

LORDS OF WATERDEEP—SOLO VARIANT

INTRODUCTION

What follows is a Solo variant of Lords of Waterdeep. I've tried to design a gameplay experience which matches the multiplayer experience as closely as possible. In this Solo Variant, the player plays almost exactly as in a normal multiplayer game, against a scripted "pseudoplayer" who plays by an altered set of rules according to a strict script.

In the solo variant, just as in the normal game, the player must take his opponent's plans into account when deciding when to gather resources, which resources to gather, when to take the first player marker, when to build buildings and when to play intrigue cards. The player must take his Lord card into account just as in normal play, and must judiciously manage the acquirement of quests.

Notable features missing from the solo game experience are: An unpredictable opponent; competition for quest cards; certain buildings and cards as noted in the SETUP section below.

An unpredictable opponent might be simulated in a future version of this variant using a pair of dice, but I haven't yet found a way to make such an opponent as effective as the scripted one I've designed here. Competition for quest cards may be implemented in a future version of the game by giving the pseudoplayer a lord card (presently he doesn't have one) and building Cliffwatch Inn into the script somehow (presently the pseudoplayer simply draws quests from the deck).

So much for future plans. Here is the present version of the Solo Variant. In what follows, the lone player will play against a scripted pseudo-player. The player will hereinafter be called "Player." The pseudoplayer will be called "Pseudo."

SETUP

1. Remove the following parts from the game:

Buildings: Heroes' Garden, Waterdeep Palace, Three Pearls, Waymoot, House of the Moon.

Lords: Larissa Neathal

Quests: Recruit the Lieutenant, Place a Sleeper Agent in Skullport

Intrigue: Bidding War

2. Set up mats for Player and Pseudo as normal. Pseudo starts with the first-player

marker. Pseudo does not receive starting Intrigue cards or a Lord card.

3. Place a score marker for Player, but no score marker for Pseudo.

4. Set up the board as normal.

HOW TO PLAY

5. Player plays as normal, with the following exception: When he plays an intrigue card that requires his opponent to decide whether or not to give the Player a resource in exchange for VPs, you decide for Pseudo. You are under no obligation to act in Pseudo's favor here--make the choice that you think will give you the greatest advantage.

6. Pseudo will always have exactly two uncompleted quests, plus any mandatory quests you give him. At the start of the game, the first quest drawn for Pseudo is his primary quest. The second one drawn is his secondary quest. The primary quest is placed next to the mat upwards (i.e. "northwards") of the secondary quest. In the course of the game, any mandatory quests given to Pseudo should be placed upwards of any existing uncompleted quests. In this way, Pseudo will always have his quests lined up in order of priority--uppermost quest being the one he will prioritize for resource acquirement according to the script given below.

7. On Pseudo's turns, he takes actions according to the following script.

A. Consider the resources on his uncompleted quests to be listed in order from right to left, from top quest to bottom quest.

B. Starting with the topmost leftmost required resource, go through the list of required resources one by one until you encounter a resource which Pseudo does not yet have enough of in his tavern to complete that quest.

C. If there is a space on the board that gives that resource, then if there is only one such space, place an agent on that space. If there is more than one such space, place an agent on the one that yields the greatest number of the needed resource. If there is a tie, place an agent on the space which has the greatest value as measured by the following assignments: Wizards and Clerics are worth four points, Fighters and Rogues are worth two points, Gold and Cards are worth one point each. Question mark cubes are valued according to whatever type of cube Pseudo will take for that question mark. Pseudo will take the highest possible value cube given conformity to the strictures of this script. Owner rewards are only taken into account in order to break ties--the owner reward's value is *subtracted* from the building's yield value. (If the reward is VPs, they are counted for one point each.) If ties remain unbroken, flip a coin or something.

D. If you've reached the end of Pseudo's list of required resources without being able to place an agent, then if Waterdeep Castle is available, place an agent in Waterdeep Castle. If Waterdeep Castle is unavailable, and if there is at least one building Pseudo can afford, then place an agent in Builder's Hall. In this case, Pseudo purchases the building worth the most VPs so long as he can afford it. Ties are broken by preferring the leftmost tied building. If Pseudo was unable to place in Waterdeep Castle or Builder's Hall, then Pseudo places on the space which yields the highest value according to the formula given in rule 3C above. If none of these conditions has yet allowed for placement of an agent, then place one in Waterdeep Harbor. (See below for information about Pseudo and intrigue cards.) If none of these were able to be placed, then Pseudo cannot place an agent this turn.

E. When Pseudo places an agent on a building that yields a quest card, or gains a quest card through a quest reward, then rather than gaining a quest card, Pseudo gives a quest card to player. Player must draw quest cards from the top of the stack until he has found a quest which is *not* of one of the two types listed on his Lord card, and make that quest one of his uncompleted quests. The other quests he drew are discarded.

F. When Pseudo places an agent on a building that yields an intrigue card, or receives one as an owner bonus or through a quest reward, or places an agent in Waterdeep Harbor, then he draws the top intrigue card from the pile and plays it according to the following rules:

F1. If it is "call in a favor," Pseudo plays it normally, deciding between options as though he were deciding between spaces to place an agent. Mandatory Quest and Sample Wares are also played normally.

F2. Recall Agent: Pseudo returns his most recently played agent to his pool.

F3. Accelerate Plans: Pseudo plays an agent. (This means he will play two this turn--one as normal, one for the card.)

F4. Bribe Agent: played as normal. If Pseudo doesn't have two gold to pay, he pays all the gold he has and takes the card's action anyway.

F5: Real Estate Deal is played by Pseudo as though it were "Call in a Favor."

F6: If the card has a picture of a Quest card on it, Pseudo plays a quest against the player as described in rule 3E above.

F7: If the card has any picture or pictures of cubes on it, then Pseudo gains one cube of the first color appearing on the card, and Player loses one cube of that color. If player has no cubes of that color, player loses 2 VP.

G: Pseudo completes a quest after placing an agent whenever he has the requisite resources in his tavern. (He may only complete one quest per turn. If he is able to complete more than one quest, he completes his uppermost quest.) The number of VPs listed on the card is *subtracted* from Player's score. Pseudo makes use of plot quest rewards just as the player does.

8. At the end of the game, points are awarded for leftover adventurers and gp as in normal play. (Remember you will already have been awarded bonus points for your Lord card throughout the course of the game.) Five points are subtracted for each of Player's uncompleted quests.

9. The goal is to make the highest score you can. Alternatively, you can consider yourself the "winner" if your score is higher than zero.