyond the acquisition of experience points. If they complete the quest, retire their characters but have the new ones in the same world - again, this helps promote player satisfaction.

The types of adventure should change at this point. Dungeon crawls are still well worth doing, but two problems arise if that is all the PC's accomplish. The first is credibility - the dungeons have to be filled with bigger and bigger monsters ( How did twenty Storm Giants fit inside a 6' high corridor? ). The second is boredom - continual dungeon crawls will eventually bore any party.

The answer is to use what the Expert rules were designed for anyway - wilderness adventures. Start out small - make the PC's travel through some difficult terrain, maybe a forest, to a dungeon. Add some interesting encounters - for the forest, Elves, Giant Eagles, Pegasi and Goblins are all appropriate. When the dungeon is reached, then continue with the theme - a Druid may have taken residence there.

Instead of simple dungeon crawls, do some adventures dealing with politics - a diplomatic mission to a foreign government, stopping an assassination ( or assassinating someone - it depends on the group. ) Start a war - that can improve player interaction with the gameworld. When you do dungeon crawls, have more of an objective. Make their goals more complex. Have multi-part adventures, linked together as mini-campaigns in the major campaign. Give the PC's new allies, and enemies, and let them come up with ideas. If they want to assault Baron Evil's castle, let them try. If they would rather gather intelligence and build up a force to fight him ( which makes for a better campaign ), let them try that. Give the PC's room to manoeuvre. This will require more work, and a considerable amount of 'on the fly' DM'ing. ( One tip - prepare lots of generic maps, and use them in sequence. Do dungeons, castles and villages - it will make life a lot easier. When one is used, record it's location, and draw a replacement - but have a stock on hand. )

Detail your campaign world. If you are using a developed world, like Mystara, your task is a little easier, but you still have to draw a map of your local area. If you are planning to use any pre-planned adventure modules, read them through and jot down any terrain mentioned - make sure it is included on the map. Some may have to be excluded for reasons of space - an Ice Cap does not mix well with Jungle ( still, this is fantasy - but try and maintain some reality. Saying 'it's magic' will soon make your players think you have stopped caring. ) Place the original base on the map, as a point of reference, but it is often a good idea if the players leave it mostly - they will have outgrown many of the NPC's found there, and may decide the simply start a take-over. If you are planning an epic, have the base taken over by the enemy. Otherwise, simply keep the players away from it by gradually moving the adventures away. Just make sure you are careful about it, or the PC's may begin to doubt their freedom of action. There are, of course, other options - if one of the PC's is a noble, he may be heir to the current ruler, or even become the current ruler, which will limit his movements.

As the PC's continue to rise in levels, they should begin to have a major effect on the gameworld, if indeed

they haven't already. To begin with, they will probably have stopped many evildoers attacking the kingdom - they should have received praise and reward for this, but also new enemies ( revealing strength often attracts challengers. ) They will become more powerful that most of the land, even at 6th level, one level above those covered by the 'Challenger' edition. Show the effect they are having, and give them adventures based on it.

One problem that can be faced is introducing new players. Some guidelines suggest giving the new player a level equal to the player with the lowest level minus 2, but

if one player plays an elf this can result in a level two magic-user joining a level 5 party. A better solution is to 'promote' a hireling, if one is available ( some belongings can be passed on in this way ), or start a character out either a level below a character or the same class, or a level below the average level of the party. This will definitely promote game balance, and keep the new player interested. Well, until next issue, may your swords shine brightly!

*Next Issue : Creating adventures for Name level characters and higher.*

# COMPENDIUM OF CHARACTERS

By R.E.B.Tongue

Last month, Compendium presented a 1st Level NPC party, for use in your campaign. This month, we deal with two individuals wealthy PC's are likely to meet early on in a campaign - a high level Cleric to heal their rounds and resurrect the dead, and a medium level Thief to relieve them of their heavy purses. ( Spells are not given for Dalamer - the DM should select those as appropriate. )

**Dalamer** ( Lawful Cleric, 10th Level )

Dalamer has been a member of the Church all his life, from when his parents sent him to a monastery as a child. He steadily rose through the ranks, showing an undying devotion to the order, but rarely leaving the city, except on pilgrimages. He is proud and formal at all times, and will often be strict about using his powers on non-believers. Having never adventured himself, his courage is sometimes questioned by other members of the order, and he has indeed proven to be more of an administrator than an active priest.

**Lolis** ( Chaotic Thief, 5th Level )

Lolis grew up in the city, working for an independent thief who preferred risking his life to paying the exorbitant Guild fees. When he was killed by an Assassin, Lolis took what she could of his belongings and struck out alone, using one of two

approaches. Either she will sneak up on a target and take his money in the usual guild way, or if the target is wealthy, she will use her lures to entice him into taking her into his house, while Lolis' apprentices wait outside. She will administer her poison and take everything she can from the house, while her target watches.

## Dalamer

( Lawful Cleric, 10th Level )

Strength	10 ( 0 )	THAC0	15	Saving Throws
Dexterity	8 (-1)	Armour Class	10	DR / P 11
Constitution	13 (+1)			MW 12
Intelligence	14 (+1)	Hit Points	( 35 )	P / TTS 14
Wisdom	16 (+2)		35	BA 16
Charisma	10 ( 0 )			R / S / S 15

Equipment : Ceremonial Robes, *Mace +2*, *Ring of Regeneration*, Various Potions, Holy Symbol, Holy Book, 3 vials of Holy Water.

## Lolis

( Chaotic Thief, 5th Level )

Strength	7 (-1)	THAC0	17	Saving Throws
Dexterity	17 (+2)	Armour Class	7	DR / P 11
Constitution	10 ( 0 )			MW 12
Intelligence	13 (+1)	Hit Points	( 15 )	P / TTS 11
Wisdom	12 ( 0 )		15	BA 14
Charisma	16 (+2)			R / S / S 13

Equipment : Thieves' Tools, Dagger, Vial of Poison ( Causes Paralysis ), Potion of Healing, Bag of Gems ( amount and type varies ), fine clothes, Concealed Dagger.

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*These items can be used to substitute some numbers already rolled.*

- 21 Letter of Introduction to Local Ruler
- 22 Old Holy Symbol
- 23 *Potion of Levitation*
- 24 Sapphire ( Value 1d100 gp )

- 25 Lucky Copper Coin ( roll d6, on roll of 6 coin is double headed. )
- 26 Book of Elven Poetry
- 27 Silver Crossbow Bolt
- 28 Small Casket with jammed magical lock  
- Contents unknown
- 29 Set of ceremonial robes
- 30 Three toy soldiers

By R.E.B.Tongue

*New magical Daggers for OD&D*

The humble dagger is one of the most commonly used weapons in OD&D, yet frustratingly the lists of magical daggers available are not very extensive - even though two classes, the Magic-User and Thief, depend on them. This article lists a small selection of daggers, intended for use in OD&D. ( A short random table follows at the end of this article, to be rolled whenever a *Dagger +1* is rolled on the original tables. )

*Phasing Dagger* : This dagger is magical, but has no special bonuses to damage or hit. However, it does possess one special ability - it can ignore armour. Every other round, the dagger becomes *ethereal*, with no real existence on the Prime Material Plane. This means that it can be inserted into a person's body without regard to armour, and will cause normal damage when it reappears, the turn afterward. The ability is activated by a codeword, and lasts for twenty rounds whereupon it returns to behaving like a normal dagger. It has 1d6 + 1 charges.

*Dagger of Lightning* : The dagger of lightning carries with it a small electrical charge, causing 1d6 damage to anyone who touches the blade. ( This is added on to normal damage if it is used to stab.

The charge lasts through 2d4 uses, although they can all be drained at once if the dagger is dropped into water. ( Any creature in the water will then suffer 2d6 damage for every charge remaining. ) It is usually found in a rubber holder.

*Dagger of Midas* : The effect of this dagger makes it de-

sired by many, but it is really a blessing in disguise. Any item or creature successfully hit by the dagger must make a *saving throw vs. spells* - failure means the creature or item is *polymorphed* into a gold replica of it's former self. The effect lasts for 1d8 days, and causes 1d6 damage to a creature each day ( which is all taken when the creature re-emerges. ) If this kills the creature, it remains in gold form. The object has 1d3 charges.

*Dagger of Speed* : The dagger of speed causes the defensive movements of the bearer to increase dramatically. If the bearer's AC is 6 or higher ( not counting natural Dexterity adjustments - a Dex 18 PC could have an AC of 3 and still benefit from this item ), then his AC is reduced to 2, whenever he is using the dagger of speed alone. However, the abnormal speed quickly tires the wielder, and he can only use the blade for an amount of rounds equal to his Constitution divided by 4 ( rounded down ).

*Diamond Blade* : Strictly speaking, this dagger is not magical, and so provides no bonuses to attacking enchanted creatures. However, this dagger is extraordinary, as it's blade is made of pure diamond, which radically increases it's penetrating power. If employed against non-magical armour, any attack with this weapon is treated as if the defendant had an AC three higher than his actual AC ( to a maximum of 9 ).

Random Dagger Table ( Roll 1d20 )

1 - 6	Silver Dagger
7 - 13	Dagger + 1
14	Phasing Dagger
15	Dagger of Lightning
16	Dagger of Midas
17	Dagger of Speed
18	Diamond Blade
19 - 20	Dagger + 2

by Geoff Gander

*Note to the reader: Although some of the herbs listed below exist in the real world, the writer is by no means an expert on herbalism. Consult a physician before considering herbal therapy.*

While clerics in the D&D game provide an essential service to adventuring parties of all levels – such as keeping them alive – it should be remembered that not all healing must be derived from magical sources. If most DMs ponder the issue for a few moments, it should become readily clear why this is so. Most adventuring parties usually have at least one cleric, who provides magical healing as a favour to those who are, more often than not, his or her friends. Even those parties who do not have a cleric can usually afford their services due to their accumulated wealth - remember, magic is not learned without personal sacrifice, so why should a practitioner of the art dispense his or her services for free? Where does this leave poorer adventurers, commoners, or those parties with low-level clerics, who are in need of healing but lack ready recourse to the magical variety? The answer, in most cases, lies with herbs. Although, in the D&D game, there is no skill for

herbalism, the nature lore skill more than adequately fulfils this role. The mechanics of using this skill are simple: A successful skill check indicates that the search for usable herbs is successful; or that a character, upon entering a region, is able to determine what sorts of herbs might grow nearby. The bulk of this article shall focus on the different types of herbs that might be found in the Mystara setting, and what their effects upon the imbiber might be (italicised herbs are fictitious).

Aloe: This small, tropical, shrub-like plant produces thick, tapering leaves. The leaves, when torn open, contain pulpy matter which, when applied against burns, both soothes the injury and aids in healing. Each application is capable of healing 1d2 hit points of burn damage (whether from fire, acid, or from sunburn), and each such use consumes the contents of one good-sized leaf.

Camomile: This flowering plant, which is found commonly in temperate regions, is well known for its calming qualities. When its flowers and leaves are dried, and then brewed as a tea, anyone who drinks the beverage will begin to feel calmer within 1d2 turns. Those who are afflicted with temporary

insanity, or who have suffered an effect resembling a *cause fear* spell, may make a saving throw vs. Spells at a -3 penalty to regain their senses. Imbibers who are not so affected, and who drink camomile tea, will find it easier to go to sleep.

Deralda berries: These blue berries, each roughly the size of a cherry, grow on the small *deralda* shrubs, which are found in deciduous forests, during late spring. Each berry, when eaten, heals 1d4 hit points. *Deralda* shrubs produce only a handful of berries each year (2d8+10), and these berries begin to rot two days after being picked.

Garlic: Aside from its purported ability to repel vampires, garlic is also a good healing agent. If raw garlic juice is rubbed in an open wound, it will act as a disinfectant – one

large clove can produce enough juice to cover up to six hit points' worth of damage. Having all of one's wounds covered with garlic will increase natural healing rates by one-third for the first two days. Garlic is only effective on fresh, open wounds – those that are already healing will not allow enough garlic juice to enter the bloodstream (credit is due to Gorolot Vathnar (Gorolot@aol.com) for this herb description).

Witch Hazel: This plant is found in temperate climates, and produces a liquid extraction made from its bark or leaves, and mixed with water and alcohol. This extract may be rubbed on skin affected by insect bites, swelling, or bruising, which will both reduce inflammations and induce minor healing – no more than one hit point per injury.

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By R.E.B.Tongue

Each issue, this section will detail a shop that can be slotted into any city or town in your campaign world, for your players to use or abuse as they see fit. They should fit anywhere from Specularum to Thyatis City, and provide useful and unusual services for the PC's.

### Drake's Cartography

This shop is impeccably kept from the outside and inside, with a newly-painted sign showing a small picture of the continent. Inside, a selection of charts awaiting delivery adorn the walls, as well as a collection of general ones that can be bought at any time. During opening hours ( 9 - 5, weekdays ), Drake, an ageing man with only one leg, will be seated at his workbench in the corner, detailing a new map.

Drake was formerly first mate on a pirate ship, the Dragon's Breath, until his leg was lost during a raid on a merchant ship. His captain, grateful for his years of service, gave Drake enough money to set up a small shop, and Drake decided to turn what had formerly been a hobby into an occupation - cartography. He drew a selection of maps, and began to open up to a roaring trade to all manner of customers, with his pirate activities now a carefully guarded secret.

Drake's travels took him across most of civilisation, and he is able to draw maps, at any scale, of any region along the coasts of the civilised lands. He uses some reports to draw reasonable pictures of other areas, and can produce maps of regions near the city or along the coasts, with inaccuracies devel-

oping at an increasing rate the further from the coast he is asked to draw. He will also produce ships charts of many regions, highly accurate and detailed - all his work is exceptionally neat. Orders of a specific map will take 2 - 5 weeks to be filled, but Drake always keeps a selection of local maps on hand, as well as highly inaccurate 'maps of the world'. In addition, there may be maps that have been ordered but not picked up, and these Drake will sell at a discount. ( The actual cost of a map should be left to the DM, as only he can determine the difficulty of drawing a map of that particular area. )

*Drake's Cartography is an invaluable source of maps to PC's, who can commission maps of the local area or of anywhere they are travelling to. Drake also has other uses, however. To begin with, he still has contacts in the pirate world - one of them may ask Drake to perform a favour for him which Drake can hire the PC's for, or the PC's might reach Drake through pirating connections.*

*Drake also could be used as an employer for PC's. One reason to explore the Isle of Dread, from Module XI, might be to map the coast for Drake. Any other exploration, to anywhere, could be financed by Drake - at low levels, the PC's could sell him information about anywhere they visited. He should accept any reasonably cheap information about even nearby lands.*

*Also, Drake may have some treasure maps, acquired during his years as a pirate. He would be unable to follow them up himself, due to his disability, but he would be able to hire the PC's to go and unearth whatever is buried there - accompanying them on their ship maybe, to ensure payment and provide advice. Overall, Drake's Cartography is a versatile shop that can provide the PC's with a useful service, as well as a potential employer and contact to the local pirate groups.*

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allows the PC to create heraldry, if ever an opportunity arises to do so. This skill is often taken by noble characters, for obvious reasons.

Engineering is another skill of some use for Thieves, although it is often taken by Dwarves. It covers mechanical contraptions, the creation of large structures and tunnels, and other engineering projects. It's best adventuring applications lie in such activities as picking

locks, where an knowledge of the mechanics may provide a bonus, in sieges, where a knowledge of how the castle or city was built may be invaluable, or even in underground adventures, where information on tunnels could be useful.

Finally, Disguise is a skill of variable use. It allows the PC to either disguise himself as a generic type of person ( rich merchant, beggar, etc. ), or a specific individual ( which should accrue a large modifier ). Certain materials, such as a change of clothes, are essential for this skill to be used. ( As Thieves' Tools are essential for Open Locks. )

By R.E.B.Tongue

*A new system for Skills in OD&D*

If you have access to the Rules Cyclopedia, or Gazetteer One, then you have access to a system of non-weapon proficiencies. However, it does not really fit in with the system as a whole. The weapon proficiencies are treated differently, with a selection of skill levels providing improved damage, 'to hit', and even special abilities that suit weapon proficiencies. However, the non-weapon proficiencies section strongly resembles the same system in 2nd Edition AD&D. ( The same system that has been ditched for 3rd Edition. ) This article provides a new system for skills, designed to fit into the present rules system.

The system is basically the same percentile system used for Thieves' special skills, such as Open Lock. The difference is that whilst Thieves get their skills for free, these 'cost' experience - each one adds 10% onto the amount of experience points the PC's require for the next level. ( For example, a fighter with two Skills will require 2,400 experience to reach Level 2, instead of 2,000. ) Each skill begins with a 25% chance of success, and rises 3% per level until 90% is reached. ( A PC may pay double experience at the beginning, and start with 45% - but in this case he may only take that skill, as it is assumed he spent most of his free time practising it. )

A wide selection of general skills are included here, that are intended to be of direct use for the PC's. ( General skills such as horse riding and fire building, under this system, are assumed to be general knowledge, instead of proficiencies. ) The DM should choose which of these skills to allow various PC's - some may not be appropriate for his setting, or at least for certain areas of that setting. If so, he will simply have to make modifications.

Legend Lore gives the PC's knowledge of legends, either of his own area

( +15% chance of success ), of the world, or of other races ( -15% chance of success ). This skill can prove useful not only to a PC, but to a DM to throw adventure hooks at the PC's, or to provide hints for an adventure. This should reflect tales being told in childhood, either orally or from reading, depending on the area the PC was raised in.

Tracking reflects an ability to follow trails, in any setting ( though the DM should provide modifiers if the PC is outside his home terrain ). The PC can pick up a trail, and follow it as far as possible. This can be the trail of an animal, or humanoid, or any creature that leaves tracks.

Herb Lore allows the PC to find, identify and use herbs of all types, and to create herbal concoctions based on those herbs. ( This is not alchemy - no magical potions can be brewed using this skill. If herbs are involved in the creation of a potion, however, the DM may allow the PC a chance to identify it. )

Seamanship is an indication of seafaring experience. It includes navigation, ship maintenance, carrying out various duties, swimming, knowledge of the sea and

conditions within, and generally all the knowledge that could be learned serving aboard a ship.

Animal Lore allows identification of various animals that exist in the game world. It includes identification, knowledge of the creature's diet and habits, and information on his environmental preferences. The DM may choose to only allow this to cover animals in the local area. ( This skill may be combined with Tracking if an animal is being hunted. In this case, take the higher of the two scores, and add half of the lowest score to the roll. )

Magic Knowledge is actually not required for Magic-Users ( but possibly for Elves or Clerics ), as this knowledge is already included in their training at 100%. It basically gives a PC a working knowledge of magic, how it works, some information on it's practitioners, and a working knowledge of the 'magic' language. This does not provide any actual spell-casting ability. ( This spell is most useful for parties with no magic-users, naturally. )

Alchemy is only allowed for Magic-Users, Elves or Clerics. ( Or optionally certain 0-level NPC's as Alchemists ). It is the knowledge of brewing potions from magical materials. The more mundane potions, such as *Potions of Healing*, should be fairly easy to manufacture, but others should be more difficult, and should require access to the appropriate spell. ( For the *Potion of Healing*, for example, a Magic-User would have to go to a temple and have a 2nd-level priest cast *Cure Light Wounds*. )

Battle Strategy is knowledge of commanding an army. It involves organising a band of men, leading them on a large scale, keeping them supplied, siege tactics, and most importantly fighting actual battles. The difficulty should increase based on number of men commanded, and whether or not they are of his own race. ( A Dwarf trying to control a warband of Elves would be interesting to watch, to say the least. )

Appraise is an extremely useful spell to have for a thief. The skill simply allows a PC to examine an object and figure out it's approximate value, to within + or - 20% if the roll is successful. It will not work on magic items. ( Again, many 0-level humans will possess this skill. )

Religion is the equivalent of Magic Knowledge for a cleric. Clerics are already assumed to possess this skill at 100%. It displays a PC's knowledge of religion in the local area at least. ( If there are two dominant religions, the DM may ask the character to choose. ) The skill covers the history of the faith, special ceremonies associated with it, special characters associated with the deity or Immortal, and general religious knowledge. ( How the world was created, etc. )

( Terrain ) Survival varies for each possible type of terrain. ( Such as Arctic, Forest, Plain, Desert, Mountain, etc. ). It covers a basic knowledge of the terrain, any special dangers it may hold ( including special monsters ), methods of survival, hunting in the region ( with bonuses if combined with Animal Lore ), and any special knowledge required to survive there. This skill is often taken by barbarian characters, or Elves.

Heraldry is a very useful skill if the setting has any feudal features. It covers every major noble house of the setting, giving the PC an idea of it's heraldry, some information relating to the house, and other relevant data. It also

(continued on Page 6)

R.E.B.Tongue

*An article on Thieves' Guilds in OD&D*

It is a common misconception that a Thieves' Guild will be primarily made up of Thieves. The name is usually the problem - an automatic association is made. Another reason - the illogical adoption of Thieves' Cant as a secret language for thieves - it makes little sense that a Thief from the country should ever learn the secret language of a guild, and less sense that only Thieves are allowed to begin with it.

If a Thieves Guild did consist only of thieves, then it probably would not be very successful in the first place. Assuming a reasonably realistic campaign, it would seem logical that the Guildmaster would be, say, level 12, with at least 520,000 experience points ( this is three levels higher than when a PC is able to start a guild, by the way. ) The Guildmaster, when picking a lock, has only a 66% chance of success. To Pick Pockets, only 75%. To Hide in Shadows, only 50%. The standard thief, who is only level 1 - 3, will fumble probably 90% of his 'jobs'. How can a Thieves' Guild last with so few good thieves.

The answer is that the Thief is only the most blatant member of the class. Any or all classes should be allowed to join. Fighters, for example, would make good 'muscle' for the guild, allowing small groups to evade guards and to force collection of 'protection' money. Magic-Users have the 'knock' spell to help them open door easily, and even at quite low levels have a considerable array of talent to offer - Levitate could help a person reach a balcony, Floating Disk can carry away loot from a 'job', Ventriloquism can distract a guard. At level 6, he can probably beat a Thief of equal level at his

own game.

Elves, combinations of Fighters and Magic-Users, are ideal for Thieves' Guilds - they share both skills and have other useful talents besides, such as infravision. A Halfling can help with his size and good hit points, and a Dwarf could provide expertise in setting traps and in engineering, as well as for any underground work ( entering a house through the sewer, for example. ) The only class that might not participate is the Cleric ( or Paladin or Druid, by extension. ) His religious persuasion would probably forbid him from taking part in such work - but many pantheons have Gods of Trickery, or Thieving, who would expect their priests to undertake such work.

A Thieves' Guild consisting of just Thieves is unimaginable. It is unlikely that the leader would even be a thief - a Magic-User would be far more likely to set up and have the talent to run such an institution, or a Fighter. An Elf may even have the temperament. This, of course, in no way diminishes the role of the Thief. He still has abilities other classes lack, with a wide range of talents. Unsupported, he probably cannot earn a living, but if in a group, backed up by a fighter or magic-user, his talents can be used to their best advantage.

Calling the Thieves' Guild simply the Thieves' Guild is probably not a good idea either - it shows a distinct lack of imagination, especially as Thievery is probably not all they do ( smuggling, assassination, racketeering, profiteering in a war, the list of activities for such a nefarious group is almost endless. ) Think of a more descriptive name, such as the Dark Brotherhood, or the Golden Key, something of the sort. Maybe multiple names would help, particularly if the PC's are trying to find the local Thieves' Guild. Don't make Thieves' Guilds one-dimensional, but instead make them the shadowy organisations they deserve to be.

By R.E.B.Tongue

*Suitable for 3 - 6 PC's of Levels 1 - 2  
( 6 - 10 Total Levels )*

This adventure is suitable for slotting into a campaign, and can be added with only minor modifications. Names of villages can be altered, and the DM will have to invent a reason for the PC's to be travelling, but only such minor changes are required.

**Player Introduction**

You are travelling down the King's Highway, to Narborel, when, on your first night out, you see shadows in the darkness, and hear a mysterious noise. You make a cursory investigation but find nothing - it is almost pitch black, the moon is absent from the sky. The next day you probe around in the bushes and find a mysterious token. Upon touching it, it burns your skin, not with fire, but cold, and icy cold which chills your very soul.

You place the small object in a bag and keep heading to Narborel, until you come to a small farmhouse, one

of many tenant farms which dot the area, harvesting crops and selling them at the monthly market in. The occupants of the house have been butchered. Everything of any value has been taken, and the only mark of the people who did this is a shred of dark blue cloak, cloak which shares the same characteristics as the token you picked up that morning.

You notice leading from the farmhouse a trail of footprints - no matter how powerful these beings were, they evidently could not escape the rain. After a short while, the footprints lead to a small opening in the side of a hill, and you can see that there have been more than one person past this way. A small, broken chest lies dumped by the side of the cave entrance, as if it's occupants just threw it down finding it had been broken in transit. Inside are some simple possessions, a few silver coins and a brooch, worth little. This is evidently where the foul beings that killed the farmer were. Desperate to avenge this foul deed, you boldly step inside to face the murders that dwell within.



## Dungeon

### 1 Mine Room

This 25 sq. ft. room contains the remains of mining equipment, broken picks, shovels, and so on. When the PC's enter the room a group of 5 Rats will jump out of the rubble and attack the PC's. There is little of value in the room, but careful examination will reveal a War-Pick ( 1d6+1 Damage, only usable by Dwarves ) leaning against the wall.

### 2 Storeroom

This 25 sq. ft. room seems to have originally been used to store food in. There is a cluster of fungi growing out of the remains of a rations case, and after two turns in this room the PC's will begin to feel nauseous from the spores. For every round they remain in the room they lose 1 hit point for the duration of the adventure.

### 3 Old Mine Face

This 50' by 25' room has only one flat wall, with the other three walls jagged and uneven. Inside, on loose chains, are five wild dogs. One of them will burst out of it's chain and attack the PC's. Every round thereafter, one of the wild dogs escapes it's bonds and similarly attacks the PC's.

### 4 Old Temple

This 15 sq. ft. room used to be a Dwarven Shrine, and although it has been desecrated over the years the gods still look down upon it. Any Dwarf praying at this shrine gains, for the remainder of this adventure, the effects of a *Bless* spell upon the entire party.

### 5 Old Storeroom

This storeroom is similar to Room 2, but this room is empty of all boxes and fungi. Instead, a pack of three Wild Dogs lie within, gnawing on some meat. They will leap on the PC's and attack them as soon as they enter the room. The PC's can prevent them from attacking, however, if they throw at least a week supply of rations to the dogs. ( If they re-enter the room, though, they must face the dogs

again. )

### 6 Guard Room

This 25 sq. ft. room has been taken over from it's original job of weapon room to serve as a guard room for the new inhabitants of this place. A Dark Elf lurks within, who will cast his spell, *Magic Missile*, on the strongest PC then attack. A search of the room will reveal a *Wand of Magic Missiles*, with 2 charges remaining, a *Potion of Healing*, and a casket containing 65 Gold Coins.

### 7 Dark Elf Lair

This 50' by 25' room contains three Dark Elves, sitting around a table discussing their next raid. They have a wild dog chained to the door which will start growling when the PC's enter, and within three rounds bursts it's bonds and attacks them. The Dark Elves will attack the PC's when they hear them, first casting their spells (*Magic Missile*, *Sleep* and *Shield* ) then attacking the PC's with their weapons. If the PC's defeat the Dark Elves, they will find the main stash of the raiders, a chest containing 130 Gold Coins, a Scroll of the Magic-User spell *Mirror Image*, and a set of *Gauntlets of Bugbear Strength* ( which provide the user with Strength 17 in Combat when used, five charges remaining. ) In addition, one of the Dark Elves carries three *Quarrels +1* in a pouch around his waist.

## Conclusion

The PC's leave the Dark Elf lair with a potential menace to the local area eliminated before it can even become a problem. The wounds they have taken heal by the time they reach Narborel, and the farmer and his family who died fighting the evil monsters have been avenged.

## Experience Points

For successfully completing this adventure, the PC's receive 150 experience points. In addition, a pool of 250 experience points is available for good role-playing, ideas, and so on.

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# OD&DITIES

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