

NOAC 2024

CU Boulder



# **Inside the pre-Ordeal Ceremony**

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# Learning Objectives

This session is focused on improving understanding of the pre-Ordeal Ceremony to uncover meanings and symbolism that may not be obvious from simply watching the ceremony occasionally.



# Part One: Inside the pre-Ordeal Ceremony

- The first half of the session, you will be seeking messages in the ceremony text – something that is meant to be communicated to the candidates by the experience of going through the ceremony.
- You will find these messages by exploring themes – subjects or topics that the principals talk about to illustrate the messages of the ceremony.



# Part Two: Inside the pre-Ordeal Ceremony

- In the second half of the session, you will be examining the tokens, movements of the candidates and principals, and symbolic actions in the ceremony (such as the firing of the bow) that illustrate the rich meaning of the ceremony.



# The pre-Ordeal Ceremony Review

First let's ask ourselves two questions...

- What is the main function of the pre-Ordeal Ceremony in the Induction?
- What is the main idea or “takeaway” for the candidates?



# Ceremony Analysis

- Message:
  - something that is meant to be communicated to the candidates by the experience of going through the ceremony.
- Theme:
  - subjects or topics that the principals talk about to illustrate the messages of the ceremony.





# Identifying and Analysis of Themes in the Text

Break-out Group Discussion



# What is the theme?

- “You were sent to seek a vision of yourselves, and of your purpose.”  
- Nutiket
- “This ordeal is but a pattern for a journey whose directions are the whispers, urgings, promptings deep within your hearts and spirits.”  
- Meteu



# Contemplation

- “What does Meteu want the candidates to listen to? What does Meteu hope they will hear?”
- What is nature symbolic of, in the Ordeal?
- What spirit is Kichkinet talking about? How is this related to Meteu's advice?
- Nutiket begins to speak to the candidates with the words, "Awake, my friends." Why do you think that is?



# What is the theme?

- “They must be willing to go upon a journey, and it is only right for us to stand by them through their ordeals until they enter into the bond of Brotherhood.”  
- Meteu
- “You now are starting on a long and toilsome journey. But before you undertake it you must Be Prepared completely.”  
- Nutiket



# Journey

- What is the journey that the principals are talking about?
- What direction do they say the candidates will be going, and what do they really mean by that?
- What advice do the principals give the candidates to help them on this journey?
- What connections are there between the Ordeal and the journey?



# What is the theme?

- “We will each present a challenge to assist you in this quest.”  
- Nutiket
- “From the darkness, from the forest, we have come with words of warning, bringing tokens of a struggle, an ordeal approaching swiftly as a flock of field crows flying back across the sun.”  
- Kichkinet



# Adversity (Challenges)

- What challenges will the candidates face during the ordeal?
- According to the principals, how can the candidates overcome those challenges?
- How are these challenges symbolic of real-world challenges that the candidates will face later?





# Identifying and Analysis of Signs and Tokens

Group Discussion



# Group Discussion

The 15 blazes:

- The ideals of Scouting guide us toward the beginning of our life of cheerful service in the OA.



# Group Discussion

The unlit fire-lay:

- Within the heart of each candidate is the potential to become a true servant leader (the spark), and the Ordeal will take place within them, awakening their cheerful spirit (lighting the fire present in the Ordeal Ceremony).



# Group Discussion

Presentation of the bow:

- A physical demonstration that a cheerful servant is not defeated by stress or pressure, but is resilient and flexible, like the bow.



# Group Discussion

## Presentation of the bow string:

- A physical manifestation of the bonds of brotherhood. When the bow is drawn, the ends of the bow grow closer together - so too, the candidates grow closer to their soon-to-be-brothers during the tests of the Ordeal. The string will become the rope of the Ordeal ceremony, and eventually the more abstract Obligation which binds each member of the Order to one another.



# Group Discussion

The step forward:

- Each candidate makes a conscious decision to proceed with the Ordeal, fully advised of the challenges ahead. This is their first step on the inward journey, and one of the more memorable parts of the ceremony.



# Group Discussion

Stringing the bow:

- Represents the combination of brotherhood and cheerfulness that the candidates will experience in their clan, which provides the power to launch them on their journey.



# Group Discussion

Testing the bow:

- Like the bow, the candidates themselves will be tested. Their willingness to test the bow is proxy for their willingness to be tested themselves.



# Group Discussion

Drawing the arrow:

- Just like the most reliable arrow is chosen first from the quiver, each candidate was selected by their troop because of the qualities of servant leadership that their peers recognized in them. A clear symbolic connection is made between each candidate and the arrow, comparing the path of the Arrowman to the upward flight of the arrow.



# Group Discussion

## Shooting the arrow:

- Reinforcing Allowat's message, Kichkinet illustrates the "lofty journey" that Arrowmen take. The arrow flies upward into darkness, so that the descent is not seen, and the candidates can imagine it continuing on upward forever - the rest of their lives! This moment represents the Ordeal itself: the moment that the candidates begin their new lives as cheerful servant leaders.



# Group Discussion

Placing the bow on the fire-lay:

- This is the proper place for the bow, since it represents those ideals (brotherhood and cheerfulness) which will allow the "inner fire" to be ignited in the hearts of the candidates.



# Group Discussion

Kichkinet joins the candidates and leads them:

- Leading by example, Kichkinet challenges the candidates to find "the Arrow" - themselves! This may create a moment of confusion when the candidates realize that they are not looking for a physical arrow, and make them wonder what Kichkinet actually meant as he led them away towards the Ordeal Ceremony.



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# Takeaway Challenge

Take a minute in silence to decide how you will use what you have learned to help others in your lodge and your future candidates.





# Questions?

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