

EB4



# The Blight

Richard Pett's Crooked City

## EB4: The Crucible

Richard Pett



FROG GOD  
GAMES



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## CB4: The Crucible

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These were the first unfortunates to walk the crooked streets of the Blight, much love and thanks to you for an awesome session at PaizoCon UK— Brett Andrews, Andrew Green, Clare Jones, Mark Laverock, Pete Pollard and Ben Wenham. *You were lucky Brett, next time I won't roll a 1...*

#### Special Thanks

Pete Pollard, Fellow Conspirator

#### Special Dedication

Felipe Gaona's excellent painting "Umbrella" is dedicated to the creator of the "Burning Woman in the Rain" image that served as the inspiration for this cover. I have seen the original piece as a wallpaper online in many locations and thought it perfectly captured the atmosphere of *The Crucible*, but I have never been able to track down the identity of the creator. So here's to you, mystery artist. You managed to capture a tiny piece of Richard Pett's brain with your art, an extremely dangerous thing to do. May his tentacled cosmic overlords never succeed in finding you.

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# The Blight

Richard Pett's Crooked City

## EB4: The Crucible

By Richard Pett



*“...You’ve just entered the wrong side of town...”*

*The Crucible* is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for a party of four to six 7th-level PCs. It serves as a companion adventure to Richard’s Pett’s *The Blight* and takes place in that twisted city as revealed in the campaign setting published by **Frog God Games**.



# Introduction

*The furnace thundered, heat raging like fury from within. A column of black iron rising into the arched roof of the giant windmill, hanging in the cradle of four vast chains, swayed like a goliath metal coffin. Yet as I approached, I suddenly became aware of another noise above the roar of the fire: the howl of hunger. The furnace itself was alive ...*

— *The Artificer*

The streets of the Blight abound lately with stories of dreadful immolations: of people rising in the night and suddenly becoming balls of living flame; of searing, screaming souls blazing through the streets being burnt alive. There seems to be no explanation for this spontaneous combustion. Good people shiver in their beds for fear of suddenly catching fire; folk shake on church pews hoping they will not be the next to burst into flames. This nightmare is real, and it's happening now to the good people of this city, what few there might be ...

*The Crucible* focuses upon events surrounding a ragefire elemental, a new monster imprisoned within a magical item known as a *searing crucible*, an item created by the Artificer, the chief villain of the adventure. The PCs experience various locations around Festival and the Great Lyme River: the high-gables of the Festival parish during a rooftop chase; a site where fossilized Leviathans are being exhumed; and a pleasure pier with a rotting caravel in imminent danger of collapse into hungry mouths in the river below. The adventure reaches its climax in one of the abandoned Great Windmills on the Lyme as it becomes a raging inferno.

In *The Blight* campaign, *The Crucible* primarily takes place in Festival — the carnival isle of wererats. Two events also occur nearby on the Great Lyme River, but all the information you need is included here. The adventure can easily be modified for other urban settings, and suggestions are given on how to use *The Crucible* in other campaign settings. The story of *The Crucible* has a strongly evil theme and is ideally suited to paladins and good clerics, inquisitors, and oracles.

## Influences and inspirations

Some of the key influences on, and inspirations for, this adventure are listed below for GMs who would like additional source material on how to portray various NPCs and convey the flavor of the adventure:

- The original 1931 *Frankenstein* film, starring Boris Karloff.
- True histories of the Elephant Man and the excellent film by David Lynch.
- Images of claimed spontaneous human combustion, including from the cases of Mary Reeser, Anna Martin, and Dr. J. Irving Bentley in particular.

## Adventure Background

The Artificer was, originally, only a minor user of magic, of a caste barely above the street illusionists and corner-mages seen across the whole of the Blight. Her only talent lay in her zealous research — an addiction to scouring the ancient shops of BookTown, squinting through mouldering shelves heady with the scent of old tomes and manuscripts for clues and secrets, unknown spells, and hidden orders.

The years, however, had rolled by and, as her faculties depleted, she grew to loathe her lowly background and station in life, and the city and its people that had caused them. Knowing that she had been destined for great things but now convinced that she would achieve none of them, she

sank into deep depression. As her misery grew, she lost her lodgings and began to roam the streets, often breaking into the book-filled corridors and backrooms of the antiquarian booksellers and bibliophiles simply to find shelter and rest. Until the night she found the *tome*.

The tome seemed little more than a collection of children's fairy stories, though richly illustrated with etchings and with faded gilt-edged pages. Unfortunately, it had been left somewhere damp; its binding hemorrhaged, its pages stained. By the feeble light of a tallow candle, she read of princes and dragons in tales of glory and betrayal until eventually, the tome itself died through her use of it — collapsing into ruin in her lap, its pages falling, its spine snapping.

The Artificer moved the pieces to one side, preparing to make a fire of what was left, when she noticed something within the corpse of the tome. It was a diagram — or rather a series of diagrams, and instructions written in ancient text — depicting a metal object of great size: a crucible. As the tome had collapsed, so had the magic that had obscured its true text with fairy stories! As the Artificer struggled in the gloom to translate the words, fumbling with obscure phrases and technical terms, she grew feverish as their meaning was revealed. In her growing excitement, the years of anguish fell away to be replaced by feelings of hope, of ambition, and a realization dawned upon her that Fortune had, finally, kissed her and given her a gift that could be her salvation.

This crucible was no mere melting pot for alchemy, no mundane container for molten iron; it was a design for a prison, a prison for ragefire, an intelligent, evil fire both terrible and beautiful, a sentient flame, a whirlwind blaze created, the tome said, by drawing and combining the blood of demons and efreet. The Artificer realized that the crucible could be configured to draw this rarest of hateful elementals into the world and then made to force the creature to multiply. It would make her the master of creatures that feast on the living, that immolate what they touch, and that grow — getting larger and larger as they gorge until they are firestorms that can destroy entire cities, and leave nothing but ash. Drunk on dreams of power and revenge, alive with hope and dizzy with ideas, the Artificer carefully gathered the instructions and, hiding them on her person, sank into an untroubled sleep for the first time in years.

The cold dawn and an encounter with a caretaker refocused the Artificer on her plight. She was alone, weak, and helpless. Yet she held in her hands a secret of power. With control over ragefire, her fortune could be made. She could use the elementals as weapons, harnessing their lethality, killing at her whim. The Artificer — who had long ago given up her true name as a worthless anchor from her earlier years — convinced herself that she would only have to threaten the use of ragefire, that she would be benevolent, and use the elemental not only for her own good, but for those of others like her. She would use the gift wisely, and not for spite or anger.

The Artificer had few friends. One, however, had shown kindness, of a sort, in the past — the Organ Grinder, a low-caste street performer who worked in the Lyme River pleasure town of Festival. The Artificer hid aboard the chain ferry out to the island and discussed things with her old acquaintance. The Organ Grinder, seeing a great personal opportunity, invested what funds he had in the enterprise, hoping it would enable him to eventually pay for the advancement of his study of golem-stitching.

The Organ Grinder suggested the use of a great windmill as a base. The great windmills, which lie in the broad part of the Lyme River, were often used by golem-stitchers and homuncule-wives as places to carry out their more troubling experiments undisturbed. The Organ Grinder arranged for the present inhabitant of one great windmill to be “removed,” ensuring it was vacant.

For a year, the pair invested stolen wealth into the construction of their crucible and, only last month, installed the final part before drawing a ragefire elemental into the physical world. The creature was furious and railed against its imprisonment, but its hunger was all-consuming. The creature's hunger amazed the Artificer, who grieved at the choice that circumstance had now given her: Feed the creature she had worked for so long to summon to the Material Plane, or see it die.



## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

At first she fed the creature's hungry demands with animal flesh — pigs mostly — but the creature refused to devour ignorant flesh; it hungered for the suffering that went with death by fire, a pain that fed it properly. Soon the Artificer relented and fed the creature a tramp who happened her way. As she saw the ragefire devour him and grow on his suffering, she knew that to gain the power she wanted, she would have to — regrettably, of course — make some sacrifices: the sacrifice of others.

While the Artificer continued her research and plotting, the Organ Grinder carried out her commands. He organized regular shipments of coal and timber to sate the creature's most basic needs, and with the help of Mahaas, a grotesquely deformed murderer with a penchant for dissection, kidnapped citizens for her to sacrifice to it to make it grow. After a few months, the creature reached a size where its spawn could be harvested. The Artificer began carefully testing the ragefire spawn upon those she thought would be little missed — orphaned waifs and strays, prostitutes and beggars selected for her by the Organ Grinder. With each attack, she was careful to ensure that the spawn was slain by her magic after its deed was done — and careful to cast it whilst veiled from sight. On two occasions, she was simply able to push her burning victims into the Great Lyme River. On others, her water- and cold-based magic sufficed to quench it. Her careful work ensured that no suspicion fell on her, but rumors of spontaneous combustion spread to every street corner with the blame placed variously on witches of the Great Coven, demons, devils, and acts of the angry gods that walked the streets of the Blight unseen.

Now, however, the Artificer's experiments are at an end, and she has chosen her first blackmail victim: Savant Edwina Spitewinter of the Royal Underneath Society, who is presently working on Festival at a great Leviathan dig. Following a demonstration of the power of ragefire, the blackmail is going well, and the Organ Grinder has been able to collect 2,000 gold shekels from the Savant so far — money the accomplices intend to use to land an even wealthier victim. Yesterday, however, an unfortunate accident occurred.

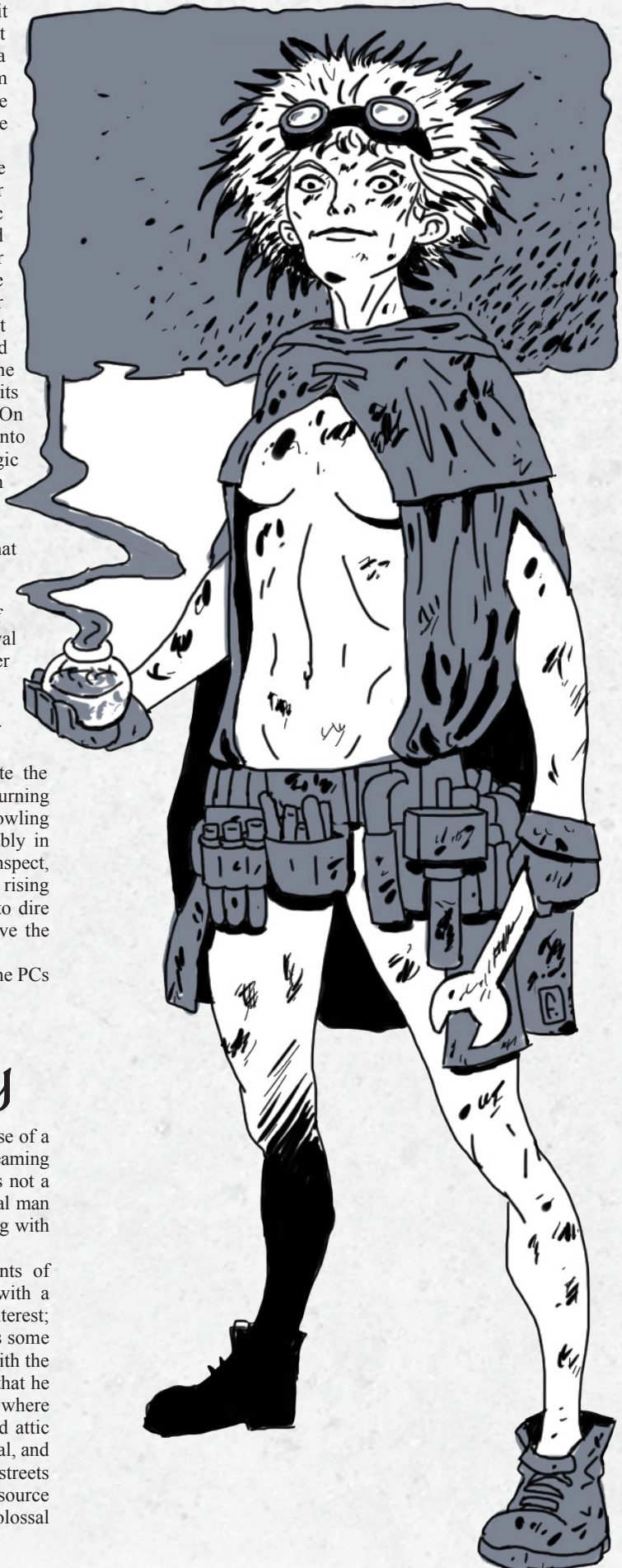
In a fit of pique, Mahaas used a ragefire spawn to immolate the uncooperative apple of his eye at a mainland ghat, with the burning prostitute running through the corpses of the area like a howling spirit. While mere threats with the ragefire have worked admirably in blackmailing Spitewinter for money, Mahaas was not so circumspect, and word has now spread like proverbial wildfire that the dead are rising to walk and burn as well as the living. This, inevitably, has led to dire consequences for the ghat owner who is looking for help to solve the riddle and restore his trade.

And thus, as a gruel-dawn rises across the Lyme, word reaches the PCs that the game is afoot ...

## Adventure Summary

The adventure begins with the PCs called in to investigate the case of a corpse that burst into flames and then inexplicably rose and ran — screaming — into the Lyme. Following initial clues, the PCs learn that it was not a corpse, but a prostitute last seen in the company of a deformed local man known as Mahaas. They may also discover further clues by working with the constabulary and by making a visit to a creepy river morgue.

The PCs find Mahaas's lodgings on Festival in the tenements of pawnbroker Uriah Mean, a bathchair-bound gnome illusionist with a miserly disposition. Mahaas has already piqued the gnome's interest; Mean scryed on his tenant and learned that the deformed freak has some "great treasure" in his grasp. Mean tries to befriend the PCs, but with the intention of having them tailed throughout their investigations so that he can attempt to take this alleged treasure when they find it. Learning where Mahaas lives, a fight breaks out in the claustrophobic and trapped attic garret, during which the PCs may first encounter a ragefire elemental, and leads to a chase through the tenement, across rooftops, and into the streets of Festival. Whether Mahaas escapes or not, the PCs discover the source of the fires and a link to the Leviathan Dig, an excavation of a colossal fossilized skeleton from the banks of the Lyme River.





## THE CRUCIBLE

The Leviathan Dig is being conducted by the Royal Underneath Society, which is led by Savant Edwina Spitewinter, The Organ Grinder, who has already caused a terrible fire in Spitewinter's private museum, is blackmailing her. Unless the PCs handle the situation cleverly, they trigger a fight with Spitewinter's overly zealous guards. By questioning Spitewinter and searching her burnt museum, the PCs discover clues leading them to the Organ Grinder.

The Organ Grinder is well known on Festival for his strange performance that involves his curious musical instrument and a grotesque monkey, and the PCs may even have seen the duo during their chase of Mahaas. The PCs eventually find his strange home: a decaying caravel lashed vertically to the end of the Dislocated Pier. The Organ Grinder is studying to become a golem-stitcher, and his hovel is crammed with jars filled with preserved organs and limbs. Here, the PCs are attacked by the Organ Grinder, his homunculus familiar, and the twisted results of his awful experiments — both failures and successes — including a twisted creature he constructed from the corpses of a minotaur and an ankheg. If desperate, the Organ Grinder also releases a ragefire elemental into the fray, risking burning down his home and the entire pier but perhaps trapping the PCs in the inferno.

As the battle progresses, the rotten ship might collapse into the alchemical silt around the river. Here, in the poisonous slime, a wallow-whale takes a passing interest in events and could make trouble for the PCs. Victorious, the PCs learn that the Organ Grinder regularly sailed to one of the great windmills and, therefore, head there to locate the source of the ragefire.

Within the great windmill is the crucible, which hangs on great chains, 6 inches thick. The Artificer and a wing of loyal gargoyles fight furiously to defend her creation, but in the heat of the battle (pun thoroughly intended), the ragefire elemental escapes. Free, the hateful creature rampages, setting the mill alight. As their investigation reaches its climax, the PCs must choose between facing the poisonous waters of the Lyme and its foul inhabitants, or trying to quench the raging conflagration and prevent an Abyssal terror from ravaging the city.

and charges them with finding out if the matter is skullduggery aimed at somehow profiting from the incidents, some act of wickedness which must be punished, or if it could potentially be regarded as a miracle, in which case it must be properly recorded and catalogued to qualify as an official miraculous sign. The PCs are furnished with lodgings, religious authority, or simply money, and provided with the rumors about Singhh, and about the previous victims (see the rumor sideboxes in **Chapters 1 and 2**).

### Rumours in the Blight

Rumor sideboxes appear throughout this adventure. Rumors are essentially idle talk or gossip, which is the staple of daily life in most places, but particularly in a crowded place like a city the size of Castorhage. Rumors are learned through the use of Diplomacy checks to gather information, although in these adventures very high checks don't always reveal the truth, just wilder or less-common gossip. In all cases, higher results also reveal all the information that lower results would reveal. Of course, the same information can be gained through roleplaying and asking questions in the right situations.

### The Sponsor

This opening is suitable for all player characters.

The Honorable and Most Holy Guild of Crematoria Masters, who are very concerned about corpses returning to life while in the charge of their members — not to mention possible demands for refunds — charge the party with ensuring that the issue goes away. They pay suitable remuneration, provide for reasonable expenses throughout the investigation, and point the party toward their member, Ghatmaster Singhh, as someone with whom to begin their enquiries.

## Adventure Hooks

The adventure begins at the Burning Ghats, which lie on the banks of the River Lyme, approximately half a mile away from Town Bridge on the true right bank of the river. Use one, or a combination, of the following three openings depending upon the goals and alignments of the PCs.

### The Long Arm of the Law

This opening is suitable for PCs motivated to help the authorities, or at least to gain their favor.

The PCs are approached by **Constable of the Watch Fidelus Crop** (NG human male veteran), the local city watch constable acting under the instructions of **Streetclerk Felicia Kent** (N human female noble), who is in charge of law enforcement and other local matters in this area. Kent is disinterested in what she sees as a trivial issue, but Crop is greatly worried; he does not like the idea of walking corpses or people burning to death on his watch and is looking for help. He is already inundated with work (assaults and murders are common in the Blight), and word has reached him about the PCs' exploits and prowess. While he cannot offer much in the way of financial reward, the friendship of the Office of the Watch could prove useful in the long run for the PCs. Crop informs the PCs of the location of Singhh's ghat and also indicates that previous victims are currently held at the Grime Street Morgue. The ghat is detailed in **Chapter 1** of this adventure, the morgue in **Chapter 2**.

### The Holy Inquisition

This opening is suitable for paladins, clerics, inquisitors, and oracles devoted to a good or lawful deity.

The holy order of a PC's god wishes a full investigation to take place of all the burning victims. A church intermediary approaches the PCs

## For the GM: Troubleshooting

*The Crucible* is an urban horror mystery adventure. Clues lead the players from one part of the investigation to the next, and even if some are missed, the players should be able to unravel the mystery and reach the climax at the great windmill. However, if the investigation comes to a dead end, you can use one or more of the following options:

- Someone other than the PCs, such as Constable Crop, finds a clue and, knowing the PCs are investigating the matter, hands the clue over.
- A clue or hint to a clue goes over and over at the back of a PC's mind. The PC might awake with an image of the room that held the clue in his mind, for example. The PC is haunted by this image until the location of the clue is revisited.
- An important NPC such as Mahaas or the Organ Grinder seeks out and attacks the PCs rather than waiting to be identified. The NPC trusts intermediaries to finish off the PCs, however, and the PCs can capture and compel these hirelings into revealing the location of the NPC. Alternatively, an NPC gets more ambitious and commits a new crime through which the PCs discover a new clue.
- The PCs fail to resolve the mystery. Occasional failure can be a good thing, particularly in a long-running campaign, as it provides the option to reintroduce the NPC (who may have become more powerful) at a later date so he can haughtily remind the PCs that he beat them before ...



# Sights, Sounds, and Smells in the Blight

This adventure takes place around the vile Great Lyme River, a ubiquitous, filthy backdrop to the events of the investigation. The chemical, excrement stench from its foul flow is a regular reminder of its roiling presence; the distracting splashes and squelches of its lurking denizens are frequent warnings of the horrors that call it home. The corpses that occasionally roll into view from its turbid depths, only to be dragged back under by some wan devourer, are chilling evidence of the brutality of life along its course and the truth of sailors' tales of its flesh-eating monsters. The more familiar the PCs are with the dark occupants of the deep, the more frightening the specific parts of the adventure will be where they face falling in.

Festival is very noisy and smells of sugar, tar, and sweat. *The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* details this area of the Blight and provides GMs with more information to present its many locations and rich flavor.

# Seasons and Weather

Although the basics of the adventure should remain unchanged, the season when this adventure takes place may affect various encounters. Refer to Fifth Edition's environment rules for specific effects of weather.

**Winter:** Winter is cold, with a 50% chance each day for a cold snap that lowers the temperature by a further 10° F. There is regular precipitation, most commonly as freezing fog or snow, but occasionally as hail, sleet, or heavy snow. The Lyme is nearly frozen, and anyone immersed in the water must deal with the cold as well as its denizens. Snow and ice coat walls and pavement, increasing the DC of Acrobatics and Athletics checks by 5 where appropriate.

**Spring:** The spring weather is damp. Rain falls throughout the adventure. Light rain only affects mood, but a downpour can prevent ranged attacks at long range and impose tactical disadvantage on short-range attacks. Perception checks based on vision, hearing, or smell can also be affected, at your discretion. Fires spread slowly if at all (divide the chance to spread by 5; see **Fire and Water** in **Chapter 6**).

**Summer:** The final encounter in the great windmill takes place when it is tinder dry. Fires spread twice as quickly, spreading to one adjacent 5-foot square per round for every square that is already burning. Blowing dust can obscure vision at long distances, at your discretion.

**Autumn:** Strong winds slash the city, and it rains often. These two factors offset each other in respect to the spreading of fires, so there are no game effects from that standpoint. However, if you determine it to be raining or windy during any outdoor encounters, apply appropriate modifiers to movement, visibility, ranged attacks, etc.

## Running The Crucible in Other Cities

For a GM who wishes to run *The Crucible* for his players but does not want to set it specifically in a Blight campaign, the locations within this adventure could easily appear in another town or city.

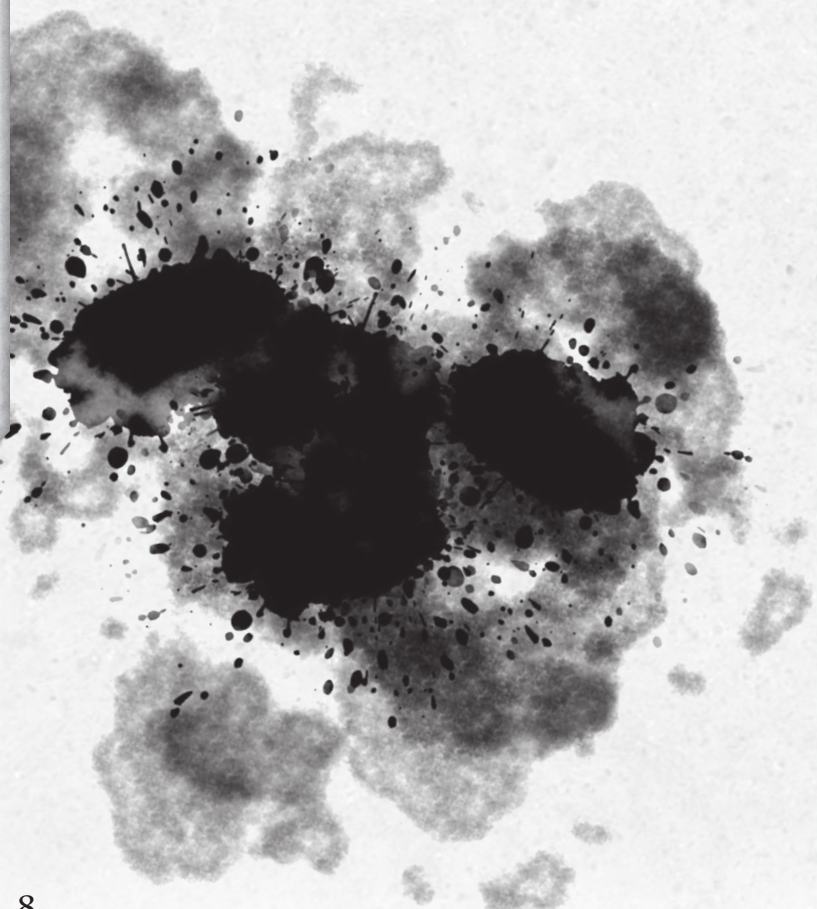
**The Burning Ghats:** A ghat is a religious site consisting of a set of steps leading to water used for various purposes, including cremation. Any crematoria or similar corpse-burning area can be substituted, as can a site connected to a holy building appropriate to your campaign, such as a small riverside temple. The site should have few possible witnesses.

**The Pawnbroker's Tenement:** Any building with a high rooftop is suitable, such as a tall manor divided into poor lodgings, a tower, or townhouse. Some of the details of the chase may also need to be modified.

**The Leviathan Dig:** The dig can be moved quite easily or changed without altering the flavor of the adventure. Instead of mysterious ancient beings, the Leviathans could be giants, dragons, dinosaurs or other more commonly known creatures. This area could also be changed into an ancient dungeon setting with the PCs helping to open the chambers below.

**The Dislocated Pier:** The *Limpet* can be put on any pier or docklands.

**The Great Windmill:** If colossal feats of engineering are inappropriate for your campaign, substitute a riverside tower or a lighthouse for the windmill. No machinery is inside, but the crucible hangs within the structure.





# Chapter One: The Burning Ghats

This chapter covers the investigation as the PCs seek out the source of the latest burning rumors and look into the case involving the ghat of M'hajeet Singhh. It is primarily roleplaying and skill-based activities, so XP awards are designated for the PCs uncovering certain clues.

## The Strange Case of M'hajeet Singhh

The initial investigation of the PCs should begin at the ghat of the holy man M'hajeet Singhh (area A1). If the PCs wish to gather information on the ghatmaster and the previous day's events before going to the scene, use the rumor table in the sidebar to determine the information they acquire.

### Rumours about Singhh

Result	Rumor
10	"Did you hear about the ghat that Singhh runs? Well, yesterday he was busy burning the dead and preparing them for the river when one of those corpses stood up and ran! Why, Beltane himself never made so bold a robbery!"
15	"I heard Singhh has paid dearly for his walking corpse, and now locals won't go near his ghat at Angelsgate unless they're going to the Angel Church. Who can blame them? Once someone's dead they should have the decency to remain so."
20	"Some say Singhh has fallen on hard times and pulled the stunt himself using a niece of his. I heard that a member of the Watch suggested that stringing him up and asking questions afterward would likely reveal a more natural than supernatural cause for this walking corpse."

### A1. Singhh's Ghat

Singhh's ghat at Angelsgate on the banks of the Lyme is well known and easy to find. If the PCs aren't locals and don't already know the way, anyone they ask can point them in the right direction.

Here, the poisoned river gurgles at the foot of a line of stone steps, their surfaces smoothed by age and tattooed with colorful tikkas and dyes. Above, the streets frown upon a singular space; within are six great slabs, and one bears a corpse laid atop a huge pyre of sweet-smelling timber, straw and spices. The redolence of sandalwood and exotic oils mingles with the more subtle smell of putrefaction from the body and, stronger, the distant stink of the river. Nearby, a painted and singing holy man is lighting coals.

Angelsgate is named for the stone angel atop the nearby Angel Church, and also because it connects the streets beyond to the river and was once used as a dock. Originally called "Angel Gate," it ceased to be a viable dockland area after the Angel Gate Fire in 1596, which consumed a dozen warehouses that lay not far from the dock and which were reached via a broad cobbled street that still remains today. A disused drinking trough in the shape of a whale lies about 50 feet away from the ghat; faded markings state that it was "Donated by the Angel Gate Import and Storage Company" in 1582. The ghat has been here since 1597 when the local traders, the ancestors of the current Singhh running the place, became more pious in the hope of work returning. Their prayers were answered in 1599 when renowned miller Halibut Quentin Crane (1534–1601) built a dye works on the land left by the warehouses. Unfortunately for Crane, a succubus enthralled him, stole his soul and took him to the Abyss. His eldest son, Sald Crane (1590–1688), took over. The dye works are still active today but use the canals for transportation.





## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

The holy man is the ghatmaster **M'hajeet Singhh** (NG human male acolyte), who owns and operates the ghat here on the riverbank at Angelsgate. Singhh, who is usually very cheerful, is a slight but strong man of Jaata descent. However, the events of yesterday have robbed him of his spirits and trade. Anyone taking an interest in the ghatmaster soon finds themselves overwhelmed by his thanks and worries. The ghatmaster had at least five corpses to cremate this morning, but after yesterday's events, four people have withdrawn their loved ones for fear of them getting up and coming home. Singhh is so anxious to get his story out and so grateful for any potential help and interest that he babbles excitedly. This, combined with his thick Jaatin accent, makes him difficult to understand, but patience and calm persuasion will calm him sufficiently to get the bulk of his story out in an understandable manner.

The "rising corpse" mentioned in the rumor was on a raised stone slab at point **X** on the map. Singhh sleeps in a small, improvised flotsam shack (actually nothing more than four posts and a roof of wood and barrel parts) at point **S**.

### Singhh's Story

Singhh's life fell apart yesterday morning at the 6th hour of the prime (6 AM). He remembers the Angel Church clock (**A2**) striking the hour. It was very misty — he could barely see farther than his hands before his face — and the morning was still. He could hear that the workers repairing the church (**A3**) had just started their work.

If pressed to describe what happened when the corpse rose, he recalls that he heard voices — two voices, in fact: a man and a woman — and that they might have been arguing, though he did not hear any of the details of the exchange. He admits he had only just awoken.

Lenice Quarn — the corpse in question — was wearing a white pyre gown, a common burial attire, then arose, dashing past him wreathed in fire. She screamed, ran down the steps, and leapt into the water. The constabulary later assumed the corpse was taken by slop-sharks (see sidebox) because they couldn't find the body when they dragged the water. In fact, Lyme Constable Crop, the local Constable of the Watch, sent a

couple of lads out in a boat with a hook and chain. But these searchers spent little more than 5 minutes looking, partly due to fear and partly due to the stench and stinging in their eyes caused by the recent dumping of a load of alchemical rot in the river here. Singhh thought the dragging was somewhat cursory, and assumes they would have looked harder if Crop had stayed to supervise. If questioned about the local gossip that his niece was the walking corpse, Singhh looks confused and explains that he has no niece.

### What Really Happened

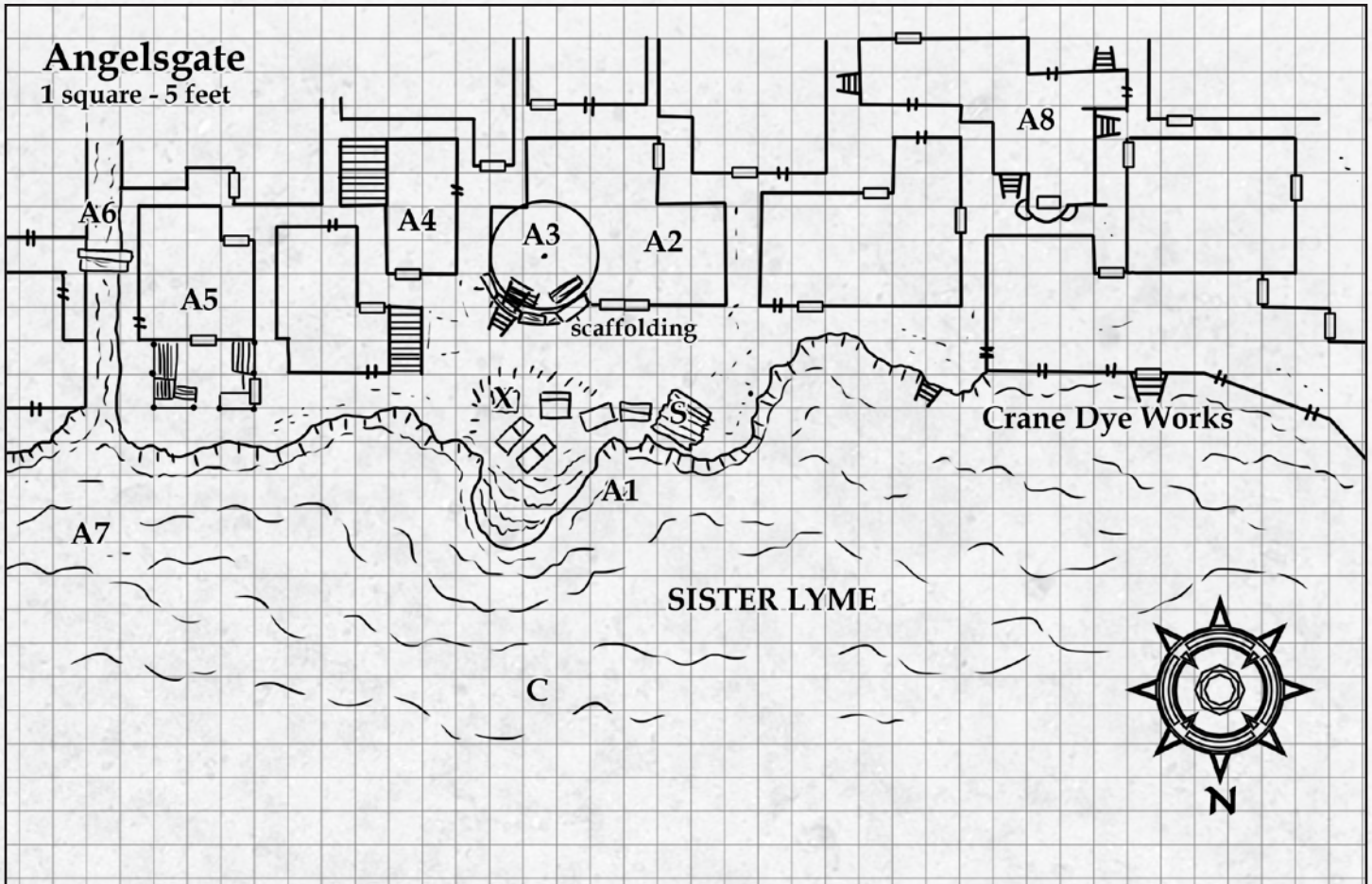
Yesterday, Mahaas, the deformed hireling of the Organ Grinder, waylaid the prostitute Constance Chanterelle near the ghats just before the 6th bell. The air was thick with the Canker; visibility was a handful of feet. Constance wore a plain white dress, which in the light could easily be mistaken for a funeral shroud like Lenice's. Mahaas was obsessed with Constance — many men were — but she found him repulsive and always refused his advances. After she had done so again yesterday, Mahaas threatened her with a vial of fire he had stolen from the Organ Grinder. Constance started to run, and Mahaas, in a fit of frustration, threw the vial at her, little knowing what would happen. The vial smashed when it struck the girl, releasing a tiny ragefire spawn (see **Appendix I**) that immediately attached to her flesh and clothing. As the poor girl struggled, consumed in the devilish fire, she staggered into Singhh's view, her face wreathed in flame and obscured. Screaming, she ran to the water and leapt in. As she plunged under the water, she was carried by a submerged current and became caught in the rusting embrace of an old iron fishing vessel sunken just off shore. While the ragefire spawn was destroyed, extinguished by its immersion in the water, the damage had been done and, too weak to escape the snag, there the poor girl drowned.

Singhh's attention was on the dress: a white dress identical — so he thought — to one worn by one of his clients' corpses. While Singhh's attention was wholly taken by what the ghatmaster thought was one of his charges — risen, burning, and screaming — Mahaas saw the corpse in the white dress and spontaneously contrived a plan. He quickly snatched



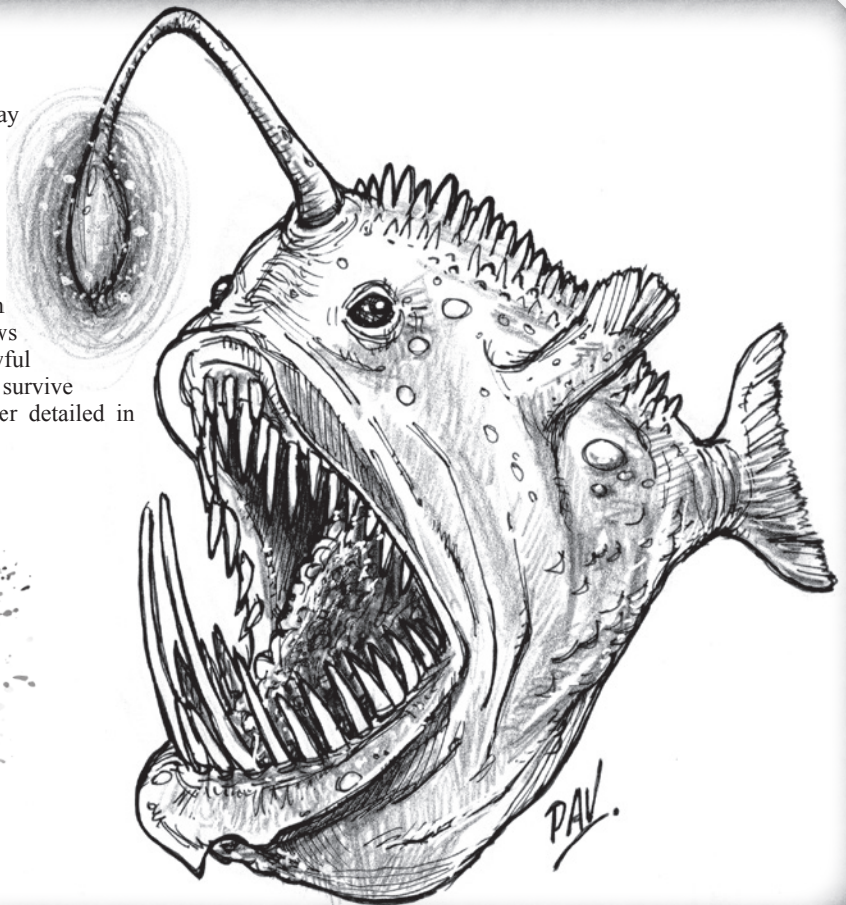


# THE CRUCIBLE



## Slop-Sharks

The terror of all who use the river as their main way across the city, slop-sharks are one of the many predators lurking just beneath the rubbish and waste-strewn surface of the Lyme. Also known as Lyme anglers, from the smaller juveniles to the massive specimens that are the stuff of nightmares, all slop-sharks resemble ragged sacks of putrid flesh about to burst open with a glowing lantern-like appendage dangling from between their eyes. They have great wide mouths filled with rows of ragged teeth, and their horrific diseased bite causes awful infections that frequently kill anyone lucky enough to survive the trauma. Lyme anglers (aka slop-sharks) are further detailed in *The Tome of Blighted Horrors* by Frog God Games.





## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

the white-shrouded corpse, stuffing it into a nearby handcart belonging to the pie-seller Master Cookcroft (A4). He then fled with it into the Canker. Having hidden the stolen corpse in the river upstream, Mahaas believed he had committed the perfect murder and returned to his home on Festival.

### Recovering the Body

Constance's body has not been eaten by slop-sharks yet because of the foul alchemic effluent dumped here last night (which also quickly drove the searchers off), and it is still lodged in the rusting skeleton of a small fishing vessel 30 feet out from Singhh's ghat (point C) and under 15 feet of water. This is where she died and where the ragefire spawn was likewise snuffed out.

Local children sagely inform anyone they see examining or entering the river here that it is full of slop-sharks in these parts and warn them against swimming out. If the PCs are nice to the children or reward them for their volunteered information, one of them remembers seeing some men from the local dye works dumping some barrels into the river upstream the day before yesterday. The child overheard them laughing and saying "It's not like anyone drinks from the river, 'cept the sharks, o'course, and this'll give 'em what for! They'll be outta' here like a flash!"

The water is inky black, and visibility beneath the surface is only 2 feet, beyond which is total darkness without a light source. Anyone in the cold water can feel things moving about around them, and objects suddenly come into their view — an odd boot (perhaps with a foot still in it), a corn doll, a blind white slug. A DC 15 Wis (Perception) check made by an individual in the water is required to locate Constance's body. If successful, it suddenly appears — wan and terribly burnt — out of the murky water. The corpse can be disentangled easily from the metal and dragged back to shore. An examination of the recovered body reveals that the majority of burns are on her face and neck, and that the shape of these burns resemble claw marks. A DC 15 Int (Medicine) check identifies the cause of death as drowning. When Constance leapt into water, the ragefire was snuffed out, and she was close to death. Too weak to swim or fight the minimal current, she was pulled under, became lodged in the wreck, passed out, and ultimately drowned. What remains of her dress is white and plain, and she wears no shoes. The wreckage of her face is drawn into an eternal, silent scream. On the back of her shoulder is a crudely rendered tattoo with the image of a black rose.

**Development:** If the PCs find Constance's body, they can find a local able to identify her with a successful DC 13 Int (Investigation) check. Identifying a drowned body is an unpleasant business, and the PCs stir up suspicion, anger, and resentment, triggering **Event 1** below.

**Ad Hoc XP Award:** If the PCs successfully determine the cause of death as drowning, award everyone 500 XP. If they correctly identify the body, award everyone 1,500 XP.

### Constance and Speak with Dead

The PCs can learn what happened to Constance by using *speak with dead* on her corpse. When the spell is cast, the corpse animates with a scream before it is consumed with sobs and moans. Coughing up foul river water, it answers the PCs' questions in a gurgling voice that a deformed man called Mahaas abused her with colorful language when she refused his advances, and threatened her with a "burning terror in a crystal flask" before she turned to run. Then the flask hit her, and she was engulfed in flames that tore at her neck like claws. She jumped into the river and the fire went out, but she became caught on something and couldn't get free. Other than describing Mahaas' appearance (see **B8-13**), the corpse knows little else of use to the PCs.

### A2. Church of the Angel

Currently wreathed in bamboo scaffolding (A3), the church steeple is being repaired from damage caused by a lightning strike. The church is consecrated to Maelstrom, the Archangel of Vengeance. The interior decoration and stained-glass windows speak of revenge and the punishment of sin.

### A3. The Workmen

**Enoch and Dillard Sheldon** (N human male commoners), 2 steeplejacks from the East Ending, are currently repairing the church steeple. Both are men of few words and do not like to stop working to talk, as they are paid upon completion of the job, not by the hour. They do not respond to shouts from the street below.

PCs wishing to question them must scale three thin ladders that ascend 60 feet before meeting sparse bamboo scaffolding to traverse, which extends outward from the spire over the street below via an overhang; the whole climb takes a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) check to avoid a 50-foot fall, unless characters use ropes to secure themselves to the ladders and scaffolding and prevent a fall, as the Sheldon brothers do. Alternatively, PCs can wait until the end of the day when the pair descend. However, at this time, both are anxious to return to their families and move briskly through the city streets, not stopping without good reason.

A successful DC 13 Cha (Persuasion) check gets the taciturn brothers speaking. Dillard was working on the upper steeple in the morning when, alerted by screams and Singhh's yells, he saw the burning figure run and leap into the river. Enoch, however, also recalls seeing a hooded man in a multi-colored patchwork coat hastily pushing a handcart away from the ghat just afterward. He assumes it was a local thief, taking advantage of the diversion.

**Ad Hoc XP Award:** If the PCs acquire this information from the workmen, award everyone 500 XP.

### A4. The Pieman

**Master Cookcroft** (NG human male commoner) is a huge, bald man who makes fine pies, including a mint lamb and a very passable minced beef and ale that he sells for 1 sp each in his nearby shop. If the PCs enquire about his handcart, the pieman tells the PCs that his cart vanished yesterday while he was making a delivery near the ghats, but that he found it later near the river upstream where the amiable Cookcroft suspects that children were playing a trick and hid it. A careful inspection of the cart reveals curious oil stains on the top. They smell like the perfumed oils and resins used by Jaata holy men to prepare corpses for cremation. There are more stains within the cart. Cookcroft can show the PCs where he found the cart (A6) if they ask. The route goes right past a fruiterer's shop (A5).

**Ad Hoc XP Award:** Identifying the oil stains earns everyone 200 XP.

### A5. Gorse & Sons Fruit

Enquiries at the fruiterer's reveals that Gorse, the owner, saw the hooded man in the patchwork coat pushing the pieman's cart up the street at about 6th hour but didn't want to get involved. He, too, assumes it was a rogue who soon slipped over a nearby rickety canal bridge (A6) and into the Canker. He lets the PCs know that he's seen this hooded man before, hanging around the working girls at Armington's Tenements (A7).

### A6. Rickety Canal Bridge

A pair of planks cross an open sewer here. Presently, a dead dog lies beached on an isle of filth 10 feet directly below the bridge, which creaks ominously as it is crossed but remains whole and sound.



## A7. Corpse of Lenice Quarn

A search of the river near where the cart was found uncovers the body of Lenice Quarn, the corpse Singhh was supposed to cremate and which he thought had burst into flames and run into the river. Like Constance's body, it, too, has remained unmolested by aquatic predators due to the dye factory's chemical dumping upstream. Heavy stones from the docks have been used to keep the corpse, still clad in its white but now stained and dirty funeral dress, from floating to the surface. It has patches of abraded skin and several dislocated joints; a successful Wis (Medicine) check correctly deduces that the corpse was forced into a small space.

**Ad Hoc XP Award:** If the PCs figure out that the body was stowed in the pie cart resulting in its damaged state, award everyone 200 XP.

## A8. The Angelsgate Working Girls

The local doxies lodge in Armington's Tenements, which lie two streets back from the river, close to the Crane Dye Works. The dye workers are good customers of the girls, and nights can get rowdy in the seemingly endless number of local gin shops, alehouses, and taverns. After dark, rogues, cutpurses, or worse set upon PCs who become embroiled in the violent drunkenness that plagues this district.

Questioning the women and men working in the area reveals that Constance was being plagued by a vile character by the name of Mahaas, a two-headed freak who lives somewhere on Festival. However, unless the PCs are careful not to implicate Mahaas in Constance's murder, the girls may decide to visit vengeance upon Mahaas themselves.

### Event 1: Street Justice

If the locals learn that the PCs have Constance's body, the Angelsgate working girls soon arrive with their pimp and his gang. They do not want the body interfered with, especially by vile and unnatural *speak with dead* spells, and demand that it be cremated properly. They are prepared to fight for it if necessary. The group consists of 12 Angelsgate doxies (**12 commoners**) and a trio of burly Angel Gang enforcers (**3 veterans**) named Lemon, Kind Karg, and Fetid. Their pimp and gang leader, a strange looking fellow known as the Cherub (**gladiator**), leads them. Muscled and tattooed, he is an albino, his shock of white hair and unblemished pale skin making him look almost angelic, but his knowing smile is anything but. If the PCs do not accede to the gang's wishes, they are willing to take the body by force, cheered on by the rowdy girls, who will not balk at the odd kick, punch and choice language.

**Cherub (Gladiator):** AC 16; HP 112 (15d8+45); Spd 30ft; **Melee** spear (+7, 2d6+4 piercing or 2d8+4 piercing with 2 hands), shield bash (+7, 2d4+4 bludgeoning; Medium or smaller target must make DC 15 Str save or knocked prone); **Ranged** spear (+7, 20ft/60ft, 2d6+4 piercing); **SA** multiattack (melee x3 or ranged x2); **Reaction** parry (+3 AC against melee attack that would hit, if gladiator sees attacker and has melee weapon); **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Saving Throws** Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6; **Skills** Athletics +10, Intimidation +5; **Traits** brave (advantage on saves vs. fright); **AL** any; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

**Angel Gang Enforcers (3, Veteran):** AC 17; HP 58 (9d8+18); Spd 30ft; **Melee** longsword x2 (+5, 1d8+3 slashing); shortsword (+5, 1d6+3 piercing); **Ranged** heavy crossbow (+3, 100ft/400ft, 1d10 piercing); **SA** multiattack (longsword x2, shortsword); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2; **AL** LN; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

**Angelsgate Daxies (12, Commoner):** AC 10; HP 4 (1d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** dagger (+2, 1d4 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **AL** LN; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

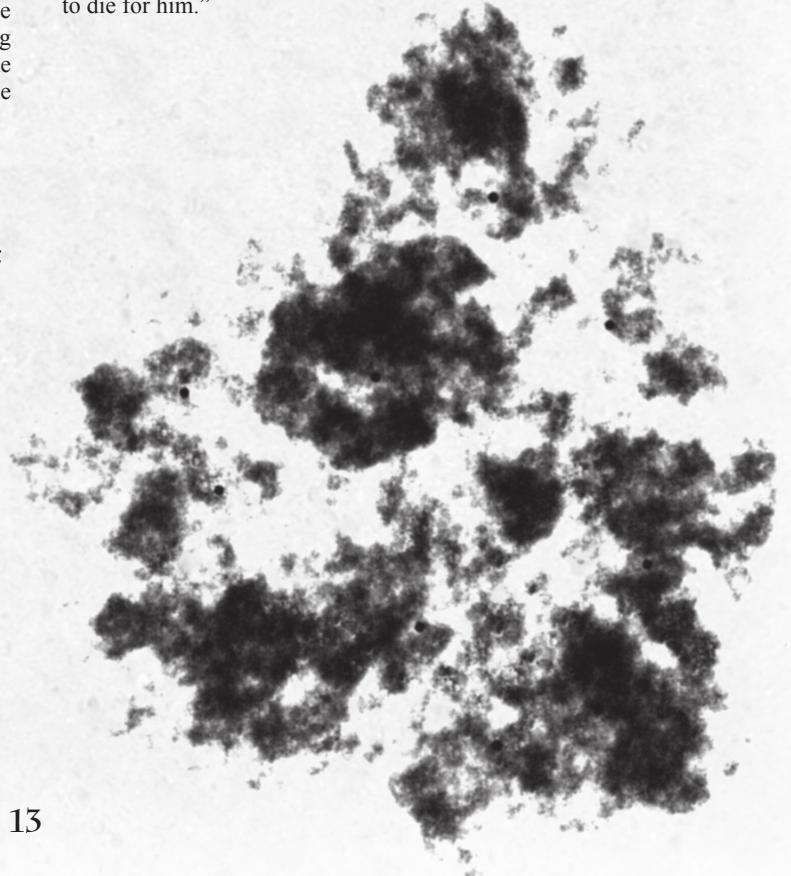
**Tactics:** The group, like most in the Blight, automatically assume the PCs have some dirty reason for taking the girl's body, or worse, are responsible for her death and come calling like a baying mob. The PCs can defuse the situation by convincing the Cherub of their authority or good intentions, but, aided by his gang and girls, he is difficult to convince. Their starting attitude is unfriendly, and the characters must present a persuasive explanation (or make a successful DC 20 Cha [Persuasion or Deception] check) to improve it. Showing a symbol of some sort of office in the investigation, such as a written authority by Lyme Constable Crop, gives tactical advantage on the Cha check. Any attempt to Intimidate the gang, however, leads to immediate hostility. If the PCs manage to escape with the body, the gang resorts to finding where the PCs lodge through their extensive list of local contacts if necessary. You can assume in this case that unless the PCs left the area magically, or used some cunning escape that you feel deserves a reward for ingenuity, they find them within 1d6 hours.

**Development:** Fighting these thugs causes complications both immediately as locals refuse to speak to the PCs for fear of gang reprisals, and at later dates as relatives and friends of the gang and their girls come looking to settle the score. How and when this reprisal occurs is left to you, but it should involve a hard or deadly encounter with rogues from the local arm of the Thieves' Guild (a.k.a. The Guild).

## The Trail of Mahaas

Having learnt the identity of the murderer, the PCs likely wish to gather information about Mahaas. If so, characters must talk to NPCs who know him or know something about him. The best place to gather such information is Festival. Diligent PCs can learn any of the following:

- "One can only pity so poor a soul, stricken as he is with a second head. He hides that terrible second face away under a great hood, which he wears to spare the fear of those he passes. He has many such hoods — some bright and gay, some dark and shadowy."
- "That freak has been seen lurking around Festival for years. They say his second head is alive and that it talks to birds and beasts!"
- "There's more to him than meets the eye. He has lodgings with that Uriah Mean, and we all know about that miserly pawnbroker. They say Mahaas keeps the same sort of dark company and has friends willing to die for him."





# Chapter Two:

## The Grime Street Morgue

If the PCs make an effort to gather information about any similar burning deaths in recent weeks, they can learn any of the following:

- “The constabulary have five previous victims of spontaneous combustion interred in the Grime Street Morgue.”
- “The five victims were all loners.”
- “Did you hear about the strange rain that fell on the nights they died? Storms whipping out of nowhere and vanishing as soon as they started. Mighty strange coincidence if you ask me.”

### At the Morgue

The Grime Street Morgue is run by **Underclerk Ernest R. Wigmore** (N human male noble), the morgue rests at the edge of the Hollow and Broken Hills district of the city, roughly 100 yards from the Chain Ferry, and consists of a small office cluttered with wooden filing drawers and ledgers. A locked door can be opened with thief’s tools and a successful DC 15 Dex check. Inside, a short flight of steps leads down to a large, lime-washed cellar with a dozen wooden biers for incoming bodies. Ernest is a stickler for duty, and for the PCs to gain any kind of access to the cellar, he must be convinced of their good intentions. Mentioning Lyme Constable Crop’s name will do.

So far, the first three bodies have been subjected to *Speak with Dead* spells by the authorities and all questions and answers studiously recorded in a ledger. PCs can gain access to the ledger only by stealing it or by making a successful DC 15 Cha (Persuasion or Intimidation) check with Wigmore. The ledger reveals that, in each case, a standard set of questions was asked and the answers were similar:

- Q:** Were you attacked? **A:** Yes  
**Q:** Did you know your attacker? **A:** No.  
**Q:** What attacked you? **A:** Living fire. It burnt so bad!  
**Q:** Did the living fire say anything? **A:** No.

The first three have all been questioned with the spell within the last week, so the PCs will be unable to use new *Speak with Dead* spells on them at this time. However, it can be used on the remaining two. Likewise, if the PCs have other divinatory means at their disposal and contrive to learn more from the decedents, the basic story is the same for each victim. They were sleeping alone in the streets and awoke under attack from a fire creature that hung onto their flesh and burnt them to death. In their suffering, none of the victims saw the Artificer nearby, carefully noting the effects of her vile attack.

If asked, Ernest can confirm that the bodies were all found on the isle of Festival, but talking about that locale makes him noticeably nervous. The Underclerk has heard the rumors about the isle — that it is home to a nest of wererats. If pressed, he reveals that getting the bodies back over to the morgue was an issue. The current Festival Watch Captain, Edrin Grast (see area F5), is luckily dealing with an internal matter, and the main City Watch were able to demand the bodies. In truth, Ernest suspects that knowing the Watch over on the island, this matter would not have come to light but for the hysteria that greeted it.

The bodies retain their clothes, mostly charred to nothing in places with bits of metal from rings or necklaces actually melted into the scorched flesh, but shreds do remain. Any belongings are kept in a drawer in the

corpse’s bier clearly marked as “Victim’s Personal Effects” and are detailed below.

Each victim marked **W** shows signs of the water elemental used by the Artificer to quench the fire and kill the ragefire. These effects are detailed on the first victim Rosie for reference.

**Victim #1, Rosie Weft (W):** The horribly burnt body of this young woman shows signs of the Artificer’s use of a water elemental to extinguish the ragefire elemental. The body shows clear signs of having been immersed in water although it was found on dry land. Her clothing has been burnt, but close checking reveals curious bruising and tearing of her subcutaneous tissues consistent with being struck by a force from the front, more or less evenly across her whole body. The burns resemble claws digging into flesh in at least two places.

**Victim #2, Edmund Hyde:** The Artificer pushed this victim into the Lyme. The corpse again shows signs of fiery claws. Edmund’s burnt clothes are the ragged garb of a low-caste person or beggar. Ernest can confirm that the constabulary knew Edmund, and he was a sad case. His wife ran away with a sailor 12 years ago, and he’d been drowning his sorrows in gin ever since. If asked, Ernest can provide the PCs with the address of the Grinning Lacedon, a public house on Festival where Hyde was known to drink. For more information on that ghastly drinking pit, see **Further Leads** below.

When hired by the Organ Grinder, Mahaas told him of a number of people on Festival whom he thought “could easily go missing,” and two were people he’d seen frequenting Mean’s pawnshop. Hyde was one of them, and the other was the navy (Victim #5 below).

**Victim #3, Eugene Wolkman (W):** Eugene was a loner who slept on the docks where he worked. Three locals saw him running through the streets, his body a blazing pyre of flame. Their statements are included in Ernest’s ledger. All three witnesses claim to have seen a watery figure roughly the shape of a man, but considerably more massive, strike the victim, quenching the flames. They believe it was a sign from the gods to protect them from injury. One witness, Goodwife Blacksyrup, claims to have heard a strange chanting just before the watery figure appeared. A successful DC 15 Int (Arcana) check leads a character to suspect the watery figure was a water elemental.

**Victim #4, N. N. Number One:** An apparent tramp, this young man’s corpse shows all the hallmarks of a ragefire attack. The head is terribly burnt, in particular. He was found floating among the docks last week.

**Victim #5, N. N. Number Two (W):** Apparently a navy (dock laborer), this victim was found 3 days ago. He shows the signs of the

### Non Nominis

The designation “N.N.” is used in the City-State of Castorhage to indicate an individual whose name is not known, much like the use of John Doe in the United States. It is from the ancient language of High Boros and means “Non Nominus,” or “Name Unknown.”



ragefire's attacking claws. A search of the victim's belongings uncovers a pawnbroker's ticket along with 3 gp, 7 sp, and an iron key, all of which have also been logged by Ernest. The ticket is for a rapier pawned for 5 gp and is signed "Uriah Mean, Riverside Tenement Pawnbroker, Festival."

## Go Far, Go Good?

By this stage of their investigation, it is hoped the PCs should know two key pieces of information. First that they are searching for a man called Mahaas with two heads and who lives somewhere on Festival. Second, that there is a link from two previous victims to a pawnbroker on the same isle. Luckily for the PCs, visiting the pawnbroker's tenement on Festival leads them straight to their quarry. The PCs can get to Festival on the Chain Ferry (see sidebox), which costs 1 sp per passenger; they can also arrange a more private and convenient crossing by private charter for 10 gp.

### The Chain Ferry

The Chain Ferry to Festival is a large, flat-bottomed barge pulled by a chain across the river. It is teeming with pleasure seekers, and has a large number of traders, puppeteers, and actors who ply their trades during its 10-minute crossing, which costs 1 sp. *The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* gives more details of this ferry and the occupants.

## Rumours about Uriah Mean

- "Mean by name, mean by nature. He has no soul, that vile gnome. All he loves is money, and his every waking thought is driven by how to acquire more of it. His tenement lies at the edge of the Isle of Festival, very near the Chain Ferry in a part of the district known as the Footings. You can't miss it — it's the place that looks like it's falling into the river. It's one of the worst in the area. Leaks and holes, rot and mould — that's what thrives there. I wouldn't give you a fourthling to spend a night there although he lives in that barge outside."
- "They say Mean was crippled during a hunt and that he can't stand by himself, but I've heard different. I've heard he dabbles in magic of a most dark sort, and that his injuries were inflicted by a cat which caught him when he was scuttling about in the form of a rat!"
- "Some people say Mean is one of the Family — the ruling clan of wererats who have Festival held in their small sharp teeth. The Family take care of their own, they say, and to cross any of them is dangerous."
- "Oh, he's in the Family alright! He has that thug Mister Mackerel to watch over his affairs and to deal with anyone who annoys him. You need to tread lightly 'round old Mean lest you're paid a visit in the night."

## Festival

When the PCs finally reach Festival, read or paraphrase the following description:

Festival up close is even more insane than seems feasible. A vast bloated isle of garish color rises from a wide, crowded shore of bright buildings, seemingly a freak gust of wind away from tumbling into the silty waters about her. Banners and hoardings and signs proclaim the last chance to see the "Dreadful Supper of Four Broken Men as One," the "Awful Whale-Girl," and "Foul Mother Broken." These signs compete for height and color and size, obscuring Festival as it rises through crooked streets to a great fayre at its summit.

And as the chain ferry clanks to the harbor, there is a rush of entertainers: a dwarf in red cries out an invitation to see the Great Ape of Dark Libynos; an impossibly tall man wearing a hood with a single eyehole holds out a vast hand for alms; and a curious and ugly organ grinder sends his human-faced monkey to collect coppers while he plays his strange-looking organ.

The organ player is in fact the **Organ Grinder**, an NPC with a significant role in the adventure, with his pet Blight monkey. Whilst presently he has no interest to the PCs, nor any knowledge of them, them later recalling this meeting may help the PCs to deduce where the villain's performing patch encompasses. More information is detailed further in this adventure.

If the PCs wish to gather information on the pawnbroker, Uriah Mean, use the table in the sidebox to see what types of information they can acquire. This assumes the PCs make inquiries on Festival. All they can learn anywhere else is, "try asking around on Festival."

## Other Possible leads on Festival

The locations of the locales used across Festival are detailed on the area map. Two locations have been mentioned in passing: the Grinning

Lacedon and the Festival Watch Station, both of which are detailed below and numbered occurred to their tag on the overall map of the city provided in *The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*.

## The Grinning Lacedon

The Lacedon lurks in a mouldy corner of the Footings. Even from the outside, it looks to be on its last legs; within, it is even more decayed.

Here is a curiosity: This building literally sags. It leans between its neighbors, a dying building of dying timber and dying stone. The stone resembles rotting teeth in a swollen timber mouth. Above hangs a revolting object, a mummified ghoul, its leering face grinning directly down at the doorway.

Within, the twisted ornamentation grows and festers. Here is an obsessive collector's lifetime of obsession — about lacedons. There are paintings of their demise at the blades of heroic nobles, several bones in walnut cabinets, an obsessive amount of religious protection from both Brine and Mother Grace, and in one corner is a whole preserved lacedon skeleton labelled as a curiosity from the Physician's Institute in BookTown (area B18).

**Wintry Theram** (LN human female noble), a sour-faced old witch who last smiled in 1693 accordingly to local legend, owns the Lacedon. PCs seeing Theram and making a DC 25 Sense Motive check can discern her breeding beneath the decay in her bearing and may even spot a ratty old fur coat hanging behind the bar if they bother to look there. Theram hates her station in life, and longs for the Capitol from which — regrettably — she was exiled after offending a member of the Tredici Family. The comings and goings and base humor of commoners revolts her, but if someone notes her breeding and uses the correct etiquette (via roleplaying or a successful DC 15 Charisma check) to know the right way of such things, she warms to the characters immediately and brings out a bottle of fine vintage wine (only offering it to the PCs that impressed her, and drinking most of it herself). She soon gets boring with her one-track talk about the magnificence of the Capitol and her grand stained-glass windows, lofty gardens and good manners.



## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

The aloof owner recalls that Hyde (she never refers to anyone by their first name) had been flush with coin recently, having sold his wife's dresses to the pawnbroker Uriah Mean. "What a revolting, degenerate thing to do and to what a revolting and degenerate individual," she editorializes. She barred Mean from the Lacedon on sight, but she does know where he lives and can provide the PCs with details (see **Chapter 3**).

### §5. The Festival Watch

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A squat, rather dirty stone tower rises from the quayside. It has become home to seagulls and crows, and its sides are streaked with years of their droppings.

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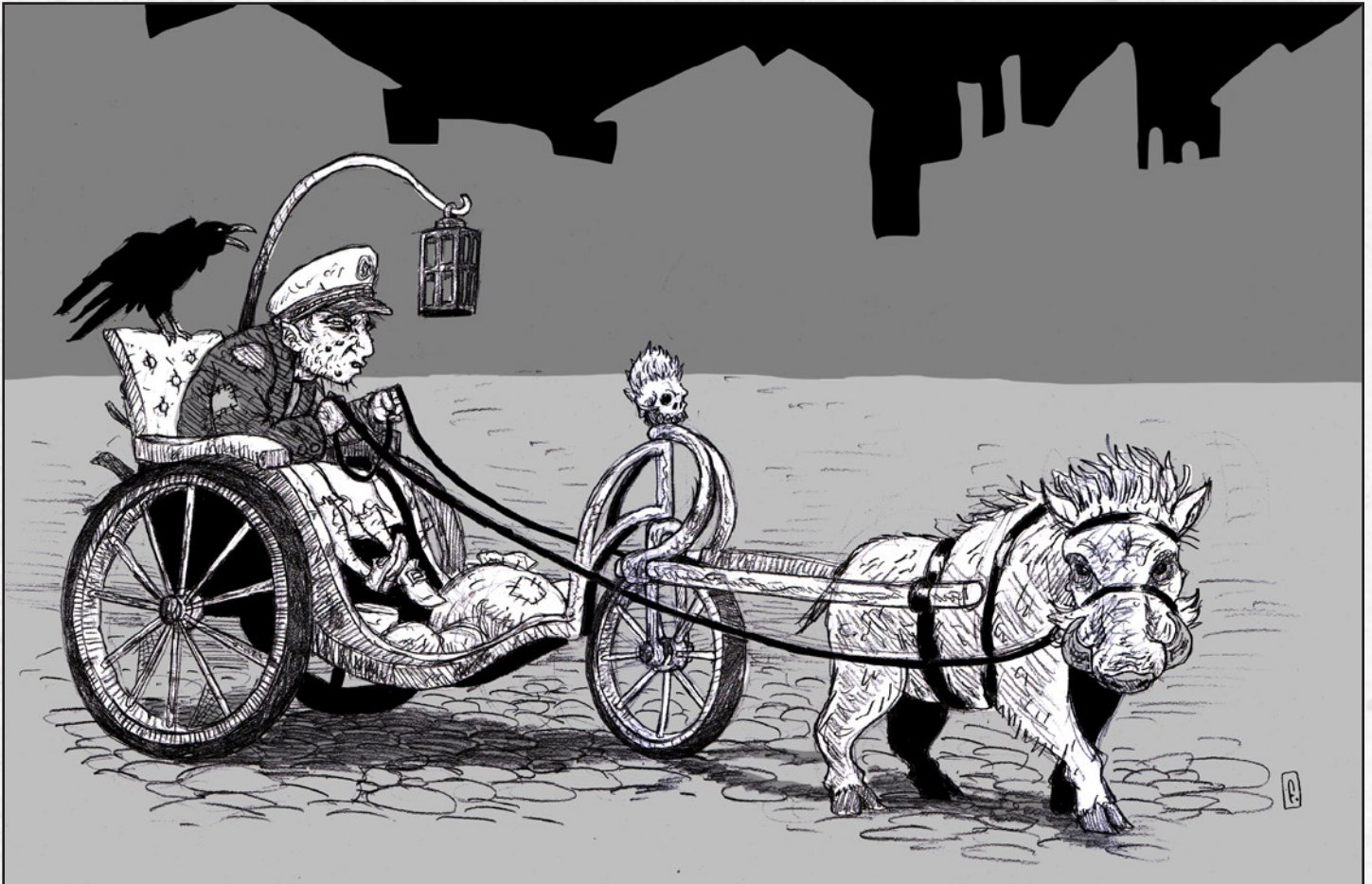
Some of these fowl operate as familiars for members of the Family; it pays to know what is occurring in the local watch.

The Festival Watch consists of **32 constables** (NE halfling male guard), recognizable by their emblazoned gray and green uniforms and the short scourges they wield to carry out their duties — which generally revolve around dealing with drunks and minor scuffles. There are also **5 Sergeants of the Watch** (NE halfling male bandit captain) led by **Watch Captain Edrin Grast** (NE halfling male wererat).

Grast is away — at the behest of one of the ruling families of Festival — and his place is taken by **Acting Captain Pleasant Fumitory** (NE halfling male wererat). Fumitory is a classic bully, and easily kowtowed by another. A successful DC 15 Cha check is needed to get cooperation or information out of him; the check is made normally if it's coupled with Intimidation, but with tactical disadvantage if someone resorts to Persuasion or any other form of pleasant exchange. He knows little (and cares less) about the strange deaths; strange deaths happen all the time on Festival, and a talk with him reveals little except his love of licorice — which he stuffs in his fat mouth constantly. The PCs should really come away with how indifferent the Watch are — they may even make jokes about the victims. This should give the PCs a higher personal sense of justice and worth than the local law; if it were left to them, the deaths would remain unsolved.



# Chapter Three: The Pawnbroker's Tenement



## Bath-chairs and Pawnbrokers

A bath-chair is an early type of wheelchair for invalids. They are usually pulled by an animal that the driver controls with reins, like a light, one-man cart. Fairly rare in other parts of Akados (though not entirely unheard of among the most cosmopolitan population centres), they occasion little comment within the urban sprawl of Castorhage.

A pawnbroker offers secured loans to people, with items of personal property used as collateral. If an item is pawned for a loan, the pawnor may redeem it for the amount of the loan plus some agreed-upon amount for interest within a certain contractual period of time. The amount of time and rate of interest is usually governed by the pawnbroker's policies. If the loan is not paid (or extended, if applicable) within the time period, the pawned item is offered for sale by the pawnbroker. Pawnbrokers may also sell items that have been sold outright to them by customers. The most famous (or infamous) pawnshop in Castorhage is the Soiled Sow Inn on Festival.

Uriah Mean (LE gnome male wererat), the infamous pawnbroker, is an honorary member of the Family — the amalgamation of wererat clans who rule Festival. The infamous pleasure island secretly operates in the name of the Rat Queen — one of the so-called “gods” of the Blight who, like many of its deities, actually physically live in the city.

Mean operates from his river barge, which is anchored at a small jetty at the foot of his tenement building that overlooks the Chain Ferry as marked on the map. As is frequently seen across the urban sprawl of the Blight, structures have converged and Mean's barge has merged with and become a part of his tenement building. It is a mass of alterations and extensions, enhancements, add-ons, and botched improvements. Mahaas lodges in the attic garret of the tenement and is one of Mean's many tenants.



# Uriah Mean, a Villain for All Seasons

Uriah Mean is an ugly old gnome with withered, useless legs and bushy white eyebrows that prop up a faded old sea captain's cap. He slumps in a rusted bath-chair resting on squeaking wheels. He uses the stat block of a wererat but with the addition of spellcasting, as noted in his description below. A harnessed boar with tiny, bloodshot eyes, coarse gray fur and yellow tusks pulls the contraption; Mean calls it Mange. The gnome uses reins tied to the boar's tusks to control the beast. A large black crow (Mean's familiar, which he calls Lovely) perches on the back of the chair, struggling to keep its balance and cawing loudly as the contraption lurches with every snap of the reins in the gnome's hands.

The notorious pawnbroker and slum tyrant Uriah Mean is a bitter and miserly cripple whose apparent obsession with crushing his tenants and debtors' hopes for better lives is matched only by his acquisitive, endless greed. Whilst in rat form, a huge tomcat (the magically enhanced familiar of a local wizard) mauled the gnome, leaving him unable to use his legs — and with an irrational fear of cats. He spends most of his time confined to a rickety bath-chair that is pulled around by a trained boar (actually his thrall, an imp called Mange) that rarely leaves his presence.

His crow familiar, Lovely, always perches at his side during business deals and negotiations, is known to sometimes accost visitors to Mean's barge, demanding to know their business in its screeching voice, and to deliver messages for its master. With its ability to talk to other birds, it has become the matriarch of a large murder of crows that roost on Mean's tenement building, teaching them to hunt stray cats and cry warnings of intruders.

As a member of the Family, Mean's claims of "powerful friends" are no idle boast. If Mean survives the events of this adventure, he may become a recurring villain in the campaign, complicating the PCs' lives with his manipulations and greed. For more information about the Family, see *The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*.

Mean always casts *mage armor* before meeting strangers. A competent liar, he tries to talk his way out of threatening situations before resorting to violence. In hybrid or rat form, Mean is able to use his crippled legs slightly but at a greatly reduced speed. He highly values his own life and seeks to escape if defeat seems imminent. If prevented from fleeing, he curls into a cringing ball and begs for mercy, though it will certainly not be long before he is plotting his revenge if permitted to live.

Of potential interest to PCs is that Mean is terrified of cats. If he sees one, he shrieks in fear and either demands its removal or attacks it using his wand or his thrall. In either case, he is shaken for as long as the cat is within sight and for 1d4+2 minutes thereafter.

**Development:** When the PCs first meet Mean, he acts friendly and obsequious toward them, just the typical oily junk dealer looking to score some coin from potential customers. However, Mean is cunning and wants to know what the PCs know. He asks questions, offers help, and may even sponsor the PCs financially if he feels it would bear fruit, though ultimately he betrays them. If the PCs start asking questions about missing customers, Mean secretly recalls both but claims to know nothing about either of them. If told of their murders, he becomes very interested and asks many questions, trying to glean what the PCs know about them. If asked about Mahaas, Mean says he may be able to help, but wants to know as much as the PCs will reveal about why they want to locate him and what their motives are. When he has gleaned as much information from them as he thinks he can, he'll reveal that Mahaas is his tenant and that his garret can be reached by climbing the ladder at the front of the tenement (B4). Regardless of the outcome of this initial meeting, if he survives, Mean arranges for the PCs to be followed.

If the PCs have learnt that Mahaas lodges in Mean's tenement though gathering information, it is possible that they may not seek out Mean and begin searching through the building instead. If this occurs, Lovely accosts the PCs and demands that they seek permission to enter the building from its owner lest they be treated as thieves. If the PCs do not comply, Lovely informs Mean, who prepares for combat and seeks them out, with Dogg

(B2) in tow. If the PCs do not treat the gnome with respect, combat may ensue.

Assuming that Mean survives his meeting with the PCs, a number of events are likely to follow. Mean sends his crow familiar to tail the PCs and report back on a regular basis what they are doing. Lovely surrounds herself with other ravens and crows as she follows, ensuring that without specific investigation, the PCs will not realize that they are being watched; crows are a common sight in the Blight after all. If discovered, however, Lovely flees back to Mean. If the PCs discover the raven before attacking the Organ Grinder (see Chapter 5), Mean reluctantly gives up. However, he may attempt to resume his surveillance if the PCs involve him again.

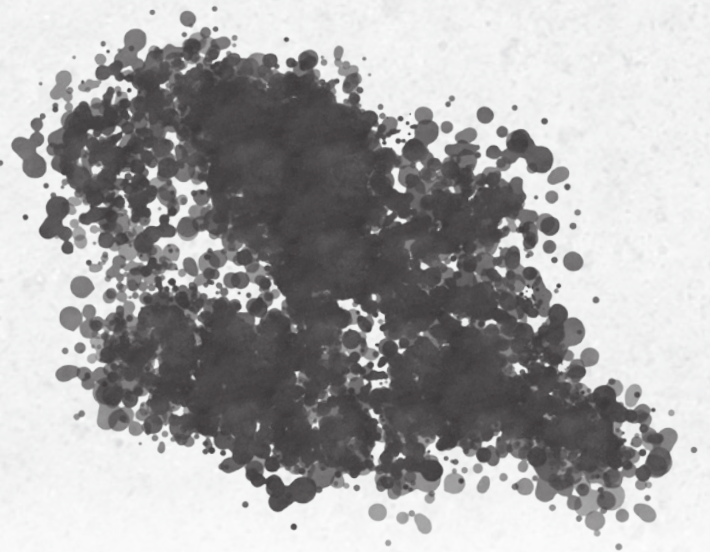
If Mean is attacked and killed, the Family learns about it unless the PCs have been sufficiently careful in covering their tracks and likely come looking for them. If Lovely is still watching the PCs when they learn about the great windmill, she arranges for Mean's mob (see Event 5 in Chapter 6) to follow them there.

**Uriah Mean (Wererat Illusionist):** AC 12; HP 33 (6d8+6); Spd 0ft human, 10ft rat/hybrid form; **Melee** bite (rat or hybrid form only; +4, 1d4+2 piercing and humanoid must make DC 11 Con save or be cursed with lycanthropy), shortsword (humanoid or hybrid form only; +4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** hand crossbow (humanoid or hybrid form only; +4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Immune** nonmagical, nonsilvered bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft (rat form only); **Traits** keen smell, shapechanger (can use an action to switch between humanoid, rat, and rat-humanoid hybrid forms); **AL** LE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

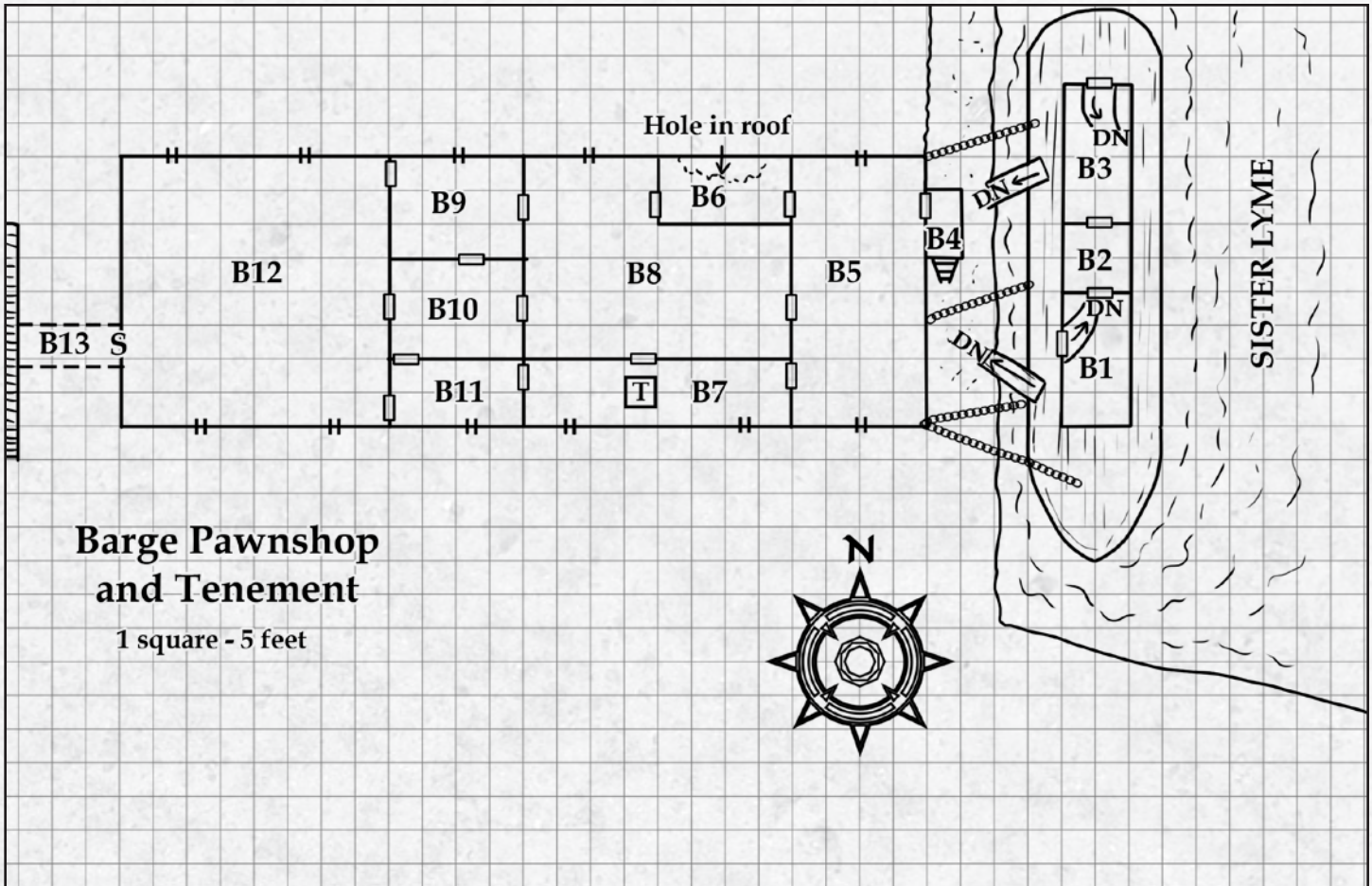
**Spells (+4, DC 12):** 0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*; 1 (4)—*color spray*, *disguise self*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*; 2 (3)—*invisibility*, *mirror image*, *phantasmal force*; 3 (3)—*lightning bolt*, *major image*; 4 (1)—*phantasmal killer*.

**Mange (Devil, Imp):** AC 13; HP 10 (3d4+3); Spd 20ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** sting (+5, 1d4+3 piercing plus 3d6 poison; DC 11 Con save halves poison); **SA** invisibility (becomes invisible until it attacks or loses concentration), shapechanger (transforms from imp to boar or vice versa); **Str** -2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5; **Resist** cold, nonmagical weapons that aren't silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** devil's sight (darkvision unhindered by magical darkness), magic resistance (has tactical advantage on saves vs. magic); **AL** LE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

**Lovely (Raven Familiar):** AC 12; HP 1 (1d4-1); Spd 10ft, fly 50ft; **Melee** beak (+4, 1 piercing); **Str** -4, **Dex** +2, **Con** -1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +3; **Traits** mimicry (can mimic simple sounds it has heard; DC 10 Wis [Insight] check to detect imitation); **AL** un; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.







## B. Barge Pawnshop and Tenement

Read the following when the PCs first lay eyes on the abode of Uriah Mean.

A river barge hangs crippled at the foot of an exhausted stone tenement that rises spastically beneath dislocated gables. The whole structure appears diseased — thick lichens hang from walls from which stones protrude like broken limbs. A chain lashes the barge tightly to the slum, so that the vessel is suspended partly above the tainted waters, almost as though it appears reluctant to touch them. The whole place — building and barge — are strangled by straining moss-choked timbers that look as if they could snap at any moment and bring the whole place down.

Three iron balls — the guild-sign of the pawnbroker — hang over the barge. Pails, cast-iron street lanterns, handcars, rope, and a confusion of other miscellany are all marked for sale, and the whole structure seems to groan under the sheer mass of the wares. Everything, it seems, has a price, even down to the hastily chalk-scrawled “10 shekels” on the rusting iron anchor of the barge itself.

An unkindness of mangy ravens lurks on the teetering gable above, cawing as you approach, and picking at the remains of what looks like a dead alley cat.

Disguised among the ravens is Lovely, Mean’s **crow familiar**. The familiar lurks, ever watchful for trouble, and if it senses it — someone sneaking about, a group of people acting unusual or suspicious, or

weapons being drawn — it shares the information with its master, who readies for combat accordingly.

Mean’s river-barge (keelboat) is of the type commonly used by river-gypsies here in the city. It has an upper deck that is little more than a flat outer level built around the central cabin, its own floor some 3 feet below the surrounding deck. This cabin is divided into two areas, one for living quarters and one for cargo. Mean’s barge is rotten, and if two of the four chains holding it to the dock are broken, the entire vessel begins sinking. It goes under fully after 1 minute. Outside the cabin, the deck is covered in goods, making space so cramped that the whole deck is effectively difficult terrain. Mean himself knows all the best ways through the clutter and ignores this effect.

Upon the barge, the air smells of damp and rot, the miasma of the vessel’s own decrepitude. Those who search among the goods risk disturbing powdered rat droppings and must make a successful DC 11 Con saving throw to avoid contracting sewer plague. The entire boat is so cramped and filthy, inside and out, that attacks with two-handed melee weapons and ranged attacks are made with tactical disadvantage.

The tenement building fares little better. Built of stone which is rapidly being eaten by the acidic smog of the river and Blight stonemites (see sidebar), the tenement is falling apart. The surface of the walls is so crumbly and unstable that a successful DC 20 Str (Athletics) check is required to climb them. The building has five stories plus an attic space (which has been converted into Mahaas’ garret), is 75 feet high at the peak of its roof, 120 feet long, and 40 feet wide. It has four dwellings per floor (not including the attic), each 20 feet wide and 50 feet long. A rotting interior stair, a trio of exposed ladders outside, a knotted rope ladder, and a small timber bridge, can be used to reach the apartments within the tenement. The tenants of this riverside tenement are mostly meek, mild, and afraid of Mean and of the consequences of talking about him or the Family to strangers.

A framework of rotting timbers — the remains of scaffolding put up years ago — strangle the whole place, barge and tenement. A timber plank of one of these scaffolds breaks as soon as weight of at least 50 pounds is placed upon it. What windows there are, are barred with 1-inch-thick iron bars, and so grimy they cannot be seen through.



## Blight Stonemites

In a city as dismal as Castorhage, where it is almost constantly damp, foggy, and chilled — except for when it's unbearably hot and muggy, thick with the smells of decomposing garbage, unwashed bodies, and worse things — and nicknamed for a particularly hazardous strain of fungus\*, it's really not particularly surprising to anyone that even something as pernicious and annoying as termites have their ugly stepbrother. That stepbrother would be the Blight stonemite.

Never confirmed to exist anywhere else beyond the bounds of the city, the Blight stonemite is a horrible, blood-red insect about 6 inches long that makes an unsettling grinding noise as it gnaws through solid stone masonry and the softer mortar between. These creatures work much slower than a termite in their destruction but are no easier to remove once an infestation occurs. They are thought to be a favored food of the Blight's other ubiquitous dweller of cellars and crawlspaces, the night-slug\*\*, proving at least some use for those disgusting scavengers. Stonemites are not only damaging to structures in the long term, they have a tendency to swarm when it gets very hot and humid, resulting in the collapse of major civic buildings on several occasions over the centuries during unusually sultry summers. Stonemites are not particularly dangerous to humanoids beyond causing itching and annoying welts from bites for those who sleep too close to a nest of the feeding insects. Nevertheless, apocryphal stories exist of unfortunate stonemasons or exterminators who have fallen victim to voracious swarms of the vermin, being reduced to little more than boneless, bloodless bags of flesh riddled with the tiny burrows of the creatures in their delving to feed on the calcification of the victim's skeletal structure.

\*See Blight in *The Tome of Blighted Horrors*.

\*\*See Night-Slug in *The Tome of Blighted Horrors*.

form only; +4, 1d4+2 piercing and humanoid must make DC 11 Con save or be cursed with lycanthropy), shortsword (humanoid or hybrid form only; +4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** hand crossbow (humanoid or hybrid form only; +4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Immune** nonmagical, nonsilvered bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft (rat form only); **Traits** keen smell, shapechanger (can use an action to switch between humanoid, rat, and rat-humanoid hybrid forms); **AL** LE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

**Spells (+4, DC 12):** 0 (at will)—*dancing lights, mage hand, minor illusion, poison spray*; 1 (4)—*color spray, disguise self, mage armor, magic missile*; 2 (3)—*invisibility, mirror image, phantasmal force*; 3 (3)—*lightning bolt, major image*; 4 (1)—*phantasmal killer*.

**Mange (Devil, Imp): AC** 13; **HP** 10 (3d4+3); **Spd** 20ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** sting (+5, 1d4+3 piercing plus 3d6 poison; DC 11 Con save halves poison); **SA** invisibility (becomes invisible until it attacks or loses concentration), shapechanger (transforms from imp to boar or vice versa); **Str** -2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5; **Resist** cold, nonmagical weapons that aren't silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** devil's sight (darkvision unhindered by magical darkness), magic resistance (has tactical advantage on saves vs. magic); **AL** LE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

**Lovely (Raven Familiar): AC** 12; **HP** 1 (1d4-1); **Spd** 10ft, fly 50ft; **Melee** beak (+4, 1 piercing); **Str** -4, **Dex** +2, **Con** -1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +3; **Traits** mimicry (can mimic simple sounds it has heard; DC 10 Wis [Insight] check to detect imitation); **AL** un; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

**Treasure:** Mean keeps a loaded light crossbow behind the counter at all times. The bolt's tip is wax-sealed with serpent venom (3d6 poison damage, or half damage with a DC 11 Con save). The pawnshop's stock is worth around 1,000 gp in total but it would take several weeks to sell in its entirety. A small till hidden behind the counter contains 25 gp, 25 sp and 25 cp.

## B1. Pawnshop and Living Area

The deck of the mouldering boat is cluttered with countless mundane or strange objects, but pathways along the sides are clear to allow passage. A small ramp enters the barge's cabin. Beyond in the murk inside, the place looks even more cluttered.

This is where Mean spends most of his day. Countless objects from ratraps to wedding dresses, hatpins to grandfather clocks clutter the deck. A simple hatch (usually open during daylight hours) allows access within via a steep ramp. The hatch can be closed and locked with a lock to which Mean carries the only key. It usually is locked at night, but it can be opened with thief's tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Below, amongst even more junk, a hefty oak counter stands along one wall, and a small door leads to the kennel (B2).

**Uriah Mean** is a local tyrant and may become a recurring villain if he survives and the GM so chooses. Motivated solely by profit, he is a hard bargainer but is always interested in new stock; he generally pawns an item for 25% of his assessment of its value. His tenant Mahaas already intrigues Mean, and the arrival of the PCs with their questions further piques this interest. He has already learnt something of Mahaas' value through scrying. Over the past couple of days, Mean has heard Mahaas talking to himself (which he frequently does) about some "new weapon" and a fortune that's to be had. Mean intends to keep an ear and an eye on Mahaas to learn more. With Mean when the PCs first encounter him are his crow familiar **Lovely** and his "boar" **Mange**.

**Uriah Mean (Wererat Illusionist): AC** 12; **HP** 33 (6d8+6); **Spd** Off human, 10ft rat/hybrid form; **Melee** bite (rat or hybrid

## B2. Kennel

Nothing more than a kennel, this section of the boat's cabin has been left to fill with excrement and shed dog hair. The stench of an animal pen fills the air.

The floor is profusely covered in a dog's mess; treat it as difficult terrain for two-legged creatures who don't want to step in anything unpleasant. Mean keeps a particularly large and nasty guard dog chained up in this room: a sickly looking, four-eyed **dire wolf** with oozing sores covering its mangy hide. Mean subdued the beast by long years of cruel training, and now the creature, which he calls Dogg, obeys its master's instructions out of fear. If Mean is present and being attacked, he instructs Dogg to defend him. Dogg's chain is long enough to allow him to reach any point in areas B1-B3.

**Dire Wolf: AC** 14; **HP** 37 (5d10+10); **Spd** 50ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 2d6+3 piercing; DC 13 Str save or creature is knocked prone); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4; **Traits** keen hearing and smell, pack tactics (has tactical advantage on attack roll if target is within 5ft of wolf's ally); **AL** un; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.



## B3. Bedchamber

A filthy four-poster bed dancing with lice-covered furs fills this chamber. A chamber pot sits by its side along with a large iron trunk. An improvised ramp rises to a small hatch at the rear of the barge.

The rear ramp leads to an entrance that is always locked with a lock (can be picked with thief's tools and a successful DC 13 Dex check) and is swollen shut with the dampness (successful DC 10 Str check needed after lock is opened). The room is filthy, with nothing of value or interest beyond the iron trunk and a small dagger coated in wax-sealed blue whinnis lodged between the headboard of the bed and the mattress.

**Trap:** The trunk is locked (thief's tools and a successful DC 18 Dex check to open) and trapped. Unless the key that Mean keeps on his person is turned two complete clockwise revolutions, hidden darts are launched across the room. Everyone in the chamber takes 2d4 piercing damage plus 6d6 poison damage; all damage is halved with a successful DC 13 Dex saving throw).

**Treasure:** Mean keeps his funds in the locked iron trunk in six neat leather bags, each containing 200 gp. These lie above his spellbook, which contains all his prepared spells plus *find familiar*.

## B4. Perilous Ascent

A rusting ladder, clumsily anchored to the powdery and crumbling outer walls of the tenement, climbs 60 feet up the side to a balcony off the attic.

Any inspection of the ladder reveals that, because of the corroded stone, the ladder is likely not to be secure. It is easy to climb, but if more than 1 Medium or 2 Small creatures climb it at the same time, it breaks away from the wall after the topmost climber has ascended 1d6x10 feet, dropping anyone on it to the jetty below.

A narrow balcony hangs 60 feet above the jetty. Mahaas has greased the roof above the balcony with pig grease, which can be noticed with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check by anyone within 10 feet. While the climb onto the roof from the balcony is easy, anyone crossing the greased area must make a successful DC 13 Dex saving throw or slip off the roof and fall to the ground 60 feet below.

An unlocked door with flaking red paint leads into the garret.

## B5. Kitchen

The room beyond the red door is a vile place. At least forty mangy street cats skulk in a large number of cages behind piles of rubbish, and a pair of wild-looking terriers stare out from the ruptured decay of a horsehair chair. Below a glass window so thick with grime that it resembles a blackboard sits a larder-cupboard and a tiny iron stove. Nearby, a dripping tap fills an iron pot to the brim with rust-colored water.

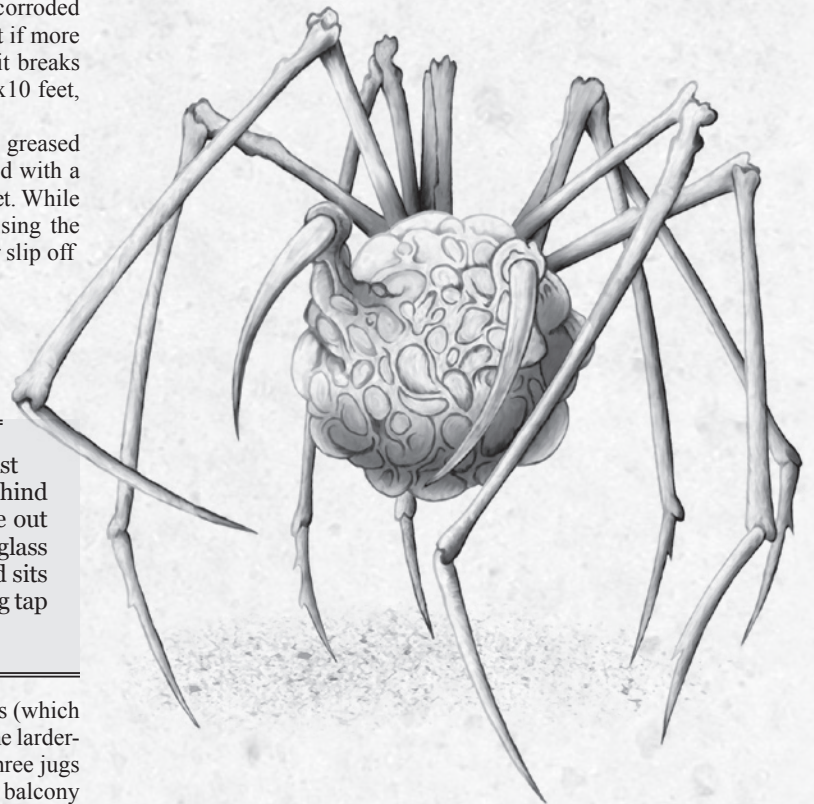
Mahaas cooks and eats in here with the help of some of his pets (which occasionally make more of a contribution than just assistance). The larder-cupboard is very well stocked at present with a whole ham and three jugs of cider. The 2 **Blight terriers** bark if they detect intruders on the balcony or entering the room, though they are fairly cowardly and try to escape attackers or cower and whimper if prevented from doing so. They are far more scared of something other than the PCs, though. Mahaas has a pet he stole from a flesh dealer in BookTown — a monstrous abomination that the dealer referred to as the **child of spines** (a boneneedle; see *Fifth Edition Foes* for full details). Like many Between creatures, the child possesses

a rudimentary intelligence. This one's Between gate, a fragmentary and fickle gateway near a place children use to play, is perhaps why the thing giggles and mumbles nursery rhymes to itself occasionally. The creature is small and revolting, superficially resembling a boneneedle but with a distended flaccid fleshy sack within which can be seen rudimentary childlike hands — and occasionally a childlike face — trying to push outward. When it was captured, its previous owner trained it like a dog. These beatings left it fearful of whomever wears a *Between ring* like that which Mahaas also stole. The caged cats are used to feed the thing; the dogs just try to stay out of its way. When the PCs first enter the room, anyone making a successful DC 13 Wis (Animal Handling) check notices the terriers are looking at the oven within which the Child of Spines lurks.

**Blight Terrier (2): AC 12; HP 2 (1d4); Spd 40ft; Melee** bite (+2, 1 piercing plus 1d6 bludgeoning); **Str** -3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4; **Traits** keen sense (tactical advantage on Perception checks depending on smell or hearing); **AL** N; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

**Child of Spines (Boneneedle): AC 16; HP 27 (5d6+10); Spd 20ft, climb 20ft; Melee** bite (+5, 1d6+3 piercing and DC 12 Con save against boneneedle poison); **SA** innate spellcasting; **Immune** charm, fright, psychic; **Str** -5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aversion to daylight (tactical disadvantage on attacks, saves, and skill checks while in natural sunlight), boneneedle poison (DC 12 Con save or become poisoned; while poisoned, +5 damage when creature takes bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage; repeat save after rest to end effect, or receive *lesser restoration* or comparable magic), regeneration (regains 5 hp at start of turn unless exposed to natural sunlight since previous turn); **AL** un; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

**Innate Spellcasting:** 1/day each—*blink*, *mirror image*; 3/day—*invisibility* (self only).



**Tactics:** The Child lurks in cover behind the oven, waiting for a chance to take lone prey; this includes any of the animals herein, although the frequent beatings it has taken at the hands of its owners has honed its hatred for men and it always attacks humans in preference to others. It



## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

prefers to quickly move, attack with poison, and then escape. However, it does not attack anyone wearing the *Between ring* Mahaas presently wears, and ideally waits undiscovered until the PCs pass and then scuttles out behind them to attack. The Child is quite cowardly, and seeks escape over attack. If the opportunity of a wide-open door presents itself, the thing scuttles away, a flaccid body on too many legs. If this occurs, make sure a PC sees it fleeing.

### B6. Aviary

The roof is fractured here, and a long rotting purlin is exposed to the elements. Birds fly in and out of the hollow this opening has created.

Mahaas keeps many animals, and his stirges are his favorites. This room has a ruptured ceiling with a few holes that allow the **12 stirges** who roost here to go in and out. The floor is littered with the bloody droppings that remain from their hunts in addition to the bones and carcasses of rodents, gulls, pigeons and small cats that they were able to carry away. Lovely's murder knows to keep away from this place.

**Stirge (12): AC 14; HP 2 (1d4); Spd 10ft, fly 40ft; Melee** blood drain (+5, 1d4+3 piercing and the stirge attaches to the target; while attached, stirge does 1d4+3 damage automatically at the start of its turns; detaches after draining 10 HP or when an action is used to detach it); **Str -4, Dex +3, Con +0, Int -4, Wis -1, Cha -2; Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** un; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

### B7. Trapped Corridor

This dusty, rubbish-strewn corridor bears a trap left by the paranoid Mahaas. He never comes this way himself.

**Trap:** Halfway along the corridor, a small pressure plate beneath a loose floorboard triggers a poison vapor trap. The loose board can be noticed with a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. Once noticed, the trigger is easily avoided. If the trap is triggered, gas sprays up from the floor; everyone within 10 feet of the pressure plate takes 14 (4d6) poison damage, or half damage with a successful DC 15 Con saving throw. A character who fails the saving throw begins suffocating immediately. A suffocating character repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself with a success.

### B8-13. Attic Living Areas

Mahaas spends most of his time in his private chambers with his accomplices, **2 wererats** that are outcasts from the Family and his demonic thrall Lump (**dretch**). Whilst he can be encountered anywhere in the garret, he spends most of his time in the living area (**B12**).

### Mahaas' Story

Mahaas is friendly with a number of unsavory characters on Festival, including two outcasts of the Family, the group of wererats who rule this island. One other associate prefers to keep his distance and does business in disguise: the Organ Grinder. The Organ Grinder has recently been using Mahaas to assist in extorting money from savant Edwina Spitewinter, a member of the Royal Underneath Society. Spitewinter is conducting a dig to uncover the fossilized remains of a leviathan, one of a huge and twisted ancient species whose bodies occasionally emerge from the silt and stone of Castorhage's bedrock. Spitewinter has organised a temporary camp on Festival to excavate it.

The Organ Grinder has been paying Mahaas to help. They visited Spitewinter and, after causing a fire with a ragefire spawn, persuaded the savant to part with cash for protection. On the last three occasions, the Organ Grinder has had a pair of quartz flasks in his possession and has



suggested to the savant that, unless she pays, he will smash the flasks for her to see what caused the fire. Afterward, Mahaas stole one of the flasks so that he could carry out the Organ Grinder's threats if it came to it. Unable to control his anger in an unrelated incident, however, Mahaas smashed one of the flasks at the ghats yesterday, resulting in the death of the prostitute Constance Chanterelle. The Organ Grinder is not aware of this incident.

If the PCs manage to intimidate and question Mahaas, he knows only that his employer is generous and required a little ugly help to persuade a wealthy toff to part with some money. This toff, savant Edwina Spitewinter, is at a nearby worksite digging into the rock under the city. He can provide directions to it. Mahaas does not know where the Organ Grinder is, but knows he performs across Festival.

Mahaas is a poor soul unmade by the gods. His voluminous attire is colorful, if faded, with sewn remnants of at least a hundred other items made into one eye-catching patchwork. However, not one but two heads fight for space through his torn collar, and while one is handsome, with an oiled moustache and neatly groomed hair, the second is a sack of cankerous flesh. At least three mouths open up from this monstrosity, and a look of blind idiocy crosses the abstract features of this unwelcome additional visage. Mahaas wears a dull gray metal *Between ring* on his left index finger. Occasionally, the ring tightens up so much that it hurts.

**Development:** If a fight breaks out, Mahaas saves his ragefire spawn until things get desperate, only flinging it at an opponent if cornered or if losing the fight. If the bottle is inadvertently broken, the ragefire spawn emerges and immediately begins taking out its anger on anyone in sight. Whenever a ragefire is released, it has the potential to become vast, growing and swelling in size as it consumes flesh and combustible material. A more serious danger comes from its inherent nature: When a ragefire elemental spends a full round in an area containing combustible material, the whole area it is in catches fire. Such fires spread unless quickly dealt with. For more information, see area E2-4 in Chapter 6.



## Arcanists and their Thralls

Any moderately fashionable arcanist in the Blight must have his thrall — and the more powerful the thrall, the more respect the arcanist is afforded by his colleagues. A thrall is not a familiar — indeed, the relationship between the thrall and familiar is often a complex one — but rather a physical guardian of its master; arcanists generally don't lower themselves to fisticuffs of any sort.

Thralls are generally bound by a pact to serve the arcanist for an agreed period, often 40 years plus a day. This is a curious length of time when considered but one which, inexplicably, is most common in all pacts between mortals and fiends or other outsiders. Arcanists often have genies or lesser demons or devils as thralls; the most powerful occasionally have more than one. Thralls tend to squabble among themselves, however, over the affection of their master and often end up jealously killing one another.

A common situation between warring arcanists is to settle their dispute by thrall duel in which their thralls battle it out in a final combat to decide which master was in the right. The losing arcanist is bound by a sacred and ancient pact to acknowledge the victor as being correct in the matter.

### Mahaas

XP 3,900 (CR 8)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Initiative +3

#### DEFENSE

AC 17 (studded leather, shield)

hp: 78 (12d8 + 24)

Saving Throws: Dex +6, Int +4

#### OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

**Multiattack:** Mahaas attacks three times with his rapier or once with his hand crossbow.

**Melee Attack—Rapier:** +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

Hit: 1d8 + 3 piercing damage plus 3d6 poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 11 Con saving throw. Each hit uses up one dose of serpent venom.

**Ranged Attack—Hand Crossbow:** +6 to hit (range 30 ft./120 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d6 + 3 piercing damage plus 24 (7d6) poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 15 Con saving throw. Each hit uses up one dose of wyvern poison.

#### STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), Dex 17 (+3), Con 14 (+2),

Int 12 (+1), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 4 (–3)

Languages: Common, Giant, Gnomish

Skills: Acrobatics +6, Perception +3, Stealth +6

#### TRAITS

**Cunning Action:** Mahaas can Dash, Disengage, or Hide as a bonus action on his turn.

**Evasion:** If a successful saving throw would normally result in half damage, Mahaas takes no damage on a successful save and half damage on a failure.

**Rapid Potions:** Mahaas can drink one potion as a bonus action. See "Equipment" for a list of his potions.

**Sneak Attack (1/turn):** Mahaas does +4d6 damage with weapons when he attacks with tactical advantage or when one of his allies is within 5 feet of the target and capable of attacking it.

**Uncanny Dodge:** As a reaction, Mahaas can take half

damage from an attack that he saw coming.

#### ECOLOGY

Environment: Blight

Organization: Solitary

#### EQUIPMENT

*Between ring, potion of animal friendship, potion of climbing, potion of fire breath, potion of greater healing ×2, potion of heroism, potion of resistance (fire), potion of speed, bottled ragefire spawn, serpent venom ×6, wyvern poison ×4*

**Wererat (2): AC 12; HP 33 (6d8+6); Spd 30ft; Melee** bite (rat or hybrid form only; +4, 1d4+2 piercing and humanoid must make DC 11 Con save or be cursed with lycanthropy), shortsword (humanoid or hybrid form only; +4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** hand crossbow (humanoid or hybrid form only; +4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Immune** nonmagical, nonsilvered bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; **Str +0, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha –1; Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft (rat form only); **Traits** keen smell, shapechanger (can use an action to switch between humanoid, rat, and rat-humanoid hybrid forms); **AL** LE; **CR 2; XP 450.**

**Lump (enthralled Dretch): AC 11; HP 18 (4d6+4); Spd 20ft; Melee** bite (+2, 1d6 piercing), claws (+2, 2d4 slashing); **SA** multiattack (1 bite + 1 claw), fetid cloud (1/day; 10ft radius; lightly obscured; lasts 1 minute or until dispersed; creature that starts its turn in cloud must make DC 11 Con save or be poisoned until start of its next turn; while poisoned, can take an action or bonus action but not both, and no reactions); **Str +0, Dex +0, Con +1, Int –3, Wis –1, Cha –4; Resist** cold, fire, lightning; **Immune** poison; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, telepathy 60ft (only with creatures that understand Abyssal); **AL** CE; **CR 1/4; XP 50.**

## B8. Junk Room

This room and its jumbled contents lie under a thick film of lichen and mould caused by leaks in the roof. It is filled with junk.

A thorough search finds a saw, a file, and two spades.

## B9. Library Laboratory

Hundreds of books line shelves in this room. The books glower over a peculiarly fleshy alchemist's laboratory while grinning masks and hoods hang from hooks nearby.

Most of the books here are about alchemy, anatomy, surgery, or vivisection. Many are deeply disturbing, showing an absolute lack of empathy for the subjects. Some, however, are valuable. A successful DC 10 Int (Investigation) check can locate three books worth 100 gp each to an appropriate buyer: Hugot's *Thrall Pacts*, Spade's *Making Animals Useful* and Palwin's *Alchymy in Scyence*. Mahaas also keeps his alchemist's supplies and notes here, and he's obviously conducting some fairly grisly experiments on cats.

There are many more hoods than masks, and most of the hoods are double ones. Among the disturbingly fleshy pigskin hoods, hoods made from sacks with eyes cut out, and single huge hoods is a saggy double hood that has had the second hood sewn into it at some time. The first hood is magical; its wearer gets a +2 bonus on Cha checks (requires attunement). Although he rarely uses it, Mahaas is aware of its effect.



## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

### B10. Stores

This is another junk room cluttered with oddments Mahaas has collected.

**Treasure:** 3 gold earrings set with tiny jet stones worth 25 gp each that have fallen down the back of a horsehair seat; a small tapestry worth 50 gp that depicts knights on chargers; a rotting teddy bear that has a silvered dagger clumsily hidden inside.

### B11. Bedroom

A mangy horsehair bed with goose-down pillows dominates this room. A large tarpaulin stretches across several small leaks in the roof to prevent rain dripping onto the bed.

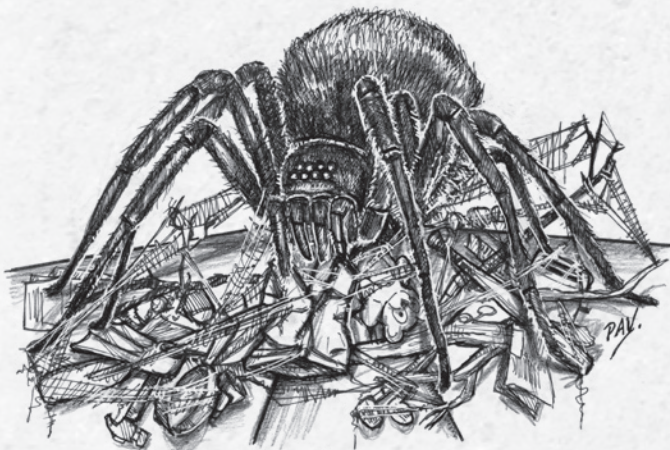
### B12. Living Area and Menagerie

This is a cluttered living room with comfortable oak chairs, a large table, and a small stove. The walls have several cupboards, while across the chamber are several cages and huge bell jars; the animals within are screaming and yelling and howling.

The animals, fish and vermin herein reflect the diverse nature of the city and Sister Lyme. Among the various blind fish, mice and enormous vermin are a **Small gable spider**, thousands of voracious giant fleas (2 swarms of insects), and 2 spore rats. The spore rats use the giant rat stat block but are plants instead of beasts and they have the added ability of **Spore Cloud**—A creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of the spore rat must make a successful DC 10 Con saving throw or take 1d6 poison damage and be poisoned until the start of its next turn.

Hidden in a bell jar under a faded tapestry depicting the Capitol is an intellect devourer that, if uncovered, immediately uses its Devour Intellect ability against the likeliest-looking target. The intellect devourer has surprise, thanks to its Detect Sentience ability.

**Small Gable Spider:** AC 13; HP 18 (4d6+4); Spd 20ft, climb 20ft; Melee bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing plus 2d6 poison; DC 11 Con save halves poison); Ranged sticky globule (recharge 4-6; +5, 10ft; DC 11 Str save or restrained; repeat save at end of turn to end effect); Immune charm, psychic; Str -3, Dex +3, Con +1, Int -5, Wis -2, Cha -4; Skills Perception +0, Stealth +5; Senses darkvision 30ft, tremorsense in web construct; Traits web construct (creature that falls prone, is restrained, or is pushed into web construct becomes restrained; escape with action and DC 10 Str save; each 5-foot-square has AC 8, 5 hp); AL N; CR 1/2; XP 100.



**Swarm of Insects (2):** AC 12; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 20ft, fly 20ft; Melee bite (+3, 0 ft, 4d4 piercing or 2d4 piercing if at half HP); Immune charm, fright, paralyze, petrify, prone, restrain, stun; Resist bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; Str -4, Dex +1, Con +0, Int -5, Wis -2, Cha -5; Senses blindsight 10ft; Traits swarm; AL un; CR 1/2; XP 100.

**Spore Rat (2, Giant Rat):** AC 12; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); Str +0, Dex +0, Con +0, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; Traits pack tactics, spores (creature that starts its turn within 5ft of spore rat must make successful DC 10 Con save or take 1d6 poison and be poisoned until start of its next turn); Senses darkvision 60ft, keen smell; AL unaligned; CR 1/8; XP 25.

**Intellect Devourer:** AC 12; HP 21 (6d4+6); Spd 40ft; Melee claws (+4, 2d4+2 slashing); SA devour intellect (10ft; one creature visible to intellect devourer must make DC 12 Int save or take 2d10 psychic and if roll of 3d6 equals or exceed's target's Int score, Int reduced to 0 and target stunned), body thief (5ft; Int contest vs. incapacitated creature; if intellect devourer wins, it consumes target's brain, teleports into skull, and takes control of body); Str -2, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +1, Wis +0, Cha +0; Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4; Resist nonmagical weapons; Immune blindness; Senses blindsight 60ft; Traits detect sentience (senses creatures with Int 3+ within 300ft; blocked by mind blank); AL LE; CR 2; XP 450.

**Treasure:** Tossed about the room are a sack of 250 sp, a pair of copper candlesticks depicting swans worth 30 gp, and a small tapestry depicting the Ice Fayre of Castorhage worth 75 gp. Alchemist's supplies and a set of thieves' tools are on the table. Sitting by the stove is a curious large object: a fossil that looks like a tail covered in barbs, with holes for eyes, or maybe mouths, and ending in a sphincter with teeth. The object has clearly only recently been dug up as it still has mud on it. The excavation of a Leviathan — an ancient species whose fossilized remains are occasionally found in the silt of the city — is currently taking place not far from here. Everyone in the area knows about it. Above the entrance to B9 is a hidden cupboard that can be spotted with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check. The cupboard door is hinged to the ceiling and contains 4 bags of gold shekels (400 gp in each).

### B13. Roof Bridge

A clockwork mechanism connects to a secret door on the outside. The door and the tiny metal stud that operates it can be found with a DC 15 Wis (Perception) check. If the stud is pressed, the door opens and a clockwork bridge snaps forward across to the adjacent rooftop, stretching 15 feet from sill to sill, 60 feet above the cobbled street below. A 15-foot-long jump is required to cross. If pressed, Mahaas and his henchmen flee this way to escape across the rooftops (see **Rooftop Chase** below for more details). As he crosses the bridge, Mahaas hits another hidden trigger that causes the bridge to collapse behind him, leaving the 15-foot gap to somehow be navigated.

### B14. Tenement Roofs

Beyond the secret entrance, jagged rooftops and gables spill away over the streets far below.

### Event 2: Rooftop Chase

This encounter is an extended chase. When running a chase encounter, it is important to remember that there are many ways in which PCs might move or overcome obstacles. Detailed descriptions are provided to help the players understand each stage of the chase, including the route it is taking and any obstacles encountered. Allow PCs to use any skills or abilities that make sense in the situation, not only those listed, and balance



## THE CRUCIBLE

the DCs for substituted skills or abilities in relation to the situation. Of course, spells such as *fly*, *dimension door*, and *misty step* might alleviate the need for ability checks altogether.

### Structure of the Chase

The chase occurs in seven stages over the rooftops of Festival. It has a number of different routes that PCs may choose — or be forced — to take as they come to each obstacle. The chase assumes Mahaas opens his secret door and gets across the bridge. For every round of delay before PCs pursue, Mahaas gets a further 60 feet away (assuming he doesn't fail a necessary check). Each stage is roughly 120 feet in length. Mahaas has a speed of 30 feet and he does nothing but move and dash, so he covers each stage in two rounds, provided all his skill checks succeed. Characters who spend actions casting spells or making ranged attacks will lose ground to Mahaas. A PC whose speed is less than 30 feet is likely to fall behind anyway. PCs have line of sight from the stage they're in into the next stage, but no further.

If Mahaas reaches stage 7 ahead of the PCs, he descends to the street and tries to slink away through the busy Festival crowd. If he reaches stage 7 while he's two or more stages ahead of his closest pursuer, PCs lose his trail completely and can't regain it in this scene. Mahaas wants to know who's on his tail and why, however, so he's likely to take up a concealed position where he can observe the PCs as they search for him and possibly even overhear the questions they ask of bystanders.

### Chase Stages

Keep track of how far characters move each round so you know when they cross from one stage into the next. Skill checks are made the first time the character starts his or her turn in the stage. Routes marked with an asterisk (\*) are the options Mahaas uses unless the PCs somehow force him to do something different (someone might get ahead of him and block his preferred route, for example). He makes Dex (Acrobatics) checks with a +6 modifier. Failing some skill checks only costs the character a move (dashing is still an option); others cost a move and must be repeated until they succeed, with each failure costing another move, while a few involve a damaging fall to the street and several lost moves while the character scrambles back to the rooftops.

#### Stage 1. Over the Bridge

The only difficulty in this stage is crossing the 15-foot gap from **B13**. Mahaas gets across easily because the bridge is still in place when he crosses. Characters with Strength 15 or higher can leap the gap automatically. Everyone else will fall short if they jump, but with a successful DC 15 Str (Athletics) check, they catch the opposite ledge and pull themselves up. A short jump followed by a failed Athletics check results in a 60-foot fall to the street below. This check can be helped by another character with Str 15+ who is jumping at the same time (no time is lost) or by any character who's already cleared the gap and stops to help someone behind him or her (the aiding character can't dash that round, and so loses 1 move).

#### Stage 2. To Higher Ground

This route involves ascending to the higher roof peaks of the building across from Mahaas' flat and past its smoking chimneystacks. It has three different route options.

1. **Around the narrow edges\***: DC 10 Dex (Acrobatics) check or DC 13 Str (Athletics) check. Failure = lose 1 move.
2. **Up the drainpipe**: DC 10 Str (Athletics) check. Failure = lose 1 move.
3. **Between the smoky chimneystacks**: DC 10 Con check; Failure = disadvantage on next check because of smoke in the character's eyes.

#### Stage 3. Jump, Man, Jump!

This crosses from the roof of one building to the next over a 20-foot gap. The fall to the street is 120 feet. It has three options:

1. **Jump the gap**: DC 15 Str (Athletics) to catch the edge. Failure = 120-foot fall to the street and lose 2 moves.
2. **Balance over the washing line**: DC 15 Dex (Acrobatics). Failure = lose 1 move.

3. **Swing on the hidden rope\***: DC 18 Wis (Perception) + DC 10 Dex (Acrobatics). Mahaas knows where the rope is, so his Perception check succeeds automatically. Failure on either check = lose 1 move, try again.

#### Stage 4. Alley Bridges

Rickety bridges cross an alley from one roof to the other across a 60-foot gap. It has three different bridge options:

1. **The broad path**: The apparently easy bridge is booby-trapped with a weak board. A DC 15 Wis (Perception) check is needed to notice the trap. If it's spotted, a DC 8 Dex (Acrobatics) check is needed to cross the bridge safely. Failure = lose 1 move, try again. If the trap isn't spotted, a DC 15 Dex saving throw is needed to avoid falling 90 feet to the street and losing 2 moves.
2. **The narrow path\***: DC 12 Dex (Acrobatics) check. Failure = lose 1 move, try again.
3. **The winding path**: DC 10 Dex (Acrobatics), no dash possible. Failure = lose 2 moves, try again.

#### Stage 5. Over the Pleasure Wheel

A small Ferris wheel straddles a street, its axle mounted into the buildings on either side. To cross requires climbing down onto the axle and then through its spokes to come out on the other side; timing a jump down to pass between two spokes and land on the axle on the far side; or simply making an all-out jump for the top of the wheel and skipping directly across to the opposite roof. The drop is 40 feet from the axle or 60 feet from the top of the wheel.

1. **Cautious climbing**: DC 8 Str (Athletics) check, and your caution costs you 2 moves. Failure = lose 1 more move.
2. **Time the jump**: DC 12 Dex (Acrobatics), and lose 1 move readying for the jump. Failure = lose 2 moves regaining your feet and senses after a nasty impact with a spoke.
3. **Go for it\***: DC 15 Dex (Acrobatics). Failure = lose 1 round and make a DC 12 Str saving throw or fall 60 feet to the street and lose 2 moves.

#### Stage 6. Up the High Wall

A high wall blocks the route and must be surmounted with either a ladder, a stairway, or by climbing. Any fall is.

1. **Up the stair**: Automatic success, lose 1 move.
2. **Up the ladder\***: DC 10 Dex (Acrobatics) to navigate the wobbly, broken ladder. Failure = lose 1 move.
3. **Straight up the wall**: DC 15 Str (Athletics). Failure = fall 1d6 × 10 feet to the street, lose 2 moves.

#### Stage 7. Down, down, deeper and down

The path leads down from the high rooftops to the crowded upper streets of Festival. These roofs are 60 feet above ground level. There are three possible methods:

1. **Descend the rickety ladders**: Automatic success, lose 2 moves.
2. **Rappel down a rope\***: DC 15 Dex (Acrobatics). Failure = fall 60 feet, lose 1 move.
3. **Jump\***: 6d6 bludgeoning damage, or half damage with a successful DC 15 Dex saving throw. Failure = also lose 1 move.

#### After Stage 7: Through the Crowded Streets

There's no need to "cross" this stage; once a character reaches this point, they've finished the chase. If Mahaas makes it here while the nearest PC is no closer than stage 5, no one can see him and he escapes clean. If Mahaas makes it here with PCs hot on his heels (in stage 6) or possibly even ahead of him, they have a chance to spot him as he slips into the crowd. Mahaas moves to the street, where he makes a Dex (Stealth) check with tactical advantage. To track him, every PC in stage 6 or 7 makes a Wis (Perception) check. If at least one PC equals or beats Mahaas's Stealth check, they keep sight of him and can corner him in the street. If not, they lose him (but he doesn't necessarily lose them).



# Chapter Four: The Leviathan Dig

Savant Edwina Spitewinter, a member of the Royal Underneath Society, is a noted expert on the Ancients — creatures of old also referred to as Leviathans. These huge fossilized horrors are found occasionally beneath the silt and stone of the city, and are sometimes the subject of furious and unsubstantiated rumors. Anyone seeking information about the Leviathan Dig can learn several interesting facts; see the sidebar for details.

## Rumours about the Leviathan Dig

- “Just what are they digging for? These Savants are the cause of all the trouble in this city! They’ll not be happy until they’ve dug their way to Hell.”
- “They say they’ve found one of the Ancients, like the one they dug up at the Seminary last year. Unholy things of teeth and tusk, with great bloated heads. I’ve heard them Savants say these creatures came from the stars. Came from Hell, more like!”
- “They’ve found some sort of object with this one — an idol or totem, or some such thing. I say what’s buried should stay buried!”
- “I’ve heard tell that they’ve been having trouble at the dig, and Savant Spitewinter has had to hire guards — what for I can’t guess!”

## A Royal Underneath Society Dig

Spitewinter uncovered this particular site by accident while spending time on Festival with her children. As she strolled the Merry-Go-Round, the streets and boardwalks that lie at the foot of the Festival itself, at low tide she spotted what she thought was an Ancient in a nearby sandbar and soon began to dig furiously from a raft at an exposed embankment of river silt. Now, two months into the dig, three strange creatures are being uncovered.

Recently, however, Spitewinter has been subject to blackmail from the Organ Grinder, who has been threatening to ruin the dig and destroy Spitewinter’s work unless paid handsomely to protect it. Up until recently, Spitewinter has paid the Organ Grinder; however, after having paid 2,000 gp and realising that the blackmail was unlikely to stop, Spitewinter has brought in some hired muscle to protect the site. Her nervousness is being transmitted to these hired men, and they have already deposited three sightseers into the river through an “attack first and question later” policy.

### C1. Guarded Dock

The festering footings overlook a curious site, an excavation of some sort on a sandbar some way from shore. It seems to have excited a lot of local interest based on the many onlookers keeping a careful distance from the bridge that leads out to the dig.

Anyone observed approaching this area is accosted by guards (4 veterans) who lurk on the dock. Unless characters give a good reason for being there (DC 15 Cha [Deception] check), they draw their weapons and threaten to attack. They follow through with this threat unless visitors leave immediately. If they can be made friendly or helpful, they lead visitors to the dig site.

**Dock Guard (4, Veteran): AC 17; HP 58 (9d8+18); Spd 30ft; Melee** longsword x2 (+5, 1d8+3 slashing); shortsword (+5, 1d6+3 piercing); **Ranged** heavy crossbow (+3, 100ft/400ft, 1d10 piercing); **SA** multiattack (longsword x2, shortsword); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2; **AL** LN; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

### C2. The Flotsam Walkway

A precarious walkway of timber planks is lashed to a number of inflated pigs’ bladders and sealed barrels. It links the isle that is the focus of activity to the shore.

An iron dock ladder leads down between 15 and 20 feet (depending on the tide). The planks beyond are not so easy to use, as they move unpredictably. A successful DC 8 Dex (Acrobatics) check is required to use them without falling into the water. Characters falling at high tide get a soaking but can clamber back onto the walkway without help. Low tide is a different matter. Characters quickly sink into the cloying silt of the bay. The silt behaves exactly like quicksand: a character sinks 1d4 + 1 feet when they fall in and another 1d4 feet at the start of their turn. They can pull themselves free with a successful Str check at a DC = 10 + feet they’ve sunk. Someone else can pull them free with a successful Str check at a DC = 5 + feet they’ve sunk. A character who sinks completely begins suffocating.

Characters watching the shore for a while notice that several dirty children throw offal and the odd creatures (but not rats or cats — they have differing fortunes here on Festival; rats abound, cats do not) such as mangy old chickens and the odd stray puppy into the water and watch the fun develop. A pair of **sough-eels** has taken to catching and eating the prey, and ignoring the odd rock throw by the children. The sough-eels are close by, and if anything drops into the water, they appear 1d3 rounds later.

**Sough-Eel (2): AC 15; HP 142 (15d12+45); Spd 10ft, swim 30ft; Melee** bite (+8, 4d12+5 piercing; if attack does 30 or more damage, target is grappled and restrained), gnaw



## THE CRUCIBLE



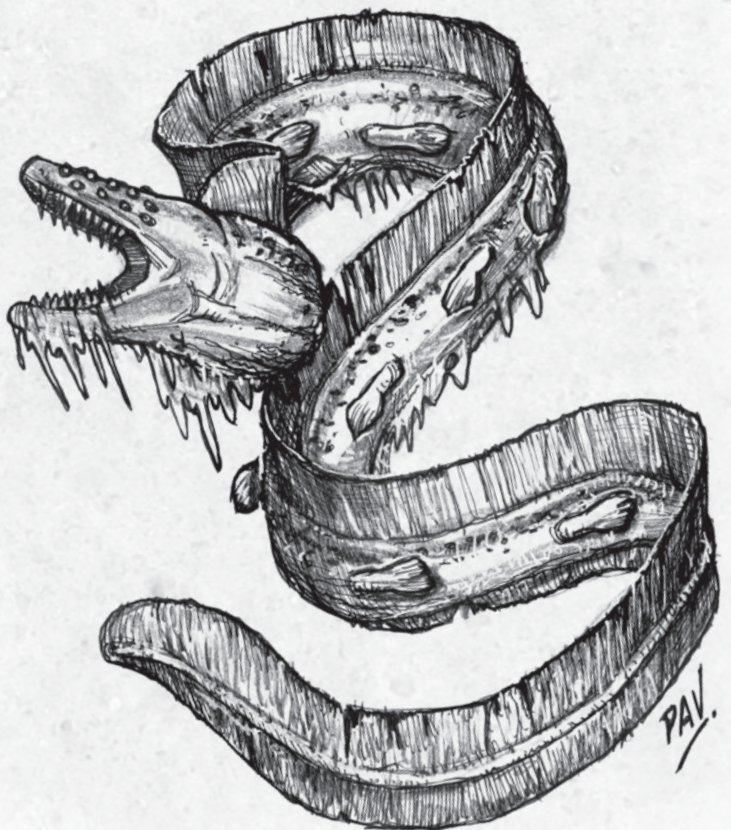
(grappled target takes 4d12+5 piercing automatically, plus secondary attack; +8, 2d12 piercing plus 2d10 poison; DC 14 Con save halves poison; DC 16 Str save or swallowed);

**SA** swallow (blinded and restrained; 1d12 bludgeoning plus 1d8 acid at start of sough-eel's turn); **Str** +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Saving Throws** Dex +3, Con +6; **Immune** poison, blinded, prone; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +3; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **AL** N; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

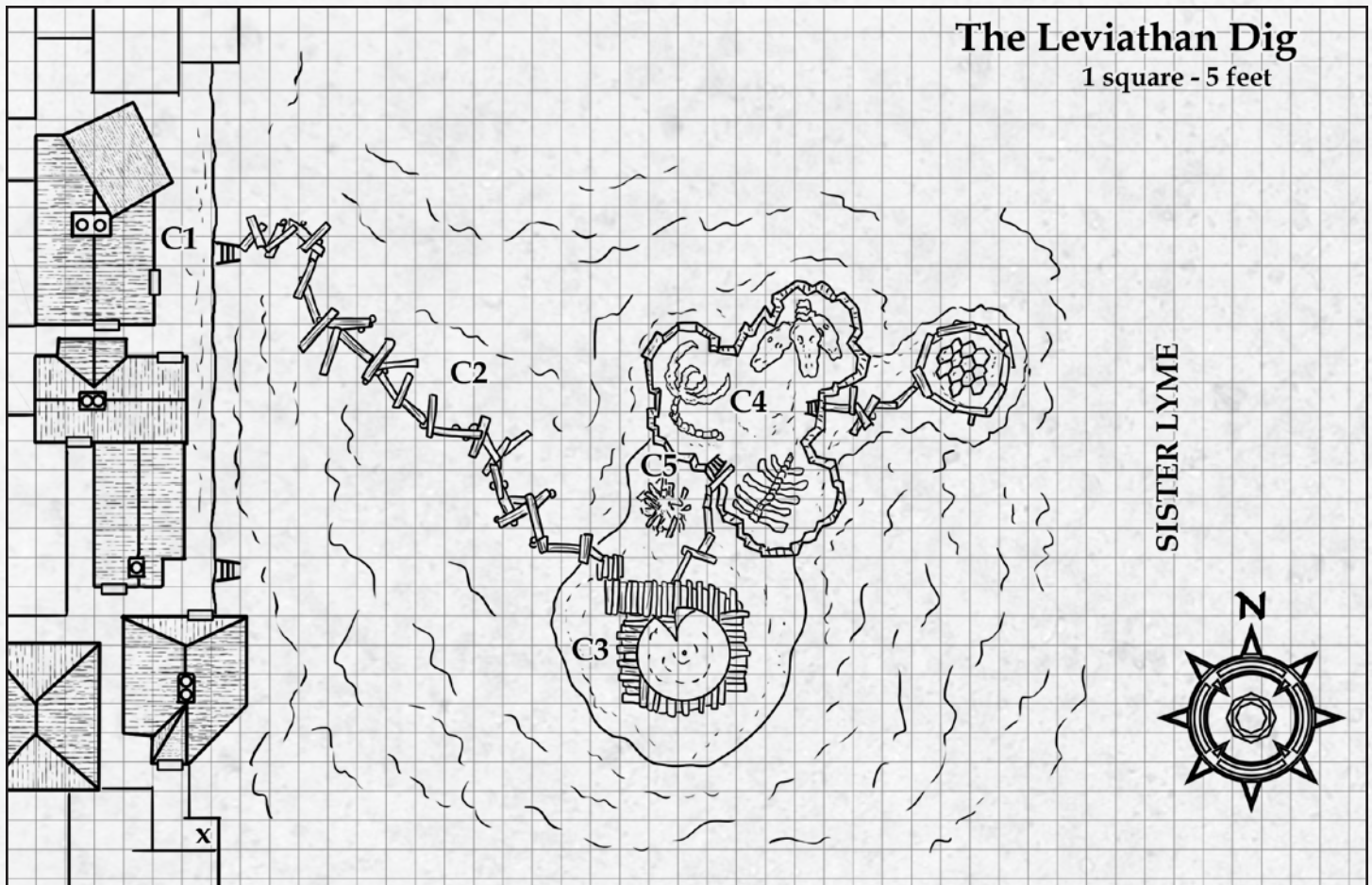
### C3. Dig Site

Barely visible above low tide water is a mucky islet, little more than a sandbank in Sister Lyme. Yet this sandbank is now a hive of activity: A raised area of timbers has been lashed together and a tent has been erected on it, while nearby is the burnt-out husk of a shed. Not far away, a large hole has been dug below the water level, though a wall of high planks holds the river back. A dark stack of strange, hexagonal stones stands nearby on the edge of the sandbank.

The islet is reached by a rickety set of boardwalks, planks, and barrel-lids supported by bladders and sealed barrels (C2). The dig site is on a sandbar that provides relatively stable footing. All other areas beyond the dig, though, are thick, black Blight mud, which has the same properties as quicksand. All boardwalks, barrel-lids and planks are unfixed and wobbly, requiring a successful DC 5 Dex (Acrobatics) check to cross without falling off.







**Savant Edwina Spitewinter** (N human female noble) presently resides in a small tent on the dig site itself. She has two reasons for this: First, she is afraid of being attacked, and second, the dig is reaching an exciting phase, with parts of a third most-unusual creature being revealed. Objects clutter Spitewinter's tent; she has been labelling and cataloguing the most interesting fragments from the dig. A dozen large trunks containing hundreds of small sample boxes fill the interior.

Spitewinter is a tall, slender woman who favors dark, foul-smelling Black Radge Shag tobacco in her pipe, and who walks with the aid of a cane. At the dig, she is usually found covered in malodorous mud and wielding a small trowel. She is a Savant of the Royal Underneath Society. An expert in her field, she has overseen a dozen digs in the city. This dig, however, particularly excites her as she has not only uncovered a shard of a honeycomb totem, but also a type of Leviathan she has never seen before.

If the PCs persuade her that they're here to help rather than sabotage her dig, she tells them what she knows about her blackmailer (see below). If the PCs return the Leviathan tail sample from Mahaas's garret to her, she immediately becomes friendly.

### What Spitewinter Knows

Although she does not know his name, Spitewinter has made several observations. First, she knows what the Organ Grinder looks like (see below) and that he has a curious monkey following him — a monkey with an unsettlingly human appearance. Secondly, she believes her blackmailer must be local, as his drawl is unmistakably a Festival accent. Finally, she knows he has an accomplice, a vile-looking fellow who appears to have two heads — a most regrettable deformity. She is particularly annoyed at this accomplice who took it upon himself to take a beautiful tail sample that she had recovered. She would dearly like it returned if the vile man is ever brought to justice. Spitewinter has considered having the men tailed but is so engrossed in the dig that so far she has only taken the step of hiring guards, incensed after the men almost destroyed her samples.

Spitewinter had been using a wooden shed to store samples that she has discovered here and shows its burnt remains to anyone she feels is trying to help her (C5).

### Becoming a Savant

Savant is a title seldom given. To earn the title, the claimant must have proficiency in the related skill, a bonus of at least +6 when using that skill, and must have performed some valuable or acclaimed service for one of the Universities, most of which are located in BookTown.

Savants receive a salary of  $1d4 + 1 \times 100$  gp per month to conduct their studies, lodgings at the University that sponsors them, unlimited time to study (occasionally interrupted by a requirement to lecture), and the use of the University's facilities. University facilities invariably have access to well-stocked workrooms and libraries.

Spitewinter plays no further role in this adventure, but you may wish to use her and her dig as a way of introducing future adventures to your players — perhaps she unearths a glass vessel in the dig, an opaque thing that intrigues her. She accidentally drops the glass one night, breaking it, and something terrible emerges and slithers into the city night. Horrified, she remembers the strangers and their confidence — and she seeks them out to help her find the escaped thing.



## C4. The Leviathans

Three Ancients are being unearthed here, their fossilized remains exposed and the tidal waters kept back by thick plank dikes. The first was a hulking snake-like brute with an enormous maw. The second was more jaw than body, with three tooth-filled mouths. The final creature is barely visible, but clearly unusual. Its flank and tail were covered in small-tusked mouths, and it had a triple tail ending in four bony scythes, and what appears to be a shoulder structure that looks like it connected to a wing.

The fossilized skeletal remains of three Leviathans are being unearthed here by the Royal Underneath Society. During the day, **2d4 + 2 student volunteers** (LN human male or female commoners) are around, assisting in the dig. At the eastern end of the dig is the “honeycomb totem” (see below).

### Leviathans, Ancients, and Fossils

The terrible Ancients are buried beneath the city streets; their fossilized bodies have laid, it is speculated, for eons beneath the ground. Practically nothing is known about the creatures save the clues given by their fossilized bones and the strange ruins that occasionally lie nearby. Their forms were an affront to the gods — indeed many cults and religions have ascribed their demise to some offended deity. Their bodies take several forms, yet all are linked by some commonality. They are always large — at least 10 feet long — and often much, much larger. They show signs of both reptilian and insectoid ancestry. Their bodies were covered in barbed chitinous plates, and their jaws were able to dislocate to enable them to swallow large prey. Some show snake-like forms, whilst others resemble lizards. Some are so strange to look upon that it has been impossible to categorise them as anything other than aberrations. Various worthies have discussed the creatures, and continue to conjecture, but as more information appears, the mystery deepens and the number of questions increases.

### Honeycomb Totem

At the edge of the site, a small shard of dark stone rises from a series of hexagonal granite slabs. Weathered hexagons, rather like those found in a beehive, cover the shard itself.

These structures, known as honeycomb totems, are a common feature of Leviathan sites. Their significance has not yet been determined.

## C5. Burnt Sample Store

Little is left of this plank building save charred wood, ash, and ruin.

Spitewinter relates the events that occurred here as she sees them. Ten days ago, she noticed a plume of smoke from the store and quickly ran to it to save her specimens. When she arrived, the blackmailer appeared with his accomplice and monkey, said that fires in the Festival were spreading and that, unless he was paid 2,000 gp, he could not guarantee that the Savant herself would not be caught in some fire and horribly burnt. He added that “some fires burn where they are told to.” Panicked, she agreed

and, after saving her most precious specimens, paid the men who then left. This event prompted her to hire guards.

A search of the charred wreckage finds little, but a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check reveals a curiosity: the silhouette of something burnt upon the remains of one wall — a thing vaguely humanoid in shape, with long claws.

Questioning locals in the immediate vicinity brings a pair of local waifs — **Jib** and **Grag** (NE human male wererats) — to the PCs’ attention. The youths claim to have seen something. They have no truck with officialdom, but they can be persuaded to tell their tale with a successful DC 12 Cha (Intimidation or Persuasion) check.

“We was playin’ hoopla when we saw ’em — a man, a monkey wiv an ’orrible human face, an’ a fella wiv two ’eads — enter the building. Finkin’ ’em a bit odd, we spied on ’em frew a gap in’t wall and saw t’ ’ooded man fling a vial against t’wall. The stuff inside looked strange and sticky an’ when it hit t’wall, it gave out a sort of baby-like cry, and then, suddenly, it was a flamin’ gargoyle thing that started burning everythin’. Then t’ ’ooded man got worried and said somefin’ about it growin’ an’ ’think what it could do if left to feed’ ’e said. Then ’e worked some magicky ‘and-wavin’ and suddenly a great big blob o’ water appeared wiv arms and eyes and such, and swallowed the burnin’ thing right up an’ we legged it.”

The boys describe the Organ Grinder’s use of the ragefire elemental and the subsequent appearance of a water elemental. Embellish these details as much as you wish.

## Locating the Organ Grinder

In a parish full of freakshows, street entertainers, and diversions, finding a man with a human-faced monkey is not as easy as it might seem. However, the **Organ Grinder** has to earn a living — including returning to his blackmail victim for more money. The PCs have options to locate the man that include laying low near the site and awaiting his return or by getting out onto the streets of Festival and trying to see him in action. The Grinder is alert; he’s aware that Spitewinter has hired some thugs and that she might just send them after him. The problem he has is that people watch him — that’s his job after all. He relies upon his Perception to spot suspicious characters, and that could be his downfall.

### Rumours about the Organ Grinder

- “He’s a strange one that Organ Grinder. They say he’s addicted to absinthe and that his monkey talks to him. He looks odd too, got a nose too big for his face; a fat face at that, which looks like it’s about to burst, and those red spectacles. There’s something up with that chap.”
- “He’s not called the Organ Grinder for nothing. He ’angs around the Seminary hoping to get tips from the Physicians. They say ’e’s a golem-stitcher!”
- “He lives in an old ship hung on the Dislocated Pier. Have you seen it? ’angs above the water as though waitin’ to drop in. I wouldn’t send my worst enemy into that dangerous place. We all know the things that live in t’river ...”



## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

The **organ** the Grinder uses is a curious animated object that offers a further option to pursue the Grinder back to his lair — if the PCs wish to do so. The Grinder has his organ with him only when he works.

Bear in mind finally that the Blight is a violent place, low-life street attacks occur daily — particularly in Festival — and the PCs are almost certainly going to be witnessed if they attack, but no one is likely to lift a finger to help their victim.

**Development:** The PCs can scour Festival, but it's a big place. Most street performers have particular territories — except puppeteers, who are a different bunch entirely — so that similar acts don't clash. If the PCs have already seen the Organ Grinder as they arrived and remember him (don't prompt them but reward them if they mention it), then they know he must be local anyway. Otherwise, they may go off around Festival looking and have other encounters as you see fit. In addition, the PCs can attempt to gain the local gossip on the Organ Grinder by asking around (see sidebox).

An hour or two of walking the neighborhoods leads characters to the Organ Grinder, working on the street. A suggested locale is indicated on the Festival Map for the encounter. If he is located and followed, allow the Grinder to make a Wis (Perception) check to spot anyone following him surreptitiously. If he succeeds, he drinks his *potion of invisibility* and flees back to his lodgings (see **Chapter 5**). At that stage, his monkey and organ also flee via the rooftops. If you like, you could run a short chase to resolve this pursuit, or you could simply require the pursuing PC(s) to succeed in a DC 15 Str (Athletics) check to avoid a 40-foot drop and a Perception contest against the monkey's or organ's Perception (as they watch for a tail) to follow one or both of them back to the Dislocated Pier in **Chapter 5**.

If the PCs have not yet located him, the Grinder appears four days after the PCs arrive at the dig to strong-arm Spitewinter, but doesn't go himself — he sends his monkey at night to her tent. It tells Spitewinter to get a gem worth 1,000 gp ready for the night after, or there'll be big trouble. As his monkey delivers the message, the Organ Grinder watches from the point marked **X** at the southwest corner of the Leviathan Dig map. He returns the night after, sending the monkey with the ragefire elemental in a flask. If the gem isn't handed over, the flask is smashed in Spitewinter's face.

### The Organ Grinder

This man's face appears almost like a caricature: His head is too fat for his body, and a pendulous, bulbous nose dangles on it like a swaying sack. His attire is fairly mundane for a performer, but his top hat is held at a rakish angle to his fat face as he plies his instrument.

If the situation turns against him, he flees to the Hold Menagerie (**area D7**) for a final stand. The Organ Grinder is not likely to surrender until severely injured (15 or fewer hit points). If attacked outside, he flees immediately and tries to get home using his *potion of invisibility* or of *gaseous form*. In addition to his poison, potions, and bottled ragefire elemental, he also carries a key to **area D1** that resembles a wallow-whale (with copper and obsidian eyes worth 75gp) devouring the sun.

### The Organ Grinder

**XP** 5,000 (CR 9)  
**LE** Medium humanoid (human)  
**Initiative** +3

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17 (studded armor, shield)  
**hp:** 104 (16d8 + 32)  
**Saving Throws:** Dex +8, Cha +6  
**Immunity:** charm

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 30 ft.  
**Multiaction:** The Organ Grinder attacks twice with his rapier.  
**Melee Attack—Rapier:** +8 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).  
**Hit:** 1d8 + 4 piercing damage plus 7d6 poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 15 Con saving throw. Each hit uses up one dose of wyvern poison.  
**Ranged Attack—Light Crossbow:** +8 to hit (range 80 ft./320

ft.; one creature). **Hit:** 1d8 + 4 piercing damage plus 7d6 poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 15 Con saving throw. Each hit uses up one dose of wyvern poison.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 10 (+0), **Dex** 19 (+4), **Con** 15 (+2),  
**Int** 14 (+2), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 14 (+2)  
**Languages:** Common, thieves' cant  
**Skills:** Perception +8, Performance +6, Stealth +12, Sleight of Hand +8  
**Senses:** passive Perception 18

#### TRAITS

**Cutting Words:** As a reaction when an enemy within 60 feet that the Organ Grinder can see makes an attack, the Organ Grinder can roll 1d6 and subtract the result from the enemy's attack roll.

**Evasion:** If a successful saving throw would normally result in half damage, the Organ Grinder takes no damage on a successful save and half damage on a failure.

**Rapid Potions:** The Organ Grinder can drink one potion as a bonus action. See "Equipment" for a list of his potions.

**Spellcasting:** The Organ Grinder is an arcane spellcaster who uses Charisma as his spellcasting ability (DC 14, attack +6). He has the following spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

1st level (×4): *charm person*, *silent image*, *hideous laughter*, *unseen servant*

2nd level (×3): *blindness/deafness*, *phantasmal force*, *see invisibility*

3rd level (×3): *glyph of warding*, *major image*, *stinking cloud*

4th level (×1): *freedom of movement*

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Blight  
**Organization:** Solitary

#### EQUIPMENT

bottled ragefire spawn, wyvern poison ×10; potions of *climbing*, *gaseous form*, *invisibility*, *resistance* (fire), *speed*, *superior healing* ×2

The Organ Grinder's familiar is a vile little creature: a bald, pink-faced monkey, with clever fingers and a long, mangy tail covered in balding patches. The thing has an altogether unsettling human look about it, right down to its fez and clown's costume. Called Scat by the Organ Grinder, the creature is a homunculus created in the form of a monkey with a human face. This homunculus can talk, albeit in a strangled, somewhat stuttering way. It sounds like a squeaky child's toy with words thrown in at random. Scat uses the standard homunculus stat block.

**Scat (Homunculus): AC** 13; **HP** 5 (2d4); **Spd** 20ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1 piercing and DC 10 Con save or poisoned 1 minute; if failed by 5 or more, 1d10 poison damage and unconscious for 1 minute); **Str** -3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Immune** charm, poison; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** telepathic bond (communicates telepathically with master while on same plane); **AL** N; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

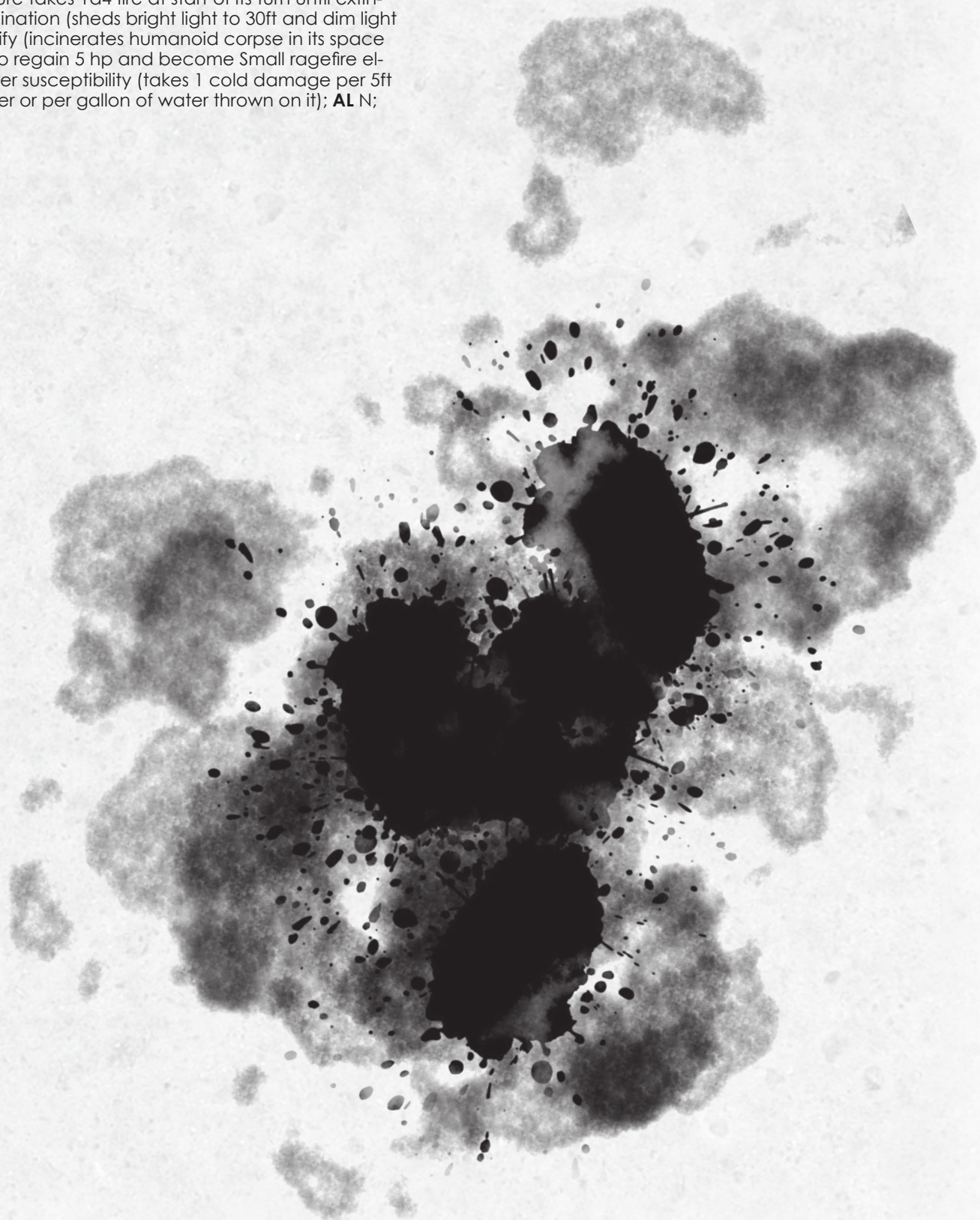
There's something unsettlingly dislocated in the way this object sits. It's made up of a grinning devil body with many-jointed limbs and a grinning face within the mouth of which is a kitten. The limbs are clearly preserved flesh from some sort of monster. It has wheels, but almost looks like it could get up and walk of its own accord. It has the stats of a Medium animated object.

**The Organ:** **AC** 13; **HP** 40; **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 2d6+1 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** -4, **Cha** -5; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.



## THE CRUCIBLE

**Ragefire Spawn:** AC 13; HP 33 (6d4+18); Spd 50ft; **Melee** touch (+3, 1d4+3 fire and flammable object ignites; burning object takes 1d4 fire at the start of its turns until extinguished); **SA** multiattack (touch ×2); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Resist** nonmagical weapons; **Immune** exhaustion, fire, grapple, paralysis, petrified, poison, prone, restraint, unconsciousness; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** fire form (adjacent creature that hits ragefire spawn with melee attack takes 1d4 fire; elemental can enter creature's space and stop, causing 1d4 fire and igniting flammable material; burning creature takes 1d4 fire at start of its turn until extinguished), illumination (sheds bright light to 30ft and dim light to 60ft), intensify (incinerates humanoid corpse in its space as an action to regain 5 hp and become Small ragefire elemental), water susceptibility (takes 1 cold damage per 5ft moved in water or per gallon of water thrown on it); **AL** N; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.





# Chapter Five: The Dislocated Pier

The Dislocated Pier is one of hundreds of piers that thrust intrusively out into the Lyme. These piers allow further real-estate development out over the waters, but so expensive is their maintenance cost that many are in terrible states of repair and are dangerous to use. Some have officially been closed, although such places, of course, make useful places to hide.

The Dislocated Pier lies in Liquorice, a part of Festival famous for imported liquorice. As well as several nearby merchants and traders, this pier specialises in gaudy freakshows and minor plays in tiny theaters. The *Limpet* — the Organ Grinder's boat home — itself lies at the very end of the pier, and while the journey to it is by no means dangerous, the fragility of these structures is readily apparent.

This crippled pier leans and sags as it drags itself away from Festival and out over the sick, black waters of the Lyme. Like a dislocated limb, it writhes and bends its way for a hundred feet above the water, its back groaning beneath a confusion of stalls and shops, tiny theaters and freak shows. The pier ends abruptly — like a broken arm with a severed hand — above the river, its final palsied moments spent in obeisance to the sky above, its entrails exposed to the air and rotting.

Lashed to the end of this ruined appendage is a ship — the carcass of a mildewed keelboat — bow raised as though praying to the gods themselves for release. This prisoner, wreathed in iron and wire, rope and rust, hangs perilously from the broken pier, looking as though at any moment its confinement will end and its stern will drop into the poisonous embrace of the dark waters beneath.

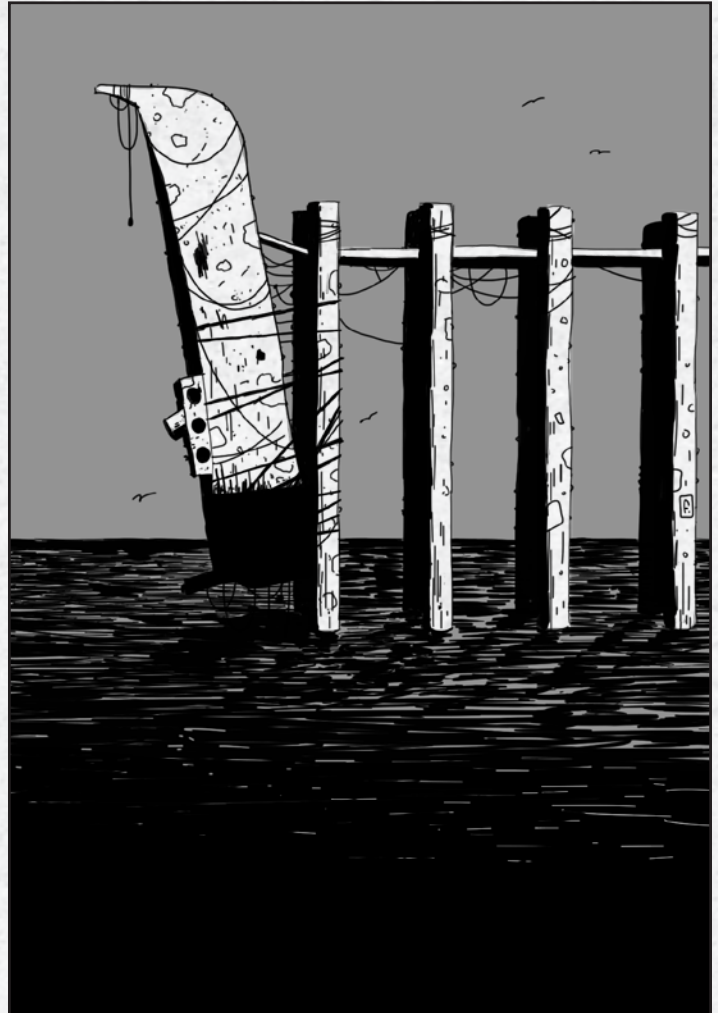
The Lyme's current is sluggish around the dislocated pier. The lower piers are slippery with seaweed and rot, however, so a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) check is required to clamber out of the river onto them. A mud bank lies 120 feet from the end of the pier with the shore 60 feet farther on. The mud is difficult terrain.

## The Limpet

The *Limpet* is an old keelboat that has been raised from the water vertically, lashed to the pier, and converted for use as a dwelling. The interior is thus a confusing stack of rooms, and poor alterations to its architecture have made it dangerous. The whole structure is in danger of collapse, with tie lines, chains, and ropes badly corroded or worn. Coal dust and wood chips lie in plentiful amounts throughout the *Limpet*. This is the result of the Organ Grinder's frequent visits to the great windmill aboard the *Blackleg*, a coal and timber merchant's vessel (see the end of the chapter for further details).

The stairs are tricky to use; treat them as difficult terrain. The Organ Grinder and his followers have grown used to this inconvenience and aren't hampered by it. The inner walls of the ship are infested with hundreds of old fittings, planks and remnants of interior walls; those wishing to clamber about along them rather than take the stairs can do so with a successful DC 10 Str (Athletics) check.

The doors are damp and tend to stick; they can be force open automatically, but doing so makes enough noise to be heard by anyone within 20 feet.



## Siklight Cockroaches

Smaller, more nauseating cousins of the pyrebeetle, these creatures feed on waste and give off an insipid, pallid light when they are awake. Siklight cockroaches are a common sight in poorer parts of the Blight. A siklight cockroach costs 8 cp and, if properly cared for, will live for a year or more. Siklight cockroaches have 1 hit point. If they take damage, the cockroaches explode like alchemist's fire. The cockroaches are also prone to sudden changes in temperature and certain conditions of the Canker (see *The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*), and small explosions and fires are a common sight in areas lit by them. For this reason, the siklight cockroach has many nicknames among the populace, including Devil's Spark, Trust-Me-Not, Tricklight, Mother's Misery, Beltane's Fart and a host of other, less-polite curses and cant-words



## THE CRUCIBLE

Siklight cockroaches (see sidebox) light all the rooms. The overpowering musk of the Organ Grinder's various creatures makes use of the scent ability impossible within the *Limpet*.

### Combat in the *Limpet*

So ruptured, rotten, and unstable is the ship that any major damage to the *Limpet*, such as by an area effect spell, can cause it to collapse. Most area effect spells cause half damage to the *Limpet*'s structure, but thunder attacks cause full damage. Keep a running tally of the damage from such spells and consult the table below. Remember that not just the PCs' attacks damage the ship.

Total Damage	Effect
5–24	The ship shakes and groans; plates fall off tables, and mice scuttle for cover.
25–49	Ropes securing the ship to the pier snap, and the whole structure becomes unstable. All attack rolls made while onboard take a –2 penalty until the damage to the ship is repaired. Spellcasters must make a successful DC 10 spellcasting check before casting a spell; failure indicates their action is wasted but no spell slot is consumed.
50–74	The whole ship sags forward. Each round anyone onboard who moves farther than 5 feet must make a successful DC 8 Dex (Acrobatics) check or fall prone.
75+	The whole structure collapses into the River Lyme (see below). Each character onboard must make a DC 15 Dex saving throw. On a success, the character takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage and falls into the river but is swimming on the surface. On a failure, the character takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage from collapsing timbers, falls into the river, and is dragged under by the sinking <i>Limpet</i> . A character dragged under the river can't breathe and must attempt a DC 15 Str (Athletics) check at the start of each of his or her turns; success indicates they break free of the sinking wreckage and swim to the surface.

(bite+tail slap), filth fever (gain 1 level of exhaustion immediately; DC 17 Con save after every long rest; +1 exhaustion on failure, –1 exhaustion on success; ends at 0 exhaustion or magical cure); **Str** +6, **Dex** –3, **Con** +5, **Int** –3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –3; **Immune** thunder, prone; **Resist** nonmagical weapons; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** N; **CR** 12; **XP** 8,400.

**Ad Hoc XP Award:** If the PCs fight the wallow-whale until it retreats, award the group 4,200 XP.

### D1. Entry

The bow rises ten feet above the pier, and a single hefty oak door inset in the vessel's deck forms a grand entrance. This portal has iron bindings and a six-inch-square, leaded-glass window. A small, carved wooden gargoyle sits on the lintel and smiles wickedly.



### Event 3: A Lyme Bath

If the *Limpet* sustains more than 50 points of damage, objects falling from it into the water attract a **wallow-whale**. The whale arrives 2d6 rounds later and attacks anything that drops into the water — objects and creatures alike. If the *Limpet* itself falls into the river, the wallow-whale takes 8d8 bludgeoning damage as the stern rams into it. The wallow-whale is not hungry, just curious, and will not use its swallow whole ability. If it gets into a fight with the PCs, it loses interest after 1d4 rounds or after taking 40 damage and swims away into the black water.

**Wallow-whale:** **AC** 17; **HP** 201; **Spd** swim 40ft; **Melee** bite (+10, 4d10+6 piercing plus 3d6 acid, and DC 17 Str save or swallowed; swallowed creature is blinded and restrained and takes 1d10+6 bludgeoning plus 1d8 acid automatically at start of wallow-whale's turns; when a creature gets out of wallow-whale, must make DC 17 Con save or contract filth fever), tail slap (+10, 15ft, 4d8+6 bludgeoning and target knocked prone); **SA** multiattack



# The Limpet

1 square - 5 feet

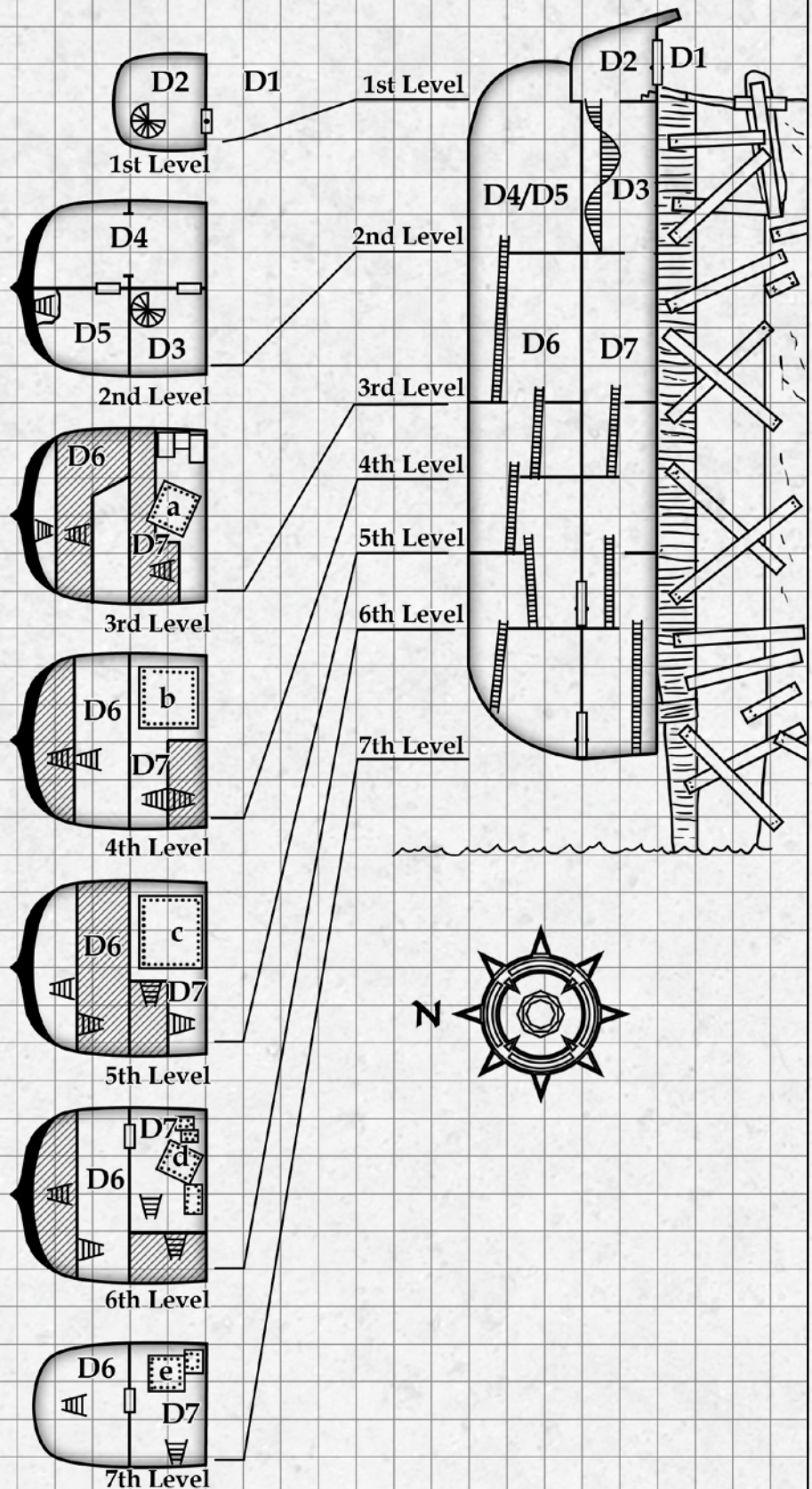
## Plan View

## Side View

Hatched Areas - Open to Below

Cages:

- a - Dire Wolverine
- b - Dire Ape
- c - Lion
- d - Dire Weasel
- e - Krenshar





## THE CRUCIBLE

The door is locked and trapped. If someone tries the handle of the door without first unlocking it, a poison arrow trap is triggered. The lock can be opened with thief's tools and a successful DC 15 Dex check. The trap can be spotted with a successful DC 12 Int (Investigation) check. It can be bypassed by unlocking the door with the key or by successfully picking the lock. If the trap is triggered, the person turning the door handle takes 1d8 piercing damage plus 7d6 poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 15 Con saving throw (wyvern poison).

### D2. Lesser Hold

Beyond the door is a cluttered chamber. Racks of knives lie under piles of books, and iron-shod boots hang, laces taut, from the arms of an iron octopus. A tight little spiral stair descends through an access point in the floor.

Hanging directly above the entry door, the Organ Grinder has hung a foul exhibit — the head and forelegs from a lion, neatly sawn in half and mounted on a varnished wooden plaque. This **lion trophy** is a creation of golem-stitching called a Made (see sidebar), mummified in an alchymic wash. It attacks with its claws and teeth. It continues attacking paralyzed prey to the exclusion of other foes. If the Organ Grinder is expecting a visitor, he stores the lion trophy in a closet to ensure everyone's safety.

**"Made" Lion Trophy:** AC 12; HP 26 (4d10+4); Spd 0ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing plus paralysis), claws (+5, 1d6+3 slashing plus paralysis); **SA** multiattack (bite+claws), paralysis (DC 11 Con save or paralyzed; repeat save at end of turn to end paralysis); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +3; **AL** un; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

**Treasure:** Searching among the confusion of objects cluttering the room reveals a fine gold candlestick worth 200 gp, a stag's head with an old purse inside its mouth containing 4 amethysts worth 100 gp each, and a flask of alchemist's fire.

### Golem-Stitching and the Made

As well as being his home, the interior of the *Limpet* is a gallery for the Organ Grinder's twisted art of golem-stitching, a sadly growing trade in the city and one which demands increasing amounts of flesh to sculpt. The creations of golem-stitchers are called Made and vary greatly depending upon the power of the creator. "Made" is actually a catchall term for a variety of animated dead and constructs. Some made are alchemical zombies, some are necrocraft, some are flesh or carrion golems or even homunculi, others are stranger still. The art of golem-stitching is one that transcends the boundaries of art, guardianship, and trap with such creations often fulfilling all three functions at once. There is a flourishing market in Made, and these monstrosities can be bought and sold at the Flea Markets and Souks in Golem Town. The Organ Grinder learnt his trade through the acquisition of a secret (see D5).

The spiral stair descends to D3 and is completely exposed, without railing or cover. This room has a guardian instructed to remain here and deter visitors, a **four-armed gargoyle** the Organ Grinder refers to as the Crooked Doorman, and which he supplies with a *potion of speed* for emergencies.

**Four-Armed Gargoyle:** AC 15; HP 55 (10d8+10); Spd 30ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing), claws (+4, 2d8+2 slashing), gore (+4, 1d8+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (bite+claws+claws+gore); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Resist** nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine;

Immune exhaustion, petrification, poison; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 60ft; **Traits** stony appearance (indistinguishable from stone while motionless); **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

### D3. Storage

A narrow spiral stair descends into this room, which is crammed with objects, piled in tea chests, hanging from beams or forced onto crude crooked shelving.

This room is so cluttered that when the door is opened several objects fall to the ground. Within the clutter are three street signs (Three Needles Street, Folgate Road, and Fanshaw Street), a portable ram with a head like a twisted giant's, a battered leather backpack containing straw, numerous household items, a large jar of very hefty coach-bolts and long nails, a pair of wall supports, and a large amount of rubbish. An enormous number of spiders are in this room, but whilst they are big, fast, hairy, and demonstrate an uncanny ability to settle on anyone with arachnophobia, they are otherwise harmless.

### D4. Dissectory

In this polished chamber's centre is a dissecting table, complete with straps. A bloody white tarpaulin on the table covers something larger and feral smelling. Shelves around the room are crowded with a gruesome display of pickled or mummified body parts in glass jars. Some of the specimens still wriggle and move, even though they are simple biological forms such as tentacles, the forepaws of a cat, a human tongue, or a monkey's hand. In one corner, an object lies covered by a hefty woolen throw with swirling red and orange woven patterns.

The Organ Grinder keeps his workshop for creating Made scrupulously clean. The specimens are Made created by the Organ Grinder and are pathetically poor things worth nothing to anyone.

Currently, the Grinder is amusing himself most of the time with his latest creation — a collage of body parts from a minotaur and an ankheg that he, unimaginatively, calls an **ankhetaur**. To protect himself, he has fitted the creature with an iron muzzle and straps that hold it in place. While muzzled, the creature cannot attack. Removing the muzzle is a full round action that provokes a reaction. Four straps (AC 15, 5 hp each) bind the creature's hands and feet. In the unlikely event that characters free this monster and must fight it, it has stats identical to a skeletal minotaur but its attacks do an additional 2d8 acid damage.

**Development:** The object beneath the throw is a wooden pedestal supporting a great jar of vinegar with the head of a **medusa** trapped within. The jar is secured by an iron screw-top lid sealed with wax; a DC 10 Strength check is required to open it (the occupant cannot open it from the inside). If the Organ Grinder retreats through this room, he may choose to knock the jar from its pedestal and then close the door behind him, trapping Leyak within to attack any pursuers.

Whenever the PCs first see the trapped head, read the following:

The severed head of an ebony-skinned woman floats in a sealed glass jar filled with an amber fluid. Floating viscera trails from the ragged stump of her neck. Her hair is a multitude of gray serpents that twist and writhe to fix their gaze upon you as the woman's eyes suddenly flick open, though they close again just as suddenly. She is alive! She begins desperately mouthing pleas for help, her expression one of indescribable anguish and fear with her eyes clenched tightly shut.

This creature is Leyak, and she has been trapped in this jar for many years. Her body was destroyed long ago. Her petrifying gaze is ineffective



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through the distortion of the glass. She has been traded around the golem-stitching community ever since she was first sold by her initial captor but none of her owners has been brave enough to release her. The Organ Grinder won her several months ago and still hasn't decided what to do with her.

Leyak's voice is just audible through the thick glass. She pleads for release, promising anything they require of her, including information on anything or anyone they seek. She explains that she was a human slave brought to Castorhage and that she is not truly a monster but has been experimented upon to look as she does. Unfortunately, her promises are all lies. If she is released, she attacks without mercy.

**Leyak (Medusa's head):** AC 15; HP 127 (17d8+51); Spd 0ft; **Melee** snake hair (+5, 1d4+2 piercing plus 4d6 poison); **SA** multiattack (snake hair ×2 + petrifying gaze), petrifying gaze (30ft; 1 creature that can see medusa's eyes; DC 14 Con save; fail by 5 or more means creature instantly petrified; fail means restrained, repeat save at end of next turn, petrified if fail or effect ends if success; creatures can avert eyes at start of turn); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300.

### D5. Study

This study is crammed with books and dominated by a fine roll-top desk. The complete skeleton of an ape hangs from a beam, its articulated bones held together by wire, and glass cases display two preserved and stuffed exotic birds. A ladder descends steeply into the gloom via a hole broken in the floor.

The ladder descends 20 feet to **D6**. The desk contains several ledgers that show that, over the past several months, the Organ Grinder has been ordering several tons of coal each week from Sallow & Son Coal and Timber Factors to be delivered to a single location. Each order for a barge load of coal and timber lists a charge of 100 gp, and there have been 15 total orders. The latest order is due for delivery tomorrow to the usual place: one of the great windmills at the mouth of the Lyme.

One of the birds is an albino dodo and the other is a paradise cockatrice. A paradise cockatrice is identical to its more mundane cousin save in one regard: It has the most exquisite plumage — a rainbow display of

violet, turquoise, and emerald. Costumers and spellcasters alike prize their feathers. The Organ Grinder keeps the key to the chest hidden in his chamber (see **D6**) in the dodo's mouth. The silver key is tiny and can be found only with a successful DC 8 Int (Investigation) check as part of a thorough search of the room; it's found automatically if players specify that their characters open the case and search the dodo.

**Treasure:** The desk has a very fine writing set worth 75 gp and three bottles of Devil's Wormwood absinthe (see sidebox). Only two of the bottles still contain a worm as the Organ Grinder has already eaten one and gained its benefits. The desk itself has a hidden cache (found with a successful DC 18 Int [Investigation] check) behind a section of removable shelving). Within the space is a small leather-bound book containing *The Secret of Creation* (see sidebox). The stuffed birds are worth 100 gp and 500 gp to the right collector.

### New Drug: Absinthe

This highly intoxicating green beverage is common in the Blight. It is usually taken with water and is commonly called "green fairy" or "Devil's wormwood." A shot can cost anywhere from 1 gp to 30 gp but various magically or alchemically enhanced versions exist which cost a lot more. A few of the more specialized versions of absinthe are detailed below. Their effects and damage given are alchemic in nature.

#### GREEN FAIRY

*Potion, uncommon*

Green fairy is taken by artists who claim it enhances creativity. Its effect lasts 1 hour. During that time, it grants a +1 bonus on Cha checks and a -2 penalty on saving throws against illusions and other mental effects. For 1d4 hours afterward, the user must make a successful DC 15 spellcasting check before casting any spell; if the check fails, the action is wasted but no spell slot is expended.

#### DEVIL'S WORMWOOD

*Potion, uncommon*

Said to have been distilled in Hell, this vile liquid has a fat worm floating in each bottle. Eating the worm exposes the consumer to a poison which may extend the effects of the drug if it doesn't commit them to a nightmare-filled coma (see Devil's worm below).

The potion's effect lasts 1d3 hours. During that time, the user gains 1d4 Cha points, a +1 on spell attacks, a +1 on his or her spell save DC, and has disadvantage on saving throws against illusions and other mental effects.

#### DEVIL'S WORM

*Potion, uncommon*

Each bottle of Devil's wormwood contains a poisonous Devil's worm. A person under the effects of the Devil's wormwood who consumes a Devil's worm must make a DC 18 Con saving throw. If it fails, the creature takes 2d12 poison damage and loses 1d4 Wis and 1d4 Int until after completing a long rest. If the saving throw succeeds, the duration of the Devil's wormwood is extended to 1d3 months.

### New Tome

#### THE SECRET OF CREATION

*This book, bound in the softest goatskin, contains a curious codex of sigils, runes and oddly disturbing drawings.*

Deciphering the book requires a month's study of the text and a successful DC 18 Int (History) check. If the check succeeds, the reader gains a rudimentary understanding of how Made are created, but not the ability to actually make them. The character can cast *animate dead* and *mend* once per week without expending (or even having) any spell slots, provided the book is within 50 feet of the caster. A spellcasting character learns these spells and can add them to his or her spellbook after reading *The Secret of Creation*.

The book's benefits accrue only to its owner. In addition, the owner of the book is troubled by dreams in which the animated parts of created creatures stalk him. This has no game effect but is unpleasant and always leaves the character looking as if he isn't getting enough sleep.

*The Secret of Creation* is worth 1,300gp.



## D6. Organ Grinder's Chamber

This chamber takes up much of the old lower hold of the ship. It comprises three levels connected by rickety ladders, with an open central section such that it is possible to leap between them. Each floor is cluttered with oddments and objects, including a large amount of books and several crude canvases.

The ladders are not tied to the walls and can easily be knocked down. The floor is the sloped hull of the ship, and its surface is slick, making it difficult terrain. The **Organ Grinder**, his monkeylike **familiar Scat**, and his **mud mephit thrall Lott**, spend most of their time here. In addition, his barrel **organ** usually shuffles about in this chamber when he is present. When the Organ Grinder is out, Lott generally remains within the **Limpet** feeding (or more usually, tormenting) the creatures in the menagerie (D7).

**Organ Grinder:** AC 17; HP 104 (16d8+32); Spd 30ft; **Melee** rapier (+8, 1d8+4 piercing plus 7d6 poison; half poison with DC 15 Con save); **Ranged** light crossbow (+8, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+4 piercing plus 7d6 poison; half poison with DC 15 Con save); **SA** multiattack (rapier ×2), cutting words (reaction; subtracts 1d6 from attack roll of enemy within 60ft), evasion (if save allows half damage, Organ Grinder takes no damage on success and half damage on failure), rapid potions (can drink 1 potion as bonus action); **Str** +0, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2; **Saving Throws** Dex +8, Cha +6; **Immune** charm; **Skills** Perception +8, Performance +6, Stealth +12, Sleight of Hand +8; **AL** LE; **CR** 9; **XP** 5,000.

**Spellcasting (+6, save DC 14):** 0 (at will)—*dancing lights, minor illusion, vicious mockery*; 1 (4)—*charm person, silent image, hideous laughter, unseen servant*; 2 (3)—*blindness/deafness, phantasmal force, see invisibility*; 3 (3)—*glyph of warding, major image, stinking cloud*; 4 (1)—*freedom of movement*.

**Equipment:** bottled ragefire spawn, wyvern poison ×10; potions of *climbing, gaseous form, invisibility, resistance (fire), speed, superior healing* ×2.

**Scat (Homunculus):** AC 13; HP 5 (2d4); Spd 20ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1 piercing and DC 10 Con save or poisoned 1 minute; if failed by 5 or more, 1d10 poison damage and unconscious for 1 minute); **Str** -3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Immune** charm, poison; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** telepathic bond (communicates telepathically with master while on same plane); **AL** N; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

**The Organ:** AC 13; HP 40; Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 2d6+1 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** -4, **Cha** -5; **Senses** blindsight 30ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

**Mud Mephit:** AC 11; HP 27 (6d6+6); Spd 20ft, fly 20ft, swim 20ft; **Melee** fists (+3, 1d6+1 bludgeoning); **SA** mud breath (recharge 6; 5ft, one creature; DC 11 Dex save or restrained; repeat save at end of turn to end effect); **Str** -1, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Stealth +3; **Immune** poison; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** death burst (5ft; DC 11 Dex save or restrained until end of creature's next turn), false appearance (indistinguishable from mud while motionless); **AL** NE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

**Ragefire Spawn:** AC 13; HP 33 (6d4+18); Spd 50ft; **Melee** touch (+3, 1d4+3 fire and flammable object ignites; burning object takes 1d4 fire at the start of its turns until extinguished); **SA** multiattack (touch ×2); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Resist** nonmagical weapons; **Immune** exhaustion, fire, grapple, paralysis, petrified, poison, prone, restraint, unconsciousness; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** fire

form (adjacent creature that hits ragefire spawn with melee attack takes 1d4 fire; elemental can enter creature's space and stop, causing 1d4 fire and igniting flammable material; burning creature takes 1d4 fire at start of its turn until extinguished), illumination (sheds bright light to 30ft and dim light to 60ft), intensify (incinerates humanoid corpse in its space as an action to regain 5 hp and become Small ragefire elemental), water susceptibility (takes 1 cold damage per 5ft moved in water or per gallon of water thrown on it); **AL** N; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

**Treasure:** The books are generally about anatomy, healing and alchemy. However, a few are notable. The first — *Granthim's Treatise upon Outsider's Souls* — is richly illustrated in gilt and crimson diagrams and is worth 350 gp. The second, a huge, untitled folio of images of speculative beasts of Between is worth 400 gp. Finally, a copy of *Kathrill's Arcanum* contains the spells *polymorph, contagion, dimension door, and wall of force*. Within the pages of this book, bound into the spine of the book as an end-piece and covered in *dust of disappearance*, is a scroll of *planar binding* and *stinking cloud*.

The Organ Grinder keeps his treasure in a chest hidden behind a small, secret panel, located with a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. It is locked (picked with thief's tools and a successful DC 20 Dex check) but opens with the key that's hidden in his stuffed dodo's mouth (D5). Within the chest, he keeps his formulae book; 1,250 gp in a large leather sack; a whalebone and walrus tusk jaggling wheel set with gold bands worth 600 gp; an engraved whale tooth depicting a swarm of ravens with obsidian-encrusted wings worth 700 gp; and three smoky colored and decorated behir eggs set with tiny emeralds and gold filigree, each worth 500 gp.

## D7. Gold Menagerie

A feral stench prowls this room, and a dozen rickety wooden cages line the trio of clumsily made wooden floors that were clearly once the ship's bulkheads. Again, planks and ladders connect this crooked space, while buckets of water, coarse tubers and plants, and fly-speckled cuts of meat hang from nails variously spaced along the walls.

The Organ Grinder is very proud of his menagerie of animals that he has collected from around the known world. It fills the old upper hold of the ship, which contains 12 wooden cages each held shut by a simple wooden peg that requires a move action to remove. The bars of the cages are close enough to prevent attack by the creatures within, and the cages are as tall as they are wide. If the Organ Grinder retreats here, he releases one caged animal at a time while climbing away if attacked. While not all animals here are aggressive (caged birds make up the rest of the menagerie), those that are offer him a last line of defence and are detailed below. He releases these in preference to any others although, if desperate, he may release other creatures in the hope that their flight distracts enemies. Each released creature emerges from its cage to look for food. It attacks anyone it can reach. The cages with creatures (and their occupants) are marked on the map.

Like D6, the bottom floor is the sloped stern of the ship, its surface slick with a slurry and animal droppings, and requires a DC 10 Acrobatics check to move upon.

**Giant Boar:** AC 12; HP 42 (5d10+15); Spd 40ft; **Melee** tusk (+5, 2d6+3 slashing); **SA** charge (if the boar move at least 20ft straight toward a target and hits it with its tusks in the same turn, the target takes 2d6 extra slashing damage; a creature must make a successful DC 13 Str saving throw or be knocked prone); **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -3; **Traits** relentless (1/between rest; an attack that does 10 damage or less reduces the boar to 1 HP instead of 0); **AL** Un; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

**Giant Scorpion:** AC 15; HP 52 (7d10+14); Spd 40ft; **Melee** claw (+4, 1d8+2 bludgeoning and target is grappled; es-



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cape DC 12), sting (+4, 1d10+2 piercing plus 4d10 poison; DC 12 Con save halves poison damage); **SA** multiattack (claws x2 and sting); **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** -5, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -4; **Senses** blindsight 60ft; **AL** un; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

**Giant Weasel:** **AC** 13; **HP** 9 (2d8); **Spd** 40ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d4+3 piercing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -3; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** keen hearing and smell; **AL** un; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

**Hell Hound:** **AC** 15; **HP** 45 (7d8+14); **Spd** 50ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing plus 2d6 fire); **SA** fire breath (recharge 5-6; 15ft cone; 6d6 fire; DC 12 Dex save for half damage); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +5; **Immune** fire; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** keen hearing and smell, pack tactics (tactical advantage if ally within 5ft of target); **AL** LE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

**Lion:** **AC** 12; **HP** 26 (4d10+4); **Spd** 50ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing), claw (+5, 1d6+3 slashing); **SA** pounce (if lion moves 20ft straight toward creature and hits with claw attack; DC 13 Str save or knocked prone, and lion makes bite attack as bonus action); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +6; **Traits** keen smell, pack tactics (tactical advantage if ally within 5ft of target), running leap (25ft long jump with 10ft running start); **AL** un; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

**Development:** If the PCs defeat the Organ Grinder, they can interrogate him. He is essentially a coward and pleads for his life, providing them with the information he knows in return for their mercy. The information he spills includes the location of the Artificer, the “creator of the living fire,” at the great windmill (Chapter 6). He explains about the “strange metal contraption that she calls the Crucible,” and the constant supply of coal and timber that is required to keep it alight. He admits that he was to sail with a new shipment from Sallow & Son to the mill on the morrow.

If the PCs kill the Organ Grinder, they might recover some of this information by using *Speak with Dead*, but the corpse attempts to deceive them if it makes its Will save, and its answers will be brief and cryptic if not. The link to Sallow & Son Coal and Timber Factors can also be gleaned from the ledgers on his study desk (D5). If the PCs want to head straight to the great windmill, boats and skiffs are easy to hire at only 5 gp per day, or the PCs may make arrangements to buy a boat for themselves. Alternatively, they may decide to first visit Sallow & Son.

## Sallow & Son Coal and Timber Factors

The ragefire elemental requires a constant supply of combustible material to be forced to spawn, and coal and timber have been used in huge quantities to that effect. The Artificer has used Sallow & Son Coal and Timber Factors, as she knew their business was on its last legs and likely would go under without her patronage. John and Jacob Sallows' loyalty is therefore assured through their fear of bankruptcy and personal ruin.

The merchants' warehouse, a shoddy building with living accommodation upstairs and a 6-foot-high wall surrounding it is indicated on the Festival map. Unpopular, but not an enemy of the wererats, the warehouse is rundown within and clearly understocked for the size of the yard. It contains no timber at all. A low iron gate, which is never locked, opens into the yard. The *Blackleg*, the pair's ship, moors just outside the

warehouse. The pair have a large but emaciated **guard dog** loose in the yard; it is very hungry and aggressive, and attacks anyone who tries to enter the yard without one of the pair present. Killing the dog lowers the pair's attitude toward strangers by one category.

**Guard Dog:** **AC** 12; **HP** 5 (1d8+1); **Spd** 40ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d6+1 piercing and DC 11 Str save or knocked prone); **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +3; **Traits** keen hearing and smell; **AL** un; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

**Development:** The coal merchants are dupes in the plot and desperate enough to appear secretive. **John Sallow** (N human male commoner) is a tall, sturdy man whose usual attire is coal dust. His son **Jacob** (N human male commoner) is quick-tempered. Getting any kind of information out of the coal merchants is not easy. They have been sworn to secrecy, and John knows that without his regular order from his “friends at the Great Windmill,” he will go out of business and be at the mercy of his ruthless creditors and the bankruptcy courts — and he is not sure which is worse. While the men are civil, their initial attitude is unfriendly. If the PCs can come up with a clever ruse (such as posing as a friend of the Organ Grinder and insisting on accompanying the latest shipment), force the information out of the pair, or explain what they're involved in as an appeal to their better natures, they can be made to reluctantly talk.

If convinced to talk, John and Jacob reveal that they have been delivering coal and timber for months to one of the great windmills and acquiesce to take the PCs in their coal barge with tomorrow's delivery. They can give a description of their employer, the Artificer (see E2), and relate that she has told them she is “engaged upon an arcane experimentation” that requires a constant supply of tinder. Jacob has caught a brief glimpse of the crucible and can give them a very basic description of the crucible itself, swearing by the all saints that he thought the device was alive, sure that he heard deep roars from within.

Thick iron plates on the *Blackleg's* hull reinforce the merchant's vessel to enable the pair to safely draw their barge up to the windmill and make deliveries without their ship being smashed by the rocks.





# Chapter Six: The Great Windmill



If the PCs gather information about the Great Windmills, use the information in the sidebox. No information is available on the Artificer, however, as she has done well in keeping her identity and activities secret.

The Great Windmill is a vast building that stands in the mouth of the Great Lyme River on a squat manmade island located in the estuary of the river, approximately 4 miles from Festival and shown on the location map. The isle is little wider than the windmill itself, with a short timber jetty allowing access by boat.

Built of heavy timbers soaked in oil to prevent rot, the mill is 100 feet tall and 30 feet wide with a stout wooden door at its base. A steeply conical roof of slate tiles rise 25 feet farther. The walls are easy to climb with a DC 12 Str (Athletics) check. The roof has been coated with grease to keep out rainwater, so a DC 17 Str (Athletics) check is needed to move across it.

The central floors of the structure have been removed to accommodate the *lesser searing crucible*, leaving only stubby balconies connected by ladders tied to them with wire. The entire place is unpleasantly hot.

## Rumours about the Great Windmills

- “You can see ’em from most eastern parts of the city — vast places built on manmade islands in the river. Many of ’em have burnt down, or been blown over, or fallen, but there must be a good score of ’em left.”
- “Most were built about seventy years ago. The mills were supposed to replace water power for the millers. Course, most of the bigger millers use accursed fleshgines and foul treadmills now so they became obsolete. They milled their last flour over forty years ago, I’d guess.”
- “D...d...dangerous places! One exploded. Exploded! They say the hot machinery ignited the flour dust and the place just blew!”
- “One of the main reasons for their demise was how awkward it was to land at ’em. Now, o’ course, they’re places best avoided: pirates, smugglers, briny-boys, golem-stitchers, and even sea-devils are rumored to populate ’em. Hah, one of the things that made ’em so awkward is now one of their strengths! Handy bases for keeping outta sight if ya wanna do unseen things ...”



# Reaching the Great Windmill

The estuary is a tricky place to navigate at times, as the Canker springs up and curious — but still hazardous — sandbanks form. Some even say sea devils or skum deliberately form the sandbanks to trap vessels when the Canker is at her deepest. If the PCs are travelling by their own means, you could make this part of the adventure as tricky or easy as you wish. As written, the PCs either go with the coal merchants or under the own methods, and since these could vary considerably, the approach is left open for you to consider.

When the PCs draw within 200 yards of the Great Windmill, read or paraphrase the following description:

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A vast dark shape looms from the water; like some primal dragon or kraken, it is monstrous and brooding. Its great sails hang ossified on her seaward side, barely moving in the wind. Whilst its flanks soar into the sky to nearly 130 feet, its feet grip the stone upon which it is built almost in desperation. This structure has a tiny footprint and virtually suffocates the rock upon which it perches. A low jetty seems to be the only landing point on this strange outpost, yet even this looks a tricky proposition as the tide is rough and the rocks about it are jagged.

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As the PCs draw even closer to the island, the water around the island seems more populated than expected with dark shapes that swim below. The Artificer and her gargoyle accomplices, eager to ensure that unwanted visitors are kept away, have been chumming the water to draw predators.

## E1. Jetty

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A low timber jetty with a single moored jolly boat extends out from the foot of a vast towering edifice of great timber beams, which squats like a cuckoo in an inadequate nest. The jetty sits atop razorlike rocks. This great windmill almost appears to be dipping its toes into the waters and, by the look of the salt scars around its base, the place is frequently inundated by storms.

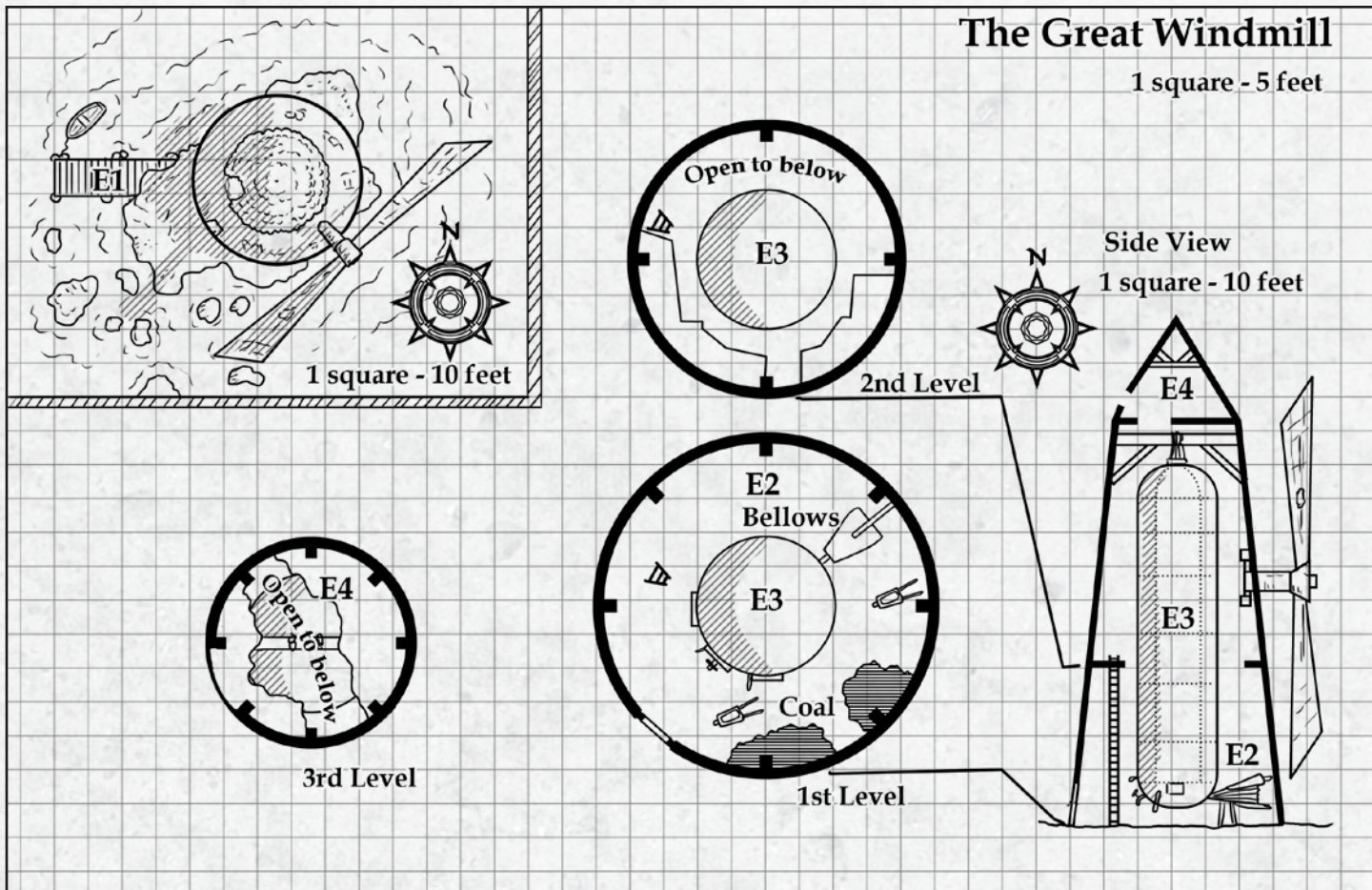
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The rocks, like many forming isles hereabouts, are indeed razor sharp and dangerous to vessels. Getting close enough to reach the jetty without bashing the hull against rocks requires a successful DC 12 Int check by the boat's pilot or tillerman; if the check fails twice before it succeeds, a small boat is knocked to pieces and sinks. Moving from a small boat onto the jetty requires a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics) check. These checks can be aided by others in the boat or on the jetty. Failure means the character falls into the water and immediately learns the true nature of the dark shapes swimming beneath the choppy surface.

Even if all the PCs safely disembark, they still are left with the problem of what to do with their vessel. If they allow it to drift, it soon gets dragged away by the strong currents. If they leave it moored, it is soon wrecked by being repeatedly ground against the rocks. If the PCs arrive aboard the *Blackleg*, they discover that its reinforced, iron-plated hull foregoes the







need for any of the normal checks and can remain lashed to the jetty for hours if need be. In addition, its gangplank also allows access from the boat to the jetty without any sort of check.

If the PCs examine the outer walls of the Great Windmill, they notice a heavy metal flue emerging from the roof and rising 30 feet above the mill. This flue vents off the crucible's smoke and is easily visible during daylight hours. It is a modification added recently to the windmill. There's also a balcony high above. This perch (E4) hangs 100 feet above the ground entrance. The wind sails of the mill are 70 feet long and 25 feet wide at their distal ends, and they move with almost imperceptible slowness. PCs who are able to reach them can climb along them with a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) check to reach their hub at the base of E4.

A **gargoyle** sits on watch, hidden amongst the rocks of the shore (Stealth +17) keeping an eye out for unexpected visitors. It fights if it must, but its job is to alert the Artificer anytime more than three people disembark on the jetty.

In addition, the waters around the island are infested with aquatic carnivores, the most dangerous of which are 3 slop-sharks (**lyme anglers**) that keep the other predators at bay and move quickly to attack anyone they perceive in the water. The slop-sharks are bloated and have an unpleasant crimson hue.

**Gargoyle:** AC 15; HP 52 (7d8+21); Spd 30ft, fly 60ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing), claws (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); SA multiattack (bite + claw); Resist nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine; Immune poison, exhaustion, petrified; Str +2, Dex +0, Con +3, Int -2, Wis +0, Cha -2; Senses darkvision 60ft; Traits false appearance (while motionless, is indistinguishable from a statue); AL CE; CR 2; XP 450.

**Lyme Angler (3):** AC 12; HP 51 (6d10+18); Spd 0ft, swim 30ft; Melee bite (+6, 2d4+4 piercing plus DC 13 Con save or contract brine misery); Str +4, Dex +1, Con +3, Int -5, Wis +0, Cha -5; Immune prone; Senses darkvision 30ft; Traits brine misery (gain 1 level of exhaustion; only curable by magic), lantern

lure (15ft; DC 13 Wis save or charmed by lyme angler; repeat save at end of turn to end effect; success gives immunity to all lantern lures for 24 hours); AL N; CR 3; XP 700.

## E2. Main Chamber

The interior of the great windmill has been stripped of furnishings and floors to accommodate a singular construction — a cyst of iron, a vast metal cocoon that gives off a nimbus of heat and the smell of hot iron — which dominates the space. This cyclopean object is suspended from great timber beams high above by a single iron chain and has heavy doors sealed at its base, where it hangs just above the floor. Several large scars and dents mar the iron plating of the construction as if something powerful within had tried to escape in the past. Piles of coal and several wheelbarrows lie nearby, ready to feed the inferno within. What were once the upper floors of the mill are now little more than a single balcony connected by a rickety ladder. Most disturbing of all though is the noise — the steady hateful roar of something within the object itself.

This entire area is sweltering from the proximity of the crucible. Anyone unprotected from severe heat who enters the building immediately begins sweating and must make a Constitution saving throw every 10 minutes. The DC begins at 10 but increases by 1 for every previous check. Each failure results in 1d6 fire damage; failing by 5 or more results in 1d6 fire damage and one level of exhaustion. Characters with resistance to fire damage have tactical advantage on the saving throws. If a character goes unconscious in here, he takes 1d4 fire damage every 10 minutes. The occupants of the room have grown acclimated to these effects.

The coal piles are used to feed the elemental within the crucible. Lying amongst them is a heavy cloth the gargoyles use to open the door levers to



# Fire and Water

## Fire

Fires ignited by fire elementals or ragefire elementals can spread. Each round at initiative count 10, fires spread to one adjacent 5-foot square for every two squares that are already burning, rounded down (for example, a fire of four 5-foot squares ignites two more, a fire of seven 5-foot squares ignites three more, and so on). A fire burning in only a single 5-foot square has a 50% chance per round of spreading and becoming a two-square fire.

Whenever a PC moves into a square that is on fire or starts her turn in a square that is on fire, she must succeed at a DC 10 Dex saving throw or catch fire, taking 1d6 fire damage every time she starts her turn still aflame. Burning clothing can be extinguished with an action and a successful DC 10 Dex check.

If half or more of the squares in an area are on fire, at the GM's discretion, the smoke may become too thick to breathe without effort; characters must make a DC 15 Con save at the beginning of their turn each round or be incapacitated until the start of their next turn by choking and coughing. A character who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 poison damage.

A PC can extinguish a 5-foot square of fire with a successful DC 15 Str (Athletics) check, provided they have water, rugs, blankets, or something else available to douse or smother the flames. Area-effect spells that do cold damage can also put out fires if the caster makes a successful DC 15 spellcasting check. Encourage players to come up with creative ways of extinguishing flames.

If fires grow too large, the burning debris creates thick black smoke that pours into the sky above Castorhage, and a fire brigade eventually arrives, followed by one or more units of the City Watch. PCs emerging from burning areas after the authorities have arrived may be detained and have some explaining to do.

## Water

As the plot of *The Crucible* so heavily involves fire and burning, the results of using certain spells are summarized below.

- *Conjure Barrage*: Tossing something like a bucket of water or a

waterskin into the air and turning it into a barrage of water isn't strictly within the spell's guidelines, but it's creative enough that you should consider allowing it if characters propose it. This could extinguish one 5-foot square of flames for every 5 damage done by the spell.

- *Conjure Elemental*: A water elemental is a born firefighter, until fire damage kills it. It can extinguish three 5-foot squares of flame per turn.
- *Control Water*: Flooding a burning area with river water is an excellent way to put out fires, but the water in this area might contain other things that aren't so pleasant, like Lyme anglers.
- *Control Weather*: Torrential rain will extinguish most fires, but the damage will already be done before the rain arrives.
- *Create Food and Water*: 30 gallons of water in buckets can put out four 5-foot squares of raging fire, if there are people nearby to toss it onto the flames.
- *Create or Destroy Water*: Extinguishes a 30-foot-square area (36 5-foot squares) of fire.
- *Gust of Wind*: This spell blows out candles and torches, but it's too weak to have any effect on a raging fire.
- *Ice Storm*: Dumps enough water into a 20-foot radius to extinguish most fires.
- *Move Earth*: This spell isn't terribly useful for extinguishing fires unless characters get really creative, but it offers an effective way to prevent fires from spreading.
- *Ray of Frost*: This won't put out a large fire, but a character can keep a fire from spreading into a specific 5-foot square by using an action to launch this cantrip at every spot where flames appear to be taking hold.
- *Sleet Storm*: Puts out the fire in a 40-foot radius.
- *Wall of Ice, Wall of Stone, Wind Wall*: These aren't very good at putting out flames but they form excellent fireblocks to keep the damage away from specific structures or areas.

ensure they do not take damage while doing so (see E3 below). The ladder is safe, and the floor above creaks but is solid enough. The mechanism that holds the mill's great sails is a rusting mass of iron 60 feet above the floor.

The **Artificer** spends her every waking hour attending the thing she has created, and is now nurturing it with the intention of drawing off a large number of ragefire spawn. With these, she intends to attack shipping far out to sea where there will be no witnesses and no way for her elementals to escape after the carnage. She is helped in her task by a **quasit thrall** and a small wing of 3 **gargoyles** that fear and respect her ever since she killed their four-armed patriarch and fed several more dissenters to the crucible. While most of the remaining gargoyles are now loyal to the Artificer, they are petty, treacherous and vindictive creatures and remain ready to exploit any perceived weakness. One in particular, the old matriarch, is waiting for an opportunity that the PCs are likely to create.

The Artificer is busy tending her beloved elemental; however, it is getting angrier and angrier. She's managed to quell it over the last few days with her *cone of cold*, but knows the thing wants to escape. The outer shell of the crucible is already scored with unnaturally large punch marks from within. Unfortunately, the gargoyles, sick of the beatings they get and extremely amused by what may happen if the thing within is freed, have already plotted to help it (see "Tactics" below for more details). The Artificer is obsessive about her prisoner, and knows it is her way to fortune and power. She'll never give it up.

When first seen, the Artificer is almost shocking in her near nakedness. She's lithe and oily and dirty, and has grown accustomed to working in the intense heat of the windmill. She wears hefty boots and a cloak that

barely covers her body. A leather belt from which dangle a few pouches and tools hangs at her waist.

The Artificer uses the standard stat block of an archmage but with an altered spell list, as indicated below. Suffer is her quasit familiar; Grieve is her quasit thrall. She carries a ragefire spawn in a stoppered glass vial.

**The Artificer (Archmage):** AC 12 (15 with *mage armor*); HP 99 (18d8+18); Spd 30ft; **Melee** dagger (+6, 1d4+2 piercing); **Ranged** dagger (+6, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 piercing); **SA** spellcasting; **Resist** damage from spells, nonmagical weapons (from *stoneskin*); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3; **Saving Throws** Int +9, Wis +6; **Skills** Arcana +13, History +13; **Traits** magic resistance (tactical advantage on saves against magic); **AL** any; **CR** 12; **XP** 8,400.

**Spellcasting (+9, save DC 17):** 0 (at will)—*fire bolt, light, mage hand, ray of frost, shocking grasp*; 1 (4)—*color spray, mage armor, magic missile, shield*; 2 (3)—*mirror image, misty step, see invisibility*; 3 (3)—*counterspell, fly, slow*; 4 (3)—*fire shield, greater invisibility, stoneskin*; 5 (3)—*cloudkill, cone of cold, scrying*; 6 (1)—*disintegrate*; 7 (1)—*teleport*; 8 (1)—*mind blank*; 9 (1)—*time stop*.

**Suffer and Grieve (Quasits):** AC 13; HP 7 (3d4); Spd 40ft; **Melee** claws or bite (+4, 1d4+3 piercing and DC 10 Con save or 2d4 poison damage and poisoned for 1 minute; poisoned creature repeats save at end of turn to end effect); **SA** scare (1/



## THE CRUCIBLE

day; 20ft; one creature; DC 10 Wis save or frightened of quasit for 1 minute; frightened creature repeats save at end of turn to end effect), invisibility (turns invisible as an action until attacks or uses scare); **Resist** cold, fire, lightning, nonmagical weapons; **Immune** poison; **Str** -3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** shapechanger (can use action to polymorph into bat, centipede, or toad), magic resistance (tactical advantage on saves against magic); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 100.

**Gargoyle (3): AC** 15; **HP** 52 (7d8+21); **Spd** 30ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing), claws (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); **SA** multiattack (bite + claw); **Resist** nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite; **Immune** poison, exhaustion, petrified; **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** false appearance (while motionless, is indistinguishable from a statue); **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

**Ragefire Spawn: AC** 13; **HP** 33 (6d4+18); **Spd** 50ft; **Melee** touch (+3, 1d4+3 fire and flammable object ignites; burning object takes 1d4 fire at the start of its turns until extinguished); **SA** multiattack (touch ×2); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Resist** nonmagical weapons; **Immune** exhaustion, fire, grapple, paralysis, petrified, poison, prone, restraint, unconsciousness; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** fire form (adjacent creature that hits ragefire spawn with melee attack takes 1d4 fire; elemental can enter creature's space and stop, causing 1d4 fire and igniting flammable material; burning creature takes 1d4 fire at start of its turn until extinguished), illumination (sheds bright light to 30ft and dim light to 60ft), intensify (incinerates humanoid corpse in its space as an action to regain 5 hp and become Small ragefire elemental), water susceptibility (takes 1 cold damage per 5ft moved in water or per gallon of water thrown on it); **AL** N; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

**Tactics:** Each of the gargoyles (including the one attending the bellows at E3) agrees that it would be highly amusing to see the elemental in action. They know how to fully open the crucible, and the arrival of any sword- and spell-wielding foes grants them cover to see their plan to fruition. One (or all) of them move toward the main opening lever and pull it, releasing the ragefire elemental (see E3 below) and then scatter to watch the ensuing chaos. They regroup at the Perch (E4) to watch. They leave this position only if attacked, in which case they attack as a quartet, fleeing if any one of their group is slain.

**Treasure:** The Artificer's gear is scattered across the chamber. A DC 15 Wis (Perception) check spots her formulae book. An unlocked iron chest contains 2,500 gp and copies of various shipping ledgers that detail voyages that the Company of Honorable Seamen are due to make in the next two months. Three of these voyages are circled, with the words "spice," "silk," and "brandy" scribbled beside them, and the word "valuable" written and underlined beside them. These are the first ships the Artificer plans to attack and rob as soon as they sail.

### E3. The Crucible

A vast construct of riveted iron plates fills the interior of the windmill like a great metal child inside its womb. A great chain holds it to the beams high above, while below it is so close to the ground it can barely be crawled under. At the base, three 5-foot-wide doors are shut fast, levers at their sides, while a curious brass tap protrudes just below. To one side, a set of bellows can be pumped to keep the fires within roaring. The entire contraption gives off an intense heat, while something inside growls angrily.

This vast construction is a *lesser searing crucible* (see Appendix B). A furnace lies within the base of the crucible; the three iron doors allow

access, only one of which can be open at a time. Two doors are used to feed the furnace, and the third is used to open the crucible and feed its prisoner. Iron valves permit fumes to escape but keep the creature trapped within. The tap is used to draw off essences of the ragefire as ragefire spawn according to a procedure known by the Artificer. The iron chain at its top is 6 inches thick: AC 19, HP 100, immune to poison, psychic, and radiant damage; can be broken with a successful DC 30 Str (Athletics) check. The beams from which it hangs are 2 feet thick (AC 15, HP 200, immune to poison, psychic, and radiant damage; can be broken with a successful DC 30 Str (Athletics) check. The hit point tallies for the beam and the chain indicate the point where they're sufficiently weakened for the weight of the crucible to snap them, not the point where they're cut through. If the chain or beams are broken, the furnace falls and ruptures, allowing the elemental to escape and filling the ground floor with burning coals to a depth of 5 feet; anyone who ends their turn in the coals takes 10d6 fire damage. The coals burn for another hour unless extinguished, and also set the building on fire (see the **Fire and Water** sidebar above).

The **gargoyle matriarch** attends the bellows that power the furnace and feeds it fuel. This gargoyle, Shlarch, is drenched in sweat and filth. She is the old matriarch of the wing who still burns with anger at the Artificer for slaying her mate. Shlarch has been working the crucible for the Artificer, observing, biding her time and plotting with her gargoyle followers. Not only has she overheard and memorized the command word to make the tap work, but she has also overheard the Artificer describing some of the functions of the crucible to the Organ Grinder, including how the bound creature can be released. When the PCs enter the mill and confront the Artificer, Shlarch realizes that her opportunity has come. Anyone touching the metal shell of the crucible or one of the levers takes 2d6 fire damage unless they are protected (for example, by using the cloth lying in the coal heap in E2). Anyone in the crucible at the end of their turn takes 10d6 fire damage.

**Schlarch (Four-Armed Gargoyle): AC** 15; **HP** 55 (10d8+10); **Spd** 30ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing), claws (+4, 2d8+2 slashing), gore (+4, 1d8+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (bite+claws+claws+gore); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Resist** nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantite; **Immune** exhaustion, petrification, poison; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 60ft; **Traits** stony appearance (indistinguishable from stone while motionless); **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

**Development:** When combat starts in the room, a gargoyle opens the tap to release the elemental. The ragefire elemental starts pouring out through the doors at the base of the crucible like liquid flame and pools beneath. At this stage, a character can try to close the tap. This takes an action and a successful DC 12 Str check, and the character takes 6d6 fire damage and provokes opportunity attacks from nearby gargoyles. If the elemental keeps flowing out for 3 rounds, the Huge ragefire elemental emerges from the pool and joins the fray (see **Event 4** below). When this occurs, the gargoyles retreat from the fight to watch with glee what happens.

### E4. The Perch

A larger fragment of the windmill's flooring stands virtually intact near the roof. Through a hole in the floor can be seen the beams supporting the great behemoth in the room below. The shimmer of super-heated air rises up through this hole and makes this room uncomfortably warm.

This room is severely hot, as described above. A narrow balcony has been made by the gargoyles to allow their frequent raids into the city to collect carrion, steal trophies to line their lair, abduct beggars and vagabonds to feed on, or to find insects and small birds and mammals to slowly pull apart.

**Treasure:** The gargoyles have kept various objects from victims fed into the furnace, including a scorched wooden clog; a silver monocle set with carved swans and angels that functions as a *gem of seeing*; a glove-



## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

puppet two-headed crow bearing a *minor illusion* that occasionally shouts out cuss-words for no discernible reason; a silver stirrup cup shaped like a fox eating a dove worth 500 gp; a large bloody and soot-damaged smock; a desiccated human hand; and a fine pinafore dress set with obsidians worth 200 gp but stained with blood (the value increases to 400 gp if properly cleaned and restored).

### Event 4: The Ragefire Freed

As the ragefire elemental has fed, it has grown and with this increase in size has come an increase in its cunning. It wants nothing less than to destroy its prison, kill the Artificer, and wreak havoc. It is about to get its chance ...

**Huge Ragefire Elemental:** AC 13; HP 123 (13d12+39); Spd 50ft; **Melee** touch (+7, 3d10+3 fire and flammable object ignites; burning object takes 1d12 fire damage at the start of its turns until extinguished); **SA** multiattack (touch ×2), spawn ragefire (incinerates humanoid corpse in its space and creates a ragefire spawn within 5ft); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Immune** exhaustion, fire, grapple, paralysis, petrified, poison, prone, restraint, unconscious; **Resist** nonmagical weapons; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** fire form (adjacent creature that hits elemental with melee attack takes 1d12 fire; elemental can enter creature's space and stop, causing 1d12 fire and igniting flammable material; burning creature takes 1d12 fire at start of its turn until extinguished), illumination (sheds bright light to 30ft and dim light

to 60ft), water susceptibility (takes 1 cold damage per 5ft moved in water or per gallon of water thrown on it); **AL** N; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900.

At least at first, the ragefire elemental is only interested in revenge. First it focuses on killing the Artificer, then on destroying the *crucible* by breaking its chain and causing it to fall and rupture (see **E2** above). Only then does it bother killing anything else and setting the windmill aflame. If it has the time and opportunity, it creates spawn from any humanoid it kills. But mostly it wants to get revenge and escape. If it starts its turn with fewer than 40 hit points, it flees.

The walls, ladders, upper floors, and structural beams of the structure are all made of wood that is baked dry and very ready to burn. Any interior surface that is adjacent to an elemental catches fire. Refer to the **Fire and Water** sidebox for rules on determining the speed with which the fire spreads, and the table below for the cumulative effect of the expanding fire in the windmill.

Squares Affected	Effect
1-10	No additional effects beyond intense heat, but interior spaces are becoming noticeably smoke-filled.
11-20	Smoke limits visibility to no more than 20 feet. All ranged attacks are made with tactical disadvantage.
21-30	Over half the building is now on fire, and the smoke has become too thick to breathe without effort. A character that starts his or her turn inside the windmill must make a successful DC 10 Con saving throw or be incapacitated by choking and coughing until the start of their next turn; the DC increases by 1 with each successive saving throw. A character who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 poison damage.
31-40	Most of the building is now aflame; everyone takes 1d6 fire damage plus 1d6 poison damage per round from breathing the searing, choking, ember-filled air (no saving throw), and must continue making Con saving throws to avoid incapacitation.
41+	The building is completely engulfed in fire, and everyone who's anywhere inside must make a successful DC 15 Dex saving throw at the start of their turn to avoid gouging flames and falling debris. If the saving throw fails, the character takes 1d10 bludgeoning damage and catches fire (1d10 fire damage at the start of their turn until extinguished). This is in addition to the ongoing Con saving throws to avoid incapacitation. After 15 minutes of burning at this intensity, the roof of the great windmill collapses, bringing down the entire structure. Characters who are anywhere on the island when this occurs are in the bury zone and take 4d6 bludgeoning damage plus 8d6 fire damage; a successful DC 15 Dex saving throw halves both damages. The Artificer dies in the collapse, if not before.

**Development:** Once the windmill collapses, and the Artificer is dead, the ragefire elemental seeks to escape the island. If Mean's Mob are waiting (see **Event 5** below), they flee from the elemental rather than engage it. If the elemental is not fleeing, it attempts to kill them. Ten minutes into combat, a caravel (the *Filthy Drake*) approaches the isle's jetty, eager to help save anyone from the fire. The ship comes to within 25 feet of the isle in this case. The elemental leaps onto the ship, killing any





# Conclusion

crew who don't immediately leap overboard (the slop-sharks rapidly take care of them), and the burning ship drifts toward the city. If the elemental is not destroyed, in 20 minutes the burning caravel draws close enough to shore for the elemental to leap onto the city docks. A large fire then breaks out in the city as the elemental kills everyone in sight. If it is not destroyed swiftly, the number of lives it may claim could transform it into a gargantuan ragefire elemental. These developments are dealt with in the **Conclusion** below.

## Event 5: An Unexpected Complication

If Uriah Mean was able to have the party followed (see **Chapter 3**), 5 minutes after the PCs reach the island, Mean's Mob arrives on the jetty behind them. They scuttle any other boats at the jetty with heavy spikes driven through the hull and, if a fight has already started within the windmill, wait outside to deal with the victor and take the spoils. If a fight has not yet broken out, they enter the windmill and start one. They flee to the jetty if the windmill catches fire and depart entirely on their boat if it becomes fully engulfed in flame and in danger of collapse.

### Mean's Mob

Uriah Mean keeps strange company, and has particular associates within the lower echelons of the Family. He is particularly close to the Krabs, a **quartet of wererats** of the little-known Pensil Fair. The Krabs are, in turn, close friends with Mister Mackerel, an **oni** who wanders the town polymorphed as a tall fisherman who wears a long waxed coat.

**Mister Mackerel (Oni): AC** 16; **HP** 110 (13d10+39); **Spd** 30ft, fly 30ft; **Melee** claw (oni form only; +7, 1d8+4 slashing), glaive (+7, 10ft, 2d10+4 slashing if Large, or 1d10+4 slashing if Small or Medium); **SA** multiattack (melee ×2), change shape (polymorphs into S or M humanoid, L giant, or true form), innate spellcasting; **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Saving Throws** Dex +3, Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +5; **Skills** Arcana +5, Deception +8, Perception +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** magic weapons (attacks are magical), regeneration (regains 10 HP at start of turn if has at least 1 HP); **AL** LE; **CR** 7; **XP** 2,900.

**Innate Spellcasting (save DC 13):** at will—*darkness, invisibility*; 1/day each—*charm person, cone of cold, gaseous form, sleep*.

**Krabs (4, Wererats): AC** 12; **HP** 33 (6d8+6); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** bite (rat or hybrid form only; +4, 1d4+2 piercing and humanoid must make DC 11 Con save or be cursed with lycanthropy), shortsword (humanoid or hybrid form only; +4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** hand crossbow (humanoid or hybrid form only; +4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Immune** nonmagical, nonsilvered weapons; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft (rat form only); **Traits** keen smell, shapechanger (can use an action to switch between humanoid, rat, and rat-humanoid hybrid forms); **AL** LE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

**Tactics:** Mackerel leads the group with *invisibility*, attempting to assess the situation, and flies back to report and plan the best ambush. He tries to charm any particularly tough fighters to step out of the way before melee. The Krabs attack as a group, attempting to shift combat quickly by overpowering single opponents and tumbling into position to try to gain advantage from the flanks. If reduced below 25 hp, Mister Mackerel attempts to flee via *darkness, invisibility*, or *gaseous form*. No heroes, a Krab flees if reduced to 10 hp; if two flee, so do the rest.

**Development:** If Mister Mackerel escapes, he may ask his oldest friend, the Bilge Prince (see **Conclusion**), to help him exact his revenge.

Destroying the ragefire elemental and the Artificer ends this adventure. However, the PCs may still need to make a quick escape from the burning isle, and may be glad of help from the *Filthy Drake*, which approaches the isle if it sees flames. PCs offering up the notes from among the Artificer's possession to the Company of Honorable Seamen receive a 500 gp reward and may open up future opportunities for adventure with the Company.

If anyone from Mean's Mob escapes, consider that they return to their master and, if Mean is still around, he becomes an enemy for the PCs. Mean is a nasty person to cross, but never likes to openly fight if he can avoid it. He'll send the occasional trouble the PCs' way by means of his shady connections.

If the ragefire elemental escapes into the city, a great fire sweeps through the East Ending, a poor district of the city. Many people are killed in the 2 days of fire that grips the district. If the PCs do not seek it out and slay it, the elemental escapes into the Underneath where, having advanced to be a greater ragefire elemental, it hunts the denizens therein to try to raise a brood of ragefire spawn with which to launch another attack. The PCs should hear about this and must decide if they are willing to brave the depths of the terrible Underneath to track it and kill it lest it unleash another terrifying inferno on the citizens of the Blight. If they do not, sooner or later a family of dwarves from Choketown (area U9), who suffer greatly before finally vanquishing the creature, trace back what happened. **Elder Bartholomew Rothgrorr Haggrudd Formel Choke** instructs a party of dwarves to track down those responsible. The PCs soon find themselves hunted by dwarves eager to place blame for their woes. How this develops is left to the GM.

Word of the PCs' exploits eventually reaches the ears of the affable **Quentin Ruben Sollerman Hubbard, KC\*** (N human male warlord) who has need of associates to gather obscure items from across the known world (see area F21). He offers the PCs a chance to join him on a voyage of discovery into the Unsea, an aspect of Between he is desperate to fish and explore. The pay should be high enough to tempt the PCs. How that adventure develops is left to the GM.

\* Knight of the City, a minor and obscure noble title of Castorhage

Finally, if Mister Mackerel survives, he may have informed his friend the **Bilge Prince** of their actions, at the GM's discretion. If so, the Bilge Prince takes umbrage at the assault upon his boon companion and seeks vengeance upon the PCs at some inopportune time when they are on or near the water. The Bilge Prince is a four-armed sahuagin baron and can be used as a long-term adversary of the PCs if you choose.



# Appendix A: New Monsters

## Elemental, Ragefire

*The rage and hatred that emanate with the white-hot heat from this demonic fire are palpable.*

The ragefire elemental is a type of fire elemental that grows as it consumes fuel. All ragefire elementals start out as Tiny sparks, called ragefire spawn. As they burn their way through their surroundings, they steadily increase in size until they become gargantuan infernos.

Every size of ragefire elemental has stats identical to a standard fire elemental, except as noted on the table below. The table lists the hit points, melee attack bonus, melee damage, ongoing damage to flammable objects ("Burn"), and challenge rating of every size of ragefire elemental. Burn damage also applies as the damage done by the elemental's Fire Form ability.

### Ragefire Elementals

Size	HP	Attack	Damage	Burn	CR
Tiny	33	+3	1d4+3	1d4	1
Small	52	+4	1d6+3	1d6	2
Medium	75	+5	1d10+3	1d8	3
Large	102	+6	2d6+3	1d10	5
Huge	123	+7	3d10+3	1d12	8
Gargantuan	189	+8	4d10+3	1d20	11

Besides the differences noted above, Tiny through Large ragefire elementals also have the following traits.

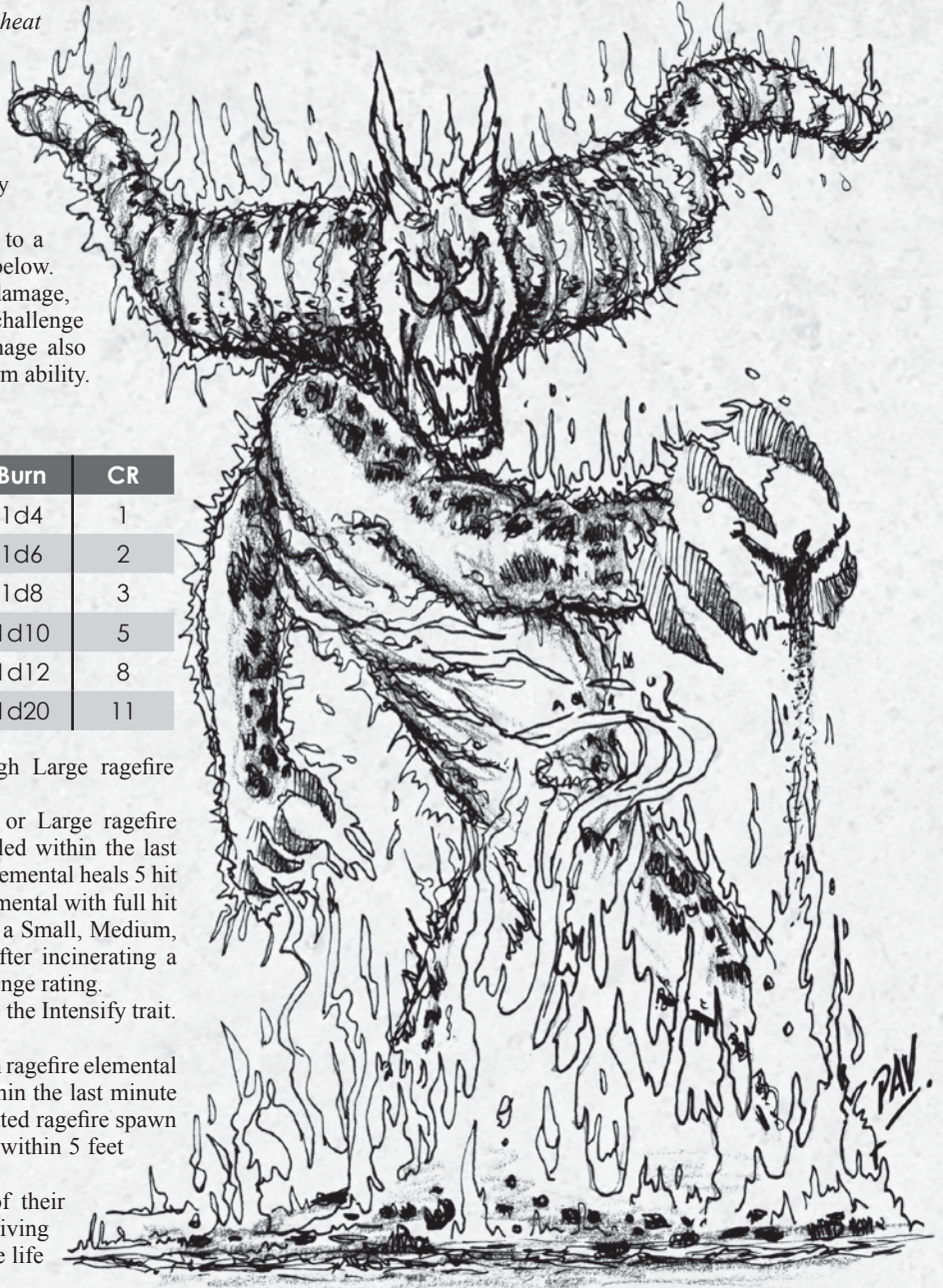
**Intensify:** As an action, a Tiny, Small, Medium, or Large ragefire elemental incinerates the corpse of a humanoid it killed within the last minute and whose space the elemental occupies. The elemental heals 5 hit points and, if it is Tiny, it becomes a Small ragefire elemental with full hit points minus its current amount of damage. Likewise, a Small, Medium, or Large ragefire elemental grows to the next size after incinerating a number of humanoid corpses equal to its current challenge rating.

Huge and Gargantuan ragefire elementals don't have the Intensify trait. Instead, they have the Spawn Ragefire trait.

**Spawn Ragefire:** As an action, a Huge or Gargantuan ragefire elemental incinerates the corpse of a humanoid that it killed within the last minute and whose space the elemental occupies. A newly-created ragefire spawn (a Tiny ragefire elemental) appears in an empty space within 5 feet of the spawning elemental.

Ragefire elementals embody the chaos and evil of their Abyssal heritage, manifesting in demonic forms of living flame, smoke, ash, and cinders. They exist to incinerate life and, in so doing, grow stronger and more destructive.

A ragefire elemental cannot enter water or any other nonflammable liquid. A body of water is an impassible barrier unless the ragefire elemental can step or jump over it or the water is covered with a layer of something flammable, such as oil.





# Lyme Angler (Slop-Shark)

This bloated fish has a glowing, fleshy protrusion that extends from the top of its skull and dangles in front of its wide mouth filled with needlelike fangs.

## Lyme Angler

XP 700 (CR 3)  
N Large beast (aquatic)  
Initiative +1

### DEFENSE

AC 12 (natural armor)  
hp: 51 (6d10 + 18)  
Immunities: prone

### OFFENSE

Speed: 0 ft., swim 30 ft.  
**Melee Attack—Bite:** +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d4 + 4 piercing damage and the creature must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or contract brine misery (see below).

### STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), Dex 13 (+1),  
Con 16 (+3), Int 1 (-5),  
Wis 10 (+0), Cha 2 (-5)  
Languages: None  
Senses: Darkvision 30 ft.

### TRAITS

**Brine Misery:** This infection is an extremely sore, itchy, red inflammation around the site of the lyme angler bite. An infected creature gains 1 level of exhaustion immediately. There is no other effect, but the disease can be cured only with a *lesser restoration* spell or comparable magic.

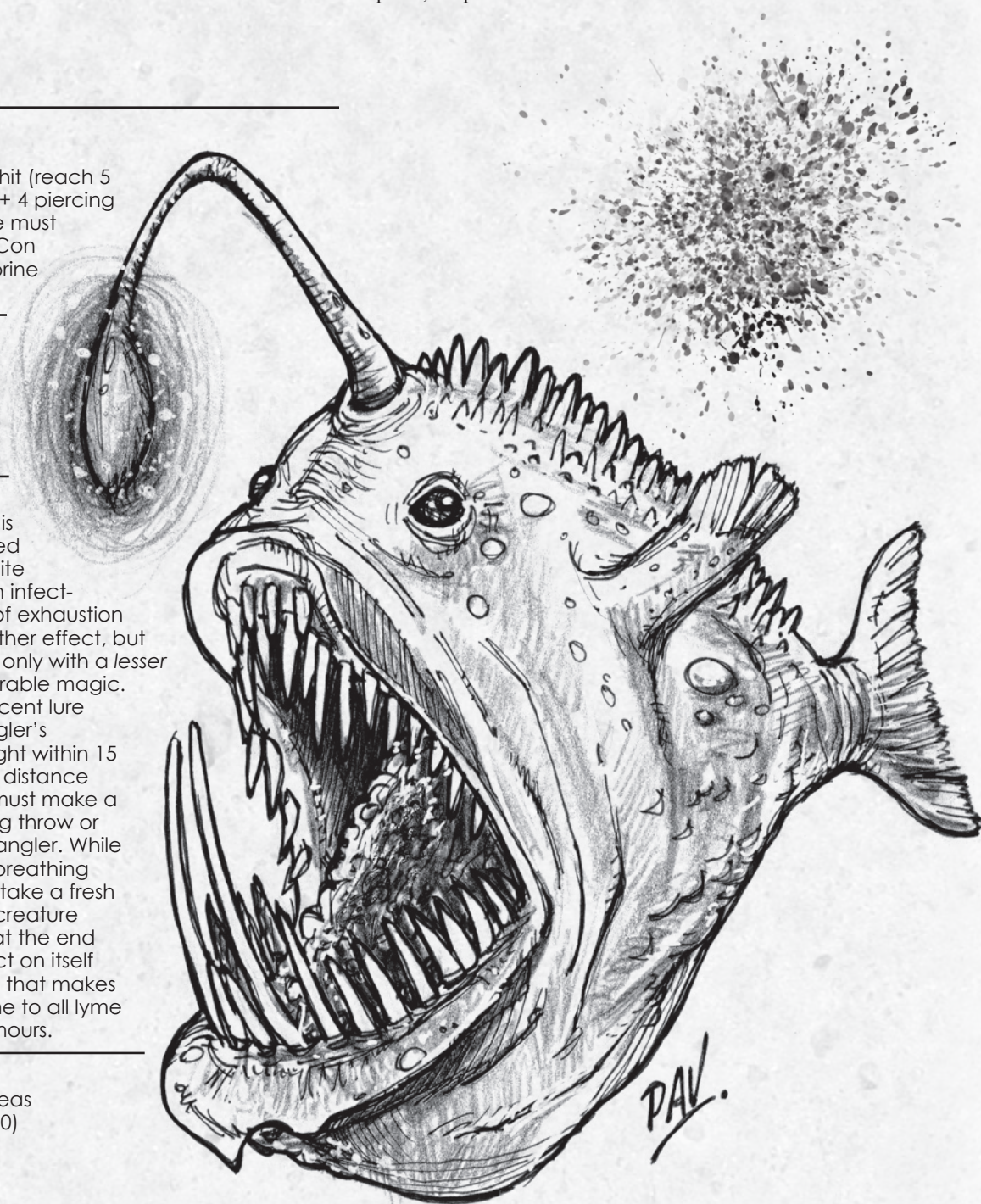
**Lantern Lure:** A bioluminescent lure dangles from the lyme angler's forehead, giving off dim light within 15 feet. Creatures within that distance and able to see the light must make a successful DC 13 Wis saving throw or be charmed by the lyme angler. While charmed this way, an air-breathing creature won't surface to take a fresh breath of air. A charmed creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself with a success. A creature that makes a successful save is immune to all lyme angler lantern lures for 24 hours.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Temperate seas  
**Organization:** School (1-100)

Also known as a slop-shark to those along the River Lyme, the Lyme angler is among the most ferocious of predatory fish in and around that waterway. Lyme anglers have a luminescent organ called a lantern lure at the tip of a modified dorsal ray (or fishing rod). The organ serves not only the purpose of luring prey in the warm, shallow, polluted water of the Lyme, but also serves to call males' attention to the females to facilitate mating. The source of luminescence in this organ is a symbiotic species of brine shrimp that lives in and along the Lyme and has an affinity for the lantern lure organ of the Lyme angler. Through a complex chemical reaction, the Lyme angler is able to agitate these brine shrimp and cause them to illuminate its lure at will.

These diseased things of corruption and toxin are common in the Lyme. They have fanged-filled mouths, and their bodies are riddled with sores, infestations, and chemical burns — proof that there are places even they cannot swim safely. One of the most notorious man-eaters of the river, the biggest Lyme anglers can reach lengths of more than 20 feet and weigh up to 5,000 pounds.





## THE BLIGHT: RICHARD PETT'S CROOKED CITY

# Sough-Eel

*This massive eel, nearly 20 feet long, has pale hide almost translucent like a fish's belly that is marred by great areas of sloughing flesh that hang loose in rotten folds. It is eyeless, with a row of small black nodules extending back from its snout, and has several small vestigial fins growing sporadically along the length of its body. Its mouth however, is the most noticeable feature, occupying nearly a quarter of its length and splayed wide with a crowd of jagged fangs.*

## Sough-Eel

**XP** 1,800 (CR 5)  
**N** Huge beast (aquatic)  
**Initiative** +0

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15 (natural armor)  
**hp:** 142 (15d12 + 45)  
**Saving Throws:** Dex +3, Con +6  
**Immunity:** poison damage; blinded, poisoned, prone

### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 10 ft., swim 30 ft.  
**Melee Attack—Bite:** +8 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). **Hit:** 4d12 + 5 piercing damage. If the attack does 30 or more piercing damage, the creature is also grappled (escape DC 15) and restrained.  
**Melee Attack—Gnaw:** One creature already grappled by the sough-eel is hit automatically by its bite attack (4d12 + 5 piercing damage) and is attacked by a second set of jaws inside the sough-eel's throat: +8 to hit (one creature already grappled). **Hit:** 2d12 piercing damage plus 2d10 poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 14 Con saving throw, and the creature must make a successful DC 16 Str saving throw or be swallowed (see below).

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20 (+5), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 17 (+3),  
**Int** 1 (-5), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 6 (-2)  
**Languages:** None  
**Skills:** Perception +3, Stealth +3  
**Senses:** Blindsight 30 ft.

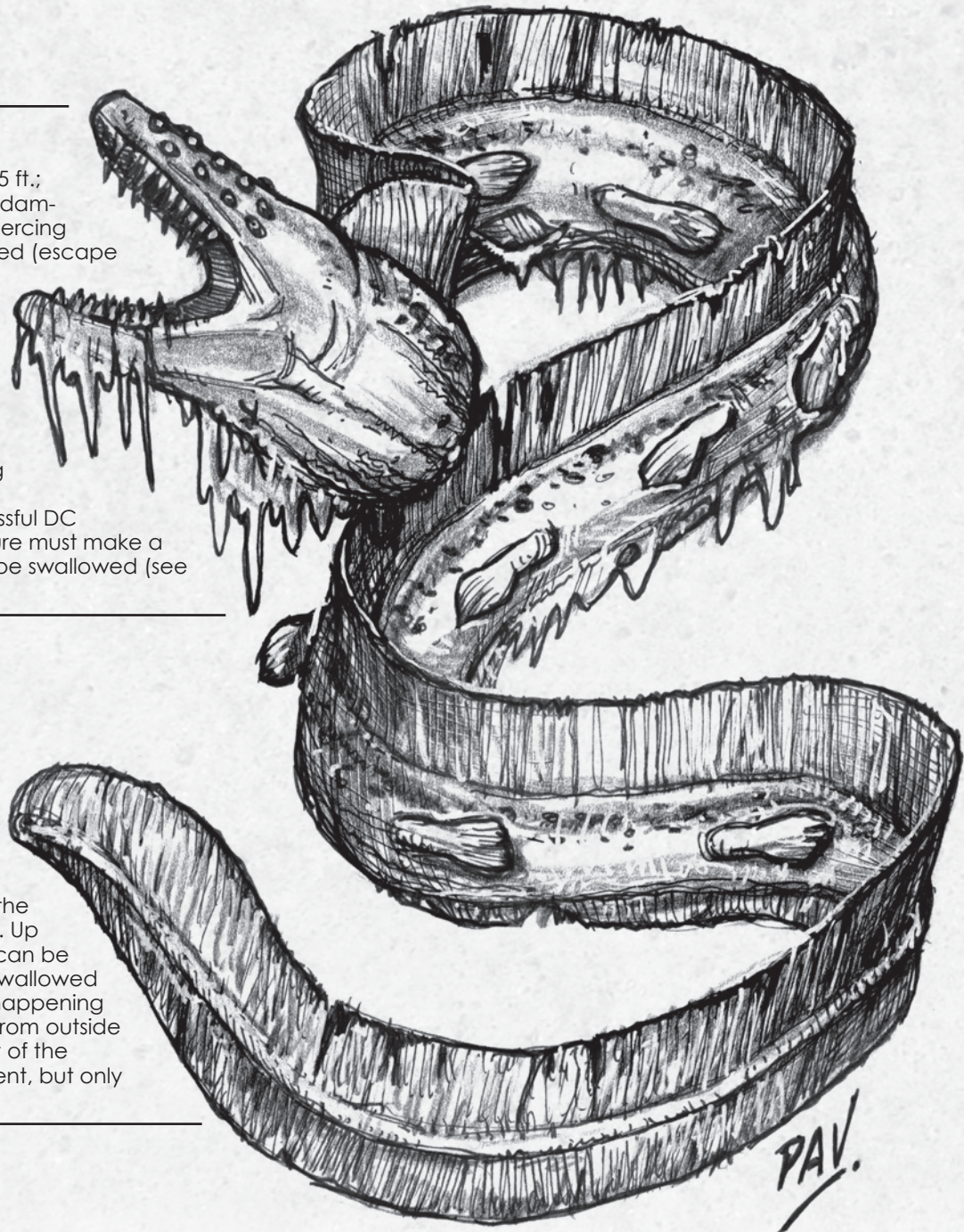
### TRAITS

**Swallow:** A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained. It takes 1d12 bludgeoning damage plus 1d8 acid damage automatically at the start of each of the sough-eel's turns. Up to two Medium or smaller creatures can be inside the sough-eel at one time. A swallowed creature is unaffected by anything happening outside the sough-eel or by attacks from outside it. A swallowed creature can get out of the sough-eel by using 5 feet of movement, but only after the sough-eel is dead.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Temperate ocean  
**Organization:** Solitary or school (4-8)

These vile predators are found exclusively in the dark, filthy waters of the Great Lyme River and Fetid Sea in the vicinity of the City-State of Castorhage. Some have speculated that they were once a temperate water variety of moray eel that was indigenous to the area until the Lyme was tainted by the noxious effluvia from the metropolis known colloquially as the Blight. Unlike most aquatic species that were unable to survive the poisoning of the waters, the sough-eel population managed to endure the deadly influx but was changed in the process. Immune to most disease and poison, the sough-eels — carriers of their own endemic pathogen — are now affected by it chronically so that their hide is in a constant state of dying and sloughing off in large swaths and layers. This has not seemed to affect their ability to survive in their harsh environment, and every native of the Blight knows better to enter the water of the Lyme for fear of the voracious attacks of the ever-present sough-eels.





## THE CRUCIBLE

# Spider, Gable

A spider the size of an alley cat scampers up the side of a tenement building. In its mandibles, it drags what appears to be a clothesline, with many of the garments still dangling limply behind.

## Tiny Gable Spider

XP 50 (CR 1/4)

N Tiny beast

Initiative +3

### DEFENSE

AC 13

hp: 2 (1d4)

Immunity: psychic damage; charm

### OFFENSE

Speed: 15 ft., climb 15 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +5 to hit (reach 0 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d4 poison damage, or half damage with a successful DC 10 Con saving throw.

**Ranged Attack—Sticky Globule (recharge 4-6):** +5 to hit (range 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the creature must make a successful DC 10 Str saving throw or be restrained. A restrained creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself with a success.

### STATISTICS

Str 1 (-5), Dex 16 (+3), Con 10 (+0),

Int 1 (-5), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 2 (-4)

**Languages:** None

**Skills:** Perception +0, Stealth +5

**Senses:** Darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense in web

### TRAITS

**Web Construct:** A creature that falls prone, is restrained, or is pushed into a gable spider web construct becomes restrained by the sticky material and can escape by using an action to make a successful DC 10 Str saving throw. A web construct is no more flammable than the material it's made from, but each 5-foot-square section has AC 8 and 5 hit points. A gable spider can move across any web construct without hindrance.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Urban (the Blight)

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or colony (3-10)

## Small Gable Spider

XP 100 (CR 1/2)

N Small beast

Initiative +3

### DEFENSE

AC 13

hp: 18 (4d6 + 4)

Immunity: psychic damage; charm

### OFFENSE

Speed: 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +5 to hit (reach 0 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 piercing damage plus 2d6 poison damage, or half





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damage with a successful DC 11 Con saving throw.

**Ranged Attack—Sticky Globule (recharge 4-6):** +5 to hit (range 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the creature must make a successful DC 11 Str saving throw or be restrained. A restrained creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself with a success.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 4 (-3), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 12 (+1),  
**Int** 1 (-5), **Wis** 6 (-2), **Cha** 2 (-4)

**Languages:** None

**Skills:** Perception +0, Stealth +5

**Senses:** Darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense in web

### TRAITS

**Web Construct:** A creature that falls prone, is restrained, or is pushed into a gable spider web construct becomes restrained by the sticky material and can escape by using an action to make a successful DC 10 Str saving throw. A web construct is no more flammable than the material it's made from, but each 5-foot-square section has AC 8 and 5 hit points. A gable spider can move across any web construct without hindrance.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Urban (the Blight)

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or colony (3-10)

## Medium Gable Spider

XP 450 (CR 2)

N Medium beast

**Initiative** +3

### DEFENSE

**AC** 13

**hp:** 52 (8d8 + 16)

**Immunity:** psychic damage; charm

### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +5 to hit (reach 0 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10 + 3 piercing damage plus 4d8 poison damage, or half damage with a successful DC 12 Con saving throw.

**Ranged Attack—Sticky Globule (recharge 4-6):** +5 to hit (range 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the creature must make a successful DC 12 Str saving throw or be restrained. A restrained creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself with a success.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 8 (-1), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 14 (+2),  
**Int** 2 (-4), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 2 (-4)

**Languages:** None

**Skills:** Perception +2, Stealth +5

**Senses:** Darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense in web

### TRAITS

**Web Construct:** A creature that falls prone, is restrained, or is pushed into a gable spider web construct becomes restrained by the sticky material and can escape by using an action to make a successful DC 10 Str saving throw. A web construct is no more flammable than the material it's made from, but each 5-foot-square section has AC 8 and 5 hit points. A gable spider can move across any web construct without hindrance.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Urban (the Blight)

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or colony (3-10)

## Large Gable Spider

XP 1,100 (CR 4)

N Large beast

**Initiative** +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14

**hp:** 102 (12d10 + 36)

**Immunity:** psychic damage; charm

### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +6 to hit (reach 0 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10 + 4 piercing damage plus 4d12 poison damage, or half damage with a successful DC 13 Con saving throw.

**Ranged Attack—Sticky Globule (recharge 4-6):** +5 to hit (range 10 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the creature must make a successful DC 13 Str saving throw or be restrained. A restrained creature repeats the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself with a success.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14(+2), **Dex** 18 (+4), **Con** 16 (+3),  
**Int** 3 (-3), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 2 (-4)

**Languages:** None

**Skills:** Perception +2, Stealth +6

**Senses:** Darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense in web

### TRAITS

**Web Construct:** A creature that falls prone, is restrained, or is pushed into a gable spider web construct becomes restrained by the sticky material and can escape by using an action to make a successful DC 10 Str saving throw. A web construct is no more flammable than the material it's made from, but each 5-foot-square section has AC 8 and 5 hit points. A gable spider can move across any web construct without hindrance.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Urban (the Blight)

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or colony (3-10)

Gable spiders are different from other varieties of giant spiders, and it is for this reason that the whole of the city isn't shrouded in endless sheets of webbing. Gable spiders are not web spinners. Although they don't spin webs, gable spiders do have glands that produce a sticky fluid. This natural glue is used to string together the detritus they find in the city's dumps and alleys—frayed ropes, sail cordage, clothesline, twisted rags, curtains, discarded cloth, and more—into weblike structures. Even lengths of chain and broken lumber can be found in the weblike contrivances the gable spiders build. They combine this myriad material in twisting, knotted mazes of suspended lines that rival the largest spider webs for complexity. They knot and anchor these mismatched lines among the rooftops, between sagging buildings, and with each other to create swaying but stable webs of junk. Anything foolish enough to enter one of their gluey web constructions is unlikely ever to leave.

The spiders also coat lengths of rope, cloth, sawdust, straw, or any other soft material with their fluid, wad it into a ball, and fling it at prey or at creatures they're fighting. The sticky mass can glue a creature in place, making it easy prey for the gable spider's poison.



# Wallow-Whale

*Something stirs in the sludge beneath; something swims through the arsenic poison that passes for water. It is vast; a seething globe of flesh, a mountain of rotting skin that hangs like a bridal train behind its back. It has at least a dozen eyes oddly spaced on its foul body, and a vast maw capable of swallowing a ship.*

## Wallow-whale

XP 8,400 (CR 12)  
N Gargantuan monstrosity  
Initiative -3

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17 (natural armor)  
**hp:** 201 (13d20 + 65)  
**Resistance:** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons  
**Immunity:** thunder damage; prone

### OFFENSE

**Speed:** swim 40 ft.  
**Multiattack:** The wallow-whale bites once and makes one tail slap attack.  
**Melee Attack—Bite:** +10 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4d10 + 6 piercing damage plus 3d6 acid damage, and the creature must make a successful DC 17 Str saving throw or be swallowed (see below).  
**Melee Attack—Tail Slap:** +10 to hit (reach 15 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4d8 + 6 bludgeoning damage and the target is knocked prone.  
**Melee Attack—Ram (recharge 6):** automatic hit (one ship). *Hit:* the vessel makes a hull saving throw using the most appropriate DC from the table below, based on the ship's type. The vessel sinks when it has failed the indicated number of saving throws. The proficiency bonus of the ship's captain can be added to the saving throw.

Ship Type	Hull DC	Sinks after
Rowboat	20	1 failed save
Barge	19	1 failed save
Oared Galley, small	18	2 failed saves
Oared Galley, large	16	2 failed saves
Sailing Merchant, small	17	2 failed saves
Sailing Merchant, large	15	3 failed saves
Sailing Warship	13	3 failed saves

### STATISTICS

**Str** 22 (+6), **Dex** 4 (-3), **Con** 21 (+5),  
**Int** 4 (-3), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 5 (-3)  
**Languages:** None  
**Skills:** Perception +4  
**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

### TRAITS

**Swallow:** A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained. It takes 1d10 + 6 bludgeoning damage plus 1d8 acid damage automatically at the start of each of the wallow-whale's turns. Any number of creatures can be inside the wallow-whale at one time. A swallowed creature is unaffected by anything happening outside the wallow-whale or by attacks from outside it. A swallowed creature can get out of the wallow-whale by using 5 feet of movement, but

only after the wallow-whale is dead. When a creature gets out of the wallow-whale, it must make a successful DC 17 Con saving throw or contract filth fever.

**Filth Fever:** A creature gains one level of exhaustion immediately when it contracts filth fever. While it has this disease, it can't recover from exhaustion naturally and it must repeat the saving throw every time it completes a long rest. On a failure, it gains one level of exhaustion; on a success, it sheds one level of exhaustion. The disease ends when the creature has 0 exhaustion levels or when it receives a lesser restoration spell or comparable magic.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Ocean (Between)  
**Organization:** Solitary or mated pair

Originally found only in the Unsea of Between before some of these great cetaceans somehow escaped and began reproducing in the mundane world's oceans, wallow-whales are now the terror of the Fetid Sea and one of the primary threats for which the Castorhage Navy diligently patrols those waters. Wallow-whales are offal, carrion, husks, leavings, and scum given life. Sturges are frequently seen circling them when they surface to launch a spume of oily brine, purulence, and clotted fluids from their blowholes, and oozes capable of surviving in the acidic environment can sometimes be found infesting their cathedral-like stomachs. Wallow-whales aren't afraid to venture close to the city to feed upon the excrement, rot, and flotsam that seethes like a gyre around its foundations. Yet despite their foul body habitus, the ambergris of a wallow-whale is a thing both rare and highly valuable selling for as much as 100 gp/pound. Daring or foolhardy whalers armed with cold iron harpoons hunt these beasts upon the oceans, and in some cases upon the Unsea, with typical Gargantuan specimens typically yielding 1d6 x 10 pounds of the substance and a Colossal beast yielding 3d6 x 10 pounds.





# Appendix B: New Magic Items

## BETWEEN RING

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

This plain, unadorned ring is typically made of iron or some other common metal and bears signs of tarnish, rust, or some flaw that cannot be polished away or repaired. It also includes something of the tainted essence of Between in its composition, giving it a slightly greasy feel to the touch. When a creature becomes attuned to the *Between ring*, the wearer must make a DC 16 Wis saving throw or be unable to voluntarily remove it. It never fits well: sometimes it feels too loose (though it never falls off), and sometimes it squeezes much too tightly, causing pain and a discoloration in the finger. Each day there is a 1-in-20 chance that it tightens, causing 1 bludgeoning damage from the constriction. If a *Between ring* ever constricts for 5 days in a row without the wearer receiving any magical healing, the finger it is worn on dies, falling off in 1d4+4 days. The loss of this finger does 2d4 necrotic damage but it does allow the wearer to remove and get rid of the ring.

A wearer of a *Between ring* gains a +2 bonus to AC against creatures with the Between subtype. In addition, the wearer can make an unarmed attack against such a creature with the hand that is wearing the ring three times per day. This attack does (1d6 + your Str modifier) bludgeoning damage. If the character already does a d4 or more damage with unarmed attacks, the ring gives a +1 bonus on unarmed damage rolls.

## MANUAL OF THE CRUCIBLE

*Wondrous item, very rare*

A *manual of the crucible* contains information, incantations, and magical instructions for creating a *searing crucible*. The tome also holds the prerequisite spells needed to summon and bind a ragefire elemental within the crucible (although these spells can be used only for this purpose and cannot be copied). The spells included in the *manual of the crucible* can be used only to assist in the construction of the *Searing Crucible*; they have no other purpose. Once the crucible is finished, the writing in the tome fades. When the tome is fed to the crucible, the *searing crucible* is finally complete.

## SEARING CRUCIBLE

*Wondrous item, unique*

This vast iron object allows the user to conjure a ragefire elemental from the Abyss that may subsequently grow if fed non-evil sentient humanoid. The structure of the crucible includes a chamber into which creatures can be placed that a bound elemental will be able to feed upon and thus grow in size. If the bound ragefire elemental reaches huge size, it can then be forced to create spawn if fed 10 tons of combustible material (coal, wood, etc.) and a sentient humanoid creature within the space of 1 week. The crucible holds the ragefire spawn in a separate internal chamber, and only one ragefire spawn can be held in the crucible at any one time, but it can be drawn out by opening a tap and speaking a command word. The ragefire spawn pours out like liquid flame in a single round, but it can be captured in a sealed container capable of holding at least a liter and withstanding the elemental's heat.

The ragefire elemental can be released by opening the tap when no ragefire spawn are held in the crucible and speaking the command word. It takes 1 round for a small or Medium elemental to pour out, 2 for a Large elemental, and 3 for a Huge elemental. Alternatively, by speaking a different command word while touching the crucible, the user of the crucible can dismiss the bound ragefire elemental back to the Abyss. The elemental receives a Wis saving throw against the spell save DC of the person releasing it (DC 10 if the person isn't a spellcaster). If the saving throw is successful, the elemental immediately begins to pour from the tap. An elemental freed from the crucible may then escape or attack, but may also listen to bargaining, depending on its relationship with the creator.

A *lesser searing crucible* can summon a Medium ragefire elemental. A *greater searing crucible* can summon a Large ragefire elemental.



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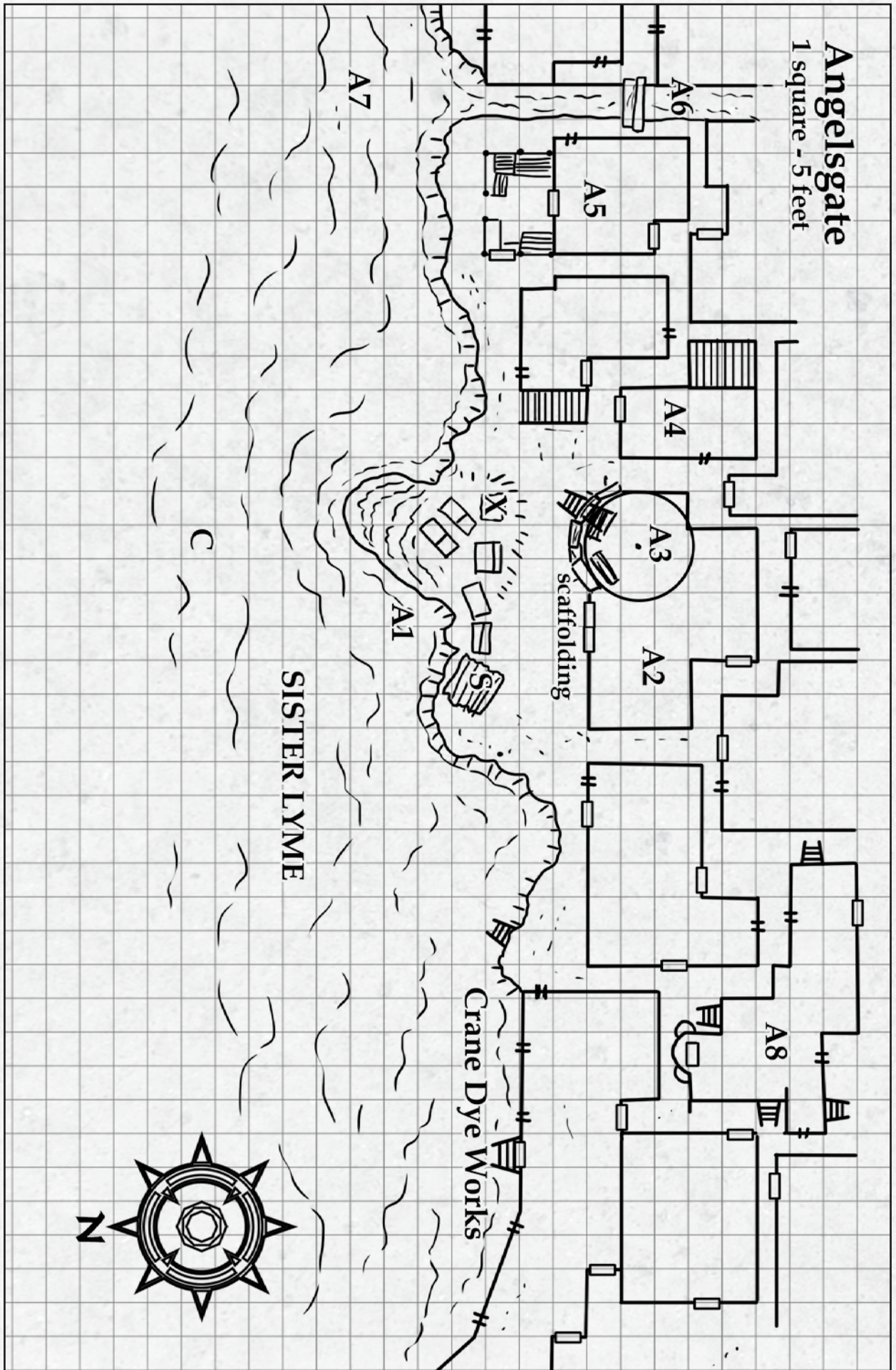
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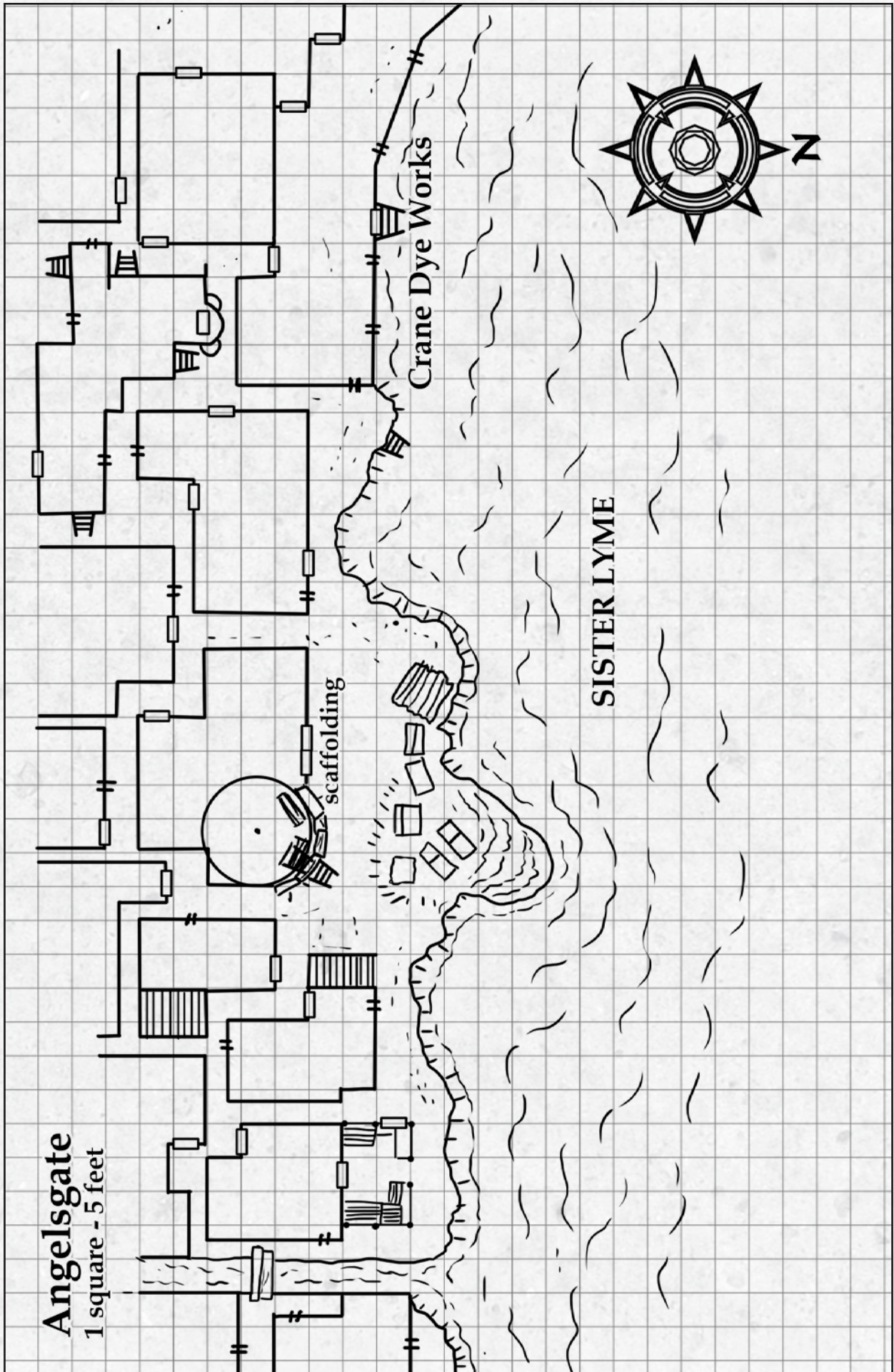
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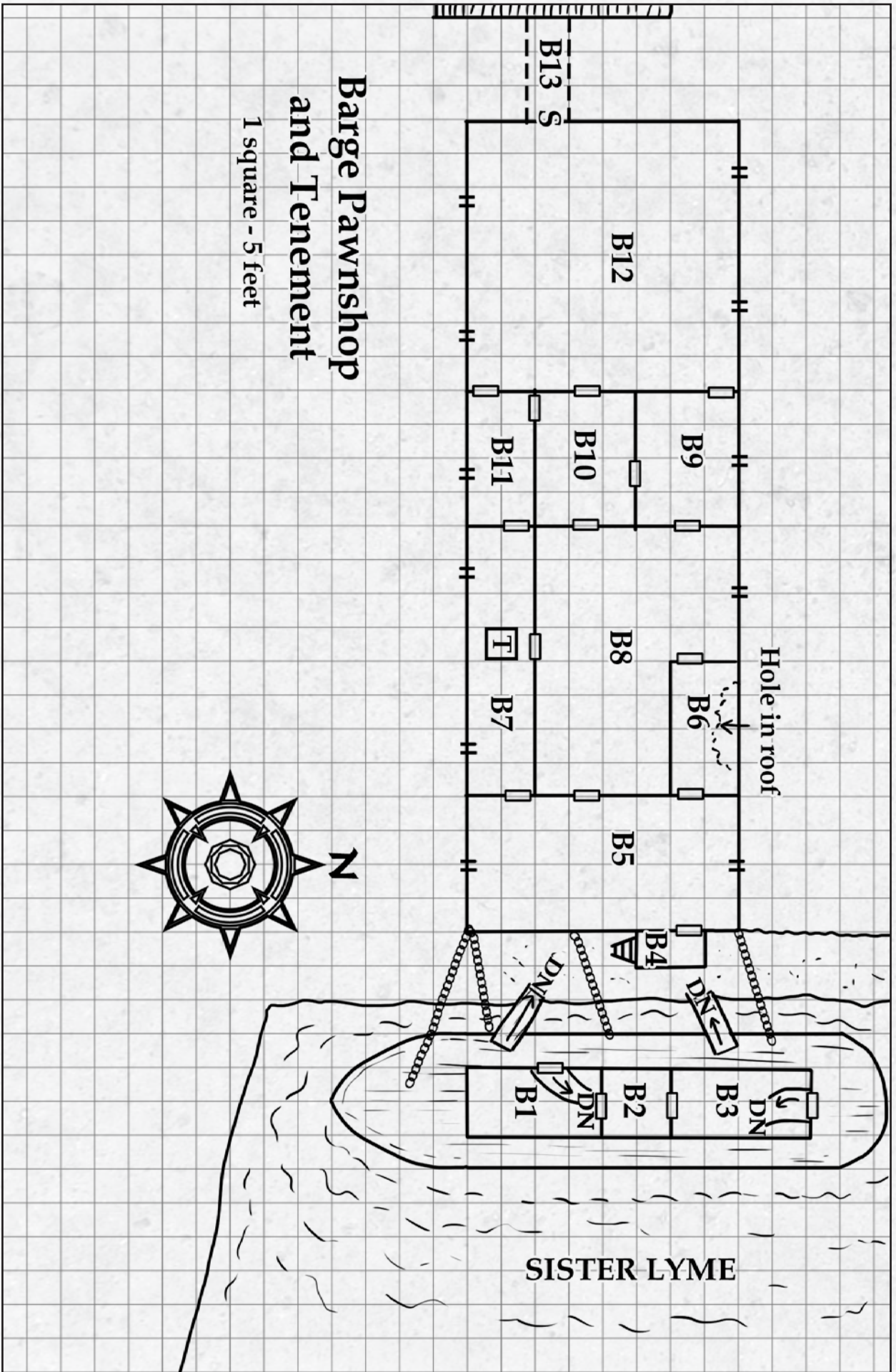




PLAYER MAP



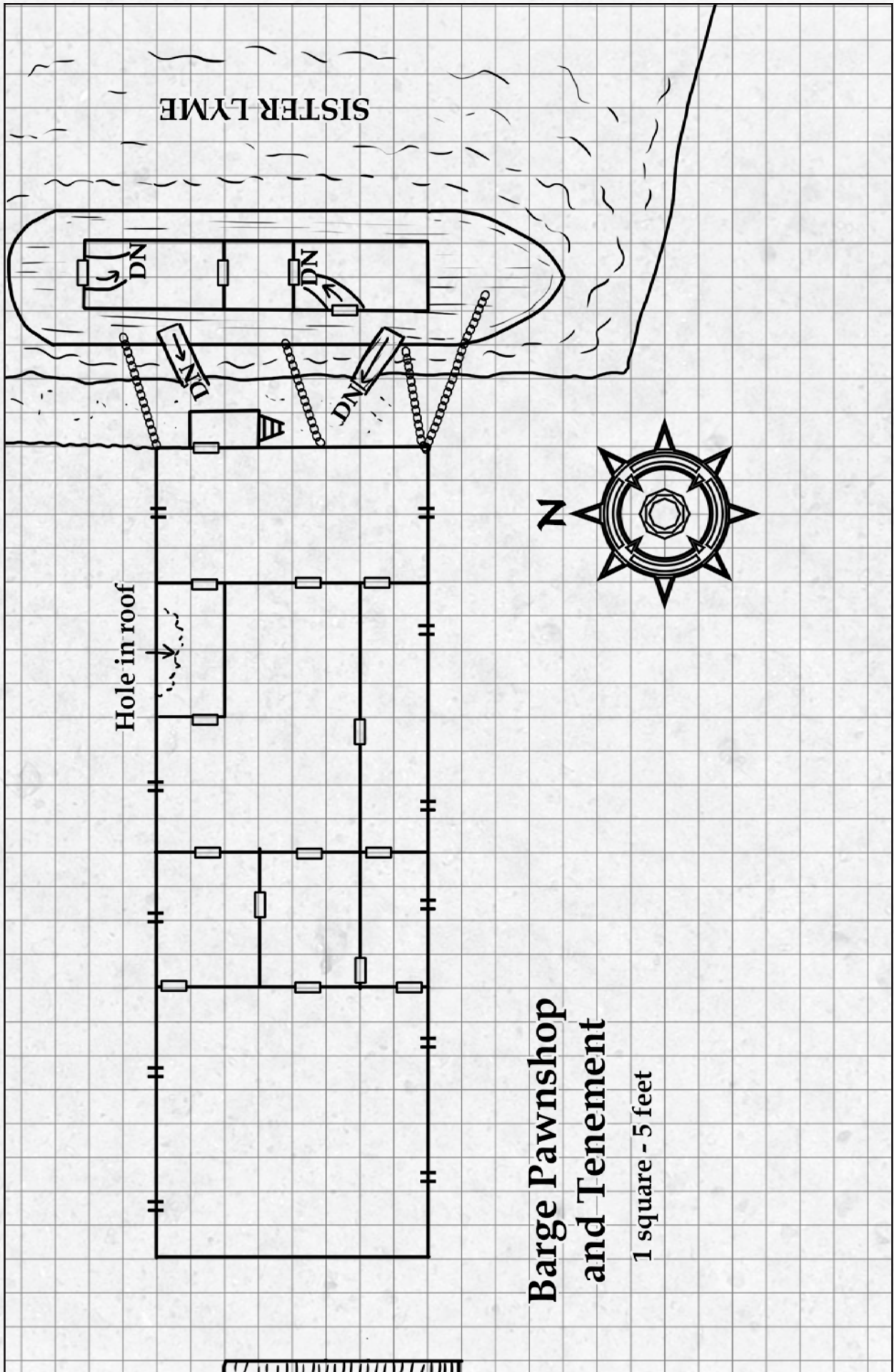




# Barge Pawnshop and Tenement

1 square - 5 feet

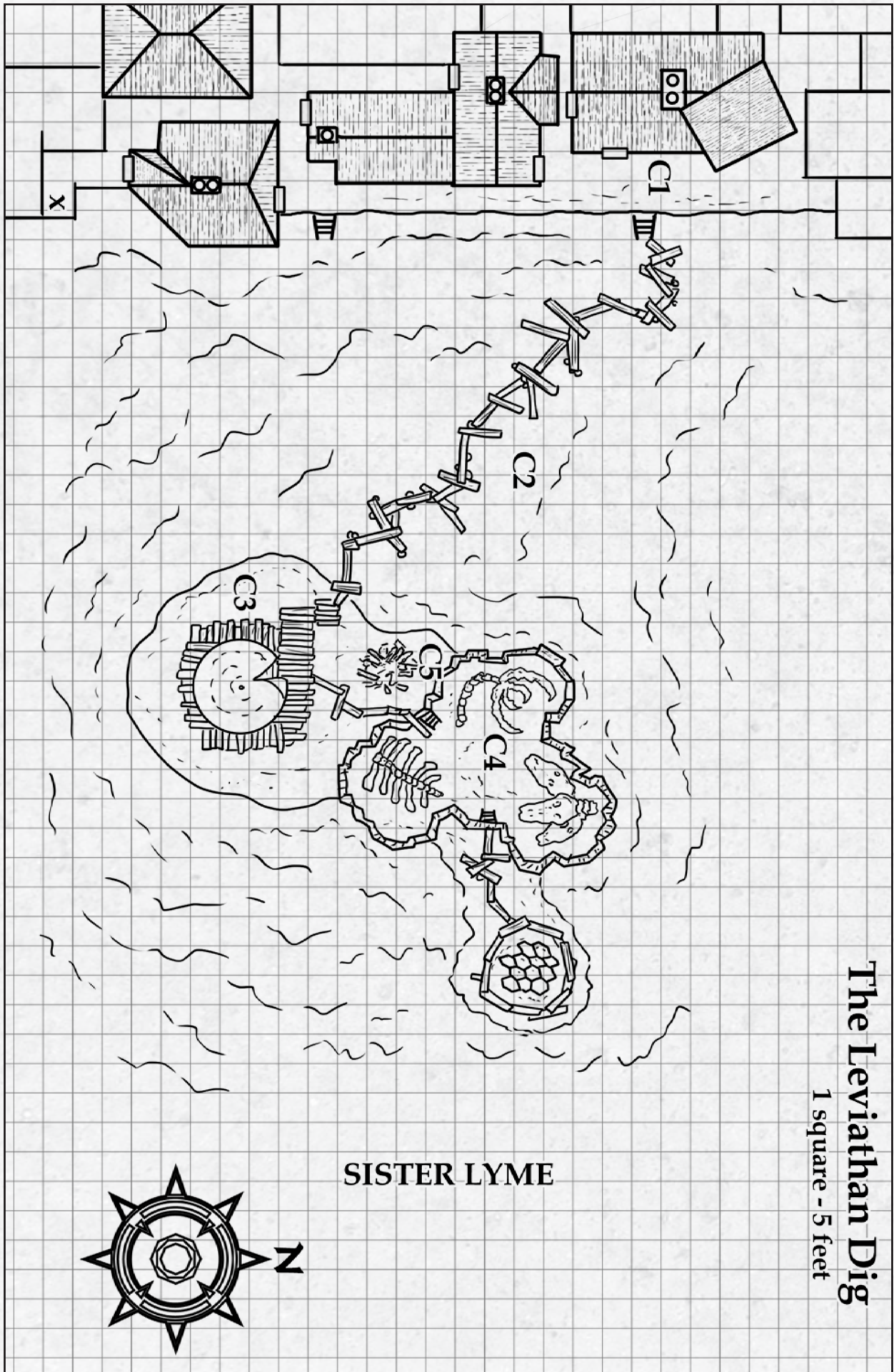




**Barge Pawnshop  
and Tenement**

1 square - 5 feet





# The Leviathan Dig

1 square - 5 feet

SISTER LYME



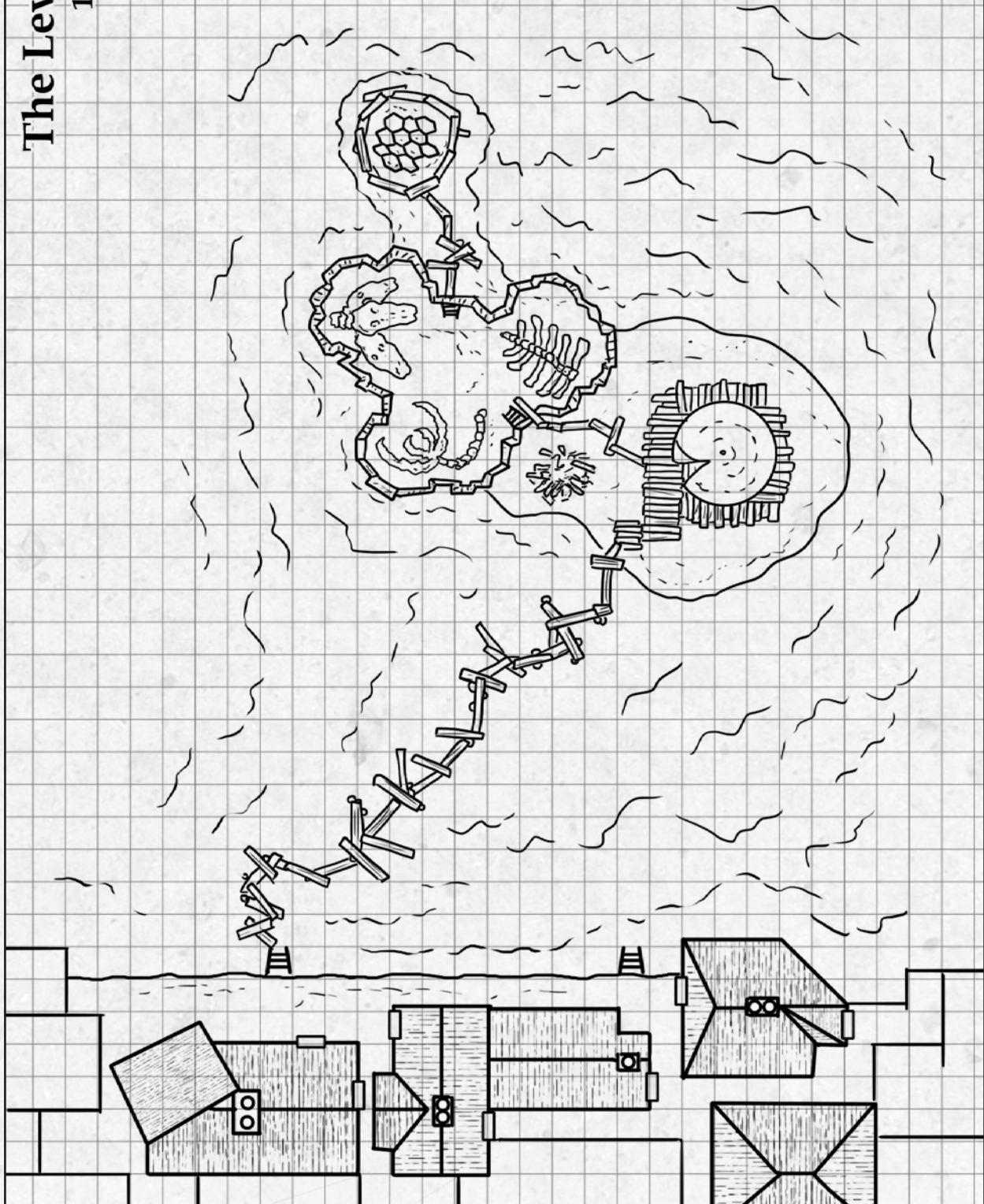


# The Leviathan Dig

1 square - 5 feet



SISTER LYME





# The Limpet

1 square - 5 feet

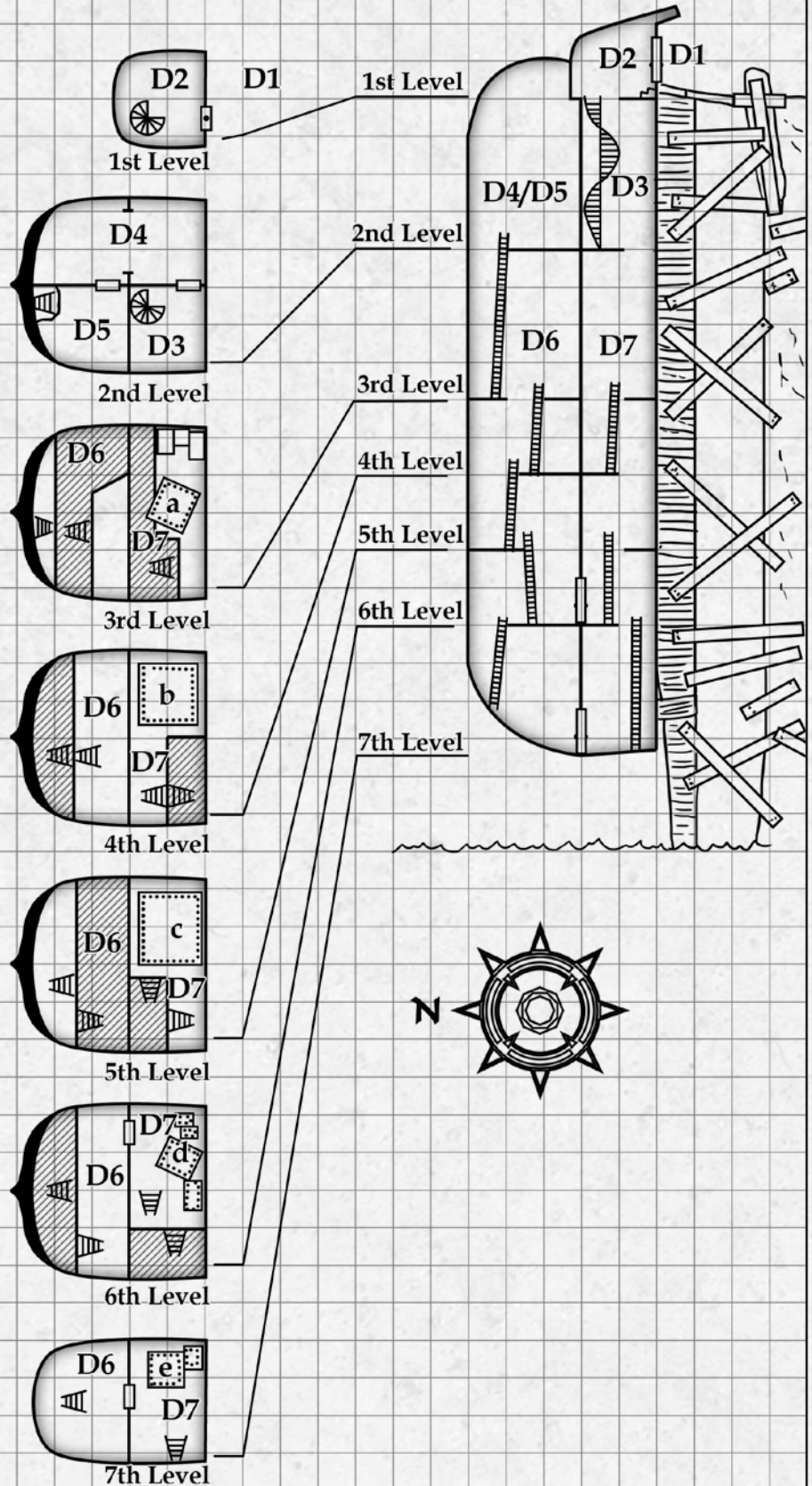
## Plan View

## Side View

Hatched Areas - Open to Below

Cages:

- a - Dire Wolverine
- b - Dire Ape
- c - Lion
- d - Dire Weasel
- e - Krenshar





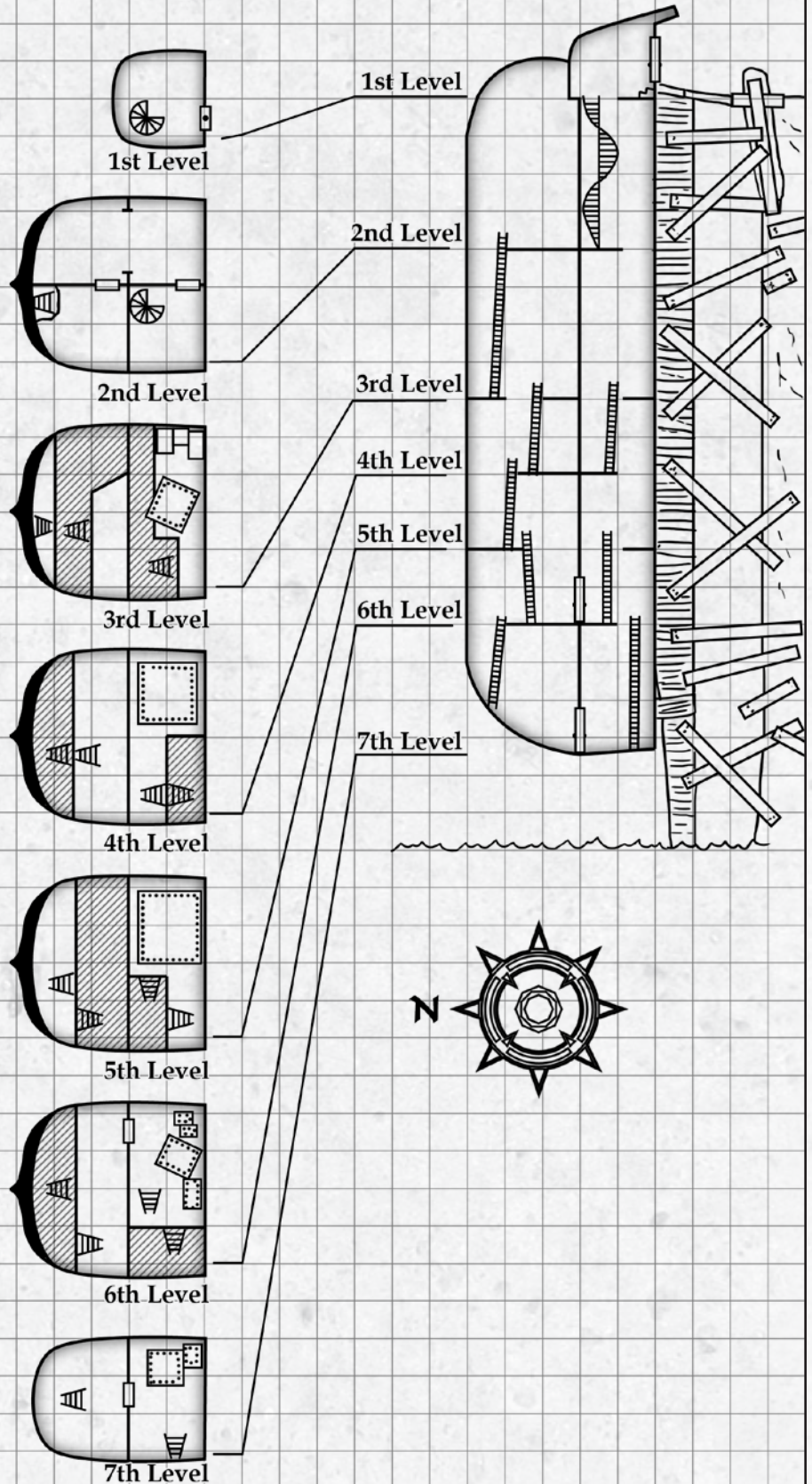
# The Limpet

1 square - 5 feet

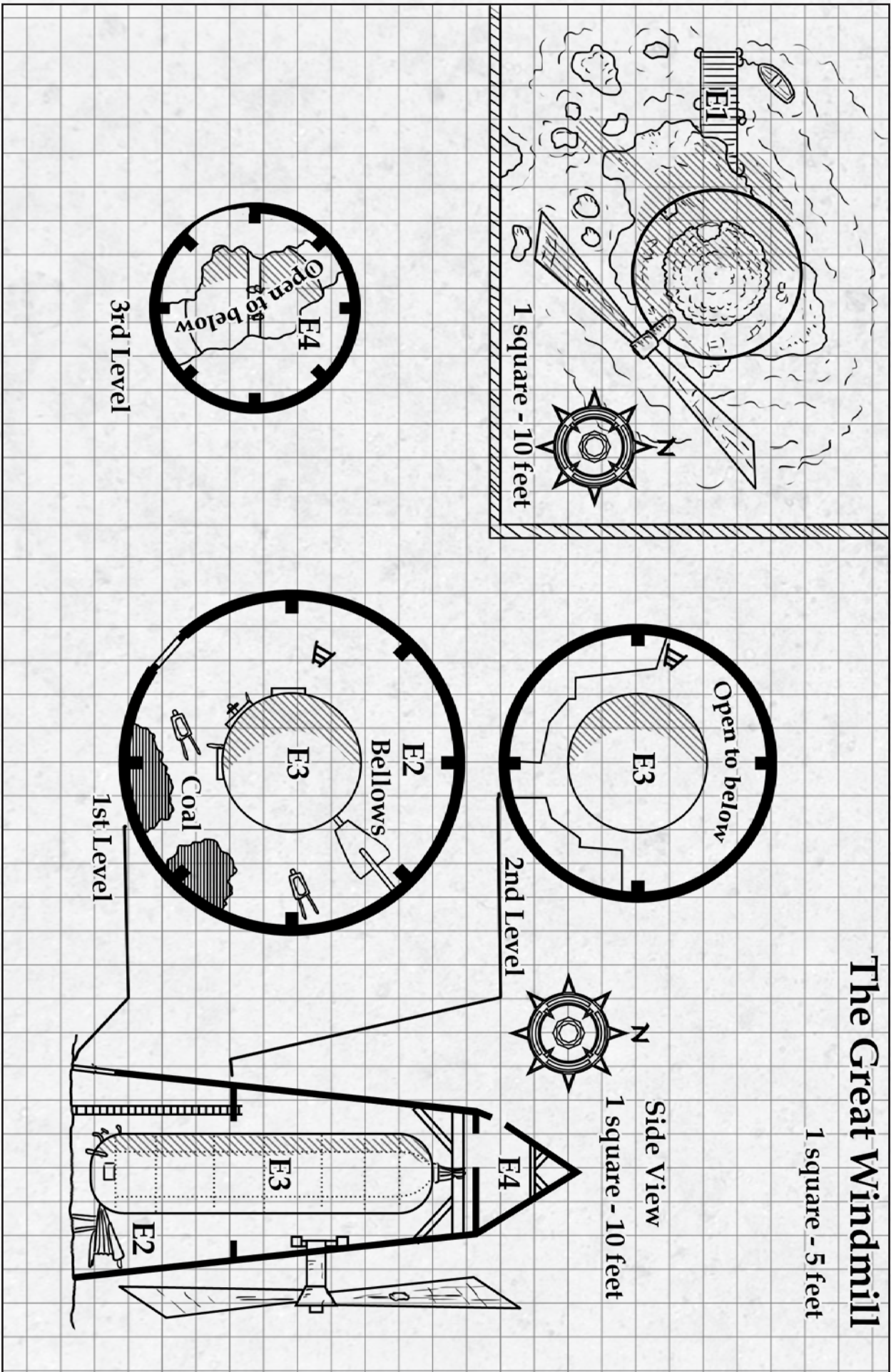
## Plan View

## Side View

Hatched Areas - Open to Below







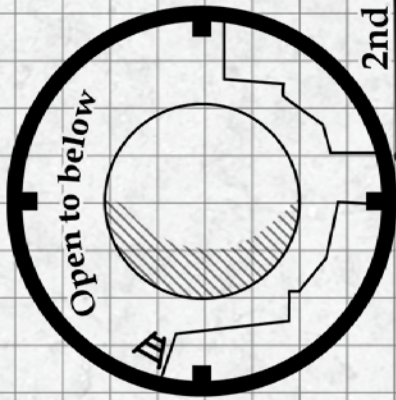
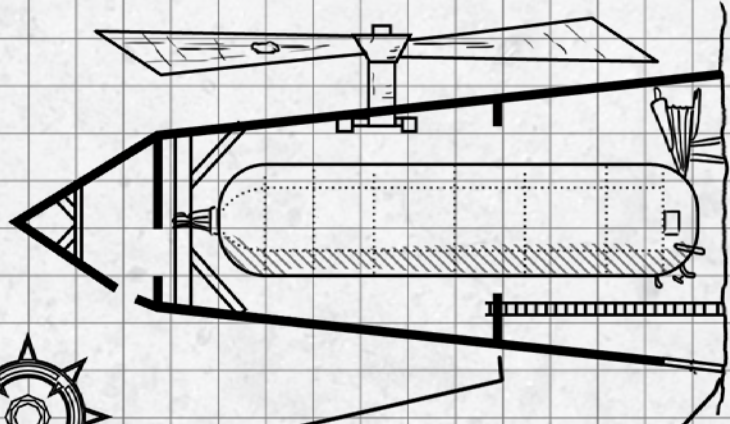


# The Great Windmill

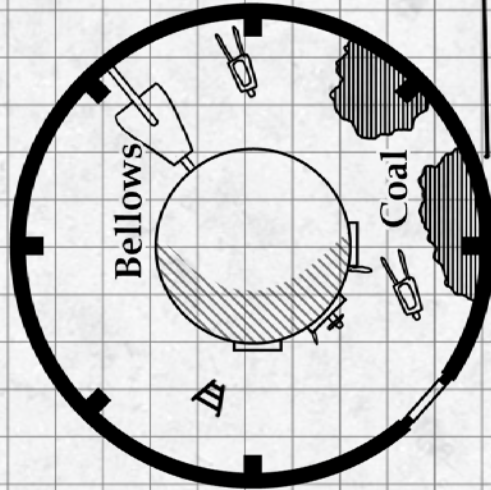
1 square - 5 feet

Side View

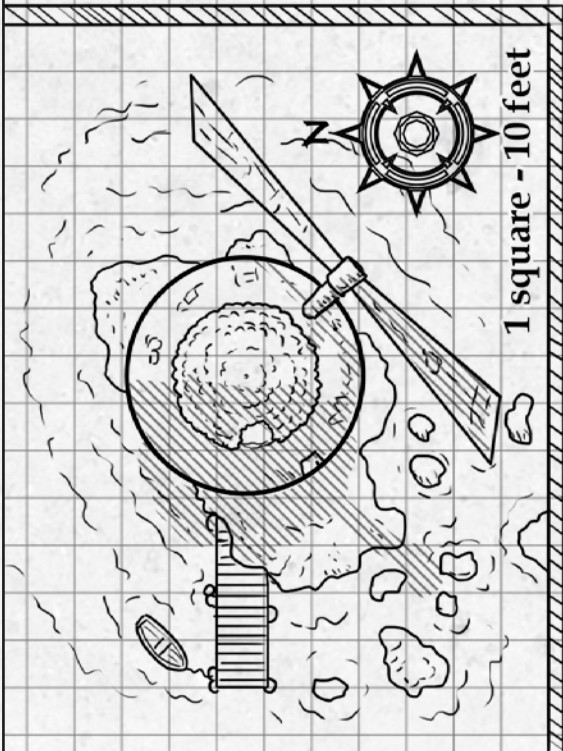
1 square - 10 feet



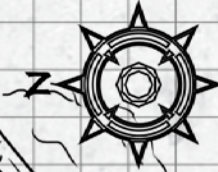
2nd Level



1st Level



1 square - 10 feet



3rd Level



# The Blight

Richard Pett's Crooked City

## EB4: The Crucible

Don't go to sleep. Some say dreams of fire are haunting the night, and that if you dream of burning, you awaken on fire.

People in the Blight begin to awaken at night burning with an all-too-real fire.

Most of them die horribly, spouses or lovers staring in shocked horror at their sudden death throes in the grip of consuming flames. A few of the truly unlucky actually manage to survive — if living in such a state can be called survival. There seems to be no rhyme or reason in the victims of these incinerating dreams, as those among the high and low fall victim to its touch, and the locals each pray that he or she will not be next.

Now no one dares to sleep.

The Crucible is a stand-alone adventure set in **The Blight** for 4–6 7th-level characters.



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