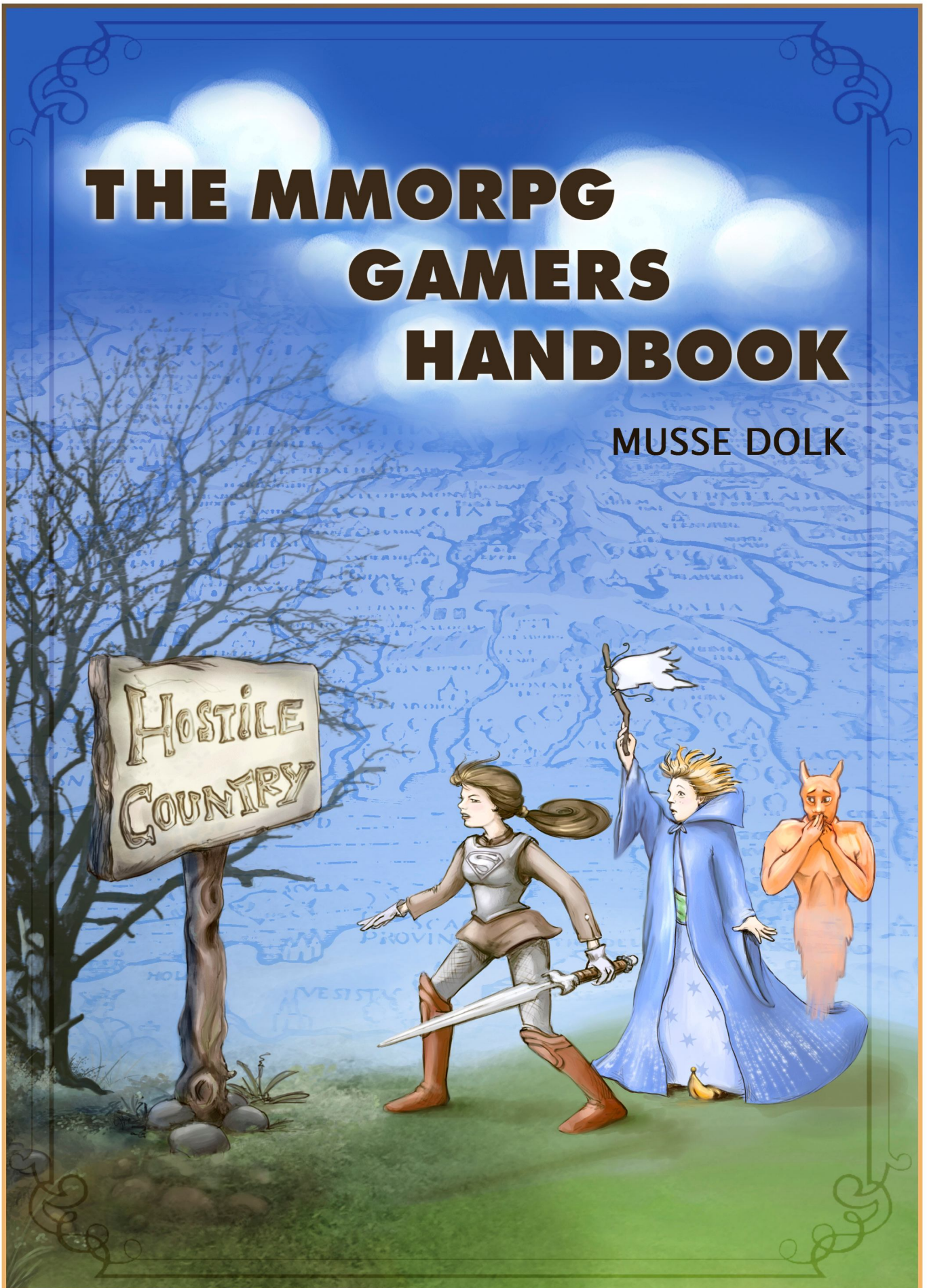


# THE MMORPG GAMERS HANDBOOK

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# 1 Abstract

Massive multiplayer online games have a growing percentage of the games on today's computer market. Each game has its unique set of challenges but there are also similarities where general game play strategies and recommendations apply. The MMORPG gamer's handbook provides practical suggestions to players for how to work well in a team-based environment. Many misconceptions in MMORPG's are clarified and players learn the most effective ways to improve their cooperative game play.

# 2 Introduction

There are a lot of good spoilers and guides out there for massive multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPG). Most of these are game specific and go down to the core in both the games system and fast advancement within the game. So why add another guide to the bunch?

Over the last few years I've played a lot of different MMORPG's and in every one of these I discovered that players new to the environment and the multiplayer game concept in general had the same kind of problems. There is quite a big gap between experienced players and new ones, even with all the guides and spoilers out there telling you exactly where to go and what to do.

One common problem is that many of the experienced players rarely have the patience to deal with newcomers, so they tend to get left out and sometimes get very hard critique for their limited knowledge. The spoiler guide ends and the player are suddenly out there on her own without really having had a chance to learn. This is especially true to games where it is easy to go solo.

The spoilers out there all offer great help on advancement. But for the most part they do not give general advice on how to play efficiently together with other players. That is where this book comes in. It is not supposed to be a replacement for any other guide out there. Instead, it supplements them by giving players general guidelines to follow that should be suitable for most MMORPG's out there. This book will point out the most effective practices of team play and steer you away from potentially dangerous ones. It will be a knowledgeable hand to guide you along the way and help you quickly become an experienced MMORPG player.

However keep in mind that there will always be exceptions to anything written here. It should be more looked on as guidelines than rules. Adapting to unexpected and unfavorable situations is part of being an experienced player. It is also oriented towards computer-oriented opponents and will not work against other players.

If you are a new player, I do not recommend trying to learn everything at once. It's often easier if you read up on one thing at the time, practice that for a while then moves on to next part. When you feel that you have a good idea of how to play your own primary role, read through the others for better cooperation and understanding while playing with them.

## 3 Character creation

The first step in any MMORPG is usually to create your character. Many times there is a wide variety of races and classes to choose from and I recommend you to do some research about each of these before you start, just to get a rough idea about them. It's a good idea to find one from start that suits your play style and fills the role you want to play in teams with others.

### 3.1 Class archetypes

There are four common archetypes when it comes to group coordination. Most classes are suited primary for one of these roles or a mix in between them.

#### 3.1.1 Tank

Basically a tank's job is to get beaten up. You're the wall between the weaker members of your party and the angry enemies you are fighting. As a tank you focus more on being resistant to damage than actually dealing it. A common mistake is to focus too much on your attack power, which makes you less efficient for taking damage. However you cannot completely neglect your attack power either. In many games, the more damage you deal the more likely are the enemies to attack you. This may differ from game to game, it's important to find out how this works in the one you are playing.

#### 3.1.2 Damage dealer

Your job will be to kill off enemies as quickly as possible. This is not as easy as it sounds. Do this too fast; and monsters will get angry on you instead of your tank. Remember that you are never the one who should take a beating. Many make the mistake of doing too much damage too fast. The trick is to find the sweet spot where you do max damage without making the enemies run for you.

#### 3.1.3 Healer

A healer's job will be to keep everyone alive. Some make the mistake of focusing on damage, which may result in not having enough power left to keep their group alive. Remember that your primary role will always be healing. A healer without mana many times leads to a dead group.

#### 3.1.4 Crowd controller

A crowd controller is someone who takes care of enemies that the group is currently not fighting, usually by putting them in a sleeping state rendering them unable to fight. This is not an easy job; you need good reflexes, the ability to adapt to changing situations and an overview of the entire battle to keep track of who needs to be put to sleep in which order.

## 3.2 Races

You should always choose a race that you feel comfortable with, since you will most likely play it for a very long time. Appearance and role-playing reasons should always be of priority. It usually does not matter which race you have chosen in the long run for a specific archetype. Having that said, there are things to take in to consideration when choosing races. The first thing you should have a look at is if there are any racial abilities in your game. These are usually more valuable than statistical values of your race. In most games you can easily get stats from gear, but these abilities are often unique.

## 4 The basics of combat

These are the basics of fighting in a team-based environment. In most MMORPG's small teams are known as "groups" and they get a private chat channel among its members. The size of a group may differ a bit from game to game. In newbie areas and lower levels, tactics may not seem like a big deal or even seem inefficient. It might not be the fastest way to get exp (points to gain a level) from start. I would still advise anyone to use this time for practice. There will be a lot more dangerous areas in time where you will not have much time to think about basics. Learn these by heart and you will have it a lot easier when more advanced situations arise.

### 4.1 Archetype basics

A few buzzwords that will be used:

Aggro – If someone gets aggro it means the enemies are attacking her.

Hate – When attacking an enemy you get hate points to that enemy. The player with highest hate points will get aggro of that particular enemy.

#### 4.1.1 Tank

Tanks usually have a "taunt" skill that adds hate points to your character to keep your friends out of trouble. The hits you make and most skills you use should also increase your hate value. It may happen that the others will need to slow down their damage dealing so you can be the one in the front line. Trigger happy friends are hard to tank for, often you may need to tell them to slow down or wait with attacking so you have a chance to build your hate points with the current enemy.

##### 4.1.1.1 Multiple opponents

Facing more than one opponent may be tricky, this means you have to switch target to keep a good hate value on them all. This should not be too hard if everyone keeps hitting the same target. You can get by with a low hate value on the enemies the others are not attacking but keep in mind that healing will always give hate to the healer for all enemies around you.

#### 4.1.1.2 Breaking sleep

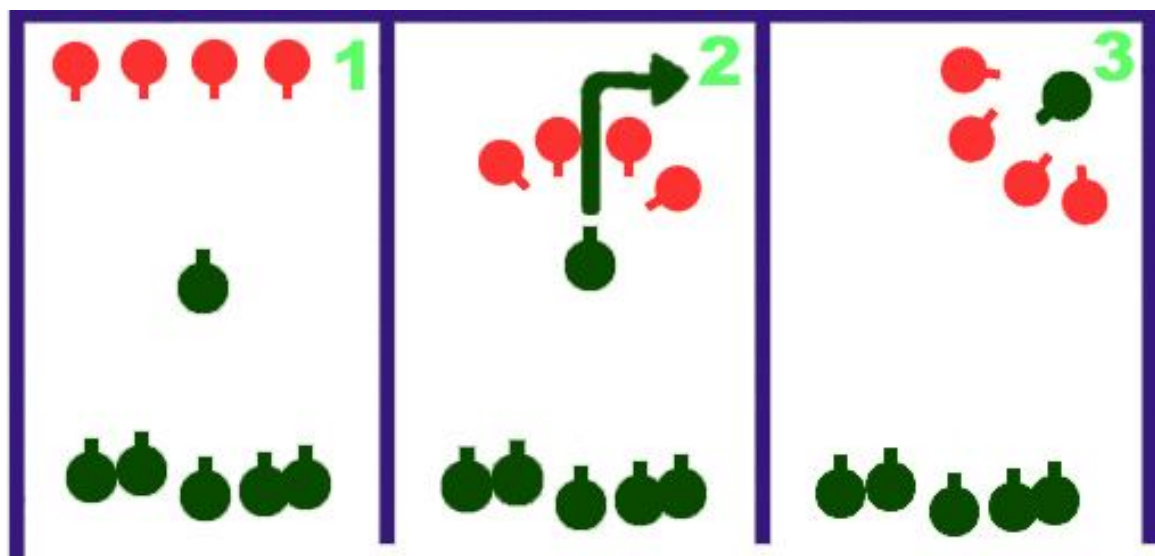
If you hit a sleeping target without thinking, chances are that it will run directly for the crowd controller. If you have a spell that gives hate without damaging the enemy, it is a good idea to use this before breaking the sleep. It's also important that your other party members wait with their attack until you are ready.

#### 4.1.1.3 Line of sight

To hit a target with a spell, most games require that there is a straight line without obstructions (discounting characters) to the target. It's important that you do not enter a room by yourself and stay there, the healers will not be able to keep you alive around a corner and the rest of your group cannot target the enemies with their spells.

#### 4.1.1.4 Enemy turning

When pulling, turn the enemies you face so they have their back against your group. This makes you closest to possible new enemies. You immediately see if you lose aggro. If you can, it is recommended to stand in a corner or against a wall. Many games also have bonuses for hitting enemies in the back or gives enemy increased chance to parry or riposte blows that hits them from front.



#### 4.1.2 Damage dealer

It's important to have all damage dealers in the group staying at the same target to kill one enemy at the time. It's really important that enemies die as quickly as possible. However it's just as important not to get aggro. Damage dealers usually cannot take many hits themselves. If you die, the group as a whole will deal a lot less damage and might not kill fast enough to survive. Even if you don't die, you will drain your healer's mana fast; which leads to additional hate points for the healer. Getting attacked as a damage dealer is a lose/lose situation.

One trick to avoid damage is to wait before attacking each enemy to allow some time for the tank to build up her hate. How long you should wait depends on the circumstances and the gear of your tank. Do not blame your tank if an enemy attacks you, instead adapt to the situation and wait longer. Try to find the perfect balance between doing a lot of damage and never getting attacked with your current teammates.

#### 4.1.2.1 Mana preservation

Another important thing is to not waste your mana. If an enemy dies really fast by your melee friends, just watch it happen. It is not important to cast a spell at every single enemy. A very common mistake is to land a big damage spell on an enemy that has very little health left. This would make the excess damage to waste and you have lost mana for no reason. This is not a competition for who that makes the most damage. Waiting until it is really needed saves both mana and time.

#### 4.1.3 Healer

Healing is a work of art like all other archetypes when you break it down to pieces. The biggest challenge is to know when to heal and when not to. This is important because if you heal too fast, the enemy will run for you and if you heal too slow your tank dies.

**Best opportunity** to heal is when there are no enemies around. No risk to get attacked if there aren't any enemies. Try to heal everyone to full, toss out all protective and damage preventing spells before each combat situation. You might want to start with the tank before she runs off to find new enemies. If you have time to do so, you can buff the others during combat, for most games buffs don't seem to give any aggro. If it does in yours, avoid doing this in combat. Do not hesitate to tell your group to slow down if they are too impatient in waiting for heals before getting new enemies. However be sure to also tell them when you are ready.

**Second best** is healing over time (HoT) spells. Cast one of these on the tanks before she gets enemies and she will have larger chances to come back alive. Beware though, in some games, the minor heals from these spells gives you hate to the enemies before the tank has a chance to build up her own. If you take notice that enemies are running directly towards you as soon as they come near, even though you have not done anything, it is likely that your HoT spells are to blame. If so, wait a moment and let the tank make the enemies mad at her before casting. They are still useful in the beginning of fights.

**The third best** opportunity is by the end of the fight, when the tank has a solid aggro to keep it for the remainder of the combat. Try to wait as long as you can with the healing without risking anyone's life and do be prepared for unexpected moments. In areas where there is risk to get additional opponents, be sure not to wait too long; or you will end up with the new enemies beating you up.

Unfortunately these opportunities are few. Most of your healing time will be spent right in the middle of combat to keep you and your friends alive. It's really important



to avoid healing when enemies are incoming. If the tank runs with a several enemies after her and you heal her as soon as she gets close, all these enemies will turn to you; which means you are likely to end up dead. If the distance is far to the group and she is about to die, it might even be worth it to let her die, and then resurrect her afterwards when the enemies go away. This might not be a popular decision though, and should not be used without a good reason.

When your tank are facing enemies that hit particularly hard it may be a good idea to start casting your heal before she takes damage and interrupt your spell if she still has a lot of health when it's about to land. This is especially useful when there is a lot of extra damage in the start of a combat.

#### 4.1.3.1 Mana preservation

Another important thing to keep in mind is not overflowing your heals. A large healing spell on someone with little health is a lot of mana wasted. Usually this means big heals on tanks and small heals on damage dealers and spell casters. Not only does this preserve your mana but it also gives you less hate points.

#### 4.1.4 Crowd controller

Crowd Control is a tricky job; you need to have an overview over the whole fight. By zooming out your camera to the max you should be able to easily pick out the enemies who need to sleep. Be sure to keep track of where the enemies come from and potential directions where additional enemies may show up.

It's also important to foresee what will happen a few seconds before they do. To know this you need to learn how enemies move, which spells they are likely to cast and how much damage they can do to your group. Start with taking out the enemies with highest threat potential. Usually this means enemy healers and spell casters goes first, but there will be enemies with abilities or spells that are especially dangerous. Often you can associate names of enemies with how dangerous they are to the group. In example if they are named sorcerer, chances are that they have spells with long range and high damage. Be sure not to put have your controlled enemies too far from the group, this may draw additional enemies that passes by to join the fight.

Communication is also an important part of crowd control. Your group needs to be prepared for fighting with a crowd controller. If they hit one of your sleeping enemies, it will wake up and you are likely to get aggro. Be sure to tell everyone in the group to hit the same target. It's also common for many crowd controllers to send a message to the group that tells which enemy is about to fall asleep. It's better to alert them before casting than after, chances are that a group member will be alerted by this and can avoid attacking the target.

##### 4.1.4.1 Sleep (single target)

This spell looks very different in many games but have the same basic function. It will allow the caster to completely stop an opponent. When sleeping, an enemy can't move, cast or attack. Once the spell lands, its will not be able to finish it's casting, hence, useful against any enemy that uses magic. This will last until either the spell

wears off, or the opponent is damaged in some way. Spells that lower an enemy's statistics, or that changes its hate towards a particular player, usually do not break the spell.

#### 4.1.4.2 Sleep (point blank)

Same as above, but will target anything in a certain range around the caster. Usually, since more enemies can be targeted, the duration of the Point Blank sleep is much lower than the single target version. Considering most classes that have good Crowd Control abilities have a low amount of health, this spell is particularly handy. It allows you to stop all movement for a short period of time, allowing you to use other abilities without being interrupted or killed.

For example, you have 4 enemies going for you; use this spell once to stop them from hitting you, then use the single mesmerize on one of them, rinse and repeat until all of them are unable to hurt you. You can keep this sleep chain going for as long as the mana allows or until your group killed off all the enemies.

#### 4.1.4.3 Sleep (area of effect)

Same as above, except the caster is not the centre of the circle of the range of the spell, but her offensive target. For example, if the spell has a 3-meter radius, and there are 3 enemies 2 meters apart, you should definitely use it on the one in the middle, so that the other 2 are also in range. If you would use it on the far right one for example, the one on the far left would not be under control. This spell can be very useful when you don't intend to be anywhere near a big number of enemies coming your way.

For example a warrior brings 4 enemies towards your group; you target the one closest to the middle of the pack, and hit the AE Sleep as soon as they are in range. This will usually stop them from hurting anyone else in the group and also keeping them all in your field of vision, allowing you to judge if any special measures need to be taken.

#### 4.1.4.4 Stun (single target)

This spell is similar to Single Target Sleep, but with a very short duration. The biggest difference being that hitting the enemy while stunned will not remove the effect. These spells are useful to interrupt a casting enemy, halting a running enemy or simply to give you the time to think about your next move. If you have more than one (that is usable at the same time) you may consider using them at regular intervals, so that the enemy is almost permanently stunned.

#### 4.1.4.5 Stun (point blank)

Same as above, but effect hits everything within a certain radius around the caster. Great when a mesmerize line spell has been resisted by one or more enemies.

#### 4.1.4.6 Rooting

Rooting spells makes enemies unable to move, but does not take away their fighting ability. Often this spell has a random duration and may be a bit unreliable. It is still very useful to cast before enemies gets to a weaker players saving the healer some mana. Note that in many games enemies have larger chances to break free of the spell if they are taking hits. In these cases it's a good idea not to shoot ranged attacks on a rooted enemy.

#### 4.1.4.7 Charm

This spell will give you control of an enemy for a period of time. While the spell is in effect, the enemy will act as any pet companion would. In most games, this means you can ask him to attack another enemy or do anything a normal pet would. These spells usually cannot be refreshed until they break. Which means you can't cast this spell on an enemy already having one, or have two charmed enemies at once. You will have to wait until it breaks for when the enemy is once again trying to kill you, and then use the spell again.

#### 4.1.4.8 Short term summoning

This is another spell that looks very different over the games. The common factor is that it creates a creature that will attract the enemy's attention for a period of time. It will take the heat off of you or your group members, but not stopping the enemy. This means that the enemy will still attack, but will just not deal damage to your group members until the creature is either dead or the enemy's hate toward one of your group has become greater than his hate towards your creature.

Keep in mind that during the period of time the enemy is attacking this creature, it can still heal, hurt your group with Area of Effect spells or simply just attract an additional enemy that roams by him.

#### 4.1.4.9 Lure

This spells is similar to above, but usually for a set amount of attacks instead of being on a timer or affected by hate. Sometimes the spell only works for one enemy, sometimes it has an Area of Effect, and everything in its radius will be attracted to it for a set number of attacks. Once the enemies have attacked it for this amount of times, they will resume attacking your group. This spell will just draw attention off of you, giving you more time to react accordingly. It can be useful for Crowd Control purposes, but keep in mind that the faster the enemies hit, the less duration this spell has.

## 4.2 Group tactics & coordination

In general it's important that everyone focuses on their on task and learn to trust each other to do their job correctly. A common mistake is that many become overprotective of the healer or other members of the group. I've seen spell casters wearing a dress dash themselves in the line of fire trying to protect a full plated healer. The only one

that should do the dashing here is the tank. Efficiency cannot be achieved if everyone is running around trying to protect each other. Not only will this drain the healer's mana, it will also give them tons of more hate from having to heal the weaker members in the group. In short, they end up in a worse situation than they started in. There just isn't any room for heroes in tight situations. So try to stick to your own primary duties.

## 4.2.1 Targeting enemies

### 4.2.1.1 Assisting

By assisting someone you gain the same target as the one you use the command on. (/assist in most games). It is wise to have this command on a hotkey easily reachable. By assigning someone to be "main assist" (MA), everyone can easily get the same target in a fast and efficient way. Many uses the tank for this issue since she is usually the one getting enemies. This is fine, as long as everyone assist at the start of the combat. When encountering multiple enemies the tank often needs to switch target to hold aggro, if you assist in the wrong moment you will end up getting the wrong target.

One solution is to wait for the tank to tell the group when they should assist. This is also a good way of letting the tank get aggro on the new target when one dies. She simply tells the group when she's ready.

Another solution to this is to have a damage dealer in the group to get the role as main assist, since they should only stick to one target at the time. It's preferable if you have someone with a little bit of armour do this. If the tank has a lot of enemies to keep aggro on, it may be a good idea to let the MA do the tanking on the main target.

The main assist should already have chosen which enemy to attack before the start of the fight, and be ready to switch to the next target before the first one dies. It's a good idea for the MA to choose enemies with more danger potential as priority, usually healers and spell casters with low hp. If you have similar enemies in different levels, try to kill off the ones that die fastest as a priority. In general, fast reduction of enemy numbers is most important.

Also try to stick to the target as main assist, even if it happens to be a low priority one. Confusion with multiple targets is a much worse problem than killing a tank before a spell caster. If it's really important to get the correct target, be sure to tell your group that you change target, so everyone can take a new assist.

If this works as intended everyone in the group should always hit the same target as MA and the enemies drop very fast. In general this is much faster than having everyone trying to click their way to a certain enemy with a symbol over his head.

### 4.2.1.2 Symbols

Some games have symbols that they can put out to hover above enemies. Note that these should not be a replacement for using assist. Instead these can be

complimentary; for example to mark out enemies having dangerous area effect spells that you need to stay away from or to mark your own healer, to stay in range of her spells. In larger fights it may also be wise to mark out where the MA is.

If you use them for targeting order, be sure to explain to the members of your group which order to kill in and why this is important. Symbols sometimes add confusion if they are interpreted in different ways. Also keep in mind that having five people getting targets is slower and more risky than just having one.

## 4.2.2 Aggro & pulling

In general, the puller should always be the tank. In many games, getting initial aggro on an enemy gives an aggro boost to your characters hate, which is an excellent start for tanking. Even if it doesn't, it's always a good idea to let the tank build up some aggro before attacking. Preferably have the group waiting to attack until the tank says she is ready. This is also relevant if you have a Crowd Controller in the group. If you break their sleep spells too early the enemies will instantly run to attack her.

If someone who isn't a tank gets aggro, try not to run it off. Trust your healer to keep you alive and stand still, keep focusing on your job. Avoid attacking the enemy that is hitting you. Your tank will have a lot easier getting it off you if she can hit it. It also takes a lot of unnecessary time to chase after an enemy chasing after you, in most cases it also runs in the same speed so you do not avoid any hits. If you have a spell to bind an enemy to the ground you can use this, and sidestep a short bit.

Avoid using Area of effect (AE) spells as a general rule of thumb. I know there are a lot of people that may disagree with this, but usually it is not worth the effort unless fighting really small enemies or having a group specifically designed for it. AE spells almost always gives the damage dealer aggro. If you have a crowd controller in the group you are also likely to break the enemies she put in to sleep. If you really think you are in a good situation to use them, speak with your group about it first, so everyone is notified and ready.

## 4.2.3 Combat strategies & discipline

### 4.2.3.1 Moving forward

The tank should always be the one to go first; the rest of the group should never pass her position. It's also good if the group stays in one spot and waits for the tank to bring enemies to this place. When it is time to move to a new spot, the tank should tell this to the group. This way there is never any doubt of where to be and what to do.

When moving inside a dungeon, it's often wise to stay close to walls. A wall is usually a safe spot for enemies; however you need to be careful around corners.

### 4.2.3.2 Standing still

Neither the tank nor the group should move around too much. By moving you increase your risk to get the attention of extra enemies nearby. It also makes it hard for your teammates' melee attacks to hit their target if it keeps moving. This is especially important in caves where there can be enemies patrolling the paths and there is nowhere to hide.

### 4.2.3.3 Pet control

Some classes have a pet companion that they can summon to help them out in combat. It's important to keep an eye on where this pet fights; some games allow them to break sleeping spells of your crowd controller. Another risk is the path it takes when running to attack an enemy. Sometimes it may decide to go around an obstacle on the wrong side too close to another patrol of enemies. If you see this is about to happen, you need to back it off before it runs in to additional danger. Remember that your pet is under your control and cannot think on its own. It's also wise in many games to position the pet so it attacks the enemy from behind, avoiding parrying and other abilities that they may use from the front.

### 4.2.3.4 Chain pulling

If you feel that you have a good group fighting and you have to wait between each enemy, you can assign another puller than the tank. This one starts bringing in an enemy slightly before the former one dies; thus creating non-stop fighting. Keep a careful eye on the healer's mana. Also keep in mind to inform your group of this, so they can call for a break if needed.

## 4.2.4 Utility spells

### 4.2.4.1 Hate reduction

Some classes have spells reduce hate from enemies, use these often, don't wait until an enemy hits you. If it already is, it's often too late for this spell to have much effect.

### 4.2.4.2 Attack speed reduction

Reducing an enemy attack speed makes them hit slower, often measured in percent. These spells are not always worth using on every mob. If the difference is below 20% difference on enemies that doesn't do very high damage, it might be wiser to use that mana for something else. If you are a healing class, make a rough estimate on how many hits an enemy has to take for this spell to be more mana efficient than healing.

### 4.2.4.3 Run speed reduction

If you have run speed reducing spells and some space, you can keep the enemies running around chasing you in circles while the group hits it. If the enemy turns on one of the melees, simply fire away a few damage spells so they start to chase you again. If you are more than one caster you can also play ping-pong with the enemy, taking turns in getting its attention. This strategy is useful when you lack a healer or a tank in the group.

### 4.2.4.4 Spell interruption

These interrupt an enemy trying to cast a spell. It is very useful to save these to use on enemies trying to heal themselves or their friends close to death. It can also be a very efficient way of taking out dangerous damage spells that affects many targets. I recommend doing some research of different spells enemies can cast if you have a lot of these at your disposal.

### 4.2.4.5 Shielding

A shield spell protects a player from harm soaking up a certain amount of damage or makes the player invulnerable for a period of time. Many of these have very short duration and used in situations when someone is about to die to give the healer a few extra seconds to keep him alive.

Another good use for these is on the tank when you know a lot of enemies will be incoming. The tanks hit points would normally drop fast and early heals will most often give the healer aggro. A well placed shield spell before the fight would give your tank a bit of time to build aggro. If your group also can take care of a few of the enemies before the shield runs out the healer may avoid aggro altogether.

## 5 Guilds

A guild is an organization whose players share the same goals and decides to work together in a larger scale. Upon creation of a guild it is wise to have a clear set of goals, which the members will strive to achieve. Look at the guild as its own entity following a vision instead of personal opinions. With a clear vision, members of the guild are less likely to have misunderstandings about it.

### 5.1 Recruitment

Be open with your guilds intentions and try to recruit likeminded people that share the vision of the guild. Try to have active discussions every now and then about where the guild is going and its future plans.

Keep in mind that not every guild is suitable for everyone. This is often a matter of play style. It's not as easy as it sounds to throw someone out. Many guilds are torn apart because someone got thrown out who had friends, who in turn had more friends and suddenly a big chunk of the guild left.

### 5.2 Leading and delegation

As a leader of the guild it's important not to take too much responsibility to yourself. Delegate this job to a few officers, how many depends on the size of the guild. It's important that all of the officers know the rules and goals by heart, so these can be explained to the members. It's also preferable if each of the officers has their area of responsibility. If their areas overlap too much, there is a higher risk for contradicting decisions.

A leader who takes too much responsibility makes the guild stand and fall with her. This is not very good, because if she wants to go on vacation the guild might break up or take a pause for that period of time. It's also very easy to get burned out of it all. It's also important not to have too many officers. An officer needs to take responsibility and commitment for her tasks. Not everyone is suitable for this role in a guild.

### 5.3 Planning events

Getting your guild members to show up at guild events may be tricky at start, especially if you are a small guild just getting started. It's a good idea to have a set time once or twice per week when guild events are happening. As leaders and officers responsible for the planning you need to remind your members when the events are and ask them personally if they can show up. Many members may miss messages given or even forget about them.

When the guild has a few events under their belt this will go a lot easier, people will take notice that the guild makes events together and keep looking for it. If things go well, less time will go to making people show up and instead be focused on development and evaluation of the events.



## 5.4 Loot systems

One of the main reasons for teamwork is to obtain treasure from your enemies. This is commonly known as loot. It's a good idea to have a system thought of how to divide these items in a way that seems fair for everyone involved.

### 5.4.1 Need before greed

This system means a piece of equipment is randomised to players that can use the item if it is better than what they are currently using. If no one can use, it is randomised between all players to sell for cash. This is suitable for most small to medium sized guilds since every well-equipped player strengthens the guild as a whole.

### 5.4.2 Total randomness

If items can be traded between players it can be argued that anyone can use an item for selling, thereby being able to buy something for themselves. This may seem like a more fair system in places where there are only items for specific classes. If you team with players you haven't been with before, it's wise to talk about which loot system to use beforehand.

### 5.4.3 Point based loot systems

In heavy raiding guilds, players often feel the need for a more advanced system to handle the loot. One of the main reasons for this is that total randomised loot is purely based on luck. A player raiding only once per month have the same chance of getting something as someone who plays every day. It can be reasoned that the more active players; spending more time helping the guilds progress with their raiding should have a higher chance of getting better equipped than those who are rarely participating. One way to solve this is to give out points to each player for the events they have been attending to. These points can then be used to buy equipment and items using some form of selling or auctioning system.

### 5.4.4 Common problems

There are a few problems that may need to be taken in to consideration before choosing a point based loot system. The first is that points sometimes are earned faster than they can be spent. This means a new or less active participant can never hope to catch up to those with the highest points. Another problem is to handle unwanted items. Some items might be good, but not good enough for people wanting to spend their hard earned points on.

## 6 Raiding

Basically a raid has the same basics as fighting in a group, except that it normally takes longer time and requires more people.

## 6.1 Leading a raid

### 6.1.1 Communication is the key

As a raid leader it is extremely important that every member of the raid knows what to do. If there is any confusion among your members this may lead to everyone's death. This means a good raid leader has a bit of insight in each of the different roles and classes of the game. It doesn't mean she needs to learn them all by heart, but it's good to have a general idea what everyone is about.

If someone asks, "what am I supposed to do, I never raided before?". A good leader will have a short but easily understandable reply. Keep in mind that a raid is not everyone to herself; a leader needs to see the groups as a whole. Even if someone is super good at soloing, doesn't mean she will do a good job in a raid.

### 6.1.2 Planning ahead

As a leader you should know as much as you can about the place you are raiding. A common mistake is to let several members who believe they know more run ahead and start trying to lead everyone else. This most often turns in to chaos. The normal member will have no idea who to follow. It's better to follow one leader to a dead end, than to be split and cause confusion in the entire team. You can always go back and take another turn, but you cannot make up for a wipeout of the team.

Some games also have raid areas where several raiding parties can be at once. If so, be sure to check that there are no other guilds currently fighting the place you are going for. If so, a backup plan may be in order.

It's also a good idea to find out quests and information about the place you are about to raid. If you have time, also go in to class specific quests, or have a few of your group leaders do this. There are always people who do not know everything about their class and what they need to get.

### 6.1.3 Groups

If you have a large raid with several groups, it might be a pain to get spammed with questions from everyone. It's a good idea to have one leader for each group to make sure there are no misunderstandings. These leaders should have enough knowledge to have an answer to most questions that may arise from normal members. In turn, if these group leaders are uncertain of something, they are the only ones that should keep direct contact with the raid leader.

## 6.2 Raiding discipline

### 6.2.1 Raid chat

If you have a specific raid chat, avoid speaking here at all if you're not the leader. This channel should be used for important messages only. This way everyone can be

sure of that whatever is mentioned on this channel is worth listening to and should be read.

## 6.2.2 Be on time

It's preferable if everyone shows up on time. If the raid starts late every time, not only is it rude to those that are there on time, people will also start to take this in to account. This in turn results in the raid starting later and later every time.

## 6.2.3 Gear

Be sure to find out beforehand if some special gear is needed. Many raid encounters may require resistances for certain elements or special weapons. Also be sure to bring with you any ingredients you need for your spells. Also food and water may be important, depending on the game. It's always better to bring with you gear you don't use than to come unprepared.

## 6.2.4 Buffing (beneficial spells)

Some games do not have buffs that cover a whole raid. If so, it's a good idea to assign people to hand out specific buffs. In this way everyone know who to ask, if they run out of theirs. (It's impossible for a buffer to keep track of everyone in a raid)

## 7 Background

The analysis made to write this book is primary from my own game play experience and from interviews with other players in different games. My own experience is built from the following games and time estimation:

Everquest – 321 days (7704 hours)

Everquest 2 – 77 days (1848 hours)

Vanguard: Saga of Heroes - 38 days (912 hours)

World of Warcraft – 22 days (528 hours)

Guild Wars – 15 days (360 hours)

Dungeons & Dragons Online – 12 days (288 hours)

Anarchy Online – 2 days (48 hours)

Final Fantasy XI – 2 days (48 hours)

Total playtime: 489 days (11736 hours)

I have also interviewed players from the following games:

City of Heroes/Villains

Dark Age of Camelot

EVE Online

Lineage

Lord of the Rings Online

Maple Story

Star Wars Galaxies

Ultima Online

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## 9 Glossary

Aggro – enemies are attacking someone who has aggro.

Area of Effect – A spell that affects a general area rather than a specific enemy.

Buff – a beneficial spell that lasts for a duration of time.

Character – A player's avatar in the world.

Class – A player's job or profession.

Crowd control – The ability to make enemies unable to fight.

Exp – Experience Points needed to gain a level.

Gear – A characters equipment

Group – A team of players working together.

Hate Points – An enemy will attack a character with the highest hate value.

Heal – Restoring a characters hit points (health)

Healing Over Time – A beneficial spell that heals hit points evenly over a set period of time.

MA – Main Assist, the player choosing which enemy to focus on.

Mana – Energy pool used to cast spells.

MMORPG – Massive multiplayer online role-playing game.

Point Blank – Very close range.

Raid – A larger teams of more than one group working together.

Riposte – The ability to turn someone's attacks against her.

Solo – Fighting alone.

Tank – A player specialized to take damage.

Taunt – Making an enemy attack you.