

# KRAKEN'S GAMBLE

This adventure is designed for the Storm King's Thunder campaign, and is meant to enhance your party's connection to important events and NPCs. Intended for a party of around 6th to 8th level, the main purpose is to acquaint your characters with the Kraken's Society and the Grand Dame casino, both of which feature prominently in Chapter 11 of Storm King's Thunder.

## BACKGROUND

The Kraken Society has long sought to grasp the mid-sized city of Yartar in its slimy tentacles, and now the time has come to make a bold move. A few weeks ago, the Kraken Society sent one of its most capable operatives, the aboleth Oosith, to aid Kraken Society member Lord Drylund in becoming the Waterbaron of Yartar.

Over the past few weeks, Oosith, Lord Drylund and a young psionic named Atalia have abducted young nobles. Lord Drylund invites them to his riverboat casino, where lady Atalia seduces them and leads them into Oosith's sewer lair. Here the aboleth infects them with an insidious disease, wraps them in a watertight cocoon and sends them flowing down the Dessarin River to Waterdeep. When they find their destination, other members of the Kraken Society gather them up, and the Society use them as hostages to blackmail their families, ensuring the noble houses' allegiance against the current Waterbaron Nestra Ruthiol.

Our heroes become entangled in the kraken's slimy appendages, when the third of these abducted nobles, young Lord Artan, is intercepted by a pack of giant birds, while flowing down the river towards Waterdeep.

## SYNOPSIS

On their travels, the party come across a young who's been imprisoned in a cocoon and send down the Dessarin River from his home in Yartar. They escort him back to Yartar, where his mother hires them to figure out who attempted to abduct him.

The party's investigations might take them into Yartar's back-alleys and taverns, and even to the the Waterbaron's Hall. Ultimately, the clues lead to the riverboat casino The Grand Dame. Here they'll speak to a Kraken Society operative, who's willing to betray her associate Oosith. She'll lead the party down into the sewers, where they must brave fish-men, oozes and traps, before going head to head with a deceptive aboleth in its natural habitat.

## HOOKS

Here we'll go over two ways to get this adventure started, both of which requires your party to be in the somewhere in the vicinity of the Dessarin Valley.

### THE RIVER

This hook only works if your party are travelling near the Dessarin River south of Yartar. They might be here if they are travelling to or from Triboar, Goldenfields or Waterdep, or have made a stop at Womford or Beliard.

While travelling near the water's edge, the party can see a flock of very large birds circling something in the river, repeatedly diving down and attempting to pick it up. As the party closes in on the four **giant seagulls**. They can see what the birds are trying to retrieve from the water: a 6-foot long white, opaque, cocoon-like container.

The birds screech loudly and argue over their prize as they pull it from the water, and it drops onto the bank next to the river. The seagulls land and peck at the cocoon and each other, each attempting to be the first to break the shell. If the party attacks the seagulls, the birds fight back, but quickly fly away if seriously threatened.

The cocoon has been ruptured, and the party can clearly see what lies within: a naked, unconscious man with translucent and slimy skin, covered in several inches of grimy water. A DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the cocoon isn't the product of any natural beast. It seems to be made of soft, membraneous tissue, that isn't webbing or fabric. A DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check determines that the man's weird skin condition is probably the product of some sort of twisted magic or unnatural disease.

The young man soon regains his consciousness, coming to life with a shuddering breath, as his stark blue eyes flutter open. *'Wh- Where am I?'* he mutters with a broken voice. He looks up at the party, a confused expression on his young face. *'Who... Who are you? What have you done with me?'*

If the party explains the situation to him, young Lord Artan Rossolio seems even more confused. *'Last I remember... I was in Yartar... I don't understand.'* Artan procees to tell the party what he knows (see the 'Lord Artan Rossolio' textbox) and then pleads with them to lend him a set of clothes and help him get home. Go to 'Getting to Yartar'.

## OPTIONAL HOOK

If your party is nowhere near Yartar, but you still want to run this adventure, there's hope for you. Any Lords' Alliance member can contact the party, reaching out to them on behalf of Waterbaron Nestra Ruthiol in Yartar, who needs a party of competent out-of-towners to investigate some mystical disappearances.

## THE INN

A different – but similar – way to start this adventure, which fits a broader variety of situations, is to have it start at an inn or similar establishment. This can be anywhere within a hundred miles of the Dessarin River.

While the party are relaxing or otherwise leisurely occupied the door to the establishment is pushed violently open. In strides a naked man, covering his private parts with both hands. His skin is translucent and slimy, his blonde hair wet and sticking to his forehead. The young man stumbles to the bar, and almost falls onto it, as he croaks: *'wa- water... Good sir, I must... I must have water!'*

The stunned barkeep quickly fills a mug with water from a barrel and hands it to the young man. The drink almost slips from the naked man's slimy hands, but he manages to catch it, and proceeds to pour it over his own head. As the water trickles down over his naked skin, he lets out a profound sigh.

Lord Artan Rossolio finds a chair near the party, and recognizing that they are adventurers, immediately beseech them for their help. He tells them that he awoke trapped in some sort of cocoon, with giant birds fighting over him. He managed to slip away, while the birds fought over their prize and walked for a mile before finding his way here. The whole way, his skin burned and itched, and he knew he needed water. He don't know where he is, or how he ended up in the cocoon. Artan remembers only very little (see the 'Lord Artan Rossolio' textbox).

While speaking with the party, he continues to douse himself with water every 10 minutes, complaining that his skin burns and that he needs the water. Desperate, he pleads with the party to help him get home. Go to 'Getting to Yartar'.

## GETTING TO YARTAR

Artan is desperate to acquire the party's help, as he is wholly incapable of taking care of himself, especially in his compromised state. He tells the party:

'You must get me back to Yartar, as fast as possible. My mother will give you more gold than you've ever seen, when I return to her,' with desperation and sincerity in his voice. 'Oh, by the gods, she must be worried sick!'

Artan will accept any demand the party has, assuring them that his mother will pay the reward, if they'll just lead him back to Yartar (he can't fathom that his mother might not agree with that assessment).

**Aboleth's Touch.** As it turns out, the young noble is quite in need of the party's help, since he's been afflicted with an aboleth's tentacle, and must be doused with water each 10 minutes or take 1d12 acid damage. The party must find a way to mitigate this while making their way to Yartar, such as carrying a large container of water that Artan can fit in, or fill extra waterskins (continually dousing Artan with water uses up six waterskins per 24 hours, and must be done throughout the night and day). Artan is optimistic that his family will be able to pay someone to cure him of his condition.

## LORD ARTAN ROSSOLIO

The young lord has blonde hair and blue eyes. Spoiled rotten and used to getting his way, this pudgy 20-something-year-old hasn't seen a day of hard labour in his life. He's not rude or arrogant, but woefully out-of-touch with lesser folk and almost completely incapable of taking care of himself. He has the statistics of a **noble** without weapons and armor.

## QUICK BACKGROUND

- House Rossolio made its fortune in barge building.
- Artan's mother, fierce Lady Dezhia Rossolio, is the head of House Rossolio.
- Artan has two siblings, Martyn and Urzales, but they are usually off on business trips.
- Artan's father Ernest died when Artan was young.
- Artan fancies himself the 'treasurer' of the family company, but in reality he is excluded from as much business as possible, due to his slow wit.

## WHAT ARTAN KNOWS

Artan's memory is very fuzzy, but he has some bits and pieces of information:

- The last he remembers, he was at the Rossolio Manor, getting ready to go out alone. He can't remember where to, unfortunately.
- He remembers something about a golden goose, but he can't quite place it. He doesn't think it was an actual golden goose, although that wouldn't be the weirdest thing the young socialite has seen at a party in Yartar.
- There was definitely a beautiful woman involved. She had black hair, and a gorgeous purple dress. He can't remember her name, if she even told him.

# YARTAR

The city of Yartar is described on page 115 of the *Storm King's Thunder* campaign book, as well as on page 57 of the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*. It's advisable to read as much about Yartar as possible, before running this adventure. Some of this information is summarized in the section below, and some of the locations that are particularly relevant to this adventure, are also described in more detail on the following pages.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION

In short, Yartar is a fortified fishing and barge building town set on the banks of the Dessarin River. It is divided into a citadel on the west bank, and the town proper on the east bank, with a sturdy stone bridge between them. The prosperous and crowded town is a member of the Lord's Alliance, and the elected leader is Waterbaron Nestra Ruthiol. Other factions are also present in Yartar: the Zhentarim, the Harpers, the local all-female thieves' guild the Hand of Yartar, and the city guard the Shields of Yartar.

## THE ROSSOLIO MANOR

Artan's home is a two-story building on the outskirts of town. Large and old, fenced in and foreboding, the Rossolio manor reeks of wealth and power. Inside, the manor is decorated with lavish paintings, tapestries, busts and statues, the floors are polished mahogany where they aren't covered by massive carpets, and gaudy chandeliers hang from the high ceilings.

The Rossolio manor is guarded by 12 elite guards (LN and N male and female **veterans**), which take orders from the unassuming 'butler' Khemed (N male **assassin**). The head of the household is Lady Dezhia (LN female **noble**), a fierce, proud and hawkish old woman, who has a knack for business and no patience for incompetence.

When the party arrives with Artan, Khemed greets the young master and the party with cool politeness, and then leads them to Lady Dezhia's office. The busy old matron doesn't seem particularly thrilled at the return of her son, and immediately starts verbally abusing him:

'Where have you been, you foolish boy? No, don't answer that. I will not tolerate your presence while you are wearing that dreadful attire. You look horrid. Go get yourselves a bath and some clean clothes, then we'll talk!'

As Artan bows his head and retreats to his chambers, Dezhia turns her attention to the party. She demands they explain what happened to Artan, how they found him and how they got him to Yartar. Regardless of what promises Artan has made, she'll refuse to pay anything more than 100 gold pieces for the party's aid

## LADY DEZHIA ROSSOLIO

The head of the Rossolio household is a sharp-featured woman of about sixty years. Her white hair is kept in a bun, and she wears stylish, but practical clothes. Her wit is sharp, her speech refined and her demeanor unforgiving. Lady Dezhia abhors stupidity – which is why Artan is only barely tolerated – and respects strength and cunning. Her ultimate goal is to firmly secure her family's coffers and legacy.

## WHAT DEZHIA KNOWS

Lady Dezhia can offer some information that might be helpful to the party:

- Waterbaron Nestra Ruthiol was very interested in Artan's disappearance, and Lady Dezhia got the distinct impression that Artan wasn't the only noble to have gone missing in the recent weeks.
- If the characters mention the woman in a purple dress, Dezhia comments that it might be one of the 'Hand of Yartar', the all-female thieves' guild. She doesn't know where they reside, but suggests that looking for 'hardened women in sordid places' might be a way to get in contact with them.
- If the party somehow know about The Grand Dame, she can tell them that it is only for the wealthy (or 'fools with more coin than sense', as Lady Dezhia puts it). Lady Dezhia can be convinced to lend them fine clothes to help the party disguise themselves as nobles, if needed.

in returning Artan. However, she'll entice the party with a job offer:

'Our family priest will have a look at his condition. In the meanwhile, I must know who our enemies are, so that they can be dealt with. I also see that the boy has carelessly lost his family pendant. It is an irreplaceable heirloom that must be returned to the house.'

Lady Dezhia offers a reward of 500 gold pieces if they can learn what happened to Artan, and another 500 gold pieces for retrieving the pendant (which is a capital R engraved with emeralds into an onyx disk). If the party press her, she'll agree to pay half of the prize up front.

**Bring the Butler.** If you think your party might need an extra hand with the challenges ahead, or some guidance along the way, you can have Lady Dezhia offer up Khemed's services. He can act as a guide and an aid in combat. Instead of taking a prominent role in planning or negotiation, the silent assassin should stay in the background and only intervene to keep the party from getting themselves in over their heads.

## WATERBARON'S HALL

The Waterbaron of Yartar, Nestra Ruthiol (LE female human **noble**), resides in the Waterbaron's Hall which sits at the center of Yartar. It's a large, squat building with a vaulted roof. Within are all sort of meeting rooms, a vast feast hall, and the Waterbaron's grand chambers. The hall is built in marble, and rich tapestries and ornate statues fill each of the high-ceilinged chambers.

Visitors to the hall must announce themselves with the Shields of Yartar standing guard outside. If the party ask to see the Waterbaron, the heavily armored **veteran** guards escort the party to Waterbaron Nestra Ruthiol's grand chamber.

If the party asks about disappearing nobles, Nestra immediately seems interested in what they have to say. She's noted the disappearance of several nobles with concern, and she's suspicious that Lord Drylund (the owner of the Grand Dame) is somehow involved. She thinks the lord is vying for her seat, and finds it suspicious that all the nobles who've gone missing so far, are from families that back her as Waterbaron. She finds herself unable to act on the suspicions, though, because she doesn't have sufficient proof to warrant a thorough investigation into Lord Drylund. Any brash move risks tipping her hand and turning more nobles against her.

She doesn't tell the party all of this, of course, but instead poses as a benevolent leader, concerned for the safety and well-being of the people she governs. She can provide the following information:

- Three nobles have gone missing over the last few weeks. Artan Rossolio, Jakkob Dawnflower and Timothy Salzberg. All are young men.
- Timothy was a regular at the Grand Dame and Jakkob might've been involved with the Hand of Yartar, or so the rumors say.
- No clues have been found about where any of them are, and all seem to have disappeared during the night.

If the party seem hesitant to investigate, or ask why she doesn't get her Shields to look into the matter, Nestra says that she can't legally investigate the Grand Dame with so little actual evidence, and ask the party to get to the bottom of this for her. She'll pay them a 100 gold pieces up front for the effort, but warns the party that they do not officially work for her or the city, and if they are caught doing anything illicit, or take up arms against the Shields or any other of Yartar's citizens, she'll deny having ever met them and punish them according to harsh Yartarian law.

## HAND OF YARTAR

If the party wants to speak with the all-female thieves' guild, they'll first have to find a representative. There's a couple of places that they might choose to visit for this: the Yartar market (called the Fishyard by the locals), the many alleys in the town, or one of the more sordid taverns, such as the Cointoss or the White-Winged Griffon.

Describing each of these locations are out of the scope of this document, but a thorough investigation should eventually allow the party to find one of the Hands. In an alley it's a woman beggar that looks a little too well-fed and sharp-eyed, in the taverns it's a stern-faced woman that everyone else seems to give a wide berth, and in the marketplace it's a lone woman who seems more focused on observing passersbys than buying anything.

If you prefer to do a montage-style-investigation, you can have each party member involved in the search roll a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check each hour, to determine how long it takes them to find a Hand.

Regardless where the party finds her, **Scimitar-Sally** isn't keen on mincing words with well-armed strangers. She'll deny any open accusation about being a member of the Hand of Yartar, but might confess to 'knowing some people'. If the party cough up sufficient coin – a few platinum pieces at the least – and make a good Charisma roll or two, Sally will tell them some or all of what she knows, at your discretion (see the 'Scimitar Sally' textbox). If the party tries to intimidate her, or becomes violent, she'll make her way to an alley (if she isn't already in one) where three **Hands of Yartar** joins her against the party. If she's close to being defeated, she surrenders the information willingly, rather than die.

### SCIMITAR SALLY

This seasoned thief has dirty-blond hair, a square jaw and a nasty scar that runs from her hairline to her upper lip, twisting her mouth in a perpetual scowl.

### WHAT SALLY KNOWS

Sally knows a thing or two about what's going on:

- The Hand of Yartar isn't involved in the disappearances, and don't know who's behind them. They suspect that some sort of organization is involved, but can't be sure if its Zhentarim, Harpers or some third faction.
- The lady in purple might be Lady Atalia, a young woman who has some sort of mind-powers and frequents the Grand Dame. The Hand have tried recruiting her, to no avail.

## GRAND DAME

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The Grand Dame and its notable inhabitants are detailed on page 215 to 219 of the *Storm King's Thunder* campaign book, so we won't go over the interior in great detail here.

The brief summary is that the Grand Dame is an ornately decorated riverboat owned by Lord Khaspere Drylund, who is a member of the Kraken Society. In essence, the Grand Dame is a nightly, floating casino catering to rich nobles.

The ship is captained by Nelvin Storn (LE male **bandit captain**) who employs eight deckhands (NE male and female **bandits**), and the casino is overseen by Pow Ming (N female **mage**). Around 80 people work on the Grand Dame (deckhands, rowers, chefs, servers, dealers, escorts and musicians) and 2d6 + 5 wealthy aristocrats or guild members spend their money there each night.

The only thing in this adventure that is really different from what is detailed in the book, is that Lord Khaspere Drylund is away on business at this time. No one knows where, not even his most trusted employee Pow Ming. He's supposed to come back in a week or two, and she's in charge while he is away. This change is made to avoid the party accidentally killing Lord Khaspere or otherwise badly disrupt Chapter 11 of *Storm King's Thunder*.

### GETTING ON THE BOAT

As it is detailed on *Storm King's Thunder* page 216, there are four obvious ways to gain access to the Grand Dame. Enter by force, pose as a worker, pose as a wealthy guest or sneak onto the riverboat. Remember, the party doesn't have to all get onboard, and they don't have to all get onboard the same way. Any characters openly wearing weapons and armor won't be allowed onto the boat, under any circumstances.

We'll cover each of the options below, expanding on the information in the campaign book, so that you're prepared for what your party might try. Be advised, posing as guests is probably the approach that'll get them the longest, and is easiest to pull off.

**Enter by force.** Really, you should do everything to make sure your players do not choose this option. Drop hints like 'the captain and his deckhands seem ready for trouble' and maybe even remind the players that 'there's a guard station just at the end of the pier'.

If your party still end up in a fight with Nelvin and his deckhands, or even Pow Ming, you can have one of the characters spot the Purple Lady during the fight, standing a hundred feet away – perhaps at the end of the pier. She sees the character noticing her, and immediately starts walking away. This does two things: it's now no longer necessary to get onboard of the Grand Dame, and the party will have an excuse to quickly make their escape, instead of continuing a fight they shouldn't fight. It's not an optimal outcome, but it's better than nothing. If the party catch up to her, you can jump straight to 'Following the Purple Lady'.

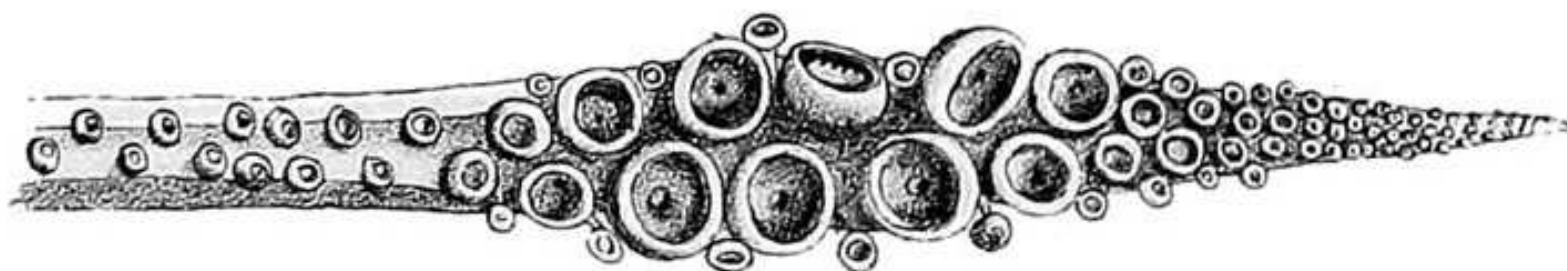
**Posing as a worker.** Workers usually arrive early in the evening, a few hours before the guests. Nelvin has the workers line up, before going down the line one by one and appraising them. For each character, roll a Charisma (Deception) check against Nelvin's Wisdom (Insight) roll (his mod is +0). If a character fails, Nelvin stops and looks at the character. '*And who might you be? A thief?*'

The character then has an opportunity to give an explanation, or simply a denial, and can roll another contested Charisma (Deception) check. On a successful check, Nelvin gives a short remark like '*fix your hat*' or '*straighten your blouse*', before continuing down the line. On a failed saved, Nelvin turns the character away with a suspicious glare, and perhaps even threats of violence.

**Posing as a guest.** The characters might also attempt to pose as wealthy guests, to gain entrance to the Grand Dame. Nelvin has a list of guests, but knows that turning away wealthy visitors is bad for business, so he doesn't always adhere to it. If a character succeeds on a DC 13 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation or Persuasion, depending on the story) check, they can convince the captain to allow them onto the boat. A character with the noble background has advantage on this check, and a character that isn't dressed suitably (such as in a noble's outfit) has disadvantage on this check.

If the characters fail the check, but doesn't otherwise grossly insult or threaten Nelvin, he might ask them to prove that they've money to spend. That's Nelvin's not-so-subtle way of asking for a bribe. If they give him 50 gold pieces or more, he'll flash an insincere smile and allow them onto the boat.

**Sneaking onto the boat.** The easiest way to sneak onto the boat is with a spell of *invisibility* or similar measures. Without invisibility its very hard to sneak



unnoticed onto the boat from the pier, since there's deckhands by all exits. If the party manages a sizable diversion, however, they might be able to sneak in while the deckhands and Nelvin are distracted.

It's also possible to sneak onto the boat from the water, through one of the windows on the main deck. Climbing the hull from the river will require suitable equipment (such as a rope and grappling hook) combined with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, or helpful spells such as *fly* or *spider climb*. The longer it takes for a character (or several characters) to find their way to the window, the larger the chance that they are discovered. If you want to, you can roll a 1d6 each round. On a 6, a worker spots the party sneaking in and begin asking questions.

## THE CASINO

The Grand Dame's Casino is detailed on page 218 of the *Storm King's Thunder* campaign book (its area 9).

When a character posing as a guest enters the casino for the first time they are met by the stern-faced Pow Ming, who tersely offers to exchange gems or gold for *golden geese*, the wooden chips used for betting in the casino. A single golden goose costs 10 gold pieces.

In the casino itself, the guests (**nobles** of various races and ethnicities) are playing games and indulging in free liquor. The attractive dealers sitting by the gaming tables are **commoners** with the following changes:

- A dealer has an Intelligence, Charisma and Wisdom score of 12 (+1).
- A dealer is proficient in Intelligence (Sava) and Wisdom (Insight) checks.

**The Purple Lady.** Any character entering the casino will quickly spot a beautiful woman clad in a gorgeous purple dress. She has black hair that is cropped short on the sides and a stunning necklace set with black stones around her slender neck.

She's playing a game of sava with a gaudily dressed older man, that finishes up when a character approaches. The white-haired noble pushes a stack of golden goose coins across the table and rises from his plush seat. *"I don't know how you do it, Lady Atalia. You seem to know my every move, before I know it myself. Thank you for the game,"* he says graciously, before bending down and kissing the woman's extended hand. *"Now I think I must find another table, lest I squander all the coin I've spent a lifetime acquiring."* The young woman smiles warmly at the older man. *"You do that, Lord Hubert. Until next time."*

If a character asks to sit down for a game of sava with Atalia, she agrees with a smile, and asks them questions about who they are, where they're from and what they're doing in Yartar, continually using her *detect thoughts* spell to read the character's surface thoughts. She doesn't probe any deeper, unless absolutely necessary, knowing that a deep look will alert the character that their thoughts are being read.

Her spell also helps her with winning the sava game (in which she's proficient), giving her advantage on her Wisdom (Insight) check.

## CASINO GAMES

If some or all of your party are posing as casino guests, they might want to actually play some games. Here are some rules that should hopefully make this a fun experience for the whole table. Remember, if some of your party aren't included in these games, or some players just don't enjoy these sort of mini-games, you shouldn't drag them out for too long.

### KOBOLD'S KNUCKLES

This dice game is basically a simple version of blackjack that uses dice instead of playing cards. Players play against the house, not each other, and more players can play at the same time.

- Each player makes a bet (the minimum bet is 1 golden goose).
- Each player rolls 1d6 + 1d4 in the open.
- The dealer (you) rolls 1d6 in the open, and 1d4 behind a screen.
- Each player can in turn choose to roll additional 1d4's until they don't want to anymore. If the total exceeds 10, they lose their bet.
- After all players have rolled their d4's, the dealer reveals their hidden d4 and rolls additional d4's until they have at least 8 or higher. If the result exceeds 10, all players still in the game win 100% of their bet.
- When the dealer is finished rolling, any players with a result lower than the dealer's lose their bets, players with the same total as the dealer reclaim their bets, and players with a result higher than the dealer's win 100% of their bets.

### SAVA

This odd version of chess is a drow invention. Two players play against each other using ebony pieces resembling drow warriors, mages and priestesses. The goal of the game is to destroy the other player's 'noble house'. It is a game of skill, deception and insight.

A game of sava takes roughly 30 minutes. Each player makes a bet before the game begins (the minimum bet is 5 golden geese). To determine who wins the game, each participant makes three rolls:

- An Intelligence (Sava) check.
- A Wisdom (Insight) check.
- A Charisma (Deception) check.

Compare the combined totals of these three rolls to determine the winner of the game (on an equal result, the game is a draw). The winner claims the loser's bet.

If a character asks Lady Atalia about Artan or any other disappearances, she maintains her composure and claims that she knows nothing about any disappearances, although she did play a few games of sava with a young noble named Artan some time ago. While outwardly appearing as if everything is normal, Atalia uses her telepathy to speak in the mind of the character: *'Pretend as if everything is fine. We need to talk. Not here. Follow me when the boat returns to the docks. Nod if you understand me.'* If the party agrees, go to 'Following the Purple Lady' when the Grand Dame returns to Yartar.

**Developments.** What else happens during the party's stay on the riverboat is up to you. The boat is sailing on the river from late evening to the early hours of morning, so there's plenty of time to snoop around and play casino games. When the boat returns to Yartar, the party can cash their golden goose coins in for gold pieces, if they've any left.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

For various reasons, your party might not get a chance to sit down with Lady Atalia on the Grand Dame.

**No meet and greet.** If they're posing as workers or have snuck onto the ship, the party probably won't be able to sit down for a friendly game of sava. Instead, allow them the chance to confront Lady Atalia when she's making her way to her cabin, the restroom or to the boat's railing for a breath of fresh air. If the party board the boat before it's evening, Lady Atalia can be found in the Dining Room (area 7) eating a light meal. She has a sava game with her, if any from the party wishes to play.

**Failure to board.** It's also possible that your party never gets onto the boat, either by choice or by accident, and instead hang arounds the docks looking for the Purple Lady. If they do, they never see Atalia board the Grand Dame (she's already on the boat before the party arrives), but she departs the boat when it docks a few hours after midnight, arm-in-arm with a young noble. They might confront her then, upon which she bids the noble farewell and you can pick it up from 'Following the Purple Lady', or they can sneak after her, following her down into the sewers, as she makes her way to the aboleth's chamber with the newest subject.



## FOLLOWING THE PURPLE LADY

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When the boat docks a few hours after midnight, Lady Atalia doesn't acknowledge the party or gives them any indication that they should follow her. She simply assumes that they will, and walks off the docks at a brisk pace, heading towards the empty streets of Yartar. She walks for a couple of minutes, attempting to stay at least a hundred feet ahead of the party, before ducking into an alley. There she waits for the party to arrive.

### DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

Lady Atalia is a competent and dangerous Kraken Society operative, but she isn't about to reveal that to the party. Instead she hopes to convince them that she is as much a victim as Artan, and that she's not an enemy, but an ally. She tells the party the following half-truths and lies:

- Yes, she was involved in abducting Artan, but she didn't do it willingly. She was forced by the evil sorcerer Oosith, who'll kill her if she doesn't comply. [The truth is that Oosith was sent by the Kraken Society to help Lord Drylund become Waterbaron, and Atalia is ordered by the kraken to aid him.]
- Oosith came to Yartar a few weeks ago and was initially charming, although he's an evil and ruthless man beneath the surface. He's tall and handsome, with a black moustache. [The truth is that Oosith was never charming, Atalia was just given orders to obey him. She doesn't know that Oosith is actually an aboleth, however, since the creature has used its *phantasmal force* to appear to her as a human noble.]
- Lord Drylund and everyone else on the Grand Dame aren't involved, she just uses the riverboat because it's a good place to pick up lone nobles, which is what Oosith requires of her. [The truth is that Lord Drylund is very much at the center of this conspiracy, but Atalia wants to protect that secret – and we don't want the party to get too suspicious of Lord Drylund before Chapter 11 of *Storm King's Thunder*.]
- She doesn't know what happens to the nobles she brings to Oosith, but is afraid that it is nefarious. [Atalia truly doesn't know, but she has a pretty good idea that they are taken captive and not killed, since she could very easily do that herself].
- Oosith resides in the sewers, preferring to stay out of sight of the Shields and the Hand of Yartar. He's protected by a handful of fish-people, who revere him like a god. She usually delivers her 'catch' to the fish-people not very far into the sewers, so she doesn't know the full layout or which traps or other guardians are there. [This is all true].
- Atalia's telepathy (and other powers, if the party has seen them) are small feats of magic that Oosith

has taught her. [The truth is that they are actually powers granted by her patron, the ancient kraken Slarkrethel].

- She's helping the party because she wishes to be free of her tormentor, but is too afraid to do anything directly, and begs them not to tell Oosith of her involvement. [Atalia actually helps the party because she detests the weird Oosith, and wishes to take his position in the Kraken Society].

After giving the party all this information, Atalia tells them that she will wait here, while they head down below using a sewer grate in the alley.

**Treasure.** Atalia carries a necklace set with jet stones worth 1,000gp. She also has 2d10 golden goose coins.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

At this point some problems might arise. Below we'll go over some of the most significant ones:

**Violence.** The party might choose to fight Lady Atalia. That's alright, she has a statblock and isn't imperative to the rest of the adventure or anything else in *Storm King's Thunder*. While defending herself, she'll try to calm things down and talk instead, so unless your party are really bloodthirsty, she should still get to tell her story. If they manage to kill her before she tells them about Oosith, you can remark on a sewer grate being open in the direction she was heading.

**Interrogation.** If the party somehow compel Atalia to talk about Lord Drylund's role in the scheme, or the existence of the Kraken Society, the kraken Slarkrethel uses its telepathic link with her to deal enough psychic damage to kill her instantly, before she can divulge anything more than 'the Kraken...'

**Come with us.** If the party asks Atalia to accompany them, she refuses on the basis that her connection with Oosith would enable him to turn her against them. If they insist, she'll reluctantly go along with them, but use the first chance she gets to slip away unnoticed.

**Calling for backup.** The party might feel that they've done enough, and choose to ask for help with Lady Rossolio or the Waterbaron's Shields of Yartar. Atalia will tell the party that Yartar's Shields are grunts, and are likely to scare off Oosith. If the party goes back to Lady Rossolio, she asks them to exact vengeance and get her pendant back, and might offer them more gold, or the help of Khemed, if they're still not convinced it's their duty.



# THE SEWERS

## GENERAL STATISTICS

The sewers have the following general statistics unless otherwise noted.

**Floors.** All vertical surfaces are grimy and slippery. A creature moving on these surfaces must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone at the end of their movement, unless they move at half their move speed.

**Illumination.** It is pitch black in Yartar's sewers.

**Sewer Water.** The sewer water is filled with refuse and garbage. The canals are 5 feet deep unless otherwise noted. The water heavily obscures anything more than 10 feet away. A creature that enters the water for the first time must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or contract Sewer Plague (see page 257 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

**Wall and Ceilings.** The tunnels and rooms that make up the sewers are old stonework. The ceilings are low, reaching only 8 feet above the gangways.

## ENTERING THE SEWERS

The party enters from a sewer grate above, climbing down a metal ladder into a tunnel which is blocked off to the west, but continues to the east. They appear from the western edge of the map.

## S1. CONTROL OFFICE

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This room has handwheels and levers used for opening and closing the waterpipes flowing into and out of the sewers in this area. There's desk and two chairs in the middle of the office. The skeleton of an unfortunate sewer worker lies naked and half-dissolved on the ground, having been cleaned by the oozes that occupy this room (see below).

**Control Mechanisms.** The handwheels and levers have half-rotten labels and color-coded handles, which are probably quite obvious to a professional, but requires some thinking for a non-professional.

Any character that takes a minute to study the mechanisms, must succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check to figure out how they work. The four handwheels let more water into this part of the sewers (the water rises by 1 foot per minute, per handwheel), but the emergency drainages (see area S4) prevent the sewer from overflowing. The four levers open up the drains beneath the water, emptying this section of the sewer (1 foot per minute per lever). On a failed check, a character gets it wrong, and thinks that the handwheels will empty the sewer, and the levers will fill it.

If a character uses an action to turn a handwheel or pull a lever, starting the process of filling or emptying the sewers, it immediately alerts the kuo-toa in area S3. Two **kuo-toa** and one **kuo-toa whip** swim to investigate and arrive three rounds later.

**Psionic Oozes.** The aberrant presence of the aboleth has caused some the grime and refuse of the sewers to develop sentience. Four **psionic gray oozes** slither along the ceilings and walls of the room, looking like ordinary muck. They attack when the party begin operating the sewer mechanisms, or before the last character leaves the room.

**Treasure.** There are a set of mason tools in a bag on the table as well as 4 gold pieces and 11 silver pieces.

## S2. OTYUGH'S POOLS

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Oosith's most favoured pet, an **otyugh**, make it's lair in the 3-foot deep pools of stinking offal in this collapsed part of the sewer. It disregards any of the treasure and material objects that lay strewn about there. The kuo-toa keeps it well-fed with rats and any humanoids they capture that aren't needed as mindslaves. If the party begin picking up items around its lair, it springs out from one of the pools, and attempt to drag a character down into the pool and consume it.

**Treasure.** Strewn about the otyugh's lair are several objects left behind by the otyugh's victims. There's 14 gold pieces, 17 silver pieces, a longsword, a hand crossbow, a bundle of five torches and two *potions of water breathing*.

## S3. KUO-TOA LAIR

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This encircled area is intended as the first step of a filtration process in this section of the sewer. Solids are separated from the water, as it flows through finemasked nets under the gangways on the north- and south side of the square pool. This process makes the water inside this area slightly cleaner and free of sewer plague. The pool is 20 feet deep.

A group of four **kuo-toa** and two **kuo-toa whips** live here. They revere the aboleth Oosith as a god, worshipping it with unquenchable fervor. Clever characters might be able to convince the kuo-toa that they mean their god no harm, and be allowed to pass unharmed, and even learn information about Oosith.

The kuo-toa otherwise stay submerged in the pool, and don't notice passersby unless they make a lot of noise or bring light close to their pool. If combat erupts by area S2, the kuo-toa wait until the fight is well underway, afraid to become the victims of the ever-hungry otyugh, before joining the fray. One kuo-toa whip swims to warn Oosith, and stays within the aboleth's lair, to aid in any combat that erupts there.

**Treasure.** The kuo-toa are carrying four spears, four nets, four *pincer staffs* and four *sticky shields*. The kuo-toas' pool contain little treasures, as they offer most of everything they gather to the aboleth, but they have stored two sealed jugs of *aboleth mucous* on the bottom of their pool, which they consider a very valuable intoxicant.

## S4. EMERGENCY DRAINAGE

These two large drainage pipes are safeguards to prevent the sewers from overflowing. If a creature is pushed into one of these drainage pipes, it falls 30 feet into the water below, taking 3d6 damage as it falls. The sides of the pipes are slippery and can only be scaled with magic such as *spider climb* or using a rope secured above (DC 10 Athletics (Strength) check).

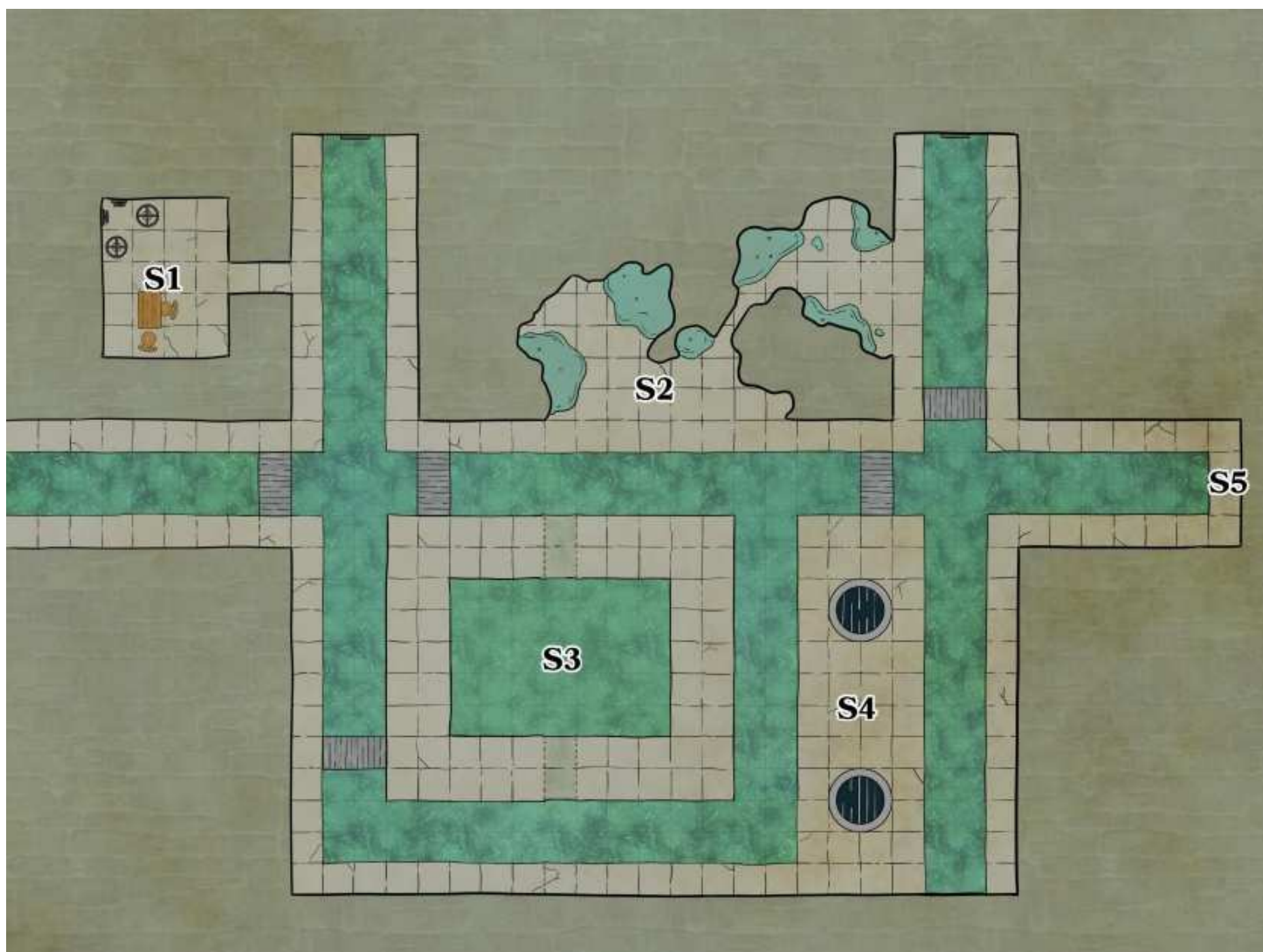
A creature can also be lifted out of the drainage pipe by flooding the sewer with water (see area S1), which raises the water level below until a creature can reach the edge and climb out.

## S5. TO THE ABOLETH'S LAIR

A sewer grate hides the entrance to Oosith's lair. Lifting the grate is a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Below is an iron ladder climbing down for 10 feet before reaching the ceiling of Oosith's Lair.

**Glyph of Warding.** Oosith has inscribed the grate with a *glyph of warding*, set to go off if a non-kuo-toa lifts the grate. The aboleth has imbued it with the spell *thunderwave*. Each creature within 15 feet of the grate when the glyph is disturbed must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2d8 thunder damage and is pushed 10 feet backwards. On a successful save, it takes only half that much damage and isn't pushed. The loud boom caused by the spells alerts Oosith and the merrow below, as well as any kuo-toa still alive.

Allow any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check to notice the glyph, and a character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) to recognize it as a glyph of warding. A character that uses detect magic will also see an aura of abjuration and evocation magic emanating from the sewer grate.



## ABOLETH'S LAIR

The walkways in this large room are 15 feet above the floor and 15 feet below the ceiling. When the party first enter this chamber, the water just barely reaches the edge of the walkways. The waterpipes (e) on each side of the chamber are closed, as are the drainages (c) underneath the water. The aboleth uses the drainages to transport the nobles it abducts, after infecting them with its insidious disease and wrapping them in cocoons. The drainages flow all the way out to the Dessarin River, and from there to the Sea of Swords in the southwest.

By both of the handwheels on either side of the chamber (d) stand one **merrow** mindslave, ready to heed the aboleth's unspoken commands. On the far edge of the room from the sewer grate entrance (a) is a stone building (f) that rises up to the ceiling. Its steel door is closed, but unlocked. Within are a set of chairs and a table, as well as crates and bags holding Oosith's stolen treasures (see the *Treasure* section below).

**Deception.** When the party arrive at the aboleth's lair through the sewer grate, Oosith allows them all to climb down into the chamber, while it remains hidden deep in the murky water. When all of the party has come down, it speaks telepathically to each of them,

taking on the mental voice of a charming and distinguished noble.

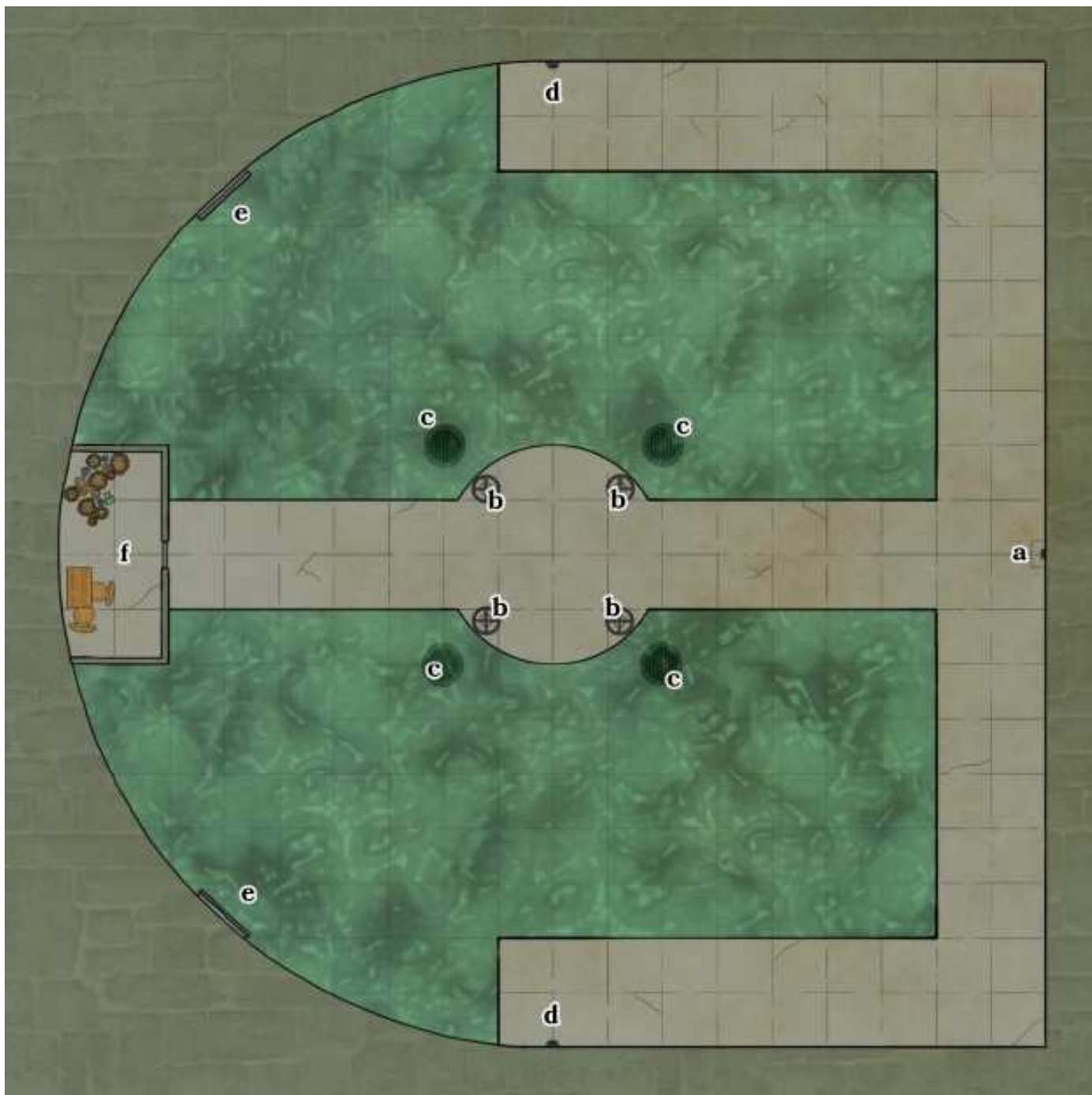
"Welcome, friends. I apologize for the unpleasant locale. If you would step into my office, I have more suitable accommodations for a private discussion."

The aboleth wants the party as far away from the exit as possible, before it orders its mindslaves to flood the chamber with sewer water. It uses every lie it can to lure them further into the chamber, such as:

- There's treasure in the office (the aboleth knows the greatest desire of any creature it speaks telepathically with).
- The two missing nobles (Jakkob and Timothy) are within, you can come take them.
- The merrow are agents of a much greater and darker power – we can't speak in their presence.

When the aboleth judges that it can get no further with conversation, or the party makes a dangerous move towards itself or its servants, the aboleth orders the merrow mindslaves to start flooding the chamber. It also orders any surviving kuo-toa mindslaves above to put the sewer grate back in place and guard it, barring the party's escape.

### RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER



The two merrow use their actions on the first round of combat to open the waterpipes and begin flooding the chamber. On their next turn, they take the Ready action, setting themselves up to grapple anyone who tries to come close to the handlewheels.

**Free the slaves.** Each time a merrow takes damage, it can make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw against the aboleth's enslavement. On a successful save it regains its own free will, and you can describe how sudden sentience seems to fill its eyes, and it turns its hateful gaze towards the dark waters. If the party doesn't attack it again, the merrow goes after its former master, fighting alongside the party until the aboleth is destroyed (upon which it might very well turn on the party again).

**Oosith.** The aboleth prefers to keep well out of harm's way. It stays beneath the water as much as possible, using its *enslave* ability, or attacking with its long tentacles before quickly diving away again. It's up to you if it uses its legendary actions to make tail attacks and psychically drain its mindslaves, or lair actions to conjure *phantasmal forces* or use the water in the room to aid it. It's perfectly fine not to abuse these abilities to keep the already complex encounter more manageable, and might even be advisable if your party aren't at least 8th level or higher.

**Escape.** If it comes below half hit points, and the fight is souring for it, Oosith commands any remaining mindslaves to open one of the drainages. It swims out through the drainage, flowing all the way to the Dessarin River and back towards Waterdeep and the Sea of Swords. Any remaining merrow mindslaves follow it.

A character that attempts the drainage, either in chase of the aboleth or in an attempt to escape its tentacles, are swept underwater with the current for five rounds, upon which they appear in the water by Yartar's docks, with the aboleth nowhere in sight.

## TREASURE

Within the office building on the western end of the aboleth's lair are the compiled treasures of its noble victims. There are three neatly folded noble attires, each gaudy and expensive (15gp each), as well as pouches containing a combined sum of 92 platinum pieces, 108 gold pieces, 45 silver pieces, two tourmalines (100gp each) and a single emerald (1,000gp). There's also a magical *Hat of Disguise* (or roll another magic item from the Magic Item Table F) and Artan Rossolio's lost pendant, resplendent with its capital R engraved in emeralds on an onyx disk (500gp). Lastly, there's ten Golden Goose coins, each worth 10gp.

## DEVELOPMENTS

**Victory.** Hopefully the party kill the aboleth or force it to flee its lair. If it dies, the merrow are mindslaves no more, and either attempt to escape through the

drainages, or fight to the death. Any kuo-toa left above can be convinced to leave if they see proof that their 'god' is dead, but will otherwise attack the party as they come up from the aboleth's lair.

## FLOODING THE CHAMBER

Below are some rules for creating a tense situation, where the party and the aboleth compete to control the waterlevel in the lair:

- A handlewheel (d) on each side of the chamber open or close the waterpipes (e) that allow water to run into the chamber. The waterlevel rises by 5 feet per round for each waterpipe that is open.
- The four handlewheels in the middle of the chamber (b) control the four drainages (c), each of which can be either opened or closed. Each open drainage causes the water level to fall by 3 feet each round.
- A creature can use an action to turn a handwheel from open to closed, or vice versa. A creature can also attempt to break off a handwheel by using an action and succeeding on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.
- At each initiative count 20, take stock of how each handlewheel is turned, and adjust the water level accordingly. If the water level reaches 0, the chamber is completely empty of water. If the water level reaches 30, the room is completely filled.

## UNDERWATER COMBAT

Remember that there are special rules for fighting under water, which can be found on page 198 of the *Player's Handbook*. The rules for drowning can be found on page 183, but if you want some more punishing rules for drowning, you can try the following:

- You have 'breath points' equal to your Constitution modifier x 10 (minimum of 5).
- At the start of your turn, you lose 1 breath point if you don't have access to air, or regain an amount of breath points equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier if you have access to air.
- Each time you take an action, bonus action or reaction, you lose 1 breath point.
- When you suffer a critical hit, you must make a Constitution saving throw to keep holding your breath. The DC equals 10 or half the damage you take, whichever is higher. If you fail, you lose all your breath points.
- When you would lose a breath point, but have 0 breath points, you must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or drop to 0 hit points and start dying at the start of your next turn. The DC of this saving throw increases by 1 each consecutive time it is made without access to breathable air.

**Defeat.** The last encounter with the aboleth is very dangerous, and could easily end up bad for the party. Luckily, the aboleth prefers enslaving creatures to killing them. It will stabilize any dying characters, and have them set up in the sewers above. It will take some work on your part, but give your party a chance to escape, such as the otyugh biting an enslaved character, breaking the charm, or Shields of Yartar coming down into the sewer, because Nestra Ruthiol had the party followed.

## CONCLUSION

**The Purple Lady.** If Lady Atalia felt like the party believed her story and that they won't betray her to the authorities, she is waiting for them above, and thanks them profusely for their victory. Otherwise, she'll flee Yartar entirely for a while, until the whole thing blows over. In a week or two she'll come back to take over where Oosith left off, abducting nobles so that her master, the kraken Slarkrethel, can install Lord Drylund as the Waterbaron of Yartar.

**The Waterbaron.** If the party return successful to Nestra Ruthiol, the savvy Waterbaron thanks them for their aid and pays them their dues. She's genuinely grateful for the assistance. If they raise any concerns about the Grand Dame and Lord Drylund, or have figured out the other nobles might've gone to Waterdeep, she takes note of their observations, but tell them to inquire no further at the moment, as she's afraid to stir up trouble with the nobles.

**The Rossolios.** Lady Dezhia Rossolio doesn't lavish the party with gratitude, even if they follow her quest to the letter. She tells Khemed to give the party their reward, but doesn't have any kind words to spare. If the party returns without the pendant and/or the aboleth was allowed to escape, they might even earn a derisive comment about their incompetence.

**Aboleth's Curse.** The Rossolio's family priest, a lanky fellow named Iborn who worships Tymora, has cured Artan Rossolio of his aberrant disease with a *heal* spell. He can cure any afflicted party members if they cough up a 1000 gold pieces, or somehow convinces Lady Dezhia to cover the expense.

## ITEMS

This adventure introduces three novelty items, detailed below.

### ABOLETH MUCOUS

A jug of aboleth mucous contains three doses. When you ingest a dose of aboleth mucous, you must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or become diseased for 1d4 hours. While diseased, you can only breathe underwater. A willing creature can choose to fail this saving throw.

### PINCER STAFF

This pincer staff is wielded with two hands, has a reach of 10 ft. and deals 1d6 piercing damage. When you hit a Medium or smaller creature with the pincer staff, you can use your bonus action to attempt to grapple the creature. If you succeed, the creature is grappled, and you can't use the pincer staff on another target, until this grapple ends.

### STICKY SHIELD

This shield seem to be made of rusted metal, driftwood and some weird, sticky algae. It grants +2 to AC like an ordinary shield, and can also be used to catch an enemy's weapon. When a creature misses you with a melee weapon attack, you can use a reaction to catch the creature's weapon with the sticky shield. The attacker must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw, or the weapon becomes stuck to the shield. If the weapon's wielder can't or won't let go of the weapon, the wielder is grappled while the weapon is stuck. While stuck, the weapon can't be used. A creature can pull the weapon free by taking an action to make a DC 11 Strength check and succeeding.