



*You are the lone captain of a small, sturdy boat, drifting through a lake so immense it is often mistaken for an ocean. This lake is known as the Wringwaste; it is full of dangers, mysteries, and things that should very much not be found in a lake.*

*As you sail through the Wringwaste, you periodically stop and sink a chain mesh net deep into its waters, sometimes recovering unusual items from the murky depths.*

*You don't remember why you do this -- in fact, you don't remember much of anything at all. As soon as your ship left harbor, your head grew foggy and muddled, keeping only bits and pieces of your previous life.*

*You remember three things with vivid clarity, however:*

***You must survive the Wringwaste.***

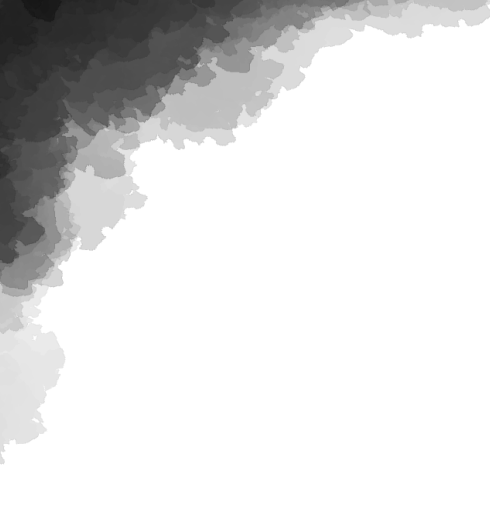
***You must cast your net.***

***You must find the Docks.***

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**Dredge** is a journaling game intended for solo play, though multiple people could play together, manning a single boat as a crew.

**You will need:** A deck of cards with Jokers removed, a Marker to indicate the player's boat, a Marker to show the Deep Hunter's position, and a journal or somewhere to write.



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Created for the 2021 Carta Jam

This work is based on the Carta system (found at <https://peachgardengames.itch.io/carta-srd>), from Cat McDonald and Peach Garden Games, and licensed for use under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.



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## SETUP

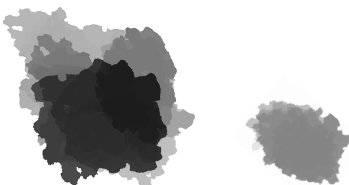
- Take one page of your journal (or paper, or writing program, etc.), and write the words “Cargo List” at the top. This will help you keep track of items you dredge up throughout the game.
- Next, remove the Ace of Spades from the deck and place it face up in front of you. This will serve as the harbor, your starting point for the game.
- Then, separate the Kings from the deck, and set aside two random Kings (do not look at their suites).
- Draw 21 more cards from the deck, facedown, and add the two Kings.
- Shuffle the cards, then lay them out facedown in a 4x6 grid, using the Ace of Spades as the bottom right corner.
- Finally, place your Player Marker on the Ace of Spades.

## GAMEPLAY

Every round, the player moves their Marker to an adjacent card to “sail” to it. If the card is facedown, turn it face up to reveal it, and find its description in the Prompts section of this book.

Carry out any effects listed in italics, and create a journal entry for the day of sailing.

Some cards will provide you with items you have trawled up from the depths. Be sure to write these items on your Cargo List.



When the first King in the grid is revealed, a malevolent being known as the Deep Hunter notices your presence and begins to pursue you.

Find the King's prompt in the Deep Hunters prompt list to learn what is chasing you.

Regardless of where you currently are, place the Hunter Token on the Ace of Spades.

Once the Deep Hunter arrives, every time you move your Marker, move the Deep Hunter one space towards you in the most direct route possible, traveling only over cards that are already revealed. If there is only one path to the player's Marker, the Deep Hunter will move towards that path.

If the Deep Hunter catches you, you must give up one of the items on your Cargo List, or you die.

Should you sacrifice an item to evade its grasp, move the Deep Hunter to any space you choose, and create a journal entry detailing how that specific item helped you escape.

Once the Deep Hunter has been placed on the board, the second (still hidden) King card becomes the Docks -- your goal for winning the game.

In order to complete the game and stay alive, you must reach the Docks with five or more dredged up items, or with every card on the board revealed.

If you reach the second King card without one of those requirements, gameplay continues until you return to the card with the requirements met, or the Deep Hunter catches you for the last time.

Once you reach the Docks AND meet the requirements, read the final card prompt, found in the Mysteries of the Docks prompt list, to end the game and unearth a mystery about the waters you have traversed.

Every prompt contains a final question, which you may ponder or create one last journal entry to answer.



## PROMPTS

### HEARTS

#### **Ace of Hearts - Unknown Archway**

In a shallower part of the Wringwaste, a stony arch curves over the water, ends sinking below visible range.

Staring at it, you know that if you were to pass underneath, you would not leave the same person as when you entered.

You cast your net over the arch's reflection; this is as close as you go.

*You dredge up something fused and unsettling. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

#### **Two of Hearts - Boiling Wastes**

The waters grow darker here, bubbling and hissing in a boiling wave of heat you can feel from up on your boat. Not much can survive in this atmosphere, you're certain, and you don't want to be the next living thing to succumb to the cloud of steam.

You take a sharp turn out of the area.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*

## Three of Hearts - Cloud of Fog

A heavy fog seeps into the air around your boat, growing denser and denser as the day progresses. By the late afternoon it has grown so chokingly thick that you find it difficult to breath.

You daren't give your boat much speed; you know that the Wringwaste is a perilous place, and you'd like to be able to see dangers before they crash into you.

You spend your evening waiting for the haze to clear.

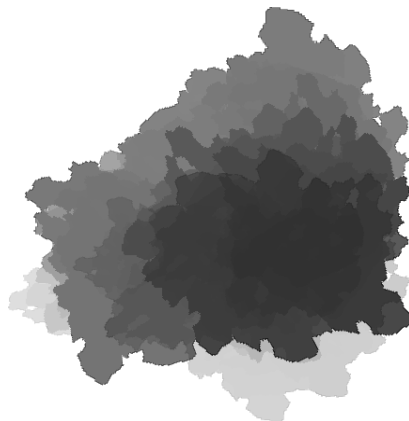
You have no clue how many hours pass, but after some achingly stretched amount of time, you blink and the fog vanishes, leaving the moon shining full above you.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*

## Four of Hearts - A Good Omen

This night, you peer up at the stars and see a good omen shining in the great expanse above you. You sleep soundly, a sense of safety calming your heart.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*



## **Five of Hearts - A New Name**

Something feels off today. You're not sure what, at first, only guided by the anxious prickling at the back of your neck.

It's midday when you finally lean over the side of your boat and discover the change: the name painted carefully on the side of your boat is different from what it was yesterday. You have no idea how or when the switch happened, but the change is unmistakable.

You know this is an omen, but you're not sure if it's fair or ill.

## **Six of Hearts - Discomfort**

You spend the day hungry, distracted, and uncomfortable, plagued by an itch that won't go away.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*

## **Seven of Hearts - Forest on the Water**

Though there is no shore in sight, in this part of the Wringwaste, treetops spring up from the water and form a forest ceiling. The trunks are tall, straight, and smooth, with a grey tinge to their bark. The leaves are a deep green; their reflections dapple the water below. Colorful beetles dot the trees, and a few even fly over your ship as you pass.

This peaceful grove on the water grants you passage. You thank it as you exit.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*



## **Eight of Hearts - Cycles**

It's daytime and the waters are calm, as always.

It's daytime and the waters are calm, as always.

It's daytime and... wait, haven't you seen that rock jutting just out of the water before? How long have you been here? Have the waters always been this still?

You turn the boat in the opposite direction.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*

## **Nine of Hearts - Bad Luck**

You lose your hat in the water here. You remember enough superstition to know that this is an unlucky act.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*

## **Ten of Hearts - Glow of Life**

As evening starts to fall, a faint glow from the water around you catches your attention. It takes you a few moments to realize that the light originates not from below the algae-covered surface of the lake, but from the algae itself: bioluminescent constellations of tiny life forms blossom around your boat, keeping you company as the hours pass.

Trusting their silent presence, you cast your net.

*You dredge up something fragile and intricate. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## Jack of Hearts - Something Old and Dead

A great distance ahead of you, you see something enormous jutting out of the water. It is too smooth to be a cliff, too thin to be a building.

As you sail closer, you realize what the towering object is: a giant, worn rib, standing just as alone as you are, marking where something powerful died long ago in the Wringwaste.

In the shadow of this great bone, you cast your net.

*You dredge up something jagged and curved. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## Queen of Hearts - Ceremony

Dots of pink cover the water ahead of you, dancing gently on the surface of the low waves. You realize they are flower petals, oddly fresh and bright for how far you are from any shore.

There is a ceremony to their presence that you sense; there must have been some purpose to their scattering. Whether it was for mourning or for celebration, however, you will never know.

As the petals drift farther and farther apart, you cast your net.

*You dredge up something beautiful and sharp. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

# SPADES

## **Ace of Spades - Safe Harbor**

This is your starting point, the harbor where your boat sets out.

## **Two of Spades - Wall of Water**

You see it coming in the distance: a giant wave many times taller than your boat is long.

You know instantly that there is no outrunning this. You wait, and brace yourself, as the enormous wave lifts you up, and bears down.

Water drenches your face and your deck, but you make it through alive.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Three of Spades - A Rousing Song**

A memory returns to your mind of some sort of song -- a sea shanty, you realize, as you hum the tune to yourself.

Eventually, the words drift into your head, and you let yourself sing fully to the empty air around you.

You don't know where or how you learned the song, but it brings you some small amount of comfort, having this melody at your lips again.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Four of Spades - A Tremor**

A shudder runs through your vessel, almost throwing you off of your feet.

You search for a sign of the cause, and then for any leak that may have opened up on the boat, but you find nothing.

You hope you haven't hit something that might feel anger towards you.

## **Five of Spades - Mysterious Sound**

In the morning, you hear something peculiar: a cricket chirping. You're far from any land, so this seems quite out of place.

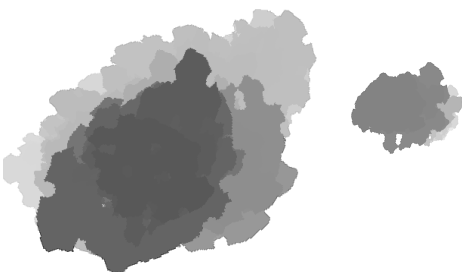
You attempt to ignore it for some time, but after a few hours of nonstop chirps, you decide to search the boat for the little creature.

You scour the vessel from bow to stern, but you don't find the bug. The chirping stays constant, not growing any louder or softer.

Just as you resign yourself to a life of sleepless nights, the noise stops.

You quickly find that you miss it.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*



## **Six of Spades - Piercing Light**

A lone lighthouse towers over the waves.

The rocks around its base are too sharp and numerous to approach -- you're not sure how anyone could have landed there in the first place, but, still, the light pierces through the night sky without end.

*Reveal any one adjacent card and decide whether or not to carry out the consequences on it.*

## **Seven of Spades - Playful Waves**

You spend an evening tossed among waves that move so sporadically they seem alive, and somehow *joyous*.

The rocky motion does no wonders for your constitution, but when the waters finally calm and you check the stars, you see the waves have simply pushed you farther on your course.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it two cards away from your Marker.*

## **Eight of Spades - Ominous Hatch**

When you wake up, a new hatch has appeared on the floor of your boat.

It seems old and worn, like it has been there for forever, but you are certain that it wasn't there yesterday.

Importantly, you notice words painted on top of it: "LEAVE ME ALONE." You oblige.

Something tells you that only a great power could have made the door so suddenly appear out of thin air, and you're not in the position to be getting on the bad side of any great powers.

You keep to yourself throughout the day, though the temptation lingers.

The next morning, the door has disappeared. In its place rests a warm, fully-cooked meal.

You happily indulge in this, you assume, thank-you gift.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Nine of Spades - A Trap Set**

Here, you see rusted metal spikes rising out of the water.

You aren't sure of their purpose at first, until you look carefully at where they sink into the water -- you think you catch sight of some sort of net woven between the poles, made from what looks like thick rope.

It's deep enough not to affect your boat; you realize this barrier must have been made to stop something deep in the water from passing.

You take your chances, passing over the web yourself.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Ten of Spades - A Message**

You see a message in a faded glass bottle, bobbing up and down among the waves. With some effort, you manage to hook and reel it in.

There is one word on the grimy page: *Dig*.

You do the next best thing, casting your net into the brackish blue.

*You dredge up something ancient and cold. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## Jack of Spades - Sweet Dreams

This night, you have a wonderful dream.

People whose faces you almost remember smile warmly at you, thanking you for where you are, for *who* you are. An orchestra plays music that turns into a choir of wind chimes, and you dance in a place without water.

When you wake up, the dream blurs in your mind, but you still feel the warmth.

You cast your net.

*You dredge up something sturdy and well-used. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## Queen of Spades - A Glowing Sky

You're not sure if you've seen an aurora before, but it doesn't particularly matter; your breath catches in your throat all the same. The lights dance infinitely in the sky above your boat, weaving a pattern too complex for a human mind to read.

You feel the faintest twinge of loneliness; it would be that much sweeter to have someone else to see the lights with.

To stave off the feeling, you cast your net.

*You dredge up something soft and colorful. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*



# CLUBS

## **Ace of Clubs - A Ghostly Presence**

It is Midnight, by your estimation, when you see it: a figure hovering silently over the water far behind you.

With some hesitation, you turn your boat, erasing some of your previous progress, and get a better look.

The figure is translucent and flowing; a person, wearing a dress with many layers and folds. You almost catch a glimpse of their expression before they fade, but you're not quite certain what you see.

You take a guess at their intentions, and cast your net.

*You dredge up something broken and discarded. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## **Two of Clubs - Nostalgia**

A memory returns to you -- warmth, someone you care about, daylight, and laughter. You strain for more, but these flashes are all that you receive.

Still, it is a comfort. You know you must not stay here forever -- you *will* leave the Wringwaste, you tell yourself -- and now it seems that perhaps you have somewhere to return to.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Three of Clubs - Flying Fish**

As you are traveling, you see flits of silver in the air-- you turn to see more clearly, and you realize they are fish, bursting through the surface of the water and catching short, beautiful flashes of sunlight on their scales.

The Wringwaste can be dreadful, but it has its small moments of wonder.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Four of Clubs - A Tense Calm**

The water here is completely still. This would not strike you as odd, but you gradually notice that it is *too* still; even your own boat doesn't seem to create a ripple.

You watch a fisher bird dive below the seamless water, leaving no sign it ever broke the surface. It does not return.

You feel uneasy here.

## **Five of Clubs - A New Sky**

The old phrase echoes through your mind -- *Red sky at morning, sailors take warning* -- but you're really not sure what to do when you wake up and the sky is a vibrant, unnatural purple.

You hope it's a good sign. It reminds you of flowers.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it as many cards to the right as possible.*

## **Six of Clubs - Towed**

You feel a jolt as something catches on your boat -- and suddenly you are travelling three times as fast, zipping forward like a deer fleeing a hunter.

You're not entirely sure the cause of this boost of speed, but you're content to let it happen.

Towards the end of the day, your vessel finally slows down.

As you strain to see what it was that dragged your boat along, you just barely catch the point of a large scale sliding back down into the depths.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Seven of Clubs - The Souls of the Lost**

A bird, white with spots of black, swoops overhead.

You remember something... you heard once that birds like this one are the souls of sailors who died at sea, bound to a feathery form and forever tossed in the winds that once guided them home.

The Wringwaste is no sea, but you wonder if the same fate befalls those who lose themselves to its murky depths.

## **Eight of Clubs - Something Dreadful**

There is blood in the water here. You aren't sure of its source -- no flesh or bones bob in the water, no broken wood signals the grave of a boat -- but there's enough of it to ice your veins with dread.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*

## **Nine of Clubs - Incomprehensible Architecture**

In the far distance, a castle builds itself upon the water's surface, towers and ramparts stretching up out of thin air.

You watch as it rises, folds in itself, rises again, towers in the sky, then fades into nothing.

You figure it was probably a mirage. Probably.

## **Ten of Clubs - Boredom**

A day has passed, and nothing at all of note has happened.

Nothing at all! In the Wringwaste! This will not do.

You cast your net, hoping for some sort of excitement.

*You dredge up something simple and loose. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## Jack of Clubs - Revelry

A purple spiral swirls through the area ahead of you, too bright and confident in its color to be the distorted stain of blood in the water. Crates of broken bottles and loose cups bob in the water nearby, hinting at either feast or treachery.

Unsettled, you cast your net.

*You dredge up something potent and tempting. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## Queen of Clubs - Uncanny Image

In a moment of calm, you peer over the side of your boat, into the water below.

You see a face looking back up at you -- not your face exactly; rather, something that has taken your features and twisted them. The grin is eerily sharp, the eyes more bloodshot than yours have ever been. It's hard to tear your gaze away, as the face that is not your own whispers something to you.

You can't hear it, from where you are, but you know it is something important, something lovely and deep, a secret that only you yourself could know.

You decide to cast your net here.

*You dredge up something forbidden and decayed. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

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# DIAMONDS

## **Ace of Diamonds - Ancient Pillars**

Ten stone spires protrude from the water, forming the shape of a crown.

The waters still in the center of the ring, emanating a patient atmosphere that causes you to hush.

In the center of the rocky pillars, you cast your net.

*You dredge up something ornate and useless. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## **Two of Diamonds - Windtossed**

Wind whips your face as the waters foam around your boat -- you see an immense column of water rise into the sky.

It's a tornado, formed above the lake itself.

You close your eyes and brace yourself. It is all you can do.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it to the Ace of Spades.*

## Three of Diamonds - Reflections

You see a boat in the distance; it piques your interest, as you can faintly make out the shape of a person.

You sail closer. After a half-hour's time, you pause... You recognize the shape of the boat, the color, and the name on the side: this is *your* boat, the one you are on right now.

Looking intently at the lone figure aboard this other boat, you see them now in more detail-- you are certain, without a doubt, that that is the back of *your* head.

At the same time, you feel the uncanny prickling of eyes on the back of your own head.

Your instincts scream to turn around, to see what is watching you, to learn what is happening. You fight them, keeping your eyes locked straight ahead.

The figure in front of you does not turn.

You stay frozen like this for minutes, though it feels like hours, and then the other ship turns.

As soon as it curves to the side, it vanishes, and you let out a sigh of relief, allowing yourself to move again.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Four of Diamonds - Temperature Drop**

You wake up to find that water around your vessel has completely frozen, locking you in place.

The air still stings with an unforgiving chill, and the sky is clouded over in white.

You spend a few hours simply waiting for the thaw to come.

Eventually, the glinting ice recedes into water, leaving no sign it ever existed.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it two cards closer to your Marker.*

## **Five of Diamonds - A Colorful Sky**

After a bad bout of rain and choppy water, the skies finally clear and a brilliant rainbow forms.

You know this is a good omen.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## **Six of Diamonds - Leave the Eels Be**

The eels live here, writhing in knots. You know not to linger.



## Seven of Diamonds - Release

This night, as you lay down to rest in the gentle shaking of your boat, you weep.

You cry large, warm tears that don't seem to stop; your body curls inwards and holds itself.

It is hours before sleep comes but it is so very sweet when it does.

When you wake up, you feel refreshed, like something inside of you has been released.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card away from your Marker.*

## Eight of Diamonds - Deadly Bursts

Geysers burst out of the water here like the spout of a giant whale.

You take the time to navigate them steadily, knowing that if one were to hit your boat it might capsize you completely.

You make it through alive, but you find you have lost many hours to this venture.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*

## **Nine of Diamonds - Sick on the Water**

You're not generally prone to seasickness, you remember that much, but this day your head swims and your stomach heaves.

It's a miserable affair that takes up most of your attention, leaving you weak and strained through the day and into the night. It is the early hours of dawn when you manage to at last catch a bit of sleep.

*If the Deep Hunter has arrived, move it one card closer to your Marker.*

## **Ten of Diamonds - A Murder**

You glance over at the stern of your boat, hearing a flutter of wings. A bird has settled onto the back of your vessel -- you have no clue where it came from or why it is resting here, but beyond the oddness of its sudden presence, there is another unusual detail: this is no water-faring bird. This is a crow.

It blinks at you with inscrutable dark eyes, unmoving.

Your vessel continues to move. This is hardly the most unusual thing to happen on these waters, after all. As hours pass, more wing flaps sound -- every time you glance to the back of your boat, it seems more birds have arrived. Around midday, your craft has become a sea of feathers and hooked claws.

You realize they are waiting for something. You cast your net, and the crows take off in one heavy cloud.

*You dredge up something shiny and empty. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## **Jack of Diamonds - Tumultuous Waters**

Here, the water bubbles up into a thick foam, with no discernible cause.

You feel no ripples of boiling heat, and you see no giant aquatic beasts engaged in a thrashing battle, so you decide to cast your net.

*You dredge up something small and useful. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

## **Queen of Diamonds - Abandoned Vessel**

In front of you, the surface of the water is broken by a great curved shape: the hull of a boat, turned upside down and weathered with age.

You can see what look like faint watery handprints down the side. It's probably best not to question it.

You decide here is as good a place as any to cast your net.

*You dredge up something unassuming and perfectly dry. Write down what that item is on your cargo list.*

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# DEEP HUNTERS

## **King of Hearts - Colossus**

Something ancient and vast moves through the water, following the trail of stirred motion your vessel produces.

You've caught glimpses of it before, after falling in the water, and you'll never forget that giant, piercing eye.

A kraken is on the hunt for your ship, or perhaps for you yourself.

## **King of Spades - Angler**

You faintly recall hearing of a deadly, deceptive hunter in these waters -- one of the few memories you still cling to -- but you didn't realize it would find you so suddenly.

It's impossible to tell what this thing is; all you know is that sometimes, a bright, enormous light appears in the water, and a faint singing starts to creep into your head. The singing makes you almost forget the great shadowed shape lumbering behind the glow.

You know you must avoid swimming towards the light, at all costs.

## **King of Clubs - Diver**

A person is following your trail, plunging deep into the water to pursue you, in a way that is beyond human.

You have heard them knock on the hull of your boat; you have seen messages carved jaggedly into rocks and wood.

You know they want you dead.

## **King of Diamonds - Cursed Vessel**

A decaying ship much larger than your boat follows you through the Wringwaste.

What fills you with dread is the way it moves: the ship glides eerily quickly under the water itself, with only an overgrown crow's nest breaching the surface.

You've never seen any shadowed shapes manning the vessel below, but you haven't exactly gotten a good look, and most of it is too far down to properly see.

Nevertheless, it trails after you. Sometimes, in the dead of night, the creaking of wood and the screaming of rusted metal pierces your ears, waking you up, and you must quicken your pace to escape the ghostly pursuer.

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# MYSTERIES OF THE DOCKS

## **King of Hearts - The Search**

You remember now, finally: this hallowed lake, the Wringwaste -- this is the new body of that ancient myth: the River Styx. You are dredging up lost things in the river of death.

*Every item is tied to a person. Who or what are you searching for?*

## **King of Spades - The Return**

You remember now, finally: these items, all of them-- are *yours*, lost in the Wringwaste long ago. You've come to bring them home.

*What story of your past do these items tell?*

## **King of Clubs - The Disaster**

You remember now, finally: the Wringwaste is no lake; it is a graveyard, a valley filled suddenly with water in a great, unceasing flood. You have come here to find lost items and return them to their owners, huddled in shelters far away from here.

*Out of everyone, why were you chosen for this undertaking?*

## King of Diamonds - The Offering

You remember now, finally: the Wringwaste and everything in it is the body of a giant, slumbering lake god. The items you've dredged up are all gifts, presented to you with meaning and purpose.

*What does the sleeping god want from you?*

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