

There's Something Rotten in the City of Q*Berg

A Role Playing Game in One Jump by Chris Perrin of Astral Beacon Games

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I. Introduction

What's this Game About?

Welcome to *There's Something Wrong in the City of Q*Berg*, the only Q*Bert role playing game that the author is currently aware exists. Making it the Greatest Q*Bert Game You'll Ever Play™. TSWITCoQ, as it's commonly known, is a game of high adventure, drama, and an exploration of the depths of spirit that can only come from solving all of your problems by jumping.

And sarcasm. Don't forget sarcasm.

In TSWITCoQ, you have one of two options. You can work to save Q*Berg and make it a better place for all its Q*Denizens by taking on the role of one of the Q*Folk and jumping your way to a better tomorrow. Conversely, for those with a non-conformist streak in their hearts, you can play one of the Coiled, giant snakes who cause problems for all by jumping. Either way, get set for a (mostly) diceless game where success is determined by hopping and shooting the occasionally booger.

Here's what you are going to need to play TSWITCoQ:

- A qharacter sheet (which can be found at the end of this text)
- A Q*Token. This can be something a simple as a quarter, a dust bunny, or one of those things that sell the PSP. You can also see "Chapter X: Making Your Own Q*Bert" (it's not just for serious TSWITCoQ players anymore) for how to make your very own Q*Token. Each character who is a Q*Folk will need a Q*Token and the Q*Bert Master (QM) may need one as well.
- A Coily token. Again, this can be something very simple or

something much cooler like a green pipe cleaner™. Each player playing a Coiled will need a token.

- An Ugg and a Wrongway token. These two purple gremlins should definitely be represented by something cool like a \$2 coin or perhaps some lint.
- A Slick and a Sam token. If you remember, they were green pineapples. So they need tokens. At this point, you're probably running out of ideas and should just use a penny. Or a *whole* green pineapple since just a piece of a pineapple would drip juice all over the game.
- Two or more small red balls to represent the small red balls in the game
- Disc tokens will be used to represent the discs that Q*Folk use to escape. A starting Q*Guy or Q*Girl will typically start out with 2 discs. At 91st level, Q*Bert has up to fifteen discs at his disposal.
- Several decks of cards.
- Lastly, the QM will need a randomizer. TSWITCoQ is one of the elite games that uses a D2 for all randomization. This means that you can use any D you want, but a coin works just as well. As a side note, any rule which would call for a die roll other than a D2 should be considered too silly to be in the game.

(That's really a much more complicated list of things that we at Astral Beacon first realized...)

A Little More About Q*Berg

Q*Berg is happy little town near the Qacific Qcean across the qontinent from the much more heavily copyrighted Q*Burg, though the two high school football teams do meet once a season to determine the state qhampion. Q*Berg is much like any town. Q*Folk live their lives in a relative state of happiness. They get up, kiss their qhildren, go to the jobs in their qars, work, come home, have family dinner, watch some entertaining Supercade shows on the TV and go to bed.

Q*Berg's Economic and Political Machine

Q*Berg is home to several prosperous businesses, including S&S Green Pineapple Plantations, a division of Bush Bioweapons, Inc., the Wacky Happy Red Ball Company, and Gottleib Pinball Games, makers of the hottest pinball games in all of the Q*World. The current mayor of Q*Bert is Dee Warren and the city planner is Lee Jay. These two tireless Q*Folk work to keep Q*Berg a fun and exciting place to live, while dreaming on day of making Bigger, More Exciting Q*Berg, a town twice the size of the current city and more exciting to boot. Still, Q*Berg seems like a good enough place as it's been ported all over the place.

The Geography of Q*Berg

Q*Berg is shaped very much like a pyramid with the mayor's house at the very top, everyone else's houses in the middle, and the city's shopping and entertainment districts near the bottom. Q*High, Q*Middle School, and Q*Grammar School can be found in the middle of the pyramid right next to each other, while the Qollege sits at the bottom of the pyramid and sprawls across several city squares.

Peculiar to Q*Berg are a collection of levitating discs which the mayor once created to take the Q*Folk to his house. Any Q*Folk can hop on a disk and be quickly, but safely transported to the mayor's house at the top of the pyramid where they can stop by for tea or to discuss the intricacies of creating a series of repeating squares in the times before PCs. Not something most Q*Folk tend to be that interested in, actually.

The Dark Shadow Over Q*Berg

All is not completely fantastic in Q*Berg. First of all, there's the Wacky Happy Red Ball Company's tendency towards industrial accident. Each mishap spews hundreds of red balls into the air which fall upon the noggins of innocent Q*Folk. These occurrences unfailingly elicit all sorts of cursing from those hit. This, of course, sets a bad example for the younger Q*Folk, who learn all sorts of bad words.

Recently, there have been rumors of strange experiments at the S&S Green Pineapple Plantations. They say that the Plantation is filled with an eerie light and strange moaning coming from where the trees grow the thickest. No one is quite sure what to make of the rumors, but most attribute them to the imagination of qhildren. Unknown to the larger Q*Population, S&S is just a front for Bush Bioweapon's Living Pineapple Combat Solider program, a horrific attempt to turn green pineapples into the ultimate solder.

The Coiled

To make matters even more complicated for the town, the Coiled have returned. Well, technically, they never really left. They were always living in the sewers of Q*Berg, content with a life of swimming in the water and eating Q*Mice until they had an

encounter with a pair of nefarious purple gremlins.

On the run from the Q*Police from Q*Town, Evil Gremlins Extraordinaire Ugg and Wrongway decided to hide out in sewers under Q*Berg until the authorities lost their sent (which is not easy to do since gremlins are known for their stench.)

At first, the Coiled greeted Ugg and Wrongway with open arms ... er ... scales I guess. A simple people of happy snakes, the Coiled brought the gremlins a feast of Q*Mice to dine on and listened intently to their tales of the world outside the sewers. Until then, no good Coiled would ever need to get out of the sewers, not when there was so much to do and eat under the city.

Unfortunately, gremlins are smart. They knew that they would always be on the run unless they could somehow distract the Q*Folk. What better way to distract them than with an army of snakes twice their size (even when coiled)?

Subtly at first, they began to subvert the naïve Coiled. They told the snakes that they were being unfairly hunted down by Q*Folk just because they were different. These stories filled the egalitarian but naïve reptiles with hatred for the evil, conniving (to their mind) Q*Folk. Soon, the Coiled got together and vowed to stop the Q*Folk's harassment by jumping on them and bruising them worse than the Wacky Happy Red Balls. Ugg and Wrongway, being practical gremlins, realize this is a start.

This is the world of TSWITCoQ...

II. Character Creation

Character creation in TSWITCoQ is no small matter. There are lots of choices, seven of them, to be exact. All of which will greatly affect how you play TSWITCoQ.

You will start by choosing a name for your character. This is very important because without a name, no one will know what to call your character. Actually, you can do this last if you want. But we're not reminding you.

Next, pick a race for your character, then a class, then customize that character by choosing attributes, skills, talents, equipment, and if you want, a faction, for your Q*Folk or Coiled character. Each of these will have grave consequences on your character (at least as grave as consequences can be in this game.)

Race

There are currently two races available to the player characters of *There's Something Wrong in the City of Q*Berg*. You can choose to be either a Q*Folk or a Coiled. For those of you not alive in the 80s or living in a hole in the time, a Q*Folk is a big poofy orange ball with two legs, no arms, and a schnozz big enough to shoot boogers out of (had the original plans gone through.) A Coiled is best represented by Coily, the green snake who's twice the size of the average Q*Folk.

Choose to be on the Q*Folk if you want to be basically good. Choose a Coiled if you want to be basically evil (though you were tricked into being evil *and* your form of evil is basically jumping on Q*Folk.) Some of you may not like such stereotyping (good=Q*Bert, bad + jumping = Coiled), but this game is far too simple to worry about such things. If you

really want to play a good hearted Coiled, talk to your QM. You're his/her/its problem at the point and the folks at Astral Beacon wash their hands of the whole matter entirely.

Q*Folk Race

Nickname: furballs

Description: For those of you not alive in the 80s or living in a hole in the time, a Q*Folk is a big poofy orange ball with two legs, no arms, and a schnozz big enough to shoot boogers of (had the original plans gone through.) (That should sound familiar.)

Attribute bonus: +2 Strength (Got to be strong to fight off head hits)

Disadvantageous Trait: *Foul mouthed.* Any time a Q*Folk takes a hit or falls of a pyramid and does not curse suffers and immediate -1,000,000,000 XP bonus penalty. (Don't **** with this rule!)

Curse Word: Any combination of characters you can type by hitting shift and then pressing a number on a keyboard. Also, all curses must end in a '!'. If a curse word does not end in at least one '!', the Q*Folk suffers a -1 XP penalty per scene.

Special Bonus: At level 20, all Q*Folk gain the *Bazooka Schnozz* bonus Talent.

This allows them the sickening ability to fire projectile boogers from the gargantuan noses. Q*Folk can fire a number of boogers equal to the Dexterity score which automagically hit their target.

Once you've burned all your Dexterity, it's up to the QM to determine if they hit so don't play this game with a QM that's looking for revenge. It's a good rule of thumb anyway.

Hitting a Coiled or another Q*Folk with a booger causes them to move one square in any direction (your choice.)

If the target of the booger is a Q*Folk, they must immediately use their curse or suffer a -1,000,000,000 XP penalty. If a Q*Folk or Coiled falls off the pyramid, they lose the conflict.

Note: Q*Folk have no arms or hands. They can grip with their schnozz, but they are not capable of fine, undetected movements.

Coiled Race

Nickname: snakes

Description: The Coiled are green snakes roughly five times as long as a Q*Folk, though when they're out of the sewers, they coil up (hence the name) so they can jump around. The Coiled's faces are normally locked in a demonic grin because that's how they look when they smile and they tend to be a rather happy folk.

Attribute Bonus: +2 Strength (They've been lifting weights to cause more bruises)

Racial Weakness: *Coily See, Coily Do.* If a Coiled is following a Q*Folk (following means moving directly towards a Q*Folk for two or more rounds) and that Q*Folk uses an escape disc or just falls off the pyramid, the Coiled must jump in the same direction the Q*Folk took even if it means that the Coiled falls off the edge of the pyramid.

If the Coiled's Dexterity is higher than the Q*Folk it is chasing, the QM can flip a coin or roll a D2. If heads, it means the Coiled must take the jump as normal. If tails, the Coiled and take a jump directly backwards.

Curse Word: Any word that sounds like a hiss. Coiled don't use swear words. They've seen what it will do the children.

Special Bonus: *Egg-Based Deployment.* At Level 1, the Coiled gain the Talent to enter into combat as an egg. This means that the will fall like a ball until the hit the second to last row of the conflict. Once they

reach the second to last level of the conflict, they will spring forth in full Coiled glory and act as normal. In egg form, the Coiled is impervious to Bazooka Schnozz boogers.

At Level 20, the Coiled can choose when to burst forth from the egg.

Note: Coiled have no arms or hands. They can grip with their tongues, but they are not capable of fine, undetected movements.

Classes

Once you have chosen your character's race, you must then choose your character's class. Some classes are only available to certain races. Please don't let us hear about a Coiled taking a Q*Folk class. That would kill the balance of the game and probably tear some hole in the fabric of the qniverse. Just don't do it. Or don't tell us.

Q*Folk

Nickname: High Priest of the True Qod (What? What are you looking at?)

Minimum Requirement: Must be of Q*Folk race

Description: The Q*Folk class is the standard class for all Q*Folk. It empowers the Q*Population of Q*Berg to use the special teleportation disks set up by the mayor of Q*Berg to scoot around town. The more experienced Q*Folk are, the more disks they can bring into a conflict.

Class Disadvantage: *Class-based Foul Mouth.*

Any Q*Folk class who does not curse when he takes damage or falls off the pyramid is subject to a -1,000,000,000 XP penalty (Don't **** with this rule either.)

Special Bonus: *Disc Control Talent.* Starting at Level 1, the Q*Folk class can ride disks which take them to the top of the pyramid (either to the mayor's house outside of conflict or to

the top of the pyramid in conflict.) There are a virtually unlimited number of discs available to a Q*Folk outside of a conflict. The number of discs a Q*Folk can bring into conflict is noted in Chart 1: The Number of Discs a Q*Folk can Bring into Conflict.

Chart 1: The Number of Discs a Q*Folk can Bring Into Conflict

Level	Discs
1-5	2
6-10	3
11-15	4
16-25	5
26-45	6
46-57	7
58-71	8
72	9
73-80	10
81-85	11
86-90	12
91	15

Coiled Class

Nickname: Evil Do-Badder

Minimum Requirement: Must be of the Coiled Race

Description: The Coiled class is the class of the Coiled race. Being one of the Coiled gives the Coiled the Talent to call in Reinforcements, or help from other parties interested in seeing an end to the happy smiling faces of the Q*Population, the joyful frolicking of the qhildren, and so on. It is important to note that the average Coiled has no real desire to see any of these things happen, but they're too pawnish to know they're being used as the less important pieces on the chess board. Like a bishop.

Class Disadvantage: *Determined.* A Coiled must announce his attentions when framing a scene and keep to that purpose throughout the scene. Changing the Coiled's intentions before the conflict is HARD and causes a Social Conflict (see Social Conflict below.)

Special Bonus: *Reinforcements*

At Level 1, the Coiled can call in help from Ugg, Wrongway, Slick and Sam. The level of the Coiled determines if help can be called and in what round the help can appear. All reinforcements are under the control of the QM until the Level 91. At Level

91, the player can direct the reinforcement's actions that she called in. The number of reinforcements and when they can be called is listed in

Chart 2: The Number of Reinforcements and When They Can be Called.

Chart 2: The Number of Reinforcements and When They Can be Called

Level	Sam	Slick	Ugg	Wrongway
1-5	X	5	4	X
6-10	X	4	3	4
11-15	X	3	3	4
16-25	4	2	2	3
26-45	4	I	2	3
46-57	3	I	2	3
58-71	3	I	I	2
72	4	I	I	2
73-80	2	I	I	2
81-85	2	I	I	I
86-90	2	I	I	I
91	I	I	I	I

X = Cannot Be Called

I = Can Be Called Immediately

Attributes

Once you have selected your Race and Class, it's time to allocate points to your attributes. Attributes measure a character's inborn abilities such as their ability to do physical activity over a period of time or shoot boogers from their insanely large nasal cavities.

All folk in the Q*World: Q*Folk, gremlins, homicidal pineapples, and Coiled alike, have four attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Conditioning, and Charisma. Each defines your character and will help you succeed in the game.

- **Strength:** For the Q*Folk, this is your ability to withstand damage. For the Coiled, it's the ability to deal damage.
- **Dexterity:** Dexterity determines who goes first in a round. Also, for the Q*Folk, this is the number of times you can fire a booger at your foes (after level 20.) In the Coiled, it determines the ability not to fall off the cliff like a Lemming.

It also gives bonuses, assigned by the QM, to succeed at any locking picking or pickpocket checks. (Maybe we shouldn't work on two projects at once.)

- **Conditioning:** For both races, this determines how many subsequent turns a character can act in a conflict.
- **Charisma:** This is the ability for characters to bluff another one. It can be used as a modifier for social conflicts and is the modifiers that can be used when a Q*Folk tries to change a Coiled's mind (see Determined above and Social Conflicts below.)

All attributes start at 1. Then add any racial bonuses. Finally, you have 3 points to distribute amongst your

attributes. No attribute may be higher than 4 to start and no more than 12 ever.

Skills

Skills measure what the character knows. There are three skills in Q*Bert: Jump, Pick Lock and Pick Pocket. Characters have 5 skill points they can allocate between the three skills.

- **Jump.** The ability to project oneself some measured distance by using your lower extremities (legs or coiled tail) to power the movement. Jump can only be attempted by characters that have a coiled tail or one more legs.
- **Pick Lock.** This is the criminal ability to use small metal tools called lock picks to open a lock and thereby gain illegal entry into a home. No character who is lacking hands can pick a lock.
- **Pick Pocket:** This is the ability to take something from another individual without their notice. At least one hand is required to pick a pocket.

Talents

Talents measure the special abilities that a character has that give them the power to fight or cause evil. All races and classes give special bonus Talents, some good, some bad, to the players. These talents tend affect conflicts. However, a character needs more Talents as well which define the character and make him or her who he or she really is or isn't.

All starting characters start with three more Talents of the players' choosing. They can be things like "Wears High School Letter Jacket" or "Carries Megaphone Around to Use When Swearing" or "In Continual State of Confusion Because SciFi Channel Chose Not To Pickup Stargate SG-1 For Another Season." Talents should be used when role playing, but shouldn't affect a conflict unless the QM okays (we can't figure out why that silly QM would.)

So go ahead, write them down on your character sheet.

Factions

Factions don't exist in Q*Berg. But if they did, they would probably be secret organizations older than time itself or more than a few days anyway, each with their own secret agendas and requirements. While no factions exist in Q*Berg, here are a few that might possibly exist.

All Factions have requirements which must be met in game terms to join. If those requirements are met, the player can petition the QM for entry. If the QM is up for it, the QM should make the character do something hazingish to get in. Upon getting in, the player gains the Bonus Talent and the Bonus Not So Good Talent.

The Q*Knights Temquar

The Q*Knights Temquar claim to be descended from the First Q*, who is so ancient he, she or it has nothing after the asterisk. The Q*Knights of Temquar have made it their sworn duty to protect the lineage of the First Q* even though they're not sure who the true Heir to the Q* dynasty is, though they all claim to be vaguely related.

Requirements: The Q* Knights accept only Q*Folk of 15th level or greater who have Talents which prove they are solemn or pious or at least somewhat serious.

Bonus Talent: *Sword Schnozz*. The Q*Folk can wield a sword in his Schnozz which can, in effect, give him the bonus of one extra booger per conflict (even at 15th level.)

Bonus Not So Good Talent: *Prone To Arguing Over Minutiae*. The Q*Knights Temquar are big historians and know a lot about the First Q*, however, they tend to get bogged down in arguments about his/her/its exact nature. The most popular current debate is how many Q* can one fit upon the head of a pin. No popular answer has yet emerged.

Martial Arts Movie Fans

Martial Arts Movie fans are a strange lot of both Coiled and Q*Folk who meet in secret caverns and watch Q*Ackie Q*an and other kung fu movies. Of all the Factions, which don't exist we swear, the Martial Arts Movie Fans are the most egalitarian as both the Coiled and the Q*Folk like these movies.

Requirements: Some Talent which would show a predisposition towards liking martial arts, knowing martial arts, or liking movies. Both races can join this faction.

Bonus Talent: *Peace Amongst the Races.* No members of the Martial Arts Movie Fans will ever fight one another. A Q*Folk member of this faction who attempts Social Conflict gains a -2 modifier to the conflict. A Coiled who is a member of this faction gets a +2 or -2 modifier to the conflict (the Coiled player's choice.)

Bonus Not So Good Talent: *I Know Kung Fu! *POW* No I Don't.* Joining this faction makes members think they know martial arts when they don't. This makes them prone to try and show off their prowess, which normally ends badly. If the character knew martial arts before they joined this Faction, they lose that Talent instantly.

The O*Folk

The O*Folk once ruled Q*World (which they called O*World) and resent the domination of the Q*World by the Q*Folk. It used to be their O*World, and now they want it back.

Actual racial O*Folk are small in number and keep mainly to themselves living in the mountains and caves outside of Q*Berg. If they must come into town, they don huge prosthetic schnozzes and tuck their hands into the furry selves. They are recruiting Q*Folk and Coiled to further their aims.

O*Folk are always plotting to take back what is rightfully theirs.

Requirements: Some Talent which would make the character hateful, vengeful, or gullible. Both races can join this faction.

Bonus Talent: *Explosives.*

Bonus Not So Good Talent: *Only Basic Knowledge of Detonators.*

Q*Science has really left discovery of stable detonation devices alone. The O*Folk have not yet really mastered the knowledge either.

Ninjas

Do ninjas need any description?

Requirements: Ninjas require at least 5 ranks of Jump, 5 points of Pick Lock, and 5 points of Pick Pocket. Or QM fiat. Only Coiled can be Ninjas.

Bonus Talent: *Being Really Cool, Like Ninja Cool.* You're really cool and you can do things like decapitate humans with playing cards. Good thing there are no humans in the game. Yet.

Bonus Not So Good Talent: *Delivery Boy.* At any moment after three rounds of a conflict, any player can call for a D2 roll. If it's heads (or 1) all ninjas in the conflict must leave and deliver fast food. This removes them from the board for 2 turns. They re-enter at the top of the pyramid.

QG-1

QG-1 is part of elite team that explores the galaxy using specialized Q Rings that have been adapted for the purpose. Typically, only members of the military or Egyptologists can join QG-1. Really, the circumstances for Egyptologists joining have to be pretty spectacular because Q*World doesn't have an Egypt, and if it did, it would have been called Q*Gypt anyway.

Requirements: A member of QG-1 must be at least Level 30 and have some affiliation with the military. Or be an Egyptologist with some really wacked out theories. Only Q*Folk can be part of QG-1.

Bonus Talent: *Script Immunity.*

Should a QG-1 member find herself in a situation which would cause them to suffer hardship or death *outside of a conflict*, that QG-1 member can call for a *deus ex machina* in the form of some goofball alien technology. The use of Script Immunity forces the character to play out a scene which should advance the plotline in no significant way.

Bonus Not So Good Talent:

Technobabble. After joining QC-1, the character can no longer explain anything in plain Qnglish. If any in-character conversation goes on for more than a few sentences and the other characters understand more than a bit of it, the player is penalized -5 XP.

The Ancient Order of the Q*Bringers of Q*Light

They don't exist. At all.

Requirements: You can't join them, they don't exist.

Bonus Talent: *Call on Armeggedon.*

This is a ritual that will essentially call the end of Q*World and all its citizens (except Q*Cockroaches). This ritual takes 3D4 days and costs 1.8 million credits.

Bonus Not So Good Talent: *Non-existence.* Members of this Faction which don't exist don't exist.

Lawyers

They really aren't a secret. They're just lawyers.

Requirements: A lawyer must be at least 12th Level and have a Charisma of 4 or better.

Bonus Talent: *I Object!* Anytime another player tries to use a Talent to get a bonus, the lawyer can object to its use in the scene. This Talent can only be used once per game session.

Bonus Not So Good Talent: *I'm a Lawyer.* We leave this up to the player and the QM.

Equipment

A Q*Folk or Coiled can carry whatever equipment they so choose as long as the QM is cool with it. Equipment has great role playing value, but should never confer a penalty of more than +1 or -1 in determining a conflict's difficulty.

Oh yeah, always carry rope. Always.

III. Playing the Game

A game of TSWITCoQ is divided into the following units:

1. **Campaign** A group of several Games.
2. **Game (also called a Session)** A single time when players sit down and play.
3. **Scene** A single plot point where two sides bring opposing ideas into contention, determines stakes, and cause conflict.
4. **Conflict** When two or more players duke it out to see who wins the scene and gets to narrate the aftereffects

In effect, a game is composed of several scenes which come together to form a longer, far reaching campaign.

To start a campaign, the QM gets a group of players together who create their characters. The QM should have an idea of the story that's going to be told and will guide their players through the various parts of the story. Each player controls a character and will help narrate the story by determining how the character acts and what the results are of winning a conflict.

The story in TSWITCoQ is broken down into individual Scenes which are a discrete happening in the game where two or more sides who have opposing viewpoints or ideas resolve their difference in the Court of Conflict.

*For instance, let's say that Quincy decides to be QM for Amy, Bob, and Charlie. Quincy wants to tell the tale of a Coiled named Cally as she tries to wreak havoc on Q*Berg. Amy, Bob, and Charlie are dying to play the game and create Q*Folk characters who for the purposes of clarity are named Q*Amy, Q*Bob, and Q*Charlie, even though any self respecting Q*Folk would laugh at such absurd names.*

Cally is a Coiled Coil Level 5 NPC. Her attributes are: Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Conditioning 3, Charisma 2. She has 3 Levels of Jump, 1 of Pick Lock and 1 of Pick Pocket. Her Talents are Sneaky, Former Postal Worker, and Afraid of Spiders.

IV. Playing a Scene

As mentioned above, a game session is composed of one or more scenes. To play a scene, the QM first announces the overall framework in which the scene will take place. This typically involves where and when the scene is taking place and who amongst the non-player characters that QM controls will be acting in the scene.

Next, all Coiled who have not gotten rid of their Determined Talent must announce their intentions. This is their characters set of goals until the end of the scene.

Next comes any amount of role playing the players would like to perform. This can consist of getting more information from QM, doing any prep work for the upcoming conflict, making long, flowery speeches in the hopes of getting an XP bonus for role playing, etc. TSWITCoQ is more than just a game of jumping, it's about learning what it truly means to be a hopping snake or an armless hairy ball and all that crunchy development goodness takes place during this phase.

Once all the role playing is over, the Q*Folk announce their intention and why they're entering into conflict.

After this is done, the QM must determine the difficulty level of the conflict. Difficulty level is crucial to the outcome of the conflict as it will determine the number of cards that must be controlled and how many times they must be touched to be considered controlled. As you'll read

in the section on conflicts, conflicts are resolved just like they are in the Q*Bert video game. A pyramid is constructed, however in this version the pyramid is constructed of cards (playing, baseball, etc.) which are laid out in a pyramid shape. The following chart shows the possible difficulty levels and the length of the bottom edge.

Chart 3: Possible Difficulty Levels and Length of the Bottom Edge.

Difficulty Level	Cards On Bottom
ABSURDLY EASY	4
SUPER EASY	5
REALLY EASY	6
EASY	7
AVERAGE	8
HARD	9
REALLY HARD	10
SUPER HARD	11
ABSURDLY HARD	12
IMPROABABLE	9*
NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE	10*
IMPOSSIBLE	11*
@!#?@!	12*

Difficulty levels marked with a * are double touch conflicts. That means that the Q*Folk must touch each square twice to control it.

Once the difficulty level is established, both sides can then argue that they have talents or equipment which should give them bonuses to make the task easier or harder. These bonuses are either minuses or pluses. A minus makes the task easier, a plus makes it harder. For instance, a +2 makes things two steps harder (from say HARD to SUPER HARD), a -2 makes things two steps easier (from HARD to EASY.) Nothing can be easier than ABSURDELY EASY or harder than @!#?@!.

An Example

*Back to Quincy's game. The players have been playing a few Sessions and Cally has decided to hijack a mail truck which has letters bound for Q*Town, the folks who were chasing Ugg and Wrongway.*

*To start the scene, Cally announces her intentions. To steal the Q*Mail truck from the Q*Post Office by walking up to it after it's loaded and driving away with it.*

*Q*Amy, Q*Bob, and Q*Charlie devise a counter plan. They want to catch Cally red handed (coiled?) and so they decide to watch and spring a trap on her as she slithers into the truck. After a few minutes of in-character chatting, they announce their intentions. They intend to ambush Cally, tie her into a knot, and take her to the authorities.*

Now we have a conflict.

The QM thinks for a few minutes and decides that this is a REALLY HARD scene for a few reasons:

- *Tying Cally into a knot is hard*
- *It will be difficult to stay hidden far enough away that they can see Cally without being seen and still get to the truck in time.*
- *They're not supposed to be on the premises whereas Cally is a Former Postal Worker.*
- *Cally is Sneaky.*

*Each player gets a chance to argue why the difficulty should be lowered. Amy feels Q*Amy's Talent for being "Super Strong" and her 4 in Strength should make it easier to tie Cally into a knot. This is good for -1 the QM feels. Bob looks at his character's talents and decides he's not going to be much help. Q*Charlie is a Mechanic and feels that it would be perfectly natural for him to be under the truck*

pretending to fix it, which the QM thinks is good for a -2 making the final difficulty AVERAGE.

Now the conflict starts...

Social Conflict

Except for one thing... The Social Conflict. Because Coiled are naïve, it's possible to get them to redirect their Determination towards another goal. An attempt at Social Conflict must be announced during the role playing portion of the scene BEFORE the QM has set a difficulty for the conflict.

To have a Social Conflict, a player must announce which Coiled he is going to try to fool (Q*Folk cannot be fooled unless they willingly take the Determined Talent at character creation or spend XP on it.) The player who initiates the Social Conflict compares her character's Charisma against the target Coiled's charisma. This difference is then added to the Social Conflict's difficulty (HARD.)

A quick conflict is played out between the player and her target Coiled. If the Coiled loses the conflict, the player gets to alter the Coiled's plans *slightly*. Obviously, the term slightly is up for some debate, and the final arbiter is the QM, but in general, the Coiled should still be following the same basic plan, but doing so in a less advantage manner. Should the Coiled win, the QM must apply a +2 modifier to the difficulty to the conflict which will arise at the end of the scene to reflect that the Coiled is angry at being lied to.

*Going back to the example above, let's say that Q*Bob has a Charisma of 4 and decides to enter into a Social Conflict with Cally. The QM compares Cally's Charisma of 2 with Q*Bob's Charisma of 4 to get a difference of 2. Looking at the chart above, that makes this an AVERAGE conflict. The*

*players run the conflict and Q*Bob wins. Bob, the player, decides that Q*Bob approaches Cally and convinces her that instead of stealing the truck, she should pull all the Q*Mail out and have a Q*Bonfire. The QM assigns this a difficulty of EASY to stop since she's out in the open. After various bonuses, it's a SUPER EASY conflict and Cally will likely be stopped.*

Winning the Conflict

The winner of the conflict gets to narrate the outcome of the scene (within reason.) This is why it's important to win each conflict. The winning side determines the actual events that led to their victory and narrates the immediate outcomes of the victory.

In the example above, if Cally wins she destroys the mail and gets away. If the Q*Folk win, Cally will likely be apprehended and taken to the see the mayor.

V. Conflicts

A conflict is a pen and paper version of Q*Bert. If you've never played Q*Bert, go to Yahoo!® Games and play a few games. A) You'll be addicted and B) You'll be in tune with the way conflicts are resolved.

To resolve the conflict, take out a few decks of cards and lay out a pyramid of cards. Start with 1 and then 2 and then 3 and so on until the bottommost row is the equal to the Cards On Bottom Chart 3 for the conflict's difficulty. Each card is referred to as a square in deference to the old Q*Bert game.

Place all cards face up (so you can see the suit and numbers, the sports player, the poke-creature, etc., etc.) When one of the Q*Folk jump (also called touching) on the card, put it face down. The Q*Folk side now "controls" that square. Once all cards

are face down, the Q*Folk side wins. If all the Q*Folk are reduced to Strength 0 or if they all fall off the side (make sure they curse in both cases) the Coiled side win.

The Q*Folk players can place escape discs on the edge of the pyramid whenever they choose before the game starts. Escape discs should be placed near to the edge so that it's obvious from which squares the Q*Folk can reach the disc. Typically, there are two squares close enough to a disk to reach it (by jumping up or down from the square.) See Q*Bert for a good visual representation.

All Q*Folk start at the top part of the pyramid unless it's a Q*Folk vs. Q*Folk conflict (see below.) All Coiled deploy as eggs at the start of Round 2 and begin rolling down the pyramid at a movement rate of one square downward per turn. (See Coiled Deployment.)

Rounds

Once the game is set up, the player with the highest Dexterity goes first. If there is a tie, the player with the highest Conditioning goes first. If there is still a tie, the player with the highest Charisma goes last. If there is still a tie, roll a D2.

Each round of a conflict is broken up into four turns. A character's conditioning determines if that character can act (i.e. jump) in a turn. The following chart shows which turns a character can act.

Conditioning	Turn 1	Turn 2	Turn 3	Turn 4
1	X			
2	X			X
3	X	X		X
4	X	X	X	X
5	XX	X	X	X
6	XX	X	X	XX
7	XX	XX	X	XX
8	XX	XX	XX	XX
9	XXX	XX	XX	XX
10	XXX	XX	XX	XXX
11	XXX	XXX	XX	XXX
12	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX

X = Can Act

XX=Can Act Twice Per Turn

XXX=Can Act Three Times Turn

Note: Having a Conditioning above 4 will allow the character to act multiple times in the same turn.

Second Note: By Act, the game means jump or cast a spell or use a psionic power. Everything else is a free action (i.e. call in reinforcement or shoot boogers) which can be done **before** jumping.

*In Quincy's game, Q*Bob and Cally are in conflict. Q*Bob's Conditioning is 2, Cally's Conditioning is 3. On the last turn, Q*Bob took a disc to the top of the pyramid, leaving Cally at the bottom right of the pyramid.*

At the start of Round 3, on Turn 1, both Bob and Cally move. Bob jumps off the disc on the top of the pyramid and Cally moves upwards and the left. Because Cally is in better Condition, she moves on Round 3, Turn 2 and keeps heading towards Bob. No one can move on Round 3, Turn 3 as neither have the Conditioning for it. One Round 3, Turn 4, both players move again.

Coiled Deployment

All Coileds deploy during Round 2 by landing on one of the two squared immediately below the topmost square. Which square depends on the roll of a D2: 1 or heads = right, 0 or tails = left.

Each turn, the egg moves downwards 1 square until they get to the second to last row when the Coiled bursts forth as a snake. Again, which direction downwards the Coiled rolls is determined by a D2 (1 or heads = right, 0 or tails = left). However, an egg can never, ever fall off the pyramid and if they cannot move a direction, they will not. They will just move to the other direction.

If a Q*Folk or opposing Coiled touches the egg, they take hit as if they had been jumped on (See Getting Hurt.)

Winning

The victory conditions of the conflict depend on race. A Q*Folk wins if they control all the squares (controlling = touching.) A Coiled wins if the Q*Folk falls off the pyramid or is hurt too badly to go on. The victory conditions are slightly different for Q*Folk vs. Q*Folk conflicts, Coiled vs. Coiled or Mixed Teams conflicts which are addressed before.

Getting Hurt

If a Coiled lands on a Q*Folk or another Coiled, that being takes a point of Strength Damage. This reduces his Strength by 1 for the rest of the conflict. If his Strength drops to 0, the being is Hurt and is removed from the Conflict.

If the difference between the Coiled's Strength and the Strength of the being that got jumped on is 4 or more, that target is also pushed one square in the

direction of the Coiled's controller discretion. This can cause the target to fall.

Anytime the Q*Folk loses a point of Strength, he or she is returned to the top of the pyramid stays there until the next turn he or she can act. The Coiled can go after any other foes. If the Coiled only has one opponent, she loses her Determination until her foe starts to move again. In game terms, that means the Coiled waits for its opponent to move.

All Q*Folk and Coiled heal to full Strength after the conflict.

Falling

If a Coiled or Q*Folk is knocked off the pyramid, it is removed from the conflict, but can act normally after the conflict is over.

Escape Discs

Q*Folk have the ability to place escape discs along the edge of the pyramid. If the Q*Folk chose, they can jump on to any disc which is one near the square they are currently occupying. Jumping on a disc takes the Q*Folk to a spot above the pyramid where they can rest. On a turn in which they can act, they can choose to jump down on to the top square or they can wait until their next turn. Any turn in which they wait is forfeited.

Red Balls

The rain of Wacky Happy Red Balls is never ending in a conflict. Starting on Round 2, the QM should roll a D2 at the start of every round. On a roll of 1 or heads, a red ball falls on to one of the two squares in the second row (1 or heads = right, 0 or tails = left). On a roll of 0, nothing happens. Then, once a turn, the QM should roll a D2 (1 or heads = down and right, 0 or tails = down and left) to see which way the ball should move. Red balls can fall off the edge of the pyramid and are removed from play if they fall.

Sam and Slick

The nefarious green pineapples can be called as Reinforcements by any Coiled per their Chart 2. Sam enters at the bottom right of the pyramid and Slick enters the bottom left and move towards the nearest Q*Folk or opposing Coiled.

Any square that Sam and Slick touch goes back to neutral control (the square is not controlled by any Q*Folk.) They can be defeated by being jumped on by any Q*Folk or Coiled or by being shot with a booger.

Note: A Coiled can only call Sam and Slick once per conflict. Multiple Coiled can call Sam and Slick multiple times, but there can only be 1 Sam and 1 Slick on the board at a time.

Ugg and Wrongway

These two gremlins appear to help a Coiled when called. Ugg enters at the middle right of the pyramid and Wrongway enters the middle left and move towards the nearest Q*Folk or opposing Coiled. (If there is an even number of rows in the pyramid, go for the bottom of the two middle rows.)

If Ugg or Wrongway touch an opposing Q*Folk or Coiled, that character takes

1 point of Strength damage. This removes Ugg and Wrongway from the conflict.

Note: A Coiled can only call Ugg and Wrongway once per conflict. Multiple Coiled can call Ugg and Wrongway multiple times, but there can only be 1 Ugg and 1 Wrongway on the board at a time.

Double Touch

There are three notable exceptions to the rules of control. First, if the game is so hard it's a double touch game. In this case, lay two cards face up. When the Q*Folk touches the card, turn the bottom card face down. When they land on the square a second time, turn both cards over and now the Q*Folk side controls that square. Sam and Slick turn both cards back face up meaning that the Q*Folk has to touch the square again twice.

Q*Folk vs. Q*Folk

Secondly, if two or more Q*Folk are facing off, use one card per Q*Folk for each square and two cards per Q*Folk per square if it's a double touch game because each square now can be controlled by different Q*Folk. Q*Folk in a Q*Folk vs. Q*Folk conflict start at the points of the pyramid, or if there are more than 3 Q*Folk along the edge in places of their choosing.

In an example game, if Q*Bob and Q*Amy are in conflict, the game is laid out with two sets of cards face up. One set of cards has a blue picture on the face down side and the other has a red picture on the backside. If Q*Bob touches a square, the blue card goes face down and Q*Bob controls the square. Q*Amy's card is removed from the pile and she cannot take over control of that square unless it becomes uncontrolled (if Sam or Slick jump on it.) A Q*Folk vs. Q*Folk

conflict ends when all squares are turned, if a player is taken to Strength 0 by a red ball, or if they player is knocked off the edge. Also, Q*Folk vs. Q*Folk battles can end by mutual consent if neither player wants to hop anymore.

The winner of a Q*Folk vs. Q*Folk is the player that survives (was not taken to Strength 0 or knocked off the edge) and controls the most squares.

Coiled vs. Coiled

Coiled vs. Coiled battles are much bloody. The concept of controlling squares goes away and the challenge is to take the other teams' Coiled to Strength zero by jumping on them or having them get hurt by red balls, Ugg, or Wrongway or by pushing them off the edge. Also, invert the difficulty so that the harder games use smaller pyramids per the fourth chart which shows the inverted difficulties. Double touches are removed in lieu of larger pyramids.

<u>Difficulty Level</u>	<u>Cards On Bottom</u>
ABSURDLY EASY	16
SUPER EASY	15
REALLY EASY	14
EASY	13
AVERAGE	12
HARD	11
REALLY HARD	10
SUPER HARD	9
ABSURDLY HARD	8
IMPROABABLE	7
NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE	6
IMPOSSIBLE	5
@!#?@!	4

Mixed Teams

In the case where a team is composed of Q*Folk and Coiled, the game breaks down and reality folds in on itself. Still, under these circumstances, the game must still go and must stay true to its Q*Bert roots. Victory will be determined by the Q*Folk's controlling

squares and the Coiled running interference. So if a team is made up of one Coiled and one Q*Folk vs. one Coiled and one Q*Folk, use the rules for a normal game.

Multi-Side Games

There can be conflicts with more than two parties. This is fine. Just use 1 card for each Q*Folk or let the Coiled beat each other up.

Advancing Your Character

At the end of every session, the QM will give all characters an Experience Point (XP) reward for their actions. XP rewards should be awarded for:

- Good role playing
- Achieving character goals
- Achieving goals
- Imaginative cussing (but not around qchildren)

XP are spent to purchase new skills, raise attributes, add talents, and raise the level of the character. The costs of each are:

Adding New Skills:

1 XP point per new Skill Level (to add a new Skill, not to Raise an old skill)

Raising Attributes

To raise an attribute, multiple the new level by three and spend that number of XP. For instance, going from 4 to 5 costs 15 XP (5x3=15). To go from 4 to 6, it costs 33 points (15 points for Level 5 and 18 points for Level 6.)

Adding Talents

Adding a new talent costs 2 XP

Removing Talents

It costs 10 XP to remove a Talent.

Adding Equipment

Is free. Asking your QM and add it. Or don't and just add it.

Raising a Level

Raising a level costs 1 XP times the new level. So to go from Level 29 to Level 30 costs 30 points. To go from Level 29 to Level 31 costs 61 points.

Raising a Skill

Um...

VI. Magic

All Q*Folk and Coiled are allowed to cast a spell called Jump as many times as they want per conflict. Jump allows the character to move one square in any direction.

VII. Psionics

There are no psionics in TSWITCoQ. Maybe in the *Q*Folk's Guide to Psionics* supplement. Maybe.

VIII. There's Something Wrong in the City of Q*Berg LARP

For those of you want to LARP, it's simple. Everything is exactly the same except for the conflict. Instead of using cards, use squares that you find on the floor of that you draw yourself.

So role play as normal until you get to the conflict and then start hopping on the pyramid you've made for yourself or found on the floor. There will be some amount of pause as the GM figures out where the Red Balls are falling or where the Coiled eggs are rolling so you should not get too tired. Still, bring some water. Just in case. And wear comfortable shoes.

IX. Sample Character

To get you started, here's our hero. The one, the only. Q*Bert!!!!

Name: Q*Bert

Race: Q*Folk

Class: Q*Folk

Curse: @!#?@!

Faction: The Ancient Order of the Q*Bringers of Q*Light

Level: 91

Experience: 4481 Earned / 3 XP

Description: An orange, fluffy ball of fur with a foul mouth and a bad attitude. Recently, he has started running with a slightly odd crowd and hasn't been seen.

Strength: 12

Dexterity: 12

Conditioning: 12

Charisma: 12

Skills:

Jump 1

Pick Lock 1

Pick Pocket 3

Talents:

Foul mouthed

Booger shot

Class-based Foul Mouthed

Disc Control (15 Discs)

Call on Armeggedon

Non-existence

Likes Vintage Arcade Games

Fan of Pinball

Equipment:

High school Letter Jacket

X. Making Your Own Q*Folk

Making your own Q*Folk is as easy as doing a search for "QBert" on eBay. If you want, however, you can go to the craft store and get:

- a Styrofoam sphere
- a tube
- an inch dowel rod about half the diameter of the tube
- Something that look like feet
- orange fur
- orange color
- glue on eyes

Remember, this thing will sit on a card, so you might want to make it small.

1. Color the tube and the sphere orange. Don't use coloring that will destroy Styrofoam, it defeats the purpose.
2. Stick the dowel rod into the tube and then insert it into the sphere. You can add some glue to make it stick.
3. Glue on the feet
4. Glue on the eyes
5. Glue on the fur

Viola!

XI. Character Sheet

On the last page I have included the official TSWITCoQ character sheet. I would have put it on this page, but then all of the pages would read:

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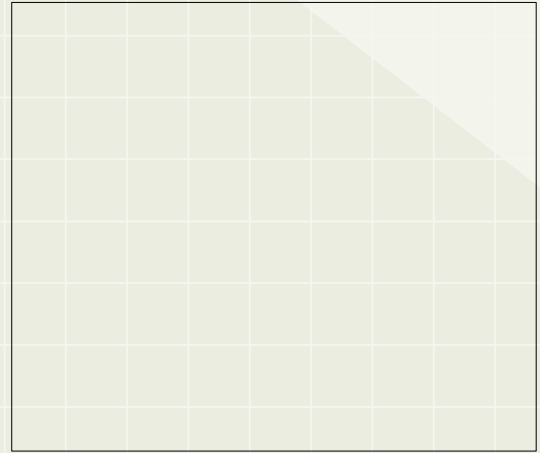
And then have the actual character sheet. That's bad for printing.

There's Something Wrong in the City of Q*Berg

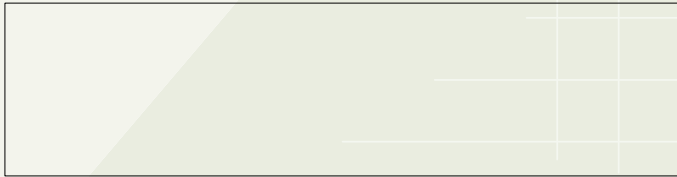
Character Sheet

Name _____
Race _____
Class _____
Curse _____
Faction _____
Level _____
Experience _____

Drawing of Your Character

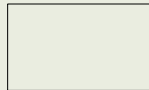


Description of your Character

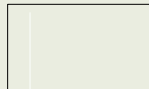


Attributes

Strength



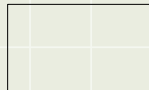
Dexterity



Conditioning



Charisma



Skills

Q

Name

Description

Talents

Name

Description

Equipment

Q

Name

Description
/ Ammo

XII. Acknowledgement

First, the author would like to thank all the folks at Gottlieb, especially Warren Davis and Jeff Lee, for creating the Q*Bert game in the first place. Hopefully if you read this, you'll get a laugh. And either way, I'm sorry...

Thanks to the makers of the Stick RPG from whom I stole the idea of Factions from since I thought it was too funny to pass up.

Also, I'd like to thank my wife for browbeating me when I laughed at my own jokes.