

Combat

Combat is expected to occur one to two times per play session, but should not be considered as a preferred outcome of most *Encounters*.

Combat is dangerous, especially in a world where access to a place to rest and heal could be days away. The GM should attempt to telegraph an encounter and provide players an opportunity to negotiate, avoid, sabotage or ambush their way through most encounters. However, the enemy may be as smart as the players and may also attempt to manipulate the situation or environment against the player characters.

Combat Grid

Combat in *Beyond the Torchlight* is abstracted to provide a cinematic feel. Combat scenarios can be played out either on a play-mat or on a traditional tabletop grid, however the grid is not used to represent physical locations within an environment.

The *Combat Grid* is instead used to represent character's combat stances along with the enemies that they may be engaged with.

Enemies					Players				
									
	Bandit 3			Bandit 2	Bandit 1		Tahula		Breyer
									
				Bandit 4			Elsa		
	Bandit 6				Bandit 5	Riddic			

Rearguard
Called Shot

Defensive
Protect

Steadied
Rally

Aggressive
Intimidation

Aggressive
Intimidation

Steadied
Rally

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Protect

Rearguard
Called Shot

Initiative

When combat begins players all start in the “Steadied” position and must make a Dexterity Save to determine if they act with *Initiative* in the first round of combat. If a character fails, they do not act until the next round of combat.

Initiative is determined only for the first round of combat or for the round in which a player character joins combat. Players may place their characters in the lane of their choice in order of their Dexterity Save from highest to lowest, provided an Action Lane isn’t designated as a different location (i.e. a balcony, a cliff above, etc.)

If there is not enough room to place all characters in the Steadied stance, place any remaining characters in the Aggressive Stance.

Rounds

A round of combat generally consists of three turns. The player’s turn, the GM’s turn, and the environment’s turn. After the Dexterity Check for the first round, all players will act simultaneously before the GM takes their turn.

Each round, the PCs declare what they are doing before dice are rolled. Players can change the stance of their character, move them to a new *Action Lane*, or complete an action. If a character attempts something risky (such as jumping from a second story window), the GM may call for a check/save for appropriate players or NPCs.

Time during combat is abstracted and all characters involved in combat act and resolve their actions simultaneously. Damage is totaled and applied at the end of each *Round*. A character who is *Incapacitated* during combat goes down at the end of the *Round*.

Note: *If required for mechanical reasons a round of combat takes 10 seconds of time, but can be extracted to larger increments of time per the GM’s discretion.*

Turns

Combat proceeds with three *Turns* in each *Round*. The players always act during the first turn followed by the GM and finally the environment.

Under certain combat situations, environmental or other actions may occur during the third *Turn* of combat. Lair actions, environmental effects or other actions not tied to the players or the enemies will occur after the GM's turn and before the start of a new round.

At the end of a *Round* all characters will make any necessary *Saving Throws* from damage received. Those who fail will be *Incapacitated*.

Actions

Characters make one action and make one move while in combat in any order they choose.

Types of actions include but are not limited to:

- *Stance Ability*
- Attack
- Interact with the environment
- Hand an item to a companion
- Speak up to 10 words
- Administer an item or potion to a companion
- Use an item or potion

Additional actions such as a Check/Save or a *Maneuver* may occur depending upon the circumstances or a request from the GM.

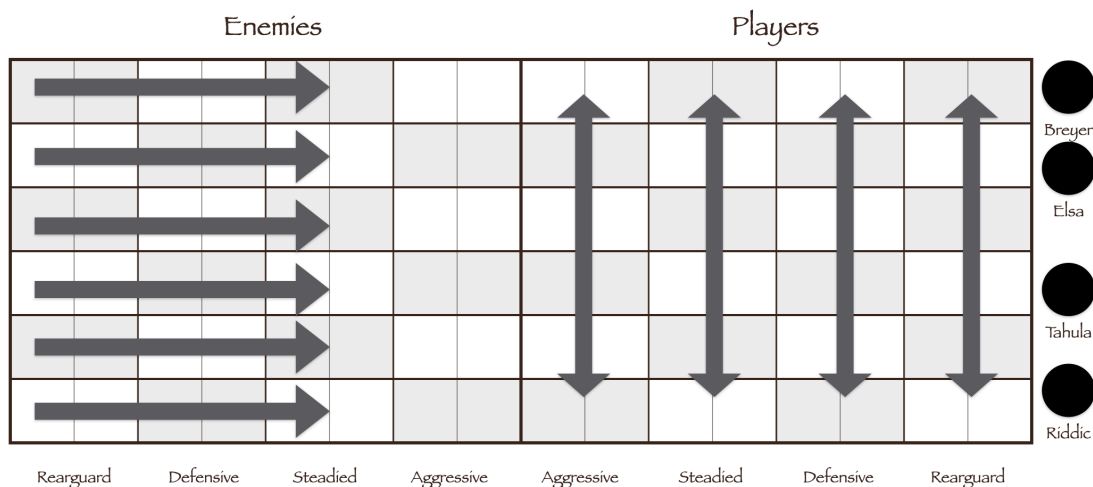
Action Lanes and Combat Stances

During combat characters will position themselves in rows, representing the *Action Lane* and in a column representing the *Combat Stance* in the *Combat Grid*.

Action Lanes

A standard combat grid contains six rows or *Action Lanes*, which can accommodate a 20x20 to 60x60 unit room in most cases. The *Action Lanes* are not meant to represent the physical locations in a space, but instead are meant to focus on the action in a particular scene. Think of the fight sequence from in the throne room in the Mines of Moria from the Fellowship of the Ring. The combat in the scene focuses from various groups of characters and at times changes throughout the scene, but the actual location of where characters are is not the most important component of the combat.

Action Lanes can be used to represent different locations if the combat scene requires it. If a fight occurs in a tavern with a second floor balcony that is open to the main room, one or more *Action Lanes* can be designated to represent the elevated area and can designate if attacks are either *Enhanced* or *Impaired* between lanes.



Movement

Characters can move to any *Combat Stance* or *Action Lane* that is on the same level as them. If an *Action Lane* is higher or lower in elevation, under dense cover or has any other feature that proves *Enhanced* or *Impaired* Attacks, then the character can only move into that Action Lane from an adjacent lane.

Combat Stances

Each column in the *Combat Grid* represents a *Combat Stance*. Combat stances have an effect that always applies to the characters in that state and have an Ability that characters may choose to use instead of taking an action.

Stance	Effect	Ability	Description
Aggressive	+2 to all attack rolls	Intimidation	Player cannot attack this round. Nearest engaged enemy must attack while <i>Impaired</i> .
Steadied	+0	Rally	Can only be completed once per round. Player cannot attack this round. All players within one adjacent position may gain 1d4 <i>Breath</i>
Defensive	-1 to all damage received	Protect Companion	Player can attack this round. May choose to defend one adjacent companion and absorb an attack taking 1/2 the damage of the attack.
Rearguard	If not <i>Engaged</i> characters may <i>Retreat</i> from combat.	Called Shot	Takes 1 round to prepare. Must declare a target. The next ranged attack is <i>Enhanced</i> even if the target is Hiding.

Engaged Characters and Retreat

Engaged

Any character that shares an *Action Lane* with at least one enemy is *Engaged*. If a character is *Engaged* they cannot *Retreat* from combat.

The nearest *Engaged* enemy is the enemy in the closest stance to the character and in the same Action Lane. A character can step in front of companion into a closer stance to pull engagement upon themselves and allow their companion to *Retreat*.

Some weapons, magic items or effects may effect only Engaged characters.

Players in the Rearguard position can attack any position, but cannot impart engagement upon a character.

Retreat

Characters may only *Retreat* from combat the Rearguard stance and only if they are no longer *Engaged* with an enemy.

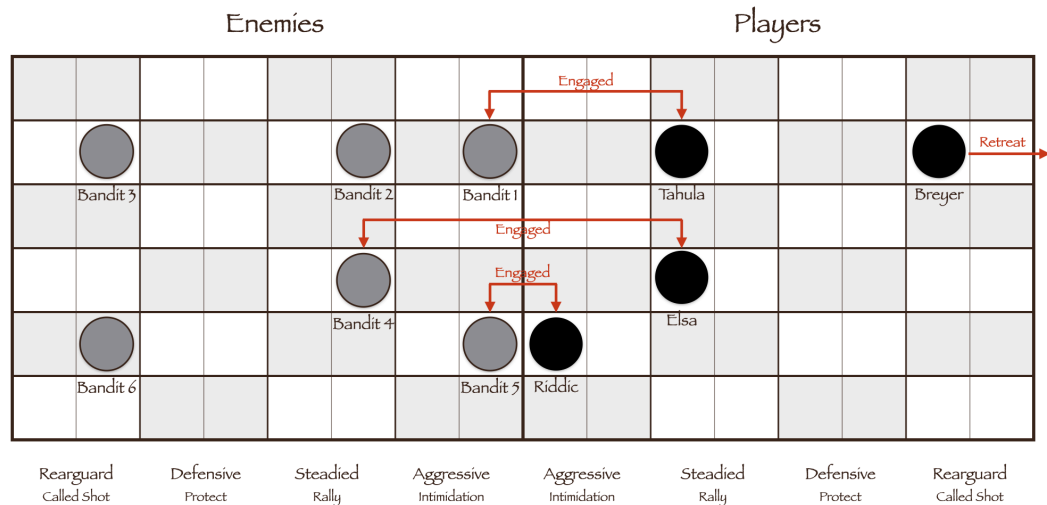
If a character *Retreats* from combat they must wait at least one round after they have left before re-entering and must re-roll for *Initiative*.

Characters who are not in combat may still be allowed to take turns for story or narrative purposes.

Non-combat characters take their turn during the third turn in each round and may not directly influence combat or the environment where combat is taking place.

Example: *The adventuring party is currently in combat with six bandits. Riddic is in an Aggressive Stance and engaged with Bandit #2. Elsa is in a Steadied Stance and engaged with Bandit 4, and Tahula is in a Steadied Stance and engaged with Bandit #1.*

Breyer is in the same Action Lane as Tahula, but he is not engaged with any enemy. If Tahula does not become Incapacitated this round, Breyer can Retreat and leave combat next round.



Attacking

Any characters in the same *Action Lane* may be attacked with a melee weapon.

- If a melee weapon has “reach” the character may attack the closest character in one adjacent lane.
- Ranged weapons may attack any character in any lane from any stance.
- A character making a ranged attack cannot be Engaged with an enemy and therefore cannot prevent an enemy from Retreating.
- Melee weapons cannot attack from the *Rearguard* stance and only ranged weapons may make a *Called Shot*.

To attack the player rolls the damage dice for their weapon, adds any additional *Proficiencies* and the total is applied to the enemy combatant.

Precision Strike (Critical Hit)

If a character rolls the highest number available on their damage die, they rolled a *Precision Strike*. The character may roll an additional damaging dice, adding any additional bonuses.

A character may also choose to forgo the additional damage dice and take a *Maneuver* instead.

I think I like this a lot of crit hits as it gives "rogue" type characters with daggers a lot of utility since they are likely to crit more often. Allows them to leverage more Maneuvers in lieu of higher damage output. Need to test the math here.

Need to test the math here to see if this makes ranged attacks too powerful. Perhaps ranged only gets to roll on additional dice and melee gets max value on 2 damage dice?

Enhanced Attacks

When an attack is enhanced the player may add an additional damage dice for each enhancement. They will roll all of their damage dice and take the highest single dice. Attacks can become enhanced due to various skills/abilities of the players or by environmental combat situations such as a surprise attack, attacking from an elevated position, etc.

Instead of attacking with an additional dice a player may choose to instead attack with their regular damage die and conduct a *Maneuver*. You must declare a *Maneuver* before rolling your additional damage dice. Some Maneuvers may only be attempted with melee weapons.

Impaired Attacks

When a character is impaired, they will roll an additional dice for each impairment and then take the lowest value. Similar to *Enhancements*, impairments can stack depending upon the situation.

Example Elsa is carrying a sword with a damage dice of 1d10. Her character is currently hiding in the shadows and on her turn will emerge from the shadows to attack. Her attack is Enhanced because she was hidden. She therefore can roll 2d10 and take the higher value.

Maneuvers

The following *Maneuvers* can be executed by a character when they achieve a *Precision Strike* or if they choose to expend one *Breath* during their turn.

Disarm

You disarm a target forcing it to drop one item of your choice that it is holding. This may include its mouth or other appendages.

Distract

You distract the target allowing all attacks against that target for the next round to receive a +1 bonus.

Evade

You can evade all attacks for the next round of combat, receiving damage only on a critical hit.

Feint (Melee)

You feint, causing the enemy to hesitate. You may re-roll your damage die and take the higher result.

Goad

You goad a single target into attacking you on the next round. The attack against you is *Enhanced* and any attack against another target in your lane is *Impaired*.

Grapple (Melee)

After your attack you attempt to grapple the creature with a Dex check. Upon success the enemy may not move and its attacks are *Impaired*. The character grappling must make Str save each round to continue to hold the grapple.

Hide/Cover

You hide or take cover provided there is a place to do so. Your next attack after coming out from hiding is *Enhanced*. You may hide for more than one round of combat. You may not be hit with a ranged weapon while hiding and only Engaged enemies may attack you.

Splash damage or other area of effects will still hit you for *Impaired* damage.

Lunge (Melee)

You may lunge at a target increasing your range to attack any enemy in your lane or an adjacent lane, or if your melee weapon has *Reach* you may attack up to two lanes over.

Parry (Melee)

You may choose to parry a melee attack from one enemy, avoiding all damage, including a critical hit. The enemy must make a melee attack against you next round. A *Maneuver* may still be enacted against you.

Push (Melee)

You may push a character into one adjacent lane or stance. The character may not move from that position next round.

Trip (Melee)

You may trip one character causing them to become prone.

Squads

Enemies and players may group up together in the same combat lane in three or more to act as a *Squad*.

- Attacks against Squads by a single player are impaired
- Attacks by Squads against a single player are enhanced.
- When attacking as a squad, all attackers roll their damage dice and you take the highest damage roll only to apply it.

Need to explore this concept more to determine if this makes sense as a separate mechanic or if it should just apply to all characters in a combat lane

Damage

When a character takes damage it is first applied to any *Breath* that they may have. Once a character's *Breath* has been exhausted any remaining damage is applied to the appropriate *Characteristic*.

Characteristic	Saves & Checks	Damage Types
Strength	Requiring physical power	Physical damage such as bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing
Dexterity	Requiring speed or reflexes	Cold, lightning, radiant, thunder
Wilpower	Requiring endurance, resilience, resistance or fortitude.	Fire, poison, force, acid, stench
Sanity	Requiring mental acuity or abilities to perceive one's surroundings	Psychic, necrotic, curse, hallucination, rage
Luck	Requiring manipulation of people, to deceive, interrogate, or manipulate	Fragrance, charm, gluing, healing, seduction, addiction, withdrawal

Characteristic Score Loss and Save Score Increase

Whenever damage exceeds a player's *Breath* it is applied to the appropriate *Characteristic*. A player's DC number will decrease and their ST number will increase. The player must roll a 1d20 Saving Throw for the *Characteristic* that has taken damage. If the character succeeds, they are still on their feet and ready to fight, albeit weaker from the damage. If they fail, they become *Incapacitated*.

Example

Elsa: Breath 3

Characteristic	DC Check	Saving Throw
Str	11	9
Dex	13	7
Wil	5	15

Elsa has a Breath of three (3) and she has been hit with a great sword resulting in six (6) total damage.

She subtracts the first three points from her Breath, bringing her Breath down to zero (0). She then takes the remaining three (3) points of damage and applies it to her Strength Characteristic, decreasing her DC by three (3) and increasing her ST by three (3).

Her new values are DC eight (8) and ST twelve (12)

Characteristic	DC Check	Saving Throw
Str	8	12
Dex	13	7
Wil	5	15

She must now make a Saving Throw (ST) against her new number. She rolls a 1d20 and rolls a nine (9) resulting in a failure. She is now Incapacitated.

Incapacitated and Death

When a character is *Incapacitated* they fall prone to the ground and cannot take any actions. During their turn they may drag themselves one unit of measure (i.e. 5 feet, 1 meter, one combat square, etc.) in any direction.

Any additional attacks made against the character are *Enhanced* and any additional damage is applied directly to the relevant *Characteristic*. The character does not need to roll any additional Saving Throws during the encounter.

If any *Characteristic* reaches zero (0) the player is dead, unable to be revived except through magical means.

Dying, Stabilization, and Recovery

Dying

If a character is *Incapacitated*, but survives an encounter they fall unconscious and are *Dying* until the end of the next *Phase*. For each unit of distance traveled or each hour that passes the character must make a Saving Throw on each *Characteristic* that received damage during the encounter. A minimum of four Saving Throws occurs per *Phase*, even if the party makes *Camp*.

Each time a character fails they must apply 1d4 damage to that *Characteristic*. If any *Characteristic* reaches zero (0) the player is dead.

Stabilization

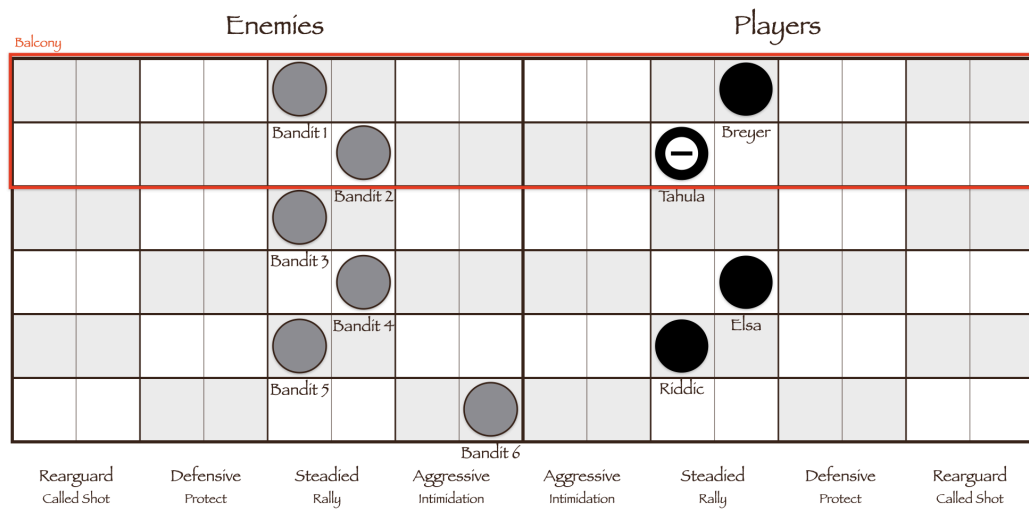
A character becomes *Stabilized* through potions, magic or by rolling a twenty (20) on their Saving Throw. When *Stabilized* a character does not need to make any additional Saving Throws, but remains unconscious until the end of the next *Phase*.

Recovery

At the completion of the next *Phase* a character *Recovers* and is no longer *Dying*. They regain their *Breath* but do not gain back any *Characteristic* scores unless they are able to rest in a *Refuge* or in a bed.

When a character is able to rest in a *Refuge* or a bed, they regain 1d4 points to all *Characteristics* below their max value.

Combat Example

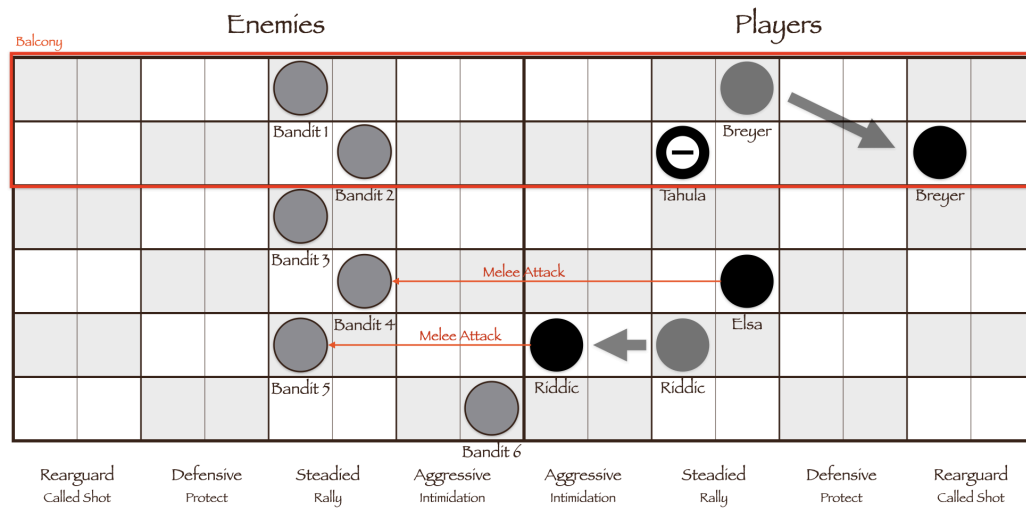


Riddic, Elsa, Tahula and Breyer are in a tavern and a fight breaks out with a squad of bandits. The party rolls for *Initiative*, with everyone succeeding their Dexterity Save except Tahula.

The bandits have more characters than can fit in the Steadied stance and will place one bandit in the Aggressive Stance.

The top two Action Lanes represent a balcony inside the tavern. Attacks from the balcony to other Action Lanes are *Enhanced* and attacks from the ground floor to the Balcony are *Impaired*, due to the elevation.

Round 1: Turn 1 - Player Turns



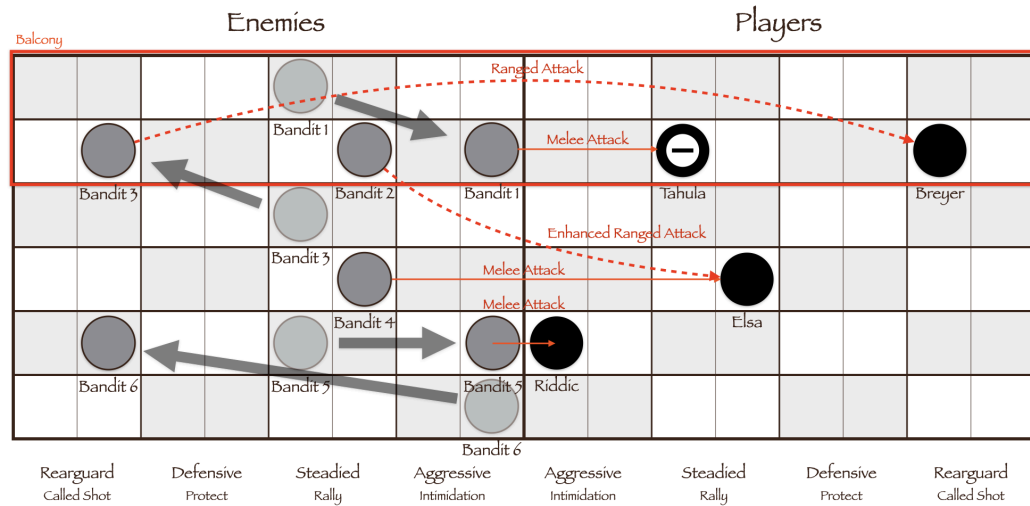
Riddic moves forward to an Aggressive stance, pulling out his Battle Axe and attacking Bandit #5.

Elsa remains in the Steadied stance and takes a shot with her hand crossbow at Bandit #3. She rolls max damage on her crossbow resulting in a *Precision Strike*. Elsa chooses to do a Maneuver and Distracts Bandit #3, meaning that all attacks against that enemy next around receive a +1 on the attack.

Thula is unable to act this round because she failed her *Initiative*.

Breyer moves to the Rearward position on the Balcony and readies a Called Shot on Bandit #2. He will make an attack next round.

Round 1: Turn 2 - Bandit Turns



Bandit #1 moves forward to an Aggressive Stance and attacks Thula with their sword.

Bandit #2 remains in place and throws a dagger from the second floor balcony at Elsa. The attack is *Enhanced*, due to their elevation on the second floor.

Bandit #3 is in an adjacent Action Lane to the balcony and can move up to the balcony on this turn. (If they were not in an adjacent lane, they would need to move to an adjacent lane first). They run up the balcony and throw a dagger at Breyer.

Bandit #4 stays in their Steadied Stance and attacks Elsa with their shortsword. They roll a Precision Strike and choose to take the extra damage.

Bandit #5 moves forward to an Aggressive Stance and attacks Riddic.

Bandit #6 moves to a rearward position and attacks Riddic with their shortbow.

Round 1: Turn 3 - Environment and Resolve Damage

Enemies										Players									
Balcony																			
																			
	Bandit 3				Bandit 2		Bandit 1				Tahula						Breyer		
																			
					Bandit 4						Elsa								
	Bandit 6						Bandit 5		Riddic										
Rearguard Called Shot		Defensive Protect		Steadied Rally		Aggressive Intimidation		Aggressive Intimidation		Steadied Rally		Defensive Protect		Rearguard Called Shot					

Patrons in the bar now begin to panic with the fight that breaks out, several tables have been flipped over and a large cask of wine was broken open, making the bottom most Action Lane flammable.

Damage is now resolved. Bandit #5 is Incapacitated from Riddic's axe attack and Elsa is Incapacitated from the damage she received from the Precision Strike.