

CROSS-CLASS *SUBTERFUGE* PROTOCOLS

BY GREG GORGONMILK, ELF-GAME REFEREE



“You’re all lawless feckin’
thieves now, I reckon!”

— HAYWOOD JABLOMEY, TENTH LEVEL “BARD”

Within this supplement you will find optional rules for *universalizing the thief/rogue skillset*. Now the whole party can know the joys of moving silently and hiding in shadows!

FOR ALL TRADITIONAL FANTASY VIOLENCE SIMULATORS AND THEIR CLONES

WHAT'S ALL THIS NOW?

The Thief class was officially introduced to the Dungeons & Dragons mythos with the publication of its very first supplement, Greyhawk (1975), largely based on Gary Gygax's home campaign. Gary's campaign did not have a thief class, at least initially. The notion was suggested to him in a letter from a D&D fan, and he ran with it and Gygaxized it for print.

Since its appearance, the Thief-as-class-onto-itself has faced criticism from Dungeon Masters far and wide. The bone of contention: The thief isn't really a necessary element of the game. Player Characters were doing plenty of burglarizing, sneaking, looting, skulking and various other sorts of shady business well before the appearance of Supplement I. One could even argue that thieves—through their very existence—deprive other PC classes of their agency. All of a sudden, fighting men are novice lockpickers at best, inevitably losing every hide-and-seek game and laughably bad at just moving silently down a passage. The thief's exclusive skillset is just that—it *excludes* other PC types and relegates them to permanent dilettante status in the Sneaking Department.

Cross-Class Subterfuge Protocols folds the Thief class back into the game batter. But not like it never happened. No, the thief **skills** were cool and we're keeping them.

SOME DEFINITIONS

For the sake of clarity:

- **ROGUE:** What every adventurer has to be sometimes to get results.
- **SNEAKY:** Furtive, sly.
- **SUBTERFUGE:** Deception and illcraft used in order to achieve one's goal.
- **THIEF:** An adventurer who has made a career of burglary and gifting.

GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

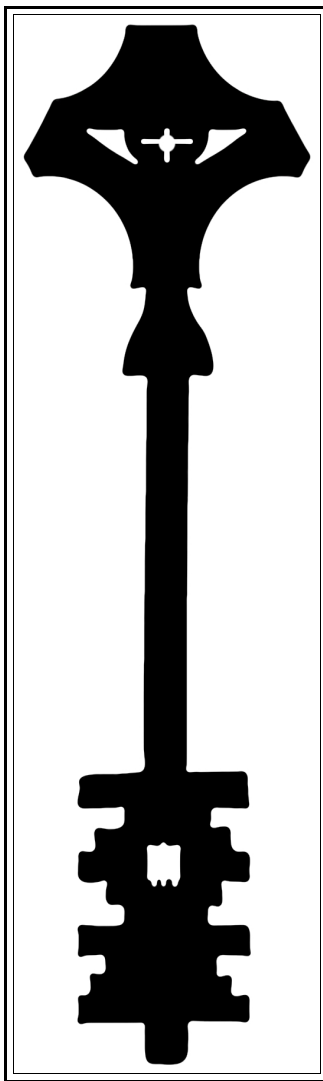
1. All player characters are Adventurers, and surviving adventures requires sneakiness from all involved, regardless of class.
2. Adventurers get sneakier as they gain experience.
3. Some classes have more opportunities than others to hone their sneakiness. [eg. A fighting man will get to practice walking silently more often than a magic-user probably will.] Thus the pace that sneaking skills are developed will vary from class to class.
4. Some races are innately better at being sneaky than others. Facts is facts. A Halfling is just going to be better (on average) at pick-pocketing than, say, a half-orc would be (on average).
5. Characters with very high WIS or DEX scores are also naturally endowed with the sneaking ju-ju.

THE BASICS

Six specific types of sneaking situations are addressed by a character's Sneaking Throws. Mechanically these work just like Saving Throws: You roll a d20—if the result is equal to or greater than the character's Throw value than the sneaking action is a success. The six Sneaking Throws are:

PICK POCKET: Attempt to grab a handful of coins, gems, lint, rotten teeth (whatever) from a target character.

Picking for a specific item is possible but incurs penalties to the roll. This makes the pick more difficult depending on the specific circumstances involved. The referee has the final say on how the throw's result should be modified—generally a -1 or -2 is an adequate representation for a challenging pick situation such as an overfull money-purse where a single magic emerald is the target item.



Halflings and dwarfs get +1 to their pick throws. Half-orcs and all other big n' burly types get -1 to all pick throws.

Characters with DEX scores of 17 or higher modify their pick throws by +1.

OPEN LOCK: Attempt to jimmy or bypass a lock or lock-like mechanism. The default assumption is that your character is using the right tools to do this. If those tools are not present, then a narrow dagger or stiletto might do the job with a -3 modifier to the throw.

Not all locks are created equal. A superior lock will subtract 2 from the throw. A masterwork lock will subtract 4. Extramundane locks can be opened by a skilled magic-user who casts *read magic* on the target lock. Treat this as a masterwork lock.

Dwarfs and gnomes are especially handy with locks and get +1 to their throws. Half-orcs and similar brutes get -1 to their throws because their fingers are like sausages.

Characters with DEX scores of 17 or higher modify their lock throws by +1.

DISARM TRAP: Attempt to deactivate or possibly destroy a trap's mechanism. Conceivably this could also apply to clockwork devices of the non-trap variety. This throw encompasses a vast variety of trapworks, and the referee should feel free to apply modifiers for especially difficult designs.

Disarm Trap also covers the use of magical devices like wands, rings and amulets. A successful throw indicates that the character understands the basic functions of the device—though not necessarily its effects—and knows what is required to activate it. Magic-users get +2 to trap throws used in this manner.

Dwarfs and gnomes probably invented booby traps and naturally get +1 to all their trap throws.

All characters with sub-average INT scores (*i.e.* scores below 9) get -2 modifiers to their trap throws.

MOVE SILENTLY: Attempt to navigate a given distance without alerting nearby creatures who may or may not be listening. Without the proper magic it's impossible to pull off in anything heavier than studded leather.

Elves and halflings get +1 to their throws.

HIDE: Attempt to conceal oneself from being seen by any means possible. Will prove to be difficult for larger than man-sized characters (adjust modifiers according to vastness).

Because so much depends on the percipient, who may or may not be actively looking for the character attempting to hide, the hide throw can sometimes be a very tricky roll to pull off. The referee should carefully consider modifiers for monsters with exceptional sensory apparatus, magical creatures and lesser divine beings. Gods should be exempt—they're impossible for a mortal to hide from.

All non-humans get +2 to their throws. Except half-orcs, who seem to be mentally impaired while trying to hide.

Characters with WIS scores of 17 or higher modify their hide throws by +1.

DISGUISE: Attempt to falsify one's appearance through the use of makeup, mask, or whatever materials are available. Highly circumstantial—the referee must rely on their best judgment, scaling how convincing the disguise is versus the visual acumen of those characters who chance to see it.

Gods and undead see through all disguises, but most mundane beings can be fooled.

Elves and gnomes get +1 to all disguise throws.

Characters with WIS scores of 17 or higher modify their disguise throws by +1.

KEEP IT SECRET

It's assumed that the referee will handle all sneaking throws from behind the screen, or at least in cases where the consequences of the throw result would not be immediately evident to the player character.

There's no reason for the players to clutter up their character sheets with sneaking throw information either. They've got saving throws. They'll be fine.

That said, make sure the players are at least aware of the basic mechanics behind their characters' choices.

NATURAL 1s: CRITICAL FAILURE

An unmodified roll of "1" is always a critical failure. It means that beyond botching the attempted action, the character's whole situation has gone awry in some way.

A critical failure on a lock throw means that the device has become jammed and any alarm system connected to it has a 3-in-6 chance of being activated.

Blowing a trap throw means the trap (or device) is triggered AND that the character has injured himself (1d6 damage) through some freak display of discoordination.

BACKSTABS?

Treat backstab situations as a bonus attack round (*aka* Attack of Opportunity! Look! A 3Eism!) with all relevant modifiers for the target's rear AC.

FINDING TRAPS?

You don't roll to "Find Treasure" do you? And yet those treasures still end up getting found (eventually). I made the call to dispense with this artifact of the Thief class. Players should have plenty of other in-game resources to help them locate traps—ye olde and much-vaunted ten-foot pole comes to mind immediately.

CREDITS

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SNEAKING THROW MATRIX

Character Class and Experience Level		Pick Pocket	Open Lock	Disarm Trap	Move Silently	Hide	Disguise
Clerics, Priests, Holy Men, etc.	1-3	15	13	13	10	12	12
	4-6	14	12	12	9	11	11
	7-9	13	11	11	8	10	10
	10-12	12	10	10	7	10	10
	13-15	11	9	9	6	10	10
	16-18	10	8	8	5	10	10
	19+	9	7	7	5	10	10
Fighters, Fighting Men, Warriors, etc.	0	12	13	15	12	14	12
	1-2	11	12	14	11	13	11
	3-4	10	11	13	10	12	10
	5-6	9	9	12	9	11	10
	7-8	8	8	11	8	10	10
	9-10	7	7	10	7	10	10
Magic-Users	11-12	6	6	9	6	10	10
	13-14	5	5	8	5	10	10
	15-16	5	5	7	5	10	10
	17+	5	5	6	5	10	10
Magic-Users	1-5	15	14	12	12	14	14
	6-10	14	13	11	11	13	13
	11-15	13	12	10	10	12	12
	16-20	12	11	9	9	11	11
	21+	11	10	8	8	10	10

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