

TROUBLES IN THARBAD

Game rules

Introduction

Please understand that these rules are intended to help you enjoy the game, not hinder it. Also, we are not omniscient, and it is likely that we forgot something that might let you “break” the rules. We kindly ask you to refrain from doing that, especially if that would make the game unfun for others.

Also, in any case: if you are unsure about something – ask the GMs!

Game masters

There are three main GMs in this game:

- Raivis (oversees the city of Tharbad)
- Endija (oversees the dead and NPCs, some quests)
- Laiqua (quests and lore, combat, calls outside camps)

Their precise roles might still change somewhat. Please consult them as appropriate. There are also several playing-GMs, who will be announced before the game. They act as liaisons between players and main GMs, especially for specific class activities (see below).

Keeping time

Time is divided into cycles, each of which lasts three hours. The cycles starting at 9PM, midnight and 3AM are night cycles. No combat actions are allowed during this time. Cycles are important for many actions (see below).

Characters

Player races and their special abilities

Hobbits: they are better at most day-to-day tasks, so hobbit farmers produce 1 additional food per cycle. See *Economy and activities* rules for more details.

Elves: do not die from malnutrition. See *Economy and activities* rules for more details.

Dwarves: as long as they wear armour on their torso, their legs are non-combat zones (i.e. hits on legs from the torso down don't count). On the other hand, dwarves cannot run while in combat. See *Combat* rules for more details.

Orcs: shorter respawn time if you either were an orc or are going back as an orc (see *Character death and respawn* for more information); can eat slain enemies.

Humans: versatile folk, able to grasp almost any profession with little effort; therefore, a human with a unique class (see below) counts as having an extra apprentice; or a human can have a unique class and be an apprentice to someone else; or a human can be an apprentice to two unique classes (a human cannot be two apprentices to the same class, though). They can only perform the activities associated with one unique class at a time, though; they can switch between these classes (i.e. switch from being one type of apprentice to another, or from one class to an apprentice of another) once per cycle and need 10 minutes to perform the switch.

Player classes and their abilities

There are two kinds of player classes: standard classes and unique classes.

Anyone can have a standard class profession. The GMs reserve the right to suggest a different class to players, but only if there is a significant imbalance.

Unique classes have very powerful abilities are limited to one character per faction (see *Factions* below). During the registration process, if two or more players from the same faction compete for the same unique class, the GMs decide, mostly based on the character backstory, which one gets the role. Also, each unique class member can have up to two apprentices. The rules for apprentices are as follows:

- An apprentice can be anyone who does not already have a unique class (exception: humans can be apprentices even if they already have a unique class);
- One person can only be apprenticed to one master (exception: a human can be apprenticed to two masters);
- While being an apprentice, the character does not lose his previous class, but does not gain any personal benefits;
- Apprentices provide help to the unique class characters, but they must be at the site where the action is performed to provide the bonus;
- If the unique class character dies, his apprentice takes over that role; if there are two apprentices, they have to compete in a quest to decide which one becomes the master (the details of the quest will be given by the GM).

Standard classes

Farmer: can produce food efficiently. Can spend half an hour per cycle “farming” (this has to be roleplayed) to gain 2 units of food; hobbit farmers produce 3 units of food instead. Farming cannot be done inside the city.

Magisterial farmer: a special character who has the dispensation to provide food for the Mayor of Tharbad and his closest associates. Can farm within city limits in a specially designed area, otherwise identical to farmer.

Everyone else: can scavenge/forage for subsistence. Half an hour per cycle of scavenging/foraging (has to be roleplayed) gives 1 unit of food.

Smith: can make/repair weapons and armour. Repairing takes 15 minutes, crafting takes half an hour. Repairing restores a broken weapon or armour to good condition by putting a ribbon back on the item (see *Weapons and fighting* below). Crafting results in putting a ribbon on a previously unmarked weapon or armour (a stash of such weapons might be made from GM/player contributions or from items that have been destroyed in-game).

Everyone else: can repair weapons (not armour), but it takes half an hour to do so.

Warrior: can wear any size (light, medium and heavy) armour and gain benefits from it.

Everyone else: can wear light armour and gain benefits from it.

Healer: can heal others. Can stop someone from bleeding without any special items (treated patient will not die, but remains incapable of fighting and running, only walking), or restore health using

elixirs, bandages, etc. (treated patient is restored to full natural health at a rate of 1 hit point per 10 minutes). Each of these actions takes five minutes and has to be roleplayed. Elixirs and bandages must be physical props.

Everyone else: can stop bleeding for themselves or someone else by using bandages, if they have any.

Other: any player might suggest what profession they would like to have, and what benefits that profession might give. It is up to the GMs to agree with this choice or offer an alternative.

Unique classes

Ranger: knows all about the forests. Once per cycle can call a GM and ask for a secret to be revealed; the GM reveals an important location in a forest, but not necessarily the secret lying therein.

Apprentice bonus: One more GM call per cycle for each apprentice (up to two).

Everyone else: have to look for notes scattered in the forest by themselves.

Thief: can steal things from others (“stealing” = slipping a note with the text “you’ve been robbed!” into somebody’s pouch or pocket, then getting the GM to check that; if the note is there, the robbed person must give up the items carried there to the GM, who then passes them along to the thief). A thief can pretend to have a different profession for roleplaying reasons, but does not get their special abilities.

Apprentice bonus: none. However, the thief can have any number of apprentices who may act as distracters to the victim.

Everyone else: can steal things (in-game items, obviously) only by actually stealing them.

Note: “In-game item” is any object given to the player by the GM, also items bought from other characters. Parts of costume can NOT be stolen. Weapons can be stolen only if their owner agrees to that. If he/she doesn’t, the weapon is “destroyed” instead (the GM takes it for safekeeping).

Torturer: Can torture prisoners for information (see below), but only with two apprentices. One or zero apprentices provide no abilities to the torturer.

Everyone else: Cannot do either of those things.

Mason: can build/repair fortifications. Increasing fortification level takes 15 minutes.

Apprentice bonus: each apprentice increases the maximum level of fortification that can be reached by one.

Everyone else: cannot do that.

Alchemist: can mix potions/elixirs/poisons. Potion-making takes half an hour and can be done no more than twice per cycle. The alchemist player is responsible for having the ingredients, i.e. a vessel (bottle or something like that) and some preferably foul but not dangerous brew to put in there. To make a potion, the alchemist first tells the GM what he/she intends the potion to do and then performs the roleplaying. The GM at the end tells the player what effect the potion will have and gives a slip of paper with that effect written down.

Apprentice bonus: more effects to the potion.

Everyone else: cannot do that.

Bard: knows a lot of lore, and can inspire his companions in battle. Once per cycle can ask a GM for a piece of lore. The GM reveals some important lore-based information during the next cycle.

Apprentice bonus: Can sing during combat and inspire allies. The singers/players cannot fight or move (but can move and then resume playing, of course). Bard with one apprentice gives his allies +1 HP, bard with two apprentices gives allies +1 HP and +1 damage.

Factions

For the purposes of counting unique class characters, the players will be divided into two factions. One faction is roughly described as “city dwellers and their allies” and includes humans (unless otherwise noted), elves, dwarves and hobbits. The other faction is “wilderness dwellers” and includes orcs and wild people.

Economy and activities

Food

Everyone needs to eat at least once per cycle (except at night). The GMs walk around and collect food tokens, marking that the character has eaten. At the end of each cycle, anyone who has not eaten this cycle suffers a malnutrition penalty for the whole of next cycle. Malnutrition means -1 hit point, inability to run and inability to perform special class actions (for warriors, this means that their medium/heavy armour only provides light armour bonus). Malnutrition can be cured by consuming two food tokens. If a character does not eat for two cycles in a row, he/she dies (except for elves, who just stay malnourished). If somebody is malnourished at the start of the night cycle, they will stay malnourished until the morning cycle (unless they buy it off, of course).

Food can be gained by farming or scavenging/foraging (see above). Also, an Orc can gain one food token from a dead body.

Money

Each player gets a certain amount of money at the start of the game. The sum depends on race, class and social standing. How the money is spent depends on the player. Money can be gained by performing certain quests and in normal economic interactions (i.e. buying and selling goods and services).

Quests

There are notes hidden throughout the game area with quests described on them. Any player who finds a quest note must choose whether they want to go on that quest. If they do, they take the quest note and go to the GM. The GM will roleplay the quest with them. A quest might involve physical feats, fighting, logic games, riddles and so on, and might earn you a reward of some kind. If the player decides not to take the quest, they must leave the quest note in the same place they found it.

Combat and similar activities

Armour and hit points

Hit point calculation:

- Base: 2 HP

- Costume and character backstory: up to 2 more HP, GM decision
- Armour:
 - o Light (leather): +2 HP
 - o Medium (armour covers torso; warriors only): +3 HP
 - o Heavy (armour covers torso, arms and legs; warriors only): + 4 HP
 - o Super-heavy (same as heavy, but armour weighs at least 10 kg; GM decision): +4 HP and reduces damage taken from arrow hits to 1 HP per hit
- Helmet: you cannot be knocked out or assassinated (see below).

For each character who wears armour, the biggest piece of that armour (typically torso armour) will be labelled with a ribbon at the start of the game. This signifies that the armour is usable. Armour can be broken: if, during combat, you lose as many hit points as the armour provides, your armour is broken (you must remove the ribbon) and provides no hit point benefit until it is fixed by the smith (see above).

A piece of armour covering the neck provides an additional benefit – you cannot be assassinated.

Also, each player gets a number of willpower points – typically 5 to 10 – representing the strength of their will. Alternatively, the player may get an “iron will” trait.

Weapons and fighting

Most types of weapons are allowed: swords (including knives and daggers), spears, polearms, axes, clubs, bows, crossbows. If you want to use some unusual weapon, let us know beforehand.

The blade part (“business end”) of all weapons must be padded, no exceptions. Arrowhead padding must be at least large enough to cover the eye. Handles of weapons do not need to be padded, but cannot be used for offensive combat actions. Quality of padding will be checked before the game on the user of the weapon.

There are no formal requirements for weapon size and mass. However, please use common sense when making your weapon! The GMs have the final say. Before the game, all weapons will be checked and labelled with ribbons, which mark them fit for use in game.

By default, each melee weapon does 1 hit point of damage per hit and each arrow does 2 hit points of damage per hit.

A hit with amplitude on any target area deals damage. The target area is the whole body of a person, except for hands, feet, groin and head. Intentional hits on groin/head result in 1 point of damage to the attacker. Exceptions: if a dwarf is wearing armour on his/her torso, his/her legs from the torso down are not target areas. “With amplitude” means that you are not allowed to hit “sewing-machine”-style, by repeatedly poking the opponent with tiny hits.

If you lose a fight, the enemy might declare that they break your weapons. If so, you must remove the ribbon from the weapon, meaning that your weapon is broken. The broken weapon cannot be used until repaired.

Capture and interrogation

Once a character drops to 0 hit points, they are not dead, but rather critically wounded. Such a character can only crawl, call for aid or try to stop his/her own bleeding (see *healer*, above). A critically wounded character who does not receive any help dies in 10 minutes. A critically wounded character cannot be killed by enemies while the combat is still ongoing (after the combat finishes, the victors may finish off the critically wounded characters).

Anyone can capture a critically wounded character by tying him/her up. You can also tie up unconscious characters (to make a character unconscious, you have to sneak up behind the character and touch them on the shoulder with the handle of your weapon, saying “knockout”; a helmed character cannot be knocked out). When tying up, the player who is being tied up can choose one of two options:

- a) The player is physically tied up by the attacker and can then attempt to escape;
- b) The player is not physically tied up; in this case, no escape attempts can be made by the tied-up character.

A tied up character can then be interrogated. Interrogation must be roleplayed, and can be simple questioning, bargaining, etc., or torture. Torture can only be performed by a torturer with two apprentices (see above). The GM must always be present, and torture must be roleplayed (without endangering the player!). Torture lasts for as many minutes as the character has willpower points. After this time has elapsed, the tortured character breaks and must answer the torturer’s questions truthfully. At any point before that, the tortured character may pretend to break and still lie. After the character is broken, any further torture results in death, unless the character was healed before (as per normal healing rules). Some characters may have an “iron will” trait; if they have that, then breaking under torture results in immediate character death, without spilling the secret.

Assassination

An unsuspecting character can be assassinated. To do so, a player needs to sneak up on the character, put one hand on the victim’s neck and slice with a bladed weapon (sword, dagger, knife) over that hand, saying “I assassinate you”. The victim dies immediately and must fall to the ground; he/she can make a gargling sound while falling.

Exception – if a character’s neck is covered with armour, he/she cannot be assassinated.

Knocking out

An unsuspecting character can be knocked out. To do so, a player needs to sneak up on the character and tap them on the shoulder with the handle of a weapon, saying “I knock you out”. The victim is knocked out and must fall to the ground, without deliberately making noises. Once knocked out, the player must stay that way for 5 minutes before coming back to his/her senses.

Exception – if a character is wearing a helmet, he/she cannot be knocked out.

Searching

A dead, unconscious, critically injured or tied-up character can be searched; a character may agree to be searched in other circumstances as well. When this happens, the player whose character is to be searched chooses one of two options:

- a) The player is to be physically searched;
- b) The player gives up all in-game items, except for costume and weapons. If weapons are not given up to the searching party, the searcher can request that the weapons are handed over to the GM.

Walls and besieging

At the start of the game, the city has some walls of level one. New walls can be made by masons. A mason with an apprentice can improve a wall to level two, with two apprentices – to level three. Building or upgrading a wall takes at least 15 minutes and depends on the length of the wall (GMs

decision). Walls are marked by ropes and wall levels by coloured ribbons on the ropes. A rope that marks a wall must be strung at least at eye level (approx. 1,5 metres above ground). Arrows can be launched above the walls (i.e. over the rope), but other weapons cannot be used across a wall.

Walls can be broken. Besieging must happen under GMs supervision. In order to try to break a wall, the attackers must have a group of at least four people and a log. The log must be swung at the wall, as a battering ram. Typically, about five swings per wall level are required, but the exact number is left to the GMs decision. A mason on either side (either attacking or defending) provides a bonus to his side in this action.

Character death and respawn

When a character dies, he/she must put on a white hairband or other similar white item and go straight to the “graveyard” (the same zone where the out-of-game campsite is). Once there, the player must wait for one hour and think up a new character backstory, get this approved by a GM, and then can come back to play. In the meantime, the GM might request the player to go out for a while as an NPC (such as an Orc); as a reward, the GM may shorten the time until respawn. If the player was an Orc or wants to come back as an Orc, the respawn time is reduced to 30 minutes.