

the job) with the guild member. They may teach cantrips only, however, and not mysteries or magic-user spells — unless the spouse or child enters the guild or trade in the usual manner.

Foiling theft

Merchants and tradesmen who cannot cast cantrips, mysteries or low-level magic-user spells and who are not retired adventurers can still protect their goods from theft. The easiest solution is a series of well-placed locks. Larger centers of population might have complex locks that reduce a thief's chance to pick them by some set amount, perhaps down to as low as one-half of the original chance for success. Complex locks should sell for about 1 electrum piece per percent of this reduction (with a reduction of 50% being maximum, as described above).

Example: A thief has a 35% chance to pick a lock. If a shopkeeper spends an extra 10 gp on a complex lock, the thief's chance is reduced by a 20% proportion, to (35% — (.2x.35), or 28%. If the thief's chance were 80%, the same amount of reduction would take the chance down to 80% — (.2x.80), or 64%. A run-of-the-mill padlock would cost anywhere from 1-100 silver pieces. Standard door locks sell from 3-300 silver pieces. Locks for strong doors, the type found in dungeons, on temple doors, in jails, and so forth likely cost from 1-20 gp.

For added protection, the merchant can also hire a thief or assassin to place a trap. The cost to place the trap will be about equal in gold pieces to the number representing the percent chance the thief or assassin has to set the trap successfully. That chance should be the same as the chance to remove a trap.

Failure to set a trap successfully means the thief or assassin will take full damage from the trap. Thus, very few thieves or assassins will set traps that might cause injury. This is especially true of traps containing poison needles. A poison-needle trap with lethal poison in it will cost at least double the usual price. Some thieves and assassins will refuse to set such a trap.

Traps able to be set by thieves involve simple mechanics and not collapsing floors or ceilings, two-ton blocks, or the like. Most thieves will set traps that sound an alarm (like ringing a bell or gong), cause something to fall (like a bucket, can, or pail), or cause minor damage (the classic form is a crossbow trap, though some spring-loaded traps can also be set effectively to throw darts). Poisons and liquids to coat daggers, darts and bolts are quite expensive. Such liquids will dry out and/or become impotent with time; usually the more potent the liquid is, the faster it will dry out or lose potency.

The merchant can also hire a magic-user, cleric, or druid to set a magical trap

via a spell. The most common of these are *Magic Mouth*, *Snare*, and a *Glyph of Warding*. Some magical traps can be reset each night so that the merchant can set the trap up and then go to bed. This is surely true of the *Magic Mouth*, which could be placed on an object that is covered during the day or not even brought out during the day, and then exposed at night for the would-be thief to trip.

Your DM may rule that a *Glyph of Warding* cannot be placed on a carpet. If this is allowed, however, this provides a great defense: Just roll the rug up in the morning and put it away until the next night. Naturally, there are more potent magics like Symbols and *Explosive Runes* that might also be available, for a much stiffer price. Any magical protection for a merchant's shop will cost quite a few gold pieces.

The merchant can employ one or more guards for his goods at night or even during the day. That is what town guards are for, by the way. The guard a merchant employs can be an adventuring-class character even if the employer is zero level himself. After all, money is the key factor here, not level.

The merchant can buy a dog or other animal (monster?) to guard his property. A guard dog can stop many a robbery before it starts. If the merchant has a golem, basilisk or cockatrice, however, so much the better!

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