

EXAMPLES OF COMBAT

If you think you understand T&T combat, you can skip over this section. If you do, though, you might miss some of the most entertaining bits in the book. If you'd like to see how several T&T game combats might play out, then read on.

Sample 1: Monsters vs. Monsters (MRs only)

Thar the Ogre is a big, bad, nasty guy with green skin, 3-inch-long yellow fangs, and an insatiable appetite. He has a Monster Rating (MR) of 72, which initially gives him a total of 8 dice and 36 adds. His tough skin, hardened like leather from many scars and years of rude living, acts as a natural armor that will take 6 hits of damage per combat turn.

As usual, he's wandering through the seemingly infinite tunnels of Black Peak Mountain, in the depths of which lies his dismal lair, and is desperately searching for some fresh, live dinner (or at least a couple of edible cavern rats). During his hunt, he arrives at a dark and cold junction in the tunnels, and after a minute of head-scratching decides to continue straight forward. As he's passing through the middle of the intersection, a couple of vicious and treacherous shadow goblins ambush him, jumping the ogre from both sides with their rusty weapons ready to strike.

Neeker ("Goblin #1") is a small and swift burglar with a MR of 23, which in the beginning gives him 3 dice and 12 adds. He yells wildly while charging at Thar, gulping when he realizes that his victim is about three times taller than himself.

Breeker ("Goblin #2") is a more massive and muscular guy with a MR of 46, which starts him off with 5 dice and 23 adds. His eyes burn with a violent and insane fire, and he seems to be berserk as he jumps into the middle of combat wielding a half-broken spear.

Slightly surprised by the two opponents, the ogre quickly prepares for the battle with just one thing on his mind: "FOOD!"

The GM decides that, despite the ambush, the ogre was alert while scouting the tunnels, so both factions can actively participate from the first combat turn.

First Combat Turn

Thar the Ogre rolls 8D6+36 for his attack. The dice give him a total of 22, and one of the dice gives a result of "6." Thar's HPT is 22 (dice) + 36 (adds) = 58. He also does 1 point of spite damage.

Neeker rolls 3D6+12, for a pitiable total of 7 (!) on the dice roll, so his HPT equals 7 (dice) + 12 (adds) = 19.

Breeker charges wildly, rolling his 5D6+23. He gets a final HPT of 19 (dice) + 23 (adds) = 42. He also rolls two "6s" on his combat dice, for 2 points of spite damage. The

combined HPT for the two shadow goblins is $19 + 42 = 61$, plus 2 points of spite damage.

The goblins win the combat round, taking advantage of their ambush and battle rage, but must take the 1 point of spite damage done by the ogre. The GM decides that the lass capable Neeker gets hit, so his MR drops to 22. Neeker now rolls $3D6+11$ (not $+12$) next round.

| Thar must take $61 - 58 = 3$ points of combat damage, but his tough skin absorbs it without problem. (Remember, he has a natural armor rating of 6). Nevertheless, he must reduce his MR by 2 points, caused by Brecker's spite damage, so his MR goes down to 70. Thar now rolls $8D6+35$ (not $+36$) next round.

Second Combat Turn

The ogre screams in a rage, bashing opponents with his hard punches. This turn, his HPT equals $39 + 35 = 74$. He also inflicts 3 points of spite damage.

Neeker gets a HPT of $9 + 11 = 20$, with no spite damage. Brecker continues his foolhardy attack, with his $5D6+23$, but the unpredictable luck turns against him, and he gets a HPT of only $13 + 23 = 36$, without any spite damage. The goblins combine for a HPT of only 56.

| This time the ogre crushes the pair of goblins, winning the combat round by $74 - 56 = 18$ points, plus 3 points of spite damage. The damage is shared evenly, so each goblin takes 10 points of damage, and the extra point is taken by Neeker. At the end of the round, Neeker has a current MR of 11 and Brecker's MR falls to 36.

Third Combat Round

Thar doesn't like a dinner that bites him before being eaten, so he continues pushing the assault. He still rolls $8D6+35$, which gives him a HPT of $18 + 35 = 53$, with no spite hits (a bad turn, indeed).

The badly beaten Neeker has dropped his rusty weapon and decides to savagely bite the leg of his opponent. He rolls gets $3d6+6$ this round, for a HPT of $16 + 6 = 22$, with 2 spite hits – what a desperate assault! His comrade Brecker fights desperately for his life, and rolls $5d6+18$; he gets a magnificent $25 + 18 = 43$ HTP, with 4 points of spite damage (!). The tide of combat turns in favor of the assaulting goblins, who get a combined HPT of $22 + 43 = 65$ points, plus 6 spite hits.

| The Ogre must take $65 - 53 = 12$ hits, which reduces to 6 after Thar's hard skin absorbs 6 of them, plus another 6 points of spite damage. The total hits taken by ogre are $12 - 6$ (armor) + 6 (spite damage) = 12 hits, which reduces his MR to 58. Ouch!!

Fourth Combat Round

The stubborn ogre continues to pummel the pair of goblins, hoping to break their frenzy and gain a substantial advantage in the brawl, and now he's both infuriated and hungry, so he must quickly end this combat and enjoy a good meal of those spiteful goblins. He gets $8D6+29$ this round (remember, his current MR is now 58 — the initial number of combat dice doesn't go down, even though his adds are reduced), and his HPT is $31 + 29 = 60$, with 1 point of spite damage.

Neeker begins to think maybe he will survive this crazy ambush, and continues to sink his rotten teeth into the ogre's foul skin. He gets $3D6+6$, and after rolling the dice he obtains a HPT of $8 + 6 = 14$. Breeker loses his head in the battle frenzy and yells a loud insult to the ogre, thrusting at him with the half-broken spear. He gets $5D6+18$, but the dice roll against him this turn and he gets only $11 + 18 = 29$ HPT, and no spite damage. This is a poor turn for the goblins, whose group HPT is a meager $14 + 29 = 43$.

The ogre strikes hard again, and the goblin bandits must take $60 - 43 = 17$ points of damage, plus another spite hit. The GM rules that they take 9 hits apiece. Breeker is down to a MR of 27, while poor Neeker is reduced to a mask of blood and broken teeth after the mighty Thar's blows: his MR drops to just 2...

Fifth Combat Round

Thar is already imagining with delight the bloody flavor of fresh goblin meat. He gets his $8D6+29$ again, and after rolling the dice his HPT equals 47, with no spite damage.

The poor Neeker stumbles and staggers, slipping on a pool of his own blood. He desperately tries to claw at the ogre, and rushes forward with a terrible headache. He gets only $3D6+1$ this turn. Rolling the dice, his HPT equals $10 + 1 = 11$. Breeker too seems to have lost his confidence, for he now he realizes that the battle will probably have a quick and dreadful outcome. He gets $5D6+14$, for a HPT of $18 + 14 = 32$, plus 1 point of spite damage. Thus, the goblins score a group HPT of $11 + 32 = 43$ this combat round.

The would-be ambushers must take $47 - 43 = 4$ points of damage, suffering 2 hits each. This slight damage lowers Breeker's MR to 25, but is sufficient to kill the already badly beaten Neeker, who concludes his bandit career with his head broken and what little brains he had scattered on the tunnel floor. Despite having won the combat round, Thar must take 1 hit of spite damage, which cannot be absorbed by his tough hide and must be directly taken off his MR, which drops to 57.

Sixth Combat Round

Thar inhales the smell of fresh blood and brains, recalling all the recipes he knows for cooking goblins — dinner is coming soon! He gets $8D6+29$ still, and advances toward the surviving goblin with a grim smile on his face, his hands covered in green blood. Rolling the dice, he gets a HPT of $34 + 29 = 63$, and also scores 3 spite hits.

The poor Breeker remains to face his enemy's rage alone, and begins to think about a

quick retreat, but the big ogre has cornered him and there is no way to get out of this massacre. The goblin gets $5D6+13$, and rolls an HPT of $21 + 13 = 34$, obtaining 1 point of spite damage.

| The ferocity of the ogre thus inflicts $63 - 34 = 31$ points of damage, and the remaining goblin's MR of 25 instantly falls to -6, leaving him unconscious and dying—the same thing that happened to Neeker on the turn before. He also has to take 3 points of spite damage directly from his MR, but it makes no difference. As a final insult, Brecker hit the ogre for a single point of spite damage, which reduces his MR to 56.

Thar doesn't seem to care much about this, though, because he has finally found his dinner! He knows that his wounds will heal quickly. They always do. With an eager grin, he collects the dead goblins' bodies, putting them into a big, stinking sack, hefts it over his mighty shoulder, and begins his long way back to his home cave, where he will conclude the day with a well earned banquet.

(Acknowledgement: Tosatt Earp)

Sample 2: Character vs. Character

A young, hulking warrior walks up to the largest uruk in the bar and smashes him upside the head with a large, heavy tankard; normally, he would need to be extremely lucky or charismatic to pull off such a stunt without resorting to combat. And right here, he didn't make any SRs on Luck or Charisma. He is on his own.

The crowd leaps back and a mighty cheer goes up. This is a muscular young lad from the fields, drinking his fill after a long, hot summer tending 30 acres of arid land. Fighting every day with the rocks, the weather, and the wilds has given him a body the barmaids have been ogling all evening. The sword that swings at his side is nothing more than a stick with a crude blade, battered, but sharpened with all the care of a master of the scythe.

Standing before him is the largest uruk he has ever seen, wearing crude leather armor and armed with an urukish scimitar. The barkeep gathers the mugs away quickly. He's seen this all before. This old uruk is big trouble. Moreover, he is down on his luck and his tab is past due; one way or another, the tab will be paid tonight. "Come on, take him lad," the barkeep calls. "Book's down this end of the counter, boys! Who's betting!?"

Up on the chalkboard, he scrawls, "Dwain, Level 1 Warrior. STR 17, CON 13, DEX 15, SPD 13, LK 13. Adds +10 (attributes), +1 (Warrior level). Weapons: Old sword ($2D6+6$). Armor: Steel cap (takes 2 hits due to being Warrior)."

Beside that, he writes, "Urk Dud, Level 2 Rogue; STR 16, CON 14, DEX 17, SPD 11, LK 8. Adds +8. Weapons: Urukish scimitar ($4D6+4$). Armor: Leather jerkin, steel cap, gauntlets and greaves (total 6 hits)."

(Note: In roleplaying games there are two levels of play — “in-character” storytelling and out-of-character dice games. Here we have some fun and combine the two. Now back to the bar.)

Urk looks up at the odds board and laughs. He knows that combat is not all about playing odds. One lucky blow could easily finish this, and he will spill human blood again. He also knows a few tricks. He casually draws his sword and plops his leather covered steel cap onto his head. Adjusting his gauntlets, he moves into a fighting stance. There's no surprise or missile round here. He swings his scimitar and the fight begins.

In T&T, there is no blow by blow accounting. The combat round lasts 2 minutes and is a full-on melee. So Dwain rolls $2d6+6$ (for his weapon) + 11 (personal adds); he gets a 10 on the dice, giving him a total of 27, an average result. “I’ve had enough of your scoffing,” he yells. “Take that, you scumbucket!”

Urk rolls 17 on his weapon dice ($4D6+4$) and applies his +8 adds, giving him a combat total of 25, another average roll. “Grrr, human trash, I’ll eat your liver! Come and get me.”

As both rolled average and quite similar results, they both role-play a careful attack. Now, the highest total wins that round. Dwain comes out on top, so Urk takes $27 - 25 = 2$ points. Urk now allocates this damage. With his armor able to absorb 6 hits of damage per combat round, he easily takes the punishment without effect.

The fighting now continues as the opponents circle, look for an opening and rush together with a mighty crash. Either fighter could choose to make a SR to give him some advantage, but both elect standard combat. Ending the second round, we look at the results.

Dwain rolls 6 on his 2 dice and applies all his adds, both personal and weapon, giving him a total of 23, another average roll. Urk, this time, rolls 16 on his weapon dice and adds his +8, resulting in a total of 24. This round goes to Urk: “Graahaahaa!” he screams in victory, perhaps prematurely.

The difference of 1 point of damage gets allocated to Dwain. Luckily, he's wearing his steel cap and takes the blow on the top of his head. His ears ring, but he is unhurt as they size each other up for the next round. Encouraged by this victory and knowing that he can do better, Urk rushes in.

This turn, Dwain rolls a total of 24, as does Urk. However, Dwain rolled a “6” on one of his dice this time, and Urk rolled two “6s,” so we also have some spite damage to allocate. Dwain's CON is reduced from 13 to 11, and Urk's CON is now 13. The patrons at the bar cheer, for this is a close fight. Urk yells, “Sucker, I got first blood!” and bets change hands.

Blood drips from Dwain's shoulder as he moves in, adrenaline pumping. He is unaware he's hurt. Urk ignores the cut to his thigh and smiles to himself as he smells human blood. They rush at each other and the bar cheers.

Dwain gets a total of 28 this turn, including another roll of “6,” for 1 more point of spite damage. He lets out a cheer. Urk rolls only 8 on his 4D6, for a total of 16, and groans loudly. Dwain wins the round significantly. Urk takes $28 - 16 = 12$ damage, of which 6 is absorbed by his armor; in total, then, he is wounded for 6 points, plus the additional 1 spite damage. Urk's CON is reduced to 6 now – he is still fighting hard, but blood gushes from a new wound in his side. With pain spurring him on, Urk rushes in for another round.

This time, Dwain stumbles (rolling only 3) and cries out in dismay, while Urk shouts with glee, rolling 20. Urk wins the round. Young Dwain takes $28 - 20 = 8$ points of damage. While 2 of these are absorbed by his steel cap, the rest are subtracted from his CON, lowering it to 5. Now, both fighters are wounded and the fight can still go either way. The bar is in an uproar. Scuffles are breaking out, the barkeeper is calling for more bets, and the bouncer is trying to keep this from turning into an all-out brawl.

Blood spraying, with shouts of pain and anger, the two fighters clash again. Dwain rolls double 5s for a total of 27, a good roll, while Urk struggles with bad luck again, getting only a 9 (total 21), even though there's a “6” in his roll. The round goes to Dwain with a total of 27. In total, $27 - 21 = 6$ points of damage smashes the urk's way, but he manages to take 6 off with his armor; in turn, that sneaky spite damage lowers Dwain's CON to 4.

Urk's hurt, and so is Dwain. Blood gushes from the mighty wound in the uruk's side. Still, the blood lust is in his eyes, and he believes that the tables will turn in the next round. He screams in pain and fury as he rushes in again. The crowd cheers, and more coins are exchanged as the fight goes into the seventh round. Will the city guard arrive before this ends, or will they find another cold corpse in some forgotten alleyway?

This time, what a round! Dwain attacks strongly, rolling two “6s” (!!), for a total of 29, and Urk also rolls a “6” among his dice, totaling 26. Another indecisive round to Dwain: $29 - 26$ gives 3 damage to Urk who absorbs up to 6 with his armor. Urk takes 2 points of spite damage, bringing his CON to 4, and Dwain takes 1 spite point, so his CON is now 3.

This has been a long, hard fight with no clear winner; the bar patrons are chanting and banging their mugs on the tables. The city guards can't be far away. How will this end?

Urk is determined not to let this human cub get the better of him. His luck is running out, like the blood gushing from his wounded side and soaking into the sawdust at his feet. Dwain is also bleeding badly, staggering from the punishment he has taken. Will there be a final blow that finishes the fight decisively, or will spite damage take its toll? Why don't you decide? Grab 4 dice and we will do this together.

There are no more bets being place. The bar is hushed, the fighters draw nearer.

Roll 2 dice for Dwain, note the total, and add a total of +17 (+6 for his weapon, and +11 in personal adds). How did he do? Now roll 4 dice for Urk and add +12. What was his total? Now subtract the lesser score from the greater. That's the damage to be allocated. Dwain has 2 points of armor to deduct from the damage if he lost; Urk has 6 points of armor. Was there any remaining damage? Deduct that from the loser's CON. Don't forget spite damage – if either rolled any “6s,” take 1 point for each “6” he rolled directly from his opponent's CON.

Are they both still alive? Can they fight another round? If so, repeat the steps again, until someone's CON reaches 0 and you have a clear winner. This battle could result in both fighters being dead — which would make the barkeep happy since he would keep all the gold that's been bet.

(Acknowledgement: Quoghmyre)

[*Note:* With a fight this close, it's likely that the loser will be only a few points below 0 CON. Under the new rules, that is dying—not dead yet. You have to be at ≤ 10 before you're truly, finally dead. If a healer steps in with a Poor Baby spell, the loser could survive this fight and live to fight another day.—Ken]

Sample 3: Characters vs. Characters (Group Combat)

| *Party 1* = “*Geminna's Greathearts*”

Geminna Halidis, Female Level 5 Dwarf Warrior. STR 50, CON 20, DEX 9, SPD 11, INT 11, WIZ 12, LK 7, CHR 8. Combat adds +33 (attributes), +5 (Warrior level).

Weapon: Falchion (4D6+4) or taper axe (3D6). Armor: Mail (takes 11 hits, doubled to 22) and tower shield (takes 6 hits, doubled to 12).

Darrity McBeel, Male Level 3 Leprechaun Wizard. STR 7, CON 9, DEX 20, SPD 18, INT 31, WIZ 12, LK 26, CHR 10. Combat adds +26. Weapon: Sax (2D6+5) and bank (2D6+3). Armor: Cuirboille (takes 6 hits). Spells: All 1st-Level, plus Little Feets.

Quorn asi Loos, Female Level 4 Centaur Warrior. STR 40, CON 27, DEX 13, SPD 9, INT 13, WIZ 15, LK 6, CHR 5. Combat adds +23 (attributes), +4 (Warrior level).

Weapon: Double-bladed broad axe (6D6+3), or broadsword (3D6+4) and dwarven spike shield (2D6), or light crossbow (4D6; 20 bolts). Armor: Quilted (takes 3 hits, doubled to 6) and, used with broadsword, dwarven spike shield (takes 4 hits, doubled to 8).

| *Party 2* = “*The Richseam Raiders*”

Rinnis Richseam, Male Level 5 Dwarf Warrior. STR 52, CON 20, DEX 13, SPD 9, INT 15, WIZ 8, LK 11, CHR 5. Combat adds +38 (attributes), +5 (Warrior level). Weapon:

Richseam pickaxe (5D6+5; special family heirloom) or falchion (4D6+4). Armor: Plate (takes 14 hits, doubled to 28).

Suntara Highbrow, Female Level 2 Elf Wizard. STR 9, CON 8, DEX 26, SPD 8, INT 18, WIZ 14, LK 12, CHR 26. Combat adds +13. Weapon: *Staff ordinaire* (2D6; as quarterstaff) or dirk (2D6+1). Armor: Cuirboille (takes 6 hits). Spells: All 1st-Level, plus Glue You, Omnipotent Eye, and Poor Baby.

Kane Orson, Male Level 1 Human Citizen. STR 17, CON 17, DEX 17, SPD 14, INT 9, WIZ 10, LK 14, CHR 9. Combat adds +14 (halved to +7). Weapon: Trident (4D6+3). Armor: Scale mail (takes 8 hits) and target shield (takes 4 hits). Kane was working as the local blacksmith's apprentice when Rinnis hired him as a guide and guard; this will be his first real fight. As a Citizen, Kane's combat adds are halved.

Ordos the Gnarled, Male Level 3 Ogre Warrior. STR 31, CON 26, DEX 12, SPD 10, INT 12, WIZ 12, LK 12, CHR 6. Combat adds +17 (attributes), +3 (Warrior level). Weapon: Pair of clubs (3D6 each). Armor: Cuirboille (takes 6 hits, doubled to 12).

The Set-Up

Geminna wiped the sweat from her brow. Despite the shade from the dense foliage overhead, it was hot and stifling in the forest they were now traversing. She looked back to see Quorn emerge from the undergrowth, with Darrity standing on the centaur's back and clutching at her mane for dear life.

"Not far now," said Geminna, "assuming Gebrabh's information as to the monument's whereabouts can be trusted." She frowned at the memory of the wizard's parting words: "You must hurry and bring me back the formula hidden in the monument. Others are also seeking it, and I will pay only for success, not for the attempt."

Continuing to push through the dense vegetation, Geminna finally broke through into a clearing about 100 feet across. Partially blinded by the sudden sunlight, the dwarf shaded her eyes and gazed at the broad, rune-carved pillar of pale stone standing near the center of the clearing. Quorn pushed up beside her, the leprechaun on her back forgetting his discomfort at the sight of their goal.

"At last!" breathed Geminna. Darrity slid to the ground, grateful that he could take a break from riding the centaur for at least a short time. Quorn stretched her legs, loosening muscles that had tensed while pushing through the thick forest.

As the three slowly approached the monument, Darrity felt uneasy. There was potent magic in the stone, he could sense it — but that wasn't the reason for the uncertainty he felt. Moving slightly away from the others, he saw other creatures standing on the far side of the stone! Four of them!

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Suntara examined the smooth stone, looking for any sign of a hidden compartment. She found nothing, but from the corner of her eye noticed movement from the other side of the pillar. A leprechaun! “Rinnis! We have company!”

The dwarf called Rinnis glanced toward where she pointed, then swore and called to her: “Take it down, Suntara! We'll check for others.” He dashed around the pillar, the human Kane and the ogre Ordos following quickly.

Surprise Round

The non-spell-using members of each side move around the monument to attack. Darrity and Suntara have line of sight on each other, and each casts a Take That You Fiend! spell at the other. To their dismay, the monument absorbs their spells and begins to glow. Normally, both casters would have needed to roll a L1SR on INT to see if their spells affected their targets, but since the monument absorbed both spells, the rolls are unnecessary. (Note also that, because Suntara's WIZ score is higher than Darrity's, his spell would have failed to damage her anyway, though it would have drained 6 WIZ points from her if it had succeeded.

Since it seems that magic is out of the question, they rejoin their respective companions and prepare to go hand-to-hand.

Combat Round 1

Quorn attacks in typical centaur fashion, charging the opposition to try to cause them to break and run. This is obviously somewhat unnerving to the relatively inexperienced Kane and Suntara, but Rinnis and Ordos stand forward and hold their line, and the centaur is unable to do more than fend off the defenders' weapons. Quorn's comrades follow her in to deal a few blows, but do not manage to connect solidly. The shocked look on the face of Kane shows that he has just realized that real life combat is very different than what he's done on the practice field.

The two parties are fairly evenly matched, and come together violently. All combatants roll combat dice, plus adds, and total their damage results for their side.

Geminna rolls a 16 (4D6+4) + 38 (adds), for a total of 54. Spite damage: 0.
Darrity rolls a 28 (2D6+5 and 2D6+3) + 26 (adds) for a total of 54. Spite damage: 2.
Quorn rolls a 27 (6D6+3) + 27 (adds) for a total of 54. Spite damage: 1.
HPT for the Greathearts: 162 + 3 spite.

Rinnis rolls a 26 (5D6+5) + 43 (adds) for a total of 69. Spite damage: 2.
Suntara rolls a 4 (2D6) + 13 (adds) for a total of 17. Spite damage: 0.
Kane rolls a 16 (4D6+3) + 7 (adds) for a total of 23. Spite damage: 1.
Ordos rolls a 25 (3D6 x 2) + 20 (adds) for a total of 45. Spite damage: 1.
HPT for the Raiders: 154 + 4 spite.

Result: The Raiders must take 8 damage, which amounts to 2 each. None of them are harmed; their armor absorbs the damage easily. They must also take 3 spite damage. Since Suntara has the lowest CON, she will take no damage and the others will take a point each. The Greathearts take 4 spite damage, of which Quorn will take 2 and the others 1 each. (The principle here is to protect the weakest members of the party as long as possible. It is not necessary to share the damage equally, or to roll dice to see who gets hit. Use every advantage the rules give you—it is hard enough to stay alive in this game.)

Geminna: CON 19.

Darrity: CON 8.

Quorn: CON 25.

Rinnis: CON 20.

Suntara: CON 8.

Kane: CON 17.

Ordos: CON 25.

Combat Round 2

Having taken the initial measure of their opposition, the teams continue the combat with somewhat greater caution. Quorn begins circling the opposition, forcing them to try watching in two directions at once. Rinnis keeps his group together and tries to maneuver them so that the centaur cannot circle.

Geminna rolls a $17 + 38 = 55$. Spite damage: 1.

Darrity rolls a $22 + 26 = 48$. Spite damage: 0.

Quorn rolls a $25 + 27 = 52$. Spite damage: 2.

HPT for the Greathearts: $153 + 3$ spite.

Rinnis rolls a $23 + 43 = 66$. Spite damage: 2.

Suntara rolls a $7 + 13 = 20$. Spite damage: 0.

Kane rolls a $13 + 7 = 20$. Spite damage: 0.

Ordos rolls a $17 + 20 = 37$. Spite damage: 1.

HPT for the Raiders: $143 + 3$ spite.

Result: The Raiders must share 10 hits, which their armor easily absorbs. They must also take 3 spite damage; as in the first round, Suntara is chosen as the person who doesn't take damage. The Greathearts must also take 3 spite, shared evenly so that they take 1 each.

Geminna: CON 18.

Darrity: CON 7.

Quorn: CON 24.

Rinnis: CON 19.

Suntara: CON 8.
Kane: CON 16.
Ordos: CON 24.

Combat Round 3

The Raiders are a little nervous, since they have yet to get through the opposition's defenses. Then again, the Greathearts haven't been particularly successful either.

Quorn swings her axe at Ordos, who just manages to deflect the swing with his clubs. Darrity is doing a credible imitation of a miniature buzzsaw, carving his initials in Suntara's leg armor. Kane considers jabbing his trident into the centaur but is too intimidated by the whirling broad axe to pull it off. Rinnis and Geminna trade blows and sneer at each other.

Geminna rolls $23 + 38 = 61$. Spite damage: 2.
Darrity rolls $31 + 26 = 57$. Spite damage: 3.
Quorn rolls $25 + 27 = 52$. Spite damage: 1.
HPT for the Greathearts: $170 + 6$ spite.

Rinnis rolls $23 + 43 = 66$. Spite damage: 0.
Suntara rolls $9 + 13 = 22$. Spite damage: 1.
Kane rolls $20 + 7 = 27$. Spite damage: 1.
Ordos rolls $18 + 20 = 38$. Spite damage: 1.
HPT for the Raiders: $153 + 3$ spite.

Result: The Raiders must share 17 hits, none of which gets through their combined armor. The 6 spite damage they must take is allocated as 2 points each to Rinnis and Ordos, 1 point each to Suntara and Kane. The Greathearts suffer 3 spite damage, and take 1 each.

Geminna: CON 17.
Darrity: CON 6.
Quorn: CON 23.

Rinnis: CON 17.
Suntara: CON 7.
Kane: CON 15.
Ordos: CON 22.

Combat Round 4

The teams are too evenly matched to pick the winner at this stage. Unless something changes, it looks like whoever loses a team member to spite damage first will be in trouble. Quorn's player asks the GM if, instead of attacking with her axe, she can try to

kick Ordos hard enough with her hind hooves to wind him and take him out of combat for a round or two.

The GM allows the attempt, requiring that she make a L2SR vs DEX to succeed. Quorn rolls an amazing $31 + 14$ (DEX) = 45! She not only makes the roll (she needed 25), she far exceeds the necessary amount. The GM decides that the kick has struck Ordos in exactly the right place, doing her combat adds in damage to him, and that the ogre will be out of action for the next 3 rounds. Further, because the SR was made by such a large amount, the GM rules that Ordos was struck down before he could contribute to the Raiders' HPT for this round. Note, though, that Quorn's attack, being made directly on Ordos, will likewise not count in the Greathearts' HPT.

[There is a principle of good playing involved here. If the game seems to be bogging down into a stalemate, and no progress is being made, try something creative and different—usually something that can be decided by a Saving Roll. Quorn was perfectly in character with such an unusual attack directed at a specific foe. With the luck of the dice, she has probably won the combat for her party on that one play.—Ken]

Moving with blinding speed, Quorn pivots and plants her rear hooves deep into Ordos' stomach. The ogre's growl is cut off by a "Whumph!" as he is flung backwards through the air to land in a crumpled heap at the base of the pillar.

Geminna rolls $21 + 38 = 59$. Spite damage: 3.

Darrity rolls $27 + 26 = 53$. Spite damage: 2.

Quorn uses her round to kick Ordos.

HPT for the Greathearts: $112 + 5$ spite.

Rinnis rolls $30 + 43 = 73$. Spite damage: 2.

Suntara rolls $7 + 13 = 20$. Spite damage: 0.

Kane rolls $20 + 7 = 27$. Spite damage: 1.

Ordos is staggered by Quorn's kick this round.

HPT for the Raiders: $120 + 3$ spite.

Result: The Greathearts must share 8 hits. They gain a few more scratches and scorings in their armor, but are not injured. They also take 1 spite damage each. The Raiders suffer 5 spite damage, taking 1 each with Rinnis soaking up the extra point. In addition, Ordos takes 27 points of damage from Quorn. His armor takes 12 of this, and the remaining 15 points come off of his CON.

Geminna: CON 16.

Darrity: CON 5.

Quorn: CON 22.

Rinnis: CON 15.

Suntara: CON 6.

Kane: CON 14.

Ordos: CON 6 (and stunned for the next 3 rounds).

Combat Round 5

Quorn's unexpected tactic has removed Rinnis' strongest ally, leaving him in an unenviable situation. He regroups his forces, leading his opponents away from the fallen Ordos. Thus, the ogre will not take damage if Party 2 loses the round, nor will he suffer spite damage, for he is considered outside of the field of combat.

Geminna rolls $30 + 38 = 73$. Spite damage: 1.

Darrity rolls $27 + 26 = 53$. Spite damage: 1.

Quorn rolls $28 + 27 = 55$. Spite damage: 3.

HPT for the Greathearts: $165 + 5$ spite.

Rinnis rolls $21 + 43 = 64$. Spite damage: 2.

Suntara rolls $4 + 13 = 17$. Spite damage: 0.

Kane rolls $18 + 7 = 25$. Spite damage: 0.

Ordos is still stunned this round.

HPT for the Raiders: $106 + 3$ spite.

Result: The Raiders take 59 hits. Their armour takes 46 points of this, leaving them to share 13 points. Rinnis takes 5 points, while Kane and Suntara take 4 each. In addition, Rinnis and Kane share the spite damage, with Rinnis taking 3 points and Kane 2. Geminna takes the 1 point of spite damage for her team.

Geminna's dwarven victory song rings out across the clearing as she presses her attack, wounding the determined but unskilled Kane. Darrity, however, is awed at Quorn's mighty ogre-felling kick, and presses the advantage as hard as he can. Exulted by her success, Quorn roars her battle cry, slicing open Suntara's chest. The elf staggers but rallies, her delicately featured face going pale from fear and blood loss.

Geminna: CON 15.

Darrity: CON 5.

Quorn: CON 22.

Rinnis: CON 7.

Suntara: CON 2.

Kane: CON 8.

Ordos: CON 6 (and stunned for the next 2 rounds).

Combat Round 6

Rinnis is becoming seriously worried about his chances of survival. He won't give up easily though — dwarves are stubborn, as a rule, and Rinnis is no exception. Geminna, on the other hand, is already starting to think about what loot she can obtain from her foes.

Geminna rolls $24 + 38 = 62$. Spite damage: 1.
Darrity rolls $30 + 26 = 56$. Spite damage: 1.
Quorn rolls $29 + 27 = 56$. Spite damage: 3.
HPT for the Greathearts: $174 + 5$ spite.

Rinnis rolls $22 + 43 = 65$. Spite damage: 1.
Suntara rolls $11 + 13 = 17$. Spite damage: 1.
Kane rolls $18 + 7 = 25$. Spite damage: 0.
Ordos is still stunned this round.
HPT for the Raiders: $114 + 2$ spite.

Result: The Raiders take 60 hits, less their 46 points of armour, for a total of 14 to come off of their CON scores. Rinnis takes 6, Suntara 1, and Kane 7, leaving each of them with a CON of 1. They must also take 5 points of spite damage. Since another point of damage will make any one of them unconscious, Suntara takes all 5 points, leaving her unconscious with a CON of -4. Geminna and Quorn also take a point of spite damage each.

Rinnis, Suntara and Kane do their best, but with the ogre out of the fight, they are now simply outclassed. Geminna targets Suntara, and stabs through her armour into her chest. The wizard collapses at the dwarf's feet, a pool of her coppery blood spreading across the ground. Darrity and Quorn hold off Rinnis and Kane, wounding both of them and promising mayhem when Geminna rejoins them.

Geminna: CON 14.
Darrity: CON 4.
Quorn: CON 21.

Rinnis: CON 1.
Suntara: CON -4.
Kane: CON 1.
Ordos: CON 6 (and stunned next round).

Combat Round 7

Left standing with a single ally, with three armed enemies surrounding him, Rinnis decides that he has no hope of prevailing. Throwing his pickaxe to the ground, he raises his hands and cries, "I, Rinnis Richseam, ask mercy for myself and for my companions! If you spare our lives, my clan will pay my ransom of half my weight in gold. But kill me, and they will hunt you down and rend the flesh from your bones!"

Geminna steps forward and declaims, "On my oath do I, Geminna Halidis, accept your surrender. I will allow you to depart to your clan to bring the ransom you offer. Until you do, your weapon will remain in my keeping." She gestures to Quorn and Darrity, saying, "Richseam, bind the ogre so that he may not attack us, and explain to him the

circumstances of your parole. Quorn, Darrity, make them rue any signs of treachery, and bring me the ogre's clubs. I shall see to the elf and human.”

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The Follow-Up

Geminna quickly checked Kane over. It was obvious the young man was badly hurt, but he might recover with medical help. She used her first-aid kit to bandage the bleeding wounds, and told him to eat lots of hot soup and get plenty of rest. Moving on to Suntara, she found a faltering pulse. Binding the elf's wounds, she pulled out a small vial containing her prized healing potion, and poured a small amount into the woman's open mouth. With satisfaction, she watched the elf's breathing deepen and her color return to normal; the axe wound closed and the bleeding stopped. She would live, Geminna decided, but it would be some time before she would do more than walk short distances. Fortunately, the ogre might carry her back to civilization without too much difficulty.

Having done what she could for the fallen, and Ordos soundly restrained, Geminna asked, “Richseam, what brought you here? Why are you investigating this pillar?”

“We were hired by a wizard named Gebrahb,” he replied. “There is allegedly some potent spell hidden within it. We were to find it and return it for a substantial reward.”

“Gebrahb? This wizard plays us for fools, then. We too were sent by him to find this formula. In such manner, he gets two groups of searchers and only has to pay one. I think that this mage needs some schooling in fair dealing, and I think my companions and I will deliver it upon our return.” Geminna's expression was thunderous, and Rinnis decided he was glad he had surrendered... and even gladder that he wouldn't be present when Geminna and Gebrahb next met.

We will show how combat works through a series of examples, and then count upon you, our highly intelligent reader, to deduce what is happening and why. You can then apply your intuitive knowledge of what is happening to your own games.

Note: I am going to take a moment to thank the members of Trollhalla who imagined and wrote up these combat sequences for me. At the end of each example, I will place the writer's name in parentheses. That glory and a few thousand trollish victory points are all they got for their hard work. I get by with a little help from my friends.