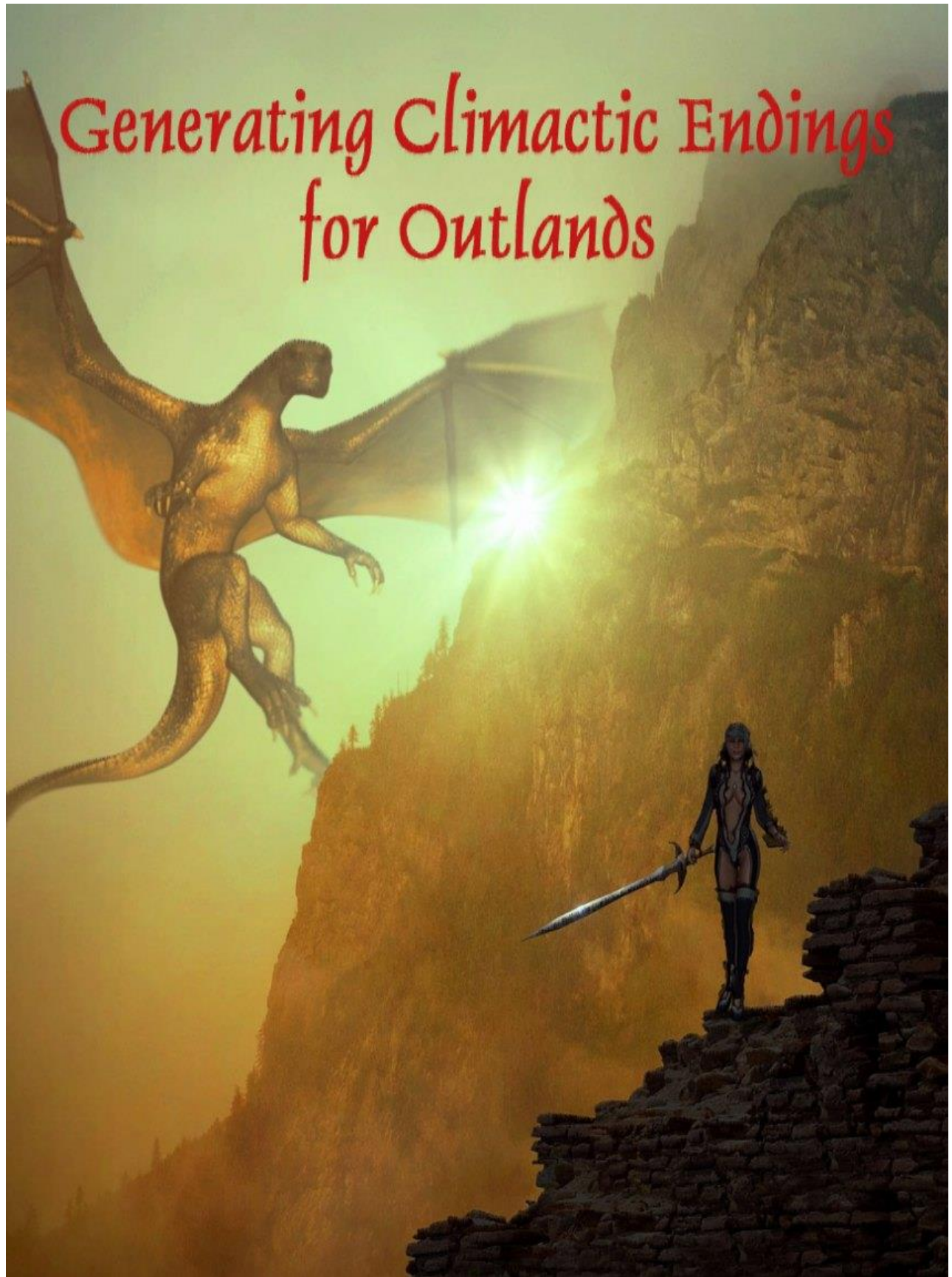


Generating Climactic Endings for Outlands



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George H. Rahm © 2019

Design: Rahm & Hillmer

Art Director Emeritus: Todd Pickens

Cover Art: Stefan Keller

Tarot Images: Pamela Colman Smith from *Golden Dawn Deck* of 1909

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Understanding Climax Challenges

After progressing in all three phases of travel, or when the Referee deems, the climax arrives. What is the climax? The Climax Challenges are the final battles, role-play action or ultimate achievement of goals. It is moderated to a greater detail than travel encounters. The climax represents the heart of play – a realization of purpose, a chance to fulfill the mission’s objectives. Play was not simply for play, but for the motives of the characters. In the climax, the characters are challenged and hopefully earn the terms set by the patron by completing the task successfully.

Every scenario has an ultimate event, battle, meeting, finality that must be interpreted – the climax. If a villain needs vanquishing, the climax of the scenario will be personal combat; most likely this battle will occur in the rival's stronghold or the underworld. Likewise, if a mission involves moving from *Place A* to *Place B* with an item or information, the climax represents the termination of the player’s travel. But final delivery of the item may be difficult, some threat will lie in the way and must be eliminated, avoided or negotiated. Should the mission have no travel—a garrison or stationary bodyguard—the climax represents the greatest threat faced in the location of service. Yet even a scenario which has no travel, may have three settings of the surrounding vicinity, usually a port city-state.

In order to complete the mission, job or task, the players must triumph in the climax. Think of the climax as a series of obstacles. Once all are surpassed, the scenario continues to final travel, a wrap-up or true conclusion in the Epilog. The

danger doesn't end after the climax, but the primary objective of the mission has been completed or abandoned as failed. After the climax, the players still must escape and return home, often to a meeting with their patron.

The players may attempt to overcome certain obstacles within the climax more than once, trying to finally succeed and pass to the next. This can force the players to accomplish again a previous challenge or change the future order of the obstacles.

Example, one player climbs a wall to lower a rope to others. Obstacle one in this case was a fortress wall. But he sees the place is heavily guarded. He might decide to abort this action and try again by digging a tunnel under a wall or using theatrics to gain a plausible excuse for entry.

The example continues. The group might fight a dozen guards to free a prisoner (obstacle two), but the rolls go bad. After the surviving players flee, they might regroup and charge the jail again; this time less Brash. Or, when the group returns they may have to once again cross the wall (obstacle one). Do they still have that tunnel or will the access excuse work twice? *"We forgot our bagpipes."* Whether the guards remain there (in obstacle two) depends on the Referee. The prisoner may have been moved to another location on the climax schematic? On the previous attempt the guards probably would have sounded the alarm. At the very least, the group might meet the rival instead as new second obstacle. The Ref's role here is to keep things consistent and offer a balanced and honest challenge.

Five Climax Obstacle Types

All climaxes are combinations of the following five obstacles:

- A** – Rival.
- B** – Rival's Forces.
- C** – Physical Barriers.
- D** – Unknown Information or Fresh Ace-in-the-Hole.
- E** – Future Threats or Secondary Events.

A – *Rival*, my oh my, someone's going to suffer. The rival should be known to at least the Ref. He's an important NPC or group of NPCs. He will wield power, money and influence, but also the rival can be one nasty duelist. Don't forget, the main bad-guy probably had an Ace-in-the-Hole advantage generated at the start with the mission. The rival may control or even be a monster. Many are high level; many start battle Enraged. All should have a name. Even the beasts should be not just a

species, but a specific creature known to the area or in legend. David doesn't slay a giant; he downed Goliath.

This obstacle represents combat (beginning with conversation or monolog) directly facing the rival – in personal duels or as the opposing commander in other battles. This usually is the last obstacle that must be faced. If not, then the rival will usually escape if the players are victorious in the duel or battle. The Referee decides if the enemy is met yet again later or after the climax. The definitive obstacle is player versus rival intrepid swaggering. Much might be lost, besides life, in the duel.

B – *Rival's Forces* can act independently from their master in a similar manner as KNAVE. (Per mission consequence encounters.) Besides direct engagement, these can be subtle acts of intrigue that hinder the players. If there are still traitors in the group, they would finally reveal themselves. The rival's men could foster rebellion or mutiny as an obstacle to the climax. Likewise, a shortage of supplies or arms discovered in the climax can be attributed to agents represented by this obstacle. Not everything needs to be solved with combat tables, right?

Strike before the final obstacle to wound and hinder. Reduce the number of longboat techniques the players may utilize. These losses can be permanent or temporary. The rival's men might need to be engaged by the servitor crew, held in check, while the player characters proceed to the final event alone. The rival's forces may even represent game modifiers: zeroing of the Quest pip, the loss of make-rolls, the penalty of beginning with a bane or Shaken.

Likewise, the win against the minions may give advantages going into the ultimate showdown. The players may be given a choice, attack the supporting forces and perhaps build a bonus or strike without delay? Regardless, the rival's forces will continue into the Epilog. Who is to truly say how they might react if the mission was successful or their master was defeated or slain?

C – *Physical Barriers* will impose a thinking dilemma for the players: where to cross a desert, when to scale a wall, how to get refugees across a river, which skill to use as a diversion or disguise, what plot, intrigue or action allows escape, how much magical prep is risked, etc. Note each has a buzzword question (where, when, how, which, what). All actions must be resolved by the Referee based on group's plan. Failure during a physical barrier can cause delay, direct wounds, loss of servitors and equipment, or attract the rival's minions if not the rival himself. These are nice opportunities to craft a Q&D which describes a hardship or action. See the Encounters booklet for many examples of recovery, motivation and planning.

D – *Unknown Information* poses the greatest problems for the players, and to be honest, the Ref too. As the players try to discover clues or gain information, the encounters will generate most action. But as part of the climax, something unknown

usually means the players must make a discovery. They must interrogate, bribe or recruit aid from the rival's forces. Perhaps the players must cooperate with grumblers in the rival's force or join an independent force of similar motives.

This can also represent discoveries of twists or other mission deviations then those initially generated. The Ref may pick a new card for Ace-in-the-Hole Flair and add it right here. (Find the table under mission generation.) The standard dungeon crawl never truly fails as a way of having the players select a path and uncover whether their guess was more or less dangerous. The fog of war in many online virtual table tops allows the players to stab blind, as also does the dry erase map showing each small battle en route to the final obstacle. Most fantasy games rely on these maps to be the entire set of obstacles in the climax.

Unknown information could put players in wrong location, against the wrong troops, on the wrong day, with the wrong equipment or servitors. It can also pose a mystery. e.g. Why is a gate previously entered now locked? If in doubt use this obstacle to represent a test (as a last resort a die roll test) that must be passed successfully. Failure of this test means this one or several other challenges must be repeated. A whole climax with new challenges may be faced. Look ahead to find Schematics Endings that can be used to quickly generate a set of true obstacles in a short amount of time.

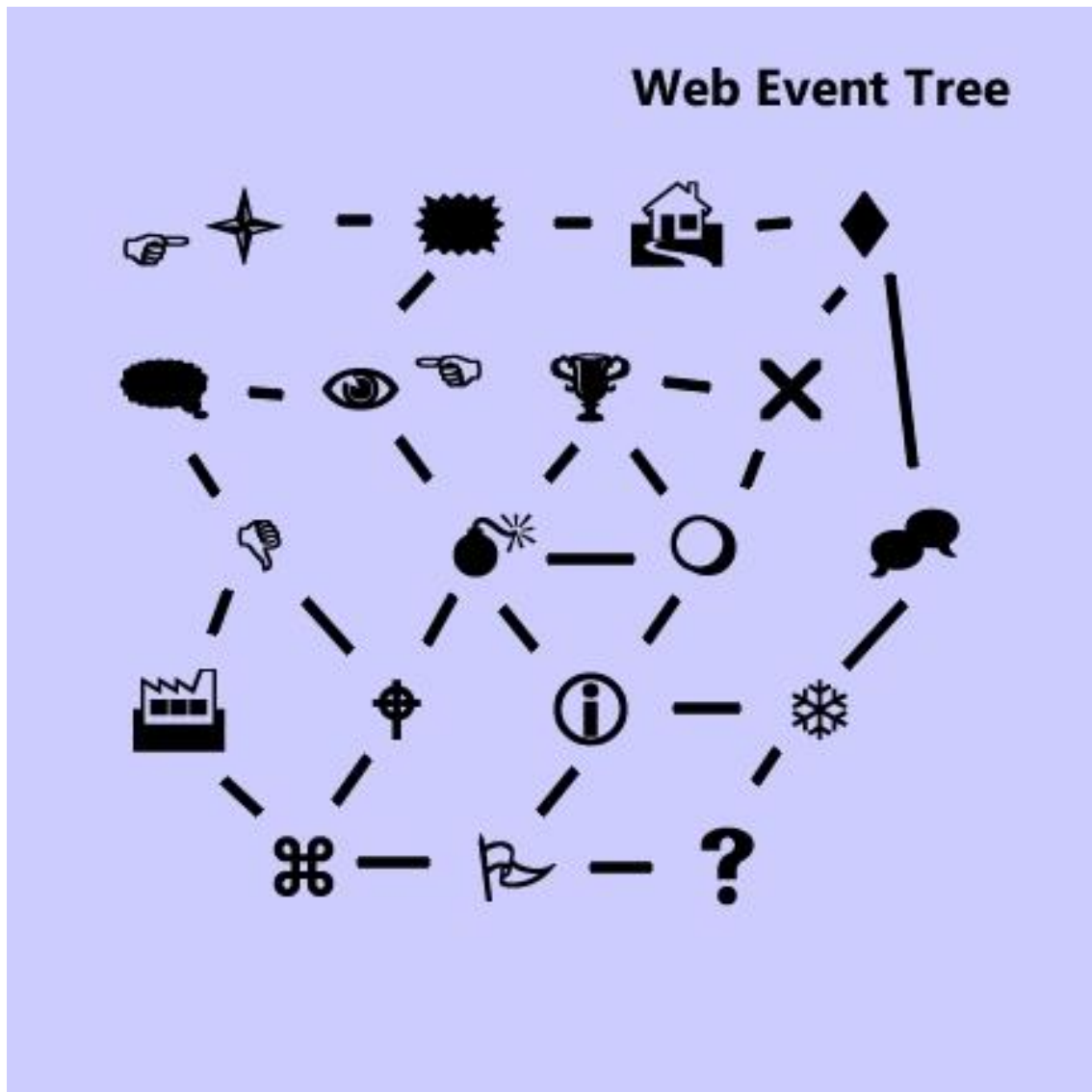
I also like using the mechanical method **Clue Points**. A number is set. With each event in the climax and each application of the players' ingenuity, the number of *Clue Points* increases. If set at the very beginning of the adventure, every KNAVE captured and interrogated, every tavern keeper bribed, every trail inspected, and augury perused, will add a clue point or two to solving the big mystery. That way you don't need to try to craft actual clues and hints (hard) and instead may let the players know the ending, but the characters cannot reach the desired outcome until *X Clue Points* are discovered (acquired). e.g. You only know where the rival is hiding the relic after the group gains ten clues over the entire set of encounters and at Cherson city-state where the climax occurs. Perhaps even roll a single D8 under the clues for success?

E – Future Threats or Secondary Events mean usually the rival is never faced directly in the climax. If this is the case, he will become a future enemy of the players. (See scenario's Aftermath and Downtime booklet.) Additionally, the mission may adversely impact the longboat, a player character's property or the group's patron liege lord – causing direct raids by a rival during a future mission, even for a different patron.

Or the outcome of the climax will become a Campaign event. Pick one from those examples listed in the encounters' booklet. The players might receive a warning of an unforeseen opponent. One that by success, they might anger. They

might face a neutral party, an agent who petitions them even here to abandon their mission. A relative of one player character might appear to tell him to give up such folly or return home. magical projections could deliver information or suggest the party has been duped. The image of a Zaire? Is it truly or another ploy?

This is a climax obstacle, so this does not just represent known consequences for completing or failing the mission. Rather, these represent unforeseen bad events. Something which isn't random. e.g. A king's death by old age is to be expected, but one who dies by act of intrigue, an intrigue the rival might have prevented if he wasn't busy protecting himself from the players. This obstacle may or may not be preventable, and it is usually the last of the series. *"We've halted the invasion, but we've got to stop the traitor's shaman from reaching the altar and releasing a demonic bane."*



In Practice How We Do This?

The Referee constructs the climax using combinations of the five obstacles, *A* to *E*. For instance, a climax to a mission attempting to recover some stolen jewelry might be succinctly:

C --> B --> A

Step One: Enter a fortress of rival.

Step Two: Battle his first line of guards.

Step Three: Battle him in his private chamber.

This example climax is pretty cut and dry. It also tends to lack novelty. It does suffice – it’s easy to generate, adaptable as players make plans, and presents numerous applications. The sequence can stay the same, yet the events can change.

Another similar example: C --> B --> A

Step One: Navigating through shallows in a fog. Each player must roll against his master’s role and best skill. A Q&D of events or specific events for each officer aboard depends on the Ref’s prep and time. In flip card play (on the fly) trust your players to be imaginative – you don’t always need to be the clever one at the table.

Step Two: Use ship engagement and boarding actions to get on the rival’s flagship. The Fundamentals book has plenty of sets of Q&D, use them. Better yet, just use part of them. If something seems to sound awkward or out of place, an event seems strange to interpret, change it or accept that the main content is the Difficulty, Advantage and Outcome. Tables with finality, ones that state Success and obtain victory or Success and obtain escape, are useful because they put the players into a crisis and yet have the ending bound within. Let each player have a turn, both risk and chance to end the obstacle. Keep going until they all fail, or one succeeds. The math is on your side (if you like gore). The more rolls the players make, the more they do, eventually one will see his dice fail at the worst of outcomes. Not enough to make the game mean spirited, but enough to make each player tingle a bit as he dices.

Step Three: Duel in rowers’ hold, using personal duels. Add more characters each round, after the first player gets here. The rival could be killing rowers or using magic or a creature to bore a hole in the hull. The players may have to take turns both trying to down him and counter his actions. This could be swagger vs swagger or restricted to specific Methods. Some of the group might be ineffective or take alternate actions of support, but all should have some involvement, even if that is self-preservation. “*I’m being choked?!?*”

Use your Voice in Free-Style

How do you role-play physical tests, like navigating through a fog? Granted, the players are not physically running the ship (to use the example), but the situation prompts decisions that are role-play oriented. Should they wait for the fog to lift? Do they have any traits, skills or swagger to aid them? Do any of them have a plan to use the ship's dingy or crew instead?



When it seems like role-play is becoming just a set of hard dice rolls, step back and start to describe the dangers and the possible mishaps. Let the players counter with details of what they attempt. Set the Degree of Difficulty. Haggle the roll down as skills are suggested to temper and mitigate the challenge. Sure, it may digress into whining, but other players do ameliorate and moderate ideas wrong for a specific character. *“Is my Horticulturist with an Amalgam(O) blade any help?”*

The Referee might jot down a few what-if options. e.g. If the players ignore the fog, this happens...*Event A*. If they travel without sails and use the ship's jollyboats as a scout, this happens...*Event B*. If the players test the water depth—cast the lead—this happens,...*Event C*. Any other ideas of merit...*Event D*. What are these events, you might ask? Still unsure what all this means, like what's a jollyboat or what's *cast the lead*?

By playing the game, you will experience as a Ref many kinds of encounters and situations prompting combat. The game will teach you and the players by immersion. You'll see misadventures defined. You'll read results when mysterious things happen. You learn how it's the characters' weaknesses, which are unavoidably on display, and how amusing it is to see the players overcome a seemingly fated to be disastrous outcome. You might later write a campaign (help is on the way) or be curious and do some research online.

Besides some tables you'll find later, don't sweat the little stuff. Start simple and catch the fury later. I like running the combat tables with or without flairs as obstacles. I laugh. I'm surprised. I enjoy the player reactions to the results, especially as they follow one after another. *"Why am I the guy who gets the Bane? And, he's the guy who gains Heroic Swordplay? I guess I'm comic relief. Okay, hero – your turn."*

As the Referee you can reinterpret events. Climaxes can be combat tables. Climaxes can be dialog exchanges. Climax challenges are for both you and your players to describe.

An event is not whether a ship runs aground, too easy – hit and miss. The events are similar to encounters, maybe related to fog maybe not. Is an outcome fated or in motion based on a player decision? Scan down the lists presented in the encounters booklet and pick a few that entertain. The usual categories are Discovery, Longboat, Misadventure, Specials, Natural, Exotic, etc. The encounter book has lots to peruse. Don't own it? Come on, support a small independent game company and get creative right quick.

More on the example:

Event A – Players pass the rival and finally see him after he starts to conjure a demon. *"Archers fire and break up his circle of followers"*

Event B – A crewman slips and falls overboard, while launching the dingy. *"Do we delay Sir or let him drown?"* I can hear the grumbling of the crew.

Event C – Players come across the grounded and scuttled vessel of the rival. After collecting the survivors, a player notices a small boat is missing. It is later found beached on a nearby isle. *"He's lost his ship, marooned and done for; shall we muster a few lads to go ashore?"*

Event D – Players get right to the fight with the rival, pass the obstacle, for being creative.

Flip for Variety

No climax flow is ever wrong, and the type of combat used is at the Referee's discretion. The Referee must be sure to include obstacles to account for any special mission concerns generated by Tarot. The following can help generate climax challenge obstacles. Pick a Tarot and compare:

Referee's Aid – Typical Climax Flow Paths

~ *Cups*: C --> B --> (E)

~ *Rod*: B --> C --> (A)

~ *Coins*: B --> D --> (E)

~ *Swords*: C --> B --> (A)

Note: Obstacles in parenthesis occur only if the card will end the climax.

Major Tarot cause the selection of two cards. The pair will chain together, making an even longer climax of obstacles. e.g. Selection of *Death* card means we grab two more. The two more cards could be the *Devil* and a *Sword*. Yet the *Devil* is discarded for two more, say a *Sword* and a *Coin*. We have finally a climax challenge of two *Swords* and a *Coin*.

C --> B --> C --> B --> B --> D --> E

Grand Example

Start with the mission that the group is trying to transport navigational charts overland with a twist, the item is in two pieces. The patron has half the charts; he gives these to the players. The rival has the other half. He wants both, of course. The patron is not with the players. He tells them to meet a man in a tavern in a distant port. Name the tavern, *Red Goose*, and use a codeword, *Cavendish*, to recognize the agent provided. Secretly, the patron will be this agent at the port at the journey's end. The players should go overland. If they ever move by water, they will instantly meet the rival in his Tesseractoneres (a story fate). They do not know this but are warned to avoid the water. Assume the players travel through three settings (all land) and enter the climax. The challenges are set by the Referee in this order:

B --> D --> C --> B --> B --> D --> B --> C --> A

Obstacle One: Fight Q&D Skirmish in outskirts of the area between player's warriors and a legionary cohort of cavalry loyal to their rival.

Obstacle Two: Do the players know the charts are in two parts? If not, they discover this now. They may decide incorrectly that a traitor has stolen part of the charts or that returning to the patron is the only logical option. They may think the charts are damaged or magically being erased.

They must overcome their fears and press-on. My players probably have looked at the charts during encounters. There they determined that they only had half. Here at this obstacle, they are looking for the man codenamed *Cavendish*. I add

an Unknown Surprise. Add **Knave Cups: Gronk Enforcer**. You can read the full result later in the booklet under Tactical Surprises. I decide this guy can only be bested by Wrestling Holds (T). I selected that, because I know two of the player characters have that personal swaggering.

As they ask around for Cavendish, the Gronk pretends to be him. If the players give in too easy, they lose. They should be suspicious. Fake Cavendish can show the players a fake other half of the maps. Something seems odd, but do the players have the traits, skills and swagger to see the two would never mesh. Cartographer and Mariner might help. If neither are in the party, perhaps a reveal by someone Clever. That character might also check Growth and vow at level advancement to select the true skills he seems to have a knack for.

One of the players hears muffled sounds and should discover that the patron is tied-up in a closet. The Gronk attacks. Each player as I go around the table, tells me how he defends. All risk injury, but by selecting the right swaggering they can win. If they don't beat this guy, they fail the mission. If they win, they have freed the patron (Cavendish) and can pass off their half of the map to him.

Obstacle Three: The patron came here by sea. The rival captured him, learned the plan. The assembled navigational charts describe the location of a treasure in a cove along the coast immediately outside of this port, Isborsk. The players may share that treasure if they can get the patron there. They don't have the full charts but can get close.

The players can quit at any time and follow with the Epilog? Likely they will try to leave the area, only to discover the port is under siege by the rival's forces. The players might decide to force passage at night, rather than face numerous opposing cohorts. If they might slink out by moving their longboat across an isthmus to a river. Resolve their plan to decide whether they move to step four or with finesse step five.

Obstacle Four: Force passage out of the besieged port using Q&D Outdistance Retreat, looking for secondary objective signaling they successfully broke free. They might also need to start with Q&D Rally, just to get their crew to attempt the action. Do they have the techniques Longboat Battle Ready (H) and Longboat Comradery (P) to avoid that on Ordinary roll?

Obstacle Five: Ambush by outliers in rival's forces; fight a personal duel without Magical or Recitation method, nothing too flashy, to get past them. Size of the target number to defeat is roughly equals that of players' group. The patron must also be protected from harm. One player each round must select a Brash card as if it was a Bane.

Obstacle Six: The treasure in a cove. The cove is entered by sea or through a tunnel under a local garrison fortress. Warn that the rival has several ships along the coast. The longboat needs to stay further out and out of harm's way. The players at best will swim or fashion a make-shift raft. Wait, could they also use magic in a thousand and one ways to get to the cove. Of course. There's also the entrance via the fortress, but that takes the players below ground. Who likes a random Underworld attack, say Q&D Denizens (pg 172) or Q&D Hysteria (pg 186). Both out of the encounters booklet. Players trying the land option will also change sequence to B --> D --> E (It's detailed as optional.)

Obstacle Seven: Assuming they don't swim (unlikely all will risk that), the players raft will be sighted. One of the rival's galley will close in on the group. They must board and take over the enemy ship but with a time limit of three rounds. (In my large play group, this would be easy.) Anything more and they face the Tessarakonteres with its defensive modifier of six. They need a galley to move the treasure anyway. When they take the prize, let the lowest level player name the vessel. He can later sell the otherwise worthless galley ship for a small treasure to invest or add a technique to the group's longboat.

Obstacle Eight: Use charts to traverse the coves while evading enemy ballistae pot-shots. The Tessarakonteres and galleys flip three Bane cards, one for each closing enemy ship, using Q&D Dragon Zone of Terror. What, a dragon!

No, the table is used for the danger, but the events are slightly altered for the experience. Besides, fighting the large Greek fire hurling Tessarakonteres is sort of like battling a dragon. Three different players must volunteer to take the event rolls. Flair: any result which suggest movement onto the beast means the group escapes to the cove without further action. If I had time I might review the table (cut and paste) and make the changes before the game. But I'm game savvy, smart; I trust my players. If for instance I get this: *Zone Terror Knave: Shout and inspire, get all to see this as just another animal that needs killing. Fail and all players suffer Shaken (penalty). Difficulty: 9 Advantage: Skill Rabblrouser* I know to swap words; it's not an animal. Wait, that one works sort of.

Let me get a second example: *Zone Terror 2: Experience the inferno, when swatted to the side of the arena by the combined strike of claw, neck and tail. Fail and lose any Swaggering Technique. This loss may be taken personally, or from your weapon or magical abilities. It may not be removed from your Mount nor suffered collectively on the group's longboat (if present). A character without appropriate techniques to lose is outright slain. Difficulty: 11 Advantage: Blade Defender (F)* Well, the claw could be a grapple hurled my way or a boarding platform that drops, I could even imagine an actual claw being conjured by magic using henchmen. Again,

what matters is the roll of eleven with my character getting two dice or three by having Defender (F). Fail and lose swagger. It's all there, every table to adapt (plus the ones you and I wrote for amusement and posted in the spacegamer.com VOX). I don't truly have to ring my hands and wonder if it works. I have experience, been doing this for decade.

The party can also magically escape and try the land route under the fort. (Not advisable.) Perhaps add a success roll from a player to find the loot. Prompt task resolution constantly within the climax; let every player get a chance to look at his character sheet, pick an ability and attempt a roll. These can add positive or negative die roll modifiers to the last obstacle. e.g. *"I use my Hunter skill to see if the treasure has been disturbed."*

Obstacle Nine: Grab the chests of loot and flee up the hidden stairs to the fort (not advisable) or back out to rendezvous with player's true crew and ship; tow the one named by the lowest level player. Finally, we meet the main galleon of the rival. Use the ship engagements and attempt to evade. If the enemy or players decide to board, well, resolve that. The rival will not fight to death in any battle. Where possible, he will escape to plot revenge. The Ref must always be ready to alter his climax challenges based on the players having eh better idea than you planned. It happens. Steer them as they need; let them plot as a group constantly. A mix of *task resolution tests*, *standard combat* and *flair combat* will always produce the rest of the action.

Success and the climax ends. The treasure is coins, bars of silver and jewelry equaling Treasure Laden (D)! The Referee and players could haggle over the split. But I dislike coin counting in games. Half of Treasure Laden might be Abundant Stores (M) or half of Treasure Laden (D) is still Treasure Laden (D). Much might have been left ashore, divvied out, spend frivolously, who is to say? They might have just as easily lost at any obstacle or fled the mission as failed.

Here's a twist for those following the route through the old fort:

Optional Obstacle Seven: The fort was nearly empty. Yet the garrison was one allied to the rival. The players fight a Q&D Storm Walls with a penalty. They might sneak inside alone without those extra longboat techniques they get as a bonus.

Optional Obstacle Eight: They beat back the enemy for now and go to the treasure. The coves and map are hard to follow. The scale was drawn oddly from the perspective of entering by water. The journey down an old set of steps is slippery and dangerous. The players can leave to try the water route (back to the other set of

obstacles). Else, they must roll Ordinary to avoid vicious injuries, falls on sharp rocks. Skilled players may justify (role-play) why they may skip the roll. Here's some ill fortune – the patron will slip and fall and break his neck. The climax may continue, but the aftermath should change.

Optional Obstacle Nine: Eventually the players meet a group of guards numbering double the player's size. These men do not immediately recognize the players as enemies, unless they try to ambush the soldiers. If the players are carrying their dead patron, the rival's guards will automatically think the players killed the man and are there to hide the body. Else, they still might convince the rival's guards that they too are allies. These men will stay with the group for a share in the silver treasure. If the players leave the same way they came, back through the fort, the rival is never met. He becomes an true enemy, who may be met as a KNAVE in the Epilog.

What about the treasure? Well, without a boat to load into, most of it cannot be carried away. The chests must weigh over seven-hundred pounds. *“Fill your pockets and let's be off.”* The rival will gain whatever is left. By Outland's math, ten pounds each of maybe 160 coins, leaves... see how well you attack with ten pounds of jingle in your trousers?

Should some players go by sea and the rest by land, the Ref can run both paths. Or, keep the focus on the main set of obstacles. The guys opting to enter the fort just lose. Digression – knocked unconscious away from others (G).

Running Multiple Paths

The players do split company in the climax, but this doesn't mean the Referee must run their actions in parallel. Most stories don't follow sidekicks. One group could become a diversion, accomplish a critical task, and allow others to get past an obstacle. Both groups might alternate battles, or one side gets three for every one the other group resolves.

The minor force will just be there to suffer player losses or give small dice modifiers to the main story force. Push them back together as soon as possible. The specific details of how the group meets again may be left vague. The action usually stays with the principal player who accepted the mission, the story's true hero, but not always. The players should try to face each challenge together and then move to the next. *“Whenever they split, one side was more right and the other sadly wrong.”*

The Referee can run separate players in different sequences of obstacles, but this takes experience and usually doesn't work well. Idle players tend to laugh out

loud and cause friction. Finish the action at hand, then continue with the main group. The rest use Digressions or join the main group later. Even after long Digressions, the players might reunite in the climax. The passage of time can play a bearing, but who is to say how many days the climax takes anyway. Remember this is fiction (and make-rolls justify much). Having players split to pass one obstacle and then reunite an obstacle later makes good game play. e.g. *“No time to explain how I got untied and then past the monster. We've got to unload our horses and catch that rogue before he makes it to the mountains.”*

Paperwork: Before, After or During

The climax can be generated with the mission or as the agreement on terms are made. Sometimes the Referee will develop the climax with a mission, both in advance, then offer it to the players. This has the disadvantage of giving the players fewer options. i.e. Here's what we're doing today. Sometimes the Referee will end one day's play after deciding what will be the next mission. The group will run Downtime looking for the first player character to accept or instigate a mission. Another fine option, but what happens when the same players cannot reassemble or play continues after one mission is complete into the next.

Here's my secret – time management. I am piecing together obstacles long before the climax is ever needed. As the players are fumbling along (talking, getting snacks, discussing actions before combat, anything in the earlier parts of the game) I use the idle time to conjure climax obstacles. I don't try to write a whole *Underworld*. What if the players never make it to a climax? I do make my notes, knowing a good idea for an obstacle may be filed away for later use now or some other day.

The Referee should not be too intimidated by the magnitude of climaxes. Flip a bunch of cards on the various tables and see what falls together. Not every climax should be an involved and long sequence. Most are simply a string of battles. Using schematics of buildings, instead of drafting complete designs, is another good way to build climaxes with little preparation. There's a section on that method to follow.

The situations in the climax are just a series of hurdles, each having to be battled, crossed, evaded or transacted. Most Referees spend too much time filling in area, planning for needless options, instead of settling on a good climax sequence. Why think of four separate obstacles on different walls of a square fortress, when only one will ever be met? That is not to say clone everything by four. But fate and the Referee writing the story knows crossing the wall is the obstacle, because that's where the rival's agent will engage in personal duels. Life is often lucky accidents, a

test of nerves and ability. The players enter a building of many rooms, find a hall with two doors, and enter one to discover their rival – kismet.

All the leading elements of travel, both mission consequence or other encounters, should also be considered. If the rival lost many men trying to stop the players in transit or is ready because he has received word of the players' plan, such details must be considered. A fully designed climax is too inflexible for game play – leave some gaps to be decided while its being run. If you make a map or have a flow, expect to alter things on the go.

Flip Card Climax Challenges

To endlessly list different climaxes would be trivial compared to the possibilities. These card flips are idea pointers to embellish.

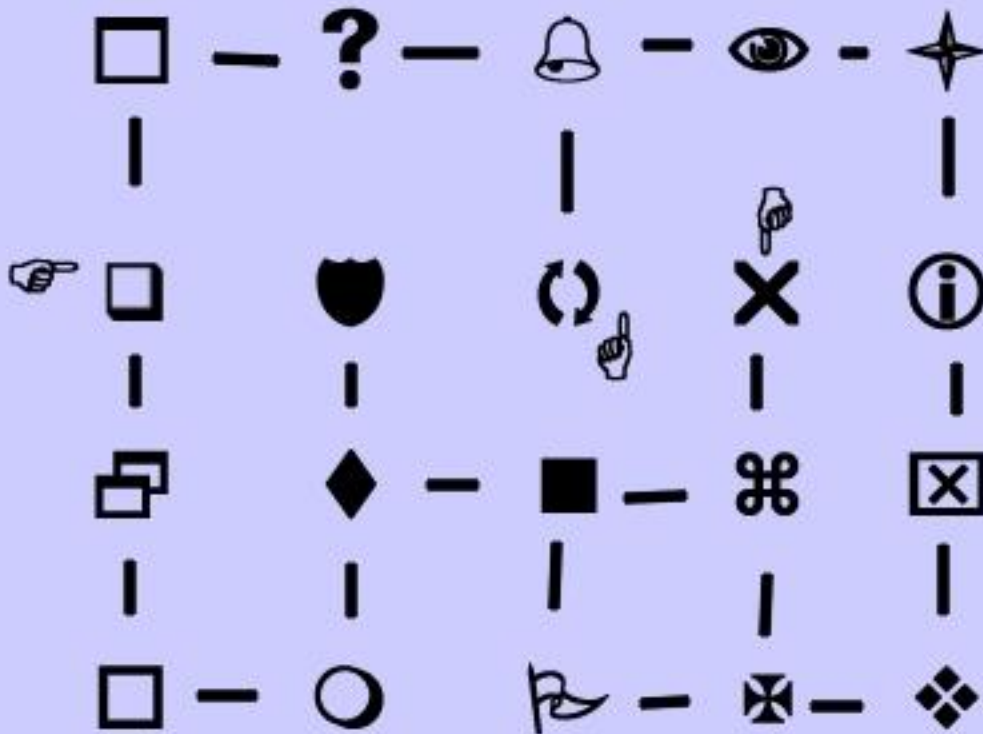
The climax is the outcome, the execution of plans, the battle, the resolution of the task. After the climax, the Referee knows if the players were successful on their mission. With practice, the Referee will become proficient at generating intricate and elaborate, as well as memorable, climax challenges. Keeping the players begging for more.

Tossing a few minions in front of a door or fighting the rival on a parapet usually needs little extra embellishment. However, *C—Barriers*, *D—Information* and *E—Secondary Threats* may require more thought than you and your players are able to summon at 3am during a marathon flip-card session.

These tables should not exclusively replace the routine game elements of climbing walls, predicting when someone is leaving a stronghold, or worrying that a rival has an avenging son. All good examples of climax challenges. The characters have traits, skills and swaggering, specifically so the players will embellish their actions.

Yet you may find these additional tables quite useful. Flip a card to see what else might be generated as a challenge. Most of these should be used with experienced players of experienced characters. Or, crib the result, lower the attempt rolls and give the injured an out. Killing a character is never the goal of play. If you Ref that way, go to hell. Your players will eventually desert you for another Ref.

Square Maze



Climax Challenges – Physical Barriers & Terrain

Sometimes the area around a climax leading to the rival is the obstacle. Instead of just facing a group of his minions in an open field, the descriptions below could present significant problems just getting across a few miles of wilderness. Sure, some towns have cobblestone roads. But even there, on the outskirts where the rival is lying in wait, the situation becomes quite rural. Though the climate, season and latitude should present recognizable terrains, strange pockets of environmental anomaly abound. A glimpse of the world that was or will be, locked by magic, protected by the Mother Earth, Gaia. A snow storm inside a castle keep? Magic of course.

A Terrain Penalty Key follows the event descriptions. The penalties presented may even apply to modify the combat and actions of all the climax obstacles. But

typically, the result is one battle inside the terrain, plus the lingering effects of damage during the crossing.

Physical King Cups: An evaporated sea has left a scarred surface of jumbled rocks and narrow valleys. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Forsaken Isles. There find a known entrance to the first level of the underworld, the Burrows of the Sub-Surface. Penalties include Isolated Null and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Queen Cups: Glacier movement cuts craggy path through a frozen landscape. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Deshii, basically humanoids with bear-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they are unable in posture to row. Penalties include Slowed.

Physical Knight Cups: Prismatic fracture of granite slabs create a stair step surface of stepping stones. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Sidonaires, basically humanoids with hawk-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they're screeching voice is piercing and unbearable. Penalties include Broken Earth and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Knave Cups: Slopes with spontaneous fires constantly smoke as pyrite and organic matter is exposed, usually following one of the area's continuous minor landslides. Visibility reduced by smoke; physical danger from fire and landslides. Rumors say this terrain shelters a Formidable Tower, the home of the true Zaire who guards this greater swarth of the world. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Natural Dangers, No Ranged Attacks, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Ten Cups: Windswept hoarfrost plains are broken only by ridges and drifts of snow and ice. The terrain is a favorite domain of Wargs, enormous wolves, and their sires, Sköll and Hati, doomed to forever chase the sun and moon as the orbs taunt and cross the sky. Penalties include Broken Earth, No Cover and Slowed.

Physical Nine Cups: Ancient ruins of disputed origin form a tangle of foundations and fallen walls. Overgrowth and stealthy transients abound. Beware of losing your purse to imps. Your arrival has definitely been reported to the rival. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Dwarven Doors. There find a garrison of more regimented imps and a known entrance to the first level of the underworld. Penalties include Equipment Mishaps, Isolated Null, Natural Dangers, No Ranged Attacks and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Eight Cups: Swiftly flowing rivers, with numerous minor cataracts and great falls, provide the only open travel routes through an ebon jungle. The terrain is a favorite domain of Dinosaurs, which hardly notice humans, except when

their footfalls accidentally crush someone. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Natural Dangers, No Ranged Attacks and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Seven Cups: Hundred foot tall wedges of limestone form a perilous maze, sectioning dense rain forest. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Aslans, basically humanoids with panther-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they are easily distracted by flashes of light. Penalties include Natural Dangers, No Ranged Attacks and Slowed.

Physical Six Cups: Wet packed sand and shallow salt water pools, rapidly change into crashing surf as the tide flows in. Rushing water has to be one of the most powerful and dangerous natural forces. Not a time to be wearing heavy armor. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Ugarits, basically humanoids with shark-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they bite and remain untamed. Penalties include Natural Dangers and Slowed.

Physical Five Cups: Continuous snow covered land, broken by frozen lakes and dormant volcanoes; these the result of craters formed by ancient meteor strikes. The locals or nonhuman villagers on the outskirts see the center area as especially dangerous and taboo. One particularly notorious place is called the Zar-Do “Agony.” There find a known shortcut to the sixth level of the underworld, the Corridors of Fiends. The beasts from those depths sometimes escape and live for a short time in the twilight of the crater edges. Penalties include Broken Earth, Natural Dangers and Slowed.

Physical Four Cups: Timberlands of red, brown and purple signal the end of Summer, as trees turn from green to gold. Decaying leaves make silent motion impossible and increase the risk of fire. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Jenolan, basically humanoids with owl-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they are deaf and mute in the tonal languages of man. Penalties include Natural Dangers and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Three Cups: Arctic oceanic calm with massive icebergs and ice floes. May only be reached by ship, and the ship will be in danger of being sunk by iceberg strike. Rumors say this terrain shelters a site called the Wild Card. Here the gods come to grant wishes of mortals who stumble into their paradise-trap. Penalties include Isolated Null.

Physical Two Cups: Sweeping and endless plains of dry brown grassland, only wetted by seasonal torrents; millions of wild animals. Danger to foot travelers from stampede and brush fires created by magical flash. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Byblosites, basically humanoids with lion-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make

good slaves, except they roar restlessly at night, disturbing slumber. Penalties include Equipment Mishaps, Natural Dangers and No Cover.

Physical Ace Cups: Saw-tooth peaks coexist with low forested valleys in an area of continuous gentle snowfall that is constantly bathed in soft dusk from a cloud covered sun. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Black Orcs, basically humanoid Neanderthals. Of course, they are smarter than that, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they learn too slowly and cannot abide strong light. Otherwise, no problems or difficulties from the terrain.

Physical King Rods: Soft volcanic rock, molded by wind and water, forms cones and pyramids. Easy to hollow caves for protection from spotting and to set-up ambush. Rumors say this terrain shelters an Oracle Sanctum, once a great place of knowledge before the gods grew offended by the arrogance of the skeptic monks who lived there. Penalties include Isolated Null, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Queen Rods: Seemingly flat terrain randomly collapses or opens into chasms that have been carved by underground rivers. Their smallest cross-section of erosion is close to the surface, but underneath water fills beyond capacity and widens into huge underground lakes. Surface travel at increased risk of sink holes. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Stygians, basically humanoids with alligator-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they seem less than cuddly and find human speech too sibilant to cough out. Penalties include Natural Dangers, No Cover and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Knight Rods: Snaking rivers have carved incredible canyons that are glazed with frost and bearded with conifers. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Unguls, basically humanoids with deer-shaped heads and antlers. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good



slaves, but they are fragile; none have ever been captured and bound alive. Penalties include Broken Earth and No Ranged Attacks.

Physical Knave Rods: Vast escarpments cause unequal levels in surface; frequent landslides of fine gravel raise dust clouds of choking particles. The terrain is a favorite domain of Wyrms, burrowing dragons without flight nor fire. The gravel may just be from the tunnels they create, which extend into the first level of the underworld, the Burrows of the Sub-Surface. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Isolated Null, Natural Dangers, No Ranged Attacks, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Ten Rods: Pleasant mossy plains with mixed foliage lie at the foot of soaring peaks caused by ancient glacier movement. Such beauty fosters day dreaming and complacency. The crew will be homesick for Nordic fjords and climes. The terrain is a favorite domain of Manticore and Gryphons, odd mixes of other creatures. Penalties include Equipment Mishaps and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Nine Rods: Shifting dunes form constantly varying elevation, that are almost always enveloped in storms of swirling sand. Ground visibility is zero. All fear the presence of a ginn. The terrain is a favorite domain of Nagas, snakes with the voices and faces of their last victim. Penalties include Broken Earth, No Ranged Attacks and Slowed.

Physical Eight Rods: Shallow sea (barely over a standing person's head) covers a surface of twisted coral and exotic fish. Danger from protruding sharp coral and voracious sea life. Parasites and barnacles do nasty damage to the hull of any ship which crosses this span. The terrain is a home for Sprites and Water Nymphs, seductive creatures that feed on human desire and flesh. Penalties include Broken Earth, Natural Dangers and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Seven Rods: Hard packed snow domes, miles deep, seem to defy logic as volcanic steam wisps from sulfurous vents. Obvious danger of snow collapsing into a portion of the vent. People randomly vanish, lost below. Characters to Digressions, servitors to death. Rumors say this terrain shelters a embrasure of Colossal Ramparts, the remains of a fortress constructed to house the Third Giant King. The center of these walls have never been reached by anyone living to tell the tale. But weapons of the giants can be seen as monuments, testament to the size and power of the wielder, positioned before the main gates in most city-states. Penalties include Broken Earth and Natural Dangers.

Physical Six Rods: Dense atmosphere constantly erupts in explosive bolts of twisted lightning. Wizardry, particularly Voltaic (N), is needed to deflect the strikes. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Devastated Plains. There find humans have retreated below the ground for safety, their very survival. Here too is a known entrance to the second level of the underworld, the Subterranean Keeps.

Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Natural Dangers, No Ranged Attacks and Slowed.

Physical Five Rods: Sunlight barely reaches the moss covered ground under the canopy of enormous trees in this muggy climate. Beware the last remnants of fae; here is where they most likely dwell (if at all). The fear of something can be as dangerous as the appearance. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Wasted Fens. Elves and dwarves battled to a bitter stalemate that forever changed both races for the worse. There find a known entrance to the first level of the underworld, the Burrows of the Sub-Surface. Penalties include Equipment Mishaps and No Ranged Attack.

Physical Four Rods: Shallow water pools teem with marshy plants and noisy wildlife. Add some lizard men, too, because the Saurians thrive here. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Lost Citadel; as large as an entire city-state, but nothing of human compassion remains. Here find many entrances to the underworld, some to depths only delvers have reached. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps and Isolated Null.

Physical Three Rods: Sand, flat, hot, barren. Horses will suffer; camels would be better for transport. One particularly notorious place is called the Dunes of Woe. There find a known entrance to the second level of the underworld, the Subterranean Keeps. Penalties include Equipment Mishap, No Cover and Slowed.

Physical Two Rods: Jagged peaks flank valleys of misty flood plains. The terrain is a favorite domain of Rocs, gigantic eagles able to pick up an entire longboat, as long as it contains not a single ounce of quicksilver, which feels like a thousand tons to the beast. Ordinary roll of Apothecary or Occult Scholar to coincidentally carry a small amount of mercury. Penalties include Isolated Null and Natural Dangers.

Physical Ace Rods: Crystallized deposits of sandstone create an irregular surface of round and knotted boulders. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Ogres, basically humanoids with gorilla-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they're repellant in smell. Penalties include Broken Earth.

Physical King Coins: In a depressed, flat space of clay and sand, is a small set of ramshackle homes. The surrounding fields seem ill-attended. The land is said to be cursed, but it may just as likely have been over planted and exhausted. The undead will roam after dark. One particularly notorious place is known for being a Dragon Lair, though the beast was supposedly slain an age ago. There find a known entrance to the first level of the underworld, the Burrows of the Sub-Surface. Penalties include Tactical Flaws.

Physical Queen Coins: Strange and puzzling shapes, carved by the elements, rise out of uneven surfaces of sandstone. Morale shaky as imagination forms images of enemy among the shadows and rock figures. Increased chance of actual magical misanthropes practicing their craft. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Dynasty Crypts. There find a known entrance to the fifth level of the underworld, the Tombs of the First Kings. Penalties include Broken Earth and Equipment Mishaps.

Physical Knight Coins: Soft radiant glow illuminates a hard granite surface potted with fractures and only occasionally dotted by lichen or scrub. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Trolls, basically humanoids with exposed bone skulls, not flesh, for heads. Almost all the legends about them are wrong, but most humans are ruled by confirmation bias – ugly is evil. They might make good slaves, except they're truly repellent to look upon; in result often of being burned by the ignorant. Trolls, shielded by illusions, have integrated into human society, most with not an inkling of ill intent. Yeah, sure, so *you* say. Penalties include Equipment Mishaps and No Cover.

Physical Knave Coins: Gnarled surface barren of life and constantly impacted by shifting stones from cliffs and even the impact of heavenly showers of meteors. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Baron's Crag; perhaps just a word play on Barren Crag. There find a known entrance to the third level of the underworld, the Deepest Man-Made Mines. The gate to the Unending Grey will only be active while the sky rains fire. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Isolated Null, Natural Dangers, No Cover, and Slowed.

Physical Ten Coins: Hot jets of steam geyser from an uneven surface of pools and rivulets that bellow and shutter in tremors. One particularly notorious place is called the Demonic Ballrooms. The jets act like a pipe organ and play eerie melodies; recreating the notes on a mandolin is said to be a form of pure wizardry. Or could be just a big bump in Warped Outcome tally? There find a known entrance to the fourth level of the underworld, the Ancient Halls. Penalties include Natural Dangers, No Cover, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Nine Coins: Seething pools of brine decorate a land of sudden earthquakes and pending volcano eruption. One particularly notorious place is called Fount Sorrow. There find a known entrance to the third level of the underworld, the Deepest Man-Made Mines. Penalties include Equipment Mishaps, Natural Dangers, No Cover and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Eight Coins: Land of moors and heather (waist high brush). Peat rich ground is subject to rapid burning and even explosion. Pockets of methane trapped below the damp surface may accidentally ignite under campfire or pyrotechnics. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Goblin Mound. There find all manner of the twisted form of the imp, dancing around the bonfires,

while also offering an entrance to the first level of the underworld, the Burrows of the Sub-Surface. Penalties include Equipment Mishaps.

Physical Seven Coins: In abnormal contrast, snowcapped peaks rise as barriers on the horizon of a stagnant sun valley composed of tar pits and oily filth. Rumors say this terrain shelters an Extensive Magazine, a place established by the first legions to house an emergency cache that can never be exhausted. The tar and oil may just be decomposition of the barrels that once held real supplies. Yet the location was a secret, and the last person knowing the whereabouts died seven hundred years ago. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Isolated Null and Slowed.

Physical Six Coins: Murky oceanic realm miles in depth, the waters almost as black as space. May only be reached by vessel. The isles within are a mix of foam washed sandbars, inky lagoons and razor piles of fish bones, scales and teeth. The terrain is a favorite domain of Stalk Brine, a zombie-alginate hybrid. Mariners call these creatures Drownings. The mobs are favored as slaves to other water favoring sorcerers. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Isolated Null, Natural Dangers, No Cover, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Five Coins: Each step forward is had only by hacking yourself a direct road through the tangle of high bush and thickets. The foliage may not be natural; a man or beast causes it to thrive and mesh. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Hemendra, basically humanoids with tiger-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they foster arcane suspicions, paranoia over who is master and who is slave. Penalties include No Ranged Attacks and Slowed.

Physical Four Coins: Numerous deadwood trees stick oddly out of a sea of sand as coastal breeze, miles away, continues to spread dunes inland. This is a place where the sea ginn battle their brothers of Sand and Wind. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Geckon, basically humanoids with snake-shaped heads, no fangs. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they're impossible for humans to trust. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps and No Ranged Attacks.

Physical Three Coins: Spires, spires and more spires, most over fifty feet tall and only a few yards apart, are all that remain of a surface that has been extracted of all salts by erosion. Ground movement must meander through this maze. Could be the ribs of a fallen giant? Rumors say this terrain shelters a Labyrinthine Vault, a place of great riches and traps designed by a madman. Penalties include Natural Dangers and No Ranged Attacks.

Physical Two Coins: Unimaginably high peaks tower over gale scarred slopes. Definitely the site where a giant was felled in antiquity by a Zaire. The muffled sound of mining signals the dwarves are just below the surface digging

electrum out the marrow. The terrain is favored by wild tribes, basically primitive men who still eat human flesh. They do make good slaves, chained to an oar and civilized under the lash. Penalties include Isolated Null, Natural Dangers and No Cover.

Physical Ace Coins: Calcium carbonate spires create a scabrous surface that surrounds freshwater lakes fed from underground springs. This is a place where underworld denizens accidentally surface in darkness and panic come break of day. Rumors say this terrain shelters a Horrifying Lair, a cave where something even more sinister and deadly than a dragon lies in wait. The immortal monster is trapped, unable to leave the cave (unknown reasons) and return from whence it came. Penalties include No Ranged Attacks.

Physical King Swords: Hard packed tundra and deep snow lay underneath a sky of eerie aurora borealis. Magnetic fields cause a spooky ambiance. The terrain is a favorite domain of electrified Wyvern, a failed attempt to make small dragons to ride. Penalties include Isolated Null and No Cover.

Physical Queen Swords: Columns of rifting ice spires shift on the surface of a frigid ocean. Rumors say this terrain shelters an Arcane Confessional, perhaps just a tiny coffer in a chest, a marker where evil goes to earn redemption from the gods by confessing to sins and surrendering charms of enormous power. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Natural Dangers and No Cover.

Physical Knight Swords: Misaligned cave walls and floors, gouged by flash floods are polished into mirrors. The light reflects in a multitude of directions and hues. Visibility distorted in prism of colors, the locals see this area as enchanted. Servitors will see angels or loved one in the reflections. One particularly notorious place herein is called the Dungeons of Torment, a place that conjures bad memories. There find a known entrance to the fourth level of the underworld, the Ancient Halls. Penalties include Isolated Null (confusing), No Ranged Attack and Slowed (by beauty).

Physical Knave Swords: Stagnant lakes and swamps are covered with miles of giant lily pads as well as other vines and surface scum disturbed only by the motion of fauna (e.g. snakes). One particularly notorious place herein is called the Mires of Misery. Pouring like an hourglass, find an entrance to the first level of the underworld, the Burrows of the Sub-Surface. Or, the quicksand may instead just be a deadly snare. Penalties include Broken Earth, Natural Dangers, No Cover, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Ten Swords: Lumpy dunes rest silent of motion in the thin atmosphere of high altitude plateaus. The terrain is a favorite domain of Basilisk, whose touch turns a man into a pile of sand. Penalties include No Cover and Slowed.

Physical Nine Swords: Microorganisms discolor the surface, and all they contact, in reddish lakes of soda salts; bubbling gas rises from a surface of corrosive lye. The toxic air causes hallucinations. Rumors say this terrain shelters an Abnormal Hostelry, a lab where inhuman scientists create new forms of nonhumans to sally forth and populate. Penalties include Equipment Mishaps, Natural Dangers and Slowed.

Physical Eight Swords: Place is riddled with subterranean caves, most of mammoth proportion. Echo makes it difficult to hear and know where someone truly is. Rumors say this terrain shelters the actual headquarters of the frontier Trade Guilds, a vast treasury. The smaller citadels found in the cities are mere decoys, while the true series of vaults are made of carved gemstone and floored in gold and ivory. Commonly disguised, of course. Penalties include Isolated Null, Natural Dangers, No Ranged Attacks and Slowed.

Physical Seven Swords: Desert comes alive with flowers and greenery, following seasonal rainstorms; ground is blanketed by thorny cacti and scrub. Ground movement is awkward, like moving through barbed wire. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Shaka, basically humanoids with rhino-shaped heads and leathery skin. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they're horns don't fit well through doors. Penalties include Natural Dangers, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Six Swords: Surface of sulfurous explosions and lava flows; fireworks of flame and molten rock. Prolonged travel here would eventually be deadly. Rumors say this terrain was once a green field, pleasant to behold. There upon rose a Monument of Victory, made from an adamantite alloy, placed by the first kings to commemorate their defeat of the giants. The souls of the defeated cursed the hubris and with tears scorched the land. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Isolated Null, Natural Dangers, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.



Physical Five Swords: Bubbling hot springs trickle over loose and uneven stones thickly coated with algae. Footing is treacherous. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Hobgoblins, basically humanoids with pig-shaped heads. They are not true goblins; they're only as ugly as the sun kissed imps. Of course, there is more to the wretches' culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they make people hungry for bacon. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Slowed and Tactical Flaws.

Physical Four Swords: Silica and sandstone gullies are occasionally clogged by multicolored columns, logs petrified millions of years ago. These low walls form a perfect barrier from which to defend behind. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Gnolls, basically humanoids with dog-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they won't be housebroken of many repellant behaviors. Penalties include Broken Earth, Natural Dangers, No Ranged Attacks and Slowed.

Physical Three Swords: Silver wakes trail whales as they skim along the surface of azure waters that flow between a maze of islands, lush with tropical vegetation. Rather than find comfort, your servitors wish to remain clear of the sea monsters, including giant arachnids. e.g. Skating water spiders. Penalties include Broken Earth, Equipment Mishaps, Isolated Null and No Ranged Attacks (on the isles).

Physical Two Swords: Land of endless ash slopes veined from ancient lava flows; largest volcanoes are snowcapped. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Atlantians, basically humanoids with elephant-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except the spearing tusks grow back very fast. Penalties include Natural Dangers.

Physical Ace Swords: Wild flowers sink roots deeply into a surface with consistency like packed gravel. The terrain is favored by the nonhuman Acacia, basically humanoids with equine-shaped heads. Of course, there is more to their culture, but most humans are too racist to care. They might make good slaves, except they spook four-legged horses. Penalties include No Cover.

Physical Major Tarot

Physical Magician: The terrain also has Isolated Null.

Physical High Priestess: The terrain never contains Isolated Null.

Physical Empress: The terrain also has Equipment Mishaps.

Physical Emperor: Command Pip may not be gained while battling in this terrain.

Physical Hierophant: The terrain never contains No Cover.

Physical Lovers: The terrain also has No Ranged Attacks.

Physical Chariot: The terrain never contains Equipment Mishaps.
Physical Justice: The terrain never contains Broken Earth.
Physical Hermit: The terrain also has Tactical Flaws.
Physical Wheel of Fortune: Shuffle the deck and continue.
Physical Force: The terrain never contains Natural Dangers.
Physical Hanged Man: All players begin any combat Shaken.
Physical Death: Catbird Seat may not be gained while battling in this terrain.
Physical Temperance: The terrain also has Slowed.
Physical Devil: The terrain also has Natural Dangers.
Physical Tower of Destruction: Trait strategic Benefits, like Bold with Shaken or Rugged ignoring a wound, may not be used here.
Physical Star: The terrain never contains No Ranged Attacks.
Physical Moon: All players begin any combat with a Bane.
Physical Sun: The terrain never contains Tactical Flaws.
Physical Judgment: The terrain never contains Slowed.
Physical World: The terrain also has Broken Earth.
Physical Fool: The terrain also has No Cover.

Terrain Penalty Key

~ **Broken Earth:** Travel difficulty, meaning it's nearly impossible to move the longboat or treasure. Only characters with Equestrian may even attempt to ride a horse for the Mount techniques. Any mishap might result in vicious to the rider or loss of Mount technique. Ships must be lightened and pulled through shallows; multiple checks for damage will be made. Treasure can be dropped, spilt, scattered, ruined, defaced and obliterated. Gold coins might seem safe until they are lost in the creek sand or between the jagged coral. Accept what you can't control and figure a way to circumvent this broken terrain obstacle.

~ **Equipment Mishaps:** All your gear, including your Blade and Mounts, is subject to increased chance of swagger loss in the harsh environment. After finishing a sequence of combat, during the pause before the next series of battle rounds, a display of skills is necessary to repair dings, sharpen edges and clean the rust and muck off of things. Weapon mishaps may also maim and kill servitors, seldom a named character. The Mount could also be in danger of complete loss; the player would need to start over building his four-legged companion. If the Mount has Wings, you'd think it was safer. But no animal flies all the time. Ref use some restraint and warn before ultimately setting a devastating loss.

~ **Isolated Null:** The place has been exhausted of magical manna. The players may not use Methods Magical or Recitation. Depending upon the seriousness of the depletion—was it caused by a recent power mad duel or formed from continual abuse by a cult—the area may also prevent Blade and Mount swagger from

functioning in Calculated action. Many of these places are known and documented. Others occur by season or the whim of the gods. The Null may exist only to thwart the players, but that's hardly fair (apply that penalty infrequently). Note, the game Q&D will imply magical events even in this area. Hey, how did that occur? If the table say, for instance, everyone must select Magical, then for the moment let them. Capricious are those higher powers that are amused by the intrigues of man. Magic will restore the land (briefly), but the slope slants toward depletion of everywhere into a Null.

~ **Natural Dangers:** During travel and combat, player characters and servitors will suffer injuries and need constant care. These may come from hostile wildlife, poisonous plants and hidden pitfalls. Injury and desertion will thin the ranks. A character falling unconscious in combat should change the result to a vicious. Most vicious wounds become wounds which maim or even outright kill.

~ **No Cover:** The players have no cover and no chance of gaining surprise, even with camouflage, smoke or a night raid. Use of magic may pose an illusion for some concealment, but the No Cover aspect usually hampers that too like a Null. Any use of Method Escape has Difficulty raised by two.

~ **No Ranged Attacks:** There is no line of sight to be had here. Ranged attacks are always blocked, meaning player actions involving bows are ignored and instead become No Effect. The Referee needs to decide based on each narrative event, which actions are skipped, and which are creatively adapted. If the arrow is said to be fired at point-blank range, so be it. Also, if the enemy is mentioned as using a ranged action, which for them would also fail, the narrative result may still hold.

~ **Slowed:** All movement rate for boats, horses and characters is reduced. If there was a time limit for success, it will be exceeded. Supplies will run out, unless there are skills present and exercised to reflect preparation and planning. This terrain is best avoided; too bad in the climax that's not always possible

~ **Tactical Flaws:** Tactical disadvantage meaning players have to switch methods often. They may never repeat a choice and in some instances, the only good method option in personal duels is Irregular. If the Ref decides there isn't even enough space to swing a sword, all methods would be conducted at a penalty of minus two to the roll.

Note on Massive Magic Cancelation: Don't do it. Many a real estate minded magic user has sought to change the world from what it is and into flat farmland. Do not think the world doesn't fight back. Gaia likes her mudpuddles and sharp nettles. As a player arrogantly states he will wipe out the entire effect of the terrain, let him try, fail and be gut-punched by a Zaire or godling with his Warped Outcome tally increasing a full D8. Magic is really nice and super good to have, but it doesn't allow giant-stepping over climax obstacles any more than it would, say, allow him to conjure the missing relic or child from the safety of his parlor upon meeting the

patron on day one. Play the game as a Viking, not a godling. Even the wizardry demigod (A) spits on those who try to worship him. *“Fug off; forgive such insult, Aesir.”*

Climax Challenges – Circumventing Obstacles to Entrance

Most city-states have gates. The walls might be easier to circumvent with magic, but the common folk still need a place to bring carts in and out. Also, the walls could be protected by magical spells. Having a place of entrance and egress is often the better path into the domain of the rival.

Nobles and aristocrats frequently still reside behind some form of wall in a secured district. The sides of many ships are also constructed as a castle (with a rather large moat). This table primarily is used to circumvent a guarded entrance.

The scale is small group. The players would not be able to vouch for a full crew of soldiers. There are definitely times when they must leave the large scale and continue with the personal. The players may be seeking surprise or face impossible odds otherwise. If the rival is alerted, he might vanish. So, the player will not be trying to storm the place, but instead enter by deception and quiet ambush. The table with only minor tweaks may work equally as well for players exiting fortified locations.

One player must start. His result may allow him to pass and if he’s lucky the other players. If anyone still needs an excuse to come inside, then flip more cards. The jig is up once someone fails; continue with combat. Hopefully everyone will cross the barrier before that ill outcome occurs.

The method may be tedious. You could just fight every guard you meet, but that’s not a reliable way of keeping anonymity. Some of the missions imply stealth and limiting the mayhem. This table may give the players another path into the inner sanctums of power: getting into a fort, into a port, up a gangplank and onto a moored vessel, entry to a court, entry to a palace, past the rival’s gate keeper, etc.

Unless noted otherwise, a failed result draws half a D8 more guards and the action changes to Personal Duels. The watch is now alerted, so the players might need to fight to escape. An endless number of soldiers may swarm the players in a dozen rounds.

The cards may allow some players to pass, before others. When the alarm is rung, the players may be separated. Those already past the obstacle remain safe inside for the moment. They have gained access and could stay out of sight as the alarm is sounded. Any player on the calm side of the situation may wait for their companions to escape personal duels and join them. Any player may also run back to the fight. But since the battle is not one which can be won by a few overwhelming the entire coterie of constables, footmen, scalawags, scoundrels...best to wait and see who eventually will rendezvous with you.

After intruders have been discovered (at the gate), the security and patrols inside will increase. For something large like a city, the chance of discovery is quite low. But on a vessel, the players aboard had better be spies or use magic to stow away until everything settles.

If a player fails a roll and the outcome states his character suffers a vicious wound, he is taken prisoner. He now needs to be rescued as another obstacle of the climax. The injured will be dragged to a courthouse jail or inner brig. If someone remains a prisoner, as the other players go on to the Epilog, resolve the captured (often his final days) with Death of Character Digressions. But do not roll anything yet. The remaining players on the quest have a chance to break the prisoners free from confinement.

Circumventing King Cups: A sentry mistakes you for another person of regal bearing. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty:** 4 **Advantage:** Trait Bold

Circumventing Queen Cups: Convince the sentry that you are someone important and must be allowed access with your companions. Success and the whole group may enter. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Wizardry Thought Control (P)

Circumventing Knight Cups: Feign drunkenness and cajole the sentry into joining you in revelry. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Rabblrouser

Circumventing Knave Cups: Give a bombastic performance and pretend to be an acting troupe, here to entertain the master. Success and the whole group may enter. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Minstrel

Circumventing Ten Cups: Demonstrate your ability with numbers, impressing a major domo who hires you on the spot. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Steward

Circumventing Nine Cups: Prepare a selection of drugged or poisoned treats, which you sell or give to the entrance guards. Success and whole group enters.

Difficulty: 11 **Advantage:** Apothecary

Circumventing Eight Cups: Pretend to be a person summoned to repair the master's prized leather doublet. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty:** 14 **Advantage:** Armorer-Smithy

Circumventing Seven Cups: Draw the guards hurriedly away from their post. Optional, success and all your companions may enter, but you continue with another result on these tables. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Swagger Speed & Guile (R)

Circumventing Six Cups: Show a few baubles and convince a sentry you are hereby call from the mistress of the household. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. Fail roll and suffer a Vicious wound, because the guards have been told to keep possible suitors away from the lady. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Goldsmith

Circumventing Five Cups: Pretend to be a person summoned to tend to the master's mare. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with another result on these tables. Fail roll and suffer a Vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Farrier-Breeder

Circumventing Four Cups: Tunnel past a wall into a little used private courtyard. Optional, success and whole group may enter. Fail and suffer a Vicious wound. If location is on a ship, the *tunnel* is a bore through the hull above the waterline. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Engineer-Sapper

Circumventing Three Cups: Render the guard submissive by removing him from his halberd. Then tie him up or cut his throat, the choice is yours. Success and the whole group may enter. Fail and the group must split and enter individually. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Swagger Disarming Blow (F)

Circumventing Two Cups: Mistaken for the person consulted about expanding the household's gardens. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with another result on these tables. Fail and suffer a Vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 16 **Advantage:** Horticulturist

Circumventing Ace Cups: Act like you are drunk and start a weak fist-fight with the watch, trying to distract him from his purpose. Suffer his blows and act like your opponent has bested and driven you off as a common fool. Optional, success and all your companions may enter, but you continue with another result on these tables. **Difficulty:** 4 **Advantage:** Brawler



Circumventing King Rods: A sentry welcomes you as a person of noble lineage. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty:** 5 **Advantage:** Courtly Graces

Circumventing Queen Rods: Convince the sentry that you are someone important from a foreign allied county and must be allowed access with your companions. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with another result on these tables.

Difficulty: 11 **Advantage:** Linguist

Circumventing Knight Rods: Convince a sentry that you are here as part of the training of arms for the garrison. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Man-at-Arms

Circumventing Knave Rods: Display a few carnival tricks and pretend to be clowns hired to entertain the master.

Success and the whole group may enter. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Acrobat

Circumventing Ten Rods: Grapple and subdue two guards stationed on either side of the bottom of a stairwell. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Swagger Wrestling Holds (T)

Circumventing Nine Rods: When called to stop and surrender, do so. Allow your opponent to confront you and start to reach to disarm you. Ready your blade and run him through. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Swagger Feigns (I)

Circumventing Eight Rods: Your flash of steel ends as quickly as it starts. Within the span of a heartbeat, an unfortunate victim ends his days in the wrong place and time. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Swagger Heroic Swordplay (K)

Circumventing Seven Rods: Harass the guards with a flurry of sword slashes, keeping them occupied. Optional, success and all your companions may enter, but you continue with another result on these tables. Regardless, increased watchfulness

means Difficulty of everyone's future rolls raises by two. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Charismatic Style (C)

Circumventing Six Rods: Insult the guards and cause them to give chase. Optional, success and all your companions may enter, but you continue with another result on these tables. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Swagger Repartee (P)

Circumventing Five Rods: Arrive with fresh meat, asking directions to the kitchen. Success and whole group may enter. Fail roll and suffer a Vicious wound. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Hunter

Circumventing Four Rods: Blast a hole in a gate and rush the breach before the full watch arrives. At least one person must stay behind and employ a decoy to simulate a retreat; so as to make it appear that no one had opportunity to enter. Optional, success and all your companions may enter, but you continue with another result on these tables. Regardless, increased watchfulness means Difficulty of everyone's future rolls raises by two. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Wizardry Pyrotechnics (K)

Circumventing Three Rods: Mistaken for the person summoned to entertain by battling the master's champion. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with another result on the tables. Fail and suffer a Vicious wound. **Difficulty: 14 Advantage:** Duelist

Circumventing Two Rods: Pretend to be a person summoned to repair a roof leak. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with another result on these tables. Fail and suffer a Vicious wound. **Difficulty: 14 Advantage:** Tinker

Circumventing Ace Rods: Silently kill a wall watchman from the ground below his post, then use the lack of surveillance to get up and over. Success and the whole group may enter. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Wizardry Necromancy (H)

Circumventing King Coins: Deceive a sentry into thinking you are a person of regal bearing and noble lineage, even his sergeant's master. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with another result on these tables. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Wizardry Shape Shifting (J)

Circumventing Queen Coins: Find a sentry who has recently been punished by his master, then give him a fine persuasion to change allegiance. Success and the whole group may enter. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Briber

Circumventing Knight Coins: Ride forth and jump the moat or rampart on your stallion. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Equestrian

Circumventing Knave Coins: Ask an innocent question from the gatekeeper and steal the keys to a side passageway. Success and the whole group may enter. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Pickpocket

Circumventing Ten Coins: Make the sentry feel ill. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Wizardry Paralysis (Q)

Circumventing Nine Coins: Someone lunges as you round a corner. Step into his thrust and deflect his blow. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Swagger Seize Swordarm (Q)

Circumventing Eight Coins: Pretend to be delivering fresh laborers. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty:** 15 **Advantage:** Slave Driver

Circumventing Seven Coins: Overturn a shelf onto a group seated together on benches, polishing off these few stout fellows, cold-cocking all by smashing bottles and mugs on their heads. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet fully passed the obstacle. Regardless, increased watchfulness means Difficulty of everyone's future rolls raises by two. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Swagger Chiasmic Action (D)

Circumventing Six Coins: You have a royal pass or writ from the emperor to speak with the master. Success and whole group may enter. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Forger

Circumventing Five Coins: Draw the guards to investigate an arrow shot from afar. Optional, success and all your companions may enter, but you continue with other results on these tables. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Bowman

Circumventing Four Coins: Capture a sentry and coerce him into revealing the watch scheduled and location of private entryways. Success and the whole group may enter. Failing this roll will NOT attract the watch, but the players will need to continue with other results on the tables. **Difficulty:** 15 **Advantage:** Tormentor

Circumventing Three Coins: The guard you quietly dispatch will not be missed until morning. Success and the whole group may enter. Fail and the group must split to enter individually. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Swagger Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S)

Circumventing Two Coins: Pretend to be conducting an audit of inventory and stores. Demanding to see the records of royal taxes or imperial audit. Success and whole group enters. Fail and the whole group must split to enter individually. **Difficulty:** 14. **Advantage:** Wizardry Power Words (S)

Circumventing Ace Coins: Offer to make a seemingly impossible bet with a sentry, setting-up a distraction that draws the watch into your gaming. Optional, success and all your companions may enter, but you continue with another result on these tables. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Gambler

Circumventing King Swords: When approached by a guard and questioned as to your identity, you bow politely. A quick snap of your hat takes him by surprise

and allows you to subdue him quietly. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty: 4 Advantage:** Wizardry Animate Objects (O)

Circumventing Queen Swords: Incapacitate a guard who approaches with his sword drawn, as he tells you to keep your hands held high. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Swagger Effective Spurning (H)

Circumventing Knight Swords: Convince a sentry that you are here to give his master a lesson in fisticuffs. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Pugilist

Circumventing Knave Swords: Nearby you sight several guards kneeling in prayer (or playing dice). Outnumbered, you must escape before they notice and come to question you. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Swagger Better Valor (B)

Circumventing Ten Swords: Confuse the chief steward, stating you represent a wholly new source for a wide range of exotic commodities. Success and whole group may enter. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Wizardry Psionics (B)

Circumventing Nine Swords: Pretend to be a person summoned to barber the master. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. **Difficulty: 13 Advantage:** Barber (Chiurgeon)

Circumventing Eight Swords: A pacing guard bars your way. He can be brought down inconspicuously from behind a curtain or by stabbing from above in the rafters of an overhang. Success and gain swaggering only; you have not yet passed the obstacle. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Swagger Irregular Tricks (M)

Circumventing Seven Swords: Your better judgment says you shouldn't try the climb, swing or jump, but since when did you listen to little voices or your conscious. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. Fail roll and suffer a Vicious wound. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Wizardry Spirit Guide (R)

Circumventing Six Swords: Catch a man sleeping at his post. Ensure he won't wake, at least till morning. Success and the whole group may enter. Fail roll and suffer a Vicious wound. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Swagger Hilt Punch (L)

Circumventing Five Swords: Shoot at a guard from afar, making sure others cannot see the direction of the attack to investigate. Optional, success and all your companions may enter, but you must continue with another result on these tables. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Swagger Concentration (E)

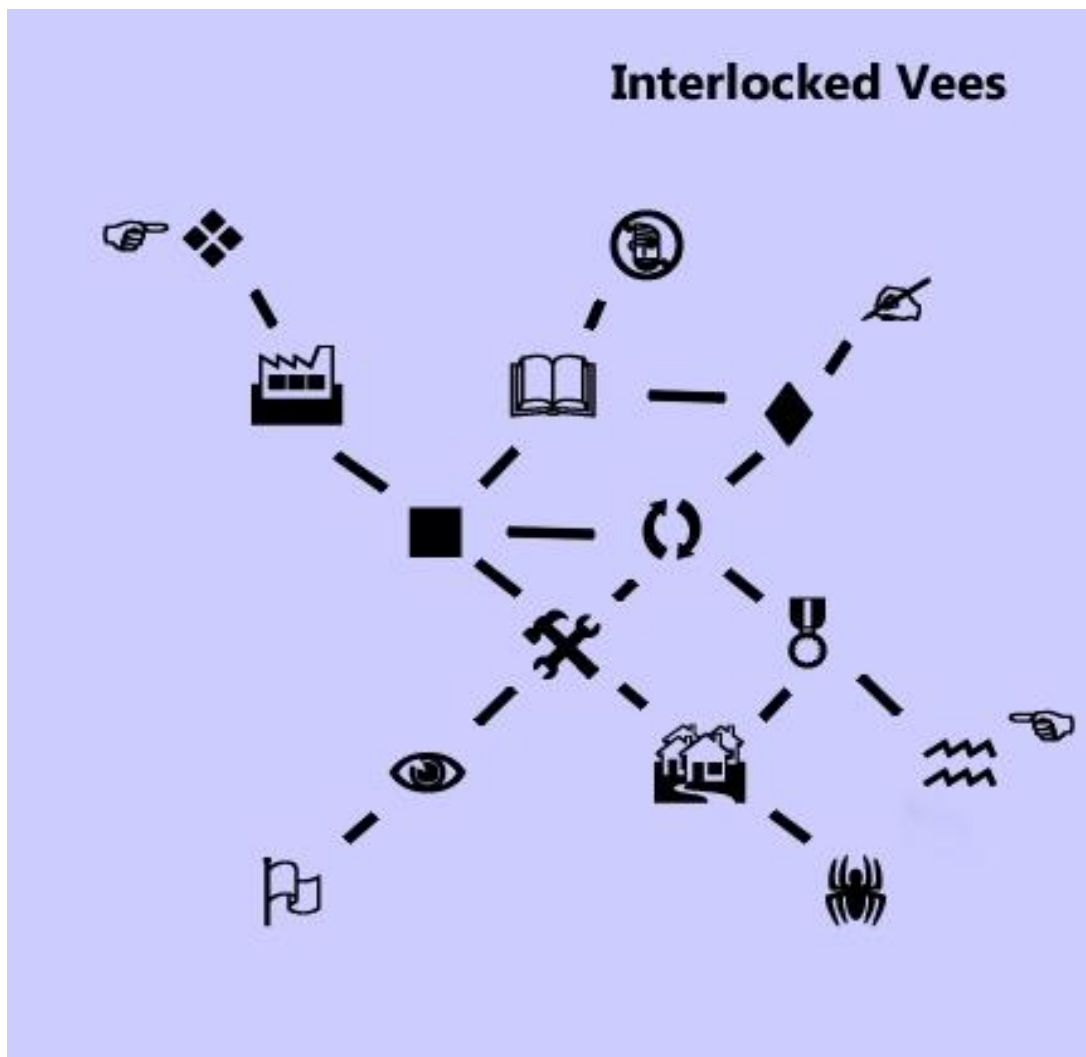
Circumventing Four Swords: Discover a way to secretly enter. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue on with other results on these tables. Fail and suffer a Vicious wound; your discovery was a trap. If the result is

successful, other players may opt to attempt this same roll, but the Difficulty increases for them by two. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage: Spy**

Circumventing Three Swords: Muffle the screams of a guard you dispatch on a seldom used alternate entrance. Success and the whole group may enter. Fail and the whole group must split and enter individually. **Difficulty: 13 Advantage: Trait Rugged**

Circumventing Two Swords: Pretend to be a person summoned to train the master's unusual pets. Success and you may enter, but your companions must continue with their own result on these tables. Fail and suffer a Vicious wound. **Difficulty: 15 Advantage: Houndsman (Beasts)**

Circumventing Ace Swords: Hurl or fire a grapnel up along a blind-spot on the high wall (or mast). Success and the whole group may enter. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Artillerist**



Circumventing Magician: Treat next minor card as a Knave; only the suit applies.

Circumventing High Priestess: Player discovers a clue to the climax for passing a later obstacle.

Circumventing Empress: Ignore the effect of all future Major Tarot for these tables.

Circumventing Emperor: Treat next minor card as a King; only the suit applies.

Circumventing Pope: Treat next minor card as a Coin; only the rank applies.

Circumventing Lovers: The master is watchful and wary of deception. All players must roll twice and take the worse of the two results. If the player has a multiple roll bonus, he still makes two rolls for each attempt, yet he takes the lower result.

Circumventing Chariot: Treat next minor card as a Cup; only the rank applies.

Circumventing Justice: Player is seen as a fugitive or renegade and is duped into a cell. The next card represents the player's excuse or action taken to escape. Should the player fail, he is trapped in this cell.

Circumventing Hermit: Treat next minor card as a Rod; only the rank applies.

Circumventing Wheel of Fortune: reshuffle the deck and continue.

Circumventing Force: Treat next minor card as a Sword; only the rank applies.

Circumventing Hanged Man: Player is confronted and taken prisoner, unless another player, already inside, comes forward and vouches for him. Both the player and his savior are thrown out and must select new, different event cards for their return and attempt again to enter as the watch guard changes.

Circumventing Death: Treat next minor card as an Ace; only the suit applies.

Circumventing Temperance: Treat next minor card as a Queen; only the suit applies.

Circumventing Devil: Someone mistakenly recognizes the player but doesn't immediately say anything. The player may decide that the watchman's false opinion is *good* or *bad*? If *good*, he gains plus three to his roll. If *bad*, he adds three to the Difficulty. Yet after the encounter, the watchman will learn his mistake. Should the player be successful and pass safely, the watchman's demeanor changes. Whichever bonus or penalty the player selected, all remaining players get the opposite. Thus, if he takes the plus three to dice, his friends get plus three to Difficulty, or vice versa.

Circumventing Tower of Destruction: The watch is alerted to other intruders. Continue from here with Personal Duels to escape past and elude the gatekeepers.

Circumventing Star: There is no moon out tonight, so the players gain Tactical Pip of plus three.

Circumventing Moon: Player discovers that the person or item he seeks is not here today in the location. The players must leave and return another day. All those who've already entered successfully are minus two on their dice rolls, when they try to enter again. After some reflection, the guards will be warier and look out for the conniver to return.

Circumventing Sun: Player is mistaken for someone else. Gain the Catbird Seat for your next roll.

Circumventing World: Someone recognizes the player but doesn't reveal on this fact. If the player misses his event roll, he is drawn into a trap and taken captive.

Circumventing Judgment: Treat next minor card as a Knight; only the suit applies.

Circumventing Fool: If the player passes his next turn, he gains a Command Pip which might be used by another player or him if it still remains when he takes his next action.

Sea Obstacles for Climax

At sea an obstacle is seldom a reef or tidal wave. Boredom and anticipation of strife tends to be more hazardous, then crossing a maelstrom. Idleness can be deadly and spawn all nature of misadventure. As the players' ship and the enemy slowly maneuver to cross paths, over hundreds of miles, the players face the obstacle of leadership.

The player commander must select his overall readiness: *Relaxed*, *Cautious*, or *Relentless*. Though it may seem a no-brainer to be constantly alert, the demeanor of the leaders will influence the anxiety of the crew. Take it from a guy who worked for TSA, sometimes it's better to treat a small threat lightly, then constantly wear-out your servitors with overhyped readiness.

~ *Relaxed* – Crew is allowed to lower its guard and take a much needed breather, before the final assaults of the climax. The commander becomes responsible for predicting and thwarting trouble. In most cases only one event will occur, even if it ends poorly. Either the player who has the title of High Commander or the principal player character of the mission is responsible for the roll; only his skills will apply.

~ *Cautious* – Only prudent changes are made to the crew or vessel. Everyone knows danger is lurking, but no special precautions are enacted, nor yet warranted. A standard tactic with modest challenges to success; more than one player might

make attempts, but that's not an advantage (usually). These are typically tests for the lesser longboat officers. The commander does not make any rolls here.

~ *Relentless* – Everyone is held in a state of alert, wary of the slightest suggestion of intrigue. Punishments are routinely handed-out for those who shirk their duties. Results in easier rolls, but more serious consequences for failure. Only the players who have certain titles as primus masters will be prompted to attempt rolls. No player may cover from another. Good luck.

Primus Masters, a reminder, the ship has a High Commander, a Second, a Sjef (boatswain), First Optio (warriors), Second Cohors (sailors), Third Remiges (rowers), plus a Hierophant and Provisioner. That's seven ranks besides the commander. A single player may occupy more than one role. Yet all players should serve someplace. A mix of low level and high still means you need to cover all the bases. The inexperienced and unskilled do manage to serve, so let them make mistakes or triumph. Play as a group, maybe help share the wealth and Ignobles for those lagging behind.

Sea Obstacles – Relaxed Readiness

Relaxed King: Shake-off your desire to hasten the progression of events. Fail your roll and you secede command to another now in charge of all decisions for any further action in the climax. That new leader will decide his own fate and select his own readiness for another test on these tables. Regardless, gain a plus one Quest Pip for the remainder of the adventure. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Trait Gifted

Relaxed Queen: The men grow fearful in anticipation of meeting the rival face-to-face. Fail roll and crew is demoralized. The mission is essentially lost, unless the High Commander selects and punishes a scapegoat. Another player character suffers a beating and a vicious wound. He may not hold any primus position (ever again) on this boat, until the commander is slain. That's Growth. His role will be grumbler for the crew. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Bold

Relaxed Knight: To break-up the monotony, you challenge someone to a half-hearted duel. Fail and lose one Swaggering Technique of your choice. **Difficulty:** 14 **Advantage:** Duelist

Relaxed Knave: Select instead a card for an Amazing Coincidence.

Relaxed Ten: Gazing out at the calm night waters, you feel something strike the base of your neck. Fail and you are held as a prisoner of the Rival's forces. The other players will have a chance to rescue you during the remaining climax challenges. For now, play an alt role and the Primus Second must take his turn with an event on this table. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Rugged

Relaxed Nine: Plot a course past the crashing waves which rock your ship. Fail and one random player character of your choice is lost overboard. His character

is fine, but the player must continue in an alternate role. He may not play his main character until the Epilog. Regardless, gain a plus one Quest Pip for the remainder of the adventure. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Cartographer

Relaxed Eight: Comfort a companion who is depressed and complains of evil chills. Fail and one player character loses his ability to use magic for the remainder of the climax; he returns to power in the Epilog. Regardless, gain a plus one Quest Pip for the remainder of the adventure. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)

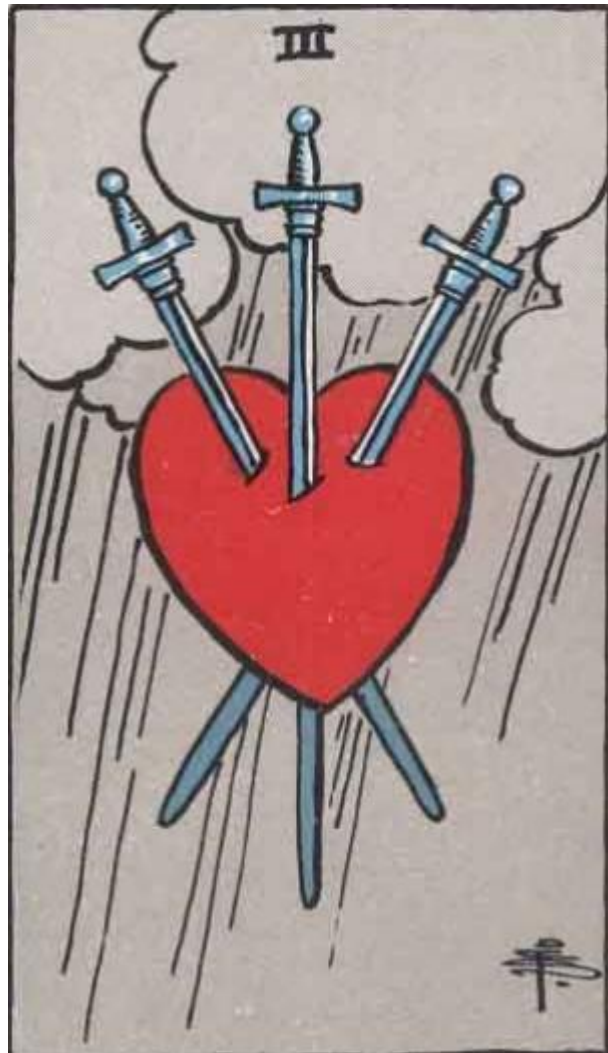
Relaxed Seven: Make a general inspection for your own peace of mind. Fail and select a card for an Amazing Coincidence. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Mariner

Relaxed Six: Leap back into your cabin away from a water barrel, which has been dropped mysteriously from above your gallery balcony. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Energetic

Relaxed Five: By fluke or intrigue, you find yourself overboard, bobbing in the sea, calling for help. Fail roll and there you will remain, until the Epilog. Play an alternate role in the rest of the climax challenges. In case it wasn't clear, at least the events on this table have concluded. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Swagger Battle Cry (A)

Relaxed Four: Direct the men to set the sheets to prevent tattering in the erratic winds and not rush the tempo on the pull of the oars. Fail and forced to switch readiness to Cautious or Relentless; that causes a new set of events. Regardless, gain a plus one Quest Pip for the remainder of the adventure. **Difficulty:** 14 **Advantage:** Sailor

Any Three: Ensure you are properly prepared for all contingencies in the final days of travel. Fail and a half D8 longboat techniques are lost to fluke accidents and magical banes. If the longboat has no techniques to cover the loss, the mission has outright failed. Regardless, gain a plus one Quest Pip for the remainder of the adventure. **Difficulty:** 15 **Advantage:** Longboat Vigilant (E)



Relaxed Two: Follow the course and rival despite of the squalls ahead. Fail and lose a longboat technique, plus take another card on this table. **Difficulty:** 16 **Advantage:** Methodical

Relaxed Ace: Pass on to the next part of the climax without further mishap. If the player will take yet another result on this table, he gains a plus one Quest Pip (never more than plus three from this table's events). Care to try for another Ace?

Sea Obstacles – Cautious Readiness

Cautious King Cups: Supplies and weapons are found unsecured. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with the role of First Optio. Fail both and the ship loses a longboat technique. However, both must be made, or the event doesn't end; take another card of Cautious. If character has Wizardry Spirit Guide (R), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Tormentor & Again **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)

Cautious Queen Cups: Provisions are discovered in short supply or spoiled. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with the role of Provisioner. Fail both and the ship loses a longboat technique. However, both must be made, or the event doesn't end; take another card of Cautious. If character has Wizardry Geomancy (C), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Apothecary & Again **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Steward

Cautious Knight Cups: Ship's pay chest needs to be secured properly. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with the role of Second Cohors. Fail both and the ship loses a longboat technique. However, both must be made, or the event doesn't end; take another card of Cautious. If character has Wizardry Hexes (M), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Armorer-Smithy & Again **Difficulty:** 14 **Advantage:** Tinker

Cautious Knave Cups: Conduct minor restoration and alterations of the rigging. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with the role of Sjef Boatswain. Fail both and the ship loses a longboat technique. However, both must be made, or the event doesn't end; take another card of Cautious. If character has Wizardry Celestial (G), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Mariner & Again **Difficulty:** 15 **Advantage:** Longboat Undamaged (O)

Cautious Ten Cups: Sound assembly and assess the readiness of the personnel with their battle gear. This pair of rolls must be attempted by each player with the roles of Second in Command, First Optio, Second Cohors and Third Remiges. However, any player serving a dual role need only test for his combined positions once. Fail either and continue with that player taking a card for an Amazing Coincidence. If character has Wizardry Demigod (A), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Longboat Battle Ready (H) & Again **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Rabblrouser

Cautious Nine Cups: Drill the oarsmen to prevent atrophy of the muscles. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with the role of Third Remiges. Fail both and the lowest level character aboard suffers a vicious wound. However, both must be made, or the event doesn't end; take another card of Cautious. If character has Wizardry Animate Objects (O), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 14 Advantage:** Longboat Battle Hard (T) & *Again* **Difficulty: 13 Advantage:** Slave Driver

Cautious Eight Cups: Discrepancies arise in the housing of all slaves and crewmen. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with the role of Second in Command. Fail either and suffer a minus one Quest Pip. Regardless, the event ends. If character has Wizardry Precognition (E), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Pugilist & *Again* **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Barber (Chiurgeon)

Cautious Seven Cups: Sponsor a competition to quell rivalry between the warriors and seamen for a prize of kicking the boat scapegoat. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with either the role of First Optio or Second Cohors. Fail either and suffer a minus one Quest Pip. For posterity, the player who rolls the highest on any of his dice, was the one who truly triumphed (and got to sacrifice the ship scapegoat). Regardless, the event ends. If character has Wizardry Shape Shifting (J), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Gambler & *Again* **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Houndsman (Beasts)

Cautious Six Cups: Bless the projectiles, melee weapons, shields and armor. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with the role of Hierophant. Fail either and continue with an Amazing Coincidence. Otherwise, make both to end the events. If character has Wizardry Power Words (S), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 14 Advantage:** Longboat Religiously Inspired (C) & *Again* **Difficulty: 14 Advantage:** Occult Scholar

Cautious Five Cups: Redistribute the weight of all storage below deck. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with either role of Second in Command or Provisioner. Fail either and lose any swagger, including a longboat technique. Otherwise, the event ends. If character has Wizardry Conjunction (L), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 15 Advantage:** Longboat Seasoned Crew (L) & *Again* **Difficulty: 15 Advantage:** Prestidigitation

Cautious Four Cups: Discuss battle tactics and designation of a reserve, including protection of the presently sick and injured. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with either role of Second in Command or First Optio. Fail either and lose any swagger, including a longboat technique. Otherwise, the event ends. If character has Wizardry Cosmic (T), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Bowman & *Again* **Difficulty: 13 Advantage:** Longboat No Disease (I)

Cautious Three Cups: Discuss the operation in terms of sacrifice and diversion. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with either role of Second in Command or Hierophant. Fail either and lose any swagger, including a longboat technique. Otherwise, the event ends. If character has Wizardry Necromancy (H), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Artillerist & *Again* **Difficulty: 14 Advantage:** Longboat Comradery (P)

Cautious Two Cups: Discuss promotions of seamen to warriors and worthy oarsmen to ðeng. This pair of rolls must be attempted by any players with either role of Second Cohors or Third Remiges. Fail either and lose any swagger, including a longboat technique. Otherwise, the event ends. If character has Wizardry Psionics (B), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Berserker & *Again* **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)

Cautious Ace Cups: Bury the dead at sea, causing alarm from those who insist on the cleansing use of fire. The smoke would reveal your position, even if you could spare the fuel wood. Placate the grumblers and the mob by adorning the dead with fine shrouds, paying xeer (blood money) and offering stoic versification. This pair of rolls must be attempted by each and every player, regardless of role. All rolls can be considered success if ship sacrifices Treasure Laden (D). Fail either and suffer a vicious wound. Otherwise, the event ends. If character has Wizardry Voltaic (N), Difficulty of each drops by three. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Longboat Noble Allegiance (K) & *Again* **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Courtly Grace

Cautious Any Rods: Use the same results as Cups. Plus, the High Commander must generate and resolve one result of Relaxed Readiness.

Cautious Any Coins: Use the same results for Cups. Plus, the High Commander must generate and resolve an Amazing Coincidence.

Cautious Any Swords: Switch instead to Relentless Readiness with all Difficulties raised by one.

Sea Obstacles – Relentless Readiness

Relentless King: An assassin lurks among the crew. Every player aboard should attempt this roll. Any fail results in that player selecting yet another card for an Amazing Coincidence. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Spy

Relentless Queen: There are duties to be performed. Every leader's performance is under the watchful eye of the servitors. Every player aboard should attempt this roll. Each failed result causes the loss of a Longboat technique or a minus one Quest Pip. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Methodical

Relentless Knight: Pass the time with some diversion. Is lady luck on your side? Every player aboard should attempt this roll. Any failed roll should follow with an event on Amazing Coincidence. The player with the highest roll restores his purse of coins (if missing or previously used). **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Gambler

Relentless Knave: Overcome a shipboard emergency. Every player aboard should attempt this roll. Fail and the player character is Shaken at the start of the next climax challenge. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Dashing

Relentless Ten: Clean and ready your battle kit. Every player aboard should attempt this roll. Success and gain the Fury Pip in the next climax challenge.

Difficulty: 9 Advantage: Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)

Relentless Nine: Drill. Each player should attempt this roll, until someone is successful. That first success gains a Command Pip in the next climax challenge. However, each round that no one obtains success, the longboat loses a technique. If none remain, slay a character outright; the one with the worst roll last round.

Difficulty: 14 Advantage: Longboat Elite Goals (A)

Relentless Eight: Discuss contingencies. Each player should attempt this roll, until someone is successful. That first success gains Catbird Seat for his first action in the next climax challenge. However, each round that no one obtains success, the longboat loses a technique. If none remain, slay a character outright; the one with the worst roll last round. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Longboat Charted Path (B)

Relentless Seven: Conduct repairs day and night. Each player should attempt this roll. Each success restores one longboat technique, but only if the ship had the swagger at the beginning of the adventure. If there were none to restore or no one can remember, then lose Longboat Vermin Free (N) from disturbing something hibernating. Ref may also say the Horrible monster rises from the water and attacks, especially if the boat is already littered with rats. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Tradesman

Relentless Six: Position guards at tactical locations, while the officers sleep in shifts. Each player should attempt this roll. Fail and betrayed while vulnerable; suffer a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)

Relentless Five: Discourage mutiny by chaining known grumblers below with the oarsmen. One character, usually the Commander, attempts this roll. Fail and the mission ends in failure (for a plethora of reasons). **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Longboat Democracy (S)

Relentless Four: Inspect restoration and readiness, right down to sanding the wooden dowels. Each player should attempt this roll by order of rank, until someone is successful. That first success becomes the Commander by acclamation. However, each round that no one obtains success, the longboat loses a technique. If none remain, slay a character outright; the one with the worst roll last round. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Longboat Undamaged (O)

Relentless Three: Toss the bones to predict the voyage's outcome. Each player (other than the Hierophant) should attempt this roll by order of rank. Fail and the player must switch to an alternate role; his fate is too uncertain or beguiled to continue in the rest of the climax challenges. If the character is above level five, the

Difficulty increases by seven. **Difficulty:** 4 **Advantage:** Longboat Treasure Laden (D)

Relentless Two: Chastise the men to prevent escalating arguments. Each player (other than the Commander) should attempt this roll by order of rank. Before any roll, the ship can lose Comradery (P) and the event ends. Otherwise, each failed attempt creates a negative Quest Pip (maximum of minus three). If the character is above level five, the Difficulty increases by four. No one may use a make-roll for this event. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Rabblrouser

Relentless Ace: Corner a sympathizer of the rival or one of his better minions. Fight a personal duel against a stowaway of ferocity equal in level to the ship Commander. Only half of the players, round down, may take action in the very first round. Select at random. The Commander and the rest join thereafter. Ref may add Ace-Hole modifiers for the action if suitable. If the players are all defeated, continue with Digression (K).

Sea Obstacles – Amazing Coincidence

These are unexpected results and special intrigues. This table is usually prompted by the failure of someone in his first attempt to overcome the obstacle or danger. The four suited actions listed are far from complete. The results should become something like Personal Events in encounters, and the Ref should start to make up his own as the results below start to become redundant and overused.

Coincidence Cups: Engage an assailant, preventing them from using magic. The Ref should select one swaggering letter. The player then must counter that by selecting techniques from himself or the ship. If the character involved is above level five, the swagger of the enemy should change each round. Once the enemy is defeated the event ends. If the player has nothing left to fight with, including exhausting all of the longboat techniques (rather pathetic, but I should not judge) he suffers a final fate as seen on the swagger outcome table.

Coincidence Rods: Hurl a line to someone who tumbles off a yard after dark. Fail and the lowest level player falls overboard and into Digression (A). **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Chiasmic Action (D)

Coincidence Coins: The Commander must remove one player character from his officer position and replace him with another. The two swap roles. This should be seen for what it is, a promotion for one and demotion for the other. Settle the rest with role-play, but for the continued action on this table (and through the climax challenges) the players have new ranks aboard.

Coincidence Sword: Kick a lantern and start a fire. Follow with everyone taking an action on Q&D Setback & Cursed Luck (Ships), until the result of *Obstacle or impediment of battle is removed*.

Note: other examples of Amazing Coincidence might be...

- ...seeing someone kidnaped.
- ...use wizardry to prevent lightning.
- ...become obsessed with revenge, yet duels are forbidden during this time of heightened tension.
- ...clipping the line on a snapping spar, letting it spring safely off into the ocean.
- ...spring to action to keep someone from dropping his Blade.
- ...find a neutral stowaway who can help the quest.
- ...confront a bully or criminal in the ranks.
- ...prevent an accident, stop a murder, prevent a mistake.
- ..brawl, grapple, learn, lose, testify, fall in love.

Sea Obstacles – Major Tarot Flairs

Sea Obst. Magician: Ship is leaking below decks. Commander and Third Remiges increase the Difficulty of any of their rolls by four.

Sea Obst. High Priestess: Gain a random wizardry technique.

Sea Obst. Empress: Ignore the effect of all future Major Tarot.

Sea Obst. Emperor: Commander may not select *Relaxed* Readiness.

Sea Obst. Pope: Crew appoints a spokesman from one of the players (not the commander). The player grumbler will step into any officer's place should he fail his roll. The grumbler will try to make a second attempt at success for any failed roll except one during Amazing Coincidence. If the grumbler succeeds where the other primus failed, the crew will demand the incompetent player character be stripped of rank.

Sea Obst. Lovers: For the remainder of these tables, two players must share the High Commander's rolls. However, both must be successful for the obstacle to pass.

Sea Obst. Chariot: Crew demands a



new commander. Fight a mutiny; else, relent and let the Second in Command take over.

Sea Obst. Justice: Warriors are in a foul mood. Commander and First Optio increase the Difficulty of any of their rolls by four.

Sea Obst. Hermit: Crew fears an ill-omen. Hierophant increases Difficulty of rolls by four.

Sea Obst. Wheel of Fortune: Reshuffle and continue.

Sea Obst. Force: All the mead and ale is drunk. Commander and Second Cohors increase the Difficulty of any of their rolls by four.

Sea Obst. Hangman: Weather is foul. Commander and Sjef Boatswain increase the Difficulty of any of their rolls by four.

Sea Obst. Death: Stores are targeted for sabotage. Commander and Provisioner increase the Difficulty of any of their rolls by four.

Sea Obst. Temperance: Commander may not select *Relentless* Readiness.

Sea Obst. Devil: Ship is off-course. Players must also overcome an additional obstacle on these tables using Cautious.

Sea Obst. Tower of Destruction: Disrupted operations. Increase the Difficulty of all rolls by four. This result does not combine with other penalties; no, rolls will never be Diff+8.

Sea Obst. Moon: Ship runs aground in shallows. Resolve the action with Q&D Mishap at Sea.

Sea Obst. Star: Cancel the effect of all Major Tarot influencing play.

Sea Obst. Sun: Crew is inspired by an event. Decrease the Difficulty of all rolls by two.

Sea Obst. World: Crew is impatient and reckless. Players must also overcome an additional obstacle on these tables using Relentless.

Sea Obst. Judgment: Crew demands time to celebrate a memorial holiday, feast day or religious rite. Players must also overcome an additional obstacle on these tables using Relaxed.

Sea Obst. Fool: Commander takes ill. The readiness changes to *Relentless*.

Battling Test of Honor

Sometimes the enemy needs to be taken more or less alive. In game terms, the players dare not accidentally kill the rival. In some missions that would cause the quest to fail. Not every rival is skilled at arms; some fight through surrogates. Else, a tribal leader or matron creature might not be ready to see her brood sacrificed.

There's no way to kill the main rival with this table. The players may wish to impress the rival with their prowess. If the Ref decides that a certain battle has

become an Test of Honor (for the enemy), then any and all of the players take events here, until told otherwise.

Typically, the rival will stand gloating or directing his minions, as the players face henchmen totaling two to three times their number. The goal is to kill or capture systematically the minions and then confront the leader. If the players defeat all the other guards—the lower fated henchmen helping the main rival—the rival immediately surrenders. **In some cases, the number dispatched should be less than those surrendered or run off.** e.g. If slaying the young of a mother monster, best not to kill all her offspring and hope she'll respectfully yield.

Honor King: Fire your arrows as you dart between two positions of cover in the battle arena. Success and one enemy henchman surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Bowman

Honor Queen: Without alerting all to your presence, capitalize on a flanking position. Success and one enemy henchman surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Prestidigitation

Honor Knight: Swing once to make them flinch, a second time to break the shield on a cowering foe. Success and one enemy henchman surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Blade Impetus (N)

Honor Knave: Decide the remaining fools have no code of principles. Your test of honor has ended. The player must select Irregular from here on out, while his companions continue to try to capture the rival. If you are the last using this table, the rival escapes and becomes a future threat; the mission typically fails.

Honor Ten: Maneuver the fracas; while others scatter, hem and haw, move from spot to spot ostensibly at ease. Success and one enemy henchman flees. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. However, the man running will return in a half D8 rounds with a D8 more minions. That is unless the player obtains a dispatch next round or right now opts to continue the battle at Irregular (in diversion), while his companions continue to try to capture the rival. If you are the last using this table, the rival does escape if you pursue; causing the mission to fail. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Swagger Charismatic Style (C)

Honor Nine: Attack, parry, lunge, riposte, beat, counter, disengage, remise, flick, point, glissade, as your boyhood instructor once counted off the positions. Success and one enemy henchman surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Duelist

Honor Eight: This is your bread and butter work; get at it! Success and one enemy henchman surrender. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Man-at-Arms

Honor Seven: Wherever the frustrated enemy intends to be, you will get their first. Success and one enemy henchman surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Trait Energetic

Honor Six: Recognize the lion, the wolf and the bear, as men fight no better than animals; confuse, tangle and subdue. Success and one enemy henchman surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. Fail and forced to select Irregular next round; you may no longer take actions as method Tests of Honor. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Hunter

Honor Five: Circumstances could get reciprocally painful if anyone notices you're employing vile tools. Optional, success and dispatch one enemy henchman. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. Regardless, forced to select Irregular next round of the continuing action; you may no longer take actions as method Tests of Honor. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Apothecary

Honor Four: Reach across the fray and pluck a dagger or purse from an assailant's belt. Success and one enemy henchman surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. Fail and forced to select Irregular next round; you may no longer take actions as method Tests of Honor. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Pickpocket

Honor Three: Of course, you meant to do that—take out a chair leg, candle holder, ale mug, mast yard, nest trim, haunch of hanging flesh—giving the viewer a jaunty startle. Success and one enemy henchman surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. Fail and forced to select Irregular next round; you may no longer take actions as method Tests of Honor. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Blade Bounding (C)

Honor Two: Impress the enemy with the size and deadliness of your weapon. Success and one enemy surrenders. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Herculean (J)

Honor Ace: Mistaken for a resurrected spirit, a notorious hero of lore, someone only spoken of in hushed tones, an evil of inflated legendary prowess. Success and a half D8 of the enemy's servants flee. If the character has yet to check Growth, do so with the understanding that he looks identical to a notorious outlaw or infamous hero; he may even be that resurrected foe. However, the men routing will return in a half D8 rounds with a D8 more minions. That is unless the player opts to continue the battle at Irregular (in diversion), while his companions continue to try to capture the rival. If you are the last using this table, the rival does escape if you pursue; causing the mission to fail. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Swagger Heroic Swordplay (K)

Bane Honor King: Deflect the attack aimed at another. Success and dispatch one enemy henchman. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. But, fail and the lowest level character in the battle suffers a vicious wound. If character is

Swagger Seize Swordarm (Q), Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 6**

Advantage: Swagger Chiasmic Action (D)

Bane Honor Queen: Nothing sells hopelessness in the enemy like a shattered skull. Success and dispatch one enemy henchman. If he was the last, the rival submits to capture. Remember, sometimes you can't just slaughter; is your capture to kill ratio still copasetic? **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Demigod (A)

Bane Honor Knight: Struck from behind, forego all subtlety and slip loose the dogs of war. Success and dispatch a half D8 enemy henchmen. If that is all of them, the rival submits to capture. Remember, sometimes you can't just slaughter; is your capture to kill ratio still copasetic? Regardless, character is Shaken. If character is Skill Brawler, Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Berserker

Bane Honor Knave: Employ fire; does not immediately kill and tends to take the fight out of an opponent. Fail and forced into diversion (maybe extinguishing what you enflamed), selecting Irregular to keep enemy reinforcements out of the fray. If you are the last using this table, the rival escapes; causing the mission to fail. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Blade Scintillating (K)

Bane Honor Ten: Elicit their empathy by tending to the wounded of both sides. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. If character is Skill Grit-Stamina, Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Skill Barber (Chiurgeon)

Bane Honor Nine: Toss out your purse, spilling the contents on the floor. Perhaps your virulent greed is not shared by all others. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. Regardless, lose your purse of coins. Regardless, character acquires Personality Flaw Greedy. If character is Swagger Speed & Guile (R), Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Skill Briber

Bane Honor Eight: Command the foe to cease this senseless slaughter. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. If character is Skill Tormentor, Difficulty decreases by two. If character is Swagger Battle Cry (A), Difficulty decreases by two.

Difficulty: 11 Advantage: Wizardry Power Words (S)

Bane Honor Seven: Secure the captives with cord or other means of binding (including a knock-out rap to the back of the neck). Fail and half of those surrendered and captured return to the fight. If character is Blade Meshed (Q), Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Wizardry Paralysis (Q)

Bane Honor Six: Gut one antagonist, while commanding the enemy's faltering servants to do what's right and join the winning side. Fail and half of those surrendered and captured return to the fight of the rival. Regardless, dispatch one enemy henchmen. If he was the last, the rival surrenders. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Wizardry Thought Control (P)

Bane Honor Five: Splay the broken body or beating heart of one of your victims; even your own loyalists look on you with terror, and they should have nothing to fear. Fail and half of those surrendered return in panic to the fight of the

rival. Regardless, dispatch one enemy henchmen. If he was the last, the rival surrenders. If character is Swagger Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S), Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage: Wizardry Demonic (F)**

Bane Honor Four: Tender forth a pleading, twitching body, suspended on your impaled Zweihänder. Fail and rival joins the action; this Test of Honor ends. If the rival must be captured, Method Calculated or Recitation could be used.

Regardless, dispatch one enemy henchmen. If victim happens to be the last, the rival surrenders. If character is Blade Hellish (M), Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Wizardry Necromancy (H)**

Bane Honor Three: Cloud the enemy mind; confuse their sense of loyalty and reason. Perhaps go too far; sane acts also what make people surrender. Fail and rival joins the action; this Test of Honor ends. If the rival must be captured, Method Calculated or Recitation could be used. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage: Wizardry Psionics (B)**

Bane Honor Two: Use the objects in the field to deflect and harry the attacks. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. If character is Swagger Disarming Blow (F), Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage: Wizardry Telekinesis (D)**

Bane Honor Ace: The enemy may not fear death, but give them a taste of the pain they might suffer in the interim. Fail and rival joins the action; this Test of Honor ends. If the rival must be captured, Method Calculated or Recitation could be used. If character is Swagger Effective Spurning (H), Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Wizardry Hexes (M)**

Major Tarot in Test of Honor apply as per Personal Duel events. If those results force regular personal dueling attacks, like Magical, the players might blow the chance to capture the rival. He might be slain (accidentally on purpose) by other Method actions. Return here after the moment of escalation passes. Ref must decide lasting modifiers or flairs.

Battling to Quell Hostility

The player may be told or may decide he doesn't want to slaughter all in his path. If he is captured by the rival, it may help him plead his case of lenience when he showed some restraint himself. But mostly, this table is used in the climax to convince the rival's minions or other neutral parties that death in this conflict is not required.

The climax challenge will be to survive long enough to bring about the truce. The players are attempting to lessen the blood-letting and get the two sides to break. In success, the sides will separate for parley, a break in the dueling action to

negotiate a trust or armistice. The Ref must decide conditions after that, but seldom will the sides renew the fight. They would instead hold grudges to be resolved in a later adventure.

This table is perfect for climax fights with twist enemies not specifically allied to one side or the other in an adventure. Cabals are very zero-sum conscious in their activities. Warriors cost money and should not be wasted. The table is great when fighting those extra political forces.

If the players initially must fight some neutral party in order to get where they need to be, instead of just wiping out the yahoos, the players can fight trying to get the opposing force to stop hostilities and let them pass. The Ref may even force that desired end on the players. i.e. *“You can’t just slaughter these guys. There’s too much unknown and ramifications to follow if you hurt the Earl’s scouts.”*

The table also has some unique Advantages, like Any Swagger (*letter*). The player would have two choices, select one of the types he has for the 3D8 Advantage. Or else, declare any technique of the same letter and have a chance to add the ability with a successful roll. He could even try to lock one he has as Glorious.

De-Escalation King: Render inert the weapon of the biggest, meanest of the lot. Success and the sides separate for parley; there is a break in the action to possibly negotiate a true end to the battle. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Swagger Disarming Blow (F)

De-Escalation Queen: Despite the clamor, focus the enemy on you and your appeals. Success and the sides separate for parley; there is a break in the action to possibly negotiate a true end to the battle. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Wizardry Thought Control (P)

De-Escalation Knight: Tend to the injury of someone in the battle, your own, the enemy or even an innocent bystander. Success and the player may wake one unconscious or injured comrade. His wound might still remain, but he gains actions once again in the continuing battle. The now conscious player may even select method De-Escalation, even if he had previously lost that option. There is no penalty here for failure, except maybe your ally’s status remains unchanged. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Wizardry Geomancy (C)

De-Escalation Knave: Corroborate your credentials of having made a career of dealing with common plebian scum. Success and the sides separate for parley; there is a break in the action to possibly negotiate a true end to the battle. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Mount Talking (P)

De-Escalation Ten: Take an important hostage, perhaps a neutral parry or innocent, and threaten all to calm down and listen. Success and the sides separate for parley; there is a break in the action to possibly negotiate a true end to the battle.

Difficulty: 13 **Advantage:** Swagger Wrestling Holds (T)

De-Escalation Nine: Your reputation proceeds you, because you are relatively well known by those you fight. Success and the sides separate for parley; there is a break in the action to possibly negotiate a true end to the battle. Fail and player is forced to abandon De-Escalation and select Irregular next round. **Difficulty:** 10

Advantage: Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)

De-Escalation Eight: Entertain with poetic recitation taken from a popular book of sonnets. Success and the sides separate for parley; there is a break in the action to possibly negotiate a true end to the battle. Fail and player is forced to abandon De-Escalation and select Irregular next round. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Minstrel

De-Escalation Seven: Every man has a price; getting a bargain is the real art of negotiation. Success and the sides separate for parley; there is a break in the action to possibly negotiate a true end to the battle. Fail and player is forced to abandon De-Escalation and select Irregular next round. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Briber

De-Escalation Six: Deliver your sermon, while using anything and everything to shield yourself. Fail and player must select Irregular next round; this method would be no longer available to him. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Swagger Mastery Shield (O)

De-Escalation Five: Gain an elevated, strategic position from which to deliver your address. Fail and player must select Irregular next round; this method would no longer be available to him. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Swagger Battle Cry (A)

De-Escalation Four: Prove thyself a gentleman and a scholar by doffing your cap, lifting your visor, lowering your weapon and shield...to present your clan banner as introduction. Fail and player must select Irregular next round; this method would no longer be selected. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Swagger Speed & Guile (R)

De-Escalation Three: Call for reason, from a relatively safe vantage of course. Fail and player must select Irregular next round; this method would no longer be selected. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Swagger Better Valor (B)

De-Escalation Two: Make a demonstrative appeal about the terrible waste—cost in lives, dulling of spear tips, damaged to wardrobe—incurred by the skirmish. Success and the sides separate for parley; there is a break in the action to possibly negotiate a true end to the battle. Fail and player is forced to abandon De-Escalation and select Irregular next round. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Courtly Grace

De-Escalation Ace: Take charge and administer a firm hand to establish order, while not seriously damaging the *merchandise*. Success and the player may wake one unconscious or injured comrade. His wound is even removed, and he gains actions

once again in the continuing battle. The resurrected *Lazarus* selects method De-Escalation. There is no penalty here for failure, except maybe your ally's status remains unchanged. If no one was injured, the player must select one other player with the contention the man was cowering; that will have to be resolved later with role-play (if true or not the act was alleged). **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Slave Driver**

Bane De-Escalation King: Pick up and hurl one braggart at another. Fail roll and your character is knocked unconscious. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage: Any Swagger (D)**

Bane De-Escalation Queen: Bait the enemy with something shiny set on the floor. Fail and select Irregular next round; you may no longer choose De-Escalation as a method. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Any Swagger (T)**

Bane De-Escalation Knight: Point upward, then deliver a swift kick to the shin. Fail and select Irregular next round; you may no longer choose De-Escalation as a method. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Any Swagger (H)**

Bane De-Escalation Knave: The enemy disengages, collects his wounded and retreats. For whatever reason, this battle has ended. They have fled, but the enemy may be hastily pursued, trailed or secretly followed. This result does not allow further chance to parley. If the players pursue and try again to force a parley, all Difficulties increase by three.

Bane De-Escalation Ten: Dodge and retrieve a dart, knife or arrow, then another, then another. You start twirling each in a circle, staring sinisterly at the weakest foe. Fail and take a shot for a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Any Swagger (O)**

Bane De-Escalation Nine: Who needs to die? Certainly not you and a likeminded aggressor, so settle this another way. Fail and your character is knocked unconscious. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Any Swagger (A)**

Bane De-Escalation Eight: Struck feebly on the jaw; return the favor with some oomph. Fail and your character is knocked unconscious. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Any Swagger (L)**

Bane De-Escalation Seven: Become the center of attention, as both sides, all sides, take a breather to watch you waltz the arena, engaging and retreating and entertaining the crowd with battle theatrics. Fail and shot for a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Any Swagger (C)**

Bane De-Escalation Six: When challenged to fisticuffs, aim low and break his kneecap. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Brawler**

Bane De-Escalation Five: Calm, self-control, reason? You would be wiser to respond in kind to the enemy's baser human nature. Fail and your appeal to reason has ended. The player must select Irregular actions next round. This method is no longer available to him. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Trait Methodical**

Bane De-Escalation Four: Brush off the minor injuries you've suffered and continue to present a calm exterior. Fail and the player must select Irregular actions next round. This method is no longer available to him. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Armorer-Smithy

Bane De-Escalation Three: Bring out the doomsday device to gain everyone's attention. Success and sides separate to parley, but fail and fall from a vicious wound. If the character has Wizardry Pyrotechnics (K) or Voltaic (N), Difficulty decreases by one for each. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Artillerist

Bane De-Escalation Two: Put the enemy off-his aim with a friendly wink or a sly twist of the mustache. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Any Swagger (P)

Bane De-Escalation Ace: Dispatch the most militant and intractable of the adversary's henchmen, obviously the one with two hands around your throat and choking you. Fail and your character is knocked unconscious. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Any Swagger (S)

Major Tarot in De-Escalation apply as per Personal Duel events. If those results force regular personal dueling attacks, like Magical, the players might blow the chance to end this respectfully or return here after the moment of escalation passes. Ref must decide.

Climax Challenges Unknown Information

Many times the game will be played flip-card and not much will be pre-generated. Yet the climax challenges need to be involved; they are more enjoyable, when they have some element of mystery. Yet, developing a mystery is not an easy task. So, the Ref might want to set up an obstacle of Unknown Information with the secret left generic. Here's a quick method.

The players will be after many things, but they fall into three categories: **missing information, an special item or securing an insider ally.** All would be something critical to the current mission or situation. Without the info, item or ally, the quest is stalled. The mission might not come to an abrupt end but continuing will be more dangerous. The Ref should increase the number of surprises, attacks or obstacles, the players face. That is if they fail on the event table below and do not find the info, item or friend.

Information is gained by Kings and Aces. Objects are acquired by Queens and Aces. Informants are gained by Knights and Aces. There are several chances to gain a die roll modifier and pick another card. There are also plenty of ways to get

knocked unconscious. Then, you're hoping you're not the last player to make an attempt. If everything rests on your success, well, you are not guaranteed a fine result.

Yet this is not how the full mission is completed. If the players are questing for an item, looking for someone, solving a grand mystery, this table is too small in scale for a single flip here to give them what they need. Instead, this is a piece of the



greater puzzle. I also like it for distractions, such as looting the rival's private arsenal. before the players find the desired loot, they must first discover info (record or diary), item (key or spell safeguard) or ally (interrogate the person who knows where something is hidden or who regularly moves past traps or locks).

The player need not have a specific goal of gaining knowledge, finding an object or treasure, or attempting to impress someone to entice a new ally. Those events are the goals, but the player may enter the action expecting kismet, unforeseen consequences generated by the cards. The Ref may hint throughout the journey of encounters that the players will face as an climax obstacle, usually to begin the challenges, where they must gain that secret info, the item, the ally.

One, two or all three may be required. That's up to the Ref to decide. He may base the goal on situations produced during the settings. Lots of Queens and

little will be hidden, that is of course unless those Queens are inverted. Lots of Knaves and again, the situation will become much easier when the various captured and dead can be inspected along the way.

So here we have an event and skill driven method of generating all three, the hidden idea, the object, the supporter. What specifically are each? Well, the Ref could flip WHAT (from Missions booklet)? Else, the players can add their own

ideas, fleshing out the flip-card adventure to suit their own tastes and to advance their characters.

To be especially cruel, this table might also be employed when a player has his Blade confiscated when he was a prisoner. If he doesn't recover his sword, he may have to start from scratch building all the Blade techniques. Yet the sword might be locked or hidden away by the rival or some other mischief (imps). Use this table to see if he can find the information (map), item (map) or ally (minion with map) to know where his sword is located. That or let the character have an affinity for his missing Blade and be able to get close to the location if only he had a final clue to get the item back. This table might be used for that.

The table has some unique Advantages, like Any Swagger (*letter*). The player would have two choices, select one of the types he has for the 3D8 Advantage. Or else, declare any technique of the same letter and have a chance to add the ability with a successful roll. He could even try to lock one he has as Glorious.

Below, there are no bane results. The table has its own frustrating results. Also, Major Tarot should be used per dueling. In many cases the players will get one and only one attempt on the table. The table itself will state otherwise. After which, a larger patrol of the rival's forces will probably be alerted and would force them to flee.

Q&D Opportunistic Motives – Gaining Info, Items or Allies

Opportunity King: Compel the opponent to monolog and boast of elements of his master's plan. Success and gain knowledge critical to the current mission or situation. Regardless, card may be attempted by each player; only one needs to succeed. There are no other options available; if all fail, the opportunity passes without gain. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Any Swagger (P)

Opportunity Queen: Your opponent taunts and teases by holding out an object of your desire. Snatch it away in an astonishing display of legerdemain. Success and gain an item which is critical to the current mission or situation. Note, the item is not any character's lost relic or magical Blade, but the item reveals a pointer or is a critical key to getting back something personal or to obtain the quest object. Regardless, card may be attempted by each player; only one needs to succeed. There are no other options available; if all fail, the opportunity passes without gain. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Any Swagger (Q)

Opportunity Knight: Prove yourself superior in your cause, and more importantly show how much fun you're having. Success to impress an ally or foster a turncoat, who proves critical to the current mission or situation. Regardless, card may

be attempted by each player; only one needs to succeed. There are no other options available; if all fail, the opportunity passes without gain. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Any Swagger (A)

Opportunity Knave: The adversaries are savvy to your plans. Your opportunity for opportunism has ended. If the battle continues, the character is Shaken. The next player is still allowed a turn and the next card flip for event.

Opportunity Ten: Overhear fragments of the enemy plans, both immediate and strategic. Success and the Difficulties on the table are reduced by four for all players yet to have a turn. Regardless, the opportunity continues. If character is Trait Clever, skilled Linguist or Occult Scholar, Difficulty reduces by one for each.

Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Any Swagger (R)

Opportunity Nine: Might as well engage in a bit of larceny during the distraction of a tussle. Gain a purse of coins, but also perhaps a clue. Success and the Difficulties on the table are reduced by four for all players yet to have a turn. Regardless, the opportunity continues. If the character is skilled Pickpocket, Difficulty reduces by two. **Difficulty: 13 Advantage:** Any Swagger (F)

Opportunity Eight: Why not just intimidate (or beat) a confession out of a henchman? There is perhaps much to be gained by forced submission. Success and the Difficulties on the table are reduced by four for all players yet to have a turn. Regardless, the opportunity continues. If character is skilled Tormentor, Difficulty reduces by two. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Any Swagger (M)

Opportunity Seven: Rely on your secondary instinct to benefit from this encounter (in the story). Fail and you have a bad choice; suffer a minus one Quest Pip or allow the opportunity to expire (events end here). **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Any Swagger (E)

Opportunity Six: Console yourself in prayer, carve a totem, make an offering, call on the divine, fashion an idol, perform a sacred dance, atone for misdeeds, etc. Every player should attempt this roll. Fail and suffer divine retribution of a vicious wound (character may have had a stroke or suffered from bloodletting). Regardless, the event concludes here; each character's Warped Outcome tally increases by a half D8, but do not generate those events. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Any Swagger (C)

Opportunity Five: Drink, damn you! Whether in self-reflection or a merry gathering, a muddled mind is the best state to find what you're looking for or what you might have lost. Success to continue on the table. But, fail and this encounter ends inconclusively. If the character has skill Grit-Fortitude, Difficulty decreases by three. If the character has yet to check Growth, he does so with the understanding he is now a Drunkard as his normal state of waking life. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Any Swagger (N)

Opportunity Four: Assemble to discuss the journey to date, the tactics, lesser figures, make a diorama, plot some what-ifs, even project a bird's eye view; you're

probably wasting time. Success to continue on the table. But, fail and this encounter ends inconclusively. If the character is skilled Cartographer, Difficulty decreases by two. Regardless, the character's Warped Outcome tally increases by a half D8; do not resolve the outcome event. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage: Any Swagger (B)**

Opportunity Three: A nagging suspicion, some detail about the situation appears to be off; perhaps something is concealed, or a trap is about to spring. Else, there is advantage to be had in searching (vigorously). Optional, success to gain plus one Quest pip; however, the rest of the event ends inconclusively. Refuse or fail roll and suffer a half D8 increase in Warped Outcome tally. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage: Any Swagger (G)**

Opportunity Two: Put the enemy on the defensive or commit an atrocity to prove your staunch resolve. Every player should attempt this roll. Fail and add a half D8 to the character's tally for Warped Outcome; do not resolve those events. Regardless, gain a plus one Quest Pip, but this event concludes here. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Any Swagger (H)**

Opportunity Ace: Think three moves ahead; the enemy has never seen such deceptive handiwork nor will he ever again; you have impressed him to stunned acquiescence. Success and gain your choice of knowledge, an item or an ally, each something critical to the current mission or situation. Regardless, card may be attempted by each player; only one needs to succeed. There are no other options available; if all fail, the opportunity passes without gain. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Any Swagger (I)**

Q&D Tactical Surprises

When a quest has Unknown Information, the result can be obtained by flipping a card here. The rival is more powerful than expected. The patron might be blamed for what follows; he should have had more knowledge of his enemy. Or more often, the rival simply kept more than one *ace up his sleeve*. Like the terrain options previously, these can make an otherwise routine clash with some minions become rather deadly. These tables may also be used to add reinforcements to the enemy, which come from a third-party the players offended with their actions along the way.

Tact. Surp. King Cups: *Ambush Stronghold*. The rival now resides in a sanctuary in which the area of battle requires the players to both advance upon one spot and guard a second. The second attack is usually upon the longboat. Each player should decide to take his main character or alternate into the first battle assault (usually minions numbering double the party). After that is resolved, each player then uses his main role or alternate in the next fight (usually minions numbering the same as the party). He may not, obviously, use the same character in both places.

Both battles must be won to satisfaction. Player characters can be injured or die, but the enemy as well must be fully defeated in personal combat.

Tact. Surp. Queen Cups: *Psychological Warfare Stronghold.* The rival now resides in a sanctuary in which the spooky environment or added magical tricks enhances the fears of any intruders. Each player must overcome his worst phobia before entering into the battle. Each player must overcome his psychological obstacle individually, a Difficult roll; however, upon failing the roll the group's leader may try to motivate all to continue. Ref decides the difficulty degree there, based on how many players failed and for what fear. There is a slight possibility that the rival will then employ the fears again if he is faced in person. The fears (here) need not be recorded, unless the character wishes to check Growth.

Tact. Surp. Knight Cups: *Personally Immortal.* By divine blessing, the aid of a relic, magic or armor—of a kind that cannot be stolen or does not offer anyone but the rival this protection—or from his simple mastery of obscure swagger, the rival is immune to player inflicted injuries. This invulnerability only lasts for the length of this mission, but the players may believe the effect is sustainable.

If the mission involves the rival's death, the Ref may decide that that can only occur under a certain set of circumstances or after the rival's secret Achilles Heel is discovered through an extra climax challenge of future play.

An immortal rival is certainly more powerful than just an Invincible one. Nonetheless, many times he does not need to be slain in order for the players to triumph. Depending upon the rival's level (ferocity) he may be driven to flee or even surrender. Yet even in defeat no one can harm him. A player will break his Blade (and start over collecting swagger) if he tries to press the issue. "*Hasan Chop.*"

Tact. Surp. Knave Cups: *Gronk Enforcer.* The rival is served loyally by an agent with enhanced resistance to damage. The agent will step in front of damage that was aimed at striking his boss. He is immune to injury (for the moment).

This operative's invulnerability can only be removed by separate display of one specific swaggering technique. The vulnerability should be a swaggering technique known by at least one player character, but not necessarily all. Each round one player may call out a swagger he has and try to cancel the Gronk. This guess is in addition to his normal turn actions in whatever task or combat is occurring. If the players are on average above level five, the swagger required should be not just a letter group but a single technique. Perhaps let the players regress and deviate into an extra climax challenge where they can gain a clue to that vulnerability (through use of Q&D Opportunistic Motives).

Tact. Surp. Ten Cups: *Personally Respawns.* The rival is armored by the plot and cannot be slain. he may be critical to the campaign or just a pest to come again and again. he need not even be that powerful. He can fill a role of comic relief or annoyance.

Even if he suffers great injury, he will recover. He may even seem slain, his head removed from his torso. By relic, magic cure, mastery of skill or godly elements, the rival will not die this day. His life force seems housed elsewhere. If he falls with several vicious wounds, it was simply a bloody mess. Often when he appears to be bested, he will fall overboard, into a ravine, appear to be blown asunder, etc. Leave the body irretrievable.

The players may be left thinking the rival was slain, and their patron may also believe the tale. Only a few missions later will the disfigured fiend reappear to seek his revenge.

The Referee gets to have this NPC as a future threat. Having at least one reoccurring villain is great fun. Often the rival resurrects from his apparent grave and attacks the players in a much later adventure with surprise. He might pose a masked patron or use an agent after a D8 intervening play sessions?

Tact. Surp. Nine Cups: *Personally Clever.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or simple mastery of skill, personal duels directly with the rival that generate a Bane result have Difficulty increased by four. This addition is not the same as his Defensive Modifier, so the Methodical Trait's strategic benefit will not cancel the penalty.

Tact. Surp. Eight Cups: *Personally Impenetrable.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or simple mastery of skill, personal dueling attacks slated to strike the rival are increased by four for Difficulty. If the result is Dispatch, the effort requires the higher roll. Only the rival, not his minions have this protection. For Calculated and Recitation results, he gains a minus four penalty to the player roll if the highest outcome involved injury. This addition is not the same as his Defensive Modifier, so the Methodical Trait's strategic benefit will not cancel the penalty.

Tact. Surp. Seven Cups: *Brain Enforcer.* The rival is served loyally by an agent with enhanced abilities of intuition and discovery. This agent will seem psychic with various angelic or warlock powers of precognition. The players will only be able to defeat this minion or the rival using Irregular or otherwise chaotic and spontaneous actions. Ref decides any flair outcomes based on extra player action.

Tact. Surp. Six Cups: *Mechanoid Enforcer.* The rival is served loyally by an agent with enhanced attacks with robotic or arcane weapons. These weapons often appear harmless to the players accustomed to facing feudal arms. "What's that rope thing pulling apart in his hands?" The Ref may flair any player Bane with changed result of failure also causing a vicious wound. Else treat Kings, Queen, Knights as Knaves in any style of battle.

Tact. Surp. Five Cups: *Personally Elder.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or simple mastery of skill, the rival is only affected by close combat attacks. He may not be injured by any ranged attack, which means most magic just misses

him. In addition to magic, if the narrative describes anything hurled, shot or thrown, it will not hurt him.

Tact. Surp. Four Cups: *Personally Defensive.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or simple mastery of skill, only a limited number of attackers may engage the rival. Usually, he may be attacked by only one person at a time with Calculated or Recitation. Each player, though, still gets his turn; he just must select another Method. No one is off the hook and out of play.

Tact. Surp. Three Cups: *Personally Coy.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or simple mastery of skill, each round one personal attack attempted against the rival is rendered ineffective by his flair defense. This is not just a skip the player's turn. It should be *change the lowest level character's action* to a Bane result each round of personal duels. The lowest level character may not take Calculated or Recitation actions to avoid the group's penalty. Should he be knocked from combat, well, the next lowest and so forth will get this Bane.

Tact. Surp. Two Cups: *Personally Regenerative.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or simple mastery of skill, the rival recovers quickly from blows and ignores when he's been knocked out. He still will fall by dispatch from a vicious wound. But he will soon pop back up into the fight. So, bind him? The players will need to take actions which force him to actually surrender or run away. Similar to the immortal and rival respawn, this one might be thought dead and return. But unlike those two, the rival is usually met, defeated and appears again in the same climax. There the players will be wise enough to then get him to stop fighting.

Tact. Surp. Ace Cups: *Personally Mystical.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or mastery of a one of a kind skill, the rival can mesmerize one attacker into fleeing or sometimes even hypnotize someone to turn on his comrades. The saving thrown for this should be Difficult. Start with the lowest level. Each character aiding the rival will cause a minus one Quest pip on the rest. The victim can also be broken from the spell by his own wits or outside help by attempting that Difficult roll again each time his turn comes around. If at any time, all the players are captured. Well, that would be bad, right?

Tact. Surp. King Rods: *Personally Rapid.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or simple mastery of skill, the rival's speed prevents the players from catching him should he evade or escape. The players must entice and trap this rival if the goal is his captured. Otherwise, the rival is almost assuredly going to flee sometime and become a threat for a later date (adventure).

Tact. Surp. Queen Rods: *Personally Deadly.* By relic, heavenly miracle, magical element or simple mastery of skill, the rival's blows continue to cause damage in the combat rounds after the strike. A player character's vicious wound must be immediately staunched and treated by a skilled Barber (Chiurgeon), Farrier-

Breeder, Houndsman (Beasts) or display of Wizardry or the character will die. The roll for this saving first aid need only be Ordinary, but the character doing the healing will need to be also take an Irregular Method action. Since most vicious wounds also knock out the character, someone else must be the attending physician.

Tact. Surp. Knight Rods: *Botanical Threat.* Rival will be an horticulturist and use herbal perils to enhance his attacks. The rival has surrounded his sanctuary with plants that kill by poisonous spores or secretions. He is himself immune to their danger as are most of his henchmen, but the players will not be so lucky nor even notice the danger. Are any observant Horticulturists in the party? These plants will be in his compound or pinned on his lapel. He may even send a scented flower to the principal player character as a gift.

Tact. Surp. Knave Rods: *Personally Hideous.* By disfiguring disease or brutal facial scarring, the rival causes even a hardened soldier to turn away. The players must make an Ordinary roll, before they can take unrestricted actions. Suffer any Banes, but ignore the regular card flips unless that extra roll is made. Each character must overcome his revulsion just once. After settling in and seeing the rival for what he is, pitiful and dangerous, combat for that player may continue normally (after the successful roll). Ref may decide characters of both Bold and Gifted traits begin immune to this penalty.

Tact. Surp. Ten Rods: *One-Shot Threat.* The rival has someone or something that can only briefly serve or will fulfill a single terrible purpose. This is often the demon, ginn or godling summoner. The outcome will leave one player character stricken and forced to drop from the climax. Ref decides which character suffers and discontinues the quest. If the selected player character is level zero, he has been killed instead – and so be it.

Tact. Surp. Nine Rods: *Black Widow Enforcer.* The rival is served loyally by an agent with enhanced seduction ability. People will do the strangest things and even betray trusted friends for this agent. The agent probably was introduced during the adventure even if not implicitly stated. Yet none of the other players noticed the interaction.

One player will drop out of the climax of the adventure for a single obstacle (only). He will then return seeking apology for his weakness of character. If the other players forgive and forget, the party continues the climax challenges with a minus three Quest Pip penalty. Else, the doomed lover is probably ostracized and in need of redemption in downtime between adventures to patch-up one by one his transgressions with the rest of the group. To make the obstacle even more tragic, the smitten character will still love the rival's minion; she may appear from time to time and wreck the save havoc, selling her additional services to later rivals. Love never ends (well). What if she seduces a different party member to enslave two?

Tact. Surp. Eight Rods: *Pitfall Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which all intruders in the area suffer damage from secondary defenses and traps. Everyone continues the climax challenges (from here) with a vicious wound. The Ref may allow Stallari to make a Nearly Impossible roll to avoid the trap damage. This series of injuries should be described by each player for himself. “*I was doused by a bucket of scalding oil.*” The group may decide, enough is enough, and call the mission failed.

Tact. Surp. Seven Rods: *Fated to Die.* If the rival is injured or slain, the player character who inflicts that damage suffers the same. “*They both tumbled overboard!*” There is no way to block this reciprocal damage. If the players’ mission is to kill the rival, someone will pay the ultimate price for success. The lowest level is not always, here, the one joined in the rival’s fate. The injury can be immediate – he bleeds, you magically bleed. Or, the result is just destined (to occur in the Epilog).

Tact. Surp. Six Rods: *Bewildering Stronghold.* The rival lives in a maze, a chaotic fortress or wild assault on the senses. The players will not be able to use Mount techniques; the animals will not enter the domain. The players might never reach the rival if that is necessary. At sea this is usually a maelstrom of sargassum, dense pack of seaweed, or a coral hazard with just a single navigable entrance and exit. The players may need to abandon the longboat and wade (dive) into the rival’s stronghold.

Mazes can be made or reduced to a probability. Adding a Quest Pip penalty as the players take wrong turns is a good way to add urgency. The rival might use a projection to convince the players to abandon the quest and allow him to lead them to safety. The conundrum inside a place of desolation (endless thirst) seems enough to kill them all unless they agree. What about magic? If it were that easy, there would not be a maze. The maze itself may be a Magical Null, a counter, or the only use of Cosmic would be to open a portal to go back to the start (or reality). Magic is great but doesn’t solve every game obstacle (outright). Are the players true gods?

Tact. Surp. Five Rods: *Personally Erratic.* By relic or mastery of skill, the rival dodges expertly and breaks-off from repeated attacks with the players. While the rival stays in the battle, the Ref may select one Method and declare all those actions Banes, or in the case of Calculated and Recitation result, found by rolling a single die not two. The players might wish to use a variety of actions attempting to defeat him.

Tact. Surp. Four Rods: *Caustic Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which the battle area has additional hazards that strike like secondary attacks during the round. Each action the player takes is treated additionally as the Bane. If the card was inverted, the player need not make two rolls. For Calculated and Recitation, the player makes two roll and suffers both outcomes. That could be helpful, using the

environ against the rival, if the player has a very high die modifier. Often it isn't good to add those extra flair results.

Tact. Surp. Three Rods: *Vast Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which the area is expansive and difficult to cross. The servitors are the ones that take the brunt of this. The longboat will lose a half D8 techniques (no save). A landed detachment will lose half the techniques they represent (collectively add by coming along).

Tact. Surp. Two Rods: *Personally Arcane.* By relic or mastery of skill, the only method available in personal duels is Magical. For other Q&D, perhaps ignore any event which doesn't have a Wizardry Advantage. That could lead to lots of cards. Maybe best to just have a swagger vs swagger against the rival where he selects a D8 wizardry and battle only the player characters wizardry – to the death! More likely to exhaustion and depletion of his *Harmful* characteristic.

Tact. Surp. Ace Rods: *Personally Cognitive.* By relic or mastery of skill, all attacks against the rival must be Irregular. That does not mean the players are defenseless just more unpredictable. Other scales of combat, like Skirmish or Ship Engagement, should have two added to every Difficulty as a penalty for the rival's intelligence and precognition. Give the players a choice to attack alone (Irregular) or all out with the warriors of the crew (at higher Difficulty).

Tact. Surp. King Coins: *Twisted Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which the area requires that the battle be fought as individual acts. Normally combat is a collective and one player's good luck can help cover for another's ill fortune. "I killed three; how many did you?" Here, the players may not help one another. Each player should face a force of minions equal to his level and must defeat them alone or gain his own escape. The rival will also join the squad attacking the principal player character (regardless of his level); he will usually have a Defensive Modifier. The worst thing to be is level four, face four bad guys with single roll resolution. Worse still if the character took the quest from the patron.

Tact. Surp. Queen Coins: *Precipice Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which the battle is bounded by extreme obstacles, which should not be penetrated or crossed. The battle could be confined to a ship deck, atop an escarpment or in a grand hall in the underworld. Anyone who goes *out of bounds* might not be able to return, ever. This usually means no one may escape any duel once it's started. Each round after all players take actions, the lowest level must roll Ordinary or fall to his doom. I imagine a stone tablet surrounded by lava as the player characters battle on the tilting platform. Or one surrounded by groping demon tentacles. But sure, mister unlucky might just get wet going overboard and need to be dried-off after the other players win.

Tact. Surp. Knight Coins: *Chameleon Enforcer.* The rival is served loyally by an agent with enhanced disguise ability. He often will appear as a double of the rival and play this role all the way to death. He could also impersonate another player character to tell the party's servitors to stand-down or go far away from the climax action. Ref as always decides details.

Tact. Surp. Knave Coins: *Deep Cover Agent.* A vicious, vicious card— Players discover that someone they trusted has been an agent of the rival from the start. Another player character is usually selected, someone other than the principal player character who accepted the quest of the patron.

Each player should describe how and why he is actually a servant or owes a debt to the rival. He should recall past missed rolls and failed attempts and justify these as misdeeds and sabotage. The Ref then decides which narrative is the most plausible. As a reward, that player usually checks an Ignoble or gains a free Swaggering Technique. That player is also declared the traitor.

The Ref may add his own details, especially if he thinks a player is only half-heartedly justifying his potential guilt. The guilty party (or even multiple parties), then drops immediately from the quest without any other combat resolution. The disloyal player character may commit himself to make amends after the mission. Else, the character may need to be set aside, until all those other characters of his former group pass into oblivion.

If the victor of the Ref's duplicitous challenge, the one with the best tale, is the highest level player character, things get ugly quick. In order to service his debt, release his soul from rival's control, that player must decide to kill (instantly) one other player character upon his exit. The murder may not slay the principal character. This act might never be reconciled with the group, even if all the original members present and witnesses were to die. Sure, no grudge should be held *out of character*, but rumors will follow. The Ref needs to decide any and all outcomes after a murder.

The *Deep Cover Agent* is a trap that potentially ends the life of two played characters! Allow the group to leave the mission, stop right now before things go tragic. Receive a reward from the rival and accept the patron as an enemy. The player traitor might convince the group of that alternate ending to keep the party united. For some it will be death before dishonor. But then I'm playing a game with Ignoble Deeds, so I'd might be cool with a full purse and a new boss?

Tact. Surp. Ten Coins: *Monstrosity Enforcer.* The rival is served loyally by a demi-human who attacks multiple times in hand-to-hand combat. Any character with less than nine Blade techniques, may only select Escape or Irregular in a fight with the creature. At this obstacle, the rival's enforcer usually tests the party threat for tactical information; the creature then escapes after a quick clash of one card each player consisting of monster Banes. The enforcer will then be side by side with the rival, if the final climax challenge is an A-type (face rival action). Ref decides

additional details. Give *odd-job* a name and have it even be a reoccurring threat after the rival is all but forgotten (or dead). He comes *jaws* again.

Tact. Surp. Nine Coins: *Personally Potent.* By relic or mastery of skill, the rival's attacks, knock out one player character in each round of battle. The victim is selected from the worst dice roll made in the round, regardless of result. This special loss may even occur in larger scaled Q&D, though the rival probably didn't directly make every punch in all cases. (Or did he?) Remember that mace swung by Jackson's Tolkien's Lord of the Nazgul? Do I need to describe what occurs if everyone in the party goes dark?

Tact. Surp. Eight Coins: *Constricted Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which the battle area is arranged in a way that only one of a single pairing of opponents may fight at a time. One player must face-off with an opponent, until someone vanquishes the other. The next man in the ready then takes his place until either falls. Arrange the players in a battle order. Who goes first?

Normally battle is fluid, and all manner of events do occur. Here, it is impossible to switch positions. The battle need not be just against the rival. His minions may number a D8 (pins to knock over). A single character might win the day. Any actions from the rear should be made using the Minor Antagonist guidelines under swagger vs swagger. But this is not a swagger exclusive battle. Could be, but usually not. The other players might just have to wait and watch the fun as the action occurs in a short hall before the rival's stateroom on a ship or in his keep.

Is the highest level always the first in line? Ref may also alter the order by having a twist where the attack comes from the rear on the last supposedly to have to fight.

Tact. Surp. Seven Coins: *Personally Evasive.* By relic or mastery of skill, any who attack the rival must first lose a swaggering technique before they take a Method of attack. To balance things some, none of the cards of battle should be treated as Banes. Any swaggering, even longboat techniques, may be sacrificed. You win some; you lose some – swagger here is being culled.

Tact. Surp. Six Coins: *Grand Warp.* By relic or mastery of skill, any who attack the rival must first add a half D8 to Warped Outcome tally before they take a Method of attack. To balance things some, none of the cards of battle should be treated as Banes. The Ref may decide to apply the Warped Outcome event before the combat result or after or not at all.

Tact. Surp. Five Coins: *Explosive Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary is loaded with gasoline, chemicals, gunpowder or high levels of leaking swamp gas (methane). Any attack that effects an area risks damaging both friend and foe alike. For all intents and purposes, he lives inside a large bomb. Any action, even a dropped torch, could risk big boom. The Ref must decide what is and is not possible in

combat; the players should not attempt and fail anything which makes fire. Does that include sword on shield sparks? Well, it could. Maybe solve this one with Recitation mind control.

Tact. Surp. Four Coins: *Adroit Minion.* By innate magic or mastery of skill, the rival's best bodyguard learns from the attacks of the players. Any card rank action becomes a Bane the next time it appears. Thus, if a Brash King appears, all Kings are now marked for failure. "*On paper, don't mar your deck!*"

If any card rank, King to Ace, appears twice, even on different tables, the result changes to the Bane. The card rank is cursed. If a table has no Banes, the result is inconsequential; those are usually larger battles where one person has less influence. Typically, this minion fights alone without other peons blocking his view. In personal combat, the players could run out of cards to use if they don't defeat the minion quick. What about Calculated and Recitation Methods? Unaffected and probably the best way to defeat the mob. Also, some results have the players ignore Banes. That would counteract the minion's ability. Ref should arbitrate all the case what-ifs this flip creates.

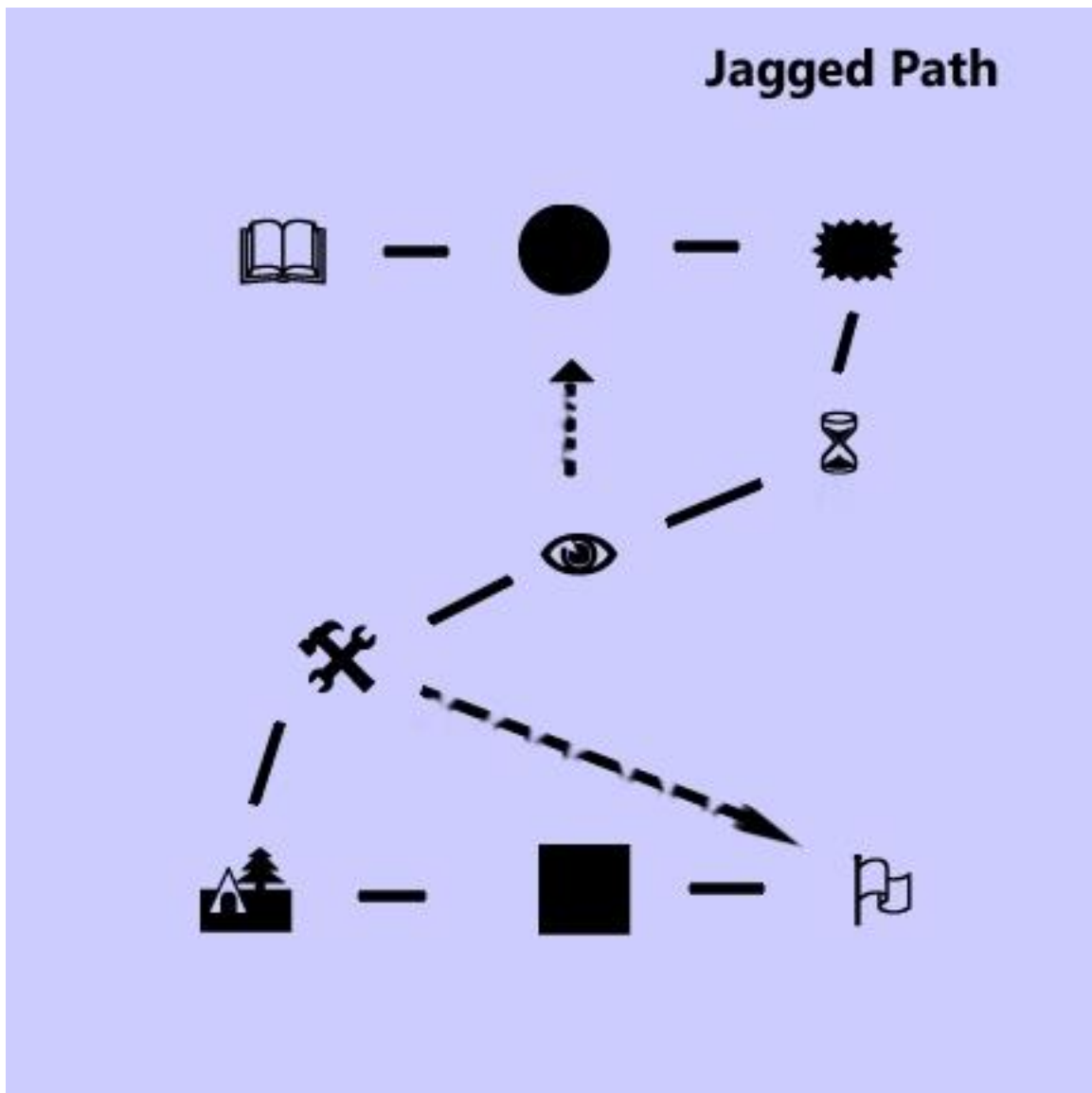
Tact. Surp. Three Coins: *Doomsday.* Rival has technology advanced for the genre, but he does not want to use it out of fear of losing control of his secret. He doesn't want anyone to copy his creation, or his experiments are preliminary. He researches a breakthrough that he has yet to fully understand. Only if he faces certain loss, will he activate his doomsday device. Primitive firearms, cannon and explosives do appear in the game as goblin made enemy flairs. None of which the players ever use.

Ref decides if this guy has a working machinegun or a ray gun. It will inflict terrible vicious damage on the party and the longboat's crew. Either, start battle, then inflict a longboat swagger loss and cause an extra vicious each round. Or, start battle and after a half D8 rounds, take a full D8 swagger, plus each and every player character receives a vicious wound (walking type, where they stay in battle injured).

A D8 rounds after the players are struck, the weapon will self-destruct, explode and kill the rival. If the rival must stay alive for the mission to succeed, perhaps some innocent he loves will suffer the terrible ending result. The players may never replicate this weapon; no one will ever believe their story that it ever existed. "*Sure, you killed a fiend with a rat-a-tat-tat-stick.*"

Tact. Surp. Two Coins: *Anti Magical.* By godly gift or mastery of skill, any magic used against the rival is blunted, cancelled or rebounds. Any narrative with Advantage Wizardry substitutes the Bane. Any Bane with Advantage Wizardry is rolled only at 2D8, even if the character has the technique. At Ref's discretion the event may backfire and any roll the player makes will be to avoid his own wound or loss. Often an increase in Warped Outcome tally will occur. Recitation method should be avoided.

Tact. Surp. Ace Coins: Knight Enforcer. The rival is served loyally by an agent who will challenge the leading player to mortal combat. The player may refuse, but his servitors will be disappointed. If the player accepts, fight a swaggering duel with the enemy agent only slightly more advanced; give him the same number of techniques as the prime player's character plus half a D8. If the player refuses battle, lose a D8 longboat techniques. Since other players can help the principal player *cheat* during swaggering, making his losses become victories, the player should probably make some attempt to fight the gallant foe. Even really criminal groups will admire this knight's audacity. (Then, they kill the knight with bow fire, after proving perhaps their leader was weak and ready to be replaced in mutiny.)



Tact. Surp. King Swords: *Weird Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which magical elements or strange weather conditions are unsettling, making it harsh or repugnant to enter. Fatigue and paralysis should dog the player characters as they adjust to changing pressures, electrostatic sparks and numbing vibrations. Most should refuse to enter without a role-play justified reason. The players' servitors will be disordered by the environment and must be left behind.

Tact. Surp. Queen Swords: *Melancholy Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which the battle area is filled with confusing objects, some that appear like innocent children or even the players' pleading friends. The party starts by rampaging to calm their puzzlement. They break lots of stuff. Then follow with a fight, where the players risk striking comrades they think are more tricks. Any time the players in this continuing battle inflict a vicious wound, say by dispatch, there is a one-in-four chance it strikes another player character. (Rather than flips lots of determination cards avoiding Swords, roll anything but one-two on D8 or else hurt a friend.)

Tact. Surp. Knight Swords: *Morbid Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which everyone seems to go berserk. Enraged is a given. Plus, any vicious wound received is treated as a slain. Rugged strategic benefit will still prevent the first enemy kill; but otherwise best not to fail rolls that inflict wound on the party.

Tact. Surp. Knave Swords: *Multi-Layered Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which he is shielded by special conditions. He has the high ground. Even on a ship, he may be boarded-up in a stern castle with his loyalists. Until the players devise a way of changing those conditions, only his agents may attack. The enemy will inflict a half D8 longboat technique losses and force each player to suffer a Brash Bane if they try a direct assault. The players should eliminate the rival's advantage before wasting good lives. There's always Siege. Or, the player characters display abilities to open up a gate; only after that can the action continues normally. Circumventing obstacles to entry may be applied here, but only if the rival is still ignorant to the players and their plans.

Tact. Surp. Ten Swords: *Baneful Minions.* The rival has a special force of henchmen who are diseased. They stink to the high heavens, and eventually infect everyone they fight. This illness may not be dodged or shielded. Though it seldom causes anything but the sniffles in a player character, the longboat will suffer an outbreak of plague. Take No Disease (I), of course. But many other techniques on the longboat might winnow away from the serious illness. Only magic might save the ship from a retching ending. One sure way to solve this problem without owing favors to demons or angels, burn the dead on the boat; start fresh. Otherwise, this ship might never be No Disease (I), short of that divine intervention.

Tact. Surp. Nine Swords: *Obscure Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which there are no road signs, landmarks and paved paths. The part becomes lost.

Ref needs to decide the outcome, but possibilities include delays, exhausting supplies, extra mishaps, impatience of warriors, arguments and accusations between players. Make as many rolls as needed to set things straight. This result on the sea usually means the location is wracked by fog and storms, which blow the players willy-nilly and hide landmarks. All magically created no doubt?

Tact. Surp. Eight Swords: *Countdown Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which the players have a time limit for each combat. Some other hazard—steam vents, random fires, explosive gases, flooding, sinking, smoke, noxious air, gale winds tilting structures—danger is always pending. Each battle will only last for half a D8 rounds, before everyone must retreat and take shelter. In the final round, each player must decide to retreat automatically, or else take actions and then make a separate Ordinary attempt to get to safety. Failing this extra escape roll means the player is downed viciously by the adverse conditions.

To add spice, each player should roll separately for his half D8 round limitation. One person's nerve or tolerance may be a bit higher today. If a battle is left inconclusive and suspended by countdown conditions, the players could return to find the enemy replaced by reinforcements.

Tact. Surp. Seven Swords: *Union of Rivals.* The rival is now meeting with an important figure of the empire. Select WHO? This person has only recently arrived to discuss a subject of importance. If the players can delay their actions, he may depart soon. They dare not attack with this bystander about. Most missions are not only private, they are dangerously close to criminal (if not outright). The agent of the capital, that WHO?, must be kept ignorant of any power struggle or intrigue, else the patron will not be pleased.

Tact. Surp. Six Swords: *Powerful Protector.* The rival has a guardian who has been notified of the rival's problems and been asked to render assistance. Select WHO? or default as the local Earl. The extra rival is not present, but he has sent some of his own forces to in support.

Choose any scale of action and fight the battle. The most problematic of these protectors will be political factions. This protector will limit his involvement even in the aftermath, unless the players plans are truly evil in motive or menacing to a region. If the rival is in the wrong or the goals of the players are small, the protector is probably misinformed by a duplicitous rival. The players might decide to argue their case in front of the assize (courts) to reduce the extra NPC's involvement back to neutral.

Tact. Surp. Five Swords: *Sheltered Stronghold.* The rival has a sanctuary in which the player attacks are easily countered by the enemy. Players attempt all actions with a minus one Quest Pip penalty. If the rival is ever fought, he may not be defeated by Calculated or Recitation actions.

Tact. Surp. Four Swords: *High-Low Stronghold*. The rival has a sanctuary in which the battlefield is very evasive and expansive; the players have split-up to find their opponents, not ever a good idea. The principal player character, the one first accepting the patron's mission, will meet the enemy first. He may select a third of the party to join him after first round, following the noise of action or calls for help. The rest then follow after a half D8 rounds of delay. Each player should roll his own half a D8 for his own delay.

Tact. Surp. Three Swords: *Freelance Enforcer*. The rival is served by an agent of legendary character – dangerous, violent, secretive. The enemy NPC is invulnerable during the climax. To face him is to lose; select only Banes. This person is normally not a static guard. The rival is instructing his powerful enforcer, and he will soon leave on a task. If the players delay and stay unseen, they will avoid the encounter. But will they know this? Q&D Opportunistic Motives may provide that answer.

Tact. Surp. Two Swords: *Comic Relief*. The rival has recruited a pair of natty agents, a husband and wife, or brother-sister team, who are notorious as thieves and reprobates. Recruited is probably the wrong word. The rival in many ways is handing-off this pair of tricksters to the unlucky players.

The pair is not shy about making themselves known, appearing in quieter settings or at dinner table meetings. They constantly quarrel over the woman's girlish seductions and present a distraction. The pair uses stealth to disrupt the players' ready supply chain. They will infiltrate the longboat. The Ref decides whether the result is calamity and the loss of a half D8 techniques. Or, often just a purloined coin box; lose (D).

Worse, once this event is generated, the players will meet this pair every other mission or so, until the Ref bores of using them. The rival has in essence *passed the star-crossed duo* to the players. They become a wagging fixture of play. Only the female will ever be directly caught or confronted in a duel. She then tries to talk or beguile her way to freedom.

Any battle will last at best a single round. The Defensive Modifier of this coquette will be twelve, even when the woman's level remains far below anything that deserves that protection. She's probably just level two on account of her lack of sea experience. Yet truly only a make-roll will cause anything other than an inconsequential result or prevent further detriment to the players. She may just be a goddess of mischief.

The players should be forewarned, that if the girl is ever truly harmed or slain, the remaining male adversary will spend every free moment seeking revenge. He may be a god of calamity. This is perhaps another example of where the players should accept their punishment, recover as able, then press on. To retaliate murderously will force an immediate parallel mission. The players must track down

and slay the surviving blackguard or suffer escalating retaliation, assassination and catastrophic mishaps. To kill a god of calamity will require a relic?

Tact. Surp. Ace Swords: *Lapse of Reason.* The players must continue the climax with no Advantage abilities. They never gain the three die roll for success. Even if they have the trait, skill or swaggering, the roll for every event remains two D8. This penalty lasts only during climax challenges.

Tact. Surp. Major Tarot may be ignored or add the same results as found under *Decisive Surprises* in the Mission's handbook.

Climax Challenges – Future Threats

These are situations, which the players must get past, before they can finish the climax. The citizens, usually a small village of people, may or may not be loyalists of the rival. They will almost always know the rival. Even if they are neutral to the quest at hand, there will be serious consequences should they alert the rival to the player characters' presence.



With each event is a rating of the chance that the players will face an angry mob, about a company size of legionary cohort, hunting for them in the Epilog. That encounter will be prompted on the cards listed with each event. The cards signaling attack will be mission consequence as the players fight these hostile forces.

If the players are traveling by sea, the action still occurs, as they come ashore for rest, supplies, information, or simply because they are duped, unlucky or curious. The Epilog is always along known routes, even if the mission took the players far, far away; the mob has sought them out. Yet, the Ref may feel free to give the mob a ship. The conditions of the event may also cause additional problems for the

players, which they must resolve with their skills.

These odd places are the very heart of Future Threats or Secondary Events. Causing problems that return after a mission is thought to be over and long forgotten by all. *“Remember when you cross paths with those pilgrims awhile back?”*

Q&D Self-Made Trouble

Self-Made King Cups: The locals hold gladiatorial games to the death. The players were not invited to the brutal festivities. The tribe would prefer to privately hold their death matches. The players stumble into and witness the bloody rituals. Now disturbed, they worry their practices may be declared unlawful and banned by the regional earl. Promise all you want to keep quiet, the pagan death cult knows better than to risk exposure. One of the players may have even accepted a challenge, killed a local hero and now is expected to stay as reigning champion (forever until he dies). Fight a preliminary fight in the climax, perhaps, but the main force of pursuit comes in the Epilog.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Queen, Knight, Knave or Ten.

Self-Made Queen Cups: The area is quite fertile with a thriving populace. All it truly needs is a politically minded noble as landlord for the region to become a prominent power broker. The present noble baron is either feeble or disinterested. A seneschal delivers a note stating that the ruling lord must be replaced. Will the Varangians help? Doubtful any player character will usurp this authority. This is a chance to aid a young man obtain power and earn his respect. Ask the players if anyone will help. Make up some atrocities.

The conspirator is the true baron’s brother or father-in-law. The attack attempt might be part of the climax or can be left unresolved. Whether the group agrees or not, they become involved in a conspiracy. The note or copies of the note sent to them are found. The baron will blame the party of inciting unrest, corrupting his kin to attempt such insolence. The minor figure who approaches them may even swear fealty and blame the players. A player character (perhaps an alternate role) might have even agreed to help for a reward, despite what the players actually think. (Yes, one of them probably owns this booklet and has read the plot will fail.)

The baron is discovered to be far from a pushover. He quashes the plot internally and now hunts the players in his domain. Add the local baron as an enemy of one or all of the player characters.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight.

Self-Made Knight Cups: The area is crossed by refugees, families fleeing nearby wars, famine, plague or raiders. The area can also be under attack by monsters. The survivors may not be desperate, but a mass exodus always creates shortages. The people here may also be fleeing a repressor, but never the rival. The

refugees may be truly foreign, having fled lands beyond the frontier. Sometimes the displaced are not even human, but a weaker nonhuman race. They will appear sympathetic.

Outsiders are never truly welcomed; they know they will someday have to fight to stay on occupied land. The fear of escalation comes from several causes. The local baron can attack and feel the Varangians are aiding the criminal outsiders. The monster or raiders they flee can arrive. The refugees can spread discord, shortages and plague to the group's ship. The crew might not be generous, they may be amorous and trade for companionship. That has lots of problems since the refugees are not gypsies and accustomed to selling brides. Magical elements among nonhumans might be foster prejudice and attract vermin. e.g. The owl headed Jenolen summon rats as foodstuff; those rodents then infest the ship.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Queen, Knight, Knave or Ten. Ref should mix and match all potential threats.

Self-Made Knave Cups: A village of both pagans and followers of the one true faith are living together in peace. Rightly, wrongly, intentionally or not, the arrival of the party, the crew and the ship's Hierophant will change that balance. Often tensions have simmered of late. Military might is added to one side or the other. Perhaps, a player character has checked Growth and selected a side in this religious debate? Is there a supreme god superior to all others? Pagans say no; Followers say yes, though the form of the high god does not specifically mean monotheism, particularly Christian. I avoid any religious debate in my own Outlands game. Ed note: *Cutlass* on the other hand is a mess of reformists and pogroms and inquisition.

Even by the simple act of going to mass (prayers) in one of the two churches (or the single shared temple), the perceived loyalty favors a side, if not outright proclaims a dogma, trumping the status quo. Even writing about religion is complicated. If the players have no established fealty to a pantheon or heavenly host, then the village will rally to convert them. That will cause the riots.

I suppose the players can avoid the unrest by pointing the finger at a third-party scapegoat. That thought, all too historically real, is too depressing to truly describe. Decades, or hundreds of years, of peace are upset in one encounter with the players. *"I check that Audacity Ignoble!"*

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight means the players cross paths with the dejected outcasts.

Self-Made Ten Cups: The area is managed by the One True Faith. The order aids the poor, which there will be many suffering in the region. The monks will ask for a charitable tithe. The players' servitors are typically more generous than the players. The crew, fearing retribution or hoping to secure favor, will demand the pay

chest be opened and wages delivered (in advance). Do the players have Treasure Laden (D) to meet the demand?

Some crew will desert to become laymen serving the friars. The friars will also admonish the Varangians over the treatment of slave rowers. Perhaps a few friars would like to take the poor souls' places? The friars will offer sanctuary to any who wish to end the sinful life of war. Up to a full D8 techniques might be tested by the encounter. Ref decides which (or let other gods decide, randomly).

The area around is loaded with the destitute and opportunists. Besides the poor, usually lots of gypsies steal and profit from the poverty.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight, but not actual armed priests, more often the arriving penitent who are less likely to turn the other cheek if the friars were molested or threatened. Also, the desperate may try to rob the rich (players).

Self-Made Nine Cups: The players become the dinner guests of a balmy scientist or eccentric inventor. This person will be a cross between Archimedes and Merlin, in mythical terms. Here the genius is cinematic, able to create things no one should have, relics of strange power and detriment.

The players will have something the mad man wants, but he is not willing or able to take the item initially by force. Okay, he probably wants brains or body parts (if your game is gruesome). Else, he covets a magical Blade of one of the Varangian characters. The group will be asked while dining if their host may hold the weapon, inspect the Blade (of one). He may even say he knows of alloy to enhance the object or has a servant who might be cured of madness or sickness by touching the Blade. Play on harmless sympathies.

The mad man will drug the players, then release his hounds (beasts). He could try to kill them all with his bare hands (or magic). Make some easy rolls to get away (at first). But the man is not the type who easily dies. His clone will be decapitated, but he will return in another host body. He will covet the object (of one, not even the best Blade) and appear from time to time in future adventures to make his claim. he will grow in power with the player character, so maybe sacrificing the object—starting over collecting techniques—is not a bad way to make a powerful ally.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight, as he or his even more wicked servants, even just mercenaries, try to steal the weapon. Should the player character die, expect the warlock to appear out of no way to claim the reward of the man's weapon. The dead have no need of it? Or would it be taken up by the fallen man's son or squire? Yes, the Ref may allow level zero characters to inherit.

Self-Made Eight Cups: A religious sect follows very narrow minded teachings proclaimed by a persecuted, often martyred prophet. These places tend to have local customs or sacred taboos that defy common sense. Players will find themselves curtly treated, regardless of their friendliness. Arrest and trials may also

occur. Worse, the demon the place worships may be physically trapped there and eternally angry.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten.

Self-Made Seven Cups: The players are offered local hospitality by the ruling noble. *“Finally, something decent and non-punitive.”*

To refuse would be the cause for later retribution. Or, add some suspense. While at dinner, they recognize someone from their past or observe a suspicious characteristic in one of the other dinner guests. Their local noble host has been infiltrated by a spy. Any resulting Epilog retaliation would depend on the players’ actions here.

Reveal the inside agent, and the person who sent the spy will be angered. A larger force from the agent’s own backer might want compensation. Keep the agent’s secret, and the lord of the manor might be slain. The players will be blamed as accomplices of the agent. Retaliation then might follow from the guards (Ronin) or kin from the manor. Do nothing? Bad things might follow. Do something? Bad things might follow. So, who’s the bigger threat? That’s for the Ref to decide. Also depends on what occurred. Maybe the players snubbed the dinner invite from the start and the lord himself will be there (hooded) to complete the robbery he had planned.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten.

Self-Made Six Cups: A fugitive has taken up residence in a local village. He may be unknown to the locals, but he will be recognized by the players. *“He’s the guy on the wanted poster.”*

There is usually a reward associated with his capture. However, the outlaw has family ties in the village or has been there so long that his cover story is universally believed. *“You accuse me? I am innocent.”*

Even if the players decide not to apprehend the man, they still might face an Epilog challenge. The criminal might rally the locals on false pretense to seek out the players. He does not want his cover story being questioned. A bad man wants to prevent the players from revealing his sanctuary. The locals think the players are evil, whether they took their friend or because the outlaw says the players are themselves wanted for a reward. Some of the player characters may be wanted men. In which case, the outlaw was an accomplice to those crimes.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. The fugitive himself will be impressive, a level better than any player (yet max of five, since he cowardly hides). He could also hide because he’s injured, but when he recovers add him as an enemy or ally if the man’s secret was kept. A fellow Varangian perhaps?

Self-Made Five Cups: The area is the home of an artist colony, a hedonist commune, which cares nothing of yesterday or tomorrow, living only for today. The members state they have found or made paradise. Some or all may have used magic

to change the landscape or themselves. They may also be kin of the Fae, a faery people known for debauchery and service to Dionysus.

The danger here lies when the players' servitors interrupt the mostly platonic fun. Frivolous philosophical arguments are made, which are not supposed to be countered by a fist strike to the face. Every character with the skill Brawler, probably gets his knuckles bloodied (for fun). Most of these places quickly devolve into anarchy. The idealistic nobles who form the cults lose interest, when they are no longer the center of attention. The guru—a mystic claiming to be divine—will be a control freak; he will want the frivolity run at his pace, on his orders.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Queen, Knight, Knave or Ten. They may also have conjured monsters or sacrificed to a more powerful protector.

Self-Made Four Cups: The players encounter an isolated village suffering from genetic isolation. Everyone here is directly related to one another. Often sister has married brother, and father has taken his daughters as brides. The villagers will try to hide these connections or deny any wrong-doing, calling each other *cousin*.

The players will probably ignore this and want to get on their way, but the villagers will fear any outsider bringing them shame. There is also probably a reason the players have arrived. The area may be snowed-in or the river is too dangerous from flood and debris. While the ship's crew stays here, they are more likely to uncover the village sins (against societal norms) and take vigilante action or insist the players hang a few of the elders.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. Vengeful stranglers returning to find their kin punished or village destroyed by the party.

Self-Made Three Cups: The area is farmed by slaves or prison labor. There may also be another project which involves a road, canal or defensive wall being constructed. The players will be asked to provide expertise. This will result in one of two bad results. The expertise will lead to an accident with prisoner deaths. Else, the prisoners escape by taking advantage of a work delay, as the players are consulted.

“Must this always end badly?”

Fight a brawling riot, perhaps a set number of Irregular Banes.

The players may instead notice how poorly treated the prisoners are. They may even notice these guys as Varangian. Something causes the prisoners and the garrison guards to brawl. The players will join one side or the other. The players will most likely gain little and be blamed either way.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight represents more escaped prisoners or a larger garrison looking for the men who freed the prisoners earlier.

Self-Made Two Cups: An unrealistic desire keeps an isolated village of people in an area where the inhabitants barely survive. There probably isn't even any noble household left. The village is without a leader or fealty. A false hope or incestuous family bond keeps all together.

This may be a mine, which is no longer profitable. The ore is since depleted or the laborers are too few. A delver company may have thrived here ages ago, but the last company to go into the underworld has yet to return and is presumed dead. The locals remain and remember the riches that once adorned their ancestors.

Some of these places were also once spas, but their popularity fell, or their medicinal value was discredited by the clergy or simply waned. These are places that need the players for a variety of jobs and for their skills. The locals will try to capture the players and their servitors as slaves.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. Maybe the survivors or that missing delver company return and retaliate for any harm done to the village. Even if, the players were the ones attacked – convince them of that.

Self-Made Ace Cups: The area has a working mine, a very deep tunnel into the underworld, which needs slave labor. The owners will pay well for strong bodies, the ship's oarsmen. The players may be tempted to sell off a few servitors – let's hope not. The players will be asked to lend expertise or wizardry to drain tunnels or help repair a structure. *"I need to borrow all your nails."*

The players may instead try to pillage the overseer's pay box. It will have perhaps a few purses of coins (or more), but no mining operation is truly independent. The local earl or legion garrison will be the chartered owner. When the lawful owner discovers his prize has been looted, he will send his army to find the criminals. *"Make them dig and replace my losses ten-fold."*

Even if the players do not steal, they might look like thieves. The supervisor may blame them for loss. Or, the players also might be raided in the Epilog for prisoner slaves.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight could be the first of many patrols.

Self-Made King Rods: The area crossed by the players has a unique plague. Some will get the disease, others will not. Ref decides randomly or vindictively. Disease is still very much misunderstood by the peasants; they will not want magic being used, even if it promises a cure. Disease is a godling's punishment. Foul smells are shunned, as other people show symptoms of affliction. The long bat loses technique Disease Free, regardless. When any illness strikes just a few, especially the player leaders, there must be divine meaning or cause. Contagion is caused by moral weakness.

A skilled barber (Chiurgeon) will be of little use. The best remedy are the poultices of an Apothecary. Since disease may have magical causes, Demonics and Necromancy may also help stave off illness. These illnesses cause wounds that may carry over into the next adventure as well.

Chance of spread or new outbreaks in the Epilog – any King, Queen, Knight, Knave or Ten.

Self-Made Queen Rods: Pilgrims are attracted to a shrine in the area of the climax. By some random coincidence, either deliberate, accidental or by false report, the players are blamed for desecrating this saint's altar. Often the shrines are altered by player character magic or magical mishap. Magical shrines may have long since lost their importance or remain a potent counter to some other evil in the region.

At least one player character must atone by either performing a quest to restore the shrine or by paying a guild to repair any damage direct or incidental the climax causes. Failure to do so, and each player must test at Ordinary upon raising to the next level. Fail there and heroic will never again be checked. The character's progression ends. Perhaps instead, the entire party might want to take that quest to restore the magical site to the village.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. As a mob of locals come to seek revenge for the desecration.

Self-Made Knight Rods: The players enter a township in which the last mayor has died. He was old, but poison is suspected. He might have even taken his own life. The town has an arcane system of electing the next leader. A series of elaborate tests, administered at odd intervals, decides who is the *smartest* and who will rule. Yet intelligence and education has nothing to do with success on the test. There is great luck involved, and the local clergy supports the final candidate by checking ancient omens. The whole process is deceptive, slanted with bias and racism. The overseer of the election tests is bureaucratic, corrupt and bribed.

One player, suddenly, jumps to number one? He makes a stupid offhand comment, which becomes law. The locals know the edict must be enforced, until that player character dies. Another place designed to make the players flee and hiding their tracks from pursuit.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten.

Self-Made Knave Rods: The players stumble upon a large number of slavers, gathering to collect souls, trade souls or buy souls. The scene is classically staged. The whip is being used. This may be a seasonal event, a secret gathering or a one-shot chance encounter. Slavery is perfectly lawful in all regions. The slaves are often nonhumans.

The sentiments of the player party will be divided. Even if all are slave drivers, the blatant oppression offends one of them. Rashly, he stops the sale, frees the unsold and turns the whips on the masters. That was a mistake, perhaps, but the deed is done. There is only to decide who took such actions (any and all).

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. But also, the player character has made an enemy of not just the village, but of the Imperial Guildmasters.

Self-Made Ten Rods: There is a village near the location of the climax, where one of the player characters was born or spent his childhood. His memories typically are not pleasant. The location may also be a place where one of the characters lost a close friend, fought in a losing battle or was jilted by a former lover. This place may even be the location of a previous adventure climax with all the players just noticing it now. *“Isn’t that your mark on that tree?”*

One or more of the players left here vowing never to return. The patron or rival may know this. There is much that can happen and many a penalty which might apply. There’s also some good role-play opportunities. The Ref must decide if someone has kin nearby, was told never to return, suffers a flashback. The battle generated by the area’s mob could be left open to speculation or anchored by a previous event.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – varies, depending upon the why and how the group decides this place is familiar.

Self-Made Nine Rods: The area has regressed to the stone age. The village has no metals. There could be many reasons, but the worst (most probable in game terms) is that the locals are controlled by a Metal Ginn. The monster does not want anyone to wield any metal. The could also be a wizardry cult with the same purpose.

The arrival of the players, and the seemingly miraculous items they carry, will cause a rift along age lines. Younger members, who’ve never seen even a nail, will be in conflict with elders who call all metal the tools of the Loki.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – King, Knight or Ten. The actual ginn or powerful sorcerer should not be met, unless a King is flipped. Otherwise, the opponents will be little more than rabble with flint spears and bows.

Self-Made Eight Rods: The people here have been struggling in their attempt to farm. On the coast, the farming can be swapped to fishing. They have only been marginally successful, because of the presence of hostile monsters. Anyone who spends time in the field will be attacked. Additionally at night, the village has seen children taken from homes. The monsters (nonhumans) may be used as a scapegoat for some other nefarious criminal in town.

The player characters, particularly hunters will be asked to stay, for a year. Most will refuse because they have not that time. The village won’t try to stop them now but could try to attack and kidnap those with the skills they need in the Epilog.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. But the result should start after the abduction with the rest of the group making a rescue.

Self-Made Seven Rods: The area is filled with seeping natural gases, tinder dry peat and pools of surface oil. One match strike or pyrotechnics, and the whole place could be engulfed in searing flame. The players will be warned by locals to avoid open camp fires, not to use torches on night patrols, and most critical of all, never use any magical heat.

A skilled Apothecary may be able to assess if that limitation is actually true. Else, it's fifty-fifty that the players are being lied-to or warned correctly. Is this an hoax with a trap? Check by lighting a candle?

Even if the players delve deeply—asking how the village cooks or why hasn't everyone died of vapors—the locals will have practical answers. If the players start a fire which consumes the area, the survivors will be forced to hunt them down, till their dying days. (The charred villagers dying days that is.) If the players abide by the warning, well, then usually it's a trick. *"Damned either way, yet again."*

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. Even if they did not start a blaze, the Knight suggests otherwise or the false impression they did.

Self-Made Six Rods: The area of the climax is uninhabited, except for the clashing forces of the players and rival. The weather is foggy and chaotic; mountains trap clouds, causing thunderstorms, massive snow, hail, flash floods and seasonal mud slides. If the players flip a Knight in the Epilog, the result will be catastrophic. Maybe not to them personally, but their servitors and ship will be annihilated. The land may also be the domain of giants, causing all this calamity. resist any out; a longboat can be replaced and in some cases it will be destroyed. No Knights, right.

Self-Made Five Rods: The whole area is an estate owned by a scientist, naturalist and astronomer. He will be quite rich but has limited his servants to just a few. He wishes to be left in peace to study the local birds. He will not like all the extra light created by campfires and guard patrols. He might also fear his blasphemous research will be uncovered and reported to the authorities.

So, who is he? A vivisectionist, a misanthrope, a theorist of world without gods? Even if his ideas are correct, they will seem ridiculous, blasphemous, dangerous. Even if the players are not the ones seeking to burn him as a heretic, there will be others in the region who might do so, including the players' own ship crew.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. The vivisectionist decides he cannot risk exposure; he summons beasts and attacks.

Self-Made Four Rods: The players encounter a place where some fundamental practice is done strangely. This village must be filled with idiots. Carts are pushed by animals, not pulled. People gather well water with leaking buckets. Crows are considered sacred and allowed to roost in fields. There may actually be some counterintuitive need for these odd practices. More likely, the trends started by false causal link and never ended. Often the place is very superstitious.

There may also be mischief behind the scenes, staging tragedy on those who commit social taboo or do something guided by common sense. The players shall feel compelled to intervene, prove the myths false. That never ends in gratitude.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight.

Self-Made Three Rods: The players find a large number of villages, plenty of military aged men, who are passive, docile, peaceful and sleepy. The villages are

poorly managed, suffer from shortfalls, have no industrial craft, survive on unseen charity.

The players might press some men to proper service. Else, they might try to motivate the local clan chief to take charge. Either would follow badly and prompt a fight. Or, they may just ignore the whole bunch, but that often turns out to be the worst choice.

If the Ref desires, there can be a local plant which makes the locals complacent. The weed will end up among the players' soldiers, who soon will fall into disorder. Continue without some servitors or find the location of the devil's harvest.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight.

Self-Made Two Rods: Cannibals are feasting on human flesh. A whole village is in on these festivals. The practice is kept secret from outsiders, since it would be punished by most authorities with torture and burnings. If the players will not join the celebration, perhaps they would like to help in the kitchen with the meal? The town could be nonhuman and hides their love of human flesh as being model servants of the regional Earl.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight.

Self-Made Ace Rods: This local area was deemed uninhabitable and evacuated many times. New migrants constantly arrive. Religious isolationists seek out the vale for its seemingly paradise qualities – an illusion. In practice, the people regard any lord as a threat to religious freedom.

Here they live as earthy nudists, yet not of the free-love variety. These residents offend nearly everyone, and yet that's not the real danger here. The place is exceedingly damp and moldy in all seasons. Iron rusts completely away in a matter of weeks. There is an area specific fungus which rots, very quickly, all forms of leather. The impact will be seen immediately, but only results in irreparable harm after a few days. The locals will often ask for special immune materials—flax, silk, bronze—ones which the players coincidentally have but can't afford to share.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight.

Self-Made King Coins: The area is in rebellion. Often the cause occurs after an arcane figure inspires the peasants to demand freedoms or sets siege to the local temple complex. Rebels refuse to pay rents and tribute to feudal landlords. There is plenty of skills the players might employ; plenty of factions the players might support. The regional Earl will someday send a force to crush the dissenters. Or, an outsider army will come to the aid of the new freehold province.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Queen, Knight, Knave or Ten.

Self-Made Queen Coins: The players enter a region where the local economy has collapsed. The reasons are varied. War and pillage is often the prime source of

such disruption. There may not be any precious metals left – no coins, no jewels, no letters of credit. The place is reduced to bartering and self-sufficient farming. If any of the players are of the nobility, they will be greeted as heroes, expected as representatives of the emperor. The township’s failure may be exacerbated by the local mayor’s mismanagement, crop failure, corruption, strike of artisans, shortage of labor, guild enforcers, internal power struggle, etc. The players might try to restore trade; this is often beyond even their skilled abilities. Any attempt will be Nearly Impossible.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten.

Self-Made Knight Coins: The group kills someone. It happens, perhaps more often than the game entails. The principal player must describe the circumstances. He should state the event in rather fine detail without becoming too graphic. At any time the Ref should stop the player and let the player to his left continue the narrative. Do this until everyone has had a chance to elaborate on the incident. *“I ended up, accidentally of course, with his purse.”*

The Ref may prompt questions, like *“What happened to the bloody knife?”*

Almost everyone will be implicated one way or another, as the killer or an accessory after the fact. All abetted in some way.

Here’s what’s funky. The players will see the person several more times, post mortem. They will think he has risen from the dead. The servitors will be in a panic. Role-play the event as desired. Of course, the man being seen is just the dead man’s ghost. But someone, a servant maybe, will confess to the deceased. That info will be all the spirit needs to find purpose and plot revenge.

The players could be wanted by a sheriff to explain themselves. The ghost probably cannot directly attack, but it can make life (die rolls) harder. Hey, you want far-fetched, the man seen is actually a twin.

Any epilog encounter will be hunting for an arrest. The Ref might continue with the court hearing Digression (Q), if not by role-play action.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten.

Self-Made Knave Coins: The players encounter an inn with crooked games of chance. How many bets will be lost, before the players suspect or discover the cheat? Now is an excellent time to have the skill Gambler. To make matters worse, the vanguard of the players’ companies has already been suckered into significant wagers.

The Ref may also have the games perfectly legit, and the soldiers were just unlucky. The men will of course say that the dice and cards were swapped as the players arrived. There may also be other exhibitions—boxing, caber toss, horse races—which are staged in the location. *“I’ll wrestle the boar.”*

The players may be crossing the area on *Derby Day*. The players may also wish to test their skills with Difficult rolls of Pugilist and Equestrian. Unfortunately, the wagers this encounter are all statistically losing.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – varies. Lose gracefully and no harm might follow.

Self-Made Ten Coins: The players cross a village where everyone is mute. This may be a magical curse (likely) or birth defect (very unlikely); it may occur because of a religious restriction. Does everyone take a vow of silence and does not communicate by talking? Will sounds attract bad things?

The people use an elaborate sign-language, but never something that the players will be able to learn in the short term. A bunch of silent people means what? There is a *situation*. A murderer, a wolf pack, a dam about to burst, a bridge deemed unsafe, a plague in a nearby town stead, a shipwreck water hazard ...the gentle folk are warning the players of something. “*Does no one know how to write?*”

Apparently the simple folk do not know how to write in your language. “*Okay, agreed, I can’t read Sanskrit letters? Sorry I called them stupid.*”

The Ref could select a problem and see how long it takes for the players to guess what it is. Or cut to the chase and kill some servitors. Here’s the crux of the event: the friends of the dead crewman take revenge on the mute. “*All you had to do, was open your pie hole, and Jesse would be still alive.*”

The Ref may think of other consequences, but generally the warriors are in rampage. If ordered or threatened to stand down, the men will be mutinous. The players can let the troops vent off anger (by slitting a few throats), but that act only makes matters worse. A feud is started, even after the guilty of the players’ forces are charged, tried and hung.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. The silent don’t fight as well, so start with a Tactical Pip.

Self-Made Nine Coins: The area lives in constant fear of legionary soldiers. Armsmen represent brutality, theft, arson. The area is usually near a disputed border, and two or more high lords vie for control, sending constant raids or sponsoring seasonal invasion.

Everyone would have fled by now, except for a dynamic leader refuses to capitulate. He will be training soldiers, even as he is falling behind with his losses. The locals will call for a champion to help in one raid; the enemy should be formidable.

The region should have both strategic and economic value. A major mill, located on a swift river, is a good focal point. None of the attacks have even tried to damage the mill. The players might decide the best solution here is to burn that down and leave the area unproductive, valueless. The local suffering will end but this *good deed* will not go unpunished.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight.

Self-Made Eight Coins: The area of the climax is mildly poisonous. Salt brine pollutes the water. Crops are stunted. A village, yearly in starvation, will ask the players to help dig new wells or hand over food stores.

The place is basically impudent beggars and thieves. The locals will not believe, even an Apothecary, telling them to leave; the water is no good. The players should roll Difficult, or Ordinary for a skilled Apothecary, to discover themselves that the water should not be mixed with their own barrels and canteens. The players might all come home dehydrated and sick. (Downtime necessary to recuperate.)

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight.

Self-Made Seven Coins: The players enter a village with customs foreign for the region. The farmers are the subject of bigotry and thus live apart. perhaps sue a nonhuman group as the victims. The inhabitants will fear the players and rightly so. The players' servitors will most likely hate the locals for being different.

These people will be the subject of many rumors and conspiracy theories. Witchcraft and demon worship is suspected, yet unproven. They as a group will be blamed for legendary treachery and ancient betrayal.

The players must choose – join the taunts or call for discipline. Discipline will create a wholly new NPC grumbler, who will stay with the players into further adventures. Joining the taunts will result in unspeakable acts inflicted on the innocent locals – the farmers were right to be wary. No one should check any Ignobles for this encounter.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight, an open-minded lord protects all his villages. If the players called for discipline, the Knight they face may be a faction of their own company. The curse hurling might be real.

Self-Made Six Coins: The players cross a noble estate and are offered hospitality. However, the noble is actually a puppet controlled by the rival. This stooge will never attempt to capture or kill, even if the players are inept. Instead, the players must display skills to recognize the host's allegiance. Purpose a skill and offer a test – *"I find it improbable an estate owner would have these payments in his steward's legers. (Difficult roll of the skill.)"*

The players upon discovery may initiate their own ambush. Leaving this guy alone (unscathed) or failing to uncover the noble's true motives or cabal loyalty, will change the climax challenges. Normally, this event is a *Type E* and will end the challenges. The rival might have never been met. But failing here, or allowing the aristocratic lackey to escape, should mean that the players will have one more climax challenge. There they will meet the rival; he has been warned by his mouthpiece agent and goes forth to stop the players. The Ref may also employ the rival's Ace in the Hole to this extra challenge, if that seems more dangerous to the players.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight.

Self-Made Five Coins: A village in the area of the climax is sinking. Here's another village which will blame the players for their problems. Large holes have already swallowed up houses. The locals think that imps are burrowing up from the earth. They also believe these dwarves have gems that the little people are hiding. Both are correct. The players might be enticed to go spelunking (but find nothing but possible accidents).

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. Even as the players find nothing (but combat), the village thinks they took the dwarven wealth, something rightfully to be shared.

Self-Made Four Coins: Fanatic pagan cult devotes themselves to advancing their physical and mental prowess. The shaman master despises weakness and impurity of spirit. He may have a xenophobic philosophy of death to outsiders. The players will be seen as violators of some sacred law. A nice twist might be that the players and remaining rival's forces must join to survive the fanatics.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. (Here they come again.)

Self-Made Three Coins: The area is filled with tent cities, people trying to exploit a river which has gold dust. Else the flock of fools are digging-up a woodland area with a rare plant root reputed to cure plague. either action, the destruction of the tributary or glen attracts the ire of a god.

The opportunists are aggressive, but usually lack the skills and resources to succeed. The find may have long since depleted. The servitors of the players could catch this fever, deserting with shovels and pans. The locals will form factions but stay ready to forge new deals to share the wealth. *"I see no wealth here?"*

The players might prove the area is not profitable; they might also be accused of absconding with the region's last riches. There's no reasoning with these crazies bent on greed. eventually, bring in the divine punishment (to all who linger too long).

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. The god's reach is world-wide and beyond. Spelljammer®? Fug no!

Self-Made Two Coins: The players encounter a place, which has a village of outsiders or nonhuman inhabitants. Actually, the place is ancient. The local region changed, while this village didn't. Here the players will meet a people who have their own language, customs and religion. They are often allowed by the region's earl to stay, so long as they pay a great fee each year.

To meet this extortion, the location will have a secret. There is seldom a goldmine, but there will be a hidden treasure, representing the wealth collected by journeymen trading on the village's crafts. Many of the men of the village will be away, traveling to trade goods made in the cottage industry. The product usually has a small to large magical component. The whole village might even trade in relics.

If the players get greedy, and they often do, they might loot the village, not remembering or discounting the large number of healthy merchant traders who will one day come back and mourn for their loss.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight, but the retaliatory attack will have gusto.

Self-Made Ace Coins: The area is a lush paradise of natural foods and blissful serenity. No record of this place will exist on any map. The players may have found a place, which each campaign season escapes the ravages of war (and forage). The local farmers hide themselves from strangers, but a representative will ask for the players to stay as their protectors. This *retirement* of the players will always be short-lived. Once found, other mercenaries will follow, often led by one of the player's own deserting warriors.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – none, unless the players decide to homestead here to face the brutal onslaught, which inevitably follows.



Self-Made King Swords: The fields and woods of the area are being used to marshal and train troops. An invading army had to disperse to survive the winter. They only now are gathering back, company by company.

The players could be misconstrued with the enemy, for they carry the wrong flags, speak the wrong language and know not the watch passwords. This need not result in skirmish. Each mistake might be explained. The players may surrender supplies to a warlord. They might even be told to go get the army forage for a fine reward. "*A small detour of purpose?*"

The region may have been annexed and occupied for some time. The player group must prove their value or be treated as spies. The skills of the players will be needed. Go around the table and have each player state one of his skills and how he can help? The group might be recruited as scouts to map the region for a recently arrived army. There is probably a campaign event tied to this encounter. The players

might see the test of a new tactical formation or shallow draft invasion craft. They could just as likely wander across a field being used for magical ballistic practice.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten.

Self-Made Queen Swords: The players encounter radical believers, people certain the end of the world is near. These people also believe in forced conversion. It would be too easy for the players to bluff (or convert to gain an Ignoble). The servitors are more certain in their faith. If the warriors of the ship will not submit to the law of this cult, they must die. Many would choose death before dishonor – the player leaders taught them well.

The result will flip a few cards of duel or skirmish, maybe result in a fire in a supply wagon. The locals are not the power here; the idea is what needs to be feared. The seeds of doubt are planted. The players did not inspire all of the crew.

Some of the servitors will now wonder if a mistake was made, should they have joined the cult? What if the end times are actually here? It's pretty miserable and the gods do appear to hate mankind? *“Was that asked in-character or out?”*

The Ref should slowly count up encounters, like these, toward a magic number of ruin. Set the bar low. The players may be one encounter away from religious strife in their ranks.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. The Ten should represent not retaliation, but internal spread of the idea of ruin.

Self-Made Knight Swords: The area has an encampment for a group of deserters, a bandit colony that raids to survive. Many of these places are a mix of languages, mercenaries who would devolve into intra-feuding squads, except they are held together by a charismatic leader. The players might be offered free passage for a small token tribute. Accepting this will mark them as bandits themselves, paying fealty to someone other than the legitimate ruling lord of the region.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight, but the size of the resulting force will exceed the players' company in either bandits or feudal knights.

Self-Made Knave Swords: The players cross a field of unspeakable horror. Women and children are dead. Many have been disfigured. These are the victims of monster attack, perhaps, but the bodies are displayed ritualistically.

The fathers, husbands and sons are off fighting elsewhere, drafted by the regional earl. Those left behind have been massacred by some feckless noble or strange new cult. No matter the religious convictions of the player characters or their servitors, this outrage must be avenged.

Let characters display trait, skills and swagger to find the culprits. This will not stop all violence, but it will send a message in this region. Don't even fight the battle (for now). The players success at their skills is enough to show the perpetrators are punished righteously. However, no Ignobles may be checked by this event (for now).

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. Now you can check an Ignoble for round two, finishing off the larger force of a useless noble and his ne'er-do-well marauders.

Self-Made Ten Swords: The climax is on an isle or moves to an isle, one just far enough off the coast or one in an oasis surrounded by desert sands. Here a small group of castaways have survived following the shipwreck or attack on their caravan. Some members perhaps seek to return to *civilization*. Others wish to make the best of the fate. They need equipment and materials to establish a permanent colony.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. But only if the players refused to help the group. Otherwise, the losses to the ship's techniques supplying all that is needed will be enough.

Self-Made Nine Swords: The players cross paths with a scholar who has been dismissed from service as a teacher of a noble's children or has been cast out from a university for misconduct. The incident is never what you first think. This man was fired, because he has criticized or mocked the gods.

The players will believe they have found a new and capable hireling. Let the NPC have skills which complement the group. The other agents and servitors of the players will not like the man and see him as untrustworthy. His religious views will cause arguments, which the erudite newcomer will often win. "*He sure speaks passionately.*"

This man is a very dangerous grumbler, who often will be asked to usurp authority from the leading players. He probably is grateful for being rescued by the players from a dull life. But, he may also be the exact thing the other servants fear, a wolf in sheep's clothing, plus one who draws retaliation from pagan temples or the one true faith.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – Knight. When this happens, the man has been proclaimed the new leader by an overwhelming number of the crew. Or if the NPC has been banished and defeated, many soldiers are calling for his return or inspired to be like him. From one, now many.

Self-Made Eight Swords: The players find a place with a terrible secret. From all outer appearances, the place will be normal. But in reality, the whole village is being held hostage. A remnant force of mercenaries or bandits has taken up residence here, threatening the locals into submission. The whole may also be threatened by a misanthrope or more powerful sorcerer. The bandits or spellcasters is injured, waiting for a relief force to come back and rescue them. That larger threat is another reason the locals are sheltering these fugitives.

When the players arrive, the peasants will alert them—try to alert them, since players can be dense—to the lurking danger. The farmers will hint that they need rescue. The players might oust or slay the smaller group of outlaws and outcasts, fighting a skirmish or duel in a manor. Yet, that larger force was not a bluff.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight, but they will be magical, elite, horsed raiders and attack with unholy vengeance.

Self-Made Seven Swords: The players cross paths with a religious sect named after a local saint or heroic figure. The order probably started hundreds of years ago. It may not even be very vibrant anymore.

There is much that can result from this encounter. These groups tend to preach against wealth and possessions; they also hold heretic views on the role of the gods. They might worship an ancient evil which may be gone or just dormant until an event (like the players arrival).

The players are bound to make a minor mistake. What they do will be amplified by their warriors. If the players take a strong stance, or even just playfully mock the throwbacks, their men might start cutting off heads. If the players act like they are reverent, then some of their servitors will desert and join the old order.

Let the players, perhaps, act-out their reaction, then have it misconstrued. Even indifference will be seen as cowardice (by all). The encounter should point out differences between the faiths of the player characters and the faiths of their paid followers, as well as, the greater polytheistic campaign.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight. This Knight may also be player on player clash. The lower level could become an NPC, until both end their feud in the downtime after the adventure.

Self-Made Six Swords: The players cross lands owned by the rival. Though it's not prudent, the players will feel obligated to forage and pillage. They will encounter resistance, so the Ref might be selecting duels, skirmish or sea engagement to resolve the action.

The players will go too far, past their mission mandate. The players will anger both their rival and their patron. The reward they gain by looting usually exceeds any payment now being withheld. Yet, the patron will not be satisfied, even if the mission was seemingly a complete success.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. This will represent either a final attack by the rival like a Knave. Also, any final Queen means the patron sent a neutral punishment force against the players.

Self-Made Five Swords: The players enter a warzone, one which no one warned them about. The area is not just recently the location of battle. There are signs the conflict has been going on for years. The farms and storehouses of the district are exhausted. This siege may have been forgotten, because it was either considered a fait accompli or a movement's commander has already surrendered elsewhere.

These last radical defenders refuse to bend. The earl's forces outside have offered quarter, safe passage. But the rebels must again swear fealty. This has become a battle of wills and asinine principles.

The situation inside the walled town is better than without. There may be ancient tunnels or ship borne supplies being smuggled. Else, magic is used to sustain the defenders.

The commander outside is usually timid or very unskilled. He has yet to dig trenches and move to undermine the walls. There may be spies in his command tent, telling the defenders how to counter the attacks. Else, the commander outside is willing to starve out the enemy, even as his own soldiers are desperate.

Normally, such a situation would result in the players being drafted. Their supplies would be taken. But the players' force intimidates the earl's attackers. A player may decide to take command and end this. A player may advise the local general on tactics. Or, the players will look at the misery and move on.

If they help end this, there is little to gain. Stay or leave, the encounter will only have additional consequences in the Epilog. That, and the players may decide to check off a much needed Ignoble by conducting some maneuvers to end this. The only real prize is the favor of a regional earl to put an end to this stubborn revolt. The downside to that is that the group to be defeated is crafty and usually more dangerous after defeat.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. It will be uncertain who attacks the players, but a good guess could be the black market merchants who have been supplying the town for years. The war was an excuse to gouge the region with inflated prices. Very twisted motives, indeed.

Self-Made Four Swords: The players cross a place which does not appear on any map. It is seemingly uninhabited. The expanse defies expectations. Crossing will take longer than expected. *“How can this much land go unclaimed?”*

The ground will seem fertile, and the players will pass vineyards and orchards planted in the fashion of ancient villas. Yet no buildings remain. Something is wrong here, but none of the party will know what that might be. magic undoubtedly, but of a source unidentifiable. The whole may seem a dream.

It will seem dangerous, but no weapons will ever be drawn. The players will vow to return, maybe claim the area for themselves. This false paradise will never be encountered again. A lost land of fable, the domain of the fey?

Desire to return could drive one or more of the player characters insane. Their servants will constantly reminisce of the place, like it was discovered months, years ago or only yesterday. Each will have vivid memories, but none of the accounts will align. Add some personality flaws to the party: Bereft, Foolish, Jealous, Wanderlust

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any King, Knight or Ten. Representing other travelers returning and searching for this place of myth; each band covets that knowledge, their own impressions of utopia.

Self-Made Three Swords: The players enter a village, which is deserted. There is no sign of violence, no pestilence nor plague. The place looks relatively

serene. No signs of looting, struggles, packing up and carting away. *“If they moved, why leave the wheelbarrows?”*

After searching and verifying the place is indeed deserted, the warriors of the players will start taking stuff. There’s not much of value, but still, Finders-Keepers. Each hut will have a rather fine dowry of pots and bed linens, bumpkin trinkets.

The Ref need never explain what happened to the place. The danger is in stopping the hirelings from stealing. Of course, the players are later blamed for killing and burying all the farmers. *“No, it was magic, not ours”* won’t save them from the guilt. Just one stolen item among the crew proves they were responsible.

At least one player must vow to solve this mystery and clear his good reputation. That player can describe what truly happened. The Ref should offer secondary missions in a D8 subsequent adventures to fully uncover and solve the mystery.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight, avenging the apparent massacre.

Self-Made Two Swords: Two local families are feuding in the area of the climax, in a quarrel that has lasted hundreds of years. The two families will both try to ask the players to aid them in settling this dispute once and for all. The players will know it is hopeless.

There are local nobles in both families. Player involvement would only weaken their servitors, exhaust their supplies, and result in a distraction from their mission. One or both sides in the vendetta will hate the players, because they refused them aid. The real solution, by player decision, is to slaughter both households, a pox on both your houses. No, that won’t work and will only escalate this conflict to a new one with a regional earl.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – King, Knight or Ten.

Self-Made Ace Swords: This event is carte blanche. The Ref may imagine any sinister threat or mysterious circumstance. Think of your favorite movie and bring the terror to life: captured by a murderous scientist, facing an invisible beast, sighting the risen dead, seeing lights in the sky portending doom.

Or else, flip two more cards and combine the result. You can even drop the entire group in a mix of Digressions (randomly selected letter), but that’s pretty mean.

Chance of retaliation in the Epilog – any Knight, though no one will truly remember why this armed band hates the party.

Evading Capture

When the climax challenges end with Future Events, *Type E*, the result doesn’t always have to be left for a later adventure. The players might need to fully escape. Plenty of stories end with the heroes running away with something or someone,

escaping for their lives. They may also need to draw the rival's army away from a place, *Type B*. Thus, giving the bad-guys a goose-chase, before escaping and heading to the next obstacle. The rival may commit too many minions and leave himself vulnerable to *Type A* attack.

Ships will escape each other on the water more easily than a larger group will be able to escape pursuers cross country. Use the Q&D Outdistance Retreat or Q&D Escape. But getting to the boat or after fleeing the immediate area, the players might roll on this table to be done and be done. I also like to think of the table as *Every Man for Himself*, or the players caught in separate locations and trying (unlike with Digressions) to get free and reunite. These tables also work when the players anger or cross the wrong person. *What you don't know, can kill you?*

This is not just exiting one room or climbing over a single wall. The action might take place over several weeks of various situations and terrains: at the inn, in the night camp, along the forest trail, through a small village, over a hill, by horse, in a boat across a stream, where ever.

The players must split for events on these tables, only to reunite at a designated location and time (down the journey). To add more challenge to higher level players or larger groups, the players may need to survive several event results to fully evade danger. Perhaps in number half their highest level, so at least twice for level three and above. Or, half the rank of the first card flipped can be used for the tally. Otherwise, a single success during encounters denotes survival and an end of the tests.

Success may end the tables if the predetermined number of success rolls are made. Each event has the success result of moving closer or obtaining your freedom from pursuit. However, the players may make an enemy of the main opponent they have wronged, even when they escape his area of influence and beyond the proximity threat of serious retaliation.

Except where noted, any **fail here results in the player character being knocked unconscious** and taken captive. (Continue with appropriate Digression depending upon who chased them, neutral parties they offended or agents of the rival.)

Generally, the type of rival determines which of the four tables to use. Yet, if the exact nature of the enemy is not yet revealed, the suit of the card flip can randomize the table to be used.

- ~Cups are nobles with political clout.
- ~Rods control overwhelming resources.
- ~Coins have wealth and power.
- ~Swords are bent on murderous revenge.

Dangerous Enemies: A rival possessing as many as all four of these attributes, might force the players to resolve four different events, one on each table. A Defensive Modifier, added to all rolls, may apply based on the ferocity of the pursuit. e.g. Horrible gargoyles on the task would increase all Difficulties by two; Enraged ones would be plus three.

Q&D Countering Enemy of Noble Status and Political Clout

Status & Clout King: Wit always comes in handy, as does lying admirably.
Difficulty: 5 **Advantage:** Swagger Repartee (P)

Status & Clout Queen: No need to spill blood, when a foppish cape can be turned over a warden's backside and tied around his bonnet. **Difficulty:** 6

Advantage: Blade Defender (F)

Status & Clout Knight: Demand with honor, "*I am not the person you're looking for; and if I was, am I a person you would be ready to confront?*" **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Trait Bold

Status & Clout Knave: Just how many local ruffians can you stack into a pile and sit atop? Undoubtedly you're having too much fun at the enemy's inept attempt to tackle you and take you alive. Fail roll and next event is on the *Escaping Murderous Vengeance* table. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Wrestling Holds (T)

Status & Clout Ten: Draw the enemy away from the main; as they make their escape, you become the diversion. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Blade Scintillating (K)

Status & Clout Nine: While negotiating, a zealot answers a query with a lunge. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Swagger Seize Swordarm (Q)

Status & Clout Eight: See here, look at my thumb. That should never work, but sadly it often does. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Skill Pugilist

Status & Clout Seven: With your flair, you could hold half a battalion at bay. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Charismatic Style (C)

Status & Clout Six: Send the enemy diving for cover with some magical flourishes aimed above their heads. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Fantastic (D)

Status & Clout Five: The local wives and maidens will swear that you are miles away. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Blade Knightly (G)

Status & Clout Four: A knowledge of fields and crop growth gives you an advantage in hiding in the cultivated lanes. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Horticulturist

Status & Clout Three: Accept ancient ritual of trial by combat. The trick is to force your accuser to surrender without causing him to lose honor; or worse, avoid killing him and attracting further retribution. Fail and continue next event *Escaping Murderous Vengeance*. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Swagger Disarming Blow (F)

Status & Clout Two: You spot the rogue who's searching and before he can react, he's dead. (Stabbed through a curtain or hedgerow perhaps to avoid having another capital warrant issued against you.) **Difficulty:** 5 **Advantage:** Swagger Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S)

Status & Clout Ace: Once the enemy truly discovers who you are and whom your allies may be, they end the pursuit. **Difficulty:** 5 **Advantage:** Wizardry Demigod (A)

Q&D Eluding Enemy of Overwhelming Resources

Elude Resources King: Through sewers and alleys and under wharves, where ever the path of least resistance flows, you follow. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Spy

Elude Resources Queen: Practice the deceptive art of withdrawing with honor. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Better Valor (B)

Elude Resources Knight: Scribble a work order or writ to move past a patrol. If character is not Literate, Difficulty increases by four. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Skill Forger

Elude Resources Knave: Fabricate a barge to ferry across a dangerous rapid. Fail and next event is on the *Escaping Murderous Vengeance* table. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Skill Engineer-Sapper

Elude Resources Ten: Play dead and ride out of harm's way in a wagon carrying coffins. If previous card in the deck was a Rod, the other victims may be plague carriers; but only future encounters will detail, if the character suffers sickness. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Skill Apothecary

Elude Resources Nine: Ambush a carriage and stop the driver. Ready your blade to keep the noble passenger in-check and entice him to vouch for your status as his servant. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Blade Eminent (E)

Elude Resources Eight: Command your fine steed and ride like the wind. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Skill Equestrian

Elude Resources Seven: Satisfy the local constables that they would be better served to pursue less deadly prey. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Heroic Swordplay (K)

Elude Resources Six: Abscond with a fishing sloop and make swiftly up the coast or out to sea. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Mariner

Elude Resources Five: Wriggle loose from your bounds and pummel your jailor before you are secured again in chains. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill

Prestidigitation

Elude Resources Four: Sight by the stars, some memory of the landscape and travel dead-reckoning to the meeting with your companions. **Difficulty:** 7

Advantage: Skill Cartographer

Elude Resources Three: Drive your horse to gallop faster and longer than any other mount of the land. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Mount Winged (B)

Elude Resources Two: Pose as a member of the Grand Assize, knowing mathematics and a tariff audit is more frightening to most Lord High Mayors than drawn steel. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Skill Courtly Grace

Elude Resources Ace: Slay the leader and sole organizer of a posse; put the rest leery and on the defensive. **Difficulty:** 5 **Advantage:** Skill Bowman

Q&D Foiling Enemy of Wealth and Power

Foil Cash & Power King: Spread propaganda about your foe's questionable acquisition of wealth to undermine his regional power. **Difficulty:** 10

Advantage: Skill Minstrel

Foil Cash & Power Queen: Stage a local labor or food riot to disrupt the region. Regardless, all other players gain plus four on their future attempts on these tables. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Skill Rabblrouser

Foil Cash & Power Knight: Plant the seeds of rumor and pretend to be even more wealthy and even more powerful than the person who demands justice.

Difficulty: 12 **Advantage:** Blade Golden (T)

Foil Cash & Power Knave: Enlist in a local garrison and prove important enough to be hidden or lied for. Fail roll and next event is on the *Escaping Murderous Vengeance* table. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Skill Armorer-Smith

Foil Cash & Power Ten: Appear by all accounts and evidence to be ten miles away from your actual route of retreat. **Difficulty:** 14 **Advantage:** Mount Fleet (R)



Foil Cash & Power Nine: Join a group of foreign laborers and march under escort out of the area. **Difficulty:** 14 **Advantage:** Skill Linguist

Foil Cash & Power Eight: Filch a key that will be instrumental to your evasion, perhaps it opens a night gate or frees an ally or mayhap unlocks a trunk of theatrical disguises. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Skill Pickpocket

Foil Cash & Power Seven: One, two, three, four heads of the constabulary (dockmaster) locked in your forearms and pinned to your frame. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Skill Grit-Fortitude

Foil Cash & Power Six: Join a group of gypsy traders, pass as foreigners crossing the area. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Trait Gifted

Foil Cash & Power Five: Flood the commerce of a region with base coins, leading to a temporary return to the barter system. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Skill Goldsmith

Foil Cash & Power Four: Fortify a tavern (or rural village) and wait out the opposition, knowing they would never accept a lengthy siege and have not the materials to sap. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Blade Scheming (S)

Foil Cash & Power Three: Hastily wrap your own immediate injury and keep it from festering on your journey. Additionally, fail and fall with a vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Barber (Chiurgeon)

Foil Cash & Power Two: A nosy clerk is easily distracted by dropping a purse of coins. Wait, instead save your purse and crack him upside of the head as he bends over. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Swagger Hilt Punch (L)

Foil Cash & Power Ace: Fake your death in a ship (or dock) magical explosion. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Wizardry Illusions (I)

Q&D Escaping Murderous Vengeance

If the player does not know who chases him or how he caused the affront, apply these modifiers:

- ~ If the aggrieved has Power-Connections to Nobility, add two to difficulties.
- ~ If the aggrieved has Overwhelming Resources or Religious Followers, add three to difficulties.
- ~ If the aggrieved has Extended Family or Riches, add one to difficulties.

Murder Bent King: Bat away an assassin's blade. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Duelist

Murder Bent Queen: Fast to the draw to down an assailant as he aims. Fail and another player character (of lower level) falls with a vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Impetus (N)

Murder Bent Knight: Use a garrison's catapult as a physical and

psychological deterrent. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 9**

Advantage: Skill Artillerist

Murder Bent Knave: Smell and hear the approach of an invisible enemy. Fail and you, plus all players of lower level, fall with a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 7**

Advantage: Wizardry Spirit Guide (R)

Murder Bent Ten: See a crooked game and save yourself and others from a bad bet. Fail and you, plus all of lower level, lose something of importance. (Each must decide.) Regardless, this action is far from over. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Skill Gambler

Murder Bent Nine: Dispute the sketchy picture drawn of you on your arrest warrant and wanted poster. Fail and prisoner of enemy's agents. **Difficulty: 9**

Advantage: Wizardry Shape Shifting (J)

Murder Bent Eight: Confuse the orders of a messenger. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Wizardry Thought Control (P)

Murder Bent Seven: Monitor a conspiratorial conversation. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Wizardry Precognition (E)

Murder Bent Six: Avoid the hidden place that conceals an enemy. Fail and captured by enemy's Agents. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Mount Mystical (D)

Murder Bent Five: Recognize the smell of a foul summoning. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Mount Pure (L)

Murder Bent Four: Hunker down behind the shoulder of your horse. Fail and fall with a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Mount Carapace (O)

Murder Bent Three: Let your steed select the path of escape. **Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Mount Empyrean (G)

Murder Bent Two: Outrace any pursuit. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Mount Vibrant (M)

Murder Bent Ace: Scare off the hounds following your trail. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Mount Ominous (S)

Note: not all the traits, skills and swaggering were included. The Ref should feel free to add flairs and lower Difficulties as the player adds extra talents into the mix.

Major Tarot Elude and Escapes

Note: Glorious techniques are neither raised nor lost. Glorious is glorious.

Elude Magician: Toggle Blade Mucilage (B); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Feigns (I); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude High Priestess: Toggle Blade Ingenious (A); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Seize Swordarm (Q); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Empress: Toggle Blade Eminent (E); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Ferocity (J); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Emperor: Toggle Blade Golden (T); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Battle Cry (A); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Hierophant: Toggle Blade Fantastic (D); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Repartee (P); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Lovers: Toggle Blade Lithe (H); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Charismatic Style (C); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Chariot: Toggle Blade Paladin (P); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Heroic Swordplay (K); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Justice: Toggle Blade Knightly (G); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Hermit: Toggle Blade Amalgam (O); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Speed & Guile (R); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Wheel of Fortune: Shuffle the deck and continue.

Elude Force: Toggle Blade Gladiatorial (R); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Wrestling Holds (T); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Hanged Man: Toggle Blade Meshed (Q); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Killer Instinct (N); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Death: Toggle Blade Herculean (J); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Crushing Blow (G); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Temperance: Toggle Blade Bounding (C); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Concentration (E); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Devil: Toggle Blade Hellish (M); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Chiasmic Action (D); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Tower of Destruction: Toggle Blade Impetus (N); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Mastery Shield (O); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Star: Toggle Blade Scintillating (K); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Hilt Punch (L); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Moon: Toggle Blade Scheming (S); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Irregular Tricks (M); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Sun: Odin is pleased; gain any Blade technique.

Inverted: Poseidon is pleased; gain any Mount technique.

Elude Judgment: Toggle Blade Defender (F); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

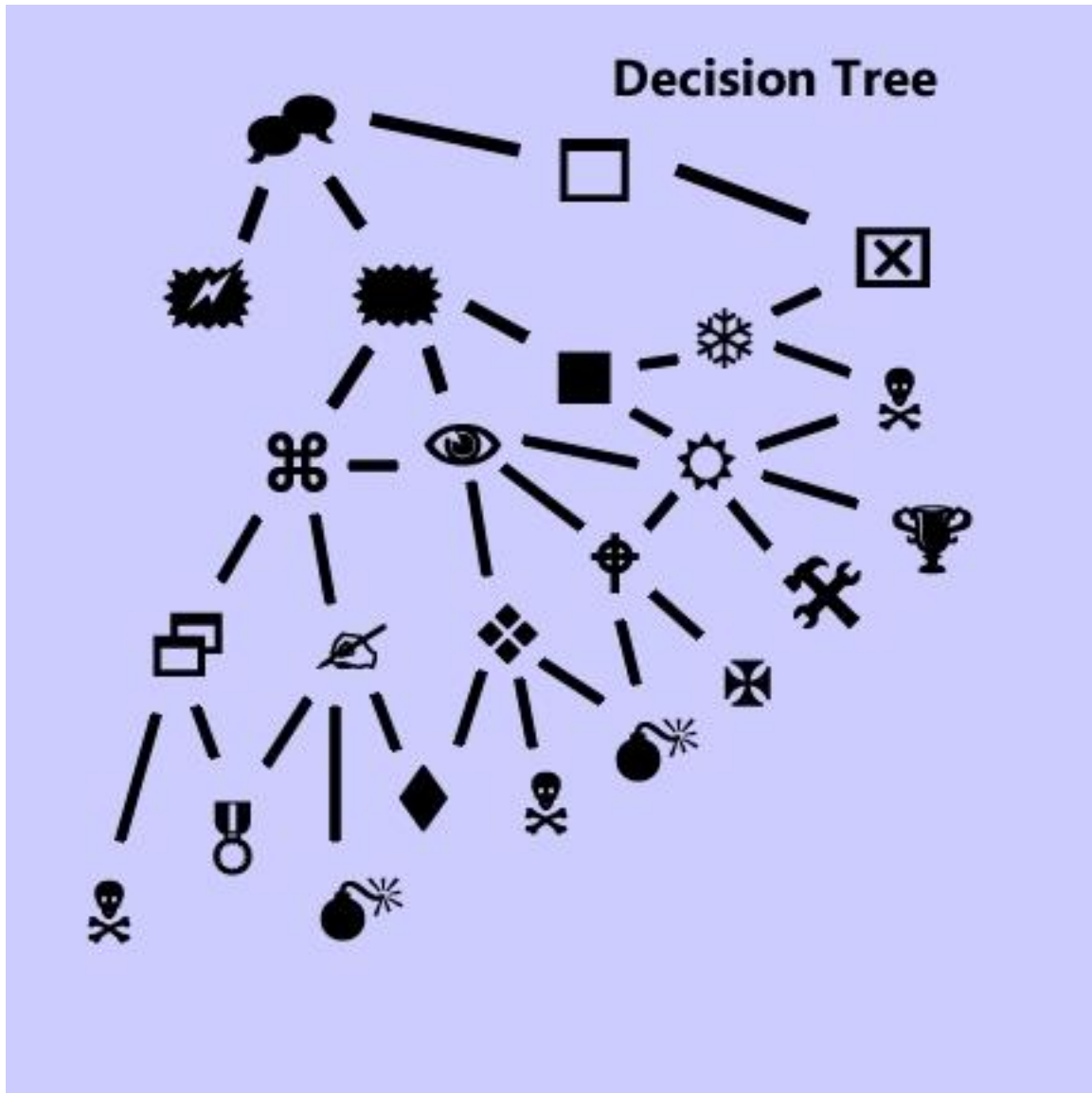
Inverted: Toggle Disarming Blow (F); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude World: Toggle Blade Heirloom (I); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Effective Spurning (H); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Elude Fool: Toggle Blade Biting (L); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Inverted: Toggle Better Valor (B); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.



Arguing in Lordly Court

Joy – the players have escaped the rival, and the climax seems done. Oh, not so fast. Do the players think they may do as they please? The ultimate authority, a ruling hereditary earl (congress or league), in a land may decide that he wants to hear what happened and decide for himself how to forgive or punish the group of players. He may have already dealt with the players’ patron.

Each player must decide to surrender to the court. If he refuses, he will be labeled an outlaw. The campaign is very hard on outlaws should they be caught. The player character will probably submit, even when the player says he would not. There must be some respect each character has for the laws of the realms. The

character's investments and lands are in jeopardy. Ref decides if a character can flee the law; most turn into an NPC, not a masked avenger.

Off to court and an unusually fast trial. The character could be held indefinitely, years without even knowing the charge. Yet for each player character's case, the action tends to be expedited. Too many unknowns, and magic being the worst of them, make this trial something the earl or mayor will want to see resolved.

The failed roll will result in a guilty verdict. The player may want to make-roll this roll, though many court cases happen in the Epilog or during downtime at mission's end.

Most crimes will be considered capital, a death by the executioner's ax. A player of noble social rank may use Briber and suffer instead a half D8 drop in social position; he is fined and loses in political power and station. Should he drop to a negative social number, well, he will be hanged instead of quartered. Social position are described in the Outland's campaign and downtime booklets.

If the player character is level Stallari, level eight, he may select two cards for his event and choose which one to try. If the character is a skilled Courtly Grace, he adds three to his dice rolls. Final penalty, player characters with a social status below five, increase all Difficulties by two. Seeking a greater role in the campaign helps ensure this table can be survived. That and perhaps never use all your make-rolls. for reference, most Varangian adventurers are social status two, perhaps three if he claims he owns his own boat clear of any debt.

Take note as well that magic is not allowed, neither Blade, Mount or Wizardry will prevail here.

Q&D Battle as Tort

Trial King: Smile brightly and wink at what you presume is a jury. Success to gain the Catbird Seat. Yet even on success, since the assize does not use a jury, select a second event. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Trait Gifted

Trial Queen: Make fun of yourself, play the fool. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Trait Clever

Trial Knight: Find yourself a legal loophole in the common law. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Trait Methodical

Trial Knave: Pay a stiff fine of treasure, lands, relics, knowledge and family heirlooms. Optional, sacrifice your magical Blade and automatically gain success;

meaning you start from scratch with Blade techniques. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage: Skill Briber**

Trial Ten: Produce a writ of dispensation or holy indulgence signed by the current emperor. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage: Skill Forger**

Trial Nine: Declare the authority of the court null and demand associated canon law verdict, a temple court should judge your case. Fail here and another character of lower level is tortured to give counter testimony. (Both he and you lose the argument.) **Difficulty: 11 Advantage: Skill Occult Scholar**

Trial Eight: Appeal to the onlookers for true honor, glory and justice. Start a riot to get away. Success and player may also regret this decision to usurp the law. Optional, select a different event, but Difficulty increases by four. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage: Skill Rabblrouser**

Trial Seven: Pay your restitution with letters of debt and indenture. If player's social status is above five, Difficulty drops by four. **Difficulty: 13 Advantage: Skill Steward**

Trial Six: Exchange your debt of service with an estate property that you own. Someone else will perform your debt to society. If player's social standing is below three, someone of lower level becomes the indentured servant to the crown.

Difficulty: 14 Advantage: Skill Slave Driver

Trial Five: Demand the ancient code of chivalry and trial by combat. The Sheriff or Constable is no pushover. Optional, skip this event and select another, but Difficulty increases by four. However, fail here and character is slain. **Difficulty: 15 Advantage: Skill Duelist**

Trial Four: Fake your death or incapacitation. Fail and the irritant you take to sell the event claims your life. Difficulty drops by four for Rugged. **Difficulty: 13 Advantage: Skill Apothecary**

Trial Three: Appeal on behalf of your humanist prior deeds and worthiness for redemption. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage: Trait Bold**

Trial Two: Claim to be above this proceeding, protected by ancient ties to royalty. Even if you fail, you will be offered a more lenient sentence. Depending on your crimes, he may be offered hemlock poison rather than suffer beheading.

Difficulty: 10 Advantage: Trait Energetic

Trial Ace: Ask the judge to consider your family ties and character witnesses. Fail here and continue with a second roll chance on event two; you just may still live.

Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Longboat technique Democracy (S)

Ace Further Note, the rules lawyers will realize that Wizardry Power Words (S) will substitute for Democracy (S), none other. True, but do you want to fail in court and do so by trying to evoke such renegade sorcery? You may just attract a Zaire to end the trial and your life. Do not fail if you make this final substitution. How many of you have mocked having Democracy (S) among the crew?

Major Tarot Trials

Note: Glorious techniques are neither raised nor lost. Glorious is glorious. Bad person tried to use magic anyway. So desperate and so easily countered when in the spotlight.

Trial Magician: Toggle Wizardry Telekinesis (D); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial High Priestess: Toggle Wizardry Shape Shifting (J); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Empress: Toggle Wizardry Hexes (M); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Emperor: Toggle Wizardry Power Words (S); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Hierophant: Toggle Wizardry Cosmic (T); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Lovers: Toggle Wizardry Thought Control (P); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Chariot: Toggle Wizardry Precognition (E); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Justice: Toggle Wizardry Spirit Guide (R); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Hermit: Toggle Wizardry Animate Objects (O); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Wheel of Fortune: Shuffle the deck and continue.

Trial Force: Toggle Wizardry Demigod (A); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Hanged Man: Toggle Wizardry Necromancy (H); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Death: Toggle Wizardry Pyrotechnics (K); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Temperance: Toggle Wizardry Paralysis (Q); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Devil: Toggle Wizardry Demonic (F); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Tower of Destruction: Toggle Wizardry Voltaic (N); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Star: Toggle Wizardry Celestial (G); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Moon: Toggle Wizardry Illusions (I); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Sun: Your trial is won by the arrival of an interceding godling or Zaire.

Trial Judgment: Toggle Wizardry Psionics (B); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial World: Toggle Wizardry Geomancy (C); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Trial Fool: Toggle Wizardry Conjunction (L); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Going Down Fighting

There is one last hope. All the condemned are held in limbo, some in the underworlds guarded by the foulest of foul. The plea is concluded as a fresh mission. As the player character is found guilty, he awaits final execution of his sentence. There is not a second judgment, per se, but many ruling lords will have missions which offer clemency. If his compatriots are in the same prison, well, go to alternate characters, relatives, acquaintances. Maybe they can do the lord's bidding. Else start anew.

The convicted are not released, but his friends might accept the challenge. The player character held in magical prison becomes an NPC. Whether he ever returns to character play is decided by the Ref.

Here is also a good time to use all the character's favors. Surely someone in the mix will come to his aid. No contacts and favors? Burned every bridge and tavern ever slept inside? Off with his head, an anti-magical null attached to his flesh, so he can't even call out to the gods.

Could he fight, make his escape, be forever the outlaw? No. Life on the run seems cool, but the character will soon lose all friends. He would only have one final solution, to become the overlord, annul his own verdict. Different game.



Not even the Death of Character Digression will offer a reprieve. If the ax rebound son first strike, the court will find a shaper cleaver.

Q&D Fleeing a Sinking (Enemy)

This event may be used during any evacuation from a flooding ship; it more often occurs in the climax when all players are suffering the fate while on a rival's specialty ship, a magical barque or Tessarakonteres.

Success on this table assumes the character to makes it to dock, shore or his own vessel. In some cases, the table will chain with further escape tables. Go from here to say Foiling an enemy of wealth and power. **Increase the Difficulty by three for any event with an inverted card.** The Difficulty can also eb raised in some cases by the enemy Defensive Modifier. That would only be for monstrous nonhumans and demi-humans who fight on even as their own vessel is going down.

Sinking King: Lash a line and loop it over a high yard to get free of the flooding hull. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Skill Bowman**

Sinking Queen: Lash a line to a boarding pike and hurl it into a floating barrel. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage: Skill Man-at-Arms**

Sinking Knight: Wiggle and worm your way through the tangle of collapsed yards and spars. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage: Skill Acrobat**

Sinking Knave: Decide correctly if you have time to take a short cut through the entire subsection of deck rather than wait to take the shorter path through a hatch clogged with the panic stricken? Anyone who has yet to take an event after this has his Difficulty increased by four. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Trait Methodical**

Sinking Ten: Make a swim for it. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Trait Energetic**

Sinking Nine: Nothing beats speed, except guile; be the next in a lifeboat. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Trait Clever**

Sinking Eight: Hang onto a boat, while still in the water; there are no more seats aboard. Anyone who has yet to take an event after this has his Difficulty increased by four. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Trait Gifted**

Sinking Seven: Hold your breath for an obscenely long time to claw out through the ruptured ballast. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Trait Rugged**

Sinking Six: Rally all to heave ho and push open a hatch stuck under swirling water. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage: Skill Rabblrouser**

Sinking Five: Deft hands can gain the key to the forward hatch, out of the soaking wet pocket of a duty officer laying semi-conscious on a grate above. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage: Skill Pickpocket**

Sinking Four: Pitch dark below, taking on water, feel your way out to the aft stairwell. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Skill Mariner**

Sinking Three: Punch through leaded glass on the captain's cabin. **Difficulty:** 5 **Advantage:** Skill Pugilist

Sinking Two: Fashion a make-shift shield and attached shoulder cuirass to cross a patch of flames. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Tinker

Sinking Ace: Whistle for ship's mastiff to aid you. **Difficulty:** 4 **Advantage:** Skill Houndsman (Beasts)

Major Tarot Sinking Enemy

Note: Longboat techniques are never Glorious. Your crew will gain or suffer in the aftermath, trying to save the Primus trapped aboard the enemy ship as it sinks.

Sink Magician: Toggle Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink High Priestess: Toggle Longboat Elite Goals (A); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Empress: Toggle Longboat Treasure Laden (D); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Emperor: Toggle Longboat Noble Allegiance (K); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Hierophant: Toggle Longboat Religiously Inspired (C); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Lovers: Toggle Longboat Comradery (P); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Chariot: Toggle Longboat Abundant Stores (M); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Justice: Toggle Longboat Treachery Expunged (G); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Hermit: Toggle Longboat Democracy (S); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Wheel of Fortune: Shuffle the deck and continue.

Sink Force: Toggle Longboat Battle Ready (H); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Hanged Man: Toggle Longboat Pure No-Curse (J); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Death: Toggle Longboat No Disease (I); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Temperance: Toggle Longboat Orderly Kept (Q); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Devil: Toggle Longboat Vermin Free (N); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Tower of Destruction: Toggle Longboat Battle Hard (T); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Star: Toggle Longboat Seasoned Crew (L); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Moon: Toggle Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Sun: You and everyone yet to get out of the sinking hulk have gained life and liberty; this encounter ends.

Sink Judgment: Toggle Longboat Vigilant (E); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink World: Longboat Charted Path (B); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Sink Fool: Toggle Longboat Undamaged (O); if you don't have this swagger, gain it; if you do, then lose it.

Climax Challenges – Everything Test

This table will spark the imagination of your group. Set a successful condition and a consequence for failure. Flip a card and consult the table below for the basic challenge in terms of traits, skills and swaggering. The table will only randomize the abilities needed. There are no event narratives. My brain is too fried. Just know what you're dicing for, the desired outcome, before you flip the card.

Let the players come up with the actual justification of how the method applies. The reason may be whimsical, humorous, practical or dead on. Simply state the problem—like say, entering a lair undetected by the monster guardian—then flip a card to find the most advantageous method.

The players should be accustomed to this free-style of game play. Yes, to enter that lair undetected, we need the Minstrel! There, I said it, he has a role. Maybe to be a decoy and die, I mean roll dice.

All the success results imply an Ordinary roll. If more than one character has the prescribed ability, each may try to be the hero (attempt the roll). Only one success is usually needed. Except for large groups, lots of characters, or really high level player characters, flip a couple cards and make them combine the results.

If none of the players have the necessary trait, skill or swaggering, then one **roll by the principal player character is attempted at Tasking**. This could mean do or die, which it shouldn't. If the roll will result in mission failure or immediate

death, then every player should roll for his own character, at ordinary with the ability or Tasking without. Again, one success generally is enough. There will come time when even the greatest will fail (several rolls). Because this is Task Resolution, weighted by character level, no player receives multiple attempt bonus. But, this may be a nice moment in the climax to apply the Energetic strategic benefit for a Fury Pip.

Use a make-roll? Often too easy, cop-out, be a hero. How about this instead? If anyone uses a make-roll, the card flip changes. Eventually they might get something that they feel they can describe, justify and roll at Ordinary. Go through the whole deck if necessary. That's only seventy-seven make-rolls, a group of eleven level sevens has that, right? Wait, the Wheel?!?

All in fun hearing the players elaborate on the abilities they seldom use or the game itself has left vague; becomes legal precedence for the action of the campaign to follow. *“Remember when I said I used my Blade Impetus as a crowbar, maybe it also functions on portcullis.”*

Test King Cups: Skill Man-at-Arms

Inverted: Wizardry Demonic (F)

Test Queen Cups: Skill Mariner

Inverted: Mount Carapace (O)

Test Knight Cups: Blade Mucilage (B)

Inverted: Wizardry Hexes (M)

Test Knave Cups: Blade Ingenious (A)

Inverted: Swagger Ferocity (J)

Test Ten Cups: Wizardry Animate Objects (O)

Inverted: Wizardry Illusions (I)

Test Nine Cups: Skill Mountaineer

Inverted: Mount Lucid (N)

Test Eight Cups: Wizardry Power Words (S)

Inverted: Blade Bounding (C)

Test Seven Cups: Longboat Elite Goals (A)

Inverted: Swagger Battle Cry (A)

Test Six Cups: Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R)

Inverted: Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)

Test Five Cups: Skill Hunter

Inverted: Mount Sturdy (Q)

Test Four Cups: Mount Ominous (S)

Inverted: Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)

Test Three Cups: Swagger Feigns (I)
Inverted: Wizardry Precognition (E)
Test Two Cups: Skill Linguist
Inverted: Swagger Wrestling Holds (T)
Test Ace Cups: Swagger Better Valor (B)
Inverted: Swagger Charismatic Style (C)

Test King Rods: Mount Vibrant (M)
Inverted: Wizardry Necromancy (H)
Test Queen Rods: Mount Beautiful (A)
Inverted: Mount Serene (E)
Test Knight Rods: Blade Fantastic (D)
Inverted: Blade Eminent (E)
Test Knave Rods: Wizardry Thought Control (P)
Inverted: Mount Inexorable (T)
Test Ten Rods: Blade Defender (F)
Inverted: Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)
Test Nine Rods: Skill Houndsman (Beasts)
Inverted: Longboat Democracy (S)
Test Eight Rods: Swagger Chiasmic Action (D)
Inverted: Longboat Comradery (P)
Test Seven Rods: Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)
Inverted: Blade Golden (T)
Test Six Rods: Longboat Treasure Laden (D)
Inverted: Swagger Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S)
Test Five Rods: Wizardry Conjunction (L)
Inverted: Wizardry Spirit Guide (R)
Test Four Rods: Skill Steward
Inverted: Skill Tinker
Test Three Rods: Swagger Concentration (E)
Inverted: Mount Winged (B)
Test Two Rods: Swagger Speed & Guile (R)
Inverted: Longboat Battle Ready (H)
Test Ace Rods: Blade Knightly (G)
Inverted: Skill Tormentor

Test King Coins: Swagger Disarming Blow (F)
Inverted: Mount Agile (C)
Test Queen Coins: Skill Spy
Inverted: Blade Scintillating (K)

Test Knight Coins: Blade Lithe (H)

Inverted: Blade Heirloom (I)

Test Knave Coins: Swagger Effective Spurning (H)

Inverted: Mount Pure (L)

Test Ten Coins: Swagger Crushing Blow (G)

Inverted: Mount Fleet (R)

Test Nine Coins: Blade Herculean (J)

Inverted: Mount Talking (P)

Test Eight Coins: Blade Biting (L)

Inverted: Skill Forger

Test Seven Coins: Blade Scheming

(S)

Inverted: Mount Mystical (D)

Test Six Coins: Swagger Repartee

(P)

Inverted: Blade Hellish (M)

Test Five Coins: Swagger Seize

Swordarm (Q)

Inverted: Mount Essential (I)

Test Four Coins: Swagger Heroic

Swordplay (K)

Inverted: Mount Radiant (F)

Test Three Coins: Wizardry

Demigod (A)

Inverted: Wizardry Voltaic (N)

Test Two Coins: Longboat Battle

Hard (T)

Inverted: Skill Farrier-Breeder

Test Ace Coins: Skill Goldsmith

Inverted: Mount Resolute (K)

Test King Swords: Blade

Gladiatorial (R)

Inverted: Skill Slave Driver

Test Queen Swords: Longboat Vigilant (E)

Inverted: Wizardry Shape Shifting (J)

Test Knight Swords: Mount Hefty (H)

Inverted: Longboat Abundant Stores (M)

Test Knave Swords: Longboat Undamaged (O)

Inverted: Longboat Seasoned Crew (L)



Test Ten Swords: Swagger Mastery Shield (O)

Inverted: Skill Equestrian

Test Nine Swords: Skill Horticulturist

Inverted: Wizardry Celestial (G)

Test Eight Swords: Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)

Inverted: Wizardry Pyrotechnics (K)

Test Seven Swords: Blade Impetus (N)

Inverted: Wizardry Paralysis (Q)

Test Six Swords: Swagger Irregular Tricks (M)

Inverted: Wizardry Cosmic (T)

Test Five Swords: Swagger Hilt Punch (L)

Inverted: Mount Replenishing (J)

Test Four Swords: Longboat Charted Path (B)

Inverted: Skill Engineer-Sapper

Test Three Swords: Longboat Religiously Inspired (C)

Inverted: Wizardry Psionics (B)

Test Two Swords: Blade Meshed (Q)

Inverted: Longboat Vermin Free (N)

Test Ace Swords: Skill Gambler

Inverted: Skill Duelist

Magician: All characters increase their Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; do not resolve those events. Select another card.

Inverted: Trait Clever

High Priestess: Select any Swagger to overcome the obstacle.

Inverted: Gain a Quest Pip of plus one going forward. Select another card.

Empress: Blade Amalgam (O)

Inverted: Skill Barber (Chiurgeon)

Emperor: Skill Artillerist

Inverted: Skill Briber

Hierophant: The success roll when the ability is not known by any character shifts to only Difficult. Select another card.

Inverted: Skill Occult Scholar

Lovers: Skill Courtly Grace

Inverted: Skill Acrobat

Chariot: Trait Energetic

Inverted: Skill Rabblrouser

Justice: Swagger Killer Instinct (N)

Inverted: Skill Pugilist

Hermit: Blade Paladin (P)

Inverted: Skill Apothecary

Wheel of Fortune: Shuffle the deck and continue.

Force: Attempt the roll with plus two for Fury Pip. Select another card.

Inverted: Skill Armorer-Smithy

Hanged Man: Wizardry Geomancy (C)

Inverted: Skill Pickpocket

Death: Trait Rugged

Inverted: Skill Grit-Fortitude

Temperance: Mount Empyrean (G)

Inverted: Skill Berserker

Devil: All players become Shaken. Select another card.

Inverted: Trait Gifted

Tower of Destruction: Suffer a minus one Quest Pip. Select another card.

Inverted: Skill Delver

Star: Select any Skill to overcome the obstacle.

Inverted: Skill Cartographer

Moon: Longboat No Disease (I)

Inverted: Skill Prestidigitation

Sun: Select any Trait to overcome the obstacle.

Inverted: Trait Bold

Judgment: Trait Methodical

Inverted: Wizardry Telekinesis (D)

World: Skill Brawler

Inverted: Skill Bowman

Fool: The success roll when knowing the ability shifts to Difficult. Select another card.

Inverted: Skill Minstrel

Schematic Endings

I stopped using graph paper to make underworlds in 1978. I could observe half or nine-tenths of what I plotted never being used. I'd recycle whole sections and decided what I really wanted was a system of paths and alternates. Pretty is nice, but tactical lines of sight and locking relationships only matters if you're moving chits on a board. It's not even realistic, since the players would not have a top down perspective.

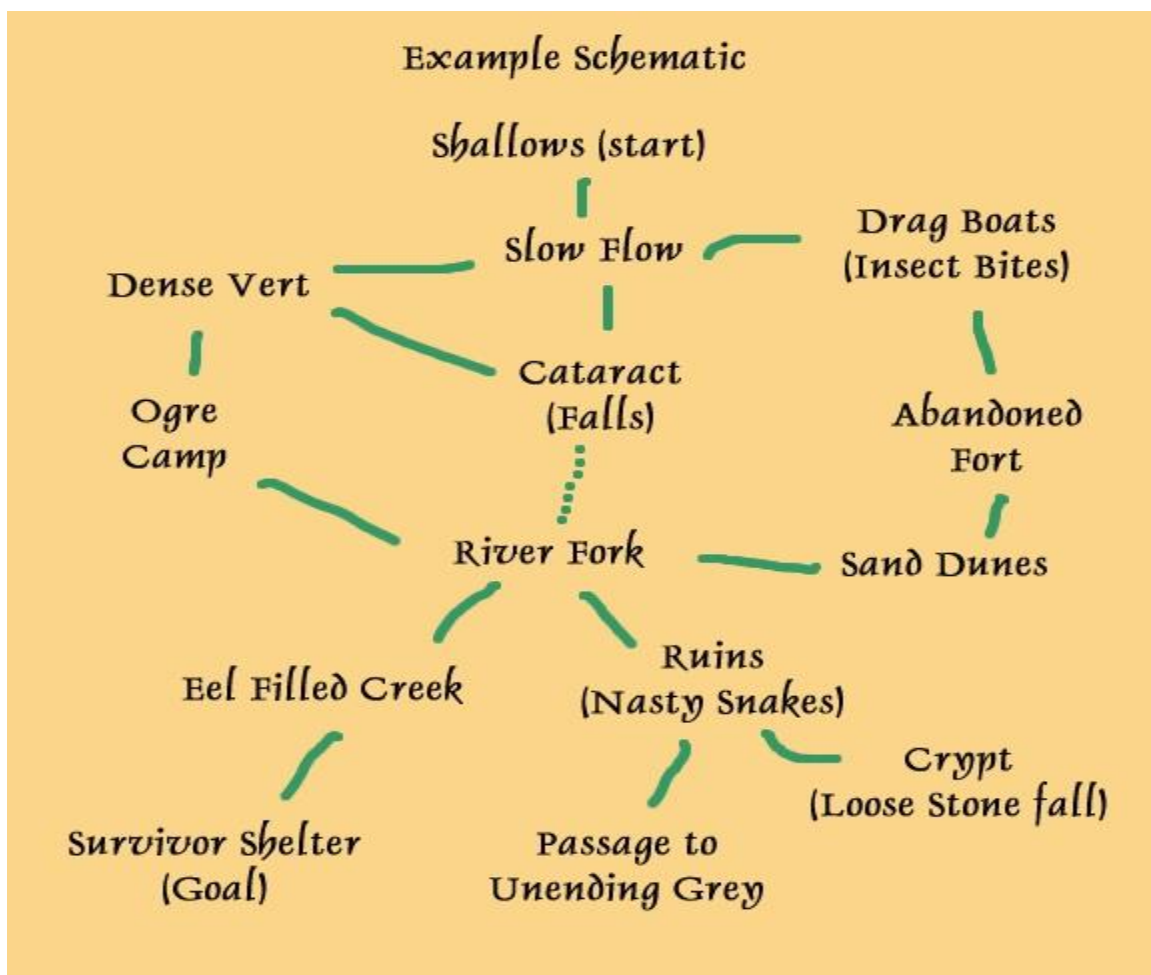
Now some players say they hate linear adventures. They never know they are on one (at the time), but they feel cheated. So, the good alternative is the choice of

schematics without trying to make architectural drawings of every fort, village and lair. Though agreed, computers make random maps that much easier.

The following generic ships, areas and interior layouts may prove useful during the climax. The purpose of these schematics is to enhance the adventure by adding a feeling of search, discovery and precognition. Players should choose their entrance—possibly prove to the Referee their choice is valid by character trait, skill or acquired knowledge—and progress from location to location within the schematic.

Opposition will engage in an area, never en route. The lines drawn between are days or weeks of travel, when desired by scale, or happen instantaneously inside a building. The Referee may move the opposition (like pawns) to respond to sounds or disturbances, plus in confusion, drawn by tactical ploys created by players.

Here's an example I generated in a few minutes.



Yes, lots of clichés in my climax plan. If you make a number of these in advance and set them aside, you will delight your players.

So, for the example, the players would head up river, maybe even in their longboat. Then the river narrows and the flow stagnates. Small life boats or raft? There is an option to drag the longboat along a side tributary. Later on, no boat can enter the sand dunes or ruins. So, they must retrace the steps and cut a path through the dense vegetation, the Vert (glade of trees).



If the players had a time crunch to rescue the survivors at the camp (the goal), they would not be able to make too many backtrack actions to the shallows. On they would go right into the ogres. The other path would have been safer, maybe. As you can see I added notes on mosquitoes, loose stones, eels and snakes.

But what I truly want to create is a situation where the players are fleeing for their lives toward the falls. best way to do that is to add rats of the Ogres at the river fork. Will they know that drop was there? When they complain, flash the schematic. “*See it was there from the start.*” Or the players must flee to the abandoned fort to fight a *Defend Citadel (Siege)*. I could place the rival anywhere. He probably is holding the survivors captive or hunting as well, avoiding the ogres, lost int e maze of ruins. The monsters are the ones to truly fear. The point overall, a schematic is

easier to use than a standard graph paper map.

No schematic is ever wrong; the examples to follow are provided to convince the Referee on the ease of schematics over drafted layouts. Every closet need not be included. Just draw the schematics to show the location of obstacles and possible routes to bypass them.

Each schematic included has its connections is left blank. Use the logical arrangement on the page – right, left, up, down. The Referee should copy the schematics and draw his own set of arrows to secretly connect the locations. When connecting the areas, sometimes add broken (dashed) lines to signify hidden passages or routes only accessible in one direction or after something else is discovered. The players like discovery and feel a sense of cleverness when they solve puzzles without too many clues.

Schematics to Follow

- ~ Varangian Longboat
 - ~ Imperial Galley
 - ~ Mercantile Cog
 - ~ Tessarakonteres, use your internet liberally
 - ~ Magical Ship
 - ~ Frontier Fort
 - ~ Stone Castle
 - ~ Inn
 - ~ Baronial Estate
 - ~ Wizard Tower
 - ~ Port or City
 - ~ Monastic Abbey for One True Faith
 - ~ Pantheon Temples or a Complex to the gods
 - ~ Ruins (surface)
 - ~ Fae Woods
 - ~ Ice Cave
 - ~ Dragon's Lair
 - ~ Underworld, a truly monstrous Climax Challenge
 - ~ Unending Grey
- Just some examples – make more!

Varangian Longboat

Schematic Outland Longboat



		Mainmast Top		
		Cross Spar		
Stern Stays		Sheet Stays		Figurehead
Commander's Cabin	Shield Wall	Trestletree		Canopy (Crew)
Tiller	Horse Sling Hammocks	Oarsman rear	Oarsman Bow	
Arms Lock	Water Casks	Hold	Dry Store	Prisoner Pole Chains
Crew paybox		ballast	Treasure Lock	

Imperial Galley

Schematic Imperial Galley



Mercantile Cog

Schematic Mercantile Cog



Mainmast
Top Archers

Foremast
Top Lookout

lanteen
Missen

Bowsprit
Top

Sterncastle

Forecastle

Beakhead

Tiller
Captain's Room

Laden Deck

Valued Cargo

Tessarakonteres

Schematic Tessarakonteres

	Missen Top	Main Top	Foremast Top	Jib Top
	Command Tower	Wizard's Tower	Ballistae Tower	
Stern Castle	Commander's House	Wild Ones Cages	Barracks	
Animated Lashing harpoon	Deck Fire Catapults	Soldiers Platform	Boarding Drawbridge	Beakhead Ram Head
Masters' Cabins	Tiller Room	Arms Lock	Cook Stoves	Sailor's Quarters
Oarsmen (three ranks each side)				



Magical Ship

Schematic Magical Ship



Sail Tops	Absurd Statue	Eerie Spires	Aviary
Exotic Stern Castle	Light Port Towers	Dark Starboard Towers	Pavilion Delights
Lavis Apartments	Spartan Dormitory		
Audience Chamber	Arena	Inhuman Guards	Extending Ram
Arcane Portal	Beast Cages	Puzzling Sundries	Whale Tow Lines
Treasures	Undead Rowers	Alchemy Lab	
Prisoners	Unspeakable Horrors	Relic vaults	

Frontier Fort



Schematic Frontier Fort



Main Road Entrance

Gated Bastion

Wooden Guard Tower

Outer Ramparts

Gynasium

Stocks

Stables

Inner Courtyard

Artillery Emplacements

Barracks

Magazine Arms

Cold Storehouse

Hospital

Inner Keep

Kitchen

Commander's Home-Tent

Secret Passage

Cistern

Rear Breastworks

Tributary

River Dock

Stone Castle



Schematic
Stone Castle



Inn



Schematic Inn



Entrance Gate

Tack Room

Cobblestones

Storm Cellar

Stable

Bouncer
Stool

Figurine
Shrine

Outhouse

Hanky
Panky

Proprietor's
Hut

Great Hall

Resident
Mystery Man

Counting
Room

Side
Gallery

Tap
Room

Stair
Up

Balcony

Guest Rooms

Bath

Upper Lease
Flats

Kitchen

Wine
Cellar

Corridor

Attic
Servants-Storage

Stair
Down

Pit

Back
Door

Rear
Garden

Garden
Shed

Evil
Secret-Sanctuary

Forgotten
Tunnel

Enter
Climb Wall

Sewer
Pipe

Baronial Estate

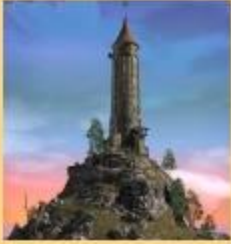


Schematic Baronial Estate



	Pasture		Fallow Fields	
Livestock Pens	Roman Road		Harvested Fields	
Battlements	Bridge	River Wharf	Water Mill	
Stable	Sentry Post	Serf Village	Planted Fields	
Vegitable Garden	Paved Courtyard	Smith	Sacred Order Concubines	
Garden Maze	Great Keep & Hall	Garrison	Armory	
Old Wall	Castellan Gallery	Family Stairs	Tall Tower	
Wooded Hill	Ornate Throne	Lord's Resident	Forgotten Stairs	
Slave Pens	Treasury	Secret Passage	Non-Human Custodians	
Sealed Breach	Copper Mine	Ancestral Crypts	Chamber Misery	Dark Cells
				Sinister Audience Room

Wizard Tower



Schematic Wizard's Tower

Door of Infinty
 Sunken Depths
 Elite Guard
 Bronze Barriers
 Creatures
 Dignitary Quarters
 Court
 non-Human Staff
 Office War
 Helix Stair
 Human Retainers
 Inner Way
 OuterWay
 Mechanical Traps
 All-Seeing Eye
 Interlevel Guard
 Hostages
 Bed Chamber
 Magical Traps
 Magical Barriers
 Riches
 Path of Forgetfulness
 Sensory Distortion
 Blasphemous Experiments
 Arcane Tomes
 Demon Circle
 Diabolical Plans
 Relic Study
 Necromancy & Conjuring

Port or City



Schematic Port or City

Fields & Woods
 Alehouse
 Low Quarters
 Retired Soldiers
 Forum (Public Square)
 Execution Block
 Battlements
 Enter Scale Walls
 Non-Human Settlement

Seconary Gate
 Imperial Dock
 Pimps
 Market
 Constables
 Seat of Power
 Theataer
 Courtesans
 Inner Keep & Gate
 High Town
 Walled
 Private residence

Sea - River Channel
 Wharves
 Dock
 Market
 Temple
 Crops
 Public Baths
 Temple War
 Private Club
 Cartel Banks

Private Vessel
 Sailor's tavern
 Warehouses
 Granary
 Enter Tunnels & Sewers
 Legion Barracks
 Aristorats
 Guilds
 Secret Society Hall

Monastic Abbey



Schematic Monastic Abbey



Pantheon Temples



Schematic Temple Complex

	Hospital	Processional	Observatory
Granary	Kiosk (Money Change)	Magical Protector	Pyramid Statue On-High
Factory Workhouse	Hypostyle Columns	Offering Tables	Colonnade Reptitive Figures High Altar
Brewery		Golden Calf	Stone Pylons Sacrifice Block
Eunuch Dormitory	Robe Room	Festival Hall	
River Beast		Jewel Seat	Hallowed Court Great Calendar Carved Tree
Water Platform	Scribes		
Hall Records	Clerical Offices	Vestibule High Priest Sanctuary	Ebon Aisle Embalmers Dark Communion
Reflecting Pool	Lessor Temples	Chistled Apostate Face	Worn Painting Unbreakable Ward
Unknown Glyphs	Arcane		
Stone Quarry	Bas Reliefs	Viper Pit	Underworld Entrance

Ruins

	Schematic Ruins		Buried Cache	
	Old Path	Signs of Humans		
Tangled Maze			Footprints	Gypsy Camp
	Caretaker			
	Buckled Street	Hut	Shattered Column	Inhuman Cry
Pitfall		Roofless Temple	Squatter's House	Signs of Battle
	Bones			Snare Trap
Ramp Down		Cult	Lunatic	Bloody Trail
	Looted Crypt			Animal Nest
		Wall		
Flooded Cellar	Graverobbers Camp	Deadend	Warning Markers	Headless Body
		Stairs Down		
	Runes of Power		Cursed Vault	Carved Map
Painful Sounds		Unnatural Light		
	Sealed Vault		Magical Aura	Undead Tomb
Trapped Ginn		Fire Scorch		
	Demon Pentagram	Underworld Entrance	Beast Lair	Phantasm



Fae Woods

Schematic Fae Woods



Roman Road	Deer Trail	Strange Light			
Overgrowth	Wash Out	Forgotten Valley	Magic Glen	Sleepy Brook	Lost Vale
Dry Decay	Tranquil Dell	Eyes Brush	Star Field	Sweet Water	Chill
Swelter	Fog Pond	Fish Pond	Mossy Rock	Above Drunkenness	Snow
Forest Fire	Pine Stand	Lily Pads	Whispering Copse	Imps	Freezing Conditions
Heath	Lightning Strikes	Thorns	Talking Animals	Laughing	Hail
Hillot	Humid Lake	Insect Hive	Tangle Vines	Glyph Rock	Nightmare Glade
Cave	Titter Sounds	Diminutive Warriors	Poison Plants	Perfumed Path	Ice Storm
Giant	Goblins	Sacred Oak	Animal Musicians	Sirens	Misanthrope
Dragon	Quest Goal	Shrine Old Gods	Circle Stones	Blood Sacrifice	Carved Tree
Fairy Queen	Demi-Gods	Human Prisoners	Druids Cult	Vipers	Thicket Snare
					Hiss Sounds
					Dinosaurs

Ice Cave

Schematic Ice Cave



Descent	Snowy Cave	Crawl Tunnel	
Smooth Sand	Jagged Path	Bears/Lion Predators	Glass Ice
Dark Ice	Razor Ice	Dripping Cavern	Slippery Floor
Black Tar	Steam vent	Blinding Reflections	Waterfall
Quicksand	Snow Blind	Blue Ice Flash Freeze	Green Ice Swim
Clanging	Sinkhole	Freezing Surface	Fresh Water Lake
Roaring Hearth	Melting Ice	Cloudy Ice	Carved Ice Statues
Giant	Anvils	Fur Clan Beasts	Leviathan
Far Fall	Dwarves	Magic Aura	Glowing Ice
Bottomless Pit	Titan	Castle Dragon	Minions Evil Pillars
	Demon	Quest Goal	Rampart
			Climb
			Platform
			Sapphires
			Sea Hag
			Ocean Hole
			Fog

Dragon's Lair

Schematic Dragon's Lair



Snow Strewn Path
 Archway
 Stinking Bog
 Fools Gold
 Wizard Abode
 Charred Thief
 Decay
 Dwarf Guide
 Dwarf Spy
 Throne Room
 Ghosts
 Demigod Mischief
 Path of Destiny
 Non-Human Servants
 Torture Cells
 Giant Nurse Maid
 Pottery Shards
 Electrostatic Surfaces
 Scalding Surfaces
 Hatchery
 Bile Cavern
 Fallen Hero
 Relics of Dead
 Cult Minions
 Undead Forge
 Spitting Serpant
 Cold Creature
 Keep
 Lake
 Sightless Lizard
 Sacrificial Column
 Flame Thrower
 Shock Monster
 Snarky Beast
 Ancient Worm
 Haughty Dragon
 Demonic Dragyn
 Gold Pile
 Unearthly Dragonn

Underworld



Schematic Underworld

Base Camp

Wooden Door

Fake Door Dark Hall Sloped

Dwarves (imps) Cross Passage Trapdoor Tombs T Intersect Narthex Rats (Noise)

Sleeping Guards Mechanical Traps Slide Block Sarcophagus Undead One Wide Corridor Blind Corner Low Ceiling

Stairs Locked Door Musty Passage Shallow Pool Slide Wall Rope Bridge

Worn Passage Emergence Snare Slime

Bronze Door Weird Statue Caved Stone Non-Human Slavers Pitfall

Magnet Curses Automatons Dip Brick Tunnel Goblins

Fanatics Ensorcelled Lady Iron Door Contact Poison Oily Floor Shadows (Confusion)

Locked Chest Magic Portal Smoky Cavern Fire Trap Stone Door Secret Door

Evil Reckoning Secret Panel Lyanthrope Beast Body (Loot) Quest Goal

Piled Treasure Passages Beyond

Unending Grey

Schematic Unending Grey

Crumbling Temple Dwarven Caverns
Ruins Crypt Mines Deep

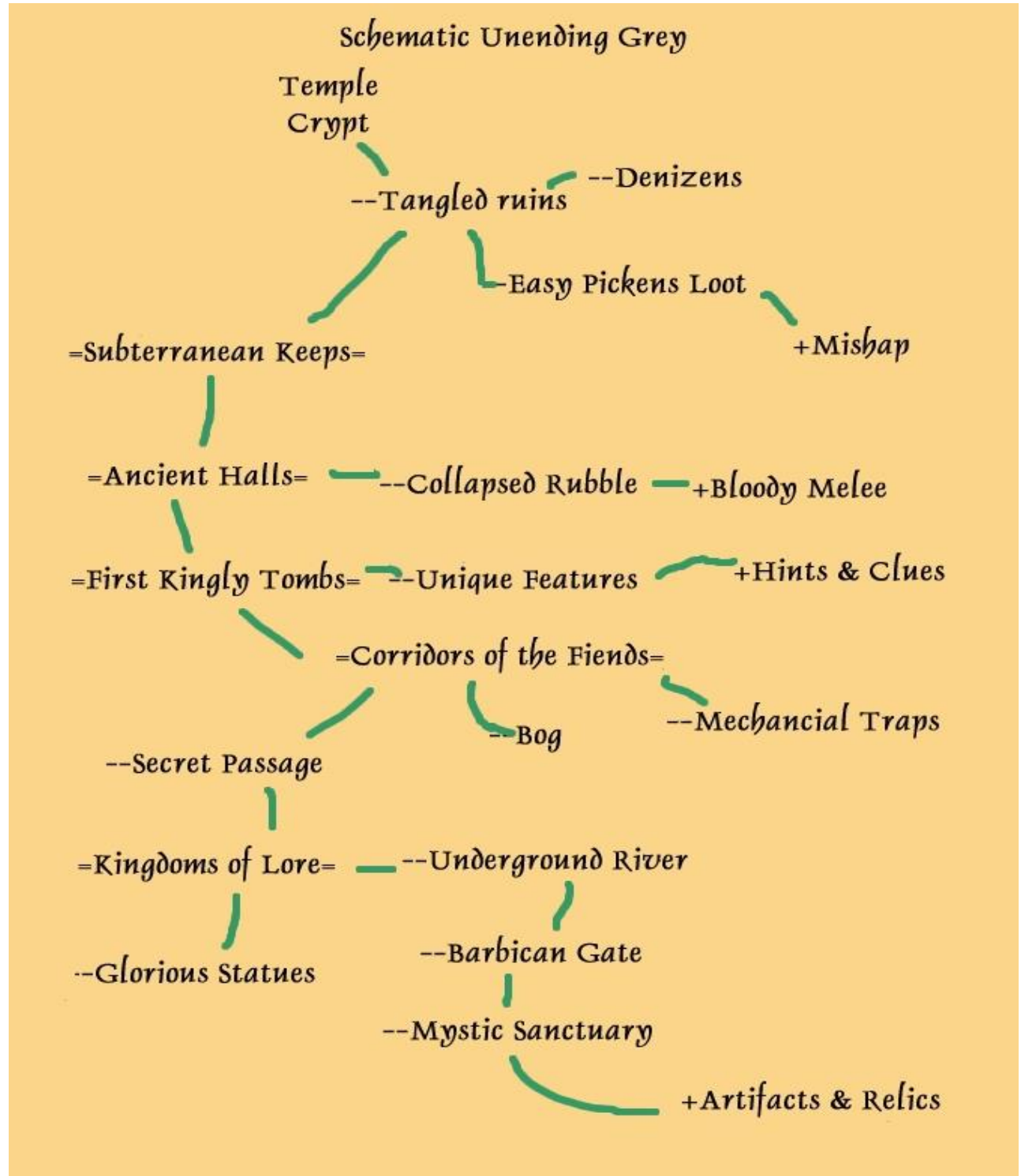


=Deepest Burrows=	--Tangled ruins	--Denizens	+Mishap
=Subterranean Keeps=	--Easy Pickens	Loot	+Parley & Deal
=Forgotten Mines=	--Broken Footing	--Maze	+Bloody Melee
=Ancient Halls=	--Collapsed Rubble		+Request
=First Kingly Tombs=	--Unique Features		Safe Passage
=Corridors of the Fiends=	--Mechanical Traps		+Issue Ultimatum
=Shadow Realms=	--Bog	--Barricade	+Pay Toll
-Where Man	--Secret Passage		+Hints & Clues
Dare Not Dwell=	--Major Excavation		+Advance Under Fire
=Kingdoms of Lore=	--Glorious Statues		+Fight Insanity
=Spawning Ground=	--Underground River		+Boon to Rash
=Nether-Worlds=	--Barbican Gate		+Artifacts & Relics
=Iron Mantel=	--Mystic Sanctuary		+Greed
=Places Beyond	--Monstrous Den		+Run or Perish
Description=	--Geysers		+Boon to Arrogant
=Ocean Floor=	--Siphon (drain)		+Locate Lost Soul
=Lightless Realms=	--Tar-pits		+Intoxication
=Glacial Realms=	--Quicksand		+Duped into Slaughter
=Womb of Gems=	--Frozen (barren)		+Run Lanterns
=Hellish Domains=	--Diabolical Puzzles		All-Directions
=Crust of the Earth=	--Magma Tunnels		+Hampered by Terrain
=Arcane Barrier=	--Chasm (rift)		+Riches & Plunder
=Unknown Realms=	--Strange Vegetation		+Withering Curses
=Inhuman Realms=	--Magical Library		+Boon for Idea
=Core of the World=			+True Warning
=Alternate Dimension=			+Age & Fatigue
			+Poisonous Air
			+Demonic Audience
			+Flesh Dissolves

Example of how to use this method:



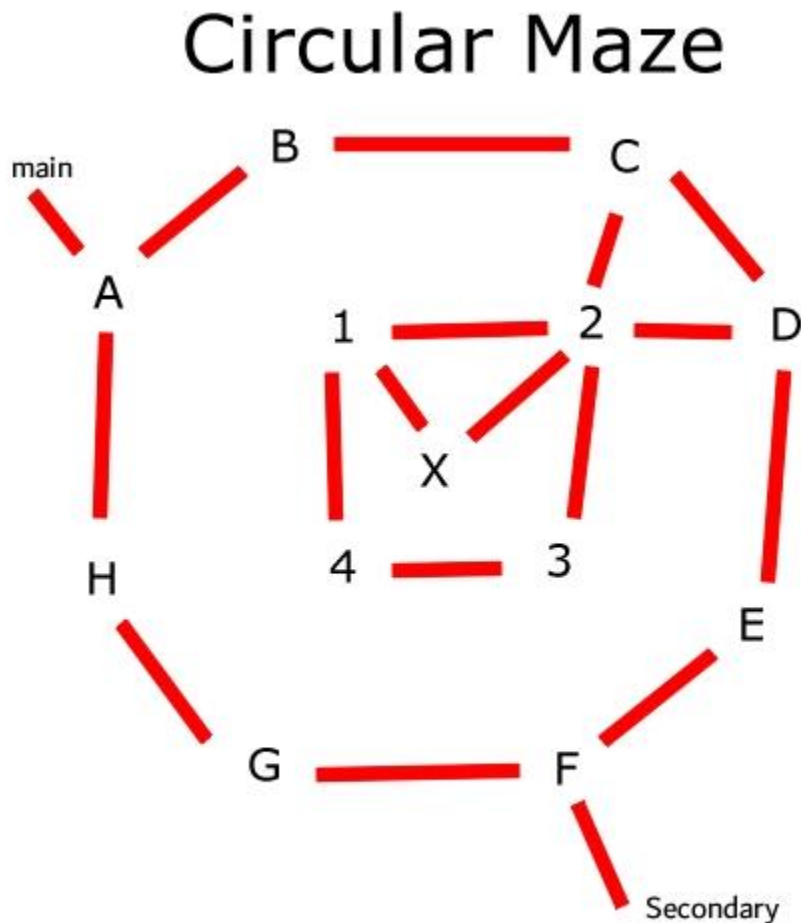
Well, that's a fuggin' mess. Keep the electronic pdf pristine. Because I can't actually draw those lines (easily), I am forced to make the map schematic on a piece of scrap paper. Here's that climax challenge using just the stuff I want.



Is that a strictly linear path? No. Is it N-S-E-W guided with task resolution and combat to cross areas? Yes. Will it work quickly to generate a very complicated climax? I think so; give it a try. You may dump architectural maps altogether like I have. Do you need to know there were eight large boulders in the Collapsed Rubble, not seven? The little details are meaningful only to some (with too much time on their hands).

Automating Climax Challenges on the Fly

Let's start with concentric circles. Grab a piece of scratch paper. You can draw one in about ten seconds. Write eight letters in an outer ring, and four numbers closer to a center *X* marks the spot. Populating it with challenges takes a bit more time, but let's consider first just the schematic.



The players can enter at two points at most. These are the *Main Entrance* and the *Secondary Entrance*. The main Entrance usually has a battle. The Secondary

usually requires task resolution. e.g. A skill or swagger test. The choice of which to take is up to the prime player character as party leader. His goal is to get to the *Inner Sanctum*, numbered one to four, four possible encounters. Inside the Inner Sanctum there are two possible routes to the *Center Objective (X)*. These may require both combat and task resolution (or vice versa).

The players enter the outer circle and go clockwise or anticlockwise, right or left. One path will be shorter, usually, to a passage to the inner circle (Inner Sanctum). Then upon progressing to the Inner Sanctum, the players will again go right or left, clockwise or anticlockwise. The passage to the Center Objective (X) will soon be found.

I drew the paths I did for no reason. The paths inside can be at the same spot. i.e. There is only one entrance, but it might be crossed by either combat or task resolution. The paths from the outer to inner in the example were drawn leading to the same spot. That doesn't have to be the case. The paths from the inner sanctum to the final objective may be side by side, across, coming from the same spot, wherever the Ref wishes. If you wish, roll some dice and make this random.

The players will have a sense of choice (not really) and can see afterward if they picked the best route. The main thing is the Ref can easily populate the concentric circles with a variety of obstacles and combat challenges.

What are these spots?

You can name the places merely for color or name the spots for what each implies. A barracks is different from a kitchen from a bog from a trap door. Go back to the climax schematics and grab some location names. For now, let's add climax challenges.

Center X

You got here. Don't ask me how. Actually, you probably worked your way around and fought some preliminary battles, solved some skill based challenges and now you've come to the end. Hazzah! But first go back and read the mission. What the heck are the players supposed to do? Whatever it is, it can happen here. But there needs to be something stopping them, right?

You will add the main Rival or at least his best servant here as a challenge. Does everything end in combat? No, but usually. More often it's both combat and extra task resolution rolls to do the small details of the mission.

I'll just grab one out of the Generating Quests Booklet. **Mission 10 Rods:** Scout for an army. A scouting group needs to find the enemy and assess that group's size. Plus, the scout needs to find places of forage and supply, warn of plague and depravation, advise as only outsiders can when loyalists are outmatched or faltering in allegiance. This is a nice job for barbarians, supporting the supposedly civilized garrisons, yet not being encumbered to fight alongside with them.



Alright, that would also help assign the colorful site descriptions of the inner and outer circles, those letters and numbers. The group was probably in rough terrain, moving through tent barracks, counting horses, swimming a creek, etc. At the final climax they are making their last assessments of the supply stores and hospital tents, getting an idea of how viable the enemy legionary cohort is and how ready it is to attack. So maybe the X spot is the command tent with all the logistic reports and battle plans. Fight the Rival, take his documents and survive the Epilog to get home to your patron. That seems logical. Even if the mission was very odd or nebulous, the main mechanical challenges can be resolved by fighting combat at the X and then making a few extra task rolls based on skill and swagger to tie up all the final fiddly details. You get better at doing this with practice. Also, have your players tell you how they proceed. Many of them are actually pretty smart (I've found). Gamers aren't slouches.

Combat Spots

We handled the Center Objective (X), is that it? Nope, you have to have some preliminary battles and task rolls. Add as many as you like. **Circle the dangerous guarded letters.** At the very least there should be guards at the Main Entrance and at each location which crosses from outer to inner circle and from inner circle to the main objective. That could be five places of potential combat. Maybe add one more

for every two levels of the highest level player character. So, a party with a Stallari would have an extra four spots on (A) to (H) and (1) to (4) for combat. Of course, the center will be combat, usually against the Rival or his most powerful minion.

Non-Combat Spots

Some of these vacant areas will be just placeholder. You got to the letter or number just fine. Where to? Yet these could have two possible outcomes related to *stealth* and *distraction*. Stealth, in that, the players must cross an area without sounding the alarm and attracting guards from adjacent connected areas. And distraction, in that there may be other things that are happening, sort of like Mission Inconsequence Encounters. If the climax is in a city-state, and many of them are, the players will cross paths with all the inhabitants therein. Drunks, constables, beggars, thieves, filth, elevation changes, chances to gamble, drink, profit, carouse, and generally forget what you're doing. If the players have warrior servitors with them—they often do for those longboat techniques—wrangling all the minions on track and to the goal is a large challenge.

Populate the locations, any and all, with the extra Q&D described in this booklet or created by the Ref for his adventure. Refer to the encounter booklets for extra possible additions and difficulties. Or else, you might select a few cards as Q&D Special Areas. These work great for Referee play-along, since he might not even know what comes next.

Q&D Special Areas

Special Area Cups: Wandering sentries here are idiots or drunk. Dupe them by a display of deception or magical trickery to cross without incident. If successful, a neighboring location preset as combat will be avoided.

Inverted Cups: The jig is up, the neighboring guards or monsters come on patrol or upon sighting the party. There's too many to fight. In almost all circumstances, every player must attempt his own survival roll. Make a single roll of Task Resolution to evade or be captured. One extra roll must be made to help the servitors get away or those longboat swaggering are lost. Plus, if the group is Treasure Laden (D), someone must risk his own capture yet again to delay the opponents in hit & run skirmish to ensure the loot has time to be safely withdrawn. Abandoning those riches may also delay the response and let everyone escape (this result).

Special Area Rods: Sentries are improperly trained. Get the minions here to abandon post and enter a wild goose chase with a display of a random letter swaggering. If successful, a neighboring location preset as combat will be avoided.

Inverted Rods: A minion of the Rival must be captured (sometime going forward) to yield necessary information. Failure means the mission cannot enter the center objective and will fail to opponent's greater glory. That capture might be made here if a neighboring area is guarded.

Special Area Coins: Sentries are corrupt-ambivalent. They might look the other way for a purse of coins offered by a Trait Methodical gentleman. If successful, a neighboring location preset as combat will be avoided.

Inverted Coins: Delays and a new fear. The party is failing a Time Crunch. If this event happens a second time, the mission is automatically failed. Yet there's a harbinger in a neighboring guarded location or as an NPC somewhere in the areas of the maze—add that person—who can accompany the players with his counter or specific knowledge to make-up time and avoid this calamity; this only occurs provided he's located and safely reaches the end objective with the group. His own motives may be suspect, but his participation might be better than absolute failure.

Special Area Swords: The guards are stalwart and on the move; you'll need to fight a quick skirmish to enter and cross here. All players start combat with a Bane. Each player selects a Brash, Magical, Monster or Spellcaster Bane card; this does not circumvent any neighboring combat.

Inverted Swords: Sentries expect the arrival of a group of professionals, tutors or hired agents related to a random skill. If any player has that ability or swagger, the whole group may cross from one ring to the next unopposed even right to the center from the Inner Sanctum.

Special Area Magician: Distraction conflict, some strongmen-hooligans are violating someone; your gallantry might offer a unique bonus or reward unrelated to this quest. Only in the aftermath will anyone collect the prize. However, any fight could be reported to the Rival and result in possible climax failure.

Inverted: Rival or Objective not in center; the rival is in a place not yet entered by the party. Secretly pick one and let the players continue.

Special Area High Priestess: A mysterious figure aids the cause. Cancel any negative Quest Pip or die penalty. He will also restore one vicious wound suffered by the party; the highest level player character is the recipient of this blessing. Just don't ask him how he does this.

Inverted: Riches, but the treasure is easily recognized, marked, branded, infamous, garnering questions from site minions and even later law enforcers.

Special Area Empress: Deviation and failure to continue will cause the mission to fail to the opponents' greater glory.

Inverted: A disloyal minion of the Rival might be convinced to turn sides. Make Task roll to gain a plus two Tactical Bonus in your next battle.

Special Area Emperor: Riches, but the treasure is bulky, won't fit everywhere; party must separate to guard, else hide or leave unattended and trust it isn't lost.

Inverted: Avoid Delay; socialize and forego goals.

Special Area Hierophant: Here lies answers to mysteries, details on plot, hints to defeating rival or completing goals. Win a battle or make Task rolls to gain a plus one Quest pip.

Inverted: Riches, but the combined treasure is weighty; those laboring start any combat with a Bane.

Special Area Lovers: Every party member should attempt a task roll for his own character to avoid dropping from the quest. Should anyone fail, another friend (only of higher level) may come to assist, but the roll for success is at a Degree higher; both then risk dropping from the quest here.

Inverted: Avoid Gluttony-Combat Penalty; lethargy and forego goals.

Special Area Chariot: An authority figure will issue a warrant; pursuit follows in the Epilog or as a future threat or enemy after the adventure.

Inverted: If you reach the Rival or Objective with the harbinger, he is opposed to your goal. Fight an extra battle against the harbinger.

Special Area Justice: Encounter an innocent or hostage, a valuable person to a future event or quest; this NPC must be brought along and escorted to safety. One player as protector will enter each battle Shaken by the distraction.

Inverted: Avoid an immediate general alarm being sounded; the subsequent mishap/mayhem may force the party's retreat from their goals. Else they continue with each battle starting as Shaken.

Special Area Hermit: A valuable provocateur must be found and bribed or coerced to reveal a truth. He is somewhere in the area still unknown. Ref should place him somewhere. The provocateur is watched or guarded by minions of the Rival. Fight them first, then make your plea (or arm bend) for help.

Inverted: A previously unknown accomplice is ready to help. He must be convinced of your shared goals. Do so and gain a Tactical Bonus of plus three in the next combat.

Special Area Wheel of Fortune: Shuffle the deck and continue.

Special Area Force: Face a barrier or significant obstruction; just one player should attempt this roll for the group. Failure and go the other way around the loop.

Inverted: Avoid strain Fatigue (dice penalties); potential injury.

Special Area Hanged Man: Rival has been tipped-off of your coming. He has a chance to escape and become an Enemy. Unless a specific task resolution is made here.

Inverted: Distraction and not too subtle request for help. A local needs your skills. Either the players must help, or the Rival will be warned. Someone care to

explain what's going on; then Ref sets Degree. A reward may be promised, or else the person aided might help solve a mystery to reaching the goal.

Special Area Death: Obstacle of local authority. Attempt to placate this encounter with a single demonstrative act or display of ability at Tasking. Else, continue with combat; failure additionally means a warrant is issued; pursuit comes in the Epilog or after the adventure.

Inverted: Enter a distraction or third-party fight. Possibly avoid involvement with a Task roll, but otherwise, the player may only use Escape to get out of this unnecessary waste of time and energy. The battle itself cannot be won, no matter the power of the player character nor how many are slain (on all sides).

Special Area Temperance: Take one round of Method Brush or Irregular, attempting to knock out and capture a hostage. To do so gives the party a plus one Quest Pip.

Inverted: Avoid or embrace Games of Chance. Each player must attempt to bypass this encounter with a single demonstrative act or display of ability at Difficult. Fail and lose purse of coins and suffer potential delay.

Special Area Devil: Meet a nefarious enforcer; he attacks as his master's surrogate.

Inverted: Deny or embrace wickedness, sexual indulgence, criminality urge; potential delay. Each player must attempt to bypass this encounter with a single demonstrative act or display of ability at Difficult. Fail and lose purse of coins and suffer potential delay.

Special Area Tower of Destruction: Mistimed or on the move, the Rival will not be encountered anywhere today.

Inverted: Misadventure or Trap means injury leading to vicious limb loss or outright death. Each player should roll a Task Resolution at Degree set by Ref, usually Difficult.



Special Area Star: Riches, however, the treasure inspires envy and party mistrust.

Inverted: Potential challenge to values-beliefs, either deny or embrace. Each player must attempt to bypass this encounter with a single demonstrative act or display of ability at Difficult. Fail and refuse to continue the mission; instead aid the humanitarian crisis.

Special Area Moon: Confused, lost and detained. Attempt to circumnavigate this encounter with a D8 successful demonstrative acts or displays of character ability. Ref must specify if the tasks are combat, negotiation, deception or orientation, perhaps a mix of all. **Inverted:** Avoid Morale Shake; resignation toward failure.

Special Area Sun: Here lies a significant reward or treasure; the object of the quest can even be gained without ever reaching the center.

Inverted: An agent of the Patron comes forward. Gain either a Quest Pip of plus one or a Tactical Pip of plus three in your next battle.

Special Area Judgment: This battle must be won without any enemy fleeing and it must be concluded in a D8 rounds. Else, the climax continues with a minus one Quest Pip.

Inverted: There is an important clue or mystery to uncover before entering the Center Objective. Enter another place in the maze, to reveal the key to the full extent of the climax. Otherwise, the rival will get away.

Special Area World: Face a barrier or significant obstruction; failure to circumvent and the party will run out of time and cannot meet the objective. A half D8 players may attempt skill or magic.

Inverted: Something about this area is not secure and offers a clever opportunity to find an alternate route directly to the maze center. Let anyone define what the discovery and defend their knowledge and ability to use the path. Ref then sets a Degree based on the creativity of this explanation; typically Ordinary roll.

Special Area Fool: Avoid Patched Throat. Each player must attempt to bypass this encounter with a single demonstrative act or display of ability at Difficult. Fail and suffer lingering dice penalties.

Inverted: Attempt to stay out of a distractive and time consuming encounter by performing demonstrative acts or displays which should your loyalty, indifference to suffering or personal selfishness & greed.

Polyhedral Automated Endings

Scattered about this booklet as art are other random climax sequences. There's even another example of a Circular Maze. Note, I replaced the letters with ding-fonts, so they already start to tell a story. With these other random schematics, you'll delight

delvers, edged with dragon bone written on vellum from the skin of ancient trolls, and protected with the teeth of powerful ginn. It is written in the ancient code of Samparas, the script of the Sea Kings. The sigils and glyphs speak in a story telling sense. A translated phrase may be incomplete and provide only general words about some topics. To hold even a fragmented copy damns a person to obsessively follow the paths described below.

Burrows of the Sub-surface

Much of the setting is natural, caverns. Besides bears and lions, the place is corrupted by the impish dwarves fashioning oversized mammals of every description. The shunned and failed experiments to create humans live here, non-humans with animal heads and human bodies. The burrows are places where the poor dump their dead; lacking consecration, those bodies might rise for necromancers.

Molds, fungus, strange vines, weeds, oozes, puddings, and scavengers crawl into dark crevices waiting for hapless creatures to wander in. While there are less traveled paths, wandering from the worn places is not recommended; under seas, uneven terrain, treacherous peaks and crevices block ill-advised choices. There is a place for man and a place for beasts. Best to stay where you belong.

The aggressive monsters here are typically Large. The traps though are mostly sprung; the obstacles easily avoided. Perhaps, a place to acquire a guide to lower levels. Otherwise, the treasure here is limited to the meat that might be had by hunting and post slaughter. If you thoroughly gut anything you slay, a few coins may have been swallowed?

Subterranean Keeps

These are cityscapes that were covered over or sunk below, yet some semblance of humanity and human logic remains. Many garrisons are housed herein for the more stable weather and to guard against evil forces surfacing from further below.

If such a thing exists, this is the place of men. Commerce, taxes, cartography, law (if only that delivered by the mob) and some sense of order exist in this realm. It is not always a benevolent order, but a surface dweller would recognize it. Laborers and masters will own property and defend what is theirs. Legionnaires and the Order of Janissary create barriers to prevent the foul things from far lower worlds from coming into this place.

The monsters here are typically Large and Enraged. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Ordinary to avoid yet seldom serious if sprung; morale will however be strained. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for level zero; worth perhaps in total a single purse of coins. That could be easily spent getting legionaries to allow the party to roam within or pass security gates allowing access to the levels below.

Deepest Man-Made Mines

Most of these places are tunnels of various sizes. Since ground water is always a problem without constant magical forces used to pump out the wells, flooding will occur. There will be places where the party must swim or dive to continue. Many times, the mine owner would have dug deeper, except the work uncovered something spooky or burst through to truly dangerous domains. The effort might also have been stopped by a deal or a few deaths.

This will seem the darkest inky black that any man has endured, though there are even worse places and absences of illumination further below. Instinctively, all go quiet into a silence that slowly rises to thunder as the breaths of the party syncopate.

Creatures or entities who linger here hold a curiosity for the world above and misunderstand malevolence as germane to both. They long to be tourist of misery. No rule of the civilized applies; do not disturb what you do not want to find.

The monsters here are typically Nasty. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Ordinary to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level one; worth perhaps a single longboat technique, letter (M) or below.

Ancient Halls

Under the sentries of the surface, which act as a ward to keep the denizens quelled, are the first true expanses of the underworld. These places are full cities sunk below the ground. The players may be following original maps, though quakes and other events will have made it difficult to find any remaining right angles. Everything will be winding, often harrowing. The place is prone to collapse, since the care needed to keep the structures sound is not usually committed. No one claims dominion here, though many linger (too long).

This is a realm of powerful transient figures. Each comes for his own purpose both profane and rational, seeking privacy, isolation from gossip, access to arcane power, anonymity from scrutiny, and to avoid the scolding expressions of surface priests and nobles. The law here is as power dictates. Yet don't expect a plethora of ebon towers and soulless wizards. Some locales are finely lit cities. Powerful denizens seek proximity to civilization, while avoiding the chaos of strata farther below the surface. Familiar objects are imported to make visitors comfortable during many a deal.

Powerful relics are stored here for immediate need. Temples to perverse, revitalized cults, resurrect bizarre gods from times untold. Weakness must never be shown, where all know dead men tell no tales. Banished agents travel here to sell their services. No longer fit for polite company. Great treasure is entrusted to servants, short-term, before final transaction moves the fortunes up or down or out.

The monsters here are typically Large and bolstered by goblin Curse-Writers as spellcasters. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Ordinary to avoid and mostly inflict damage on servitors. Every surviving delve or quest gains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level two; worth perhaps a single longboat technique, letter (G) or below. Herein are minor magical charms and talisman, which offer a Quest Pip to the party for a single adventure, before going inert for another generation.

Tombs of the First Kings

These were the cellars and sanctuaries, the first dungeons of humanity. When the cities above them were covered over as punishment or smashed by the mountain ranges formed by falling giants, the locations of the crypts remained relatively the same. These tombs contain the cherished possessions of people who lived in a magically rich time. Much remains, but perhaps not as it was once.

Even in later years, still greater men longed to be interned with their ancestors. Pilgrims still come to these places, though the danger makes that likely a final trek. Claim a palace of the gods, if only for an evening, by camping in a hall which once echoed with the merriment of magnificent rulers. The landlords now are not discerning. Popular lore suggests that even a pimp buried in the fields with the first monarchs can claim his place among them.

Men of ambition and cunning survive the tombs and claim patents and titles to ensure speedy passage among the wealthy and privileged. Still, some do face a stiffer fee from the protectors and traps safekeeping all value held in these vaults. The

Scribes of Unalu'uka hardly need embellish the dangers and secrets of the First Kings. A delver knows to leave the powerful institutions in place. Covetous lingers long after men enter the grave.

The monsters here are typically Nasty and Enraged. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Ordinary to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Plus, the players will be left Shaken into their next task resolution or combat. Every surviving delve or quest gains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level three; worth perhaps any single longboat technique, usually Treasure Laden (D). Combined treasure is weighty; those laboring start any combat with a Bane. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for a single adventure (or prize in the aftermath), before going inert for another generation.

Corridors of Fiends

Just below the man-made structures are all the venomous tunnels of underworld denizens. All manner of creation has formed by misuse of magic. This level is often shunned by true delver companies, as not worth the risk. Many an expedition has died here; their gear is perhaps even more valuable than anything crafted by the inhabitants. If the party can find clues or evidence of a prior group—one with success raiding a much lower level only to be slain here—perhaps there is merit in looking around.

The entrances into these strata are barricaded with ingenious and perpetual barriers, sealed solid and when damaged self-repair. The men who created these obstructions, perhaps even the same who made the abominations, do not wish anything to escape and advance upward to settle. Special routes have been fabricated to bypass the strata entirely, skipping this realm and connecting across time, as if the domain is just myth.

Many who return triumphantly, though, do describe creatures closer to man than demon. Small consolation to those who die. Images painted after from memory, or aspects remotely viewed, seem to show something which resembles gangs of men. Though one popular artist, claiming to have seen firsthand and survived an expedition, drew one fiend with flame for fingers. These denizens were created in cauldrons and inscrutable pits by dark artificers using their own vulcanized hearts and apostate thoughts as inspiration.

Most of these creatures outlive their masters through generations of rebirth and intermingled breeding. Some seek to return to quasi familiar sounds, smells and sights of true civilization. The memories of their creators became prayers. Cults

worship adoring pristine images of man and heavenly life in the sun. Do not appear less than godly. Perhaps something might bait memories or fool the denizens to passively obey, even offer escort, though these are hardly lost souls, children longing for a craven master.

The monsters here are typically Nasty and bolstered by goblin Curse-Writers as spellcasters. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Ordinary to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Plus, the result could cause increase to Warped Outcome tally. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level three; worth perhaps any single longboat technique, usually Treasure Laden (D). Herein are minor magical charms and talisman, which offer a significant Tactical Pip when fighting a certain kind of monster; the more specific the creature, the longer the relic remains powered before going inert for several generations. e.g. Against dwarves and goblins for a D8 adventures or against any Nasty or Horrible for a half D8. Yes, seems like a *+1 Winkie*, so maybe plan on having the creature appear more frequently and more ferociously to destroy the holder of its wicked bane.



Shadow Realms

A region of illusions and false hopes; the immaterial takes substance and lashes out at the living. The pattern of life here is no pattern; nothing here seems to be alive nor wishes to exist. Any joy is abhorred and punished.

Philosophers speculate there must be a river contained within the Shadow Realms that passes silently into the many final resting places of the dead. This is a back door of sorts to the strata defined as the Nether-World. (See below.) The boatman who steers the long gondola across the misty swamp will accept bribe, but only from spoils acquired elsewhere below ground. The treasure is not what the

demigod values, but the danger experienced to gain the prize. He seeks only true spoils not the wages of hard work nor privilege. They say his route is littered with gems and gold offered by men as they begged the boatmen to return from death. With nary a smile, the boatman pursues his duty.

Realize that should a man find the River Styx, as playwrights penned, there are many lands of the dead and many on-way entrances and one-use exits. Most are protected from trespass by things horrible. The boatmen in one classic production released a man in exchange for an ancient secret, something once commonly known in the First Kingdom. Yet in a final twist, the boatman returned to the living and his role was assumed by the man fulfilling the pilot's desire.

The monsters here are typically Horrible. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Ordinary to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Plus, the result could cause a minus one Quest Pip. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level four; worth perhaps a half D8 longboat techniques, starting with Treasure Laden (D). Instead, invest in trade goods or purchase some land. Combined treasure is weighty; those laboring start any combat with a Bane. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for a single adventure (or prize in the aftermath), before turning baneful and requiring a special quest to safely counter later misfortune.

Where Man Dare Not Dwell

This level is a chore to cross, a burden to move about and a constant fatigue to inhabit. The place stinks and breaths are made shallow. Every sense is insulted by being here. Even the provisions brought along will taste spoiled, for often they will quickly in this environment. Many an exotic substance is found here; many a powerful alchemist will need materials only harvested at this level.

This place is also known as Venenum Terram, the poison lands. The strata is entirely waterless and coated in oily film. There is dim light which permeates the realm, but none can determine how the light occurs. The place holds no more magic than surface peat. Soil and oil samples returned no longer illuminate, though one delver revealed that the material continues to glow when carried into lower strata; he later denied his claim before hanging himself.

There are bizarre and unnerving sounds which chirp, crack and ring at random intervals. One witness described this as a screech of death; another said it sounded like iron shattering on the quench. Regardless, all say it is offensive to the ears and restful sleep is impossible.

Warrior cults from distant continents use this realm as a testing ground for greatness. Upon the death of one chief, all claimants are dispatched here to survive six days. Survival taxes one's strength and cunning. Long dead bones of many weaker men litter not the ground but remain collected in baskets placed at the base of stone obelisks and ancient markers. It would be no test if all survive. Still, who does this? Any aspirant knows to leave this task to whatever monster feels compelled to make the offering. Calcium bones quickly turn caustic, stinging hot as pure lye. Ordinary things simply change.

The monsters here are typically Horrible and Enraged. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Difficult to avoid yet seldom serious if sprung; morale will however be strained. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level four; worth perhaps a half D8 longboat techniques, starting with Treasure Laden (D). Instead, invest in trade goods or purchase some land. The treasure is easily recognized, marked, branded, infamous, garnering questions about whether it is cursed or should be used in any way; the blood money wealth is typically shunned by all but the most corrupt. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for a single adventure (or prize in the aftermath), but the wielder rolls a full D8 when increasing Warped Outcome tally. The relic may not be discarded but might be returned or surrendered to a place of safe keeping to be rid of the mixed benefit and burden.

Kingdoms of Lore

These are the palaces of things that might have been human, but even in their own lifetimes became something far more. The domain is glorious to behold with colors most mortals never see. The paths glitter; sunrise and sunset even takes place despite the terrible depth. The lure to stay here and live in beauty and comfort is short lived. Most of the denizens have no need for human slaves but do enjoy the taste of long pork (human flesh).

If the masters here had ever known men, it was long ago, and those memories are forgotten. Humans will be looked upon as vermin, pests best destroyed. Men are not their offspring, ancestors, nor even distant cousins. Mankind is an offal left discarded yet returned to trouble and beg. The final death of entire surface cities or even nations would engender no pity from these great mobs. Their concerns are beyond life of the nameless. They only consider their own needs.

If any arrival were to amuse these greater minds, he need to be a master of lore and flattery. He entertainment must be novel, his tales original. Boring the would-be

gods causes them to lash-out in anger and amusement. No one will stay alive in their company for more than a day, an hour, a few minutes, the length of a glance. Yet to convince one of these specimens of perfection that not everything is useless would follow with gifts. To perform for an approving audience would bring many lifetimes of pedestrian riches. Just don't drink or eat the intoxicating provisions of the false gods.

The monsters here are typically Enchanted. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Difficult to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level four; worth perhaps a half D8 longboat techniques, starting with Treasure Laden (D). Instead, invest in trade goods or purchase some land. Sadly, the treasure inspires envy and party mistrust. By the end of the quest, there will be some form of brawl, mutiny or murder over the split. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for a single adventure (or prize in the aftermath), but then the wielder gains no Advantage dice; an atonement quest must occur to shut-off the sinister residual effects.

Spawning Ground of Beasts

Everything here seems to be in a frenzy; the result of the mating rituals are gruesome. Only the strong survive the incubation and birth. This is evolution on fast forward and overdrive.

Consider an arena of Jon Ken Pon, Paper-Rock-Scissor, or Shield vs Hammer vs Axe, mayhap even Carapace, Tusk and Claw. One beast kills many but is then killed and eaten by a new predator. Each in turn is both destroyer and chew-toy over time. Some say crazed gods build the perfect beast, a true competitor to man. Is it not enough to build a creature to vanquish? Bragging rights to the beast that consumes all it faces? There's a difference between an anomaly and a geometric growing number of perfect killers representing true power. The original goal has been forgotten, morphed or perverted. The vile now roam at will to kill, eat, destroy and replicate without a moderating divine hand.

The monsters here are typically Horrible and bolstered by reverent Cultists as spellcasters. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Difficult to avoid and mostly inflict damage on servitors. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level four; worth perhaps a half D8 longboat techniques, starting with Treasure Laden (D). Instead, invest in trade goods or purchase some land. The treasure is bulky, won't transport easily; party might separate to guard and transport the materials. Else risk hiding and

returning, but will any unattended treasure escape dwarvish mischief? Herein lie few magical items; anything to aid mankind, or particularly to slay monsters, is sent by emissary to levels further below.

Nether-Worlds

Portals both obvious and subtle will move the players to realms that many view as hell. Yet true hell is still deeper. These places are not normal. Everything from physics to biology to everyday common sense twists. This level is neither here nor there, but something all its own.

Crazed sages, the scholarly insane, say the whole is one long corridor. All there but dark memory, fear and regret, a terror all in the mind. Every memory, every dreamt fragment of each and every collective culture is fodder to be used to torment and test the traveler's mettle. The doors and gates that exit the strata cross first into each man's own mind, assaulting his failings. Before travel to Elysium or Hades, each entrant first determines his worth. Few honestly pass such tests, whereas most remain in an oblivion of guilt and regret and despair.

Else, wander aimlessly back and forth between the beginning and the end, facing perils in a lost motive, a lack of compass direction; each failure adding more evidence of iniquity. Should anyone find the courage and moral conviction to take a passage out, the action might likely result in a wrong course, a rebirth or recycle into another person's distress.

Yet, clever men have left clues first to themselves, later as courage and warning to followers. A snowy beast should signal a return to normal goals. A golden ring may allow a wish for a blank mind. A talking goat distracts with giggles. A wooden cradle allowed one to caress the grandson he had yet to have, becoming enough for him to find renewed purpose. This realm's dangers, the onset of insanity, is all in the mind. Choose what you remember carefully, before trudging down this far.

The monsters here are typically Enchanted and Enraged. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Ordinary to avoid; inflicting harm to morale and wounds to characters. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level four; worth perhaps a half D8 longboat techniques, starting with Treasure Laden (D). Instead, invest in trade goods or purchase some land. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for a single adventure (or prize in the aftermath). But in all action after

the first quest, the wielder starts any combat Shaken; a task must be later performed to safely power off the item.

Iron Mantel

Everything seems to be made of metal here. The objects come to life and live in a cruel order. The sound of the inhabitants moving or fighting will be deafening.

Why come here? Human flesh is grist in the millstone. The denizens knead bones to make bread with a strength beyond all imagination. Armies are mere mouse or insect. The inhabitants know this. They fear little. They tell stories before eating the audience. Still in dire surface circumstances, or when deceived into thinking Ragnarök, the end time approaches, illustrious knowledge is shared through boast. Just do not stay long enough for the truth to become known, that that war is a millennium away.

Avoid the grand halls and cling crawling in drains, places titans do not comfortably fit. Load up on steel – what might take a forest of wood in a furnace to forge collects as dusty powder on the floor. Find what you need, learn what you must, then be gone. Confirm, yet again, the trickster nature of men. Fair Ulysses blinded his benefactor, after getting one Cyclops, the son of Poseidon, passed out drunk.

The monsters here are typically Enchanted and bolstered by some denizens as curse wielding spellcasters. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Difficult to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Additionally, the players will suffer an increase in Warped Outcome tally and be left Shaken into their next task resolution or combat. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level five; worth perhaps a full D8 longboat techniques, a king's ransom. Instead, purchase a title of nobility or use the windfall to remove a Bad Trait from a friendly city-state. Combined treasure is weighty; those laboring start any combat with a Bane. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for a single adventure. After which, the relic is exhausted of power for several generations. The blood of the metal denizens might also be used by someone cunning and foolish to build an army of loyalist metallic soldiers.

Places Beyond Description

Now what would the title mean if I could actually describe what is here? This is a bad, very bad, level. Ancient men had a word for such places, Aotman Krelnar, or *“wealth or wisdom that cannot be shared.”*

To even sense a floor to stand on, means the loss of all balance and direction. The more understood, the less control a person has of his own movement and choices. Start with the hands; scabbard your swords and drop what you carry. To sight the horizon, permanently forget a name of a friend, your child. Only the most fiendish grope their way through; others see every direction fraught with destruction, madness. Only the crazed navigator steers a true course into the abyss and over the edge of the seas. Perhaps here too.

The monsters here are typically Foul. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Difficult to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Additionally, the result could cause increase to Warped Outcome tally as well as a negative Quest Pip.

And, while the treasures here seem useless as collateral in the accounts of man, other bizarre intelligence, such as the Styx boatmen or scribes of the First Kingdoms, will trade gold dust or favors for certain weird baubles. A delver company, too, will recognize the true value of trinkets collected here, ones thought pocketed in madness. A fair purchase obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level five; worth perhaps a full D8 longboat techniques, a king's ransom. Instead, purchase a title of nobility or use the windfall to remove a Bad Trait from a friendly city-state. However, most delvers will give merely one chest of treasure laden silver. The elements collected are otherwise easily recognized by the wizen, marked, branded, infamous, garnering questions about whether the items are cursed or should be used in any way. Delver money gained by a swap of such would be viewed as similar blood money; wealth typically shunned by all but the most corrupt.

Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for a single adventure (or prize in the aftermath). But in all action after the first quest, the wielder starts any combat Shaken; a task must be later performed to rejuvenate the relic for yet another adventure of stable use. Regardless, the user would rather die than part with his gizmo.

Ocean Floor

The depth of the location is fathoms, but it is not usually the actual Ocean Floor with the sea above. How could the players survive that? Yet the air pressure alone of being so deep is a struggle. Pockets of oxygen deficient areas abound. This is a place where life settles into decay. The servitors as mariners will panic if they ever realize just how deep the expedition has ranged; they know water and what it's like to almost drown.

No living man lives here for long. His means of breathing will wane. Even with great power, the resources here are difficult to freely reap. Even uninhabited places seem well protected by the environment and by patches where magic disappoints the user.

In comparison, some say there are great bejeweled cities hidden in the depths of the murky ocean. Wherein glorious men, tantalizing women, don fashions in braided gold, keep warm with cloaks of threaded platinum, scabbard weapons of quicksilver death. They are said to be a culture older than the oldest clans of the rivers. The underwater folk hold knowledge from times which predate many gods. They are said to live wisely and with infinite justice. Fables? The cunning man knows that if ever a city-state such as that did exist, the dwellers of those tranquil places will have transcended, leaving treasure intact and armories for the picking.

The monsters here are typically Foul and Enraged. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Difficult to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Additionally, the players will be left Shaken into their next task resolution with a minus one Quest Pip. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level five; worth perhaps a full D8 longboat techniques, a king's ransom. Instead, purchase a title of nobility or use the windfall to remove a Bad Trait from a friendly city-state. Sadly, the treasure inspires envy and party mistrust. By the end of the quest, there will be some form of brawl, mutiny or murder over the split. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for several adventures. However, the wielder rolls a full D8 when increasing Warped Outcome tally. The relic may not be discarded but might be returned to the custody of true ocean dwellers, surrendered for safe keeping and to be rid of the mixed benefit and burden.

Lightless Realms

Torches will not work here. Magical light must be produced. There's fuel and oxygen, but ordinary flame will not burn. Something has rendered the location endothermic, draining of heat. Legend says an ice dragon or stuck-open demonic gate is to blame. Another place the servitors should not be told the truth about. Best to let them think the weather outside is winter, and the chill is from being so close to the surface. Reality is grim.

There are said to be electrum lanterns that burn precious metals if initially ignited by the blood of demons; these will cast a light in this realm if anyone dare afford the cost of burning up the contents of more than just the collective party purses. Think magnesium or thermite for the brilliance. Why would you use such to

wander here? Anyone fashioning and affording the fuel for such lanterns would not need to come to Drokama (just one name of this peculiar strata).

The Fae call the location Amu'ula, as a warning. The faery folk die without the sun. Though delvers do debate that translation and believe there is power in the very word if spoken when first entering the level.

Many a student of the occult has challenged his professor, arguing Amu'ula would not deserve more than passing reference in the Cantiquim. Nothing can grow here, survive here, be found here? Move on from such; draw the sigils to denote bypass. Yet, this realm is mentioned in multiple chapters of that great underworld volume.

First, it is a place to hide expended or baneful wonders. Be careful what you leave should you be followed. Still, be fairly confident that getting here is the challenge. After which, sledge a proper dent and cover over something terrible; may it never to be found again.

More so, one could find the secrets of the immortals, the past magical refuse of generations. Where is the seed of the Vannerman planted? Where does the spark of the all consuming fire still glow? That one might be just as hard to see as a mere candle. How about the location of the god slayer? Actually, again my bad, that scimitar is said to be worn by the Commander of the Janissary in Constantinople; his order merely has forgotten the exact word of command to power the relic. Back on point, would not Drokama be a good place to store such an item or find such secrets? And, if not there, where then?

The monsters here are typically Invincible. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Tasking to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level five; worth perhaps a full D8 longboat techniques, a king's ransom. Instead, purchase a title of nobility or use the windfall to remove a Bad Trait from a friendly city-state. The treasure is bulky, won't transport easily; party might separate to guard and transport the materials. Else risk hiding and finding the newly buried yet again? Do dwarves see clearly here? They might lead a lost party, tugging them along on ropes, but to where?

Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for several adventures. But the wielder gains no Advantage dice; an atonement quest must occur to shut-off the sinister residual effects.

Glacial Realms

The level above keeps this one in perpetual freeze. At least fire is back. Furs might not cut it; the party might need to be magically suited and warmed. Almost anything will freeze solid to the floor (ground). Everything seems like the kid with his tongue stuck to the flag pole. No one dare put a spoon in his mouth. No one would ever come here, except they know how close they are to the real prize. If only the expedition can break through to the other place one level down. Yet nowhere is this the equivalent of crossing a single flight of stairs. Many a leader will go insane, drive his party and kill everyone in doing so, savagely, to cross this domain.

There are bands of savage troglodytes here, something humanoid, but trapped. They would incinerate in other places. The trogs roam the wastes with barely more than clubs of shaped bones. That and an innate magic grounded in endothermic reaction. The languages and customs of them are unrecognizable; the logic is not even primal, since they do not seem to eat, drink or breath. They just frenzy, crazed and fearless, upon anything not frozen solid and stationary.

There is said to be a hermitage somewhere in this realm; the Order of Kzul keeps the secret to forging weapons for defeating even a Zaire. While no sane man would fight these protectors, it was prophesized that in an age overdue the Zaire will change to Czars and force all to bend in obedience, a tale for another time perhaps. If some structure does exist in this realm, perhaps other monasteries do as well?

The monsters here are typically Foul and bolstered by dangerous Misanthropes as spellcasters. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Tasking to avoid and mostly inflict damage on servitors. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level five; worth perhaps a full D8 longboat techniques, a king's ransom. Instead, purchase a title of nobility or use the windfall to remove a Bad Trait from a friendly city-state. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for several adventures. But the wielder's other magical possessions, his Blade and Mount, offer no benefit; a quest for the ultrapowerful must occur to rid the owner of his desires and return his faith to his own sword and charger.

Womb of Gems

Here it is; like grapes on the vine, the precious stones of the world are grown here, harvested by imps and selectively planted for mankind to find and kill each other over. The place is the goal of every delver company, to reach here, load up and return to the surface. So, open a portal, a gate Cosmic and do so? Are you crazy? You think

you are the first to suggest that, to try that, to fail at that, to fail miserably at that. This is a level where no magic seems to work, except by bizarre ever-changing formulae. It is the starting level of places which are no longer really part of this world, maybe not part of this galaxy.

Once the party reaches here, the tendency is to stay. Even though that seems like madness, and it is, many a delver has slipped from the safety of many and been drawn obsessive and insane by the color, clarity, cut and weight of the gems he finds. Most player characters find it Tasking to leave behind what they cannot carry, each new gaze a greater joy. Tarry for a spell, swallow some crystals for your children. Run to the light of a hue no one else has ever seen.

Mortal men are not the only ones who find this place compelling. Creatures from other realms come here quietly to trade for gems. Others come here for their own logic, often not based in any way on greed. Yet dragons brought here will never leave and wallow on piles so deep, they become encrusted and invulnerable. What does anyone seek? Portable wealth or an irresistible poison? The same envy that gems foster in men does occur in nonhumans. Joining with more powerful demi-human hosts, the exotic dominions here are the most protective and covetous of any in the Unending Grey.

The monsters here are typically all Invincible and all Enraged. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Difficult to avoid; inflicting harm to morale and wounds to characters. Note, the treasure just stuffed to the brim in each servitor's pockets would be immense. Yet how little will actually reach the surface? As you will see – every surviving delve or quest obtains just the raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level five; it will exchange for a full D8 longboat techniques, a king's ransom. Inflation, rivalry, godly prank will consume the rest.

The womb of gems also is the birthplace of the best fakes. Yet, what proves real will purchase a high title of nobility or perhaps use the windfall to remove two Bad Traits from a friendly city-state. Sadly, the treasure inspires envy and party mistrust. By the end of the quest, there will be some form of brawl, mutiny or murder over the split. A crushed skull while carrying a helmet full of rubies, each dead warrior could have had a kingdom of his own; each starving man might trade that fortune for a single crust of bread on his escape ascent, having thrown away such trivial things. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for several adventures. But the wielder forever starts any combat as Shaken; a quest is needed to render the relic inert for another generation.

Hellish Domains

This level is connected to places where demons thrive. What is a demon, some might ask? Imagine your worst fears and that's just a start. Demons start battle as a warrior's worst fear then evolve. The demons here do not like mankind. They do not like coexisting. Yet demons are flawed with vices and desires; vulnerable to exploit and magic. Knowing any specific creature's name and weakness is the start to horrific power but usually also a countdown to hideous death. Care to press your luck?



numen.

Deals with demons are particularly challenging because every promise, every leer, even seductive smells generated by a demon, may beguile the strongest warrior or knowledgeable sage. The human thinks he has traded a small pinch of his life for a fair trinket of power in exchange; words are spoken, contracts inked using indelible fluid. But, such a deal includes the movement, thoughts, exchange of glance and the very odors emitted by each party. Fear is also guaranteed forever by the exchange, delicious to the demon, uncertain is the mortal's debt. The meanings of words change with time. The demon has the luxury of not just elder phrasing but the definition which mankind thousands of millennia to follow will accept as true. You dig? Never is tit for tat. Not even the Beta Zaire is capable of cementing a deal without fine print. Yet, powerful Zaires, Emperors, and even the Dark Lord himself and his unspeakable toad, the Grey One, have thought themselves too clever to fool. Each has dealt and regretted a deal with some fiendish

A parlay site, a clerk's office because it seems familiar, attested to existing by every delver and called the Jade Enclave, sits at one of the portals between men and demons. Wiser forces restrict communication in the place, permitting only certain

sounds to cross in arbitration. One delver, Nerva, said his conversation was limited to ten words of no more than total time of three seconds. The equally curt reply of the netherlings killed his entire company and him of natural causes a year later. Yet his wish for a dynasty to rule the surface world amicably as the Pax Romana lasted nearly a century through Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, Verus and Marcus Aurelius...before Commodus broke the puzzling deal, killed him and plunged the empire into a single year of five warring emperors.

The Jade Enclave is watched over by angelic sentinels; a bad deal is allowed and thought better to be known. Men are permitted free will here. Still, every transaction with the demons of this level beginning in the Jade Enclave is chronicled, just in case it might be unmade or negotiated further after the principal parties depart. Thus, even your best deal has others writing new legislation and compacts attached to your own schemes.

The monsters here are typically Invincible and cast spells themselves as dangerous Misanthropes. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Tasking to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Regardless, the players will suffer increases to Warped Outcome tally, be left Shaken as a result and suffer a minus one Quest Pip. The demons might be sensible, more so than the players. They will offer bribes, trivial things to them. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level five; worth perhaps a full D8 longboat techniques, a king's ransom. Instead, purchase a title of nobility or use the windfall to remove a Bad Trait from a friendly city-state. The treasure is easily recognized, marked, branded, infamous, garnering questions about whether it is cursed or should be used in any way; the blood money wealth is typically shunned by all but the most corrupt. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance for a single adventure (or prize in the aftermath), but then the wielder gains no Advantage dice; an atonement quest must occur to reboot the power for yet another adventure. A dangerous cycle of gift and injury follows.

Crust of the Earth

The rock here is the hardest; no tool crafted by mortal men will crack the walls. There is not going to be a hall and stairs, at least a set the players would use. Only the truly foolish would think they are going to find a familiar object or seemingly man made course. Any construction would be sized for titans. A single step could be a half mile high, indistinguishable from a gorge. There may be no continuing if the party did not come specifically to find this domain.

By some strange twist of fate, this has become a place to hold prisoners who cannot be killed by acts of man and even gods. The many small cracks in the crust have been converted to cells for immortals. Because of the scale, none need be placed within shout of another captive. All live in solitude.

Even if a creature could somehow escape this level, the areas above and below are inhospitable. The escapee will be caught and put back in the cage. But while free to roam, all will certainly take amusement by assaulting the party of visitors. Unless, the player group might provide a means of true escape. Each inmate will seem sympathetic, yet none of the prisoners are honest. Or are some falsely here, suffering ills in response to transgressions ages in the past, for violating norms no longer thought to be sinful. Not much fun in that – but that is what each might claim. That and all the captives are able to reward any liberator.

The imprisoned might be small and of little consequence, barely nasty in ferocity. Not all trapped here are creatures of great power. There are better vaults for such important foes. This is for fools who dare life altering incantations or speak unacceptable thoughts. Many siblings of the many emperors are put here for safekeeping, locked where the effort to free someone exceeds any value of a figurehead's claimant status.

Most prisoners are also in agony; can't be helped. The party too will begin to itch, suffer and agonize, if they remain beyond the length of a day: pain so severe that the warrior will think himself lucky to be able to die.

The monsters here are typically Heinous. None know the place as a true home. They are guardians to keep the cells secure. Or, wardens no longer needed and wandering blind in horrific pain without any goal or purpose. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Nearly Impossible to avoid but do cause vicious injury.

Occupied and empty cells are festooned for the occupant's creature comforts. Many a worldly gift is left out of guilt, particularly when the prisoner is locked away as a child. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level five; worth perhaps a full D8 longboat techniques, a king's ransom. Instead, purchase a title of nobility or use the windfall to remove a Bad Trait from a friendly city-state. The treasure is bulky, won't transport easily; party might separate to guard and transport the materials. Else risk hiding and returning, but will any unattended treasure escape dwarvish mischief? Yes, the imps come here, by sorcery or to mock. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious

sway or dominance for several adventures. After which, the relic is exhausted of power for several generations.

Arcane Barrier

Getting here seems epic; crossing the magical defenses of this level are impossible. Truly, the protections placed herein were set by the gods to separate locations which should never meet. Impossible? Okay, nearly, or rather there must be a relic or divine intervention involved. The better event is to hopscotch over this level, if that is even possible. Face facts, the party did not dig its way here. The truest manner of coming here is typically as a trap from another place and time. Do something stupid, or insult the wrong denizen, and the party might find itself here at the edge, trying to work its way back a level at a time to freedom. As for going through, down? Your guess is as good as mine. Could be as easy as praying – that’s your funeral may be the reply from the unknown and then a voice could make it so.

It is said that crossing the multi-color swirls that border all edges of the barrier would change a man. Some might see it as glorious but likely the passage would first remove their humanity. The lifeforce of the explorer ebbs; his remaining vessel an energy slowly evaporating from a husk of the thing that was once called man. Inside he thinks, *“My enemies are now dust.”* Many then disappear following that thought.

It is best to wait close but nowhere; others shall rescue you. Build a camp, a fort, a town, perhaps a city and wait for others to rescue you. Why is there so much familiar, so ample the supplies to craft and hobby and occupy the hands. However, there are no tools to scratch your way through this rift. There are, however, many towns on the brink, started and ended by this place. Wait here in a fine homestead at the boundary. Do not travel further; sing out of your labors and hone your craft, until other voices call for your skills. Die in madness and isolation. Small urges become manic cravings for a thing, like cheese, which seems unavailable for the smallest of things; the lack of rennet despite a waterfall of cream? Or step out bravely into the barrier and never have a name again (or compunction to be bold).

The monsters here are typically Heinous and Enraged. They exist inside and at the fringes. Some seek to call a warrior into an embrace. Other reach from within and try to drag the unfortunate to them. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Nearly Impossible to avoid and mostly inflict damage on servitors. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level six; worth perhaps a full D8 longboat techniques or start a mercantile cartel which might become a new political faction. Instead, use the windfall to create opportunity and a half D8 Good Traits in as many friendly city-states. A single place

may gain no more than one here. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance, including creating prizes in the aftermath. But the wielder never gains Advantage actions outside of any climax challenges; a quest is needed to render the relic inert for another generation.

Unknown Realms

If you were keeping count, this level is number googplex or Pi or the square root of negative one. Coming here is another trap or happens via a specific set of ill circumstances. Did no one live to tell the tale? More likely the survivors are compelled to keep quiet or prevented from recalling their achievement.

Or replaced by simulacrum.

Who would believe them anyway? If you tell some lord that you've seen the Spawning Grounds, he'll listen. Say you've touched the Womb of Gems, he'll ask for proof. But say to him, I've seen the Unknown Realms, he'll chuckle. What is that supposed to be? This place can mirror a previous level, but the monsters and reward are far different.

Another description for this place is the *Impossible Infinity*. Each time you come to this place it is familiar but different. If you leave a marker, when you return it will not be there...because you are not in the same place. Each entry to the Unknown is unique and the experience a multiplier. You will recall far too much in exacting detail, a flood of memory, too much to have happened in the time frame in which you supposedly stayed. Gaps too will blank sections of your experience, until after a year, nothing of the events will remain. You are neither in a time nor place. The simple man will have no issue with this, as he simply sharpens his weapon and continues his dire existence. Philosophers stumble over each paradox, especially when you battle and kill yourself as a younger man. Or strike and watch your own scars disappear.

The monsters here are typically Great. Anytime you face a dragon below the surface you may have entered an Unknown Realm. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Tasking to avoid; inflicting harm to morale and wounds to characters. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level seven; worth perhaps every missing longboat technique or fund a war that could destroy an political faction. Instead, use the windfall to create opportunity and a full D8 Good Traits in as many friendly city-states. A single place may gain no more than one here. The treasure is bulky, won't transport easily; party might separate to guard and transport the materials. Else risk

hiding and returning, but will any unattended treasure escape dwarvish mischief? Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance, including creating prizes in the aftermath. But the wielder forever starts any combat as Shaken; a quest is needed to render the relic inert for another generation.

Inhuman Cross-Over Realms

Just because a place is not human, doesn't make it superhuman, except here. These are not just lairs for demi-humans and exotic beasts. These are places that exist outside of space and time. If you like cross-over games, have at it. These are aliens wielding lots of tech. These are mutants with lots of swagger. These are bad places to offend anyone and could also be places too confounding to understand. The party may think it found heaven, something new to worship. The denizens here are not interested. They have their own agendas and wonder what fluke or mishap has brought them these refugees from Ren-Faire.

This is not only an intersection to other strange and unknown worlds; this is a gate to alternate dimensions of your own world. Travel here to live in the world where your brother survived that Jenolan attack. Or, live in a world where your wife did not die in child birth. Or forever wonder if the surface world is not just another phantom place and you remain here in an Inhuman Realm. Mortal experience is moot. Truly this is game-land with reboot and save functions randomly triggering.

Yet, take care, for you do not control the menu or spawn point. Just as likely you will open a gate (another's abandoned saved game) to madness, or a hostile enemy, an innocent destroyer of humors or vapors, or a rift to draw your universe within. In fact, it is more likely you will open to your immediate doom than a thing you can even comprehend. Arcade reality and strategy sims be damned; maybe your character needs to fight a D20 battle. No way!

This is not a dice game of chance where the odds are slight against you. This is one where to pick up the dice is an almost assured ending. Scholars of long and difficult research may be able to discover a chance of opening a right path but even then, they will likely not find exactly what each party member desires.

Spin the giant wheel forcefully with great care.

If you must debate, ponder that all your days lead to one possibility of real chance, not fate but change, but only one. Would that instance be noticed in the long scripted movie role you performed as unnamed extra? Would having choice even be to your liking. One act of choice could sunder all. All your days to your coming of

age would be to the destruction on your world. All the days until you were old finally turn to fire, a war against all. Think of the hatred you might cause if the others of your party must go out of character and use an eraser. Tread very lightly. Only to a day as you lay in your bed giving birth to the Dark Lord, hearing his wail and promise to avenge you, as you perish. Do not spin the wheel without care.

The monsters here are typically Heinous and bolstered by powerful Sorcerers as spellcasters. Why? Are they puppies and kittens chewing on 25mm figures? The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Nearly Impossible to avoid but do cause vicious injury. Regardless, the players will suffer increases to Warped Outcome tally, be left Shaken as a result and suffer a minus one Quest Pip. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level seven; worth perhaps every missing longboat technique or fund a war that could destroy an political faction. Instead, use the windfall to create opportunity and a full D8 Good Traits in as many friendly city-states. A single place may gain no more than one here. The treasure is easily recognized, marked, branded, infamous, garnering questions about whether it is cursed or should be used in any way; the blood money wealth is typically shunned by all but the most corrupt. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance, including creating prizes in the aftermath; however, the wielder rolls a full D8 when increasing Warped Outcome tally. The relic may not be discarded but might be returned to a place of safe keeping to be rid of the mixed benefit and burden. He may not surrender the item, knowing someone else would gain and abuse its power.

Core of the World

The domain of Vulcan, the furnace that powers all, is one possibility. The core might also be a world inside a world. By going deep enough, the players may exit out back to where they came from. Cool. Or they may wish for such a gift. The inhabitants will often think the party are a procession of new gods. The party had better not prove otherwise. Having servitors here is a penalty; one of those guys is bound to make a faux pas and summon the world's largest marshmallow man to appear.

Few places in the world are this close to the heartbeat of the planet. Should the furnace be damaged, or the hammers silenced or slowed, the planet will slowly chill and the places of men and beasts will turn to tundra. No other magic in the known world can replace the gift of the Furnaces of Vulcan.

Use caution when sharing the secret of any path to the World Fire. Could be best to immediately kill yourself upon the realization of what you've discovered. There's too much chance you could be compelled to lead the destroyers back to this

level. The choice is yours, but even in death your secret might escape if you return to the surface. True secrecy is to decide to pick up a hammer and pledge to stay. That's as good as shredding the character sheet. All your servitors will seem to understand, and none will follow you further. Ding, ding, they each select a hammer and pound an anvil (for eternity).

The monsters here are typically Great and Enraged. They will not want you to leave. The obstacles and traps are circumvented at Nearly Impossible to avoid; inflicting harm to morale and wounds to characters. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for up to level seven; worth perhaps every missing longboat technique or fund a war that could destroy an political faction. Instead, use the windfall to create opportunity and a full D8 Good Traits in as many friendly city-states. A single place may gain no more than one here. Sadly, the treasure inspires envy and party mistrust. By the end of the quest, there will be some form of brawl, mutiny or murder over the split or among those who call out to the destroyers to reveal what they know. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance, including creating prize opportunity in the aftermath. Yet there will come a time, when the item turns baneful and causes the wielder's death. Keep it too long in the group, and the whole party is doomed.

Alternate Dimension

If you go down deep enough, you will run out of planet. So, to get around that, you cross from our place to some other place. It could be paradise. Not a bad time to retire a character, say it made it back to Eden. The level could be truly funky, psychedelic. Or it could be the last place anyone wants to find and stay.

No one would return from this place as they began. To walk into this dimension is to journey outside the physics of men. If you are lucky, you would be greeted by the Keepers of the Singularity. They would answer your questions and urge you to turn back before truly entering. Should you pass into this realm, you would not be the same elemental material as before. You can never be trusted to be only who you say you once were. Each character's Warped Outcome tally should jump to somewhere around Two-Forty with few exceptions. Ref decides.

The monsters here are typically Great and bolstered by powerful Sorcerers as spellcasters. Any obstacle or trap are could be disastrous if haphazardly crossed and activated. Every surviving delve or quest obtains raw riches or refined treasure of a value worthy of Ignoble for any level; worth perhaps every missing longboat technique or fund a war that could destroy an political faction. Instead, use the windfall to create opportunity and a full D8 Good Traits in as many friendly city-

states. A single place may gain no more than one here. Herein are magical items bestowing prodigious sway or dominance, including creating extra prizes in the aftermath. Supremely powerful, the relic will be sought by dangerous people who crave such power.

Additional Domains

These places in the Unending Grey have been testified to, but unverified. They may be a hybrid of other strata or only connect at certain places. They may be locations inside some other level, yet wholly apart in substance. Since few delver companies share their Star-Books, the history of their maps and deals, there is no way to know if any of these exist, except when you accidentally find the party in such a place.

The Transverse

This is less of a realm and more of an open area, which allows creatures who know the Transverse to move about the entire world. The enlightened would go into one part of the Transverse and come out across the ocean or among the ice flows. This realm would connect to many of the upper areas. Because there would be travelers, migrants, and caravans moving through this realm, there would be a greater chance of meeting other non-residents and more surface folks. They would not necessarily be interested in meeting you or be even friendly.



This may include passages that traverse under seas and cities. The Traverse is dotted with non-human trading posts. But the lesser beings there are not interested in anything mankind would bring to exchange, even if it was highly valued or coveted. Many skilled explorers know of the Transverse, but also most know it is not a safe place for common people to cross. It is a path of last resort, when speed is of the essence. Some might even say, that you can leave home on a Wednesday and arrive on a Saturday, the previous one.

The Sanctuary

This is a realm where powerful creatures and men go to hide. It is said to be open and vast, dotted by few structures. In the dwellings are solitary and mostly terrible beings who wish not to be disturbed. There may be demonic gates from other places into the Sanctuary to allow wizards and imperial heralds to engage in discourse with the mightily exiled and then return to the world of men. Why this is not accomplished remotely, none can say. The wards keeping reality at a distance must also work to frustrate magic and cosmic connections. Anyone here, aside from the few lost beasts which roam the vales, should be left alone. A healthy fear of the powerful is best to engender.

The Library (Karnaotrun)

Secrets of the world throughout time need a place to inhabit. Even the memories of great men have been removed and sent to the Library. Think not of this as a building for square books. Think instead of a place to store the bones, broken ships, tapestries, magical reflections, songs and poems of endless generations. It is a place of experiences that were, are and will be. While coming here could allow entrance to a great concentrated knowledge, there would also by armies of the dead and magical apparitions playing out each drama, over and over, as the world aged towards its doom. To be a witness to all mankind's adventures is a gloriously selfish desire.

The place may be just a extrapolation of another historic site. Karnaotrun, before it magically vanished, was a series of emerald walled vision-rooms that entertained worthy and supplicant scholars. People were reputed to be able to place themselves into actual events or practice what has yet to occur. The complex had studies that no one, not even the head steward, had entered to experience in recent memory. Many areas were declared off limits, even before the whole disappeared.

Who keeps this knowledge, a place in the Unending Grey, sustaining the archive? Some say it is the Order of Athena, the Children of Metis, the Followers of the Titan Coeus, Servants of Thoth, perhaps all have in their turn. Though dubious, some scholars say magical leakage created a place for secrets to remain secret. Most scholars think the Library is just another myth. In Constantinople, an impoverished and nearly defunct Order of the Cord claims to maintain the strata containing the Library. When times are dire the Order shall share this location and the knowledge contained within. Many a beggar also claims such insight and will reveal all truths for a copper penny.

If such a place exists, the keepers do not suffer vandals or thugs lightly. Best, perhaps, not to storm in and fight doppelgangers or wizardly reflections of yourself. Pilgrims might be welcome, but their tale needs to be foretold in the first saga of man.

The Null & Void

A place where magic and energy no longer work as they once did. To spend an extended period in the Null & Void—perhaps even minutes—the person would be unable to return to the normal world; their essence would simply drift away having been replaced by negative energy.

No demon, wizard, or Zaire, no immortal entity or godling would venture into such a place. Most will not even contemplate such a place and risk being trapped within. If any hero seeks to find this place, he would first have to breach the membrane to enter the Null Void – no simple task. Only the most foolish would continue after blade, fire, and even life were extinguished upon entering the Null & Void. Mere pockets of such a place have destroyed two delver companies.

The Chamber of Elios

Hidden in the Unending Grey is a place which contains an entity so powerful that to release it would bring eventual destruction on the entire universe. It is not known if this is simply a room, a cavern, a great hollow in the world, because those that have found it cannot speak anymore. It is not clear if the experienced retain the secret and are too scared to speak. Or if, they are rendered dumb and mute by the entity or whatever is guarding the same.

This place is alternately known as the World Flaw, in a code exchanged by a cult devoted to releasing the force within. Many of the members have gone to the level and seen the horror; yes, they no longer speak as proof of their devotion. Though it surely would bring worse doom than even the return of the Dark Lord, minions bring offerings to the Chamber of Elios and worship the power of the same. Their pledge is to find a way to free their god.

Ancient delvers studied Elios to determine if its cell also held treasure or amusements of value. Designated dead-men explored within and returned with maps and a complete listing of treasures. In the end, they declared the place the Silver Cathedral, which means a place of doom and of minuscule value, silver being the discard left by satrap leaders of companies for the unnamed mutts they rule. No delver will return to the location. Symbols mark the region and connecting passages

as sacrosanct, inviolable. There is plenty of treasure in the underworlds, so best to leave this one untapped. The offerings of the most recent cultists were not part of that assessment.

The Crucible (Place of Making)

Deep in the whispered places of the Unending Grey is said to be a furnace of making not associated with the Core realm of Vulcan. The Crucible can be used to make, and presumably unmake, great magical relics. Correctly you surmise, a place such as this would not be just an anvil and a hot fire. There must also be veins of umber coal, gold, silver, an ocean of clean water, and legions of mindless slaves led by brilliant inhuman craftsmen to fashion any desired thing. The stones of the floor would have to be anchored through to the bedrock of the World Core.

The magic within must also be of a source that once made the world and all within. All legend, and yet, the place could be littered with great tools, precious materials for the asking. No doubt a prank set by dwarves? Or goblins if the real purpose is to unmake anyone who enters, him and all he brings along. That sounds more likely of the underworlds.

The River Styx

Where do dead characters go? Basura? There are two opposing myths, one of Valhalla and another of a cave of Hades, a place where the dead huddle, rich and poor, wise and foolish, heroic and cowards. If the player character is cursed more than slain, he might go to the wrong place. I'll not rehash material that an internet search can describe far better.

Explore the ancient myths and religions; fuse them into the campaign. Something familiar yet changed is the best way to make your climax challenges remarkable. That and collect the dead characters. Use them as NPCs (names changed to protect the innocent or not). Return them even to played roles. The choice is entirely up to each Ref. The choice is yours.

Closure

Where to next? Yes, these rule booklets can seem like a never ending set of volumes. In order to fully bound the characters from creation to death and all that transpires in between, you're going to need a bunch of tables. Even with the voluminous works, some things will get stale after a few hundred plays.

Better to have more than less? That depends we can all agree. I've been using the system for so long; that extra material is welcome. Truthfully, much of this is written for me. So, my advice if you stumbled on *Outlands* and are trying to run a game is to start small. Slowly add material. It can even be fun to just wing-it, add a Q&D table someplace even when unsure of how it will turn out. It may work there or not. In most cases it will be novel and help the story. Collectively you and the players will sort things out. Crazy time is also nice in whimsical fantasy. Use the source material as needed. When things go well, scan more as you find time and inclination. As you find yourself pressed for adventure challenges, open the tome and start dictating to your players.

Is there any wrong way to use this? No. Well, maybe, if you're confused or not having fun. If this all seems tedious, or if you try to backtrack and cover material after it might have helped and the action was resolved some other way. Sure, anything can be a chore. Yet if you find something works, go for it. If you find something lags or seems brutal, step back and add a Zaire to rectify the situation. Zaire meaning *deus ex machina*, a mulligan, divine intervention, a do over. Yet some time later when players get higher level, you'll need the very dangerous to offer a challenge.

If you are aware of *Barony*, I enjoyed playing the game. I also found that after a year of adventures, the players were too powerful. I had to invent penalties. That's no way to really play. With the event driven system designed first for *Cutlass* and refined here, your players will gain greater survival but never be immune to the Tower, Irregular Method or other random combinations of cards. You can even add very dangerous Q&D, which your players will complain about. They will cry out—unfair—yet they will prevail. When they do, they will talk about it later. They might never look forward to the same or grouse worse later, but they will see triumph in themselves, the character play and in being there when that victory was achieved.

But who am I kidding? I'm really writing these tables for myself. I don't have the time to make detailed climax challenges. I create most of my adventure endings with an Excel macro button click performing all the card flips described herein. Voilà I'm ready. One day the robot Refs will do that for all of us. Will that be better?