

# Temple of Nidag (Surface)

Despite its northerly latitude (around 58°N), the coastal town of Stormwatch on the northern shores of Alarius is a bustling, lively, and none-too-safe place, which has already grown beyond its current boundary walls. Among the properties built in recent years east of the town, is a group of somewhat roughly-constructed places, ostensibly created by the Fellowship of Maleng, followers of a peaceful, local nature deity, known as the Herald of the Seasons. Maleng has numerous other worshippers scattered across the communities of the Emerald Crown Forest region, known for their good works in general, including aiding travellers in these wild parts with inns and rest-houses, and providing medical or veterinary assistance when required.

Here, the complex of Maleng properties forms two main sections. The buildings along Moonweir Street, including Banys Hall, Brand, Wilbert and Luke Houses, and the buildings opposite (labelled Kitchen, Bar, Dance Hall, Stables and Staff), which collectively comprise The Hooded Satyr inn, and those around Maleng Square and the southern end of Hog's Tail Lane that form The Temple. Other nearby properties (those with no internal furnishing shown on the map) are owned by people unconnected to the Fellowship.

Around many of the buildings are garden areas, where fruit and vegetables are grown during the short spring and summer growing season, and where a few smaller livestock are sometimes kept (including edible fowls, goats and pigs), when the ground is free from frosts and snow cover, all to supplement supplies brought in from elsewhere, and provide variety to the largely seafood diet hereabouts. Any scrap of cleared ground is liable to be so used at times - even to window boxes or planters by the houses - although the soil further east, closer to the where the native woodlands have been more recently cleared, is rather poorer for growing. Two main wells provide fresh water, in Maleng Square and at Bennart Cross (where there are also a couple of drinking troughs for animals, as also by the Stables at The Hooded Satyr), aside from that collected in rain barrels. Both wells are available as water-sources year-round, and are fitted with removable wooden covers in winter, to ensure access then as community resources.

Not all here is what it seems, however, as the map's name perhaps indicates, as the Fellowship of Maleng at Stormwatch is really a front for the Fellowship of Nidag, the Blind Slayer, a far less pleasant deity altogether, one which requires occasional to regular humanoid sacrifices. That front is carefully maintained to help trick unsuspecting travellers into becoming the cult's latest victims, albeit such folk are chosen with care to prevent the cult's secret getting out.

Labelled locations are described in more detail below. The area chosen was to fit an adapted layout for the subterranean Temple areas (see the separate "Temple of Nidag Underground" Atlas map), which layout was determined randomly using designs from two Inkwell Ideas Dungeonmorph Dice in the Trailblazer set. The basis for the "hidden cult" and multi-level inn concepts were taken and adapted from the accompanying book for this dice set, the "Dungeonmorph Book of Modular Encounters: Delver, Trailblazer, & Voyager Edition", also by Inkwell Ideas, while the names and natures of the two deities involved, and most of the on-map place-names, came from random tables in the "Tome of Adventure Design", and the "Nomicon", both published by Mythmere Games. Note that a map toggle in the FCW version allows the viewing of the upper storeys of several buildings, including Desinde, Wilendale, the Meeting House, Banys Hall and Luke House.

## Location Notes

**Maleng Hall** is the public access route into the subterranean Temple of Maleng, using the double doors on the short roadway off the south end of Maleng Square. The blue-tiled floors indicate the public spaces within, a series of rooms with cupboards to hold outdoor clothing and weapons (weapons are not permitted in The Temple itself underground - at least, not for non-cultists), along with robes and hymnals for use by the worshippers. Rooms and doors throughout are decorated with designs and scenes that prove familiar to Maleng worshippers from elsewhere, so nothing seems out of place. However, all the doors can be securely fastened by hidden bolts to prevent access - or escape - by the more knowledgeable cultists and priests, if required. The eastern pair of rooms in the southern part of the Hall are used by Maleng clergy when meeting outside visitors seeking help or advice, while the two rooms in the northern half of the Hall (separated from the rest of the Hall, and accessible only using the door off Maleng Square) serve a similar purpose for larger groups or visiting Maleng clergy. The broad stairwell leads down to the separate Temple of Nidag Underground map.

On the western side of Maleng Square are two separate buildings, collectively labelled **Priests' Quarters**. The southernmost of these holds the chambers for the two leading Maleng priests, with bedrooms and a sitting-room study, while the southern half of the adjacent property is the kitchen and dining room for these same people, and other lesser Maleng clergy. These are the folk who officiate at ceremonies in the Maleng Temple underground, helping to maintain the cult's concealment. The northern half of this property has locked doors and an interior guard each, as the eastern room of the pair contains a slightly off-axis trapdoor that leads down by a ladder into the Priests' Study of the Underground map. This secret way, while

used chiefly by guards going on and off duty to the southern part of the Underground complex, and the priesthood, still retains a veneer of Maleng-respectability in case someone from outside should find out about it, although there are weapons and some armour stored in the cupboards of both rooms, only partly concealed by robes and less inimical items, which the guards and clergy use to appear as ordinary Maleng worshippers or townsfolk.

The three eastern buildings north of Maleng Hall, the **Cook House**, **Meat Hall** and **Meeting House**, form part of the services for the clergy, local and visiting Maleng worshippers. Despite their names, each has a cooking-range fireplace and larger table for dining at, together with store rooms and similar facilities, and each includes a latrine (cleared daily from a hatch below the window in the properties that have one showing, or an unmarked hatch elsewhere). The Meeting House, in common with other properties having an upper storey here, has its latrine situated beneath the stairwell's landing, and thus not shown on the map. The Cook House is where most of the cooking is done, and where the Cook and one assistant live (bunk beds in the indicated room). Meat Hall is predominantly used for storage and is where the local worshippers and lesser clergy can eat (used mainly as an occasional overspill dining room, thus commonly not in use at all). Meeting House has a chamber used for formal meetings of larger groups of Maleng clergy and worshippers than other places can accommodate, including a pair of rooms upstairs that visiting clergy may be allocated to stay, with a small library and sitting room, plus a dining room below for their use as well.

**Desinde** and **Wilendale** houses west of this trio and north of the Priests' Quarters are living quarters for various of the lesser clergy and guards, though generally known as communal houses for favoured local worshippers, to help conceal their true identities. Each has storage facilities for robes, gear, weapons and armour, mostly upstairs in the bunk-bed fitted, barrack-like rooms. Both are unstatedly off-limits to outsiders, especially the upper floors, where there is much less concealment of the real nature of the folk staying here.

Sprawling along both sides of Moonweir Street are the various properties that together are known as **The Hooded Satyr** inn. The entertainments and services side of the facility lie to the northwest of the street, with the accommodation available on the opposite side. The **Kitchen**, **Bar** and **Dance Hall** are linked together, and each also has a single door into the back yard, with its latrine block and woodstore. Behind these, the rough dirt alleyway of Crow Lane provides access to bring in stores, remove waste, and deal with other activities that may prefer to avoid the main road through the inn, linking westwards with Gyls Way. Some food stores are kept in the Kitchen, prepared for use in the Bar and elsewhere among the Temple's properties. A trapdoor and ladder in the floor here lead down to the Kitchen Cellar and Lower Kitchen in the Underground level, where more stores are kept. The Bar provides drinks and places to sit, drink and eat, while the Dance Hall hosts regular entertainments, including for dancing, which itself is a key part of some aspects of Maleng worship. The well-appointed room on the Street side of the Dance Hall building is the main administrative office for the inn. In the records here may be found hints towards the truth of the Temple. Further northeast is the **Stables**, with stalls and grooms for visitors' riding animals, who can provide reasonable veterinary care for minor ailments as well. The final building is for the inn's **Staff** who work the Bar and Stables, with a dining room and a pair of bunk-bed rooms. All these properties are single-storey only.

Southeast along Moonweir Street, **Banys Hall** is an imposing double property, linked together by a bridge in its upper storey, where the stairwell landing for each building meets. The more westerly building has separate ground-floor rooms for the innkeeper and cook, and a communal room. The upper floor has a storeroom, where some secret papers are kept, and a cramped, bunk-bed barrack room for Nidag guards and worshippers. The upper storey of the more easterly half of Banys Hall has a room for the vet (who doubles as stable-operator and guard captain), with a larger chamber forming another bunk-bed barrack room for more worshippers, guards and inn staff. Below these, the ground floor of this building is always guarded in its lobby and back sitting room, as a door off this latter leads to the spiral stairwell down to the Underground level's Banys Hall Barracks, the main accessway for guards and lesser Nidag priests to enter the lower Temple. A small study also off the back room, like most of the ground floor, is windowless, for secret meetings.

The single-storey buildings of **Brand** and **Wilbert Houses** are the inn's accommodation blocks for visitors, with tiny, cramped rooms each with a bunk bed, providing space for most ordinary folk. Note these small rooms are not all the same size, to increase discomfort. Each House has a little common-room, along with some general storage for the inn. Deliberately uninviting, their layout is meant to make it hard for spies to sneak about easily, and equally difficult for anyone chosen for "special attention" to escape.

Lastly, **Luke House** is a two-storey property, providing accommodation in an upstairs bunk-bed barrack room for more of the inn's staff, priest-worshippers and guards. Somewhat better-appointed, and less cramped, than Banys Hall, these are quarters for the more favoured ordinary Nidag cultists. The sitting room at the back is always guarded, as the rooms off it towards the street side link to another secret spiral stairway down to the Worshippers' Entrance in the Underground level. This hidden route is also used by Nidag worshippers from elsewhere in Stormwatch and out of town, but who must be known to the guards here to gain entry, and then only when a ceremony of some form is to take place below. Inn staff who also work in the Underground level when required use this route too.