

DHAKA: THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Many moons ago, before chaos had sprung upon the land, there was peace. Hundred years of prosperity till that fateful day. The winds of fury had risen long before, but it wasn't till the fat lady was breathing down his neck that Tazrian would take matters into his own hands, thus giving birth to the legend whose story would echo through the ages. The descendants he would never have would be proud.

I wake from my slumber and gain footing of my consciousness. Reminding me of the task at hand the guiding fairymother tells me, "It's redundant to go alone, take this." She points to the cipher that will end all evil, handing it to me as if she imbued it with some magic. So with the key to my destiny and the power of nine hearts, I venture off.

Before exiting Home, I garb myself with the *Amulet of Borovny* giving me a +5 resistance to Snatchers. This allows me to make a safe passage through the alleyways of risk. But the road ahead is long and full of terrors.

No sooner than walking out into the Road of Saint Bae-Lee, I was greeted by Helios himself. I put on the *Blinder of Eyes* but little did I know that his spiteful rays would prove too much for me. My heat resistant Cotton Vest is no match for his fury either as my stamina had been all but drained. I need an elixir quick. Lucky for me there's a conveniently placed Tavern of Fruit Juices 300 metres northeast of my general direction.

This detour of mine leads me to Khajiit Juice Bar. The sign on the front proudly proclaims "Khajiit has pears if you have coins". As I walk around the shop I find to my surprise that it features all manners of elixirs and nifty gears that are up for sale. Despite us not being in an elevator, uplifting and cheerful music is heard as if being echoed off the walls.

I would soon get my hands on what I needed - a tall

glass of lemonade. I got it for 15G and with one big gulp, I seemingly revitalised my stamina out of nowhere. Instead of questioning the efficacy of the lemonade, I shifted my focus on the task at hand.

I get back on the Road of Maine and I'm reminded through a text message by the guiding Guardian Angel to find a ferry to my destination. It's as if he's always holding my hand, telling me exactly where to go. Before I could board the vessel I would encounter my first real roadblock, the one headed *Cerberus*. A common breed in these parts, the creature can stun you with its puppy-dog eyes and wholesome boops.

And just like that the heathen steals my heart and I'm left there petting its deceptively soft belly. Its joyful tail hypnotises me to no end and before I could break the spell, it had already taken away a chunk of my health bar. I can't stop myself, thinking that it's a life worth losing if it's lost to the *Cerberus*. I quickly come to my senses stopping myself from rolling on the ground with him. I spot a red marking hovering over the *Vessel of Need*, and I make my way to it.

The vehicle is packed and full of Ektuedikeashos, Snatchers, Talkers and other garden variety enemies. After I skilfully push my way into the vessel I felt as if I can finally breathe. I needed to restore my health a little so I try to shut my eyes for a quick rest.

My eyes have barely closed when they shoot back open. A grave-sounding voice echoes in my head. It warns me: "You cannot rest here, enemies are nearby. Wake up, Tazrian!" the voice shrieked. So I forced myself up and fixed my sights towards my ultimate goal with the treasure firmly grasped in my hands. There is no hope of redemption for my foe, as long as I have this by my side.

The disappointment I feel at not being able to rest is

further compounded when I realise I cannot fast-travel while the roads are overburdened. Extending my neck out the window confirms my fears, as tailbacks longer than my list of unfinished quests stare back at me. As I sit and stew in the sweltering heat, I decide to take matters into my own hands and leg it to the evil layer. Or whichever direction the waypoint markers take me.

Mum is there to remind me of the importance of my task. "Not now, Mother." I think to myself. I start to feel weary now and realise that I need to get to my destination quick, the cipher was losing power with each second.

This is when I decide that I need *The Green Cage*. This dungeon cell of a moving vehicle is has to pass through the Intersections of Doom where the Climbers latch onto the cage to snatch your Pip-bois. They are smarter than the average Rogue Alchemists or Snatcher mob in that, they have maxed out stealth. I need to be vigilant.

As the door to the cell clamps shut behind me, I take all precautions to ensure the presence of the

Mesh of Security to defend against Climbers. This Cager clearly does not care about the Climbers. I change my loadout to maximise my awareness stats. This involved equipping my dispenser of exotic spices to one handed skill. Additionally, I had the Pip-boi set to self-destruct on any attempts at security breaches. However, it seemed that the Climbers sensed my well-planned defence. The ride was uneventful.

Once I disembarked, I was left with the tall task of carving a straight path through to the lair of evil. With single-minded determination I set out to overcome all obstacles in my path. Crossing the Sapphire Kingdom of the Books, however, I found myself drawn to the wares on display. Before I knew it my feet were glued to the pavement, and I was poring through the intrigues of the King of the Dhali Woody Bards and now-ousted Queen, regarding how to bring up the heir to the throne. Engrossing stuff. My Pip-boi beeps to indicate that the end of the world is only thirty minutes away.

That's nice and all, but oh what's this on the shopfront there? It's a book of horoscopes; quite interesting. It would be an ill omen to not check this just once,

so I drop my pieces of gold on the counter to find out what Pisces have in store for the coming days.

When I eventually manage to extract myself from the land of allure, my inventory slots are filled with scrolls and my Pip-boi is beeping angrily to signal that the world is ending faster than before. In such a time of dire need I activate all my perks to help save the world. In seconds I take in all the scrolls I have accumulated, feeling my knowledge boosted with every page I leaf through. It's surprising how I can cram hours of knowledge in a few seconds, but I can't dwell on that for long as the +100 to speed starts to take effect and my feet glide across the uneven mucky roadways as if they were ice.

The +200 damage resistance ensures minor cuts and scratches from the minor evils do not faze me. At one point, however, my speed perk ends suddenly and I find myself at the middle of a busy intersection with nowhere to go. That is when the three-legged Rocketshaw ploughs into me. I am thrown to the ground, and a deep crunch indicates I won't be able to walk this off. In the midst of this numbing pain of limbs sticking out at impossible angles, I remember something crucial. Reaching into my backpack, I take out an apple. Round and juicy, the refreshing fruit elixir soothes my soul. My body too, apparently, since I am now able to get up and find my limbs back to their original positions.

My path is true, and surely enough I arrive at the gates of what I call hell. To any commoner, this infinite storied construction of madness would be impenetrable, but I retrieve my trusty identity card and waltz right into the belly of the beast. As I mount the stair-calator to The Dark Tower, I think of all that I have sacrificed to get to this position. With one stroke, I can end all the suffering. Reaching the room, I knock on the door and come face



to face with my worst nightmare: my boss. I hand him the all-important cipher.

Walking out, I realise I may yet live to produce offspring. The world isn't ending just yet. As much as I hate it, sometimes sacrifices need to be made. It's for the greater good. You'll see. I'll explain it to you the next time we meet. Till then, my friend.