



You:

I want to be the player in a text-based game where I'm in Damascus in May, 1348, a city in chaos due to the plague.

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You:

Certainly! Welcome to the interactive text-based game set in Damascus, May 1348. The city is in turmoil as the plague sweeps through the population, leaving death and despair in its wake. You are a resident of this once-bustling city, now full of fear and suspicion. How you navigate through these perilous times is entirely up to you.

You find yourself standing in the center of the marketplace, which is much emptier than it once was. The air is thick with the scent of spices and herbs, as vendors are trying to sell remedies and potions, but it is also tinged with an undertone of unease. People walk by wearing face coverings made of linen, soaked in vinegar or filled with herbs, believed to protect against the "miasma" thought to spread the disease.

Your objectives:

1. Ensure your own survival and that of your family.
2. Gather information about the true nature of the plague and any possible cures.
3. Make ethical decisions that could affect not only you but also the people around you.

You have some resources at your disposal:

- A small pouch containing 10 silver dirhams
- A modest home in the older part of the city, where you live with your spouse and two children
- Basic medical knowledge (you're not a physician, but you know some home remedies)
- A close friend who is a merchant, has access to rare goods
- A small dagger for self-defense

Your Options:

1. **Visit the Apothecary:** Head to the apothecary to buy some herbs and medicines that could possibly protect your family.
2. **Go Home:** Rush back home to check on your spouse and children. Make sure they are well and discuss plans for the coming days.
3. **Seek Information:** Talk to people around you, especially the scholars and physicians who may have more knowledge about the plague.
4. **Visit the Mosque:** Head to the Umayyad Mosque to pray for protection and guidance, and perhaps find some solace.
5. **Visit Your Merchant Friend:** Maybe your friend has come across some valuable information or goods that could help you during these times.

What will you do?

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You decide that gathering information is crucial at this point. With knowledge, perhaps you can navigate through these dangerous times more effectively. Slipping through the crowd, you head towards the intellectual hub of the city, near the Al-Azem Palace, where scholars, physicians, and clerics often gather for debate and discussion.

As you arrive, you notice that the gathering is much smaller than usual. Those who are there speak in hushed tones, their faces marked with worry. You overhear snippets of conversations—people are discussing the nature of the plague, its spread, and potential remedies.

You see three individuals who may have the information you seek:

1. **The Scholar:** A wise-looking man with a gray beard, engrossed in a manuscript. He is reputed to be an expert in the medical sciences.
2. **The Physician:** A woman who is well-regarded for her healing skills, conversing earnestly with another medic. She holds a small leather bag, possibly filled with medical instruments or herbs.
3. **The Cleric:** A religious man, sitting alone, engrossed in prayer. Clerics often hear news from various members of the community and might have a unique perspective on the situation.

#### Your Options:

1. **Approach the Scholar:** Discuss the scientific aspects of the plague and ask if there is any known cure or prevention method.
2. **Speak to the Physician:** Learn about the symptoms and treatment methods that are currently being used to manage the illness.
3. **Talk to the Cleric:** Inquire about the spiritual and ethical aspects of dealing with the plague, and see if he has heard of any divine interventions or miracles.
4. **Leave:** Decide that it's better to go back and focus on your family's immediate needs.

What will you do next?



ask the doctor how I can avoid becoming sick



You decide to approach the physician, the woman with the leather bag who seems to be discussing medical matters with her colleague. As you get closer, you catch a few phrases: "...quarantine," "...boiling water," "...no surefire cure." The atmosphere is grim, but her eyes are filled with determination.

Clearing your throat softly, you manage to catch her attention. "Excuse me," you begin, "I know you're busy, but I'm extremely concerned for my family. Is there any way to prevent contracting this terrible plague?"

The physician takes a moment to size you up, her eyes meeting yours intently. Finally, she nods and begins to speak. "Prevention is difficult, but there are some measures you can take. First, avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are sick. The disease spreads easily."

She reaches into her leather bag and pulls out a small bundle of herbs. "These are a mix of sage, lavender, and rosemary. They're believed to purify the air when burned. It may not be a guaranteed method, but it's better than doing nothing. You can place them in your home."

She also advises you to frequently wash your hands and face with soap and boiling water, and to keep your living space as clean as possible to deter rats, which are thought to be carriers of the disease.

She hesitates for a moment and adds, "And one more thing. If you or anyone in your family starts showing symptoms—fever, chills, or painful swellings—seek medical help immediately. Time is of the essence."

For her guidance and the herbs, she asks for 3 silver dirhams.

### Your Options:

1. **Pay for the Herbs and Advice:** Give the physician 3 silver dirhams and thank her for the valuable information.
2. **Decline the Offer:** Politely decline, deciding to save your money for other needs.
3. **Negotiate:** Try to negotiate the price or ask for more information before making a decision.
4. **Ask More Questions:** Inquire further about symptoms, treatments, or anything else you are curious about.
5. **Leave:** Thank the physician for her time and go back to focus on your family's immediate needs.

What will you do next?



pay



You reach into your pouch and carefully count out 3 silver dirhams, handing them over to the physician. She accepts the money with a nod, placing it in a small coffer beside her.

"Thank you," you say, taking the bundle of herbs she offers. "Your advice is invaluable. I'll make sure to follow your guidelines and share this information with my family."

"May it serve you well," she replies, her eyes showing a mix of fatigue and hope. "Take care, and may God protect you and your family."

With the herbs safely tucked into your pouch, you feel a small sense of relief. It's not much, but it's something—a tangible action you can take to protect your family.

Your pouch now contains 7 silver dirhams, and you have gained some potentially life-saving information and herbs.

### Your Options:

1. **Go Home:** Return to your family, share the information you've gathered, and place the herbs in your home as advised.
2. **Visit the Apothecary:** Now armed with some information, perhaps you'll find additional useful remedies at the apothecary.
3. **Visit Your Merchant Friend:** Maybe your friend has come across some valuable information or goods that could further help you during these times.
4. **Seek More Information:** Continue your quest for knowledge by speaking to the Scholar or the Cleric.
5. **Visit the Mosque:** Head to the Umayyad Mosque to pray for protection and guidance, and perhaps find some solace.

What will you do next?



go home to see how my family is doing



Feeling the weight of the herbs and the silver dirhams in your pouch, you make your way through the now eerily quiet streets towards your modest home in the older part of the city. As you approach, you notice that the door is securely bolted, a precautionary measure you had discussed with your spouse earlier. With a sense of urgency, you knock softly on the door, signaling your arrival.

The door creaks open, and your spouse's face, weary but visibly relieved, appears in the narrow opening. "You're back! How did it go? Did you find out anything useful?"

As you step into the safety of your home, you find your children sitting in the corner, playing with simple wooden toys. They look up and rush towards you, joyful yet puzzled by the grave atmosphere that has enveloped their young lives.

"I spoke with a physician," you begin, pulling out the bundle of herbs. "She gave me these herbs—sage, lavender, and rosemary—to burn in the house. They're supposed to purify the air and may offer some protection against the plague."

Your spouse listens intently, nodding as you explain the additional precautions advised by the physician—frequent washing, avoiding crowds, and being alert for symptoms.

"We should start by burning some of these herbs," you suggest. "And perhaps boil some water for washing."

Your spouse agrees, quickly taking the herbs and setting them in a shallow metal dish, then lighting them. A fragrant smoke begins to fill the room.

### Your Options:

1. **Discuss Plans:** Sit down with your family to discuss the next steps, from rationing food to possibly sending your children to stay with relatives in a less affected area.
2. **Inspect the House:** Thoroughly check your home for any signs of rats or other potential disease carriers, and clean it as best as you can.
3. **Rest:** It's been a long and emotionally draining day. Maybe a little rest would help you think more clearly.
4. **Visit Your Merchant Friend:** Leave your family for a short while to see if your friend has any useful goods or information.
5. **Visit the Mosque:** After ensuring your family is as safe as you can make them, head to the Umayyad Mosque to pray for protection and guidance.

What will you do next?

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You:

check for rats

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You:

Realizing that rats might be carriers of the disease, you decide to inspect your home thoroughly. Armed with a lantern and your small dagger, you proceed to check every corner, nook, and cranny of your modest dwelling.

Your spouse keeps an eye on the children, ensuring they stay away from the areas you're inspecting, while also occasionally helping to move furniture or other objects that could be hiding potential pests.

After a meticulous search, you find signs of rodent activity in a corner of your storage area—tiny droppings and gnawed bags of grain. "We've got rats," you announce grimly.

You spend the next couple of hours doing your best to clean the area, disposing of the contaminated grain and patching up holes with whatever materials you can find. It's exhausting work, but you feel somewhat relieved when it's done. At least you've taken a proactive step in minimizing the risk to your family.

Your spouse burns some more herbs near the affected area, hoping the smoke might act as a deterrent for any remaining rodents.

### Your Options:

1. **Discuss Plans:** Now that your home is as secure as you can make it, sit down with your family to discuss the next steps.
2. **Rest:** After the thorough cleaning and stress of the day, you feel drained. Perhaps some rest would be good for you.
3. **Visit Your Merchant Friend:** Maybe your friend has some useful goods or information that could be of help. Rat traps or stronger deterrents, perhaps?
4. **Visit the Apothecary:** With the rat issue in mind, you consider going back to the apothecary to see if they have anything specifically for pest control.
5. **Visit the Mosque:** Head to the Umayyad Mosque to pray for protection and guidance, now that your home is as fortified as you can make it.

What will you do next?

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You:

wash my hands

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You:

Understanding the importance of hygiene, especially after dealing with a potential source of infection, you head to the basin where you keep water for washing. You ask your spouse to boil some water for you and, while waiting, gather soap and a cloth.

Once the boiling water is ready, you cautiously mix it with some cooler water in the basin, testing the temperature with your elbow. Satisfied, you proceed to scrub your hands vigorously with soap, taking care to wash between your fingers, your nails, and up to your wrists. You even wash your face for good measure.

After rinsing, you dry your hands and face with a clean cloth, feeling a bit more at ease. Your spouse also takes the opportunity to wash, following your example.

"Every little bit helps," you say, hoping that your caution has made your home a bit safer for your family.

### Your Options:

1. **Discuss Plans:** Now cleaner and a bit more relaxed, you can sit down with your family to discuss the next steps.
2. **Rest:** After the thorough cleaning and stress of the day, you feel drained. Perhaps some rest would be good for you.
3. **Visit Your Merchant Friend:** Maybe your friend has some useful goods or information that could be of help. Rat traps or stronger deterrents, perhaps?
4. **Visit the Apothecary:** You could return to the apothecary to inquire about additional preventive measures or remedies.
5. **Visit the Mosque:** Head to the Umayyad Mosque to pray for protection and guidance, now that your home is as fortified as you can make it.

What will you do next?

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You:

stock up on food and drink

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You:

Acknowledging the increasing uncertainty and the need for provisions, you decide it's time to stock up on essentials like food and drink. With 7 silver dirhams left in your pouch, you hope it will be enough to get your family through this difficult period. You inform your spouse of your plan and head out once again, making your way toward the marketplace.

The market seems even quieter than it was earlier, with fewer vendors and customers. The rising prices are evident as desperate citizens try to stock up on what they can afford. You make your way to a trusted vendor who sells grains, pulses, and dried fruits.

A quick conversation confirms what you already suspected—the prices have indeed increased due to demand and the difficulty in getting supplies into the city. Nevertheless, you manage to haggle and purchase a decent supply of barley, lentils, dried figs, and some jars of water, costing you 5 silver dirhams.

You also buy a few additional items like vinegar and garlic, believed to have health benefits and possibly even some protective properties against illness. This costs you an additional 1 silver dirham, leaving you with just 1 silver dirham in your pouch.

With your supplies secured in a sack, you make your way back home, feeling the weight of your purchases but also a sense of accomplishment. Your family helps you unload and store the food and water, clearly relieved to see the added provisions.

### Your Options:

1. **Discuss Plans:** With the new stock of food and water, sit down with your family to discuss how you will ration the supplies and what steps to take next.
2. **Rest:** After a busy day of gathering information, cleaning, and stocking up on essentials, you feel exhausted. Rest could help you rejuvenate.

3. **Visit Your Merchant Friend:** You have only 1 silver dirham left, but perhaps your friend might have some valuable information or goods to trade.
4. **Visit the Mosque:** With your family and home as secure as you can manage, maybe it's time to seek spiritual comfort at the Umayyad Mosque.
5. **Inspect the House Again:** Considering that you brought new items into your home, you may want to double-check for any signs of pests or contamination.

What will you do next?



You:

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You:

Recognizing that communication and planning are vital in these trying times, you call your family together for a discussion. You all sit in the main living area, the bundle of herbs still smoldering in its dish, filling the air with its pungent scent.

"We've managed to secure some extra food and water," you start, gesturing to the sack of supplies you've just brought in. "But it's important we make it last as long as possible. We'll need to ration carefully."

Your spouse nods, equally serious. "We should also make sure we're using our existing supplies wisely. We can cook simpler meals to stretch out our ingredients."

You discuss the idea of limiting each person to two meals a day—moderate portions to keep everyone nourished but not overly full. Your children listen intently, the gravity of the situation even reaching their young minds.

"Is there anything else we can do to stay safe?" your spouse asks.

You share the rest of what you learned from the physician, emphasizing the importance of cleanliness, avoiding crowds, and keeping an eye out for symptoms of the plague.

You all agree to stay within your home as much as possible, venturing out only when absolutely necessary. You also talk about what to do if anyone starts showing symptoms—immediate isolation and medical intervention are the consensus.

It's a sobering conversation, but you all feel a little more secure for having had it. In a time of so much uncertainty and fear, the clear plans provide a much-needed sense of control and purpose.

### Your Options:

1. **Rest:** After a long, emotionally draining day filled with both worries and small victories, perhaps some rest will help you recharge.
2. **Write Down Plans:** Document your rationing plans and safety guidelines as a reminder and as an actionable checklist.



3. **Visit Your Merchant Friend:** You're down to just 1 silver dirham, but perhaps your friend might have some valuable information or items to trade.
4. **Visit the Mosque:** Consider heading to the Umayyad Mosque for some spiritual solace and to pray for protection and guidance.
5. **Inspect the House Again:** Before settling down, double-check your home for any new signs of pests or other risks.

What will you do next?

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