

# Generating Travel Events for Outlands



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*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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## Encounters

Travel is the step in the scenario sequence where encounters occur. An encounter is a meeting, mishap or event that affects one or all of the players. There are several types of encounters. Some encounters are related to the mission, called Mission Consequence Encounters. Others appear regardless of mission; those are termed Mission Inconsequence Encounters. The mission had no bearing on the event, but the event is seldom of irrelevance. Some are clashes with others pursuing different motives; some depend upon the location (setting) of the players. Encounters will additionally be generated that affect just one character in a personal event, or encounters can change the scope of the mission by changing the larger power struggles in the campaign.

Encounters generate the action leading up to the climax of the adventure. Moving from *Point A* to *Point B* could be routine (dull), if agents of the opposition were not attempting to thwart the way. Encounters generate aspects of the mission that develop after the players sign terms and agree on a deal. The whole world is probably in flux, but the focus of the game stays cleanly on the players and their adventures.

The campaign is a dynamic place. Encounters do not generate all those interactions; they describe the significant events that influence the player characters. Philosophically, there are no such things as random encounters. Encounters only appear random, because all the motives and personalities involved are unknown. Even weather and natural events seem to a degree directed from a supreme fate, the Tarot or the Referee. To come to the point, the Referee interprets each encounter and may modify, substitute or delete any event.

## How to Proceed?

The mechanics are complicated at first glance. No single card tends to mean anything; all apply in context to what's happening. What's happening, combat or negotiation, steers the next situation. Events occur as a combination of cards.



Try not to just cherry-pick events but do what you must. What you don't ever need to do is memorize the actual descriptions. Hundreds and hundreds of pages – no, bad Ref. Sure, you might think you know what something means. That's fine. You might also just imagine something and apply the result. That's fine too.

Yet when time allows, **read out loud the section, as it is generated.** Read it like a story to your players. You might be surprised to find the encounter apropos to the situation. The game and mechanics are filled with serendipity (or kismet).

How? Maybe I got lucky or maybe (long ago) I ran some statistical analysis on the system and tweaked all until I was satisfied? The gamer gods were kind here; all seems gloriously fresh after years of play, decades even. The bloody system just works.

## **Measuring Travel Time & Game Clock**

By having just a rare one-percent chance of meeting a thief each encounter day, one could expect three robberies a year! That's ludicrous; where is the law? **Time is not the probability basis for encounters.** Encounters are events that occur because the players are intent on a motive. They are not just roll a set number of times each day.

A person could ignore many days of rain; but, by sailing through a storm after receiving hull damage, the event becomes significantly more noticeable. Someone might live forty quiet years in a port; yet upon accepting the task of spying on various vessels that enter his harbor, he might encounter more exploits in a week than he had in his entire life.

Encounters occur because the players are characters. The plot of the scenario unfolds as the players travel. Seldom indifferent to others on the journey, **player characters incite encounters even without consciously trying.** They notice people, live in audacity, and take pride in themselves (as well as clan and noble patron).

## **Action Based Encounters**

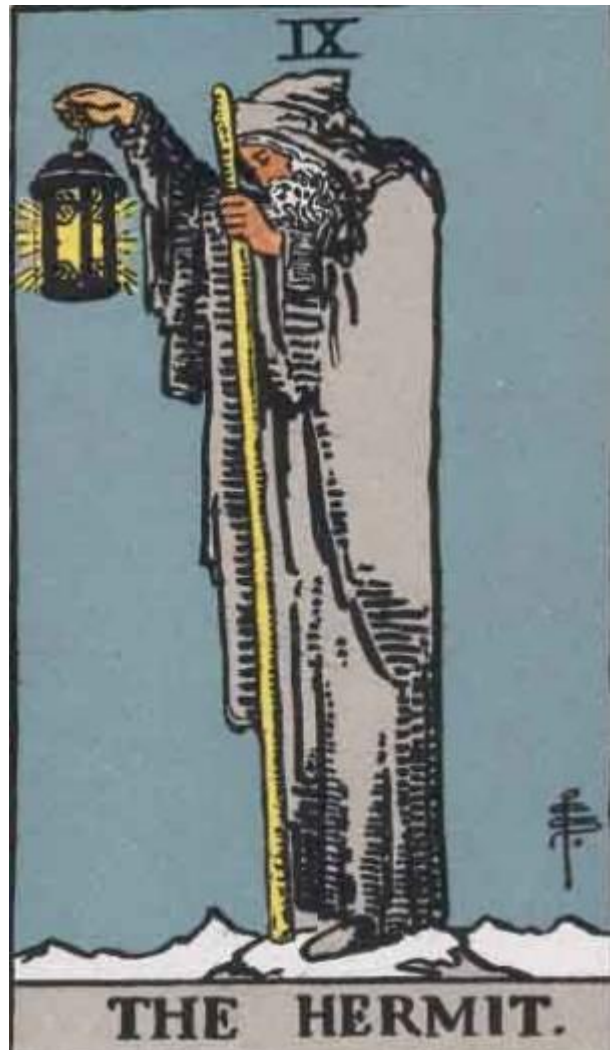
All possible actions generated during travel are called encounters; these happen before and after the climax. If the climax is detailed and encounters will add little to play—the Referee has included into his climax challenges problems faced before the resolution of the mission, in essence the intent of encounters—encounters from travel need not be generated. These **encounters can be waived**, and the scenario sequence can directly enter the climax (at Step Five). Also, missions that require very little

outfitting and travel may skip the encounters. i.e. After the Ref has his game notes ready, jump to the climax at Step Five of the scenario sequence.

On the other side of the electrum coin, some missions will not have a difficult climax. e.g. There may just be one major battle, before the players are finished and go home (in the Epilog). For most missions, encounters serve to add the variety of play that the climax lacks. Usually travel missions are encounter intensive, with short climax engagements. i.e. After Phase C, the players directly face the rival. For shipboard and garrison duties, the climax might represent the end of the voyage or term of duty. Some stories just have anticlimactic endings. Still, Ignobles are gained by getting to that end.

Finally, the **Epilog is another period of encounters** that occur after the mission's climax is completed, or abandoned as failed, by the players. During the Epilog, the opposition is still active, but diminished or less concerned with the players. Only after completing the encounters of the Epilog can the mission be considered over, and an aftermath determined. The rival (or others) may never forgive, but their influence awaits future encounters on other missions.

As the players move through the scenario on their mission, they must travel through several phases. The analogy of a story is used to represent these phases. Outlands is a game of plot and characters. The following phases represent parts of the story. Here are the leading elements, before the climax and the journey home thereafter:



## The Three Phases of Encounters

- ~ Phase A – Initial conflicts.
- ~ Phase B – Detailed intrigues.
- ~ Phase C – Suspense before the climax.
- ~ Epilog – Journey home after success, failure or abandonment of the mission.

Each of these phases has a setting in the story. Mission Consequence Encounters will direct when the phase changes or enters the climax. All this is generated with the Tarot. The Ref will be constantly flipping cards, to describe battles, for new events, to answer questions.

After initially putting the scenario down on paper, The Referee can begin encounters during travel. The players might decide how they will travel, or specifics of the mission will set the route. After knowing the travel route, the Referee will choose the settings for the action generated during travel.

To start travel, the **Referee will pick three settings** for the journey; one for each phase of the story. Every story needs a setting, correctly three settings in plots of Outlands. A setting is a terrain, a place or a general area in which events take place. The most widely used is Seas, Rivers and Coasts. You'll find that setting included in this booklet.

However, many others exist. The Referee might make his own special setting and detail the encounters therein. A setting can be influenced by the campaign. e.g. Warzones. But avoid overly specific settings that belong in the realm of schematics for the climax. e.g. Rival's home is not truly an encounter setting; it's just too bounded and would be easy to escape or change. Settings might even be dependent upon whether the characters move in a small group or with a large force of troops.

The **Referee may pick the same setting for all three phases of travel encounters**. However, he may not choose more than three settings, no matter how many different types of terrain are entered by the players or how long the journey will take. The setting may change, but that would be prompted by the deck. The Ref should not willy-nilly toss the players about the world. (That by the way is a Major Tarot event.) Even if many settings would be crossed, the Ref is obligated to select three from all the choices. *“Damn, we have three disputed regions, two sieges, a plagued city, an underworld and a maelstrom to cross by tomorrow evening.”*



Even if the group is just crossing the port, there are still three settings. Each setting represents a phase. If the job was just walk for fifteen minutes, that would hardly be a mission. If the job was to wait for a ship to return, many days would pass. Many encounters in that port might occur. Three settings – get it, got it, good.

**When selecting consider:**

- ~ Where the players travel.
- ~ Which setting types are available.
- ~ Where adversaries are located.
- ~ Which mix is exciting.

In this way, the players may be traveling many miles of road, through several cities in the campaign, but the Referee might choose one special city. e.g. Maybe having an unforeseen opponent as mayor, for a setting; the other two settings could be simply Rivers to get there or after that onto the climax. The Ref may pick all three settings in cities and ignore the rivers and roads traversed. If he feels justified, he might choose all three settings in that one special city, a very problematic place to cross. In some cases, the players will not control their route, in which case, the Ref may force them to take any desired travel route and settings. All within reason and justified by the mission and campaign. *“Would you go all the way through the underworld to deliver a note between two ports connected by a river?”* The answer is *perhaps*.

The campaign time required to cross an area is not important when determining encounters. There was a travel rate listed in the fundamentals book, so you could keep a calendar of how long each step in the journey takes. But, that may not be important. Aging is usually a hardship that a fictional hero avoids. If the mission has a time constraint, then days and hours may be critical. Otherwise, advance the year by seasons. *“You’ll get there before the harvest.”*

Several months of campaign time might pass without encounters. i.e. No settings are selected for these expanses of land or sea. Yet a short jaunt across the Bosphorus strait might prompt many encounters. Not to worry, encounters can be non-hostile. If the players enter an area, no matter how briefly, the Referee may select the location as a Setting for a Phase.

**Time is important for other reasons:** supplies, pay, seasons, travel rates, deadlines, other mundane issues like aging, healing, repairing and building, status of battle and siege. etc. All of which become clerical functions and have nothing to do

with spawning encounters. As said, a person might live many years without event, but upon accepting a mission, he will have encounters (some truly noteworthy). The only influence chronology has on encounters is in selecting the order of the settings. If the players pass through a certain setting, before traveling into another, then the Referee may not reverse the order for determining the Phase in which they apply. Example, the players move by sea before entering a warzone; the Referee may not select the order of settings warzone then sea.

**After selecting the settings, the Referee assigns them to the three phases** of the scenario's travel. After completing or giving up the mission, the players will travel home generating final encounters. During this **final travel of the Epilog**, the setting becomes **Seas, Rivers and Coasts**. All the exotic settings and underworlds are verboten in the Epilog. (Unless the Major Tarot flips and tells otherwise.) The players can expect a more serene glide home.

If during the scenario, the **players change their travel mode** or move by a different route—especially avoiding an area where they receive warnings of intended intrigue—the Referee can change the settings to account for this change of plan. He can swap out a setting and swap in any new possible setting the players enter. The settings will not change after the third (Phase C) of travel. But, the players should not significantly change their travel route after completing Phase Three. They advance right to the climax at the end of Phase C, or in some cases go into the Epilog.

**Most travel will rivers, the fastest route**, but sometimes detours are made to avoid areas of suspected intrigue. After setting three, the rest of the journey completes without further mishaps (encounters). The players may change slightly their travel route after this point without generating new settings, but only if they discover a route to save travel time. The Referee may refuse to allow such changes if he feels the players avoided initially entering an area, because it might become a travel setting. If the players are avoiding terrain because of the encounters it might yield, this fear would continue for the remainder of travel and during the return home (Epilog).

If the **players are searching for clues** on the whereabouts of an item or person and should they still not know where it is located by the end of Phase C, the mission fails; the climax is skipped, and the Epilog is entered. They do not continue to search; the end of the third phase signals they have searched enough and would abandon their mission and return home to the patron's judgment. If the players enter a setting and encounter a mishap that would leave them scattered—wounded and

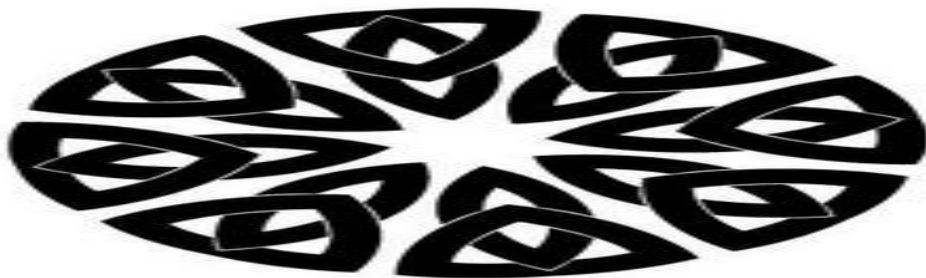
fleeing—use Digression tables to split the group. As the players and their servitors divide from panic or strange twists of fate, each must seek his own escape. Later, reunite them to continue in the same phase and setting. Several days may have passed, if that matters?

**If all the players ever quit during travel, they enter the Epilog immediately.** If only a few player characters give up, the group continues with encounters in the setting. The players who depart the mission might use Digressions to get home (DG #R—Road Home Alone—works well). Do not generate Epilog encounters, while part of the group continues toward the climax.

Dividing the group and running two separate tracks of encounters is a confusing process, usually a waste. In literature it seldom happens; even there, events in stories tend to stay on one set of heroes and the obstacles they face. The players should switch to alt characters to stay as a cohesive single group. Where is the party longboat? That often determines who has the focus of play.

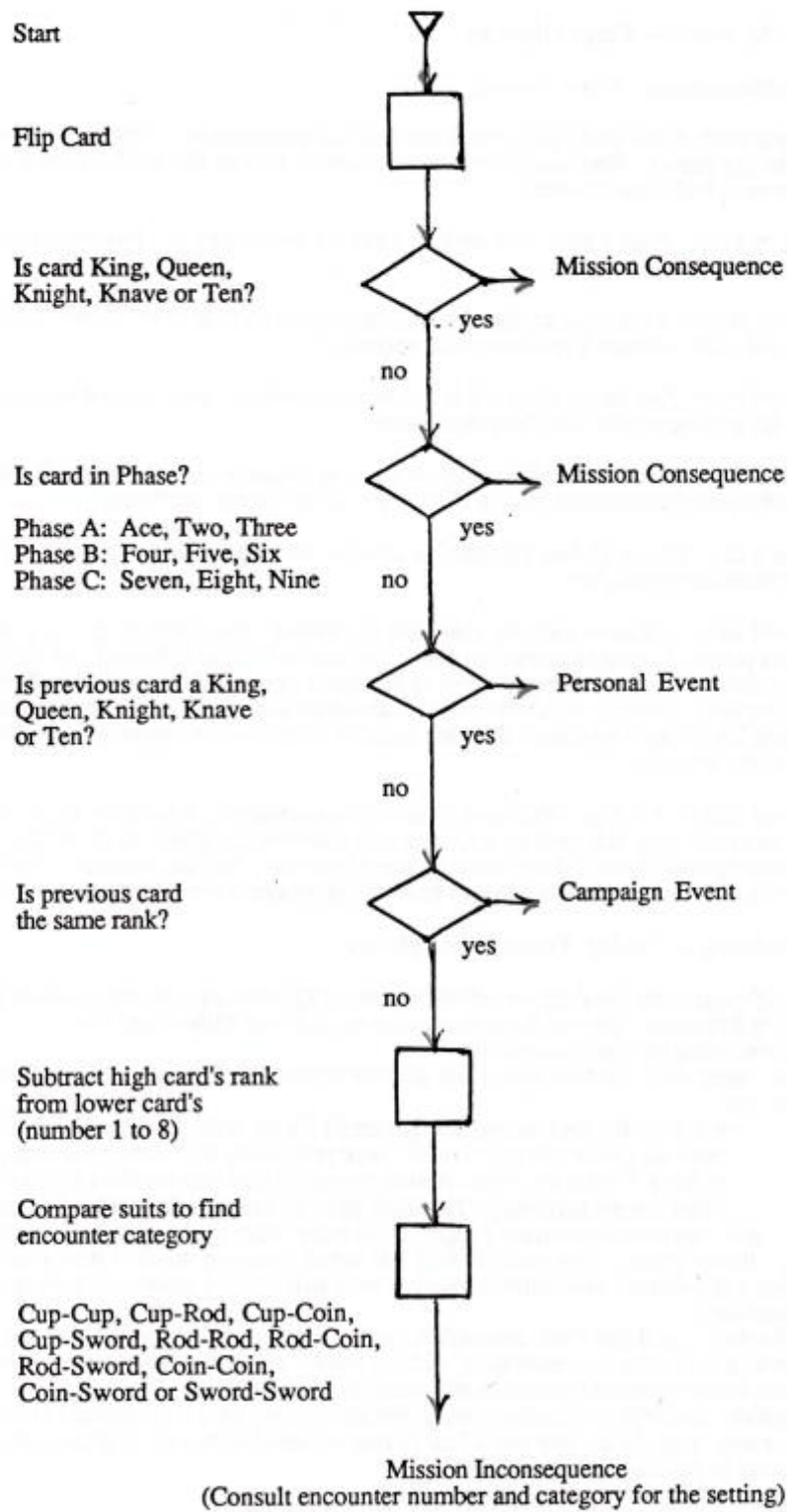
Or, any player might sit idle; go get pizza. It's almost better to make them grab an alternate role. (After they run for pizza.) Only in combat should a player watch others after his own character was felled by wound, knocked out, captured, run off in fear or escaped. The group could be on a path to ruin as one by one the players are inactive (helpless).

The **Tarot deck is used to generate the action.** Flip cards as required for any reason: encounters, combat and additional campaign or scenario details. When flipping the cards, Major Tarot only influence the areas in which they are selected. Thus, an encounter might be generated; it could require some other cards to fully describe the situation, and finally combat could result. Major Tarot selected while determining encounters do not affect the process within combat and vice versa.



# Encounter Flowchart

Encounter Determination Flow Chart



## Generating the Next Encounter

Each Tarot flip generates an encounter of one of the following four types:

- ~ Mission Consequence
- ~ Mission Inconsequence
- ~ Personal Event
- ~ Campaign Event

Mission consequence encounters are events and situations that happen because the players are on the patron's mission. If they were not on a mission, these encounters would not occur. The majority of Mission Consequence Encounters change the setting, advancing the phase toward the climax. These encounters signal the end of one part of the story and the move to the next. All Kings, Queens, Knights, Knaves and Tens are mission consequence, plus the following:

**Phase A** – Ace, Two and Three

**Phase B** – Four, Five and Six

**Phase C** – Seven, Eight and Nine

If an encounter flip is not Mission Consequence, then it becomes Mission Inconsequence – one of the other three types of encounters produced by the Tarot. Two special types of Mission Inconsequence encounters are Personal and Campaign Events. All of these encounters are created based upon the card flipped (Suit and Rank) and the previous card flip (the last Minor card with rank and suit Tarot).

**Important:** Since Q&D combat is also generated with the deck, the previous card is always the one on top. Even if that card did not specifically generate the last encounter. Let the deck be the deck.

When the deck reshuffles, the previous card is remembered. The whole deck should shuffle. For a new game session, the Referee can figure out his own way of deciding a previous card: *“Ace of Cups, good as any.”*

Personal Events are generated whenever a mission inconsequence card is flipped, and the previous card was a King, Queen, Knight, Knave or Ten. e.g. Queen followed by Nine, just not in phase C; because in phase C, the Nine is in Phase and becomes Mission Consequence. Mission Consequence trump all other types of encounters.



Campaign Events are generated by flipping a card of the same rank as the previous card. e.g. two Fives in a row, just not in Phase B. Note, Campaign Events are not generated by multiple picks of Kings, Queens, Knights, Knaves and Tens, nor for any card in-phase and thus becoming Mission Consequence.

When the card does not generate a Personal Event or a Campaign Event, then we do some razzle dazzle. To find out what occurs, subtract the cards' ranks from each other. The bigger minus the smaller. You have two cards, the one last flipped and the one now flipped. Compare the suits to determine which Mission Inconsequence Encounter is consulted. e.g. *Two Coins* with *Nine Swords* means a *Rank Seven* in the *Coin-Sword* pairing of the setting. Here's another one, *Eight Cups* and *Seven Cups* means a *Rank One* in the *Cup-Cup* section of the setting.

### **Example of Encounter Flips**

Let me demonstrate the encounters being generated at the start of an adventure in Phase A. The complete action generated by each event is not shown; the example is just a demonstration of the mechanics. Follow along, please:

**Phase A, Setting** – *Seas, Rivers & Coasts*

**Previous card:** *Seven Swords*

**Card one:** *Eight Rods* This card is not Mission Consequence in Phase A. Compare previous card and this card to get result. Encounter becomes a Rank One in the Rod-Sword category of *Rivers – Animals, Game*.

**Card two:** *King Cups* This card is Mission Consequence. Determine the impact of the important NPC. A clarifying card may or may not be flipped by the Ref.

**Card three:** *Five Swords* This card is not Mission Consequence in Phase A. Since the previous card is a King, the card becomes a Personal Event.

**Card four:** *Five Rods* This card is not Mission Consequence in Phase A. Since the previous card is also a Five, the pairing results in a Campaign Event.

**Card five:** *Nine Rods* This card is not Mission Consequence in Phase A. Pairing will yield a Rank four in the Rod-Rod category of *Rivers – Crew, Master's Error*.

**Card six:** *Knave Coins* This card is Mission Consequence. Determine the outcome of this agent from the opposition.

**Card seven:** *Knave Swords* This card is Mission Consequence. Note, it does not generate either a Personal or Campaign Event. The Knave followed by a Knave is just two Mission Consequence encounters in a row.

The agent of the rival is very active in trying to thwart the players. Even if this was a Knave followed by a Two, or Two followed by a Two, the Mission Consequence event always takes priority. Back to my *Knave of Swords* in my example. Determine the outcome of this other agent of the opposition. The Referee might further combine the last results with this new card and deduce a traitor in the players' group is alerting the rival of the group's location. Connecting any and all encounters together adds a natural flow to the scenario.

**Card eight:** *Ace Cups* This card is Mission Consequence, since Aces become so in Phase A. Players could treat the card as a Queen, while advancing the Phase to B. Or, they might decide to progress right to Phase C. Play will continue either way. See the chapter sections for further details on the above encounter types.

## Encounters – Major Tarot Descriptions

**Magician:** Until the deck reshuffles, ignore all QUEEN; treat them instead as Tens.

**High Priestess:** Restore all Trait Strategic Benefits. The players do not gain extra Longboat techniques for being Methodical, but they would gain perhaps that extra wound avoidance for Rugged or the option to have the Fury Pip from Energetic.

**Empress:** Until the deck reshuffles, players ignore the effect of all Major Tarot for determining encounters.

**Emperor:** Until the deck reshuffles, ignore all KING; treat them instead as Tens.

**Hierophant:** Until the deck reshuffles, all Mission Inconsequence Encounters have less impact. Subtract one from the Rank of any pairing; Ref may even decide to ignore Rank One Routine events in a Setting.

**Lovers:** Until the deck reshuffles, treat all QUEEN encounters as inverted. The patron has nothing to offer and may expect something to be returned.

**Chariot:** Until the deck reshuffles, ignore any Campaign Events that are generated. When selected, skip to the next encounter without result. Campaign changes fostered by player actions or extreme situations generated by some categories of Mission Inconsequence encounters still may occur.

**Justice:** Until the deck reshuffles, ignore all KNAVE; treat them instead as Tens. This is a good card.

**Hermit:** A previous KING encounter, one which helped the players, either regrets his involvement or was being duplicitous. The group should suffer some loss accordingly. If the KING allowed the players to skip a Phase or find a clue, that may result in the Phase regressing back; all was discovered to be a lie. If he gave them something, it is found to be stolen or was merely illusionary. If no KING occurred, treat instead as no future KING events will aid the players.

**Wheel of Fortune:** Reshuffle the deck and continue.

**Force:** Until the deck reshuffles, ignore all KNIGHT; treat them instead as Tens.

**Hanged Man:** Until the deck reshuffles, ignore any Personal Events that are generated. When generated, skip to the next encounter without result.

**Death:** Until the deck reshuffles, all Mission Inconsequence Encounters will tend to be unfavorable. Add one to the Rank of any pairing; Rank Eight Catch-All remain Catch-All for events in the Setting.

**Temperance:** Until the deck reshuffles, treat all KNAVE encounters as inverted. The rival is holding back his forces for the climax.

**Devil:** A previous KNIGHT encounter, one now traveling in the players' service, has become a traitor. If none are present, treat instead as no future KNIGHT events will trigger an NPC to ally and join the players.

**Tower of Destruction:** Until the deck reshuffles, ignore TEN; a very bad card indeed.

**Star:** Cancel the effect of all Major Tarot presently influencing encounters.

**Moon:** The prime player character has a bad choice. He can return to the previous Phase and start over from scratch. Or else, the lowest level character on the quest suffers an accidental vicious wound. Injured player may tell a story and perhaps check an Ignoble. If the group falls-back from Phase C to Phase B, Ref may decide the interphase Twist needs to be fought or resolved again. Even if the threat was defeated, everything has kin (to fight).

**Sun:** The prime player character has a good choice. He can treat the card as a TEN and advance the Phase. Or else, he can cancel any Twist action that is scheduled to occur between Phases B and C. Only a Twist that would occur between B and C is voided, no others.

**World:** Change the Setting. This usually means the group must enter the Unending Grey (Underworlds). Ref decides. This lasts until the deck reshuffles or the Phase advances.

**Judgment:** Digressions become easier. Until the deck reshuffles, treat any character that is forced into Digressions as generating (Z), Appeals for Aid, the end of any threat. However, the player character will not return for any action in the Phase he suffers the Digression. He will take the rest of the Phase or Epilog to rejoin the party. He might even miss the climax challenges if the forced Digression (separation) happens there.

**Fool:** Digressions become harder. Until the deck reshuffles, treat any character that is forced for any reason into Digressions as generating (K), Taken Before Rival as a Captive; he is held out of play. The player character shall not roll further and try to escape; he must wait for rescue as part of the Climax Challenges. Just another thing the rest of the group must do. The player should grab his alternate character role and continue. If any character is captured in Digressions in the Epilog, he will be held for ransom until the Quest's Aftermath. Upon a successful mission completion, the patron may pay for his release; else, another player character will need to come up with the money. Ref decides. Don't fall into Digressions with the Fool active in play.

**Note Inversion:** Ref may apply changes to account for Major Arcana flipped upside-down; consider the quest and prior events when making changes.



## Encounters Summary

*Mission Consequence* – Linked to mission.

*Mission Inconsequence* – Happens to group as a group.

*Personal Event* – Happens specifically to one player.

*Campaign Event* – Happens to group, but from action in a location outside the area.



## Longboat Mitigation

Some encounters can be viewed as resource management of the party longboat. Techniques will come and go. When the party suffers a vessel swaggering hit, the Ref may decide to allow two players to attempt to stop the loss. Usually only two players may try. Here's a table to help steer that decision.

Best Skill to Mitigate each Longboat Technique	
Longboat Elite Goals (A)	Skill Courty Grace, Skill Grit-Fortitude
Longboat Charted Path (B)	Skill Cartographer, Skill Mountaineer
Longboat Religiously Inspired (C)	Skill Tormentor, Skill Berserker
Longboat Treasure Laden (D)	Skill Goldsmith, Skill Pickpocket
Longboat Vigilant (E)	Skill Armorer-Smithy, Skill Bowman
Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)	Skill Occult Scholar, Skill Linguist
Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)	Skill Spy, Skill Briber
Longboat Battle Ready (H)	Skill Man-at-Arms, Skill Artillerist
Longboat No Disease (I)	Skill Barber (Chiurgeon), Skill Horticulturist
Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)	Skill Linguist, Skill Occult Scholar
Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)	Skill Equestrian, Skill Forger
Longboat Seasoned Crew (L)	Skill Mariner, Skill Gambler
Longboat Abundant Stores (M)	Skill Steward, Skill Farrier-Breeder
Longboat Vermin Free (N)	Skill Apothecary, Skill Hunter
Longboat Undamaged (O)	Skill Tinker, Skill Engineer-Sapper
Longboat Comradery (P)	Skill Minstrel, Skill Prestidigitation
Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)	Skill Slave Driver, Skill Brawler
Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R)	Skill Houndsman (Beasts), Skill Delver
Longboat Democracy (S)	Skill Rabblrouser, Skill Acrobat
Longboat Battle Hard (T)	Skill Duelist, Skill Pugilist

The first player to try should roll Difficult. Should he fail, the next gets a crack at Tasking. If either lacks the skill, then the rolls may be attempted at Nearly Impossible. Make-roll perhaps? Yet after two attempts, the result may not be corrected. There comes a point when too many people, contradicting and second guessing each other, would break the party in twain. Hold your passive aggressive name calling; your experts say the ship is broken, don't go proving them wrong (with lucky rolls).

Recall that all characters with **Clever Trait form a pool to prevent swaggering losses**. That's true here too. If the first two rolls have failed, then check off one Clever character's transferable benefit. **Don't forget, Clever Trait also cancels negative Quest Pip**, again if any remain in the adventure to be used. See the Outlands Fundamental rules for more info.



Only skills were listed. Even though the crew is more accustomed to witnessing, and even using magic, no one is truly comfortable having spells cast over them or where they sleep. The side effects might be brutal: dreams, sensory changes, memory loss and lingering anxiety. The Ref may allow **any swaggering to be used to help mitigate a loss**, but the story of justification should be spontaneous and superb.

A skill allows a single roll; swaggering would require several. Play a bit of back and forth. *What about the rats?* Animate barrel lids to snap as traps. *What about the mold?* Same wizardry on mops to scour it away. *What about the leaking casks?* Cosmic to restore them to newly made. *What about the bugs?* My mucilage blade has a vinegar spray. *And so forth.* After half a D8 plus one total questions with group answers, then let each person try his one or more rolls at Ordinary to complete the plan. Any failure may be covered by someone else's display of swagger at Difficult. It's best just to have good ol' fashioned know-how imparted by a skill.

For play balance, the Ref might also force players to make the same rolls to gain windfall techniques. Sure, the KING encounter pays for repairs, but can anyone aboard properly apply the boiled tar (provided). The rolls should be attempted, again at most two, using Ordinary and Difficult. Nearly Impossible again if the skill required is lacking. **Do not second guess or require these extra rolls, when a technique is gained by Q&D success on 2D8 with Advantage of a boat swaggering.**

## **Alternate Longboat Technique Loss**

There's an occasion to be mean. When the players lose a Longboat technique, many times they simply do not have that technique to lose. Good for them, their weakness turns into a lucky break. Yet for parties above four Methodical player characters or when any character reaches level five+, when multiple attempt rolls occur, this benefit should end.

Instead of just skipping a negative consequence, the following table shall be used to assess another debit inflicted. Note the reverse is never true. If the players are granted a Longboat technique they already have, they will only smile and continue; nothing else is acquired. Reminder, Longboat techniques do not lock as Glorious.

<b>Longboat Alternative Loss</b>	
Penalty	Taken Instead
Longboat Elite Goals (A)	Longboat Pure No-Curse (J), Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)
Longboat Charted Path (B)	Longboat Comradery (P), Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)
Longboat Religiously Inspired (C)	Longboat No Disease (I), Longboat Democracy (S)
Longboat Treasure Laden (D)	Longboat Undamaged (O)
Longboat Vigilant (E)	Longboat Abundant Stores (M)
Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)	Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R)
Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)	Longboat Treasure Laden (D)
Longboat Battle Ready (H)	Longboat Seasoned Crew (L)
Longboat No Disease (I)	Longboat Elite Goals (A)
Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)	Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)
Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)	Longboat Religiously Inspired (C)
Longboat Seasoned Crew (L)	Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)
Longboat Abundant Stores (M)	Longboat Vermin Free (N)
Longboat Vermin Free (N)	Longboat No Disease (I)
Longboat Undamaged (O)	Longboat Charted Path (B)
Longboat Comradery (P)	Longboat Battle Hard (T)
Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)	Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)
Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R)	Longboat Comradery (P)
Longboat Democracy (S)	Longboat Battle Ready (H)
Longboat Battle Hard (T)	Longboat Vigilant (E)
<p>These negative results should cascade. If the alternate to lose is not there, well, the party loses the alternate to that and so forth. If the vessel has no traits, the lowest level player character should receive a vicious wound.</p>	

## Mission Consequence Encounters

These are NPCs, servitors and events that happen because of the mission, motives and opposition. These also direct the phase to change or the scenario to enter the climax. Whenever during travel a mission consequence encounter is generated, the descriptions below are consulted.

The following are always mission consequence: King, Queen, Knight, Knave and Ten.

The following are mission consequence only when drawn in their respective phases:

**Phase A** – Ace, Two and Three

**Phase B** – Four, Five and Six

**Phase C** – Seven, Eight and Nine

## Mission Consequence – Quick Look Table

**King:** Epic figures of campaign.

**Queen:** Agents and messages from your patron.

**Knight:** NPC agents.

**Knave:** Agents of opposition, mostly the rival's own.

**Ten:** Phase change, a good card.

**Nine:** Realization the climax is here.

**Eight:** Last opposition before the climax.

**Seven:** Pyrrhic victory and set-back for group; phase returns to B.

**Six:** Anticlimax; phase returns to A.

**Five:** Opposition to the opposition, other allies reveal themselves.

**Four:** Opposition, often the rival's minions.

**Three:** Realization of commencement; the next setting is reached.

**Two:** Opposition to commencement, the first agents of the rival.

**Ace:** Ultimate commencement, luck or fate moves the plot forward.

## KING – Epic Figures

KING represent important figures of the world or area; these are powerful NPCs that already exist in the campaign. The Ref should choose an appropriate NPC for the campaign setting or he can flip a clarifying card as listed later.

Both suit and card inversion should be considered:

*Cups* – The NPC is on his own lands; only in open water will he have a vessel. He could also be on an isle with his ship hidden or away. These estates may be underdeveloped. They may be magnificent. Depends on the location, location, location (on the campaign map). Otherwise, he will be on the shore and may be easily avoided. The KING will be suspicious of thieves and punishes any poaching. In the underworld, he will skew sinister and magical.

The players will be treated well, provided they were not killing his local minions or stealing livestock in a previous encounter. Ref decides. The players should freely tell the identity of their patron and often reveal their mission. They can lie, but they will only gain favors if they reveal enough to pique his interest and ensure him that he's not their target.

In good graces, the players have a choice. The KING will offer the players a clue to their mission, enough to gain a Quest Pip. He will give them Abundant Stores (M), gained after a Steward or Farrier task resolution roll. He may warn them of dangers in the region, making the next half D8 events optional. Ref may allow other advantages for shared trust.

The danger in revealing the quest's true plans could be he may be opposed, and the consequences thus turns inverted. Use the clarifying card to decide if the KING would oppose the outcome of the quest. Most will not; the card was after all of regular orientation, and inverted cards will happen often enough. But if he's say a Bishop, and the quest injures that church, well, turn the card inverted. I always flip the clarifying card after the players make a decision to share trust. Most barbarians see a man in a clean pressed shirt and that's all; king or coin changer, all the same to his sensibilities. Or as they show faith in the hierarchy, so will the KING reveal more.

**Inverted:** The KING will demand tribute. The players must pay a half D8 purses of coins or longboat technique Treasure Laden (D). Failure to pay results in a negative Quest Pip. He will not attack unless provoked, threatened or attacked (first). His influence in the campaign causes the penalty; it will not go away, either, with bloodshed.

**Rods** – The NPC is traveling to someplace else; he will be on his own ship if the setting is watery. In the underworld, he will be on a quest of intrigue.

He will be cordial, but not want any questions, regardless. The players must decide if they will attack for whatever reason, loot? If they salute and let the encounter pass, they gain a plus one Quest Pip.

**Inverted:** Same but unless they attack, they suffer a negative Quest Pip. The combat may start and end with everyone using method Escape. If they defeat the KING, they can ransom him for Treasure Laden (D), provided he is taken alive. For this battle, only his minions need be defeated. But his second will have a level equal to this KING master. Injuring him or his second could have campaign event consequences, and the group should gain an enemy (as well as Ignoble loot or tales).

**Coins** – The NPC is conducting business, buying land, dealing with guilds, moving goods to and from a city. On the





water he will have several merchant cogs, slow moving ships. In the underworld, he will be dealing with a Dwarf King. His *dealing* will produce less negotiation and more driving the imps to deeper berths. Yet the KING, himself, is not in this encounter. Flip his clarifying card for his background, but the players are meeting his agent.

There will be another official or purchasing broker (as well as the bodyguards). The broker may mistake the players for locals or men hired for patrol duties by the true owner. Should the players reveal their true identity, the broker will not be pleased; he'll worry his own master, the KING, will be angry the deal was jeopardized.

The players instead can gain men and materials by deception, or simply allow the encounter to pass uneventful. Where is the fun in that? The broker will often take the blame, not the players, should he give Treasure Laden (D) to the wrong people. Yet, anymore KING encounters this adventure will be the broker coming back to restore his honor in an ambush attack.

***Inverted:*** The KING and his agent is not easily deceived. Both will know of the quest and be surprised the players got this far. Any combat will have ramifications. Yet not engaging in combat will mean the rival is alerted, so suffer a minus one Quest Pip. Only by attacking the agent, adding some fear, will that penalty be avoided.

***Swords*** – The NPC is moving his soldiers to a battle. In open water he will have several ships in convoy. In the underworld, he will be bargaining or summoning demons for aid.

The KING may wish to hire the players briefly as scouts or employ them as auxiliaries to bolster his own men. Gain Treasure Laden (D) but ignore TEN encounters for the rest of the phase (or until the deck reshuffles) from taking the secondary action. All Encounters in this expanded period may be assumed to be related to the KING and his engagements in the warzone. Fighting well and hard may make a friend, provided the encounters represented some event of importance the players helped this new ally win or defeat or overcome. Ref decides.

***Inverted:*** The NPC will mistake the players party as the enemy. Almost always a larger battle will result. This is the only KING event, which guarantees combat from the start.

**Overall Note:** whenever the party receives a negative Quest Pip from an encounter with a KING, the Ref may allow any player character a chance to nullify that event. One character may expend a contact or owed favored with someone appropriately powerful to intercede on the group's behalf. *“Oh, you're a friend of Lord Whigg of the Vox Illuminati? I'll let you off with a warning”*



This *give and take* is a good part of play – that and make at least an Ordinary roll, right? Ref must decide when and if any contact can be used. But the player must be the one to suggest the intervention.

In some missions, the KING is treated as a third-party KNAVE, or tend toward hostility for every encounter. In that case, all card flips of KING may be treated as inverted for the resolution. That may still mean combat can be avoided. But those negative Quest Pips accumulate into a world of hurt and misery.

## **Naming and Arming the KING**

By cloning advanced (even dead) player characters, the Referee can people his campaign. Else, take a moment to generate an NPC to represent the KING card. Start with a name. Add a half D8 traits. Forego skills, but assume he has plenty of skilled retainers in his service. If combat results, make him a D8 plus four in level for Defensive Modifier, plus a D8 swaggering per level if ever needed. His significant bodyguard should number double the number of players, triple if any player character is above level four. Yet recall, only with an *inverted Sword* will combat immediately result.

## **More to Ponder on KING**

These NPCs are Mission Consequence, because they are characters of prominence. These men expect, at the very least, to be informed. “*Who are you, and what business brings you to Staraja?*”

These figures often use agents to hinder, other times they may provide resources to further the quest even after the first meeting. When inverted, try to choose an NPC that definitely opposes the players. Most will still do nothing if the mission has no real campaign consequence. Evaluate the pros and cons of the mission, the knowledge the KING has of the players’ fame and reputation, the power of the patron or his rival, and the importance of the KING in the area of the mission.

Most KING are involved with their own plots. To further hinder the players, information or money may be given to the opposition. Hence the negative Quest Pip.

## **Double Up KING, Optional**

If the players ever receive two KING encounters in the same Phase, they can treat the second one as a TEN. This generally should occur, where the Ref has a detailed climax ready for the players. When playing flip-card Outlands, where the encounters and climax are being generated on the fly, the KING should remain unchanged. How

do you know? The Ref will know. If he has a finely crafted set of climax challenges, the prequel events of encounters need not be as labored.

## **Epilog KING**

After the climax or after the players have decided to quit the quest, **during the Epilog treat KING as TEN**. No need for a clarifying card, the KING flip in the Epilog represents the final end of the adventure. I often select a new Patron instead and offer the group their next mission. But up to the Ref if the aftermath and downtime is skipped.

## **Multiple Kings in the Same Quest**

If two KING events (or more) occur in the same Phase, they will be the same person. Even if the first KING encountered was slain, then someone of the same clarifying type has come to seek revenge.

The KING will be out and about, as the suit reveals. He may be first met traveling and again on his estates. He might be making a deal and then moving soldiers. The Ref may even have a single KING repeat throughout the whole quest. If the deck reshuffles, he could be met a bajillion times. (Well, that may be an exaggeration.)

Each time the KING is met there should be some greater familiarity and trust, less chance of conflict even if it has not been so in the past. Losing and winning can be sobering. *What, do I need to kill you all again?*

So even inverted results should have more nasty looks—you following me?—and less *Nasty* mob fights. Remember this is fantasy. The KING can be given such power and air of invincibility, so he can be a fixture in the campaign. The plus and minus Quest Pips are his mood.

Temper those if he has had good dealing with the players in the past. The powerful like doing small favors, gold or information, knowing they can ask large favors in return. You might even skip the next mission Patron and use the last KING encounter. Logically, that makes sense, else how does anyone know who needs work? That's right, magic.

## **KING Clarifier**

**Epic King:** *Earl* – A royal councilor who advises and controls the emperor. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Noble Allegiance (K).

**Epic Queen:** *Patrician* – A very rich citizen from a mercantile family, though seldom considered well-bred. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Seasoned Crew (L).

**Epic Knight:** *Legion Consul* – May lead as many as five-thousand soldiers, but probably travels with just a cohort of several hundred guards. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Battle Ready (H).

**Epic Knave:** *Imperial Guildmaster* – An honorary councilor, a man who controls a guild and hence monopolistic trade. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Orderly Kept (Q).

**Epic 10:** *Wizard* – A person who utilizes magic for personal wealth and political power. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F).

**Epic 9:** *Aedile* – Someone beloved by the people as a sponsor of tournaments and public works, additionally, a proficient spellcaster. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Comradery (P).

**Epic 8:** *Legati* – Sorcerer from a high noble family, a titled landowner, and supporter of various imperial intrigues. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Pure No-Curse (J).

**Epic 7:** *Bishop* – Head of a diocese and proponent of the One True Faith; a man who believes the lower class should obey in life and obtain heaven after death. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Religiously Inspired (C).

**Epic 6:** *Praetor* – Member of a magical guild of protectors, a powerful enforcer of the status quo. Someone who expect people to cower and pay homage, a keeper of secrets. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat No Disease (I).

**Epic 5:** *Janissary* – Imperial monster hunter, very capable, usually armed with one or more relics. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R).

**Epic 4:** *Agent of the Dux* – Warrior with authority of the imperium or Auctoritas, a prestigious, though murderous, order. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Vigilant (E).

**Epic 3:** *Captain Imperial Navy* – Commander of a warship or speedy dispatch vessel. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Charted Path (B).

**Epic 2:** *Quaestors* – Magistrates and traveling judges of the empire. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Treachery Expunged (G).

**Epic Ace:** *Tribune* – Idealists of the people, a man who ferrets out high crimes of the landed gentry and artisan class, hunting treason, corruption, conspiracy. Extra bonus, regardless, display of skill to gain Longboat Democracy (S).

**Any Majors:** These roles are very grand, so specific details may or may not be anything more than a game delay. The Ref may treat these as additional modifiers like those found in the *Generating Quest* booklet under **Rival (WHO?) Major Tarot Broaden** facts. Or, he can just apply the Major Tarot as encounter modifiers.

**Overall Note:** The extra bonus swaggering for the group's Longboat is obtained by stealth, observation, secondary meetings or bribes, the general mishmash of dealing with someone else's skilled servitors. Hire some people away or incite them to desert to your cause. Since the KING tends to be the same most of the quest, the players get this one shot at improvement, one shot to learn from the *civilized* world.

The bonus has nothing to do with the actual KING or his card's inversion, nor what he gives or causes to be lost by the predicament of the KING card's suit. The Ref may decide otherwise and make the players suggest a method or plan to gain the gain. I like stories being told, so how did this happen besides the dice roll?

Also, should the *Epic Role* be **inverted, he'll have sympathy or be secretly affiliated with a sinister cabal**. Use the list presented in the *Generating Quest* booklet; you could have flipped one already for the quest. When in doubt, use the Vox Illuminati; many a distant debt needs to be collected, and few KING are traveling to enjoy the Outlands' scenery.

## QUEEN – Patron or his Messenger

These represent agents from your patron. During travel, these cards represent contact between the players and the patron, or one of the patron's allies coming to the group of players. Unless the players were expecting help, this arrival is usually unannounced, and anxiety filled. Use the following guidelines and consider the patron's influence and resources, as well as any difficulties added by the quest's finance card:

**Cups** – Good tidings. If patron's Sea resources are **Assuredly**, the longboat gains one technique; the prime player character selects from (L), (O) or (Q). If the longboat already has all three of these techniques, it gains (A) or (B). If the longboat has all five of these techniques, then gain a plus one Quest Pip.

The same result is obtained on an Ordinary or Tasking roll for patrons with **Ordinarily** or **Improbable** Sea resources. Regardless, afterward the Sea resources of the patron have improved one step toward **Assuredly**. If the encounter happens in the underworld, the improvement still occurs (far away, perhaps) or the Ref may treat the card as a Rod.

If patron's Riches resource is **Assuredly**, the party starts with a Tactical Pip in the very next combat they fight. For resources defined as **Ordinarily**, the same is gained with a Difficult task resolution roll.

**Inverted:** Request of aid. Lose any Longboat technique. If none are available, suffer a minus one Quest Pip. Regardless, Sea resources decline one step toward **Improbable**.

**Rods** – Reinforcements. If patron's Land resources are **Assuredly**, the longboat gains one technique; the prime player character selects from (M), (R) or (T). If the longboat already has all three of these techniques, it gains (E) or (H). If the longboat has all five of these techniques, then gain a plus one Quest Pip.

The same result is obtained on an Ordinary or Tasking roll for patrons with **Ordinarily** or **Improbable** Land resources. Regardless, afterward the Land resources of the patron have improved one step toward **Assuredly**.

If patron's Riches resource is **Assuredly**, all players gain Fury Pip in their next battle. For resources defined as **Ordinarily**, the same is gained with a Difficult task resolution roll; each player should dice his own chance.

**Inverted:** Divergent strategy; some of the servitors are needed elsewhere. Suffer a minus one Quest Pip for the remainder of the Phase. Regardless, Land and Riches resources decline one step toward **Improbable**. A half D8 player characters as selected by the prime player character discover they are broke; their pocket money has been spent on the trip.

**Coins** – Positive remarks in the Curia. If patron's Respect resources are **Assuredly**, the longboat gains one technique; the prime player character selects from (K), (P) or (S). If the longboat already has all three of these techniques, it gains (C) or (G). If the longboat has all five of these techniques, then gain a plus one Quest Pip.

The same result is obtained on an Ordinary or Tasking roll for patrons with **Ordinarily** or **Improbable** Respect resources. Regardless, afterward the Respect resources of the patron have improved one step toward **Assuredly**.

This flip also gives a chance to replace each player character's purse of coins. If the player has spent or lost his purse, he restores his travel money on an Ordinary roll. The patron's Riches resource improves one step toward **Assuredly**.

**Inverted:** Bad news. In the next battle the players fight, everyone starts Shaken. Additionally, both Power and Respect resources decline one step toward **Improbable**.

**Swords** – Support of a regional Earl. If patron's Power resources are **Assuredly**, the longboat gains one technique; the prime player character selects from (I), (J) or (N). If the longboat already has all three of these techniques, it gains (D) or (F). If the longboat has all five of these techniques, then gain a plus one Quest Pip.



The same result is obtained on an Ordinary or Tasking roll for patrons with **Ordinarily** or **Improbable** Power resources. Regardless, afterward the Power resources of the patron have improved one step toward **Assuredly**.

If patron's Riches resource is **Assuredly**, the prime player character starts combat with the Command Pip in his next battle. For resources defined as **Ordinarily**, the same is gained with a Difficult task resolution roll.

**Inverted:** The patron has withdrawn his offer; he no longer wants the players to pursue the quest and its objectives. If the players continue (for Ignobles), they suffer a minus three Quest Pip. Quit into the Epilog here or at any time. Regardless, treat QUEEN as KNAVE for encounters, and do not generate an aftermath; there will be no reward, and the campaign will not change. The rival becomes an enemy of the prime player character only. Mark it on your character sheet.

**Overall Note:** When initially generated, sometimes a patron had **Ordinarily** listed for a resource type, and sometimes he didn't have any rating. If the patron was not specifically listed as **Assuredly** or **Improbable**, his rating is **Ordinarily**. If the Ref desires he can flair that omission and say it will never change one way or the other in step. He will always be Ordinarily and require rolls for bonuses. In a perfect game nothing would be ambiguous, but we never claimed to write a perfect game; we choose to write a better one. (I feel psychically your smiles and groans.)

## Should Patron be on the Journey

If the patron is on the journey with the players, the QUEEN may still be either good or bad. The patron may meet with another agent to increase the protection of the whole. Else, he will inform the party of his reservations or need to commit resources elsewhere. Combat should never result from these exchanges. The worst that might happen is any card can be treated as an inverted Sword—I give up—if the situation is too dire for the patron to continue or the players put too much pressure on him for additional men and materials.

## Incognito Travel

Some settings are remote or the mission peculiar. The players may be moving fast, over a random route or traveling under a disguise. Even with magic, the situation might prompt the question, how did you find me? The Referee may treat the QUEEN instead as KNIGHT. In the Unending Grey and uncharted seas, you might ignore QUEENs entirely. But take some liberties; these are only stories. Much is implied and unstated during any adventure. The prime player character may be sending coded dispatches or meeting contacts on an arranged schedule.



## Double Up QUEEN, Optional

If the players ever receive two QUEEN encounters in the same Phase, they can treat the second one as a TEN. This generally should occur, where the Ref has a detailed climax ready for the players. When playing flip-card Outlands, where the encounters and climax are being generated on the fly, the QUEEN should remain unchanged.

## Epilog Queen

After the climax or after the players have decided to quit the quest, **during the Epilog treat QUEEN as TEN.** No need for anymore plus or minus, the QUEEN flip in the Epilog represents the final end of the adventure. Continue in the aftermath.

## Say What!?!?

So, I lose Vermin Free, cause the patron wants it back? I'm confused. The longboat swaggering techniques are both an abstract and a construct. No, the patron does not

infest your ship with rodents out of spite. He might have asked for his favorite mouser to be returned. Or the men and material sent back to help the patron had the unintended consequence of being the ones who kept things tidy.

Yet don't sweat the small details. The consequences are far more important than the causes. When the players are given a choice to lose a longboat technique, they are deciding how the boat suffers. Or might suffer, since sometimes the loss can be averted by proper display of skill. Use the Longboat Mitigation section as desired. Or just consign yourself to have your patron be vexing, i.e. a prick. Yes, yes indeed, he decided he open a cosmic portal and dump the contents of his rat infested cellar into your grain stores. The world is filled with such spite. However, you rationalize the loss is fine. The loss of the technique (N) is more important to the game mechanics.

## KNIGHT – NPC Agents

These represent agents of more important men in the campaign; these cards are similar to KING, but with two important differences:

- 1) They often join the quest, after the players successfully solicit their support through *Flattery & Banter*, *Money Enticements* or *Veiled Threats*.
- 2) They might represent extra reinforcements of servitors, not just an NPC.

If an NPC is justified (and available), then his total commitment to the mission should not be much more than his personal involvement. No campaign figures of importance or prominence should be used to represent the card. e.g. Never a character above level four, Butsecarles. KNIGHT should NOT have anything more than a small compliment of soldiers, well below cohort size. The Ref must decide how many if that's important.

**Cups:** The agent comes from the nearest city-state or region of the campaign. He comes as a representative of the local lord. He is loyal and content; will not join the group. Even if the party is in the Unending Grey, the man comes from the surface. There will be much mistrust underground, so perhaps treat the card as a Rod.

His clarifying card is unimportant. On a Tasking roll by the prime player character, the longboat receives Abundant Stores (M) or a single purse of coins. Even at sea, the money or material might just plop on the deck. After that the encounter ends.

**Inverted:** The agent is local and recently suffered a mishap. He failed in his job. Generate a clarifying card and use that role to predict some mistake or negative event. If the players as a group can enter the scene, a city-state or manor, to correct the wrong, they will be rewarded with a plus one Quest Pip. The prime player character may even gain a friend.

If they try and fail, they will take the blame; minus one Quest Pip from the ire of a local noble. Ref must set the conditions, and the players should suggest, based on skill and swaggering, how to proceed. Finish with task resolution. If time allows, conduct a small set of obstacles, a mini-climax challenge. Else use the *Ref Aid for City Traits and Player Actions* to set some task resolution rolls for the party.

**Rods:** The agent is local; he represents his master, but he wishes to find other employment. If the party is offering adventure and reward, then add another NPC to the crew. Doing so, gives the party a plus one Quest Pip or allows them a Tactical Pip of plus three for every battle that occurs in this Phase. The NPC stats and role may be developed as needed; start with a flip of the clarifying card to get some

general idea on his traits and skills. Maybe start the person as level zero and give him to the first player who desires to play an alternate role?

***Inverted:*** The agent is employed locally and trying to prevent an intrigue. He wishes to stop some baneful act on his master. Flip a clarifying card for his role and a second card for the person he suspects of betrayal.

If the players agree to help, the action will take place in the city-state or manor as a set of mini-climax challenges. The group will need to find evidence, prevent a kidnap, threaten the accused into fleeing the region, kill someone on the word of another...battle will often result. The lord may see this trial by combat as truth yielding. Else, the lord now rages about his lost hireling. Ref needs to unfold and present this small plot.

***Coins:*** Regional. The agent comes from a larger domain or distant place. His origin is not important. Flip a clarifying card for the person's role. If the players can entice the man to service, they gain a fine addition to the party. He will remain for the rest of the quest.

If he joins, assume his own task is handled in parallel. Even add an extra climax challenge to represent his united goal. The party gains (for now) either a plus one Quest Pip, or a Tactical Pip of plus two for all combat this Phase, one or the other provided that the KNIGHT comes aboard. In the underworld, merging with a stranger is very dangerous. But, since the players are not delvers, per se, c'est la vie.

***Inverted:*** The agent comes from the local lord making demands. Sometimes he might be bribed to fall back. Sometimes he wants the group's supplies or riches. Make a roll to get by with a toll of just one purse. Failing that, hand over Treasure Laden (D) or Abundant Stores (M); else fight combat against an adversary equal to the party. This can be resolved with any combat method. After defeating a number equal to the number of players, the rest retreat.

***Swords:*** The agent is freelance, often just fired. In the underworld, his last leader was a Dwarf King or Demon; helping the KNIGHT will make either archetype an enemy.

Flip a clarifying card to get an idea of his traits and skills. He will join the group if allowed. In most cases he will be begging to come along. At sea he can be found adrift? Like the Rod, maybe start the person as level zero and give him to the first player who needs to play an alternate role.

But, taking him into the group results in a negative Quest Pip for the rest of encounters. Yet for the climax challenges, the group gains a Tactical Pip in every battle they fight. The choice is up to them to adopt (and train) this new minion.

If he is rebuffed, fifty-fifty chance he dies. Should he live, he one day will become a powerful enemy. Ref decides WHO? and WHEN?



***Inverted:*** The agent is local and involved in intrigue. Flip a clarifying card for his role and a second card for the person he despises. He wants to get even with another member of the local lord's minions. If the players agree, the action will take place in the city-state or manor as either an ambush on the other man involved or a set of mini climax challenges as the players enter a keep or walled city-state, work their way past interior guards or obstacles, then complete the vile deed.

That deed? Could be plant blackmail evidence, could be kidnap, could be threat or extortion to get the victim to leave the region, could be murder...it's not going to be pretty. Some enemies might be made. Ref needs to generate this action.

If the players refuse to help the intrigue, the plotter will attack the players with his bodyguard trying to silence them. Fight combat against an adversary equal to the party. This can be resolved with any combat method. After defeating a number equal to the number of players, the rest retreat.

## **Naming and Arming the KNIGHT**

Take a moment to generate an NPC to represent the KNIGHT card. Start with a name. Add just one or two traits. His skill should match the role he plays as represented by the clarifying card. If combat results, make him half a D8 in level for Defensive Modifier, plus a half D8 swaggering per level if ever needed. His number of attendants were detailed by the card's suit and inversion. Yet if a player character is above level four, his total men to dispatch (before the rest run off) should double. The Referee can add whatever else he needs and finds significant. There's a whole table of Ace-Hole flairs in the Generating Quest booklet if needed for fun against high level player characters.

How many pennies are in his purse? About as important as his shirt color when he gets bloodied. If his itemized list of loot is important, make it so. Add a signet ring, bane relic, identifying object that implicates the players in the man's death...someone in the crew might end up with his gold tooth or set of monogram shoes. But purse contents and *+1 Winkies* are stuff for *your other favorite rpg*.





## Ref Aid for City Traits and Player Actions

I'm a big fan of any skill or swaggering having the potential to be used to do anything, provide the player is thinking and extrapolating and entertaining (all). But, I'll admit I get fatigued, and sometimes I like to look things up on tables.

	Skill	Personal	Blade	Mount	Wizardry
Add <i>Populous</i>	Grit-Stamina, Prestidigitation	Seize Swordarm (Q)	Lithe (H)	Vibrant (M)	Demigod (A)
Remove <i>Plagued</i>	Barber (Chiurgeon)	Irregular Tricks (M)	Paladin (P)	Essential (I)	Pyrotechnics (K)
Add <i>Magazine</i>	Mountaineer, Slave Driver	Concentration (E)	Herculean (J)	Winged (B)	Conjuration (L)
Remove <i>Depleted</i>	Briber, Mariner	Crushing Blow (G)	Amalgam (O)	Replenishing (J)	Cosmic (T)
Add <i>Strong</i>	Artillerist, Engineer-Sapper	Heroic Swordplay (K)	Knightly (G)	Resolute (K)	Power Words (S)
Remove <i>Ransacked</i>	Armorer-Smith, Tinker	Mastery Shield (O)	Defender (F)	Inexorable (T)	Shape Shifting (J)
Add <i>Peaceful</i>	Steward, Bowman	Disarming Blow (F)	Scintillating (K)	Serene (E)	Voltaic (N)
Remove <i>Disorder</i>	Berserker, Pickpocket	Wrestling Holds (T)	Scheming (S)	Agile (C)	Paralysis (Q)
Add <i>Patriotic</i>	Forger, Rabblouser	Ferocity (J)	Golden (T)	Empyrean (G)	Spirit Guide (R)
Remove <i>Rebellious</i>	Occult Scholar, Spy	Speed & Guile (R)	Biting (L)	Hefty (H)	Thought Control (P)
Add <i>Fruitful</i>	Farrier-Breeder, Horticulturist	Better Valor (B)	Mucilage (B)	Radiant (F)	Geomancy (C)
Remove <i>Famine</i>	Cartographer, Hunter	Chiasmic Action (D)	Fantastic (D)	Mystical (D)	Telekinesis (D)
Add <i>Civil</i>	Courtly Grace, Pugilist	Hilt Punch (L)	Heirloom (I)	Beautiful (A)	Psionics (B)
Remove <i>Pestilence</i>	Apothecary	Killer Instinct (N)	Bounding (C)	Fleet (R)	Demonic (F)
Add <i>Prosperous</i>	Gambler, Goldsmith	Charismatic Style (C)	Eminent (E)	Lucid (N)	Celestial (G)
Remove <i>Pillaged</i>	Equestrian, Man-at-Arms	Feigns (I)	Impetus (N)	Sturdy (Q)	Hexes (M)
Add <i>Justice</i>	Delver, Linguist	Battle Cry (A)	Ingenious (A)	Carapace (O)	Animate Objects (O)
Remove <i>Corrupt</i>	Duelist, Tormentor	Unc. Dagger Thrust (S)	Hellish (M)	Pure (L)	Precognition (E)
Add <i>Entertained</i>	Acrobat, Minstrel	Repartee (P)	Gladiatorial (R)	Talking (P)	Illusions (I)
Remove <i>Unruly</i>	Brawler, Houndsman (Beasts)	Effective Spurning (H)	Meshed (Q)	Ominous (S)	Necromancy (H)

These rolls should be made at Difficult first attempt or Tasking for the second and final try. Roll Nearly Impossible if no one has any of the qualifying abilities. Others may be applied at the Ref's discretion. **Magic tends to cover much.** For higher level player characters, a half D8 rolls of Skill and Swaggering should be required. Traits may allow a bonus to a roll, at best plus one, but alone they are too common in play to grant an opportunity all their own.

Every player should tell a story, embellish and describe what he does to correct the mess or generate the affluence, remove the bad or create the good. **A fine tale might reduce the Degree**, a silly or uninspired one should raise the task a step harder. We are, after all, playing a free-style story game. e.g. Saying, *I cast Pyrotechnics* is dull; describing the use of fireworks and flame to purge the sewers of rodents has panache, but your players can do even better. *"The dusky azure of ignited swamp gas fed out a drainpipe...."* Well, maybe edit yourself? Use less flowery prose and more commonsense for your narratives. *"The dusky azure of rodents running on fire from the drainpipe...."* (With apologies.)

This roll should **not be made everywhere in the campaign that has problems.** That's too easy. Only when prompted by, say a KNIGHT or perhaps

KING, would the players gain a chance to make the campaign more livable. Whole missions might be conducted just to remove one! See the Generating Quests booklet for examples. But if a KNIGHT encounter suggests the man made a mistake, the players may need to fix that bad city trait (or return the good). If the encounters prompt changes to the campaign, that's terrific.

## Chaos

Here's another table you might use to sow some dissent. Some of the KNIGHT events will want to see their homesteads crumble, both to punish an arrogant overlord and to cause strife to an adversary. The players too may wish to get some payback on a place where they feel slighted or cheated or betrayed. The rolls here are easier. Sad but true, society is easier to destroy than build.

	Skill	Wizardry	Others
End <i>Populous</i>	Horticulturist	Illusions (I)	Mount Pure (L)
Cause <i>Plagued</i>	Occult Scholar	Demonic (F)	
End <i>Magazine</i>		Pyrotechnics (K)	
Cause <i>Depleted</i>		Demigod (A)	
End <i>Strong</i>		Voltaic (N)	
Cause <i>Ransacked</i>	Engineer-Sapper	Telekinesis (D)	Swagger Battle Cry (A)
End <i>Peaceful</i>		Animate Objects (O)	
Cause <i>Disorder</i>		Necromancy (H)	Blade Heirloom (I)
End <i>Patriotic</i>		Power Words (S)	
Cause <i>Rebellious</i>		Spirit Guide (R)	Blade Ingenious (A)
End <i>Fruitful</i>		Celestial (G)	Blade Mucilage (B)
Cause <i>Famine</i>		Geomancy (C)	
End <i>Civil</i>		Shape Shifting (J)	Blade Golden (T)
Cause <i>Pestilence</i>		Cosmic (T)	Blade Fantastic (D)
End <i>Prosperous</i>		Precognition (E)	Swagger Speed & Guile (R)
Cause <i>Pillaged</i>		Paralysis (Q)	
End <i>Justice</i>	Courtly Grace	Psionics (B)	Swagger Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S)
Cause <i>Corrupt</i>	Briber	Hexes (M)	Blade Scheming (S)
End <i>Entertained</i>		Thought Control (P)	
Cause <i>Unruly</i>	Brawler	Conjuration (L)	Blade Hellish (M)

Note, not all the swaggering and skills made it onto that last table. The table is far from exhaustive and complete. I admit this can be a struggle, trying to figure out how say Steward would end an empire or increase a town's fleas. Yet, most anything done falsely will have a negative impact. That steward could do his managing to hurt, so long as he first obtains through a local lord some modest power and responsibility. There he plans his harm. Break deals and end City Trait Strong? I'd agree to allow the roll.

I was chuckling, but resisted, putting some things like Repartee and Minstrel as both the creator of Entertainment and the end of it. Critics and excessive use of star-ratings will be the death of art. Yet please five-stars please; I write with a yearning for five red stars. As if anyone (besides me) is ever going to ready this?

## **More to Ponder on KNIGHT**

The KNIGHT event seldom has any way to help the rival. The exception is that later flipped Major Arcana Devil. The lord he works for is not likely to attack the players, even as they cause mischief. The rivalry of minions is as unlikely to faze the greater NPC as it is the players. How many servitors are on the group longboat? And on any given day what's being plotted to avenge minor wrongs? See, the lordly leader just doesn't have time to care, until his City-State Traits are being mangled.

The Ref may insist the players keep a good record of who came from where. Great color is added by tying KNIGHT events back to the region or the adventure. e.g. *Ivan of Cherson* or *Ivan of the Kidnap Mission*. As the minions of the players become more diverse, new factions and problems are created (during encounters). As minions are treated badly, they have stories to tell of past player criminal acts and intrigues. Some players thrive on clerical tasks, so put them to work naming and accounting the small subsets of their men. Others will find it droll. Know your players.

In rare cases where a KNIGHT is patently unavailable or inappropriate to the setting, substitute a KNAVE. This is rare indeed, since people can be met anywhere. Recall, various Twists and Flairs generated by the mission change KNIGHT events more often than any other card.

## **Double Up KNIGHT, Optional**

If the players ever receive two KNIGHT encounters in the same Phase, they can treat the second one as a TEN. This generally should occur, where the Ref has a detailed climax ready for the players. When playing flip-card Outlands, where the encounters and climax are being generated on the fly, the KNIGHT should remain unchanged.

## **Epilog KNIGHT**

After the climax or after the players have decided to quit the quest, **during the Epilog treat KNIGHT as TEN**. No need for a clarifying card. Continue with the quest's aftermath.

## KNIGHT Clarifier

**Proxy King:** *Champion.* A squire and prime bodyguard to a lordship. This person fight duels. Boost his level to a full D8. The most common mishaps he suffers are from lingering battle injuries; the champion will often practice at arms with the lord. As the lord fumbles, the champion must grin through the pain. His intrigues involve when he's paid to be negligent as a protector, or in these sparring sessions he lashes out.

**Inverted:** *Vigiles.* Delegated the responsibility for keeping the peace, a shire reeve or sheriff. He may be related to the lord he serves, so he's less likely to leave service. Yet many a mishap will result from a chase on horseback. He may be found unconscious to start the event.

**Proxy Queen:** *Emissary.* An attorney who takes grievances to other lords. If the emissary is incompetent, the lord will be too busy on mending external affairs to handle his regional problems. More intrigue will brew. The most important act of an emissary is to negotiate ransom and terms of surrender. The flip may denote the lord is held by an enemy of the empire, like the lizard men. Is the KNIGHT impartial in his acts or serving another's goals?

**Inverted:** *Confidante.* A mistress or fraternity brother, a close associate of the lord, a typical court free-loader who stays for the luxury and none of the responsibilities. The confidante is often openly antagonistic to any other minion. He does not make mistakes; he has no duties. he's the guy saying, "*I told you so,*" following another person's misfortune. Any act of mishap should be assigned to another member of local court. Intrigue follows favoritism, and even when not a mistress, that fraternity brother may be trying to get his high lord back out on an adventure. The other courtiers will want the lord running official matters, not galivanting.

**Proxy Knight:** *Knight-Errant.* A bachelor who rents a place to stay, paying usually in services, a monster slayer. The knight will philander in court, overspend his allowance and generally make mischief. If he is involved in intrigue, he has a half D8 people on his hit-list or opposed to him as cuckold.

**Inverted:** *Spy-Enforcer.* A temporary position, the high lord has an enemy in his ranks. This outsider is supposed to find the local traitor. Recall, no one reads minds. The party of players can aid him as more outsiders, ones with skills. If the spy-enforcer is the KNIGHT, he will deliver Treasure Laden (D) to the party if the true culprit or culprits are revealed. This could be a fool's errand, as there will be too many to solve in a short period of time. But perhaps mark the place as having intrigue in the campaign.

**Proxy Knave:** *Heir Apparent.* The one who takes over upon the death of the high lord. If a blood relation, he is an embarrassment. This person could be trying to



hurry along the process, but the KNIGHT event should not involve the high lord. His more immediate enemy will be someone who might replace him in this rank. This is not an imperial heir. Of course, female as well as male in the role.

**Inverted: Jester.** The man who provides comic relief, usually at the expense of other members of the local court. The jester may get carried away and insult the high lord himself or be made magically to do so.

**Proxy 10: Armorer.** Binds magical properties into metals, cares for the greatest of relics. Every manor will have its share of tinkers and smiths, so by generating a special armorer as a high lord's courtier, this fellow must come with a reputation or be there for a reason. Relics are unpredictable, moving along their own Warped Outcome tally. The mishap or intrigue relates to something dormant changing or a protection necessary suddenly lapsing. If the encounter is above ground, a sky realm, it may be what's keeping the castle afloat!

**Inverted: Mount Handler.** A mere farrier, tending to horses, would not earn a place in the local court; magic is in work. The mount is monstrous. The small mishap or intrigue will involve a fight with the creature. The lord later will be miffed his property was slain. Dinosaurs can be fun to have saddled and hanging about, unless you dislike Crichton.

**Proxy 9: Astrologer.** Someone who sees bad events but is not believed or will be punished by those whose plot has been thwarted. The astrologer may instead be a charlatan with no ability. He will not be loved, but he could be feared. His visions if truly spiritual predict calamity. The players may wish to leave the region quickly.

**Inverted: Vizier.** Chief magical counselor to the lord. He is usually hated by the man's heirs, because he prolongs the lord's life. Many a vizier shuns attention, content to lead without title, his actions will be smooth, full of silent intrigue.

**Proxy 8: Herald.** A sage who keeps the records of the land. Losing the records would be a disaster. No one can remember all the trivium. People have been known to fabricate historic records. The true purpose of a relic may have been lost or altered.

**Inverted: Herbalist.** A humble gardener, hardly, a full blown alchemist most likely, with a huge array of labs and experiments taking place in the lower recesses of some dungeon. Ghastly intrigues, and the high lord is an addict. All manner of power vacuum might be created by sobriety.

**Proxy 7: Master Hounds.** The keeper of the kennels. Hounds being just a colorful way of saying beasts with moat creatures and all manner of denizens under his control. Wolves in the pens, he mixes more dangerous species with tame ones. He is often a shapeshifter, but no one asks. His ability might be malady and not wizardry. Cleaning the pens and servicing the monsters is foul work, almost always he's totally mad and antisocial. A beast may get free or evolve; another place to add a monster fight.



**Inverted: Forester.** The warden of the wild lands. he will be dealing with poachers or gypsies, some outside invader. This new threat may not even be human or may have erupted up from the underworlds.

**Proxy 6: Pagan Priest.** A temple chaplain with more theatric ability than magic. Miracles are left to the many gods. His role is to predict how decisions made by the regional court will be embraced by the commoners. He controls those people pretty thoroughly. The region could be in protest or riot.

**Inverted: Sophist Confessor.** A person who teaches ethics and absolves the sins of the high lord through rational justification. The sophist helps the lord relieve his guilt. He probably uses magic and may not even be human, except in appearance. The high lord could stray into paranoid fits without his trusted confessor. Anyone who injures this rival will need to explain themselves, ethically.

**Proxy 5: Captain Watch.** A sergeant at arms charged with setting the rotation of the high lord's guards. He embraces honor and loyalty, but he also has a bloodlust. He's a tormentor, seeing assassins and seeking confessions. Constantly taking people to the breaking point can bring insane reaction. Who is on watch can lead to inside intrigue. The watch commander controls who moves where and when, so he is feared by most who have secrets to hide. He controls when and where lovers may rendezvous.

**Inverted: Barber.** Sure, he cuts hair, but few are worried about their appearance in a fantasy world. The barber here is the doctor, a quack physician for a hypochondriac. He may have tried magic and failed.

**Proxy 4: Artificer.** A teacher hated for discipline by a younger set of courtiers, and an artist beloved by many older loyalists, including the high lord. Almost always a true wizard but may also be one who lost considerable power an age ago by misadventure. Part of many a fairytale, he may be given a child as reward for service.



That's both strange and unpredictable, but never tawdry. This is a pledge of safekeeping, not a gift to feed a demon. But Ref decides.

**Inverted: Edificer.** A master mason who improves the city or estates. He designs buildings for show, lots of statues and hanging gardens. All his work is completely impractical and precarious; the magic holding all together is failing.

**Proxy 3: Gatekeeper.** This man guards a high lord's bedchamber. That may be a barbican to a private castle or the single passage into a room. Acting as a self-contained vault, each gatehouse will have its own staff and discipline. Can he be bought? has he been bought? Surely for the right price, but seldom in the simple currency of gold. Also ask why the high lord needs an identified gate warden? The entrance he guards may be a portal into the Unending Grey or to the stars above.

**Inverted: Valet.** Clothes make the man. But here, the clothes are entirely magical. He's not simply making the lord more presentable, the valet like the armorer is creating magical apparel to protect and empower his master. The binding of magic to fashion can have consequences unintended. He does make and use relics, yet not often truly with any confidence or control.

**Proxy 2: Jailer.** A psychotic running a medieval torture chamber. Meeting this KNIGHT causes a minus one Quest Pip, regardless of anything else. Just part of the reason this man is so hated. The high lord keeps a special prisoner, usually enchanted that represents the major mishap or intrigue.

**Inverted: Alderman.** A representative of a guild and another sign that the high lord is sharing power with outside forces. A gang leader in his own right, his intrigues usually spill over into the local court.

**Proxy Ace: Steward.** Here, a nonhuman, an extraordinary cook of renown; his actions will be always suspect, since he isn't human. He is also a food taster. So why does the high lord believe someone is trying to poison him?

**Inverted: Aerarium.** A person who collects the estate rents and keeps the expense records. If his records are wrong or lost, this tax exchequer will lose a hand. He dares not err twice. Hoarding of real gold attracts raiders, delvers and monsters. The high lord will take great offense when his aerarium seems to dress and live more lavishly than himself.

**Any Majors:** Treat these as additional modifiers like those found in the *Generating Quest* booklet under **Rival (WHO?) Major Tarot Broaden** facts.

## Requests for Aid

The Ref may allow the players to hire away KNIGHT minions from regional lords. Do not always roll on this table, when the event implied the KNIGHT was recruited outright. e.g. Sword, upright.

Any KNIGHT could join the party, but does he want to? If the KNIGHT is aided by the group, he has greater incentive to help. But, he also has more at home now to make him stay there; the players fixed his problem, right? Not every friend wants to travel. Yet there will be times when an NPC minion becomes part of the group, but only after being convinced.

Tact is very important, when trying to get a KNIGHT to join the party. The same table might also be used to get someone to just render aid or pledge the group support as a contact or favor. Tormentor is nice, but sometimes you want to be subtle when obtaining information. The prime player character must choose how he interacts with the NPC he's recruiting or querying:

- ~ *Money Enticements*
- ~ *Veiled Threat*
- ~ *Flattery & Banter*
- ~ *Indifference (Playing it cool)*

**Money Enticements** is a signing bonus. I'd call them a bribe, but you're not truly making the NPC do something he isn't inclined to do. Bribery skill is not required, unless the action is designed to reveal information. Many a KNIGHT wants to join but is sizing up the party. Many a person will offer aid but wonders why he should help. What's in it for him? He certainly doesn't want to side with people that are going to get him killed. Having money to gift, suggests the party is flourishing.

These have the highest chance of success, but the player loses his purse of coins. Anyone in the party may volunteer to give their own purse of coins, should the player be broke. In some cases, the Ref may decide other tangible objects may be used instead of the purse. If none of the group has money to spend, this option is impossible.

**Veiled Threat** tries to impress the NPC that the prime player character is a serious person of significant prowess. Is he? He probably is in many ways with swaggering and levels. The Ref may decide the player character is too weak to impress the NPC, or just let the final card flip for resolution imply that outcome. Threats work more often than Flattery and Indifference, but they also have more negative outcomes. They are not as fruitful as cash, but no one loses his purse. You don't need to always break a person's arm to get them to do what you want.

**Flattery & Banter** makes the KNIGHT feel welcome, one of the gang. Alcohol helps, but it's not required. As a choice, flattery works less but will not make any enemies. You just might not prompt anyone to answer your questions. You may not gain a hireling simply by using kind words.

**Indifference** suggests to the KNIGHT that he has to make up his own mind. Little to nothing is offered. You try to get him to boast, when information is needed. Everyone tends to monolog if they have a secret they wish to share. Likewise, little to nothing is revealed about the party. It is a safe option but also one prone to outright failure. People need validation; this is not such.

None of these actions require specific skills or swaggering. None require a specific Trait. Someone in the party must speak the man's language, but there's usually somebody among the crew who understands (every language). However, if the prime player character (only that character) does not share a language with the KNIGHT, he must make any roll to follow as Shaken (minus two to dice). Dealing through an interpreter is always sketchy; something is bound to be lost by not knowing the man's actual heritage and humor.

Select a Tact and then flip a card. The result will be the Task Resolution required to gain a contact, friend or favor; the KNIGHT might also join the adventure. Only the prime player character may attempt this roll to recruit new henchmen.

### **NPC Incentives, Pressed, Pleaded or Ignored**

	<b>Money Enticements</b>	<b>Veiled Threat</b>	<b>Flattery &amp; Banter</b>	<b>Indifference (Playing it Cool)</b>
<b>Cup</b>	Ordinary	Ordinary	Automatic	Tasking
<b>Rod</b>	Ordinary	Ordinary	Difficult	Difficult
<b>Coin</b>	Automatic	Ordinary	Difficult	Difficult
<b>Sword</b>	Difficult	Automatic	Difficult	Tasking
<b>Major Tarot</b>	Ordinary	Make Enemy	Ordinary	Automatic
<b>Inverted</b>	Fail and add a half D8 to your tally for Warped Outcome for anything except Indifference (Playing it Cool).			



## **KNAVE – Minions of the Rival**

These represent agents of the opposition. There are many Twists and Flairs, which change other encounters to KNAVE. Many of the other numbered Mission Consequence encounters generate KNAVE action as well. A KNAVE is a KNAVE is a KNAVE, no matter how it flips or appears. They reflect conflicts provoked by *Direct*, *Indirect* or *Covert* actions instigated by the rival or others opposed to the quest.

**Direct actions** involve confrontation between the rival and the player characters. Actions like these should be reserved for *Phase C*, but may occur as early as *B*. Personal duels, legion skirmish or ship engagements are all considered direct actions. If the players' mission requires capture or murder of the rival, he will always escape after starting these direct actions. Regardless of the mission, the Referee should not have the rival commit all his resources or his own life, until the climax.

**Indirect actions** differ from direct in that they appear more ill-planned. Only very powerful rivals will risk losing a ship or cohort of men by indirect action; however, NPCs have been known to unwisely attack to gain status and glory. Perhaps an agent of the rival has exceeded his instructions by offering combat. The rival will never be present in these actions. Instead, some other major opposing NPC undertakes combat.

Indirect actions occur in all three phases and the Epilog. Most occur in the much dreaded *Phase B*. If the opposition is not very influential, wealthy or puissant, then an indirect action will be even less effective or mere token in effort. Skirmish is always a choice, where the enemy engages, but only for a set number, half D8 rounds, before the rest run away. Those rounds may be treated all as Banes for higher level player character groups. Who decides? Red decides.

**Covert actions** do not involve any battle between the players and the opposition. Yet there still may be task resolution and certainly loss. These acts cover a broad range of infiltration, intrigue and hindrance that the opposition uses to discourage the mission. For instance: stealing needed items, creating shortages of supplies, soldiers, sailors, supplies, etc., bribing servitors or mercenaries, planting spies, poisoning or kidnapping players or allied NPCs, even using legal measures of soliciting nobles along the way to arrest the group, impound the longboat, delay and drive up the cost of the adventure (in terms of lost longboat swaggering) – all can be covert actions.



Sometimes these agents will pose as representatives of the patron, giving treacherous soldiers or inferior supplies. They might be generous at first, in order to gain the trust of the players. Later, they'll be asking for the return of those men, and of course, extra equipment and soldiers.

Covert actions happen mostly in *Phase A*, but can occur in *B*. The more desperate types occurring in that later phase. By *Phase C*, the rival will have given up covert actions to stop the players.

In most cases, the players will suspect a covert act. e.g. They see the Knave card flip. Yet the group will be helpless for the moment to prove any misdeed. A skilled Tormentor can be used, but torture used on the wrong grumbler will lead to rebellion. Mistakes are often made. Who is to know which were intentional? Let the players discover clues to traitors (or false clues). Role-play should generate the rest.

Many food spoilages, brawls among the troops, disappearances of loyal men, lost or damaged equipment, etc., will be blamed on bad luck. Which is worse, ill-fate or an unknown enemy in the group? The players must not instill too much distrust in their troops – teamwork is needed for the fight.

## **An Insanely Loyal KNAVE**

The enemy minions tend to be partisan, unflappable, stereotypical unnamed bad guys, thugs, brutes and villains. The players should not be worrying too much about the orphans they leave behind. If anyone wishes, he can add a personality flaw to his character to reflect this callousness? Any volunteers? Yeah, I thought not.

Since the missions will become harder for higher level characters, the rival will also become more powerful. His minions will respect and fear him. Only after defeating a full D8 KNAVE encounters (unlikely) will the enemy henchmen begin to doubt their service. This roll need not even be made. Perhaps bribe a captured man for a clue or some trivial information on the rival's swaggering. (Really, he uses a sword.) But otherwise, you don't often lose by just whipping the defeated out of camp or turning them over to the local lord for punishment. *"Let them contemplate life on the tree of woe."*

The Referee decides which type of action—Direct, Indirect or Covert—applies. It's easy to generate wave after wave of fanatics with knives, but that's simply unrealistic. *"It's rather dull game play as well."*

## Covert Acts

**Cups** – Red sky in the morning. The players' longboat loses Treachery Expunged (G). Attempt to mitigate. If that fails or the technique was not there to begin with, then continue to try to mitigate three more times for (L), (O) and (Q). If the longboat doesn't have any of these techniques, the prime player character selects either (A) or (B) to mitigate. If the longboat started the encounter without any of these techniques, then suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

**Inverted:** None of the losses may be mitigated.

**Rods** – Nagging suspicions and grumbling. The players' longboat loses Treachery Expunged (G). Attempt to mitigate. If that fails or the technique was not there to begin with, then continue to try to mitigate three more times for (M), (R) and (T). If the longboat doesn't have any of these techniques, the prime player character selects either (E) or (H) to mitigate. If the longboat started the encounter without any of these techniques, then suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

This entire event can be avoided if any player volunteers to be the unlucky victim of the covert minion's attack. He must roll Tasking or in failing suffer a vicious wound. Regardless, the act of sabotage was prevented.

**Inverted:** None of the losses may be mitigated.

**Coins** – Ill news and sentiment. The players' longboat loses Treachery Expunged (G). Attempt to mitigate. If that fails or the technique was not there to begin with, then continue to try to mitigate twice more for (P) and (S). If the longboat doesn't have any of these techniques, the prime player character selects either (C) or (K) to mitigate. If the longboat started the encounter without any of these techniques, then suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

This entire event can be avoided if any player volunteers to risk personal loss from the rival's covert minion. He must roll Tasking or in failing loses any swaggering; consider this loss a humiliating counterblow in a short duel. The swagger loss may even be taken from the group's longboat techniques. Clever strategic benefit may prevent the loss if any remain untapped.

**Inverted:** None of the losses may be mitigated.

**Swords** – Dark horizons. The players' longboat loses Treachery Expunged (G). Attempt to mitigate. If that fails or the technique was not there to begin with, then continue to try to mitigate three more times for (I), (J) and (N). If the longboat doesn't have any of these techniques, the prime player character selects either (D) or (F) to mitigate. If the longboat started the encounter without any of these techniques, then suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

This entire event can be avoided if any player volunteers to suffer the brunt of the magic used by the rival's covert minion. He must roll Tasking or in failing suffer a half D8 addition to his tally for Warped Outcome. Gifted strategic benefit still

applies; so, it may be worth losing one Longboat technique to avoid that Warped tally outcome. Is one lost technique better than a potential fist full?

***Inverted:*** None of the losses may be mitigated.

## **Indirect Acts**

***Cups*** – Enemy minion makes an attack. Stress one Longboat technique at random. If the ship has none, the test will be to prevent a negative Quest Pip. All players in the group will suffer a Brash Bane. If a majority are successful in the individual events of combat, then the technique is saved and salvaged. After each player takes a single Bane event, the encounter ends.

***Inverted:*** the battle is not concluded after the round of banes. Instead, fight on against this adversary. This combat may be resolved with any combat method. Ref may decide to set a Defensive Modifier of zero, one or two. After defeating a number equal to the number of players, the rest retreat. Winning the action handedly, with captures and kills, might gain the party a Quest Pip.

***Rods*** – Enemy minion employs a relic. Stress one Longboat technique at random. If the ship has none, the test will be to prevent a negative Quest Pip. All players in the group will suffer an Enemy Spellcaster's Bane; each receives his event based on his character's level: 1-3 Cultist, 4-6 Misanthrope, 7-8 Sorcerer. If a majority are successful in the individual events of combat, then the technique is saved and salvaged. After each player takes a single Bane event, the encounter ends.

***Inverted:*** The magical strike is NOT matched to level of victim; the highest player character's level determines the threat to all.

***Coins*** – Enemy minion uses magic. Stress one Longboat technique at random. If the ship has none, the test will be to prevent a negative Quest Pip. All players in the group will suffer a Magical Bane. If a majority are successful in the individual events of combat, then the technique is saved and salvaged. After each player takes a single Bane event, the encounter ends.

***Inverted:*** the battle is not concluded after the round of banes. Instead, fight on against this adversary. This combat may be resolved with any combat method. Ref may decide to set a Defensive Modifier of zero, one or two. After defeating a number equal to the number of players, the rest retreat. Winning the action handedly, with captures and kills, might gain Treasure Laden (D).

***Swords*** – Enemy minion summons a demon. Stress one Longboat technique at random. If the ship has none, the test will be to prevent a negative Quest Pip. All players in the group will suffer a Bane Monster event; match the creature to level of victim with lowest levels all taking a hit on *Nasty*, then count up to level eight struck by *Great*. If a majority are successful in the individual events of combat, then the

technique is saved and salvaged. After each player takes a single Bane event, the encounter ends.

**Inverted:** The monster ferocity is NOT matched to level of victim; the highest player character's level determines the threat to all. No need to be kind.

## Direct Acts

**Cups** – The main rival attacks in personal duels. Use his Defensive Modifier when he becomes the victim of any combat event. Otherwise, the players must also defeat a number equal to *twice* the number of players in the party. After doing so and dispatching, causing to flee or forcing the surrender of the main rival, the battle ends. However, the enemy may not be truly vanquished here. Somehow and some way, his



minions manage to create just enough opportunity for the rival to escape. He may only be truly defeated in the climax challenges. But, by gaining victory, the party gains a Tactical Pip for every battle in the climax.

**Inverted:** Enemy starts Enraged.

**Rods** – Fight a larger scale battle using Q&D Ship Engagements or Legion on Legion Clashes. The rival may even be fought on either side of a siege; someone's caught in a frontier fortress.

**Inverted:** Fight a monster. The rival sends his best retainer or conjures something as an obstacle. The beast's ferocity will be equal to the highest level character in the party. If there is more than one Stallari, then why not a Dragon? Substitute all Banes for the equivalent Monster Bane. It's obviously Large+, and still there may be more than one in number to defeat. Ref needs to make this a worthy clash; put the threat out there to ensure some combat Ignobles might be checked. Recall, to get that check, all have to resist

using make-rolls.

**Coins** – The main rival attacks from afar with magic. His Defensive Modifier does not come into play. Instead the Ref selects a Defensive Modifier of one or two

for his underlings. The players fight a number of enemies equal to the number of players in the party. Additionally, the prime player character treats his Banes as spellcaster; Ref decides the severity there: cultists, misanthrope of sorcerer (based on the rival's role). If the player is knocked out of combat, then another player takes his place as the magic attack victim.

The rival will not be caught or injured in this action. After defeating the specified number of minions, the combat ends. Little or nothing is gained by this action. Kidding, each player still up and fighting at battle's end, may roll Ordinary to gain any swaggering. He can even reward the group by taking a technique for the party's boat.

***Inverted:*** Taken by surprise, the players start Shaken.

***Swords*** – Fight swagger vs swagger against the main rival's techniques, until he is reduced to a final half D8. Go around the table with each player choosing one of his swaggering techniques and comparing it to the one the Ref secretly selects from the rival's repertoire. Compare to the matrix in Fundamentals and see the result. Any *Inconsequential* result will be held and resolved by the next player's act. Any player may choose to take *Minor Antagonist* action—it's rough—and switch the outcome. After the main rival is reduced in statue by losing most of his techniques, he will flee and escape into the later climax challenges. His techniques will be weakened if there is another swagger vs swagger contest there.

***Inverted:*** After the enemy leader is defeated and forced to flee, continue combat against adversaries numbering double the total player characters in the group. Since the enemy and his bodyguard were vanquished, maybe some reward is justified for capturing his supply train? Gain any one Longboat technique, plus Treasure Laden (D). Already have treasure filled ship, then ask yourself why you're still on this cockamamie quest? The answer should be for the Ignobles. *"Toss those gold chalices upon the others."*

## **Ranks TEN to ACE**

### **TEN – Phase Advances**

Denote a change in phase. Whenever a TEN is flipped, the phase advances by one from *A* to *B* or *B* to *C*. If the phase is *C*, then encounters for the journey are complete. The final climax is now moderated by the Referee. If the players have completed the mission (or abandoned their mission) and are returning home in the Epilog, then picking a TEN will officially, finally, but possibly not completely end the mission. Follow with the Scenario's Aftermath. During the Epilog, the players are looking for a TEN to signal the story has ended. *"On to the sequel."*



Picking three TEN in a row would place the players at their journey's end without encounters and picking a forth (after the climax) would send them straight home. *"I've never seen that happen in thirty-five years of pretty regular play."*

A city-state is often at the end of each encounter phase. There the players can spend purses and perhaps gain some longboat techniques. They might also trade Treasure Laden (D) for something more tangible. They will also lose techniques due to the locations bad influence or shortfalls. The table was listed in both the *Outlands Fundamentals* and *Generating Quests*. A third time won't hurt. (Since I no longer have to pay a printer by the page, wahoo!)

Longboat Techniques Barter-Mishap	
<p>A city-state may have up to ten <b>Boon</b> traits and ten <b>Bane</b> Traits. When docking in a city-state with a Bane Trait, party's Longboat immediately loses the associated Swaggering. When landing at a city-state with a Boon Trait, party may at Ref's option, be able to purchase the associated Swaggering.</p> <p>Bottom five, (P) to (T), for perhaps a purse of coins. Next eight, (H) to (O), for all the purses. (A) to (G) require swap of Treasure Laden (D) for any one; might be even more? Loot and adventure to become filled with riches for increased purchasing options.</p> <p>No more than a quarter of the current total longboat techniques may be gained or lost in a single location. At Referee's option, players might attempt at Tasking a display of Trait, Skill, or Swagger to avoid loss.</p>	Populous ( <i>Plagued</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Religiously Inspired (C) or Disease Free (I)
	Magazine ( <i>Depleted</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Vigilant (E) or Battle Ready (H)
	Strong ( <i>Ransacked</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Treasure Laden (D) or Noble Allegiance (K)
	Peaceful ( <i>Disorder</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Pure w/o Curse (J) or Battle Hard (T)
	Patriotic ( <i>Rebellious</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Elite Goals (A) or Charted Path (B)
	Fruitful ( <i>Famine</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Abundant Stores (M) or Democracy (S)
	Civil ( <i>Pestilence</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Vermin Free (N) or Undamaged (O)
	Prosperous ( <i>Pillaged</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Arcane Sentinel (F) or Seasoned Crew (L)
	Justice ( <i>Corrupt</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Treachery Exp. (G) or Inhuman Watchdogs (R)
	Entertained ( <i>Unruly</i> ) – Purchase ( <i>or lose</i> ): Comradery (P) or Orderly Kept (Q)

The TEN is Mission Consequence in every phase. For the remaining other cards, remember the card must be drawn in the proper phase in order for it to be Mission Consequence. Not every travel card is, just most.

The cards ranked one to nine often generate Mission Inconsequence or Special encounters based on the suits and ranks of this card and the previous play. Refer to the Encounter Flowchart.

## NINE – Climax Realization

These represent a realization that the mission is moving to the climax. When this card is selected in *Phase C*, it may be treated as either a TEN or a QUEEN. The prime player makes his choice. The only reason he would select QUEEN would be if

he still lacks clues to find the climax, or if he thinks the party is totally unprepared. If selected as a QUEEN, the patron should be generous. Even if the card is inverted, the players receive a reward.

## **EIGHT – Last Travel Adversary**

These represent opposition, but from this same opposition comes the knowledge that the mission's goal is close. In *Phase C*, treat this card as a KNAVE; but, after the conflict is resolved, the phase changes to the climax like a TEN. Prisoner confessions, captured documents, proximity of opposing force, pursuit by scouts, etc., all give clues to bring the adventure to the climax.

## **SEVEN – Pyrrhic Victory (Set-Back)**

These represents a bitter victory. Usually, the result of this selection is the Phase returns to B. The quest is far from done, when it should be at the climax challenges.

Flip a card for the consequences. Specific details are only important if a player wishes to check an Ignoble. Let the player of the lowest level character make a short apology for his failure in putting the group behind in the quest. If the Ref decides the player's explanation is beyond recovery, say the magic object to be returned was dropped in the sea, then the entire mission may be called a flop. Continue in the Epilog. Can he recant? Sure, maybe? Perhaps a Difficult roll by the prime player character, unless he was the one making the mistake.

## **Set-Back Consequences**

**Cups** – The delay was justified, a humanitarian act or a miracle calling from the gods; one place along the journey gains improvement to its City-State Traits. Remove a bad trait or add a good trait. Ref decides what and where, unless a player crafts his own narrative of the outcome.

He still risks the entire mission failure if he presents a situation beyond recovery. For instance, if he added *Fruitful* by overseeing the planting of apple trees. That would take some time, right? No magic, just Horticulture skill? A good goal, but how long can the true mission be delayed? Just one example of kibitz.

**Inverted:** Caused a disaster; one place along the journey loses improvement to its City-State Traits. Add a bad trait or remove a good trait. Ref decides what and where, unless a player crafts his own narrative of the outcome. He may become persona non gratis in that beset place. The real impact is to the players' longboat as they adventure on future quests. Weakened cities inflict pain on travel.

**Rods** – Receive warning, but by whom? This allowed you to avoid an ambush, puzzle or rival's timed response; gain a plus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** Feeling of impending doom. The party suffers a negative Quest Pip. If the party quits the adventure now, enters the Epilog, they do not suffer that penalty.

***Coins*** – Windfall of sorts. The action was caused by a secondary opportunity; gain one of the following: Treasure Laden (D), Abundant Stores (M) or full purses for all. If the players already have all three, then they got greedy. Any player choosing to make a narrative of the event gains the personality flaw of Greedy.

***Inverted:*** Venture of speculative misery. The group must lose the following, either Treasure Laden (D) or Abundant Stores (M); if neither is available, the lowest level character suffers a vicious wound, probably in an underworld delve. But, the game author shouldn't kibitz. Plus, each player must roll Tasking to keep his purse. Maybe he bought a fine plumed hat? Again, I should not kibitz – a player should include this in his own narrative.

***Swords*** – In harm's way, protecting the innocent or your self-interests. Each player must make an Ordinary roll or suffer the loss of one of his character's swaggering; he may select longboat techniques. If the player choosing to make a narrative, mentions in any way a battle or monster, each player may roll Difficult and gain the Fury Pip in his next combat action. If anyone points this out to him, the advantage is lost. *{Per corporate, maybe he should buy his own booklet and read along.}*

***Inverted:*** Bad mojo in the air. Each player must roll Difficult or add a half D8 to his tally of Warped Outcome. None of those events should be generated, just add to the tally. If the player choosing to make a narrative, mentions in any way a battle or monster, each player must additionally roll Difficult to avoid a vicious wound. If anyone else mentions battle or monster, even to say *don't mention monsters*, well that was a mention of a monster? Roll or be wounded.

## **SIX – Anticlimax**

These represent the worst of the worst. When this card is picked in *Phase B*, the result is like a SEVEN. The Phase drops back to A. In some cases, the mission itself will be outright failed. Has rival has won? This will not reflect an instantaneous destruction of the player characters or their longboat. Rather, the card represents knowledge that the mission can no longer succeed as planned. Apply a negative Quest Pip.

Flip a card for the consequences (the table under SEVEN). Specific details are only important if a player wishes to check an Ignoble. Let the player of the lowest level character make a short apology for his failure and the jeopardy to the quest. If the Ref decides the player's explanation is beyond recovery, say the person being

escorted died of the flu, then the entire mission is over. Continue in the Epilog. Perhaps let him have a second chance to explain the fiasco.

The patron becomes angry and blames the players. Treat all further QUEEN as KNIGHT. He will not befriend anyone in the aftermath. Ref may decide the patron even refuses to pay any reward. The mission is at best *Successful, but Problematic*, even if the goals are completed later.

### **FIVE – Opposition to the Opposition**

Allies come forward. In Phase B, treat this card, disregarding inversion, as either a KNIGHT or a QUEEN. As a KNIGHT, they might gain an agent. As a QUEEN, the patron provides them with information or clues on the rival. Use the card's inversion to decide QUEEN upright or KNIGHT not. Yet to say again, the result is not treated as inverted for the outcome table.

### **FOUR – Opposition**

These represent the enemy coming forward. Some battle likely occurs. In Phase B, treat as either a KNAVE or if inverted as a KING.

### **THREE – Realization of Commencement**

These represent the first significant milestone being crossed; the mission has truly begun. In Phase A, the players receive benefit, or loss when inverted, like a QUEEN; additionally, advance to Phase B like a TEN.

### **TWO – Opposition to Commencement**

These represent enemies. In Phase A, treat the card as either a KNAVE or if inverted a QUEEN. The phase remains unchanged.

### **ACE – Ultimate Commencement**

These represent a grand start or shortcut. In Phase A, the players may choose to regard this card as either a QUEEN & TEN combination or as back to back TEN events. The QUEEN is beneficial, even when inverted. One choice gives the players some necessary help or materials, plus go to Phase B. The other choice means the players jump right to Phase C. The players may even skip any event, which might occur between Phase B and C. An event, which is slated to occur at the end of Phase A, must still be resolved.

## Mission Inconsequence Encounters

Every encounter is unique. Yet if that's so, how can the game provide details on Mission Inconsequence encounters? In this section, the game will describe how to make new encounters, starting from broad classifications, then continuing with refined descriptions.

The rules will not list the actual events caused by the encounters, although examples will be given. It can be easy to create a table that lists a probability followed by a curt description of the event – to some degree these rules do just this. But, the actual Outland event created by the encounter must be more elaborate.

The Referee might decide the players meet two hundred bandits, but that is not the encounter. Who are these bandits, or more importantly why are they labeled bandits? For a force of such size is it: religious march, a cohort in revolt, an assembly of local militia, a scouting or foraging party for an invading army, etc. Any of those extra labels might further describe the group. Are they getting ready for a raid, celebrating after such, electing a leader, quarreling with themselves, dividing loot or interrogating a prisoner? What is their readiness? Do they see the players longboat? Are they all drunk or waiting in ambush? **The game cannot personalize each event; the Referee must do this.** He has a better sense of what the player characters can handle. He knows his campaign and how the players' mission might impact the campaign.

**Can Mission Inconsequence encounters influence the mission?** Damn straight; they do, and they will. The encounter is not caused by the players being on that particular mission. Here, the mission was of inconsequence. The players could be traveling for any number of reasons and still they meet the encountered event. *Mission Inconsequence Encounters* are not *Inconsequential to the Mission Encounters*. Those are ignored. If calling this section *Specifics and Motives of Mission DO NOT Matter to the Following Encounter* helps clarity, so be it, or maybe call them Other Encounters. The text will stick with Mission Inconsequence – it has a familiar ring.

The game employs a system of classifications. With each level of classification comes a description stated in generalities. Some encounters can happen over and over again—more correctly some general types of encounters happen often—but each particular meeting will specialize and alter the event. Take for example this list: a country, city, building, room. These descend in magnitude from the very broad, a general place to a particular location to an exact spot.



The game booklets (later the Ref making his own) will describe several settings in general terms. Each setting will have translations offering details on *ten categories* of encounters that occur for the players traveling through the setting. From those, more exact descriptions of *eight number types* will be given. However, at that point, the specifics will stop.

The Referee must describe the exact event. i.e. By analogy above – the Ref picks the rooms in the country, in the city, in the building. When an encounter generates a category and number, the exact event depends on the Referee’s interpretation. e.g. Number five in the Cup-Coin category of Seas – *Longboat, Seaworthiness*. The game offers much in the way of data, but the Referee has to select from sundry possibilities to create the play experience. By adding elements of his campaign and offering flair to his players, he generates the game’s action, arbitration, decisions, setbacks and triumphs.

Besides this booklet’s two examples, the Referee may want to develop his own settings for encounters. Here are some elements to consider. Keep all of the encounters modular, placed into groups by setting. Certain categories or numbered events will happen in every setting, but the setting will modify and specialize every result. The Referee must consider the setting in which the encounter occurs. A sea is different from land, as a minimum; there could be much more that makes even two ports different. e.g. One could be blockaded and under siege.



Each encounter package has three sections:

- A) Description of the setting in relation to the campaign.
- B) Description of categories; there are ten suit pairings.
- C) Description of numbered events; not everything involves combat.

## Encounter Categories

There are ten possible pairings for the two cards that generate a Mission Inconsequence encounter:

Cup-Cup, Cup-Rod, Cup-Coin, Cup-Sword, Rod-Rod,  
Rod-Coin, Rod-Sword, Coin-Coin, Coin-Sword, Sword-Sword

The combination of Rod-Cup is the same as Cup-Rod. As are others, Sword-Rod, Coin-Rod, Sword-Cup, etc.

To understand how the categories further describe the setting consider the symbolic meaning of the Tarot suits:

*Cups* – Nobility, Church, Laws, Conquest, Thought.

*Rods* – Peasants, Nature, Work, Adventure, Skill.

*Coins* – Wealth, Economics, Travel, Exploration.

*Swords* – Battle, Politics, Disorder, Mishap, Emotion.

These combine together to enhance or become base:

*Cup-Cup* – Boats, Extravagance, Stagnation, Lords, Aristocrats, Sea Monsters.

*Cup-Rod* – Estate Owners, Royalty, Family, Sailing Problems, Pagan Priests, Peculiar Situations.

*Cup-Coin* – Shipping, Deals, Craft, Carousing, Baggage, Cargo Problems.

*Cup-Sword* – Conflict, Mutiny, Magic Users, Action, Gentlemen, Travelers.

*Rod-Rod* – Unending Grey, Weather, Lands, Food, Unmarked Vessels, Commoners, Natural Obstacles.

*Rod-Coin* – Forts, Relics, Ship building, Repairs, Merchants, Constables, Treasure.

*Rod-Sword* – Stores for War, Pending Revolt, Open Rebellion, Monsters, Animals, Patrols.

*Coin-Coin* – Loss, Blackmail, Mines, Monopoly, Misfortune, Wind Changes, Travel Delay.

*Coin-Sword* – Greed, Thieves, Action, Mercenaries, Unexplained Events, Wagers.

*Sword-Sword* – Bitter War, Famine, Violence, Insanity, Troop Conflicts, Crew Problems.

The Tarot naturally generates fortunes. Use this fact to apply meanings that seem to fit or jog your memory. Use the cards to describe the encounter, to tell the player characters’ grand fortune. However, anything can be applied. The Referee can make any pairing represent any category of encounters under the setting. Don’t gripe and contradict the Ref, complaining “*That’s not what that means.*”

By no means should any listing of the ten categories attempt to cover all possible encounter events. Pick ten that are varied, but easy to further detail. Why wrack-your-brain thinking up encounters for obscure classes of folks? Gentlemen and brigands make good categories. Pick categories on taleworthy topics. Generate encounters that have action, but don’t make every encounter a battle. Not all problems should be solved with crimson on the blade.

## Numbered Events

Here’s a table to help you determine the numbered event. It really is just for those rusty on subtraction.

		<i>Selected Card</i>								
		Ace	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Ace		s	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2		1	s	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3		2	1	s	1	2	3	4	5	6
Previous Card	4	3	2	1	s	1	2	3	4	5
5		4	3	2	1	s	1	2	3	4
6		5	4	3	2	1	s	1	2	3
7		6	5	4	3	2	1	s	1	2
8		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	s	1
9		8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	s

Note: Selected card must NOT be drawn in its mission consequence phase. An "s" denotes the Special encounter type Campaign event.

The numbered events are statistically based. Understand, the odds of meeting a low numbered event are higher than meeting a high numbered event. Also, these

odds change depending upon the Phase. But don't worry, none of these probabilities need to be calculated to determine the encounter. Simply understand the following:

1, 2 or 3 – Common, Routine, Informational, typically Non-Hostile. In general, Ordinary rolls for tasks.

4 or 5 – Infrequent events, Action, Battle, Agitated Showdowns. In general, Difficult rolls.

6, 7 or 8 – Rare, Special, Flukes, Random. In general, Tasking rolls.

## Understanding Rank

**Rank One:** *Routine* – Fairly typical representation of the category. A most likely event with the simplest of resolution. For dangerous categories, combat may follow, but most often this event is noted and ignored. Seldom even test reaction. This initial event will make additional events in the same category have results more severe.

**Rank Two:** *Common* – Another typical event, but perhaps one requiring some exercise of skill, trait, diplomacy or player strategy to avoid impact. On less aggressive categories, this event usually has short-lived influence. Roll reaction if necessary.

**Rank Three:** *Informational* – Still occurs often but differs slightly from the previous two by the fact these people tend to interact with the players. Mostly they'll be friendly or have a neutral exchange, but possibly this turns threatening, creates covert goals or later becomes a surprise confrontation. A reaction test is important here.

**Rank Four:** *Infrequent* – The causal example of the category. Perhaps people or things with another motive or starting with a disguised intent. These can spark battle or other action, but the aggressor will most likely be the players. After the players learn of a deception, or see the whole intent, the players often are angry. These encounters tend to insult one's decency.

**Rank Five:** *Agitated* – A form of the category that appears hostile. For more benign categories, the event is at least disappointing. For evil or unlawful categories, this numbered event is truly to be feared. Not something that occurs often; when it does, the players enter combat.

**Rank Six:** *Flukes* – Some unlikely event, tending toward a bad result or a newly discovered problem the players must resolve. If the category is dangerous or itself precarious, these events can be catastrophic. These events by their very calculated nature, only occur in the dreaded *Phase B*.

**Rank Seven:** *Rare* – Here are events that only occur in stories, dime store novels and pulp acts of intrigue. These represents coincidences, or at times foul luck,

creating banes which may even be beyond credible belief. A seven is very, very unlikely to occur. When it does, the impact is usually quite grave.

**Rank Eight: Catch-All** – A final standard for all categories; this event can be any special event the Referee wishes. Each tends toward a highly specific encounter or happening; these are similar to personal events but affecting the whole group from the onset. Not all need be bad, but then again, it lousy to be a player character in a realm of dark magic.

## Setting Worksheet

This worksheet may aid in detailing the encounters of a setting. The symbols of ‘U’ stands for *Cups*, ‘x’ for *Rods*, ‘o’ for *Coins*, and ‘+’ for *Swords*.

Setting:					
U-U		U-x		U-o	
1		1		1	
2		2		2	
3		3		3	
4		4		4	
5		5		5	
6		6		6	
7		7		7	
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
U-†		x-x		x-o	
1		1		1	
2		2		2	
3		3		3	
4		4		4	
5		5		5	
6		6		6	
7		7		7	
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
x-†		o-o		o-†	
1		1		1	
2		2		2	
3		3		3	
4		4		4	
5		5		5	
6		6		6	
7		7		7	
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
		†-†			
		1			
		2			
		3			
		4			
		5			
		6			
		7			
		8	Catch-All		



## **Fairness**

The Ref could just outright kill a character. I've seen it done. Some Refs don't even need a reason. Take a deep breath, if you are a Ref having a bad day. Does any player deserve to lose hundreds of hours of game play? You'll probably just cause a rift in your group. We've all lived through a heroic death of a character, one where the risk was understood, and our luck failed. I still reminisce about some of my favorite character deaths.

And yet, I play a lot at conventions with near strangers. Strange Refs are downright mean. I often feel people who Ref truly hate humanity. I hope you find (or are) a kinder sort of foe.

## **NPC Reaction**

So there has to be some challenge, some sense of success against harsh odds. Yet, how do you know when you meet *Friend* or *Foe*? How do you know when you turned a potential friend into a foe? How do you know when you made someone angry (in the game), someone you should have just ignored as an encounter?

Reaction is a term of many meanings in role-play. It is used to determine speed and initiative on the attack or implies attitudes expressed by encountered people. Combat determines who hits when, but the players or the Ref must decide why. The numbered events imply a reaction and attitude, but the Referee might need to generate a responsible reply based at times upon the player actions.

In most actions, deals and meetings, the Referee can moderate the NPCs' and servitors' responses. However, when in doubt, the Tarot gives a quick answer and attitude table:

## **NPC Disposition**

*Cups* – Helpful to compassionate.

*Rods* – Courteous, but usually uninterested.

*Coins* – Uncooperative, confused or preoccupied.

*Swords* – Unfriendly, unexpectedly emotional or violent.

*Major Tarot* can modify the above or give special results as the Referee desires. In most cases simply ignore their selection, until a minor card is flipped.

This table should not be used constantly to provoke attacks from passersby. Many of the events generated by encounters have implied consequences. The

majority of people generated by Mission Inconsequence encounters will be disinclined to be involved. The players are downright dangerous.

Never use the table for player character responses; each player should make his own choices. Use this table sparingly to decide the consequences for more difficult propositions or enticements made by a player characters to another person in the campaign. As much as possible, the Referee should decide the event result without a random card flip. Only when resolving skills—briber, courtly grace, rabblouser—by mere die roll and little role-play interaction should results require interpretation.

Remember, it's very hard to deal with someone who speaks a different language. Plus, seldom will people talk to overtly armed strangers. A sheathed sword might be ignored; a brandished one will not. Large companies of soldiers send the timid in doors.

Cups are great, and the players may ask freely for advice or aid. The rest are less likely to give the players anything. Yet sometimes the players cannot skip an opportunity and let a privileged NPC walk away unmoved by their plight. The prime player character (leader) will want to press the issue or make a claim for help directly to a local noble or legion commander. He might also need to inspire his own servitors or get other recruits to join his cause. While role-play is often the preferred method of resolving these pleas, sometimes an expedient method is desired.

Let's avoid begging. Not every encounter is a potential bank for the players. Some people may not want to be bribed; they have a sense of duty. Some people hate to be led; they find loud action bloviating, empty, boorish. The player characters will be trained killers; must they swat every *fly* who *skitters by*? Can't some of these local bullies just be scared into backing away, so everyone saves honor? How in fairness, does the Ref know one person's personality from another? By a table of course and a flip of the card. Gamers trust in all things random.

**The *Request for Aid* under KNIGHT may also be used for other people met along the way.** Select a Tact and then flip a card. The result will be the Task Resolution required to gain help or someone's service.

Wait, this is the end of the section? All the rules have given so far is mumbo-jumbo, presto, endless lists of encounters to be made by the Ref? Now, don't fret.

Describing encounter settings is a sizable task. Two fully described settings are included. However, make more! At least tailor the settings to suit your campaign.

## Special Encounters

There are two types of special encounters: **Personal** and **Campaign**. These are different from the other encounters in that they do not initially involve the whole group. Personal events affect just one player character, and Campaign events affect no one initially. Later, the change can influence any and all of them.

The Referee decides which player has the encounter. Almost never will the prime player character—the player first approached by the patron and agreeing to take the mission—will experience these encounters. Personal Events personalize play for other members of the group.

Personal Events happen, at least initially, to one player character. He may involve others later. These encounters extend from the mundane to life threatening, from light fluff to options so intense they rival the mission. Some personal events can happen regardless of setting; others are dependent upon the environment. e.g. It's hard to get a ship problem on land.

The most important aspect to remember is that personal encounters happen once then never again. Each is unique, tailored to the character suffering the injury or attempting to gain. Sure, the generic outcomes of events will repeat, but usually some aspect of the narrative will change. Better still the player has as much burden creating the encounter as the Ref; both must describe the short tale that unfolds.

## Personal Events Typical Outcomes

**Cup:** Gain Traits, Skills, Swaggering. The player will be proving that his character has an aptitude. He might need to cover for another's mistake. He might be magically enhanced. These tasks tend to be Difficult. The gain might be temporary on an Ordinary roll, lasting just the adventure. The result may also be Ordinary, but only if something (like a longboat technique) might be sacrificed in failure. The player may also try to gain the lowest missing longboat technique on an Ordinary roll, provided he has a mitigating skill or risks something in failure.

**Inverted:** The outcome is to avoid losing a Trait, Skill or Swaggering. The player will be proving his own characteristics did not atrophy. The roll is Tasking, but the outcome only lasts the remainder of the quest. If the player desires, he can risk on a Difficult roll gaining one skill or swaggering, but upon failure lose another. On a Difficult roll, he can also share/teach one of his own swaggering to another

player character. Yet in failure, the mission suffers a frustrating negative Quest Pip. Everything should be a balance between loss and gain.

**Rods:** A preliminary event or omen helps the character. These can be from the spirit world, or more often from a warning heeded from a local. The result will create a Pip – Fury, Command, Tactical, even Quest. The Ref should set the degree of task based on the player's narrative. The effect will last one Phase but never for the climax. He can gain the advantage for the Epilog. Instead of the Pip, the Ref may substitute a personal quest; a list might be found in the *Generating Quests* booklet.

**Inverted:** Overcome doubt, superstitions or malevolent ghosts haunting the character's dreams. This could also be news from afar or a general ennui. Failure and start next battle, whenever that occurs, as Shaken. The Ref may also force other penalties, like the loss of Trait strategic benefits or treating certain card flips as more baneful. The saving throw is Difficult. However, the roll can be made at Ordinary if the player character will with failure drop out for a Phase and return only later to the adventure. What he subsequently missed may prompt role-play questions about where he went and why.

**Coins:** Test the character's interpersonal relationships. He will make new enemies or lose favors and friends. He can avoid the enemy on a Difficult task or hold on to his contact with Tasking. The choice is usually his, provided he has at least one friend, favor and important contact to risk. Regardless, his purse of coins has been spent with this encounter. Being constantly broke is another motive for adventure.

**Inverted:** Avoid changes in personality that could result in a personal and lasting flaw. The roll is typically Ordinary. The player may choose to instead roll Difficult and risk receiving the extra flaw, but upon success banish a different one from his personality. Instead of the flaw, the roll might represent the character becoming the ship's scapegoat, a person hated by most of the crew. Every mishap will be subsequently blamed on him until he redeems himself through heroics; money and gifts will never be enough.

**Swords:** Avoid injury. This could be an accident avoided with a display of skill. Else, the brawl or duel should be resolved with one of the many Banes or conclude in a half D8 combat events or regular combat, before the others come to his aid. The story should involve challenges, brawls, ill-advised comments, mistakes leading to arrest, sighting monsters, and assorted mishaps. If battle results in unconsciousness or surrender, well, follow-up by using a Digression.

**Inverted:** More conflict, but the result is not a possible vicious wound, but instead failure could result in increase to the character's tally for Warped Outcome. Did he practice (or fail) at wizardry? Did he fiddle with a relic, shrine or magical

foil? Again, describe the situation and then assign the task roll. He might also be involved in his own swagger vs swagger duel and end up losing a few techniques.

## Whose Turn is It?

The Ref should rotate the receiving character, typically knowing in advance who will be next should an event arise. The Referee decides the outcome and moderates the result. The player should provide much of the details and justification. **Before even receiving the event, each player should be encouraged to jot down amusing or interesting personal events that could happen to his character.** Later offer these as suggestions to the Referee. Since not all personal events are good, the players should also write down bad events that might happen to other players around the table. The point is that the game needs a pool of small events to toss at the players.

Don't become too burdened with elaborate events. Some may be detailed; most are not. If the game's action goes well, don't confuse or slow party play with an involved personal event. When playing with a large group, spice the mission's action with personal events that tempt the players into wondering whether the event was mission related or has effects on the mission.

## Campaign Events During Travel

Sometimes events change the balance of power. Basically, this is grand news – topical, dynamic, provoking. Use the following guidelines:

**Kings, Queens, Knights, Knaves** and **Tens** are always mission consequence – they do not generate Campaign Events, no matter how many reveal in a row.

**9** – Territory, Legions, Battle, Land Commerce, Expansion, Conquered Lands. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Strong or Ransacked in response.





**8** – Raiders, Sultans, Invasions, Trade Tariffs, Treaties, Ship Battles. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Magazine or Depleted in response.

**7** – Political, World Balance, Treaties, Appointments, Alliances. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Justice or Corrupt in response.

**6** – Discovery in Underworld, Trade Routes, Huns, Unending Grey, Cabals. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Peaceful or Disorder in response.

**5** – Pagan Doctrines, Orders from the Patriarch, Reforms in any Faith, Debates, Conferences, Appointments. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Civil or Pestilence in response.

**4** – Important NPCs, Allies, Enemies, Prizes, Honor, Deceptions, Notorious Figures. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Patriotic or Rebellious in response.

**3** – Property, Estates or Family, Natural disasters, Bad or Unexpected News. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Fruitful or Famine in response.

**2** – Economic, Navy, Maritime Commerce, New Ships Launched, Sunk or Lost Ships, Contracts, Deals. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Prosperous or Pillaged in response.

**Ace** – Monarchs, Quarrels, Marriages, Deaths, Births, Pretenders, Meetings, Appointments. Regardless, the closest city-state to the party should become Populous or Plagued in response.

**Note:** the inversion of the last card flipped in the sequence should determine if the Trait gain result was for good or bad. Also, for any campaign event beyond two alike cards in a row, the closest city-state to the party should become Entertained or Unruly in response.

## Counting the Sequence

The number of cards in a row has a bearing as well. These events will build on one another, since the draw must first generate a pair, then three and finally (and rarely) all four. Two cards in a row gives a routine event. Three and four give events of greater magnitude. Note, more than four cards in a row are possible, since Wheel of Fortune can be drawn between. Yet usually the shuffle of the deck signals the end of a series. The Referee may decide otherwise.

The following two examples demonstrate this process of building an event:

### **Example One – Campaign Event Aces**

*Pair Aces:* Someone in the imperial royal family has died.

*Three Aces:* The emperor himself has died.

### **Example Two – Campaign Event Threes**

*Pair Threes:* Part of the estates of a regional Earl have been sold or lost in deals made with outsiders.

*Three Threes:* An Earl has died, and his lands are being squabbled over by his numerous heirs.

*Four Threes:* A foreign power has overrun and dominates a major city-state.

Realize player actions during the scenario can create campaign events. By failing or completing the mission, and otherwise disrupting some balance encountered as a mission inconsequence event, the players change the campaign (slightly or greatly). The Referee can also plan certain events as he develops his campaign, then trigger their passage when a campaign event arrives via card flips.

## **Not so Esoteric Consequences**

Campaign events can change the social fabric of the world. Within each city is a diversity. A campaign event might alter that balance, adding an influx of a particular displaced ethnicity or reducing a minority in racist strife. Does it really matter if a population is twenty percent Greek or forty? The easy answer is both yes and no. The Ref must decide how much societal problems impact the campaign. Take solace in the fact that everything can be healed in the fantasy world with role-play. Or for some campaigns and sets of players, balkanized chaos will be the end and desired result. Ask yourself how well the Varangian player characters fit unobtrusively into a place? *“We don’t harbor barbarians.”*

## **Setting: Seas, Rivers and Coasts**

This is a hybrid setting that takes the player characters with their longboat up the rivers and out to sea. Yet the action is not exclusively on the ship. The party is repeatedly going ashore, negotiating with villagers for supplies, scouting phenomenon, satisfying a curiosity for adventure. Use these encounters to move the players before they reach the climax challenges.

The player characters presumably know where they are heading. If they are sailing blind, into regions (presumably off the map) where few civilized men dwell,

the encounters should transform rather harshly. Maybe add one to the rank of all events to denote that extra peril.

Even if the river is frequently used as a trade route, there is much that needs to be navigated, circumvented and endured. The logical course is to use the vessel as a stockade and depot, all the supplies and crew, while selectively sending in expeditions ashore to hunt, raid, trade and forage.

If the quest involves a hunt—a shrine, village, temple, underworld entrance—the longboat will task men ashore. The shore parties will not venture inland very far (on purpose). They do, however, often leave sight of the shore. Routinely the player party heads inland, while the crew and some guards stay with the vessel. e.g. The plan is to convene ten miles down the shore in two days. **A pattern follows of the ship sailing further down; the adventurers disembark, and later both reunite to go yet further.** Why do all the officers always join the shore party? Ignobles are always a good answer. Yet when the action takes place on the ship, the players are there too. Since the focus (some might argue the cause) of all events are the player characters.

The players will be in both places, both in land and at sea. When the action is on shore, they happen to be there. When the action is at sea, they happen to be there. The Ref may decide to split the group and make some characters sit out an event. e.g. No, you were clearly on shore during this leviathan attack. Otherwise, the action may stay with the players and need not worry coincidental timing. If anything happens away from the group, that too is generated in the tables. Events beyond anyone's control do occur.

The Referee draws his campaign map. At his option, the leaves entrances to the Unending Grey as places of mystery to be discovered. Even along widely traveled routes, there remain, or suddenly spawn, places which to be explored. The players will instinctively seek short-cuts, alternate routes which bypass the places they are wanted or warned to avoid. **Even if a city-state is on the river, employing a few streams or having the boat hauled on a sledge, major obstacles might be avoided** (and new dangers generated and faced).

The players are still charting, always. Updating the changes in the course, the sandbars, the ship wrecks, the footsteps of huge creatures, the magical changes to the waterways. The longboat technique of Charted Path (B) is always tenuous to maintain.

This setting is also used in the Epilog to get the players back to a home port or their patron and final reward. That return voyage is easier, but never routine.

## Setting Seas Quicklook

Setting: Seas, Rivers and Coasts					
U - U	Seafarers	U - x	Discovery	U - o	Longboat
1	Trader	1	Landmark	1	Delay
2	Castaways	2	Cult Shrine	2	Rationing
3	Baronial	3	Ancient Ruins	3	Respite
4	Derelict	4	Smoke & Fire	4	Technique Loss
5	Raider	5	Massacre	5	Seaworthiness
6	Magical Barque	6	Warzone	6	Disaster
7	Saurians	7	Boon	7	Sentinel
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
U - †	Locals	x - x	Crew	x - o	Misadventure
1	Hunters	1	Grumblers	1	Food Poison
2	Market	2	Fever	2	Heat & Thirst
3	Village	3	Drunkenness	3	Surf & Tides
4	Sanctuary	4	Master's Error	4	Set-Back
5	Skimish	5	Trial	5	Monsters
6	Dwarves	6	Mutiny	6	Obstacle
7	Lord's Fleet	7	Catastrophe	7	Zaire
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
x - †	Animals	o - o	Phenomenon	o - †	Mysterious
1	Game	1	Whale	1	Missing Crew
2	Fearful Signs	2	Strange Weather	2	Watchers
3	Pestilence	3	Tentacles	3	Thefts
4	Infection	4	Curse	4	Violent Death
5	Attack	5	Tempest	5	Magical Attack
6	Gigantic	6	Demon Spawn	6	Phantoms
7	Unique	7	Faeries & Ginn	7	Migration
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
		† - †	Shore Party		
		1	Exhaustion		
		2	Disease		
		3	Exposure		
		4	Argument		
		5	Call to Arms		
		6	Vanishes		
		7	Usurper		
		8	Catch-All		

## CUP-CUP Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Seafarers

These are ships, of various functions and origins, ones sighted by the watch. Some will be flying a flag to loyalty proclaiming an intent and destination. Most though will give no indication of their true nationality. To avoid the encounter, the Q&D Ploys of Speed and Potency may be used. but otherwise, the two ships might draw side to side or with easy rowboat range to meet and parley. Exchange tea? Hardly. Both sides will be cautious and expect deception from the other.

The players need to meet these unmarked, potential foes, head on. Often we don't start with ramming. The crews on both sides are intrigued. Is that a vessel from our patron? Here, it is not. The Ref may want to flip a card for the other captain's or NPC's background or disposition. Else, the rank of the mission consequence event will steer the story and game mechanics.

**Rank One – Trader:** Anything not consumed locally will move by barge along the rivers. When encountered at sea, the ship will be more yawl and have better cargo. If the players crave loot, they can pirate the vessel. I guess Q&D Ramming Speed was inevitable? The resulting theft might be rather easy. Yet the owner will become an enemy. So, sure, grab those pickled turnips and beets, yahoo. Make an enemy of (card flip) the Vox Illuminati! Rarely will this ship be Treasure Laden (D), unless it has a rather powerful and unforgiving owner.

Yet who would know of your mischief? Magic, remember? No one needs to truly read minds (not allowed) to get some premonition or spirit guidance to help point the way. Anonymity is important, maybe the *culprits* might never be identified. Yet a pattern of piracy will be discovered, as the cards describe, even if only as former crew members confess themselves missions and years later. If the players rob too many ships, the city-states along the river will gain negative Traits. Each time they do so, prime player character must roll Ordinary to avoid that bad outcome. Perhaps look at this event as the reverse, a chance to spend a purse of coins on the seas and cancel a shortfall or mishap hinted at in a previous encounter. Make a trade; that too checks the Ignoble for *Prudence* or *Exercise of Skills*.

**Rank Two – Castaways:** The players sight floating debris, a ship's dingy or swimming survivors. These may be seen on a sandbar surrounded by water or waving on a rocky isle. There is just as much likelihood that these men are walking (or crawling) down the riverbank. If the players have previously lost some of their own, they encounter those starving men. The gods plopped them back where they can be found. Add a Quest Pip for good fortune. The rescued men will both praise and hate the commander, as someone who left for them dead. Maybe also add a fresh NPC grumbler.



Even if this is not their own people, the survivors are very grateful, but also notorious. Any later mutiny may be absolutely blamed on their influence. The group still gains the Quest Pip for lending a hand. There is always the thought among the loyal servitors that that could be them someday. Leaving the survivors where they are is never an option. Even if the smiles on the rescued seem demonic or possessed, the men of the crew will feel the castaways are just delirious from the mishap. Only later events in the same Phase might prove your mistake or not. Won't change the next foundling being rescued. The paranoid do not roam, do not seek adventure.

If the setting and adventure ends smoothly, these assimilated mariners will later prove to be someone the prime player character can rely on for a favor. Determine their background and the new friend then by flipping WHO? (See *Generating Quests* booklet.) The Ref will have to set his own limits, but why be stingy?

If the adventure later has some bad turns, the players have obviously added more capable leaders in the guise of these *castaways as stowaways in plain sight* among their formally loyalist crews. Whenever a test of longboat swaggering must be made, the Degree jumps one. So, if the player might need to roll Ordinary to keep the swaggering Abundant Stores (M), that roll plus the newfound castaways would be Difficult. Extra mouths to feed? No, probably just intrigue, always mischief and intrigue (to keep things fun).

Infuse the castaways into play, don't just skip forward and forget. Personal Events might involve the new foundlings. Another player character might gain a personal quest by speaking with the rescued strangers. Seldom should nay event be a one-off; let each expand the options in the story.

**Rank Three – Baronial:** The vessel is from the nearest city-state. If that happens to be a foreign land, then the owner is a noble of that exotic place. There are many foreigners, like Brotherhood, Order, Raja's, Usurper's, etc. The ship's origin, after closer inspection, can be identified by her banners and flag. Whether those flags are false (a ruse) depends on the true owner. But unless the ship is part of a cabal, it will have some origin of pride. Even the cabal vessel might be from a city-state and have secret allegiance. The Ref should pick some place from his campaign.

Like in the rank one *Trader* event, there need not be immediate battle. The other captain has business to attend, but he will always desire tribute. Surrender a purse or a longboat technique (representing the lingering effect of not having that purse for important reoccurring supplies). That loss can be avoided by testing the waters of the Q&D Ploys of Speed and Potency. The players then will be seeking to avoid the encounter.

Can the group make a stand and fight? Sure, but the crew will know the enemy is elite and important. The players' rolls should start Shaken to account for the crew

apprehension. This penalty can be avoided by sacrificing the technique Battle Hard (T). Yes, the astute will note that is the same as just paying the fee?

The clear difference is that to attack here is not as damaging long term as pirating helpless tradesmen. Rather than pay coercion, avoid the Shaken, go for blood and maybe gain stores, treasure or even a sentinel in the aftermath. This baronial vessel will be seen as the aggressor. There will be factions that might applaud the loss and sinking of such scourges of the whale roads.

On the other hand, parley may also yield some additional information. There may even be a Quest Pip to be gained by display of skill. Pay a purse for an opportunity to aid the entire trip? Yes, a carnival barker's deal perchance. But it does make the game become less bloody on the poor, unnamed warriors and crewmen of the campaign. A reputation for always fighting, never dealing, is not going to keep the best crew employed in your service. Even when you win, you're burying some people at sea, ones by the way you have not even learned by name. Consider that scoundrel?

Ref must decide if there's a twist. If the players' mission hinted at secrets, the players may have no choice but to attack and keep their location unknown. The baronial patrol will want an accounting. The longboat is not a barge of milled grain; they represent marauders. There's always the ploy to stay out of range.

**Rank Four – Derelict:** This is a fully wrecked vessel, taking on water or without masts and oars. The boat will be grounded on the bank or bobbing as a swamped shell. The cause was probably a storm, but the opposing captain will be defensive about the incident. His crew might whisper that they crossed paths with a leviathan or tempest.

There are no clear hints on the ship's origin or destination. The crew has enough racial mix that it could come from anywhere or be part of any partnership. The Ref should secretly pick something from his campaign.

These men aboard cling to life, looking like rotting, leprous, desperate devils. The derelict ship will need considerable repairs. The prime player characters may order all to render help. No good will come from it. Why? Because the last fifteen boats they helped had no consequence. When did those happen? Constantly, the game just didn't waste time with them. Here the derelict is finally a horrid mystery and a challenge.

Unlike castaways, the crew will be leery to render help. The servitors will fear undead-ghostly drowned men, plague, a pirates' ruse, or lingering curses and magical mishap. Tis one thing to help the random lost soul, another to try to double bunk a full crew of ungrateful strangers.

Helping the captain of the derelict might offer the players a short-term Quest Pip or more likely avoid a negative Quest Pip from skipping this without rendering

aid. Else, the players will find themselves fighting infectious disease, radical magical notions, or battling an undead host. Ref decides what penalty or battle he inflicts. Is it worth the risk or just take the minus one to rolls for the rest of the Phase?

**Rank Five – Raider:** here comes combat from an opposing galley. Even if the enemy is primitive, the sheer number of them makes the battle straight-up Q&D. Either start with Ramming Speed or go right to the boarding actions. For high level folks, begin with Setback. The enemy might attack from both sea and shore. They will swarm the players' vessels. They might have blocked the way or magically gated onto the deck. The battle is joined.

May the Ploy be used to avoid this? Up to the Ref, but only do so if the players sacrifice something – longboat techniques work, as do a make-roll or a Trait Strategic benefit, like Clever, Methodical or Rugged (as a flair). usually the group is ready for the dice roll and potential loot to follow. In victory there should be at least one purse collectively on the scores of fanatics; Ref may decide more. Or let the players decide based on a Defensive Modifier (raising the Q&D Difficulties appropriately). Seems fair that the greater the threat overcome, the greater the potential reward.

**Rank Six – Magical Barque:** This encounter represents a demonic ghost ship or what appears to be a monstrous phantasm. The players face blood thirsty spirits, a horde of fire imps, a Misanthrope with an undead crew. Let one of the players describe what is met. This could be a legendary ship and mythic captain, someone long thought to be dead.

The enemy should have a high Defensive Modifier, even if ship engagement Q&D is used. The enemy leader might need to be defeated by swagger vs swagger even after his ship is rendered useless. A magical exchange of wizardry on the high seas might start as the players try to render the enemy devoid of his magical powers. (The swagger fight would only employ wizardry techniques.) The reward of these epic exchanges should fill all the player characters and crewmen purses, plus laden the player vessel with treasure. Unless it was all some divine test or cross into a netherling's realm. Both riches and bizarre enough to check an Ignobles of the mighty?

**Rank Seven – Saurians:** The lizard men are fervent and ply the waters with an invasion fleet. The players must use a gambit to avoid complete destruction. Even if they escape with events on the Q&D Ploy table, they still must face a single swift pursuit vessel in further combat. The enemy dare not let the players get away and report the oncoming arsenal.

Complete destruction is defined as loss of entire vessel and crew, continue on Digressions. If they escape that yet lose to the enemy hunter craft, they still might end up in Digressions. But, their boat may be later claimed by the survivors, found

only missing a half D8 swaggering. The lizard scout-craft will have little of value; even as a sold prize, it would be broken down for firewood. The construction is too crude, requiring too much raw strength to oar.

The Saurians are not adept at seafaring nor able to make many of these excursions. If met in the Caspian Sea, they will seem more of a threat. In other locations, they will act hopelessly lost, rowing in circles, looking for a sign of any enemy or his sanctuary. Magic may have dumped them here. Outside of the Caspian or their homelands, there may even be a chance to parley. The language barrier requires at least rudimentary Ossetia or fuhgeddaboutit.



Helping the enemy might garner a chest of gold. There is a good chance the players will then need to then escape with ploy. But that may be the only way to actually win anything from a fight. Of course, the Ref decides.

### **Q&D Ploys of Speed and Potency**

**Ploys King:** Send a few barrages of flaming arrows, well placed across their bow, to signal your displeasure in their close company. Success and this encounter ends.

**Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Artillerist

**Ploys Queen:** Put on a dazzling light show at night both to monitor the other craft's position, but also to show you're well equipped for war under the stars. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward.

**Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Scintillating (K)

**Ploys Knight:** Deflect away some magical bolts hurled from afar or happening by your own crew's panicked accident; the

attack barrages cease, so there's no telling (yet) who to blame. Fail and encounter escalates into close combat. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Defender (F)

**Ploys Knave:** Treat your ship and theirs as pieces on a flat game board; isles, shoals, even beasts, just more pieces in a logic puzzle to solve. Fail and encounter escalates into combat using ship to ship. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Gambler



**Ploys 10:** Vary your speed, make sure they cannot match your exact course without overtaking you. They would then need to swing about without winds should the other vessel be planning mischief. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Swagger Irregular Tricks (M)

**Ploys 9:** They seems to have stronger oarsmen, so capitalize on your larger sails. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter escalates into combat using ship to ship as the lizard men engage to board. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Cartographer

**Ploys 8:** Radical maneuvers, wait to the last moment to avoid striking the shore or trust your draft is shallower as you encroach; you can react more quickly on the tiller. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter escalates into combat using ship to ship as the enchanters' attack. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Blade Impetus (N) {Take note, imparts faster reaction.}

**Ploys 7:** Take the boat into someplace no one would dare follow – up a rivulet, through an ice floe, across a sandbar, over a reef, through sharks or huge piranhas, into crashing surf, etc. Fail and lose technique Longboat Undamaged (O). If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into close combat, but upon success gain a Tactical Pip. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Swagger Speed & Guile (R)

**Ploys 6:** Signal your refusal to parley by pretending to be diseased, possessed, undead, phantasmal, or otherwise cursed. Fail and lose any Longboat technique. If the party has none remaining, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter was a ravager trick and escalates into combat using ship to ship boarding. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Swagger Feigns (I)

**Ploys 5:** Stand on the prow and wave your banner, proclaiming your triumphs and honorable clan. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. Regardless, the encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, upon success, also gain Longboat Noble Allegiance (K). **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Blade Golden (T)

**Ploys 4:** Attract a favorable wind; beckon a ginn or godling to answer your call. Fail and drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, upon success, also gain Longboat Comradery (P), saving a few lives of skilled mariners. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Blade Eminent (E)

{To explain, Advantage technique here relates to illustrious and conspicuous attraction (to forces above). The wind was not self-created, even if that seemed within the character's wheelhouse.}



**Ploys 3:** Glower, have the men raise and bang on their shields. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, upon success, also gain Abundant Stores (M); one player should pay a purse of coins, else the group accepts the consequences for receiving a *don't kill us* discount from the merchants? **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Longboat Battle Ready (H)

**Ploys 2:** Shorten the distance between you and the other vessel; see if he means business as you tighten your angle of attack to ramming. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (G), Unconscious Away from the Others; baneful magic undeniably occurred and snatched you away. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Wizardry Cosmic (T)

**Ploys Ace:** Call on your ancestors to bear witness to your courage; inspire your clan within the crew to mercilessness. Success and this encounter ends. Optional, if roll is attempted and made a second time, the Longboat gains Treasure Laden (D) from concerted piracy. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Blade Heirloom (I)

## Sea Encounters Major Tarot

**Sea Magician:** Enter a strange nexus of power. Selecting player gains a random Wizardry technique. If he already has the ability, he may lock it as Glorious.

**Inverted:** enter an area quasi-depleted of magical manna. All Difficulties which have Advantage of Wizardry are increased by two.

**Sea High Priestess:** Feel a sudden moment of clarity. Regardless of the event generated, a successful result will end the encounter. The Difficulty and Advantage still applies, but no other result (even regardless flairs) occurs.

**Inverted:** swell with confidence. If any combat results, all players start with Fury Pip.

**Sea Empress:** Watched by the gods. Ignore the effects of any Major Tarot selected for these events. Those majors presently influencing play still apply.

**Inverted:** malevolent water sprites are not pleased by the disturbance. If event was generated for Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Reaction, Difficulties increase by three.

**Sea Emperor:** Murmurs suggest the leader hates the crew. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Rare (seven) or Catch-All, the lowest level player character is Shaken, until the conclusion of this encounter.

**Inverted:** be on your guard. If any combat results, the first player to take action in the ensuing battle starts with a Command Pip.

**Sea Hierophant:** Enjoy the salt breeze. Selecting player gains a random Personal Swaggering technique. If he already has the ability, he may lock it as Glorious.

***Inverted:*** traverse a place where magic is gravitating. Any player suffering a Warped Outcome in this event rolls D8 for tally increase.

**Sea Lovers:** Your focus drops to your weapon. Selecting player gains a random Blade technique. If he already has the ability, he may lock it as Glorious.

***Inverted:*** you worry needlessly about fumbling and losing your Blade to the depths. All Difficulties, which have Advantage of Blade techniques, are increased by two.

**Sea Chariot:** All's well; the NPC masters thrive. The party gains a Longboat technique. Select from the first available counting up from (T). This addition joins the party for the continuing adventure, even if it exceeds the one-third limit.

***Inverted:*** ill tidings on the wind. If event was generated for Q&D Ploys of Speed and Potency, Difficulties increase by three.

**Sea Justice:** Inexperience is highlighted. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Flukes (six) or Catch-All, the lowest level player character is Shaken, until the conclusion of this encounter.

***Inverted:*** the wild life in the area is confounding. If event was generated for Q&D To Stalk and Quickly Kill increase Difficulties by three.

**Sea Hermit:** Eliminate the waste before you're undone. Either lose Longboat Abundant Stores (M) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** mere accident or a forgotten score being settled? If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Routine (one) or Catch-All, the lowest level player character is Shaken, until the conclusion of this encounter.

**Sea Wheel of Fortune:** Shuffle the deck and continue.

**Sea Force:** Pay tribute to the lords who claim dominion of these lands and the waters. Either lose Longboat Treasure Laden (D) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** the sea or river grows stagnant, deprived of oxygen. All Difficulties which have Advantage of Personal Swaggering are increased by two.

**Sea Hanged Man:** The open terrain and waters are flat as glass, giving you no chance of surprise. If any combat results, the enemy starts battle as Enraged (ready).

***Inverted:*** the locals don't enjoy strangers. If event was generated for Q&D Inconspicuous Acts for Gain, Difficulties increase by three.

**Sea Death:** Espy too many unburied corpses. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Agitated (five) or Catch-All, the lowest level player character is Shaken, until the conclusion of this encounter.

***Inverted:*** scout with horses ahead and keep a man aloft always. If any combat results, the players start with a Tactical Pip.

**Sea Temperance:** Weary of the leadership role. If event was generated for Q&D Restoring Morale, Difficulties increase by three.

***Inverted:*** civilization has retreated here; the roads are barely ruts. If event was generated for Q&D Reconnaissance Ashore, Difficulties increase by three.

**Sea Devil:** Pass a crumbling pagan temple dedicated to a deity with few or any followers; it should have been absorbed by another to limit the divine retribution. Either lose Longboat Pure No-Curse (J) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** a traitor is suspected. The sabotage or grumbling was internal but having a rival didn't help matters. Either lose Longboat Treachery Expunged (G) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

**Sea Tower of Destruction:** Time perhaps for repairs or a new boat. Either lose Longboat Undamaged (O) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** the speed of the group's ship is declining for unknown reasons. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Common (two) or Catch-All, the lowest level player character is Shaken, until the conclusion of this encounter.

**Sea Star:** Fine wind and routine sailing for now. Cancel the effects of any Major Tarot presently influencing this encounter event.

***Inverted:*** receive a gift from the goddess Gaia. Selecting player gains a random Mount technique. If he already has the ability, he may lock it as Glorious.

**Sea Moon:** The spirit which guides the ship has transcended; her opus and redemption is complete. Either lose Arcane Sentinel (F) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** the soldiers are feuding with the sailors, even more so than usual. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, the lowest level player character is Shaken, until the conclusion of this encounter.

**Sea Sun:** Look around; you're in good company. Next event generated is automatically successful regardless of Difficulty. Perhaps a swaggering will be gained.

***Inverted:*** the Norns tie your skein tight. If any combat results, the selecting player starts with Catbird Seat Pip.

**Sea Judgment:** the near region seems devoid of people with a cliff rimmed coasts and overgrown tangled riverbanks. If event was generated for Q&D Recovery, Repairs and Resupply, Difficulties increase by three.

***Inverted:*** some of the men have talked about this being their last voyage, tempting fate. If event was generated for Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils, Difficulties increase by three.

**Sea World:** Compounding events have occurred. After concluding this event sequence, the party must immediately face a second set of events on another Q&D table. Ref decides which one.

***Inverted:*** the crew is overworked, underpaid and underappreciated; at least so they feel. All Difficulties which have Advantage of Longboat techniques are increased by two.

**Sea Fool:** the boat is suffering from passive aggression and an abundance of sarcasm. If event was generated for Q&D Ship's Remediation, Difficulties increase by three.

***Inverted:*** some of the crew have talked about using their shares to buy their own vessel. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Informational (three) or Catch-All, the lowest level player character is Shaken, until the conclusion of this encounter.

## **CUP-ROD Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Discovery**

Here's an event for the shore party. Very close, if not directly on the coast, the players find buildings, special gatherings or strange tribes of nonhumans. Many of these are landmarks that can aid the party in establishing reference points.

At times the shore party will be chased into these events or pursue something that will take refuge therein. Almost all turn into a mini-plot, a catch as catch can battle or search of the area; use schematics and split the players into smaller groups. One schematic is always available and useful – the compass. Simply put different sized groups in the center, to north, to south, to southeast, etc. Then let each player and his entourage resolve his part of the encounter.

The Q&D Reconnaissance Ashore may be used at each generated event to see if anything good comes from the find. Each player may take one and only one event and **collectively the group will see if they muster a net Quest Pip**. The Ref may limit this to one up or down (for groups larger than four). This goal of the Quest Pip should take place instead of a baneful event (like a rank Six), by interpreting the Pip gain as meaning the event eventually passes without further incident.

**Rank One – Landmark:** These are very noticeable land features that allow the players to navigate. Give the discovery an epic name. They will be added to the charts made of the coast and are often seen from by the ship far out at sea. The players may not be able to take a straight line path, but for now they will not become lost.

Landmarks often raise morale, even if they are prominent places marked with memorials to the dead. These will shorten the time needed by the land expedition to fully explore the terrain. The same number of encounters occur, but the players feel less consequence from shortages. The group should be able to regain lost time.

These can also be roads or game trails, likely leading to higher ranked encounters, like an ancient stone city. Markings could direct the players to special locations.

Landmarks left by past ships or sages may point to treasures left by raiders, or simply give a reference in a region shrouded in vapors. Landmarks may be subtle, and only the locals can guide the players through some tricky terrain.

**Rank Two – Cult Shrine:** These are refuges of the impoverished or diseased; they could also be strange and nonhuman, protected by benign monsters. The exact reason for the cult's ouster from society should remain vague. Tantalize and suggest, but do not answer why a pagan group cannot worship freely? Why did they seek to hide?

There is usually no clear language between the cult and players to answer demanding questions. However, this encounter may be seen as a means to an end. The cult has something of great power, and the players need only walk away with it. There can be enough common ways of communicating to gain a relic producing a Quest Pip. Why are they helping? No one can say, except to suggest they aren't?

The boon must be returned by the end of the Phase or the result turns into a negative Quest Pip. Each encounter the players risk having the Phase advance and suffering the dice loss. Most will be prudent enough not to be tempted, so perhaps make the Quest Pip a half D8 gain rolled anew for every encounter. Think of the swaggering that might be gained if for just the next encounter the relic was utilized? Pick a fight with what comes next and run up the Brash or Magical method actions?

The cult members otherwise can be slaughtered, but the relic offers no energy against them or if they are all slain. The cult will have little or nothing to plunder. The members don't even make good oarsmen or house slaves. Take the relic or not. Do not concern yourself with walking it back to them. The boon will last at most one Phase, but what a Phase might result. *"We use and abuse then when it fails, we quit the quest."*

**Rank Three – Ancient Ruins:** The players have entered an area of stone piles, the remains of a town, a pagan temple, a lost civilization, a magical fortress, etc. These will be places that contain possible treasure, but usually also strange cults of degenerates, nonhumans or animal guardians. The players must decide how many will trespass. Start with Q&D Reconnaissance or the party might separate by accident.

These places quickly turn into labyrinths, not necessarily underground – a ruined city could cover dozens of square miles with twisted streets, crumbling walls, bricked-up bastions and exotic altars. There will be danger from arcane traps, pitfalls and other classical Hollywood inspired deadly puzzles. Here, perhaps, keep it basic, but remember a place like this for a future climax challenge. Give it a scary name.



The Ref should consider risk to reward, but the risk side is always larger. When the players decide they are done delving the distraction, the true mission awaits.

**Rank Four – Smoke & Fire:** Someone or something is establishing a sanctuary. This is not just one communal fire. This is a large gathering. This place has such spiritual importance; it should be treated as an anomaly. The abode will house nonhumans or demi-humans. The players may have entered a place where goblins gather after dark.

The players may see what looks like their faces painted on walls or carved into trees. The message may have been home-grown from a recent prophesy. The area has attracted such numbers that collectively it counts as a gated fortress, which must be besieged or stormed (to cross).

Danger awaits. Monsters must be fought. If the path cannot be changed or the group cannot wait out the threat to wane, then the danger increases even more so. Denizens of the underworld occasionally sally forth at night to skirmish, ambush and steal sacrifices. They may have already done so, and supplies and treasure lay within the gathering.

The leader is key to ending the sect (threat); his death may be had by subterfuge, via stealth inside or the uncontested dagger thrust. Sometimes a bloodletting ritual will be taking place, but otherwise the normal business is pillage. Add a fine Defensive Modifier or alternate Bane events to make the danger real. The party has been warned, yet what might they do with the surprise they might achieve for seeing them before they are seen?

**Rank Five – Massacre:** The players find hundreds of unburied corpses. Lose at least one swaggering technique from the sight. Ask a player to describe the situation. Suggest the bodies are eaten, animated, ritualistically carved, slain each other in madness, etc. The party might find themselves on the wrong side of a siege. The Referee might steer the carnage toward disease, fire, monster slaughter, raiders, magical cults. The danger might seem long gone.

The party will start off being attacked by roaming carrion eating animals; wolves are fine. But for a half D8 rounds, the attackers change into grander and more eminent foes. The only escape before combat is by exercise of Q&D Reconnaissance.

**Rank Six – Warzone:** Two or more factions are fighting in the region. This may be humans against monsters or nonhuman foes. This may be a lawful leader putting down a rebellion. Let one player describe the human side, if it is a baron or earl or some faction. Woodcutters are always fighting some group opposed to the logging. Then let a second player (or the Ref) tell what they face. The players do not have the option to join either side. Here they must join the lawful owners and protectors (even if those forces have radical ulterior motives).

Roll on Q&D Reconnaissance to avoid being drawn into the fight. These scores do not resolve themselves in a single epic clash. This may be the first or one of many fights. Color the rest of encounters in the Phase as influenced by this war ongoing.

One or more players may wish to arbitrate an end; only the very lucky or high level have any chance of success (short-lived). In any aftermath of this struggle, the neighboring city-states should lose good traits or gain bad ones. One faction may find peace, only to have the conflict renew with a third party. The campaign map might need to be amended to take note of this area of conflict.

**Rank Seven – Boon:** These are areas that have easy riches or economic potential – mining for gold and silver, tall trunk timber exceptionally good for masts, edible plants and spice, wild pipe tobacco, a newly found crypt to seize, dead monster’s lair or ancient sunken ship, objects thawing in the ice, etc. Add a good trait to the nearby city-state, *Prosperous* maybe. Mark the discovery, but the event comes with an initial blight.

The group will feud, until they realize there is plenty for everyone. A few warriors make the discovery and brawl. They will be joined by others supporting both claims. The players will need to join the fray to calm all the men. Either fight personal combat trying to quell the most vocal claimants. Or use Q&D Defending Citadel events to represent the safeguard of the find, and the end of outside (or internal) claims. Take turns looking for a result of WIN (see the Quicklook) to prove the conflict has truly ended.

How much wealth is found? Probably enough to check an Ignoble, but the material will be difficult to collect and transport. A few choice items or pans of gold dust will be collected. Fill purses, of course, but how much more is left to the Ref. The whole is a distraction to the players’ mission. At least half the characters will need to drop from the quest to help organize the recovery operation. The players will continue in alternate roles. The wealth should be short-lived or becomes the windfall for a single player character to retire from further play.

## Q&D Reconnaissance Ashore

**Reconnaissance King:** Ride high, your piercing eye on the horizon; there are auspices sent from heaven intermingled in the panoramic view. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Mount Resolute (K)

**Reconnaissance Queen:** Cover the distance, back and forth, leave no life unturned. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Mount Fleet (R)

**Reconnaissance Knight:** Gallop headstrong through the heath and uneven terrain. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Equestrian

**Reconnaissance Knave:** Address the nagging feeling that you're missing something, a sign or omen meant as a test. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Mount Lucid (N)

**Reconnaissance 10:** Cover twice the distance in half the time, feeling exhilarated. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Mount Vibrant (M)

**Reconnaissance 9:** Confer and decide to divide into smaller detachments, covering more hollows in your search. Fail and lose any Personal Swaggering technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, regardless, gain Abundant Stores (M). **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Mount Talking (P)

**Reconnaissance 8:** Reflect on similar situations, places, people, narrow your focus as you hunt for supplies. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Wizardry Precognition (E)

**Reconnaissance 7:** Cross a place of misery and onslaught; sacrifice some time and give the unburied proper internment. Fail and lose any Blade technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Geomancy (C)

**Reconnaissance 6:** Debate assembling a detail to accompany an injured warrior and lame horses back to the vessel; some balk at womanly sharing a saddle. Fail and lose any Mount technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Mount Carapace (O)

**Reconnaissance 5:** Hunker down and create a basecamp as an assembly point for what you find; each day ride out and return with spoils. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, optional, players may opt to take one round of events on Q&D Investigation and Excavation in the Underworlds setting. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Longboat Vigilant (E)

**Reconnaissance 4:** Let your horse set the direction; something unearthly compels it and guides it precisely. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Mount Mystical (D)

**Reconnaissance 3:** Survey from the highest point available; get your bearings right-right. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. If the character's Mount is Winged (B), Difficulty decreases by seven. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-

All, regardless, continue with Q&D Inconspicuous Acts for Gain. **Difficulty: 10**  
**Advantage: Skill Mountaineer**

**Reconnaissance 2:** Delay to profit and later catch up. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (R), Road Home Alone. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Mount Winged (B)**

**Reconnaissance Ace:** Dart and slalom through the undergrowth, blazing a trail for the rest to follow. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. **Difficulty: 7**  
**Advantage: Mount Agile (C)**

**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.

## **CUP-COIN Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Longboat**

These represent mishaps on the players' ship. There is a great risk from within, not just from external dangers. Some of the hardest encounters the players face will come from action on their own vessel engaging their own upset crew. One or more masters (or ancillary captains of the watch) will be negligent or incompetent. Keep at least as many NPCs on the vessel as there are player characters. These are not just alternate roles, but they can be. These extra people have their own intrigues and desires, ambitions and flaws. Boy, do they ever have flaws.

The players' ship is on the coast, and food and water are constantly being collected from the land. Under favorable conditions, this supply will always be plentiful. When is this game ever a study in favorable conditions? Ship storage containers are designed for and loaded in a temperate climate, not one reaching freezing conditions or warped by magic. Methane brews with fermentation and casks burst. Recall, ice takes up more volume than liquid water. (Enough science, the game is fantasy, fantasy is dangerous enough.) The contents spoil and rot away other bags and staples. All of this is also held below the waterline, in a seeping, leaking basin. The stores must survive infestation by vermin and flies or other demonic maggots that escape the Unending Grey. Even the experienced encounter bugs that they have never seen.

The Q&D Recovery, Repairs and Resupply offers a set of challenges to help the players overcome bad events. These can be prompted as a test with the ultimate result sought of ending an escalating series of misfortunes and calamities. Often the Ref will present the situation, then go right to the Q&D to see if the result is solved.

**Rank One – Delay:** The journey takes a longer time than expected. The expeditions ashore have been delayed. Meeting times have become fluid. Weeks of



idleness could ensue. Do you abandon hope? Are those who went hinterland ever going to return? Maybe magically contacting them could help?

The loading and unloading of the foraging warriors never moves smoothly. Horses have to be separated from slings used to store them below deck. Else on a very shallow craft, the horses tied on deck are constantly rocking the vessel and leaping barriers right overboard. Both are misery, besides hourly mucking the waste.

The free crew has to be paid some stipend. If incorrectly estimated, too little was set aside. This delay does not help matters. The coins in the box may not cover the voyage. The men long to spend this money (small amounts) and ask for any opportunity for liberty ashore to the village, town or farmstead passed. Those might be the people who have yet to return from tavern crawling on a drunken night's binge or week of revelry. Just try to keep any and all penned aboard at a major city-state. You'll have desertion if not outright mutiny. Uprising of the slave oarsmen is also a worry. They need to be fed and watered and replenished as some died from neglect and abuse. If anyone escapes he must be tracked and recovered, punished for all to see. Who said this was a pretty little jaunt across the bay?

The blame for problems will fall on the prime player character as leader if not overall commander. He has a patron; if supplies dwindle, he should have asked for more up front. The ship probably with any encounter is short on supplies and patience. Top that off with the expectation for fresh meat from ashore is now overdue.

Now how to visualize this in play? The party ashore will not have player characters. That's probably why it was delayed. If the missing men are simply left for dead, lose at least one longboat technique (no chance of mitigation) to represent the hit to the crew or true situation which caused any incidental party to be sent inland (without true leadership). For the love of heaven, who's in charge?





**Rank Two – Rationing:** This is a lack of food, probably because of seasonal shortages or spoilage. The slaves will be less able to endure strong work as the rations are cut. The sailors and warriors will find table fare lacks aroma and finesse. This is beyond shared hardship. The men now doubt the promises that the expedition will profit all. The shore party returned empty handed or what they purchased did not last. They will image the player masters lavishing at feasts. Crew morale is argumentative and near mutiny. The loss is usually short-lived, unless the result happens chronically (twice during any adventure).

**Rank Three – Respite:** Something beneficial has happened. These can reflect changes in the crew's or ship's performance that allow someone with a skill to add a longboat technique. Usually the one to be gained is the lowest lettered starting from (T). But, the task is only Ordinary.

Since good times are less fun than bad, perhaps the encounter will start with a bad event. Use the Q&D Recovery to settle the accident. Upon successful conclusion, then the longboat gains the technique. The mishap will provide extra training or comradery that will benefit thereafter. Instead of gaining a specific technique, a Ref feeling generous may allow a choice of a Quest Pip or let this one event signal an end to all Longboat problems for the remainder of the adventure. The players ignore CUP-COIN mission inconsequence encounters; treat them instead as a QUEEN.

**Rank Four – Technique Loss:** Boom, the ship suffers casualty. Hunting and rationing, shore parties and magic have all proven to be inadequate. Yes, you tried fishing and still came up short. Cross off one technique at random from the ones the ship has.

Can it be prevented? Usually no, but the players should be forced to use mitigation to keep the event from spreading or escalating. The Q&D will need to be consulted to finally put this one accident to rest. The crew will begin to not just doubt the commander; they will begin to think the gods hate their goals.

**Rank Five – Seaworthiness:** It gets ugly. Every longboat technique demands, one by one, to be checked and confirmed. Roll once at Difficult or a second time at Tasking for each. If any character aboard has the particular skill to mitigate the outcome (that table is in the front of this booklet ~ page thirteen) he may roll three dice instead of two. If you play with a small group, the rolls can be made at Ordinary and Difficult, with less characters around to have skills. Or, be strict. The deck is less than kind. Each longboat technique is tested.

Do not examine Undamaged (O), yet. Use the Q&D Recovery to determine if the ship hull is actually cracked. Or if the ship's hull was already cracked by virtue of the missing technique (O), then the Q&D Recovery is still consulted but the players rolls are Shaken.

If the ship ends up without any techniques remaining, the crew is essentially annihilated (for sundry reasons). Treat the result like a Rank Six, Disaster.

**Rank Six – Disaster:** The ship is beyond repair. The crew has scattered. The most loyal linger with downturned faces. This could be a sudden loss or a series of malignant events that culminate here. Have each player describe one monster or tragedy that befell the vessel.

Now, start again. Buck yourselves up, open your purses, hue some timber, raid a local warehouse, assess your decimated insipid slaves, extend your credit, wave your wands, call in your favors, get back to baseline. Start with a half D8 random longboat techniques. A fine start; every ship is a work in progress. Add one more of the lowest letters from (T) for each character of Methodical trait. Finally, use the Q&D Recovery to launch the vessel and see where you finally stand at the end of it all.

The Ref may decide the mission has outright failed, but I tend to think this happens (loss of ship) far more often in a fantasy world than probably is literally generated by the game deck. I've even seen where the players end up with a better reboot than the scurvy riddled wreck they had beforehand. Isn't life grand.

**Rank Seven – Sentinel:** The ship attracts a familiar spirit, usually nested inside the ship's prow or ornamental figurehead. If the boat already has Arcane Sentinel (F), then the guardian shifts more demonic or bloodthirsty. The twenty personality flaws of characters can also be infused into the boat's sentinel. The boat will have a persona, a slant which it desires or inspires magically of the crew. Will get very problematic if the idol is flaw Traitor. Use the Q&D Recovery to purge the ship of the newly warped or more corrupt sentinel (as desired). The Ref may also force the Q&D simply to settle the mishap caused, and finally attributed to, the newfound ghost aboard (as sentinel) or the change in the sea soul's sulk.

## **Q&D Recovery, Repairs and Resupply**

**Recovery King:** Take hammer to hot metal and all is absolved. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Armorer-Smithy

**Recovery Queen:** Mix up a restorative to ease any hunger pangs. Success and this encounter ends. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Paladin (P)

**Recovery Knight:** Toss deck-side all the sacks of stores, before the majority are contaminated by seepage. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Chiasmic Action (D)

**Recovery Knave:** Ensure your own survival by hiding a stash of biscuits from the rest. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the character has yet

to check growth this level, he does so and acquires the personality flaw of Greedy or Traitor; Ref decides. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Trait Clever

**Recovery 10:** Save the mast with an initial patch repair, utilizing the most precarious of handholds or rope swings. Fail and lose any Longboat technique. If the party has none remaining, player suffers a vicious. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Skill Acrobat

**Recovery 9:** Provide distraction from depravation through tales of ancient mariners dealing with similar troubles. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, regardless, ship loses technique Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F). **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Skill Occult Scholar

**Recovery 8:** Accept a tipsy dare to solve the ship's problems entirely through magic. Fail and drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, ship loses first lettered technique it has starting with (A). **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Wizardry Conjunction (L)

**Recovery 7:** Insist there's more danger in delay, that the vessel's repairs can be handled after the quest. Success and this encounter ends. But fail and suffer a minus Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless, ship loses technique Longboat Undamaged (O). **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Engineer-Sapper

**Recovery 6:** Take stock of what remains to assess the degree of emergency and necessary crew sacrifice. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, regardless, ship loses last lettered technique it has starting with (T). **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Steward

**Recovery 5:** You can't eat gold, but its luster tends to calm the soul; player character loses his purse of coins. If he has none, everyone loses all purses distributing bonus to the crew. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, continue with Q&D Disciplining Servitors. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Longboat Treasure Laden (D)

**Recovery 4:** Bring the sides together over a hearty (often Spartan) meal. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, upon fail, also all players start the battle with a Bane; this mutiny was planned. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Longboat Abundant Stores (M)

**Recovery 3:** Insult the weaklings, unable to tilt the group's vessel on a beach for hull repairs; heave the craft on her side by yourself. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. If character is Trait Rugged, Difficulty decreases by three. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or

Catch-All, regardless, ship loses technique Longboat Treachery Expunged (G).

**Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Mount Hefty (H)

**Recovery 2:** Row or swim over to a nearby isle to gather needed materials; you did tell several people before leaving? Fail and continue your survival on Digression (M), Marooned. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Longboat Undamaged (O)

**Recovery Ace:** Get a gang together and get every task done; even the untrained can learn to barter, fish and mend; even free a few slaves who show initiative. If character is skilled Slave Driver, Difficulty decreases by two. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Skill Tinker

**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.

## **CUP-SWORD Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Locals**

These are the indigenous people of the region. Most are simple in life and deed, pedestrian peasants, nothing worth stealing, few suitable as slaves. They can be found on islets or along the riverbanks. They can be on rafts or in canoes. They might not always be seen, hiding in the foliage or living just below the water surface. The group need not be human, though they will always be humanoid. I like to put animal faces on human torsos and give them odd race names. Maybe have one player do so?

Keep them primitive, far from being envied. For the most part the event is a one-off, the place need not be recorded on the campaign map. The game should not be populated with chimera player characters, except following magical mishaps. They are both an opportunity and potential misery, nothing more.

The locals will be standoffish, except when forced into combat. They all tend to hate magic and the consequences. There is usually a local priest as their guide and a local chief or headman who is the tallest and most able to throw a punch. Still, they usually do not want a fight. The locals want the players gone posthaste.

There will **always be a language barrier**, because insular groups develop dialects. The character skills can be utilized to gain trust and barter with likeminded folks of usually far less talent. The Barber will have rapport with his counterpart village leech; the hunter will trade for meat with the local butchers. Steward is always nice to have in these situations. Ordinary roll at most if any is required to start the event.

The group might barter to solve past shortages. They rarely recruit any of the locals as crew. The nonhumans and humans do not share space well. The boat puts people sleeping inches from others and prejudices flourish. Yet direct swap can result

in a deal. Money may be welcome or something else might be exchanged. The more remote the frontier, the less coins are actually valued.

The Q&D Inconspicuous Acts for Gain is a means of having the players obtain what they need from the locals with the goal of generating little strife. The local authorities will almost always be close or can be summoned. The players will probably like to avoid one battle after another. Even if they win their affairs, they are leaving a trail of bodies for the rival to follow.

The players may also have to stop their crew from overreacting in their nature. Seeing twenty women washing clothes may at first look like an Ignoble opportunity. Yet the world is interconnected, and every soul has a greater and greater master who is expected to punish evil doers. Not that the player characters would be interested, but they are running a ship of corruptible barbarians.

Above all, outsiders are blamed. Someone else might have caused the problem or committed the crime, but the appearance of the players gives an easy culprit to accuse. Yet, many times the players and the crew do start the routine encounter with impulsive acts, which the players must then deny or provide restitution to the local authority.

**Rank One – Hunters:** These are a group of men, sometimes independent wanderers, but more often from a village. Even a vigilante gang or wild monster hunt as a goal? The players should offer these men ale, whether they expect anything in trade or not.

The party met will be small, even a single potential foe. Large numbers are safe for the band; small numbers denote true rangers able to handle the wilds. If combat follows, the Ref should select a target number of foes to vanquish (perhaps equal to the party size) before the rest run off (to go get vigilante or lordly reprisal). Or have the group face a potent enemy with a high Defensive Modifier.

The hunters are an easier way to get provisions, then sending the ship's warriors out in small groups. That may also be poaching and attract a patrol. Abundant Stores (M) might be had by trade or Q&D Inconspicuous Acts might be used to assuage any suspicions and have the men turn over a feast for free. An alarm horn might also summon a grander patrol from the local lord. Then the Q&D will deal with dealing with that new threat.

**Rank Two – Market:** This is the same as the *Rank One* event, but the locals row out in canoes and outriggers to the players' ship. The players should offer drink or services, and the locals will hand over mussels, fish, fruit and nuts. While the



quartermaster is haggling that deal, the crew may also be exchanging for souvenirs of their own – beads, monster teeth, tobacco, mojo, shrunken heads. The sailors aboard will want these tokens to ward away evil. The sailors usually overpay and end up exhausting their pocket change. Demands will be made to open the paybox and empty the contents.

Afterward, the prime player character must decide whether to punish the seamen, raid the natives and take back the money before the ship faces a true need to mitigate.

If the players use the village stores of grain to resupply, they will attract the local watch; this will follow with events on the Q&D Inconspicuous Acts. Though trade is seen as good; hungry barbarians are not seen as good. What should be rationed locally, instead is being bartered away to the party. That could actually impoverish the region. Only a true city-state has the diversity and abundance to sustain true market days. Imagine, a naval vessel arriving in a small town and buying everything off the shelves. That can be what it's like for the longboat to disgorge and return with local wares. Could take a season or year to set the balance back.

Good for the party, who cares about a random event? That's what the Q&D Inconspicuous Acts will decide.

**Rank Three – Village:** These are permanent establishments and landmarks. Many are constructed around ancient ruins, old legion keeps. If the players go away and return, the village will still be here. Add a dot to the campaign map. Maybe let the place grow into a city-state or be burned out of existence? Name the spot.

This place can act as a fallback refuge for the players, giving them a place to store supplies and bivouac troops. Missing men might be found here. Any longboat technique lost in this Phase might be restored at the Ref's option by having a sanctuary. Make an ally by resolving the event with Q&D Inconspicuous Acts for Gain. A final result of *Success and this encounter ends* means the group has done enough to be treated as welcomed goodfellows.

The village will be led by a brutish chieftain. The local priest will not like foreign ideas corrupting his flock. Long range, both men would have to be dealt with, just not yet. Killing these two in personal combat will end any resistance but create a power vacuum. The players can start by destroying the thriving village and enslaving a hundred adult males. Potentially gaining a half D8 techniques in victory. Is that worth it? They could fill their ship with fresh oarsmen but ruin their rapport with future local groups. They make an enemy from some greater lord (of course).

Best here to maybe accept the sanctuary. Overtime the prime player character might make a friend or use the place for a favor or as a contact for answering unknown questions and solving future quest mysteries (around the same area). By the end of the setting, the locals will not only be friendly, they will be ready to help the

players by selling them convicts and captured migrants as slaves. That should beat the typical attrition. This is a good find, unless the players are desperate, or their crew is too large to manage. An unruly force may see the place as simply pillage on toast.

**Rank Four – Sanctuary:** These are an official gathering of locals from a village or small township. They come to meet and welcome the players. These men probably have prior trade dealings with the players, even if that event was not previously flipped. The locals come to reward the players, but their goal is to make them do some mercenary business. The entourage arrives to discuss battle tactics for killing a chief's adversary. The players must do so to maintain the trust and concord.

The player group will be presented with gifts of food and gold, sometimes female slaves. Potentially a half D8 techniques might be gained by the longboat. The expedition will follow with some bloody clash, either large scale skirmish or personal combat with intent to murder. Collectively the enemy group may number in the thousands, refugees displaced by war or monster intrusion, unemployed migrant labor, or simply a detested racial group who uses the wrong hand to greet or prays to the wrong statue. If the players wish to gain this pact (keep this trust), they need to attack and disperse the crowd. Set the number at twice the player characters necessary to defeat.

If the ref enjoys more chivalrous play, he can have the players kill the monster threat. He might even give the players the choice. Kill the very hard monster and allow the migrants to return to their home. Else, slaughter the easy to kill peasants and push the remnants down the road to the next place they upset. Yes, the monster will have the higher Defensive Modifier and worse Banes.

In either victory, however, outside forces or a cabal will take notice of the players. They will be seen as a new regional threat and likewise a potent set of agents. The result might be a mix of dangerous alliances and secret enemies for higher level player characters.

Only by refusing the outcome would the players need to make an excuse and use Q&D Inconspicuous Acts to sell their promise to return when their present affairs are resolve. They may even do so as part of the Epilog if so desired. Any enemy will undoubtedly grow more ferocious if the battle is delayed. The choice is up to them; mayhap they pledge and break promises so often, they lose count of when they do so?

**Rank Five – Skirmish:** This is an attack by enraged locals. A deal has gone sour, even if the events have not prompted a *Cup-Sword* in this setting. Assume a tribe of nonhumans has met the players, but something has made them go berserk. Any attack will quickly turn into a slaughter of the enemy. But only after each player defeats at least one opponent solo in personal duels.

The soldiers don't sit this one out, but their role need not be generated. Each player will select method and try to gain his own dispatch; surrender and run away are ignored. Only death works here. If any player is wounded, a proportional number of servitors are slain and longboat techniques lost. e.g. With six players and one goes down – lose one out of every six techniques. The players will still win as long as one player gains a dispatch. If no one does, continue with Digression (G) for each player.

**Rank Six – Dwarves:** You begin your chores ashore or conduct trade...Here come the goblins; event must've occurred at night. The imps are just below the surface nearly everywhere. Don't you wish you just stayed out in open water, never approached the shore or isle? Either go right to battle against a set of monsters. Or, strike a deal with a dwarven king for tribute. If the players act improperly, the negotiation will result is a massacre – no save, the player characters are dead. That's probably not going to happen. Someone is bound to generate an end event result on the Q&D Inconspicuous Acts, right? The situation may digress into battle described in the next paragraph from action there too.

The players may wish to avoid that horrendous possibility by simply going right into the fight. The dwarves, turned sadists as goblins, will not be easy to kill. Tens of thousands might need to be crushed. Yet, select a target number equal to half the party. The Ferocity of the creatures will be equal to the highest level player character being attacked. Defeating this smaller significant force drives the rest to flee away or delays the combat long enough to reach morning, when the fiends retreat to the Unending Grey.

Count your survivors at sunrise. There may even be a chest of gold to be collected off the burned remains of the goblins from their light dusting of minerals in the mines. Wouldn't it be nice to have a charm that turns back the dwarven swarm? Resist relics, they have a proper place. For a mission that would end with this event, maybe activate the relic (shrine Q&D). But for a random very bad event, you just have to gut it out.

**Rank Seven – Lord's Fleet:** The waterway has an obstruction, usually magical. This typically occurs as the group haggles in the market or loads purchases. The local patrol (on ships and on shore) requires a toll to pass. The group will lose all their purses or lose Treasure Laden (D). That just starts the event. Continue with Q&D inconspicuous Acts for Gain to feign your commoner's status and justify why the local lord and his pirate hunting fleet should not impound your vessel and leave you continuing your quest cross country? (That would be with just a third of your techniques salvaged.)

You may wish to whine and plead for mercy. You may wish to pledge to help him in your next quest. You may need to grovel and do both. Fight on, never surrender to tyranny? Roll your next character here. Now what does he do?

If combat results from the Q&D Inconspicuous Acts, the enemy is distracted and will be less all powerful and overwhelming. Just don't start the fight right away.

## Q&D Inconspicuous Acts for Gain

**Inconspicuous King:** Produce your warrants to travel, at least copies that were once valid for someone. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. **Difficulty: 7**

**Advantage:** Skill Forger

**Inconspicuous Queen:** Make up a pretext when someone comments on your unusual accent, quashing additional inquiry. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. **Difficulty: 7**

**Advantage:** Skill Linguist

**Inconspicuous Knight:** Treat everyone with the utmost courtesy in the guise of hippy-dippy pilgrims. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 7**

**Advantage:** Skill Courty Grace

**Inconspicuous Knave:** Trusting fools; enjoy your five-finger discount. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. If the character has yet to check Growth, he does so and collects the personality flaw of Foolish or Gamester; Ref decides.

**Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Pickpocket

**Inconspicuous 10:** Pay your excise taxes for deal making or trespassing; player character loses his purse of coins. If he has none, everyone in the party loses all purses; the alternative is to fight constables or legionnaires of superior stature. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6**

**Advantage:** Skill Briber

**Inconspicuous 9:** Eavesdrop on a fascinating conversation. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter also escalates into combat using ship to ship. **Difficulty: 6**

**Advantage:** Skill Spy

**Inconspicuous 8:** In the blink of an eye, decapitate an annoying imp that kibitz during the deal, before he engages in gossip; cover the deed by mashing his





body as you would a clump of toadstools. Fail and lose any Blade technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, party loses Longboat technique Treasure Laden (D).

**Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Blade Lithe (H)

**Inconspicuous 7:** Entertain some kiddies, but in doing so draw a crowd. Now you have to fabricate a lie on your origin and motives. Fail and lose any Longboat technique. If the party has none remaining, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into combat with the local authorities. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Swagger Better Valor (B)

**Inconspicuous 6:** Attempt seduction (perhaps hypnosis) on an overly inquisitive gentlewoman. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter also escalates into combat with her husband and guardians of the sect. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Psionics (B)

**Inconspicuous 5:** With your supplies in hand, avoid any questions or thievery by giving the locals a serious distraction – why is it always arson? Fail and drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter also escalates into combat with constables. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Wizardry Illusions (I)

**Inconspicuous 4:** Size up some livestock and haggle a price from a reluctant farmer. Note you keep your purse of coins, so your stance is miserly, and your tact is brusque. Fail and lose any Personal Swaggering technique (failed to impress). If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter also escalates into combat with local freemen.

**Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Skill Farrier-Breeder

**Inconspicuous 3:** Accept local praises, wave off any offers and downplay the heroics of your horse to minimize the attention. Fail and lose any Mount technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter also escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Mount Pure (L)

**Inconspicuous 2:** Display your heraldry and patronage, at least to the extent that validates your independent rights without tipping off the rival. Success and this encounter ends. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (G), Unconscious Away from Others. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)

**Inconspicuous Ace:** Amaze the locals, despite any instinct for restraint, winning a drinking or eating contest. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. If character has yet to check Growth, he does so with the personality flaw of Drunkard or Libertine; Ref decides. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Trait Gifted

**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.



## **ROD-ROD Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Crew**

Crew morale is all important that includes the slave rowers. These events represent mishaps, disagreements and intrigue involving the servitors. Moving to a set of climax challenges might take months. The sailors start off trusting the masters; the warriors follow orders expecting to share in loot. This encounter will affect everyone. Often there is discord between the two internal clans, even factions. Rival religious elements might be involved. The ship becomes a prison to not just the slaves.

The Q&D Disciplining Servitors will often be consulted. Order is usually established in a two fisted fashion – might makes right. *Success and this encounter ends* becomes a satisfactory outcome. The rivalry or confined space remains, but the crew has something greater to fear, hate or respect. Lose the morale completely, and every mission is doomed.

**Rank One – Grumblers:** The masters start hearing more than the standard complaints. Depending upon past encounters or future events, add an NPC grumbler to the crew. Having grumblers is a given. Whether they plot to take command is also a given. Is anyone capable of usurping power is the unknown.

Consider the complaint. Let one player voice a concern. e.g. The warriors told to stay aboard, upon hearing tales of their counterparts visiting brothels and filling their purses following wagers, grow resentful of their confinement to the ship. A proper rotation of those who go ashore and those who must stay might not exist. Yet the skills needed to go out to hunt are not skills all have.

Use the Q&D for discipline. The chief grumbler will be released from a sweatbox in a few days. He'll probably know better than to challenge a player master for the remainder of this adventure. But, only follow-on events will tell.

**Rank Two – Fever:** The crew is ill; remedies have been tried, but there is reason to believe all the ailments are imagined, hysteria. Many refuse to perform their jobs claiming sea sickness. The casks of water may be tainted.

Ale is a good general cure, if the ship has plenty to be generous. Several longboat techniques suggest as much: treasure, stores, comradery to name three. But even religion and noble allies could ensure the ship has plenty of drink.

There's almost no chance that the crew contracted a plague. That is unless the ship has no barber or no wizards, plus lacks No Disease (I). Make an Ordinary roll using magic to purge the ship of this latest gripe of discomfort. Note you may not be curing anything, so even pyrotechnics might get the men and boys up and back to tasks. Two rolls by different players may be attempted. Fail both and then realize the

crew has scurvy. Now you lost No Disease (I). If you didn't have that technique, then each player must roll Difficult to avoid receiving a vicious wound.

A true illness will not go away anytime soon. At each interphase of the adventure, a longboat technique is lost as more of the crew grow weak. These can all be restored once the quest ends and a proper rest and recovery is had in a friendly city-state. What, you have no such refuge? Then keep losing technique upon technique until someone makes a friend that can be the harbinger of true rest.

**Rank Three – Drunkenness:** The crew is in a disorderly state; revelry is causing a loss of discipline, order and effectiveness. Attempt at most a half D8 events on the Q&D Discipline. The prime player character takes the first roll, then the others who get to act are decided at random. If no one obtains the success to safely end the carousing, the boat loses Orderly Kept (Q). When that is not available, the Ref may wish to consult the Alternative Loss table in the *Generating Quest* booklet. Hint, that would be Pure No-Curse (J); but when that is absent, a next and a next potential loss might ensue, until something is struck for such insolence. The players were not asked to join the frivolity.

Restoring order could generate grumblers and lower morale. Allowing excessive drink to continue will cause shortages of ale or even combat penalties. But most often the result brings intrigue and causes more puritanical crewmen to conspire. If the immediate event following this one has combat, the hangover will leave the players unable to tap longboat techniques for Advantages.

**Rank Four – Master's Errors:** A blunder or miscalculation has been made. Could be a shortage, could be an accident? If an NPC was responsible, he must be stripped of his duties and flogged. He won't like that. Some won't submit quietly and must be subdued by combat. Use the Q&D Discipline to quell him into submission (or start the mutiny by failed actions of his accuser).

If the NPC is not liable, then which player character was involved? Ship duties should be assigned. Someone will be the quartermaster, someone else the master of warriors. Yes, those names next to the Officer Primus on the longboat record sheet do have day to day jobs.

Let one player select the responsible person from the list of eight officers and detail what was neglected. The victim of this blame may choose one swaggering to lose (his or the boat's). Or he can accept full responsibility and mark his vicious wound from a beating. With either, the person responsible is discharged of duties. His role assigned to someone else. That person may have to pretend to have certain skills, until he grows into his role (or is discharged from his duties for the next failure).

Often the boat has a proclaimed scapegoat (or jinx), someone blamed for all the bad events. The scapegoat may be the default person to suffer the vicious

punishment from this event. If the prime player character accepts ultimate responsibility, the longboat loses a half D8 techniques in shock and awe. The high commander is not supposed to make mistakes.

**Rank Five – Trial:** Fabricate some charge against one master or any NPC aboard. The overall commander will appoint a prosecutor, as he acts as judge. If the longboat has Democracy (S), there must also be a jury of impartial masters for the inquiry. Selecting an NPC as the guilty party causes rolls on Q&D Discipling Servitors. His supporters must be kept in check. After that the accused skips right to sentencing and is tossed overboard.

The accused player, however, defends himself. He will be innocent of any charge, unless his character has personality flaws. If so, then one of those bad elements of his character has been revealed to the crew via the crime. Not all crimes need be deaths or thefts. Religious blasphemy might also be rightly or wrongly alleged. Speaking ill, even joking, of the ship or commander is also mendacious.

The innocent make a fitting defense on an Ordinary roll; the guilty do likewise on a Difficult roll. The Ref may allow bonus to the dice for up to three pips by suggesting character skills employed as assets. e.g. Briber makes a pay-off or Minstrel sets his speech to music.

Next comes the prosecutor. He makes one roll at Nearly Impossible to refute the defense. Since he only rolls if another player is on trial, he is actually rolling hoping to fail. (Unless he dislikes his fellow player, then use a make-roll.) The roll is made mostly for laughs, since it could be very high and then the defendant will be held guilty and sentenced. Having a jury overrules the prosecutor, but the crew may not like that. It is a final safeguard for the defendant though. The Ref may actually let the jury vote, but that is plain mean.

If the defense successfully pleads (makes his roll), the prosecutor doesn't prevent that (fails his roll), then the judge (or jury) says he goes free. Release the man and let later events show whether all is forgiven (unlikely) or retaliation follows.

By failing the defense or when the prosecutor condemns the man, then the guilty player character will go to Digressions (A). If he survives that, he returns to the ship; the crew sees the outcome as a miracle. All is forgiven (for now). A guilty man may also be pardoned by the commander as judge. He does not go to Digression. Yet both he and the judge may later find themselves facing retribution (even from the ever watchful gods). In other words, the trial is a sham, just for show. So, stage a performance and placate as many as you can of the crew (or some heavenly host).

**Rank Six – Mutiny:** Someone leads a group to take control of the vessel. The party is being attacked. They do have loyalists, but the longboat techniques will not be available until this conflict is resolved. This can unfold in many ways. The Ref

may decide to start with some task resolutions or initial swagger vs swagger. He might have the enemy split the party (for a few rounds). He may add an outside element, like a conjured monster or happenstance providing the distraction for the mutineers. Some of the warriors may be off ashore. Rarely, but plausible, one or more players will use alternate roles to handle the event (as loyalists). Never have player characters appear on both sides. Any disloyal are NPC (permanently).

Part of the crew, many of the freed slaves, usually led by an NPC grumbler, must be defeated. Use ship to ship with boarding. Use personal combat restricted to Irregular. Let the players have free reign to use any method. Make a mutiny Q&D; I should get on that. Again, resolve this battle as desired. There are some guidelines presented in the *Outlands Fundamentals* booklet.

If this event happens out of the blue, when there has been little to justify the anger, consider how much the player characters may be out of touch with their men. Use Q&D Discipline sometimes to prevent the mutiny as it starts. Usually there is enough bad events proceeding this to justify the usurpation of command and attempt to kill all the players.

**Rank Seven – Catastrophe:** Like the CUP-COIN event for Disaster, the crew has suffered a calamity. The players usually have inflicted draconian discipline on the entire crew. Madness, simply madness, has taken hold. There's been a massacre (or might be).

These sometimes start as small events or false prophecy. e.g. The crew's morale is uplifted by sighting an angel. The men go ashore to pray or make a shrine. The commander tells them to hurry, get back aboard. The men seem changed, foreign, unfamiliar. Only later does the whole turn corrupt, demonic, in a word catastrophic.

The crew might have been poisoned by the cure, sobered to divine retribution, slit each other's throats silently as they slept, suffered powerful magic, or simply die without explanation or inquiry. This is another event of misery. The result is often self-inflicted. One or more players look down at their bloodied swords and wonder what just happened.

Just not right yet. There's a slim hope.

Try to resolve this first with Q&D Disciplining Servitors. If the event ever forces battle (to escalate), then skip the battle. The players slaughter their own crew. Only by achieving *Success and this encounter ends* will that be avoided. Otherwise, discover the exact outcome by checking every longboat technique with a Tasking roll. Each swagger lost represents a portion of the crew to be buried (or burned).

The prime player character is the one who makes these rolls one by one for each technique. If he alone has the particular skill to mitigate the outcome (that table is in the front of this booklet ~ page thirteen) he may roll three dice instead of two.

Whatever crew he has left, after this frenzy of death and self-mutilation, will not have any grumblers. Anyone that survived and has shirked work is now a hobbled slave. The purge complete, the adventure may continue. The Ref should give the prime player character a personality flaw of Combative or Unemotional.

## Q&D Disciplining Servitors

**Disciplining King:** Coldcock the first man to open his mouth and dare to speak negatively. Success and this encounter ends. Regardless, add yet another NPC grumbler into the crew. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Pugilist

**Disciplining Queen:** Set your boot to the backside of someone sitting on his keister complaining. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Swagger Effective Spurning (H)

**Disciplining Knight:** Loosen the teeth of someone who looks at you side-eyed. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Swagger Hilt Punch (L)

**Disciplining Knave:** Tease, insult the crew's stamina, lecture the men about what your ancestors endured before gaining liberty from the effete Romans. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Tormentor

**Disciplining 10:** Pull your sword and order the grumblers back to duties. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Hellish (M)

**Disciplining 9:** Hold a man up and over the railing as he confesses he can't swim. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward; you lost your grip, and someone drowned. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, regardless, ship loses a half D8 Longboat techniques. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Demigod (A)

**Disciplining 8:** Bugle assembly on the riverbank or on an isle; ride up and down the ranks excoriating the men. Fail and lose any Personal Swaggering technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into intramural combat. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Mount Ominous (S)

**Disciplining 7:** Allow the men to voice their grievances; sign a pledge to make amends, but your demeanor is ambivalent or weak. Fail and lose any Blade technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, upon fail, the lowest level character suffers a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Longboat Democracy (S)

**Disciplining 6:** Refute line by line the petition offered up by the crew for restitution; in fact, this is what they signed-up for. Fail and encounter escalates into



intramural combat. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, upon fail, that battle starts with the lowest level character suffering a vicious wound; he may continue in this combat taking events (or pass out from the pain)? **Difficulty: 7**

**Advantage:** Longboat Charted Path (B)

**Disciplining 5:** Leave the men be to skulk and sulk, when the next crisis arrives they will not fail (again). Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, if Longboat lacks technique Longboat Orderly Kept (Q), Difficulty increases by seven.

**Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Longboat Seasoned Crew (L)

**Disciplining 4:** Allow the men drink and frivolously toast hardship; join in the defiant lampoon of the gods who punish for whimsy. Fail and lose any Longboat technique. If the party has none remaining, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, and further if the ship-crew lacks technique Longboat No Disease (I), Difficulty increases by five. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Longboat Vermin Free (N)

**Disciplining 3:** Cover for any man who claims to be too weak to work; guilt them back to tasks. Fail and drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, upon fail, player character gains buzzword Braggart or Melodramatic; these personality flaws will only go away through continued role-play and atonement. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Skill Mariner

**Disciplining 2:** Ambushed, struck from behind, sent overboard; shake off the haze and swim back to your vessel. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (A), Adrift at Sea. Regardless, every player character must attempt this roll; only if a majority fail, continue with a battle for command. **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Skill Duelist

**Disciplining Ace:** Break the fingers of the man who pulled a knife, then chain him to an oar. Success and this encounter ends. Fail and your attacker is outright slain, missing the opportunity to openly punish and demonstrating nothing.

**Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Skill Brawler

**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.

## **ROD-COIN Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Misadventure**

These mishaps happen to both the ship and to parties exploring ashore. Wherever the event happens, the players are there. Most of these are actually external events. Smaller challenges in the group probably occur, but with the ship within a day or two's march, minor events are ignored. These are major happenings. The players will be challenged to overcome serious problems and obstacles. Grumblers be damned, there's a true crisis to palliate.

**Rank One – Food Poison:** This represents convulsive deaths caused by spoiled food. If the last card flipped was Rod, the shore party is the victim, a Coin and the vessel. Many die. The shore party might suffer one third of the longboat techniques. The ship could exhaust half.

Start by taking events on Q&D Remediation. Each time an event fails to achieve *Success and this encounter ends*, the players lose a longboat technique of their choice. Some bad luck is ahead, even as players succeed at individual rolls. The maximum lost techniques will only equal the one-third (possibly) ashore or half those found in the crew of the vessel. As if that's any consolation.

Was this intrigue? Most likely not, but ask yourself does the ship still have the technique Treachery Expunged (G)?

**Rank Two – Heat & Thirst:** The winds are calm; the sun seems closer than usual. The temp swelters unseasonably warm. The slaves are exhausted and cannot continue to row. The prime player character must decide – drive them on or let all have a few days of rest. Could he tell his warriors to row? That too would have later consequences. For now, any decision seems rational, though driving the slaves will result in the loss of the lowest longboat technique available starting at (T).

The real situation occurs in what comes next. The next event happens during this calm. For the next encounter all players are anxious and start Shaken. If the party is attacked, the commander will be blamed for placing the ship in such a vulnerable condition and circumstance. Regardless of his decision, he will be blamed for waiting, for his lenience, for his lack of ingenuity, or even for being a taskmaster. He can't win, unless the next event is temperate. Perhaps hope for a TEN flip.

**Rank Three – Surf & Tides:** The river currents are unbearable; the surf is making the crew nauseous. The weather is erratic, and the winds blow from every



direction; the sails seem constantly fouled. The gods are angry. Prayers go unanswered. Earlier or distant storms cause flash flood down hillsides and a dirty wash over the banks of the river.

Anyone caught ashore might be hit by surprise. The expedition will lose supplies; gear is water logged, warped and ruined. The area turns to mud. Of course, it's impossible to track and ride. Flooded streams and creeks become impassible and cause delays to those ashore. The path the players waded across a day before, is now a rapid. How do they ford the water to get back to their ship? The expedition is forsaken. Some want to declare every man for himself.

Use Q&D Remediation to get past this difficulty. Keep taking events until *Success and this encounter ends* is gained. If a full round of player actions occur without that result, the party becomes Shaken. If two rounds occur, then take a break and handle a fight. Most of these will be duels between characters, the players and some NPCs who doubt the leadership. The loss of any NPC here will not bode well for morale going forward; suffer a minus one Quest Pip for each dispatch.

**Rank Four – Set-Back:** The expedition or vessel suffers a devastating attack or accident. These can be combinations of hostile nonhumans, ferocious animals, weather or barriers that cause dreadful tribulation. To make matters worse, each player and many of the NPCs have their own solution to the problem or opinion on preventing another assault. No one seems to be in charge. The servitors are confused and pulled every which way with orders.

Every player except the prime player character must roll Difficult, or Ordinary for having Methodical trait. Success and he reaches a compromise or did his part and is satisfied. Fail and continue with Digression (N), lost in unfamiliar lands, as he heads out on his own, at first with men and materials, but later finds he's alone and lost. Only upon reaching result (Z) is home base of the ship found.

As for the prime player character, he needs to use the Q&D Remediation, taking as many events as required to achieve *Success and this encounter ends*. Should he too be lost or suffer a vicious, another player character must step into the leadership role. Should all fail, then the party wiped. Better luck next time with your next set of characters. The Ref may decide the ultimate fate of any party member; Death of Character Digression?

**Rank Five – Monsters:** The players are attacked. If the last card flipped was a ROD, the monster is met on land where the party has only a third of the longboat techniques to use for Advantage actions. The Ref may also like to flip an extra card and refer to the *Generating Booklet* list of monsters (under Twists, pg 249). Else, let one player describe the monster, then the Ref should set the ferocity and any flairs or Banes. Perhaps do both, flip the card for the general monster type and let a player name and personalize the creature. Adding familiar monsters specific to certain

regions is another way to build the campaign. Your inhuman nemesis or its offspring reappears. Of course, many monsters change and evolve as the players grow stronger in levels.

**Rank Six – Obstacle:** The path is blocked. This should not put the players back a Phase. That would be a mission consequence encounter. But it could be serious enough for the mission to fail. Rockslides, fires, logs, monster bones, magical undulation, take your pick of the barrier. Prismatic Sphere? The time and supplies to get around the obstruction will be significant. The only way to block open water (as I conclude) would be ice. Get out the sledges and start hammering or push the wizard to the front.

First take some results on Q&D Remediation. It probably won't be all that is needed, but it will be a good start. The rolls should be made with the players Shaken, unless the player's character is Trait Bold.

After that, the Ref must assess a full D8 additional losses to longboat techniques or vicious wounds inflicted in the ordeal. Clearing the path has accidents, disrupts animal and monster lairs, offends the wizards or nobles that created the barrier. The dwarves are fond of mischief; a demon may be loose? Much to consider, but do not resolve each possibility.

Rather, suffer the D8 hit and get on with matters. To add a story element, the Ref or each player should choose his own wound or lost longboat swagger and describe what took place, how the injury or accident unfolded for him. In most cases, the Rugged should absorb the wound, using Strategic Benefit, rather than inflict harm on the crew implied by any longboat technique loss.

Since it has been asked of me in my own gameplay, let me clarify here (as elsewhere). The terms *technique* and *swagger* are used interchangeable. Usually I say swagger when it applies to any collective technique – personal, blade, mount, wizardry, longboat. But if I err, forgive and don't be confused. Oh, yes, the player may also state he damaged his Blade or Mount and lost the necessary swagger. I wouldn't advise that, but the boat may not have a D8 techniques to lose?

**Rank Seven – Zaire:** The misadventure involves a powerful wizard. He could be invincible, one of the twenty protectors of magic. He could be a pretender to that power. Either way he is hardly one to magically duel, unless the players are very high level and collectively have more than a dozen unique wizardry techniques between them. If so, sure as a Brit might say, bring on the fantastique dingdong.

The event implies an evil ritual taking place, often involving human sacrifice. The wizard may be the instigator (COIN last flip) or trying to stop the action (ROD). The rite often includes a cult of cannibals or goblins, working themselves into a frenzy. The gods are both offended and delighted at the chaos which might ensue. The players just happen by. Give them Arcane Sentinel (F) as an initial bonus.



The group will start by watching, peering from behind cover. They will yearn to do something, but the numbers of the enemy will be massive. The players might attack in field battle skirmish, trying to save the lives of those about to be sacrificed. The Ref may also employ Q&D Mishap at Sea, that's the last table in the Fundamentals Booklet, as the wizard discovers them and tries to stop the boat from leaving the isle or dynamic range of his temple. You know you're safe only when you no longer hear the screams.

But the wizard was on our side, right? If the Zaire is here to protect and serve, he could confuse the players as cultists or draft them into service. There are a slew of good Q&D which imply Zones of Terror, Death Dances, Cursed Luck, even Magical Gates (to be closed). Any Q&D used may need some fudging of narratives, of course, to fit exactly an event. The rolls and consequences still apply.

Sure, the *all-powerful* guy should just snap his fingers, but why should he when fate gave him new minions. Maybe he'll be satisfied and become a friendly contact following success.

As for the Q&D Remediation, that should follow after any combat or rescue. The crew will not want to continue the journey. This region in bonkers. The freed hostages might attract retaliation from the cult. The wizard is never truly defeated or dead, is he? A powerful friend is not always for the best, since he comes with powerful foes? Use the table to get past the event.

## Q&D Ship's Remediation

**Remediation King:** Finish the crisis, then solve the aftermath. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Concentration (E)

**Remediation Queen:** Gather a counsel and discuss your strategy going forward. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Scheming (S)

**Remediation Knight:** As if anyone could wave a magic wand and restore things to what they were? Success and this encounter ends. If the character has yet to check Growth, do so with the personality flaw of Authentic or Utilitarian; Ref decides. **Difficulty: 12 Advantage:** Blade Fantastic (D)

**Remediation Knave:** Shirk your duties and get others to do the heavy lifting. Fail and suffer vicious wound. If the character has yet to check Growth, do so with the personality flaw of Bereft or Reluctant; Ref decides. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Animate Objects (O)

**Remediation 10:** Break down some baubles and ornaments and make a sacrifice upon an idol to the elder gods. Success and this encounter ends. But, fail and lose any Personal Swaggering technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. The failed result can be avoided if a slave is sacrificed in a blood ritual; the



encounter might not end, but the loss is avoided? **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Skill Goldsmith**

**Remediation 9:** Negotiate with a magical projection, which is hunting for a fugitive inside your servitor crew. Strike a bargain, perhaps; the wizard gets what he wants, you get the remedy you need. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward; the crew feels betrayed. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, every member of the party gains a half D8 to his tally of Warped Outcome; generate none of these events. **Difficulty: 8**

**Advantage:** Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)

**Remediation 8:** Wrangle a hoist line removing an obstruction fouled in the rudder or debris transecting the river. Fail and drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, upon fail, continue your survival on Digression (M), Marooned. Player may explain his absentminded mishap, but as a reminder Digressions generate no Ignoble checks. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Swagger Wrestling Holds (T)**

**Remediation 7:** Never admit you were frozen (magic or fear), as everyone else thought you alone stood stalwart and stared down a strange beast. Fail and lose any Longboat technique. If the party has none remaining, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter further escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Skill Grit-Fortitude**

**Remediation 6:** Solve your dilemma with a novel idea; many doubt the solution, even as it seems to be working. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, upon fail, the player character unintentionally cursed the gods for his ill fortune; lose both Longboat Religiously Inspired (C) and Pure No-Curse (J). This may not be the end of the ramifications. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Blade Ingenious (A)**

**Remediation 5:** Weave an experimental pattern of numinous cord to replace stretched and snapped gear lines. Tensile strength was probably not the problem; the rope needed to be blessed in these accursed waters. Fail and lose any Blade technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, upon fail, ship's hull ruptures when it strikes bottom between waves; lose Longboat Undamaged (O). **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Blade Meshed (Q)**

**Remediation 4:** Quench the thirst of a busy crew with a wondrously enhanced beer made from mare's milk. Fail and lose any Mount technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, upon fail, player character also suffers a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Mount Essential (I)**

**Remediation 3:** Order the men to eat to prevent scurvy! Though you might never advocate a vegetarian diet, you do know a balanced one and a varied one is best. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, upon fail, the lowest level character also suffers a vicious wound; perhaps he was used as a food taster? **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Horticulturist

**Remediation 2:** Slay a saboteur conjuror in the act. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (A), Adrift at Sea. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Wizardry Power Words (S)

**Remediation Ace:** Discover and plug a leak, seal a waterline crack before it widens. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Mucilage (B)

**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.

## **ROD-SWORD Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Animals**

These events happen exclusively to any party which is foraging ashore. Could a commander keep everyone aboard? No, not and keep order. The men will need fresh food. The crew is too large, the slaves need too many calories, the guys crave something that hasn't been soaked in brine. Any opportunity to hunt is both necessary and welcome.

Almost all of these can be a source of food, but the beasts also cause deaths. The beasts met here are large, numerous and deadly. They can also be tiny, yet just a bloodletting or worse septic. Do not be so inclined to mirror your campaign with the flora and fauna of our own. Mix and match. These animals will seem to stalk the players. Each animal event in the setting should be worse than the last, so raise the rank as needed if events repeat.

The Q&D To Stalk and Kill is a substitute for full combat. It can be added to any event, even when a monster is not implied. Every event implies something being hunted. **The players may be able to slay, injure or frighten off the threat of an encounter.** On that table will be the failed results that create full blown, choose your method, response to the menace. Again, any event rank might force the Q&D, to finish the hunt or defeat something larger, not always monstrous but potent.

**Rank One – Game:** On this event, the players have restocked their provisions by hunting, trapping and fishing. They've even found plenty to add to the ship's salted meat barrels. Add longboat technique Abundant Stores (M). Or, nullify any shortage or depletion of food, which may have already occurred. Excess butchered

animals may even be given to locals as a show of good faith. Depending upon the region, this act may be poaching of a noble's property. But usually, the

Where's there's game animals, there will also be predators. This will be the last time you simply see what the large monsters usually eat. Next time, the players may be the welcomed *fresh meat*. Brings back memories of the Butcher in Diablo.

**Rank Two – Fearful Signs:** More game is collected as *Rank One*. Yet the players encounter large tracks, foul waste matter, howling sounds or mutilated carnage. These will portend increased swarms of insects that later damage supplies or cause sickness in half a D8 turns. Rotting fish, animals which die after breeding, leave a putrid setting with new forms of vermin feasting on the decay. Fearful signs can portend large ferocious animals may be lurking.

One should appear before a D8 event card flips. The players have that long to draw a TEN result and advance the Phase. Otherwise, they are being stalked and will have an extra battle to fight. The troops will not want to continue the quest and start to imagine all sort of possible monsters. The players must particularly start to worry, when the locals lock doors and show fear.

**Rank Three – Pestilence:** Despite the game, this is a shortage in provisions caused by nuisance animals – infestation of insects, spoilage by rodents, stolen by primates, etc. These events can reoccur leaving the group never in proper supply. The crates left on shore, waiting to be rowed out to the vessel may also show signs of large claw marks. Regardless, the ship loses a technique, Vermin Free (N) seems the most obvious (if available).

**Rank Four – Infection:** These are usually insect bites but can also be snake or bat bites that injure and kill. The whole force contracts an ailment. Infectious disease can spread and kill, even after an area is left. Deaths from attrition will increase. The locals often have tribal cures for these afflictions, but they may want a service in return. The wakened malaria ridden warriors might have to force march and burn an unfriendly village. The fight will kill less of the soldiers than the trek to battle. Ref decides. Regardless, the ship loses a technique, No Disease (I) seems the most obvious (if available).

**Rank Five – Attack:** How many die? Seldom will the group use personal combat to resolve these battles. Although the players fight valiantly, no Ignoble check for duels. Packs of wolves, lions, hyena or an enraged bison can enter the group's encampment, kill some servitors and scatter the land expedition. On a stream, crocodiles make a good choice to tip a boat and show no mercy. The campaign might have more fearsome animals that attack the group. This will not be the last attack. The players might have to mitigate the loss of one random longboat technique to reflect continued servitor losses every flip of the cards; the creatures will be too numerous, of too many varieties, to kill them all.

**Rank Six – Gigantic:** Now we start to see true monsters. These are animals that exist in the campaign and are totally strange. These can be weird game animals whose skin causes hallucinatory reactions. These exotic fauna may display fearful signs before attacking. e.g. ten foot across footprint. These creatures cause massive damage, sickness or attack deaths.

These are animals that seem supernatural. Use the Q&D To Stalk and Quickly Kill. As well as apply the results of pestilence, infection and attacks (those lower ranked events). This is an infested region, which needs to be exited as soon as possible.

**Rank Seven – Unique:** These are animals that provide a source for food, but also represent monster attacks. If combat escalates while using the Q&D To Stalk and Quickly Kill, then generate a real monster to fight. A random table of some was presented in the *Generating Quest* booklet.

In odd and rare instances, perhaps on Nearly Impossible roll, the creature might not be butchered, but instead tamed. If combat creates a situation where the animal cowers (surrenders), then it can be turned into a pack animal or sold to a lord's zoo. e.g. Mastodon. These are fantasy stories, so ignore the time needed to train an elephant. Unique animals like these might instead have feathers or fur that will be profitable if farmed. Give the players some benefit that might be turned into Treasure Laden (D), but only after the quest. So, what's stopping the players from just quitting and profiting? That's what many of the crew will also be asking.

Even in victory there will be crew moral and campaign consequences.

## Q&D To Stalk and Quickly Kill

**Stalk King:** Surprised but respond valiantly, staying between the creature and its lair. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Trait Bold

**Stalk Queen:** Follow the trail and put an end to this, while the swine is out in the open. Success and this encounter ends. If character is not a skilled Hunter, Difficulty increases by three. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Houndsman (Beasts)

**Stalk Knight:** Spur your horse to buck and kick backward, preventing the prey from entering its burrow. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Mount Sturdy (Q)

**Stalk Knave:** Unleash the dogs and follow the baying; they'll keep the mob out and circling. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R)

**Stalk 10:** Engage, singlehandedly, you may not be able to do this alone, but the beast will experience its own primal fear. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Berserker



**Stalk 9:** Assess the terrain from a highpoint; surmise where your quarry makes its den. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, upon fail, encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Mount Empyrean (G)

**Stalk 8:** Nothing dare try to overrun you; force the brute to retreat away from its cave. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter



escalates into combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. **Difficulty: 8**

**Advantage:** Blade Herculean (J)

**Stalk 7:** Each time it tries to go to ground, slash the freak, send it whelping backward. Fail and lose any Personal Swaggering technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into combat.

**Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Swagger Heroic Swordplay (K)

**Stalk 6:** Block the entrance to the creature's haven. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, regardless, Longboat loses No Disease (I).

**Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Mount Inexorable (T)

**Stalk 5:** Scorch the earth, start a brush fire to corral the wild thing. Fail and lose any Mount technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, regardless, Longboat loses

Vermin Free (N). Ref may allow as second separate roll to sterilize the water casks with heated iron and prevent the pestilence from spreading. **Difficulty: 10**

**Advantage:** Wizardry Pyrotechnics (K)

**Stalk 4:** Convey the obvious; the beast will be easier to fell outside its lair. Fail and encounter escalates into combat (in that lair); players must start with a Brash Bane. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, regardless, Longboat



loses Inhuman Watchdogs (R); they are no longer effective and are mercifully retired. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Swagger Killer Instinct (N)

**Stalk 3:** Though seeing this herd seems to be a separate opportunity, bring down some of the predator beast's food source. Most apex predators are attracted to a fresh kill? Fail and lose any Blade technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. If character has Blade Biting (L), Difficulty decreases by four. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, regardless, Longboat gains Abundant Stores (M). **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Skill Bowman

**Stalk 2:** Carefully chum the water or bait some deadfalls. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (B), Facing Great Beast. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Hunter

**Stalk Ace:** Your record is seven, seven in one blow. Success and encounter ends. But, fail and escalate into combat on the monster's terms. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Crushing Blow (G)

**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.

## **COIN-COIN Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Phenomenon**

These are weather phenomenon and sea creatures. The boat suffers the exotic animal attack, not the shore party. Most natural events in the seas—such as water cyclones, tidal waves, changes in compass magnetism, etc.—are rightly blamed on evil creatures; these are collectively called ginns or tempests. Large animals at sea are leviathans. Even a whale is seen as diabolical. Many maybe intelligent, driven on their own goals.

Use the Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation as a means of ending the foul winds, engaging the entity which threatens. This could make the monster appear in the flesh and offer proper combat.

**Rank One – Whale:** The average whale is roughly sixty feet long, and any longboat is well under that mark. The blue whale might reach a hundred feet and weigh two hundred tons. When such a beast slaps its tail on surface, the impact cracks and deforms the hull, producing a wave which might capsize the vessel.

This event will happen even along a river, though the animals may be massive crocodiles. The resolution is little changed.

Use the Q&D Mystical Scrutiny to dive off the whale. Yet consider how much of the supplies have been ruined or lost overboard following this event? What strain on the whole crew is created by fishing survivors out of the water? Just one leviathan encounter is enough to send the whole expedition into panic.

Mitigate a half D8 longboat techniques to prevent loss on this first encounter. If the whale (or its brother) appear again, double that and double that, until the whole ship is at risk when *thar she blows* is hollered as its steamy gusher spouts.

**Rank Two – Strange Weather:** This event denotes torrid conditions. Sickness and death result. A sweltering heat seems to envelope the ship. The shore parties are unable to find fresh water; all the wells seem dried or festering. The crew will be licking the masts and canvas each morning for little relief. Imagine this for what it is – not a pretty sight. Guarding the rationed water barrel results in brawls and intrigue, increasing the danger of Personal Events.

Let all players receive one event of Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation seeking an end (or explanation besides the divine). *Success and this encounter ends* has never been more important to achieve. If the heat event continues, it will linger.

Follow with lightning strikes, despite cloudless skies, from heated static discharges. Storm titans, ginns, mysterious godlings, the very heavens toy with humanity below. The damage might be limited with wizardry, Voltaic on an Ordinary roll. Or, any other wizardry can be attempted after an explanation and a Difficult task roll, but failure there causes the character a vicious wound. The condition lasts unless the Phase advances.

Every intervening event where the weather is not nullified by magic, expect to lose a longboat technique; or else, someone at random suffers a vicious wound. The NPC aboard should be included in this danger. Named NPCs—grumblers, friends and junior officers—don't count here among servitors outside the risk. Actually, the crew too is dying by the scores with each longboat technique sacrificed.

The terrible closeness of the terrible gods – the prime player character may sacrifice one of his swaggering, but not a longboat technique to appease the deities. Doing so will end the weather threat and grant the adventure a plus one Quest Pip. Otherwise, curse them all and wish for the Phase to change.

**Rank Three – Tentacles:** Some crewmen are dragged overboard. This event happens in daylight. Everyone sees the giant tentacles reach from the seas and pluck men from the deck. The player characters must defend the whole. Use Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation, until the event ends or personal combat against the monster initiates.

The enemy may only be a single mob, but it will be of ferocity equal to the highest level player character. The nature of the creature makes Brash and Calculated methods impossible. Should combat result, the players must use other options.

**Rank Four – Curse:** The boat itself has been possessed. The crew seems on edge, agitated more than usual. Everyone is accused and the finger points on many as scapegoat. Someone blasphemed. Someone offended the heavens.

The prime player character and half of the other players receive one event of Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation seeking to dismiss the hysteria. *Success and this encounter ends* means the crew stops blaming and gets back to work.

Short of that, the prime player character has a terrible choice. He can lose a half D8 of his lowest lettered techniques starting from (T) as he purges and drowns a minority, or he can accept blame and acquires a personality flaw, Anathema or Melodramatic. Let the player roll the total of his half D8 before he decides.

Once the decision is made and the result inflicted, then the highest level player character aboard will call for calm, an end. He rolls Difficult, or Tasking if the longboat has Arcane Sentinel (F). Success and the event ends. But fail and he has the same terrible choice with similar result – take buzzword or lose half D8 techniques.

Repeat this for every player character, until someone is successful at the roll. Note, personality flaws which occur twice result in other new buzzwords that influence role-play. This event can leave many of the player characters changed. It also should be noted that any Arcane Sentinel (F) currently residing in the ship's figurehead is not entirely loyal to the crew. Resolve that in future play.

**Rank Five – Tempest:** The ship crosses a storm. The prime player character alone takes a single event on Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation to get the ship alerted and bypass the danger.

Failing to achieve success there, means that everyone then uses Q&D Mishap at Sea to do his part to keep the vessel from being crashed onto rocks. Achieving *Success and an obstacle or impediment of battle is removed* will end the event table for all. Yet there's still the clean-up, morale recovery and restoration, where each player aboard must display one of his traits, skills or swaggering at Difficult. Fail and either suffer a vicious wound or lose a random longboat technique.

The Ref may instead of a skill roll, generate new events for each player on the different Q&D tables found under CUP-COIN, ROD-ROD and ROD-COIN to reflect the different aspects of getting the ship back to a sailing condition. Even CUP-ROD, CUP-SWORD and ROD-SWORD might apply to find the supplies needed to replace the stores washed overboard or ruined by salt water spray.

**Rank Six – Demon Spawn:** A malevolent entity is controlling the weather. This specter appears before the prime player character and demands acknowledgment or tribute. The player has one event of Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation to rally the crew and put an end to the threat.

Failing to do so will cause a COIN-COIN event to occur in parallel with any future mission inconsequence encounter, until the Phase advances. The rank of these extra phenomenon should be one lower and resolved either jointly or one shortly after the other. The voyage from here on out will be problematic to say the least.

How do the players get rid of this lingering tempestuous devil? Well, seldom with combat (unless they can get it to congeal and offer a fight). Prayer and sacrifice may help, maybe a divine oath to slaughter in its name, maybe treasure can be obtained and dumped overboard, etc. The Ref should secretly write down worship, slaughter or gold. Each player should state his penance. Let the majority of players vote to see which one the majority performs. If they guess correctly, the encounter ends before the Phase changes. They may try anytime they can perform combat (and kill the survivors) or gain treasure (which they discard). As for bowing down to evil, that will change any player character doings so with a personal flaw, Anathema or Foolish. As with any flaw, duplicates add even greater mental abnormality, and all must be infused in role-play.

In rare cases, regular combat might slay the Great beast. Yet any wounds inflicted by this demon tend to maim, causing the loss of an arm, leg or eye. The Ref should decide extra restrictions inflicted on the character for such significant amputations. Perhaps he may never sue Calculated method again.

**Rank Seven – Faeries & Ginn:** The players' ship is tossed in crashing surf, blinded by poor visibility and suffering random lightning strikes near and far. The final outcome is usually the vessel is blown or takes refuge in a lagoon or alcove, even a sea cave. Therein, at the center of these storms is an oasis of calm, lorded over by a highly beguiling creature. The initial celebration someday turns to lonely exile and true imprisonment.

I am inclined to send everyone to Digression (A), where escape could reunite them with the group's longboat and many questions of "What happened?" But each player may attempt to save himself from that fate by taking events on Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation; each must obtain his own *encounter ends* result. Each event after the first round of a card for each player will lower progressively the rank of the card selected by one, then two, then three, etc. Two and below are treated as event two. Any Ace is treated as high of a count fourteen. Any Quest Pip resulting here will only change the rolls on this progressively hopeless event resolution. The Ref may allow a starting die modifier if the player character has favors to expend with wizards, ginns, giants or other magical protectors. But I expect some will be tempest tossed into Adrift at Sea, regardless.

## **Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation**

**Mystical King:** Disbelieve and mock the simplistic nature of these phony magic acts. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)

**Mystical Queen:** Bah, nothing to fear from amateur witchery. Fail and lose any Personal Swaggering technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a

vicious. If character has Skill Delver, Difficulty decreases by two. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Spirit Guide (R)

**Mystical Knight:** The best defense is a good offense, an adage timeless and true. Fail and lose any Blade technique. If the character has none to lose, suffer a vicious. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Bounding (C)

**Mystical Knave:** Shelter among the fallen; dissuade further violence by pretending to be dead. Fail and drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Necromancy (H)

**Mystical 10:** Attract fire; make all take notice and inspire confidence in your minions. Fail and lose any Longboat technique. If the party has none remaining, player suffers a vicious. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Knightly (G)

**Mystical 9:** Seek wisdom from the sage and the arcane among the crew. Fail and drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, increase Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, regardless, whimsy and seductive promises of the creatures causes loss of Longboat Vigilant (E). **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)

**Mystical 8:** Absorb a strike of lightning by gallantly holding your magical blade on high. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into combat as the nonplussed attacker materializes on the deck. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Blade Amalgam (O)

**Mystical 7:** Speak in soothing tones and cajole the dread to chill. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, Longboat loses Undamaged (O). **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Demonic (F)

**Mystical 6:** Employ a set of wards and prayers to dispel the aggression. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, regardless, lose Longboat Pure No-Curse (J). **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Hexes (M)

**Mystical 5:** Free yourself, then others, from magical bounds. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Shape Shifting (J)

**Mystical 4:** *“Cease, strange Vanir...cease your rough play.”* (Heroes of Asgard, 1870) Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, Longboat loses Charted Path (B). **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Celestial (G)



**Mystical 3:** Trace back the lightning path or wake of the destruction to pinpoint the source for your retaliation. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, also on success gain Abundant Stores (M). **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Voltaic (N)

**Mystical 2:** Brace or lash yourself to keep from being blown up and away, eventually landing way out at sea. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (A), Adrift at Sea. Regardless, Longboat loses Undamaged (O). **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Swagger Mastery Shield (O)

**Mystical Ace:** Plunk – sound the water at precise points to sense what lurks or stirs below. Success and this encounter ends. But, fail and fight a sea creature of ferocity equal to the highest level player character. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Telekinesis (D)

**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.

## **COIN-SWORD Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Mysterious**

These are events that happen, yet their cause, or extent of the motives involved, remain vague. Many events are unexplained, not many can be forgotten with a shrug. By having one event occur, others will follow. The new events need not be prompted by encounters. Even as other dangerous events occur, the Ref should add more unexplained mysteries.

The crew will see many of these events as supernatural punishments or ghoulish tricks. A primus officers might cover neglect or incompetence leading to accident by staging hocus-pocus puzzles. Yet the most likely cause of something unexplained is an act by a flesh and blood opponent, a skilled spy and stowaway. Just remember that the event should emphasize a mission inconsequence encounter. If an NPC spy is behind these unexplained events, he is not an agent of the patron nor rival. He's just a tool for some other guile.

Q&D Restoring Morale is used to stop further loss. Any intermural combat which follows should pit an NPC for Defensive Modifier, plus supporters equal to half the players in battle. The players must defeat that number to end the event. But the next time they will have more should other Mysterious events follow. Double the number fighting in any intermural battle after the first and as needed create new NPC grumblers as their (short-lived) leaders.

**Rank One – Missing Crewmen:** This is not dismissed as a man that went overboard at night or a loss that goes little noticed. Start with Q&D Restoring Morale to calm the riot of murmurs.

The person AWOL is an NPC. He will be a supporter of the prime player commander, a colleague or beloved toady. This is a murder, which must eventually be solved. Add clues, or let the players take actions, only as each future event card of whatever nature takes place. If the mystery is not solved before the setting changes, the Epilog will become more problematic. The Ref decides how. Whether the Epilog follows a success or failed mission, this mystery lingers and produces future harm.

**Rank Two – Watchers:** These are shining eyes and sounds coming up from the water or from the wild interior. Could be mermen, animated corpses of the drowned, nasty goblins, dire wolves or something even more sinister. Use Q&D Restoring Morale on first encounter, but thereafter, none of the COIN-SWORD events may be placated by that Q&D for the rest of the Phase.

Each night the ship's guard on watch will say he saw hulking figures walking along the coast, a lantern light on an isle or floating overhead, or creatures in the deep. These events will leave a ship crew tired and irritable. The players too should be assessed a Quest Pip penalty, until the mystery is solved. This may simply foretell of an exotic attack to come that is part of regular encounter events. Or it could be a battle right here.

Sound can play funny tricks; by investigating ashore the players might become lost or travel in the opposite direction by following the echo. Otherwise, a hunt may find the owner of the strange glowing eyes. The Referee should roll one half D8 secretly and the players should roll a half D8 openly, combined the two for the ferocity (Defensive Modifier) of the source. Care to push the action yet? If the Ref's roll was higher, the monster also starts Enraged.

**Rank Three – Thefts:** Ships arms, the coinbox of wages or supplies are missing. These can be found with a *Success and this encounter ends* result on Q&D Restoring Morale. Nothing more need be done; unless the event repeats, then nothing short of conflict will cause further losses to stop.

Select an NPC with a role on this ship. Be he the guard on an arms locker finding the knives and axes within gone. Or he could be a Hierophant spiritualist who reports more men are saying they hear whispers of a rising violent cult inside the crew. He may be the leader of subterfuge or not. Ref should secretly decide.

Regardless, someone plots armed mutiny. Either flush the offenders out with Nearly Impossible display of skill, or slowly reduce that difficulty with the trickle of clues at each event to follow. The rolls may be attempted twice per event of the quest, and the Ref may allow three dice for resolution if a player tells a compelling story around the use of his abilities. Again, get away from straight *Tormentor takes*

*pliers to suspect* description of actions; expect a tad more. The prime player character might try to set a trap or provoke a large scale boarding action to see who truly commands. Do the players have a plan?

**Rank Four – Violent Death:** The ship has a serial killer. The ship loses the following techniques if present – Treachery Expunged (G) and Comradery (P), but gains Vigilant (E). Collectively these murders might cause additional longboat technique loss as determined by the Ref.

Crewmen are being garroted or ritualistically disemboweled as each victim sleeps. How is that possible on such a confined space? Magic is being used to allow the killer to freeze time or disguise his actions. The killer will be potent in some ways. The prime player character, assisted by the highest level player character aboard, alternate events on Q&D Restoring Morale looking for the *Success and this encounter ends* outcome. Either might just send the whole into intermural fight.

The victims of the crimes might also be less openly flayed of flesh and more subtly slain. Too many men are falling from masts. A whole squad of soldiers ate rancid beef. The fiend then is only caught as clues become known.

Mysteries are tough to write on the fly, so you can always force a purely numeric game mechanic. If the setting lasts at least a D8 more events, the criminal is exposed. Fight that personal duel to finish him off; he still may be an insane higher level character. If the setting advances before the set number of events, the culprit will lay low and strike again next adventure for one Phase. He is only caught if that Phase lasts longer than a D8 events. Even when exposed he will say “*so what*” and must be punished by battle. Are the players sinister enough themselves to let the man have a few slaves to satisfy his need for gore? Nope, the crew would never serve on such a villainous craft.



Sometimes Ignoble player characters become true antiheroes, doing right for even wrong reasons.

**Rank Five – Magical Attack:** The easiest to visualize is a pyrotechnic explosion. Yet this can be many forms of wizardry sabotage. Lose one technique or someone suffers a vicious. Animate Objects on strangling mast lines? Mitigate the damage perhaps, but who is responsible?

The strike is a single action (here on first event flip). Someone may have accidentally discovered his own powers. Free that slave. Start with Q&D Restoring Morale to find the source and calm everyone. If combat results, it is not with the magical attacker.

If morale after the Q&D is still shaky, continue with the players Shaken. The act occurred because someone wanted an NPC master (often a player victim) dead. Intermural fighting delayed finding who tossed the magical hand grenade (so to speak). The party remains Shaken in every event of this Phase to follow, until the source of this first magical attack is found. How? Why? WHO?

Unlike the other mysterious events, the only way to truly find the person is for the event to repeat, or the Ref to add our fledgling wizard back into play. He will not stay with the ship after a Phase, but his hatred thrives. If the Phase ends, he will become one player character's Wizardly enemy. That's a bad one.

He might also appear to join a mutiny, aid an attacker, even try to help his other friends in the crew by slaying a monster...he might be a good person to have around, even if he hates one of the player characters. Card flipped as Coin might show redemption, while Sword tend to hate all aboard. The Ref must decide how to follow up, should the initial Q&D not calm nerves and find the magic source with a *success ends* result. A full Phase of misery might follow with that Shaken making the rolls minus two.

**Rank Six – Phantoms:** Start with dreams, supernatural omens, shared premonitions and seemingly demonic voices. Only the prime player character may try to use Q&D Restoring Morale. Should he fail and a fight starts, the majority of the crew will believe that the phantom will only be placated and leave upon the prime player character's death. Some of the NPCs will also believe this to be so. The phantom might also state as much. One of the player character's enemies has summoned a supernatural force for retribution.

The longboat will not gain any further swaggering techniques, until the prime player character dies. Every time the player character takes a vicious, he may roll Ordinary to see if the phantom is mollified. He might try to fake his own death, but that will take at least a vicious to sell the act. So, is he ready to suffer a sword blow to try to restore normalcy to his crew?



Is another player ready to strike him down for mercy's sake? NO longboat techniques until he dies? The ship is slowly going to be a wreck, and a replacement will still be haunted by the Phantasm. The Ref might set a series of actions and atonements, which could call off the spiritual attacker. He might have to make peace with a former enemy by performing a quest (or half D8 quests). If he's below level five, is he even still worth playing? No loopholes, as an alternate of the crew he still has the black curse, the cloud of doom, the demented death hovering overhead. An advantage? Nope, it's only seen by friends. Did I cover all the arguments to make a case for tearing up his sheet? Two changes to roll Ordinary as the vicious fall; three if the character's Rugged.

**Rank Seven – Migration:** The players cross a route where an enormous number of animals or monsters are passing. Not just one whale, but hundreds. Not just one attack by tentacles, but a sea roiling with the things. The dead drift on the water surface clawing for the living. a herd of strange beats reach the river and begin to leap across.

The crew will not continue on the same path. The only hope is to pull the ship out of the water to minimize the destruction. Along a river the vessel is dragged onto the high ground or into a cave near the shore. Just so happens at sea that there's a sandbar, ice floe or shrouded isle upon which to take refuge. All are mysterious, an obvious trap set by the capricious gods. But is there any other option?

The party has to wait out the threat of the mass migration or nauseating uprising from the deep. Q&D Restoring Morale is needed just to keep the servitors from tearing the prime player character limb from limb for bringing them to this point of no return, putting them in such harm's way.

The players must attempt a finite number of rolls equal to their number. Each flip is made, and one player decided by the prime player character will attempt the result. Probably the one with the Advantage or using a make-roll, but each player may only take one turn's action. Each player must get one turn. If by the end of all the card flips for events, by the time the last player has an action, the *Success and this encounter ends* must be obtained. If not, everyone suffers a vicious wound.

Even if the success result to end is attempted and made, the remaining events, one for each player, must still be resolved. Success to end multiple times gains nothing more. Yet every player will get his action and potential loss from the variety of events. Again, the event is flipped and known, then the prime player as leader assigns someone to handle that result. He even decides when he takes his own roll.

For small parties of perhaps three or fewer, the Ref may allow several NPC to join the action; he will either roll for them or say any event assigned to them is failed. For parties of players above eight, nice job Ref, but also the rolls should be made as Shaken.



Resolve intermural combat by having the person generating that ill result take an extra flip as a monster Bane equivalent in ferocity to his level. That could result in a vicious wound, which will double up and count as two if the overall event of *success to end* is not obtained by anyone (or never occurs even as an opportunity).

## Q&D Restoring Morale

**Restoration King:** Lead by example, and your example is get busy, get happy, leave those cares behind. (Shout Halleluiah!) Success and this encounter ends.

**Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Trait Energetic

**Restoration Queen:** Gallows humor tends to be employed by soldiers and mariners in the worst conditions. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6**

**Advantage:** Swagger Repartee (P)

**Restoration Knight:** Employ a comfort pet; pass the mascot. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Mount Beautiful (A)

**Restoration Knave:** Sing of heroes and celebrate those who now feast in Valhalla. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat. **Difficulty: 5**

**Advantage:** Skill Minstrel

**Restoration 10:** Tell jokes and recall first moments – first voyage, first kill, first love, first sacking, first close friend to die, etc. Success and this encounter ends.

**Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Swagger Charismatic Style (C)

**Restoration 9:** Drugs, medicate any sorrows; weeping is just a waste of water. Fail and lose any Longboat technique. If the party has none remaining, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, regardless, continue with Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils, as you go ashore and investigate what's happening (or secure some more dope). **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Skill Apothecary

**Restoration 8:** Dismiss any claims of having seen ghosts and haunts of the fallen, mere dreams; everyone is tired, perhaps a day of bonfires and repose ashore. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, continue with Q&D Ship's Remediation, cleaning up the mess caused by the apparition. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Wizardry Thought Control (P)

**Restoration 7:** Perform an ad hoc ritualistic dance, a vigor building Haka to shore-up morale. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless, continue with Q&D Mystical Scrutiny and Retaliation, discovering and mitigating the source of the death ray. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Ferocity (J)

**Restoration 6:** Celebrate the living and make promises to avenge the dead. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, regardless, continue with Q&D Recovery, Repairs and Resupply, as you paper over rivalries and take stock of some neglected duties. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Battle Cry (A)

**Restoration 5:** Celebrate a feast day or hold mass. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, regardless, continue with Q&D Inconspicuous Acts for Gain, quietly seeking a source to replace your loss. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Longboat Religiously Inspired (C)

**Restoration 4:** Encourage all to suffer or brood in silence; that is the way of your clan. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, regardless, continue with Q&D Reconnaissance Ashore, as you pursue the people (or creatures) spying on your activities. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)

**Restoration 3:** Select a scapegoat and shout for a heresy trial; some coward has offended the very gods. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, regardless, continue with Q&D Disciplining Servitors, addressing the crew's concerns. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Rabblouser

**Restoration 2:** Calm the nerves with a short respite ashore, a picnic and some leisurely intramural sports. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (N), Lost in Unfamiliar Lands. (Guess you were left you behind?) **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Longboat Comradery (P)

**Restoration Ace:** Entertain, parade the slaves and let the warriors cast lots and declare winners. (Left to each Ref to choose what's euphemism.) Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Prestidigitation

**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.

## **SWORD-SWORD Seas, Rivers and Coasts: Shore Party**

These are mishaps, mostly occurring in the land side of the expedition, causing disagreements between the player characters, as leaders, and the rest of the troops. Fractious arguments do not end, simply because the players return to the ship. The disgruntled soldiers will want to desert; they only are waiting for an opportunity. If the various primus officers of quartermaster, tinker, priest and loyal Heerth or Hafna have yet to be named, they are considered part of the unwashed warriors for this disagreement with the players.

All warriors aboard serve solely out of loyalty and for loot. Clan ties and contractual oaths may not be honored. Social clout means nothing. The men will want the best and bravest to be in charge. Yet that is seldom the case.

When times get bad, servitors will sponsor a new leader, one who will order them as they are inclined. The only thing that can steel their resolve is treasure and the promise of more treasure. Since the locals may be normally helpful and good to keep as allies, the soldiers are working against that goal. If the commander won't order forage and plunder, many barbarians will rape and steal anyway. People forget that everywhere still has some form of law.

Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils is used for events of the player characters leading their troops. Combat occurs with outsiders but isn't the only task that must be resolved. The shore parties often have the goal to trade, to gather, to repair and build, to barter labor for services or supplies. The warriors will grow to dislike this mundane set of chores. Many were scouts for the legions, knew true authority, always blameless. But those times are the past. Work once done solely by slaves is now shared. All except rowing. The fear of being put in irons and becoming a oarsman does keep many soldiers from reckless acts.

**Rank One – Exhaustion:** This represents complaints from the men about the thickness of the forest, the broken footing on the trails, the utter futility in continuing. *“We have a vessel to ride past this brush, don't we?”*

The troops might ask to be given a day (or two) for rest. This may even solve the problem, but more often the soldiers will find new complaints. The commander may have to start bartering for porters or capturing locals as slaves to help move supplies. Then what? More mouths to feed aboard or release the captives miles down the trails and inflame different sets of locals who now deal with all the idle poor. Nobles dislike when slaves are freed, bad visuals for those left in hereditary servitude. They usually don't want them either. Take them home and start over?

See what happens when Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils is used to obtain *Success and this encounter ends*. The combat might occur as the warriors start killing laborers when their role is finished. *“We don't need these weaklings anymore.”*

**Rank Two – Disease:** The players and the soldiers on the land part of the exploration have caught a disease from the locals. Sickness in the group, an influenza, weakens or drives men insane. Deadly ailments can be transferred from the crew later to city-states, but only to one distant city-state visited in the Epilog. The longboat will lose No Disease (I) or the alternative if it already is plagued.

Combined with age, travel, fatigue and weather, about a quarter of all the party ashore dies. That's about one extra longboat technique of those the group assigned to bring with them ashore.

That second loss can be prevented if the group uses Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils to gain *Success and this encounter ends*. However, instead of any intermural fight caused by the Q&D, the failed activity resulting in combat causes another quarter of the men ashore to become very sick. Another longboat technique is potentially lost each time a fight erupts.

**Rank Three – Exposure:** A light rain is falling and the conditions at night drop nearly to freezing. The players are too late to build or seek shelter. Unless the cold happens twice, no one dies here. However, all players should dice Ordinary or suffer frostbite and lose a toe. Make-roll perhaps?

Losing a toe causes no change to the character. Except he is marked for vulnerability to future frostbite. If this event occurs ever again, he could die from failing that Ordinary roll. Wouldn't the group use magic? Ref decides if this drastic event can be avoided on Tasking.

Before continuing after the rain, use Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils to gain *this encounter ends* or have the troops brawl over the poor planning and leadership. A brawling fight might automatically occur if anyone loses a toe. He lost a toe, someone must be punched for that?

**Rank Four – Argument:** The troops become unruly. They think the quest is a waste of time. They are spoiling for a real fight. The work of trailblazing is seen as drudgery. Discipline must be restored, or further events will cause rebellion or rout.

Often the troops have faced such pitiful adversaries—perhaps in battles that weren't worthy enough to spark encounters—that they feel invincible and refuse to drill and practice the proper upkeep on their arms. If the group's morale is low, the troops are wallowing in self-pity. *"I miss me dear mother."*

Giving the men strong drink, allowing them to carouse with locals, and offering time to celebrate with games, might improve morale or backfire as the group is helpless when the next encounter proves to be too much for the blurry eyed company. The party has at most a half D8 events on Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils to gain *encounter ends*. Otherwise, the Referee decides the consequences of celebration hangover based on the next encounter.

**Rank Five – Call to Arms:** The shore party will fight enemy raiders or roaming monsters. The Ref must decide those details. He might wish to flip a card for the monster off the table in the *Generating Quests* booklet.

Before that occurs, however, the prime player character must roll Ordinary. If he fails, the call to arms occurs late or during other action. The party will resolve a half D8 events on Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils. Any player who gains

*encounter ends* for his event will start the later combat with the Fury Pip. If intermural combat happens, the group is Shaken at the start of the main monster battle.

**Rank Six – Vanishes:** The men sent ashore seek justice, food, ale and pay. They have ulterior motives. This started as complaints, then continued with disorder, desertion and threats. The prime player character believed some diversion off the vessel might solve all ills. Instead the group that goes ashore never returns. For this event, none of the player characters tagged along. But, the overall group did lose an NPC. He might have been murdered by the men he led?

The troop's morale was probably shattered by a previous event. They were no longer an effective fighting force regardless. There is just as much likelihood that the group was killed to the man by some other hostile event or internal feud. Count your blessing to not be among the fallen. But there is no evidence what happened? Not even magic seems to reveal what might have occurred?

The prime player character takes one event on Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils. This could result in further loss. This could result in a new fight with others who hate the quest.

There is a result, **Challenges 8**, which might cause loss in longboat techniques representing those who vanish ashore. But otherwise, the lost party becomes a sleeper event. The missing group may or may not generate future consequence. Keep them in mind for the remainder of this quest. They may also be something of a campaign event sometime in the future. Whatever happened to so and so? The answer might someday be known as wanted posters appear, a friend or enemy from the past emerges, or some noble asks if a severed head was one of the group's minions?

**Rank Seven – Usurpers:** This is a challenge for command. A party with good morale can still suffer this event. A rank seven is still pretty rare. A heated argument, usually enflamed by religious doctrine or strong drink, provokes a dueling challenge.

The prime player character has one event on Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils to gain a *success to end*. Else he must fight a swagger vs swagger combat against an opponent with as many techniques.

The other players may not participate unless they choose to risk injury by being minor antagonists. If the player is defeated, the final swagger technique employed will determine if he has surrendered or been slain. If he loses, the leader (for now) becomes the NPC that defeated him. The Ref may even insist that the player swap roles and take this new alternate character as the temporary prime. His own character is set aside.

The usurper will last about as long as encounters are friendly. At the first true serious event, another player character will assume the prime role. Or the Ref might



one by one fight the remaining players in swagger vs swagger to see who eventually defeats the NPC (if anyone).

The change in leadership could cause the mission to fail. The new prime player character may decide to go right to the Epilog and skip any climax challenges and their danger. No one ever said that mission inconsequence encounters have no result on the quest. They only were not directly caused by the quest. The Ref has much to decide if the prime player character is defeated by the usurper. Ask how many of the other players will actively seek revenge?



## Q&D Overcoming Challenges and Toils

**Challenges King:** Before setting sail, finish the drudgery – splitting firewood, digging a well (for unsullied water), smoking meat, upending and cleaning the hull, etc. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Slave Driver

**Challenges Queen:** Reuniting after dark, assembling before a camp was truly established, use torches and signal flares to light the way to home. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Mount Radiant (F)

**Challenges Knight:** Even after a respite, the mood is still foul; air the last of the grievances or finish your pep-talk. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Mount Serene (E)

**Challenges Knave:** Stop two men from fighting; more so, put an end to the rest enjoying the spectacle. Fail and

drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, increase Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; suffer the event that occurs. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Disarming Blow (F)

**Challenges 10:** Assess the last of the chills as inconsequential or the foibles of laggards. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Longboat No Disease (I)

**Challenges 9:** Look into each man's eye and judge his character, as he judges yours. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into intramural combat. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Wizardry Paralysis (Q)

**Challenges 8:** Assay your weapon, since it may have been awhile since you broke inhuman bone. Fail and drained of one Wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, Longboat loses a half D8 techniques. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Man-at-Arms

**Challenges 7:** Some of your soldiers would never return to the water if given a choice; those and only those are the ones to threaten insubordination. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, selecting player has a choice to continue with Q&D Ploys (under Cup-Cup) or Stalk and Kill (under Rod-Sword)? **Difficulty: 5 Advantage:** Trait Methodical

**Challenges 6:** Amputate a lingering cancer of the party and leave him unburied for the wolves. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. If character has Blade Gladiatorial (R), Difficulty decreases by three. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, fail and suffer a vicious wound, as the disagreement involved you. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S)

**Challenges 5:** Run one last raid to finish your shopping list. Fail and lose any Longboat technique. If the party has none remaining, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, upon fail, also suffer a vicious wound, almost freezing to death. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Longboat Battle Hard (T)

**Challenges 4:** Aid the injured to reach the vessel; they can finish healing there. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, upon fail, suffer a vicious wound, nearly coughing out a lung with influenza. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Skill Barber (Chiurgeon)

**Challenges 3:** Sacrifice the weakest of the rustled horses; none of the player characters' of course. There's room for jerky, but the boat has only so many hay strewn stalls. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, upon fail, lose all Trait Strategic Benefits for the

duration of this quest; you need true rest without responsibility. **Difficulty: 7**  
**Advantage:** Mount Replenishing (J)

**Challenges 2:** Wake from a dream to clasp the hand about to run the slaver's garrote about your throat. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (G), Unconscious Away from Others. **Difficulty: 8** **Advantage:** Swagger Seize Swordarm (Q)

**Challenges Ace:** The cycle continues; sail for a spell, then resupply ashore, repeat as needed until the quest truly ends. And, you return to collect your reward. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 11** **Advantage:** Longboat Elite Goals (A)

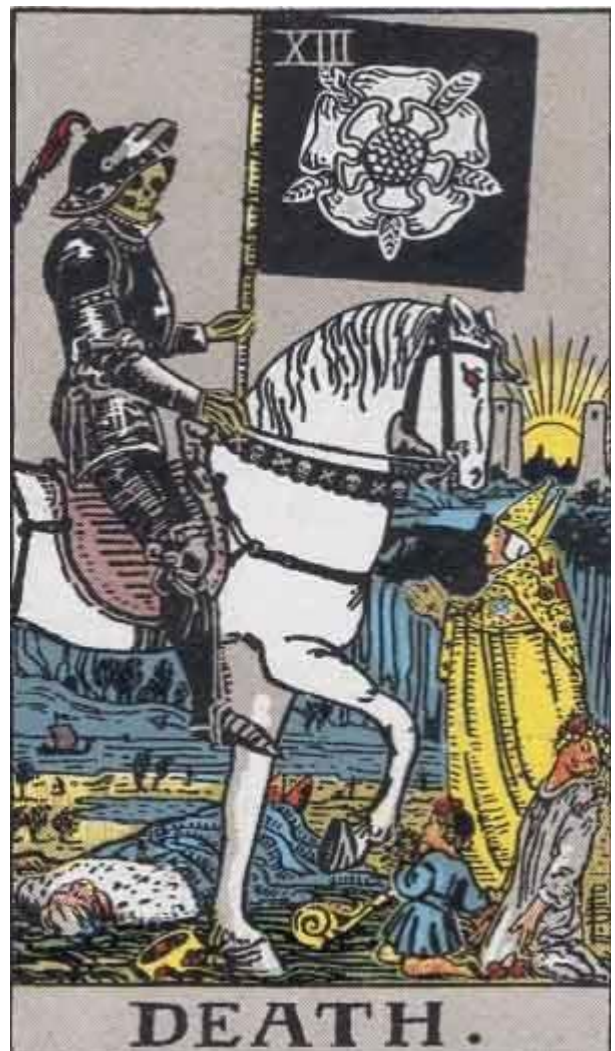
**Majors:** Use the table under Seas, Rivers and Coasts *CUP-CUP*.

## Setting: Crossing Underworlds

An underworld is a fine description. These are places that are unlike those known by the player characters. These can be rocky barren caves, forests of mushrooms, stinking pools of sewage, tangles of maze and tomb, but most often these are levels upon levels of abandoned cityscape. Roads and buildings, walls and gates abound. Behind any section may be treasure or monsters or both.

No horse would be dragged below. Mules barely can make the trip. Only a fourth of all longboat techniques will accompany the party. These represent the servitor warriors in the group. There may be a force also left at the surface or the longboat is moored near the entry or anticipated exit point, settling in for a long wait.

The temperature varies, yet the humidity remains a constant. Everything is damp. Everything tends to spoil, rust and rot given time. The light is provided by torches, lanterns and magic. Extra slaves are brought to hold the light for those who guard and fight. Yet some places seem to have their own aura, a glow of unnatural luminance. These



are places that no civilized man would enter, at least not without desire for gold.

Meeting dwarves is a given. These are not little people or Tolkien miners. Often the group will offer the imps ale to keep them amused and sleepy. A few drops is all that's needed for each tiny folk. Yet there are so many, the ale is quickly all gone.

The dwarves are of the Norse tradition, wicked and inhuman in desire. They are savages if provoked, transforming into goblins of every twisted description. These primitives are beyond redemption. Their technology magical and nontransferable to men. Some dwarves are even armed with cannons.

**Dwarves have no souls.** They are single minded in finding gold and hiding gold, digging out the veins of fallen giants and redistributing the precious finds in a pattern of chaos. Even experienced delvers have no idea what to expect from dwarves.

The savages engage in all forms of depravity, including drinking human blood. Yet they do not age, do not truly feed, do not copulate. They simply are, and there are too many of them to count. They are everywhere, busy and not at the same time.

Greed alone will not hold a party together underground. The player group must have a purpose. The players are not a company of delvers who can stomach loss after loss and count down men like pennies in a toll. The NPC grumblers of the group will constantly look for paths to go up and out of the Unending Grey. Yet the prime player character might need to go even deeper.

The upper levels are given names like the Old Tombs or Halls of the First Kings. The middle levels reflect the Elder's Age or A Time Before Man. The lowest domains are beyond the Womb of Gems and Hell's Furnace. There may be a Place of Null, where no magic occurs. But usually magic changes beyond comprehension in the underworld. Wizardry tends to have radical outcomes, too much or not enough, an off and on without a throttle.

The lower you travel, the more danger and inhumanity encountered. These are also the havens of dark forces, demons, the undead. The monsters here are truly the worst. There is no ecology to speak of. The lion has lain with the lamb, and both are poisonous. The worst dangers appear in the smallest packages. The group should see



these domains as a muddle, a place to navigate and cross in the least amount of time but also in the safest manner.

Anything met below can be slain with impunity. Nothing should be living there, and anything that appears to be living there has no rights, including the party of players.



The player characters might seek to map an area; but the effort will prove futile, except when that is the quest goal. Both the dwarves and strange magic is shifting things around. The result is not immediate, but the players will seldom return and have an easier adventure. Large distances might be safely crossed with no encounters. A small intersection might lead to events one after another.

The main difference between the typical dungeon crawl and this setting is the scale. This is not a series of small rooms joined by a theme. **The underworld is countless cities sunk below.** There might be a building complex that seems important, but it would take many lifetimes to enter every broom closet along the trip. But do you take the main traveled arteries, the ones overlooked by so many sets of eyes? Or do you delve a twisted path, avoiding scrutiny as much as possible? Both and neither.

Each category of encounter is also given a Q&D to help resolve the action. The players might avoid the worst outcomes by first using the Q&D to gain an advantage if not immediate resolution. Otherwise, the game might be nothing but one fight after another after another. It still may be, but not always against external forces.



## Underworld Setting Quicklook

Setting: Crossing Underworld					
U - U	Messengers	U - x	Specials	U - o	Baggage
1	Routine	1	Goblins	1	Indifference
2	Supplies	2	Outcasts	2	Rationing
3	Lost Hope	3	Remnants	3	Technique Loss
4	Surface Raid	4	Ritual	4	Darkness
5	Despondent	5	Slavers	5	Raid & Capture
6	Disaster	6	Expedition	6	Magical Mishap
7	Delver	7	Emissary	7	Riches
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
U - †	Dwarves	x - x	Natural	x - o	Misadventure
1	Signs	1	Barriers	1	Lost
2	Wards	2	Traps	2	Attrition
3	Clan	3	Disease	3	Delay
4	Entourage	4	Deposits	4	Arguments
5	Skimish	5	Tremors	5	Illusions & Delirium
6	Kingdom	6	Breeding Ground	6	Catastrophe
7	Demonic Host	7	Waterway	7	No Return
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
x - †	Denizens	o - o	Exotic	o - †	Mysterious
1	Vermin	1	Ruins	1	Watchers
2	Fearful Signs	2	Crypts	2	Missing Men
3	Spoilage & Filth	3	Cults	3	Losses & Thefts
4	Creature Attack	4	Cityscape	4	Omens
5	Magical	5	Paradise	5	Violent Deaths
6	Glorious Evil	6	Quirks	6	Phantasm
7	Celebrated Beast	7	Vile Domain	7	Discoveries
8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All	8	Catch-All
		† - †	Servitors		
		1	Exhaustion		
		2	Hunger		
		3	Patched Throat		
		4	Disarray		
		5	Ultimatum		
		6	Abject Misery		
		7	Murders & Madness		
		8	Catch-All		

### CUP-CUP Underworlds: Messengers

These are dispatches sent from the group's ship. These will request information or report some mishap. Sometimes the arriving groups will bring supplies or

reinforcements in answer to the players' call for aid. The players' group will usually be exploring along, securing a route; they are moving slower and messages can be run back and forth between themselves and their vessel or surface garrison.

The action and events stays with the group in the Underworlds. But the ship to a lesser degree becomes a storehouse and a hospital to send the sick or injured. Letters from the surface might be relaying info on a campaign event, but here, the category represents mishaps. These will not be the chores of those they left behind. The ship might even survive a mutiny, and the players may never hear about the incident. However, messengers do bring bad news followed by ill-fortune. Good news is less event worthy.

Rarely will the Referee suspend travel and shift the game's focus back to the ship's action. Only worst case events call for warriors to return. By then it may be too late. The person placed in command of vessel has his own reputation to preserve. He won't bother the group delving with small issues or petty concerns. If the party has no vessel or outpost above, treat this category as *Cup-Rod, Specials*.

The Q&D Placating the Expedition Inquiry allows the players to respond to notices and requests with little lost in the process.

**Rank One – Routine:** This message is a positive sign causing the troops' spirits to uplift. The party gains a Quest Pip. Messages like this might arrive after the players was diverted or lost; the event proves they have found or forged a proper path. Else, a request from the party below can be answered, bringing fresh men or supplies. The messenger will report good news on the status of the ship or construction efforts to protect the entry site. Possibly a past mishap there has been corrected. Yet this is the last time in this setting for such; hereafter treat rank one as rank two.

The prime player character should take one event on Q&D Placating the Expedition Inquiry. Obtaining *Success and this encounter ends* is not required. But doing so, allows the next combat which starts to gain the Command Pip for the first player who acts.

**Rank Two – Supplies:** These are messages that relate to provisions. The ship could also be running out of food and needs permission to forage. They will need to hunt and barter to otherwise send back down anymore provisions.

Failure to do so could bring starvation deaths. But often the request is made out of boredom or to force the players below to return and make a personal account. Use Q&D Placating the Expedition Inquiry, until a *Success and this encounter ends*

is generated. If more than a half D8 events occur, the ship was actually telling the truth and very much in need. Could this have been discovered by magic? Probably not, since magic is not as reliable below ground.

The ship may have also tried unsuccessfully to trade with locals. After no success, they raided for what they needed. The ship has some stores but warns that retaliation is expected. If the players did not leave a capable and skilled NPC leader behind, this outcome is likely to get worse. One of the players may need to send his character back and play an alternate role.

If the party below needs food, then the incomplete result means that the longboat was no help. Does the group dare to harvest local plants or trade with dwarves? Most everything below is known to be toxic. Could magic make provisions or purify what's available? Ref must decide what's possible based on player action and skills. Techniques may be lost upon failure and Warped Outcome tally may increase even in success? Best to be lucky and resolve this on the Q&D under the limit imposed.

**Rank Three – Lost Hope:** A messenger arrives with word that the ship commander, or leader left behind in support at the entrance, is losing faith. He wants proof of life sent immediately. By life he wants either everyone to return and be counted, or a significant sum of gold be sent to prove the expedition losses are worth the cost and wait.

First try as many as a half D8 events to placate the request. The prime player character may assign the player attempting the roll after seeing the event generated. If all that fails, the collective purses of the party might be fashioned into a staged reward, a pretend found treasure – a Difficult task, but roll three dice for Goldsmith.

If the group actually acquired Treasure Laden (D) from any discovery, that too may be sent to the surface (and subsequently squandered). You may not need money here, except the dwarves do accept full purses to themselves go away (for a spell).

The players might be forced to return or ignore the request. A runner will never be enough, unless that guy is carrying significant gold as proof of success. If the players return, they suffer a minus one Quest Pip from backtracking. If they ignore the request, then all CUP-CUP events to follow increase rank by three toward Catch-All. Weigh carefully for that could be the very next encounter to occur.

Any riches sent above will not remain by the time the players return. However, new windfalls may also occur and give the expedition a fresh Treasure Laden (D) technique. You never know.

**Rank Four – Surface Raid:** The messenger reports the ship has been damaged, perhaps by intrigue, but more often as a result of local attack or a monster fight. The ship will need men and one player character's skills to conduct repairs. These damages are stated as severe, just short of disaster. The vessel is not lost yet.

Yet is this a matter of confidence? The prime player character must decide to send back what's needed or attempt to placate? Sending back men and material means the expedition loses a longboat technique. The player character that returns will be out of play for the rest of the Phase. The player should switch to an alternate role.

If the player decides instead to placate, each player may take at most a single event. One of them needs to gain a *success and end event*. If none do, the longboat loses Undamaged (O) or the equivalent. If that technique was brought below—as represented by servitors and for the (O) equivalent effect—it will be lost regardless.

If this event happens a second time, the Ref may wish to have all the players take alternate roles and actually conduct the combat. Their success above will then translate into what has happened or has been lost.

**Rank Five – Despondent:** This messenger will be a petition from victorious mutineers. Only a few loyal remnants come to the group. The mutineers have the ship and are planning to leave. They offer the group a chance to return, abandon the folly and come with them as subordinates. The mutineers may also need the players collective skills to run the ship. There is no delusion that all is fine; the new would-be captain knows that egos are bruised. He may even want an attack, so as to prove even more so that he is destined to be the new leader.

The choice seems clear, go up and fight. The men with the group in the underworld will be uncertain. Some will think it's a bluff; some will think the riches to follow will buy a dozen new ships. Start by using Q&D Placate, but this time the people being convinced to obey are the warriors of the party. Continue to select events, until someone generates a stop and end result.

Next comes the extra challenge. Go back and put down the rebellion. The Ref should set the conditions and use either boarding actions or regular personal combat. Depending upon events up to now, the mutineers will number half, equal or twice the players number. They need a leader with a Defensive Modifier.

After the battle there will be undoubtedly some lost techniques resulting from the mutineers outright slain or caught and punished. Set a new party and select new techniques to take along. Time was lost if that was important, usually not. Prior events which caused concern probably still cause concern. e.g. Shortages.

Should the players fail, we go to Digressions (of course). Could the players actually quit the mission and join the new crew as junior officers? Anything actually is possible as the Ref allows.

**Rank Six – Disaster:** The players' ship has been destroyed. The messenger here will be the surviving men coming from the vessel. These can be hauling the last of the supplies. They probably have few if any slaves. The majority drown when the ship went down. Maybe the decision should be to quit this mess now?

The prime player character, alone, uses Q&D Placate to rally all to his mission. If he fails (by injury), drag him above and continue in the Epilog. Go home in disgrace. If the prime player character generates the *success to end the event* result, he may continue the challenges. Who needs a boat anyway?

After exiting the setting, the players will need to generate some task rolls to start the basis for a replacement or salvaged ship; it might not have any techniques except those that came back from the underworld.

**Rank Seven – Delver:** These are contacts with a professional company of underworld explorers. The players will be told they are trespassing; the delvers alone have legal right to be here. The players need to leave. The delver company will be too powerful to fight, but for now this is only a foursome and the warning.

All the players should select events on Q&D Placate to explain themselves. When one achieves *Success and this encounter ends*, the main threat is gone. But each player still needs to risk at least one event of his own. Any time after a complete round of Q&D for all is generated, then the event can be concluded. Except the company of delvers remains somewhere?

The players may quit the quest. I would. Or continue and try to get out of the Phase before any other CUP-CUP event is generated. If another Messenger is met, it will be the Rank Six result. Yes, the delvers are responsible. Care to continue?

If yet another CUP-CUP event is generated, the result is one character at random vanishes. Roll for Obliteration, per the *Outlands Fundamentals* booklet. Every time the CUP-CUP follows as a mission inconsequence encounter, someone will suffer the *Tantalus Field*. Leave, risk oblivion or get that TEN – the choice is yours to see one more flip of the deck.

## Q&D Placating the Expedition Inquiry

**Messenger King:** Joke and downplay the peril; pretend all is a vacation from the regular ship's toils. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Swagger Repartee (P)

**Messenger Queen:** Present your best face and make the carrier of the dispatch see that all is fine. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Wizardry Illusions (I)

**Messenger Knight:** Manipulate the perceptions of all; blank smiles for all. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Thought Control (P)

**Messenger Knave:** Stall. Send your reply to the surface written in half-truths and legalese, so they cannot react immediately, and instead ponder clarifying questions. Success and this encounter ends. But, fail and lose one longboat technique



left behind with the surface garrison. If none remain, then suffer minus one Quest Pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Language Greek

**Messenger 10:** Make your hardship appear as a strength, pointing out how adversity is good for the soul. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Swagger Feigns (I)

**Messenger 9:** As questions are made on the state of the party and the endeavor, blank the investigator's memories. He mumbles and repeats his questions confused. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, Difficulty raises by four. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Wizardry Psionics (B)

**Messenger 8:** Offer a wager, a dare or bet; tell the man representing the surface detachment that win or lose, you can make all loyalists rich. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, change failed outcome to suffer a vicious in retaliation for perceived mockery. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Skill Gambler

**Messenger 7:** Review the course of the journey and where to rendezvous with the surface detachment on an updated timeline. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless lose one Longboat technique left behind with the surface detachment; if none available, that force deserts, never to be seen again (minus one Quest Pip). **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Longboat Charted Path (B)

**Messenger 6:** Break out the ale and entertain the representative of the surface detachment with a ditty about your encounters. Fail and lose any longboat techniques, which the group detailed and brought with them below ground. If the party has no remaining detachment, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, increase Difficulty by three. **Difficulty:** 12 **Advantage:** Skill Minstrel

**Messenger 5:** Dazzle the agent coming to check on your health and party vitality. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, regardless, increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Suffer the event that occurs. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Skill Prestidigitation

**Messenger 4:** Embellish your tale, trying to put the risks into more familiar terms; the Unending Grey is an abstruse place to truly describe. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, the next player to take his action will suffer a vicious wound from exasperated ambush if he fails any outcome. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Mariner

**Messenger 3:** Convince your quest is right and righteous; instill your own smug confidence in all. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, Difficulty increases by two.

**Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Charismatic Style (C)

**Messenger 2:** Stealthily take the man's map directions to ensure he's delayed returning to the surface or never gets back with his report. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (P), Prisoner in Transit. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Pickpocket

**Messenger Ace:** Reveal some of the treasures you've collected in your short time in the tombs. (Some undoubtedly staged?) Success and this encounter ends. Roll may be skipped if character has in fact checked Ignoble Desires-Profits while underground. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Goldsmith

## Setting Underworld Major Tarot Flairs

**Underworld Magician:** Behold the strange nexus of power. Selecting player gains a random Wizardry technique. If he already has the ability, he may lock it as Glorious. If he already has the technique locked as Glorious, he suffers a vicious (kidding, nothing else happens).

**Inverted:** enter an area quasi-depleted of magical mana. All Difficulties which have Advantage of Wizardry are increased by two.

**Underworld High Priestess:** Feel a sudden moment of clarity. Regardless of the event generated, a successful result will end the encounter. The Difficulty and Advantage still applies, but no other result (even regardless flairs) occurs.

**Inverted:** swell with confidence. If any combat results, all players start with Fury Pip.

**Underworld Empress:** Watched by the dark gods. Ignore the effects of any Major Tarot selected for these events. Those majors presently influencing play still apply.

**Inverted:** dwarvish Imps are fettering the group's actions. If event was generated for Q&D Mending and Recovery following Mishap, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld Emperor:** A call goes out for a new leader. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Rare (seven) or Catch-All, failure also results in a vicious wound to the lowest level player character.

**Inverted:** be on your guard. If any combat results, the first player to act in the ensuing battle starts with a Command Pip.

**Underworld Hierophant:** Hale surroundings and breathe easier. Selecting player gains a random Personal Swaggering technique. If he already has the ability, he may lock it as Glorious.

***Inverted:*** traverse a place where magic is gravitating. All players increase by half a D8 their tally on Warped Outcome. None of those events are actually generated; the tally just merely raises steadily toward doom.

**Underworld Lovers:** Your focus drops to your weapon. Selecting player gains a random Blade technique. If he already has the ability, he may lock it as Glorious.

***Inverted:*** you feel less confident in using your weapon here. All Difficulties which have Advantage of Blade techniques are increased by two.

**Underworld Chariot:** Meanwhile and far away...your subordinates remain keen. The party gains a Longboat technique. Select from the first available counting up from (T). This addition joins the party for the continuing adventure underground, even if it exceeds the one-fourth limit.

***Inverted:*** when the news arrives, it's grim. If event was generated for Q&D Placating the Expedition Inquiry, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld Justice:** Inexperience is highlighted. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Flukes (six) or Catch-All, failure also results in a vicious wound to the lowest level player character.

***Inverted:*** overcome a persuasively coarse mood. If event was generated for Q&D Checking or Limiting Pointless Skirmish, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld Hermit:** Eliminate the waste before you're undone. Either lose Longboat Abundant Stores (M) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** mere accident or a forgotten score being settled? If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Routine (one) or Catch-All, failure in the next event also results in a vicious wound to the lowest level player character.

**Underworld Wheel of Fortune:** Shuffle the deck and continue.

**Underworld Force:** Pay tribute to the unseen forces, even delvers, who claim to own this dark turf. Either lose Longboat Treasure Laden (D) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** take shallow breaths near something dank and pungent. All Difficulties which have Advantage of Personal Swaggering are increased by two.

**Underworld Hanged Man:** The silence is disturbed by an echo of ghastly bellow. If any combat results, the enemy starts battle as Enraged.

***Inverted:*** bewildered by too many crevices and too many blind corners. If event was generated for Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade and Lairs, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld Death:** Malignancy mars the spirit world. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Agitated (five) or Catch-All, failure also results in a vicious wound to the lowest level player character.

***Inverted:*** the space is well scouted. If any combat results, the players start with a Tactical Pip.

**Underworld Temperance:** No time for a consensus. Only the prime player character takes actions on these tables. Only if he is incapacitated may he choose his second to take over rolling on events.

***Inverted:*** clutter and uneven surfaced cause many to stumble. If event was generated for Q&D Retreat to a Choke-Point or Designated Refuge, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld Devil:** Some elder realms are better left undisturbed and bypassed. Either lose Longboat Pure No-Curse (J) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

***Inverted:*** a traitor is suspected. The sabotage or grumbling was internal but having a rival didn't help matters. Either lose Longboat Treachery Expunged (G) or suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

**Underworld Tower of Destruction:** Ancient trap is sprung. Failure in the next Q&D event also results in a vicious wound to the lowest level player character.

***Inverted:*** linger and admire the antiquities, wondering who built such ornately carved places. If event was generated for Q&D Investigation and Excavation, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld Star:** Adjust to the situation; all hardship might be overcome. Cancel the effects of any Major Tarot presently influencing this encounter event.

***Inverted:*** make a list of all the things you should have brought but didn't. If event was generated for Q&D Circumventing Passage Obstacles, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld Moon:** Suffer a lack of sleep from too many nightmares. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Informational (three) or Catch-All, failure also results in a vicious wound to the lowest level player character.

***Inverted:*** the place is teeming with life; mostly harmless you think. If event was generated for Q&D Halting the Spread of Hysteria, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld Sun:** Look around; you're in good company. Next event generated is automatically successful regardless of Difficulty. Perhaps a swaggering will be gained.

***Inverted:*** bend and scoop-up a token, a souvenir, a reminder of better fate and fortune ahead. If any combat results, the selecting player starts with Catbird Seat Pip.

**Underworld Judgment:** Run through your mind the names of those you feel are expendable. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, failure also results in a vicious wound to the lowest level player character.

***Inverted:*** something makes you itch, gnaws at your stomach or keeps you on edge. If event was generated for Q&D Discord in the Ranks, Difficulties increase by three.

**Underworld World:** Compounding events have occurred. After concluding this event sequence, the party must immediately face a second set of events on another Q&D table. Ref decides which one.

***Inverted:*** pass the time by swapping stories of what you miss most back at the vessel. All Difficulties which have Advantage of Longboat techniques are increased by two.

**Underworld Fool:** Relax and allow the group a moment of levity. If the rank of the encounter event, which prompted the Q&D, was Common (two) or Catch-All, failure also results in a vicious wound to the lowest level player character.

***Inverted:*** nervously count the number of the party and make estimate on how many days you have left in supplies. If event was generated for Q&D Austerity, Improvisation and Salvage, Difficulties increase by three.

## **CUP-ROD Underworlds: Specials**

These are groups of denizens, nefarious men, nonhumans or demi-humans, people with hands moving underground for various motives. These are not dwarves common to the area (setting), but other raiders even explorers, who have arrived from distant places. Meeting a strange group is never a good thing, because the others will not want witnesses to their action. The encounters do not have to cause battle, but that is the outcome most likely the longer the encounter lasts.

Q&D Checking or Limiting Pointless Skirmish may be used by the Ref when requested by the players. If the players want a fight, bring it on. If they know better than to constantly rile the denizens, maybe they will want to meet and retreat (in good order). The other group is not seeking the players as trespassers. But they will wonder if the players were sent to stop them and their actions.

**Rank One – Goblins:** These are vile dwarves, transformed figures, heading out or returning from outside. Meeting one group will prompt others, since goblins are shunned by their own dwarven selves. Think of every imp as having a Jekyll side which it too fears. That is the goblin state, many and twisted they are. Add to that insanity changes in size, shape, power and malevolence, well you get the idea. Goblins are monsters, nasty at the very least.

The goblins are hunter-warriors running a raid; they might accept tribute, a coerced toll. Or they will see negotiation as weakness. If the card flip was a CUP, they will be heading out, instead of coming back. That makes them fresh, more



dangerous if battle starts, but less likely to actually engage in combat. They are compelled to a mission, and the players could cause that to fail.

Magic is at work. The underworld itself might be transforming, which would also (over events) punish the player characters and servitors too. Yet more often, goblins are turned by misanthropes, malignant men or cults. Pity the party if a demon's work is involved. The master is never met here, but he may become involved later as this event chains into others. If the battle ends with a character



captured, consider his life lost in the worst of manners – as part of a stew. The goblin's diet is not solely human flesh, but the mobs have obviously no respect for human life.

Goblins can be armed with strange technology which simulates magical wizardry – blow guns, black powder pistols, crack sirens, combustible chemicals. If any player character suffers vicious wound, he could be instead the victim of shock or knocked unconscious by drugs. Better? If the party eventually wins, the fallen will recover.

Sometimes the goblin arms must be countered by player character techniques. Refer to the swagger vs swagger table. The Ref can select a half D8 wizardry techniques. Then by cross reference, the player party must have the correct *x-generators* for advantage won on the table. The whole may force swagger vs swagger to be used with the players guessing what each might face or using minor antagonist action to capture and counter goblin weapons where no player has a valid technique for a good match.

**Rank Two – Outcasts:** These are refugees or criminals from the surface, though the tribe may be mutated or nonhuman. The exact reason for their ouster will remain vague. There is usually no clear language between those found and the players to truly understand what brought them here. Any real delver would say to shun them and drive them back with fire. Still, the outcasts seem to have some

survival skills and may even have established a commune of other exiles. This could be a nice fallback position to lessen party mishap, if friends are made.

This encounter may be seen as a means to that end. These men and their families could also be added as bearer slaves. The players might gain a longboat technique by offloading burdens and having more area light. The Ref could let the players have a half D8 events on Q&D Checking Skirmish, trying to obtain a *Success and this encounter ends* for a peaceful assimilation. The players might receive some gratitude for accepting them as camp followers.

Otherwise, the strangers might be subjugated by the sword. Fight the battle against the opposing leaders. Killing a few will let the players seize the rest. But no Longboat Technique is gained by forced enslavement; except Treasure Laden (D) if a good number of these surviving servants are sold in any city-state at the end of the adventure.

The danger is if the CUP-ROD Rank Two event should repeat. There the outcasts met will not be a new group. Instead the encounter will represent the assimilated outcasts or forced bondage group suddenly showing a darker side – disease, malice, transformation, curse, etc. Risk a little and win a little (gold); risk a little and lose gravely (lives)?

**Rank Three – Remnants:** These are men from a shattered expedition. They might be true delvers, but probably not. True delvers do not seek out anything in the underworld as friendly. Here you have people that were lost from a party, like the players, which entered the underworld for assorted reasons. The outcome for them was catastrophic. They may be large in number, but look and act like penniless waifs.

If the group keeps their distance, use the Q&D Checking Pointless Skirmish to have the event pass without incident. You are leaving humans to probable death, of course?

The men encountered will be very glad to see the players and promise to do anything to join the group. They would even submit to be slaves, rather than be left behind. The players may add a longboat technique, one low on the list from (T), by embracing the new followers.

Many are good sailors, skilled soldiers, but devoid of arms or supplies. A single NPC would be half a D8 level, since he did, after all, survive. If a player is willing, have him generate a character and play along as this new found man. These men may have lived with dwarves and learned to speak their language. They can serve as guides in the setting, allowing some events to have lesser impact. Ref decides.

And the downside? Almost anything that happens after this point will be tainted by these survivors. Flip a TEN and all is cool. Flip a dozen other events and you'll start to see what damages might be wrought by kindness. No good deed goes

unpunished in the Unending Grey. Who ate all the food, spilled the beer being saved for dwarven tribute, made the noise that brought on the monster, turned into a monster, summoned rats by magical mishap...boggles the mind why anyone would accept the unknown into the party. But, I'm a delver at heart after all. Pippin would have been gutted at the pool before the *Door of Durin* for his idle toss of a single rock.

**Rank Four – Ritual:** These are pagan religious celebrations, often involving human sacrifice and demonic summoning. The cult or nonhumans performing these rituals are of course cannibals, working themselves into a frenzy. The players will usually be watching in secret, peering from behind cover. They will yearn to do something, but the numbers of the enemy will be great. *"Is that a gold idol!"*

The group might skirmish, attack to save the lives of those about to be sacrificed. Success in defeating a small number of guards will disburse the gathering. Later events in the setting will reveal if the cult can compose themselves, send forth warriors or monsters committed to killing the outsiders that desecrated their ceremony. Witnessing these events and doing nothing will cause morale to rapidly decline. *"Next time it's our heads used as cups."*

In place of personal combat, substitute the Q&D Checking and Limiting Pointless Skirmish. Yet no more than a single round for all players should be allowed before full-blown combat ensues. Can they achieve the safe outcome before this escalates?

**Rank Five – Slavers:** This is a group of nonhumans or goblins, often led by several more ferocious demi-humans; they are collecting and transporting sacrificial slaves to the lower reaches. If the card flip was a CUP, they do not need more. They might seize upon an opportunity if the party seems weak. Else, they could be convinced to part with some of their captives, for use by the players as bearers or torch holders, even to return hostages to the surface as a good deed or reward. Yet if the flip was a ROD, then the mobs are just starting out and see the players are their potential first victims. The combat might still be avoided by Q&D Checking Skirmish.

Any goblins will have firearms, the equivalent of Telekinesis (D) or Pyrotechnics (K); completely indecipherable by the players. Yet the two swagger will need to first be countered by the players with their own swaggering in order to have any chance in combat.

**Rank Six – Expedition:** This is an armed band of men similar to that of the players. These are not delvers but will be searching for gold and glory. There will be soldiers and slaves, perhaps some miners and magic users. These men can be desperate, suffering their own mishaps, shortages and mutiny. Battle is a good way to divert the attention of the servitors on both sides.

Champions of both sides might first duel rather than have both sides weaken further. Or those met will have no reason to fight, having already abandoned provisions and wounded to continue to haul raw bullion and looted artifacts. They may need a map to landmarks and are willing to barter. The players may know the way out along a path they did not travel; their own route changed or proved too treacherous to repeat.

The leader will be half a D8 plus four in level. Even if the players are victorious and drive this claimant away, this might not be the last time the players meet his soldiers, subordinates or this group's allies. All future CUP-ROD encounters should be treated as new forces, scouts or rear guards, of this initial group. Yes, it may have inhuman elements. If the high level leader escapes a clash—he often does even in loss—give him a name and mark him as a mortal enemy.

**Rank Seven – Emissary:** These are agents sent to meet with dwarves or sedentary diabolical groups. The party they intend to meet will not come to the surface, so the negotiators venture within. Unlike most expeditions, these will be powerful NPCs that travel in small groups (at most). Fast and quick, they would send a projection or use a cosmic door, except that is ineffective or dangerous right here. Most are wizards or nonhumans who freely travel in the Unending Grey, fearing nothing as they do so.

These are never nice people. If the card flipped was a CUP, they seek anonymity; the players had better not ask too many questions. Otherwise, the man or men will feign being lost, a remnant of a failed party. If offered aid, the outsiders will accept but try later to slink away. That is for the best.

If the players wish to stop the emissary's plot from unfolding, it may cause a campaign event. A nearby city-state may gain a good trait or lose a bad. That always helps the party. Yet to fight the agent will mean attacking a powerful foe; his level an equivalent in ferocity for Defensive Modifier. Should he escape, even run away, he may decide to change his plan and spend his energy inflicting harm on the group or the longboat above.

The event may also signal the discovery of a permanently garrisoned fortress, well stocked with stores and supplies, even treasure. Care for a siege or storming action? It might have a passage to the surface; always nice to know. The base is a ward against a danger on the other side – the place the players go next. There may be a way to negotiate to replace the party's own shortfalls of men and supplies. Yet the favors the group might owe will force them to undertake a secondary mission, usually to slay a monster. The siege, though nearly impossible, might be safer.



## Q&D Checking or Limiting Pointless Skirmish

**Specials King:** Call for the rest to hunker down as you step forward to cover the intruder by brandishing steel. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Duelist

**Specials Queen:** Sheath your weapon and have the rest increase the light, so the potential enemy can rue what he faces. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Trait Gifted

**Specials Knight:** Adjust the well-worn hilt of your fighting blade, an obvious expression of be gone weakling. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Gladiatorial (R)

**Specials Knave:** Display the herald embroidery of your clan and noble underwriters. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)

**Specials 10:** Extinguish the enemy torches or blind them with the flare of yours. Fail and drained of one wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. Regardless, encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Wizardry Pyrotechnics (K)

**Specials 9:** No need to parley solo, when you stand arrayed with your heavily armed bodyguards. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, the group must also take additional actions on Q&D Halting the Spread of Hysteria. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Longboat Battle Hard (T)

**Specials 8:** Confidently change the subject to recreational activities only possible on the surface. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, the group must also take additional actions on Q&D Retreat to a Choke-Point or Designated Refuge. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Skill Equestrian

**Specials 7:** Scold a henchman, when he steps out of formation; silence and spear tips greet the potential enemy. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, the group must also take additional actions on Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade and Lairs. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Skill Man-at-Arms

**Specials 6:** Demonstrate you are not a trifle and are in no mood to bandy words. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. Regardless, encounter escalates into combat. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, everyone also starts battle Shaken. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Wizardry Hexes (M)

**Specials 5:** Shower the arena with sparks as you strike your sword upon an obstruction, giving warning to back away. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Resulting event for the increase is optional, but the tally still grows. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, the group must



also take additional actions on Q&D Austerity, Improvisation and Salvage.

**Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Herculean (J)

**Specials 4:** Increase the area's illumination; best for both sides to see one another. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, the group must also take additional actions on Q&D Discord in the Ranks. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Blade Scintillating (K)

**Specials 3:** Call for a vote to decide what should be done, if anything, regarding the seemingly wretched people happened upon. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, the group must also take additional actions on Q&D Mending and Recovery following Mishap. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Longboat Democracy (S)

**Specials 2:** Small world, as you (or someone) believes they recognize one of the strangers you've encountered. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (I), Slave in the Mines. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Longboat Seasoned Crew (L)

**Specials Ace:** Repel a nervous strike, as one of the people met overreacts; questions should be asked and answered first. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. In lieu of the Quest Pip, the players may escalate right into combat. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Hellish (M)

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.

## **CUP-COIN Underworlds: Baggage**

Anything related to the group's stores of equipment, arms and provisions. Often over the long trek the group simply exhausts its supplies, but these are also mishaps that lead to food spoil, shortages, thefts by dwarves, etc. These are usually harder, if not impossible, to replace in the underworlds. As the expedition runs short of stores and basic construction materials, the servitors will want to return to the ship.

The path may need to be reinforced to keep from shifting or collapsing. A search with an unclear destination will need a greater amount of supplies. There are roads, but the state of these is indifferent and broken. The roads are also more widely traveled by denizens. Most everything must be physically carried. Carts and draft mules are employed until they break beyond repair or die.

The clever might fabricate from the remains, though wood will be in short supply. There's always magic, yet any attempt will seem to increase the user's Warped Outcome, even upon success. With so much potential disaster, is this really worth the risk?

**Rank One – Indifference:** The group has been freely consuming supplies and that must end. The sheer scale of the expedition was never anticipated. Even when warned to bring a variety of gear, the players could have unloaded their vessel and still not have had enough. They need a supporting city on the surface, and that might not be enough. What's anyone to do?

That prevailing view is ill-intentioned and is the basis of the event. The group's supplies are running out, but many feel that's a blessing. The servitors are tired of humping around the gear and building supplies. They may have even been purposely wasting materials to exhaust their burden. If the stuff carried is gold, as was promised, then no problem. But even baked bricks were brought, and that weight is seen as nonsensical. Often it can be. The group is not delver and should stop acting like it can be. The extra weight also slows down the rate of travel.

If this event should occur a second time, all supplies are abandoned. If it can't be eaten or drank, it is tossed. That too will prove a penalty on certain events, starting with a negative three Quest Pip. The party after the event repeats doesn't even have rope?!?

**Rank Two – Rationing:** Group has eaten nearly all of its food. Weakness and sickness follow. Gear, even arms, must be set aside. A debate must be held to decide whether to use stretchers to carry some men or leave them to die. hauling men means something else is set aside, like armor or treasure? Make the call prime player character; only further events will tell whether you suffer retaliation, total desertion or prove to be the draconian hero.

Truly, only a QUEEN could bring relief, as shortages of provisions increase desertion of men trying to make it back to the vessel. Rationing only goes so far. Anything killed in the Unending Grey will seem unnatural to eat; the place of travel has nothing to hunt. The troops might also start to wander off, tricked by dwarves into thinking they saw a feast. Increase the conflict caused by missing men; the whole is on the verge of declaring every man for himself.

**Rank Three – Technique Loss:** These are mishaps that result in severe shortages that cause the loss of one or more swaggering. These events can occur at the same time as other events and increase the severity of both. The players might be left unable to flee for the next encounter without suffering disastrous depletion of their provisions.

The players may find that food was spoiled by insects or dampness, because the containing barrels rotted. The group's arms might be aging unnaturally, rusting before their eyes. Trade goods brought to deal with dwarves were poorly selected, finally tossed, but the men know they have value, just not here. Money may have vanished, both coins brought below and some of what has been found or pillaged.

The previous two events seemed to imply Longboat Technique loss, but the Ref might have been lenient; not here. All the expedition's longboat techniques are unusable; they might not be lost yet, but they may not be used for task resolution nor combat Advantage. The group should also test Q&D Austerity if only for giggles and to inflict further harm.

**Rank Four – Darkness:** The group is running out of combustibles, the oil for lanterns, the tar wadding for torches. Soon the party will be plunged into total darkness. The men want to use what's left to escape. The players might try to improvise with shirts and magic, wheelbarrow wheels and spear shafts.

This is a bad event, because light is really important for human eyes. No kidding. All combat, all actions after this point are Shaken.

The dwarves have oil. They will demand a brutal price, which the prime player character alone must decide to pay. Ref decides terms based on what his players can handle for propriety's sake. Could get uncomfortable and the servitors will hate the prime player character if he agrees to anything unspeakable to restore the light.

Cheat the dwarves? Kill them as they hold out fresh torches? Okay, but don't expect to survive any CUP-SWORD event which follows after that decision. How many Phases of Underworld does the party need to cross?

**Rank Five – Raid & Capture:** The group lost the supply train after an enemy initially isolated the warriors or caused the group to scatter. The party was caught unprepared. Now they must fight to get back what is there's.

If the card flip was a COIN, the attackers are humanoid, goblins perhaps or demi-human. If the CUP, then the monster is snarling and snapping as it stands between the party and all the food. Which is worse?

The demi-humans may trade the group back their assorted stuff. They don't eat the same things nor care for hammers and trinkets of gold. The deal they desire will be for fresh meat, slaves to butcher. Is the prime player character able to make that trade (in his heart). Agreeing to trade lives will add a personality flaw, Anathema or Maniac.

Before that even happens use Q&D Austerity, Improvisation and Salvage just to get enough to eat to make an honest pursuit. Recall the scale of the underworld. The demi-humans may be tens of miles away by the time the party sets out in serious prepared pursuit. Fight them or toss them a brutal bone. By the way, a true delver company would never have this happen; or if it did, it would surely offer the men responsible as payment.

How about that monster? Go right to battle, and it will Great. Maybe not a dragon, but the fight will be very hard to win. This is a terrible event, because it starts as a disadvantage.

If the party is all low level, the Ref may instead allow the group to fight and protect their gear from the get-go. That too may prove disastrous, but the Ref does not need to make the attacker Great. He could. Those Dragon tables will have to be used sometime. Half the party could die, maybe all. Pray for a miracle? Roll on Death of Character Digression if your level is above three.

**Rank Six – Magical Mishap:** Whose bright idea was it to conjure more stuff? This is the worst of shortages. The players have exhausted their supplies of both food and building materials. Most of the tools are dull or broken off at the handle. There was probably a battle where gear was set on fire or left behind. There may have been insurance bolt-holes established by the Methodical of the group, but those are far behind; the group pressed forward along the journey. The key scale of one inch did not equal one mile as it would on surface maps. The journey has had a great deal of up and down, less over and accomplishment.

That's what prompted the party to try and use magic to shorten the affair or bring in more surface supplies. Neither was a brilliant idea. Even if the first few times such was attempted went swimmingly, the result now is a calamitous ruin.

If the players still have Abundant Stores (M), many intermediate magazines—too many in fact—were created. Some will advocate going back and retrieving these nest eggs. The leader will know that would mean paying twice for the same ground. Those magazine stockpiles are now salvation for some other party or food for the worms.

The primus of the warriors or quartermaster says he can spare no more. To make matters worse, the party has often already traded all they can with the dwarves, has even resorted to eating their mules and leather boots. The area is probably more arid or colder than expected, and firewood is never plentiful. Morale is shattered, and regular combat is nearly impossible. There's nothing to hunt, little to drink, and



sickness runs through the group. Magic was a final option, and it failed spectacularly. Any player want to describe what went wrong? Maybe all suggest their role?

The more one player character is held responsible, the less the entire party will suffer or declare failure. Roll a full D8; that's the number of wounds or techniques lost by the expedition. One character can volunteer to take all the overkill loss; he's dead right? A few Rugged may decide to continue with real wounds. Share and share alike, the group can divvy out the injury. If the party is left with no expedition techniques, then the entire group of servitors, including slaves, is slain in the act. Maybe that one martyr will decide to suffer all for the team. The Ref may even allow the player, regardless of character level, to gain a roll on Death of Character or Obliteration. All must decide for themselves.

Can the party continue as a bunch of characters without even a linkboy holding the torch? Ask your Ref. There is a table for closing magical portals. Maybe it can be used with some slight narrative adjustments to open a gate and resupply from scratch with what's behind in the longboat. There may be questions about what happened to cause this and why are so many bodies suddenly dumped on deck.

**Rank Seven – Riches:** The group is stunned to find a cache of wealth. Treasure Laden (D), full purses for all. Not so fast?

The group has every right to take what they find. But this is either a tomb (CUP) or some creature or delver company's half of a deal.

Just a bit of explanation – humans are often able to use blind drops to barter with things that don't like to be seen. A pile of say gold or a few barrels of ale, are put in a relatively safe place, maybe a ward on the lot, then go away. Some other party will find the cache, leave a counter offer, maybe a relic, maybe some bones, and go away. The first group then comes back and either takes what was left by party of the second part or counter offers by removing some of what they first left. Back and forth, until both sides tenuously agree. Underworld escrow. So, when the players find the riches, they are actually taking – who cares? Enemies are going to be made. Who is to know? So, two groups no longer trust each other. Life is a bitch; those guys choose to live underground.

The main event is under baggage because gold is greed. Given a choice to carry a pouch of cornmeal or a pouch of rubies, is it a fait accompli? Only later would someone trade rubies for cornmeal, when they have gone a few weeks without eating. The group gets wealth, riches. There had better not be any further CUP-COIN events. All will prove to be harsh; add two to the rank of any event which follows. That raiding party of course will be the dead from the tomb or the unseen horror returning to claim what they lost. Hey, but you don't ever lose Desires Fulfilled after you check the Ignoble.



The Ref may even want to change this rank from seven to one, on occasion, to make his later event flips diabolically unsettling. Any interphase moving from Underworlds to Underworlds is another good place to introduce this discovery.

## Q&D Austerity, Improvisation and Salvage

**Baggage King:** Persuade your near feral followers to share and share alike; no skulking and hiding crumbs. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 7

**Advantage:** Skill Houndsman (Beasts)

**Baggage Queen:** Make a feast of culled pack dogs or lesser critters caught and warmed on a spit. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. Note, since the *Advantage* might be gained upon success, consider that recruitment coming from a sociable denizen recently encountered; in free-style play, much is happening, yet not all is detailed (until inferred or needed). **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R)

**Baggage Knight:** Skewer some sightless fish in an underground pool or lake. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Blade Lithe (H)

**Baggage Knave:** Tough it out; takes a good forty or more days of fast to actually starve. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Resulting event for the increase is optional, but the tally still grows. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Grit-Stamina

**Baggage 10:** Deal with the hyper life cycle changes that occur when surface rot and pests are exposed to the enchantments of the underworlds. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Longboat Vermin Free (N)

**Baggage 9:** Punch the next guy who complains that his tummy aches. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, the group must also take additional actions on Q&D Discord in the Ranks. The men have been tossing supplies and hiding riches in the flour sacks. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Pugilist

**Baggage 8:** Spell out the dire situation, which might occur if the party does not conserve. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, all players must increase their Warped Outcome tally by a half D8; generate no events from this increase. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)

**Baggage 7:** There's plenty to eat if you can tell mushroom from poison toadstool. Fail and lose any longboat technique, which the group detailed and brought with them below ground. If the party has no remaining detachment, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, the group

must also take additional actions on Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade and Lairs.

**Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Skill Horticulturist

**Baggage 6:** Lose track of time; maybe it's dilated? Craft a seasonal calendar to reference. Fail and the mount you left behind on the surface has regressed; lose one Mount technique. If the player has nothing to lose, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, regardless, the encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Steward

**Baggage 5:** Track and kill something tasty; the caves seem filled with primitive beasts. What can't be recognized still tastes like chicken. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, increase Difficulty by five. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Hunter

**Baggage 4:** Take a collection of boot laces, girdles, bracers and hats, whatever might contain some leather that can be boiled and seasoned as a jerky. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, the Difficulty increases by three. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Longboat Comradery (P)

**Baggage 3:** Lighten the load of construction materials purchased for every contingency. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, increase Difficulty by three. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Longboat Treasure Laden (D)

**Baggage 2:** Be first to the communal pot and take a full portion; you can't afford to be weak and ill prepared to fight. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (R), Road Home Alone. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Swagger Ferocity (J)

**Baggage Ace:** Convince the men that the rats you transformed into pigs are the real deal. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Wizardry Conjunction (L)

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.

## **CUP-SWORD Underworlds: Dwarves**

Dwarves are the indigenous inhabitants of the Unending Grey. They are everywhere, lurking about or following along taunting, shining lights, banging gongs, laughing to unnerve, playful and cruel. They make useless servants and are impossible to keep as slaves. They don't regard death any more than insects do; they don't obey orders any more than the player could command backyard bugs to perform tasks. They don't react to magic like humans do, so even mind control and necromancy results in random outcomes. Best to let them be and react to any event with skepticism. Beneficial results are short-lived.

Dwarves are pests. An NPC imp might make a deal, but Monty Hall don't offer no doors to PCs in Outlands. Sometimes anthropomorphism will make one appear and act human. But just a matter of time before the thing proves worse than feral. These are not house elves. They are random critters of magical nature. Mister Mxyzptlk is closer to the truth. Are they lesser demons? Perhaps, since true demons are able to control them as thralls.

Remember, to all the Outlands characters, dwarves are not the underworld owners. The chambers of the Unending Grey, many areas at least, were once on the surface. Some cities sunk; other domains were forced below by magic. Whole regions were buried, covered by giant footfalls (earthquakes) and the various godlings morphing landscapes. The world itself folded and various levels of the underworld were created. God bless Gygax for the concept. Add M.A.R.Barker for his imprint on my imagination as well.

The dwarves too were once on the surface, before being banished—as the player characters believe by Odin—to exist in perpetual toil. Yet they do not do so for greed. Any similarity to greed is misunderstood. Yes, they steal valued objects. But no, they do not use what they take. In reality, each dwarf owns nothing, desires no property. Dwarves, as savage imps, living in a communal state; they do not truly understand the concept of ownership. They actually don't eat, don't drink, at least because they must. I'm not sure if they even bleed; more correctly they would ooze or pop as struck down.

The players claim abandoned property as war spoils. The treasure tombs are a human legacy. The dwarves get treated like the tenant occupants, mere serfs squatting or infesting like vermin. Do dwarves even dress? For propriety they should (depends on your game) but looking at them as tiny naked freaks is not a bad analogy.

Initial contact is always awkward and leads to umbrage by the players and the dwarves. Dwarves are often found toiling but for no proper end. The Dwarves will try to take gear off the players, curious about each item. The players will swat their hands and cause the imps to flinch away. A bared set of teeth will make dwarves step back in surprise. Distrust and anger are the usual response when strangers cross paths.

When encountered, should either side be a larger group, the dwarves will offer the player characters hospitality. When the player characters take any gift, the

dwarves will be very resentful. The offering was symbolic to them, not for sharing. They would not accept player gifts either. They are though maniacs for precious metals, obsessed with filching or procuring these then immediately heading out to hide the objects. The players probably lose all purses of coins upon initial meeting. They might not wish to entertain dwarves while Treasure laden (D).

The player characters might respect the dwarves, but only if they believe these nonhumans are the subjects of a greater king. Fealty to a high lord can be understood. Living in whimsy and mischief is anathema to the player characters, except the ones with that personality flaw. Dwarves are more likely to act benevolently to characters that are deeply flawed. They also might inflict new torments instead of vicious wounds. Ref decides when characters gain personality flaws. (See *Generating Quests* booklet for a common list.)

When the player group finds out there is no high lord to negotiate with, they will revert to the basic game philosophy of treating these imps as heathen savages or lesser monsters. Killing them is no different than swatting flies.

In most cases the players start by treating the imps as children. The characters will order them to do tasks, reward them with cheap baubles, teach them the doctrines of their beliefs and punish them with beatings for disobeying. Confusion is the underworld dwarf's problem, not the self-righteous barbarian. That idea is flawed.

Dwarves have no human logic analog. They are as perplexing to humans as they find humans perplexing to them. If the humans would stop mining gold, trading gold, maybe the world would be a garden, a paradise. Doozers and Fraggles? The dwarven view of paradise, like the humans, would not have an annoying counterpart.

Where do dwarves come from? Who knows, who cares. They might bubble out of a magic pool deep in the world? They do not appear to procreate. Dwarves can be wandering tribes, always moving, or live in established havens. But you won't find any beds or apparent women nor any children. Maybe they bud from one another like amoeba? They don't build tiny houses or bake cookies. They do like strong drink, but mostly when it's flavored with salty human blood.

Some dwarves will be ruled by strong chiefs, who may be NPCs with names. The chief might fight better than his counterparts, but his actions are no less confusing and suspect. None of these kings are respected elders, though some have

residual magic from their periods turned to goblins. Talking with a dwarven king makes the player character feel important, not vice versa.

Yet Goblins? The many and twisted forms of lesser evil start as dwarves. The magic of the Unending Grey corrupts the imps, and they turn into a plethora of creatures. They grow, both in size and ferocity, adding strength to the vileness of the impulsive imps. Think of the goblin form as a lycanthrope state. They may change back. Think of the goblin form as an evolutionary state; they may turn from antlike imps into huge monstrous bugs. It's all magic anyway, so both and neither might be true.

A dwarf leader might be able to deal with the players. There may even be friendship, so sometimes list them as friends. Yet if the players return, the chief will be someone new. Some dwarves will be led by true demons, enemies of godlike status, monsters who subjugate dwarves as minions. Demons, of course, might be treated with a bit more courtesy. Most dwarven favors are in fact deals and contacts made with otherworld monsters. Yet that's just slander of someone else's fiend, I mean friend.

Dwarves are not defenseless, but their ability to battle the players' group is at best inconsistent. Thousands could be treated as a single opponent to dispatch. Each round of battle would have tens or hundreds being popped, but until that one combat success is generated, the *hive* still swarms. They more often threaten the players after mishap or when weakness is revealed. Never beg for mercy. Your head will be made into a cup.

No telling what the dwarves fight with, maybe just rocks, no better than clubs. They might also carry (randomly) wicked relics of their own creation. Their standard battle tactic seems never to kill. Prisoners are more important. Dwarves attack to knock opponents down, not make them unconscious. A dwarf would want his captive to walk on his own, though bounded or ankle chained.

Dwarves would not be found fighting outside in anyone's army. Only when a player force is truly overwhelmed by numbers will they be taken captive. That or if the enemy turns into goblins during combat. Goblins, on the other hand, might make fine troops, even labor slaves (until they randomly switch back). It's all very confusing and best just generated as events, not pondered as optional tactics too much.



The players should never reveal they understand the dwarven language. The Briber, Gambler, Goldsmith and Steward skills will be used to get at the root of any conversation. "*Where is your gold?*" Both sides will be asking, demanding. True interpretation makes the imps mad. Knowing dwarvish may allow a battle or ambush to be avoided, but it could also cause a fight if the player character slips and reveals his linguistic gift.

The group does not so much barter with Dwarves, as it does steal and steal alike. A system of dead drops has been established by delver companies. The player group will find caches of food and materials, even gold. These are approximate deals between men and imps. One side drops a pile. The imps do the same nearby. Again, no telling why? But when the delvers return, they can remove part of what they left (to negotiate) or take the dwarven offering, leaving their side of the deal.

Thus, the player characters will find dwarves hauling a variety of baggage to dead drop locations. These the players will take. But by doing so, they should then allow the dwarves (not even the same dwarvish clan) to later claim what the creatures' desire. Looting dwarves is a good way to give up ownership of a Blade.

So, what's valued? Dwarves will enjoy rum, but the players may not wish to part with such. They like coin, but usually equate weight not value. So, a pound of gold might only be swapped for a pound of jerky. A good deal only to the starving. The exchanges made by various criminal cabals are usually for materials valued even more highly than gold. A pound of electrum for a pound of magically infused opiate or viagra, perhaps.

Dwarves will not understand the meaning of letters of debt, banking or favors. But they might accept very strange things that they have never seen, like seashells or furs. They do need mining tools; they might be confused by glass beads as jewels; captives too might be worth a try, but never mere slaves. The dwarf would value celebrity or a player character's actual sliced off tongue, animating the thing as a pet.

One last thing, dwarves do surface at night. Yet those events and campaign consequences need not be understood here. For the moment treat any dwarf on the surface as one about to turn into a goblin. But also realize fleeing to the surface does not always make dwarven encounters go away.

Many dwarves are cursed and addicted to wagers. They of course will cheat, but do so repeatedly and thus might be tricked. Any player character meeting

Dwarves may risk his purse of coins on a Nearly Impossible roll (that's the cheat at work). Sure, could be a make-roll, but hear me out. Should the first purse be lost, a second person can risk his at Tasking, then again at Difficult and likewise at Ordinary. If there are enough purses in the party, the wager reaches Routine and is automatically successful. After a D8 additional automatic losses the dwarves will quit. But the group may get their coins back and then some.

Roll that gambling D8 secretly, so the players have an unknown. Each player character may only bet a half D8 times before the dwarves get suspicious. Remember two purses of coins should be shared, since a double-sized purse is just a large purse whenever one is needed. You don't accumulate purses as tokens; you merely get better money to splurge, when the time occurs to spend. Don't be a penny-pinching clerk, just accept it.

The Q&D Retreat to a Choke Point or Designated Refuge is a means of escape from a massive group of enraged dwarves, maybe even goblins or other nonhumans. Zombies too? Similar to the Q&D Checking Skirmish, the Choke Point results apply less for confrontation and more for tactical retreat. Either Q&D might be used to prevent further exhaustive combat. There are many places where a few can hold off countless smaller fiends. The party will keep track of such havens, even use them as bolt holes for extra supplies.

**Rank One – Signs:** These are markers of ancient wealth – idols, archaic weapon displays, old clothing on bones, even pavement, chests of jewelry, etc. All denote a regional shift in area, different dwarves, have been entered and encountered. This will be a positive boon to the group, meaning fresh conquest and riches are near. Often the players will come across a gate to open, grand walls and magical carvings. The prime player character may select to gain either Treasure Laden (D) or a plus one Quest Pip. He may get greedy and choose both, but then the dwarves hereafter are angry. That might force them to use the Q&D to retreat from the get-go.

**Rank Two – Wards:** These are magical protections. They might not always harm the party. Yet that is worse. If the wards are designed to keep something away, the players will eventually move to a location with that threat and far enough away from the ward to be vulnerable. Card flip of SWORD suggests as much.

The ward may otherwise be an alarm which could trigger if a task roll is failed. By use of skill or swaggering, Q&D Retreat might not happen. The player may also need to deactivate a barrier to continue. That could cause a loss or enrage the dwarves further. The arcane protection is not typically dwarven, regardless.

Ref and players should add their own details for color and task resolution. Fighting magic with magic could be handled by the Ref selecting a wizardry technique secretly and having the players apply a counter as the table for swagger vs swagger suggests. Longboat techniques armed within the party should also have a chance of defeating or circumventing the ward as an obstruction or danger.

**Rank Three – Clan:** These are permanent establishments and landmarks. Many are constructed around ancient ruins, stone pyramids, obscure temples. If the players go away and return, the structures and the same clan will still be here. This will seem like a perfect fallback sanctuary for the players, giving them a place and familiar faces. At least one player character, never the prime, will think this dwarven group is different from their brethren. Perhaps anyone who fails an Ordinary roll is self-deluded. The clan is probably more socialized with the surface. Maybe the imps can change? How long the amity lasts is never known; the wise expect enmity.

For the moment, the group can purchase and replace slaves. These may not always be human, but they will do the job. But what do the player characters have that the dwarves could want? Actually, there are a number of things. The best is beverage, after that comes glitter and treasure. Just don't expect a fair rate of exchange.

Weight seem to be important to the dwarves. The chief of the clan may produce a huge set of novelty scales. A true slave will require a large amount of material. Can the players rent one? The concept will be strange to the imps. They might want to rent and shatter a player's magic Blade? Yet, the dwarves may not be too particular what they receive, so long as it reflects the light.

There's a somewhat cruel but expedient path of trading weak and diseased slaves for relatively fresh ones. Fill the chattel's stomach with stones to overcome his diseased, anemic and emaciated state, before making any deal. This all depends upon



the campaign and what the players will stomach. Remember, the dwarves may even accept two hundred pounds of seashells as currency. Yet that too becomes a question of how the players got that wheelbarrow load here. Some of this required prep work; maybe have the players make a list before the Phase starts; at each event justify why things, like a cart of broken mirrors, are still being hauled?

Could any player trade a pouch of shiny leaves and corn kernels for electrum? Possibly, but what causes most of these deals to go south is when someone mocks the imps for doing so. A single laugh can start a brawl. Or, the dwarves have made such a deal in the past and later found it wasn't fair. Ref must set the degree as the players employ skills and a sales-pitch.

There's always gambling. The dwarves will wager in weighty equivalents, a pouch of coins for a pouch of coins. But recall, they will cheat on the dice roll. A suggested resolution for gambling with dwarves in the underworld was described in the category header.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder. If the dwarves have not seen humans in a while, they may be more hospitable. Yet never ask for anything free. Free means your party's stuff, as well, is free for them to borrow, break and lose. Familiarity breeds discontent. If this event happens a second time, the clan will turn angry.

What usually causes this to be an event is a mistake, anthropomorphism, where the player character leaders or the servitors believe that they made previous friends. The tired servitors slink back here looking for protection. A separated group returns to rendezvous with the whole. Both result in the dwarves turning violent. The main party might come here and find the men they seek on spits over the fire with the dwarves betting to see which one smells charred first.

The Ref may treat the clan as a twice visited event, even as the cards reveal for the first time. That first encounter was before, and now this Rank Three event suggests the clan is hostile (or offended and annoyed) at second crossing of paths. Just when you think the dwarves are another race like men, that's when they prove they are never tame, never civilized, never normal.

The clan is impossible to fully destroy. The tendrils will spread. By fighting and killing the leaders, or whatever accounts of leaders, does scatters the rest; the players now will treat all dwarvish encounters of CUP-SWORD as Rank Five Skirmish.

**Rank Four – Entourage:** These are an official gathering of dwarves coming out of the shadows. They have a reason for doing so, but it's usually mistaken identity. The dwarves believe the party is from the actual empire or represents the return of some folk hero or immortal – long on memory, no perception of time. Thousands of imps process, even donning regalia—playing magical songs—hoping to meet and welcome the prime player character. The dwarves are in awe.



Seldom do the imps deliver treasure or anything which resembles edible food, but the players may make demands. If they get lucky with their rolls and application of skills and swagger, they can gain a half D8 longboat techniques, including Treasure Laden (D). Let each player suggest a swagger and the Ref should set an ever increasing difficulty roll. A failure might not start battle (or force the Q&D Retreat), but another player must counter the affront or confusion by his own actions using a degree of difficulty one less than that which failed his roll. Eventually, the dwarves will know they are being cheated or lied too. When the gods seem to want too much stuff that as gods they should already have or not need, right?

Example, someone with skill Slave Driver may start beating the clan, prompting them to chase away all the pests which annoy the emperor's demigods. If this was the first attempt, the roll might be Routine (a freebee) to gain Vermin Free (N). If it was tried after three other actions, the result would be had with a Tasking. Say he failed, then someone with a Difficult roll could say that his companion was shirking his own duty to the true king of kings and receive punishment with a chopped-off hand. The dwarves enjoy a cartoon spectacle of violence. Use Prestidigitation or Fantastic Blade (D) to make that act look real. (Unless he truly does cut the man's hand off with Duelist to save the party.)

Get some gold maybe, before your luck runs out. Treat any further meeting of an entourage as a war party come to attack like Rank Five Skirmish. Unless you are gods? Thought not. No, Demigod (A) does not count, but could be used to impress the dwarves to drink fire and spray it all over them. Now that that was suggested, use your own idea.

**Rank Five – Skirmish:** This is an attack by enraged dwarves. None of the enemy should be Goblins (yet). But many clans of campaign dwarves are treated as significant, even Great, in prowess for Defensive Modifier. If the players have yet to encounter any dwarves, this attack will start as a standoff or warning. Regardless, the group might gain the ability to use Q&D Retreat. The matter in question is whether it is one and only one chance on that table or unlimited, until either escape or combat ensues?

The dwarves will want captives. Treat the first vicious on any player as resulting in Shaken. After that the dwarves will use every trick, exotic weapon and magical bane at their disposal to kill; vicious goes back to being vicious. Any player may surrender at any time. Digressions would start with (E) should a character end-up among the losing or alone.

**Rank Six – Kingdom:** These are campaign communities. They are still as wild and untamed as any sets of dwarves, except the players meet not the dwarves but the spokesman for the dwarvish leader (or people). What truly changes is the dwarves are probably under some outside magical influence. They are restrained, not



by their own devices, but because a demon or powerful wizard has them in check. That guy won't be met here. This is just an inhuman ambassador of the dwarf king.

The dwarf king is a title and may not be a dwarf himself. Strange but true, the delvers would rather deal with goblins than unaltered dwarves. The players too might discover that dealing with the ruler of the dwarves, even though he will not be kind and makes demands, is more recognizable to them, an ego driven Penguin vs insane Joker sort of choice. We're all nerdy; that analogy should be clear.



The Ref should pick a dwarf clan from his campaign map. The dwarves here do not plan immediate intrigue, assassination or poison. Yet the players need to be cunning. Was it an accidental breach of the kingdom? Or did the players anticipate this event? Can they offer a service or use a favor to move past this event? Are they at the mercy of whatever demand is made by the kingdom (and Ref)?

Too many questions to answer all here. For the moment, pass the pipe and talk things out. What does he want? Go kill a monster, prove yourselves – seems to always be a crowd pleaser in a fantasy setting.

Or maybe cut your losses and run (Q&D Retreat). Dealing with the mouthpiece here is far easier than dealing with the potential demon in charge. Though, the spokesman may demand the players come with him; that is Digressions for all (E).

Killing the representative of the dwarven king is impossible without a relic. Not just any +1 Winkie silver relic, but a

relic which was forged as part of a quest goal. In other words, the players will only be able to use Method Escape if they do not gain a *Success and this encounter ends* to retreat with at most one round of actions for each player character.

This might all be avoided if the Ref sets a reasonable demand and payment is met. Of course, it will only be the first. Every other event of CUP-SWORD could return here if the players try to bribe their way past this first encounter with an

offering or pledge of service. The underworld is filled with obstacles; maybe next time capture a specified beast, rather than slay it – always fun.

**Rank Seven – Demonic Host:** The players stumble their way into or break through a walled passage to come face to face with a dwarvish king. The king could be an imp, the fool who wears the crown for a spell. Yet more likely, the dwarves are led by something powerful, arcane, typically impervious to even the player character magical Blades.

The king will be part of the campaign (or add him now). He will mock the player, dislike the intrusion, want to be entertained, demand to know everything the group knows, punish them for pleasure, make them humiliate themselves, or fight each other to the death. The players could be ready for this event, but often the mission just fails.

Maybe give them one flip for the prime player character to gain a *Success and this encounter ends* result on the Q&D Retreat. Each player can get an event, but the result is every man for himself; even in success each player uses Digressions. His would be (L); theirs could be (E). Even if the group fought, and it does, there's too many. The king can't be killed without a relic and a plan and a dozen questing knights of legend. He can't be killed (here).

Is there a chance the king will allow an audience? Maybe for someone of renown. Read back those fame Ignobles and make a case. Didn't write them down? <Chuckle> He may tease his decision to sell you back to the surface folks. He'll put more riches in front of the group than any has ever seen. Then he will kill the party with it? He doesn't need random minions, wandering in? He will suspect spies or fools.

This is a very rare event and usually ends only after one or more are rolling new characters. That's up to your Ref. Beg to him for mercy. Complain to him that the deck isn't fair. Or send spacegamer.com your letters.

If this is death of party, what would Catch-All (eight) be? Maybe kill the characters here and the ones in the campaign in Peoria. Some things the Ref needs to explain and weave into his story.

## **Q&D Retreat to a Choke-Point or Designated Refuge**

**Dwarves King:** No time for inaction, speak directly and confidently to the multitude (wondering what your blood tastes like). Success and this encounter ends.

**Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Trait Bold

**Dwarves Queen:** Corral the throng to keep all but the leaders back and cowering. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Blade Bounding (C)

**Dwarves Knight:** Pay no heed to the hurled rubbish or spitting faces taunting in the crowd; don't let them provoke a rash act. Success and this encounter ends.

**Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Armorer-Smith

**Dwarves Knave:** Do not let on that you see through their smiles right into their deceptions. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Language Dwarvish

**Dwarves 10:** When a vulgar defiler lunges, crack open its skull and watch as the underlings cavort to lick-up the blood spray. Success and this encounter ends.

**Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Swagger Crushing Blow (G)

**Dwarves 9:** Retreat step by step until your sanctuary is easily within bow range. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, fail and the lowest level player character suffers a vicious wound.

**Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Artillerist

**Dwarves 8:** Spot and target the most aggressive enemy gorgons instilling confidence in the rest. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, Difficulty increases by three. Note, the dwarven king is not typically Great, but he might be; he is not threatened by this event. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Bowman

**Dwarves 7:** Withdraw facing the enemy yet protect your flanks from being enfiladed by slingers. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless, battle is engaged, but success allows group to gain a Command Pip.

**Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Blade Biting (L)

**Dwarves 6:** Order the rest to make haste back to the waypoint, as you quell the first wave of assault. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, regardless, gain the Fury Pip for action here or in combat going forward; wound becomes walking, as you're still in this to win (survive). **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Berserker

**Dwarves 5:** Keep up your banter, both sustaining parley with the dwarves, as you also give orders for your men to slowly retreat. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, the failed roll also results in a vicious wound; the clan is pissed. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Better Valor (B)

**Dwarves 4:** Deflect the enemy missiles and caustic magical sprays. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, fail and increase Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Mastery Shield (O)

**Dwarves 3:** Stand ready, drawing them closer; tis you and your brethren ready to ambush the dwarven vanguard. Fail and lose any longboat techniques, which the group detailed and brought with them below ground. If the party has no remaining detachment, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, success and also all players gain a Tactical Pip. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Speed & Guile (R)

**Dwarves 2:** The area is festooned with cloaked pitfalls, though several are marked by previous delver passage. Fail and continue your survival on Digressions (E), Confronted and Overwhelmed by Dwarves (Goblins). **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Language Lezgin

**Dwarves Ace:** After the first crimson speck bubbles from your forearm, delight in fiendish reciprocity; slaughter hundreds, thousands, wade through their tiny shattered bodies. Success to end encounter. But, fail and encounter escalates into full combat. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Swagger Heroic Swordplay (K)

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.

## **ROD-ROD Underworlds: Natural**

Natural dangers pose a threat that will frustrate the player characters' group. Although the character's typical philosophy of putting a sword through an obstacle works rather well on a grumbler or monster, it doesn't stop freezing chill or move a collapsed tunnel out of the way. Venting frustration by cleaving a few rodents may be gratifying? These mishaps will kill servitors, damage supplies, delay the force and ruin morale. Anything else? Just one category of ten that might end up in complete disaster.

The Q&D Circumventing Passage Obstacles is sort of a when all else fails, now we dig. There may also be a repetitive question as to why the group doesn't just use magic, blow a hole in things, connect two points, you know, magic?

Let's make this clear (for at least when you find it here), as said elsewhere (to repeat), if you use magic, you suffer increased tally for Warped Outcome even for success. Always? It's up to the Ref, but yes typically. The tally events might not occur on success, but your countdown to failure rises steadily with magic use below ground. Not perhaps in a Q&D where the Advantage applies, and the event was kinda spur of the moment. But you might wish to glance and see that there aren't many Q&D in these categories of settings with Wizardry as an Advantage. They each appear just once scattered over ten tables. Maybe that Blade is of value digging and prying without backfire.



**Rank One – Barriers:** These are features that stop travel – lakes, rivers, waterfalls, cliffs, tunnel collapse, mazes, glaciers. They can also be flooded places or strange magical phenomenon, like constant hail. These barriers must be mitigated by the players with ideas and skills. i.e. How do you get across?

In most cases the players will find a method, but to do so, they may be compelled to abandon heavier supplies, barrels, crates, etc. They may have to stage across in small groups. Engineering seems always to be implied if not directly tested with a roll. The players should display some panache and story details. You just can't say I Sapper everything in the way. Some pitfalls are indeed magically bottomless.

These events will cause delay with the players needing an extra day or weeks to complete any plan. Mishap seems inevitable, and servitors will be injured in the effort; some will die. The Referee should bait the players by offering advice from dwarves. The next event might occur as the group works.

Extra provisions will be consumed, tools and building materials expended. Dwarves can undo what the players create, but not right away. The dwarves will want the players to go as well. Yet the journey home or backtracking could also take time, energy and resources. That's the heart of play. How much does each event consume in men, materials and morale? Is there any left, and are we close to getting done?

The Ref may also find it useful to test the Q&D Circumventing, even using it as a guide for setting task rolls. All that and you're still only at Rank One?

**Rank Two – Traps:** The ancients left some diabolical things behind, so did the denizens. The trap may be right in front of the party to solve. The trap might first kill a few, then be seen as something other than a random act of the gods. Better hope no god made the trap!

These are minefields, even literally. They may need a series of good ideas and rolls to cross or bypass. Go around the group, have the first player suggest a trap or problem with the trap. The next in line then offers his solution and rolls to avoid the consequences. This can continue with the next and next as each person rolls to avoid loss or injury and then adds something else to the problem for the person after him.

The Ref may also have the trap described by one persona (take notes) and then extra details or unforeseen difficulties are added by the next and next. After the whole wicked set-up is described, then the prime player character directs people based on abilities to solve each part of the problem.

Example of what might be said and done: I eat the cheese as a reward after its sprung? I bind the wounds. I fill in the trigger mechanism. I toss the rock to test if anything else we missed. I fashion a shield to hide behind. Now, there is an order to that described, and it doesn't start with eating cheese.



**Rank Three – Disease:** Sickness strikes the group with weakness and brain swelling (insanity). Lose No Disease (I) or the alternative. Give each player character an Ordinary roll to avoid a vicious ailment.

A small number of servitors must be subdued in personal duels. The other soldiers will be too terrified of the demonic possessed maniacs to fight.

If the group brought down sickness from the surface, their own boat never was disease free, then the dwarves in the region will also become ill here. That epidemic makes the imps retaliate in Skirmish after recovery in a D8 events. A TEN before then would be nice. The Ref may allow the players to help cure the dwarves, show some kindness. Will it prevent the attack? Probably not but ask the Ref if two half D8 might be rolled and added together instead. Helping the dwarves does confuse them.

Usually the disease is associated with a stagnant lake or tainted water, river of sewage or oxygen free stench. Purifying what you have (with heat) or simply getting past the undead bog takes ingenuity or Q&D Circumventing. Undead? Sure, why not add something to fight along the way with the screaming minions to subdue.

The disease itself should have lasting effect in the underworld. Sunlight cures all. Until the Phase advances or some other event explains away the problem (unlikely), the player characters will eventually take that wound or temporarily lose traits, skills and techniques from the contagion contracted. Fleas, it's always fleas. Not really but use whatever idea that's suggested to help solve the problem or delay the wicked side effects.

**Rank Four – Deposits:** The group has found a vein of silver or gold. It may be a channel in the rock being stuffed by the dwarves. Collect some wealth; from a single purse up to an entire treasure is up to the Ref. However, the event comes with some initial blight.

Fight those dwarves and suffer their wrath on any CUP-SWORD encounter as Rank Five Skirmish to follow. Else, feud within the group, as the ore is cursed. The more the group finds the less chance of combat, huh? Yes but, the extra weight is not refined. Any Treasure Laden (D) in this bulky form is heavy; the expedition will set aside other materials to bring the precious metals out.

Is it an illusion? Fool's Gold? Anyone able to test for either?

Extracting will take more display of skill and perhaps a set of Q&D Circumventing Obstacles to finish the job. Keep taking events on that table, until generating *Success and this encounter ends*.

The correct choice could be leave it be, sell or trade the location later to Delvers. Use the find as knowledge. Do you think any servitor will be happy with that decision? That seems like a recipe for desertion as parts of the party slip off to mine some anyway. A good roll, plus losing (P), (Q) or (S), might allow this prudent

decision. Then again, if you never meet true delvers, who on the surface will ever believe you? “*I’m a skilled Delver, I must have contacts?*” Now you’re role-playing.

**Rank Five – Tremors:** The ground shakes. Not good for man nor beast. These happen with storybook timing, like when a rope bridge is crossed or ledge must be crawled along. Tremors are sent by the gods or caused by giants trying to stand back up. No fooling; plate tectonics are something for another game. So, the best question anyone can answer is why is it happening now? What did the party do?

Test all the longboat techniques brought with the expedition at Ordinary. If any character has either mitigation skill, that player can roll three dice. For large groups, restrict each player to one roll.

If the event happens again, the test should increase to Tasking. Yet, don’t forget to mention the cause of the tremors. Something might need to be done, if anything, to calm the cosmos.

If the earthquake caused the way forward to be blocked, use Q&D Circumventing. The dwarves in the area may even help. They don’t want the players here angering the unknown or feel the players were the cause of the tremors. Could monsters be startled and bolt into the path of the players? Sure, that’s another outcome to keep things varied and lively. Monsters are always good in underworlds for added fun.

**Rank Six – Breeding Ground:** The place seems to have a fair amount of guano or large clumps of offal. Tease and build-up the situation but get on with facing a monster. Flip a card on the table of the *Generating Quests* booklet or let a player describe what the group meets. The ferocity is usually set high enough for any of the party to check Battle or Heroics as an Ignoble. If the group is desperate, fears the fight, a hasty defense might be erected with one event of *success to end* on Q&D Circumventing Passages to reflect sealing off the monster’s entry. Otherwise, we have a fight.

**Rank Seven – Waterway:** These are channels of water that allow the players to navigate by raft. The longboat remains above, not here; any river passage of that size would be marked on the surface campaign. This is a fast moving shallow underground river with little overhead space. Think of it perhaps as a long water slide. Build a few dinky (Q&D Circumventing Obstacles).

The rapids, even falls, are the straight line path. The route back may not be as clearly possible, and it could put the players isolated without retreat. But the speed of moving by water, and the weight the group takes along without fatigue, makes underground river passage irresistible. Dwarves will not follow. Monsters will not follow. The players can leave many lingering threats behind. On to new dwarves and monsters, a clean slate of events. But as stated, the path back is not assured. Ref may add other circumstances and penalties.

Hereafter treat CUP-CUP events as ROD-ROD. Also, the group continues on the rafts until it has another ROD-ROD encounter. All the rest are events which happen as the group poles their way along. Even mission consequence encounters will occur with the added freedom of being on platforms on the water. Still a cave above, but somehow everyone is happier to have sea legs again.

## Q&D Circumventing Passage Obstacles

**Natural King:** Though the logic is neither hominid nor orderly, the design does have a pattern that might be discerned to allow the party to cross safely. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Delver

**Natural Queen:** Order everyone to close their eyes and feel their way past the sensory distortion. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Suffer the event that occurs. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Wizardry Spirit Guide (R)

**Natural Knight:** Empower a dowsing rod to steer a path across the void of confusion. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Ingenious (A)

**Natural Knave:** The whole can be brought down by pulling or dislodging a lynchpin. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Swagger Chiasmic Action (D)

**Natural 10:** Fill in the gaps and pitfalls; hope each worker doesn't have to shovel more than a long ton of dirt to fashion a level roadway. Fail and drained of one wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Wizardry Geomancy (C)

**Natural 9:** Patience and carpentry skills, this will take some adroit fabrication and building planks to traverse; you'll need to safely camp for adequate time. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, if the player has the skill Mariner, Difficulty decreases by four. **Difficulty:** 13 **Advantage:** Longboat Abundant Stores (M)

**Natural 8:** Ancient walls, which have stood the test of time, were placed to imprison something within. Best to completely bypass this citadel dungeon. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Resulting event for the increase is optional, but the tally still grows. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, failure also places the party into combat with a monster. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Wizardry Cosmic (T)

**Natural 7:** Hold on tight as you gingerly step upon a damaged path, rotting rope bridge or swinging decayed catwalk. Success and this encounter ends, but fail

and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, Difficulty increases by five. **Difficulty: 8 Advantage: Skill Equestrian**

**Natural 6:** Cut or widen a hole into an intervening area, wondering what nonhuman miners carved the tunnel but then abruptly stopped. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, upon success the party gains longboat Treasure Laden (D); this technique is added right into the group, even above the maximum of the one-fourth allowed this far off the team's vessel. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage: Wizardry Voltaic (N)**

**Natural 5:** Slough through the pooling water, which has turned into a stifling bog, complete with biting mosquitoes. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, Difficulty increases by five. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Longboat No Disease (I)**

**Natural 4:** Hard to determine whether this location is inherently dangerous or the product of impish craft; the torches are igniting methane fumes, and projectiles are darting from everywhere. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, the group must also take additional actions on Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade and Lairs. The traps were set by the imps, but to keep something on the darker, ironic, far side. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Skill Acrobat**

**Natural 3:** What can't be gone through or under might still be climbed over. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, Difficulty increases by two. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Skill Mountaineer**

**Natural 2:** Awake, slightly dazed, trying to recollect what might have happened. But more immediate, free your tied hands. Fail and continue your survival on Digressions (E), Confronted and Overwhelmed by Dwarves (Goblins). **Difficulty: 7 Advantage: Wizardry Shape Shifting (J)**

**Natural Ace:** There's four and fifty ways to solve anything. Take a guess on a solution; the *so called* experts are doing the same, even if they'll never admit to such. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage: Trait Clever**

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.

## **ROD-COIN Underworlds: Misadventure**

The majority of these will be mishaps within the parry. Not all action is created by external causes and events; these will challenge the players to overcome problems within their company. In these strange lands, these actions can be devastating.

Q&D Mending and Recovery Following Mishap has a decidedly underworld slant compared to Q&D Ship Remediation as presented in the Seas Setting. The

difference is obvious; the expedition is suffering these harms, not the longboat and whatever crew was left up above.

**Rank One – Lost:** The party doesn't know where they are, but so what? In most cases the players do not know where they are heading anyway. Well, now the party doesn't know how to get back or send a message to their vessel or surface entrance support. Outside messengers may find the group, signifying the end of being lost, or the Referee might treat CUP-CUP category as CUP-COIN caused by the loss of regular supply runs.

If the players complete the setting, they will have found their way back to a known landmark or path. If the players call it quits, they will get home (eventually) for the Epilog. But the Ref may make them declare every man for himself and continue with Digression (L).

This may also signify that the party is cut-off from servitors; not truly a mystery of missing men the group has been divided by an obstacle or mishap. Did it even choose to divide? With the party split, the next set of encounters will not be able to use any techniques. The Ref may be generous and have the group select one that remains. This split will last until the end of the Phase, unless another event signifies the group has rejoined. Maybe that CUP-CUP event represents the group coming back together.

Better still, give the prime player character a choice. He may decide to willingly split the company. If he does so here, for some advantageous tactic, the group may not use the expedition's longboat techniques. But, the group also suffers no ill effect of CUP-CUP encounters. This immunity lasts until that first CUP-CUP messenger of any rank appears. If it doesn't, the group will normally meet by the Phase End.

The Q&D Recovery from Mishap may also be used to resolve some events as the sides find each other and unify.

**Rank Two – Attrition:** These are disease, exposure, starvation and desertion, four military banes of moving men and materials. Even if the group's size is well below an army, their few servitors suffer attrition losses. e.g. Fatigue, sickness, exhaustion, fear, animal and insect bites, accidents, etc. Lose one technique in the party; if none, the lowest level character suffers a vicious wound.

Use the Q&D Recovery to determine whether anything else has been lost at this encounter. Here can be the accumulated losses of the travel finally tallied. Many things happen along the whole journey.

The illness is not long lasting nor contagious, unless the prime player character selects that one to lose from the techniques available. The environs of the underworld



change radically, and men die from lack of shoes or cloaks or just the lack of a dry towel.

Starvation may occur in a well provisioned force, when proper diet is not served. Strange hunted meat and collected fruit may contain toxins. Everything tastes funny in the underworld. Desertion occurs in all but the elite. Yet even there, the siren call of demons might tempt good men to do foolish things. Tired men flee, trying but seldom making the return alone, back to the vessel.



**Rank Three – Delay:** The journey takes far longer than expected, because the group is stuck, unable to continue, unable to retreat. The party is locked in place, hunkered down and waiting for a serious threat to pass or an obstruction to be removed. Resources were stretched to the limit, or the group not only conserved but at times did without.

Any time limit restriction the players have is a bust; this mission might take an extra month or two to truly complete. The longboat may give up all hope. If the group does not generate a CUP-CUP or a QUEEN encounter during the rest of this Phase, the crew left behind has assumed the worst. They will sail off to new adventures. They probably will not tell the patron that the prime player character is dead, but that too is a possibility.

The group will lose their longboat (and all the techniques intrinsically aboard), unless they generate either event or seek the boat's location after they get out of this jam. In other words, they may need to abandon the mission at the interphase.

Even then it might be a fight with the new owners-leaders. The underworld will change people; the crew may not recognize the player characters after this encounter occurs.

The Ref may allow Q&D Recovery to force march back to the vessel right after the event, only to return from where you left off after the attempt. This could leave the party exhausted, but they dare not risk further delay.

**Rank Four – Arguments:** As camp is made and all take a rest, a fight will start. This usually is a personal duel, but everyone probably selects Irregular methods. Most of these will be duels between characters, players and NPCs.

A personal hatred is amplified by the harsh travels. Nerves are frayed; someone said something taken the wrong way. Complaints led to challenges. The players must defeat a number equal to the player characters, led by one of the NPCs for Defensive Modifier.

These are not arguments over command, i.e. Usurpers. Instead, one character might ridicule another's ability, calling him incompetence. Cheating on a wager is another possible cause for arguments, or the loser might refuse to pay an honest bet. Brawls can result from rowdy warriors beating and killing a slave. These fights can leave the players' force in disorder. Else, the troops can vent some anger and become a stronger band of comrades. Fight the initial battle, then use the Q&D Recovery to decide if morale festers or improves. The combat just settled could immediately flair again.

**Rank Five – Illusions & Delirium:** The group wanders in a haze or spell, caused by breathing spores or eating something tainted. The whole party is intoxicated by gases or magic, and heads in the wrong direction or into a trap. The worst of these magical areas leaves the party unable to remember what brought them to the underworld in the first place.

The dangerous trek will take the party into immediate loss of longboat technique (ROD) or to the lair of a beast (COIN). The Ref may allow a half D8 events on Q&D Recovery and see if anyone gains the *Success and this encounter ends* result to stop the willy-nilly walk into doom. Flip the event and then the prime player character can assign the player character responsible for the roll; no more than one event for anyone.

**Rank Six – Catastrophe:** This is the ultimate mishap. The party is scattered by ambush or accident. The longboat techniques on the expedition are all lost. Just a few soldiers are regrouped. The gear and arms have been abandoned. There is one chance to avoid Digressions. The prime player character will take one event on Q&D Recovery to see if he can pull something together from the survivors. It still may not be enough to continue, but at least all players are not forced to roll Digression (L) just to get back to the surface.

**Rank Seven – No Return:** The path back is no longer available. Often the group has changed levels of the underworld. One player should describe what happened and the Ref might add some flair to events going forward.

At a minimum treat CUP-CUP events as CUP-COIN. The longboat will give up and leave if the Phase is not ended with a TEN encounter in a D8 events. Otherwise, the journey has no choice but to continue. Use Q&D Recovery to

accelerate the party pace and add a second D8 roll to the countdown before the longboat gives up the party as dead. If it is any consolation, whatever was behind you or stalking you is no longer a worry. It can't get by the obstruction either.

## **Q&D Mending and Recovery following Mishap**

**Misadventure King:** Figure out a better marching formation to end this brutal chain of accidental deaths. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward.

**Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Trait Methodical

**Misadventure Queen:** Stop and take a count; the party seems to have spread out along a much too vulnerable procession. Fail and drained of one wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Blade Fantastic (D)

**Misadventure Knight:** Attend to the pack dogs and mules; wrap their hooves and paws to prevent injury from crystal shards in the loosely packed terrain. Fail and drained of one wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious.

**Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Farrier-Breeder

**Misadventure Knave:** What did you expect to happen? Sternly tell the troops to get back to work and continue the adventure; more shares for all as the party diminishes in number. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Grit-Fortitude

**Misadventure 10:** Proclaim a half-day of rest, some quiet comfort passing the mug or bowl. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Mucilage (B)

**Misadventure 9:** Walk confidently in front, silently breathing a sigh of relief for making it (almost whole) out of the last deathtrap, and secretly hoping you're not forced to backtrack through that last maze. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, fail and also start the next event or combat Shaken with worry. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Blade Knightly (G)

**Misadventure 8:** Short of slave bearers and faced with the choice of doubling the burden on the backs of your warriors or turning your worst soldiers into dedicated linkboys. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, fail and player character should check Growth from acquiring a personality buzzword, like Reluctant or Utilitarian; these personality flaws may only be removed through role-play. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Wizardry Animate Objects (O)

**Misadventure 7:** Calm the group, even with some set-backs and strange bumps in the night; else, everyone could be too jittery to be effective. Fail and

increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, Difficulty increases by five.

**Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Skill Apothecary

**Misadventure 6:** Separate sides and mitigate a dispute, which arises between two recently developing factions inside the party. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, also upon failure, fight the combat against the more militant and mutinous of the two cliques to settle this for good. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Blade Paladin (P)

**Misadventure 5:** Hit a snag when a cart upturns or a martingale snaps on a pack animal. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, upon fail also lose longboat Abundant Stores (M) or the alternate through shortages.

**Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Skill Tinker

**Misadventure 4:** Dispatch some of the servitors as they become too weak to travel; this is not a time or place to tarry. Fail and suffer a vicious wound (not as weak as you assessed). If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, fail and player character should check Growth from acquiring a personality buzzword, like Anathema or Unemotional; these personality flaws may only be removed through role-play. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Wizardry Necromancy (H)

**Misadventure 3:** Does anyone have any chutzpah remaining? Any clear idea what to do? Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, fail and player character should check Growth from acquiring a personality buzzword, like Braggart or Vainglorious; these personality flaws may only be removed through role-play. **Difficulty:** 10 **Advantage:** Wizardry Celestial (G)

**Misadventure 2:** Rouse confused; collect your wits and patch yourself up. Your companions are not immediately to be seen, and the path is strewn with rubble from an apparent cave-in. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (L), Lost in the Underworlds. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Skill Barber (Chiurgeon)

**Misadventure Ace:** The news is grim; the accounting of the expedition suggests all manner of misadventure has been whitewashed. Fail and lose any longboat techniques, which the group detailed and brought with them below ground. If the party has no remaining detachment, player suffers a vicious. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Longboat Undamaged (O)

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.



## **ROD-SWORD Underworlds: Denizens**

In the Unending Grey, the beasts can be large, numerous and deadly. They can also be tiny, yet just a bloodletting or worse septic. In desperation, these can be a source of food; however, the magic of the underworld tends to seep into monster flesh in extremely bad ways.

The action need not be monster battle upon monster battle. The players do not need to blunder into every dark corner. The monsters too need not be single-minded, aggressive and ready to die at every moment. Well, maybe if its undead.

Always handy to have a few monsters, pre-generated just in case. Have one to tease of ferocity about a step or two below the character's level. Have a second with some special powers at equal to or greater than the best character. Else, let a player describe the monster and each time you get a ROD-SWORD maybe add something else to its arsenal of deadliness. Did it evolve? Did the large mate appear? Did it just test battle only to return with all its powers? Ref must decide.

Even if the characters are not seasoned delvers, intuition and combat experience can let them avoid many attacks. Or, the party may leave a sacrificial group behind as the rest of the expedition gets to safety. Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade and Lairs may be used to simulate the players avoiding what the event tells them they could face.

**Rank One – Vermin:** These are smaller creatures, rodents but also bugs, which contaminate food, infect wounds and end the party's ability to claim Vermin Free (N). The bites can also be snake or bat, either delivering a wound, but odds are a servitor is struck first. The players will get past this event, but the real question is what's feeding the small creatures. The answer is usually a larger monster's leavings. Any use of Q&D Avoiding Lair would be to do just that here. The result of *Fail and encounter escalates into combat* will not be against the vermin.

**Rank Two – Fearful Signs:** The players encounter large tracks, foul waste matter, howling sounds or mutilated carnage. The larger the carcasses, the bigger the apex predator. These will start with increased swarms of flies. Something else lurks. The fact that the mob's eaten may prevent it from attack, here and now. But, the monster could appear in any event that follows. Maybe use Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade to stay clear of it's ready pounce both here and sometime later. Get away from it twice and it may never be seen again.

**Rank Three – Spoilage & Filth:** The provisions are gone – infested, spoiled, stolen, etc. The cause may be a nuisance monster or the general bad luck of crossing



strange areas with one of the only food and water sources. Like water on the desert causes a bloom, the players presence and the stuff they bring cause monsters big and small to appear and populate. Anyone interested in studying the behavior? Get on with eh adventure; it's all magic at its heart.

**Rank Four – Creature Attack:** Go ahead fight he battle as desired. If the players try to keep their distance, the effort probably proved futile. Take at most a single event on Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade. Fight the action against monsters numbering the size of the player party plus a half D8. The Ferocity may be just Large, unless one or more players need the Battle Ignoble. The Ref should decide how often he wants to elevate the ferocity, simply to let the players gain a check. Yet if he doesn't, they could be slowly being exhausted by smaller attacks before the main boss appears.

Also, skip all the ranks below this one form here on out you get at least another attack if a Rod-Sword mission inconsequence encounter occurs.

**Rank Five – Magical:** Another attack, but this one must begin with some swagger vs swagger to neutralize the special powers involved. The Ref should pick a half D8 Wizardry swaggering. Keep them secret to start. Then, go around the table and have each player select a countering swagger against the unknown. Note, these need not be only wizardry, since any swaggering has the potential to stop, disable as a manner of speaking, the technique the Ref has selected for the opponent. After a few guesses and reveal, the players will know what the enemy (creature) has and will be better able to select something to defeat the mob.

That usually does not end the battle, only start more combat. The players may chase off the attackers and pursue (into an Ambuscade). The whole battle can be resolved after the initial action in any manner the Ref deems appropriate. For player characters above level four, mix in some extra Banes and of course a Defensive Modifier. Yet with that risk should come some appropriate reward.

**Rank Six – Glorious Evil:** The party has come face to face with something truly extraordinary in terms of danger. Nevertheless, don't rush straight into battle. The grand fiend may be starved for conversation; he might settle for adulation or a deed. Offer the group a secondary quest or detour challenge. If he players are spoiling for a fight, bring it on. Add swagger to start against his own magical ability, then segue into regular combat. Even dust-off an old Q&D.

Emphasize that battle might be a last resort. The party might even face a demon that can only be slain by a relic, perhaps one which hasn't even been made. There is nothing inherently wrong with making the players start with method Escape. You can even pluck the lowest level right into Digressions; adding more and more of the company with each passing round. The game is not supposed to be easy, especially in the underworlds.

**Rank Seven – Celebrated Beast:** The party has met something legendary, something truly one of a kind. Something which is both frightening and awe inspiring. Dragons, they work. The celebrated beast could be a minor deity or a campaign figure of great (grave) importance.

Any combat here would be futile. If the quest was to slay this monster, then yes, the party might have a chance. But randomly meeting something of this magnitude is bum luck. Are they dead? No, that's no fun.

Maybe give the players the choice to end one quest and start another. The current patron will not be pleased. Or the group must promise to do something later or make some form of atonement. All player characters should gain one new personality flaw from the encounter, usually Authentic or Unemotional. Yet these monsters, as possible patrons, will be able to heal other buzzwords or solve problems each player has.

If nothing seems right or won't scale on the fly, then give the players one event of Q&D Ambuscade to try to avoid the whole thing. Short of that, the only option may be Q&D Dragons in the Zone of Death. You could even have each player take events there, and only there, until they gain any grapple to signify escape. Yet the beast tends to be something that changes motivation and politics of all who witness it in person. e.g. Behold the Sphinx!

## **Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade and Lairs**

**Denizens King:** Whatever lay ahead in the murk, you can trust you've trained your men well (to die before you). Fail and encounter escalates into combat.

**Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Longboat Battle Ready (H)

**Denizens Queen:** Instinctively, you hold up one finger and signal for the column to silently rotate noncombatants to the guarded rear. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. **Difficulty:** 6

**Advantage:** Wizardry Precognition (E)

**Denizens Knight:** Subdue a cultist or humanoid minion; capture him for interrogation and keep him from sounding a greater alarm. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Brawler

**Denizens Knave:** Heed the warnings written in graffiti by past parties of explorers; whatever is out there, the lizard men fear as well. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Language Ossetia

**Denizens 10:** Fell a minor foe or disable a magical bane positioned as sentry on a little used approach. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Swagger Irregular Tricks (M)

**Denizens 9:** Strange lights, drums, the enemy is supplicating in ranks and summoning its cruel master to feed. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by

a half D8. Resulting event for this increase is optional, but the tally still grows. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, the fail result changes to a full D8 increase in tally. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)

**Denizens 8:** A scout catches a sight, a mere glimpse of what you might face, but he's rendered mute by fear or magic. Fail and lose any longboat techniques, which the group detailed and brought with them below ground. If the party has no remaining detachment, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, fail and lose all longboat techniques taken below ground as the servitors desert in horror in all directions. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Wizardry Power Words (S)

**Denizens 7:** A ricochet of energy was not specifically aimed at you nor the party, not yet. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Suffer the event that occurs. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, regardless, follow with combat as everyone receives an enemy spellcaster bane. Ref decides power, usually Cultist. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Acrobat

**Denizens 6:** Spring catlike away from the swipe of a rotund arm, tentacle, furry paw, snapping jaw, whipping tail, slithering tongue, etc. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into combat with all players receiving an appropriate monster bane. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Swagger Killer Instinct (N)

**Denizens 5:** Corpses, some human-ish and many not so much; briefly wonder if these were half eater or defecated half consumed. Fail and drained of one wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, all players must attempt this same roll to avoid the same result upon failure. **Difficulty: 6 Advantage:** Longboat Vigilant (E)

**Denizens 4:** With more light, more sleep, a warmer set of meals, less comforting drink, less overall discomfort, less anxiety, perhaps you'd see the many tracks and scratches, tufts of fur and shed scales. Perhaps voice some concerns and collaborate. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. If skilled Delver, Difficulty reduces by two. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, all players must attempt this same roll to avoid the same result upon failure. **Difficulty: 10 Advantage:** Blade Scheming (S)

**Denizens 3:** As discreetly as possible, disperse a swarm of skittering bugs, which your group unfortunately drives in a single forward direction, forecasting the party's presence. Could these miniature carrion eaters be in league with the beast? Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, Difficulty increases by three. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Wizardry Telekinesis (D)

**Denizens 2:** Take a peek ahead, even though that's dumb; your curiosity or desire to be valiant may prove damning. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (B), Facing a Great Beast. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Skill Spy

**Denizens Ace:** The creature clearly marks its territory if the party will only slow for a spell, instead of recklessly trudging onward. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 5 **Advantage:** Swagger Concentration (E)

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.

## COIN-COIN Underworlds: Exotic



These are mostly places, buildings, special gatherings or strange sets of locals. Many of these are landmarks that can aid the party from becoming lost. The party might shelter her or create a vault for supplies, a place to return following mishap. These are the events that make the Unending Grey an exciting place. These are places of mystery and intrigue, where the group is usually forced to deviate, break protocol and explore.

These events might be combinations of other categories – Specials, Dwarves, Natural, Denizens. At times the group will be chased into these events or pursue something that will take refuge therein. Almost all turn into a mini-plot, even a small four or eight location action sequence; use schematics and split the party into smaller groups. One schematic is always available and useful – the compass. Simply put different sized groups in the center, to north, to south, to southeast, etc. Then go around the table and let each player with his entourage resolve his part

of the encounter. Any player may resolve his own trifle and respond to join another. All might end up retreating to the same center block and making a defense.



The Q&D Investigation and Excavation allows the eerie to intrude on any discovery. The events there can mark an end to a search, an adapted fortification or a discovery to aid passage through and out of the area.

**Rank One – Ruins:** The players have entered an area of stone piles, the remains of a dead empire, a temple to forgotten gods, a lost civilization, a fortress created by past explorers, etc. These will be places that contain possible treasure, vaulted materials left behind unguarded, but also might be still inhabited by strange cults, goblins or nonhuman guardians.

The players must decide how they will trespass. They can try to leave little but footprints, but that will just get them out and to the next encounter. If they want to excavate for possible treasure, they will have to start hammering. Noise will attract the angry or the hungry (if any live nearby or within).

These places quickly turn into labyrinths; a ruined city could cover dozens of square miles with twisted streets, crumbling walls, bricked-up bastions and exotic temples. There will be a danger of ancient traps, pitfalls and other classical Hollywood inspired deadly puzzles. Here, perhaps, keep it basic, but remember a place like this for a future climax challenge. The Ref should consider risk to reward; ask the prime player character if he would risk more to ensure riches. e.g. Difficult to find money could yield Ordinary to avoid meeting denizens. Tasking to find something valuable might mean same Ordinary chance to avoid monsters, but the roll is made with three dice.

When the players decide they are done delving the distraction, the true mission awaits.

**Rank Two – Crypts:** These are graves and temples of internment for native chiefs and emperors. The players may have instead discovered the remains of an expedition or a cache of hidden equipment. There may even be small amounts of treasure left behind as tribute. Skeletal remains of warlords and the undead guardians of the tombs will affect morale.

Most of these, however, are nearly obliterated; the names on the tombs are indecipherable. The players may find desecrate and find riches; golden jewelry could be had inside the shrouds of the dead. Robbing the place means defiling sacred graves, though the servitors may have already started doing just that.

Crypts could house beasts or garner unworldly sympathy. The area's dwarves will be watching, groaning, cheering; these places are warded and protected by secret juju, mojo and curses. The Unending Grey is not an understood place, and even the hint of superstition can make the men blame the simplest misfortune on an active curse. The players might gain some loot, Treasure Laden (D), but desecrate a holy place. Retribution will not be far behind.



Make a retaliatory attack after a D8 events. The players have that long to leave the Phase or face the enemy consequence. Use Q&D Investigation to perhaps prove the encounter comes and goes without incident.

**Rank Three – Cults:** Something evil has a sanctuary. This place has a magical anomaly or monstrous demonic presence. An unnatural influence twists the location. The cult is attracted to the site for a variety of reasons, but mainly they want to control the magic here.

The temple might be a gated fortress, which must be besieged or stormed. The players can pass by but doing so will mean they have left an enemy garrison along their supply route to their vessel. The inhabitants inside will occasionally sally forth to ambush and steal supplies. *Messenger Cup-Cup* encounters will never reach the players.

The temple will be attended by fanatic slaves, who fear the priestly powers of the divine leader more than the players. To be rid of this pimple, the players may need to enter and kill the leader. The protectors should have Banes related to magical Q&D Fighting Cultist or for a party with above level four, use the worst case of Q&D Sorcerers & High Priests. The leader is key to ending the sect; his death may be had by subterfuge, via stealth inside or the uncontested dagger thrust.

Sometimes a bloodletting ritual will be taking place at the temple, but otherwise the normal business is collecting sacrifices, experiencing the anomaly and plotting terror on the lords of the surface, the ones who banished them below. The monster or demon should not be met (yet). There is also a danger that some player servitors will desert to join the evil below.

**Rank Four – Cityscape:** The players find a set of walls with many subterranean buildings. These are what remains when whole cities were sunk in magical wars of a millennium ago. The party might also find themselves on the wrong side of a siege. Any treasure found will have an owner, so who indeed?

These are useful as both landmarks and places to reinforce for an outpost. The Referee must decide if there is any lingering bane – disease, unstable structures, infestation, curses, etc. Most times the danger is long gone. Whole industries may be found in working condition. Are the users long dead, ghosts, or run off at the players approach? The party may be attacked by inhabitants or surprised by monster lair. Use these the same as *rank one* Ancient Ruins for an initial search and mystery.

The city may even be alive and working, connected to the surface. The Referee must decide the condition of the colony. Neglect will rapidly erase any semblance of structure. The place could have been left during restoration, after completion but with fresh damage, or fully assembled but abandoned yet without hint of decay. Stone survives, but wood supports not so well. The owners should prompt many questions and even negotiation.

**Rank Five – Paradise:** This is an enchanted garden, peaceful. The flowers fragrant, the food a sweet nectar. The inhabitants are often not human, yet all will appear angelic, seductive. The servitors will never want to leave the place. Now you understand how dangerous paradise becomes.

These places are tranquil with malevolent forces that create lassitude in all. The food is addictive, euphoric. The place is often vampiric.

The players must burn and destroy this location in order to continue their quest. Such actions will harden the player characters and influence the character's future role-play. The players will understand; these are not the wonderful heavens that the troops feel they are. Most are too good to be true and very short-lived. Death to the party is likely if the players fall under the spell of the siren's village. Maybe retire here; roll a new character to play fresh someplace else? Digression (I), Slave in the Mines, may occur when each player character sobers up and breaks the illusion.

**Rank Six – Quirks:** The players have crossed into a place where supernatural elements created a haven or fortress. The occupants employ potions and spells, exotic protectors, chimera cross-breeds. Horrific animal headed people do not enjoy outside company. Employ pyrotechnics, demons, clockwork idols, hypnoses, flying critters, the weird and scary. They will first try to intimidate before unleashing utter doom.

The quirk they guard is typically a magical pool with waters that heal and invigorate, allowing men to travel for days without need of food or sleep. The effects will wear off and supplies are limited. The fountains drips only a few drops a day (or year). These are not healing potions to carry about. Nor can an apothecary attempt to refine and extract the secrets. Other quirks, portals and powerful weapons, do exist.

This is a cult, but one too powerful to start directly with combat. Let the cult slowly generate penalties on the player group until escape or combat becomes unavoidable. The player group will be losing access to techniques one by one. The loss may even last the rest of the phase. Up to the Ref to decide when and if battle then is joined.

**Rank Seven – Vile Domain:** The party has crossed into a realm ruled by intelligent self-aware monsters. The doors being broken down and walls cut through, typically something the party does as a matter of moving about, turn out to be the shelters of this other race of beings.

These are mighty kingdoms; the players must respect the lords and bureaucracies of them. A social order is maintained. Tribute is expected. The player characters may be the only ones allowed to live. The servitors may be gathered up as slaves, food or sacrifices; all are seen as coming here to submit to death. The players need to flatter, pretend their mission was to parlay in this place, be supplicant to survive. Courtly Graces seems a must, after demonstration of powerful and varied wizardry. Escape is about the only option after true combat is joined.

## Q&D Investigation and Excavation

**Exotic King:** Ghostly visages populate a spectral arena, waving and applauding your entrance; best to keep some distance. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. Regardless, this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Blade Golden (T)

**Exotic Queen:** The temperature drops suddenly; you see your breath and feel your garments start to freeze stiffly. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Suffer the event that occurs. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Blade Defender (F)

**Exotic Knight:** Overcome unease, as each step seems to irregularly fall upon a multitude of textures, where visually nothing appears to change. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Blade Impetus (N)

**Exotic Knave:** The region's mile markers date back several thousand years to the magical realms recollected only in sagas. Fail and drained of one wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Language Hypatia

**Exotic 10:** Translate the translations on cuneiform scratches overlaid with runic notes left by previous surveyors. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. Regardless, this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Occult Scholar

**Exotic 9:** The very air has a tint, scarlet. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, also upon fail, the group must follow with actions on Q&D Mending and Recovery following Mishap. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)

**Exotic 8:** Rejoin in whisper the staccato noises emanating from the dark corners of inhumanly molded cervices. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Resulting event for the increase is optional, but the tally still grows. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, regardless, the group must follow with actions on Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade and Lairs. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Linguist

**Exotic 7:** Salute your unseen hosts who have left gifts in tribute to your arrival. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. Regardless, this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, continue with Q&D Mending and Recovery following Mishap. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Courtly Grace

**Exotic 6:** Decipher the map key on a glyph covered monolith or arcane parchment, which has withstood the test of time. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, upon fail, the group must

follow with actions on Q&D Retreat to a Choke-Point or Designated Refuge.

**Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Cartographer

**Exotic 5:** Blockade the portal into a crude temple, trapping the strange supplicants inside. Fail and lose any longboat techniques, which the group detailed and brought with them below ground. If the party has no remaining detachment, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, also upon fail, the group must follow with actions on Q&D Halting the Spread of Hysteria. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Engineer-Sapper

**Exotic 4:** Read aloud the name on an altar with a mixture of disgust and skepticism. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, upon fail, the group must follow with actions on Q&D Avoiding Ambuscade and Lairs.

**Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Wizardry Demonic (F)

**Exotic 3:** Organize the men to clear the rubble and produce a proper direct path, no mindless twists and elevation changes. Success and gain a positive Quest Pip. Regardless, this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, upon fail, the group must follow with actions on Q&D Discord in the Ranks. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Skill Slave Driver

**Exotic 2:** Crack open a distinctively carved and craggy vault using the pommel of your blade. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (C), Captured by a Cult. Regardless, group gains a positive Quest Pip. **Difficulty:** 11 **Advantage:** Blade Amalgam (O)

**Exotic Ace:** Half-heartedly suggest that such gilded sites might be avoided. Record the find for a later date or sell that information to some other fool. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. Regardless, the same player selects a second event on this table; his role is not quite done. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Delver

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.

## **COIN-SWORD Underworlds: Mysterious**

These are events that happen, but their cause is not known or fully understood. These will begin as perhaps harmless events, but never seem to completely disappear.

When an event is a mystery, it could be caused by a traitor in the group or internal conspirators. Other times the mystery will come from an external source, like the dwarves. Rightly or wrongly the imps will be blamed. When something other than a dwarf caused the event, the party is heading for a bad surprise.

Discovery of the cause will usually end further incidence; otherwise these events tend to repeat without prompting by further cards. The vastness of the Unending Grey suggests this event will never be understood, continuing to plague the party until the setting advances.

**Rank One – Watchers:** These are shining eyes blinking and growls coming from the darkness. The dwarves, ever present, may be pranking the players. At least, hopefully so. Something is waiting to ambush the group. If the players advance, the watchers will evaporate, mere nerves. Else, the scouts of a larger force of nonhumans will be dispersed by combat. Always, a larger threat looms.

If the group does nothing, a future event will decide whether that was a wise course. More Mysterious events, after this first, are very bad, as are Specials (*CUP-ROD*) and Denizens (*ROD-SWORD*). The rank of those encounters should increase by two. The threat could attack Enraged or with advantages that force everyone to use method Escape. Else, the Phase might advance and nothing adverse follows.

Until then, the guards on watch will often call the group to action, yet no one (or thing) will enter the camp. These events will leave a group tired and irritable. The players should be assessed a minus one Quest penalty, until the mystery is solved.

Sound can play funny tricks; by investigating the players might become lost or travel in the opposite direction by following an echo. Otherwise, a hunt may find the owner of the eyes. Watchers combine with other events to yield the exact cause, or the Referee can feel free to pick any other event as the source.

Using magic here, to say cause the area to be fully lit by sunlight, will solve the mystery. But typically, any failed wizardry use in the Underworld has an increased chance of generating Warped Outcome. Ref decides, perhaps using the same chance for the less than successful results found in each Recitation method.

**Rank Two – Missing Men:** Take a count or assemble for muster to discover some of the servitors are not present. Desertion or intrigue? The bearer slaves are not trapped like oarsmen chained shipboard. The loss is not as morale damaging at first, unless more people go missing.

Most disappearances are usually dismissed as desertion, unless the result follows or amplifies another encounter. The hope is that the person will be located later, safe and apologetic, perhaps at the ship. The players are not the only ones in authority; there are assorted named and unnamed roles of first spear, hierophant, cook and tinker. A rivalry may have been settled, and the body discarded along the way. Tough to be a cook, when someone might gut you over using too much salt?

There may be mixed orders and confusion, and some men may have been legitimately ordered off as runners to take a message back to the ship. The Referee decides the significance of the men lost and what occurred. Just don't tell the players



or it wouldn't be a mystery. The lowest level player character may even awake alone and separated from the group. He must follow with Digression (L), if he cannot display a mix of skills to reunite himself with the party.

**Rank Three – Losses & Thefts:** Most subtle of mysterious events; missing arms might be troop's ineptness or intrigue. A man found dead could be from exposure or sickness, unless his throat is slit? Missing valuables or supplies could signal a warrior is stealing. Valuables might be stashed and left behind, the thief thinking he can reclaim the items (greed blinding him to the danger). Residual magic and evil drives people insane in the Unending Grey.

Combined with other events, this may signal a group of dwarves pursues and steals, often aided by an insider. Someone might be coerced or charmed or just villainous. The players' group is large; the players will not personally know the mindset of all their servitors. Characters who lack Methodical probably are unable to tell one man from another; they see the world as actions not faces.

Else, an impostor infiltrated the force. Someone was killed and replaced by a doppelganger. Only magic might reveal the truth, but any failure here against a magical imposter would cause loss of technique. Some players will want to torture every man. Better choices should prevail.

This loss will be the first of others until all is explained. Stealing? Or worse, some of the troops might be throwing away their equipment and arms rather than carrying the burden. Even slaves might be lessening their loads.

Armor is the first thing discarded, because of the physicality of climbing, crawling, dragging, hoisting, contorting a path through the Underworld. Complacency is also caused by infrequent combat exchanges. Days and weeks go by with nothing to fight (and no encounters to generate). Drilling can help focus the men, but that might lead to grumblers or exhausting of supplies. Men get injured when constantly run through mock battles.

If the group is disordered by a previous event—continues without techniques like Elite Goals (A), Battle Ready (H) or Comradery (P)—a longboat swaggering should be lost each follow-on flip of any Mission Inconsequence encounter. The group's morale remains just to the well side of the disastrous every man for himself. Restore one of those three or slowly winnow away.

**Rank Four – Omens:** These are bad signs, and the troops' superstitions cause events. One of the rank and file might have had a magical mishap he covers. At times men will have similar dreams. Other times, the setting becomes so indecipherable and foreign that men will go insane.

Insect bites bring fever or a general malaise, drowsiness and delirium. The men will think divine forces have directed them to burn, slay and conquer. These events may instead be foul smelling locales that spook and nauseate. Hard men are

accustomed to decaying corpses, but the life in the underworld has its own cycle of nauseating putrefaction. Morale in the party falls to disorder, exhaustion and despair. Lose at least one of these three – Elite Goals (A), Battle Ready (H) or Comradery (P) or their alternates.

**Rank Five – Violent Deaths:** After a respite, muster to find a scout or a guard left on vigilant duty has been silently knifed or strangled. This can be a personal quarrel or portend intrigue. The soldiers will blame dwarves. They will want to grab a few and hang some examples. Does anyone think that's a good idea?

Decide who killed the man and why? Will this be the last? By answering these questions, the Referee has detailed the encounter. The players then must determine from clues and possible motives what to do in response. They will often accuse and punish the wrong person (it's a cruel game).

Local dwarves are not involved, but rival intruders, like goblins may have raided into this domain. These silent impish killers are dangerous, both in their mastery of covert action and their general antipathy for life. If the setting does not advance soon, more will die; more longboat techniques will be lost. Any fight against the culprit will be a significant fight and could also be battle with imposed restrictions. Use those monster banes; restrict Magical and Recitation methods. Add a penalty to Calculated. Any and all might be used as a flair.

**Rank Six – Phantasm:** These are supernatural events that happen to the group, perhaps apparitions or divine prophesy. The players' group receives divine direction to undertake a sub-quest or receives angelic guidance in solving a dilemma. Other times the group will have a vision of their next event. i.e. They have time to prepare or counter, after revealing the next turn of the deck.

Do that thing you do so well – give me that old time underworld crawl mini-game. Have the players use specific skills to open arcane locks, decipher runes, placate lordly demons, connive and conspire their way through a major challenge. The very gods are watching, not always nice gods either.

The Referee decides the exact event. The players often get accustomed to meeting and defeating minor monsters. Let this be lopsided and the path forward will need something more than a numeric superiority in number of swords.

The phantasm itself may also be the dispelled, but only by application of Blade swaggering alone. Some time it is better to be a Pawn than the Knight in the game. The pawn may promote, while the knight is merely an instrument to fork a better piece than die. Chess anyone? Confused anyone?

**Rank Seven – Discoveries:** This is knowledge, which may seem ironic in a category labeled Mysterious. But these are events that at times appear out of setting or have no clear explanation of how the players know the new facts. Following a plot with gaping holes, the players have solved a dilemma or understand a past mystery

without clear justification of the leap in logic that occurred. They still may need to convince their servitors via Q&D Halting Hysteria to trust and deviate from the prime goal (directive).

These can reflect the players now understanding and able to enlist aid from the local dwarves, cure a previous plague or misfortune caused by the setting, avoiding a barrier, ending all shortages by barter or windfall...just some of the options. Many times, this event will seem like an immunity to a specific kind of mishap.

As an extra starting bonus, each player may pick a new swagger and add it to his character. He may not lock anything as Glorious, but the addition is still not random.

Discoveries act like campaign events inside the Unending Grey. e.g. Discover that the dwarves hate a ruling demon and know how the players might banish the thing. This event might also signify the group has traveled many miles further than expected or faster than expected. They are now acclimated and at peace in the surroundings.

This event can be saved as a *Get Out of Jail Free* card or immediately traded as plus three Quest Pip. Prevent one future mishap that will occur this setting or gain a good increase to all endeavors?

Are all of these events good? Probably, but the Ref is not ever bound by rule-law. Enjoy the prosperity while it lasts.

Consider that there must be a way that delver companies manage to thrive. The underworld miners do lose members – boy do they ever. But the overall profit of their expeditions is high. The players now know what local delvers know. They may have an alliance with local dwarves or the demon of this realm. Oh yes, that may be something the delvers may not like; delvers do not share.

So, yes, good things here in the setting but make an enemy of some delvers in the years ahead. Trade secrets are always something people kill to keep from being



revealed. The real mystery may be who now hates the players in the world above? Not all delvers walk around with nametags labeled underworld explorer. Vox Illuminati? Too obvious or not.

## Q&D Halting the Spread of Hysteria

**Mysterious King:** Roust the men back to fighting form with a reverberating howl. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Swagger Battle Cry (A)

**Mysterious Queen:** Start an uproarious chant and get the rest to join in, making-up their own verses. Success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Rabblrouser

**Mysterious Knight:** Command the men to formation, though no immediate danger presents itself. The party will proceed as if in short file, combat march order. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Man-at-Arms

**Mysterious Knave:** Pick a demoralized man up off the floor and encourage him to rally or be left to die. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Resulting event for the increase is optional, but the tally still grows. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Trait Energetic

**Mysterious 10:** Grab and manhandle the men, placing them back in formation two at a time. Fail and increase your Warped Outcome tally by a half D8. Suffer the event that occurs. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Wizardry Demigod (A)

**Mysterious 9:** Keep the party from stuffing themselves and their packs with food and treasure; the find is an obvious deception. Fail and lose any longboat techniques, which the group detailed and brought with them below ground. If the party has no remaining detachment, player suffers a vicious. If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, Longboat gains Treasure Laden (D). Still might be a danger lurking, but the cache is real. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Wizardry Paralysis (Q)

**Mysterious 8:** Restrain and muffle a man who is whimpering uncontrollably. Optional, fail and suffer a vicious wound. If roll is refused, party automatically enters combat with a Magical Bane. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, roll is no longer optional, and Difficulty raises by six. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Blade Meshed (Q)

**Mysterious 7:** Delay to respectfully cremate the body of a fallen hero, though many find the action unwise and ill-timed. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, follow with combat.



The smoke and ceremony attracts a beastly denizen. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Longboat Religiously Inspired (C)

**Mysterious 6:** Calm the crew's worries by producing a map of the region, which shows the path forward is anodyne in comparison; proclaim the worst is behind. Fail and encounter escalates into combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. If the rank of the event is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, success and this encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Forger

**Mysterious 5:** Stop the men from bickering and accusing each other of larceny. Push two sides apart and blame the dwarves; a guess, but an accurate one perhaps. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. If the rank of the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, the failed result creates not party on party violence, but attracts a very sobering monster as the enemy. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Swagger Effective Spurning (H)

**Mysterious 4:** Keep a couple of men from going out to look for a friend who failed to return from morning ablution. Fail and drained of one wizardry technique. If the player has no magic, suffer a vicious. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, fail also results in the loss of one Longboat swaggering brought with the expedition. Many join the hunt and do not return. If there are no techniques to lose, the selecting player takes a vicious wound instead. Yes, he could end up with a pair of vicious and be possibly outright slain. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Brawler

**Mysterious 3:** By Thor's or Grabthar's hammer, promise you will never betray or fail your underlings. Fail and suffer a minus one (Galaxy) Quest Pip going forward. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter ends. (Unless anyone laughs at the reference, then fight a rock creature.) **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Blade Heirloom (I)

**Mysterious 2:** Rush ahead, hollering and leaving a clear trail to follow. Yet the party knows to keep on an alternate path. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (F), Evading in the Underworld. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Berserker

**Mysterious Ace:** Drag down a soldier unresponsive to commands; keep him from revealing the group's position. Fail and encounter escalates into combat. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Swagger Wrestling Holds (T)

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.

## **SWORD-SWORD Underworlds: Servitors**

These are mishaps and disagreements between the player characters, as leaders, and the rest of the troops. If the players reach a desperate state, where they are traveling nearly alone, treat this category as *COIN-SWORD*, Mysterious. If the various servitor



cooks, tinkers, priests and sergeant Heerth or Hafna have yet to be named, they are considered part of the soldiers for this disagreement with the players.

All warriors in the Unending Grey serve solely for loot. Clan ties and loyalty vows will literally seem a world away. The obligations of the surface are too remote, and the hardships here too real for anyone to fear a later criminal charge. Might makes right; these are a place with no law.

Do not worry about the social clout of the leader. The men will want the best and bravest to be in charge. If that is not the prime player commander, then the warriors will constantly support another to take the role. When times get bad, servitors will want to leave or find a new leader who will order them as they are inclined. As these events occur, regardless of severity, the soldiers will want to abandon the mission and return to the ship. The only thing that can hold their resolve is treasure and the promise of more treasure.

If the players have exhausted their servants and have no Longboat techniques with them below in the party, treat these results as *CUP-SWORD*, Dwarves. Or apply the outcome directly to the player characters. The Q&D accompanying the tables will have some PvP then. Ref decides.

**Rank One – Exhaustion:** This represents complaints from the men about the length of the trek and the utter futility in continuing. The group may have been wandering only to circle back on a spot they already crossed. The troops might ask to be given a day (or two) for rest. This may even solve the problem, but more often the soldiers will only continue if more of their burden is shifted over to slaves. The slaves are near death from overwork.

The trip is seldom a straight line walk on an even path. In the chaos of up-down, over-under, with little action of arms, the soldiers will remove their armor, hand off their shields, unbuckle their sword belts and free their hands of any burden; everything gets tossed to the slaves. *“He’s my shield bearer.”*

Any true combat could leave the group first needing a successful event to establish readiness. If taken by surprise, by another encounter, the soldiers may be caught pants down, unarmed, surrendering. Even welcoming becoming prisoners to any human who would take them out of this place, even in chains.

**Rank Two – Hunger:** The troops complain. The cook has convinced them that he’s not to blame. add a named grumbler as the expedition’s provisioner. The meat has spoiled, and anything hunted will be gamy and strange of taste. The cook

may have no idea how to properly and safely prepare the exotic fare being foraged or carved from the last kill.

If the players already had a shortage or provision mishap, treat this as major loss from starvation; attrition tests every longboat technique in the party. Otherwise, this complaint will compound other events, making desertion or rebellion more likely.

The troops might secretly leave the group to steal from dwarves, as if that fare is anything but an illusion. Yet future encounters of Dwarves are more likely to be hostile. Not from the theft, but from whatever else might have taken place. The ways of the imps are strange. Their rules of human desecration are incomprehensible or completely random. Boundaries have been violated.

**Rank Three – Parched Throat:** The party indulges a bit too heavily in drinking. The troops witness the double standard and will grumble about their own sobriety as the leaders freely intoxicate. The group often has consumed the last of the rum rations.

The dwarves may have spiked the water or offered potions to the greedy or naïve. No matter how much is drank, no one is satisfied. Each person suffers through a small hang-over of Shaken. The Referee may assess further penalties for those who are not Rugged (of heart). Personal swaggering and Blade techniques may be temporarily lost.

Any combat penalty will only last for the next event. This encounter combines with the next event to put the players at a minor disadvantage fighting or mitigating problems inside the group.

Yet if it repeats, the party is instead out of water and must abandon the quest. Unless, water can be magically conjured or drawn from the stones. Such alterations are dangerous and could cause major cave-in or surely a Warped Outcome when done in the vile Underworld.

**Rank Four – Disarray:** The troops become unruly. Suffer a minus one Quest Pip. Often the troops have faced such pitiful adversaries—perhaps in battles that weren't worthy enough to spark encounters—that they feel invincible and refuse to drill and practice the proper upkeep on their arms. They have spread out and hunt for riches in small groups. They think the quest is a waste of time. They are spoiling for a real fight. The excavation work of clearing a path is seen as drudgery. Discipline must be restored, or further events will cause rebellion or the routing of the party.

If the group's morale is low, the troops are wallowing in self-pity. Giving the men rum to drink, allowing them to rest, and offering time to celebrate with games, might improve morale or backfire as the group is helpless when the next encounter proves to be too much for the blurry eyed company. The Referee decides based on the next event.

**Rank Five – Ultimatum:** The men seek justice, food, ale and pay. Starts as complaints, then continues with disorder, desertion and threats. This will just be a single soldier mouthing-off or acting-out if morale to date is good. A force that has collected treasure, been victorious, and shows high morale, may even ignore this first event. An elite group will never spontaneously rebel; instead they are no longer elite.

A militant sergeant Heerth or Hafna will gladly conduct a whipping or execution. Give this new disciplinarian a name. Such punishment restores order, at least outwardly. But if this expedition is weakened by past events, follow with a full scale combat brawl for command. The Ref might split the servitors down the middle as divided techniques; one side may be just the slaves and other captives. The leading prime player character and his loyal supporters on one side face the rest.

If one round of Q&D Discord proves inconsequential, then go to combat. A number equal to the players must be defeated in by Brash or Irregular Method to restore command authority. Else, immediately scratch off half the longboat techniques, split the party and get back to the business of travel with what remains.

The affair usually does not end. A placated rebellion will continue the rest of the setting Phase with acts of disobedience and intrigue. What happened to morale? If this setting has been abominable, the answer is obvious. Otherwise, something was a touchstone and trouble flares without warning or from player character neglect. The Underworld is all too distracting. Once the men move to the next setting or the climax, loyalty should recover. Ref may decide otherwise by adding one or more grumbling NPCs to the party.

**Rank Six – Abject Misery:** The troop's morale is shattered. They are no longer an effective fighting force. If sent into battle, they will be at best fodder. The slaves of the group will often take this as an opportunity to drop what their holding and flee.

A combination of illness, equipment disrepair and growing anxiety has left the soldiers unable to stomach further adventure. Even if punished the men will collapse sobbing. Many events can cause a dramatic change – insects, hunger, floods, curses, cold snaps, broken marching paths, a certain soldier's death, an omen, a dream, a visit by a cult soothsayer, news from home, loss of a mascot, etc. Past bad events accumulate here with the expedition fully disbanding. Perhaps one event on Q&D Discord with a slim hope for continuance.

The players may retire the victims and start anew with fresh reserves from their ship. Yet the idea that the commander would rout his soldiers, and simply try again will start the second (or third) attempt leads to higher starting anxiety, hopelessness and sense of defeat. There had better be incentive in the form of treasure. If the setting's phase does not end within a half D8 events, this encounter

again and again repeats. Fear is a virus that spreads, even to the player characters with loss of Traits.

If the party doesn't have Treasure Laden (D) to expend, there may not be an alternative to giving up. To press on much further with no such reward or respite would put the ship into mutiny as well. The smart choice may be quit to the Epilog. The next mission brings recovery.

The soldiers of the shattered force act like conscript rabble, pressed slaves and will be no better anytime in this adventure. Without soldiers (servitors), the climax had better be resolved exclusively with personal duels. Otherwise, skirmish and ship actions are a futile endeavor.

**Rank Seven – Murders & Madness:** This is a challenge for command. A party with good morale can still suffer this event, though rarely. A heated argument, usually religious or drunken, provokes a dueling challenge. A sergeant Heerth or Hafna may be ambitious and demand a duel. A noble fop or ambitious raider might arrive from the ship to demand a leadership change. The usurper will want to go back home; many agree with him.

For small groups, treat this event as morale causing most of the servitors to desert. If the sergeant Heerth or Hafna is an NPC on extremely good terms with the player as leader, he will offer a compromise – divide the force and split the company. *“I go north where the dwarves say there's more gold to be had.”*

## Q&D Discord in the Ranks

**Servitors King:** Decapitate the leader of a small faction advocating retreat. Success and this encounter ends, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Skill Duelist

**Servitors Queen:** With random deaths at nearly every bend, select a time when you can get away with murdering the group's chief grumbler. Fail and lose one swaggering technique. Neither the Longboat nor Mount may be selected. If the player has no others, suffer a vicious. Regardless, encounter ends. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Bowman

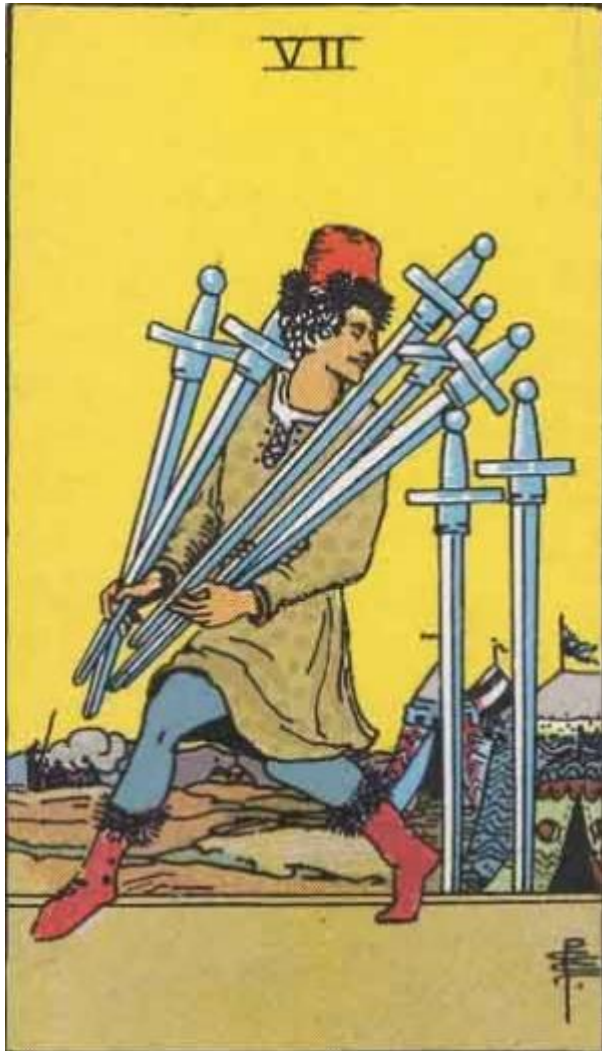
**Servitors Knight:** Humiliate a complainer, cowering him into hushing or cutting out his spiteful tongue. Fail and lose any longboat techniques, which the group detailed and brought with them below ground. If the party has no remaining detachment, player suffers a vicious. **Difficulty:** 5 **Advantage:** Skill Pugilist

**Servitors Knave:** Hang back with the elected everyman, the voice of the servitors; persuade him that there's more to be gained in promoting unity. Fail and suffer a vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Briber

**Servitors 10:** Stop a man from making an injudicious mistake, which will be his last. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat. **Difficulty:** 8

**Advantage:** Swagger Seize Swordarm (Q)

**Servitors 9:** Let the biggest naysayer within the group, take his best shot (at you). Success and this encounter ends as he balks, but fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward when he obeys (and you sidestep). If the rank of the event is Rare (seven) or Catch-All, regardless, encounter escalates into intramural combat.



**Difficulty:** 7 **Advantage:** Trait Rugged

**Servitors 8:** Sit by a roaring fire and praise the men one by one, letting each know how much his clan is venerated by his actions. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Flukes (six) or Catch-All, upon failure start a clan rivalry, which results in the party core disbanding in disappointment; all longboat techniques are lost in the group below ground. **Difficulty:** 8 **Advantage:** Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)

**Servitors 7:** Some cynic tried to murder you as you slept or ate. Success and this encounter ends. If the rank of the event is Agitated (five) or Catch-All, a failed result also causes the player character a vicious wound. **Difficulty:** 9 **Advantage:** Swagger Disarming Blow (F)

**Servitors 6:** Staving off fatigue, pack away the heavier arms and armor, letting each many carry a simple spear, one which moreover tactically fits the terrain. Fail and suffer a vicious wound, as someone does not want to surrender over his heirloom blade? If the rank of the event

is Infrequent (four) or Catch-All, a failed roll also means the player character loses one swaggering technique. If he has none to lose, he is slain (for his ludicrous idea).

**Difficulty:** 6 **Advantage:** Skill Armorer-Smithy

**Servitors 5:** Swiftly deal with a man found drunk on duty. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start with a Brash Bane. If the rank of



the event is Informational (three) or Catch-All, all players must attempt this roll.

**Difficulty: 8 Advantage:** Swagger Hilt Punch (L)

**Servitors 4:** Refute the claim that the warriors, as stronger men, have a right to eat before the rest. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. If the rank of the event is Common (two) or Catch-All, regardless, lose one Longboat technique brought with you on the expedition. If there are none, lowest level player character takes a vicious wound. **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Blade Eminent (E)

**Servitors 3:** Remind the men of your oaths, chief of which is death before dishonor. Fail and encounter escalates into intramural combat; players must start battle at method Irregular. If the rank of the event is Routine (one) or Catch-All, the combat only lasts one round, but every player must suffer an Irregular Bane.

**Difficulty: 11 Advantage:** Longboat Elite Goals (A)

**Servitors 2:** Quietly deal with a worrywart in the party. Fail and continue your survival on Digression (P), Prisoner in Transit. (The man was a significant agent of the rival, all along.) **Difficulty: 9 Advantage:** Swagger Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S)

**Servitors Ace:** Use your lash; the younger warriors must learn some respect. Fail and suffer a minus one Quest pip going forward. **Difficulty: 7 Advantage:** Skill Tormentor

**Majors:** Use the table under Underworlds *CUP-CUP*.

## Examples of Personal Events

These are by no means an exhaustive list. Understand the event should be something described, and the outcome then is interpreted by the Referee with player input. Events will cross types; the suits are provided merely as a creative aid. A Personal Event is not (for instance) "*Gain Sapper skill.*" An event is "*Volunteer to join the diggers in the trenches*" – from this, the Referee may assess the player character gains Sapper, but not always.

Mundane results are possible; events occur which have no result in terms of game mechanics. As you read the examples, understand how a similar event might change outcome in different card suits. So mundane events might shield the character from even worse outcomes of later Personal Events. Wearing a funny hat is far better than buying a new hat, one which obstructs your right side vision or causes a character to lose Energetic out of fear for his lucky hat falling off.

Take a moment before each game session and write out a few ideas. Create simple chance meetings, act of kindness and dedication to tasks, which produce the

opportunity to gain skills (plenty of those), swaggering and traits. What can be gained might also be lost by neglect, disservice, injury, attitude, prejudice, superstition and spite.

Life decisions can change personality, the way a character is role-played. Personality Flaws can be gained in play and then removed by Personal Events. Adding a dice roll is optional. A character's history might make him stingy, distrustful, envious, arrogant, reckless, driven, pious, disrespectful of authority, risk averse, etc.

The events can add nicknames, erase debts and end past scores, basically accomplish secondary objectives, which might otherwise require dedicated outcomes in Down Time between adventures.

The simplest of all Personal Events is *“after a fine broth, you feel fully healed.”* Restoring a wound should not be routine, but it will happen. You might also give an extra make-roll or a boon of the Catbird Seat at the start of the next battle. Add a dice roll to ensure the outcome or on failure generate a hazard. Likewise, a decision here might be regretted and some mending will need to take place in the party to prevent role-play hostility. *“Sir, did you spit on my boots?”*

The tables are presented with events followed sometimes by possible outcomes in parenthesis ( ). The events are in no order and numbered just because I often found myself asking a player to pick a number between  $x$  and  $y$ .

Some of the examples are specialized to certain settings. A good practice is to start at the top of a list. Perhaps with the player to the right of the Referee. Each time an event is needed, use the next one that appears. Keep going until the Ref has assembled a new set wholly his own. Before the digital advent of the game, I crossed them out of my copy of the book.

## **Personal Events Cups – Traits, Skills, Swaggering, Decisions**

001 – Observe the nature of man; you now understand what makes men unite or flee. (Gain Bold trait.) All the traits might be gained or lost in Personal Events.

002 – Take a lesson from the more devious on how to survive and thrive. (Gain the strategic benefits of the Clever trait, usable in the remainder of this mission.) Rewarding short term use of Traits or swaggering is another way to add events into play.

003 – Someone teaches you how to read and write in another language. (Gain Greek.) Any skill or language be gained or lost in a Personal Event.

004 – Listen to the stories of a widely traveled foreign gentleman. (He teaches you his foreign language.)

005 – Pay a warrior to teach you how to aim and shoot a crossbow. (Gain Man-at-arms skills in exchange for your purse of coins.) Advantages can be balanced with losses.

006 – Practice your swordsmanship and develop a special attack style. (Gain Irregular Tricks (M), the swaggering technique.) As with broader skills, every swaggering ability might be gained or lost inside a Personal Event.

007 – Suffer long hours of apathy and poverty without proper paper to practice upon. (Lose Forger skill.)

008 – Cut your hand and must develop a new grip for your blade. (Lose all your Blade techniques for the remainder of scenario.) Short term losses and changes in personality are always possible.

009 – Strong labor and steady meals—both for the first time in your life—make you rely on brawn rather than speed. (Swap two traits by gaining Rugged, but losing Gifted.)

010 – Use instinct more and more to survive. (Lose a combat skill, but gain Energetic Trait.)

011 – Receive a personal message to return home at once for a family matter of concern. Do you? (Switch to an alternate role; stay and lose standing in your clan.)

012 – Steal from the crew. (Fill an empty purse, check an Ignoble, but risk discovery or disgruntled servitors.)

013 – Give up your noble pride of leading from the rear and seek to understand the craft of arms. (Trade and lose any trait for four combat skills.)

014 – Observe another player character at work. (He teaches you one of his skills.)

015 – Start to learn how to bare-hand fight, but suffer a pair of bruised knuckles; do you continue? (Take vicious wound to gain a combat skill.)

016 – Instead of speed and raw talent, you dedicate yourself to refined attack. (Lose the Brawler skill, but gain a half D8 Blade swaggering techniques.)

017 – Have four nights in a row with the same dream, a ray lighting an altar. (Decide to find this place.) Personal quests are very good and can be added right into the mission. An extra climax challenge is typically needed to resolve the secondary quest.

018 – Watch a sick comrade die and decide at first opportunity to enter university to study medicine. (Check Growth and once you go up a level, the next skill you take should be Barber.)

019 – After watching the cruelty toward slaves on a work team, you decide never to hold another as property. (Never choose Slave Driver as a skill for the character, and further hold prejudice against others so skilled.) Hating a fellow player character is not the same as hating the player. Just be careful the players understand this, else your group might fragment. Gamers are prickly people.

020 – See another person gamble and lose all of his pay. (Decide never to wager with coins; challenges are still possible, but never for purely monetary reasons.) Should events say otherwise, the Ref must decide to change that event or call for a momentary lapse of reason.

021 – Spurned by a lover and swear never to seek the company of a woman again. (Immune to seduction and other such events, but also never will marry.)

022 – Talk to a tavern owner and find he needs money; he offers to sell you part of his inn. (An honest request and chance for the player to invest. But if the keeper is having trouble now, more than likely he'll lose the player character's purse.) These can also be ploys, which cause further plots or changes in personality.

023 – A dying soldier asks you to hear his last confession. (He bequeaths you the land he has been slowly purchasing for his retirement. The deed may not hold up in court.)

## **Personal Events Rods – Heroic Deeds, Extra Duties**

001 -- There's a building on fire. Children in the second story window are calling for help. (The Referee moderates based on player's actions.) Use a system of what-ifs; these come together into a mini story-plot as all pieces of puzzle are placed.

These events are usually prepared and listed at a convenient time. But if not, then quickly jot down some solutions or mishaps like those listed in *A-F*. The player usually selects his action, then the Ref looks to see if the result made his list. After you use up this one, maybe task another player in the group to create another wholly new one. *“And, drop it in the spacegamer.com forum for other Refs, like myself, to have.”*

Truth Table *A-F* of outcomes for event #001:

*A.* Should player climb the wall, he saves the children. He is honored by a local lord as a hero. The noble's praise seems superficial.

*B.* Yell to the children to jump. When all three do so at once, you catch only two. The third is crippled in the fall. Deed has mixed results and could haunt the player character for years to come. The player might not be able to use his Bold trait in Phase A of any adventure.

*C.* Rush into the house, but you are overcome by smoke and must retreat. All three children die. It's not your fault, but you take the loss personally and suffer a fear of fire. The player and Ref decide to what degree this fear penalizes him during future events.

*D.* Call for help from the party, but only one other player character comes to your aid. Were the rest out of earshot or not taking you seriously? The children are saved, but you're suspicious or angry at your other teammates.

*E.* Recruit some aid from locals to get a ladder or form a bucket brigade, and the people begrudgingly do so. Fear is noted in their eyes, and the area's constables are not to be found. All the children die in the blaze.

*F.* Go to the rear of the building and see two men, one holding a torch, both running away; these are servitors from the local lord, sent to burn the house and murder a gentleman agitator. He is away, but his wife and three kids are inside.

002 – Leader is looking for volunteers to scout ahead. (The skies the limit on this one: meet thieves, find forage, see suspicious activity, next encounter happens to this player character alone, etc.)



003 – Someone suggests splitting the shore party. Go ahead to set-up camp down the road, while the rest escorts the slower supply wagons. (Another open-ended event with action for the player either leading the forward team or staying with the rear group.)

004 – Leader sends the player and a few servitors into port to purchase more supplies. (Much can happen with brawls, thefts, loss of money, stop to drink, buy wrong goods, hire soldiers instead, etc. Give the player one or two events to mitigate between himself and his men, or in situations involving his group and an outside opponent.)

005 – Acquire a liking for the taste of boiled chicken. (Purely mundane.)

006 – Listen to the stories of a widely traveled foreign gentleman. (Mundane.)

007 – Grow a mustache. (Mundane, but you won't have another event about growing yet another.)

008 – Develop a personality quirk of squinting, while talking to other characters. (Mundane and harmless.)

009 – Save a man's life. He is a clerk in a noble's court and offers you a job as his protégé. (Drop from this mission by accepting. You could make enemies at the court, but you also raise in social standing, gaining a friend.)

010 – Deeds and duties, of course, can produce the opportunity to gain skills, swaggering and traits. Dereliction and cowardice might just as well allow something to atrophy and be lost.

011 – The drudgery between events is filled with life experiences that may culminate as a Personal Event to be judged here. The player may decide he's grown and will push his character through role-play into new experiences.

These are not just Ignoble checks, but future conduct and manners like becoming gallant, crusading, opinionated, patriotic, impulsive, serene, lusty, adventuresome, having wanderlust, blood thirst, viciousness, etc. Aspects like those tend to get you killed in the combat cards, but they're also fun in a *I press my luck* sort of way.

These character personality *switches* may *turn on and off* as the character experiences a significant emotional event. Seeing the wounded does what? Seeing poverty does what? Seeing opulence does what? The lives of others, not his own, will make a character change in unpredictable ways. Allow the player to help select the new motivations, rather than foist a difficult role upon him. *“I don’t want to be a blowhard.”*

Some characters will change into alternate roles or even NPCs, heading into lesser roles. Some will move from the play of one player to the alternate pile of another player. Yet be careful not to take away someone’s special familiar or erase hundreds of hours of glorious game play without full permission.

## **Personal Events Coins – Loss, Injury, Discovery, Friends and Enemies**

001 – Fall down a set of stairs. (You’re uninjured, but you break your shield.)

002 – Race another in the group over rocky-broken ground to a crossroad and back. (Win race and a silver penny, but horse goes lame and must be rested for the remainder of the mission.)

003 – Enjoy the good life of drinking morning, noon and night. (Create a dependency on rum. You must have alcohol or suffer penalties on using skills. Yet too much—in morning hangover and by the end of each day—causes penalties as well. Player and the Referee apply as agreed.)

004 – Grow a mustache. (It looks terrible; lose Courtly Grace skill, until you decide to shave it off, on perhaps your next Personal Event.)

005 – Listen to the stories of a widely traveled foreign gentleman. (Secretly discover he is a fugitive from another land.) This need not be fully resolved here. Some Personal Events, like any event, lay dormant until added back into play much later.

006 – Start to learn how to bare-hand fight, but suffer a pair of bruised knuckles; do you continue? (Fully break your hand on the next blow; lose Acrobat skill permanently.)

007 – Start to learn how to bare-hand fight, but suffer a pair of bruised knuckles; do you continue? (Later knocked out, but the man you faced marvels at your determination. You have made a friend of the ship’s Heerth or Hafna.)

008 – Learning from friends and enemies too presents experiences to gain skills, swaggering and traits. Abilities might also disappear from the character sheet following injures saving friends or battling enemies.

009 – Hatred and loss are powerful motivation, but they also cause fanaticism and single-mindedness. A womanly friend might get a player to temper his passion for revenge or calm a madness from which he suffers. Magic and Warped Outcome are also possible. Use friends to get the players into trouble. Use enemies to get the players into trouble. With each friend and enemy, there might come a flaw.

Only after the friend's help is used-up, his favor repaid or washed clean, else as the enemy is defeated, will the negative aspect fade. A friend might also help someone beat addiction to spirits, gambling, trollops, carnage. The friend might also enflame those desires.

Personal Events may be flashbacks. Memories played out about lovers, family, old ship mates, soldiers...these may not be happening in the here and now. Yet the Personal Event relived can change the attitudes of the character here after. *“That old crone, reminded me of an aunt. She taught me why I hate the Rus.”*

## **Personal Events Swords – Brawls, Duels, Ill-advised Actions, Mishaps**

001 – Two constables are brawling with four locals – a fist fight with Irregular method for attack. (The player enters fight, then many things can happen: he can injure someone, become arrested, lose something, make an enemy or friend, etc.) This infrequently checks an Ignoble, since the level of the men in the brawl might not be enough for battle or heroics.

002 – Player slips while carrying his drink and spills it all over another person. Local gentleman-adventurer challenges the player to a duel or admit to the whole bar that he, the player character, is a clumsy dolt. (Sounds like a personal duel using swaggering, now or the next day with this NPC navita.) A navita is a sailor from Roman era. By more fully describing the NPC or environment, the Personal Duel has both extra story element and extra campaign significance. Have the other players also suggest or describe the background and focal point details. Use the internet.

003 – While at port, lose temper and push a servitor overboard. Now what? (Swim to save the man, a duel with his buddy, apologize to him as he climbs back aboard, trial for manslaughter, keep your mouth shut and mark it down as another mysterious event.)

004 – Start to learn how to bare-hand fight but suffer a pair of bruised knuckles. Do you continue? (Lose temper, draw a knife and wound the man. More action follows.) This event had other outcomes in other suits; nothing is ever certain. The Ref may just as easily use the *Rod* Personal Event here, but why not allow the deck to steer most action?

005 – Listen to the stories of a widely traveled foreign gentleman. (He is later found conspiring to mutiny. You are accused by loyalists in the crew of plotting with this mutineer. Much might follow, including the event become a self-fulfilling prophesy.)

006 – While practicing recitation, an explosion results. Who dies? Was it an accident or a new talent? (Might receive a vicious wound or lose a hand. The longboat is damaged, and some servitors are maimed.)

007 – Fall from your horse and become skittish of riding. (Lose your Mount techniques for one adventure.) When many players are in the party, and the events are rotated among them. That means a Personal Event for any one of them is less likely. Regular group encounters are a perfectly fine place to correct problems that begin in a Personal Event.

008 – After a battle, sight one of the opponents riding off. Quick jump on a horse and gallop in pursuit. (Overtake and grapple him to the ground – fight a personal duel. Otherwise, possibly sober up and find yourself separated from the party.) Personal Events might follow with Digressions. The whole group should not have to sit idle while one player heads off on a sidebar mission. If a situation is lengthy and Digressions won't suffice, save the result for a separate mission. Don't concern yourself too much with the time-dilation. The next mission might start from the same point after this one is done. Or, let the character will stop here and wait on-hold. Grabs an alternate role to continue. The rest come back in alternate roles to play this other quest.

009 – While not paying heed to the forward direction, pass under the low bow of a tree and knocked from your horse. Revive after a state of delirium. In who's care and for how long? (Other players left you at a prioress. Drop from the mission, but character learns to speak an extra language during his stay.) A character might have children out of wedlock, join in marriage, increase his social standing, change his life forever. The events in between, while his comrades are off elsewhere, need not be

detailed. The main result or outcome has merits, the causes less so. Digressions aren't the only way to catch-up. Memory loss might result, and unknown events might haunt the player. Magic allows time to be other than linear.



010 – Is there anything better than a fight to gain experience. Personal duels might gain a special enhancement during a Personal Event. The player might select a card, even a Bane. Yet where normally a combat event and Advantage is only gained by being a Swaggering Technique, not so for this quirk encounter. When a player lacks a skill, even a trait, he might find he gains the same by success on the roll. A nice time to use a saved make-roll. If the advantage is already his, then in this one special instance, he better not fail the roll and suffer a loss. The combat is a trial before the gods.

011 – The very nature of ill-advised action means the character might act out or change in character. Buzzwords, personality quirks, irrational beliefs, all the things we modern players hold dear might be denounced by his character. If a player is uncomfortable, he might decide to toss the sheet to another. The players may even barter, trading characters like ball cards.

## Personal Events at Sea (Cups)

001 – To break the monotony, the ship's hierophant asks the player if he may teach some of the crew lessons on reading. (He is a cultist and will corrupt the minds of many with his teachings.)

002 – Older master takes a liking to you as a son. (Teaches the character his skills, at least some. Skills depend on which master is involved.)



003 – See a crewman carving his initials into the ship’s rail. (Player decides next action.)

004 – Crewman spits in character’s face; he claims by accident. (Player decides next action.)

005 – Trip is so dull that the player debates whether he will ever make a sea voyage again. (Player decides his actions, but how could he stay away long. Maybe one scenario must be totally on land, or he’ll be Shaken on adventure. he will be the first to go ashore with any foraging or exploration party.)

006 – Asked by another master to borrow some coins to gamble. (He will lose them and forget he even borrowed the money.)

007 – Sight a pickpocket in the crew. (Player decides next action. Could be even, *“Teach me to do that.”*)

008 – Become interested in numbers, cargo and coins. (Player decides next action. Could be used as Growth Ignoble and commit the player to select Steward as his next skill upon advancement.) Using the Growth Ignoble to make the player choose a life path is a fine way to focus play on not just advancement but building a story arc.

009 – Release a few slaves and train them to be mariners. (This will make friends and enemies.) Since servitors may also be punished on the oars, maybe the men were always free and were forgotten until the player recognizes their plight.

## **Personal Events at Sea (Rods)**

001 – Sight a man overboard. (Dive in, but player was mistaken.)

002 – Rip your shirt to shreds. (Mundane or sunburn?)

003 – Write a heroic ode of your travels, adding other tales to round out the adventures. (Character becomes famous, but resented by the men whose tales were co-opted.)

004 – Acquire a tattoo. (Perhaps mundane, but in fact something that resembles a notorious brand of a cabal, the Freemason octopus, Grey One’s skull and

hourglass.) In some cultures, the entire history of a person is scribed on his skin. That includes clan ties, affiliations, victories, prejudices, etc.

005 – Given a nickname that seems to follow wherever the player goes. (Let the other players decide name – good, bad or stupid.)

006 – Commander asks for a volunteer to climb the mainmast and unfurl a twisted sheet. (Mundane, but the crew may like the bravery of the player.)

007 – Hear wild stories of exotic lands from a drunken seaman. (He’s seen the Unending Grey but can offer little about finding such riches again.)

008 – Commander asks for a volunteer to row ahead and check the depth of the channel. (The boat will suffer mishap in the high surf.)

009 – First Optio, master of warriors, asks for you to join them ashore at an isle or port to secure or forage supplies. (Player decides next action.)

010 – Provisioner aboard asks the player to check his accounting of the supplies. (If the character is not of the right skills, like Steward, he will show his faults and embarrass himself. If he waves off he request to disguise his limitation, the NPC may see that and embezzle.)

011 – Get sick on spoiled meat and heave violently, but you’re getting accustomed to it. (Mundane.)

012 – Rescue a fellow crewman trapped and hanging in the rigging. (Crew admires the player character and will respect and trust any of his decisions for the remainder of the voyage. The prime player commander or Second Cohors of the sailors becomes envious of this allegiance.)

013 – Frustrated by the shortages, you take it upon yourself to go ashore and collect three barrels of untainted water. Or did the character just magically make the brew. (Left stranded and in Digressions (N), lost in unfamiliar lands. Else, wounded, find treasure, meet a castaway, find a buried body, bring back disease, lose all your effort as the tide rises on a beach, etc.) Taleworthy experiences need not be epic for low level. Small mishaps, ones survived, are always nice. Yet, Digressions may never be used to check Ignobles, just an iron-clad rule.

014 – Accidentally start a fire, while below deck with a candle. The mistake is easily put out, but it's seen by another crewman known to hold a grudge. (If the player doesn't panic and try to silence the man, the grumbler will report the player's heroics to the prime player character and little will come of this.) Note: Viking longboats were shallow draft, but the game needs a bit more three-dimensional movement and long corridors for true functionality. So, the longboat has more of a trireme layout with at least three decks: Hold (ballast), Rowers stations and Main (battle) deck. Likewise, the ship historically has one mast, but in a fantasy world it probably has at least an extra jib if not a three mast construction. Stated and buried here for the record and to be quickly forgotten. Things work as they should in fiction. So yes, below deck might be a crawlspace, but when needed it's an auditorium (to fit in all the cinematic cameras and swinging sword stunt work). Hopefully that never needed to be said.

015 – Macramé a fine belt for yourself. (One day will stop a dagger thrust to the guts.)

016 – Etch a picture on your knife handle. (Mundane, but notice how this knife can become a marker for the player's identity. "*We look for a man with sea horses on his hilt.*")

## **Personal Events at Sea (Coins)**

001 – Sing a rowdy song all night. (Lose voice for next encounter.)

002 – Fall in love or admire someone greatly. If a female passenger or officer shield maiden is not aboard, this can happen on a port call or with the historic alternative. (Player decides next action.)

003 – Discover a friend or enemy is impressed in the crew as a slave. (Player decides next action.)

004 – Impressed rower dies. He claimed to be a lord, and the player was the only one who played along with this delusion, calling him "*sir*" and helping feed him extra rations as able. The lord wills all his lands to the player. (Where are they? Is this true? How can the player prove his claim? A good sleeper like this deserves a worthy lucky break. "*I am the heir to the Earl of Kirov.*")

005 – Primus offers to teach you how to truly fight from various positions on the ship. Accept? (Always gain Fury Pip at the start of any battle aboard.) If too

much is given away, the game becomes dull. So maybe that advantage only lasts until the ship is overhauled and reconfigured in a half D8 adventures. Regardless, a character sheet should store lots of information and much of it should be coming back into play. Remember to mark all your Ignobles; for these will create encounters.

006 – Notice another master has a document inside his coat pocket. (The map to his cache, secret third party orders, letters of credit, personal log, privy paper – Ref decides which?)

007 – Discover a blackmail fact about another crewman or player character. (Player decides next action.)

008 – Bitten by a rat. (Develop a phobia of such creatures, catch a plague, or enjoy a meal of fresh meat. Ref decides.)

009 – Get sick on spoiled meat and heave violently. (Suffer a vicious wound.)

010 – Catch a crewman asleep at his watch, but you do not report the deed – *“We’ve all been working hard.”* The man pledges an oath, a blood pact, of friendship and brotherhood. (Keep the man close—name him—fate decrees he will take the character’s next vicious wound.) Around my gaming table we call such a man, with true respect, Tony. Many a *Tony* has come and gone in play.

011 – Find the commander’s cabin is unlocked. Enter? (Discover an open log book and start to read that commander confides he has been stealing from the crew. Evidence in hand, now what?) A cabin? Yes, some liberty is taken. Viking ships were more communal but having a tent or lean-to seems ludicrous aboard. So, to add some mystery and separation for intrigue, the prime player character has a small stateroom. Small meaning, only a dozen people can have a full-on melee inside. Yes, the game has many Cutlass style conventions. No, this is not an extra dimensional room as seen on the Warner Bros. Movies about the boy-MU. Or is it in a fantasy world? Interesting.

012 – Discover someone highly skilled—Chiurgeon, Cartographer, Philosopher, Apothecary—is impressed as a slave. (Player decides next action.)

013 – Find a well charted map hidden below deck. (Player decides next action.)

014 – See a man drawing a knife to start a mutiny. The player character is next to a bowman. (If ordered to fire, the servitor’s drawstring will snap and take out an eye on the player character.)

015 – Player’s boots corrode and becomes worthless in the salt sea air. (Ref decides the penalty and for how long, usually little to nothing.) This can become a running gag. The player can be constantly destroying his shoes and running around barefoot.

016 – In the hold, bump into a barrel marked salt, but hear a hollow sound. Open? (Find a set of eight bronze swords and shield. Ref must decide who put these there.)

017 – Cut your soft hands helping out on a rope. Player misses the next event, unable to function. (Gain some impressive scars tenderfoot.) When any player quibbles, give them a vicious. The saving roll (of sorts) was the numbered event and the random order. Plus, ask the player why he wouldn’t be injured. Is his character a mariner (most are not)? If he Rugged strong? If he’s both, maybe someone used magic and cursed the rope. Does he have Hexes? Players must understand this game is blunt. Take the hit and on to the next. Don’t spend all day mitigating a few rope cuts. Else, the same player will be griping his every bane. Okay, maybe he should Banes are awful.

018 – Overhear two crewmen, very drunk, talking to each other in a foreign language. (Ref decides what’s being said. Player decides next action.)

019 – Catch another officer cheating at dice with several of the warriors; the bets are for pennies. (Make an enemy by saying anything.)

020 – While moving sacks of flour in the hold, you bump the ship side and hear a hollow thump. (If investigated, drilling into the hull will leak some water. If the player presses further, he’ll open a hollow cavity—half filled with water—inside find a small fortune in gold and gems. These were stolen nine years ago. The original ship owner had them built into the hull for transport to a foreign land, but he disappeared before making that voyage – what now?) If that was not possible, say because the ship was restored during the character’s life, well maybe it’s magic or maybe the gems grew inside the tree cut to form the planks. If you second guess and pick at the logic of every act, you’re a downer. Your friends won’t tell you so, but I



will. Stop it, you're no fun to have around. Play nice, be the brunt of a joke now and then. Enough rant. Apologize to your friend for me; he's not a bad guy.

021 – Have all your pocket coins stolen while you sleep. (Player decides next action, but nothing truly can be done.)

022 – Drop a valued ring or possession into the ocean. (Player decides next action, but the item is lost.) Each player has a magic weapon. There is always the thought that it might be lost. Nope, not the case. The player and sword are bound. Truly you could argue that the hero makes any sword magical. But instead, just avoid the obvious. The character can call the sword, perhaps. Even when captured and chained, it only means the Blade techniques may not be used (for now). Would the enemy leave his captive armed? No, but the player just by story element gets reunited to his gear. Don't believe me? Read any story with magic blades and see how often the bad guys end up using them against the good guys they take them from. I recall a certain Orcrist, Goblin Cleaver, which logically should have been left in Mirkwood (after Thorin's capture and escape). If it's in the *Holy of the Holy*, you may not protest. Tolkien, blessed be his name, is our set of fantasy commandments.

023 – Discover a suicide note with wet ink. (An NPC is about to jump off the ship.)

024 – Discover one of the seamen is a female in disguise. (Her sex is unknown to anyone else aboard. Or is she the mistress of someone? Why does she keep this secret? She must be hiding from someone, even the players.)

025 – Overhear two soldiers talking about their hatred for the Third Remiges, master of rowers. (If asked, the men will be found to be merely grumblers. Two more NPCs though, not good ones.)

## **Personal Events at Sea (Swords)**

001 – Brawl for sport with commander's consent. Strike another officer and with a fluke hit, knock him out. He is a champion pugilist, and several other crewmen congratulate the player for the deed. When he wakes, he'll want a rematch. Agree? (Use personal duels with Irregular methods. Yes, a dispatch can happen and cause major wounds.)

002 – While standing guard with a few soldiers one night, you are attacked by several seamen trying to fight their way off the ship. (The slave mutineers were

released by a stowaway of high level. Fight a personal duel against three weak opponents. But the greater problem is finding the intruder, before the ship suffers further.) Though this seems like a KNAVE event, the person aboard is not related to the mission. He has a different agenda, maybe a friend in the rowers. Maybe an enemy of a player character or officer. Personal Events will impact the mission.

003 – Trip down a flight of stairs or take a fall from the rigging with no injury. Witnesses claim that such a fall should have killed. Crew will grow fearful of the player and think he is a demon. (When bad events happen later, the player must defend himself from accusations. He becomes the vessel scapegoat for any wrong, the jinx.)

004 – Nose bloodied in a brawl, but player does not report the blow. He at first fears reprisal from other crewmen in a secret brotherhood. (Player decides next action.)

005 – After a long miserable day, the player is ordered to get back to work; this leads him to strike the prime player commander. The free crew call for punishment, death. (A clever player might talk his way out of anything. Else, Digression (A) is warranted.)

006 – Another seaman tells the player's fortune. The very next day, to the letter, he was correct. Ask for tomorrow's fate? (The player character might now fully believe all soothsayers and augers, becoming paralyzed by superstition and ill prophesy.)

007 – Someone challenges the player to arm wrestling. (A brawl will start if the player wins or refuses.)

008 – Get sick on spoiled meat and heave violently. (Someone tried to poison the player character.)

009 – Become envious of a seaman's medallion. After he refuses to sell it, you steal it while he sleeps. (Player decides next action. No good can come from this impulse to steal.)

010 – Find prime player commander's cabin is unlocked. Enter? (Seen by a guard and he rushes to the room, calling for armed support.)

011 – Fall asleep in a boat towed behind only to awake and see the tip of the mainmast sinking below the surface – fluke, mystery, flashback, dream, not your ship? “*What happened?*” (Player decides next action to avoid Digression A.) Yes, the bad event can seem to affect everyone, but actually doesn’t. Was this an illusion, of course. Could it be real, that everyone dies and only one lives? Call for a new Ref if ever suggested.

012 – Tell a story of how you made a friend of a ship’s cat. After one uneventful voyage, you took him with you. Where is the cat now? (The cat’s true owner is on board; he overhears the player and is incensed.)

### **Personal Events in the Unending Grey (Cups)**

001 – While scouting ahead of the main party, the player and a couple of servitors come across dwarves drilling holes and filling them with gold. (Player decides what happens next.)

002 – Player wears a hole in his boot. There’s another man in the expedition who’s about the size. (Continue without replacing or mending, and the foot will suffer.)

003 – Player secretly views a magical projection of a cultist or demon; a small fortune will be paid if the player character leaves the mission. The player would continue in an alternate role. Even more will be paid if the player disrupts the party and gets all to return home. (The image is from a delver company protecting a prime location from intrusion. An enemy of the delvers is made if the bribe is refused.)

004 – A player’s friend in the group dies of fatigue and sickness. The rest of the expedition wants to leave his body buried here, but the dead man’s wish was to be buried at sea. (Player decides what happens next.)

005 – Come upon a stream rippling with exotic fish. (Mundane, too bony to eat or dangerous more if removed from the water.)

006 – Find an ancient chest filled with golden figurines. No one else knows of the discovery. The player character happens to be holding a shovel. (Gain an Ignoble for hiding the wealth; nothing if it is shared. But inevitably, the money will never make it back to the surface. Maybe the figures walk away?)

007 – As the group enters an immense trove of mushrooms, the player is struck with homesickness for his mother’s stew. (Player decides what happens next.)

008 – Player has a dream that an angel tells him to do something: repent to civil ways, be more merciful, offer sacrifices, stop the expedition, slay the godless hordes, take command of the party, leave party and go on alone, spiritual quest, etc. (Ref states the dream. Player decides what happens next.)

009 – Come across a suspicious patch of ground; the leader yells, *"Press on, we can't dodder at every depression and shadow."* (It's quicksand.)

010 – The sing-song mumblings of the dwarves begin to make perfect sense, but you grow fearful of what you might learn. Plug your ears with wax or concentrate? (Gain ability to understand the dwarvish language.)

011 – You forget how to read and write—something you never did well anyway—on the long hard trek. (Players decide if he rededicates himself to learning or saunters down the easier life path of ignorance and trust in a stout club.)



## **Personal Events in the Unending Grey (Rods)**

001 – Start to feed an exotic critter, insect or worm you found and carry it as a pet. (Player decides what happens next.)

002 – Player starts a song cadence that seems to inspire the men to increase their rate of travel and morale. (Gain extra miles without mishap during the journey.)

003 – Fall into a foul smelling pool that will not immediately wipe or rinse off. (Lose Gifted trait until a proper bath is obtained.)

004 – Come across a suspicious patch of ground; the leader yells, "*Press on, we can't dodder at every depression and shadow.*" (Mundane.)

005 – You wear a hole in your boot. (Mundane, one of many.)

006 – The sing-song mumblings of the dwarves begin to make perfect sense, but you grow fearful of what you might learn. Plug your ears with wax or concentrate? (Suffer a half D8 increase of Warped Outcome.)

### **Personal Events in the Unending Grey (Coins)**

001 – Find a campfire and the remains of something, maybe human, being butchered. Footsteps approach; now what? (Fight a Large+ or hide. After a Half D8 rounds others may come to help in the combat against the demi-human troll.)

002 – Discover an ancient column with markings the player thinks are Hypatian language in origin – "*Who cares? It ain't etched in gold.*" (Player decides what happens next.)

003 – Player notices that one of the dwarves following along with the group now has a face which matches the prime player commander. Is it your imagination, or can it mimic? (Player decides what happens next.)

004 – Think you befriend a dwarf and teach him to recite prayers to your deity; other in the expedition say the imp is only mocking your efforts. (Player decides what happens next.)

005 – Discover a deposit of minerals that can be used by an Apothecary to make an explosive. (Difficult roll to clear an obstruction if encountered, but upon fail take a vicious wound.)

006 – Player feels sure that the mount he left behind is injured. he will miss the next half D8 encounters if he goes back to check. If the phase advances in that period, he will never return to the party until it returns to the group's vessel. (Player decides what happens next. Ref may assess a loss of Mount swaggering if he fails to check on his horse.)



007 – Awake in the morning and notice your purse of coins is gone. Everyone will say it was dwarves; each has a method of keeping things safe from laying on it, to hiding it in a boot to stuffing it down your loincloth. (Player decides what happens next. Ref decides if the dwarves were truly to blame.)

008 – Player slips and falls into a deep chasm. Uninjured, he must walk parallel to the main party until the gully becomes shallow enough for him to repel back to the main group. (The next encounter could happen fifty-fifty to him alone or the main party. Anything related to servitors still occurs with the expedition, not the solo player.)

009 – Find something dead; could be a missing servitor gone for a few days. The corpse is mostly eaten. (A monster in the area is still hungry. But, the combat is not the gist of the challenge. What does the player do to quell fears or stop a vigilante action to find the monster? Maybe he leads the hunt.)

010 – The sing-song mumblings of the dwarves begin to make perfect sense, but you grow fearful of what you might learn. Plug your ears with wax or concentrate? (Mundane.) Notice that not just *Rod* suit might be mundane.

### **Personal Events in the Unending Grey (Swords)**

001 – Player finds a pool of sweet water and cannot help but drink. The pool is an intoxicating effluent created by dwarves. You may never taste a better ale again in your life. (Player decides what happens next.)

002 – Start to feed a furry and harmless looking animal, but it jumps and bites the player's arm. (The injury will swell and itch, but nothing more.)

003 – Add some exotic fruit to the communal soup. maybe wait and see if anyone has a bad reaction, before taking a gulp. (The result is harmless, but did someone notice your actions?)

004 – Two men, the player is sitting between, start to argue and throw punches. (Player decides what happens next.)

005 – Something that the player does or says angers the dwarves. (Player made an evil sign or his accent slurs common words into a guttural curse.)

006 – A crazy witch-doctor type goblin jumps from a ledge and throws powder on the player. A skilled delver in group will say the powder is a curse that must be cleansed with magic, but a different delver says that's hokum. (This is harmless, but the player character might be self-deluded and feel strange.)

007 – Player falls asleep by a underground river but awakes as the water swells and carries him down stream. (Swim vigorously to avoid being separated from the party.)

008 – The sing-song mumblings of the dwarves begin to make perfect sense, but you grow fearful of what you might learn. Plug your ears with wax or concentrate? (Others take your suggestion and do the same, and only by sealing your ears will you pass without brawls from temporary insanity.)

## **Personal Events of Magical Origin**

Adding relics into play is an important aspect of fantasy role-play. Sure, I have chastised often about not flooding the game with *+1 Winkies*. Yet to each his own. Presented are a few ideas for magical items, which might enter play through Personal Events. Most should start innocuous. Remember how a certain nonhuman acquires a ring of power? Like that tale, the result of using and over using an object should cause Warped Outcomes.

001 – Player finds a ring; he knows by the shape and luster that it is ancient and probably evil. Take or push down in the mud with your boot? (The ring improves Recitation by plus one to the roll for a specific wizardry technique. If the character lacks that technique, touching the ring causes a vicious wound.)

002 – Player finds an arcane pouch hanging from the bones of a burial litter; it contains a soft wax with the impression of human teeth. (The object when chewed will make him furious using any wizardry, gaining that Pip, but the object causes him to slowly lose swaggering powers from his magical blade.) The use of the object is not clear, and the result is both good and bad. Magic relics should be prudently used selectively in play at opportune or desperate moments.

003 – Player is offered a chance to purchase a mask; he is told it will improve his abilities using a specific type of wizardry. Is it worth a mere purse of coins? (The mask will lock as Glorious a specific wizardry technique. However, only a character with Gifted Traits seems to gain the benefit. Further if used with wizardry already locked as Glorious, the character suffers a Warped Outcome result and his face

scalds horribly.) Are all of these evil? In my campaign they are, but each Ref is different. And by *evil*, I'd term them instead a *mixed blessing* as magic itself is.

004 – A delivery from your clan chief states he is proud of your actions and the wealth you have sent home in tribute. The arcane master of your clan has fashioned a helm with bull horns. The wearer of the helmet never suffers Shaken result provided he was Bold of Trait. (If the player has not sent any tribute home, the delivery has gone to the wrong person. That's a dilemma, since the magic properties still hold true. The true owner will one day come to claim his prize.)

005 – A dying, frozen Viking surrenders his shield, "*Please Odin, let this only be carried by a Varangian.*" The oddly shaped shield requires the carrier to be Trait Energetic, else he starts each battle Shaken. Occult Scholar will recognize the embossed relic as the *Ward of Einherjar*, a chosen tribe, whose last death brings Ragnarök. The relic's powers are slowly revealed in play.

(The adventure's first vicious wound taken by anyone, not ignored by Rugged, is instead blocked by the wielder. The sky turns suddenly red. The shield carrier, however, then loses all his remaining make-rolls. If the shield is ever set aside or handed to another, both suffers a half D8 rise in Warped Outcome tally with the associated event. If the shield is ever cast aside, it has a habit of returning to the group on future events. The shield can mimic others, acting like one of any on the side of the longboat. To truly be rid of the relic, the shield must be returned to the statue of Bolverk in the tomb of the first barbaric kings, located in the underworlds near Isborsk. Bolverk was an alias of Odin, one he used to pose as a giant and win a mead contest. The statue has a way of collecting the powerfully *unwanted* treasures of the world. There will be many other relics resting there at the statue to tempt the players, if they decide to undertake the nullification quest.)

006 – Shield of Einherjar, another one? (A similar relic to #6, but this one blocks the first wound, has no effect on the second, but changes the victim of the third vicious wound to the wielder. How often are three vicious inflicted in any game adventure? For higher level characters this shield may be a nice addition to the party and carried by the designated dead-man, lowest level of the group.)

007 – Player is abducted for what seems like a year. He lives in the clouds and is trained relentlessly by storm giants to master a wizardry technique, like Celestial (G). Yet when morning comes, he awakes to find it was all a dream. Yet puzzled, the character gains the Glorious swagger.

008 – Player fashions a charm and endows the object with arcane powers. The charm allows him alone to gain an extra make-roll performing one of his character's skills. (Upon using the charm, the first time, the character also should gain a D8 to his tally of Warped Outcome. But that is the only time, that bane happens, if he does not discard the object.)

009 – Player cavorts with a water nymph; he may not have known the creature was magical, but really he had no idea? Maybe give the player a choice to do so or not. (The residual magic of the enchanted creature aids him. Hereafter, the player gains the Catbird Seat Pip whenever he generates a Warped Outcome, provided he is not incapacitated or slain by the event.)

010 – Player consults with a demon or ginn, which he can summon in the embers of a fire. Every time he does so, he can gain insight on the quest or will obtain a Command Pip to start the next battle. Yet he is consorting with something diabolical and that sinister force may start to demand tribute. (The result only lasts this adventure. Thereafter, the bonus is gained instead whenever one of his companions generates a Warped Outcome. Because that seems a good trade, everyone in his party now generates Warped Outcome on both snake eyes (two) and on the result of rolling a three. Every time that occurs a spectral laugh will follow. The bane lasts until the offending character leaves the group or is slain in his sleep.)

011 – Player discovers that a locket he wears, one with the image of his mother or wife inside, generates extreme reactions among the dwarves. Some imps will flee in terror; others fall hysterically in laughter; others show sympathy; others become enraged. (The Ref should generate a truth table of results based on a D8 options or deck suit flips. Feeling ambitious, add the twenty-two major tarot as well.)

## **Examples of Campaign Events**

The Referee may feel free to change the magnitude of any event. He should tailor any and all to his events to work inside his campaign.

### **Pair Aces:**

New regional earl ascends to local authority.

Two earls meet face to face.

Important marriage has occurred, joining two noble houses.

### **Three Aces:**

An earl dies without an heir.

Earl has died violently.  
New prince is born in the imperial capital.  
New member of Curia Regis is appointed.

**Four Aces:**

Emperor dies, and a new ruler is anointed.  
Pretender assumes the imperial thrown.

**Pair Deuces:**

Blockade established on a city-state.  
Commodity becomes in great demand.  
Royal ship lost in storms.

**Three Deuces:**

Inflation causes gold or silver to lose value.  
Major ship battle fought between the empire and a rival.  
New admiral is appointed.

**Four Deuces:**

Emperor defaults on loans; he will soon be assassinated.  
Imperial navy is destroyed or decommissioned.  
Delvers make such a major find that all purses lose value (for half D8 adventures, until currency stabilizes).

**Pair Threes:**

Craftsmen in a city-state are on strike.  
One of the player characters is married into a noble house.  
One player character's lands are lost in unpaid debts.  
Harvest across the lands is poor – famine in every city-state for one adventure.  
Guilds across a land are in revolt; nothing can be bought to add techniques at any port (for one adventure).

**Three Threes:**

Guilds in the capital are on strike.  
A friendly NPC dies leaving a final request  
One player character's lands are lost to an invader.  
Character's ship is drafted for a major battle.  
A land or port has proclaimed itself a separate and independent realm; he comes the royal army to stop that madness before it spreads.



**Four Threes:**

Fire destroys a major city-state. The place will recover to a marginal level in a D8 adventures.

Cabal is destroyed.

Mandatory draft is declared to fight an outside invader.

**Pair Fours:**

Rewards for criminals offered.

Hero of major battle proclaimed.

Friend of character dies.

**Three Fours:**

New lord high mayor or merchant prince commands a city.

Enemy of character dies.

Treasonous usurper arrested.

**Four Fours:**

Usurper takes thrown and abolishes the monarchy (for now).

Magical prisoner has escaped the bronze tower.

Raider Stallari has died; now there's a power vacuum.

**Pair Fives:**

Major abbey destroyed by fire.

Theological debate will be held.

**Three Fives:**

New ecclesiastic prince or pagan high priest is appointed.

A debate splits the One True Faith.

The worship of a certain god is unlawful.

**Four Fives:**

Pagans are being persecuted; the one true faith now calls the emperor a disciple.



**Pair Sixes:**

New colony is formed; add an extra city-state (lasting a half D8 adventures).  
A new river route is magically dredged (lasting a half D8 adventures).

**Three Sixes:**

Larger numbers of ships are trading on a specific river.  
Fewer or no ships are plying a certain river; implies magic or monster threat.

**Four Sixes:**

A permanent cosmic connection is established between two locations.  
New section of the Unending Grey discovered by a newly formed delver company.

**Pair Sevens:**

Two neutral factions are joined as allies.  
Two neighboring city-states declare war on each other.

**Three Sevens:**

A new faction forms in the campaign.  
War between two factions ends with the destruction of one of them.

**Four Sevens:**

City-State wins independence, legally recognized, from the empire.  
Two earls combine domains. The Emperor and Curia Regis bless this change.

**Pair Eights:**

Two outside factions, usually Lizard Men, consolidate under leader.  
Land battle fought with enemy invaders. Legions are depleted in a region.  
Sea battle fought with enemy invaders. Imperial navy is depleted for a period of time.  
Price of everything increases drastically. For a half D8 adventures, only Treasure Laden (D) will gain techniques. And the top eight or so are beyond anyone's ability to purchase in the hyper-inflation.

**Three Eights:**

Major invasion sacks a city-state in the Frontier. Place will recover to a marginal level in a D8 adventures.  
All commerce by waterway stops for a year. A Zaire must be behind this edict.  
A fortress of the legions has been destroyed. It will not ever return.

**Four Eights:**

An outside enemy openly subjugates a frontier city-state as its capital.

**Pair Nines:**

A neutral faction has declared itself allied to the empire.

An enemy faction declares itself at peace, and neutral, to the empire.

New imperial appointments are made (following a purge).

Legion sent on campaign against an enemy faction.

**Three Nines:**

A faction is declared outlaw and enemy of the empire.

A Legion is destroyed trying to attack an enemy state.

Delegation formed to seek peace with an enemy faction; seen as a sign of weakness.

**Four Nines:**

An enemy faction is conquered and subjugated. Hereafter treat its remnants as a secret cabal.

**Closure**

As you read the encounters, try to picture how the events appear in play. The purpose of encounters is to provide problems that the players must solve. Encounters can also be added to the climax as options that occur after botching a different table or obstacle.

Remember this adage – *“If it speaks, adopt a slur.”* Use character conversation to describe events, not just read the narrative. Develop some personalities that can be applied to NPCs to reflect emotions and attitudes. Make an NPC tell the player characters each event. *“That was a growl.”*

Some characters will be very sincere, but constantly incompetent. How can a more noble character punish honest effort that constantly goes wrong? In the reverse, some characters are always able to solve problems. They might be a threat to command, as a truly admired leader. There are those who constantly are saying *“I told you so.”* There are others that shun responsibility or refuse to try lest a mistake be made. We all know that bastard that won’t start anything in a timely fashion. *“Sure, I like the idea of a barge to cross the river; I’ll get on it first thing tomorrow.”*

When a person is tired and grumpy, he will act differently from one that it is angry and excited. Try to role-play the events. Make the sailor on watch talk fast and

incoherent, while describing a leviathan. *“We’re all, all doomed Sir.”* Most officers will not want to admit they have made an error. If an event occurs let the master only hint at the full extent of the problem. Turn the players into detectives to further investigate.

At times make the players use conversation to solve their problems. A dice roll is just the start or only possible after the conversation is finished. If a player states his game plan—*“I talk to the lord.”*—then hold the conversation. Make them direct and instruct loyal NPCs to perform their actions.

Which creates more nuance in play? Stating something in third-person perfect, *“I have a hand-picked guard go up the hill and scout.”* This fiat allows for no interaction. Try the fuller and more uncertain, *“Hafna, take a force and hike up that hill. See where the enemy is coming. Keep low.”*

At times, flip an encounter, check on the result, and then tell the players that nothing has happened just yet. The players know better. They too can see that a card was flipped. Many will be checking their own copies of this book. *“That’s how a lowly author makes pin money, right?”*

The event is left to the Referee to detail. Remember they’re your friends. But, the Ref can change events, delay events, combine events, twist events, all based on both his campaign and what came before. The Ref may hold an event and see what is happening next. The story will build in this fashion. He may even have to consider the mission. Mission Inconsequence, as has been said before, are not inconsequential to the mission. They may cause utter failure. The mission won’t matter, when the event is catastrophic to the party of players.

In most role-play games, a player usually does not go wrong by attacking anything that moves. If it moves, it generally speaks. The players are free to challenge everything – that will get them killed. Sooner or later, the wrong card will flip. So, on his next character, maybe a player will pick his enemies more carefully. Even with strangers and a language barrier, there’s always a smile or stance of authority. A gentle nod of the chin to show peace.

The players will more often solve their dilemmas by talking. Even if the encounter reaction goes horribly wrong, the player may prove he’s a dolt, clumsy, or misspoke, rather than have blades drawn every single time. When combat isn’t

initiated by the players, the result usually occurs because an underling made a mistake. The servitors will often get the players into trouble.

Still, the Referee should not constantly use encounters to send the players into personal duels. In fact, after a character checks that ignoble, he should most likely avoid combat actions.

## Setting Template

Setting:					
U-U			U-x		U-o
1			1		1
2			2		2
3			3		3
4			4		4
5			5		5
6			6		6
7			7		7
8	Catch-All		8	Catch-All	8
U-†			x-x		x-o
1			1		1
2			2		2
3			3		3
4			4		4
5			5		5
6			6		6
7			7		7
8	Catch-All		8	Catch-All	8
x-†			o-o		o-†
1			1		1
2			2		2
3			3		3
4			4		4
5			5		5
6			6		6
7			7		7
8	Catch-All		8	Catch-All	8
			†-†		
			1		
			2		
			3		
			4		
			5		
			6		
			7		
			8	Catch-All	