

# ON HER MAJESTY'S PEST CONTROL SERVICE

AN ADVENTURE MODULE FROM THE GM'S SECRET STASH

Quickphix Presents

A Tier 1 Introductory One Shot for  
the world's greatest roleplaying game

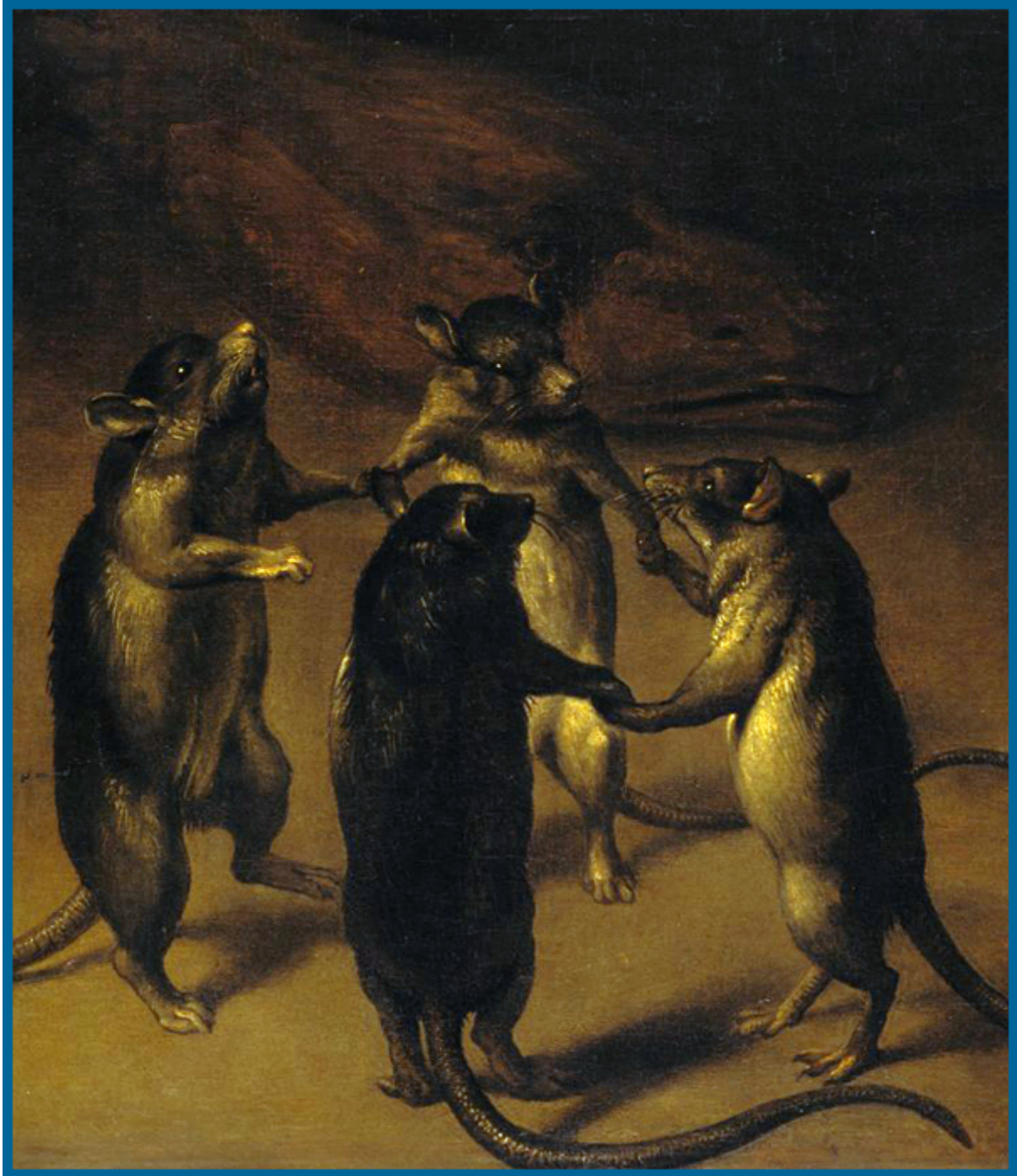




# On her Majesty's Pest Control Service

An Adventure Module from the GM's Secret Stash

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Presented by Quickphix

# **On her Majesty's Pest Control Service**

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A 1 - 3 Hour Introductory Adventure for 1<sup>st</sup> Level Characters

## **CREDITS:**

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*“Squish 1 – it’s fun; Squish 2 – this won’t do; Squish 3 – they don’t flee; Squish 4 – there’s even more; Squish 5 – you may yet survive; Squish 6 – they know your tricks; Squish 7 – on your way to heaven; Squish 8 – now it’s too late; Squish 9 – they crawl up your spine; Squish 10 – you’ll never squish again ”*

*– The Dance of Rats, A Children’s Rhyme from Ghenna*

## Summary

Like most large port towns with lots of food and bad sanitation, Ghenna has a pest problem. An unusually large rat colony has taken a liking to its scenic waterways and mouldy cellars. Each day, a thousand more furry creatures scuttle through the city’s drainage pipes and sewers. Usually, this isn’t a problem the local royalty would concern itself with. However, after Queen Marissa found rats dancing in her new summer home’s bathroom, the pest problem has been swiftly declared a threat to the crown. Unfortunately, knights and city guards make for bad exterminators and not many sane men are keen to delve through Ghenna’s wild sewers. To make matters worse, the superstitious citizens declared the weirdly smart rats to be the heralds of the demonic forces supposedly living under the city. Hence, the “Reformation through Extermination” act was passed, allowing local law enforcement to pass down fines measured in rat scalps. Captured criminals were allowed to shorten their incarceration by delving into the sewers and bringing back heads or pelts. Needless to say, criminal activity in Ghenna dropped considerably. Not because more criminals were deterred by the sentence, but because most of them never returned from the city’s rat-infested bowels.

In this 1 – 3-hour introductory adventure, a party of 1<sup>st</sup> level characters are sentenced to reformation through extermination. The task is not only disgusting and arduous, it soon turns deadly. Can they collect enough rat pelts before becoming rat food? Is there a way to stop the infestation all together? Can they survive being “On her Majesty’s Pest Control Service?”

### **In your Campaign:**

This adventure is meant for people who have little to no experience with TTRPGs. Hence, it should be kept as short as possible and most of the rules listed in the document should also remain hidden from the players.

## Premise

The players have run afoul of Ghenna’s laws and are currently stuck in a holding cell, waiting for their sentences to be passed. With them in the cell sits an angry dwarf named Locke Bramer. He asks them, why they are here.

## Before the Session

Depending if the players are new to TTRPGs in general or just D&D, there are a few things the GM can do, to make the first session run smoothly for their players. Here are just a few tips on what to do before everyone sits down to play.

## Rules for Beginners

Unless the players specifically ask for it or have played other TTRPGs before, it is generally better to not provide them with the basic rules or the players handbook before their first session. These text walls can be intimidating at first and the game is much better taught while playing. Hence, it is better to let them learn the rules gradually over the course of a few play sessions. However, there are two rules which should be true for the first session: Player’s are not allowed to fight each other, and characters are not allowed to refuse to go on an adventure. Overly aggressive or antagonistic characters could otherwise quickly spoil the fun for their party members.

## Player Characters

The GM shouldn't let the players fill out their character sheets themselves. The GM and the players should create the PCs together beforehand. There are three easy ways of doing this:

- Asking them, which hero-archetype they would like to play as (e.g. "Which of the Lord of the Rings Characters do you like the most?") and then create a corresponding PC for them.
- Letting the players take a [D&D 5e race quiz](#) as well as a [D&D 5e class quiz](#). With both data points, the GM can then create the PC for them.
- Presenting the players with ten pre-made characters. If these pre-made sheets feature a good character-portrait and a short description, the players can just choose their favourite.

After the characters have been created, explain the players the basics of their character-archetype before they introduce themselves. E.g "You are playing a barbarian – they are the tough guys of the group who can take a lot of hits and still keep going".

## Dice

Giving (or gifting) the players physical dice to play with goes a long way for making the first session memorable. However, instead of handing them a complete set from d4 to d100, it is best to just give them a d20 and whatever dice they'll be using to roll damage. With younger or completely new players, it might even be preferable to just provide them with a d20 and having the GM calculating the mean damage of attacks in their head.

## Ease into Roleplay

If the group has expressed interest in the roleplay part of D&D specifically, or if the GM wants the players to keep their characters after this initial session, there are

some ways to get the players to engage with their PCs early on:

- Before the session, each player writes down three rumours about their character: two of them true, one of the false. They are distributed to all players before the session. These can be used to improvise stories and character backgrounds later on.
- The players start their game as prisoners. The GM should prompt the players to come up with a reason, why they ended up here. Are they innocent? Did they commit a crime pursuing their ultimate goal?
- The players should write their character introduction down beforehand – however, they should reduce it down to just two sentences: "My name is NAME and I'm a CLASS RACE. I have ASPIRATION but I also FLAWS.

Most importantly, none of these things should be forced upon the players – it should all be voluntary. If the players see it as a hassle, GMs should just accept it. Not everyone is comfortable with heavy roleplaying from the start.

## Props & Miniatures

Unless the players come with a war- or board- gaming background, it is best to keep the number of props (such as miniatures, models, playmats) at a minimum at first. Seeing miniatures might keep players in a video- or boardgame mindset, which may keep them from fully expressing themselves through play. However, visualizations of monsters, locations and NPCs will help immerse new players in the world (see Appendix II). Providing them with a small map (see Appendix I), will also take out much of the guesswork of the theatre of the mind and make things easier to understand. Additionally, the story can and should be aided by playing ambient music or soundscapes.

## The Adventure in Steps

This adventure follows three-steps, which will take the players through the three most common challenges in D&D: social encounters (roleplaying), skill checks and battles. Hence, the adventure starts above ground, with the players gathering information on the best modus operandi. Afterwards, the players follow leads to the source of the infestation down into the sewer, where they'll learn how to explore and use basic skill checks. Finally, they'll also be faced with some minor enemies and a boss to fight.

### Step 1: Part of the Service

After each character has told the party and Locke why they've been thrown into jail, Locke Bramer properly introduces himself. He has been locked up for vagrancy and beating up a city guard after they destroyed the tent, he set up down at the river.

#### Locke Bramer (male mountain dwarf)

A loud and uncouth dwarf with a surprisingly handsome face. He speaks in a weird dialect, which nobody seems to be able to place. His musclebound and scar-covered body betrays him as an ex-soldier or mercenary. While he has a short temper when spoken down to, he does treat everybody in the same jovial manner. He firmly believes, that there's no room for caution in a life lived to the fullest.

#### Ability Scores

AC: 14 / HP: 15 / Speed 25 /

STR: 17 (+3) / DEX: 13 (+1) / CON: 16 (+3)

INT: 8 (-1) / WIS: 12 (+1) / CHA: 10 (+0)

#### Traits

**Twitchy:** Locke has an uncanny sense of when things nearby aren't as they should be, giving him an edge when he dodges away from danger. He has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells.

Resistances: poison, acid

#### Actions

**Cudgel Blow** (+5 to hit), melee attack, reach 5ft., one target. 1d6+3 damage.

#### Swift Sentencing

After a while the cells door swings open. A female halfling administrator named Jenna Kurtz casually strolls into the cell, while four guardsmen stand to attention at the exit. With a monotone voice she reads through the players' criminal records. She explains, that because of the minor nature of the players' crimes (or a lack of evidence) all off them are to be sentenced as a group to "reformation via extermination". This will not only save the city some time but also free up the cell. The party is to bring the city four barrels worth of rat scalps or carcasses – to be approved by the city's executioner. Alternatively, as unlikely as it is: should the players be able to find an alternate solution for the plague of rats, they'd also be relieved of their sentences.

#### Marked and Noted

With a snap of her fingers, Kurtz summons forth a fifth guard and orders him to put iron bracelets on all the prisoners' arms – to be removed upon the delivery of all required rat scalps. With a dry chuckle she also notes, that destroying or removing the bracelets is a crime punishable by death. Since their faces and names will be put on record throughout the kingdom, running away won't do them any good either. They'll have a month to produce the necessary scalps as a group. Otherwise, another barrel will be added for each month they are late. On this unreasonable notice, Jenna Kurtz has the prisoners escorted out to the streets of Ghenna, without accepting any further objections or questions.

#### The First few Days

Locke will stick with the group – both because he has taken a liking to them and because he has no other



choice. He has no prior experience catching rats, but he suggests maybe gearing up in the city to finish this task faster. Locke himself is broke, but he offers to carry the sack containing the rat carcasses. The party can decide on how they want to tackle the task before them. The GM may suggest the following activities:

- **Buying equipment:** The players can spend some money buying traps, ropes, lures and poison.
- **Answer job-postings:** Find people (e.g. inn-keepers) with rat-filled basements.
- **Research:** Ask the locals, where the rat concentration is the highest and how to catch them.
- **Enlist more people:** They can spend money to get other people to do their work for them. However, since they are wearing bracelets marking them as criminals, they won't be able to recruit any upstanding citizens. Maybe somebody will even try to steal their pelts.
- **Just get out there:** Run around the city without any plan (or a really crazy plan) just trying to get some scalps.

### Setbacks, Rumours and Legends

Regardless of what the players decide to do, they'll at most have moderate success. They'll learn the following things:

- The rats of Ghenna are a lot smarter than in other cities. The players will often find their simpler traps to be ineffective or even strategically chewed apart.
- While Ghenna has always had a lot of rats, they only became a bigger problem a few years ago. Although, most citizens aren't quite sure what has changed.
- Other rat-catchers have tried using cats or dogs to get rid of the rats, only for their pets to be overwhelmed by a horde of rats. Most of these pets are never seen again.

- The rat-catchers are convinced, that somewhere under the city rests a demon who's using the rats as his eyes and ears in the city.
- Others say, Ranea, the Kingdom to the south is deliberately importing these rats to weaken Ghenna's economy.
- The city-watch and the guardsmen are on high alert, after they've caught some crafty entrepreneurs who wanted to get rich by breeding rats within the city.
- The competition amongst rat-catchers is fierce – a lot of sentenced criminals have divided the city up in hunting grounds, not tolerating anybody muscling in on their turf. An entire black market has sprung up, with a barrel of rats costing upwards of 200GP. Most mobsters use them to buy freedom for their foot soldiers.
- All rat catchers murmur about the legendary Glenn Simmons. Nobody is quite sure what his crime was, but he's been delving into the dark depths of Ghenna's sewers, returning each time with an obscene number of dead rats. The rats don't show any wounds, they appear to just have dropped dead. Some have accused him of breeding the rats, but one talk with him usually convinces them otherwise: because nobody has a more intense hatred of the Ghenna's rats than Glenn.

### New Mission, new Momentum

After failing for about two weeks to meet their quota, Locke invites the party to a drink at the local inn to come up with a new strategy. He rightfully concludes, that at the current rate, the party will spend the rest of their lives catching rats. However, he'd heard from other rat-catchers, that there exists a cut-off part of the city's sewer. He also observed the flow of water throughout the city and thinks to have pinpointed where this forgotten stretch of sewer could be located. While he doesn't believe in the demon sleeping under Ghenna, it does make sense to him, that the rats must have a place where they are breeding in peace. Otherwise, the city would have exterminated most of them by now.

He suggests pooling the rest of their money to buy some digging equipment and risk not catching rats for a few days to get a chance at locating the “motherload”.

## Step 2 Expedition down under

Should the players be unwilling to follow Locke’s plan, they might be willing to compromise and at least try catching rats in the city’s sewers, as they are far less patrolled by other rat-catchers than the granaries and storage sheds around the city.

### Break on through

Somewhere deep down in the sewers, Locke manages to blow open a wall. He has noticed rats disappearing through a passage in the now destroyed wall. After the dust has settled, the party is faced with a mouldy stone passage leading further down into the bowels of Ghenna.

From here, the exploration follows the rooms mapped out in Appendix I. Throughout their track through the sewer, the players will see the general rat density increasing. Other marks, such as rat droppings, fur or small nests will increase in frequency the deeper they go. Clearly, Locke’s theory of one central nest seems to hold some merit.

The GM should cut content wherever they see fit, to not stretch the session out for more than 2h – as any longer could be exhausting for novice players. In addition to the encounters listed in Appendix I, the following events should be used regardless of the chosen layout.

### Rats of Ghenna (swarm of small beasts)

Above ground, the Rats of Ghenna more or less behaved like normal rats. However, down here the rats regularly attack the party, as if trying to stop them from advancing. They usually attack in swarms, with two or three big rats in the centre, almost looking like they are giving orders.

### Ability Scores

AC: 10 / HP: 15 / Speed 25 / CR: ¼

STR: 9 (-1) / DEX: 12 (+1) / CON: 9 (-1)

INT: 10 (+0) / WIS: 10 (+0) / CHA: 3 (-4)

### Traits

**Keen Smell.** The Rats of Ghenna have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell

**Swarm.** The Rats of Ghenna can occupy another creature’s space and vice versa, and they can move through any opening large enough for a single rat. The swarm can’t regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

**Pack Intelligence.** If the two or three big rats in the middle of the swarm are targeted specifically, killing them (2HP each) might disperse the entire swarm immediately.

**Dissonant Whispers.** The rats in the middle of the swarm exhibit telepathic abilities and are able to communicate some basic sentiments with a target creature. The more of the big rats there are, the clearer these messages get.

### Actions

**Bites** (+2 to hit), melee attack, reach 0ft., one target. in the swarm’s space. 2d6 damage piercing damage, or 1d6 piercing damage, if the swarm has half or fewer of its hit points left.

### Tips on how to run this encounter

The Rats of Ghenna consist of a large number of regular rats and a few bigger, telepathic rats. The more of them there are in a swarm, the more tactical the entire swarm fights. With one rat, the swarm is just smart enough to attack the weakest party member. A swarm with multiple of these big rats are even able to lie in ambush for the players.

### Telepathic Rat (small beast)

These rats were created by the toxins and weird psychic spells Glenn Simmons and other rat catchers have been using over the years to kill them. Individually, they are slightly smarter than normal rats, able to rally their kin towards collaboration. However, their collective intelligence grows the more of them there are. A half-dozen



of them together can communicate basic sentiments telepathically. It stands to reason, that even more of them would be able to express even complex thoughts.

### **Ability Scores**

AC: 12 / HP: 3 / Speed 30 / CR: 0

STR: 2 (-4) / DEX: 14 (+2) / CON: 10 (+0)

INT: 8 (-1) / WIS: 10 (+0) / CHA: 3 (-4)

### **Traits**

**Keen Smell.** The Telepathic Rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell

**Dissonant Whispers.** The Telepathic Rat is able to communicate some basic sentiments with a target creature. The more Telepathic Rats there are, the clearer these messages get.

### **Actions**

**Bite** (+4 to hit), melee attack, reach 50ft., one target, 1 piercing damage.

### **Closely watched**

While wandering through Ghenna's sewers, the players will occasionally hear sentence fragments without being able to discern their origin. They are picking up fragments of consciousness from the large number of telepathic rats scuttling through the narrow passages all around them. They are watching the players' every step, deciding on whether they should attack them. Examples of fragments could be:

- ...let the young rest...
- ...hunted wherever we go...
- ...intruders, thieves, murderers...
- ...hide, run, gather...
- ...the giants hate us...
- ...our eyes won't close...
- ...unable to share, unable to leave...
- ...they end us, bury us...
- ...why do you seek us, why do you run...
- ...the smoke, the whispers will start again...
- ...there are more of them...
- ...he will join them, he's ahead...

### **Distant Echoes**

While fighting their way through the sewer, the players will occasionally hear other sounds in the distance. Muffled explosions, sharp hisses, footsteps from further ahead, etc. Glenn Simmons is the source of these disturbances. He's been fighting his way through the sewer as well.

### **Step 3 Glenn and the Swarm**

Finally, the players reach the heart of the sewers: A giant, dark room filled with furry shadows. The acidic smell is almost unbearable. Thousands of small bodies can be heard scratching around in the dark, their beady eyes glinting in the light of Locke's torch. However, as soon as the party starts advancing into the room, it immediately falls completely silent. The darkness in front of them takes shape as thousands of rats move in unison to face the players. Hundreds of small voices start ringing in the players' heads, forming one coherent sentence:

"WhY dO yOu HuNT uS?"

### **The Nest must be Fed**

The swarm intelligence of Ghenna's Telepathic Rats has been observing the party's expedition through the sewers. Years of being hunted has made it cautious. It has decided, that the players clearly pose a mortal threat to the nest. Yet, they aren't certain if they'll be able to fend them off. Therefore, it has decided to talk to them. Collectively, the Nest has about the intelligence and vocabulary of a human child. It pursues the following objectives:

- **Survive.** It wants to get out of this encounter with as many of them alive as possible. It knows, that even if it were to defeat the players, this victory would come at a great cost to themselves.
- **Feed.** The Nest occupies the sewers below Ghenna, because the city represents an unending stream of food for them. Because of

their numbers and telepathic abilities, they also hardly face any natural predators. Another source of food might be the only bargaining chip the players could use to reason with the Nest.

- **Spread.** The Nest wants to grow larger. However, Ghenna has become an increasingly hostile environment for them. Even though most exterminators aren't particularly good at their job, they still manage to kill dozens of rats per day. They've also seen Glenn Simmons slaughter hundreds of them. Emphasizing this threat is the only chance the players have, to get the swarm to leave Ghenna.

### The Nest (large swarm of small beasts)

An enormous swarm of rats interspersed with a lot of telepathic rats. It communicates telepathically and speaks in chorus of voices forming a single will. When "speaking" it uses collective pronouns. While it is sentient, it doesn't follow any more complex motives than those of an individual rat (survive, feed, spread). Hence, it views all decisions through this lens – which means it harbours no ill will but also won't show any sympathy.

#### Ability Scores

AC: 10 / HP: 46 / Speed 30 / CR: 4

STR: 9 (-1) / DEX: 14 (+2) / CON: 9 (-1)

INT: 15 (+2) / WIS: 11 (+0) / CHA: 14 (+2)

#### Traits

**Keen Smell.** The Nest has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell

**Swarm.** The Nest can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and it can move through any opening large enough for a single rat. The Nest can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

**Dissonant Whispers.** The rats in the middle of the swarm exhibit telepathic abilities and are able to communicate with other creatures. Because of this large amount of telepathic activity, the Nest is immune to any

effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics):** The Nest's innate spellcasting ability is intelligence (spell save DC 13). As long as it has more than half of its hit points remaining, the Nest can innately cast the following spells:

- **At will:** detect thoughts
- **1/day:** confusion

#### Actions

**Bites** (+5 to hit), melee attack, reach 0 ft., one target. In the swarm's space. 4d6 damage piercing damage, or 2d6 piercing damage, if the Nest has half or fewer of its hit points left.

#### Negotiations

Unless the players immediately start attacking the Nest, it will try to negotiate with them. However, about 5 minutes into the negotiations or 2 rounds into the fight, Glenn Simmons suddenly storms into the chamber.

### Glenn Simmons (male High Elf)

A stern high-elf with a crooked gait and a deep voice. After losing his family to the plague, Glenn swore to eradicate rat plagues wherever he could find them. Over the years, he's discovered many alchemical agents to more efficiently kill all sort of pests. In combination with the spells he learned during his travels, he's found a deadly tool for almost any infestation. Still, even he has found his match two years ago in the large rat population of Ghenna. Unwillingly, some combination of his alchemical agents together with his spells helped to create the telepathic rats, worsening the infestation. He's here to correct this mistake once and for all and nobody is going to stand in his way.

#### Ability Scores

AC: 13 / HP: 18 / Speed 30 /

STR: 12 (+1) / DEX: 16 (+3) / CON: 13 (+1)

INT: 16 (+3) / WIS: 10 (+0) / CHA: 10 (+0)

## Traits

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**Resistances.** poison, acid

**Keen senses.** Glenn can see in the dark and has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

**Fanatic.** If an attack were to reduce Glenn's HP to 0 for the first time in a fight, it will instead reduce it to 1. Glenn will get a free round and an extra level 1 spell slot. Afterwards, all attacks against him have advantage.

**Spellcaster.** Glenn is a second level spell-caster. His spell attack modifier is +5, his spell save DC 13. He can channel the following spells through his arcane focus:

- **At will:** Minor illusion, poison spray, thunderclap
- **Level 1 (3):** Dissonant Whispers, Sleep, Thunderwave, Magic Missile, Ray of Sickness

## Actions

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**Short Sword** (+5 to hit), melee attack, reach 5ft., one target. 1d6+3 piercing damage.

**Poison Grenade (1x).** Glenn throws a small pouch which explodes into a 20ft. sphere of poisonous, yellow fog. It lasts up to 30 seconds (5 rounds) or until dispersed by wind. When a creature enters the fog's space for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, that creature must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw (with advantage if that creature has resistance to poison). The creature takes 2d6 poison damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

## The Nest and its Exterminator

The final encounter gives the players a choice. Upon the arrival of Glenn, the Nest realizes that it probably won't survive this fight. It immediately proclaims its intention to leave Ghenna and never return. If the party allows it leave, it promises to bestow a token, which will "mark them as a friend to our kin everywhere you go" upon them. Of course, Glenn won't accept any of that – he's here to end the infestation once and for all. He reminds the players of their sentence and that helping to end the plague also carries a large monetary reward.

Of course, accepting the offer of one, means having to fight the other. Locke will follow the judgement of the party – as a wanderer and outcast, he can sympathize with the Nest, which only wants to live in peace. However, he's also in desperate need of money and doesn't want to fight Glenn.

## Resolution

The final encounter ends either with the swarm getting killed or Glenn being killed or incapacitated. Either way, the fight will have produced enough rat carcasses for the players to pay their debt to the city. The consequence of the players' choices can play out as follows:

- **Option 1 – Helping the Nest escape:** As promised, the Nest will leave Ghenna behind. Thousands of them will burst forth from every well and sewer in the city. The huge swarm will coalesce in the market square, giving the citizens of Ghenna a good scare before disappearing into a nearby wood. After that, rats are still regularly seen in the city, but at levels which allowed the Queen to redact the "reformation through extermination" act. If Glenn is still alive, he'll quietly leave Ghenna behind in pursuit of the swarm, cursing the players all the while. Nobody will believe the players should they claim to have ended the infestation. At least they'll have paid of their debt.
- **Option 2 – Helping Glenn exterminate the Nest:** Having nowhere left to escape to, the Nest will fight until enough of its telepathic components are killed. The bond which held them together for so long collapses and the rats disperse in all directions. With a few of Glenn's smoke bombs, the heart of the sewer is fumigated, and the city's rat population drops considerably. Glenn returns with the players to the surface triumphantly. Thanks to his word, everybody believes that he and the players ended Ghenna's great rat infestation. The "reformation through extermination" act is redacted shortly after, and the players are celebrated as heroes.





## Reward

If the players helped the Nest, they'll receive a small bone statue. It depicts a crudely carved rat. The teeth marks across the material indicate, that it was created by the Nest itself. Apart from being an extraordinary proof of the Nest's collective intelligence, it also carries residues of its psionic magic. While attuned to the item, the wearer can cast the spell "animal friendship" on rats, mice and other small mammals without requiring any components. If they search the room, they might also find some shiny trinkets the rats have stolen from above ground.

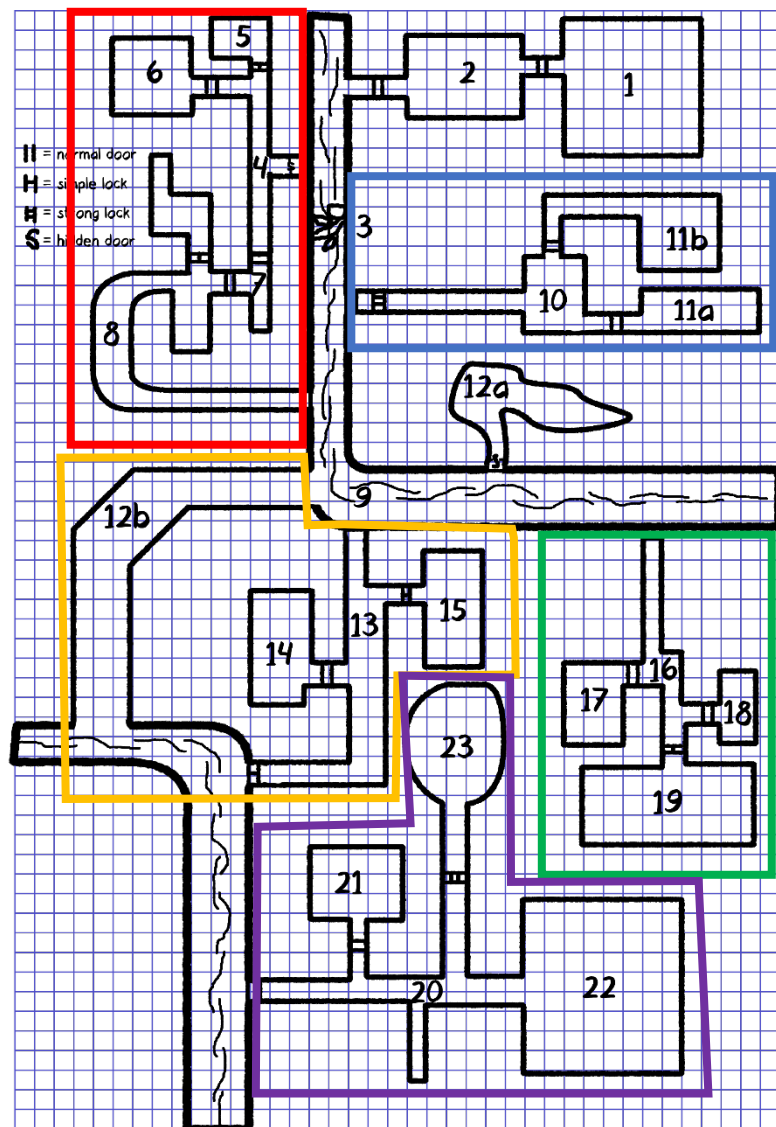
If the players help Glenn, the city will pay each of them a bounty of 25GP and the citizens of Ghenna will celebrate them as heroes for a while – which usually involves a lot of free drinks.

## What's next?

The players have had their first taste of adventure. Maybe after their successful expedition down the sewers, someone in the city will recognize their talent and want to hire them? Maybe they want to find out, who build the ancient ruins below Ghenna? Or maybe, they just want to kick back and relax in a hot bath for a while – Locke certainly wants to.



## Appendix I – Map of the Sewer’s Heart



### Legend

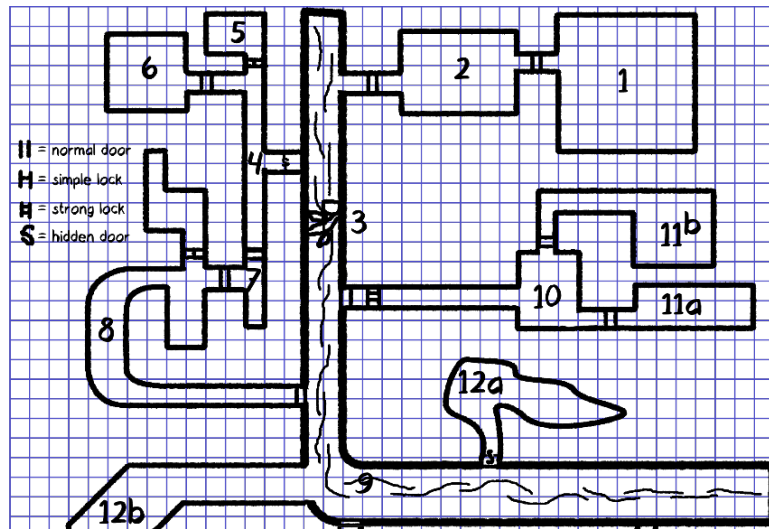
The entire map is only supposed to be used, if the game session can last longer than 4 hours. There are several side pockets which can be cut out of the main map as follows:

- **Top left diversion (red):** Contains the rooms 4 – 8. It is supposed to teach the players about circumventing obstacles in dungeons, gives them the opportunity to loot and contains a few traps and other skill challenges.
- **Top right diversion (blue):** Contains the rooms 10&11. It consists of a single puzzle battle encounter which is supposed to teach the players teamwork.
- **Middle right diversion (green):** Contains the rooms 16-19. It is supposed to teach the players about sequential puzzle solving using combined skill checks.
- **Middle left divergences (yellow):** Contains the rooms 12b-15. Offers the players two paths: a more direct but dangerous path (12b) and a more convoluted but safer path (13-15)
- **Bottom center ending (purple):** Serves to pad out the dungeon’s length before the climactic boss-fight.

These elements can be put together or mixed to form the following dungeons (suggestions):

- **Minimum length dungeon (0.5h):** Contains the rooms 1, 2, the upper canal (3) and the chamber 12a used as stage for the final encounter. All other rooms should be cut away.
- **Medium length dungeon (1h):** Contains the entirety of the minimum dungeon as well as the red and green diversions. Room number 19 is used as a stage for the final encounter. All other rooms should be cut away.
- **Long dungeon (1.5h):** Contains the minimum length dungeon, as well as the red, yellow and purple sections. Room number 23 is used as a stage for the final encounter. All other rooms should be cut away.
- **Full dungeon (3h):** All of it. No content gets cut. Room number 23 is used as a stage for the final encounter.

## GM Version (Part 1)

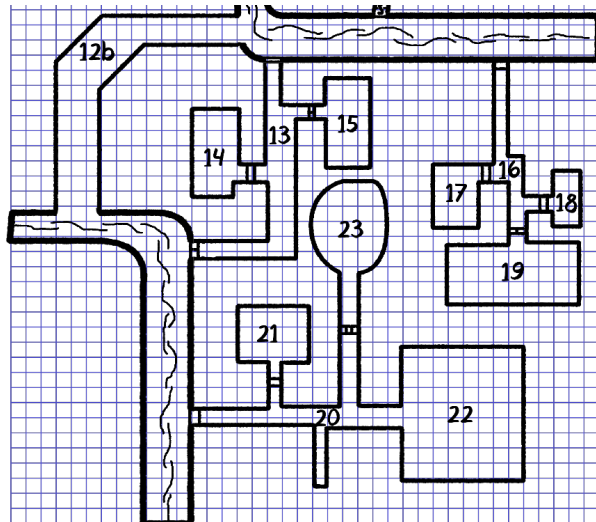


Regardless of what dungeon layout the GM chooses, the rooms contain the following encounters & challenges:

1. A rusty ladder leads the party down into a dripping cavern. This part of the sewer looks older – like a city build below the city. The exit is hidden behind some moss (DC 12 perception check).
2. The immensely high room faintly echoes with the waterway of Ghenna rushing above it. The stairs leading up to the 20ft. raised exit have crumbled away. The players will have to somehow climb up to proceed.
3. A cave-in blocks the waterway. Moving it all away will take a lot of time and might not be save. In the Minimum length dungeon, a secret passage to wedge through can be found by diving through the water to the other side (DC 14 Athletics check).
4. The narrow passage is overgrown with slippery moss and rats are scuttling around everywhere. There's no light.
5. This locked room contains the skeleton of an ancient adventurer. Most of his gear has eroded, but his adventurers pack still contains some torches and his warhammer – while overgrown, looks to be in very good condition (after cleaning away all surface level rust).
6. A pack of rats is swarming over a leather bag which has apparently been washed here by the city's sewer system. The bag itself is chewed up and serves as a nest. Something metal (a set of lockpicks) can be seen poking out of the bag. Trying to get it will provoke the rats to attack.
7. The door to left is curiously heavy and something heavy can be heard scraping along stone when opening it. Yet on the other side, nothing can be seen. The reason is, that opening the door closes the passage to the north. Behind it, the players can find what looks like a primitive altar. On it rests an ugly statue some sort of fish people. The eyes are emeralds, worth about 10 GP in total
8. This stretch almost looks like it was once part of a walkway. Whatever Ghenna is built upon, it must have been just as rich judging by the artisanship displayed by the now slimy tiles.
9. The waterway continues from here and then abruptly ends, as the water is sucked down a narrow chasm.
10. A heavy iron door blocks access to this room. It can either be opened through picking the lock (DC 12) or by breaking it down (DC 18) or whatever else the players can come up with. A giant rat is skulking through this room. Out of its back sticks a beautiful dagger with faintly glowing runes on its hilt. It is a magical sacrificial dagger – on a critical hit it deals an additional 1d4 poison damage. To get it, the players have to catch the rat – which immediately flees towards room 11.
11. The rat flees into on of the two rooms. They are connected by a small crack in the wall the rat can hide inside. Each time the players enter the room, the rat slips into the other.
- 12a. This giant rat nest is hidden below a curtain of thick moss. It can be used as the stage for the final battle or contain a fight with one aggressive rat per person.



## GM's Version (Part 2)



12b This path is rife with difficult terrain and is filled with Shrieker and Gas Spore Fungi (MM p. 138)

13. Cold water drips from the ceiling and the path forward is blocked by a closed gate showing a symbol of a crossed-out stream of water. From the left and the right, rushing water can be heard. The gate will only open, if both waterfalls in the room 14 & 15 are turned off.

14. A giant waterfall plummets from the darkness above through the slippery grating which forms the rooms floor. On the other side of the waterfall, a skeleton can be seen. It clutches a key to room 15. On the wall a weird mechanism with a broken off lever can be seen. It was used to turn off the waterfall. Moving through the waterfall requires a DC16 Strength saving throw to get through and a DC 12 Constitution saving through to not be exhausted by the cold.

15. This room perfectly mirrors room 14. The lever to turn off the waterfall is intact and could be removed to be used in room 14. However, the grating below the lever looks really rusty and could collapse if stepped on.

16. The way to room 19 is blocked by a heavy iron portcullis. The passage is too narrow for more than one person to try and lift it. Lifting it without any aid, would require passing an Athletics check of DC 25 and even then, the person would only be

able to hold it up 1ft. for a few seconds. Clearly, there must be another way to open it.

17. The room stand at the bottom of a big shaft, smelly water dripping down from overhead. The room is empty, apart from a broken iron ladder, half of which is still bolted to the wall. The other half, an 11ft. pole is lying on the ground. It still looks quite sturdy.

18. Room 18 is caved in – a lot of loose bricks and stones have spilled into it. Amongst the rubble, a good investigation or perception check, the players might discover some metal hooks.

19. To get into room 19, the players must use the pole from room 17 and the bricks in room 18 to build a lever and pry the portcullis open. The room itself almost looks like a courtyard, but instead of seeing the gate of an estate, there's only a collapsed tunnel. The skeleton wearing the tattered remains of what looks like a priest's robes is crushed beneath the rubble. The skeleton wears ritualistic jewellery of an older religion worth 15 GP.

20. The passage looks, like it was carved over the years by a constant stream of water. The stream diverges ca. in the middle of it and flows further south.

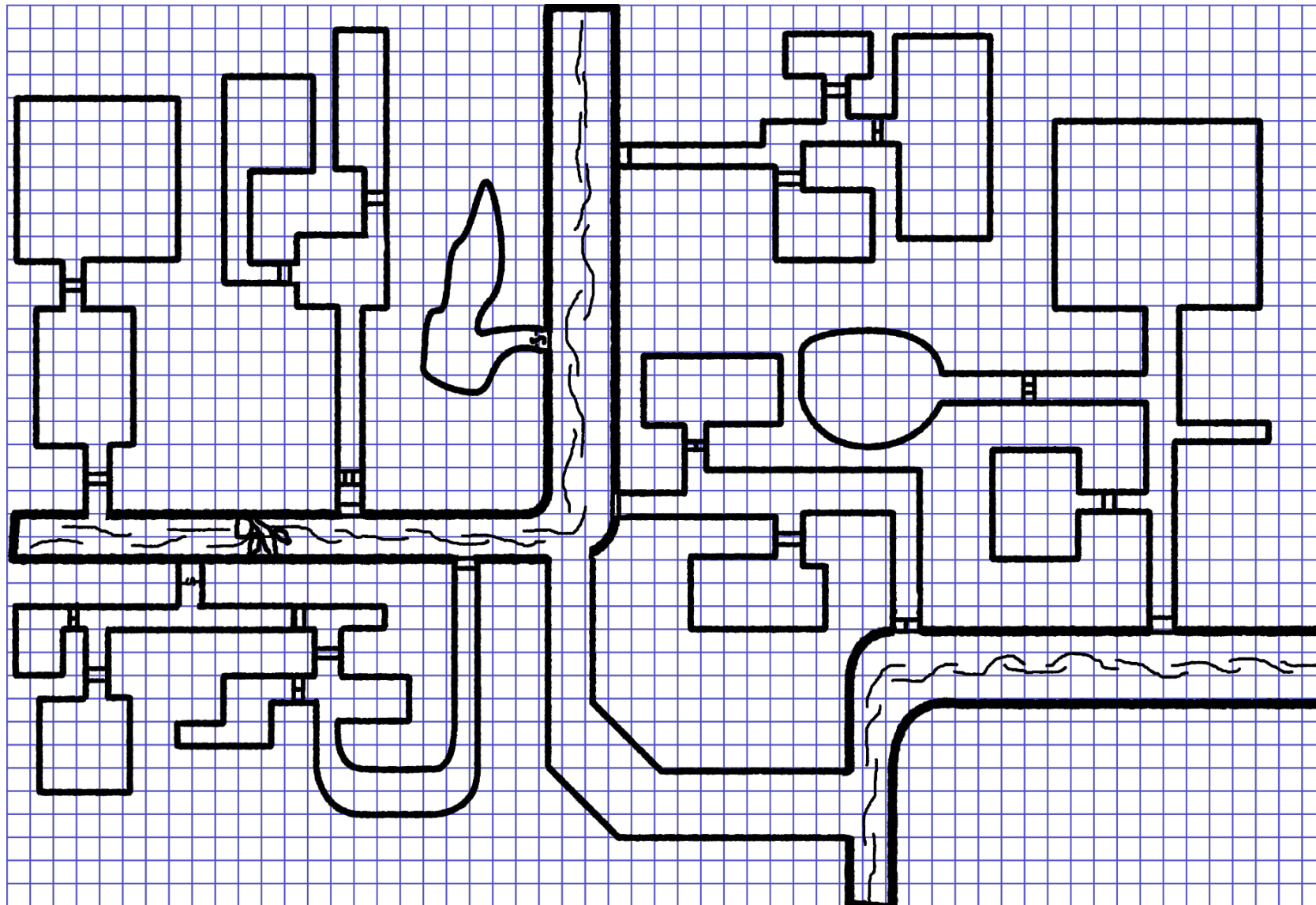
21. The room contains a lot of rats – they will first cower before the party and then try to escape. If attacked, an entire swarm will appear to defend the few nests found in this room.

22. The passage 20 joins with a clearly man made passage into what looks like an ancient chapel of some sort. The walls are covered in religious carvings. A lot of wooden beams once holding up part of the wall are lying around.

23. The way to the final chamber, a large underground cistern, is only visible due to the large number of rats passing through it. The passage ends at a brick and mortar wall which can be broken down (e.g using the wooden beams as a ram). The room behind serves as the stage for the final battle.



**Printable Version**





## **Appendix II – Illustrations**

### **List of Artworks:**

- Roadside View of Ghenna – Bernardo Bellotto (Public Domain)
- Streets of Ghenna – Louise Rayner Chester (Public Domain)
- Sewer – Joseph Wright of Derby (Public Domain)
- Telepathic Rat – DM's Guild Creator Resource, all rights belong to Wizards of the Coast (Used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild)
- Glenn Simmons – DM's Guild Creator Resource, all rights belong to Wizards of the Coast (Used with permission under the Community Content Agreement for Dungeon Masters Guild)



## Roadside View of Ghenna





## Streets of Ghenna





**Sewer**



## Telepathic Rat



**Glenn Simmons, Exterminator Mage**

