Od&dities

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Editorial

As I write this, OD&DITIES 13 has been available for sale for six days, and the results have far surpassed my hopes and expectations. I hope everyone enjoyed the last issue; I hope just as fervently that everyone enjoys this issue and the issues to come.

This issue is centred on the Thief, probably one of the most problematic of the classes in Labyrinth Lord, with low starting skills *but* critically a rapid level progression, far surpassing most of the other classes. As such, in my experience, it has proven a rather popular choice at the table (indeed an attempt to drop it from my campaign has failed in the face of the player's desire to play one), so I think worthy of an issue in itself. Taking from both the GM's and the Player's perspective, we examine in this issue Thieves' Guilds as a campaign enemy, taking a look at the structure and components of such an organisation, and then look at some of the ways a DM can challenge a Thief in a dungeon, and provide him with a true chance to shine in the game.

From the player's side, we examine the best methods of playing a thief, how to play to the strengths and weaknesses of the class, as well as taking a look at some magical items based around the thief. We also have our usual 'Touch of Class' article, taking a look at a new version of the Psionicist – including powers, abilities, and again some magical items. Naturally Mr. B is present also.

Two other important pieces of housekeeping. First of all, there are a couple of places where OD&DITIES has a web presence, although we don't maintain a site *per se*. There is the (fairly) frequently updated OD&DITIES blog, at http://odditiesmagazine.blogspot.com/, which provides some comments on articles past and present, previews of content for future issues, as well as anything else that occurs to me. Come and check it our. With thanks to Daniel Proctor, OD&DITIES also has a discussion forum at http://www.freeyabb.com/goblinoidgames/viewforum.php?f=42&mforum=goblinoidgames. Come and say hello!

The second piece of housekeeping is that from Issue 15, OD&DITIES will be including paid submissions! Details of our submission guidelines can be found on the blog, or by emailing me; the payment rate is two cents a word, payable upon publication. Check first before writing; pieces are generally preferred that fit in with the planned theme of the magazine, but standalone pieces are also welcome.

Yours,
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THE MANY-TENTACLED BEAST

The Thieves' Guild is one of the longest-standing traditions of old-school role-playing, dating back to the first introduction of the Thief itself. These organisations can add flavour and depth to a campaign, as well as opportunities for intrigue for a group of player characters, but they can also serve as excellent villains for a campaign, whether played as a group of thugs terrorizing old ladies for money, to a mafia-style organisation that has whole nations in its thrall.

For a DM, the Thieves' Guild provides the opportunity to place his players against a wide variety of opposition, all tied together in a loose web of conspiracy and corruption; either as a primary villain in a campaign or as a secondary plot lasting throughout the whole run of a campaign with other goals.

The first step is to introduce your players to the Thieves' Guild; at this point, you should also be seeking to give your players a reason to treat the Guild as an adversary, an enemy – in short, you should attempt to make it personal. If the goal of the campaign is going to revolve around bringing the guild down, then their motivation must be a strong one.

Rather than introduce your players to the core of the guild at the start of the campaign, a good method is to start small and build up, working through the various layers of the guild until reaching the hidden Guildmaster.

There are several suitable 'ins' to introduce a low-level party to the Guild, and this model has the advantage that there are a series of pay-offs. If done right, the PCs should be able to dispose of one layer of opposition, with all the satisfaction that can bring, before discovering that there is a higher layer waiting to strike. As the PCs do more and more damage to the guild, the guild itself will have a greater motivation to take on the PCs.

Most of the inhabitants of your setting will interact with the guild at its lowest level, at its 'street' operation, rather than with the higher members of the guild; this represents an obvious introduction for a group. In a city or town, the 'protection racket' is one good introduction, and one which most guilds will employ. Select a lawless area of the town where the PCs have a base of operations, and start having the Guild 'toughs' move in, demanding money from the local shopowners, and 'favours' from the local womenfolk. (These are the bad guys, remember – don't hesitate to highlight this through any means.) Either the PCs will feel a natural desire to help the NPCs they have befriended in the course of the campaign, or they can be hired 'A-Team' style to dispose of the racket.

Another obvious city-based introduction is to have the PCs targeted by a group of pickpockets. After a lucrative adventure, have their coin pouches made lighter; this will immediately set the party on the trail of the people who keep stealing their possessions. Still more – once the thieves realise that they have found some wealthy individuals, they are likely to keep after them, and target them in the future. To get a PC's attention, hit him in the wallet, where it counts!

In a more rural setting, bandits are an excellent tool. A group of thugs can terrorise a local highway network, robbing and murdering travellers, or in their worst excesses, attacking small villages and taking everything not nailed down. The PCs can either be hired to deal with the problem, or find themselves a victim of one of the bandit attacks. Even a well-organised gang of sheep rustlers could create the circumstances for starvation in a poor area.

Another good way of getting the interest of the PCs is to 'play' them, and the con artist is an excellent introduction. A simple property scam is always popular, or some sort of sham betting ring, or even being lured into a trap. You can be sure that if a smooth-talking gentleman steals everything the PCs own through fast talking, they will not rest until they have found him and obtained the safe return of their property.

Of course, another method of introducing the players to the guild is to start the campaign with them as members. This has the advantage that they will already be familiar with many of the aspects of the guild, and will have valuable contacts and allies that can be exploited. Perhaps they are the victims of internal politicking, or perhaps they are blamed for a job going wrong. This method has some advantages, but can make it slightly harder to build motivation; it would also lead to a much more morally grey campaign, with the PCs less obviously the 'White Hats'. (One related alternative is to have the group as members of one Thieves' Guild, hired to help bring down a rival, either in the same city or one in close proximity.)

Simply introducing the party to the Thieves' Guild can take several sessions; the adventure should be structured in such a way as to make the target similar to the guild itself in structure, with a leader operating from a secret base, some internal squabbles that can be exploited, and various minor targets to take out; this is important, as it will give the players an idea of what to expect as the campaign moves on, and some idea of how they should operate.
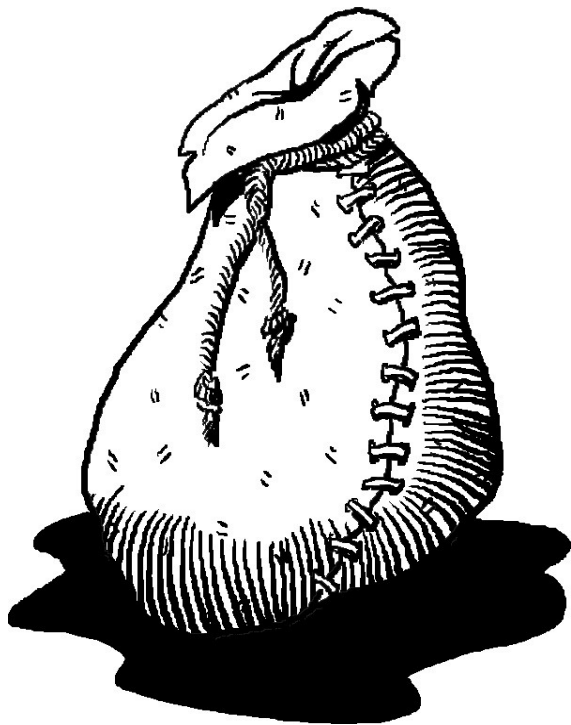
It is also critical to give some hints that this is part of a larger whole. Hidden messages in secret code (what *else* is Thieves' Cant for), signals in the sky, the intervention of other groups, seemingly from nowhere, coming in as allies. If the GM is feeling particularly mean, the group could even break into the secret sanctum to find that their target has already been killed – murdered by his masters as punishment for his failure.

The PCs are going to require clues in order to progress further in the adventure, and great care must be taken to not make them so subtle that they might be missed. Have a few contingencies in mind in case that clever hint is totally overlooked, and don't be afraid to adapt future plans in order to match the expectations of the players, should they not prove in accord with your structure.

A Thieves' Guild is likely to operate as a decentralised power structure, probably in a cell structure, in order to help security. Each cell will be complete within itself, serving its set function – this can either be area based (everything on the East Side), task based (handling the Beggars), or both (the Protection Rackets on the Peasant Quarter). The cells will have links between each other, though not every member will be aware of them. The head of the cell will report to a superior in a higher cell, funnelling their share of the take and receiving special instructions, as well as passing on information, and cells may work together on special jobs. It is also likely that the guildmaster will have his own, secret network of informants laced throughout the guild, creating a secret 'shadow network' that the group can exploit.

Once the PCs have finished with their first goal, they should be presented with a second – the next 'rung' on the ladder in the organisation. This can either be another 'street' group, or moving closer to the circles of power.

One of the early steps the GM should take is to prepare his own grid, at several levels, with connections between them. This will serve as the 'organisation chart' for the campaign, and will be used both by the GM to plan future sessions, and by the PCs to plan their next move; they should be encouraged to use the information they obtain to prepare their own chart as the game progresses.

Sample of a typical Thieves' Guild structure.
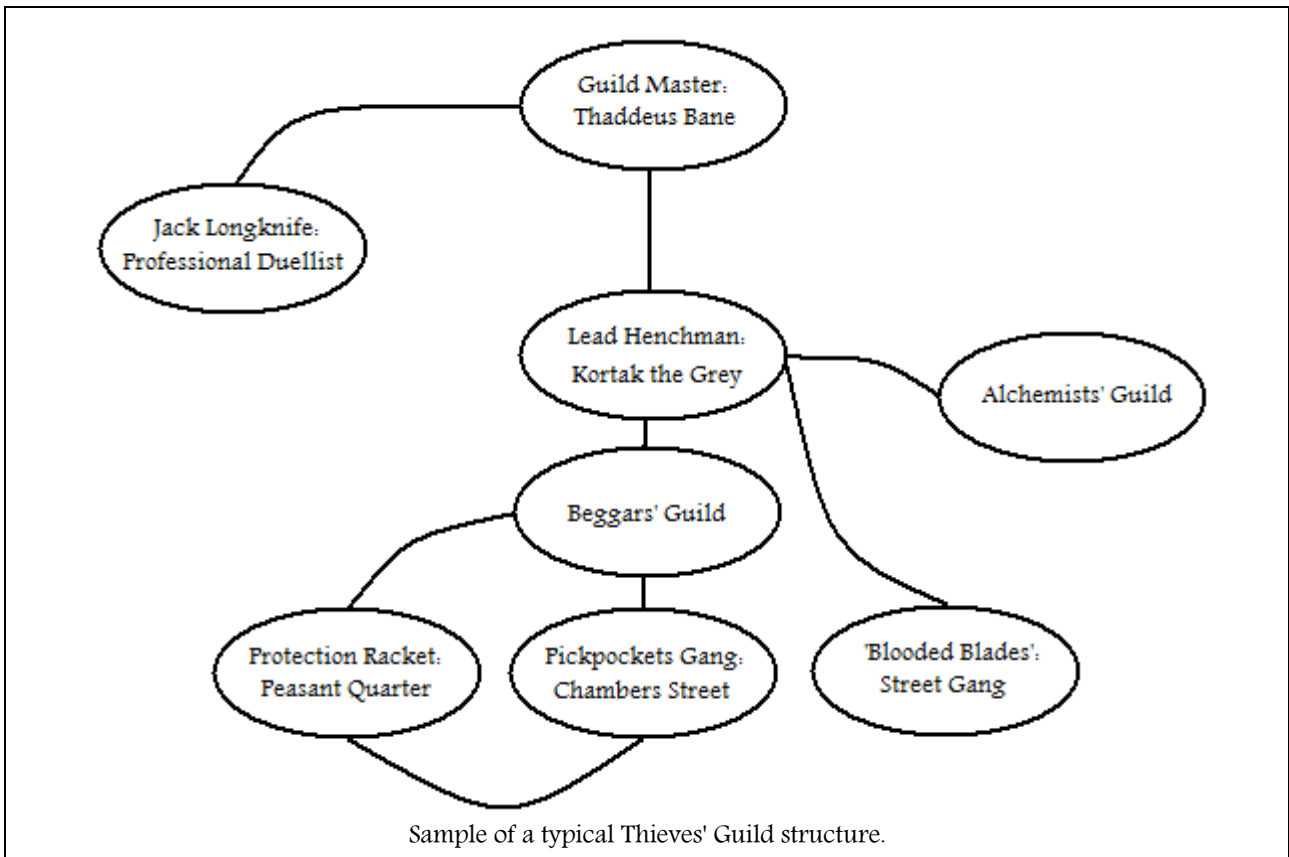
Above the 'street' level guild elements will be a collection of fronts. Only in the smallest guilds will the guild master directly interact with his 'underlings'. If the lower elements are task-based, then there could be a series of area-specific groups coordinating them, or one that encompasses their task in a wider sense. This should be similar to the smaller areas, but (gasp) more administrative in scope. This means offices, possibly hidden as 'false businesses' in otherwise respectable parts of the city, and now means a completely different style of infiltration – simply beating up the gang members in dark members is no longer enough; a literate PC may try and become employed as a scribe, or bookkeeper, or some similar speciality. The group can be harassed through the courts, or some sort of hostile takeover can be arranged. The key here is to provide variety, to keep the campaign interesting.

It should also be noted that the PCs may well choose to not proceed by taking one element at a time. Using the example organisation above, they may try and infiltrate the Beggars' Guild in order to obtain information to bring down the Protection Racket in the Peasant Quarter.

As the PCs move up the organisation, they are going to attract more and more attention from its leaders, and will be the focus of greater levels of hostility. Suddenly they will find that their homes are being broken into, they become a target for corrupt city officials, and their families are accosted on the street, kidnapped, or blackmailed to influence the PCs. Use any means possible to stimulate this; it is all part of the challenge of the game, and promotes strong role-play. The leader of the group might be stalwart and resolute, but it his brother is being blackmailed and his mother held hostage, this might not be so easy. Furthermore, it helps to reinforce their motivation to bring the guild down.

Remember also that a power vacuum will be created when the PCs manage to take down one element of the organisation. If the Protection Racket in the Peasant Quarter is taken down, then the Blooded Blades Street Gang might decide to take on this as part of their beat. Indeed, they may feel indebted to the PCs for helping then take this territory (this may even have been part of the plan, and the PCs could find allies of this type in the Guild structure.) By wary of overusing this, however; the PCs will not enjoy going over the same ground again.

At some level – probably after they begin to work on one of the coordinating groups – the PCs will start to attract the direct attention of the Guildmaster and his own personal retinue. He will not have *become* guildmaster without first having worked his way up the ranks, and will therefore have his own strong power base; he will also have allies, in different capacities. Some of them will control different parts of the organisation, seving a a last link in the structure, reporting directly to him – one might deal with prostitution, another with begging, another with smuggling, and so on. Think of them as Vice-Presidents of a large company, for in a very real sense, that is what they are. They will have their own defences and abilities, and will almost certainly be the only members of the guild who are aware of the identity of 'The Boss'. Depending on the way the PCs worked their way up the guild, they will have one or more of these to deal with. It should again be remembered that they will all likely be feuding among themselves for various shares of the pot – or even to become the next guildmaster – and the PCs could well find allies in this circle, reading to provide information and resources. Remember also that the PCs will have skipped over a lot of the lower levels of the guild in their rise to the top, and these represent a substantial resource pool that can still be employed for nefarious ends.

The guildmaster will also almost certainly have other allies as well, outside the guild structure (in fact, so may several of his underlings). These could be the heads of other associated guilds, with their own political power base, or individual specialists whom he can call upon in times of trouble – powerful wizards, mercenary leaders, deadly assassins; feel free to unleash all of these on the PCs as they attract more and more attention through their work. These can be especially devastating as they will not necessarily be expecting them, though some seeds can be dropped at earlier points in the campaign.

The final confrontation <u>must</u> be an epic one, if the entire campaign as revolved around. The guildmaster will be a powerful individual in and of himself, and by the nature of the job is bound to be extremely paranoid; he will surround himself with an arsenal of defences and traps to protect himself from attack. This can take many forms, from a well fortified keep, surrounded by guards, to the bottom level of a deep dungeon. It *will* have weaknesses, however, and the PCs should be required to do considerable detective work, or involve in many intrigues, in order to find them.

Even once the guildmaster is dead, of course, the game is not over. Far from it – as the bulk of the guild will still exist. No doubt the PCs will have obtained a vast amount of information that can be shared with the authorities, but if anything, they have made things more chaotic, with several faction fighting it out for power. Playing out the aftermath should be exciting as playing up to that point was, though now the PCs will be highly experienced, well resourced, and powers in their own right, and can use these abilities to finish what they have become. Whilst this section of the campaign can be fascinating to play out, it must be remembered that in a real sense the PCs have 'peaked' at the death of the guildmaster, and therefore the campaign should not play on for *too* long after the big climax.

Of course, in terms of the campaign world, there are likely to be other repercussions. Even if the Thieves' Guild is totally defeated, a huge power vacuum will be created that someone will rapidly exploit – still worse, the previously regulated set-up could be thrown into turmoil, with gang warfare on the streets. While organised crime is a terrible blight, *disorganised* crime can be far more deadly to a community.

Depending on the group, this void could easily be filled by the PCs; they will have gained contacts and influence on their way up, and will therefore be in an excellent position to fill this gap.

This of course suggests a possible sequel campaign, maybe years in the future – once again taking out the Thieves' Guild, but with the distinction that this time, its leading members are none other than the old PCs from the last campaign, turned evil...

Magical Miscellany: The Keys of Dolfa

'Lord' Dolfa, a quarter-Elf Rogue from the Borderlands, became widely famous for his conquest and later leadership of the Dark Brotherhood, following the great struggle with the Capthorites in the 34th century. He was well-known for his trademark, picked up in a dungeon near the start of his adventuring career, a magical set of keys. History does not recall the function of all seven of these keys, but considerable research into documents and records of those dark days has uncovered the secrets of four of them. The location of the keychain itself is unknown.

The **Key of Molding** is a valuable, if limited instrument. When placed into a lock, it adapts itself to fit that lock perfectly, making a slight change to the lock itself to render the original key useless. The key is only capable of recording d6 doors, each triggered by a command word uttered by the wielder as the key is placed in the lock.

The **Key of Trapfind** is a general all-purpose device, that automatically disarms any traps in a lock; the trap will be triggered but will not harm the wielder of the key. This power can be used only once per day, and succeeds against all but magical traps.

The third key, the **Skeleton Key**, is perhaps the most conventional. When placed in any lock, it imprints in the mind of the wielder an image of the interior of the lock, revealing its weaknesses and strengths; it provides a +30% bonus to *one* attempt to pick said lock.

The **Key of Sealing** is the last key whose powers are known; when placed in a lock, it fills the lock with the material surrounding it, making it impentrable. If the lock has been opened, it will forever remain so; if closed, then it will likewise prove impossible to open.
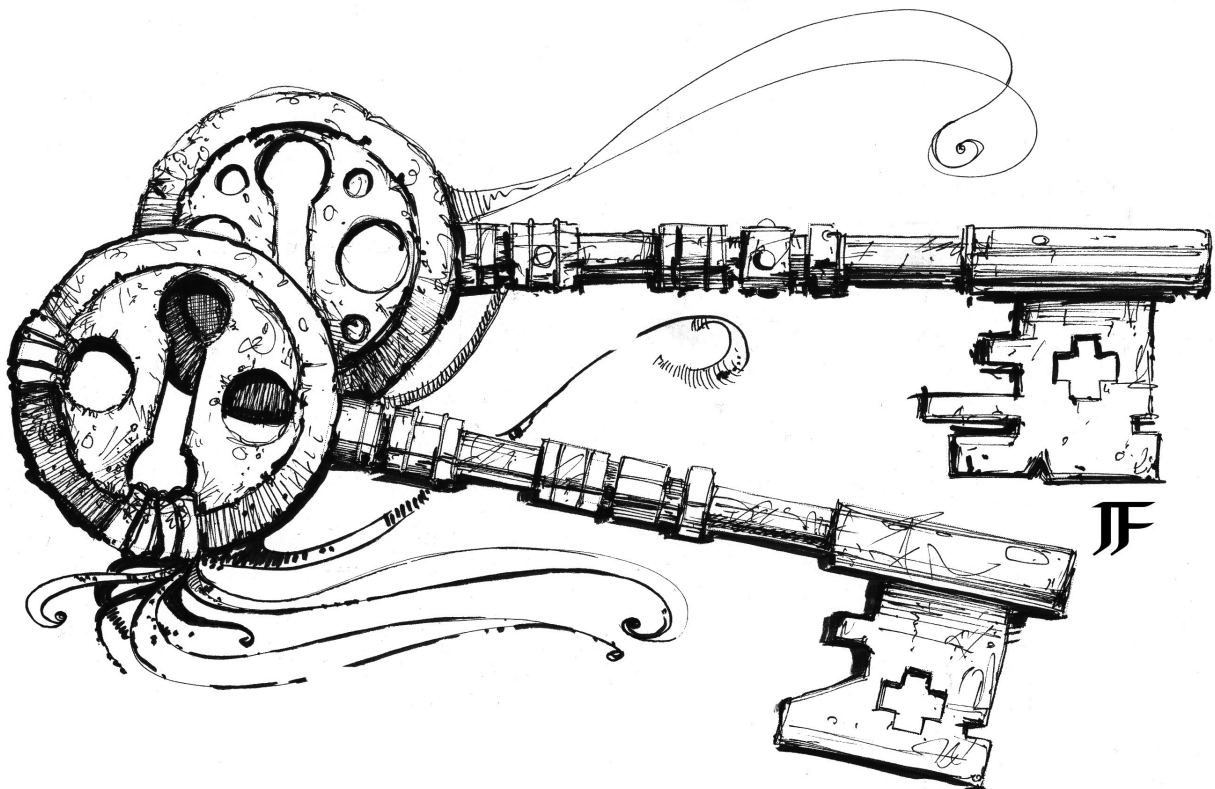
THE TRIAL OF SKILL

Dungeons are a major part of old-school fantasy role-play, and the Thief is key to the success of many adventuring groups that dare to travel in such places. His skills, at picking locks, detecting traps, and scouting ahead are critical. As a GM, this provides both a challenge and an opportunity. Sometimes the best laid plans of mice and DMs can be overcome by a lucky skill roll, and this can make an encounter that was meant to be an exciting climax far too tame, and uninteresting. Adventures in general, and dungeons in particular, should always be designed to allow each of the members of the party a chance to showcase their abilities, and the thief is a primary example of that. This article will look at each of the traditional thieves' skills, and provide examples of how they can be employed in a dungeon to test the abilities of a player, and his character.

As a caveat, however, Dungeon Masters should be cautioned that they should not place all their emphasis on the success of a single skill roll, especially in the case of a thief. Remember that Thieves' skills start at a fairly low level, so it is important to either provide multiple methods of getting past an obstacle. If they require the employment of Thieves' skills, so much the better.

Pick Locks

This one is obvious, you might think – the DM simply has to make sure that there are some locked rooms, chests and the like, that the Thief has an opportunity to pick. If he is successful, then great, but if he is not, then the strong back of the Fighter or Dwarf is required to make up the difference, with poor consequences if the party was hoping to take the occupants by surprise.

Well, yes, this is something that against requires prior preparation on the part of the DM, and is definitely something that should be employed. However, remember that the skill here is somewhat low at first, but rising fairly rapidly, so be sure to allow lots of positive modifiers if you want the thief to be successful, and once again – reward preparation. If the player has his

character spend time examining the lock, if he has purchased additional tools for his character, all of this is to the good.
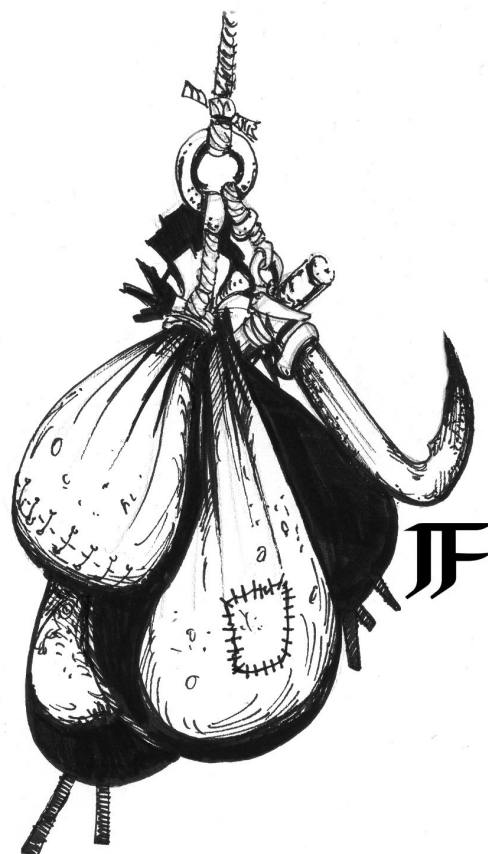
The tendency is often to employ this skill to the exclusion of others, and this should be resisted by a DM. It is often better to treat this skill as a happy bonus, rather than as a deal-breaker; make sure that the party has plenty of alternatives, as it is likely that the Thief will fail, and he only has one attempt per level to succeed.

Try and think of other ways that the Thief can employ this skill. Puzzleboxes can use this skill to be opened; imagine if a 1st-level Thief received one at the beginning of the campaign, and was only able to try and open it once per level to find out what, if anything, was inside. (Though make *sure* that it won't break the game if he gets lucky first time.)

Climb Walls

This skill is likely to be the one employed most heavily by the Thief in the early stages of the campaign, as it is his best skill by far. As a result, do not be afraid to levy negative modifiers for poor conditions or lack of preparation – likewise, be willing to provide bonuses for those who elect to take the proper precautions beforehand, testing walls, securing ropes and so forth.

A good way of making sure that the Thief has a lot of action in a dungeon is to make it three-dimensional. You really should be doing this anyway (only Kahn fails to think three-dimensionally, after all), but it can really give the Thief an excellent chance to shine. Either there are ledges placed high up, a hundred feet up a high wall, with valuable items on it, or whole sub-levels can be accessible only if a thief can scale a wall and secure a line so that the party can reach it. Remember that this works both ways; the Thief might be the only one capable of climbing down a pit to rescue a captive, or find a special object.

Opportunities should also be provided for the Thief to employ these skills in individual encounters. Perhaps a 'big boss' is in a chamber with high ceilings, allowing a Thief an opportunity to work his way around out of reach, or a sharp cliff face is present at the side of a dragon's lair, leading to opportunities for a thief willing to take a risk.

This is one of the skills that can be strongly promoted by DM preparation; there is often no need to telegraph that such skills are available, as a canny player will notice them for himself. One tip – if a lot of climbing is being done, you might want to keep track of all the rope being used by the party. Their needs are always going to overwhelm their actual possessions.

Find and Remove Traps

Now in many campaigns, this is the primary role of a Thief – as a walking mine detector, venturing first into rooms and using his trained eye to spot obstacles. As a result, many DMs use the opportunity to introduce a wide variety of fiendish traps designed to catch out the party. Remember again that this must be balanced towards the abilities of the group in general, and the thief

in particular, and that he has to make two rolls to first find and then disarm a trap. Not an easy task, although it should be considered that simply knowing of the existence of a trap is often enough to avoid it, or at least set it off harmlessly. (Needless to say, this is one of those rolls that should be made in secret every time.)

Having said that, traps are a traditional element of dungeons and dungeon crawls, and can provide impressive spectaculars if done well – a rockfall triggering a roof collapse, a series of poisoned darts flying everywhere, or a spear shooting out of the wall. (Yes, we've all seen *Indiana Jones*. The man is a high-level Thief, I swear.) Remember the golden rule, however, and be sure to provide alternatives. If there is a poisoned dart, then the antidote should be available somewhere, perhaps at the top of a high ledge. A rockfall may need to be climbed over in order to find a safe passage.

Another option is the alarm; instead of wounding the PCs or blocking an escape route, simply have a lot of noise made, which is likely to attract wandering monsters of some sort, but which will give the PCs some chance to prepare to face them, thereby providing the Thief with a chance to try out another of his skills.

Hide in Shadows

The archetypical stealth skill, which a Thief can use to head up to an enemy or scout out a position without being seen. Given the low skill levels, however, it is also one that a Thief will be reluctant to use in a 'victory or death' situation, so plan dungeons accordingly, and feel free to ladle on the positive modifiers as appropriate.

Again, reward preparation. A Thief wearing a fluorescent sweater is going to stand out like a beacon, but one wearing black clothing is going to have advantages. This can be a simple as smearing mud or ash on a face, so is fairly easy for a PC to improvise.

Opportunity is key here. Areas of the dungeon should have darkened areas that the PC can sneak through without being detected, to gain intelligence or information as an advance scout, or simply to sneak up on a guard in order to deliver a quiet *coup de grace* without being detected.

Too often, the role of the Thief as a forward scout is overlooked, often because the Thief is frankly afraid of venturing forth by himself, without the muscle of the party to protect him. This behaviour should be rewarded by a DM, either thorough additional opportunities opening up for a party or directly with experience points, as it does give a Thief a strong chance to shine in a solo role. (Remember that the Thief works best as a solo character; he has skills that no other member of the party has, and should be encouraged to use them as such.)

Move Silently

This is a companion skill to Hide in Shadows, and often both rolls will be required for a successful infiltration. This can be a mistake; it would often be a better idea to only use one roll as appropriate.

Preparation by the DM is again key, if he wishes to showcase the use of this skill. The dungeon should have locations present that cannot be seen, but where a scouting thief could potentially be heard; pipes, or ventilation shafts are possible, as are areas of total darkness; when no-one can see anything, then the other senses become ever more important. Care should again be taken when employing this skill; padded footwear and the like should reap dividends, and bonuses should be given if the PC is able to take his time and more carefully check his footing before proceeding.

Hear Noise

The thief's ability to hear noise is, admittedly, one of the most used after 'pick lock', in my experience. Often a Thief will be the first to listen at a door in an attempt to discern what lies within. This is a use of the skill that doesn't really require any advanced planning by the DM; any decently-organised party will do it as a matter of course, in any case.

While it is nearly always used at a door, however, it is far rarer for it to be used in other situations, but if you think about it, such a skill *should* be of far greater value when there isn't a large wooden door in the way. A DM should make periodic checks of this skill behind the screen, in secret, allowing the Thief character to hear set-ups for a possible ambush up ahead, or catch snatched, whispered conversations that may provide valuable information

about what lies in wait. This can be as key as hearing a secret password to a room, or as mundane as hearing one of the guards up ahead stomping off in disgust, claiming that he has been cheated at dice. Remember to make sure rolls based on the actions of the player. If he and the rest of the party are ambling down a corridor, clanking and chattering away, then this skill is totally useless. (In fact, anything up ahead will hardly need a skill to be able to tell that they are coming.)

This is one skill where the DM can feel free to be a little misleading towards his players; intelligent creatures could well attempt to lure a group into an ambush, and that annoyed Orc might simply he taking the PCs to meet his boss, the Ogre. Don't be afraid of occasionally using the double-bluff, but also don't overuse it, or the group will justifiably feel that they are being penalised for success.

Pick Pockets

A good, all-purpose skill, that I generally expand to include all manner of sleight-of-hand, such as minor magic tricks, palming an object, or of course, picking a pocket. The opportunities to use such a skill in any game session are manifold, and the only preparation that a DM generally needs to make is to have some sort of idea what is in a creature's pockets.

This skill can be so much more than that, however. I generally tend to think of it as the thieves' all-purpose skill, the one that can be adapted to many different situations. Need to work your hand into a small space to turn a handle? Need to hide a coin up your sleeve? A good player will think of uses for this skill, with a little prodding.

Not to say that you shouldn't come up with other uses, of course. A guard could have the key to the treasure vault hanging from his belt, or a goblin king may seek to be entertained by a trickster before he allows the party to pass. Remember, of course, that this is also a low skill at first, so make sure that there are other options, and often it is better to treat this as one that the player must come up with by himself.

Backstab

Backstabbing is the equaliser, the ability that gives the Thief an ability to really contribute to a fight on a par with the rest of the party. It will never be the key to completing a dungeon, but it could well be key to survival in a particular encounter. The player of a Thief will generally try and make this his first action, probably in unison with one of his sneak skills, and a DM should take that into an account in a planned combat encounter. Is it practical for the Thief to employ his backstab skill in this particular situation, and what will be required to employ it.?

In some cases, it could be as simple as a Thief making his way carefully around the rear of a group and announcing his backstab, while in others a complicated series of manoeuvres may be required to pull off this feat. Remember that the one being stabbed must be taken unaware by the attack in order for it to have a chance of succeeding, but this does not necessarily mean that a whole group of enemies needs to be surprised – only that there is no opportunity to warn the target of the incoming attack.

The best course here is to play to the player's planning, and to make sure that you have some level of preparation, which means keeping a decent map for the encounter, along with any obstacles or hiding places for the Thief. He will be likely to try varying methods, such as lying in ambush while creatures pass buy, to fast-talking his way behind the bad buys, or scaling up and down the walls. Remember that this is the Thief's primary combat ability, and that within reason, it is often a good idea to let him pull off this one blow, as it will be very difficult for him to get another in the same round of combat. This should very much be treated as a one-shot deal.

Read Languages

An oft-overlooked skill, largely because it does not start until 4th level – but when it does kick in, it kicks in reliably, with an excellent 90% chance of success. This is one skill that the DM needs to do some work for, if he wants the Thief to use it in a dungeon, but it is fairly simple to sprinkle a level with writing for the Thief to decipher.

This does not simply mean signs saying, "This way to Secret Sanctum", but it can mean directions to temples in ruined cities, tattered pieces of paper with directions on them, or even graffiti scrawled on the wall. "Kilroy Was Here", has a whole new meaning if finding and tracking Kilroy to his lair is one of the major campaign goals. This skill also allows the Thief to employ himself in a somewhat different, more scholarly role, which can well suit a different type of character.

Use Magical Scrolls

This one comes relatively late in the career of a Thief, even beyond *name* level, but it can still have some purpose in a campaign, allowing a Thief to serve as a back-up Magic-User, if a slightly unreliable one, with the right mix of scrolls available.

The key with all of these skills is that they form the core of the Thief as a character class. Without them, then the Thief is a frankly worthless tag-a-long, but with them, he can become a vital member of the party, and more importantly, can be hugely entertaining to play both from the perspective of the player and from that of the entire group.

But it does require work. Quick thinking on the behalf of the player to recognise the opportunities as they arise, and planning on the behalf of a DM to make sure that these opportunities become available. With both, you can run a group through a nightmarish deathtrap whilst having some hope and confidence that they have a chance of survival.

Expanded Grimoire

One of the first low-level spells that a magic-user tends to consider is the humble Magic Missile, and indeed, when first playing the game many simply take the spell out of instinct. In truth, however, the spell is not *that* useful as it stands, only doing 1d6+1 points of damage as a one-shot hit; far less devastating than a 'charm person' or a 'sleep'. If it were the first in a family of such spells, on the other hand, it could be considered a lot more useful, and could even come to define a magic-user in a campaign. This article, the first of a series taking another look at the spell lists, provides an expanded range of such spells (and takes another pass at the magic missile spell itself), as well as a few new magical items designed to work with the new spells...

Chain of Missiles

Level: 2
Duration: Special
Range: 150'

This spell functions in the same manner as the magic missile, but fires three missiles in a round instead of one. These can be fired at the same or different targets; the caster will receive in following rounds a number of missiles equal to the number of successful hits.

Delayed Missile

Level: 2
Duration: Special
Range: 150'

This spell functions as a standard magic missile, with the same effects and restrictions, but can be imbued into any object, such as a door, a lock, or even a wall; it is targetted by a specific event defined by the caster, that transpires within the range of the spell, *or* by a command word prepared by the caster. When rolling to hit with missiles generated through this spell, the caster's ability *at the time the spell was cast* should be used.

Flying Missile

Level: 3
Duration: 5 turns
Range: 150'

This missile, when cast, does not automatically attack a set target, but sets a position circling above the head of the caster. If a threat enters the range of the spell, the missile will automatically fire itself at the target. The magic-user can have as many of these operating at any one time as desired, but all will target the first enemy in range. This spell *will* target *invisible* creatures.

Force Missile

Level:	1
Duration:	1 round
Range:	100'

This missile is a more powerful, and more certain variant of the standard magic missile spell. A large finger-sized bolt of magical energy is fired from the palm of the caster, and automatically hits a target for 2d6 points of damage. Unlike a magic missile, this spell does not repeat.

Invisible Missile

Level:	3
Duration:	1 round
Range:	150"

This spell functions in exactly the same manner as magic missile, with the difference that it cannot be detected by any non-magical means. The target is aware that he has been injured, but is unaware of the reason why.

Magic Missile

Level:	1
Duration:	Special
Range:	150'

A missile made of magical energy is fired from the fingertip of the mage, unleashed at a specific target. The magic-user must roll to hit his target in the same way as any ranged weapon, but taking no regard for non-magical armour, cover, or other constraints. A successful hit inflicts 1d6+1 points of damage on the target. In the event of a successful hit, another missile, identical to the first, may be fired by the caster in the next round of combat; new bolts will continue to form as long as the caster succeeds in hitting his target.

Missile Burst

Level:	2
Duration:	1 round
Range:	150'

When this spell is cast, a ball of glowing magical energy is created by the caster, and is fired to a point within the range of the spell at the choice of the caster. The ball then explodes, emitting 1d8 missiles at any targets within 20'

of the ball; the missiles automatically hit, causing 1d4+2 damage to each target. This spell <u>does not</u> discriminate between friend or foe.

Signal Missile

Level:	1
Duration:	1 round
Range:	1,500'

The magic-user unleashes from his finger a bright bold of magical energy, providing light equivalent to that of a full moon, which can be of any colour desired. This light can be seen to the limits of the horizon.

Thought Missile

Level:	2
Duration:	1 round
Range:	300'

This magic missile operates in exactly the same manner as the basic spell, with the difference that the magic-user does *not* require line-of-sight. As long as he is aware of the presence of a target through any means, the missile will seek out and hit its prey.

Magical Items

Morgan's Magical Monocole

On the surface, this appears to be nothing more than a normal, though rather ornate, monocole; it is, however, rather more than that. When worn by a Magic-User, it acts as a targeting aid to anything seen through it, providing the mind of the caster with a more in-depth sense of the surrounding area. This equates to a +2 to hit, and a +5 to hit with any magic missile or variant spell.

The Pentacle Caltrops

These caltrops are unusual, having five spikes, one of which *must* be placed facing upwards for this item to be effective. When a magic-user casts a magic missile spell or variant, instead of having them come from his hand, they can come instead from one of the caltrops (they generally come in bags of five), as long as it is within 300 feet of the caster. These must be attuned to the user in order to function; this process means keeping them on the person of the caster for at least two weeks prior to their first use.

Playing the Godfather

So your Thief has reached 9th-level, and has decided that the time has come to settle down and find a town that he can make his own – in a very literal sense of the word. Starting a Thieves' Guild is fraught with peril, but can prove immensely rewarding in both an emotional and financial sense.

First of all, you need to pick the right location to found the Guild. Too small a location, and the available revenue will be minute, so a reasonable-sized settlement is a requirement – a town at the very least, with a couple of thousand inhabitants as a minimum. It should be close to several valuable resources, and optimally be on a good trade route; this will provide lots of targets passing through the town, who don't have local contacts and connections that can be antagonised too easily. Ideally, there should not be any organised Thieves' Guild present, as this will lead to complications. (If the 'perfect' location has a Thieves' Guild, then give serious thought to tearing it down before starting to build yours up. This will save complications in the long-run.) In a sizeable settlement, this is slightly less important, but make sure that there is room for the two guilds to operate – and prepare for some early conflict with the residents.

Reconnaissance is critical at this stage, and will save a lot of problems in the future. It is a *bad* idea to pick a location that you have spent time in before – the odds are that you will be known as a thief, and that the local law enforcement will have plenty of information. At worst, this means that your fledging guild will be rapidly rounded up, at best it means a reduced take as people are aware of your nature, and an increased expenditure on bribes. All of this will cut into your take.

A base of operations is a key starting point. In fact, several bases of operation are important. Putting all your eggs in a single basket is never a good idea, and several different locations will help protect your operation at a later stage. It is a good idea to keep as much of your operation legitimate as possible – the less that there is to cover up, the easier it will be. Storage is a *must*; you are going to obtain large quantities of items, and lots of money. The former should be stored in warehouses, and to fulfil this function set up a legitimate shipping operation. To make it credible, ensure that it is actually run as a business – there is no need to actually do this yourself, but you should own at least a large stake. (Buying into to one that is already operating is ideal.) Make sure that there is plenty of surplus storage space that you can use at short notice. To store money, a bank is the best plan. Find one with a reputation for secrecy, and deposit funds there. There are two options here, with advantages and disadvantages. Setting up an account in a different town makes it a lot harder for the funds to be traced, but also makes them harder to access. Setting up one in the town in which you operate is going to make security more of a priority, but this will be easier to monitor. Again, if possible, piggyback on a legitimate business, rather than starting anew, but don't be tempted to just use the one.

Storage for valuable and hard to conceal items will also be a must; generally these do not at least take up much space, so work out several locations where items can be hidden. At the bottom of wells, behind loose panels in taverns – come up with a couple of dozen of these, and make sure to rotate them property.

Just as important will be hiding places. Some of your Guild are going to mess up and end up on the run, and they will need places to hide before you can sneak them out to safety. (Of course, you could simply leave such people hanging out to dry – and on occasion that will be not only appropriate but also necessary – but they will probably <u>know too much</u> about your organisation for you to risk them staying in the hands of the authorities, and just killing them will give you a reputation that you might not want.) Sewers are good for this, or cellars, abandoned houses, anything such as that. Make sure that these hiding places have plenty of decent escape routes, and rotate them, as well.

Most of your specialists will handle their own facilities in any case, and your apprentices should be encouraged to spread out across the town. Resist the temptation to have a 'secret guild hall', even if you find the 'perfect' location. Having everything in one place is *begging* for a group of adventurers to storm in and ruin your whole day.

You will of course need a place to stay yourself, in fact, you will need two places. For as long as possible, you should maintain yourself as a respectable member of society, and can live accordingly. Make sure not to live beyond your obvious means, but feel free to living in comfortable surroundings. You should establish some sort of cover identity, perhaps as a noble, merchant, or even retired adventurer, and shelter behind that.

This will likely not last forever; at some point you will be exposed, and will have to make a fast getaway (make sure that an early priority is to give your house some sort of escape route.) You certainly won't want to throw everything away, though, and start fresh in a new city, so you will need a new, secret hideaway, again, one with a large number of escape routes. Plan this in advance, and you can have a nice comfortable nook instead of a dank, depressing sewer.

Once you have scouted out the area, it is time to start recruiting. What you need depends on the type of jobs you are doing, but to begin with you are going to need a group of muscle – some low-level fighters and thieves. Muscle can be recruited anywhere, fairly cheaply; thieves are perhaps better picked up outside the initial theatre of operations. (Incidentally, if there is already a Thieves' Guild in operation, one idea might be to see who they threw out. As long as they are decent material and not out-and-out rejects, you might gain some qualified help and some inside information.

This is just the beginning, however. If you plan to deal in stolen goods at all, you are going to need a fence, or more realistically several, specialising in different types of goods. Blackmail is your friend, here; make sure that you have something on anyone who can bring your business down. Magical help is always of interest; you may have adventured with a magic-user of some type in the past, and he can be roped in to help, failing that, there are always some disgruntled types tossed out of the Wizard Schools, and they will usually be hard up for cash.

It is important at this stage to look at what you actually want to *do* with your Guild, once it is established. Thieves do more than sit around picking locks and looking moody, and you need to establish the basis of your operation. This will largely depend on the area you have chosen, but there is enough common ground to sketch out an idea.

Pickpocketing is a good way to make use of the local urchin population. Make sure that you use people who would not be suspected, and assign each of them a regular beat to cover. Giving a decent cut at this stage makes it less likely that they will rob you; one idea is to essentially set-up as a provider of training, and a fencer of high-value goods, and let the urchins keep the copper and silver.

The protection racket is easier to organise, and really does not require much work. Select an area that the guards have little or no interest in, making sure that the occupants have *some* money, and send in the thugs. Beat up anyone who fails to pay a tithe. The trick here is to keep the tithe at a level that *can* be paid – too high, and they'll have no choice but to call for help. Actually *providing protection* can actually make this semi-legitimate – use your men to keep the street safe, and keep your other operations out, and they will be far less likely to squawk. This is a business, after all – you aren't in this to be nasty just for the sake of it. That doesn't pay.

Thefts need to be planned out in advance, and that requires a network of informants. Try and pick high-value small items if possible, to make them easier to transport, and it is always best to try and steal items that have already been stolen. If someone does not want to admit to owning an item, they won't report that it has gone missing. Plan routes, in and out, and for the 'front' men, try and use people brought in from outside, rather than any of your own. If they are caught, they know little, and you won't miss them. This is a good opportunity to test those with potential for advancement, of course.

Merchants passing through can be excellent targets, as well; their goods can be moved from one warehouse to another in the depths of night, and they won't have the local contacts to help them find it. You can then either ransom it back, or better still, sell it on yourself. The trick with such grand thefts is to refrain from doing them too often, or the town will start to acquire a reputation.

Prostitution will probably already have some sort of organisation, but if it doesn't, then feel free to move into this area. Be wary of the potential pitfalls, however; this *can* attract considerable unwanted attention. It does, of course, open up possibilities for blackmail and extortion.

Blackmail itself is not a business in itself, but more a support mechanism. It is always wise to pick up whatever secrets you can, and store them for later use; you never know when you might need a rapid influx of cash in exchange for incriminating documents, or a guard to 'look the other way' while you move some crates.

Assassination is generally a bad idea. Assassins work alone for a reason – large groups tend to attract notice, and worthwhile bounties are rare in any case. Rather than running such an operation yourself, retain a few connections within the assassination community, in case there is someone *you* need to 'dispose' of.

Forgery is an excellent ploy, and done properly it can be low risk. Every Thieves' Guild should have a number of good forgers on the books, but think beyond documents and passes, to the world of art. Many are willing to pay good money for valuable pieces, especially renowned ones, and often do not know enough to properly check. Good forgeries will sell. Another good trick is to simply present the pieces for sale at a price that would be a bargain, if they were what the appear to be, but do not advertise them as such. Someone will think they have a great deal, but will not be willing to admit that they have been 'had' – even if they are, you actually then have not done anything wrong.

Con artistry in general is a lucrative field, but more suited to smaller groups. Keeping track of the con artists is a good idea, however, and for a cut you can provide assistance with their work – forging items, disposing of stolen goods, muscle for special occasions, and so on.

Smuggling will require some contacts beyond the town, and is dependent on high law levels. The more banned items, and the higher the import tariffs, the greater demand for such materials. These can be funnelled into a black market, which again can be organised by a creative guildmaster – set up shops, stores, and sellers, but try and keep them isolated, and expect that you will have a high turnover of personnel in this field as they are caught and executed. Related to this is pedalling addictive substances, but this only works if they are illegal in the first place. Remember that these items have to be transported, and that the risk of sale will require you to generate a substantial profit. More blackmail possibilities *can* open up through this field, however, and this should be taken into account.

Don't think you have to instigate every criminal activity – you don't. Rather, you should be aiming to make your Guild the central clearing house for criminal activity, and have everyone undertaking such work paying you a cut of their profits.

Keeping the local authorities on your side is one of the more challenging jobs, and for that reason, many guilds simply do not attempt it, content to work completely outside the law. You *can* choose this option, but there is another – try and obtain cooperation. Bribery and blackmail are obvious goals here, with many urban authorities willing to turn a blind eye in exchange for a 20% tax on crime, that they can keep off the books to fund various secret operations of their own.

More than that, dis-organised crime is far more disruptive than organised crime. If it is clear that you have boundaries that you will not cross, then a measure of tolerance may be available, for fear that something worse will crop up. (This can work *very* well if the 'wrong' sort of Guild is also present.)

A major trick here is to keep your operations at a level that they local authorities can ignore. If you have thugs beating up old ladies on every street corner, then the town guard are going to have to deal with it. Instead, keep your operations at a lower key, and they will be able to ignore you. Do favours for some of the guards, especially if you can kill two birds with one stone when you have information on unregulated criminal activities. Help them catch that serial killer, or find the kidnapped baby, and you will find them willing to deal.

Sometimes, of course, you will find a zealot who decides that he must 'root out all crime' for the good of the city. Analyse this person, and try and find a weakness – then try and break him. Be wary, for many steps could strengthen his resolve, so instead *isolate* him from his colleagues. Make him 'that nut', and he will receive worse assignments and less help. He will either lose spirit and give up, be dismissed from the guard, or at worst end up in a position when you can quietly 'dispose' of him, one dark night.

As your success builds, opposition will spring up. Watch your subordinates carefully, and be wary of them building power bases of their own; if it appears that they are planning a little coup, then force their hands and strike first. Don't be *too* paranoid, but *don't* give second chances.

From outside, you will almost certainly face opposition from rival guilds. In a large community, try and find some way to co-exist, if you can, though this is unlikely. A war between guilds draws unwanted attention.

If it has to be, then make sure that the other side is the one working out in the open, and you are working covertly. You can enlist the authorities to help <u>you</u> if their goons are the ones smashing up the place. Infiltrate their organisation, preferably with people from out of town, and bring it down from within using this intelligence. Leak information to the town guard, or make sure that the local merchants are informed ahead of time if a 'hit' is being planned. (In fact, you could make some money by hiring out your men as guards...)

Realistically, you cannot beat a half-competent Thieves' Guild in a straight fight, but you can beat them in the field of business. Make their operations unprofitable, and starve them out that way. Encourage defection to your side, though have a close eye on any you attract in this way. Eventually you will only be facing a small, hardened core, and that you can take down with force of arms.

If you lose, <u>don't take it personally</u>. That will get you killed. Lots of other towns and cities out there, and you can clear out some of your organisation and start fresh somewhere else. There is no shame in running, in fact, for a Thief, it is mandatory.

If you have everything well-established, then it may be time to think about other opportunities. You could turn legit, and try and obtain political office, either peacefully through politicking and trickery or by the sword in a bloody revolution. You *could* rest on your laurels, or you could set up another guild in a nearby town. Who knows, one day you might control all criminal activity in the kingdom, starting from just one small walled town on the borderlands...

Unusual Enemies

An adventure is nothing without enemies to fight, and beasts to slay. But when the PCs have passed through the meat of the dungeon and reached its big conclusion, they expect to face something special. Too often, the dungeon ends with 'more of the same', with a slightly more powerful Orc leader, a ruling council of Ogres or the like. Either that, or the same old monsters make their appearance at the end of the line, the Dragons, Demons, or the like. This article takes a look at some different options as 'evil mastermind', all drawn from the Labyrinth Lord corebook.

The **Black Pudding** is generally considered as one of the 'joke' creatures; named after a type of sausage, and appearing as nothing more than a slimy mass rolling around the dungeon. Yet if you look at its statistics, it is actually a pretty devastating beast to encounter. Ten Hit Dice, 3d8 damage per hit, high morale; the only 'fly in the ointment' is its low armour class. How could this be used? As the evil 'god' at the bottom of a dungeon, worshipped by the inhabitants out of fear and habit. They placate it by feeding it offerings, to prevent it from coming forth from its lair and destroying everything – this can, of course, include the PCs. How to make it more deadly? Well, it swallows anything it touches, so have its stomach contain a *Ring of Spell Turning*, and a *Ring of Protection*. Not only will this make it a tough opponent to fight, but it will also provide a reward for the players when (if) they defeat it.

From certain parts of the world, the **Crocodile** is regarded as the king of the wilderness – a fast moving hunter, with a tough, armoured skin. Labyrinth Lord provides the 'Giant' version, a fifteen hit dice behemoth. Taking this creature down could be a spectacular adventure all in itself. If it choose to settle by the shore of a fishing village, the locals would not stand a chance, and even a medium-level party would have a difficult time taking it down. By a similar note, Africans regarded the **Elephant** with considerably more fear than the lion; another tough armoured brute with long, sharp tusks, that travelled in packs. With nine hit dice and a 4d8 trample attack, stopping the Elephant stampede without dying would be a feat worthy of reward.

John Lampton found the Lampton Worm to be a worth adversary, and as the **Gray Worm** is present in the game, so can your players. Its swallowing attack can incapacitate much of a party, and only small bladed weapons can be used by those trapped in its stomach.

Simply looking into the eyes of an **Octopus** can inspire fear, and these creatures can prove devastating opponents, especially to a low-level party. In a dungeon where the lower-levels are flooded, or guarding an underwater treasure, it's eight attacks and its ability to constrict its prey can prove devastating – if that isn't enough, then its spray of ink can nicely finish the job.

When encountered singly, the **Pixie** is a fairly harmless trickster, but if encountered in a swarm, a group of PCs can find themselves walking through hell. A foe that can become invisible at will, flies through the air for most of the time, and automatically has surprise. Although the individual amount of damage they can produce is low, a dozen or two of the fiends should be sufficient to prove a great challenge for a party, especially one with limited magic.

Finally, in the right sort of adventure, a pack of **Wolves,** especially **Dire Wolves**, can prove a worthy adversary. These should not be encountered in a confined space, but out in the open, where a pack can hunt and track its prey, keeping it constantly on the move for fear of being detected. Evading detection is not as easy as it look, especially for an underprepared party; perhaps a Goblin leader releases a group of captured PCs into the wild, and dispatches his 'pets' to hunt them down and bring back their bodies...

A Touch of Class:

The Puppeteer

Puppeteer

Requirements: Dex 10, Int 10, Cha 15
Prime Requisite: Charisma
Hit Dice: 1d4
Maximum Level: None

Puppeteers are generally Magic-Users who focus heavily on the arts of deceit, treachery, and ensorcelment, using their magical ability to force others to do their dirty work for them. They use their magical abilities to charm others into following their will, generally against their wishes. The Puppeteers are hated and feared across the civilised world, and often find themselves the target of hostility by the general population; to be fair, the nature of their spellcraft cannot fail to be inimical.

As a variant of the basic Magic-User, Puppeteers follow the same basic guidelines in terms of weapon and armour use, with the same to-hit and saving throw tables, but similarly to the Illusionist (from OD&DITIES 13 and a host of other sources), draw their spells from a more restrictive spell list; many of these spells are generally unavailable to the standard Magic-User. (Though if desired, a DM can elect to make such spells generally available.) Puppeteers begin play with three first-level spells, including the critical Charm Person, the sine qua non of the Puppeteer.

Playing a Puppeteer can prove quite a challenge. The nature of the character's ability will generally need to be concealed from the wider world, and most of the spells available only function at best potential when the Puppeteer has other intelligent individuals around to affect; further, many of his spells only function against a single target. In social-based campaigns, however, the Puppeteer can prove extremely effective. He will generally be accompanied by a selection of *charmed* henchmen, and great care should be taken when selecting these targets to provide maximum effectiveness.

At 'Name' Level. Though there are no formalized training schools for Puppeteers, such magic-users do tend to take on apprentices; a usual requirement is that the apprentice has successfully resisted an attempt to *charm* him. Often, Puppeteers will take over a small community, controlling key figures to provide himself with a place of some safety and security; this can be small villages, dungeons, or similar locations. More powerful figures may, ultimately, assume control of small countries...

Resist Charm. As experienced masters of magical mind control, the Puppeteer tends to develop an increased resistance to such spells cast upon him as his experience progresses. When saving against any spell on the Puppeteer list, no matter whom casts it, the Puppeteer receives a bonus to his save equal to his current level of experience.

Puppeteer Level Progression		
Experience	Level	Hit Dice (D4)
0	1	1
2,350	2	2
4,700	3	3
9,700	4	4
19,900	5	5
39,500	6	6
78,000	7	7
156,000	8	8
299,000	9	9
465,000	10	9 + 1
632,000	11	9 + 2
1,230,500	12	9 + 3

Class	Spell Level					
Level	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2					
2	3					
3	3	1				
4	3	2				
5	4	2	1			
6	4	3	1			
7	4	3	2	1		
8	5	3	2	2		
9	5	4	2	2	1	
10	5	4	3	2	2	
11	6	4	3	3	2	1
12	6	5	3	3	2	2

Puppeteer Spell Progression

Puppeteer Spells

1st Level
Charm Animal
Charm Person
Daze
Hypnotism
Mental Command
Sleep

2nd Level
Detect Charm
Dispel Charm
ESP
Inspiration
Mass Hypnotism
Suggestion

3rd Level
Deep Sleep
Despair
Enhanced Charm Person
Hold Person

4th Level
Charm Monster
Confusion
Lesser Geas
Mental Storm

5th Level
Dominate
Feeblemind
Hold Monster
Triggered Charm

6th Level
Geas
Mass Charm
Permanent Charm Person
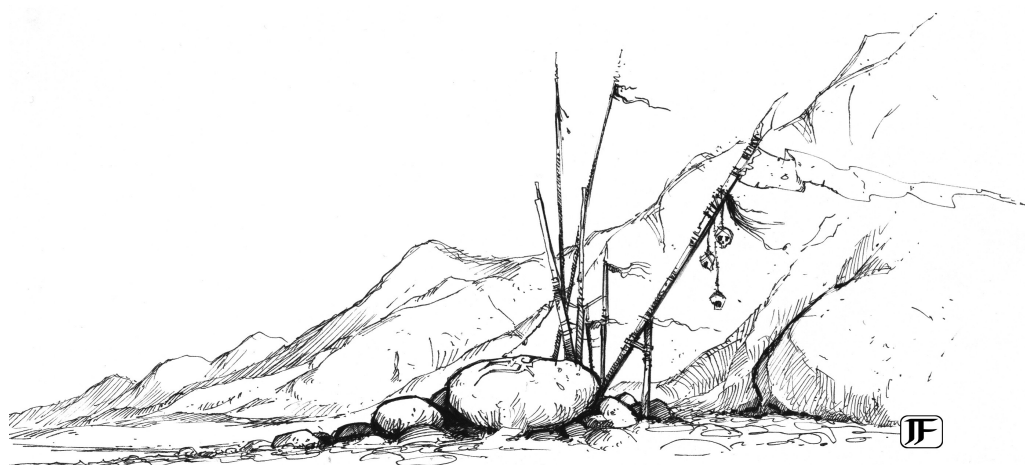
Puppeteer's Lexicon

Charm Animal

Level: 1
Duration: Special
Range: 120'

As *Charm Person*, but affects creatures of animal intelligence.

Charm Monster

As in the Magic-User spell list.

Charm Person

As in the Magic-User spell list.

Confusion

As in the Magic-User spell list.

Daze

Level: 1
Duration: 1 minute/level
Range: 30'

The target of this spell is dazed for the duration of the spell, and cannot take any actions until the spell has worn off. This spell does not affect creatures with more than four hit dice, and a saving throw vs. spells can be made to resist the effect of the spell.

Deep Sleep

Level: 3
Duration: 4d4 turns
Range: 240'

This spell works as the *Sleep* spell, but affects 4d8 hit dice of creatures.

Despair

Level: 3
Duration: 1d4 rounds
Range: 120'

This spell can be cast on any target already under the effects of a *Charm* spell from that caster, and fills the target with a crushing sense of despair; the target must make a saving throw vs. Spells to avoid killing himself. If the saving throw is passed, the target will be unable to take any action for the duration of the spell, and has a -2 saving throw against any future attempts to break the charm.

Detect Charm

Level: 2
Duration: 1d4 rounds
Range: 240'

This spell allows the caster to determine whether any humanoid or animal within the radius of the spell is under the effects of a *Charm* spell; those affected are caused to glow faintly purple, visible only to the caster.

Dispel Charm

Level: 2
Duration: Instant
Range: 30'

This spell allows the caster to make an attempt to break a *Charm* spell on a humanoid or animal. The *Charmed* individual can immediately make a saving throw to break the charm, with a positive modifier equal to the level of the spellcaster attempting to break the charm.

Dominate

Level: 5
Duration: Special
Range: 120'

This spell allows the Puppeteer to take over a *charmed* target telepathically, over-riding his free will and controlling his every action. Whilst the Puppeteer is 'operating' his target, he cannot take any other action. The target can be placed on harmful situations, and the spell lasts as long as the caster maintains his concentration.

Enhanced Charm Person

Level: 3
Duration: Special
Range: 120'

As *Charm Person*, but affects creatures up to 8 Hit Dice.

ESP

As in the Magic-User spell list.

Feeblemind

Level: 5
Duration: Permanent
Range: 30'

Feeblemind causes the Intelligence and Wisdom of the target to drop to 1, rendering the target unable to communicate effectively, cast spells, use class abilities, or recognise any former associates or friends. This spell is permanent, but can be removed with *Dispel Magic*.

Geas

As in the Magic-User spell list.

Hold Monster

As in the Magic-User spell list.

Hold Person

As in the Magic-User spell list.

Hypnotism

Level: 1
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Range: 50'

The trickster makes a series of hand gestures and sounds that have a hypnotic affect on a group of creatures, causing them to stop and blankly stare at the caster for the duration of the spell. The spell effects 2d4 Hit Dice of creatures, and a saving throw vs. Spells may be made to resist its effects.

Inspiration

Level: 2
Duration: 1 round/level
Range: 120'

This spell allows the Puppeteer to tap the unused resources of one of his *charmed* minions, removing his sense of fear and self-preservation; it provides the target with a +5 bonus to all attack and damage rolls, at the cost of a –5 to the target's armour class. However, the target will receive a +2 bonus to his next saving throw to break the charm, and this bonus is cumulative.

Lesser Geas

Level: 4
Duration: Special
Range: Touch

This spell functions as the spell *Geas*, but only works against targets with fewer than 3 hit dice.

Mass Charm

Level: 6
Duration: Special
Range: 30' + 10'/level

This spell works as *Charm Person*, but works on *all* creatures or animals within the range of the spell. The caster can elect not to target up to five specified individuals.

Mass Hypnotism

Level: 2
Duration: 1 minute/level
Range: 50'

This spell works as the *Hypnotism* spell, but can affect multiple targets, up to 4d4 hit dice in total.

Mental Command

Level: 1
Duration: Instant
Range: 120'

This spell allows the Trickster to place a one-word mental command in the mind of a target that he has already *charmed*. No line of sight is required for this command to be effective; this immediately becomes the highest priority of the target of the spell.

Mental Storm

Level: 4
Duration: 2d4 rounds
Range: 60'

This spell creates an area around the caster of befuddlement, creating intense mental confusion in the minds of all those in the area, equating to a −10 penalty on all rolls, and an inability to cast any spells. This spell works on *all* humanoids in the target, friendly or otherwise.

Permanent Charm Person

Level: 6
Duration: Permanent
Range: 240'

This spell acts as *Charm Person*, but the target only receives a single saving throw when the spell is cast. After that, the only way of breaking the spell is with a *Dispel Charm*.

Sleep

As in the Magic-User spell list

Suggestion

Level: 2
Duration: Special
Range: 120'

This spell compels the target to complete an instruction, limited to ten words, given at the time of casting. The suggestion must be worded to make it appear reasonable to carry out, and the target cannot be compelled to undertake any action that will obviously lead it to harm. The spell lasts until the instruction has been completed.

Triggered Charm

Level: 5
Duration: Special
Range: 30'

This spell works as an *Enhanced Charm Person*, but is implanted by the caster into an object, such as a coin, a door, or a lock, and acts to *Charm* the first person to touch it. This spell only works once, but the effect lingers until someone has been *Charmed*, whether this takes a day or a century.

Mʀ. B's Last Word

"It was supposed to be impossible to steal... so I stole it."
-The Riddler

The Thief. Yes – that's 'Thief'. Not 'Rogue', 'Scoundrel' or 'Ne'er-do-well'. Thief. Playing the Thief allows one to act as a Rogue, or a Scoundrel, or Viking Raider, or Robin Hood-style defender of the weak and feeble. When we talk of classes, we always talk about the big four – cleric, fighter, thief and magic-user (I know it was added later, but it was first to be added to the original three), and I hold the thief to be the greatest class in the game.

What's so good about them, you say? Well, in the hands of a smart player, they become a hell of a lot more than the sum of their parts. Of course, in the hands of a Muppet, they are just a dead fighter clone. At best, you'll have seven hit points to play with, and it's a lot more likely that you'll have just one. So why is it so great, then?

In one word – skills. No other class has them, but they have them in spades.

At low levels, as they are, skills are pretty useless...unless you are *smart*. Unless you *role-play*. The main skill needed by the thief is a quick wit. "No, I'm not here to rob you, dear lady – I bring this rose from an admirer." Give her a weed from the verge outside, plant a kiss on her cheek, then amble away with your 'climb walls' skill'. Entertaining antics like this will not only save the life of your character, but both entertain the party *and* earn some XP for your role-playing skills. Put yourself in places where flim-flam is required, and just make sure your flim is faster than the DM's flam.

The backstab skill is the thief's best friend, that which separates him from the mundane fighter. To employ it, he must catch an opponent who is unaware of his presence. A *smart* player will set up a distraction in advance, sneak in behind and make his kill. A *really smart* player will do this with two poisoned daggers, to guarantee his kill!

A thief has in-built roots in the community, in the shape of the local Thieves' Guild. This provides shelter and information on call, and can bring in some much needed muscle to use as a back-up. No other class defaults with such roots.

Thieves are suitable for any style of play, for any alignment – from the Body Snatcher to the Gentleman Thief or the Cat Burglar – who steals not for need, but either for the challenge or to humiliate local law enforcement. It all comes down to how one plays one's skills. How about a lawful thief, who does not steal from people but simply tests their security, or advises architects on safer construction? How about an urban defender, a vigilante who stalks cities during the night and picks off the evil-doers?

OK, so perhaps evil is more your glass of tea. The thief can provide truly smart and fun evil, with the skills employed for swapping that glass of wine with the glass of poison, or sneaking a scorpion into a pocket, or broken glass into dinner. Don't think 'Psycho', think 'Godfather'. Imagine the reaction when you leave a dragon's head on the king's bed!

Finally, don't forget the incredibly fast level advancement, that will see you one or two levels ahead of the rest of the party for most of the time. You will have better attacks, better saves, better hit points. Remember, though – as with almost anything, with a Thief you only get what you put in. That crown won't steal itself from the king's head, after all!