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Consoles and Cards: A Console RPG for Tabletop

JRPGs

When someone says “I like Role Playing Games” there are two separate hobbies they may be referring to (although they, like the author, may like both). One involves rule-books, miniatures, dice, cards and friends, while the other replaces everything (sometimes - but not always - even the friends) with a game console or computer. These console RPGs have always been built using the knowledge of paper and pencil RPGs as a basis, but rarely do we see digital RPGs informing paper games; we at Smoke & Mirrors aim to remedy that!

Of the various styles of digital RPGs, the Japanese mode may be the most rarified. Defined by blockbusters like the excellent *Final Fantasy*, *Dragon Warrior/Quest* and *Fire Emblem* series, the fans of this genre have come to expect certain traditions to be practiced in each game. Most importantly, JRPGs place storyline above freedom: the characters, relationships and events are largely set, but far more detailed than an open-ended philosophy would allow. Critics of the genre consider this rail-roading, while its proponents emphasize its depth. Secondly, most JRPGs exist on multiple levels such as a world map, dungeon map, and battle viewer. These levels only need to fit together loosely.

Like Western RPGs, JRPGs are based on a quest structure and fantastic environments. There is also a shared assumption that characters get better over time (with experience) instead of degrading over time (with age and cumulative injury). The use of these characters' abilities, however, are wildly different: western RPGs often have non-combat skills that different characters can make use of (stealth, haggling, etc.), but JRPGs generally have a single character that is capable of dealing with any given obstacle in a cut scene outside of player control. In JRPGs all abilities are combat abilities.

The above are generalizations. In recent years games have borrowed from each other so liberally that lines have blurred. It can even be argued that console sports games owe as much to RPGs (western and Japanese) as they do to first-generation sports games. What we aim to do here is create a platonic ideal of the JRPG on the tabletop, a distillation of 8- and 16-bit solutions in card form.

Warning - do not proceed before reading!

Solitaire, Co-Op, or Traditional

Much of the reason for the strength of console and computer RPGs over paper and pencil is that you don't need to get your friends together in a quiet space for some number of hours to play. Maybe you live in a new city. Maybe your friends are next door but the kids are on incompatible nap cycles and the new job is a hassle. Maybe you just don't want to wait till Thursday to try out the Cartomancy rules. It is for you and your busy life that we present three different modes of play for this playset: solitaire, co-op, and standard.

This playset is primarily designed to be a solo tabletop experience, a game of solitaire that tells a story as the game progresses. No dealer, no other players: just you, a deck of cards, your character and these rules. All of the enemy and NPC actions will



follow specific rules so that you don't have to make decisions on both sides of the board yourself.

If you are playing solitaire, it is important that you **do not read ahead** past the "Opening Cutscene" header. It is also important that you have a strong understanding of the Cartomancy Player's and Dealer's guide, as you will have no one else to fall back on if you can't remember the rules.

The second method is co-op. This is similar to playing solitaire, but with friends. Basically, you and some number of other players will be playing against the game, without a dealer. This is a good way for two players to enjoy Cartomancy and can be a good challenge for larger groups. As with solitaire, **do not read ahead**.

Finally, standard is just that: the standard method of play detailed in the Cartomancy Player's Guide. A dealer will **read the entire playset** and provide a play experience for the players, modifying as she sees fit.

The Chosen Ones

Mechanically there is no difference between these protagonists and others in Cartomancy: use a 6 card draw for a hard game, 7 for normal, and 8 for easy. Special attention should be paid to the characterization of the protagonists. All protagonists will take on the role of archetypal JRPG main characters. The trick to making this work is to simplify the character, not in the normal sense where all characters should be refined down for dramatic presentation, but a massive 8-bit simplification. There is a one-twist maximum for each character: love interest that can't admit she's interested, angsty guy that looks like a bad guy but has a heart of gold, amnesia, android not certain if he is as good as a "real" person—the possibilities are endless. This should be played out in big broad strokes: save the deeply nuanced characterization for a setting that cares; JRPGs need 1) action, and 2) big emotions.

There are some basic rules that these sorts of characters typically follow, but the power that a tabletop game has over a digital game is that you can feel free to alter all you want. We are going to outline one typical setup, which also happens to be the one that the Bots in this playset are built around (more on that later). If you want to go out with a different party makeup (maybe even build your own Bots) that is your call; stay true to the JRPG form, and you can't go wrong.

All protagonists (save the parental figure) will be ludicrously young (don't define ages but think of them as junior high schoolers) and ill-suited to this world-shattering quest that they have been sent on. Each protagonist must choose a role, class, or job that they will follow—ninja, knight, tofu girl, gunfighter, princess, sorcerer—it doesn't have to make sense: just pick something that sounds cool! Oh, and finally you will need a hair color; whatever it is, make it intense.

An ideal party should have an equal number of female and male characters or slightly more females (most gaming groups are majority male and most gamers avoid playing cross gender; get over it). One of the males must be an adolescent boy who will be the main character for no readily apparent reason. He may range anywhere from 100% incompetent to inexperienced at anything not related to sword work. This is the character that you get to name after yourself when you play these games (that says something about both the authors and us, the players, of this genre, doesn't it?). If you



are playing solitaire, this will be your only character, but reinforcements will be supplied to you.

Next we must have the love interest. Remember that most JRPG romances don't progress very far beyond the "girls have cooties" phase, but for all of that they take up quite a bit of cut-scene time. Ideally you will have at least two love interests that compete to either show affection for, or a lack of interest in, the main character.

Last you must have the parental figure. A teacher, relative, grizzled warrior or someone else over the age of 20 (making them *old*) must join the party. This elder will invariably have to chide the others (especially the main characters) over their childishness. Lay it on thick! Consider carrying a special weapon like a ruler with which you beat the others in the cut scenes. But remember that you will need to show some sort of grudging respect or acknowledgement to the main character before you can defeat the final boss.

There are a number of lesser character types that may overlap with any of the three major types above. Any character can be made anxiety-ridden and/or mysterious by the addition of a dark secret. No more than one character may be something dramatically non-human, like a mystic rabbit, genetically engineered tiger, or troll. Overall make sure that the characterization is simple but very strong.

Bots, obstacles, and scripts

It is recommended that no one venture into a dungeon without a party of 3 or more. How, then, will you complete a solitaire or two-person co-op game? The same way as in a console JRPG: with the addition of supporting characters. It is common for JRPGs to allow the player control over additional characters in combat; you can choose to allow this and simply play the whole team, but we find the following rules to create a primitive artificial intelligence for supporting cast to be more fun. We call these extra characters "Bots" and the predetermined behaviors that they follow "Scripts."

A bot will be written up in a manner very similar to an obstacle. The scripts will be listed after its powers as a series of "if then," "always," and "never" statements. All bots will act after the main character in accordance with their scripts. These scripts will not cover every eventuality: sometimes you will still have to make decisions (like how exactly to distribute health tokens from the Heal power), but these will generally be simple calls. Bots and Protagonists together are referred to as "characters" or "the party."

We will begin with two bots (they will be introduced in a cut scene, but it is convenient to discuss their mechanics here). If you are playing a solitaire game, Akemi and Bryanna will be introduced. If playing a 2-person co-op or standard game, you will have to cut Bots to reach a party size of 4 after the first dungeon. It is important to remember that the Bots do not have hands and only act by drawing cards as specified in their powers and scripts. Because they do not have hands they can not gain cards from a kitty (and you do not have to locate them a share of the cards from a kitty) but cards they play can be added to kitties. If a monster script or other event requires you to compare hand sizes Bots always have a hand size of 0.

Ms. Akemi: the schoolteacher

Akemi is the teacher at the local school that the protagonists attend. She has a strong sense of duty to her pupils - to such an extent that she is willing to follow them into dan-



ger, even while bemoaning that the fate of the world is entrusted to such "flippity children."

Bot: (Represent on the table with a non-card object. Will always be co-located with the main character but can block and be blocked for as normal.)

Three hits to defeat

Dodge: When struck draw a card: if equal or greater than the strike value, the attack is blocked.

Window Card (Cram Time!): as the protagonist power

Refresh (Extra Credit!): as the protagonist power

Script:

Always draw two cards on Akemi's turn then follow this script to play one of them.

Always move to block for any friendly character at 1 health.

If a pip diamond is drawn, then play it as a Window card. If yes then stop.

If a pip heart is drawn, then play it as a Refresh. If yes then stop.

If there are obstacles that Akemi can strike, then play highest card as strike against the lowest obstacle defense then stop.

Bryanna: the magic prodigy

Bryanna is the most promising student at the school with a bright future in wizardry ahead of her. The only thing that may hold her back is her strange attachment to (Insert your main character's name here). Of course it would have been nice to have another decade or two to learn how to use her talents before putting them to the test...

Bot: (Represent on the table with a non-card object. Will always be co-located with the main character but can block and be blocked for as normal.)

Three hits to defeat

Dodge: When struck draw a card: if equal or greater than the strike value, the attack is blocked.

Heal (True heart): as the protagonist power

Multi-attack (A+ Magician): as the protagonist power

Script:

Always draw two cards on Bryanna's turn then follow this script to play one of them.

If a pip heart is drawn and a friendly character is damaged, then play it as a Heal card. If yes then stop.

If a pip club is drawn and there are obstacles it could successfully attack, then play it as a multi-attack on all obstacles it could damage. If yes then stop.

If there are obstacles that Bryanna can strike, then play the highest card as a strike against the lowest obstacle defense then stop.

Cut Scenes

At certain points throughout this playset the term "cut scene" will be used to indicate a pause in the action where the plot and characters are allowed to develop. In real JRPGs



these are the points in the game where you lose control of your character for a time to witness events in a manner more reminiscent of a movie than a game. If you are playing solitaire, then simply read the scene text and take an Attaboy Chip (cut scenes are the only way that you can gain ABCs in a solitaire or co-op game).

In a co-op or standard game the players should get a chance to react to events and really strut their characters' stuff. It is important to note that although the plot is changed by cut scenes, the game is, generally, not. No cards are played and no health chips are altered unless specifically stated by the rules. Characters can do things in a cut scene that they have no mechanical way to do: ninjas can sneak past guards to spy, an enemy that needs to be tough for the plot can defeat the party with a single blow, and characters can be teleported across the map. What is important is the internal logic and outcomes of the scene.

Dungeons

Random encounters are nice, but the warriors foretold in legend need to earn their reputation in dungeons. Each Dungeon is one long scene. The dealer will set up a series of rooms on the table; he can draw these out on large sheets of butcher paper or arrange books (a good use for all your non-Cartomancy RPG books!) where each book is a room. Regardless, rooms will be populated by obstacles, which are kept face down until the party arrives.

In a co-op or standard game you must make a decision here. You can have the party move as a group, shifting rooms on the main character's action, one room at a time and everyone together. This solidarity provides for an authentic JRPG feel and makes for an easily controlled game. Alternatively you can allow each character to move independently. This makes for a more dynamic and competitive game more in line with traditional notions of an American RPG. It's your call.

In either style of movement, a character may only move one room at a time and may not move from an obstacle-occupied room to another obstacle-choked room (although you may withdraw from an occupied room to one that you have already cleared). Within a room a character may move to block for other characters but may not do so on the same round that she moved: think of it as one movement action.

One note on powers: ranged attack may be used to attack creatures in adjacent rooms who have already been revealed. It can not be used to strike at unrevealed creatures or obstacles more than one room away.

Opening Cut Scene

***** Do not continue reading until ready to play! *****

We set the stage with the main character asleep in bed. Around the room are remnants of childhood and a sign of things to come, a sword leaning on the bedpost. A scream breaks the nighttime silence.

The door opens before our hero can do more than sit up. "Boy, ready yourself!" Mentorius, the hero's adopted father, exclaims from the doorway. "I had hoped that you could have more time, but time waits for no man. The temple has opened and Ms Akemi has been pulled inside from the schoolhouse. Sword! Now! Move!"



We next see the hero in the town square, in front of the temple doors that have remained closed for the characters' whole lives. Bryanna is there if it is a solitaire or two-player game. If there are other protagonists, they are also present.

Bryanna: "Hey mister C-in-everything-but-fencing-class! Did you think you were going in there alone? I'm Ms Akemi's favorite at school and I'm going down there too. Besides you're going to need me and my A+ magic!"

This is a good time to allow some dialogue space in multiplayer games. Describe your protagonists and make the pillars of their personalities clear. Dealers may want to incentivize this with heavy use of ABCs to encourage the habit—and make it a little less likely that they will have to use a save point. When everyone is feeling satisfied, draw an ABC in solitaire and co-op games, and push inside the temple doors.

The Gateway Temple

	D	C	
		B	
		A	

Obstacles

For this dungeon all the obstacles will be randomly dealt from a deck with the face cards removed to only leave pip cards.

Place an equal number of face-down cards to the number of protagonists + bots in room B. Then do the same in room C but add an additional one. When the protagonists enter a room flip up the cards, those with black pips (club or spade) become Black Slimes, red cards (hearts or diamonds) become Red Rats.

Black Slime:

Face Value: Pip cards only

Two hits to defeat: See "Fission" below.

Fission: when damaged by a strike a Black Slime with two or more hits will divide into two Black Slimes with the same number of total hits as the original round down (a two-hit slime will become two one hit slimes). Draw a new card for the new slime's value.

Horde: All Slimes in a room will form a horde.

Script:

Always strike the protagonist or bot with the most hits.

If all protagonists and bots have the same hits, strike the one with the most cards in hand.



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If all protagonists and bots have the same cards, strike the target farthest to the left.

Red Rat:

Face Value: Pip cards only

Two hit to defeat:

Wrath of the Rat: When a Red Rat successfully strikes, it must immediately strike a different protagonist or bot. If there are no protagonists or bots it has not attacked this round, disregard this power. Continue to attack until a strike is blocked or there are no more targets.

Horde: All Rats in a room will form a horde.

Script:

Always strike the protagonist or bot with the fewest hits.

If all protagonists and bots have the same hits, strike the one with the fewest cards in hand.

If all protagonists and bots have the same cards, strike the target farthest to the right.

Room By Room

Room A

This is the empty entry hall. Cobwebs, ancient art depicting heroes of legend, etc. Bad news: As soon as the characters enter, the exterior doors slam shut of their own accord. Good news: This is a save point (as are all dungeon entrances); if the characters are all wiped out farther in, you can start here once more.

There is an unlocked door to reach room B.

Room B

The biggest rodents you have ever seen scurry around in the gloom as it becomes apparent that the slime on the wall will need more than a good scrubbing to handle. This is the first fight. The protagonists are moving into the room and will get the first action.

Room C

Room C cut scene

*Ms. Akemi is backed into a corner fighting for her life surrounded by slimes and rats. "Why are you *huff* children out here *smack*? I *eek* have things under control... Well, I suppose it isn't a school night." Ms. Akemi has joined the party!*

Room C is where things should get real. You have the extra firepower of Ms. Akemi (and an ABC from her cut scene), but the protagonists are likely getting low on health and cards.

Ms. Akemi is insistent that you continue to Room D as soon as C is completed, saying, "This temple contains the answers... There are so many questions that I have studied about what has happened and what is going to happen, and the answers are on the other side of that door!"

Room D

Room D cut scene:



The room is beautiful; which makes the creature inside of it even more horrible. It looks like a mass of the giant rats that you have fought previously, but tied and blended together into one slaving mass. It rears up and all the heads roar, shaking the whole temple — even the massive and ornate doors to the north.

The Rat King:

Exotic Obstacle: Place a Red King in room D. Place four face-down pip cards around it. Any strike against the Rat King must target one of these 5 cards.

Special: Each of the 5 Rat King cards must be removed to defeat the Rat King.

Boss: The Rat King acts before players when room D is entered.

Legion of Rats: Each card defends like a face-value obstacle with one hit to defeat. Reveal face-down cards when struck.

Wave of Rats: On the Rat King's turn reveal all cards and then make one strike (at face value) with each, starting with the highest valued and using this script:

Script:

Always strike the protagonist or bot with the most hits that has not yet been hit this round.

If all protagonists and bots have the same hits, strike the one with the fewest cards in hand.

If all protagonists and bots have the same cards, strike the target farthest to the right.

Always repeat with next-lower valued Rat King card until all have been used or all targets have been hit.

After the Rat King's action, turn all remaining Rat King cards over, shuffle them, and deal them all out face down.

Cutscene: Victory and Legends

As soon as the rat king is defeated, Ms Akemi looks around. "It must've dropped a key —there's another door! We have to know what's beyond that gate!" The door to the north is massive, ornate... and despite the best efforts of the party completely impenetrable.

Bryanna soon speaks up. "Look at these carvings... That one looks like you and this other... is that how I look?" The carvings tell a story of an age of darkness that returns to the world once every thousand years but also tells of a small band of warriors who stand against the dark—and these warriors look shockingly like the party members.

"Yes, and here it shows this door opening... but it looks like we need something, a few somethings, more. I think that this shows us where we need to go!"



The World Map

Below you will see a world map—much of which, like experience points and money for Cartomancy characters—doesn't mater. The only things on the world map that will affect anything early on are the two elemental temples, the protagonists home town (Takinia) which contains the Gateway Temple, and the city of Linwata. You may move between any of these by following the lines on the map. To move between any of these locations requires a draw on the random encounter table below the map. This random encounter will be a complete scene except that there is no free healing at the beginning or end of it.

Going to a town and staying at the local inn (don't worry about money for it; we are not going to get into the shopping obsession of JRPGs here) will heal the party members completely. It will also save the party's progress. Yep, thats right: if they get butchered, the party can tell the dealer at any time that they want to revert to their last save. Remember to record this last save point on your character sheet.

Encounter	
2	3x Doom Bird
3	2x Doom Bird
4	3x Battle Stag
5	2x Battle Stag
6	4x Glup
7	3x Glup
8	1x Doom Bird (5HP)
9	1x Battle Stag (5HP)
10	2x Glup (5HP)
Face Card	1x Wizrobe

Doom Bird:

Face Value

Two hits to defeat: See World Map Chart for exceptions.

Flight: After a Doom Bird is hit by a strike, it immediately "flies" out of range.

Move it back to indicate that it can only be damaged by Ranged Assault until its next attack when it flies back in range.

Panic!: Every time a Doom Bird attacks, all protagonists and bots must play a card face down. Reveal these simultaneously; the Doom Bird strikes the character with the lowest valued card. Add all cards to the Doom Bird's kitty.

Script:

Always strike (see "Panic!" for details).



Battle Stag:

Face Value

Three hits to defeat: See World Map Chart for exceptions.

Charge: When a Battle Stag Strikes, the strike applies to all characters who are not blocked. Each must defend individually.

Always strike (see “Charge” for details).

Glup:

Face Value

Three hits to defeat: See World Map Chart for exceptions.

Goopy grab: Strikes and other cards played against a Glup are not placed in a kitty; they are discarded.

Script:

Always strike character with the most hits.

If all characters have the same hits, strike the target farthest to the left.

Wizrobe:

Handed Obstacle: Draw 3, play 2.

Five hits to defeat

Mystic Trickery: Play any black card (spade or club) to block a strike.

Summon Doom Bird: Play any diamond to create a face-value Doom Bird. The Doom Bird may not strike on the round it is brought into play.

Beam: Strike with any heart; the Beam will strike all the party members tied for the fewest hits or individual with the fewest.

Script:

If a diamond is available, use Summon

If a heart is available, use Beam against target with fewest hits.

If characters are tied for fewest hits, they are all affected and must defend separately.

Where is the map? Do things just end? I’m confused!

We can’t make a map yet because we don’t know how big the world is. If you look at the “Content Matching” stretchgoals on the Kickstarter page you will see that we are going to add to this world if you are excited enough to add to Cartomancy. For now just put one random encounter between any two places you want to go.

Water Temple:

Water Temple cut scene: *Before you spreads a pond, wide and brackish. The water is covered by a thick layer of slime interrupted on occasion by a fallen log and at other points by reptilian eyes. There is a stairway bisecting the pond and descending into it, protected by a low wall rising a hands-breadth above the waterline. There is a disturbance in the water: “Could it be, are they the ones... or are they just another feast for*



*Tidal the Water demon?" *Splash* and the origin of the voice, if you truly heard it, is gone.*

As you enter each room, you will lay out a predetermined series of obstacles from the Room Descriptions.

Blue Wizrobe:

Handed Obstacle: Draw 4, play 2.

Three hits to defeat

Mystic Trickery: Play any black card (spade or club) to block a strike.

Summon Soaker: Play any diamond to create a face value Soaker. The Soaker may not strike on the round it is brought into play.

Beam: Strike with any heart; the Beam will strike all the party members tied for the fewest hits or individual with the fewest.

Script:

If a diamond is available, use Summon Soaker

If a heart is available, use Beam against target with fewest hits.

If characters are tied for fewest hits, they are all affected and must defend separately.

Soaker:

Face Value: See room description

One hit to defeat

Horde: All Soakers in a room will form a horde.

Key Drop: Keep track of all defeated Soakers for use on Lock obstacles (see Lock).

Green Slime:

Face Value: See scene description

Four hits to defeat: See "Fission" below.

Fission: When damaged by a strike, a Green Slime with two or more hits will divide into two Green Slimes with the same number of total hits as the original, rounding down (a two-hit slime will become two one hit slimes). Draw a new card for the new slime's value.

Horde: All Slimes in a room will form a horde.

Key Drop: Keep track of all defeated Slimes for use on Lock obstacles (see Lock). Only the initial Green Slime counts for the use of this power, not those created by "Fission".

Script:

Always strike the protagonist or bot with the most hits.

If all protagonists and bots have the same hits, strike the one with the most cards in hand.

If all protagonists and bots have the same cards, strike the target farthest to the left.

Flood:



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Face Value: See room description

Indestructible: The Flood cannot be destroyed by normal means (though some may be removed by special instructions in the room description).

Bog: Characters in a room with a Flood may not play cards of higher value than the card representing the Flood.

Script:

N/A the Flood does not act.

Lock:

Exotic: Represent with a card of the value specified in the room description, but the Lock can not be affected by strikes or powers like a normal face value

Indestructible: A Lock cannot be affected by regular strikes and powers.

Obstruct: Each lock prevents characters from taking an action—commonly moving between rooms, opening treasure chests, or flipping switches. See individual room descriptions for details on each individual Lock.

Unlock: A lock can be removed by a protagonist if a character has defeated a face-value obstacle in this dungeon with the exact same value as the Lock (see Key-drop in some Obstacle Descriptions). Each vanquished opponent may only be used for this purpose once.

Script:

N/A the Lock does not act.

	F	E	
	B	D	
	A	C	

Room A:

The entrance hall. The room speaks to long-lost grandeur. There are statues of great kings whose bodies end in dolphin tails, now covered from crown to fin in slime trails, and the broken remnants of shells from all five of the great seas. The way to the North and East are both open.

Room B:

There is a torrent of water (the Flood) moving through the room from an ornate water gate with an elaborate control mechanism (the Lock) in the west to flow through a grating in the East. From the water four drops the size of a man's head rise (the Soakers) but inside them you see a glint... A key! Place four Soakers in the room when entered (values of 2,4,6,8) and a Flood (value Jack) and a Lock (value 10). There is no



way out of this room except the way the party came. Playing a value 10 "key" on the Lock will shut down the Flood in Room B.

Room C:

A slime attacks! Place a value 10 Green Slime in this room and a value 8 Lock on the north wall. The door to the north will not open until the Lock has been defeated with a value 8 Key.

Room D:

Magical power animating a wizard's azure robes floats in the middle of the room, and the words to old dark spells begin to fill the room! Place a Wizrobe in the center of the room. If the players have disabled the Lock in room B, then that is all that is in the room; if they have not, also place a Jack value flood. The room can be exited to the north.

Room E:

Two slimes ooze out of the walls to defend the grand ornate door to the West! Two Green Slimes (King and 5) and a treasure chest populate this room. The treasure chest can be opened with one action and effectively works like a kitty of five randomly dealt cards. The kitty may be distributed immediately if a character spends an action. There is an ornate doorway to the West.

Room F:

This is less a room and more a tempest. Rushing rapids, piercing ocean spray, bone breaking waves: all of these are Tidal the Water Demon! Tidal is the only thing in the room.

Tidal the Water Demon:

Exotic Obstacle: Place a jar with 10 blue marbles (health tokens) to represent Tidal (or come up with something suitably aquatic).

10 hits to defeat:

Boss: Tidal acts before players when Room F is entered.

Wave of Power: On the Tidal's round draw a single random card. This is a strike against all characters; each character must block independently. After the strike is resolved, the card stays in play until the beginning of Tidal's next turn as a Flood. Discard the Flood before Tidal's next action.

Vast as the Ocean: Tidal does not defend in any way except for the constraints of the Flood created by the "Wave of Power".

Script:

Always use Wave of Power once a turn.

The End?

Cutscene: *When the last hit lands on Tidal, his magic and waters go coursing out through the temple, washing away the built up detritus and spiritual evil of centuries. When the waters lower, a transformed temple is revealed: statues are made whole, and water changes cut into the floor are revealed to be a network that would allow aquatic*



species to coexist in this place with land dwellers. Soon two beautiful mer-creatures, one male and one female, swim along the channel. "Thank you! We did not reveal ourselves before because we have been disappointed by so many. But they were treasure hunters and grave robbers; I see that your motives are pure! For centuries we have been trapped by the evil of this place. This temple is the source of a great river that flows down the far side of the mountain. Now that it is purified, we are freed to grant you passage down the slopes... Our traditions say that you will need to travel that way for the remainder of the seals. Oh, we almost forgot to give you the reward our oracles say you seek!" The party has gained the Water Seal!

What Now?

Two possible answers to that: Hold on and see if the Kickstarter brings more dungeons for you to explore or make up your own campaign. This playset sets the conditions for a long adventure in search of elemental seals. New overland maps with the same encounter charts or others. New temples with all the tricks and monsters you would expect. This may be a good time to pick up a mer-creature party member, or to level up characters in some way.

How to level? You may not want to as it can dramatically change what sorts of obstacles are appropriate. You may want to change the draw number, or you may want to give a +1 to the value of playing a certain suit of cards. Perhaps you could let all the characters play Jacks with their powers. Your game, your call.

