

Dan & D

DOKE

Freeform Fantasy RPG



for adults to play pretend in public

lonelyfun collective

“You all are in a tavern; a wizened crone approaches you and asks: “Will you Quest with me?” Hello and welcome to DandDoke, a free-form fantasy roleplaying game designed for adults to play pretend in public. It’s D&D lite, played in the style of karaoke. I will be your Game Jockey, or GJ. This stage will be your party, these pages will be your characters, these dice will determine your fate . . . Let’s begin . . . again.”

WHAT WE “NEED” TO PLAY

- ❖ A table and seats
- ❖ Pencils & scratch paper (sign-up slips)
- ❖ Player-facing Quick Reference rules
- ❖ 1 or more Tomes, binder with the rules & half-character sheets
- ❖ 1 Dungeonomicon (Where the Legacy character sheets live)
- ❖ 5-10 Twenty-sided Dice (D20)
- ❖ 1-5 mics & sound system
- ❖ A screen (projector, TV or computer)
- ❖ Silly outfits, hats etc.

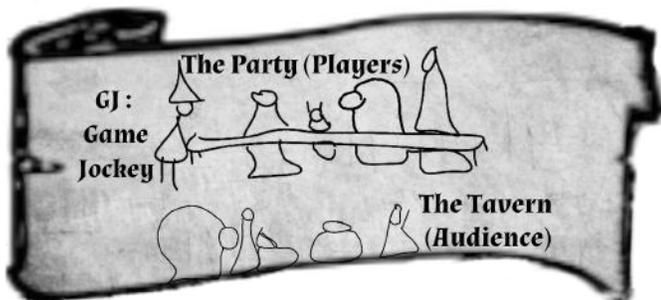
ROLES TO PLAY

GJ - Game Jockey; the referee & storyteller.

PARTY - On-stage volunteer players.

TAVERN - The audience; people watching and sometimes adding input to the story.

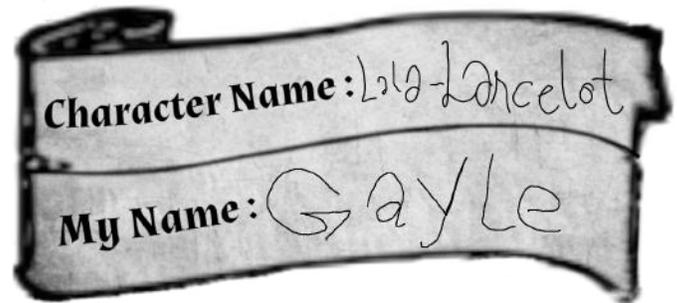
TROLL - {optional} An assistant to the GJ.



SET UP

Decide how many adventurers will be on stage at once, have as many mics and seats for those adventurers. Set up a seat for the GJ and have access to a jar for players to put their sign-up slips into. The GJ should also have whatever other resources they think they might need handy like random encounter tables, or just a laptop.

Have the Tomes, paper scraps, & pencils accessible throughout the room. Give the Tavern some time to look over the Tomes. At their leisure, people should be encouraged to pick a character from a Tome, write down that Character Name and their own Name on a sign-up slip, then submit it to the GJ, like this;



BEGIN AGAIN

After at least a few adventurers have signed up the GJ starts by reading the opening paragraph, explaining the rules and safety tools. This is also when things about the Quest and the Dungeon and/or Dragon are collaboratively determined.

JOIN THE PARTY

The GJ calls the adventurers by saying; “Character Name has accepted the quest.”

When the GJ calls a character’s name, the player goes onstage where they will be provided with a pencil, the Legacy copy of their character & a twenty-sided die.

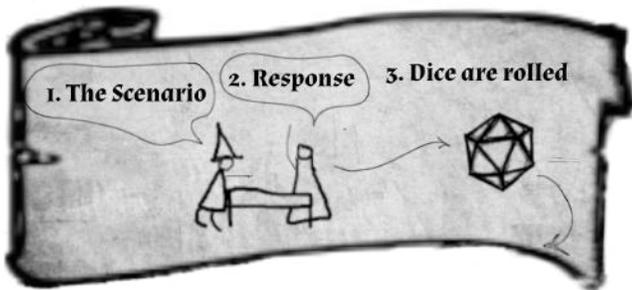
GAMEPLAY

THE FLOW OF THE GAME

As players come onto the stage they are introduced, and usually asked; “So what’s your Deal?” & “What’s your Thing?” They play until they die or make a critical roll, in which case they leave the stage and a new player takes their place.

NEW TO ROLEPLAYING?

You already know how, it’s just playing pretend! However to understand the “engine” of the game, one could look to this diagram:



1. The GJ describes a scenario.
2. The player/s respond with what they do
3. Dice are rolled to see what happens

The process repeats and a story is told!

THE DICE

DandDoke uses the twenty-sided dice(D20) as the main randomizing tool. If the outcome of a player’s action is unsure, the GJ will ask for a roll of the D20. The GJ will have a target number known as a DC(Difficulty Class) which may or may not be public. At no time will anything be added or subtracted to the die roll, however the dice may be rerolled or rolled more than once, usually through the Advantage and Disadvantage system.



ADVANTAGE & DISADVANTAGE

ADVANTAGE (ADV): When you have any narrative advantage, you roll twice and take the better of two results. You can always ask the GJ to receive ADV for a roll, but you will most likely receive it when you reference your Deal, Legacy, Thing, or some other situational positioning.

DISADVANTAGE (DIS): When you are at a disadvantage, you roll the die twice and take the worse of the two results. You can always impose DIS on yourself if you think you would have it, and the GJ may reward you for the honorable act of playing true to your character. That being said, there shall be no penalty raised for not snitching on yourself in this manner.

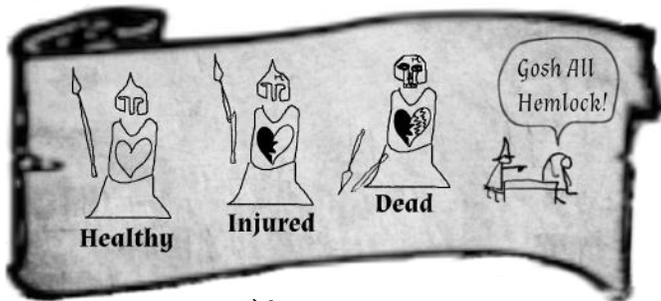
- ❖ You can only have ADV or DIS once, (no triple or more vantages).
- ❖ If you have ADV & DIS, they cancel out, leading to a single roll.

ROLL INITIATIVE

Whenever the party enters combat or the order of actions is in question the GJ may call on all the players to Roll Initiative. Players each roll once, and the GJ will roll for the different NPCs and/or groups of NPCs. The highest roller acts first, then decides the order of gameplay; clockwise or counterclockwise.

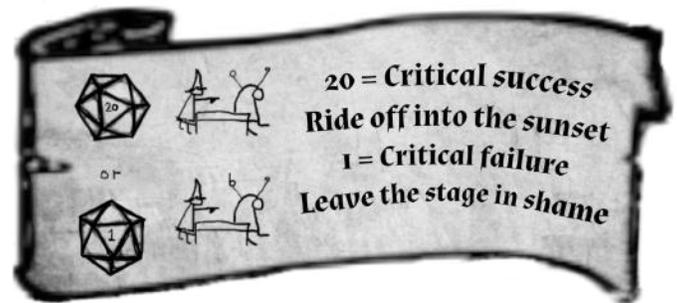
INJURY AND DEATH

Sometimes the consequences of a die roll will be injury. In that case you will mark that your character is injured. While injured you roll with DIS. If you are injured while being injured, your character dies. Don't worry, death isn't as permanent in a fantasy world. It is assumed that characters can be resurrected later or dramatically avoid death if narratively necessary. All death really means is that you leave the stage after saying some last words like "Gosh all Hemlock."



CRITICAL ROTATION

- 1 & 20 are both *critical* rolls.
- Rolling a 1 is a *critical* failure, things broke bad.
- Rolling a 20 is *critical* success, you did extra good.
In either scenario, when a player makes a *critical* roll, they leave the stage either in glory or shame. The player also has a chance to give a parting narration about their ride into the sunset or their faceplant, respectively.



GAME COMPONENTS

THE TOMES

Like karaoke songbooks, these are the documents put out so the players can see their options for play. There should be more than one and they should have half-sheet copies of the characters available to play (Name, Deal & Thing), copies of the Quick Reference rules as well as these more detailed rules for players to read.

THE DUNGEONOMICON

This is the book full of Legacy characters kept by the GJ. These are the same characters that are in the Tomes (same Names, same Deal & Thing, etc) but there is more space for Legacy notes and everything is written in pencil. These are the character sheets designed for play on stage.



THE CHARACTER SHEET

There are half-sheet & full sheet records of a character's information including;



CHARACTER NAME: The pretend person's name. Could be a list of possible names or nicknames. There are going to be a lot of characters to choose between, so keep the names as distinct from each other as possible.



PORTRAIT: This area is for inspiration art. The Legacy character sheet should always have this area reserved for pencil, even if it is a tracing of other art, so that players can add or alter the portrait as they play the character on stage.



DEAL: A characters whole "deal", Modus Operandi etc. Generally the Deal should be two words or two concepts strung together, i.e., "adjective-noun" or "noun-noun".



THING: The unique power of that character. Unless otherwise stated, these powers have the following attributes:

At-will: It can be done(or called upon) anytime your character is able to act and other stated criteria are met.

Free: It does not cost any resource to use.

Instantaneous: It takes no time to do your Thing. You can do your thing on top of another action.

One-at-a-time: Although it can be repeated, there can only be one active instance of any Thing's effect at any given time.

Infallible: You do not have to roll to determine success or failure. There may be a roll to determine some secondary effect, but the primary Thing happens without question.

Ambiguous: The actual mechanics of a character's Thing are not explicitly spelled out, this is so they can be negotiated and argued about on stage.

Advantage: Best of 2 rolls when taking action related to your...
...Deal or Legacy(e.g.: _____)

ADVANTAGE (ADV): Quick reference definition.

E.G.; In the Advantage field is space to write examples of character specific ADV, based on what their Deal is good at. These examples may be nouns, gerunds, or conditional states that would give that character ADV. They're just examples!

Disadvantage: Worst of 2 rolls when your character has a/an...
(Condition) _____ -or- Injury (injury + injury = death)

DISADVANTAGE (DIS): Quick reference definition.

CONDITION: _____ : In the Disadvantage field is a space to write a narrative status that would give your character a hard time. This could be anything from “tainted aura” to “unsatisfied”. Regardless of the wording, when you have a Condition you roll with DIS. Thankfully, you can only have one Condition at a time.

INJURY : Also under the heading of Disadvantage is your injury status. If you are injured you roll with DIS. If you receive an injury while already having an injury, you die. This is covered more in the “**Injury and Death**” section.

Legacy: (write a line about something that happened during play)
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LEGACY: This is the place where the player can chronicle the character’s history between adventures. Maybe the character drank a potion that gave them a beautiful bat nose, or met an estranged relative. Write that here in short sentences or statements; “Bat Nose” or “Has estranged relative X.”

GAMEJOCKEYING

HOW DO YOU GAME JOCKEY?

Good question! How do you Game Jockey? For an experienced GM/DM/Storyteller, there’s not much difference between running DandDoke and running other TTRPGs. If this is your first time running a TTRPG, beginner’s guides are out there, but this document is not intended to be one of them. This chapter will go over the unique experience of running DandDoke.

BEGIN AGAIN...

On the first page is a short excerpt on how to begin the game. The GJ should wait until enough people have signed up, then make some introductory announcements, read the opening paragraph and spend some time explaining the rules and safety tools. Depending on the crowd, you might want to spend more or less time on the rules and you might add other safety tools not mentioned so far, such as Lines and Veils (search: [Lines and Veils](#) or [RPG safety tools](#) for more info).



THE QUEST

When you have the audience's attention it's time to determine the Quest. Try doing a quick madlib with the Tavern like this;

*“Every Quest involves a Dungeon and a Dragon. The **Dungeon** is in the _____ (weather) _____ (fantasy place) and is filled with _____ - _____s (2 creatures). The _____ (creature type) **Dragon** is known for their powerful _____ (dragon feature) and _____ (mood) personality.”*

This doesn't have to be the only plot prompt. The Quest could be about a Princess and a Ball, a Murder and a Mystery. No matter the premise create a prompt with blank spaces as above.

TROLLS

The amount of work and number of roles that are thrust on the GJ can be overwhelming. To minimize this stress, it is important to delegate aspects of these responsibilities. That's where Trolls comes in. There's no set function of the Troll, it is a placeholder for whatever the GJ wants to ask for assistance with. Here's a list of sample Troll-roles;

- ❖ Banterer: A pseudo-player who stays onstage to have someone to talk to.
- ❖ Vibechecker: Someone to remind people about Safety Tools and pay attention to the crowd/players.
- ❖ AV Club: Most KJs manage their own sound & video, but you can ask for help if you aren't that technically inclined.
- ❖ Arbiter: It is oft said that the GJ is the final authority on all rules, but what if not?

- ❖ Cat Herder: Where is it writ that the GJ has to do the scheduling and event organizing?
- ❖ Town Crier: Someone to voice NPCs.
- ❖ Tru Troll: Maybe you want someone who has control of what appears on a projector behind you and puts up memes to make fun of the GJ at a near-antagonistic level.

Remember to ask for help!

SETTING THE SCENE

DandDoke is designed to be played with an audience that doesn't have to give their full focused attention to what's happening onstage. The Tavern is allowed to socialize and only pay attention when their friends are playing! To remind the Tavern of what's going on, it might be good to project a map, notes or other visual aids. If you don't have a projector, its up to the GJ to repeat the premise of the Quest often.

On DandDoke's first ever playtest, the venue was by the train tracks and everytime a train went by the GJ reminded the crowd that the train sound was actual the yawl of the Demon-Cat Dragon Hisspun. This way the premise was repeatedly reasserted.

The other times the GJ has to set the scene is whenever there is a new room or Random Encounter. This is also a good opportunity to repeat the themes determined by the initial Quest prompt.

<p>When describing a room try using DELVE:</p> <p>Dimensions - How many feet by how many feet?</p> <p>Exits - How you get in and out?</p> <p>Lighting - Bright, dim, or dark?</p> <p>Variables - Furniture, objects, architecture etc.</p> <p>Environment - Temperature, sounds, vibe.</p>
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SETTING THE DC

DC or Difficulty Class, is the target number that the players must meet or exceed to succeed at a specific challenge. It's the GJ's job to set the DC. There are a number of things to consider when setting the DC such as;

REALISTIC vs. NARRATIVISTIC: In many roleplaying games the DC of an action is set based on how realistically difficult a certain action would be, according to that world's metaphysics. DandDoke should be more cinematic, and for that reason DCs are set primarily with *narrative* principles in mind. This means that the DC is set based on what would make the better story!

Heroic stories have often have *rising tension*, full of failure and complications, before the climax and *falling tension* afterwards. So to simulate this rising temperature the DC of all actions are increased as the players move toward the climax. Make everything in the Dragon's lair harder!

However too much failure and death is demoralizing, so you might do well to bring down the DC after the players experience a dramatic failure. Failure teaches more than success!

This might be a shift in thinking for some. Try this, instead of asking yourself: "What DC would this challenge be?" ask "What in the story would make this challenge the current base DC?"

Example; *Your base DC is 13, as the players are in the Dragon's antechamber. A player wants to climb a stone wall, instead of asking "How slimy is the wall", ask yourself what the Dragon would have placed there to stop the players! Wall traps, intelligent slimes, false handholds etc.*

PLAYER vs. ENVIRONMENT: In most cases, ADV & DIS are the main levers to increase or decrease the player's chances for success. If you like to vary difficulty due to other factors like, weather, covering fire, strategic thinking, situational leverage etc., you as the GJ can alter the DC to reflect this.

To keep it simple try to only fluctuate the DC by +/-2 based on outside factors and only when they're not already being expressed in some other mechanical way, like ADV or DIS.

SECRET vs. PUBLIC: Keeping the DC a secret creates a sense of mystery and exploration, but there is nothing game-breaking about having the DC be known. It can also create dramatic tension to announce the DC before the roll. Try starting off with a secret DC, slowly reveal the logic behind your calculations, and then announce all the DCs during the story's climax!

PROBABILITY: Sometimes you just want to just to state the odds flatly. Here are some base DCs based on probability alone;

DC6	Easy task	75% chance
DC8	Common task	~66% chance
DC11	Hard task	50/50 chance
DC14	Heroic task	1 in 3 chance
DC16	Epic task	1 in 4 chance

OVERVIEW

- ★ The starting base DC is 8(Common)
- ★ (+1) base DC as players near the Dragon.
- ★ (-1) base DC after dramatical failure.
- ★ (+/-2) DC due to situational leverage.
- ★ Ask & Answer; "What makes it this hard?"

COMBAT

NPCs rarely if every roll dice, it is the players that roll to attack or defend. All NPCs have 2 stats; AC and DC. AC is their Armor Class which represents how hard it is to hit them and DC is the Difficulty Class of their attacks, which is the number the player has to roll to avoid receiving an injury. When NPCs receive a Condition or Injury players receive ADV on attacks and defense against that NPC.

PVP: When a player attacks another player, the attacking player rolls to attack and the defending player rolls defense. If the attacker wins they deal an injury and play continues.

MINIONS, MONSTERS & MASTERS

These are the denizens of your dungeon. They can show up when the Random Encounter cards tell you you need creatures, or they can be part of designated event triggers.

MINIONS: The lil' guys. Their base AC & DC are both 8. They die in one hit. Minions are **weak**; they do not deal an Injury unless the target has been successfully hit by another minion in this round, in which case they deal an Injury.

MONSTERS: Middle management. Their Base AC/DC is 11. They are injured and killed just like a PC and their attacks deal injury as normal.

MASTERS: At least there's no gods?. Their Base AC/DC is 13. They take 2 actions a turn. Masters are **cowards**; they can have Minions take an injury.

TYPE	AC/DC	SPECIAL
MINION	8/8	1-HP, WEAK
MONSTER	11/11	
MASTER	13/13	2-ACTIONS, COWARD

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Sometimes it's not all about fighting creatures, but there should still be some danger. Threaten the players with Conditions, Injury or Death. Assign a number to a hazard and anytime a player rolls that number, have it trigger the hazard.

DRAGON BATTLING

The dragon should be a climatic battle that will cost lives and be a glorious tale to tell.

HEADS: A Dragon should have lots of threats. They don't have to have literally extra heads, but they should be different routes of attack or self-defense. Give the Dragon as many Heads as there are players. Some things they could do include;

- Bite: Kills on a hit, DC 13
- Breath: Targets everyone, DC 11
- Nest: Creates a Minion every round
- Fly: Cancels 1st successful hit every round
- Tail: Bonus attack, DC 16

Treat each Head like an NPC, so if it's injured players have ADV to attack or defend against it and when it takes another injury it is x-ed out (dead). The dragon doesn't die til all the heads are gone.

THEMES & OVERARCHING PLOTS

Not all parts of the story have to be generated through Tavern suggestions. You could literally take a sample dungeon or story from any source material and simplify it to be usable in DandDoke. If it's a holiday, your adventure could be themed appropriately. Other such themes could include;

- Time-Loop: fight-die-repeat
- Psychic Worm Mafia: (secret roles, shhh)
- Dating Show: less fighting more flirting
- Labyrinth: explore a maze!
- Dragon Race: start your engines



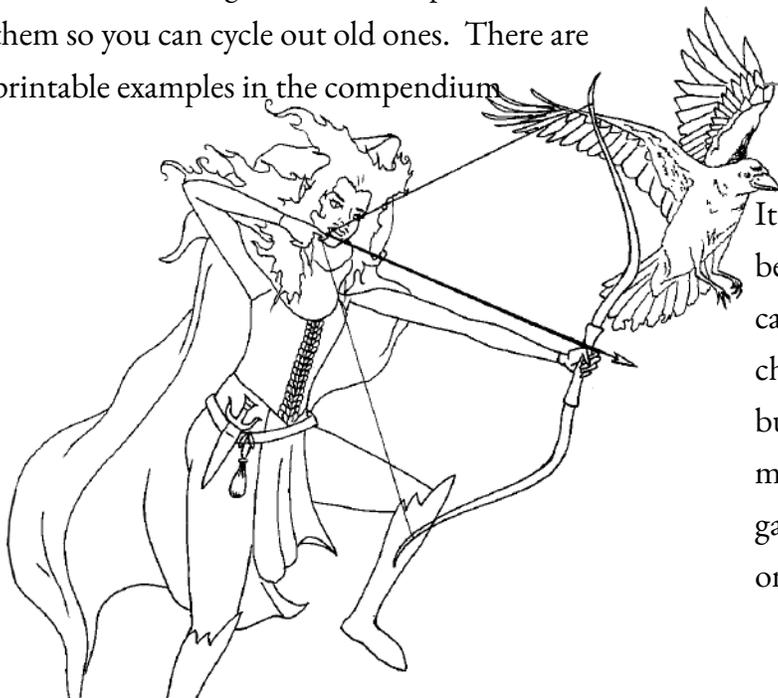
The GJ can generate a Random Encounter through random tables or cards when:

- the danger of a room is resolved
- the gameplay is stalling
- you need to change the subject
- someone says “OMG, how Random”

RANDOM ENCOUNTER CARDS: A good random encounter should have:

- danger, existential or otherwise
- reward, narrative or fungible
- at least one blank space “____(example)” for the Tavern to insert variety.

This is the place to utilize your burning idea for mini-game or cool combat mechanics. You can come up with random encounters on your own, or modify them from the many random encounter tables online. It’s good to come up with lots of them so you can cycle out old ones. There are printable examples in the compendium



To give rewards to players is a fundamental part of adventuring. There are many ways that you can structure rewards, but treasure is the surest and most classic method. You should give treasure when;

- the players narratively find treasure
- they defeat a random encounter
- when you want to rewarding specific behavior

TREASURE CARDS: Treasure cards should:

- have all the instructions for how to use them written on them.
- an effect that is used once and then discarded (so not permanent effects)

Again, there are printable examples in the compendium.

P R E P A R A T I O N S

MAKING CHARACTERS

It is crucial to have a lot of characters to choose between. Attached to this document should be a cache of PDFs that are (at least) the first 26 characters that were made for the initial playtest, but you can get together with your friends and make some characters together in advance of gameplay. Character making could also happen onstage prior to play!

For every character that is made, you will need at least:

- one Legacy character sheet; filled out in pencil on a full-size blank character sheet that the players will use onstage.
- at least one half-sheet character sheet to put in a Tome (or one for each Tome).

Try to have enough different characters that many different genres of heroes are represented. One of our goals was also to have a broad diversity of character genders/races/body types etc, as well as having many characters neutral or ambiguous in regards to gender, race or other identity.

PRINTING PREP

Unless you prefer to have all the files digital, you should print out some stuff; *Let's say you have 26 characters and you are trying to make 2 Tomes for players to look through.*

- ❑ 26 blank character sheets
(These are the Legacy Character sheets and should have the characters stats & portrait written in pencil)
- ❑ 52 Double-sided half sheet characters
(These are put into plastic sleeves and put into 3 ring binders)
- ❑ 10-15 Quick rule reference sheets
(These can also be put in plastic sleeves and put around the venue and in the Tomes)
- ❑ 3-5 copies of these rules
(The GJ should have at least one copy available and maybe some others in the Tomes and on stage)

VENUE & EVENT PLANNING

The primary vision of this game was for it to take place in a bar, like karaoke, but you could have it at

a gaming shop or just in your living room.

Whatever the location, be sure to find out and publicize the accessibility and accommodation of the building.

The creators of this game mostly have experience planning events from their history in the DIY punk scene. We made flyers and sent them to our friends, but you might want to do it in a different manner, like posting on social media, event sites, making posters or having the event by invitation only. Whatever you do, please just let us know at; lonelyfuncollective@gmail.com

OPTIONAL RULES

FUNDRAISER MODE

If this game is being played to raise money for a {chaotic} good cause, you could add rules to that end.

- Make a set price {5\$} for a Tavern member to grant or impose a reroll onto an adventurer!
- Sell random starting treasure for players as they arrive onstage.
- Any number 1-20 could be added to a die roll (sacrilege!) if someone donates that much in dollars.
- What if only the Tavern (audience) can purchase rerolls in the form of giant coins and the players have to catch them in order to reroll their dice!

KARAOKE-STYLE

Whenever someone is told: “It’s like D&D in the style of karaoke, *but no singing*,” there are two kinds of people; those who are relieved and those who are disappointed. These optional rules are for the latter:

- When you roll a 20 you get to sing a karaoke song of your choosing before leaving the stage as normal.
- When you roll a 1 you get to sing a song of the GJ & Tavern’s choice, before leaving the stage as normal.
- Boss Ballad; instead of rolling you can choose to sing a Karaoke song. 4 Judges chosen from the audience will give you a 1-10 score with their fingers. The lowest and highest scores are dropped and the 2 middle scores are added together to be your die roll.

OTHER STATS

DandDoke was designed to cut back on the time wasted by players looking at their character sheet, so most traditional stats and descriptors have been discarded. However if people playing this game want to advance or complicate the game to accommodate more experienced players, here are some other Stats that could be fun or interesting:

VOICE: A description of the voice of the character. It could be described through speech pattern terminology, a regional accent or just a celebrity’s name. Not everyone will feel comfortable trying on a different voice, but it could also be fun to try! GJs should give ADV or Treasure to players that even attempt to use the voice indicated.

GOAL: DandDoke is not a hidden role game, (but it could be?) the players are explicitly working together to complete their quest. However it could be useful for new players to be given some direction on what motivates their character in the context of the overarching Quest. If your games are focused on the dungeon crawl, maybe make up what is motivating the character to delve, such as; gold, treasure, revenge, inspiration, glory etc.

PLAYERS MAKE CHARACTERS

DandDoke Characters are pretty simple. Name, Deal & Thing are the core requirements. There’s nothing stopping anyone from making their own characters beforehand or onstage! Players could choose from a list of predetermined Things or have an onstage negotiation with the GJ about the limitations of a Thing. (A quick thought; A Thing should be *powerful* OR *versatile* but not both.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to

Jos, Luka, Caitlin, Judy, Zeke, Evie, Lane, Isa, Tru, Fable, Sabbi, Marceline, Elitience and everyone who supported me in my quest & housed me on my glorious oogle-return.

Character Name:

Deal:

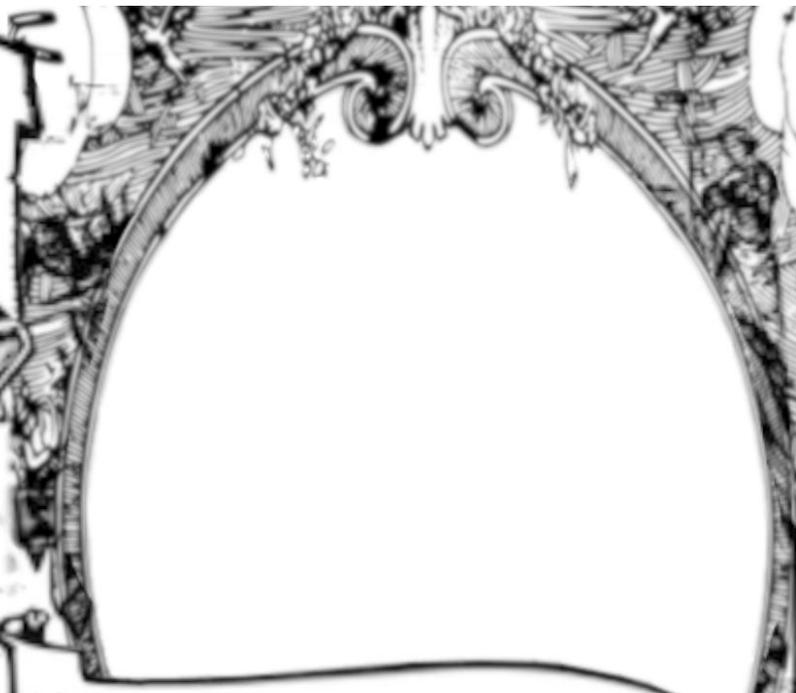
Thing: (at-will special power)

Advantage: Best of 2 rolls when taking action related to your...
...Deal or Legacy(e.g.:_____)

Disadvantage: Worst of 2 rolls when your character has a/an...
(Condition)_____ ~or~ Injury (injury + injury = death)

Legacy: (write a line about something that happened during play)

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WE CAN BE HEROES
JUST FOR ONE DAY