

# The Gongfarmer Militia

A Hirelings &  
Henchmen Zine



COMPATIBLE WITH

# DCC RPG

| Morale Roll | Hireling Reaction   | Henchman Reaction   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1           | Soiling their pants (or nearest equivalent), the hireling runs off screaming, never to be heard from again. Any element of surprise is lost and opponents get a +1 to all attacks during the first round of combat. | Henchman stalks off, quietly muttering "I didn't sign on for any of this crap..." Emboldened, opponents get a +1 to all attacks during the first round of combat. |
| 2-7         | Hireling refuses to fight and stays out of the fray, abandoning the party when it is safe.  | Henchman reverts to hireling status and refuses to fight.   |
| 8-10        | The hireling refuses to fight unless their pay is doubled.  | The henchman demands a better weapon from a PC and refuses to fight until getting one.  |
| 11-14       | The hireling assumes a defensive stance, choosing self-preservation over valor.   | The henchman fights but refuses to take any unnecessary risks.  |
| 15-20       | The hireling defends the party to the best of their ability.  | The henchman fights with honor.   |
| 21-24       | Confident in the abilities of the PCs, the hireling wades into the fray with +1 to all attack rolls.  | Overcome with devotion for their comrades, the henchman leaps to their defense; +1 to all attack rolls.   |
| 25+         | Inspired by the Fates, the hireling leaps into battle with outsized ferocity. All attack and damage rolls made by the hireling are at +2 and their AC increases by 1 for the duration of the combat.                | The henchman rises to the occasion and gains an additional permanent henchmen upgrade. All attack and damage rolls are at +2 for the duration of the combat.      |

### Morale Roll Modifiers

PC Personality modifier: variable (only one PC's modifier may be applied)

Hireling: +0

Henchman: +2

Has been mistreated by PCs: -1

Exceptionally well cared for by PCs: +1

Fighting in the dark: -1

Has cover/hiding places: +1

Facing a horde of enemies: -1

Facing a magical foe: -1

Facing a monstrosity (dragon, demon, chaos lord, etc.): -2

# *The Gongfarmer Militia: A Hirelings & Henchmen Zine*

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per Aspera



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**DCC**  
**RPG**

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# On the Care & Feeding of Hirelings

*Dungeon Crawl Classics* presents retainers and followers as the purview of “adventurers of wealth and renown.” While this is true of more experienced and well equipped PCs, even a band of 1<sup>st</sup> level reavers will sometimes find it advantageous to hire some help to care for equipment, carry treasure, and serve as fodder for meat-grinder dungeons.

Hirelings – NPCs employed by player characters to accompany and assist them – are best deployed as aids to PCs without dominating the spotlight. For this reason, unless otherwise stated, they do not have the same skills and traits as PC classes: hired muscles don’t gain a Deed Die, and hedge mages’ spells cannot reach the same dramatic heights as wizards’ incantations. At best a hireling will share one or two abilities with a normal class.

Hirelings can be run by the judge but can also be given to players to run in combat. No player should control more than one hireling.

## On-boarding a Hireling

Hirelings can be found or recruited by PCs of at least 1<sup>st</sup> level. At the Judge’s discretion, NPCs rescued from dungeons or encountered in large cities may turn out to be hirelings and convinced to join the PCs.



If the PCs are looking to bring on additional help they can choose to advertise for the position. Typically there will be a 10-50 gold pieces fee for advertising, depending on the size of the city or area. The chance for a given type of hireling to be in the area is given in the hireling descriptions. For each additional 5 gold spent on advertising the chance of attracting a candidate increases by 5%.

Use the tables in the hireling description to randomly select the characteristics and skills for each hireling, or simply choose from the available options.

## **From Hireling to Henchman**

Hirelings gain experience points (XP) at half the rate of the party that hired them. In other words, if the base XP given to party members at the end of a session is 6 XP, surviving hirelings receive 3 XP.

When a hireling reaches 20 XP they “level up” to a henchman. This represents the additional loyalty and camaraderie they feel with the party due to their history together. Henchmen do not accumulate additional XP.

When a hireling becomes a henchman they gain 1d6 hit points and roll on the “Henchman Upgrade” table.

At the Judge’s discretion, if a henchman is ever mistreated, underpaid, or otherwise put in a situation in which they would abandon the party, they instead

lose all their XP and henchmen upgrade, reverting to hireling status.

## **Morale**

The real test of hirelings and henchmen is holding fast despite the overwhelming desire to flee for their miserable lives. At the start of every combat, roll a Will save for each hireling and henchmen in the party.

Any PC may spend Luck to increase a hireling or henchman’s morale roll; this includes pooling Luck from multiple PCs.

The Morale Roll may be further modified based on certain factors:

### **Morale Roll Modifiers**

PC Personality modifier: variable (only one PC’s modifier may be applied)

Hireling: +0

Henchman: +2

Has been mistreated by PCs: -1

Exceptionally well cared for by PCs: +1

Fighting in the dark: -1

Has cover/hiding places: +1

Facing a horde of enemies: -1

Facing a magical foe: -1

Facing a monstrosity (dragon, demon, chaos lord, etc.): -2

| <b>Morale Roll</b> | <b>Hireling Reaction</b>  | <b>Henchman Reaction</b>   |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 1                  | Soiling their pants (or nearest equivalent), the hireling runs off screaming, never to be heard from again. Any element of surprise is lost and opponents get a +1 to all attacks during the first round of combat. | Henchman stalks off, muttering "I didn't sign on for any of this crap..." Emboldened, opponents get a +1 to all attacks during the first round of combat.    |
| 2-7                | Hireling refuses to fight and stays out of the fray, abandoning the party when it is safe.  | Henchman reverts to hireling status and refuses to fight.  |
| 8-10               | The hireling refuses to fight unless their pay is doubled.  | The henchman demands a better weapon from a PC and refuses to fight until getting one.   |
| 11-14              | The hireling assumes a defensive stance, choosing self-preservation over valor.   | The henchman fights but refuses to take any unnecessary risks.   |
| 15-20              | The hireling defends the party to the best of their ability.  | The henchman fights with honor.  |
| 21-24              | Confident in the abilities of the PCs, the hireling wades into the fray with +1 to all attack rolls.  | Overcome with devotion for their comrades, the henchman leaps to their defense; +1 to all attack rolls.  |
| 25+                | Inspired by the Fates, the hireling leaps into battle with outsized ferocity. All attack and damage rolls made by the hireling are at +2 and their AC increases by 1 for the duration of the combat.                | The henchman rises to the occasion and gains an additional permanent henchmen upgrade. All attack and damage rolls are at +2 for the duration of the combat. |

# Gongfarmer Militia

Init -4; Atk Unarmed +0 melee (1d3) or by tool (see below); AC 9; HD 1d4; hp 3; MV 30'; Act 1d16; SV Fort -1, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N.

*Kor looked at the dozen or so peasants and townsfolk standing before him and spat on the ground. "This is the best you could come up with?" he whispered to Sorvel.*

*"Don't blame me," replied the halfling with a frown. "We're in the middle of nowhere with barely a copper to our name. You're lucky I was able to find this many."*

*Kor grunted in response, then turned to address the group: "Our goal is to breach the ancient ruins three leagues to the east. You all know the stories, so I won't pretend this will be easy or safe, but we can offer you food, coin, and maybe a few trinkets that we find. That's more than enough to get your farms through this wheat blight."*

*A few of the older men grumbled and kicked the dirt, but a young farmhand stepped forward. "I'm not scared. I've even got my own dagger. I'll go with you."*

*Kor smiled broadly, then leaned over to whisper to Sorvel:*

*"That's one less fool this town will have to feed come winter."*



*"Gongfarmer militia" is a derogatory term for unskilled hirelings. Many come from areas stricken by war, famine, or disease and see adventuring as their ticket out of desperate circumstances. Used as canon fodder and cheap valets, they are employed by only the most desperate (or miserly) adventurers.*

**Found:** Wherever there are people willing to hire on with grave robbers and ne'er do wells.

**Price:** 2 coppers per week per militia member, plus food



# Occupation

Militia members come from a variety of backgrounds and often carry a tool of their trade with them as a weapon or good luck charm.

| d12 | Occupation | Tool                | d12 | Occupation | Tool          |
|-----|------------|---------------------|-----|------------|---------------|
| 1   | Gongfarmer | Shovel (1d3)        | 7   | Beggar     | Stone (1d3)   |
| 2   | Plowhand   | Pitchfork (1d4)     | 8   | Fuller     | Club (1d5)    |
| 3   | Milk Maid  | Broken bottle (1d4) | 9   | Cobbler    | Dirk (1d4)    |
| 4   | Cook       | Frying pan (1d4)    | 10  | Cooper     | Mallet (1d4)  |
| 5   | Carpenter  | Hammer (1d4)        | 11  | Tailor     | Shears (1d4)  |
| 6   | Miller     | Stone club (1d5)    | 12  | Butcher    | Cleaver (1d5) |

# Ailment

Coming from unsanitary conditions, militia members are prone to disease. For every day a PC does not eat and/or get a full night's rest there is a 10% chance they catch an infectious illness (\*) if one is present in the party. PCs with an ailment suffer -1D to all actions until healed via magical means or 3 days of rest.

| d12 | Ailment      | d12 | Ailment   |
|-----|--------------|-----|-----------|
| 1   | Leprosy*     | 7   | Grippe*   |
| 2   | Pox*         | 8   | Flux*     |
| 3   | Scurvy       | 9   | Clap*     |
| 4   | Consumption* | 10  | Lazy Eye  |
| 5   | Lockjaw      | 11  | Gammy Leg |
| 6   | Croup*       | 12  | None      |

# Henchmen Upgrade

When your militia member reaches 20 XP they are cured of all ailments; then roll on this table.

| d6 | Upgrade            | Effect            |
|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1  | Natural Resistance | +1 Fort saves     |
| 2  | Constant Vigilance | +1 Ref Saves      |
| 3  | Iron Will          | +1 Will saves     |
| 4  | Battered Shield    | +1 AC             |
| 5  | Increased Stamina  | +1d3 hp           |
| 6  | Weapon Proficiency | May take a weapon |

# Hired Muscle

Init +0; Atk weapon +1 melee; AC 12 (ill-fitting armor); HD 2d8; hp 11; MV 30', 10' climb, 5' leap; Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

*"Insolent whelp! How dare you violate my inner sanctum and disrupt my experiment! I promise that your death will be slow and painful, stretched out over days — nay, weeks! You are no match for the might of Grezilikhan the Undying!"*

Horgan cocked his head at the lich. "You're right. I have neither the strength nor the speed to stand up to you." A faint smile spread across his lips.

*"But she does."*

From the shadows stepped a massive form. Grezilikhan had a fleeting moment of recognition before his head was swept from his shoulders by Lisella's broad sword and tumbled across the floor to rest at Horgan's feet.

*"Well," said Lisella with a raised eyebrow. "I trust that was money well spent."*



A step up from the gongfarmer militia, hired muscle is a broad category of sell swords and mercenaries who are more than willing to work for the highest bidder.

Most come from far away lands or have been outcast from their tribe. In order to survive they hire out as pirates, bodyguards, escorts, and fighters. Quick to boast of their prowess and number of kills, they also tend to resent uninvited inquires into their past.

**Found:** In medium (15%) and large (75%) cities, military outposts (35%), and ports (+20% to city size)

**Price:** 10 silver per week and 10% of any treasure

## Background

People from a variety of backgrounds and cultures become muscle for hire.

| d7 | Background          | Weapon                      |
|----|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1  | Educated Barbarian  | Broad sword (1d8)           |
| 2  | Outcast Beastman    | Flail (1d6)                 |
| 3  | Failed Squire       | Short sword (1d6)           |
| 4  | Grizzled Veteran    | Long sword (1d8)            |
| 5  | Ex-Gladiator        | Trident (1d3+3)             |
| 6  | Vengeful Widow      | Heirloom long sword (1d8+1) |
| 7  | Reluctant Sellsword | Two-handed sword (1d10)     |

## Vice

Many mercenaries decide to sell their unsavory skills due to a vice or addiction that lands them in regular debt or trouble with the authorities. When the hiring is faced with their vice they must make a DC 12 Will save to withstand the temptation.

| d7 | Vice        | On a failed Will save...                             |
|----|-------------|--|
| 1  | Drink       | -1D to all action rolls until next rest              |
| 2  | Gambling    | Loses 10% of the PCs gold                            |
| 3  | Carousing   | Disappears for 1d3 days                              |
| 4  | Vengeance   | -1D to all action rolls until vengeance is satisfied |
| 5  | Gluttony    | -1D to all action rolls until next rest              |
| 6  | Kleptomania | Random PC loses an item or half their gold           |
| 7  | None        |  |

## Henchmen Upgrade

When your hiring reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

| d6 | Upgrade             | Effect                  |
|----|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Cat-Like Reflexes   | +1 Ref saves            |
| 2  | Iron Stomach        | +1 Fort saves           |
| 3  | Increased Stamina   | +1d4 hp                 |
| 4  | Serrated Blade      | +1 damage with a weapon |
| 5  | Mis-Matched Armor   | +1 AC                   |
| 6  | Natural Born Killer | +1 to all attacks       |

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# Temple Acolyte

Init +0; Atk Mace +1 melee (1d6); AC 10; HD 1d6; hp 4; MV 30', Act 1d20; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1; AL L.

*Nimrol gazed across the campfire at their new companion as light danced across the lacquered mask obscuring her face. "So... is this your first time outside the coventry?"*

*The priestess gave no reply, but continued to work the straw with her crooked fingers. The weaving of the strands was almost hypnotic, and Nimrol had to blink several times to clear his head as he watched.*

*"I mean, I haven't seen anyone from your sect around here before. Are there other communities of your... faith?"*

*He almost jumped as, with a final twist of a knot, the priestess stood up and walked around the fire to him, holding out a small straw effigy. "Sleep with this tonight and you may avoid the dark fate which awaits you tomorrow," came the hollow voice from behind her mask.*

*Nimrol reluctantly accepted the item. "Yes, ma'am," he squeaked.*

Novices and acolytes in various religious traditions will sometimes sign on with adventuring parties while on pilgrimage or to raise funds for their community.



The beliefs and practices of these hirelings can vary widely, with many novices deliberately obfuscating their more extreme doctrines and alien rituals in order to win favor with unwary reavers.

**Found:** In medium (25%) and large cities (80%) with a religious presence

**Price:** Food and lodging, plus 10% of treasure donated to the acolyte's temple or monastery

# Devotions

Acolytes follow a strict regimen of devotional practice. Failure to do so causes the acolyte to roll at -1D until the devotion is observed.

## d7 Practice

- 1 The acolyte must assist beggars and those who ask for help.
- 2 Heretics and apostates should be rooted out and punished.
- 3 A day of rest must be observed every six days.
- 4 The acolyte must stop and pray for 15 minutes twice each day.
- 5 A living sacrifice must be made each day.
- 6 The acolyte always wears a mask and never shows their face.
- 7 Self-flagellation must be performed on a daily basis.

## Petitions

Each day the acolyte is granted a single request by their deity. This may be determined randomly after resting and then applied as needed. Prayers are forfeit if not used before resting.

| d7 | Prayer    | Effect   |
|----|-----------|--|
| 1  | Heal      | A single target gains 1HD worth of hit points    |
| 2  | Encourage | An ally receives +1 on a saving throw            |
| 3  | Restore   | Rid a single target of a disease or condition    |
| 4  | Curse     | Target must roll at -1D                          |
| 5  | Smite     | Deal an additional 1d4 damage to a single target |
| 6  | Spare     | A blow that would reduce an ally to 0 HP misses  |
| 7  | Bless     | Restore 1 Luck to one ally                       |

## Henchmen Upgrade

When your acolyte reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

| d6 | Upgrade             | Effect                                     |
|----|---------------------|--|
| 1  | Sainted Will        | +1 Will saves                              |
| 2  | Radiant Force       | +1 damage                                  |
| 3  | Resilient Vestments | +1 AC                                      |
| 4  | Blessed Rest        | Recover 2 HP/day                           |
| 5  | Aura of Holiness    | Undead and demons within 10' roll at -1D   |
| 6  | Divine Favor        | Gain an additional prayer request each day |

# Halfling Cutpurse

Init +1; Atk Short sword +1 melee (1d6); AC 12 (leather armor); HD 3d4; hp 6; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP double damage when attacking targets unaware, darkvision 30'; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.



*"See? Piece of cake. Told you I could shake those guards."*

*Sistral nodded at her halfling companion. "Yes, your knowledge of the streets is... extensive. But what I hired you for—"*

*"Yeah, nickin' the baron's coin purse. Did you think I forgot?"*

*The cutpurse drew a small leather pouch from deep within her cloak and tossed it to the elf. "What so important 'bout it, anyway?"*

*"It's not the purse I seek, but what's in it."*

*A satisfied grin spread across the halfling's face. "Oh, is that right? 'Cause I stashed that stuff in a safe place. You want it? It'll cost ya extra."*

Driven by wanderlust, greed, or a disposition at odds with respectable halfling society, halfling cutpurses sign on with scoundrels and grave robbers as a means of seeing the wider world and finding their place in it. They are most at home in cities where their small stature helps them escape notice (and the authorities). Their sharp eyes and sharper blades make them excellent spies, thieves, and (if the money is right) assassins.

**Found:** In medium (25%) and large (90%) cities or halfling villages (15%)

**Price:** 10 silver per week and 10% of any loot

## Master of One

Halfling cutpurses specialize in one trick of their trade and give PCs +1 on associated rolls

### d6 Skill

- 1 Pickpocketing/Larceny
- 2 Disguises
- 3 Evading Pursuers
- 4 Hiding
- 5 Extortion/Intimidation
- 6 Information Gathering

## Contact

Halfling cutpurses often have local contacts they can turn to when they need information... or a place to lie low.

### d7 Contact

- 1 A bartender who keeps an ear out for rumors of easy marks
- 2 A lady of the night who has the ear of a local politician
- 3 A wandering minstrel who knows all the secret doors in town
- 4 A tavern owner who's willing to hide something precious
- 5 A stable owner who knows all the new arrivals
- 6 The King of Beggars who rules the sewers
- 7 A second lieutenant of the Thieves Guild who owes a favor

## Henchmen Upgrade

When your cutpurse reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

| d6 | Upgrade               | Effect   |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 1  | Lightening Reflexes   | +1 Ref saves   |
| 2  | Studded Leather Armor | +1 AC  |
| 3  | Increased Mastery     | "Master of One" skills increased to +2                     |
| 4  | Another Favor Owed    | Roll an additional contact                                 |
| 5  | Master of Two         | Roll an additional "Master of One" skill                   |
| 6  | Double Bladed         | On a successful melee attack, make a second attack at 1d16 |

# Hedge Mage

Init +0; Atk Staff +0 melee (1d4); AC 9; HD 2d4; hp 4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort -1, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N.

*Anistaris spoke a few words and a brilliant light appeared at the end of her staff, its rays illuminating the way forward in the damp tunnel.*

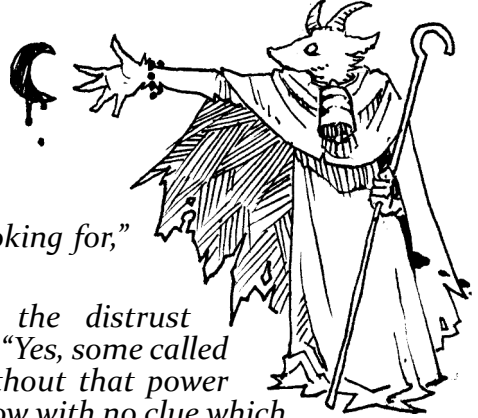
*"How did you do that?" asked Tefduk as he clutched his great axe a little closer.*

*"Oh, that's something my mother taught me," Anistaris replied. "She was the local... well, healer isn't quite the term. Miracle worker? Seer?"*

*"I think 'witch' is the word you're looking for," growled Hemdrok with a scowl."*

*The hedge mage tensed, feeling the distrust dripping from the barbarian's words. "Yes, some called her that. But bear in mind that without that power you'd be standing in the dark right now with no clue which way to go."*

*Hemdrok grunted in reply. Anistaris knew that was as much of an apology as she would get, as surely as she knew that every step brought her closer to the doom that had claimed her mother years before...*



Hedges mages have the ability to channel magical energy but never received the training necessary to master the mystical arts. Many become wonder workers in rural communities, using their talents to assist those in need. Others, not content with their meager abilities, set out to uncover forbidden knowledge and darker powers.

There is a 30% chance that a hedge mage will be able to use any given magical item (scroll, wand, etc.); this roll is not made until the mage tries to use the item. On a failure the mage takes 1d3 damage from magical feedback.

**Found:** In large cities (20%) and thriving rural communities (50%)

**Price:** 1 silver per day and a half share in any scrolls or magical items



# Known Spells

Hedge mages have limited magical ability and can usually only cast a spell once each day.

| d7 | Spell          | Effect  |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1  | Drowsy         | A single target must make a DC 10 Fort save or spend the next round yawning |
| 2  | Darkness       | Candles, lanterns, and other small lights are extinguished within 15'       |
| 3  | Light          | A small sphere of light granting dim illumination is created for 1 turn     |
| 4  | Detect Water   | The mage is able to sense the presence of water within 50'                  |
| 5  | Sight          | +1 to discover hidden objects or illusions                                  |
| 6  | Minor Missile  | A small bolt flies towards the target doing 1d3 damage                      |
| 7  | Electric Touch | 1d4 damage on the next successful melee attack                              |

# Mercurial Maladies

The chaotic magic coursing through hedge mages often imposes minor physical and mental conditions.

| d12 | Malady            | d12 | Malady               |
|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------------|
| 1   | Paranoia          | 7   | Imaginary Friend     |
| 2   | Claustrophobia    | 8   | Insomnia             |
| 3   | Overdeveloped Ego | 9   | Restless Leg         |
| 4   | Cowardly          | 10  | Audio Hallucinations |
| 5   | Pathological Liar | 11  | Sleepwalking         |
| 6   | Hematophobia      | 12  | Atrophied Limb       |

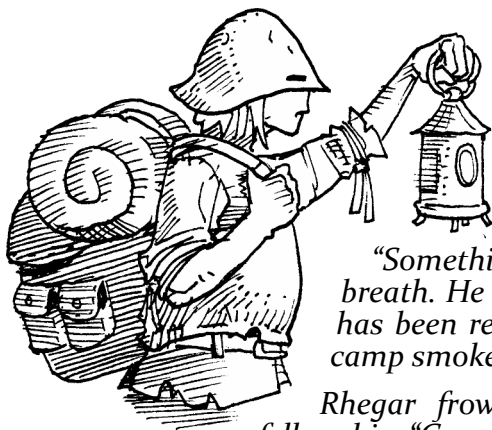
# Henchmen Upgrade

When your hedge mage reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

| d6 | Upgrade            | Effect   |
|----|--------------------|--|
| 1  | Altered Metabolism | +1 Fort saves  |
| 2  | Fluidic Motion     | +1 Init and Ref saves  |
| 3  | Stony Skin         | +1 AC  |
| 4  | Artifact Insight   | +10% to using magic items  |
| 5  | Hardened Memory    | Known spells may be cast twice per day                               |
| 6  | Magical Surge      | Gain an additional spell and a random minor corruption (DCC, p. 116) |

# Elven Guide

Init +1; Atk Short bow +0 ranged (1d6 at long range; 2d6 at close range; requires 1 round to reload) or dagger +1 melee (1d4); AC 11 (hide armor); HD 2d6; hp 7; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP vulnerable to iron (1 HP damage/day of prolonged contact, darkvision 60'; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.



Ardryll held his hand up, signaling the rest of the party to stop. A gentle breeze rustled the leaves overhead as the low sun spread deep shadows between the trees.

*"Something's not right," he said under his breath. He glanced back at Rhegar. "This trail has been recently used, and there's a smell of camp smoke coming from up ahead."*

*Rhegar frowned and looked at his rag tag fellowship. "Can we sneak past?"*

*"I don't think so," said the elf grimly. "But I know a secret path that will take us around the danger..."*

Elven guides are highly regarded for their expertise in traversing wilderness areas. Groups utilizing an elven guide use only half the normal amount of daily rations (due to the guide's ability to supplement rations with foraged food) and have a 25% chance of avoiding any random encounters.

Such guides carry basic wilderness provisions and tools, and will often bear an elven lamp (p. 28). Like other fey creatures they tend to look down on other races and hold themselves above the petty concerns of mortal beings.

**Found:** In wilderness outposts (40%) and elven cities (30%)

**Price:** Elven guides cannot be bought for mere coin. They will usually ask for assistance with a mission or quest, demand the return of an elven artifact or magical weapon, or extract a favor for use in the future.

# Animal Companion

Wilderness guides are often accompanied by a tame(-ish) animal. This companion will not engage in combat but may be useful in tracking, hunting, etc. The guide believes they are able to communicate with the animal.

| d16 Companion     | d16 Companion | d16 Companion |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 Owl             | 7 Wolf Cub    | 13 Snake      |
| 2 Juvenile Bobcat | 8 Badger      | 14 Vulture    |
| 3 Fox             | 9 Mole        | 15 Ferret     |
| 4 Mastiff         | 10 Rat        | 16 Bear Cub   |
| 5 Chipmunk        | 11 Falcon     |               |
| 6 Skunk           | 12 Skink      |               |

# Elven Magic

Like others of their kind, elven guides can tap into the energies of the cosmos to produce modest effects. One effect is known and can be used once per day.

| d7 Spell           | Effect  |
|--------------------|---|
| 1 Detect Water     | Sense the presence of water within 50'                        |
| 2 Purify           | Make putrid water or food safe to eat                         |
| 3 Silence          | Create a 10' sphere of silence for 1 turn                     |
| 4 Fey Walk         | Instantly teleport up to 15'                                  |
| 5 Uncanny Accuracy | +1 to a ranged attack   |
| 6 Greatberries     | Create 1d5 berries; each heals 1 HP but spoils after 1d3 days |
| 7 Combat Flow      | Make an extra attack at 1d16                                  |

# Henchmen Upgrade

When your guide reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

| d6 Upgrade             | Effect                                       |
|------------------------|--|
| 1 Danger Sense         | +1 AC  |
| 2 Better Part of Valor | +10% chance to avoid random encounters       |
| 3 Hated Enemies        | +1 to attacks against evil woodland monsters |
| 4 Aperture Senses      | +2 to detect hidden doors or paths           |
| 5 Master Tracker       | +2 to track prey                             |
| 6 Forest Magic         | Roll for an additional spell                 |

# Dwarven Sappers

Init -1; Atk Blunderbuss -1 ranged (1d6 at long range; 3d6 at close range; requires 1 round to reload) or warhammer +2 melee (1d8); AC 13 (chain mail); HD 2d8; hp 10; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP darkvision 60'; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; AL L.

*BOOM!*

*The foundations of the ancient fortress shook and dust rained down as the dwarven twins poked their heads back around the corner.*

*"Well, that did the trick!" exclaimed Borfin at the sight of the shattered stone doorway.*

*"That it did!" replied Dorlin with a grin. "Everyone alrigh' back there?"*

*With fits of coughing and wheezing the rest of the party stumbled back into the corridor.*

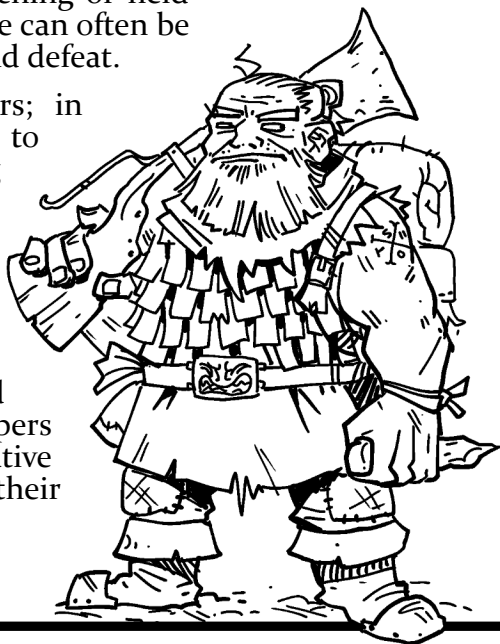
*"Stop dwadlin', yeh berks – there's gold to be had!"*

Formidable support and offensive mercenaries, dwarven sappers are highly valued by generals for their skill in the construction, defense, and breaching of field fortifications. A sapper's expertise can often be the difference between victory and defeat.

Sappers always operate in pairs; in battle this allows one sapper to cover the other while reloading their blunderbuss.

**Found:** In dwarven armies, cities, and outposts (75%) or large cities (30%)

**Price:** 5 gold per day per sapper team, plus an equal share of gold and gems. For every day the sappers are underpaid there is a cumulative 15% chance they will abandon their employer.



## Skills

All sappers specialize in some form of demolition or fortifications.

| d6 | Skill           | Equipment                                 |
|----|-----------------|---|
| 1  | Demolitions     | Dwarven dynamite (2 sticks; p. 28)        |
| 2  | Bridge Building | Axe and sledgehammer                      |
| 3  | Fortifications  | Collapsible shovel (p. 28) and hammer     |
| 4  | Bivouacking     | Field tarp and mess kit                   |
| 5  | Repairs         | Small tool kit                            |
| 6  | Field Defenses  | Rope (50'), knife, and collapsible shovel |

## Rivalry

Sapper pairs will often develop intense rivalries over a singular compulsion.

| d6 | Rivalry               |
|----|-----------------------|
| 1  | Acquisition of Jewels |
| 2  | Gold Accumulated      |
| 3  | Drinking Games        |
| 4  | Fighting              |
| 5  | “Friendly” Wagers     |
| 6  | Enemies Killed        |

## Henchmen Upgrade

When your sappers reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

| d6 | Upgrade             | Effect  |
|----|---------------------|---|
| 1  | Watch My Back       | +1 Ref saves                                    |
| 2  | Dwarven Resilience  | +1d3 HP   |
| 3  | State of Readiness  | +1 Init   |
| 4  | Boomstick           | +1 damage with blunderbuss                      |
| 5  | Increased Firepower | Critical hit on a 19 or 20                      |
| 6  | Double Barrels      | Blunderbuss may be fired twice before reloading |

# Obsequious Toady

Init -1; Atk bite +1 melee (1d3) or weapon -1 melee; AC 10; HD 1d4; hp 4; MV 25', jump 10', climb 20'; Act 1d16; SP darkvision 30'; SV Fort -2, Ref +1, Will -1; AL C.

*Flub looked around at the bodies of his fellow spear-spitters and had a moment of shining, uncharacteristic clarity.*

*He was alone. And alone meant danger.*

*Alone meant death.*

*Flub had never been alone before. From the moment of his birthing he had always been surrounded by family and the tribe, their reassuring presence promising food, warmth, and safety.*

*The goblin froze as the three reavers turned as one to look at him, the blood of Snot, Gog, and Snag still dripping from their swords. He thought briefly of avenging his comrades and throwing himself against these invaders to protect all that he held dear.*

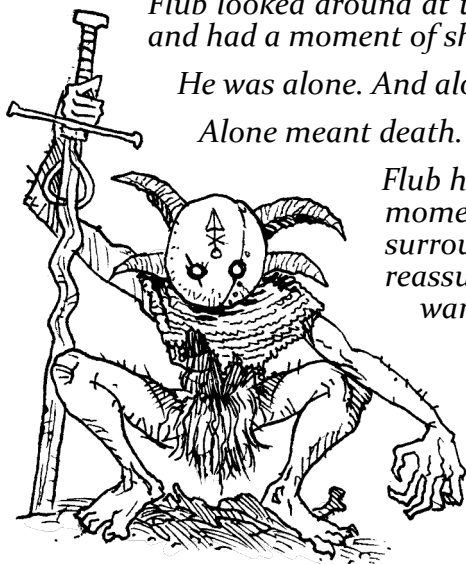
*Instead he threw down his spear and dropped to his knees.*

*"Oh glorious, kind, most powerful friends!" he began...*

When overwhelmed by more powerful foes, goblins, beastmen, and other humanoid monsters will sometimes seek to bribe or win the favor of their foes by ingratiating themselves, even to the point of subservience. Wise vandals know to keep an eye on this new lackey, lest they in turn are betrayed to an even greater power.

**Found:** When defeating a humanoid horde there is a 10% chance that the last monster standing will surrender and beg to serve the PCs

**Price:** Toadies expect only food and protection, but will steal small treasures and look for the first opportunity to betray their "masters" if they are mistreated or if they encounter an obviously more powerful threat.



# Precious Possession

Toadies will horde small trinkets and items believing they have special powers They will protect such items at all costs.

| d7 | Possession     | Presumed Power           |
|----|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1  | Tarnished Ring | Grants invisibility      |
| 2  | Dead Lizard    | Protects from disease    |
| 3  | Shattered Wand | Curses enemies           |
| 4  | Cracked Amulet | Protects against attacks |
| 5  | Moldy Sock     | Cures all ailments       |
| 6  | Shriveled Hand | Commands obedience       |
| 7  | Stone Rat      | Summons creatures        |

# Weapon

Weapons wielded by toadies are typically poorly made and have a 10% chance of being coated with a mold poisonous to other creatures (DC 14 Fort save or -1D to action dice for 1 day)

| d12 | Weapon                        | d12 | Weapon                    |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|
| 1   | Sock filled with rocks (1d3)  | 7   | Curved dagger (1d4)       |
| 2   | Board with a nail in it (1d3) | 8   | Chipped short sword (1d4) |
| 3   | Sharpened spoon (1d3)         | 9   | Knuckle spikes (1d4)      |
| 4   | Rusty scissors (1d4)          | 10  | Small spear (1d5)         |
| 5   | Broken chair leg (1d4)        | 11  | Stone club (1d5)          |
| 6   | Iron skillet (1d4)            | 12  | Warped sword (1d6)        |

# Henchmen Upgrade

When your toady reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

| d6 | Upgrade            | Effect                       |
|----|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1  | Unconscious Flinch | +1 Ref saves                 |
| 2  | Sneaky Sneaker     | +1 to attempts to hide       |
| 3  | Maximum Effort     | Action die increased to 1d20 |
| 4  | Thriving           | +1d3 HP, +1 Fort saves       |
| 5  | For the Masters!   | +1 to all attacks            |
| 6  | Ankle Biter        | Bite damage increased to 1d6 |

# Camp Cookie

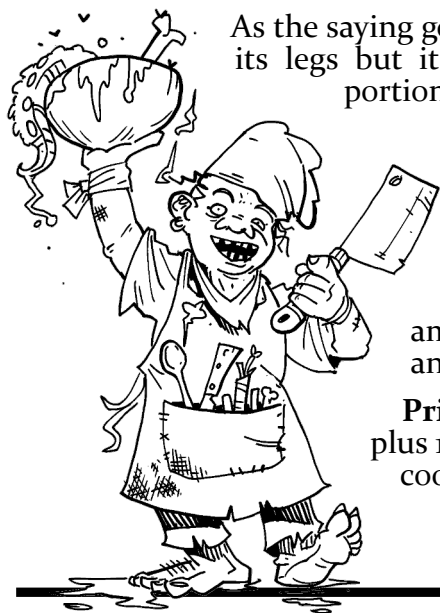
Int -2; Atk utensils +1 melee (1d3 to 1d4); AC 9; HD 2d3; hp 4; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP foraging (base 35% chance to find "edibles," modified up or down based on environment); SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will -1; AL N.

*"Why waste all that silver up front to hire a cook, Barnoire? For that price we could set every man up with some leaded cabbage and--"*

*Barnoire's chair shot back as he stood up and posted his hand on the top of his tankard, now hovering eye-to-eye with Timple. "Cabbage?! Do you know what four weeks of fermented greens will do to a man's constitution? Without the right minerals you'll be loosing teeth by day twenty, and not just the back ones."*

*"No, a cook does many things: varies ingredients, has the fire fit for the adventurer's return, and spares us from wasting precious hours reading cook books instead of spell books. Moreover, if we find ourselves an experienced one, a cook is able to look at the world around them and find culinary delights that the common man wouldn't of thought of."*

*"Trust me. On a long campaign such as we're planning, a good cook will save us as much money as we would have spent to plug up our trolly-bags with days of eating salted preserves and nut medleys."*



As the saying goes, an adventuring outfit can stand on its legs but it campaigns upon its stomach. Equal portions quartermaster, arbiter, apothecary, and storyteller, a trail cook or "cookie" is responsible for setting up hearth and meal whatever the environment, climate, or availability of provisions.

**Found:** On sailing vessels (40%), amid farmlands acting as hands (25%), and among Halfling settlements (75%)

**Price:** Typically, a base of 1 gold per day plus 1 gold per "mouth" per week will enlist a cook for the span of an adventure.



## What's for Dinner?

Roll 3d10 on the following chart, then reference “Them’s Good Eats!”

| d7 | Style    | Main Dish      | Side Dish      |
|----|----------|----------------|----------------|
| 1  | Burnt    | Mush           | with Flies     |
| 2  | Boiled   | Turnips        | with Raisins   |
| 3  | Roasted  | Unknown Rodent | with Dumplings |
| 4  | Strew of | Mutton         | with Oats      |
| 5  | Smoked   | Beans          | with Bread     |
| 6  | Cured    | Marmot         | with Gravy     |
| 7  | Glazed   | Taters         | with Rice      |
| 8  | Baked    | Maize          | with Fruit     |
| 9  | Fried    | Venison        | with Mussels   |
| 10 | Braised  | Pork           | with Pie       |

## Them’s Good Eats!

Examine the die results from “What’s for Dinner.”

| Result                          | Effect  |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Triple “1”s                     | The diners must pass a DC 7 Fort save or lose 1D3 Stamina (1 point heals per day) |
| Double “1”s                     | The diners must pass a DC 7 Fort save or lose 1 Stamina (heals the next day)      |
| Two of a Kind (2s or greater)   | Diners receive 1d4 temporary hit points   |
| Three of a Kind (2s or greater) | Diners receive 1d4 temporary hit points and heal 1 attribute point                |

## Henchmen Upgrade

When your cook reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

| d6 | Upgrade       | Effect  |
|----|---------------|---|
| 1  | Knife Work    | +3 to melee with knives   |
| 2  | Iron Chef     | +2 AC, +1 Fort  |
| 3  | Herbal Wisdom | Has 15% chance to find herbs to cure diseases or poisons  |
| 4  | Pastry Chef   | +2d3 hit points   |
| 5  | Sous Chef     | +3 Will   |
| 6  | Saucier       | Once per adventure the cook can create a sweet smelling sauce whose aroma mimics the Charm Person spell; roll 1D20+1) |

# Confidence Artist

Init -2; Atk weapon -2 melee or ranged; AC 13 (well-kept hide armor); HD 2d5+1; hp 7; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP mimics other hireling abilities; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +1; AL C.

*Jipsum leveled the dagger directly in front of Hubert's quivering eyes, his calloused dwarven knuckles white with anger, and vehemently whispered, "What do you mean you can't open it?"*

*"Well, I..I..I never specifically sta..stated that I had experience op..op..opening chests," Hubert stuttered. "If you recall, when you asked me if I could pop a lock I..I said, 'I have full confidence in my abilities'."*

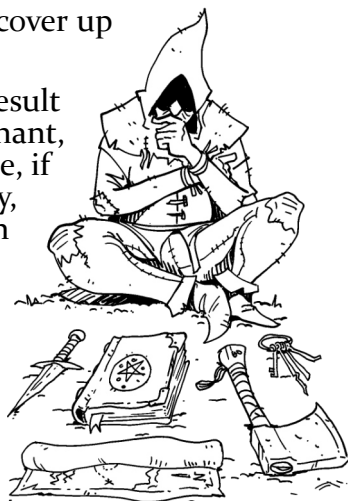
*The rest of the group stood in stunned silence around the glowing chest while Becca rushed forward to restrain the fuming dwarf who was seconds away from ending Hubert's life.*

*Trembling with fury under Becca's calm grasp, Jipsum roared, "What did we even hire him for, Becca! He hasn't done a single thing right this entire trek!"*

Confidence artists pretend to be one of the previously detailed hirelings. With a clean face and slick hair they instill a sense of trust... up until the point when they are called upon to perform their hired tasks. While not without their uses, con artists will be extraordinarily inept at any skill they attempt and use quick words ("I've never seen this situation exactly...") to cover up for their obvious lack of training.

**Found:** Whenever a hireling is found on a result of less than one third of the original determinant, that hireling is in fact a con artist. For example, if searching for a hedge mage in a medium city, a result of 6 or lower ( $\frac{1}{3}$  of 20%) would mean they are in fact a con artist posing as a hedge mage. In a rural community it would be 16 or lower ( $\frac{1}{3}$  of 50%).

**Price:** Con artists are smooth talkers and cost double the normal price of whichever hireling they are portraying... and will tell you they're worth every copper!



# Even a Broken Clock...

Despite being completely full of hot air and utterly disappointing, there are rare occasions when the confidence artist actually delivers when called upon, regardless of the original job they were hired to do.

## d14 Done Right Twice a Day

- 1 Heal one target for 1 HP
- 2 Locate a secret door or switch
- 3 Back stab (with crit)
- 4 Sneak silently
- 5 Prophecy the near future
- 6 +3 to ranged attack
- 7 +3 to melee attack

## d14 Done Right Twice a Day

- 8 Cast a light spell
- 9 Cast a minor missile (1d3 dmg)
- 10 Track a target
- 11 Find food and water
- 12 Cook a good meal
- 13 Unlock a door
- 14 Give 1 PC a Luck point

# Fast Talker

Picking up on subtle observations and clues, con artists are able to talk their way out of almost any problematic situation – a clear benefit in smoothing over tense situations and granting PCs a bonus to Per checks. Parley?

## d6 Preferred Form of Persuasion

## Per Check Bonus

- |   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| 1 | Flirtation (teasing, winks, sweet nothings) | +1 |
| 2 | Compliments (flattery, praise, adulation)   | +1 |
| 3 | Feigned Weakness (meekness, injury)         | +1 |
| 4 | Groveling (begging, pleading, weeping)      | +2 |
| 5 | Blackmail (threats, insinuations)           | +2 |
| 6 | Confidence (swagger, puffery, boasting)     | +3 |

# Henchmen Upgrade

When your confidence artist reaches 20 XP, roll on this chart.

## d6 Upgrade

## Effect

- |   |                   |  |
|---|-------------------|--|
| 1 | Et tu, Brute?     | Betrays the party and steals all their coin    |
| 2 | Doppelganger      | Begins copying a PC, preparing to replace them |
| 3 | Split Personality | Begins to mimic a different class              |
| 4 | Superiority Bias  | Broken Clock skill usable once per day         |
| 5 | Silver Tongue     | +1 to PC Per checks                            |
| 6 | A New Leaf        | Becomes the class they've been mimicking       |
-

# New Equipment

## Dwarven Dynamite

Cost: 5 GP per stick

Prized for its stable nature and explosive power, dwarven dynamite comes in sticks 6 inches long. The sticks are lit by a fuse timed for  $4+1d6$  seconds; taking 10 HP damage will also cause the dynamite to explode.

A single stick produces an explosion that deals  $3d12$  damage in a 10' radius;  $2d12$  from 10' to 25'; and  $1d12$  from 25' to 40'. Creatures caught in the blast can make a DC 17 Ref save to decrease the damage by a  $d12$ .

Multiple sticks can be detonated simultaneously, increasing the damage by  $1d12$  per additional stick used.

## Collapsible Shovel

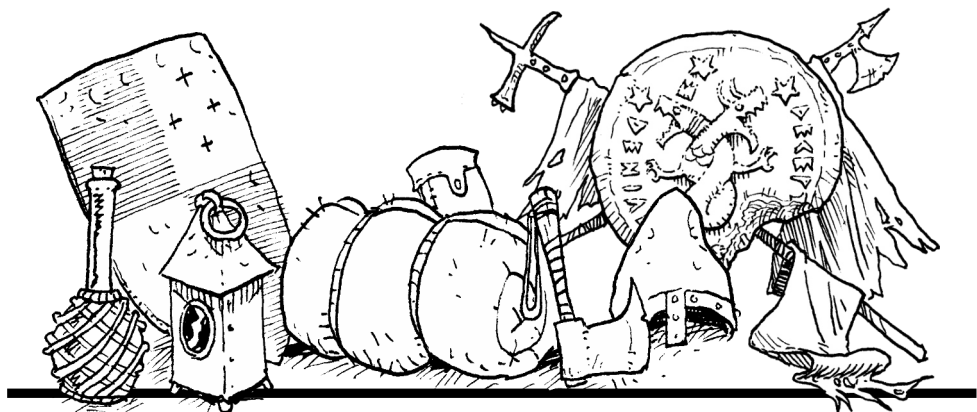
Cost: 8 SP

This simple tool of dwarven design is a hand-held shovel approximately three feet long. When folded in on itself it become a one-foot long cylinder with a one-inch diameter. Used as an improvised weapon it deals  $1d5$  damage, but is destroyed on a fumble (in addition to the result of the fumble roll).

## Elven Lamp

Cost: Not for sale

Appearing to be an ordinary hooded lamp, when lit it casts a magical light that is invisible to any creatures outside its radius. The radius of the light can be changed from 10-30' by adjusting the hood of the lantern.



# Optional Rules

## Sidekicks

The hirelings detailed in this zine can also be run as sidekicks for parties that don't have enough PCs.

When run as sidekicks, the NPC is considered a member of the party, not an employee. As such they are not paid a set wage but are given a full share of any treasure plundered by the party. In addition, sidekicks do not make morale rolls.

Sidekicks don't track XP. Instead they level up with the lowest-level PC. When they advance a level the sidekick gains a number of hit points equal to  $1d4$  plus their Fortitude save modifier (minimum of one additional HP per level). They also receive an additional henchmen upgrade. Instead of randomly for upgrades, it is recommended that the sidekick receive upgrades in order from 1 to 6. If they survive to level seven, begin to roll randomly for upgrades.

For roleplaying purposes sidekicks are run by the DM; in combat it is recommended that one of the players make decisions and roll for the sidekick.





# An Historical Note on RPG Hirelings

The rules for hirelings and henchmen found in this zine are informed by the tradition of such NPCs in fantasy roleplaying games (which are themselves based on mercenaries and hirelings in the miniature war games that preceded RPGs). Here are a few historical notes on how party NPCs have been named and treated across various rule systems:

## **Original Dungeons & Dragons (1974)**

The “Men & Magic” pamphlet in the White Box already includes advice for handling mercenaries and charmed monsters of various types, including systems for loyalty and morale. Only low level NPCs can be hired, and the starting rate is given as 100 gold.

The Basic Set’s *Players Manual* includes a half-page description

of retainers indicating that they are controlled by the DM (although players are responsible for tracking their XP). The *Dungeon Masters Rulebook* adds a little more, although the DM is left to rule on many details (such as modifiers for morale checks).

Specialist hirelings are also a feature in OD&D; of note is the sage, which first appears in *Supplement II: Blackmoor* (1975).

## **Tunnels & Trolls (1975)**

Slaves and hirelings are the two NPC types offered in T&T. Slaves may be created by the players. They have no Luck or Charisma; other attributes are paid for at a rate of 10 GP per point. Slavery is not presented as an inherently evil act.

Hirelings are also created, but at a rate of 2 GP per attribute plus 25%

of all treasure acquired by the party. Players are warned not to deny a hireling their wage, lest they seek retribution.

### ***Dragon Magazine* (1976)**

Hirelings were an infrequent topic in *Dragon*, with 18 articles appearing across its print run. Of note are "Hirelings Have Feelings, Too" by Charles Sagui (issue 26); "The Forgotten Characters" by Thomas M. Kane (issue 117); "A Few Good Henchmen" by Christopher Perkins and "Get a Life, Henchmen" by Peter Adkison (both in issue 246); and "Animal Henchmen" by James Wyatt (issue 269). *Dragon* also featured a number of articles on the relationship between hirelings and individual classes.

### **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (1977)**

The AD&D *Player's Handbook* gives a half-page to hirelings and henchmen, while the *Dungeon Masters Guide* gives a more thorough treatment over several pages. Hirelings are paid for their services, and the DMG offers a listing of various occupations and what they offer. Over two full pages are given to sages and their fields of knowledge.

Henchmen are 1st level NPCs and are also compensated. Rules are given for the frequency of henchmen of various races and classes in a given area, the cost of advertising for henchmen (!) as well as their upkeep, and morale and loyalty.

### **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, Second Edition (1989)**

AD&D2e advanced the options for hirelings. Chapter 12 ("NPCs") of the *Player's Handbook* expands on the 1st edition rules by outlining three levels of NPCs: hirelings (motivated primarily by money), followers (who seek out people of great renown or power), and henchmen (powerful friends and allies). Over half a page is devoted to the PCs' obligations to their followers, including room and board, the procurement of equipment, and costs associated with ransoming or resurrecting them.

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* goes into even greater detail, covering the subject of hirelings over 13 pages, including a list of medieval occupations and detailed treatments of spies, assassins, sages, and soldiers. Extensive thought is also given to the political ramifications of hiring skilled craftspersons from feudal lands and depopulating areas of valuable manual labor and adults of fighting age. *Dungeon Masters* also receive advice on handling NPC morale.

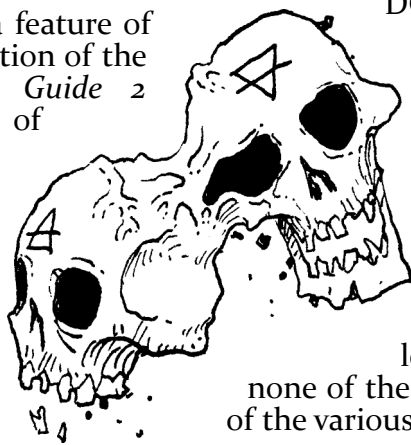
*Sages & Specialists* (1996), part of the *Dungeon Master's Guide Rules Supplement* (DMGR) series, gave DMs details on ten new NPC classes, including the apothecary, the cartographer, the guide, and the historian, in addition to more traditional hirelings such as healers and blacksmiths.

## Dungeons & Dragons, Third Edition (2000)

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* includes rules for cohorts, followers, and hirelings. The biggest difference between these groups is that cohorts and followers gain XP (utilizing a byzantine formula) and are attracted to PCs as a result of the characters' leadership trait, while hirelings are mercenaries in it for the money.

## Dungeons & Dragons, Fourth Edition (2008)

Party NPCs aren't a feature of 4e until the publication of the *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* (2009) in the form of new "companion characters." These henchmen utilize a monster stat block, can be adapted from a wide variety of creatures, and may be used to fulfill a missing PC role in the party.



*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium* (2011) introduces more traditional hirelings to the 4e rules. These are minions (1 HP NPCs) that give bonuses based on their profession. For instance, a mercenary bestows an AC bonus to nearby PCs, pilots increase a vehicle's speed, and linkboys (torchbearers) provide an aura of bright light. Hirelings have levels; higher-level hirelings bestow greater bonuses. No morale rules

are set forth, but mistreating or refusing to pay them will cause hirelings to abandon the party.

## Pathfinder (2009)

The ability to recruit followers (low-level NPCs) and cohorts (NPCs who gain class levels) in Pathfinder is tied to the Leadership feat. At higher levels this can include a retinue of dozens of followers, with the attendant costs.

## Dungeon Crawl Classics (2012)

DCC details hirelings and other NPC followers in a single page with rules for finding, outfitting and retaining unskilled NPCs. As written, DCC hirelings are equivalent to 0-level characters with none of the abilities or benefits of the various classes.

## Dungeon World (2012)

Rules for hirelings are given several pages in *Dungeon World*. Hirelings are defined by their skills (seven examples are given, including tracking, minstrel, and burglary), cost (which may be something other than money), and loyalty (used in-game to determine if they follow foolish, risky, or outlandish orders). PCs are given new moves to account for hirelings.



## Dungeons & Dragons, Fifth Edition (2014)

The “Equipment” chapter in the *Player’s Handbook* includes a list of various services PCs can purchase, such as messengers, passage on ships, and hirelings. Followers (low-level NPCs that get a share of the PCs’ XP reward) and hirelings get a little over a page in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*.

The *Essentials Kit* (2019) and *Tasha’s Cauldron of Everything* (2020) introduce the concept of sidekicks — minor NPCs with limited class skills and the ability to gain levels. Sidekicks come in three varieties: experts (favoring knowledge and cunning over brawn), spellcasters (with options for wizard or cleric spells) and warriors (fighters from a variety of backgrounds). These roles can be combined with any creature to create a DM-controlled sidekick for the party, making them analogous to 4e’s companion characters.

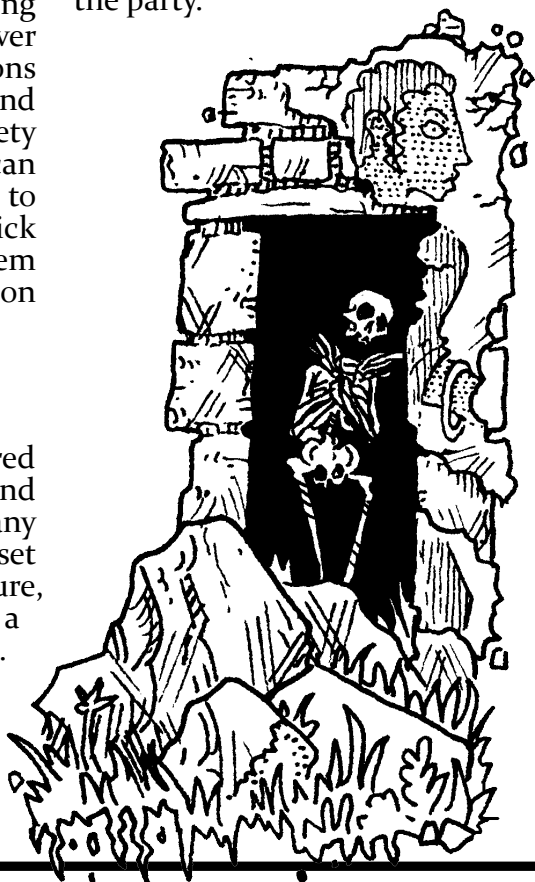
## Old School Essentials (2019)

OSE offers three types of hired help: retainers, mercenaries, and specialists. Retainers accompany adventuring parties, are paid a set wage and/or share of treasure, and maintain loyalty based on a character’s Charisma score. Mercenaries and specialists, on the other hand, don’t accompany PCs on their adventures. Mercenaries (which include archers,

footmen, horsemen, etc.) can be hired as part of a regular army, while specialists such as alchemists, blacksmiths, and sages have a particular skill or trade and are hired to perform specific tasks.

## Mörk Borg (2020)

True to form, followers in *Mörk Borg* are tortured, alien, and prone to abandoning the party. Rather than fulfilling set roles, *Mörk Borg* followers appear more monstrous (eyeless and noseless Pale Ones and the lamp-headed Wild Wickhead, for instance). Morale checks can be improved with a high Presence in the party.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Hit Points \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ HD \_\_\_\_\_ Alignment \_\_\_\_\_

Armor Class \_\_\_\_\_ XP \_\_\_\_\_ Henchman ☐

Action Die \_\_\_\_\_ Init \_\_\_\_\_ Saves

Fort \_\_\_\_\_

Movement \_\_\_\_\_ Ref \_\_\_\_\_

Will \_\_\_\_\_

### Special Abilities

### Weapons

Type \_\_\_\_\_

ATK \_\_\_\_\_ DMG \_\_\_\_\_

Type \_\_\_\_\_

ATK \_\_\_\_\_ DMG \_\_\_\_\_

Type \_\_\_\_\_

ATK \_\_\_\_\_ DMG \_\_\_\_\_

### Inventory

CP:

SP:

GP:

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Henchmen, whether male or female,  
are greatly desired by the discerning players,  
for they usually spell the difference  
between failure and success  
in the long term view. They are useful  
in individual adventures as  
a safety measure against  
the machinations of rival player characters,  
provide strength to the character  
and his or her stronghold, and lastly  
serve as a means of adventuring  
when the player character is unable to.

:: Gary Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide* (1979)



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