

# LIFEBOAT

© 2001 Jeff Siadek

**Game Design: Jeff Siadek**

**Art: Stephen K. Ratter**

**Art Direction: Fred Davis**

You are one of six characters adrift at sea sharing an Edwardian lifeboat with your most beloved friend, your worst enemy and a few other shifty characters. Each turn, you'll take an action (row, change seats, mug somebody, use a special card or do nothing). At the end of the turn, a Navigation card will reveal who goes overboard and/or gets thirsty. If it shows a bird, you're getting closer to land. **The game ends immediately when 4 birds have been sighted.**

## GAME END SCORING

When the fourth bird arrives, players total up their victory points as follows:

- **Character is alive:** Survival value
- **Character is in boat** (regardless of survival): total victory point value of cash, jewels and paintings in hand
- **Loved one survives:** their Survival value
- **Hated one dies:** their Size value

Note that these conditions are independent -- a player scores points even in death if his worst enemy dies, the love of his life survives or there are treasures left on his person to go to his heirs.

**If you love yourself**, you are a **Narcissist** and score points for surviving twice (but you know there's nobody out there watching your back).

**If you hate yourself**, you are a **Psychopath**, scoring points for the death of everybody else in the boat. **Psychopaths** score no points for their own survival or death unless they also are **Narcissists** in which case they score their own survival points once for surviving.

If you love and hate the same person, you are ambivalent scoring some points for their survival or other points for their death.

## COMPONENTS

- This rulesheet
- 42 Provisions cards
- 6 Character cards
- 6 Placeholder cards
- 6 Hate cards
- 6 Love cards
- 24 Navigation cards

## SETUP

Shuffle the character cards and deal one to each player. Shuffle the Hate and Love decks separately and deal one of each to each player (these must be kept secret from other players). Shuffle the Provisions deck and deal 1 to each player. Set the remainder of the Provisions deck near the left side of the table (the bow of the boat). Place the placeholder set of character cards in a row stretching away from the Provisions deck to the right in the following order: Lady Lauren, Sir Stephen, Captain, Mate, Frenchy, Kid. These are the starting positions of the characters. Shuffle the Navigation deck and place it on the right of the kid (at the aft of the boat).

**Each turn represents one day at sea with the following phases:**  
**Quartermaster, Actions, Navigation**

## QUARTERMASTER

The character in the bow is closest to the Provisions deck and draws as many cards from it as there are characters alive and conscious in the game. He chooses one card to add to his own hand and passes the rest to the next closest character to the bow. This character chooses one card passing the rest back and so on until all the provisions for the turn are passed out. Unconscious characters are skipped. No trading is allowed during this portion of the turn. Once the provision deck is depleted, you may skip the quartermaster portion of the turn. The deck is NOT reshuffled.

Turn order is established by character position at the beginning of the turn.

During the **Actions** portion of the turn all players can trade cards freely unless there is a **FIGHT** going on.

## ACTIONS

Beginning with the character closest to the Provisions deck and proceeding towards the Navigation deck each player chooses **only one** of the following actions:

### DO NOTHING

### ROW

### CHANGE SEATS

### MUG SOMEBODY

### TAKE A SPECIAL ACTION

(as allowed by a card)

**Row** - Draw two Navigation cards. Look at them and decide for each one whether it goes into the Row stack (next to the Navigation deck) or at the bottom of the Navigation deck. Place a marker on the starboard (right) side of your character card to signify that you have rowed and may become thirsty for it at the end of the turn.



**CHANGE SEATS** - Trade places with another character. If he refuses, there is a **FIGHT** (see below).

**MUG SOMEBODY** - Steal a provision from another character (either choose a face up card or a random one from their hand). If he refuses, there is a **FIGHT**. (When the kid "steals" a hidden card there can be no fight.)

**SPECIAL ACTION** - The flare gun, parasol and medical kit each require a character to spend their action to use them. The parasol remains in play and open until overboard. The medical kit and flare gun are discarded when used.

### FIGHTING

During a mugging or seat change, the victim must either agree or say "FIGHT". An unconscious or dead character cannot start or join a fight.



**Fighting is not an Action.**

Push the attacker's placeholder slightly up out of line with the other placeholders. Push the defender's placeholder slightly down out of line

with the other placeholders. Others may choose to join the fight by pushing their placeholders out of the line toward the side they are supporting. Any player may play a weapon card on their character, which adds to their Size for fighting but remains face up (and will be lost if the bearer goes overboard later).

Negotiations for assistance are possible but no cards may change hands until after the fight and deals need not be honored. There is no backing out of a fight once a character has announced they are in. When it becomes evident nobody else will join or play a card, the fight is over, the side with the highest total size wins. Defenders win ties. Each character on the losing side suffers one wound. Mark them with a wound marker. Mark all characters who participated by placing a marker near their card on the port (left) side. The Navigation card that is resolved later may indicate that these characters suffer thirst. If the defender wins, nothing else happens. If the attacker wins, he gets what he was asking for in the first place. Either way, the attacker's turn is done.

## UNCONSCIOUSNESS

If your number of wounds is equal to your size, you are unconscious. You cannot draw or play cards or take actions. People can take from you or trade places as normal but you cannot fight back. Other characters can play cards for you. If you go overboard, you die unless you have a face up life preserver already in front of you.

## DEATH

If your wound total exceeds your Size, you die. You can't draw or play cards or take actions but you still score points for loot you have on your corpse when the boat is rescued (it is given to your heirs) as well as for the survival of your beloved and demise of the one you hate. Treat your body like an unconscious person for purposes of looting if on board. If you go overboard remove all of your cards and your placeholder from the game.

## NAVIGATION

The closest conscious character to the Navigation deck looks at all the cards in the Row stack and chooses one to play. Put the rest back face down on the bottom of the deck. If there is no Row stack, resolve the top card off the Navigation deck. Resolve the Navigation card in the following order.

### BIRDS



If there is a bird on the card, place a marker near the Navigation deck. An exed out bird indicates removal of a bird marker. When there are four birds above the boat, land is near enough and rescue is immediate. Do not resolve anything further except counting up victory points.

### OVERBOARD

This is the unlucky character(s) who fall overboard this turn. Anybody but Frenchy (the good swimmer) will suffer a wound unless they have a life preserver or has one thrown to them. If the bucket of chum is played (or was face up in front of the overboard character), all in the water take an additional wound from sharks immediately (even Frenchy). Anybody who falls overboard loses all face up cards (except a life preserver) in front of him but is returned to the boat in time for thirst unless dead. Anybody unconscious in the water is dead unless they have a life preserver.



### THIRST

There are three ways to become thirsty:

- If you **Row** (and the oar icon appears on the Navigation card)
- If you **Fight** (and the fighting icon appears on the Navigation card)
- If your name appears under "**Thirsty**" on the Navigation card

For each separate thirst you experience (up to three if you rowed, fought, and your name appeared), you must expend a water card or suffer a wound.

Regardless of how many times you fight in a turn, Fighting thirst as indicated on the Navigation card will only make you thirsty once per turn.

### END OF TURN

Place the Navigation card at the bottom of the Navigation deck and begin another turn.

### PLAYING CARDS

A conscious character may play a card such as a weapon to help in a fight or a compass to help him navigate or any other card just to show it (usually so the kid can't steal it). Played cards are kept face up. The character can continue to use them until he goes overboard or they are taken away. Some cards such as water, a flare gun or a bucket of chum must be discarded when used.

### FEWER THAN SIX PLAYERS?

If you have four or five players, leave one or two characters out by removing their character, placeholder, love and hate cards. If you have fewer players, play a different game.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Can I start a fight just because I don't like somebody?

**No, only an unwilling conscious target of a mugging or seat change can start a fight.**

**SPECIAL THANKS** to Neal Sofge, Bryce Whitacre, Dennis Lien and Tony A. Rowe.

**Lifeboat is dedicated to Arden Moreau Siadek who continues to capsize my life with joy every day.**

For errata and more cool stuff (like the *Variant Sharks Rule*) go to:

**gorillaboardgames.com**

email questions and comments to:  
**questions@gorillaboardgames.com**

