

Enchanted Items

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

Enchanted Items is a collection of magical items and artifacts for a Fantasy Hero game. The flavor text is set for Hero Games' Turakian Age setting, the item write-ups are generic Hero however. The book isn't divided into chapters, but thirteen sections by item type.

Each section is divided into Offensive, Defensive, Movement, Sensory, Miscellaneous, and some include Unique or Named items.

Amulets, Fetishes, And Talismans. Thirty nine items most of them some form of necklace. The Offensive and Defensive amulets are pretty standard fair for fantasy games. A few interesting ones are the Amulet Of Orcs (which summons a war band of orcs to fight for you), and Amulet Of The Thespian's Demise (which let's the wearer simulate death - after they've dramatically acted out a death scene). The Movement, Sensory, and Miscellaneous amulets are all pretty standard fair, all good items to have in a campaign. The Unique Amulet's has three powerful artifacts. The most interesting of which randomly transports the wearer from one city street to another somewhere far away as they walk down it - a fun artifact for any game to be sure.

Armor, Helms, And Gauntlets. The armor section is all pretty standard. There are armors that heal the wearer, repair themselves, grant strength, courage, presence, size, extra protection, enhancements. Helms that grant mind control, armor made of bone. You get the idea. While all the armor is nothing unexpected having all the ideas detailed out is helpful.

Bracers And Bracelets. All manner of magic that one might find in wrist-wear, whether utilitarian bracers for archers or simple decorations of armbands. From bracer's of strength to bracelet's of beauty. The Bracelet Of Monkey Mischief is my favorite item in the book.

Clothing. This section covers a number of items that don't fit elsewhere, but fall under Things People Wear. Since just about everyone wears clothing it makes sense to have a bunch of enchantments centered around them. The normal assortment of bandoliers, vests, belts, boots, cloaks, gloves, robes, and pants is collected here. The coolest item here are a pair of pants - Jocular Short Pants Of Ziandwyrth. These unique artifacts (and how often do you see pants as artifacts), they grant an enormous amount of luck - and drive the wearer insane.

Jewelry. All items worn as decoration, though some are utilitarian, or signs of office. Brooches, necklaces, gems, tiaras and crowns, earrings, headbands, fillets, and ribbons all appear here. All with

some cool effects. The neatest items though are the Magical Buttons, a very cool idea for inconspicuous magic if there ever was one.

Potions, Dusts, And Ointments. This section contains the ever present magical potions, magic dusts and ointments that are everywhere in fantasy - almost as important as magic swords. While all the important potions and dusts are here this is larger a lot of reprinted information from Fantasy Hero Grimoire 1. Though, this book has a little more space to dedicate to a nice discussion on how to carry potions around and a nice table on container types with DEF and BODY just in case you need to figure out if that vial did in fact break when the PC fell four stories out the tower window. . .

Rings. What fantasy game would be complete without PCs weighing their hands down with magical rings of every sort. All the rings you would expect to find are here. The one item that stands out is the Ring Of Ring Wearer whose magic allows the character to wear many magical rings without affecting his manual dexterity.

Shields. Heroes need to protect themselves, and shields help get the job done. All manner of shields appear here included the rather cool Shield Of Many Uses which turns into a hut, row boat or sled - just what any adventurer needs.

Staves. The mighty staff, most seen carried by wizards and the like as the wander about the land. It makes sense there would be a large number of staves enchanted by wizards, and many of them have uses for other adventuring types.

Swords And Daggers. A staple of the fantasy genre - sharp pointy sticks. Forty-six swords and fourteen daggers should provide enough items to keep you from running into the same weapon over and over in your games. Most of them are what you would expect out of magical swords - the ability to do better in combat. But a few surprises are hear such as a Scimitar Of Far Leaping and a number of examples of Runeblades.

Wands And Rods. Another item almost completely unique to wizards, usually used as backup spells or extra spells. While the wands are almost exclusively for spell caster types, the Rods on the other hand a geared towards just about anyone. From rods that turn into various weapons to rods that bestow the appearance of leadership.

Weapons. Anything that isn't a sword or dagger is here. Axes, bows, crossbows, arrows, clubs, hammers, maces, and spears. Though there aren't many non-standard weapons here the rest of the collection is a good solid selection for those who prefer something other than a sword.

Miscellaneous Items. This is everything else that doesn't fit elsewhere. Starting with Books and Tomes. The Figurines section has a rather cool take on animal figurines in a fantasy setting, where a figurine summons forth the perfect specimen of a creature. Horns provides some cool effects. Saddles and Horseshoes are another important addition to the adventuring life (never forget to outfit your horse). Lenses, Monocles, and Spectacles add another cool dimension to the magical item list of things that adventurers have in their repertoire. Masks only has a few examples, but some neat ones. Musical Instruments is a must have section for any would be bard, though it doesn't contain too many examples. And at the end is a section of Other. Flying Carpets, everfull mugs, crystal balls and the like all belong here. A few really cool items in this last bit are the Boxes Of Translocation, Hovering Skull, and the Instant Door.

All considered Enchanted Items contains six-hundred and ninety-five magical items, plus options to alter the ones provided to create literally over a thousand magical items to use in your campaign.

Beyond just the write-ups the flavor text describing the items is full of bits of history and stories that take the book from a simple list of magic things to use to something more. The stories behind each item can be adventures in and of themselves as the a group of characters tries to track down exactly what it is they've found. This is the part that makes the book stand out as not just another list of stuff for a fantasy game.

The Downside:

While the description text goes a long way to making each item different and unique a lot of the items in here are the same old stuff we've been gaming with since the dawn of table top RPGs. While that isn't a true downside, I thought a few more different and, to be honest, weird ideas should have slipped into the book.

Otherwise this is a good solid book of Magic Items to get any Fantasy game off the ground.

The Otherside:

Unless you're into converting system write-ups the only part of the book useful to non-hero gamers is the histories and descriptions of items. While there are a good number of new and different ideas for magic items, there's also a lot of the same old stuff in here.

What it comes down to is this really is a good mix of familiar magic and new magic ideas. Despite the fact that I might like to see more weird magic items that doesn't overshadow the pure usefulness of having a simple Healing Potion and Magic Sword already written up for you. The pure volume of magic in here is worth the price on the cover, stripping out any setting elements you don't want is easy enough to do with a simple name change here and there, or taking the item of choice and pairing it with a history of your own devising. I'd count this as a must have for any Fantasy Hero Gamer.

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