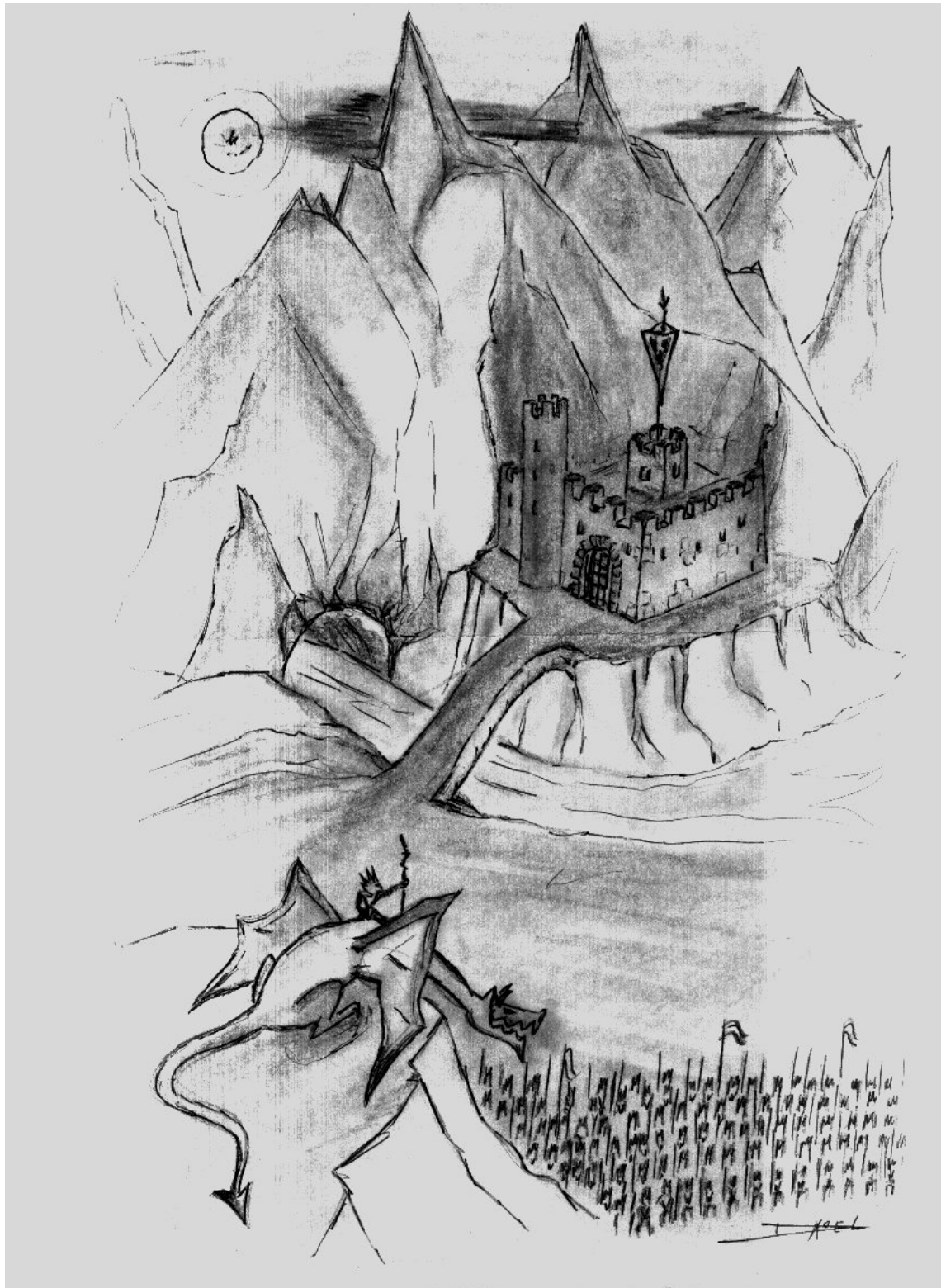


OD & DITIES

THE ORIGINAL DUNGEONS & DRAGONS FANZINE

ISSUE TWELVE

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EDITORIAL & CONTENTS

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Editorial

Well, hello again, and welcome to Issue 12 of OD&DITIES! It's been a long time coming, this issue, and the first of 2004 – this was not intentional, and although I appear to be making a habit out of this, my apologies for the delay. I'll just have to take the easy way out and blame my computer; specifically my email system, which abruptly decided not to work a couple of months ago. We have an excellent assortment of articles in this issue, with writers familiar and new; I hope you enjoy!

There are also a couple of bonuses available, to compensate for the delay. First of all, the 'Getting Started' supplement is finally almost ready: expect to see it within the next few weeks. Also, some of you may remember my abortive attempts at publishing from last year. It wasn't a total loss, as it did leave me with three D&D-related magazines. As of now, no-one is getting any use out of them, so I am making them a 'special offer'. Look on the 'Archives' page for a link to download Issue One of Almanac, a magazine devoted to 3E D&D. It will be available until the release of Issue Thirteen of OD&DITITES, slated for August. (As an interesting side note, that magazine ended up essentially a 'Richard Tongue production'. Three of the writers in that issue were pseudonyms; anyone want to guess which ones? The answers will be revealed on the Guild of OD&D on May 1st – any winners will get, er...kudos!)

There has been a lot of interesting activity recently in fantasy role-playing. The forthcoming release of Castles and Crusades should be interesting, to say the least, and I am eagerly awaiting its arrival on the shelves of my FLGS. Any game backed by Gary Gygax has to have something good going behind it! (Incidentally, while I was writing this editorial the news about Gary's stroke came out – I, and I trust the readership, wish him well and a swift recovery.)

What else....well, the Guild of OD&D is still going strong – if you aren't a member yet, then WHY NOT!!!! Let's get the discussions building up again – though the fact that we have over 200 members is probably some sort of record for a game that has been 'out-of-print' for a decade! (For heaven's sake, someone please license the Cyclopedia and republish it! You'd get sales through the roof – look at Hackmaster!) Of course, technically everything is still available in PDF format; I know I've been taking advantage of the re-releases to complete my collection!

Well, I think that's about all for this issue. My apologies to those who did not get in this issue; rest assured that your pieces will see a home in Issue 13! That does not mean that we do not need submissions – please send them in to the usual address – Methuslah@tongue.fsnet.co.uk . Any comments, suggestions or objections should go there as well.

Until next time,

Richard Tongue

'SKILLS APLENTY'

ERIN D. SMALE & JAMES GREGOIRE

Introduction

One of the more adaptive rules presented in the *Rules Cyclopedia* is the optional General Skills variant (RC/81¹), whose inclusion in the campaign allows players to simulate all manner of knowledge and craft known by characters. While the official list of skills (RC/82-5) is long, it is by no means exhaustive. To wit, we've added some of our own for use in any OD&D campaign. The skills below are used like any other general skill, and for ease of reference, we've arranged them by their corresponding ability score.

Strength

Coachmanship (choose vehicle type)

Those with this skill are capable of driving any vehicle powered by a mount or team of mounts. Such vehicles include chariots, wagons, drawn carts, and coaches (other, possibly exotic, vehicles may exist at the DM's discretion; for example, a shallow water skiff pulled by dolphins). No skill roll is required for travel over standard terrain, though skill rolls are necessary to perform any special manoeuvre, negotiate a specific obstacle, drive the mounts to sprint, or control the rig and mounts under adverse conditions (bad weather, amid combat, etc.). Separate skill slots must be allotted to each vehicle learned, though knowledge in Animal Training (RC/83) grants a +1 to all skill rolls if the vehicle is powered by a mount familiar to the character.

Swimming

Any character who wishes to swim competently needs this skill², which allows swimming movement equal to 1/5 the character's normal outdoor running speed (convert to feet if swimming underwater). No skill roll is required for surface swimming on calm water. However, Swimming rolls are required once per round whilst submerged or in rough waters. A failed roll means that the character begins to drown; such characters are still alive but below the surface. A submerged character may hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to CON (or 1/2 that amount if exerting himself; RC/90); additional skill rolls may be made each round during this time to see if the character can break the surface. Characters who escape death by

drowning are immediately exhausted (RC/88); drowned characters may be revived as per the guidelines on RC/90.

Intelligence

Alchemy (choose school)

The skill of Alchemy is divided into two schools: herbal and magical. Herbal Alchemy deals only with natural materials, the products of which are usually healing salves, herbal remedies, biological poisons, or corresponding antidotes. Magical Alchemy deals with rare and arcane ingredients, usually used in the fabrication of magical potions. Separate skill slots must be spent to learn the methods of each school. A successful skill roll allows the alchemist to recognise admixtures appropriate to his school. If desired, the character may concoct alchemical brews germane to his discipline, though the DM must determine ingredients and equipment (e.g., a simple healing poultice may require only a few herbs and some water, while a magic potion certainly requires exotic components and a well-equipped laboratory). Herbal Alchemy skills are modified by +1 if the character possesses Nature Lore; Magical Construction (q.v.) similarly affects skill rolls in Magical Alchemy.

Anatomy (choose creature type/species)

Anatomy is the study of a creature's physiology. The Anatomy skill may be applied to a single creature type (construct, dragon-kin, humanoid, lowlife, normal animal, et al., as listed on RC/155-6) or a single species (goblin, halfling, gold dragon, et al.). If learned as the former, the character has knowledge of the general anatomy of all creatures within the category. If learned as the latter, the character has especial knowledge of the species studied, reflected as a +2 modifier to rolls dealing with that species, but is penalised with a -1 modifier for rolls dealing with any other creatures. A successful skill roll grants knowledge of a creature's body, biology, and organ systems. As such, this skill may be useful to those investigating organic ingredients for magic item creation; in a more sinister vein, Anatomy is required for the Assassination skill (q.v.).

¹ *Rules Cyclopedia*, 1991, TSR, Inc.

² If this skill is included in the campaign, ignore the swimming rules found on RC/89.

Brewing

This skill allows the character to brew weak and strong ales, beers, meads, and stouts provided he has the necessary ingredients on hand (grains, yeast, water, heat, and casks). A brewer can find ample supplies of such ingredients for sale in any community larger than a hamlet. No skill check is required to perform these tasks. However, with a successful skill check, the character may identify a brew, detect poisons in a questionable drink, and make special, delicious brews (e.g., seasonal ales with local or regional fame, made from exceptional ingredients and perhaps possessing a greater than average potency). As with any other Professional skill, it is possible for a character to make a comfortable living with Brewing.

Cryptography

The skill of making and breaking codes, cryptography is a somewhat esoteric art. Skill rolls are required to devise new codes and to reveal the contents of a coded message; the character must recognise the code's language before attempting a skill roll. A successful skill roll creates a workable cipher whose difficulty is reflected with a permanent modifier equal to -1 per point of skill roll success. When puzzling out a code, the character's skill roll is modified by the code's difficulty. For example, a cryptographer with an INT of 14 creates a new code; the result of his skill roll is 10. The code's difficulty is -4, and subsequent skill rolls to break that code are modified accordingly. Conversely, a failed skill roll results in a +1 modifier per point of failure. If our cryptographer above failed with a roll of 17, his new code's difficulty would be +3. A character reading code he previously devised requires no skill roll.

Heraldry (choose culture)

This skill grants recognition of heraldic symbols and devices common to organisations within a specific campaign region (typically a country or kingdom). Recognition of the heraldry in different regions requires separate Heraldry skills. Heraldic symbols may appear on shield crests, badges, signet rings, religious effigies, flag patterns, or clothing styles (helmet plumes, arm bands, etc.) as may be used by noble houses, ruling bodies, prominent families, political groups, religious sects, or troop companies. A successful skill roll allows the character to identify a symbol or device, which person or group the device designates, and any useful tidbits associated with the device as determined by the DM. Characters with this skill automatically recognise the prominent devices of their homeland. If the character possesses the

Knowledge (local lore) skill appropriate to the region, all Heraldry skill rolls are modified by +1.

Knowledge (campaign lore)

This skill confers knowledge of the prominent legends and lore of the campaign setting—ancient battles, prominent warriors of the past, legendary magical items, old fables and curses, lost treasures, etc. Such lore, being a mixture of historical fact and mythical speculation, is not always absolute truth, and a successful roll indicates only awareness or recognition of something's relationship to the campaign's body of lore. For example, the party might discover a rune-scribed spear whilst adventuring. Knowledge of campaign lore would not reveal the exact (if any) powers of the weapon though it could identify the spear as that wielded by a legendary elf warrior who fought in the goblin wars two centuries ago.

Knowledge (local lore)

This skill simulates a character's familiarity with the history and legends of a specific and familiar locale. At the DM's option, characters automatically gain Knowledge of local lore surrounding their home village or town. Like any other Knowledge skill, local lore can be used to answer particular questions, and a successful skill roll indicates that the desired information is known. A failed roll simply means that the answer is unattainable without further research. Note that this skill differs from Knowledge (campaign lore; q.v.) in that it is more centralised and specific, often concentrated on more mundane and temporal matters than the campaign's myths and legends.

Magical Construction

This skill subsumes the principles of using magic in the fabrication or enchantment of any item (including magic items, constructs, fortifications, and magically powered vessels). As such, it is a required skill for those who would construct magic items of any sort. A roll is required for every major stage of item construction (as determined by the DM; RC/250-5); if the roll fails, the construction process is set back one day per point of failure and, during this time, the character must engage in additional research. Of course, normal construction costs are incurred during the delay. Conversely, a successful skill roll reduces construction time for that phase of the project by one day per point of success, to a minimum of 1 day. This skill is not required for spell research (RC/255), and it differs from Magical Engineering (RC/84) in that it provides no ability to recognise the workings of common magic items.

Mechanical Construction

This skill allows characters to build simple or complex machines, and a skill roll is required whenever the character wishes to invent, build, or repair a mechanical device. When inventing such items, a successful skill roll generates a sound set of plans; a successful roll when building the item means that the device works as intended. A successful repair roll obviously fixes a damaged piece of machinery. The DM should determine the viability of any plan or invention as well as what materials and tools (if any) are required. As a rule of thumb (and, since this is a fantasy game), a device will work if its design and operational theory is plausible. In game terms, then, if something looks like it *ought* to work, it probably can be *made* to work.

Wisdom

Anthropology (choose culture)

The study of anthropology grants intimate knowledge of a culture's beliefs, convictions, values, and traditions. Such knowledge includes an understanding of cultural icons, prevailing creation myth, rites of passage, the significance of various ceremonies, proper forms of address, social hierarchies, and community taboos. In short, the character is a veritable expert on the culture studied; skill rolls are required only if the result would be significant to game play.

Appraisal

This skill allows characters to estimate the value and authenticity of nearly any item of worth—works of art, gems, jewellery, perfume, furniture, tapestries, silks, et al. Appraisal rolls should be made by the DM. A successful check grants a figure accurate to within 10% of the item's value or allows the character to recognise an item as a fake. If the check fails, the item's value cannot be accurately determined; if the roll is an automatic failure, the item's value is grossly miscalculated, always to the character's disadvantage.

Astrology

This skill allows the character to read the stars and interpret the significance of their positions relative to each other. The DM should make all Astrology rolls. With a successful roll, the character can “read” another character (via palm reading, tarot cards, or the subject's “sun sign”) and make vague predictions for the near future (one week per point of success). The DM must decide how such predictions or classifications are reflected in the campaign (or, indeed, if the astrological reading has any real merit at all). Possession of the Astrology skill grants a +1 bonus to Navigation skill rolls, provided that the character has a clear view of the sky.

Camping (choose terrain)

Those with this skill are capable, given rudimentary gear, of camping safely and soundly within their chosen environment. Knowledge includes lighting and maintaining a fire³, open-flame cooking, erecting and placing shelter, some knot-tying, how to use natural features to aid a campsite's comfort and defensibility, and general understanding of how to best live while out-of-doors. No skill roll is typically required, unless the outcome would be significant to game play. Those possessing Nature Lore or Survival in the chosen terrain type may add a +1 to all Camping skill rolls; conversely, Camping grants a +1 to all Survival skill rolls in the chosen environment.

Fishing

This is the ability to judge “good” fishing areas in streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans. With the appropriate gear (bait, nets, line, hooks, tackle, traps, etc.), a character can catch small fish, crustaceans, and other small aquatic life in less than one hour with a successful skill roll at +4. Catching large fish, fishing without adequate gear, or bringing in enough fish to feed a group of up to eight persons requires a skill check at -2 (a further penalty of -1 is applied for every four additional persons). Note that, if the DM deems any fishing area devoid of life, nothing will be caught, regardless of the skill roll result. Like the Hunting skill, a character can automatically feed himself while foraging within plentiful waters, even while on the move. A successful skill check also identifies aquatic life (including Common or Rare monsters).

Dexterity

Assassinate

This dangerous skill replaces the assassinate ability of the Thug (RC/184). To use this skill, the assassin must possess the Anatomy skill appropriate to the target's species (*not* just creature type; q.v., Anatomy). The assassin must also have at least Expert mastery with the murder weapon and be within point blank range (i.e., half of short range for a missile weapon) or melee range (five feet) of the victim. Finally, the target cannot be aware of the assassin's proximity or be actively defending himself (as in combat, for example). If these conditions are met, a successful Assassinate roll eliminates the victim, regardless of hit points. A failed roll indicates that the assassination attempt was somehow foiled; an automatic failure grants the would-be victim automatic initiative if combat

³ Lighting a fire with a flint and tinder is automatic; this skill allows for lighting a fire with raw materials in normal conditions. Lighting a fire under adverse conditions requires the Fire-Building skill (RC/83).

ensues. The Assassinate roll is penalised by the victim's AC (not including DEX or shield adjustments), but improved by the assassin's normal "to-hit" modifier(s).

Craft (rope-making)

The skill of making rope, twine, or cord from a suitable raw material (cordage fibres, hemp, wool, alpaca, silk, cotton, etc.), or gauge the quality of same. A skill roll is required for either function and should be made by the DM. If the skill roll fails, the rope breaks during the manufacturing process or is recognised as weak; if the skill roll is an automatic failure, the rope appears serviceable but snaps when used during a critical situation.

Forgery

This skill allows the character to create convincing signatures or passable duplicates of official documents. In order to render a forgery, the character must have seen, studied, or have on hand an original of what's being forged. The DM should make all Forgery skill rolls. If the roll is successful, the forgery is passable and can be used credibly. If the roll fails, the forgery is questionable and will be detected as such under close scrutiny (the DM needs to define "close scrutiny," though a WIS check by the reader is suggested). If the roll is an automatic failure, the forgery is instantly recognised as a fake, though the forger believes it to be satisfactory. The Forgery skill may also be used to copy unique items, but only if the character has the appropriate general skills to create them in the first place (e.g., a character could create a forged painting if he possessed the Forgery skill and the Art (painting) skill).

Juggling

This skill gives the character the ability to juggle three, four, or five similarly sized objects in the air without the need for a skill check. If juggling six or more objects, unbalanced or differently sized items, or flaming matter of any sort, a skill roll is required.

Profession (Gem smith/Jeweller)

This skill provides the basic knowledge required of any gem smith or jeweller (while the former cuts and polishes gems and the latter sets gems into jewellery, they are combined into one skill for simplicity). If performing routine work (e.g., gem cleaning, jewellery repair, etc.), no skill roll is required. However, when cutting an uncut stone, the smith must make a skill roll and the DM should consult the Variable Gem Size and Quality Table (RC/226). If the skill roll is successful, the gem moves up one row in quality (e.g., from "Fairly good" to "Good"); if the roll is

unsuccessful, the gem's quality is degraded one class (at the DM's option, a natural 20 renders the gem's quality "Very poor," while a natural 1 indicates a gem of "Very good" quality). If fashioning a piece of jewellery, the jeweller's skill roll affects the piece's value on the Jewellery Value Table (RC/227): each point of success grants a +5%, while each point of failure subtracts 7%. Possession of this skill grants a +1 to all Appraisal (q.v.) rolls for gems and jewellery.

Rope Use

This skill is useful for anyone wielding rope in any capacity. It allows the character to tie and untie knots or perform difficult or trick manoeuvres (e.g., accurately tossing a grappling hook or lassoing a (non-combative) target). Each point of success or failure on a skill roll equates to a +1/-1 modifier to all other rope-related skill checks (i.e., Engineering (when rope is used in construction), Escape, and Snares). The same modifier negatively affects any other attempt to work against the character's knots. For example, if a character ties a knot in a construction project and fails by three points, any subsequent Engineering roll is made at a -3 penalty; conversely, if a character ties up a prisoner and makes his skill roll by two, the prisoner's Escape skill roll is modified by -2.

Trick Shot (choose weapon)

A character with the Trick Shot skill may perform "stunt" or seemingly impossible shots with a particular weapon. Trick shots are possible only with the short bow, throwing knife, dagger, dart, light crossbow, or whip (other missile weapons are either too heavy or unwieldy to allow trick shot techniques). Separate Trick Shot skills must be developed for each weapon studied. This skill is not a combat proficiency, and does not provide any bonuses when fighting. Trick shots are normally made from within 15 feet and are impossible amid major distractions (e.g., noise, lights, and movement). Examples of trick shots include hitting a bull's-eye, cutting a candle, knocking an apple off of a volunteer's head, etc. A standard penalty of -1 per two feet above the maximum safe distance of 15 feet should be applied to all skill checks. In addition, the DM can apply a penalty of from -1 to -10 to simulate the shot's difficulty (-1 for a tiny object, -10 for a buzzing insect, for example). The DM may allow characters without this skill to attempt trick shots, though such require a successful DEX check at a -4 penalty and are limited to a range of ten feet.

Constitution

Profession (Sailor)

This skill includes all of the basic knowledge required of a crewman aboard a sailing vessel, though it does not include the ability to pilot or navigate a ship, nor does it assume the character's ability to swim (q.v., Swimming). No skill checks are required unless performing duties under adverse conditions (e.g., bad weather, under attack, whilst sinking, et al.). Successful skill rolls simply mean that the task is performed properly. At the DM's option, separate skill slots may be required for different vessel categories (cf., Piloting skill, RC/85).

Charisma

Acquisition

This represents a character's skill in finding (but not necessarily obtaining), hard-to-find items through the use of unnamed contacts, fences, and influence; as implied, this skill is suited to thieves and best used in urban environments where the potential to find all manner of commodities is relatively high (the DM may wish to modify skill rolls based on the size of the population or proximity to avenues of trade and commerce). With a successful skill roll, the character knows who to talk to or where to go in order to find a particular rare or exotic item. Another skill roll allows the character to favourably negotiate an asking price, request specific quantities, schedule a meeting to deliver the goods, or get passed on to superior contact—all while retaining anonymity. Dungeon Masters must strictly enforce the scope of this skill: a successful skill roll **does not** automatically conjure up the item desired; it simply provides favourable leads toward obtaining that item. Possession of Etiquette or Streetwise (qq.v.) improves use of this skill by +1 when employed in appropriate circles.

Etiquette

Those possessing this skill are knowledgeable in the proper forms of address and social behaviour when amongst those of rank or nobility. A successful skill roll allows the character to interact appropriately with persons above his station, use correct titles, demonstrate social niceties, and adequately participate in appealing conversation. Skill rolls are typically made upon initial introductions; subsequent rolls are made whenever the DM feels it necessary (when discussing, for example, a sensitive subject). Failed rolls indicate that the character has committed some social gaffe or breach of protocol; at best, he will be politely shunned or, at worst, he will be accused of delivering a significant insult.

Rumour

This skill allows the character to extract rumours from conversation by piecing together seemingly disparate bits of knowledge overheard from those around him. When used passively, the character gleans one rumour for each point of skill roll success while within earshot of or amid general conversation (e.g., a tavern, marketplace, courthouse, etc.). If used actively, the character may use the skill by keeping an ear open for rumours about a particular topic, individual, date, circumstance, event, or location. Active use skill rolls are negatively modified by the specificity of the information desired (DM discretion). Note that this skill does nothing to gauge the veracity of a given rumour, and it is up to the character to use other means to determine which rumours are true and which are false. Possession of Etiquette or Streetwise (qq.v.) improves use of this skill by +1 when employed in appropriate circles.

Streetwise

Knowledge of this skill allows a character to carouse with and gather information from elements of the campaign's underworld (street toughs, urchins, beggars, and other seedy types). A successful skill roll indicates favourable reactions from such persons, the correct use of "street" terminology and slang, and recognition of underworld protocol. Skill rolls are typically made upon initial introductions to a particular figure; subsequent rolls are made whenever the DM feels it necessary (when the character's trustworthiness, for example, comes in to question). Failed rolls signify, at best, that the character is not accepted or trusted or, at worst, that the character will be set up by some sleazy contact with whom he is engaged.

Conclusion

While the roster above is by no means a complete appendix to those presented in the *Rules Cyclopaedia*, it does suggest some of the directions that new skills in the campaign can take. Try adapting these skills to your campaign and make them available to characters. If there's an interest amongst your players, feel free to develop more in the same vein. General skills such as these are just another way to enrich your campaign and empower the characters therein.

THE SHEPHERD

KENNETH BAILEY

Prime Requisite: Wisdom

Other Requirements: Minimum 13 Strength, 10 Dexterity, 13 Charisma

Experience Bonus: 5% for Wisdom 13-15, 10% for Wisdom 16-18

Hit Points: Starting at 10th level +2 hit points per level, no Constitution bonus applies

Maximum Level: 36

Armor: None heavier than Studded Leather, no shield allowed

Weapons: Blunt Weapons, All Ranged Weapons, No Bladed weapons except daggers and knives

Special Abilities: Wrestling, Songs, Climb Walls, Herbology, Carry Heavy Burden, Tracking, Calling, Mimicry, Hiding

Restrictions and Abilities:

Weapons:
Shepherds may not use sword or other bladed weapons, except for daggers, knives and small hand axes (hatchets) or throwing axes. Shepherds have natural proficiencies with the staff and sling and gain a +2 bonus to hit with the sling and a the possibility of a critical hit (doing escalating damage as the shepherd gains levels) with either the sling or staff. (See chart below.)

Restrictions:
Shepherds tend to be loners and prefer the outdoors and their herds to people and cities. Shepherds will frequently work together when the work demanded requires it, but they infrequently request the assistance of other classes, preferring to stay "in house." Due to their isolationism, shepherds have learned to take care of most of their own needs by mastering several skills usually reserved for other classes. Shepherds have special healing abilities, fighting capabilities, and the ability to use songs to manipulate others (for their good or bad!)

Spells and Magic Item Use:

Shepherds do not use spells, nor do their abilities come from "magical" or "prayerful" sources. The Shepherd's abilities are based in practical skills passed down from shepherd to shepherd over time.

Shepherds may use any magic items normally usable by fighters of comparable attributes.

Special Abilities:

Wrestling:

Shepherds excel in unarmed combat, specifically in wrestling. It is not uncommon to find a shepherd wrestling a wild beast, such as a bear, wolf or big cat. When wrestling, shepherds have special bonuses and abilities as detailed below. In addition to wrestling, shepherds are well-trained in unarmed combat and have special abilities similar to those of mystics in fighting, but it takes much longer to reach Mystic-type damage and special "abilities".

Singing:

Due to their solitary existence shepherding animals, shepherds have learned how to manipulate song and music to affect others. All creatures of rudimentary intelligence and above which can hear or feel the vibration of the shepherd's music can be affected by the shepherds' songs. Songs need only be learned once to be used. A shepherd may use each song he knows an unlimited amount of times per day (within the limits of time); however, the each song's effects can only be used on the same creature once per day. Some songs require musical accompaniment to be effective, and all songs increase in effectiveness with the use of a musical instrument.

Climb Walls:

Because shepherds must spend much time in the wilderness tending their charges, they are sometimes required to climb difficult terrain and steep walls in fulfilling their duty. This ability is the same as that of a thief of comparable level.

Herbology:

Unlike a Cleric's supernatural gifting of healing, shepherds are trained in the art of herbology. They train to recognize various plants and their uses for healing and other

purposes, including poison, infravision, invisibility to animals, etc. Shepherds must learn these various skills individually in order to use them and can use them up to three times per day with success rate depending on level and circumstances (i.e. inclement weather, terrain, combat, etc.).

Carry Heavy Burden:

Shepherds often must carry extremely heavy burdens such as a wounded animal while out in the field. Their ability to "Carry Heavy Burdens" increases with their level and is proportionate to their strength. In addition to the normal weight limit for someone of their height and strength, shepherds gain the ability to carry x times their strength in encumbrance in addition relative to their level.

Tracking:

Shepherds may track others with varying degrees of success. Animals of his flock and party members may be tracked with little chance of error; however, enemies and higher level PCs and monsters can are much more difficult to track. Certain conditions also limit the chance of success for tracking. The only way for a shepherd to have a zero percent chance of tracking his target is for magic to be used in the escape through flight, levitation, or a wish; although, it is possible for a shepherd to pick up the trail again if given the right circumstances.

Calling:

Shepherds can, once per day, call any number of low-intelligence animals to him no greater in Hit Dice than his own. A Lawful shepherd can summon up to his Hit Dice in animals of Lawful alignment, half his Hit Dice of Neutral, and one-quarter Hit Dice of Chaotic. For a Chaotic shepherd the situation would be reversed, and for a Neutral shepherd, he would only be able to call one-quarter of Lawful or Chaotic animals. Only one alignment type will be called and the animals called will serve the shepherd for 1 turn per level of the shepherd then depart. The shepherd can only communicate in very rudimentary ways with the animals unless he employs a song or mimicry in order to communicate with them.

Mimicry:

A shepherd may mimic the sound of any animal of equal or lower Hit Dice than the shepherd in order to catch that animal's attention. This ability allows the shepherd to communicate

very basic commands to each animal communicated to. This ability may only be used on one type of animal per day, but may be used repeatedly on the same type of animal. If the communication fails (varies per level of shepherd), then the creature will attack the shepherd if it is not of the same alignment; otherwise it will ignore the any further attempts for 3 rounds.

Hiding:

Similar to a Halfling's ability to hide, Shepherds may also hide out in the open or in dark areas. The chance for success depends upon level, but even a low-level shepherd has a good chance at success.

| Level | XP |
|-------|---------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 3000 |
| 3 | 6000 |
| 4 | 12000 |
| 5 | 24000 |
| 6 | 48000 |
| 7 | 96000 |
| 8 | 150000 |
| 9 | 300000 |
| 10 | 450000 |
| 11 | 600000 |
| 12 | 750000 |
| 13 | 900000 |
| 14 | 1050000 |
| 15 | 1200000 |
| 16 | 1350000 |
| 17 | 1500000 |
| 18 | 1650000 |
| 19 | 1800000 |
| 20 | 1950000 |
| 21 | 2100000 |
| 22 | 2250000 |
| 23 | 2400000 |
| 24 | 2550000 |
| 25 | 2700000 |
| 26 | 2850000 |
| 27 | 3000000 |
| 28 | 3150000 |
| 29 | 3300000 |
| 30 | 3450000 |
| 31 | 3600000 |
| 32 | 3750000 |
| 33 | 3900000 |
| 34 | 4050000 |
| 35 | 4200000 |
| 36 | 4350000 |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | | | | | | |
| 2 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 3 | 2 | | | | | | |
| 4 | 2 | 1 | | | | | |
| 5 | 2 | 2 | | | | | |
| 6 | 4 | 3 | | | | | |
| 7 | 4 | 3 | 1 | | | | |
| 8 | 4 | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| 9 | 4 | 4 | 3 | | | | |
| 10 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | | | |
| 11 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | | | |
| 12 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | | | |
| 13 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 1 | | |
| 14 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 2 | | |
| 15 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | | |
| 16 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 1 | |
| 17 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | |
| 18 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | |
| 19 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | |
| 20 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | |
| 21 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 22 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 23 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 24 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 25 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 26 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| 27 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| 28 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| 29 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| 30 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 31 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 32 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| 33 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| 34 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| 35 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| 36 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |

Shepherd Songs and Herbology

Shepherd Songs affect only those who can hear the music. It is not necessary to understand the words. Of creatures that can hear the song, only non-intelligent creatures are immune to the songs effects. Songs only affect those with Hit Dice equal to or lower than the Shepherd, unless the "victim(s)" choose to allow the song to affect him(them). Duration of the songs varies per song, but generally the duration lasts a specified time after the song ends (1d6 rounds or x rounds per x levels of the shepherd.)

Shepherd Songs are not magic, but the "victim" may make a saving throw to avoid or reduce the effect of the Shepherd Song. Members of the Shepherd's party can be adversely affected by Shepherd Songs which are not selective like magic. They may make saving throws with a +4 bonus however, since the Shepherd does not want to entrance his co-workers. (NOTE: The DM may choose to ignore the susceptibility of party members for convenience sake at his discretion.)

Unlike spells, songs must only be memorized once by the shepherd in order to be used repeatedly. Songs may be used any number of times each day. A spell may only be used once a day per victim, and only one song may affect a creature at one time. Songs cannot be combined for effect on a single creature. The lingering effects of the songs only last until another song is sung. At that point only the effects of the new song are valid -- with the possible exception of the Song of Love.

Because Shepherds are not relying on magic or prayer, but on training for their special effects afforded by their singing, they face a higher risk of failure in their singing. If they fail to sing correctly, their attempt to influence through music fails, and the hearers simply notice the shepherd's attempt at entertainment. Shepherds begin with a 50% chance of success and gain 5% per level thereafter. This will put a 36th level shepherd at 230% chance of success, but other factors may combine to limit his ability, such as inclement weather, lack of an instrument (-25%), background noise, etc. No matter the shepherd's % of success, a roll of 00 results in a failure. Some songs have an inherent difficulty greater than other songs, and these are discussed within the individual descriptions.

When using a musical instrument, the Shepherd must use both hands and is unable to wield a weapon while playing. If the Shepherd is in combat with his party, he automatically forfeits

initiative while playing. It takes one round for the Shepherd to put up his instrument and grab his weapon, unless he discards the instrument, which may result in it being broken (33% of the time roll 1-2 on 1d6). If the instrument is broken it is unusable until repaired. The Shepherd may attempt repair with a 15 % chance of success. He may only attempt to repair it three times. If he fails a third time, the instrument becomes unsalvageable.

Shepherd songs do not require a musical instrument in order to be effective, but the victim gains a +4 bonus vs. Rod/Staff/Spell if the Shepherd does not use a musical instrument. "Victims" may only be affected by a specific song from the same Shepherd once per day regardless of the initial response to the song. Shepherds may sing each song known up to three times per day, but they have no effect on the same individual more than once per day. The Shepherd is not affected by his own songs and receives no bonus from them for his own combat.

Shepherd Songs

Peace

Creates an aura of peace within the sound of the Shepherd's voice. Party members gain initiative in combat, while enemies must make a saving throw vs spells to avoid surrendering to the party. If the enemy is attacked during the duration of the song, he will resume fighting and cannot be subject to the song for a 24-hour period.

Charm Animal

The Shepherd can use this song to beguile animals of less hit dice than himself. The total hit dice may not exceed twice the number of hit dice of the shepherd for the animals that are affected. Animals that are charmed will follow the shepherd and perform rudimentary tasks as their intelligence allows including defending the Shepherd or guarding areas he requests guarded. The effects of the song last for 1 turn per level of the shepherd.

Charm Person

Similar to the Magic-User spell of the same name, the victim must make a saving throw vs Spells to avoid being charmed. Once charmed the victim will do anything the shepherd requests aside from those things the victim finds morally objectionable. The effects of the song will last for 1d6 turns +1 turn per level of the Shepherd.

Intelligence/Duration

3/+30 days

4-6/+15 days

7-8/+8 days

9-12/normal

13-15/-8 turns (minimum 1 turn)

16-17/- 15 turns (minimum 1 turn)

18/-30 turns (minimum 1 turn)

Members of the shepherd's party gain +4 bonus to saving throw vs. spells to avoid.

Charm Monster

Similar to Charm Person and Charm Animal, this spell will affect Enchanted Creatures and other monsters not considered to be persons or animals. The Shepherd can affect up to his hit dice in monsters but may not exceed a total over his own hit dice/level.

Bless

Similar to the Clerical spell of the same name, this song gives a +1 bonus to morale, to hit, and damage rolls for party members. Enemies hearing the song receive the same benefit unless the Shepherd makes a saving throw vs Spells.

Self-Control

The song for self-control causes all members of the Shepherd's party to gain control of their thoughts and actions. This spell counteracts the effects of charms upon party members. This includes Charm spells, Geas, Quest, and illusory spells. The song will not counteract the spells of a caster with greater hit dice than the shepherd. Enemies who hear this song, afraid of the party's newfound determination, must make a saving throw vs Spells or run in fear from the party for 1d6 rounds.

Joy

This song provides the hearers with a sense of overwhelming joy. Because of their ecstasy, party members' morale will be boosted by +3, skills which require a percentage check will have a +15% chance of success, and party members will regenerate 1 hp per round during the duration of the song's effect (one round per two levels of the Shepherd).

Enemies hearing the song receive the same benefit unless the Shepherd makes a saving throw vs Spells.

Thrive

Sometimes adversity makes people stronger. This song makes the party members want to work harder in its adverse conditions and overcome any obstacles that may be obstructing them in their mission. Hearers receive a +2 bonus to all saving throws during the duration of this song's effect. Enemies hearing the song receive the same benefit unless the Shepherd makes a saving throw vs Spells.

Excitement

"It's all fun and games until someone pokes an eye out." This song causes its hearers to get themselves into an excited frenzy. They gain the initiative but have a -2 penalty to hit, damage and a -1 to all saving throws during the song's duration. Members of the shepherd's party gain a +4 bonus to their saving throws to avoid this song's effects.

Boredom

Those who hear this song become overwhelmed with a sense of laziness and uselessness. They become complacent and withdrawn, simply wanting something else to do. The victim must make a Saving Throw vs Spells or lose initiative for the next three rounds and possibly (25% chance) wander off to find something more "enjoyable". When the victim "wanders off", he leaves as though retreating, giving a +4 penalty to armour class and no shield bonus. Members of the shepherd's party gain a +4 bonus to their saving throws to avoid this song's effects.

Rage

This song causes party members to become filled with a vengeful rage giving them a +3 bonus to hit and +3 to damage while penalizing their armour class by 4. Additionally, the members of the party are penalized 15% to skill roles while enraged (A 4th level thief's Climb Walls skills would be 75% (90% - 15%). Enemies hearing the song must make a saving throw versus spells or be they will run away for 2d6 rounds in fear due to the ferocity of the party's rage.

Hatred

Victims of this spell become overwhelmed with hate for all those around them causing confusion among groups of enemies. They will attack one another in rage (+3 to hit/damage, AC +4, etc.). There is a 25% chance the monsters will attack party members instead of one another. Members of the shepherd's party gain a +4 bonus to their saving throws to avoid this song's effects.

Love

The song of love is a wondrous song and to hear it is to be honoured. Rarely sung due to its powerful effects, the song is difficult to sing with a 50% chance of failure, leaving hearers with a feeling of goodness and peace, but having no effect. Hearers of the song become dedicated to the protection of the Shepherd and gain +3 to hit and damage rolls while protecting him from attack without being penalized. Enemies hearing the song will rush to the shepherds defence as well, unless they make their saving throw vs spells (-4 penalty). When used outside of combat,

the song will cause its hearers to follow the Shepherd as if charmed and do various tasks with no concern up to giving him 5,000 gp worth of items. Greater tasks or "donations" to the shepherd requested by the shepherd may be done if the "victim" fails a saving throw vs. spells each time the request is made (no penalty). Members of the shepherd's party gain a +4 bonus to their saving throws to avoid this song's effects. Additionally, the Shepherd may ask the victims of the song to ignore all other songs he sings during the victim's "enchantment" in which case the Song of Love retains its effects for the rest of its duration.

Lullaby

Similar to the Magic-User "sleep" spell, this song makes its victims fall asleep if they fail their saving throw vs. spells. Even if the saving throw is made, the victims become sluggish and suffer a -1 to hit and damage rolls. Members of the shepherd's party gain a +4 bonus to their saving throws. As with the Magic-User spell, victims who fall asleep may be killed with one blow. The range of the lullaby is only "hearing distance" or a 30' radius whichever is less.

Pain

The Song of Pain causes the hearers to cover their ears in pain and eventually double over into the foetal position unable to do anything. The target's effective armour class becomes 9 minus any magical bonuses. The victim suffers excruciating pain for 1d6 rounds after completion of song. Members of the shepherd's party gain a +4 bonus to their saving throws to avoid this song's effects.

Curse

The Curse song causes the victim to suffer from a superstitious fear of some horrible accident about to happen. Because of this irrational fear, the victim suffers a -4 to hit/damage for the duration. Members of the shepherd's party gain a +4 bonus to their saving throws to avoid this song's effects.

Fright

The Fright Song causes fear in all those hearing it, unless they make a saving throw vs spells. Those frightened will flee for 1 round per level of the shepherd and suffer a -1 to morale/to hit/damage rolls. Members of the shepherd's party gain a +4 bonus to their saving throws to avoid this song's effects.

Remove Fear

This song's calming effects remove the fears of all within hearing distance. Similar to the Clerical spell with the same name, all those suffering

from fears when hearing this song make a saving throw vs. spells (with no bonus for Shepherd's level) to overcome their fear. A failed saving throw means the victim is still frightened.

Mourning

The Song of Mourning causes its hearers to become overwhelmed by a sense of loss. Failing their saving throws, the victims immediately fall to their knees or to a prone position and begin to weep. They cannot be consoled and will remain inattentive to all those around them, losing initiative in combat and having an effective armour class of 9 minus magical bonuses (no shield bonus) until attacked. Once attacked victims will take one round to rouse themselves; although they will still suffer a -1 penalty to hit and damage rolls for 1 round per level of the shepherd.

Death

Unlike the powerful Magic-User and Clerical spells which can kill with a word, the Death Song does not kill the victim, instead the victim falls into a trance-like state where she thinks she is dead, unable to perform any acts for 1 turn per level of the Shepherd. The Shepherd can choose not to let this spell affect his party but must announce this intention prior to singing. Otherwise, party members receive a +4 bonus to their saving throw vs death ray. Undead hearing this song become invigorated with the feel of death and gain +4 to hit/damage rolls for the duration of the song and 1d6 rounds after it ends. This song can be countered by a Life Song, Cureall spell or Wish.

Life

Unlike the Clerical spells of Raise Dead and Raise Dead Fully, this song does not resuscitate a corpse, but it breathes the power of Life into a recently deceased corpse. The result is that if the victim is raised within 48 hours with a Raise Dead spell, the victim will be fully restored to health when resuscitated. If a Raise Dead Fully spell is used on a corpse to whom a Life Song has been sung, the victim will also be fully healed and will have a temporary boost to their Charisma of 2 points due to their overwhelming joy at being alive. If this song is sung to living creatures, they gain +2 to hit/damage, -2 armour class, +2 morale, +2 to all saving throws and regenerate 2 hp per round for 1 round per 3 levels of the Shepherd. Undead creatures hearing this song will become shake uncontrollably and be effectively paralysed, unable to attack for 1 round per 3 levels of the caster. Undead creatures with Hit Dice over 8 may make a saving throw vs Death Ray to avoid their

"paralyzation". No saving throw is allowed for undead with less than 8 hit dice.

Enemies of the Shepherd, when hearing this song, become overwhelmed by the futility of their lives and either flee (1-2 on 1d6), fall to the floor and wail (3-4 on 1d6) or attack with a -4 to hit/damage and +4 armour class (5-6 on 1d6) unless they make their saving throw.

Purify the Soul

This song is the culmination of the Shepherd's Art of Song. It has several different possible uses of which only one may be made when sung.

* It will turn undead as a Cleric of the same level as the shepherd.

* It will mimic the effect of a Cureall spell.

* It will Dispel Magic, all illusions and charming effects on anyone or anything within a 20' radius of the shepherd.

* It will cause enemies to be convicted of their evil nature causing them to fall to the floor and writhe in a self-pitying despair for 1 round per level of the Shepherd.

* Party members of the Shepherd will feel refreshed, all being healed 3d6 hit points, with any adverse affects being dispelled (i.e. slow, fear, curse, etc).

Due to its complexity, this song has a high percentage of failing 65% (reduced by 5% for each point over 12 of the Shepherd's intelligence -- with 15 intelligence only 50% chance of failure. For shepherds with less than 9 intelligence, +5% chance of difficulty, 6 intelligence has 80% chance of failure.) There is no saving throw for this song..

RUINS OF CASTLE VENDEGAAR

ROBERT ADKINS

This adventure is an introductory adventure designed to ease new players into Dungeons and Dragons without pitting them against foes too powerful and traps too dangerous to handle. It is designed for 2 to 4 players and can be easily modified to be challenging to large parties as well as for smaller parties by adding or removing some Goblins and by using a lower or higher level Xensolat. Completing this module should take little more than one to two hours, depending upon how well the party works together and how quickly combat is completed as the party makes its way through the ruins. The goal of this adventure is to build a framework of basic skills that new players will need to use in further more advanced adventures. Give the players pointers to help them along and fudge any dice that needs to be fudged to keep the party alive. Killing off new player's characters can be a sure fire way to kill off new gamers interest.

Some of the areas and items the characters will come into contact should have some of the 'extra' DM 'only' information given into the player's laps in order to help them start to think more like adventurers, the object is to do less and less of that as time goes on until the players start coming up with everything on their own. An example of this is the water well in **Area 2**, it should be noted aloud to the party that they think the water could be used to clean something off, if they felt the need. Later, the hint about the handcart being filthy, but usable with a slight cleaning should be dropped as well.

"In days long past the region your home town is in was once under the auspices of a grand and powerful wizard by the name of Vendegaar. Through the years of his life he gathered a great many treasures, items of untold magical power, creatures both strange and mundane, he built a magnificent castle home and also acquired a fair number of enemies. Apparently, at some time in the distant past, one or more of these enemies caught up with him. It has been said that the battle between the powerful wizards had been felt, seen and heard for a great many leagues through the surrounding countryside and that in the end, only a smouldering ruin of a castle, with not a single wizard or being standing amongst the wreckage. For days, which stretched into weeks, which stretched into months, which stretched into years few dared tread the lands surrounding the battered castle for fear of being swallowed up by the unchained magical energies

that ripped at the land and warped the life that it touched. Several hundred years passed before these magical energies subsided enough for the lands about the castle to once again be 'safe' for the foot of anyone brave enough to dare approach and perhaps enter the ruins of the castle...

Until now... you and your friends had heard the tales of riches, magical treasures and supposed dangers to be found in the ruins of this once great castle, which is said to extend a great many levels into the depths of the land, carved out by the ancient and powerful magicks of the wizard Vendegaar himself. There have been rumours of bandits or goblinoids moving into the area of the old castle and you are also aware of a bounty being offered for the capture, dead or alive of an evil wizard named Xensolat. He is a dark hearted fiend wanted for the death of the cleric Alura, who once was a bastion of light in your small town, but was snuffed out by the dark arts and poison dart of Xensolat. There is a 1000GP bounty on the body of Xensolat. Standing within the ruins just past the gatehouse, you see the entrance to what could be your future or could be your doom. Steeling yourself, you and your companions brush aside your worries and stride within, confident that what awaits will only bring fame, fortune and opportunities for valour."

The characters begin within the entrance of the original portion of the long dead wizard's keep. It is a squat castle building that is crumbling with age and covered with vines, moss and other plants as well as crumbled stone. The area is fairly sparse, since nearly 200 years has passed since the area has been heavily travelled by the foot steps of most creatures. The area is typical for a castle of its size, the outer walls are crumbled away and are little more than piles of stones in some places and barely taller than a dwarf in others. The area that the gatehouse would have sit in is simply a pile of rubble strewn about with what could be the long sitting remains of burnt wooden timbers. The area itself is rather square in shape no more than 200 feet wide and perhaps 50 feet in between where the interior door of the gatehouse would have been to the entrance now before the party.

If the party wishes to search around for anything of use, they locate a number of random shaped stones all of similar size that can be used as sling stones in a pinch. **Roll 3d6+2** for total number of stones available. If they listen for noise, they

hear nothing but the sounds of birds and the rest of nature, there appears to be nothing else of note on the wind. Other than that, the entrance into the 'castle proper' sits before the party through the gaping maw of a once glorious building that may have at one time held large doors. Of course, most of the front wall and most of the area that could or would have been over any doors has long since gone missing, blasted away by some blast of magic.

Does the party enter?

Main Entrance

“Upon entering the gaping maw that was once a door you see the ruined interior of what could have once been a fine greeting hall. You make out the outline of a somewhat curved stairway that probably lead up to an overlooking balcony and entrance to some, now nonexistent, upper level of this building. At the base of where the stairs met the ground, you see the remnants of stairs that must have been finely carved at some time. There is a pair of pillars carved in the shape that looks vaguely like elfin or thin human females where the handrail of the stairs must have ended at.”

Beyond those rather beautiful features, it appears that the area has been untouched and has no other decoration of note. The area is a decent 50 foot wide room that runs back at least 100 or so feet. The lighting provided by the gaping maw should be enough to provide you with ample light to view through the entire area without needing to light torches, lamps or magical lighting sources. If the party searches near the entrance, for a way into another room, they will easily find a caved in section of floor that leads to the lower level. This caved in section has piles of wall material that has collected in what could be used as makeshift stairs. If the characters use this to move down, they must each make a Dexterity check. Upon failure, they will take 1 – 2 points of damage from falling. If the specifically search around the staircase remains, they will discover an unusually cleared area that contains a trap door. With a combined strength of at least 20 the party will be able to pull the large oaken door out of the opening by the large iron ring set into to. This will lead them down into the first level of the castle ruins.

The Dungeon Proper

The first level of the dungeon beneath the castle ruins is home to a small band of goblinoids and the chaotic wizard Xensolat who recently moved

in and to over the small, wretched goblin band by challenging and defeating the goblin leader. Since taking over the band Xensolat, has ordered the goblins to clean up the mess and stink that they left in the areas they had already started to use heavily and also cleared out rubbish and 200 year old battle remains from the rest of the area. Meanwhile, Xensolat started working on unlocking a magically sealed doorway that would lead him down further into the castle ruins that would reveal to him the greater magic of the long-dead Vendegaar.

Area 1 – Main Landing

“As you enter this area you are greeted with the slight stench of very bad body odour and refuse, which of course can only mean one thing; Goblins have infested this level, somewhere; it is obvious by the low amount of stench that these goblins must not be very close to where you are right now. After looking around for a moment you see that you have entered into a room that has a staircase leading up situated in the centre of the room. Across from the bottom steps is an open archway that leads off into darkness and three doors on each of the other walls, apparently set in or very near the centre of those walls.”

The room itself is roughly 25' wide and roughly 30' long from the open archway to the door that is almost directly behind the stairs. If the characters make a significant amount of noise, by banging on doors, or arguing amongst themselves about where they will be going, the doorway from area 4 will be flung open and a small number of goblins will rush forth yelling out cries that is certain to raise the attention of any more goblinoids nearby. If the party stays quiet and listens at the doors, they will hear the quiet voices of what sounds like two beings talking and laughing quietly to themselves at the Eastern door. They will hear nothing from the Western door, Northern door or Southern area.

Goblins

AC: 6, Attacks: 1, Damage: 1d6-1, Mor.: 7, Hit Points: 3, 4, 2, 2, XP: 5 Each.

If the fight occurs and the PCs win, any treasure remains will be found in **Area 4**. Other than the possibility of a fight with Goblins, there is little else to note in the room, a little rubbish and the remains of a torch in a sconce.

Area 2 – Entertaining Room

“The first thing you notice when entering this room is the sunlight drifting in from the main level of this destroyed castle that is filtering in

through the damaged ceiling in the SW corner of this fairly large room. The second thing you notice is the small amount of water that is pooled up in places, most likely from the rainwater that pours in through the damaged ceiling. Looking around the room, you get the sense that this area was once used as an underground room for entertaining. They are common among the wealthy of your town for they help people to escape the heat of late summer. Attached to the wall in various places are what appear to be stone hooks for hanging tapestries and other hanging art pieces. There is also the broken and rotted remains of what must have once been fine and comfortable furniture, strewn about the area.”

The room itself is wider than it is deep, with walls roughly 65 feet wide and roughly 25 feet long. The soft stone floors appear worn in places that may have once had great foot traffic and in these places there are small puddles of slimy rainwater, unfit for drinking. Other than the torn up and useless furniture bits, there is little of note in this large area. If investigated, the piles of stones nearby the caved in roof appear to have been moved about in an intelligent fashion to create a makeshift set of stairs. They are very poor quality and can easily be missed if looked at from the wrong angle. Near the Eastern wall of this area, there is a small well that contains fresh water that appears clean enough to drink from. There is a clean bucket that is fairly new sitting next to the well, this water could be used to rinse something off, if the party needs to. Other than that, this room doesn't appear to be very safe to rest in, beside the damaged furniture, if it is used by someone to enter and exit this level, the party could easily find its rest interrupted.

Area 3 – Goblin Filth Room

“The slight stench of Goblin kind is stronger in this room, after your eyes adjust to the darkness in this large room you can see why... The floors are covered in the filth of Goblins, tossed away bits of food, tossed away bits of clothing and other goblin refuse. There is one odd bit about the room though... The piles of refuse are tidier than they probably should be and there is a cart that is loaded up with a good amount of garbage and other filth. From what you have heard of Goblins, this is far from their usual behaviour... Something must have changed these Goblins...”

The room contains the old sleeping area, cooking area and general living area of the Goblin tribe. They have since been moved deeper into this level since Xensolat wants his ‘followers’ to not

stink of body filth. He is also having a handful of Goblins clean this room out and they have thus far completed a decent portion of the task. The only item that could be useful to the party is the hand cart that currently has a decent pile of Goblin refuse within it. The wheels, sidewalls and even the pull-bar are in good shape, with a good cleaning out the cart could be quite useful, with a rinsing out, the cart would be bearable to ring along and it would allow the party to carry a decent amount of treasure and other items that one person wouldn't be able to carry themselves. The room itself is roughly 20' from East to West and roughly 30' from North to South. If the party takes the time to dig through the refuse, which will take almost 3 turns, they will locate a broken brass mirror worth roughly 3 sp, a grubby sack with 30 cp inside and nothing else of note.

Area 4 – Punished Goblin Sleeping Area

If the party listened at the door, read the following...

“After slowly and carefully opening up the door, you see that this area has been converted into a makeshift sleeping area. At the far SE corner, you see two Goblins chatting away near a low fire that fills this room with a slight acrid stench, which just barely covers up the filthy stench of these Goblins. Nearer to the middle of the room against the back wall, you see two more Goblins sleeping as peacefully as Goblins sleep in an area that appears to have sleeping arrangements for four Goblins.”

Attacking the Goblins provides a surprise in the party's favour. The sleeping Goblins will be -2 to attack for two rounds as they are awakening, with the distance involved only party members with ranged weapons in hand will be able to attack in the first round of combat. If the party made a ruckus in **Area 1** and subsequently fought and killed the Goblins, read this...

“Entering this room, fills your nostrils with a stench of Goblin filth and oily smoke, nearly bringing all of you to gagging. After overcoming your initial reaction, you give a quick survey of the room...”

In the SE corner, there appears to be the remains of a small Goblin sitting area with a warming fire smouldering in an old black iron pot. Near the back wall, in the middle of the room is a makeshift sleeping area that appears to have been recently hastily vacated by at least a few beings. You get the sense that half of the Goblins from this area had been sleeping while the other two

were in quiet conversation prior to being noisily alerted to your presence.”

Once the fighting is over, or if the characters search this area after defeating the Goblins in **Area 1**, they will discover the following treasure items. Unless defeated in **Area 1...**

Goblins

AC: 6, Attacks: 1, Damage: 1d6-1, Mor.: 7, Hit Points: 3, 4, 2, 2, XP: 5 Each.

Each Goblin has a small grubby pouch on their belts containing some items of note and some useless items as well.

Goblin 1: 7 EP and a smoothed rat skull with a small string and a feather attached to it.

Goblin 2: 10 EP and a pair of carved six-sided dice that are not square enough to be used in reputable games of chance.

Goblin 3: 6 EP and a small quartz stone worth 9 GP.

Goblin 4: 5 EP, a small citrine gem worth 25 GP and a small scrap of paper that contains a mapped out path, which appears to resemble the areas the party is in and some extra areas beyond the Northern door of **Area 1**. This map is wrapped around the citrine and could be missed by the character that gathered this Goblins pouch without an Intelligence roll being passed. (Secretly rolled by the DM.)

Searching the rest of the room reveals nothing of note. The Goblins also have rusted and poorly edged short swords that are barely worth the material they are made of. They could be sold in town for 3 GP and could be used in combat doing 1d6-1 HP of damage.

Area 5 – Central Hallway

“This dimly lit hallway is roughly 10’ wide and goes on for what seems like 35’ off into the distance. From what you can tell in the dim light of the few torches in this hall, you can see one door on the eastern wall roughly 5’ before you and another door in the same wall another 20’ beyond that. At the end of the hallway you see another door. Being careful not to make any noise that would raise the attention of any other Goblins or other creatures that could be in this area, you hear some faint ruffling and shuffling of possibly heavy items, intermixed with a few jingles of what could be coins, chain or other small metallic objects emanating from the door closest to you...”

Beyond that, you can see or hear nothing else, unless you investigate further down the hall...”

If the party has located the Goblin map, they will know about the existence of the secret door that leads into Xensolat’s private chambers, other than that, they will not know how to open the door, which can be determined by an elf on a roll of 1 – 3 on a D6, only if the Secret door is known about. Otherwise, the party will have to announce they are looking for secret doors, especially if after they defeat the wizard and find no sign of his sleeping area. (An Intelligence check made by each member of the party will reveal that thought, if nobody mentions it.) If the party makes a ruckus or somehow attempts to gain attention, the Goblins working in the Storage Place **Area 6** as well as one Goblin sent out to investigate the noise, from **Area 8** will step out and immediately call out an alarm to the rest of the Goblins in **Area 8**, who will then rush out and attack the party of adventurers, while the Goblin woman and children escape out of the dungeon via the tunnel in **Area 9**.

For stats of the Goblin warriors and totals, look to **Area 6** and **Area 9’s** descriptions.

Area 6 – Storage Area

If the party surprises the working Goblins by rushing or otherwise entering this room...

“You enter this room and are presented with a quick glimpse of some of the Goblin’s treasure just moments before the surprised Goblins attack...”

Upon entering the room, the Goblin treasure guards, that were sent to guard the Goblin treasure by the ‘new’ Goblin leader, whip out their short swords and war hammer and attack the party.

Goblins

AC: 6, Attacks: 1, Damage: 1d6-1, Mor.: 7, Hit Points: 5, 3, 4, 3, 2, First Goblin does 1d6 Damage with War hammer, XP: 5 Each

After defeating the Goblins, the party can search the Goblins for what treasure they would hold as well as the rest of the treasure in this storage room. Each Goblin has between 2-12 pieces of Electrum in their grubby pouches. Beyond that, there are 4 rusty, poorly made Short Swords and one decently made regular war hammer that is worth keeping or selling. After the defeat of the Goblin treasure guards, read the following...

“After the defeat of your Goblin foes, the glint of treasure gleams in your eyes. Before you are a number of small shelves in this 12.5’ long by 15’ wide room, that hold a few small chests, a few barrels and other odds and ends that must be some, if not all, the items these Goblins have gathered over the years.”

Goblin Treasure

Stuffed into the three small chests the party finds the following coins and other treasures:

6000 CP
2000 SP
1 Citrine Gem (50GP)
1 Topaz Gem (500GP)
1 Gem Encrusted
Necklace (1200GP)

The two barrels contain the following liquids:

One barrel of Wine (15GP)
One barrel of Lantern Oil (30GP)

There are a few other odds and ends:

Brass Candlesticks (2) (5GP Each)
Small Stone Statue (10GP)
Box of Matching Silverware (20GP)

Area 7 – Xensolat’s Sleeping Quarters

It isn’t likely that the party will locate this area, unless they find the Goblin Map or search all the walls and succeed in finding the secret door from the hallway. Regardless, if the party does locate this hidden room, they will be presented with quite a little treat with a few items of magic that Xensolat has collected in his travels as well as some other treasures.

“Finally, you discovered the hidden catch to open up the secret door, leading into this hidden room. Past the doorway you see a rather large, but spartanly decorated room, it is obvious that whomever sleeps here is not a Goblin and also has a liking for some of the finer things in life. Even though there is little within this room, the items you see feature quality construction. Gazing around the room, you see a small cooking area within the confines of a large chimney, a small study that has a handful of books and also appears to have a wizard’s laboratory and of course a sleeping area that includes a fine bed. Looking some more, you see a decent sized chest before the bed and other items that you could easily gather up and carry out of here that will fetch you a decent price in the town’s marketplace.”

Whether the party has defeated Xensolat or not, his belongings are open for the taking. This includes a small number of magical items from a few potions to a few scrolls and even a weapon usable by a stout warrior that he ‘liberated’ from the Goblin leader he defeated a short time ago. The items are spread out around this room, from the chest at the foot of the bed, which contains most of Xensolat’s money, to the wizard lab, where the potions and scrolls lie to next to the fireplace, leaning up against the wall. Below is the listing of treasure available to the party.

Chest

1300GP
1300SP
2 Turquoise Gems (10GP)
1 Onyx Gem (50GP)
1 Amber Stone (100GP)
2 Golden Bracelets with
Inlaid Gem Stones (600GP)

Magic Items

Normal Sword +1
Potion of Gaseous Form
Potion of Growth
Potion of Diminution

1 Scroll (2 Spells)
Sleep
Magic Missile

Beyond the treasure listed above, there are a few decent quality animal skins that could be used as either fur cloaks or as they are used on the bed as blankets. The bed itself is a decent construction, but it would be quite difficult to bring out of the dungeon, the same goes for the table. The wizard’s laboratory is another story altogether. It could be useful to a wizard, but it is extremely fragile with thin glass tubes, beakers and pipes going this way and that all over the table. With the fragility of the laboratory and also the lack of skill that any party wizard might have with the set-up and take down of such equipment. (Which is assumed to be acquired by the time the wizard obtains 5th level.) There is a high chance of breaking a significant amount of the lab if not taken apart by a professional. Roll % dice on any roll less than 15%, the party successfully takes apart and can package the laboratory in the travel box beside the lab’s table. Anything over that results in the lab being rendered useless. (If somehow successful, the lab can fetch 2000gp in town being that it is used.)

If the party asks about a spell book either now or after they have defeated Xensolat, they will be

unable to locate it. The spell book is in this room, but it is magically hidden from view, even a detect magic spell would be unable to reveal its location.

Area 8 – Goblin Tribe’s Room

This area holds the bulk of the Goblin tribe, minus a few of the much stronger warriors that Xensolat has with him in **Area 11**. The tribe also has its women and children in this area off in a protected rear corner. One any combat ensues, the party will see the Goblin women, children and a few of their guards move out of the area to escape into the unknown.

“The often overwhelming stench of Goblin bodies that you would expect to be permeating this room is nowhere near as bad as you think it should be by the looks of it. Within from roughly the middle of this room to the back of this room you see a large Goblin ‘nesting’ area. Before you get much of a chance to act, you are spotted by a few Goblins that scream forth an almost fright filled scream as they reach for their weapons and prepare to attack!”

In combat 3 Goblins will close immediately with the party while 2 draw forth short bows and start firing arrows. The last 2 combat capable Goblins will rush to gather and defend the Goblin ‘Wiminz’ and children from the attacking party. If the combat lasts more then 5 rounds, these Goblins will most likely make it out to the hallway that the PC’s entered from and will hastily retreat out the escape tunnel and into the unknown. If the combat lasts less then 5 rounds, these final two Goblin warriors will throw themselves at the PC’s feet asking to be allowed to escape with their woman and little Gobs. If the PCs are truly Lawful, they will allow these goblins to escape to freedom.

Goblin Warriors

AC: 6, Attacks: 1, Damage: 1d6, Mor.: 7, Hit Points: 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, XP: 5 each

Unlike other Goblins, the ones that fall in this battle each have 12EP in their grubby pouches and two of them have quartz gems worth 10GP each. If the party decides to attack the remaining two Goblin protectors and to kill the woman and little Gobs the woman and little Gobs won’t put up a fight worth mentioning, but the protectors will do what they can to help the rest escape. This escape will occur within two rounds of combat.

Goblin Protectors

AC: 5, Attacks: 1, Damage: 1d8, Mor.: 9, Hit Points: 10, 12, XP: 10 each

If defeated, the party will discover 5GP and 12EP in the less grubby pouches of these slain Goblin Protectors. When the party turns to finish off the woman and little Gobs, they will find them gone in the commotion of the battle.

Area 9 – The Long Hallway

“This hallway opens up before you heading both East and West with the Eastern running half trailing off into Darkness, along the Northern wall to the West, there is a recently dug opening that appears to have been made by Goblins as some sort of escape route or entrance to another Goblin nest. Past the Goblin carved tunnel, on the Eastern Wall is a closed doorway set into the middle of the 10 Foot Western Wall. Other then a very small amount of rubbish nearby the Goblin Hole, there is little else of interest in this area.”

If the characters head off in the Eastern direction they will begin to hear something that sounds like it might be some kind of quiet talking or muttering. This won’t become noticeable until the PC’s are almost 20 Feet to the East of the door that they first entered this area from. As they move farther to the East read the following...

“As you come to the Eastern end of the hall you see that it turns South after travelling roughly 40 feet from the door you used to enter this area. Right about the time that you see this you notice a quiet talking that grows louder as you close the corner. Cupping your ear, you hear that the talking is actually some kind of magical chanting that is both some distance from where you stand and is also quite different and much longer then any other magical incantations you have heard in your days...”

The chanting is coming from the mouth of the wizard Xensolat. He is performing a ritual that is designed to break the magical seals that were put in place by the wizard Vendegaar to protect the lower levels of his castle, which were always rumoured to hold his more powerful magical items, spell books and treasures. At the time of the great wizard assault on the castle, Vendegaar had sealed the lower levels with magics more powerful then the wizards mustered against him knew how to defeat. In the intervening years, those magics have waned and Xensolat had come into possession of a powerful incantation that he could use to bring down the seals, wards and other protections that were keeping him from

obtaining the treasures of the long dead Vendegaar.

If the PC's continue on towards the turn on the hall they will eventually see a figure hidden in the shadows. It is of course, a statue of a man standing in the corner, but the party doesn't know that. Read the following...

"As you approach the corner, the chanting becomes louder and it is then that you notice the shape of a man standing in the shadows off in the corner of the hall, his robed arms raised up as if casting a magical spell! **What do you do?!"**

If the party dallies for a moment, they will see that the robed figure is unmoving and would also notice that the chanting voice they hear is coming from South of where the figure stands. Bringing any torch into the area reveals a long ago carved statue of a proud looking wizard holding up his arms almost as if to display his robes more than to be casting a spell of some sort. However, if the party attacked the statue, yelling any battle cries or shooting arrows at it, there is a chance that the Goblin Protectors that Xensolat is using as bodyguards in **Area 11** could hear the noise and investigate. Roll a 1d6 on a 1 or 2, they hear the noise and come rushing out of the open door to the south to attack the party. Regardless of whether the combat happens or not, the chanting the party is hearing will continue and will become louder as they come closer to the door at the end of the hall. This chanting will continue for no matter how long the party stands outside the door and will only end once they enter the **Area 11**. To impress upon the party that they should rush in use one or more of the following suggestions...

"Chanting like this could be calling forth a powerful evil being, you could be stopping the release of evil if you rush in."

"Whoever is performing this chanting is likely very dedicated to their task, there is a chance that if you rush in, you can take them by surprise and if it is the Wizard Xensolat, you could easily gain that 1000GP reward!"

If you have to, even force their hand. The chanting will not end until after the party enters the next room for the dramatic effect detailed in **Area 11**.

Area 10 – Pantry/Closet

In the days of Vendegaar this room was used as a pantry or other basic storage area. Inside are a number of shelves with broken jars and boxes. There is also the remains of a rat, minus the

skull. Other than the rubbish, the room is a sparse relatively empty area with nothing of value.

Area 11 – Magically Sealed Room

In its day this room lead down into the magical depths of Vendegaar's castle. In order to keep thieves and nosy rivals out of his business, Vendegaar devised a magical means of sealing the lower depths from prying magic and also powerfully warded and sealed a large portal with spells designed to let only him enter. Over the intervening years, his magical wards and seals have weakened to the point that the lower levels are not longer sealed in the way that they once were. Still, the easiest method of entry is still to be made through the large portal in this area. Of which the seals are close to being broken by the vile wizard Xensolat.

When the PC's enter the room, read the following...

"This room is alive with the swirls of magical energy coursing this way and that, streaming forth in washes and streams of colour intermixed with sparkles and flashes from a rather large door set into the wall on the far side of the room..."

Standing before the door with his arms raised up and his back to you is a robed man, who you can now tell is the one that has been performing the chanting for the time you heard through the hallway leading to this doorway. His robes appear to be nothing special, colour in dark colour that you can't quite be sure off, it could be a really deep blue, black or maybe... perhaps even purple...

As you ponder this thought for a moment, you see a mad rush of energy strike forth at the corners of the large door filling the cracks between the door and the frame with red crackling spark filled magical energy...

Amazed at this display of power you watch as the red magical energy lazily fills the spaces oozing down and across the door line from the four corners until the energy encompasses the entire door jam... It is then with a flash and the smell of a slight acrid odour that all of the magical energy suddenly vanishes in an almost audible pop...

With his arms now lowering to his side, you see and hear this wizard begin to laugh a sinister laugh...

"Yes, Vendegaar your secrets will now be mine..."

With that said, he turns and seems shocked and amazed to see you standing before him with your weapons drawn. Stepping back for a moment he quickly looks around the room before making his move...”

If the party hasn't fought the Goblin Protectors as of yet, they will be fighting them as well the Wizard, who will be casting spells and using a sling from afar to attack the party.

Goblin Protector 1

AC: 5, Attacks: 1, Damage: 1d8, Mor.: 9, Hit Points: 10, XP:10

Notes: Carries and extra large belt pouch with 20GP and a Citrine Gem (50GP).

Goblin Protector 2

AC: 5, Att: 1, Damage: 1d6+1, Mor.: 9, Hit Points: 10, XP: 10

Notes: Uses a magical Mace +1 in combat. Has a large belt pouch with 10GP and 30SP in it.

If the party has already defeated the Goblins, the Xensolat will attempt to barter with the party for his freedom. He will speak to them in a snarly fashion.

“Who are you to be disturbing my work and killing my servants?!” He will demand arrogantly.

He will tell the PCs that if they let him walk out, he will let them live and keep whatever treasures they have acquired, he will continue by saying that it is apparent that he will not have his peace if he stays here any longer and will be moving on. It's almost not possible that the party should allow him to escape, if they do, he will turn to attack them at the most opportune moment. His greed taking over his better judgment, especially since he hadn't been expecting any danger this day, he hadn't memorized his more potent spells.

Xensolat (4th Lvl Wizard)

AC: 8 (9)

Attacks: 1

Damage: 1d4+1

Hit Points: 19

STR: 10

DEX: 9

INT: 17 +2

WIS: 10

CON: 17 +2

CHA: 11

XP: 400

Spells: Detect Magic, Magic Missile, Mirror Image, Continual Light (to be aimed at the eyes)

Notes: Xensolat wears deep purple robes, a Ring of Protection +1, a Ring of Feign Death (detailed below) and a magical dagger +1. On his belt, he carries a small pouch that contains a few gems of value.

Gems:

Onyx (50GP)

Topaz (500GP)

Amber (100GP)

At the beginning of the battle, the party should be located near the entrance to this room with Xensolat being located closer to the large door that leads deeper into the dungeon. Unless the party have ranged weapons in hand, they won't be able to attack first. The wizard will first cast Mirror Image before the party can close and will next cast Continual Light into the eyes of the most dangerous looking PC, normally the largest fighter or very apparent leader. If the saving throw versus spells fails, that character will be blinded until a dispel magic spell is cast. It is best to have this spell be successful. (See Epilogue) Upon striking Xensolat for more than half of his hit points, he falls to the ground appearing to have been mortally wounded and looks to be dead. In reality, he is under the magical effects of his 'Feign Death' ring that is invisible on his finger. During this state of being, he is fully aware of what is happening around him and could get up thus destroying the illusion, at anytime, but he is far from foolish enough to do so while the party still stands over him. If the party suggests beheading, remind the party that the reward was for the "Whole" intact body and if they remove his head, it is likely to be a waste of their time to even carry him back into town for the reward. If the characters are lawful, use the extra step of advising them that taking off the head of an already dead man isn't exactly a lawful alignment action to take. If the party approaches the large wooden door, they will notice that it appears to be a normal door. Tugging at it will result in it not opening, it looks as though it is stuck in the door jam and might need to be hacked out with an axe or pulled open using pulleys and extra strength. In any case, it would be best to end the adventure here, since a small party of adventurers is sure to be rather hurt and low on supplies.

Magical Item

Ring of Feign Death - Only rumoured to have existed for several centuries, the magics to create such rings had been lost to the winds of time.

Even when the magic to create such rings was known few of these rings were made due to the difficult and rare components used in their making. The powers of the ring are controlled by the user and once the ring is placed on the hand, it becomes invisible and cannot be found through non-magical searches. Only by casting the 3rd level Cleric spell of Speak with the Dead, or both the wizard and cleric spells of Dispel Magic will the ruse be exposed. At the wearer's beckoning, the ring will cause the wearer to appear as though they are dead. This is typically called forth after being stricken in combat in order to remove oneself as a threat and hopefully be able to escape after the battle is completed. This power can be used only once per week as it is an extremely powerful combination of both illusion and the negative plane. After becoming 'dead' the ring wearer is able to see, feel and hear all that is happening within the normal ranges of human senses. The ring creates a simple 'Wizard eye' that allows the wearer to look out from their body in any direction, all in order to be able to better make ones escape.

Conclusion – Epilogue

Once, if, they turn in the body in town, they will be provided with the 1000GP reward. Later in the evening, while the party is relaxing, in the local inn drinking to their victory and telling their tale, the constable will enter the inn looking distraught, if pressed; he will reveal that the body of Xensolat has disappeared. The party will be allowed to keep their reward, since they did fulfil their part of the bargain. All the constable believes is that his body was stolen for some nefarious purpose; Xensolat is believed, for all intents and purposes, to be dead. In reality, Xensolat chose to move and subsequently escape after his body had been laid to rest for the town clerics to consecrate for burial. Now, he wishes revenge upon the party for humiliating him in the way that they did. The party has now gained a long-term antagonist that has a peculiar interest in escaping his 'untimely' demise. The lower levels of the castle will await the party's return to give up its secrets. What to do about all that gold that the party gathered? If you add up

all the treasure that can easily be converted into gold, you will find that the party has acquired somewhere near 6000 GPs. After adding up and determining what each player's share will be, subtract enough from the total to make sure that each player character (and henchmen) will receive anywhere from 200 to 300 GPs each. The rest of the gold will be charged away from the party to pay for the dispel magic spell to remove the blindness from the character that may have been blinded by the spell and or to pay for all of the identifying spells for the magical items the party has gathered. The amount of gold provided in this dungeon could/should be lowered tremendously for more 'veteran' player groups or if you feel that the players will feel that they deserve that much gold for each adventure. The main point of this much treasure is to help bump the PC's up to 2nd level, which should provide them with a nice sense of achievement which could raise their interest in playing again. If you feel the treasure was too much, half the listed amounts and remove the following magical items:

Dagger +1

Mace +1

Story Experience

For successfully completing the adventure, the party should be rewarded with some additional story element experience. In this adventure, there are a few places where good thinking by the players, even with clues, should be rewarded along with explanations of those rewards.

Cleaning up the cart and using it to gather treasure: **250 XP**

Keeping Quiet in **Area 1** and **Area 5** without alerting the Goblins to the party's presence: **250 XP Each of the Two Areas**

Attacking the Statue: **50XP**


Not Attacking the Statue: **150XP**

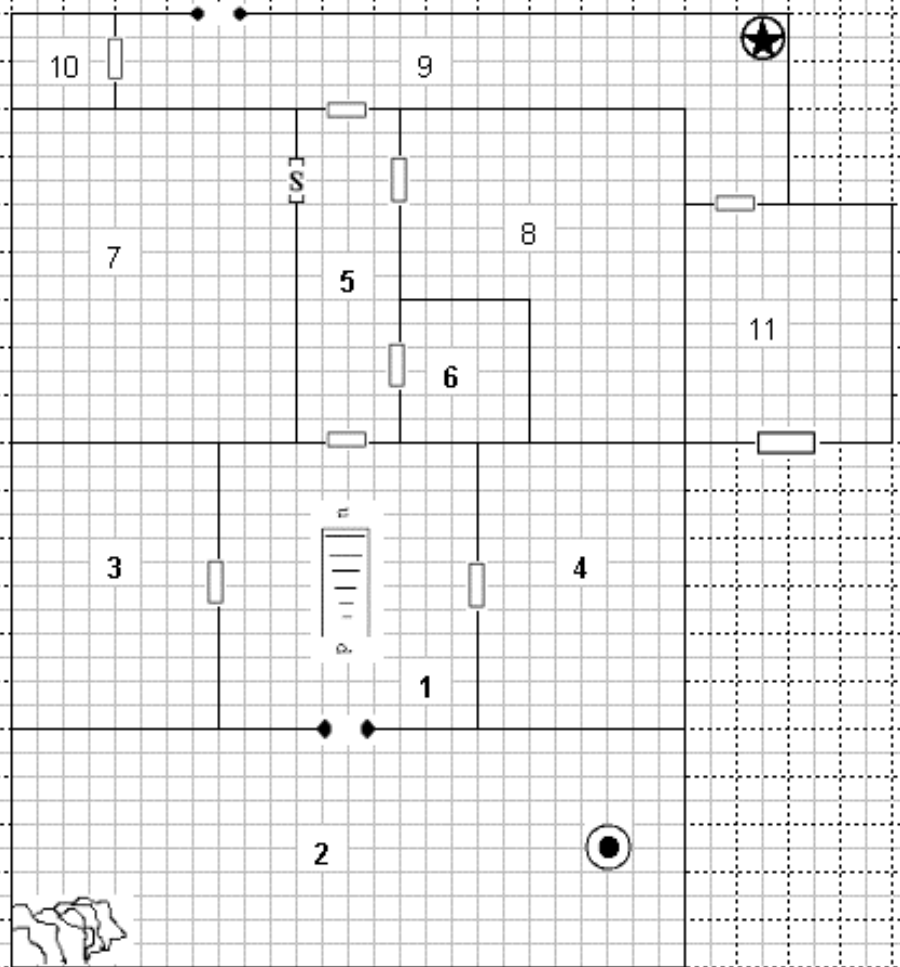
Completing the adventure: **500XP**

These story rewards should be added to the total experience gained in this adventure and divided up amongst the PCs and NPCs.

Ruins of Castle Vendegaar

Level One

 = Five Feet



NOTES CONCERNING THE HIN

SCOTT MOORE

The following guidelines are presented to offer a few more options for advancing halfling characters in OD&D, as well as some background on the NPCs that protect the halfling relics and harness them to produce magic items.

Knighthood

Upon reaching 8th level, halflings may choose to gain Knight status. In order for a halfling to become a Knight, the halfling must meet the same requirements as a human fighter who wishes to enter Knighthood (see the Players Companion, page 17, or Rules Cyclopedia, page 18). Once knighted, the halfling gains all the privileges of the title except for the Fighter Combat Options, which are not attainable until attaining Attack Rank D.

Attack Ranks

In the D&D Companion Set, dwarves and elves may attain a maximum Attack Rank of M while halflings can only reach Attack Rank K. Since elves divide their time between mastering combat and learning spells, it stands to reason that halflings, like dwarves, should be able to attain at least equal Attack Ranks with respect to elves, since they can dedicate more time to learning new and varied styles of combat. Therefore, for halfling characters that have reached Attack Rank K, the following chart shows additional progression to Attack Ranks L and M, as well as an improved bonus to missile fire.

| <u>Attack Rank</u> | <u>Halfling XP (in thousands)</u> | <u>Target's Armor Class</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | -1 | -2 | -3 | -4 | -5 | -6 | -7 | -8 | -9 | -10 | -11 | -12 | -13 |
| L | 3,300 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| M (e) | 3,600 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | |

(e) Gains a total bonus of +2 to all hit rolls when using a missile weapon.

Halfling Elders

The council of elders for a given halfling clan will consist of 3-10 sheriffs, all of all 8th level. This council is made up of the Clanmaster (Cha: 14 + 1d4, Required Skill: Leadership), the Keeper of the Flame (Int: 12 + 1d6, Dex: 12 + 1d6, Cha: 12 + 1d6, Required Skills: Alternate Magics, Craft (Web Of Shadows), Craft (Weapon Making), Leadership), along with 1-7 Keeper's Aides (2d4 total, one of which is the Clanmaster himself, Int: 8 + 1d10, Required Skills: Alternate Magics).

Magic Weapon Creation

The Keeper of the Flame, with some assistance from his aides, is able to construct magical weapons, such as daggers, slings, and swords, by using the Crucible and Blackflame relics. Time and cost for these items are as follows:

- 3000gp per "plus" of the weapon.
- 1000gp per spell level of any spell-related talents of the weapon (treat non-spell-like effects as a first level spell), multiplied by 5 for any permanent effects.
- 1000gp additional for silver weapons.
- Time required is equal to one week plus 1 day per 1000gp of cost.

For examples, a +4 sword of slowing would cost 27,000gp (+4 bonus x 3000gp plus 3rd level spell x 1000gp x 5 for permanency = 27000gp) and require 34 days (1 week plus 27 days) to make. Success is determined by an appropriate Craft (Weapon Making) check by the Keeper, made with a bonus of -1 to the die roll for each aide that assisted him.

The cost in gold and time for preparation of these magical weapons varies slightly from the normal cost of magic item production given in the standard rules. The reason for this is that the halfling Keeper is not an experienced cleric, druid, or magic user, but is instead experienced in manipulating the magic energies of the clan relic, which require different amounts of resources in order to produce a desired result.

OD&D SPELLS

COLIN DAVIDSON

Level 1

Shocking Grasp

Range: 0 (Magic-User only)
Duration: See below
Effect: The spellcaster only

This spell will cause the casters hands to become enveloped in a deadly shroud of crackling electricity. The caster can make unarmed meelee attacks while the spell is in effect, causing 1d4+1 points of electricity damage, adding any bonuses from strength or appropriate magic items, such as *Gauntlets of Ogre Strength*. The spell lasts for 1 round/level to a maximum of 10 rounds

Lazast's Comfortable Bed

Range: 30'
Duration: 8 hours
Effect: Creates a bed

This spell, when cast, creates a bed which is comfortable according to the caster's tastes. (For example, one may prefer a bedroll on a hard surface, where another mage would prefer a massive Queen sized bed with pillows large enough for a Hill Giant to use them adequately.) The bed created by this spell can not be used for any purposes other than sleeping. The caster can choose to allow up to five human-sized creatures into the bed, as dictated by the size of the bed, which can be no bigger than 15' long, 2' tall, and 10' wide.

Level 2

Lazast's Flame Ripple

Range: 120'
Duration: Instantaneous
Effect: Ripple of flame up to 10' diameter

This spell creates a circular wave of flame, about 2' high, which flows outwards from its point of

origin, inflicting 1d4 points of fire damage to anything in the blast radius, per level, to a maximum of 10d4.

Level 3

Moonlight Desires/Recorder

Range: 0 (Magic-User only)
Duration: 4 hours
Effect: Permanantly imprints memories of a 4 hour period in casters mind.

When cast, this spell causes the caster to permanantly remember the events of an 8 hour period in the casters mind. This spell is often used by wizards who act as spies, or by romantic wizards who wish to ensure they remember special moments with their lovers, such as dates, weddings, honeymoons and the like. These memories can not be removed by anyone other than the caster, not even by a *wish*. Divine intervention is possible, but taxing on the interfering force. The caster must cast the spell again, in reverse to break the lock on the stored memory. Romantic wizards call the spell *Moonlight Desires*, while spies call it *Recorder*.

Lazast's Fearful Rage

Range: 0 (Magic-User only)
Duration: 3 rounds
Effect: Caster goes into a bloodthirsty rage.

When this spell is cast, the Magic-User becomes enraged, and is fueled by emotions. The Magic-User gains Srength and Constitution bonuses equal to the casters Intelligence modifier, to a maximum of 18 for the duration of the spell. While in effect, the caster can not do anything that requires a signifigant amount of concentration, such as casting spells, or using most General Skills. Afterwords, the Magic-User must rest for a number of rounds equal to double his/her Intelligence modifier.

A LA CARTE CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

SCOTT MOORE

The following guidelines were initially created to allow characters that have reached maximum level and Attack Rank (as dictated by the standard rules) the opportunity to improve their abilities through the expenditure of XP. For the purpose of obtaining the following improvements, characters should keep track of two XP totals on their character sheet: the first is the XP applied towards increasing level and Attack Rank, the second is the "improvement fund" of XP available to the character for purchasing improvements. When originally broken down, the sum of these two values should be equal to the total XP value previously recorded on the character's sheet. Note that XP may not be shifted to a character's improvement fund if it would result in a loss of level or Attack Rank. Energy and level draining attacks are directed against a character's XP pool for leveling and do not affect the XP set aside for their improvement fund. XP cannot be shifted back to the character's XP pool for leveling once deposited into their Improvement Fund; it can only be spent on the following advancements. If you choose to allow players to improve character abilities before reaching maximum level or Attack Rank, only the options for ability scores, demihuman abilities, and hit point improvements should be permitted. These improvements can create extremely powerful characters and it is recommended that these options be used in a campaign either where other characters and challenges have been equally increased in abilities, or where characters are bettering themselves in hopes of successfully completing a path to immortality. In fact, the high XP requirement of several of these improvements are on par with what should be involved in completing some of the required quests for those seeking immortality. The XP costs of the various Attack Rank, saving throw, and skill improvements listed below are based on the rate at which these abilities usually progress for specific classes, and the XP required to reach them. This was done to relatively balance the costs of the improvements between the different character classes involved.

Ability Scores

To raise a non-prime requisite ability score by one point, it costs the new ability score value times 10,000 XP. Thus, increasing a fighter's Charisma from 12 to 13 costs 130,000 XP.

Abilities must be increased a point at a time such that a character wishing to improve an ability from 12 to 14 must first spend 130,000 XP to reach 13, then another 140,000 XP to reach 14. For improving ability scores that comprise the character's prime requisite, all costs are doubled. Note that elf, halfling, and mystic characters actually have two prime requisites each. Ability scores cannot be increased any higher than 18 in this fashion. Each character that has reached their maximum level and Attack Rank may also select one ability score that they can raise above 18 to a maximum of 25, but at a cost of the new ability score value times 40,000 XP, for each point gained. This cost is the same for all ability scores whether they are prime requisites or not. Note that Constitution and Intelligence scores improved in this manner do not automatically grant additional hit points, skills, or languages that would have been obtained by the character at lower levels. See the following sections for improving a character's hit point total or skills and languages. If an increase in Intelligence would raise a character's Intelligence modifier by one, the character must purchase an additional skill choice and become fluent in an additional language before increasing their Intelligence further to the point where the modifier would increase by another point. For example, a character increasing their Intelligence from 12 to 13 (+1 modifier) can continue increasing the ability to 15, but must become fluent in one additional language and learn (or improve) one additional skill before attempting to increase their Intelligence to 16 (+2 modifier).

Attack Ranks

After reaching maximum level and Attack Rank as specified in the standard rules, halfling, magic user, and mystic characters can continue to improve their combat abilities up to Attack Rank M based on the following XP costs. Halfling: 300,000 XP to get to Attack Rank L, followed by an additional 300,000 XP to get to Attack Rank M. Magic User: 750,000 XP to obtain Attack Rank M. Mystic: 300,000 XP to achieve Attack Rank I, followed by another 300,000 XP to get to Attack Rank K, and another 300,000 XP to reach Attack Rank M. Note that demihumans gain one Attack Rank at a time, while human progression is two Attack Ranks at a time, essentially skipping every other Attack Rank. If you wish to change

progression for humans so they can only gain one Attack Rank at a time, use half the above XP costs as the new cost for each Attack Rank gained above the class's normal maximum.

Demihuman Abilities

Dwarf and elf characters start off with special detection abilities that succeed on a 1 or 2 on a 1d6. The success range for these abilities can be increased one point at a time up to a maximum of 1-5 on a 1d6. Each single point increase costs 200,000 XP. Halfling characters can improve their base 90% chance to successfully hide outdoors by spending 100,000 XP for each 1% increase up to a maximum of 99%.

Hit Points

A character may purchase additional hit points at the rate of one per 100,000 XP spent, up to a maximum as determined by the character's level and Constitution score. Note that improving a character's Constitution score can also affect their maximum potential hit points.

Knighthood

Once a travelling demihuman character gains the Fighter Combat Options abilities (12th level for dwarves, Attack Rank D for elves and halflings), they, too, can swear fealty to a ruler and become knights, gaining all the privileges associated with the title. The cost to gain this status is 200,000 XP.

Saving Throws

Certain character classes can continue to improve their saving throws by spending XP after reaching their maximum level. Mystics can improve all their saving throws by 1 point (but never below 2) for each additional 320,000 XP they spend. Demihuman classes can improve their saving throws to a value of 2 across the board by a one-time expenditure of XP, depending on their race. The cost is 600,000 XP for dwarves, 750,000 XP for elves, and 900,000 XP for halfling characters.

Skills and Languages

As detailed for demihumans in the Rules Cyclopeda (page 86), humans can also continue to gain additional skill choices as they gain XP past their maximum level. Clerics and mystics may gain one additional skill choice for every 400,000 XP spent. Fighters and thieves gain one for every 480,000 XP and magic users gain one for every 600,000 XP. Characters gaining languages in this manner will never be fully fluent in them, as described in the Rules Cyclopeda (pages 87-88). Characters wishing to become fluent in a new language must spend

800,000 XP to do so (total, not on top of the previously mentioned skill choice cost). While characters may possess any number of non-fluent languages, the maximum number of fluent languages they can possess is determined by their race and Intelligence score.

Special Defenses

For a cost of 2,000,000 XP, a character may become especially resistant to one special attack form. The character selects one of the five saving throw categories and always takes half damage from that type of attack. A successful save indicates only ¼ damage is taken. This effect can only be taken once per saving throw type.

Spell-Like Abilities

For a cost of 1,000,000 XP per level of the spell, a spell caster may gain a spell-like ability usable once per day. This ability does not require memorization or meditation time to be able to wield it. The spell-like ability always functions as if cast by a spell caster of the minimum level required to cast that spell. Characters may only have a maximum number of spell-like abilities equal to the lesser of 3 or their appropriate ability modifier (Wisdom for avengers, clerics, druids, and paladins, Intelligence for elves and magic users). It is possible to purchase the same spell-like ability multiple times. Each additional time it is purchased, the character may select either one extra use per day, or to increase the spell's effective caster level by one. In addition, the level of the spell chosen cannot exceed the character's appropriate ability modifier (as listed above). Under no circumstances can the *wish* spell be taken as a spell-like ability.

Thieves' Abilities

A mystic or thief character may add a +1% bonus to any one of their thieving abilities for every 10,000 XP spent. The maximum base chance of success for these abilities are 99% for read languages and read magic/cast from scroll, 279% for pick pockets (99% chance of success against a 36th level target), and 150% for all others (open locks, find traps, remove traps, climb walls, move silently, hide in shadows, and hear noise). A thief may increase their backstab attack bonus by +1 per 480,000 XP spent. Damage is not affected. The maximum backstab attack bonus cannot exceed the sum of the character's move silently and hide in shadows percentages, divided by 40 and rounded down. This allows for an absolute maximum of +7 to the backstab attack bonus.

TWELVE AMAZING DAGGERS OF ZABAAS

TOSATT EARP

The history so far

The Twelve Amazing Daggers of Zabaas are powerful enchanted items that power is fabled through all the Known World of Mystara. Many legends, stories and even ballads was composed and told about those items, and still today the Daggers are renown amongst thieves, bandits and burglars everywhere.

The entire set of magical items is composed of twelve daggers of several races and cultures, and each of these weapons has several magical powers and characteristics, which renders everyone dissimilar from all the other under many aspects. A complete description of each single dagger, including game statistics and powers, can be found in the text below.

These legendary Daggers once belonged to a great adventurer, a sort of thief-acrobat named Zabaas the Great. The latter part of his name was credited to him for his many exceptional quests he accomplished, including various remarkable robberies and the slaying of a mighty demon that incidentally provoked his departure from the world of the mortals.

Zabaas was a Human of Alasiyan origins, born somewhere in the blistering deserts of that barren region overwhelmed by scorching sands and ferocious sunrays of the Emirates. Nimble and smart, self-centered and fashioned by riches, Zabaas grow up as a small-time cutpurse and smuggler in the streets of the city of Ylaruam, and soon became a well known face to the local militia, due to the great number of thefts perpetrated. Before reaching the age of 20, his name was well known, respected by his fellow outlaws and feared by the rich merchants and nobles of the city.

His rise to success was unstoppable, and in few years Zabaas became the most famous thief of all Ylaruam, his fame spreading to nearby nations and kingdoms. He amassed enough gold, gems, jewelries and other riches to live in luxury for the rest of his life, but he still wasn't gratified from his efforts and looked for even more exceptional quests to accomplish. Counting on his tremendous nimbleness and agility, his flashing reflexes and a natural inclination toward criminal acts, Zabaas managed to accomplish some of the greater thefts of his time. In combat, the clever

adventurer invented and developed a peculiar style of melee combat, based on the simultaneous use of two daggers and based upon a combination of quickness, stealth, strike combos and backstab strikes, who easily bested the slow and heavy armored guards of Ylari militia and the ordinary mercenaries and bodyguards hired by riches to protect their homes and properties.

For about two decades, Zabaas (who in the meantime achieved his appellative of Great) undisputedly ruled the criminal activities of Ylaruam, even without never formally joined the local Thieves Guild.

At the highest peak of his career, Zabaas decided to test his skills against the most protected and secure place of the entire Emirates, the treasure chamber of the Sultan himself! After having carefully studied an action plan, Zabaas penetrated in the Sultan Palace and sneaked to the treasury unnoticed by the guards. He managed to evade or disarm every single trap that protected the room, either mechanical or magical in nature. Once reached his objective, he picked the magical reinforced lock on the room door and entered the area, filling his greedy eyes with the shining of untold hoards of coins, gems, jewels, ingots of pure ore and many other precious, valuable or enchanted things.

Amongst these were many suites of armor inlaid with gold and silver, shields of all sizes emblazoned with flamboyant crests and a wide variety of arms: swords, scimitars and khopeshs, flambergue, bec de corbin, maces, great axes, two-handed war hammers, bows and crossbows, many pole arms and even a pair of golden sickles. But the attention of the thief was caught by a series of daggers, wonderful and encrusted with gems and precious metal, carved with intricate symbols and of various shapes and forms. Fascinated with these marvelous items, and because daggers were his favorite weapons, Zabaas quickly depredated the rack holding the arms, strapping the precious blades at his belt.

Suddenly, a noise like a whistling teapot and a puff of multicolored smoke emerged from a dozen of unlit golden lamps, and a group of angry genies emerged from it. They were the last guardians of the Sultan's treasure, and

attacked Zabaas with their powerful spells and tremendous strength. Quickly drawn out his trusty daggers and began a desperate combat retreat, fighting for his life. He was expert and lucky enough to run through the exit in a desperate rush, thus saving his life and looting the daggers from the treasury.

In the following days, Zabaas studied carefully the enchanted weapons, each forged in a different shape distinctive of a singular race or culture, discovering the magical powers of each single dagger. Further researches revealed to the thief that those set of weapons he stole from the Sultan's treasure chamber were the fabled Twelve Amazing Daggers, property of the Sultan himself and of inestimable value. Zabaas quickly learned how to use at best effectiveness the daggers, using the power of each arm in the proper situation. His power and reputation continued to prosper and grow thanks to these weapons, and after a few time the name of Zabaas was constantly associated with that of the enchanted daggers. But the Sultan did not forget the name of Zabaas and the insult he made to him, and the chiefs of the Ylaruam Thieves Guild begun to plan a scheme to eliminate Zabaas, which had became to far powerful and respected without swearing loyalty to the Guild itself.

With an unexpected and secret pact, the Sultan's officers and the high spheres of the Thieves Guild made a treaty, working together to capture and execute Zabaas, thus ending his mortal life and stopping his newborn quasi-legendary status. The nobles, rich merchants and aristocrats (and the Sultan himself) would sleep better without the shadowy menace of the thief, and the Guild masters would have regained full control over all the criminal activities in the city.

By intimidation, imposition and bribery, the Guild masters eventually discovered the secret hideout of the unbeatable Zabaas, and alerted the elite guards of the Sultan to capture the thief. Zabaas' hideout entrance was in a long dried out well in the beggars' quarter, from which he entered a small complex of subterranean rooms once inhabited by vagrants and long abandoned and forgotten by all at present days.

In the very dark hearth of a cold and starless night, the soldiers made their way into the complex, leaded by a small group of the more experienced Guild stalkers. They surprised Zabaas and attacked, hoping to capture the thief and arrest him, but the wily outlaw killed

many of them before being encircled and disarmed. Roaring with triumph, the guards took the unconscious thief to the city prison, while the satisfied Guild servants crawled back into the darkness from which they came. Also the Twelve Daggers were retrieved and took back to the Sultan, who personally rewarded his loyal minions.

While Zabaas was still lying in the royal prison, an evil emir initiate his foul scheme to assassinate the Sultan and the Great Vizier and take control of the entire Emirate. He summoned on the Prime Material Plane from the flaming depths of the hell a great demon, and made a pact with the entity, promising to sacrifice every day one prisoner to him for the rest of his life, as long as the demon served him faithfully and helped him in killing the Sultan and his court. When the dark contract was signed with blood, the sky turned gray and a foul wind rose up from nowhere, tormenting the desert wastelands and scaring the unaware peoples of Ylaruam.

The Court Diviner had a vision of death and massacre and, fearing for the life of the Sultan, alerted the Grand Vizier about an unknown menace coming from the desert. Further predictions revealed that a nightmare creature emerged from the Plane of Pain had instructed to kill the Sultan and all his followers in the next night of full moon. Exceptional measures were taken to overcome the menace; the strongest and skilled fighters were joined from the entire Emirate to defend the Sultan, along with powerful mages and sage clerics and patriarchs. Zabaas himself was dragged out of his damp cell and dragged in front of the Sultan, who promised him to spare his life if he joined the conclave of adventurers create to protect the palace against the fiendish menace. The great thief accepted, but only at the condition that the Sultan gave him back the Twelve Daggers forever. Full of awe for the approaching danger, the Sultan agreed to the offer and Zabaas conquered his freedom and his weapons with within few moments.

The fatal night, the greatest Ylari adventurers were scattered through the Sultan's Palace, ready to defend his life at the cost of theirs. Amongst them were Zabaas the Great, fully equipped with his set of Amazing Daggers, excited from the new thrill that the entire matter was expected to deserve to all involved in the quest. When midnight arrived, darkness more obscure than the night sky covered the entire palace, and icy drips of sweat covered the bodies of the defenders.

Eventually, the terror grew so high that many brave adventures began to tremble like rookies and silently prayed for the savior of their souls. Zabaas, who was teamed with a sturdy desert warrior wielding an enormous two-handed scimitar, grasped nervously the decorated hilts of his daggers, silently trying to perceive any nearby sound. Suddenly, a nearby wall burst out in bluish flames and crumbles with a creaking noise. A couple of seconds later, the splattered corpses of two former defenders were thrown into the breach and tumbled in a grotesque mess of blood, exposed organs and contorted bones. The air became chilly and a whistling sound filled the area.

Zabaas and the desert warrior embraced their weapons and jumped ahead to confront the fiendish menace, a 9' tall demon with thick leathery crimson skin, with ivory horns, adamantite 10"-claws and a ferocious mouth full of savages and sharp fangs. The mighty desert man stroke the demon with his massive scimitar, but the leathery hide seemed to deflect the blow and, whilst the fighter was still wondering of his ineffective attack, the horned fiend beheaded him with a well-aimed blow. As the lifeless body fallen to the floor, Zabaas quickly moved to flank the demon and stroke it with two daggers, leaving his weapons struck into the beast, then instantly drawn out another pair of enchanted daggers.

In exchange, the demon howled with both pain and hate, and aimed at Zabaas' head with a mighty claw, but the swift thief ducked and evaded the mortal blow. The fight endured for about ten minutes, with the thief adopting his beloved "strike and run" tactic and the fiend constantly missing him, due to the speed and careful moves of the outlaw. Ten daggers were already deeply inserted in the demon's thick hide, when other defenders began to arrive at the battle scene, running with their weapons in hand. Zabaas was exhausted and his movements began to slow down, thus making him an easier target to be hit for the furious monster. With a sudden move, the demon cornered Zabaas and strokes him in the trunk with a mighty slash, trespassing him from torso to the back. A yell emerged from the thief's lips, hurrying up the desperate run of his former companions.

Zabaas felt his vital force leaving his body and with a desperate attempt collected his last vigor to hit again the monster. His hands sprung toward the demon's head, and both daggers were immersed in it eyes. With a desperate

jump, the fiend blindly charged the thief, hitting him in the stomach with its bony horns, before falling down, cold dead. The high pitched scream of the evil creature mixed with the last breaths of the legendary Zabaas, while the other defenders watched at the entire scene with bulging eyes and a grasp of terror to their hearts.

In a few seconds, the body of the demon begun to dissipate in a cloud of dense and stinky gas, that corroded both the carcass of the fiend and the corpse of Zabaas. Only the Twelve Daggers remained untouched by the acid cloud, maybe protected by some form of arcane magic. The following day, the Sultan recompensed all the defenders, and built an opulent tomb in his own mausoleum in which buried the Twelve Daggers, the only remains of the man who saved his life. By the way, the rebel Emir was captured and impaled in a public ceremony few days after the fallen of his demon, pleasing the ears of the entire Court with his scream for about three hours before finding the eternal rest.

Today, the story Zabaas, his daring thefts, his final sacrifice and his enchanted Daggers is still told around the fires of the taverns, along the caravans' ways, in the dark alleys, in the refreshing oasis in the earth of the desert and even in the luxurious rooms of nobles and aristocrats. His Daggers was looted from his tomb long time ago, along with many others valuables, from unknown grave robbers, but despite their destiny is still uncertain, it remains one of the most desired items of all Ylari history.

Description and powers

The Twelve Amazing Daggers of Zabaas are a set of enchanted weapons finely crafted, each created in a specific shape peculiar to a particular race, clan or social group. It is said that they were donated to the Sultan of the Emirates of Ylaruam from an ancient guild of desert mages, to swear a promise of peace and reciprocal help in case of need. Nothing else is known about the fate of this mages or the assistance oath, but it seems that both things are lost and forgotten from a very long time.

Following is the description of the Twelve Daggers, along with their powers and special qualities. All Daggers have the game statistics indicated below their name, can be used by magic users and are considered Small weapons. The indicated damage is the base damage, to which must be added any magical or Strength bonus. These base stats can be used if the DM

desire to introduce in his campaign normal versions of the weapons detailed above. If the Weapon Mastery rule is used, all types of Daggers use the same weapon skill, that for ordinary daggers. Also, all the Twelve Amazing Daggers shares the following powers: indestructible, +1 bonus to Initiative Rolls, and inflicts triple damage on a “natural” attack roll of 20.

Ajjenn, Dagger of Fire

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4; Rng 10/20/30; Enc 25 cn

This weapon resembles one common dagger, normally used everywhere across the Known World. Ajjenn is an ordinary shaped dagger forged in steel, with the hilt covered in black leather. The blade burns with blue and orange flames when unsheathed, although it cannot be used to ignite materials nor emits heat. It has a magical bonus of +2 to hit and damage, and when strikes an opponent cause an additional damage of 1 HP per level of the attacker due to the fire that burns on the blade. The Dagger inflicts double damage to all creatures especially vulnerable to fire, and while wielded acts like a *ring of fire protection*.

Burmentari, Knife of Ice

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4; Rng 10/20/30; Enc 25 cn

This weapon is a common rude knife, universally used across the Known World. Burmentari is a long and rough knife forged in steel, with a long blade and the hilt of black iron. The blade emits a pale blue light when unsheathed and transmit a chilly sensation on touch. It has a magical bonus of +3 to hit and damage, and when strikes an opponent cause an additional damage of 1 HP per level of the attacker due to the cold that spreads from the blade, and while wielded acts like a *ring of cold protection* (i.e. the same like a *ring of fire protection*, only against cold).

Cadissur, Katar of Life

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4+2; Rng cannot be thrown; Enc 35 cn

The katar is widely used amongst the fiery nomads of the Khanates of Ethengar. Cadissur is a long dagger with a large blade that gradually shrinks to an acuminate point, forged in an alloy of steel and copper, from which derivates its reddish color. The hilt is strangely shaped, resembling an “H” letter, with two vertical lateral bars connected by an horizontal one at the middle, and is forged with the same metal of the blade, decorated with small red rubies.

Moreover, when the wielder suffers a fatal blow that will lower his HP to zero or less, he can continue to act normally for another 1-3 rounds before dying. During this time he can be healed to positive HPs and so avoid to effectively dying.

Drenjai, Kukri of Death

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4+2; Rng 15/30/45; Enc 35 cn

The kukri is commonly used by elves, especially those who dwells in isolated or savages lands and by the peoples of Atruaghin Clans. Drenjai has a long and heavy dagger, with a curved blade sharpened only on the outer part, forged in black steel, in alloy with the ashes of a powerful lich. The black hilt is massive and decorated with golden and white motives of skulls and sickles, realized in gold and platinum. It has a magical bonus of +3 to hit and damage, and when strikes a target with an unmodified Attack Roll of 19 or 20, the victim must succeed at a ST vs. Death or will be instantly slain. Creatures killed by this fatal strike cannot be resurrected in any way (maybe except a *wish* spell, at DM discretion).

Durmana, Kriss of Sun

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4+1; Rng 20/40/60; Enc 45 cn

The kriss is the weapon of assassins from southern lands, including (but not limited to) Thyatis, and Minrothad regions. Durmana has an ornate blade in serpentine shape forged in dark gray meteoritic iron, with a golden hilt decorated with motives of hands. It has a magical bonus of +1 to hit and damage, but renders the wielder immune to any 1–3 level spell, even if its effects are simulated by a magical item. However, the owner of this Kriss cannot cast any spell while keeps it unsheathed. While wielded, shine as it has a *continual light* spell placed upon its blade and any undead creatures that enters the light area suffers 1 HP of damage per round.

Jennai, Dirk of Moon

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4; Rng 10/20/30; Enc 30 cn

The dirk is a weapon used by the highlanders’ clan of central Mystara, and also adopted from some families of the Principalities of Glantri. Jennai is a short knife with a sturdy and stocky one-edged blade forged in solid iron, with an unadorned hilt covered in ordinary looking leather. It has a magical bonus of +1 to hit and damage when used during the day or in enclosed spaces, but while wielded under the open night sky its magical bonus raises as indicated due to moon influence: +2 while no

moon is present (new moon); +3 while waning moon is present; +4 while waxing moon is present; and +5 while full moon is present.

Mashanti, Haladie of Water

Game statistics: Dmg 2d4; Rng cannot be thrown; Enc 30 cn

The haladie is a rather uncommon weapon, mainly used by elves or human swashbucklers, especially those from the regions of Glantri, Darokin, Karameikos, Ierendi and Minrothad. Mashanti is a double dagger with two short blades, one curved and one straight, placed each one to an extremity of a central hilt. The entire dagger is forged in a strange alloy of steel (for the central hilt), light blue iron (for the curved blade) and light green copper (for the straight blade). It has a magical bonus of +1 to hit and damage, which raises to +4 against marine or waterborne creatures or monsters originated in the Plane of Water. While wielded, it also confers the ability to breathe underwater.

Shelkantari, Bank of Earth

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4+1; Rng cannot be thrown; Enc 35 cn

The bank is a weapon meanly used by the peoples of Ylaruam Emirates, but it is also used by the orcs and other humanoids of the savage lands of Thar. Shelkantari has a very curved blade, similar to that of a sickle, forged from volcanic iron, fixed to a straight ebony hilt. It has a magical bonus of +2 to hit and damage, which raises to +4 against creatures originated in the Planes of Water, Fire and Air. While wielded, grants a +2 bonus to AC and complete immunity to poisons.

This Bank can cast once per day the *passwall* spell at the wielder's level.

Trellaisi, Scramasax of Bravery

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4+3; Rng cannot be thrown; Enc 40 cn

The scramasax is the grand knife used in the northern lands of Soderfjord, Ostland e Vestland, and also from some of the peoples of the Heldann Freeholds. Trebellaisi is a great dagger with one-edged sturdy blade forged in grayish steel, with a rich silver hilt encrusted with precious gems of various colors. It has a magical bonus of +4 to hit and damage, and while wielded renders immune to any form of fear, terror, awe, paralysis, hold-effects and mind influence. In addition, it also imposes a -2 penalty to hit and damage rolls to any hostile creature in a 2'-radius from the wielder.

Valoajj, Stiletto of Blood

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4; Rng 5/10/15; Enc 25 cn

The stiletto is a small weapon used widely across all civilized lands of the Known World, including Karameikos, Glantri, Thyatis, Minrothad, Darokin, Ierendi, the Five Shires, Vestland, Ostland, Soderfjord, and Heldann Freeholds. Yaloajj is a short knife with thin and pointed blade forged in an alloy of steel and silver, with a rich hilt of shining silver encrusted with small blood red gems. It has a magical bonus of +5 to hit and damage and when strikes an opponent on a unmodified Attack Roll of 15+ inflicts a nasty wound which will keep bleeding for 1-3 rounds, inflicting at the beginning of each round an additional damage of 3d4 HP.

Ygressei, Bich'wa of Faith

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4+1; Rng 10/20/30; Enc 40 cn

The bich'wa is an uncommon weapon mainly used by pirates and natives of the southern seas, from the Minrothad Guild and southernmost regions. Ygressey has a long double-curved and double-edged blade forged in stout iron, fixed on a circular hilt sculpted from the horns of a buffalo or a similar animal. It has a magical bonus of +4 to hit and damage and inflicts a damage of 2d4 HP, plus any magical or strength bonus. Once per round, the wielder can reroll any to hit or damage roll regarding the Bich'wa, but must accept this second result.

Yotula, Jambiya of Speed

Game statistics: Dmg 1d4; Rng 10/20/30; Enc 25 cn

The Jambiya is a strange blade, mainly used in the Ylaruam Emirates. Yotula has a long, curved and double-edged blade forged in yellowish steel, fixed to a simple hilt of dark iron decorated with tiny yellow and white gems. It has a magical bonus of +3 to hit and damage and the wielder can double the number of effective attacks he can make every round with this Jambiya, which also strikes first in each round of combat. If this weapon hits with an unmodified Attack Roll of 20 mortally wounds the target string through his hearth (or similar vital organ), killing him instantly.

A new class, the Nimble Thief

Zabaas the Great was part of a restricted class of acrobatic thieves, that is now made accessible even to human PCs. This new character class is known as Nimble Thief, and is detailed below, so it can be included in any personal campaign setting (obviously with the DM permission!).

- ✧ *Prime Requisite:* Dexterity.
- ✧ *Minimum Scores:* a Nimble Thief character must have a Dexterity score of 13 or greater when first played.
- ✧ *Experience Bonus:* 5% for Dexterity 13-15; 10% for Dexterity 16-18.
- ✧ *Hit Dice:* 1d4 per level up to 9th level. Starting with 10th level, +2 hit points per level, and Constitution adjustments no longer apply.
- ✧ *Maximum Level:* 36.
- ✧ *Armor:* Leather armor only; shield not permitted.
- ✧ *Weapons:* Any missile weapon; any one-handed melee weapon.
- ✧ *Special Abilities:* At 1st level – Open Locks, Find Traps, Remove Traps, Climb Walls,

Move Silently, Hide in Shadows, Pick Pockets, Hear Noise, Backstab, and Two-weapons Combo; at 4th level – Read any normal language 80%; at 10th level – Cast magic-user spells from scrolls (10% chance of backfire).

- ✧ *Saving Throws:* As Thief of same experience level.
- ✧ *THACO:* As Thief of same experience level.
- ✧ *Weapon Mastery:* Begin with two weapon choices; additional choices at each of the following experience levels: 3, 6, 9, 11, 15, 23, 30, and 36. Gain an extra choice every 200,000 XP earned above maximum level 36.

Special Abilities

- ✧ Open Locks, Find Traps, Remove Traps, Climb Walls, Move Silently, Hide in Shadows, Pick Pockets, Hear Noise, Read Languages, and Scroll Use as Thief of same experience level.
- ✧ Backstab as Thief, but bonuses to hit and damage rolls increase as following:

| Nimble Thief experience level | Backstab bonus to hit | Backstab damage multiplier |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1-4 | +4 | 2x |
| 5-8 | +5 | 2x |
| 9-12 | +6 | 2x |
| 13-16 | +6 | 3x |
| 17-20 | +7 | 3x |
| 21-24 | +8 | 3x |
| 25-28 | +8 | 4x |
| 29-32 | +9 | 4x |
| 33-36 | +10 | 4x |

- ✧ *Two-weapons Combo:* with this ability, a Nimble Thief can fight simultaneously with two weapons, one in each hand. Both weapons must be Small sized to be used with this maneuver. Basically, the effect of the Combo is the same as the *Two weapons combat* optional rule (page 110 or the *Rules Cyclopedia*), except that the second attack has no penalties to Attack Roll. Also, the Nimble Thief can freely combine anyone of these combat maneuvers (see page 104 of *Rules Cyclopedia* for maneuver's details): Attack, Throw, Fighting Withdrawal, Parry, and Disarm. In the same round, the Nimble Thief can perform two times the same combat maneuver or use two different maneuvers, as desired.

Nimble thief Experience Table

| Level | Title | XP |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Dexterous Thief | 0 |
| 2 | Deft Thief | 1.600 |
| 3 | Agile Thief | 3.200 |
| 4 | Handy Thief | 6.400 |
| 5 | Lively Thief | 12.800 |
| 6 | Swift Thief | 27.000 |
| 7 | Tumbler Thief | 54.000 |
| 8 | Acrobat Thief | 108.000 |
| 9 | Nimble Thief | 216.000 |
| 10 | “ “ | 378.000 |
| 11 | “ “ | 540.000 |
| 12 | “ “ | 702.000 |
| 13 | “ “ | 864.000 |
| 14 | “ “ | 1.026.000 |
| 15 | “ “ | 1.188.000 |
| 16 | “ “ | 1.350.000 |
| 17 | “ “ | 1.512.000 |
| 18 | “ “ | 1.674.000 |
| 19 | “ “ | 1.836.000 |
| 20 | “ “ | 1.998.000 |
| 21 | “ “ | 2.160.000 |
| 22 | “ “ | 2.322.000 |
| 23 | “ “ | 2.484.000 |
| 24 | “ “ | 2.646.000 |
| 25 | Master Nimble Thief | 2.808.000 |
| 26 | “ “ | 2.970.000 |
| 27 | “ “ | 3.132.000 |
| 28 | “ “ | 3.294.000 |
| 29 | “ “ | 3.456.000 |
| 30 | “ “ | 3.618.000 |
| 31 | “ “ | 3.780.000 |
| 32 | “ “ | 3.942.000 |
| 33 | “ “ | 4.104.000 |
| 34 | “ “ | 4.266.000 |
| 35 | “ “ | 4.428.000 |
| 36 | Grand Master Nimble Thief | 4.590.000 |

SOME ENCHANTED ITEM

TESMAR'S BAGUETTE

ERIN D. SMALE

Each instalment of *Some Enchanted Item* features a unique magic item, complete with a loose historical context for adaptation to any OD&D campaign. Adventure hooks are also provided to ease the DM's task of integrating the item—via encounters or whole scenarios—into his setting. In our fourth instalment, we feature *Tesmar's Baguette*, a gem with many hidden powers.

History

Tesmar the Skald is a name bandied about the Iddulf Holds with unequal parts of admiration, disdain, contempt, and no little amusement. Less than a quarter-century ago, Tesmar was the most popular minstrel in the Holds, well received for her beautiful composition, evocative verse, and charming wit. Entertaining the thanes throughout the Holds, Tesmar earned an abundant living as a great performer and sometime spy.

While the **Baguette's** origin is unknown, Tesmar used the gem to great effect whilst within the halls of her host nobility. Indeed, the jewel magnified her already considerable skills, and her consequential talent at espionage allowed her to amass a treasury that approached that of her employers. Unfortunately, her success cultivated no little envy among her rivals, who were quick to ascertain the means by which she had obtained her riches. It was not long before Tesmar's welcome in any hall was refused, and the ranks of her supporters thinned. Some thanes, desirous to keep the secrets of their houses intact, formulated a stop to her continued intrigues.

As recently as five winters past, Tesmar was induced by the Thane of Rorogulf to assess the strength of Duram Hold, whose shore-wards, only miles away, threatened Rorogulf's security. Unknown to all, however, Rorogulf and Duram had already established friendly terms and, as a token of his solidarity, Rorogulf promised to deliver Tesmar to his erstwhile rival. The skald, wary of the commission, but unaware of the conspiracy, fell for the ruse.

Upon her arrival at Duram, where she planned to winter, Tesmar was apprehended and imprisoned. Charged with espionage, Tesmar

was to be tried at the spring Holdmote. Confident that the rogue had been securely trapped, Duram was satisfied with his dungeon-geld. It is an understatement to describe Duram's mood as merely enraged, when at winter's terminus he discovered that his snow-prize had escaped.

Duram accused Rorogulf of freeing the rogue to be used in later plots against him. In turn, Rorogulf accused Duram of fabricating the escape of his "token of solidarity" to cause discord and mistrust amongst Rorogulf's other allies. Most believe, simply, that Tesmar escaped with the aid of her own supporters, through bribes to her jailers, and, of course, the powers of her **Baguette**. Regardless, it is considered no little irony that, after Tesmar's egress, the flowering treaty between Duram and Rorogulf wilted, leading to an unenforceable and discordant accord that today amounts to tepid fighting between both sides with no territorial gain and much animosity. The fate and present whereabouts of Tesmar remain unconfirmed. Somewhat of a folk hero amongst the thralls of the Holds, who enjoy pointing out the folly of their ostentatious thanes, Tesmar is suspected to live still, continuing to practice her art in other lands.

Appearance and Powers

Tesmar's Baguette is, in normal form, a 1/4" oblong diamond of "Fairly good" quality (RC/226). Given the proper command word(s), the gem transforms into one of several pieces of jewellery, each of which features the **Baguette** prominently and provides its wearer with certain magical powers. Each transformation consumes a single turn and a number of charges; the current form remains indefinitely until changed. The **Baguette** has 3-13 (2d6+1) charges, and the jewellery forms are:

- Diamond (0 charges): The **Baguette** grants +5% to all thief special abilities (RC/22).
- Anklet (1 charge): Increases movement by 30' (10'), regardless of actual encumbrance.
- Armband (2 charges): Provides a "to-hit" bonus of +1 to any class
- Bracelet (3 charges): Improves an *existing* thief's Backstabbing ability (RC/23) by +2 "to-hit" and triple damage.

- Broach (2 charges): Confers a +1 AC bonus to any class.
- Earring (1 charge): Grants Hear Noise ability (RC/22) as 1st-level thief; if wearer is already a thief, improves Hear Noise ability by one experience level (RC/22).
- Monocle (1 charge): Grants Find Traps ability (RC/22) as 1st-level thief; if the wearer is already a thief, improves Find Traps ability by one experience level.
- Necklace (1 charge): Grants Move Silently and Hide in Shadows abilities (RC/22) as 1st-level thief; if the wearer is a thief, improves these abilities by one experience level.
- Ring (1 charge): Grants Open Locks and Remove Traps abilities (RC/22) as 1st-level thief; if the wearer is a thief, improves these abilities by one experience level.

Adventure Hooks

Tesmar's Baguette may inspire any of the following adventures:

- Tesmar is encountered by the PCs and joins the party as an ally or spy, depending on the PCs' disposition and current mission (and DM's desire). Tesmar should be a Neutral thief of at least name-level. She may possess the **Baguette** and use it surreptitiously for the benefit (and possible amazement) of the PCs. If the **Baguette** is lost to her, Tesmar seeks to reclaim it (assuredly with the unknowing aid of the party).
- The PCs find the **Baguette**, in one of its many forms, within some trove (perhaps within the Iddulf Holds), and a lucky PC thief learns of its significant powers. Word of the **Baguette's** use somehow reaches Tesmar, who arrives at some inopportune time to reclaim it. Alternatively, the **Baguette** becomes the target of desire for not only Tesmar, but also at least two rival thieves' guilds, a

thane of Iddulf (ideally Rorogulf or Duram, or both), and a sect of anti-thief clerics bent on the gem's destruction.

- A quest to recharge the **Baguette** is launched. Assuming it's possible, revitalising the gem proves difficult, requiring both mundane ingredients (the blessing of a jeweller-become-cleric, the oil of a stout lock, and the sweat of a thief) and esoteric components (the footfall of a silent rogue, a drop of shadow, and the distilled pain of a backstabbed victim). The final requirement is a **Stoneform** spell (RC/54) cast from a scroll by a Neutral thief of 12th-level or higher. The ritual charges the **Baguette** to its maximum potency of 25 charges, though the entire process is certain to catch the attention of many covetous eyes. . .
- Tesmar was freed (or slain) by Rorogulf or Duram for political gain, though the **Baguette** was lost in the process. One (or both) of the thanes entreat the PCs to retrieve a certain, oblong diamond, about a quarter-inch long. The PCs are promised all manner of rewards upon the gem's return—whether such offers are genuine is up to the DM.
- The origin of the **Baguette** is some Immortal of Thought, who decides that the gem's time on the Prime Plane has ended. To be effective, this hook assumes that the **Baguette** has been in play for some time, and that its absence will affect the PCs in some manner. Alternately, the **Baguette** is actually an artefact of the Sphere of Entropy, and its destruction is sought by an Epic Hero (RC/223) questing for Immortality (perhaps, ironically, a high-level Tesmar herself).

THE MANDOLIN OF JAENELLE LYNWYTH

GEOFF GANDER

What follows is a description of a unique magical item for use in any D&D® campaign. This article is intended to build upon the recent articles concerning bards in the D&D® game⁴, but DMs are free to use it as they see fit.

History:

During the years following the decline of the Darokin Kings, the land of Darokin – which, until that time, was a land of relative prosperity – fell into chaos. Frontier lords made themselves into kings, and mercantile interests, who financed many of the political factions active at the time, gradually took up the reins of power in many of the larger cities. Between these two loci of power lay the great Streel Plain, which had been Darokin’s breadbasket, as well as a hub of logging activity. Thus, the Streel River ran through lands that were vital to both the borderlands and the emerging city-states, and it was there that many would-be kings tried to carve out their own domains, and thus become power brokers.

So it was, in the years that followed, that many nations arose along the Streel River. Some of these duchies and kingdoms did, in fact, become powerful in their own right; others were lands plagued with constant strife. Almost all of these nations, however, had become faint memories by the time of the founding of the Darokinian Republic in AC 927, having been absorbed by more powerful neighbours, or fallen into obscurity. Some of those lost nations – such as Daelbar and Almarand – have not been completely forgotten, if only because renowned bards of that period composed great tributes to the heroes of those realms. Some of those great heroes were, in fact, bards themselves.

Perhaps the best-known bard of that tumultuous time was Jaenelle Lynwyth, Sword-singer of Daelbar (AC 743 – 779). Jaenelle was born and raised in the Daelbaran town of Rennalen (now overgrown ruins near the village of Rennydale), the only child of Conwyn Lynwyth, himself a bard of renown. It was only natural that Jaenelle would become a bard herself one day, and her father trained her rigorously. An apt pupil, Jaenelle became a respected bard in her own right at the age of 14, and was soon performing at the court of King Haldmun, in Mintarm (also now in ruins). Upon reaching adulthood, Jaenelle began to chafe at being in her father’s shadow, and being limited to performing for the Daelbaran nobility; she felt that songs and ballads should be for everyone to hear, for no one could fail to be uplifted by music. Hearing of orcish incursions in the nearby Duchy of Rondeth, Jaenelle took leave of her father, and sought out a mercenary company that was heading to Rondeth to lend aid. It was there that she witnessed her first battles, and where she composed her first heroic tribute. It was then that she knew her place was at the side of heroes.

The following years saw Jaenelle travel all over the Streel Plain, marching with mercenaries, adventurers, and royal armies alike in search of the tales that, she felt, must be recorded for all to hear. During that time, she became proficient with a blade (in large part out of necessity), and discovered her own talent for composing and singing magical songs. By the time she was in her early 20s, Jaenelle was a veteran of several battles, and she was known throughout the Streel Plain for being deadly with a sword, and for the power of the magical songs she sung. Thus it was that Jaenelle became known as the “sword-singer” – a title that was eventually applied to a school of Darokinian fighting bards, which persisted until the middle of the 10th century.⁵ Jaenelle

⁴ See OD&DITIES Issue 11: “The Bard: A Revitalised Class for the D&D® Game”, by Geoff Gander, Marco Dalmonte, and Carl Quaif. Readers may also wish to peruse Geoff’s article entitled “Luigi’s Symphony” (also in that issue), which presents a collection of additional spell-songs for use with the bard as presented.

⁵ Sword-singers were distinguishable from regular bards by the oaths that they swore to protect the people of Darokin, to uphold the cause of just law, and to ensure that no deed – good or evil – went unreported to the masses. In this sense, sword-singers served as sources of news for the people of the countryside, and as champions of justice for the legitimate rulers of the Streel Plain.

is widely held to have been the first sword-singer.⁶

During her illustrious career, Jaenelle composed a large number of spell songs, many of which have been lost in the years since her death. Her one distinguishing attribute or feature, however, was the mandolin that she played. No one knows where she obtained it, or under what circumstances⁷, but everywhere she was seen after her first battle, it was in her possession. Jaenelle bore her mandolin with her throughout all of her travels, until her death at the Battle of Favaro in AC 779. The mandolin was recovered by one of Jaenelle's companions on the battlefield, and, according to records from that time, it was brought back to Rennalen, to be presented to her ailing father, who was much aggrieved by what the presentation meant, and died the following day. All records of the mandolin cease to be after that time, and over the intervening years many a bard has tried to locate the instrument, but to no avail.

Description:

Jaenelle's mandolin measures approximately three feet long from end to end, with a stock measuring one foot in width at its widest point. The stock and frame of the mandolin are made from well-polished birch, and the tuning pegs are fashioned of silver, which never tarnishes. Along the length of the instrument there are geometric patterns, composed mainly of inlays of mahogany. On the flat face of the mandolin's stock, fashioned with inlays of mother-of-pearl, there is a stylised depiction of the sun – a symbol favoured by Jaenelle. Due to the reputation of its original owner, this mandolin is well known to Darokinian bards, most of whom are well versed in the history of their country. As such, all Darokinian bards will have a 30% chance, plus an additional 5%

⁶ The last Darokinian sword-singer was Tybalt Bentilun (AC 914-968), who attained his title in Darokin City in AC 947. At that time, there was only one instructor left at the academy, which was no longer supported by the major merchant houses for political reasons. Tybalt founded a conservatory of his own, but none of his students sought to become sword-singers, perhaps due to covert pressure wielded by the major families of Darokin. With Tybalt's death, the tradition of Darokinian sword-singing ended, and very few people today are old enough to remember it.

⁷ Even Jaenelle's closest companions never found out how she obtained her legendary instrument.

chance per level, of recognising this mandolin should they see it.

Although this instrument will play beautifully for anyone who uses it, the true magic of Jaenelle's mandolin is only revealed when a bard uses it. As long as the mandolin is in the bard's possession, he or she will be treated favourably by Darokinian bards, receiving a reaction bonus of +2 from lawful bards, and +1 from neutral bards – all due to the instrument's storied past. This bonus applies only to reactions from NPCs. Chaotic creatures will sense an aura of goodness surrounding the mandolin, and will be averse to picking it up. If they do touch it, they must make a save vs. Spells or feel ill for 1d2 days, during which all ability scores are reduced by 4. Should a chaotic bard use the instrument, all of his or her spell-songs will go awry – all damage from them is minimised (for example, a spell-song inflicting 3d4 damage will only do 3 damage), and all victims' saving throws automatically succeed.

When played by a lawful or neutral bard, Jaenelle's mandolin enhances all combat related spell-songs by 1. This means that damage from spell-songs have a bonus of +1 per die (for example, the fifth level spell-song *Rolls of Thunder*⁸, which normally does a base damage of 2d8, would do 2d8+2 damage while the bard has the mandolin in his or her possession), all enemy saves are penalised by – 1, and all bonuses (for example, to armour class, morale, or attacks) provided to the bard's allies are increased by 1.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Jaenelle's mandolin is the spell-song that she placed within it. If a bard holds the instrument and says Jaenelle's name aloud, a pair of ghostly hands will appear on the strings, and play a haunting tune, accompanied by Jaenelle's disembodied voice, which sings the lyrics to the song. This is one of Jaenelle's personal spell-songs, which she composed at the height of her adventuring career. Any bard who witnesses this demonstration will know immediately that it is a spell-song; although it will not have any effect – it must be played by a living person. Two halved Intelligence checks will be necessary to transcribe the song properly. The spell-song is as follows:

⁸ Please refer to the aforementioned article on bards in OD&DITIES #11 for a complete basic list of bardic spell-songs.

Clear Mind

Level: 4

Range: 0' (bard only)

Duration: Permanent

Effect: Clears all minds within 50' of any sort of befuddlement or deception.

When this spell-song is sung and played, all intelligent creatures within 50' of the bard are instantly freed of any magically induced confusion or deception, such as that produced by a *charm* or *confusion* spell, or by a bard's *charm* ability – provided the other bard is of an equal or lower level. The spell-song dispels the other enchantment permanently, but will not prevent any creatures freed in this manner from being affected by such spells again in the future.

Use in a Campaign:

The most obvious use for Jaenelle's mandolin would be to provide a bard player character with a useful magic item. Ideally, the mandolin should be the object of a quest for the bard, with its eventual discovery being a cherished

moment, as well as a noteworthy accomplishment. If the campaign is set in Mystara, such a goal would be particularly appropriate for Darokinian player character bards.

An interesting plot twist that the DM could add in such a scenario could be the goal of a small group of Darokinian NPC bards to re-establish the sword-singers. An instrument as well known as Jaenelle's mandolin could certainly rally other bards to their cause. Should they discover that the player characters have the instrument in their possession, or that they are questing for it, the NPC bards might try to steal it from them, or find out where their rivals think the mandolin is located, and try to recover it first. This could lead to a long running campaign in its own right. Alternatively, the player character bard could be the one seeking to bring back the sword-singers, in which case he or she could attract the attention of various elements in Darokinian society who, for various reasons, do not wish them to succeed.