

NANTUCKET SLEIGHRIDE

or, the Moby Dick Roleplaying Game. A card based, gm-less game for 4 people.

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version a.1

A **Game Chef 2014** entry

Theme: No Book

Ingredients: Absorb (card mechanic), Wild (open sea), Glitter (insanity), Sickle (harpoon)

What is a “nantucket sleighride”? It is the term for a whaling boat being dragged across the waves at 25mph by an enraged sperm whale.

You have booked passage on a whaling vessel out of Nantucket off the coast of New England. It is the early 19th century and sperm whale oil is essential to all aspects of the fresh young Industrial Revolution. Whalers are overworked and underpaid. You and the other players will have private demons, Obsessions, that will color your story arc, much like Moby Dick clouded everything Ahab did.

You and your fellow whalers will undergo a 4 act play; each act comprising of 3 scenes. And then wrap up the story with a final epilogue. All of the instructions are printed on the game cards you will be using. You will also need a regular deck of 52 playing cards; some pens and perhaps some paper for notes.

As a matter of outline, here is an overview of what to do:

Read the Set UP card first to prepare the decks and Act cards across the table; read the Play card to familiarize yourself with bidding and turn order; the Errata card has important information about Whale Sightings but it directs you to this page for additional minor rules and clarifications (see Errata below).

Players will be dealt Sailors and Compulsion cards. Each will create 4 Conflicts that they will submit face down to a pile in the middle that will be drawn from for Scenes. Conflicts should be highly charged scenario that will pit one player vs another in conflict. Each act will be more animated than the last.

Players will be playing and acquiring playing cards in their hand to bid for control and framing of the scenes, as well as the end win condition. Highest cards will dictate which of the Epilogues are available to each player. The player with the lowest overall total point value will receive the Traitor card and will modify their own story as well as one of the other player's in a short solo scene describing the end of that character's story.

*And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee:
thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.*

*And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as
an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.*

*The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon
them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. - Exodus : 15*

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further information and development on Nantucket Sleighride at: <http://etagelarsen.com/doubleking/>

ERRATA

cards and card play:

- * **Ties.** The following player will have to adjust their bid more/less with multiple cards. In the event that it is still mechanically impossible, the following player's play will be considered null.
- * **Aces.** May be played high or low. Must be declared.
- * **Bank and Banking Cards.** Banked cards are taken from your hand and placed facedown in front of the player. They are safe from Whale Sighting recalls. They are added to the final tally for the player at the end of the game to establish who has fist choice of Epilogues.

roles:

- * **Harpooneer.** The Harpooneer is the person with the highest bid total at the start of each Scene. This person selects 2 conflicts, returns 1, and dresses the scene for two players.
- * **Navigator.** The Navigator is the person with the lowest bid at the start of each Scene. They will marshall the scene and look for its natural or most obvious conclusion, awarding Winner and Loser status as to how the tail end of the conflict will ultimately resolve.
- * **Whale Sighting.** Player playing this card may play it at ANY time. Player playing the sighting (joker) will call out "Thar She Blows!" then describe the nature of the sighting and how the scene is either interrupted by the Captain or somebody reading from the ship's logbook by reading a Captain's Logbook card. [these excerpts are mostly taken from Moby Dick and slightly altered for tense or to remove reference to specific characters.]

**ACT
I**

6 months on

Randomly select one Stage Card and place underneath, unseen.

**ACT
II**

one week later

Randomly select one Stage Card and place underneath, unseen.

**ACT
III**

one day later

Randomly select one Stage Card and place underneath, unseen.

**ACT
IV**

one hour later

Randomly select one Stage Card and place underneath, unseen.

FINISH

Place all four Epilogue cards underneath

Group read after Act IV

SET UP

READ FIRST

PLAY

ERRATA

FINISH

All players add up the count of the cards in their hand and any banked cards.

Player with highest total takes 2 epilogues, chooses 1, returns other. Next highest count chooses of remaining 2. 3rd takes remaining card.

Each narrates a short final scene with the tone of the Epilogue card.

Player with lowest score is The Traitor. The Traitor goes last and will narrate a final scene that also rewrites the final story of any one of the other players.

SET UP

* 1/2 standard deck of playing cards, add both Jokers and shuffle.

* Make a row of Act + Finish cards, follow card-back instructions.

* Deal Sailor + Compulsion to each player; last picks from remaining.

* You are playing crazed, lonely, desperate and confused sailors. Each create 4 dynamic Conflicts you'd like to see engaged.

* Read Play and Errata cards.

*Cut cards. Lowest card is the Cabin Boy, player to his left starts with Act 1.

*Deal 3 cards to each player.

PLAY

* Play consists of 4 Acts with 3 scenes.

* 1st Player draws 1 card from deck; makes bid, playing at least one card from hand. Play proceeds to others, once around. Highest bid is Harpooneer. Lowest bid is Navigator.

* Harpooneer draws two Conflicts from pool; selects one; returns other; and sets the scene between players.

* Navigator decides at any point in the scene which side will win, according to the narrative.

*Winner may bank a card.

*Loser draws a card from deck to hand. Loser starts next bid for following scene.

THAR SHE BLOWS!

Jokers are "whale sightings". Played any time, Whale Sightings immediately interrupt play. Scene ends without a victor. All players immediately discard their hands. Entire discard pile shuffled; returned to top of deck; all players dealt new 3 card hand.

Person that played the card, the Whale Spotter must draw from the captain's logbook and read one aloud.

ERRATA

In being incredibly concise for this format, some nuances are explained in an accompanying Errata sheet.

ACT I

6 months on

Act 1 is started by the 1st player to the left of the Cabin Boy. Reveal the Stage card and paint a picture of departure from port and the strife of life at sea with a crazy obsessed captain. Use the Stage card to set off a dynamic backdrop for the three scenes in this act, and how this dismal trip has gone from bad to worse.

You will draw the top card from the deck to add to your hand and make the first bid, opening the game.

Act 2 will be started by the person to your left, the 2nd player

ACT II

one week later

The 2nd player to the left of the Cabin Boy reveals The Stage card for Act two.

Describe the mood on the ship and growing mistrust amongst the seamen. The captain's mania bristles. You've barely recovered from what just happened (Act 1) when this new terror befalls the crew.

You will start the bid for the first scene of the second act.

Act 3 will be started by the person to your left, the 3rd player

ACT III

one day later

The player in 3rd position stages ACT 3.

Reveal the Stage card for this act. Things have gotten as bad as they could possibly get. Describe the horrors and mistrust. The isolation and desperation. The rage and the fury of a captain possessed. With this new disaster the crew has given up any sense of unity.

You will start the bid for the first scene of the third act.

Act 4 will be started by the Cabin Boy.

ACT IV

one hour later

Lowly is the Cabin Boy that must recount the horrors that have befallen this ship and its damned crew.

Somehow. SOMEHOW, things have managed to get impossibly worse in this past hour beyond all measure of reason or right.

These are the final moments for many of you.

You will start the bid for the first scene of this final act.

Finish will be started by the player with the highest final count.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

SURVIVOR

ABOMINATION

PROPHET

THE TRAITOR

STAGE

STAGE

STAGE

STAGE

STAGE

STAGE

Choose from any of the elements to create a backdrop for this Act. Increasing the drama as the game progresses. Describe: sight, smell, sound, feel etc.

WHALE ATTACK

- *Sperm Whales, largest toothed whale
- *Stave in the hull, foul lines
- *Enrages the Captain anew
- *Eats a crewman
- *Malicious chaos
- *Why has it chosen to attack?
- *Describe the beast and its intentions

Choose from any of the elements to create a backdrop for this Act. Increasing the drama as the game progresses. Describe: sight, smell, sound, feel etc.

PORT O CALL

- * Have you stopped for provisions
- * Early season whaling and you're sending barrels of oil back early?
- *Medical emergency requires a stop.
- *If a ribald port town, describe it and points of interest.
- *Are the natives friendly?

Choose from any of the elements to create a backdrop for this Act. Increasing the drama as the game progresses. Describe: sight, smell, sound, feel etc.

MAELSTROM

- *Chaos
- *Ship is in danger
- *Weather could knock the ship over
- *Visibility a problem to navigation
- *Lightning hazarding the masts
- *Superstitious crew
- *Giant waves

Choose from any of the elements to create a backdrop for this Act. Increasing the drama as the game progresses. Describe: sight, smell, sound, feel etc.

MUTINY

- *Who is involved?
- *What event precipitated this?
- *Where is it being planned?
- *Can you trust everyone involved?
- *What have you/will you do with the Captain?

Choose from any of the elements to create a backdrop for this Act. Increasing the drama as the game progresses. Describe: sight, smell, sound, feel etc.

SINKING

- *What is the cause? Did the ship run aground? bad weather? Did a bad owner not follow through on repairs?
- * Just a hole? Knocked down? Turtled?
- * Can you escape in whale boats?
- * Chaos.
- * Clearly not everyone survives this.

Choose from any of the elements to create a backdrop for this Act. Increasing the drama as the game progresses. Describe: sight, smell, sound, feel etc.

WHALE HUNT

- *What ocean are you in?
- * How many whales?
- * Are the men excited?
- * Adult sperm whale can have up to 50 gallons of oil in its head.
- *The oil gets everywhere.
- * Within the whale's intestines is Ambergris. Worth more than its weight in gold.

SAILOR

SAILOR

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SAILOR

SAILOR

SAILOR

SAILOR

SAILOR

Olli

wonder in the kitchen
foreigner
light hearted in nature
thick

Amundson

hard face / cold heart
natural leader
star-gazer
thick wollen sweater
sound

Thomas Nichols

earnest
mends sails
dashing
blowzy cotton shirt
owns books

Scar

seasoned hand
rippled
taciturn
squints
private interests

Merriwether

god fearing Quaker
fastidious
few worldly goods
understated but fiery
tall and awkward

Tupou

godless savage
smokes often
strange alien ways
stocky

Thibodeau

handy with an oar
wirey
consummate 5th wheel
timid

Bennett

green hand
first voyage
doughy
over-eager

COMPULSION

COMPULSION

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COMPULSION

COMPULSION

COMPULSION

COMPULSION

COMPULSION

SEX

Compulsions are the heart and soul of the game. they are your own white whale that shapes the character's evolution over the course of play.

MURDER

Compulsions are the heart and soul of the game. they are your own white whale that shapes the character's evolution over the course of play.

TRUTH

Compulsions are the heart and soul of the game. they are your own white whale that shapes the character's evolution over the course of play.

PIETY

Compulsions are the heart and soul of the game. they are your own white whale that shapes the character's evolution over the course of play.

PYROMANIA

Compulsions are the heart and soul of the game. they are your own white whale that shapes the character's evolution over the course of play.

ORDER

Compulsions are the heart and soul of the game. they are your own white whale that shapes the character's evolution over the course of play.

CLEANLINESS

Compulsions are the heart and soul of the game. they are your own white whale that shapes the character's evolution over the course of play.

BEAUTY

Compulsions are the heart and soul of the game. they are your own white whale that shapes the character's evolution over the course of play.

**CAPTAIN'S
LOGBOOK**

But as the mind does not exist unless leagued with the soul, therefore it must have been that, in Ahab's case, yielding up all his thoughts and fancies to his one supreme purpose; that purpose, by its own sheer inveteracy of will, forced itself against gods and devils into a kind of self-assumed, independent being of its own. [. . .] Therefore, the tormented spirit that glared out of bodily eyes, when what seemed Ahab rushed from his room, was for the time but a vacated thing, a formless somnambulistic being, a ray of living light, to be sure, but without an object to colour, and therefore a blankness in itself.

The red tide now poured from all sides of the monster like brooks down a hill. His tormented body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake. The slanting sun playing upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back its reflection into every face, so that they all glowed to each other like red men. And all the while, jet after jet of white smoke was agonizingly shot from the spiracle of the whale.

What I've dared, I've willed; and what I've willed, I'll do! They think me mad— but I'm demoniac, I am madness maddened! That wild madness that's only calm to comprehend itself! The prophecy was that I should be dismembered; and—Aye! I lost this leg. I now prophesy that I will dismember my dismemberer. Now, then, be the prophet and the fulfiller one. That's more than ye, ye great gods, ever were.

And thus, though surrounded by circle upon circle of consternations and affrights, did these inscrutable creatures at the centre freely and fearlessly indulge in all peaceful concernments; yea, serenely revelled in dalliance and delight. But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still forever centrally disport in mute calm; and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy.

...to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee.

Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a colour as the visible absence of colour; and at the same time the concrete of all colours; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows—a colourless, all-colour of atheism from which we shrink?

Yes, there is death in this business of whaling — a speechlessly quick chaotic bundling of a man into Eternity. But what then? Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death. Methinks that what they call my shadow here on earth is my true substance. Methinks that in looking at things spiritual, we are too much like oysters observing the sun through the water, and thinking that thick water the thinnest of air. Methinks my body is but the lees of my better being. In fact take my body who will, take it I say, it is not me.

we know the sea to be an everlasting terra incognita; though, by vast odds, the most terrific of all mortal disasters have immemorably and indiscriminately befallen tens and hundreds of thousands of those who have gone upon the waters; though but a moment's consideration will teach that, however baby man may brag of his science and skill, and however much, in a flattering future, that science and skill may augment; yet for ever and for ever, to the crack of doom, the sea will insult and murder him, and pulverize the stateliest, stiffest frigate he can make; nevertheless, by the continual repetition of these very impressions, man has lost that sense of the full awfulness of the sea which aboriginally belongs to it.

CONFLICT

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Sailor:

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