7202 POST SUNDERING

TALES OF MAR DE ORO

SEA, SKY, FAITH, EMPIRE

Community Review Edition

A free system-neutral campaign setting presented for critical community review

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What This Edition Is

This is a deliberately limited review edition of *Tales of Mar de Oro*. It is designed to help reviewers judge the setting without reproducing the complete website, Player's Handbook, GM material, adventures, tools, or sealed revelations.

It includes

- The premise and play experience
- The system-neutral design approach
- The Golden Sea and its political pressures
- Representative nations and institutions
- Fortera, Éterlumin, airships, and warfare
- Character and campaign guidance
- Review questions and an actual-play report
- Tarlaxians and Moon-Affected
- Clocks as a pressure tool

It intentionally omits

- Complete Codex chapters
- Full nation dossiers
- GM secrets and adventure solutions
- Complete conversion rules and stat blocks
- The full Quickstart, handouts, and pregens
- Interactive tools and illustrated web features

The review request: identify what is unclear, derivative, difficult to use, inaccessible, inconsistent, or unconvincing. Specific criticism is more useful than general encouragement.

Full setting, tools, downloads, and current canon: mar-de-oro.com

REVIEW ROUTES

Choose the Depth That Fits

I Ten-minute first impression

Read pages 5 to 10. Then answer: What is this setting? What do characters do? What feels distinctive? What remains confusing? Would you continue?

II One-hour setting review

Read pages 5 to 46. Judge premise, setting clarity, system neutrality, practical GM value, visual presentation, and whether the setting supports a campaign rather than only lore.

III Actual-play review

Use the San Telmo Quickstart, the optional 2d6 Resolution Bridge or your preferred system, and complete the report on page 57 after play.

The review request: identify what is unclear, derivative, difficult to use, inaccessible, inconsistent, or unconvincing. Specific criticism is more useful than general encouragement.

Review Edition 1.0 - Canon cutoff: 28 July 2026. State whether you are responding primarily as a GM, player, designer, accessibility reader, or worldbuilding reader.

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The edition remains player-safe. Full-page visual plates replace the simplified Dragon Line and GM tool diagrams.

THE SETTING IN ONE PAGE

A World Wrong in a Wonderful Way

In the warm middle waters of Aeon lies the Mar de Oro, the Golden Sea: a long island chain of colonies, forts, pirate harbors, trade routes, and old secrets.

It is close enough to tempt every continental power and far enough to let secrets fester. Flintlock navies and early airships cross waters where faith, engineering, commerce, and empire all claim the right to define what is real.

The current year is 7202 Post Sundering. The age of sail has not ended. It has opened another sea above it.

THE SETTING'S PROMISE

Why Mar de Oro

I
Everyone is partly right

Priests call the forces reshaping their world divine. Engineers call them useful. Scholars believe they are beginning to understand their laws. Choose what your character believes and what they will risk for it.

II
The world pushes back

Éterlumin degrades. Calibration buys time, never permanence. Ships need crews, supplies, and difficult decisions. Factions remember debts, betrayals, and public humiliations.

III
Something lies underneath

What appears miraculous still obeys rules. The people of Aeon have discovered fragments of those rules, but no one has yet assembled the whole pattern.

"They are not fools for believing so. They are simply early."

AT THE TABLE

What Play Feels Like

Mar de Oro is built around crews operating inside pressures that were already moving before they arrived.

Physical and immediate

Heat, rain, harbor noise, damp powder, rigging, ledgers, permits, and failing machinery matter. The setting reveals itself through places and consequences rather than lectures.

Political without one required conclusion

Colonial power, exploitation, resistance, and institutional failure have human consequences. The table chooses its moral position. The setting does not flatten the forces involved into neutral scenery.

Mystery with a real bottom

Strange events are not arbitrary. Apparent miracles, engineering failures, rites, and anomalies belong to one underlying order, even when characters cannot yet explain it.

Crews before lone heroes

A ship, expedition, household, regiment, or investigation gives characters a shared practical reason to remain together. Trust may be incomplete. Cooperation is still necessary.

Competence under pressure

Characters matter because they can act, interpret, negotiate, repair, navigate, and choose. The setting rewards people who understand institutions and physical systems, not only those who can fight.

Consequences that accumulate

A faction remembers. A ship degrades. A promise closes one door and opens another. The world responds to what the crew changes.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

What Do Characters Do?

Serve a crew

Take a meaningful role aboard a ship, expedition, military unit, household, or independent company.

Cross a contested world

Travel between colonial ports, old roads, frontier settlements, dangerous interiors, and the first air routes.

Investigate the impossible

Encounter Fortera phenomena, moon-pressure, strange creatures, lost structures, conspiracies, and failures of Éterlumin technology.

Choose where you stand

Institutions have interests, limits, and internal divisions. Characters are defined by loyalties they preserve, revise, or betray.

Good campaign questions: Who gave the crew authority? Who benefits if the mission succeeds? What does the crew owe each other when the commission becomes morally impossible?

RULES APPROACH

System-Neutral by Design

Mar de Oro is a setting, not a mandatory rules engine. It does not depend on classes, levels, spell lists, fixed statistics, or one dice procedure.

Use your preferred system

Keep the engine your group already knows and translate the fiction into its terms.

Use the optional bridge

The lightweight 2d6 Resolution Bridge requires no separate rulebook.

Keep conversions optional

D&D 5e, Pathfinder 2e, and Blades in the Dark material are optional starting points, not setting canon.

Review question: Does the setting describe people, dangers, ships, and institutions clearly enough that you could express them in your own system without guessing what they mean in the fiction?

Full adaptation chapter: System-Agnostic Adaptation

TRANSLATION METHOD

The Six-Step Adaptation Ladder

1	Fictional Role	What is this person, vessel, danger, or institution in the story?
2	Capability	What can it reliably do, and what requires exceptional circumstances?
3	Scale	Does it operate at personal, crew, vessel, faction, or regional scale?
4	Pressure	What does it demand, threaten, consume, or force the characters to decide?
5	Consequences	What follows from success, delay, partial success, exposure, or failure?
6	Mechanical Expression	Only now translate the fiction into your chosen system's rules.

Fiction first. Mechanics last.

THE STAGE

The Golden Sea

The Mar de Oro is a warm archipelago between greater continents, strategically placed, politically crowded, and still incompletely understood.

Why every power comes

Harbor rights, trade routes, military anchorages, timber, cane, salt, copper, medicine, and Éterlumin sources make even small islands consequential.

Why control remains incomplete

Distance delays orders. Weather changes routes. Local communities have their own histories and interests. Colonial officials interpret mandates through practical need, private ambition, and fear.

Why crews matter

A letter, chart, witness, engine failure, or disputed cargo can alter the balance between powers before continental governments even learn that a crisis exists.

Why the setting is campaign-sized

The archipelago is large enough for cultural and political variety, but concentrated enough that decisions, reputations, and faction moves can recur across a long campaign.

> A warm sea between greater continents, close enough to tempt every power and far enough to let secrets fester. That is the stage.

Archipelagos of the Mar de Oro

**Cartography adapted from "Continents and Archipelagos of the Herran Sea" by Kirdissir. Names and labels have been changed for Mar de Oro. Coastlines, islands, terrain, and overall composition remain the work of Kirdissir. No endorsement is implied.*

Continental Powers at a Glance

Valdegracia	The Mother-Crown. Crown, church, noble houses, precedent, and an imperial system built to endure.
Albion	The Naval Crown. Maritime confidence, constitutional authority, intelligence networks, and first-strike doctrine.
Stroomdijk	The Chartered Kingdom. A parliamentary monarchy whose banks and companies convert contracts into power.
Luminore	The Civic Republic. Solarian faith, protected print, universities, and public argument treated as civic work.
Eisenmark	The Disciplined State. Order, metallurgy, artillery, and exactness treated as forms of devotion.
Volkharov	The Interior Empire. Endurance, distance, salvage, and institutions shaped to outlast hardship.
Republic of Éirighdún	The Island Republic. Neutral harbors, factor houses, credit, codes, and the politics of being useful to everyone.

Heller is not an eighth continental power. It is an autonomous Valdegracian Duchy with substantial internal authority, a distinct fleet, and its own frontier engineering culture.

Valdegracia

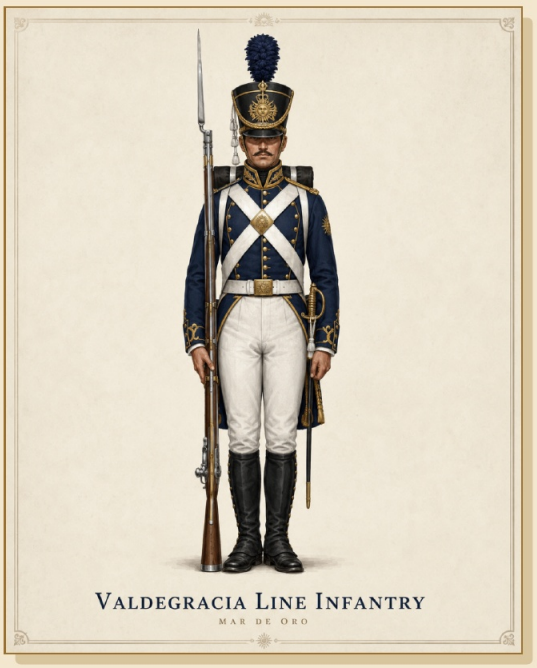
The Mother-Crown. The Eldest Authority. The House That Held the Center.

Valdegracia is the oldest continental power. Crown, church, noble houses, tribunals, and archives are so entangled that legitimacy itself becomes a daily negotiation.

Its colonial presence is large, formal, and authorized. Palaces, cathedrals, garrisons, forms, and precedents communicate that power has arrived with both legal and sacred sanction.

A Valdegracian character often carries ease with hierarchy, respect for precedent, and the fatigue of belonging to a magnificent structure whose foundations are beginning to shift.

Full nation dossier:
mar-de-oro.com/nations/valdegracia



UNIFORM PLATE | VALDEGRACIA LINE INFANTRY

FORMATION AS CULTURAL EVIDENCE

Uniform, equipment, and drill are presented here as material expressions of the state: what it values, how it organizes authority, and what it expects a soldier to endure.

AUTONOMOUS VALDEGRACIAN DUCHY

The Duchy of Heller

The Newest Thing. The Three Founders. A young polity deciding what it must become before older powers decide for it.

Heller is an autonomous Duchy within Valdegracia. It owes the Crown military allegiance in time of war and governs itself in other matters. It is not an independent continental power.

Distance, unreliable supply, covert conflict, and frontier command have produced a distinct engineering culture. Heller values salvage, adaptation, manual control, field repair, and crews capable of operating when institutional support is far away.

Campaign pressure

Heller is simultaneously a Valdegracian territory, an autonomous government, and a community founded by people whose promises have not all been fulfilled.

At the table

Hellerite campaigns naturally support survey missions, privateering, political reform, internal disputes, covert fleet work, and questions about how a new polity behaves when survival and principle pull in opposite directions.

> Signature vessel: the Veloz-class represents Heller's preference for speed, field repair, and purposeful force rather than continental mass.

Albion

The Old Kingdom. The Naval Crown. A maritime state that treats accurate observation as a form of power.

Albion is a constitutional monarchy built around the Crown, Parliament, the Admiralty, the Colonial Office, and institutions that have learned never to force a final answer to who is ultimately in charge.

Its visible authority is naval. Its less visible authority is informational. Charts, correspondence, factors, pilots, physicians, and duty books allow Albion to know more than its rivals expect.

An Albionite character often carries a strong relationship to obligation, hierarchy, observation, and the habit of recording why a decision was made.

Full nation dossier:
mar-de-oro.com/nations/albion

UNIFORM PLATE | ALBION LINE INFANTRY

FORMATION AS CULTURAL EVIDENCE

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REPRESENTATIVE POWER

Stroomdijk

The Chartered Kingdom. The Empire of Ledgers. The state that understood what sovereignty costs.

Political form

Stroomdijk is a parliamentary monarchy reborn from commercial revolt. Parliament holds decisive power on the continent, while the Crown exercises greater freedom in colonial affairs.

Where power lives

The Wisselbank, great trading companies, insurers, charters, and a deliberately difficult Directorate make finance and procedure instruments of state power.

Colonial method

Where Valdegracia sends a governor and Albion sends a flag, Stroomdijk often sends a company. A territory may be governed through commercial law while everyone involved insists that it is technically not a colony.

Character formation

A Stroomdijker may trust contracts, competence, credit, and practical coalition more than inherited grandeur. The danger is how easily responsibility can disappear into paperwork.

The distinction between a company territory and a colony may be only a distinction of paperwork.

Full nation dossier: mar-de-oro.com/nations/stroomdijk

REPRESENTATIVE POWER

Luminore

The Civic Republic. The Solarian Conscience. The nation that decided reason and faith were the same argument.

Luminore is a Solarian republic organized around the continent's oldest university, a protected press, and a civic tradition that treats rigorous examination as legitimate and even sacred.

Its faith is genuine and civic in expression. Public feast days, community observance, university chapels, and the conviction that rational order can be read through both belief and inquiry shape public life.

Literacy is a civic virtue. Printers, booksellers, physicians, jurists, natural philosophers, and scholars have made Luminore the intellectual center of the known world by most reasonable measures.

A Luminoran character often carries a habit of verification, documentation, and resistance to authority that cannot give an account of itself.

> The argument that cannot withstand examination was not an argument. It was a wish.

Full nation dossier: mar-de-oro.com/nations/luminore

FURTHER POWERS

Three Different Ways to Endure

Eisenmark

The disciplined state of the Velasian tradition. Military method, engineering, metallurgy, theology, and exactness reinforce one another. Its strength is reliability under pressure. Its danger is mistaking order for moral certainty.

Volkharov

An interior empire shaped by distance and vyderzhka, the cultivated art of outlasting what breaks others. Its systems tolerate hardship and irregular supply. Its danger is normalizing the suffering demanded of workers, soldiers, and subjects.

Republic of Éirighdún

A neutral island republic of clans, harbors, factor houses, Éterlumin deposits, codes, and credit. Its independence survives because every major power finds it more useful unconquered than conquered.

Review question: do the powers feel like playable social formations with internal tensions, or only like national archetypes?

FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE

Faith Is Not Background Decoration

Religion in Aeon shapes legitimacy, education, ritual, grief, law, social obligation, and the vocabulary people use to interpret Fortera.

Solarian Church

Hierarchical, liturgical, and deeply institutional. It is especially powerful in Valdegracia and remains important across Luminore.

Luminary Fellowship

Emphasizes personal enlightenment and a more individual relationship to the divine. It has strong roots in Albion and Stroomdijk.

Oraclean Communion

Associated with Volkharov and traditions of endurance, interpretation, and revelation shaped by the interior world.

Characters may be devout, lapsed, reforming, doubtful, hostile, or caught between institutions. Even rejection remains a relationship to categories learned before the character could choose them.

Design principle: priests are not fools, engineers are not automatically correct, and belief does not make the physical world arbitrary.

Fortera

Fortera is the underlying field behind rites, engines, gifts, signal systems, moon-pressure, and phenomena that the people of Aeon describe through different vocabularies.

Known principles

- Fortera is present in all places.
- It can be drawn by instruments, engines, rites, and natural prodigies.
- Local use can weaken responsiveness for a time.
- Violent or contradictory work can create instability.
- Its behavior is consistent even where current models are incomplete.

At the table

Fortera should make the setting coherent, not effortless. Characters can observe patterns, compare explanations, and earn discoveries. No single cultural tradition possesses the complete answer.

What it is not

It is not a spell list, a universal battery, a divine command that changes according to belief, or an excuse for consequences without cause.

One reality under two vocabularies.

THE WORKING MEDIUM

Éterlumin

Fortera made visible and partly material.

Éterlumin is extracted, refined, transported, assayed, contained, calibrated, and maintained. It can exist in inert, semi-state, and active conditions.

It is not poisonous by nature. Its dangers come from pressure, activation, degradation, oxygen displacement in confined spaces, instability, heat, resonance, fire, and rupture.

Active Éterlumin is indispensable for aerial lift. It is also dangerously flammable. A successful engineering culture is therefore built from discipline, inspection, logs, quiet warnings, and respect for systems that punish bravado.

> Operational principle: Éterlumin is a maintained industrial medium. Extraction, calibration, containment, and disciplined handling matter more than spectacle.

Full science chapter:
Fortera & Éterlumin

REVIEW PREVIEW

Technology in the Age of Flight

The Age of Flight did not replace the Age of Sail. It opened another sea above it.

Ships remain timber and iron, bronze and canvas and rope. Sailors work rigging by hand. Gunners load black powder under smoke and pressure. Engineers read machines through needles, bells, vibration, heat, and the changing note of a stressed valve.

Fortera and Éterlumin widen what can be built. They do not replace wind, muscle, combustion, or human labor.

Advanced machinery is rare, costly, dangerous, and concentrated in naval yards, arsenals, universities, fortresses, and exceptional vessels.

Every important device has a material basis, maintenance burden, operating limit, institutional owner, and physical failure mode.

Energy
No unlimited output

Inertia
Lift does not erase mass

Sails
Wind still carries distance

Materials
Wood, iron, glass, seals fail

People
Skilled crews remain essential

Review question: does the technological ceiling feel internally consistent, or do any elements appear too modern, too magical, or insufficiently constrained?

Airship Systems Overview

A vessel is defined by role, crew, condition, and operational capability, not by a single number. The full website supplies system-neutral guidance for translating these systems into the rules engine your table prefers.

A Ship Is Never Only Transportation

It is a community, hierarchy, workplace, home, prison, symbol, and often the most honest portrait of a society in miniature.

Sea vessels

Frigates, sloops, merchant barques, and transports carry bulk cargo and colonial economies. They teach endurance, salt, labor, hierarchy, and the long intimacy of travel.

Airships

Airships add engineers, containment discipline, expensive fuel, permits, technical authority, and the permanent awareness that failure at one post can kill everyone.

Why crews work

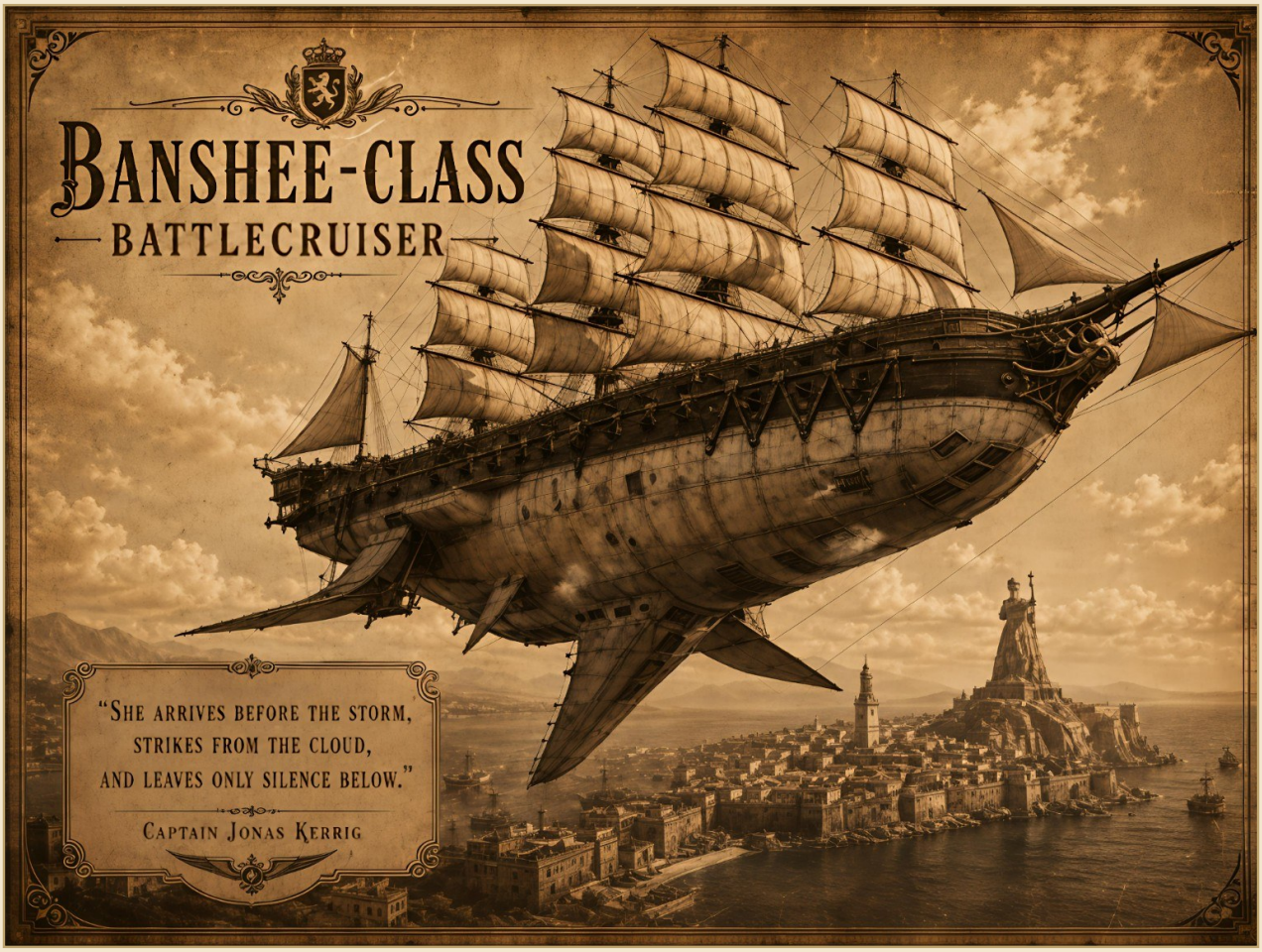
The vessel is a commons. Its success benefits everyone. Its failure threatens everyone. Characters who might otherwise avoid each other must learn to coordinate.

Why secrets work

Close quarters intensify fear, loyalty, class resentment, competence, devotion, and grief. A long campaign can let those tensions become earned trust or permanent fracture.

The ship is where the setting becomes social.

Doctrine Built into the Hull



Valdegracia

Composure. Conflagration. Hold formation, absorb punishment, and let mass and disciplined broadside fire decide the engagement.

Albion

Silence before the storm. Fire first, reposition, conceal true capability, and refuse the engagement the enemy expected.

Heller

Operate at a scale the Duchy can sustain. Combine specialized vessels, field repair, local knowledge, and tempo rather than contesting larger fleets through attrition.

System-neutral use: doctrine tells the GM what a vessel tries to do before any statistics are assigned.

Full chapter: Ships of Sea and Sky

THE EARLY AGE OF FLIGHT

A New Sea Above the Old

Airships are age-of-sail vessels built around lift chambers, sky-keels, sails, rigging, gun crews, engineers, and fragile systems. They are not zeppelins, modern aircraft, or vehicles with visible glowing engines.

Powder, Steel, Height, and Consequence

Combat is smoke, shouting, damp powder, bad footing, ringing ears, splintered wood, burned hands, frightened animals, and officers trying to be heard.

Firearms remain lethal

Personal armor is not bulletproof. It may reduce injury from blades, fragments, animal attacks, or glancing shots. Cover, range, angle, penetration, and discipline matter more.

Artillery is a crew weapon

A gun depends on people who load, aim, vent, cool, secure, and coordinate it. Damage to the crew changes the weapon's real capability.

Ships fail by subsystem

Rigging, steering, guns, lift, containment, command, and morale degrade in recognizable cascades. Crews should usually see warning before catastrophe.

Air adds a new danger

Altitude, pressure, and containment turn structural damage into falling catastrophe. The engineer's authority becomes part of the chain of command.

Review question: does the setting preserve the danger of black-powder warfare while giving non-combat roles equal reasons to matter?

HOMELANDS AND PEOPLES

Tarlaxians

Tarlaxians are not a decorative ancestry added to broaden a list. They are a people whose bodies, households, language, and survival strategies reveal the pressures of the Golden Sea. Recognition is often intimate, contextual, and dangerous.

Recognition Without Spectacle

A Tarlaxian may pass unnoticed until several small details form a pattern. No single cue should function as a universal test.

Ear seam

A subtle seam sits behind the ear. It is easy to miss and should never be exaggerated into an animal feature.

Temples and light

The temples may hold light differently, appearing matte or shadowed under conditions that reveal nothing unusual elsewhere.

Hands and gesture

Hand shape, habitual gesture, and the handling of tools or household objects may be noticed by someone who knows what to read.

Older rhythm

A phrase, cadence, road sign, old knot, or household custom may carry a rhythm older than the surrounding colonial culture.

Hidden marks

Household and kinship marks are often kept out of public view. Their meaning lies in relationship, not in display.

At the table

Use recognition to create choices about trust, concealment, belonging, prejudice, family, and obligation. Do not reduce Tarlaxians to a reveal mechanic.

Review question: does this material make Tarlaxians feel like a people with agency and history rather than a cosmetic ancestry or mystery box?

CREATURES AND PHENOMENA

Moon-Affected

Some people are physically transformed by moon-pressure and Fortera conditions. The result is rare, embodied, and feared. It is not a werewolf curse, divine punishment, or a creature from another plane.

SYSTEM-NEUTRAL GM TOOL

Clocks and Pressure

Clocks make approaching consequences visible without deciding the outcome in advance. They track pressure, not plot.

Ship Damage

Frames twist, guns jam, and repair choices become urgent.

Pursuit

The opposing vessel closes as routes and weather narrow.

Moon-Pressure

Safe operating margins shrink before a universal failure occurs.

Unrest

Grievances become visible, organised, and difficult to ignore.

Signal Delay

Orders arrive late, incomplete, or not at all.

Exposure

Authorities, rivals, or a phenomenon learn what the crew is doing.

Suspicion

Trust erodes as explanations stop matching observed facts.

Storm Approach

The question is no longer whether the storm arrives, but what remains unfinished.

When a clock advances

Something changes in the fiction: time is lost, evidence accumulates, systems degrade, factions act, weather worsens, or attention gathers.

When a clock fills

The consequence arrives. It should alter the situation, not close the story. Players still choose how to respond.

Why this matters for review: clocks show that Mar de Oro is designed to produce actionable pressure at the table, not merely provide background lore.

Build a Person, Not a Set of Numbers

A character grew up somewhere, believes something, wants something, and has already made at least one choice they cannot entirely take back.

Where did you become who you are?

Nation is only the beginning. Port, province, class, climate, work, and colonial position shape a person differently.

What formation did faith give you?

Devout, lapsed, doubtful, or hostile, the character still works within or against categories learned early.

What do you owe?

Debts may be financial, familial, institutional, sacred, political, or personal.

What happened before play began?

Prior work, service, study, failure, reputation, and compromise make the character feel as though they existed before the campaign.

What are you seeking?

Desire becomes playable when the cost of the search is concrete.

What will the crew reveal?

Close quarters expose the difference between the person the character believes they are and the person their decisions prove them to be.

Callings and Practical Authority

A calling tells the table what a character is trusted to do, what kind of problems they notice first, and where their authority becomes contested.

Officer

Command, judgment, legitimacy, discipline, and responsibility for decisions made under uncertainty.

Navigator or pilot

Charts, weather, routes, local knowledge, and the authority to say that a safe-looking passage is wrong.

Engineer

Containment, gauges, calibration, failure chains, and technical authority that may overrule rank in an emergency.

Gunner or marine

Weapons, boarding, defense, discipline, and the physical cost of violence.

Scholar, physician, or jurist

Evidence, treatment, records, interpretation, and disputes whose stakes cannot be solved by force.

Agent, factor, or freehand

Contacts, intelligence, commerce, irregular methods, and relationships outside formal chains of command.

A role is a fictional promise, not a mandatory class. Translate it only after the table agrees on what it means in play.

Bonds, Burdens, and Reasons to Adventure

Bonds

People, crews, institutions, places, and promises the character wants to preserve.

Burdens

Debts, duties, shame, compromised loyalties, family expectations, legal exposure, or knowledge that cannot safely be forgotten.

Reasons to adventure

A commission, search, exile, ambition, necessity, reform, revenge, faith, curiosity, or the need to protect something that institutions have decided is expendable.

Why they matter

A motivation is only an idea until the setting puts a price on it. The campaign becomes personal when the crew must decide what they will sacrifice and what they will refuse to trade.

A good bond gives the GM something to threaten. A good burden gives the character something to choose.

Shared Shapes for a Crew

Privateers

Legal violence, letters of marque, profit, political stakes, and the question of where authorization ends.

Investigators

A vessel vanished, an account conflicts with physical evidence, or a cargo appears in no manifest.

Hellerite expedition

Survey, diplomacy, covert fleet work, local politics, and promises made by a young Duchy under pressure.

Church inquiry

Conflicting denominations, institutional mandates, ritual evidence, and a phenomenon no authority fully understands.

Intelligence crew

Correspondence, extraction, observation, double orders, and loyalty treated as a contractual relationship.

Smugglers in public service

People who know unofficial routes and informal economies, coerced into doing something an institution cannot admit it needs.

Before session one: agree only on why the crew is together in the same place on the same day.

Pressure, Not Plot

Begin with one practical problem, clear enough to grasp in a minute and layered enough to unfold over hours.

Good opening locations

A dock, deck, relay tower, customs stair, chapel courtyard after burial, or rain-swept road where the guide has stopped walking.

Good opening signals

The harbor official is more afraid than he says. The priest knows one thing too much. The engineer hears something wrong before anyone else does.

Good opening problems

The cargo is not what the crew was told. The person who hired them is missing. The manifest has been altered. Three people on the dock are watching with professional attention.

The operating principle

Plot is a sequence the campaign follows. Pressure is a set of conditions that generates events from character decisions. Mar de Oro runs better on pressure.

The world did not wait for the characters to become interesting.

GM USABILITY

From Setting to Session

The site provides guidance and tools intended to convert setting depth into decisions at the table.

First Session Guide	Open with a concrete pressure and allow consequences to teach the setting.
Session Prep Builder	Develop goals, hooks, obstacles, clocks, rewards, and spoiler-aware preparation.
GM Tools	Use clocks, faction moves, clue webs, session objectives, and consequence planning.
System-Agnostic Adaptation	Define role, capability, scale, pressure, and consequence before mechanics.
Character Builder	Create a system-neutral dossier focused on identity, capability, motivation, and crew role.
Conversion Companion	An experimental tool that produces a starting point for human review, not an automatic authority.

Review question: after reading this edition, could you prepare a first session without the creator explaining the setting to you?

The San Telmo Quickstart

A complete three-to-five-hour introductory adventure with pregenerated characters, handouts, and a route into the wider setting.

Use your preferred system

Run the adventure under the rules your group already knows, using the adaptation guidance to express the fiction.

Or use the optional 2d6 Bridge

No separate rulebook is required when using the Bridge.

What the Quickstart should test

Whether the setting becomes understandable through play, whether players can make meaningful choices quickly, and whether the GM can locate the information needed during the session.

What it does not require

Reading the complete Codex, mastering every nation, or knowing the hidden explanation behind every phenomenon.

Play the full Quickstart

mar-de-oro.com/quickstart

REVIEW LENS

Accessibility and Practical Clarity

A setting can be beautiful and still be difficult to enter. Please review not only the ideas, but the route a reader must take to use them.

Premise
Could a first-time reader explain the setting after ten minutes?

Campaign activity
Is it clear what characters do from session to session?

Navigation
Can a player or GM find the next useful page without already knowing the site?

System neutrality
Does the setting remain understandable without D&D, Pathfinder, or Blades terminology?

Visual readability
Are type size, contrast, spacing, captions, and mobile presentation comfortable?

Spoiler separation
Can players explore safely without encountering GM-only revelations?

PDF and download usability
Are page breaks, bookmarks, contents, file names, and printing behavior professional?

Representation and themes
Do communities possess agency, disagreement, and ordinary life rather than existing only as scenery?

EVERYDAY LIFE

The Golden Sea Is Inhabited

Ports, roads, ships, missions, yards, counting houses, and households are not scenery around the powers. They are where people work, argue, worship, trade, adapt, and decide what imperial promises mean in practice.

Ports before flags

Pilots, dock labourers, fishers, sailors, clerks, artisans, factors, healers, and smugglers may share a harbour while answering to different authorities.

Households and chosen kin

Campaign loyalties often begin with a crew, family, workshop, parish, regiment, or neighbourhood before they reach a distant crown.

Language as navigation

Accent, register, translation, and the right form of address affect access. A person may be locally fluent while remaining legally foreign.

Faith in routine

Belief appears in feast days, burial customs, blessings, work habits, argument, and obligation. It is lived before it is debated.

Work and class

Ships and settlements reveal who commands, who maintains, who records, who carries risk, and who is permitted to call failure an accident.

Local agency

Island communities interpret, resist, exploit, redirect, and survive continental projects. They possess interests that do not begin with the arrival of player characters.

Review question: does the setting give ordinary people and colonial-born communities enough visible agency, disagreement, and daily life?

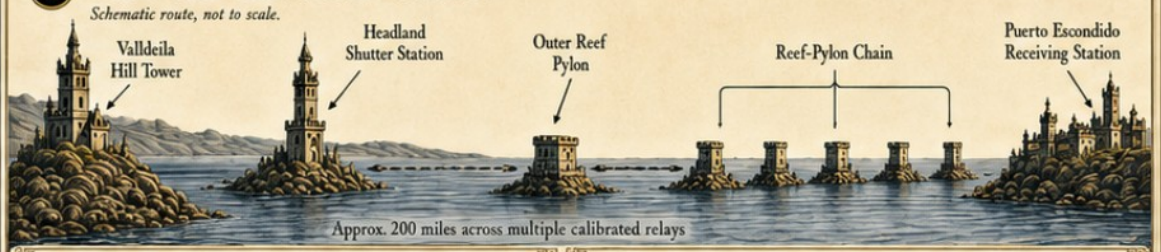
DRAGON LINE

HELLER'S CHAIN OF COUNTED MESSAGES

The Dragon Line carries counted messages through tuned matter, disciplined hands, and calm transmission windows. It does not carry the living voice.

1 THE PERMANENT CHAIN

Schematic route, not to scale.



The message walks the chain in stages: hill tower, headland shutters, outer reef pylon, reef-pylon chain, and final receiving station. Each keeper verifies the count, records it, and forwards it during the next suitable transmission window.

In hard weather, the chain holds the message until the next calm window. If the window is missed, the keeper records the delay and waits. Dawn and dusk are preferred. Outside those windows, the note bends and lies.

WHAT IT USES

MEASURED BELL
Sets the rhythm by counted strikes.

TUNED REED / ROD
Establishes the correct pitch.

REGULATOR
Holds pressure and alignment.

TRACE NEEDLE
Records the received pattern.

COUPLER
Transfers the pattern into structure or stone, never by wire.

DRAGON LINE PRINCIPLES

COUNTED INSTRUCTIONS
Messages are numbers, codes, and commands.

TUNED MATTER
The signal moves through resonance in tuned rods and stone.

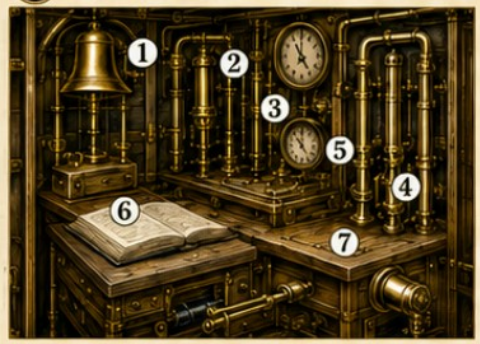
STORE AND FORWARD
Keepers may hold a message until conditions are favorable.

WEATHER AFFECTS TRUTH
Storms and strong Fortera disturbance blur the line.

NO HURRY. NO NOISE.
The pattern must arrive unbruised.

KEYS AND LOGS
Codes, countersigns, and records confirm the message.

2 THE SHIPBOARD SIGNAL-POST



1. Measured Bell
2. Tuned Reed
3. Regulator
4. Coupler
5. Trace Needle
6. Signal Log
7. Structural Coupling Point

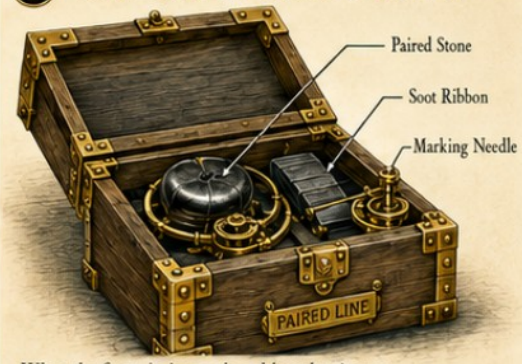
STRUCTURAL CROSS-SECTION

Coupling point in the vessel's frame to the tuned gap.

The coupler places the counted pattern into the vessel's frame. From the frame, tuned Fortera resonance crosses the short gap into the prepared reef stone of the nearby pylon. No cable, beam, or physical connection joins ship and station.

No hurry. No noise. The pattern must arrive unbruised.

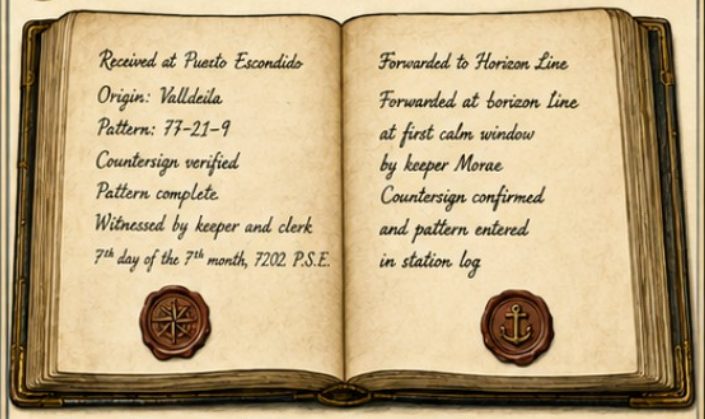
3 THE PAIRED DISPATCH BOX



When the far twin is struck and keyed to its tone, the local stone warms and the needle marks short and long strokes on the soot ribbon. No wire. No spark. No visible beam. Only tuned matter in sympathy.

A dedicated secure link, not an open channel.

4 AUTHENTICATION AND RECORD



Keys, countersigns, logs, and witnessed records confirm the message before forwarding.

TYPES OF STATIONS

Hill Tower	Headland Shutter	Outer Reef Pylon	Reef-Pylon	Receiving Station
High ground Maintains line-of-sight and resonance.	Visual shutters on land and the pattern to the next station.	Low, reinforced pylon set in reef. Sea gate of the line.	Carries resonance forward.	Decodes, records, and forwards inland.

CONDITIONS FOR TRUE TRANSMISSION

- Calm to moderate sea state
- Stable Fortera conditions
- Dawn and dusk are ideal
- Keep instruments warm and dry
- No deck hammering or shock

LIMITATIONS

- Severe storms can blind the chain.
- Strong Fortera disturbance can break resonance.
- Messages hindered by design cannot be past and reassembled inland.
- Each day introduces noise.
- Patience protects truth.

AUTHENTICATION LEDGER (EXAMPLE)

Record held at Puerto Escondido
From: Valldeila
Window: Dawn
Key: MORAE
Countersign: STILL HORIZON
Line clear and confirmed.

"Counted instructions, not spoken voice. Tuned matter, not visible energy."

— Old Signal Creed

The Three Moons

Three repeating but imperfectly aligned pressure cycles shape observation, navigation, ritual, and public expectation across Aeon.

Moon	Cycle	Operational meaning
Umbra	29 days	The shortest cycle. Changes are noticed quickly and compared against recent conditions.
Sirulena	34 days	Its offset from Umbra creates recurring periods of partial agreement and uncertainty.
Veles	41 days	The longest cycle. Its slower drift can make rare alignments operationally significant.

How the cycles work in play

The cycles drift in and out of alignment. Sailors, engineers, clergy, scholars, and communities may explain them differently, but the changing conditions are real enough to plan around.

A moon cycle is not a universal transformation timer. It changes pressure, visibility, expectation, and the likelihood of particular phenomena. Local conditions, Fortera disturbance, and human decisions still matter.

At the table, use alignment as a changing operating condition: a departure window narrows, instruments become less reliable, a rite gains urgency, or witnesses interpret the same event through different inherited models.

A Person Is More Than the Transformation

Moon-Affected material works best when the transformation creates pressure around identity, safety, concealment, responsibility, and fear rather than reducing a person to a monster encounter.

Rare and embodied

The condition is physical and dangerous. It is not a spell, divine punishment, planar intrusion, or generic werewolf curse.

Continuity matters

Memory, loyalty, affection, debt, and prior choices remain relevant. Transformation does not erase the person who must live with its consequences.

Society responds

Old World institutions are hostile to monsters and anomalies. Firearms and artillery remain dominant, so secrecy, flight, protection, and misidentification can matter more than raw strength.

Fear is not the only story

Use family, community, medical uncertainty, religious interpretation, military interest, and exploitation as pressures alongside immediate danger.

Scale stays grounded

Personal armour is not bulletproof and transformation is not invulnerability. Cover, distance, restraint, and coordinated action remain meaningful.

No universal template

Moon-pressure and Fortera conditions can produce variation. Avoid treating every Moon-Affected person as the same creature with the same motives.

Review question: does this framing preserve danger while allowing Moon-Affected people to remain characters rather than disposable threats?

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The Altered Manifest

This is an original review example, not an excerpt from the San Telmo Quickstart.

Situation: the crew's vessel is cleared to depart at dawn. A junior customs clerk has altered the cargo manifest, three observers are watching from the rain arcade, and the harbour chain will rise in twenty minutes.

GM	The clerk keeps one thumb over the amended line. His other hand is shaking. Behind him, the harbour master has not looked up from your papers.
Captain	I greet the clerk by name and ask whether the amendment came from his office or from someone who outranks him.
Engineer	I compare the ink and numbering with yesterday's cargo log. I want to know when the change was made.
Deckhand	I carry the harbour token to the chain station and watch the three people in the arcade.

Social

Protect the clerk's dignity and discover who applied pressure.

Technical

Read paper, ink, sequence, and process as physical evidence.

Operational

Preserve the departure window while identifying surveillance.

Customs Attention

The crew proves the amendment was made after the official copy was sealed, but the harbour master notices the comparison. The crew learns an Admiralty courier ordered the change. They must now leave with the crate, surrender the tide, expose the clerk, or create another option.

System-neutral use: establish role, capability, scale, pressure, and consequence, then resolve under the chosen rules engine.

GM TOOL 2: SESSION OBJECTIVE

What it is and how to use it.

1. What it Is

A session objective gives the table one clear direction for the session.

It answers: What matters most right now?

2. Why it Works

Keeps the session focused.
Everyone knows what success looks like.

Clarifies the stakes.
Defines what is on the line and why it matters.

Helps the GM prep consequences.
Clear outcomes make prep faster and play stronger.

3. How to Use it

1. **Choose the objective.** State the one thing the session is about.
2. **Define success.** What does winning look like?
3. **Define delay/failure.** What happens if they fall short?
4. **Define what happens if ignored.** What changes if they walk away?

4. Anatomy of a Session Objective

Objective	The one clear task the session is about.
Success	What happens when the objective is achieved.
Delay	What happens if they succeed, but not in time or at a cost.
Failure	What happens if they attempt and fail.
Ignored	What happens if they choose not to pursue it.

5. Example

Secure The Original Ledger

Objective	Obtain the original ledger before the auction ends.
Success	The party gets the ledger. Gain an advantage and new leads.
Delay	The ledger changes hands. They can still pursue it, but it costs more and time is short.
Failure	Rivals secure the ledger. They gain leverage and act first.
Ignored	The ledger's secrets are lost or exploited by someone else.

6. Good Practice

Keep it Concrete.
Use clear, specific verbs and tangible outcomes.

Make Success Change the Situation.
Tie success to meaningful results, not just "progress".

Let Failure Continue the Campaign.
Consequences should create new problems, not dead ends.

7. Avoid

Vague Goals.
"Find info," "deal with the threat" are not objectives.

Multiple Competing Primary Objectives.
Too many directions, no real focus.

No Consequence for Delay.
If time doesn't matter, choices don't either.

• Give the Session Direction. Let the Stakes create Momentum. •

GM TOOL 3: FACTIONS & MOVES

What they are and how to use them.

1. What it Is

Factions are active powers with goals, assets, and current moves.

2. Why it Works

Keeps the world moving.
Events happen even when the players look elsewhere.

Prevents static NPC groups.
Factions act, adapt, and pursue their own agendas.

Creates off-screen pressure.
Choices matter beyond what the players can see.

3. How to Use it

1. **Choose Active Factions.** Pick 2–3 factions that are in motion right now.
2. **Define what each wants.** State their objective in one clear line.
3. **Choose a Current Move.** Pick what they are doing about it right now.
4. **Show the result in play.** Reveal the outcome through events, signs, or complications.

4. Anatomy of a Faction Card

- **Faction** — Who they are.
- **Objective** — What they ultimately want.
- **Public Face** — How they present to the world.
- **Current Move** — What they are doing right now.
- **Status** — Where their power stands.
- **If Ignored** — What happens if they are left unchecked.

5. Examples

Albion
Objective: Maintain control and expand influence.
Current Move: Tighten border patrols and demand new taxes.
Status: Strong
If Ignored: Civil unrest and heavier crackdowns.

Duchy of Heller
Objective: Regain lost lands and prestige.
Current Move: Forge alliances and raise a levy.
Status: Growing
If Ignored: Military pressure on the borders.

Stroomdijk Syndicate
Objective: Control trade and undercut rivals.
Current Move: Smuggle weapons through the fog.
Status: Hidden
If Ignored: Black markets spread and corruption grows.

The Clann
Objective: Preserve the old ways and their lands.
Current Move: Gather support among the clans.
Status: Restless
If Ignored: Raids, feuds, and roadblocks increase.

6. Good Practice

Use only 2–3 active factions per session.
Keep the focus tight and the world manageable.

Make moves concrete.
Use actions with clear stakes and visible results.

Let ignored factions act off-screen.
They don't wait for permission.

7. Avoid

Making every faction active at once.
Too much noise drowns the story.

Vague faction goals.
"Get power" or "Be strong" are not enough.

Factions that only react when the GM remembers them.
Factions need agency, not reminders.

8. Faction Turn

At the end of the session, ask:

- Who was ignored most?
- What do they want?
- What can they do now?
- What sign appears next session?

• Factions keep the world alive when the players look elsewhere. •

GM TOOL 4: CLUE WEB

What it is and how to use it.

1. What It Is

A clue web gives multiple routes to an important truth.

2. Why it Works

Prevents dead ends.
The investigation keeps moving.

Preserves Investigation Momentum.
Players stay engaged and in control.

Makes Failure productive.
New leads emerge from setbacks.

3. How to Use it

1. **Define the truth.** Name the key fact the web will reveal.
2. **Place at least 3 clue routes.** Ensure there are multiple paths to the truth.
3. **Vary clue types.** Use different sources and perspectives.
4. **Decide how failure changes access or reliability.** Don't remove the path.

4. Anatomy of a Clue Web

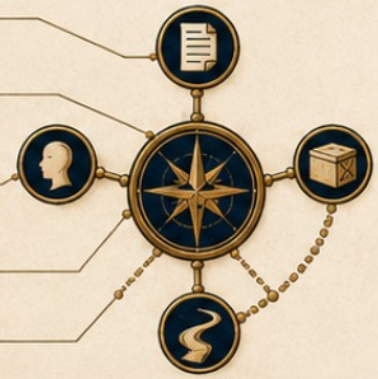
Truth
The core fact the investigation seeks.

Document Clue
Written or recorded information.

Witness Clue
A person with knowledge.

Physical Evidence
Tangible items or conditions.

Alternate Route
A different path to the same truth.



5. Example

Truth:
"Stroomdijk exemptions move captives"

Altered Customs Clause
A revised clause in the Stroomdijk tariff ledger.

Dockworker Testimony
A worker saw sealed crates leave under special exemption.

Private Tally Hidden in a Warehouse Beam
A chalk tally of exempt shipments.

6. Good Practice

Use at least three routes.
More paths mean more choices and fewer dead ends.

Vary clue types.
Documents, people, places, and things reveal the same truth.

Let failure change control or cost rather than deleting the route.
The path remains—conditions shift. Access or reliability may change.

7. Avoid

One-Clue Bottlenecks.
If one clue fails, the story stops.

Making Every Clue Require the same method.
Variety invites creativity.

Hiding the only proof behind one roll.
Don't tie truth to a single swing.

If one route is lost, the truth should still have a path forward.

GM TOOL 5: HARD CHOICES

What they are and how to use them.

1. What it Is

A hard choice pits two desirable outcomes against each other.

2. Why it Works

Creates agency, tension, and meaningful consequence.

3. How to Use it

1. **Choose Two Goods**
   Pick two goods that cannot both be secured easily.
2. **Define Who Benefits**
   Identify who benefits from each outcome.
3. **Define What Changes**
   Define what changes if either outcome is lost.
4. **Let Players Decide**
   Present the choice clearly and let the players decide.

4. Anatomy of a Hard Choice

Outcome A
One desirable result.

Outcome B
Another desirable result.

Who Benefits
Who gains from each outcome.

Permanent Change
What changes if either is lost.

5. Example

Protect the Witness
versus
Follow the Courier

Protect The Witness
The witness survives and can testify, exposing a powerful foe.

OR

Follow The Courier
The courier delivers critical intelligence that prevents disaster.

Either path brings a real good—losing one changes the world.

6. Good Practice

Both sides should matter.
Each option should offer a real, desirable good.

Neither option should be fake.
Don't present a choice where one is clearly the right answer.

Consequences should reshape the situation.
Let the outcome create new opportunities and challenges.

7. Avoid

Obvious Correct Answers.
Don't make one option clearly better.

False Dilemmas.
Don't force a choice when both outcomes can be had.

Punishing Players for Choosing at all.
The choice should be meaningful, not a trap.

• Offer two real goods. Let the players decide what matters most. •

GM TOOL 6: SCENE SPINE

What it is and how to use it.

1. What It Is

A flexible five-function structure for building a session.

2. Why it Works

Gives shape without railroading and helps pacing.

3. How to Use it

Choose an opening disruption, first meaningful decision, investigation or movement, escalation or reversal, climax and consequence.

4. The Five Functions

1. **Opening Disruption**
   Introduce the pressure. Something changes the status quo.
2. **First Decision**
   Present a meaningful choice with real stakes.
3. **Investigation or Movement**
   Gather clues, meet NPCs, travel, or take action to open the path.
4. **Escalation or Reversal**
   Raise the stakes, complicate matters, or shift the situation.
5. **Climax and Consequence**
   Resolve the core conflict. Show the outcome and what it means.

5. Example

Harbor Investigation Session

1. **Opening Disruption:** A body washes up near the docks.
2. **First Decision:** Who do you question first and where do you start?
3. **Investigation or Movement:** Question sailors, search the docks, visit the warehouse.
4. **Escalation or Reversal:** The suspect flees, or a false lead collapses—new threat emerges.
5. **Climax and Consequence:** You confront the culprit. The harbor reacts to your actions.

6. Good Practice

- Scenes can merge or shift order. Flexibility keeps the story alive.
- Each scene should lead to a choice or consequence.
- Keep one clear throughline: what the characters are up against.

7. Avoid

- **Scripting Player Actions.** Describe situations, not solutions. Let players drive.
- **Adding Filler Scenes.** If it doesn't create pressure, choice, or consequence—cut it.
- **Making the Climax unrelated to the Opening Pressure.** The end should flow from the start.

• Use structure to prepare pressure, not to force decisions. •

GM TOOL 7: CONSEQUENCE PLANNING

What it is and how to use it.

1. What It Is

Consequence planning is preparing likely outcomes for failure, delay, violence, and ignoring a scene.

It ensures every path forward creates new developments.

2. Why it Works

It helps the GM respond quickly when players' choices lead off course.

It keeps failure from becoming a dead end by turning it into new situations, not "game over."

3. How to Use It

1. **Identify the scene.** Pick a major scene with a clear goal or outcome.
2. **Define Four Outcomes.** For each scene, define failure, delay, violence, and ignored.
3. **Make them Meaningful.** Each consequence should change the situation in a concrete way.
4. **Use and Evolve.** Let consequences play out and adjust future planning as needed.

4. Consequence Grid

Failure	Delay	Violence	Ignored

5. Example

Warehouse Rescue

Failure: Captives are moved but one witness remains.

Delay: Convoy leaves before the party arrives.

Violence: Public case weakens and guards call reinforcements.

Ignored: The Shadowed Tide attempts the rescue alone.

6. Good Practice

Change something important. Consequences should shift control, cost, timing, or exposure.

Be specific. Name who acts, what they do, and what changes.

Keep it moving. Use consequences to open new paths, not close all of them.

Stay proportional. Match the consequence to the stakes of the scene.

7. Avoid

Blank failure states. "They fail." isn't useful—define what happens next.

Total dead ends. Avoid consequences that end the story or remove player agency.

Punishing every outcome equally. Not all outcomes should carry the same cost—be fair, not rigid.

Let consequences change the situation, not stop the campaign.

GM TOOL 8: END-OF-SESSION UPDATE

What it is and how to use it.

1. What it Is

A short GM review at the end of each session that updates the living campaign record and sets the stage for the next session.

2. Why it Works

Tracks consequences.
The world reacts, not resets.

Prepares the next session.
Clear threads. Strong starts.

Keeps faction pressure consistent.
Momentum never stalls.

3. How to Use it

1. **Ask what changed.** What materially shifted in the fiction?
2. **Which clocks advanced?** Mark the clock segments that moved.
3. **Who gained or lost trust?** Update NPCs and faction relationships.
4. **What evidence was found or lost?** Add or remove evidence.
5. **What consequence has begun?** Name the consequence that started.
6. **What hook opens next session?** Set up the next-session opener.

4. End-of-Session Checklist

- [ ] What changed?
- [ ] Which clocks advanced?
- [ ] Which NPC or faction state changed?
- [ ] What evidence was found or lost?
- [ ] What consequence has begun?
- [ ] Next session: 3 possible hooks.

5. Example

From Session End to Next-Session Hooks

1. **Session ends.** The crew escapes with the ledger.
2. **Clocks advance.** Inspector's Net advances 2. Debt Collector advances 1.
3. **Trust changes.** The Clann trust increases. City Guard trust decreases.
4. **Evidence found.** A ledger page reveals a hidden buyer.
5. **Consequence begins.** A warrant is issued for the Captain's arrest.
6. **Next-session hooks.** Present 3 hooks to open with pressure.

Sample Hooks

- A coded courier seeks only the Captain.
- Smoke rises from the abandoned warehouse.
- The Clann send word: Come if you seek truth.

Good Practice

Keep it brief.
5–10 minutes. Focus on facts that drive the world.

Update immediately after play.
Details fade. Momentum suffers.

Use it to start the next session under pressure.
Open with stakes, not exposition.

7. Avoid

Waiting until later and forgetting details.
Small facts drive big consequences.

Resetting pressure between sessions.
The world remembers.

Opening the next session with no consequence.
Start in media res. Keep it moving.

End with consequences. Begin again with pressure.

GM TOOL 9: PACE GUIDE

What it is and how to use it.

1. What It Is

A pace guide is a rough time structure for a session.

It helps you shape the flow and build to a satisfying climax—without scripting scenes or outcomes.

It's a *compass*, not a *cage*.

2. Why It Works

Keeps momentum.
A clear rhythm prevents stalls and keeps players engaged.

Helps the GM notice drift.
You can course-correct before the session loses focus.

Preserves time for the climax.
Your big moments land when you save space for them.

3. How to Use it

1. **Estimate Session Length.** Agree on a target (3–4 hours, or whatever fits your table).
2. **Divide Time by Phase.** Use the pace guide to set targets for each stage.
3. **Watch for Drag.** If energy dips or the clock tightens, notice it early.
4. **Compress or Escalate.** Cut, summarize, skip ahead, or raise the stakes to regain pace.

4. Sample 3–4 Hour Session

1	2	3	4	5	6
Opening Disruption	**First Decision**	**Investigation / Movement**	**Escalation / Reversal**	**Climax & Consequence**	**Wrap-up & Fallout**
Hook the table. Present the problem and its stakes.	Give players a real choice and set direction.	Explore, gather clues, travel, and deal with obstacles.	Complications mount. Plans shift. Stakes rise.	The main conflict resolves. Choices have weight.	Loose ends, rewards, reactions, and next hooks.
15–20 min	20–30 min	35–45 min	30–45 min	45–60 min	10–15 min

Total: 3–4 Hours

5. Good Practice

Protect the Ending.
Guard time for the climax and its aftermath.

Cut repetition.
Summarize what you've already covered.

Let important scenes breathe.
Give key moments room to land.

6. Avoid

Spending half the session before the first real choice.
Players need agency early.

Rushing the climax.
Give it time to build and mean something.

Treating the guide as rigid law.
Adapt to your table and what the story needs.

• Pace the pressure so the session peaks at the right moment. •

GM TOOL 10: LEVERAGE

What it is and how to use it.

1. What it Is

Leverage is what gives a faction, witness, officer, or rival a reason to bargain, yield, threaten, or act.

2. Why it Works

Makes negotiation meaningful.
People change their minds for a reason.

Turns clues into power.
Information becomes influence.

Gives social scenes real stakes.
Choices matter, and so do consequences.

3. How to Use it

1. **Identify** what someone wants.
2. **Learn** what they fear.
3. **Decide** what the players can offer or threaten.
4. **Show** what changes when leverage is used.

4. Anatomy of Leverage

- **Desire** — What they want or hope to gain.
- **Fear** — What they dread or must avoid.
- **Cost** — What it costs them to act or change.
- **Proof** — What confirms the truth or gives you credibility.

5. Example

Governor Deluca

- **Wants:** Order and legitimacy.
- **Fears:** Scandal and exposure.
- **Cost:** Public instability.
- **Proof:** Ledgers, witnesses, and harbor records.

6. Good Practice

Leverage should shift behavior, not mind-control.
It creates pressure, not puppets.

Different factions respond to different pressure.
Know who cares about what.

Spend leverage in the fiction, not only in notes.
Let the world react.

7. Avoid

Treating every NPC like they only want money.
People want safety, respect, love, power, freedom, and more.

Making leverage identical for everyone.
Variety makes the world feel real.

Letting major revelations have no social consequence.
Information should move the world.

Quick Reminders

- **ASK:** *What do they want most right now?*
- **ASK:** *What are they most afraid of?*
- **ASK:** *What would they accept to avoid that fear?*
- **SHOW:** *What will change if they choose to act?*

• Information Matters most when it changes what people will do. •

REVIEWER SCORECARD

Rate the Review Edition

Select one score per row. Use 1 for weak or unclear and 5 for excellent.

Area	1	2	3	4	5
Premise clarity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Setting distinctiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Visual polish	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease of entry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
System-neutral credibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Campaign clarity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
GM usability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Player accessibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Internal consistency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Likelihood of running it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Your primary perspective

☐ GM ☐ Player ☐ Designer ☐ Accessibility reader ☐ Worldbuilding reader

Experience level

☐ New to TTRPGs ☐ Occasional player ☐ Experienced player ☐ Experienced GM ☐ Professional

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

The Questions That Matter Most

1. After ten minutes, what did you believe Mar de Oro was?

2. What would player characters actually do in a campaign?

3. What felt most distinctive?

4. What did you initially misunderstand?

5. What is the single biggest reason you might not run it?

May Mar de Oro quote your feedback?

☐ Yes, anonymously ☐ Yes, with my chosen credit ☐ No

Send the completed review

Save this PDF and email it to talesofmardeoro@gmail.com. The QR code opens a pre-addressed message with the subject "Mar de Oro Community Review." Include the credit you want used, or submit anonymously.

After the Session

System used

Players

Preparation time

Session length

What setting questions arose during preparation?

Where did players become confused?

What did the group understand naturally through play?

What information was difficult to find at the table?

Would you run another session? Why or why not?

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Regional map reproduced on page 12

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CONTINUE BEYOND THIS EDITION

The Golden Sea Is Open

Read the full illustrated Codex, download the Quickstart, build characters, explore ships and nations, and use the optional system-neutral tools at the official site.

mar-de-oro.com

Feedback and collaboration:
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Mar de Oro is free to read, play, explore, and create with. Please credit the setting and do not present community material as official or endorsed.

Community Review Edition, July 2026