

Questers of the Middle Realms

Ten Magical Thingies, vol. 1



This short PDF contains ten magic items to add to your game of **Questers of the Middle Realms**.

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The **Prose Descriptive Qualities (PDQ) System** has been designed for evocative simplicity, speed, and flexibility in play. Three levels of resolution, suitable for any type of situation.

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Some of these are spells embedded in items, and those Qualities are explained as separate bullets in the same format as the rulebook - they could, of course, be found as spells separate from the item.

Some items could exist as different versions at varying levels of potency, so instead of specifying for each Quality [Rank] is used for the overall Rank of the item.

Corset of Defence

This item was invented at the behest of court ladies, both the day crowd and the evening shift workers, to aid them in escaping drunken and frisky nobles. It has found favour in other milieus too.

Basically it has a Quality of *Defence** [Rank], giving the wearer its MOD benefit to dodge out of the way of blows, grapples and such. In most cases it is also a [Rank] *Corset* - that is, its materials and workmanship keep pace with its magical properties.

Delmolio's Patent Cure-all

The "Delmolio's" brand is known throughout most of the civilised Realms, due mainly to energetic and persistent marketing. He's a quack and a charlatan, but his products are just useful enough to keep him from being shut down, and keenly priced too. (Of course you get what you pay for, which in this case includes occasional irritating side-effects.)

The 'Patent Cure-all' is perhaps the most famous of all, to the extent that someone might say, "But then I drank a Delmolio's." It bills itself as, "The sovereign remedy to all ills and mender of all hurts!" In reality it makes you feel a bit better and recover a bit quicker.

Effects. In game terms it's usually ranked Good, though there is an Extra Strength version that's Expert.

- ✦ On drinking it, MOD Damage Ranks are not eliminated but converted to Failure Ranks, making them quicker to get rid of through natural healing or Fortune Points. (An Average version - maybe it's past its sell-by date - would be counted as MOD 1 as usual.)
- ✦ You can add the MOD for resisting diseases and poisons for the next hour or two.

Side-effects. "Our secret recipe includes many potent herbs and enchantments." Well, it certainly tastes pretty foul, with a strange tingling sensation going down and a tendency to see rainbow auras around things for an hour or so. Sometimes, in addition to the benefits, a minor magical mishap occurs. Roll 2d6: on double 1's the drinker is afflicted by some magical alteration like donkey's ears or purple skin. This is generally cosmetic with a bit of nuisance value and perhaps a Downshift in some situations (especially social). It wears off after a couple of hours. The Extra Strength Cure-all version is the same, but takes effect on any double - the main reason why it's not found very often.

Disposable Armour

The ABRA Co. (Ko-Sha, Ong Ong) is an alliance of magi and artisans producing "labour-saving devices for the discerning adventurer". In practical terms, they specialise in selling you things to fill needs you didn't know you had.

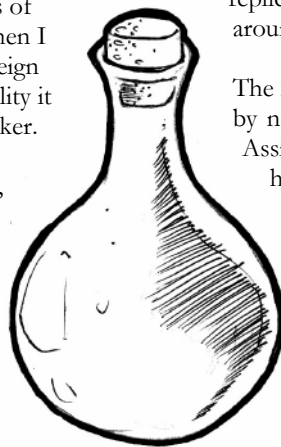
The Disposable Armour is a sort of thin cloth overall, greyish with a pattern vaguely resembling chainmail, easily carried in a corner of a pack. You pull it on over normal clothing - it'd go over a leather jerkin, but not bulky mail or plate - and activate the enchantment. It then gives *Good* [+2] *Armour** for a scene, after which the magic is exhausted and you simply throw it away. You can, if you wish, take a Downshift to shrug off a single attack altogether - the attacker lands a lucky blow and burns out the enchantment prematurely.

Divisibility Potion

Drinking this potion splits you into a dozen small replicas of yourself for a scene - useful for sneaking around or swarming enemies.

The replicas can only communicate with each other by normal speech - often loud argument, in fact. Assign them numbers for keeping track. Number 1 has a special status as the "keystone" - they'll be the one the others recombine into when the spell ends, flashing back as magical energy blobs from wherever they are. The duplicates recognise this and might give No. 1 some grudging deference as the leader.

Each individual has your original Qualities. Their size is one level smaller, and this is used if you send an individual off, for instance to scout somewhere. They can also act as a unit, with the *Swarm* Quality at one level higher than your original size (minimum Average). (Items are a bit tricky. Each replica has the Shadow items necessary for practising skills, but character items and Props, especially Arcane



items, should be allocated to particular individuals, subject to keeping book-keeping reasonable. You can assume the group as a whole has the same stuff you did, even if it's shrunk.)

Track damage for any duplicate that acts on its own and for the Swarm as a whole. For every 5 Failure or Damage Ranks taken by an individual the whole takes 1, and if an individual zeroes out the whole takes a Damage Rank. The Swarm as a whole inherits any damage you had when you split, and each replica inherits a fifth of that; when you recombine you keep the Swarm's damage levels.



Glamour Crystal

These items appear as semi-precious stones, and might have material worth based on that alone. But in fact they are storage devices, holding an illusionary scene with a full complement of senses. When the trigger conditions are met the scene springs forth, overlaying the nearby area in the minds of those within it. They can wander through and observe its elements. The scene can even be a moving, changing tableau, allowing animated elements or a recording of a brief set of events. (You could even use it as a message, but these crystals aren't trivial to create.) The illusion may be set to remain in existence as a static scene, terminate at the end of a cycle or keep repeating itself.

The elements of the illusion don't have real substance: they ripple like water if touched, and have the feel of water too. That's not to say they're totally harmless though. The glamour could contain **hazards**, like an attacking knight or a wall of fire. These can be given whatever Qualities the GM thinks fit and attack a character (and be resisted) in the normal way - but if they succeed they inflict just 1 Failure Rank of shock regardless of the actual result. A victim who knows for sure that it's only an illusion gets an Upshift to resist. If the crystal is **destroyed** it releases all its stored sense impressions in one go, giving everyone nearby a Failure Rank of, "Whoa!"

There is a greater peril associated with the stones, though: sometimes they have **parasites**. There is a type of being labelled "ethereal interlopers" by scholars, who are pretty sure they originate on a different plane of existence. They are not matter as we understand it, and somehow are able to slip inside the illusion, even while it's stored in the crystal. There they lie dormant and wait till the glamour is triggered by potential prey. They feed on the negative emotions of living beings, and can use their ability to alter their appearance to look like an element of the glamour, changing the experience of those within it to generate the feelings they crave. They don't react to contact like the rest of the illusion, allowing solids to pass through seamlessly and giving a cold, tingly feeling. As a hazard, though, they work the same way as the rest of the glamour.

Ethereal Interloper

Strengths: Expert [+4] Incorporeal*, Expert [+4] Emotion Feed*, Good [+2] Intelligent, Good [+2] Cruel, Expert [+4] Alter Appearance

Weaknesses: Poor [-2] Withstand Positive Emotions

† *Emotion Feed**: this is kind of a variant of the creature ability *Energy Drain**. If anyone nearby definitely feels an emotion (in this case negative ones, especially fear) - taking cues from the reactions of the players, or from explicit influences like horrible creatures or spells - the creature can feed on it. Roll this Quality against a TN from any Qualities the target might have that would help them resist the negative emotion: Strong Will, Courage, Unfazeable, etc. If the creature wins it gets just 1 point of energy regardless of the result, or 2 points if the victim took any damage Ranks, balancing the fact that it doesn't have to touch the victim but can draw from anyone nearby. If the emotional influence actually causes a victim to zero out the creature automatically gets 2 points. It may be wise for the GM to note characters' relevant Qualities ahead of time and make the rolls without explaining them.

† *Alter Appearance*: the creature's natural form is a shifting silvery energy field, somewhat two-dimensional, but it can manifest whatever appearance and sound it likes in our reality with a bit of concentration.

† *Withstand Positive Emotions*: if nearby beings genuinely feel happiness etc. the GM must assign that a Rank for intensity, which then becomes a hazard the creature must resist or take Failure Ranks. Zeroing out means it departs to its own plane.

Ninmuzi's Guardian

If there's one thing the god/goddess Ninmuzi hates it's stealing life energy. These amulets, made of fine woods carved with Ninmuzi's symbols, are usually owned by the higher ranking of her/his faithful. They have two properties: a permanent protection against such theft, and a retaliatory attack against anyone who tries it (that takes a while to recharge).

† *Protection Against Energy Drain** [Rank]: Energy Drain* is listed in the rulebook as a creature ability, but there are certainly spells working the same way. This Quality simply adds its MOD to resist the drain, and is permanently on.

† *Life-force Retaliation* [Rank]: this is an active Arcane power, triggered by an Energy Drain* attempt on the wearer. A tendril of green energy attacks the drainer, doing straightforward damage. It bypasses *Dead** and *Incorporeal**. If the drainer has a pool of points of stolen energy, this effect's damage is split as equally as possible between punishing them (always the first point) and liberating that energy.

Peril Protection Pendant

This is another item from the ABRA catalogue. It has a permanent effect of hooking into the wearer's senses and preventing them from seeing anything that might alarm them. It does this by overlaying the relevant impressions with something the wearer will find safe and comforting instead - often something from childhood experience or stories. For example, a troll might appear as a 9-foot bipedal bunny, and an approaching zombie might look like your grandma and smell of fresh bread. It doesn't alter things they might be carrying - so your grandma might have a meat cleaver. Inanimate hazards are similarly altered but not hidden: a swinging bludgeon trap might look like a pillow on a pendulum, and a precipice might appear to have lots of cushions at the bottom. There's a certain knack to adapting to the magic's logic, and not everybody can manage it (which can get you into trouble).

The reason it's worth a try is that the Pendant opposes actively horrifying influences. If the influence is higher Rank than the Pendant, the wearer must resist but can add in the Pendant's MOD; but if the influence isn't higher the Pendant blocks it completely. If the nastiness leaks through it manifests as changes in the Pendant's illusion - maybe the big bunny has big pointy teeth.

Portable Steed

This is a sort of wallet that can be carried around in a pocket and, when needed, opened up to magically produce a riding animal. It's a Plot Point item. You could give it a Rank and use that to determine how long the steed is maintained - when the time expires it kind of folds up back into the wallet. You can also do this deliberately before the time's up.

Unfortunately there's a certain amount of variability in what the magic gives you. It's always a suitable thing to carry the user at a reasonable pace for a reasonable duration. The GM can make stuff up, or use the following chart with a 2d6 roll. The player can, if they wish, spend a Fortune Point to bypass fickle fate and get something appropriate to their current situation.

- | | |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 2 | Bicycle |
| 3 | Group of goblins carrying chair |
| 4 | Weasel |
| 5 | Cat |
| 6 | Dog |
| 7 | Horse or Pony |
| 8 | Ox |
| 9 | Bugra |
| 10 | Elephant |
| 11 | Giant |
| 12 | Dragon |

The creature is defined very simply: it has a pair of Qualities for size at [Rank, usually one level higher than that of the item's user but possibly different or even Swarm instead of size] and Poor, and a pair for its type at Good and Poor, so that positive and negative aspects of each will come into play in different circumstances (a bit like Racial Qualities). For example, a human could use it and get one of the Giant Weasels of Helongor. Then the steed would be Good [+2] Large, Poor [-2] Large, Good [+2] Weasel, Poor [-2] Weasel. The steed serves well, though it might make a fuss or otherwise act according to its nature.





Sixpence People

It's not clear where these came from: perhaps they were created by someone who loved money, or as a warning to someone who did, or by a conman or thief, or someone who wanted to punish one. Anyway, they are little homunculi that appear as ordinary coins when dormant, but sprout arms and legs and will perform tasks for their owner. ("Owner" seems to be a vague term, but based around having them for a while and treating them well.) They communicate using expressive gestures.

The name comes from early sightings, but in fact they've been observed in the form of various different currencies. Those early reports had them as rather basic creatures, emerging from dormancy to follow simple commands and then subsiding again. But as time goes on they seem to be staying active more of the time and exhibiting more independent behaviour, including social interactions and even building things. One reliable source has seen a pair of them accompanied by a couple of pennies running around - leading to the strange and somewhat unnerving conclusion that they're minting.

Sixpence Person

Strengths: Master [+6] Small, Expert [+4] Coin, Good [+2] Metal Body, Average [0] Darksense

Weaknesses: Poor [-2] Small

† *Coin*: this is mainly for looking like a coin to avoid detection, but could conceivably be used for other coin-like things like rolling around. It's not used for physical resilience - that's what *Metal Body* is for.

Stormblade

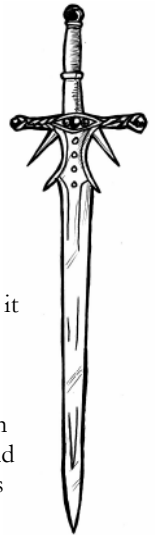
These are the hand-and-a-half, or "bastard", swords given to the Paladins of Elal. These mighty and righteous servants of the ruling god advance the cause of order and authority. Joining their ranks involves many tests of prowess and character.

A Stormblade has an air daemon, a servitor of Elal, bound into it by divine magic. The wielder cannot communicate with this entity, but can call upon certain powers. In game terms, the weapon has the following Qualities.

† At least *Good* [+2] *Bastard Sword* to reflect the materials, workmanship and size. Higher ranking folks can have better ones.

† *Air Daemon** [*varies*]: the common version has this at Good, but again it can go up (often, but not always, in step with the quality). There are two uses. It can absorb elemental air energy from attacks against the wielder, notably wind and lightning, adding its MOD to defence as a permanent effect. As an active power it can sheathe the blade in lightning, adding MOD damage to attacks and giving an Upshift for social impressiveness. Note that the daemon has a veto on the use of its powers and will not grant them to a wielder who's in poor standing with Elal.

† *Poor* [-2] *Air Daemon*: carrying all that divinely bestowed air-power around has its downside - air-related things love it. Birds want to come and sit near it or on it, which can be a problem if you're trying to escape notice. In a thunderstorm, lightning tries to arrive close to its brother. Winds ruffle your hair when they don't bother anyone else.



Acknowledgements

The Sixpence People owe a nod to my favourite critters from Adamant Entertainment's *Underworld* game of modern subterranean fantasy. The Peril Protection Pendant owes a nod to Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*.