LIVING TAL'DOREI PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

Version 2.1 (Updated 10/2/19)

What is Living Tal'Dorei?

Living Tal'Dorei is the organized play system for Matthew Mercer's world of Exandria. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the Living Tal'Dorei system. As characters adventure, players track those characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their personal story.

Storyline Seasons

Living Tal'Dorei play is broken up into storyline seasons. Players are not limited to one season though. So long as a character is tier appropriate and has not run the module on that specific character, they are legal to play. When players create characters, they can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player must use a character in the same tier as the adventure they are in. We intend to get players characters to Tier 4 and continue putting out Tier 4 mods so they remain playable forever.

Factions now and moving forward

The Clasp, The Council of Tal'Dorei, and Arcana Pansophical are the first to open up membership to adventurers. Other factions will become available over time and we are aware that people want to make characters for them. We **highly** recommend planning for a Season 1 faction first and saving those characters for later seasons. This season is planned entirely around those factions and involves them directly. All tier one modules are broken up into 2 mod arcs for each of the factions. 1-2 offers Clasp Membership, 1-4 offers Council of Tal'Dorei Membership, and 1-6 offers Arcana Pansophical faction memberships. You can start without a faction or already be one of the offered ones.

As we begin moving into Season 2, we will be changing the factions offered. The Clasp will remain a faction in season 2. Each season we will keep one of the existing factions and switch the other two out in the hopes of broadening the story and the player's impact on the world.

Trial of Heroes

These are a multi table events scheduled to be run at gaming conventions and potentially in stores. Players will have a chance to make moves and influence the plot of the rest of the season and beyond. Signups for each event will vary based on the event and where it is being run. When you play a Trial of Heroes each player will leave with at least one guaranteed tier appropriate magic item. In addition, regardless of the season each Trial of Heroes counts as a Special Mission towards faction rank for all characters regardless of wether or not their faction is highlighted in that season. (IE an Arcana Pansophical character still gains a Special Mission for participating in a trial even though the Pansophical will not be a season 2 faction.)

The Setting

As we move into the roughly 23-year gap in story between Critical Role Campaign 1 and Campaign 2 we intend for the players to have a say in guiding the overall narrative. This will be achieved through our questionnaires that appear in the back of each module, RP through our social media platforms, and direct actions at our Trial of Heroes. We will limit travel to the continent of Tal'Dorei for now. That being said we intend to take the story out of Emon proper and begin exploring other areas such as Craghammer, Syngorn, Westruun, and Stilben. Whitestone is intended to be a season 3 location for reasons.

Living Tal'Dorei League Play

Game Masters and players can engage with the story in many ways. These currently include Living Tal'Dorei introductory adventures, Season modules, Season Trial of Heroes and role playing through the official Facebook Groups, Subreddit r/livingtaldorei and our Discord channel. This list of options may continue to change to meet the needs of fans and event organizers. GM's are encouraged to value Role play over Roll play and ensure a fun table for all participants.

Living Tal'Dorei Introductory Adventures

These adventures are three one-hour modules and are meant to introduce you to the content of Living Tal'Dorei and advance new players to level 2. This free content typically should run about 3 to 4 hours including character generation. Season 1 is 22 modules that gets an adventuring party to tier 3. It is important to note that there will be an introductory adventure for each new season. You will only be able to have one season's introduction module on a character. This is to keep players from stacking multiple seasons worth of Shopping Episode modules and disrupting magic item balance.

Living Tal'Dorei Trial of Heroes

Trial of Heroes will be additional season content designed for convention and larger scale store play. They will be made available to organizers as we write them and stores/conventions ask for them. Trial of Heroes are not limited to conventions. Anywhere with enough tables to accommodate the necessary number of players are venues that can apply for sanctioning. Events can take place anywhere, both at a public venue such as a local hobby retail store, or privately in your home or other location of your choosing. The only requirement is prior sanctioning through Living Tal'Dorei admins and adherence to the code of conduct.

Being a Game Master

Playing Living Tal'Dorei adventures as the GM is easy and fun. The adventures can be prepared in a short period of time, and you don't have to worry about creating background material.

What You Need to Run a Game

In order to run a game as a GM in Living Tal'Dorei, you'll need the following.

- A square grid map.
- Miniatures or dice to represent monsters.
- A Living Tal'Dorei Module.
- Dice, Pens or Pencils and Paper. Not everyone uses apps!
- Optional Items.
  - A copy of the D&D 5E Player's Handbook, Monster Manual and Dungeon Master's Guide. All are helpful as a reference, but any items dropped and all monsters encountered have their relevant information listed within each module. Note that the variant rules in the DMG are not legal for Living Tal'Dorei play (This includes flanking).
  - Note Cards. A helpful GM tool that you can use for commonly needed information such as passive perception, pre rolled initiatives, character names, Armor Class or other things you need as a quick reference.
  - A GM screen. This one is largely up to the GM. Some prefer to roll behind the screen, and some do not. Either is fine and legal.

Before Each Module

If you are new to being a Dungeon Master, here is a useful guide to preparing. Before you start the

adventure, spend some time familiarizing yourself with the locations, events, and characters. Take some time to learn what the Social and Exploration rewards are and how they are applied. You'll also want to review the relevant statistics for any monsters or nonplayer characters (NPCs). After introducing yourself to the players, ask them to provide you with a small amount of relevant character information. This typically includes (but is not limited to) the following.

- Character name
- Character race, class, and level
- Character faction
- Passive Perception—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Add the total level of everyone playing the Adventure and divide it by the number of players rounding up. That is the APL (average player level) of the group.

To figure out the party strength for the adventure, consult the following table and compare to the intended level for the adventure. Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar might or might not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments. However, a good rule of thumb is if it seems too hard or too easy in the course of play, you can totally make adjustments one way or the other in order to present an appropriate challenge to your players. In higher tier play it is acceptable to add additional monsters at GM discretion to account for additional powerful magic items. There will be guidelines for that in the printed modules.

Determining Party Strength

- 3-4 Characters APL less than (Very Weak)
- 3-4 Characters APL equivalent (Weak)
- 3-4 Characters APL greater than (Average)
- 5 Characters APL less than (Weak)
- 5 Characters APL equivalent (Average)
- 5 Characters APL greater than (Strong)
- 6-7 Characters APL less than (Average)
- 6-7 Characters APL equivalent (Strong)
- 6-7 Characters APL greater than (Very Strong)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range cannot participate in the adventure with those characters. If you're playing a tier one (levels 1 – 4) adventure, players with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character.

In future seasons gear will shift the balance of encounters and will be an added sidebar for GM's to adjust based on their party composition and skill.

While the adventure provides suggestions on how to adjust an encounter to provide an appropriate challenge for your players, they are just that— suggestions. You may, at your discretion, make other adjustments to the encounter by changing or removing monsters. While the monsters you add may be different from those listed in the encounter or the sidebar, they should be thematically similar. For example, if your players are encountering a group of rats, adding a bunch of mephits doesn't make much sense. However, adding a giant rat or a swarm of insects might. Keep in mind that while the characters fight these new monsters, the amount of XP designated for combat does not change. Keep it challenging but do not aim to TPK(Total Party Kill). We do not want the GM to have an us versus them attitude. This is first and foremost a storytelling game and not a hack and slash fest.

A player character can only play each module once. Whether the party succeeds or fails each character is locked from repeating that module again. A person with multiple characters can run the same module once per character. There is no limit to the number of times you can GM a module.

Distributing Rewards

All items, gold, and any other treasure is handed out at the end of a module. Each module has its own rewards and the details are contained within them. You may choose to extend the length of the module for roleplay or other reasons. For example. You are running a two-hour module, but it runs long and extends into 4 hours. The awards, downtime, treasure and xp remain the same as if it were run in 2 hours. GM rewards remain the same as well.

Some modules have specific rules

 For example, LT 1-10 Myriad Ways has rules to be either a 2 or a 4-hour adventure. Also, LT 1-6 Fading Scars has guidelines to be run as a multi table module. Use the rules outlined in the modules as they come up. Some of our modules can be run as either a tier 2 or a tier 3 LT 1-16, LT 1-17, LT 1-18, LT 1-19 this is for a few reasons. Our regular season mods are designed to give players all the necessary experience they need to tier up. If a player runs a Trial of Heroes they wind up ahead of that scale. To keep people from being locked out of content we made those 4 mods able to be run in either tier to accommodate. As we move into later seasons you may use previous season modules as a bridge to get to a higher tier faster (or possibly because you want items available in those modules…and that's ok!) We want you to have all options available and we balance our content with the assumption that some players will do so. It's not required but we expect it to occur.

Gold, Flavor items and Treasure

Coin, Jewelry, and other forms of wealth are converted into gold at the end of a session and distributed evenly among all players. If someone would like to take an item (say a 25gp sword with a gem encrusted pommel) they may pay for it from their share of the wealth. If the cost exceeds their share they may buy the item from their personal wealth and that gold value is added and distributed instead.

Example: Player 1 wants to buy a 1000gp sword but each person's share of the treasure is only 600gp. Player 1 pays 1000gp from their personal wealth and that gold is added to the treasure (replacing the sword) which is then split between the party. Some of the money Player 1 spent will be returned to them but the money being split among the players does not change. If the player in question does not have the money to cover the cost (including what they would have returned to them) they may not buy the item.

Consumable Magic Items

Potions, scrolls, and other consumable, non-permanent magic items are divided among the characters at the conclusion of a session, episode, or adventure. Most adventures will contain a small number of consumable items and it is up to the players how they are ultimately distributed. A player notes the item obtained by recording it on their log sheet. Encourage your players to proceed equitably in the distribution of consumables. If more than one player would like to own a specific consumable and they cannot resolve it the players roll a D20 and highest number wins.

Permanent Magic Items

Permanent magic items are distributed at the conclusion of a session, episode, or adventure. A player notes the item obtained by recording it on their log sheet. Permanent magic items have specific rules for distribution to promote equity. Each character's log sheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference. Follow these steps to determine how to distribute permanent magic

items.

1. If all players agree on who gets the item/items they log it on their sheet and that's it.
2. If Not, all players show their log sheets and the lowest item count wins.
3. If players are tied roll a non-sequential D20 and highest roll wins.

4. Some permanent magic items have charges or limited use and are destroyed or otherwise rendered non magical when the last charge is consumed. Other items have very specific circumstances under which they can be recharged. If an item loses all of its magical properties when its last charge is consumed (i.e., Keoghtom's ointment, etc.) or because it can't be recharged because the criteria are otherwise unachievable (i.e., wingwear, balloon pack, etc.) that magic item no longer counts as a permanent magic item for the purposes of determining how many permanent magic items a character possesses.

Splitting Sessions

Sometimes players cannot remain for the entirety of a module. If this is the case the player must log the session even if incomplete. All gold, Downtime, Renown and Experience rewards are to be handed out as earned. This likely means said player will not gain Downtime, Renown or a Faction Secret Mission. If a group wants to split a module between sessions that's fine. Just record what spells/class features are used and current hit points. This way you can pick up where you left off next session.

Last but not least
Can you run modules outside of events run by LT staff? Absolutely and please do! We are doing this so that anyone who wants it may adventure to tier 4 in the world we all know and love. This is at it's core a community project meant to be a gift to all. The entire reason it's free is in the hopes you find a table and help share in world building with us. We want your input and your stories. This is intended to be YOUR story first and foremost. Everything we do is a direct result of player choice and agency.

(**A little extra sneak preview of our plans**)
Now that season 1 is ending we are beginning to book some major conventions (Our premier of season 2 will be at Winter Fantasy in February). Two of the main projects we are looking at for Season 2 are the start of a YouTube channel and a Twitch stream. In addition to those we are also beginning the process of converting our modules to online play that we will be attempting to get groups for via our Discord channel.

The season one Twitch stream will be intended as a guide for people new to running the game. Our hope is that you can watch along with the broadcast in real time and get a feel for how we run the game and the reasons behind it, so the process becomes less intimidating. Our staff has experience running at all tiers and at stores, conventions and home games at all difficulties. We hope to pass our tips and tricks on to you.

After the season 1 stream has ended, we will pick up in whatever season the main story is with an adventuring group in a similar fashion to Critical Role's main campaign, but weaving the stream player's stories into the season and referencing our player base in both modules and the stream. We want to bring your moment to shine to as many people as we possibly can and will always be looking for the maximum amount of ways to do so.

Building a community starts with training people in how to run it. From our own experiences in Organized Play we have found groups work best when running is shared between multiple people.

Offering GM Rewards is one way we attempt to even out the loss of progression for running instead of playing.