

Welcome to The Thames

Unless it says otherwise on your character sheet, you have lived in The Thames for as long as you can remember. Of course, being a fish, your memory isn't that great...

The Thames is a river. While this would normally make it freshwater, the effluvium and jetsam that is dumped into it every day has changed its nature. Saltwater fish can live just as easily in the Thames as freshwater. Further, some really smart fish can build stuff with all the junk that is lying about.

The surface of The Thames opens into the horrible air above, and the bottom is solid. You may, if you wish, leap out of the surface of The Thames, onto the banks where you will quickly die. If you choose to do this, please see a Tank Master (TM).

A day in The Thames is full of wonder and excitement. Giant beings surround The Thames and constantly disrupt your world. Sometimes they drop weird science parts. Sometimes they grab one of your fishy brethren who is taken away forever.

The world of The Thames is very much like Victorian England, except everyone is a fish of some sort. The Thames is ruled by the wise and fair Queen Fishtoria who is much beloved by her loyal subjects. Most of you are members of the Angler Church, the official state religion of The Thames.

Of course, all is not perfect in The Thames. There is a shady underworld led by the devious Professor Fishbone. And there have been reports of shady Water Pirates, evil fish who travel in a contraption that actually *floats on top of the water*. Luckily, we have the might of Scotland Lake to keep the forces of evil in check.

But, for the most part, the fish get along peacefully, except when Jetsam is thrown into The Thames. Then it's finders keepers, losers, er, losers, um, losers- whatever-fish-do-instead of cry.

Fish Fight

Sometimes a fish has gotta do what a fish has gotta do. When you want to attack another fish, point your hand, er, fin at your target, and pronounce in a loud, clear voice, "I'm attacking you."

The next step is for you and your opponent to close your eyes or turn your backs. Count to 3, and then raise a

hand (or fin) in the air, holding up between 0 and 5 fingers. (Actually, you cannot hold up more fingers than you have hit points.) Take the difference between the two hands. If the difference is 0, defender takes no damage. If it is 1 or 2, defender takes 1 damage. Difference of 3 or more? Defender takes 2 damage. Defender then gets to attack the attacker.

In the case of multiple attackers/defenders, you all hold up your hands at the same time and calculate all the damage done at once. Why not get a TM to help you make the combat go quickly? That's why he's there.

Speaking of hit points, you're going to start the game with them clearly attached to your costume via hopefully rustproof safety pins (it is possible hit points may be represented by gummy bracelets you wear around your wrist instead). When you lose a hit point, remove it from your costume and toss it out of The Thames. If you lose all your hit points, you are at the mercy of whoever is around you. They can take all your items, push you around, or kill you. Should you die, you should float belly up until you are removed from The Thames.

Those Strange Hand Thingies

Above the surface of The Thames you often see large, bizarre shapes moving about. These things often communicate to each other, quite unintelligibly, although they seem to know what's going on.

Every once in a while, these unbelievably huge creatures reach into The Thames with appendages known as "hands." If you are touched by one of these "hands," you are caught and you must follow the "hand" even if it takes you out of The Thames. Fish caught by these "hands" are never seen again.

Jetsam

However, sometimes these "hands" bring jetsam. Jetsam can be used to build weird science devices. While not every fish can build such devices, the parts are so useful, they are used as a sort of currency in The Thames. Jetsam is always tossed into The Thames near the "hands," so it is impossible to know if the "hand" is there to give jetsam or to drag you from The Thames never to be seen again.

Jetsam will be simulated by Duplo™ building blocks with a number written on the side. In order to build a

device, you need to have at least four different colors of blocks and the sum of the numbers has to be more than the difficulty number given by the TM. Also, you need to have the Weird Science Shtick.

Who's Who In The Thames

Queen Fishtoria: Queen of The Thames, beloved by her subjects.

Lady Snootberry: A very wealthy and proper member of High Society and a close friend of the Queen.

Sir Archfiend: A very wealthy and proper member of High Society. He wishes to fund an underwater railroad in the Nile.

Archfishop Swimmer: Head of the Angler Church.

Les Poissons: The Ambassador from the Seine. Rumour has it that he wants war.

Die Fische: The Ambassador from the mouth of the Danube in Germany.

Prince Lutefisk: The Swedish Fish Ambassador.

Barbelthroat Carpetshark: Liberal MP and owner of the Rio Grande Embassy brothel.

Ian Dunross-Fish: Wealthy patron of inventors and founder of the SPL, the Society of Perch and Limpets.

Pietr Braincoral: The Minister of Technology. He has just completed his greatest invention ever: The Brassy's Fish, a robotic fish capable of independent thought.

Fishop Scaryfish: Well known Fishop of the Angler Church.

Gregory Gravel: The Head of Scotland Lake.

Professor Herringbone: The head of the criminal underwater. Nobody knows his true identity.

Credits

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