



# WHITE BOX ROGUES

OLD-SCHOOLASSASSINS, STEALTH, AND THIEVES

COMPATIBLE WITH SWORDS & WIZARDRY: WHITE BOXTM

By Omer Golan-Joel

# **WHITE BOX ROGUES**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

Gold glitters in the coffers of noblemen and in the hordes of dragons. Vast riches exchange hands in the bazaars of the city. Gems of untold value adorn the dead lying in their crypts. All of these, and more, call for the cunning merchant, or even the mighty swordsman, to take them by mercantile or martial prowess. They also call to the cutpurse, the burglar, the footpad – in short, their glitter summons the thief from the shadows, to lay their grubby hands on such fabulous treasures and take them, usually with their owners none the wiser. Similarly, the intrigues of nobles often devolve into cloak and dagger affairs, with emphasis on the dagger and the poison dart; into this world of conspiracy and deceit, steps the assassin, perhaps held on retainer by some corrupt noble to fell their rivals, or perhaps a murderer for hire.

Myth and legend, as well as more modern fantasy literature and even contemporary film and digital media, include – side by side with knights, wizards, and holy men – also thieves, rogues, and assassins. From Hermes the god of thieves (among other things) to the Merry Men who stole from the rich and gave to the poor, from a Halfling hired to burgle a dragon's den to a lone, cynical urban master-thief caught in schemes of ancient gods – the life of such criminals is a life of adventure, danger, and a potential to gain wealth beyond the lout's wild dreams. This product caters to this mythical and fantastic archetype by presenting an Assassin class and a Thief class to the *Sword & Wizardry: White Box™* game, with additional expanded and clarified rules for stealth and for trafficking on the Black Market, as well as some of the tools of the trade of such outlaws and scoundrels.

Note, however, that in the old fantasy games, the Thief is an old class. Indeed, some of the versions of *Swords & Wizardry*<sup>m</sup> do include a Thief class. The current product provides another approach to such class, in the spirit of the *White Box* rules themselves. This is one alternative approach to such thievery in your White Box game, which we hope will be to your liking. The main differences from the more classic Thief classes such as in *Swords & Wizardry: Core* are the use of 1d6 for thief abilities instead of percentile dice; expanded and clarified stealth rules; and more emphasis on the social aspects of thievery, namely black markets and underworld contacts. The Thief class presented here also starts off a little better than more orthodox Old Fantasy thieves, but at later levels their skills are similar.

Note that all rules presented in this product are optional variant rules, to be used at the Referee's discretion.

# **Required Materials**

To get the most from this book you will need at least two dice of various sizes and some pens/pencils and paper or a computer.

This book requires access to a copy of the *Swords & Wizardry™: White Box™* rules by Mythmere Games™. Page notations in this product refer to those in the First Printing Edition from 22 January 2009, available for free at the Mythmere Games™ web-page at the following address:

http://www.swordsandwizardry.com/whitebox.htm

#### References to Other Books

In this book, references to specific pages in other books and products are shown as the code for the relevant book followed by the page number, both in italics, thus: S&W x or (S&W x) for  $Swords \&Wizardry^{TM}$ : White  $Box^{TM}$ .

#### **Die Throw & Notation Conventions**

The die throw and notation conventions used in this book are the same as those described on *S&W 1*.



#### **Combat**

Wherever this book refers to combat, you can use the Combat chapter on S&W 14-16.

#### About the Author

**Omer Golan-Joel** is a 34 years old freelance English-Hebrew-English translator and an avid sci-fi and fantasy gamer from the town of Yavne, Israel. He lives with his beloved spouse and his two cats Saki and Chicha — the real masters of the house — as well as an entourage of lizards, from the gang of house geckos to the large Star Agama who graces the wall of his home in the warm and hot months. Omer is a fan of science-fiction, fantasy and history, an amateur cook, and a hobbyist herpetologist. He also writes role-playing gaming material, including **Outer Veil**, a full-scale campaign setting for **Traveller™** published by **Spica Publishing®**.

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Stellagama Publishing is a small, independent, international role-playing game publisher focused on older-school science fiction and fantasy gaming. We publish stuff for Sword & Wizardry: White Box™, the White Star™ RPG based on it, and for Mongoose® Traveller™, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Our interests are first and foremost to put forth enjoyable, immediately playable supplements, settings and adventures for these games for the enjoyment of our fellow players and referees.

# NEWAND EXPANDED RULES

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#### **Clarified and Expanded Stealth Rules**

The Swords & Wizardry: White Box™ rules do not deal with stealth and sneaking. This product, however, presents sneaky Assassin and Thief classes for these rules and thus warrants a closer look at stealth. The first thing we wish to clarify is Surprise – mentioned in several places in the base rules but not fully explained. In an encounter, any party will gain surprise – if circumstances allow for this – over others at a roll of 1-2 on 1d6. The target – or victim if you will – of the surprise (or ambush) attempt makes the roll and will have to roll 3+ on 1d6 to avoid being surprised.

Under these expanded rules stealth depends on the person or creature being sneaked upon. If a creature is actively watching an area, it will detect anyone trying to sneak around it unless special abilities or magic render the sneaker invisible. In this case, no surprise roll or even save vs. detection will allow the sneaking character to avoid detection. Humans and most other living creatures, however, get tired of such vigilance and will let down their guard within one turn, becoming passive watchers. Generally speaking, such beings cannot watch an area on full alert more than one out of three turns. On the other hand, undead, golems, and other non-living beings are constantly on alert.

Any character may sneak up to a passive watcher or around them on a regular surprise roll – normally 1-2 on 1d6; such a roll will allow the character to move one round without being detected. A failed surprise roll means that the watcher detects the character. A creature may, however, become distracted, making stealth even easier. Distraction can come from engaging in a conversation, playing cards with other guards – or hearing a loud noise in another direction. When distracted, the watcher will not notice the character by sight, but may still hear them on 1 on 1d6. When the watcher hears something, however, they have not detected the character yet; they may still be surprised as above on a roll of 1-2 on 1d6. So a distracted character has, cumulatively, only approximately 11% of detecting a sneaking character. An undead creatures or a golem may also be distracted by attracting its attention away from the sneaking. This is the only way to sneak past such a creature; as long as it is actively watching, it will automatically detect any sneaking character in its line of sight.

The above applies to all characters of all classes. Thieves, however, have another ace up their hole. If a passively watching or a distracted character is about to detect them as per the above rules – they may make a Saving Throw vs. detection; if successful, they avoid notice.

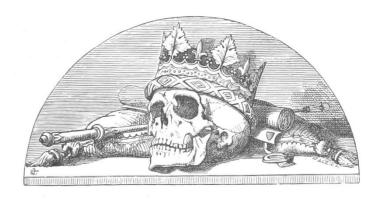
#### **Fencing Stolen Goods**

Role-playing game characters are notorious for looting anything not nailed down in the dungeon they just visited. However, selling these spoils on the open market can be a challenge. Most scrupulous merchants – or those afraid of the long arm of the law – will usually avoid purchasing questionable goods from the hands of shady characters such as the typical PC. After all, if a general shop's keeper in some village just buys a set of crown jewels suspiciously similar to those on the local baron's tiara, he is likely to get into big trouble if discovered by authorities, and possibly hanged as a traitor. So when regular player characters attempt to resell looted goods to merchants, they will usually only get half of their listed price. If the item at hand is particularly risky to deal with, they will able to find a buyer only on a roll of 5-6 on 1d6, and even then will get paid 10% of the list price. Thieves, however, have a special ability allowing them to fence stolen loot more efficiently and profitably.

**Open Content ends here** 

# **THEASSASSIN**

Daggers in the dark are a staple of intrigue among the aristocratic ruling classes. In too many instances, behind the mask of civility and chivalry lie dark motives and an unquenchable thirst for power and wealth. The more honorable of gentlemen and earls settle such affairs by dueling, but the more underhanded among them prefer more discreet and much less heroic methods. Into this world steps the Assassin – a professional killer. Some are bound by



oath to one lord or another, but many sell their murderous talents to the highest bidder, ready to stab a person of high standing in their back or slip poison into their wine-glass for a purse of gold. Not all assassins are such low-lives, however — some serve as the sacred slayers of the wicked in service of a vengeful god, while others turn their talents to hunting and slaying necromancers and other practitioners of black magic. But in any case, the Assassin excels in the art of death.

Unlike the Thief detailed in later pages of this publication, the Assassin knows very well how to fight and kill. They might lack the proficiency in heavy armor or the hearty endurance of a Fighter, but long years of harsh training have shaped their body into a weapon, used for slaying — they strike with great precision and viciousness. They can also stay hidden in the cloak of shadows and knows how to climb very well — to make their way to the mark, and then vanish into the dark before the corpse hits the floor.

Level	XP	HD	ВНВ	ST	Assassinate	Climbing
1	0	1	+0	14	X2	4+
2	1,500	2	+1	13	X2	4+
3	3,000	2+1	+2	12	X2	4+
4	6,000	3	+2	11	X2	3+
5	12,000	4	+3	10	Х3	3+
6	24,000	4+1	+4	9	Х3	3+
7	48,000	5	+4	8	Х3	2+
8	96,000	6	+5	7	Х3	2+
9	192,000	6+1	+6	6	X4	*
10	384,000	7	+6	5	X4	*

<sup>\*</sup> The roll will only fail on a roll of 11+ on 2d6.

**TABLE 1: Assassin Advancement** 

#### **Assassin Class Features**

**Weapon/Armor Restrictions:** Assassins may use any weapon but may only wear Leather Armor and may not use Shields.

**Saving Throw:** Assassins get +1 on the Saving Throws vs. death and poisons.

**XP Bonus from Dexterity:** This class' bonus is due to a high Dexterity attribute.

**Stealth:** Assassins know how to blend into shadows and avoid notice, especially when closing in for a kill, or when fleeing the bloody crime scene afterwards. When at risk of being detected, as per the stealth rules on p.5 of this product, the Assassin may make a Saving Throw vs. detection to avoid being detected and stay hidden. This cannot defeat fully alert active watchers, of course, but will fool passive watchers and distracted characters.

**Assassinate:** Assassins know how to kill. Both in melee combat and in ranged combat at any range, when shooting at an unaware target, Assassins receive a +4 bonus to hit, and multiply their damage as given in the Assassin Advancement Table.

**Climb:** While any character may climb regular surfaces with ladders, ropes or other easily-grabbed handholds, an Assassin is a cat-burglar skilled in "second-story jobs" – that is, climbing walls without obvious handholds. On a roll of the number given on the column, or higher, on 1d6, the Assassin has succeeded in scaling that wall.

Establish Assassin Cult (9<sup>th</sup>): At 9<sup>th</sup> level, an Assassin who chooses to organize a safe-house or a dark temple in a major city may attract a small group of partners in crime -1<sup>st</sup> level Assassins, Thieves, and Fighters, who will serve as his assistants in assassinations or as a separate gang of murderers under his command.

Open Content ends here

# **THE THIEF**

The nimble street-urchin, cutpurse of the county town, the expert burglar, the resourceful spy — all of these, and many more, are Thieves. Where there are riches to be stolen and secret information to be exposed, there will always be people who seek to put their grubby hands on them. Keep in mind that not all Thieves are criminals — some are lawful Thief-Catchers, Witch-Finders, or heroic spies in service of a just ruler or organization. But all of them know how to get their hands on what they want, when they want it, despite the wishes of others.



The Thief is a master of stealth and burglary, but is not very skilled in honorable combat. Years of lazy larceny, or secret agency stealth and information-gathering training at the expense of combat training have rendered the Thief relatively weak physically, and not highly skilled with an axe or a sword. They are, however, experienced in underhanded combat and backstabbing.

The following are classified as Open Content

Level	ХР	HD	ВНВ	ST	Sneak Attack	Mechanics	Pickpocket	Climbing
1	0	1	+0	14	X2	6	5+	4+
2	1,250	1+1	+0	13	X2	5+	5+	4+
3	2,500	2	+1	12	X2	5+	4+	4+
4	5,000	2+1	+1	11	X2	4+	4+	3+
5	10,000	3	+2	10	Х3	4+	3+	3+
6	20,000	3+1	+3	9	Х3	3+	3+	3+
7	40,000	4	+3	8	Х3	3+	2+	2+
8	60,000	4+1	+4	7	Х3	2+	2+	2+
9	90,000	5	+4	6	X4	*	*	*
10	120,000	5+1	+5	5	X4	*	*	*

<sup>\*</sup> The roll will only fail on a roll of 11+ on 2d6.

**TABLE 2: Thief Advancement** 

#### **Thief Class Features**

**Weapon/Armor Restrictions:** Thieves may use clubs, daggers, light crossbows, short bows, short swords, and slings. They may only wear Leather Armor and may not use Shields.

**Saving Throw:** Thieves get +1 on the Saving Throws vs. death and poisons.

**XP Bonus from Dexterity:** This class' bonus is due to a high Dexterity attribute.

**Stealth:** Thieves know how to blend into shadows and avoid notice, especially when preparing for a heist, or when fleeing the crime scene afterwards. When at risk of being detected, as per the stealth rules on p.5 of this product, the Thief may make a Saving Throw vs. detection to avoid being detected and stay hidden. This cannot defeat fully alert active watchers, of course, but will fool passive watchers and distracted characters.

**Sneak Attack:** Sneaky taffers that they are, Thieves are underhanded in combat and know how to land an unexpected blow on an unsuspecting victim. Both in close combat and in up to a range of 30', when shooting

or striking at an unaware target, Thieves receive a +4 bonus to hit, and multiply their damage as given in the Thief Advancement Table.

**Mechanics:** Locks and traps are no match for the skilled boxman. We encourage the Referee to simply let a Thief pick most routine locks and disable simple, crude traps without requiring a roll. However, when faced with complex locks or vicious traps, roll the number given on this column, or higher, on 1d6 to pick the lock or disable the trap. Thieves usually require Thief's Tools (costing 25 gold) to use this ability, but may use improvised or scavenged tools in its absence, suffering a -1 penalty to this roll, though a roll of 6 on 1d6 is always a success regardless.

**Pickpocket:** Picking pockets is a time-honored tradition among thieves. The Thief may attempt to pick a pocket, palm a small object, or hide a small item from search on a roll of the number given on this column, or higher on 1d6.

**Climb:** While any character may climb regular surfaces with ladders, ropes or other easily-grabbed handholds, a Thief is a cat-burglar skilled in "second-story jobs" – that is, climbing walls without obvious handholds. On a roll of the number given on the column, or higher, on 1d6, the Thief has succeeded in scaling that wall.

**Fencing:** As discussed on p.5, stolen goods are hard to sell. The Thief, however, knows whom to contact and how to sell them on the black market, and thus sell regular loot and stolen items at 100% the market price and sell particularly risky items at 50% the market price without needing to roll for a seller.

Cheating the Gods: The sneaky thief may even attempt to cheat the Gods themselves and use magical or holy items and relics not intended for their normal use. At level 9 or above, a Thief may attempt to use a magical item normally unusable by thieves, such as various magical staves or scrolls. However, such fraud against the Gods and against the rules of Magic is dangerous. Upon attempting such inappropriate use, the Thief must make a saving throw vs. Magic, or suffer dire results – usually the (painful) reverse of the intended effect, or other unpleasant consequences decreed by the Referee. Note that this power does not allow a Thief to use magical arms or armor not allowed for a Thief's use, as the limitation is such case is the matter of physical scale and not the will of the Gods.

**Underworld Contacts:** Thieves know the criminal underworld well, and know whom to talk with to get sensitive information not available otherwise to player characters. Generally speaking, the Thief will know whom to ask for various rumors and pieces of information, and once per gaming session, will be able to get their hands with no roll necessary on one important piece of information, such as the plans for a villain's lair or the password used by robbers to open the magical stone door to their hideout. Such information costs money, however – typically a steep sum of 50 gold, or more than that for particularly valuable secrets.

**Establish Guild (9th):** At 9th level, a Thief who chooses to set up a hideout may enlist the help of several other like-minded criminals to start a thieves' guild, typically engaged in larceny — or, alternatively, a spy network stealing secrets to sell to the highest bidder.

# **OPTIONAL RULES**

#### Non—Human Thieves and Assassins

The Thief and Assassin classes are, at the basic level, human classes, just like the Cleric. However, there are precedents in literature for Halfling burglars and Elven rogues – or even Elven assassins! Therefore, with the Referee's approval, Elves might advance as far as level 6 both as Thieves and Assassins, and Halflings up to level 8 as Thieves and level 4 as Assassins.

Even more optionally, Dwarfs would only be able to reach level 3 as Thieves, but Dwarven Thieves will always enjoy a Mechanics ability of a Thief two levels higher than their own — for example, a level 1 Dwarven Thief would have the Mechanics ability of a level 3 Thief. On the other hand, regardless of level, Dwarven Thieves would only have a Climbing ability of 6 on 1d6, as their bodies are not conductive to climbing. Generally speaking, Dwarves would usually prefer to hire a Halfling burglar instead of dabbling in thievery by themselves. Dwarves cannot be Assassins.

#### **Dexterity and Stealth**

At the Referee's discretion, a Thief or Assassin may add their Dexterity bonus to their saving throw vs. Detection, as a nimble rogue would be even harder to detect than a more mediocre one.

#### **Read Languages**

Some thieves, but not all, lead quite cosmopolitan lives, connected to underworlds traffickers of all sorts and gleaning some knowledge of foreign languages. Such knowledge will not be appropriate for many thieves, such as the street urchins and cutthroats of a grittier campaign. But in other campaigns dashing rogues intermix with colorful characters of many cultures, and will doubtlessly gain at least some proficiency with their strange tongues. Therefore, in such a campaign, the Referee may decree that from the 3<sup>rd</sup> level onward, a Thief will understand the main ideas of any written document, regardless of the language, on a roll of 3 or higher on 1d6. Note that this will not automatically solve riddles, and the Referee has every right to veto this ability when encountering a particularly rare language which the Thief would have a negligent chance of picking up even with their cosmopolitan underworld experience.

#### **Dexterity and Thief (or Assassin) Abilities**

As the Mechanics, Pickpocket, and Climb rolls use a 1d6, adding a +1 bonus or subtracting a —1 penalty due to the Thief's dexterity score will greatly affect these abilities. If the Referee wished to allow the Ability Scores such significant effect on thievery, he may allow the Dexterity bonus or penalty apply to Mechanics, Pickpocket and Climb rolls up to level 9. Note that regardless of the modifier, other than on level 9 and above, a "natural" roll of 1 is always a failure and a "natural" roll of 6 is always a success. On level 9 and above, the Thief's skills are so great that the natural Dexterity ability no longer has any effect on them. Under this optional rule, Assassins will receive a similar bonus to Climb.

# **NEW WEAPONS**

Weapon	Damage	ROF	Range	Weight	Cost
Blowpipe	Special	1	100ft	5	10
Garrote	1d6	-	-	-	2
Sleep Smoke Bomb	Special	1	30ft	1	50
Smoke Bomb	Special	1	30ft	1	10
Dart, Death Poison (10)	-	-	-	0.5	5
Dart, Sleep Poison (10)	-	-	-	0.5	1

**TABLE 3: New Weapons** 

**Dart:** Ammunition for a Blowpipe. Sold in bundles of ten darts. Both types of darts – death poison and sleep poison – weigh the same.

**Blowpipe:** A simple long tube made out of bamboo using the power of its user's lungs to propel a dart at its target. There are two types of darts – sleep poison darts and the highly illegal death poison darts. A living being struck by a sleep poison dart must make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or immediately fall unconscious for 2d6 rounds. A living being creature struck by a death poison dart must make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or die within 1d6 rounds.

**Garrote:** A thin but strong wire used to strangle unsuspecting and unaware opponents from behind. The person using the garrote must get right behind the victim without being detected to use the garrotte, but if they do so, they silently do 1d6 damage, subject to Assassinate and Sneak Attack multipliers. The garrotte does not work on an opponent aware of the attacker. A garrote works on unarmored opponents and on those clad in leather armor, but is completely ineffective against targets wearing heavier armor.

**Sleep Smoke Bomb:** Upon impact, this bomb ignites to generate a thick cloud of narcotic smoke, lulling all who breathe it to sleep; anyone within 15' of the point of impact must make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or fall unconscious for 1d6 rounds. The smoke dissipates on the next round.

**Smoke Bomb:** Upon impact, this bomb ignites and creates a thick cloud of regular smoke, 15' in radius and 5' high. The smoke is opaque and prevents sight, except for by magical or other supernatural means, through the affected area for 1d6 rounds.

Open Content ends here

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