

OD&DITIES 11

DECEMBER 2003

WE'RE BACK!

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EDITORIAL

R.E.B. TONGUE

Interestingly enough, this is the third editorial I have had occasion to write for this issue. Getting this one out has been a long, hard slog – not because of shortage of material, but because of other problems. As far as I am concerned, these are now over, and I intend to make OD&DITIES my primary focus once again. In short, all will now be as it was, I hope. A little house news, first – OD&DITIES Twelve is scheduled for April, with a March release possible if I get material in. As well as the normal range of material that is found in OD&DITIES, there will be two themes in the next issue. The first will be, ‘Classes and Races’ – an assortment of new classes and races for OD&D. I had quite a bit of material of this type in, enough that I’ve decided to make a special based on this. The second will be ‘Your Keep’. This will be a collection of variations on the ‘Keep on the Borderlands’ that have been created over the years by various people – let’s get these in. I’ve been doing a bit of modifying myself recently, now that I’m running the module (for the first time), so I know that almost everybody must be doing something along these lines.

News on the OD&D front. Troll Lord Games is producing a new rules system, a light version that apparently will use the D20 as its system but will simplify it in a similar way to OD&D. The rumours of those involved in the project are flying around – the word is that Gary Gygax and Rob Kuntz are involved in producing material for the new system. Could it be that the long awaited Castle Greyhawk will finally be here? Only time will tell. They may not be the only one working on such a project. More rumours of Hackmaster Lite are coming up again – and if any company can be trusted to do OD&D justice, I suspect that it is Kenzer (though I must admit that Troll Lord runs a very near second). Other companies are thinking about such works, also – and I believe that it is at least partly due to the efforts of people in the Guild of OD&D (check it out if you have not done so!), Dragonsfoot, Mortality.net, and other places to keep the spirit of the old games alive. Let us keep up the pressure, and one day we might just get OD&D back again. Already it has been made available for purchase once more in pdf form, along with a large number of the old modules – could this even have been conceived three years ago, back when OD&DITIES was in its early days?

So, this is a time for triumph. In my opinion, though, it is not a time for complacency. Let us keep working for OD&D, and let us keep the flame burning, brighter than ever. To this end, there are a few new things in the works. The more eagle-eyed will have noticed that ‘Getting Started’ is no longer a feature of the magazine. There is a reason for that – I have of late been penning a supplement entitled ‘Getting Started in OD&D’, a forty-page PDF – and it is almost finished. Expect it out later in the month. It takes a lot of the material in the original column, but introduces some new material as well, including adventures, floorplans, sample characters, and everything needed bar the rulebooks (and it contains new details on how to pick those up). Know anyone interested in roleplaying? Send them this PDF, or direct them to it.

What else is in the works? Well, we have the D&D Player Registry, the first edition of which is available now, both through the Guild list and on the OD&DITIES website. Only six entries at the moment, so everyone please get your lists in! I intend to update this weekly, as long as sufficient new entries are in. If you are looking to set up a game, send the details in as well – but please update me as to its success. Well, that’s all for this issue. Please, please get your submissions in to Methuslah@tongue.fsnet.co.uk, send in any thoughts, ideas, or comments.

My Thanks,
Richard Tongue

LEGENDARY ITEMS

CARL QUAIFF

Despite the fact that Herol's Age of Legends ended cataclysmically nearly a thousand centuries ago, certain relics of that age have managed to survive through the intervening millennia – either because they were well-protected, or through sheerest fluke. This article provides a smattering of those surviving items, which provide a tantalising glimpse of life in Herol's lost past.

Memory Globes: These are 3"-diameter globes of flawless crystal. They are surprisingly sturdy and heavy for their size (roughly five pounds), although dropping one from a height of 10' will smash it as easily as if it were blown glass.

If placed on a stand, or low table, and commanded to function, a *Memory Globe* records a three-dimensional-image (including sound, if desired) of anything within a 10' radius, until commanded to stop. Another command will replay the image as a remarkably lifelike *Phantasmal Force*, filling the same area with a non-dispellable illusion – the observer will be able to walk through the image without affecting it in any way. A further command can erase an image, ready for re-recording.

A *Globe* can store a total of three hours of images, either continuously or broken up into segments, and replay them indefinitely. *Memory Globes* were employed in the Age of Legends primarily for entertainment purposes – a few have been recovered from archaeological digs and their command words deciphered, revealing fascinating glimpses of everyday life in the distant past, but little useful information. An occasional *Globe* might be discovered which was used for magical or combat training – some Wizards encoded spell-teaching demonstrations into the *Globes*, while others contain displays of fighting techniques. It is theorised that these items were used by masters to provide training to their apprentices without the need for the masters to attend; one historian has even suggested that such *Globes* were made commercially available, for independent study!

Spell-Knives: These items resemble small, gripless throwing-knives, made apparently of unbreakable glass. They are perfectly balanced for throwing, and radiate variable levels of dweomer if a *Detect Magic* spell is cast on them.

In fact, *Spell-Knives* are actually low-level attack-spells, enchanted into the form of a knife for the use of non-mage users. The metamagic used to make the spells *permanent* is long lost, perhaps irretrievably so. Designed to activate when a *Spell-Knife* is thrown at a target, the spell is released *only on a successful hit* – if it misses, the *Knife* can be retrieved for later reuse. A successful strike causes 1hp damage from the sharp blade, at which point the *Knife* explodes in a flash of multicoloured light, releasing the attack-spell to affect only the target (no saving throw).

Suitable spells for this enchantment – or at least, those that have been uncovered to date - are *Fireball* (which affects those around the target as normal), *Lightning Bolt*, *Hold Person*, and *Charm Person*. Other, perhaps long-lost spells may be contained in unused *Knives*, but there is no way of discovering what spell is preserved in an individual *Knife*. Present-day magic can determine the rough level of spell in a particular *Knife*, but the only way to know for certain is to use the item in combat.

Only a very few *Spell-Knives* have been found, despite their indestructible nature. As they are an irreplaceable resource, they are rarely used in combat, although the occasional *Spell-Knife* has been seen in battle – often to good effect, as a person struck by one of these weapons does not receive a saving throw versus its effects.

Cadiram's Travel-Platform: Named for the discoverer of the first such item, this is a 6' wide, 6" thick circular platform made of an unknown metal alloy, with a horizontal bar of the same alloy supported by vertical struts at a height of 3' around the entire circumference (for holding onto when the craft is in motion). The *Travel-Platform* can hold up to ten standing passengers in relative comfort.

When a command word is spoken, the *Travel-Platform* rises in to the air and moves about like a *Flying Carpet*; however, this item can also be used to travel underwater (by casting *Water Breathing* on the passengers), in extremely hot or cold climes (*Fire/Cold Resistance*), or in thin atmospheres – perhaps even outer space (*Create Air*)! These spells are cast automatically, and the

Travel-Platform activates as many as are needed at one time (for example, in deep oceans, both *Water Breathing* and *Cold Resistance* would be cast at once).

Further command words may be used to generate powerful beams of *Continual Light* from the *Travel-Platform's* edge, to render the craft *Invisible*, or to protect passengers from harm with a *Force-Field*, but these must be discovered; they are not automatic. Some examples, it seems, were also fitted with weapons systems; *Magic Missile* or *Lightning Bolt*-firing Wands deploy from the underside of the *Travel-Platform*, and automatically track the offending target. There may be other useful features incorporated in to a

Travel-Platform, but these are the only ones so far discovered.

Only two *Travel-Platforms* have ever been recovered. Cadiram unearthed his a century ago, from deep within the solidified lava-plug of an extinct volcano on the continent of Gileme – the device was protected by its still-functioning *Force Field*, although its luckless passengers were by then no more than dust on the *Platform's* surface. The other crash-landed in the Northwestern Territories 20 years ago, having been in orbit about the planet for many millennia – again, it was protected from serious harm by its powerful *Force Field*; it is currently the prize of the Dorinwarf Dwarf Clan.

WAR PAINTINGS IN D&D

TOSATT EARP

It is an old custom, especially amongst the warriors of less civilized humanoid tribes, to paint body and face before entering in battle. This is an extremely old usage that probably dates from the first savage Trolls at the beginning of their racial history. This practice quickly spread through other humanoid races (like Orcs, Kobolds, Goblins, Bugbears, Gnolls, and even Ogres), and it was adopted even by many primitive human and demi-human tribes. So, after some decades, warriors of any human-like sentient kin almost universally used the war paintings.

Even if many other races used those colors, it is important to remember that it was originally created by Trolls, so its meanings and representations are strictly related to trollish view of the world and racial folklore. Today, it is fairly uncommon to find “civilized” warriors who deeply knows this old ritual, that is nearly forgotten by all but a few of savage humanoid tribes scattered across the vast world. Despite this, the combatants who still practice this ritual painting regard it as a great sign of power and prowess. Savage warriors often paint themselves with ritual drawings before entering in war with their enemies or engaging in battle. Only a few mundane fighters still knows and practice the war paint in this days, and so it is quite rare to encounter warriors painted in such manner during the conventional adventures.

ORIGINS OF THE WAR PAINTINGS

The descent of this paints is lost in the spires of Time and it's probably old as the fiery trollish race.

It is said that the first to use war paintings was some tribes of warriors who dwelled deep in luxuriant forests or near the shores of rivers and lakes. It seems that was habit amongst them to distinguish the bravest and fearless fighters with ritual drawings, traced on their bodies and faces with vegetable colored inks, following a mystic ritual known only by the tribe shaman.

The war paintings, which are called *Trurrigâr* in the trollish language, were considered a sign of great honour and the highest reward conquerable in battle. The *Krurrigâr* (“Painted Warriors” in the trollish language) were a high-status social class, respected by their own tribal companions and feared by enemies in battle. With the passing of time, the paintings almost completely lost their distinguishing value, and merely became ritual

decorations used both to scare the enemies and invoke help in battle upon their wearer.

As such, they were traced either by the tribe shaman or by the more expert tribal warriors, but it is still considered sacrilegious and unlucky to use it without the proper drawing ceremony. Actually their use is confined to few uncivilized humanoid tribes, and to those warriors more faithful to their ancient traditions. Between such (uncommon) individuals, it is still possible to find some adventurers who walk the many ways of the world.

MEANING OF RITUAL PAINTING COLORS

As said before, all the colors used for war paintings are obtained from vegetable essences, through various processes handed down over millenniums and still unchanged.

The ritual colors are the following:

- Red (or Orange): it means rage and blood. Is used to represent the battle wrath by which the warrior is pervaded with, and his uncontrollable desire to spill the enemy's blood.
- Ochre (or Yellow): it symbolizes the baneful essence of the sunbursts, that can directly transform even the mightiest Troll warrior in cold stone. It is rarely used and only by those delvers who actively seeks the death in battle, fighting like berserkers to the extremes consequences, to cleanse a previous act of cowardice or shame.
- Blue: it means night, darkness and night sky. Is primarily used by those warriors who are used as skirmishers, explorers or commandoes, and must use stealth more than brute force.
- Indigo (or Azure): it symbolizes the endurance and persistence proper of all trollish race. Many warriors have achieved this color due to their great resistance to pain or fatigue of for their attitude to be tireless even in the most stressful situations.
- Green (or Pale Green): it means bravery and ardour. Is one of the most utilized war colors, often in conjunction with the Red. The tradition imposes that it can never be used in combination with Ochre, because a dishonoured warrior cannot be considered courageous at the same time.
- White: it symbolizes physical strength and brute force. Only the strongest and mightiest

warriors use this color in battle. They are exceptionally strong (even for trollish standards) and are able to wield melee weapons that will normally require the use of two hands with only one hand, thus allowing them to be awesome foes in hand-to-hand combat.

- Black (or Grey): it means death and is one of the unusual colors to be seen. The warrior is determined to fulfil his duties at any cost and will go to any distance before surrendering. It is primarily used by those delvers who pronounce solemn oaths of vengeance.
- Brown: it symbolizes the Earth, both intended as the Creator of Life and as the Bones of the World. Is the more mystical color and is often used by shamans. It is also intended as the endurance that a warrior must have to withstand adversities, and in such sense is frequently associated with Indigo paintings.
- Purple (or Violet): it means the swiftness and smartness in combat. Is reserved primarily to tribal chiefs or warlords and is never used alone or in conjunction with the Ochre color. Generally, it is believed that has the power to inspire his wearer to conduct his army or tribe, and as a rule is traced exclusively by shamans or tribal chiefs.

RITUAL PAINTINGS AND THEIR SHAPES

The war paints have a well-defined range of possible shapes, depending on the body location upon which it is traced. On the forehead can be drawn only circles or horizontal stripes. The latter are used for the most experienced warriors. The eyes can be circled with rounded, oval or (rarely) squared outlines. The latter are used only for young or inexperienced warriors, while spherical shapes are used indifferently from all other combatants. On nose and cheeks can be traced horizontal or vertical stripes, and this is also true for the chin, which can also be entirely painted of one color. Alternatively to those said above, the entire face could be painted on one color or two. In this second case there can be three different options: one color for the upper half and another color for the lower half; or one color for the left half and another color for the right half; or alternated stripes (either horizontal or vertical) made from the two different colors.

The war paint is principally applied on the warrior face and a fighter will never go into battle without having painted his face. The facial tints represent the warrior attitudes and personality and are considered the most important of all. On arms and legs can be painted vertical or horizontal stripes, or circles, or ovals, or squares, or the limbs can even be painted entirely of one color. No more than one color can be combined

when painting limbs. Also hands and feet are only wholly painted of a single color. This tint can be the same color of those applied on face or a different one, and symbolize the warrior capability of battling. They are used infrequently and only by the most proud or bully combatants, especially for those applied to hands and feet. The chest, abdomen and back are painted exactly as the limbs and represent the warrior durability and persistence. Only the wisest or mightiest fighters are allowed to use it. Other than the few rules and significance seen above, there no special rules to be followed when applying war paints and their disposal is entirely left up to the warrior creativity.

WAR PAINTINGS IN D&D

If you decide to use the war paints in your D&D game, keep in mind that it are seldom used by mundane civilized warriors and are reserved only for those fighters (especially humanoids) who came from savage or isolated tribes, or are particularly tied to their ancestral origins. Savage tribes guards with suspicious and dislike (at best) any non-fighter character that uses their war paintings. The tribesmen may decide to harshly punish or even kill those who wear their drawings without being entitled to do so. The warriors who put on war paints are considered exceptionally savage and bloody, even by those of their own race. Humans, Elves and Hobbits often judge them as sanguinary and incapable of mercy, and so they don't deserve clemency to them. Dwarves are sworn enemies of painted enemies of other races, and fight them to death, maybe remembering their ancestral wars at the beginning of Time.

On the other side, tribal warriors beat, mutilate or even kill any member of another Class who is so brave or crazy to put on their ritual paintings. This is done without exceptions and the colors are never applied to whoever isn't a fiery warrior. The various effects of the war paints are efficacious only if inscribed by a warrior on another fighter (or by a warrior on himself), by using the appropriate ritual known only by shamans, expert warriors or savage fighters (is up to the DM to decide if one delver can have this mystical knowledge). This ritual is called *Rutziggrarr* (the trollish word that stands for "Mystical War Color") and it requires about one hour to be completed.

The wearer of the war colors must concentrate for 2-12 minutes, filling his mind and spirit with images of battle and courage – this is done by making a test on Int. The person who drew the paintings must make the same test. If the wearer and the drawer are the same person, he must

make a single test on Int with a -2 penalty. If even one of these tests fails, the ritual has no practical effects in game terms, but must be completed anyway. After having purified their spirits, the drawer and the wearer may decide which colors paint – with the limitations seen above in the color description. The maximum number of different colors that can be painted are determined as follows:

| Wearer Int+Wis+Cha | Max # Colors |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 15 or less | 1 |

Here follows the description of the various game effects keyed to the war colors. Always remember that these effects are cumulative (except for the duration) if more than one color is used and are

- **Red/Orange:** double the warrior bonus to hit and damage due to Str for the duration of an entire combat.
- **Ochre/Yellow:** double the warrior bonus to hit and damage due to Str, temporary doubles his HP, but halve his Wis; the effects lasts for an entire combat. The fighter cannot retreat from the melee and if the wearer is still alive at the end of the fight, he must succeed in a ST vs. Death Ray or permanently lose 1 points of Con, Wis or Cha (randomly determined).
- **Blue:** the warrior reduce gains a 90% chance in hiding and/or stealth. He also inflicts 1 extra point of damage in melee combat for every level of experience. This bonus lasts from dusk to dawn.
- **Indigo/Azure:** the warrior's HP are doubled for the duration of an entire combat. Alternatively, the fighter can sustain exceptional physical efforts (like running, swimming, going without sleep or food and water, etc.) without suffering any penalty for double of normal time. The desired effect must be specifically chosen when the painting are traced and, if the latter outcome is chosen, at the end of the time period the warrior must succeed in a ST vs. Death Ray or permanently lose 1 point of Con.
- **Green/Pale Green:** the warrior becomes immune to any type of fear or discouragement, even of magical or supernatural origin, for a number of turns equal to hi Cha score. He also gains a special +2 bonus to any ST vs. mind-influencing Spells that he must make during this time period.
- **White:** the warrior 'to hit and damage' bonuses due to Str are multiplied by four for an entire combat. During this fight he can use melee weapons that normally requires two hands to wield it with only one hand, thus

| | |
|--------------|----|
| 16 – 36 | 2 |
| 37 – 50 | 3 |
| 51 or higher | 4* |

* In addition to any limitation seen above, the war paintings must be traced by a tribal shaman or by a warrior of at least 15th level. Also, the warrior who gets painted must be at least of 12th level. If these requirements are not meet, the maximum number of different colors is limited to 3.

independent of the shape the war paintings are outlined. Also keep in mind that all effects are useful only if the paintings are traced on a Fighter.

using two of them at the same time in combat. If he desires to do this combat feat, at the end of melee he must succeed in a ST vs. Death ray with a +4 bonus, or permanently reduce his Str by 1 point.

- **Black/Grey:** the effects of this war painting lasts until the color is washed away or otherwise removed from the warrior skin. All fighters' ST gains a +4 special bonus, and he gains a +1 bonus to hit and damage rolls per experience level. When the warrior quest is fulfilled or the paintings are removed, the wearer must reduce all his attributes by 1 point.
- **Brown:** doubles the warrior's HP and make him automatically succeed in any Strength and Constitution Tests. This lasts for a number of turns equal to the warrior's original Con.
- **Violet/Purple:** the warrior gains a bonus of +2 to hit and damage rolls for every experience level, and his AC is lowered by 1 for every 3 points of Con (round fractions down). He also gains a +1 bonus to any ST and can double his Cha for purpose of commanding or influencing and army or warband. The above effects lasts for a number of hours equal to the wearer's experience level or the double of his Cha score – whichever is lesser.

LIMITATIONS TO USE OF WAR PAINTINGS

As said previously, the war paintings have effect only if traced on a fighter by a shaman or warrior by following the appropriate Rutziggrarr ritual. Moreover, the colors can be painted only one time per month. Specifically, Trolls says that war paints do not have any effect if are tinted again on the same fighter before the moon has completed a full cycle.

SOME ENCHANTED ITEM: GREYWAND

ERIN SMALE

Some Enchanted Item features a unique magic item in each issue of OD&DITIES, complete with a loose historical context that may be adapted easily to any OD&D campaign and adventure hooks wherein the item itself can be central to game play. Our third instalment introduces *Greywand*, a sword forged against the power of humanoids in general and orcs in particular.

History

Six centuries ago, the now-sundered kingdom of Leodwored stood as the most influential nation of mannish peoples united under one banner. Along the kingdom's northern border, the Duchy of Esobran was home to The Esteemed Order of the Protectors of the Northern Havens. This knightly brotherhood was charged, as it is today, with protecting the kingdom from humanoid raiding by the orc tribes beyond Leodwored's northern frontier. After ten years of successful defensive campaigns against the orcs, the Order's Champion and First Sword, Marhared, struck north into orcish territory. Chroniclers of the invasion noted that Marhared bore an enchanted sword named *Greywand* and the shield *Quiverbane*¹ as proof against any orcish arrow. Sadly, Marhared was to lead his 100-strong cadre of elite knights to its doom. When Marhared's dismembered body was found, no trace remained of his magicked arms.

As is common amongst mortals, rampant speculation exists as to their whereabouts. That *Quiverbane* was taken by the orcs has been divined through spell-craft. The fate of *Greywand*, however, has escaped revelation, prompting much research into Leodwored's forgotten lore for clues as its location. The knowledge found has been a cause for celebration, inspired fervour, non-secular debate, secular devotion, and arduous questing. The first allusion to *Greywand* appears in the *Leodwor Book*, a collection of historical writings that predates the kingdom itself by some 250 years. In this tome, the blade is referred to as "Ormdall's Lancet," described as "a divine-wrought anelace of retribution against Blackspawn [orcs], fashioned in the Law-Forge of Jorg."² Other sources assert that while *Greywand*

was a gift from the Immortal Ormdall, it was periodically lost to the keeping of Men. Indeed, there are long chronologies of Leodwored's frequent orc wars wherein no mention of the weapon's use is made. Whether "lost" means physically misplaced or recalled by its divine master is not clear.

Thus, the common belief is that *Greywand* was reclaimed by Ormdall, supposedly to be returned when again it was needed. Though this theory accounts for the blade's absence, it does not explain its non-appearance during the violent orc wars of Esobran's immediately subsequent history. Few challenge this belief, however, believing that such is the will of the Immortals.

Appearance and Powers

Greywand is a **normal sword +0, +2 vs. orcs** fashioned from a dull steel alloy. The weapon's double blade keeps its edge magically, while the hilt, wrapped in cloth of deep azure, moulds itself to the hand of the wielder (*Greywand* cannot be fumbled). The silvered pommel is capped with a sapphire inside of which the tiny figure of a hawk—the animal companion of Ormdall—may be seen. To any Lawful bearer, the Keen-Blade grants Alertness (as the General Skill; RC/82; if General Skills are not used, allow a +1 to any Surprise roll (RC/92) vs. humanoids). *Greywand* is also capable of loosing a non-rebounding, two-dice (2d6) **Lightning Bolt** (RC/49) to orcish combatants, up to thrice per day.

If the bearer is an adherent of Ormdall, the effectiveness of the **Lightning Bolt** is increased to four dice (4d6). Further, the wielder may summon and control a normal hawk (CC (1986)/16; CC (1993)/52) that can communicate with the bearer empathically. This hunting bird remains for one turn per level of the wielder and may be summoned once per day. If slain, the hawk disappears and regenerates inside the blade's sapphire pommel within one week's time.

Adventure Hooks

Greywand, the Keen-Blade, may spawn any of the following adventures:

- The various chapters of The Esteemed Order of Protectors, found throughout the independent kingdoms that represent the vestiges of fallen Leodwored, do not despair of

¹ The shield *Quiverbane* is described in last issue's instalment of *Some Enchanted Item*.

² In the Nord pantheon, Ormdall the Warrior is the Lawful champion of men against orcs; Jorg, the Greysmith, is the Armourer of the Gods. The

Esteemed Order of the Protectors, formed into numerous chapters, is the fighting order of Ormdall, based throughout the Leodwored territories.

reclaiming the divine blade. Each year, on the anniversary of Marhared's invasion into orcish territory, the Order sponsors The Blade Seek, a quest launched to recover the *Greywand*. Initially, the quest's participants were limited to knights of the Order. However, within the last century, anyone with allegiance to the Nord Pantheon may join the hunt. Thus, in addition to knights of the Order, the quest is engaged by nobles, adventuring parties, secular and non-secular elements of Ormdall's following, glory-seekers, and mercenary bands. Within any kingdom that was once part of Leodwored, the PCs surely hear of The Blade Seek and may opt to participate. If the DM wishes to incorporate The Blade Seek into his campaign, he must fabricate clues as to the blade's possible whereabouts, what encounters occur during the quest, and possible outcomes if the blade is found (if, indeed, it can be found).

- The *Leodwar Book's* account of *Greywand* is, in reality, a cock-and-bull story, either written by zealous clerics of Ormdall or contrived to bolster worship of the Nord Warrior. In truth, the northern orc tribes ward the blade. In this respect, it may be secured simply as a spoil of war or as insurance against its further use by Men. Either way, the PCs, caught up in the pageantry of The Blade Seek or merely at the right place at the right time, discover *Greywand* nestled within the orc warrens of the north. The orc complex, its defenders, and the security surrounding the blade are up to the DM. Regardless, if the party returns to civilisation with *Greywand*, it will be heralded as heroes of a new age of conquest over the orc foe.
- One (or more) of the PCs is an adherent of Ormdall, visited by the Immortal in a dream that reveals the location of *Greywand*. If the

PC is a member of The Esteemed Order, assume that he has been handpicked to recover the blade. Otherwise, it may be speculated that Ormdall has, for whatever reason, deemed the Order unworthy, instead selecting an unaffiliated worshipper to bear his divinely wrought sword. The DM must determine the blade's location, the encounters that present during its recovery, and the nature of the Keen-Blade's keeping. When the party returns to civilisation, it is challenged by the envy of the Order, but nevertheless compelled to somehow lead a major campaign against the orcs.

- A series of orc raids have escalated into full-out war, and *Greywand's* recovery is necessary to combat the humanoid host. The PCs may seek the blade either on earthly ground or amongst the planes of multiverse, where Ormdall has perhaps hidden *Greywand* against discovery by the unworthy. The DM can create an epic adventure across worlds, essentially providing an opportunity for the party to save civilisation from unstoppable orc marauders.
- The party, entirely ignorant of The Blade Seek, Leodwared, or Esobran, discovers *Greywand* in some treasure hoard. With the Keen-Blade in its possession, the party encounters participants of The Blade Seek, who either attempt to wrest possession of the blade from the party or compel the PCs to return to Esobran where the blade can be used against the orcs (who, naturally, are massing raiding bands along the kingdom's northern border). Eventually, the party learns of *Greywand's* history, and it may elect to journey to the defence of a kingdom it's never heard of. Alternately, the party might continue on its way, equipped with the priceless blade (of course, Ormdall may have other plans for the PCs. . .).

DEADLY WOUNDS AND BALANCED COMBAT

ERIN SMALE

Introduction

Since the inception of OD&D, players have created probably dozens of "critical hit" systems to enhance the experience of game combat. Unlike combat in the official rules, wherein opponents simply whack at each other in a literal battle of hit point attrition, combat with critical hit systems attempts to simulate the quality and effect of the weapon blows exchanged. Such systems run the gamut from simply applying extra damage to detailing graphic breaks and sprains, internal bleeding, and the horrible squish of important body parts.

As might be imagined, some critical hit systems are deemed better than others, whether for playability, realism, fairness, their compatibility with the rest of the rules, or simply their effect on the campaign. Given these factors, and their varying weights within different playing groups, it's difficult for any single critical hit system to satisfy everyone's tastes. That said, this article offers some advice regarding what a critical hit system is supposed to do, what makes a critical hit system work within the OD&D game context, and finally, an actual critical hit system itself.

The Critical Hit System: What Is It Good For?

The job of any critical hit system is to make combat more interesting, more realistic, or both. Unlike "official" combat, where successful blows simply chip away at a combatant's hit point total, critical hit combat explains how those hit points are lost through descriptions of where the victim was struck and how the resulting injury manifests.

Most critical hit systems go a step further by connecting the type of hit described to a corresponding amount of damage. As a by-product, blows to vital areas can mean instant or near-instant death for the victim, while non-lethal hits impose other, lesser-yet-nasty limitations. For example, a brilliant sword blow to the target's head might signify decapitation, while a slice of the victim's hamstring might only reduce the target's movement rate.

The results of such outcomes are far-reaching. First and foremost, combat is often far deadlier, since a single critical hit can slay a combatant instantly. Second, critical hits can impose significant realism in the campaign because the

results, instead of merely subtracting "intangible" hit points, impose specific and detailed wounds. Third, the results of critical hits can provide role-playing opportunities for afflicted characters, as certain abilities and skills are degraded, and various means of healing are sought. Given these qualities, it's fair to say that a workable critical hit system has the potential to truly enhance any OD&D campaign; that's the attractive part. But developing that workable system is harder than most believe—that's where things can get ugly.

Critical Hit System Checklist

While the critical hit outcomes described above certainly make for interesting combat, details are subject to interpretation. For example, how does a blow to the leg or a sliced hamstring manifest? Reduced movement? If so, how much of a reduction? Should movement even be permitted? Is weapon damage applied as well? What of bleeding or shock? How is the damage healed and how long does it take?

Such questions reveal the subjective element that dooms many critical hit systems. No two OD&D campaigns are identical, and the degree of realism within each is a distinguishing factor. In practice, then, a critical hit system that works well in Group A's campaign is not guaranteed—or even likely—to work well in Group B's campaign. Given this, it would seem impossible to create a critical hit system suitable for general OD&D use. Yet if the concept of a critical hit system is broken down into the components that affect the campaign in general and combat in particular, it is possible to view those individual factors and perhaps devise a workable variant. To this end, I've identified five game areas in which a critical hit system's affects are felt:

Playability

Is the critical hit system easy to use? Does it disrupt the flow of the game or make combat unnecessarily complex? If the system requires extra die rolls, frequent consultation of charts and tables, or anything above the simplest addition and subtraction, it may be too cumbersome to be useful. If combat takes twice as long to resolve, the system is definitely too cumbersome.

Another aspect of playability is the system's learning curve. For some OD&D players, especially novices, combat resolution can be

confusing. Knowing what options are available, when to attack, which dice to roll, and how to interpret the results can be daunting for any player; even experienced gamers are sometimes overwhelmed when resolving fights between large numbers of combatants. If the critical hit system is harder to grasp than the official combat rules, it's not likely to be popular or even fun to use. In terms of playability, then, the ideal critical hit system would provide results without using too many factors external to official OD&D combat.

Realism

Do the results of critical hits make sense? Could the wounds described actually occur? Almost every critical hit system allows for some sort of "instant kill," whether by decapitation, an arrow to the heart, a crushed skull, et. al. However, even within the context of heroic fantasy, it's probably quite difficult to land such a telling blow. For example, prisoners slated for the mediaeval chopping block often bribed their executioners to ensure that the deed was done with a single hit. If it was hard for an executioner, prepared with a sharpened sword or axe, to decapitate an unprotected, stationary prisoner, how likely is it for Ragnar the Fighter to slice through an armoured ogre's thick neck during the chaotic press of combat?

On the other end of the spectrum, are the results *too* realistic? If the system imposes a "to-hit" modifier for a wrist sprain or requires a saving throw to stave off infection or shock, it may be too heavy on detail. When realism impinges on ease of use, the system is probably attempting to simulate too much. Frequently, realism and playability have an inversely proportional relationship: the more playable a system, the less realistic it tends to be. Conversely, the more realism a system attempts to capture, the harder it is to play. The ideal critical hit system would balance realism and playability to the campaign group's satisfaction.

Fairness

Is the critical hit system fair and balanced? Are critical results merely lucky rolls that point to instant death? Do they occur with such frequency so as to be mundane and expected? If critical hits are equivalent to death warrants, and they occur more often than not, the system is likely neither fair nor balanced.

The best way to find out for sure is to rule that, as long as characters can inflict critical wounds on opponents, those opponents can inflict critical wounds on *them*. After all, if PCs were immune to critical hits, they would have an unfair advantage over their foes. See how the player of Ragnar the

Fighter's face goes white when he realises that his beloved warrior could turn into a headless corpse with one lucky blow?

As a rule, if players blanch at being on the business end of a critical hit, the system isn't fair or balanced; fixing it probably means toning down the frequency and ferocity of dire and fatal results. The ideal critical hit system won't promote the intensity of the damage over the comfort level of the players adopting it.

Mechanics

How does the critical hit system affect other game conventions? Does it mesh well with the existing rules, or does its use "break" things? For example, consider the popular "natural 20" critical hit system, wherein a critical hit—often double damage—occurs on an attack roll result of a natural 20. This simple system has high playability and is realistic enough to make a critical hit memorable without too much suspension of disbelief or too much detail. Since it represents only 5% of all combat rolls, it seems fair in terms of frequency and impact.

However, this simple system is badly flawed. The most glaring problem is its lack of balance—the static 5% chance of inflicting a critical should be offset by a similar chance of catastrophe. So, if a natural 20 indicates an expert strike, it's only fair that a natural 1 signifies a bungled blow—the so-called "critical fumble." Even assuming that the critical fumble doesn't result in the patently absurd "the attacker damages himself with his own weapon" outcome, the system is saddled with an arbitrary mechanic whose existence is rationalised only as a balance against the possibility of landing a critical hit. Further, the frequency of critical results has increased from 5% of all combat rolls to 10%. In one fell swoop, each of playability, realism, and fairness has been compromised.

Let's further assume that, instead of merely doubling damage, critical hits result in broken bones, sprains, bleeding wounds, severed limbs, etc. At first glance, this system doesn't seem bad. Such results, dire as they are, could certainly occur in a fantasy setting, so there is an attempt at realism, and even though they probably derive from a separate table, playability isn't seriously derailed. Finally, to help make it fair, the system allows for certain curative measures to restrict or reverse the damage caused by critical hits (e.g., setting broken bones, packing bleeding wounds, and regenerating severed limbs).

Unfortunately, while this looks good on paper, it is destined to be a logistical headache as the

campaign progresses. Why? Because the OD&D rules weren't designed to deal with broken bones, sprains, bleeding wounds, or severed limbs. To make the system "work," the DM has to apply a whole new model to damage and healing, as well as determine how critical results impact other areas of play. For example, what is the movement rate of a character with a broken leg? Can he move at all? What if the leg is merely sprained? If a thief's abdominal laceration were sewn up, but not completely healed, would it affect his Climb Walls ability? Would a severed finger mitigate his skill at Picking Locks or Removing Traps? How long does it take for a broken arm to heal? What is the DEX or STR modification during this period? Does CON affect healing?

With a seemingly innocuous addition to the critical hit system, realism has given way to potential confusion and bogged-down playability. Even assuming that players deem the system fair to their characters, one must wonder if the results are compatible with the heroic spirit of OD&D—after all, do players really want to run characters suffering from broken bones, crushed rib cages, and deep, debilitating wounds that prove difficult to heal?

Finally, the system has another, subtler, flaw: any opponent that requires a 20 to hit becomes essentially invulnerable to all but critical strikes. Put another way, when an attacker needs a 20 to hit, any successful blow has to be a critical hit. For example, a 4th-level thief with a STR 8 attacking an AC 0 foe requires a "to-hit" roll of 20. Therefore, every successful strike is a critical hit, though it is mathematically impossible for the character to land a "normal" non-critical blow. To confuse matters, if the required "to-hit" roll is greater than 20 (e.g., a 6th-level fighter attacking an AC -1 foe in the dark needs a roll of 22), and a natural 20 is rolled, the DM needs to decide if a critical hit has been made. On one hand, it's reasonable to allow it, since a natural 20 *was* rolled. On the other hand, it doesn't quite make sense—if a critical hit represents a superb attack, how could one result from an attack that missed?

This short example illustrates two common pitfalls in critical hit system design: the introduction of new rules and rule exceptions that have to potential to "break" other game mechanics, and the rapidity with which simple systems can become complex and unwieldy as a consequence. The ideal critical hit system seamlessly blends with the existing mechanics and accepted conventions of the OD&D game.

Balance

How does the critical hit system affect the campaign as a whole? Are the critical hit results too powerful? Most importantly, do they "fit" into the overall context of the milieu? If a 1st-level fighter can dispatch a large red dragon or a 10th-level fighter with a single blow, the system isn't balanced. This is an important warning, for even if the system passes the four previous tests, when it leads to PC domination over the campaign, it is unsuitable for play. Consider an example from this author's campaign:

A low-level party, consisting of two elves, two fighters, and an NPC cleric, was returning from a hard-fought victory over the local goblin king. I devised an octet of humanoid bandits—four goblins, three orcs, and an ogre—to challenge them on the way home. The encounter wasn't supposed to turn into a fight—I figured that the bandits would divest the PCs of some booty in exchange for free passage. The party, I assumed, would parley instead of fight, weakened as they were from their recent foray, nor could they win if they did. In fact, I had specifically detailed the ogre—a fearsome challenge, with maximum hit points, plate mail armour, a wicked-looking pole arm, and a STR adjustment of +3 "to-hit" and damage—to dissuade the PCs from combat. The bandits were in a small gully, where the goblins were posted as sentries, the orcs were cooking dinner, and the ogre was casting about for something to smash. As luck had it, the party scouted the bandits undetected quickly devised a plan of attack: wherein the elves would pepper the ogre with arrows, as the rest of the party closed to engage the remaining humanoids.

The first elf archer made the best of all possible rolls, not only shooting the ogre, but also scoring a critical hit. According to the critical hit table I had devised, his single arrow had ripped through the ogre's throat, killing him instantly. The orcs raised a cry whilst diving for cover, while the goblins failed their morale checks and (prudently) ran away. The party made short work of the orcs, having lost not a copper and, in fact, gained another 100sp or so for their trouble.

It was a lucky shot, certainly, and an even luckier roll on the critical hit table. As a DM, I'll admit to some disappointment that the encounter hadn't worked out as planned.³ But what *surprised* me the most was that the critical hit had done so much damage. This ogre had 33 hit points; a long bow does 1d6 points of damage. Yet, a single

³ OK, actually I was irked that my carefully crafted ogre hadn't the chance to even *notice* the PCs.

arrow obliterated the humanoid completely and instantly.

Of course, I could have overruled the roll, but that would have been heavy-handed and unfair to the player. I could have introduced a few more previously unseen humanoids to enforce my expectations for the encounter, but that would have been railroading the party. I probably could have done a lot of things, but, more than anything, I didn't want to appear as if I were throwing a tantrum in response. Yet, what if that ogre had been a huge dragon or a 15th-level magic-user—either of which might have been the uber-villain at the climax of some epic-level campaign?

When a critical hit system makes it too easy to overcome foes, the challenge they represent is seriously dulled. While this may seem fun or ultra-heroic or even reasonable to the group, it spells eventual doom for the campaign. Ultimately, the DM will become frustrated at his inability to challenge the PCs, and the PCs will become bored from lack of challenge. The ideal critical hit system maintains campaign balance by preventing PCs from overcoming challenges too easily.

Critical Hit System

With the criteria above in mind, I developed the critical hit system included herein. In practice, the system is more accurately one of critical *damage*, and it reflects the additional hit point loss suffered by the recipient from an extremely well placed strike. Every attack is a potential critical hit; the determining factor is the result of the attacker's "to-hit" roll and it works like this: For every five points of the modified attack roll result greater than the minimum "to-hit" number, the attacker may roll an extra die of damage (round all fractions down). A single damage die is equal to a weapon's base damage.⁴ For example, a normal sword does 1-8 points of damage, so an extra damage die equals 1d8. At Expert Mastery, however, sword damage is 2-16, so an extra damage die equals 2d8. Ability score adjustments, weapon enchantment, or any other "to-hit" modifiers do not modify additional damage dice—extra dice are strictly extra damage rolls.

As with normal damage, critical damage is applied immediately, though the DM should describe the wound with some imaginative description appropriate to the amount of damage inflicted. It doesn't matter if the DM mentions a

hit to the leg, the arm, or the chest—in game terms, all that matters is the quantity of hit points lost, but in role playing terms, describing a piercing wound to the neck or a deep cut across the combatant's torso makes for high tension and good storytelling. Please note that this system is compatible not only with the official OD&D combat rules, but also the revised armour class and THMod guidelines described in the article "Combat sans Matrix" (OD&DITIES #9), which are used in the following example:

A fighter with AC 12 and Expert mastery in the dagger strikes at an orc who has an AC of 14 and Basic mastery of the short sword. Circumstances dictate the fighter's THMod is +3 and, because of his mastery level, base damage dice are 2d4. The fighter's first "to-hit" roll is 12, modified by +3 for a total of 15, which hits the orc for 2d4 points of damage (RC/78⁵). The orc swings with his short sword and successfully hits with a 17. His short sword does base damage of 1d6, but the result of 17—five points greater than the 12 he needed—allows one extra damage die (+1d6) so total damage is 2d6. The fighter, with his arm bleeding, makes a desperate stab and rolls an amazing total of 25. This is 11 points greater than the 14 he needed, so he inflicts a critical hit consisting of two extra damage dice. His dagger's base damage is 2d4, so with the extra dice, his total damage is 6d4. The orc, his throat punctured by the dagger's point, falls gasping to the ground.

Conclusion

The critical hit system provided above is simple, and I believe it satisfies each of the criterion set forth in the preceding section. It would be incorrect for me to presume this model as the "best" possible OD&D critical hit system, since it clearly won't capture every group's style of play. However, I think it provides a number of advantages:

- Critical hits are indicated using the normal OD&D attack die, so no additional die rolls are required, nor is the learning curve more than a gentle slope (it's really just simple addition).
- Critical damage is applied in hit points, so while the graphic element of decapitations and broken bones is absent, there are neither the corresponding problems of too much or too little realism. Nevertheless, DMs are encouraged to freely interpret and describe the critical hit's result, and the system still allows for the infamous "killer blow."

⁴ Use RC/62 for weapon damage dice; if the optional weapon mastery rules are used, consult RC/78-9 for damage dice at various mastery levels.

⁵ *Rules Cyclopedia*, 1991, TSR, Inc.

- Critical results occur in connection to an attacker's total of "to-hit" modifiers and the defender's armour class, so they manifest with some degree of logic. Yet because the system's foundation is the random result of a d20 attack roll, the occurrence of critical results cannot be predicted with static frequency.
- Critical damage is significant enough to give attackers some satisfaction, but not so dire that players would consider it unfair if they suffered critical damage themselves.
- Critical results dovetail nicely with other rules, principally because they are determined through existing modifiers to the existing attack roll. No new mechanics need be injected.
- Critical damage, similarly, has no effect on other mechanics, because it is reflected in hit points, an existing game convention

used to determine a combatant's overall health.

- Critical results are not likely to slay powerful opponents with single blows, so campaign challenges are not unfairly toppled through the use of this system, especially through the occurrence of lucky rolls.

With that, I encourage you to give this system a try in your campaign. In the context of OD&D combat, it provides the excitement and results expected of any critical hit system, without unbalancing the game or sacrificing playability.

Enjoy!

THE BARD: A REVITALIZED CLASS FOR THE OD&D GAME

GEOFF GANDER, MARCO DALMONTE, AND CARL QUAIFF

This article presents the bard as a full character class for use in the D&D® game. It is based in part on the work of Bruce Heard, who presented the bard as a modification of the thief class in issue 177 of Dragon® magazine. Some of his original ideas have been incorporated into this document, and as such the authors thank and give credit to him appropriately.

Bard

Prime Requisite: Dexterity and Charisma.

Other Requirements: Dexterity and Charisma scores of 9 or higher.

Experience Bonus: 5% for Dexterity and Charisma 13-15; 10% for Dexterity and Charisma 16-18.

Hit Dice: 1d6 per level up to 9th level. Starting at 10th level, +1 hit point per level, and Constitution adjustments no longer apply.

Maximum Level: 36.

Armour: Up to chain mail; shield permitted if less than large-sized.

Weapons: Any one-handed.

Special Abilities: Bard spell-songs, *charm ability*, some Thief abilities (see below).

Saving Throws: As Thief of same level.

THACO: As Thief of same level.

Thief Abilities: Any bard can use the following abilities as a thief of the same level - Climb Walls, Hear Noise, Hide in Shadows, Move Silently, subject to penalties for wearing heavier armour.

Weapon Mastery: Begin with two weapon choices; additional choices as per other non-fighter classes. An extra choice per 200,000 xp gained after level 36.

From the earliest days of prehistory, there have been people whose calling it has been to sing the songs of others' deeds, to contribute to the lore of a people. In many cultures, the bard is the individual who serves this purpose. He or she would often travel the land, learning of great events by witnessing them, or by hearing of them from other travellers. In many ways, bards were the only source of news the average person had, and they were often the means by which cultural lore was passed down through the generations. In the D&D® system, bards fill this role, but they also possess a unique talent – the ability to sing what are known as “spell-songs”.

In a typical adventuring party, a bard is a competent fighter and an adequate scout – he or she will not need to be protected at all times. They can wield most weapons, and wear light and medium armour, and their prowess is bolstered by their spell-songs. Additionally, bards can be good information gatherers through their skills and charisma, thus helping the rest of the party acquire important clues over the course of their adventures.

The level advancement chart for the bard is:

Bard Experience Table

| Level | XP | Title | Spell Songs/Level | | | | |
|-------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 0 | Apprentice | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | 1,925 | Musician | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | 3,850 | Performer | 2 | 1 | - | - | - |
| 4 | 7,700 | Lyrical | 2 | 2 | - | - | - |
| 5 | 15,400 | Poet | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| 6 | 30,000 | Sonneteer | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| 7 | 60,000 | Troubadour | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| 8 | 120,000 | Minstrel | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | - |
| 9 | 240,000 | Bard | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | - |
| 10 | 360,000 | " | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | - |
| 11 | 480,000 | " | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12 | 600,000 | " | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 13 | 720,000 | " | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 14 | 840,000 | " | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 15 | 960,000 | " | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 16 | 1,080,000 | " | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 17 | 1,200,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 18 | 1,320,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| 19 | 1,440,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| 20 | 1,560,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 21 | 1,680,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 22 | 1,800,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 23 | 1,920,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 24 | 2,040,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 25 | 2,160,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 26 | 2,280,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 27 | 2,400,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 28 | 2,520,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 29 | 2,640,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 30 | 2,760,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 31 | 2,880,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 32 | 3,000,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 33 | 3,120,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 34 | 3,240,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 35 | 3,360,000 | " | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 36 | 3,480,000 | Master Bard | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

Class Details

Prime Requisite:

The bardic profession is one that requires considerable charisma – a performer must be able to encourage his or her audience to pay attention to them for a prolonged period. It also helps if the performer is found to be interesting, or likeable. Bards must also be able to communicate with others, empathise with them, and gain their trust whenever possible. In addition to this, bards must have good co-ordination if they are to be good performers. Thus, a bard's prime requisites are Charisma and Dexterity. If both of these attributes are between 13 and 15, the bard earns a 5% bonus to earned experience points; if they are both between 16 and 18, the bonus is 10%.

Hit Dice:

Owing to their more combat-oriented nature, compared to other roguish characters, bards roll 1d6 to determine their hit points (plus any Constitution bonus). This reflects the greater need for them to be in the heat of battle.

Armour:

Although a bard was wear any armour type up to, and including, chain mail, it should be remembered that their thief abilities can be affected whenever a bard employing these skills is wearing armour heavier than leather. The table below presents the various penalties to be applied by the DM against a bard's thief skills whenever he or she employs them while wearing scale or chain mail.

Bardic Thief Skill Penalties

| Armour Type | <i>Hide in Shadows</i> | <i>Move Silently</i> | <i>Hear Noise</i> | <i>Climb Surfaces</i> |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Scale Mail | -5% | -15% | -5% | -15% |
| <i>Chain Mail</i> | -10% | -20%* | -10% | -20% |

*This should be halved if the bard is wearing *elven chain mail*.

Bards may also use shields of medium size or smaller, although this will make it impossible for them to play any two-handed musical instrument.

Weapons:

Looking at how bards are portrayed in conventional literature, it is clear that they are people often versed in the art of combat as well as music and song; although, as with the primary focus of their careers, a bard's combat talents tend to focus more on style, rather than brute force. It is not a bard's job to skulk about in the shadows and gain information or treasure, either - though he or she may wish to rely on those talents as needed. A bard's primary purpose is to inspire his or her fellows to greater heights and bolder deeds, and assisting them in combat where possible. They may not wield two-handed weapons, either, as these interfere too much with the bard's style and way of life, which revolves around freedom of movement, and such weapons tend to be cumbersome.

Skills:

A bard *must* take the following skills when he or she is created: Singing, Music (instrument), and Storytelling. The thief skills possessed by the bard are Climb Walls, Hear Noise, Hide in Shadows, and Move Silently. These develop at a rate identical to those of a thief of the same level. Bards also receive the Gather Information skill for free. This skill is described below:

Gather Information (CHA): This skill allows a PC to use his or her savoir-faire and connections to gain another person's trust, and thereby gather information about a particular topic. The player must specify before making the skill check what sort of information is sought, and the DM assigns modifiers according to the specificity of the information required, and its obscurity. Penalties may also be assigned if the PC is trying to gather information from someone whose culture or native language differs from their own.

Special Abilities

A bard has two special abilities – charm, and the ability to perform spell-songs.

The Charm Ability:

Starting at 3rd level, the bard gains the ability to charm once per day, as per the magic-user spell *charm person*. He or she can affect a number of Hit Dice or levels equal to one-third his or her own level, rounded down. The bard must sing, recite poetry, or play an instrument for three rounds, and then make a skill check in the weakest of his or her mandatory skills (singing, storytelling, or playing a musical instrument). If the skill check fails, the victim saves vs. Spells at +3. The charm ability can also be used to negate another bard's charm attempt. If the bard is injured or interrupted while attempting to charm, the effect is ruined, and the victim(s) may become hostile.

At 9th level, the bard's charm ability extends to intelligent monsters (but not undead), as per the *charm monster* magic-user spell. A successful save vs. Spells negates this effect.

At 15th level, the bard's charm ability is extended again to plants, as per the magic-user spell *charm plant*. This ability is negated if the target successfully saves vs. Spells.

At 21st level, the bard's charm ability is extended once more to large crowds, as per the magic user spell *mass charm*. A successful save vs. Spells will negate the charm effect.

Spell-Songs:

Spell-songs are musical compositions that draw upon and shape the ambient magical energies of the world; they neither rely on symbols (as runic magic does), nor do they depend on magical formulae and complex invocations. As such, bardic magic does not actually “create” anything – it can only manipulate what already exists, and in so doing evoke sounds, sights, sensations, smells, and feelings – in other words, the bard works more on the level of illusions and influence. Nevertheless, the performance of a spell-song can influence the recipient to do, feel, or think many things. As such, spell-songs that affect the senses

or perceptions do not affect undead, or those immune to sensory attacks (such as constructs).

The means by which spell-songs can be obtained differ considerably from the spells used by magic users or clerics. As bardic lore is predominantly oral in nature, if a bard wishes to increase the number of spell-songs he or she knows, they will have to learn them from a bard of higher level. Often, the senior bard will require a favour of the seeker – essentially a quest – in exchange for the spell-song. When the spell is obtained, the younger bard must spend at least one week in intense study with his or her teacher.

Spell-songs may also be written on scrolls, but this is quite rare, and they are often found only in bardic conservatories (more on this below). Even so, such scrolls are closely guarded by their owners, as they are usually intended to remain as a record of a particular bard's achievements long after his or her passing, so that their music need not be lost to the community of bards. Therefore, an adventuring party would seldom find a bard scroll in a treasure hoard. If and when they are found, bard scrolls resemble complicated sheet music – the notes to be played are written down, and supplementary notes concerning the timing of lyrics (if any) and other relevant information are written in code, such that they resemble musical notes, as well. This bardic code is a closely guarded secret, much like the meanings of the words intoned by magic-users, or thieves' cant. As with thieves' cant, the bardic code can also be used to convey simple messages or ideas; these are often written into mundane songs, and thus are detectable only by other bards.

As a bard advances in level, his or her repertoire of spell-songs - those that have been committed to memory, and the complexity of the songs that may be sung - will increase, as shown on the level advancement chart. Each spell-song may be sung only once per day, and all of them are committed to memory (except in the case of powerful mental attacks, such as *febleminding*). This differs considerably from magic-users, who must memorise their spells, and clerics, who must pray for them. When singing a spell-song, the bard may choose whether or not to call forth the magical potential of the song itself. In this way, he or she may simply sing them for entertainment purposes, with no magical side effects on the patrons. It should be noted that the bard's spell-song repertoire increases only until 20th level, after which no further improvements are possible.

DMs should also note that the number of spell-songs listed on this chart indicates how many songs of each level a bard may sing per day, and

still be able to use their magical effects. Any magical song may be sung any number of times after its magic has been triggered, but it will possess no power until the next day. Until then, it is a mundane song, but still beautiful, nonetheless. Prior to singing any spell-song, a bard must decide whether or not to invoke its magical powers.

Once a bard reaches 9th level, he or she can write their own spell-songs, due to their accumulated knowledge and experience. The rules governing the creation of spell-songs are the same as those which apply to magic-users, and, assuming the spell-song was created successfully, the bard's repertoire will be increased, but he or she will still not be able to exceed the maximum number of spell-songs for that level each day.

Instruments:

In order for most spell-songs to have any effect, a bard must have a magical musical instrument in his or her possession. This can be of any sort appropriate to the bard's native culture, but it *must* be enchanted. A simple *enchant item* cast by a magic-user would be sufficient, or a *wish*. Once an instrument has been enchanted, it may be used to play spell-songs. A bard's instrument is likely his or her most prized possession, and he or she would be loath to part with it. The DM may decide to allow a starting bard PC to have his or her own magical instrument, much as magic-users have their own spell books at the start. If not, it would be easy to add one to any reasonably sized treasure hoard.

Singing and Playing:

For spell-songs of levels 1-2, the bard only needs to play an instrument, or sing (this will be noted in the spell description), for one round prior to invoking the effects of the spell-song itself. Spell-songs of levels 3-5 generally require the bard to both sing and play an instrument for that one round (hence, woodwind instruments, such as flutes, are often unsuitable for such spell-songs, unless the song's description notes otherwise). Spell-songs that are more combat-oriented (these are marked in italics on the chart below) often require the bard to sing and/or play an instrument for the spell-song's duration, which is limited only by the bard's Constitution. If for any reason the spell-song itself is interrupted, that attempt is ruined and cannot be tried again until the next day. It should also be mentioned that a bard may not employ the effects of more than one spell-song at a time - both will cancel each other out.

Bards may also ply their trade for money. If a bard is singing a mundane song, telling a story, or playing an instrument, he or she may earn up to 5 cp per person (5 gp per person if the audience consists of nobles). If the skill check is successful, the amount earned is 1 cp per person, plus an extra cp for every point scored under the skill. For example, if the bard's singing skill is 14, and a 12 is rolled, then the amount earned will be 3 cp per person (1 cp plus an extra 2 cp for the two points rolled under 14). If a spell-song is played without invoking its magical effects, the amount earned for playing in front of a commoner audience should be in silver pieces instead of copper (for a maximum of 5 sp per person), while

nobles might provide an additional 10-20% tip, in recognition of the fact that such songs are of exquisite beauty. In any case, a failed skill roll could result in a hostile audience.

Spell-Song List:

Having discussed the basic rules for magical bard songs, it is now necessary to present a list of spell-songs for use in any D&D® campaign. Please note that this list is by no means an exhaustive one. The names given are the titles of the songs. As with spells, each spell-song is described according to its duration, its range, and a brief description.

| First Level | Second Level | Third Level | Fourth Level | Fifth Level |
|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Eternal Wanderer | Bellow | Epic Battle | Breathstealer | Dance With Me |
| Faerie Lights | Flight Be True | Requiem Melody | Magic's End | Fantasy |
| Lullaby | Guardian | Song of Binding | Mind Render | Forgotten |
| | Angels | | | Thoughts |
| Moonlight | Hero's Chant | Song of Freedom | Tempest | Rolls Of Thunder |
| Shadow | | | | |
| Seeker of Magic | Tireless Hero | View From Afar | Truthtell | Satire |

First Level Spell-Songs:

Eternal Wanderer:

Range: 10' +2'/level of bard

Duration: 4 hours +1 hour/level of bard

Effect: Increases the movement rates of the recipients of this spell-song.

When performed, this spell-song allows the bard and anyone within his or her immediate vicinity to enjoy effects similar to that of the *longstride* spell known to the Shadow Elves. While the spell is in effect, the recipients' movement rates are tripled, and they do not tire. In this way, many miles may be covered in a matter of hours, with no ill effects on the travellers. After singing this song, the travellers must spend an equivalent number of hours resting as were spent travelling.

Faerie Lights:

Range: 10' + 10'/level of bard

Duration: 6 turns

Effect: Creates floating lights that provide a 30' radius illumination.

This spell-song creates a series of shimmering lights that dance around any target, organic or not. They provide the same amount of light as a conventional *light* spell, providing enough light to illuminate an area with a radius of 30'. The lights themselves dance and flicker, seeming to have lives of their own. Apart from dazzling any creatures with animal intelligence or lower (save

vs. paralysis or be stunned for 1d6 rounds), this song has no other effects.

Lullaby:

Range: 40'

Duration: 1d4 hours

Effect: Makes creatures within range fall asleep.

When sung, this spell-song puts a number of Hit Dice worth of living, sentient creatures equal to his or level, within range, fall asleep. Creatures whose Hit Dice is less than half of the bard's level receive no saving throw; others may make a saving throw vs. Spells to avoid this spell-song's effect. When performing this spell-song, the bard may choose which creatures will be affected, as long as the Hit Dice limit has not yet been reached, and as long as the target creatures remain within range. This means that if some creatures make their saving throws one round, they may succumb the following round if they remain within range, until the bard has sung a number of rounds equal to his or her Constitution score, after which no other creatures may be affected. Those who fall asleep can be awakened by shaking or poking them for 1d4 rounds, but otherwise will remain asleep for 1d4 hours. Only creatures of man-size or smaller may be affected by this spell-song.

Moonlight Shadow:

Range: 50'

Duration: 1d4 turns

Effect: Deepens surrounding shadows.

This spell-song may only be cast on a moonlit night, or in daytime in an area with considerable shadow. The bard calls to the shadows by singing or quietly playing this spell-song, causing them to appear to deepen and thicken over a period of 1d6 rounds. The spell-song affects an area of roughly 30' diameter. Once complete, the shadowy area grants the bard (or a thief or raker) a +25% bonus to his or her Hide in Shadows roll, or provides a flat 25% chance for non-thief classes to Hide in Shadows. The area of effect for this spell increases by 5' diameter, and the Hide roll bonus by 5%, for every three levels of the bard, to a maximum of 60' diameter and 55% bonus at 19th level. The range, duration, and casting time are unchanged.

Seeker of Magic:

Range: 0' (bard only)

Duration: 6 turns

Effect: Detects magic within a 20' x 20' x 20' area.

When sung, this song reveals the magical nature of all magical items within the area of effect. All magical items, including those worn, will have a soft blue halo about them for the duration of the spell. There is a 3% chance per level that the bard can identify correctly the exact nature of the magical object(s) examined, as per the magic-user's *analyse* spell - though he or she will not be able to find out the number of charges (if any).

Second Level Spell-Songs:

Bellow:

Range: 50' + 5'/level of bard

Duration: 1 round

Effect: Creates a blasting cone of sound.

After singing this spell-song for one round, the bard may shout the next round, creating a cone of sonic force 40' wide at its far end, which inflicts 2d6 damage on everyone within the area of effect. In addition, those within the cone must save vs. Death Ray or be deafened for six turns. Every three levels after 3rd level, the bard will inflict an additional 1d6 damage with this spell-song, such that a 6th level bard's *bellow* will do 3d6 damage, up to a maximum of 13d6 damage at 36th level.

Flight Be True:

Range: 20' + 10'/level of bard

Duration: Special

Effect: Temporarily enchants one arrow, quarrel, or sling stone each round.

This spell-song allows the bard to temporarily enchant one missile weapon attack each round, as long as he or she is singing and playing his or her instrument, and is succeeding in all required checks. That attack gains an extra +4 to hit, as well as the ability to injure creatures that would normally be immune to non-silvered or non-magical attacks, provided the creature is alive. The bard may sing this song for a number of rounds equal to his or her Constitution score, after which time he or she will pass out for 1d4 hours. If the spell-song is stopped before then, no ill effects result.

Guardian Angels:

Range: 15' +5'/level of bard

Duration: 10 rounds

Effect: Improves the armour classes of the recipients temporarily.

Once sung, this spell-song emboldens the bard and other recipients, providing them with a bonus of -2 to their armour classes for the duration of the spell-song's effect. This bonus is applied against all attacks made by opponents. This spell-song also renders the recipients, for its duration, immune to all effects from other spell-songs.

Hero's Chant:

Range: 10' +2'/level of bard

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: Inspires one's allies to fight with renewed vigour.

This spell-song invigorates and inspires friendly combatants within range, conferring a bonus of +1 on all attack and damage rolls against opponents, a +1 to saving throws, and a +1 bonus to morale. Unlike other combat-oriented spell-songs, this one must be sung continuously in order for its effects to be enjoyed. The bard may sing this song for a length of time in rounds equivalent to his or her Constitution, after which he or she will fall unconscious for 1d4 turns. If he or she stops singing before this point, there are no ill effects.

Tireless Hero:

Range: 10'

Duration: Eight hours

Effect: Bard and anyone within 10' may go without rest for eight hours.

When this song is sung, all within its area of effect will instantly feel as though they have just had a full night's sleep. Any penalties for fatigue are eliminated, and parties otherwise needing to sleep for the night will be able to go without rest.

The effects of this spell-song may not be utilised for more than three days in a row, nor may this song be sung more than four times a week. Otherwise, the bard and his or her companions will suffer penalties for fatigue as per the normal rules - the body can go without sleep only for a short while. After the spell-song's duration expires, the recipients must rest for at least six hours, though a second casting will obviate this need. If this is done, the rest requirement would then be 12 hours, and this cannot be avoided by a third invocation of this spell-song.

Third Level Spell-Songs:

Epic Battle:

Range: 10' +5'/level of bard

Duration: 12 rounds

Effect: Creates an illusory battle scene up to 20' x 20' x 20' in size.

This spell-song allows the bard to create, from his or her imagination, any battle scene up to 20 feet cubed in size. The scene will be realistic, and is capable of moving with the bard - all those seeing it must save vs. Spells in order to recognise it as an illusion, otherwise they will be awed by what they see, and be stunned for 1d6 rounds. Most often, the scene is of an epic battle, or of a great hero defeating his foes. The images can be placed anywhere within range by the bard, such that the party can appear to be bolstered by several powerful-looking warriors or wizards. In any case, all images have an armour class of 9, and if touched will disappear. As with magic-user *phantasmal force* spell, those "killed" by an illusion will fall unconscious, but only for 1d6 rounds.

Requiem Melody:

Range: 120'

Duration: Special

Effect: Saddens 4d4 Hit Dice worth of creatures.

When the bard begins to sing this requiem, 4d4 Hit Dice worth of creatures, ogre-sized or smaller, become overcome with sorrow (-1 to attacks and damage, no save) and must make a saving throw vs. Spells in order to avoid the other effects of the spell-song. If the saving throw is successful, the penalty lasts only as long as the bard continues to play the song, which is a maximum of one round per Constitution point. If the saving throw fails, the victim falls into despair, mourning his or her ill fortune (real or imaginary), and unable to perform any action. This bout of depression can last for a maximum number of rounds equal the bard's Constitution (see rules above). The spell-song only works against intelligent (i.e., those with an Intelligence of 3 or higher) creatures.

Whether or not the bard stops singing before a number of rounds equal to his or her Constitution has passed, he or she must make a Wisdom check to hold off the negative emotional energies that were summoned with the spell-song. If the save succeeds, the bard is stunned for 1d4 rounds; if it fails, the bard passes out for one round per round spent singing.

Song of Binding:

Range: 30' + 10'/level of bard

Duration: 1 round/level of bard

Effect: Paralyzes up to four creatures.

This spell-song is similar to the magic user spell *hold person*. The bard can paralyse up to four creatures of Medium size (up to 7' tall), two creatures of Large size (7+' to 12' tall), or one creature of Huge size (12+' to 25' tall); it has no effect on creatures greater than 25' in height (Gargantuan size). The victims must be within the range of the spell-song and must listen to the song for at least one round in order to be affected. Each victim can avoid the effects by making a successful saving throw vs. Paralysis, otherwise they are convinced that they are paralysed. The paralysis lasts for one round per level of the bard and can be dispelled in the normal ways (such as the spell *free person*), or by the reverse of this song (see below).

Song of Freedom:

Range: 30' + 10'/level of bard

Duration: 1 round/level of bard

Effect: Frees up to four creatures within range from the effects of paralysis.

This spell is the opposite of the spell-song called *Song of Binding*. It has the same range and characteristics of that spell-song, and can be used to permanently negate all paralyzing effects in the area (from spells such as *hold person*, as well as ghouls' touches). As long as the duration lasts, all paralysed creatures within range are filled with newfound energy, and are allowed a new saving throw vs. Paralysis each round to free themselves of any paralyzing effect that is holding them.

View From Afar:

Range: 0' (bard only)

Duration: 3 turns

Effect: Allows the bard to see places up to five miles away.

The effects of this spell-song are much like that of a *crystal ball*. Upon singing the song, the bard can see any location up to five miles away. He or she only needs to know the name of the place, and a brief description, in order to see it. His or her

point of view of this location can rotate up to 360 degrees at will, but cannot move. The bard may look at different locations within the duration by naming different places and descriptions, and so may obtain a form of “movement” in this way, though far less accurate than that of a *wizard eye* spell. This spell-song cannot allow the bard to see through solid objects, or at any place shielded by magical wards or enchantments. Also, while the spell-song is in effect, the bard is in a trance-like state; there is no awareness of surroundings or events. Should the bard be injured in any way, his or her concentration is broken, and the spell-song is ruined.

Fourth Level Spell-Songs:

Breathstealer:

Range: 20' + 10'/level of bard

Duration: Special

Effect: Suffocates anyone within an area measuring 30'x30'x30'.

When sung by the bard, anyone within a 30' cube within range must save vs. Spells at -2, for each round in which the spell-song is in effect, or think they are beginning to suffocate. As long as the bard sings, the victims must make a save every round, losing three points of Constitution temporarily if they fail, losing nothing if they make it. In either case they are able to move normally, though those failing their save must make a Constitution check (at the reduced score if they failed a saving throw) in order to do so while they are within the area of effect. Every time the victim fails the saving throw, another three points of Constitution is lost. Victims within the area of effect who have failed their saving throw also have their movement rates halved as long as they are suffocating. In addition to this, suffocating victims cannot cast spells, speak, or make any attacks, and death will result if their Constitution score reaches zero. The bard may sing this song for as many rounds as he or she has Constitution points. Should the bard sing until his or her Constitution reaches zero, he or she will pass out for 2d6 rounds. It should be noted that everyone within the area of effect (including a bard's friends!) will be affected by this spell-song. Lost points of Constitution are regained at 1d3 points per full day of rest.

Magic's End:

Range: 60'

Duration: Permanent

Effect: Nullifies magical effects within a cube measuring 20'x20'x20' in size.

When sung or played by the bard, this spell-song will instantly dispel all spells and spell effects

within a 20' cubed area up to 60' away. Unlike the mage spell *dispel magic*, there is always a chance that the target(s) of this spell-song may resist this effect. The base chance is 20% for all spells and spell effects of a level equal to or lower than that of the bard performing this spell-song. This chance increases by 5% for every level of difference between the spell and the bard. For example, an 8th level bard wishes to dispel a *cloudkill* spell cast by a 12th level mage. The spell has a 40% chance of resisting the spell-song's dispelling effect (base 20% chance, plus 20% for four levels of difference). The same rules apply for dispelling spell-like effects - except that the DM must estimate the level of the mage who crafted the item in order to determine its resistance factor.

Mind Render:

Range: 50'

Duration: Special

Effect: Induces primal fear in anyone within range.

This spell-song, when sung or played, induces in every sentient being within the area of effect an insane fear of all that is around them, unless they make a saving throw vs. Spells at a -2 penalty each round they are in the area of effect. Those who make this save each round, or who leave the area, are unaffected. Those who fail any save while in the area instantly become delusional - fearing that everyone around them is out to get them. There is a 50% chance each round thereafter that they will launch into a frenzied assault on the nearest person, regardless of whether they are friend or foe. All such attacks are made at an additional +1 to hit and damage, on top of regular Strength bonuses. This effect will occur even if the victim who failed his or her saving throw leaves the area of effect, and will last for a number of hours equal to the level of the bard. This effect may be removed by a normal *remove curse* spell, a *wish*, or any other magical means of removing enchantments. The bard may perform this spell-song for a number of rounds equal to his or her Constitution score. If he or she does not stop playing before then, the bard may maintain this spell-song, but must make a save vs. Spells each round, or fall under the same effects as the intended victims. It should be noted that this spell-song is indiscriminate, affecting everyone within the area of effect - even a bard's friends.

Tempest:

Range: 0' (bard only)

Duration: Special

Effect: Creates illusory weather conditions within 120 yards.

When performed, this spell-song allows the bard to create illusory weather conditions in a 120-yard area, centred on him- or herself. This spell-song must be performed outdoors, and the effect may move with the bard as long as he or she continues performing. In many ways, this spell-song works in much the same way as the druidic *weather control* spell. The bard may select a weather pattern with which he or she is familiar, and create a realistic illusion of it. Those caught within the effect (except the bard's companions) must make a save vs. Spells to see through the illusion, otherwise they will believe it is real, and will suffer its effects. Typical weather conditions, and their effects on those who fail the save, could include the following:

- Rain: All missile fire within the area of effect is penalised by -2, the ground appears to become muddy after 12 rounds (all those affected by the illusion move at half normal rates);
- Fog: Visibility is reduced to 20', movement rates are effectively halved, and people may get lost;
- High winds: Missile fire and flying is impossible, movement rates are halved; and
- Snow: Visibility is reduced to 20', movement rates are halved.

The bard may perform this spell-song for a number of rounds equal to his or her Constitution score, after which he or she may continue the spell-song, but must save vs. Spells each round or pass out for 1d6 rounds due to the exertion. If the bard stops performing before that time, no ill effects result.

Truthtell:

Range: 50'

Duration: 5 questions

Effect: Makes one person provide information freely.

After being performed for one round, this spell-song allows the bard to select one individual within range, and compel him or her to answer up to five questions truthfully. The victim of this spell is not *charmed*, but he or she cannot disobey the bard. The answer to each question will be given as fully as possible, including the victim's opinions and inner thoughts on the subject matter – nothing can be held back. Details that the

victim does not remember, or of which he or she was unaware, cannot be obtained by this spell-song. Once the questioning is over, the victim will not remember the experience, and will return to "reality" in another three rounds, after which he or she will be slightly disoriented. At the DM's discretion, victims may be allowed a save vs. Spells every week to recall the questioning.

Fifth Level Spell Songs:

Dance With Me:

Range: 0' (bard only)

Duration: Up to one round per Constitution point

Effect: Makes people within 30' of the bard dance wildly.

This spell-song is very similar to the magic-user spell *dance*. In this case, the bard plays his or her instrument and all those who are within 30' of the bard, and who fail their save vs. Spells, begin to dance uncontrollably following the rhythm of the song. While they dance they cannot cast spells, fight or dodge, and cannot activate magical objects. They are totally caught up in the dance and do not pay attention to anything else around them. They move following the source of the sounds and cannot thus exit the area of effect of the spell-song, unless somebody pulls them away by force (a Strength check is required). If they are somehow hurt while dancing, they ignore the pain and keep on dancing. The victims of this spell suffer the following penalties: -4 to their saving throws; -4 to every skill check; and their armour class is calculated using only their magical bonuses and without the shield (if any). The bard may continue playing this wild spell-song for a number of rounds equal to his or her Constitution score; if he or she stops, the whole effect ends. The effect can be cancelled also via a *Magic's End* spell-song or a *silence* spell; *dispel magic* has no effect whatsoever.

Fantasy:

Range: 120'

Duration: Special

Effect: Induces hallucinations in up to 15 Hit Dice of creatures within range.

When invoking this spell-song, the bard can affect up to 25 Hit Dice worth of creatures (i.e., one 25 HD creature, five 5 HD creatures, 25 1 HD creatures, or any other combination). The player indicates which creature(s) he or she wishes the bard to target, and the DM secretly determines how many of those creatures are affected. From the 25 Hit Dice maximum, the DM should first subtract the larger Hit Die creatures, and then apportion the remainder (if any) among the weaker creatures. If any Hit Dice are left over,

either because all of the creatures have been affected, or because there are not enough to affect the remainder, they are lost. Once the creatures have been chosen, they must save vs. Spells or succumb to a vivid combination of audio and visual hallucinations. So intense are these sensations that the affected creature(s) cannot interact with the outside world in any way; they will literally believe they are in another world, devised by the bard through his or her singing and playing. As such, the bard can create almost any experience desired for those affected by the spell-song, though violent hallucinations may result in the victims striking out wildly with their weapons (the DM should determine whether such attacks might hit anyone). This effect may be maintained for a number of rounds equal to the bard's Constitution score. If the number of rounds equal to that score have passed, the bard may maintain the spell-song, but he or she must make a save vs. Spells every round to avoid experiencing a sensory overload, which will stun the bard for 2d6 rounds. There are no ill effects if the bard ends the spell-song before his or her Constitution limit is reached, though the creatures affected by the spell will be stunned for 1d6 rounds due to the sudden shift back to reality.

Forgotten Thoughts:

Range: 30'

Duration: Permanent

Effect: Makes one victim forget something.

By playing this spell-song, the bard hypnotises the victim and makes him or her forget something stored in their memory. The victim who fails their save vs. Spells finds themselves staring blankly at the bard who continues playing while whispering to him or her to forget a specific thing. In order for this power to function correctly, three things are needed:

- a) the victim must understand the bard's language and hear him/her;
- b) the bard must know what to erase from the victim's memory; and
- c) the victim must have an Intelligence score of 17 or lower (it does not affect geniuses).

The bard can erase from the victim's mind a single memory (for example the name of a person or the location of a hideout or even a spell stored in his or her mind), or they can erase a brief period of the victim's memory, up to one hour per level (for example, a 11th level bard could say: "You will forget everything you did yesterday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm" or "on Ambyrmon't the 23rd" or "on Nuwmon't the 4th of AC 989"). There

is no limitation to the point in the past the memory can go.

This spell-song does not make a spellcasting victim forget all of his or her spells; only one (chosen by the bard, provided he or she knows what spells the victim memorised). Memory lost as a result of this spell-song can only be regained via a *wish*, a *psychic surgery* or a *restoration* spell cast by a cleric of higher level than the bard.

Rolls Of Thunder:

Range: 120'

Duration: 1 round

Effect: Creates a thunderous wave of sonic force.

This spell-song produces a great blast of sound from the bard's instrument at the end of the round in which it is played, which affects all creatures standing in front of the bard, in a cone 120' long and 60' wide at its far end. Those within the cone are buffeted by the sonic wave, and receive 2d8 points of damage (they may save vs. Dragon Breath for half damage). In addition, all victims must save vs. Death Ray or be blown over by the blast. No additional damage is taken if the save fails, but victims will be stunned for 1d6 rounds. Every five levels after 11th level, the bard will inflict an additional 1d8 damage per victim with this spell-song, up to a maximum of 7d8 damage at 36th level (although victims may still save for half damage).

Satire:

Range: Special

Duration: Special

Effect: Curses one being.

This spell-song is one of the most potent weapons in a bard's armoury; it enables the bard to place a form of curse on a single individual who has wronged him or her, or those whose side he or she takes. Each use of this spell requires the bard to compose and write a new song (a process that takes at least one week), lambasting the chosen target in a particular way; the song should generate derision, contempt, or dislike for the target in those who hear it. A skill roll (using the lowest score of the bard's three required skills) is required at its completion, to see if it succeeds in evoking the effect the bard wants; failing this roll means that the bard must start again, with -1 penalty on the next skill roll. If the attempt fails three times (cumulative penalty), the bard may not *Satirise* that individual until he or she gains at least two more levels.

If the attempt succeeds, the bard may cast the spell by playing the song in front of an audience of no less than 20 people. The target need not be in

the audience, or even in the same country, but must nevertheless make a Saving Throw vs. Spells (with -1 on the roll for each 10 people who hear the *Satire's* debut performance) or be affected by the curse. This may be anything from a penalty to saving throws, to a reduction in one characteristic (no more than two points), to some physical effect - an obscenely long nose, for instance, or the sound of a donkey braying when the cursed person speaks; anything which makes a suitable punishment for the target's "crime".

The effect of the curse lasts for as long as people remember, and continue to sing, the satirical song; if no further performances are given, the effect fades in about a week. A wronged bard is a vengeful creature, however, and is likely to perform the *Satire* as often as necessary, and to as many people as possible, to keep it going. The task may be made easier if fellow bards and minstrels can be convinced to take up the *Satire* - two (or ten, or twenty) bards can spread a song much more effectively than one, after all. No bard may have more than one *Satire* in operation at once; this includes those relaying another bard's *Satire*.

The subject of the *Satire* is entitled to an additional save once per month, for as long as the curse continues; if successful, he or she is freed from its effects forever. The power to *Satirise* someone is the most important ability, and most sacred trust, held by the bards; they never use it for frivolous or trivial purposes. If a bard should ever stoop to such an act (DM's judgement), he or she may find the effects of the curse rebounding threefold.

Higher Experience Levels

Upon reaching 9th level - or Name level, as it is sometimes called - a bard has the option of building a stronghold, or of becoming a traveling bard, as per the guidelines below.

Land-Owning Bards:

Name level bards may construct a conservatory (which can be in any form, such as a building in a town, a tower, or anything that strikes the bard's fancy - but the bard must finance the construction), which will attract 1d8 first level bards, who wish to commence training or add to their repertoires. They will be loyal, but will not sacrifice themselves for the PC, who will have to replace them if they leave or are killed. At a conservatory a Name-level bard may teach novices, research new spell-songs, store the lore of heroes, or learn of unsung epic deeds from travelling bards (see below). For many smaller

towns, conservatories are a source of information on great historical events and people, as well as legends.

Land-owning bards are also required, by the unspoken code of their trade, to provide shelter to any travelling bard who requests it, as well as allow such visitors to avail themselves of any historical lore that is available. In most cases this is beneficial to both bards - the traveller gets a temporary place to stay, and the host obtains news of the outside world and can provide his or her students with another teacher for a while.

Travelling Bards:

If a Name level bard chooses to become a travelling bard, they may never decide to construct a conservatory afterwards. Travelling bards have a chance (once per month, at the DM's discretion) of learning of epic deeds for which no song has been written. This is in the form of rumours or chance encounters, and this provides opportunities for them to meet great heroes and travel with them for a while, earning some experience along the way while composing an appropriate tribute. This sort of information is of a greater depth or obscurity than could otherwise be obtained with the Gather Information skill. Travelling bards may also take refuge in any conservatory they find, and use the resources therein to further their own studies, but they must repay the hospitality by offering to assist in the teaching of any students that might be there.

Further Advancement:

As the bardic profession is rather small and tightly knit, with its secrets guarded jealously, there are very few high-level bards, who are known as *Meistersingers* (those of 21st level or greater). To attain this rank, a 20th level bard must make their way, once they have enough experience points to advance to the next level, to one of the greater conservatories, and undergo a test to determine their suitability for advancement. This test can take many forms, but often consists of displays of musical and storytelling talent, and possibly a duel. The aspirant will be matched with a *Meistersinger* of one level higher than him- or herself, who will administer the test. If the applicant succeeds (the DM is encouraged to run the test as a roleplaying opportunity), he or she will be able to advance to the next level. Those who fail must wait one month before trying again. In the meantime, they may continue to gain experience points through adventuring, but they will not advance in level until they pass the test. This process must be undertaken each time the bard wishes to advance

in level beyond 20th, until they reach 36th level, after which they will become one of the six Master Bards.

Demihuman Bards:

As with certain other classes, demihumans (elves, dwarves, halflings, and the like) may become bards. The notes below discuss the rules associated with each race in terms of their advancement and saving throws.

Dwarves: Dwarven bards advance and save as dwarves equal to their level. A dwarven bard cannot also be a cleric. Upon reaching 10th level, the dwarf may choose either to continue advancing as a dwarf (and thereby he or she will gain the dwarven fighter options and abilities, but will not progress further as a bard), or as a bard (and thereby will continue to improve his or her bardic abilities, but will not gain the fighting abilities normally available to dwarves at higher levels). If the latter option is chosen, use the expanded demihuman experience table provided in the Rules Encyclopaedia, and continue spell-song progression according to the table provided in this supplement, equating dwarven level with bardic level for spell-song progression purposes.

Elves: Elven bards advance and save as normal elves until 10th level, after which they may, as per the rules from the *Elves of Alfheim* Gazetteer, advance as an elf mage (and increase their

magical powers, but not their bardic or fighting abilities), an elf lord (improving their fighting skills while their bardic and magical powers do not advance), or as an elf bard (bardic abilities continue to improve, but fighting and magical abilities do not). As with dwarves, elves should follow the expanded demihuman level progression table given in the Rules Encyclopaedia, and continue spell-song progression according to the table provided in this document.

Halflings: Halfling bards advance and save as regular bards, and will gain the racial immunities normally available to halflings at higher levels, when their experience point total is the amount required for obtaining them. They will not gain the special fighter abilities normally available to halflings.

Lupins and Rakastas: These two races can also be bards; in fact, there are several good kits to use with these races if you use the AD&D™ rules system. If you are using the D&D® rules, then both of these races advance and save as regular bards, and start game play as 2 HD creatures, as per the rules in Dragon® magazine. Racial abilities, such as the lupin's perception sense and *detect invisible* ability, and the rakasta's infravision, are retained. The one-time penalties for these races (-2,000 XP for lupins, and -2,200 XP for rakasta) must still be overcome before the character can progress to 2nd level.

LUIGI'S SYMPHONY

GEOFF GANDER

History:

Luigi Antonio Qualizza was a renowned bard from the Glantrian principality of Caurenze, who travelled across much of Mystara's Known World region in the late 9th century AC, treating audiences of all social classes to his unique musical compositions, and joining parties of adventurers in order to record their deeds – and to gain some treasure, too. So powerful were some of his songs in their raw emotion and imagery, it was not unheard-of for some members of the audience to faint during his performances, or to become overwhelmed by their emotions. Eventually, Luigi grew tired of wandering, and settled in northern Kerendas, where he established a conservatory.

Over the following years, many aspiring bards sought his tutelage, thinking that they, too, could become as famous as Luigi Qualizza. Although he was an excellent teacher, he would never reveal, even to his most trusted students, the inspiration for many of his greatest songs, both mundane and magical. Soon, his students came to understand that, when he disappeared for days on end, and then returned to the conservatory, looking dishevelled, without a word of explanation as to where he was, Luigi had crafted yet another masterpiece. Some of these he recorded in a green leather folio, which he never let out of his sight, and which he never let others peruse.

Over time, his compositions became ever more bittersweet, and one day, Luigi announced his departure, and appointed his most senior student to take his place as master of the conservatory, saying to her, "I have imparted to you all the knowledge that I can share. Your future path will be one of your own choosing." Although no one ever saw him again, some students later recalled, as Luigi embarked on his journey, that he muttered the name, "Marlena," softly under his breath. Although most of Luigi's personal effects were left behind - some of which remain on display at the conservatory today - the green folio disappeared with its owner. To this day, some bards still wonder what Luigi kept in that folio, and whether it still exists.

"Marlena" was, in fact, Marlena de Boer, Luigi's secret love. Descended from an old Flaemish family, she was expected to marry into another

family of similar background. Luigi, although a respected bard in his own right, was deemed unsuitable by Marlena's conservative family, and the two were forbidden from meeting. They kept meeting in secret, and Luigi began to compose his symphony, which he intended to dedicate formally to Marlena once it was completed. Eventually, their private trysts were discovered, and Luigi was banned from the de Boer estate, under the threat of death if he was discovered there again. Frustrated, Luigi tried to elope with Marlena one day, but was discovered by her father, Willem de Boer, who cast offensive magic at the bard, forcing him to flee. Only days later Marlena was married off to a young Bergdhovian wizard, and Luigi left Glantri a broken man. It was then that he began his career as a travelling bard, during which he completed his symphony, which was never performed.

Description:

Luigi's Symphony is a collection of 98 loose leaves of parchment, kept within a green leather folio, measuring 15" long, 9" wide, and 1" thick. There is nothing written on the outside, and the folio can be buckled shut. At first glance, the parchment appears to contain nothing but sheet music, and, if played, will produce a lovely, evocative piece of music that tells the story of a lonely composer who sees a young girl, a veritable vision of beauty, late one night, and who later falls in love with her. The woman reciprocates the musician's affections, and love blossoms. Towards the end, something comes between the lovers, and the bard is denied the fulfillment of his love. He feels cold and lifeless ever afterwards, mourning the love that has been lost.

To a bard, however, it becomes clear that *Luigi's Symphony* is not one, but five distinct songs – the opening, and four spell-songs that comprise the body of the symphony. If the bard makes a successful Intelligence check, he or she will be able to discern one distinct spell-song; four successful checks are required to identify all of them. Also identifiable, with a halved Intelligence check, is a brief dedication in bardic code at the very end, which reads, "To Marlena de Boer, the fairest flower of Bergdhoven, lost to me these many years." *Luigi's Symphony* contains the following spell-songs:

Still Night:

Level: 1

Range: 0' (bard only)

Duration: 6 turns

Effect: Creates a 10' radius area of silence around the bard.

This spell-song has the effect of creating a sphere of silence 20 feet wide, centring on the bard - not unlike the cleric spell *silence 15' radius*. This sphere moves with the bard while the spell effect lasts, and no sounds whatsoever may escape from within it, although those within the sphere may hear every sound on the outside. Any spells being cast are nullified if the caster finds him or herself within this sphere.

All Good Things:

Level: 3

Range: 0' (bard only)

Duration: Up to 1 turn per Constitution point

Effect: Creates a protective circle 30' around the bard.

With this spell-song, the bard evokes all things good and pure that exist in the world, and creates a veritable circle of protection with a radius of 30 feet around him- or herself that works in a manner identical to the spell *protection from evil*. To maintain the circle of protection the bard must go on playing or singing, and can do so for up to one turn per Constitution point. This spell-song can be dispelled only by the *Magic's End* spell-song, or by incapacitating or interrupting the bard for at least one round; a *silence* spell may also work.

The Miracle of Love:

Level: 4

Range: 80'

Duration: 24 hours

Effect: Makes people fall in love.

This most powerful spell-song requires the bard to play his or her instrument for at least one minute to touch the heart of the intended victim and make him or her feel love for another person (not an animal or a monster). The victim who fails his or her save vs. Spells (at a -3 penalty) will love the subject of the spell-song passionately, for a period of 24 hours from the time of the failed saving throw. They cannot refrain from showing their love. In game terms, this means the "bewitched" victim of this spell-song is treated as though they were *charmed* by the "lover" for the whole day, at the end of which the song's effects expire, and their original feelings resurface. This effect can only be dispelled by performing the *Magic's End* spell-

song, or by a *remove curse* spell cast by a cleric of 15th level or higher.

I Am Become Death:

Level: 5

Range: Touch

Duration: Up to 1 round per Constitution point

Effect: Makes people within 50' fall into a coma.

One of the most powerful and deadliest spell-songs of the bard, this is normally used against evil creatures or in very dire situations. By playing this song, the bard makes all those within 50 feet of the bard who fail their saving throw vs. Spells believe that the bard is death incarnate. They start seeing him as a dark, cloaked grim reaper armed with a silver scythe and fear him to the point of avoiding any contact with him (this means they will not engage in melee combat with him). All the others who make their saving throw are simply unnerved by the bard's presence and make all attacks against him or her at -2.

The bard must play for two rounds before the effects of the spell-song take place, then they last for up to one round per Constitution point of the bard without any need for him or her to go on playing; the bard must however keep on singing. All the people who failed their saving throw who are touched by the bard (normal hit roll) faint instantly and remain comatose for 20 rounds minus their Wisdom score; at the end of this period, they awake and realize it has all been an illusion. If the bard touches a person who was inside the spell-song's area of effect when he or she first played the spell-song, but made their saving throw, nothing happens. This power can be dispelled with a *Magic's End* spell-song or by casting *dispel magic*.

Use in a Campaign:

The most obvious use for *Luigi's Symphony* is to include it in a reasonably sized treasure hoard, preferably one that is guarded by a powerful monster that has inspired local legends - but this is not essential. It is up to the DM to determine whether or not Luigi's remains are also located in the same area, perhaps as a result of a fateful decision to accompany a now-dead adventuring party in its quest to slay a feared monster in its lair. Regardless of how it is inserted into a campaign, the symphony is a magic item intended for the use of any bards in an adventuring party, as a means of increasing their repertoire of spell-songs, and possibly to provide them with an inspiration to compose their own.

An alternative way of introducing this item is to have an NPC, possibly a renowned bard, hire the

PCs to track down this elusive compilation. If the DM goes this route, it would be advisable to have at least one PC in the party be a bard, who may have some knowledge of the history of the

symphony, or at the very least have a personal interest in ensuring that it is recovered. Needless to say, finding *Luigi's Symphony* should be the culmination of a difficult quest.

THE IMMORTAL GAME

JESSE WALKER

Have you ever run or played in a D&D® Immortals only campaign? If your answer is yes, then I suspect that you would be in a very small minority of D&D® players who have. Recently, one wet and gloomy Sunday, I pulled out my old, battered copy of the 'gold box' *Immortals Set* and started to reread through the rules for the first time since I bought the set from a secondhand book shop some years ago. I have never run or played in such a campaign and I had to ask myself, why not?

The answer for me was twofold. Firstly, none of the campaigns that I've been involved with have ever reached the uniformly lofty levels needed for the entire party of heroes to become Immortals. The second problem, from a DM's point of view, was the daunting prospect of creating interesting 'Immortal only' adventures that would both challenge the players' imaginations *and* could be sustained through an entire campaign.

The first problem can, of course, be solved relatively simply; instead of the players waiting for their PCs to reach the 36th level, they either roll up an Immortal from scratch, or assume control of an Immortal pre-generated by the DM. Two of the only three official Immortal level adventures produced by TSR, IM2 *The Wrath of Olympus* and IM3 *The Best of Intentions*, (but frustratingly not the first in the series, IM1 *The Immortal Storm*), provide pre-generated Immortal PCs ready for the players to run.

The second reason is a little more problematic. What sort of adventures would challenge a god? The *Immortals Set* published in 1989 does give some limited guidance on constructing and running Immortal only adventures and campaigns. But, as the author Frank Mentzer acknowledges, the boxed set "opens many doors without entering them". Perhaps *The Wrath of the Immortals*, the boxed set companion to the D&D® *Rules Cyclopedia* that replaced the old *Immortals Set* in the early 90s, provides some of these answers? Unfortunately, I do not have access to this product so that question, for the purposes of this article, will have to remain unanswered. The three previously mentioned official Immortal adventures might also provide campaign ideas and adventure seeds beyond the adventures set out in the modules, but I'll also leave those products to some other author to

review at some future date.

One obvious source of inspiration for adventure ideas are the new Immortal level monsters. The *DM's Guide to Immortals* details a number of nifty creatures, any of which could be used as the basis for an adventure, including; Soo (watery time-beings), Jumpers (no, not the woolly things you wear in cold weather, but intelligent life forms that feed on time!), as well as numerous types of Demons. Although these creatures might provide interesting and challenging one off, or a short series, of adventures, such creatures alone are not likely to sustain an entire campaign.

Mentzer suggests that many of the scenarios presented in the D&D® *Basic Set* could be used as ideas for an Immortals only campaign—but on a much grander scale. For example; exploration of the Outer Planes, rescuing an imprisoned Immortal, or finding a lost race. But why play an Immortals only campaign if it is nothing more than a collection of high-powered '1st level' adventures? Shouldn't a campaign about the gods be a little more inspiring than something the Party can do at first level?

The *DM's Guide to Immortals* does, however, attempt to develop campaign themes that go beyond the usual D&D® quest for glory and gold. Each Immortal has a set of goals that govern his or her life and these goals vary according to the Sphere that they serve. However, all Immortals generally share the following goals in descending order; (1) to maintain the existence and integrity of the Prime Plane, (2) to assist, protect, and develop the Sphere that they serve, and finally, (3) to explore and develop the Multiverse. Whilst these goals are universally acknowledged by all Immortals, harmony is far from established between the Spheres. In particular is the conflict between the Spheres of Matter, Energy, Time, and Thought versus Entropy, the Sphere of destruction and despair. Either the conflict between these broad set of goals, or the everlasting struggle between the Spheres, could be the seed of an adventure or series of adventures.

Other areas of inspiration for campaign themes or adventures might be one of the myths and legends from our own world. Fancy yourself playing Hercules or Zeus from Greek legend, or

perhaps overseeing the drama of Ragnarok, the Norse apocalypse? Other D&D® products might also be worth a look, especially the AD&D® PLANESCAPE™ campaign setting which strongly emphasises campaigns about "ideas, philosophies, morals, and attitudes". This would fit nicely with a more expansive and thoughtful Immortals only campaign.

Another option, if a long campaign is not to your liking, is a one-night-stand Immortals adventure. This might be a great way to spice up a stagnating campaign. Perhaps the players can play the parts of the Immortals interfering in the matters of mortals (i.e. the PCs), and then resuming their usual PC roles to try and cope with the chaos wrought by the meddling Immortals? This could be a good way to explain those pesky, but sometimes necessary, reality shifts. Another alternative to an ongoing Immortals only campaign is the mixed Immortal-mortal campaign. Mentzer discusses the possibility of players running Immortal PCs which have secretly assumed mortal *Identities* (perhaps secret even from the other players!) and adventuring with the Party so to complete some higher mission.

You see? The campaign possibilities are as boundless as the Planes of Existence themselves! Listed below are a five sample campaign ideas to serve as seeds for your own Immortal campaigns and adventures.

Five Immortal Campaigns

The eternal struggle

One of the most obvious campaign themes, though the least well defined, is the never ending battle between the forces of Chaos, Neutrality and Order—a conflict where Immortals from the different Spheres struggle (both in the 'heavens' and on the Prime Plane) to gain control over the hearts and minds of mortals. Where the Chaotic Immortals attempt to corrupt the innocent, the Lawful Immortals attempt to stop them ... and the Neutral Immortals, well, they try to mediate between the two. This fits broadly into the Immortals' second goal to assist, protect, and develop the Sphere in which they serve.

The lesser of two evils

An interesting variation on this theme might be a civil war among the forces of Chaos. An evil Immortal upstart from the Plane of Entropy is seriously challenging the current hierarchy's grip on power. Although 'evil', they (the evil powers

that be) have always respected the 'rules of engagement' and the balance between the Spheres. But not the new fellow and his disciples, they want total power across the Multiverse, with *no* restrictions. The Lawful Immortal heroes can't choose sides—after all, evil is evil. They must, however, find a way to protect innocent mortals caught in the crossfire of this civil war which is spilling out onto the worlds of the Prime Plane. Ultimately, the heroes might need to find a way to end this conflict, but how can this be done without aiding the lesser of two evils?

Undoing the damage

A further variation on this theme is a single, but powerful, rogue Immortal who is gallivanting across the Multiverse leaving untold havoc in her wake. The heroes might be charged with undoing this damage, ultimately catching her and returning the renegade Immortal to her home Plane to face justice. But no matter how hard the PCs try, she always manages to elude their grasp.

A mortal life

For millennia The Old Ones, the great beings who created it all, have been dying. As The Old Ones fade, so do the worlds on the Prime Plane. Without a cure to the mysterious illness afflicting The Creators, the Prime Plane will ultimately dwindle into nothing, and so eventually will the very Immortals. This campaign theme goes directly to the Immortals' first and primary goal to maintain the existence and integrity of the Prime Plane, for without it there can be no more Immortals, as the creatures from it, through their own achievements, replenish their ranks. What titanic quest must the heroes perform to find a cure and save the Multiverse?

Cast out of heaven

The PCs have been very naughty Immortals. For their 'crimes' they have been cast out of heaven, stripped of their powers, trapped in mortal form, and exiled to wander across a world on the Prime Plane until they have learnt the error of their ways. Occasionally the Immortals test them, and occasionally they grant the PCs their powers—only to revoke them once they have fulfilled their task. This final campaign idea is not quite an 'Immortals only' campaign, but may be a good way to introduce players to the *Immortals Set* whilst allowing at the same time for a more traditional D&D® game.

Conclusion

I hope that this article is a source of inspiration that sparks many more ideas of your own, and perhaps to even inspire you to consider running

your own Immortals campaign. The *Immortals Set*, I suspect, has been a long neglected item in the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game range, and it is a set of rules that I for one intend to take a much closer look at from now on.

SECONDARY SKILLS FOR OD&D

MIKE STEWART

The non-weapon proficiencies section given for OD&D in Gazetteer #1 and the Rules Cyclopedia strongly resemble 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 of Basic/Expert D&D.

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 the doubled skill costs 25% experience. At first level only, the character has 20 points to distribute among skills. This is one-time only and will set the basis of the percentile for the future.

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.

Table I: Secondary Skill List

- Alchemy/Brewing
- Administration
- Arcane Lore
- Astrology/Scrying
- Blacksmith/Armorer
- Bowyer/fletcher
- Chivalry
- Courtoisie
- Farmer/gardener
- Fine Arts
- Fisher (netting or harpoon)
- Gambler
- Hunter/fisher (hook and line)
- Husbandman (animal husbandry)
- Jeweler/lapidary
- Leather worker/tanner

- Legend Lore
- Limner/pointer
- Mason/carpenter
- Miner
- Navigator (fresh or salt water)
- Performing Arts
- Physical Arts (Athletic or Acrobatic)
- Physicker
- Religions/Rites
- Sailor (fresh or salt)
- Scribe
- Shipwright (boats or ships)
- Tailor/weaver
- Teamster/freighter
- Terrain Lore
- Trader/barterer
- Trapper/furrier
- Woodworker/cabinetmaker

Certain secondary skills reflect the inherent abilities of many of the classes available to player characters in the D&D world. However, any character with the appropriate secondary skill may know a bit about the field in question, but their knowledge is inferior to anyone actually practicing the class. For example, a fighter with Woodland Terrain Lore as a secondary skill has some woodland knowledge but would still be very inferior to even a first level Ranger or Druid in the same surroundings. However, any skill that is part of the character's class(es) is considered to have a 95% score in as part of the class.

Below is a handy table to reference the various D&D classes and the secondary skills that would approximate such class knowledge.

Table II: Secondary Skills/Class Comparison

| Class | Class Skill | Percentage |
|------------|---------------------------|------------|
| CLERIC | Religion/Rites | 95% |
| Dwarf | Miner | 95% |
| Elf | Terrain Lore (Forest) | 95% |
| FIGHTER | Physical Arts (Endurance) | 95% |
| Halfling | Farmer/Gardener | 95% |
| MAGIC USER | Arcane Lore | 95% |
| THIEF | Trader/Haggler | 95% |

SKILL DEFINITIONS:

While most of the Secondary Skill list is self-explanatory, some are obscure and are therefore briefly defined below. Please note that the precise

definition and when/where the skill can be applied is entirely up to the DM.

Administration: This skill shows that the character is proficient with government, bureaucracies, and other such organizations and may be able to infer proper behavior and procedure to interact with such groups.

Alchemy/Brewing: 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, but costs and time to create such potions are determined by the DM. Note that any potion mimicking a spell effect must have the spell cast upon the fluid during potion creation by a caster of the appropriate level with the spell.

Arcane Lore: This skill is all the various minor disciplines any student of the Arcane is familiar with such as Witchcraft, Occult, Numerology, Demonology, etc. It is also useful in the further study of the Magical Arts.

Chivalry: This skill notes that the character is proficient with manners, social mores on their particular level of social class, and how to act among those superior or inferior to them. Public Speaking is also part of this, as is the many methods society uses to segment itself (such as heraldry, Regalia, etc.).

Courtoisie: The skill of Courtoisie is a combination of poise, elegance, social banter, seduction, and all the subtle arts of social intercourse in all areas. Any player with this skill gains bonuses on Charisma rolls when in social settings or attempting to gain another's confidence and intimacy.

Fine Arts: The skill of Fine Arts covers the entire gamut of artistic expression in its physical sense, from design to sculpting to poetry and prose.

Husbandman (animal husbandry): The skill of Husbandry provides the character with knowledge of domesticated or wild animals (specified when skill is taken) common to their culture, and their treatment, upbringing, and breeding. Simple training is capable as well, though more complex training is at the DM's discretion.

Jeweler/lapidary: This skill notes the character's ability with gem cutting, setting and crafting of fine jewelry and the use and appraisal of precious and semiprecious stones.

Legend Lore: This knowledge 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.

Performing Arts: The skills of Performing Arts comprise any method of artistic expression that entertains an audience by physical activity. This can encompass acting, singing, juggling, etc. And the parameters should be specified between the player and DM.

Physical Arts (Endurance or Acrobatic): This ability portrays a character's early life's dedication to physical activity, be it of strength and endurance or acrobatics, one of which must be specified at character creation. Note that the acrobatics specialty is only available to the Thief/Assassin class, with the agreement of the DM.

Physicker: The skill of Physicker notes a character's ability with medieval healing theories and some rudimentary knowledge of healing herbs and their application for minor ailments.

Religions/Rites: The Religion/Rites skill is the equivalent of Magic Knowledge for a cleric. Clerics are already assumed to possess this skill at 95%. 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.)

Scribe: The Scribe's skill is that of penmanship, writing, and ink and paper preparations. Simple illumination is possible, as well as other writing abilities.

Terrain Lore: The skills of Terrain lore denote a character's familiarity with a certain terrain type that they lived in for some time before adventuring (or is the predominant area they adventure in). Only one terrain per skill is allowed and must be chosen from the below list.

The facets of the Terrain Lore skill can cover a wide range of abilities, such as woodland lore, setting small snares, identifying local flora and

fauna, etc. Terrains that can be chosen are Oceanic, marshland.
Woodland/Prairie, Artic, Mountainous, Desert,