

PUTTING TOGETHER A PARTY ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT

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There are times — often if you attend many conventions — when you will have a group of players desiring to adventure in your campaign who have no suitable characters with which to do so. You might want only low, medium, or high level characters for the particular scenario you have in mind, and regardless of level it is certain that you will not wish to have ultra-powerful (considering character level) or strange magic items in the group. It therefore becomes necessary to have the party generate special characters on the spot, and this takes up valuable playing time. In order to reduce this to a minimum, the following system, one which I have developed perforce from DMing conventions, is suggested:

Abilities: Players roll 4d4, discarding the low die, for abilities, arranging scores as they like.

Race & Class: After generating ability stats, each player selects the race and class of his or her character as desired, making adjustments accordingly.

Alignment: Make certain that the alignments allowed to participants are not so diverse so as to cause a breakdown in the game due to player quarrels. You may require players to select from two or three compatible alignment types if you think best — such as neutral, neutral good, and lawful neutral, for example.

Level: For low level, you might use random dice to find if players are levels 1-2, 1-3, 2-4; medium range might be 5-7, 5-8, or 7-9; upper range is typically 8-10, 8-11, or 9-12. *Multi-class* races are best handled by adding 1 level per profession to the level generated, and then dividing the total by the number of classes involved, counting all fractions as whole numbers.

Standard Equipment: Assuming that these are not 1st level characters, you will probably find it best to allow them to take whatever is desired, reminding them that they can only carry so much, and then quickly checking the character sheets before the start of the adventure. Whatever restrictions you decide to place upon standard items is, of course, your own business. Technologically impossible items, and items that you deem unlikely to be used can always be refused to the party.

Magic Items: If the party is assumed to have been adventuring for some time, however brief, then it is probable that one or more of their number would have acquired certain magic items. In order to reflect this likelihood, use the following tables for the various classes of adventurers, as applicable to your group:

PROTECTIVE ITEMS TABLE

Per Level Chance For Shield, Armor, Etc. (Typically + 1)							
Character Class	Shield	Plate	Banded	Chain	Leather	R. of Pr.	Bracers*
CLERIC	10%	5%*	6%*	8%*	—	2%	—
Druid	—	—	—	—	8%	5%	—
FIGHTER	10%	6%*	8%*	10%*	—	—	—
Paladin	10%	6%*	8%*	10%*	—	—	—
Ranger	8%	5%*	7%*	15%*	—	—	—
MAGIC-USER	—	—	—	—	—	15%	4%
Illusionist	—	—	—	—	—	15%	4%
THIEF	—	—	—	10%	10%	4%	—
Assassin	8%	—	—	—	10%	3%	—

*Bracers of AC 6 value.

**Only one sort of armor may be gained, so the character must have a decision as to what type before the odds are computed and the percentile dice are rolled.

Multiply level by percentage chance to determine odds; then roll percentile dice, and if the score is equal to or less than the percentage chance, the character has the item. There is a 1% chance per level of experience of the character that any item will be above average — +2 or bracers of AC 5. If the chance for having the item was greater than 90%, add the percentage above 90% to the chance for the item to be above average. If the resulting roll indicates an above average item, then see if it goes up to + 3, or bracers of AC 4, on a straight 1% per level of experience chance. *Example:* Gonzo the 9th level ranger discovers that he has magic chain mail, having opted to take a sure thing with a 135% chance. Gonzo's level (9) plus the percentage chance above 90% (45%) are added together to find the chance for +2 chain — 9% +

45% = 54%. Percentile dice are rolled, and the result is 51, so Gonzo now has at least +2 chain. A third check is made, and it is discovered that he has just +2 as the dice roll was 99.

WEAPONS TABLE

Per Level Chance For Weapon (Typically + 1)

Character Class	Battle					
	Dagger	Sword*	Mace	Axe	Spear	Bow Bolts +2
CLERIC	—	—	12%	—	—	—
Druid	10%	—	7%	—	10%	—
FIGHTER	10%	7%*	—	10%*	8%*	10%*
Paladin	10%	10%*	—	10%*	10%*	—
Ranger	10%	9%*	8	9%*	8%*	5%
MAGIC-USER	15%	—	—	—	—	—
Illusionist	15%	—	—	—	—	—
THIEF	12%	11%	—	—	—	—
Assassin	10%	5%*	5%*	5%*	5%*	1%
Monk	1%	—	—	—	2%	—

* Scimitar in the case of druids, short swords for characters less than 5' tall, long swords in all other cases, except the character may opt for a short sword if desired.

** As with protective items, only one category of weapon of this type may be had, so before finding odds the player must state which his or her character wishes to go for.

Chances for +2 or +3 weapons are the same as for protective items. You may alternately give special features instead, to swords, i.e. +1 sword Flame Tongue, or +2 sword, Giant Slayer. Add a *crossbow of speed* to +2 bolts if a +3 is indicated, otherwise double their number only.

POTIONS TABLE

Character Class	Per Level Chance For Having Potion		Maximum No. Of Potions	Possible Potion Types
	Per Level Chance	For Having Potion		
CLERIC	6%	—	1	1. Climbing
Druid	11%	—	2	2. Diminuation
FIGHTER	8%	—	1	3. Extra-healing
Paladin	6%	—	1	4. Fire Resistance
Ranger	7%	—	1	5. Flying
MAGIC-USER	10%	—	1	6. Gaseous Form
Illusionist	10%	—	2	7. Growth
THIEF	9%	—	2	8. Healing
Assassin	5%	—	1	9. Invisibility
Monk	4%	—	1	10. Polymorph Serf

You may allow characters to have whatever potion(s) suit them, or you can dice to find them at random. Any score of 100% or more for having a potion MUST be allowed to select their own, as this reflects the fact that such characters would have supplies of them available to choose from.

SCROLLS TABLE

Character Class	Per Level Chance		Type of Scroll (And Level)		
	For Having	Scroll	Protection	1 Spell*	3 spells**
CLERIC	8%	—	no	1-3	1-4
Druid	7%	—	yes	1-3	1-4
FIGHTER	9%	—	yes	—	—
Paladin	4%	—	yes	—	—
Ranger	5%	—	yes	—	—
MAGIC-USER	15%	—	no	1-4	1-6
Illusionist	12%	—	no	1-3	1-4
THIEF***	6%	—	yes	1-3	1-4
Assassin***	3%	—	yes	1-3	—

* Determine randomly, but only normally useful spells for the sort of adventure undertaken.

** Normally given only if no other types of scrolls are in the possession of the character, otherwise as above.

*** Only one scroll type available. If spell scroll, they will be magic-user spells, otherwise as above.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

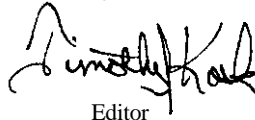
If the party is generally above 5th level and going into a hazardous area, or if the party is generally above 8th level, then you might determine it advantageous to award from one to four miscellaneous items according to the following list. Large groups are less likely to need such items. Higher level characters are more likely to have them despite numbers. Selection can be by you or by the party, as you deem best. You may

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Rumbles, cont. from pg. 1

guarantee that every letter sent will be published; the one letter I mentioned is the only printable one out of the grand total of five that we received.

Joe Orłowski is no longer with TSR Periodicals, much to our regret. He has transferred to TSR Hobbies, Inc., to become fulltime GenCon Coordinator and Convention Director. I would like to thank Joe publicly for the fine job he has done in the past, particularly while I was recovering from my surgery last winter. Had it not been for his yeoman efforts, Periodicals might well have floundered. We wish him well in his new position.



Editor

AND NOW, A FEW WORDS FROM THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK. . .

"Gee, three weeks ago I couldn't even spell ~~editor~~ editor, and now I am one!"

Well, my first half-a-rumble. As the Kindly Editor (my boss) said earlier, I'm Gary Jaquet (henceforth to be known as "Jake" — we already have one Gary around here). Some of you already know me, as I've been hanging around the game world for some years now. Actually, I got into board games in high school back in the 60's, but when D&D appeared in '74, I was hooked for good. Oddly enough, it was that period in my life that has put me where I am today, here in *The Dragon* offices.

I was minding my own business, attending Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Illinois, majoring in journalism. One day I stopped in at one of my regular haunts, the Downstairs Arcade pinball arcade. There behind the counter was a bearded, slightly balding man rolling strangely shaped dice and making notations on graph paper. Being the curious being that I am, I asked what he was doing. That was it! I had to have a set of D&D rule books right away. And, if you haven't guessed by now, the man behind the counter was none other than Tim Kask. Tim and I developed a fast friendship and from then on, most any evening you could find us both, along with a few other crazies, at Tim's house, exploring dungeons.

Tim graduated in '75 and went straight to Lake Geneva to be editor of the old Strategic Review, and eventually *The Dragon*. I graduated in '76, and with the extreme lack of jobs in the journalism field at the time, started working construction. In the past three years, however, my interest in gaming has, if anything, increased. I free-lanced a few articles for *The Dragon*, started attending all the cons in Lake Geneva, wound up co-authoring TSR's *Gamma World*, and, surprise, surprise, got offered the job of assistant editor of *The Dragon*.

It took me about three seconds to make the decision.

After three years of working in the elements, carrying things that weigh more than I do, and just generally wasting away in Peoria, Illinois, it almost seems immoral to be paid for sitting in my own office, working at a trade I spent seven years preparing for in college, and dealing with a subject I enjoy as recreation. From watching a clock to see how much longer it would be till I got to go home, I

Sorcerer's Scroll, cont. from pg. 30

any comment at all—save perhaps from those on the receiving end. There are also a couple of other points which should be mentioned. Those who read what was said noted that I mentioned two offerings by name. This in itself, and despite the generally bad things said, was actually a favor, the old axiom about the superiority of being attacked rather than being ignored coming into play. It is true. Coupled with the comparison to early amateur press efforts in wargaming, it offers these publications, and all the other amateur efforts, a chance to show the whole hobby just how wrong and stupid I am by publishing material of superior quality which does not resort to invective, character assassination, libel, slander, or various and sundry cheap shots, relying rather on honest efforts at quality contents to interest readers. *DUNGEONEER* took this approach in the first place, and it has done well. Perhaps other publishers will take a page from their journal and turn things around in the amateur adventure gaming press. If so, I'll be among the first to give congratulations, in print! Meanwhile, I have had the misfortune to view a so-called professional fantasy gaming oriented magazine's first issue; this contained mostly numerous boring commentaries by some folks who are trying hard to make a name for themselves in gaming, principally by insulting the leaders in the hobby. This is regrettable but understandable when one is dealing with amateurs; it is deplorable in a professional magazine. Even though it is the house organ of an aspiring publisher, such journalism cannot succeed for long. That sort of work will have to change quickly or the magazine won't see many issues.

So much for this issue's SORCERER'S SCROLL. Here's to the fun of gaming, win or lose!

now find myself worrying that I don't have enough time each day to do all the things I want to see in the next issue of the magazine. Quite a change.

At any rate (how 'bout 18½%?), I find myself filling Joe Orłowski's shoes (or at least one of them) as he moves on to become GenCon Co-ordinator full time. My duties as assistant editor, in addition to all the editorial/lay-out/paste-up/production responsibilities Tim and I share together, will include subscriptions and circulation. With this transfer, unfortunately, there are bound to be a few delays/foul-ups. Joe is doing his best to touch all the bases with me before he leaves the magazine entirely, but, if he forgets to tell me there are two address change cards back in the bottom of the left hand filing cabinet, I may not find them for a few days. So please bear with me. Full and fair restitution will be given to any problems incurred during this transition period. The impossible just takes a little longer.

You'll start seeing a few changes in *The Dragon* with this issue, new features, columns, etc., and as the summer progresses, there will be more. Tim and I have been talking about the magazine for the last three years, and now we have the opportunity to work on it together. We both have great expectations.

Keep those cards and letters comin' folks. See you next month.



Assistant Editor

Party Formation, cont. from pg. 37

add or delete items as desired, but remember that those shown are chosen to maintain a low key of power.

1. *Feather falling ring*
2. *Warmth ring*
3. *Water walking ring*
4. *Wand of Negation*
5. *Wand of Wonder*
6. *Bag of holding (500 pound capacity)*
7. *Boat, folding (small rowboat)*
8. *Brooch of shielding*
9. *Cloak and boots of Elvenkind*
10. *Javelin of lightning, pair*
11. *Javelin of wounding, pair*
12. *Necklace of adaptation*
13. *Robe of useful items — SEE BELOW*
14. *Rope of climbing*
15. *Trident of warning*
16. *Wings of flying or boots of levitation*

Items On A Robe Of Useful Items (Select 7-12)

BONFIRE, small
 CASK, 1-3 = water, 4-5 = wine, 6 = brandy (3 gallon capacity)
 CALTROP, six
 CROWBAR, 4' tempered iron
 DAGGER, silver
 DOG, WAR
 DOOR, standard size, oak with iron bindings and bar
 GEM, 100 gold piece value
 LADDER, 12' long
 LANTERN, bullseye
 Mallet & STAKES
 MEAT, haunch of roast mutton, venison, etc.
 MONEY, stack of 50 silver coins
 MULE, pack
 OAK TREE, 30' high, large
 OWL, GIANT
 PICK, standard digging
 POLE, 10'
 ROOSTER
 ROPE, 50' coil
 SHOVEL
 TORCH, flaming
 WASP NEST, normal, about 200 wasps

When you are thoroughly familiar with this system, you will be able to ready a party of players for an adventure with a minimum amount of time and effort on your part, and do so with relative assurance that they will be about right for the area they will adventure in. Your comments on this system will be appreciated.