

How to Play Across the Endless Sea

You'll need 3-5 players. Set aside around three hours to play. You'll need a copy of each playbook, a copy of the Map (or some blank paper), the Facet decks (or the list), the Encounter Rules, and a copy of this sheet.

To start, pick someone to read this aloud:

The Endless Sea flows out beyond the horizon. Its tides and stars are strange, and its weather wild and treacherous. Each island and outcrop that breaks the surface is more perilous and wondrous than the last. Outlandish travelers roam the face of the water, while weirder creatures lurk beneath.

Across this dream-like expanse, there are a People making a long journey.

The People are travelers, wanderers, voyagers. They are known for their keen eyes, their skillful hands, their lovely voices. Their hearts are as untamed as the sea itself, and their memories as deep.

They journey towards a far-off destination, hoping for a safe arrival.

They journey Across the Endless Sea.

Next, choose an Aspect of the People and a Facet of the Endless Sea playbook each.

Make and declare whatever decisions the Aspect playbooks ask you to. Make sure this includes the Heart choosing the People's destination (if the Heart is not in play, decide as a group).

Finally, read out the Encounter Rules. Explain to the group that not all encounters represent obvious threats, but all should pose a danger to the People. Which isn't to say they can't offer rewards, if handled properly...

To begin play, choose someone to play the Endless Sea, have them draw a prompt from their Facet's deck (or randomly roll it off the table), and then resolve an Encounter per the rules on their Facet playbook.

Play lasts for eight encounters: a randomly-determined one for each of the first five months of the People's half-year journey, and three encounters chosen by the players of various Aspects.

The Voice frames an encounter between the third and fourth months, showing what has changed since the last voyage; The Eyes frame another between the fourth and fifth months, as The People near their destination; and The Hands frame a last encounter during the sixth month, featuring the last challenge The People must overcome. (If any of these playbooks are absent, have the group choose all together).

(If you have time and you are having fun, you may choose to play out two Encounters per month.)

Between encounters, feel free to describe how the People live while they are on the Endless Sea.

Draw a record of your journey on the Map, month by month, and note what you win and lose along the way.

Play ends after the People arrive at their destination. Have the Memory choose how the People mark the end of their voyaging. As a group, describe the ceremony that marks the end of The People's journey and any final scenes you desire, then you are finished.

How to Run Encounters

When an encounter is called for, follow this procedure:

1. Choose a player to run the encounter. They will draw a prompt from the encounter deck linked to their Facet of the Endless Sea (or roll one randomly on the associated table).
2. The person playing the Endless Sea asks and answers (silently to themselves) the questions on their Facet playbook about the prompt. They may give as many answers as they see fit. If they wish, they may ask some of these questions of the Aspect players.
3. The person playing the Endless Sea describes the signs that signal the coming of this encounter. They describe how the People first sight it, and what impressions they get.
4. The remaining players talk together and quickly choose a lead Aspect to meet the encounter. This choice can be based on strategic considerations, or what makes sense, or what seems most interesting, or who hasn't had a turn yet/in a while: whichever the group wishes.
5. The lead Aspect asks the person playing the Endless Sea questions about the encounter, per the move in their playbook. The Endless Sea player must answer fairly and truthfully. If they do not know what to answer, they may ask another Facet for help.
6. The lead Aspect makes a choice how the People will meet the encounter, per the move in their playbook (they can declare this choice or keep it secret, their call). Then they describe what this choice looks like: what the People do, how they overcome the encounter. If the person playing the Endless Sea needs clarification after, they may ask questions.
7. The lead Aspect asks the person playing the Endless Sea whether the course of action they have described succeeds.
8. The person playing the Endless Sea considers what was described, what they know about the encounter, and choices they may have made that are still secret. They then give an answer – either it works completely, it works barely or at a cost, or it fails to work – and say how many things are lost and won in the encounter, per their Facet sheet.
9. The lead Aspect will ask other Aspects to choose what is won or lost per the moves on their individual playbooks. These choices will be recorded on the People playbook.
10. Narrate anything that feels necessary to close the scene. Discard the prompt, and describe together how the People journey onwards until the next encounter begins.

Happy sailing!

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