

RULES FOR GAMING

(AKA THE STUFF THAT'S NOT IN THE BOOKS)

We're here to play a game that should be fun for everyone involved. That being said, there are certain kinds of fun that cannot and should not be pursued during this particular time together. It's just a game. If it's disturbing or otherwise altering real life situations in a negative way, do yourself (and everyone else) a favor and take a break for as long as you need to get things back in their proper order. In order to best ensure that this does not happen, the following guidelines should be adhered to.

All of the below rules can be summed up as follows: 1) Remember it's a game, and 2) Don't be an ass.

ATTENDANCE

1.) Game planning is to happen publicly. Keep everyone in the group notified of what and when you want to play or run. Don't hassle them if they decline, but don't presumptively cut someone out of a discussion (unless it's supposed to be a surprise).

Caveat: A public discussion that you decide not to look at is still public. The discussion-starter is free to determine the format.

2.) Feel free to skip out on a session that doesn't interest you. You won't be rewarded for your absence, but nor will you be penalized. We're busy people with busy schedules. Do what you have to do.

3.) A regularly scheduled game requires 4 players, or 50% of the group (not including the GM), whichever is *less*. You may waive your right to halt the session due to your absence if you so choose. Every reasonable effort will be made to include every player for every session. The host determines what is "reasonable." The GM is, of course, required for any session.

Caveat: If you feel that you are falling behind, feel free to contact the GM to schedule an extra session so that you can "catch up."

4) The GM hosts. The GM may run the game wherever he or she chooses, so long as the location is reasonable. Steam tunnels, sewers, and secret volcano lairs are considered unreasonable.

5) If you need to cancel, for *any* reason, just let us know. Real life can be a bitch, but she's a bitch you need to keep happy. Remember that it's just a game, so even if you miss a world-shattering event *in the game*, you still didn't miss a thing that will affect a single, solitary part of your actual livelihood.

PUNCTUALITY

1) If you cannot arrive within 15 minutes of the agreed-upon gathering time, call the host (or someone who can contact the host) and let them know. We may or may not wait for you. No bitching allowed.

CONSUMABLES

1) Arrangements for food should be made at the same time the game is being scheduled. Snacks and more substantial offerings are perfectly acceptable at the game table. If you make a mess, please clean it up yourself. If you bring snacks (not including bringing your supper with you), please bring enough to share.

2) Drink whatever you want, as long as it's not likely to kill you or others, and you can act like a reasonable human being while drinking it. The host is not responsible for hiding your corpse from the police. As with snacks, please consider sharing. The host will provide ice, fridge-space, or both.

3) Smoke outside when you need or want to, but try to confine it to times when your character is not urgently needed. Don't get mad if you missed something while you were out.

4) Keep food and drink off of the gaming surface.

5) Please take your trash (food wrappers, empty drinks, etc.) with you when you leave. It doesn't have to go home with you, but it can't stay here. Recycling is informally discouraged.

GAMING ETIQUETTE

1) Bring your own supplies. Please purchase (or borrow) your own copy of the core book for whatever game we're playing. Bring your own dice, or make arrangements to borrow them from another player: each player should have a full set of dice appropriate for the game being played. Have your character sheet, or have it stored in a place that makes it easily accessible. The GM is not responsible for remembering or storing your statistics. You are encouraged (but not required) to purchase and paint a miniature to represent your character during tactical situations.

Caveat: If you do not have your stats and still arrive to play, the GM may fabricate them. The GM is encouraged to be as creative as possible, and may (by rights) temporarily alter your character's race, gender, class, hair color, etc. If you should choose to produce a new character sheet, fill it out thoroughly and completely. This will be your character sheet from now on. If you had better equipment (or stats) on the old version, too bad.

2) Computers are allowed at the table, but may only be used for specific activities. Please, no idle web browsing, e-mail checking, chatting, or instant messaging. Playing music, tracking

resources, or accessing other electronic gaming resources is allowed by GM's discretion. Actual gaming takes table priority, so keep computers off of the gaming surface.

Caveat: Be aware of the location of any cords attached to your computer. Do your best to ensure that the gaming area does not begin to resemble an obstacle course.

3) Roll dice in the open, where at least one other player can see. A flat surface (such as the table, or a well-balanced book) is preferred. Cocked dice will be re-rolled, no griping. The GM determines when a die is cocked.

4) Be honest. Cheating is highly discouraged. If the GM suspects you of cheating, be aware that he or she is also perfectly capable of fabricating numbers, statistics, and abilities. Continued cheating will not be tolerated.

5) Stay as focused as is reasonably possible. Out of character comments that can be construed as being in character will be interpreted as such. Be mindful of other's attempts to act in character. Be respectful of others' time(s) in the spotlight, and remember to spread the glory around. Role playing is as much a part of the game as roll playing. Keep snide comments to a minimum, but remember that there's nothing quite as valuable as a good laugh.

Additionally: Please do not demand to "kill something," or "murder" during an in-character conversation. You'd be angry if they demanded the same while you were roleplaying, so grin and bear it with the assurance that you'll get your chance.

6) The whole group need not be included in every discussion, in-character or out. However, be respectful of players' wishes, and try to include those who feel they should be included. If, by design or otherwise, you are not involved in a discussion, be respectful and do not distract from it.

7) Act when it's your turn, don't try to act when it's not. If another player has begun to roll dice, and you remember a bonus or attack you forgot, *too bad*. You'll get a chance to use it next turn. Think about what you will do during the other player's turns, and be ready to act when yours comes around again. The attendant rule for your action should be prepared and ready for inspection (if necessary) before you declare it.

8) Out-of-character advice on strategy and tactics should only be given if asked for. Each player has only one character for a reason.

9) Don't metagame (much). You're in this to have fun, so have your characters do whatever you think will be fun (and try to have it make at least some sense in character). However, don't be shocked if it's not successful, no matter how fun you thought it would be. In a roleplaying game, you can *try* to do anything. The key word is try. The penalties for failure, should they arise, must be accepted as a part of the game.

10) Accept the consequences for your actions. No matter how cool you might think having your character swim through lava would be, the GM is perfectly within reason to say, "that will kill

you," without you responding, "Railroading! I no longer have any input in my character's actions!"

Furthermore: It should not be up to the GM to have to make game-bending decisions to try to fix the unreasonable actions of his or her players. If you're so set on a course of action of your own that you're effectively trying to "railroad" the GM, you'd better be prepared when he tells you that the bridge ahead isn't finished, and you're going to steam over the canyon's edge. You got on the train and made it go - don't get pissed off when he or she doesn't make a bridge appear for you.

12) There is a time and a place to make decisions of a large, campaign-shaking magnitude - the GM usually lets you know when those times are. But if you futz around and refuse to decide, don't be surprised if events move beyond your control. Further, there are times when it makes no sense to have a major epiphany, or for your character to suddenly shift in personality, temperament, or worldview. Bear that in mind while choosing and describing your characters actions.

13) ***The GM is always right.*** Players can and do catch the GM in errors, even on rules that he or she may have written. You may question rulings and bring apparent errors or discrepancies to his or her attention. However, should such a situation arise,

- a) Do not raise your voice
- b) Do not present the discrepancy in an insulting or disrespectful manner
- c) Try not to take an inordinate amount of time explaining the issue; in particular, don't continue to pursue complaints that the GM has already overruled (Exception - if you are convinced that the GM has *misunderstood* the complaint. Note that disagreeing with you is *not*, by itself, evidence of this).
- d) The GM may make up a rule on the spot to resolve disputes, and should do his or her best to remain bound by the new rule. Feel free to *suggest* such a rule. Do *not* feel free to just make one up unilaterally and expect the GM to be bound by it!
- e) If you still disagree with a ruling after the GM has given your issues with it a hearing, accept it and move on for the moment, or leave
- f) Whenever possible, leave any further discussion of it until after the session at the soonest, or preferably, a couple of days later. (For one thing, see if it still seems important enough to bring up at that point.)

Reminder: The GM will bend the rules for you far more times than they will be bent against you. He or she is not actively trying to kill your character, nor is he or she trying to steal your fun. The GM will act with *everyone's* fun in mind, with an eye toward fairness at all times. Please remember that no matter how much work you've done, how much emotional investment you have in a character, he or she has done more for *every session* you participate in: they've made the effort to try to create and maintain the entire game world, and the events therein. Treat them with the respect that that effort should garner.

MESSAGEBOARDS AND EMAIL

1) The group maintains a private messageboard, to be used to discuss in and out of character issues related to the game of the moment. Involvement in discussions on the board are entirely voluntary, and every effort should be made to ensure that important decisions are made publicly, with input from all of the available players. However, please remember that just because you decide not to look at the public discussion does not mean that it is not public.

The board can be found here: <http://www.enworld.org/forumdisplay.php?f=208>

2) In character discussions should happen during the game session as much as is possible. See gaming etiquette, rule 6.

3) Please Reply-All when discussing something over e-mail with the entire group. If you are concerned about inbox inflation, please use the messageboard linked above.

MISCELLANEA

1) It's just a game. Forget that at your own peril.

2) Have fun. If you're not having fun, change something. If you're still not having fun, change something else. If you're still not having fun after that, take a break. Friendship is not determined by your suitability to game with: don't be afraid to quit, or to find another group. We'll still love you.

3) Since it's a game, don't take it too seriously. Remember that your character, no matter how long you've played him or her, is essentially only one step removed from the thimble (or top hat, or car) on the monopoly board. Losing the thimble doesn't make monopoly unplayable, and neither does losing a character.

APPENDIX I

RULES THAT DIDN'T MAKE THE BIG LIST, BUT ARE STILL GOOD IDEAS

1) Be nice. You're playing the game to have fun, but the people around you are trying to do the same. Keep any fun that you acquire at the expense of someone else to a respectable minimum.

2) Be helpful. Everyone playing the game has different strengths and weaknesses. Help out those that need help, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Ridiculing another player for not knowing the entirety of rules, setting, or related information only slows down the game - please refrain from doing so.

3) Separate in-character and out of character knowledge (and problems). There are things that the players may know (or think they know) that their characters do not. Whenever possible, please

act only on information that the characters have. Similarly, arguments between characters should be hammed up as much as possible, and playful banter is encouraged. Arguments between players are strenuously prohibited, at least insofar as they may result from game events. You may argue politics, religion, or historical facts (etc.) to your heart's content, so long as it does not distract from the game.

Arguments between players are to be left at home. Just as character disputes should *absolutely not* cross into reality, neither should personal disputes cross into our shared fantasy.

Regardless, don't push it – ostracizing characters and/or factionalization is strictly prohibited. While I certainly don't care if your character places priority on the life of your real-life significant other or best friend, forming sub-cliques and mini-groups only results in hurt feelings. Make allowances for others as you'd expect them to make for you. For more detail, see Player Rule 0.2 (Don't be an ass).

4) Be a grown-up if and when your character dies. Any game that I run will include at least some risk of demise throughout the course of adventuring. I expect anyone who has a character die mid-adventure to speak with me as immediately as is possible to arrange for the introduction of a new character.

Accordingly, I will not make any specific or concerted efforts to kill off any particular person's character, save to the degree that NPCs in the game would do so. I will do my best to ensure that no rule or 'out' is ignored when determining if, in fact, a character has died. However, established rules for the game or setting will be strictly enforced for all characters.

Be smart with the risks you (and others) take in the game, and you'll probably live through the greater part of it.

5) Only metagame to the degree that you need to do so in order to have fun. Don't try to second-guess my intentions, or how an NPC will react based on something you know in real life. Not all problems you encounter will have expected (or scripted solutions), and I can guarantee that there are events and encounters designed to be as insurmountable as possible. However, such events will be few and far between.

Alternatively, feel free to try to orchestrate events to correct problems you perceive with your own character. Rather than complaining about how frustrating it is to "have to" play your character in a certain way, simply change the way he or she acts and reacts. Please, try to have it make as much sense within the bonds of the story as is possible. But...

6) Remember that this is not improvisational drama. While the game may share certain aspects with improvisational drama, your key goal is not to entertain an audience, but rather to entertain yourself and the other players. There is no reason to continue playing a character you are no longer fond of, and even less reason to constrain your own actions to things you do not enjoy. Regardless...

7) Things will not always go right for you. Sometimes, it's just a strike of bad luck. At other

times, it will be one of the many types of obstacles that you're playing the game to overcome. If you want full control over *everything* that happens, good or bad, I would encourage you to write a novel or short story, and not participate in an RPG.

8) Don't be afraid to ask questions. I don't mind answering them - about pretty much everything and anything. I won't remember everything you might need to know to be able to perform every action, but I'll do my best to tell you. Regardless, the world exists only in our imaginations, so if there's something you need to be *sure* about, ask *before* you try, rather than complain *after* you fail.