**Thieves’ Dilemma**

Basis

So you and your “friends” decide to hunt down monsters and treasure: you hear about this \_\_\_\_\_ monster that is at the \_\_\_\_\_ and is guarding \_\_\_\_ amount of treasure and head off on an adventure.

Based loosely off The Prisoner's Dilemma thought experiment, players must decide when and at what cost to be fair with each other or to be selfish. Players must be both crafty and cooperative with their fellow players attempting to earn the most gold but also survive amongst themselves.

Remember, there is no honor amongst thieves.

Overview

“Thieves’ Dilemma” is played stage by stage in order to reach the biggest monster guarding the most treasure, slay the monster and escape with the most loot.

The players fight their way through a number of stages to the biggest monster available, then fight their way back through the same number of stages to return to safety.

Each Stage consists of 3 face down cards: a Monster, a Monster Adjective and a Treasure Card.

Players will perform round based combat in an attempt to kill the monster, steal the treasure, and / or sneak past to the next stage.

Your goal is to not only survive the stages of the game but also end the game with more gold and items.

Components

Monster cards

Monster Adjective cards   
Boss cards (?)

Boss Adjective cards (?)  
Character cards

Item cards  
Treasure cards (same backing as item cards)  
Action cards (same backing as item cards)

Skill Cards (?)

Wound markers

Gold markers

Game Set-up

Each Player chooses or is assigned a character card at random. These will have the character’s attack, defense, health, sneak attributes, inventory slots and starting action and/or item cards.

Each player starts with 3 gold.  
  
There will be a number of stages before the goal stage equal to the number of players plus one.

2 players = 2 + 1 = 3 stages

4 players = 4 + 1 = 5 stages

Player Card

Attack

Defense

Health

Sneak  
 Starting action cards:  
 Starting item cards:

Monster Card

Attack

Defense

Health

Observation  
Special Actions:

Actions

Basic

Most players will start with 4 basic action cards:

**Hide/Sneak:** If there are no unoccupied monsters, the character does not participate in combat. They may move to the next room or just hide. If there is an unoccupied monster, compare the character’s Sneak to the monster’s perception: if it is higher, then sneak normally, otherwise the monster has spotted them.

**Hoard:** If there are no unoccupied monsters, the character does not participate in combat. They instead steal some of the treasure for themselves. If there is an unoccupied monster, the monster has spotted them.

**Fight:** Subtract the monster’s defense from the character’s attack: the monster will receive that much damage.

**Scout:** If there are no unoccupied monsters, the character does not participate in combat. Look at the face down cards of the next stage, do not reveal to other players, but you can tell them anything you want about them, including lying about the information. If there is an unoccupied monster, the monster has spotted them.

(If shopping, this can be done to view the first stage instead of shopping)

Basic actions are never discarded, unless a card specifically states that it is discarded or set aside.

Special

Special actions are typically discarded after use, unless otherwise stated.

Items

Equipment

Equipment is passive, it always gives you a bonus of some kind:  
 Weapons, armor, helmets, boots, amulets.

Action

Some items require an action to use and are typically discarded after use, unless otherwise stated:

Grenades, potions, magic scrolls, flamethrowers.

Quest

If an item is marked “Quest”, then it counts towards your end of game points.

Shopping

The players may choose to play with the option of a “Town Shop” being open before an adventure. If the store is “open”, then players may purchase items, equipment, or “books” to learn special actions. A number of cards should be dealt from the item deck equal to the number of players plus one. If any of the cards are restricted, then it can be discarded and replaced.

Epic Play  
If the players are on an Epic, then after each adventure they will have the opportunity to shop before they set out on a new adventure. Available items are randomized before each opportunity to shop.  
  
Lay Away  
If a player does not have enough money to buy an item they want, then they may pay (at least) 1 gold towards the item and the shop keep will keep that item on hand, randomizing the rest of the stock.  
  
Shopping Initiative

Option 1) A “first” player can be determined by dice or argument, rotating clockwise until each person has had the opportunity to purchase one item.

Option 2) Players can buy items in order of sneak, highest to lowest.

Head Start

The players may choose to play with the option of “Head Start”. While everyone else is shopping, one or some of the players decide to start the adventure early. For each round of shopping, the early players may perform an action in the first stage. This can result in defeating the first stage before everyone gets there.   
If the monster was defeated, the late players will find the same monster in the stage at half strength and whatever treasure was not collected. “Defeated” monsters heal one health per action turn unless all living players pass them and that stage is removed.

Gameplay

Pre-Game Phase

Shopping

Phases

Planning

Reveal Stage Cards

Reveal Player Actions

Resolve Player Actions  
Determine Player Damage and Deaths  
Resolve Monster Actions  
Determine Monster Damage and Deaths  
Resolve Hoarding

Resolve Scouting

Payout  
Clean Up

**Planning:** Players discuss their situation and prepare for their actions. This is the ONLY time when players may barter, trade, or sell items amongst themselves. Trading does not need to be fair nor abide by any kind of ethical agreement. Players are encouraged to take advantage where able. All players will end this phase by placing one action card down on the table.

**Reveal Stage Cards:** If they have not yet been revealed, the Monster, Adjective and Treasure cards for the stage are flipped face up. Add the appropriate number of wound and gold counters.

**Reveal Player Actions:** The players flip their action cards face up.

Gold may be spent to use an additional action card. (cost per action?)

**Resolve Player Actions and Monster Damage:** Determine if anyone is participating in combat and / or there are any unoccupied monsters. Subtract the respective monsters’ defense form the respective characters’ attack and remove that many wound markers from the monster.

**Determine Monster Deaths:** If the monster has no wound counters left, then it is dead. Discard it.

**Resolve Monster Actions and Player Damage:** If there are still living monsters, one at a time, the monsters attack the players. If no players fought the monsters, then the monster deals damage to all players, one at a time (randomize the order). Players that pass Sneak are not affected. Otherwise the player that dealt the most damage (to the respective monster) or healed the most damage (whichever number is greater) is attacked. All player's attacked reduce the attack damage taken by their Defense value and take any damage over that value. (I.e. a player that is attacked for 3 but has a defense of 1 will only take 2 damage.)

**Determine Player Damage and Deaths:** If any player has no Health remaining they are dead. In a single Adventure the other players can Hoard to loot the body. In an Epic, the ghost can negotiate the body’s return to the town.

**Resolve Hoarding:** Any players that Hoarded without being spotted, get 1 gold from the treasure.

**Resolve Scouting:** Any players that Scouted without being spotted, may look at the next stage cards.

**Payout:** If the monster is dead, then the remaining treasure is distributed as follows: any special effects resolve when they said (first, second, last), Hoarders (randomize or order of Sneak), Fighters, Scouts, and Sneaks (if they did not leave the stage).  
Any fighters that killed a monster also receive a skill card. (?)

**Cleanup:** Adventurers discard any cards that should be discarded, and pick up their remaining cards. If all the monsters are dead, then all surviving players proceed to the next stage. Otherwise they return to the Planning phase.

Boss Stage

Players may not sneak past the “Boss Stage”. Because the monster is too huge, perceptive aggressive, etc. this monster must be put down in order to get the treasure and escape. A sneak action can only be used to hide in order to avoid damage on a given round.  
  
Boss attributes:

Option 1) A Boss Stage uses normal monsters, but doubles their attributes.

Option 2) A Boss Stage uses special Boss monsters.

Boss Actions:

A Boss Monster gets two attack actions.

The treasure drawn for a Boss is always doubled.

Option 1) The treasure card drawn for the boss is doubled.

Option 2) A number of treasure cards (equal to # of players?) is drawn.

If there is only one survivor from the Boss Stage, that player may attempt to sneak the remaining stages, if able.

End Condition

When all surviving players have passed the last stage of the game, total their gold and the value of quest items are tallied up. The player with the most gold is the winner, ties may occur.

Epic

If the players decide to play an Epic, then they will proceed on a set number of adventures, or play until all or enough people decide to retire from a life of adventure.  
  
The new stages are randomized just like the original journey.  
All monsters receive an attack and defense bonus equal to number of completed adventures.  
  
If the ghost of a player that died has successfully convince another adventurer to drag his body back to town (bribery is highly encouraged), that player is resurrected by the town priest.  
  
All living players take a rest at the town inn, restoring their health.  
Everyone has an opportunity to shop.