

The Temple of the Tides



A D&D scenario for Fastaval 2020
by Troels Ken Pedersen

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Participants: 3-5 players and a Dungeon Master

Time: 4 hours

Age Limit: 13 (but read on page 15 regarding young players)

Amount of reading required: 3 pages (for the players)

Practicalities

The Temple of the Tides takes about 4 hours to play, and is written for 3-5 players and a Dungeon Master.

The scenario wants to be printed single sided, as landscape. The players' map would like to be printed double sized (A3) if possible. Aside from scenario, writing materials and D&D dice, you need a set of ordinary playing cards and a pirate coin (you will be given a coin at Fastaval). The system is D&D 5th Edition, but the books should not be necessary to run the scenario if even *some* of you know what you're doing.

The Temple of the Tides is sort of a fully independent sequel to my earlier scenario The Rat Princess which won the 2018 Viking-Con scenario competition. The two share some setting elements and themes, and the Moon Goddess, but no other characters.

Credits

Illustrations: Oliver Nøglebæk

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Welcome!

The Temple of the Tides is a D&D dungeon crawl about a group of teenage pirates raiding an underground, partially flooded temple, and it is a story game about a group of lost boys in a fucked up situation. They are forced to balance between cruelty and kindness to survive and to find out who they really are. The style is lurid, gritty, bloody and human.

Player Characters

The main characters are 3-5 big boys of 16-17 years. They are pirates aboard the Goshawk, which is captained by an ambitious, hard and cruel man. The boys have joined the crew with varying degrees of voluntariness, and most of them are not happy as pirates. The mission is a test for them – if they manage to steal the magical wooden statue of the Moon Goddess, they will become full pirates, and whoever comes out as the leader will be richly rewarded. If they fail, they all die.

Dungeon

The Temple of the Tides is a small but dangerous dungeon inhabited by two warring factions of imprisoned cultists. They build traps both as weapons in their civil war and as acts of worship of the Moon Goddess. The boys are dropped off as the tide is going out, and picked up as it is coming back in again – all in all they have three hours, and if they are not back at the pickup point on time, with the idol, they will never get to leave. Along the way, the flow of the tide and their limited supply of torches will remind them of the time pressure. The group has a map, so they must choose their way but need not worry about getting lost.

Story Game

Through brief, narrated flashbacks, the players can pull resources into the present time of the game. By narrating covert kindness aboard the Goshawk, they can give each other the strength to go on, and by narrating public, status-seeking cruelty against the other player characters, they can overcome challenges that would otherwise stop them. Both are scarce resources, but where the kindness is individual, the cruelty is controlled by the leader of the group – and the leadership can be fought over.

Just as the group can pick different routes through the temple, their internal relation can also develop very differently. It is at least as important for the game how they handle friendships, power struggles and letdowns as whether they get to the Holy of Holies through the Chamber of Trials or the Abyss of Terrifying Illusions.

Reading Guide

You should read the game thoroughly enough to have a general understanding before you run it. The first chapters on setting, mechanics and style of play are important for understanding the dungeon. The start of the game, until you enter the temple itself, can be run with the chapter "Preparations & Prologue" in hand. The description of each area of the dungeon falls in two parts. The first part is meant for support during play. The second part contains an in-depth description of what is going on and why – I assume that you have read all of it beforehand, and can remember the contents based on the first parts. I also figure that you will need the pages with creature stats and the aid sheet "Time & Cultists" while running the dungeon itself.

Setting

We are in a setting reminiscent of the European Late Middle Ages, a bit dirty and corrupt. There are certainly people who want to tell you about the struggle between Light and Dark, and they are probably after your savings. Magic exists, but if you run into something that seems supernatural, it is usually just trickery or misunderstandings – we are talking distinctly low fantasy here.

The Pirates

The scenario starts on the pirate ship *The Goshawk*. The ship is ruled by a ruthless man known simply as *The Captain*. Right now, it is visiting a remote and rural region where *The Temple of the Tides* is to be found. The ship was also here three years ago, and then the Captain sent another group of boys into the temple to steal a legendary, magical, wooden idol. The first group failed – now, the Captain is trying again with a new group of recruits, the PCs.

The Temple

The Temple of the Tides is an ancient temple to *The Moon Goddess*. Through generations, it has been filled with traps because of an idea that traps can be sacred tests that serve to prove peoples' spiritual worth (and destroy the unworthy). The Moon Goddess fell out of fashion as a prominent cult a few centuries back, when new mysteries emerged that spoke of salvation and afterlife. Also, her cultists were involved in gruesome murders and failed political intrigues, which made the cult unpopular.

The Cultists

The inhabitants of this remote, coastal region have held on to the moon cult long after the royal and the learned disappeared from the picture. Through the last couple of generations, the Temple of the Tides has served the locals as a sort of prison. Men (only men!) who have committed sufficiently serious crimes are lowered through a shaft into the temple, from which geography makes escape extraordinarily difficult. There they live and perform rituals in honour of the Moon Goddess. As long as the guards above can hear the sacred songs being sung, they keep lowering supplies – in amounts that decrease over time, due to the expectation that some of the prisoners will die.

Aside from singing songs, the prisoners also guard the shrine and maintain and expand the traps. The motivation for all of this is a belief that when some people suffer in the name of the Moon Goddess, it will bring an equal amount of good fortune to the families and communities from which they came, as a sort of cosmic balance. This is why the *Ortho cultists* (the orthodox) act the way they do, and they make up the larger of the two groups in the temple. Half a year ago, the *Revelators* split off – they tried to overthrow the strict order and failed, but escaped and barricaded themselves in the far less hospitable south side of the temple. Here they survive for now with the aid of a terrifying *mermaid* that the Revelator leader *Golzar* has befriended. In the temple's Holy of Holies, Golzar has rediscovered ancient doctrines of (apparent) transformation through the uncovering of previously hidden qualities, and the Revelators consider these sacred transformations a better goal than helping society by suffering.

But the situation is unstable. The Orthos have a clear advantage in numbers, supplies and position. So far they have been waiting for the Revelators to starve to death, but they are beginning to realize that this is not happening any time soon. And their first attempts at attack have run into furious resistance. If they really committed all resources to an assault, they would probably be able to overrun the Revelators, and they are gathering their courage to do this as soon as they get fresh recruits lowered from above. However, they fear the strange powers of the Revelators and are especially frightened of the mermaid. The Revelators know that they do not have the strength to win right now, so in keeping with their faith, they are hoping for something to happen that will change the situation. The arrival of the PCs will probably change the situation, but not necessarily in favour of the Revelators.

Leo is the strict and authoritarian leader of the Ortho cultists. Leo is a former knight who has seized leadership of the cultists after being condemned to service in the temple for murder. He is a stout, middle aged man with graying, dark hair and beard. He rules with both brute force, discipline and cunning – after the rebellion of Golzar and the Revelators, he regained control over most of the cultists by pressing a young man named **Mateu** into taking up residence inside the head of the Goddess in the great hall, so that "she" now confirms Leo's authority.

Is Golzar the Hero? I *like* her, but I also worry that if she seizes control of the temple and survives for 5-10 years or so, she might end up being far more terrible than Leo. And in any case, she is a secondary character as far as the story of the young pirates is concerned.

Golzar is the charismatic leader of the Revelator cultists. Golzar was condemned to serve in the temple for theft. She stealthily explored, and in the Holy of Holies (area 9, see page 43), the face of the Goddess revealed that Golzar is a woman. She also befriended the mermaid. After her rebellion against Leo failed, she and her surviving followers fortified themselves. Golzar is passionately dedicated to the Goddess and the vision of the potentials of the transformative force, but she is also fairly pragmatic in how she pursues her vision. The lifestyle of the Revelators – battle ready sensualism under horrifying conditions – is very much an expression of Golzar's personality.

The Moon Goddess

There is clearly a supernatural power present in the temple. Much of the magic of the temple is mechanics and deceit, and some of the real magic is quite subtle. And some things, such as the abyss of illusions, are ambiguous. But the power is there. Is the Goddess actually a person with a point of view, or just a quality of the place and the people? I'm not sure, and after all, I wrote the game.

The cult, or the Moon Goddess, or however it is, has two aspects or values – one is *ebb and flood*, the other is *transformation by revelation*. Until the rebellion of the Revelators, the second value was almost completely suppressed, as the Ortho cultists care only about the first.

Ebb and flood is about the world being in balance, a balance personified by the Moon Goddess. In the grand scheme of things, everything evens out, but in terms of human lives, ebb and flood come and go, as do fortune and misfortune, and fortune being prevalent at one time, in one place, is connected to misfortune elsewhere. The Ortho cult is an attempt to *game* this principle.

Transformation by revelation is about hidden truths under the surface, which might break out under the right circumstances. For instance, it might mean that a person who is a werewolf reveals their true, inner self as it really was all along when they turn into a bloodthirsty beast. Or it might mean, as in Golzar's case, that a man turns out to be a woman because this was her inner truth.

In both cases we are dealing with values and priorities, but not in a classical good vs. evil sense. And in any case, this is a setting in which "who are the bad guys?" is one of the less interesting questions to ask.

Joining the cultists? It is unlikely but possible that the PCs will join one faction or the other, probably after having picked a side in the war. If this happens, you will have to improvise. And you should in no way hint at or encourage this – if it happens, it should be completely player driven.



Warhammer? Sort of, but not really – the supernatural is ambiguous here, not made out of penis tentacles sporting fangs.

The Player Characters

To begin with, the PCs are character cores with some meat on them, but it is impossible to say who they will turn out to be until some pressure is applied. There are six characters, and only 3-5 of them will be picked (from the menu on pp. 53-54). Much of the dynamics between them depend in part on specific combinations of characters, in part on how their relationships turn out in play. The story game rules mean that the players will be exploring the PCs' past through flashbacks as well as their horrid present in the temple. To begin with, they establish some seeds of relationships in the form of little points of admiration and contempt for each other, and they establish a sketch of a hierarchy.

The PCs are teenage boys of 16 or 17 years. They are all pirate recruits aboard the Goshawk, and have been for a bit more than a year. Two of the possible PCs (Alon and Dio) have run away to join the Captain, two have been sold by their families (Cort and Felix), and two have been kidnapped (Bran and Egin). One of the boys is largely a good and kind person (Felix), one is largely terrible (Dio), and the rest are more ambiguous. It is worth noting, however, that Dio might well end up making friends, and in test play I have seen Felix commit murder in cold blood. All the boys are hurting and have problems with pirate life.

The hierarchy of the boys is based on how good they are at threatening people (the skill "Menace"), where their strength varies from +0 (Alon) to +7 (Bran). Along the way, friendships, rivalries, accidents and maybe even murder will prove important too – it HAS happened in test play that Alon has ended the game as the leader of the group at the last minute. The PCs are described on pp. 55 to 72.



Mechanics

The scenario uses Dungeons & Dragons 5th edition rules with a couple of adaptations and add-ons that give the Temple of the Tides an element of story game. The PCs are level 2 and none of them know any spells, which keeps down the rules complexity. Rules familiarity is not required to play, but you should make sure that everyone is on board with these basics:

D20 + bonus vs difficulty – attacks, skill checks, saving throws

Advantage and disadvantage – instead of bonuses and penalties

Action economy of a round – action + bonus action + movement + reaction

Adaptation of D&D

Menace – the skill "Intimidate" has been rewritten to "Menace", which is str + cha + proficiency bonus. The internal confrontations of the pirates will often be decided by "menace" contests, and here, brute strength is allowed to matter.

Locks & Traps – "Thieves' Tools Proficiency" is "Locks & Traps" here, and tied to the stat Intelligence. This gives a single number to write on the character sheet, and makes the PCs Alon and Egin more interesting as concepts. You find/figure out traps with Investigation, and open/disarm with Locks & Traps. Some traps are obvious but require handling, some are easily avoided if you have figured them out, and some require both.

Initiative – the players roll for initiative as always, but the opponents simply have an initiative stat of 10+dex bonus, so the DM needs not roll for initiative, and needs only keep track of the players' numbers. This rule is not necessary for the scenario, but the stats of the inhabitants of the temple are based on it, and I have included it because it makes the DM's life easier. Ignore the rule if you like.

Add-On Rules

There are two sets of them, one about leadership conflicts and one about flashbacks that pull resources (and complications) from the past into the present. Flashbacks involve using playing cards to keep track of things.

Leadership – the leader gets the big reward at the end, and the leader player controls the pool of cruelty cards. The leader player has a pirate coin in front of them. Basically, if a PC says "This is what we do", and the group then does so, that boy is the leader now. The DM can take the coin away if a leader appears weak, and give it to the player of a character who appears stronger. This means that if the leader wants to hold on to the leadership, he has to make all decisions, or at least take credit for them.

Note that the first area of the dungeon, the sea cave, is designed to provoke decision-making, which makes it a tutorial for the concept of leadership.

Leadership conflicts – if someone refuses to submit to the decisions of the leader, or if the leader takes credit and someone calls him on it, a contest of Menace may ensue. The two contestants glare at each other, and the players grab their dice. The others can choose to openly support one or the other, or they can stay out of the conflict. Then the two players roll d20 + Menace, and if one of the sides is outnumbered, that contestant has disadvantage. The current leader counts for two, so all else being equal, the challenger will be at a disadvantage. *You cannot use flashbacks* (see below) *in leadership conflicts or in fights that grow out of these.*

If the loser will NOT submit, it comes to actual, sharp PvP battle. Involved players roll for initiative, and those on the losing side have disadvantage on their initiative roll. This is what you sign up for if you back someone up in a conflict. Uninvolved PCs can interfere from round two if they like. The fight is not necessarily to the death, but might well be.

Example: Bran is the leader of three others, and they come to the Chamber of Trials. Bran (who has been a bit of a prick so far) has a key, but thinks the statue with the keyhole looks like a trap, so he hands Felix the key and orders him to insert the key and turn. Felix refuses, so Bran puts his hand on his cutlass and snarls "Do it!" – a clear leadership conflict. Felix refuses, and the two others are really tired of Bran, so they back Felix. Being the leader, Bran counts as two, but against three, he is still at a disadvantage. Nonetheless, his Menace is much stronger than Felix's, so Bran wins the contest. But Felix has two boys backing him up against one, so he insists, and all players roll initiative, Felix and his two friends at a disadvantage. Had Bran backed out of the conflict, Felix would have become the leader until further notice – but Bran would probably have survived.

Flashbacks: Kindness – can be used to heal damage. Each player has one kindness card, hearts with a number, ♥. They can offer kindness to another player's character who is having a hard time (not their own). If the recipient does not accept, the kindness is not spent. If the recipient's player accepts, they will briefly narrate a time in the past, aboard the Goshawk, when their character was having a hard time, and the kind one's player will then narrate how their character helped the other, discreetly and privately, in a way that made a difference. ***The recipient of kindness regains 4d6 hit points in the present*** – this can prevent a PC from going down, even if they would otherwise have hit 0 hit points. Thereafter, the card must be placed in plain sight in front of the recipient player, 'tapped' (turned horizontally). It is quite important that people control their own kindness – you cannot be ordered to spend it, and the DM should interrupt if someone tries to dictate that someone else use their kindness for practical reasons.

Example: Alon is stabbed by a cultist and reduced to zero hit points. Cort's player interrupts by holding a kindness card towards Alon's player, offering kindness ♥, which Alon's player accepts. Alon's player then briefly narrates about that time on the Goshawk when Alon had tried to explain to an older pirate that he was tying his knots wrong, and had taken a bad beating and was lying curled up in a corner of the hold, weeping. Cort's player then takes over and narrates how Cort found Alon and patted him awkwardly on the shoulder, and said "You were right." Back in the present, Alon regains 4d6 hit points, and doesn't keel over after all. Alon's player takes the kindness card from Cort's player and places it horizontally in front of themselves, making it visible that it is used.

Flashbacks: Cruelty – can be used when someone is failing an important roll. The current leader's player controls the pool of cruelty cards (spades with numbers, ♠), of which there are five at the start of the game. The leader's player can use the cards on the leader, or offer them to others. If another player does not accept, the cruelty is not spent. When you use a cruelty card, you must briefly narrate a time in the past, on the Goshawk, when your character was publicly cruel to one of the other PCs (who is alive now, and not the current leader) in order to raise your own status among the pirates. Torture, mutilation and rape are off limits, but theft, beatings and humiliation are OK. The target of the cruelty takes one hit point of damage, and the cruel PC's player can reroll a d20 with advantage, even if they know their PC would otherwise have failed. Thereafter, the card must be visible and 'tapped' in front of the player of the target of the cruelty. When a new boy seizes the leadership, his player gets what is left of unspent cruelty cards.

Example: Dio is disarming a trap to let the boys get past the next door, but his player rolls low with Locks & Traps. Cort is the leader, and Cort's player offers Dio's a cruelty card ♠, which Dio's player accepts. Dio's player then narrates how Dio cruelly mocked Felix on the Goshawk by stealing his knitting and displaying it in front of the other pirates, who laughed loudly. Felix takes one hit point of damage, and his player places the cruelty card horizontally in front of them to show that it is used. Now, they can reroll Dio's Locks & Traps with advantage, and disarms the trap so the group can continue.

TRUE WEAKNESS and TRUE STRENGTH – If a player character touches the face of the Goddess at low tide in the Holy of Holies, a truth will be revealed to him (which the player will define) which is a weakness if he fails, or a strength if he succeeds. Each PC can get only one truth. WEAK truth is represented with a clubs face card, ♣, which the player places in front of them, and STRONG truth with a diamonds face card, ♦. Which type of truth is determined with a wisdom saving throw versus difficulty 12. Immediately afterwards, everyone else will see the truth in question clearly on his face – this you must make clear as the DM.

You can (and must!) use WEAK truth against the player at the worst possible time by giving them disadvantage on a roll that they are about to make. Explain it either with the concrete weakness that they defined, or by the PC being distracted by the thought of the revelation of the Goddess. Then, the card is used and tapped.

The player can bring STRONG truth into play by tapping it to give themselves advantage on a roll (before rolling).

See The Holy of Holies, page 43.

Example: Egin touches the face of the Goddess in the Holy of Holies, and the player rolls a 10 on their wisdom saving throw. So, the DM says that he has a vision of floating in the night sky, where the moon looks into him and sees a hidden truth about some way in which he is weak – and Egin's player gets to define how that is. The player says that the moon looks into Egin and sees that his pirate coolness is a total sham – inside, he is just a scared boy. As Egin rises, this is clear to everyone – that is, the DM tells the other players that they can

clearly see on Egin's face what he has just realized about himself. The DM gives Egin's player a jack of clubs ♣ which they must keep in front of them. Later in the game, Egin is trying to bluff his way past cultists, and the DM uses the card to give Egin's player disadvantage on the Deception roll. The card is then made horizontal ("tapped") in front of Egin's player.

Player Character Ghosts – If a PC dies during the first two hours in the temple, that is before the end of the low tide, he can become a ghost and use kindness once (regardless of whether he has already been kind or not), and he also gets one use of a special, ghostly cruelty with which he can do 1d4 points of damage and force a player to fail a roll that they were about to succeed at, unless they make a **difficulty 15 charisma saving throw**. The target character takes the damage in any case.

See the handout Dead Player Characters, page 52.

Example: Bran has been murdered by Dio at low tide and has become a ghost. Even though Bran's player has already used their kindness card, they get a fresh one. This, Bran uses to help Cort. And when Dio tries to sneak past cultists and succeeds at his Stealth roll, Bran's player uses a flashback about how Bran beat up Dio aboard the Goshawk. Dio takes 1d4 damage and has to make a charisma saving throw to avoid detection anyway.



Style of Play

The Temple of the Tides is a dungeon crawl, and it is also a story game about lost boys trying to grow into men in a cruelly fucked up situation. And it is quite important that the players are on board with what the style of the game is, both as regards dungeon crawling and story gaming.

Dungeon crawling

It is *exploration*, not a series of encounters. What this means is that the temple is a piece of reasonably coherent fictional reality which the players must explore parts of in order to accomplish their goals. This has a number of consequences:

- 1) It is quite possible that there are parts of the built-in story of the place that the players will never get round to exploring. And this is OK, as long as it feels real.
- 2) The (possible) fights are NOT designed as balanced encounters that the players are supposed to be able to fight their way through. Fights can be dead easy, or they can be utterly deadly – there are situations where "success" means not biting off more than you can chew.
- 3) It is important that you not present encounters with the cultists as fights that the players are by definition supposed to fight, but as living reality that they must deal with.

If the DM doesn't say anything, there is nothing. It would be boring if the players were to stop and roll for *Investigation* every five feet, so it should be a pact between you and the players that if you say nothing, nothing is there. You are allowed to be tricky, however – the trap is not necessarily right in the spot where you are

describing things, but there will be no traps in an empty corridor, unless perhaps you start waxing poetic about the mold on the wall...

The players have three hours in the temple itself, and the scenario treats time inside and outside the fiction as one to one. Combats, for instance, will be a bit slower, but many other things will be faster. Real time is still used as the measure against which the deadline of the game is held. If the players do something that would require impractical amounts of time, procrastinate instead of just fast forwarding through it. Every water level of normal-low tide-normal takes one of the three hours of dungeon runtime.

Fights are relevant, but protracted, tactically complicated fights are not what the scenario is about. The opponents are dangerous but fragile, in order to support brief but brutal fights.

In the temple, there are two warring factions of cultists. Perhaps in some situations it can be tempting for you as DM to play out conversations between cultists. Please resist! Conversations between cultists should nearly always happen off stage, as it is really boring for the players if you have lengthy discussions with yourself. *The players* are absolutely allowed to talk to cultists, and when that happens it is important that the cultists appear to be human beings, not impersonal cannon fodder. This doesn't mean that you have to say a whole lot about them – just a few details to suggest that there is more to them than just stat blocks.

There are two maps of the temple – the players' which they get when the mission starts (page 74) and the DM's map (page 73) with area numbers and notes. Thus, the players don't have to map, and you can use the map to relate to the places in play, but naturally the DM has a bit of extra insight.

Story Game and Group Dynamics

The players are not supposed to simply play a bunch of ice cold psychopaths. Neither are they supposed to just play good buddies at war. They are supposed to play to find out what happens, and how their relationships and attitudes evolve.

A major part of the excitement of the game is the development of the relationships between the PCs. A number of elements in the game can push the relationships in unforeseen directions, but it is also an important task for you as DM to poke the players a little if they settle too firmly into a pattern, too fast. Specifically, you should start interfering if they COMPLETELY stop caring about who is the leader, whether the leader makes the decisions and whether the decisions have good or bad consequences. If someone other than the leader makes a decision, and the leader doesn't take credit quite hard, take the pirate coin and cruelty cards away from the leader and give them to the new leader. Or if you can see it is going to happen, you can threaten the leader into stepping up and either deciding something else or at least bluster loudly. And if the leader takes the credit for something which is quite obviously someone else's idea, you can poke the others and ask if they are OK with the glory and the rewards being taken by the leader.

The cruelty flashbacks of the story game can potentially contain transgressive elements that can push some players' buttons in ways that are not good. It is defined (and stated on the character sheets) that narrating torture, mutilation and rape is off limits, but on one hand, people can forget the boundaries in the heat of the moment, and on the other, sometimes seemingly minor cruelties can be too unpleasant for some players. Keep an eye on the players as cruelty is narrated AND afterwards, and intervene if you sense a

significant bad mood. Also note that the players are equipped with the safety phrase "STOP THE GAME".

Variable Player Number, Fixed Timeframe

The scenario works with 3-5 players, and there are 6 possible characters. The number of cultists (and in a couple of places, snakes) is scaled according to the number of players, but otherwise the challenges are the same. Having more PCs naturally means more resources, but on the other hand having more players also means that things take longer. And one of the deadliest challenges of the game is the time limit, as illustrated by the tide and by torches burning out.

From the Captain has dropped off the PCs at the entrance, they have three hours, and those are also three hours of real time at the table. There is a time sheet (page 51) to help keep track of the overall time frame, the tide and water levels, and the PCs' supplies of torches – things which remind the players of the time pressure.

The Roles of the Dungeon Master

Aside from playing NPCs in the few situations where the players actually talk to them, the DM has two meta roles to use as tools: the Captain and the Moon Goddess. Each comes with particular gestures and a particular attitude, and they can be useful tools for the DM to nudge the players in relevant ways. In a way, the Captain represents cruelty, or a very specific approach to cruelty, while the Moon Goddess does not necessarily represent kindness. In the hands of the DM, she is primarily the Goddess of the Revelators and is interested in how the combination of circumstances and inner life causes seeming transformations of people and situations.

Except for when they literally appear in the fiction, you should not announce that you are now the Captain or the Moon Goddess, you should simply, subtly become them.

The Captain – At the beginning and end of the game, the Captain is a 'real' NPC. When you are the Captain, take up a lot of space and look at the players *with intense scrutiny*. And look a *bit* cunning. Use the Captain to intervene in leadership affairs, for instance to take the coin away from someone showing weakness and giving it to someone stronger. Or to give tactical advice and point out that it would be foolish to get into a hard fight. Say something like "The Captain might say that only losers pick fights that they can't easily win." Or if the players are running out of time.

The Moon Goddess – The Moon Goddess is a 'real' NPC if anyone touches her face in the Holy of Holies at low tide, or if they unlock the power of the statue. When you are the Moon Goddess, smile a little smile that does not quite reach your eyes, and let your hands be expressive.

Also be the Goddess when you use the WEAK TRUTH (from the Holy of Holies) of a PC against them, or when they themselves use STRONG TRUTH. And if you initiate the players of dead PCs into the art of being a ghost (see the handout, page 52).

She can also be used as DM point of view when the players explore the mysteries of the temple in general.



Preparations & Prologue

Introduction to the Style of Play. We start at the group sorting (at Fastaval).

1. **Setting.** We are in a setting reminiscent of the European Late Middle Ages, a bit dirty and corrupt. There are certainly people who want to tell you about the struggle between Light and Dark, and they are probably after your savings. Magic exists, but if you run into something that seems supernatural, it is usually just trickery or misunderstandings.
2. **Exploration.** The content of the game is a piece of made-up reality, not a series of balanced encounters.
 - **Fights** can be really easy or incredibly dangerous – in some situations, 'success' is not getting into a fight against bad odds.
 - **The place** has a story, and there are reasons why things are the way they are. You should try to understand things in order to solve problems, but it is REALLY OK if you don't get all connections – it is much more important that you can FEEL that things have an internal logic.
3. **Story Game.** The scenario is very much about the relationships of the characters, and about pirate life aboard the Goshawk.
 - **Morality** – the PCs are not necessarily evil villains or good heroes. There are some house rules about kindness and cruelty, and you should use them, both to access vital resources and to figure out who your player characters are.

D&D quick intro. Still at the group sorting.

1. **D20 + bonus versus difficulty.** For instance d20 + attack versus armor class.
2. **Advantage and Disadvantage.** If you have advantage, roll 2d20 and pick the better one. If you have disadvantage, roll 2d20 and pick the worse.
3. **Action Economy.** In a combat round, you can carry out one **movement**, one **action** and one **bonus action** (if you have special abilities that can be used as such). Outside of your turn, you can make one **reaction** if you get something to react to.

Congratulations, you now know D&D 5th edition, and can get sorted into play groups if you are at Fastaval.

Age & Group Sorting at Fastaval: 13-14-year-olds can play the game, but it is a good idea to see to it that they get extra support from the DM, especially in connection with cruelty flashbacks. Therefore, at group sorting, very young players should go into groups with DM's prepared to help the play group as a whole come up with past cruelty that everyone at the table is OK with.

Casting. When the group is gathered at the table and you have greeted each other, put the character menu on the table. Give the players a minute to look at the menu, and then ask them to name a few characters that they might be interested in. Then, it should be fairly easy for them to negotiate a distribution of characters – after all, there are six characters and five players at most. The distribution should be one that everyone can live with, and not be based on some players having quick reflexes in grabbing characters.

Then ask the players to read pages 1 and 2 of their characters – page 3 is better used as support when the DM explains special rules, which happens right after the players have read the first two, and asked questions they might have. Quickly outline D&D 5E basics if complete novices are present.

Cort as Retard?: If a player gets Cort and makes faces and speaks in a slurry voice to seem sufficiently stupid, you should intervene. It is bad for the game, and anyway that sort of thing is simply not cool.

Special Rules. Explain leadership & conflicts, flashbacks and safety, briefly and working from the overview – the DM might grab page 3 of a PC not being played.

The Goshawk, strengths and weaknesses. Briefly introduce the Goshawk and the Captain, and the general background of all PCs having been on the ship just over a year. Then ask the players to each introduce their character's strengths and weaknesses to the others, as well as how they joined the crew. These things are on the character sheets, on page 1.

Status. Ask the players to silently read their Menace bonus, then step out on the floor and form a status line according to how much status their characters have in the pirate crew. Declare one end of the room to be where low status people belong, and the other end for high status people. In case of a contest over the same spot in the line, the players must glare evilly into each other's eyes and say their Menace number.

Admiration. Ask the players to sit at the table, and then ask each player to state one thing that they admire about one of the other PCs. This should not be a lengthy explanation.

Contempt. Ask each player to state one thing that they despise about one of the other PCs.

The Mission. Prologue – here, you start actually roleplaying. Start by describing the Goshawk and the situation on board.

- **The Goshawk** is a mid-sized warship, a sailing ship with castles fore and aft.
- The ship **is located** some way from the major shipping routes, near a rugged coast in a remote and rural region.
- It is **late afternoon**, and in the distance to the east, tall, dark cliffs tower. It is early fall, and the weather is clear but windy.
- **A bosun** sends the PCs up to the Captain who is standing on top of the front castle, looking landwards.

The Captain talks:

- A smaller **auxiliary ship** would be good for business. It might...
 - ...enter ports where a pirate ship might cause alarm...
 - ...be extra transport capacity...
 - ...be useful as bait.
- He thinks it should be named '**The Goose**'. And such a ship might be a really good first command for a promising young pirate. But equipping it would not be inexpensive, which brings us to...
- Inside the **dark cliffs** visible to the east is a partially flooded cave, and there is **The Temple of the Tides**, a shrine to the almost forgotten Moon Goddess.
- In the temple there is a **wooden idol** said to have miraculous powers. Elsewhere, there is a buyer who will pay really good money for that idol. Unfortunately, he has a really detailed description of the statue that he won't share, so we can't just make him a copy. In any case, it is a human-sized wooden statue.
- Tonight, **as the tide is going out**, you boys will be dropped off at the cave. And then you have three hours to get the idol and return to the entrance, where you can be picked up when the water level is right again. It is an amazing chance! All survivors will become full pirate crew members, and whoever emerges looking like a real leader will be given command of the Goose.

Leadership from the beginning. Show the players the pirate coin. Then the Captain asks who of them feels strong enough to start out as the leader?

- **Are there two** (or more) who want it? Set it up as a contest of Menace between the two strongest candidates, and say that the others cannot offer support because right here, violence is not an option. The winner gets the pirate coin.
- **Is there only one?** In that case, the Captain picks out the one of the rest who has the highest Menace and encourages /shames him into reaching for the power. Then have a Menace contest, and the winner gets the coin.
- **Dungeon map and four torches** are handed to the leader by the bosun. The leader's first task is distributing these things. The map is a copy of an old map, made on parchment in waterproof ink.

Break. If someone needs supplies or a body break, this is a good time, as the dungeon crawling bit is under time pressure.

Reminder about the style of play

- **Exploration** – not balanced encounters; the place has a story that the players need not understand in its entirety.
- **Story game** – use the game to find out who the player characters are, and don't commit too firmly to anything black-and-white from the beginning.

Get in the boat! The tide waits for noone, and the Captain is not inclined to listen to them planning and studying the map. The Captain and eight full pirates row the PCs to the dark cliff in a longboat as the evening sun is creeping towards the horizon behind them. The waves are showing teeth, and the seagulls are crying mournfully.

- **Pickup:** In just over three hours, the boat will come near the cave to look for them – if they want to be picked up, they must signal with a torch. If they do not have the idol, they might as well not signal.
- The Captain makes an offhand remark about **the first attempt**, three years ago. Here, he sent in a similar group to make an attempt.
- One of them came back and babbled something about "**an abyss of terrifying illusions**".
- **Consequenses:** The Captain does not tell the rest of the story without prompting – the survivor called in the boat to pick him up without having the idol, so the Captain threw him into the water to drown like the failure he was.
- **Inaccessibility:** As they approach, it is clear that the towering cliff is impossible to climb, and any attempt to swim away, even with a board to cling to, will end in one drowning or being dashed against the cliff by the waves.

- **The cave is really big** – 10 metres tall at the current water level, and 12 metres wide. You can tell that the highest water level is at least three metres above the current level, which is at least a metre over the lowest water level. To the left of the cave entrance is a wide, uneven ledge that was flooded until very recently. Here, just at this water level, it is reasonably practical to disembark or embark people, if you are coolheaded about waves and sharp rocks.

And then it is time for area 1, the sea cave. Note the starting time on your time-and-cultists sheet (page 51) and start the dungeon crawling.



Dungeon Description

All nine dungeon locations are presented in two parts, a summary and an in-depth description. The intent is for you as DM to read both thoroughly during your preparation, and then as far as possible you will refer only to the summary during play. The location descriptions also refer to the chapter Creatures, in which you will find the stats of potential opponents gathered.

The summaries contain a number of fixed points.

Introduction – a few words about the point of the location, and what to say to players when the characters enter. Do point out to the players on their map where they are as you explain to them. Feel free to use more artful words in play than those of the text.

Map Section – a slightly magnified section of the DM's map.

Light – lighting in the area. The description covers what light there is if no one brings torches in there. Torches provide bright light to a distance of 30 feet, and dim light out to 60 feet (~20 metres). And it is a real possibility in the game that the players will run out of torches. And yes, then they will have to make do in the darkness, and will have to be creative to signal the boat at the end.

Tide – some locations are always above water level. Otherwise, it depends on when you are in the timeslot. The two water levels which are relevant in the game are 'normal', the level at the beginning and end, and 'low tide' which is the level in the middle hour of the game. 'Normal' is about a meter over 'low tide', and high tide just short of three metres above 'normal'. The total variation in water level in the area is thus just short of four metres in the course of an average tidal cycle.

Threats – here, you find only keywords, relevant skills and saving throws (ST), difficulties (DC, for Difficulty Class) and damage, as well as references to Creatures. In some locations, the amount of threats is variable depending on whether there are three, four or five players, while in other locations, the threats are constant. In any case, it is very likely that the players will do something that the stated skills and difficulties do not account for – lucky then that there is a live DM present!

Story – what is the dramatic basic idea of just this location. It gives something for the DM to work with, but if what happens is something other than what 'Story' assumes, it is fine.

Additionally, there might be other, unique points in the summary.

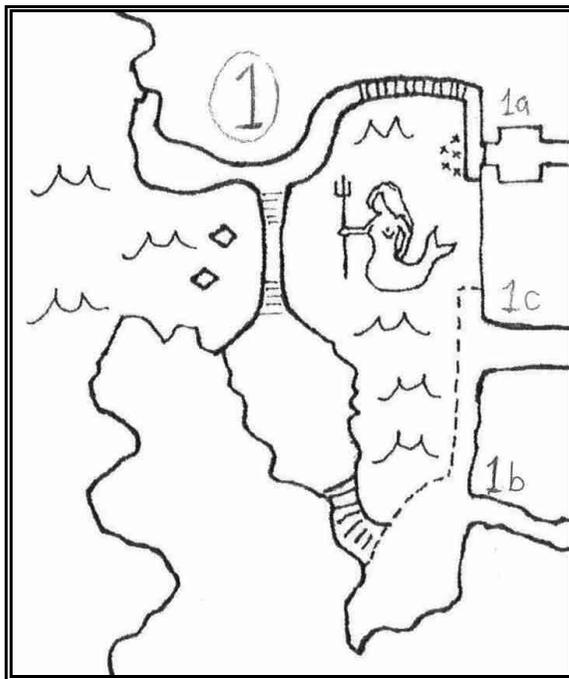
The in-depth description consists of free text, with some elements from Threats **in bold**. Three of the larger locations have parts of their presentations split into sub-locations, 1a, 1b etc.

When the players start dungeon crawling, you should immediately start using the aid sheet Time & Cultists, page 51, to keep track of time, water levels and torch supplies. It is a bit of work, but both changing water levels and torches that sputter and go out are pure magic for reminding players of the time pressure.

1: The Sea Cave

The cave opening is some 12 metres wide and 10 high. To the left is an uneven ledge where it is possible to disembark. In the middle, a partially natural bridge crosses the inlet. These are very dangerous waters both for sailing and swimming.

Light: At the start of the game, strong light from the evening sun in the west shines into the cave. At the end, there will be light from both moon and stars above the sea, but the cave will be in utter darkness (unless someone brings torches).



What you can see of the three exits (1a, 1b and 1c) from the entrance/bridge:

- **1a, the north door:** A narrow, carved stairway leads up to a narrow platform in front of a stone door, five metres above the water. Bronze spikes in front.
- **1b, the south corridor:** An uneven crack, just short of two metres wide and four to five metres tall.
- **1c, the middle corridor:** Even, arched opening, three metres wide and up to two metres over the water.

Tide: At *normal level*, the ledge outside the cave is half a meter above the water surface, and the water in the southeast end of the sea cave is about a meter deep. At *low tide*, the ledge is a meter and a half above water level and hard to use, and the southeast end of the sea cave is about drained. You can see on the walls that high tide is about three metres above 'normal'. (All other descriptions of this area assume normal level. Adapt if someone comes here in the middle part of the game.)

Threats:

- **Falling and getting hurt** as you come ashore. *Dex ST, DC 7, 1d4 damage* (and loss of dignity).
- Maybe furious *cultists* at the end of the game.

Story: The sea cave is a tutorial for the PCs' hierarchy. First, there is a chance that the leader falls and is humiliated, and then the group must decide which way to go. This is an obvious occasion for conflicts – in a place with no other pressing threats.

1: The Sea Cave – In Depth

The cave is a gap in a vast, vertical cliff towering towards the sky. The cliff is impossible to scale and extends far to both the north and the south – any swimmer will be dashed against the rocks and drown, any climber will fall to their death. The smell of salt is intense, and mournful cries of the sea birds can be heard above the crashing of the waves. White foam suggests treacherous rocks, and inside the cave, the waves are lower. You can make out smaller, darker cave openings – and a door. The cave opening is about 12 metres wide and 10 metres high. The cave is 20-25 metres deep from west to east, and the smooth east wall is about 35 metres wide (north-south) and 10 metres high. Here, you can see the traces of the last high tide, about three metres above the current water level.

The Captain's longboat disembarks the PCs on the ledge on the north side of the cave opening. Getting from a boat onto the ledge at the normal water level requires a **difficulty 7 dexterity saving throw** to carry out in an elegant fashion – otherwise you end up prone on the ledge, and take 1d4 damage from falling onto the sharp, slippery rocks. Also, the Captain will laugh contemptuously. (Note that Bran has advantage because of his danger sense – this will not be highlighted elsewhere, but this roll serves as an intro.) Once they are disembarked, the longboat sails away immediately.

When the PCs first disembark, the cave is lit by the rays of the sinking sun from the west. After an hour or so, the sun sets and the cave gets gloomy. On the ledge outside the cave, you can still see (and be seen), but otherwise the light is dim unless you are carrying a torch..

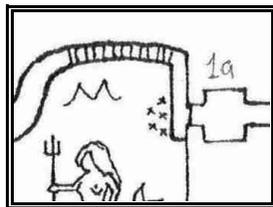
In an elegant arch, a partially natural bridge leads over the water in the cave entrance, which is full of shoals. A carved stairway leads from the ledge up to a narrow platform about five metres above the normal water level. Here, at the north end of the east wall, is a stone door in the rock. Half a dozen cruel bronze spikes protrude several metres out of the water beneath the platform.

On the other side of the bridge is a plateau, 5-7 metres wide and 12 metres long. From there, a stairway leads down into shallow water in the southeast end of the sea cave, where you can see a dark, uneven opening in the rock, two metres wide, 4-5 metres high and (normally) flooded. In the middle of the east wall is another dark opening, three metres wide with an arching ceiling, clearly shaped by people. In the wall south of this opening is a series of little holes that look like hand grips for support (and that is precisely what they are, even in they look a little suspect).



1a: The North Door

A narrow stairway carved in the rock leads up to a *platform* and a *stone door*. The lack of a handle shows that you must open the door by pushing. Under the doorway, cruel, metres-long *bronze spikes* protrude from the water.



Light: Outside, evening sun at the start of the game. There is no light in the room behind the door (but of course some will shine in if they get the door open).

Tide: Always above the water.

Threats: The platform is a **trap** that tips people onto the spikes if they try to push open the door.

- **Investigation DC 12** to identify, **Locks & Traps DC 15** to fasten the platform (only roll when it counts; aid requires someone to be out on the platform).
- If the trap is sprung: **dex ST, DC 15**, damage is **1d4** if you are secured with rope, or **1d6+2d10** to fall onto the spikes.

Behind the door: Long levers to reset the platform, and a shorter lever to lock the platform.

Story: This is the obviously dangerous way, and SOMEONE must risk more than the others if they are to proceed this way.

1a: The North Door – In Depth

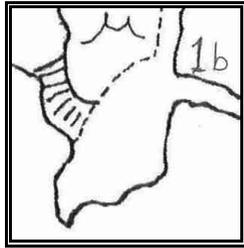
A narrow stairway carved in the rock leads up to a platform and a stone door. The lack of a handle shows that you must open the door by pushing. Stair and platform are narrow enough that only in the corner is it possible to pass each other without great risk.

Investigation difficulty 12 reveals a crack in the platform a meter before the door, and between the platform and the wall. **Locks & Traps difficulty 15** (and an iron spike, or deadly violence against a dagger) might jam the platform in place – only roll when someone tries to push open the door. With this L&T roll it is possible to aid someone – but one of the two must be on the unsafe part of platform! If someone pushes the door without having jammed the platform in place, the platform will fold into the wall and dump the offender onto the spikes unless they succeed at a **difficulty 15 dexterity saving throw** to leap to safety. If you are secured with rope held by at least two others, the consequence of a failed saving throw is only slamming into rock for 1d4 damage, but if you fall onto the spikes, you take 1d6+2d10 damage, and then you are in a lot of trouble if you cannot swim. If the platform is down, it is impossible to get back up from the outside, and the door is impossible to open.

Behind the door is a small, unlit room, three metres by four, from which a dark, silent stone corridor goes on. There are two large levers (one on each side of the door) with which two+ people can raise the platform again if the trap has been set off, and a small handle with which you can block the platform so that it does not fold down when the door is opened. The inner side of the stone door has a handle, so that it can be pulled open from the inside.

1b: The South Corridor

Mostly *natural cave*, just short of two metres wide and four to five metres high. Just as the first PC reaches the entrance, there is a *spooky sound*. There is an inscription on the wall to the right of the entrance.



Light: Close to dark, with just a few reflected glints of sunlight on the ceiling high above, from waves in the cave entrance. Further in, there is no light to be seen.

Tide: At *normal level*, about 120 cm deep. At *low tide*, maybe 20 cm deep.

Threats: None (at the entrance).

Inscription: "*Touch the face of the Goddess / Revelation transforms*"

Story: This is the most obvious route to take. But if it is portrayed as REALLY spooky, it is still an interesting choice.

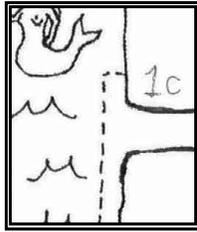
1b: The South Corridor – In Depth

The corridor is quite rough, natural cave that has had a little help with picks and chisels. It is a bit short of two metres wide and four to five metres high, with more than a meter of water at normal water levels. The floor is much more level than you would expect from a natural cave. To the right of the corridor entrance, an inscription has been scratched into the wall (who can read?), which says "*Touch the face of the Goddess / Revelation transforms*". Down the corridor, there is no light and nothing to smell beyond salt water. But in the distance, for a moment, they can hear strange and uncanny notes of something that might be singing – it reminds people of long forgotten things that one might not quite want to remember. And then there is just the sound of the waves gently crashing against the rocks.



1c: The Middle Corridor

A wide corridor, cut from the rock. You arrive at the entrance from the south via a *narrow, flooded ledge*. There are holes in the rock wall above the access that can be used as hand holds. The water smells a bit of sewer.



Light: Evening sun on the wall to the north at the beginning, then quite dark. No light to be seen further in.

Tide: About a meter of water at *normal level*. At *low tide*, the floor and ledge are at the level of the water surface, but little waves break over the edge.

Threats:

- Without using the hand holds, **dex ST, DC 7** – or you **fall into the water**.

Story: Here, they get the most banal illustration in the world of the fact that the temple is inhabited by living human beings.

1c: The Middle Corridor – In Depth

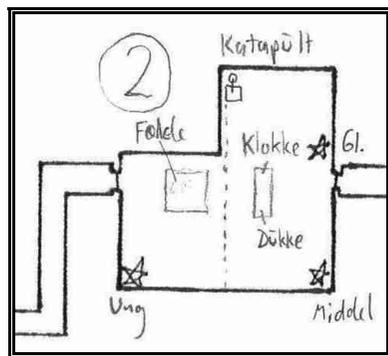
You get to the middle corridor by walking along the wall from the south corridor along a ledge which at normal water levels is under a meter of water. Hand grip holes are cut into the wall at about shoulder height because the ledge is slippery and the waves quite annoying. If you do not use them, it takes a **difficulty 7 dexterity saving throw** to not **fall into the water** as a wave hits (the consequences will depend on whether people can swim, and whether others are willing to help).

The middle corridor itself is three metres wide, and the middle of the arching ceiling is about three metres over the floor. It is roughly hewn from the rock. In the first hour of play, there will clearly be water flowing out of the corridor, driven by the tide. Curious questions will reveal (with no need for dice rolls) that the water smells a bit of sewer, and at some point a turd actually floats past them. The corridor is quite dark and rather quiet.



2: The March of the Mechanical Goddess

The door from the west is wooden, and not more than a couple of years old. It opens into the room. A *string* connects the door to a wooden mechanism, and if the string is slackened or cut, the march of the "goddess" begins at the other end of the room, set off with a hidden string.



At the other end of the room is a table with a *large bell* at one end, and the *mechanical goddess* at the other – in less than ten seconds (in practice, one combat round), the hammer of the Goddess will hit the bell. A pit trap and a hidden catapult set off by a tripwire threatens people who hasten to stop the Goddess.

There are three statues in the room.

Light: None, and the room is large enough that the opposite end will be dancing shadows if you enter with a torch.

Tide: Always above the water.

Threats:

- West door, **Investigation DC 20, Locks & Traps DC 18.**
- An action to look around – **Perception DC 10** spots the pit trap, **DC 15** the tripwire too, same roll.
- **Pit trap** w. stone painted canvas – **dex ST, DC 15, athletics DC 13** to get across as well.

- **1d6 damage** from falling in, and the hole contains (players – 3) **venomous snakes** (Creatures, p. 48). **Animal handling DC 13** to calm, **athletics DC 18** to get up.
- **Catapult rock dex ST, DC 16** to avoid, **3d6 damage** and **str ST DC 16** or get knocked prone.
- **Poison needle** under goddess robe if you grab her, **50%**, see poison under Creatures, p. 48.

Story: The panicked race to stop the mechanical goddess before she reaches the bell. The traps here are only dangerous if you are in too much of a hurry to look out. This shows that many of the dangers of the temple are based on manipulation and deceit.

2: The March of the Mechanical Goddess – In Depth

The room is large, of irregular shape but with smooth walls and arching ceiling, cut into the dark rock. It is the second line of defense of the Ortho cultists and a religious statement. The description after light and threats assumes that the PCs enter from the west – otherwise adapt. From door to door, the distance is 15 metres. The basic concept of the room is that a small, mechanical goddess holding a hammer marches along a table towards a bell. In and of itself, her march is harmless, but if you rush too fast to stop her, there are two other traps to get hurt by, and she herself has a poison needle under her robe. There are stone statues both in the nearer and the farther southern corners.

The west door is of wood and reasonably new. It is fairly tight fitting, but of course there are enough cracks that you can tell that it is dark on the other side. The door opens inward, and there is a handle of wood that opens the door. **Investigation difficulty 20**

(yes, it is tricky) can, if you examine the door, reveal that there is a string on the other side that stays taut as long as the door is closed. With **locks & traps difficulty 18** you can get a lockpick through the door and pull in the string as you open the door.

If you open the door WITHOUT hauling in the string, the grip of the string on a wooden, mechanical device about three metres from the door and to the right is slackened, and this starts the march of the mechanical goddess. About ten metres into the room (30 feet) there is a table, a meter wide and three long. On the left/northern end is a large bell of polished bronze, and from the right end, the goddess walks. She is a two feet high, robed figure with a white face turned towards the bell, holding a hammer and playing a music-box tone. She will reach the bell in about ten seconds. If they have made it safely through the door, the 'goddess' stays still.

If the goddess is on the move, ask them to roll for initiative and say that the hammer hits the bell at the beginning of round two. Then ask them what they do, but do NOT give them time to plan and coordinate. If someone wants to look out (properly), say that it will take up their action. If they are OK with that and succeed at **Perception DC 10**, tell them that 3x3 metres of floor looks wrong. If they are up to **Perception DC 15**, tell them about the tripwire a short way from the table (and they can warn others).

If you run from the door directly at the table, you run onto the "wrong" floor which is canvas painted to look like stone. It takes a **dexterity saving throw DC 15** to not fall in – if you succeed, you can choose to fall on your own side (succeeds automatically and your turn ends) or you can try to jump over. This requires a roll against **athletics DC 13** – on a failure you fall into the hole anyway. The hole is 3½ metres deep and somewhat dirty. The fall

does 1d6 damage, and in the hole there is one venomous snake if there are 4 players (see Creatures, page 48), or two snakes if there are 5 players. The snakes act in round two, and attack if you do not keep cool with **difficulty 13 Animal Handling** (+wisdom if you do not have the skill but give it a shot anyway). People outside have disadvantage on attacking the snakes. Climbing up requires **difficulty 18 athletics**, but help from above gives advantage.

The tripwire is silk, and hard to see if you are in a hurry (but otherwise **Perception** or **Investigation difficulty 10** does the job). If you run into it, the catapult throws a big rock that it takes a **difficulty 16 dexterity saving throw** to avoid. Being hit does 3d6 damage and you must make a **difficulty 16 strength saving throw** to avoid being knocked prone (and then your turn ends).

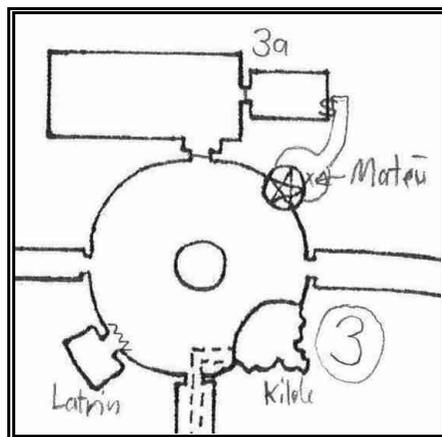
The about 60 cm tall mechanical doll has a body of wood and brass under the robe. The hammer is likewise a nice little one of wood and brass. Her face is porcelain and very beautiful. Knocking her over is easy enough if you get to her, but if you carelessly grab her, you have a 50% chance of being stung by a poison needle under the robe – the poison is like that of the snakes (because that is what it is, see – again – Creatures, p. 48). Anyway nothing more than a low "gong" comes out of it if she gets to the bell and strikes. It is possible that creative players can put her to interesting use. When the spring is wound up, she has about 20 feet of walking in her and plays strange notes.

The catapult is too large to easily bring along. Also there are three statues of light sandstone, all women in voluminous robes with hands held out. The southwest one is a young woman, the southeast one a middle-aged woman and the northeast one an old woman. They all have a silver coin in their right hand and a withered flower in their left. They can freely be taken.

3: The Hall Where the Goddess Speaks

The hall is 15 metres in diameter. The ceiling is 12 metres up, with a shaft in the middle. Low platform in the middle. On the SE side, a basin. On the NE side, a giant woman's face of bronze with dark eyes.

A lot of men (led by Leo, standing to the NE) are singing towards the shaft, from which a basket descends on a chain.



Light: The room is clearly lit by *three torches* – one on each side of the basin, and one in a wall sconce in the northwest end. The cultists have more torches in store in the northern side room.

Tide: Always above the water.

Threats:

Sneak up to the room, but not in: (worst sneak rolls) *Stealth DC 10*, advantage for ceremony, disadvantage for suspicion.

Sneak past: (worst sneak rolls) *Stealth DC 18*.

Sweet words: *Deception DC 15*.

- A lot of **Ortho cultists** (see *Creatures*, page 48, and numbers on *Time & Cultists*, page 51).
- **Leo**, leader of the Orthos (*Creatures*, page 49).
- In 3a, baskets of **venomous snakes** (*Creatures*, page 48).

Ceremony of the Cultists: First, everyone (minus 2) are present and sing, while the basket of supplies is lowered. Then, Leo and most go north, leaving (no. of PCs) cultists on the platform.

Phrases of the Face: The face speaks when imprisoned Mateu has lit the eyes and they shine with a rainbow glow.

- KNEEL BEFORE ME, PUNY MORTALS!
- CONFESS YOUR SINS AGAINST THE COMMUNITY!
- KILL THE BLASPHEMERS, FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS!
- SACRED IS THE CYCLE OF LIFE! (If Mateu needs to play for time, but it would be embarrassing to say nothing.)

Story: A lot of people live here and have a hard time. HOLY SHIT! – and a giant, talking Goddess head! This is the religion's aspect of exploitation and manipulation.



3: The Hall Where the Goddess Speaks – In Depth

This is where the Ortho cultists live. The hall is round and 15 metres in diameter. The ceiling is domed, and 12 metres up centres up into a 1½ metres wide shaft leading upwards. Through this, supplies, and sometimes new cultists, are lowered by the local villagers – as long as the cultists perform their rituals and sing their songs. The room is clearly a natural cave that has been expanded and shaped, but the raw rock is clearly visible around the spring on the southeast side. In the middle is a low, round dais, 30 cm high and 3½ metres in diameter. Visually, the room is dominated by a giant bronze face with dark eyes, on the northeast side. Inside the head is a secret cultist ready to play the Goddess.

The room is clearly lit by three torches – one on each side of the spring and basin, and one on the northeast side of the room. The cultists have more torches in store in the northern side room (3a).

The doorway to the small room to the southwest is covered by a ragged blanket, and it smells bad even outside the blanket. This is the latrine of the Ortho cultists, and here are two wooden buckets that they empty into the waters of the battlefield at high tide.

To the southeast is a spring where a small stream of fresh water trickles from the rock and runs into a stone basin. There is an overflow channel in the floor, ten cm deep and 40 cm wide, which leads out of the corridor to the south. However, at this point there is far from enough water in the basin to produce overflow.

To the north, a wooden door leads to the dormitory of the Ortho cultists (3a).

There is a rather large crowd of Ortho cultists in the area, including their leader Leo, and if they were to rush the PCs en masse, it would probably be disastrous. Aside from regular weapons, the cultists have baskets with snakes that they might literally toss into the fray. The total number of Ortho cultists is based on the number of players, and there is space to keep track of this on the aid sheet Time & Cultists, page 51.

The Ceremony

The cultists are singing a song so that their jailers above the shaft can hear that they are carrying out their religious duties, and lower supplies to them. During the ceremony, Leo is present, as well as all cultists save two (i.e. 9, 14 or 19). Leo stands in front of the face of the Goddess, and the rest form a circle around the central dais. While they are all singing praises to the Goddess, a chain with a large basket is lowered from the shaft at the top of the room. The cultists are all men, a bit on the lean side but not downright starved. They come in a wide variety of ages, from about 15 up to 60 or so. They are pale, their clothes are in tatters and their hair short and ragged. A couple of them do not look too healthy. Only Leo is well dressed, well fed and visibly physically formidable, as well as equipped with a mail shirt and a sword. His beard is full and bushy, and radiates authority. Three of the cultists step forward and empty the basket while the rest sing a hymn of thankfulness. Then the basket is raised again, and most of the men (led by Leo) carry food, a couple of boards and a smaller wicker basket out the north door, which they close. An number of men equal to the number of players remain behind. They get on the platform and keep on singing (though one of them has a cough). Do be very clear about all the cultists being far too many to fight against and win.

When first the PCs approach, the ceremony is in progress. Sneaking along one of the corridors without a proper door and looking in without being seen requires a roll against **Stealth DC 10**, with **advantage** during the ceremony, or **disadvantage** if the cultists have reason to be on guard. The worst Stealth skill in the group rolls (that is one, not all). Once in position outside one of the doorways they can either try to sneak past on **stealthy** feet (or just plain make a run for it), they can use **sweet words** or they can **fight**. All these approaches will be challenging but practical if most of the cultists have left after the ceremony, or rather impractical if they try their luck while all the cultists are still there.

Approaches

Stealth: If the PCs have not been caught sneaking up to the room, and the cultists are not particularly on guard, the PCs can either just dash around the platform and over to one of the other entrances while the cultists are surprised. Or they can try to sneak past – worst Stealth skill rolls against **Stealth DC 18**, as the room IS rather open.

Sweet Words: The PCs can try talking to the cultists. Presenting themselves in such a way that the cultists do not just raise the alarm takes a roll against **Deception DC 15** (harder if the PCs angle is too unconvincing. If the cultists do not raise the alarm, the Goddess will intervene after about a minute (and the cultists will react with visible, religious awe). Because inside the head sits a cultist that the rest do not know about, and it takes him a minute or two to ready the lamps that make the dark eyes of the Goddess light up with a mysterious rainbow glow. See the summary (p. 27) for the Goddess' phrases. It is however not impossible that they might avoid a fight and get at least a head start if they leave the

cultists sufficiently confused. But if they are at all honest about their intentions, things will go badly wrong.

If the PCs do not manage to move on reasonably quickly, Leo will be alerted by the voice of the Goddess, and after a minute or two he will arrive with the rest of the cultists. If the PCs confront Leo, a fight will ensue fairly quickly unless they are extraordinarily clever.

Fighting: A frontal assault will have to defeat all resistance during the surprise round, if the rest of the cultists are not to be alerted. And even then, the Goddess will intervene to scare the PCs and distract them with talk until Leo arrives.

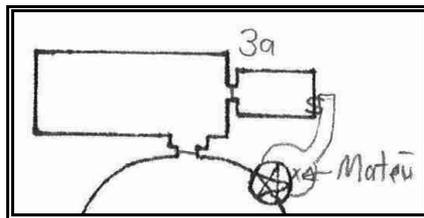
In any case, it is quite possible that the players will get creative. In that case, improvise.

The Cultist Inside the Head of the Goddess

Mateu is close to losing it after half a year in a small, dark chamber where he can see people but only interact with them as the Goddess, except for maybe ten minutes a day with Leo, who gives orders and instructions and is the only one who even knows that Mateu is alive. Mateu can be lured or pressed 'off script' with either cunning or passion.

3a: The Quarters of the Ortho Cultists

A stone hall with a low ceiling and a wooden door to Leo's room. It is unlikely but not impossible that the PCs might come here. If the Ortho cultists are losing, this is where they will withdraw and defend.



Light: The room is dimly lit by a couple of candles.

Tide: Always above the water.

Threats: A lot of **cultists**, baskets with **venomous snakes**.

Secret door **Investigation DC 16** to find, **DC 20** to open (same roll).

Story: If they come in here, they have probably spent too much time on hard fights.

3a: The Quarters of the Ortho Cultists – In Depth

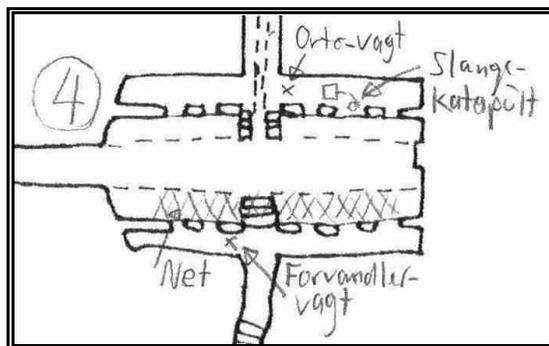
The **side room to the north** contains beds of blankets and old sacks, barrels and boxes of food, as well as stores of various weapons (a couple of spears, a mace, a cutlass) and torches. There are also baskets with **snakes** and baskets with hamsters. It is dimly lit by a couple of cheap candles that stink of sheep's grease.

Leo's room contains a bed made of wooden boxes, boards and blankets, as well as a basket with about a hundred silver coins, twenty gold coins and three crossbow bolts with silver heads. And a porcelain chamber pot with a lid. There is also a secret door to the room behind the head of the Goddess. If they look, and the **Investigation roll can manage difficulty 16**, they can find but not open the door. And if they can manage a **20**, they find the right combination of stones that opens the door to Mateu.



4: The Battlefield

A great hall with *raised galleries* on the north and south sides, and a canal in the middle. Very steep *stairs* lead up to the galleries. *Net with clam bells* covers parts of the platform under the southern gallery. There is a great *half-moon relief* on the east wall, and a large *inscription* under it. This is no-man's-land between the Orthos and the Revelators. Singing from both factions can be faintly heard in the distance, and the melodies clash.



This is no-man's-land between the Orthos and the Revelators. Singing from both factions can be faintly heard in the distance, and the melodies clash.

Light: A TINY little bit of light falls in from the north, from the torches in the hall of the Orthos, but in practice it is really dark. The Ortho guard has a **torch on a pole** with flint and steel attached, so that he can push it out into the hall (it stops when it points up at an angle). As he pushes it out, it ignites and lights up. He does this if it is dark and he hears suspicious noises.

Tide: At *normal level* there is a bit over a meter of water in the canal, while the platforms are exposed but wet. At *low tide*, the canal is almost empty and the bottom is quite disgusting.

Threats: Both factions have a guard in their gallery. **Perception DC 15** hears that there is someone there.

- **The Ortho cultist** in the northern gallery has a **catapult with snakes**. 3 players – 1 snake. 4 players – 2 snakes. 5 players – 2 snakes plus a backup snake in a basket. Thrown snakes attack as a reaction and land about three metres west of the stairs if they haven't hit anyone. See Creatures, p. 48.
- **The Revelator** in the southern gallery has **big rocks** and aims for light and ringing bells without exposing himself. **Stealth DC 14** to not rattle clam bells in the net. **Rock: dex ST DC 12**, damage **1d10** and **str ST DC 12** or be **knocked into the canal**. See Creatures, p. 48.

Inscription: "*The Ocean Obeys Me*".

Story: The PCs get into conflict with one guard and find that the other guard is cheering them on. This introduces them to the conflict between the two factions in an amusing/grotesque manner.

4: The Battlefield – In Depth

At the end of the long canal/corridor is the 'battlefield', the no-man's-land between the two factions of cultists, and also the place where they empty their latrine buckets. In the middle is a canal, a bit over a meter deep and 3-4 metres wide; on each side of it is a platform of rough rock, about two metres wide. Then it is four metres up to two rows of large, irregular openings into the galleries behind. Midway through the hall, there are steep stairs up on both sides. The ceiling above is rough stone arches. On the wall at the end of the 25 metres long hall you can see (if you get within

the about 20 metres that is the outer limit of how much light a torch will cast) a grand carving of a half moon with a face looking right. Under the moon is an inscription which can be read if you get closer and have light (and can read) – it says "*The Ocean Obeys Me*". Unless all cultists are thoroughly disturbed, the hall resounds with distant singing. Large parts of the south platform is covered by a net of woven seaweed, in which there are clam pairs that work as bells.

The darkness is almost complete, except for such light as the PCs bring with them. If they bring no light, they can make out a faint orange glow from the gallery to the north – it is the distant reflection of the light of the torches of the Ortho cultists. The Ortho guard has a torch on a pole with flint and steel attached, so that he can push it out into the hall (it stops when it sticks up at an angle). As he pushes it out, it ignites and lights up. He does this if it is dark and he hears suspicious noises. At normal water level, the canal is flooded while the platforms are exposed but wet. At low tide, the canal is almost empty and the bottom is quite disgusting – the tide carries away most of the gunk, but not all. At high tide, the platforms are flooded and the water reaches about two thirds up the stairs.

In the northern gallery, an Ortho cultist is on guard and can set off a catapult that throws venomous snakes. In the southern gallery, a Revelator cultist lurks with big rocks to dump on peoples' heads. At 3 players, there is one snake in the catapult, at 4 players, two snakes, and with 5 players the guard has an extra, backup snake in a basket. The seaweed net on the south side is there so that clam bells can make noise that helps the guard aim the big rocks.

Perception DC 15 can reveal that there is someone in the galleries whispering or singing very quietly. Moving on the south platform without making noise requires **Stealth DC 14**. If someone makes noise on the southern platform, a big rock will fall from above. With a **DC 12 dexterity saving throw** you can avoid being hit in the head with a big rock for 1d10 damage – and if you get hit, it takes a **DC 12 strength saving throw** to avoid being thrown into the canal. If the Ortho guard senses intruders on the northern platform, he will first set off the snake catapult, and then, if it is dark, the torch. The catapult is in the east end of the north gallery and throws the snakes along the platform from east to west, with a crooked arm and relatively gently. Normally they are in a covered basket where the lid is ripped off as the catapult fires. If the guard has a backup snake, he dumps it in the face of the first attacker to come up the stairs.

If the PCs get into conflict with the guard in one gallery and there is enough light that the other guard can see a bit of what is happening, the second guard will cheer on the PCs – the enemy of an enemy and all that. If the PCs are clever, they can build on this at least for a little while.

If the PCs try to talk, you must improvise. If they are a bit cunning, it is not unthinkable that they can get some information, but remember that there is a guard on the other side. And if it makes sense, you can have the guard on the other side interfere in the conversation.

5: The Mermaid's Cave

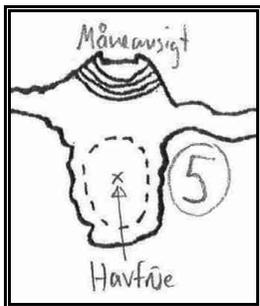
High, natural cave; the corridor continues on the other side. To the north, steep stairs up to a large relief of a *moon face*, with a wide mouth and dark, reflective eyes. To the south, *still water*.

Light: At the start of the game, the glow of the sunset can be seen in the tunnel to the west, but it does not light up the otherwise dark cave.

Tide: At *normal level* there is about a meter of water (over a slightly uneven bottom) in the north end of the cave and along the walls. The deeper water (shown with a broken line on the map) is three metres deep. At *low tide* there is maybe 10 cm of water on the floor, and the deep water is two metres deep.

Threats: If they stop and are actively alert: **Perception DC 10** hears song in the distance (if the Revelators are not yet disturbed), while **DC 18** also spots bubbles and maybe a little movement in the water to the south.

- **The moon face:** **Investigation DC12, L&T DC 15** to take the key-dagger, stabby trap **dex ST DC 14** (disadvantage with hand in mouth), damage **2d10**.
- **The mermaid:** *Only aggressive* if they are bringing out the statue. See Creatures p. 50. Note that saving throw vs the song is BEFORE initiative. She surfaces in the *deep water* – if anyone closes with her before she attacks, they fall into the deep water. Note also that the mermaid's *hit points* are dependent on the number of players.



Mermaid Intro:

- *Powerful, smooth and grey.*
- Her *hair* looks like seaweed.
- Large, dark *eyes*.
- Her *mouth* is wide and full of pointy teeth.
- Her *breasts* are mostly visible because of large, dark grey nipples.
- In her great, right hand she holds a *trident*.
- She is *singing* – a strange, deeply inhuman and incredibly beautiful sound as if of an entire choir from the depths of the sea.

Story: They get past without much trouble, and maybe consider if there might be something dangerous in the water. When they bring back the statue and think they are about to escape to safety, they are confronted by the most terrifying guardian of the temple, who is also the only completely and unequivocally magical element of the scenario.



5: The Mermaid's Cave – In Depth

The cave is for the most part natural and quite irregular. To the north, steep, carved steps ascend five metres up to a great full moon face. To the south, there is only water to be seen. The cave is about 12 metres north-south and 6-7 metres east-west.

If anyone listens and rolls **Perception, DC 10** reveals echoes of strange singing from the eastern corridor (if events have not silenced the Revelator cultists), and if they can match **DC 18**, they notice a few bubbles and a bit of movement in the deep water.

A steep, carved stair with nine steps leads up to the moon face that dominates the cave. The finely carved relief is more than two metres in diameter. The eyes of the moon face are dark and reflect the torchlight – one is cracked and scratched, and looks like it has been broken and repaired. They look like (and are) glass, and there is nothing but rock behind them. The mouth is wide and forms a visible crack into the rock. If you look into it, you can see that on the tongue, a meter or so in, is a dagger with a dark blade (it is tarnished silver) and about 10 cm of key protruding from the handle. **Investigation DC 12** will reveal that there seems to be no traps around the moon face, but that the knife is fastened with a metal band, and you can make out two bronze points to the sides of the knife – something bad will probably happen if you try to take the knife without being pretty light-fingered. A careful attempt to take the knife will discover the band without rolling, while a rash grab will just set off the trap. **DC 15 Locks & Traps** frees the key-dagger without setting off the trap. It is impossible to free it with anything but clever fingers – string, tools etc. will not do the job. If the trap is set off, it takes a **DC 14 dexterity saving throw** (with disadvantage if your arm is inside the mouth) to avoid the two bronze spikes that thrust violently about a meter out of

the mouth and then slowly withdraw. If someone else is obviously involved in the problem and have not explicitly stated that they keep their distance, they have to roll as well. The spikes do 2d10 damage.

In the deep water, the **mermaid** hides. If anyone dives down to her, she takes them. But only if anyone tries to bring the idol out through the cave will she emerge to attack. And even if she emerges, she breaks off pursuit when she has killed her first victim. See Creatures, page 50.

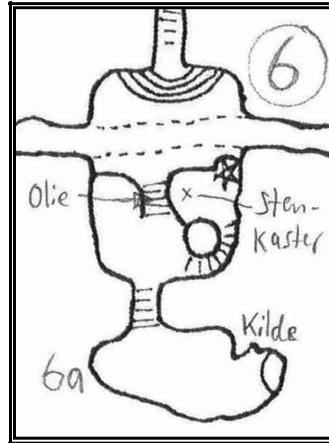
The mermaid is powerful, smooth and grey. Her hair looks like seaweed, her eyes are dark and her mouth is wide and full of pointy teeth. Her breasts are mostly visible because of large, dark grey nipples. In her great, right hand she holds a trident. And she is singing, a strange, deeply inhuman and incredibly beautiful song as of an entire choir from the depths of the sea.

If the mermaid *charms* everyone with her song (unlikely), she pulls one of them under the water to drown, and a minute later the rest of them wake from their daze. Otherwise she prefers to attack uncharmed targets. If wounded, she screams, and by definition this wakes up all charmed characters. If you feel like throwing a tidbit to the players of charmed PCs, you can describe how the fight around them sounds like the crashing of the waves and the screams (except for that of the mermaid, which would wake them) sound like seabirds.

Down in her water, she has among other things a fishing net, fifteen metres of rope and a horn made out of a great conch shell, if someone spends time diving for it. I think the mermaid might once have been a human priestess of the Moon Goddess. She is interested in humans, but cannot speak.

6: The Cave of the Revelators

High cave, partially excavated. *Stairs* up to the north. Southeast, *very high ledge*, five metres up, with *statue*. Southwest, *lower ledge*, two metres up. *Stairway* up between the ledges, leads to the lower ledge. *Canal* through the low, northern part of the cave. Singing, humming, chanting *Revelators*. If the PCs have approached with a lit torch, the Revelators will be on guard. In that case you should WARN them in the Captain's voice that this looks like a dangerous fight if they try to storm the fortified south end of the large cave.



Light: None. The Revelators have three torches in 6a, but no way of getting more, so they are only for emergencies.

Tide: At *normal level* there is about 120 cm of water in the deep east-west canal, and about 30 cm on the flats that surround the canal. At *low tide* there is about 20 cm of water in the bottom of the canal.

Threats:

Sneaking past: *Stealth DC 10* (worst sneaker rolls) at normal water levels, *DC 16* at low tide. Both ONLY in darkness!

Sweet words: *Deception DC 15* (and a good story) can get them past if Golzar is not present and they act fast. BUT NOT if they are bringing the idol with them!

- **Trap** on the south stairway – fish oil. *Dex ST DC 12*, damage *1d4* from falling, and turn ends.
- A lot of **Revelator cultists** (see *Creatures*, page 48-49, and numbers on *Time & Cultists*, page 51). With 3 players, total 3 plus stone thrower and Golzar, with 4 players, 6 cultists, and with 5 players 9 cultists plus stone thrower and Golzar. If they are not on guard, some of them will be in 6a.
- One cultist is **stone thrower** on the high ledge. Attack +4 (with advantage), damage 1d10+2 AND *str ST DC 12* or be knocked prone, range 20 feet. Needs light.
- **Golzar**, leader of the Revelators (*Creatures*, page 50). Golzar will normally be in 6a if the cultists are not alarmed.

Story: There are many good and terrifying possibilities here, but most of all I want to see the PCs meet a woman with live snakes in her hair and on her arm.



6: The Cave of the Revelators – In Depth

This high-ceilinged cave of dark rock has been expanded quite a bit by human hands. The tidal stream to the Holy of Holies runs through the northern end, while the southern end is raised, and the southeast is a high platform that towers over the rest of the cave. Here in the cave, the Revelator cultists live and try the best that they can to make it a nice place – but they do not have that much to work with. The cave is 10-11 metres east-west and 15 metres north-south.

To begin with, the cave is utterly dark except for what light the PCs bring. In the spring hall (6a), the Revelators have a store of three torches that they will light one of if they feel that they need light which they control (so their stone thrower can hit) – but they do not have access to more torches, so they are quite stingy with them.

Normally there is about 120 cm of water in the deep east-west canal, and 30 cm of water in the end around the carved stairway up to the north corridor, as well as from the canal to the southern platform. At low tide there is 20 cm of water in the bottom of the canal, and the other low areas are merely wet, not flooded. At high tide, the low platform is flooded, and the cultists retreat to the spring hall and the high platform.

There is a simple but annoying trap, as the middle of the stairway up to the lower south ledge is smeared with fish oil and is very slippery. The greatest threat is of course Golzar and the rest of the Revelator cultists. On the high ledge, one of them is ready to throw big rocks at intruders. Their total number is based on the number of players, and there is space to keep track of it on the aid

sheet Time & Cultists, page 51. Some of them are in the spring hall (and two of them stand guard elsewhere). If the Revelators are on guard, you should say **VERY DIRECTLY** that it is a strong position with battle-ready defenders – the Captain would say that only losers get into fights that they cannot easily win.

The cave is quite impressive, and on the edge of the high platform stands a light-coloured sandstone statue of a stately woman in an elaborate robe, streaked with red algae and very visible against the dark background. The stairs up to the high platform winds behind an almost 3 metres thick column. The high platform is 5 metres over the wet flat to the north, and 3 metres over the low platform to the north (which is obviously 2 metres above the wet flat).

Most of the Revelators are normally on the low, southern platform, where they sing, hum, huddle for warmth, groom each other's hair and beards with their fingers or with the one comb that they have, or clean fish and shellfish and pound seaweed tender for eating cold. Typically all in total darkness, in which they use their knowledge of the place, sense of touch and each others' humming for orientation. The stairs from the wet flat up to the low platform is about two metres wide, and the middle 80 cm are smeared with fish oil – the Revelators only use the sides. If you use the stairs unaware and at speed, it takes a ***dexterity saving throw versus difficulty 12*** – otherwise you drop prone and take 1d4 damage, and your turn ends. And if there are Revelators nearby, they will not hesitate to take advantage. Getting from the wet flat directly onto the low platform takes 15 feet of movement and a ***DC 12 Athletics check*** to avoid a reaction attack (with advantage) from the defenders.

Battle Tactics: Here and in 6a, there are 4/7/10 Revelator cultists as well as Golzar (depending on whether there are 3, 4 or 5 players). If the Revelators are not alarmed, there is one of them in hiding on the upper platform, 3/4/5 on the lower platform and 0/2/4 plus Golzar in the spring hall (6a). The ones on the lower platform are armed with knives, while a couple of spears and javelins stand ready in the spring hall. And there are a dozen large rocks ready to throw on the upper platform. Golzar, and such reinforcements as might be, turn up on the battlefield at the start of round two if it comes to combat.

If the cultists are alarmed (the PCs have approached with open fire, or the advance guards in the areas 4 or 7 have warned them) there is still one on the upper platform. Everyone else is on the lower platform, with a torch ready to light so the stone thrower on the upper platform can aim. Golzar will start out in cover behind a couple of others, so she is not available for shooting from the start. They will try to make the most of the stone thrower, and they will strike hard against people who fall on the steps or try to climb up. In any case, the Revelators fight with great ferocity and determination. They chant a terrifying battle song.

The stone thrower on the upper level throws headsized rocks from above. Within 20 feet of the upper platform, he attacks with +4 & advantage, does 1d10+2 damage, and a hit requires a DC 12 strength saving throw to avoid being knocked prone. Further away (and the room is not that large), the stone thrower has disadvantage instead. Unless you wait to shoot just as he throws, attacks against him have disadvantage, as he is in shadow and cover.

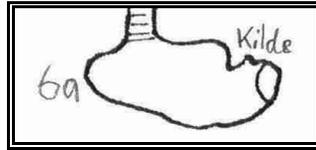
Sneakery: At normal water levels, you can try to sneak past if you do it in darkness, by sticking to the canal. The worst sneak rolls against **difficulty 10 Stealth**. At low tide, it is harder to get past without splashing audibly in the shallow water. Worst sneak rolls against **difficulty 16 Stealth**. But if they make a run for it, they can at least get past – but the Revelators will at least be on guard, and might start getting proactive once they have considered the situation.

Sweet Words: If the Revelators are surprised, and the PCs are fast and cheeky enough, a **Deception DC 15** will let them get past without the Revelators reacting or pursuing them. If the PCs stop and argue their case, the Revelators will quickly fetch Golzar, who is not so easily fooled. The Revelators will insist on the PCs staying down and not ascending to the platform. If the PCs say that they have come to take the idol, the rank and file will gasp, but Golzar will be more cool. However, she will just play for time, and then attack in the middle of a sentence – **Perception DC 15** to avoid being surprised. If the PCs are more vague and say that they have come for treasure, Golzar will believe them if their spokesman can manage **Deception DC 12**, and she will say that Leo, the master of the slave cultists, has the temple treasure. She will be up for coordinating an attack, but she will let them convince her with equipment – torches, rope, clothes etc. But even though she will be a reasonably honest ally, she will be careful not to overly risk herself and her men, and when they go for the idol, she will react.

If they try to bring the idol past the Revelators, they will attack immediately unless the players come up with something fabulously creative.

6a: The Spring Hall

In the east end of this low cave-hall, a small, natural spring trickles into a carved stone basin. The Revelators use most of the water that flows – or they carry the excess out in a bucket to avoid having a small stream running through their sleeping quarters.



Light: None, but this is where the Revelators keep their torches.

Tide: The water never reaches this high up.

Threats: The PCs probably only come in here if they have defeated the Revelators.

Story: A sad little one about the people that the PCs have just massacred very much being people. And maybe that the PCs are wasting precious time trying to rob people who own nothing.

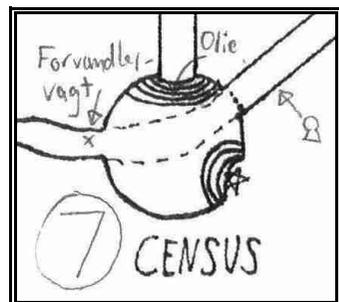


6a: The Spring Hall – In Depth

There are ragged blankets for sleeping as well as various stores – three torches (and flint and steel at the ready), a handful of buckets (of which two with lids serve as the Revelator latrine), two spears and various tools and bricabrac..

7: The Chamber of Trials

Round chamber, 9 metres in diameter and with a domed ceiling. A *canal* leads from the west corridor to the northeast corridor, which is blocked by a *portcullis*. To the north, steep steps up to a *corridor*. To the south-east, steps up to a giant *bronze statue* against the wall.



Light: Nearly none. If the PCs bring no light, they can faintly make out a pale glow in the corridor to the northeast – but it illuminates nothing but the silhouette of the *portcullis*.

Tide: At *normal level*, there is about 120 cm of water in the canal, and 20 cm on the floor. At *low tide* there is about 20 cm of water in the bottom of the canal, and the floor is just wet.

Threats:

- **Revelator guard** with a trident (stats like a spear) in the west corridor. If they come with a torch from the west (or are noisy), he will either try to stage an ambush or hide in the north corridor.. **Perception DC 12** from the front PC to prevent an ambush. See Creatures, page 48.
- **Trap:** Fish oil on the north stairs. **Investigation DC 10, dex ST DC 12**, damage **1d4**, falling down the stairs and turn ends.

- **Keyhole w. trap** in the crotch of the statue. Key-daggers from 5 and 8 open the lock. **Investigation DC 10/15, L&T DC 20, dex ST DC 15**, damage **2d6** and disadvantage on L&T vs same. If you jam the arm, the portcullis will not rise. Two attempts pr. PC w. L&T – disadvantage on the second try.
- **Sealed keyhole** opens the portcullis from the northeast side. Same key-daggers open. **Investigation DC 14, L&T DC 20**, the trap is harmless (but it can suck quite badly to not get through). Again, two tries pr. PC.
- **The portcullis:** Regardless of whether you leave a key in the lock or not, the portcullis is slowly lowered after a minute or so.

Story: This is where you show yourself to be worthy of the Holy of Holies from the Revelator side. It is also a place where leaders can prove their worth – or give orders that people really do not want to follow. The statue suggests a (somewhat disquieting) sexual aspect to access by this route.



7: The Chamber of Trials – In Depth

The Chamber of Trials is round, nine metres in diameter and with a domed roof ceiling six metres up. A carved canal runs between the corridor to the west and the corridor to the northeast. The northeast corridor is blocked by a solid portcullis, clearly lowered from the ceiling of the corridor. To the north, eight steps lead up to a broad, carved corridor, and to the southeast, eight steps lead up to an enormous, fearsome woman of bronze.

The bronze woman is kneeling, and her lower legs and back are inside the wall, so to speak. She is naked and her face is severe. She holds her left hand with a circle of thumb and index finger before her crotch, and behind the finger circle is a keyhole. Her right hand is raised above her head, and **Investigation DC 10** will reveal that there is a joint in her shoulder, DC 15 will say that the arm will probably strike down in front of the statue if anyone fiddles with the lock without doing it very well. Also, sabotaging the mobility of the arm will probably compromise the ability of the lock to open the portcullis. The dagger-keys in areas 5 and 8 will safely unlock the lock, which will cause the portcullis to open with a great deal of creaking and scraping. Picking the lock requires a lockpick and a roll against **Locks & Traps DC 20**, and a failed attempt will cause the right arm to strike down with great force – **dexterity saving throw DC 15** to avoid 2d6 damage. Then the arm rises back up with a lot of creaking and clicking. If a PC who has already failed tries to pick the lock again, they will have disadvantage from nerves and shaking fingers. If you cannot do it on the second try, you just plain cannot. The gate slowly lowers after a minute or so.

The top steps of the north stairs are smeared with fish oil which the Revelators maintain. If you are not in a hurry, you will smell fish (no roll) and **Investigation DC 10** will reveal the treacherous steps. If you are in too much of a hurry to look out, you must instead make a **DC 12 dexterity saving throw** to avoid falling down the stairs and taking 1d4 damage (and your turn ends).

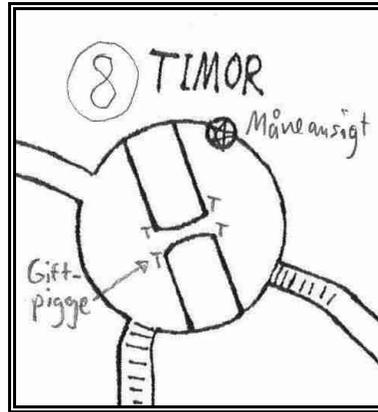
In the corridor to the west (from which the PCs are quite probably coming), a Revelator cultist lurks, armed with a trident and ready to jump out and skewer Orthos. If the PCs come with light, the guard will see them coming and hide in the best possible ambush – **Perception DC 12** to avoid being surprised (i.e. he gets a free attack with advantage). Or the Revelator guard can hide in the north corridor – whatever you like. If they come from the north, and no one falls on the stairs, he will retreat to the west..

Three metres east of the portcullis – i.e. behind if you are in the Chamber of Trials to begin with – on the south wall there is a black metal plate (tarnished silver) with a keyhole sealed with wax. Investigation DC 14 will reveal that to the right of it, there is a hidden, two-panel stone hatch in the wall. If you remove the wax, you can use the dagger-keys here to raise the portcullis. Or you can pick it with **Locks & Traps DC 20**. Failure will have the stone hatch flop open, and some foul water and the skeletons of half a dozen fish with enormous jaws with pointy teeth will fall out. But they are dead (not undead). Again, if you cannot pick it in two tries, you simply cannot.

8: The Abyss of Terrifying Illusions

The rock is dull black with tiny, shiny points of light. Or is it an abyss of starry night sky both above and below? The visual illusion is overwhelming.

Large, round hall. Narrow *bridge* over four metres wide *chasm*. *Spikes and blades* on both sides of both ends of the bridge. Two *skeletons* in the chasm. To the north-northeast, big *moon face* w. smiling, slightly open mouth.



Light: None, or just the very faintest glow in the corridors towards 3 and 9. Without light, no illusion, but the spikes and the chasm are specifically dangerous for people moving blindly.

Tide: Always above the water level.

Threats:

- **The illusion:** *Int ST DC 11*, vertigo with disadvantage on attacks and skill checks.
- **Spikes & blades:** Only when you move onto the bridge. With vertigo, *dex ST DC 10*, can be aided. Or *dex ST DC 13* if you move without sight. Damage *1d4+poison* (see Creatures, page 48).
- **Crossing the bridge:** With vertigo, *dex ST DC 10*, can be aided. Damage 2d6 for falling in (6 m deep).

- **Jumping the chasm:** *Athletics DC 12*.
- **The moon face:** *Investigation DC12, L&T DC 15* to take the key-dagger, stabby trap *dex ST DC 14* (disadvantage w. hand in mouth), damage *2d10*.
- **Ortho cultists:** If there are pursuers from area 3, and the PCs slow down significantly, two Orthos with javelins. The cultists must also save vs the illusion (save +0), but have advantage. See Creatures, page 48.

Story: Here, you prove yourself worthy of the Holy of Holies from the orthodox side, by mental discipline and cooperation. The abyss of terrifying illusions can be a scary and chaotic place to fight, whether with cultists or with each other. It is also a place where leaders can suddenly appear very weak.

8: The Abyss of Terrifying Illusions – In Depth

All surfaces in this hall are so black that they almost suck up the light, and little points light up like stars in the night sky ...a night sky that also opens under your feet. The optical illusion is overwhelming and induce strong vertigo in people who cannot force their brains to see the room as it is, rather than how it appears. The hall is fifteen metres in diameter, and the domed ceiling rises nine metres up. Between north-northwest and south-southwest runs a literal abyss, four metres wide and six metres deep – a narrow bridge crosses the chasm in the middle of the hall. To the north-northeast is one thing that is not night sky – an enormous full moon with a smiling face that dominates the space.

All who enter the room must make an ***intelligence saving throw versus difficulty 11***. If you make it, all is fine and you can maneuver freely. If you fail, you get dizzy and have disadvantage on all attack rolls and skill checks for as long as you are in the room. If you leave it, you feel better right away, but the vertigo returns if you come back within ten minutes. If you come back after more than ten minutes, you must roll a new saving throw, with advantage if you made it the first time and disadvantage if you didn't. If cultists enter, they must roll saving throws (with +0), but they have advantage, having tried it before.

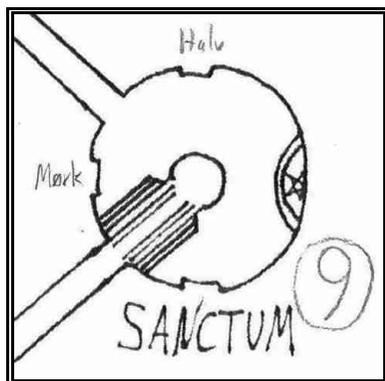
The bridge is of stone, four metres long and a meter wide in the narrowest place, the middle. On each side of each end of the bridge is a cluster of poisoned spikes and blades – they make it quite difficult to feel your way to the bridge blind without getting hurt. If you do not have vertigo, you can just walk across the bridge. If you DO have vertigo and you try to cross, it takes a ***difficulty 8 dexterity saving throw*** to avoid the spikes, and then a ***difficulty 10 dexterity saving throw*** to get across the bridge without falling off. You can get advantage on both saving throws either by crawling really slowly, or by being helped across by an undizzy person. The spikes do 1d4 damage + poison (see page 48), while falling in the chasm does 2d6 damage, and then getting up without help is quite difficult. If you fumble your way along the edge of the chasm to find the bridge, it takes a ***difficulty 13 dexterity saving throw*** to avoid the spikes (and then you have to cross the spikes). It is not necessary to roll to avoid the spikes when you have crossed the bridge. There may be spikes on both sides, but rolling that many times for the same thing is not interesting.

With a running start, it takes a ***difficulty 12 Athletics*** roll to jump the chasm – and remember that vertigo gives disadvantage. Here, it is not really practical to aid another. And there are no good places to fasten a rope. The rock is smooth and without cracks, so hammering in spikes is not feasible. There are two skeletons at the bottom of the chasm, with some scraps of skin, hair and clothes. They have no useful equipment.

The moon face to the north-northeast reaches quite a bit into the room. The moon is of light yellow sandstone. The smile is wide and the mouth is a wide crack. If you look into it, you can see that on the tongue, a meter or so in, is a dagger with a dark blade (it is tarnished silver) and about 10 cm of key protruding from the handle. ***Investigation DC 12*** will reveal that there seems to be no traps around the moon face, but that the knife is fastened with a metal band, and you can make out two bronze points to the sides of the knife – something bad will probably happen if you try to take the knife without being pretty light-fingered. A careful attempt to take the knife will discover the band without rolling, while a rash grab will just set off the trap. ***DC 15 Locks & Traps*** frees the key-dagger without setting off the trap. It is impossible to free it with anything but clever fingers – string, tools etc. will not do the job. If the trap is set off, it takes a ***DC 14 dexterity saving throw*** (with disadvantage if your arm is inside the mouth) to avoid the two bronze spikes that thrust violently about a meter out of the mouth and then slowly withdraw. If someone else is obviously involved in the problem and have not explicitly stated that they keep their distance, they have to roll as well. The spikes do 2d10 damage.

9: The Holy of Holies

Great, round *hall*, 15 metres in diameter. A shaft with *mysterious, white light* from above. Two reliefs with half moon faces north & south, dark disc to the west. To the east, a figure in a dark cloak (*the idol*) on a dais. From the south-west, a deep *canal* with sides of steep steps runs to a *basin* in the middle (the bottom is the face of the Goddess).



There are a few withered leaves on the floor, and the space smells of rain and sea.

Light: Silver light shines down from above, as if the full moon were directly above – which cannot be true. The basin is clearly illuminated, while the rest of the hall is dimly, indirectly lit.

Tide: At *normal level* there is about a meter of water in canal and basin, and reflections from the moonbeam in the slightly uneasy surface of the basin lights up the ceiling around the shaft. At *low tide* canal and basin are empty, and the bottom of the basin is revealed as an enormous, wonderful and fearsome female face (when you look down upon it).

Threats: None as such, and no cultists will dare bring a fight here. But the place can take time.

The Idol: From a distance, it looks like a person in a dark cloak standing quite still. Statue of pale driftwood under a black, woollen cloak. See more under The Way Out, page 45.

The Face: If you touch the face a low tide (whether on purpose or not), **wisdom ST DC 12** decides if the Goddess reveals a STRONG TRUTH ♦ or a WEAK TRUTH ♣. Cruelty cannot influence this roll.

Story: Here are things to be afraid of and choices to make, and no enemies or traps to interrupt conversations between the PCs – this gives them space to gauge their relationships and hierarchy. Which way you enter determines which aspect of the place is emphasized. The face at low tide can give the PCs personal, spiritual experiences, which is an interesting seasoning for temple robbery.



9: The Holy of Holies – In Depth

This round hall is 15 metres in diameter, and 12 metres up, the sweep of the domed ceiling meets in a 1½ metres wide shaft going upwards. Pale light shines down from the shaft. The hall is finely carved from the rock. From the southwest, a wide canal enters the hall. It ends in a kind of basin right under the shaft, and the canal is connected to the sea and the tide. Against the east wall is a dais on which stands a still, cloaked figure (this is the wooden idol). A few withered leaves lie here and there on the floor, and the hall smells of rain and sea. It is a beautiful, strange and slightly sad place.

On the north and south walls are large reliefs of smiling half moon faces in light rock which protrude some 20 cm from the dark rock of the walls. A superficial look on the west wall will see a similar disk but dark and blank like the walls, but a closer look will reveal that a furious, monstrous face is subtly suggested by the dark surface. Against the east wall, on which the full moon would logically have completed the pattern, instead there is a two step dais, on which stands a still, silent figure clad in a dark, woollen cloak. If you look closer, the face under the hood is a beautiful, pensive woman's face, but if you look even closer, or lift the hood, it is just wood. Pale driftwood, cut at the bottom to make it stand, and it's natural shape suggests a woman. This is the idol that they have come for. See more about the properties of the idol, and the practicalities of transporting it, under The Way Out (page 45).

Canal and basin are five metres deep. The sides of the canal are steep steps. At normal water levels, the basin is just a basin, but at low tide, the face of the Goddess is revealed, and this has subtle but miraculous powers. The face has an expression which might be horror or ecstasy. If anyone touches the face (for instance, steps

on it or examines it with their hands), for a brief moment they will have an experience of floating in the night sky while the moon, who is a woman, examines them. The gaze of the Goddess will penetrate them and see something hidden in their souls. This hidden thing will rise to the surface and become obvious to both themselves and others. Make a **difficulty 12 wisdom saving throw** – if it succeeds, it is a hidden strength which the gaze of the Goddess draws into the light, but if it fails, it is a weakness. Cruelty cannot affect this saving throw. 'Strength' needs not be sympathetic (but might be) and likewise with weakness. When the player has rolled and succeeded or not, ask the player what quality is revealed. But if they try to manipulatively claim something strong even though they have failed, you might ask the other players what the hidden truth is. Several player characters can touch the face for as long as the low tide lasts. But remember that it takes time. The rules for truths are also under Mechanics, page 10 (but are repeated below).

Each player can only get one truth. WEAK truth is represented by a clubs face card ♣ which the player keeps in front of them, while STRONG truth is represented by a diamonds face card ♦.

You can (and must!) use WEAK truth against a player at the worst possible time to give them disadvantage on a roll that they are about to make. Either explain it by the concrete weakness that they defined, or by them being distracted by the thought of the revelation from the Goddess. Then the card is used and tapped.

The player can bring STRONG truth into play by tapping it to give themselves advantage on a roll (choose before rolling).

The Way Out

On their way in, the PCs will probably have found the areas they have passed through quite precisely as described. Their way out will however be complicated by two things. One, they have to carry out a wooden statue, and two, the inhabitants of the temple are not sitting still, and unless the PCs have been unusually sneaky, some of the cultists will be aware that there are intruders about.

Transporting the Idol

The idol is a roughly human-shaped piece of driftwood, cut on one end so it will stand but otherwise unworked. The wood is bleached by sun and sea, and quite silver-white. If you look closely it is just wood, but out of the corner of your eye, you will see a woman. It is lighter than you would think, but it still weighs about forty kilos and is not terribly handy. In area 8 in particular, the idol might be a lot of trouble.

- **One bearer** – player characters with strength 14+ can carry it, or otherwise tortuously drag it, but will be so encumbered by the statue that they have *disadvantage* on all checks and move at half speed.
- **Two** can carry the statue between them fairly easily, but they will have their hands full.
- **The statue floats** – at normal water levels they will be able to "sail" the idol out through 7-6-5 – here, a single person will be able to push it, but this will probably be while the tide is coming in, so the idol will move towards the Holy of Holies unless someone is pushing it. And the portcullis will have lowered behind them if they came in this way.

Powers of the Idol

The idol DOES have magical powers, but they are fairly subtle. Here are some that I know about:

- **Comfort:** If a person weeps with their arms around the statue (even if just because they are carrying it), they will have a sensation of strong but gentle women's arms holding and comforting them. If they are wounded, they regain 7 hit points. This works once per day.
- **Homecoming:** If the idol is left to the winds and currents, she will always drift home to the Holy of Holies in the Temple of the Tides.

The Cultists

The cultists in the Temple of the Tides are preoccupied with their conflict with each other, and even though a lot of them are quite willing to fight for their faith, they do not have limitless reserves of courage and tactical understanding. However, there are more of them than there are PCs, and their warring leaders are no fools.

If the PCs have passed one faction or the other on the way in *without* breaking them, and they haven't been completely unseen, this faction will be on guard, and might even act proactively. On the other hand their rivals will probably suspect nothing unless there has been trouble on the battlefield (location 4).

If the PCs have broken a faction on their way in and killed its leader, any survivors will submit to the other faction after some hesitation and warn them about the intruders. In practice the PCs will have time to get in and out, BUT they get picked up only at the end. So the surviving faction might attack the PCs in the entrance area, together with the survivors of the broken faction. Here, you must use some dramatic discretion as DM – if the

players have had a very hard time, maybe the cultists attack in force just as the Captain in coming to pick up the PCs. But if the players have had an easy time, you can let the cultists attack as the Captain's longboat is still on it's way in, and the PCs will have to hold the line for 2-3 rounds before they can retreat, if you like. The cultist can be fairly clever if you want them to – improvised shields, swimming sneaks etc. Or they can just come on straight and hard.

The Mermaid

The mermaid is not that dynamic as such, but if the PCs try to bring the idol out through her cave (which would be obvious because of the waterway), she attacks.

The Captain

It is very possible that the players will have a strong expectation that the Captain will deliver some kind of nasty plot twist at the end. This is not the case, or rather he will act precisely as promised – if they have the idol with them and signal with a torch, he comes to pick them up. But if they do not have the idol, or they have something that isn't the real idol, he mocks them and sails away. Murdering the Captain is not a practical possibility – think of him as a fighter with so many levels that it doesn't matter.

The Captain can unfailingly see who is the leader when he picks them up – the others get a nod, but the leader gets praise. When the Captain has made sure that the idol seems genuine enough, he pats the statue and says *"We'll get a good price for her."* And then the oarsmen row the longboat out to the ship, and cut to the epilogue.



Epilogue

The most important things have already happened in the Temple of the Tides. But a little epilogue narration remains, different depending on whether there are survivors or not.

If There Are Survivors

First, settle the accounts to see if each survivor in the epilogue is *cool & impressive* or *grim & scary* as seen with the eyes of a new recruit. Their inner life is whatever it is, but this is how other eyes see them. Put cards for cool to the left of each player and cards for grim to the right.

Cool & Impressive

Spent Kindness ♥

STRONG TRUTH ♦

(3 points for Strong Truth)

*Cool wins if there is a tie with
grim*

Grim & Scary

Cruelty, both spent and
unspent ♠

Unspent Kindness ♥

WEAK TRUTH ♣

(3 points for Weak Truth)

BUT we are not done yet – if there are dead PCs whose players are still present at the table, they can give their cards to the living if they like. Some or all, and to who they like. The cards still count left or right as above.

If there are more cards to the right, the character appears *grim & scary* in the epilogue. If there are more to the left, or they are tied, the character appears *cool & impressive*. And if you have a truth, you MUST allude to it or show it as best you can, even if it might be hidden now.

It is three months later, an ordinary day. Whoever ended up as leader is now commander of the new auxiliary ship, the Goose, and the other survivors are crew. A new recruit, a fifteen-years-old boy (played by the DM) comes aboard the Goose and gets a first-hand impression of the tough, full blown pirates (the surviving PCs). The players of dead PCs can help describe the ship and the day. The players of live PCs each describe their character, but it must be as either cool & impressive or as grim & scary. After the introduction, let the scene run for a moment so that they can each say a sentence or two if they like.

The final leader can keep the pirate coin after the game.

If All Are Dead

Or (less likely) have joined the cultists.

Each player must briefly describe a family member back home in a situation where they are thinking about the lost player character. Do not say WHAT the family member is thinking, just where they are and how they look in that moment. If anyone is stumped, describing their mother is always fine.

Say thank you for the game

Escape? There are sailors loyal to the Captain aboard the Goose, and the Goose cannot outsail the Goshawk. In the future other things happen, but in the epilogue, the PCs are still pirates.

Creatures

Venomous Snake (Spotted Rock Viper):

Strength 2 (-4) Dexterity 16 (+3) Constitution 14 (+2)

Intelligence 1 (-5) Wisdom 10 (+0) Charisma 4 (-3)

Speed: 30', Initiative: 13, AC: 13, HP: 4

Attack: Bite +5, damage 1+poison

Poison: All poison in the scenario comes from the spotted rock viper. **Constitution saving throw difficulty 12.**
Success: 1d4 damage and no further effect. **Failure:** 1d6 damage and poisoned condition (disadvantage on attack and skill rolls, but not saving throws) – new saving throw at the end of your turn, with the same consequences as the first, including damage. If you are already poisoned and get poisoned some more, you automatically save versus the new poison, i.e. you just take 1d4 damage.

Cultist (Ortho or Revelator)

Strength 12 (+2) Dexterity 11 (+0) Constitution 10 (+0)

Intelligence 10 (+0) Wisdom 11 (+0) Charisma 9 (-1)

Speed: 30', Initiative: 10, AC: 10, HP: 9

Attack: Dagger +4, damage 1d4+2

If armed for battle:

Spear +4, dmg 1d8+2 or thrown +4, dmg 1d6+2, range 20/60

or...

Kastespyd +4 (melee or thrown), damage 1d6+2, range 30/120

Reckless Attack: A cultist can choose to have advantage on melee attacks until the start of their next turn – in the meantime, all attacks against the cultist have advantage. Cultists tend to use this either if they feel very superior or if they are totally desperate.

Ortho Cultists: They are all men, most of them originally locals with light brown skin and thick, dark hair, but some of them are very light or very dark. They are a bit on the lean side but not downright starved. They come in a wide variety of ages, from about 15 up to 60 or so. They are pale, their clothes are moderately ragged and their hair and beards are short and badly cut.

Snake Basket: A cultist rips the lid off a wicker basket and throws a snake that attacks as a reaction. In the next round, the snake acts freely (and in a panic) and does not distinguish between the sides.

If the players need a named Ortho cultists to talk to who is not Leo, their leader, his name is *Gislin*. Gislin has been here for four years and was lowered here after having been caught stealing cattle. He clings to the belief that his misery here brings happiness to his village and family above via cosmic balance – otherwise he would not be able to stand it. He fears Leo but fears the madness of the Revelators more, and the wrath of the Goddess most of all.

Total Number: 3 players: 11 4 players: 16 5 players: 21

(One of them is poor Mateu in the head of the Goddess, see location 3.)

Leo, Leader of the Ortho Cultists

Strength 16 (+3) Dexterity 11 (+0) Constitution 13 (+1)

Intelligence 14 (+2) Wisdom 12 (+1) Charisma 15 (+2)

Speed: 30', Initiative: 10, AC: 13, HP: 22

Chain shirt, longsword, grey-white robe

Attacks: 2 x longsword +5, damage 1d10+3

Leo is a stout, broad-shouldered, middle-aged man with salt-and-pepper hair and beard, better dressed and fed than the other Ortho cultists. He is proud, hard and cunning.

Leo honestly considers himself a servant of the Goddess, and has a talent for believing intensely things that affirm and justify his own power. On the other hand he is intensely suspicious of everyone else's motives and is hard to fool.

Revelator Cultists: Except for their leader, Golzar, they are men, again mostly but not exclusively locals. They are clad in terrible rags, but their hair and beards are longer and better groomed than that of the Orthos (nicely braided), and they are a bit better fed. They are almost always humming and singing if they do not have a practical need for silence. Among other things, they use this to locate each other in darkness – they live almost all of their lives in darkness, except for when they sneak out to the entrance to catch a bit of sun. They live on fish, shellfish and edible seaweed brought to them by the mermaid. The Revelators are outnumbered, their situation is desperate and untenable, and only Golzar's vision keeps their courage up.

The Stone Thrower on the High Ledge: +4 (has advantage), damage 1d10+2, and strength ST DC 12 or be knocked prone. In location 6.

IF the PCs need to talk to a named Revelator cultist who is not Golzar, his name is *Hanno*. Hanno has been here for six years over a lethal knifing during a drunken brawl. He hopes passionately that he will soon be ready to be turned into something beautiful by the Goddess, and that something will happen to give victory to the Revelators. He despises Leo and adores Golzar intensely.

Total Number: 3 players: 6 4 players: 9 5 players: 12

Golzar, Leader of the Revelator Cultists

Strength 11 (+0) Dexterity 16 (+3) Constitution 12 (+1)
Intelligence 13 (+1) Wisdom 14 (+2) Charisma 17 (+3)

Speed: 30', Initiative: 13, AC: 14, HP: 22

Leather armour, dagger, ragged black robe, two tame spotted rock vipers that live on her – one in her hair, one on her left arm.

Attacks: Dagger +5, damage 1d4+3 (+2d6 sneak attack, if the conditions are met)

Bonus off hand attack: **Left Arm Snake +5**, damage 1+poison. The snake can be attacked separately, but at a disadvantage.

Venomous Retribution: The round after she has fallen, the snake from her hair attacks whoever took her down (if possible).

Golzar is a tall, bony woman of about 30 years, with a large, wild head of hair and burning eyes. She is radically imaginative and brutally practical.

The Mermaid

Strength 19 (+4) Dexterity 12 (+1) Constitution 16 (+3)
Intelligence 9 (-1) Wisdom 12 (+1) Charisma 13 (+1)

Speed: 10' (Swim 40'), Initiative: 11, AC: 13,

Hit points depend on the number of players:

3 players: 22

4 players: 30

5 players: 37

Attack: Trident +6, damage 2d6+4

Specials: Darkvision, song x1 (in effect from the start, before initiative) and scream, reaction, x1

The Voice of the Mermaid: All within 60 feet who hear it, from the start of the first round, must make a **wisdom saving throw versus difficulty 11** or be *charmed* and put in a daze, which is only broken if they take harm or if the song stops – if they are shaken (an action), they get a fresh saving throw.

The Scream of the Mermaid: If the mermaid takes damage, her song turns into a piercing scream as of many voices, so powerful that it hurts – everyone within 30 feet who hear it must make a **constitution saving throw versus difficulty 11** or take 1d4 damage and let go whatever they have in their hands to protect their ears (does this put out all torches?).

Time & Cultists

Time, start: _____

(The Captain has dropped off the PCs and sailed away.)

Time, end: Start +3 hours = _____

(If the PCs are not picked up here, or very close, they are not getting picked up.)

Water level:

Normal, going down: Start to start +1 hour = until _____

Low tide: Start +1 to start +2 = until _____

Normal, going up: Start +2 to end = until end

Four torches, each burns for one hour. From the start, the torch heads are wrapped in oilskin so they can stand some water, but if they get really soaked, they are done. The PCs might be able to acquire more along the way.

Torch 1, started: _____

Torch 2, started: _____

Torch 3, started: _____

Torch 4, started: _____

Cultist Totals

Three players:

Orthos: Leo On duty: 2 Main force: 9

Revelators: Golzar On duty: 2 Main force: 4

Four players:

Orthos: Leo On duty: 2 Main force: 14

Revelators: Golzar On duty: 2 Main force: 7

Five players:

Orthos: Leo On duty: 2 Main force: 19

Revelators: Golzar On duty: 2 Main force: 10

Dead Player Characters

YOU ARE DEAD! But this is a special place, so you persist for a little while, as an echo. The accounts are not settled, and so you do not yet rest. You have two interventions that you can make in the world of the living – a helpful one and a harmful one. Each can be used once. That you are not gone seems to have something to do with balance and the Moon – you do not understand it, but you can feel it.

Kindness

If you have not spent your Kindness card, you still have it. If you have spent it, the DM will give you a fresh one. It works normally.

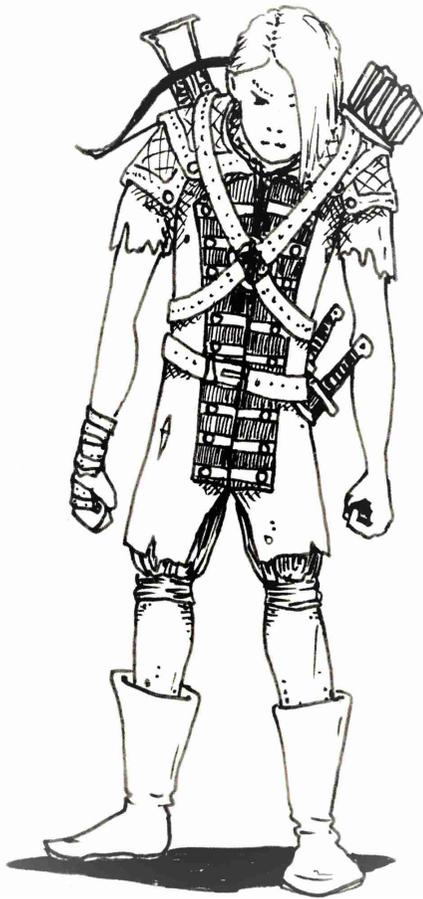
Cruelty of the Ghost

The DM gives you a special Cruelty card. You can use it against a living PC to try to get him to fail a d20 roll – you can interrupt with Cruelty of the Ghost, just as he was otherwise about to succeed. Briefly narrate how you were cruel to him in the past, and then he must roll a *charisma saving throw versus difficulty 15*.

If he succeeds, he takes *1d4 damage*.

If he fails, he takes *1d4 damage and fails the roll*, even though he otherwise would have made it.

The Temple of the Tides Player Characters – Menu



ALON

The Trapmaker's Runaway Apprentice



BRAN

Sensitive Soul, Furiously Bloodthirsty



CORT

Tough Guy, Not AT ALL Confused

The Temple of the Tides Player Characters – Menu



DIO

Cruel Joker



EGIN

Cunning Watchmaker



FELIX

Homesick Shepherd

ALON – page 1, who he is

THE TRAPMAKER'S RUNAWAY APPRENTICE

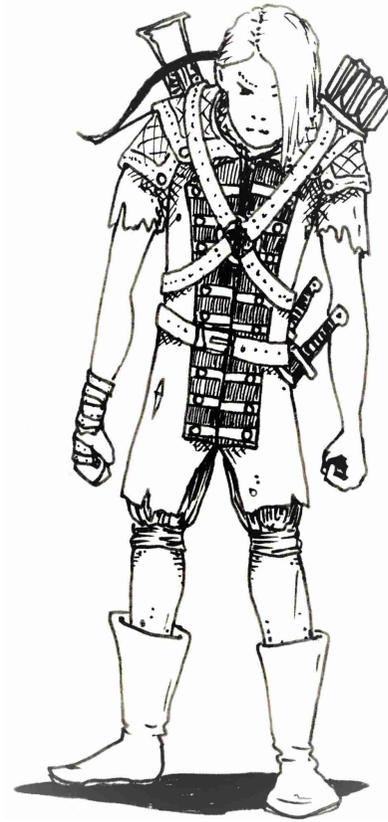
ALON dreamt of adventure and ran away from a rich but cruel master, with whom his family had installed him, to join the Captain, the famous pirate. Alon is not physically weak, and he had hoped that his cleverness and knowledge would win him a good place among the pirates, but book learning and intelligence have rather proved to be disadvantages that make him a target for ridicule and cruelty. He is far down the pecking order and DESPERATELY wishes he were elsewhere. On the surface, he is cowed, but underneath he seethes with rage over the disrespect shown his superior intellect and learning. Alon makes himself useful, seeks protectors and survives as best he can. He is not much use in combat, except as sniper. Alon is 16 years old.

THE CAPTAIN AND THE GOSHAWK

The Captain is ruthless, greedy, cruel and totally amazing. This is also the tone that he sets for his men. On his pirate ship, the Goshawk, the rule of the strong prevails, and everyone fights to assert themselves in small things and large, often by ridiculing and cowing others. The limit to this is that whoever hurts the business becomes a target for the Captain's wrath. And no one wants that! Alon has been on the Goshawk for a bit more than a year.

SETTING

Where we find ourselves slightly resembles the European Late Middle Ages, dominated by sluggish, declining kingdoms and prosperous but corrupt trading cities. The supernatural is rare, ambiguous and often trickery and deception.



RECRUITMENT

Voluntary.

STRENGTHS

Intellect, technical finesse.

WEAKNESSES

Awkward nerd, cannot swim.

HISTORY KNOWLEDGE

Alon knows things. The Temple of the Tides is dedicated to the Moon Goddess, one of the old deities from before salvation and afterlife became fashionable a few centuries ago. As the new mystery cults were growing, the cultists of the Moon Goddess were involved in a series of bloody, failed political intrigues, and largely disappeared.

The Moon cultists had an interesting relationship with traps and accorded them spiritual value as trials of people's worth and punishments for the unworthy. Many of Alon's master's best trap types were originally Moon cultist inventions.

ALON – page 2, stats (level 2 "rogue")

Strength	12 +1	Armor Class: 13
Dexterity	15 +2 (save +4)	Initiative: +2
Constitution	14 +2	Hit Points: 17
Intelligence	17 +3 (save +5)	
Wisdom	10 –	Ammunition: 7
Charisma	8 -1	

Skills

Menace +0	Athletics +1	Perception +2
Stealth +4	History +5	Investigation* +7
Deception +1	Medicine +2	Locks & Traps* +7

CANNOT swim, can read & write

Attacks

Crossbow +4 (advantage from hiding), damage 1d8+2 (+1d6 if sneak attack), range 80/320

Dagger +4, damage 1d4+2 (+1d6 if sneak attack), thrown range 20/60, (off-hand only damage 1d4, and where is the crossbow?)

Equipment

Light crossbow, 2 daggers, leather armour, backpack, rope w. grappling hook, lockpicks, two iron spikes, tinderbox, leather canteen w. water, piece of chalk, little pot of burn salve, dishcloth, pouch w. 2 silver coins, quiver w. 7 crossbow bolts

Rogue Abilities

Sneak Attack: Once pr. turn you can do +1d6 damage if you have advantage on your attack OR if you have an ally in melee with your target, and you do not have disadvantage.

Cunning Action: You can *hide*, *disengage* or *run* as a bonus action (instead of a regular action).

Expertise: Better at two skills, marked with *. The bonuses are already included.

Actions

Actions: Attack, help, dodge (dash, disengage, hide)

Bonus Actions: Off-hand attack, hide, disengage, dash

Movement: 30 feet (standing up costs 15 feet of movement)

Reactions: Attack if opponent flees without "disengage"

Tactics: Your strongest card is sniping. Use your movement to find a hiding place, use your bonus action to try to hide (via *Cunning Action*) and attack from hiding with advantage, and with the sneak attack bonus damage that goes with it.

In melee, you are not very good. You can be defensive by going into melee (using some of your movement) side by side with an ally, attacking with a dagger and then disengaging from melee with your *Cunning Action* and the rest of your movement. Attack with two knives if you are out of arrows and desperate enough to end your turn in melee.

ALON – page 3, custom mechanics

LEADERSHIP

- The leader is *whoever gives the orders*.
- But only as long as the others *obey*.
- The leader's player has the *pirate coin*.
- If the leader *appears weak*, the DM will give the pirate coin to someone who appears less weak.
- The leader's player controls the *pool of Cruelty cards*.

CONFLICTS over leadership

- Open conflict is handled with a *contest of Menace*.
- *Being outnumbered gives disadvantage*. Others can back up a side, and the pirate coin counts as an extra person.
- The loser chooses between submitting or rolling initiative for combat. Everyone on the losing side has disadvantage on initiative.
- Those who *did not pick a side* can take part from round 2.

FLASHBACKS

- Cruelty and Kindness are resources brought into play through *brief, narrated flashbacks*.
- Flashbacks are *set on the Goshawk*.
- Flashbacks *cannot be used* during conflicts over leadership.

CRUELTY

- *The leader* can use Cruelty himself or offer it to others.
- The flashback must be about *public cruelty* against another PC (not the current leader).
- *Beatings, humiliation* and *cruel teasing* are OK.
- *Torture, mutilation* and *rape* are no go.

In the present, Cruelty gives a REROLL of a failed roll, with advantage, and does 1 hit point of damage to the target PC.

- The target puts the Cruelty card in front of them, *tapped*.

KINDNESS

- Each player has *one Kindness card*. It is yours alone.
- The flashback must be about *private kindness* to another PC (not yourself).
- You can offer it to another who is having a hard time.
- They can narrate a situation where they were hurting. You then narrate how you helped.

Kindness HEALS 4d6 hit points, and can keep a PC from going down at 0 hit points.

- The recipient puts the Kindness card in front of them, *tapped*.

SAFETY

Hopefully unnecessary, but – if something seems more fucked up than cool, anyone can say **STOP THE GAME!** Then, together, you come up with something more cool than fucked up.

BRAN – page 1, who he is

SENSITIVE SOUL, FURIOUSLY BLOODTHIRSTY

BRAN is the son of a merchant, but doesn't really have a head for the trade. He is a beautiful and elegant boy, with a lovely, light singing voice, and tears come easily to him whether of anger, laughter or sadness. He was originally kidnapped by the Captain for his singing voice, but he is moving up the ranks. Though it was hard at first, he has managed (well!) by cultivating a talent for frightening rage and the tough style that goes with it – he cannot suppress his emotions, but he can use them as a weapon. He deliberately makes a show of it, but the rage is no lie once he gets going, and he can take a lot of pain when his blood is up. He has taken a couple of brutal beatings from strong, full pirate crewmen because he didn't put up with their bullying, but he has also won a lot of respect for taking those beatings. Bran does not love what the rage turns him into, but he depends on it. He is still beautiful and charming, but in a menacing way, where everyone knows that his laughter and tears can turn into lethal violence at the drop of a hat. Bran is 17 years old.

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RECRUITMENT

Kidnapped by the Captain.

STRENGTHS

Frightening rage, intense charm.

WEAKNESSES

Unable to pretend to not feel.

SETTING

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TEMPLE SINGER

In the town that Bran comes from, he was not just a rather unskilled merchant's apprentice, he was also a singer in the holy choir. That went a lot better. He didn't care much about all that salvation and mysteries stuff, but a few bits did stick with him. There was something about how the Moon Goddess was an old cult that did not promise salvation. The priestess didn't want to talk about what the Moon Goddess DID promise instead.

BRAN – page 2, stats (level 2 "barbarian")

Strength	15 +2 (save +4)	Armor Class: 15
Dexterity	14 +2 (Danger S.)	Initiative: +2
Constitution	13 +1 (save +3)	Rage: 2
Intelligence	11 –	Hit Points: 21
Wisdom	9 –1	
Charisma	17 +3	

Skills

Menace +7	Athletics +4	Perception -1
Stealth +4	Performance +5	Investigation +0
Sailing & knots, can swim, can read & write		

Attacks

Cutlass +4, damage 1d6+2 (in a rage, 1d6+4)
Off hand dagger/torch +4, damage 1d4 (in a rage, 1d4+2)
Dagger throw +4, damage 1d4+2, range 20/60

Equipment

Cutlass, dagger, chainmail shirt, shoulder bag, jar of sweet red wine, tinderbox, bloodstained rag, two metres long red silk scarf, pouch w. 17 silver coins & 6 gold coins

"Barbarian" Abilities

Rage: Rage as a bonus action. This gives you +2 to damage and you take half damage from violence. Lasts a minute (10 rounds) or until you stop fighting.

Reckless Attack: You can take advantage on your melee attacks. Everyone else gets to attack you with advantage until the start of your next turn.

Danger Sense: Advantage on dexterity saves if you can see the threat.

"Barbarian" is about rage mechanics, not culture.

Actions

Actions: Attack, help, dodge, dash, disengage, hide

Bonus Action: Start raging, off hand attack

Movement: 30 feet (standing up costs 15 feet of movement)

Reactions: Attack if opponent flees without "disengage"

Tactics: With *rage* + *reckless attack*, you are matchlessly deadly, but you only have two bouts of *rage* in you. Do not be shy about using your first *rage* in a serious fight, but save your second *rage* for a tight spot. YOU ARE ALLOWED to think while you rage!

If you want to rage in a fight, rage right away! Use your bonus action to rage in your first turn, and in subsequent turns, use your bonus action to make off hand attacks.

BRAN – page 3, custom mechanics

LEADERSHIP

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- But only as long as the others *obey*.
- The leader's player has the *pirate coin*.
- If the leader *appears weak*, the DM will give the pirate coin to someone who appears less weak.
- The leader's player controls the *pool of Cruelty cards*.

CONFLICTS over leadership

- Open conflict is handled with a *contest of Menace*.
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- The loser chooses between submitting or rolling initiative for combat. Everyone on the losing side has disadvantage on initiative.
- Those who *did not pick a side* can take part from round 2.

FLASHBACKS

- Cruelty and Kindness are resources brought into play through *brief, narrated flashbacks*.
- Flashbacks are *set on the Goshawk*.
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CRUELTY

- *The leader* can use Cruelty himself or offer it to others.
- The flashback must be about *public cruelty* against another PC (not the current leader).
- *Beatings, humiliation* and *cruel teasing* are OK.
- *Torture, mutilation* and *rape* are no go.

In the present, Cruelty gives a REROLL of a failed roll, with advantage, and does 1 hit point of damage to the target PC.

- The target puts the Cruelty card in front of them, *tapped*.

KINDNESS

- Each player has *one Kindness card*. It is yours alone.
- The flashback must be about *private kindness* to another PC (not yourself).
- You can offer it to another who is having a hard time.
- They can narrate a situation where they were hurting. You then narrate how you helped.

Kindness HEALS 4d6 hit points, and can keep a PC from going down at 0 hit points.

- The recipient puts the Kindness card in front of them, *tapped*.

SAFETY

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CORT – page 1, who he is

TOUGH GUY, NOT AT ALL CONFUSED

CORT is the son of poor fisher folk. When he lived back home, he had his beloved older sister Marla to explain all the confusing things to him. He trusted her. Now he's been sold to the Captain to cover his father's gambling debts. Here, he has no one to trust and can never admit that he is confused – that would be to admit weakness. Several times, he has been cruelly, humiliatingly fooled. He desperately needs someone to tell him what to do, in a way that does not make him look weak. Cort has a hard time of it, even though he is unusually strong and agile. He is tough, brutal and deeply unhappy. Cort is 17 years old.

THE CAPTAIN AND THE GOSHAWK

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SETTING

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RECRUITMENT

Sold to the Captain by his family.

STRENGTHS

Brute strength and agility, fishing experience.

WEAKNESSES

Lacks smarts, lacks someone to trust.

THE MOON AND THE TIDE

Marla knew an old song about the moon and the tide. Suppose she still knows it, back home. It was something about the moon as "the face of the goddess". And fortune and misfortune, and the tide. It was a very beautiful song.

CORT – page 2, stats (level 2 "fighter")

Strength	16 +3 (save +5)	Armor Class: 14
Dexterity	16 +3	Initiative: +3
Constitution	15 +2 (save +4)	Action Surge: 1
Intelligence	7 -2	Second Wind: 1
Wisdom	8 -1	Hit Points: 20
Charisma	11 -	

Skills

Menace +5	Athletics +5	Perception +1
Stealth +3	Deception +2	Investigation -2
Sailing & knots, can swim, CANNOT read & write		

Attacks

Battleaxe +5, damage 1d8+5

Dagger +5, damage 1d4+5, thrown range 20/60

Equipment

Battleaxe, dagger, leather armour, dirty rag, belt pouch w. 9 silver coins and three meter of string and a fish hook

Fighter Abilities

Fighting Style: +2 damage on one-handed attacks (already included in your attacks).

Action Surge: Take an extra action on your turn, once in the scenario.

Second Wind: As a bonus action, regain 1d10+2 hit points once in the scenario.

Actions

Actions: Attack, help, dodge, dash, disengage, hide

Bonus Action: Second Wind

Movement: 30 feet (standing up costs 15 feet of movement)

Reactions: Attack if opponent flees without "disengage"

Tactics: Cort's tactics are simple and aggressive – close fast, chop hard. This has the limitation that it can be a really terrible idea when facing strong, numerous opponents.

You can hold a torch in your off hand, but you cannot also attack with it without losing your bonus damage.

Use *Action Surge* if it is important and you might take down an opponent with an extra attack. Remember to use *Second Wind* BEFORE you go down!

CORT – page 3, custom mechanics

LEADERSHIP

- The leader is *whoever gives the orders*.
- But only as long as the others *obey*.
- The leader's player has the *pirate coin*.
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- The leader's player controls the *pool of Cruelty cards*.

CONFLICTS over leadership

- Open conflict is handled with a *contest of Menace*.
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FLASHBACKS

- Cruelty and Kindness are resources brought into play through *brief, narrated flashbacks*.
- Flashbacks are *set on the Goshawk*.
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CRUELTY

- *The leader* can use Cruelty himself or offer it to others.
- The flashback must be about *public cruelty* against another PC (not the current leader).
- *Beatings, humiliation* and *cruel teasing* are OK.
- *Torture, mutilation* and *rape* are no go.

In the present, Cruelty gives a REROLL of a failed roll, with advantage, and does 1 hit point of damage to the target PC.

- The target puts the Cruelty card in front of them, *tapped*.

KINDNESS

- Each player has *one Kindness card*. It is yours alone.
- The flashback must be about *private kindness* to another PC (not yourself).
- You can offer it to another who is having a hard time.
- They can narrate a situation where they were hurting. You then narrate how you helped.

Kindness HEALS 4d6 hit points, and can keep a PC from going down at 0 hit points.

- The recipient puts the Kindness card in front of them, *tapped*.

SAFETY

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DIO – page 1, who he is

CRUEL JOKER

DIO is a tailor's son but ran away from his drunken, miserable loser family to join the Captain's crew. Dio is not brash and muscular like most pirates – he is slender, androgynously pretty and has a punky-glitzzy, slightly feminine style. Instead of brute strength, he uses tactical cleverness and sharp humour. Among the pirates, Dio gets by seeking the protection of strong men, gaining their favour through flattery, and by directing his harsh sarcasm and his jokes against the rivals of his leader. As well as against weaker folk who cannot retaliate when Dio raises his status by mocking them. It is not always easy being a bit feminine, but Dio can live with a few bruises now and again and plays the game as best he knows how. Dio's admiration for the Captain knows no limits and Dio dreams of impressing him and winning his favour directly – but Dio dares not aspire directly to pirate officer-hood for himself without having some noteworthy advantage. He lacks the brute strength for it. Dio is 16 years old.

THE CAPTAIN AND THE GOSHAWK

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SETTING

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THE TEMPLE OF THE TIDES

Dio has heard whispered rumours among the crew of the Goshawk that a few years ago, the Captain sent some other boys into the Temple of the Tides. They came back without the treasure, so the Captain killed them. Don't mess with the Captain!

RECRUITMENT

Voluntary.

STRENGTHS

Cunning, dirty tricks tricks.

WEAKNESSES

Lacks brute strength.

DIO – page 2, stats (level 2 "rogue")

Strength	9 -1	Armor Class: 14
Dexterity	16 +3 (save +5)	Initiative: +3
Constitution	13 +1	Hit Points: 15
Intelligence	14 +2 (save +4)	
Wisdom	11 -	
Charisma	15 +2	

Skills

Menace +3 Athletics* +3 Perception* +4
Stealth +5 Deception +4 Investigation +4
Locks & Traps +4
Tailor (needle & thread), can swim, CANNOT read & write

Attacks

Rapier +5, damage 1d8+3 (if sneak attack +1d6)
Dagger +5, damage 1d4+3 (if sneak attack +1d6) – not off hand, thrown range 20/60

Equipment

Rapier, dagger, leather coat, bold hat, shoulder bag, jar of sour wine, lockpicks, tinderbox, roll of black thread & two needles, comb, pouch w. 13 silver coins

Rogue Abilities

Sneak Attack: Once pr. turn you can do +1d6 damage if you have advantage on your attack OR if you have an ally in melee with your target, and you do not have disadvantage.

Cunning Action: You can *hide*, *disengage* or *run* as a bonus action (instead of a regular action).

Expertise: Better at two skills, marked with *. The bonuses are already included.

Actions

Actions: Attack, help, dodge (dash, disengage, hide)

Bonus Actions: Off-hand attack, hide, disengage, dash

Movement: 30 feet (standing up costs 15 feet of movement)

Reactions: Attack if opponent flees without "disengage"

Tactics: Your strongest move is to sneak up on people and stabbing them with advantage and sneak attack damage. Or lying in ambush.

If a fight is already in progress, you can attack a target that one of your allies is already in melee with to get your sneak attack bonus damage, and then use Cunning Action to disengage as a bonus action, and use the rest of your movement to get out of melee and in cover behind your allies.

Fight as dirty as you can, and insult and mock your opponents as rudely as you can!

DIO – page 3, custom mechanics

LEADERSHIP

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- The leader's player controls the *pool of Cruelty cards*.

CONFLICTS over leadership

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FLASHBACKS

- Cruelty and Kindness are resources brought into play through *brief, narrated flashbacks*.
- Flashbacks are *set on the Goshawk*.
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CRUELTY

- *The leader* can use Cruelty himself or offer it to others.
- The flashback must be about *public cruelty* against another PC (not the current leader).
- *Beatings, humiliation* and *cruel teasing* are OK.
- *Torture, mutilation* and *rape* are no go.

In the present, Cruelty gives a REROLL of a failed roll, with advantage, and does 1 hit point of damage to the target PC.

- The target puts the Cruelty card in front of them, *tapped*.

KINDNESS

- Each player has *one Kindness card*. It is yours alone.
- The flashback must be about *private kindness* to another PC (not yourself).
- You can offer it to another who is having a hard time.
- They can narrate a situation where they were hurting. You then narrate how you helped.

Kindness HEALS 4d6 hit points, and can keep a PC from going down at 0 hit points.

- The recipient puts the Kindness card in front of them, *tapped*.

SAFETY

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EGIN – page 1, who he is

CUNNING WATCHMAKER

EGIN is a large boy, introverted, thoughtful and tactical. You wouldn't think that a clumsy lout like him would have clever fingers and be a watchmaker's apprentice. But he is – or was, before the Captain kidnapped him to toil and carry burdens. It was hard at first, but Egin kept his wits about him, and now he is moving up the ranks. He has scrounged parts and adapted available materials to make an improvised but impressive suit of armour that lets him get by in combat despite his slowness. It would doom him if he fell in the water, but he cannot swim anyway, so he lives with the fear.

Being boastful and cruel does not come naturally to Egin, but he is willing to play the part when it is necessary. And it frequently is, if you want to get ahead in the crew. Often, however, he manages by discreetly seeking alliances and opportunities, and with sweet words. Egin is unhappy with pirate life but not desperate. And who knows, if escaping takes him long enough, he might be so much of a success as a pirate that escape is unnecessary. Egin is 17 years old.

THE CAPTAIN AND THE GOSHAWK

The Captain is ruthless, greedy, cruel and very clever. He sets a grim tone for his men. On his pirate ship, the Goshawk, the rule of the strong prevails, and everyone fights to assert themselves in small things and large, often by ridiculing and cowering others. The limit to this is that whoever hurts the business becomes a target for the Captain's wrath. And noone wants that! Bran has been on the Goshawk for a bit more than a year.



RECRUITMENT

Kidnapped by the Captain.

STRENGTHS

Physical size, cold cunning, technical finesse.

WEAKNESSES

Clumsy, cannot swim.

SETTING

Where we find ourselves slightly resembles the European Late Middle Ages, dominated by sluggish, declining kingdoms and prosperous but corrupt trading cities. The supernatural is rare, ambiguous and often trickery and deception.

HISTORY KNOWLEDGE

The Temple of the Tides is dedicated to the Moon Goddess, one of the old deities from before salvation and afterlife became fashionable a few centuries ago. As the new mystery cults were growing, the cultists of the Moon Goddess were involved in a series of bloody, failed political intrigues, and largely disappeared.

The Moon cultists also thought they could steal people's luck. Or people thought they were stealing luck. Not popular.

EGIN – page 2, stats (level 2 "fighter")

Strength	16 +3 (save +5)	Armor Class: 15
Dexterity	8 -1	Initiative: -1
Constitution	14 +2 (save +4)	Action Surge: 1
Intelligence	15 +2	Second Wind: 1
Wisdom	12 +1	Hit Points: 20
Charisma	13 +1	

Skills

Menace +6 Athletics +3 Perception +1
History +4 Deception +3 Investigation +4
Stealth -1 (and disadvantage due to heavy armour)
Locks & Traps +4
CANNOT swim, can read & write

Attacks

Warhammer +5, damage 1d8+3 (1t10+3 two handed)
Handaxe +5, damage 1d6+3, thrown range 20/60
Dagger +5, damage 1d4+3, thrown range 20/60

Equipment

Warhammer, hand axe, dagger, armour of chains sown on a leather jacket (plus a few "real" spare parts), backpack, rope, 2 iron spikes, jar of thin wine, small wooden box w. 4 little raisin cakes, lockpicks, tinderbox, two rags, pouch w. 18 silver coins

Fighter Abilities

Fighting Style: +1 to Armor Class (already included).

Action Surge: Take an extra action on your turn, once in the scenario.

Second Wind: As a bonus action, regain 1d10+2 hit points once in the scenario.

Actions

Actions: Angreb, help, dodge, dash, disengage, hide

Bonus Action: Second Wind

Movement: 30 feet (standing up costs 15 feet of movement)

Reactions: Attack if opponent flees without "disengage"

Tactics: Egin is best as a solid rock that more fragile allies can maneuver around. Keep your head cool and apply your strength where it is needed the most. And remember that not all fights need be fought to the bitter end. Or be fought at all.

Use *Action Surge* if it is important and you might take down an opponent with an extra attack. Remember to use *Second Wind* BEFORE you go down!

EGIN – page 3, custom mechanics

LEADERSHIP

- The leader is *whoever gives the orders*.
- But only as long as the others *obey*.
- The leader's player has the *pirate coin*.
- If the leader *appears weak*, the DM will give the pirate coin to someone who appears less weak.
- The leader's player controls the *pool of Cruelty cards*.

CONFLICTS over leadership

- Open conflict is handled with a *contest of Menace*.
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FLASHBACKS

- Cruelty and Kindness are resources brought into play through *brief, narrated flashbacks*.
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CRUELTY

- *The leader* can use Cruelty himself or offer it to others.
- The flashback must be about *public cruelty* against another PC (not the current leader).
- *Beatings, humiliation* and *cruel teasing* are OK.
- *Torture, mutilation* and *rape* are no go.

In the present, Cruelty gives a REROLL of a failed roll, with advantage, and does 1 hit point of damage to the target PC.

- The target puts the Cruelty card in front of them, *tapped*.

KINDNESS

- Each player has *one Kindness card*. It is yours alone.
- The flashback must be about *private kindness* to another PC (not yourself).
- You can offer it to another who is having a hard time.
- They can narrate a situation where they were hurting. You then narrate how you helped.

Kindness HEALS 4d6 hit points, and can keep a PC from going down at 0 hit points.

- The recipient puts the Kindness card in front of them, *tapped*.

SAFETY

Hopefully unnecessary, but – if something seems more fucked up than cool, anyone can say **STOP THE GAME!** Then, together, you come up with something more cool than fucked up.

FELIX – page 1, who he is

HOMESICK SHEPHERD

FELIX is tough, sullen and introverted. He is desperately missing his green hills, his sheep and his dogs – he is a shepherd. Or he was, before his mother sold him to the Captain to be able to afford medicine for his sick older brother. So Felix can never go home again, and he cannot stand it. But even though he is sad, he is also a survivor – he is actually an excellent shot, and not too soft to hit the mark – and he has acquired reasonably good equipment. But boasting and making threats to get ahead among the pirates does not come naturally to him at all – he can do it, but he doesn't like it. He is basically a good boy, and he hopes that maybe under the surface some of the others are not as horrible as they are acting. Felix is 17 years old.

THE CAPTAIN AND THE GOSHAWK

The Captain is ruthless, greedy and cruel. He sets a grim tone for his men. On his pirate ship, the Goshawk, the rule of the strong prevails, and everyone fights to assert themselves in small things and large, often by ridiculing and cowing others. The limit to this is that whoever hurts the business becomes a target for the Captain's wrath. And noone wants that! Bran has been on the Goshawk for a bit more than a year



RECRUITMENT

Sold to the Captain by his family.

STRENGTHS

Good shot, calm.

WEAKNESSES

Quiet.

SETTING

Where we find ourselves slightly resembles the European Late Middle Ages, dominated by sluggish, declining kingdoms and prosperous but corrupt trading cities. The supernatural is rare, ambiguous and often trickery and deception.

THE GAZE OF THE MOON

Felix's mother has a proverb that if you stare too long at the moon, the moon can look into you. But Felix has always liked looking at the moon.

FELIX – page 2, stats (level 2 "fighter")

Strength	14 +2 (save +4)	Armor Class: 14
Dexterity	16 +3	Initiative: +3
Constitution	15 +2 (save +4)	Action Surge: 1
Intelligence	11 –	Second Wind: 1
Wisdom	13 +1	Hit points: 20
Charisma	9 –1	Ammunition: 9

Skills

Menace +1 Athletics +4 Perception +3
Stealth +5 Animal Handling +3 Investigation +0
Carting, spinning & knitting, can swim, CANNOT read & write

Attacks

Crossbow +7, damage 1d8+3, range 80/320
Cutlass +5, damage 1d6+3
Dagger +5, damage 1d4+3, thrown range 20/60 (off hand damage 1d4, and where is the crossbow?)

Equipment

Light crossbow, cutlass, dagger, sheepskin waistcoat, backpack, tinderbox, wooden knitting needles, ball of 90 metres of yarn, half finished woolen sock, leather canteen w. water, two half-crushed biscuits in a handkerchief, quiver w. 9 crossbow bolts

Fighter Abilities

Fighting Style: +2 to hit with ranged weapons (included).

Action Surge: Take an extra action on your turn, once in the scenario.

Second Wind: As a bonus action, regain 1d10+2 hit points once in the scenario.

Actions

Actions: Angreb, help, dodge, dash, disengage, hide

Bonus Action: Second Wind, off hand attack

Movement: 30 feet (standing up costs 15 feet of movement)

Reactions: Attack if opponent flees without "disengage"

Tactics: You are a crack shot, so of course you shine the most when you can either fire a bolt or two early in a fight, or make life dangerous for opponents who engage you at a distance. You are most dangerous with your crossbow when you can shoot from hiding (with advantage), but even if you can find cover, it takes you a regular action to hide properly.

If there isn't really room to shoot, you are also OK in melee with your cutlass. If you are out of ammunition (or have stowed your precious crossbow safely), you can also use a dagger in your off hand for a bit of extra damage.

Use *Action Surge* if it is important and you might take down an opponent with an extra attack. Remember to use *Second Wind* BEFORE you go down!

FELIX – page 3, custom mechanics

LEADERSHIP

- The leader is *whoever gives the orders*.
- But only as long as the others *obey*.
- The leader's player has the *pirate coin*.
- If the leader *appears weak*, the DM will give the pirate coin to someone who appears less weak.
- The leader's player controls the *pool of Cruelty cards*.

CONFLICTS over leadership

- Open conflict is handled with a *contest of Menace*.
- *Being outnumbered gives disadvantage*. Others can back up a side, and the pirate coin counts as an extra person.
- The loser chooses between submitting or rolling initiative for combat. Everyone on the losing side has disadvantage on initiative.
- Those who *did not pick a side* can take part from round 2.

FLASHBACKS

- Cruelty and Kindness are resources brought into play through *brief, narrated flashbacks*.
- Flashbacks are *set on the Goshawk*.
- Flashbacks *cannot be used* during conflicts over leadership.

CRUELTY

- *The leader* can use Cruelty himself or offer it to others.
- The flashback must be about *public cruelty* against another PC (not the current leader).
- *Beatings, humiliation* and *cruel teasing* are OK.
- *Torture, mutilation* and *rape* are no go.

In the present, Cruelty gives a REROLL of a failed roll, with advantage, and does 1 hit point of damage to the target PC.

- The target puts the Cruelty card in front of them, *tapped*.

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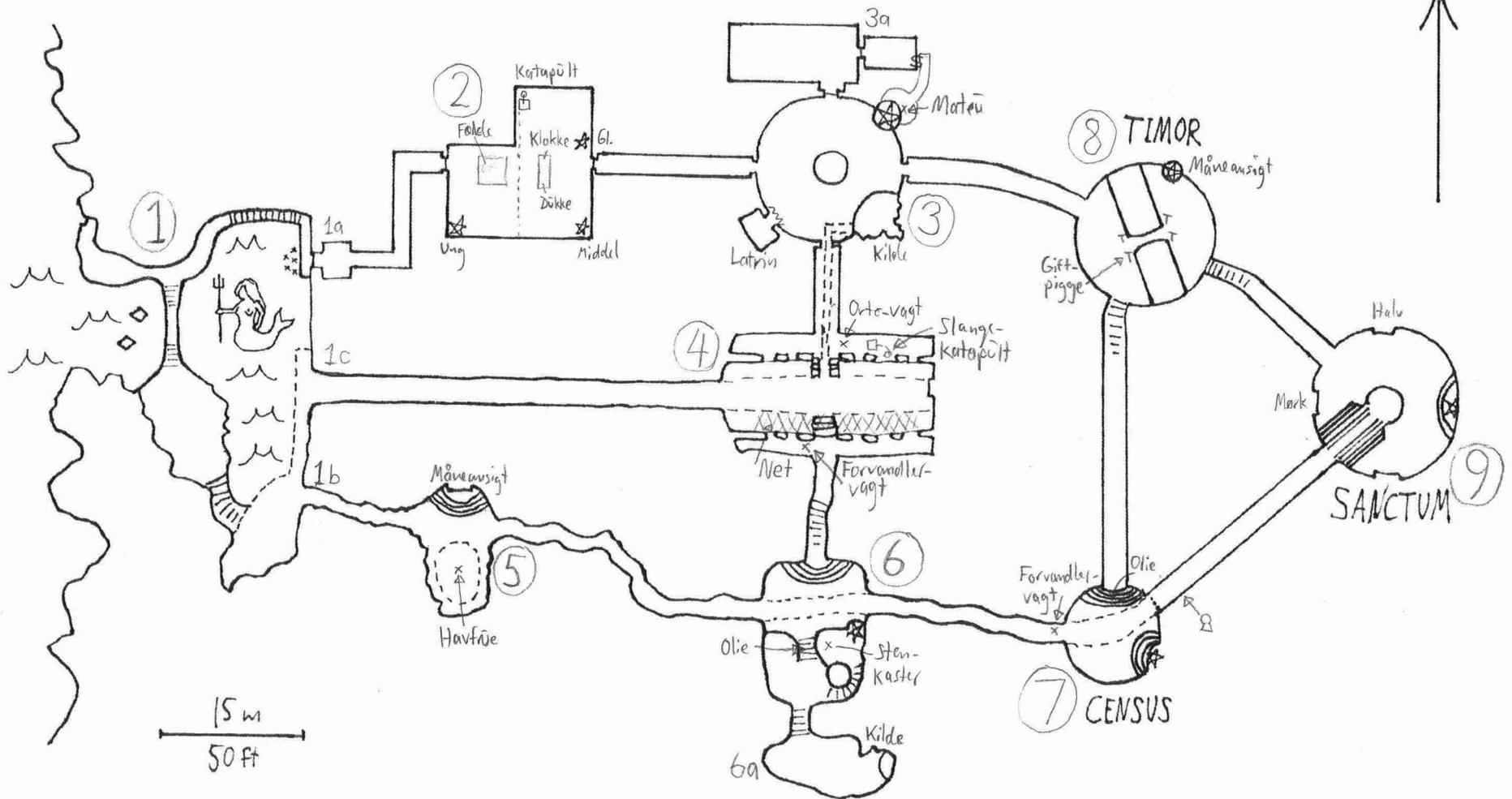
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TIDEVANDETS TEMPEL



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