



“TRAVAILS AND MISFORTUNES”



“The second son of the king ... repeatedly asked me to teach him how to shoot [the harquebus] and I always excused myself for not doing it by saying that he would have plenty of time to learn it in the future... [One day] he came to the house where I was hosted at the time of the siesta ... where he found me asleep on a mat ... After ordering one of his servants to quietly put fire to the match, he picked up the harquebus, intending to load it as he had seen me doing in several occasions. Not knowing how much gunpowder was required, he filled the barrel with more than two hands before inserting the bullet. Next he put the gun to his shoulder and aimed at an orange tree to his front. When he fired his mischievous fate willed that the gun burst at three different places wounding him twice – including his right hand thumb that barely escaped being chopped away – so much so that the young prince fell to the ground looking more dead than alive.” TToMP, Ch. 136

From role to play

In a TToMP game you and your fellow players “become” the characters created according to the guidelines of the last section. While playing you are to act and behave in-character within the game context. This behaviour is purely imaginary and results from the interaction among the players.

The present section provides a system of guidelines and rules devised to facilitate the smoothest interaction between you and the other players while ensuring that the unfolding of game events and actions is consistent with the setting. We hope that it will also fuel your imagination by providing ideas and options for your in-character decisions.

In other words, the present section provides the basis for *game action resolution*.

In TToMP game action resolution follows the next guidelines:

- Action doesn’t happen in a vacuum. It happens within a concrete temporal, geographical and social circumstances limiting what the characters can do and how they can do it. This corresponds to the *context*.
- Action is performed purposefully, there’s an objective or aim to it. What the character actually does is instrumental in achieving that objective. So the player has to define the character’s *goals*.
- To aim and take no action is simple wishful thinking. The character has to fulfil his goals through a concrete behaviour. This is the character’s *performance*.
- Usually what really happens is not at the discretion of a single party. It is the result of the interaction of the independent performances by the different characters and other events. All of this has to be conciliated into an *outcome*.

Let’s clarify the concepts from start up by using the excerpt above this page as an example. We need to break it up into the four steps in action resolution keeping in mind that we are trying to analyse the behaviour of the young prince and that what follows respects the conventions presented in Section 1.

First step, context: *“he came at the time of the siesta to the house where I was hosted... where he found me asleep on a mat”*.

As you can see, this passage provides us with the spatial (*“the house where I was hosted”*) and time (*“at the time of the siesta”*) context. It also informs us on what Fernão Mendes Pinto was doing (*“where he found me asleep on a mat”*).

Notice that the context allows us to decide on who can act in the given situation.

Second step, goals: *“repeatedly asked me to teach him how to shoot [the harquebus]”*.

The intense desire to learn how to use the harquebus is so extreme that the young prince decides to take the issue on his hands. This desire is the determinant in the formation of his intentions. We can define the young prince’s goal in the next terms: *“If the foreigner (Mendes Pinto) does not teach me how to use the gun, I’ll do it on my own”*.

Third step, performance: *“After ordering one of his servants to quietly put fire to the match, he picked up the harquebus, intending to load it as he had seen me doing in several occasions. Not knowing how much gunpowder was required, he filled the barrel with more than two hands before inserting the bullet. Next he put the gun to his shoulder and aimed at an orange tree to his front” and fired it.*

This description gives us the actual performance as done by the prince. Notice how it is influenced by his skill (or lack of).

Final step, outcome: *“When he fired his mischievous fate willed that the gun burst at three different places wounding him twice – including his right hand thumb that barely escaped being chopped away – so much so that the young prince fell to the ground looking more dead than alive”*.

The final part of the passage corresponds to the description of the outcome of the performance.

The present section allows you to handle situations like this by providing guidelines on how you can describe the action of your character and rules to arbitrate what happens at each stage of action resolution. Throughout the rest of the section we will exemplify the presentation of the rules with the follow up to the events just described.

The where and when of your action: The context

In order to act you need to define a course of action. Your ability to do this is defined within boundaries that can either limit your freedom or serve your purposes. These boundaries are circumstantial since they correspond to factors external to the character. We will specifically consider three types of contextual factors: The antecedents of the situation, and the spatial and temporal boundaries of the action.

Antecedents

Before a player can decide on his character’s course of action he needs to understand the *antecedents* that lead to the current situation. Usually it’s up for the GM to provide the antecedents if these don’t come up from the previous developments in the course of the game session. Usually he will outline who, why and how is involved in the situation, and where and when it is to happen.

“...the youngster fell to the ground more dead than alive. His two friends run away to the palace shouting as they crossed the streets «The foreigner’s gun killed the son of the King!», thus raising such an outcry among the residents as if the whole town was falling apart. The people, weapons in hand and shouts in their mouths, rushed to the house where my poor self then was in such a state as only God can tell. Waking up with this outcry and spotting the young prince close by, covered in blood, I mindlessly embraced him forgotten of where I was. In the mean time the King came (...) [with the Queen and their two daughters] and when they entered the house and noticed the youngster laying on the ground like a dead man, I embraced to him and both of us covered in blood, they all got convinced that I had murdered him. Two soldiers rushed, sword in hands, ready to kill me but the king shouted: «Ta, ta, ta, question him first (...))»

“(...) Then they called without delay three scribes and five executioners with unsheathed two-handed swords while I was put on my knees in front of them, my arms in chains. And the bonze Asquerão Teixeira, the chief justice, his sleeves rolled up his arms and a dagger stained with the blood of the prince in his hands, told me: «I summon you as if you were the son of the devil – what you surely are – and as guilt of this grievous crime as the dwellers of the House of Smoke in the deep concave of the centre of the Earth! Come, raise your voice so that everyone can hear it, tell me, why did you wish your gun to kill through its sorceries this innocent child, hair of our own heads?»”

As you can see, Mendes Pinto is suspected of killing the prince for some mischievous reason. He is questioned to get an explanation to the why of such an act.

The time dimension

Action takes time. How long it takes is dependent on the nature of the action. In most occasions we don’t need to care too much about this, though. The GM just needs to settle on a reasonable duration for the action. Yet, sometimes it asks for definite units of time. This is especially true in cases of repetitive performances (see below for this concept). The most common time units in TToMP are the *half-creed*, the *creed*, the *half-hour* and the *hour*. The reason is simple: These are the most common time units used by Fernão Mendes Pinto for the narration of action in his book. Of course, this is not to say that the GM will not resort to other units of time. The night or the day, the week, the month, the year, etc., all have a place in a game of TToMP.

In game terms, time is broken up into rounds of variable duration. Each round allows for the completion of an action. Intense physical or inter-personal action is handled in half-creeds. In most other cases the half-hour is the standard duration of the round.

The half-creed

The *half-creed* is the smallest time unit referred to by Mendes Pinto. It is based on the time it takes to say the *Creed*, the Christian prayer where the faithful enunciates his belief in God. A creed corresponds more or less to one minute, so one half-creed corresponds to roughly 30 seconds. The half-creed is used for physical individual action and for intense social interaction¹.

*“In less than a **creed** twelve of the sixteen Portuguese in our party were slain with another thirty-six boys and sailors”*
Ch. 36

For examples of a situation involving _ creed rounds, check pages XX and XX.

The Half-hour

Other than the creed, Mendes Pinto often uses two other time units: The half-hour and the hour. These are mainly used for important collective action – battles more often than not – and for leisurely social interaction:

*“After an exchange of gunnery that lasted for close to **one hour and a half...**”* Ch. 57

¹ Notice that we translate into the game unit half-creed the expression “less than a creed” often used by

Mendes Pinto is being questioned by the chief justice of the King. This is done through an interpreter and in the middle of interventions by other people present in the room. It is not a fast affair. We may assume that the dialogue is taking place in _ hour exchanges.

“... in the course of which [Mendes Pinto’s interrogation by the chief justice] were spent more than three hours...”

Other time units

Besides the round and the turn, there are other larger time units that regulate daily life including the break up of the day according to religious rhythms, days, weeks and months, seasons, monsoon cycles, etc. In any case, the half-day and the half-hour are those that usually will regulate the characters’ actions.

The space dimension: Where action happens

The players need to have an understanding of the place where action takes place. This is basically an issue of describing the surroundings and what’s in there. The level of detail is left to the descriptive skills of the GM. In any case, he should provide visual clues that may be accessible to the characters and that may be relevant to the sequence of events.

Mendes Pinto is held in chains in the middle of the house, surrounded by the executioners and the scribes, the chief justice in front of him. Close by is the King, the Queen and the princesses. All around there are noblemen and servants. Somewhere half-forgotten lays the prince.

Integrating space and time: movement and placement

Space may also play a major role in action. In many occasions it may be treated as a circumstantial constrain, like when a character has to perform in a very narrow place that affects his freedom of action. Yet, space takes a dimension of its own when it becomes a determinant of action. This falls down either to movement or positioning.

Movement

Movement is measured in all possible scales used in measuring space. Fernão Mendes Pinto mentions measures that were more or less standard at his time like the league, the mille, the pace or the foot. Furthermore he often uses missiles as a reference. We find mentions of different shots (gun, harquebus, crossbow, arrow) and thrown weapons (the stone more often than not). Finally, he obviously uses the nautical knot.

Given this, it is useful to identify the most relevant scales to be used according to the different time units.

In the course of a half-day a character is able to do the next moves:

- Step around while performing an action that doesn’t require movement: 10 paces.
- Walk ready to act and keeping an eye to placement and possible surprises: 30 paces.
- Charge into the enemy from harquebus volley distance: one harquebus shot that’s roughly equivalent to 100 paces.
- Run as fast as possible in even terrain while being unencumbered by equipment or heavy gear: maximum of 200 paces.

As you can see, the basic unit we adopted is the pace. It corresponds roughly to something between 75cms and 1 meter or to the now outdated yard.

If Mendes Pinto was not bounded and forced to rest in his knees he could move himself at this pace. Not that it would be of much help given that he is surrounded by a little crowd while in a closed space. As things are he may attempt to crawl on his knees or raise up to his feet, just before his head falls down to the ground severed from his body by a slash of a sword.

For larger time units the most relevant measures are the mille and the league, the former corresponding to approximately 1,500 paces and the latter to 6,000 paces. For simplicity sake we will use these units both for inland and nautical movement, thus dropping the knot despite the fact that it was the most common unit for naval purposes.

Positioning

Positioning refers to the relative placement of the character towards other characters, entities or things in situations where there can be a physical or social interaction. It helps define what the characters can do in the course of a half-creed.

Unknown constrains

Within the general context we may isolate several aspects that condition the nature and terms of the actions the character may undertake. These are the *external constrains* affecting the characters. Constrains may be unknown to the participants in the action. Furthermore, constrains are not necessarily true facts. The character may work on wrong or false assumptions. Finally, constrains can be positive or negative.

Unknown to Mendes Pinto, to the King and to everybody else, the prince is not dead but only fainted.

Notice that constrains are independent of the action of the characters involved in the situation. This is a critical point: if the current behaviour of character A limits the behaviour of character B, in a certain sense it constrains B. But this is not what we refer to here. We are only looking at constrains that are not the result of the willing action of one of the parties currently involved in the situation.

What you want to achieve: Your goals

There's a purpose to action. Whenever a character does something he will be attempting to reach a certain expected outcome, his goal, and he will be willing to apply himself to it. Yet, for any goal there may be several alternative courses of action the character could pursue. Furthermore, even if the character chooses to achieve a certain goal, he may not be willing to fully commit himself to it.

Setting goals

This is to a certain extent self-explanatory: Your character wants to achieve something with his behaviour. Yet, what your character aims at may change widely from action to action. Sometimes he may concentrate on the behaviour in itself (and probably the pleasure one can extract from it), like when one is dancing or listening to music. In other situations he may target a change in the environment, like when he wants to

may even happen that your character is only concerned with the maintenance of the status quo. Furthermore, a character's goal doesn't need to be his own alone. He may be sharing the goal of another character or characters (either if he wishes it or not).

Mendes Pinto's goal is, of course, to save his life and dismiss the impending accusation of murdering the prince.

Defining commitment

A goal is nothing else than wishful thinking, the expression of a desire, if not backed by a will to act on it, by the definition of a precise course of action and by the correspondent performance. On what concerns the will to act, it is dependent on the personal traits of the character. These define his commitment: How much involved he will be with the action, how much he will invest into fulfilling his aim. This involvement is measured in a grading that goes from a refusal to get going with the action to total commitment to its completion. The exact commitment will depend on the interplay of three types of factors: Contextual factors; personal factors; and the effect of surprise. These factors are handled as bonus or penalties to the Basic Die.

Contextual factors affecting commitment

Whether a person wants or not to perform an action depends to a certain extent on how the person perceives how the context favours or works against his performance and how serious the situation is in terms of its potential outcome (as described latter in this section). The nature of that vision determines either a bonus or a penalty to the commitment roll:

<u>Predicted outcome</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Neutral	-	-
Minor	1b / 1p	1p
Major	2b / 2b	2p
Critical	3b / 3b	3p

Notice that positive factors may work either as positive or negative modifiers. They are negative if the character is surprised but when the surprise is gone they affect commitment as a bonus.

Being held chained and down in his knees while facing a menacing crowd howling for his head is not the best environment on where to exercise free will. Mendes Pinto is facing a critically negative situation. This implies a 3p modifier to his commitment.

Personal factors affecting commitment

Further to contextual factors, the determination of commitment also requires the player to identify the combination of the most relevant value and goal (if any) that may influence his behaviour in the situation for the purpose of fulfilling his goal. Of course, these personal factors may work for or against the formation of commitment, depending on the situation at hand.

Mendes Pinto has a great esteem for his safety. This only makes him more aware of the danger he is in, resulting in a 1p mod to his commitment. The fact that he wants to get rich plays no role in this situation.

When the unexpected happens: the impact of surprise

Often in Mendes Pinto's book we find persons being surprised by events they did not anticipate. Usually, it takes time before the person is able to get up to his senses and frame a course of action. Sometimes the dynamics of the events don't allow for this and the person is left at the mercy of what is happening. The end result is that surprise is a critical determinant of action since a surprised character needs time to realize what is happening, get hold of his senses and define a course of action. Notice that a character may be more or less prepared to handle the surprising event. Sometimes what happens is completely unexpected but it may also happen that the character was already anticipating what was to come. So, there are levels of surprise that need to be taken into account:

SURPRISE PENALTY		
Readiness	Penalty	Meaning
Ready	Acts normally	The character is prepared for the event.
Alert	1p	The character anticipates something, just does not know the exact what, when and how of it.
Unprepared	2p	The character does not anticipate the event but he is awoken and in hold of his senses.
Clueless	3p	The character is sleeping or is so surprised he isn't even able to understand what's happening or envision the probable outcome of the situation.

At the start of the whole affair, when he was awoken by the shot to discover the prince seemingly dead in his room, Mendes Pinto was completely *clueless* about what was going on. Now, bewildered by the pace of events, he is still *unprepared* and didn't completely get hold of his senses. His commitment suffers a 2p modifier.

Summing up

The combination of these different factors is expressed as a BD modifier that allows us to determine the exact nature of the character's commitment either through a dice roll or through deliberate determination of the commitment:

COMMITMENT DETERMINATION		
Commitment	Random roll	Deliberate arbitration
Passionate	9 – 10	$\geq 5b$
Committed	7 – 8	$2b - 4b$
Ambivalent	5 – 6	$1p - 1b$
Reactive	3 – 4	$4p - 2p$
Give up	1 – 2	$\leq 5p$

What do the different types of commitment mean? Simply put:

- A passionate person will devote himself fully and use all his resources in the action.
- A committed person will dedicate most of his resources to the action but may pursue other secondary goals at the same time.
- The ambivalent person weights the action against other possibilities and will commit a limited level of resources to it.
- A reactive person will not start the action unless forced to or in support of another person. He will try to use as few resources as possible.
- If a person gives up he will not do it, not even if forced to.

(This general classification will be adapted to the different types of actions in

Fernão Mendes is subject to a contextual 3p modifier to which is added is personal 1p and the 2p effect of surprise. That gives us a total of 6p. If we were to opt for deliberate arbitration we would get a direct *passive* Mendes Pinto. We decide to roll instead and get 5, 4, 1, 7, 8, 8. We retain the lowest result, a 1, still a *passive* commitment to the goal.

“«...tell me, why did you wish your gun to kill through its sorceries this innocent child, hair of our own heads?» To which I answered no word since I was so mindless that even if I was shopped to death, I am sure I would be unable to feel it.”

Changing commitment and goals

In the course of time a character may change either his goals or his commitment.

Changing commitment

When a situation requires several rounds there can be changes in commitment on the part of the characters so it needs to be re-evaluated at the start of each round. When doing this don't forget to reflect the impact of changing contextual and personal factors. On what concerns surprise, decrease it by one level each successive round until the character becomes completely alert (unless, of course, no new surprising events happen in the mean time).

“With fire and ire on his face [the chief justice] insisted: «If you don't reply to my queries I will have you sentenced to death in blood and fire and water and wind blows so that in the air you shall be broken into pieces just as the feather of a dead bird gets divided into countless parts!». Upon which he gave me a mighty lash out to get me into my senses, and continued: «Speak, confess who paid you and for how much and their names and where they live».

Eventually Mendes Pinto is able to dispel the initial surprise. The magnitude of the menace is still there, just as the sense of insecurity: He still suffers a 4p modifier to his commitment. That means that he may *react* to the questioning that is being conducted. (We may also attempt a roll and get... 6, 6, 3, 7. Still reactive.)

“To which I, by now somewhat more awoken, answered that God only knew it and took Him as the judge for the matter. The chief judge, not satisfied with what he had gotten, continued to menace me with all sorts of baffling and terrible prospects in the course of which were spent more than three hours”.

Changing goals

Changing goals usually are the result of a major change in the environment that implies that the previous goals are no longer relevant or, of course, of the fulfilment of the stated goals. In any case, the new situation may be start for a new line of action that calls for a different set of goals.

“The chief judge, not satisfied with what he had gotten, continued to menace me with all sorts of baffling and terrible prospects in the course of which were spent more than three hours until, Our Lord be praised, the young prince awoke. Seeing his parents covered with tears, he told them not to cry or accuse anyone of his death since he alone had been the cause of everything that happened, and that I was innocent of any guilt so he requested them on the blood that covered him to have me freed right away, otherwise he would die again. Hearing this, the King ordered the executioners to take off the chains that were holding me.”

The unexpected twist of events determines that the impending menace is dispelled. Fernão Mendes is lucky to achieve his goal even if not as a result of his action.

The King orders his bonzes to cure the wounds of his son but they are unwilling to do it. They suggest that an old, famous and very holy bonze from a nearby pagoda be called to heal the prince. The latter replies that he is not going to wait for a blind man and die from blood loss before he arrives. He asks his father to order Mendes Pinto to heal him instead

The father accepts his son's suggestion and promises to enrich Fernão Mendes if he cures his son.

Even before accepting to address the request, our adventurer attempts to get a more peaceful environment for the new course of action: *"I replied to his highness by asking him to send away those people since I was disturbed with fear generated by their outcries"*. This done, Fernão Mendes is still not very secure on what to do so he *"checked the wounds, and if I dare heal them, I'll do it willingly"*. He realizes that the wounds are not very deep or dangerous so he accepts to cure the prince, thus starting on a new course of action with a new goal, *"and putting myself in the hands of God, and plucking up courage since there was no alternative to it or I would be put to death, I readied everything needed for the treatment"*.

(In terms of commitment, we may assume that: First, the context is slightly negative since on one hand if Fernão does not do as he is ordered he risks his life, but on the other hand the wounds are not very serious and are within the reach of his ability (1p). Second, in personal terms, the fact that he has no choice is a boost to his need for security and he relies on his faith in God (2b). Third, a successful treatment means that he will be handsomely rewarded, thus contributing to his long term goals in life (1b). So, we have 1p for context, 2b for values, 1b for goals for a total of 2b for commitment: Fernão Mendes Pinto is *committed* to heal the prince.)

What you attempt: Your performance

Your character may be more or less committed to a goal. But how does he attempt to do it? In other words, what's his performance? First and foremost, your character needs a vision, a blueprint for action. This is his intended performance or *intentions*. But intentions do not necessarily translate into facts. What the character really does depends in his ability to execute his plan, thus turning his intention into an *actual performance*.

Defining intentions

You define the intentions of your character by describing what he wants to do, and how and what he uses to do it. All you have to do is to say or write it down. While doing this you need to account for the means used and the circumstantial constraints that may affect the performance.

When considering the means you must acknowledge if there are things the character may use in the course of his performance. Of course, his first instrument is himself but in many situations he may use external instruments that can further his ability to fulfil his goals, be it tangible means (like weapons, tools, cash, goods, etc.) or intangible instruments (such as knowledge – all the more effective the more secret it is). You can select as many means as you wish provided you can employ them in a useful and meaningful way. The means can be used either to further the purposes of your character or to hinder someone else's performance.

You also must take into account circumstantial constraints that may hinder the ability of the character to optimise his performance. Usually this is done within the context of the description of the situation as presented by the GM².

"...I readied everything needed for the treatment and moved right away to cure the wounded hand (since it looked in a more precarious condition) where I used seven stitches

... the wound in the forehead was smaller so it only required five. I covered the wounds with an egg mix and a tissue that I carefully laced³

Most often than not, a character's intentions are complex and need to be broken up into discrete units so that we may be able to move from intentions to actual performance. These units are called *tasks*. The tasks may be subject to special *qualifications*. Both have a cost in terms of *Performance Units* or PU.

We will look in more depth at tasks and qualifications so let's just consider right now the PUs. It's intuitive that nobody can do whatever he wants in the course of a round. There are always limits to how much someone may attempt. PUs are a metric that allows the players to restrain the scope of their actions. In any round a character may spend as much as 10 PUs in the description of his intentions.

Tasks

You may notice that so far we have used the expression "intentions" in the plural. This is because the character may wish to attempt to achieve several objectives in the same round. These objectives and how to do it are the tasks the character wants to perform. If their performance can be separated and there is no mutual interdependence, we can consider that each is a separate task. The first step in the analysis of the overall intentions of the character is precisely to isolate his independent tasks.

In the case of Mendes Pinto, we have: 1st task "*...I readied everything needed for the treatment*"; 2nd task "*moved right away to cure the wounded hand (since it looked in a more precarious condition) where I used seven stitches*"; 3rd task "*the wound in the forehead was smaller so it only required five*"; 4th and final task "*I covered the wounds with an egg mix and a tissue that I carefully laced*".

Since each task has a cost in PUs as will be explained in a moment, it may be wiser to break up the overall project into several rounds, each including a small set of tasks... if the character has time to act in several rounds.

Remember what we said about the need to get the means required by the action when framing the description of the character's intentions? In game terms you may separate the preparation from the execution meaning that you can have a first round where the character prepares himself and gets what he will use in the successive rounds³.

Fernão Mendes is wise enough not to rush himself, so he decides to fulfil his intentions in steps, each task taking a separate round:

First round, first task: "*...I readied everything needed for the treatment*".

Second round, second task: "*moved right away to cure the wounded hand (since it looked in a more precarious condition) where I used seven stitches*".

Third round, third task: "*the wound in the forehead was smaller so it only required five*".

Last round, last task: "*I covered the wounds with an egg mix and a tissue that I carefully laced*".

Simple tasks

Whenever the performance of a task is not dependent on other tasks we call it a simple task.

³ Of course, if there is no time for previous preparation you may have to bundle the recollection of the means and the performance that uses them in a single round. For an example of a situation where this

When you attempt several simple tasks in a single round you may order them either as a sequence in time (where the order of the tasks in the description corresponds to their order in time) or as alternative tasks dependent on some circumstantial factor (“or”). If the tasks are to be performed at the same time, they can be handled as parallel courses of action (“and”).

Conflicts

The conflict is a special case where there are several interdependent tasks in the course of a round. Usually a character wants to achieve two simultaneous objectives: To weaken the position of his adversary through an attack or offence; to protect himself against the action of the adversary through defence. This means that a conflict requires a balance between the offensive and defensive tasks of the character in relation to those of his adversary.

Tasks and PUs

You may configure as many tasks as you wish while framing the description of your intended performance. Yet, that does not necessarily mean you will be able to fulfil all the tasks you set up as your goals. The system handles this by assigning a varying number of PUs to the tasks you describe.

In the case of single tasks their cost in terms of PUs increases as the commitment of the character decreases.

In the case of conflicts what changes is the balance between the PUs assigned to either offence or defence: The higher the commitment, the higher the number of PUs that have to be assigned to offence. Because of this, the different offensive and defensive tasks to be performed in the course of a conflict have a basic cost of 1 PU:

Commitment	Simple task	Conflict	
		Offence	Defence
Passionate	1 PU	All PU	You don't defend
Committed	2 PU	At least 2/3 PU	No more than 1/3 PU
Ambivalent	4 PU	No less than 1/3 PU	No less than 1/3 PU
Reactive	8 PU, only acts if pressed to	No more than 1/3 PU	At least 2/3 PU
Give up	You just don't do it	You don't attack	8 PU, surrenders or routs

Since Fernão Mendes Pinto is committed and he is doing simple tasks, the basic definition of each task costs him 2 PU.

Remember when Fernão was being interrogated – a verbal conflict – and “*I ... answered that God only knew it and took Him as the judge for the matter*”? He was being reactive, so he could spend no more than 3 PUs in a verbal attack against the Chief Justice’s arguments. He opted for a defensive approach by invoking the name of God.

Qualifying tasks

Each task may be further qualified in terms of its complexity, quality and timing to describe more precisely what the character wants to achieve. There are three levels of qualification for each of these aspects: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, each requiring an expense of PUs: Basic qualifiers have no cost since the character is always expected to be able to perform at the lowest level of quality, complexity and timing; Intermediate qualifiers cost one PU each; Advanced qualifiers cost 3 PU each.

	Complexity	Quality	Timing	Cost
Basic	Simple	Poor	Leisurely	+0 PU
Intermediate	Standard	Serviceable	Normal	+1 PU each
Advanced	Complex	Excellent	Rushed	+3 PU each

The exact meaning of these three qualifiers varies with the nature of the task, so it will be explained later in this book.

First round: “...I readied everything needed for the treatment”.

The preparation of the means needed by our adventurer corresponds to the first round. Most likely the GM just allows the player to declare what Fernão Mendes uses in the treatment without further complications, leaving these to the next rounds where our adventurer performs the treatment.

Second round: “moved right away to cure the wounded hand (since it looked in a more precarious condition) where I used seven stitches”. Remember that “his right hand thumb ... barely escaped being chopped away”.

The Portuguese wants to do the best job possible – after all, he is taking care of a prince – so he is aiming at excellent quality. We may consider that this is a standard complexity operation. Time, on the other hand, is not a problem, he does it leisurely. We have 2 PU for the basic task + 2 PU for complexity + 3 PU for Quality for a total of 7 PUs this round.

Third round: “the wound in the forehead was smaller so it only required five”. This is identical to the previous round.

Last round: “I covered the wounds with an egg mix and a tissue that I carefully laced”.

Mendes Pinto feels comfortable with a serviceable quality and this is a simple task. We have 2 PU for the basic task + 1 PU for quality = 3 PU in total.

Finalizing the definition of the character’s intentions

Once you identified and qualified the tasks that your character intends to perform in the course of the round, you need to number the PUs so that you define their order or priority from highest priority (1) to lowest priority (10).

Second round: “moved right away to cure the wounded hand ... where I used seven stitches”: Basic task 1-2; complexity 3-4; quality 5-7.

Notice that complexity always takes precedence to quality and timing. You are free to decide which of quality and timing takes precedence.

From intentions to actual performance

The character may or may not perform as he intends. There is a wide range of personal and external factors that may interfere with his performance to the point that he is unable to raise up to the objectives he chose for himself. To determine the actual performance, you need to take into account the character’s personality traits, abilities and physical status. You should also consider the means employed by the character and any external constraints that may have an impact on performance.

Personality traits and performance

The first aspect to consider is whether the character has any personality trait that may reinforce or distract from his will to fulfil his intentions. You see, intentions are simple ideas that cross the mind of the character. Whether he is really driven to do turn them

Notice that personality traits may work both ways: If they contribute to the performance, they provide a bonus; if they work against it, they impose a penalty.

We know that Fernão Mendes Pinto is joyful, friendly and modest. None of these traits are contribute or interfere with his intention to heal the young prince's hand.

Abilities and performance

To do something one has to know how to do it. We have seen that abilities are broken up into common and occupational where the former are more or less known by most people at a standard (Basic Die) level while the latter are standard level only to whomever has specialized in their execution but usually may also be performed at a lower level of skill (2p) by other people. In both cases abilities are culture specific (each culture has its own set of common and occupational skills and these may not overlap among cultures) and experts can have an ability higher than standard (1b or more).

Our adventurer wants to perform a surgery, an occupational ability that he lacks but that most people can perform at 2p. Since Fernão Mendes has been subject or exposed to plenty of surgeries in his past life as a soldier, we can upgrade his ability to 1p.

Physical status and performance

A character that is not in good shape either because he is wounded, sick or tired is more likely to under-perform, suffering a corresponding penalty to his performance. On the other hand, a character that rested and prepared himself physically to the task may get a bonus for being in top condition. Apply the next modifiers:

- Prepared for the task 1b
 - Minor sickness / poison / related damage* (all factors are cumulative) 1p
 - Major unrelated damage* / fatigue (all factors are cumulative) 1p
 - Major sickness / poison / related damage* (all factors are cumulative) 2p
 - Critical unrelated damage* / fatigue (all factors are cumulative) 2p
 - Critical sickness / poison / related damage* (all factors are cumulative) 3p
- (* Related damage affects the body locations used in the performance; unrelated damage affects body locations that are not directly used in the performance.)

Mendes Pinto had been having a good courtly life for some time, so he is rested and in top physical condition. On the other hand, the hours of stress that followed the accident have been tiresome. One thing conceals the other so we may consider that there are no physical modifiers to his performance.

Means and performance

If a performance requires some instrumental means, their absence or quality may affect the performance. Required means have to be there. Dispensable means may not be there but their absence may mean that success becomes more difficult. Poor quality means may penalize the performance while top quality means may make it easier.

We know that Mendes Pinto got his means prepared in the first round but what were these? He does not have a surgeon's kit with specialized tools, he certainly improvised whatever he needed. Yet, the requirements for an operation like the one he is going to perform are not very stringent. We may assume that whatever he got is adequate to his objectives, so only a minor penalty applies (1p).

There are external constraints that may affect the capability to perform as intended. If the ambient is particularly conducive to the performance, this may imply a bonus. If it hinders the character, it results in a penalty.

With the help of the king Fernão Mendes made sure that the environment is not distracting or prejudicial to the treatment. This actually gives him a bonus of 1b.

Determining actual performance

The starting point is to compute all the factors that affect the performance as presented in the previous paragraphs.

The Portuguese is subject to 1p for his limited ability in surgery, to 1p for his lack of specialized tools and to 1b for the conducive environment surrounding his action. Both factors cancel each other so he is performing at BD+1p.

Once you have defined all the factors that affect performance you get a modifier (either positive, negative or neutral) based on which you can get at the actual performance. It all depends on the action method of your choice: If you opt for random determination, just pick your dice and roll. If you favour the deliberate method, check your against the next table:

ACTUAL PERFORMANCE – DELIBERATE METHOD	
Total modifiers	PUs
$\geq 9b$	10
$4b - 8b$	9
$2b - 3b$	8
1b	7
BD	6
1p	5
2p	4
$3p - 4p$	3
$5p - 8p$	2
$\geq 9p$	1

The value you rolled or picked up from the table is the maximum PUs your character was able to perform according to his intentions. All PUs in the description above that value are discarded: Your character was not able to perform them.

Remember, in his second round Mendes Pinto’s intentions are the next: *“moved right away to cure the wounded hand ... where I used seven stitches”*: Basic task 1-2; complexity 3-4; quality 5-7.

If he goes for the deliberate method he cannot fulfil his objectives since he can only perform up to PU 5: In this case, he is able to fulfil his basic intention at the level of complexity he chose but he cannot reach the level of quality – excellent – he was targeting. Instead he is still able to spend 1 PU (PU 5 in his performance) in quality, ensuring that the operation is at least of standard quality.

Mendes Pinto could roll instead of picking the performance value from the table but the risk of getting a bad result is too great so he accepts what he gets: *“...I used seven stitches but if the treatment had been done by a surgeon’s hand, maybe a lot less would be needed”*.

How things unfold: the outcome

If nothing interferes with the performance it happens as described. That means the outcome of the situation is the one that comes naturally from the way the character performed.

That's how we handled the first round in the treatment of the Prince.

In some cases the performance just cannot bear fruit, no matter what the character may attempt. For instance, if the action requires something to be there and it doesn't, the performance fails.

This would happen if Mendes Pinto didn't have the materials he needs to perform the surgery.

Most often than not the performance is neither automatic nor impossible, either because some unexpected event takes place, unaccounted external constraints interfere, expected factors don't materialize or the action undertaken by another party interacts with the action of your character. If this happens the characters may not be able to control either the nature or the extent of the outcome of their actions. Usually this will be critical in stressful situations, situations where the outcome implies long range effects to the characters or their environment, or where it may start major causal chains that will lead to sizable changes in the future. When this happens and we need to arbitrate the nature of the outcome, how do we go about it?

The first step in the arbitration of an uncertain outcome is to identify what are the alternatives. In fact, uncertainty means that there are several possible outcomes to the action, one of which will materialize. This means that to handle alternative outcomes the players need to: a) identify the alternatives; b) adjudicate which of the alternatives materializes.

Potential alternative outcomes

Most often than not, the difference between the alternative outcomes is a matter of degree within a continuum that starts with no change to the existing situation and ends with radical, irrevocable change. For game purposes, we may break it up into a limited set of alternatives:

- Critical outcome – the action achieves a radical change.
- Major outcome – the action brings an important change.
- Minor outcome – the action only results in a sizable change.
- No change (other than the passage of time) – the action changes nothing.
- Fumble – the outcome is worse than the previous situation.

The potential alternative outcomes have to be defined according to the situation at hand. The departing point is the situation before the action. It corresponds to the "no change" outcome. Based on that the players should define what is the best desirable result of the performance. This is the critical outcome. The Major and Minor outcomes can be worked out as incremental improvements to the present situation. The Fumble is just the opposite.

In the case of our adventurer we have check what may happen as a result of his operation to the Prince's finger. Let's try to define the possibilities:

- Critical – the finger is completely healed to the point that there's nothing to remind it had been hurt.
- Major – the finger is completely healed but there's a scratch to mark the accident.
- Minor – the finger is healed but there are some permanent functional sequels that cannot be cured.
- No change – the wound is still there.
- Fumble – not only the would is still there but it has been augmented. Maybe the finger has been severed.

Adjudicating the effective outcome among the alternatives

Adjudicating outcomes depends on the method the players are using: Automatic, deliberate or random. As was mentioned above, most common actions can be considered automatic since it is unnecessary in most game situations to configure alternative outcomes. This is specially true about simple tasks in non stressful situations. We may safely assume that the character is able to do what he wants and the outcome follows straightforward from the performance as intended by the character (or even if he fails at a first attempt, he will do it at the second or third time).

Whenever there's the need to decide on one among several alternative potential outcomes, the players need to resort to either the deliberate or the random method. In both cases, a minor outcome is considered to be the most likely consequence of the action. The probability of an outcome different from minor depends on the factors in the performance that may lead to it. For this purpose, the players need to identify those factors. They may include:

- The quality of the intended outcome (poor = 1p; serviceable = 0; excellent = 1b);
- In the case of a conflict the quality of the defensive action of the adversary, if any (poor = 1p; serviceable = 0; excellent = 1b);
- Characteristics of the means that specifically apply to the outcome (from 2p to 2b).
- Circumstantial factors that specifically apply to the outcome (from 2p to 2b).

Mendes Pinto is performing a *serviceable* surgery. There's no counter-action to it since it is a simple task. The means are adequate and the circumstances neutral. All in all, no modifiers apply.

The sum of the factors that influence the outcome corresponds either to the dice-pool the player has to roll if is using the random determination method; or the ascribed outcome if he is using the deliberate method:

OUTCOME DETERMINATION		
Type of result	Random roll	Deliberate arbitration
Critical	9 – 10	$\geq 5b$
Major	7 – 8	$2b - 4b$
Minor	5 – 6	$1p - 1b$
No result	3 – 4	$4p - 2p$
Fumble	1 – 2	$\leq 5p$

Once more, sensing the risk of leaving things to a dice roll Mendes Pinto opts for the deliberate method. He prefers to settle for a minor result than to risk a potential fumble:

“...I used seven stitches but if the treatment had been done by a surgeon's hand, maybe a lot less would be needed... within twenty days he was completely cured, if it wasn't for a small loss of control in the thumb”.

He was able to save the thumb of the wounded boy, yet he used more stitches than needed and couldn't avoid a minor disability.

Putting it all together

In the course of this section we went through a step-by-step analysis of action resolution in TToMP. To consolidate the concepts it's useful to see them in action in a couple of other situations. What follows is a set of examples that will allow you to get a better grasp of the rules. Notice that a broader

Action resolution in social interchanges

When the listeners said in certain passages «Taximida» one of us by the name of Vicente Morosa also said «tal seja tua vida», such be your life, and that with such a grace in the gestures and a look so grave, with no hint of cheerfulness, that no one present could hold his laughs. Only he didn't change his looks and kept feigning the outlooks of true devotion, his eyes set in the Talapicor. The latter, on noticing Vicente Morosa, was not able to keep his composure and did as the others so that when the sermon came to an end everybody was laughing with joy, both the preacher and the preached... believing that the Portuguese was displaying true devotion and belief; but if they realised that he was doing it out of mockery and contempt, he would be heavily punished.

Peregrinação, c. 127

ADVANCED RULES

< THIS WILL NEED MAJOR CHANGES TO BE PUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEW VERSION OF THE STANDARD RULES ABOVE >

Complex intentions

There are situations where you want to achieve several objectives with a single performance. In this case you have more than one intention and a single course of action to do it. When this happens you may not or want not to separate the intentions into different separate performances. When this happens you treat the whole as a single unit, including for the purposes of applying qualifiers, but the cost of the unit increases with the growing number of intentions:

# of intentions	PP per intention	Total cost in PP
1	1	1
2	+2	3
3	+3	6
4	+4	10

Example

Repetitive performance in successive rounds

In the simplest situations one action requires one performance. This is not always so, though. Sometimes the character needs to repeat the performance several times before reaching his aims while external constraints, means available and commitment remain constant. In this case the players go through performance iteration after performance iteration until either the character achieves his aims, changes these, or needs to re-evaluate the external constraints or his commitment.

Notice that in repetitive performance you only need to pay for any given mean the first time you use it. You don't need to pay in the subsequent performance iterations.

Routine behaviour

There are situations that repeat themselves so often that they generate a standard response on the part of the character: they become routine. When this happens the character is led to stereotyped behaviour. Here you should not use the random method of action determination. Instead, the whole action should be described, including the definition of aims, commitment, performance and outcome.

As long as the situation unfolds according to the expectations of the character, he responds as defined in his routine. If the situation evolves in a different direction from what was expected, the character will be surprised.

Combined actions

Combined actions are situations where there is an interaction among the behaviour of two or more parties, either through joint action, assistance, collaboration or confrontation. In the first three cases the parties are trying to reach a common end; in the last case they attempt to outdo each other in an action / counteraction dynamic.

If there is a combined action situation, all parties involved state their aims and determine their commitment according to the previous rules, under the constraints of a common context. Combined actions only require specific rules for performance description and outcome determination.

Performing combined actions

When performing combined actions each player describes independently the performance of his character, including qualifications and the assignment of commitment grades, like if they were acting in isolation. Next, these independent performance descriptions are combined into an overall description of the situation.

Joint action

What is specific of a joint action is that several parties come together to achieve a common outcome that would be impossible or harder to achieve in isolation by joining their strengths in a similar behaviour.

Assistance

In the case of assistance a party (the author) is trying to do something and gets support from other parties.

Collaboration

In the case of collaboration the parties also come together to achieve an outcome that would be impossible or harder to achieve in isolation but each party performs a part of a common project.

Confrontation

Confrontations are combined actions where one party (active party) is trying to achieve an outcome (principal action) and the other party (passive party) is trying to avoid that outcome through a counter-action.

Outcome of combined actions

The outcome of combined actions is handled just like for independent performance. The specificity is that you need to identify the contribution for the outcome from the different parties involved. In the case of alternative outcomes, you identify the alternatives just like for independent action.

Outcome of assistance

The performance of the author defines the basic arbitration of outcomes. The performance of the assistants contributes to the performance of the author as a modifier. That means that first, each assistant has to define the outcome of his performance. This outcome is incorporated into the action of the author as a modifier.

Outcome of the assistant(s)	Modifier to the author's outcome
Critical	3b
Major	2b
Minor	1b
No result	–
Fumble	1p

Outcome of joint actions

In this case the players should combine the contributions of the different parties into a single outcome by taking into account what each party has is contributing, both positively and negatively. If there is a result to adjudicate, the factors pertaining for each party are combined into a single adjudication process where you take into account:

- The quality of the performance for each party involved in the action;
- The means used by each party;
- The circumstantial factors that apply to all parties plus those that apply specifically for each party.

Outcome of collaboration

In this case each party is handled as if it was acting in isolation. If their contributions are required and they fail, the overall outcome does not materialize.

Outcome of confrontations

In the case of clashing performances, the players need to account for and balance the factors implied in both performances to determinate the result. First, the passive party arbitrates the result of his counter-action. This result is incorporated into the principal action as a modifier to the result factors:

Counter-action result	Principal action results modifier
Critical	3p
Major	2p
Minor	1p
No result	–
Fumble	1b

Framing lively performance descriptions

TO BE CONTINUED

< THE PRESENT EXAMPLE WAS DESIGNED IN THE COURSE OF AN EXCHANGE WITH ??? ON RPGNET TO EXPLAIN BETTER THE RULES. IT WAS THE STARTING POINT FOR THE REVISION OF THE PRESENT SECTION. BECAUSE OF THAT THE LANGUAGE USED IS NOT THE SAME THAT IS USED ABOVE >

1. Going after a mango.

Remember what I said about automatic resolution? This is one of those situations where it makes no sense to handle it in any other way. Yes, Mendes Pinto may fall or he may fail to climb the tree. But why bother looking after alternatives in such an unimportant matter?

2. Hidding from the enemy.

Here it is different. This a stressful situation where what happens is critical. Let's structure it:

a) Definition of circumstances:

How hard is it to climb the tree? The GM has to define a modifier to action. This is the equivalent in TToMP to the target number in d20. The GM decides that there are big mango trees and medium sized mango trees.

Big mango trees provide better coverage (+2b) but are harder (+2p) and take longer to climb.

Medium mango trees provide less coverage (+1b) but easier (+1p) and take less time to climb.

Now, at this stage it is for the GM to provide a description of the circumstances. The dialog could be something like:

GM - "You are running away from the enemy. You can listen to them not far away. The road goes into the fields. There are some mango trees around."

MP - "Hum, how big are the trees?" (he knows that mango trees have a good foilage)

GM - "You have some big and old ones but also some medium sized."

b) Definition of aim.

Now it's for the player to decide on what his character wants to do:

MP - "I'll try to get up a tree and hide there."

c) Definition of commitment.

Now, does MP really want to achieve his aim? Or will he look after another alternative? In other words, how committed is he to it?

To decide on this we need to look at MP in more detail:

His personality is marked by joyfulness, friendliness and modesty. None of this contributes for the action.

He values security so he will do whatever he needs to escape the enemy. +1b for commitment.

We don't know what happened before, but we may admit that it had an impact on his attitudes and award a further +1b to his action.

At this moment MP has two alternatives to define his commitment:

i. He may go randomless. If he does, he picks the commitment that corresponds to 2b (1b from values +1b from imediate past) which is "committed". So, MP is committed to climb the tree and hide there.

ii. He may go random. In this case he rolls $BD+2b=3d10$ and pick the highest result. MP rolls and gets a 3, a 6 and a 8. The highest value rolled is 8 that also corresponds to committed.

d) Performance.

It's time for MP to describe what intends to do:

MP - "I'll climb up a medium sized mango tree as fast as I can and hide in the foilage."

GM - "How do you do it? The first branches are at 2,5 meters from the ground. The best branches to hide are a further meter above those."

MP - "I'm not loaded so I'll just run to the tree, and jump to the branch, putting a foot to the trunk for leverage."

Now it's time to assign performance points to the action up to the limit of 10:

i. We start with commintment. Since MP is only "committed", he spends 1PP up front.

ii. Next we have the first sub-action: 'climb up a medium sized mango tree by jumping to the branche,

putting a foot to the trunk for leverage, and as fast as MP can'.

The first sub-action does not have costs for multiple sub-actions.

MP - "What does quality means in this context?"

GM - "It means whether you do it in a clean and neat way or not. If not you will do a lot of noise, leave marks on the tree, bruise yourself and possibly tear your cloths."

MP - "I see. In terms of quality, it's serviceable, so it costs 1PP."

GM - "Ok. In terms of complexity, the way you want to do it is complex. That's 3PP. And you want to do it as fast as you can, so it takes +3PP. If you decide to go to the tree and climb from a static departing point, it will be less complex but will require added time."

GM - "So far we have:

- 1PP for Commitment; it's PP #1.

- Climbing the tree costs PP by the next order:

MP describes / GM suggests

quality inter. #2PP #2PP

complexity inter. #3PP #3PP

complexity adv. #4-5PP

timing extra #4PP

timing inter. #6PP #5PP

timing adv. #7-8PP #6-7PP"

MP - "I think I'll give up the idea of running up the tree and follow your advice."

iii. Finally we have the second sub-action, to "hide in the foilage". The second sub-action costs 1PP for being a second sub-action.

GM - "Basic performance means that you stay at the lower branches, trying to hide behind the trunk.

Increased quality allows you to climb to the upper branches, while increased complexity allows you to look to the places with more foilage, shadows, etc."

MP - "In that case I go for intermediate complexity and intermediate quality by this order."

GM - "In terms of PP you need:

- 1PP (#8PP) for the extra sub-action,

- 1PP (#9PP) for complexity,

- 1PP (#10PP) for quality.

That's it, you have no more PP to assign. But do you really do it? Let's see."

After distributing PP according to the intended performance the player needs to see if the character actually achieves what he intends to do. For this purpose he needs to do a Performance roll (or do it randomless if he so decides).

The only factor that affects MP's performance is the difficulty of climbing and hiding in a mango tree = +1p.

He does not have any skill that could help him in his action neither is he using any equipment of other means that can facilitate the performance; he is not hindered by heavy gear nor by a poor physical conditon.

Based on that we can see that MP either rolls for performance at BD+1p or goes randomless and is only able to do what he wants up to PP #4. He decides to take his chances and rolls getting a 5 and a 8. He keeps the worst value rolled, a 5, still better than if he had opted for randomless. From the described performance, MP only retains the components that correspond to the PP #1 to #5: He climbs the tree to the lowest branches. This is serviceable in terms of quality, standard in terms of complexity and normal in terms of timing.

On what concerns his second action, to hide from the enemy while on the tree, he does it but at a basic level of performance.

GM - "MP goes to a tree and climbs it up to the lower branches. It takes a little longer than what he wanted and is not as quiet as he would desire. His hands are bruised and now there's a little hole in the left knee of his pants. He can see the lost tissue stuck in the trunk, one meter below. In any case, it has been a close call since the enemy has just arrived. Had it taken a little longer and they would have seen you climbing the tree. You hear someone saying <<He is somewhere around, I heard him trying to get cover somewhere>>. Someone replies <<Let's search and we will find him>>."

e) Outcome.

In this context outcome measures how well MP is able to cover his presence. We know that he was not

able to make it up to the highest branches.

GM - "As I said, a medium mango tree offers some level of coverage (+1b) but you are at the lowest branches so you get +1p and your performance in hiding is poor (+1p). Your basis to define the outcome is BD+1p."

MP - "If I go randomless it means I only get minor coverage, right?"

GM - "Yes. Minor hiding means the enemy will have +1p to his search, medium is +2p and critical is +3p. Of course, if you roll and fumble the enemy will have +1b instead."

MP - "I'll roll... a 3 and 10, gosh."

GM - "You are basically standing in the tree. Your only hope is that the enemy will not look in your direction."