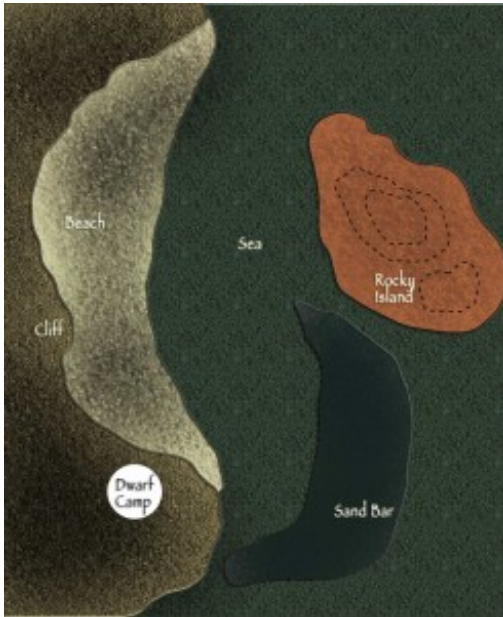


N is for Nautical

theskyfullofdust

Another mini-adventure/location-based encounters; this time underwater!



Area Map of Coastal Region

Nautical Adventure: The Temple of Tides

For Levels 3 to 5, using LotFP Weird Fantasy rules as a basis (OSR compatible).

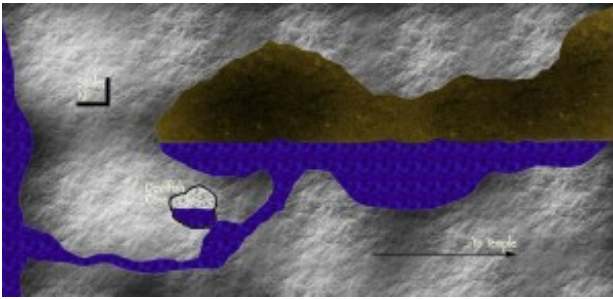
An expedition of curious dwarf explorers have discovered an ancient temple in a cave off the coast; a cave only reachable by swimming underwater and along a dark, submerged tunnel. These uncommon dwarves seek brave adventurers to help them explore the temple and learn all that they can.

The Dwarfs

Led by the gruff dwarf *Dyddd Longleat*, these explorers are unlike most of their kind. They are driven by an insatiable curiosity, longing for ancient works of art and tomes. This party calls itself *The Exploratory League* and number a dozen men and women, none of which are capable fighters (treat as 0-level dwarf, armed with daggers if anything). They have a hoard of dungeoneering equipment that they will be happy to loan to any adventurers who will 1) scout ahead, (2) eliminate any danger, and (3) protect them whilst they explore the temple and catalogue their discoveries. They are willing to pay the going rate, and maybe a little extra for danger-money (although, they stress, they don't expect any trouble). Amongst their equipment are several air-bladders that will allow a person to breath underwater for a turn between refills.

Swimming to the Temple

Reaching the cave requires the adventurers to swim underwater, through the submerged tunnel, and across the lake that serves as the entrance to the cavern.



Side View of Underwater Tunnel

Swimming down to the tunnel is the easy part, requiring a Strength (2d6) check to make it without mishap (or a 3d6 check if carrying anything too heavy; 4d6 if wearing armour of chain mail or greater).

The tunnel is dark and narrow, barely 2' wide in some places. It stretches underwater for about 80 feet in a straight line, before angling up for a further 70 feet to the surface. Swimming requires another Strength (3d6 if unencumbered, 4d6 if carrying a heavy load, 5d6 if wearing heavy armour) check to avoid any mishaps.

At the point where the tunnel angles, a **Devilfish** has made its home in a fissure in the ceiling; it attacks anyone rounding the bend, surprising on a 4 in 6. The bend is 5' wide, 4' high, and hinders combat with anything larger than a dagger or short blade (-2 to attack).

Devilfish: Armour Class 14, Hit Dice 3, Hit Points 20, Movement 50' (150') swimming, # Attacks 1 bite, 1 head-butt, 1 tail slap, Damage/Attack 1d4/ 1d3/ 1d2, Morale 8.

A red-skinned fish with wicked teeth and two horns atop its bulbous head. Attacks by ramming into its opponent, biting and slapping them with its tail. If it retreats it takes shelter in its cave (a narrow fissure, 4d6 Dexterity check to squeeze through, 3d6 for a halfling or smaller). Inside the **Devilfish Cave** is a pocket of air, on one ledge is the skeleton of a fisherman, still dressed in tatters of his fisherman's clothes. This corpse has a split belt pouch containing 3 silver pieces, 12 coppers, and a bronze locket with a faded and water-damaged picture of a young woman inside (worth 5 silver if sold, more if brought back to the wife the picture depicts).

The tunnel opens into a small lake fronting the cavern, where the temple lies at the rear.

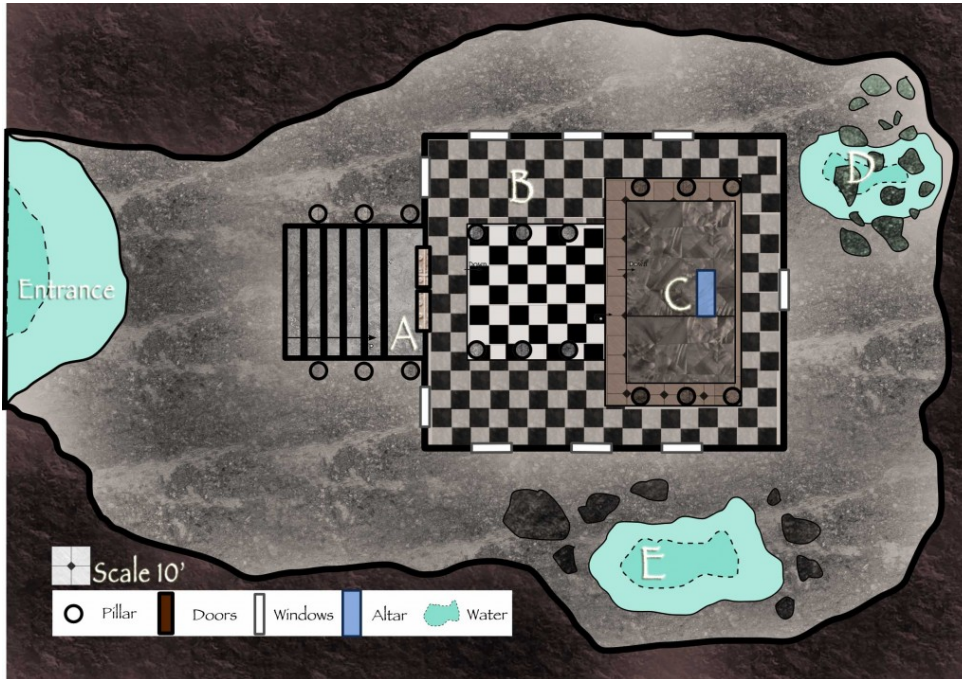
Swimming Mishaps (roll 1d6)

1. *A moment of panic makes you take an involuntary gulp of water;* save versus poison or start to drown in 1d4 rounds.
2. *A brightly coloured school of fish darts past, distracting you;* saving throw versus magic or be turned around, make a 3d6 Wisdom check (or a Search check) to reorientate; otherwise head off in the wrong direction.
3. *Your clothing gets snagged on a rock;* stuck on a rock until a 3d6 Strength check is made to pull free.
4. *You flail your arms and legs, and dislodge something;*

a randomly determined object falls from a belt, pouch, pack, and disappears into the depths (sinks for 1d100 feet).

5. *Sharp stones cut your flesh as you swim past;*
character takes 1d3 damage and bleeds into the water.
6. *You knock your head on the rocks;*
make a saving throw versus paralysis or be knocked out for 1d3 turns, possibly drowning unless someone saves the character.

The Temple of Tides



The Temple of Tides

An imposing edifice built from green-veined black marble that seems to absorb the light. Columns line stone stairs that rise to a wide archway, the arch made of carved blocks depicting leering faces that resemble humans with bulbous fish-eyes. Blue plaster adorns the skirting of the walls, shaped like rolling waves. The plaster glistens wetly if light is shone upon it.

A peaked roof of slate wet and slick from drips off the ceiling covers the temple, which has a pair of huge bronze doors barring the archway. Wide but low windows look in, each 15' up on the 30' walls; all are 2' tall, fitted with thick glass (AC 14, HPs 10) that distorts the view within, making everything vague and unsettling. Soft blue light, like sunlight off water, filters through the glass, making the cavern glow green-blue, providing a dim illumination.

Stalagmites grow around the edge of the cavern, dripping water into pools. The rock floor is wet, and during any combat a roll to hit of a natural 1 means that the attacker has slipped on a wet patched, falling prone and taking a point of damage.

Map Key

A) *"Wide stairs lead up to a pair of bronze doors under an arch of leering faces. On either side cracked columns, each bearing a statue of a man with the head of a fish carrying a barbed trident, look down with bulbous eyes on those climbing the stairs."*

The statues are part of a magical trap (*Detect Magic* reveals the stairs and statues radiate magic),

which is triggered when anyone not wearing a symbol of the faith (see Temple interior) reaches halfway up the stairs. At that point the six statues throw their tridents, one per character, multiple strikes if less than six in the party, starting with whoever is at the front:

Tridents attack as a 3 HD creature and deal 1d6 damage; if a natural 20 is rolled to hit, the barbs stick into the target, slowing movement by half until removed. Removing them without care inflicts a further 1d4 damage; a 3d6 Dexterity check is needed to remove without harming the impaled character.

The bronze doors are ten feet tall, heavy, with no sign of any locks. They are barred from within by a bronzed iron rod bolted across the two doors. An Open Doors check is at -4 to force these doors open, and then only bending the rod to create a small gap for characters to squeeze through.

B) *"The interior of the temple is a tiered open chamber, with fluted columns holding up the arched ceiling. Blue-green light fills the room, ebbing and flowing like water. The ceiling is painted with a beautiful underwater garden scene, the colours only slightly faded. The columns all bear engravings of waves at their base, fish and plants along their length. The floor is made of marble tiles of black and white, some cracked and chipped."*

At first glance this chamber seems empty, except for the glow that emanates from the altar ahead. The tiles, however, are not all that they seem. Some are false, concealing 30' pits lined with barbed wire, with 10' of stagnant water at the bottom (so, 20' fall to the water, 1d4 damage from the wire and impact). Climbing out can be tricky, and unless precautions are made, the barbed wire cuts for 1d4 damage as the character climbs out.

To determine which tile is actually a concealed pit, roll randomly for each 10' explored: on a 2 in 6 the tile breaks and the character plummets into the pit; a saving throw versus paralysis will allow the victim to grab on to the edge, but still takes 1d3 damage from the wire. Once a tile has been crossed, explored, checked, there is no need to roll again for that tile.

C) *"In this section rests an altar of brilliant sea-blue marble, softly glowing, ebbing and flowing like the tide. The stone is worked to resemble crashing waves, and on the top lies three objects: a trident made of green metal, a necklace with a pendant, and a curved seashell decorated with images of the sea."*

All the objects and the altar radiate magic. There is also a secret compartment at the back of the altar, opened by pressing against one of the waves rolling across the bottom edge. This compartment is magically warded, the trap triggered by anyone not wearing a symbol of the faith (the necklace, see below) attempting to open the secret panel:

A bubble of water surrounds the character, cutting off their air. It lasts for 1d4 turns, and unless the victim can hold their breath for the duration, they will start to drown. It travels with the character, surrounding them like a 6" thick second skin, albeit one made of salt water.

The bubble can be dispelled (treat as a 5th-level spell), and objects may pass freely through the water, but not living material. This trap can only be triggered three times before the magic is drained. It recharges once a month, when the moon is full.

Inside are three ancient stone tables, full of runes that is in an unknown language (any Language checks are at -4), with sides shaped like waves. They are prayers and hymns dedicated to an old and forgotten goddess of the sea, known as *The Mistress of the Tides*, a pagan god whose followers were all but wiped out. The tablets could be sold for a tidy profit to those interested in

such things.

The three objects are as follows:

1. *A barbed trident made of solid electrum, with wave patterns along its shaft.*
Does damage as a +1 spear (+1 to hit, and +1 damage if underwater), but on a natural to hit roll of 1, the electrum prongs bend, effectively making it into a +1 club. The trident also improves the attitude of any fish or aquatic creature that comes into contact with the wielder: when making a Reaction check, make two rolls and take the most favourable of the two.
2. *A blue-green coral pendant with a symbol of a bulbous-eyed mermaid frolicking in the sea, hooked to a necklace of pearls.*
The holy symbol of the pagan goddess of the sea, known as the Mistress of the Tides. A goddess as unpredictable, as calm, as aggressive, and as mysterious as the sea she is said to have dominion over. Anyone wearing the necklace can freely breath underwater, but only so long as they are unencumbered.
3. *A spiral seashell decorated with wave patterns and fish. A bronze mouthpiece has been fitted at the mouth of the shell, and air-holes have been drilled along the shell. Blowing through the mouthpiece makes an eerie sound, something reminiscent of nightmares when lost out at sea.* Blowing this horn while underwater summons native wildlife to the aid of the user. Out at sea this will either be a school of fish (1-3), a shark (4-5), or a dolphin (6) with normal statistics. It will assist for 1d4 turns before returning to the sea. In fresh water, the aquatic ally will be either fresh water fish (1-2), a giant pike (or similar, 3-4) or a water-snake (5-6), duration as above.

D) *"A shallow pool of deep green water lies beneath a cluster of thick stalactites, drips forming ripples on the surface. A glitter of gold can just be seen at the bottom of the pool."*

The golden glitter is a scattering of 2d4 ancient gold coins, dating back nearly a century. They are stamped with unknown runes. There is no danger here, and the water is actually quite pleasant and refreshing to drink, although greener than the norm.

E) *"A deep pool of water, the surface coated in a thin layer of scum. Stalactites and stalagmites hung around the edge, but none hang above the water."*

The layer of scum is actually a subterranean **Scum Slime**, which lives off the odd fish that swims through a crack in the bottom of the pool, that in turn leads to the sea. As such, this water is salty. Other than the killer slime, there is nothing of interest in the water.

Scum Slime: Armour Class 12, Hit Dice 3, Hit Points 19, Movement nil, # Attacks 1 acidic touch, Damage 1d4 acid, Morale 12; immune to sleep, charm, hold, acid and poison; takes only minimal damage from non-magical weapons, none from fire, but suffers 1d4 damage from a pint of oil that disrupts its surface tension and breaks the scum apart.

*The **Scum Slime** cannot move from the water, but its scum can flick out like a tentacle up to a range of 10'. Touching or immersion in the slime causes an automatic hit, no roll necessary. Anyone immune to or protected from acid is also protected or immune to the slime's attack.*

NOTE: The dwarves will be interested in the three holy relics and the tablets found inside the altar. They will bargain for them if necessary, and pay handsomely (DMs choice).

