

THE PUPPETEER

A NEW BARD CLASS FOR YOUR FAVORITE OSR GAME



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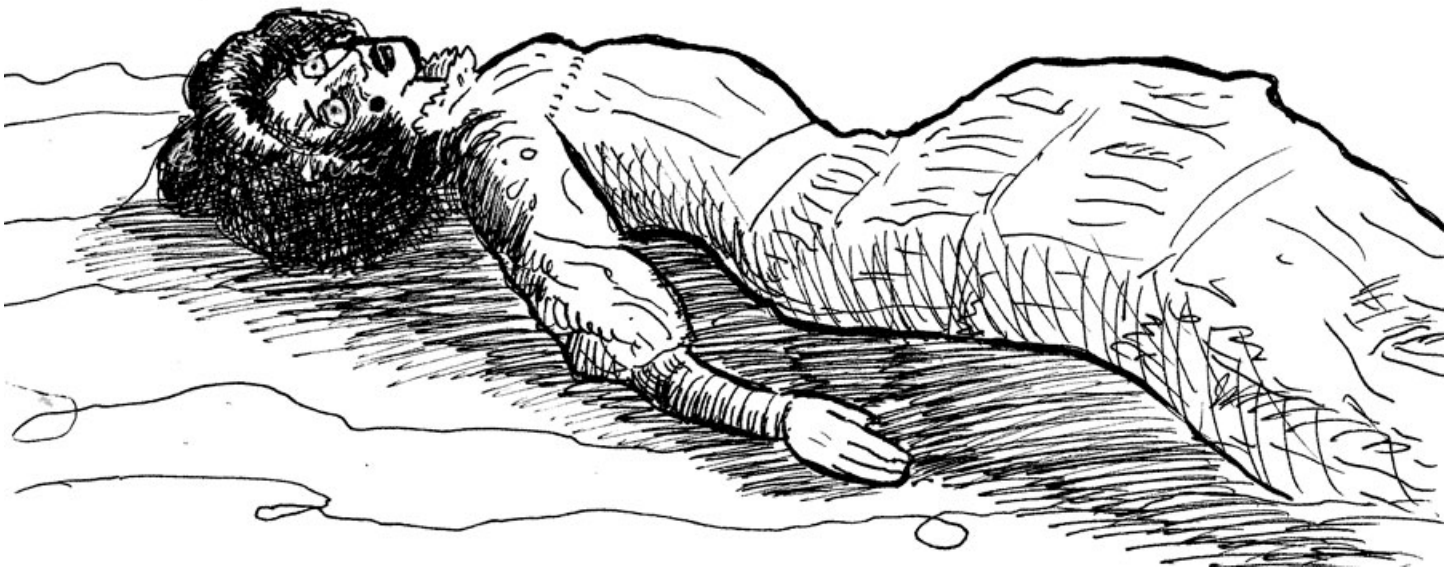
A NEW BARD CLASS FOR YOUR FAVORITE OSR GAME

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The Puppeteer



Though similar to other types of Bards, the Puppeteer is unique in his or her mastery over the arts of puppetry and the mystical nature in which he or she controls the puppets. They are masters of manipulation and can mesmerize the average person with the wiles of their deft handiwork. The Puppeteer is one to choose stealth and subterfuge over direct action and will almost always prefer to send his or her special puppets in to do his or her dirty work, rather than tackling things straight on. They are sometimes gregarious, always interesting, and often the true brains behind an operation. Masters of planning, the Puppeteers are those members of a team who will always think about all possible options and avenues before taking action and will typically have multiple failsafes and fallbacks devised. They are not afraid to lead and will typically manage the other members of the party when devising their schemes.

While the majority of the puppetry involves the traditional marionette, the Puppeteer is equally adroit in the use of shadow puppets, hand/sock puppets, rod puppets, and the like. Likewise, the Puppeteer is skilled in the art of puppet making and should never find him or herself wanting for a puppet to use.

The Puppeteer progresses as a Priest/Cleric and gains hit points and makes saves as a Thief/Rogue/Specialist. If you do not like the idea of using your default game stats for this, then simply use the table provided. This is the way that we play the Puppeteer and it is definitely a good way to do it. If you play a system like LofFP that doesn't allow for combat advancement for non-fighters, simply ignore that column.

ABILITY SCORE REQUIREMENTS

The Puppeteer must have a minimum Dexterity of 12 and a minimum Charisma of 13. A high Intelligence is also recommended. Puppeteers with a Charisma of 15 or more will earn a +10% bonus to experience points. If you play the kind of game that is not race-as-class, the following races are allowed: Human, Half-Elf, Halfling, Gnome. Obviously Elves find puppetry to be beneath them and a shameful act that should be avoided at all costs. Dwarves just don't get it.

SKILLS

If you use a skill system, the Puppeteer gains skills as Thieves/Rogues/Specialists at two levels lower than their actual level. If your skill system is percentage based, assume that the Puppeteer has skills at -10% of what a Thief/Rogue/Specialist of the same level would have. If you are playing with the LotFP skill system, assume that the Puppeteer begins play with two skill points and gains one skill point per level.

COMBAT

Puppeteers really prefer to work behind the scenes (obviously) and will avoid fighting if other options are available. Even when in combat, they will prefer to use sneaky and creative weapons--torches, daggers, oil, etc. Puppeteers love ranged weapons, with a preference for the short bow, throwing knives, small crossbows, and (if they are available) muskets of all kinds. They never use two-handed weapons. Some Puppeteers will wear leather or studded leather armor, but they will never use a shield, wear metal armor (other than elven chain), or wear a helm. If a Puppeteer ever finds him or herself in plate or chain armor, automatically consider them to be heavily encumbered.



PUPPETS

The Puppeteer can create as many puppets as he or she desires, though his or her particular ability to animate them can only be applied to a number of puppets equal to the Puppeteer's level at one time. For instance, Montreux, a 3rd level Puppeteer can animate a maximum of three puppets at once. The puppet follows the Puppeteer's every command, but must be within hearing distance to receive new commands.

All puppets will have the following base stats, plus modifiers granted by the particular class of puppet and the Puppeteer's whims:

Hit Points: 1d4; Armor Class: 14 (5); To Hit: +1; Damage: 1d2 or by weapon

Climb: 2:6

Pick Pockets/Sleight of Hand: 2:6

Stealth/Move Silently & Hide in Shadows: 3:6

Sneak Attack/Back Stab: 2:6 (+4 to hit, double damage)

Tinkering/Open Locks & Removing Traps: 1:6

In addition to these base abilities, the Puppeteer can add a total of his or her level number of points to the aggregate of the puppets that he or she has currently active--points may be used to increase hit dice, armor class, to hit, damage, or skills. For instance, a 3rd level Puppeteer has activated two puppets. He can give a total of three points to the puppets and chooses to add one point to the first puppet's Climb skill and two points to the second, adding 1d4 hit points and +1 to damage.

Furthermore, each type of puppet is slightly different. The following puppet types get additional modifications:

Marionette:

+1d4 hit points, +1 to Tinkering/Open Locks & Removing Traps

Shadow Puppet:

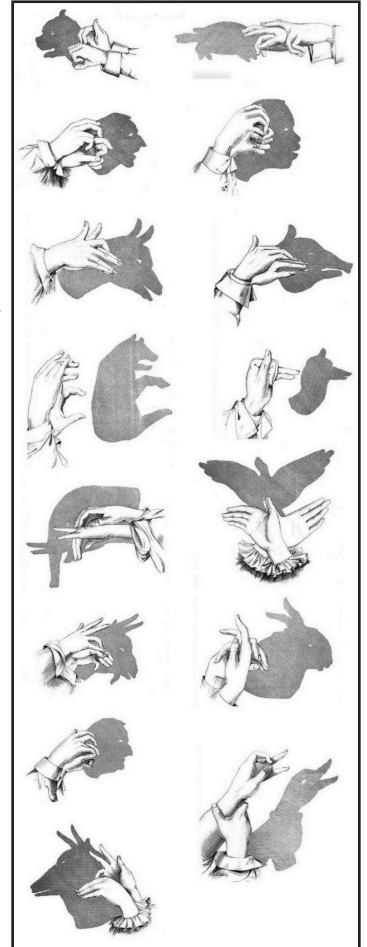
+2 to Armor Class, +3 to Stealth/Move Silently & Hide in Shadows

Hand Puppet:

+2 to Pick Pockets/Sleight of Hand, +1 to hit

Rod Puppet:

+1 to Armor Class, +2 to Climb, +1 to damage



To create a puppet, the Puppeteer needs almost no supplies—he or she is a master of improvisation and can use almost anything at hand to create something that will suit his or her purposes. Given enough time and access to tools and supplies, creation of a puppet is automatic and the referee should not bother with calling for a roll at all. Under duress, without proper supplies, or with time running out, the player may then be required to make a check. The Puppeteer begins with a 2 in 6 chance of success and improves with level progression (see the Progression table for more information.) Failure means that the Puppeteer was unsuccessful, but may try again the following round. Success means that the Puppeteer was able to make the puppet and should be able to animate it on the next round. If animating the puppet exceeds the Puppeteer's maximum number possible, the oldest existing puppet will simply lose its animation as the new one takes its place.

Beginning at third level, the Puppeteer can imbue his or her puppets with magic-user spell abilities. See the section on magic user spell progression for more information.

CHARM AUDIENCE

Given the opportunity to perform a puppet show, the Puppeteer may use his or her special skills (and, perhaps, a bit of magic) to charm those watching. After at least a minute of puppetry, the Puppeteer may roll a check to see if the audience was charmed. If the goal is simply to improve reactions and make friends, this roll is all that is required. If the Puppeteer wishes to influence the audience in any way beyond this, each charmed individual also gets a save vs. magic before it can take effect.

MAGIC USER SPELL PROGRESSION

While not schooled in the arcane arts, the Puppeteer does possess some innate magical talents and abilities. Besides his or her spell-like ability to charm audience with puppetry, the Puppeteer can, over time, develop an understanding of certain magical powers that can be transferred upon the puppets that he or she chooses to bring to life.

It is important to note that the Puppeteer cannot cast spells directly, but must transfer the magical effects of the spell into a puppet at the moment of animation in order to use this magic. Indeed, the Puppeteer doesn't even think of these abilities as true magic, but rather particular abilities that he or she can build into the puppets through expert craftsmanship and a lifelong devotion to puppetry.

Beginning at third level, and every level thereafter, the Puppeteer will inherently “know” a new spell that he or she may utilize once per day in the art of puppetry. These spells, once imbued upon the puppet, will never be forgotten (and, as such, do not have to be re-learned) but the Puppeteer will not be able to use that particular spell again until having rested a full night. The Puppeteer is limited to these few spells, which come to him or her as spontaneous epiphanies upon gaining new levels, and has no means of learning other spells.

While all magic-user spells are technically available, most Puppeteers will tend to utilize the kind of magic which aides in the craft of puppetry—illusions, charming spells, and the like.



ADVANCEMENT

Level	Title	XP	Hit Dice	Fighting Ability	Create Puppet	Charm Audience	Level 1 Spells	Level 2 Spells	Level 3 Spells	Level 4 Spells
1	Apprentice	0	1d4	+0	2:6	1:6				
2	Performer	1,500	2d4	+0	3:6	1:6				
3	Doer	3,000	3d4	+0	3:6	2:6	1			
4	Handler	6,000	4d4	+1	4:6	2:6	2			
5	Manipulator	12,000	5d4	+1	4:6	3:6	2	1		
6	Punchman	25,000	6d4	+1	5:6	3:6	3	1		
7	Entertainer	50,000	7d4	+2	5:6	4:6	3	2		
8	Player	100,000	8d4	+2	Automatic	4:6	3	2	1	
9	Puppeteer	200,000	9d4	+3	Automatic	5:6	3	3	1	
10	Master of Puppets	300,000	9d4+1	+4	Automatic	Automatic	3	3	2	
11	MoP, 11th	400,000	9d4+3	+5	Automatic	Automatic	3	3	2	1
12	MoP, 12th	500,000	9d4+5	+6	Automatic	Automatic	3	3	3	1
13	MoP, 13th	600,000	9d4+6	+7	Automatic	Automatic	3	3	3	2
14	MoP, 14th	700,000	9d4+7	+8	Automatic	Automatic	4	3	3	2
15	MoP, 15th	800,000	9d4+8	+9	Automatic	Automatic	4	4	3	2
16	MoP, 16th	900,000	9d4+9	+10	Automatic	Automatic	4	4	4	2



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