

# Sweating Seven



by [Samuel Briggson](#)

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#).

This work was created as an entry for Game Chef 2012, the theme of which was “Last Chance”. It used the following ingredients:

- Coyote
- Doctor
- [Diceless Combat Using Logic Grid Puzzles?](#)
- [Frontier Xperience rules](#)

“[Nature inside the walls](#)” by Stanislav Pecha, licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic License](#).

*Sorry kid. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but you've got the sweat. Oh sure, you feel giddy and cold right now. To hear your momma tell it, you damn near shivered right out of your pants. But that'll pass. Give it a day. Maybe three. The sweating will come.*

*I'd like to tell you that it'll be easier then but I won't lie to you. You're going to be hot; hotter than you ever were hauling wheat from the gravel pit your pops calls a farm. And you're going to get delirious – last guy I knew with this thought he had ladies in royal gowns bringing him buckets of water.*

*Did I mention the thirst? Your heart is going to beat all weird, like a galloping horse with a rock in her shoe, and the only thing to calm it will be water. Oh, you'll drink a lot of it. But don't worry about running to the bathroom; you'll soak your shirt with it instead. Hell, that rag might come clean for once.*

*Cure? Oh sure, there's a cure. Only one doc knows it though. He lives a lavish life in the middle of the Eastern Kingdom. Nobles there learned of his cure and “invited” him to move there. Since then, they built themselves a collection of walls to keep scamps like you away from him. Honestly, I think our queen would be hard pressed to get the cure from them.*

*Face it kid; you've got about two weeks. Fact is, you'll have to sleep, drink, and bathe for the rest of our benefits. Minus that, you've got about two hundred and forty hours to kiss your momma and sister goodbye. Sounds like a lot when I put it that way, doesn't it?*

*Scale the walls? I figured you might say that. I like you kid, you've got spunk. I know a guy. They call him a coyote. He's a pro at getting past the defenses on them walls. It'll cost you though, but hell, I'm sure it'll be less than your parents will lose by not having you in the fields.*

## Overview

Sweating Seven is a role-playing game following the story of one or more characters who have been infected with sweating sickness. Those characters have 240 hours left to live and their only hope is a doctor in a foreign kingdom who's been sequestered behind seven walls. The story follows them and those helping them as they race against the clock.

To play, you'll need at least three players – the Game Master (GM) who will design the walls and adjudicate their destruction, at least one infected player character (PC) and one uninfected PC. Three to five PCs are recommended to help make things interesting, but the rules work fine with more or less.

You'll need copies of the character sheets included in this PDF, something to write with, and a few sheets of graph paper. Finally, you'll need a way to keep track of how many of the 240 hours have passed. A bag with 240 pennies in it or ticks on a piece of paper both work well.

## Overcoming a Wall

When your party comes to a wall, they'll engage in a grid-based guessing game similar to *Battleship* by Milton Bradley. The GM will tell you the dimensions of a vulnerable section of the wall and describe the defenses in that area. You'll use your character's abilities to attack the wall in various ways. To pass the wall, you'll need to do one of two things:

1. Destroy or disable all the defenses.
2. Identify a fatal flaw in the wall.

Walls have two unique features that will be new to seasoned *Battleship* players. These are weak spots and fatal flaws.

Weak spots are always located on a defense. If you destroy the square containing a defense's weak spot, you destroy the entire defense. A moat might have a small stone dam that keeps the water from flowing downstream.

Fatal flaws can be located anywhere on the wall and, if you strike one of them, your party can immediately bypass the wall. In the fiction, this might represent something like discovering a former traveler's tunnel or killing the captain of the guard.

## Character Abilities

Like in *Battleship*, you can use some basic logic to find and destroy the defenses. For example, moats are 5x1 when placed on the grid and must always be placed at the bottom of a wall. Unlike *Battleship*, your character has abilities that can damage multiple squares on the grid, identify defenses, and more.

Keep in mind that every ability takes an hour to use. When you use one, you'll need to deduct one from the 240 hour pool that is shared by all the PCs. If that pool runs out before your characters pass the seventh wall, then the infected character(s) have died.

When attacking the wall, the players should decide if they want to take turns or work as a group to identify which PCs' abilities are best suited to attack the current wall. Since the hours are shared by the players, they should be in relative agreement when spending them.

Each ability has seven levels, some of which enhance the effect of the ability. You start off at level one in each ability and tick off a box each time you use the ability. When you've used the ability a number of times equal to the next level, you advance to that level. For example, once you've reached level 3 of the Ferry ability, you must use that ability four more times to progress to level four.

*Note: The abilities were designed so that each new effect improves upon the existing effect. However, if you wish, you may use the effect from any level lower than your current when using the ability.*

## Say Yes or Spend Hours

The infected characters have two weeks left to live but there's only 240 hours in the pool. This was done intentionally so that you don't have to calculate time spent sleeping, eating, and doing mundane things. Any socializing your characters do should be included to be part of this downtime allotment. There may be a small town between the third and fourth walls; time spent chatting up the innkeeper there shouldn't penalize the PCs.

However, if the PCs want to do something to aid their journey that their abilities don't account for, the DM and the PCs should come to an agreement on how long such a task would take. Once agreed, the group spends that many hours from their pool and then role-plays through the event. They're always successful in such endeavors.

*Note: When calculating hour costs, keep in mind a figure of about one hour per grid square disabled. If they players seek out a man with a flying ship to float them over the fourth wall, which is 3x10, then such an endeavor should cost 30 hours. Alternatively, the players could employ goblin sappers to destroy the left third of the same wall for only ten hours.*

Keep in mind that you can't use this technique to simply bypass every wall; you'll run out of time. Additionally, your own abilities will only get strong through use. But the option exists and might be of use for a particularly challenging wall.

## Designing the Walls

Almost all of the preparation for Sweating Seven falls on the GMs' shoulders but it is this preparation that makes the campaign more interesting. Think of the care that goes into placing one's ships when playing *Battleship*; it's that level of care that should go into designing each wall.

A campaign is one story that covers the players' journey through all seven walls. However, depending on how long your group plays, you probably won't finish the story in one sitting. Each wall should be considered an adventure, complete with it's own story and non-player characters (NPCs). In addition to designing each wall, you'll want to make notes about the towns, vegetation and personalities that are in the areas between the walls.

The rules have been balanced to allow the players to overcome seven sixty-square walls. At the most basic level, the GM could generated seven 10x6 walls but it's recommended to move some squares from one wall to another. For example, the first wall may be 10x3 (30 squares), the second 5x6 (30 squares), and the third 12x10 (120 squares). The players' abilities will be stronger later in the game so you may want to keep the big ones until the end.

After you pick dimensions, you'll add defenses to the wall. Defenses should cover about 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the wall, or ten or eleven squares on a sixty-square wall. Use a sheet of graph paper to draw the wall and where the defenses are. Label the columns with letters and number the rows. This will let the players tell you the coordinates they're attacking.

*Note: Since the players won't see the GM's drawing, they'll want to make one of their own as their attacks hit or miss the defenses.*

The following is the list of the defenses, their type and dimensions. For quick reference, the number in parenthesis is the total number of squares covered by the defense.

**Arrowslit (2)**

Type: Human

Dimensions: 1x2

A thin opening in a wall through which an archer can launch arrows. Vertical slits are usually manned by longbowmen and horizontal ones by crossbowmen.

**Portcullis (3)**

Type: Metal

Dimensions: 1x3

A metal gate in the wall which can quickly be raised or lowered by chains attached to it.

**Murder Hole (4)**

Type: Human

Dimensions: 2x2

A hole in the wall through which harmful substances, such as scalding water or boiling oil, can be poured down on attackers.

**Moat (5)**

Type: Water

Dimensions 1x5

Special: A moat may only be placed in the bottom row of a wall.

A deep water-filled ditch at the base of the wall to serve as an initial obstacle to attackers.

**Gabion (6)**

Type: Metal

Dimensions 2x3

A large metal cage filled with stones, soil and sand. Typically used until permanent masonry can be put in place.

**Drawbridge (8)**

Type: Wood

Dimensions: 2x4

A moveable bridge typically associated with a wall defended by a deep ditch or moat.

**Palisade (9)**

Type: Wood

Dimensions: 3x3

A section of the wall that was built from tree trunks aligned vertical. This type of defense is quick to build and often used as a temporary patch for a damaged section of the walls.

In addition to the defenses, each wall must contain at least one weak spot or fatal flaw.

During your campaign, two walls should have a flaw and the rest contain a weak spot.

**Weak Spot (1)**

Type: Special

Dimensions: 1x1

Special: A weak spot must always be placed on top of a defensive structure. When the weak spot is struck by an attack, that defensive structure is also destroyed.

**Fatal Flaw (1)**

Type: Special

Dimensions: 1x1

Special: A fatal flaw may be placed anywhere on the wall, either by itself or on top of a defensive structure. When the fatal flaw is struck by an attack, the players have defeated the wall and may continue immediately.

**Approaching a Wall**

The walls of the Eastern Kingdom are huge, country-surrounding structures. Construction quality and material varies not only from wall to wall but within each wall. As such, the area you've constructed represents one area that's ideal for a breach by the PCs.

When the PCs first approach the wall, describe it to them in terms of the construction, height, and defenses. You also need to give them, in terms of mechanics, the exact dimensions of the wall and list of defenses. Here's an example for a 5x12 wall with a portcullis, murder hole, and two arrowslits.

Picardy's Tower stood long before the fourth wall. The sixty foot tall building can be accessed via a black metal portcullis and glints of torch light reveal two arrow slits flanking a murder hole. At twenty-five feet wide, there's plenty of room for those inside to carry pots of boiling oil up the stairs.

*Note: When describing a wall, consider each grid square to be 5 feet by 5 feet.*