

The Sailor and the Siren

By C.M.Ruebsaat

To Begin

One of you will be the **Sailor**. You are brave, foolish, strapping, and human. You have left your home in search of glory and adventure, going across the sea for foreign lands.

Answer these questions:

What is your name and pronouns? You can use your own, if you like, or change a letter or two.

Who do you miss from back home that you wish could have come with you? A sibling, a love, a parent, or an enemy.

What do you hope to find? Adoration, adventure, enlightenment, glory, monsters, redemption, romance, treasure, or something else.

What is your most attractive quality? Physical or otherwise.

What is your boat? A simple rowboat, a small fishing ship, a battleship, a cargo ship, or a pleasure cruise

The other will be the **Siren**. You are beautiful, aquatic, deadly, and otherworldly. You have lived here among the seaside rocks for your entire life, watching the ships go by.

Answer these questions

What is your name and pronouns? Your name should be related to water.

How many other sailors have you killed before? None, a few, or countless.

How do you attract the Sailor to you? Name

something that is especially beautiful about you.

How wild is the sea today? Still waters, light breeze, foggy, gentle rain, deafening rain, thunderstorm, or wailing gale.

Where are your rocks? Rising from the ocean, the side of an island, beneath the cliffs, just below the surface, or nowhere in sight.

To start

Take a deck of cards and remove jokers, clubs, and diamonds.

The Sailor will start with 2 cards in their hand, and the Siren will start with 3.

If either player would have more than 5 cards, they must choose which to keep and which to discard. If either player would have less than 1 card, they may draw 1.

Do not keep aces in hand, and instead set them off to the side, to be used at the end of the game.

At the start of each playbill except First Sight, each player draws a card.

When a scene calls for a **bid**, each player places a card of their choice from their hand face down in front of them. Then, turn them over.

The higher is leading, and the lower is following. Cards are discarded after being played. If both cards are equal, spades follows.

Spades are omens of death, while Hearts give mastery over your feelings.

To play through the scene, follow the playbills instructions from beginning to end. Begin with the First Sight on page 5. Play each playbill only once.

Playbills

A game for a single Moment

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A game for a single moment

The First Sight

Sailor, describe your activities onboard the boat. What is your job? What is your demeanor? Include your attractive qualities in your description.

Siren, describe how the sailor first finds you: watching from the water, sitting on the rocks, swimming under the boat, as a voice whispering through the air. Describe what is especially beautiful about you, and what the seas are like today.

When there is a lull in the description: **Siren**, tell the Sailor they feel drawn to you by some strange force. Begin a **bid**. Whoever leads will choose the next scene.

Should the **Sailor** lead with **hearts**, they will describe why they are driven by curiosity rather than lust or enrapturement, and play accordingly. They may draw a card.

Should the **Siren** lead with **hearts**, she will seem human, for the moment; the Sailor may not question her about her nature until she chooses to reveal it.

Should the **Siren** lead with **spades**, she will describe her intent as she sees the Sailor, and the hunger she feels as they catch eyes. She may draw a card.

Should **any** follow with **hearts**, they fall in love with the other at first sight, and play accordingly. They must discard a card.

Move on to the Conversation or the Swim.

The Conversation

Sailor, describe your smile as you greet the Siren, and reveal your name to her. Are you in the water, or leaning over the edge of the boat? Do your eyes stray?

Siren, describe the look in your eyes as you greet the Sailor and learn their name. Do you give a name, if you have one? How close do you come to the Sailor?

As you meet in the water, begin a **bid**.

Should the **Sailor** follow with **hearts**, they must not refuse to answer any question they are asked, and must discard a card.

Should the **Siren** follow with **spades**, they must ask the Sailor the question: 'do you see my hunger?' and the Sailor may draw a card.

Whoever **leads** will move forward first; they say what question they ask, and the other will answer however they wish. Progress until the conversation has finished. Then the second will go. When someone answers a question, they can choose the scene's end.

Questions

What is your name?

Where did you come from?

What do you want?

Why did you say that?

Do you know how beautiful you are?

Do you trust me?

Where do we go from here?

Move on to the Swim or the Dance. If both have already happened, move on to the Drowning.

The Dance

Siren, describe your invitation to the Sailor to dance in the water, or tell them they must invite you. What is your opening movement?

Sailor, describe whether your movements are tentative or confident. Tell the Siren whether you keep the dance above or below the water.

As you start the dance, begin a **bid**.

Should the **Sailor** lead with **hearts**, they describe how fluid their movements are through the water, for a human. They may draw a card.

Should the **Siren** lead with **hearts**, she may move the dance above or below the water as she chooses.

Should the **Sailor** follow with **spades**, they will ask the Siren if they may speak. If they may, they can ask the Siren one question, and the Siren may draw a card. If they may not, they must discard a card.

Should **any** follow, the other may draw a card, and they should describe how they are stunned speechless by the other.

Move on to the Conversation if the dance was above the water, or the Swim if the dance was below the water. If both have already happened, move on to the Drowning.

The Swim

Sailor, describe how you prepare to dive into the water, and how you eventually lower yourself in. Do you bring clothes or leave them on the deck? What do they look like?

Siren, describe your demeanor as you swim over to the Sailor. How do you move? Are you hesitant or confident? How cold or warm is the water?

As you meet in the water, begin a **bid**.

Whoever **leads** will move forward first; they describe what they wish to do, and ask if they may. Then the second will choose an answer. Continue until someone chooses the scene's end.

Wishes

I press my hand to your sternum, fingers exploring your collarbones. May I?

I run a hand over your wrist. May I?

I comb your hair with my fingers. May I?

I put my palm against your cheek. May I?

I entwine my fingers with yours. May I?

I kiss you. May I?

I go to speak, and remember I am underwater.

I smile at you. What do you see in my eyes?

I swim away from you, and end the play here.

Answers

Yes, you may.

You may, but you must do [X] first. Will you?

You may, but not for long.

You may not.

You may not, and I will end the play here.

Should the **Sailor** lead with **spades**, they will feel their breath long before it begins to run out. As long as the other options have not been chosen, the scene will not progress to the Dive.

Should the **Sailor** follow with **hearts**, they will be blinded by infatuation, and must discard a card.

Should the **Siren** follow with **spades**, she will describe the hunger in her eyes to the Sailor, and ask if they notice. If they do, they will draw a card. If they don't, the Siren will discard a card.

Move on to the Conversation, the Dance, or the Dive. It is the Siren's choice.

The Dive

Siren, describe the dark water as you pull the Sailor deeper. Tell them about your rocks, should they come into view. Describe how things look a bit more alien and strange down here, deep beneath the waves.

Sailor, tell her what goes through your mind as your lungs strain and your ribs creak from the pressure. Describe what it is like to feel so weightless down here.

As this playbill begins, the **Sailor** must discard a card. After, down in the water, begin a **bid**.

Should the **Sailor** lead with **spades**, they will notice the bones on the seafloor, and describe their reaction. They may draw a card.

Should the **Siren** lead with **hearts**, she will describe how her beauty compels the Sailor to stay close. If she truly loves them, she must discard a card. Otherwise, the Sailor must discard a card.

Should the **Siren** follow with **any**, she must discard a card as her heart and hunger take hold. She must describe the conflict she feels.

Move on to the Drowning.

The Drowning

This is the end, for better or for worse.

Siren, describe how you hold the Sailor down in the water. Are you violent or gentle? Tell the Sailor what they see as their breath leaves their lungs.

Sailor, describe what you are feeling in this moment. Do you struggle, or let yourself go gently into the dark water?

Begin one last **bid**. If any aces have been set aside, you may use those. Aces are high.

Should **any** lead with the **ace of hearts**, they may ask that the Sailor joins the Siren in the water, becoming like her, strange and no longer human. Whether both accept or not, the game ends here.

Should **any** lead with the **ace of spades**, they may describe the Sailor, their hands scrabbling on the ocean floor, finding a sharp rock. Should the Sailor choose to swing it, they may escape, and the Siren will die. Whether they do or not, the game ends here.

Should the **Siren** follow with **any**, she must describe her regret. Can she even look at what is left of the Sailor, or does she grudgingly accept what has happened? Whatever she chooses, the game ends here.

Thank each other for playing once you have narrated the end of the game.